

Number 229:

The governor of the province of Los Texas informs Your Lordship of another massacre, perpetrated on the northern seacoast by the apostate Indian José María and a band of Carancahuazes. They killed 9 shipwrecked persons and stole everything from a damaged ship. The governor also advises of other events that have occurred in the matter.

My dear Sir:

I learned that five male and 2 female Indians, all of whom are apostates of the nation of the Copanes and all of whom returned to their mission, La Conzep[ció]n, about the middle of the proximate past month of April, that they had been relating that a ship had been wrecked on the northern seacoast and that the apostate Indians José María and Matheo, together with many other Indians of the Carancahuaz nation,

had killed the Christians who were on the ship and stolen the entire // <sup>lv</sup> cargo, including some pesos and doblones that the ship was carrying. It therefore seemed to me indispensable, [MS: 1 word blotted out] in view of this news, to proceed [MS: 2 words blotted out] to send a note to Padre Fr[ay] José Fran[cis]co López, m[inist]ro of La Conzep[ció]n Mission. I begged him--if the news that had been given me were true--to send me those Indians who were most knowledgeable of said event. López

sent me one Indian, assuring me that this was the only one that he knew had been an eyewitness ~~to-that~~ to most of the disaster; he also advised that this Indian had been raised in the College of Sacatecas [Zacatecas] and was a good linguist.

Consequently, when the Indian arrived at this presidio on the 21st of the present month, I invited him into my house, affording him //<sup>2</sup> the most graceful reception and courteous treatment.

Seeing that the Indian spoke our language perfectly and that he had sufficient intelligence, I made him ready to recount to me everything that had taken place in said occurrence. Whereupon he told me [the following]:

His name is Man[ue]l Alegre and he is from the Copano nation. About the middle of February of this present year, he, with several families of his own nation, was on the island called the Island of Los Copanos, which is in front of the disembogement of the Nuezes River in the northern sea. The group saw a two-masted ship approaching (despite all the distinguishing characteristics I have given him, he has been unable to state whether //<sup>2v</sup> it was a schooner, a brig, or a packet ship). Casting anchor close to the island, the ship launched a small boat, with two men, into the water. The men landed on the island and asked for water and meat. Not having meat, the Indians gave them water and fish they

were-given-water-and-fish.

The two sailors, seeing that the Indian Man[ue]l spoke such good Spanish, asked him to board their ship with them, for the captain, they said, would receive him very kindly. He agreed to go aboard. Arriving at the ship, which was of modest size, he noticed that the entire crew consisted of seven Spaniards and two Frenchmen or Englishmen (he couldn't tell which of these last two nationalities they were).

The captain's name was D[ic]n José Montesuma. Affording Manuel many courtesies // <sup>3</sup> and asking him whether he was familiar with the port of S[a]n Bernardo, Montesuma offered him many gifts if he would guide them to that port. Manuel promised to do so, and they weighed anchor and set out. But [MS: 3 words blotted out] finding that there was insufficient depth, they returned with the intention of leaving the Indian on the island. At this point they ran into a north wind so fierce that within a few hours it drove them ashore on the coast, toward the northern part of the mouth [MS: 1 word blotted out] of the Colorado River.

Aground as they were, they jumped onto the beach, the water reaching to the thighs. Digging a large hole in the sand, they buried several chests of goods, two sacks of pesos gordos, and a small bag of doblones. The said ship-wrecked people // <sup>3v</sup> wanted to unload other effects from what

was on board, but the Indian Man[ue]l persuaded them not to tarry so long, for they were exposed to a surprise attack from the Carancaguazes, and he wanted to get these people to this presidio within six days, as he had promised. But not wanting to leave all the other items which they intended to unload from the ship, these poor people were surprised on the third day by Jose María, Matheo, and seventy other Carancaguazes. The attackers killed them all and carried off everything that was on the beach and on the boat.

Witnessing these events, the Indian Manuel had the good<sup>4</sup>// fortune of being able to flee, going into the woods, wherein he lay hidden for about three days. Crossing the Colorado, Guadalupe, and S[a]n Ant[oni]o rivers, he arrived, after much difficulty, at a camp of Indians of his own tribe; fortunately they were encamped in an area in this direction from the mouth of the last-mentioned river. Learning that José María sought to kill him, he resolved to return to his mission, as indeed he did, with 4 other men of his tribe, plus two Indian women who went with him at his urging.

The ship, he states, was not broken up, but there was a hole in its hull, through which water entered.

Various effects were left on board. He has not been able to tell me their nature, //<sup>4v</sup> save that there were many barrels of lemons, sweet oranges, rifles, gunpowder, and shot and about a hundred barrels of an alcoholic beverage.

Whether the beverage was from Castile or Rome or whether it was tafia he has been unable to tell me; so I cannot infer whether the cargo was taken on at a Spanish port, an English one, or a French one [MS: 1 line blotted out].

He has not been able to inform me what port said ship had sailed from nor whither it was bound; he assures me that he did not hear the people mention either place and that he did not inquire. This last point I can believe very well, since I know the Indian disposition [MS: 2 lines blotted out].

Seeing that it was <sup>5</sup>// impossible to do anything about this disaster, I had intended to dispatch a squad of troops, under an officer, to examine the boat and try to salvage what they could of the cargo that remained on board-- particularly since the Indian Man[ue]l offered to point out the site. But it has been necessary to give up this intention in view of the few troops that I could lay hands on. Furthermore the aforementioned Indian advised that it would behoove me to send many troops, for the Carancahuazes were now very numerous--by virtue of the addition to their numbers of those who had fled from El Rosario Mission--and well supplied with gunpowder, shot, and rifles, in-the-ones which they had taken from the before-mentioned ship. <sup>5v</sup>//

I have therefore remained with the distress of seeing scanty progress or none at all made at these stations despite

what one might [MS: 1 word blotted out] intend. I do not have more troops than the minimum number required for indispensable duties; and for some cases, I do not have enough men to relieve those employed in regular daily fatigues. Thus, nothing successful can be achieved beyond ~~defending-the~~ guarding these posts: it is useless to aspire to inflict punishment for the hostilities and outrages perpetrated by enemies. I refer in particular to acts now being committed ~~new-being~~ by the Carancahuazes. Consequently, what is contained in article 21 of the tractate of instructions for the new placement of presidios necessarily causes one to wonder; on page 108 of the royal regulations // <sup>6</sup> for these presidios is found the following phrase: given that little or nothing is to be feared from the heathen that live in the marisma, on account of their pusillanimousness and wretchedness. The contrary proving itself to be the case, it is indispensable that other measures than those prescribed in said regulations should be adopted; the current situation is now quite [MS: 3 words blotted out] distinct [MS: 3 words blotted out] from that for which the system was designed.

Since the possibility of making an inspection of the wrecked ship has not been within my power, I have sent the Indian Manuel to his mission, having entertained and regaled him as best I could.

A few days after I had the Indian Manuel return to his mission, the substance of what he had related to me was confirmed. Juan José Martínez, resident of this presidio was running <sup>6v</sup> // a few cattle belonging to El Rosario Mission, ~~at-the-place-called-de-El-Sane~~ at the place called El Saus, about two leagues from the sea, when the Indian José María-- who is a close friend of Martínez' by virtue of the two having been raised together at the aforesaid mission--came out to him and asked him whether [MS: 4 words blotted out] he wanted to go to his [the Indian's] camp. The Indian told Martínez that he would give him a gold watch, some pes[o]s gordos, and some dobloones as a gift. He also narrated ~~the-entire-account-of-how-these-items-had-been-acquired~~, stating-that-if-they-would-pardon, without any reservation, sheepishness, or shame, the entire account of how these items had been acquired, stating that if he were pardoned, he would return to El Rosario, together with all the other Christians who had fled from that mission. The Indians [who had fled from the mission] had named him their chief, and even the non-Christians obeyed him, <sup>7</sup> // such that now [MS: 2 words blotted out] the old chiefs possessed no authority, he being recognized as the chief of his entire nation. To all of this the aforesaid Juan José Martínez replied that he did not dare go to the Indian camp without my express permission; that if I should learn of it, I would

punish him; and that he would come to ask me, and if I should give him permission, he would not fail to go to see José María. With this, the Indian strongly requested that I be informed that if he were pardoned, he would proceed with all his people [to the mission]. After the one and the other had bid their leave, the before-mentioned Martínez came directly to me to tell me what I have related above. Consequently, I have told him to let the matter rest with me, that I would afford a response. I did this with the intention of premeditating a way to capture this perfidious Indian, in the belief that if I // <sup>7v</sup> am able to do so, what will be the greatest service to God and king will be to hang him immediately.

Having received an answer from the cav[aller]o governor of the province of La Luiciana concerning what I had informed him of in regard to the event that befell D[o]n Ju[an] Andrín, I have again written that official, apprising him of this latest occurrence, in case the wrecked ship had come from the port of La Nueva Orleans or in case he might have knowledge, from the name of the captain, D[o]n José Montesuma, of any details that might be of importance in the matter.

The above will leave Your Lordship informed of this new catastrophe wrought by these treacherous Carancahuazes, the apostates among them being the guilty parties in these



atrocities. // <sup>8</sup> The Indian Man[ue]l assured me that he recognized a greater number of apostates than of heathens on the day in which the massacre I have related above was committed.

May Your Lordship overlook the digressions in my report, being, as they are, a result of my desire that Your Lordship be informed in detail of everything that occurred.

Our Lord protect Your Lordship's life many years.

Bahía del [E]sp[í]ritu S[an]to, May 30, 1780.

Your Lordship's most devoted and faithful  
servant kisses your hand.

Lord Commandant General }  
Caballero de Croix }

Dom[ing]o Cabello

<sup>8v</sup>  
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[A.L.S., 1-8 pp., 5/30/1780]