

Review of: "Blacks in the Middle Ages – What About Racism in the Past? Literary and Art-Historical Reflections"

Abel Lorenzo-Rodríguez¹

¹ Universidad de Santiago de Compostela

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

It is a really and interesting contribution in the field of study. Bibliography about the topic it focused traditionally about the prolegomenon of racism in Europe based on blackness. However in this article we could check a new side about this blackness based not only on racism but also on praise of non-white people.

For example there are excellent contributions from art history perspective, Michel Pastoreau, *Black, history of a colour* (with some comments about st. Maurice and blackness in Middle Ages).

It could be really useful to check also documentary evidences (specially monastic) like sales, registers of workers, monastic genealogies to find references like *niger* (*Petrus Fernandi dictus Niger*, 1272) or *maurus* (*fuit maurus*, more like an ethnic-religious distinction and not based on skin colour) especially in Early Middle Ages in Iberia and Italy, there were categories to emphasize the difference, to mark the otherness? How these references co-lived at the same time with hagiography and the portrait of the demon as *black*?

About Alfonso X, the "tolerance" of Alfonso's court was based on the population of Castile in this moment founded in the idea of "king of three religions". As an example before Pedro I of Aragón signed his official documents in Arabic.

A curious 14th century sculpture in Santiago de Compostela shows the "dignity" of Balthazar in a church promoted by the French archbishop Berenguer de Landoire in Santiago de Compostela (San Fiz de Solovio church).



Just a brief comments about visual culture, racism and blackness. In the *Ashburnham Pentateuch* (Paris, BnF, MS nouv. acq. lat. 2334) appear a really interesting depictions of black and white people, working together, as protagonists of biblical events. Are they making the difference among different people in the Bible? Which one is the purpose? Manuscript available at: <https://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/btv1b53019392c.image>

Black and white “workers”, Paris, BnF, MS nouv. acq. lat. 2334, f. 21r.



