



## **THE FORTIFICATIONS OF ALEXANDRIA AND ROSETTA BEFORE THE ENGLISH CAMPAIGN IN 1807**

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### **Abstract**

The location of Alexandria and Rosetta on the Mediterranean Sea and at the entrance to the River Nile had a significant impact on increasing interest in fortifying them, this explains the dangers to which the western borders and the Egyptian coasts were exposed.

During the French campaign, Alexandria was chosen to be the site of the campaign's descent due to its strategic location on the one hand and the proximity of Abu Qir Bay, in which it was decided to anchor the French ships, on the other hand, the campaign also headed to Rashid in a move to control the western Nile outlet and to prevent the British fleet from reaching Cairo.

Alexandria and Rosetta witnessed the construction of a large number of castles and fences with gates during historical times. These castles and ramparts played a major role in defending the two cities during the French campaign (1798-1801) and the British campaign (1807).

The research deals with several axes, including: an introduction to the location of the cities of Alexandria and Rosetta on the Mediterranean and at the entrance to the Nile, and its impact on increasing interest in fortifying them, and the defensive state of Alexandria, in terms of the city gates, Al-Fanar fort, Al-Rokncastle, Al-Zahircastle, Al-Silsilacastle, Kom El-Dikkacastle, the Roman fortress (Caesar's camp), the 'Ajami fortress and the ports of Alexandria, as for the defensive situation of Rosetta, it deals with: Salah al-Din Ibn'Arramcastle in the south of the city and the Qaitbay castle in the north, along with the walls of Rosetta.

**keywords:** Alexandria, Rosetta, the Mediterranean Sea, the River Nile, castles and walls, the French campaign, the British campaign.



## **First: Introduction**

The location of the cities of Alexandria and Rosetta on the Mediterranean and at the entrance to the Nile had a significant impact on increasing interest in fortifying them.

In the era of the nineteenth dynasty, King Merinptah built fortifications, in order to defend the country against attacks by sea pirates, and this illustrates the danger to which the western borders and the Egyptian coasts were exposed [1]. King Ramses III[2] built other fortifications along the shores of the Mediterranean to protect the northern and western borders of Egypt [1], and Pismatik I [2-3] (664-610 BC) set up a camp at Rosetta called the Milesian camp in (663 BC), which included the Milesians from some islands. Greece and other mercenary forces used in the army of Egypt [4]. Diodorus the Sicilian mentioned that at each estuary of the Nile a city arose, in which high fortifications and castles were built on both sides of the river [5-6].

When Alexander conquered Egypt (331 BC), "Rakotis" or "Rakouda" represented a strategic location and not just a small fishing village. Along the main coast there is an island called "Pharos", and then a fortified village protected the northern corner. The western part of the delta had a fortress opposite the fortress of Pharos [7].

Alexandria was chosen to be the landing site of the French campaign due to its strategic location on the one hand and the proximity of Abu Qir Bay, in which it was decided to anchor the French ships, on the other hand, and the city's land at the time (the end of the eighteenth century) consisted of a narrow strip of extended mountain ranges. To the west, it is connected to the Libyan Desert, and this narrow strip continues to the east, confined between the Mediterranean Sea in the north, and Lake Ma'adiya (Abu Qir) in the south, up to Abu Qir, which belonged to the city in the late eighteenth century. The old city was surrounded by a large wall surrounding it from all sides. Mahmoud Pasha Al-Falaki made excavations in the city during the era of Khedive Ismail, which led to accurately locating the old city and its monuments [8-9]. With the shrinking of the city's size in later periods, this wall was rebuilt to surround the populated areas. It was renewed during the reign of Ahmed bin Tulun in the year 260 AH (873 AD), and then it was renewed again during the reign of Salah al-Din al-Ayyubi in the year 600 AH (1203 AD).

The size of the city gradually decreased in the Ottoman era (1517-1798) until its construction became, in the late eighteenth century, confined between the eastern and western ports. The shrine of Abu Al-Abbas Al-Mursi, some of them are cemeteries, and



there were only some houses for fishermen in the Al-Siyala area. At the advent of the French campaign, the urbanization of the city decreased significantly, to the extent that Pompeii column became far from its construction by about one thousand five hundred meters to the south[10-11].

This modern city, or the one that arose between the two ports, was called the Arab city following the Arab conquest of Egypt, and even the French invasion, and the locations of land and sea changed greatly, and the coast increased in area at the expense of the sea[12], and the accumulated sand deposits linked the coast to the ancient island of Pharos, People built homes for themselves on the soil of this new beach, and these sediments increased until they reached a height of about forty feet in front of the house of the French Consulate facing the eastern port[13], and the Heptastade bridge that connected the African shore to the island of Pharos in ancient times became the backbone of that modern city that arose Between the two ports, the ancient island of Pharos turned into a peninsula that was later known as the Ras al-Tin peninsula, and that new island itself became known after the Ottoman invasion of Egypt as the Turkish city, and the population dwindled, and their number was clearly reduced, and as a result the fence of the Arab walls became large and these residents shrank on the patch that formed from the new sediments on the Heptastade Bridge, and it became a residential strip teeming with houses and small mosques[14].

### **Second: the defensive state of Alexandria**

As for the defensive state of Alexandria[9], it was taken into account when the city was established that it was surrounded by walls interspersed with towers, and forts to defend it against any land or sea invasion, but it began to decline in the late Roman era as a result of political revolutions and religious persecutions, and the deterioration of the city, including its walls, continued until the advent of the Muslim Arabs conquered the country, its area shrank, and its old wall became unfit for defense; as it became surrounded by vast uninhabited ruins, while the population crowded into a small area called (the Arab city), the Arabs surrounded it with a new wall to secure and defend it. With the passage of time, this wall became surrounded by vast ruins, and the area of the city shrank to occupy the neck of the Heptastade separating the two ports: the eastern and western, and it is the city we mentioned and its defensive conditions worsened.



The modern city was in the Ottoman era, with the exception of the Frank district, its buildings are poor, the houses are low, the streets are narrow, filled with sand [15], and inhabited by the Turks, the rich Egyptians, European merchants residing in the Frankish quarter, and some Arabs who live between the old city wall and the walls of the modern city built by the Arabs[16]. One can enter through high doors towards the south to those ancient walls of the city, which no longer contains only the remains of ancient Alexandria, which are archaeological ruins, and buildings buried under the ruins; And broken columns, and the remains of pottery, glass and marble[13].

This city also remained inhabited throughout the Ottoman era, and during the three years of the campaign it occupies only that area between the two ports, which is no more than one kilometer long from north to south, and a width from east to west about half a kilometer, and the advent of the French was an opening a new era for the city, in which it became a military base and a navy, and Bonaparte worked on making Alexandria the point of contact between Egypt and Europe to serve the objectives of his military campaign.

The French traveler Volney depicts the case of Alexandria in the late eighteenth century; He says: It is a military base, of no value; it does not have strong fortifications or a good garrison, for its Ottoman garrison does not exceed two hundred but a little, and it does not know anything about war matters [17].

As More, the Consul of France, wrote in his report submitted in 1783 to the French government wishing it to seize Egypt, saying: The ports of Alexandria are devoid of fortresses, artillery, and ammunition, and have no soldiers except for the people who have joined the military divisions established from the period of the Ottoman conquest. As for Al-Manara Castle, it appears luxurious, but it is almost devoid of the garrison, ammunition and artillery, and the remaining cannons are not suitable for beating, and are only used on holidays, from these sayings we understand that the state of defense of Alexandria has led to weakness and neglect in the Ottoman era [11].

Nicholas al-Turk pointed out the weakness of Alexandria from a military point of view, by saying: The Castle of Alexandria, which is the mouth of the Kingdom of Egypt, had only one jar filled with gunpowder when the French campaign arrived at the port[18]. In terms of coastal defense, the country was generally very weak, and there were no naval operations in the real sense to repel the French fleet in Egyptian waters. Until the end of 1809, Egypt did not possess any warships[19].



## **1. City Gates**

As for the city gates, the number of windows in the walls of the wall, which are the exit outlets from the city, is about five [13], and the first of these doors: the two doors overlooking the facade of the modern city in its north, one of them is called Bab al-Bahr overlooking the eastern port, and the other door is located to the west of it, next to the Al-Balkaria lane. Close to the western port [20], it is called the Green Gate [21-22], and the third gate is located in the east, and is called Bab Rosetta, or Cairo Gate; because it was the traveler's way to the cities of Rosetta and Cairo, and he met the Gate of the Sun in the walls of the old city[23]. As for the fourth door, it is located to the south, and it is called Bab al-'Amoud; because it overlooks Pompeii's column[24]<sup>1</sup> (the pillar), or Sidra Gate, where there was a large Sidr tree next to this door [10]. The door of the tombs is called (Catacombes) close to the corner castle, or the Triangulaire castle[13].

These five doors were erected in the body of the fence's towers to defend it, and the outer façade of the shutters of these doors are covered by iron blades fixed with nails, their heads are prominent and multi-shaped, although their iron has been eroded by rust, and has become crumbly, while the wood from which these doors are made, which is the strong sycamore wood, remained in its condition. There are Western inscriptions in Kufic script on its facades, indicating the time of its construction. With the advent of the French, they opened two new doors in the walls of the wall, in contrast to the five main gates of the city: the first near the Triangulaire fortress (the corner), which is called the fortress of the graves gate, and the second in the settlement adjacent to the Triangulaire fortress Cortina, near the main gate overlooking the new gate area, and we find These two new doors are nothing but a "hole" in the body of the fence [13], and new lines (lanes) have arisen next to these doors, and I have known them such as the Bab al-Bahr line, the Bab Rosetta line, the Bab Sidra line, and the Bab al-Akhdar line [25].

## **2. The Phare Fort**

The most important fortifications and castles of Alexandria was the Phare fortress. It is located at the end of the Pharos Peninsula, where the ancient Lighthouse of Alexandria was located. It was built on its ruins, Qaitbay castle [11]in 1479. This ancient lighthouse was destroyed after an earthquake that occurred in the city in 707 AH (1307 AD), the stones of the lighthouse and its columns were used in building a fortress and the fort's mosque. Its walls are three meters thick in some directions. It is a newly fortified, and includes a square



tower on its sides four small towers are built on its sides, and its four sides have four balconies with cannon slots [26]. The connection to the lighthouse, or the castle, is via a narrow bridge protected by a covered road, with barricades, and a length of 550 meters. Qaitbay built around his castle an impenetrable wall with towers [13], cannon slots with wide corridors [27], and inside the wall several buildings specially prepared for the housing of the soldiers of the military divisions stationed in the castle, and the Alexandrians called that castle the Great Tower Al-Ashrafy[27]. This castle was also a symbol of Alexandria's strength. European travelers who visited the city before the advent of the campaign found it in a state of weakness, but despite that, it resisted the French with all valor and courage.

### **3. Corner Castle**

As for the second fortress in the city, it is Al-Rukn Castle. It occupies the southeastern corner of the Arab walls. The French used to call it the Triangulaire, because it formed a triangle in the corners of the walls[13]. It leads to the shrine of SidiImad, or the so-called Western Naj'e[28], located to the south of one of the main city gates in the west, the Porte de Catacombes. The French called it Fort Duvivier<sup>ii</sup> after their occupation of the city.

### **4. Al-Dhaheri Tower**

As for the Dhaheri tower, it is located on the shore of the eastern port, facing the tombs, and the shrine of Sidi Ahmed Abi Al-Abbas Al-Morsi[20], and in the neighborhood known as the shrine line. It is more like a fortress separate from the walls of the Arab city, so it was called the Dhaheri[29]or Bahri Island of Al-Thaghr. In the vicinity of this tower there is the Mustafa Pasha Tower, which bears the Arab architectural character, and protects the western port, in the neighborhood known as the Fishermen Line, which is the largest area of the apparent tower, and is superior to it in terms of numbers due to the military forces stationed in it [13], and on the hill that overlooks the old port Qala'atKoumNadura (Cafarelli Castle) [30]<sup>iii</sup>, which is a small tower used as an observatory and a point of guidance for travelers when approaching this port, its height is 50-60 meters above sea level. It appears that it was present during the days of Sultan Selim I, and to the south of Customs Al-Thaghr. The General Bonaparte built a fortified castle over this height [13-26].

### **5. Al-Silsila Tower**

To the east, we find Al-Manara Fort, a small fortress that takes its name from its location towards the Al-Fanar fort. , which sometimes covers it, and the tower of this fort is square



in shape, and it was destroyed at the time of the French campaign [13]<sup>iv</sup> after it was full in the late eighteenth century, when it was called Al-Silsila Tower, or Sidi Abdullah Tower [31].

#### **6. Kom El-Dikka Castle**

To the south, there is the Kom el-Dikka Castle (Citadel of Cretan)<sup>v</sup> in the far east, close to Bab Rosetta, above one of the two prominent heights within the walls of the Arab city, and its height reaches more than fifty meters [13], some called it Kom Al-Dimas [27], where there is this fortress that protects the outskirts of the city from the south, which the French called the Cretan fortress, and they fortified it well [13].

#### **7. Roman Fort (Caesar's Camp)**

In addition to the city walls from the east, there is one of the forts built by the Romans, and its ruins remained until the nineteenth century. It is located on the seashore in the area known as Nicopolis or the City of Victory, in memory of Caesar's victory over Antony in the late Roman era<sup>vi</sup>[11]. In the far east of the city, there is Abu Qir Castle [13-32]. It is likely that it was built in the Mamluk era, and the French restored it due to the importance of this military site to them.

#### **8. Al-'Ajami Fort**

As for the last fortifications of the city, it is built at the top of the rocky chains on a tongue located to the southwest of the Gulf of Alexandria in the far west. It is called Al-'Ajami Fort (Murabit), and the distance between it and Al-Fanar Fort (Qaytbay) is about 11.728 meters. The French built an artillery battery to protect The entrance to the western port is at this location.

#### **9. Alexandria ports**

As for the ports of Alexandria, which consist of the new (eastern) port, European ships were not allowed, before the advent of the French campaign, to dock except in this port alone [9], whose entrance is protected by the Al-Fanar Fort (Qaitbay), and its eastern entrance is protected by the Al-Qaim fortress on the Al-Silsila Tower [13], (the Alexandrians nowadays call the tombs located to the south of that region the tombs of the Lighthouse), the port is spacious; But it is shallow in depth, with rocky reefs in the water level until its middle[13]. The shores of this port were also surrounded by agencies, foreign trading houses, the office building (customs) and the residence of the consuls with French merchants in particular [33].



As for the old (western) port, it is located to the south of a spacious bay that consists of a series of rocks that partially disappear under the water [9]. The bottom of these rocky reefs extends from Ras al-Sheikh al-'Ajami (Murabit) to Ras al-Tin in the far west of the Pharos Peninsula, where the lighthouse (Qaytbay) is located [13]. The old port was forbidden for European ships to enter, and after the French took control of the gap, merchant ships of different nationalities could dock in any of the two ports[34], and the Tarsakhana building, and the naval stores were located on the shore of this port [35].

### **Third: Rosetta's defensive status**

As for the fortifications of the city of Rosetta and its castles before the campaign, in the Pharaonic era, Rosetta was a fortified city that protected the Nile branch, and was a center for the manufacture of war wheels [14-36-37], as it represented an isolated area from the rest of the cities of the delta, because it was surrounded by lakes and waterways, and this role continued to be clear until the Arab conquest [38]. After Amribn al-'Aas conquered the city of Alexandria and demolished its impregnable walls [10], Rosetta was one of the cities whose owner, Cosman, made peace with Amribn al-'Aas, and then the Islamic army entered Rosetta [39-40-41-42].

All these reasons motivated the Arabs to realize the importance of forts and towers, and then they studied the art of siege and the manufacture of heavy machinery, and thus they began to learn new methods in the art of building castles and building forts [43-44], and Rosetta was one of the important maritime centers [45]. And when the Byzantine danger increased in the era of the Abbasid state, the caliphs began to restore the strongholds and fortresses [46]. And then the Abbasid Caliph Al-Mutawakkil[47] ordered the construction of a group of Ribats[48] on the mouths of the Nile from Tennis to Alexandria [49-50], in 239 AH (853 AD), in order to face the Byzantine danger to the Egyptian frontiers[51-52-53-54].

Ahmed bin Tulun was also interested in these frontiers [14], as the Islamic city arose near Rabat Rosetta during the reign of Ahmed bin Tulun in 256 AH (870 AD), and Ahmed bin Tulun's plan was clear, which was to defend the frontiers, with his keenness to pay attention to the repair and renewal of forts so that the armistice would not be a deception followed by a sudden attack [55]. Therefore, the city of Rosetta arose from a warlike origin, as Rabat was the nucleus of this emerging city in conditions full of conflicts, and





the military impact began to appear clearly on its planning, as it was subjected to various conditions that governed this planning, the first of which was the city's location on the River Nile. The emergence of the city reflected the importance of fortification to protect its existence and develop its urbanization [45]. The Abbasids were satisfied with the establishment of the Ribat of Rosetta, and it was not proven that they built walls around the city, and it seems that they were satisfied with the natural borders of the city far from the sea, separated from it by sand dunes that are difficult to walk and easy to control, and it was easy to close the city in front of the invaders, as the strength of the city's population of the conquerors soldiers.

In the Fatimid era, some dangers began to threaten the Egyptian frontiers after the state weakened during the days of the succession of the winner Nasrallah Issa and the minister Saleh Tala'i bin Razik. In the year 555 AH (1190 AD) the Byzantines launched an attack on Rosetta with a fleet of sixty ships sent by Rogers II, the owner of Sicily. Pirates wreaked havoc in Rosetta, Tennis and Alexandria [49].

Rosetta remained the focus of the attention of the Byzantines for more than five centuries, when the Crusader danger began after that, which continued throughout the Ayyubid and Mamluk eras. Salah al-Din had seen in the Levant fortified cities, walled fortresses and high, well-built walls, so he took a broad idea of the methods of siege and the importance of forts, castles and fortifications in protecting cities.

In the Mamluk era, the Mamluk sultans were interested in establishing military fortifications and means of monitoring the enemy, and increased interest in Rosetta, as it became an independent outpost in its own right, and one of the most important of these fortifications was the lighthouse whose age was al-Zahir Baybars in Rosetta to monitor Frankish ships. It is clear that this castle is the observatory of al-Zahir Baybars. It was renovated by Sultan Qaytbay in (884 AH / 1479 AD), and he built a wall around it to protect it from raids. The same is true of Alexandria. At the bottom (top of Abu Mandour Hill) is the tower of the age of Salah al-Din ibn 'Arram (667-782 AH / 1365-1380 AD) on the shore of the Nile by Fairouz al-Rumi al-'Arrami (Prince of Rosetta), during the reign of Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban in 775 AH (1373 AD)[57], and Sultan Qaytbay established A tower [7-58], the sources said that he visited the city of Rosetta in the year 884 AH (1429 AD) to discover this tower, as well as the tower that he built in Alexandria.

The sources stated that Sultan al-Ghuri visited the city of Rosetta on the thirteenth of Dhul-



Qa'dah 921 AH (1515 AD), where he ordered the construction of a wall on the seashore and towers to preserve the gap. He went to the ports of Alexandria or Damietta, and Al-Ghouri sent builders and stoners, and when he returned from his trip, he delegated the chief architect, Khair Bey Al-'Ala'i, and appointed him commander of the thousand to supervise the construction of those walls[49].

### **1. Salah Al-Din Bin 'Arram castle**

IbnDuqmaq[59] mentioned the Rosetta lighthouse and the Salah al-Din bin 'Arram tower when he said, describing Rosetta: "there is the kom of al-Afrah, in which there are good people, and it is a blessed place, and at the top of the kom is a minaret from which the ships of the Franks can be seen, the Sultan Al-Malik Al-ZahirBaybars Al-Bunduqdari, and below it is the tower of his age, Prince Salah Al-Din bin Aram on the shore of the Nile".

Combe goes back and mentions that he does not know anything about the condition of the tower built by Prince Salah al-Din bin 'Arram at the end of the 14th century AD, and he concluded that it was definitely not in the south of the city, where the hill and the lighthouse are located, which does not agree with the location of the Qaitbay Tower. What IbnDuqmaq mentioned was a clear reason for this confusion, as he stated that the lighthouse is located above the kom and not on it, and it is known that the distance between Qaitbay Castle and this kom is eleven kilometers, so it is illogical for a lighthouse to be established to monitor ships in the sea so far away, considering The Qaitbay Citadel is located on the sea coast, which is not the case [60].

From here it is understood that (above) as stated in the text of IbnDuqmaq means (north), as it was mentioned: "And below it is the tower of Omar, Prince Salah al-Din bin 'Arram." It did not make it clear that this tower is at the bottom of the lighthouse or at the bottom of the hill, and it is not reasonable from a military point of view to construct a tower at the bottom of a hill So, what is acceptable is the construction of the tower below the lighthouse, i.e. in its south, considering that the lighthouse is located at the top of the hill, i.e. in its north, and this indicates a clear indication that the lighthouse was located to the north of the city more likely [61].

And if we go back to what the Turkish Admiral PeriRéis[61-62], who came to Rosetta in 1521 AD, said and mentioned a phrase that identified the locations of two towers, he said: "We discovered, ten miles outside the sea from the head of the city of Rosetta, a tower similar to a castle erected at the entrance to the branch, the Nile from the south and another



tower in front of the entrance, three miles from the city.

From what this admiral mentioned, the features of the Qaitbay and Salah al-Din bin 'Arram towers are clear, as it is confirmed to us that the tower of Salah al-Din bin 'Arram was located at a distance of ten miles (16 km) south of the mouth at the top of the hill west of the Abu Mandour Mosque, which is located south of Kom al-Afrah, which was lower in height. Including, and this indicates that this tower was located at the bottom of the kom, i.e. in its south, and the hill on which it was located represented the highest peak in the hills of the region. Therefore, it was devoid of tombs that extended south of the city at the Abbasid Mosque, which is based on the tomb of Sayyid Mohamed al-Abbasi, who died in the 7th century AH. (13 AD)[57].

The Kom Al-Afrah, which was mentioned in the text of IbnDuqmaq, extends from the Abbasid Mosque to the Mosque of Abu Mandour, and to the south of it is the Kom (below) the Salah al-Din Ibn 'Arram Tower mentioned by PeriRéis, and it is ten miles away from Al-Boughaz (approximately 16 kilometers) and seven miles from Qaitbay Castle (approximately 11 km). This indicates that the Burj Qaitbay and the lighthouse of al-ZahirBaybars were north of the city, close to the sea, three miles from the mouth (five kilometers). Qaitbay Tower is seven kilometers away from the city, and the lighthouse remains so far without specifying its location, unless we assume that the lighthouse is the Qaitbay Tower.

## **2. Qaitbay castle**

Sultan Qaitbay built the citadel of Alexandria on the foundations of the lighthouse, and by reference to the sources, we find that this lighthouse was present during the time of al-ZahirBaybars, who built a mosque in it in 983 AH (1274 AD)[14]. He had built a lighthouse in Rosetta before that [48], and he was influenced in its construction by the one in Alexandria. The first floor of the lighthouse is similar to the layout of the first floor of the inner tower of Qaitbay Castle in Rosetta [58]. Sultan Qaytbay also used the lighthouse, which dates back to the era of al-ZahirBaybars, as the basis for his castle, which he built the walls around it, keeping the lighthouse, to play its role in warning the forces inside the castle with some modifications [63].

The sources mentioned that King Meriptah and Ramses III had established a series of fortifications along the shores of the Mediterranean [1], and among these fortresses a castle on the island of Pharos and the Castle of Rosetta (Boulbitine), in (663 BC. AD), Psamtik I



established a camp called the Milesian Camp [4], al-Mutawakkil, the Abbasid Caliph built a ribat in each of them in 239 (853 AD)[49], and this indicates that the lighthouse may have been built on the foundations of one of these fortifications, and the closest in our opinion is the Ribat of al-Mutawakkil, which was erected on the foundations of the Lighthouse of Alexandria. When Sultan Qaytbay built his castle, he modified some parts of the inner tower to suit the new situation. He built a wall surrounding the castle with the necessary defensive elements to repel any attack.

Accordingly, Rosetta was blessed in the Mamluk era with the construction of a lighthouse, two castles, and the wall surrounding the city supported by the castles. The lighthouse dates back to the era of al-Zahir Baybars 758 AH (1261 AD), and the first fortress belongs to Salah al-Din Ibn 'Aram (767-782 AH / 1365-1380 AD) and supervised the It was built by Fayrouz al-Roumi al-'Arrami (Prince of the Center) in 775 AH (1373 AD). The second castle was built by Sultan Qaytbay in 876 AH (1472 AD) under the supervision of the engineer Muqbilal-Hasani, and he established a chain linking this castle with the Moghayzel Tower under the supervision of Prince Yashabak al-Dawadar. Sultan Al-Ghuri made renovations to the castle also according to the development of weapons, so he expanded the openings of the workshops, reconstructed the northeastern tower and provided the castle with cannons[64].

Throughout the Ottoman era, the Ottomans did not care about establishing fortifications in Rosetta, and documents throughout the era only mentioned Qaitbay Castle. The sediments that took place during this period also contributed to the removal of the Qaitbay Citadel from Al-Bughaz. The sources stated that Sultan Selim issued an order in 1517 to move the mountains of ruins that threatened Cairo and the rest of the cities of Egypt to bury them under them, and ordered the transfer of these wastes by land and river to the mouths of the Nile [65]. And the military function of the castle was reduced, while it was the seat of the city garrison only, and buildings were spread around the castle, which confirms the lack of its military importance. When Cesar Lamberth visited the castle in 1627, he mentioned that in Rosetta there were two castles facing each other in the port, protected by one hundred and fifty soldiers [66].

In 1672-1673 the traveler Vanzlep visited it and said that there were 74 cannons in the castle, of which seven were unusually large, and its garrison consisted of 184 men from the Janissaries led by the Agha, they sleep at night inside the castle and earn their living during



the day in Rosetta [67]. The soldiers of Rosetta Castle used to go down at night and carry out the tasks of the Muhtasib, attack the people and steal their money, and spread panic among them, or leave the aggressors on the passers-by on the road between the gap and Rosetta without preventing them from doing so, and despite the decisions to isolate them, the repetition of these abuses from this category spread throughout Egypt. This phenomenon became a general feature of the conditions of members of the military divisions in Egypt in the seventeenth century.

The importance began to diminish later, the traveler Paul Lucas [66] visited the castle in 1699, and stated that there are two large forts, but the cannons are very few. Then Van Egmont and Heymann [68] visited it and told that its upper parts had holes for 15 cannons, most of which were not fit to work.

The traveler Richard Pocock [69] also visited the castle in 1737 and said that he saw a number of iron cannons of the old style, each consisting of two or three pieces installed in each other, and he also saw three large copper cannons. Sonnini [70] visited it in 1777 and stated that its buildings were in ruins, and La Larm [67] repeats that too. The traveler Vivandinon [71] visited it in 1798 and said that it was mounted with cannons, each of which was 25 feet long, and mentioned that the ground floor had stores filled with weapons such as bows, arrows and swords of the type of those weapons that were used in the days of the Crusaders, as well as many helmets were found. The castle had been neglected since the eighteenth century and many parts of it fell. Tal believes that it was demolished by 600 men and four pieces of cannons [72].

With a study of the events that passed on the castle in the Ottoman era and the study of the developments that went through it and in which restoration works were carried out, it confirms that the Ottomans did not make any modifications to it, and that they kept the old situation even the cannons did not make any changes and remained as they are.

### **3. Rosetta Walls**

The aim of constructing these walls was to surround the city from the three northern, western and southern sides, close to the sea coast and not directly on the coast [74]. Five kilometers north of the walls, while the second is approximately two kilometers south. Al-Ghuri built walls around the city in 921 AH (1516 AD) under the supervision of Khayir Bey Al-'Alai, the chief architect.

The sources mentioned these fortifications without specifying their confirmed locations, so



there was a great confusion in the identification, so that no one had previously reached in particular the location of the lighthouse or the tower of Salah al-Din bin ‘Arram. As for the walls and gates, the researcher found an astronomical map of the city of Rosetta dating back to the 19<sup>th</sup> century AD, derived from the maps of the French campaign. The walls that were built in the Mamluk era were identified on the map, and they were renewed in the era of Mohamed Ali.

The city walls used to extend from the River Nile in the east at the white Qushlaq area and then extend westward to Al-Mazli castle in the northwest corner of the wall. In the middle of this northern wall is the Bab (Abu Al-Rish Gate), which is the only remaining part of the fortifications that surrounded the city [75]. The northern wall extended a length of one thousand three hundred and fifty meters, from the shore of the Nile to the house tabernacle, and it is certain that there was a tabernacle in the site where the white Qushlaq was erected at the beginning of the wall, similar to the Abbasid tabernacle on the eastern edge of the southwestern wall and on the Nile as well or in the east.

The distance between the northern door and al-Manzali castle is approximately 675 meters. As for the western wall, it extended south from al-Manzali to al-Nishan castles, and veered toward the southeast until it ends at al-Abbasi castle on the River Nile, where it is located in the middle of al-Nani castle between al-Abbasi and al-Nishan (Toubjiya) Castles. As for the distance between al-Manzali and Al-Nishan castles, it is 250 meters, and the distance between al-Ninni and al-Abbasi castles is 650 meters.

Accordingly, the length of the walls of Rosetta from the castle, which was replaced by the white Qushlaq, to the Abbasid tabernacle, passing through al-Manzali, al-Nishan and al-Ninni castles, was approximately 2,700 meters, and the River Nile was a natural limit for the city.

The width of the city wall was 3.50 m, and it was zigzag in its tracks, and was topped by a corridor defined by two walls to facilitate the throwing process from above. Between the two blocks of al-Nishan and al-Ninni, it is 120 meters from al-Ninni castle, and it leads to the road that connects to the city of Alexandria and meets the gate of Rosetta in the eastern wall of this city. In which is located the Orabi Mosque, which leads to the Great Street, which is the most important street in the city. The area of the city was nine square kilometers, and it formed an isosceles triangle, the length of its eastern side, which represents the shore of the Nile 1900 meters.



It is noted that the northern side is equal to the southwestern and western side, which is 1,300 meters each, meaning that the city's walls represented a triangle whose base was the shore of the River Nile and the length of its sides was 1350 meters. Another door is at a distance of 675 meters from al-Manzali castle, which confirms the extent of coordination in the planning of the castles and the two gates. The interest in the western and southwestern walls has increased because it is the source of land dangers, while Qaitbay Castle in the north and Abu Mandour Castle in the south play a defensive naval role, whether from the Mediterranean Sea or the River Nile. Until 1884, there were no remains of the northern wall except for the part connected to the house cob, with a length of 70 meters, and the area connected to the northern door with a length of 60 meters.

The construction of the red Qushlaq, which was built to the east of northern gate, caused the demolition of the wall as was the case in the construction of the white shell at the site of the north-eastern castle.

As for the western part of the wall between the two tabs of the house and al-Nishan, it was not straight, as is the case in the entire wall, as it was zigzag, and the reason for this is due to the sand dunes surrounding the city that ruled the construction of this wall. Angles facilitate the protection of the city, unlike straight walls, to increase the number of mandrels and ratchets, and each opposite side protects the rib on which it is based. They were not next to the walls, but if there were no towers or opposite sides, the enemy could not be detected in case of attacking these walls, and we note that the wall extends for a certain distance and protrudes outward for another distance and then returns again to its integrity, and this process is repeated at semi-regular distances. The wall separating the two tabs of the House and the Nishan, as well as the wall between the two tabs of al-Nishan and al-Ninni, remained until the year (1884). As for the wall located between the two tabs of Al-Ninni and al-Abbasi, it was demolished, and the reason for this is due to the English campaign in (1807), which was destroyed by cannons, as well as the city [76-77].

It is certain that the five tabernacles were not large in size, but served as accommodation for the soldiers assigned to guard the walls, each of which was an irregularly shaped building with a battery facing the outside, and climbing to the floors of the tower was carried out by a one-turned staircase. As for the northeastern tabernacle, it is the one that was located on the eastern edge of the northern wall, and it was replaced by the white Qushlaq, which was for the residence of soldiers, and outside it is located the training field,



on the road leading to Al-Boughaz and Qaitbay Castle, this castle was called in the era of Mohamed Ali after Mahal Al-Sharkha castle (the company) [7]<sup>vii</sup>.

In terms of general planning, we can say that there is a great similarity between the walls of the city of Rosetta and the planning of the walls of Jeddah. The walls of Rosetta were irregular, due to the presence of sand dunes that surround the city, extending north from the Nile to al-Manzali castle and then towards the southeast to the Nile again south of the city, and the architecture was more concerned with the southwestern wall than the northern wall. While there are two bricks on the northern wall, we find four bricks in the southwestern side, at a time when the two sides are equal, as the length of each of them is (1350 m), and in the middle of each of the two sides is a gate, the first in the north It is the northern gate, and the second gate is the Alexandria gate at the beginning of the road heading to the city of Alexandria.

The layout of the walls was distinguished by its zigzag and many angles, as we found in the walls of the Andalusian cities, and this facilitates the defense of the city better than the straight walls, as the walls of Rosetta increase the agitators and ratchets, and the angles help to protect all parts of the wall from being excavated by the enemy. The walls were provided with bricks, which serve as places for the soldiers assigned to guard the walls, and each of them is an irregular building and ascends to it with a staircase from one heart. The construction of castles and fences with stones continued, and it was distinguished by the construction of the two sides of the fence with stone, while the interior of the wall was stuffed after that. From these walls remains the Abu al-Rish Gate, which consists of an entrance surrounded by two building blocks, and the entrance leads to a vaulted vestibule that opens into the city. We find similarities between this entrance and the entrance to Aqaba Castle, as well as the entrance to Nekhil Castle.

The Ottomans did not care about the castles and walls of Rosetta, around which mosques and shrines were erected. The tomb of Abu al-Rish was built adjacent to the northern door, and the Al-Manzali Mosque, Al-Ninni Mosque, and Al-Abbasi Mosque were built next to the brick walls. The buildings also crossed these walls, which became memorial elements, and many parts of Qaitbay Castle[75] were destroyed and neglected. Its cannons and buildings spread around it, and the castle of Salah al-Din Ibn 'Arram was also neglected until it was destroyed[78].





It is clear from the statements of historians that the conditions of the settlements in Rosetta during the Ottoman era were neglected, and there was no change in them except at the beginning of the era of Mohamed Ali, especially after the English campaign. The sources did not mention the military monuments in Rosetta except for the towers that were erected on the road between Rosetta and Alexandria. Shaw mentioned that the caravans are guided from the ferry to Rosetta by signs consisting of rows of palms, and Sonnini mentioned that they are brick towers numbering eleven, some of them are more rounded than the rest and are not sturdy, and each has a shelter for the traveler and a mosque[69], but Julius[79] mentions that they consisted of adobe columns rising successively along the length of the road, and their layout was circular or semi-circular[57].

### **Conclusion**

- The location of the cities of Alexandria and Rosetta on the Mediterranean and at the entrance to the River Nile had a significant impact on increasing interest in fortifying them, from the Pharaonic era until the era of Mohamed Ali, and this illustrates the danger to which the western borders and the Egyptian coasts were exposed.
- Alexandria and Rosetta witnessed the construction of a large number of castles and fences with gates during historical times. These castles and ramparts played a major role in defending the two cities during the French campaign.
- Alexandria and Rosetta witnessed great care in constructing castles and walls to protect the two cities from the Crusader and Ottoman danger, especially during the reign of al-Zahir Baybars, Sultan al-Ashraf Sha'ban, Sultan Qaytbay and Sultan al-Ghuri.
- The Ottomans did not care about the castles and walls of Rosetta or Alexandria, around which mosques and shrines were built, and the buildings bypassed these walls, which became memorial items.
- The castles of Alexandria, which were not able to face the French or British aggression. In general, the poor condition of the castles and walls was the reason for the French (1798-1801) occupation of Alexandria and Rosetta, and this was repeated in the British campaign (1807).
- During the French campaign, Alexandria was chosen to be the landing site of the campaign due to its strategic location on the one hand and the proximity of Abu Qir Bay, in which it was decided to anchor the French ships, on the other hand. The



campaign also headed to Rosetta in a move to control the western Nile outlet and to prevent the British fleet from reaching Cairo.

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#### Notes

<sup>i</sup>Pompeii Gate is a Roman column in Alexandria, the largest of its kind built outside the imperial capitals of Rome and Constantinople, and is located in the Serapeum of Alexandria. The name of the column dates back to the Arab era, where it is believed that it came as a result of the height of this towering column, which is similar to the masts of ships. He fled to Egypt to escape from Julius Caesar and was killed in Egypt. They thought that his head had been placed in a precious funerary urn and placed over the crown of the column.

<sup>ii</sup>After Napoleon's victory in the wild battle of Abu Qir in July 1799, he issued his order that three of the castles of Alexandria be named after Cretin, Duvier and Laturk; A memorial to those commanders and officers who died in battle.

<sup>iii</sup>Caffarelli's Cob: Caffarelli's Column, called Nadura or Nadura for the use of the hill in observation, and there was a tower from the Islamic era overlooking the port, and at the time of the French campaign, the French named it after Caffarelli, one of the leaders of Napoleon and was supervising the military engineering works in the army. The French, was killed during the siege of Acre. In the era of Muhammad Ali, the tower was renovated to become an observatory to monitor and guide the movement of ships.

<sup>iv</sup>This fortress was located at the end of the sanctuary entering the sea, east of the eastern port, which is now called al-Silsilah. It dates back to the Mamluk era, while the western flank occupies the island of Pharos on which the fortress that is now called Qaitbay Castle was built, and was occupied by the Lighthouse of Alexandria.

<sup>v</sup> Cretan Cob: The Cob of Kom Al-Dikka (Crétin), also known as the Cob of Kom Al-Damas, was built by the French and called it Cretan Cob, in reference to Colonel Cretan, the engineer supervising the fortifications. Hill 1952 to reveal the Roman Theater.

<sup>vi</sup>The camp of Caesar (Camp Caesar) is located on the heights of present-day Mustafa Pasha

<sup>vii</sup>The Sharkha or Company: is a light artillery placed at the front of the army to attack the enemy.