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The conditions of Muslim and christian captives in the Islamic west and the Spanish Kingdoms during the Middle Ages, as seen through Spanish studies

أوضاع الأسرى المسلمين والمسيحيين بالغرب الإسلامي والممالك الإسبانية في العصر الوسيط من خلال الدراسات الإسبانية

Professor/ Lecturer A : daoudi laredj*
University Center Nour Bachir El Bayadh , Algeria
l.daoudi@cu-elbayadh.dz

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Abstract:

This study falls within the political and social history of the Islamic and Christian West during the Middle Ages. All information and data in this study are sourced from the Spanish archives and relate to Muslim prisoners in the Spanish kingdoms and Christian prisoners in the Islamic Maghreb. However, the data presented deals with the general conditions of prisoners in some places without providing statistics on the number of Muslim and Christian prisoners, and mentioning names only rarely. Rather, the documents focus on the conditions and nature of the treatment of these prisoners.

The issue of prisoners of war is a significant one, witnessed in both Islamic and European societies, and it had political, social, and commercial dimensions. Religious considerations clearly influenced the Christian stance on the phenomenon of prisoners, but we will examine the impact of interests, separate from humanitarian or religious inclinations.

* daoudi laredj, University Center Nour Bachir El Bayadh , Algeria

It is worth noting that Western researchers were pioneers in this type of historical and anthropological study, presenting archival material and providing a comprehensive overview of this phenomenon in both the Islamic and Christian worlds. Among these studies are the Spanish studies, which focused on the conditions and fate of prisoners, their treatment and living conditions, ransom, and the resulting establishment of institutions dedicated to border security and the ransoming of prisoners.

Keywords : Prisoners; Wars; Ransom; Security; Borders; Islam; Christianity; Trade

الملخص:

تندرج الدراسة ضمن التاريخ السياسي والاجتماعي لبدان الغرب الإسلامي والمسيحي خلال فترة العصور الوسطى. وجميع المعلومات والمعطيات في هذه الدراسة، مرجعها الأرشيف الإسباني، وهي تتعلق بالأسرى المسلمين في الممالك الإسبانية، والأسرى المسيحيين في بلدان المغرب الإسلامي، إلا أن المعطيات المقدمة تتناول أحوال الأسرى بشكل عام في بعض الأماكن دون تقديم إحصائية لأعداد الأسرى المسلمين والمسيحيين، وذكر الأسماء إلا في حالات نادرة، إنما كان تركيز الوثائق على أوضاع وطبيعة معاملة هؤلاء الأسرى.

تعتبر مسألة أسرى الحروب من المسائل الهامة، التي شهدتها المجتمعات الإسلامية والأوربية على حد سواء، والتي كانت لها أبعاد سياسية واجتماعية وتجارية. وكانت المرجعية الدينية لها أثر واضح في الموقف المسيحي من ظاهرة الأسرى، إلا أننا سنلتمس تأثير المصالح في ذلك بعيدا عن النزعة الإنسانية أو الدينية.

والجدير بالذكر، أن الباحثين الغربيين كانوا السباقين إلى البحث في هذا النوع من الدراسات التاريخية والأنثروبولوجية، وعرضوا في هذا المجال مادة علمية أرشيفية، وأعطوا تصورا شاملا عن هذه الظاهرة في العالمين الإسلامي والمسيحي. ومن تلك الدراسات، نذكر الدراسات الإسبانية، التي عنيت بأوضاع الأسرى ومصيرهم، وما تعلق بالمعاملة ووضع المعيشة، والفداء، وما نجم عن ذلك من نشأة مؤسسات تحتص في حفظ أمن الحدود، وافتداء الأسرى.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الأسرى؛ الحروب؛ الفداء؛ الأمن؛ الحدود، الإسلام؛ المسيحية؛ التجارة.

Introduction:

The subject of this study has attracted the attention of Spanish researchers, falling within the realm of the political and social

history of the Islamic and Christian West during the Middle Ages. We have not focused on a specific period due to the scarcity of historical evidence, which addresses various periods of the medieval era. All information and data in this study are drawn from Spanish archives and pertain to Muslim prisoners in the Spanish kingdoms and Christian prisoners in the Islamic Maghreb. However, the data presented generally describes the conditions of prisoners in certain locations without providing statistics on the number of Muslim and Christian prisoners, or mentioning names except in rare instances. The documents focus instead on the conditions and nature of the treatment of these prisoners.

The Mediterranean Sea witnessed a fierce conflict between the states and peoples inhabiting its shores, namely the conflict between Islam and Christianity during the Middle Ages. Amidst this conflict, the phenomenon of captivity and hostage-taking emerged as a socio-political crisis that transformed into a major challenge faced by both Islamic Maghreb states and their Western counterparts. What particularly concerns researchers in this matter is the situation of prisoners of war, which contravened the tenets of the Abrahamic religions and was rejected by human customs and sensibilities, especially regarding mistreatment and deteriorating living conditions. The circumstances of prisoners were linked to political, economic, social, and religious conditions, particularly concerning their treatment and the conditions of their captivity, which ranged from care to abuse.

This study raises the central issue of the conditions of prisoners of war in the medieval period, exploring its humanitarian and ethical dimensions. The study's focus is drawn upon Spanish studies. To address this issue, we pose a series of questions:

What was the Christian stance on the phenomenon of captivity? How were prisoners treated in the Islamic and Christian West? What were the conditions under which prisoners lived?

Have Spanish studies succeeded in providing a comprehensive picture of captives?

This type of study requires the adoption of multiple historical methodologies. These include the narrative and descriptive approach, which involves presenting the narratives adopted by Spanish historians and researchers, describing the conditions and living circumstances of captives, the nature of the relationship between prison guards and prisoners, and how they were freed from captivity and slavery. The analytical and comparative approach involves examining Spanish archival texts used by Spanish researchers in their studies to understand the differences in Spanish accounts and texts regarding the conditions of captives in the Islamic and Christian West.

The objectives of this study are as follows:

-To understand the religious perspective on the phenomenon of captivity and enslavement

-To describe the conditions of captives in their places of captivity

-To highlight the treatment of captives and their physical and psychological suffering far from their homelands

- To define captivity as a phenomenon that led to slavery and a human tragedy.

1- The captives from a Christian perspective

In this study, we will present texts from the Bible that illustrate Christian doctrines concerning prisoners. It should be noted that the Bible is divided into two testaments: the Old Testament and the New Testament. In this context, we recall what is stated in the text of the First Book of Samuel: “Now go and attack the Amalekites and totally destroy everything that belongs to them. Do not spare them; put to death men and women, children and infants, cattle and sheep, camels and donkeys” (Egbert Young, 1898: 193). And in the First Book of Chronicles, it is stated: “He brought out the people

who were in it and sawed them in pieces with saws, iron picks, and axes. This is what David did to all the cities of the Ammonites. Then…" We captured all its cities at that time, and we destroyed the entire city, men, women, and children, leaving no one alive" (Egbert Young, 1898: 121). And in Deuteronomy it says: "When I sharpen my flashing sword, and my hand grasps judgment, I will exact vengeance on my enemies and repay those who hate me. I will make my arrows drunk with blood, and my sword will devour flesh, with the blood of the slain and the captives, and with the heads of the enemy commanders." (Egbert Young, 1898: 143).

The Book of Joshua states: "When Israel had finished killing all the inhabitants of Ai in the field in the wilderness, where they had pursued them and all had fallen by the edge of the sword until they were destroyed, all Israel returned to Ai and struck it down with the edge of the sword. All those who fell that day, both men and women, were twelve thousand, all the people of Ai." Joshua did not withdraw his hand, which he had stretched out with the javelin, until he had utterly destroyed all the inhabitants of Ai. But the livestock and the spoil of that city Israel took as plunder for themselves, according to the word of the Lord which he had commanded Joshua. Joshua burned Ai and made it a permanent ruin, a heap of desolation to this day. And he hanged the king of Ai on a gallows until evening. At sunset Joshua gave the command, and they took his body down from the cross and threw it at the entrance to the city gate, and they heaped a great pile of stones over it to this day (Egbert Young, 1898: 150).

The texts of the Old Testament are considered a disgrace, containing historical accounts that advocate killing and extermination, including the murder of children, women, and prisoners. Based on the historical events presented in the Old Testament, we believe that the wording and editing of these texts were fabricated. These texts, which originate from the Old

Testament associated with Judaism, portray Christianity as an extremist religion that calls for murder. What concerns us in this article is understanding the extent to which the texts of the Old and New Testaments influenced the Christian stance on prisoners.

We will now present examples from the New Testament that demonstrate tolerance and forgiveness towards all people, friends and enemies alike. One such example is a passage from the Book of Matthew, which reads: "But I say to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Egbert Young, 1898: 612). It is also written in the Book of Matthew: “You have heard that it was said, ‘An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.’ But I say to you, do not resist an evil person. If someone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to him the other cheek also. And if someone wants to sue you and take your tunic, let him have your cloak as well” (Egbert Young, 1898: 611). Interestingly, there is a passage in the Book of Matthew that completely contradicts the other passages in the same book. While the passages we have mentioned call for mercy and forgiveness, this passage is the complete opposite, as if the words were spoken by two different people with opposing views. This passage appears in the Book of Matthew as follows: Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I have not come to bring peace, but a sword” (Egbert Young, 1898: 615).

A close examination of the biblical texts reveals a clear difference between the Old and New Testaments. While historians have interpreted certain passages in the Old Testament as reflecting a context of total war, influencing medieval Christian perceptions of conflict and captivity, the New Testament, in contrast, calls for mercy and forgiveness, wishing well for all humanity, including enemies, regardless of a few isolated instances that are not considered authoritative. The unfortunate aspect of this is that misinterpreting the historical context of the biblical texts led to bloody events recorded in history.

2-lives of captives

The subject of the study is one of the topics that attract the attention of researchers, and it falls within the political and social history. All the information and data in this study are referenced to the Spanish archives, and they relate to Muslim prisoners in the Spanish kingdoms, and Christian prisoners in the Islamic Maghreb countries. However, the data presented deals with the conditions of prisoners in general in some places without providing statistics on the numbers of Muslim and Christian prisoners, and mentioning names except in rare cases. Rather, the focus was on the conditions and nature of the treatment of these prisoners.

The topic of prisoners of war has attracted the attention of researchers due to its profound importance in human history. It has shed light on a crucial issue studied from an anthropological perspective and has had a clear impact on the civilizations of the Mediterranean peoples, particularly in the social, political, and economic spheres. In this context, we note the value of foreign studies, especially Spanish ones, which have given considerable attention for decades to the situation of Christian and Muslim prisoners of war in the Islamic and Christian West. These studies have released numerous documents from the Spanish archives, providing a clear picture of the lives of prisoners.

This study attempts to clarify the conditions of prisoners of war, including their treatment, circumstances of captivity, and fate during that period, which witnessed a bloody conflict between Muslims and Christians on the western shores of the Mediterranean during the Middle Ages. In this context, we present what the Spanish archives have yielded, along with accounts from Spanish researchers. We cite the testimony of a Christian woman, a captive named Maria, who stated that she enjoyed freedom, like the Muslims, allowing her to move freely throughout the city of Guadix in Andalusia and to provide many services to Christian prisoners.

However, another Christian captive woman, Catarina de Linares, gave a completely different account. She testified that she was taken as a concubine by one of the princes of Granada, with whom she had two children. However, she suffered restrictions on her freedom, as she was imprisoned in the house for four years, not alone, but with four other women. The testimonies of some women appear to have been deeply disturbing, describing abject living conditions, frequent hunger, and a diet limited to meager bread often made from inferior grains such as barley, sorghum, and wheat. One woman may have exaggerated when she mentioned eating the flesh of a dead horse or having an iron screwdriver placed over her mouth to prevent her from eating while she performed her domestic duties (Angel-Luis Molina, Manuel González, 2008: 29-81).

Testimonies varied widely, some detailing the nature of the treatment and living conditions, while others described the location of the captivity. One prisoner, for example, described the prison as being twenty-five meters underground. According to several Christian prisoners, the prison resembled a detention facility, sometimes resembling a house or a room. Many prisoners agreed that they were shackled with iron, the doors were tightly locked, and they were heavily guarded to prevent escape. It appears that the guards sometimes deliberately beat and burned prisoners to force them to contact their families and pressure them into paying ransoms, especially if the prisoners remained in captivity for an extended period without any family efforts to secure their release. The mistreatment may have stemmed from disobeying orders, making mistakes, or attempting to escape. In a striking contrast, some prisoners described good treatment and comfortable living conditions, eating like royalty and being served rabbit meat, partridge, figs, bread, and cheese (Angel-Luis Molina, Manuel González, 2008: 22-81).

The harsh and tragic conditions endured by Muslim prisoners were not only documented by their own accounts and testimonies, but also by the writings of Western authors, particularly Spanish historians and researchers who focused on this type of study earlier than their Arab and Muslim counterparts. These writings shed light on the lives and suffering of Muslim prisoners held by Christians. Here, we present a description of the Muslims' plight from Western writings, including discovered documents detailing the suffering of Muslim prisoners between the 12th and 15th centuries CE. These documents describe the Muslims' mistreatment as slaves, exploited in urban planning, agriculture, mining, road construction, building luxurious structures, domestic work, and church property maintenance (Arregui Manuel, 2008: 255-275).

According to the documents, Muslim captives were gathered in monks' houses and hospitals, where they were enslaved for labor and service. These houses became markets for the sale of enslaved captives by the monks, a lucrative trade, especially since Mudéjars were eager to buy and free their fellow Muslims from the monks' grasp. Everything related to the captive's identity and enslavement was recorded in a document, one of which mentions the enslavement of Muslim captives in the house. This document was mentioned by Ferdinand III on the occasion of his donation to the Villanueva Church in the village of Alcaraz on September 11, 1243. The captive's tragic situation continued even after gaining his freedom. Spanish law stipulated that a woman who gained her freedom was granted a license allowing her to move freely throughout the Spanish kingdom and was thus considered a Mudéjar. However, if her husband was still a captive or a slave, the religious order would seize half of her property. If the woman had children, even if her husband was free, The monastic order has the right to own the children as slaves because their mother is considered a servant. However, if the mother is free and her

husband is a prisoner, the order has the right to own half the children's freedom. Generally, the children follow the mother's status: if she conceived them before her capture, they are free; if she conceived them while in captivity, they become slaves (Ana Echevarria : 2007 ,481, 482).

The documents provide a detailed account of the prisoners' plight. One account describes their forced labor, as recounted by an anonymous historian who wrote a book on the history of the Monusterio monastery in Veruela. He reported that a large church was built in 1150, and Muslim prisoners were used to lay its foundations and complete its construction over a period of five years. In another account, the author describes the mistreatment and harsh living conditions endured by the prisoners. He mentions that ten prisoners were sent from Huesca to the fortress of Sesa on September 26, 1276, and used in construction. However, the most tragic aspect was not only their forced labor but also their living conditions: they were shackled with iron chains and locked at night in a room secured with nails. The Muslim prisoners lacked proper clothing, especially during winter, and fearing for their lives, the monastery's abbot purchased shirts and other garments for them (Manuel Gómez , 2015: 117, 118, 122).

According to the documents, the owners of the captives profited from renting them out to individuals, the municipality, or public institutions. This included renting them out to work in the ports of the Malaga region, exploiting them for public services, herding, and other tasks that benefited the city and its inhabitants (Lopez De Coca, 1978: 282). In another tragic scene documented in historical records, the inhabitants of Lisbon were marched as captives after its fall. The inhabitants of Alcácer do Sal suffered the same fate in 1217; their number is estimated at around 3,000 Muslims, who were sold as slaves in the Lisbon market. This is in addition to the Muslims captured in ambushes, raids, and kidnappings on the

borders with Muslim lands, who were treated badly and forced into all kinds of arduous and degrading labor. One such document is a will that addressed the issue of enslaved Muslim prisoners in agricultural and herding work. In May 1291, the widow Maria Afonso bequeathed all her lands and possessions, including all her Muslim slaves, to her daughter and son-in-law, leaving them all her lands and possessions (François Soyer, 2007: 491).

In conclusion, the phenomenon of captivity in the medieval Islamic and Christian West was a political and social phenomenon with commercial dimensions, falling under the umbrella of the slave trade. We have examined the suffering of Muslim and Christian captives through Spanish archival documents presented by Spanish researchers, which described the tragedy of captivity in both Islamic and Christian West. Even if there were variations in the conditions of captives, ranging from suffering to relative comfort, captivity generally had a severe physical and psychological impact on the captive.

3-Methods and means of freeing captive

It must be said that the methods and means of freeing captives were numerous and varied. The existence of this historical and social phenomenon was linked to the convergence of several cultural factors, in addition to religious motivation. Just as Islamic endowments played a significant role in securing the release of captives, the Church also played a prominent role in their liberation, as Spanish studies have shown. For example, it has been noted that the Christian Church established a religious institution dedicated to freeing Christian captives. The Congregation of the Holy Trinity and the Salvation of Captives was founded in 1198, with the aim of ransoming and releasing Christian prisoners. This was only accomplished after the end of war and the conclusion of peace agreements, through the signing of contracts and the offering of money to purchase or ransom the captives. This included the actions of King Peter II the Catholic, who died on September 13, 1213, who offered to buy or ransom Christian prisoners through the Order of the Brothers. His son, James I, continued this practice, as

did King John the Fisherman on 28December 1388 (Sem-link Giulio, 1983: 141).

It is worth noting that the same methods employed by Muslim rulers to free their captives were also used by Christian rulers. Documents indicate that the Kingdom of Aragon resorted to exchanging Christian prisoners for Muslim ones during the 13th century CE. The king received one-fifth of the spoils and captives, with the remainder divided among the army according to its unit and military branch, whether cavalry or infantry. Of particular note is the establishment by the Kingdom of Aragon of militias in several regions, such as Teruel, Darroca, and Zaragoza, whose purpose was to launch attacks on the borders of Muslim lands. Religious orders, including the Knights Templar, were established with the support of the Kingdom of Aragon along the borders in fortresses and castles within Muslim territory. These orders worked to encourage settlement in these areas, collect taxes, recruit Christian settlers, and organize attacks on Muslims, during which they amassed spoils and captured prisoners. Thus, not only did Muslims fall captive to the Kingdom of Aragon and other Christian kingdoms, but Muslims also fell captive to militias, monks, and Knights Templar. The monastic order kept one-fifth of the livestock and captives and distributed the rest (J. Ángel, 2002: 30, 32, 33)

It appears that the city of Murcia held a large number of captured Muslim prisoners, who constituted a significant source of wealth, prompting King John I to sell them as slaves in the markets of Aragon. The sheer number of captives, and their diverse social classes—especially princes, scholars, and nobles—served as a tool of leverage within the system of power balances and political influence. Consequently, Castile, Murcia, and Granada all vied to acquire as many captives as possible. Both sides sought to seize money, livestock, and the people who would become prisoners. In this context, Granada carried out raids on the border with Murcia, seizing 5,000 sheep and 60 head of cattle, and capturing six shepherds employed by a cattle owner named Francisco Fernández de Toledo from the region of Vélez. They also captured four people working on the estate of Count Carrión in Murcia. This was recorded in the minutes of the Murcia town council clerk in 1382.

In that same year, the Granadans seized 7,500 head of cattle from the town of Lorca. Also in 1382, the peace treaty concluded between Castile and Granada in 1379 was revived, and the agreements between the two parties were implemented. However, it wasn't long before the inhabitants of Lorca attacked Granada with the intent to plunder and capture. Not all raids and incursions resulted in prisoners; for example, in one raid, the town of Murcia recorded the theft of clothing such as skirts and cloaks. Trousers, underwear, blankets and sheets, cauldrons and pickaxes, some weapons and money, and 12 donkeys. What is important to note is that the negotiations for the release of the prisoners were extremely difficult and costly for both sides. The Christians demanded exorbitant sums, especially if the prisoners were wealthy or noble. For example, Francisco Fernández de Toledo demanded a large ransom for a Muslim prisoner from Granada who came from a wealthy family (Isabel García Díaz, 1989: 25, 26, 28, 30).

The issue of captives was intertwined with trade and piracy in the Mediterranean. Piracy and the slave trade played a significant role in the development of relations between Majorca and the Maghreb, particularly concerning the intermediaries and officials responsible for transporting captives. This led to the development of a Majorcan institution with both civil and religious character, aimed at collecting donations to ransom Christian captives in Muslim lands. Interestingly, while Majorca, Barcelona, and Valencia were major centers for the transfer and emancipation of captives, Majorca's slave trade and captive transfers were primarily linked to cities in the Maghreb, especially Béjaïa, Algiers, and Tunis. Valencia, on the other hand, had connections with Granada in this area. Jews were among the first to benefit from the concessionary agreement that granted them the freedom to emancipate captives and move freely between the kingdoms of Spain and the lands of the Islamic West. We should mention some of the Jewish families who dominated this type of trade, including the Belfiore (or Benfiore) and Pardo families, who were among the wealthiest, most influential, and most prestigious in Majorca during the 15th century. The Majorcan institution was active in the liberation and exchange of prisoners with the lands of the Islamic West, due to its

structure based on partnership and cooperation between the councils of the city and kingdom of Majorca and the cathedral council, which collected alms to be redistributed to Majorcan prisoners in Islamic lands. This institutional organization, used for the liberation of Christian prisoners, was not limited to Majorca; it was also practiced in the Kingdom of Aragon and other kingdoms of Spain (Marta Fernández Siria, 2024: 357, 358 , 359).

Further evidence of the evolving relationship between Western Christian and Islamic powers can be seen in the relations between the kingdoms of Spain and Granada. This relationship was forged through peace agreements that stipulated a unified effort to secure the borders, the establishment of border security institutions, and the activation of institutions dedicated to the ransom of captives. Documents indicate that the kings of the Spanish kingdoms granted special royal privileges for the purchase of captives and freedom of movement throughout the kingdom's land and sea routes. This included the Bernat Marcos family, who had previously held this privilege, which had been granted to the Arnau Pere d'Arcos family. According to available documents, King Alfonso donated additional funds to the ransom institution, a donation later recorded in April 1185. The beneficiaries of this privilege were Matex Bernat Marcos and Bernat Adaro (María Teresa, 1990: 91).

The establishment of what was known as the mayor or border judge between Muslims and Christians was stipulated in guarantees agreed upon in the peace treaties or truces dating back to 1310, 1475, 1478, and 1481 between Granada and Castile. King Henry II finalized this system. It resembled security and judicial institutions on the border between the two states, with each border sector having two judges, one Muslim and the other Christian, to hear people's grievances. The Muslim judge heard the grievances of Christians, while the Castilian judge heard those of Granadans. It seems that the establishment of such joint judicial and security institutions between Castile and Granada on the border reduced the phenomenon of attacks and raids, resulting in a decrease in the number of prisoners during those periods. The institution of "al-Faquik" (also called "exeas") was one of the most famous and active border institutions during the period of truce and peace, as it

dealt with the purchase and exchange of prisoners. Those involved in this activity earned considerable money. Two leaders, one Muslim and one Christian, headed the institution of the Vaquec from the reign of King Henry II. They controlled all members of this institution, which was spread across the border regions between Castile and Granada between 1410 and 1414. The minor Vaquecs, both Muslim and Christian, were numerous and sometimes negotiated the release of prisoners, even during times of war. Interestingly, the Christian Vaquecs often adopted Muslim dress and grew beards to appear more amenable to negotiation with Muslims. They negotiated on both sides of the Strait and the Alboran Sea in 1490 and 1516, and the prisoner-freedom movement, along with the Vaquec institution, continued until 1620 (Miguel-Ángel, 2002: 55, 56, 57).

In conclusion, we say that the issue of ransoming prisoners was not merely a humanitarian operation dictated by moral and religious motives, but rather the phenomenon of ransoming and liberating prisoners was dictated by economic interests. It became one of the most important aspects of maritime and land trade in the countries of the Mediterranean basin. This is without neglecting the political and social motives for creating institutions specializing in ransoming prisoners, and concluding understandings and agreements under which merchants were granted the privilege of buying and liberating prisoners, and the privilege of moving across the sea and land in the regions of the kingdoms of Spain and the countries of the Islamic West. Thus, the phenomenon of captivity developed from a social and political phenomenon that was burdensome for all parties, to an economic phenomenon that was profitable for all parties.

CONCLUSION:

In conclusion, we mention the most important results and outcomes of the study, which we list as follows:

Captivity is a political and social phenomenon whose historical roots are linked to wars and conflicts since ancient times.

Religions have called for peace and the preservation of civil and religious human rights. However, the tragedy of captivity stems from greed and the stripping away of human values and humanity when hatred, revenge, and religious extremism prevail. This is what happened in the Christian and Islamic West.

Captivity was not merely the taking of soldiers or civilians; it evolved into a measure of power and influence between Christian and Muslim Spain and Morocco. The number of captives was linked to their social class, political standing, and intellectual prominence.

Institutions were established and others developed alongside the evolving political and economic perspective on captivity. The role of Islamic endowments (waqf), as well as the Church and monastic orders, became evident in securing the release of captives. The traditional view of captives as a political and social burden was no longer valid; they were now seen as a financial and commercial resource, generating substantial revenue for merchants and states, and providing a valuable workforce for urbanization and development. The large number of captives prompted the kingdoms of Spain and the kings of Granada to conclude agreements, activate mechanisms, and establish security and judicial institutions along the borders, all aimed at ensuring the safety of both Muslim and Christian communities in Spain.

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