

**SPANISH DRAMA  
BEFORE  
LOPE DE VEGA**

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Spanish drama before Lope de Vega by J. P. Wickersham Crawford

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**J. P. WICKERSHAM CRAWFORD**

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LOPE DE VEGA**



*To Crasno Buceta  
with best wishes  
J. P. Wickersham*

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No. 7

# SPANISH DRAMA BEFORE LOPE DE VEGA

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To  
MY WIFE  
MAY WICKERSHAM CRAWFORD  
THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY  
DEDICATED

## PREFACE

SEVENTY years have passed since the first appearance of Adolph Friedrich von Schack's *Geschichte der dramatischen Literatur und Kunst in Spanien*, the first part of which was devoted to a study of the predecessors of Lope de Vega, and while many critical studies have been written upon individual dramatists and many plays, not mentioned by Schack, have been discovered and published, no attempt has been made since that time to write a history of the earlier Spanish drama. Limitations of space have prevented me from attempting to write a detailed history of the Spanish drama before Lope de Vega, but I have tried to give at least an outline of the development of dramatic literature in that period. I am fully aware of the fact that the picture which I present is incomplete, but it is my hope that I have succeeded in presenting here the results of the studies of my many predecessors, as well as of my own reading, and that this little book will serve as a starting-point for further investigation in a subject that offers so much of interest.

I have limited myself to a consideration of the drama in the Spanish language, and have, therefore, paid little attention to the plays of that period written in Catalan and Valencian. With considerable regret, I have included only the Castilian plays of Gil Vicente, and the plays in which the Castilian element seems to predominate, and I have not even touched upon the many disputed points in the biography of the great Portuguese poet.

I wish to express my gratitude to my friend and colleague, Professor Hugo A. Rennert, for his kindness in reading my manuscript. It is to him that I owe my first interest in this



subject, and the inspiration which I have received from his labours and from our many chats regarding our favourite Spanish dramatic poets has been a powerful incentive to me in my own studies.

J. P. W. C.

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## CHAPTER I

### THE SPANISH DRAMA BEFORE ENCINA

Although material is almost entirely lacking for a study of the liturgical drama in Spain, the close relationship that existed between the ritual of the Spanish church and that of other countries of Western Europe, and particularly of France after the eleventh century, allows us to assume that in Spain, as elsewhere, the religious drama developed from the tropes attached to the Introit of the Magna Missa of Easter and Christmas. To the study of the origins of the medieval liturgical drama, Castilian-speaking portions of the Peninsula contribute only an eleventh or twelfth-century Christmas trope of a primitive type from Huesca,<sup>1</sup> and two eleventh-century Easter tropes from Silos.<sup>2</sup>

In spite of this noteworthy lack of liturgical texts, Spanish literature may claim the honor of possessing in the *Auto de los Reyes Magos* one of the earliest, if not the earliest religious play in a modern tongue. This composition, consisting of 146 or 147 lines, is contained in a manuscript of the Chapter Library of Toledo, now preserved at the National Library of Madrid, and on the basis of linguistic and scribal considerations may be ascribed to the middle of the twelfth century. It was probably performed in some church in the city of Toledo to celebrate the festival of the Epiphany. With respect to its origin, it is difficult to determine whether its pro-

<sup>1</sup>Mentioned by Karl Young, *Officium Pastorum: A Study of the Dramatic Developments within the Liturgy of Christmas*, *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters*, vol. xvii, pt. ii, 1914, p. 300n.

<sup>2</sup>Carl Lange, *Die lateinischen Osterfeiern*, Munich, 1887, p. 24.