

Black Dancers and Musicians Performing Afro-Christian Identity in Early Modern Spain and Portugal

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Abstract

This article discusses several early modern Spanish and Portuguese texts that describe Afro-Iberians' festive and confraternal practices in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries. While scholars have contended that the early modern Iberian states and church used conversion and confraternities, or lay Catholic brotherhoods, to integrate Afrodescendants to Iberian society, by linking Afro-Iberians' festive practices to their confraternities, the article contends that these texts underscore how Afrodescendants adapted their African cosmologies and festive customs in the diaspora, rather than totally assimilate to Iberian culture. The article also triangulates Afrodescendants' festive practices in Europe, Africa, and the Americas, suggesting that Afrodescendants thought of the diaspora as an imagined community.

Black Woman: If you want me to have a fiesta,
I'll sing a song from our land.

*Preta: Queri tu que faça uns festa, eu canta
argum moda de nossa terra.*¹

On March 20, 1455, a group of free blacks from the parish church of *Sanct Jaume* (St. James the Great, d. 44 CE) in Barcelona received royal permission to establish a confraternity, or Catholic association made up of laypersons and established for various pious purposes.² The royal edict encouraged the members to continue taking part in the city's annual Corpus Christi celebration, "which they were already accustomed to doing" [*lo qual ja acostumen de fer*].³ Corpus Christi was one of the most important feasts of the Catholic calendar, and was celebrated with great pageantry in the early modern Mediterranean.⁴ This pageantry, which was meant to reinforce the Catholic Church's doctrine on the Eucharistic presence, sought to incorporate all sectors of society.⁵ In 1497, for example, when Queen Isabella I of Castile (r. 1474-1504) entered Seville on Corpus Christi, the council asked "all the blacks in the city" to join the rest of the citizenry in welcoming the Catholic monarch [*que deuien salir al dho. recibimiento todos los negros que ouiese en esta çibdad*].⁶ When this order was issued by the city council, Seville already had several black confraternities, which certainly participated in these festivities. These early

examples link black confraternities to both religious and civic celebrations, a distinction that was not always made in the early modern Mediterranean.

How did these blacks participate in these civic-religious celebrations? According to the royal decree, the confraternity of *St. Jaume* was to take part in the Corpus Christi celebration by participating in the processional with candles, like the other confraternities of the city.⁷ The 1565 *compromisso* (constitution) of a black confraternity of the Rosary, founded in 1460 in Lisbon, also asks its members to celebrate their feast in a similar fashion, by marching with candles while "very devoutly praying the rosary" [*virão todos os irmãos e confrades com cirios azeos nesta procissão muito devotamente rezando o rosario*].⁸ The language in the documents cited so far has led scholars such as Didier Lahon, Iván Armenteros Martínez, Aurelia Martín Casares, and Christine Delaigue, to posit that sub-Saharan Africans were culturally assimilated into Iberian society through religious integration.⁹ Yet scholars such as Isidoro Moreno affirm the opposite: that Afro-Iberians did not forego their ancestral cultural heritage altogether as they participated in the social life of early modern Spain and Portugal.¹⁰ In this essay, I follow this second line of argument and, through the analysis of texts that show blacks in both civic and religious festive performances in early modern Spain and Portugal, demonstrate that blacks used confraternities to continue their ancestral festive practices in their new European context. This claim will be supported

by the fact that blacks did more than march with candles in religious events; they danced, played African instruments, and sang to the tune of African music.

The first black confraternity in Western history may have been founded in Seville between 1391 and 1401 by the prelate of that city to minister to infirm blacks.¹¹ This confraternity eventually evolved into a black confraternity similar to *St. Jaume* or Lisbon's black Rosary and became popularly known as *Los Negritos* (The Little Blacks), but was officially under the spiritual patronage of Our Lady of the Angels.¹² In the sixteenth century, there were at least three other black confraternities in Seville. The ones of the Rosary and the Precious Blood were founded by blacks from Portugal in Triana, outside the city limits.¹³ The third one was founded by the mixed race mulattoes of the parish church of *San Idelfonso* (St. Idelphonsus, c. 607-67).¹⁴ There were also black confraternities in Valencia, Granada, Cadiz and other Andalusian cities, as well as in Portugal, Sicily and Naples, making it a relatively common phenomenon in the Mediterranean. Some black confraternities were made up of only free persons, like St. Jaume, but most were made up of both free and enslaved Africans.¹⁵

As the origin of *Los Negritos* suggests, caring for sick members, paying for the burial of those whose survivors could not afford it or who had no survivors, and praying for their soul were central tenets of black confraternities.¹⁶ In this fashion, Afro-Iberian confraternities continued the traditions established by their European predecessors.¹⁷ But black confraternities had many elements that were uniquely their own. On the one hand, black confraternities could, and often did, purchase the freedom of members. On the other, they imbued their confraternal life and festive performances with African elements. By making confraternities their own, blacks transformed confraternities into alternative communities within the broader oppressive structure of Iberian society and used them to exercise limited self-rule in their affairs.

Black confraternities also adapted other European confraternal traditions. Especially in Portugal, but also in Spain, black confraternities elected ceremonial royalties for festive performance, a tradition that resonated with both European carnival and African practices.¹⁸ Although this practice was also common in other Iberian confraternities, it eventually became particularly associated with black confraternities.¹⁹ In early modern Spain and Portugal, blacks would appear in festive performances led by their king and queen. Through these festive performances, blacks performed their Afro-Christian identity before their black and broader European audiences.²⁰

Afro-Iberians of sub-Saharan descent were partially allowed to establish confraternities because the Church and Crown did not see them as *hostes fidei* (enemies of the faith), but rather as theopolitical *tabula rasa*, ready to receive the Gospel.²¹ As such, they were treated with less suspicion than

their *moriscos*, or Muslim converts, counterparts.²² Their festive practices were not perceived as threats to the social order, but rather as a necessary respite from their harsh labor. In this sense, the seventeenth-century Sevillian alderman and historian Diego Ortiz de Zuñiga (1636-1680) wrote in his annals for the year 1474, that

in Seville, the Blacks have been treated with great benignity since the time of King Henry III [of Castile, b. 1379, r. 1390-1406], being allowed to gather for their dances and fiestas on holidays, which made them work with greater joy and better bear their captivity.

[eran en Sevilla los Negros tratados con gran benignidad desde el tiempo de el Rey Don Henrique Tercero, permitiendoseles juntarse à sus bayles, y fiestas, en los días feriados, con que acudian mas gustosos al trabajo, y tolerauan mejor el captiuero.]²³

However, blacks were not allowed to engage in their merriment without authorial supervision. As Ortiz de Zuñiga himself writes, “[a black was given the title of *mayoral* [overseer] and would represent the others before their masters” [à uno se le daua título de *Mayoral*, que patrocinava a los demás con sus Amos].²⁴ (Confraternity leaders would be called *mayoral* in the Spanish-speaking world.) To this end, in 1475, when Queen Isabella named the “Black Count” [*Conde Negro*] Juan de Valladolid *mayoral e juez* (overseer and judge) of the blacks of Seville, she instructed him not to allow the black and mulatto men and women of the city to meet or have fiestas without his presence. The monarch instructed him to make sure “that the said *negros* (blacks) and *loros* (mulattoes) may not and do not have fiestas or coronations without your presence [que no puedan fazer, ni fagan los dichos Negros, y Negras, y Loros, y Loras, ningunas fiestas, nin juzgados de entre ellos, salvo ante vos].²⁵ The Queen's instruction reflects the Crown and Church's desire to control the social activity of the black population, and at the same time, could reveal their inability to do so to the fullest extent of their will.

Unfortunately, we do not have detailed accounts of black festive performances for early modern Spain. However, we can imagine what they may have been like through the Portuguese texts that will be discussed later. Nonetheless, there are myriad mentions of black festive practices and performances in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish texts. This study will not examine Golden Age authors such as Miguel de Cervantes and Lope de Vega as this work has already been done by many Golden Age literary critics.²⁶ Instead, it will analyze lesser-studied texts.

Within the short period between 1585 and 1600, we find three documents that mention black dancers in Barcelona, Madrid and Valencia. The first one is the Dutch Henrique Cock's *Annals of the Year 1585*. These annals detail King Philip

II and Prince Philip III's journey through Aragon, Catalonia and Valencia for the purpose of holding the courts for the Kingdom of Aragon for that year.²⁷ Cock traveled with the king and prince as an archer in the monarch's personal guard (*Guarda del Cuerpo Real*), but he was also a scholar, and later became Apostolic Notary.²⁸ As the king and prince traveled through the kingdom, his entourage and the cities they entered staged lavish fiestas for them. The nobles that traveled with the king and prince brought their black slaves with them. On March 20, describing all the people in the entourage and in what order they traveled, Cock mentions the black slaves of one don Sebastian de Santoyo:

After [some Castilian nobles] came don Pedro de Bolea and don Bernardino Copones, and in front of them, the blacks of don Sebastian de Santoyo.

Después de [algunos nobles castellanos] vinieron los señores don Pedro de Bolea y Bernardino Copones, yendo delante de ellos los negros del señor Sebastián de Santoyo.²⁹

These blacks also took part in the fiestas staged by the traveling court. On March 28, when the nobles staged a lavish Renaissance festival for the king and prince, Cock describes a group of “twelve blacks dressed in red and playing their instruments” [*venían delante doce negros vestidos de colorado tocando sus instrumentos*].³⁰ Albeit this is a very elusive mention of the blacks' performance, it makes clear that they played *their* (and not *our*) instruments. In other words, they may have performed on African instruments. The normality with which Cock describes the blacks should not surprise us. Black drummers had been used in the Spanish royal army since the time of Charles V.³¹ In 1529, Christoph Weiditz witnessed such black drummers, with a red shirt, in Emperor Charles' coronation entourage traveling to Rome (fig. 1). Weiditz concretely writes that “thus ride the army drummers in Spain when the emperor rides into a city,” suggesting, as Kate Lowe concedes, that black drummers were a staple of Spanish Renaissance royal entries.³² Perhaps, the blacks in Queen Isabella's 1497 Corpus Christi entrance into Seville performed in a similar fashion, as Isidoro Moreno suggests.³³

In Barcelona, on the feast of St. Stephen (December 26), the king and prince witnessed blacks in a religious celebration: the previous performance “was followed by a Moorish dance and that of the blacks” [*siguió una danza de moriscos y luego los negrillos*].³⁴ On this occasion we have two black groups (northern Africans [*moriscos*] and sub-Saharan Africans [*negrillos*]) performing different, or at least two dances at the same event. This example allows us to see that Iberians, and perhaps Africans themselves, distinguished between the two groups. Furthermore, each group may have performed their own cultural heritage.³⁵



Fig. 1. Christoph Weiditz, “Drummer at the Entrance of the Emperor,” ca. 1529. Courtesy of the Germanisches Nationalmuseum.³⁶

The blacks' performance was followed by a procession of Barcelona's confraternities: “Then came the confraternities with their standards, according to their rank, whose images were taken in by the prince” [*Luego vinieron los pendones de las cofradías, por su orden, cuyas imágenes tomó todas el príncipe*].³⁷ Although Cock does not go into details, *St. Jaume* most certainly was among the confraternities that processed before the monarch. City records show that *St. Jaume* was among the confraternities that processed through the streets of the city when Philip II visited Barcelona in 1564. On that occasion, when the confraternities of the city had a processional before the monarch, *St. Jaume* came in fifth place out of thirty confraternities.³⁸ *St. Jaume* is the only confraternity identified by its name, rather than by professions. The confraternities that came before *St. Jaume* were those of farmers (*parayres*), carpenters (*ffusters*), tanners (*blanquers*) and gardeners (*hortolans*). This list places *St. Jaume* among the humblest occupations, which must have been the kind of labor available to free blacks in early modern Iberia. Confraternities, then, marched according to rank, as Cock writes, but from lowest to highest, which is the form many Catholic processions still take today.

This same order was observed when Philip III visited Barcelona again in 1599. On this occasion, the gardener confraternity that came in front of *St. Jaume* was that of the young gardeners (*jovens ortolans*). The older gardener confraternities of St. Anthony (*Sanct Anthoni*) and St. Peter (*Sanct Pere*) came later in the procession, toward the middle.³⁹ This shows that rank was not fixed for Europeans confraternities, for by 1599, the gardeners of 1564 had ascended in rank and the young/new gardeners occupied their old place in the procession. *St. Jaume*, however, seems to have been fixed in its place, highlighting the little social mobility available to blacks. For example, in the eighteenth century, white

Sevillanos took over *Los Negritos*, and it was only then that the confraternity came first in the city's Corpus Christi procession, although the black members had fought for this right in the sixteenth century.⁴⁰

In 1590 and 1599, Philip II and Philip III witnessed Afro-Iberians of sub-Saharan descent performing black dances and music again. In 1590, when nobles in Madrid staged a poetry competition for Philip II, there was a black dance and a Sayagoan dance (*sayagiúés*) with a black bride that won for best performance:

Don Pedro de Toledo and don Bernardo de Toledo, brought out a group of black dancers; [...]; and another of Sayagoans with a black bride, who was Francisca de Almada, the slave of Prior Don Fernando [...]. They won the prize for best performance.

Don Pedro de Toledo y Don Bernardo de Toledo, sacaron por invención una danza de negros; [...]; otra de sayagiúeses con una novia negra, que era Francisca de Almada, la negra del prior Don Fernando [...]. Diéronles el precio de mejor invención.⁴¹

Philip III also witnessed black dancers in Valencia in 1599. That year the monarch traveled to Valencia to receive his bride, Margaret of Austria. The festivities celebrated in Valencia for this occasion are meticulously detailed in the city's chronicler, Felipe de Gauna's *Account of the Fiestas Celebrated in Valencia on the Occasion of the Marriage of Philip III*, which in the modern facsimile edition fills two tomes.⁴² As with St. Stephen in Barcelona, the blacks of Valencia were involved in the wedding festivities on a Christian feast day, that of St. Vincent Ferrer, native son and patron of the city.

These instances link black festive performances to Christian holidays, and points to religious and state occasions as one of the events that gave Afro-Iberians the freedom to perform African dances in early modern Spain. As we see, these religious events were often sponsored by civic authorities, pointing to what Ortiz de Zuñiga highlighted as a tradition that went back to the late medieval period; namely, that civic authorities also gave Afro-Iberians the freedom to perform African dances. It is not surprising that the accounts that bear witness to Afro-Iberian festive performances are found in accounts about festivals staged for monarchs, as royal events demanded recording, while lesser festivities may have not. This means that we can take this small sample as an indicator that blacks performed African dances and music for both religious and secular purposes in early modern Spain on a regular basis.⁴³

From the point of view of state, church and city authorities, this permissive practice constituted what has become known in ethnography as the safety release valve theory of containment, which is precisely what Ortiz de Zuñiga expresses in his annals for the year 1474, cited earlier: that is

that such allowances allowed blacks to get much needed rest from their oppressive labor so that they would "work with greater joy and better bear their captivity."⁴⁴ In other words, authorities allowed these practices in order to prevent revolts and other forms of resistance. However, ethnographers contend that such performances as the ones described here constitute transformative practices through which subaltern groups form their collective identity.⁴⁵ So, while the blacks in the festivals above and below are manifesting their adherence to Iberian Catholicism and showing their loyalty to the sovereign, they are also taking part in events that celebrate and contribute to the formation of their Afro-Iberian identity and culture, a syncretism of African and Iberian cosmologies.

Portuguese accounts of black festive performances are not to be found until the early eighteenth century, when they abound. Albeit written toward the end of baroque culture, these accounts are far more detailed than the ones we have seen from Spain. Spanish baroque reached its zenith in the seventeenth century. Portugal, on the other hand, extended its baroque into the eighteenth century, thanks to the discovery of gold in Brazil. This newfound wealth not only increased Portugal's power, but also its black population. This black population filled the streets and public spaces of urban Portugal with their festive culture.

The *Brief Extract of the Most August Triumph which the August City of Braga Offers in Honor of the Most Holy Sacrament*, published by a Jesuit school (*Colegio das Artes*) in Coimbra, Portugal, in 1731, is a unique text because rather than a festival account *a posteriori*, it is an instruction book for those who were to participate in the festival. As the title states, this festival was to take place in the northern city of Braga on the feast of Corpus Christi, on May 27, 1731. Also, as the title states, the instructions do not include all the parts of the festival, but only some. Thus, the inclusion of the black dance (*bayle dos negros*) among the three (out of thirteen) dances (*bayles*), four plays (*fabulas*), and the *triumfo* or procession with the Eucharist, described in the extract in full is significant (fig. 2). Intended to show the rest of Portugal how the city of Braga celebrated Corpus Christi, the extract included the black dance as one of the festival's main attractions:

Then in ninth place, will come the black company, with a new composition, and pleasing music, and their ceremonial figures being most talented, they will perform an elegant, and jovial dance.

Logo em nono lugar, virà a Fulia Preta, formada com nova composição, e agradável musica, e por serem nella destrissimas as Figuras, formã hum vistoso, e alegre bayle.⁴⁶

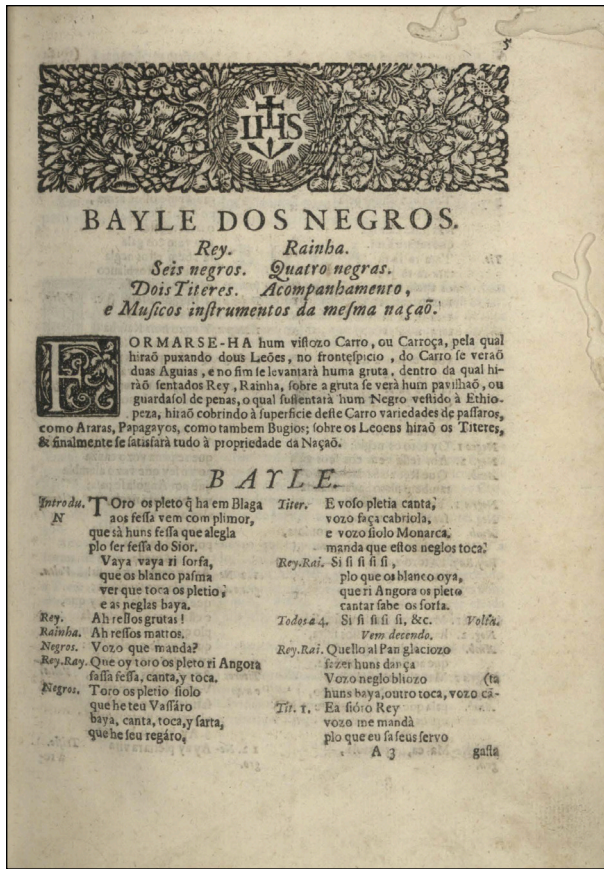


Fig. 2. Page 3 of the *Brief Extract*, 1731. Courtesy of the National Library of Portugal.

The dance troupe was to be composed of a king (*rey*), queen (*rainha*), “six black men,” “four black women,” “two dwarfs” (*titeres*) “and musicians [and] instruments from the same group” (*nação*).⁴⁷ Like the other performers in the festival, and in accord with baroque custom, the black troupe was to travel in a sumptuous carriage (*vistoso Carro, ou Carroça*):

There will be an elegant carriage drawn by two lions, there will be two eagles in the front of the carriage, and on the back there will a cave, inside which will travel the king and queen. On top of the cave there will be a parasol held by a black person dressed in African custom. There will be many birds on top of the carriage, such as macaw, parrot, as well as monkeys. The dwarfs will ride on the lions, and finally everything will be done according to their custom.

Formarse-ha hum vistoso Carro, ou Carroça, pela qual hiraõ puxando dous Leões, no frontespicio, do Carro se veraõ duas Aguais, e no fim se levantará huma gruta, dentro da qual hiraõ sentados Rey, Rainha, sobre a gruta se veraõ hum pavilhaõ, ou guardasol de penas, o qual



Fig. 3. Carlos Julião, “Brazilian Ceremonial Black King and Queen,” ca. 1775. Courtesy of the National Library of Brazil.⁴⁸



Fig. 4. Bernadino D'Asti, “The Missionary is Welcomed by the King of the Kongo,” ca. 1750. Courtesy of the Public Library of Turin, Italy.⁴⁹

sustentará un Negro vestido à Ethiopeza, hiraõ cobrindo à superficie deste Carro variedades de passaros, como Araras, Papagayos, como tambem Bugios; sobre os Leoes hiraõ os Titeres, & finalmente se satisfará tudo à propriedade da Nação.⁵⁰

This design’s similarity with black festive performance in eighteenth-century Brazil could illustrate how black festive culture circulated in the early modern Atlantic, forming an imagined community across the African diaspora. For example, the description of how the king and queen were to travel, especially under “a parasol held a black person dressed in African custom,” resembles what the Italian artist Carlos Julião witnessed in Rio de Janeiro in the late eighteenth century (fig. 3).

The performance also bears striking similarities with early modern African royal pageantry, especially as recorded by Italian missionaries in the Kingdom of the Kongo, where the Portuguese had taken Christianity in the late fifteenth century (fig. 4).⁵¹

Here we see the governor of Soyo, one the three provinces of the Kongo, receiving a Franciscan missionary. The governor

and the nobles travel under a parasol. These similarities triangulate the African diaspora and its practices.

According to the extract, as the dancers performed to the rhythm of the music, they were to sing the “new composition” mentioned in the introductory paragraph cited above. As in Spanish Golden Age works with black characters, this text is a stereotyped (European) version of how blacks spoke Portuguese, as in the epigraph that opened this essay. In this text, for example, what would normally be *r*'s are rendered as *l*'s, so that *negra* (black woman) in a black person's speech is *negla*. This dialect was known as *lingua de negros* (black speech).⁵² This performative text was most likely composed by a non-black writer and shows that the truly authentic part of the blacks' performance is their dance and music, which was to be done according to their customs, as the instructions state. This claim is supported by the fact that most blacks were illiterate, and the text is not an African song but rather an elaborate baroque poem.

A year before, on Friday, October 6, 1730, the weekly satirical *Pamphlet of Both Lisbons* (*Folheto de ambas Lisboas*) reported that the blacks of the city had celebrated the feast of the Rosary on Sunday, October 1, in the churchyard of the parish of Salvador in Alfama.⁵³ The *Pamphlet* describes the music as bizarrely dissonant:

There were myriad instruments in the churchyard, with a bizarre dissonance; because there were three marimbas, four piccolos, two fiddles, more than three hundred berimbaus, tambourines, African drums, the instruments they use.

No adro estava hum rancho de instrumentos, com huma bizarra dissonancia; porque estavaõ tres marimbas, quatro pifanos, duas rebecas do peditorio, mais de trezentos berimbaus, pandeiros, congos, e cangáz, instrumentos de que uzaõ.⁵⁴

The pamphlet also includes a letter which the ceremonial king of Angola supposedly sent to the ceremonial king of Mina⁵⁵ in a very satirically distorted version of *lingua de negros*:

The Lord be with you, brother, King of Mina. You know that our feast is on Sunday, and that you should come celebrate with us. Make sure you don't miss it, brother, because sister Susana and the daughter of brother Mauricio will be there, and sister Josefa's daughter is the viscountess. You will sing the Zaramangoè and dance the fofa in the procession. Brother José prepared the music to company the dancing. Now, if you come great, and if you don't, also. May God keep you many years, brother.

Seoro compadra Re Mina Zambiapum tatè: sabe vozo, que nossos fessa sà Domingo, e que vozo hade vir fazer os forgamenta: oya vussè naõ falta vussè comprada, que

as may Zoana os fia dos pay Maulicia, e dos may Zozefa sa biscondeça dos taraya: nos procissaõ vozo cantar o Zaramangoè, e traze vussè nos fofa que os pay Zozè nos fezo os cutambala, cuzambala cuyè nunas minueta; agora se vozo vem zangana se naõ vem zangana vussè homo Zambiapum tatè muitos anos.⁵⁶

Even if this celebration did not take place, it is certainly based on the fact that the blacks of Lisbon did indeed celebrate the feast of the Rosary and other Catholic feasts. The false letter may be based on the fact that the blacks of Lisbon may have announced their forthcoming celebrations (but orally, since most were illiterate), calling on all their *irmãos* (brothers and sisters but also confraternity members) to join in the feast. As James H. Sweet has stated, “the letter still reveals a deep understanding of specific African national differences—in language, music, dance, and religion.”⁵⁷ The letter, for example, imitates a herald (*pregoeiro*), which was an office in Portuguese confraternities.⁵⁸ In this sense, it alludes to the fact that confraternities convoke their own members and other confraternities to celebrate with them. Moreover, as Sweet adds, “an invented letter of invitation, written by a Portuguese, would represent more powerful evidence of Central African cultural vibrancy in Lisbon than one actually written by an Angolan.”⁵⁹ The figure of the ceremonial kings is also taken from reality, as we saw in the example from Braga.

In this essay, we have seen black dancers and musicians performing their Afro-Christian identity in civic-religious festivals in early modern Spain and Portugal. The Spanish texts analyzed here showed blacks performing before the sovereign, especially on Christian holidays, while Portuguese texts only show blacks performing in religious festivals. Although the texts do not show it, Portuguese state, church and city authorities also allowed these festivals for the same reason Spanish ones did, namely in order to help blacks bear their “work with greater joy and better bear their captivity,” as Ortiz de Zuñiga states. Yet, as ethnographers Peter Stallybrass and Allon White contend, these festive performances constituted transformative practices in which Afro-Iberians celebrated and formed their collective group identity. The difference between the seemingly more austere Spanish examples and the more pompous Portuguese ones may very well be due to the fact at the time these events took place in Portugal, in comparison to the time those in Spain took place, Portugal had a greater African presence. In sum, this essay has shown that when blacks participated in religious and secular celebrations in early modern Spain and Portugal, they did it “according to their [ancestral] customs,” as the black character in my opening epigraph proclaims; performing and forming their Afro-Christian identity before and among their black counterparts and broader European audiences.

NOTES

1. José Daniel Rodrigues da Costa, *Pequena peça intitulada o Caes do Sudré* (Lisbon: José Aquino Bulhoens, 1791), 10. All translation are my own unless otherwise noted.
2. “Ordenanzas de la cofradía de los cristianos negros de Barcelona” (Barcelona, March 20, 1445). Archive of the Crown of Aragon, Reg. 3298, fol. 5r/v. Reproduced in Próspero Bofarull y Mascaré, ed., *Colección de documentos inéditos de la corona de Aragón* (Barcelona: José Eusebio Monfort, 1851), VIII: 463-471. On the origin and nature of medieval confraternities, see, for example, Catherine Vincent, *Les confréries médiévales dans le royaume de France: XIIIe-XVe siècles* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1994). Most medieval and early modern confraternities were exclusively for men or women, but *St. Jaume* explicitly welcomed men, women and children, which was a common practice among national confraternities.
3. As cited in Bofarull y Mascaré VIII: 467.
4. On Corpus Christi, see, for example, Miri Rubin, *Corpus Christi: The Eucharist in Late Medieval Culture* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1991), esp. 164-287.
5. This pageantry increased in volume as the Eucharist became a central concern of the Catholic Church during the post-Tridentine Counter-Reformation.
6. Municipal Archive of Seville, Cuaderno de Actas Capitulares, June 27, 1497. Qtd. in José Gestoso y Pérez, *Curiosidades antiguas de Sevilla* (Seville: El Correo de Andalucía, 1910), II: 101. Queen Isabella was a significant promoter of Corpus Christi celebrations in Spain (“bien sabía su merced quel tenía cargo de fazer salir los juegos y danças quando la Reyna nra. sra. mandase fazer la fiesta del cuerpo de nro Señor” / “your lordships [the city council] well know how [the mayor] has order to arrange for the performances and dances when the Queen our lady orders the celebration of the feast of the Body of Our Lord” (qtd. *ibid.*).
7. See Bofarull y Mascaré VIII: 467.
8. *Compromisso da irmandade de Nossa Senhora do Rosário dos homens pretos* (Lisbon, 1565), fols. 6v-7r. National Library of Portugal, Lisbon, Portugal, MS 151. The first Confraternity of the Rosary was founded by Dominicans and was meant “to rid the poor and illiterate population of pagan belief” (Elizabeth W. Kiddy, “*Congados, Calunga, Cadombe: Our Lady of the Rosary in Minas Gerais, Brazil*” [*Luso-Brazilian Review* 37.1 (2000): 47-61], 58). Lisbon’s Rosary confraternity dated back to the early fifteenth century. Blacks were originally admitted into the Portuguese confraternity, but in 1460, they established their own branch. Unlike *St. Jaum*, this branch was originally only for men (“homens”).
9. Didier Lahon, “Da redução da alteridade a consagração da diferença: as irmandades negras em Portugal (séculos XVI-XVIII),” *Projeto História* 44 (2012): 53-83; Iván Armenteros Martínez, “De hermandades y procesiones: la cofradía de esclavos y libertos negros de *Sant Jaume* de Barcelona y la asimilación de la negritud en la Europa premoderna (siglos XV-XVI),” *Clio: Revista de Pesquisa Histórica* 29.2 (2011): n/p; Christine Delaigue and Aurelia Martín Casares, “The Evangelization of Freed and Slave Black Africans in Renaissance Spain: Baptism, Marriage, and Ethnic Brotherhoods,” *History of Religions* 52.3 (2013): 214-235.
10. Isidoro Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de “Los Negros” de Sevilla: etnicidad, poder y sociedad en 600 años de historia* (Seville: U of Seville/Government of Andalucía, 1997), 59-67.
11. Bernard Vincent, “Les Confréries de noirs dans la Péninsule Ibérique.” In David González Cruz, ed., *Religiosidad y costumbres populares en Iberoamérica* (Huelva: U of Huelva, 2000), 17-28. In a forthcoming book, Karen Graubart contends that this date is too early for a hospital for blacks.
12. Moreno 59-60. Like Lisbon’s black Rosary confraternity, this confraternity was also originally only for men (“negritos”). This confraternity is still in existence today, but since the 18th century, it is made up of European members (Moreno 337-475). It is still a masculine confraternity. hermandadlosnegritos.es
13. Moreno 73-76.
14. Félix González de León, “Hermandades y cofradías de negros en la Sevilla del XVI.” *Alma Mater Hispalense*. URL: http://personal.us.es/alporu/histsevilla/cofradias_negros_sevilla.htm. All these confraternities were exclusively for men.
15. Miguel Gual Camarena, “Una cofradía de negros libertos en el siglo XV,” *Estudios de Edad Media de la Corona de Aragón* 5 (1952): 457-466; Debra Blumenthal, “*La Casa dels Negres: Black African Solidarity in Late Medieval Valencia*,” in T. F. Earle and K.J.P. Lowe, eds., *Black Africans in Reinassance Europe* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2005), 225-246; Aurelia Martín Casares, “Free and

- Freed Black Africans in Granada in the Time of the Spanish Renaissance,” *ibid.*, 247-260; William D. Philips, *Slavery in Medieval and Early modern Iberia* (Philadelphia: U Pennsylvania P, 2014), 91-97; Lahon, *op. cit.*; António Brásio, *Os pretos em Portugal* (Lisbon: Agência Geral das Colônias, 1944), 73-104; Cristóvão Rodrigues de Oliveira, *Sumario em que brevemente se contém algumas coisas, assim eclesiásticas como seculares, que há na cidade de Lisboa* (ca. 1548), Augusto Vieira da Silva, ed., (Lisbon: Biblion, 1938), 59. For a relatively comprehensive list of early modern Afro-Iberian confraternities, see, for example, Patricia Mulvey, “The Lay Brotherhoods of Colonial Brazil: A History” (PhD Dissertation, New York University, 1976), 283-286.
16. See, for example, Bofarull y Mascaré VIII: 466-67; *Compromisso* fols. 5r-5v; and Moreno 66.
 17. Elizabeth W. Kiddy argues that medieval views on death and other confraternal elements resonated with sub-Saharan cosmologies (*Blacks of the Rosary: Memory and History in Minas Gerais, Brazil* [University Park: Penn State UP, 2005], 15-63). Indeed, medieval cosmology was closer to African cosmology than later European worldviews, for as Miri Rubin writes, “In the Middle Ages the language of religion provided a language of social relations, and of cosmic order; it described and explained the interweaving of natural and supernatural with human action” (1).
 18. See, for example, *Compromisso* fols. 9v-10r; also Kiddy, *Blacks of the Rosary* 15-63; and José Ramos Tinhorão, *As origens da canção urbana* (Lisbon: Caminho, 1997), 121-24.
 19. Lisbon’s back Rosary brotherhood took this practice from their Portuguese predecessors of the same name.
 20. We will see in other examples to follow how their audience was not only Iberian, but fully continental.
 21. Delaigue and Martín Casares 215.
 22. *Ibid.*
 23. *Anales eclesiásticos y seculares de la muy noble y muy leal ciudad de Sevilla que contienen sus más principales memorias desde el año de 1246 hasta el de 1671* (Madrid: Royal Printing Office, 1677), 374.
 24. This practice was instituted by Henry III of Castile (Moreno 43).
 25. “[T]hat the said Black men and women, and Mulatto men and women, may not, and cannot, have fiestas nor meetings, unless it is in your presence” (qtd. in Ortiz de Zuñiga 374). The *mayoral* acted as justice of the peace in the community and was usually referred to by a royal title, as Juan de Valladolid was (see Nicole von Germeten, *Black Blood Brothers: Confraternities and Social Mobility for Afro-Mexicans* [Gainesville: UP of Florida, 2006], 81; and Moreno 43).
 26. See, for example, Juan R. Castellanos, “El negro esclavo en el entremés del Siglo de Oro,” *Hispania* 44.1 (1961): 55-65, Baltasar Fra-Moliner, *La imagen de los negros en el teatro del Siglo de Oro* (Mexico City: Siglo Veintiuno Editores, 1995). Luis Quiñones de Benavente (1581-1651) is a lesser-known Golden Age author who wrote many short dramas (known as *entremeses*) with black characters. See, for example, Isidro de Robles, *Navidad y Corpus Christi, festejados por los mejores ingenios de España en diez y seis autos a lo divino, diez y seis loas y diez y seis entremeses: representados en esta corte y nunca hasta aora impresos* (Madrid: Ioseph Fernandez de Buendia, 1664), 128-132. It should not surprise us that Benavente was from Seville, although he was active in Madrid.
 27. See Teofilo F. Ruiz, *A king travels: festive traditions in late medieval and early modern Spain* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
 28. See José García Mercadal, ed., *Viajes de extranjeros por España y Portugal desde los tiempos más remotos hasta comienzos del siglo XX* (Valladolid: Junta de Castilla y León, 1999. 6 vols.), II: 454. “There were formerly Apostolic notaries and even episcopal notaries, duly commissioned by papal or episcopal letters, whose duty it was to receive documents relating to ecclesiastical or mixed affairs, especially in connection with benefices, foundations, and donations in favor of churches, wills of clerics, etc.” *Catholic Encyclopedia* (newadvent.org).
 29. *Anales del año ochenta y cinco, en el cual el rey católico de España don Felipe, con el príncipe don Felipe, su hijo, fue a Monzón a tener las cortes del reino de Aragón, compuestos por Enrique Cock, notario apostólico y arquero de la guardia del cuerpo real* (1585). Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Fond Espagnol MS 272. In José García Mercadal (II: 453-569), II: 486.
 30. As cited in García Mercadal II: 488.
 31. Kate Lowe, “The Stereotyping of Black Africans in Renaissance Europe” 37. In Earle and Lowe, 17-47.
 32. Trans. by Lowe.

33. “Pluriethnicidad, fiestas y poder: cofradías y fiestas andaluzas de negros como modelo para la América colonial,” in Antonio Garrido Aranda, ed., *El mundo festivo en España y América* (Córdoba: U of Córdoba, 2005, 169-188), 176.
34. As cited in García Mercadal II: 537.
35. In her forthcoming book, Graubart argues that the distinction between *moriscos* and sub-Saharan Africans developed as the latter grew in number in the fifteenth century.
36. Das Trachtenbuch fol. 168r. Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg, Germany, HS 22474/18.
37. As cited in García Mercadal II: 537.
38. “Ordinació y forma de la cerimonia y festa feta per la ciutat de Barcelona per rahó de la nova entrada del catholico e molt alt senyor don Phelip, rey y senyor nostre, vuy beneventuradament, fill de la bona memoria de don Charles, emperador y rey nostre, la qual entrada es la primera que ha feta en esta ciutat de Barcelona com a rey” (Barcelona City Archive, January 10 – March 1, 1564). Qtd. in Agustí Duran i Sanpere and Josep Sanabre, eds., *Llibre de les solemnitats de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Institució Patxot, 1947), II: 1-13. 10-11.
39. “Ordinació y forma de la cerimonia y festa feta per la ciutat de Barcelona per rahó de la nova entrada del catholico e molt alt senyor don Phelip, rey y senyor nostre, vuy beneventuradament, fill de la bona memoria de don Felip, rey y senyor nostre, la qual entrada es la primera que ha feta en esta ciutat de Barcelona com a rey” (Barcelona City Archive, May 14-18, 1599). Qtd. in Duran i Sanpere and Sanabre, II: 126-136. 133-34.
40. Moreno 26.
41. Anonymous, *Relación de la sortija que se hizo en 31 de marzo de 1590* (1590). National Library of Spain, MS 18638. Qtd. in José Simon Díaz, ed., *Relaciones breves de actos públicos celebrados en Madrid de 1541 a 1650* (Madrid: Instituto de Estudios Madrileños, 1982, 35-39), 37. Sayago is a town in Zamora.
42. *Relación de las fiestas celebradas en Valencia con motivo del casamiento de Felipe III*, Salvador Carreras Zacaras, ed. (Valencia: Acción Bibliográfica, 1926-1927). The original is at the U of Valencia, MS 550(1).
43. In this sense, Aurelia Martín Casares and Marga G. Barranco have studied literary representations of Afro-Iberian wedding ceremonies in early modern Spain in “Popular Literary Depictions of Black African Weddings in Early Modern Spain” (*Renaissance Reformation* 31.2 [2008]: 107-121).
44. Michael D. Bristol, *Carnival and Theater: Plebeian Culture and the Structure of Authority in Renaissance England* (New York: Methuen, 1985), 27; Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1986), 13-14; James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale UP, 1990) 183-201. My gratitude to Michelle Wibbelsman for her orientation on this topic.
45. Thomas Turino and James Lea, *Identity and the Arts in Diaspora Communities* (Warren: Harmonie Park Press, 2004), 8-10.
46. Anonymous, *Breve extracto do augustissimo triumpho, que a augusta Braga prepara em obsequio do Santissimo Sacramento* (Coimbra: Colegio das Artes da Companhia de Jesu, 1731), 2.
47. 3. The term *nação* may refer to the fact that sub-Saharan groups were often identified as national groups, akin to tribal affiliation in African cosmology (see Kiddy, *Blacks of the Rosary* 39-63). This is in line with European understanding of *nation* as “people, tribe, kin, genus, class, flock,” which was often a unifying characteristic of confraternities (Guido Zernatto, “Nation: The History of a Word,” *The Review of Politics* 6.3 [1944]: 351-66).
48. *Riscos iluminados de figurinhos de brancos e negros dos uzos do Riode Janeiro e Serro do Frio*, fol. 70r. National Library of Brazil, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Iconografia C.I.2.8.
49. *Missione in prattica: padri cappuccini ne Regni di Congo, Angola, et adiacenti*, MS 457, fol. 9r. Public Library of Turin, Italy. The verso of the same folio (9v) is a similar image of the same event.
50. Ibid.
51. See Cécile Fromont, *The Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of Kongo* (Chapel Hill: U North Carolina P, 2014), 1-20.
52. See José Ramos Tinhorão, *Os negros em Portugal: uma presença silenciosa* (Lisbon: Caminho, 1988) 201-205; also Tania Alkmim, “Falas e cores: um estudo sobre o português de negros e escravos no Brasil do século XIX,” in Laura do Carmo and Ivana Stolze Lima, eds., *História*

da língua nacional (Rio de Janeiro: Casa de Rui Barbosa, 2008, 247-64), 247-51; Nicholas R. Jones, *Staging Habla de Negros Radical Performances of the African Diaspora in Early Modern Spain* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2019).

53. The *Pamphlet's* title alludes to division of old Lisbon into two major districts, Bairro Alto to the north and Alfama to the south.
54. Anonymous, *Folheto de ambas Lisboa*s, no. 7 (Lisbon: Oficina de Música, 1730), 3. See James H. Sweet, "The Hidden Histories of African Lisbon," in Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Matt D. Child and James Sidbury, eds., *The Black Urban Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade* (Philadelphia: U of Pennsylvania P, 2013, 233-247), 243.
55. From Castelo de São Jorge de Mina (Elmina Castle) in the Portuguese Gold Coast, in present-day Ghana.
56. *Folheto*, no. 7, 4. Despite, or precisely because of its satirical distortions, this fragment may be a good example of the black speech non-black authors attributed to black characters and blacks themselves. Here, for example, *Senhor* (Lord, Mister) is rendered as *Seoro*, *Susana* (Susan) as *Zoana*, and *José* (Joseph) as *Zozè*. It also contains Bantu terms, such as *Zambiampum* (Great God/Lord/Spirit), *zarambagoè* (a type of song) and *cutambala* (music) (see Linda M. Heywood, "The Angolan-Afro-Brazilian Cultural Connections," in Sylvia R. Frey and Betty Wood, eds., *From Slavery to Emancipation in the Atlantic World* [London: Routledge, 1999, 9-23], 11-12; Dedier Lahon, "Esclavage, confréries noires, sainteté noire et pureté de sang au Portugal (XVIe et XVIIIe siècles)" [*Lusitania Sacra* 2.15 (2003): 119-162], 144-45; also Sweet, 243, 330nn43 and 44). On the *fofa* dance, see Peter Fryer, *Rhythms of Resistance: African Musical Heritage on Brazil* (Hanover: Wesleyan UP, 2000), 126-128.
57. 44.
58. Maria Helena da Cruz Coelho, "As confrarias medievais portuguesas: espaços de solidariedades na vida e na morte," in VV. AA., *Cofradías, gremios y solidariedades en la Europa medieval* (Pamplona: Government of Navarre, 1993, 149-184), 163.
59. 44.