COVENS & MORTIER’S ECTYPE OF DELISLE’S *CARTE DU MEXIQUE ET DE LA FLORIDE*

278. [MAP]. DELISLE, Guillaume [Insulanus] (after). COVENS, Johannes & Cornelis Mortier (publishers). *Carte du Mexique et de la Floride des Terres Angloises et des Isles Antilles. Du Cours des Environs de la Riviere de Mississipi. Dressée Sur un grand nombre de memoires principally sur ceux M® d’Iberville et le Sueur Par Guillaume De l’Isle Geographe de l’Academie Royale des Sciences. A Amsterdam Chez Iean Covens & Corneille Mortier Avec Privilege 1722.* [below cartouche] I. Stemmers Senior Sculp. [additional title across top, above neat line] *Tabula Geographica Mexicæ et Floridæ &c.* Amsterdam: Covens & Mortier, 1722. Copper-engraved map showing the area from the Great Lakes to Colombia and from the Gulf of California to Trinidad; on two joined sheets of laid paper; title at lower left within elaborate cartouche with allegorical figures, serpents, cornucopia; original outline coloring; neat line to neat line: 46.7 x 59.6 cm; map with title above: 48.5 x 59.6 cm; overall sheet size: 55 x 64.5 cm; dotted sailing lines around the Gulf of Mexico and Central America, between Cuba, Mexico, and the northern coast of South American, and the east coast of the future United States, showing the route of the Spanish galleons. Professionally backed with thin archival tissue, a fine copy in strong impression.


The present map makes scant geographic advance and is more important for studying the various reissues of Delisle’s prototype regional map and for gaining insight into the printing practices of eighteenth-century mapmaking. Marco van Egmond in “The Secrets of a Long Life: The Dutch Firm of Covens & Mortier (1685-1866) and Their Copper Plates” in *Imago Mundi*, Vol. 54 (2006), pp. 67-86, discusses the special role played by copper plates in the making amendments to the plates. The author refers to Coolie Verner’s “The Identification and Designation of Variants in the Study of Early Printed Maps” in *Imago Mundi* Vol. 19 (1965), pp. 100-105; “Carto-bibliographical Description: The Analysis of Variants in Maps Printed from Copperplates,” in *The American Cartographer*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (1974), pp. 77-87; etc. Marco van Egmond states:

Verner advised the sorting of similar-looking maps by studying the plate characteristics to distinguish among prototypes, derivatives, ectypes, and pirated maps. A prototype is defined as a map based on original mapping. A derivative is a map on which the principal geographical data has been drawn from one or more prototypes, but for which no effort has been made to reproduce the original exactly. An ectype is a replica of an original map which differs from the original
only in respect of specific bibliographical details. A “piracy” is a copy of a map that is so like its prototype that the two might be confused; indeed, we may presume that the pirated map is intended to deceive.

According to Verner’s classification, the present map is an ectype because it is a replica (re-engraving) of Delisle’s original map, with some bibliographical details changed as noted above. As the title cartouche indicates in the privilege statement, Covens and Mortier most likely had permission to copy Delisle’s original, but for some reason did not use or have access to the original plate, thereby necessitating the new engraving present here. Our map is another iteration of Delisle’s influential and long-lived map, versions of which survived for many decades (see herein).

Marco van Egmond gives an overview of Covens & Mortier firm: “The publishing house of Covens & Mortier manufactured Dutch cartographical material throughout the eighteenth century and well into the nineteenth century, producing thousands of maps and dozens of atlases. The foundation of the firm had been laid by Pieter Mortier (1661-1711), when in 1685 he set himself up as a bookseller in Amsterdam. Four generations later, in 1866, the business came to an end with the retirement of Cornelis Joannes Covens (1806-1890).” See also Tooley’s *Dictionary of Mapmakers* (revised edition), Vol. I, pp. 307-308 (Covens) & pp. 353-354 (Delisle); Vol. III, p. 285 (Mortier).

($600-1,200)