

Dirassat & Abhath
The Arabic Journal of Human
and Social Sciences



مجلة دراسات وأبحاث
المجلة العربية في العلوم الإنسانية
والاجتماعية

EISSN: 2253-0363
ISSN : 1112-9751

The Migration of foreign military Elites to the Islamic Maghreb

The case of "Christian battalions"

هجرة النخب العسكرية الأجنبية إلى بلاد المغرب الإسلامي " الكتائب المسيحية " أنموذجا

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تاريخ القبول : 2025/09/21

تاريخ الاستلام: 2025/07/21

Abstract:

This research is concerned with the issue of migration of foreign military elites to the Islamic Maghreb, which has been dealt by many studies and research throughout the historical ages, highlighting many problems that we have always tried to raise and find radical solutions. In order to identify the Other, but the investigator of this phenomenon in the Medieval finds that the theses accomplished in this context were characterized by ambiguity and classics, as the latter focused on listing religious and social concepts and thought at certain groups such as jurists and scholars, with a map of this migration and its paths and then the methodology used was in Traditionalist conservatism did not depart from the narrative and subjectivity, so it was similar in its contents away from the scientific methods that aim to shorten the cognitive filler such as maps and graphs that facilitate scientific reading.

Keywords: The migration of military elites, Islamic Maghreb, Medieval, the Other.

الملخص:

يهتم هذا البحث بموضوع هجرة النخب العسكرية الأجنبية إلى المغرب الإسلامي الذي تناولته عديد الدراسات والأبحاث عبر العصور التاريخية مبرزة إشكالات عديدة التي لطلما حاولنا طرحها وإيجاد حلول جذرية بغية التعرف على الآخر، غير أن المتقضي لهذه الظاهرة في العصر الوسيط يجد أن الأطروحات المنجزة في هذا السياق تميزت بالغموض والكلاسيكية؛ حيث ركزت هذه الأخيرة على سرد المفاهيم والفكر الديني والاجتماعي لدى فئات معينة كالفقهاء والعلماء، مع تبيان خارطة هذه الهجرة ومساراتها ثم إن المنهجية المتبعة كانت تقلدانية في طرحها لم تخرج عن السرد والذاتية فكانت متشابهة في مضامينها بعيدة عن المناهج العلمية التي تهدف إلى اختصار الحشو المعرفي كالخرائط والرسومات البيانية التي تسهل لنا القراءة العلمية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: هجرة النخب العسكرية، المغرب الإسلامي، العصر الوسيط، الآخر

INTRODUCTION The Migration of foreign military elites to the Islamic Maghreb is one of the marginalized topics which haven't been discussed or even is referred to before. Especially in the face of the openness witnessed by the Islamic Maghreb countries to the Christian world during the era of strong states such as: Almoravids, Almohads, Marinids and Zayanites; in front of its needs to modernize the army's combat system. So what do we mean by military elites? What are the factors for their migration to the Islamic Maghreb? What are the manifestations of its military

2 The concept of military elites:

The first subtitle opens with an introduction that presents the specific problem under study and describes the research strategy. The first subtitle opens with an introduction that presents the specific

problem under study and describes the research strategy. The first subtitle opens with an introduction that presents the specific problem under study and describes the research strategy.

1. Factors of migration of foreign military elites to the Maghreb:

2-1. commercial activism:

The countries of the Islamic Maghreb aimed to establish strong trade relations, given their strategic location, economic requirements, potential and production in search of spaces for export, and perhaps the Mediterranean space in particular was more present in trade exchange between Islamic Maghreb countries and Europe¹. This was reflected in the establishment of trade treaties between them and the settlement of some coastal cities of the Islamic Maghreb in order to facilitate tasks and trade

coordination². Moreover, some of them were employed in the state apparatus to collect taxes, as in the Almohad state from the Moroccan tribes, for example, a pirate returned with a lot of money during his campaigns against the Arab tribes³.

We further believe that trade was one of the most important factors that facilitated migration to the Islamic Maghreb, and it was a way to gauge the suitability of conditions for stability in the Islamic Maghreb, especially the profits and the authority's facilitation of commercial activity.

2-2. Religious tolerance as migration indicator:

The countries of the Islamic Maghreb were not fanatical; especially the period of the Almoravids, Almohads and Marinids, which embodied the spirit of understanding and dialogue, confronting *Dhimmi*⁴ instead. As these Christian Mediterranean communities lived in the Islamic Maghreb reveling in their religious freedom and subject to the laws of the state in the practice of their religious rituals as well as the building of churches is a manifestation that embodies the philosophy of tolerance to The caliphs of Islamic Maghreb. For example in Tlemcen al-Zayaniyya, they had churches in which they performed their religious rituals, and this was due to the freedom they enjoyed⁵ wherein they mingled with Muslims and fused with them⁶. Therefore, the religious tolerance of the Islamic Maghreb countries for these communities was a great outlet for migration and an increase in its pace.

What we conclude is that trade and religious tolerance were preludes; extrapolation and putting out feelers of migrant by the native people, so their migrations were based on the background of this reading, which was correct because it was launched from reality to establish the migration mind⁷.

2-3. Christian military elites and the obstacles of their Kingdoms:

Among the most prominent factors for this qualitative migration we have mentioned: the problems, obstacles and misunderstanding between these elites and their rulers. As some of them resorted to offering their military

services to the caliphs of the Islamic Maghreb, especially Castile; during Marinid Era, when relations became tense between the leader "Cuzman" and the King of Castile "Alfonso X" this latter offered to his group to join the army of the Marinid Sultan Yusuf who accepted the idea⁸ in order to invest their military capabilities in the army of the Islamic Maghreb⁹, while the rest fled.

2-4. Political conditions and rebellion movements witnessed by the Islamic Maghreb:

It was a basic motive for the Allies to invest in these communities in order to confront the tribal rebellion and eradicate it, and thus strengthen the tribal league. Since the Mediterranean countries were the closest regions to the Islamic Maghreb, bringing in military units became a matter of course¹⁰.

2. The military presence of the battalions in the Islamic Maghreb Army:

The phenomenon of "prisoners" is one of the most prominent manifestations of the Islamic-Christian conflict in the medieval period, which was a fundamental feature that distinguished the military establishment in the Islamic Maghreb, and The onset of migration of these battalions to the Islamic Maghreb¹¹ where they were appointed as guards and tax collectors¹²... After the stage of captivity which was a stage of experience to know the mentality of the caliphs and Maghreb reality, focusing on their view of the Other (Christian), which was great, tolerant and profitable, all these circumstances encourage the migration of Christian soldiers with their families from Rome and Sicily to the Islamic Maghreb to begin the practice of what is called "Christian livelihood" in light of the caliphs generosity and the need to protect their kingdom¹³.

3-1. The tactical presence and martial arts of Christian elites in Islamic battles:

These battalions were distinguished by specific fighting methods, such as striking with the sword, shooting with the Crossbow, and the fighting style based on steadfastness in marching when fighting, instead of the hit-and-run style in the Maghreb countries¹⁴; what was explained by Ibn Khaldun, who

attributes the presence of these battalions in the Islamic Maghreb army to the fighting style, which they are distinguished by, that is based on steadfastness in the advance against the Berber wars that depend on hit and run¹⁵, even the Sultan Yaqoub bin Abdul Mu'min built for them their own camp called Rabdh enasarah¹⁶ "the Christian quarters."

Financial inducements were also a great incentive for the influx of the military institution in the Islamic Maghreb, where the army commander was paid one hundred dinars of silver and one thousand dirhams per day, while the knight used three silver dinars, equivalent to thirty dirhams, while the ordinary weapon bearer received twenty-five dirhams¹⁷.

The most prominent of these elites are: Mushir Alkisy, AmberAlkisy, Blascode Allagoon, Baribreth of Decastro and the Portuguese knight Geraldo Simbafort¹⁸. The Roberter's son is the famous military commander who converted to Islam and was followed by many of his familie, as well as the Alfonso's nephew who became Muslim and is called Abu Zakaria Yahya, making the Almohad era feel somewhat as the era of the conversion of military Garrison Leaders to Islam¹⁹. So what are the manifestations of this presence?

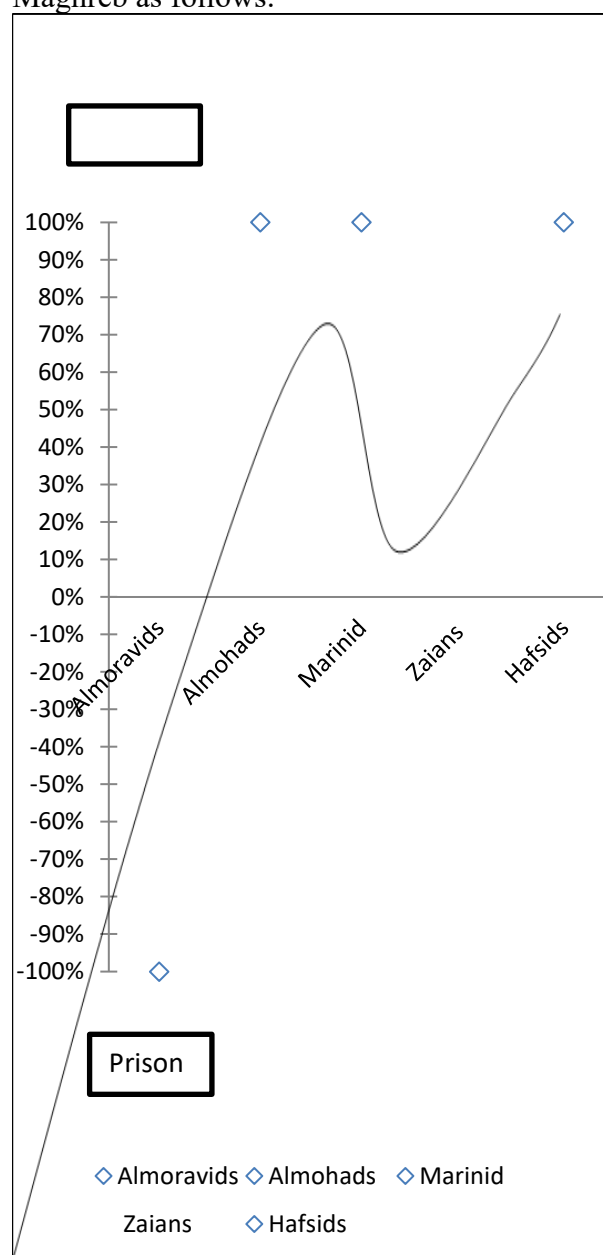
The contribution to the militar²⁰y industrialization of the military institutions of the Islamic Maghreb: Where it employed its experience in the field of : spears maker, armor maker , bridle maker, saddle maker and the carpenter²¹; These crafts were a means of earning, which brought them great profits, especially since the Islamic Maghreb countries (the Almoravid, Almohad and Marinid) are military countries par excellence depend on the base of armament, so the demand for Christian labor for military industrialization was necessary²².

Thus, the Christian battalions were an integral part of the army system in the Islamic Maghreb. In the Almohad state, especially the period of power during the reign of Abd al-Mu'min ibn Ali, where he used them as a guard squad for the caliph and his entourage, about twelve thousand emigrated during the

reign of al-Ma'mun almohadi²³. The Caliph Al-Murtada also allowed large numbers of them to join the Almohad army²⁴, and then the satisfaction, appreciation and good treatment of the Almohads encouraged other elements to migrate to earn a living from Rum and Saqlaba²⁵.

These battalions have also shown their ability to practice wars and its arts, and this is shown by their military parade carried out by the state when conducting the war²⁶.

Through our extrapolation of some sources²⁷, it is possible to illustrate the development of foreign military immigration to the Islamic Maghreb as follows:



A graphic curve illustrating the development of the stages and formulas of the presence of Christian military Elites in the Islamic Maghreb

We note that the Almoravid period ²⁸ was a stage dominated by prisoners for these battalions owing to the religious character of the state and the fatwas of the Almoravid fuqaha', where it included many prisoners, and perhaps the period of Yusuf bin Tashfin shows us this large number, especially after the period of Zallaqah 479 AH / 1086 AD.

As for the Almohad state, it was a model state for Christian military migration due to the armament and the amazing development achieved; especially in the field of military reform and the development of the military institution, so the doors of soldiering were opened for these military Christian expatriates to benefit from their war experiences ;that's how the Marinids,

Zayanites and Hafsidids followed their example and approach.

What can be said is that foreign military battalions found in the Islamic Maghreb an outlet for livelihood and a space to highlight their military capabilities after they were marginalized in Castile, which stole their fees and efforts. In all objectivity, this class has added to the military establishment in the Islamic Maghreb many innovative elements that contributed to the crystallization of the strategic thought of war. They were important elements for winning battles and wars and conquering rebellions.

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²⁸