

Large engraved plan on nine sheets, letterpress text pasted onto the lower sheets, remnants of original colour, losses to margins. A full condition report is available upon request.

## **MADRID OF THE BOURBONS**

**Plano topográfico de la Villa y Corte de Madrid.**

### **Author**

ESPINOSA de los Monteros y Abadía, Antonio

### **Publication date**

1769.

### **Publisher**

### **Publication place**

Madrid,

### **Physical description**

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### **Dimensions**

1850 by 2465mm. (72.75 by 97 inches).

### **Notes**

The first plan of Madrid to show the eight quarters in which the city had been divided a year prior; the first to include the numbering of building blocks; and the first to show the orientation and plans of churches. It was published during the reign of Charles III under the direction of one of his most prominent government reformers, the Count of Aranda, following an extensive urban transformation aimed at aligning Madrid with the other European capitals.

In the mid-eighteenth century Madrid counted a population of 150,000 and over 7,500 houses. The city was characterised by the pronounced unevenness of the ground and large areas of crop land, and its core was formed by a network of narrow and poorly illuminated streets, which hindered the implementation of hygiene measures and facilitated criminality. The king (Ferdinand VI) therefore commissioned a survey, known as the 'Visita General', with the purpose of reorganising the city administratively and urbanely and, most important, to establish the correct taxation for each household. The survey was assigned to four architects who with their teams visited and numbered every building, and drew plans of every street, resulting in a general planimetry composed of 557 maps.

The plan is set within lavish ornamentation in the style of Piranesi. It stretches from the Manzanares river and the Royal Palace on the left, to the renewed Paseo de San Jerónimo and Parque del Retiro on the right, giving ample room to this eastern part of the city. An inset map shows the old Paseo de San Jerónimo before it was demolished and altered by order of the Count of Aranda. Marked in black near the Plaza Mayor are the ancient Muslim walls, reflecting the growing interest in archaeology. On the lower register are letterpress texts describing the history of Madrid, listing hospitals, churches and convents, and the subdivision of the quarters and their barrios. Some details, such as

the square in front of the Royal Palace, were never actually implemented.

Antonio Espinosa de los Monteros y Abadía (1732-1812), was one of the most important engravers of his time. He spent three years in Rome before training at the Real Academia de San Fernando in Madrid, where he became a fellow. He was engraver at the Mints of Seville and Segovia, opened printing presses in Segovia and Madrid, with the present plan being his most ambitious project. It has been suggested that Espinosa might have not been the sole author of the plan, and that a likely candidate could have been the architect and military engineer José de Hermosilla y Sandoval (1715-1776), who was involved in the projects of the Prado, the hospital in Atocha and the church of San Francisco el Grande, which are all drawn with a great level of detail on the plan. Further to this, it is possible that the basis for the present map would have been Pedro Teixeira Albernaz' plan of 1656, the two sharing similar size, scale and orientation.

Rare. We were able to locate seven institutional copies: Biblioteca Nacional de España (3); Bibliothèque nationale de France; British Library; University of Connecticut Library; University of Toronto Library. We were unable to trace another copy appearing on the market in the last 50 years.

### **Bibliography**

De los Reyes Gómez, 'El impresor Antonio Espinosa de los Monteros en Madrid: avance para su estudio', *Revista General de Información y Documentación*, 14, 2004; Molina Campuzano, Instituto de Estudios de Administración Local, ed. *Planos de Madrid de los siglos XVII y XVIII*, 1960; Ortega Vidal, 'Los planos históricos de Madrid y su fiabilidad topográfica'. Catastro. 'Ciclo de Conferencias con motivo del 250 Aniversario de la Planimetría General de Madrid 1749- 1999, 2000.

### **Provenance**

**Price:** £40000

**Inventory reference:** 1817