

Memory of the World International Register

Travelling Registry of the Conquistadors or “Becerro Book” (Peru)

2012-07

1.0 Summary

The *Travelling Registry of the Conquistadors* (1533-1538) is the first written testimony of the process of “westernization” of South America, in other words, of the spreading and implementation of European socioeconomic, political and cultural institutions. This can be studied through the information contained therein regarding the activities realized by the actors involved in the process of conquest.

The information in this primary source affords a valuable insight forth study of this process, as it sheds light on the concrete actions carried out by individual characters. This all complements the early chronicles in which anonymous characters predominate.

Furthermore, it is a unique source for the study of the early years of the encounter between two cultures. This document was written during the Conquistadors’ journey across the different territories that they settled, and it contains the documents laid out by the scribes that accompanied them. The numerous bibliographical references to it by prestigious researchers of the period, such as James Lockhart and Guillermo LohmannVillena, prove its outstanding value.

2.0 Nominator

2.1 Name of the nominator (natural person and organization)

LIC. PABLO ALFONSO MAGUIÑA MINAYA. ARCHIVO GENERAL DE LA NACION DEL PERÚ
(GENERALARCHIVEOFPERÚ)

2.2 Relation with the nominated documentary heritage

CUSTODIAN

2.3 Contact person (to provide information about the nomination)

LIC. PABLO ALFONSO MAGUIÑA MINAYA

2.4 Contact information

Name	Address
LIC. PABLO ALFONSO MAGUIÑA MINAYA	JR. CAMANA N° 125 Y PASAJE PIURA S/N. CERCADO DE LIMA

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3.0 Identity and description of the documentary

3.1 Name and details about the identification of the nominated items

It is already registered, the exact name of the institution is written in the certificate to be issued.

"REGISTRO AMBULANTE DE LOS CONQUISTADORES " Ó "LIBRO BECERRO"
("TRAVELLINGREGISTRYOF THECONQUISTADORS"OR"BECERROBOOK")

3.4 History

The General Archive of the Nation – Peru has taken care of the “Becerro Book” since the promulgation of Law 4666, “Reorganization of The General Archive of the Nation” in 1923. This law required the delivery of notarial instruments held by all notaries. As was pointed out by Bertram T. Lee: “Among the registries that had belonged to Doctor Prieto’s Notary’s Office and were submitted to the Archives of the Nation, in accordance with the Law of Organization of the Central Archives, there was a document called “Becerro Book of Documents”, before 1926”. (*Algunos documentos sobre los primeros conquistadores del Perú*. En: Revista Histórica, Tomo VIII, Entregas I – II, 1925, pp. 193-194).

4.0 Legal information

4.1 Owner of the documentary heritage (name and contact information)

Name	Address
ARCHIVO GENERAL JR. CAMANA Nº 125 Y PASAJE PIURA S/N. CERCADO DE LIMA. DE LA NACIÓN DEL PERÚ	

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4.2 Guardian of the documentary heritage (Name and contact information)

Name	Address
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4.3 Legal Conditions

Legal Conditions of property: Public

Relevant Legal Conditions: Provisional Registry Record N° 1.1.0.1.0.1 – 2009-RENAPCA.

Copyright: Archivo General de la Nación.

4.4

Accessibility:

Access is limited in order to prevent direct manipulation of the manuscript. It is kept locked in a safe for security reasons. Therefore, users use a microfilm reproduction created in 1998. There are display problems with the microfiche because of the pictures' low quality, due to the pictures having been taken prior to the restoration process and the obsolescence of the equipment they were made with. However, we keep a master of the microfilm made from the restored registry in the Direction of Conservation, to which the public has no access.

4.5 Conditions of the copyright

We have custody of the Documentary Heritage as laid out in:

- Law 19414. Law of protection, preservation and increase of the Documentary Heritage of the Nation and its regulations. 1972.
- Law 28296. General Law of the Documentary Heritage of the Nation. 2004.

5.1 Authenticity:

The collection of documents that makes up the Travelling Registry is a unique and non renewable material whose relevance is due to its character as a historical and cultural source for researchers. The authenticity of the signatures of the characters has been verified by using another registry (Escribano Pedro de Castañeda. Año 1537), as well as by events referred to in the chronicles and documents.

5.2 World Relevance

This document is unique because of its antiquity and as a testimony of the process of "Westernization" of South America. The information contained in this documentary source shows the concrete actions carried out by individuals and complements the tales of the early chronicles, in which anonymity and narrative predominate. Its loss or disappearance would prove detrimental to the research and understanding of this historical context.

5.3 Comparative criteria:

1 Time

The documents of the Travelling Registry (agreements, purchases, sales, bills, etc.) provide the first testimonies of the campaigns and deals struck among the conquistadors within the Inca's territory, spanning from the capture of Cajamarca to their settlement in Lima.

In this context, information was collected and the exploration of new territories is mentioned, as well as Indian slavery, in the power of attorney granted by Gómez Caravantes on 08/06/1537 (Fol. 317): " ... **que todo los indios que Alonso de Alvarado hizo esclavos del dicho mi cacique sean libertados...**" and others describing contractual relations of the Conquistadors

for the receipt and distribution of the gold and silver from Atahualpa's ransom as detailed in a document dated 24/07/1533 issued by Cristóbal de Sosa (Fol. 62): ***"...que toda la parte del oro y plata y piedras y [perlas] que se le diere [sic] al dicho caballo e uviere de aver de todos que hasta que oy [dia] esta traydo y de todo lo que a mandado Atabalica a los cristianos hasta que cumpla y de lo que a mandado el cacique de la mezquitay de lo que trayn o enbyaren los cristianos del Cuzco..."***; and others referring to the Indian counteroffensive and resistance as portrayed in the document by Pedro Hernández, dated 07/06/1537 (Fol. 300v.): ***"...por razón de ciertas armas e ropa que nos diste para yr en este socorro al Cuzco en servicio de su magestad..."***.

2 Location

It is the first written manuscript produced in South America, right after the capture of Inca Atahualpa in Cajamarca (04/05/1533) and months before his execution (26/07/1533). It also spans locales that were explored during the journey of the conquistadors, such as Jauja, Cuzco, Pachacamac, Lima and others.

3 Peoples

It is a testimony of the encounter between two cultures, Western and Indigenous. It is also a testimony of the occupation and settlement in the former Tahuantinsuyo.

4 Object and contents

Its contents reveal:

- a) In economic matters: The written contracts by which assets (mounts, slaves, weaponry) were exchanged, as well as the most unique company charters. The importation of goods from Panama gives testimony to the new kinds of animal and vegetable products, to merchants who used pesos and maravedís as official currency, to the first shipment of precious metals to the Metropolis, as well as contracts for services.
- b) In demographic matters: The places of origin and the destination of the conquistadors during their expeditions, as well as information that enriches their biographies, records of the people involved in the conquest and colonization, *comendadores*, knights with deeds of nobility, bureaucrats and even minstrels and clerics.
- c) In social matters: This document reflects the earliest expressions of written Castilian in Peru, the level of education attained by a sample of new authorities such as captains, sheriffs, governors, mayors, inspectors, and commanders. It also provides information about military aspects such as the recruitment of the army or facilities for weapons. Furthermore, it allows us to reconstruct the legal practices of the day and attain a better understanding of court customs. Finally, there is a reference to the exploitation of Indian labor by means of enslavement.

5 Social/spiritual/communal significance

Its profound significance pertains to the heritage of the Americas, as it bears witness to crucial moments during the Spanish conquest and colonization.

6.1 Rarity

It is a unique registry inasmuch as it comprises several different scribes who recorded documents in different locations. Furthermore, the Travelling Registry has many original and unique documents.

6.2 Integrity

Most of the information is well preserved, except for some lost areas.