

## DID THE 1540 CORONADO EXPEDITION IN SEARCH OF CÍBOLA ENCOUNTER JAGUARS IN PRESENT DAY ARIZONA AND NEW MEXICO?

### Abstract

*The widely held belief that the men on the 1540 expedition led by Francisco Vásquez de Coronado witnessed jaguars near the present day Zuni pueblos in northern Arizona and New Mexico is a myth. The myth originated in mistranslations of two documents including the August 3, 1540 letter from Vásquez de Coronado to Viceroy Diego de Mendoza and the circa 1563 narrative of the expedition written by Pedro de Castañeda, a horseman/soldier on the expedition. Both original documents are lost to history. Evidence shows that certain translators may have added their own embellishments or even outright fabrications to surviving copies of these documents as early as the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Confusion as to which words are nouns or adjectives stems from the dearth of punctuation in the earliest known transcription of Pedro de Castañeda's original manuscript. A proverbial "Rosetta stone" is found in two books written by Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo. Oviedo's Sumario and Book XII describe the animals specifically noted by Pedro de Castañeda, providing strong evidence that he made no mention of jaguars.*

Many scientific<sup>1</sup> and government<sup>2</sup> papers claim that the men on Francisco Vasquez de Coronado's 1540 journey through Arizona and New Mexico saw jaguars near the present day Zuni pueblos. For example, Robinson et al. (2006), cited in the Federal Register by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as purportedly representing "the best available science"<sup>3</sup> cites George Parker Winship's 1900 translation of Pedro de Castañeda's manuscript:

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<sup>1</sup> One of the most frequently cited is Seton, Ernest Thompson. 1929. *Lives Of Game Animals: An account of those land animals in America, north of the Mexican border, which are considered "game", either because they have held the attention of sportsmen, or received the protection of law.* Volume 1. Part 1. Doubleday, Doran, and Company, Garden City, New York, USA.

<sup>2</sup> Example: *Canyons and Caves newsletter from the Resource Management Offices Carlsbad Caverns National Park National Park Service, 1999*  
<http://www.nps.gov/cave/naturescience/upload/Canyons-Caves-Issue-12.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> 77 Federal Register No. 161, August 20, 2012. 50 CFR Part 17 Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Designation of Critical Habitat for Jaguar; Proposed Rule. P. 50211

The historic record of jaguars in New Mexico begins with the first written account of what is today the United States. Pedro de Castañeda, who recorded the 1540-1542 expedition of conquistador Francisco Vasquez de Coronado, of which he was a part, mentions that “Gray lions and leopards were seen” somewhere in the vicinity of the upper Gila River.<sup>4</sup>

Popular and seemingly intellectual periodicals likewise perpetuate this claim to the point it is widely accepted as undisputable fact, although without the validation of scientific scrutiny. Those sources similarly rely on and cite George Parker Winship’s 1896 and 1900 transcriptions and translations of two documents.

The first document in question is Francisco Vásquez de Coronado’s August 3, 1540 letter written at the village of Hawikuh to the Viceroy of New Spain and Coronado’s co-financier of the expedition, Don Antonio de Mendoza. The second document is Pedro de Castañeda’s later narrative of the expedition. As Viceroy of Nuevo Galicia, Mendoza’s rank was second only to King Carlos V. Hawikuh was in the province of Cíbola and near the present day Zuni pueblos and the Arizona boundary of northern New Mexico.

In the year 1540 Coronado was the governor of Nuevo Galicia, which encompassed the modern day Mexican states of Sinaloa, Jalisco, and Nayarit. These states were then, as now, core breeding habitat for jaguars. During the 1960s, Nayarit produced most of the Boone and Crockett “trophy book” jaguars taken from Mexico. Without doubt, Coronado and his men, including the 1,500 Nuevo Galician Indians who accompanied them on the journey, had no difficulty in correctly identifying jaguars.

In about 1563, some 21 years after the expedition returned, Pedro de Castañeda de Nájera wrote his own narrative of the expedition. Various translations of this document likewise indicate the trekkers saw jaguars north of Mexico.

Neither the Coronado letter nor Pedro de Castañeda’s narrative, however, is verifiable as authentic.

Both originals went missing centuries ago. In a nutshell, this means that neither record provides verifiable, reliable scientific evidence of 16<sup>th</sup> century jaguar presence in Arizona or New Mexico. That said, with two second-hand accounts purportedly originating from members of the trek at least superficially appearing to confirm each other’s possible sightings of jaguars north of Mexico, and the fact that federal regulations are now proposed that rely on unfounded assumptions regarding the historic presence of jaguars in the southwestern United States, the matter merits a closer look at the history of each document and the fidelity of its transcriptions and translations.

In 1540, Giovanni Battista Ramusio (1485-1557) was the Secretary of the Venetian Senate. He also published travel books to thrill Europeans and earn a profit thereby. Although not an explorer himself, he was well connected internationally with all the famous explorers of his day. In 1556 he published the third of a three-volume set of narratives of the most notable 15<sup>th</sup> century overseas explorations.

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<sup>4</sup> Robinson, M., Bradley, C. and Boyd, J.; Potential Habitat for Jaguars in New Mexico. Arizona Game and Fish Department. 2006

Ramusio published the earliest surviving version of Francisco Vasqu ez de Coronado’s August 3, 1540 letter to Viceroy Antonio de Mendoza in *Terzo Volume delle navigationi et viaggi*,<sup>56</sup> in Venice. George Parker Winship translated Ramusio’s translation into English, creating a third-hand account of the expedition.

Ramusio’s Italian translation of the letter indicates with the words, “tigre”(tigers) and “pardi,” (leopards) that the explorers saw jaguars near C bola, as stated (emphasis added):

...Vi sono di molti animali, orsi, **tigri**, Leoni, & porciSpin(os)i, & certi castrati della grandezza d’un cavallo, con corni molto grandi & code piccole. . .

*Vi sono cacciagioni di C rvi, **Pardi**, Cavrioli molto grandi: ...*<sup>7</sup>

*Winship’s* 1896 English translation of Ramusio’s version of the letter appears faithful to Ramusio’s work:

They have many animals–bears, **tigers, lions**, porcupines, and some sheep as big as a horse, with very large horns and little tails . . . For game they have deer, **leopards**, and very large deer: . .

Richard Hakluyt’s 1582 English version translates the last reference to possible jaguars, “pardi,” as ounces, cats that are much smaller than jaguars.<sup>8</sup>

Here are many sorts of beasts, as Beares, **Tigers, Lions**, Porkespicks, and certaine Sheep as bigge as an horse, with very great hornes and little tailes. . . There is game of Deere, **Ounces**, and very great Stagges: [sic]

The likely errors in Ramusio’s translation are readily apparent. The translation uses two separate words to refer to jaguars. Further, it mentions deer twice in one sentence. Coronado originally wrote the letter fully knowing it may reach the eyes or ears of the most powerful monarchs in known history. He directly addressed it to the most powerful

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<sup>5</sup> Ramusio, Giovanni Battista. *Terzo volume delle navigationi et viaggi*, 1556, fols. 359v–363r as republished by Flint, Richard and Shirley (2012-04-16). *Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects* p. 268. University of New Mexico Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.brynmawr.edu/library/exhibits/BooksPrinters/secular.html - ramus>

<sup>7</sup> Ramusio, Giovanni Battista. *Terzo volume delle navigationi et viaggi*, 1556, fols. 359v–363r as republished by Flint, Richard and Shirley (2012-04-16). *Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects* p. 268. University of New Mexico Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>8</sup> Hakluyt, Richard. *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, Volume XIV (of 16). *America, Part III*. Ed. Edmund Goldsmid. Edinburgh. 1890 The Project Gutenberg eBook. September 19, 2012 [eBook #40803]. <http://www.gutenberg.org/files/40803/40803-h/40803-h.htm#a269>

authority in a land plagued by treachery and bloodshed between rival Spanish governors. Coronado as an explorer was in fierce competition for royal license<sup>9</sup> with rival Spanish explorers.<sup>10</sup> This unlikely choice of words and sloppy, repetitious sentence structure, therefore, provide evidence that Ramusio's translation is probably unfaithful to the original letter.

In 1940, through the University of New Mexico press, George Hammond and Agapito Rey published a third English translation of both Coronado's August 3, 1540 letter and Pedro de Castañeda's narrative. Donnelly and Sons chose this translation for their 2002 publication of Castañeda's narrative, including editor John Miller Morris's introductory explanation that George Winship had embellished his translations to boost market appeal. He describes Winship's translation as,

“wonderfully elegant and refined, but therein lies the dilemma. In its added rhetorical polish and Victorian gloss, it is much less faithful to the original Spanish text (than the Hammond and Rey translation.)” American scholars often quote from the 1940 Hammond and Rey English translation because of its greater textual fidelity.”<sup>11</sup>

Many authoritative historians consider Ramusio's translations unreliable. Among them are Dr. Richard and Shirley Flint.

Richard and Shirley Flint have produced considerable research and recently discovered, translated and published many previously forgotten original documents from the expedition. They have published numerous recent books about these findings. The Flints question Ramusio's honesty. For example, they analyze the authenticity of the item that immediately precedes Vázquez de Coronado's March 8, 1539 letter to the viceroy in Ramusio's *Terzo* volume as follows:

It purports to be the synopsis of another letter written by Vázquez de Coronado on the same day, March 8, but to the viceroy's secretary rather than to the viceroy himself. . . The document appears to be an outright fabrication, but whether Ramusio was victim or perpetrator remains a mystery. . .

In examining another document Ramusio translated, the Flints again caution readers not to assume any of Ramusio's translations faithfully represent original documents:

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<sup>9</sup> de Oviedo, Gonzalo Fernández, *Writing from the Edge of the World, The Memoirs of Darien, 1514-1527*. University of Alabama Press. Tuscaloosa, USA. Translated by G.F. Dille. p.5 of Introduction. Dille states in the introduction, “all expeditions that set out for the Indies had to be licensed by the crown.”

<sup>10</sup> de Oviedo, Gonzalo Fernández, *Writing from the Edge of the World, The Memoirs of Darien, 1514-1527*. University of Alabama Press. Tuscaloosa, USA. Translated by G.F. Dille.

<sup>11</sup> John Miller Morris, editor, *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition/Relación de la Jornada de Cibola*. 2002. Donnelly & Sons Co. The Lakeside Press, p.lxxxiii

Thus as is evident from Ramusio's unannounced and gratuitous embellishment of the original text of fray Marcos's relación, the fidelity of the translations he published must always remain in doubt in cases such as this one, in which the original-language text is no longer available for comparison...

The mention of "leopards" in Ramusio's writing, whether real, fabricated or merely a translational error, surely could not have hurt sales as is evident from the many popular and profitable, although not necessarily accurate publications about jaguars found on bookstore shelves today.

Our first hint that Ramusio's translation might not be entirely faithful to the original manuscript is in the use of two separate words—tigers and leopards—both of which may or may not refer to jaguars. Remember that Coronado knew he was writing to the third most powerful human on the planet, and that the Catholic monarchs would likely also read his letter. Using two different words to describe one species of cat, specimens of which both Cortez and Diego Columbus had already transported to Spain, would harm Coronado's credibility. This point will be explored further later.

A second passage that raises suspicion is the statement, "for game they have deer, leopards, and very large deer." The repetition and discontinuity of mentioning deer, then switching the train of thought to leopards and then back to deer almost makes it sound as if Coronado had developed early dementia. Ramusio's translation therefore is suspect on its face.

Flint and Flint wisely advise their readers that with Ramusio's "dubious reputation for fidelity to sources," none of Ramusio's work is trustworthy without corroboration from other documents. Accordingly this applies to his translation of Coronado's letter of August 3, 1540.<sup>12</sup>

In the early 1560s, likely 1563, a veteran of the expedition, Pedro de Castañeda penned the second document which we can compare against Coronado's August 3, 1540 letter for evidence of jaguars: *Relación de la Jornada de Cibola*.<sup>13</sup>

The original manuscript of Pedro de Castañeda's narrative is in fact lost, but in 1596 a well-educated scribe by the name of Bartolomé Niño Velázquez made a copy in its original Spanish language at Seville. This document, however, remained obscure until 1838 The Spanish transcription changed hands several times until James Lennox donated it to the New York Public Library, which conserves it to this day, and where George Parker Winship accessed it.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Flint, Richard and Shirley. (2012-04-16). Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: "They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects" (p. 253). University of New Mexico Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>13</sup> Donnelly, p. lxiii

<sup>14</sup> Flint, Richard and Shirley. (2012-04-16). Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: "They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects" Document 28 (pp. 382-383). University of New Mexico Press. Kindle Edition

With such differences as will be shown between four different translations it becomes necessary to compare each to the original Spanish text. That text is supplied herein as a transcription by Hammond and Rey.<sup>15</sup> The only two possible references to jaguars in the manuscript are found early in chapter II of the Second Part of Castañeda's narrative (emphasis added on the words in question):

En los ríos de este depoblado hay barbos y picones como en España **hay leones pardos que se vieron** desde el principio del despoblado siempre se va subiendo la tierra hasta llegar a Cíbola que son ochenta leguas la via del norte y hasta llegar allí desde Culiacán se había caminado llevando el norte sobre el ojo izquierdo.<sup>16</sup>

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Esta tierra es un valle entre sierras a manera de peñones a hoyos no crece el maíz alto de las mazorcas deste el pie tres y cuatro cada caña gruesas y grandes de a ochocientos granos cosa no vista en estas partes **hay en esta provincia osos en gran cantidad leones gatos cervales y nutrias** hay muy finas tartan turquesas aunque no en la cantidad que decían rocogen y entregan piñones...<sup>17</sup>

Three translations presented below in Table 1 differ significantly from one another. This is no surprise considering the original manuscript wants for punctuation. Readers must guess where thoughts begin and end, and whether some words are nouns or adjectives.

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<sup>15</sup> Donnelly, pp. 1-401

<sup>16</sup> de Castañeda, Pedro, *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition/Relación de la Jornada de Cíbola*. Transcribed by George Parker Winship. 2002. Donnelly & Sons Co. The Lakeside Press, p. 262

<sup>17</sup> de Castañeda, Pedro, *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition/Relación de la Jornada de Cíbola*. Transcribed by George Parker Winship. 2002. Donnelly & Sons Co. The Lakeside Press, p. 263

**Table 1. Summary of various English translations of the original Spanish text**

Author or Translator	Phrase I	Phrase II	Author's clarifying message in footnotes
Pedro de Castañeda	"leones pardos" <sup>18</sup>	"leones gatos cervales" <sup>19</sup>	
Winship, George P. <sup>20</sup>	"grey lions and leopards"*	"lions, wild-cats, deer"	*Evidently the mountain lion and wildcat
Hammond, G. and Rey, A.	"grey lions" <sup>21</sup>	"lions, wildcats" <sup>22</sup>	
Flint, Richard & Shirley <sup>23</sup>	"leopards [jaguars]"*	"lions and short-tailed cats"	*The Flints offer reasons they interpret jaguars but offer Strout's contrasting opinion that the text refers to cougars

<sup>18</sup> de Castañeda, Pedro, *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition/Relación de la Jornada de Cibola*. Transcribed by George Parker Winship. 2002. Donnelly & Sons Co. The Lakeside Press, p. 260

<sup>19</sup> de Castañeda, Pedro, *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition/Relación de la Jornada de Cibola*. Transcribed by George Parker Winship. 2002. Donnelly & Sons Co. The Lakeside Press, p. 262

<sup>20</sup> de Coronado, Francisco Vazquez; Charles River Editors; Winship, George Parker (2011-09-10). *The Journey of Coronado* (Kindle Locations 1271-1274). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

<sup>21</sup> de Castañeda, Pedro, *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition/Relación de la Jornada de Cibola*. Transcribed by George Parker Winship. Translated by George Hammond and Agapito Rey. 2002. Donnelly & Sons Co. The Lakeside Press, p. 261

<sup>22</sup> de Castañeda, Pedro, *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition/Relación de la Jornada de Cibola*. Transcribed by George Parker Winship. Translated by George Hammond and Agapito Rey. 2002. Donnelly & Sons Co. The Lakeside Press, p. 263

<sup>23</sup> (2012-04-16). *Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: "They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects"* (p. 417, Kindle location 14570). University of New Mexico Press. Kindle Edition.

Winship's English translation of Castañeda's narrative mentions possible jaguars in two places. The first possible reference is in Part II Chapter 3 where Castañeda describes Chichilticale and the despoblado of Cíbola:

There are barbels and picones, like those of Spain, in the rivers of this wilderness. **Gray lions and leopards were seen.** <sup>Winship footnote 11</sup> The country rises continually from the beginning of the wilderness until Cibola is reached, which is 85 leagues, going north. From Culiacan to the edge of the wilderness the route had kept the north on the left hand. . . <sup>24</sup>

Winship's footnote 11 reads:

These were evidently the mountain lion and the wild cat.

Winship has translated "leones pardos" as, "gray lions and leopards," unintentionally but errantly embellishing the original text. Either "pardos" is an adjective describing the color of lions or it is a noun describing a second species. It cannot serve both functions at once. Therefore, Winship's translation of this phrase is exaggerated and unreliable.

The second possible reference to jaguars in Winship's translation reads,

. . . There are large numbers of **bears** in this province, and **lions, wild-cats, deer, and otter.** . . <sup>25</sup>

Here Winship translates "gatos cervales" as two species—cats and deer. Later translators disagree. They also disagree with Winship on where the cats were seen, due to the confusion caused by missing punctuation in the original manuscript.

In 1940 historian George Hammond and linguist Agapito Rey made a new translation for the Cuarto Centennial of the Coronado Expedition but published it without a side-by-side Spanish transcript for comparison. The translation is not without fault but it is generally considered much more faithful to the original Spanish text than Winship's translation. <sup>26 27</sup>

Hammond and Rey translate the two possible references to jaguars as shown below:

In the rivers of this despoblado there are barbels and picones <sup>Hammond/Rey</sup>  
<sup>footnote 1</sup> as in Spain. **Grey lions were seen from the beginning of the**

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<sup>24</sup> de Coronado, Francisco Vazquez; Charles River Editors; Winship, George Parker (2011-09-10). *The Journey of Coronado* (Kindle Locations 1271-1274). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

<sup>25</sup> de Coronado, Francisco Vazquez; Charles River Editors; Winship, George Parker (2011-09-10). *The Journey of Coronado* (Kindle Locations 1282-1283). Unknown. Kindle Edition.

<sup>26</sup> Donnelly, lxxi-lxxiii.

<sup>27</sup> A full discussion of the merits of various transcriptions and translations of the narrative can be found on pages 5-7 of Richard and Shirley Flint's *Documents of the Coronado Expedition*.



**despoblado.** The land rises gradually until one reaches Cíbola, which is eighty leagues by the northern route. To get there from Culiacán, we marched with the north on our left. . . There are in this province numerous **bears, lions, wildcats, and otters.**

Hammond and Rey interpret “pardos” as an adjective describing the color of the lions seen, and as gray following Winship’s lead, but do not insert “leopards” where they never existed in the original manuscript. They also interpret “cervales” to be an adjective of “gatos,” and not a second noun—deer— as Winship had done.

Hammond and Rey’s footnote 1 reads,

“Dr. Hodge suggests that the barbels and picones were catfish and Gila trout”.

Richard and Shirley Flint also transcribed and translated the narrative based in part on examination and comparison of their predecessors’ efforts. Their version includes their own opinions as annotations in brackets and reads as follows:<sup>28</sup>

In the rivers of this unsettled region there are whiskered and freshwater carp like [those] in Spain. **There are leopards [jaguars],**<sup>Flint and Flint footnote 421</sup> **which were seen from the beginning of the unsettled region.** The land rises **continually** until Cíbola is reached, which is eighty leagues toward the north<sup>Flint and Flint footnote 422</sup>

Here, the Flints interpret “leones pardos” as jaguars, as if Coronado’s companions saw no mountain lions. They then interpret “gatos cervales” as short-tailed cats. They agree with Winship on where the cats were seen.

From Culiacán, until reaching there [Cíbola], [the expedition] had traveled keeping the North Star over the left eye.<sup>Flint and Flint footnote 423</sup> . . . In this provincia there is a great number of **bears, lions, and short-tailed cats.**<sup>Flint and Flint footnote 430</sup>

The Flint and Flint footnote 421 reads,

j Compact Edition of the Oxford English Dictionary, 2 vols. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971)] **Strout, 872, in contrast, says, “I believe the animal referred to is most likely the mountain lion or cougar.”** See also Document 19, note 77.

430 “Lions, and short-tailed cats,” leones gatos cervales. Whether these lions were mountain lions or jaguars or both is unclear. The short-tailed cats were either lynxes or bobcats, both of which had historic ranges in New Mexico. Charles Yocom et al., *Wildlife of the Southern Rocky Mountains*, rev. ed. (Healdsburg, CA: Naturegraph Company, 1969), 81. Lobo cervical, lynx, DRAE [Real Academia Española, Diccionario de la

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<sup>28</sup> (2012-04-16). Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: "They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects" (p. 417). University of New Mexico Press. Kindle Edition.

lengua española, 21st. ed., 2 vols. (Madrid: Editorial Espasa Calpe, 1992)  
], 1267. Gato cerval, DRAE, 1029: “Especie de gato [en España] cuya cola  
llega a 35 centímetros.”<sup>29</sup>

It is useful to compare the translators’ assumptions with Flint and Flint’s footnote 77 of Document 19 (the letter of August 3, 1540 from Coronado to Mendoza), following Coronado’s statement, “*there are many bears, tigers, lions and porcupines.*” Footnote 77 reads,

77 “The reference here is to jaguars and mountain lions. Jaguars have been present in Sonora throughout historic times and still make solitary forays into southern New Mexico and Arizona. The most recent confirmed sighting was in 1996, and nearly 60 have been seen since 1900. While the northern limit of the jaguar’s range probably lay across central Utah, Colorado, and Kansas as recently as 10,000 years ago, that range has shrunk drastically in the last couple of centuries, now being confined to the Sierra Madre Occidental and its foothills in southeastern Sonora. . . . David E. Brown and Carlos A. López González, *Borderland Jaguars: Tigres de la Frontera* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 2001), 6–9, maps 1 and 2, 30–31, 51, 55. More credence is given to our rendering of “leones pardos” as “jaguars” here by the facts that the scientific name for leopard is *Panthera pardus* and that the common name derives from the Greek elements *leonto* and *pardos*. Application of the name for leopard to the jaguar would have been natural for Spaniards of the sixteenth century, the leopard being the great Old World spotted cat and the jaguar being the great New World spotted cat.”<sup>30</sup>

The source the Flints cite makes no claim nor does it imply that the modern forays of jaguars across the U.S. border indicate any possible historical presence in the USA circa 1540. In fact, the cited authors discount many of the records of jaguar sightings more than 100 miles north of Mexico as unreliable. Serious flaws, however, do appear in the cited source, which are analyzed in the literature discrepancy analysis submitted by Dennis Parker for Pima NRC et.al in October 2012, and included herein by reference.

**Furthermore, no paper trail leads to reliable original documentation of any breeding populations of jaguars or lactating females in Arizona.** No naturally occurring female jaguar has ever been documented in New Mexico, although there are confirmed reports of numerous females that were imported and released for sport hunting.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> (2012-04-16). Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: “They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects” (p. 684). University of New Mexico Press. Kindle Edition.

<sup>30</sup> (2012-04-16). Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: “They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects” (pp. 654-655). University of New Mexico Press. Kindle Edition

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

The Flints' Note 77 also ignores the dramatic and widely recognized geological and climatological changes that have occurred in Arizona and New Mexico within the last 10,000 years, and the fact that Pleistocene jaguars (*Panthera onca augusta*) were a different, larger subspecies from modern ones. Even so, remains of such are rare in the United States. Comparing fauna of the current landscape to fauna on the corresponding Pleistocene landscape is an unreliable approach.

The Flints' claim in note 77, that "*Panthera pardus*" is the scientific name for the leopard is true; however, Pedro de Castañeda referred to no other animal by its modern Latin name.

The Flints' next claim, that the Greek roots for "leopard" are "leontos" and "pardos" is dubious. The King James Bible, which was first printed in 1611—just 71 years after the expedition—contains just one mention of leopards in the New Testament, in Revelation 13:2 (the Old Testament in contrast was originally written in Hebrew). Strong's Concordance translates "leopard" back to its original Greek as item 3917 in its included Greek Dictionary of the New Testament:

3917. παρδαλις **pardalis** *pár-dal-is*; fem. of παρδος **pardos** (*a panther*); a leopard:—leopard.

According to this widely accepted and authoritative source, "pardos" in Greek translates to "panther" while "pardalis," the feminine form, translates to "leopard." The term "leones pardos," therefore, appears more likely to indicate generic panthers rather than leopards.<sup>32</sup> This finding also conforms better with the relative abundance of panthers vs. jaguars in the southwest throughout documented history while also concurring to the relative abundance of mountain lions versus jaguars in the fossil record and in the La Brea tarpits.

The Flints' final claim in Note 77 is likewise refutable: "Application of the name for leopard to the jaguar would have been natural for Spaniards of the sixteenth century, the leopard being the great Old World spotted cat and the jaguar being the great New World spotted cat."<sup>33</sup>

To the contrary, it apparently was never "natural" for 16<sup>th</sup> century Spaniards to refer to jaguars as "leopardos," because no early Spanish chronicler of the New World ever did. Quite consistently, they all referred to jaguars as "tigres," as will be discussed later.

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<sup>32</sup> Strong, James. Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible, MacDonald Publishing Co., MacLean, VA 22102. ISBN0-917006-01-1. p. 593; "Greek Dictionary of the New Testament" p.55

<sup>33</sup> (2012-04-16). Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: "They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor Did They Wish to Be His Subjects" (pp. 654-655). University of New Mexico Press. Kindle Edition

The findings of each of the three translations of Castañeda’s manuscript are summarized in Table 2.

Table 2. Comparison of Translations

Original text >	“leones pardos”	“leones gatos cervales”	What happens from the “beginning of the despoblado”
Translator			
Winship	grey lions and leopards	lions, wildcats, deer	The country rises continually
Hammond and Rey	grey lions	lions, wildcats	Grey lions were seen
Flint and Flint	jaguars	lions and short-tailed cats. Foonote: Unclear whether this is wildcats or jaguars	Jaguars were seen

Winship’s interpretation that the land continually rises from the beginning of the despoblado is most likely the correct interpretation. Castañeda indicates that the “despoblado,” the uninhabited region, began at the ruins at Chichilticalle.

Considering the thousands of domestic prey animals including cattle, sheep, chickens and pigs that the explorers brought along on the journey, which may have attracted jaguars at the beginning of the journey, and the prevalence of jaguars then and now near Culiacán, Coronado’s party may have seen jaguars as well as mountain lions, wolves and other large predators for some distance from the beginning of the expedition at Culiacán. Shepherds traveling with the explorers would have killed these predators to protect their two-year food supply.

It would make no sense, therefore, to indicate that the explorers began seeing feline predators only after passing Chichilticalle.

***The Spanish explorers consistently referred to jaguars as “tigres” and nothing else.***

It was, in fact, natural for early New World chroniclers to refer to New World animals by names for similar Old World fauna. For example, the Spaniards referred to jaguars as “tigres” or tigers, alpacas as sheep, peccaries as wild boars, bison as cattle, etc.<sup>34</sup> This may explain the origin of the fact that Arizonans and New Mexicans to this day still refer to wild animals by Old World names: in the borderlands jaguars are most commonly called, “tigres,” javelinas are “pigs,” and cougars are “lions.”

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<sup>34</sup> Miguel de Asua y Campos and R.Roger K. French. *A New World of Animals: Early Modern Europeans on the Creatures of Iberian America*. 2005. Ashgate Publishing, Burlington, Vt. USA and Haunts England. p. 33

References to “leopardos,” however, do not appear at all in original 16<sup>th</sup> century Spanish language manuscripts about the New World. According to Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo y Valdés (Oviedo), Christopher Columbus was the first person to refer to jaguars as “tigres.” “Tigres” is the word used consistently for jaguars by early Spanish chroniclers of New World natural history including Oviedo, Alvar Nuñez, Cieza de Leon, Peter Martyr and Jose de Acosta. Even Garcilaso de la Vega, the son of a Spanish father and a royal Incan mother, who wrote the most authoritative history of the Incan empire, did not distinguish between jaguars and tigers.<sup>35</sup>

Of the aforementioned writers, only the works of Oviedo and Martyr preceded the 1540 Coronado expedition. Both were official chroniclers to the throne. The main difference between the two is that Oviedo traveled to the New World a dozen times, at times living there and observing the flora and fauna first hand, whereas Martyr never visited the New World.

The spot-on consistency of the aforementioned authors in identifying jaguars as “tigres” is a direct result of Oviedo’s personal authority. In order to understand the degree of influence his writings had on both Coronado and Pedro de Castañeda, we must first recognize and understand the magnitude of his personal status.

### ***Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdez directly influenced the chronicles of the Coronado expedition***

Gonzalo Fernandez de Oviedo y Valdez (Oviedo) was the son of a secretary to the royal Spanish Court. Through this connection at a young age he became a page at the court of Alphonso of Aragon, the nephew of Spain's powerful King Ferdinand. Alphonso took a liking to Oviedo and trained him in the military arts, and eventually introduced him to his uncle Ferdinand and Queen Isabella. The royal family also took a liking to Oviedo, and at the age of 13, he was appointed an aid to the Infante Juan, the crown prince of Spain, who was his same age.<sup>36</sup> He retained the position until Juan died unexpectedly six years later.

The year 1492 was pivotal to world history and Spain was its geographical pinion. Driving that pinion were the Catholic monarchs. Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile and León, whose marriage united Spain’s greatest kingdoms, began that year having won a ten-year battle for Granada and having ousted the Islamic Moors who had occupied Andalusia for the previous 500 years. In a ceremony held in an open field outside the walls of Granada—the last Islamic state on the Iberian Peninsula—on January 2, 1492, the chief of the Nasrid dynasty Mohammed XII solemnly handed over the palace keys to the royal Spanish couple and thereby signified Spain’s victorious end to the Reconquista period that had begun 781 years earlier.

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<sup>35</sup> Miguel de Asua y Campos and R.Roger K. French. *A New World of Animals: Early Modern Europeans on the Creatures of Iberian America*. 2005. Ashgate Publishing, Burlington, Vt. USA and Haunts England. p.

<sup>36</sup> Mariners’ Museum. “Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo Y Valdés”  
<http://ageofex.marinersmuseum.org/?type=travelwriter&id=6>

Oviedo was present to witness the pageant, as was Christopher Columbus, who was at court making his third attempt to gain financing for his historic voyage west.<sup>37</sup> In Prince Juan's court, Oviedo shared duties with admiral Columbus's sons Diego and Ferdinand, and cultivated other important connections that served him well in later years.<sup>38</sup>

In 1514 Oviedo sailed to the New World along with the new governor Pedrarias de Dávila and settled on the isthmus of Panamá in the province of Darien. Although Oviedo's original appointment from the monarchy was as a low level notary, his status rapidly rose. As the fleet was preparing to sail, the appointed official inspector of gold smelting for the New World died suddenly in Seville. Through Oviedo's high-level connections he received an assignment as a royal official in the governor's seat.<sup>39</sup> This signifies the high level of trust the monarchy placed in Oviedo, despite the fact that his position was a minor office. After landing in the New World, Oviedo quickly and greatly added to his income through a variety of successful endeavors.

In 1515 Oviedo returned to Spain. He denounced Pedrarias to King Ferdinand shortly before the monarch's death in 1516. Very soon thereafter he persuaded Ferdinand's 16-year old grandson and successor, King Charles I, to replace the corrupt and bloodthirsty Pedrarias Dávila (more formally, Pedro Arias de Ávila) as governor of the New World province of Darién. Pedrarias had been sent to remove the treacherous and tyrannical Vasco Nuñez de Balboa. In 1517 Pedrarias ordered Balboa, who was by that time his son-in-law, beheaded for crimes against the throne. Balboa was rightly suspected of secretly engineering his own predecessor's death. Therefore, when Oviedo set forth on a personal mission to replace Pedrarias Dávila as governor, he did so at great risk to his own life matched only by a high degree of self-confidence in his personal influence with the monarchy.

Oviedo was a perpetual, prolific writer and in addition to his royal duties, authored more than 2,000 pages in more than 50 books over the course of 40 years. As William Eamon described him,

An indefatigable collector and shrewd observer, Oviedo meticulously recorded his impressions of the plants, animals, mines, and indigenous ways that he observed in the New World. He was an ethnologist, a geologist, a climatologist, and natural historian; and he piled up thousands of pages of notes on natural history and Native American culture.

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<sup>37</sup> Eamon, William June 21, 2011 "Two Thousand Hardships, Privations and Dangers:" A Spanish Naturalist in the New World <http://williameamon.com/?p=814>

<sup>38</sup> Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo. *Writing From the Edge of the World, the Memoirs of Darien 1514-1527*. Dille, G.F. translator and author of introduction. University of Alabama Press. Tuscaloosa, AL USA 2006. P. 2 of introduction

<sup>39</sup> de Oviedo, Gonzalo Fernández, Book XXIX Part II Ch. 6, *Writing From the Edge of the World, the Memoirs of Darien 1514-1527*. Dille, G.F. translator and author of introduction. University of Alabama Press. Tuscaloosa, AL USA 2006. p.43

In 1520, King Charles I, later Holy Roman Emperor Carlos V, commissioned Oviedo to write an account of the history of the New World. In 1526 Oviedo published his report under the title, *De la natural historia de las Indias* (Natural History of the Indies), better known as the *Sumario* (Summary). The book was widely read in Spanish as well as in English, French and Italian translations. It was the precursor to his more extensive 1535 publication of *Historia genera y natural de las Indias* (General and Natural History of the New World.)

Once Oviedo had thus set forth standards and references describing the flora and fauna of the New World, the explorers and chroniclers that followed him did not stray from those standards. There are several good reasons why they did not. First, everything that was chronicled by the Spaniards between 1535 and Oviedo's death in 1557, by law, went to Oviedo himself for final documentation. Second, Oviedo's work was already widely known and accepted from the previous decade. Third, there is a credibility issue if one strays from the established precedent in describing and naming animals generally unknown in the Old World. Roger French and Miguel de Asúa describe the key challenge facing New World explorers in credibly documenting the unusual and unknown animals they encountered:<sup>40</sup>

During the sixteenth century a new genre of writing which aimed at embracing the natural as well as the human landscape of the Indies took form. The 'natural and moral histories' sought to create—and control—the total experience of the encounter with America. *The Natural and General History* of Oviedo and *The Natural and Moral History* of Acosta were the first significant Renaissance answers to the disruptive challenge posed by the creatures of the New World upon the late medieval order of representation of nature. The weight of ancient learning made itself felt in the outlook of these literary monuments. In what concerns the kind of inquiry into nature, they embodied, respectively, a Plinian and an Aristotelian programme. But notwithstanding these diverse conceptual frameworks, both Oviedo and Acosta endorsed and proclaimed a common empirical approach in their accounts of individual animals, in the sense that they understood that the warrant for the truth of their statements was autopsia and not tradition. The emphasis on the I-saw-it-myself criterion of truth could have been related to a question faced by travellers to the New World, that is, how to invest their at times fantastic reports with the signs of credibility. Rhetoric devices aimed at convincing the reader that the author was a reliable witness to his own experience were prominent in the early accounts about natural life in the New World.

Most importantly, on August 18, 1532, King Charles wrote to the Consejo de Indias granting Oviedo authority as the official chronicler of the Indies. This meant that at Oviedo's request, all royal officials in the New World were required to submit to him

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<sup>40</sup> de Asúa, Miguel and French, R. Roger K., *A New World of Animals: Early Modern Europeans on the Creatures of Iberian America*, P. 232. Ashgate Publishing 2005, VT USA and Aldershot, Hants, England

detailed reports of the geography, natural phenomena and noteworthy events in their respective territories. The requirement no doubt included every document related to the Coronado expedition, and this fact may explain the very nature of Coronado's detailed letters to Viceroy Mendoza.

As William Eamon described the body of Oviedo's final compendium, which not only drew from Oviedo's eyewitness accounts but also those of others,

The General and Natural History—the first comprehensive descriptive history of the New World—was fully 50 books long in manuscript, although the 1535 printed edition included only the first 19, which were dedicated to Columbus's voyages and the Caribbean islands. The 20<sup>th</sup> book was published in 1557. The remainder—contained in a 2,000-page manuscript known today as the Monserrat manuscript after the monastery in whose care Oviedo left it—was not published until the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

For the above-named reasons, sixteenth century Spanish New World documentation exhibits a clear pattern of highly consistent nomenclature in describing wild animals. Jaguars were documented by no other name than "tigres." The word "leopardos" appears only in translations of the original manuscripts to languages other than the original Spanish.

***Oviedo's Sumario tells us where the commas go in Pedro de Castañeda's account.***

The significance of the 1526 *Sumario* is that in it, Oviedo set down permanent descriptions of New World animals that would consistently bear the names he assigned to them to the present day. He very clearly described the following four types of cats:

- "tigres" (man-eating jaguars)— in great detail—in Chapter XI,
- "gatos cervales" (large ferocious, man-eating cats) in Chapter XIII,
- "leones reales" in chapter XIV, and
- "leones pardos" (cats that are not the same as tigres, and which do not kill people) in chapter XV.

Oviedo's description of jaguars as "tigres" in Chapter XI mentions the fact that Admiral Diego Columbus had already transported one to Toledo Spain, where it was being kept for all to see. There could be no question what animal he was describing, therefore. He very carefully described its spots and their distribution around the body. He also described the cat as a vicious man-eater, with so many natives killed that the magistrates offered a bounty of five gold pieces. The Spaniards bayed the jaguars with hounds and killed them with crossbows.

Therefore, we know from Oviedo's *Sumario*, which words in Pedro de Castañeda's manuscript are intended as nouns and which words are adjectives.

Oviedo also described these same animals a second time in Book XII of the *Historia Natural de Los Indias*.

- "tigres" (similar to the *Sumario* version) in Chapter X,
- "gatos cervales" (light, fast, large man-killers) in Chapter XIII, and
- "leones pardos" (cats with spot patterns like jaguars but not man-killers) in Chapter XIV.



- In the latter work, he described “gatos cervales” as being as large or larger than jaguars, and the fastest and lightest of the big cats. He mentioned that these cats would devour the Indians if the cat could find one alone. He described “leones pardos” as cats that have the same type of color and spot patterns as jaguars, but said they were not known to kill people or be any nuisance. He did not mention anything about their size.

Returning to the question of how to properly translate the phrases in question from that manuscript, the answers are more self evident. Combining what we know about common wild felines seen in Arizona and New Mexico since the mid 1800’s, we can speculate that “gatos cervales” were most likely mountain lions and “leones pardos” were most likely bobcats. If this is correct, we can then translate the passages.

En los ríos de este depoblado hay barbos y picones como en España **hay leones pardos que se vieron** desde el principio del despoblado siempre se va subiendo la tierra hasta llegar a Cíbola que son ochenta leguas la via del norte y hasta llegar allí desde Culiacán se había caminado llevando el norte sobre el ojo izquierdo.<sup>41</sup>

Translation: There were brown lions [bobcats] that were seen. From the beginning of the uninhabited area the land rises continually. . .

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Esta tierra es un valle entre sierras a manera de peñones a hoyos no crece el maíz alto de las mazorcas deste el pie tres y cuatro cada caña gruesas y grandes de a ochocientos granos cosa no vista en estas partes **hay en esta provincia osos en gran cantidad leones gatos cervales y nutrias** hay muy finas tartan turquesas aunque no en la cantidad que decían rocojen y entregan piñes...<sup>42</sup>

Translation:

...There are in this province bears in large quantity, lions, cervine cats, . . . ”

***Conclusion: There is no evidence in original documents that suggests the Coronado expedition encountered jaguars north of present day Mexico.***

The analysis shows that Pedro de Castañeda used standard nomenclature to describe animals seen on the Coronado expedition. He made no mention of jaguars (tigres), much less leopards.

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<sup>41</sup> de Castañeda, Pedro, *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition/Relación de la Jornada de Cíbola*. Transcribed by George Parker Winship. 2002. Donnelly & Sons Co. The Lakeside Press, p. 262

<sup>42</sup> de Castañeda, Pedro, *Narrative of the Coronado Expedition/Relación de la Jornada de Cíbola*. Transcribed by George Parker Winship. 2002. Donnelly & Sons Co. The Lakeside Press, p. 263

Furthermore, using this standard nomenclature as set forth by Oviedo in translating the phrases in question, we find the manuscript by Castañeda does not corroborate the “leopards” mentioned in Ramusio’s translation of the August 3, 1540 letter from Coronado to Viceroy Mendoza. Without such corroboration it is impossible to assign any credibility to Ramusio’s translation with regard to its mention of jaguars.

There is no evidence, therefore, that Coronado’s men saw any jaguars north of the present day Mexico/U.S.A border.

