

Theater of Conquest: Sovereignty and Territorial Expansion into Africa (1492-1530).

In this workshop paper, I will present chapter four of my book project *Theater of Conquest: Performing Iberian News in Rome (1450-1530)*. The book explores how Iberian performances re-elaborated the news of conquest that arrived at Christian diplomatic centers, such as Rome, Naples, and Lisbon. In this chapter, I intervene in recent scholarly discourses on the construction of Iberian sovereignty and hegemony via its diplomatic exchanges with North African, West, and West Central African polities and kingdoms (Beton, Bennett, Fromont). The chapter articulates how Castilian and Portuguese theatrical performances put on stage the embassies of African sovereigns and diplomats to Iberia and Rome, while deploying strategies of dispossession by staging conversion, ceremonies of deposition, and pledges of obedience. Portuguese diplomacy with West African and West Central African sovereigns contributed to discursively enhance Iberian sovereignty in Europe. By surveying diplomatic correspondence, Iberian accounts of Africa, cartographical information, and Castilian and Portuguese theatrical pieces, such as Torres Naharro's *Tropea* and Gil Vicente's *Exortação da guerra*, the chapter explores the role of interpreters, agents, and actors in the dissemination of misinformation regarding foreign powers and the creation of European hegemony, or the illusion of it. The chapter further analyzes how theater and performative works conveyed knowledge about African technologies and intellectual traditions (Diaz Tanco, *Triumpho Canario*) and the interest these technologies generated within local and regional borders.