Public Celebrations, the Other, and Emotional Responses. New approaches to the Iberian Royal entries in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Period

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ABSTRACT: Traditionally, when dealing with the study of urban celebrations in the Middle and Early Modern periods, historiography has accepted the concept of Gesamtkunstwerk to point out the magnificence and diversity of artistic expressions that were part of these ephemeral events. Without totally opposing this idea, reinforced by methodological currents such as the history of emotions, this paper aims to reflect on the concept of urban celebrations. We will provide new perspectives in the study of these performances, especially their short-lived nature, which prevented the people from having access to all the acts and messages that involved these events. To this end, we propose a new approach to documentary and literary sources, from the point of view of the analysis of the Muslim other. We study its visual representation as well as its role as a spectator and active participant, especially as a dancer or musician. This allows us to present a new methodological framework using Valencia as a case study.

KEYWORDS: Urban celebrations; Otherness; Monarchy; History of emotions; Soundscapes; Iconography; Methodology.

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INTRODUCTION

Nothing must have been what it seemed in Renaissance and Baroque public celebrations; if this is true for those who witnessed them, it is even more so for us today. Even someone who has read the hundreds of Relaciones (accounts) that were written describing all the details of each of these triumphal entries in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries cannot imagine what they were really like. This is because the very words that are used to describe them constitute a kind of literary screen making it more difficult to perceive them. Just as the celebrations themselves disguised the cities by contriving a mask for them in the form of ephemeral architecture, tapestries, paintings, and flowers, among other things, the written texts are also a kind of literary mask that disengages what these celebrations really were (Cámara, 1998, p. 67).

This eloquent remark about the study of public celebrations in the early modern period can also be extended to include the Middle Ages. Historians have argued that these events—whether royal entries, funerals, canonizations, or other religious or secular celebrations—constituted a sort of Gesamtkunstwerk in which music, theater, fireworks and lighting, architecture, and visual arts came together to highlight a city’s richness and to render homage to a particular figure. Although we do not want to suggest that this characterization is altogether untrue, it is equally true that the “literary mask” that Alicia Cámara refers to in the quote above has traditionally been ignored. Though the sources describe, as we will see, a celebration that took place over a short period of time, the phenomenon was much more complex than that. First of all, it is important to keep in mind that only a few people would have been able to take in the celebration in its entirety, and if we focus on these people, our analysis will be incomplete. Only a few were chosen to tour all of the arches, from beginning to end, to listen to all of the musical pieces, and to see all the tableaux vivants that were created for these events. The spectacle was created by and for the authorities and their retinues. The rest of the population—including the actors and/or musicians who would have been awaiting the arrival of these personages—only really saw, in all its splendor, a small part of the series of events planned for the celebration. Thus, to analyze these festive manifestations of power as Gesamtkunstwerk is a bit unrealistic, in that doing so ignores the fact that only a very small portion of the population would have had this full experience.¹ It is true that the arches and catafalques, though ephemeral, would have been on display for several days so that they could be seen by everyone, but the soundscape and the theater were more fleeting. To view the arches without the performances would have diminished the emotional impact of the program and would surely have affected the “potency” of the message communicated through it.

Despite all this, many historians contend that these celebrations had the effect of “taming” the emotions. According to them, using the different elements mentioned above (music, lights, painting, etc.), the planners of the celebrations wanted to create a clear presentation of the battle between good and evil and to justify the current political agenda. For Turner (1989, pp. 23, 53), the symbols that appeared in modern pageants affected the way the world was perceived and aroused feelings of hatred, fear, affection, or sorrow.⁷

These ideas have influenced the thinking of most researchers who study public celebrations, beginning with Jakob Burkhardt’s seminal work. This approach might lead us to analyze these celebrations using the methodology of the “history of emotions.” This is not the place to go into this methodological trend in detail,¹ but we should ask whether it can shed any light on the medieval and modern culture of celebration. Peter Burke (2005, pp. 38-9) pointed out this methodology’s pros and cons, especially problems that need to be resolved if it is to be successful. As he sees it, the main problem, which is also applicable to our case study, has to do with the historian’s access to the emotions of people long dead. He lays out how those who came before him, especially Burkhardt and Johan Huizinga, mined the literature in order to establish a “vocabulary of emotion” to deal with this problem. This solution is imperfect for our case, first and foremost because the sources that we have at our disposal are few in number for the medieval period and somewhat more complete but also more complex for the early modern period. We have sources that are economic or legal in nature to inform us of the decisions made by city councils, but these do not tend to provide information about the impact that the celebration was intended to have on the spectator. On the other hand, we have the written accounts of the celebrations, which, as Cámara points out in the quote at the beginning of this article, are nothing more than ideological constructions. Sometimes these are written by royal chroniclers, whose purpose was to exalt the monarchy’s power by emphasizing its superiority over its enemies (Lopes Don, 2000, pp. 60-82) and who are therefore prone to hyperbole and liable to conceal whatever shortcomings the celebration may have had. Other accounts were written by local (paid) chroniclers, who attribute the monarchy’s magnanimity to the city’s own merits and explain the opulence of the pageantry (Bonet, 1990, pp. 10-11; Mínguez, 1999) as the result of the city’s economic success.¹³ Lastly, there are other, sometimes anonymous sources that contain the descriptions of individual diletantes, travelers, or simple spectators; these sometimes contradict the “official” sources, and while they combine the author’s own perspective with references to the mood of the audience, they are also only perceptions,⁴ even though they try to give an aura of “authenticity” to everything they describe. When all is said and done, what historians have done is to create a hypothetical reconstruction on the basis of these contemporary texts that, though useful, is yet another “literary mask.”

The bureaucratic documents (bills of sale, legal regulations, etc.) dealing with the costs incurred for the royal entry and its participants are not helpful in formulating a social theory of the emotions, but neither are any of the
other accounts of the celebration. In fact, they tend to corroborate Foucault’s ideas about the instrumentalization of emotions with the intent of oppressing or imposing a certain ideology. In Foucault’s theory of public emotions, the object of analysis is top-down; however, what we are interested in is the response (from the bottom up), which is almost impossible to know from the official sources that we have.

In addition to all of this, there is another well-worn debate regarding how the people who witnessed these celebrations understood all that they saw. This would clarify not only their perceptions and “emotions” but also how effective the iconographic and sensory program created by the planners of the celebration was. There is no consensus on this topic either, nor do we think there can be. However, we must admit that the repetition of certain stimuli (whether images or sounds), described time and again in the same geographical area over hundreds of years, does suggest to us that, in the end, knowledge of what was seen and heard was much greater than what the most incredulous historians claim; even so, this knowledge is unquantifiable and therefore we are still far from any “objective” analysis of emotions elicited by this supposedly “total” work of art (Handelmann, 1990, pp. 4-9). Another factor making it difficult to know how the celebration was understood was the fact, mentioned above, that everyone was not able to see and hear the same thing, and only the civil or religious retinue was able to visit all the stations of the pageant. All the same, it is possible to get close to what Barbara Rosenwein (2002, p. 842) called “emotional communities”—that is, the feelings that certain social communities (parliaments, guilds, monasteries, parish church members, etc.) sought to transmit in these celebrations—since the choice of the iconographic program often lay with them, and through this program, it is possible to glimpse their preoccupations or at least those preoccupations that they wanted to make clear as claims on the king during his visit. Even so, what we can learn taking this perspective is partial, since sometimes preexisting paintings or (ephemeral) structures were reused (Acidini, 2000, p. 22), and this makes it difficult to know whether a given program was presenting a new preoccupation or a fear that had been inherited or gone unresolved, or whether the choice was due to a lack of economic resources to make something new (Ruiz, 2012, p. 49).

Given our space constraints, the most practical way to demonstrate this is by focusing primarily on royal entries. As Massip (2003, p. 38) rightly pointed out, these entries were not only a social occasion but also a legal, economic, political, religious, and aesthetic event that touched all of society and its institutions (Strong, 1998, p. 15). It was a celebration that intensified social communication and the exchange of values, that activated contacts between individuals and groups, as well as the transmission and reception of messages through certain cultural codes that had been hammered out since antiquity (Gómez García, 1990, p. 58). These royal entries projected an image of the monarch and the monarchy that made them present in a symbolic way, especially in places where the monarchy was normally absent, and thus had the effect of reducing the distance between the king and his subjects. They were, in essence, an act of submission to the monarch on the part of the people whom he had come to visit, a space where local fears were made visible, as were how the monarch had dealt with those fears in the past and was dealing with them the present (García Bernal, 2006, p. 91; Strong, 1998, p. 26; Monteagudo, 1995). Though our focus will be on these royal entries, we will make comparisons between them and other local and national celebrations.

In order to get a closer look at all of the factors mentioned above, we will take a long-range view—beginning in the fourteenth century, when the first complete descriptions of these events appeared, up to the marriage of Philip II with Margaret of Austria (1599)—of a particular place, Valencia, one of the most important cities of the European Middle Ages and early modern period because of its maritime trade and its (at times conflictive) relations with Islam. Not only will we look at the iconographic programs that were developed but we will also use some unpublished sources to highlight aspects such as music that tend to receive very little attention in the scholarship on these kinds of events.

THE SELF CONFRONTING THE OTHER IN VALENCIAN EPHEMERAL ART: METAPHORS OF ISLAM

Jean Delumeau (1978, pp. 244-272) was the first to approach the relationship with Islam from the angle of the fear that it aroused in Europe, and in his wake numerous historians have attempted to understand how this emotion comingled with other feelings that Islamic culture inspired, such as admiration. Here we will focus on how Islam was made manifest in Valencian public celebrations, given that it was the enemy that appeared most frequently in these celebrations (more than Protestants or other political opponents of the Spanish Crown, who appeared intermittently in these celebrations throughout the centuries). The earliest celebration of the conquest of the city from Islamic forces took place on the centennial of this event (1338), and thereafter the city organized minor commemorations of subsequent victories over Islam in Iberia and the Mediterranean, and even celebrated the death of the most fiercely anti-Christian sultans. However, the first written reference to the appearance of Turks as enemies in an iconographic program comes from much later: during the entry of Ferdinand I, his wife, and his first-born in 1414. The document states, “Lo jorn que lo senyor rey entrà anaren ab los entrameses sis salvatges e quatre turchs e doní’ls los salaris següents…” From the context, we are given to understand that these were not prisoners of war but rather actors dressed as Turks for the interludes; furthermore, the fact that they were associated with savages indicates that the intent was to demeana. This use of Turks in the celebration is rather late compared to other territories. As Massip (2003, p. 109) has shown, the first reference in the Iberian Peninsula to the
appearance of defeated Moors in a royal entry dates from 1373, when Peter III of Aragon received the betrothed of his son John, Martha of Armagnac, in Barcelona. Thus, unless new sources are discovered, we can conclude that the inclusion of dances or interludes showcasing the conflict between Christians and Muslims was delayed in royal entries in Valencia.

The appearance of the Turk constitutes an interesting link between royal entries and one of the most important celebrations in the Crown of Aragon during the Middle Ages, the Corpus Christi procession. There are many similarities between these commemorations—both used the same routes, festival lights, and the tolling of bells—but the one that interests us most here is the dance known as the “caballets cotoners,” which presented a staged battle between Christian and Turkish horsemen. It first appears in the documentation in 1424, in the description of Barcelona’s Corpus Christi procession found in that city’s Libre de Solemnitates. Keeping in mind that this procession had been taking place in Barcelona since 1380, it is reasonable to assume that these dances began to appear as part of Corpus Christi at the end of the fourteenth century. The situation in Valencia is similar, in that we find documentary references to the “caballets cotoners” in 1437, though the city had been doing the procession regularly since 1372 (Harris, 1997). This fact confirms that aspects of the staging of these two festivities—Corpus Christi and royal visits—were repeated and reused, establishing a connection and continuity between them. Fear of the Turk and of Islam was a recurrent element going back to the Middle Ages.

But it was especially after the entry of Alfonso the Magnanimous in Naples (1442) that the figure of the Muslim, in particular the subdued Turk, starts to appear systematically in royal entries in Valencia, which used Italian festivals as a model. The depiction of the enemy, shown in equal measure as humiliated (in defeat) or exalted (to accentuate his bravery), is a constant in courtly celebrations, where it served as a counter-image to the monarch (Strong, 1998; Checa, 1987; 1992; Ruiz, 2012). It also served to amplify the feeling that there was an ongoing battle against evil, to justify the economic costs of underwriting armed conflict, and to celebrate victories in order to distract from other political problems. It is here that we see a couple of different ways in which the people’s emotions were manipulated: presenting a defeated Turk at the king’s feet “moved” the people’s affections, since they idolized their monarch, but it also aroused their animosity toward the “other” who besieged their coasts. It should be noted that this iconography began to be developed in the sixteenth century; before that time (except on rare occasions such as the above-mentioned entry of Alfonso the Magnanimous into Naples), the custom of building arches for the arrival of the king did not exist. So, how did these ideas become visible in Valencia? In several different ways.

Muslims appear first of all in conjunction with historic figures, local or otherwise, who did battle against them. The figures chosen most frequently were Scipio Africanus, the Cid, and James the Conqueror. The first of these was used repeatedly in triumphal arches for Charles V because of his North African campaigns (Jacquot, 1975; Deswarte-Rosa, 1988; Checa, 1999, p. 204; Carrasco, 2000), and it is understandable that this figure would continue to appear in association with Charles’s successors. Although the Cid was closely linked to the city of Valencia, he is not represented in this city’s celebrations until rather late, in 1586, after having appeared in the Burgos entries made by Charles V and, later, the wife of Philip II, Anna of Austria (Relacion verdadera..., 1571, p. 15). These two cities would be the obvious places to pay tribute to the Cid and his conquests, because it was here that he lived. Moreover, the Cid will continue to be a fixture in Valencian entries, as well as in the three-hundredth anniversary celebration of the canonization of Saint Vincente Ferrer in the eighteenth century (Individual noticia..., 1755, p. 10; Olivares Torres, 2016, p. 616). Thus, we might conclude that, despite the Cid’s late arrival on the scene, he has been (along with James I) the historical figures to have received the most attention in public celebrations over the centuries. James I was depicted in the centenary celebrations of the city’s conquest as well as in all royal entries, sometimes multiple times within the same entry. This was the case in the celebrations surrounding the nuptials of Philip III, where James appeared on the important Serranos Gate along with other illustrious monarchs, such as Ferdinand the Catholic, Emperor Maximilian II, Holy Roman Emperor Rudolf, and Archduke Ernest of Austria (Esquerdo, 1599), as well as on Saint Vincent’s Gate, where his likeness was paired with a portrait of Philip I (Esquerdo, 1599; Gauna, 1926, p. 129).

ON BATTLE PAINTING AND STAGED BATTLES: ICONOGRAPHIC SUBLTLETY AND THE PRESENCE OF MORISCO SPECTATORS

Unlike in other European cities, in Valencia there was no tradition of decorating the trompe l’oeil architecture with paintings of battles against Muslims. There are very few extant references, and except for the paintings created by Juan de Sarriena for the celebrations at the end of the sixteenth century (Juliana, 2017), most were the work of second-rate artists, and therefore very different from the programs created in Seville and Madrid, mainly. So, it was traditional to import art made elsewhere to showcase the military victories of the Habsburg dynasty: in fact, the tapestries designed by Vermeyen that showed Charles V’s Tunisian campaign were brought to Valencia on two separate occasions (Cock, 1876, p. 225). The extant descriptions of the local paintings mentioned above are very brief. For Philip III’s entry on the occasion of his nuptials (1599), the sources note that there were a couple of oil paintings on the Puerta del Real in which Charles V was shown combatting Turks,20 surrounded by allegories and four goddesses: Athena, Diana, Juno, and Venus. The paintings are described as showing a fierce clash.21 This was at a time of relative peace in Christian-Muslim relations in the Mediterranean, but of serious conflict within...
the Spanish realms. The inclusion of these paintings is essential for understanding this complex historical moment in Valencia, when a policy of Morisco repression was adopted by John of Ribera and other Valencian nobles (Benítez Sánchez-Blanco, 2001). At this time, Dominicans such as Jaime Bleda were calling for the expulsion of the Moriscos, and the place where the paintings were shown was just in front of the Dominican monastery (among others: Poutrin, 2015; Vincent and Benítez, 2001, pp. 9-47).

There were only two works, but their inclusion indicates a change vis-à-vis the entries of Philip III’s predecessors. The use of battle painting—which was unprecedented in this geographical area (Franco and García, 2019)—was intended to make the Turkish threat more visible; in earlier celebrations this threat had been illustrated instead through feminine allegories, which were more difficult for the people to understand. The intention was to demonstrate the monarchy’s power but also the threat posed by a domestic enemy that could potentially join forces with the dreaded Turk.

The point here is that the means by which the plastic arts were used to create emotions around royal power and defending territory against the enemy were not consistent or uniform. Although there were direct representations of Muslims and Turks in entremeses and theatrical pieces going back to the Middle Ages (a topic we will return to below), the figure of the bloody, vanquished Muslim or Turk, especially when shown prostrate at the feet of Saint James Matamoros and/or Saint George, was not very common in royal entries in Valencia, compared to other parts of the Spanish realms. There were more subtle allusions that gradually grew in intensity in response to the Crown’s agenda, reaching a climax with Philip III’s entry on the occasion of his marriage, in which the king, who had himself won few military victories, was depicted as the heir of an earlier tradition and began to display his hostility toward an enemy whose final defeat he planned to accomplish by expelling the Moriscos.

In contrast to these images of the “other,” which we might call “static,” in that they could be seen by all since they were displayed over a period of days following the king’s visit, we have another series of more complex images. These were the theatrical acts and staged battles that were a part of the celebrations, which were only seen by a fraction of the people and which presented a much clearer anti-Islamic message in the way that they were deployed. The analysis of these images (and their effects on the spectators) is complicated not only by their more intangible nature but also by the fact that Muslims and Moriscos played an important part in them, making their message even more difficult to decipher. We can divide these types of images into theatrical works, staged battles (whether between Moors and Christians or through juegos de cañas), and dances.

It has already been mentioned that the first specific reference to a “staged” Turk dates from Ferdinand I’s 1414 entry, though there is evidence that galleys were built for the celebrations surrounding the visit made by Alfonso X of Castile to James I of Aragon (1274) (Massip, 2003, p. 98), as happens later as well, in the entry of Prince John and his betrothed Martha of Armagnac in 1373 (Documents…, 2005, p. 225). These wooden ships may well have been used for the popular Joc de les Galeres, in which ships mounted onto wagons were wheeled through the streets while the people on board lobbed oranges at one another in a semblance of battle. This form of amusement was not always anti-Islamic, but it did serve as a precedent for the spectacular naumachies that were staged for Philip II’s visit and, later, to celebrate the marriage of his son (Ferrer Valls, 1991).

Despite these early mentions in the Manuols de Conells and in several civil and ecclesiastical archives in Valencia, there are only brief notes about how much was spent on these theatrical productions. The sources are scarce for the medieval period, and it is not until the reigns of Philip II and Philip III that this situation changes significantly. Philip II’s second entry into Valencia (1586) came on the heels of the victory at Lepanto (1571), which is why the naval element was so prominent. These shows were produced in several different locales. In the Plaza del Mercado, “in front of the Magdalene convent, there was a reenactment of the Battle of Lepanto, for which a stage was built with two large towers on either side, and in the middle twelve galleys and two galleasses twelve or fourteen palms long” (Carreres Zacarés, 1926, pp. 151-153; 1935, II, p. 973). The description goes on to highlight the dramatic nature of the performance, which included blood and wounded, falling bodies, but the most interesting aspect of the depiction was that singers had been hired by the city council to act as the Turks’ captives and to call out for help, which made the show even more sensational.

This is one of the few descriptions that specify the kind of song that was sung and the singers’ position at the very bottom of the set, allowing us to imagine the effect that this must have had on the people in the audience, who would have heard the cries of the captives as they watched the reenactment of the battle. Even so, we should stress, again, that this staging was limited in temporal and spatial scope in that it was performed only as the king was passing by.

However, this was not the only show that was performed during this entry. After the king and his retinue entered the city through the triumphal arch erected on the Serranos Gate, they watched a performance of the capture of the Peñón de Vélez in that plaza. In this performance there were “vint y cinch o treinta homes adreçats com a turchs a hus de guerra,” who were defending the fort from his majesty’s attacking army, made up of four ships and four galleys. Following the itinerary of the procession, in the Plaza de Cajeros there was a reenactment of the Battle of St. Quentin, and in the Plaza de Predicadores there was a dramatization of the “great relief” of Malta, where the royal entourage again witnessed a naval battle between Christian galleys and the Ottomans. It is interesting to note that this reenactment replaced the taking of Terceira Island (Battle of Ponta Delgada), in which Spain sought to subdue Portuguese rebels on the Azores Islands who refused to recognize Philip II as king. The documents...
show that a decision was made to remove from the itinerary all references to Philip II’s Portuguese campaigns and to focus on presenting the war against the Ottoman Empire. This may have been due to the presence among the king’s retinue of Portuguese noblemen, making it necessary to identify the enemy clearly and directly with the Turks.30

This entry was only a prelude to an entire series of dramatic productions attended by Philip III and Margaret of Austria during their visit to Dénia, and then later to Valencia, where they were married (1599). In fact, famous authors such as Lope de Vega were commissioned to create the festival program. In the former city, they beheld, from the beach, how the Navy had built a strong walled fortress with five turrets and a drawbridge over its moat. Within the fortress there were three hundred soldiers dressed as valiant Turks with bows, crossbows, and arrows in hand and standing at the ready to defend the fortress. Just then horses came from the coast to sweep away the defense and the siege and the people inside the fortress; then two companies of arquebusiers arrived, gained the drawbridge and a skirmish began with the Turks (Gauna, 1926, p. 94).31

This skirmish included “several arrows flying overhead” but ended up being only a “battle exercise.” It was a simulation that had not been announced and thus made a real impression on both on the city’s inhabitants and, especially, the members of the royal entourage (Carrasco Urgoiti, 2003, p. 27). These “attacks,” which were organized by the nobility, continued even as the royal entourage went on its way toward the capital. Near Oliva, “there was an ambush by one hundred men dressed as Turks—quite realistically, with their Turkish bows, crossbows, and rifles… —raising loud cries,” prompting both “mockery and terror” (Gauna, 1926, p. 105; Esquerdo, 1599). This is one of only a few references to specific reactions or to sounds, such as the “cries” or the loud din that this “ambush” produced. The word espanto (“terror”) at the time did not have a pejorative sense and was associated with the feeling of wonder or fascination. What denoted time did not have a pejorative sense and was associated “ambush” produced. The word espanto (“terror”) at the time did not have a pejorative sense and was associated with the feeling of wonder or fascination. What denoted

After the festival program in Valencia, the court continued over many years, thanks to the good standing of the Moriscas, where the playwright parodies the excesses that the staged battles reenacted all across Spain provoked among their audiences. In other words, new historical approaches are asking whether the intended message of these warlike performances—the one conveyed from on high to the people36—was truly understood or whether they became, by dint of repetition and standardization, mere street festivals having little to do with anti-Islamic polemics. We readily concede that there was an anti-Islamic background to all the regalia, and we believe that the Crown and the city councils intended to portray the clash with the Turks and the victory of good over evil. What we question is whether this message was actually conveyed to the people, or whether it became, for many of the viewers, a mere visual diversion, a pastime, as are the Moros y Cristianos festivals celebrated in Spain today.

In order to delve deeper into this question, we would like to analyze another kind of military entertainment that has Islamic origins: the juego de cañas (game of canes). These tournaments are documented to have taken place quite frequently in Valencia after John II’s visit on May 30, 1459 (Miralles, 2011, p. 268). We are not going to describe them in detail, since many other scholars have already done so (Irigoyen-García, 2017; Ruiz, 2012), but we would like to reflect on some aspects of these military games and staged battles that may have influenced how they were perceived and enjoyed by their viewers. This will allow us to propose new interpretations along with those mentioned above.

First, we need to ask where the costumes for these battles or performances were acquired, as well as who the actors were who wore them. In Valencia, it is documented that they were bought in the merrería and paid for with monies allocated for the entry of Ferdinand I in 1414 (Cárcel Ortí and García Marsilla, 2013, p. 242v).37 This tradition of purchasing costumes and props in the merrería (Moorish quarter) for civic celebrations would continue over many years, thanks to the good standing that certain noblemen enjoyed, first among the Muslims and later among the Moriscos.38 The practice of buying from Muslims was not unique to the preparations for civic celebrations; the higher classes of Spanish society did so in their daily lives from the time of the late medieval period.39 Many nobles wanted to dress as Moors because their clothing was so opulent. These were the very people who organized the juegos de cañas and many of the theatrical performances in which “Turks” (Old Christians dressed in luxurious garb) made an appearance. This would have cast the communal conflict in a more playful light, giv-
ing it a hint of Maurophilia or, at the very least, altered the original, intended semantics. The _juego de cañas_ is the subject of a study by María Soledad Carrasco Urgoiti (1996, p. 78), which looks at the celebrations organized by the Marquis of Montejur, in 1601, where the entourage included forty Moriscos on foot dressed as Moors and carrying jingles and tambourines and performing _zambras_. This ensemble leads one to wonder whether there was a moderate stance toward the Morisco question. Such a stance was clear in the Mendoza family, in particular Count Tendilla in 1569, who went to Granada to receive John of Austria in the company of two hundred riders, half of whom were dressed, according to Marmol Carvajal, in the Morisco style.

We should also not fail to recall that the religious minorities took advantage of the revelry in the streets during these civic festivities to perform their own celebrations. Space prohibits us from discussing other celebrations such as Corpus Christi (about which there is enough material to write many other articles), but we will allow ourselves to include—in order to complete the picture we are drawing here—the interesting information studied by Nirenberg (1996, pp. 180, 211). He suggests that in these celebrations the veneration of the sacred form was not intended as a clash between Christianity and the infidel; rather these were moments of coexistence and interreligious celebration, moments for sharing urban space. He demonstrates this through a study of several medieval festivals.40

WHEN THE “OTHER” HAS AN ESSENTIAL ROLE IN THE CELEBRATION

As has been noted, the coexistence of Christians, Muslims, and Jews in Iberia should not be understood exclusively in polemical terms. The study of civic celebrations can help to put the interreligious conflict in perspective. We should keep in mind that Muslims and Moriscos were important in these events not only because they supplied props or were used to represent the enemy in staged battles and other performances, but also because they were actors and musicians, since music—or rather, sound—played an essential role in these civic celebrations. From very early on we find evidence that the Muslim population participated in royal entries, especially as musicians and dancers. One of the earliest documented examples is the entry of Alfonso VII into Toledo in 1139, in which Christians, Muslims, and Jews all came to welcome the king, each singing in their own language (Cortés García, 1996, p. 203). In the fourteenth century, we have the arrangements decreed by the municipal council in Valencia for the entry of Prince John and his wife, Martha of Armagnac, in 1373. This source specifies that Muslims and Jews were required to don their best clothes and parade and dance before the prince and princess, “as they are wont,” which suggests that this was already customary on these kinds of occasions (Oleza, 1990 pp. 47-64).

Moreover, we also have evidence that singers and minstrels were sought and hired by medieval Spanish courts. For example, more than half of the musicians hired for the court of Sancho IV of Castile in 1294—thirteen in all—were Muslims. This practice was also followed by other Castilian monarchs, such as John II. We also find Muslim musicians in Aragon, in the courts of Peter III, James II, Alfonso IV, John I, and Peter IV. This last-mentioned king sent for the troubadours Ali Ezigua and Çahat Mascum from Xàtiva to come and join his court (Reynolds, 2009, pp. 243-4). This tradition continued after the Trastámara dynasty ascended to the Aragonese throne: both Ferdinand I and his son Alfonso V summoned Muslim troubadours and dancers from Valencia to their courts (Gómez Muntané, 2001, p. 288).

Something noteworthy happened in the case of Ferdinand I. For his entries into Seville (1410) and Valencia (1414), we see a depiction of the king defeating Islam. The former, which took place shortly after the conquest of Antequera, depicted a military triumph in which Muslim prisoners were presented as war trophies along with their weapons and standards. In Valencia, on the other hand, there were Christian actors dressed as Turks in clothing that had been rented in the city’s morería.

The difference between the two entries could not be clearer. In Seville, Spanish Muslims are the enemy that has been defeated by the Christian conquistador, whereas in Valencia, the actors play Turks, that is, the foreign entities that threatened the coasts of the Crown of Aragon. We might ask why real Muslims were not used in the Valencian entry to portray the Ottomans. The answer has to do with the music that was played and the way that Moorish minstrels were treated in the court of Aragon. As we have seen, the Trastámara kings followed the custom of having Muslim musicians and dancers in their courts, because it was prestigious to do so. These artists, moreover, were direct subjects of the king, and although we do not have any documentary proof, we can be sure that Muslims also participated in the celebration of Ferdinand’s visit to Valencia, as is shown in documents relating to royal entries into Valencia at the end of the fourteenth century. It would therefore have been an insult to the king himself to use these inhabitants of the city and subjects of the king as personifications of the Turk. And thus, the documents distinguish clearly between the words _moro_ (Moor) and _turco_ (Turk), and only the latter is shown in defeat and humiliation.

Later in the fifteenth century, we continue to see Muslim minstrels and dancers in the royal courts. This was due, as we have said, to the prestige and fame that these professional performers had achieved; and perhaps for the same reason many cities, like the monarchs, continued to hire Muslim troubadours for their civic and religious celebrations. Thus, in places like Vila-Real, Daroca, and Orihuela, among many others, there are numerous references to this fact throughout the fifteenth century (Aparici and Aparici, 2008, pp. 89-165; Pérez, 1990, pp. 85-177). An interesting example comes from Murcia. In 1425, the municipal council there ordered one of its agents to seek out as many troubadours as possible from the different _morerías_ in the Ricote Valley to take part in the Corpus
Christie procession in the capital (Veas and Veas, 1992, pp. 395-410). Also, in Murcia in 1426 an annual festival was inaugurated to celebrate the reign of John II of Castile that included parades with musicians and standards “alongside which marched a large number of both Moorish and Christian troubadours,” the former coming from the Ricote Valley (Montes, 2011, p. 13).

This custom of hiring Muslim musicians for civic festivals, and even of seeking them out in the areas with the largest Muslim populations, such as the Ricote Valley or the cities of Alzira or Xàtiva, took root in the different kingdoms of Iberia during the fifteenth century, and there are numerous examples of this in the historical sources. Rather than provide a mere listing of all of them, we will focus on the 1464 entry of Henry IV of Castile into Jaén; the 1472 entry of Prince Ferdinand into Zaragoza; the 1476 Corpus Christi procession in Zaragoza; and the entremeses of Moors and Jews in the entry of Isabella of Castile and Aragon into Évora to marry Portugal’s Prince Alfonso in 1490, for which the morenerías throughout the realm were ordered to send “all male and female Moors who know how to dance, play, or sing” (Crónica d’el Rey Joao II, quoted in: Ruiz, 2012, p. 101; Cisneros, 1986, pp. 32, 36; Massip, 2003, p. 302).

As we can see, there are many examples, proving that this practice was common among the different town councils in different regions. But it is worth asking whether this custom continued following the fall of Granada in 1492. We can confirm that, at first, there were few changes, and even the city’s first bishop after its conquest, Hernando de Talavera, permitted Muslim zambra dancing in the Corpus Christi procession, which seems to be a clear example of his policy of tolerance (Gallego and Gamir, 1996, p. 94). This situation would change in 1501 with the implementation of Cisneros’s agenda, leading to the forced conversion of Granada’s Muslim population. We might assume that, following this decision, which was sanctioned by the Catholic Monarchs, the stance of city councils toward hiring Muslim musicians for their celebrations would have changed, but the documentation says otherwise, as can be seen in the entry of Philip the Fair into Lleida in 1503, as it is recounted by Lalaing (García Mercadal, 1999, II, p. 241), or in the Corpus Christi procession in Zaragoza during the early decades of the sixteenth century (Calahorra, 1977, pp. 236-242).

Even during and after the second Alpujarras rebellion, Morisco music and dance, especially zambra, were allowed and promoted by different Christian authorities in private celebrations, such as weddings, as well as in celebrations that we would call public in that they were organized by municipal councils, such as the Corpus Christi processions, for which Morisco musicians continued to be hired in the 1570s (Irigoyen-García, 2017, p. 159).

But Corpus Christi is not the only example of using Muslim sounds in Christian cities in the sixteenth century. In the tour that Philip II made in 1585 and 1586 through the Crown of Aragon—one of his last—after his first-born was sworn in as heir by the Cortes of Monzón, he was regaled in several cities, such as Zaragoza, Tortosa, and Valencia, with staged battles and Morisco dances (Cock, 1876, pp. 72-73).

The tradition of using Morisco-inspired sounds continued even in Valencia’s celebration of Philip III’s marriage to Margaret of Austria in 1599, just ten years before Philip himself would sign the edict expelling the Moriscos. According to the chronicler Felipe de Gauna, during the nighttime festivities, a group of trumpets, a drum, and a dulzaina played a “son a la morisca” (song in the Morisco style) (Gauna, 1926, I, p. 162, quoted in: Villanueva, 2019, p. 36).

We have shown that for a period of over three centuries, sounds originating in Muslim culture were used in all manner of celebrations in cities throughout the Iberian Peninsula, regardless of historical changes and even despite explicit prohibitions. We may conclude, then, that this custom was so deeply engrained in the cities’ traditions that it would have been difficult to extirpate it. Whether it was used to enhance the prestige of the proceedings, to underscore the city’s identity, or to accompany staged battles, the Muslim element was an integral part of celebrations in Spanish cities between the end of the Middle Ages and the beginning of the modern period. What kinds of reactions these sounds produced among the Christian population remain to be determined. On the one hand, the fame and prestige of these musicians and their songs would have elicited respect and admiration, just like in the royal palaces. On the other hand, the war cries and other sound effects used in staged battles and other performances must have been unsettling. Thus, there must have been a wide range of feelings, some of them contradictory, even within a single celebration.

EPILOGUE

Much work remains to be done on the study of public celebrations in Europe. Here, we have attempted to present and reflect upon some sources that help to open up the debate about how we should understand these kinds of events in Iberia. We have suggested a different way to interpret how the Muslim “other” was portrayed and understood in royal entries, in that this Muslim was actually not always the “other,” since he was integrated to a greater or lesser extent into the celebrations. It is misguided to approach public celebrations as instances of conflict rather than of exchange; and it is a mistake to overlook the fact that a single celebration (staged battle, theatrical piece, etc.) might have different levels of meaning and thus might evoke different feelings depending on the audience. It is impossible, using the accounts of these celebrations and the legal sources, to get into the minds of the spectators of these events; we can only theorize broadly about their feelings. We think that all aspects of these celebrations need to be taken into account, from the hiring of musicians and artists to the selection of themes to be depicted, in order to reveal the complex social networks that the celebrations drew upon. We need to think about the different levels of meaning that would have been conditioned by the spectator’s position along with the course of
the celebration’s procession, and his or her connection to the event itself. Royal entries were not only celebrations intended to present a “vertical” discourse that coincides with the written accounts that describe them; they were the sum of years of experience using sounds and visual stimuli, in other kinds of celebrations such as naval victories and canonizations. These celebrations involved the participation of the “other” as musicians, dancers, or purveyors of costumes. Our knowledge of the relations between the different religious communities that are depicted in these royal entries allows us to add new layers to the analysis of these celebrations, seeing them not as clashes between opposing parties but as a much more complex experience.

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NOTES

1. Some scholars even think that the city’s inhabitants actually participated very little in the hubbub of the celebration and were merely passive spectators. See: Pizarro Gómez, 1991, p. 123.
2. On the “taming” of emotions in royal entries, see also: barraco Urgoiti, 2003, p. 25.
3. The bibliography on this methodology is huge (there are even research centers devoted to this topic). However, we will only cite some works that we consider required reading in order to understand its relevance for public celebrations: Corrigan, 2004; Davies and Warne, 2013; Gouk and Hills, 2005, pp. 15-34; Stearns and Stearns, 1985, pp. 813-836. On Spain and specifically its public festivities: Christian, 1982; Tauset and Amelang, 2009.
5. In this regard, the study by Lisa Voigt (2011) on Portuguese chronicles of public celebrations is instructive. She emphasizes that these chronicles were either written out of “love for the fatherland” or love for one’s city, or were merely the product of observation.
6. The debate about Foucault’s theories in this regard, which is linked to the theory of emotions, has been thoroughly analyzed in: Gouk and Hills, 2005, pp. 25-30.
8. Though much of the population participated in the staged battles, much like the nobility participated in the game of canes (both of which were ever-present aspects of Hispanic celebrations), it is believed that the city’s inhabitants participated minimally in the rest of the events in the royal entry. See: Pizarro Gómez, 1991, p. 123.
9. This is why monarchs such as the Habsburgs took such care in selecting the artists and intellectuals who helped plan their events, since the success of the royal entry as a propaganda campaign depended on these artists’ and intellectuals’ talents. See López, 1999, p. 20; Ferrer, 2000, pp. 43-52.
10. Beginning with Strohm’s seminal study (1990) on the soundscape in the city of Bruges, many researchers have contributed to and broadened this field of study, focusing on royal celebrations. The following is a brief listing of the studies of this kind that we found most useful: Kreintner, 1990; Ros-Fábregas, 1995; Carreras, 2000; Knighton and Morte, 1999; Raventós, 2006; Bejarano, 2009.
12. This celebration took place on October 9, 1338, and though there are no extant written accounts of it, we do have an announcement, the Crida del Consell from October 7, that we can analyze. Carreres, 1926, Doc. 2; Llibre de memòries, pp. 23-25, Narbona, 9 de octubre: Llibre d’establaments, crida.
13. We have documentation of some fifty events of this kind beginning in 1344. Initially they consisted simply of lighting the streets, ringing the bells, and organizing processions that did not include images created specifically to humiliate defeated Muslims. For example, on August 3-5, 1344, there was a celebration of the capture of Elba, in Rousillon, and the end of the conquest of Mallorca: “En III. KIs, augusti, se va rebre una lletra del Rey, escrita en Euna a 15 de joliol, participant dita notícia, que donaren els Jurats per Crida pública manant se feren iluminaries, volteig de campanes i processo general” (Llibre de memòries, S. Carreres edition, 1926, p. 34). The text of the proclamation appears in the Llibre d’establaments: “Han ordenat que esta nuyt e demà dispaite, semblantment a la nuyt, sonen les senys e campanes de la Sfe e de totes les egleyes parroquials de la ciutat a gran clasc. E cascú, dins sa casa, faça aquella solemnitat que-s voldrà de sonar conques e bacins e fer luminaries bonament” (Ed. Furió y García Oliver, 2011, p. 430). This is also the first time in Valencia’s municipal documents in which the volt-eig de campanes and the luminaries are mentioned and citizens are exhorted to sonar conques e bacins.
14. We find it remarkable that there is a reference on June 18, 1481, to a procession of the Virgen de Gracia that celebrated the death of Mehmed II (which took place on May 3 of that year). Documents on this celebration can be found in the Valencia Cathedral’s libros de fábrica (account books) (Archivo Catedral de Valencia [ACV], Fábrica. Llibres d’obra, sig. 1484, fol. 16r), and in the minutes of the town council (Archivo Histórico Municipal [AHMV], Manuals de Consells A42, fol. 135r-v). This is the first documented celebration in Valencia with this subject matter, which demonstrates that these events celebrating the misfortunes of the Turks intentionally stoked fear of the Turk.
15. “The day that the lord king entered, in the interlude plays there were six savages and four Turks, and they were given the following wages.” Cárnel Ortí and García Marsilla, 2013, pp. 234-235.
16. A study of the figure of the savage as an enemy of Christianity would require another series of publications. Therefore, we refer the reader to: El Salvage Europeo (Bartra and Pedraza, 2004).
17. Teófilo Ruiz (2012, pp. 78-82) points out that the entries of Fernando de Antequera (Ferdinand I of Aragon) were further examples of this.
18 A detailed study of this entry, as well as a bibliography of works that deal with it from other perspectives, can be found in: Francisco Llopis, 2017

19 The bibliography on these entries is enormous. See, especially: Carande, 1990; García Bernal, 2007, pp. 172-211; Lleó Cañal, 1979; Morales, 1998; Válguima, 1966.

20 We have evidence for two of these. The first was described by Gauna (1926, p. 22): “en el uno [cuadro] daba la corona del imperio á su hermano, agüelo de la Reina [Margarita de Austria], con su letrero, y en el otro cuadro estaba pintado el ejército del Turco, huyendo del ejército del emperador Carlos, asimismo con su letrero que declaraba lo que era.” The second was described by Esquerdo (1599): “En el otro quadro havia una fiera y sangrienta batalla, en la qual se vehia la derrota y rompimiento de los Turcos con grandissima ventaja de los Christianos por estar puestos en huyda los contrarios.” Its inclusion in the program for the royal wedding has been studied in: Rodríguez and Mínguez, 2013, p. 290.

21 The glorified representation of brute force was very common in battle paintings and was intended to evoke emotion in the viewer. See: Portús, 2009.

22 An interesting piece of evidence that corroborates the fact that the brutalized Turk is absent from early Valencian iconography can be found in a diachronic study of the decoration of the altar of Saint Martin’s church. We have not found a single description from before the reign of Philip III in which Saint Martin is shown in the presence of other figures. He is always depicted alone. Only after 1638 does he appear systematically flanked by Saint George and Saint James, with their feet on their enemies. This initial absence and subsequent presence strike us as highly significant. For a description of this iconography in Philip II’s entry, see: Cock, 1876, p. 232. Regarding the altar in 1638: Ortí, 2005, p. 48. On the use of these saints in anti-Turkish polemics in the Philippines, see, among others, Merle, 2004, pp. 11-21.

23 This tradition—with anti-Islamic iconography but without a staged battle—is maintained in several festivals connected to the Immaculate Virgin in Valencia, using the iconographic model of the “Ship of the Church.” The most spectacular demonstration is probably the well-known frigate and mask of the Turks, which the source says was built under the supervision of a professor of philosophy at the University of Valencia to commemorate the intercession of the Virgin in the victory over the Turks in 1663. Valda, 1663, pp. 57-58.

24 In fact, as soon as this battle was over, Valencia organized four days of light festivals in the city, with prizes for the best light displays, the pealing of the bells, juegos de cañas in the marketplace, and a procession for the Virgin of Grace, which also served as a commemoration of the fact that Don Miguel de Moncada led a regiment of infantrymen from Valencia in the battle. Carreres Zacarés, 1926, p. 139.

25 These clashes were commonplace in all the royal entries made by Philip II all over Europe. See: Pizarro Gómez, 1999, p. 23.

26 “[... ] quienes muchos, á manera de cautivos, pedían socorro en altas voces, los cuales todos, al pasar del rey cantaban música á cuatro voces. Estaban ansísmiso dos figuras de dos religiosos de la dicha Órden que paresçían mártires, teniendo coraçones travesados con saeta [...].” Cock, 1876, p. 231.

27 Authors such as Canova-Green (2013) overlooked the distinctiveness of this naumachia by failing to notice its musical aspect. Nonetheless, he is correct to point out that its inclusion is not only due to Lepanto but also to the presence of corsair pirates and the deployment of Valencian sailors to the coast of Algeria. Thus, the naumachia would have aroused the sympathy of the Valencian people, who were concerned about the safety of their fellow citizens.

28 “twenty-five or thirty men dressed as Turkish warriors.”


31 See also: BNM. MS. 2346, Jornada de su magestad y alteza desde Madrid a Valencia a casarse el rey con la reina Margarita y su Alteza con el archiduque Alberto. 1599, fol. 169. A brief study of this celebration can be found in: Mínguez, González and Rodríguez, 2010, p. 50.

32 In his text, Lope de Vega (1599, pp. 62-63) gives little attention to the fact that this was all planned by Valencia’s nobles to enthrall the king on his passage through the city; rather, he takes the opportunity afforded by the ambush to extol the strength of the royal fleet.

33 BNM. MS. 2346, Jornada de su magestad y alteza desde Madrid a Valencia a casarse el rey con al reina Margarita y su Alteza con el archiduque Alberto, 1599, fol. 197.

34 In some cases, like the Corpus Christi celebrations in Buda (Hungary), these battles finished with curious ceremonies such as the destruction of the sepulcher of Muhammad to show the final victory over the infidel. These performances were planned to commemorate the victory of the Spanish kings against Muslims in Granada. See: Goda, 2011, p. 73.

35 “Through the naumachia the galleys battle had become highly stylized entertainment, quite divorced from geopolitical reality. Lepanto’s popularity would only further concretize the naumachia’s importance as entertainment ritual.” Jordan, 2004, p. 102. For an overview of the topic of naumachias in Spain during the modern period, see: Sánchez Cuno, 2013a.

36 To cite one example of a study that interprets civic festivals as polarizing the conflict of cultures, and not as a space for conviviality, see: Cardaillac, 1999.

37 “Ítem, don a a Donat lo Verger, los quals havien donat a l’hom qui portà ensembs ab ell les sis aljubes dels moros a la Moreria, los quals havien portades los turchs lo dia de les entrades del senyor rey e de la senyora reyna.”

38 For example, we have the “Turkish” or “Morisco” clothing used in Philip II’s wedding, which was acquired through the good standing of the nobility among converts. This has been studied by: Casey, 2001, pp. 251-278.

39 Authors such as María Judith Feliciano, Juan Carlos Ruiz Souza, Ana Cabrera, and others have reflected on the hybridization of customs and the use of the Morisco style in courtesan spaces. An overview of the scholarship on this topic can be found in: Franco and Moreno, 2019, pp. 89-108 and 233-264.

40 Scholars, such as Goda (2011, p. 61), proved that, in other European territories, these ceremonies were also considered as inclusive events.

41 “Diez y siete moros de los que fueron presos en la batalla ... los quales iban a pie, y cada uno dellos llevaba una vandera el embro llegando las puntas al suelo, que fueron tomadas en aquella batalla.” “Crónica de Don Juan II”, in Crónicas..., 1953, pp. 332-333.

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