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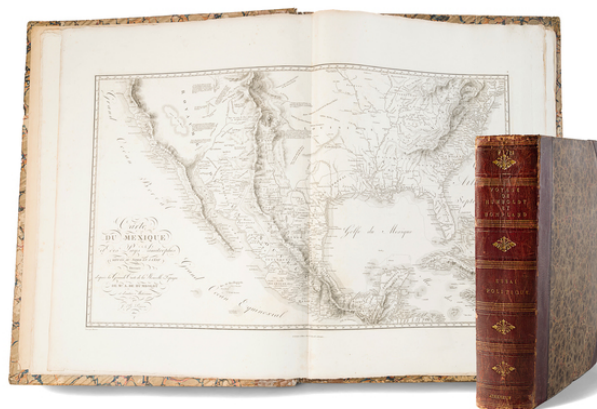
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**(Humboldt Atlas and Text) Geographique et Physique du Royaume de Nouvelle-Espagne  
[with quarto text:] Essai Politique de la Royaume de la Nouvelle-Espagne**

**Stock#:** 99796  
**Map Maker:** Humboldt  
**Date:** 1811 [i.e. 1808?] - 1812  
**Place:** Paris  
**Color:** Uncolored  
**Condition:** VG  
**Size:** 18.5 x 24.25 inches (atlas)  
**Price:** \$ 34,500.00



**Description:**

***With Suppressed Dedication to Charles IV***

***"A Truly Magnificent Cartographic Achievement" - Wheat.***

***"The Best Representation of Texas That Had Thus Far Appeared" - Streeter.***

***"Of Superlative California Importance" - Howes.***

A monument of geography and a masterpiece of American cartography, Alexander von Humboldt's Political Essay on the Kingdom of New Spain is a key work in the mapping of Mexico and the American Southwest. We offer here the luxurious large quarto edition of the text accompanied with the folio atlas.

The present example includes a rare variant of the first edition of the *Essai Politique*, with the complete suppressed dedication to Charles IV present (initial dedication leaf plus 4-page dedicatory text by Humboldt dated in the spring of 1808). The atlas has the variant title page dated 1812. The dedication is significant in that it was Spain's Charles IV who allowed Humboldt to travel freely through the Spanish colonies in America. When Napoleon invaded Spain and installed his brother Joseph on the Spanish throne in 1808, it is believed that Humboldt himself suppressed the original 1808 first edition of the text. The first regularly issued editions appeared in 1811 in both French and German issues. Though our example contains the 1811 title pages in the quarto text volumes, it is notable and bibliographically interesting for retaining the the extensive dedication to the Spanish monarch, suggesting that the present 1811 quarto text is actually made of sheets from the rare 1808 abortive edition.



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This important work contains the most complete and accurate picture of the natural resources of Mexico available. It also contains references to the early explorations of the Californias. And shows much cartographic detail in the present-day American Southwest. Bill Reese praised this work, noting the importance of the atlas:

*... the best overview of the Spanish Southwest at the end of the 18th century. Humboldt spent five years in the Spanish dominions of the New World, from 1799 to 1804, and recorded his experiences... The atlas, which was published separately, appeared only in a Paris edition. It is one of the seminal cartographical works of Western Americana, most important for Humboldt's great "Carte Generale du Royaume de la Nouvelle Espagne," originally executed during his stay in Mexico in 1803-04, and covering two large folio double sheets... Schwartz and Ehrenberg state that it remained "the standard map of the Great Basin region until Fremont's explorations 35 years later." - Best of the West.*

Humboldt's New Spain map is an important Texas item, extending from the "Comté de Natchitoches" in the east, to the top of the Gulf of California in the west, beginning just below present El Paso in the north, and south to the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. The Presidio de Bejar is clearly marked "Capitale de la Province de Texas" and most of the important towns, settlements and Indian tribes are noted.

In addition to the massive map of New Spain, there is a fine double-sheet map of the whole of North America south of 42 degrees latitude, as well as three important maps relating to the Santa Fe trade, these latter illustrate the route from Mexico City to Durango, Durango to Chihuahua, and Chihuahua to Santa Fe, respectively.

Wheat describes Humboldt's massive map of New Spain as "a truly magnificent cartographic achievement." Adding that although the map was dated 1811, it was drawn in Mexico City in 1803 while the geographer was visiting New Spain:

*...he decided that it would require too large a sheet to include on his main map both California on the west and Texas on the east, so he left those areas for an overall map to be engraved for him by J. B. Poirson in Paris...*

Thomas Streeter includes an extensive and useful note on the important Texas aspects of Humboldt's General Map of New Spain in his Texas bibliography, including some interesting information about the printing history of the *Atlas Geographique*, as well as notes on how Pike and Arrowsmith copied from Humboldt:



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*Humboldt's Carte... de la Nouvelle Espagne extends from the 15th to the 42nd parallel and from about the meridian of Natchitoches to the head of the Gulf of California. It is entered here under the year 1809, the date, according to the inscription below the neat line, it was "perfectionné," and appears as map No. 1 in the Humboldt atlases with the 1809, 1811, and 1812 title pages...*

*The representation of the course of Texas rivers... shows the vague ideas of Texas geography held at the time. There are two imaginary rivers between the Sabine and Galveston Bay; the Trinity and Colorado are shown having an almost due north and south direction; the Brazos and Guadalupe appear as minor streams; the San Antonio flows directly into Espiritu Santo Bay... instead of into the Guadalupe, and the mouth of the latter is shown as only a few miles south of the mouth of the Colorado. Several presidios and villages are shown, and such natural features as "Montagnes de San Saba." Notwithstanding these defects, it is without question the best representation of Texas that had thus far appeared...*

*Humboldt's bitter charges against Aaron Arrowsmith, and rather gentle chiding of Pike, for copying without credit from the Carte Generale... should be mentioned. There seems to be no doubt but that Pike copied the Mexican portions of the Humboldt map... Now that it seems to be fairly well established that the Humboldt Carte Générale was actually published in 1809, or a year or so before the Arrowsmith New Map of Mexico, there is no longer a problem of how it was available for use by Arrowsmith...*

The atlas is complete, with all the maps, profiles and tables:

- 1. & 1 bis. Map of New Spain [on two double-sheets]: *Carte Generale du Royaume de la Nouvelle Espagne*. Dated 1811.
- 2. *Carte du Mexique et Des Pays Limitrophes*. Dated 1811.
- 3. Valley of Mexico: *Carte de la Vallée de Mexico et des Montagnes Voisines esquissée sur les Lieux en 1804, par Don Louis Martin redigée et corrigée en 1807*.
- 4. *Points de partage et communications projetées entre le Grand Océan et l'Océan Atlantique* [8 maps on single sheet]
- 5. Route from Acapulco to Mexico City: *Carte Réduite de la Route d'Acapulco a Mexico*
- 6., 7. & 8. Route from Mexico City to Santa Fe [3 maps on single double-sheet]: *Carte de la Route qui mene depuis la Capitale de la Nouvelle Espagne jusqu'a S. Fe du Nouveau Mexique. Dressée sur les Journaux de Don Pedro de Rivera et en partie sur les Observations Astronomiques de Mr. de Humboldt*.
- 9. Veracruz west to Mexico City: *Carte réduite de la Partie orientale de la Nouvelle Espagne depuis*



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*le Plateau de la Ville de Mexico jusqu'au Port de la Veracruz.*

- 10. *Carte des Fausses Positions de Mexico, Acapulco, Veracruz et du Pie d'Orizaba.*
- 11. *Plan du Port de Veracruz.*
- 12. *Tableau physique de la pente Orientale du Plateau de la Nouvelle Espagne (Chemin de Mexico a Veracruz par Puebla et Xalapa). Cross-section.*
- 13. *Tableau physique de la pente Occidentale du Plateau de la Nouvelle Espagne (Chemin de Mexico a Acapulco). Cross-section.*
- 14. *Tableau du Plateau central des Montagnes du Mexique, entre les 19 et 21 de Latitude boréale, (Chemin de Mexico a Guanajuato). Cross-section.*
- 15. *Profil du Canal de Huehuetoca (Desague Real). Cross section. Aquatint in sepia.*
- 16. *Volcans de la Puebla vus depuis la Ville de Mexico. Single sheet. Aquatint in sepia.*
- 17. *Pie d'Orizaba, vu depuis la Foret de Xalapa. Aquatint in sepia.*
- 18. *Plan du Port d' Acapulco. Dressé par les Officiers de la Marine Royale de S.M.C. embarques sur les Corvettes la Descubiera et l'Atravida l'année 1791.*
- 19. *Carte des Diverses Routes par Lesquelles les Richesses Métalliques refluent d'un continent a l'autre, desinee par Poirson. [map and 4 tables on single sheet].*
- 20. *Tableau comparatif de l'étendue territoriale des intendances de la Nouvelle-Espagne.*

A beautiful example of this cartographic landmark, a cornerstone of Western Americana cartography, accompanied by the large quarto text in French, including the complete suppressed dedicatory leaves to Charles IV.

**Detailed Condition:**

Folio atlas bound in contemporary marbled boards, rebacked at an early date in half tan cloth. Green morocco label on front board: "Atlas Geograph. et Physique de Mexicain / Humboldt." Untrimmed. Likely a large paper example. Corners and edges of binding worn. Spine cloth with some repairs, especially at extremities. Occasional minor foxing. Otherwise a nice clean example. [4], 4 pages, 20 maps, 4 color-tinted single-sheet profiles, graphs and charts (on 28 sheets). Complete. Quarto text: 2 volumes bound in 1: [14], xcii, [2], iv, [3]-350, [6]; [8], 351-904, [2] pages. Both half titles present. With the suppressed dedication leaves to Charles IV present (see below). Contemporary half morocco and marbled boards, gilt title on spine. Unobtrusive defunct 19th-century British library mark on spine (small call number at head of spine, and "Athenaeum" at toe of spine). Small ink shelf mark stamp on front pastedown. No other library marks. Spine ends a bit rubbed. Occasional fox mark. Withal, internally very nice indeed. Overall a very good set.