

# The Sixth Cortes Relation Letter

This document purports to be a letter from Hernan Cortes to Holy Roman Emperor Charles V, dated February of 1538 AD, that summarizes and describes Cortes's 1536 California expedition. The letter was discovered in June of 2017 in a Madrid museum annex, as part of a box of documents that had been misfiled somehow after the death of Phillip II of Spain. Analysis of the paper and ink indicates that the Sixth Letter is from that time period, and nothing about it is inconsistent or anachronistic for the time period. If the Letter is a hoax, it's a contemporary hoax.

But it has to be a hoax, and a ludicrous one at that. This account reads like something out of the Prester John stories: according to Cortes, the entire 'Island' of California (the man was convinced that he was exploring an island) was full of bizarre creatures and people. Sea serpents (non-aggressive). Desert cats with porcupine-like quills. Hairy, man-like giants in the woods. Short, bald, grey-skinned people in the hills. Large cats with teeth like swords. Huge, hairy elephants. Human-sized bats. Smaller, blood-sucking bat-creatures. Rabbits with antlers, seal-men in the far north: there is page after page

of weird species, complete with sketches of the animals in question.

That last part is what got paleontologists interested in the Sixth Letter: the sketches that Cortes included match up remarkably closely to extinct creatures like the saber-toothed cat and the woolly mammoth. For that matter, Cortes' description of some of these creatures closely match the legends of the Sasquatch, jackalope, and chupacabra -- but it's the 'real' animals that interest researchers. There's no indication that Cortes ever ended up anywhere near known fossil locations, which suggests that he must have found hitherto unknown sites. Rediscovering those sites would certainly be quite the coup for an ambitious academic. Admittedly, this will require a certain amount of exploration of the sparsely-populated wilderness of Baja California Sur, but that's all part of the game, right?

Note, by the way, that the expedition going out there -- the one that will undoubtedly require a team trained in survival, exploration, and discreet protection -- is firmly of the opinion that most of the Sixth Letter is nonsense. This would absolutely include the passage about the city of bald, grey-skinned small people that Cortes reportedly discovered. And the passage where Cortes warned the

Emperor to 'not avenge our losses there.' **And** the scribbled passage in the margins (in what looks to be Phillip's own hand) saying *Would that Father had heeded Don Hernan.*

You know. Nonsense like that. It's so nonsensical that the expedition heads won't even bring it up. Unless they end up having to.

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