Mock Battles between Moors and Christians

Playing the Confrontation of Crescent with Cross in Spain's South

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Expressive culture constitutes a field of study *par excellence* for the combined efforts of anthropology, history and folklore. This contribution deals with a public drama in which mock fights are enacted in the streets and squares of Andalusian towns and villages. The analysis takes into account both the history of Muslim-Christian relationships and the vicissitudes of this particular festival. Links are suggested between religious folklore and economic and political trends. Students have taken it for granted that this festival is "popular". Historical evidence points in the direction of elite and urban origins. Attention is paid to the cultural agents of diffusion. Finally, suggestions are offered for further inquiry into celebratory events in Andalusia and elsewhere in Europe.

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Introduction

The last two decades we have witnessed a rapprochement of anthropology, history and folklore. Several students of these disciplines are going through a process of reorientation that leads them to convergent ideas, approaches and aims. In history, a strong current moves common and marginal people into the focus of research. The *regard ethnologique* invites historians to study everyday life in the past. Historians discover that the people they study had minds and manners, thoughts and sentiments, that they bestowed meaning upon the realities in which they lived. "Mentality" and "popular culture" are the new catchwords. In order to deal with new questions historians try out anthropological methods and perspectives such as the case-method, thick description and holism. New kinds of records such as folklore and iconography are explored. In the same period anthropological research in Europe proliferated. Anthropologists are increasingly becoming aware that the communities in which they work have long historical records. They rediscover the past and realize that history can do more than just figure as background in studies focusing on the ethnographic present. A number of them have concluded that historical evidence should play an integral part in anthropological analysis. At the same time, their nineteenth-century twins, the folklorists, progressively abandon the descriptive approach in favor of a more problem-oriented and analytical stance.

Until recently, anthropologists and historians working in Europe were hardly interested in ritual, drama and symbolism. These phenomena were left to the folklorists, who, however, rarely went beyond descriptive accounts. Today, this field of research is rapidly gaining momentum. Careful study of expressive culture promises to yield insight into the changing nature of human interdependencies. It is this field where anthropologists, historians and folklorists can draw most inspiration from one another.[2] This article hopes to illustrate this point by analyzing a specific cultural repre-

sentation and celebratory event in contemporary Andalusia, Spain.

In Spain's south there is a vivid awareness of the conflict-ridden history of Christian-Muslim contacts. Oral, dramatic and written traditions transmit the hostility of the past to present generations. In dozens of Andalusian towns and villages festivals are celebrated in which this past is acted out in mock battles between Moors and Christians. In their present form these representations are secular pantomimes and recitations held at patron saint festivals in streets and squares. In broad outline the *fiestas de Moros and Cristianos* are a series of verbal and physical confrontations between actors who take the part of Christians and Moors. The latter challenge an improvised stronghold in the main square or attack to carry off the image of the patron saint during a procession. They succeed in taking the Christian castle or abducting the saintly image by force, but have it wrested away from them by the Christians during a fierce battle. In the final scene the Moors are usually converted to Christianity.

One may well wonder why this drama is performed three-and-a-half centuries after the Moors were driven out of Spain. We might assume that for drama to make sense, it must communicate meanings important to the participants and the audience. I will address the following questions. What relationship does this festival bear to what actually happened in the past? And what precisely is celebrated in this drama? Before going into details, let me first sketch in broad outline the history of Christian-Muslim relations in Spain.

Muslims in Spain

The historical links between the peoples on either side of the western Mediterranean have been intimate. The histories of southern Iberia and northern Morocco are interwoven by centuries of trading, marauding, conquering, colonizing and converting. The history of Spain includes nearly 800 years of Muslim civilization and Christian Reconquest. Since the end of the fifteenth century Spain has been present on the Moroccan shore in a number of strongholds from where it extended its influence culminating in the Spanish protectorate over northern Morocco from 1912 till 1956. Hostility has been the dominant mode of communication but that does not alter the fact that Arabs, Berbers and Christians have influenced one another considerably.

"To have Moors and Christians" *(haber moros y cristianos)* runs a Spanish saying, which refers to serious discord and strife. This linguistic expression is based on historical experience, i.e. the Spanish state was born out of an age-long struggle between the two peoples and their religions.[3] The Muslim conquest of the Iberian peninsula was part of an expansion of the Islamic proto-states in the east that started in the seventh century A. D. The political unity of these states could only be achieved by a transformation of the razzias between the Bedouin tribes into conquest of new territories and resources (Watt & Cachia 1965: 6–7). The allegiance to the young Islamic state was phrased in religious terms. The Muslim army that crossed over to Spain in the early eighth century and rapidly defeated the Christian hosts, was largely made up of converted Berbers. The Muslim conquerors are commonly known as moors after *Maurus,* inhabitants of the ancient Roman colony of Mauritania in the western part of North Africa. Approximately a decade after the fall of the Visigothic monarchy, a part of the Muslim army was routed in the Asturian mountains of northern Spain by a small Christian host, whose leader, Pelayo, founded the independent Christian kingdom of Asturias. This event is considered to have been the beginning of the slow recovery of the territory lost by the Visigoths to the Muslim invaders. This gradual recovery that spans almost eight centuries is known as the *Reconquista.*

Although the majority of the population changed its religion from Christianity to Islam, both the Christians under Muslim rule, known as Mozarabs, and the Jews, constituted sizeable minorities in *Al-Andalus.* The popular view that the beginnings of Islamic expansion were marked by forced conversions on a massive scale, is completely unwarranted (cf. Wolf 1951: 350). Since the Koran prohibits forced conversion, Christians and Jews were more or less tolerated, albeit discriminated. Mozarabs

were allowed to practice their religion within rigorous limits which defined them as socially, culturally and politically inferior. They had to pay extra taxes, were less protected by law, had to wear special dress and could not carry arms nor ride horses (Lomax 1978: 19). After the collapse of the Cordovan Omayyad empire in the eleventh century their situation changed radically. They became a persecuted minority under the reign of the Almoravids and Almohads.[4]

On the other side of the military frontier religion also defined a person, differentiating friend from foe. In the Christian territories the Reconquest had at first been considered a just war based on claims of legitimate succession to the Visigothic kings. About the time when Omayyad Al-Andalus disintegrated, there came about a transformation in the spirit of Reconquest. The concept of Holy War became an explicit doctrine in the second half of the eleventh century. The new theology of war stressed God's intervention through his saints who participated actively in the battles against the "infidels". Santiago the Pilgrim assumed the role of "Slayer of Moors" (*Matamoros*) and became the patron of all Christian Spaniards.[5] The right to reconquest was now phrased in religious terms and the idea of *communitas* based on religious orthodoxy emerged (cf. Cantarino 1980).

In the first decades of the thirteenth century a coalition of Christian princes conducted sweeping campaigns in the eastern, southern, and southwestern regions of the Iberian peninsula, bringing vast areas under their control. Religious symbols and rituals played an important part in the battles. Muslims who peacefully handed over their towns to the Christian conquerors were allowed to stay. The first deed of the new masters was to adapt the mosques to Christian cult, thus establishing symbolic dominance over the vanquished. The larger part of the Muslim population remained in the newly conquered areas as *Mudéjares*, Moors living under Christian rule. Their situation was similar to that of the Mozarabs under Omayyad rule.

In the thirteenth century the Nasrid Kingdom of Granada emerged as the last Moorish bastion in Spain. It comprised the present provinces of Granada, Almería and Málaga. In this Islamic state there was no place for a Christian minority.

The second half of the fifteenth century saw the union of the Castilian and Aragonese crowns by the marriage of Isabel and Ferdinand. They were granted the title of "Catholic Kings" which symbolized and reinforced the unity of Crown and Church. The conquest of Granada was the quintessence of their policy to achieve national unity. After ten years of war the last Muslim monarch in Spain had to surrender his kingdom by a pact that guarenteed life and property of his subjects and the right to keep their religion and customs. Many Muslim ruling-class families, however, left Spain or converted to Christianity. The mass of the working population stayed and clinged to their religion and way of life.

At the close of the fifteenth century intolerance towards the Muslim population increased. The powerful Fray Francisco Jiménez de Cisneros, cardinal and future regent of Castile, became the champion of forced conversion. In 1499 he ordered copies of the Koran and other Islamic works burned, and many Muslims were forced to reject their religion, a violation of the pact made by the Catholic Kings. In 1500 the first Muslim revolt broke out in the Moorish quarters of Granada and spread to the surrounding mountains. Religious opposition stiffened and compulsory baptism was imposed by royal decree on all Muslims living in the Kingdom of Castile. With this decree the Muslim population came to be known as *Moriscos*.

A Spanish national and cultural identity was only beginning to be forged. The formation of Spanishness rested heavily on religion, indeed, Catholicism provided the cement for binding together the heterogeneous regions of the monarchy and was the main tool for the homogenization of the population.[6] "Cleanliness of blood" (*limpieza de sangre*) became a true ideological obsession in sixteenth-century Spain. A dividing line developed between Old Christians and converts. The latter were regarded and treated as inferior and infamous. Braudel has characterized the condition to which the Moriscos were submitted as "inter-

nal colonialism, rapine, theft, murder, injustice and economic exploitation being their lot" (1975 II: 788). A Pragmatic promulgated at the beginning of 1567, reinforcing and extending earlier prohibitions of Morisco dress, customs, ceremonies, and the use of Arabic, triggered off a widespread revolt, a cruel civil war that lasted two years. Massacres, burning and looting were carried out on both sides. Afraid of a coalition between the Turkish-Berber empire of North Africa and the Morisco population of Spain, Philip II decided to deport and resettle the Moriscos of Granada in other parts of Castile. It was hoped that this policy would lead to an assimilation of this minority. However, the practical outcome was that the Morisco problem was spread over the entire kingdom. Relationships between Old Christians and the descendants of the Muslims remained tense.

Not only politicians and prelates were obsessed by the Morisco problem. It has been a constant theme in Spanish historiography since the sixteenth century. Chroniclers and historians of the Golden Age completely focused on the religious side of the problem. The dominant image of the Moriscos in this period shows them as false converts who owe their low social status to their inferior racial origin and as traitors who threaten the security and unity of Spain.[7] Spanish literature, elite as well as popular, is full of references to Moriscos who are almost invariably presented in a bad light. The great Spanish writers Luis de León, Lope de Vega, Cervantes and Quevedo voiced the general hatred and prejudice by painting them as people who are treacherous, who rob, hoard what they gain, who only marry among themselves and multiply rapidly (cf. de Brunes 1983: 19–21, Lea 1968: 208–11, Caro Baroja 1969: 94). At the same time the literary image emerges of a mythical, noble Moor who is situated in Reconquest-time and who is completely unrelated to the situation of the Morisco population.[8]

The hatred towards Moriscos culminated in a series of decrees issued by Philip III between 1609 and 1611 ordering the expulsion of all inhabitants of Muslim origin. By 1615 hundreds of thousands Moriscos had been deported to the southern shores of the Mediterranean. Most of them sought refuge in Morocco. Among them were many descendants of converts from the original Christian population of southern Spain. The spirits of those who were born in Spain but refused to take over Christian culture remained behind and haunted future generations of Spaniards. Feelings of hatred against Muslims persisted in the Spanish population. They were fueled by endemic raids of Barbary corsairs on Spanish ships and coastal towns and by Spanish soldiers, colonists and missionaries who tried to carry the Reconquest across the Mediterranean sea.

Their remain numerous silent testimonies of Muslim civilization in the remnants of castles, ramparts, bridges, irrigation works, agricultural technology, mosques, architectonic motives, and handicrafts. Many placenames and much of Spanish vocabularly derive from Arabic (cf. Glick 1979). Until recently it was a widespread belief that Moorish spirits, ghosts of the original owners of treasure, visited particular persons to reveal the location of their hidden wealth (cf. Irving 1977: passim; Pitt-Rivers 1971: 196, 205–06). Several proverbs refer to the Moorish presence in Spain, mostly in the negative sense.[10] In the cafés of Andalusia men frequently admit to their Moorish blood and heritage, particularly in the sphere of sexual ideology and practice. In Spanish bourgeois circles the "Moorish myth" is closely tied to Andalusia, attributing to "Moorish blood" presumed qualities and defects of the Andalusians, such as poetic sense, sensuality, fanatism, fatalism, and idleness.

Fiestas de Moros y Cristianos

Every year between fifty and sixty-five Andalusian towns, villages and hamlets revive their martial past by enacting a public drama in which war is waged between the Cross and the Crescent.[11] A recently published guide to popular feasts in Andalusia reports eighteen of such festivities in Almería, nineteen in Granada, three in Málaga, one in Cádiz, and three in Jáen.[12] In the remaining Andalusian provinces of Huelva, Córdoba and Sevilla the festival of Moors and Christians is presently unknown. However, there are indications that in the past

these festivals were celebrated on a larger scale throughout Andalusia. Aside from these festivals numerous towns commemorate the Reconquest or the War of Granada with an annual feast in which men, dressed to represent Moors and Christians, parade through the streets. In Andalusia there is a rich folklore on the Moorish past.

In the majority of cases the mock fights between Moors and Christians are part of festivals in honor of patron saints (*ferias*), one of the major celebrations in the ceremonial cycle of Andalusian society. The following scenario is acted out in the majority of towns where the festival of Moors and Christians is held. It consists of two parts on two successive days. In the afternoon of the first day the image of the patron saint is taken out on a float for a procession through the main streets of town. A certain number of processionists are dressed up as Christian warriors. The pageant moves slowly through the principal streets when suddenly a band of Moorish soldiers bursts upon the scene attacking the float on which the statue stands. Skirmishes ensue in which simulated blows and shots are exchanged. Amidst powder-smoke and din the Moorish band succeeds to carry off with the saintly image. During the intermezzo (*cautiverio*) the statue remains hidden somewhere in the town. The next day the Moorish warriors parade the image through the town and are in turn attacked by the Christian fighters. Combats are waged which invariably end in favor of the Christian cause. The Moors are taken prisoner, sometimes killed but more often converted to Catholicism. The image of the patron saint, rescued from the hands of the infidels, is elevated victoriously whereupon the procession proceeds.

There are several variations in detail which give a distinct character to the festival of each town. The cast of roles varies considerably. In some instances the protagonists are made up of two bands of four warriors each. In other instances the cast consists of eight characters or more: soldiers on foot and horseback, spies, sentries, messengers, captains, generals, ambassadors, Moorish king, a devil under the command of Lucifer and a guardian angel. Male adolescent actors seem to predominate. In some instances the performance covers only one day. Combats are often preceded by verbal contests. Rhymed negotiations and disputes (stereotyped *embajadas*) may be held, as a central part or only marginal part in the total representation.[13] The same holds true for dances. Usually, weapons, costumes and other paraphernalia are quite simple and improvised – wooden swords and guns, towels for turbans, sheets for *djellaba*-s. There are several towns and villages in the province of Granada where the battles between Moors and Christians take place over the possession of a castle (*tablado,* an improvised wooden and cart-board construction) or the settlement itself. In these cases the patron saint may or may not figure in the performance. It is most common that the Reconquest is acted out in the spectacle, but there are also festivals that explicitly refer to the War of Granada or the expulsion of the Moriscos. The festival may be sponsored by a special committee, a religious brotherhood, the municipality, wealthy inhabitants or by the entire community.

One of the first things that strikes the observer is the geographical distribution of the festivals. There is a dense concentration in mountainous areas, in particular the Alpujarras in Granada, the mountains of Almeria, Cádiz and Ronda. Until recently, these areas were relatively isolated backwaters where cultural conservatism was predominant. They also seem to be reservations of folklore. The Alpujarras was one of the major centers of Morisco population in Andalusia, where the trauma of Christian-Moorish strife is rooted deeply. On the other hand, there are also several coastal places among the towns which celebrate the festival of Moors and Christians. Reminiscences of endemic barbary pirate raids in the collective memories of these towns may have kept the folklore of Moors and Christians alive.

Unfortunately, little is known about the origin and historical development of the festivals. Detailed case studies that trace the vicissitudes of this celebratory event back in time are lacking. The historical consciousness of oral tradition is highly diffuse and inaccurate. For instance, the inhabitants of Benilar (Almería)

state that the festival has been staged since the Christianization of the province. In Carboneras (Almería) people assume that it has been celebrated since last century, while in Senés it is told that the feast has been organized for more than two centuries. In Bubión (Granada) it is said to be an age-old custom that was prohibited in 1936 by the local authorities when the Nationalists took over the town, and revived after Franco's death. In Benamocarra (Málaga) the fiesta was held in the 1840's and abolished at the beginning of the twentieth century. In Alfarnate (Málaga) the tradition was interrupted by the Civil War and revived in 1971. Here the written text dates back to the eighteenth century. Local historians of Benadalid (Málaga) disagree about the origin, giving such disparate dates as the time of the Visigoths, the War of Granada, and the eighteenth century.

The earliest performance seems to have taken place in 1150 when in Lérida (Aragón), upon the occasion of a royal marriage, a company of Moors and Christians feigned battle (cf. Alford 1937). The Andalusian festivals are reported later in time. The first documented one was held in Jáen in 1463.[14]

During the sixteenth century the festival was highly elaborated and widely diffused (cf. Hoenerbach 1975: 10–11). It was also an age of large-scale Christian-Muslim (Turkish) confrontations. Spain reached its height as an imperial world-power. The New-World riches swelled Spanish ceremonial funds. Religious festivals and associations proliferated and prospered. Passion-centered lay religious brotherhoods sponsored and staged Holy Week processions. Brotherhoods of the Holiest Sacrament organized the festivity of Corpus Cristi, often in cooperation with town councils. Religion pervaded all spheres of life, all festivals were clothed with religious symbols. On the other hand, outdoor religious activities were permeated with the profane, with drinking, dancing, secular songs and plays, inherent characteristics of local religious expression which the clergy unsuccessfully tried to suppress (cf. Christian 1981a: 164). The expansion of the festival of Moors and Christians fitted these conditions.

There are several indications of the intimate link between the festivals of Moors and Christians on the one hand and *moriscas* and *comedias de moros and cristianos* on the other hand. These three expressive genres influenced each other considerably. *Moriscas* were dances in which the performers, dressed like Moors and Christians, confronted one another with swords. This dance of Spanish origin spread over most of Europe. It is still performed as part of the Moors-and-Christians festivals in Catalonia and Aragón. As to the *comedias* a specialist on Spanish Golden Age literature writes that,

"This type of play derived much of its appeal from a colorful portrayel of Moorish-Christian confrontation, and it emphasized the affinities and contrasts among the knights who on both sides of the frontier were supposed to have embodied the spirit of chivalry. Lope de Vega contributed more than any other dramatist to the rise of this genre (...) Lope's diverse characterizations reflect the popular views of the Moors and their imprint on Spanish history (...) Although Lope lost interest in his later years in the *comedias de moros y cristianos,* the genre continued to be immensely popular. And, indeed, it was through late recastings and imitations of Golden Age works that those Moorish themes and types (...) sifted down into the stream of folk plays, which even today formulate the motives of Moorish-Christian confrontation" (Carrasco Urgoiti 1976: 138–9, also see n. 37, 162).

The playwright Pérez de Hita, a contemporary of Lope de Vega, famous for his fictionalized history of the War of Granada, in which he fought as a soldier, seems to have had a tremendous influence on popular plays. He worked in Lorca, not far from the former kingdom of Granada, as a bootmaker and organizer of the pageantry of religious festivals. It was not uncommon for members of the artisan and middle-peasant class to compose poetry and write texts for folk plays that were performed during religious celebrations (ibid. 73, 75, 79). A dialogue between a Moor and Christian in his two volumes on the War of Granada is very

similar to the verbal contests that are still part of many Moors-and-Christian festivals (ibid. 82). Weisser, a historian of rural Castile, cites an example of a peasant who wrote a play that recaptured the history of Moorish-Christian contacts. This play was performed by a group of the author's friends at the occasion of annual religious festivals. Plays written by urban dramatists were often disseminated by city troupes who gave performances in village squares (Weisser 1976: 85, 87).

Although religious brotherhoods and festivals went through periods of crisis and decay – which seem to synchronize with demographic and economic crises – some of them vanishing, new ones arising, and others being revived, they constituted a persistent feature of public life in the rural towns of Andalusia (cf. Luque Requerey 1980, Driessen 1981: 194–6, 1984). Unfortunately, the historical evidence pertaining to the vicissitudes of the *fiestas de moros y cristianos* in specific localities since the sixteenth century, is fragmentary. We know, for instance, that at the beginning of the eighteenth century the festival was celebrated in the town of Rute (Córdoba), but we do not know when and why it disappeared. We also know that during the reign of Charles III (1759–1788) the festival was prohibited by royal decree as part of a policy of austerity. Religious organizations and pageantry were curtailed and brought under government control. However, we do not know how effective this policy was. The town of Zujár (Granada), for instance, successfully pleaded exemption from the prohibition and has ever since organized its festival of Moors and Christians.

There is evidence that the festival was very much alive in nineteenth-century Andalusia. Washington Irving, who in 1829 witnessed the celebration commemorating the capture of Granada by the Catholic Kings, states in his *Alhambra* that,

"In emulation of the *Dia de la Toma* (conquest, h.d.) of Granada, almost every village and petty town of the mountains has its own anniversary commemorating, with rustic pomp and incouth ceremonial, its deliverance from the Moorish yoke (...) The celebrations are heavy drains on the treasuries of these petty communities, and have sometimes to be suspended for want of funds; but, when times grow better, or sufficient money has been hoarded for the purpose, they are resumed with new zeal and prodigality" (1977: 127).[15]

Irving apparently voiced the opinion of his key-informant, which contains two interesting points for further inquiry. To what extent are city festivals models of emulation for rural towns and villages? How intimate is the link between economic trends and the ebb and flow of religious folklore?

Two conditions may have influenced the scope on which the festival of Moors and Christians was celebrated in nineteenth century Andalusia. Towards the middle of the century Spanish colonial activities on Morocco increased. Hostile confrontations between Spaniards and Muslims in Morocco might have given extra impetus to the celebration of the festival. Folk songs against *los Moros* proliferated around 1860 when Spain was involved in a war with Morocco (cf. Caro Baroja 1969: 222–3). In the town of Alora (Málaga) some soldiers who came home from the *Guerra de Africa* revived the festival commemorating the reconquest of the town in the late fifteenth century. This may have been the case in several towns.

The second condition pertains to the emergence of Andalusian regionalism in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. This movement took off with a great interest in regional "popular" culture. Intellectuals in rural towns, who often were in favor of regionalism, might have encouraged the celebration of "traditional" festivals. Research in local archives is needed to gather circumstantial evidence on this point.

Like Carnival, the festival of Moors and Christians was suppressed in several Andalusian towns during the first years of the Franco regime, which saw it as a threat to public order. In the late 1970's there is a general revival of popular festivals in Andalusia coinciding with the re-emergence of Andalusian regionalism. Moreover, the ceremonial funds of local communities expanded along with the rise in the standard of living. It has often been argued

that community-wide rites of intensification tend to erode in the face of rural exodus, modernization, the spread of modern mass media and transport facilities. Since the 1950's these processes have washed over the rural towns of Andalusia, yet a revitalization of communal activities can be observed. The question why this is so remains to be answered.

Interpreting the festival

The plot of the drama is quite simple. A Christian settlement – or the image of the patron saint as the main symbol and focus of local identity and loyalties – is besieged by "Arabs of Barbary" (and sometimes Turks). The captain of the Christians evokes all great Spanish leaders from Pelayo to Philip III. The Moors are pictured as "treacherous dogs" (*perros traidores*) – one of the most serious insults on both sides of the Mediterranean – as "braggerts" (*fanfarrónes*), as "wicked and ruthless" (*impio*), and as "barbarians" (*bárbaros*).[16] The Moorish king presents himself as the legal heir to the last Muslim ruler of the kingdom of Granada. The Christian leader invokes the Heart of Jesus Christ and the Virgin Mary for help, whereupon an angel is sent to him as an ambassador from Heaven. The Moorish king on his turn invokes Muhammad and is helped by Lucifer. The Christian cause triumphs, a heavenly reward for "true faith". The Moors are defeated and submitted symbolically by conversion to Catholicism.[17] The message of this drama is obvious. Christians embody Good, spiritual health, Humanity, Faith and Civilization. In contrast Moors represent Evil, spiritual malady, Sub-Humanity, Heresy and Barbarism. The pageant shows the victory of the former over the latter, thus tying the destiny of the Spanish people to a heroic and cosmic cause.

The festival contains both factual and fabulous elements. The drama of the confrontation between Christians and Moors literally plays out, relates and confirms historical experience, i.e. the Reconquest, the War of Granada, the expulsion of the Moriscos, and the colonial encounter of Spain with Morocco. These confrontations were justified as civilizing missions. However, the ethnohistorical account acted out in the festival is ridden with anachronisms and distortions. Consequently, it does not reflect actual long-term processes of shifting power relationships between Christians and Muslims. More than thousand years of changing relationships of dominance and submission are telescoped into a simple scenario, transmitting a partisan concept of the past. The drama also acts out a myth of origin, the founding and refounding of Christian communities. The story the festival tells can best be placed in the transitional realm between profane history and sacred myth.

It is important to note that the drama of Moors and Christians is part of a more comprehensive festival in honor of the patron saint, which on the one hand includes Masses, processions and vows, on the other drinking, dancing, bullfights, cinema, play and game, in sum, a mixture of secular and religious dramaturgy.

Every society that claims to be civilized needs a model of barbarism. Moors have constituted the prototype of everything that was felt to be alien and inferior to Spanish culture and society. They served as a model against which Spaniards could affirm and express their religion, collective identity and way of life. Even after their elimination from Spanish territory, the "Moors" continued to act as the "Others". The persistence of raids by Barbary corsairs on Spanish ships and coastal towns, the violent confrontations between Spaniards and Moroccans on the other side of the Mediterranean, the proximity of the "Others" to Spain's south, helped to cloth the "Others" with factuality. Today, *los moros* still serve as a model of what Spaniards are not. The despised peoples who live in modern Spain are popularly attributed Moorish (or Jewish) origins (cf. Tax Freeman 1979: 244). In Andalusia mothers often invorke *el moro* as a bogey when training their children. Moroccan ambulant traders who visit Andalusian towns and villages are regarded with destrust and contempt.

Until more historical evidence is available, the festival of Moors and Christians can be interpreted as a cultural performance reviving images of the past in order to reinforce local and national identity. It both stresses the spir-

itual bond of local community with the Spanish nation and localizes Spain's self-conceived historical mission by situating the combat between Christians and Moors in specific localities. In this festival Andalusians celebrate and promote their sense of cultural superiority *vis-à-vis* the "Others".

Suggestions for further research

This article has raised many questions with reference to a particular festival. These questions are part of an agenda for further research on expressive culture in Andalusia and elsewhere in the Mediterranean area. It focuses on the sentiments channeled in ceremony, ritual and play, on the symbols employed and on the social relationships articulated in festivals. Festivals are special points of orientation in the yearly round of life. They break through the drudgery of routine and open up a whole spectrum of activities and meanings. They are not only an interface with the wider society and culture, but also an interface with the supernatural domain. A festival may highlight dominant values, counterpoints to these values, or both. Festivals also constitute ritual arenas in which social groups and individuals compete for power and prestige. Hence the need for more information on the context of the festivals, i.e. the towns and villages where they are celebrated, in particular on the position and role of the sponsors, organizers, and protagonists, on the social composition of the audience, on the role of the Church and its local agents. And, last but not least, more evidence should be gathered on the views of the different parties to a festival about what it represents.

Three crucial interrelated issues have to be taken into account. First, the same celebratory form may have different functions for different kinds of people at different times. Second, problems of meaning are as important to the study of festivals as are problems of power.[18] Finally, where do local festivals come from and how are they related to national culture? The great majority of the folklorists who have written about the Moors-and-Christians festivals have taken it for granted that these celebrations are "popular". They have disregarded historical evidence pointing in the direction of urban and elite origins. There are also indications that artisans and middle peasants (and possibly schoolteachers and priests) have acted as cultural brokers between city and countryside, as translators of "learned" into "popular" culture. Or is a two-level model of civilization, rooted in Robert Redfield's distinction between "Great Tradition" and "Little Tradition", too rough to accomodate the complexities of historical and contextual evidence? Besides its connotations, the usefulness of the term "popular" seems to be severely limited by its undifferentiated nature. A more refined model is needed in which sex, age, class and community-state relations are crucial parameters. This issue is extremely relevant to the study of celebratory events.

Notes

1. This article is a revised version of a paper presented at the conference on "Cultural Dominance in the Mediterranean Area", which took place December 20–22, 1983 at the Institute of Cultural and Social Anthropology, Catholic University of Nijmegen, the Netherlands. I wish to express my gratitude to the participants for their critical comments.
2. Recent issues of *Ethnologia Europaea* testify to these trends.
3. This section is mainly based on de las Cagigas (1950), Lévi Provençal (1950), Menéndez Pidal (1955), Caro Baroja (1957), Watt & Cachia (1965), and Lomax (1978).
4. Glick (1979) sites the transfer of Islamic Spain's local masses away from Christianity precisely on the eve of the caliphate's decline (early eleventh century). This large-scale conversion marked the full entrance of Andalusia's population into the religious and political inheritance as Muslims.
5. Santiago's epithet survives in several placenames. There is a Matamoros in Pennsylvania, three in Mexico, a Matamorosa in Spain, and a Mata Morerisca in Portugal.
6. See Worsley (1968: 227–243) on the integratory role of religion in segmented societies.
7. See de Brunes (1983: 10–11). Nineteenth-century historians tended to view the Morisco problem as an inevitable racial confrontation between antagonistic worlds. A hesitant start of socio-cultural analysis can be observed in their works. Twentieth-century historians tend to fo-

cus on the minority's literature, religion, and way of life. They view the Morisco problem in terms of a receding Islamic civilization in the Iberian peninsula.

8. See de Brunes (1983: 10–11) and Brenan (1976: 226, fn 1).
9. For upsurges of hatred against Muslims in later periods see Caro Baroja (1969: 278). This hatred was also expressed in popular songs (cf. Rodriguez Marin 1883 IV: 455–57).
10. "Hay moros en la costa" (the coast is not clear), "moros van, moros vienen" (literally, Moors come and go; refers to a state of drunkeness), "como moros sin señor" (literally, as Moors without a master, i.e. a gathering of people characterized by chaos and confusion), "es un moro" (refers to a person who has not been baptized). One of the rare sayings that praises Moorish civilization: "una huerta es un tesoro si el hortelano es un moro" (literally, a garden is a treasure if the gardener is a Moor; refers to superior irrigation technology of Muslims in former times).
11. There are two other regions in Spain with a high density of Moors-and-Christians festivals: Aragón and Alicante. The festival was also found in Portugal, the Balearic Islands, it crossed the Atlantic to Mexico and other Latin American countries, to the south-west of the United States and the Philippines (cf. Hoenerbach 1975: 19). For Latin America, where it was an important tool for propagating Christian faith among the Indians, see Foster (1960: 221–5). For Mexico see Redfield (1930: 120–3) and Trexler (1984: 189–227). In the Aragonese-Catalan type the actual battle between Moors and Christians is interwoven with other plays, performances of angels and sword dances. The Alicante type is marked by highly elaborated pageantry (costumes, castles, and maritime battles), while in the Andalusian type the Moors attack the procession and abduct the image of the patron saint.
12. My main source for this section is a voluminous guide of "popular festivals" in Andalusia (Rodriguez Becerra 1982). This book describes more than 3.000 festivals in 800 population entities of all sizes. Its aim of completeness is not fulfilled. The results of this immense work by eleven contributors are highly diverse. Unfortunately, a common framework for collection and description of data has been lacking. Notwithstanding its weaknesses this inventory constitutes a rich source for studying festivals. Hoenerbach (1975: 51–2) lists fifteen festivals of Moors and Christians for Almería, forty for Granada, four for Jaén, four for Málaga, and one for Cádiz. He includes several hamlets (*cortijadas*) not covered by Rodriguez Becerra.
13. There are several unanalyzed texts of the festival in the *Revista de Dialectologia y Tradiciones Populares* (XVIII, 1962; XXII, 1966; XXXV, 1979–80; for other regions of Spain: I, 1945; XI, 1955). There is only a brief reference to the festival in Velasco (1982). I have not been able to consult the proceedings of the *I Congreso Nacional de Fiestas de Moros y Cristianos,* Alcoy (1973).
14. Cf. Hoenerbach (1975: 35). Also see his list of documented festivals in Andalusia from 1463–1833.
15. Like many of his romantic contemporaries – travelling poets and writers such as Byron, Hugo, and Chateaubriand – Irving was keenly interested in Andalusia's Moorish past, which he conceived in picturesque colours. See Said (1978) for a critical discussion of orientalism.
16. This analysis is based on the text of the festival celebrated in 1799 in Iznalloz (Granada) (Garcia Serrano 1979–80) and in the early 1960's in Valcabra (Granada) (Mũnoz Renedo 1966). See note 13.
17. Moors are in the background of many apparitions in medieval Spain. Several of these apparitions occurred to men who fought in battles against the Muslims (cf. Christian 1981b: 22, 55). Human society and the supernatural realm interfused.
18. I wholly agree with Manning (1983: 7), who offers encouraging suggestions for studying festivities: "The following, then, are the themes guiding our entrance into the celebratory genre: its paradoxical ambiguity, its significance as socio-cultural text, its role in sociopolitical processes and its complex relationships to modernity and hierarchy. These themes constitute a conceptual center from which our cross-cultural studies radiate."

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