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The United States by early Geographical-Statistical Atlases: A comparison of *Historical, Chronological, and Geographical American Atlas* (Philadelphia, 1822) and *Atlas von Amerika* (Weimar, 1823-29)

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Abstract:

In 1801, French exile E. de Las Cases (under the pseudonym 'Le Sage') published in London the *Atlas historique, chronologique, géographique et généalogique*, which combined condensed historical and geographical data with maps. This novel concept was an instant and sustained commercial success that created a new class of atlases (and single sheet prints). Key characteristics of this new type of atlas were wide ranged yet (relatively) brief text paragraphs printed literally around the map instead of the backside or on other pages.

The 1817 version of C.V. *Lavoisne's Complete Genealogical, Historical, Chronological, And Geographical Atlas* (London, first edition 1814), a world and history atlas based on Le Sage's principles, in 1820 was used by the Pennsylvania publisher Carey & Lea to style their *Historical, Chronological, and Geographical American Atlas* (Philadelphia 1822, re-issued 1823 and 1827). Revising the London edition, focusing on the Americas, and enlarging the content by several maps, this became one of the first commercially successful hand-colored atlases in the United States.

The success of the new atlas type in France, the United Kingdom and in America prompted the leading German cartographic publisher, Geographisches Institut Weimar, to launch an emulation of the Carey & Lea atlas. Unlike the American edition of the British template, which both appeared as bounded atlases, the German atlas was released in instalments since 1823. The death of text author G. Hassel in 1829 stopped the release of further instalments, leaving the few custom bounded volumes (each of the known copies differs in number s and editions of sheets) arguably the rarest nineteenth century atlas on North America.

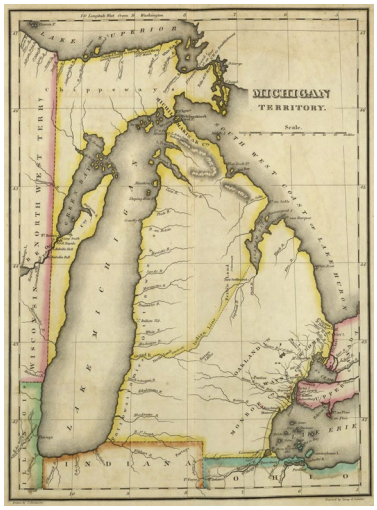

Figure 1 (left): Michigan Territory. Carey & Lea (1822), Map No. 36; Figure 2 (right): Das Gebiet Michigan und das Nordwestliche Gebiet. Geographisches Institut Weimar (1828), unnumbered sheet.

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This research focusses on an in-depth comparison of similarities and differences in the cartographic scope and design as well as the content of the pertaining text paragraphs of the sheets on North America – modern United States and Canada – in the completed Carey & Lea atlas (1822) and the never completed Geographisches Institut Weimar atlas installments (1823-29). It is argued that the hitherto characterization of the Weimar atlas as ‘largely a copy’ of the Philadelphia atlas, that concedes just a few new sheets, needs to be revised. The unfinished Weimar atlas not only comes with an updated engraving and clearer color scheme by cartographer C.F. Weiland but also significantly improves the scope by replacing Carey & Lea sheets with only sketchy content on the west and north of North America byh conceptually improved Weimar designs based on latest explorations and developments of the administrative developments.

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