

BHSP14-1987

BRAZIL IN 1712

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What is possibly the earliest British newspaper account of Brazil can be found in a London paper of 1712. The intention of this note is to print it.

Interest in Brazil was clearly aroused in early 1712 by news of the French raid the previous year on Rio de Janeiro. The report in the paper was lengthy by the standards of the age, but, in accord with the practice of the period, it was anonymous and the source of the information was not given. The item appeared under a London byline in number 65 of the *Protestant Post-Boy*, an issue of the London newspaper that appeared on 31 January 1712. It is published as in the original.

Jan 31 1712 Protestant Post-Boy No 65.
(Fall of Rio¹ London 31 Jan. J. Baker)

«Brasil, or Bresil, is a very great Country of South America, lying on the Sea, from the River of the Amazons to the Provinces of Paraguay; Its Coast is in the form of a great Circle, and the Sea Waters it on Three Sides. The Portuguese have render'd themselves Masters of what they found most Pleasing and Commodious along the Coast, where they have several Governments, which they call Captainships. There are at this Time 14 of them along the Coast from

the River Amazons to Paraguay, to wit, Tamaraca, the most Antient; Bahia de todas los Sanctos, the most Famous; Pernabuco; Paras; Maraham, Giara; Rio Grande; Paraiba; Seregippe; Los Isteas; Porto Seguro; Spirito Sancto; Rio Janeiro; and St. Vincent.

The Principal Cities of Brasil, are Salvador of Bahia de todos, etc. Olinda of Pernabuco; Puerto Seguro; St. Sebastian of Rio Janeiro; Spirito Sancto, Siera, and others, which bear the Name of Captainships. This Country was call'd The Country of the Holy Cross, when Alvarez Cabrael discover'd it Anno 1501. The Wood of Brasil comes from their Arabautou, which is a thick Tree without Fruit: Here are also some Mines of Gold, but many more of Silver. Other chief Comodities are Saffron: Cotton; Red Wood; Lacca; Balsam; Tobacco; some Amber-grease; and Mines of Jasper; with White and Red Chrystial, and a very great quantity of sugar, and among other sorts that of Candi. Those who remain among the Portugueze are almost all Christians, and Inhabit the Aldees, which are Villages of no more than Four or Five Houses, but so Long, that they will contain more than 800 Persons Each.'

Notes

1. Rio at the time was being blockaded and held to ransom by the French privateer, Duguay-Trouin.