

MEMORY OF THE WORLD REGISTER

*Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et
Americi Vespuccii aliorumque Lustrationes*

REF N° 2004-41

Part A Essential Information

1. Summary

The *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vespuccii aliorumque Lustrationes* by Martin Waldseemüller. N.p. 1507 [St. Dié or Strasbourg, France]. The 1507 printed world map, prepared by the Gymnasium Vosagense, St. Dié, France under the direction of Martin Waldseemüller, is the first map on which the name America appears. The Library of Congress possesses the only known surviving copy of this map.

Prepared by the research team in St. Dié, France and reflecting fresh information derived from the Spanish and Portuguese expeditions of the late 15th and early 16th centuries, the 1507 World map by Martin Waldseemüller is universally recognized as the first map, printed or manuscript, to reflect a true depiction of a separate Western Hemisphere and the existence of the Pacific Ocean. This monumental cartographic achievement of the early 16th century bears the additional importance as the first printed world wall map and is the document which reflects Waldseemüller's decision to name the New World "America" in honor of Amerigo Vespucci. In light of the importance in the field of geographic and the history of cartography, Martin Waldseemüller's monumental 1507 world map should be included in the Memory of the World Register.

2. Nominators

Name (1) Dr. James H. Billington, The Librarian of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

Name (2) German Nomination Committee for the Memory of the World Program, Prof. Dr. Joachim-Felix Leonhard (Chairperson)

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Relationship to the documentary heritage: United States, Library of Congress, owner
Until 2003, the map had been held in Germany. Since its first consultations back in 1998/99, the German Nomination Committee had short listed the map for nomination

Contact Person: Dr. James H. Billington, The Librarian of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

Contact Details: Library of Congress
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1st and Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E.
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3. Identity and Description of the Documentary Heritage

Identity of Document

Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vespuccii aliorumque Lustrationes by Martin Waldseemüller. N.p. 1507 [St. Dié, France?].

Location

Country: Printed in St. Dié or Strasbourg, France. Held in Germany until 2003. Collected and owned in the United States of America

State: Washington, District of Columbia, USA

Address: Library of Congress, 1st and Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540

Custodian: Library of Congress, 1st and Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540

Description of document

A large uncoloured wall map of the world, on twelve separate and unjoined wood cut sheets centered on Europe, Asia, and Africa, in the Ptolemaic tradition, showing the Americas on the west side and

Japan on the easternmost portion. At the top centre appear two hemispheres, Eastern Hemisphere on the left and the Western Hemisphere on the right. The Eastern Hemisphere inset is flanked by an image of Claudius Ptolemy and the Western Hemisphere inset is flanked by an image of Amerigo Vespucci. The name America appears on the southern portion of the Western Hemisphere in the main map, near the present country of Brazil. The map is presented in a pseudo-Ptolemaic projection (cordiform in appearance).

Bibliographic details:

LC Control Number: 2003626426 Type of Material: Cartographic Material
Waldseemüller, Martin, 1470-1521? *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptholomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucii aliorumque lustrationes*. [St. Dié, France? : s.n., 1507]
Woodcut, 1 map on 12 sheets ; 128 x 233 cm., sheets 46 x 63 cm. or smaller.
CALL NUMBER: G3200 1507 .W3 Vault

Visual documentation: High quality reproduction made from the digital file of the map prepared in the Fall 2001 in the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress. A digital file of the 12 sheets, with both recto and verso, (scanned at a resolution of 500 dpi) is maintained in the Digital Lab of the Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress. Additional photographic documentation of the map is maintained in the Conservation Office, Library of Congress. [View the 1507 world map by Martin Waldseemüller \(<http://lcweb2.loc.gov:8081/gmd/gmd3/g3200/g3200/ct000725Z.gif>\)](#)

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History of the document

The 1507 world map by Martin Waldseemüller was prepared in the Gymnasium Vosagense, St. Dié, France with assistance of a team of scholars assembled to synthesize the new geographic data arriving as a result of the European discoveries in the New World and Africa at the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth century. That team, under the patronage of Duke Rene of Lorraine and titular King of Jerusalem, was in the process of preparing an updated edition of Claudius Ptolemaeus's *Geographia*, containing references to European discoveries, when the map was prepared. Accompanying the large world map in the spring of 1507 was Waldseemüller's text *Cosmographiae Introductio cum quibusdam Geometriae ac astronomiae principiis ad eam rem necessariis* in which the large world map was referenced as well as a set of gores for a small globe. Through the map, and the book, Waldseemüller recognized the contributions of Amerigo Vespucci in the understanding of the New World as a separate, and for Europe, an unknown part of the earth. Building on the Ptolemaic tradition, Waldseemüller integrated the recent discoveries by the Portuguese and the Spanish, merging the medieval knowledge with the contemporary worldview.

In recognition of Vespucci's understanding, Waldseemüller christened the New World "America" in honour of the Italian explorer and writer. With that designation on the map, the use of the name America was applied and gradually accepted to describe the Western Hemisphere. That is the foremost significance of the 1507 world map as a universal treasure. In addition, the 1507 map also included new information to describe the earth, including the presence of two oceans separating Europe from Asia on the West, and a totally separate and large Western Hemisphere. It provided the most up to date and detailed information about Africa, based on the expeditions of the Portuguese in the late fifteenth and into the sixteenth century. The map influenced later representations of the earth and of America, thus providing a relatively accurate understanding of the modern world.

The map also revolutionized world geography, and especially the European worldview, which had previously focused on the existence of a three continent world, i.e., Europe, Asia, and Africa. Thus, Waldseemüller's monumental achievement, the 1507 world map, ushered in a totally new way to understand the composition of the earth.

The sole surviving copy of the 1507 world map by Waldseemüller, of which some 1000 copies were reportedly initially prepared, has a fascinating history in its own right. This map was maintained in a portfolio by Johann Schöner, a German globe maker living in Nuremberg. The portfolio contained not only the 1507 world map by Waldseemüller, but also, a copy of the 1516 large wall map known as the

Carta Marina, prepared also by Waldseemüller, and copies of Schöner's terrestrial and celestial globes (1515 and 1517 respectively). In that fashion, and reportedly late in the seventeenth century, the family of Prince Waldburg-Wolfegg acquired and retained Schöner's portfolio in their castle in Baden-Württemberg where its contents remained unknown. Scholars in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries who speculated on the existence of Waldseemüller's 1507 world map because of references in the *Cosmographiae Introductio* were unaware of the existence of any surviving copies of the world map. In 1901, the sole surviving copy of Waldseemüller's monumental 1507 cartographic achievement was uncovered by Jesuit priest Joseph Fischer who was conducting research in the Waldburg collection. Following this discovery, which created much excitement among cartographic and history of discovery circles, a facsimile was prepared of the 1507 and 1516 maps, which the Library of Congress acquired in 1903. Throughout the twentieth century, the Library of Congress expressed its repeated desires to acquire the 1507 world map, when and if ever it was made available for sale. The map was finally offered for sale to the Library of Congress in the late 1990s and in late May 2003 the sale of the map was completed and the transfer of the world treasure to the Library of Congress occurred.

Waldseemüller's subsequent works continued the scientific road chosen, culminating in 1513 in the Strasbourg edition of Ptolemy (*Geographiae opus Claudii Ptolemei*), done in co-operation with Matthias Ringmann (*Philesius*). Out of the 20 new maps in this edition, 11 had been done by Waldseemüller himself, including, next to representations of the New World, Switzerland and the Rhinelands. This collection of new maps - *Tabulae novae* - can be considered one of the first modern atlas.

In 1511, he did a first coloured wall-map of Europe, *Carta Europae topica neoterica civitatum*, printed in Freiburg/Germany. Today, there is only one copy known, from a re-print done 1520 in Strasbourg (held by the Tirolean Museum at Innsbruck/Austria).

In 1516, Waldseemüller published his last great world map, *Carta marina navigatoria (Navigationes atque totius cogniti)*. This map built on a Portuguese sea map by Canerios, integrating all cartographic knowledge and research material available at this point in time. From a scientific point of view, this map is of even greater significance than the 1507 one. The sole existing copy of the Carta Marina, in the Jay Kislak Collection in Miami Lakes, Florida/USA, has been donated in early 2004 to the Library of Congress, along with the contents of the remainder of the items in the Schöner Portfolio. Until November 2003, this copy had been retained in the Waldburg-Wolfegg collection (library of Wolfegg)

In addition, Waldseemüller published a small globe, printed in 12 segments, in 1507, segments of which are held today by the Bavarian State Library, Munich/Germany, by the James Ford Bell Library of the University of Minnesota/USA and by the Historic Library of the Offenburg Municipal Library/Germany.

Bibliography:

Fischer, Joseph and Franz von Wieser. *Die älteste Karte mit dem Namen Amerika aus dem Jahre 1507 und die Carte Marina aus dem Jahre 1516...* Innsbruck: Wagner, 1903.

Harris, Elizabeth. "The Waldseemüller World Map: Typographic Appraisal, *Imago Mundi* 37:30-53.

Karrow, Robert W., Jr. *Mapmakers of the Sixteenth Century and Their Maps: BioBibliographies of the Cartographers of Abraham Ortelius*. Chicago: Speculum Orbis Press for the Newberry Library, 1993. Pp, 568-583.

Shirley, Rodney W. *The Mapping of the World: Early Printed World Maps, 1472-1700*. London: Holland Press, 1983. Pp. 28-31.

University of Minnesota/USA, James Ford Bell Library -
www.bell.lib.umn.edu/map/WALD/mainw1.html

Waldseemüller, Martin. *Cosmographiae Introductio*. St. Dié, 1507 (April 25, 1507).

Wolf, Hans (Ed.), *Globensegmente von Martin Waldseemüller: Amerika, das frühe Bild der neuen Welt* (Kulturstiftung der Länder, Patrimonia 38=Austellungskatalog 58), München 1992

4. Justification for Inclusion

Authenticity

The scholarly community has universally accepted that this world map is the one surviving example of Martin Waldseemüller bold graphic 1507 presentation of the earth as outlined in his *Cosmographiae Introductio* (1507). Publications in the twentieth century prepared after the uncovering of the 1507 world map in the collections of Prince Waldburg-Wolfegg in 1901 corroborate that this is a document prepared in the early sixteenth century and that it faithfully follows descriptions of the work prepared at that time. This document remained in the possession of the Waldburg-Wolfegg Library since the late seventeenth century until the Library of Congress acquired it. Paper specialists have studied the document and have concluded that it is consistent with the time of production.

World significance and uniqueness and irreplaceability

The 1507 world map by Martin Waldseemüller is the first document on which the name America appeared. Its depiction of a separate large continental landmass, that is the Western Hemisphere, to the west of Europe, and the placement of an ocean to the west of that landmass represents the first time that that understanding was graphically presented. This presentation of the earth in 1507 represented a radical departure from the accepted European worldview, which had used 2d century A.D. Claudius Ptolemy's long accepted perception of a three-part world, i.e., Europe, Asia, and Africa, as geographical canon. Waldseemüller's mind-stretching presentation was only gradually accepted into the mainstream of European intellectual life although his geographical findings were absolutely correct. This cartographic document, now in the Library of Congress, is the only known survivor of the map's print run and therefore is irreplaceable.

Significance of the document in light of time, people, subject, and format

A. Time

From an historical perspective, the 1507 world map by Martin Waldseemüller is the first cartographic object to boldly and correctly depict the true nature of the European discoveries in the New World and the true nature of the composition of the earth. It represents the earliest understanding of the shape and relationship of the continental landmasses of the earth, reflecting an enlightened reading of the information gathered during the early part of the period of European discoveries at the end of the fifteenth century.

B. People

The 1507 world map provides a unique understanding and a true depiction of the world based on European transoceanic discoveries which began in the late fifteenth century.

C. Subject

The 1507 world map by Martin Waldseemüller serves as a keystone to a reinterpretation of world geography marking the transition from the Ptolemaic worldview to a modern concept, which reflected the impact of Europe's discovery of the rest of the world.

D. Format

The 1507 world map by Martin Waldseemüller is the first printed wall map of the world and because of its large format it provided a bold statement regarding its depiction of the earth.

Rarity and integrity

This 1507 world map is extremely rare being the only known surviving copy of the 1507 production. Wall maps are considered especially vulnerable to the ravishes of light, heat, moisture and other forces

that contribute to their destruction. That this large wall map survived intact is due in no small part to the manner in which it was housed and preserved. Its survival is not threatened in its present location since it is maintained in the Library of Congress, and that it has been identified as one of the Library's Top Treasures and thus receives the highest attention of the Library's preservation and security initiatives.

5. Legal Information

Owner: Library of Congress, 1st and Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540

Custodian: Library of Congress, 1st and Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540

Legal Status

Category of ownership: Public Property

Details of legal and administrative provisions for the preservation of the documentary heritage:

Kept and supervised in accordance with the regulations and practices of the Library of Congress with regards to the preservation and security for Library of Congress Top Treasures.

Accessibility:

By sales contract with the former owner, the Library of Congress has agreed to prepare a permanent public display of the map in the Library's Thomas Jefferson Building, in which the original copy will be allowed to remain on view within appropriate preservation guidelines. In those times when the original map is not on display, an exact photocopy (facsimile reproduction) of the original map will be placed on public display and the original map will be retained in the vault of the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress.

Copyright status: public domain.

Responsible administration: The map is now framed and preserved according to the highest conservation practices of the Library of Congress.

Organization: Library of Congress

Address: 1st and Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E., Washington, D.C. 20540.

Tel: 202 707 8530 (Geography and Map Division, Library of Congress)

6. Management Plan

Presently, the 1507 world map by Martin Waldseemüller is owned by and maintained at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540. The plan for preservation, exhibition, and scholarly access of the document is determined by decisions of Library Services of the Library of Congress, with the participation of its Geography and Map Division, the Preservation Directorate, and the Interpretive Programs Office. The map has been designated as a Top Treasure of the Library of Congress and as such is not available for loan. As a Top Treasure of the Library of Congress the handling and access to the document must follow prescribed use procedures, including protection by armed guards in movement within the Library of Congress.

7. Consultation

The owner of the 1507 world map by Martin Waldseemüller, The Library of Congress of the United States of America, is making the nomination together with the German Nomination Committee for the Memory of the World Programme to add the map to the Memory of the World Register. Both co-nominators have consulted each other extensively on the elements to be included in this nomination proposal.

Previous to May 30, 2003, the map was owned by Johannes Fürst zu Waldburg-Wolfegg und Waldsee, Schloss Wolfegg, 88364 Wolfegg, Germany who sold the map to the Library of Congress. The map was listed in the cultural registry of the German state of Baden-Württemberg and as item 01301 in the cultural registry of the Federal Republic of Germany. Permission to sell the map to the Library of Congress was granted by both the state of Baden-Württemberg and the Federal Republic of Germany.

Part B Subsidiary Information

8. Assessment of Risk

This 1507 world map is extremely rare being the only known surviving copy of the 1507 production. Wall maps are considered especially vulnerable to the ravishes of light, heat, moisture and other forces that contribute to their destruction. That this large wall map survived intact is due in no small part to the manner in which it was housed and preserved. **Its survival is not threatened in its present location since it is maintained in the Library of Congress, and since it has been identified as one of the Library’s Top Treasures and thus receives the highest attention of the Library’s preservation and security initiatives.**

9. Assessment of Preservation

Environmental conditions

The temperature, humidity, lighting, and air quality provide the optimum conditions for the preservation of this documentary heritage both when on public display and when stored in the vault of the Geography and Map Division of the Library of Congress.

Present condition:

- Air quality maintenance: Automatic air-conditioning system
- Temperature
- Relative humidity
- Lighting

Physical condition

Good because it was printed high quality rag content paper of the early 16th century and because it was maintained in a portfolio not exposed to light and was subjected to little use during its 500 years existence.

Preservation Budget

By the budget of the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., USA

Part C Lodgment

On behalf of the co-nominators, this nomination is lodged by Dr. James H. Billington, The Librarian of Congress, Washington, D.C., USA

Signature..... Date,