

PART I:
Identification

BOOK BRANDS

THE BOOK BRAND is a dramatic statement of ownership commonly found on volumes with Mexican library provenance. Effective permanent identification, a brand could not be reversed. It could be altered and trimmed, but because these Mexican and Spanish books on religious topics were not sought by European and American collectors in the same way as more traditional “beautiful” and “important” books, they were less likely to have been trimmed and gilded by European “society” binders and are often found in this, their original, condition.

TITLES ILLUSTRATED

Antonio de Escobar y Mendoza, *Nueva Jerusalem*, Mexico, 1758. (fig. 1.1)

Lope Felix de Vega Carpio, *Triunfo de la fee*, Madrid, 1618. (fig. 1.1)

Catholic Church, *Manual de administrar los santos sacramentos*, Mexico, 1638. (fig. 1.1)

Angel Serra, *Manual de administrar los santos sacramentos*, Mexico, 1731. (fig. 1.1)



1.1
A selection of book brands from Mexican libraries.

INK STAMPS

“What think you of the plan I have before suggested to you of having all my books stamped with my name or initials on the front or back of the fifth pages?”

—John Carter Brown to John Russell Bartlett, November 14, 1848

CONTROVERSY OVER whether or not to stamp the pages of a book with an owner’s mark is not new; John Carter Brown was debating the question in 1848. Initially, he mentioned book stamping only for less valuable volumes, but apparently he later became convinced that he should mark most of his collection. It is possible that he considered the red mark a lesser evil than loss or theft. Then, too, if he later decided to dispose of a book, the Brown library provenance could hardly lower its value. Most collectors today would consider the practice defacement.

TITLES ILLUSTRATED

A relation of the invasion and conquest of Florida by the Spaniards,
London, 1686. (fig. 1.3)

Hernán Cortés, *Praeclara Ferdina[n]di*, Nuremberg, 1524. (fig. 1.4)



1.2
Selection of John Carter Brown's ink stamps.



1.3
Ink stamp on *A relation of the invasion and conquest of Florida* (1686).



1.4
John Carter Brown's ink stamp on title page of Cortés, *Praeclara* (1524).