THE "GREAT SPANISH NAVY" IN THE 18TH CENTURY: HISTORICAL PROCESSES, MENTALITIES AND IDENTITY. THE CASE OF THE BIRTH OF THE UNITED STATES.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to provide a deep and original view of the subject of the Great Spanish Navy and the men who surrounded it in the 18th century, stopping as a culmination at the Emancipation of the United States. The navies of France and Great Britain will also be involved in this. All of this in order to analyse, among other topics, the protonationalisation of Spain in the last third of the 18th century through the Navy or the mentality of the naval officers at that time. For the first part of the text, it is a long-term overall analysis that allows us to approach some of the most interesting, little-known and novel aspects of the Spanish naval heritage. Let us remember that at that time the Great Spanish Navy was the third in the world in number of ships and firepower. Thus, the long term is very necessary for the common understanding of the phenomena of the past. The second part, however, would be within the short term, in order to get closer to the processes of History that we are dealing with in themselves. The materials and methods used to carry out the study are interrelated and correspond to sources from Spanish and French archives and an extensive bibliography. All of this with renewed and original points of view[1].

Keywords: Great Spanish Navy, Great Britain, France, protonationalization, Birth of the United States.

1. Introduction, a reflection. Background: Spain and its Navy in the 18th century in the oceanic panorama.

We have divided the objectives of this work into two interconnected phases. The initial phase is a broad documented reflection on the background, the Oceanic space, the sailors of the time, the mentality of said sailors and the identity of Spain through the Navy. We also study the dedication of life in combat and the formation of the combined Spanish-French Navy, based on the Family Pacts in the 18th century, which led to the main events of the last third of said century. That is, with respect to the American emancipation, having a roadmap, as regards the entire story, of an interdisciplinary nature (it covers sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5: Introduction, Materials&Metods, Results 1, Results 2 and Discussion 1). The second, and as a consequence of the previous one, is

[1] NOTICE: We understand protonationalization in the 18th century as the process that began in different fields of politics, mentalities, society and institutions, such as the Navy, from the enlightened Spanish elites, including the Monarchy, based on the phenomenon of patriotism as an element of the mentality of that time. As far as we have been able to verify, the phenomenon of protonationalization reached the popular layers from the elites precisely during the conflict with England during the Independence of the United States and the alliance with Spain. This process of protonationalization in the last third of the 18th century served as a factual basis for the beginning of the subsequent phase of nationalization during the 19th century, the Spanish War of Independence in 1808, the work of the Cortes of Cadiz in 1810, and the Constitution of 1812.

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