



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman
Antique Maps Inc.**

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Plano Corografyco del Partydo de Porco, perten/te. al govi/no e ynt/a de Potosi

Stock#: 54468hs
Map Maker:
Date: 1794 circa
Place: Bolivia
Color: Pen & Ink with Wash Color
Condition: VG
Size: 17 x 23.5 inches
Price: \$6,500.00



Description:

Finely Executed Spanish Colonial Government Survey Manuscript Map of the Porco District of the Mining Region of Potosi in Bolivia

Remarkably detailed manuscript map of the Porco district, part of Potosi, one of the richest mining regions in the world, prepared by the Spanish Colonial government at the end of the 18th Century.

The map highlights the mountainous nature of the geography, as well as shows the abundance of rivers. It has finely drawn details, including a title in a *trump l'oeil* scroll, delicate calligraphy, and a castle as a north indicator.

The *partido*, or district, is shown with an eastern orientation. The neighboring districts are not shown, but their names are written out, ringing Porco. The map includes eighteen *doctrinas*, or towns, including those of Caiza, Toropalca, Yura, Chaqui, Porco, Bartolo, Potobamba, Turuchipa, and Pilcomayo. They are marked with a number and a red square with a cross, denoting the local church. The town of Puna, roughly in the center, is the capital of the district. It is marked with a red square with a flag. Rivers are denoted with a letter and red dots.

Porco

Porco was a district within the *intendencia* of Potosi, an administrative district of the Spanish Empire in South America. The province was part of the viceroyalty of Río de la Plata and it was located largely within the modern state of Bolivia, although it also included parts of modern Chile and Argentina. The *intendencia* included the districts of Chayanta, Atacama, Chichas, Lipez, Tarija, and, of course, Porco. The



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intendencia was created as part of the Bourbon Reforms, in 1782, and came into being as the silver flow was waning. The viceroyalty was split into eight *intendencias* in total.

Although the other districts had their own settlements, the most important place in the *intendencia* was the mining town at Potosi, the *Villa Imperial de Potosi*. At 4,000 meters above sea level, it was founded in 1546 and named an imperial city in 1561. Over the next two centuries, 40,000 tons of silver were shipped down the mountain and over the seas. 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 for grinding the silver ore.

Juan del Pino Manrique, the first *gobernador intendente* of Potosi (from 1783-1788), described Porco as 200 leagues in circumference, with eighteen *doctrinas* (not including the capital, Puna)—the same information shown here. Puna had a temperature, “more cold than warm, produces an abundance of potatoes, broad beans, barley, a little and very bad wheat, and some wool-bearing livestock” (Manrique, 8). Some of this fertility is evident in the rivers and vegetation included on this plan.

Related materials and provenance

The map is likely related to a manuscript map referenced in the *Catalogue of the Manuscript Maps, Charts, and Plans, and Topographical Drawings in the British Museum* (Volume III, p 469-470):

Plano corográfico del partido de Porco, pertinente al gobierno e intendencia de Potosi, levantado por D. Francisco Lopez, visitador de dicho partido, nombrado por D. Francisco de Paula Sanz . . . gobernador intendente y superintendente de la real casa de moneda, minas, mita y real banco de S. Carlos . . . de Potosi . . . año de 1794

Based on this title, Francisco Lopez was an imperial official and surveyor assigned to tour the district. Francisco de Paula Sanz (1745-1810) was a Spanish politician who served in various positions in Spanish Empire in South America. He was the first *gobernador intendente* of Buenos Aires from 1783 to 1788. Then, he was posted to the same position in Potosi from 1788 until his death, taking over the position from Manrique.

The map was likely prepared in conjunction with or with reference a manuscript treatise drafted by Francisco Lopez entitled *Descripción del partido de Porco i sus doctrinas, por Francisco López, Contiene*



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el censo de la población en las diez y nueve doctrinas, siendo la totalidad de habitantes 63.572

(Description of the Porco region and its doctrines, by Francisco López, containing the census of the population in the 19 doctrines, totalling 63,572 inhabitants).

This example of the map was formerly in the collection of Aguirre Saravia. It was exhibited at the Pontificia Universidad Católica Argentina between December 19, 2007 and March 9, 2008. It is featured in the exhibit catalog, *Documenta Chartographica de las Indias Occidentales y la Región del Plata* on page 19. It is a significant object offering a look into local administration in the last decades of the Spanish Empire.

Detailed Condition:

Loss of lower right blank section of map, replaced in facsimile, else very good.