

## Introduction

### *Linguistic and Spiritual Mediations in the Earlier Black Atlantic*

On a May morning in 1659 in the Caribbean port of Cartagena de Indias, a man from Angola named Andrés Sacabuche testified before a notary and a judge in the city's Jesuit church. Sacabuche was serving as a witness in a formal inquiry into the potentially saintly life of Jesuit priest Pedro Claver, his recently deceased supervisor. In his lengthy testimony, Sacabuche provided details about his own life as a survivor of the Middle Passage and an enslaved evangelical interpreter in Cartagena: after arriving in Cartagena as a young man on a slave ship, he was purchased by the city's Jesuit school to help its priests evangelize the new black arrivals from central Africa disembarking in the port by the hundreds almost every year during this period.<sup>1</sup> As a speaker of the languages of Kimbundu and Anchico, Sacabuche became an important member of a group of enslaved black interpreters owned by the Jesuits in Cartagena. Sacabuche's testimony and related Jesuit writings about missionary efforts in colonial Lima and Cartagena offer windows onto how black men and women in the diaspora used linguistic and spiritual mediation to communicate with each other and adapt to their New World surroundings.

<sup>1</sup> *Proceso de beatificación de Pedro Claver* [hereafter *Proceso* 1676], Biblioteca Nacional de Colombia, manuscrito 281 [1658–1669], trans. Claudio Louvet [1676], Andrés Sacabuche, 99v–109v. For a transcription and translation of a selection from Sacabuche's testimony, see Appendix B. For details regarding numbers and places of provenance for slave ships to Cartagena, see David Wheat, "The Afro-Portuguese Maritime World and the Foundations of Spanish Caribbean Society, 1570–1640" (PhD diss., Vanderbilt University, 2009), 252–56.

While Sacabuche narrated his testimony in 1659, some 1,050 miles away in the Pacific coastal city of Lima, Úrsula de Jesús, a Peruvian-born black religious servant in the Convent of Santa Clara, was fashioning another kind of testimony. Úrsula's narration took the form of a spiritual diary about her visions and conversations with holy voices and souls in purgatory that she related out loud to nuns in her convent at the request of her confessor.<sup>2</sup> Úrsula was a different kind of intermediary than Sacabuche: rather than translate between distinct languages, she served as a respected visionary and relay of messages between God, souls in purgatory, and the living. Two posthumous biographies written about her shortly after her death in 1666 use her spiritual diary to fashion their own accounts about her. The biographies selectively repeat her diary's portrayals of how black men and women should be perceived in and beyond her religious community.

Andrés Sacabuche and Úrsula de Jesús are two of the black intermediaries from colonial Spanish America who are the focus of this book. By examining texts by and about them, *Beyond Babel* highlights the influence black men and women had on the production of written texts in their respective communities through the work of linguistic and spiritual mediation. In the case of the evangelical interpreters in Cartagena such as Sacabuche, linguistic mediation describes the transposition of messages across the many different languages spoken by the black men and women disembarking from slave ships to facilitate their arrival in the port as well as their catechisms and baptisms. In the case of Úrsula de Jesús in Lima, spiritual mediation describes the labor of relaying messages communicated to her by God and other otherworldly interlocutors to her spiritual community and to serve as an advocate for the salvation of the souls of the living and the dead. This book will demonstrate that these black intermediaries used linguistic and spiritual mediation to shape notions of blackness in written texts that have been overlooked by previous scholarship on colonial Latin America and the African diaspora. Specifically, these intermediaries helped document and circulate notions of black

<sup>2</sup> *Diario espiritual de la venerable Úrsula de Jesús, escrita por ella misma*, Archivo de Santa Clara de Lima, 8r–60r. This document has been edited and published by Nancy van Deusen in Spanish and English. Nancy van Deusen, *Las almas del purgatorio: El diario espiritual y vida anónima de Úrsula de Jesús, una mística negra del siglo XVII* (Lima: Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú, 2012); *Souls of Purgatory: The Spiritual Diary of a Seventeenth-Century Afro-Peruvian Mystic, Úrsula de Jesús* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004). Úrsula's diary dates from 1650 and concludes in 1661.

virtue and black beauty even as racial hierarchies stigmatizing blackness were increasingly cohering in seventeenth-century Spanish America.

Men and women of African descent first arrived in the territories that would become Peru and New Granada along with the first Spanish expeditions to these areas in the sixteenth century. In some cases, they were conquistadors themselves, and in others they were servants to conquistadors.<sup>3</sup> The importation of large numbers of enslaved Africans to the Caribbean for commercial purposes began in 1518 after the Spanish Crown authorized the first large shipment to Hispaniola.<sup>4</sup> Then, when the Spanish Crown assumed control of Portugal in 1580, the volume of the transatlantic slave trade to Spanish America increased significantly until 1640. The enslaved black men, women, and children who survived the sea voyage during this period were taken to work in farms, fields, and mines or to serve as servants in domestic spaces and convents. Some already knew skilled trades on arrival in Spanish America; others learned

<sup>3</sup> Frederick Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru, 1524–1650* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1976), 4–6. A trickling arrival of enslaved Africans as personal servants in the early years of the Peruvian viceroyalty resulted from the permits for the importation of African slaves from Iberia that the Crown awarded Pizarro and his men for the conquests in Peru. For example, when Pizarro returned to Spain and signed the Capitulations of Toledo in 1529, the Crown authorized him to import duty-free fifty African slaves into the land. Other men who went with him were granted similar permits for a modest fee. Then, between 1529 and 1537, the Crown granted more people to import at least 363 slaves. Black servants were coveted in the early viceregal period, as they would be throughout the following centuries, because they were considered a symbol of prestige for their owners (8). On the prestige of owning black slaves in the Andes, see also Tamara J. Walker, *Exquisite Slaves: Race, Clothing, and Status in Colonial Lima* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 26–42. For a recent synthesis of historiography on Iberian and Mediterranean antecedents to the transatlantic slave trade, see William D. Phillips, Jr., *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Iberia* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2014), 10–78. On black soldiers in the early European settlement of the Spanish Caribbean, see Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1999), 21–23; Matthew Restall, *The Black Middle: Africans, Mayans, and Spaniards in Colonial Yucatan* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 6–13.

<sup>4</sup> In 1518, the Spanish Crown agreed to the shipment of 4,000 captive African laborers from western Africa to the Caribbean over an eight-year period. On the early history of the trade to Spanish America, see David Wheat, *Atlantic Africa and the Spanish Caribbean, 1570–1640* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2016); Alex Borucki, David Eltis, and David Wheat, “Atlantic History and the Slave Trade to Spanish America,” *American Historical Review* 120, no. 2 (2015): 433–461; José Luis Cortés López, *Esclavo y colono: Introducción y sociología de los negroafricanos en la América Española del siglo XVI* (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad, 2004), 1–44; Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery from the Baroque to the Modern, 1492–1800* (New York: Verso, 1997), 134–37; Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru*, 26–30.

them afterward.<sup>5</sup> Some became free through their owners' selective manumission, their own supplemental work as day laborers, or physical escape.<sup>6</sup> Many more stayed enslaved. By the early seventeenth century, free and enslaved black men and women came to form a significant percentage of the population in these regions.<sup>7</sup>

The texts examined in this book were produced in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the urban centers of Lima and Cartagena, two coastal cities connected by empire, commercial routes, and evangelical projects.<sup>8</sup> Together, as ports, Lima and Cartagena were tied to other cities across the globe such as Seville, Luanda, Lisbon, Veracruz, Portobello, Buenos Aires, and São Tomé. Colonial Peru and New Granada, the broader areas surrounding Lima and Cartagena, are usually studied separately, but by focusing on both in conversation in this book I can

<sup>5</sup> On black men and women in the skilled trades, see Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru*, 125–146.

<sup>6</sup> For recent scholarship on the varying forms of access to freedom throughout colonial Spanish America, see Bianca Premo, *The Enlightenment on Trial: Ordinary Litigants and Colonialism in the Spanish Empire* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 191–223; Michelle McKinley, *Fractional Freedoms: Slavery, Intimacy, and Legal Mobilization in Colonial Lima, 1600–1700* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2016); Sherwin Bryant, *Rivers of Gold, Lives of Bondage: Governing through Slavery in Colonial Quito* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014), 115–42; Jane Landers, “The African Landscape of Seventeenth-Century Cartagena and Its Hinterlands,” in *The Black Urban Atlantic in the Age of the Slave Trade*, ed. Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, Matt D. Childs, and James Sidbury (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 147–62; Alejandro de la Fuente, *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 170–79.

<sup>7</sup> For scholarship on Lima as a majority black city for most of the seventeenth century, see Bowser, *African Slave*, 340–41; José Ramón Jouve Martín, *Esclavos de la ciudad letrada: Esclavitud, escritura y colonialismo en Lima, 1650–1700* (Lima, Peru: IEP, 2005), 21–52. On the changing demographics of blackness in Lima toward the end of the seventeenth century, see Nancy van Deusen, “The ‘Alienated’ Body: Slaves and Castas in the Hospital de San Bartolomé in Lima, 1680–1700,” *The Americas* 56, no. 1 (1999): 1–30. According to David Wheat, for all of the seventeenth century Cartagena’s free and enslaved black population outnumbered its native and Spanish/white populations (*Atlantic Africa*, appendix 1, 277–81).

<sup>8</sup> Travel between these two cities during this period was typically realized by sailing from Cartagena to Portobello, crossing the Panamanian isthmus by land, and sailing south from Panama to Lima. For Iberians seeking to reach Peru as well as west African captives forced to travel the same route, stopping in Cartagena was often the first stop after crossing the Atlantic. See Nicolás del Castillo Mathieu, *La llave de las Indias* (Bogota: El Tiempo, 1981); Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*; and Linda Newson and Susie Minchin, *From Capture to Sale: The Portuguese Slave Trade to Spanish South America in the Early Seventeenth Century* (Boston: Brill, 2007). For a narrative of a voyage from Iberia to Peru via Cartagena, see Gerónimo Pallas, *Misión a las Indias* [1619], ed. José Hernández Palomo (Sevilla: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 2006).

attend to some of the ways the movement of people, material goods, and evangelical projects between them were frequent and mutually influential.<sup>9</sup> For example, most of the routes of the legal and illegal slave trades to Peru during this period passed through Cartagena such that the black men and women who arrived in Peru from Iberia or western Africa had to stop in Cartagena before resuming their voyage. As I will show in Chapter 2, people, materials, and evangelical projects also went in the other direction: missionary strategies that were first developed for indigenous populations in Peru in the late sixteenth century then served as models for Jesuit missionary efforts among black men and women in Cartagena when the order expanded northward into New Granada from Peru in the early seventeenth century. Focusing on both areas in this book allows me to examine a shared discourse about blackness produced in collaboration with distinct kinds of black intermediaries across different areas of colonial Spanish America. The juxtaposition demonstrates that the notions of black virtue and black beauty that circulated in each city were not merely local phenomena. They were shared across regions as well as among recent arrivals from Africa *and* black men and women born in the Americas. The bifocal frame of my study also offers an alternative to “Atlantic-only” readings of the African diaspora by foregrounding ways in which policies and practices developed to incorporate black men and women into colonial societies in the Atlantic were directly connected to precedents established in the Andean highlands and the Pacific littoral.<sup>10</sup>

The time period covered by this book begins in the late sixteenth century and closes toward the end of seventeenth century, a stretch of time that coincides not only with the demographic boom of Africans in

<sup>9</sup> In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Peru corresponded to the contemporary territories of Peru, northern Chile, and Bolivia, whereas New Granada corresponded to today’s Colombia, Ecuador, Panama, and Venezuela. The Spanish began their conquests in the Andes in 1532 and incorporated Peru as an official viceroyalty in 1542. The region of New Granada took on its name starting in 1539, although sometimes it was also referred to as Tierra Firme. Santa Fe (Bogota) became the seat of the Audience of New Granada in 1550, but the Spanish Crown did not officially incorporate the “New Kingdom of Granada” as a separate viceroyalty (from that of Peru) until 1718.

<sup>10</sup> While Paul Gilroy’s “Black Atlantic” and Joseph Roach’s “circum-Atlantic world” trace important geographies of New World blackness, they emphasize English and French Atlantic iterations of the diaspora from the eighteenth century forward and therefore omit earlier and concurrent Iberian-controlled geographies of the slave trade that connect the early Atlantic world with the Pacific Ocean. See Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993); Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996).

colonial Spanish America, but also with the onset of the influence of Iberian Renaissance humanism and Counter Reformation theology in these areas.<sup>11</sup> As I will show in Chapter 1, the confluence of Renaissance humanist ideology and Counter Reformation theology had a profound effect on the way written texts began to codify blackness in early and mid-colonial Spanish America. In particular, I identify and analyze the work of a pervasive set of interlocking associations between black men and women and the uncivilized body, a limited capacity to speak, and a redeemable soul. Important alternatives to this set of stereotypes appear in the textual portrayals of black intermediaries who are described or describe themselves as masters of language, models of Christian virtue, and privileged relayers of religious signs. Their texts offer a set of aesthetic and moral valences that blackness held in this period that have gone unrecognized by scholarship on racial hierarchies of the more secular eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

For this analysis, it is crucial to note that one of the key ways blackness took shape in Spanish America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries was through comparisons with indigeneity. Especially in the first two chapters, this book engages how attitudes and policies developed by Spanish missionaries to evangelize black and indigenous populations helped structure colonial ideas of race. In taking this approach, I join a growing number of scholars integrating the study of Africans and their descendants with that of indigenous peoples in Latin America, examining these groups' social and political histories side by side or examining interactions between them.<sup>12</sup> While mine is not a full comparative study,

<sup>11</sup> The period of the unification of the Spanish and Portuguese Crowns (1580–1640) gave Spanish America immediate access to the Portuguese slave trade. For more on the demographic changes of black populations in Spanish America during this period, see Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, 267–81. The Bourbon takeover of the Hapsburg reign at the beginning of the eighteenth century and the British assumption of political and economic primacy in the Atlantic changed the demographics of the slave trade and the distribution of military and economic power on all sides of the Atlantic.

<sup>12</sup> For studies adopting comparative social and political histories of indigenous and black populations, see Rachel Sarah O'Toole, *Bound Lives: Africans, Indians, and the Making of Race in Colonial Peru* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2012); Marcela Echeverri, "Popular Royalists, Empire, and Politics in Southwestern New Granada, 1809–1819," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 91, no. 2 (2011): 237–69; Aline Helg, *Liberty and Equality in Caribbean Colombia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004); and James Sanders, "'Citizens of a Free People': Popular Liberalism and Race in Nineteenth-Century Southwestern Colombia," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 84, no. 2 (2004): 233–312. For studies that focus on the interactions between the two groups, see Patrick J. Carroll, "Black-Native Relations

it demonstrates that the Jesuit missionary strategies among black men and women in the Americas grew out of and then in distinction from evangelical projects among indigenous populations in the same regions. More specifically, I show that the roles assigned to and adapted by black linguistic and spiritual intermediaries in colonial evangelical projects were initially based on and then expressly different from those assigned to indigenous intermediaries.

The unique roles assumed by the black intermediaries examined in this book relate to the different treatment of black populations compared with indigenous populations in early colonial Spanish America. Key to this difference were the distinct juridical categories given to black and indigenous populations based on their perceived relationships to territorial possession by the Spanish Crown.<sup>13</sup> While the Crown made efforts to legally protect indigenous populations of the Americas and to establish a separate governing system of *la república de los indios* to function parallel to *la república de los españoles*, there was no comparable legal space created for black political collectivities in Spanish American colonial governments.<sup>14</sup> As has been noted by several scholars, black men and women

and the Historical Record in Colonial Mexico,” in *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Matthew Restall (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 245–68; Andrew B. Fisher, “Creating and Contesting Community: Indians and Afromestizos in the Late-Colonial Tierra Caliente of Guerrero, Mexico,” *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 7, no. 1 (2006); Matthew Restall, *The Black Middle*; O’Toole, *Bound Lives*; Pablo Miguel Sierra Silva, “From Chains to Chiles: An Elite Afro-Indigenous Couple in Colonial Mexico, 1641–1688,” *Ethnohistory* 62, no. 2 (2015): 361–84.

<sup>13</sup> O’Toole, *Bound Lives*, 64–87; Herman Bennett, *Colonial Blackness: A History of Afro-Mexico* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009), 212; Laura Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors: Power, Witchcraft, and Caste in Colonial Mexico* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 49–54; Peter Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*, 2nd ed. (London: Pluto, 2010), 27; María Elena Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de Sangre, Religion, and Gender in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2008), 100 and 143.

<sup>14</sup> While in the case of the indigenous populations, there was a bureaucratic mechanism (*protector de indios*) established to protect native subjects, there never existed a *protector de negros* in the American viceroalties (Jouve Martín, *Esclavos de la ciudad letrada*, 100). Laws from the Spanish American viceroalties frequently discouraged association between indigenous and black populations due perhaps to a perceived threat posed by the development of a collective consciousness among the two groups as well as the fact that black populations were often cast as aggressors to indigenous communities. See Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru*, 150; Lewis, *Hall of Mirrors*, 99; and Wade, *Race and Ethnicity in Latin America*, 27–28. O’Toole’s *Bound Lives* provides an excellent study of the limits of those perceived divisions between black and indigenous populations.

were thus legally included as part of Spanish American viceregal societies without giving them means of collective representation and protection within them.<sup>15</sup> Indeed, the Spanish Crown debated and defended indigenous rights by the mid-sixteenth century, making native slavery mostly illegal in principle (if not in practice) precisely at a time when black slavery began to grow. Contrary to the critiques of indigenous enslavement and violent evangelical methods that characterized the mid-sixteenth-century debates about Spanish treatment of New World natives, before the late seventeenth century few comparable critiques were made of the ownership of and trade in black men and women in the Iberian empire.<sup>16</sup>

As religious subjects in Spanish America, black men and women also differed from indigenous men and women. The Church in Spanish America administratively considered black men and women to be Old World peoples who had at least technically already converted to Christianity before crossing the Atlantic, whereas indigenous peoples were considered neophytes. Historians have attributed this phenomenon to the many Iberian contacts with Ethiopians, North Africans, and sub-Saharan Africans before and after Iberian colonization of the Americas began.<sup>17</sup> (Ethiopia had long been an independent Christian kingdom and the

<sup>15</sup> Martínez, “The Black Blood of New Spain: Limpieza de Sangre, Racial Violence, and Gendered Power in Early Colonial Mexico,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 61, no. 3 (July 2004): 479–520; Jouve Martín, *Esclavos de la ciudad letrada*, 53–74; O’Toole, *Bound Lives*, 122–25; Bryant, *Rivers of Gold, Lives of Bondage*, 8; Graubart, *Republics of Difference*. On indigenous slavery in the Iberian world after the mid-sixteenth century, see Nancy van Deusen, *Global Indios: The Indigenous Struggle for Justice in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015).

<sup>16</sup> See Bowser, *The African Slave in Colonial Peru*, 110–24; David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* [1966] (Oxford University Press, 1988), 165–96. On the late seventeenth-century critique of black slavery by two Capuchin priests in Cuba, see José Tomás López García, *Dos defensores de los esclavos negros en el siglo XVII: Francisco José de Jaca y Epifanio de Moirans* (Caracas: Universidad Católica Andrés Bello, 1982); Miguel Anxo Pena González, *Francisco José de Jaca. La primera propuesta abolicionista de la esclavitud en el pensamiento hispano* (Salamanca: Universidad Pontificia, 2003), among other secondary studies.

<sup>17</sup> Solange Alberro, *Inquisición y sociedad en México, 1571–1700* (México: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1946), 8–9, 455; Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 220–21; Herman Bennett, *African Kings and Black Slaves: Sovereignty and Dispossession in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018); Herman Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico: Absolutism, Christianity, and Afro-Creole Consciousness, 1570–1640* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003), 4, 54; Joan Cameron Bristol, “The Church and the Creation of Christian Subjects in Spanish America,” in *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches: Afro-Mexican Ritual Practice in the Seventeenth Century* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2007), 64.



Kongo had become Christian by the early sixteenth century.)<sup>18</sup> Before and during the sixteenth century, it was not uncommon for peoples from what we now consider the African continent to arrive in Iberia as royal visitors, diplomats, servants, or slaves.<sup>19</sup> Many of these were already Christian; others, especially if they were servants or enslaved, became Christian soon after arrival due to evangelization efforts inside the homes in which they worked.<sup>20</sup> These precedents contributed to the fact that black men and women in the early modern Iberian world were often rarely *categorically* identified as New Christians.

Indigenous populations of the Americas, in contrast, were cast as neophytes. The missionaries, theologians, and Crown officials committed to evangelizing New World populations generally agreed on the need to use different policies and practices than those developed for the Old World populations of Jews and Muslims, many of whom were forcibly converted to Christianity in Iberia in the fifteenth and early sixteenth

<sup>18</sup> On the early history of Christian Ethiopia beginning in the fourth century, see Sergew Hable Sellassie, *Ancient and Medieval Ethiopian History to 1270* (Addis Ababa: United Printers, 1972). On advent of Christianity in the Kongo, see John Thornton, “The Development of an African Catholic Church in the Kingdom of the Kongo, 1491–1750,” *The Journal of African History* 25, no. 2 (1984): 147–67; Thornton, *Africa and Africans in the Making of the Atlantic World, 1400–1800*, 2nd ed. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), especially 254–62; Linda Heywood and John Thornton, *Central Africans, Atlantic Creoles, and the Foundation of the Americas* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 60–67; and Cécile Fromont, *Art of Conversion: Christian Visual Culture in the Kingdom of the Kongo* (University of North Carolina Press, 2014).

<sup>19</sup> On the travelers and diplomats to Europe from Africa, see Kate Lowe, “‘Representing’ Africa: Ambassadors and Princes from Christian Africa to Renaissance Italy and Portugal, 1402–1608,” *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 17 (2007): 101–28; Matteo Salvatore, *The African Prester John and the Birth of Ethiopian-European Relations, 1402–1555* (New York: Routledge, 2017); Paul H. D. Kaplan, “Italy, 1490–1700,” in *The Image of the Black in Western Art from the “Age of Discovery” to the Age of Revolution: Artists of the Renaissance and Baroque*, ed. David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates, Jr. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 93–190; Fromont, *The Art of Conversion*, 109–71; Bennett, *African Kings and Black Slaves*. On free black men and women who requested permission to travel to and from Iberia and the Spanish American territories in late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, see Chloe Ireton, “‘They Are Blacks of the Caste of Black Christians’: Old Christian Black Blood in the Sixteenth- and Early Seventeenth-Century Iberian Atlantic,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 97, no. 4 (2017): 579–612.

<sup>20</sup> See Bianca Premo, “Familiar: Thinking beyond Lineage and across Race in Spanish Atlantic Family History,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 70, no. 2 (2013): 295–316, on the slave as a part of the Iberian family.

centuries.<sup>21</sup> One important perceived difference between the Old World conversions of Jews and Muslims and those of the New World natives was that, unlike Old World Jews and Muslims, New World natives had not known of Christianity before the arrival of the Spanish and therefore could not be considered guilty of rejecting it or descending from those who had rejected it.<sup>22</sup>

The black men and women in Spanish America who arrived with the boom in the trade to the region in late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries were caught in between these distinct models. Some missionaries sought to evangelize black men and women using the coercive practices employed for Jews and Muslims in fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Iberia, but others looked to accommodate policies and techniques developed for indigenous evangelization.<sup>23</sup> To complicate matters further, the Inquisition in Spanish America had jurisdiction over black men and women but not over indigenous populations.<sup>24</sup> This policy, historians

<sup>21</sup> For a study of the policies and practices developed to convert Jews and Muslims at the end of the fifteenth century and through the sixteenth century, see Seth Kimmel, *Parables of Coercion: Conversion and Knowledge at the End of Islamic Spain* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015). Kimmel explains that a key moment occurred in 1525–26 when the Council of Madrid agreed that while no more forced conversions should happen in the future, those of the past should be considered legitimate. This ruling, according to Kimmel, was largely about defining jurisdiction for the governing of New Christian populations. It brought the forcibly converted under the purview of the Inquisition, who would then be in charge of monitoring New Christian beliefs and behaviors.

<sup>22</sup> On the emergence of such prejudice against descendants of New Christians in Iberia, see Benzion Netanyahu, *The Origins of the Inquisition* (New York: Random House, 1995); David Nirenberg, “Race and the Middle Ages,” in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, ed. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 71–87; Nirenberg, “Was There Race before Modernity? The Example of ‘Jewish’ Blood in Late Medieval Spain,” in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, ed. Miriam Eliav-Feldon, Benjamin Isaac, and Joseph Ziegler (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 232–64.

<sup>23</sup> For a critique of the Old World model of mass baptisms, see José de Acosta, *De procuranda indorum salute*, vol. 2, 367–69; and Alonso Sandoval, *Naturalaleza, policia sagrada*, book 3, chap. 4, 242v–249r.

<sup>24</sup> See Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 63–91; J. Jorge Klor de Alva, “Colonizing Souls: The Failure of the Indian Inquisition and the Rise of Penitential Discipline,” in *Cultural Encounters: The Impact of the Inquisition in Spain and the New World*, ed. Mary Elizabeth Perry and Anne J. Cruz (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 3–23; Nicholas Griffiths, “Inquisition of the Indians?: The Inquisitorial Model and the Repression of Andean Religion in Seventeenth-Century Peru,” *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 3, no. 1 (1994): 19–38. Bristol notes that in 1518 King Charles I required all enslaved Africans imported to the New World to have already become Christians before arrival (68).

have speculated, originated from the fact that before 1580 most black men and women taken to Spanish America arrived by way of Iberia (and would have therefore been already considered Christian on arrival in the New World).<sup>25</sup>

The failure to update Inquisition policy on black men and women in Spanish America after 1580 when most black men and women began to arrive directly from Africa likely reflects the marginal priority black populations represented for New World missionaries and the Crown compared with indigenous populations. This was the case, in large part, because the basis for Spanish sovereignty in the Americas originally depended on indigenous evangelization, while African evangelization held no such connection to sovereignty.<sup>26</sup> A secondary, but also crucial, reason is that unlike missionary efforts among indigenous populations that had clear funding sources (from *repartimiento* labor and substantial tributes to the Crown), black men's and women's evangelization was not a lucrative enterprise in itself. Slaveholders were supposedly responsible for recompensing priests who tended to their slaves' spiritual care, but in practice slave owners were often reluctant to do so.<sup>27</sup> And even though free black men and women were supposed to pay tributes to the Crown in recognition of the costs related to "civilizing them," recent research has shown that they were not a significant source of revenue as many freed black individuals avoided tribute through exemptions related to military service or demonstrated poverty.<sup>28</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 220–21; Bristol, *Christians, Blasphemers, and Witches*, 65–68.

<sup>26</sup> Alexander VI's papal bull of 1493 gave Spain and Portugal custodianship of the areas that were divided between the two in the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494. See Anthony Pagden, *Spanish Imperialism and the Political Imagination: Studies in European and Spanish-American Social and Political Theory 1513–1830* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1990), 13–15. According to Pagden, by the mid-sixteenth century, Thomist Spanish theologians articulated a new justification of Spanish sovereignty in the Americas based on natives' voluntary submission to the Spanish Crown and the Catholic Church.

<sup>27</sup> A 1545 royal ordinance required slave owners to teach their black slaves to speak Spanish and to Christianize them within the first six months of arrival in the Americas. The ordinance reminds owners of the importance of tending to their enslaved black servants' spiritual care. See Richard Konezke, *Colección de documentos para la historia de la formación social de Hispanoamérica, 1493–1810* (Madrid: Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, 1953–58), 1: 237. On complaints of slaveholder negligence regarding the spiritual care of the enslaved, see Alonso de Sandoval, *Naturaleza, policía sagrada i profana, costumbres i ritos, disciplina i catechismo evangelico de todos etiopes* (Seville: Francisco de Lyra, 1627), book 2, chap. 3, 137r–140r.

<sup>28</sup> See Cynthia Milton and Ben Vinson III, "Counting Heads: Race and Non-native Tribute Policy in Colonial Spanish America," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 3, no. 3 (2002); Karen Graubart, "African-Descent Self-Governance and the Paradigms for

For related reasons, black men and women in Spanish America also occupied a significantly more marginalized position in relation to the production of written texts than indigenous peoples. For example, whereas there are many examples of missionary efforts to compose narratives of the pre- or post-conquest memories, histories, and beliefs of indigenous populations as part of New World evangelical projects – many of which involved the participation of indigenous assistants and intermediaries – very few comparable works were produced to study Africans and their descendants in the Americas.<sup>29</sup> There exists for this period a comparatively small corpus of narrative texts composed in Spanish America to describe black men's and women's beliefs and backgrounds before or after their arrival in Spanish America in *any* amount of detail.<sup>30</sup> The

Racial Order,” in *Republics of Difference: Racial and Religious Self-Governance in the Iberian Atlantic, 1400–1650* (forthcoming). For the eighteenth century, see Norah L. A. Gharala, *Taxing Blackness: Free Afromexican Tribute in Bourbon New Spain* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 2019).

<sup>29</sup> Some of the best-known narrative accounts of indigenous cultures from this period that are thought or known to have been composed by missionaries and native informants are Bernardino de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de la Nueva España*; the *Popol Vuh*; the Chilam Balam; and the Huarochiri Manuscript. On the written corpus produced by Sahagún and his indigenous assistants, see Louise M. Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989) and Diana Magaloni Kerpel, *The Colors of the New World: Artists, Materials, and the Creation of the Florentine Codex* (Los Angeles, CA: Getty Museum, 2014). The best-known narratives about pre-conquest indigenous beliefs composed by Andean authors identifying as *indio* or mestizo are Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, *Los comentarios reales de los incas*; Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno*. For a typographical study of such narratives, see Rolena Adorno, “The Indigenous Ethnographer: The ‘Indio Ladino’ as Historian and Cultural Mediation,” in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 378–402.

<sup>30</sup> See Jesuit *cartas annuas* from New Granada, Paraguay, and Peru; Gerónimo Pallas's *Misión a las Indias* (1619); Alonso de Sandoval's *Naturaleza, policia sagrada i profana, costumbres i ritos, disciplina i catechismo evangelico de todos etiopes* (1627); Sandoval's *Historia de la Aethiopia* (1647), Estefanía de San José's hagiography (1646), Pedro Claver's beatification inquest (1658–60), Úrsula de Jesús's spiritual diary and hagiographies (1650–61, 1666, 1686), Martín de Porras's hagiographies (1673, 1675, 1680–81, 1696), Miguel de Santo Domingo's hagiography (1680–81), and Juan de la Cruz's and Juana Esperanza de San Alberto's hagiographies composed toward the turn of the eighteenth century. Another set of texts that could form part of this corpus but are not strictly narratives are the surviving records of the Inquisition in the New World on the practices and beliefs of black individuals in the Americas. For scholarship on New Granada Inquisition documents about black men and women, see Jaime Humberto Borja Gómez, *Rostros y rastros del demonio en la Nueva Granada: Indios, negros, judíos, mujeres y otras huéstras de Satanás* (Bogota: Ariel, 1998); Luz Adriana Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y la reconstrucción*

comparable dearth of sources derives from the fact that on the whole missionaries perceived the black men and women arriving in the New World as displaced and dispossessed individuals, not members of coherent communities that persisted in meaningful ways in the New World.

A related feature of blackness that separated it from indigeneity in colonial Spanish America is the multilingual nature of the African diaspora. Especially in ports such as Cartagena, Lima, and Veracruz that received ships from an especially diverse set of African ports, there was no consistent common language shared by the black populations passing through them. In the absence of a common language, newly arrived black men and women spoke to each other and to other inhabitants of colonial societies through interpreters and improvised creole languages (often called *lenguas medias* in Spanish documents).<sup>31</sup> Eventually, Spanish or Portuguese became the common language if not the only one used by most black men and women in these areas.<sup>32</sup> While indigenous men and women were also enslaved and displaced in Spanish America, as Nancy van Deusen and others have shown, they were enslaved in much lower numbers.<sup>33</sup> The common missionary strategy of relocating indigenous populations en masse (as seen in processes of *reducción* and *congregación*) allowed for many of these communities to preserve their languages

*de identidades entre los africanos y sus descendientes en la Nueva Granada, Siglo XVII* (Bogotá: Ministerio de Cultura, 2005); Sara Vicuña Guengerich, "The Witchcraft Trials of Paula de Eguiluz, a Black Woman in Cartagena de Indias, 1620–1636," in *Afro-Latino Voices: Narratives from the Early Modern Ibero-Atlantic World, 1550–1812*, ed. Kathryn Joy McKnight and Leo Garofalo (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 2009), 175–194; Nicole von Germeten, *Violent Delights, Violent Ends: Sex, Race, and Honor in Colonial Cartagena de Indias* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2013); Pablo F. Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean: Creating Knowledge and Healing in the Early Modern Atlantic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); and forthcoming work by Ana María Silva Ocampo. On black men and women in the Inquisition in Lima, see the brief references throughout Paulino Castañeda and Pilar Hernández, *La Inquisición de Lima (1570–1635)* (Madrid: Deimos, 1989), 253–283, 456, 506.

<sup>31</sup> Jean-Pierre Tardieu, "Los jesuitas y la 'lengua de Angola' en Perú (Siglo XVII)," *Revista de Indias* 53, no. 198 (1993): 627–37, 627.

<sup>32</sup> In the Peruvian context, Jouve Martín argues that another motivation for learning Spanish was that it facilitated the access to written documents and the power they upheld as well as eliminated the linguistic barriers between black men and women and colonial officials (*Esclavos de la ciudad letrada*, 79). See also John M. Lipski, *A History of Afro-Hispanic Language: Five Centuries, Five Continents* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1–3; and Tardieu, "Los Jesuitas y la 'lengua de Angola,'" 627, for similar arguments. Some examples of black communities that developed and preserved creoles in the Americas are Palenquero, Papiamentu, San Andrés Island Creole, and Garifuna.

<sup>33</sup> Nancy van Deusen, "Diaspora, Bondage, and Intimacy in Lima, 1535–1555," *Colonial Latin American Review* 19, no. 2 (2010): 247–77; Van Deusen, *Global Indios*.

as opposed to the more fragmented displacement and diaspora of African languages in the Americas that resulted from the transatlantic slave trade in black men and women.<sup>34</sup>

In the context of the fragmentation and dispersal of linguistic groups among black populations reaching the New World, the importance of the work done by black intermediaries to facilitate communication among new arrivals is hard to exaggerate. We can imagine that long before the black men and women who disembarked from ships in Spanish America learned to speak Spanish they were in constant communication with each other and with other inhabitants of those colonial locations. These communications would have occurred through linguistic and spiritual intermediaries. Curiously, however, no extended study has examined the work of translation among black populations in colonial Spanish America.<sup>35</sup> Instead, scholarship on translation in colonial Latin America has focused entirely on the roles of native, *mestizo*, and Spanish intermediaries.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>34</sup> On the strategy of the *reducción*, see William Hanks, *Converting Words: Maya in the Age of the Cross* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010), and Daniel Nemser, *Infrastructures of Race: Concentration and Bio-politics in Colonial Mexico* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2017).

<sup>35</sup> For the studies that do exist, see Wheat, *Atlantic Africa*, 229–238; Paola Vargas Arana, “Pedro Claver y la evangelización en Cartagena: Pilar del encuentro entre africanos y el Nuevo Mundo, siglo XVII,” *Fronteras de la historia* 11 (2006): 293–328; and Joan Fayer, “African Interpreters in the Atlantic Slave Trade,” *Anthropological Linguistics* 45, no. 3 (2003): 281–95. For studies of the use of translation in European encounters with west Africa, see P. E. H. Hair, “The Use of African Languages in Afro-European Contacts in Guinea: 1440–1560,” *Sierra Leone Language Review* 5 (1966): 5–26; Wiley MacGaffey, “Dialogues of the Deaf: Europeans on the Atlantic Coast of Africa,” in *Implicit Understandings: Observing, Reporting, and Reflecting on the Encounters between Europeans and Other Peoples in the Early Modern Era*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 249–67; and George E. Brooks, *Eurafricans in Western Africa: Commerce, Social Status, Gender, and Religious Observance from the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth Century* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 2003), 31–53.

<sup>36</sup> There are too many works pertaining to this subfield in colonial Latin America to cite all of them here. For the classic assessment of the “indio ladino” as cultural and linguistic intermediary in colonial Spanish America, see Adorno, “The Indigenous Ethnographer.” For a typology of kinds of translation in colonial Spanish America, see Larissa Brewer-García, “The Agency of Translation: New Assessments of the Roles of Non-European Linguistic Intermediaries,” in *Routledge Companion on Colonial Latin America and the Caribbean*, ed. Santa Arias and Yolanda Martínez-San Miguel (2020). Some of the seminal monographs of the field are Rolena Adorno, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986); Louise Burkhart, *The Slippery Earth: Nahuatl-Christian Moral Dialogue in Sixteenth-Century Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1989); Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991); and Alida

*Beyond Babel* addresses this lacuna and opens the field of colonial translation studies to consider the lives, labor, and influence of black linguistic and spiritual intermediaries in the African diaspora in the Americas. Similar to Louise Burkhart's argument that translation in Nahuatl produced negotiated notions of Christianity in sixteenth-century New Spain, I will show in Chapters 3–5 that black men's and women's participation as linguistic and spiritual intermediaries created opportunities for them to shape understandings of Christianity and language related to blackness in seventeenth-century colonial texts.

Like other recent studies of colonial translation, this book examines colonial encounters that do not easily map onto a linear narrative of a unidirectional success in which Europeans harnessed language to establish colonial domination in the Americas.<sup>37</sup> For example, Alessandra Russo's concept of the untranslatable image, Anna Brickhouse's notion of the motivated mistranslation, and Allison Bigelow's examination of composite vernacular languages of science in colonial mining treatises underscore the highly mediated and multiply negotiated nature of translation in many distinct settings in early Spanish America. Focusing on New World material culture, Russo borrows Barbara Cassin's concept of the untranslatable philosophical term to demonstrate about how *technes* and aesthetics employed by artists on both sides of the Atlantic influenced each other. Brickhouse takes another approach, harnessing the power of conjecture to read European texts about native intermediaries to highlight

Metcalf, *Go-betweens and the Colonization of Brazil* (Austin: University of Austin Press, 2005). Some of the more recent works in this subfield are Nancy Farriss, *Tongues of Fire: Language and Evangelization in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Kerpel, *The Colors of the New World*; Anna Brickhouse, *The Unsettling of America: Translation, Interpretation, and the Story of Don Luis de Velasco, 1569–1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2015); Alessandra Russo, *The Untranslatable Image: A Mestizo History of the Arts in New Spain, 1500–1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014); José Carlos de la Puente, "The Many Tongues of the King: Indigenous Language Interpreters and the Making of the Spanish Empire," *Colonial Latin American Review* 23, no. 2 (2014): 143–70; John Charles, *Allies at Odds: The Andean Church and Its Indigenous Agents, 1583–1671* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2010); Yanna Yannakakis, *The Art of Being in-between: Native Intermediaries, Indian Identities, and Local Rule in Colonial Oaxaca* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2008); Camilla Townsend, *Malintzin's Choices: An Indian Woman and the Conquest of Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2006); Allison Bigelow, *Mining Language: Racial Thinking, Indigenous Knowledge, and Colonial Metallurgy in the Early Modern Iberian World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020).  
<sup>37</sup> See Brickhouse's survey of the typical narrative in "Mistranslation, Unsettling, La Navidad," *PMLA* 128, no. 4 (2012): 938–46.

numerous instances in which native intermediaries undermined Spanish efforts at settlement. Allison Bigelow, for her part, examines colonial mining treatises to demonstrate how indigenous languages and mining techniques were constitutive of the development of colonial mining science.<sup>38</sup> In different ways, all of these scholars use colonial translation as a means of indexing a remainder of difference that is not fully subsumed by a narrative of univocal and unidirectional Spanish conquest and domination in the Americas.

The cases of black men and women who served as intermediaries in the documents analyzed in this book provide distinct challenges and rewards for colonial translation studies than the precedents mentioned above. On one hand, few identifiable material art objects designed by black men and women in Spanish America have survived, so Russo's approach, which depends primarily on the analysis of such objects, is hard to apply.<sup>39</sup> Furthermore, contrary to the native intermediaries about whom Brickhouse writes, the black men and women in the documents I analyze do not on the whole appear as actors with overtly anticolonial intentions. Instead, the black linguistic and spiritual intermediaries examined in this book appear to have worked *within* sanctioned spaces of colonial Christianity to articulate notions of blackness that are nonetheless different from those voiced by Church officials and slave-owning elites. And whereas Bigelow explores the discursive world of colonial mining for the influence of black and indigenous participation in the extraction and refining of the metals of the Americas, I consider the discursive world of Christianity in a multilingual black Atlantic that began earlier than has previously been considered. As I will show in Chapters 3 and 4, the black evangelical intermediaries' unique linguistic abilities in Cartagena allowed them to hide the real points of negotiation of spiritual conversion from those limited to European languages such that the exact terms of acceptance or rejection of Christianity are hard to detect in surviving documentation. What we can see from written evidence of their oral mediations in these documents is the emergence of new notions of blackness that reverberated in and beyond spaces of evangelical translation.

<sup>38</sup> Bigelow, *Mining Language*.

<sup>39</sup> Black men's labor was instrumental to the building of the convents, walls, streets, and buildings in many areas of colonial Latin America. These constructions, despite their longevity, are usually analyzed as products of European, *mestizo*, or indigenous architects' designs. See Frank Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen: The Negro in the Americas* (New York: Vintage, 1946), and Gilberto Freyre, *Brazil: An Interpretation* (New York: Knopf, 1945), 155–62.



In addition to bringing the study of black intermediaries to colonial translation studies, *Beyond Babel* contributes to two more debates that cut across colonial Latin American studies and African diaspora studies. One has to do with the question of cultural continuity and authority among black communities in the Americas. Contesting Orlando Patterson's argument about the social death experienced by enslaved black men and women forcibly taken to the Americas, a steady stream of studies over the last three and a half decades has sought to demonstrate that enslaved Africans brought with them certain traditions and recreated others in their areas of arrival in the Americas.<sup>40</sup> A different track has been taken by some historians of colonial Latin America who examine Inquisition records for the appearance of black men and women rejecting Christianization, arguing that the vitality of black colonial social life be read from archival glimpses of unorthodox religious behavior.<sup>41</sup> Critiques of this latter approach note that reading Inquisition sources for resistant black subjects can reify the colonial gaze of the Inquisition archive even as it tries to offer insight into black life.<sup>42</sup> *Beyond Babel* treads a new path in the debates about the social lives of black men and women in the diaspora by considering how black men and women served as intermediaries in the

<sup>40</sup> See Orlando Patterson, *Slavery and Social Death* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1982). Another line of research followed an alternative route charted by Sidney Mintz and Richard Price in *The Birth of African American Culture: An Anthropological Perspective* (Boston: Beacon, 1976), which prioritizes tracing how the culturally fragmented enslaved populations in the Americas created new creole cultures. Subsequent scholars have noted that Mintz and Price overemphasized the amount of fragmentation among diaspora cultures. For critiques of Mintz and Price, see Stephan Palmié, "Ethnogenetic Processes and Cultural Transfer in Caribbean Slave Populations," *Slavery in the Americas*, ed. Wolfgang Binder (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1993), 337–64, 186; David Scott, "That Event, This Memory: Notes on an Anthropology of African Diasporas in the New World," *Diaspora* 1 (1991): 261–84.

<sup>41</sup> See Colin Palmer, *Slaves of the White God: Blacks in Mexico, 1570–1650* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1976); Maya Restrepo, *Brujería y la reconstrucción*. More nuanced approaches can be seen in Javier Villa-Flores, *Dangerous Speech: A Social History of Blasphemy in Colonial Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2006), especially 127–47, 129; James Sweet, *Domingos Alvarez, African Healing, and the Intellectual History of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Gómez, *The Experiential Caribbean*.

<sup>42</sup> Bennett, *Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 51–78; Bristol, *Witches*, 188–189. Also see Marisa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), 1–12, for a critique of how historians tend to reify power dynamics of the colonial archive in the Anglophone Caribbean context.

articulation of Christian identities in texts beyond those produced by the Inquisition.

This approach is informed by the work of Herman Bennett, Joan Bristol, Karen Graubart, José Ramón Jouve Martín, Michelle McKinley, Nancy van Deusen, and Javier Villa-Flores, whose respective studies of people of African descent in New Spain or Peru focus on ways Christian categories were activated in colonial legal settings to shape black subjecthood.<sup>43</sup> *Beyond Babel* builds on their efforts by examining the notions of blackness that appear in a collection of narrative texts produced about or in collaboration with black linguistic and spiritual intermediaries. In doing so, it demonstrates that the projects, spaces, and language supporting the Christian salvation of black men and women in Spanish America served as venues for black men and women to craft new social lives and articulate notions of blackness beyond the negative stereotypes increasingly circulating in Iberian texts in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

In analyzing these sources and addressing the construction of blackness within them, *Beyond Babel* also contributes to the ongoing debate about the emergence of race in the early modern world. This debate has many strands, and while there are too many to describe all at length here, I will signal a few of particular importance to this book's argument. One important strand elaborated by David Nirenberg, among others, locates the emergence of modern discourse on race in mid-fifteenth-century Iberia at a moment when anticonverso polemicists began borrowing language from animal husbandry regarding inherited differences and disease in livestock to justify treating converted Jews and their offspring with suspicion even after becoming Christian.<sup>44</sup> Building on this argument, María

<sup>43</sup> In their respective studies, Bennett and McKinley take Frank Tannenbaum's observation in *Slave and Citizen* that the Church in Spanish America bestowed a "moral personality" on the slave as a point of departure. Bennett deviates from Tannenbaum's emphasis on the Church's potential to ameliorate slavery's excesses in Spanish America (in comparison to Anglo-America) by focusing on its role in regulating the lives of slaves (*Africans in Colonial Mexico*, 35). McKinley also echoes earlier critiques of Tannenbaum's naiveté regarding the living conditions of enslaved black men and women in colonial Spanish America while adding a gendered dimension to Tannenbaum's examination of the moral personality given to slaves in ecclesiastical law (*Fractional Freedom*, 8–13). For earlier important critiques of the Tannenbaum thesis as it relates to Spanish America, see Alejandro de la Fuente, "Slave Law and Claims-Making in Cuba: The Tannenbaum Debate Revisited," *Law and History Review* 22, no. 2 (2004): 304–69.

<sup>44</sup> See Yosef ayim Yerushalmi, *Assimilation and Racial Anti-Semitism: The Iberian and the German Models* (New York: Leo Back Institute, 1982); Netanyahu, *The Origins of the*

Elena Martínez and Max S. Hering Torres place late medieval Iberian anticonverso discourse into conversation with descriptions of human difference in colonial Spanish America, tracing how language and institutional forms developed in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Iberia transformed in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish America to differentiate between people based on skin color rather than creed.<sup>45</sup> These scholars joined an older but still ongoing debate about the origins and meanings of race specific to the Americas. Aníbal Quijano, for example, proposed that the modern epistemology of race was born in Spanish America from the first encounters between the New and Old Worlds in the late fifteenth century, such that a coherent system of oppression (conceived of as “coloniality of power”) can be traced from 1492 to the present.<sup>46</sup> In contrast, Irene Silverblatt and Daniel Nemser have argued in their different respective studies that racialization emerged in Spanish colonial enterprises of the mid-sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through particular practices of colonial administration.<sup>47</sup> Another strand of the debate relates specifically to identifying modern forms of racial categorization and discrimination as emergent in the eighteenth century along with the epistemological changes of the European Enlightenment.<sup>48</sup> Finally, Ruth Hill and Eduardo Restrepo, among others,

*Inquisition*; David Nirenberg, “Race and the Middle Ages”; Nirenberg, “Was There Race before Modernity?”

- <sup>45</sup> Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*; Max Hering Torres, “Cuerpo, misoginia y raza. España y las Américas en los siglos XVI–XVII,” in *Desvelando el cuerpo: Perspectivas desde las ciencias sociales y humanas*, ed. Josep Martí and Yolanda Aixela (Madrid: CISC, 2010), 145–56; Nikolaus Böttcher, Bernd Hausberger, and Max S. Hering Torres, “Introducción. Sangre mestizaje y nobleza,” in *El peso de la sangre. Limpios, mestizos y nobles en el mundo hispánico*, ed. Böttcher, Hausberger, and Hering Torres (Mexico City: El Colegio de México, 2011), 9–28; Hering Torres, “Purity of Blood: Problems of Interpretation,” in *Race and Blood in the Iberian World*, ed. Max S. Hering Torres, María Elena Martínez, David Nirenberg (Zurich: Lit Verlag, 2012), 11–38.
- <sup>46</sup> Aníbal Quijano, “Colonialidad del poder, cultura y conocimiento en América Latina,” *Capitalismo y geopolítica del conocimiento: El eurocentrismo y la filosofía de la liberación en el debate intelectual contemporáneo*, ed. Walter D. Mignolo (Buenos Aires: Signo, 2001).
- <sup>47</sup> Irene Silverblatt, *Modern Inquisitions: Peru and the Origins of the Civilized World* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004); Nemser, *Infrastructures of Race*. James Sweet, for his part, identified what he called “racialization without race” in the Hispanic world in the sixteenth century that resulted from prejudices against black peoples originating in Iberian Islamic culture. James Sweet, “The Iberian Roots of American Racist Thought,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997): 143–66.
- <sup>48</sup> See María Elena Martínez, along with María Eugenia Chaves, and Robert Schwaller. Another aspect of this trend has to do with the changing perceptions regarding the malleability of the body in relation to color, climate, the stars, and behaviors in the

identify the nineteenth century as the beginning of modern racial classification in Spanish America.<sup>49</sup>

This book's intervention in these debates does not look to change our understanding of when race as we know it today began. I support others' arguments for reading early modern portrayals of human hierarchies as approximate cognates for contemporary racial categories while attending to the specificities of the languages, time, and place in which they appear in colonial sources. As Kathryn Burns so clearly explains, race "has long organized notions of fixity but has never itself been stable."<sup>50</sup> Instead of focusing on *when* exactly race "happened," *Beyond Babel* demonstrates

New World. For different angles related to the malleability of New World bodies, see Jorge Cañizares-Esguerra, "Demons, Stars, and the Imagination: The Early Modern Body in the Tropics," in *The Origins of Racism in the West*, 313–25; Ilona Katzew, "White or Black? Albinism and Spotted Blacks in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic World," in *Envisioning Others: Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America*, ed. Pamela A. Patton (Leiden, 2016), 142–86; and Rebecca Earle, *The Body of the Conquistador: Food, Race and the Colonial Experience in Spanish America, 1492–1700* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

<sup>49</sup> Ruth Hill, *Hierarchy, Commerce, and Fraud: A Postal Inspector's Exposé* (Nashville, TN: Vanderbilt University Press, 2005), 198–200; and Eduardo Restrepo, "Eventualizing Blackness in Colombia" (PhD diss., University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, 2008). For a review of these debates, see Kathryn Burns, "Unfixing Race," in *Rereading the Black Legend: The Discourses of Religious and Racial Difference in the Renaissance Empires*, ed. Margaret R. Greer, Walter D. Mignolo, and Maureen Quilligan (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 188–204; and Andrew B. Fisher and Frank O'Hara, "Racial Identities and their Interpreters in Colonial Latin America," in *Imperial Subjects: Race and Identity in Colonial Latin America*, ed. Fisher and O'Hara (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009), 1–38. For the debate related to the emergence of classificatory systems in relation to "class" and "casta," see Douglas Cope, *The Limits of Racial Domination: Plebian Society in Colonial Mexico, 1660–1720* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1994). For studies on the role gender plays in the construction and manipulation of casta categories, see Leo J. Garofalo and Rachel Sarah O'Toole, "Introduction: Constructing Difference in Colonial Latin America," *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 7, no. 1 (2006); Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*; and O'Toole, *Bound Lives*. For key works on the debate on the comparative study of race in the Americas and its complications, see Tannenbaum, *Slave and Citizen*; Michael Hanchard, *Orpheus and Power: The Movimento Negro of Rio de Janeiro and Sao Paulo, 1945–1988* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Howard Winant, *Racial Conditions: Politics, Theory, Comparisons* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Peter Wade, "Images of Latin American Mestizaje and the Politics of Comparison," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 23, no. 1 (2004): 355–66; Micol Seigel, *Uneven Encounters: Making Race and Nation in Brazil* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2009). For a thorough literature review, see Wade, "Race in Latin America."

<sup>50</sup> Burns, "Unfixing Race," 188. See also David Nirenberg's incisive analysis of race in the medieval period compared with the present, "Race and the Middle Ages" and "Was There Race before Modernity?"

how black men and women participated in shaping what blackness meant as it happened. To do so, I underscore how the language black intermediaries helped produce about blackness overlaps with contemporary religious discourses related to territorial and political sovereignty of the Spanish Imperial project in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A key point of this overlap will demonstrate that the growing discrimination associating black men and women with enslaved or minimally paid labor in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish America was actually based on gestures of inclusion in the Christian category of the human, not exclusion.<sup>51</sup> This inclusion, while limited and hierarchical, became a condition of possibility of and a point of emphasis in black men's and women's own notions of what it meant to be black in colonial Spanish America: all people, even black people, are equal before God.

The term "blackness" itself (referenced in Spanish as *lo negro* or *la negrura*) rarely appears as an abstract concept in the sources I examine. While the abstraction itself is mine, it is done in close dialogue with the primary sources so as to attend to the differences between the distinct terms that make up the category and the reasons why the terms can be productively collapsed to make an argument about blackness in colonial Spanish America. More precise and contextualized definitions of what I mean by blackness will emerge from the individual chapters, but for the sake of establishing a common vocabulary as a point of departure, the remainder of this introduction offers working definitions of the most common terms associated with blackness in texts written about and from New Granada and Peru in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries: *negrola*, *etíope*, *morenola*, *pardola*, and *mulatola*.

Individuals identified with any of these terms were perceived in relation to two interlocking criteria: (1) coming from or descending from at least one parent originating from what we now consider the African continent and (2) having some form of dark skin tone. As I will show in the next chapter, there were other linguistic, legal, and physical associations with blackness beyond place of origin and skin color circulating in this period, too, but they were not *sine qua non* criteria as these two were. While the five terms named above share these two criteria, it is also crucial to note that the different terms are by no means merely equivalent to each

<sup>51</sup> On the "differential inclusion" of *indios* and *mestizos* in New Spain, see Nemser, *Infrastructures of Race*, 88, 99–100.

other.<sup>52</sup> Although texts sometimes use more than one term to describe the same person or group, each name tended to carry specific valences and values with different relationships to hierarchy and stigma.<sup>53</sup> I will therefore keep the terms in their original in italics to avoid ignoring important specifications. To attend to these specifications, below I survey their typical uses around the turn of the seventeenth century in Spanish America. In doing so, I will note how they increasingly although not exclusively began to associate people of African descent with displacement, enslavement, and servitude.

Many of the colonial valences and values associated with *negrola*, *etíope*, *morenola*, *pardola*, and *mulatola* began to appear in Spanish discourse and visual art after the sixteenth century witnessed the arrival of unprecedented numbers of enslaved men, women, and children from Africa in the Iberian Peninsula and the Spanish American territories, as mentioned earlier in this introduction.<sup>54</sup> For example, although there existed a late medieval aesthetic tradition in visual and written texts of figures such as Saba (the queen of Sheba), the black magus, and Prester John that associated blackness with faraway wealth, power, and spiritual virtue, references to this tradition are absent from all definitions related to black men and women in Sebastián de Covarrubias's *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, a dictionary published in Madrid in 1611. Instead of referring to any illustrious black figures of the late medieval and early modern imagination of blackness in Europe, Covarrubias explains in his definition for "negro" [black] that it is not only the term used for "el etíope de color negra" [the black Ethiopian] but also a term for a color considered "infausta y triste, y como tal usamos desta palabra, diciendo: Negra ventura, negra vida, etc." [unlucky and sad, like when we say: Black luck,

<sup>52</sup> Sherwin Bryant, Ben Vinson III, and Rachel Sarah O'Toole justify analyzing similar terms together insofar as they demonstrate a "politics of blackening cross-cut with gender at work in the colonial era" ("Introduction," in *Africans to Spanish America: Expanding the Diaspora*, ed. Bryant, O'Toole, and Vinson [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012], 1–26, 13).

<sup>53</sup> In the "Vida de la Venerable Madre Ursula de Jesucristo," Franciscan Archive of Lima, Registro 17, No. 45, n.d., ff. 585r–607v, the narrator describes Úrsula as a "morena criolla" and "negra criolla" in the same paragraph, reflecting the interchangeability of the terms *morena* and *negra* in this text (f. 585v).

<sup>54</sup> For a study of earlier classifications and descriptions of black men and women arriving in Iberia in the late medieval Mediterranean trade, see Debra Blumenthal, *Enemies and Familiars: Slavery and Mastery in Fifteenth-Century Valencia* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

black life, etc.].<sup>55</sup> Covarrubias directly connects the color's symbolism to what he presumes to be the lowly position of black people themselves in Iberian societies by then citing the proverb "Aunque negros, gente somos" [Although we are black, we are people].<sup>56</sup> Meanwhile, Covarrubias describes white as representing "castidad, limpieza, alegría" [chastity, cleanliness, and happiness]<sup>57</sup> and expressly identifies black as its opposite: "Uno de los dos extremos de las colores, opuesto a blanco" [One of the two color extremes, the opposite of white].<sup>58</sup> Covarrubias's dictionary thus associates black men and women with servility, bad luck, and corruption, demonstrating key ways color symbolism affected the values assigned to individuals called *negros* in early seventeenth-century Spanish discourse. Such uses of the terms *negro* and *negra* traveled to Spanish America, appearing in now well-known texts composed by Spanish and indigenous authors before and after the turn of the seventeenth century.<sup>59</sup>

*Negro* and *negra* also had a series of ambivalent religious associations on both sides of the Atlantic during this period. On one hand, there existed an association between the color and sin as seen in texts that

<sup>55</sup> Sebastián de Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana* (Madrid: Luis Sánchez, 1611), 1: 562. Jack Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans: The Language of Race and the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 71–72, gives an account of the use of *negro* in Portuguese in the sixteenth century to refer to New World natives. I do not include this alternative usage in my analysis as it does not appear to affect the use of *negro* in Peru and New Granada.

<sup>56</sup> Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, 1: 562. Two additional longer variations of this proverb appear in Gonzalo Correas, *Vocabulario de refranes y frases proverbiales* [1627] (Madrid: Olózaga, 1924): "Aunque somo negro, hombre somo, alma tenemo" and "Aunque somos negros, gente somos, alma tenemos" (73).

<sup>57</sup> Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, 1: 140r. <sup>58</sup> Ibid.

<sup>59</sup> For an early example, see Bartolomé de Las Casas, *Historia de las Indias* [1527–1559], ed. Agustín Millares Carlo (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1951), book 5, chap. 129. For a later example, see Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala, *Primer nueva corónica y buen gobierno* [1615], ed. John V. Murra and Rolena Adorno ([www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/info/en/frontpage.htm](http://www.kb.dk/permalink/2006/poma/info/en/frontpage.htm)), 940–941. On Las Casas's portrayals of black men and women as a plague in the New World as well as innocent victims of an unjust slave trade, see Rubén Sánchez Godoy, *El peor de los remedios: Bartolomé de las Casas y la crítica temprana a la esclavitud en el Atlántico ibérico* (Pittsburgh, PA: Iberoamericana, 2016), and "Mercañía, gentes pacíficas y plaga: Bartolomé de las Casas y los orígenes del pensamiento abolicionista en el Atlántico" (PhD diss., Pennsylvania State University, 2009), 54–55 in particular. For examinations of Guaman Poma's pejorative portrayals of blackness, see O'Toole, *Bound Lives*, 157–61; Valérie Benoist, "La conexión entre casta y familia en la representación de los negros," *Afro-Hispanic Review* 29, no. 1 (2010): 35–54; Jean-Pierre Tardieu, "L'intégration des noirs dans le discours de Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala," *Revue de CERC* 4 (1987): 40–60.

invoke the stain of sin as a mark that could be either washed out through confession or continuously suffered as a literal and permanent trace of God's curse of Cham for mocking his father.<sup>60</sup> A related connotation sometimes projected onto black men and women in early modern Spanish and Spanish American texts is an association with the devil and threatening sexuality. While this association has some precedents in early Christian and then medieval Europe, it became particularly prevalent in Spanish American texts in the seventeenth century.<sup>61</sup> For example, several

<sup>60</sup> For texts that speak of symbolically whitening African's souls, see Sandoval, *Naturaleza, policia sagrada*, and Pedro de Mercado, *Historia de la provincia del Nuevo Reino y Quito de la Compañía de Jesús* [c. 1688] (Bogota: Biblioteca de la Presidencia de Colombia, 1957), 1: 233; 3:13. Chapter 4 will discuss this tradition at greater length. On the emergence of the use of the curse of Cham as a justification for black enslavement, see A. J. R. Russel-Wood, "Before Columbus: Portugal's African Prelude to the Middle Passage and Contribution to Discourse on Race and Slavery," in *Race, Discourse, and the Origins of the Americas: A New World View*, ed. Vera Lawrence and Rex Nettleford (Washington, DC: Smithsonian, 1995); Benjamin Braude, "The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (1997): 103–42; David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); David M. Whitford, *The Curse of Ham in the Early Modern Era: The Bible and the Justifications for Slavery* (New York: Routledge, 2009); and Larissa Brewer-García, "Imagined Transformations: Color, Beauty, and Black Christian Conversion in Seventeenth-Century Spanish America," in *Envisioning Others: Race, Color, and the Visual in Iberia and Latin America*, ed. Pamela A. Patton (Leiden: Brill, 2016), 111–41, 134.

<sup>61</sup> For early Christian instances of this stereotype, see Robert Hood, *Begrimed and Black: Christian Traditions on Blacks and Blackness* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994), 73–90; David Brakke, "Ethiopian Demons: Male Sexuality, the Black-Skinned Other, and the Monastic Self," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 10, nos. 3–4 (2001): 501–35; Gay Byron, *Symbolic Blackness and Ethnic Difference in Early Christian Literature* (New York: Routledge, 2002). For primary sources demonstrating this phenomenon across medieval Europe, see Peter Abelard, "Letter 4 to Héloïse," and Bernard of Clairvaux, "On the Song of Songs," in *Race in Early Modern England: A Documentary Companion*, ed. Ania Loomba and Jonathan Burton (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 60–62, and *Cantiga CLXXXVI* of Alfonso X's thirteenth-century *Las Cantigas de Santa María*. For secondary studies of the phenomenon in Iberian medieval texts, see Andrew Beresford, "Sanctity and Prejudice in Medieval Castilian Hagiography: The Legend of S. Moses the Ethiopian," in *Medieval Hispanic Studies in Memory of Alan Deyermond*, ed. Andrew M. Beresford, Louise M. Haywood, and Julian Weiss (New York: Boydell and Brewer, 2013), 11–37. For the circulation of this stereotype in the New World in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Borja Gómez, *Rostros y rastros*, 103. Other examples of this kind of demonization of black men and women are referenced by Walter Hawthorne, *From Africa to Brazil: Culture, Identity, and an Atlantic Slave Trade, 1600–1830* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Laura Mello e Souza, *The Devil in the Land of the Holy Cross: Witchcraft, Slavery, and Popular Religion in Colonial Brazil*, trans. Diane Groszklaus Whitty (Austin: University of Texas Press,



life writings from the Andes describe protagonists encountering the devil in the form of a black man. The motif appears most often in texts by or about white men and women who report having conversed or copulated with the devil in the form of a black man (in dreams, visions, or possessions).<sup>62</sup> Blackness in these cases is conceived not only as sinful but as a demonic sexual threat.

On the other hand, there existed a competing religious connotation that associated black men and women with an innocent ignorance of God. This association conceives of the knowledge of God as “light” and the ignorance of God as “darkness.” Employing this dichotomy, many visual and discursive representations of blackness present black men and women as innocent victims of ignorance who need missionaries to save them from their own darkness. Art historians Tanya J. Tiffany, Victor Stoichita, and Carmen Fracchia, in distinct studies, analyze the effects of this ideology on the representation of black religious subjects in Hispanic art, baptismal manuals, and sermons from the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.<sup>63</sup> This notion of blackness differs from the demonization mentioned above because it conceives of blackness as related to the blamelessness of the soon-to-be or recently converted, not the intentional (or inherited) guilt of a willful rejection of God and association with the devil. This particular Christian conception of blackness imagines black men and women as the ideal objects of evangelical efforts: like unconquered territory for the colonizer, they contain the promise of glory for

2004); and James Sweet, *Recreating Africa: Culture, Kinship, and Religion in the African-Portuguese World, 1441–1770* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

<sup>62</sup> See descriptions of the devil in *Vida de la V. M. Francisca Josefa de la Concepción* (Philadelphia: T. H. Palmer, 1817), chap. 39, 162. See also Rachel Sarah O’Toole, “The Most Resplendent Flower of the Indies’: Making Saints and Constructing Whiteness in Colonial Peru,” in *Women, Religion, and the Atlantic World, 1600–1800*, ed. Daniella Kostroun and Lisa Vollendorf (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009), 136–55.

<sup>63</sup> Victor Stoichita, “The Image of the Black in Spanish Art: Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries,” in *The Image of the Black in Western Art, vol. 3: From “Age of Discovery” to the Age of Abolition: Artists of the Renaissance and Baroque* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 191–234; Tanya J. Tiffany, “Light, Darkness, and African Salvation,” *Art History* 31, no. 2 (2008): 33–56; Carmen Fracchia, “(Lack of) Visual Representation of Black Slaves in Spanish Golden Age Painting,” *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 10 (2004): 23–34. Margaret Olsen, in *Slavery and Salvation in Colonial Cartagena de Indias* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), has also studied how Sandoval employs this imagery in *Naturaleza, policia sagrada*, explaining how in some passages Sandoval portrays black men and women as innocently ignorant of God (83–91).

missionaries capable of converting them.<sup>64</sup> Whereas the blackness associated with the devil reflects the fear of seduction by a black man or woman, the blackness associated with an innocent ignorance of Christ reveals the missionary fantasy of seducing black souls in a glorious spiritual conquest.

The notion of the black Christian, in fact, often circulated under another name: the *etíope* [Ethiopian]. The legends of Prester John, Moses's Ethiopian wife Sepphora, and the black magus provide important precedents for this use of the term *etíope*. "Ethiopia," during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, could refer to a variety of geographic locations, and therefore those described as *etíopes* were not necessarily tied to a fixed geographic area. Even though the term sometimes referred specifically to people from the kingdom of Ethiopia located in what is today's northeastern Africa, it was also used more broadly to refer to any dark-skinned Christian people.<sup>65</sup> Uses of this term for the latter purpose relate to the fact that several passages in Scripture mention the promise of Ethiopian conversion to Christianity.<sup>66</sup> Sandoval's treatise *Naturaleza, policia sagrada* manipulates the distinction between the different peoples of the African continent by referring to *etíopes* in the title of his text and then clarifying in the first

<sup>64</sup> See Sandoval, *Naturaleza, policia sagrada*, book 3, chap. 1, 230r–v, on the paramount glory of evangelizing *negros bozales*. Baltasar Fra Molinero, "Ser mulato en España y América: Discursos legales y otros discursos literarios," in *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos: Derroteros africanos en los mundos ibéricos*, ed. Berta Ares Queija and Alessandro Stella (Seville: Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 2000), 123–47, describes this particular archetype of black men and women as "a means of reaching glory" (125). Regarding the manifestation of similar ideology in colonial New Spain, see Nicole von Germeten, "Corporate Salvation in a Colonial Society: Confraternities and Social Mobility for Africans and Their Descendants in New Spain" (PhD diss., University of California Berkeley, 2003), 15–61.

<sup>65</sup> See Luis de Urreta, *Historia eclesiastica, politica, natural, y moral, de los grandes y remotos Reynos de la Etiopia, Monarchia del Emperador, llamado Preste Juan de las Indias* (Valencia, 1610), for an example of the more geographically limited use of "Etiopia" [Ethiopia] and "etíope" [Ethiopian] in early seventeenth-century Spanish discourse. On Urreta's notion of Ethiopia, see Brewer-García, "Hierarchy and Holiness in the Earliest Colonial Black Hagiographies: Alonso de Sandoval and His Sources," *William and Mary Quarterly* 76, no. 3 (2019): 477–508.

<sup>66</sup> For example, "Ethiopia shall soon stretch out her hands unto God" (Psalm 67:32 Vulgate; 68:31 KJB). See also Jean Marie Courtès, "The Theme of 'Ethiopia' and 'Ethiopians' in Patristic Literature," in *The Image of the Black in Western Art, vol. 2: From Early Christianity to the "Age of Discovery": From the Demonic Threat to the Incarnation of Sainthood* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 199–214.

book of the treatise that *etíopes* are also commonly called *negros* or *morenos*.<sup>67</sup>

*Morenola* also had a variety of meanings in late sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish-language texts. Those composed in Spanish America generally use the term differently than contemporary texts from the Iberian Peninsula. For example, in Iberia Covarrubias defines *moreno* as a color with an uncertain approximation to black, relating it to the color of Moors.<sup>68</sup> This association coexists with another popular connotation for *morena* that appears in popular lyric from the period as the object of affection or the beloved. Scholar of Iberian popular lyric Margit Frenk argues that this association relates to the symbolism of the dark-skinned woman as colored by her loss of virginity.<sup>69</sup> In contrast to such uses common to the Iberian Peninsula in the sixteenth century, in Spanish America *morenola* explicitly referred to dark-skinned people from western Africa or descending from those who originated there. Sometimes *moreno* or *morena* appear to be synonyms for *negro* or *negra* (or *etíope*), as when Alonso de Sandoval describes the baptisms of *morenos* on the shores of western Africa before their shipment to the Americas.<sup>70</sup> Other times, *morenola* appears in Spanish American texts in distinction with *negro* and *negra* to name individuals of African descent who were not

<sup>67</sup> See the chapter in Sandoval's *Naturaleza, policia sagrada*, titled: "De la naturaleza de los Etiopes, que comunmente llamamos negros" [Of the nature of Ethiopians, whom we commonly call blacks] (book I, chap. 2, 10r). See also Brewer-García, "Hierarchy and Holiness in the Earliest Colonial Black Hagiographies."

<sup>68</sup> "Color, la que no es del todo negra, como la de los moros, de donde tomó nombre, o de mora" [A color that is not completely black, like that of the Moors, from which it took its name, or that of the blackberry] (Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua*, 1: 555). See Valentín Groebner, *Who Are You?: Identification, Deception, and Surveillance in Early Modern Europe* (New York: Zone, 2007), 131–32, on a distinct notion of "brown" in medieval European texts that associates the color with humoral traits of an individual instead of an ascription to a broad status-related type.

<sup>69</sup> Margit Frenk, "Símbolos naturales en las viejas canciones populares," in *Poesía popular hispánica: 44 estudios* (Mexico, DF: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 2006), 239–352; Frenk, "La canción popular femenina en el Siglo de Oro," in *Poesía popular hispánica*, 336–37; Daniel Devoto, *Cancionero llamado Flor de la rosa* (Buenos Aires: Francisco A. Colombo, 1950), 126–32; Alfonso Alegre Heitzmann, "El color de la Sulamita en las Biblias medievales romancesadas," *Anuario de Filología* 5 (1979): 239–56; José M. A. Alín, *El cancionero español de tipo tradicional* (Madrid: Taurus, 1968), 253–57; Wardropper, "The Color Problem in Spanish Traditional Poetry," *Modern Language Notes* 75, no. 5 (1960): 415–21; Wardropper, "The Impact of Folk Song on Sacred and Profane Love Poetry in Post-Tridentine Spain," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* 17, no. 4 (1986): 483–98.

<sup>70</sup> Sandoval, *Naturaleza, policia sagrada*, book III, chap. 4, 234r.

enslaved or who held a higher social status. For example, Gerónimo Pallas's description of the different kinds of black populations living around Cartagena in the early seventeenth century employs *moreno* in distinction with *negro* to name people of African descent who occupied positions of higher status: "De los negros criollos (esto es los nacidos acá en las Indias) muchos son libertos, los cuales están alistados en compañía[s] de soldados con su capitán y oficiales morenos" [Of the black *criollos* (that is those born here in the Indies) many are freed. These participate as soldiers of militias with *moreno* captains and officials].<sup>71</sup> Even though Pallas uses the term *moreno* to refer to individuals of a higher status than that of other *negros*, he includes all of them in the category of *negros criollos*.<sup>72</sup> In another important example, Graubart's study of black confraternities in seventeenth-century Lima notes that free or freed people of African descent sometimes chose to call themselves *morenos* to set themselves apart from enslaved black men and women.<sup>73</sup>

*Mulatola* is yet one more term used to describe people of African descent in texts from this period.<sup>74</sup> Compared with *negrola* and *morenola*, however, *mulatola* does not expressly refer to a color-related

<sup>71</sup> Pallas, *Misión a las indias*, 114. On the multivalent uses of the term *criollo* in late sixteenth century and seventeenth century, see Karen Graubart, "The Creolization of the New World: Local Forms of Identification in Urban Colonial Peru, 1560–1640," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 89, no. 3 (2009): 471–99.

<sup>72</sup> On free black men in the military in colonial Spanish America and the use of the term *moreno*, see Ben Vinson III, "Race and Badge: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico," *The Americas* 56, no. 4 (2000): 471–96, 472; Jean-Paul Zúñiga, "'Morena me llaman . . .': Exclusión e integración de los afroamericanos en Hispanoamérica: El ejemplo de algunas regiones del antiguo virreinato del Perú (siglos XVI–XVIII)," in *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos: Derroteros africanos en los mundos ibéricos*, ed. Berta Ares Queija and Alessandro Stella (Sevilla: Publicaciones de la Escuela de Estudios Hispano-Americanos, 2000), 105–22, 109. An important clarification is offered by Joanne Rappaport's study of the use of the term *moreno* in travel documents from seventeenth-century New Granada. Rappaport finds that *moreno* as an adjective is never used to describe the traits of those identified as *negros* in the travel documents, but it was used as an adjective for the complexion and hair and eye color for some indigenous peoples and Spaniards (*The Disappearing Mestizo: Configuring Difference in the Colonial New Kingdom of Granada* [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014], 171–204). This fact reveals the importance of differentiating between the use of these terms as adjectives and as nouns in colonial texts.

<sup>73</sup> Graubart, "So color de una cofradía." On "negro" as a synonym for slave at the turn of the seventeenth century in Iberia, see Fracchia, "(Lack of) Visual Representation."

<sup>74</sup> On *mulatos* in Spanish America in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, see Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 164–65; Berta Ares Queija, "Mestizos, mulatos y zambaigos (Virreinato del Perú, siglo XVI)," in *Negros, mulatos, zambaigos*, 75–88; and Fra Molinero, "Ser mulato."

category but instead to a person's mixed parentage when one of the parents is of African descent. As a result, a *mulato* or *mulata* in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Spanish texts could be described as "light" or "dark."<sup>75</sup> Covarrubias confirms that *mulatola* refers to mixed parentage rather than a precise color when he defines the term as "El que es hijo de negra y de hombre blanco, o al revés y por ser mezcla extraordinaria la compararon con la naturaleza del mulo" [The child of a black woman and a white man, or the reverse; for being an extraordinary mix they compare it to the nature of the mule].<sup>76</sup> Comparing the *mulatola* to the degeneracy and hybridity of the mule invokes animal husbandry language to describe new "kinds" of people emerging in the early modern period through global contact.<sup>77</sup> Additionally, in the Americas, *mulatola*, like *negrola*, had its more positively inflected euphemism that grew in popularity in the mid- to late seventeenth century: *pardola*.<sup>78</sup> As with the abovementioned phenomenon of *morenos*, Jouve Martín's study of the self-representations of *mulatos* in seventeenth-century Peru finds that people identifying as *mulatos* sometimes tried to distance themselves from the label of *negro* because of the latter's association with servitude and enslavement.<sup>79</sup>

The term *mulato* carried with it an additional legacy tied to darkness: the stain of infamy related to the suspicion of having been born of an adulterous union. Associations between *mulatola* and illegitimacy appear, for example, throughout Solórzano y Pereira's *Política Indiana* from the

<sup>75</sup> Forbes, *Africans and Native Americans*, 148–50; Richard Boyer, "Negotiating *Calidad*: The Everyday Struggle for Status in Mexico," *Historical Archaeology* 31, no. 1 (1997): 64–72, 68–69.

<sup>76</sup> Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, 1: 117v.

<sup>77</sup> On the use of animal husbandry terms to describe human differences in early modern Spanish, see Hill, *Hierarchy, Commerce, and Fraud*, 205, 259–60; and Javier Irigoyen, "Diana and Wild Boar Hunting: Refiguring Gender and Ethno-Religious Conflict in the Pastoral Imaginary," *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 88, no. 3 (2011): 237–87. Rappaport specifies that *mulatos* could be born of a range of specific combinations of mixed parentage: "indigenous–African or European–African in the Americas, but also European–North African in Spain" ("Así lo parece por su aspecto: Physiognomy and the Construction of Difference in Colonial Bogotá," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 91, no. 4 [2011]: 601–31, 603).

<sup>78</sup> Ann Twinam, "Purchasing Whiteness: Conversations on the Essence of Pardo-ness and Mulatto-ness at the End of the Empire," in *Imperial Subjects*, 141–66, explains that "Pardo usually means 'dark skinned' although the term can be used interchangeably with 'mulato'" (161).

<sup>79</sup> Jouve Martín, *Esclavos de la ciudad letrada*, 47. See also Jouve Martín, "Public Ceremonies and Mulatto Identity in Viceroyal Lima: A Colonial Reenactment of the Fall of Troy (1631)," *Colonial Latin American Review* 16, no. 2 (2007): 179–201.

mid-seventeenth century. In following passage, the Iberian jurist writing in Peru states that the infamy attributed to *mulatos* did not necessarily result from the mixture itself of which they were born, but rather from the presumed illegitimacy of the unions that produced them:

si estos hombres huviessen nacido de legitimo matrimonio, y no se hallasse en ellos otro vicio, u defecto, que lo impidiesse, tenerse, y constarse podrán, y deberian por Ciudadanos de dichas Provincias, y ser admitidos a honras, y Oficios de ellas . . . [p]ero porque lo mas ordinario es, que nacen de adulterio, o de otros ilicitos, y punibles ayuntamientos: porque pocos Españoles de honra ay que casen con Indias o Negras, el qual defecto de los Natales les hace infames.

[if these men were born of legitimate matrimony, and if no other vice or defect that might limit him is discovered, they can and should be considered and included as citizens of these provinces and awarded honors and titles thereof . . . but it is most common for them to be born of adultery or of other illicit and punishable unions; because there are few honorable Spaniards who marry Indians or black women; this defect of the offspring makes them *infame*.]<sup>80</sup>

Although *mulatos* were not always born out of wedlock, Solórzano y Pereira suggests that the suspicion of illegitimacy accompanied all *mulatos/mulatas* and *mestizos/mestizas* regardless of the actual marital status of their parents. For similar reasons, Baltasar Fra Molinero states that in seventeenth-century dramas performed in Iberia, *mulatos/mulatas* often appear as objects of ridicule due to the illegitimacy of which they were assumed to have been born.<sup>81</sup> References to the darkness or blackness of a *mulatola* in colonial Spanish American texts, then, could refer to an individual's skin tone and/or to the metaphoric obscurity of his or her lineage or conditions of birth. The double interpretation of the *mulatola*'s darkness is supported by Covarrubias's definition of "claro" [light]: "Lo que se opone a lo oscuro, tenebroso y dificultoso. Claro linage, el ilustre y generoso" [The opposite of that which is dark, shadowy, and difficult. Light lineage, illustrious and generous].<sup>82</sup> For such a presumed lack of clarity and the additional infamy of having being born into slavery or descending from a parent who had been enslaved, invocations of *limpieza de sangre* in the New World began to exclude *negros/las*, *mulatos/las*, and other "mixed populations."<sup>83</sup>

<sup>80</sup> Juan Solórzano y Pereira, *Política Indiana* (Madrid: Diego Diaz de la Carrera, 1648), 246.

<sup>81</sup> Fra Molinero, "Ser mulato," 127.

<sup>82</sup> Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, 1: 215.

<sup>83</sup> Fra Molinero, "Ser mulato," 135–37; Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 220–26; Carmen Bernand, *Negros esclavos y libres en las ciudades hispanoamericanas* (Madrid: Tavera, 2000), 100–106.

In contrast, by the early seventeenth century in Spanish America, documents employ the terms *blanco/a* [white] as synonyms for *español/a* [Spanish]. Like the double meaning of the darkness of a *mulato*, the association between *blanco/a* and *español/a* was related not only to the presumed lighter skin tone of Spaniards but also to the supposed clarity of their lineage in comparison to those born of mixed parentage in the New World.<sup>84</sup> Joanne Rappaport, building on work by Ann Twinam, suggests that whiteness was first used as a color term before appearing as a category in late seventeenth-century Spanish America.<sup>85</sup> Yet there are earlier uses of *blanco* as a color-related category. For example, Pallas's 1619 narrative demonstrates that by the second decade of the seventeenth century people in Spanish America used the terms Spaniard and *blanco/a* as synonyms to refer categorically to any European-born person of a presumed higher class who was free of the reputation of being "contaminated" with mixed or illegitimate parentage:

es de advertir que por español se entiende cualquier hombre blanco nascido en Europa y otras provincias o islas de los que acá passan y viven en estos reynos, porque el nombre español fuera de significar la nación es título de honra, y vale lo mesmo que hombre no indio, ni mestizo, ni quarterón, ni mulato, ni negro ettz. sino como en Castilla se dize un hidalgo.

[It should be noted that Spaniard is understood as any white man born in Europe or other provinces and islands from which they originate and come here to live in these kingdoms, because the name Spaniard, other than meaning a nation, is an honorable title and is like saying a man who is not Indian, mestizo, *quarterón*, *mulato*, or black, etc., like the term nobleman used in Castile.]<sup>86</sup>

Pallas's explanation thus defines *blanco* as a category shaped by color, class, and geographic place of origin in Spanish America. Contrary to its use in the Iberian Peninsula, Pallas demonstrates that language to describe class differences (specifically related to the status of nobility compared with that of a commoner) was redeployed by the early seventeenth century to describe emerging racial hierarchies in the Americas. Pallas's description implies that a person considered *negro/a*, *indio/a*, or *producto de alguna mezcla* would have limited access to whiteness's categorical associations with nobility in the New World, whether it be nobility tied to

<sup>84</sup> Martínez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 268. Martínez explains that the emerging association between whiteness and Spanishness in New Spain resulted from the adaptation of Peninsular *limpieza de sangre* discourse to Spanish American circumstances.

<sup>85</sup> Rappaport, *Disappearing Mestizo*, 197; Ann Twinam, "Purchasing Whiteness," 154.

<sup>86</sup> Pallas, *Misión a las Indias*, 163–64.

wealth, titles, or merely the prestige of coming from or descending from white European parents.<sup>87</sup>

Documents from this period demonstrate that the distinctions between *negrola*, *morenola*, *etíope*, and *mulatola* surveyed here were far from consistent. For example, some enslaved people called themselves *morenos/as* and some non-enslaved people called themselves *negros/as*; other times, both terms are used in the same text to refer to the same individual.<sup>88</sup> Such variations show that these different terms for blackness were not clear static markers of status and value, but that like “woman” and “lady” in today’s English they could at times demarcate the same person, while in other instances they could distinguish between people of different social statuses. Nor do the common distinctions between the terms reviewed above revolve around a single coherent ideology of *limpieza de sangre* or color gradation. Rather, they show the confluence of different generic norms and aesthetic and moral values that circulated in the early modern Hispanic world.<sup>89</sup> As a whole, their use evidences the prevalence of what Ruth Hill calls the “norm of inequality” that existed in viceregal societies in the Americas: “a written and unwritten hierarchy that *ostensibly* mirrored nature and its laws but was in fact a social construct.”<sup>90</sup>

The chapters of this book will explore how such a “norm of inequality” that by the late sixteenth century tended to place black men and women on the lowest end of colonial social hierarchies coexisted with the Christian ideology that *all* people are equal before God. In its

<sup>87</sup> Covarrubias’s definition of white adds yet another facet to this association between whiteness and prestige by describing the virtues of whiteness in relation to the shining holy garments of prophets and angels as well as the noble robes of Roman dignitaries (Covarrubias, *Tesoro de la lengua castellana*, 1: 140r).

<sup>88</sup> In addition to the examples provided in notes 53 and 70, enslaved Biafada interpreter Manuel Moreno is described in *Proceso* 1676 as the least acculturated black interpreter owned by the Jesuits in Cartagena; yet he is the only one who uses *moreno* as his last name (*Proceso* 1676, Manuel Moreno, 98v–99v).

<sup>89</sup> For studies on the baroque plurality of colonial Spanish American societies that provide context for this confluence, see Karen Graubart, *Republics of Difference* (forthcoming); Tamar Herzog, *Frontiers of Possession: Spain and Portugal in Europe and the Americas* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2015); Lauren Benton, *Law and Colonial Cultures: Legal Regimes in World History, 1400–1900* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Joanne Rappaport and Tom Cummins, *Beyond the Lettered City: Indigenous Literacies in the Andes* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); and Alejandro Cañeque, *The King’s Living Image: The Culture and Politics of Viceregal Power in Colonial Mexico* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

<sup>90</sup> Hill, *Hierarchy, Commerce, and Fraud*, 197.



examination of this juxtaposition, *Beyond Babel* will show that the ideology of Christian equality was leveraged by certain black linguistic and spiritual intermediaries in seventeenth-century Spanish America to identify with and articulate notions of black virtue and black beauty in colonial texts. Engaging these notions with care allows us to tell new stories about the making of blackness in colonial Spanish America.