

1808
1809

Los Sitios de Zaragoza

Portillo Square

The streets in this city area were the scene of intense battles during the Sieges of Zaragoza since it was one of the most important sites of Zaragoza's defence against the Napoleonic troops.



Portrait of Agustina Zaragoza y Domènech (1785-1885). Fernando Brambila y Ferrari (a). First half of the 19th century. Oil on canvas.

AGUSTINA OF ARAGÓN

(Reus, 1786-Ceuta, 1857). An artillery battery had been placed to defend the Portillo gate. On 2 July 1808, the French General Lefebvre amassed his forces at different points of the city and specifically at that gateway. The defences were gradually weakened little by little. At a certain time on 4 July, the Aragon cannons fell silent because all the gunners had fallen. At that moment, a French vanguard unit advanced, however a woman, Agustina Zaragoza y Doménech lit the fuse of one of the cannons, firing it at the enemy which halted their attack.

Inside the nearby Church of Nuestra Señora del Portillo, her mortal remains rest alongside other women who were called “heroines” who played major roles in the Sieges, as is the case of Casta Álvarez and Manuela Sancho. A monument in her memory has been built in the centre of the square, with artwork by the sculptor, Mariano Benlliure.

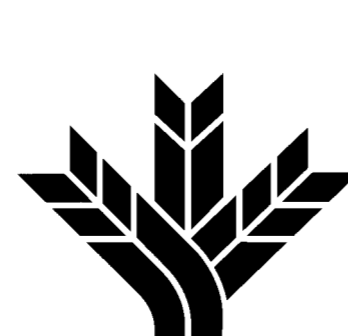


Francisco de Goya immortalised Agustina Zaragoza in his engraving titled *Qué valor* (*What bravery*), in his series: *Los desastres de la guerra* (*The disasters of war*).

The “Disasters of War” consists of a series of 82 engravings made by the painter Francisco de Goya between the 1810 and 1815.



English
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CAJA RURAL
DE ARAGÓN



Zaragoza
AYUNTAMIENTO

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Portillo Square

Its name, "Portillo", originates from a small gateway which was opened in the city walls, located in the present day junction of the streets: Calle Conde de Aranda and Calle María Agustín. The square called Plaza del Portillo is basically one of the most eclectic environments of the city.

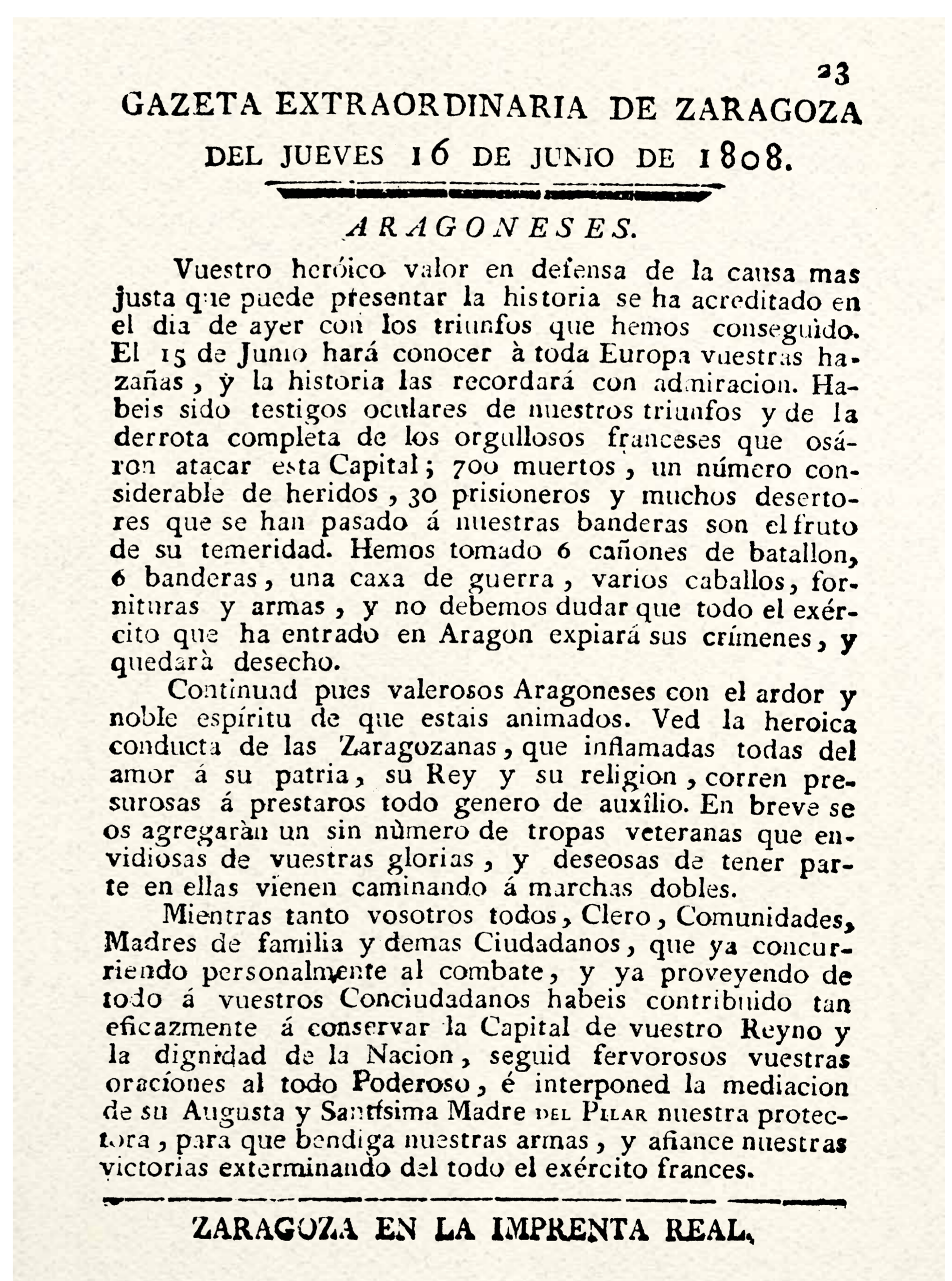


Engraving by Gálvez y Brambila. THE BATTLE OF LAS ERAS. In this battle, the French tried to force entry at the Buena Vista point and invade Zaragoza. They were repelled by the Aragon defenders and forced to retreat from the city's cannon fire. This combat took place on 15 June 1808.

THE BATTLE OF LAS ERAS

On 15 June 1808, French troops appeared before the gates of Zaragoza in a strong simultaneous attack on three fronts: the Portillo gate, the Carmen gate and the Santa Engracia gate. At the latter, a small group of cavalry, apparently Polish Guard Lancers, penetrated and arrived at the old square: Plaza del Portillo, but they were killed by brave Zaragoza women who were only armed with rocks and knives.

The first Siege of Zaragoza began here with the Battle of Las Eras, which was named because it took place at the esplanade called "Eras del Rey", ("Threshing grounds of the King") located in the present day Promenade called Paseo María Agustín.



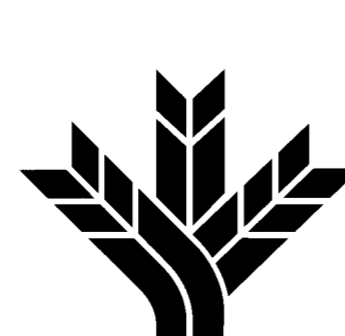
Reproducción facsimilar completa de la Gaceta Extraordinaria de Zaragoza del jueves 16 de junio de 1808.



Monumento a los Sitios de Zaragoza. Plaza del Portillo.



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