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Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539-1542: "They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor did They Wish to be His Subjects" (review)

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Book Reviews

JESÚS F. DE LA TEJA, *Editor*

Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: “They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor did They Wish to be His Subjects.” Edited, translated, and annotated by Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint. (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 2005. Pp. 760. Acknowledgments, illustrations, maps, abbreviations, appendices, notes, glossary, bibliography, index. ISBN 0870744968. \$75.00, cloth.)

Documents of the Coronado Expedition, 1539–1542: “They Were Not Familiar with His Majesty, nor did They Wish to be His Subjects” both fills a void and corrects previous misinterpretations in the study of the Coronado expedition. Richard Flint and Shirley Cushing Flint have put together a magnificent volume of documents that any person studying the era will be glad to own. There are thirty-four documents, each presented in English and the original Spanish, with an introduction to put it in context. The maps and the twenty-seven illustrations also add value.

The first group of documents is from Coronado to the king in 1538 and 1539, then from the king appointing Coronado as head of the expedition. The account of Fray Marcos de Niza, with his instructions, is included, as are testimonies regarding his discoveries. For most people, the most surprising part of the expedition would be just how many Indians were involved. The Flints included the muster roll of the expedition and the narratives of the participating Indians, along with the record of the effects of Spanish exploration on Indian populations. The Spanish bureaucrats wrote and received many letters and instructions regarding this expedition, and several are in the book, including one from Hernán Cortés. Many people recorded their accounts of the expedition and these form the bulk of the documents. The last record is Coronado’s petition for the recovery of his *encomienda* in 1553.

There are four appendices, including biographical and geographical data, a list of the expedition members, and the Requerimiento. There are copious notes, a good bibliography, and an index. This source book is an astounding achievement, useful in many ways. Students can use it to begin their primary source work in the history of the Southwest. Professionals will find it easy to find exactly what they need for their research. Amateurs will appreciate its clear explanations. Anyone who is interested in the history of the Southwest, should read this collection.