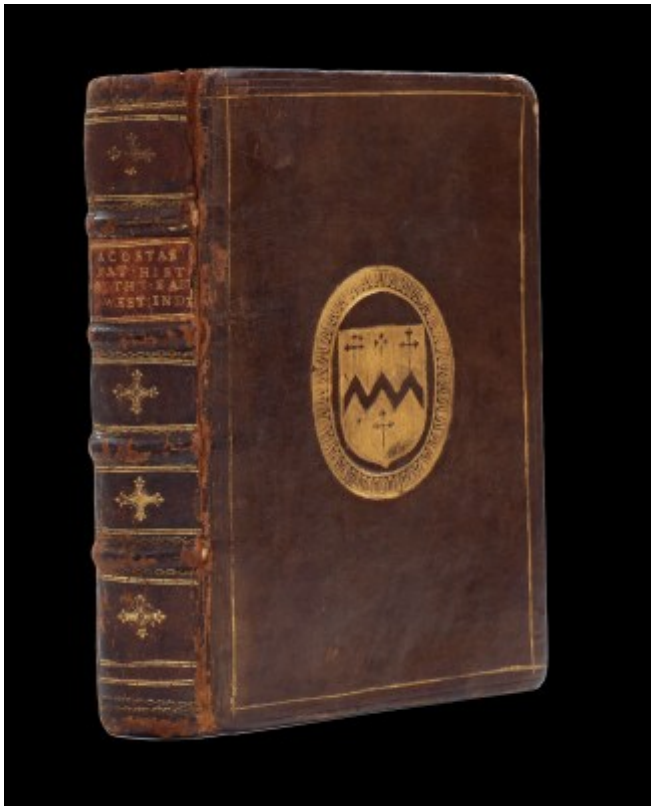


Quarto (190 by 140mm). Woodcut head-, tailpieces, and initials, without initial and final blanks, signatures 23-6 misbound; contemporary full calf, each cover decorated with gilt and blind fillets, and the gilt supra libros of George Sandys in the centre, preserved in a modern ochre cloth slipcase and chemise.

Collation: leaves [3], pages 590 [i.e. 592], leaves [7].

FROM THE LIBRARY OF GEORGE SANDYS: “ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT MEN IN THE HISTORY OF COLONIAL JAMESTOWN” (GRIZZARD)

The Naturall and Morall Historie of the East and West Indies. Intreating of the remarkable things of heaven, of the elements, mettalls, plants and beasts which are proper to that country: together with the manners, ceremonies, lawes, governments, and warres of the Indians. Written in Spanish by the R.F. Ioseph Acosta, and translated into English by E.G.

Author
ACOSTA, Jose de; [translated by Edward GRIMESTONE]

Publication date
1604.

Publisher
Printed by Val: Sims for Edward Blount and William Aspley,

Publication place
London,

Physical description

Quarto (190 by 140mm). Woodcut head-, tailpieces, and initials, without initial and final blanks, signatures 23-6 misbound; contemporary full calf, each cover decorated with gilt and blind fillets, and the gilt supra libros of George Sandys in the centre, preserved in a modern ochre cloth slipcase and chemise.

Collation: leaves [3], pages 590 [i.e. 592], leaves [7].

Dimensions

Notes
George Sandys' copy of the "most convincing, detailed, and reliable account of the riches and new things of America" (Hill), with his supra-libros, and inscription on the fore-edge. Undoubtedly Acosta's work would have been essential reading for Sandys in association with his career as colonial treasurer of the Virginia Company, and "one of the most important men in the history of colonial Jamestown" (Grizzard). Only ten other titles are recorded from Sandys's library. Most of them are Latin language editions classical or religious texts, although they include his own 'Relation of a journey Begun an: Dom: 1610' (1621), and an English translation of Pliny, 1601.

In 1621 the Virginia Company was controlled by George Sandys's brother, Sir Edwin Sandys, and the earl of Southampton, so it is not altogether surprising that Edwin appointed George treasurer for the colony, member of the council of state in Virginia, and member of his majesty's council for Virginia in London. He sailed in July 1621, "arriving in Jamestown, Virginia, in October; with him was another Sandys kinsman, the newly appointed governor, Sir Francis Wyatt. As treasurer, Sandys was granted 1500 acres in Virginia, but these turned out to be virgin forest, and on his arrival he was forced to purchase 200 acres of cleared plantation where he could grow the crops necessary for the survival of his tenants. Wyatt and Sandys pursued a moderate and tolerant approach to colonization in Virginia, in the belief that the Virginian natives were about to convert to Christianity. Their hopes were shattered on 22 March 1622 by a great Indian uprising, in which over 300 of the colonists died. Sandys himself led the first English counter-attack against the Indians and a popular ballad celebrating this exploit has survived. Sandys's remarkably frank letters to friends and relatives about the appalling conditions in the colony after the uprising had the misfortune to be impounded in London and used as evidence of Sir Edwin's mismanagement of the company. After the crown dissolved the Virginia Company and assumed direct control of the colony in 1624, Sandys was reappointed to the colony's council (26 August), but in 1625 he returned home, narrowly escaping from Turkish pirates on the way. Before leaving for Virginia, Sandys had published a verse translation of the first five books of Ovid's 'Metamorphoses' (1621). Two further books were completed on the voyage to Virginia, "amongst the roreing of the seas, the rustling of the Shrowdes, and Clamour of Saylers" as Sandys later wrote; the remaining books were completed during the long evenings in the colony. On 24 April 1626 Sandys was granted a patent from the king for exclusive rights to print and sell the work for twenty-one years, and the completed 'Ovid's Metamorphosis Englished' was published in the same year… More successful as translation is his version of Book One of Virgil's 'Aeneid', not published until 1632 but probably completed before the outward voyage to Virginia. Previous Virginian adventurers had drawn parallels between themselves and Virgil's empire-building Trojans, and through this translation Sandys was able to express many of the emotions of early colonization. On his return from Virginia, Sandys became a gentleman of the privy chamber of Charles I.… Sandys remained involved with Virginia after his return from the colony. Despite his absence in England, he was reappointed to the colony's council in 1626, and again in 1628, presumably in the expectation that he would return. But he remained in England, serving on a royal commission which advised on the state of the colony in 1631 and at some time before 1638 he was appointed to the subcommittee for foreign plantations under the Laud commission. When Sir Francis Wyatt returned for a brief spell as governor (1639–42), one of his first actions was to appoint

Sandys as the colony's agent in London. Sandys was twice directly involved in attempts to revive the Virginia Company, first in 1631, and second in 1640, when he presented a petition to the House of Commons for the restoration of the company's former constitution" (Ellison).

Jose de Acosta was a Jesuit missionary and naturalist, who spent seventeen years in Latin America, working as a missionary in Peru from 1571 to 1576, then travelling extensively in Mexico: "he provided great detail in his descriptions of sailing directions, trading commodities, etc. Consequently, his work revealed to the rest of Europe the great wealth that Spain was drawing from America. Eventually Spain grew more secretive in these matters. Acosta gives important accounts of the Strait of Magellan and the navigators who had sailed through to the Pacific" (Hill). Acosta also theorized that Latin America's indigenous peoples had migrated from Asia to Latin America, although the Bering Strait was not yet known to Europeans.

This is the first edition in English of the complete text of Acosta's work, originally published in part, in Latin, in Salamanca in 1588, then in full in Spanish, in Seville, in 1590.

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Provenance

Provenance: 1. From the library of George Sandys (1578-1644), colonial treasurer of the Virginia Company, with his supra libros, and fore-edge inscription; 2. The Earls of Macclesfield, their sale: 'Macclesfield Library Part Nine: Voyages, Travel and Atlases', March 15th, 2007, lot 3078 (supra-libros misattributed to "Sanders" family).

Price: £50000

Inventory reference: 24355

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