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Slaves and Captives Between Castile, Granada, and the Canary Islands: Frontier and Judicial Dynamics in the 15th and 16th Centuries

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Abstract

By analyzing the encounters at the borders between the Kingdom of Castile and Granada, and those on the Canary Islands, this paper delves into the dynamics of slavery and captivity practiced by Christians, Muslims, and the Indigenous inhabitants of the Canarias archipelago between the 15th and 16th centuries. Legal and judicial documents from this period show how common human trafficking was in the peripheries of the Spanish dominions even before the overseas expansion. This activity often included revolts, horseback raids, robberies, death, the capture and enslavement of people, and other notions such as slavery under ›just war‹, which sometimes blurred the margins between slavery and captivity. Whether at sea or on land, life in the frontier was a difficult one, with people exposed to many dangers. Furthermore, these local practices had global significance once the Spanish Empire expanded its frontiers to America and beyond.

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I. Introduction

This article seeks to reconsider the frontier as a space that reproduces slavery practices. In this sense, we will analyze two frontier spaces in late medieval Castile: the southern Iberian Peninsula along the Castilian-Granadan frontier, and the Canary Islands, located off the African coast in the Atlantic Ocean. The peripheral characteristics of both these spaces informed the patterns of human dependency that developed in these territories, which were administered by the Spanish Crown during the 15th and 16th centuries. Here we can see forms of slavery and captivity that will later be observed in some American frontier dynamics and in places even more distant from Europe, such as the Philippines. Furthermore, mainstream historiography has not approached slavery and captivity comparatively but rather as processes framed within the Christian-Muslim relations of the Late Middle Ages and the ›Reconquista‹ or as part of Spanish overseas expansion.

The 15th and 16th centuries were chosen as the time frame for this study because this period witnessed the consolidation of fundamental institutions and practices that were born at the end of the medieval period. As Atlantic expansion was launched by the Castilian settlement in the Canary archipelago and later by the discovery of the West Indies in 1492, peninsular dynamics were exported to new territories, changing mentalities and no-

tions that up to that point had ruled perceptions and attitudes towards slavery and captivity.

However, this article does not attempt to examine the whole spectrum of experiences lived in southern Castile and the Canary Islands, which is the subject of an abundant bibliography. The objective here is to study these two geographical spaces because, although both have been analyzed extensively on their own, few works compare the practices of slavery and captivity developed in these territories from a frontier perspective. This article also seeks to unveil possible parallels that could be established with the relationship between Spaniards and Indigenous subjects on the peripheries of the Indies.

Regarding local normative structures, Víctor Tau Anzoátegui has explained that, prior to the 19th century, provincial and local laws were far from comprehensive and exclusive. On the contrary, they were open to laws and customs from other places and spheres of power.[1] In this sense, the mentality and legal practices developed in the Indies took into account the particularities of their surroundings, but they were also based on previous experiences and tendencies propagated by Hispanic imperial networks. As Silvio Zavala has shown, the Indigenous policy in America and the controversies over the freedom of natives were preceded by scholarly disquisitions regarding the inhabitants of the Canaries but also »by ideas on the relations between Christianity and infidels«,

based on the principles of *ius commune*, scholasticism, and the contributions of Thomism, which recognized the natural rights of non-Christians.[2] Many of these ideas have been discussed in studies examining Isabella of Castile's Indigenous policy in America, based primarily on the codicil of her will, which insisted on the recognition of the Indigenous peoples of the Indies and the Canary Islands as subjects of the Spanish Crown.[3]

While some studies have compared processes of expansion developed on both sides of the Atlantic, they have mainly focused on the commercial aspects of human trafficking or on the common characteristics between the settlement structures created for the Peninsular Reconquista, the Canary Islands, and America.[4] However, works that compare slavery practices in the Iberian Peninsula's periphery with those of the Canary Islands – or indeed as a set of three contexts, if the treatment of Indigenous peoples on the frontiers of the Spanish Empire in the Americas is also included – have not been found for this research.

Therefore, the purpose of this article is twofold. On the one hand, it serves as a chronological introduction to the topics covered by the other articles in this *Focus* on peripheral slavery practices of the Spanish Empire in subsequent centuries. On the other hand, it seeks to account for certain notions that were common, or at least similar, in the Canary Islands and on the frontier that existed between the Spanish and Muslim worlds on the Peninsula, thus facilitating a comparative study of slavery or captivity in these spaces. With this in mind, I have reviewed legal and judicial documents that illustrate human trafficking of non-Christians between Castile, the Canary archipelago, and Granada between the 15th and 16th centuries.

The article begins with an outline of the historiography on slavery in the Iberian Peninsula and its various aspects.[5] The following section focuses on the notion of *frontier* and the circumstances that characterize this space in the prelude to overseas expansion toward the Indies, but especially the similarities and differences detected between the Granada frontier and the Canary archipelago between the 15th and 16th centuries. Finally, the last section discusses the forms of slavery derived from captivity, the practices of depredation and violence between Christians and non-Christians along the frontier, and several legal dynamics that emerged in these contexts.

Consequently, this article aims to demonstrate that the frontier zones between Castile and Granada, and between the Peninsular kingdom and the Canary Islands were spaces that articulated slavery and captivity practices as a result of the different encounters that took place there. It also seeks to explore the extent of the interconnection between these areas. Following Diego Olstein's ideas, it is a question of connecting units that are usually approached separately in order to underscore the ties at play between them.[6] In this sense, we can establish connections between the peripheral realities of the Iberian Peninsula during the Late Middle Ages and the dawn of the modern age, but also with those that would later emerge on the margins of the Spanish Empire as local realities with global, or at least imperial, significance.

II. Historiography of Slavery and Captivity in Castile

1. *Slavery and Servitude*

Even when we limit ourselves to analyzing the Iberian Peninsula, studying slavery is not a simple exercise. In addition to the challenges posed by the long period during which it existed and developed, its wide geographical span, and the variety of thematic fields or historiographical perspectives from which it has been studied, slavery is also an issue that involves a variety of nomenclatures.

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2 Zavala (2006) 260–261.
3 Suárez Fernández (1992) 87–88.
4 For example, a compilation of articles by Vicenta Cortés entitled *Esclavos y libertos en los mundos ibéricos* (›Slaves and Freedmen in the Iberian Worlds‹; Cortés Alonso [2011]), addresses the slave market that crossed the ocean from the 15th century onwards, connecting Iberia, Africa, and America. John Kicza (1992) draws a parallel between the expansive mechanisms used by Castile in the early years of maritime domination and those employed later in the Castilian settlements in the Caribbean.

5 For example, the dynamics of the slave market, its demography, the various jobs to which enslaved people were subjected, social segregation, the causes that gave rise to servitude and captivity, and the treatments and punishments enslaved people had to endure.

6 Olstein (2015) 59.

Both people in the past and current historiography attempted to classify diverse concepts and to distinguish different practices related to slavery, occasionally diluting its margins and thus obstructing its analysis. For example, the Castilian *Siete Partidas* established similarities between slavery (*esclavitud*) and servitude (*servidumbre*) by defining the latter as someone's complete power over the actions of another.[7] Jesús García Añoveros seems to agree, asserting that the two »are synonymous terms in the period we are referring to – at the time in which the Spanish discovered and controlled the West Indies in the name of the Crown of Castile and León«.[8]

However, approaching these terms and concepts historically is no simple task. Raúl González González, for example, refers to the »historiographical disaster« that has resulted from confusing slavery »with forms of dependency linked to land and jurisdiction […] that emerged in the 9th century and persisted for better or worse in different European regions as the cornerstone of the ›feudal regime‹ until liberalism became widespread«.[9] What González González is describing here is *serfdom*, which became the archetype of servitude during the Early Middle Ages.

For González González, servitude involves different forms of personal dependency, with a nomenclature that today could be misunderstood. On the other hand, Manuela Boatcă, in a thought-provoking study on peripheral labor regimes of modern capitalism, introduced concepts like *coloniality of labor* and *coerced labor* to refer to the intermediate states in which Indigenous work in America developed, insisting on the different levels of coercion that resulted in different forms of exploitation.[10] Thomas Duve has also studied the complexities of vocabulary when addressing forms of human dependency. For him, many cases of so-called *asymmetric dependencies* in history (self-regulation of communities, colonial labor) do not fit into the paradigm of the state or law, but do have a normative framework given by the practices and customs from which they originated.[11]

2. Slavery and Captivity

The distinction between *esclavos* (slaves), *siervos* (serfs), and other personal dependents must include the notion of *cautiverio* (captivity). This is a central concept in the study of slavery practices in the Iberian Middle Ages, defined in the Castilian *Siete Partidas* as the state of »those who are taken prisoner by men of other beliefs; and the captors kill the prisoners for disrespecting their law, or they torment them with extremely cruel punishments, or they turn them into servants *[siervos]*, forcing them into activities so despicable that they often prefer death over life«.[12]

Many works have studied slavery practices during the Spanish Late Middle Ages and the modern period, covering different perspectives and foci, whether spatial, temporal, or methodological.[13] For the purposes of this paper, it is interesting to consider Rocío Periáñez Gómez's concluding remarks on her analysis of the current state of research on slavery: »[W]e still have a long way to go, given that research has favored monographic treatment with either local or regional studies […], but we still lack comprehensive studies of the peninsular reality.«[14] Therefore, this article attempts to contribute in some way to the path outlined by Periáñez Gómez.

Like slavery, the practice of captivity along the Castile-Granada frontier has been extensively studied, with works covering different decades and thematic aspects. José Manuel Calderón Ortega and Francisco Javier Díaz González are the authors of an exhaustive study that examines the prisoner-captive dichotomy as an »overwhelming« phenomenon in medieval and modern Europe, with particular characteristics in each place,

7 Alfonso X, Partida IV, Title XXI, Law 6.
8 García Añoveros (2000) 57.
9 González González (2017) 162–163.
10 Boatcă (2014) 362, 370. Similarly, Andrés Reséndez (2016) has illustrated the conceptual forms that Indigenous forced labor took in America.
11 Duve (2022b).

12 Alfonso X, Partida II, Title XXIX, Law 1.
13 The historiography related to Hispanic slavery in the Middle Ages and modern period is extensive, covering countless aspects and different geographical spaces, and can of course not be adequately discussed within the limits of this paper. Periáñez Gómez (2008) offers a good panorama of research. The works of

Domínguez Ortiz (2003), Cortés Alonso (1964), as well as the survey of current research and methodology published in Franco Silva (1979a, 1979b), were of extreme importance for this paper. Also helpful were William D. Phillips' critical reflections (e. g. in Phillips [2010, 2014]) that span notions of slavery from Roman times to Iberian modernity.
14 Periáñez Gómez (2008) 282.

even reaching and affecting the distant Canary Islanders, Africans, and Indigenous peoples of the Hispanic world.[15]

Of the elements that characterize captivity, the *Siete Partidas*' definition highlights that slavery is *one* of the possible outcomes for a captive. Diego Melo Carrasco has also defined captives as »men that had lost their freedom at the hands of others of different beliefs, who could use them as servants«.[16] Calderón Ortega and Díaz González have argued that the critical element of the concept seems to have been that the captive's religion was different from the captor's,[17] as a consequence of the borderlands that separated Christians from Muslims in the southern part of the Peninsula.[18]

William D. Phillips, on the other hand, has instead defined captivity as a situation in which a victorious fleet or army captured a person in times of war or peace.[19] For the Castilian case, however, smaller groups of no more than one hundred people raided the frontier in search of captives.[20] Jarbel Rodríguez has shown in detail that, despite suffering many of the same degradations and abuses as slaves, captives had a reasonable expectation of achieving freedom, as some of them were subjects to ransoms.[21]

From the 15th century onwards, the Hispanic world also encountered the phenomenon of captivity in other contexts beyond hostilities involving neighbors of Islamic faith. Alfonso García-Gallo, commenting on the Castilian Crown's integration of insular African territories during the 15th century, has claimed that the Canary Islanders were perceived as backward pagans living in a situation similar to the Stone Age. It was thus proposed that they should be turned into captives for Euro-peans.[22] Víctor Muñoz Gómez has shown that, with the creation of the first Castilian overseas frontier on the Canary Islands, the contemporary ecclesiastical position, which informed the Catholic monarchy's decisions, justified the right of conquest over non-Christian and ›idolatrous‹ populations. If they refused the baptismal sacrament, they lost their freedom, possessions, and institutions.[23]

Without attempting an exhaustive analysis, Silvio Zavala's studies of early American history also show that captivity was widely practiced in the Iberian Peninsula during the medieval period. It then expanded to the Canary Islands, the African coasts, and, finally, with Columbus's discovery, to the Caribbean region, from which it continued to other American territories.[24]

We can see, therefore, that slavery and captivity are concepts that often overlapped in history and continue to do so in the historiography, despite several efforts to distinguish between the two.[25] However, the first aspect that appears in the analysis of this phenomenon is precisely the fact that it occurs in a frontier area that separates Christians from non-Christians and that, in the context of battles and campaigns to conquer one territory or another, or in times of peace, people could be captured and enslaved.[26] Similar circumstances can be observed in the Canary archipelago in the decades when it became a realm of the Castilian Crown. There, Castilians came face to face with different Indigenous populations. Some of these were willing to sign peace treaties, but others took up arms to defend their territories from invading troops. The outcome for the Canary Islanders who fought against the Spanish, as for the Granada Muslims, was slavery.[27]

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15 Calderón Ortega / Díaz González (2012) 15.
16 Melo Carrasco (2011) 654.
17 Calderón Ortega / Díaz González (2012) 21 fn. 2: »In general, and following the classic differentiation established from the beginning, we will consider the *captive* as the prisoner who professes a religion different from his captor's. In contrast, the meaning of *prisoners* will be reserved for the captured enemies of the same religious creed.«
18 Diego Melo Carrasco (2012) 182 presents this idea as follows: »The result of predatory frontier activity is captivity: a phenomenon that was present both in moments of open war and in the stages of truce.«
19 Phillips (2014) 38.
20 Melo Carrasco (2019) 12.
21 Phillips (2014) 40.
22 García-Gallo (1987) 701.
23 Muñoz Gómez (2020) 115–116.
24 Zavala (2006) 546–547.
25 González Arévalo (2014) has reflected on the matter, supporting the possibility of a comparative approach to slavery and captivity as long as researchers apply a scrupulous methodological.
26 Diego Melo Carrasco (2012) 182 focuses on how to enter and leave captivity as a persistent element in the borderlands between Castile and Granada.
27 González Zalacain (2015) 123–124.

III. The Frontier at the Brink of Castilian Overseas Expansion

The concept of *frontier* is fundamental for approaching and understanding the practices of slavery and captivity developed in peripheral Castilian spaces during a period in which the world's limits often changed.

Diego Melo explains that medieval actors saw frontiers as territories with diffuse boundaries. Some historians prefer to speak of ›borderlands‹, even evoking the Roman notion of *limes*,[28] which, because of its imperial characteristics, is relevant for this study. Specifically for the Castilian-Nazarí[29] case, Melo insists that the frontier was a wide strip of land, a space of transit »where, although people fought battles, they also exchanged products, fodder, and people over long periods of time«.[30] Thus, on the limits between the Christian and Muslim worlds, heterogeneous social groups coexisted: peasants, traders, and people who lived by plunder and pillage, in addition to aristocratic groups that did not necessarily participate in confrontations with their neighbors.[31]

The Canary Islands, by contrast, are located in the Atlantic Ocean. In Eduardo Aznar Vallejo's view, the Castilian Crown's 15th-century conquest of this archipelago can be understood as the first »exterior« colonization (»exterior« in the sense of occurring outside the Iberian Peninsula), which would thus imply different aspects.[32] The Canary Islands were incorporated into the Castilian kingdom during the 15th century by border treatises with Portugal that attempted to delimit the areas of the Atlantic each kingdom claimed control of.[33] These documents were signed both by European authorities and Indigenous groups from the archipelago, similar to the peace treaties signed between Christians and Muslims during the Peninsular Reconquista.

Regarding this issue, we must remember the Christian and universalist mission of medieval Castile.[34] Alejandro Cañeque, for example, has argued that the Spanish Crown's imperial logic functioned based on the medieval understanding of a monarchy with a Catholic, evangelizing, and universal mission,[35] which, therefore, was called upon to annex non-Christian territories and to promote their conversion. In the Canary Islands, we observe a peripheral space similar to that which also existed on the Christian-Muslim margins, and which resembled those that would later appear at the extremes of the overseas Empire on the other side of the Atlantic.[36]

The frontier is a dual and ambiguous concept of closure and aperture that allows reciprocal exchanges of cultural influence, a place where it is possible to identify common historical phenomena and particular institutions.[37] Sofía Marfil has asserted that the frontier as a historical object »emphatically constituted the central axis of medieval history in the Andalusian region since the 13th century until sometime after the conquest of Granada«.[38] On the other hand, Roberto González Zalacain has emphasized the position of the Canary Islands as cornerstones of the Atlantic overseas expansion, a preamble to »the first period of globalization«.[39]

28 Melo Carrasco (2020) 1–3.
29 The term *Nazarí* refers to the Nazarí Kingdom of Granada, which was the name of the Muslim state in the southern Iberian Peninsula.
30 Melo Carrasco (2020) 10.
31 Marfil (2015) 199.
32 Aznar Vallejo (1986) 195.
33 Luis Rojas Donat (2002) presents a lucid overview of Portuguese-Castilian relations in the lead-up to the Discovery of the Americas.
34 Rojas Donat (1994) 110–111: »The Luso-Castilian overseas expansion began, therefore, without any title other than that which the Christian princes claimed to have over the territories inhabited by infidels, considered by the *orbis christianus* as barbarians, without juridical personality, without rights of any kind, susceptible to domination and enslavement. Inhabitants of spaces alien to the known, inhabited, and the habitable world *(oikoumene)*, non-Christians were included within the category of infidels, traditionally known and hated by late medieval Europe […]. The Christian princes, and also the private ones, had no scruples to enslave Black Africans, and others such as the *huanches* of the Canary Islands.«
35 Cañeque (2013) 283.
36 Manuel Bastias Saavedra (2022) has recently published an interesting study regarding norms and empires. About the latter, he distinguishes between a metropolitan and a cosmopolitan notion of empire in order to explain power distribution within imperial states. The diverse situations in the peripheries that are mentioned in this article seem to demonstrate how the Spanish Empire grew into a cosmopolitan empire, which »highlights the internal diversity and fluidity of the imperial system and thus allows for a plural – but not for this reason less violent – articulation between the different regions, networks, and interests that composed the imperial space. The cosmopolitan and the metropolitan images, thus, share the idea of asymmetrical integration and the use of violence and force as means for political control« (ibid., 9–12).
37 Marfil (2015) 194–195.
38 Marfil (2015) 206.
39 González Zalacain (2015) 115.

Regarding the link between the Castile-Granada frontier and the overseas frontiers, González Zalacain has suggested there was a relationship between the *military factor* in the Peninsula and the *maritime factor* for the coastal settlements. The coastal settlements became »eternal frontier territories« and shared the perils derived from a peripheral situation, with harsh living conditions and constant fear of pirates coming from the northern African coast.[40] In the case of land frontiers, enemy incursions to take captives were a frequent occurrence until the Reconquista was completed in 1492. Later on, the threat of being taken captive moved to the maritime stage, where Christian and Muslim naval attacks were not unusual. In the Canary Islands, on the other hand, we could assert that both the military and maritime factors were at play: the first in the incursions against Indigenous groups that resisted Castilian domination of the archipelago and the second in the North African Muslim pirates' assaults on the island populations.[41]

To further delve into the connection between these frontiers, it seems appropriate to introduce the notion of *epistemic communities* and *communities of practice* which Thomas Duve has used to analyze the circulation of normative knowledge. According to Duve, communities with greater or lesser political and social structures have historically shared normative experiences, usually on the margins of society and neglected by the central administration. It could be argued, then, that frontier settlements such as those established on the Castilian-Granada frontier or the Canary Islands can be understood as communities of the kind Duve describes, in which the local and individual encounters between Castilians, natives, and non-Christians led to the formation of collective and decentralized normativities that responded to specific local needs.[42]

The economic dimension of these peripheral spaces also leads us to establish parallels between them, for the permeability of the Granada frontier and the Canarian archipelago facilitated exchange.[43] In this sense, we cannot ignore the commercial importance of human trafficking through slavery and captivity. In the Canary Islands case, since the 14th century, profitable sales of Indigenous captives in the markets of Seville and Lisbon were an essential incentive for continuing the process of territorial expansion.[44] In the opposite case, now regarding the Granada-Castilian frontier, Diego Melo has pointed out that between the 13th and 15th centuries, rescuing captives was an extremely profitable business, and even the Crown wanted to be involved when taxes were owed.[45]

Regarding this last point, the Archive of the Royal Chancellery of Granada holds several files on a number of civil lawsuits, dating to 1560, in which royal assistance with ransoms to rescue captives held in Algiers was requested. Those to be ransomed were Christians whom Muslims had captured in maritime attacks or incursions on settlements close to the Castilian coastline and later taken to northern Africa. One example is the petition that Francisco González, a resident of Albolote, sent to the king, who responded with the following:

> [W]e have been informed that Francisco González, your son, was captured in the campaign led by the count of Alcaudete, now dead [...], during last year, fifteen fifty-eight, and that he is currently in Barbary, and pleading and requesting by mercy that, taking into consideration the aforementioned and that you are poor and do not have means to rescue him, that in order to do so we should display mercy and provide alms [...].[46]

Cases like this show the economic dimension of captivity as a human trafficking activity that moved large sums of money. This is also revealed in another lawsuit from 1599 between Juan García Chacón, a citizen of Malaga, and the convent of

40 González Zalacain (2015) 126.
41 Eduardo Aznar Vallejo (2011) 39 and Roberto González Zalacain (2015) 122 also recognize the existence of common characteristics between the frontier societies of the Atlantic world and the Reconquista Peninsula.
42 Duve (2022a) 22–23.

43 On commerce on the Granada frontier, including its trade centers, spaces, and privileges, see Jiménez-Alcázar's interesting article (2014).
44 Muñoz Gómez (2020) 111–112.
45 Melo Carrasco (2019) 13.
46 ARCHGR/01RACH/Box No. 2236, piece no. 8.

Merced over the fate of several goods left by Gregorio Chacón. The religious institution claimed that these goods were not part of the inheritance but had been destined for ransoming captives.[47]

These kinds of situations, as well as the disputes over the captives in Algiers, enable us to envision the frontier as a fundamental element in the articulation of slavery dynamics in the Hispanic world between the 15th and 16th centuries, with violent and abusive interactions that characterized life in every part of these territories.

IV. Slavery and Captivity as a Frontier Phenomenon in Granada and the Canary Islands

1. Depredation and Violence on the Frontiers

In one of the few studies that establish connections between Granada, the Canary Islands, and America, Antonio Espino López reflects on the horrifying practices the conquistadors undertook in each of the processes of expansion in the Late Middle Ages and early modern period. Although he mentions the Spanish incursions in the Canary archipelago and across the Castile-Granada frontier, and the subsequent captivity of Canaries and Muslim populations, he focuses on the punishment and torture applied by Christian armies as a strategy of domination, as recorded by different chronicles. His study establishes common traits and identifies shared practices of depredation and abuse that were transferred between these three spaces.[48]

Manuel Rodríguez de la Peña has also concluded that the population inhabiting the medieval West's frontiers was involved in a continuous spiral of violence: »Non-combatants and their properties, movable and immovable, were the target of indiscriminate attacks that generally aimed at looting and acquiring booty, in many cases human.«[49] On the Granada frontier, violence could take the form of battles, but according to Diego Melo, these were the exception. The most common practice was

related to the so-called *guerreada* war, conducted through skirmishes and raids aimed at robbing livestock and capturing enemies.[50]

Such campaigns were common in both the Canary Islands and the Nazarí frontier. Eduardo Aznar has described the aforementioned situation when referring to the Canary Islands' »export products«, including slaves, »initially originating from conquest and later from the ›raids‹ on rebellious islands«.[51] García-Gallo has discussed the *salteo* or hunt of the Canary Islands' Indigenous peoples, with the ultimate aim of selling them on slave markets.[52] Regarding the Nazarí frontier, on the other hand, horseback raids, robberies, captivity, deaths, and setting fire to crops were quite common in the 13th and 14th centuries.[53] Elvira Melián has further discussed rescue operations carried out to free those captured.[54]

Civil lawsuits help us to determine the geographical space covered by the frontier as they reveal how far Castilians could penetrate into enemy territories in their search for war booty. By the 1530s, for example, when the Reconquista of the Iberian Peninsula had been achieved and the Christian-Muslim frontier had consequently become maritime, there was a law suit between Fadrique Enriquez de Cabrera, Lieutenant Major of Castile and Granada, and the Justice of the City of Malaga over the *quinto* tax charge on Muslim prisoners taken captive during horse raids into Berber territory.[55] These contentious trials could last over a decade, as we can observe in another lawsuit between Fadrique Enriquez de Cabrera and two residents of Malaga and owners of brigantines, Hernán Lorenzo and Pedro de Burgos, over a tax charge.[56] The files for this case start in 1533 and continue until 1546. In both these law suits, the judicial documentation illustrates the frontier geography in which the phenomenon of captivity and activities such as horseback raids became commonplace for local populations.

In his 1632 *Historia de la Conquista de las Siete Islas de Gran Canaria* (History of the Conquest of the Seven Islands of the Gran Canaria), Fray Juan de Abreu recorded events in the archipelago with similar characteristics to those observed in Gra-

47 ARCHGR/01RACH/Box No. 14602, piece no. 1.
48 Espino López (2012).
49 Rodríguez de la Peña (2009) 31.
50 Melo Carrasco (2019) 11–12.

51 Aznar Vallejo (1986) 215.
52 García-Gallo (1987) 702–703.
53 González Jiménez (1993) 111. Also Melo Carrasco (2012).
54 Melián (2011) 35–36.

55 ARCHGR/01RACH/Box No. 629, piece no. 1.
56 ARCHGR/01RACH/Box No. 5324, piece no. 2.

nada. He wrote that vassals from El Hierro used to invade La Palma to rob cattle (driven by the prospects of quickly obtaining leather and tallow) and capture *palmeros*.[57] Similar situations are described in the *Crónicas de la Conquista de Canarias* (Chronicles of the Conquest of the Canaries), written between the 15th and 16th centuries and recently transcribed by Professor Francisco Morales Padrón.[58] These works illustrate similar situations as those happening along the Christian-Muslim frontier on the Iberian Peninsula, where the assault on non-Christian territories had clear economic, predatory, and violent motives.

Fray Juan de Abreu also described the assault on the Tigalate area of La Palma around the middle of the 15th century. After the unsuccessful attempt to capture Ehentire, one of the island's lords, the Castilians sailed to the Juguiro and Garebagua estates, where they apprehended a *palmero* man and woman.[59] The attempted seizure of Ehentire suggests that the capture of Indigenous Canary Islanders changed little over time. For example, we know that a Canarian king traveled to the court of the Catholic Kings at the end of the 15th century to report on unjust enslavement. This led the Castilian Crown to initiate a series of mechanisms to protect the Indigenous Canarians of the archipelago from human trafficking practices.[60] In this case, we can observe a difference between the Castilian attitude towards the inhabitants of the archipelago (at least in the Crown's official discourse and intentions) and its treatment of Muslims. The Crown's attitude toward the European treatment of Canarians is occasionally mentioned in various studies on the archipelago's conquest,[61] usually in the form of comments on papal bulls that dictated the freedom of converted Indigenous Canarians and called on the kings to protect them.[62] It is also discussed in research on the islands' administrative and tributary history.[63]

Royal intervention in the freedom of captive Canarians can be examined from contemporary sources, although these also reveal tensions between Castilians and Indigenous peoples on the different islands of the archipelago. An example of this is a document from 1499 in which a Canarian named Juan Manuel expresses his distrust of certain persons who, in order to hold positions of power, had no problem with enslaving groups of Indigenous, despite them being recognized by the Crown as vassals.[64] The previous year, in 1498, a document from the Castilian monarchs, sent from the Royal Chancellery of Valladolid, instructed the governor of Gran Canaria to force Alonso de Lugo to release Canarians whom he had enslaved during a period of peace between the two sides.[65] Peace treaties between Castilians and Canarians were not rare events in the process of the Crown's annexation of the archipelago. In several cases, Canarians who converted to Christianity became vassals of the Spanish Crown and assisted in its campaigns against those who resisted the European presence.

Depredation was also a practice on the periphery of the Indies. Macarena Sánchez, for example, has written about the *malones* or *malocas* that took place on the Hispanic-Mapuche frontier on the edges of the Chilean governance, consisting of quick surprise attacks of a contingent of soldiers against an enemy group, such as the Mapuche, »with the objective of obtaining livestock, provisions, and prisoners, especially women and children«.[66]

2. Slavery Practices

Slavery as a result of war or captivity was a common phenomenon transcending the spaces and periods covered in this article. A consequence of Castilian assaults and raids in frontier regions was the capture of non-Christians, who were subsequently enslaved. Captivity in the Granada frontier is described by Sofía Marfil as a war practice that then became a business following the patterns of human trafficking.[67] Eduardo Aznar has also

57 Abreu (1940) 203.
58 Morales Padrón (2018).
59 Abreu (1940) 203–204.
60 Gambín García (2003).
61 Most historians describe the process of discovery and settlement on the islands, the mechanisms of legitimation, and the diplomatic conflicts that arose. See García de Gabiola (2019); García-Gallo (1977). There is also an emphasis on the commercial practices developed on the islands in connection with the American continent: Lobo Cabrera (1992); Paz (2006–2007).
62 Rojas Donat (1994); García-Gallo (1977); Berquist (2017).
63 Aznar Vallejo (2018).
64 AGS, RGS, LEG, 149909, 494.
65 AGS, RGS, LEG, 149812, 305.
66 Sánchez Pérez (2014) 14 fn 3.
67 Marfil (2015) 201.

discussed the »Atlantic products« that attracted the attention of the Andalusian market, including slaves from the Canary Islands obtained from raids.[68] For example, the Catholic Monarchs issued a decree in 1500 that ordered a search for the deposed King Icod from the island of Tenerife. Though Icod had the status of a free man, the Crown was subsequently informed that he had indeed been captured by Spaniards on the island.[69] Another royal document from 1500 orders the release of certain Gomerans protected by peace accords who had been taken as slaves and deported to Jerez de la Frontera.[70] As already mentioned above, peace treaties or truces between Castilians and Canarians were instruments meant to preserve the converted populations of the islands; however, in several cases, this protection escaped the Crown's control, making it easier to transfer and sell Canarians in Peninsular markets.

The Royal Chancellery of Granada preserves archival sources on enslaved Muslims that date back to the last third of the 16th century. On the one hand, these sources include letters of sale, such as that of a Moorish woman named Isabel, born in Otura, to Pedro de Bordas in 1570.[71] On the other, we find documents relating to lawsuits in which enslaved Muslims fought for their own or their relatives' freedom. María de la Cruz, for example, another Muslim woman from the kingdom of Granada, participated in a lawsuit over her own and her daughter's freedom between 1587 and 1589.[72] María de Alcalá and Francisca de Aliquen were other Moors reduced to slavery who appear in the archives,[73] reflecting the frontier reality of the Iberian Peninsula. This highlights the fact that the slave population in the Castilian world was not only made up of Africans or Indigenous people brought from the Canary Islands, but also of Muslims captured in northern Africa or in the Iberian Peninsula in revolts against the Spanish.

Captivity in the Iberian Peninsula was essential to the economy, as Raúl González Arévalo has written concerning the slave market supplied by the conflict with the Kingdom of Granada: »The Moorish war and the slavery of Muslims defined slavery in Castile in the 14th and early 15th centuries.«[74] Furthermore, although the *Siete Partidas* included slavery as only one of the possible consequences of captivity, Calderón Ortega and Díaz González remind us that it was the traditional fate that awaited defeated enemies whose lives were spared.[75] It was the most common destiny for Christians and Muslims on either side of the Castilian-Granada frontier, but also for pagans, such as the Canary Islanders and the Black population of the African coast.[76]

According to specific articles in the *Siete Partidas*, war slavery could even affect Christians if they had helped religious enemies, such as the Moors, by selling weapons or ships, or by providing them with other types of reinforcement.[77] Converted Muslims who abandoned Christianity were also punished. In an undated (but likely 16th-century) document, the king received news that »some Moors who converted again to our holy Catholic faith […] went further into Africa to become Muslims«. Judicial officials then took matters into their own hands, and, in the absence of the individuals concerned, seized and sold their goods to help finance efforts to »fence the village of Motril«.[78]

Whereas Muslims were automatically categorized as »infidels« by the Christians, this was not the case for Canary Islanders. As Emily Berquist has explained, similarly to what later happened to Native Americans, the islanders' status developed over time from »infidels» to »gentiles«, before they were finally recognized as vassals. The Crown took advantage of this situation, withdrawing its protection from those Canarians who refused to con-

68 Aznar Vallejo (2011) 48. Vicenta Cortés (1955) and Alfonso Franco Silva (1991) have also studied the presence of the Canarian slave in peninsular markets.
69 AGS, RGS, LEG, 15012, 20.
70 AGS, RGS, LEG, 15010, 47.
71 ARCHGR/01RACH/Box no. 10933, piece no. 11.
72 ARCHGR/01RACH/Box no. 12001, piece no. 1.
73 ARCHGR/01RACH/Box no. 12001, piece no. 2, and ARCHGR/01RACH/

Box no. 3019, piece no. 10, respectively.
74 González Arévalo (2019) 18. In this sense Calderón Ortega / Díaz González (2012) 124: »The sale constitutes one of the most evident manifestations of the enslavement of prisoners, by highlighting the true scope of this activity and how on many occasions, the real engine of campaigns against the religious enemy was not religious zeal but, fundamentally, the obtaining of

captives for sale in slave markets when they had no means to rescue themselves.«
75 Calderón Ortega / Díaz González (2012) 119.
76 Calderón Ortega / Díaz González (2012) 124.
77 Alfonso X, Las Siete Partidas, Part IV, Title XXI, Law 4.
78 AGS, GYM, LEG, 1323, no. 402.

vert to Christianity, leaving them at risk of being killed or enslaved.[79] As Silvio Zavala has pointed out, the Castilian monarchy seemed to see the Canary Islands as »an enterprise similar to the one that occupied them in Spain against the Moors.«[80] A 1490 litigation case in the Royal Chancellery of Granada illustrates the concept of Indigenous peoples enslaved in a just war, the legitimacy of which was not questioned at the time. The Royal Council of Castile and the Bishop of the Canary Islands mandated the release of a group of Canarians who had been acquired as slaves of just war by Álvaro de Piñán.[81] This decision was influenced by the fact that the Canarians sold as slaves had been liberated, that is, had gained their freedom, probably after embracing the Catholic faith. If they had been Indigenous rebels who had opposed European domination or Christian conversion, they would have been considered legitimate human booty in a just war.

Luis Rojas Donat has exposed the Reconquista's ideological influence on the Spanish empire's expansion in the Canary archipelago and the categorization of those who did not profess Christianity as »infidels«. In this way, the island inhabitants, »with very specific exceptions, were considered infidels, almost on an equal footing with the Saracens.«[82] The same idea would later be applied in the Spanish empire's American and Asian territories – in the Caribbean, but also along frontiers such as the Araucanía in Chile and in the Philippines, for example[83] – and used to legitimize, »according to European concepts of captivity, the slavery of Indians defeated in any just war«.[84]

The phenomenon of war slavery also appears as the so-called *esclavitud de segunda guerra* (»second-war slavery«). In 1546, for example, the Junta of Mexico decreed that Indians who had rebelled for a second time could be enslaved.[85] Precedents already existed in the annexation of the Canary Islands regarding members of Indigenous tribes who had signed treaties with the Spanish monarchy but subsequently decided to rebel or refused

to comply with the terms of the said treaties. A war waged against such Indigenous rebels, now called *alzados* (insurgents), was considered just and thus legitimized the enslavement of defeated and captured enemies.[86] This explains why, in 1498, the Royal Chancellery of the Kings of Castile requested a report from the governor of Gran Canaria regarding the fate of certain Canarians who, having cooperated during the conquest of the islands, were subsequently enslaved without having taken up arms in any rebellion.[87] Since these people had not rebelled after converting to Christianity, their enslavement could not be justified as »second-war slavery«, and they were therefore granted their freedom. However, if they had rebelled, their captivity would have been permitted under Castilian law.

A similar situation can be observed in the Castilian Crown's reprisals against the Morisco rebellions in Alpujarras of 1568. Although the Castilian-Granada frontier no longer existed by then, the event illustrates how »second-war slavery« was an institution used to punish those who participated in revolts.[88] Toward the end of the 16th century, it would be brought up again for the participants of the Indigenous rebellions that took place on the southern margins of the Spanish Empire.

V. Conclusions

Various frontiers surrounded the territories of the Spanish monarchy from the Late Middle Ages to the early modern period, each with particular characteristics resulting from many geographical, social, religious, and other differentiating factors. Nonetheless, we can draw concrete connections between these frontier territories, particularly those formed between Christians and Muslims and in the Canary Islands. The phenomena addressed in this article – slavery and captivity – were practices of human dependency that connected

79 Berquist (2017) 8. William D. Phillips also refers to the flow of captives from the Canary Islands that supplied the slave market during the second half of the 15th century: Phillips (2010) 160.

80 Zavala, as quoted in Espino López (2012) 381.

81 AGS, RGS, LEG, 149002, 338.1.

82 Rojas Donat (1994) 114.

83 See, for example, Sánchez Pérez (2017).

84 Zavala (2006) 183.

85 García Añoveros (2000) 74.

86 Phillips (2014) 36; Berquist (2017) 9.

87 AGS, RGS, LEG, 149803, 23.

88 Garrido García (2013); Phillips (2014) 37–38.

these two peripheral territories of the Hispanic world, with dynamics of abuse and exploitation replicated on both fronts.

On the one hand, our analysis has highlighted the difficulties presented by the various terms with which these practices were and are denoted and differentiated when attempting to study them historically. On the other, slavery and captivity have been revealed as transversal activities derived from a frontier that gave rise to and maintained these kinds of practices. The frontiers were an environment where Christians and non-Christians interacted, entering their enemies' land to terrorize (including by using rape as a means of war) or capture the people living there. In this way, the Castilian-Granada frontier and the Canarian archipelago were transformed into spaces of harsh, insecure living conditions, subjected to plunder, depredation, and the violence of human trafficking. Hosts from one side frequently raided the other, with maritime and land incursions from Muslims into the Peninsula and Castilians into North Africa.

Enslaving captives became an important activity, not only in commercial and tax terms: It also stimulated judicial action in both spaces studied. A series of legal *pareceres* (statements of opinion by various royal officials) influenced the treatment of Canarians: As the archival records show, royal and local justice were constantly involved in resolving disputes over Indigenous and Muslim captivity. On several occasions, however, there were ambiguous rulings in cases concerning the Indigenous inhabitants of the Canary Islands, as we saw in lawsuits concerning freed individuals who had once again been captured. It could be argued that this shows how normative knowledge – to use Thomas Duve's concept – was constructed at the peripheries, con-

stantly adapting. It is another example of the existence of so-called epistemic communities in medieval and early modern Castile.[89]

In addition to selling or capturing people, other types of actions could result in enslavement at the frontier: It served as a punishment for those who helped »infidel« populations, rejected the Christian faith, or rebelled against the Castilian Crown after having converted to Christianity. In the long run, these actions would also affect the rulings made by Spanish authorities on the furthest margins of the empire.

The Castilian Crown faced the new reality of the American continent by elaborating a normative scaffolding that was based on the notion of casuistry,[90] as had previously been done in Europe in the centuries prior to overseas expansion. This was the result not only to the medieval notion of *ius commune*, which was deemed universal, but also of the Crown's experience with the different frontiers that coexisted in the Iberian Peninsula, which had generated spaces where similar practices had taken place, despite the cultural differences between the populations inhabiting these marginal areas.

It is not strange that Tau Anzoátegui argued that the American development of casuistry was linked to the preexistence of this concept in the Castilian legal tradition.[91] The Crown's considerations on the nature of Native Americans were also informed by the Iberian Peninsula frontier life and, with it, the possibility and legitimacy – in specific circumstances – of subjecting local peoples to captivity. In this article, I have hoped to contribute to the connection of those historical spaces that defined the fate of millions of human lives at the frontiers and beyond.

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