



# TOWER OF HERCULES

## History

The Tower of Hercules is the only Roman lighthouse still functioning today that continues to exhibit the same functions as when it was founded, on the one hand as maritime sign and on the other hand assisting navigation for the ships that were and are crossing the Atlantic corridor.

In all likelihood it was constructed in the second half of the 1st century or the beginning of the 2nd century A.D. by the Roman Empire, in the finis terrae of the, until then, known world, to accompany the ships that were bordering at the end of the Empire furthest to the West.

It is located in the NW of the Iberian Peninsula, in the region of Galicia, in the province of A Coruña and in the city of A Coruña.

The place chosen for its emplacement was a rocky hill, named Punta Eiras, of almost 57 meters of height, which is located between Punta Herminia and Punta del Orzán, and dominates the north end of the peninsula in which the city of A Coruña lies.

When the Romans constructed the Tower, they chose a few areas that were part of a sacred place or an indigenous sanctuary. It was frequent that the Celts dedicated coastal promontories to divinities similar to Hercules. In addition, in the case of A Coruña there is a congruence between the three rocks placed in the sea, opposite the Punta Eiras, known as Ox, Cow and Calf, and the Kenmare's sanctuary, on the SW coast of Ireland, with the same names. There the traditions locate the island of Donn or of the Dead men. Hence, in the area surrounding the Tower, a sanctuary would have surely been linked to the beliefs of the other world in the pre-Roman epoch. This would have certainly corroborated the sacred character of the whole zone.

When the Tower was constructed, it was located far from the Roman city of Brigantium that gave origin to A Coruña. As time passed the distance grew smaller until it disappeared and at present the Tower is integrated in the city itself, inside a great urban park that covers 123 acres, an area free of buildings, defined as rustic ground of special protection and dedicated to green space.

This recovered zone has a great scenic value for being a part of coast of enormous natural beauty, with abrupt cliffs that fall down towards the sea, forming many inlets and projections where the waves of the Atlantic Ocean break with force.

From this privileged lookout it is possible to see the whole Gulf of Ártabro that ranges from Cape San Adrián to Cape Prior, a wide zone in which the islands Sisargas, the islands of O Portiño, A Marola and A Gabeiras lie, and much as the mouth of the estuaries of Burgo, Betanzos and Ferrol. This park surrounding the Tower is an observatory from which frequently different species of birds like the cormorants, gulls, arks and guillemots can be seen, since their nests are placed in the near cliffs.

The numerous ways crossing the whole zone allow the visitors to enjoy a natural environment with an autochthonous flora of undoubted ecological value.

## Tower of Hércules: Denomination and Geographical Coordinates

The tower of Hercules has an almost 2.000-year-old history, throughout which it has been denominated in different ways. In the Roman epoch it was known as Farum Brigantium, in the medieval epoch as the Faro or Old Castle and in the Modern Age as the Tower of Hercules.

This denomination is based on the legend that the King Alfonso X, the Wise, wrote as part of his History of Spain (12th century A.D.) in which he links the construction of the Tower with the victory of the hero Hercules against the giant Geryon.

The geometric center of the Tower of Hercules coincides with the geographical coordinates:

Lat. 43 ° 23 ' 13,3923 " north latitude.

Long. 8 ° 24 ' 17,9519 " west longitude.

The topographic height of the base of the tower is 57 m above sea level

The coordinates U.T.M. are:

X = 548.200

Y= 4.804.060 Zone = 29

