



Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

7407 La Jolla Boulevard
La Jolla, CA 92037

www.raremaps.com

(858) 551-8500
blr@raremaps.com

[Plan of Moscow] Plan stolichnago goroda Moskv

Stock#: 37809
Map Maker: Marchenkov
Date: 1789
Place: Moscow
Color: Hand Colored
Condition: VG+
Size: 19 x 30 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

Rare first edition of Ivan Marchenkov's decorative large-format map of Moscow, the most important printed plan of the city issued during the second half of the 18th Century.

Ivan Marchenkov's masterly plan is the finest map of Moscow to appear during the celebrated reign of Empress Catherine the Great (reigned 1762-96). An exquisite example of Russian engraving, Moscow is shown according to the redevelopment plans that transformed the city roughly into the form it acquired during the 19th Century. In this respect, it can be called the first truly modern map of Moscow.

Marchenkov's plan shows all for the city's inner and outer wards, military constructions, streets, squares,



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parks, rivers, canals and major buildings (all as built or proposed). While many of the details shown had not yet been constructed, Marchenkov's plan is the first to depict what would become many of the city's most prominent features in the coming decades. For instance, it is the first printed map to show the Garden and Boulevard rings, which eventually became two of the city's most prominent features.

The composition is surmounted by the Russian Imperial Double-Headed Eagle, while in the lower right is an exquisite imaginary scene of Classical ruins, symbolically meant to link Catherine's Moscow to the glory of Imperial Rome. A small index in the upper left labels Moscow's 14 wards, while a voluminous key occupying the lower quarter of the map labels literally dozens of key sites and buildings (both realized and projected).

The Story behind the Creation of the Marchenkov Map

The history of urban planning in Moscow begins at the end of the 16th Century. The earliest development plan for Moscow was created in 1596-97 for Czar Boris Godunov. While the original plan is no longer in existence, it was used as the foundation for later plans, such as Peter's Plan, Sigismund's Plan and others drafted in the 17th Century.

The most significant early re-design of Moscow was undertaken during the reign of Czar Peter the Great. In 1700, Peter issued a decree banning the construction of wooden structures in the city center to replace those destroyed by fire. The decree required that property owners build stone buildings and that all structures be designed by professional architects. In 1714, the unpredictable czar banned building with stone. After Peter's death, in 1725, construction of stone buildings resumed, but the vast majority of structures were built of wood.

In 1731, Empress Anna Ioanovna ordered the creation of a new map for Moscow, Ivan Michurin's *Imeratorskogo Stolichnogo Goroda Moskv*, the first scientific survey of the city ever conducted (in 1739), and published in 1745. This was the first plan that took into account the topography of the city. In 1762, the Building Commission for St. Petersburg and Moscow was established. In 1763, the Senate required that layouts be drawn up for all cities in all regions of Russia. The same year, Quartermaster-General Pyotr Ivashov composed a layout of Moscow and the surrounding area, while another plan was drafted under the supervision of Major-General Gorikhvostov, an engineer. Unfortunately, these plans were never printed and little was done to reform Moscow, with very detrimental consequences.

During this period, Moscow was essentially a medieval-style city of narrow labyrinthine streets, mainly wooden buildings and relatively few open spaces. Building codes were few and far between and when on the books, were rarely followed. The city had a terrible problem with public hygiene, as garbage dumps were allowed to accumulate right next to densely packed residential areas. These factors caused Catherine



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the Great to refer to Moscow as a "seat of sloth". Factories, often employing flammable agents, mingled closely together with ancient wooden houses, creating an 'accident waiting to happen'.

In the autumn of 1771, a vicious plague spread like lightening through the dense warren of dirty streets, killing as many as 60,000 people, about a quarter of the city's population. In the 1773, a series of fires destroyed large portions of the city, as the wooden buildings were set ablaze as if they were kindling.

In response, in 1774, Empress Catherine formed an imperial commission, headed by Peter Kozhin, to propose plans for the conversion Moscow into a modern city, less prone to the calamities of fire and disease. The commission's General Plan of 1775 proposed that many of the wooden buildings be cleared to make way for a 'Masonry city' of larger buildings, wider streets and numerous new public squares.

The Neglinnaya River, which flowed along the eastern part of the Bely Gorod (the old central part of the city, including the Kremlin) was essentially a brackish moat. It was to be cleaned, widened and its banks were to be planted with trees. A drainage canal was to be built beside the Moscow River to prevent the regular occurrence of floods. The Kitay Gorod (the district to the east of Red Square) was to be partially demolished and rebuilt with a series of large stone buildings. Outside of the city center, the old defensive walls were to be taken down and a series of ring roads was to be constructed. The commission recommended strict new building codes and the allocation of central government money to help pay for material and construction.

While Empress Catherine initially endorsed the General Plan, the scheme met with fierce local resistance. The funds for the proposed improvements from the Imperial treasury were largely held up by bureaucracy, and local officials and grandees were unwilling to step in with their own resources. Wealthy property owners strongly resisted any changes, preferring to retain the stable rents afforded by the denizens of the old wooden tenements.

In the decade following the General Plan, very limited progress was made. In response, in 1786, the city's Governor-General Iakov Brius, decided to scale down the plan in an effort to get at least something accomplished. He reduced the number of squares to be constructed, recommended that the proposed ring road around the Bely Gorod be cancelled and that the construction of the proposed large masonry edifices be limited to a more manageable scale. The planned improvements to the Neglinnaya and the Moscow Rivers were to proceed as planned, as Catherine granted her "supreme approval" of Brius's less ambitious designs.

It was in this context that Lieutenant Ivan Marchenkov, a military engineer assigned to Moscow's planning department, was tasked to create a master plan of Moscow, based not only on what was already constructed but what was intended to be built, according the Brius plan. Marchenkov relied heavily on



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Gorikhvostov's 1763 plan for his basic template for the inner city, but added copious new information. In 1789, Marchenkov's map was engraved by Lavrentiy Florov, and printed in Moscow by Timofei Polezhayev, with the publishing subsidized by the merchant Nikita Kalchugin. The present map is the first edition, with a second edition issued in 1796.

Immediately noticeable on Marchenkov's plan are the numerous buildings already constructed and those merely proposed in the suburbs between the established city and the Kamer College Ramparts (the outmost ring of military defenses visible on the map), many of which were churches. Also prominent are the two outer ring roads proposed by the 1775 plan (the innermost had been successfully scuttled by Brius), the Boulevard Ring (marked as 'H' on the map) and the Garden Ring, shown to be lined with trees (marked as 'G' the map). At the time, these ring roads had not yet been built, and while partial construction occurred in the 1790s, it would only be following the Great Fire of Moscow in 1812 that major progress got underway.

The broad Moscow River drainage canal, which formed an island immediately to the south of the city center is shown, and although underway, the project had not yet been completed. Many of the large stone buildings shown in the center of town, such as in Kitay Gorod, had not yet been built. All this being said, much of the overall plan depicted by Marchenkov was eventually constructed, more or less as shown, making this the first truly modern map of Moscow.

The Marchekov plan of Moscow is very rare. We are aware of only a single institutional example outside of Russia (at the Library of Congress) and only one auction record for the first edition of the map from the last 25 years.

The plan is one of the 'great' maps of Moscow and perhaps the one that is the most difficult to acquire.

Detailed Condition: