**Iconic architecture or theme park?**

**Seville’s cinematographic reinvention for tourism purposes (1911-1929)**

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This paper aims to highlight the influence of the state administration of Spain, through the Royal Commission for Tourism (institution in charge of Spanish tourism promotion during the period 1911-1929), on the architectural and cinematographic configuration of the city of Seville in the early 20th century (CÓMEZ in MENÉNDEZ ROBLES, 2008).

The willingness to (re)create the Spanish and Andalusian spirit for tourism purposes (MENÉNDEZ ROBLES, 2008) is observed in urban renewal initiatives for the Ibero-American Exhibition in 1929 (LÓPEZ GÓMEZ, 2016): urban rehabilitation and renovation of the Santa Cruz neighborhood (old Jewish quarter) and restoration of the Alcázar (the oldest royal palace still in use in Spain and Europe). A homogeneous ensemble was thus created (TRAVER, 1965; VÁZQUEZ, 1920), a happy ‘Arcadia’ in the city centre. It would be complemented by the construction of inexpensive housing for workers and the ambitious project to expand the city southward, linked to this major event (landscaping of María Luisa Park, the exhibition grounds and construction of the Hoteles del Guadalquivir neighborhood, with 5,000 dwellings meant to house visitors to the fair).

Similar tourism-oriented intent can be observed in films from that period, which present an image of the city in line with the promotion efforts of the Royal Commission, culminating with “La Copla Andaluza” (Ernesto González, 1929) and “La Bodega” (Benito Perojo, 1927). Tourism policies and cinema trends thus converged to promote Seville ahead of the 1929 fair, a landmark event. The goal of this paper will be to determine how the Ibero-American Exhibition’s tourist architecture was depicted in a representative sample of films produced during the aforementioned period.

To that end, five period ‘tourism-poster’ films produced in Seville will be subject to diegetic analysis. The choice of such films makes reference to a film type “pervaded with a certain publicity charge about the city, the zone, or the country where the plot is located” (MESTRE, DEL REY & STANISHEVSKI, 2008).

Louis Feuillade’s diptych comprising “Le coffret de Tolède” and “Les fiancés de Séville” will therefore be analyzed, along with the first cinema versions of “Sangre y Arena” (Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, 1916), “Currito de la Cruz” (Alejandro Pérez Lugín, 1925) and “La Hermana San Sulpicio” (Florián Rey, 1927).

Feuillade’s diptych provides an image in line with the Royal Commission’s tourism promotion (the geographical axis Madrid-Toledo-Seville), showing a territorial contrast that will be a promotional keynote in the early 20th century: the modern capital with its luxury hotels vis-à-vis the traditional style of Seville, anchored by the topical image of the Alcázar. The film version of the novel “Sangre y Arena” (“Blood and Sand”) in turn set the bases for the folkloric cinema of the 1920s by means of a tourist film clip shot in the Santa Cruz neighborhood. Also associated to those two emblematic locations, the works of Pérez Lugín and Palacio Valdés adapted for the big screen reinforced the idea of Seville as an earthly paradise and ‘city of grace’. The five films otherwise highlight the figure of the visitor in the city of Seville.

This analysis will indicate that tourist promotion in Spain is a direct consequence of the Spanish ‘regenerationist’ movement (ÁLVAREZ LOPERA, 2000), linked to the regionalist artistic style that would popularize cliché topics for tourism in cinema. Paradoxically, the Seville architecture of the Ibero-American Exhibition, the utopian Seville of Royal Commissioner Benigno de la Vega-Inclán (VEGUÉ Y GOLDONI, SÁNCHEZ CANTÓN, 1921; VIGIL-ESCALERA Y PACHECO, 2015), converted the Santa Cruz neighborhood and Alcázar Gardens into Andalusia’s most successful theme park.

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