

LEO CADOGAN RARE BOOKS

74 Mayton Street, London N7 6QT

IMPORTANT TEXT IN SPANISH BOOK TRADE HISTORY

[Spain. Book trade] [Gonzalez de Ribero, Blas:] Señor. Los libreros de los reynos de Castilla y Leon, por si, en nombre de los hombres doctos della, professores de todas ciencias, curiosos de saber, y de tener en varia leccion, y erudicion entretenido el tiempo, postrados à los Reales pies, con humildad debida, valiendose de las leyes Reales [...] [*n.pl.*] [*n.pr.*] [*c. 1636*].

Folio, fols. 4. Woodcut first initial. Some spotting and soiling, especially to first page, a good copy, stab holes but no evidence of glue at spine, in modern vellum boards, MS note to p. 1, "No. 138".

Lawyer's plea on behalf of the booksellers of Castile and Leon, against the extension of a sales tax ('alcabala') to books. An interesting economic text, the author carefully sets out the parlous state of the contemporary trade. He states how booksellers were already paying more than fifty per cent of their outgoings in tax (tax on book and paper imports, sales tax on binding materials, fees for licences), how they had to give out books to officials to get their licences, and how they carried the risk, after purchasing the works of an author, that books be banned by the Inquisition and they lose everything. Religious institutions undermined their livelihood with the privileges that they had, and yet the booksellers were expected to be in business to do the comparatively marginal work of binding, or to buy the books from them in order to bind them. The barter-trade was an important part of bookselling, and this would end with the 'alcabala'. Stock took a long time to sell, and was disposed of at knocked-down prices on the death of booksellers. Alongside discussion of the business, the plea - which contains examples of titles, values and privileges - has arguments for the importance of books, and for a functioning printing industry for the dissemination of new learning.

This is one of two editions, this printed with learned side-notes, which are themselves of some interest (the other does not have these). Gonzalez de Ribero was a high-standing lawyer of the Royal Council and consultant to the Inquisition. The booksellers' sales tax, promulgated on 14 December 1635, was remitted by royal decree on 27 June 1636.

The copy's absence of glue to spine, its soiling, and the lack of the MS re-pagination that is often found in sammelbands makes one wonder if, rather than being removed from a sammelband, it was previously a loose item in an archive.

CCPB000120469-5. OCLC shows only one location outside Spain (BL) - although M. Christian Péligny (see below) used a copy at BNF. This title not in Palau but see under author for others.

The document is the chief source for M.C. Péligny, 'Les difficultés de l'édition Castellane au XVII siècle à travers un document de l'époque' (*Mélanges de la Casa de Velázquez*, 13 (1977), 257-284). That article has reference to a modern edition by A. Sierra Corella, in 'Bibliografía Hispanica', May 1944, 336-341. D.W. Cruickshank ('"Literature" and the book trade in Golden-Age Spain', *The Modern Language Review*, 73/4 (Oct., 1978), 799-824) references (813 n. 3) an edition of a manuscript in Jose Manuel Blecua, 'Dos memoriales de libreros a Felipe IV' in R.P. Sigale and G. Sobejano eds., 'Homenaje a Casaldueiro' (Madrid 1972) 95-104. Blecua used a manuscript in the University of Barcelona.

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