

"Coats of Many Colors: Costuming in Joseph Plays of the Golden Age."

The Old Testament story of Joseph was a popular source for Golden Age playwrights. It inspired at least ten *autos sacramentales* and *comedias*, written by such well-known playwrights as Lope de Vega, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. The story provides many themes of interest to a society whose history and identity were shaped by contact and conflict with the Moorish Other: captivity, slavery, interracial marriage, and religious conflict. The account of an individual's ability to maintain his faith in a foreign land would have resonated with an audience familiar with North African captivity tales brought back by Cervantes and other former prisoners. I propose that early modern playwrights and theater companies used costuming to reinforce the connection between the Biblical story and contemporary inter-ethnic relations. To demonstrate this, I will analyze stage directions and other sartorial references in Micael de Carvajal's *Tragedia Josephina*, Luis Vélez de Guevara's *La hermosura de Raquel II*, and Antonio Mira de Amescua's *El más feliz cautiverio*, alongside relevant paintings and other visual records from the period. I will argue that early modern thespians staged Joseph plays not as recreations of ancient Biblical history, but rather as commentaries on contemporary issues of cultural conflict.