

[Cross]

Number 299:

The governor of the province of Los Texas encloses for Your Lordship a copy, authenticated by himself, of some sections of a letter written by Captain Don Ant[oni]o Gil Ybarbo. With these and with some documents that the governor previously sent to you, Your Lordship will be knowledgeable of the deplorable condition of this province and of the similar condition of our friendship with the Indians of adentro. In virtue of this friendship, the governor has resolved to favor the said Indians with gifts and to have Don Nicolás de la Mate go out as his emissary for this purpose [of

My dear Sir:

I have received a letter from Captain Don Ant[oni]o Gil Ybarbo that treats a miscellany of matters, many of which it is not important to bring to Your Lordship's notice. Therefore I am not remitting the original letter, as I customarily do with others, and hence I have selected the pertinent sections, which, copied and certified by me, I enclose for Your Lordship.

From their contents, Your Lordship will be // ^{lv} knowledgeable of the deplorable state [MS: 1 1/2 lines blotted out] into which the greatly desired

distributing gifts] and others, as is explained in greatest detail for Your Lordship.

peace and friendship with the Indians of adentro

[MS: 5 words blotted out]

have deteriorated. I have the consolation and satis-

faction, however, that for my part I have spared no effort whatever to keep and promote said peace and amity: Besides affording graceful reception to Chief Mocho and giving presents to him and his Tancague nation, of which [efforts] I informed Your Lordship in my official letter number 145, I took the greatest pains [to arrange] for Alfe[re]s Don Bernardo Portolán to go out to all the friendly tribes, visiting them in my name, in order to secure our amity // ² with them. For this last purpose, I wrote to the cavallero governor of La Luiciana, as I have explained to Your Lordship in greatest detail in my official letter number 154. I do not list numerous other efforts that I ~~have~~ have addressed myself to with the greatest zeal in order to bring about the achievement of this goal; ~~I have~~ I have previously reported these efforts in detail to Your Lordship. Withal, it is certain that if the said Indians have failed to keep their pledges and their word, the fault lies not with me; rather it derives from their fickle, inconstant, and covetous temperaments--as I have ~~I~~ reminded Your Lordship on many occasions. I have a greater understanding of the character

of these peoples than // ^{2v} I appear to have.

With this understanding, nothing will astonish me, irrespective of what may come to pass. I have previously expressed this feeling to Your Lordship, in my official letter number 208 and in other communications that I do not cite--Your Lordship probably having such communications well in mind.

In view of this state of affairs, and considering what has happened since the month of June to the present--which [events] I have recounted in detail to Your Lordship in a great many official letters in which I brought these events to your worthy attention--it appears to me entirely likely that some Indians from the friendly tribes have become agitated enough to join up with the Comanches. With respect to the message sent by Captain Gil Ybarbo, which I relayed to Your Lordship in my official letter 273, and with regard to what I recently informed you of in [my official letter] number 297, and // ³ considering the contents of the enclosed sections, it is extremely plausible that the assessment I have made of the situation is correct, particularly in view of the great number of Indians that are committing hostilities in these districts and of the evidence that said Indians are lingering between the Guadalupe and the Colorado rivers in a wooded area that these people call the Monte del Diáboló on account of its roughness and impenetrability.

When I was at the rancho of S[a]n Bartolo, one of the

boys who had escaped being a victim of the hostilities that the Comanches were committing at that rancho (of which Your Lordship knows from the ninth sentence of my official letter 257) assured me that said Indians were driving a horseherd of great size, more than three hundred head. // ^{3v}

Since that number of horses had not been reported missing in these districts, I have come to learn, by certain true pieces of news from two residents of Laredo who just arrived at this presidio [the following]: The stolen horses were from their villa and its surrounding area. Persuaded that some Lipan-Apaches who had been encamped on the banks of the Nuezes River were responsible, a group of citizens from the said villa of Laredo and from the villas of Camargo, Revilla, and El Cántaro [MS: 1/2 line blotted out], numbering about a hundred seventy persons in all, banded together and on the 8th of this current month came upon the camp of the Lipan-Apaches, these Indians having no reason to anticipate such an assault. The citizens killed two Indian men and one Indian woman and drove off more than five // ⁴ hundred horses and mules. The Lipan-Apaches are so inflamed about the episode that they are planning the most terrible revenge against the people of Laredo and the other populated areas along the Rio Grande. These Indians having this intention, I find myself informed that they are thus moving all their women and children to

the canyon of San Saba, preparatory to falling upon the afore-mentioned places. The disasters that could take place I leave to Your Lordship's reflection, all having arisen from the error of believing that the Lipan-Apaches were the aggressors in the first instance; whereas in fact it was the Comanches and whatever confederates they may have brought with them.

In official letter number 292 I informed Your Lordship of some of the continuous reports // ^{4v} reaching me every instant, of the many trails and signs [of Comanches] being seen throughout this entire region. And I have just received news that on the afternoon of the 17th of the current month, the foremen and boys from the ranchos of S[a]n Fran[cis]co and La Mora, while rounding up cattle for branding, were attacked by ~~30~~ more than 30 hostiles. In the encounter, which took place on a plain that lies between the two haciendas, the Indians killed three of the afore-mentioned boys. The rest, about 13 in number, were able to save themselves only by virtue of the swiftness of their horses.

From the presidio of La Bahía del [E]sp[í]ritu S[an]to, I have just received word from the commander of that station that on the night of the 12th of the current month the Indians tore down // ⁵ a section of the adobe wall of the enclosure at Rosario Mission. Through the breach, or opening, they

drove a large herd of mares and a number of domesticated animals without being heard or seen. The commander of the said presidio dispatched a small squad of troops to follow the trail, which ~~denote-them-to-be~~ led to the Guadalupe River. Hence it is inferred that these aggressors are the same Indians, the Comanches, even though some people have claimed that the raiders were some Jaranames that fled from El [E]sp[í]ritu S[an]to Mission during past months. But even if they were [fugitives from the mission], they would certainly have joined up with the Comanches and other allies. From all these incidents, Your Lordship will infer the condition // ^{5v} in which this province finds itself. For even though I may wish to, it is impossible for me to reflect upon or to proceed with the punishment of these ~~hostiles-if~~ hostiles, when at the present time I am making do with only two men available for duty, after allowing for the seven who are on guard [MS: 1/2 line blotted out], the one orderly, the drummer, and the armorer. To verify this [last assertion], I am enclosing for Your Lordship the status report in order that you might conclusively know of the impotence of the forces at this presidio [MS: 3 lines blotted out]. Moreover, I cannot count on the citizenry or the militia that is supposed to be made up of citizenry. Having carefully inspected their armament, I find it [MS: 2 words blotted out] to be utterly useless: scarcely can // ⁶

twenty-five to thirty serviceable firearms be brought together. And the owners of these weapons lack other qualifications that are necessary before they could be called upon for any military action. In fact, I have such a low concept of their value that I regard them as worthless: when my officers have left the presidio with these citizens, [upon returning] they assure me that they consider twenty men from the company to be of more value than 60 of these civilians. For at the [end of] the first day these civilians' horses are already tired. Some civilians do not put shot in their muskets; others are apt to carry no gunflints or only one at most. All in all, the said officers go out to die when they leave [the presidio] with these citizens. And therefore I classify these civilians as worthless, their only ability being to promote caviling // ^{6v} and intrigues.

Consequently, and heeding the notion that grave illnesses require and demand grave remedy, I am going to implement a policy that appears to me to be the only way, not merely to cut out the cancer from which this province is suffering, but rather to prevent the mutilation of any of its members. I have gathered up all bits of news--which [news] I have relayed to Your Lordship, including the information I ~~explained~~ made known in my official letter 263, which [information] had been given me by the leader of the Texas Indians who came to pay me their respects at La Bahía del

[E]sp[í]ritu S[an]to--concerning the complaint that the Taguayazes, Guages, and Guachitas had of not having been given presents by Lieutenant Colonel Don Atanacio // ⁷ de Mecieres; messages from Captain Gil Ybarbo have confirmed the complaint and have even amplified upon it. And so I have decided to bestow gifts upon these Indians, equivalent to the amount of the effects that I told Your Lordship in my official letter 139 are in this abilitación, to see if by this means I can achieve what I have been unable to bring about thus far. Therefore, mindful of the grave dangers that could ensue if I should attempt to transport the aforementioned effects--for if by virtue of the imminent risks to which they were exposed they should be seized by the hostiles, the latter would find themselves supplied with powder, shot, and rifles, [MS: 3 words blotted out] and the situation would be utterly deplorable--I have decided to write to Don José María de Arman and to the new commander at the post of Natchitoches, Captain // ^{7v} Don Estevan de Bogine, [telling them] to bring to the pueblo of Nagcodoches a like quantity of effects and goods to that expressed in the above-cited report [in official letter 139], and to present gifts to the ~~name~~ said Indians. For this mission and assignment of trust, I have availed myself of the unbelievable efficiency, [MS: 1 word blotted out], industriousness, and competence of Don Nicolás de la Mate (who is at

present in this presidio). He will proceed to Nagcodoches, where Captain Gil Ybarbo will dispatch my letters to Natchitoches. Then, when my orders for goods have been filled, la Mate will leave with the goods to distribute them amongst the above-named nations; he will also see all the other nations to assure them that we shall trade with them; and he will seek, by whatever method his perspicacity and knowledge--//⁸ the which he has of many of these Indians' languages--may dictate, to bind them to the peace and tranquility that is so much to our advantage. For this entire project, I am drawing up the most judicious and appropriate instructions that are in harmony and conformity with present policy.

I am positively certain and confident that Don Nicolás de la Mate will perform this errand with utter efficiency and tact, for in my mind there is not the least doubt that this subject is the most competent and possesses the finest talents that can grace a man of his most honorable character. It seems to me that there is no other subject capable of carrying out this mission with the proficiency and prowess of de la Mate. He has assured me that he will even attempt to travel to //^{8v} many of the Comanche pueblos; in spite of his certain knowledge of the Comanches' ferocity and inconstancy, he assures me that he will do everything possible to see if he can persuade them to embrace our

amity. [Following inserted in margin:] To this end he is taking with him Fran[cis]co Ugues and Juan Bosquet, who are both settled and domiciled in this presidio and who are completely fluent in all the languages of the before-mentioned tribes. De la Mate has promised me [End of marginally inserted material] that he will indagate with precision into the matter Your Lordship placed in my care in your official letter--~~of the~~ which I answered with my official letter number 240--in respect to finding out what sort and quality, in the eyes of the Comanche nation, were the foreigners you mention in the said official letter dated April 4th. He assures me that if he achieves his hopes of being of service in this matter, he will proceed to the city of S[an]ta Fee, capital of El Nuevo México, whence he will communicate his findings to Your Lordship.

For the expenses that may be // ⁹ incurred in this journey, I will draw up a statement, the most formal and legal one possible. I am determined, should Your Lordship not wish to approve these expenses, to sustain them from my own poor purse, for I am convinced that the goal which has stimulated me to devote myself to this undertaking will redound to the great service of the king and to the well-being of this province. And for this reason I shall consider the satisfaction of these costs a worthy investment.

The effects that remain in the abilitación will be

available [MS: 4 words blotted out]--should the said Don Nicolás de la Mate succeed in bringing any of the chiefs of the aforementioned nations to this presidio--for use as favors and gifts; for it would be imperative that we make them such gifts.

//^{9v} I am persuaded that Your Lordship will not take unkindly to this decision that I have found myself compelled to make. The current situation has forced me to free myself from the vexations I am suffering and to prevent the [recurrence of] experiences I have suffered as a result of equal and even greater efforts that are made in other districts to elicit and win the friendship of the Indians. These other efforts I do not itemize in detail for Your Lordship as I might, because I do not have the least doubt that Your Lordship is thoroughly knowledgeable of this and other matters of major importance. And again bringing before your worthy consideration the desire that has stimulated me my reflection, taking this measure makes me hope that Your Lordship will approve it and that--according to the manner in which //¹⁰ he conducts himself in discharging this service and toilsome commission--Don Nicolás de la Mate will know of Your Lordship's gratitude, by means of whatever favors you might afford him.

Our Lord protect Your Lordship's life many years.

S[a]n Ant[oni]o de Béxar, October 20, 1780.

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

Lord Commandant General }
Cavallero de Croix }

Dom[ing]o Cabello [Note:
signature is not autograph.]

//^{10v} [Blank]

[L.S., 1-10 pp., 10/20/1780]