



**Barry Lawrence Ruderman  
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**Carta Esferica de la Confederacion Argentina y de las Republicas del Uruguay y del Paraguay que comprende los Reconocimientos practicados por las Primeros y Segundas Subdivisiones Españolas y Portuguesas del mando de los Señores Don Jose Varlea y Ulloa (Comisario Pral. Diror.) Don Diego de Albear, el Teniente General Lucitano Sebastian Xavier da Vega Cabrad da Camara, y el Coronel Francisco Juan Roscio, en Cumplimento del Tratado Preliminar de Limites de 11 de Ocubre de 1777. . . .**

**Stock#:** 60309  
**Map Maker:** Cabrer  
**Date:** 1853  
**Place:** Paris  
**Color:** Outline Color  
**Condition:** VG+  
**Size:** 30 x 48 inches  
**Price:** \$ 3,500.00



**Description:**

***A Colonial Rarity Created By Spain's Most Important Boundary Commissioner and Surveyor -- Crucial to Early Argentinian History***

The earliest surviving example of Don Jose Maria Cabrer's finely executed map of the Argentine



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Confederation and the Republics of Uruguay and Paraguay, published in Paris in 1853.

Originally drawn in 1802 by Cabrer, a Spanish imperial military engineer assigned to the boundary survey following the Treaty of Ildefonso in 1777, the map encompasses the tumultuous first half-century of Argentina's existence as an independent state and alludes to the border struggles that defined the region earlier, in the eighteenth century. The map is the culmination of Cabrer's two decades of work surveying and mapping the region on behalf of the Spanish Government. His work would become the most important and authoritative work in the region, but for reasons unknown existed only in manuscript format for nearly half a century, until its publication in 1853. His reports from the field during the survey would win him praise by both his contemporaries and later commentators who reviewed his work in connection with later international boundary arbitrations (see, e.g., Zeballos).

The map is highly detailed, the result of Spanish-sponsored surveying that took place in the wake of the Treaty of Ildefonso (1777), which settled in part the border between the Spanish and Portuguese empires in the Río de la Plata region.

To the left, a history of Spanish conquistadores in the area is recounted. Rivers and mountain ranges thread through the inland areas. Towns are marked with specialized symbols to mark their size and importance. The entire map is drawn with close attention to detail, largely because it was originally an official document meant to be the definitive authority on the location of the borders between the empires and later the new nation states of South America.

To the lower right is the informative title:

*Carta Esférica de la Confederación Argentina y de las Repúblicas del Uruguay y el Paraguay que comprende los Reconocimientos practicados por las Primeras y las Segundas Subdivisiones españolas y portuguesas del mando del Sr. José Varela y Ulloa (Comisario Principal, Director), Don Diego de Albear, el teniente General Lucitano Sebastián Xavier da Vega Cabral da Cámara y el Coronel Francisco Juan Rosció en cumplimiento del tratado Preliminar de Límites del 11 de Octubre de 1777. Construido oficiosamente en 1802 por el Segundo Comisario y Geógrafo de la sobre dicha subdivisión española Don José María Cabrer para desatar las dudas ocurridas entre los referidos jefes y que ambas cortes pudieran deliberar sobre la importante obra de límites. Imp. Bineteau.*



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*París. 1853. Gravé sur Pierre chez F. Delamare.*

The map, originally drawn to clarify boundaries agreed in treaties signed in 1750 and 1777, was then used as a political tool by early Argentinian politicians. Its creation and subsequent publication, which span Argentina's colonial period, its independence, and its early years, make this map one of the most important of the mid-nineteenth century.

At the bottom right is the legend, "Deliniado y lava por el mismo cabrer en 1826," the only other clue on the map as to the dating of the manuscript original from which this map was drawn.

### **The contentious borders of the Río de la Plata basin**

South America, and particularly the Río de la Plata basin, have been sites of contention between Portugal and Spain for centuries. According to the Treaty of Tordesillas, Portugal was only supposed to expand to 370 leagues west of Cape Verde Islands, or to roughly the 46th meridian. However, in practice, Portuguese Brazil had spread far more than the treaty originally allowed and the rugged terrain and long distances meant that the treaty was hard to enforce.

By the eighteenth century, the area had become the focus of territorial disputes between the Spanish and Portuguese empires, not to mention the Jesuits who had founded missions in the area and farther west in what is today Paraguay. One conflict centered on what is now Montevideo. When the Portuguese began to fortify the area in 1723, the Spanish became nervous. Early in the next year, the Spanish sent an expedition to harass the Portuguese fortification. They succeeded in routing the Portuguese defenders, leaving the city to Spanish control.

### **Treaty of Madrid (1750)**

In 1750, Spain and Portugal signed a landmark treaty meant to settle the territory question once and for all. The Treaty of Madrid was based on the principles of *Uti possidetis, ita possideatis*; from Roman law, it means "he who owns by fact owns by right." In effect, the treaty recognized the *de facto* situation on the ground in South America and upheld natural geographic boundaries. The preamble states, "each party must stay with what it now holds," and, "the boundaries of the two Domains... are the sources and courses



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of the most notable rivers and mountains.”

This authorized the Portuguese to retain the lands they had long occupied at the expense of the Spanish Empire. The treaty also stipulated that Spain would keep Colonia do Sacramento, situated directly across the Río de la Plata from Buenos Aires, while Portugal would gain the Misiones Orientales's, seven independent Jesuit missions east of the upper Uruguay River.

The treaty sought to follow geographic features in fixing the boundary: it moved westward from a point on the Atlantic coast south of Río Grande do Sul, then northward irregularly following parts of Uruguay, Iguazu, Paraná, Paraguay, Guapore, Madeira, and Javari Rivers. North of the Amazon, it ran from the middle Río Negro to the watershed between the Amazon and Orinoco basins and along the Guiana watershed to the Atlantic.

### **Guarani Wars (1754-56)**

The Treaty of Madrid was significant because it substantially affected the modern boundaries of Brazil. However, it also called for the removal of the seven Jesuit missions of the Misiones Orientales west of the Uruguay River. Guaraní people who lived on the *estancias* were expected to relocate. The Guaraní, led by Sepé Tiaraju, rejected Portuguese rule and the order to relocate.

Instead, they fought for their lands, with the conflict erupting into the Guaraní War in 1754. The dispute simmered from 1754 to 1756, then broke out again in 1756 when a Spanish-Portuguese force sought to quell the remaining Guaraní fighters. Sepé Tiaraju was killed and, three days later, over 1,500 of his warriors were slain at the Battle of Caiboaté; only 4 Spanish and Portuguese soldiers were killed.

The disappointment of the Jesuits at surrendering their missions and the active resistance of the Guaraní against forced their relocation contributed to the nullification of the Treaty of Madrid by the subsequent Treaty of El Pardo, signed by both empires in 1761.

### **José María Cabrer, The Treaty of Ildefonso (1777) and Subsequent Boundary Commissions**

In the Treaty of San Ildefonso (1777), Spain returned the recently captured island of Santa Catalina to Portugal, but they received definitive power over Colonia do Sacramento. They also took much of the



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Banda Oriental, including the Misiones Orientales. It is this context that conditioned the original drafting of this map. The borders laid out in the treaties were vaguely defined and still required field surveying to be fully realized and effective.

Although the Argentine Confederation and the Republics of Uruguay and Paraguay are mentioned in the title, the original map was drawn before these states existed. Completed in 1802, the map encapsulates the surveys of the region taken by surveyors and prepared for José María Cabrer, the Second Commissioner and Geographer of the second subdivision of the border.

Cabrer was born in 1761, the son of a military engineer. His father trained him in his profession and the young Cabrer set out to fight the British in Jamaica as part of Spain's involvement in the American Revolution. However, en route he was rerouted to Río de la Plata, where he was ordered to serve in the commission then starting to demarcate the border as set out by the Treaty of Ildefonso.

This first commission was organized at the request of Charles III, who wanted to avoid the ambiguity that had led to previous conflict over the border. The new border was split into five sections, with Diego de Alvear y Ponce de León, a naval officer and founder of a dynasty of Argentine politicians, in charge of the section near the Paraná and Paraguay rivers. Cabrer worked under Alvear, who is mentioned in the title of this map along with other officials who directed the surveying project. Alvear eventually promoted Cabrer to the position of Second Commissioner and Geographer of the works and ordered Cabrer to survey and explore the river Pepirí Guazú, part of the second division of the surveying work that still needed to be done.

Cabrer finally returned to Buenos Aires in 1801, where he learned of the deaths of many of his family members back in Spain and decided to stay in Buenos Aires for the duration of his life. Despite compiling decades of work into this map, it was not published at the time. Instead it seems Cabrer kept it, along with his manuscript journal, which is how it came to play a role in the contentious politics of Argentina in the mid-nineteenth century. In fact, the map and journal would be discussed at length by both Guilherme Schuch de Capanema and Estanislao Severo Zeballos, Argentine Minister of Foreign Affairs, in his commentary on the Misiones Boundary Arbitration in 1893.

#### **Argentina in the first half of the nineteenth century**



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In the early 1800s, calls for independence mounted in Buenos Aires, spurred by the capture of Ferdinand VII, King of Spain, during the Peninsula Wars. If Spain was not able to rule its empire, or even keep its king free, many thought the South American colonies should rule themselves. There were several revolutionary movements in the first decade of the nineteenth century, culminating in the May Revolution of 1810, which ousted the Viceroy.

Several juntas, regimes, and governments formed to rule the new political entity, then known as the United Provinces of the Río de la Plata, and fight the remaining royalists. In 1816, at the Congress of Tucumán, the United Provinces declared their independence from Spain. Bolivia would later claim its own independence as a nation in 1825. The Empire of Brazil and the United Provinces fought the Cisplatine War (1825-1828), after which Uruguay was declared an independent state.

The United Provinces then plunged into a civil war that pitted the unitarians, who wanted Buenos Aires to lead the less-developed provinces, against the federalists, who wanted autonomous provinces on a model similar to the United States of America. Out of the fighting rose Juan Manuel de Rosas, who managed to maintain power of what was now known as the Confederation of Argentina from 1829 to 1852, although not without significant opposition.

In 1852, General Justo José de Urquiza turned against Rosas, whom he had previously served. After defeating Rosas' paramilitary force, Urquiza called for a new assembly to write a constitution, something Rosas had refused to do. The document forged by this assembly, the Argentine Constitution of 1853, is still in use today. Buenos Aires briefly succeeded in protest at the new constitution, which diffused its power, but they rejoined later. In 1862, the first president of unified Argentina, Bartolomé Mitre, took office.

#### **Cabrer's 1802 Manuscript Map Resurfaces**

Cabrer was still in Buenos Aires and in 1831 he was appointed to the Topographic Department; he died in 1836. His papers and this map were known to Rosas. The map then passed to Urquiza. The latter sent it to Paris to be published. It was then that Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay were grafted on top of Cabrer's imperial landscape, in order to further Urquiza's federalist vision for his young country. A pasted name plate at the bottom of this sheet, which identifies the mapseller James Wyld of London, testifies that Urquiza's politically charged map was indeed distributed across the world, although few examples survive



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today.

Cabrer's journal was not published until 1882-86 in Montevideo. *Diario de la segunda sub-division de limites española entre los dominios de España y Portugal en la América Meridional, por el segundo comisario y geógrafo de ella D. José Maria Cabrer ... Principiada en 29 de diciembre de 1783 y finalizada en 26 de octubre de 1801".*

Cabrer's original manuscript map no longer exists, making this the sole surviving graphic depiction of his monumental map.

**Rarity**

OCLC locates complete examples in the National Library of Chile, the University of Amsterdam, the Bibliotheque Nationale de France, and the French Natural History Museum.

This map is quite rare, in full or as individual sheets as with this example. The creation and publication of the map tells a fascinating and important story about the early history of the Argentinian nation and of South America. It would make an informative and significant addition to any collection of Argentinian or Age of Revolutions maps.

**Detailed Condition:**