276. [MAP]. DELISLE, Guillaume [Insulanus]. Carte du Mexique et de la Floride des Terres Angloises et des Isles Antilles du Cours et des Environs de la Riviere de Mississipi. Dressée Sur un Grand nombre de memoires principalement sur de ceux de M.B. d'Iberville et le Suere Par Guillaume Del'Isle Geographe de l'Academie Royale des Sciées A Paris Chéz l'Auteur Rue des Canettes pres de St Sulpice avec Privilege du Roy pô. 20. ans 1703 [below cartouche] C. Simanneau, fecit. Paris, 1703. 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 with watermark and countermark (PG with heart); title at lower left within elaborate cartouche with allegorical figures, serpents, cornucopia; original outline coloring; neat line to neat line: 47.5 x 64.5 cm; overall sheet size: 55 x 77 cm. Upper blank margin lightly soiled, five small holes in blank margins (likely from much earlier framing), one old closed tear in right blank margin professionally repaired, overall a very good copy with strong color retention. Two contemporary ink notes on verso. Very rare in first issue.


Martin & Martin, p. 50 (color plate) & p. 92 (black & white plate), p. 93 & #14 (text), citing the Quai de l’Horloge imprint of 1703: “At the time Delisle prepared his map, much new information on the area had become available. First-hand reports from the survivors of La Salle’s expedition, as well as from the French explorers and colonizers of the Gulf region like Bienville and d’Iberville, were carefully studied. It was the first printed map to portray accurately the course and mouth of the Mississippi River.” Phillips, America, p. 405. Phillips,

Guillaume Delisle published maps of America from 1700 onwards. At that time he had not yet been elected to the “Académie royale des Sciences,” but he would be in 1702 as a student of astronomy, “even though he was not an observer.” In fact, he had received a joint training: one type with his father Claude, the historian/geographer for whom he prepared maps and globes, and another with Jean-Dominique Cassini, who taught him astronomy. It was necessarily the latter who persuaded him to use the figures of latitude and longitude set out by the Académie des Sciences, to compile documents which would renew French cartography.

A recent work refers to the Delisles as continuing the work of Nicolas Sanson [see herein], which is true as far as their pedagogical effort is concerned, but which is more debatable as far as method goes. For while Sanson used existing cartographic models, which he developed further using textual information, the Delisles began by considering the validity of the models, renewing them by incorporating new observations. When such observations were lacking, they did not neglect any other source of information, whether old or new, but tried to work out new cartographic models using available texts. Nicolas Sanson had already used textual information, following a system that he may have passed on to Claude Delisle.... [The printed maps of the Delisles] give only a faint idea of their intense activity in re-working their cartographic ideas.... The *Carte du Mexique et de la Floride* of 1703, which traces the frontiers of Florida, defines the Spanish possessions and does not forget to show the division of Saint-Domingue between France and Spain.
This map, which is one of the three great maps of regional North America conceived by Delisle during the first quarter of the eighteenth century, identifies the colonial affiliations that defined the destiny of North America by the end of the century. It is yet another example of a French “PowerPoint” presentation. As is often the case, the British North American Colonies are shown hemmed in by the Appalachians and crowding the Atlantic coast. The status of present-day South Carolina is dubious, the coloring implying that it may belong to Spain. To the north and west of New England, Canada confines the British colonies even further. In the Southwest, French “Floride” extends to the Rio Grande and south to present-day Brownsville. The northern boundary of “Floride” is indicated, except that it abuts Canada, thereby giving France possession of the entire middle part of the continent. Various remarks and locations for Native American tribes are shown, indicating, for example, the locations of the “Apache Vaqueros,” the “Apache Navaio,” and the Tiguas. In the French possessions many tribes and their villages are indicated, for example, the famous Cenis in Texas, the Apalache in Georgia and Florida, and the “Kicapou” near the Great Lakes (their original location before they were pushed all the way to Mexico). Delisle’s debts to Iberville’s explorations are frequently shown on this map.

Jean Delanglez and others have suggested that Claude Delisle, father of Guillaume, was the one who conducted the research on the maps, whereas Guillaume was the one who actually drew the maps and engraved the plates. Obviously the maps were a collaborative effort of the Delisle firm. See Delanglez, “The Sources of the Delisle Map of America, 1703” on *Mid-America* 25 (New Series, Vol. 14, no. 4, October 1943), pp. 276-278.

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