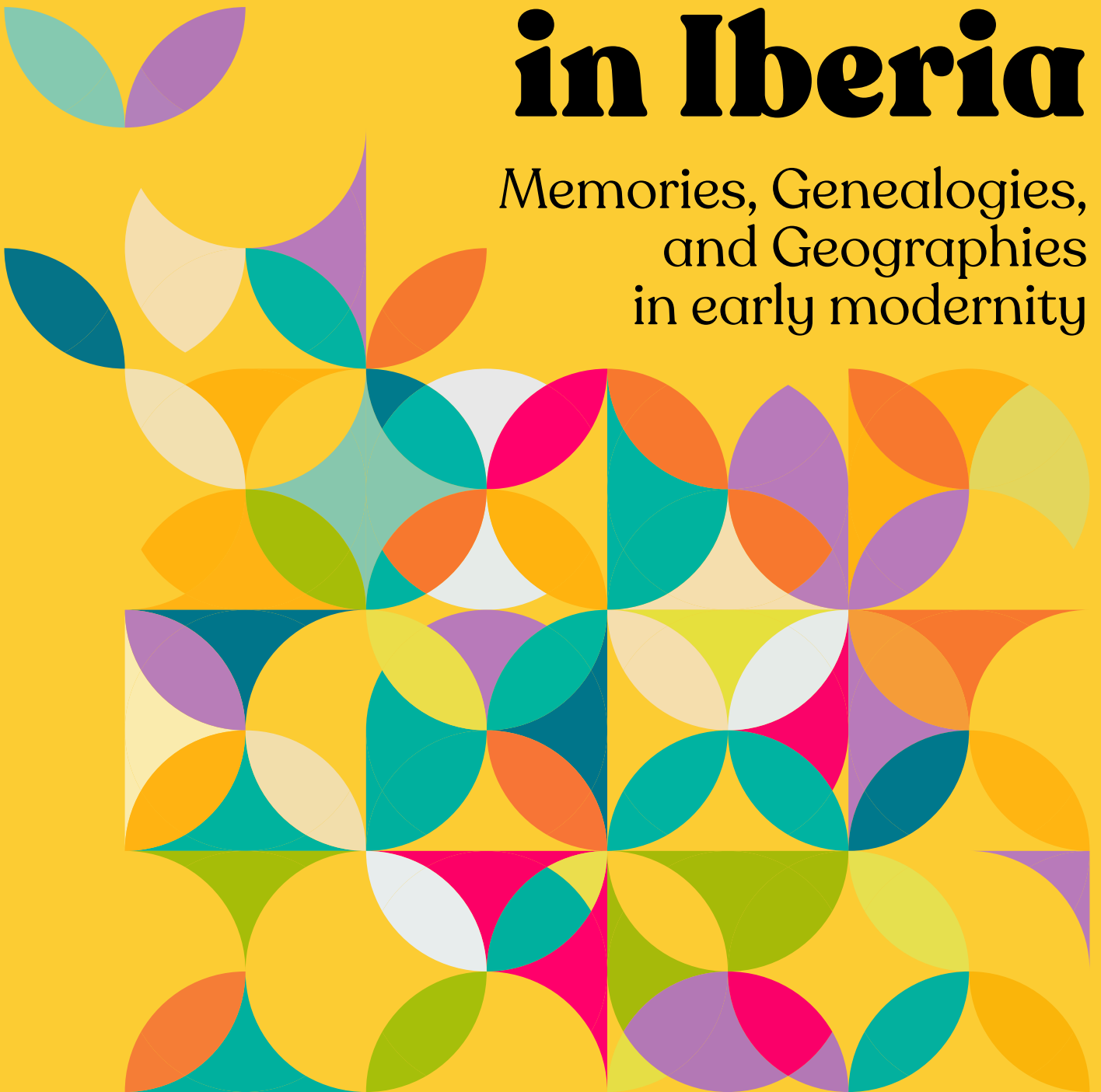


Research Symposium

Africa in Iberia

Memories, Genealogies,
and Geographies
in early modernity



Convenors

Dr Manuel Olmedo Gobante
Dr Cornesha Tweede
Dr Diana Berruezo-Sánchez

University of Arkansas
November 2-4, 2023

The
Making
of Blackness

ADHUC



UNIVERSITY OF
ARKANSAS



University of Arkansas
Fayetteville, AR 72701

Africa in Iberia

Memories, Genealogies, and
Geographies in early modernity,
a Research Symposium

Africa played a major but understudied role in the fashioning of early modern Iberian identities. Metaphorically or literally, the image of Africa was frequently used in Iberian commercial transactions, political projects, and social and cultural practices. All sorts of African travelers and ambassadors visited Iberia to establish and maintain intercontinental trading and political relations. European humanists invoked (Northern) Africa as a locus of imperial ambitions, chroniclers informed cartographers of what they called ‘tierra de negros’, and traders exploited these territories. Afro-Iberians often recalled Guinea as a chronotope of freedom. They alluded to Congo and Angola as sites of festive and ritual sovereignty. They referred to Ethiopia to foster religious belonging. Africans, Afro-Iberians, and white thinkers, chroniclers, cartographers, traders, and artists, they all were agents in creating notions, images, and concepts about Africa in early modern Iberia.

The study of Africa within the early modern period includes the geography and peoples of the entire continent, including West, Central and East Sub-Saharan Africa and the Maghreb. The European perspective fragmented African areas and identities to understand them in categories still used today. How do we challenge this fragmentation? How was Africa, partially or wholly, conceptualized and discussed in early modern Iberia? How did Afro-Iberians remember Africa? How were social and cultural worldviews formed from the rich and complicated histories of Africa and Iberia? With these questions in mind, *Africa in Iberia* seeks to understand Africa’s role in early modern Portugal and Spain through a lens focused on discourses, relations, transactions, and social practices, and to foster a discussion on how Africans and Afro-descendants actively shaped and were shaped by the era’s racial thinking. *Africa in Iberia* will explore how early modern Iberian people conceptualized, envisioned, discussed, and remembered Africa and Africanness both geographically and culturally, and explore the active contributions of Black people and other racialized communities to Iberian society and culture.



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We welcome contributions on topics including but not limited to:

- African Kinship, Ethnicity, and Origins in the Iberian Archive
- Travelers, Captives, Refugees, and Other Forms of Human Migration
- Mudejar/Morisco/North African Communities and Identities
- Black Performance and Representations of Blackness in Literature and Culture
- Iberian Cartographies of Africa
- Mediterranean or Trans-Atlantic Networks of Trade
- Early Modern Ideas on Race

The keynote addresses will be given by **Noémie Ndiaye** (The University of Chicago) and **Nicholas R. Jones** (Yale University).

Africa in Iberia is the third gathering—the first outside of Oxford, England— of *The Making of Blackness* project, an international group of historians, anthropologists, ethnomusicologists, and literary, visual, and cultural scholars who research how Afro-descendants actively shaped narratives of Blackness in early modern Iberia. Founded in 2020, the interdisciplinary project connects understudied expressions of early modern Afro-Iberian culture with Black emancipatory strategies and social practices of the time. For more information on past meetings, please visit [Black Africans' Agency](#), [Black Iberia](#), and [The Making of Blackness website](#).

A collective book publication will follow the meeting. This publication will include a collection of original critical essays. Articles selected will undergo a rigorous peer-review process.

We are seeking funding to cover travel and lodging expenses, and we warmly encourage graduate students to apply. Please send an abstract (250 words in English) and a 2-page CV to **Manuel Olmedo Gobante** (molmedog@uark.edu) by September 1.

Event hosted by the department of World Languages Literatures, and Cultures at the University of Arkansas in Fayetteville, AR. Sponsored by the Arkansas Humanities Center, the departments of History, Anthropology, and World Languages Literatures, and Cultures; the African and African American Studies Program, the Medieval and Renaissance Studies Program, the Middle East Studies Program, the World Literatures and Cultures Graduate Program, the Latin American and Latino Studies Program, and the Division of Diversity Equity and Inclusion.