



An analysis of the backbone of the coastal defenses of the Maritime Department of Northern Spain in the eighteenth century. Illusory impregnability [

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Analítica

The election of Ferrol as the headquarters of the Maritime Department of Northern Spain in 1726 converted this small fishing village in Galicia into mainland Spain's principal arsenal and shipyard. In order to guarantee its protection, a permanent concern for the Crown, engineers and seamen performed surveys and studies of the Galician coast with a view to establishing a system of coastal defenses. This was then followed by the construction of castles and batteries, in addition to watchtowers from which to monitor the coast and keep Ferrol informed of any developments by means of beacons. In the following pages, this system will be examined in order to determine its quality, efficiency, and state of repair during the eighteenth century, thus revealing the huge disparity between theory and practice. For, as with the rest of the Galician coast, Ferrol was continuously at the mercy of Spain's enemies throughout the century

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