

Las mazmorras

The two openings to the dungeons are on the north side of the lower precinct. They are built following the same system as the silos: they are like a large inverted funnel, which made them impossible to scale, and both openings are quite narrow. In this area of the hill, these hollows are very damp, which must have made a period of residence within them very hard. In principle, the captives were not meant to stay in the dungeons for a long time. The captives were an asset – they were made to work, they were exchanged with the other side for their captives, and they could be redeemed through the payment of a ransom, something that could be organised by the family, relatives, communities or religious orders created for this purpose, such as the Mercedarians, an order founded in 1218 for the redemption of Christian captives in Muslim territories. Of course, during certain periods of instability captives could be confined in the dungeons, as could political opponents whom they did not dare to eliminate directly, instead confining them within what the French called “oubliettes”, underground dungeons where people were sent to “be forgotten”. The dungeons of the Alcazaba are identical to those that exist in the Alcazaba of the Alhambra of Granada, although a little smaller.