

FIRST BOOK ON

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THE FIRST BOOK printed in Europe which treats exclusively of the Philippines is Maximilianus Transylvanus' *De Moluccis Insulis*.

This is an account of the epochal voyage of Ferdinand Magellan in the years 1519 to 1522 which led to the rediscovery of the Philippines by Europeans in 1521.

Maximilianus Transylvanus, Latin for Max Oberwald, his German name, was a German scholar who happened to be in Valladolid at the time of the arrival of Juan Sebastian del Cano and his 18 companions to relate their adventures to the King of Spain who was then holding court in that city.

Transylvanus' tutor had him write an account of the voyage in the form of a letter to his guardian, Archbishop of Salzburg, Germany. Transylvanus proved to be an able historian and wrote his account based on his interviews of the returned survivors of the expedition.

The Archbishop of Salzburg, his guardian, was most pleased with his ward's proficiency in Latin, the classical language of the time in which the letter was written, and realizing the significance of the great voyage, he ordered the printing of the letter.

Dated at Valladolid, October 24, 1522, shortly after the arrival of Del Cano and his

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companions in Spain. September 8, 1522, the book appeared in no less than two editions the following year. These are the Rome edition, November, 1523, and the Cologne edition, January, 1523. Another edition is said to have been printed in Paris in the same year but its existence is disputed by bibliographers in the absence of known copies of it.

As to which of the two editions is the first and the second has been a puzzle among bibliographers. Brunet (French), Medina (Chilean), Retana (Spanish), and Quaritch (English) believe that the Rome Edition, November, 1523, is the first, and the Co-

logne edition, January 1523, the second.

Harrisse (American), Robertson (American), Leclerc (French), Pardo de Tavera (Filipino), and Lathrop C. Harper (American) on the other hand, think the Cologne edition is the first, and the Rome edition, the second.

This bibliographic puzzle has once more been brought to public notice with the news of the recent acquisition of another edition — the third, Rome, February, 1524 — of this book. Acquired by Carlos Quirino, Filipino rare book collector of consequence and leading authority on Philippine maps, the book was one

of the main attractions of his book exhibits he recently put up in his residence for the members of the Philippine Booklovers Society.

The puzzle was also one of the main topics for lively discussion in the educational conference of the Ateneo centennial celebration held also recently when one of the papers presented to the committee on history of the conference saw it fit to ventilate the subject.

What seems to have caused the confusion regarding the priority of the two editions are their dates. If the Cologne edition was printed in January, 1523, it precedes the Rome edition printed in November, 1523, those favoring the former argue. Those favoring the latter, particularly Retana, think the Cologne edition was actually issued on 1524, although dated 1523. This point has been settled however by the fact that Johann Schoner in a letter to Reine von Streitberg in 1523 already cites *Transylvanus'* book.

One authority has attempted to resolve the issue with the aid of the calendar. In the olden days, as late as the 16th century, the sequence of the months was not as it is now. The calendar year began in April, so that our first

three months in the present calendar were at the end of the year. This being the case, January 1523, the imprint date of the Cologne edition of *Transylvanus* actually follows November, 1523, the imprint date of the Rome edition.

It may be mentioned in this connection that the copy presently owned by the Filipiniana division of the bureau of public libraries, which luckily was saved during the last war and which came from the Tabacalera collection purchased by the Philippine government in 1925, bears the Cologne imprint. From the foregoing, it can be deduced that the government copy is a second edition.

Since the copy recently obtained by Carlos Quirino, as mentioned above, is a third edition, Rome, February, 1524, the Philippines is lucky to have the second and third editions of *Transylvanus*.

LOCAL COLLECTORS however have yet to find the first edition of this rare item. An idea of the rarity of *Transylvanus* may be obtained from the fact that a similar item, Fabre's edition based on Pigafetta's original account, has been reputedly sold recently for \$30,000.

After the issuance of *Transylvanus* in the three editions

mentioned above, the Paris edition of 1523 being under discord and may be discounted at present, the work has been published in such compilations as John Huttich's *Novus Orbia Regionum* (1537); Joannes Boemus' *Omnium Gentium Mores* (1524); G. B. Ramusio's *Delle Navigazioni et Viaggi* (1550), which has been reprinted a number of times; Martin Fernandez de Navarrete's *Coleccion de Viajes y Descubrimientos*; and J. T. Medina's *Colleccion de Documentos Ineditos para la Historia de Chile*. An English translation is found in volume 52 of the publications, first series, of the Hakluyt Society, and in volume 1 of *Philippine Islands* of Blair and Robertson.

Transylvanus' is not the only book published on the famous voyage of Magellan. Two other accounts describing the voyage are Antoine Fabre's *Le Voyage et Navigation faict par les Espaignol* and Antonio Pigafetta's *Primo Viaggio intorno al Globo*. Fabre's work is often con-

fused with Pigafetta's. A distinction between the two should be noted.

Unlike Transylvanus' *De Moluccis Insulis*, which was based from interviews he made of the returned crews of Magellan, Pigafetta's account is a first-hand record derived from his diary kept by him of the expedition. His original diary is lost. Of the few copies he made of his account, he gave one to the queen regent of France from which Fabre derived his version already mentioned.

At present four manuscripts of the Pigafetta original account are known to exist, three in French and one in Italian. Of the French versions, two are found in the Bibliotheque National in Paris and one used to be in the famous Thomas Phillipps collection in Cheltenham, England. Sir Thomas' collection has been undergoing a systematic dispersion since his death in 1872, and the present whereabouts of his Pigafetta manuscript is unknown.

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