

## Free and freed black Africans in Granada in the time of the Spanish Renaissance

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### I Black Africans, the Renaissance and Spain<sup>1</sup>

The Renaissance spirit is associated with progress and renewal, humanism and arts. Almost no black Africans took part in this movement in Spain with the important exception of Juan Latino, the sixteenth-century professor of Latin at the University of Granada<sup>2</sup> who achieved fame through his literary works.<sup>3</sup> Being black was otherwise synonymous with slavery for the people of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Spain. Even though slavery is opposed to the spirit of the Renaissance, enslavement was common at the time. Aristotle, the so called 'prince of philosophers', was one of the main theorists to develop the idea that some people were naturally born to be slaves, and his theory was in full force during the Renaissance. Thus the relationship between slavery and the optimism about the human condition inherent in Renaissance ideas was one of contradiction.

My intention is to compare the lives and social perceptions of black Africans who were emancipated with those who remained slaves. I will analyse the change that took place from the moment they were set free and present several examples of social promotion of black Africans in Spanish Renaissance society. I have based my research primarily on historical sources (notarial, ecclesiastical, court, etc.) from different archives, complemented by the study of literary sources. But it must be understood that the freedom experienced by this handful of people was exceptional and has nothing to do with what we understand by freedom today.

<sup>1</sup> I would like to thank Una Flett and James Dahlgren for their help with the translation of this text.

<sup>2</sup> Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza, *Historia eclesiástica de Granada* (Granada, 1639). I have used a modern edition (Granada, 1989), p. 260: 'Estudió Artes y fue maestro en ellas y quiso estudiar Medicina, y disuadióle un amigo discreto no fuese el negro médico. Aplicóse a leer gramática y tuvo la cátedra desta universidad.'

<sup>3</sup> I have dealt briefly with this interesting character from a historical point of view in my book *La esclavitud en la Granada del siglo XVI: género, raza y religión* (Granada, 2000).

Before developing the subject, I would like to pay some attention to terminology. What are we talking about when using the word 'black'? The Castilian<sup>4</sup> word *negro* (black) could be used to describe people from very different cultures, religions and nations. The following seven groups of people could be described or referred to as *negros* in early modern documents:

- 1) Sub-Saharan people from different ethnic groups speaking different native languages, mainly from the area called 'Guinea'<sup>5</sup> but also from the Congo and Angola. They could be Muslims (since Islam had entered the area), Christians (since there were also Christian missions there) or animists (keeping their traditional religion). They constituted the largest group of black Africans, most of them slaves;
- 2) North African Muslims (freed or slaves) of sub-Saharan origin who spoke Arabic;
- 3) People with sub-Saharan ancestors born in Spain or Portugal, baptised and Castilian-speaking;
- 4) Moriscos (Spanish Muslims converted by force to Christianity, either free or enslaved) with sub-Saharan blood;
- 5) People from the Canary Islands who had dark skin and were in most cases slaves;
- 6) Hindus or Tamils from India brought by Portuguese slave merchants;
- 7) African Americans brought to Spain by their Spanish owners living in the Americas.

It is obvious that the word *negro* refers exclusively to the colour of the skin and has a strong biological reference. The common characteristic of these groups of people is that they had sub-Saharan ancestors. But the word 'black' suggests a uniform origin even if the cultural, religious and geographical references of the groups of people mentioned are very heterogeneous. And even with regard to those coming from sub-Saharan Africa, it has to be emphasised that there were as many internal differences in 'black' Africa as in 'white' Europe. Classification of people on racial categories, such as skin colour, aims to biologise social-economical differences since racial categories are perceived as 'natural'. Oppositions such as black/white give the impression that it is the race (or skin colour) that marks the difference between people and their economic conditions. A correlation between poverty and dark skin was a clear equation for any Spaniard at the time. My belief is that their inferior social

<sup>4</sup> Castilian was the word used for the Spanish language of that epoch.

<sup>5</sup> In the sixteenth century, the Spanish and Portuguese gave the name Guinea to a vast territory corresponding to Western sub-Saharan Africa. Sometimes black Africans were also called *guineos*.

condition clearly informs the stereotypes of moral and intellectual inferiority in black Africans found in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish literature. The social stigmatisation of black Africans was greater than that of other groups sold as slaves in Spain (such as Arabs) since what was taken into account was not culture or religion but the colour of their skin.

But after reading the documents, it becomes clear that descriptions of colour are arbitrary, inconsistent and sometimes even contradictory ('clear black', 'almost black', 'dark black', 'very dark black', etc.) since there is no such thing as 'pure black' or 'pure white'. Descriptions of skin colour depend on subjective perception through comparing groups. The words 'black' or 'white' are reductionist terms with the goal of using racial categories to maintain social hierarchies.

Although many contemporary authors use the word 'black'<sup>6</sup> to describe people who have sub-Saharan ancestors, authors such as Orlando Patterson would clearly disagree with the use of this term. He writes: 'I refuse to call any Euro-American or Caucasian person "white" and I view with the deepest suspicion any Euro-American who insists on calling Afro-Americans "blacks"'.<sup>7</sup> Patterson prefers to use a geographical-cultural category rather than a racial one, but the reason he argues for his choice is not the 'biological essentialism' of the word 'black', but the negative meanings associated with the word 'black' in dictionary definitions and therefore in American mentalities.

This article is devoted to the study of 'people with sub-Saharan ancestors' living in Spain during the sixteenth century, but I have consciously chosen to use the term 'black Africans' to refer to them<sup>8</sup> because it makes for easier reading and, more significantly, I believe that using politically correct terminology is not as important as the approach to the subject and the ideology it conveys.

## 2 Muslims, Christians and their black slaves: fourteenth to sixteenth centuries

The Muslim entry into the Iberian peninsula in 711 and their presence until the sixteenth century makes Spain an interesting nation in the European context.

<sup>6</sup> Angela Davis, 'The meaning of emancipation according to black women', in Angela Davis, *Women, Race and Class* (London, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> Orlando Patterson, *Rituals of Blood: Consequences of Slavery in Two American Centuries* (New York, 1998), p. 22.

<sup>8</sup> I have to say that in my book, *La esclavitud en la Granada* (mentioned above), I hardly use the word 'black' since chapters are based on geographical origins of enslaved people, and this schema lets me use geographical categories to describe groups of slaves such as *subsaharianos* (sub-Saharan) or *norteafricanos* (North African), etc.

Slavery was a normal institution in Islamic Spain for this entire period. Most of the slaves were black Africans coming from the trans-Saharan slave trade.<sup>9</sup> During the slow Christian expansion, traditionally called the Reconquest (*reconquista*), the battles between Christians and Muslims resulted in the taking of many prisoners who were enslaved by both sides.

By the fifteenth century, Spain had been conquered by the Christians except for the Kingdom of Granada, a large Muslim territory formed by today's provinces of Granada, Málaga and Almería (basically the south-east part of Andalusia). The Kingdom of Granada was ruled by Muslims until 1492 and once conquered by the Christians, the majority of the population remained Muslim. In 1505, twelve years after the victory of Ferdinand and Isabella, all the Spanish Muslims<sup>10</sup> were forced to convert and were called 'Moriscos'.

The Moriscos became subjects of the Catholic Crown and as such had the right to own slaves. Black Africans were used as slaves by everyone, especially by the Moriscos who preferred them to North African Arabs, as Moriscos were themselves descendants of Arabs and Berbers. Christians purchased either white Arab or black African slaves depending on market conditions. The number of slaves (whatever their origin) in sixteenth-century Spain varied significantly from south to north. In most Andalusian cities they added up to 10 per cent of the total population in urban areas (in some periods even more) but as we travel north their presence diminishes to 2–3 per cent.<sup>11</sup> The Christians of the inland cities of Seville<sup>12</sup> and Córdoba<sup>13</sup> purchased a significant number of black slaves from Portuguese<sup>14</sup> slave merchants. On the other hand, the inhabitants of Mediterranean coastal cities, such as Málaga or Almería,<sup>15</sup> could more easily buy or capture white Arab slaves due to the proximity of North Africa. In any case, the Mediterranean trade also provided

<sup>9</sup> Arabs called them *abid* (literally, slaves) or *sudan* (literally, black Africans, but synonymous with slaves).

<sup>10</sup> Apart from the Kingdom of Granada, several areas in Christian territory still remained populated by free Muslims, such as parts of the regions of Valencia, Aragón, Extremadura and Castilla-La Mancha.

<sup>11</sup> Alessandro Stella, *Histoires d'esclaves dans la péninsule ibérique* (Paris, 2000), pp. 76–7.

<sup>12</sup> Alexis Bernard, 'Les esclaves à Seville au XVIIe siècle', Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Lyon II, 1998.

<sup>13</sup> Albert Ndamba Kabongo, 'Les esclaves à Cordue au debut du XVIIe siècle (1600–1621)', Ph.D. dissertation, Université de Toulouse Le Mirail, 1975.

<sup>14</sup> A. C. de C. M. Saunders, *A Social History of Black Slaves and Freedmen in Portugal, 1441–1551* (Cambridge, 1982).

<sup>15</sup> Bernard Vincent, 'L'esclavage en milieu rural espagnol au XVIIe siècle: l'exemple de la région d'Almería', in Henri Bresc, ed., *Figures de l'esclave au Moyen Âge et dans le monde moderne* (Paris, 1996), pp. 165–76.

black slaves coming from the traditional trans-Saharan slave routes, as Bernard Vincent has explained.<sup>16</sup>

Due to several Morisco rebellions, the Crown took away the privilege of Morisco slave ownership in 1560<sup>17</sup> and forced them to sell their slaves to Christian neighbours or set them free. Francisco Nuñez Muley, a noble Morisco, in a last desperate attempt to defend the Morisco right to own slaves, argued that black Africans from Guinea were the lowest kind of people and so Moriscos should be able to keep them.<sup>18</sup> However, the law was duly passed, and 1560 marks the first liberation of a small group of black slaves.<sup>19</sup> Most of the liberated black Africans lived in the mountains of the Alpujarra or in the Morisco quarter of Granada. There are still several streets in the Albaicín named after the black Africans, such as the Callejón de los negros (alley of the black Africans), the Placeta de los negros (square of the black Africans) and the Barranco de los negros (ravine of the black Africans). For the rest of the sixteenth century, slaves were mainly the property of Christians, and only the wealthy, assimilated Moriscos who had proved their Christianity had permission from the Crown to keep, buy and sell slaves.

Most sub-Saharan slaves brought to Spain as children or adolescents learnt to speak Castilian very quickly. Those who had just arrived and could not speak Castilian were called *bozales*, those who spoke fluent Castilian were called *ladinos*, and finally those who were learning and spoke a little Castilian were called 'half *ladino*' or 'half *bozal*'. On the other hand, many black Africans owned by Moriscos spoke fluent Arabic and knew only a few words of Castilian. Allusions to the so-called 'half language' of black Africans are common in literature, black characters generally changing –l– for –r– and –r– for –g– when speaking Castilian.

Most black Africans and mulattos had Spanish names since baptism was the rule for all, even for those who were owned by Moriscos.<sup>20</sup> Only a few kept

<sup>16</sup> Bernard Vincent, 'Les noirs à Oran aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles', in Berta Ares Queija and Alessandro Stella, eds., *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos: derroteros Africanos en los mundos ibéricos* (Seville, 2000), pp. 59–66.

<sup>17</sup> The law was passed by the Cortes de Toledo in 1560 and reiterated in the *Nueva Recopilación de Leyes del Reino* in 1566.

<sup>18</sup> 'Tampoco hay inconveniente en que los naturales de este reino tengan negros. ¿Estas gentes no han de tener servicio? . . . ¿Qué gente hay en el mundo más vil y baja que los negros de Guinea?', in Luis de Mármol Carvajal, *Rebelión y castigo de los Moriscos* (orig. 1600, Málaga, 1991), p. 71.

<sup>19</sup> Individual slaves had been freed previously, but not groups.

<sup>20</sup> On the question of syncretism and religious identity, see: Aurelia Martín Casares, 'Cristianos, musulmanes y animistas: identidades religiosas y sincretismo cultural', in Ares Queija and Stella, eds., *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos*, pp. 207–21.

their African names for a long period. The surname was generally that of the owners, whether they were Christians or Moriscos. As most slaves belonged to several owners during their lives, their surnames changed according to their master's. Freed slaves generally kept the surname of their last owner. The rule was not always strictly applied as some took the name of the village where they lived,<sup>21</sup> or were given nicknames such as 'Ramicos' (Small bouquet).<sup>22</sup> I came across the case of a black slave called Juan Blanco<sup>23</sup> (John White), which may be a joke in bad taste since his owner's surname was not Blanco.

### 3 Freedom and the possibilities of integration for black Africans

The status of an emancipated slave was not the same as that of a free born person in early modern Spain. Emancipated slaves were fatally stigmatised by their past. Analysing numerous documents, phrases such as: 'slave who belonged to', or 'who is free and was a slave', or 'recently freed from slavery', etc., make clear the insistence of emphasising their slave past and distinguishing them from those who had been born free.<sup>24</sup>

This generalized attitude denigrating emancipated slaves, whatever their origin, became accentuated in the case of black Africans because the dominating ideology made black and slave synonymous. This was clearly portrayed in the testament of a widow, dated 1566, who wills her estate to two black heirs (brother and sister), emphasising: 'The colour of their faces gives rise to the suspicion that they are slaves, but I say and declare that they are not, and that they have never been but free people'.<sup>25</sup> It is interesting to note that her statement was necessary precisely because slaves did not have the right of inheritance. It is evident that the association between dark skin and slavery was an integral part of the mentality of the time. Thus, freed black Africans were doubly handicapped in comparison with other freed people with regard to social integration.

<sup>21</sup> Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 145, fol. 14r (1565): 'Sebastian de Lojuela, de color negro, vecino del lugar de Lojuela, jurisdicción de la ciudad de Almuñecar'.

<sup>22</sup> Ramicos was one of the two slaves who accompanied Don Juan de Guzmán, the Duke of Medina Sidonia, one of the principal nobles of Castile. Ramicos may be a reference to some kind of skin mark. Granada, Archivo Municipal, Cabina 504, Legajo 793, pieza 13, fols. 40v-43v: 'Inventario de todos los bienes, villas y heredamientos de Don Juan de Guzmán, Duque de Medina Sidonia, hecho en la ciudad de Sevilla donde vivió y murió, 1507'.

<sup>23</sup> Juan Blanco was accused of having stolen a piece of silk cloth and an embroidered handkerchief. Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 78-1-12 (1562).

<sup>24</sup> Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 150, fol. 496v: 'Pedro Macarruf, moreno, esclavo que fue de Lorenzo Macarruf'. Examples such as this can be found in notarial documents relating to freed black slaves in most of the public and private archives of Spain.

<sup>25</sup> Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 150, fol. 68 (1566).

Moreover, the majority of slaveowners did not liberate their slaves gratuitously but rather only after the payment of a redemption fee. Relatives and friends were generally those who paid the fee,<sup>26</sup> and slaves who came from distant places, such as sub-Saharan Africa, had fewer possibilities of being freed. In Granada there were two main black and mulatto confraternities (Nuestra Señora de la Encarnación y Paciencia de Cristo in the church of San Justo y Pastor and San Benito de Palermo in the church of Santa Escolástica, located in the centre of the Christian city), both very poor, although they did manage to help slaves obtain their freedom.<sup>27</sup> In some cases, when slaves were manumitted without payment, it is reasonable to assume that they were bastard children of their owner. White masters sexually abusing their female slaves was unfortunately quite common. Bastard offspring born under the slaveowner's roof, and freed later when they reached the prime of life, often received financial support or land which suggests the paternal and emotional connection.<sup>28</sup> But in most cases, bastard children remained a secret and were never freed.

Of course, most black Africans were not born in Spain but arrived as adolescents or adults. Many came by Atlantic trade, transported either by Canary Island or Portuguese merchants.<sup>29</sup> Others arrived by the Mediterranean trade routes, connecting with trans-Saharan routes, finally crossing the straits by boat. Many were used as galley slaves of the Muslims, others simply

<sup>26</sup> This is, for example, the case of Pedro, whose mother was also a slave, but who once freed scraped together enough money to pay the redemption fee of her son who was thirteen when freed in 1563. 'Y es hijo de Ana Hernández, que así mesmo fue mi esclava, y al presente es libre, que nos convenimos me pagase 80 ducados por el rescate del dicho Pedro y ella me los ha pagado' ('And he is the son of Ana Hernández, who was also my slave, and now she is free, and she agreed to pay me 80 ducats for the redemption of Pedro and she has already paid me'). Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 198 (1563). Another example is the case of Isabel and her two daughters, Luisa and María, the three of them enslaved during the Morisco revolt and liberated in 1573 by Francisco Pérez, husband of Isabel and father of the two girls, who paid 100 ducats as redemption fee. Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 191, unfoliated (1573).

<sup>27</sup> Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada*, p. 422.

<sup>28</sup> Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 212, fol. 156 (1564): 'Y Luis Brío, tejedor de terciopelo, dice que es padre de la dicha Micaela y así lo tengo entendido y me ha rrogado liberte a la dicha Micaela y para la ayuda a las costas que yo he hecho en la crianza della me ha ofrecido y quiere dar 12 ducados' ('And Luis Brío, velvet weaver, says that he is the father of Micaela, and I have heard so, and he begged me to free Micaela and for helping with the expenses I incurred in bringing her up, he offered and wants to give me 12 ducats').

<sup>29</sup> A black slave from Senegal called Francisco said that he was brought to Cádiz by the Portuguese merchant who captured him. Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 101-47 (1566). The first Portuguese settlements in the area called Guinea date from 1444 and 1446 and many Portuguese slave traders sold slaves in Spain.

arrived as free servants. A few, interestingly, freed (for various reasons) by their Arab owners, went on to join the bands of pirates which raided the Iberian coast.<sup>30</sup>

The Mediterranean sea was a very busy, chaotic place. Apart from the normal business of fishing, there were primarily three activities in which black Africans were involved: first, Arabs (with their black galley slaves) came to Spain to plunder and capture Christians; second, Spaniards (with their black galley slaves) plundered North Africa and captured black and white Muslims; third, black and white Moriscos left Spain with their black slaves looking for a better life in Muslim countries. In some cases, these Moriscos found new careers as spies or guides for pirates due to their excellent knowledge of the Iberian coast. Some, becoming pirates themselves, used their black slaves to help fight, plunder and capture Christians. The trip by boat from Tetuán (in Morocco) to Castel de Ferro (in Granada) lasted one day and one night.<sup>31</sup> Curiously, it is the same maritime route used today by sub-Saharan Africans and Arabs attempting to enter Spain illegally – the cause of so many of the recent tragic news stories.

In some official documents, black Africans are to be found escaping to the Spanish coast from Muslim vessels in order to avoid the hard life of a galley slave. Others simply got lost on shore during pirate raids. Black Africans unable to prove their free status were in deep trouble. The Spanish were very concerned to prevent spying along the coast. When black Africans could not speak Castilian, which was very frequently the case, the Spanish authorities usually found a translator during the interrogation.<sup>32</sup> If the authorities were unconvinced, it was a one-way street back into slavery.

These 'escaped' or 'lost' black Africans understood that the only road to freedom was to declare their desire to convert to Christianity. And some genuinely did want to convert, as they had suffered terrible treatment under their Muslim owners. There were many instances during the subsequent interrogation (which sometimes involved torture on the rack) when the Spanish lawyer provided for the suspect successfully defended the position of 'religious

<sup>30</sup> Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 100–47 (1561). <sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Haxa, a slave from the north of Africa who spoke good Castilian, was the interpreter in several cases in Granada. For example, she was the interpreter in the trial in which freedom was granted to a black man called Suzma found lost on the coast of Granada and put in jail where he was dying of hunger. The text says: 'Llevando consigo una esclava que se llama Haxa para que interpretase porque la lengua berberisca es cerrada' ('Taking with them a slave called Haxa to interpret because the Berber language is hard to understand'). Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 100–6 (1553).

refugee'. However, an unsuccessful defence usually meant being sold back into slavery (the money going to the Crown) or working as a galley slave, the very life they were trying to escape.

When a slave escaped from his/her master, it was not easy to hide. Most cities in early modern Spain were small enough for everyone to know each other. Any new arrival would be noticed sooner or later, and the fact of being black made him/her even more conspicuous. Black Africans who did not have documentation proving their free status or who could not be identified by other citizens were usually sold again as slaves.

On the other hand, black Africans from different ethnic or tribal backgrounds living in the same town tended to help each other, even if this represented a grave danger for the people helping the runaway. Additionally, black confraternities played an important unifying role for black Africans of different cultures as well as offering solidarity.

Most freed black Africans who went back to Africa, as well as escaping slaves, left their possessions in Spain. The few goods they had were confiscated and sold in public auctions (the money going to the Crown), as in the case of the following family of freed black Africans. In 1556, Melchor,<sup>33</sup> his mother and his brothers abandoned the few possessions they had: a woollen cloak, two pillows of dyed burlap, a blanket, a mattress (half wool and half floss silk), another mattress (half wool and half tow), six tow baskets (one of them full of wool), a piece of orange cloth, four plates and four bowls, a green pot, two pitchers, one earthenware pitcher, three rush mats, a wool comb and two heddles for weaving. Most of their goods were old and some were broken, but everything was sold at public auction, proclaimed by the town crier in front of the entire village. The sale amounted to an insignificant 1,326 *maravedís* for the Crown. Like Melchor and his family, most freed black Africans were poor and lived from hand to mouth.

#### 4 How to survive as a freed black African in Castilian society

Most freed black Africans had miserable jobs involving hard physical labour for which they received little recognition and even less money. Others still less fortunate were forced to beg or rely on charity.

Analysing first the employment of black Africans in urban areas, we find a significant percentage caring for horses and mules, animals of fundamental importance at this time. For example, in 1507, the Duke of Medina Sidonia

<sup>33</sup> Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 62-19 (1556).

had seven black slaves working in the stables (where they also slept).<sup>34</sup> We also find examples of stableworkers in literature, as in the novel<sup>35</sup> written by María de Zayas (1590–1661) at the beginning of the seventeenth century. A lady who was the lover of her black free servant visited him every night in the stables where he worked, his room being so small that only one single bed would fit in it.

Freed black men were stableworkers and also worked as unskilled labourers: hod carriers, builders, diggers, pavers, etc. Employers and labourers found each other in the public squares of the cities. Francisco Xailyn is a good example of a freed black African who earned his living through hard labour. At eight or nine years old, he was captured in Senegal<sup>36</sup> by Portuguese merchants and then sold to a Spanish Morisco who liberated him in 1566. Once freed, he found employment as a labourer.<sup>37</sup>

Freed black Africans were also esparto workers, smelters and casters in foundries, carriers and vendors of water (common in Andalusia), and of firewood, bakers or butchers. Commonly at this time, butchers often also served as public executioners.<sup>38</sup>

In some cases, although rarely, old owners put their freed slaves to learn a craft with a master craftsman. This is the case of Juan, who was freed at the age of seventeen and put to work with a tailor to learn the trade in 1539.<sup>39</sup> As his owner was a priest and his mother a slave, one might imagine that Juan was the son of the priest. Regarding black Africans working as apprentices in workshops, it is interesting to note that guild legislation<sup>40</sup> expressly mentioned that neither slaves nor freed people could learn any craft, and that master

<sup>34</sup> Granada, Archivo Municipal, Cabina 504, Legajo 793, pieza 13, fols. 40v–43v (1507): 'Inventario de todos los bienes, villas y heredamientos de Don Juan de Guzmán, duque de Medina Sidonia, hecho en la ciudad de Sevilla donde vivió y murió'.

<sup>35</sup> María de Zayas, 'El prevenido engañado', in *Novelas amorosas y ejemplares compuestas por Doña María de Zayas y Sotomayor* (Madrid: 2000), first published in Zaragoza in 1637.

<sup>36</sup> He was said to be a *jolof* from the ethnic group of Wolofs in Senegal.

<sup>37</sup> He was freed at the age of thirty. 'Se anduvo alquilando en esta ciudad en la plaza de la Alhacaba ganando de comer por su trabajo' ('He rented himself as a labourer in this city in the square of Alhacaba earning his food with his work'). Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 101–47 (1566).

<sup>38</sup> In 1714, following this old tradition, the mayor of the town of Lorca was officially reprimanded because he used the slave of a widow as a public executioner. The document states he was wrong to have done so since there were so many slaves whose owners were butchers: 'Habiendo tantos esclavos de los carniceros debería haberse servido de ellos'. Granada, Archivo de la Chancillería, Legajo 513, Cabina 2.566, pieza 25 (1714).

<sup>39</sup> Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 44 (1539).

<sup>40</sup> As in the case of the 'Ordenanzas' of Seville and Granada, sixteenth-century local legislation kept in the Archivo Municipal of Seville and the Archivo Municipal of Granada.

craftsmen who dared to take slave or freed men as apprentices would be punished with a fine payable in *maravedís*. The purpose was obviously to stop any possibility of competition within the craft, but the fact that the law existed means that slaves and freed people did work as craftsmen.

Since women were excluded from most officially recognised paid jobs, they had no other choice but to get married and work in the home as housewives. Some masters gave their female slaves a few goods as dowry (generally old used goods) when freeing them so that they could more easily find a husband, but most owners were strongly opposed to the marriage of their female slaves, especially if the suitor was a free man who would pay his wife's redemption fee sooner or later. Most freed and slave women became economically dependent on their husbands once they were married. And most married couples were the same skin colour, which does not necessarily mean of the same origin.<sup>41</sup> There was 'colour endogamy', meaning that a black man or woman would generally marry another black person no matter whether he/she was born in Senegal, Morocco or Cartagena de Indias. Then as now, taboos on interracial marriage worked to keep ethnic groups in their place.

Some freed black women worked in taverns and inns.<sup>42</sup> Black women also earned their living working as sorceresses – making love filters, finding lost objects, curing illnesses with herbal remedies, etc.<sup>43</sup> A good proportion of them were tried and condemned by the Spanish Inquisition, although witch hunts, torture and terrorising were not as extreme in Spain (except for isolated cases in the north) as in Northern Europe.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>41</sup> Esperanza de Orozco, a North African 'black' slave, married in 1581 a 'black' man from Portuguese India called Francisco Mejía. Granada, Archivo de la Curia Episcopal, Legajo 1579–1585. I have analysed more than forty dossiers ('Expedientes matrimoniales'), preserved in the Archivo de la Curia Episcopal de Granada, of marriages that took place in the city during the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries. The dossiers form one of the most interesting sources for the study of slavery, though they have not previously been used for this purpose. They each consist of twenty to forty pages, describing many details of the lives of the couples concerned. I have to say that the ecclesiastical archives of Spain are in very bad condition due to the general neglect of the Catholic Church.

<sup>42</sup> Inés, a black girl of eighteen, worked in the Mesón del agua with the widow who owned the inn, Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 150, fol. 607 (1566). The number of taverns and inns in Granada was very high since the city housed the litigants who came to the Chancery, the only one in the south of Spain. For example, in the central district of Santa María there were twenty-four inns, four taverns and one house that offered a bed. Simancas, Archivo General, Censo de Granada de 1561, fol. 117v.

<sup>43</sup> Aurelia Martín Casares, 'La hechicería en la Andalucía Moderna ¿una forma de poder de las mujeres?', in Mary Nash and María José de la Pascua, eds., *Pautas históricas de sociabilidad femenina: Rituales y modelos de representación* (Cadiz, 1999), pp. 101–12.

<sup>44</sup> Brian P. Levack, *The Witch-Hunt in Early Modern Europe* (London, 1995).

In rural areas, some black women and men worked as farmers on their own land or by hiring themselves out to work. Other black Africans living in the countryside had small plots of land with mulberry trees, sugar cane or vines. For example, Sebastian de Lojuela, a black farmer, bought six fields of sugar cane in 1565 with his savings.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, Alonso Calderón,<sup>46</sup> a freed black African who had been a slave of Francisco Calderón, had a plot of arable land with eight or nine mulberry trees and some vines. Sometimes they bought trees on other people's land and took care of them, gathering the fruit and selling it in the public markets. Some black Africans used to gather wild chestnuts to sell and mulberry leaves for raising silkworms.<sup>47</sup> Women also owned pieces of land and worked in the countryside.<sup>48</sup>

When work did not bring in enough to make a living, they sometimes stole fruit. In fact, some black boys ended up in jail after being caught stealing fruit or vegetables. A young black man called Juan was accused of climbing over the walls of a fruit garden to steal from it.<sup>49</sup> The owner of the orchard personally saw him and when he tried to stop him, the boy responded with threats and stones. In some cases thieves were condemned to be whipped in the street or banished from the place for a period of two to four years.<sup>50</sup>

Although the great majority of black Africans lived as I have described, there were a few black people who enjoyed a certain social renown in early modern Spain. The most famous case is Juan Latino, the black professor of Latin who wrote several books and who died in 1590. Francisco Henríquez de Jorquera, author of the *Anales de Granada*, describes him as 'one of the most eminent black people the world has ever known'.<sup>51</sup> He was born a slave,

<sup>45</sup> Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 145, fol. 14r (1565).

<sup>46</sup> Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 101-19 (1566).

<sup>47</sup> A black man called Francisco, who arrived in Spain in 1521 at the age of nine and was freed in 1543, earned his living by selling mulberry leaves for raising silkworms and by working in the vineyards. He was said to be a very good worker. Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 137-15 (1543).

<sup>48</sup> Many freed women such as Costanza Firiha, who had been the slave of a Morisco, worked in the countryside. Once freed she bought a small plot of land for her own use, with vines and two olive trees. Granada, Archivo de Protocolos del Colegio Notarial, Legajo 150, fol. 120r (1566).

<sup>49</sup> Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 223-145 (1573).

<sup>50</sup> On 4 February 1562 a black man was sentenced to 100 lashes in the street around the district of the Alhambra where he lived. Subsequently he was banished from Granada for four years. He had been accused of robbery of goods of an estimated value of six ducats but had no money to pay for them. Granada, Archivo de la Alhambra, Legajo 78-1-16 (1562).

<sup>51</sup> Francisco Henríquez de Jorquera, *Anales de Granada. Descripción del Reino y su ciudad. Crónica de la Reconquista (1482-1492). Sucesos de los años 1588 a 1646*. I have used the latest edition published by the University of Granada in 1987, II, p. 533.

but later freed and brought up in the houses of the Duke of Sessa. It is quite possible that the duke was his father because most documents state clearly that the duke was very fond of him. Juan Latino married a white woman and they had a daughter. In his later years he went blind, perhaps through devoting so much time to reading by candlelight. Even when blind he used to walk through the streets with his pupils reading Horace or Virgil. He was buried at the church of Santa Ana, a church located in the centre of the Christian city, where he lived, near the high altar where his name is engraved on a white marble slab.<sup>52</sup> He was a good friend of the archbishop of Granada and they frequently had lunch together. Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza, author of the *Historia eclesiástica de Granada* of 1639, makes reference to the following exchange, which apparently took place between them. The archbishop asked Juan Latino: 'Master, what would have become of us if we had not studied?', to which Juan Latino replied wittily: 'Your Grace would be a brutish day labourer and I would be brushing down horses'.<sup>53</sup> It is worth noting that both men considered their studies to have been the basis of their social position, though their success was probably more related to the fact of having wealthy parents or protectors.

Another black person who escaped slavery was a Dominican priest Cristóbal de Meneses, of whom almost nothing is known except that he was said to be a good priest and preacher.<sup>54</sup> A third is the Licenciado Ortíz, who was a lawyer of the Royal Court. He was the son of a black woman and a knight of a military order. He lived with his mother and took care of her, but he did not want to hear a word about his father. When asked why he hated his father, he answered with the following paradox: 'I owe more to my mother who gave me a good father than to my father who gave me a despicable mother'.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Bermúdez de Pedraza, *Historia eclesiástica*, p. 260: 'Cegó de viejo porque vivió noventa años y ciego leía en la Universidad y por las calles con sus pupilos delante, iban leyendo a Horacio o Virgilio, y el maestro explicando. Fue sepultado en la parroquia de la Señora Santa Ana junto a las gradas del Altar mayor se lee su nombre en losa blanca.'

<sup>53</sup> Bermúdez de Pedraza, *Historia eclesiástica*, p. 260: 'Comía con él muchas veces, y una de ellas le dijo el arzobispo: señor, maestro, qué fuera de nosotros si no hubiéramos estudiado? Y respondiolo con donaire: Vuestra merced fuera un destripaterrones y yo almohazara caballos.'

<sup>54</sup> Bermúdez de Pedraza, *Historia eclesiástica*, p. 260: 'También fue negro deste tiempo el padre fray Cristóbal de Meneses de la orden de Santo Domingo, fue buen sacerdote y predicador y de graciosa y agradable conversación'.

<sup>55</sup> Bermúdez de Pedraza, *Historia eclesiástica*, p. 260: 'Tenía en casa a la negra de su madre, la regalaba y quería bien, pero a su padre no quería hablar más que de gorra y preguntado por sus amigos la causa, respondió: Debo más a mi madre que me dio tan buen padre que a mi padre que me dio tan ruin madre'.

The embroideress Catalina de Soto is also listed with these three men, all described as 'prodigies', but she is regarded as a sexual object.<sup>56</sup> She was called the 'Queen of Black Africans' and described as a pretty woman with a pleasant face and an attractive body. She was well known for her embroidery and was said to be the first needlewoman of Spain and to have the best hands for embroidery of her time. She also valued trousseaux for white women who were going to marry, as was the custom at the period. The chronicler who informs us of her existence met her when he was a child, and says that he used to follow her because it was so unusual to see a clean, smart black woman with two white women servants following her.<sup>57</sup>

Other cases in which black Africans were promoted to higher social groups may have existed, but they are exceptional and have to be treated and remembered as such. Although it must have been better to be freed, since at least they could not be arbitrarily beaten or punished, most black Africans lived in terrible conditions, whether as slaves (the majority) or free. The word 'Renaissance' had no meaning for most black Africans in early modern Spain and unfortunately still has no meaning for many black immigrants today.

<sup>56</sup> Bermúdez de Pedraza, *Historia eclesiástica*, p. 260: 'Y porque no se queje el femineo sexo de que no cito sus negros prodigios, sea el cuarto la negra Catalina de Soto, que mereció por sus ilustres partes ser Reina de negras'. ('So that women don't complain that I don't mention female black prodigies, the fourth will be Catalina de Soto, who deserved to be called the Queen of Black Africans')

<sup>57</sup> Franciso Bermúdez de Pedraza, *Historia eclesiastica de Granada*, p. 260: 'Yo la conocí en mi puecia y me iba tras ella pareciéndome gran novedad ver una negra muy aseada y compuesta, con dos criadas blancas detrás de ella'.