

Others and Outcasts in Early Modern Europe

Picturing the Social Margins

Edited by Tom Nichols

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Constructing the Black Slave in Early Modern Spanish Painting

Carmen Fracchia

It is surprising to find that very few works of art produced in early modern Spain depict the considerable but marginal sector of the population made up of black slaves. These rare but diverse paintings do, however, reveal imperial attitudes towards those on the edge of Spanish society. This article will explore the complex and sometimes contradictory ways in which the visual construction of black people was shaped in the period. Before turning to these paintings, we need to note that the presence of African people in Spain during this period was primarily due to the practice of slavery and to the commodification of the slave, especially from the fifteenth century onwards.¹ It is also necessary to clarify at the outset that the word 'black' will be used as it was in early modern Spain to signify 'slave'. This generic word used to refer to either a black person from sub-Saharan Africa (*negro*); a Berber from North Africa, as well as a Jew (*berberisco*), and an Iberian Muslim (*morisco*), but not a white slave from Turkey. In urban Spain, there was also a much smaller group of liberated slaves, but their new condition did not represent a great improvement in a society where the existence of slavery was never questioned.²

Most black people were captured by the Spaniards, but particularly by the Portuguese in Africa, in present-day Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Senegal, Gambia, part of Mali and part of Burkina Faso.³ As slaves, they were then transported to Seville to be sold at auctions on the steps of the Cathedral or in the square of San Francisco, and from there exported to the rest of the Peninsula, to important urban centres such as Burgos, Valladolid, Barcelona and Valencia, and also to the New World.⁴ In Spain, the price of a slave, which depended on the person's physical condition, age and sex, rose during the sixteenth century. The urban slave workforce were branded, and mainly

employed in domestic service, which explains why black women usually attracted higher prices.⁵

The creation of the slave trade licences by the state and its inherent bureaucracy turned this business of human transaction into an efficient and profitable system.⁶ The slave trade reached its peak at the end of the sixteenth century, when Seville became the main slave market in the Iberian Peninsula, together with Lisbon and Valencia. Seville had the largest slave community in Spain: it had a population of 120,000 including approximately 30,000 slaves (both black and white), although there was also a high proportion in Madrid, the seat of the Habsburg Court. During the seventeenth century, however, the slave trade began to decline, owing to a series of events which contributed to a gradual decrease of the population.⁷ Decisive causes were the loss of Portugal; the expulsion of over 30,000 *Moriscos* (Muslims converted to Christianity) in 1609–14; and the death of 46 per cent of the population in the plague of 1640.

The undeniable presence of black people in urban Spain, especially in Seville, led one contemporary commentator to compare the latter city to a 'giant chessboard containing an equal number of white and black chessmen'.⁸ It is well known that the presence of the African in early modern Europe was rendered visible through religious subjects, of which the most popular was the *Adoration of the Magi*.⁹ It was first introduced to Spain around 1470 by Hans Memling, in the central panel of the *Adoration of the Magi* triptych (Prado Museum, Madrid) on the altar of Charles V's chapel in the castle of Aceca, near Aranjuez.¹⁰ Memling's depiction of a glamorous Orientalized black Magus proved very influential on subsequent imagery of this kind in Spain.¹¹

The two main currents are represented by the paintings of the *Adoration of the Magi* executed during the first part of the seventeenth century in Seville by Juan Bautista Maino (1612–13) and Diego Velázquez (1619), both in the Prado Museum.¹² In Maino's painting, as in many Spanish representations of this subject, the black King is shown as an exotic figure wearing Oriental elements in his costume such as turban and ostrich feathers. The association of the black Magus with the Orient was already an iconographical commonplace in France and Germany before it appeared in Spain. By contrast, Velázquez's attempts at a more realistic contextualization of the religious subject allow him to represent an unusually sober black Magus dressed in contemporary costume that divorces him from his African context.

However he is represented, the black Magus in the *Adoration of the Magi* presents a deliberate contrast to the real appearances of African people in early modern Spain, one which combines newly naturalistic attention to the image of the black person following the Discoveries with a persisting medieval 'sense of the marvellous' or exotic.¹³ In Spain, this imagery coexisted with another religious iconography in which something of the impact of the presence and function of African people within the country is more evident.

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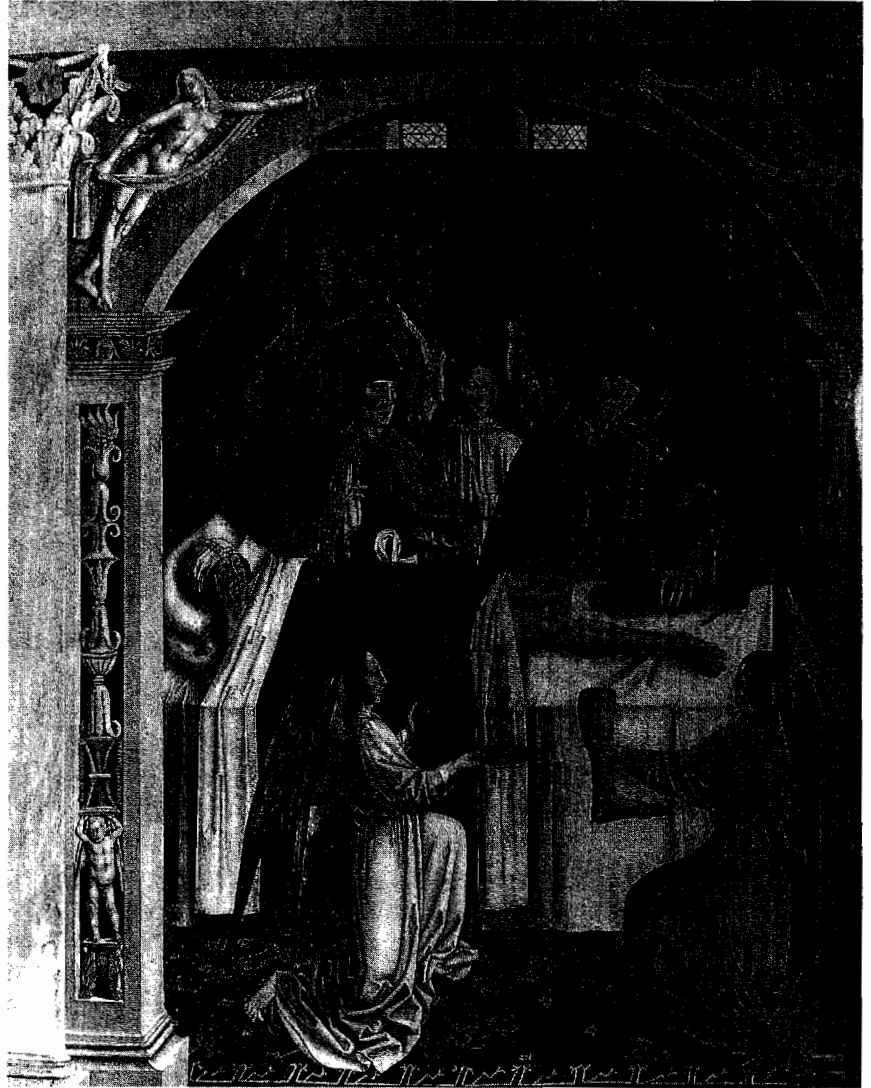
This is the intriguing representation of the so-called 'Miracle of the Black Leg'. This iconography became very popular in Spain, Germany and Flanders by the middle of the fifteenth century, but its popularity in Italy, where it had originated in the second half of the fourteenth century, soon declined.¹⁴

The 'Miracle of the Black Leg' was supposedly performed by two Christian brothers, Saints Cosmas and Damian, in the period following their martyrdom in the year 300 A.D. These two martyrs had healing powers of body and soul and worked as surgeons for no fee.¹⁵ They were the considered patron saints of doctors, surgeons and pharmacists by the Church, by the medical profession, and in popular belief. Spanish churches devoted to the twin brothers multiply after the Reconquest (1248), especially in Castile and Catalonia, where the wealthy cities of Barcelona, Burgos and Valladolid were important university centres for the study of medicine.¹⁶ Not surprisingly, the visual depiction of the 'Miracle of the Black Leg', with Saints Cosmas and Damian wearing contemporary academic dress, appeared in Spain from the middle of the fifteenth century, in places where the practice of anatomy, dissection and surgery was legitimized and regulated at university level.¹⁷ This imagery, produced in cities that also had slave markets and black confraternities, indicates the presence of a prominent black population.¹⁸

In the interpretation of the 'Miracle of the Black Leg' attributed to the Master of Los Balbases (c. 1495) (Figure 8.1), a miraculous operation is being performed in an ordinary room, though the presence of three angels emphasizes the supernatural religious aspects of the narrative action.¹⁹ In the background one of the saintly brothers grafts a black leg onto the amputated stump of the white person lying in bed, while in the right foreground an angel holds the discarded cancerous white leg. To the left, another angel holds up a candle to illuminate the scene. In another painting by Pedro Berruguete of c. 1490, there are no angels, and the artist creates a more scientific atmosphere by showing the saints actively engaged in the grafting operation using contemporary medical instruments.²⁰

The key to this uncanny narrative is to be found in the lives of saints Cosmas and Damian in Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend* (c. 1275) in which the miracle is described as follows:

Pope Felix built a noble church in Rome in honour of SS Cosmas and Damian. In his church there was a man, a devoted servant of the holy martyrs. One of the man's legs was totally consumed by cancer. While he was asleep, the two saints appeared to their devoted servant, bringing surgical instruments. One of them said to the other: 'Where can we get flesh to fill in when we cut away the rotted leg?' The other said: 'Just today an Ethiopian was buried in the cemetery of St Peter in Chains. Go and take his leg, and we'll put it in place of the bad one.' So he sped to the cemetery and brought back the Moor's leg, and the two saints cut off the sick man's leg and inserted the Moor's in its place. Finally they took the amputated leg and attached it to the body of the dead Moor. The



8.1 Master of Los Balbases, *Miracle of the Black Leg*, c. 1495, oil on wood, 169 × 133 cm

man woke up, felt no pain, put his hand to his leg, and detected no lesion. He held a candle to the leg and could see nothing wrong with it, and began to wonder whether he was himself or somebody else. Then he came to his senses and told everyone about what he had seen in his dreams and how he had been healed. They sent at once to the Moor's tomb, and found that his leg had indeed been cut off and the aforesaid man's limb put in its place in the tomb.²¹



15, oil on wood, 169 × 133 cm

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8.2 Isidro Villoldo, *Miracle of the Black Leg*, c. 1539, polychromed wood (altarpiece panel from the Monastery of de San Francisco, Valladolid)

In a late fourteenth-century Tuscan panel painting, which might be the very first depiction of this story, the black man is visible on the left-hand side of the image, but he is shown as a corpse in the cemetery with a white cancerous leg.²² The dramatic focus on the act of amputation of the black body is first shown at the top right background of the Catalan painting (datable to 1460–61) by Jaume Huguet (1415–92) and then again in a painting by León Picardo of 1533 in Burgos Cathedral.²³ However, representations of the miracle soon acquired new elements, as can be seen in the Castilian panel by Fernando

del Rincón de Figueroa: here, the black corpse with his white leg lies in the foreground of the picture with his face staring towards the viewer.²⁴

In the sixteenth century the black corpse would occasionally be replaced by a living black person placed in the foreground. This disturbing visual addition is unique to Spanish representations of the miracle in early modern Europe. In some examples, as in the painting in the Chapel of St Gregory in the Cathedral of Palencia, it is not clear whether the black amputee who faces the viewer in the foreground is alive or dead.²⁵ There is no doubt that he lives in a bas-relief in polychrome wood executed in 1539 by Isidro Villoldo in Valladolid (see Figure 8.2).²⁶ The black man, placed close to the viewer, holds the stump of his leg with his right hand and screams with pain. His dramatic depiction contrasts markedly with the unconcerned expressions and attitudes of the holy physicians who are concentrating on the grafting operation and on the welfare of their patient. It is also significant that the body of the black is lying on the ground and runs parallel to the healed white man, who, in contrast, lies on a bed and is sedated, probably with oral opium, mandragora or alcohol.²⁷ A similar composition, with the black man in visible pain in the foreground and his body positioned parallel to the healed white man, is to be found in a relief in the choir stalls in the Cathedral of Avila, started in 1534 by Lucas de Giralda and Juan Rodríguez and completed a decade later by Nicolás Cornelis de Holanda.²⁸

While depictions of the 'Miracle of the Black Leg' almost disappeared in Spain from the seventeenth century, perhaps in response to the new realism in sacred imagery demanded by the Council of Trent (1545–64), imagery of black slaves appeared in more naturalistic depictions of cities, in portraiture, and in genre paintings. In Seville, Velázquez twice recorded the domestic presence of the same slave woman in a *bodegón* or kitchen setting: in his *Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus* (Figure 8.3), and (without the religious background) in the painting known as the *Kitchen Scene*, the *Kitchen Maid*, the *Black Servant* or the *Mulatto Servant* (Art Institute, Chicago).²⁹ These paintings offer a unique and extraordinary depiction of a mixed-race woman in Golden-Age Spain.³⁰

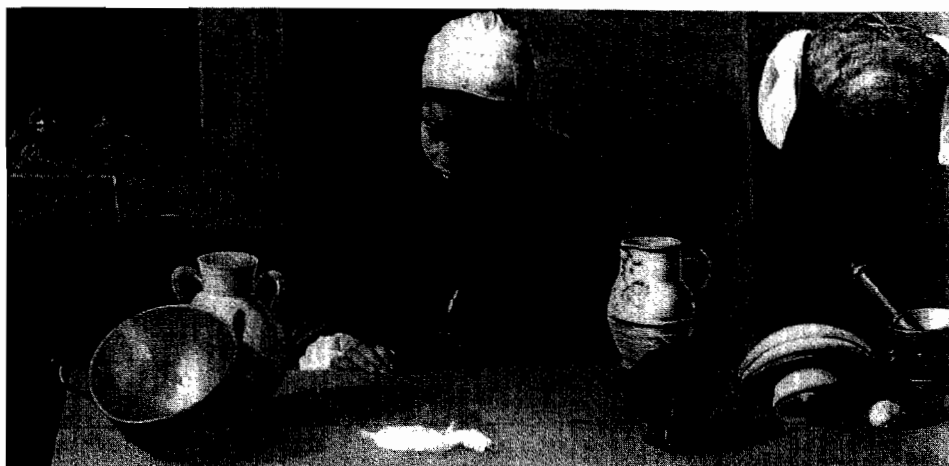
The anonymity of the woman depicted in her workplace is a common feature of all Velázquez's *bodegones* depicted in Seville before 1623, when he moved to the court of Philip IV in Madrid. The general compositions of the Dublin and Chicago paintings are similar to that of the *Kitchen Scene with Christ in the House of Martha and Mary* (National Gallery, London), and many of the kitchen objects (the basket on the wall, the glazed pottery jug the slave is holding, the pile of dishes turned upside down, the head of garlic, and the pestle and mortar on the table) are the same objects used by the artist in his other *bodegones*.³¹ Perhaps the most surprising thing in these paintings is the degree of attention that Velázquez paid to the slave, a member of the lowest

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8.3 Diego Velázquez, *Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus*, c. 1620, oil on canvas, 56 × 118 cm

social strata in the city. The artist carefully individuates her, brings her to life for his audience and presenting her as a worthy subject for contemplation in the realm of high art. In this way, he broke the chain of invisibility surrounding the existence of slaves in the privileged and learned circles in which he moved in Seville. Though he suggests her humbleness by lowering her gaze, she is nonetheless placed at the centre of the composition, and the material conditions of her lowly existence in the workplace are suggested both by the everyday objects around her and by the oppressive, shallow and ambiguously defined space she occupies. By directing the source of light to the slave's white cap, to her exhausted face and busy left hand engaged with the pottery and copper vessels on the table, the painter allows his viewers a glimpse of the humdrum domestic work without which the Spanish urban elite could not have survived.

The religious scene in the background of the Dublin painting is a clear signifier of the slave's acculturation. The woman could not have been shown in a domestic setting if she did not belong to a Christian nation, society and household. Baptism was the slave's passport to early modern Spanish society.³² It was the slave's key to integration, whether she or he lived and worked in a Spanish household, worked in the fields, went to the New World, or sought to purchase freedom. The unification of Spain through the Christian faith was a structural feature of the Empire, and this state policy is clearly reflected in the *Baptism of the Ethiopian Eunuch* depicted by a Flemish painter for Charles V in his *Book of Hours* finished in 1519.³³

Velázquez's figure conforms to a common social type: like the great majority of female slaves in Spain, she is shown as a domestic servant, and as confined to the most menial tasks in the kitchen. Such women would also work as wet nurses and take care of their masters' children.³⁴ Spanish prices for young women slaves (especially from North Africa), considered among the most valuable 'goods', were apparently higher than those in other European countries.³⁵ Velázquez's slave is represented as a humble and submissive servant, but the reality of the relationship such figures shared with their masters was often more ambiguous and complex. Such relationships were not necessarily as peaceful and 'natural' as most Spanish historians of slavery have claimed.³⁶ The sexual exploitation of female slaves and servants by their masters was apparently a widespread feature of early modern Spain. In fact, during the sixteenth century, 80 per cent of black women were not married but had one or two children and most mixed-race children were born from a female black slave and a white male Christian.³⁷

The treatment of domestic slaves depended on the owner's economic and social position. It is important to notice that there was a fundamental difference between a domestic slave and a servant. While both were at the bottom of the social scale in terms of marginalization and exploitation, their means of reproduction and therefore of survival were different, as the servant was never auctioned or captured in wars.³⁸ In some cases, the rigid domestic hierarchy in the Spanish household did not exclude the ambiguity of the relationship between slaves and their masters, and in fact some female slaves had a certain proximity and closeness to their mistresses.³⁹

The stereotype of the docile domestic slave is contradicted by documented confrontations between slaves and owners in the domestic sphere. Among the methods of punishment for serious offences were whipping, yokes placed on the feet or the neck, 'dripping of pork fat' or 'taper wax' on to the naked skin, or more drastic measures such as sale to the colonies or donation to the Crown for use as a galley slave. Fugitive slaves who were caught were put in yoke and shackles and sometimes had their ears cut off.⁴⁰ Galley slaves can be seen at work on the River Guadalquivir in an anonymous *View of Seville* from around 1600.⁴¹

Outside the realm of the domestic environment, the establishment had other means of control over the social behaviour of the slave population, through the activities of the Inquisition and the foundation of exclusively black confraternities.⁴² It must be remembered that in Spanish cities such as Seville there were also black people who did not work as domestic servants. These were part of the city's large unskilled workforce and were mainly employed in soap factories, in the public granary or as lowly helpers in craftsmen's shops. Slaves working outside the domestic environment to support their masters did not typically reside in their owners' homes. They mainly lived in the poor and malodorous quarter of San Bernardo, outside the city walls, with many other lowly and marginal social types such as bakers, gardeners or workers

type: like the great majority of a servant, and as confined to a household could also work as wet nurses or nurses for young women slaves. They were the most valuable 'goods', and were common in European countries.³⁵ Velázquez's painting shows a servant, but the reality of the situation was often more ambiguous than it appears, especially as peaceful and 'natural' slaves.³⁶ The sexual exploitation of slaves was presently a widespread feature of the sixteenth century, 80 per cent of black children and most mixed-race children were white male Christian.³⁷

On the owner's economic side, there was a fundamental contradiction. While both were at the heart of the economy and exploitation, their functions were different, as the servant and the slave. In some cases, the rigid domestic discipline of the slave could include the ambiguity of the situation, in fact some female slaves were used as prostitutes.³⁹

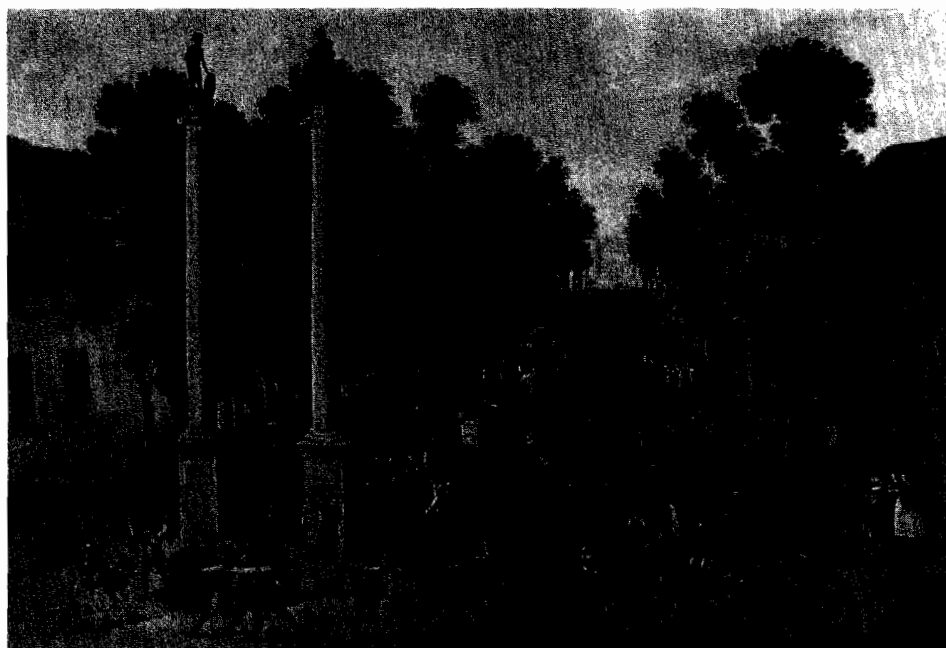
Contradicted by documented practices in the domestic sphere. Among the punishments, yokes placed on the neck, or more severe, led to the Crown for use as a punishment. Men were put in yoke and shackles, and women can be seen at work on the streets of Seville around 1600.⁴¹

At the establishment had a large proportion of the slave population, particularly in the region of exclusively black cities such as Seville. These slaves were domestic servants. These slaves were mainly employed in workshops and craftsmen's shops. They were used to support their masters and were mainly lived in the poor areas of the city walls, with many workshops, gardeners or workers

in the slaughterhouse.⁴³ In early modern Spain such people were easy targets for persecution by the tribunal of the Inquisition. This institution was set up in Seville by the Catholic Monarchs in 1480 and one of its responsibilities was the regulation of crime. Its regulations were not very clear with regard to the type of punishments applied to slaves, but there are records of burnings alive, amputations of hands, feet and subsequent death.⁴⁴ In the late sixteenth century a total of 309 people were condemned to die by the Inquisition of whom 42 were black, mixed-race and *Moriscos*.⁴⁵

Black people, slaves or liberated, were excluded, together with a significant sector of the population – 'Jews, Moors, Indians, mulattos, and slaves' – from membership of the Sevillian confraternities. The regulations of the wealthy Confraternity of Santa Caridad clearly specified that their members should be Old Christians 'of clean and honest generation', and excluded Moors, Jews, and 'mulattoes'.⁴⁶ But just as *Conversos* – Jews who had converted to Christianity – were permitted to found their own Confraternity of Saint Matthew, so two such organizations served the black communities (access to whites being denied until the eighteenth century). The Confraternity of Nuestra Señora de los Angeles (Our Lady of the Angels), also called the Confraternity of Little Blacks (*negritos*), had its own hospital and chapels in the parishes of San Bernardo and San Roque in the district of San Bernardo. In 1587 it merged with the Confraternity of Nuestra Señora de la Piedad (Our Lady of Piety).⁴⁷ On the other hand, in the middle of the sixteenth century, the mixed-race population of slaves and the liberated were a big enough group to create their own confraternity in the parish of San Ildefonso. They had their own chapel and entrance through the back door in the 'Street of Mulattoes'.⁴⁸

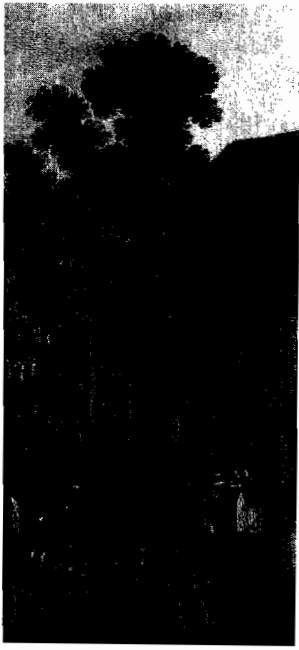
The confraternity of Our Lady of the Angels adopted a 'penitential advocacy', which allowed their members to participate in the city's religious celebrations and in the Holy Week processions. It is documented that during economic difficulties some of their members offered themselves into slavery to raise money for their confraternity.⁴⁹ Our Lady of the Angels was always noted for its splendid processions, and it is interesting that in 1617 their dress was so costly that it drew censure from the clergy. There were in fact strong social pressures from wealthier confraternities and from the royal authorities to dissolve the black confraternities, who were constantly accused of theft, alcoholism, riots and killings.⁵⁰ Black confraternities had even asked for papal intervention to ensure their existence. These congregations were, as Moreno has rightly argued, the only formal place where the black community could assert its collective identity with dignity. In addition to their religious functions, these institutions were, contrary to many other Sevillian congregations, highly organized, with a hierarchical internal system through which certain members were elected to act as intermediaries between their communities and the public and civic authorities. Something of the nascent



8.4 Spanish School, *A View of the Alameda de Hércules*, mid-seventeenth century, oil on canvas, 106.7 × 162.5 cm

power of the 'black nation' (*nación de negros*) these confraternities symbolized was at the root of the ambivalent reception of similar confraternities in early modern Andalusia, particularly in Seville and Cádiz.⁵¹

The ambiguous reception of black people in urban centres is well represented in an anonymous Spanish painting *A View of the Alameda de Hércules* in Seville, from the middle of the seventeenth century (Figure 8.4).⁵² The *Alameda*, created in the 1570s, was the most popular open public space in the city. In the painting, one can see its two classical columns surmounted by their respective statues of Hercules and Julius Caesar (allegories of Charles V and Philip II) and the wide avenue of trees, where people of all classes are represented. It is significant that the main source of light from the left focuses attention on the foreground, where a fight between a white and a black is featured by the well in front of the two columns. On the same spatial plane, slightly off-centre to the right, another black person is shown, either a page or a dwarf, who looks at his master who is about to interrupt a pair of fencers.⁵³ Similar hints of social and racial tension in the urban spaces of Seville are perhaps also given in Bartolomé Esteban Murillo's *Three Boys* (1670, Dulwich Collection, London) (Figure 8.5).⁵⁴ The smiling white boy

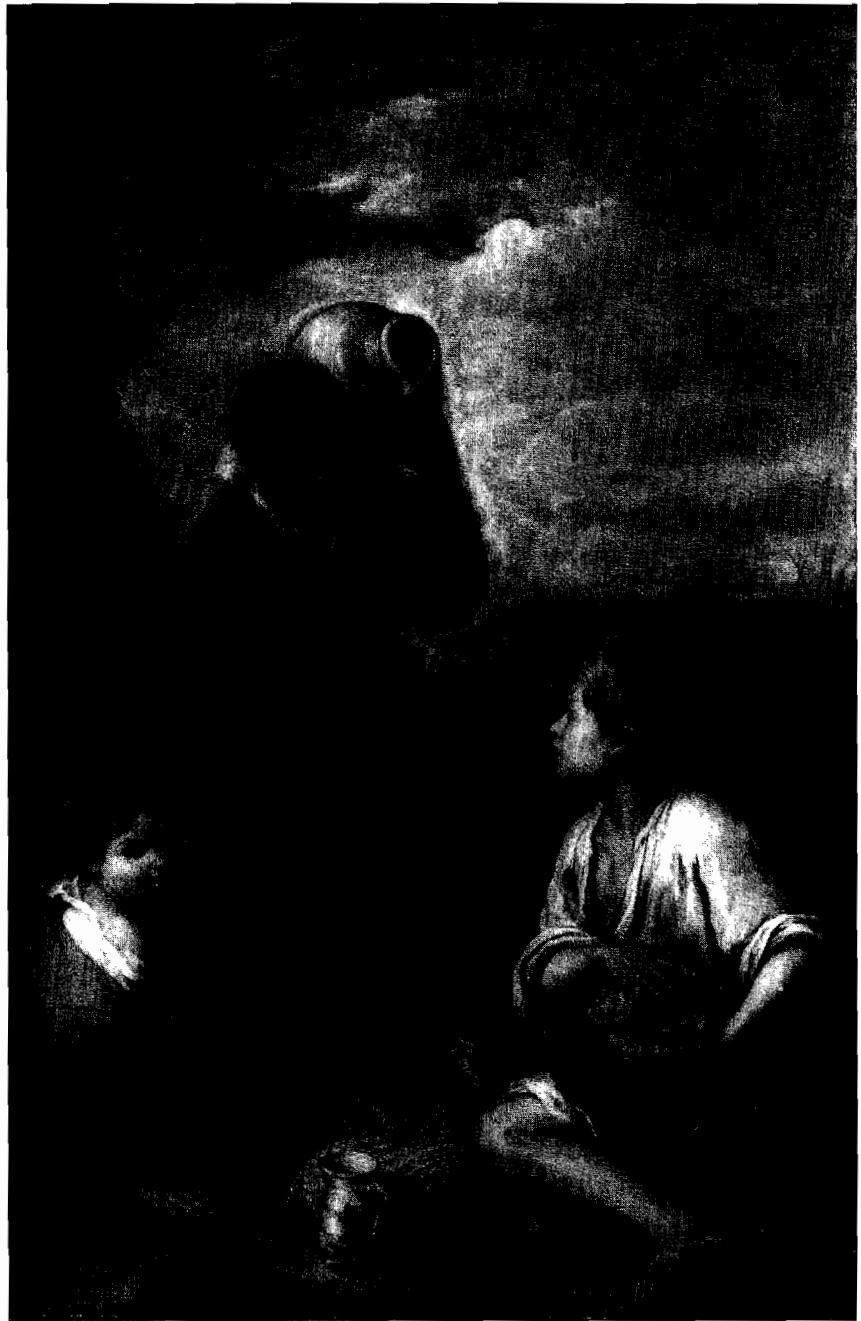


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⁵⁴ The smiling white boy



8.5 Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, *Three Boys*, 1670, oil on canvas, 168.3 × 109.8 cm

on the left margin of the picture introduces us to the narrative by his gaze, pointing to the black boy with a smile at the moment when he has been denied his share of the pie, held by the white boy on the right. Murillo, who lived close to the main black quarter in the city, may have used his own domestic slave 'Juan', who would have been twelve or thirteen years old, as the model for the water-seller carrying a pitcher at the centre of the painting.⁵⁵

While it was not rare for Spanish artists to own slaves and servants, Velázquez choose to represent his mixed-race slave and painter, Juan de Pareja, in an exceptional way during his second trip to Rome in 1650.⁵⁶ This superb and unusual portrait of a slave (Metropolitan Museum, New York) follows the conventions of formal portraiture normally restricted to the upper echelons of Spanish society. The lack of accessories or attributes to define the man's profession, his confident pose, his expensive costume, and above all his engagement with the viewer through his powerful gaze, give the impression that the man represented on canvas is a nobleman.⁵⁷ Painted by the Court Painter to Philip IV, this work is certainly exceptional, particularly when one considers that in this context black servants were not allowed to pass the threshold of the royal quarters, and that even the inclusion of a black child in a royal portrait was considered unusual. Significantly, the portrait of *Juana of Austria with her Black Slave Girl* (1552–53, Musées Royaux de Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels) by the Portuguese painter Cristóvão de Morais, was painted not in Spain, but in Portugal. Documentary evidence shows that the black girl, who is shown supporting the princess's body as if she were no more than a piece of furniture, was given to Juana by her husband, Prince João Manuel of Portugal as a wedding gift.⁵⁸

There is another portrait, which offers a great contrast to that of Juan de Pareja. This is the fascinating depiction of a young black man in the *Allegory of the Sense of Smell* (J. and D. de Menil Collection, Houston) painted by an anonymous Spanish artist in the mid-seventeenth century.⁵⁹ The elegance of the Spanish costume of the young man who inhales the scent of a pink carnation, and of the highly decorated vase from which he has taken his flower, are placed on the same plane in the foreground of the painting: the black is represented in a similar extravagant and decorative manner as the black Magus in Spanish depictions of the *Adoration of the Magi* discussed earlier. In this secular image, however, the anonymous black figure, who engages directly with the viewer, is shown as a slave rather than a king, and as such is an embodiment of his owner's wealth and status. These are the same functions fulfilled by the anonymous little black girl in the portrait of Juana of Portugal. Such portraits echo Domínguez Ortiz's statement that one of the main functions of slaves was to perform 'the taste for luxury and refinement of the nobility and indeed

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own slaves and servants, slave and painter, Juan de tip to Rome in 1650.⁵⁶ This litan Museum, New York) ally restricted to the upper s or attributes to define the costume, and above all his l gaze, give the impression an.⁵⁷ Painted by the Court nal, particularly when one e not allowed to pass the inclusion of a black child antly, the portrait of *Juana* es Royaux de Beaux-Arts Cristóvão de Morais, was y evidence shows that the 's body as if she were no y her husband, Prince João

t contrast to that of Juan young black man in the nil Collection, Houston) id-seventeenth century.⁵⁹ ng man who inhales the ated vase from which he e in the foreground of the travagant and decorative ns of the *Adoration of the* owever, the anonymous wer, is shown as a slave nt of his owner's wealth lled by the anonymous gal. Such portraits echo n functions of slaves was f the nobility and indeed

the middle class who required large retinues of servants'.⁶⁰ There is no doubt that some of these key visual and political issues were at stake in the portrait of Juan de Pareja given that Velázquez was himself fiercely trying to secure noble status from King Philip IV of Spain. Merely by the act of depicting his own mixed-race slave, the painter may have sought to legitimate his own claims to nobility. On the other hand, Velázquez trusted Pareja, who signed many legal documents as his master's witness from 1634 to 1653 at various places in Spain and Italy.⁶¹ Velázquez was certainly exceptional in his treatment of slaves at the Spanish Court. He freed Pareja on 23 November 1650 in Rome, with the not uncommon condition of continuing to serve his master.⁶² Two years later, on 7 November 1653, he made an official complaint to Philip IV about the indecency and improper placement of a chained black slave as a guard by the door of the king's kitchen, and requested his immediate removal.⁶³

Pareja's freedom meant that he could paint in Spain and in fact he decided to follow Velázquez's conventions of self-portraiture in his huge canvas representing *The Calling of St Matthew* (Museo del Prado, Madrid) painted a year after his master's death in 1661.⁶⁴ Pareja portrays himself on the left edge of the painting standing below the window, from which light illuminates the crowded room full of paintings and furniture. His authorship is confirmed by the piece of paper with his name and the date of the execution of the painting clearly written on it, which he holds in his hand and shows to the viewer. Pareja's extraordinary and surprising self-portrait in the social guise that Velázquez had given him (that of the European gentleman) signifies the price he had to pay in order to gain acceptance in Spanish society, where neither the establishment nor intellectuals questioned the legitimacy of slavery.

The causes and justification of this practice in 'Golden-Age' Spain are found in the Aristotelian doctrine of natural slavery, transformed in medieval times into one that justified a cultural practice with reference to the 'givens' of sin and war. In the sixteenth century, Spanish theologians extended this argument, seeing slavery as a natural and indispensable component of life, necessary for domestic and national survival.⁶⁵ In fact, intellectuals such as Martín González de Cellorigo in his *Memorial de la política necesaria y útil restauración a la república de España* (Valladolid, 1600) claimed that legal slavery was necessary because Spanish people were different by nature. Some aspects of the system were, however, already questioned by Tomás de Mercado in his *Suma de tratos y contratos* (Seville, 1571) who declared that he was in favour of the slave market, but had doubts regarding the legality of slaves captured without the justification of a just war. He also denounced the cruel treatment of slaves and pleaded for more humane behaviour from their masters.⁶⁶

On the one hand, the visual representation of black slaves in early modern Spain simply reveals imperial attitudes towards black slavery. Less obviously, it affords us a glimpse of certain of the contradictions and complexities that attended their marginal social position, allowing us intimations of the breadth of relations and responses that these marginalized people had with their white masters.

Notes

1. See the comprehensive work on Spanish slavery by the historian Alfonso Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla y su tierra a fines de la Edad Media* (Seville, 1979). For the most updated historiography of the study of slavery in early modern Spain, see the excellent work by Aurelia Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada del siglo XVI: género, raza y religión* (Granada, 2000).
2. On the social condition of liberated slaves, see Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, pp. 243–72, and Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada*, pp. 447–54.
3. Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, pp. 73–103, 193. Slave-dealers in Seville were mainly Sevillians, Portuguese, Genoese, Florentines, Catalans, Germans, French and English.
4. José Luis Cortés López, *Los orígenes de la esclavitud negra en España* (Madrid, 1986), p. 111. See also Ladislav Bugner, Jean Devisse and Michel Mollat (eds.), *The Image of the Black in Western Art*, 2 vols (Fribourg, 1979), vol. 2, pp. 197–8.
5. Branding of slaves was a common practice in Spain. See Cortés López, *Los orígenes de la esclavitud negra en España*, p. 123, and Ruth Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders. Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century* (London and Ithaca NY, 1972), pp. 176–7.
6. The first monopoly contracts for slave trading were issued by the 'Casa de Contratación' in 1518 and by the 'Consejo de Indias' in 1595. For the workings of this new bureaucratic system see Enriqueta Vila Villar, *Hispanoamérica y el comercio de esclavos* (Seville, 1977); Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern 1492–1800* (London, New York, 1998), pp. 131–2, 135, 141–2.
7. Antonio Domínguez Ortiz in Alfredo J. Morales et al. (eds.), *Velázquez y Sevilla: Estudios*, 2 vols (Seville, 1999), vol. 2, pp. 20–21; Domínguez Ortiz, *Política y hacienda de Felipe IV* (Madrid, 1960), pp. 220–222; Domínguez Ortiz, *The Golden Age of Spain: 1516–1619* (London, 1971), pp. 162–72; and Domínguez Ortiz, *Los extranjeros en la vida española durante el siglo XVII y otros artículos* (Seville, 1987), pp. 245–61. See also Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 170–92, and Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Ni espada rota ni mujer que trota. Mujer y desorden social en la Sevilla del Siglo de Oro*, trans. M. Fortuny Minguella (Barcelona, 1993), pp. 12–13.
8. This quotation is cited in Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 172.
9. Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, p. 22, identified the beginning of the representation of the black Magus between 1350–70 in Cologne, Germany.
10. *Ibid.*, pp. 134, 156, 161–4.
11. *Ibid.*, p. 161.
12. The *Adoration of the Magi* by Juan Bautista Maino was depicted for the main altarpiece of the church of the Dominican Friary of St Peter Martyr and the one by Diego Velázquez was for the Jesuit Novitiate of St Luis. See David Davies and Enriqueta Harris (eds.), *Velázquez in Seville* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp. 162–3.
13. Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, pp. 232, 258.
14. See note 22 in this work. See Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, pp. 204 and 276, and Ramón Jordi González, *Iconografía de los santos Cosme y Damián* (Barcelona, 1973), who reproduces 150 Spanish depictions of the *Miracle of the Black Leg*.

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15. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. W. Granger Ryan, 2 vols (Princeton NJ, 1993), vol. 2, pp. 196–8.
16. Luis S. Granjel, *Cirugía española del Renacimiento* (Salamanca, 1968), pp. 14–16, and José María López Piñero, *Medicina moderna y sociedad española. Siglos XVI–XX* (Valencia, 1976), pp. 65, 68, 69.
17. Kees W. Zimmermann, *One Leg in the Grave: The Miracle of the Transplantation of the Black Leg by the Saints Cosmas and Damian* (Maarsen, 1998), pp. 34–7, objects to the idea of associating these paintings in a medical context, in spite of the fact that the saints are represented either as contemporary surgeons with short tunics or as university-trained physicians with long academic gowns.
18. Cortés López, *Los orígenes de la esclavitud negra en España*, pp. 175–6.
19. This oil painting on wood (Wellcome Institute for the History of Medicine, London) was originally in the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Burgos. It was previously attributed to Alonso de Sédano (1486–1533) and to Fernando Gallego, but the recent attribution is to the 'Master of Los Balbases'. The latter could be the painter Andrés Sánchez de Oña, who is documented in Burgos between 1484 and 1510: see María Pilar Silva Maroto, 'La pintura hispanoflamenca', in *La pintura sobre tabla de los siglos XV y XVI de la catedral de Burgos* (Burgos, 1994).
20. Pedro Berruguete's panel was part of the destroyed main altarpiece for the Church of Saints Cosmas and Damian in Covarrubias, south of Burgos. It is currently displayed in the sacristy of this church. See María Pilar Silva Maroto, *Pedro Berruguete* (Salamanca, 1998), pp. 47, 142–3, 204. See also Marie-Louise David-Danel, *Iconographie des Saints médecins Côme et Damien* (Lille, 1958), pp. 45–6, 48, 175, 185; Chandler Rathfon Post, *A History of Spanish Painting*, 14 vols (Cambridge MA, 1947), vol. 9, p. 108; Zimmermann, *One Leg in the Grave*, pp. 59, 80; Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, p. 205.
21. De Voragine, *Golden Legend*, p. 198. The miracle of the black leg is one of the three performed by the twin brothers after their deaths.
22. The iconography of the *Miracle of the Black Leg* was depicted for the first time in c. 1370, on the predella of an altarpiece dedicated to Saints Cosmas and Damian by the Master of the Rinuccini Chapel (Matteo di Pacino(?), 1350–75). The work is in the North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh, USA. See also Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, p. 75, n. 47, and Zimmermann, *One Leg in the Grave*, p. 69.
23. The Catalan work is in the Church of Santa María in Terrasa (Barcelona), but was originally in the Church of San Miguel, while Picardo's painting is in the Diocesan Museum in the Cathedral of Burgos. See David-Danel, *Iconographie des Saints médecins Côme et Damien*, pp. 37–8, 46, 47, 186; Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, pp. 205 and 292, and Zimmermann, *One Leg in the Grave*, pp. 38, 81, 92.
24. Fernando del Rincón's painting (Prado Museum, Madrid), came originally from the Monastery of St Francis in Guadalajara. See *Museo del Prado. Catálogo de las pinturas* (Madrid, 1996), p. 320; Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, pp. 205–6; David-Danel, *Iconographie des Saints médecins Côme et Damien*, pp. 42, 48, 186–7; Zimmermann, *One Leg in the Grave*, pp. 39, 88.
25. Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, pp. 206, 292.
26. This polychrome bas-relief (Museo de Escultura, Valladolid) was a panel of the Santa Juana altarpiece in the Monastery of San Francisco in Valladolid. Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, pp. 206–8, 292; Zimmermann, *One Leg in the Grave*, pp. 38, 59, 93; David-Danel, *Iconographie des Saints médecins Côme et Damien*, pp. 49, 172, 186, 198, 200, 201.
27. These substances were normally given to patients before the invention of anaesthesia (1840). See Geoffrey B. Rushman, N. J. Davies and Richard S. Atkinson, *A Short History of Anaesthesia: The First 150 years* (Oxford, 1996), p. 1; Roy Porter, *Blood and Guts: A Short History of Medicine* (London, 2003), p. 123.
28. González, *Iconografía de los santos Cosme y Damián*, pp. 6, 24.
29. José López-Rey, *Velázquez: A Catalogue Raisonné of his Oeuvre* (London, 1963), pp. 33 and 156, and José López-Rey, *Velázquez: Painter of Painters* (Cologne, 1996), pp. 33, 38, 41. For the most up-to-date history of the kitchen scenes, see Rosemary Mulcahy, *Spanish Paintings in the National Gallery of Ireland* (Dublin, 1988), pp. 79–82; Davies and Harris (eds.), *Velázquez in Seville*, p. 134; Peter Cherry and McKim Smith, in Alfredo J. Morales et al. (eds.), *Velázquez y Sevilla: Estudios*, 2 vols (Seville, 1999), vol. 2, pp. 88–91, 112–113, 118–119.

30. See Carmen Fracchia, '(Lack of) visual representation of black slaves in Spanish Golden-Age painting', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies* 10 (1) (June 2004), 23–34.
31. Mulcahy, *Spanish Paintings*, p. 80, and Davies and Harris (eds.), *Velázquez in Seville*, pp. 128–9, 132–9.
32. Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, pp. 231–42, and Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, pp. 108–200.
33. Bugner et al. (eds.), *Image of the Black in Western Art*, pp. 237, 244.
34. Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, p. 193.
35. Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada*, Chapter 6.
36. See instead the excellent work by the Spanish anthropologist Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada*, Chapter 1.
37. Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, p. 215.
38. Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada*, pp. 23–5, 319–327. For a study on female servants, see Margarita Ortega and Rosa María Capel in A. M. Aguado et al. (eds.), *Textos para la historia de las mujeres en España* (Madrid, 1994).
39. Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 180.
40. *Ibid.*, p. 180, and Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, p. 209.
41. This painting, which belongs to the Prado Museum and is on loan to the Museo de América in Madrid, is attributed to Alonso Sánchez Coello. See Davies and Harris (eds.), *Velázquez in Seville*, pp. 98–9, and Cruz Martínez de la Torre and Paz Cabello Carro (eds.), *Museo de América, Madrid* (Madrid, 1997), pp. 136–7, 140.
42. Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, pp. 217–221.
43. Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 185–6.
44. See Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, pp. 217–218, and Francisco Morales Padrón (ed.), *Memorias de Sevilla (1600–1678)* (Cordoba, 1981), pp. 48, 58–9, 63, 69, 110, 137.
45. Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Crime and Society in Early Modern Seville* (Hanover, 1980), pp. 76, 83.
46. Isidoro Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas. Estructura, Simbolismo e Identidad* (Seville, 1985), p. 53.
47. Susan Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (Princeton NJ, 1998), pp. 33, 34, 38. See Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, p. 223; Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, p. 195; and Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada*, p. 423.
48. Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 186.
49. *Ibid.*, pp. 188–9, and Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain*, pp. 140–1.
50. Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain*, pp. 44–5, and Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, pp. 46–51, 55.
51. Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, pp. 46–51, 194–7.
52. Davies and Harris (eds.), *Velázquez in Seville*, pp. 102–3.
53. In Golden-Age Spain, to own black children or pages was a symbol of status and wealth. See José Moreno Villa, *Locos, enanos y niños palaciegos. Siglos XVI y XVII* (Mexico City, 1939), who gives an extensive list of black people (adults, children, dwarves or giants) who lived in the Habsburg Court in Madrid.
54. For the most up-to-date bibliography on the artist, see Peter Cherry and Xanthe Brooks (eds), *Murillo: Scenes of Childhood* (London, 2001), pp. 56–7, 124–5.
55. See Cherry and Brooks (eds.), *Murillo*, p. 124, and X. Brooke, *Murillo in Focus* (Liverpool, 1989), pp. 39, 40; *Bartolomé Esteban Murillo, 1617–1682*, exhib. cat. (London, 1983), p. 191. Murillo also had a 'mulato' slave who was a painter, see María de los Santos García Felguera, *La Fortuna de Murillo (1682–1900)* (Seville, 1989), pp. 143, 174–9.

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56. Pareja was born in Antequera in 1605 or 1606, and died in Madrid in 1670. Velázquez followed the tradition of artists who owned slaves, such as Alejo Fernández, who was also a slave-trader; Vicente Carducho, whose slave Juan de la Cruz was a painter; and Francisco Pacheco, who was Velázquez's father-in-law. New documents dismiss the legend that Pareja was born in Seville – see Jennifer Montagu, 'Velázquez marginalia: his slave Juan de Pareja and his illegitimate son Antonio', *The Burlington Magazine* 125 (1983), 684.
57. See Carmen Fracchia, 'Metamorphoses of the Self in Early Modern Spain: Slave Portraiture and the Case of Juan de Pareja', in Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal (eds.), *Invisible Subjects? Slave Portraiture in the Circum-Atlantic World (1630–1890)* (Chicago, 2008).
58. Annemarie Jordan, 'Images of empire: slaves in the Lisbon household and court of Catherine of Austria', in T. F. Earle and K. J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 175–9. The author rescued the anonymity of the black girl in the official title and clarified the child's gender. The origin of the iconography of a black page as a 'decorative accessory' in a portrait derives from sixteenth-century Venetian paintings, such as Titian's *Laura De' Dianti*: see Giles Waterfield, Anne French and Matthew Craske (eds.), *Below Stairs: 400 Years of Servants' Portraits* (London, 2003), p. 141.
59. I am extremely grateful to Dr Peter Cherry for drawing my attention to this allegorical portrait. See Charles Sterling, *Still Life Painting from Antiquity to the Twentieth Century* (New York, 1981), p. 20.
60. Domínguez Ortiz, *Golden Age of Spain*, p. 163.
61. Angel Aterido Fernández (ed.), *Corpus velazqueño. Documentos y textos*, 2 vols (Madrid, 2000), vol. 1, document numbers 99, 162, 206, 207, 208, 346; and Montagu, 'Velázquez marginalia', p. 684. Pareja was obviously a *ladino*, a slave who assimilated his owners' language and customs and one of the very few who could read and write.
62. Montagu, 'Velázquez marginalia', pp. 683–5. Manumission was not very common in Spain: see Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada*, Chapter 10, and note 58 in this work.
63. Aterido Fernández (ed.), *Corpus velazqueño*, vol. 2, p. 1653.
64. Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El Museo Pictórico y Escala Óptica* (1724) (Madrid, 1947), p. 128, recorded one portrait by Pareja. See Juan Antonio Gaya Nuño, 'Revisiones sexcentistas: Juan de Pareja', *Archivo Español de Arte* 30 (1957), pp. 271–85.
65. Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla*, pp. 37–44.
66. On Spanish political thought on slavery, see Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada*, pp. 65–89.