



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

Planta Da Cidade de S. Sebastião do Rio De Janeiro Levantada por Ordem De Sua Alteza Real O Principe Regente Nosso Senhor No Anno de 1808. Feliz E Memoravel Epoca Da Sua Chegada A Dita Cidade -- Na Impressão Regia 1812.

Stock#: 36229hs
Map Maker: dos Reis
Date: 1812
Place: Rio De Janeiro
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 48 x 36 inches (if joined)
Price: SOLD



Description:

Fine example of the rare and highly important first large-scale map of Rio de Janeiro ever published, and the first map of Rio printed in Brazil.

This monument of Brazilian cartography depicts Rio de Janeiro shortly after its fortunes were greatly enriched by the arrival of the Portuguese Royal Court in 1808. This transformative event saw Rio progress from being a peripheral center to becoming a city of international importance. The map was especially commissioned by the Royal Court to depict the city that had just become the capital of the Portuguese Empire.

The map features the entire urban area and its immediate environs, with south shown at the top of the map. While in modern times extensive land reclamation and urban development schemes have long since changed and transformed the *Cidade Velha* into a grander cityscape, this map locates many of the important old edifices remain, along with the patterns of many of the old streets, many of which no longer appear on modern maps.

During this, a period of rapid population and economic growth, Rio is shown to have expanded beyond its original warren of streets northwards into Gamboa and Sao Cristovão districts, while new 'trapixe' or quays line the harborside. The map's legend, or 'Explicação', identifies 52 important buildings including palaces, churches and theaters, as well as names 60 streets. Notable sites include item A, the Paço Imperial, the city residence of the king, having previously been the local governor's place since 1738.



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Items B & C identify the Igreja de Nossa Senhora do Monte do Carmo da Antiga Sé, built in 1770, which was then the main cathedral of Rio. Sitting on an island just offshore is the Fortaleza Ilha das Cobras, the Portuguese Navy's most important base, and the main maritime defense structure of the city. The 'Monte do Castello', which looms over the old town, was the city's principal landward fortification.

The transfer of the Portuguese Royal Court from Lisbon to Rio was a major event. By November 1807, it had become clear that all of metropolitan Portugal would soon fall to Napoleon's French legions. Fearing for their safety, the Braganza family decided to move their entire court to Rio de Janeiro. With the assistance of Britain's Royal Navy, Dom João VI and his family, as well a vast retinue of 15,000 nobleman, civil servants and their families migrated en masse across the Atlantic.

This was historically significant as the only instance of a "metropolitan reversal", whereby a major European empire was forced to flee the mother country and relocate to one of its colonies. The arrival of so many people had a transformative effect on the Rio. In 1808, Rio had a population of around 85,000, sizable by colonial standards. While Rio had been Brazil's capital and major port since 1763, it had been experiencing a prolonged economic slump that saw the value of its harbor traffic halved over the previous generation. Prior to the arrival of the Portuguese Royal Court, Rio had been in a state of decay for several decades.

The arrival of the Portuguese Court not only significantly added to the city's population, but also brought great wealth and intellectual sophistication to Rio. This led to the genesis of several institutions, many of which are anchors of Rio and Brazil's economic and cultural life to this day. These included Brazil's first printing house, the Academy of Fine Arts, the botanical gardens, the Rio School of Medicine, the National Library of Brazil and the Bank of Brazil.

Importantly, the port of Rio was also released from the limitations of the traditional mercantilist system (which had strictly limited trade to Portugal and other Portuguese colonies) and opened her economy to global commerce, ushering in an unprecedented boom. Between 1808 and 1816, over 6000 new houses were built in the city and 100 new country estates were established in its environs. By 1821, the city's population had grown to 113,000, making it the largest city in South America. Thus, more than any other event, the court transfer was responsible for laying the foundation of the modern cosmopolitan City of Rio de Janeiro.

The present map was commissioned by the new royal court and published by the Impressão Régia. Founded in May 1808, it had the distinction of being Brazil's first printing house. While the author of the



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map is sometimes mentioned as Paulo dos Santos Ferreira Souto, according to Borba de Moraes' authoritative work, *Bibliografia da Impressao Regia do Rio de Janeiro* (1808-1822), the map was designed by Antonio dos Reis.

As the first large-scale maps of Rio ever published, and the first-large scale map ever printed in Brazil, the present map is simultaneously a critically important landmark in the histories of Rio, Brazilian printing and urban mapping in the Americas.

The map is exceedingly rare. OCLC locates only the copy in the British Library, with no example in the National Library of Portugal. We locate a second copy in the National Library of Brazil. In the 'Imago Mundi Chronicle for 1978-79' (vol 31; 1979, p. 101), Tony Campell reported that the recently acquired copy at the British Library was "one of only four recorded examples of the earliest large-scale plan of Rio to be printed in Brazil." With the exception of this example of the map, we know of no other copy of the map to appear on the market.

Detailed Condition:

4 sheets, unjoined.