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Mapa de España y Portugal Al Ex. S. Marques de la Romana Vincente Beneyto Valencia del Cid. 1809

Stock#: 63842ba
Map Maker: López
Date: 1809 (1810)
Place: Valencia del Cid
Color: Outline Color
Condition: VG+
Size: 50 x 37 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

A Tribute to Spain's Ongoing Resistance Against Napoleon

Rare, separately-published map of Spain, released during the Spanish War of Independence (also known as the Peninsular War).

It is dedicated to the Marquis de la Romana, a Spanish war hero who died in 1811.

The map is based on the work of the renowned Tomás López, one of the most important Spanish cartographers of the eighteenth century. He is best known for his important *Atlas Geográfico de España* published posthumously by his sons in 1804, 1810, and 1830.

The map is wonderfully detailed, showing López's careful compilation work. His maps of the Iberian Peninsula were used by both the British and the French during the Peninsular War. The map identifies provinces, post roads, towns, cities, and Spain's hilly terrain. In the bottom left are scale bars and an inset of the Strait of Gibraltar.

This remarkable map was published in Valencia during the period of the French Occupation of Madrid. This is one of only a few maps published in Valencia during the occupation, a period when the Spanish Crown was in crisis.

Marquis de la Romana and the Spanish War of Independence (1808-1814)



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The map is dedicated to Pedro Caro, the Third Marquis de la Romana. The title cartouche is decorated with allegorical figures, including a bust of the Marquis next to the flags of Spain and England, allies who defeated France during the war. Athena holds a stone slab emblazoned with a map of Spain and the map's title; a second woman, likely Europa, points toward a general leading his men onto a man-of-war. This is Romana leading his division back to Spain on British ships to fight the French. Behind the bust is an inscription on the base of a column: "He fought betrayal and injustice; he saved his armies, rescued Galicia."

Don Pedro Caro y Sureda, Third Marquis de la Romana (1761-1811) was a prominent Spanish general during the Spanish War of Independence. Spain had been allied with the French since 1796. By July 1807, Napoleon Bonaparte could turn his attention to the two powers who remained allied with his archenemy, Britain: Sweden and Portugal. He left Sweden to Russia, with whom he had recently signed a pact at Tilsit. He demanded that the Portuguese close their ports to the British, part of the Continental System meant to cripple British trade. The Portuguese stalled and Napoleon countered by sending a 30,000 strong army to Lisbon, leaving just enough time for the Portuguese royal family to flee to Brazil.

Meanwhile, also in 1807, King Charles IV of Spain, under pressure from Napoleon, agreed to provide a veteran infantry division to bolster the French army in Germany. The Marquis de la Romana was made commander of this "Division of the North" and spent 1807 and 1808 performing garrison duties in Hamburg and later Denmark under Marshal Bernadotte.

Sending this division was not enough for Napoleon. After his general, Junot, took Portugal, he pressed on into the northern provinces of Spain. The Spanish politician Godoy persuaded Spain's King Charles IV to flee to South America, but the entourage was halted at Aranjuez. There, Fernandistas, supporters of Charles' son, Ferdinand, had Godoy fired and Charles abdicated in favor of Ferdinand. While the Spanish were in turmoil, Napoleon sent General Murat to occupy Madrid. This brought both Charles and Ferdinand to the table; Napoleon had Ferdinand abdicate in favor of Charles, and Charles in favor of Napoleon. Then, the French leader named his brother, Joseph, as the new ruler of France. The people of Madrid revolted at the news, starting the Spanish War of Independence.

The Spanish proved adroit at resistance and guerrilla warfare. They quickly defeated the French at Valencia, where this map was published, and at Bailén. By August 1808, they had expelled Joseph Bonaparte from the capital.

At the eruption of hostilities, Romana made plans with the British to return to Spain. The success of the evacuation of Romana's division was chiefly credited to his great mind for strategy and subterfuge. Nearly two-thirds of his 15,000 men-strong division boarded British ships on August 27, 1808, and escaped to



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Spain. Their loss crippled Bernadotte's army and weakened Napoleon in his fight with Austria in the 1809 campaign.

The French had not given up when the Spanish retook Madrid. The British landed to support Portugal and the Spanish on August 1, 1808. Romana arrived at Santander and was handed command of the Army of Galicia on November 11, 1808. This army, under British General Blake, was decimated on the battlefield that same day. Two weeks later, on November 25, 1808, La Romana took command of what remained of the army, only about 6,000 men. By December, Napoleon's forces had retaken Madrid.

With this force, Romana fought small-scale actions against the French in 1809. Thanks in large part to he and his men's dogged resistance and clever tactics, Marshal Soult abandoned the attempt to reestablish French rule in Galicia. Then, when Soult pivoted to counter the British in Portugal, Romana drove the French from Asturias as well.

Romana was appointed to the Central Junta on August 29, 1809 and served until the following year. He then returned to the field to support Wellington's army. Sadly, he died suddenly on January 23, 1811. The Spanish and their allies, including Wellington, were devastated. Wellington wrote, "his loss is the greatest which the cause could sustain."

In 1811-12, Napoleon led the Grand Army against Russia, pulling up to 30,000 men from his peninsular armies. Wellington took advantage of this depletion and started to advance into Spain. He attained a decisive victory on June 21, 1813, at the Battle of Vitoria. Joseph Bonaparte fled and Wellington took the fighting to the Pyrenees.

Napoleon knew he had lost Spain. He released Ferdinand, who had been detained since 1808. He was again, and permanently, crowned Ferdinand VII in March 1814.

Detailed Condition:

Dissected and laid on linen, as issued.