

Folio (280 by 210mm). Woodcut title-page printed in red and black, some repaired tears; twentieth century full speckled calf antique.

Collation: Leaves i – lxxvi [lacking lxxvii] then lxxviii – cxiii, cxiii.

THE CONQUEST OF MEXICO

Con privilegio del Principe nuestro Senor: Cronica de la Nueua España: con la conquista de Mexico, y otras cosas notables: hechas por el valeroso Hernando Cortes, Marques del Valle, Capitan desu Magestad en aquellas partes. Con mucha diligencia corregida, y anadida pozelmesmo autor.

Author
LOPEZ DE GOMARA, Francisco

Publication date
1554.

Publisher
En casa de Augustin Millan,

Publication place
En Çaragoça,

Physical description
Folio (280 by 210mm). Woodcut title-page printed in red and black, some repaired tears; twentieth century full speckled calf antique.

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Dimensions

Notes
First published as part II of ‘La Historia de las Indias’ (1552) in Saragossa, a second edition appeared in 1553, and other editions quickly followed, including this one, when volume I was dated 1555. It is very likely that the suppression of the work began almost as soon as it was first published, with copies confiscated directly from booksellers. When it was first published in 1552, Gomara’s was the first printed history of Mexico.

Gómara organized the work in two parts, the first of which, not present here, contained a dissertation on world geography, location of the Indies, Columbus’s discoveries, and colonization of Hispaniola and Peru. The second part, as here, presents Cortés’s biography, the Conquest of Mexico, Cortés’s travels to Cuba, Santo Domingo, Honduras, and his trips back to Mexico, the Francisco de Ulloa in 1539, and Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo in 1542. The second part also includes descriptions of the indigenous population in Mesoamerica at the time of the conquest.

Each part stands alone as a distinct work. The book was first published in 1552 (known only by a single example held in John Carter Brown Library), and was almost immediately suppressed by an order of the Crown, dated November 17, 1553, requiring that all copies be seized and returned to the Consejo Real, and imposing a penalty of 200,000 maravedis on anyone who should reprint it. This was probably the reaction of the Crown to the claims of the Cortés family regarding their rights in Mexico, and Gómara’s hagiography ran contrary to its purposes. Despite this, the work soon became widely known and was published in Paris, Venice, Rome, Antwerp, and London.

Rarity: Only one North American institutional example of this issue is recorded, at the JCB; only one example has appeared at auction, Sotheby’s 1963, when it was sold bound with Part I.

Bibliography
The ‘Celebrated Library of Boies Penrose Esq’, sale catalogue, (London: Sotheby’s, 1971); JCB I, pp.175-176; Mathes, ‘Historiography of the Californias: Imprints of the Colonial Period, 1552-1821’;Palau, VII, 141146; Sabin 27728; Wagner, ‘The Spanish Southwest 1542-1794: An Annotated Bibliography’, 1997, 2; Wagner, ‘Francisci Lopez de Gomara, La Historia de las Indias y conquista de Mexico’, 1924, pages 29-30.

Provenance
1. Shelfmarks of a Spanish Library on the spine; 2. New York bookdealer, Lathrop C. Harper (1867-1950), 1968, acquired by.

Price: £40000

Inventory reference: 35670

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