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[Moxos Plains, Bolivia]

Stock#: 59593
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1767 circa
Place: n.p.
Color: Pen & Ink
Condition: VG
Size: 17.5 x 12 inches
Price: \$ 4,500.00



Description:

Manuscript Map of the Missions in the Moxos Plains of Bolivia

Fine manuscript map of the Jesuit missions and indigenous nations east of La Paz in the Moxos Plains. The area shown in the map is now in the country of Bolivia but was then a part of the Viceroyalty of Peru. Today, several of the missions are protected as UNESCO World Heritage Sites.

The map is east-oriented, with longitude at top and bottom and latitude marked on the left and right sides. La Paz is to the west at the bottom of the page, with Cochabamba and Concepción farther east and therefore closer to the top. Missions are marked with a cross on top of a square, while other settlements are shown with a circle around a dot. Red lines are drawn around groups of missions. The larger group are the Jesuit missions of the Moxos, while the smaller grouping at the bottom of the page are those of the Franciscans.

Rivers and streams are included, as are the many mountains that define the geography of the region. In addition to the missions, this area is home to many indigenous peoples, many of which are still there today. One note on the map mentions the, 'Tibois nation of long heads,' showing the European viewpoint behind this map.

The number of missions indicate that this map was completed as or just after the Jesuits were expelled from Spanish territories in 1767 and might indicate Portuguese interest in the extent of the Jesuit expansion into the interior of South America.

The Jesuits in the Moxos Plains



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The Jesuits began to operate in the Spanish empire in the Americas in 1540, and in the Viceroyalty of Peru in 1568. The area that is now Bolivia was then part of the Viceroyalty of Peru, founded principally to manage the extraction of silver from the mines of Potosi, which is south of the area shown on this map.

The Jesuits would gather the nomadic indigenous groups in communities called *reducciones*, or reductions, so that they could be Christianized more easily. It was also a way to control and subjugate the indigenous population to European rule. However, the Jesuits were initially given a remarkable degree of autonomy by the Spanish, meaning that the indigenous peoples under their control were more independent than those under direct Spanish control.

The Jesuit missions shown here were established in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The first of the Moxos missions was that at Loreto, just above the center of this map, begun in 1682 by the Jesuit priest Father Cipriano Barace. The second was at Trinidad, also founded in 1682 by Fathers Marbán and Barace.

All of the missions shown here were in existence when the Jesuits were expelled, suggesting that this map was constructed as or just after the Jesuits were expelled from Spanish America. Many of the missions decayed quickly after the Jesuits left and some are no longer extant. Perhaps a Portuguese authority was curious about how far the Jesuits had expanded their holdings, as tensions were extremely high at this time between the Spanish and Portuguese empires regarding their borders in South America.

For its historical information, this is an important manuscript map and a rare survival of a tumultuous time in South America's history. It could augment a collection of Bolivian, Spanish or Portuguese empire maps.

Detailed Condition:

Large coat of arms, escutcheon with bend separating two post horns, helmet and additional post horn above, supports. Countermarked "GR"(?). Perhaps mid 18th century.