

**The Castles of Mallorca:**  
**A diachronic perspective of the dynamics of**  
**territorial control on an Islamic island**

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# ABSTRACT

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This thesis pioneers a study in the dynamics of territorial control of the island of Mallorca from ca. 902-1300 AD, with the aim of providing the first holistic and systematic study of the known Islamic fortresses of this island, and determining the reasons which account for the lack of the so-called *hisn/qarya complex* there. The scientific focus of this project explores the effects that island contexts may have on the identity-forming processes of their population and how these in turn affect the socio-political makeup of these ‘bounded’ polities. More specifically, in the case of Mallorca the core of this study is devoted to the relation between the hinterland fortifications of the Islamic period and the island’s capital city Madīna Mayūrqa, concluding that due to the relative isolation of Mallorca’s segmentary communities from their mainland analogues they evolved a distinctive meta-identity which gradually supplanted their traditional tribal allegiances and redefined their relation with the state and political authority in general. Other areas of interest explored here are the use of rammed earth and masonry in Andalusī Architecture, and the mechanisms of integration of the Islamic territorial setup of Mallorca into the Christian kingdom of Aragon from 1229 onwards.

The data here presented results from a broad variety of sources such as extensive archival research, architectural and spatial analysis of the 17+ sites surveyed, aerial photography, hydro-archaeology and in particular viewshed analysis, which was able to provide highly relevant results regarding the interconnectivity of the various sites and therefore give important evidence on their operational context. The creation of the viewsheds relied heavily on GIS software (Global Mapper 10-12) as well as architectural design software (AutoCAD, Illustrator, Sketchup) in order to carry out partial reconstructions of some of the main structures on the island.

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