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Session: *The exotic otherness of Early Modern imagery and emblematics.*

"Moros y cristianos". The Triumph over Otherness in the Celebrations for the Canonization of St. Ferdinand in Seville Cathedral (1671)

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Introduction

As Art Historians our paper examines the exotic otherness of Early Modern imagery and emblematics in the celebrations of the canonization of King Ferdinand III of Castile held in the Cathedral of Seville in 1671.

In the first part of this paper, I will focus on how the language used to articulate the difference, hybridity and assimilation of the "Moors", "Turks" and the so-called "Moriscos" was overwhelmingly visual, as can be seen in pictorial representations, engravings, ephemeral architecture and, especially, in the "Moors and Christians festivals" in Spain since the late Middle Ages. I will consider some examples to illustrate how the stereotype of the "Moor" is configured and how during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in most of the festivals of the Hispanic monarchy these stereotypes were present.

In the second part, Hilary Macartney will focus on the celebrations for the canonization of Ferdinand III of Castile in Seville in 1671, and the lavishly illustrated book that accompanied them. She will consider examples of the triumphalist imagery featured in the celebrations, alongside the acknowledged artistic importance of the ephemeral decorations and the printed record, and the challenges of (re)interpretation in light of modern attitudes and agendas.

"men with faces, appearances and dress like the Arabs of today, mounted on horseback, wearing clothes of various colours, carrying swords, crossbows and banners aloft..."

Rodrigo Jiménez de Rada, *De rebus Hispaniae*
(Manuscript, ca. 1240)

This is the image of the Muslims that appears in an account of the Islamic conquest of the Iberian Peninsula by Jiménez de Rada around 1240. It is one of the passages that the author dedicated to the last king of the Goths, Rodrigo, who suffered defeat at the hands of the Muslims.

The same quotation would serve to describe the image of the 'Moor' in the 'Moors and Christians' festivals that are celebrated in Spain today in many localities, especially in the east and south of the Peninsula.

As analysed by Borja Franco and Antonio Urquizar, "here we have an early example of a (fictional) description of a (fictional) painting in which the Muslim enemy is visually characterised as a foreign Other".

It is important for our purposes in this study to note that in the pre-modern world of the western Mediterranean "the language used to articulate difference, hybridity and assimilation was overwhelmingly visual. Pictorial representations, architectural monuments and material culture converged with, but sometimes also resisted, literary representations."

Examples of how the Muslim enemy is depicted in the Hispanic culture can be found in engravings such as *Alegoría del triunfo de la Santa Liga* where the entire pavilion rests on a platform supported by four Turks. Another example is shown in this engraving for an 18th-century edition of Don Quixote (2nd part), where Don Quixote mistakes the puppets for real Moors, who are depicted with the Ottoman turban and crescent moon or plumes of feathers.

The processes of hybridisation can be seen especially in the "Moors and Christians" festivals, where even today we find surprising variations, especially in the typology of the characters. Thus, in some Spanish towns, the Moors and Christians festivities still commemorate the naval battle of Lepanto against the Turks; in Mexico, a Turkish landing in Yucatán is also represented, as well as the inclusion of both Moors and Christians in the hosts that follow the Apostle Santiago in his fight against the pagan Indians.

For some researchers, the process of stereotyping is closely related to the creation of a "counter-identity". In Early Modern Spain, we must take into account the emergence of the figure of the so-called "Old Christian", an ideological construct that the current Spanish dictionary defines as: "A person who was a descendant of Christians, without any known mixture of Moor, Jew or Gentile". In this sense, the Old Christian needed to define and categorize the "other" as contrary to him, hence the creation of such stereotypes.

Bearing in mind the broad chronological framework from the conquest of Seville by Ferdinand III in 1248 to the celebration of his canonisation in 1671, more than four centuries later, we must consider that the relations between Islam and Christianity, between New Christians and Old Christians were changing, and also their stereotyping – both literary or visual – underwent variations over time.

Some questions:

- How was the image of the "Moor" constructed in the festive context of Late Medieval and Early Modern Spain?
- What symbols become the differentiating elements between Moors and Christians?
- What image of the "Moor" is conveyed in the Sevillian Triumph for the canonization of Ferdinand III in Seville? The latter issue will be addressed in more detail by my colleague Hilary Macartney.

One of the most important symbols is the Ottoman turban which appear, in particular, in the iconography related to the conquest of the king Ferdinand III. On the other hand, despite the transcendence of festivals in the creation of the image of the other in European ephemeral art, so far its approach has always been tangential and only in a few publications.

In general, researchers agree that the first of the many celebrations that took place over more than two centuries and where the image of the Muslim was represented in different ways, whether as an enemy or an ally, was at the entry of Alfonso the Magnanimous (Alfonso V of Aragon) into Calabria in 1443. During the 16th and 17th centuries, the Moor, the Moorish or the Turk were present in most of the festive events held in the Hispanic context as symbols of the fight against heresy and the infidel. They appear in mock battles, naumachias, the capture of castles, fights between Moors and Christians, cane games, etc. The victorious battles of the Hispanic monarchs against the Moors and Turks were also depicted in ephemeral architecture (for example, in one of the arches designed for the reception of Maria Luisa de Orleans, the second wife of Charles II). As Victoria Soto also noted, some of the chronicles show that the festival was receptive to an "oriental" fashion and luxury that had nothing to do with religious ideology. And this "exoticism" is especially visible in the costumes, uniforms and disguises used in the festivities of Baroque Spain, where the participants were dressed "a la turquise" or in "Moorish livery", feathered bonnets or simply "dressed as Turks", a dress that was a gala uniform for solemn occasions.

In the painting by Domingo Martínez (1748-49), which depicts the Chariot of the Air, one of the series of eight large canvases representing the Sevillian festivities for the proclamation of Ferdinand VI in Seville in 1746, the procession is closed by groups of Turks followed by a group of Algerians and Moroccans. In this other picture depicting the chariot of Parnassus, members of the "Africans" group once again appear next to the "Americans", etc.

Festive events in the 16th and 17th centuries were intended to reinforce the political discourse of the Hispanic monarchy. In royal entries or catafalques of the 16th-17th centuries, the (ephemeral) image of the new christian and the Muslim is hybrid and polyhedral. The aim was to link the

deeds undertaken by the Habsburgs against the Turk or the Moor with the exploits of mythical characters such as Don Pelayo, El Cid, Ferdinand III the Saint or the Catholic Monarchs.

Although the presence of images of Moors, Turks and Moors in ephemeral architecture is not continuous from the conquest of Granada by the Catholic Monarchs until the mid-17th century, when they appear, such images can serve "as a barometer of the perception" of the "Moor" in each period.