

Castles and military fortresses in the city of Oran between the two centuries 10 AH/ 16AD - 12 AH/ 18AD 'historical study'

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Abstrac:

The fortifications of the city of Oran are considered one of the largest defensive systems in the Maghreb. It is an elaborate and complex system dating back to the 10th century AH/16AD, which is the date of Spanish control over the city. As soon as the Mers el-Kébir and later the city of Oran were occupied, the Spaniards initiated the fortification process, due to the necessity of preserving the city. Its fortifications and defensive system were developed during three centuries of Spanish domination, so it was considered one of the best examples of fortified coastal cities, and its defensive fortifications were distinguished by being more comprehensive and complex than their counterparts that were built by the Spanish Empire in the rest of North Africa.

The intervention aims to introduce the Spanish military fortifications in the city of Oran, its advantages and characteristics, and is it really considered a milestone on other military buildings?, And what can be concluded is that castles and forts gave the city of Oran a special architectural character on the military side, that the

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	historical study curriculum is the most appropriate For this article to know the stages of the development of military engineering in Algeria in general and the city of Oran in particular.
Keywords:	Military fortifications; the city of Oran; military construction; defensive system; Fort.

1. INTRODUCTION

After the seizure of Oran in 915 AH/ 1509 AD, the Spaniards rushed to provide it with new castles and towers that were necessary to maintain it in the middle of a hostile country, it is clear that the old was insufficient, in fact we know that there was only a stone wall with several towers and a castle Some of the towers are widespread around the closest perimeter of the city, Oran and Tlemcen practically open cities.¹

The idea of building a border collar through castles and forts, 'which heads' the coast of North Africa was considered necessary, with the aim of repelling the recovery attempts, as these fortifications played the role of military controls to defend the coasts and to secure other invasions, but at the same time it will be offensive places against The surrounding lands.²

And we find the importance of this study in the fact that the castles and fortresses of Oran are a fortified sign with a very few castles along the wide coastal strip. As the engineers of the modern era were transferred to the neighboring continent, the organizational, military and human immunization systems that appeared in the late 9th century AH/15 CE and developed and supported in the 10th century AH/16 CE.³

During the three centuries of Spanish control over the city of Oran, Spanish fortresses and defensive towers were built and its defensive system was gradually formed, a period that corresponds to the history of military architecture with the so -called 'modern fortification' or 'fortified fortification', so the fortifications of the city of Oran became a unique model of fortifications in the Maghreb countries; Where all theories of modern military engineering were applied it in addition to the advanced military architectural elements, where the military engineers created a qualitative boom in defensive construction and in particular castles and forts, as this article aims to introduce the most important castles and forts that formed the defensive system of the city of Oran And as well as the historical stages to construct it. From this standpoint, it comes in mind this problematic: in what is the most important castles and fortresses of the city of Oran? What are the most important historical stages to construct? The historical approach has followed us to complete the study, as the article mainly depends on a historical study

2. The historical stages of the construction of castles and horoscopes in the city of Oran

The immunization process has known two important periods: the first between 1509 AD and 1708 AD and the second between 1732 AD and 1790 AD, and during these two periods, the greatest Spanish fortifications that were known in that period were created as "Oran pride of the Spanish Crown", because modern military theories at that time were applied to it. And that we can divide historically into the stage of the first Spanish occupation and the second Spanish occupation stage of the city and it came as follows:

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2.1 The first stage: the major castles of the defensive system of Oran:

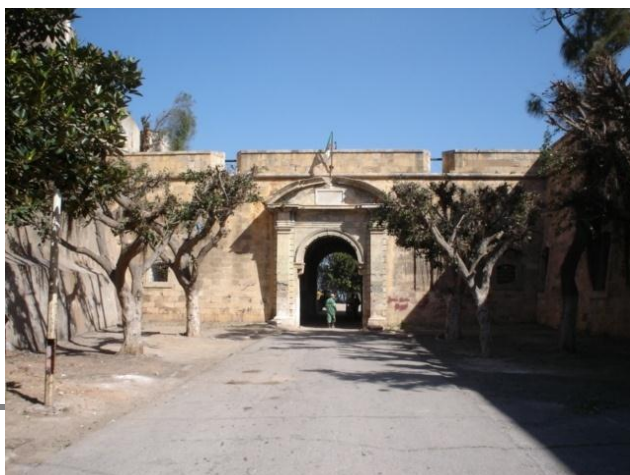
This stage consists of the major castles, all built during the first Spanish occupation of the city, respectively: Rosar Castle Kazar, Saint Gregory Castle, Santoker Castle, Saint Andriss Castle, Saint Philip Castle, and Castle Mers el-kébir.

2.1.1 El Rosalcazar Castle:

It is located on a mountainous peak overlooking the sea⁴ and has multiple names such as the Red Tower, El Rosalcazar Castle, Shatounav, and El Mahal Tower,⁵ The founding and construction of this castle dates back to the year 1347 AD, ⁶by Sultan Abu Al-Hassan Al-Marini. ⁷

It can be said that the first building of the castle was originally a cluster of three towers connected by curtain walls, which we can see on the western side of the castle. These towers were reshaped and given another plan during the first Spanish control, as the castle is considered one of the oldest and largest. Castles of Oran, **Picture 01.**⁸

Picture 01: the main entrance to the Rosakzar Castle



2.1.2. Saint Gregario Castle:

It is located on the top of the Hydor slightly low on Santa Cruz and is an interview with the Santa Cruz castle from the side that descends to the sea in the close of 175 m, until it is met with a battery for a color.

It was built by order of King Philip II in 1589 AD, and it was planned by the military engineer, nicknamed Fratin.⁹ **Picture 02**

Picture 02: Alawite view of St. Gregpario Castle



Source: OGEBC

2.1.3 Snta Cruz Castle:

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It rises on the Hedor Plateau, Mount Marjajo, or Mountain Mountain, which is called the Spaniards, Silla.¹⁰

The opinions of researchers and historians differed in the year of the establishment of the Santa Cruz Castle, where we find a group of sources that give different dates, perhaps the most prominent of which is what Didi said that the year of establishing the Santa Cruz Castle was in 1577 AD,¹¹ As for Kahil, it indicates that after the appointment of Don Louis Gagraran de Borja Marquis, the governor of the Governor of Oran and the Grand Marina, on June 29, 1567 AD, this year visited each of the two castles of St. Geagerio and then ascended more to inspect the castle on top of the mountain called 'Santa Cruz'.¹²

And if we go further, we find that this history is inconsistent with what Suàez referred to, which is considered one of the most important sources that touched on the description of the city of Oran where we find it indicates that it is in 3 My 1577 AD Done Martín De Córdoba, Governor of Oran, laid the foundation stone for the construction of the castle, which is the Day of the Holy Cross.¹³ **Picture 03**

Picture03: The northern side of Santa Cruz Castle.



2.1. 4 Saint Andrés Castle:

It is located on top of a hill next to the Oued Kebir, halfway between the fortresses of Saint Philip and Al-Rosalcazar .¹⁴ Saint Andrés Castle is considered small in size compared to its counterparts, but it is essential for its strategic location along the Mostaganem Road.¹⁵ It was called Other names in the Ottoman period are the Sabaihiye Tower and the New Tower.¹⁶

This castle was founded by Don Andrés Coppola, Duke of Canzano and Marquis Robledo de Chavela, governor of the squares of Oran and Mers el-Kébir between 1692 AD. -1697 AD,¹⁷ When Don Gonzalo de Arias, the leader of the Oran

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government, which was subordinate to the Marqués de Cassola, died, he carried out the final construction in 1697 AD for the Castle of Saint Andres.¹⁸ **Picture 04.**

Picture 04: Entrance to Saint Andrés Castle



2.1.5 Castle of St. Philip:

The east of the city is located on the right plateau of the valley, which is passed by the birth river (Rio De Los Molinos).¹⁹

In a letter dated September 5, 1616 AD to His Majesty Felipe III, he was written by the ruler of Oran on July 12, where they requested about 541-542 Murvada (Spanish coin), in order to re-fortify the castle of St. Philip such a large amount means rebuilding a castle St. Philip, whose construction was not completed until 1629 AD.²⁰ According to this letter, whoever initiated the creation of the castle of St. Philip is the Don Felipe Ramrir De Areno.²¹ **Picture 05**

Picture05: Interior and exterior view of St. Philip's Castle



2.1.6 Mers el-Kébir Castle:

Mers el-Kébir is the great port, and it is part of the Gulf of Oran between the tip of Lamona and the end that extends to Mount Santoun, this last point nicknamed Mers el-Kébir.²²

Mers el-Kébir Castle is one of the first defensive castles known to the city of Oran, where we find Historians have differed on the date of the founding of this castle. Among them is Leon the African, who dates it to the Kingdom of Tlemcen around the 9th century AH/15AD.²³ As for Marmul Carvajal, he links it to the Romans,²⁴ but it is likely that the castle located in Mers el-Kébir

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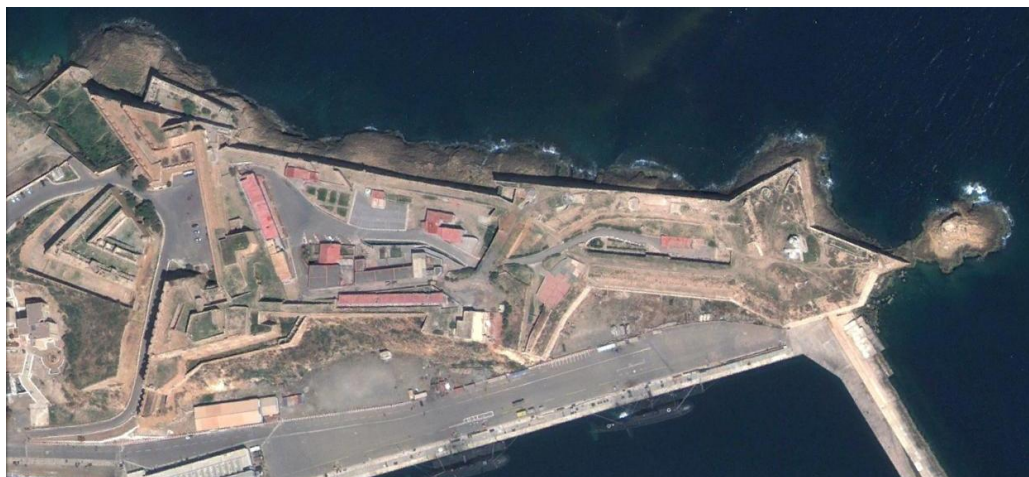
was founded by Sultan Abu Al-Hassan Al-Marini in the year 1347 AD. ²⁵

The Italian engineer Bautista Antonelli began building the new citadel of Mers el-Kébir, drawing his plan. The first plan was square, then it became rectangular with four towers at its corners: the Santiago Tower, the Saint Philip Tower, the Cruz Tower, and the Saint Juan Tower. ²⁶

Then, works and projects continued in Mers el-Kébir, in order to transform it into a fortress capable of confronting enemies. ²⁷

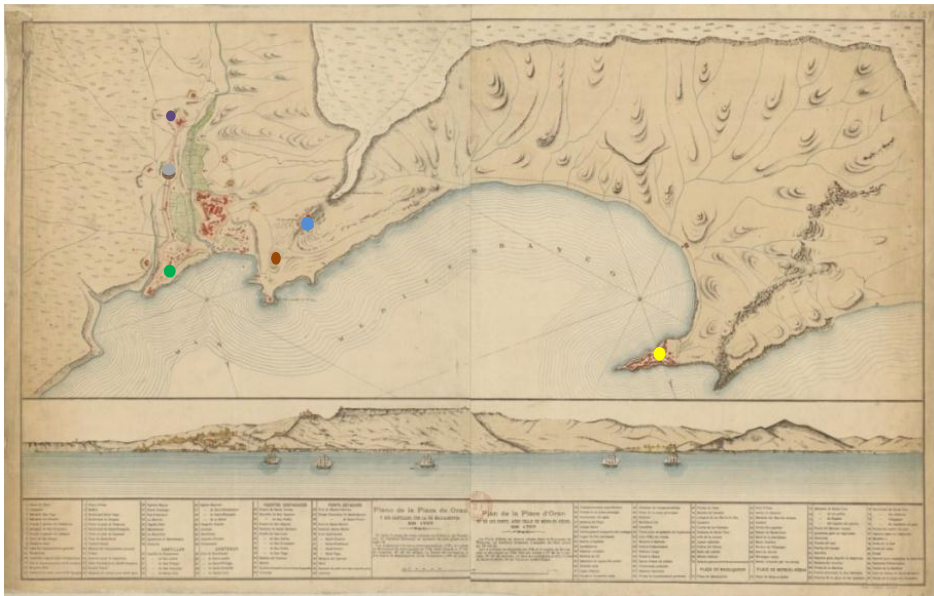
Picture 06.

Picture 06: Location of Mers El-Kébir Castle



Source : Google Earth

Map 01: The distribution of the great castles location of the city of Oran and its fortifications for its inscription of French maps painter Jack Nicholas Bilin 1703 m / 1772 AD on a copper plate, and published in 1764 AD Paris.



● Rosalcazar castel ● San Gregario castel ● Santa Cruz castel ● San Andrés castel ● Mers el-Kébir castel ● Sant Philip castel.

Source : http://www.mcu.es/ccbae/es/consulta/resultados_busque- -- da.cmd

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2. 2 The second stage: Fortresses, extensions of the major castles of the city of Oran.

During the second occupation of the city of Oran, the governors of the city saw it necessary to build other towers that were small in size, but had a very important role in defending it. The best organizer of this defensive strategy was the Commander-in-Chief Don José Vallejo (1734 AD - 1738 AD), where the Madrid court adopted his suggestions and proposals that he presented in his memoirs in the year 1734 AD.²⁸ This stage consists of forts attached to the major castles, and their construction dates back to the year 1732 AD, with the exception of the “La Mouna” battery, whose founding dates back to The 16th century AD and the Nasenmento Tower, which was strengthened in the 18th century AD. This system, known as external fortification or fortified forts, ensured the protection of the castles and the place through a belt of forts planted in such a way that the enemy’s artillery was pressed into an area that did not allow it to fire on the castles, especially in Oran Square.²⁹

2.2.1. Lamona Fort:

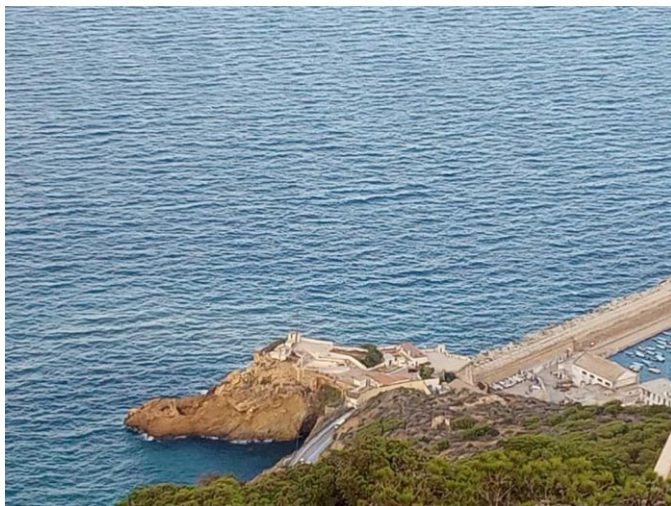
It is located under the Fort of St. Gregorio in the place where the Spanish naval forces first landed on land on the northwestern shore of the city’s port ³⁰ .

Historians differed regarding the year the fort was built. Some say 1509 AD. Or 1518 AD, and we can consider that this fort is considered the oldest fort built by the Spaniards in Oran. It was also known as the Jewish Tower.³¹

Don José de Arampur, in the year 1740 AD, renovated and rebuilt the Lamona fort, and it was completed in 1742 AD. It was in the shape of an incomplete horseshoe and contained a moat and a drawbridge.³²

It repels the enemy and prevents him from landing operations on the sandy beach, and also ensures communication with Mers-el-Kébir. It was armed with four cannons, which headed west to defend Mers-el-Kébir, while the other six cannons It faces towards the sea and is twenty-four caliber³³ **Picture 07.**

Picture 07: A general view of Lamouna Fort in 2021 AD



2.2.2 Saint Teresa's Fortress:

It is located to the southeast of the Rosalcazar Fortress³⁴ It is also known as the Francis Fortress³⁵, This fort was built between the years 1737 AD - 1778 AD according to the letters and memoirs of Governor General Don José Vallejo³⁶ , It was shaped

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like a simple pincer and contained a trench and a drawbridge³⁷.
Picture 08.

His fire defended the lands surrounding the Rosarquar Castle and also defended the valley of St. Megal and his lands³⁸.

Picture 08: A general view of Saint Teresa's Fort



Source : (KHelifa Mohammed Amine
, 2012/2013, 171)

2.2.3.Fort Santiago:

It is located in the southwest in the open fields next to the city³⁹. The Santiago fort was built in 1736 AD, according to Michal de Palza⁴⁰. Which was the engineer of Oran in 1732 AD, his plot was five -ribs with a water trench and a moving bridge.⁴¹ **Picture 09**

Due to its good location, it defended the city and prevented the enemy from approaching from the right and left of the double walls of the castle, and also ensured communication between the Castle of San Gregorio and the Castle of Santa Cruz. It contained five cannons on the west and six others, and it could accommodate one hundred and fifty men⁴².

Picture 09: General view of Fort Santiago



2.2.4. Fort Saint Pedro:

It is located in the southeast of the city⁴³. Fort Saint Pedro was built on the orders of Governor Don José Vallejo in the year 1737 AD and implemented by engineer Don Juan Ballester⁴⁴. It took a pentagonal shape and was very low. It had a major flaw because it received hits from a very close space. It contained a trench, a

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drawbridge, and a tank for soldiers, officers, and gunpowder⁴⁵.

Picture10 Its main mission was to prevent the enemy from approaching or firing at the El RosalCzar Castle from close range. It could accommodate sixty men, and contained five cannons⁴⁶.

Picture 10: A general view of the fortress of St. Pedro.



2.2.5. Fort Saint Fernando:

It is located next to the Guadalquivir in the same line with the Fort Saint Philip,⁴⁷ It was built during the reign of Governor Valejo in the year 1734 AD. It contained a covered moat and had a tunnel connecting it with the Castle of Saint Philip.⁴⁸

This fort was defending the streets, valley, and low lands of the Castle of St. Philip, and he was armed with filling rifles, stones of stones and five cannons, and he could accommodate seventy men.⁴⁹

2.2.6 Nassimanto Fort:

It is located on the right of St. Fernando's tower on the southern side of the valley,⁵⁰ was built during the reign of General Don Alexander Don Lamon in 1743 AD-1746 AD, where there is a second writing inside the tower as follows: 'Under the rule of His Majesty Philip V The completion of this tower of Christmas in 1746 AD without Alexandro Don Lamon⁵¹.

His basic mission was to guard the source below the fortress of St. Carlos, which represents the first advanced defensive system for Oran fortifications, so he was arranged with a set of landmines⁵².

2.2.7 St. Carlos Fort:

It is located in the northeast of Nassimto Valley and completely next to the source. There is a fortress of St. Carlos⁵³, was built in 1734 AD by the hands without José Valejo.

His primary role was the enemy's response and the protection of the castle of St. Philip, he could accommodate a hundred men⁵⁴.

2.2.8 St. Megal's fortress:

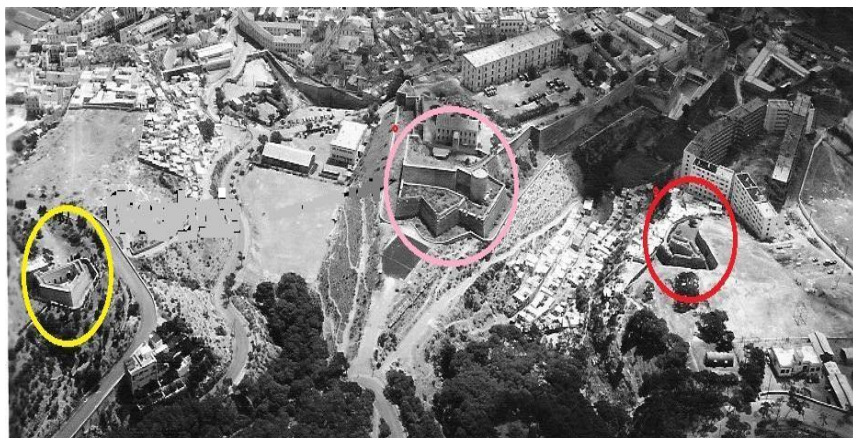
It is located to the east of the Front of St. Pedro and the fortress of St. Anjnasio⁵⁵. To defend the door, it contained a trench and a drawbridge⁵⁶. Its role was to prevent the enemy from installing batteries in the event of a siege. It also worked to protect the horns of the castle of El Rosarczar, and in the event of a siege it could accommodate five artillery pieces and two hundred men.

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2.2.9 Fort Saint Louis:

It is located east of Saint Andres Castle⁵⁷. This fort was also built by order of Governor José Valejo, who built it in the year 1736 AD. Its shape was rectangular, and it was surrounded by a moat and a moving bridge⁵⁸. Its importance lies in protecting Saint Andres Castle, as well as the protection of the mines, was armed with four stone cannons⁵⁹. **Picture11.**

Picture11 : ● fort san pedro ● fort santiago ● View of the Campana double pliers position



Source : (KHelifa Mohammed Amine

, 2012/2013, 166)

These forts were supported by an immediate defensive circle of the squares and the navy, and were independent of the neighboring forts and castles, and were represented by watch towers and guard points.⁶⁰ Between the Castle of Saint Andrés and Bab Tlemcen in the open field, there was a tower called La Torre

Grand, which was built in the year 1570 AD by the engineer Don Pedro Luis Galcerán de Borja.⁶¹ To strengthen the line of defense between El Rosalcazar and Saint Andrés, a tower known as Santa Barbara **Picture12** was built. It was built in 1734 AD. It contained thirty men and was equipped with three .

. Picture 12: Santa Barbara Tower.



Source : (KHelifa Mohammed Amine, 2012/2013, 174)

The Saint Madrigal Tower was built between the Castle of Rouzalcazar and Saint Philip, whose foundation dates back to the tenth century AH and the sixteenth century AD by the engineer Antonilli.⁶²

Three towers were erected on the defensive line that connects the Castle of Saint Andrés to the Tlemcen Gate, which are the tower of Saint José, Saint Antonio and Saint Nicholas, then the Colorado fortification was added to the buildings attached to the Kasbah in order to prevent the enemy from approaching it.⁶³

These towers were supported by a facility called the “Cartadira de la Barrera”, through which the castles connected to each other

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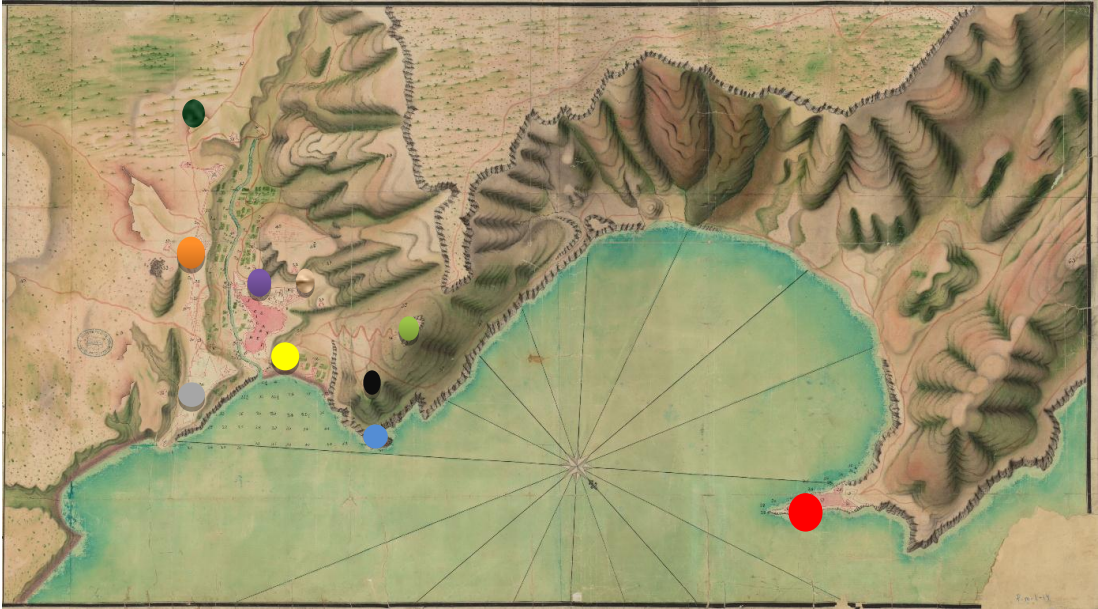
with barricades, and the “Barrera” in turn was connected to a square. Saint Andrés Castle. The inner defenses of the castle consisted of the inner towers of “Saint José,” “Saint Nicholas,” and “Saint Antonio” **Picture 13.**

. Picture 13: Saint Nicholas Tower.



Source : (KHelifa Mohammed Amine, 2012/2013, 178)

Map. 02: General map of the city of Oran and Mers el-Kébir



- Rosalcazar castel ◌ San Gregario castel ◌ Santa Cruz castel ◌ San Andrés castel ◌ Mers el-Kébir castel ◌ Sant Philip castel ◌ fort san pedro ◌ fort Santiago ◌ fort San Miguel ◌ Lamona Fort.

Source : (Ar.GBis-T.5-C.5/198)

3. Conclusion:

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As a general summary, the Spanish control of the city of Oran in the past can be hinted today in a set of fortifications built on certain geographical heights and various strategic sites, and it represents archaeological features of the historical and artistic cultural heritage of the city of Oran.

This architectural heritage, which was built during three hundred years of Spain's control of the city of Oran, is a historical and cultural landmark, and it is an integral part of the architectural perspective and the urban fabric of the city.

These fortifications are undoubtedly one of the greatest defensive systems that Spain built in North Africa with Melilla and Ceuta, which was designed by military engineers who provided their services under the banner of the Spanish Kingdom throughout the modern era, where they identified the spatial and defensive composition of the city of Oran and converted into a border area that was characterized by the construction of many fortifications that were given The city of Oran has its own unique character, and these huge buildings also constitute an excellent reference for knowledge and scientific and artistic development of architecture and military engineering in modern Spain.

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- ⁴⁶ **Bendaoud Ferhat Radja Halima-** Etude d'architecture Milition de la ville d'Oran pendant l'occupation espagnole 1505-1792- Mémoire de Magister- Ecole polytechnique d'architecture et d'urbanisme- Alger- 1999-2000- p 167.
- ⁴⁷ **Cazenave Jean-** Les gouverneurs-op, cit- p 257.
- ⁴⁸ **Alonso Acero-** op-cit- p 16.
- ⁵⁰ **Epalza Mikel.DE et Vilar Bautista-** op, cit- p 300.
- ⁵¹ **Ibid-** p 301.
- ⁵² **Pestemal Djoglou Alicxcndr-** op- cit- p 168.
- ⁵³ **Ximenéz De Sandoval-** op-cit- p 74.
- ⁵⁴ **Hantabat Harnaldo-** op-cit - p 24. **AGS,E G, M, LEG,** 3470/fols, 79 .
- ⁵⁵ **AGS,E G, M, LEG,** 3470/fols, 79.
- ⁵⁶ **Ximenéz De Sandoval-** op-cit- p 79.
- ⁵⁷ **Hantabat Hernaldo-** op-cit- p 249.
- ⁵⁸ **Bendaoud Ferhat Raja Halima-** op-cit- p161.
- ⁵⁹ **Hantabat Hernaldo-** op-cit- p 250
- ⁶⁰ **Ibid-** p ,161.
- ⁶² **Terki Hassaine-** « Porlematica gestion de los Posesiones Espanolas en la Algelia del siglo XVIII : caso de crang Mazalquivir melilla ; revista aldaba, n0 25- 1995- p 140.
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