



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

[Manuscript Pictographic Map of the Spanish Trading Route from Lima To La Paz]

Stock#: 53425gw
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1700 circa
Place: Madrid?
Color: Pen & Ink with Wash Color
Condition: VG
Size: 26.5 x 18 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Remarkable Pictographic Manuscript Map of the Spanish Treasure Route

Striking pictographic map of part of Peru, Bolivia and northernmost Chile, showing the Spanish Treasure Route between La Paz and Lima, with the dense Amazon Jungle looming beyond the Andes Mountains.

This east-oriented map presents a stylized image of the road (in red) from Lima, on the coast, across several mountain passes to Cuzco, and then across the highest mountain pass of the trek-represented with jagged peaks running east-west-on to La Paz. Along the route, three stick figure drawings of Indians are shown (with packs on their heads), with one trailing behind a pack mule. In the first part of the route, between Lima and Cuzco, there are also illustrations of two bridges, to inform the would-be traveler. At sea, a large ship and a smaller one monitor the coast line, perhaps protecting the trade route from smugglers and pirates.

The road from Lima to La Paz and the significance of the silver trade

This route was a major, yet challenging, thoroughfare of the Spanish Empire in the New World based on the most important and valuable resource, silver. The mining town at Potosi, at 4,000 meters above sea level, was founded in 1546. Over the next two centuries, 40,000 tons of silver were shipped down the mountain and over the seas, much of it traveling along the route marked on this map. The mining was done by indigenous people and imported slaves who suffered terrible diseases, accidents, and abuse; many thousands perished. In 1672, Potosi became the site of the first mint in the Americas. With a population of at least 160,000, the city was the fourth largest city in the world in the mid-seventeenth century, outstripping London, Milan, and Seville. At its peak, the city supported 22 dams which powered 140 mills



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for grinding the silver ore.

La Paz, Bolivia was founded by Alonso de Mendoza in 1548, with the intention of serving as a principal town in the route from Potosi and another mining center, Oruro, to the Spanish port at Lima on the Pacific. Cuzco was the major city of the Inca Empire. The Spanish invaded and conquered it in 1533 and it became a regional center for trade, agriculture, mining, and ranching. Lima was conquered a year earlier, in 1532, and named capital of the Viceroyalty of Peru and site of a *Real Audiencia* in 1543. It was the major port of the Spanish Empire on the western South American coast.

From Lima, the silver would depart by ship for Portobello, Panama, where it would be packed overland and then shipped to Spain via the Caribbean and the Atlantic. Perhaps even more significant, yet less well known, was the huge proportion of the silver that instead was shipped to Acapulco and then across the Pacific to Manila, which was founded in 1571. From Manila, the silver would underwrite Spanish, and European, trading with China. The flow of silver sowed the seeds of a global capitalist system and marked the definitive beginning of the global economy we are still a part of today.

It is hard to overstate the importance of the silver trade to world history. The silver route, shown here in such creative detail, funded the world economy for three centuries, led to European imperial expansion, drove interaction with Asia, and led to the colonial system that would dominate the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth centuries.

Dating the map

In dating the map, several factors were taken into account. The map almost certainly pre-dates 1776, as this was the year of an administrative change in the imperial governance of the region. The silver from the Potosi region was then ordered to go through Buenos Aires, rather than Lima, significantly undermining the La Paz-Cuzco-Lima trade route.

We have selected a date of circa 1700 with the assistance of Gonzalo Pontes. Pontes noted that the large sailing ship has a Bourbon flag that was used by Spanish ships beginning with the reign of Philip V in 1700. However, the ship is not the classical galleon of sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but an early eighteenth-century ship (which he described as a transitional model between the earlier galleons and the *navio de linea* that appeared in the early-eighteenth century, but which still has a high stern). We have also identified several examples of similar Spanish pictographic maps from the late-seventeenth century which are stylistically similar to the present map.

This map was found in a composite atlas of Spanish maps which was divided up in 2012, after being acquired by the Old Print Shop in New York City from Clive A. Burden Ltd. A number of the maps were



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subsequently acquired by us in February 2013. This map was reacquired in 2017 from the original purchaser. The contents of the atlas comprised of manuscript maps and Spanish printed maps, which included maps of the northern coasts of South America, Mexico and California, along with Spanish maps of the Caribbean, Balearic Islands and the northern coastline of Spain. The maps in the atlas dated from the early-eighteenth century to approximately 1790 and included several other remarkable manuscript maps. It is a fine example of craftsmanship and shows how a single map can capture a global phenomenon, in this case the silver trade.

Detailed Condition:

Minor tears at the edges and minor soiling.