

# AN OUTLINE OF THE DANCKERTS ATLAS HISTORY

Gyuri DANKU<sup>1</sup> – Zoltán SÜMEGHY<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Map Department,

National Széchényi Library, Budapest, Hungary

danku@oszk.hu

<sup>2</sup> Department of Climatology and Landscape Ecology,

University of Szeged, Szeged, Hungary

sumeghy@geo.u-szeged.hu



## A DANCKERTS CÉG ATLASZKIADÁSÁNAK VÁZLATOS TÖRTÉNETE

### Összefoglalás

A Danckerts család atlaszkiadásáról meglehetősen hiányosak az ismeretek. Ennek a töredékes kartográfia-történeti és életrajzi adatok mellett az a legfőbb oka, hogy a kor szokásának megfelelően az egyes Danckerts atlaszokat, illetve a bennük foglalt térképlapokat nem datálták sem a szerzők, sem pedig a kiadók. Ezért csakis több különféle módszer komplex, együttes, s ilyen formában újszerű alkalmazásával lehet megkísérelni az atlaszkészítés és -fejlesztés rekonstruálását, amelynek első lépése és alappillére a térképek relatív és abszolút kronológiájának a meghatározása. Ez sok éves kutatómunkánk eredményeképp mára elkészült. Ennek, illetve a rendelkezésünkre álló életrajzi adatok alapján tanulmányunkban kísérletet teszünk az általános földrajzi világatlasz építés Danckerts-i koncepciójának bemutatására. Az ilyen típusú atlaszkiadásnak és -fejlesztésnek fő jellegzetessége a döntő mértékben családi alapon történő szerveződés (ami meghatározta munkánk kereteit, egyúttal több vonatkozásban meg is könnyítette azt).

Vizsgálataink eredményei azt mutatják, hogy a Danckerts cég atlaszkiadásának kezdetét majd egy évtizeddel későbbre kell tolni, mint ahogy azt eddig a mértékadó nemzetközi szakirodalom feltételezte. Bemutatjuk, hogyan jutott el a Danckerts család 1690-re egy tudatos térképkészítési stratégia révén addig, hogy önálló, kizárólag saját térképekből összeállított általános földrajzi világatlasszal léphessen a piacra. Végkövetjük az atlasz fejlesztésének, bővítésének lépéseit (26, 30, 37, 50, 60, 75, 100 lapos művek), és kísérletet teszünk a térképkészítésben és az atlaszkiadás menetében időközönként megmutatkozó kisebb-nagyobb hullámvölgyek értelmezésére, a kezdetektől a cég megszűnésig. Főhírójuk továbbá Eduard és Johannes Danckerts személyében az atlaszkészítésben két olyan családtag szerepére a figyelmet, akikről keveset tudott vagy éppenséggel téves ismereteket adott ezidáig a szakmatörténet.

### Summary

There are rather large gaps in our knowledge about the atlas publishing activity of the Danckerts family. Besides the fragmented biographical and cartographic data the main reason for this is the Danckerts atlases and maps following the custom of the age have not been dated by the authors or the publishers. Only by using a complex and thus unconventional research integrating several methods can we attempt the reconstruction of the atlas-making and developing procedure. The first step and main basis of this research is the definition of the absolute and relative chronology of the maps. After several years of work this part has been finished. On the basis of our findings and the available biographical data in this study we attempt to present the Danckerts conception of general geographical atlas construction. The main characteristic of such atlas-publishing and developing activity is that it was organised on a family basis, which defined the limits of our work but also made it easier.

Our findings show that the widely accepted beginning date of the Danckerts firm's atlas-publishing history should be reconsidered and put almost to a decade later. We present how, due to a conscious mapmaking strategy, the Danckerts family got to the point of entering the market with a general geographical atlas consisting wholly of self-made maps by 1690. We follow the steps of the development and extension of the atlas (volumes with 26, 30, 37, 50, 60, 75, 100 items) and attempt to interpret the temporal slowdowns from the beginning until the closing down of the firm in 1727. We also present two family members, Eduard and Johannes Danckerts, whose role in the making of the atlas up to now was little or even wrongly known in history of cartography.

## Introduction

Our knowledge on the production and publishing history of the Danckerts Atlas has been rather incomplete. Only few records relating to the activity of the Danckerts firm and to the life of the members of the family have survived (e.g. GREGORII, 1713; KLEERKOOPEL – VAN STOCKUM, 1914–1916; KEUNING, 1955; VAN EEGHEN, 1965–1978; KOEMAN, 1969; WALLER, 1974; DE VRIES, 1986; FRENCH, 1999; DANKU, 2004; VAN DER KROGT – DANKU, 2004). The atlases and the maps themselves also contain few information concerning the background of map production. As KOEMAN (1969) notes: „It is very difficult to establish the year of publication as the younger Danckertses never dated their maps and title pages.” This is mostly why we have possessed quite a hazy and sketchy knowledge regarding even the most basic issues: when the individual maps of the Atlas were made and by whom; how the Atlas has developed and enlarged; how many types of the Atlas were actually published; what sources the compilers and engravers-etchers of particular maps used.

Since the history of the Danckerts Atlas is based on the chronology of maps, therefore the principal part of our research consisted of dating the preparation times and the intervals of the maps in the atlases, obtained with joint application of the methods used. (DANKU – SÜMEGHY, 2007).

## Methods

The first and main method comprises a systematic study of the traces of changes on each Danckerts map. We call this method a state method. In addition we have examined each atlas map to find out, establish and record the deliberate changes concerning the content of maps and noting incidental ones of the map plates hoping that with this procedure a chronological sequence of the examples of each map – their relative age – could be established.

A second method is the style method that is the distinction of the engraving style of each map and of each individual element of the maps' contents from which we had hoped the separate and independent successions of when the maps were made could be established.

The third method is the background history method that is to collect those events and facts, mainly events and facts of wars of the period (ca. 1670–ca. 1730) which could assist in dating in timescale the maps or states of maps as much as possible.

The fourth method is the source map method that is finding those maps which were used as source for the compiling and engraving of the Danckerts maps. This method as we had calculated would give a terminus post quem chronology of each particular map.

The fifth method consists in collecting information on the biography and publishing activity of the Danckerts family and also on the activities of contemporary map and atlas making firms and publishing houses, first and foremost on those of Amsterdam in the period (e.g. De Wit, Visscher, Allard, Mortier). We call this method biography and trade method.

The first two methods can be considered as tools of developing relative sequences of maps, the third to fifth ones, however, as devices in absolute dating, that is anchoring relative successions in absolute time.

And with a sixth method, the method of analysis and evaluation, we have been comparing, connecting, cross-checking, analysing and evaluating the vast amount of data collected and the results obtained with the 1st–5th methods in the six years of research (SÜMEGHY – DANKU, 1999; DANKU – SÜMEGHY, 2007).

## The development of the Danckerts Atlas

On the basis of the above-mentioned methods used in this research and the biographical data a rough idea can be formed of the producing and publishing history of the Danckerts Atlas. This picture cannot be considered whole and final but in many respects it is the first that provides detailed knowledge. The story presented here is based on guesswork at some points but in all cases it is in accordance with our knowledge so far.

Different researchers relate the beginning of the Danckerts Atlas's production to different dates (e.g. TIELE, 1884; KOEMAN, 1969). Our investigations show that these data, e.g. ca. 1680 (KOEMAN, 1969), widely accepted in the literature of map history, need correction. On the basis of currently available data it seems that Justus I Danckerts (1635–1701), a book and print publisher in Amsterdam, who till then was only a second-rate figure in map publishing, decided on the production of an atlas consisting of his own maps in the first half of the 1680's only. This decision was probably influenced by several factors. Probably the most important of these was the fact that his elder sons Theodorus I (1660/1663–ca. 1727 ?) and Cornelis II (1664–1717) reached adulthood in these years and learned the basics of map-making, especially copper engraving and etching, which were considered indispensable in commercial cartography at that time. Considering details from the history of Amsterdam map- and atlas-making the decision of Justus I corresponds to the tendency of that age; besides the two most significant major firms grown out of the shadow of the two giants (the Hondius–Janssonius and the Blaeu) and already having an own atlas in the market (the Visscher and the De Wit), in the 80's other firms also started to appear with more or less ambition in the field of geographical map and atlas publishing.

After the production of some maps in the beginning of the 80's (e.g. *Circulus Saxonicus*, *Portugallia*), which we could call experimental, the atlas maps of the Danckerts were made, from ca. 1682–83, at an accelerating pace. On the basis of style investigations it seems that by dividing the tasks the firm managed to produce 22 maps by 1686–87. The privilege of 12 September 1684 (KLEERKOOPEL – VAN STOCKUM, 1914–1916) seems to confirm that by the middle of the 80's the family felt itself prepared for long-term planning and providing proper protection for its ready and future works including maps for the next 15 years.

After 1686–87 it seems there was a short pause in the creation of folio-sized maps. We don't know the cause of this but considering that the firm was involved in other activities as well (production of wall maps, art and historical prints and book publishing) this pause might plausibly been explained.

According to our investigations the production of atlas maps started again in the years 1688–89 only. The earliest volumes already published by the firm as their own atlases are also known to be originated in these years. The volumes now guarded in Vienna and Budapest have an original title page and printed index and besides 20 and 21 own maps they contain 5 and 4 others respectively, which were made by other firms (one by Visscher and the others by De Wit) and are in accordance with the index.

The first 26-sheet geographical atlas of the firm containing only self-created maps could only have been completed by 1690 at the earliest. According to the detailed investigation of the maps the atlases described in detail in *Atlantes Neerlandici* (KOEMAN, 1969) under the entries Dan1 and Dan2 are probably volumes from the year 1690 or after.

Of course we cannot exclude the possibility of the firm publishing an atlas with 15–18 maps some time around 1685–87, consisting only of maps of their own making, but there has been no evidence of this. A rather strong argument against this assumption is that the earliest known atlas closely follows – both in structure and content – the atlases with 26–30 maps by the De Wit firm. The title page design also follows the same pattern and it should not be forgotten either that the first two known Danckerts atlases contained 3 and 4

maps by De Wit respectively. The title page imprint found in a later made Danckerts atlas, now guarded in the Beineke Library of Yale University, seems to support this theory. The specialty of this particular title page is that the imprint label that is the name and address of Justus Danckerts was printed from a small separate printing plate and was pasted onto an original title page by De Wit – which shows Atlas Titan in a reversed image to its counterpart on the title page version by the Danckerts. But the really interesting thing is that the whole sheet of this particular title page seems to be a very early imprint which must have been made still before 1690. Thus it seems to represent a very early, hybrid version of the Danckerts title page, which probably originates in the second half of the 1680's, the period before the Danckerts firm's own title page version was produced.

Therefore, it seems that in the first period of its production, until about 1690, the Danckerts atlas was developed following the structure and contents of the standard De Wit atlases with 26–30 map sheets. That means Justus I first aimed at creating a complete geographical atlas of the world with only a small number of maps and the evident model may have been the well-known De Wit atlases with the same number of map sheets. Another evidence is that either the world map, either the continent maps and the most important country maps that couldn't be missing of any atlas (e.g. Gallia, Hispania, Germania, Italia) were made following their counterparts by De Wit – although in the case of some elements the use of other sources e.g. Visscher, Sanson (GREGORII, 1713) and Jaillot maps is recognisable.

We have no information on whether such increase in the number of the Danckerts maps happened with the consent of Fr. de Wit or against his interests. De Wit might have only realised later, in 1688–89, that dangerous rivals were appearing in the market (Danckerts, Van Schagen, Allard, Valk, Mortier), in many instances by copying his maps. Of course the request of De Wit for a privilege in 1689 (KOEMAN, 1969) might have something to do with this. In any case, by 1689–90 the Danckerts firm was ready with a general geographical world atlas containing only self-made maps.

The next atlas type containing 30 items was probably completed by 1690–92, followed up by a 37-sheet one in 1692–94, a 50-sheet one in 1694–96 and a 60-sheet one in the last years of the century, between 1698 and 1700. This enumeration suggests a relatively continuous and untroubled development of the atlases with a continuous increase in the number of pages. But on the basis of the complex investigation we can deduce several periods of temporary pauses, slowdowns or on the contrary, an increased pace of work. Because of the lack of enough firm data, the picture we draw below is a conditional one, a version of the events to a high probability, which we publish with the intent of sharing our knowledge about the possible details of atlas development.

In the period between 1689–92, besides the making of maps serving the extension of the general world atlas (e.g. Dania, Helvetia, Bohemia) we can witness the production of maps illustrating areas that can be considered the theatre of war of the Great Alliance War between 1688–1697, such as e.g. Lotharingia, Episcopatus Leodiensis and Ducatus Sabaudia. Also under the influence of political and war events and in relation with these the settlement name addition of the already completed Britannia map was more than once updated, the English parts in 1688–89 and the Irish parts in 1689–91.

At about 1691–93 we experienced another downturn, the production of fewer maps. As for the reason, again, we can only guess. The biography data and the style investigations suggest that this slowdown can be related to the death of Justus II (?–1692). We know practically nothing of the life of Justus II, except for the date of his burial (8 January 1692) and his young age („jonghman”) (KLEERKOOPEL – VAN STOCKUM, 1914–1916). But a closer inspection of the style of one group of the Danckerts maps, the maps of Russia, Turcicum Imperium, Lotharingia, Episcopatus Leodiensis, Dania, Helvetia, Ducatus Sabaudia, Circulus Franconicus, or shortly, the Russia group – as we named it – suggests

that Justus II partook in the production of the plate of this group. Apart from two exceptions (Dania and Helvetia) the representation of the relief and forests in maps belonging to this group is quite uniform meanwhile characteristically different from any other etcher-engraver's style who partook in the creation of the Danckerts maps. However, this style (namely the method of forest and relief depiction on these maps and the engraving and etching of these map contents) suddenly and utterly disappears in the years 1691–92. Taking into account the fact that it doesn't appear earlier nor later it seems logical to relate this style to Justus II.

Thus we suppose that the slowdown of map-making in about 1691–93 came about due to the unexpected demise of Justus II after an active period of 2–4 years. This tragic family event might have ruined the family work order developed in the previous years. It would also provide an explanation as to the downturn in an otherwise very favourable period when the European war events provided a good opportunity to produce and sell new maps of countries and territories as theatres of war.

Our atlas and state investigations seem to support our suggestion concerning the production, described above. In these very years (1691–93) in two maps some title modifications occurred, and in both cases the name Theodorus is changed to Justus. As such changes cannot have been done in an earlier period, which means they cannot be related to Justus II, we assume that they came about after his death and are probably signs of a redistribution of the family fortune, arising from the new situation. In this period, besides the production of 4–5 new maps, mainly the amendment of old plates was going on, which had become a necessity in the case of many older maps.

It was Eduard (?–after 1721) taking up the work that seems to have solved the problem of replacing the suddenly demised young family member but only a year or two later. On the basis of atlas- style- and source map examinations we think that Eduard might have taken part in the engraving and etching of maps from 1691 at the earliest but probably only from 1692. Presumably related to his joining, the rate of mapmaking accelerated from the years 1692–93 again especially with the production of new maps of provinces in Spanish Netherlands affected by the Great Alliance War. From that time on mapmaking rate apparently kept on at a high level for 3–4 years.

It is important to note that at present we only have one piece of biography datum of Eduard Danckerts as well. This single piece of information is however very relevant and reveals the significant role of Eduard in the history of the family mapmaking. The KLEERKOOPEL – VAN STOCKUM (1914–1916) biography shows that in 1721 Eduard, as uncle and guardian, was witness at the wedding of Theodorus II (ca. 1701–1727), son of Cornelis II. According to experts of the age's language use, the expressions used in the document suggest a close relative. This datum seems to confirm the picture formed on the basis of style-investigations. The map styles of the approximately 15-year period after 1692 show that the role of Eduard Danckerts became dominant in the map plate engraving and etching. First with Theodorus I in the period between 1692–1700, later, in the years after 1700, with Johannes Danckerts (?–1712) he participated in production of lots of maps; moreover, he had a key role in this work. All these data suggest a close relationship, which underlines our assumption that Eduard Danckerts was a family member. He too may have been the son of Justus I and, similarly to Johannes, was probably born later in the beginning or middle of the 1670's. Being born later would explain why neither his nor Johannes's name is included in the privilege of 1684 and also why we cannot find their styles on the maps made between 1681 and 1691.

As for the period between 1696 and 1700 again we can only rely on assumptions. Yet, it seems certain that by the end of the 1690's the plates of the early maps had been in use for 10–15 years thus many of them, for instance those of the continent maps, needed extensive reworking. These all are confirmed by our atlas and state investigations so these

large-scale amendment works might be an explanation for a lesser downturn in the years 1696–98.

The marriage and moving of Cornelis II in 1696, Justus I making his will in 1696 and the expiry of the privilege in 1699 suggest that in these years the family work order was modified again. The second half of the 1690's might have most probably been the time when Johannes joined in the making of atlas maps. That may have happened in relation with the then already old (over 60) Justus I withdrawing from actual work as is suggested by the fact that he had made his will. He may even have left the management tasks to Theodorus I.

The etching and engraving style of Johannes is extremely characteristic and uniform but even the survey of a large number of maps could not show any clear gradual changes that could be related to different time periods. Most of the maps etched and engraved by him were published under the name of Cornelis II, but he also made maps together with Theodorus I and Eduard. However, according to our investigations these could not have been made before 1700. Johannes mostly participated in the preparation of lettering, his relief and forest styles appear on much less maps, mostly on those that were published under his own name, which were surely made after 1700 (Transylvania, Hungaria & Graecia – plate 2, Ducatus Wirtenbergensis).

The will of Justus I suggests that in the end of the century Justus I still had the final word in several affairs, like for instance in determining the future activities of the family firm. The majority of the maps made after his death in 1701 were surprisingly still published under his name, which is quite unusual and could not be explained without assuming a decision originating in earlier years. Especially if we consider that by that time, after some 15 years of map production, his elder sons Theodorus I and Cornelis II have become renowned members of the Amsterdam map-making and publishing world. Thus it is hard to imagine that the fame of Justus I would have been the only reason to produce and publish maps under his name for years after his death. A more likely assumption, though there's no written evidence, is that the privilege expired in 1699 was extended still in the life of Justus I in a way that it supported the interests of Eduard and Johannes as well. It is barely believable that the younger brothers, participating in the preparation of so many maps between 1700 and 1710 and being family members, only got a salary for their work. It seems more probable that it was in their interests that a privilege might have been renewed in that form, under the name of Justus I, to help selling the maps made by the then still young and less known brothers. A larger-scale reworking of several plates, including the last amendment of the world map and the four continent maps, was probably also decided still in the life of Justus I in the second half of the 90s. Similarly the decision in the end of the century to create new world and continent map plates was probably made together with Justus I as well. Relatively quickly, by around 1702–05, the earlier versions, however, were totally superseded by these new maps, the 2nd world and continent map plates, in the Danckerts atlases.

After 1701, a new era began in the history of atlas-making. Besides the death of Justus I and Johannes reaching adulthood, the new war, the war of Spanish Succession now extending to the whole of Europe (and some other parts of the world) may have played an important part in this. In the first years of the new century maps of the theatres of war (or areas that could be sold as such) were made and published one after the other. First those of the Italian states, the maps of southern Netherlands and then the German provinces were made. In many cases the year of publishing makes it likely – though there is no clear-cut evidence – that the maps were created in relation with war events (e.g. Portugal – plate 2, Spanish regions, the Mosel–Saar area, Transylvania, Württemberg; and even the map covering the Caribbean, published under the name of Cornelis II could have been made in relation with events of the colonial war in this area). The maps were

made by the four brothers, Theodorus I, Cornelis II, Eduard and Johannes dividing the tasks among themselves. The role of Cornelis II is the haziest or obscurest of all but on the basis of style examinations his actual participation can also be presumed.

In the case of maps made after ca. 1706 the marks of Albert Schut's style can be identified on the engravings of some published under the name of Cornelis II. The fact that Albert's name appeared on some of these maps indicates his increasing role in etching and engraving. It seems that he had made his earliest maps (e.g. Polonia – plate 2, Stiria, Norvegia) together with Johannes (and surely with Cornelis II) but around 1708–1712 he has already engraved also a few Danckerts maps alone (e.g. Provinces).

In the years between 1700 and 1712 (approx. until the death of Johannes) the firm managed to increase the number of atlas map sheets from 60 to 100. This is the explanation for the atlases with 75 and 100 sheets getting finished still in the life of Johannes.

Several new prints from these years indicate the active initiative role of Cornelis II in defining the atlases' content, such as the complementary plates published under his name (geographical-historical tables, flag and ship illustration prints). It was him to purchase Robijn and De Ram plates (world map and astronomical charts) which were then included in the atlases published by the family, also in those of Theodorus I with a larger number of sheets.

The role of Theodorus I in this period can only be guessed. The number of maps he participated in the engraving of seems to have decreased at that time compared to earlier periods. In the first few years of the new century his style can still be recognised on several maps (2–3 French and 1–2 German provinces, and maps of the East-Indies, Normady and Bretagne which could only be sold as atlas maps). In the period after 1710 only the atlases sold with title pages under his name show that he probably did not utterly withdraw from the map and atlas-publishing tasks of the firm.

The demise of Johannes in the autumn of 1712 started a new era in the life of the family and the firm yet again. According to biography sources, in 1712 he acted as an agent for his family and an Amsterdam merchant named Henry Desbordes in Frankfort-am-Main, the center of international book and map trade (VAN EEGHEN, 1965–1978). His presence seems to confirm what GREGORII (1713) stated, namely that the Danckerts firm concentrated on the German market: [their works] „...delivered in a low price have found all the collectors". Thus Johannes probably moved to Frankfort or stayed there for a while in order to ensure as effective presence at the German market as possible. His death certainly meant a sore loss to his family again and was probably an important reason for the slowdown in the pace of mapmaking. Johannes's fortune and his part of the family fortune were sold at an auction in March 1713 (VAN DER KROGT, 1985) and other publishers could acquire some of it although the plates of the atlas maps surely remained in the possession of the family members.

According to our investigations, the most striking characteristic of the atlas-making and publishing activity of the Danckerts firm in the period between the death of Johannes and the closing down in 1727 is that the creation of new maps significantly declined. Up to now, we only know about two maps produced in this period; the 3rd world map engraved by Jacob Folkema and a Hispania map published under the name of Cornelis II although none of these two can be found in any Danckerts atlases, moreover, this Hispania map might actually be a version of the old one with views only. The reworking of maps also declined at the time; after 1720 there are only a few likely amendments, maybe carried out by the then adult Theodorus II. We have found yet no traces of the styles of Theodorus I, Cornelis II or Eduard on maps of this late period.

As for atlas-publishing, Cornelis II made a few lesser modifications in the number of sheets and the content of his self-published atlases. Maybe even in his lifetime, before 1717, maps printed from unfinished plates of 1701–06 were started to be gathered in

atlases (even sheets in uncut state, probably intended for collectors). Yet it is possible that this only happened after 1717, in the time of his widow or his son, Theodorus II.

Biography sources evidence that in 1716–17 Theodorus I and in 1726 Theodorus II had financial problems (KLEERKOOPEL – VAN STOCKUM, 1914–1916). In addition, several tragedies touched the life of the family in these years. After 1720 we only have biography sources concerning Theodorus II. Being deep in debt he had to hand over most of his stock to a creditor, T. Rijswijk, as mortgage in the months before his death. After his demise in the autumn it was put under the hammer for the benefit of the creditor on orders of the city council. The auction was managed by two renowned book-traders of Amsterdam, J. Oosterwijk and S. Schouten (KLEERKOOPEL – VAN STOCKUM, 1914–1916). It was probably at this auction that other publishers (e.g. Ottens and Van Keulen) took the possession of the map plates of the Danckerts atlas.

Because of the lack of biography and publishing history data we can hardly guess the fate of Eduard and his role in the years after 1720. As we have already mentioned, he was still surely alive in 1721 since he is mentioned as the wedding witness of Theodorus II (KLEERKOOPEL – VAN STOCKUM, 1914–1916) but nothing more is known about his life or further activities.

The case is similar with the last years of Theodorus I's life. Although the map history literature claims he died around 1726–27 and wrongly relates the above-mentioned 1727 auction as well as the closing down of the Danckerts firm to his name, on the basis of biography data and our knowledge of atlas-publishing we assume he may have died earlier, a few years before Theodorus II, most probably sometime between 1718 and 1721.

The biography data relating to the son of Theodorus I, Gerrit (ca. 1708–after 1731) (KLEERKOOPEL – VAN STOCKUM, 1914–1916), do not mention him as a book or map publisher so it is not likely that he continued the craft and trade of his father. So neither Cornelis II, nor Theodorus I had descendants who could have renewed or carried on with the family firm in the 1730's.

Thus the publishing of the Danckerts atlas ceased completely. Its map sheets and plates, scattered among other publishers, still remained in circulation at least until the middle of the 18th century. Some plates were even renewed and used in printing for a long while.

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