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RITUAL, SPECTACLE, AND THEATRE IN LATE MEDIEVAL SEVILLE

PERFORMING EMPIRE

by
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ABBREVIATIONS

ACS	Archivo General del Arzobispado y Archivo de la Catedral de Sevilla
BCC	Institución Colombina Biblioteca Capitular de Sevilla
BNCF	Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale de Florencia
E	<i>Cantigas de Santa Maria</i> , Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, MS B.I.2 (<i>Códice de los músicos</i>)
F	<i>Cantigas de Santa Maria</i> , MS Banco Rari 20, Biblioteca Nazionale Centrale de Florencia (<i>Códice de Florencia</i>)
RABA	Real Academia de Bellas Artes de San Fernando
RBME	Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial
T	<i>Cantigas de Santa Maria</i> , MS T-I-1, Real Biblioteca del Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial (<i>Códice Rico</i>)
To	<i>Cantigas de Santa Maria</i> , MS 10069, Biblioteca Nacional de España, Madrid (<i>Códice de Toledo</i>)

NOTES

All translations from Spanish and Latin are the author's, except where otherwise noted.

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Introduction

THEATRES OF ABSENCE

...ninguno puede ver las cosas que en él se muestran, que tenga alguna raza de confeso, o no sea habido y procreado de sus padres de legítimo matrimonio; y el que fuere contagiado destas dos tan usadas enfermedades, despídase de ver las cosas, jamás vistas ni oídas, de mi retablo.¹

BEST KNOWN FOR the novel *Don Quixote*, Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra also wrote for the stage. His short, comically dark play *El retablo de las maravillas* was published at the end of the period of the expulsion of *Moriscos* from Spain (1609–1615) and offers us a theatrical portal for viewing imperial Spain during the centuries prior to *el Siglo de Oro*—the Spanish Golden Age of literature, art, music, and theatre.² *El retablo* is a play about a puppet show, or more precisely, a puppet show that never takes place. The theme of the *entremés* is based on an exemplar from the fourteenth-century collection of stories known as *El conde Lucanor* (Count Lucanor) and appears again in *Kejserens nye klæder* (The Emperor's New Clothes) by Hans Christian Andersen. The literary and dramatic lineage of the picaresque tricksters in the play can be traced farther back, to eleventh- and twelfth-century *maqāmā* stories and shadow puppet theatre in al-Andalus, and across the wider Arabic-speaking world.³ The mordant plot involves two travelling rogues, Chanfalla and Chirinos, who swindle a gullible, anxious group of villagers out of six *ducatos* by promising to present a spectacle that can be seen only by Old Christians, that is, Christians without Jewish or Muslim ancestry. The con artists narrate the Old Testament story of Samson's destruction of the temple; however, *el retablo* (the puppet stage) remains void of action. Out of fear of being identified as *Conversos* or *Moriscos*, the townspeople feign reactions as they gaze upon the empty stage. In the last moments of *El retablo*, the theatrical trick turns deadly. A soldier who admits to seeing nothing becomes enraged when he is accused of being "one of them." He slaughters the audience of townspeople.

El retablo summons not only an empty stage but historical absences as well: forced conversions, expulsions, and massacres of non-Christians over a two-century period preceding the publication of the play. Cervantes's satire of the blood purity anxieties of

1 Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, "Entremés del retablo de las maravillas." *La Biblioteca Virtual Miguel de Cervantes*. www.cervantesvirtual.com/obra-visor/el-retablo-de-las-maravillas--0/html/f328a9c-82b1-11df-acc7-002185ce6064_5.html.

2 "Morisco," meaning "little Moor," described Muslim converts to Christianity. The term first appears in texts written by Christian authors in the early sixteenth century. "Conversos" were Jews who converted to Christianity; the term came into wide use in the fifteenth century.

3 J. A. Garrido Ardila, "Origins and Definition of the Picaresque Genre," in *The Picaresque Novel in Western Literature from the Sixteenth Century to the Neopicaresque*, ed. Garrido Ardila (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015), 3.

late medieval and Counter-Reformation Spain reveals the theatrical nature of ethno-religious identity, a theme that is explored in this book. Although written in the early seventeenth century, the title of the play recalls the materiality of medieval theatre and the religious origins of the puppet stage. '*El retablo*' signified a transportable stage outfitted with portals and scenic elements through which automata and puppets would enter and on which they would perform. The use of the word in a theatrical context originated from the Castilian word for church altarpiece or tabernacle. From the early Middle Ages, *los retablos* were painted, carved altarpieces that framed and decorated the sanctified ceremonial space of the church altar. Church *retablos* were often panelled and contained both niches that framed life-like statues of saints, Jesus, and the Virgin Mary, and, not unlike puppet stages of the Spanish Renaissance, shuttered doorways through which sacred objects and statues would make entrances.⁴ As discussed in the following chapter, some of the more lifelike figures in *los retablos* were, in every respect, puppets themselves. Life-sized Virgin Mary and Christ figures had limbs and heads that articulated in order to theatricalize the festivals of the Assumption, the Deposition of Christ, and other Christian holidays. Although Cervantes's *entremeses* were never performed during his lifetime, his readers knew the word *retablo* from both the world of the church and the world of the theatre. The appearance of *retablos* across sacred and profane domains calls attention to the existence of a vibrant theatrical tradition in Iberia centuries prior to the flourishing of dramatic literature in the forms of *comedias*, *entremeses*, and *autos sacramentales*.

This book engages with evidence of material culture in the multi-confessional city of late medieval Seville: mosques, synagogues, and churches; manuscript illuminations and texts; and religious statues and ritual objects. It traces an historical arc during the period of Christian rule of the city from 1248 to the conquest of the New World in the sixteenth century, from a period of relatively peaceful, if strained, coexistence among Jews, Muslims, and Christians to decades of interreligious violence and expulsions. Public performance in Seville was a vital means for the people of the city to negotiate and reform community relationships, reinforce and resist social controls, enact ethnic and religious identities, and instantiate and preserve communal memories. Interconfessional relationships among medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims in al-Andalus, Castile, Catalonia, and across the Mediterranean world have been a rich area of research, particularly over the past thirty years. What sets the current study apart from this growing body of work is its direct engagement with performance culture. As a book about theatre, it is concerned with multifarious components of social performance, both living and inanimate: language, music, choreography, technology, props, stages, and cityscapes. Within the imaginative space between stages and audiences, imagined communities emerged. *Ritual, Spectacle, and Theatre in Late Medieval Seville* investigates the accumulation of signs and effects in the play space of theatre and the very real consequences of these creative explorations.

⁴ Francisco J. Cornejo, "Del retablo a la máquina real: Orígenes del teatro de títeres en España," *Fantoche* 9 (2015): 39–40.

Since theatre is conducted in public spaces and relies on a degree of consensual participation, it is a powerful means of creating identities and tools for restoring and preserving social memory and behaviour. To cite Richard Schechner's famous definition—now a commonplace in performance studies—theatre is *twice-behaved behaviour*: in the rehearsal of the past, theatre and ritual restore *and* revise the conventions of social life.⁵ Because theatre is embodied, transitory and public, representations of the past may enforce traditional behaviours but also could transgress and transform conventions. As Antonin Artaud eloquently expressed, “the image of a crime presented in the requisite theatrical conditions is something infinitely more terrible for the spirit than that same crime when actually committed.”⁶ The crimes, devices, simulations, and rituals described in this book were both forgeries and real, orthodox and nascent. In these dichotomous staging areas, Sevillians pronounced divisions, cultural intimacies, communal identities, and imperial might.

An Historiographic Lacuna

Iberian theatre occupies a small, peculiar place in medieval studies. Many theatre history textbooks present it as an anomaly compared to the well-documented dramatic traditions of England and France. Others elide medieval Spanish theatre altogether. The blind spot is due to a number of compelling factors, but mainly to the lack of evidence for theatre as defined in terms of form, mode of performance, and mode of textual presentation. For instance, if we seek dramatic texts defined in a modern or Aristotelian sense (distinct characters, dialogue and soliloquy, narrative arch), only a few fragments and short plays speak for all theatrical culture in Castile prior to 1492.⁷ Richard Donovan concluded that since Mozarabic ceremonies, songs, and prayers were considerably different from devotion in the Western Church, a quasi-dramatic tradition related to the liturgy was never cultivated in the Christian communities of al-Andalus.⁸ By the same token, the eleventh- and twelfth-century Cluniac liturgical reforms in the kingdoms of Castile and Leon failed to ignite liturgical theatre since the Benedictine tradition never fostered musical tropes or dramatic extrapolations.⁹ Other historians have argued that the centuries-long conflict with Islam preoccupied Castilians to such an extent that crea-

⁵ Richard Schechner, *Between Theater and Anthropology* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 37.

⁶ Antonin Artaud, *Theater and its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove, 1958), 85.

⁷ These include the twelfth-century *Auto de los Reyes Magos*, a mid-fifteenth-century Passion play by Alonso del Campo and the *coplas* and *representaciones* of Íñigo de Mendoza and Gómez Manrique. Evidence for biblical and hagiographic theatre in the kingdom of Aragón is more plentiful, however Catalan drama falls outside the scope of this book.

⁸ Mozarab is the term for a Christian living in Islamic territory in medieval Iberia, who, although adopting the language and culture of Muslims, continues to practice Christianity.

⁹ Richard Donovan, *The Liturgical Drama in Medieval Spain* (Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Mediaeval Studies, 1958): 21; 69–70.

tive elaborations of the Mass and celebrations of Holy Days of the Christian Church were never fostered.

The argument goes that these conditions prevented the development of a theatrical tradition in Castile. However, as many recent theatre historians have noted, the argument overlooks performance forms that did not derive from play texts. Perhaps the greatest issue with the lack of a robust historiographic tradition of medieval Iberian theatre is that drama in the Spanish Golden Age is studied and taught predominantly in language and literature departments, who focus on dramatic texts rather than performance practices and material culture. The significant figure of the playwright during the Spanish Renaissance has cast a long shadow over the medieval world. Even though the discipline of performance studies embraces a broad range of practices that function independently from written drama, many medieval theatre historians gravitate to traditions that are substantiated by familiar forms of text-based drama.

As a theoretical tool that has permeated the humanities over the last decades, the critical concept of “performance” can be as productive as it is contested. It is often used imprecisely as it is employed to meet the competing needs of disciplinary and historical dispositions. The conflation of the terms *performance* and *performativity* has caused more confusion. From speech act theory to gender studies, performative utterances and acts may be embedded in the “nonserious” world of theatre, but the two are not synonymous.¹⁰ There is overlap, of course, since performed rituals—weddings, liturgies, rites of passage—are both performative *and* staged. An additional problem is that “performance” might serve to describe any number of forms taking place in any number of sites. In the medieval period these are particularly diverse and include tropes, Corpus Christi plays, estate satires, oral narratives, tournaments, *ludi*, tableaux vivant, and minstrelsy. While some medieval scholars have embraced the fuzziness of the term, others have observed that its broad construction is unwieldy. Bruce Holsinger writes that the “anti-discipline” of performance

casts in miniature the dilemma of ultimate irrecoverability endemic to historical inquiry, a relation that also foregrounds the strange (indeed etymological) relations between the problematics of theatricality and the theoretical enterprise itself...The study of history and the study of performance approach their respective archives with a healthy respect for spectrality for which the historian will try to compensate but which the performance theorists will proffer as her *raison d'être*.¹¹

10 The term “performativity” is from the field of linguistics and is often used as a synonym for “theatricality.” To avoid confusion, I use the term “performativity” only when describing an illocutionary utterance, whether pronounced in a theatrical context or not. An illocutionary utterance is a linguistic act that brings about a serious belief or establishes a condition, such as a promise, giving an order, or pronouncing a vow. See J. L. Austin, *How to do Things with Words* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003). For performative acts in theatre, see Andrew Parker and Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, eds., *Performativity and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1995).

11 Bruce W. Holsinger, “Analytical Survey 6: Medieval Literature and Cultures of Performance,” *New Medieval Literatures* 6 (2003): 273–74.

An historical spectre may be a trace of the past come alive in the present; it may also be a phantom creation emerging from memories, affective responses to uncanny objects, rationalizations of archival contradictions, or images born of professional requirements to say something new about very old things. Avery Gordon suggests that historians describe lost moments and the lives of those who have not been spoken for by “finding the shape described by her absence.”¹² Thus, medieval performance speaks *through* living ghosts by reanimating stubbornly persistent artifacts and *against* the contours of an insufficient archive. The very nature of theatre is multidisciplinary and performance historians are, therefore, particularly well-equipped to conduct a séance. By layering and restaging the basic elements of theatre—music, dance, gesture, costume, stage settings, props, and texts—a thick description of events conjures the affective lives of past actors and audiences in a way that escapes any single (often fragmentary) document. Performance reminds us that history is remarkable, ethereal, and invariably tied to deficiency—all preconditions for faith.

The subjects of this book are social performances, a term I employ heuristically to indicate public acts where the “belief dimension is experienced as personal, immediate, and iconographic.”¹³ Rituals are a subset of this broad category, and for the sake of clarity denote religious content and intention. Social performances and rituals often manifest paradoxically, illogically, or weirdly, in that the investment of energy and resources appears overwrought or excessive. However, surplus behaviour is precisely what grants rituals their efficacy: meanings are derived from the labour and commitment of human bodies engaged in unprofitable actions and inviting communal participation. Many medieval processions, for instance, were organized around a religious centre and derived their performative powers from spatial configurations that maximized contact with the wider community. The actors of the procession watch observers, crowds watch actors, and crowds watch themselves. In addition to enhancing affective excitement, these multidirectional gazes are powerful methods of subject and identity formation. The physical effort and expenditure involved in organizing and enacting processions, festivals, and liturgies squanders time and consumes resources. But ritualized walking, singing, and carrying of sacred objects bind actors and spectators in a social contract, a contract fulfilled when the spectators’ expectations of customary choreographies are met and the performers’ expectations for appropriate reactions are satisfied: humans doing peculiar things to get *other* humans to do *other* things.

Within this context, a rich history of medieval Iberian theatre is intelligible. Medieval theatre historians working in other geographical regions have already lighted the way, often using a torch of interdisciplinarity. Jessica Brantley, Thomas Meachum, Jill Stevenson, Carol Symes, and Laura Weigert have expanded the scope of theatre studies in the English and French Middle Ages by engaging with sociology, cognitive theory, and criti-

¹² Avery Gordon, *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 6.

¹³ Jeffrey C. Alexander, “Cultural Pragmatics: Social Performance between Ritual and Strategy,” in *Social Performance: Symbolic Action, Cultural Pragmatics, and Ritual*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Bernhard Giesen, and Jason L. Mast (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 38.

cal race, gender, and sexuality studies.¹⁴ A recent generation of medieval art historians have borrowed theatrical metaphors for their inquiries. Robert Clark and Pamela Sheingorn's phenomenological exploration of French manuscript illumination and affective devotion—what they term “performative reading”—has been influential.¹⁵ In her study of the multimedia aspects of Byzantine icons, Bissera Pentcheva probes the centrality of synesthesia and sensory interaction with devotional objects, describing the “spectacle of shifting phenomenal effects on the surfaces of icons and architectural décor,” and how objects effect “vividness and vivacity in a subjective but culturally specific vision of paradise.”¹⁶ Questions of sensuality and theatricality are prominent in the work of Elina Gertsman, who has described the ways in which devotees of the Virgin Mary were compelled to engage somatically and creatively with ritual objects.¹⁷

As methods have changed, the archive has expanded. With the displacement of the dramatic text from the centre of the field, a broader range of subjects is now studied, including architecture, ritual objects, theatrical machines, and manuscript illuminations. Prior to the advent of the printing press, narratives, sermons, hymns, homilies, chronicles, and official pronouncements were embedded in the everyday lives of literate and illiterate people by way of public performance. The vast majority of medieval people experienced secular and religious texts orally and aurally rather than privately in silent reading. As Carol Symes reminds us, “[a]udiences everywhere were made aware of the advantages to be gained by participation in literate culture precisely because they were constantly hearing and seeing its effects.”¹⁸ Opportunities to explore theatrical modes of communication were ubiquitous since players of all varieties—preachers, priests, town criers, guild members, storytellers, singers, mountebanks, troubadours, jugglers, professional mourners, and puppeteers—needed only to extemporize a temporary stage in a public marketplace or thoroughfare to solicit incidental audiences.

Where scholarship on performance in medieval England, France, the Low Countries, and Germany has steadily evolved over the last few decades, critical historio-

14 Jessica Brantley, *Reading in the Wilderness: Private Devotion and Public Performance in Late Medieval England* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007); Thomas Meacham, *The Performance Tradition of the Medieval English University: The Works of Thomas Chaundler* (Berlin: De Gruyter and Medieval Institute, 2019); Jill Stevenson, *Performance, Cognitive Theory, and Devotional Culture: Sensual Piety in Late Medieval York* (New York: Palgrave, 2010); Carol Symes, *A Common Stage: Theater and Public Life in Medieval Arras* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2007); Laura Weigert, *French Visual Culture and the Making of Medieval Theater* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015).

15 Robert Clark and Pamela Sheingorn, “Performative Reading: The Illustrated Manuscripts of Arnoul Gréban’s *Mystère de la Passion*,” *European Medieval Drama* 6 (2003): 129–72.

16 Bissera Pentcheva, *The Sensual Icon: Space, Ritual and the Senses in Byzantium* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2010), 2.

17 Elina Gertsman, *Worlds Within: Opening the Medieval Shrine Madonna* (University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2015).

18 Symes, *A Common Stage*, 14. For a fulsome discussion of the medieval archive and performance practices, see Symes, “The Medieval Archive and the History of Theatre: Assessing the Written and Unwritten Evidence for Premodern Performance,” *Theatre Survey* 52 (2011): 29–58.

graphy of theatre in Iberia, Byzantium, Islamic North Africa, and Eastern Mediterranean has lagged. There are a few notable exceptions, however, and these studies have informed my own approach. In *Radical Theatricality: Jongleuresque Performance on the Early Spanish Stage*, Bruce Burningham argues that theatrical impulses originated on the Peninsula in the presentation of songs and stories by jongleurs rather than in dramatic or extraliturgical texts.¹⁹ Denise Filios discusses the gender identities of women court entertainers in Castile who performed comic songs and lyrical poetry.²⁰ Art and architecture historian Eduardo Carrero Santamaría takes a holistic approach to the study of Aragonese and Castilian liturgies by reconstructing the multidisciplinary elements of performance: architectural space, costume, ritual objects, music, actors, and audiences.²¹ Departing from traditional approaches to medieval Islamic narrative, David Wacks has published extensively on the performative dimensions of *zajal* and *muwashshah* poetry and on Hebrew and Arabic versions of the Iberian *maqāmāt*.²² Cynthia Robinson's dense, fascinating study of the thirteenth-century manuscript version of the epic tale *Ḥadīth Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ*, the only extant illustrated secular narrative in Arabic produced in al-Andalus, teases apart the literary, artistic, and social strands of the work to demonstrate its embeddedness in the vibrant oral culture of Islamic society.²³ The traditional perception of Islam's cool attitude toward theatre, song, and dance—secular or religious—is challenged by these and other examples of entertainments across the medieval Mediterranean. Although Muslim performance culture in Seville during the Islamic period falls outside the scope of this book, Islamic music and poetry influenced Christian forms of performance through processes of cultural transmission, appropriation, and hybridization.

Seville: City of Culture, Spectacle, and Power

For some, the sustained presence of Muslim society in medieval Europe may come as a surprise. However, situated within the broader scope of Mediterranean geography and history, Islam's presence on the Iberian Peninsula becomes more knowable. In the early eighth century (711–718), the Islamic Umayyad caliphate invaded the Iberian Peninsula

¹⁹ Bruce Burningham, *Radical Theatricality: Jongleuresque Performance on the Early Spanish Stage* (West Lafayette: Purdue University Press, 2007).

²⁰ Denise Filios, *Performing Women in the Middle Ages: Sex, Gender, and the Medieval Iberian Lyric* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005).

²¹ Eduardo Carrero Santamaría, "Entre el transepto, el púlpito y el coro. El espacio conmemorativo de la Sibila," in *La Sibila. Sonido. Imagen. Liturgia. Escena*, ed. Gómez Muntané and Carrero Santamaría (Madrid: Editorial Alpuerto, 2015), 207–60.

²² David Wacks, "The Performativity of Ibn al-Muqaffa's *Kalīla wa-Dimna* and *Al-Maqāmāt al-Luzumīyya* of al-Saraqustī," *Journal of Arabic Literature* 34 (2003): 178–89; and *Framing Iberia: Maqāmāt and Frametale Narratives in Medieval Spain* (Leiden: Brill, 2007).

²³ Cynthia Robinson, *Medieval Andalusian Courtly Culture in the Mediterranean: Ḥadīth Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ* (New York: Routledge, 2007).

and occupied nearly all the peninsula after the fall of the Visigoth kingdom, leaving only the northernmost region from Galicia to the western Pyrenees unconquered. At its height, the Umayyads ruled over a vast empire of multiethnic and multicultural peoples in Persia, South Central Asia, the Arabian Peninsula, North Africa, and Iberia. Through eight centuries, and in shifting alliances and sporadic conquests among and between various powers, the Peninsula was divided between Christian and Islamic polities. Jewish and Muslim communities in Christian territories were mostly tolerated, as were Jews and Christians in Islamic kingdoms, although the picture of ecumenism was pockmarked with violent outbursts and outright persecutions.²⁴

When the Umayyad dynasty collapsed in 1023, al-Andalus fractured into a divided and, sometimes, antagonistic region of city-states. For instance, the Taifa of Seville in post-Umayyad Spain cannibalized Islamic cities Cádiz and Murcia in order to secure control of much of disunited al-Andalus. Capitalizing on an appeal for military aid to fight Christian forces on the northern frontier issued by al-Mu'tamid Muhammad ibn Abbad's (Taifa ruler of Seville, 1069–1091), the Almoravid kingdom of the northwest African region took control of al-Andalus in 1091. About eighty years later, a second group of ethnic Berbers of North Africa—the Almohad Caliphate—wrested control of al-Andalus from the Almoravids and moved the capital of Muslim Spain from Córdoba to Seville, already a thriving cultural centre in southern Iberia.

Seville's position on the Guadalquivir River provided the city with access to important trade routes in the Atlantic Ocean and Mediterranean Sea, and so it remained a contested nexus of political, economic, and religious power throughout the Middle Ages. During the Almoravid and Almohad periods, Seville served as an Andalusí extension of Caliphal power from the Maghreb (roughly the northwest African region that encompasses contemporary Morocco, Mauritania, Algeria, and Tunisia). Despite the political and cultural turmoil caused by the successive overthrow of Islamic caliphates during the Taifa period, through nearly two centuries of the second millennium the frontier border between Christian and Islamic kingdoms that divided the Peninsula remained relatively stable.

The Almoravids and Almohads adhered to more orthodox forms of Islam than the Umayyads and were generally hostile to the opulent arts of their predecessors. Still, architectural, literary, and performance culture in al-Andalus continued to thrive. Seville and other Islamic cities maintained economic and cultural connections with the Abbasid empire to the east. Music, poetry, and writing on engineering, astronomy, and medicine circulated in the centres of learning and governance, from Seville and Marrakech to Cairo and Baghdad. The Almoravids and Almohads contributed indelibly to the urban topography of al-Andalus and the Maghreb. Commissioned by the Abū Ya'qūb Yūsuf (Almohad Caliph, 1163–1184) in 1172, the Great Mosque of Seville had a footprint of over 15,000 square metres, including a *haram* (prayer hall) of seventeen alleys framed by lobed arches. Often referred to today as La Mezquita (the Mosque), the central mosque was converted to a Christian cathedral when Fernando III's victorious army

24 Religious minorities in Muslim al-Andalus were called the *dhimmi*, meaning “protected person.”

entered the city in 1248. Starting in the 1430s, the *haram* was razed and replaced with a gothic structure. However, three significant Almohad architectural elements remain: la Giralda (bell tower), el Patio de los Naranjos (rectangular patio with fountain for ritual cleaning), and el Puerta del Perdón (arched entryway and bronze door). The physical presence of historical Jewish communities in Seville and other Andalusian cities is barely perceptible today due to the destruction of synagogues during the pogroms of the late fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

During the rule of both Berber empires, the Caliphal courts and religious institutions supported a vibrant performance culture of poetry, storytelling and song in Andalusia and the Maghreb. From the early millennium through the twelfth century, Andalusī Arabic and Hebrew poetic culture fomented in Seville. Composed in colloquial Hispano-Arabic (vernacular that is interspersed with Mudejar Romance language), the *zajal* is a strophic form of secular lyrical poetry that can be traced to the early twelfth century and continues to be performed today in North Africa. Written in classical Arabic, *muwashshah* poetry emerged from the interplay of Hebrew and Arabic narrative cultures distinct to al-Andalus in the tenth through the thirteenth centuries, and the development of both the *muwashshah* and the *zajal* in Seville undoubtedly benefited from the city's musical instrument industry. The distinct forms predate the compositions of French troubadours, and some scholars argue that Arabic poetry influenced the secular song tradition of Provence. In the late Middle Ages, some of the formal elements of the *muwashshah* and *zajal* were absorbed into the Galician-Portuguese lyric of *los trovadores* (troubadours) at Christian courts.²⁵ Yehūda al-Ḥarīzī's translation (d. 1225) of Arabic *maqāmāt* into Hebrew in the early thirteenth century is emblematic of the shared literary and performance culture of Muslims and Jews in al-Andalus.²⁶ The tales of the peripatetic travels of a roguish hero and his companion in *maqāmāt* were the most well-known and widely circulated collection of stories across the medieval Arabic-speaking world. The rich performance culture of Islamic al-Andalus is also evidenced in courtly love poems like the *Bayāḍ wa Riyāḍ* and secular fables like the *Kalīla wa-Dimna*.²⁷

Evidence for traditions of *khayāl al-zill* (shadow puppetry) appears sporadically across the Arabic-speaking Mediterranean and Asia in the High and late medieval periods; the survival of three thirteenth-century satirical puppet plays by the Persian physician Muhammad ibn Dāniyāl (d. 1310) provide the most conclusive evidence of a popular puppet tradition. The overall paucity of evidence of puppet theatre, however, speaks more to the ephemerality of orally transmitted stories than it does to an anemic tradition. Centuries earlier in al-Andalus, the theologian and historian Abū Muhammad 'Alī

²⁵ Manuel Pedro Ferreira, "The Medieval Fate of the Cantigas de Santa Maria: Iberian Politics Meets Song," *Journal of the American Musicological Society* 69 (2016): 295–353.

²⁶ *Maqāmāt* of Abū Muḥammad al-Qāsim ibn 'Alī al-Ḥarīrī (d. 1122) were transmitted orally and in manuscripts, from the Caucasus and Cairo to the Maghreb and al-Andalus.

²⁷ The *Ḥadīth Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ* is preserved in a rare, illustrated thirteenth-century manuscript that was likely produced in Seville. The widely disseminated and popular *Kalīla wa-Dimna* was translated from Pahlavi into Arabic in the eighth century, and subsequently into Castilian in the thirteenth century in Alfonso X's scriptoria.

ibn Aḥmad ibn Saʿīd ibn Ḥazm (d. 1064) described lifelike shadow puppets that were “mounted on wooden handles [and] turned rapidly so that some disappear and others appear,”²⁸ and historians of early Islamic culture have demonstrated the ways in which the *maqāmā* stories were presented theatrically, with and without shadow puppets.²⁹ Further research may reveal performance conditions of Peninsular oral narratives like *maqāmāt*, *Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ*, and *Kalīla wa-Dimna*, although we can at least be certain that sacred and secular poems, songs, and narratives were presented orally in court settings, madrasahs, yeshivot, and scriptoria, and in outdoor public spaces.³⁰ Translation, exchange, and collaboration with Christian and Jewish poets and musicians throughout the Islamic period contributed to the vibrant performance culture of Seville, a tradition of multiculturalism that endured into the early period of Christian sovereignty, as will become clear in the following chapters.

What appears to be a straightforward narrative of cultural hybridity based on enlightened tolerance and learned curiosity in Muslim al-Andalus was, in fact, more complicated. Life for Christians and Jews living under Islamic regimes was not ideal. The *dhimmi* of al-Andalus were second-class citizens upon whom special taxes and dress codes were imposed, and religious minorities occasionally endured repressions, massacres, and forced exiles. This is also true in Christian Seville in the later Middle Ages, where the archive has far more to say and what it says presages the utter dissolution of religious tolerance at the end of the fifteenth century. However, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century pogroms, forced conversions, and expulsions were not characteristic of Christian attitudes and treatment of religious minorities in earlier centuries. Starting in the twelfth century, the translation of Arabic, Greek, and Hebrew literature, philosophy, and scientific and medical works into Latin and Castilian was conducted in earnest by Christian clerics and kings. By their doing so a learned tradition of cultural exchange in Toledo was maintained, fortified, and extended to include the court in Seville by Alfonso X, “the Wise” (King of Castile and León, 1252–1284). In both Islamic and Christian societies, cultural hybridity was made possible by the multiplication of forms, where the “assertion of hegemony by the conqueror transformed the culture of both the conquered and conqueror.”³¹

28 Translation of passage from Ibn Hazm's *Al-akhlaq wa as-siyar fi mudawat al-nufus* is by Karim Dakroub, “Arabic Shadow Theater,” *Puppetring: Puppet, Shadow and Marionette Magazine*, December 19, 2013, www.puppetring.com/2013/12/19/arabic-shadow-theater-by-karim-dakroub/.

29 For theatrical presentation of *maqāmāt* see Filiz Adigüzel Toprak, “The Influence of Oral Narrating Traditions on a Frequently Illustrated Thirteenth-Century Manuscript,” in *Islamic Art, Architecture and Material Culture New Perspectives*, ed. Margaret Graves (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2012), 133–42. For a discussion of the shadow puppet tradition, see Alain George, “The Illustrations of the *Maqāmāt* and the Shadow Play,” *Muqarnas: An Annual on the Visual Culture of the Islamic World* 28 (2011): 1–42.

30 For theatrical presentation of oral narrative, see Wacks, *Framing Iberia*, and Robinson, *Ḥadīth Bayāḍ wa-Riyāḍ*.

31 Janina Safran, *Defining Boundaries in al-Andalus: Muslims, Christians, and Jews in Islamic Iberia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2013), 20.

During the late period of *Reconquista* (Reconquest)—from the decisive defeat of the Almohads at the battle of Las Navas de Tolosa in 1212 to the fall of Granada in 1492—Seville was situated near the Islamic-Christian frontier at the edges of Extremadura, Castile, and al-Andalus.³² After Islamic *Išbiliya* (the Arabic name for the city of Seville) fell to Christian forces and *Libros de Repartimiento* were issued by the Castilian monarchy, the majority of Muslims living there migrated to rural enclaves outside the city walls, many more fleeing to Granada.³³ Although Muslims continued to contribute to the cultural life of the city, the sudden decline of the interior population destabilized the economy. As part of an effort to revivify and Christianize the frontier city, Alfonso X oversaw the composition, compilation, and performance of over four hundred songs honouring the Virgin Mary—the *Cantigas de Santa Maria*. Over the subsequent two centuries Seville remained an opulent city renowned for its physical beauty, musical and poetic culture, scriptoria, and schools for translation. The Muslim community slowly regained strength in Seville and the Jewish community there remained one of the most vital in Christian Andalusia.

Seville's coreligionists wrestled with contrasts of ideology and practice, faith and vocation, and violence and revelation, tensions that were particularly potent in the later Middle Ages when the social and spatial distinction between the Jewish and Moorish *barrios* of Seville was robustly maintained. Seville was the site of two significant historical "firsts" that mark an extended period of religious intolerance in Spain: In 1391, violence against Jews and the physical destruction of the Jewish quarter in the city set off a sequence of deadly anti-Jewish riots across Aragón and Castile. In many cities, communities of Muslim, Jews, *Conversos*, and *Moriscos* were uprooted, and places of worship destroyed or converted to churches. Seville was also the city where, in 1480, the Catholic Monarchs Ferdinand II (King of Aragón, 1479–1516) and Isabella I (Queen of Castile, 1474–1504) inaugurated the Holy Office of the Inquisition. The growing Christian empire projected its power onto the bodies of religious minorities in inquisitorial trials and punitive processions that theatricalized suffering in grand spectacles before massive crowds. In 1492, the year that the last Nasrid Sultan of Spain Muhammad XII (ruler of the Emirate of Granada, 1482–1492) capitulated to the Catholic Monarchs, Isabel and Ferdinand promulgated the Edict of the Expulsion of the Jews.

Between the mid-fifteenth and mid-sixteenth centuries, the demographic profile of Seville transformed and grew as people from across Europe, Africa, and the Americas

32 The word *Reconquista* entered the Spanish language in the nineteenth century. It has been used to designate the period between CE 722 and 1492 and suggests a history of uninterrupted progress of Christianity over Islam during that period. Joseph O'Callaghan defends the use of the term as an accurate representation of Christian ideology of religious war. *Reconquest and Crusade in Medieval Spain* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2003), 4–21.

33 *Libros de Repartimiento* were legal instruments used by the Christian conquerors for resettling and redistributing lands previously occupied by Muslims. A *repartimiento* was implemented in Seville in 1291 and the instrument was used throughout the remainder of the medieval period and during the conquest of Granada in 1492. Olivia Remie Constable, *Medieval Iberia: Readings from Christian, Muslim, and Jewish Sources* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997), 228.