

The Cultural Agency and Limits of Minority Groups in Early Modern Iberia: A Comparative Approach

25-26 June 2025
Universitat Autònoma de
Barcelona

CONVENORS

Diana Berruezo-Sánchez (ICREA/ U Autònoma de Barcelona)

Elizabeth Blakemore (U Autònoma de Barcelona)

Andrea Rueda Herrera (U Pablo de Olavide)



Open Call for Papers

Organised by the *Making of Blackness in Early Modern Spain: A Process of Cultural and Social Negotiation from the Bottom-Up* project and the *Cultural History of the Black African Diaspora in Early Modern Spain (BADEMS)* project, this two-day international and interdisciplinary conference seeks to bring together scholars researching minority groups who resided in early modern Iberia and its colonial territories, focusing on the cultural practices and cultural productions of these groups.

The aim of this conference is to create a dialogue between scholars working in separate but complementary fields, acknowledging the cultural agency of minority groups within early modern Iberia, while also being conscious of the challenges and limitations they faced. We wish to investigate what these cultural productions tell us about the experiences of marginalised communities within early modern Iberia, and how they inform our understanding of early formations of racial thinking and difference.

We will discuss the agency, cultural productions, and experiences of various minority groups who were racialised due to phenotypical, religious, cultural, linguistic, or geographical differences. We hope to consider groups such as the Afro-Hispanic diaspora, Hispanic Muslims, Jews, *moriscos*, *judeoconversos*, Roma communities, and indigenous communities, both within Iberia and the Americas.

It is also our hope that selected papers will recognise and incite conversation about the methodologies and challenges we face as scholars as we look for these figures within the archives and former cultural hubs, such as confraternities, the royal court, musical groups, and Afro-Catholic festivals. We aim to facilitate discussions about terminology, and what we mean when we talk about race and racialisation, ethnicity, Blackness, agency, and minorities in the early modern period. We also wish to recognise our own limitations as scholars who look at these groups, acknowledging the obstacles that we face and, on occasion, are unable to overcome.



We invite scholars across all disciplines - particularly, but not limited to, cultural (art and music) scholars, historians, anthropologists, premodern critical race theorists, and literary scholars - to submit paper proposals on the following topics or areas of investigation:

- ▶ Case studies of individual artists, dancers, musicians, and writers, or other areas of cultural creations.
- ▶ Collectives and communities of artists, including musical groups, theatrical troupes, confraternities, etc.
- ▶ Cultural productions and performativities in diasporic communities within and outside the Iberian Peninsula.
- ▶ Ephemeral cultural expressions, such as festivities, orality, or demonstrations.
- ▶ Critical and/or decolonial epistemologies in the (cultural) archives.
- ▶ Social spaces, patronage, supporting networks, and modes of collective organisation enabling cultural production, exchange of ideas, identity discourses, etc.
- ▶ Methodological challenges when conducting archival work on early modern racialized groups

Panellists are invited to present a 15-20 minute paper in person at the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona on either the 25 or 26 June 2025. We welcome papers in English, Spanish, Catalan, Portuguese, and French, with the aim to promote inclusivity and allow for in-depth conversations to take place between a group of international scholars.

Conference panellists will also be invited to contribute to an edited volume, which will be published in English by Routledge as part of the *Junctures: New Approaches in Cultural Studies series*. This volume will focus on the question of how the cultural practices and productions explored inform our understanding on the making of Blackness and race while considering early formations of racial thinking. Therefore, the selected papers will address questions about the making of Blackness, either explicitly focusing on Black diasporas or investigating other groups that interacted with notions of Blackness



and/or Black diasporas. There will be a selection process after the conference and a first draft of the paper will be expected by the end of September 2025. If you wish to be considered for this publication opportunity, please let us know at the time of submitting your abstract.

No fee is required to participate in this event. Participants are responsible for their own expenses. Letters of support for external funding requests can be issued upon request.

Paper abstracts (250-300 words) as well as a short biography (150 words) can be submitted here: <https://forms.gle/pfiyoM2Wg7ZdXZn39>

The deadline for submitting proposals is **15 March 2025**, with applicants informed of the committee's decision by **20 April 2025**.

Any queries can be sent to: **makingofblackness@gmail.com**