



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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**[Claudii Ptolemei viri Alexandrini Mathematic[a]e disciplin[a]e Philosophi doctissimi
Geographi[a]e opus novissima traductione e Gr[a]ecorum archetypis castigatissime
pressum: c[a]eterisante lucubrationum multo pr[a]estantius. Pro Prima parte continens
CL.]**

Stock#: 74835
Map Maker: Waldseemüller

Date: 1513
Place: Strasbourg
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 13.5 x 18 inches (book block)

Price: SOLD



Description:

The Atlas That Ushered in Modern Geography, by Martin Waldseemüller, the Man Who Named America.

Martin Waldseemüller's *Geographiae opus novissima traductione a Grecorum archetypis castigatissime pressum* of 1513 is one of the most important geographical works ever made; it represents a watershed moment in the mapping of the world when the geography of the ancients was finally eclipsed by the work of Renaissance mapmakers. With this book, the ancient work of Ptolemy, which had been the basis of almost all serious mapmaking up to 1513, was surpassed by a full suite of maps of diverse regions of the world based on contemporary sources.

This is the most important atlas for early global exploration, containing, as it does, Waldseemüller's famous *Tabula Terre Nove* (the earliest obtainable map to focus on the Americas), *Orbis Typus Universalis Iuxta Hydrographorum Traditionem* (the earliest obtainable Waldseemüller map of the world, showing the New World), as well as his new maps of Africa and India. All of these maps were made possible by the explorations of Christopher Columbus, Pedro Cabral, Amerigo Vespucci, Vasco De Gama, and the other figures of those formative decades between 1490 and 1510.

Composition of the Atlas

The atlas consists of 27 Ptolemaic maps, all but two of which are drawn on the trapezoidal "Donis"



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projection, which was first adopted in print in the 1482 Ulm Ptolemy. The world map is drawn on Ptolemy's first (conic) projection, and Taprobana (Sri Lanka) is on Marianus's plane projection, as it was in the Ulm Ptolemy. Stevens (1928) suggests that despite their great uniformity in design and layout, the maps are by two distinct hands, one who favored the "caterpillar" mountains of the Ulm Ptolemy and another who favored "hummock" mountains. Stevens also notes that some of the lettering is done with woodcut gothic type while elsewhere metal roman type is used. He concluded that the original concept for the atlas was probably to copy the 27 maps of the Ulm Ptolemy while inserting some toponyms in metal text.

There are 20 "modern" maps in the atlas, in their own section, which begins with a title page and contents leaf "In Claudii Ptolemei Supplementum... Pars Secunda." All but one of the modern maps are on the quadratic plane projection, the sole exception being the map of Scandinavia, which keeps the trapezoidal projection of its antecedent in the Ulm Ptolemy. All of the maps are graduated with latitude, but, unsurprisingly, without longitude. The map of Lorraine is the first map printed in more than two colors, as it was printed from three separate blocks in black, red, and brown or green (the third color varies depending on the copy). Martin Waldseemüller is thought to be the author of all of the modern maps, save the map of Switzerland "Tabula Nova Heremi Helvetioru".

Two maps from the modern suite, "Chorographia provincie Rheni" and "Chrographia Lotharingie", were likely drawn from "survey or first-hand knowledge" according to Skelton.

Evidence suggests Martin Waldseemüller and Mathias Ringmann began work on the atlas between 1504 and 1507. The work contains two allusions to its "six-year" delay in production, meaning that it was close to completion in 1507, but for some reason failed to be published. There has been considerable scholarship - and speculation - surrounding the early history and production of the book, for a concise and cogent study, see R.A. Skelton's essay in the 1966 TOT facsimile.

His introductory paragraph in that essay provides a good summary of the atlas, "Bibliographical Note", in *Claudius Ptolemaeus Geographia Strassburg 1513* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1966), page v:

The edition of Ptolemy's Cosmographia printed by Johann Schott at Strassburg in 1513 marks a turning-point in Renaissance geography. From the two Ulm editions of 1482 and 1486 (the only earlier ones produced north of the Alps) and from the Rome edition of 1490, it was separated by a



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span of time which, short though it was, saw the European discovery of the Americas and of the Indian Ocean. The modified version of the Ptolemaic world map introduced by Henricus Martellus at Florence about 1490, and followed in the Behaim globe of 1492, provided a convenient 'base-map' upon which the great discoveries in the East and West could be imposed or added. But the Ptolemaic atlas of 27 maps, constructed on a rigid model which was closely associated with the text of the Cosmographia and reproduced in numerous Latin manuscripts and in nine printed editions before 1513, could not be so easily adapted to the new world geography. Attempts to bring it up-to-date had been made by various editors, either by the addition of tabulae novellae (from 1482 onward) or of a modern world map (in the editions of 1508 and 1511), or (in the Venice edition of Bernardus Sylvanus, 1511) by redrawing the maps with outlines corrected from nautical charts. The uncritical character of these expedients is pointed out in an editorial note in the 1513 Ptolemy (sig. LV2), referring to the confusion created in the mind of readers - presumably of Sylvanus' edition - who often could not tell what was Ptolemaic and what modern. In the Strassburg edition of 1513 a different plan, explained in an address to the reader on the verso of the second titlepage, was deliberately adopted. In the first part the editors presented Ptolemy's Cosmographia with its 27 maps 'intact and separate in its ancient form' (ut in corruptior et selecta stet antiquas sua), and a supplement or second part contained twenty maps offering a representation of the three parts of the world more proper to our time'. For the first time the arrangement of an edition of Ptolemy plainly illustrated the distinction between ancient and modern geography; the Ptolemaic work was treated as a historical atlas; and the modern maps which complemented it were sufficiently numerous, systematic and novel in content to merit their description by Nordenskiöld as 'the first modern atlas of the world'.

In his discussion of the modern maps Skelton (1966) calls into question Stevens's conclusion about two hands being responsible for the woodcuts, saying (page xix):

We know that two of the modern maps (nos. 1 and 2) must have been put into their final form later, perhaps after 1509, and that in 1511 Waldseemüller was apparently still at work on the maps. Yet, apart from the variations noted above, the general uniformity of engraving style throughout the atlas (except in the map of Switzerland) points, in our view, to their execution in a single workshop, perhaps over no long period of time. It appears possible that Eames (1886) was not far wrong in asserting that most of the modern maps were engraved in 1507; if so, they are certainly Waldseemüller's. Of the printing houses in Strassburg, Grüninger's had the greatest experience in woodcut book-illustration, and it seems likely that he undertook the engraving of the maps. If he did,



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*by 1513 the blocks had presumably been conveyed to Schott -unless the maps had been printed
earlier in sufficient quantity for the edition of Ptolemy.*

Conclusion

Waldseemüller's book is a triumph of Renaissance mapmaking and signals the beginning of modern cartography. Atlas making would take two more great leaps during the 16th century, in 1540 with Münster's *Geographia*, and in 1570 with Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum*, but the cartographic project that was continued by the luminaries of the later 16th century was first conceived of and manifested in the present atlas.

Detailed Condition:

Folio. Expertly bound to style in antiqued full calf, covers ruled and tooled in blind with a complex latticework design of rolls and foliate tools; spine separated in seven compartments with raised bands. 47 woodblock maps (26 double-page and one single-page woodcut Ptolemaic maps, and 19 double-page and 1 single-page "modern" woodcut maps, the last of which (Lorraine) printed in three colors.) (Few wormholes filled. The map of Lorraine with some expert facsimile and some expert marginal repairs. Minor rust spots to the Ptolemaic world map with some expert marginal repairs. Wanting all text leaves save for the "Supplementum" contents leaf.)