SEVILLE: PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE

SEVILLE OF THE PAST.

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Origins and Legends.

The principal fluvial artery of Andalusia, known today as the Guadalquivir river, formerly bore the names of Tartessos, Baetis and Wad-el-Quebir. From the fourth millennium BC on, its untamably variable flow prevented early settlers from living near its banks.

Tartessos, the first permanent land settlement which took its name from the river, was established around 800 BC. Phoenician merchants from the southern shores of the Mediterranean frequented it, and by 100 BC, the Romans had named it Hispalis. Often settled and destroyed, its archaeological remains are scarce: a few inscriptions and the columns of Calle Mármoles ('Street of Sculptures', Fig. 1) are practically all that remain today. However, one may form an idea of Hispalis from the more abundant remains of the other cities established along the Baetis: Caura, Osset, Italic, Illipa Magna, Arva, Celti, Orippo, etc.

The quest for Roman Hispalis really started early in the 16th century, in opposition and contrast to the then still overwhelmingly present evidence of five centuries of Islamic rule. At the same time, local scholars attempted to develop a new image of the city, inventing a mythological foundation by Hercules. The Holy King (Ferdinand III the Saint, 1201-1252, who conquered Seville in 1258 and was canonized in 1671) and other local heroes were shrouded in myths:

'Hercules built me,
Julius Caesar surrounded me
with walls and high towers.
A Gothic king lost me.
The Holy King won me
With Garci Pérez de Vargas.'

Local erudites made an effort to identify Seville with the 8 km distant Italica, the celebrated birthplace of the emperors Trajan and Hadrian and of no less than 36 Roman senators. They replaced the name of Italica with Old-Seville.

Visigothic and Islamic Conquests.

Seville evolved through strong convulsions, violence, conquests and other momentous events.

Hispalis, razed by the Vandals but culturally fertilized by the presence of the Byzantines, reached its apogee in the late Visigothic period, personified by the towering figure of St. Isidore who died in 636 AD. St. Isidore was a politician, bibliophile and historian, whose Etymologiae, a synthesis of ancient culture, was the instructional encyclopaedia of Europe's High Middle Ages.

In 711 AD, the sudden arrival of Berber and Arab elements in the Peninsula, bearers of Islam and eastern lifestyles, produced radical changes in the life of Visigothic Spalis, which now became Isbiliya (or Ishbiliyah).

In the 10th century Razi called Isbiliya an 'ancient city of remote foundation.' Al-Hundri in the 11th and Al-Himyari in the 13-14th centuries evoked the antiquity and numerous remains of the Roman city: hot baths, segments of
city walls, Roman temples and Christian churches, porticoes, capitals, pillars, and parts of residential areas—which, in general, were considered inadapted to, and replaced by Islamic structures.

If Hispalis/Spalis was already an important city, its prominence increased as Isbiliya, the first capital and seat of Islamic power in the Peninsula (713-716). Constantly in conflict with Cordoba for the supremacy of Al-Andalus, Isbiliya became a brilliant and expansive capital after uniting numerous independent kingdoms or ta’ifas under its aegis during the dynasty of Banu ‘Abbad in the 11th century. Later, under the Almoravids (1086-1130) and the Almohads (1130-1169), Isbiliya was the European capital of an African empire to which it lent its cultural achievements and prestige.

An ethnic and religious mix of Christians and Converts (Mudejars) of Hispanic-roman and Gothic origin, Jewish settlers from ancient times, Syrians, Arabs and newly-arrived Berbers lived together in Isbiliya, only exceptionally at conflict, and most of the time in peace during five centuries.

The river, now called Wad-el-Quebir, the principal element of the urban landscape, was praised by Islamic authors: "...there is no better (river)
in the world', or '...it is on par with the Tigris, the Euphrates, the Nile or the Jordan'. Of Isbiliya they said, '...at her throat gleams the pearl rope of the great river'. Its banks were lined with vegetable gardens, villas, vineyards, olive groves, poplars and orchards. There was never lack of merriment on the river, and its banks often resounded with music. Indeed, Seville was considered the capital city of music. It was a common saying in Moorish Spain that 'When a musician dies in Cordova and his instruments are to be sold, they are sent to Seville; when a rich man dies in Seville and his library is to be sold, it is sent to Cordova'. (Calvert A. F., Cordova, London 1907, page 107.) Wine ran freely, for as in the other cities of Al-Andalus, prohibition was never taken too seriously.

The river banks, and above all the port area where the still used Roman roads crossed, were the nerve centre of the city and focal point of great commercial activity. There were numerous piers near the gates of the west city wall. The Almohads built a pontoon bridge as link with Triana and the excellent farmland of Aljarafe on the opposite bank.

Only isolated archaeological evidence remains from the 8-10th centuries, as some parts of the Royal Palace (Reales Alcazares). Most of the remaining buildings of the Islamic period are due to the Almoravids and to the Almohads: the Giralda, former minaret of the great mosque, the Golden Tower, the ‘Casos de Carmona’ aqueduct and the city walls (the latter almost totally destroyed at the end of the last century).

The Islamic legacy is still visible in the layout of the city, with land use and a few building elements preserved in parts of other structures. Former mosques became churches; palaces of which only the poetic names (Qsar-al-Zahir, al-Zahi, al-Mukarram, al-Wahid) or their ruins (al-Suhayra) remain, while mosques still retain their courtyards (Ibn-Adabbas and the Cathedral) and orange, lemon, lime and citron trees; the baths are now incorporated into palaces of later date, while facades, arches, lattices, shops and workshops testify to the merging of the Eastern Arab and North African Berber cultures with Andalusian civilization.

The Reconquest.

Isbiliya fell to Ferdinand III the Holy in 1248 and underwent a complete demographical transformation after the Repartimiento - the exodus of Muslims from the city and its repopulation by Christians. The mosques were transformed into churches and the call of the muezzin replaced by the chime of bells (Fig. 2). Princes, prelates, great lords, and the military orders received extensive gifts of land, and the small Muslim holdings gave way to large estates where the new landlords preferred to live. The resulting urban settlement never fully encompassed the Almohad walls.

Alfonso X the Wise (1221-84) chose to live in Seville, thus colouring the city with courtly refinements and intellectual activity. He founded a school of Latin and Arabic and worked on his prodigious encyclopaedia and a series of poems, the Cantigas de Santa Maria. The cathedral replaced
Figure 2  Example of the uses of a tract of land in Seville. In the Collegiate church El Salvador the courtyard remains from the Sahn mosque of Ibn Abbas, the first Sevillian building with a known date of construction. Excavations of the site (not visible on the photo) reveal elements of a Roman basilica below the church *Sancta Jerusalem*.

Figure 3  The Guadalquivir and Triana.
the old mosque, and Alfonso introduced Gothic architecture in a palace next to the fort, the church of Santa Ana, and the Torre de la Plata (Tower of Silver), while continuing to respect the Almohad tradition in the arsenals (atarazanas). He demonstrated his appreciation of the city by granting it the title of 'Very Noble, Very Loyal, Very Heroic and Invincible City of Seville'.

Among the medieval kings, Peter I, known also as Peter the Cruel and the Just (1334-69), was closely associated with Seville. A large part of his busy political, family and love life, recalled in buildings and legend, occurred here. He undertook great works on the Alcázares (Palace) and following the 1356 earthquake damage, repaired a large number of churches, rebuilding them in Sevillian Mudéjar style.

The Rise during the 14-15th Centuries.

The large empty plots of land within the Almohad walls early in the 14th century rapidly filled up during the 15th, as the geographical position of the port renewed the economic importance of Seville. The intense merchant activity was, along with the Sevillian aristocracy, in the hands of foreigners and outsiders: Genovese, Florentine, people of Burgos, Vizcaya and Santander, Catalans, English, Venetians, Flemish and French. All settled in the administrative and financial centre of the city, the Barrio de la Mar (Sea Quarter) around the port and the Cathedral. The names of some of the streets (Alemanes, Frances, Placentines...) recall their presence.

Of particular importance was the Italian colony, (e.g., the Centurion and Pinelo families) and especially the Genovese presence, which grew following the loss of their trade in the Eastern Mediterranean due to the advance of the Turks, the wars in Italy and the recent Portuguese and Castilian discoveries.

During the latter part of the Middle Ages, Jews and Mudéjars played also an important role. The Muslim Converts, or Mudéjars were a distinct group of craftsmen who preserved the artistic traditions of the Islamic world, particularly in building-related activities. The Jewish community was quantitatively (it is reckoned that there were more than 200 families in Seville in the 14th century) and qualitatively the more notable of the two. They traditionally made up the world of finance, and counted such influential personnages as Samuel Levi, Zulema Barchillon and Yúçaf Pichón among their numbers. After the assault on the Jewish quarter in 1391, the Jews ceased to be a force in the city, although some converts continued to play a certain role.

In the 15th century, Seville became illustrious. The Canary Islands and much of the Kingdom of Granada were conquered and colonized from Seville. With the peace and good government of the Catholic monarchs Ferdinand and Isabella, the city grew into one of the wealthiest and most powerful in the world, despite the expulsion of the Jews (1492) and the establishment of the Inquisition (1478). Seville's great moment had arrived: it became the centre of the exploration and exploitation of Amer-
ica through the Casa de Contratación (House of Trade), established in 1503 to regulate commerce between Spain and the New World.

Apogee.

Seville was the richest and most populous city of Spain in the 16th century: some 60,000 inhabitants around 1500, more than 100,000 in 1565, and 150,000 in 1588. Economic development ultimately led to a new code of government and hence the creation of the modern state. The new mechanism of power was consolidated by Charles V (who married Isabella of Portugal in the Alcázar). His imperial ambitions concerning both Europe and America gradually materialized.

The trade of the Spanish empire was forcibly funnelled through Seville. The city as well as its financiers regularly lent money to Charles V; most of the silver from Mexico and Peru quickly found its way from there to Antwerp, which coordinated much of the trade of the far-flung Habsburg Empire. Of the duties arising from the monopoly of trade with the Indies, many important buildings were constructed, including the Casa de la Contratación, the Casa Lonja (Archives of the Indies), the Customs Office and the Royal Mint.

From the Reconquest and until the first third of the 16th century, 32 monasteries and convents were founded under the patronage of powerful noble families. Some were of major importance in the rivalry over the New World and the transformation of ideas. For example, the Monasterio de San Isidoro del Campo, was so closely associated with Erasmian trends that several of its monks were sentenced by the Inquisition. In the important religious centre of Cartuja de Santa María de las Cuevas just outside Seville, Christopher Columbus made his contacts and plans for the expedition to the East Indies. His personal and family documents were deposited there, and his remains were brought from Valladolid and interred in the Chapel of Santa Ana. The first printing house was established at the Monasterio de San Jerónimo de Buenvista, from where the publications were dispatched to the Americas.

With the reinforcement of the administrative and commercial centre of the city in the growing port area, the market for goods (silver, spices, quinquina rind... from the Indies) shifted slightly further to the south, next to the Golden Tower. The exported merchandises included wines and spirits from Spain and France, olive oil, saffron, dried fruit of Andalusia, beeswax from Germany, paper from Genova and France, pig and worked iron from Viscaya, horseshoes by ten thousands of dozens, nails by the hundred thousands, knives, axes, and barrels of books. Above all, there were fabrics: linen from Rouen, Brittany or the Netherlands, cloth from England and France, serge, muslin, Italian velvet, lace, silver and gold braid tissues, hats, silken woolen hosiery... In this context, the Reales Atarazanas (Royal Warehouse) took on new importance. On the opposite bank, the former suburb of Triana (Fig. 3) consolidated its seafaring activities and became a great pro-
ducer of ceramics. Pottery-making has been documented in Triana since the Muslim period, and its stylistic evolution makes Seville pottery an invaluable archaeological indicator for dating and study of trade between the metropolis and the colonies.

As the German traveller J. Münzer noted in 1494, there were still many Islamic remains in the city. During the 16th century, the Islamic layout was modified, and tracts of land occupied by Renaissance buildings. As observed by A. Morgado, the inward-looking facade-less Muslim houses gave way to the bright Renaissance building-fronts of the 16th century. Pillars, shafts, and other decorative elements arrived from Genoese workshops on the Guadalquivir. Renaissance figuration emerged (Fig. 4). The city evolved so greatly that when the Ambassador of Venice Andrea Navaggero visited Charles V in 1526, he considered it as '...the Spanish city which most reminded him of Italy'. (Figs. 5 and 6).

This fever of revival and restoration also affected the Tower of the Cathedral (see cover), considered from its construction as the symbol of the city. The upper part was capped by a slim belfry topped with a statue symbolizing the Triumph of the Faith. Sevillians considered it as a weather vane and thus nicknamed the tower La Giralda.

The publication of numerous cosmographies further enhanced the avant-garde and cosmopolitan image of the city. Other than Seville, the only cities in Europe with populations of over 100,000 inhabitants were Lisbon, Antwerp, Amsterdam, followed by Toledo, Milan, Rome, Naples, Florence and Paris.

Seville played an important role in Spain's Golden Age as the birthplace of great poets, playwrights, sculptors (Juan Martínez Montañés, Fernando de Herrera...), and painters (Velázquez, Zurbarán, Murillo...). Poetic and scholarly circles proliferated and until 1679, there were many popular playhouses.

Decadence.

This brilliance, however, was fleeting and partially ephemeral. No industries were created to supply America, while banking and commerce were conducted mainly by foreigners enriched by the gold and silver coined in the world's most active mint. The gradual decline of the Habsburg Empire was paralleled by the city. The transfer to Cadiz of the Casa de la Contratación and Consulado del Mar, and thus the monopoly of the trade with the Indies, was a staggering blow which could not, by far, be compensated by the foundation of the Naval School in 1682 (currently the Palacio de San Telmo).

The more than one hundred churches, hospitals and convents, the palaces of the nobility and the indios (Spaniards returning rich from the Americas) contrasted with the quarters frequented by rogues, swindlers, rakes, whores and the idle; in short, the picaresque world faithfully portrayed by Cervantes.
Figure 4  Detail of the plateresque ('silversmith-like': architectural style in Spain during the first half of the 16th century) townhall by Diego de Riaño, 1528.

Figure 5  Seville, engraving by G. Hoefnagle, 1565.
A harsh blow to the vitality of the city was the great epidemic which swept through Andalusia between 1646 and 1650. Seville lost 60,000 inhabitants during the terrible year of 1649, which decimated entire neighbourhoods.

Revival of the 18th, Decline of the 19th Centuries.

In the 18th century the Bourbons stimulated an economic revival: The University, the Real Fábrica de Tabacos (Tobacco Factory) and La Maestranza de Artillería (present bullring) were built during this period. In the 19th century, the French invasion, revolutions and civil war halted these developments. A series of epidemics further accentuated the economic and demographic regression. Nonetheless, for a brief period the city became the capital of the country with the creation of the Junta Suprema Central (Supreme Central Council).

The modernization of the city was planned during the short-lived French occupation. However it was not until 1825, under Asistente Arjona, that a real policy of urban revival was begun and subsequently pursued by Mendizábal’s expropriation of church estates which freed much space for rationalization and rehabilitation of large districts. The first symptoms of recovery appeared while the aspect of the city changed.

Although mid-19th century Seville was still a declining and provincial city, the great civil projects which were undertaken were at times difficult to assimilate into the newly-emerging urban landscape. These projects included the construction of the first railway, improvements to the port, construction of the Isabel II bridge (until then there were only pontoon bridges), plans for a ring road, etc. All these contributed to the form of the present city.

The recovery of the population during the second half of the 19th century was largely due to the influx of an agrarian workforce. Conversely, there was scarcely any new commercial or industrial development and unfavourable economic conditions persisted.

During the last third of the 19th century yielding to the need to extend the city, the ancient walls were systematically demolished. The space thus cleared remained unused until the early years of this century.

Attracted by the exotic nature of Andalusia, a stream of travellers and scholars from Europe and especially from Britain and France converged in Seville, contributing to the dissemination of España de Pandereta. Light, colour and music combined to form new myths such as Carmen and Don Juan.

Spain’s loss of its last colonies (Cuba and the Philippines) caused a resurgence of nationalist sentiment reflected in the lo sevillano style. This was an eclectic, historically-inspired, backward-looking architecture, freely mixing Islamic, Gothic and Renaissance styles. It gave rise to a popular and somewhat amateurish architectural current which both contrasted with the products of professional architecture (Barrio de Santa Cruz) and represented a reaction against the local Modern Movement.
THE CARTUJA (CARTHUSIAN MONASTERY) OF SEVILLE.

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Monastic building and early history.

The Cartuja of Seville was founded in 1399 on the site of a small hermitage, 150 years after the Castillian conquest; it is situated opposite the city, on the right bank of the Guadalquivir. Since the 16th century the monument and its 16 hectares of land, mostly vegetable gardens, is enclosed within a polygonal wall.

From 1399 until 1835 the Cartuja was active as monastery. It enjoyed the beneficence of great families during the Middle Ages, and was enlarged during the 16/17 centuries. Nobility and even the royal household were among its regular visitors and protectors. Christopher Columbus, guest and friend of the monastery planned here his voyage to America.

Throughout the 450 years of Carthusian life, the monastery was continually extended and adapted to the needs of the order. The obvious result is an architectural and decorative superposition of all artistic styles of southern Andalusia: Mudejar-Gothic, Renaissance-Mannerist and Baroque (the association of 'industrial art', see below). Arab tradition may be seen in the outlay and technology of its 16th century orangeries.

During the French occupation in 1810-12 the Cartuja used as army headquarters was seriously damaged, further accentuated by abandon and decadence during the 19th century.

A faience factory.

After the expropriation of ecclesiastical estates by the Spanish Government in 1835, the English industrialist Charles Pickman transformed it in 1835 into a faience factory which