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(Portugaliae Pars - Showing a Naval Battle between English Armada and the Spanish Galleons off the Coast of Portugal)

Stock#: 37795
Map Maker: Keller
Date: 1600 circa
Place: Frankfurt
Color: Uncolored
Condition: VG
Size: 11 x 8 inches
Price: SOLD



Description:

A rare map depicting the battle between the English Armada and Spanish Galleons off the Coast of Lisbon, during the failed Drake-Norreys Expedition of 1589.

This rare and attractive map shows the Spanish and English fleets arrayed off the coast of Portugal, during the opening stages of an epic contest. To add artistic elan to the view, the ships take on an exaggerated size, compared to the coastline in the background, which extends from Cape St. Vincent up to the north past Lisbon.

The Anglo-Spanish War (1585-1604), pitted Phillip II's empire, the vanguard of Catholicism, flush with the riches of New World gold and silver, against Elizabeth I's Protestant England and its brazen pirate-adventurers who had sought to take Spain's riches.

Enraged by England's piracy and heresy, in 1588, Phillip II assembled what was by far the largest naval fleet to date. It sailed from Lisbon to attack England, and many in London feared that their nation would be easily destroyed by the Spanish juggernaut. However, a combination of brave and clever English resistance, gross Spanish incompetence and terrible weather resulted in the complete failure of the mission and the loss of most of the Spanish fleet. The 'Defeat of the Armada' was one of the momentous events of British history. Elizabeth I, who showed incomparable courage and rallied her people to arms, would forever be hailed as one of England's greatest leaders. Sir Francis Drake (1540-96), one of the leaders of the resistance to the Armada, and a famed corsair and Circumnavigator, became one of the nation's greatest heroes.



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Following the defeat of the Armada, Elizabeth and her ministers quickly moved to strike a death-blow to Spanish naval power. While Portugal had been England's oldest ally (since the Treaty of Windsor in 1386), in 1580 Spain took over Portugal, following a dynastic shift. The Spanish Navy soon started using Lisbon's harbor, a superior port to any in Spain, a development that the English found galling. The English decided to mount a grand expedition to destroy the main Spanish fleet (and so cripple Spanish sea power for a generation) and then to follow up by liberating Portugal.

In 1589, the English mounted the Drake-Norreys Expedition, led by Sir Francis Drake as admiral and Sir John Norreys as general (in charge of landing troops in Portugal). The expedition was made up of six royal galleons, 60 English armed merchantmen, 60 Dutch flyboats and about 20 pinnaces. In addition to the troops, there were 4,000 sailors and 1,500 officers and gentlemen adventurers. Drake assigned his vessels to five squadrons, led respectively by himself in the *Revenge*, Sir John Norreys in the *Nonpareil*, Norreys' brother Edward in the *Foresight*, Thomas Fenner in the *Dreadnought*, and Roger Williams in the *Swiftsure*.

The commanders of the so-called "English Armada" unwisely decided to attack Corunna, in Galicia, on their way to Lisbon. While they managed to create quite a bit of havoc for the Spaniards, the diversion seriously weakened the English fleet and spoiled the element of surprise, as the Spanish garrison in Lisbon was alerted and given two weeks notice to shore up its defenses.

Once the English arrived off of Portugal, they became bogged down in a protracted series of naval battles, the Spanish maintaining the upper hand. Political leaders in London refused to authorize re-enforcements for the fleet. The English were never able to land their army and to link up with the Portuguese resistance fighters, so dooming the mission. Drake and Norreys were forced to withdrawal with heavy losses both in lives and ships. The Spanish victory marked a revival of Philip II's naval power through the next decade, ensuring that the sea war would drag on for another 15 years. Portugal would remain benighted under Spanish occupation until 1640.

The present map is rare and is one of the few contemporary views of this important event. It was engraved by Georg Keller (1568-1634) of Frankfurt am Main, who was best known as one of the engravers for Theodore De Bry's *Petit Voyages*.

Detailed Condition:

Trimmed to neatline and remargined, as issued, in the style of a Lafreri map, in order to fit into a larger binding.