THE VILLANCICOS DE NEGROS IN MANUSCRIPT 50 OF THE BIBLIOTECA GERAL DA UNIVERSIDADE DE COIMBRA: A CASE STUDY OF BLACK CULTURAL AGENCY AND RACIAL REPRESENTATION IN 17TH-CENTURY PORTUGAL

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ABSTRACT

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The development of Renaissance Portugal was greatly impacted by the transatlantic slave trade during the colonial period, as the country emerged as a major European power not only financially but also culturally. It is well known that Portuguese musical practices during this period, especially with regard to sacred polyphony, resembled those of other European cultures, however, there is more to this narrative. Knowing that the transatlantic slave trade was one of the major consequences of colonialism, and that by the 16th-century Black Africans represented more than 10% of the population in Lisbon and other cities in Portugal makes it crucial to consider Black Africans as major agents of cultural transfer.

As the groundbreaking work of historians Kate Lowe, A. C. de C. M. Saunders and José Tinhorão demonstrates, the presence of Africans had a significant impact on Portuguese social and cultural life. Contemporary written and visual sources (such as paintings) demonstrate that, for instance, music from sub-Saharan Africa was performed in a variety of situations and on different levels of society: in the squares and taverns of early modern Lisbon, in religious processions around the country, and at the Portuguese court.

The primary aim of this thesis is to explore the musical activities of Africans in early modern Portugal, emphasizing their influence towards the practice of the villancico. To contextualize the question of how Black Africans have influenced the practice of music in Portugal, I discuss the social, cultural and legal role of Black Africans within the society. Through a thorough stylistic and formal comparison of the *Villancicos de Negro* to other
villancicos of the same collection that represent other ethnic groups or an unspecified type, I will seek to demonstrate that the *Villancicos de Negro* share a common stylistic and formal profile. Moreover, I will examine the specific issue of representation of race, focusing on what the works can potentially tell us about how Black Africans were perceived within Portuguese society and how they were represented in the liturgical context of Christmas celebrations, during which these villancicos were frequently performed.

I propose that the African slaves brought to Portugal during the fifteenth century not only had a major role in development of the society by contributing and participating in the practice of music in Portugal, but also influenced the practice of Portuguese villancicos.
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INTRODUCTION

The exploration of Africa, the establishment of trade posts along the West African coast and the African and transatlantic slave trade during the 15th- and 16th centuries had a great impact on the development of Renaissance Portugal both culturally and economically. Human trafficking in particular, although horrific, not only provided profits, but led to the exploration of African lands, unknown to the Portuguese, but known to Black Africans.1 As early as the mid-14th century, Black Africans were brought in significant numbers to the Iberian Peninsula as slaves in exchange for imprisoned Moors2 from northern Africa.3

By the mid-16th century, Black Africans made up about ten percent of the population in Lisbon and other major cities in Portugal, thus their presence had a significant impact on Portuguese social and cultural life. Contemporary written and visual sources (such as paintings) demonstrate that, for instance, music from sub-Saharan Africa was performed in a variety of situations and in different levels of society: in the squares and taverns of early modern Lisbon, in religious processions around the country, and at the Portuguese court. This evidence alone suggests that Black Africans were major agents of musical transfer, an agency, however, that is complicated by their largely marginalized and tenuous position in society. Black Africans, as agents, were often silenced, controlled and restricted, due to their marginalized position. Despite this position, however, I assert, that one can analyze their cultural activities, specifically their

1 It is important to clarify at this point that I will capitalize the term “Black” and “White” when referring to people, however, such terms will not be capitalized when working as racial signifiers.
2 The term “Moors” refers here to people from Northern Africa associated with the Muslim religion. For an outline of the various meanings of this term, see my discussion below.
3 The Moors enslaved those who were shipwrecked along the coast of North Africa and would trade them for Moors imprisoned on the Iberian Peninsula.
musical activities, and explore their contribution as cultural agents. Representing a significant
group in the fabric of Portuguese society, it is certainly plausible that Black Africans affected
white attitudes and perceptions, thus, it is important to ask how Black Africans influenced
cultural norms.

This study will explore black musical agency and its cultural contexts in 16th- and 17th-century Portugal. In the first chapter I outline the presence of sub-Saharan Africans in Portugal by discussing their legal and social status. In the following chapter, I outline what is currently known about the circumstances and functions of the musical activities of Africans in early modern Portugal, building on sources discussed by A. C. de C. M. Saunders, Kate Lowe and other historians. In the third chapter, I will examine the villancicos de negro as a musical genre representing Black Africans and their musical practices. This genre provides an important source for the present study, as these villancicos often functioned not only as a representation of the rural population of early modern Portugal and Spain, but also of ethnic minorities such as Gypsies, Moors, and Black Africans, through the systematic use of specific literary dialects, vocabulary, and through the representation of ethnic traditions of music and dance, often based on racial stereotypes. In the last chapter I will specifically discuss a substantial collection of 17th-century villancicos de negro from the monastery of Santa Cruz de Coimbra, using them as a case study.

In scholarship on early modern Portugal, Spain, and New Spain, the villancicos de negro have been a subject of controversy among scholars. For instance, to date it is disputed who performed them: Black musicians or rather White musicians acting as Black musicians? Earlier scholars, particularly Robert Stevenson, have endorsed the first interpretation and viewed
villancicos de negro as straightforward evidence of black musical practices, while more recently Geoff Baker, Drew Edward Davies and Andrew Cashner have challenged this assumption, viewing villancicos de negro as representations of Black people by White composers and performers.4

In this study I re-examine the main issues raised in this controversy, notably the question of whether the villancicos de negro reflected African musical practices, as well as the issues of black agency, and racial representation and appropriation, by analyzing an important, yet little-studied repertoire of villancicos from 17th-century Portugal, the Manuscript 50 of the Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra, a collection that was compiled at the Monastery of Santa Cruz in Coimbra, one of the most important Portuguese musical centers during the 17th and 18th centuries. This collection contains many ‘ethnic’ and ‘black’ villancicos, illustrating views on the role of Black Africans within Portuguese society and also raising the question of a possible participation of Africans in the religious life of this monastery. In my analysis of these villancicos de negro, I focus on musical parameters such as prevailing rhythmic, melodic, harmonic and textural patterns, such as the frequent call and response between an unaccompanied soloist and the full ensemble. Moreover, I also examine the literary dimension of these pieces by focusing on the linguistic representation of Black people through the use of a standardized literary dialect. Through a thorough stylistic and formal comparison of the villancicos de negro to other villancicos of the same collection that represent other ethnic groups

or an unspecified type, I will seek to demonstrate that the black villancicos share a common
stylistic and formal profiles.

Additionally, I will examine the specific issue of representation of race, focusing on what
the works can potentially tell us about how Black Africans were perceived within Portuguese
society and how they were represented in the liturgical context of Christmas celebrations, during
which these villancicos were frequently performed.
CHAPTER 1. THE BEGINNING OF THE TRANSATLANTIC SLAVE TRADE

In 1415, D. João I, King of Portugal, led an enormous military expedition – comprised of 19,000 combatants, 1,700 sailors, and 200 ships – to conquer Ceuta, a city located in the North coast of Africa.\(^5\) This event, considered the beginning of the Portuguese maritime expansion, marked an important turn in the history of Portugal.\(^6\) Following this event, an exploration voyage to Africa was ordered by D. Henrique in the year 1416. However, the most significant maritime exploration took place in the year of 1434, with the discovery of a passage around the Cape Bojador under the command of mariner Gil Eanes.\(^7\)

These very first Portuguese expeditions were executed with the intention of exploration, that is, to gather information regarding the lands of Africa, unknown to Europeans.\(^8\) The explorers assembled information regarding the resources found, as they were looking for gold, which, according to what was believed, existed in abundance in Africa.\(^9\) However, from 1441 onward, the focus of Portuguese explorers shifted to the trade of slaves from the coast of West Africa.\(^10\) From that point on, millions of slaves, most of whom came from sub-Saharan Africa, were brought to Portugal and were then sold to other European powers.

It is easy to see how this slave trade significantly affected the ethnic, cultural and social diversity in Portugal. As Kate Lowe has recently shown, there were several significant ethnic groups living in early modern Lisbon besides the native Portuguese population, the two most

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\(^6\) Ibid.
\(^7\) Ibid., 139.
\(^8\) Ibid.
\(^9\) Ibid.
\(^10\) Ibid.
substantial being Jews who had converted to Christianity, and Black Africans. Jews had been living in Portugal for centuries. However, in the late 15th century, they were forced to convert to Christianity, otherwise they were threatened by expulsion. Additionally, new laws were created and promoted, insisting on the idea of the integration of these conversos within the society – mostly through intermarriage and dispersed housing – as many of them were still accused of remaining faithful to their foreign religious practices. Policies became stricter after the institution of the Inquisition in 1536 under King João III, as these conversos were often subject to interrogations. In spite of the large population of conversos, Lowe names Black Africans as the numerically most significant non-Portuguese group living in Lisbon during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

While slavery in general had been an established practice for quite a long time, as records from the Middle Ages reveal, the slave trade between Portugal and West Africa began around mid-15th century. While many of the Black people brought from African lands were under a master’s rule throughout their life, some were eventually freed. As a consequence, Black Africans living in Portugal could be slaves, freedmen or free-born.

12 Ibid., 59
13 Ibid., 60
14 Ibid.
15 Ibid., 61.
16 Ibid.
17 Ibid.
Estimated Black African Population in Portugal during the 15th and 16th Centuries

The exact number of African slaves during the fifteenth, sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in Portuguese lands will most likely never be known. Many sources that could have provided reliable data were destroyed during the earthquake of 1755. Just like many other sources, the records of the Casa da Guiné and the Casa dos Escravos were among the documents that did not survive the 1755 tragedy. Yet, a rough estimate of the Black population in Portugal can be made, for instance, based on accounts by contemporary visitors to Portugal. Although, during the end of the 14th century and during the 15th century, the number of African Slaves in the Iberian Peninsula was small, that soon came to change. The first Portuguese censuses, dating from 1527-32, showed that the kingdom of Portugal had about 282,734 fagos, with an estimated population of around a million and a half, while Lisbon had from about 50,000 to 65,000 inhabitants. In 1551, Cristóvão Rodrigues de Oliveira estimated that there were near 10,000 Africans living in Lisbon, representing about 10% of the population of that city. The result of Rodrigues de Oliveira’s census showed that Lisbon had 100,000 inhabitants, among which there were 9,950 slaves, a number that did not include the mulato population, nor the

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19 Institution responsible for the trading issues and slave trade in the Age of Discoveries.
20 Institution responsible of managing the traffic of slaves in the Age od Discoveries.
21 Ibid.
22 Portuguese term to refer to a household or place inhabited by a single family.
24 Saunders, A Social History, 19. Saunders describes Cristóvão Rodrigues de Oliveira as the individual in charge of the semi-official census for the Archbishop of Lisbon.
freedmen of African descent. Moreover, Lowe cites another estimate dating from 1578, stating that “one fifth, or 20% of Lisbon’s population of 250,000, were Black Africans.” While she emphasizes that these numbers represent an estimate, she also discusses several other accounts that portray Lisbon’s ethnic diversity in terms of qualitative rather than quantitative description, affirming that they often came with stereotypes and exaggerations. Lowe claims that Lisbon was frequently characterized as “the mother of Black people.” She writes: “It was said there were ‘so many Black slaves that [Portuguese] cities appear like games of chess, with as many black as whites,’ an exaggeration that was often repeated.” All in all, the accounts suggest that there was barely a house in Lisbon that did not have at least the presence of a female slave to do the specific work that the Portuguese preferred not to do.

In the 16th century, Lisbon constituted one of the cities in all of Europe with the most concentration of slaves, surpassed only, perhaps, by Naples in terms of numbers, which according to records from 17th century, had 20,000 slaves within a population of 275,000.

In regard to locations outside of Lisbon, numbers of Black people are much harder to establish for the 15th and early-16th centuries, since specific records are lacking. However, Saunders provides us with a map that indicates places where Black slaves and freedman are documented between 1441 and 1530.

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28 Ibid.
29 Ibid.
30 Ibid.
31 Ibid.
32 Jorge Fonseca, Escravos e Senhores na Lisboa Quinhentista, (Lisbon, Portugal: Edições Colibri, 2010), 102-104.
33 Saunders, A Social History, 50.
Figure 1: Places where Black Africans reportedly lived, according to Saunders.\textsuperscript{34}

In this map, one can observe that Black slaves were present in most regions of the country from north to south. Outside of Lisbon they were first registered in the southern city of Lagos in 1441.

For the period after the 1530s, Saunders has documented sources of information that allow for a better estimate of where these people lived within the country.\textsuperscript{35} Among these sources are parish

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid., 51.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid.
registers of births, marriages, and deaths, and lists of people buried by the Santa Casa da Misericórida, a religious institution founded in 1498.\textsuperscript{36} Although Saunders affirms that these records are often incomplete, he believes that they contain enough detail to estimate where Black people lived in the mid-16\textsuperscript{th} century. Saunders thus concludes that Black slaves and freedmen lived in all Portuguese regions, and that, more specifically, a larger number lived in the southern parts of the country.\textsuperscript{37}

Regarding the geographic origin of African slaves, it is unfortunate that sources only rarely make references to them. However, it is possible to make some general observations. African slaves were sold on the coasts of Africa in European trading-posts. The specific places mentioned in sources, according to Jorge Fonseca, refer to geographic origins or ethnicities, such as “pretos de Guiné” [blacks from Guinea], “cafres\textsuperscript{38}” da costa de África [“cafres” of the coast of Africa], Cape Verde, S. Tomé, Benim, Manicongo, Angola and Mozambique.\textsuperscript{39} Additionally, one is able to infer that many of the Africa slaves who arrived in Portugal came from Portuguese trading-posts in the Guinean coast – from Arguim and Cape Verde – São Tomé and the north of Africa.\textsuperscript{40}

\textsuperscript{36} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{37} Ibid., 59.
\textsuperscript{38} Offensive term to designate a person of dark skin
\textsuperscript{39} Fonseca, \textit{Escravos e Senhores}, 105.
\textsuperscript{40} Ibid., 122.
The Use of Different Terms Referring to Slaves from Sub-Saharan Africa

It is relevant to note in this context that in the writings regarding the subject, the sources refer to the people brought from Africa in general terms as they were not concerned with making a distinction between individual ethnicities, thus making it difficult for us today to be completely sure to whom they were referring. Thus, Black Africans were referred to, in a generalized way, as *almas* (souls), and later *negro* and *preto* to denote every racial type of dark-skinned people.

To be more specific, Mario Maestri points out that until the 11th century, European working slaves were called by names derived from Latin, such as *servus*, *manicipum*, *criatio* or *hominès*, in the Iberian Peninsula. However, after the encounter of Muslims and Christians on the Iberian Peninsula, slaves were often labeled as Moors, a term that was initially used to refer to the people of Mauritania until the mid-15th century. Thus, Moor became the term used in Portugal to describe those who were forced to work under their masters’ rules.

Such terminology was eventually replaced by the word “slave” after the systematic introduction of Black Africans to Portugal. According to Maestri, the first uses of this term are documented for the years around 1450, right after the traffic of Black Africans had begun on a larger scale, although this term seems to have only been popular within erudite circles, as the

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41 Tinhoro, *Negros em Portugal*, 45.
42 Ibid., 71.
44 Ibid., 37.
45 Ibid.
general population still used to the term Moor.\textsuperscript{46} Thus, the first Black Africans who arrived in Portugal were called “Mouros negros,” that is, Black Moors.\textsuperscript{47}

Regarding the use of the term “negro” [black] in Portugal, Maestri points out that it was a term that referred to all individuals with a darker skin, here also including ‘Moors’ from northern Africa.\textsuperscript{48} In the beginning of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, as more and more Black Africans were brought to Portugal with darker skin than the ‘Moors’ from northern Africa, they were referred to in Portuguese as “homem preto” [Black men] and “mulher preta” [Black women], and later just “preto” [the masculine form of black] or “preta” [the feminine form of black].\textsuperscript{49} Thus, the word “slave,” which was already in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century much in use, came to define only the enslaved position of the people. Therefore, at points we encounter, as further distinctions only, the terms “escravos pretos” [Black slaves], “escravos negros” [Black slaves of darker skin], “escravos mouros” [Moor slaves] and “escravos brancos” [White slaves].\textsuperscript{50}

As it is only occasionally clear what geographic or political regions individuals brought from African came from, I will in the following discussion refer to “African slaves” or “Black Africans,” when I talk about individuals brought to Portugal from the 14th through 18th centuries from sub-Saharan Africa, unless more accurate distinctions can be made in specific contexts.

\textsuperscript{46} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{47} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{48} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{49} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{50} Ibid.
CHAPTER 2. BLACK AFRICANS IN THE SOCIETY OF EARLY MODERN PORTUGAL: LEGAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ASPECTS

As previously discussed, Black Africans were present in Portugal in almost every sector of society. It is now crucial to discuss the specific contexts of their social and cultural agency in order to achieve a better understanding of the cultural significance of the villancicos de negro analyzed in the following chapters. More generally, it is also important to discuss such issues in order to recognize the importance of Black Africans in Portuguese society, a presence often reflected in many records. Hence, the present chapter aims to clarify the role of Black Africans in society, their way of living and their rights by analyzing a variety of existing records.

Ownership and Legal Rights

In Portugal, slaves were owned by citizens of almost every class, something that was rare in Europe outside of the Iberian Peninsula. Even the Spanish seemed to be surprised that people of lower class in Portugal owned slaves.\textsuperscript{51} Although slaves were worth a fair amount – an amount that depended on their physical capacities, gender, and age – and ownership was generally associated with wealthy classes – aristocracy, priests, religious institutions, government officials and professional men – poorer people were also able to afford slaves, since sick slaves could be acquired cheaply from the Casa dos Escravos.\textsuperscript{52}

\textsuperscript{51} Saunders, \textit{A Social History}, 62-63.
\textsuperscript{52} Ibid., 63.
In his study *Escravos e Senhores na Lisboa Quinhentista*, Jorge Fonseca provides the reader with a table that indicates for how much money adult slaves were sold during the 16th century, showing that from the beginning of the century to the end, the prices increased by about four times. Fonseca shows that from the beginning of the 16th century to about 1530, a captive could cost from 6500 to about 10,800 *reais*.\(^53\) In the next decades to 1580, prices increased: from 20,000 to 35,000 *reais*, and from then until the end of the century from 16,000 to 27,000 *reais*.\(^54\)

Many institutions were associated with slavery throughout Portugal. Most of the nobility employed slaves as domestic servants and Saunders also demonstrates that slaves working in domestic functions were rare outside of houses of nobility and religious institutions.\(^55\) Additionally, slaves were also employed in hospitals, as work near the ill was notoriously dangerous.\(^56\) In fact, records exist showing that D. Manuel I of Portugal (1469-1521) annually offered a number of slaves to the hospital of Todos-os-Santos in Lisbon, as well as to other hospitals of the country.\(^57\) Slaves could also be found doing agricultural work, encompassing many rustic chores, and within the urban centers they performed a variety of occupations.\(^58\)

The reason why Portuguese masters preferred slaves over free White wage laborers cannot be explained with all certainty, however, tentative explanations can be offered, using contextual evidence. Saunders, for instance, suggests that some slaves were acquired for reasons motivated by social status and representation, as servants of African descent would add an exotic


\(^{54}\) Ibid. For a general comparison of the prices practiced in Portugal during the last decades of the 16th century: 1 *alqueire* (approximately 14 liters, as it varied from region to region within the country) of wheat was worth between 200 and 300 *reais*.


\(^{56}\) Ibid., 67.

\(^{57}\) Ibid.

\(^{58}\) Ibid., 71-73.
elegance to a household, while others preferred Black slaves as they seemed to be less expensive to obtain than White slaves to obtain.\textsuperscript{59} Another reason often cited is the fact that slaves seemed to be more under the masters’ control and thus forced to accomplish tasks that free laborers would often refuse to do.\textsuperscript{60}

In the middle of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century, Portuguese society worked within a hierarchical framework that already had a place for slaves upon their arrival. In this framework, the king marked the top of the hierarchy, while slaves were at the bottom.\textsuperscript{61} This order was maintained and further modified according to specific privileges based on occupation, sex, age and descent.\textsuperscript{62} The majority of the legislation on slavery during the reigns of D. João II and D. Manuel were compiled in the \textit{Ordenações Manuelinas}, the first edition of which appeared in 1514, followed by a revised edition in 1521, which became the definitive law book for the remainder of the century.\textsuperscript{63} These ordinances were further modified in later, supplementary legislation. The \textit{Leis Extravagantes}, a collection of laws up to 1569 edited by Duarte Nunes Leão, is an example of this development.\textsuperscript{64}

Although slaves were members of Portuguese society, their rights were highly restricted, as they were not considered citizens of the respective administrative unit (e.g., town), in which they lived.\textsuperscript{65} There were several things that they were not allowed to do, for instance, they could not testify in court, even though a judge could decide to call them upon certain circumstances.

\textsuperscript{59} Ibid., 85-86.
\textsuperscript{60} Ibid., 85.
\textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 113.
\textsuperscript{62} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{63} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{64} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{65} Saunders, \textit{A Social History}, 116.
They could not make a will or be a tutor or guardian to any orphan or minor, and although they were allowed to have a *peculium* (i.e., money and goods for personal use), they still were not the legal owners of such property. However, with the consent of the master, a Christian slave could in fact buy his freedom with his *peculium*. Slaves were legally responsible for their actions, that is, if any crime was committed, they would have to answer to the royal and municipal courts.

Saunders points out that a slave could achieve his/her freedom in two different ways, namely by running away from his/her master, or by waiting until his/her master freed him/her. To obtain their freedom letter and legally become a *forro*, the captive always depended on his/her master’s wish, and such could be achieved with no costs or be subject to a payment that would be negotiated by both parties. The wish to free a slave could be expressed during the master’s lifetime or in a will. There were several reasons that would led masters to free their slaves. Jorge Fonseca suggests that the main issue is related to the wish to recompense the captive for his/her service and fidelity. For instance, Fonseca discusses the account of Isabel Caldeira, a widow who freed her 18-year-old slave Bartolomeu, because he was born in her household and because she had cared for him as if he had been her own child. Other masters, not as sympathetic, would free their captives because they were no longer useful, because of their age or due to illness.

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66 Ibid.
67 Ibid.
68 Ibid., 117.
69 Ibid., 134.
70 Portuguese term referring to freedmen.
72 Ibid., 397.
73 Ibid., 394.
74 Ibid.
75 Ibid., 395.
Regarding illegally obtained freedom, one can assume that even though some fugitive slaves may have been successful in escaping, most had no chance of doing so. Due to the geographical position of Portugal, running away was not an easy task for the captives, with the Atlantic ocean on its western side, the Mediterranean sea on its southern side and Spain in the east. Spain was a country that practiced the same slave working regime and extradited all discovered fugitives. Thus, the most effective and secure form of obtaining freedom was through manumission.

Linguistic Elements Retained from Native African Languages

As a consequence of the forced transfer of Black slaves to Portugal, many elements of African culture were not only brought to Portugal, but were also retained within Portuguese lands, leading to cultural hybridization. At this point, it is important to briefly refer to two theoretical concepts that are important for my discussion, namely ‘cultural transfer’ and ‘hybridization.’ The term ‘cultural transfer’ was coined by Michel Espagne in the 1980s and developed into an autonomous field of study in the following years. For Espagne, when a cultural object passes from one context to the another it results in a transformation of its meaning. The first consequence is the mix of cultural elements among or between different parties, thus one is not simply transporting those elements from one context into the other, but

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76 Fonseca, Escravos e Senhores, 322.
77 Ibid.
78 Saunders, A Social History, 134.
79 Saunders, A Social History, 89.
rather transforming them.\textsuperscript{81} Consequently, studies of such transfers should not limit themselves to a comparison of different elements between cultures, but should pursue a search for the cultural mixing and hybridization as a result of such transfers.\textsuperscript{82}

One of the elements that Black Africans brought to Portugal was their language. Saunders argues that many of the people brought from African lands spoke a form of Portuguese that was characterized by morphologic and syntactic adaptations reflecting the languages of their respective homeland.\textsuperscript{83} As for levels of competence in speaking Portuguese, this obviously varied as there were those who learned Portuguese after their arrival, while others, born in the country, had a different level of fluency and thus an opportunity to learn to write and read in Portuguese as well.\textsuperscript{84}

African slaves were exposed to standard Portuguese, the evidence for which is suggested by the existence of a non-standard form of Africanized Portuguese, which occasionally seemed to have been difficult for White people to comprehend.\textsuperscript{85} Among the evidence presented by Saunders are Portuguese poems and plays written and published from 1455 onward, revealing alterations of phonetic and syntactic elements of standard Portuguese that were made in a consistent way. This way of speaking came to be referred as \textit{fala da Guiné} [Guinea-speech] or \textit{fala dos negros} [black-speech].\textsuperscript{86} This took place not only in Portugal, as Castilian authors were also portrayed Black people as speaking a related form of Portuguese.\textsuperscript{87} Additionally, Saunders

\begin{thebibliography}{99}
\item\textsuperscript{81} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{82} Ibid.
\item\textsuperscript{83} Saunders, \textit{A Social History}, 89.
\item\textsuperscript{84} Ibid., 98-99.
\item\textsuperscript{85} Ibid., 99.
\item\textsuperscript{86} Ibid., 99.
\item\textsuperscript{87} Ibid., 99.
\end{thebibliography}
argues that another important evidence for the existence of such languages is the fact that its morphological and syntactical characteristics resemble Portuguese-based creole languages spoken by Black Africans in the Western parts of Africa today.\(^{88}\) One of the main features of such language is the simplification of the grammar.\(^{89}\) For instance, the uninflected pronouns come to be used instead of other personal forms, that is, \(a\ mi\ [me]\) replaces \(eu\ [I].\(^{90}\)

Pronunciation is another aspect of Portuguese that was changed, as it is altered in order to make words easier for Black Africans to pronounce.\(^{91}\) For example, final consonants are often omitted, particularly “\(r\),” “\(s\)” and “\(i\),” or may be retained when adding a final vowel.\(^{92}\) Additionally, consonants in clusters seemed to have been also problematic, thus they were avoided by reducing the cluster to only one consonant or by introducing a vowel between the consonants.\(^{93}\) In this particular idiom it is also common to have “\(v\)” replaced by “\(b\),” and confusions between the letters “\(r\)” and “\(i\)” or “\(r\)” and “\(d\)” occur.\(^{94}\) Lastly, diphthongs were simplified, and there seems to be even more omissions of syllables than already existed in the Portuguese language.\(^{95}\) Most of these features can be observed in a passage from the famous Portuguese writer, Gil Vicente (c. 1465-1536), in his work “Clerigo da Beyra,” dated 1527.\(^{96}\)

\(^{88}\) Ibid., 99-100.  
\(^{89}\) Ibid., 100.  
\(^{90}\) Ibid.  
\(^{91}\) Ibid.  
\(^{92}\) Ibid.  
\(^{93}\) Ibid.  
\(^{94}\) Ibid.  
\(^{95}\) Ibid.  
\(^{96}\) Ibid.
According to Jorge Fonseca, this form of Portuguese language used was a *pidgin* that was imitated by the Portuguese population when trying to speak with Black Africans and particularly used as a way to ridicule them.\(^7\) On the other hand, even though Black Africans spoke a form of Portuguese that was not standard, they were able to understand “pure” Portuguese and even able to speak it correctly.\(^8\) According to an anecdote cited by Fonseca, the Black slave Jácome Feio, a shawm player in the service of duke of Bragança, encountered some farmers in Vila Viçosa. One of the farmers asked his name in a form of *fala da Guiné*, to which the musician responded in standard Portuguese: “What do you say to a bad villain who cannot speak Portuguese and wants to speak black?”\(^9\)

Regarding the more specific origins of this type of dialect apparently spoken by Black Africans, there are various theories.\(^10\) One theory suggest that this was merely a simplified form of Portuguese, while another theory posits it was a *pidgin* language created by the Portuguese to communicate with Black Africans. Both theories reflect the colonial context of the period, where languages were used as tools of power and control.

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\(^7\) Fonseca, *Escravos e Senhores*, 299-300.

\(^8\) Ibid., 300.

\(^9\) Passage translated from the original presented in Fonseca, *Escravos e Senhores*, 300: “Que dizeis a um vilão ruim que não sabe falar português e quer falar negro?”

of Portuguese taught to those newly arriving to Portugal.\textsuperscript{101} Saunders, however, points out that \textit{fala da Guiné} could potentially have developed with consistent rules only in the urban centers with a large Black slave population, as the authors who left evidence for the language, such as Vicente, had strong connections with these centers.

The Social Position of Slaves in Portuguese Society

In their ways of living, it seems that the lives of Black slaves resembled those of the Portuguese lower classes. That is, they dressed and worked in fairly the same way, were taught the same language and shared the same Christian names as lower class White Portuguese.\textsuperscript{102} Additionally, they were also required to obey to the same legal and religious codes, as according to Saunders, even the subjection to their masters was not significantly different from the situation of White servants. For instance, the use of corporal punishment was extended to all workers, but it was the level of subjection that distinguished slaves from the freedmen.\textsuperscript{103} A major difference was that slaves were servants for life and could not leave their masters unless sold or freed, as they were the possession of their masters.\textsuperscript{104} Moreover, the bodies of servants were much more under their masters’ control, which means that physical and sexual abuse was more common.\textsuperscript{105}

One of the most important religious codes connected to the traffic of slaves to Portugal was the rule that all slaves were to be introduced to the Catholic Church, the baptism being the

\textsuperscript{101} Ibid., 100.
\textsuperscript{102} Saunders, \textit{A Social History}, 89.
\textsuperscript{103} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{104} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{105} Ibid.
first step. Every slave was supposed to be baptized upon his/her entrance to the country, or shortly after, and those born in the country were to be baptized in their local parish church.\textsuperscript{106} The argument that the conversion of slaves to Christianity would save their souls was one of the main justifications used by the crown for the traffic of slaves.\textsuperscript{107} King D. Manuel (1469-1521) therefore requested an authorization from Pope Leo X (1475-1521) to baptize all the captives coming from Africa during their sea passage to Portugal.\textsuperscript{108} Thus, mass baptisms began on African soil, on the boats, or upon their arrival in Portugal, before being sold, without any kind of instruction in Christian doctrine, circumstances that made formal integration in the Church rather weak.\textsuperscript{109}

Iconographic and Written Representations of Black Africans in Portugal

As has been observed, Portugal had an ethnically diverse population during the 15\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} centuries. Black Africans formed the numerically and culturally most significant non-Portuguese minority in this multi-ethnic context. White masters and Black slaves lived together, thus creating a situation of constant racial diversity not only within their houses but also in the streets of the city where the racial and cultural differences were highly visible. This diversity can be gathered from many contemporary sources, not only from written accounts but also from visual representations such as paintings.\textsuperscript{110} African slaves are often described in sources as easily

\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{106} Ibid., 90.
\item \textsuperscript{107} Fonseca, \textit{Escravos e Senhores}, 361.
\item \textsuperscript{108} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{109} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{110} Lowe, “The Global Population of Renaissance Lisbon,” 61.
\end{enumerate}
distinguishable from others because of their personal relaxation and happiness.\textsuperscript{111} It is, however, important to note that these descriptions come from a White perspective. Therefore, one needs to be aware of the contemporary racial stereotypes of the time that were constructed through the description of African slaves’ social behaviors.\textsuperscript{112}

One of the most well-known statements of this kind can be found in an account by an anonymous Italian visitor to Portugal dating from the second half of the 15\textsuperscript{th} century, the “Ritratto et riverso de Portugallo.” In this account the Italian observed that “while the Portuguese, by gravity, are always sad and melancholic, the slaves always show themselves as being happy, do nothing but laugh, sing, dance and get drunk publically in every town square.”\textsuperscript{113} It is often believed that Portuguese “gravity” was caused by the pressure from State and Church: The State aimed at the regulation of the behavior of its citizens, while the Church tried to control their moral behavior, enforcing its moral standards through penance, and by the threat of excommunications.\textsuperscript{114} On the other hand, the African slaves, with fewer social responsibilities, as they were not legal entities, could supposedly indulge in spontaneous impulses, thus viewed by white society as living in constant happiness.\textsuperscript{115} Kate Lowe mentions another account that further illustrates this point: King Philipp II of Spain is said to have written to his daughter in 1582 describing that he had seen Black people dancing from his window.\textsuperscript{116}

\textsuperscript{111} Tinhорао, \textit{Negros em Portugal}, 113.
\textsuperscript{112} For more detailed information on early modern concepts of race see: Anne Kuhlmann, \textit{Schwarze Europäer im Alten Reich} (Göttingen: Vanderhoek und Ruprecht, 2013), and Dienke Hondius, \textit{Blackness in Western Europe: Racial Patterns of Paternalism and Exclusion}, (New Brunswick, New Jersey: Transaction Publishers, 2014).
\textsuperscript{113} José Ramos Tinhорао, \textit{Festa do Negro em Devoção de Branco: Do Carnaval na Procissão ao Teatro no Cirio}, (São Paulo, Brazil: Ed. Unesp, 2012), 64-65.
\textsuperscript{114} Ibid., 114.
\textsuperscript{115} Tinhорао, \textit{Negros em Portugal}, 114.
Furthermore, activities of African slaves within Portuguese society can also be deduced from municipal documents concerning control of the social life of Africans in urban areas, especially in Lisbon, by state authorities. One example concerns the integration of African slaves in public spaces, such as taverns as they represented one of the most important places of social gathering and entertainment, where the people of the lower social classes could talk, eat, drink, sing, and dance. On November 27, 1469, a law was released by the city authorities of Lisbon, prohibiting wine sales to the slaves in the taverns. It was believed that the theft rate could be lowered by this prohibition, as money was needed in order to purchase the drinks.

Additionally, due to the belief that the slaves were selling everything they could, another law emerged, prohibiting people to buy objects from slaves, threatening violators with arrest or the payment of a fee of five hundred reais. These legislative measures not only allows us to conclude that the State was controlling the slaves’ financial independence, they also demonstrate that there was a frequent, everyday interaction between the slaves and the white Portuguese society, providing a strong basis for cultural exchange between the two groups.

Lowe discusses several iconographic representations portraying Black people in early modern Portugal. When Black Africans appear in visual representations, this happens mostly within a courtly or domestic context. Lowe mentions two very important paintings that demonstrate, preliminarily, how Black Africans were portrayed and how interactions with Portuguese society took place. One of the most iconic paintings described by Lowe is the

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118 Ibid., 116.
119 Ibid.
120 Ibid.
The anonymous *The Chafariz d’el-Rei* (see figure 3) which portrays interactions between different social classes of Lisbon’s population in a key urban location, the main municipal fountain in Lisbon. This plaza was highly frequented by different ethnic groups of the city, and it is said to have given the opportunity for male and female slaves to meet while getting water for their masters. In this painting one can observe many Black Africans at a variety of tasks. Firstly, it is noticeable the number of women carrying containers on their heads, probably jars of water taken from the fountain. On the right side, one can see a mixed-race couple dancing, which based on an analysis of their clothing, seems to be from the lower-class background. On the left side, one sees a Black African escorted by two White individuals, perhaps officials due to their attire. Another depiction is the Black knight present in the foreground of the right side. One can tell he is a Knight of the order of Santiago, due to his clothing, a black habit marked with a large red cross on the back. The person represented here is most likely one of the rarer examples of a Black African who belongs to a higher social class. Also interesting is the presence of a Black musician with his tambourine, on the small boat, accompanied by another dark-skinned individual and two White people. It is remarkable to see so many social and interactive elements among Black Africans and White Portuguese present in this painting, thus illustrating their interaction, at least in this specific location.

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122 Ibid., 65.
123 Ibid.
124 Ibid., 72.
Another important painting discussed by Kate Lowe is the Santa Auta Altarpiece dating from 1520-25, a work attributed to Cristovão de Figueiredo and Garcia Fernandes that portrays six Black musicians, with no indication if they are slaves or freedmen (see figure 4). In this painting one can observe that the six figures are dressed in the same way—wearing what could be a court attire—while holding musical instruments: a sackbut and five shawms of different types. Lowe argues that this painting may be an example of skilled African musicians performing at a court setting.

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125 Fonseca, *Escravos e Senhores*, II.
127 Ibid.
128 Ibid.
There are records that show that there were also Black freedmen who, in fact, were able to achieve a comfortable and successful life in Portugal.\textsuperscript{129} As Portugal had diplomatic relations with countries in sub-Saharan Africa, it was normal to see Black African ambassadors and their followers in Lisbon.\textsuperscript{130} Examples of such relations can be found in records from late-15\textsuperscript{th} and early-16\textsuperscript{th} centuries, when the relatives of the ruler of the Kongo were sent to Portugal to study at the monastery of Santo Elói.\textsuperscript{131} Lowe mentions that Henrique, the son of King Afonso I of

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{129} Ibid., 62.
\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 69
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
\end{flushleft}
Kongo, was sent to Funchal, the main city on the Portuguese Island of Madeira, to start his ecclesiastical career, becoming the first Black African Catholic bishop in 1518.  

Additionally, there are also records demonstrating the involvement of upper-class Black Africans with slaves and freedmen living in Lisbon. For instance, it is known that in the mid-16th century, a Kongolesse ambassador, António Vieira, who had been working many years in Lisbon married Margarida da Silva, a former slave of Queen Catarina. Interracial marriage seemed to also have occurred more often than one would imagine today. Lowe cites the example of Dona Simoa Godinho, a Black African born in São Tomé, who married Luís de Almeida, a White Portuguese nobleman. Godinho is known to have been a rich Lady who moved to Lisbon with her husband in 1560 where she lived a very comfortable life, surrounded by Black slaves, who were freed in her will in 1594. A last example of a Black Africans who was able to achieve a relatively high social status is found in the foreground of the Chafariz d’el Rei painting. Here we see the aforementioned Black knight, from the Order of Santiago, with his black habit ornamented with a red cross, characteristic for this order. Lowe tells us that only three Black Africans were admitted to this order during the 16th century, and all were indeed active within court circles, namely a nobleman from the household of the King of Kongo who joined in 1550, and a nobleman from the household of the King of Angola who joined in 1579.

The person most likely depicted in the painting was a court fool and former slave of King João

133 Ibid., 69-70.
134 Ibid., 70.
135 Vieira was in charge of diplomatic negotiations between King Pedro and King Diogo I of the Kongo.
136 Ibid.
137 Ibid.
138 Ibid.
139 Ibid., 72.
III named João de Sá Panasco¹⁴⁰ who joined the court sometime between 1550 and 1557.¹⁴¹

Since Black Africans were present at different levels of society and had frequent, everyday interactions with Portuguese society, one can also argue that Portuguese culture was affected by these interactions on different levels. At the same time, it is important to consider how Black Africans were seen by the White population, a view that most likely was not only based on what they saw, but also heavily informed by racial stereotypes. As Saunders points out, allusions to Black Africans in everyday figures of speech were common, as well as their depiction by historians and travelers in poems and plays.¹⁴² While he argues that this literary depiction may reflect actual behavior and social interactions of Black people in Portugal, he also stresses that the interpretations of such words by White people was nothing more than: “a rationalization and justification of slavery and the status quo. Further examination shows that the Black [African]’s behavior is best explained as a reaction to their oppressed social position.”¹⁴³

Many surviving records suggest that most Portuguese saw Black Africans as inferior people not only in status, but also in regard to physical beauty and mental ability, thus suited for a life of oppression.¹⁴⁴ Such can be seen in many literary works (where it became common to depict black characters since mid-15th century), especially in those of Gil Vicente, as his works dominated the Portuguese stage in the 1520s.¹⁴⁵ While it was more common to depict Black

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¹⁴² Saunders, “A Social History,” 166.

¹⁴³ Ibid.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 166-167.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid., 168-169.
males as loyal and dutiful to their masters, however there were also other depictions that showed slaves as having “bad habits.”

Black Africans and Religious Confraternities

The church had no opposition to the acquisition of slaves, since theologians believed that after baptism, slaves were considered individuals with mortal souls, who had to receive proper guidance according to Christian beliefs. Black Africans were involved with their church on different levels, as long as their masters did not object. They could marry in church, attend Mass and participate in religious festivals. For instance, according to a record by the Bohemian Gabriel Tetzel dating from 1466, dancing within churches was a unusual custom in Portugal that seemed to have been appealing to Black Africans. Although there are no known surviving descriptions of their religious festivities during the 15th and 16th centuries, an important record comes from Capuchin friar, who described how Black Africans celebrated Our Lady ‘ad Nives’ day in Lisbon in 1633. On this August 5th celebration, Black Africans marched and danced through the streets, dressed in loincloths or skirts with tied ornamented bands around their heads, arms and chests, while playing castanets, drums, flutes and African instruments. As they marched singing and dancing, they entered the church of São Francisco da Cidade, parading a few times around it before entering to hear Mass.

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146 Ibid., 169.
147 Ibid., 149.
148 Ibid., 150.
149 Ibid.
150 Ibid.
151 Ibid.
Black Africans were also part of religious fraternities, known in Portugal as *irmandades* or *confrarias*, not only dedicated to the cult of a specific saint, but also operating as societies that helped their members. One such important fraternity, that, in fact, even helped people who were not part of it, was the Fraternity of Our Lady of Mercy, known as the *Mesericórdia*, founded in Lisbon in 1498 by D. Leonor. This fraternity accepted men with their entire household, *criados* and Black slaves included, and Black freedmen were also allowed to join.

As for their own confraternities, often dedicated to and named after “Our Lady of the Rosary,” Black Africans were permitted to take part in their administration, representing the Black community and aiding its interests, and specifically that of the Black slaves, regarding matters of freedom. The crown supported such groups, as it created a way to regulate the confraternities. Two accounts illustrate how early these confraternities were in existence. The earliest black confraternity seems to have been created in Lisbon, as its 1565 *compromisso* [mandate] claimed that it already existed in 1460. A different account mentions that this confraternity was comprised of White and Black people, and was founded in 1484. Even though Saunders states that neither source is absolutely reliable, one can be certain that Lisbon’s brotherhood existed several years before 1494, as at this time the confraternity was referred to in royal letters. Records document that by the mid-16th century, other black confraternities had

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152 Ibid., 151.
153 Ibid.
154 Ibid.
155 Ibid., 151-155.
156 Ibid., 151.
157 Ibid.
158 Ibid.
been formed, for instance in Évora around 1518, in Lagos around 1555, and in the colony of São Tomé in 1526.159

Black African Musical Agency in Court Settings and Religious Festivities

Already during the Middle Ages both Moors from North Africa and Jews performed their own songs and dances at various public occasions – upon the arrival of important ambassadors, in processions and upon royal marriages, as their performances apparently fascinated both the Portuguese and the foreign visitors.160 Consequently, people brought from sub-Saharan Africa also became part of these multi-ethnic performances that featured foreign elements.161 The existent iconographic material and textual sources demonstrate that Africans were appreciated by Portuguese society for their musical qualities, beginning with the arrival of Black slaves in Portugal in the 15th century until the abolishment of slavery in 1761.162 It was common to see Black Africans singing, dancing and playing instruments at their gatherings, information available to us mostly because of the legislation forbidding such gatherings.163

Although little is known about songs and dances in Portugal performed by Black Africans prior to the 17th century, due to the lack of surviving records, it is known that Black Africans frequently played musical instruments.164 It appears that they not only performed European repertoire on European instruments (which appear to have been, as Sanders argues, mostly

159 Ibid., 151-152.
161 Ibid.
163 Ibid.
instruments “with African cognates”\textsuperscript{165}, but also continued musical practices of their African homelands in Portugal. Even though the scarcity of sources does currently not allow for a more precise assessment, it seems possible to suggest that there were various forms of musical hybridization due to cross-cultural encounters between Black Africans and Portuguese, and also between Black Africans of different ethnic origins. One of the earliest sources documenting the performance of Black Africans in a court setting is the account of the royal wedding of Infanta D. Leonor to the Emperor Friedrich III in 1451 by Nikolaus Lanckmann of Falkenstein. Lanckmann commented that the city of Lisbon had “a very varied population,” which included “Christians, Saracens, barbarians and Jews.”\textsuperscript{166} Regarding the wedding, Lanckman noted that four ethnic groups were present in the celebrations outside of the palace of Infanta Leonor, performing dances for the bride.\textsuperscript{167} The account reads:

On the 23\textsuperscript{rd} of October, a great crowd arrived at the front of the palace of the betrothed lady, with a variety of musical instruments, horns, trumpets, etc., and they formed four groups. First, the Christians, men and women, with dances according to their customs. Secondly, there were the Saracens, men and women, according to their customs. Third, the Jews, men and women. Fourth, there were Africans (“ethiopes”), Moors, and savages from the Canary Islands.\textsuperscript{168}

As the reiterated phrase “according to their customs” (“ad morum eorum”) suggests, each of the four groups performed their music and danced in a way that was typical of their individual

\textsuperscript{165} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{167} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{168} “Vicesima tercia die mensis Octobris uenit magnus populus coram pallacio domine sponse, cum diversis instrumentis musicalibus, tubis, buccinis, etc. Et fecerunt quatuor turmas Primo christiani utrisque sexus ad modum eorum cum coreis; secundo, sarraceni ad modum eorum; tercio, iudei promiscui sexus; quarto ethiopes, mori et siuestres homines de insula Canaria (...).” Portuguese translation: “No dia vinte e três do mês de Outubro, chegou uma grande multidão à frente do palácio da senhora desposada, com diversos instrumentos musicais, trompas, trombetas, etc., e fizeram quatro grupos. Primeiro, eram os cristãos, homens e mulheres, com danças a seu modo. Em segundo lugar, eram os sarracenos, homens e mulheres, a seu modo. Em terceiro lugar, eram os judeus, homens e mulheres, a seu modo. Em quarto lugar, eram africanos, ouros, e homens selvagens, da ilha Canária,” cited after Nascimento, Aires A., ed. Leonor de Portugal Imperatriz da Alemanha: Diário de Viagem do Embaixador Nicolau Lanckman de Valckenstein, ed. Aires A. Nascimento, (Lisbon: Edições Cosmos, 1992), 47.
ethnic context and was seen as different from that of Portuguese society. Kate Lowe points out that “African dances appealed to Europeans for their seemingly wild and exotic nature, and in fact several of them seem to have crossed over (like ear-rings and gold accessories) and became fashionable amongst certain sections of European society. For example, Black Africans probably introduced popular dances such as the guineo, ye-ye and zarambeque to Spain.”

The popularity of mouriscas (Moorish dances) at the Portuguese court suggests that African dances were used for court entertainment and courtly representations. Saunders points out that “D. João III had a group of Moors at court especially to dance and accompany the mourisca” in 1535. That Black Africans indeed continued their own musical traditions in Portugal is evident from the aforementioned account of a Capuchin monk written in 1633, who observed Black Africans playing “instrumentos al uso de su tierra” (“instruments as they were used in their country of origin”) in Portugal. This use of African instruments and repertoire in Portugal, especially in the field of dance music, certainly demands further investigation.

In regard to the use of European instruments, drums, flutes and guitars were particularly associated with Black Africans. For instance, extant records note the presence of Black drummers in 1571 welcoming Cardinal Alexandrino’s party in Vila Viçosa and Évora. Black Africans were also part of wind bands, as can be seen in the aforementioned painting of the Santa

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172 Ibid.
Auta Altarpiece, showing Black musicians playing a sackbut and four different kinds of shawm (see Figure 4).\textsuperscript{173}

Accounts from early explorers indicate that there was a great variety in the music they heard in the different parts of the sub-Saharan regions. Their accounts clearly illustrate that these explorers discerned differences between the musics they heard in regions such as Senegal, lower Congo, Angola, the Cape, and Mozambique.\textsuperscript{174} For instance, Stevenson cites Alvise Da Mosto’s account of his visit to Senegal in 1455. According to Stevenson, Mosto, a Venetian mariner in the service of Prince Henry,

\begin{quote}
liked their moonlight dancing despite its being ‘molto differente dal nostro’ and it amused him to see how immediately the Senegalese took to the bagpipe (‘una queste nostre pive’), which they wished to class as a heavenly being (‘cosa celestial che Idio l’avea fata con le sue man’). But he decried their native instruments. Familiar with the perfumed sonorities popular in the \textit{O rosa bella} epoch, he found offensive the Senegalese tanbache (big drums) and their two-strin plucked instruments resembling a violleta.\textsuperscript{175}
\end{quote}

Citing contrary, more favorable opinions, Stevenson tells us that other Portuguese voyagers, with tastes less exquisite, found instruments such as the drums, ivory trumpets, and fiddles very attractive, observing that in a commemorative ceremony for a deceased of the Congo royal family in 1491, they were playing “in good tune with each other.”\textsuperscript{176} Documenting an early case of cultural transfer, in the same year organs arrived in Congo, coming as a gift from the Portuguese Royal family.\textsuperscript{177}

\textsuperscript{173} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., 477-478.
\textsuperscript{176} Ibid., 478.
\textsuperscript{177} Ibid.
Rare were the events in Portugal (sacred or secular, such as processions, royal entries, bullfighting, or parish feasts) in which African slaves would not participate, playing the *charamela*, *sacabuxa*, *timbale* and other musical instruments, allowing not only for the dissemination of their musical practices but also for the social interaction between Africans and White people of lower social classes. José Ramos Tinhorão affirms that these social interactions began in sacred contexts, such as churches – particularly in church festivals and celebrations such as religious processions and *romarias* – and through the creation of religious confraternities that were exclusive to Black people, which came to be allowed to participate in major religious celebrations, such as the *Círios* of *Nossa Senhora da Atalaia*. These confraternities gained such proportion in Portugal that from 1518 to the second half of the 18th century there were 25 confraternities exclusive to Africans.

There are several possible reasons for why the church and state were allowing the participation of Africans not only in public celebrations but also in religious institutions, such as confraternities. As one of the major consequences of the Portuguese transatlantic expansion was the human traffic of Africans slaves, the Portuguese State was left to deal with a problem of moral responsibility, that is, how to justify such injustice theologically. Thus, through collaboration between Lisbon and Rome, specifically between the King D. Manuel (1452-1521) and the Pope Leo X (1513-1521), three papal bulls were created with the intention of minimizing the moral responsibility of the Church by showing the goodwill of the people in power. The first of these papal bulls, *Eximiae Devotionis* was created in the year of 1513 and allowed the

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179 Tinhorão, *Festa do Negro*, 64.
180 Ibid., 64.
181 Ibid., 52.
existence of a baptismal font exclusive to slaves in the church of the Conceição Velha in Lisbon. The second papal bull, created in 1515 and entitled *Praeclara Tuæ Celsitanus Merita*, stipulated that the slaves were to be baptized upon arrival to the mainland, or even inside the boats prior to the arrival. The last papal bull, *Pro Excellentem*, created in 1516 gave patronage over all Churches in the conquered lands to the King of Portugal.

Regarding the participation of Africans in the church festivities occurring every year from Christmas to the *Dia de Reis* [Day of the Kings], Tinhorão states that the clearest reflection of this participation can be found in the *villancicos*, which according to the author were sung and danced since the 15th century, often accompanied by traditional Portuguese instruments such as the *adufe* and *pandeiros*, during these religious festivities. Although it is challenging to confirm such an affirmation, this genre still represents an important regarding the possible musical practices of Black Africans, as *villancicos* often functioned as a representation of the ethnic minorities present in Portugal at the time, often incorporating specific literary dialects and vocabulary, and representations of traditions, including music and dance, that most likely were based on racial stereotypes. Thus, in the following sections of the present study, it will be discussed how Black Africans may or may not have participated in the *villancicos* and in what way these works constituted a white image of Black Africans.

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182 Ibid.
183 Ibid.
184 Ibid.
185 Ibid., 147-148.
CHAPTER 3. VILLANCICOS: THEIR MUSICAL AND TEXTUAL CHARACTERISTICS

The villancico has been considered the most representative genre of vocal polyphony in Portugal and Spain between the 1550s and 1650s. Paul Laird has shown that, from the 16th century on, the villancico was so widely cultivated that it may have, in terms of usage, exceeded other genres of vocal ensemble music such as madrigals, especially in Spain, Portugal, the Low Countries, Naples, different regions in Southern Italy and in the New World. Derived from the diminutive of the Spanish word villano [rustic], the villancico, took its musical and textual inspiration from common people and popular culture. Although the precise origins of this genre are presently unclear, the term villancico seems to have first emerged within the context of literature, as a form of poetry that was intended to be sung. While the music of the early villancicos does not survive, it has been suggested that the term in itself first appears in the poem “Villancico que hizo el Marqués de Santillana a unas tres hijas suyas” dating from after 1445.

Regarding its antecedents, Laird emphasizes that a specific type of poetic form with a verse refrain was much more practiced in the Iberian Peninsula, and this may have very well influenced the development of the villancico into its own form. Additionally, the author also suggests that it is possible that the Arab zajal and the various verse-refrain forms found in

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188 Ibid., 3.
189 Ibid., 4.
190 Ibid., 2.
191 Ibid., 3.
Galician-Portuguese literature such as the Cantigas de Santa María may be the closest antecedents to 15th-century villancicos.\textsuperscript{192}

Although the origins of the genre villancico are still clouded in obscurity, it seems possible to affirm that they were doubtlessly associated with popular traditions.\textsuperscript{193} Musicologists specializing in the villancico such as Isabel Pope, Rui Bessa, Rui Vieira Nery, Carlos de Brito and Robert Stevenson agree with this hypothesis, recognizing that the popular features in the music and text never left the genre, even when it became more stylized and polyphonic, or when it became also religious or when it became a genre used in performances of liturgical drama.\textsuperscript{194}

While texts of early villancicos from the 15th-century onward have survived, the music has not, and it is thus believed that their music was at first passed on orally.\textsuperscript{195} Andad, pasiones, andad attributed to Pedro de Lagarto – a musician associated with the Toledo Cathedral between 1490 and 1507 – seems to have been the first villancico with surviving music.\textsuperscript{196} It is part of the Cancionero de la Biblioteca Colombiana (CMC) dating from before 1490.\textsuperscript{197} The original function of the CMC is presently unclear. However, Laird suggests that it may have been gathered for the court of a Seville aristocrat.\textsuperscript{198}

Rui Bessa defines the earliest villancicos as songs with short phrases and simple melodies, with a popular and profane character that people sang during festivities and in their

\begin{itemize}
\item[Ibid.\textsuperscript{192}]
\item Ibid., 30.
\item Ibid.\textsuperscript{194}
\item Ibid.\textsuperscript{195}
\item Laird, “Coming of the Sacred Villancico,” 3-4.
\item Ibid.\textsuperscript{197}
\item Ibid., 4.\textsuperscript{198}
\end{itemize}
daily lives. This genre was first known as “cançoneta” [canzonet] or “canção” [song], being the first terms that coexisted with the term villancico for a long time, as the villancico emerged around the end of the 15th century, referring to a poetic and musical form that contains coplas connected by a refrain. From this point onwards, the villancico was influenced by other genres and, with its rising popularity, came to develop into a more complex genre. In the 15th century, this genre became part of religious rituals that occurred outside the sanctuaries, for instance in processions, thus becoming closer to the sphere of the church. Later in the century it actually began being used in liturgical ceremonies such as Mass and Office. It is a challenge to determine when the villancico became a religious genre that took a part in the Catholic liturgy. However, we know that by the 1570s, villancicos were already strongly integrated in many of the church ceremonies, such as the Christmas Mass. Thus, we know that some villancicos were composed primarily for the celebration of Christmas Eve, and later for other Feasts such as the Immaculate Conception, the Epiphany, and Corpus Christi. Additionally, the villancicos also often sung during the Elevation of the Hour, and during Matins.

The popularity of the villancico grew, since its introduction into the Catholic liturgy was well accepted by less conservative clerics and by congregations. The genre was also cultivated at court, used at secular festivals as well as in court entertainments. Bessa points out that the

200 Ibid.
201 Ibid., 30.
203 Ibid.
204 Ibid., 371.
205 Ibid.
dance was one of the most attractive elements of court life, and the *villancico*, with its joyful character, although not intended for dancing, fitted perfectly.207

The use of the *villancico* for religious purposes resulted in major changes in the genre, as the church looked to introduce spiritual elements into the works, giving the genre a closer affinity to the liturgy.208 One of the first changes in the genre was the substitution of the text, in order to adapt to the liturgy.209 Additionally, one also observes that the poetry was then full of stylistic figures such as metaphors, allegories, and puns that made it possible to maintain a textual connection to the sphere of “love and life,” but adding a spiritual connotation related to the love for God.210

As we approach the Baroque period, the *villancico* went through further changes. The main transformation can be seen in the emotional and expressive character that was now embodied in the genre, classified by musicologists such as Rui Vieira Nery as a mannerist style, characterized by intense emotional content and high dramatic expression.211 Around the beginning of the 17th century, the *villancico* was becoming a musical genre to be seen and heard as a form of spectacle, rather than as a participatory genre for the congregation.212

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207 Ibid.
208 Ibid.
209 Ibid., 32.
210 Ibid.
211 Ibid., 33.
212 Ibid.
Formal Characteristics of Villancicos

One of the main formal features of a *villancico* is the alternation between the *estribilho* [refrain] and the *coplas* [stanzas].\textsuperscript{213} While in the early *villancico* the *estribilho* presents the same music and text, the *coplas* contain a collection of verses exhibiting a structure different from the *estribilho*, as they are usually more extensive, although they usually have the same music as the *estribilho*.\textsuperscript{214} The first *villancicos* whose music survives (from the 15\textsuperscript{th} and 16\textsuperscript{th} centuries) display a simple formal structure, as it was merely an alternation between the *estribilho* and the *coplas*, a simple form that with time became more complex.\textsuperscript{215} George Buelow explains that the *villancico* emerged with the structure ABBA, in which the first A section corresponded to a two or three line *estribillo*, and the following B section contained the *coplas*.\textsuperscript{216} However, by the beginning of the 17th century, this form, initially intended to be for solo singers, expanded to a choral format, developing a new structure that alternated between soloist or soloists and choir. Buelow provides a chart that illustrates this new format:\textsuperscript{217}

\textsuperscript{214} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{215} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{216} Buelow, “History of the Baroque,” 370.
\textsuperscript{217} Ibid. 370.
Another characteristic of the 17th-century villancico is the fact that it could contain an introduction before the estribilho, along with longer coplas, and that it could be laid out in the form of a dialogue.\textsuperscript{218}

In sum, the transformation of the villancico from the Renaissance to the Baroque was nothing more than an expansion of the established ABBA form.\textsuperscript{219} In his thesis titled “Vilancico: Um Gênero Musical de Santa Cruz de Coimbra,” Bessa cites Isabel Pope’s seminal formal analyses of Baroque villancicos that facilitates a general understanding of its form. In the following table Pope succinctly explains the poetic and musical form of such works:\textsuperscript{220}

\begin{verbatim}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Estribilho</th>
<th>Mudanza</th>
<th>Vuelta</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[change]</td>
<td>[return]</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Introduction</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Coplas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Soloists)</td>
<td>(Choir)</td>
<td>(Soloists)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| B or A and B |

Figure 5: Formal structure of 17th-century villancico.

Figure 6. General form of the Baroque villancico.

\textsuperscript{218} Granados, ““Zente Pleto, Zente Pleto,”” 24.
\textsuperscript{219} Bessa, “O Vilancico” 47.
\textsuperscript{220} Ibid.
Although villancico composers of the Baroque period may have used forms that slightly differed from the ones presented above, musicologists argue that they never deviated significantly from those above. As we approach the last decades of the 17th century, Nery notes that more soloist coplas with music for solo voices were introduced. These coplas are also characterized by having each its own music.

In the 18th century, the villancico developed into the cantata-villancico, containing dance-like sections, arias, recitatives and ritornellos in Italian style. At this time, composers composed in a freer way, deviating from the previously established musical forms that developed from the traditional ABBA form.

Ethnic Villancicos and Their Texts

It is important to note that, in general, there was no difference in literary style between the Portuguese and Spanish villancicos surviving in manuscripts. The majority of the Portuguese villancicos were in Castilian. It is believed that the major reason for the use of this language was to represent the intention of the King of Spain to transform Castilian into the

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221 Ibid.
222 Ibid., 50.
226 Ibid.
lingua franca of the Iberian Peninsula as a way to refine the aristocracy of the Iberian Peninsula.\textsuperscript{227}

The texts found in the villancicos are often regarded as not only a representation of the various Portuguese and Spanish strata of society within the rural population, but also the ethnic minorities such as Gypsies, Moors, and African slaves.\textsuperscript{228} These different ethnic groups were evoked through the use of specific accents and vocabulary, and through the representation of ethnic traditions of music and dance, often based on stereotypes presented in a blatant way.\textsuperscript{229} Figure 7 is a chart provided by Rui Cabral Lopes that represents the number of villancico texts in different languages for Christmas and Epiphany in one of the major Portuguese Churches, the Royal Chapel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Languages</th>
<th>Number of Villancicos</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Castillan</td>
<td>1037</td>
<td>85.84%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other languages/subgenres</td>
<td>171</td>
<td>14.15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1208</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portuguese</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>50.87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gypsy</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>18.71%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negro (Portuguese and Castillan Creolees)</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11.11%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensaladas (mixed texts)</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galician</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>7.01%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (Arabic, Sayagués, Basque, French)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>171</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7. Number of villancicos in different languages, based on an inventory from the Royal Chapel.\textsuperscript{230}

\textsuperscript{227} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{228} Buelow, “History of the Baroque,” 372-373.
\textsuperscript{229} Ibid., 373.
This multiracial character introduced in the performance of *villancicos* in churches was eventually criticized. This criticism resulted in the exclusion of *villancicos* from the Royal Chapel in 1717 and in 1723 they were forbidden in all churches (in Portugal and its colonies), a decision that was supported by the opinion of the King João V that the *villancicos* were a primitive tradition.\(^{231}\)

From the ethnic groups mentioned above, one of the most often to appear in the *villancicos* are the *negro*. These pieces were often entitled *villancicos de negro* or *guineos*, since they depicted the lives and musical practices of African slaves.\(^{232}\) Granados presents us with the definition developed by Glenn Swiadon Martínez who, in general terms, explains the characteristics of this sub-genre as a:\(^{233}\)

…Poetic-musical genre very popular between late 16\(^{th}\)-century and mid-18\(^{th}\) century (with a particular peak in the second half of the 17\(^{th}\)-century). The poets wrote them to be sung mostly in the peninsular and colonial churches, during Christmas celebrations. The poems consist of an introduction, an *estribillo* and *coplas*. If they do not have an introduction, then an extensive *estribillo* has the same function….there is much metric variety, formal games and jokes that exaggerate the differences between Black and White people to provoke laughter. These poems imitate dialogues between slaves, using the ‘*habla de negro,*’ a literary dialect made by phonetic and morphosyntactic distortions and an African lexical, derived, primarily from Bantú.\(^{234}\)

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\(^{231}\) Nery, “O Vilancico Português,” 112.

\(^{232}\) Ibid., 168.


This sub-genre is much informed by the field of linguistics, as its use of a very specific vocabulary is one its most important characteristics. Granados tells us that, from a linguistic point of view, two types of guinéus\textsuperscript{235} are mostly used in these works, the afro-espanhola [afro-hispanic], known as habla de negro and afro-portuguesa [afro-portuguese], known as lingua de preto.\textsuperscript{236}

Regarding known composers of this sub-genre, Robert Stevenson mentions Francisco de Santiago (who died in 1644), a Portuguese composer who was one of King John IV’s favorites, who composed at least 18 villancicos de negro.\textsuperscript{237} Next comes Gabriel Dias with 16, and other Portuguese composers such as Estevão de Brito, João de Escobar, Manoel Machado, Manoel Rabello and Manoel de Tavares.\textsuperscript{238}

\textit{Villancicos de negro} or guineos, frequently depict dance rhythms, syncopations and call and response patterns, features that are still associated with African musical traditions.\textsuperscript{239} These works are also characterized by the extensive use of sounds such as “A la, la, la lila/ A la, la layle.”\textsuperscript{240} Furthermore, beyond the specific implementation of features of African dialects, the negro villancicos are also characterized by a dance-like style that represents their festive mood – so often associated with the African slaves – by references to family relationships, as a way to emphasize their origins, and by reference to their geographical origins, referring to a variety of places in Africa, that, however, may be based on stereotypes.\textsuperscript{241} In these works one can also

\textsuperscript{235} General term used to refer to languages derived from Criole
\textsuperscript{236} Granados, “‘Zente Pleto, Zente Pleto,’” 31.
\textsuperscript{237} Stevenson, “Afro-American Music Legacy,” 488.
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{241} Lopes, “Religiosity, Power and Aspects of Social Representation,” 215.
observe a pattern of frequently distorted names used, names that were often associated with the most humble people of rural areas, such as Flancisco, Flasico, Fasico and Flasisquiyo.\textsuperscript{242} Additionally, another literary topic, often present in these works is the invocation of a noble lineage of the slaves, often referring to knighthood and noble titles such as kings and princesses, and use of terms such as \textit{senhor} [sir] or \textit{vossemecê} [to your service – meaning someone was at their service].

As most of these texts used in the \textit{villancicos de negro} are anonymous, Granados presents three theories on how the texts originated, from which sources they may have derived, and whom they may represent.\textsuperscript{243} According to the first theory the texts’ topics are entirely fictional. Although they are based on some factual reality, this reality is rendered in a distorted way, since stereotypes are represented, fueled by a need to popularize the works.\textsuperscript{244} According to the second theory, the texts may have directly derived from the religious practices the time, according to what was heard and observed by the White poets in the \textit{romarias} [pilgrimages], religious processions and festivities of black confraternities.\textsuperscript{245} According to the third and final theory, Granados points out that these \textit{villancicos} could indeed have been created by Black Africans who had somehow earned an academic education, or had the ability to write and compose such works.\textsuperscript{246} Granados developed this third theory based on the resemblances between these \textit{villancicos} and popular lyrics of the same time, as they both had simple versification, were based on strophic forms and contained irregular and floating meter.\textsuperscript{247} To solidify this theory, Granados

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{242} Granados, ““Zente Pleto, Zente Pleto,”” 51.
\item \textsuperscript{243} Ibid., 38.
\item \textsuperscript{244} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{245} Ibid., 39.
\item \textsuperscript{246} Ibid., 41.
\item \textsuperscript{247} Ibid.
\end{itemize}
also presents the arguments of José Labrador Herraiz and Ralph Di Franco, who argue that Black Africans were indirectly involved with religious rituals, as they worked in houses, palaces, monasteries and convents, next to figures such as clerics, nobility and artists.\textsuperscript{248}

However, Geoffrey Baker, Drew Davis and Andrew Cashner, scholars who have extensively studied \textit{villancicos de negro} in the context of New Spain, all agree that these works are a stereotyped representation of Black Africans from a white perspective. Baker stresses that more research needs to be done regarding the genre’s portrayal of a fictional world rather than a social reality.\textsuperscript{249} The author believes that the portrayal of Black Africans in these \textit{villancicos} is entirely fictional, because societal forces, such as the upper class and the church, utilized these works to shape the consciousness of their audiences and to reinforce the idea of a hierarchical society.\textsuperscript{250} Baker states:

\begin{quote}
The deliberate portrayal of cultural divergence and the denial of a common ground of language or culture also emphasizes the role of the church/state as the only power capable of resolving or uniting these disparate elements. Instead of cultural unity, the vision that is promoted is one of a necessarily exaggerated divergence unified through the authority of the church.\textsuperscript{251}
\end{quote}

Thus, the author believes that \textit{villancicos de negro} were a construction fabricated by those who rule as a way to place each individual within a social hierarchy.\textsuperscript{252} For him, the \textit{villancico de negro} “masked their silence with words that were not their own, limiting, controlling and possessing black minority through the power of representation,” rather than giving a voice to the voiceless.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{248} Ibid.
\item \textsuperscript{249} Baker, “The ‘Ethnic Villancico,’” 399.
\item \textsuperscript{250} Ibid., 400-402
\item \textsuperscript{251} Ibid., 402.
\item \textsuperscript{252} Ibid., 404.
\end{itemize}
Drew Davis shares the same opinion: “I believe that we need to stop looking at Latin American villancicos as exotic treasures and see them as breathing vestiges of a precarious colonial culture performing both its European roots and its American future in an officially elitist environment.”\(^{253}\)

Finally, Andrew Cashner, who also believes these works represent stereotypical views on race, affirms that these works are distorted caricatures of the Spanish language, often resulting in nonsense speech.\(^{254}\) Further, he argues that “this linguistic nonsense is paired with distinctively rhythmic musical motives. This produces the effect that the words seem to embody a form of speech perceived by Spaniards as closer to music than to language. At the same time, these phrases evoke the action of black characters’ musical performance, such as African drumming and dance – as imagined by Spaniards.”\(^{255}\)

There are two recently published Portuguese collections of villancicos with music that contain works of negro villancicos, one in the Biblioteca Pública de Évora, and the other in the Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra.\(^{256}\) The latter is a transcription of manuscripts from the monastery of Santa Cruz de Coimbra that are today owned by the Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra and are marked as Musical Manuscript 50 (M.M-50). Among these works, which will be discussed in the following section, seven villancicos de negro are found, in various languages such as Portuguese, Castellan and Creole, and they have almost always Christmas, and the birth of Jesus, as their main theme.\(^{257}\)

\(^{253}\) Davies, “Villancicos from Mexico City,” 238.


\(^{255}\) Ibid., 23.

\(^{256}\) Lopes, “Religiosity, Power and Aspects of Social Representation,” 199.

\(^{257}\) Jorge Matta, Manuscrito 50 da Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra: Vilancicos, Romances e Chansonetas de Santa Cruz de Coimbra Século XVII Parte I, (Lisbon, Portugal: Edições Colibri, 2008), VIII.
CHAPTER 4. VILLANCICOS IN THE COLLECTION OF SANTA CRUZ DE COIMBRA

The Mosteiro de Santa Cruz de Coimbra was one of the main centers for the development and practice of Portuguese culture and religion during the 16th and 17th centuries.258 Established in 1131 and considered a self-contained musical community, Santa Cruz was a place that employed only its own members, the monks, for the practice of music, that is, composing, teaching, performing and instrument making.259

Already in the 16th century, the performance of music at the services of this church was carried out by two distinct vocal groups, the Coro [choir], responsible for the performance of parts of the Mass and the office in plainsong, and the Capela [Chapel], which was assigned to perform every time the repertoire was polyphonic.260 Although both groups could be accompanied by instruments, this feature was not required, and the Coro could only be accompanied by the organ.261

Polyphonic music was performed in this monastery at a variety of occasions. During the 16th and 17th centuries it was used in the celebrations of Mass and Office, especially during the major church Feasts such as Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and Pentecost.262 In fact, the output of local composers focused significantly on the productions for these major festivals in the church year.263 Regarding the repertoire used for such festivities, Cançonetas (as previously mentioned, this was a term often used to label pieces that exhibit genre characteristics of the villancico, at

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259 Ibid., 44-45.
260 Ibid., 37.
261 Ibid.
262 Ibid., 31.
263 Ibid., 48.
times even appearing more frequently than the *villancico*) and motets are the genres most frequently represented in the manuscripts of *Santa Cruz de Coimbra*, along with parts of the Mass and the Office, thus suggesting that *villancicos* may have formed a major part in the liturgy.\textsuperscript{264}

Unfortunately, there are not many records documenting the names of the musicians who were active at the monastery during the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th}-centuries; however, Pinho and Bessa refer in their research on music in *Santa Cruz* to a list of names of important musicians who were working at the monastery in the mid-17\textsuperscript{th} century, the main period of focus of the present study.

One of the main composers whose name appears in the monastery documents, including in musical manuscripts is Dom Pedro de Cristo (c. 1545-c. 1618).\textsuperscript{265} Considered one of the major composers of polyphonic music in Portugal of the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, Dom Pedro de Cristo was attracted specifically to the genre of the *villancico*.\textsuperscript{266} More than two hundred works can be identified as his including masses, motets, Psalms, antiphons and responsorials in Latin as well as *cansonetas* and *villancicos* in Portuguese and Castilian.\textsuperscript{267} Dom Pedro da Esperança, who died in 1660, is another composer whose name appears in the musical registers of *Santa Coimbra*.\textsuperscript{268} The first register associating Esperança with music dates from 1627 and is a petition requesting a move to a different monastery. The request was refused, stating that his talent was irreplaceable.\textsuperscript{269} Only eight surviving works are indisputably by him, and they are all in the

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item[] 264 Ibid., 48-50.
\item[] 265 Bessa, “O Vilancico,” 108.
\item[] 266 Ibid., 109.
\item[] 267 Pinho, *Santa Cruz de Coimbra*, 183.
\item[] 268 Ibid., 187
\item[] 269 Ibid., 188.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Manuscript M.M.18 from Santa Cruz.\textsuperscript{270} Another name associated with the monastery is Dom Gabriel de São João, who joined Santa Cruz in the first quarter of the 17\textsuperscript{th} century, as evidenced by an archival record dating from 1624 according to which Dom João had not yet become ordained as a Dom.\textsuperscript{271} Other names of musicians associated with Santa Cruz de Coimbra include Dom João de Santa Maria, Dom Fernando de São José, Frei Antônio da Madre de Deus, Dom Teotónio da Ascenção and Frei Francisco de Santa Maria, whose works can be found in the manuscript M.M.236 and date from 1651-1652.\textsuperscript{272}

\textit{Villancicos in the Liturgy of Santa Cruz de Coimbra}

Regarding the practice of the villancicos at the convent of Santa Cruz de Coimbra, Bessa affirms that the collection of villancicos currently held at the Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra and being a part of the former monastery’s 17\textsuperscript{th}-century-manuscripts, is the largest surviving collection of religious villancicos in Portugal.\textsuperscript{273} In fact, the Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra owns most of the musical manuscripts of the monastery from the 16\textsuperscript{th} and 17\textsuperscript{th} centuries and identifies them with the abbreviation M.M followed by an identification number, for instance, M.M-3.\textsuperscript{274} They are a total of forty-one of such numbered manuscripts and many of them are in such a bad condition that is impossible to reconstruct the works in them.\textsuperscript{275} Many musical genres occur in these manuscripts, sacred and secular, such as parts of masses and

\textsuperscript{270} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{271} Ibid., 189. Title associated with high members of the clergy.
\textsuperscript{272} Ibid., 247.
\textsuperscript{274} Pinho, Santa Cruz de Coimbra, 22.
\textsuperscript{275} Ibid., 101.
office, hymns, psalms, passions, laments, cançonetas and villancicos for the many celebrations of the liturgical year.\textsuperscript{276} Although most of the compositions are in four parts (Superius, Altus, Tenor and Bassus), the musical manuscripts also contain works for more than four voices, including sometimes works in twelve and sixteen parts.\textsuperscript{277} The collection of villancicos can be found in the manuscripts M.M.-50-51, 227 to 229, 223 to 240 and also in the M.M-243.\textsuperscript{278}

According to Brito, villancicos were usually grouped in “sets” in performance, and were placed at the different moments of the mass, as well as after each lesson of the vespers.\textsuperscript{279} Regarding the form of such works, Brito also points out that most are through-composed, that is, they freely alternate between a section of solo or duets, followed by sections that employ the full vocal ensemble.\textsuperscript{280} Regarding the musical features of these pieces, Brito’s analysis suggest that most of the works do not reveal an enormous melodic, rhythmic and harmonic variety, although he affirms that, upon a closer look, some of these works exhibit a number of individual musical elements to the music specifically characteristic of the villancicos, including the use of seventh chords, dissonances, false relations, syncopated passages and hemiola rhythms associated with vivid tempos.\textsuperscript{281}

Regarding the use of instrumentation in these works, Brito points out that only about six works include instrumental parts besides the basso continuo.\textsuperscript{282} To add to the previous argument, the author emphasizes that the use of other instruments besides continuo instruments such as

\textsuperscript{276} Ibid., 106.
\textsuperscript{277} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{279} Manuel de Carlos Brito, Vilancicos do Século XVII do Mosteiro de Santa Cruz em Coimbra, (Lisboa: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 1983), XVII.
\textsuperscript{280} Ibid., XVIII.
\textsuperscript{281} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{282} Ibid.
organ, lute and harp was much in vogue at the monastery, for instance the use of wind instruments as I will discuss in the following section. Thus there is a high possibility of their use in such works, doubling the vocal parts or playing an improvised *ritornello* in the form of an ornamented variation of a verse. Additionally, the instrumentation used for the continuo is never specified, but instruments such as harp, organ or harpsichord were instruments much practiced at this church, thus there is a high possibility that they were employed in such works.

**Instruments Used at the Monastery**

Upon entering the monastery, every monk was required to study music and organ or an instrument that could be used in church and that they had previously learned. Specifically, besides the opportunity of singing instruction, monks were also able to learn a variety of keyboard, wind and string instruments such as organ, flute, shawm and violas da gamba inside the monastery. While the basic knowledge of organ playing was generally required, the opportunity to specialize in this instrument was only given to those who revealed some musical talent. Regarding wind and string instruments, we are left with a passage from a document to King João III (1502-1557) that informed the King about all the details of what was going on at the monastery after the Counter-Reformation. From this document, entitled “Descripcam e

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284 Ibid.
285 Brito, *Villancicos do Século XVII*, XIV.
287 Ibid.
288 Ibid., 135-136.
debvxo do mosteyro de Sancta Cruz de Coimbra,” printed in 1541 one reads a passage that suggest that the monastery used a sizeable instrumental group:

“…each with his musical instrument, some play organ, others recorders, others shawms, violas da gamba, others harps, zithers, others psaltery, that from the view it seems that it works and from the ear results in a melodic symphony (…).”

Musicians at the Santa Cruz monastery used a variety of musical instruments, not only during mass, but also during religious acts celebrated outside the monastery, during popular festivities and also during their time of leisure. Based on the study of manuscript sources such as Actas de Mesa do Definitório, death registration books, chronicles, letters, reports and descriptions of festivities, books of office from ceremonies and masses, and musical manuscripts from 16th and 17th-century, Pinho shows that musical instruments such as recorders, bassoons, fagotilhos [small bassoons tuned in F], shawms, cornetts, dulcians, bagpipes, trombetas [early trumpets], tenoretes, violas da gamba, violins, harps, psalteries, zithers, vihuela, lute and bandoras are often associated with the practice of music at this church.

The works preserved in the manuscripts of the Monastery of Santa Cruz that employ obligato instrumental parts belong to four genres: motets and polychoral masses from the mid-17th century, versos for solo voice and accompaniment, and villancicos. Regarding the villancicos, the works of importance for the present study, Brito points out that there are only

289 Passage translated from the original provided by Pinho in Santa Cruz de Coimbra, 136: “…cada hu com seu instrument musico, ca hus mostram tanger orgaõs, outros frautas, outros charmelas, violas darco, outros arpas, citharas, outros salteyros, em modo que da vista parece q resulta e o ouuido a simphonia melodia & musica que seria feyta aquelle dia.”
290 Pinho, Santa Cruz de Coimbra, 138.
291 Minutes of the definitory, religious assembly of a monastery.
292 Ibid., 136.
very few villancicos in the Coimbra manuscripts with parts for obligato melody instruments. Among hundreds of pieces, only a little more than six contain instrumental parts other than a continuo part. Moreover, these instrumental parts usually only occur in brief sections of the works and are often motivated by a textual image. For instance, in the villancico “Hola hau pastorcillos” from 1645, the instruments only play two brief ritornelli, which have a connection with the text. This section of the work is based on a pun that is developed between the vocal soloists who sing “contemplad” [behold] followed by an echo that answers “templad,” [the end of the word contemplad] and the instruments that play the ritornello (two cornetts, one tenorete (?) and one dulcian), to which the choir answer “Ya templados los instrumentos” [instruments are in tune].

Furthermore, it is possible that instruments were not only used in a brief section such as this. Brito believes that it was possible that the instrument doubled the vocal parts throughout the work, or perhaps just joining in with the indication of the chapel master or the composer. Brito makes his point by citing the Ordinario dos Canonicos, that says that the chapel master had the power to call to the music the instruments that he wanted, thus there was probably no need for the composers to integrate those instrumental parts in the manuscripts, as it is known that during this time, it was normal for instruments to come and double the vocal parts, and only in a few occasions presented more independent parts.

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294 Ibid., 60.
295 Ibid.
296 Ibid.
297 Ibid.
298 Ibid., 60-61.
299 Ibid., 62-63.
One can also gain information on the use of instruments at Santa Cruz de Coimbra by studying the prohibition of their use. For instance, according to the ordinances from 1572, 1575 and 1576, the use of instruments other than keyboards was forbidden.\textsuperscript{301} The fact that there were three ordinances regarding the subject within four years, suggests that these rules may have not been followed.\textsuperscript{302} Additionally, in 1605 another order, taken from the Mesa do Definitório, emphasized again the prohibition of certain instruments.\textsuperscript{303} It says:

“Because there is the audacity of playing viola da gamba, zither, bandurria, thus exposing the secular brothers to great scandal, that even caused us complains, we order that no religious member of our order use such instruments anywhere under the sentence of serious misconduct, of which, if the church finds out, will perform according to the same sentence…”\textsuperscript{304}

Later, in 1615, the General Chapter released an order that described the places where it was allowed to play the instruments prohibited in 1605, namely in certain areas of the Quinta de Ribella, a farm annexed to the monastery.\textsuperscript{305}

Regarding the use of instruments in the villancicos de negro, Brito gives the example of a Christmas villancico and argues that it is the text that brings us some information about instruments that may or may not have been used in this practice, as the text often refers to

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\textsuperscript{301} Pinho, Santa Cruz de Coimbra, 145.
\textsuperscript{302} Ibid., 146.
\textsuperscript{303} Ibid., 148-149.
\textsuperscript{304} Passage translated from the original provided by Pinho in Santa Cruz de Coimbra, 148-149: “Por auer deuacidad em tanger uiolas, chitaras, bandurrias, cõ m.\textsuperscript{305} scandalos secuursal, de q nos fizeraõ queixas, mädamos, q’ nhu Religioso da nossa ordem uze dos tais instrum.\textsuperscript{306} em nhu lugar sob pena de culpa graue, aqual o Prelado sabendo executara sob a mesma pena. O q não entendemos nas grãias e quintas da[s] portas adentro.”
\textsuperscript{305} Pinho, Santa Cruz de Coimbra, 149.
\end{flushright}
musical instruments, an argument that will be made in the following section, an analysis of the text of the works discussed in the present study.306

Villancicos de Negro in the collection of Santa Cruz de Coimbra

The Manuscript 50 of the Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra contains a number of villancicos de negro from the Monastery of Santa Cruz de Coimbra. Jorge Matta made a modern transcription of this manuscript and published it in two volumes, the first titled “Manuscrito 50 da Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra: Vilancicos, romances e chansonetas de Santa Cruz de Coimbra Século XVII” and the second as “Manuscrito 50 da Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra: Vilancicos, romances, tonos e um Te Deum.” In the first volume, which contains a total of fourteen works, we encounter seven 17th-century villancicos de negro within a collection of otherwise non-ethnic villancicos, romances and chansonetas on religious topics such as Christmas and Divine love. In the second volume, with a total of 20 works, only one fits the characteristics of a villancico de negro, while the other works represent non-ethnic villancicos, romances, tonos and one Te Deum.

As the composer or composers of these works are presently still unknown, we are left to hypothesize about what these works may represent by analyzing their texts and music. Since we are able to point out musical and literary characteristics that are common to them and different from the non-ethnic villancicos, this study will investigate if these works reference black musical practice that can reflects black agency and racial stereotyping. The following analyses of each of

these works focuses on elements such as scoring, harmonic structure, meter, melody, texture, linguistic elements (such as language), themes, text relations to geographic places, and text settings. Following the analyses, I will create a summary that highlights the major characteristics that make these works so unique, and unlike other works in the same collection that are not referred to as *villancicos de negro*.

*Olá zente que aqui samo*

Written for two choirs, à 8 (S₁S₂T₁B₁/S₃A₁T₂B₂), and continuo, this work features a limited harmonic progression that rarely deviates from I-IV-V-VI while utilizing few secondary functioning chords. In a feeling of a constant triple meter, this work is characterized by a conjunct melodic contour and by a syllabic distribution of the text. The work is homophonic, containing solos, dialogues between the choirs, and at points has overlapping text between the choirs. Observing its linguistic elements, the work is in *fala de negro* [Portuguese-creole], and it contains the typical feature of the use of onomatopoeias as interjections such as “ai ai ai” and “hé hé hé” (see figure 8). Additionally, the text in this work also includes references to places in Africa and its people, citing places such as São Tomé and Guiné, and to Black people, stating, for instance, “que pleto que samo” [how black we are]. This interesting reference to skin color (among many similar references in these works), could have had comical associations. As Lowe discusses, it was common for Black Africans to be the target of ridicule due to their “inferior” position and skin color. 307 Another common element of *villancicos de negro* is the use of adaptations of typical Portuguese names to the *fala de negro*. In this work one finds names such

as Zé (said in the same way in Portuguese), Flanciquia (probably an adaptation of Francisca or Francisquinha) and Flancico (an adaptation of Francisco). The thematic material, as is common in the villancicos of the time, focuses on Christmas themes, mentioning the characters’ way to Bethlehem, while singing to Christ that today the Black people will rise to the glory of the sky.

Figure 8: Excerpt from “Olá zente que aqui samo” demonstrating the use of interjections.

En un portal derribado

This work, written for two choirs (S₁A₁T₁B₁/S₂A₂T₂B₂) and continuo, also features a limited harmonic progression of I-IV-V-VI. Rhythmically, the work contains some variety as we observe a meter change from “C” to “3,” the latter being fast paced, with dance-like sections. In fact, this change occurs in the very beginning making a contrast between the first solo and the second in the soprano (see figure 6). In contrast to the previous work, En un portal derribado is in Spanish, with a section in Spanish-Creole, which occurs at the end when the gente negra

[Black people] enter, thus making it a linguistically mixed work. Regarding its texture this work is quite similar to the previous one: homophonic and also containing, solo sections and dialogues between the choirs. Textually, at the end of the work there is a reference to people from sub-Saharan Africa who are playing “un instrumento” [an instrument]; the party concludes with a “dança de negros” [dance of Negros] announced in the text. The text in this dance section portrays a festive mood, with singing, playing flutes and tambourines. The thematic material is again related to Christmas and the birth of Jesus.

![Figure 9: Excerpt from “En un portal derribado” demonstrating rhythmic variety between two solo sections.](image)

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Sà qui turo zente pleta

Written for two choirs (S₁A₁T₁B₁/S₂A₂T₂B₂), this work, in Portuguese-Creole, also contains a limited harmonic progression as well as a conjunct melody. Metrically the work is in three and is characterized by the extensive use of syncopations. As in the previous works, it contains a homophonic texture that is diversified by the varied use of solos and dialogues between choirs. Particularly interesting in this work is the extensive use of the interjections “he he,” that give to the work a festive mood (see figure 10). Additionally, these interjections are marked with a forceful character, as they are sung by the whole ensemble. Also important to note is the absence of a continuo part that could be either improvised or entirely left out. The text contains references to African places – Guiné – to their people – zente pleta – and to a variety of

Figure 10: Excerpt from “Sà qui turo zente pleta” demonstrating the use of interjections.\textsuperscript{310}

\textsuperscript{310}Jorge Matta, Manuscrito 50 da Biblioteca Geral da Universidade de Coimbra: Vilancicos, Romances e Chansonetas de Santa Cruz de Coimbra Século XVII Parte I, (Lisbon, Portugal: Edições Colibri, 2008), 37.
Portuguese names that were adapted to Creole, such as Menino Manué, Bacião, Thomé, Flanciquia, Caterija, Flunando and Resnando. The text distribution is syllabic and once again refers to Christmas themes.

**Ola hau, quien está hay**

Written for two choirs and continuo, this work also contains a limited harmonic progression focusing on V-I-V/V or VI and V/VI. Rhythmically and melodically the work is also modest, using mostly quarter-notes and half-notes supporting a conjunct melody. Spanish, Portuguese and Creole texts are used, making it a culturally diversified work that is enhanced by references in the text to different regions and their people (Angolan, Portuguese and Castillian). The texture is also homophonic and again contains different forms of dialogue exchange between the choirs. Interesting about this work is its theme, which refers to peace between the people, as when the Angolan says:

Tá tá
Não hayas brigas
Toros vivamos contenta
Que sá seoro de turo zente
E toros quer ver amigas

Tá tá
Do not have fights
Let’s all live happy
Who knows Sir of everyone
And I want to see you all friends
Olá Plimo Bacião (Three versions)

The manuscript presents three versions of Olá Plimo Bacião that exhibit very similar characteristics, including their texts. Different from one other is the scoring, as the first and third are written for two choirs and continuo, but the second is for one choir and continuo. All three works are in triple meter and mostly use quarter-notes and half-notes, and all contain a conjunct melody. The three works are in Portuguese Creole and refer to Christmas celebrations. In these works one can also observe the use of interjections such as “Hé Hé” and “Ha Ha,” and references to places in Africa, Guiné and Santo Tomé.

Casuá Casuá

This work is the only villancico de negro present in the second volume of Jorge Matta’s edition and it has a very particular scoring, written only for Alto, Tenor and continuo. Harmonically the work is also limited, consisting mostly of progressions of I-V-I. Rhythmically one observes almost only quarter-notes and the melody is conjunct and brief. Its text, in a form of Portuguese Creole, is, for the most part, difficult to understand.

Conclusion Regarding These Works

There are many similarities among the works discussed above. All but two are scored for two choirs with solo sections. Their harmonic structures are limited, using mostly tonic, pre-dominant, dominant and sub-mediant chords. Rhythmically and melodically the works are also simple with little rhythmic variety, apart from the use of syncopations, and melodies are always
conjunct. All works are homophonic, containing sections for solos, extensive use of dialogue between choirs, and textual interjections; the texts are almost always set syllabically. Complexity, however, is found on the level of interchange between the choirs (which is present in all the works) and the call-and-response patterns, features that are very particular of this sub-genre.

A remarkable variety of languages is used in these works, which is one of their most important characteristics. Most of the works in this collection are in Portuguese-Creole, however, some also use Spanish-Creole, Spanish and Portuguese. Some works even contain more than one language, thus presenting a remarkable linguistic diversity. Characteristics of these works related to text are the many references to places in Africa and to their people, and to musical instruments. As is common to the villancicos, the themes of these works are related to Christmas or the idea of bringing people together in celebrating Christmas.

_Villancicos de Negro_ and Other Ethnic or Unspecific _Villancicos_: A Comparison of Musical and Literary Elements

By way of comparison, in the following section I discuss two villancicos from the same collection that are not categorized as villancicos de negro, in order to shed light on differences and to argue what constitutes a villancico de negro within this collection. I also examine in what ways these works may or may not be early modern representations of blackness.

One of the non-ethnic villancicos present in this collection is _Hay una Aquila divina_, also dating from the 17th century and by an anonymous composer. This work is scored for two solo sopranos and continuo, the vuelta being written for four voices (SATB) and continuo. Its harmonic structure is built in the same way as the ethnic villancicos de negro discussed above, as
it develops around I-IV-V-VII chords. Although the melody is conjunct, the rhythmic element that differs from the previous works analyzed. In this work the rhythm is more complex, as we observe runs of sixteenth notes, as well as more rhythmic variety rather than the constant use of specific rhythmic patterns. Another important musical characteristic of this work is the independence of the vocal solos, as they are laid out in a form of dialogue. The use of melismas in this works is also a feature that the villancicos de negro of this collection do not contain. The text is in Spanish and focuses on religious themes and the Divine.

Another work present in this collection that is not an ethnic villancico is Um galan tan liberal, also with no attributed composer and dating from the 17th century. The work is scored for two choirs (S1A1T1B1/S2A2T2B2) and continuo, as we are used to seeing in most of the works from this collection. The harmonic structure of this works is slightly more complex than others in this collection. The work begins with a solo in the alto voice in a minor mode, to which the choirs respond in A Dorian, thus suggesting the use of modal mixture. Regarding its rhythmic elements, in this work we observe the extensive use of a pattern that includes a quarter note, followed by a dotted quarter note and an eighth note. Also in Spanish, this work, at first glance focuses on a secular topic, mentioning how wonderful this galan [ladies’ man] is. However, the text could also be interpreted allegorically, where the galan in fact refers to Jesus and his wonderfulness. Similar to the previous work analyzed, the text is mostly syllabic, however we observe the occasional use of melismas. It is thus possible to suggest that non-ethnic villancicos, when compared to the villancicos de negro appear harmonically and rhythmically more complex. It is also important to stress the absence of characteristics often seen in the villancicos de negro such as the use of interjections, references to geographical places, and the extensive use of call
and response patterns. While a more detailed and systematic examination of these sub-genres is
definitely called for, even the preliminary overview presented in this study highlights some of the
major differences between the two types of works.
CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION: VILLANCICOS DE NEGRO 
AND THE ISSUES OF REPRESENTATION AND AGENCY

The strong presence of Black Africans in Renaissance Portugal and their impact on the social and cultural life of the Portuguese cannot be doubted, but such affirmation alone does not answer the main questions of this study. What do these villancicos de negro represent? Are they a stereotyped view of the “other” from the perspective of White Portuguese? Do they nevertheless reflect some form of musical practice of Black people and therefore can be viewed as documents of black musical agency? As previously mentioned, two opposing views exist in this research field. On the one side, there is the view of Robert Stevenson and other scholars following his interpretation argue that these villancicos de negro are indeed a representation of black musical practice, and therefore a document of black agency, while Geoffrey Baker, Drew Davis and Andrew Cashner, who have published on villancicos de negro from New Spain, believe that the works they study represent a stereotypical view of blackness and therefore represent a construction of black identity by the colonizers.

Baker argues that White singers in New Spain imitated the speech patterns and behaviors of Black Africans. For instance, he states that the love for music and dancing, an idea that is frequently portrayed in the villancicos de negro, is embodied in a comic manner.\(^{311}\) Furthermore, Baker believes that these compositions worked as a way to affect the conscience of those who attended the ceremonies, the people, through the use of musical and rhetorical elements that, in his opinion, were a construction done by those in power.\(^{312}\) Baker thus concludes that this

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\(^{312}\) Ibid., 402-404.
representation of the “other” should not be viewed as politically innocent, but rather as an example through which the ruling classes taught people their proper role in an estate-based, hierarchical society, demonstrating an attitude of Christian paternalism.\textsuperscript{313}

Drew Davies shares a similar position, arguing that \textit{villancicos de negro} are a reflection of a narrative of identity-building of the Black Africans in New Spain built by “others,” those in power.\textsuperscript{314} He goes further by affirming that these \textit{villancicos} should not be looked at as exotic treasures but rather that one should “see them as breathing vestiges of a precarious colonial culture performing both its European roots and its American future in an officially elitist environment.”\textsuperscript{315}

Andrew Cashner, who agrees with the two previous scholars on most aspects, argues that, although these works abound in musical descriptions of dancing, playing instruments and singing in other languages, their focus point is not music but cultural difference.\textsuperscript{316} Referring to the language used, Cashner adds that these works represent a parody of speech and culture by merely twisting Castilian Spanish to imitate black African accent.\textsuperscript{317}

However, as Portuguese \textit{villancicos de negro} were created in a different cultural and social setting from that of New Spain, two important points need to be highlighted. First, the social situation in Portugal differed significantly from that in New Spain. As Baker states, the \textit{villancicos de negro} originated in the Iberian Peninsula, where Black Africans were clearly the minority.\textsuperscript{318} In New Spain, however, the situation was quite different, as there were vastly more

\textsuperscript{313} Ibid., 407.
\textsuperscript{314} Davies, “Villancicos from Mexico City,” 238.
\textsuperscript{315} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{316} Cashner, “Faith, Hearing, and Power,” 22
\textsuperscript{317} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{318} Baker, “The ‘Ethnic Villancico,’” 399.
Black Africans and mulattos than the White Castilians.\textsuperscript{319} Thus, Baker points out that, for instance, in Mexico, the black population was considered a threat to the White populace: “the villancicos show Negro characters participating fully in the activities of the Church, yet most churchmen paid little attention to Black Africans, preferring to concentrate their efforts on evangelizing the indigenous population. In the fictional world of the villancicos, Negro characters participate in society through their music and dancing, yet in reality their cultural activities were circumscribed.”\textsuperscript{320} It seems then, that although Black African’s activities were circumscribed, the image that people in power wanted to portray in the villancicos was different, thus showing them as fully active in the church. While the restrictions on their cultural activities may be true in the situation in New Spain, the same was not so much the case in Portugal, which and that can be seen in the records analyzed in chapter 2. In Portugal, the status and political power of the White population was never endangered, thus this could result in a more benign, patronizing view on Black people by the Portuguese. That is, in Portugal, the villancicos de negro may have been used to demonstrate the cultural diversity of an “overseas empire,” a function that is apparent in the descriptions of the wedding celebrations of Infanta D. Leonor to the Emperor Friedrich III in 1451, or in the painting Chafariz d’el-Rei, where Black Africans are portrayed or referred to as being part of social and cultural activities and as people integrated in society. Additionally, one can also argue that Black Africans were an actively present in social and cultural activities, as they were also part of the multi-ethnic performances. As Kate Lowe states, African elements, such as dance and music, were appealing to Europeans for their exotic 

\textsuperscript{319} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{320} Ibid., 400.
nature. Thus, the Portuguese villancicos de negro can be viewed, just as other ethnic villancicos, as a demonstration of the ethnic diversity (and thus far-reaching power) of the Portuguese seafarer and trade empire.

Second, I believe that it is possible to suggest that Portuguese villancicos do indeed contain a reflection of actual musical practices of Black Africans in 16th- and 17th-century Portugal, even though this happens through the filter of a white, Portuguese, stereotyping and homogenizing perception. In the Portuguese villancicos de negro from 17th century, we observe a number of features specifically characteristic of this particular sub-genre: a dance-like style, frequent use of syncopation, very simple tonal plans, pronounced call and response patterns, a through-composed form with varied alternations between solo and choral sections, and the use of a specific vocabulary. Additionally, although the works do not have great melodic, rhythmic and harmonic variety, the works are engaging through their rhythmic vivacity, and especially through the varied ways of interaction between the different choral groups, often in dialogue and with call and response patterns, giving much “action” to these works. These latter features do not seem so prominent in villancicos de negro from New Spain321, and are almost absent from non-ethnic villancicos of the Manuscript 50, thus suggesting a possible stronger representation of the musical practice of Black Africans, although still from a white perspective.

It is important to note that the second point argued is a hypothesis that requires more in-depth research. In order to fully support the claim that the Portuguese works discussed here are indeed quite different from those of New Spain it would be necessary to create a database of

321 See, for instance Drew Davis paper “Africa and Africans in Christmas villancicos from 17th century New Spain,” (unpublished paper, presented at the BGSU Musicology and Ethnomusicology Colloquium, January 2016), in which he argues that there is an absence of an idiomatic African voice in the musical language of these works.
**villancicos de negro** from both Europe and New Spain, with text, translations and scores in order to make more detailed stylistic comparisons possible.

One of the most important aspects of the *villancicos de negro* is the text, written in a language that resembles Portuguese and Castilian, but also with some traces of creole. Saunders noted that there is evidence of the existence of a form of Portuguese-creole spoken in the western parts of Africa resembling the same language represented in the *villancicos*; it is possible to argue that the Portuguese-creole present in the *villancicos* may have come close to the dialect of the Black Africans living in Portugal. As I have discussed in Chapter Two, the different ethnic groups present in Portugal were in constant contact with each other, allowing for an absorption of customs that could affect Portuguese culture.

To conclude, the *villancicos de negro* in the Coimbra manuscript, although simple at first glance, are greatly complex not only in terms of cultural representations, but also in terms of performance style. I have argued that, although the works were most likely written by a White composer or several White composers, they were indeed intended to portray Black Africans and their musical practices in early modern Portugal. Even though Black Africans were portrayed in a stereotypical way, the *villancicos de negro* should also be viewed as artifacts that contain references of cultural activities of Black people, of which there are otherwise only traces in archival records. Even though these works do not represent their own voice, they can serve us at least as reminders of their former presence, of their past position as slaves, of inequality and injustice, but also as their own agency, despite their marginalized position.
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