



BULWARKED FORTIFICATIONS OF THE "RAIA" (BORDER)

The Bulwarked Fortifications of the "Raia" (Border) - RFAR - comprise the strongholds of Valença, Almeida, Marvão and Elvas to illustrate a more comprehensive set of bastioned structures creating the world's first fortification system. This coherent system was developed during the Restoration War (1640-1668) and continued until the end of the Spanish Civil War (1701-1714). From a historical and geographical perspective, it covers about 140 bulwarked fortifications along both sides of the Portuguese-Spanish border, from Minho to the Algarve. On the Portuguese side, there are about one hundred, and on the Spanish side, forty.

2 STRONGHOLD OF ALMEIDA

FORTIFY THE LIMITS



At the beginning of the 18th century, Almeida was the kingdom's most advanced defence work, with an imposing bulwarked fortress. The star-shaped structure reflects the most advanced influences of national and international fortification. Its urban context is based on ideal city principles.

PLACES OF INTEREST



D'el Rey Arena (former ammunition depot and arsenal)

Almeida Military History Museum



Portas Exteriores de São Francisco

Portas Exteriores de Sto. António

3 MARVÃO SQUARE

FORTIFY THE URBE



Marvão lies about 13 kilometers from the current Spanish border. A privileged observation point and strategic stronghold for the defence of the Alto Alentejo border, its fortress is perched on an escarpment on Serra do Sapoio, at an altitude of between 800 and 845 meters.

PLACES OF INTEREST



Castle of Marvão

Municipal Museum



Portas de Rodão

Cistern

4 GARRISON BORDER TOWN OF ELVAS AND ITS FORTIFICATIONS

THE URBAN LOGISTICS OF WAR



In Portugal, Elvas was the most important bastioned stronghold. It represents the implantation of a fortified complex in plains on irregular terrain while also sharing with the others the defence of a traditional "natural entrance", the Madrid-Lisbon corridor.

PLACES OF INTEREST



Magazine of Our Lady of Conceição

Portas da Esquina



Portas de São Vicente

Quartel do Assento - current Archeology Museum

ATLANTIC OCEAN

SPAIN

Mapa RFAR
Fortaleza de Valença

CHRONOLOGY

18th / 19th century
Construction of the 1st Islamic wall of Elvas

1299
Stronghold of Marvão construction begins

1640 1641
Fort of Elvas construction begins
Beginning of the construction of the Fortress of Valença and Stronghold of Almeida

Reign

1100 1150 1200 1250 1300 1350 1400 1450 1500 1550 1600 1650 1700 1750 1800 1850 1900

1st Dynasty - Alphonse
D. Afonso Henriques D. Sancho I D. Sancho II D. Afonso III D. Denis
2nd Dynasty - Aviz
D. Afonso IV D. Fernando D. João I D. João II D. Manuel I D. João III D. Sebastião I Filipe I Filipe II Filipe III D. João IV D. Afonso V D. Pedro I D. João V D. José I Dona Maria I Dona Maria II D. Luís I
3rd Dynasty - Philippine
4th Dynasty - Bragança
First Republic

LEGEND

Information

Airport

Train station

FORTRESS OF VALENÇA
BORDER OF WAR, BORDER OF PEACE

Valença is part of the Minho River Valley's riverside landscape. Its strategic position on the centuries-old route between Portugal and Galicia, facing the neighboring city of Tui, 1,5 km away, has shaped its history over the centuries.

Duarte d'Armas
Author of the "Livro das Fortalezas" (Book of the Fortresses) prepared on the initiative of Dom Manuel I between 1509-1510. In this work, 56 border castles are described. This is an essential work in the study of cartography and military architecture since there are few international parallels.

Michel de l'École
A French soldier, he was one of the first foreign engineers to arrive in Portugal after 1640.

Lieutenant Colonel João Miron de Sabione
As governor of Valença stronghold, he founded the "Aula Real de Artilharia" where he taught Mathematics, Fortification, Tactics, Artillery, and Drawing. He is buried in the Marte magazine.

Nossa Senhora do Carmo
The chapel of Bom Jesus houses the image of Nossa Senhora do Carmo, patron saint of the 21st Infantry Regiment. Soldiers carried it in their backpacks when they went on campaigns for protection.

Map of Valença and surrounding area with location markers for Tui, Vila Verde, and other nearby towns.

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ACCESSES
GPS
42° 10' 40.93"N -8° 38' 40.96"W

INFORMATION
QR code linking to Valença information.



RFAR
FORTALEZA DE VALENÇA

CHRONOLOGY

4th century	5th - 13th century	13th century	1276	1217	1262	1458-1462	1568	1641	1657	1660	1666	1691-1700	1700	1713	XVIII	1715	1775	1928
Located on a hill overlooking the river Minho, the Roman fortified settlement also served as a XIX road between Braga and Astorga.	In the area where the medieval village would be built, no indications of occupational continuity can be found.	D. Sancho I Contrasta was the name of a medieval village founded in the 13th century.	Construction of the Church of Santa Maria dos Anjos.	A charter is granted to the town by D. Afonso II.	D. Afonso III confirms the charter and changes the name to Valença.	People from Valença benefitted from creating a tax-free fair when active trade was maintained between the two sides of the border.	Customs in Valença.	Castilian troops besiege Valença in the first episodes of the Restoration War.	"In S. Pedro da Torre, the Governor of Arms of Galicia installs Spanish troops and builds the Fort of S. Luiz Gonzaga. In contrast, the Portuguese forces build the Fort of S. Jorge, in the parish of Silva."	According to the plans of the Count of Prado, Michel de L'Ecole provides a plan for fortifying the medieval village.	Valença's stronghold surrendered.	Manuel Pinto Vilalobos built the Military Chapel of Bom Jesus.	The Recinto da Coroadá has been completed.	Between the 17th and 18th centuries, Manuel Pinto Vilalobos designed the Açougue magazine.	Construction of the Magistral Area or "Vila Velha" and other external works begins.	Construction of the Marte magazine in the Recinto da Coroadá.	In the Governador da Praça's House, Lieutenant General Joo Miron V. de Sabione started the Royal Artillery Classroom.	Valença's stronghold was declared a national monument.

Double Ravelin of Feitoria Velha

S. Jerónimo Bulwark

Field of Marte magazine

Santana Bulwark

Porta da Coroadá

Chapel of Senhor do Encontro Santa Bárbara Bulwark

Amoreiras Garden

Chapel of Bom Jesus

S. José Bulwark

Lapa Bulwark

S.º António Bulwark

Portas do Meio

Village Fountain Ravelin

Village fountain

São João Bulwark

Açougue magazine CIFAR

Carmo Bulwark

Church of Santa Maria dos Anjos

Church of Santo Estevão

Museological Nucleus

Governor's House

Store Tourism

Firefighter Museum

Faro Bulwark

Portas do Sol Entrance

Portas do Sol Ravelin

São Francisco Bulwark

Gabiarrá Ravelin

Porta da Monção

Porta da Gabiarrá

Socorro Bulwark

Valença International Bridge

The bridge was built in the 19th century as a road-rail-pedestrian crossing. This is an essential milestone in the union of two neighboring people that constitute the Valença-Tui Eurocity, designed by Spanish engineer D. Pelayo Mancebo e Ágreda.

LEGEND

- Information
- Viewpoint
- Parking
- Public toilets

Spain border

EVERYDAY LIFE IN TIMES OF WAR
As a result of the war, border towns and cities faced challenges regarding space management, supply, and urban coexistence.



THE Fortress OVER TIME
Contrasta was settled and fortified by King Sancho I at the beginning of the 13th century. Affected by the Leonese-Portuguese battles and the conflicting interests of the nobility of Entre Lima e Douro and Sé de Tui, the settlement remained compromised until the renewal of the charter by King Alfonso III (1262). Renamed, repopulated, and refortified, Valença has become one of the most important fortresses of the Minho as part of an increasing territorial consolidation that culminated with the Treaty of Alcañices.

THE Fortress IN THE PERIOD OF THE RESTORATION WAR
After the Portuguese gained independence from Spain (1640), the strategic role of the border and the necessity to reinforce its defensive structures were reemphasized. Like other border fortresses, Valença was also built to withstand the coming armed conflict that lasted another 28 years. As part of the logistical preparation of the Minho fortresses, Valença became the concentration point for most of the infantry, ammunition, artillery and other war paraphernalia sent to Minho.