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HASINAI-EUROPEAN INTERACTION, 1694-1715¹

by *Daniel A. Hickerson*

Spanish withdrawal and retrenchment, 1694-1709

The first Spanish missionary effort in East Texas began in 1690 with the arrival of a small party that left among the Hasinai Indians three Franciscan priests, accompanied by three soldiers.² The missionization of the Hasinai was undertaken as a reaction to the occupation of the Texas Gulf coast by the French explorer Rene Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle during the 1680s. Despite an optimistic beginning, the Spaniards were forced to abandon their mission only three years later when the hostility of the Hasinai compelled them to flee. The Hasinai, who initially welcomed the Europeans, had suffered a series of severe epidemics for which they correctly blamed the Spaniards. They were further angered by the priests' persistent attempts to convert them to Catholicism, as well as the failure of the Spanish soldiers to aid them in battles against the Apaches and other enemies.³

After the retreat from the East Texas mission in 1693, the Spanish had little direct documented contact with the Hasinai for more than two decades. For most of this period there is little evidence of what was taking place in eastern Texas. After their initial failures, both Spain and France seem to have lost interest in Texas temporarily. This lack of activity has led to the perception that these were, in the words of historian Carlos Castaneda, "silent years" in the history of Texas.⁴ It was not until after 1715, when the French trader and adventurer Louis Juchereau de St. Denis appeared unexpectedly at a Spanish settlement on the Rio Grande, that the territory of the Hasinai was reoccupied officially by Europeans.

This appearance of inactivity from eastern Texas is deceiving. Although the historical record may contain little direct documentation of the Hasinai during this period, these two decades were anything but silent. Contact did take place between the Hasinai and Europeans, although on a less official, and thus less well documented, level. The French, in particular, began to make exploring and trading forays into Texas during this period. Far-reaching political and economic changes continued to take place, changes to which the Hasinai undoubtedly tried to adjust, to react, and to turn in their favor.

During the seventeenth century, the Hasinai had acquired Spanish goods and horses through trade. The primary source of these commodities was the Jumano Indians, traders who made regular journeys from the Spanish colonial settlements along the Rio Grande to the Hasinai villages of eastern Texas.⁵ These regular trade connections to the south and west were broken sometime after the withdrawal of the Spanish missions, although it is likely that some goods and horses continued to make their way to the territory of the Hasinai from that direction through members of other Indian groups. After 1699, when the French constructed a fort at the mouth of the Mississippi River, new opportunities for trade were opened to the east because of French settlement, exploration, and trading activity in western Louisiana.⁶ When the Spanish returned to eastern Texas in 1715, they found the Hasinai trading animal skins, Indian slaves, corn, horses, and livestock to the French in return for rifles and

other goods, a commerce that the Spanish authorities attempted to eradicate, without success, for most of the eighteenth century.

Exactly when the trade connections with the Jumanos were broken is not certain. The last time that Jumanos are noted at or near the Hasinai territory in the historical record is in 1693, during the Salinas Varona expedition that travelled to eastern Texas to resupply the Spanish missions shortly before their abandonment.⁷ Shortly after this time, Apache dominance of the southern plains apparently increased to the point that the annual trading expeditions became too hazardous to continue. The Jumanos' support of the Hasinai in their uprising against the Spanish soldiers and missionaries may also have strained their relationship with the Spaniards at Nueva Vizcaya, making problematic their access to, and subsequent trade in, Spanish goods.⁸ These factors combined to cut off the Hasinai from the trade network of which they had been a part, probably by 1695, and almost certainly by 1700. The Jumano disappear completely from the historical record for several years. They eventually realigned themselves with their old enemies; when they reappear in the historical record two decades later, in 1716, they are described as allies of the Apaches and enemies of the Spaniards and the Hasinai.⁹

This is not to say that the Hasinai were left completely without a source of Spanish horses and trade goods, as well as information on happenings among the Spanish settlements. Even without the Jumanos, the Hasinai maintained their long-time alliances with many of the hunting and gathering tribes who lived to their south and southwest. These alliances were still in place more than two decades later. In a declaration given to Spanish authorities in 1715, St. Denis noted that to the south of the Hasinai "there is a multiplicity of nations allied with this one, which are well-governed according to the relationship that these Indians have with them."¹⁰ And at the time of the reestablishment of the Spanish missions in 1716, Domingo Ramon noted that in addition to the Hasinai, the missions could "attract various and innumerable nations of Indians, friends of the Tejas, that I have had notice are in these parts."¹¹

Following the setback created by the failure of their initial efforts in Texas, the Franciscans established several missions in northern Mexico, at or near the Rio Grande, beginning in 1698.¹² A few of the Spanish priests working in these missions maintained an interest in returning to the Hasinai. Principal among these was Father Francisco Hidalgo, who was among the missionaries who had fled East Texas in 1693. Hidalgo's efforts to bring about a return of the Spanish to eastern Texas proved pivotal in the reestablishment of the missions in 1716.¹³

Hidalgo and his colleagues in the Rio Grande missions remained informed of events among the Hasinai and probably maintained a sporadic communication with them, primarily through their contact with members of the Coahuiltecan tribes who lived and wandered in the territory from northeastern Mexico to central Texas.¹⁴ Many of these were among the groups that had accompanied the Jumano on their journeys to the Hasinai during the previous decades. By 1700, the Hasinai evidently had direct interaction with French traders, who already had made inroads into their territory, and were in more indirect communication with the Spanish priests, who maintained an active interest in the Hasinai from their base at the missions along the Rio Grande.

French forays into eastern Texas began almost immediately after their occupation of the mouth of the Mississippi River in 1699. These expeditions had the initial purpose of making treaties of friendship with the Indian tribes and discovering the locations of mineral deposits that could be exploited. In March 1700, a party of twenty-two Canadians and seven Indians commanded by Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville and Louis de St. Denis reached the village of the Yatasi, Caddoan Indians who lived on the Red River, who told them where they could find the Hasinai and the closest Spanish settlements. Later the same year, a second expedition reached the Natchitoches and Kadohadachos on the Red River. More expeditions followed, and, according to Vito Alessio Robles, it is likely that the French of Louisiana had established regular contact with the Hasinai by 1704 or 1705.¹⁵ St. Denis probably had spent several months among the Hasinai shortly before, according to his own account, he had made his initial journey to the Rio Grande.¹⁶

Spanish records suggest that such contact had been made several years before this time. In 1700 Father Diego de San Buenaventura y Salazar, the Franciscan priest in charge of the newly-founded Rio Grande missions, travelled from the Mission Santa Maria de los Dolores, in northern Nuevo Leon, to Mexico City to request aid and military protection for the Rio Grande missions.¹⁷ Salazar was accompanied on this expedition by two Hasinai Indians who had come to the missions with news of French advances into Spanish territory for the purpose of establishing trade with the Indians. These two Hasinai Indians were to testify to the French intrusions before the Spanish authorities.

The Indians testified that Frenchmen had come to the village of the Nasoni, located at the northern end of Hasinai territory, and had given two rifles to the chief of the village in exchange for two horses. More ominously, from the point of view of the Spaniards, the French seemed prepared to settle permanently among the Kadohadacho on the Red River. They had built houses, and had brought with them "religious who are dressed like those of San Francisco [Franciscans]."¹⁸ The two Hasinai stated that they had been sent to the Rio Grande missions by their uncle, the "Governor of the Tejas," to ask the Spanish to send priests and soldiers to settle at a place they called "The Three Crosses," which was on the banks of the San Marcos River, close to, but not within, Hasinai territory.¹⁹ Salazar's requests for aid for the missions were approved by the Junta, or council, that heard his petition. Undoubtedly, the indication of French advances into the area had some impact on this decision. The request of the Indians for soldiers and missionaries was put off with a provision for an investigation into their claims.²⁰ Just as importantly, the presence of the two Indians on this expedition demonstrates that contact between the Hasinai and the Spanish could not have been completely cut off during this period.

There is little doubt that, as a result of their regular contact with the Spanish, the hunting-and-gathering tribes of central Texas and the Rio Grande valley were able to carry on some trade with the Hasinai in Spanish goods, horses, and livestock. As suggested by the testimony of the two Hasinai who accompanied Father Salazar, it was probably these horses and cattle, as well as grain and Indian slaves, that served as the principal commodities that the Hasinai traded to the French colonists in Louisiana during the first two

decades of the eighteenth century.²¹ St. Denis noted in 1715 that the Hasinai possessed huge herds of “thousands of cows, bulls, horses, and mares, with which their fields are entirely covered.”²² While this claim was almost certainly an exaggeration, the herds of the Hasinai probably were sizeable. It was in part due to the need for livestock for the Louisiana colony that the governor of French Louisiana established contact with the Spanish on the Rio Grande.²³ It is likely that as the French colonial establishment grew, the colonists feared that their need for cattle and horses would outgrow the ability of the Hasinai and other Indians of the area to supply them. The colonial settlements of New Spain seemed to be a more direct source of these commodities as well as a potentially profitable trading partner for the French colonists.

The extent of the contact, direct or indirect, that took place between Spanish religious agents and the Hasinai in the years after the missions were abandoned is not clear, although it was almost certainly more frequent than the official documents indicate. Rumors of French activity in Louisiana, including occasional forays into Texas, reached the Franciscans, who made certain that they were passed on to Spanish political authorities in the hope that the East Texas missions would be reactivated, this time with a more effective military presence to protect them against both the French and hostile Indians. The missionaries evidently believed that the Hasinai would once again welcome them into their territory, despite the hostility that had forced the earlier retreat. The presence of the two Hasinai on Salazar’s expedition to Mexico City suggests that they provided some degree of cooperation to the Spaniards. Some of the Coahuiltecos who frequented the Rio Grande missions also probably had suggested that the Caddoans would be receptive to a Spanish reoccupation of their lands.

The 1709 Olivares-Espinosa-Aguirre Expedition to the Colorado River

Thus it was with some optimism that Spanish authorities approved, and the priests planned, an expedition into Texas in 1709. The expedition was commanded by Pedro de Aguirre, with the assistance of Father Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares and Father Isidro Felix de Espinosa.²⁴ This expedition, like most of those undertaken by Spain in its colonial territory, had both a military and religious purpose. Reports of French forays into Texas once again increased, creating renewed fears of a threat to Spain’s colonial borders. At the same time, the expectation that the Hasinai again would receive missionaries willingly is reflected in the preparation for this expedition. It had been rumored that the Hasinai had moved from their homeland along the Neches and Angelina rivers to the banks of what the Spanish called the San Marcos River, by which they probably meant the Colorado,²⁵ to be closer to the Spanish settlements along the Rio Grande, presumably to persuade them to reestablish the missions. The source of these rumors is not clear; they could have come from any of the Indians who frequented the Rio Grande missions. Whatever the source, the Spaniards almost certainly recalled the two Hasinai in Mexico City nine years earlier, who asked them to send priests to the banks of the same river.

The Spaniards were disappointed in the results of this expedition. The party, consisting of the two priests and fifteen soldiers, departed on April 5 from the San Juan Bautista mission, located on the southern bank of the Rio

Grande at present-day Guerrero, Coahuila.²⁶ On April 19, having reached the Colorado River where they hoped to find the Hasinai, the Spaniards instead were met by a party of approximately forty Yojuan Indians and a few individuals of other tribes. This group was led by the Yojuan chief Cantona, who according to Espinosa was "an Indian who knew the Spanish very well."²⁷ A larger group of Yojuan Indians camped several miles away.

Cantona was known to have been among the Hasinai, and was questioned closely concerning their whereabouts and intentions. Asked by the Spaniards "if it was true that they had abandoned their territory and come to the San Marcos [Colorado] River to settle it," Cantona responded "that the Hasinai Indians (also known as Tejas) were in their land where they always had lived and that they had not departed to settle in the place of which we had asked; that only some of them departed from it to hunt for bison meat on these banks of the Colorado River and its vicinity." And he said "that the Indian named Bernardino, who is a Tejas Indian who speaks Spanish, and who has been in Mexico and spent many years among the Spanish, was Governor of all the Tejas," and that Bernardino "is known to be very hostile to all matters of the faith, and could never be reduced to it."²⁸ It seemed clear to the Spaniards that they would not be welcomed by the Hasinai leader and his people.

Faced with this disappointing news, the Spanish party did not press any further toward the territory of the Hasinai, despite having been told by the Yojuanes that they were only three days' travel from their territory. Discouraged, running short on supplies, and lacking orders from their superiors that would have been necessary to advance further into Texas, they returned to Mission San Juan Bautista, arriving there on April 28. Before retreating the missionaries made one last attempt to contact the Hasinai. They persuaded Cantona to deliver to Bernardino a paper cross painted with ink that they had made, a symbol that they knew would be recognized by the Hasinai leader. Cantona was then to tell Bernardino and his people "that we had gone to seek them, and they they should come to the Rio Grande to our missions, since they knew where they were."²⁹ It is clear that the priests never received a response to this invitation.

The motives of Cantona and the veracity of his statements about the Hasinai and their chief are not clear, although historians have never questioned the truth of the information he gave to the Spaniards. For example, both Carlos Castaneda and, more recently, Donald Chipman note this incident briefly with little comment.³⁰ This may be in part because little is known about the Yojuanes. They seem to have been a fairly large group. According to the account of Espinosa, the Yojuanes that several members of the Spanish party encountered during a side trip to their main camp were quite numerous. However, although their presence is noted several times in the historical record, their identity or ethnic affiliation has not been determined satisfactorily.³¹

Nevertheless, the possibility should be noted that the Yojuan chief was trying to steer the Spaniards away from the Hasinai and that he may have been attempting to court the favor of the Spaniards toward his own people in the hope of establishing a military alliance and a source of trade goods. Although this is speculation, the circumstances of the encounter provide at least some support for it. Although the priests were in error about the move of the Hasinai

to the Colorado River, they probably had cause to think the Hasinai would be receptive to their overtures of renewed friendship. As previously noted, there was almost certainly some contact between the Spanish and the Caddoans. Even the last line of the message entrusted to Cantona reminding Bernardino that the Hasinai "knew where [the Rio Grande missions] were" suggests familiarity, given that those missions had been established several years after the Franciscans' abandonment of eastern Texas.

The actions of Cantona and his followers also suggest that they were hoping to establish an amicable relationship with the Spaniards. The Yojuanes and their companions were clearly well prepared for their encounter with the Franciscan priests, and seem to have anticipated the meeting. Father Espinosa noted in his diary that in their initial encounter near the banks of the Colorado River, Cantona and a group of the Indians arrived

with a cross of cane, well crafted, and behind this Indian crucifix, three Indians, each one with an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe, two of these painted, and the other an old print. And upon their arrival, they all made demonstrations of peace, some kneeling, and approaching the Spaniards and embracing them, which is their means of demonstrating their happiness with meeting those of whom they are fond.

It was just after this demonstration of friendship and faith, which was designed to win the favor of the priests, that Cantona delivered to the Spaniards his report detailing the continued hostility of the Hasinai, and particularly their leader, toward the Spanish and the Catholic religion. The Spaniards responded by presenting Cantona with a baton "with a tip of silver" to reward his demonstration of friendship, to encourage his peoples' conversion to Catholicism, and to symbolize his leadership. He made a prominent display of this baton upon his return to the camp where most of his people had remained to show "his Indians that the priests and Spaniards esteemed him much."³²

The possibility that the Yojuanes were attempting to court the favor of the Spaniards does not necessarily imply that they were trying to deflect this favor from the Hasinai, or that they were in competition with them for trade and alliance with the Spanish. But it does seem apparent that Cantona and his followers were attempting to demonstrate a clear contrast between their own friendship and receptivity toward the Catholic religion and the hostility and faithlessness of the Hasinai. It should be noted also that when the Yojuanes next appear in the historical record, upon the return of the Spanish to the Hasinai in 1716, they are listed as being among the enemies who "encircled the north" and harassed the Hasinai, as well as the newly reestablished Spanish missions.³³ Franciscan missionary priest and historian Father Isidro Felix de Espinosa later noted that around 1714, the Yojuanes, who he also now describes as enemies of the Hasinai, had attacked and burned the fire temple and the house of the Conenesi, or spirit children, to whom the Hasinai regularly gave offerings and made petitions.³⁴ The possibility should be noted that the Yojuanes, by 1709, were in competition with the Hasinai for access to trade goods, for political and military alliances, and for a favored position in the regional political and economic system. If this is the case, then it is also likely that the Hasinai chief Bernardino never received the painted cross and

message that Fathers Olivares and Espinosa expected Cantona to carry to him.

Hidalgo, San Denis, and the return to the Hasinai

Two individuals, one a Spanish missionary priest, Father Francisco Hidalgo, and the other a French explorer and trader, Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, have been credited as the principal figures who engineered the return of the Spanish to eastern Texas. Numerous historical accounts of this fascinating episode in the colonial period of this region have described in detail the actions of these two persons and the effect that they had on the policies of Spain and France on the frontier between the two colonial territories.³⁵ In these accounts, the territory of the Hasinai is always mentioned as part of the setting for this historical drama. The actual role played by the Hasinai rarely receives more than a few sentences in these accounts, but without the influence and cooperation of the Hasinai, the goals of the French traders and the Spanish priests almost certainly could not have been realized.

After the Espinosa-Olivares expedition of 1709 failed to locate and reestablish contact with the Hasinai, the two priests involved in that journey left the Rio Grande missions for other duties, leaving Father Francisco Hidalgo to continue to lobby the Spanish religious and political authorities for a return to eastern Texas.³⁶ Hidalgo almost certainly had been in contact with the Hasinai – indirect contact through members of other tribes, and probably at least sporadic direct contact as well. When St. Denis arrived at the Rio Grande accompanied by four Hasinai Indians, Diego Ramon, captain of the Presidio de San Juan Bautista, wrote to Father Hidalgo, noting that one of the Hasinai was “he who came to see Your Reverence in past years.”³⁷ Robert Weddle notes that some sources have indicated, although without clear documentation, that while at San Juan Bautista, Hidalgo made periodic journeys, alone and without official permission, to the territory of the Hasinai.³⁸ Regardless of whether this is true, he certainly knew of the French activity in Louisiana and their forays into eastern Texas to trade with the Hasinai and their neighbors.

On January 17, 1711,³⁹ Hidalgo wrote to the French governor of Louisiana, Lamothe Cadillac, to inquire about the well being of the Hasinai and ask for his cooperation in reestablishing a Spanish mission for the Indians. He sent three copies of the letter by separate routes to Louisiana.⁴⁰ One of the copies reached the French governor more than two years later, on May 2, 1713.⁴¹ It was at just this time that Cadillac was attempting to establish a commercial enterprise in Louisiana, with the primary goals of finding sources of minerals to mine, increasing the Indian trade, and establishing a regular commerce with the Spanish colonial settlements. Hidalgo’s letter created the possibility of bringing about the third of these goals by bringing the Spanish closer to the colonial frontier.⁴²

Almost immediately an expedition composed of twenty-four Canadian soldiers was dispatched from Mobile late in September 1713 under the command of St. Denis. The expedition was to seek out Father Hidalgo,⁴³ and purchase cattle and horses for the French colony.⁴⁴ Certainly, an additional purpose was to make the Spanish authorities aware of the French presence at the frontier of Texas and Louisiana to oblige the Spaniards to establish a presence on that frontier as well. It was hoped that such a presence would open

up a line of communication and, more importantly, of commerce, between the two colonies.

Setting out from Mobile, St. Denis travelled by the Mississippi and Red rivers to the village of the Natchitoches Indians, who he described as "people with whom the French have traded for fourteen years in this place." From there he and his party travelled overland about forty leagues to the territory of the Hasinai. There he found the eleven villages of the Hasinai confederacy united under their leader, the Xinesi (chief or high priest) Bernardino, "who all obey."⁴⁵ This was the same Bernardino the Spaniards had known two decades earlier as the nephew of the Caddi (village chief) of the Hasinai village of Nabedachi, and whose hostility toward the Spaniards had been described by the Yojuan chief in 1709. From the Hasinai, St. Denis sent twenty-one of the soldiers back to Mobile. After a stay of undetermined length among the Hasinai, St. Denis, his three remaining soldiers, and a party of twenty-five Indians led by Bernardino set out for the Presidio de San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande. Along the way the group was attacked "by some two hundred thieving Indians from the coast," probably Karankawa. After a six-hour battle, in which at least twelve of the enemy group were killed, peace was made, and twenty-one of the Hasinai returned to their villages.⁴⁶ St. Denis and his party finally arrived at the Spanish presidio on July 19, 1714.⁴⁷

St. Denis presented himself to the commander of the Presidio de San Juan Bautista, Diego Ramon, showing his passport and explaining that he wished to purchase supplies for the French settlements in Louisiana.⁴⁸ He also asked for Father Hidalgo, who had some time earlier returned to his *Colegio* at Queretaro. St. Denis and his three companions were arrested by Ramon and confined to the commander's own household. After an "imprisonment" of several months, during which St. Denis lived comfortably, charmed and befriended the entire Ramon household, and became engaged to Captain Diego Ramon's granddaughter, he was sent to Mexico City. There he appeared several times before the Viceroy, the Duke of Linares, to account for his illegal entrance into Spanish territory and describe the route that he had taken.⁴⁹ St. Denis' official statement regarding his journey was recorded on June 22, 1715.

The report that St. Denis gave the Spaniards concerning his voyage was calculated to stimulate their interest in returning to the land of the Hasinai. Noting the cultivated fields and vast herds of the Hasinai, he also described the fertility of the land, on which, he said, are found "fruits of every kind, very rich and most noble, with the most prolific vines that he has seen, of distinct qualities and colors, and in such quantity that the countryside is covered with bunches of grapes which are of the size of a ball of 28 or 30 pounds each, as also such vast fields, covered with hemp so fine that it could provide the rigging for all the ships of Europe."⁵⁰ His report on the inhabitants of this land was no less positive. Many of the Hasinai, including Bernardino, he reported, had maintained the Catholic faith even without priests in residence among them. Furthermore, the Indians had asked St. Denis to find Father Hidalgo, "who had lived among them with singular knowledge of their customs and language," and persuade him to return to East Texas. The Hasinai, said St. Denis, "have always retained a firm veneration for the Spanish, which they express even unto death, with the hope of their restitution."⁵¹

St. Denis' testimony contained numerous exaggerations and even some outright falsehoods. His description of the land and its resources seems to have been designed to remind the Spaniards of the most positive features of the environment while judiciously omitting more negative features and conditions, such as the dense forest, the unpredictable rainfall, and the periodic flooding of the rivers that had caused them difficulty during their first occupation. St. Denis' report was particularly deceptive concerning the supposed devotion of the Hasinai to the Catholic faith. There is no evidence that any of the Indians had remained practicing Catholics or even maintained an interest in the religion after the departure of the Franciscans in 1693. There is little reason to believe that any conversions had been made, even during the first Spanish occupation, except perhaps a few among those who were dying of disease.⁵² According to some accounts, Father Hidalgo had won some genuine converts among the Hasinai, who had begged him not to abandon them in 1693.⁵³ The devotion of these converts presumably accounted for Hidalgo's long-time dedication to bringing about the return of the Franciscans to eastern Texas. However, this scenario probably is based more on romantic fantasy than genuine documentation. Whatever conversions had been achieved were few and far between. Nor would the priests have any greater success in converting the Hasinai after 1716 when they returned to eastern Texas.

Nevertheless, St. Denis' statement had its intended effect. The following month, the Spanish *Fiscal* directed the Viceroy to order the establishment of a mission among the Hasinai, and soon the number of missions to be established was increased to four.⁵⁴ St. Denis was released from prison, appointed to guide the expedition to establish these missions, and was given a salary. The reasons for this decision to reoccupy Texas were numerous. The Spanish authorities certainly had been aware of French activity in the area for some years, having no doubt been reminded by Fathers Hidalgo and Salazar time and again, but it apparently took the appearance of St. Denis to shake them out of their complacency and to make them aware of the "pernicious consequences" that the Spanish could suffer from the French forays into their domain.⁵⁵ The continuous lobbying of the priests must have had some effect, as well as did the glowingly positive report of St. Denis on the land and on the desires of the Indians to once again receive missionaries. But the other major figures in this episode, the Hasinai Indians themselves, played a part, as well. What were their goals during this period, and what were their strategies in bringing them about?

The Hasinai and the reoccupation of East Texas

Unfortunately, there are only two accounts of first-hand encounters with the Hasinai that pertain to this period: the documents detailing Salazar's expedition to Mexico City, on which he was accompanied by two Hasinai Indians; and St. Denis' report, which contains a few sentences designed primarily to spark the interest of the Spaniards in a reoccupation of eastern Texas. So it is necessary, to an even greater degree than for other periods, to infer what may have been the motives and strategies of the Hasinai in dealing with Europeans in their land. There are a number of points that seem relevant to this endeavor.

First, although, as noted, St. Denis' report of the Catholic zeal of the Hasinai was an obviously calculated deception, the Hasinai nevertheless were

interested in having the Spanish return to their territory. The reason was not their desire for religious instruction or the salvation of their souls, but rather an opportunity to benefit from the increase in trade that would result from the presence of both Spaniards and Frenchmen in their vicinity. Thus, the Hasinai were probably just as eager to see San Denis' mission succeed as was St. Denis himself. The last segment of St. Denis' journey, from the Hasinai to the Rio Grande, may have been undertaken partly at the urging of Bernardino. St. Denis indicates, as quoted in a letter written to Father Hidalgo by Diego Ramon, that he initially had intended to contact Hidalgo by letter from the territory of the Hasinai. The Hasinai individual who at first had agreed to carry the letter then made an excuse not to do so.⁵⁶ As St. Denis noted in another letter, this one written by himself to Hidalgo, "it is Bernardo [Bernardino], a Hasinai, who wanted to guide us here, with three others of his countrymen." Apparently at Bernardino's urging, St. Denis and his small party "departed from his land without supplies ... living on the road on whatever we could hunt."⁵⁷

Bernardino was instrumental in bringing about St. Denis' contact with the Spanish, or at least in encouraging the French party in making their journey to the Rio Grande. As the most powerful political leader among the Hasinai, it would have been among Bernardino's duties and prerogatives to mediate between the Hasinai and the French and Spanish outsiders and to arrange trading relationships with those outsiders. The arrangement of such relationships by a political leader also would have been a means of reinforcing and consolidating his power. Bernardino no doubt hoped that his relationship with St. Denis would give him access to an exclusive source of European goods, a source that would allow him to strengthen his network of allies and sources among the Hasinai and with surrounding tribes.

While Bernardino certainly remembered the disastrous outcome of the first Spanish occupation of his territory and the anger with which he and his uncle had evicted the Spaniards, it should not be considered unusual that he would welcome them back. In the social world of the Southeast and the Southern Plains during this period, friendships, alliances, and trade relationships constantly shifted, and an enemy one year might be an ally the next. In this unstable social climate, the willingness of the Hasinai to overlook past conflicts with other groups probably accounted in part for the large network of alliances and exchange partnerships they enjoyed. If an amicable relationship with the Spaniards could bring material or political benefits to the Hasinai, past grievances would be forgotten readily.

There was one group with whom there was little or no chance of arranging an alliance or a regular trading relationship. The Apaches were still mortal and irrevocable enemies of the Hasinai and all of their neighbors. In 1716, Captain Domingo Ramon, the son of Diego Ramon, who led the military arm of the party that reestablished the missions among the Hasinai, reported that he was unable to carry out a planned exploration of the surrounding territory because of the presence of Apaches and Yojuanes, who were enemies of the Hasinai.⁵⁸ And the following year, Don Juan de Oliven Rebolledo proposed the building of a presidio on the bank of the Red River to guard "against the invasions of the Apaches, who are enemies of one and all."⁵⁹

It was the hostility of the Apaches that had made the development of an

amicable relationship with the French of Louisiana all the more important to the Hasinai. This is true because the French were the source of a commodity, previously unavailable to the Hasinai, that gave them a distinct advantage over their enemies. Beginning around 1700 the French colonists of Louisiana began to bring firearms to the Hasinai and their neighbors. At first guns were obtained in such small numbers that they were almost certainly a prestige item, available only to individuals who held high social status and political authority. In addition to their utilitarian value, firearms would be displayed by elites as symbols of their status and distributed selectively to allies and supporters.

In 1700, one of the two Hasinai who accompanied Father Salazar to Mexico City reported that the Frenchmen who had come to the province of the Hasinai had met the "Captain of the Nazones [Nasoni]," and had presented to him two rifles in exchange for two horses.⁶⁰ Sixteen years later, the Spaniards found firearms among the Hasinai in slightly greater numbers that had been noted in 1700. Domingo Ramon reported in a letter written shortly after the Spanish reoccupation of East Texas in 1716, "I have found that the Tejas have eighteen or twenty long rifles, all French," in addition to beads, knives, and clothing that the French had traded to them for livestock.⁶¹ At this time, firearms still appear to be primarily a prestige item. In his diary of the 1716 expedition, Domingo Ramon described a Hasinai welcoming procession in which the Indians marched in three columns, the middle of which included "the Captains, who carried shotguns as they approached."⁶²

The introduction of guns would give the Hasinai and their allies the advantage of being better armed than their enemies. The Apaches did not have a reliable source to obtain firearms in trade, and thus were unable to acquire guns and ammunition in sufficient numbers to be useful in warfare.⁶³ Access to a reliable source of guns, ammunition, and other trade goods would enable elites among the Hasinai, such as Bernardino, to attract allies and supporters hoping to take advantage of those goods. St. Denis must have made clear to Bernardino and the other Hasinai leaders that if the Spaniards were to settle among them, more Frenchmen would settle nearby, and the flow of trade goods, including the valuable firearms, would increase. The request for missionaries made by the two Hasinai Indians who took part in the Salazar expedition almost fifteen years earlier suggests that Bernardino may have been aware of this implication for quite some time before St. Denis' journey of 1715.

A further clue as to what the Hasinai expected from their relationship with the French may be found in the speech given by a chief of the Kadohadacho on the occasion of the establishment of a French post in their territory of the Red River.⁶⁴ The Kadohadacho had suffered heavy losses in war, and the chief, who was described as "a venerated old man and the most eloquent talker of his nation," told his people that

the time had come to change their tears into happiness, even though it was true that most their comrades had been killed or made slaves by their adversaries, and that they were no longer numerous. The arrival of the Canouches [the name given to the French] would prevent their total destruction; and their enemies, becoming their allies, would no longer make war upon them.

The Hasinai do not seem to have suffered as heavily in war as the Red

River Caddo. The Kadohadacho were more exposed than the Hasinai to attack by parties of Osage and Chickasaw from the north and east, who went well-armed with French and English guns. However, the Hasinai had certainly taken some losses in warfare over the years, and the expectation of protection from enemies by their relationship with Europeans must have been much the same. Earlier experiences had taught the Hasinai not to expect the Spaniards to come to their aid in warfare, and they knew of the Spanish policy not to give or trade firearms to the Indians. But now the French, and their guns, presented a new advantage over their enemies, as well as a source of political power for Hasinai leaders. If a Spanish occupation of their territory would help to bring more French goods to them, then the Hasinai would not hesitate to welcome Spaniards back into their territory.

NOTES

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²Letter of Fray Damian Massanet to Don Carlos de Sigüenza, 1690, in *Spanish Exploration in the Southwest, 1542-1706*, edited by Herbert E. Bolton (reprint; New York, 1963), pp. 168, 183.

³Carta e informe del padre Damian Mazanet al virrey Conde de Balve sobre la critica situacion de las misiones de Texas, in *Primeras Exploraciones y Poblamiento de Texas (1686-1694)*, edited by Lino Gomez Canedo (Monterrey, 1968), pp. 313-314.

⁴Carlos E. Castaneda, "Silent Years in Texas History," *Preliminary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society* 2 (8) (1934), p. 6.

⁵J. Charles Kelley, "Juan Sabeata and Diffusion in Aboriginal Texas," *American Anthropologist* 57 (1955), pp. 981-995.

⁶Vito Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas en la Epoca Colonial* (Mexico, 1938), p. 426.

⁷Diario del viaje del capital Gregorio de Salinas Varona, en su expedicion de socorro al este de Texas (July 17, 1693), in *Primeras Exploraciones*, p. 306.

⁸Nancy P. Hickerson, *The Jumanos: Hunters and Traders of the South Plains* (Austin, 1994), pp. 204-205.

⁹Herbert E. Bolton, "The Jumano Indians in Texas, 1650-1771," *Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* 15 (1911), p. 80.

¹⁰Declaration of Don Luis de St. Denis and Don Medar, natives of France, June 22, 1715. University of Texas at Austin, Center for American History (UTCAH). *Archivo de la Nacion de Mexico* (AGN), Box 2Q176.

¹¹Domingo Ramon, July 22, 1716. UTCAH. *Archivo General de las Indias* (AGI), Box 2Q146.

¹²Robert S. Weddle, *San Juan Bautista: Gateway to Spanish Texas* (Austin, 1968), p. 20.

¹³Donald E. Chipman, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin, 1992), pp. 104-110; Carlos E. Castaneda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936* (7 volumes; reprint, New York, 1976), 2, pp. 26-28; Weddle, *San Juan Bautista*, pp. 97-100.

¹⁴Weddle, *San Juan Bautista*, p. 98.

¹⁵Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas*, pp. 426-427.

¹⁶Declaration of St. Denis, 1715. St. Denis briefly mentioned this expedition in his statement, but no more detailed account or mention has been found.

¹⁷Fray Diego de San Buenaventura y Salazar, July 16, 1700. UTCAH. AGM, Box 2Q203.

¹⁸Declarations of the Tejas Indians, July 20, 1700. UTCAH. AGM, Box 2Q203.

¹⁹Declarations of the Tejas Indians. The Governor of the Tejas referred to was probably Bernardino, the nephew of the old Caddi of the Nabadache who had evicted the Spaniards six years earlier.

- ²⁰Report of the Junta. UTCAH. GM, Box 2Q203.
- ²¹Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas*, p. 428.
- ²²Declaration of St. Denis. 1715.
- ²³Declaration of St. Denis, 1715; Don Juan de Rebolledo, November 4, 1716. UTCAH. AGI, Box 2Q146.
- ²⁴Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, pp. 107-108; Weddle, *San Juan Bautista*, pp. 92-94.
- ²⁵Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, p. 110.
- ²⁶Weddle, *San Juan Bautista*, pp. 92-93
- ²⁷Fray Antonio de San Buenaventura y Olivares and Fray Isidro Felix de Espinosa, Diary of the Olivares Expedition, 1709. UTCAH. AGI, Box 2Q146.
- ²⁸Olivares and Espinosa Diary.
- ²⁹Olivares and Espinosa Diary.
- ³⁰Castaneda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, 2, p. 23; Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, p. 110.
- ³¹The Yojuanes have been identified as a Tonkawan group (Weddle, *San Juan Bautista*, p. 93), and as Wichitas (Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, pp. 268, 279).
- ³²Olivares and Espinosa Diary.
- ³³Domingo Ramon, July 22, 1716.
- ³⁴Fray Isidro Felix de Espinosa. *Cronica de los Colegios de Propaganda Fide de la Nueva Espana*, edited by Lino Gomez Canedo (Washington, D.C., 1964), p. 697.
- ³⁵Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, pp. 110-116; Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas*, pp. 426-441.
- ³⁶Chipman, *Spanish Texas*, p. 110.
- ³⁷Captain Diego Ramon, to Father Francisco Hidalgo, July 22, 1714. UTCAH. Spanish Material from Various Sources, Box 2Q235.
- ³⁸Weddle, *San Juan Bautista*, p. 98.
- ³⁹Don Luis de St. Denis, to Fr. Francisco Hidalgo, July 28, 1714. UTCAH. SMVS, Box 2Q235.
- ⁴⁰Castaneda. *Our Catholic Heritage*, 2, p. 27.
- ⁴¹Don Luis de San Denis, to Fr. Francisco Hidalgo, July 20, 1714. UTCAH. SMVS, Box 2Q235.
- ⁴²Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas*, p. 428.
- ⁴³Declaration of San Denis, 1715.
- ⁴⁴Don Juan de Oliven Rebolledo, November 4, 1716. UTCAH. AGI, Box 2Q146.
- ⁴⁵Declaration of St. Denis, 1715. It should be noted that "Bernardino" was clearly not the Caddo name of this chief. He was given this nickname by the Spaniards on the De Leon and Massanet expedition in 1690. However, he seems to have adopted this name as his own, or at least used it when dealing with Europeans.
- ⁴⁶Declaration of St. Denis, 1715.
- ⁴⁷Father Alonso Gonzales, letter to Father Francisco Hidalgo, July 21, 1714. Archivo del Colegio de la Santa Cruz de Queretero, K Leg. 1, no. 7. Photocopy in Catholic Archives of Texas, 2.4.11.
- ⁴⁸Castaneda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, 2, p. 31.
- ⁴⁹Alessio Robles, *Coahuila y Texas*, p. 431.
- ⁵⁰Declaration of St. Denis, 1715.
- ⁵¹Declaration of St. Denis, 1715.
- ⁵²Father Francisco Hidalgo to Father Isidro Felix de Espinosa, November 20, 1710. UTCAH. SMVS. Box 2Q235.
- ⁵³Weddle, *San Juan Bautista*, p. 97.
- ⁵⁴Castaneda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, 2, pp. 35-38.
- ⁵⁵Espinosa, *Cronica*, p. 684.
- ⁵⁶Diego Ramon to Hidalgo, July 22, 1714.
- ⁵⁷St. Denis to Hidalgo, July 28, 1714.

⁵⁸Domingo Ramon, July 22, 1716.

⁵⁹Don Juan de Olivan Rebolledo, December 24, 1717. Bexar Archives microfilm, reel 8. Southwest Collection, Texas Tech University.

⁶⁰Declarations of the Tejas Indians, July 20, 1700. Nasoni was one of the villages that comprised the Hasinai Confederacy.

⁶¹Captain Don Domingo Ramon's Diary of His Expedition into Texas in 1716, edited by Reverend Paul J. Folk, *Preliminary Studies of the Texas Catholic Historical Society* 2 (5) (1933), p. 20.

⁶²W.W. Newcomb, Jr., *The Indians of Texas: From Prehistoric to Modern Times* (Austin, 1961), p. 108.

⁶³Jean-Baptiste Benard de La Harpe, The Historical Journal of the Establishment of the French in Louisiana (Lafayette, 1971), p. 132. The Kadohadacho were a Caddoan confederacy that was located on the Red River, and was culturally similar to the Hasinai.