



CASA MUSEO

MARÍA PITA

One of the María Pita House Museum`s main goals is to provide information about the heroine of A Coruña and explain the framework of her lifetime in the 16th and 17th centuries. This was a significant period in the history of the city, as this was when it acquired the administrative and military functions that would define its future evolution.

The site the museum is built on is the same site where María Pita's family owned a house in the 16th century. It was originally the property of the heroine's first husband, Juan Alonso de Rois, who inherited it from his grandmother. When her husband died, the house came into the hands of their daughter, María Alonso de Rois, although her mother and guardian, María Pita, lived there in usufructure.



Coat of arms of A Coruña
Early 17th century
Archaeological Museum of A Coruña.



Plan of the city and its fortifications
Juan Santáns y Tapia, 1639
General Archive of Simancas.

A Coruña was one of the few crown land cities in Galicia in the 16th century. The House of Austria turned it into a fortress-city in the political context of confrontation with the European powers in the North Atlantic, especially England, and it was therefore named the administrative capital of the Kingdom. The decisive factors behind this choice were the city's privileged geographical and strategic situation and its large and sheltered port.



The urban morphology of A Coruña in the 16th and 17th centuries shows two clearly differentiated areas, which could almost be described as “Two cities”:

The walled High City, was the old medieval town and the residence of the nobles, Court officials, high ranking military officers and the wealthy bourgeoisie. The most relevant buildings were to be found here, both civil institutions and churches.



View of the city of A Coruña.
Pier María Baldi, 1669.
Municipal Archive of A Coruña.

The Pescadería, which Grew out of a small fishing village, was a suburb in continuous expansion thanks to a thriving port activity and in spite of the by-laws that tried to stop People from the Old City moving there. Its inhabitants were fishermen, traders and soldiers.



Portrait of Sir Francis Drake.



The harness of the
Marquis of Cerralbo.

Relations between Spain and England became more and more hostile in the second half of the 16th century, eventually leading to war. The Spanish Armada, destined to invade England in 1588, turned out to be a complete failure. The immediate consequence was the preparation of a Counter- Armada consisting of 17,000 men; its mission was to attack Spanish ports. The fleet sailed Under the orders of Sir Francis Drake and the first attack was made on A Coruña.



Medal from the
300th Anniversary.

The invading force vastly outnumbered the defenders. The failure of the English attempts to break into the city can only be explained by the local's obstinate resistance and in particular, by the active role of women. Over time the figure of María Pita became a symbol of this heroism.

María Pita was a woman of humble origins who was married four times and had four children. Her first two husbands were butchers, the second of whom, Gregorio de Rocamonde, died during the siege by the English. She moved up several places on the social scale with her third marriage, and especially with the fourth to Gil Bermúdez de Figueroa, a Squire at the Royal Court. We conserve a considerable amount of details concerning Maria Pita's life, thanks in part to her litigating character and her stubbornness in claiming the compensation granted by the king in recognition of her role during the English siege. She died in Sigrás, in the parish os Cambre, in 1643, at over eighty years old.



María Pita
Isaac Díaz Pardo, 1946

María Pita House Museum

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Opening time

Tuesday to Saturday: 11 - 13:30 / 18 - 20 h.

Sundays and festive: 12 - 14 h.

Closed on Monday

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