

The dori [Tidore in the Moluccas], and, having gone twelve degrees on the other side of the equinoctial line [12° south of the equator], they did not find the Cape of Cattigara, which Ptolemy supposed to extend beyond the equinoctial line; but when they had traversed an immense space of sea, they came to the Cape of Good Hope.'

Maximilian concludes his account with a deserved tribute to the achievement of the crew of the *Victoria*: 'Worthier, indeed, are our sailors of eternal fame than the Argonauts who sailed with Jason to Colchis. And much more worthy was their ship of being placed among the stars than that old Argo; for that only sailed from Greece through Pontus, but ours from Hispalis [Seville] to the south; and after that, through the whole west and the southern hemisphere, penetrating into the east, and again returned to the west.'

One does not need to be an experienced bibliophile to savour the thrill of holding in one's hands a book printed over four centuries ago. The Alexander Turnbull Library copy of the Rome 1523 edition of Maximilian's letter — the edition has a long descriptive title in Latin — is cased in a green morocco binding which cannot be regarded as contemporary with the original appearance of the edition. Attached to its flyleaf is an extract from the 1923 catalogue of the Scheepvaart Museum, Amsterdam, describing that Museum's copy of the Rome 1523 edition, with the statement that the edition was the first printed book about Oceania. But whereas this edition is dated November 1523, an edition of the letter dated January 1523 was published at Cologne. The aforesaid catalogue of the Scheepvaart Museum mentions this, saying that the date of its publication was actually January 1524, the basis given for this being that the Julian calendar differed from the Gregorian calendar. This reasoning does not appear to make sense, since the Gregorian calendar was not adopted until 1582, and the difference between it and the Julian calendar could not in any case make the difference of a year in the date. It would seem, therefore, that the claim that the Rome 1523 edition was the first printed book about Oceania is highly dubious. The Alexander Turnbull Library also has a copy of the Rome 1524 edition.