

# LEO CADOGAN RARE BOOKS

74 Mayton Street, London N7 6QT

## "MEDICINAL" SERMONS

**Vaca, Gabriel, OFM:** Libro muy provechosso[sic.] para todo fiel Christiano, intitulado Sermonario Quadragesimal Medicinal, compuesto por el padre fray Gabriel Vaca predicador, de la horden de señor San Francisco. Es obra de muy excelente doctrina. Con privilegio imperial. *Impresso en Valladolid, a costa del licenciado Antonio de Sopueita. Y de Andres Fanega mercader de libros. Vezinos de Valladolid. [Colophon: En cassa de Sebastian Martinez]. 1553.*

First edition. Folio (29.5 cms. x 20.5 cms.), 288 pages (fols. [2], ix-cxlviii). Title-page in red and black with central woodcut image of crucified Christ with bedridden man stating "Infirmus sum, sana me Domine" (I am infirm, heal me Lord). The same texts appears in Spanish, outside the borders of the illustration. Woodcut borders to title-page with putti and grotesques, printer's initials S[ebastian] M[artinez] held at foot by two putti with masks. Some red overprinting with tone blocks to title-page illustration. Small woodcut Crucifixion scene to fol. [2] verso. Inscriptions: "Del Collegio de Montilla", also (in a different hand) "Biblioteca Episcopal Cordob." (further words in this hand, difficult to read, but possibly including "Cap."); at top a contemporary abbreviated note and at bottom a contemporary note "En cinco reales de papel". Later censor's note dated 1707 and initials. Annotations to six pages (fols. 93 recto, 94 recto, 103 verso, 104 recto, 104 verso and 105 recto), occasional reader's marks. Bound in contemporary vellum, titled to spine, remains of ties, top- and fore-edge cover extensions (binding slightly torn with a few small wormholes else fine).

*Rare collection of sermons for Lent with striking and important title-page, the book is written on a medical theme. The prefator, Antonio de Sopena, a preacher who helped pay for the edition, notes "the doctor orders the patient not to eat or drink outside a diet, and with blood[-taking] [...] prepares [...] the matter. And then with the purge evacuating the humors there is introduced [...] health. The doctors of the soul convey this style in their own cure". The medical theme continues through the book. There is frequently printed in the margins to the sermons the word 'Comparacion' (Comparison), at which point in the text there is often an analogy to a medical visit, affliction, diet, medicine etc. There are also citations of Avicenna and Aristotle in the work.*

*The author, a Franciscan monk, chose the theme to his sermons after two phrases (which he inverts) taken from Psalm 6: "Oh Lord heal me, for I am weak" (KJV, inverted). These words are found - and illustrated - on the title-page which shows a bed-bound person lying at the foot of the Crucifix. The title-page, which is printed in red and black, is interesting for its use of tone blocks, to overprint some of the black*

*design with red. This is an early example of colour perking in Spain, and the manufacture of the blocks used would have required extra work. A cursory examination of other red-and-black title-pages from the press of Sebastian Martinez shows that colour perking was not his standard practice (normally the red and black is kept distinct). Martinez ran his own businesses from 1550 to 1576, in Valladolid (1550-1566), Sigüenza (1561-1565), Alcalá de Henares (1562-1576), and Palencia (1567-1569). He was a notable publisher and (as the present book shows) an interesting user of illustrations.*

*The title is found in the 1556 inventory of a bookseller in Burgos, Juan de Junta. Our copy carries a contemporary price note from wherever it might have been bought from, probably showing the cost of the book block alone without binding ("five reales the paper"). It was subsequently in two libraries in the region of Córdoba in southern Spain: an episcopal library, probably in the city, and nearby, the "College of Montilla". We believe this is the Jesuit Colegio de la Encarnación of the town of Montilla in the district of Córdoba, because there is a copy of this title in a catalogue of 1749.*

CCPB000026997-2. Palau 346563. USTC 342143. IB 18823. Marsá 295. Miguel Ángel Sanchez Herrador, 'La biblioteca del Colegio de la Encarnación de los Jesuitas de Montilla, Volumen I' (PhD thesis, Córdoba 2015), 1240 number 2714 (probably this copy). OCLC shows no copies outside Spain.

See also William A. Pettas, 'A sixteenth-century Spanish bookstore: the inventory of Juan de Junta' (Philadelphia 1995) 140 and n. 984. My special thanks to Dr. Elizabeth Savage for her invaluable observations on the title-page.

[ref: 3541 ] **£6000**