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[Ilha da Santa Catarina to Bombinhas]

Stock#: 59595
Map Maker: Anonymous
Date: 1780 circa
Place: n.p.
Color: Pen & Ink
Condition: VG
Size: 17 x 12 inches Sheet Size
Price: \$ 3,500.00



Description:

Portuguese Manuscript Chart of the Waters Near Santa Catarina in Southern Brazil

Chart detailing the sailing conditions around the Ilha de Santa Catarina, a strategically important island in southern Brazil. The island reached the apex of its importance in the mid-eighteenth century, when this chart was drawn.

The chart is west-oriented, with Portuguese nomenclature. Although it is intended as a visual guide for sailors, the author still saw fit to include some of the many mountains and hills that dot the landscape. This would let the navigator know the sort of views they could expect from onboard an approaching vessel. Settlements are included and important religious sites are marked with a circle topped with a cross.

The chart provides a wealth of information for the curious pilot. Sounding depths are scattered along the coast lines, showing how shallow the waters could be. Sand banks are shown with an array of dots and rocks are marked with an x.

The chart includes the forts that were built beginning in 1739 to protect the island and coast from the Spanish. These include São José da Ponta Grossa (Pontagrosa on this map), Santa Cruz Anhatomirim (Anhotumin), San Antonio (I. dos Ratonos), and Nossa Senhora da Conceição da Barra do Sul (Fort. do Sul). Curiously for such a detailed chart, Santa Cruz Anhatomirim is mislabeled. The name is written in a bay on the mainland, when the fort was actually on a small island just south of where the label is written.

The handwriting, inclusion of the forts, and style of the symbols suggest a date of ca. 1780.

Ilha de Santa Catarina

The island came to prominence precisely during the period this map was drawn, but the Portuguese had



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already been on the island for three centuries by that time. Originally, the island was settled by Carijós Indians; archaeological evidence shows that they had been on the island 4,000 years ago.

The Portuguese arrived in roughly 1514 and called the island Ilha dos Patos. It was renamed in 1526 as Ilha de Santa Catarina. Originally, the main value of the island to the Portuguese was as a watering and supply station for ships en route to the Río de la Plata region to the south.

The first Portuguese settlement was officially founded in 1673, when a group of bandeirantes, or pioneers (literally, flag bearers), established an agricultural colony. Five years later, they had a chapel consecrated to Nossa Senhora do Desterro, the name of their small town. Desterro was designated a village by the Portuguese town in 1714, and a town in 1726. It is included on this map.

From the early eighteenth century onward, the Ilha de Santa Catarina increased in strategic value. It was located midway between Rio de Janeiro and Buenos Aires; the former was a Portuguese holding, the latter Spanish, but both were large and important ports. In 1739, the island was named a capitania, an administrative unit within the Portuguese empire. Desterro was named as the capital and construction began on the imposing fortresses included on this map.

Just before this map was likely drawn, the fortifications were tested. As tensions mounted over control of what is today Uruguay, the Spanish launched a naval attack on Santa Catarina. The fleet landed in the north of the island, easily bypassing the forts and the Portuguese ships. The island was not in Spanish hands for long, however, as it was returned to the Portuguese in the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1777.

Also at mid-century, the population of the island boomed. 6,000 settlers arrived from the Azores and Madeira, kickstarting the agriculture, cotton, and linen industries. They also brought with them their customs and cuisine, both of which influenced the culture of the island immensely.

This chart was drawn at a moment of heightened importance for the island, which explains why being able to sail its waters was considered vital for the Portuguese. This chart would have guided its users around the shallow waters of the region, perhaps amongst its ring of island forts. Manuscript charts like these are rare surviving documents of maritime heritage and this example would make an insightful and interesting addition to any collection of Brazilian or eighteenth-century charts.

Detailed Condition: