

The city walls of Logroño

El Cubo del Revellín



El Cubo del Revellín

C/Once de Junio n.º 6,
26001 Logroño

Wednesday: 10-13 h.

Thursday and Friday: 10-13 h. / 17-20 h.

Saturday: 11-14 h. / 17-20 h.

Sunday: 11-14 h.

Guided tours:

Book on tel. 941 503 116

at the following e-mail

cubodelrevellin@logrono.es

or at the tower itself

The eastern side of the Revellín Tower

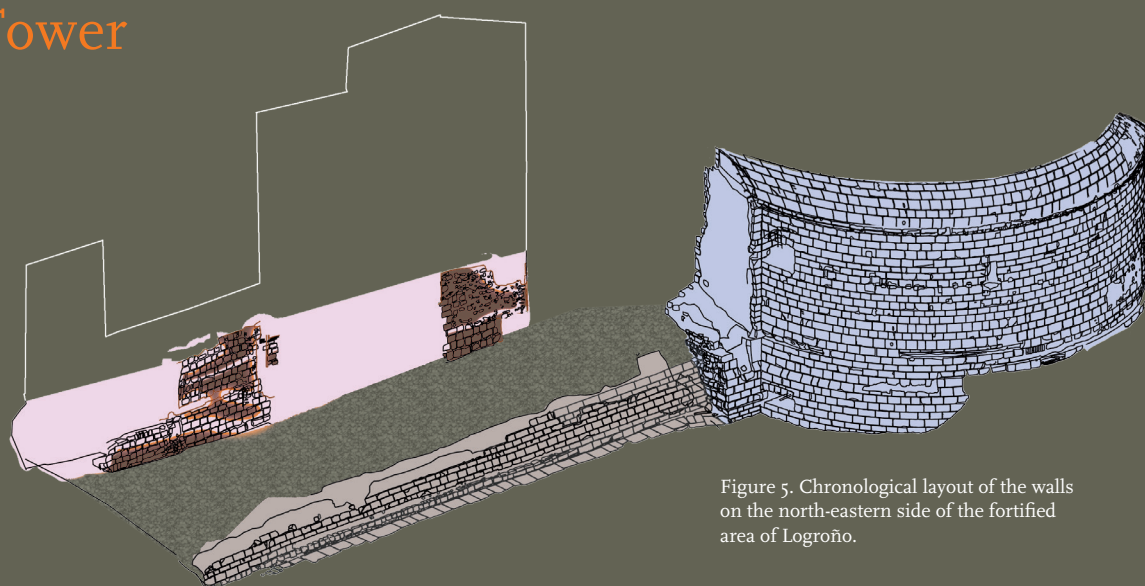


Figure 5. Chronological layout of the walls on the north-eastern side of the fortified area of Logroño.

The demolition of the old Revellín pelota court facilitated archaeological excavations, enabling the historical development of this part of Logroño to be reconstructed. To understand this space, it is important to know that in the 16th century the Revellín Tower and walls were intended to be the first step in a process to restore the city's defences that was never completed. Everything indicates that in the section facing the eastern side of the tower the plan was to apply the system implemented in the street known today as Once de Junio street. The final annexation of the kingdom of Navarre to the Spanish crown and the gradual achievement of peace along the northern border resulted, in the long term, in a gradual decline in our city's strategic importance. This would result in a lack of economic investment in the redesign of its defences and the subsequent

deterioration of the encircling walls. Data acquired during archaeological excavations have revealed that the Revellín Tower was eventually connected to the older fortifications by means of a makeshift solution of more than questionable constructive quality.

The solution remained unchanged until Napoleon's army entered Logroño during the War of Independence (1808-1814). This involved the conversion of our city into a stronghold for the French rear-guard and the reinforcement and transformation of the walls. Despite the lack of accurate documentary evidence, all indications suggest that the stretch of wall that appeared under the Revellín pelota court was built during that period and not during the First Carlist War. Thus, the elements built in this area correspond to three different moments in history (Figure 5).

The Revellín artillery tower

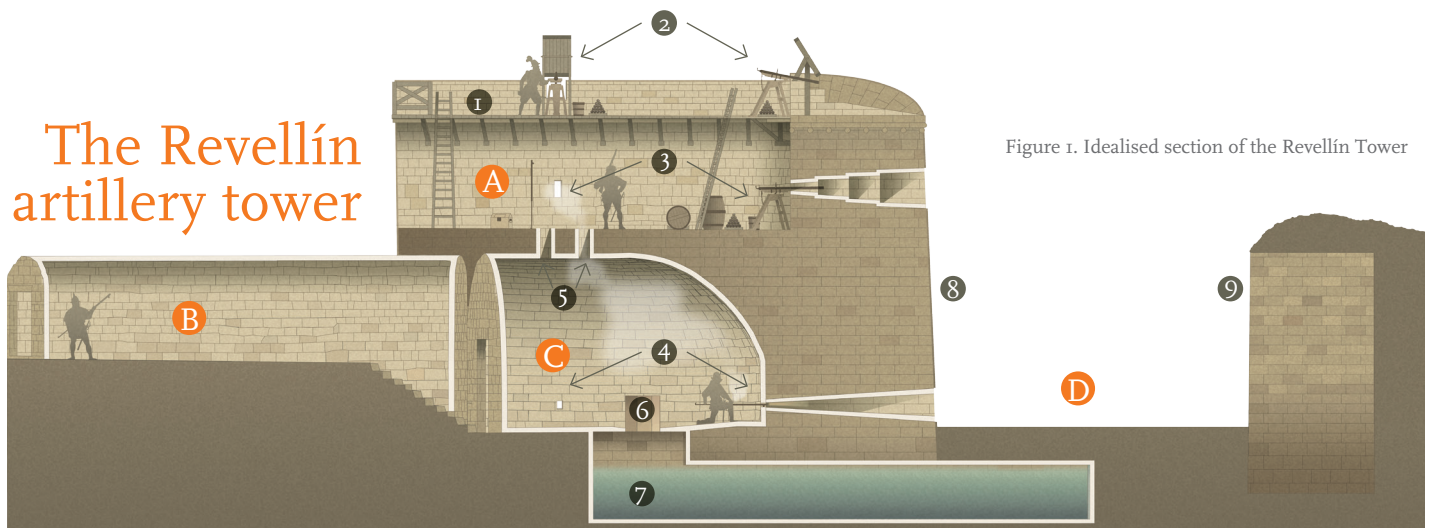


Figure 1. Idealised section of the Revellín Tower

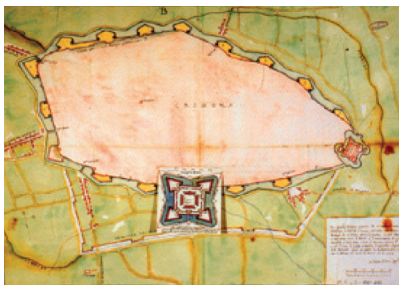


Figure 2. Design of a four-bastion castle for Cremona (1595-1596) by the engineer Tiburzio Spannocchi.

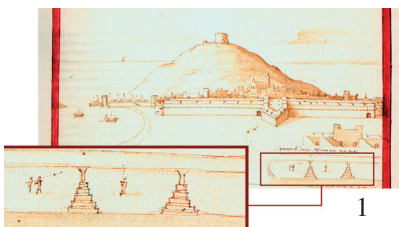


Figure 3. 1 Francisco of Holland. Drawing of the fortress of San Sebastián. The graded cannon embrasures level is highlighted and in close-up. 2. Graded cannon embrasures at the Fuenterrabía fort

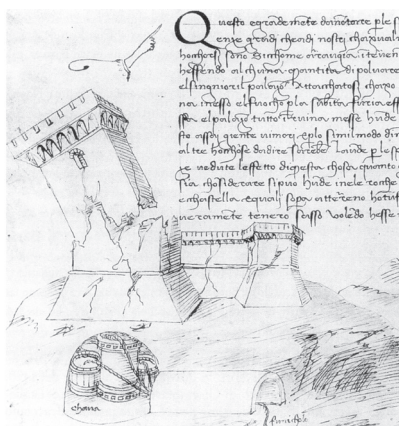


Figure 4. Drawing showing the placing of an explosive mine. Francesco di Giorgio Martini. Trattato di Architettura ca-1480-1490. Laurentian Library. Cod. Ashburnham.

The Revellín Tower was built between 1522 and 1524 under the supervision of master Lope de Insturizaga. It was financed taking advantage of tax exemptions granted by Emperor Charles V to the city of Logroño in reward for the resistance offered by the citizens of the city when it was attacked by the French-Navarre army in 1521.

The artillery tower is structured around three platforms formed by the combination of a parapet and two shooting galleries with embrasures, the upper gallery with no permanent roof and the lower gallery under a flat vault, both designed to repel attackers from the moat. Its installations were complemented by the adjacent artillery building where all kinds of military ammunition and equipment were stored. The artillery tower and its surrounding area are unquestionably the best conserved sections of the city walls of Logroño from the 16th century. Due to its chronology and characteristics, the artillery tower was built at the height of what is known as *Transitional Fortification*, i.e. the middle phase between medieval architectural designs and *modern-style* buildings, already adapted to war with firearms and heavy artillery.

Figure 1 is an idealised recreation of the Revellín Tower. Its spaces are divided into the following points:

Upper shooting gallery (A). Transitional artillery towers had modestly sized spaces. Small artillery was placed in these towers to defend elements of strategic importance such as, in the case of Revellín, the bridge and the gateway to the city. From the mid 16th century, circular towers were replaced by large rectilinear bastions that were suited for the placement of very heavy artillery and allowed artillery to be moved to make firing easier (Figure 2).

Elements of interest in this space are the walkway (1), which provides access to the upper shooting gallery where there were normally embrasures (2) that, in the damaged Revellín Tower were either not present or have not been conserved. Two graded cannon embrasures (3) (Figure 3) were conserved that are repeated on the Fuenterrabía and San Sebastián walls. These two fortifications, together with Pamplona, were the key defensive strongholds of Charles V on the northern border of the Iberian Peninsula.

The access corridor (B) is a long corridor that provides direct access between the inner city and the first line of defence. Its purpose was linked to the existence of the countermure, a second inner defensive boundary marking a separation between the urban centre and the city wall.

The pillbox or lower shooting gallery (C) in the Revellín Tower was covered by a flat vault. Three small convex openings inside formed embrasures for defending the moat. They were designed for the use of small-calibre weapons (4). The dense smoke produced by the combustion of gunpowder was expelled via holes in the upper part of the vault, called smoke-holes and that served as chimneys (5). One interesting element is a puteal (6) integrated in a gallery where water was stored to cool firearms during combat. In addition to fulfilling this function, it is likely that a listening or countermine gallery (7) was opened in this area. This was used first to detect and then resist attacks after besiegers had dug their trenches.

The use of explosive mines in sieges between the late 15th and early 16th centuries contributed to the rapid development of these systems (Figure 4).

The moat (D) was the key defensive element in sieges. In practice, the taking of the moat inevitably resulted in the fortification falling into the hands of the besiegers because it was relatively easy to breach the walls using mines and allowing attacking troops to penetrate the besieged fortification. Transitional fortifications were largely designed with a view to preserving the moat. Moats were wide and not excessively deep, delimited by the scarp (8) and the counterscarp (9), designed to hold off attackers.