

## The Place of African Slaves in Early Modern Spain

Carmen Fracchia

On 19 March 1650, Diego Velázquez (1599-1660) exhibited an unusual portrait in Rome (fig. 1). It depicted his slave, the painter Juan de Pareja (Antequera, Province of Málaga, c. 1606 - Madrid, 1670).<sup>1</sup> This work was highly praised and its reception was extremely successful due to the realistic likeness of the sitter as the art critic and painter Antonio Palomino recorded in his *Pictorial Museum and Optical Scale* (1724):

“[Velázquez] made [the portrait] (one) of Juan de Pareja, his slave and a painter himself, with such likeness and liveliness that when he sent it with Pareja for the criticism of some friends, they stood looking at the painted portrait and the model with admiration and amazement, not knowing which one they should speak to and which was to answer them. Of this portrait (which is half-length, from life) a story is related by Andreas Schmidt, a Flemish painter now at the Spanish court, who was in Rome at the time. In accordance with the custom of decorating the cloister of the Rotunda (where Raphael of Urbino is buried) on Saint Joseph’s day [19 March], with famous paintings, ancient and modern, this portrait was exhibited. It gained such universal applause that in the opinion of all the painters of the different nations everything else seemed like painting but this alone like truth. In view of this Velázquez was received as Roman Academician in the year 1650.”<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Velázquez’s *Juan de Pareja* is in New York, at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. See Carmen Fracchia, “Metamorphosis of the Self in Early Modern Spain: Slave Portraiture and the Case of Juan de Pareja”, in Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal (eds.), *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World* (Cambridge, 2013), pp. 146-169.

<sup>2</sup> See “Life of Velázquez”, translated from Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El Museo Pictórico y Escala Óptica* (1715–24), 3 vols. (Madrid: M. Aguilar, 1947), in Enriqueta Harris, *Velázquez* (Oxford, 1982), 3: pp. 209-10.

At the time, Velázquez was the Spanish court artist in post-Tridentine Rome. His selection of a mixed-race Spanish subject is notable because the depiction of black Africans is rare in early modern Spanish art. This makes the decision to display such an image in Counter-Reformation Rome all the more intriguing. This essay will use Pareja's portrait by Velázquez, as well as the former's own artistic production, as a starting point for exploring the place of African slaves in early modern Spain. It will explore the relationship between the presence of slaves within early modern Spanish society (particularly Seville) and their representation in Spanish visual culture. In so doing, it will contribute to the discussion of meanings and manifestations of marginality in relation to space and culture. In the first section, changing religious concepts of slavery will be outlined. In the second part, the spaces occupied by slaves in early modern Seville will be highlighted, including those belonging to the city's black confraternities. In the third section, the *oeuvre* of both Velázquez and Pareja will be examined against the backdrop of the broader religious, social and spatial context of early modern Seville.

### **Concepts of slavery**

In early modern Spain, Africans were conceptualized and discussed as naturally subhuman beings, lacking agency and the "chattel property of another man or woman, and thus subject to sell".<sup>3</sup> The slave's will was subject to the owner's authority and this condition was reinforced by the practice of painful and systematic corporal punishment. Slaves were commodities and they provided free labour in the emerging capitalist society of imperial

---

<sup>3</sup> David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (Oxford, 2006), p.30.

Spain.<sup>4</sup> Most Spanish intellectuals and theologians accepted slavery as a natural phenomenon and a constituent part of the social order. The causes and justification of this human transaction were found in the Aristotelian concept of natural slavery, which was transformed in medieval times into a doctrine that justified slavery by placing its origin in the existence of sin and war.<sup>5</sup> In the sixteenth century, Dominicans, Jesuits and Capuchins followed the same lines and agreed on the legitimization of slavery through war and heredity with the result that slavery was seen as necessary for domestic purposes.<sup>6</sup> In 1573, in his *Art of Contracts*, the Dominican lawyer Bartolomé Frías de Albornoz claimed that Christianity could not justify the violence of the slave trade. However, most Spanish and Portuguese intellectuals followed the thought of the Jesuit theologian Luis de Molina in his *Of Justice and Law* (1615). He identified the conversion of infidels as the only benefit of slavery.<sup>7</sup>

The Counter-Reformation promoted an interest in the Christianization of African slaves with the implementation of baptism and the learning of the catechism. This was particularly endorsed by the archbishop of Seville, Pedro de Castro y Quiñones, in his *Instructions for Remedying and Ensuring that None of the Blacks Is Lacking in Sacred Baptism* (1614) and by the Jesuit Alonso de Sandoval in his *Treatise on Slavery* (1627). The latter claimed that blackness can be removed by baptism, a sacrament intended for the inner whitening of all humans: “although they [slaves] are black to the eye, they can have the innocence and

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., pp. 3, 30. For methods of punishment against slaves, see Ruth Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders. Sevillian Society in the Sixteenth Century* (London, Ithaca, 1972), pp. 180, 183 and Alfonso Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla y su tierra a fines de la Edad Media* (Seville, 1979), pp. 209, 217-8.

<sup>5</sup> José Andrés-Gallego and Jesús María García Añoveros, *La Iglesia y la esclavitud de los negros* (Pamplona, 2002), Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla y su tierra a fines de la Edad Media*, pp. 37-44 and Carmen Fracchia, “Constructing the Black Slave in Spanish Golden Age Painting”, in Tom Nichols (ed.), *Others and Outcasts in Early Modern Europe: Picturing the Social Margins* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 191.

<sup>6</sup> Aurelia Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada del siglo XVI: género, raza y religión* (Granada, 2000), pp. 65-89.

<sup>7</sup> Andrés-Gallego and García Añoveros, *La Iglesia y la esclavitud de los negros*, pp. 28-53 and Davis, *Inhuman Bondage*, p. 96.

whiteness that Christ's blood gives to one who is washed in it".<sup>8</sup> Other religious orders—Franciscans and Benedictines—also exercised a major influence in the implementation of the evangelical role of the Catholic Church that had been reinforced by the Council of Trent (1545-63). A correlation between “blackness” and unorthodox Christianity was reinforced by the permanent tribunal of the Inquisition, which had its seat from 1480 in Seville. The Inquisition defended the purity of the Catholic faith that, in law, was equated, after the middle of the sixteenth century, with purity of lineage or blood.<sup>9</sup> The main targets of the Inquisition were the “new Christians” who “were suspected of having covertly returned to their old beliefs”: Muslims and Jews converted to Christianity—Moriscos and Conversos—and also the marginal and the foreign, including Afro-Hispanic slaves and freedmen and women.<sup>10</sup>

The word “black” (*negro*) or “African” most often signified “slave”, whether people from sub-Saharan Africa, Berbers or Iberian Muslims. Thus, in early modern Spain, the word “black”, and the physical appearance of blackness, was a signifier of the specific social condition of slavery.<sup>11</sup> This ideological association made the existence and life of freedmen and women extremely difficult because they “were fatally stigmatized by their past”. Slaves were also mostly branded: the most common brand was an S and a line (*clavo*), standing for “slave” (*esclavo*).<sup>12</sup> It was “a kind of insurance” and later became a method of punishment for runaway slaves. The status of emancipated slaves was not the same as “that of a free born

---

<sup>8</sup> This quotation is cited in English in Tanya J. Tiffany, “Light, Darkness, and African Salvation: Velázquez’s Supper at Emmaus”, *Art History*, 31 (February 2008), p. 44. See also pp. 41-6.

<sup>9</sup> Jeanette Favrot Peterson, “Perceiving Blackness, Envisioning Power: Chalma and Black Christs in Colonial Mexico”, in Dana Leibsohn and Jeanette Favrot Peterson (eds.), *Seeing Across Cultures in the Early Modern World* (Farnham and Burlington VT: Ashgate, 2012), p. 50. I would like to thank Jane Stevens Crawshaw for this useful reference.

<sup>10</sup> John H. Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716* (London, 2002), pp. 107, 221. Susan Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain: Sevillian Confraternities and the Processional Sculpture of Holy Week* (Princeton, 1998), pp. 31-2.

<sup>11</sup> Carmen Fracchia, “The Urban Slave in Spain and New Spain”, in Elizabeth McGrath and Jean Michel Massing (eds.), *The Slave in European Art: From Renaissance Trophy to Abolitionist Emblem*. The Warburg Colloquia Series, vol. 20 (London, Turin, 2012), p. 204.

<sup>12</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 176-7.

person in early modern Spain”, as Martín Casares shows by analysing a series of documents in which the previous condition of manumitted slaves is always recorded.<sup>13</sup>

### **The place of slaves in early modern Spanish society**

There was a considerable early modern presence of black slaves in Spanish urban centres. In Seville, slaves accounted for approximately ten per cent of the population in 1565, which led contemporary commentators to compare this cosmopolitan city to a “giant chessboard containing an equal number of white and black chessmen”.<sup>14</sup> Seville’s slave community was the largest of the Spanish kingdoms. It also became, with Lisbon and Valencia, the main centre for the slave trade in the Iberian Peninsula. Slavery was a profitable business in this important Spanish port. The price of a slave, which depended on the person’s physical condition, age and sex, rose at the height of the Iberian transatlantic slave trade in the sixteenth century; most commonly the slaves were aged between twenty and forty.<sup>15</sup> Slave trade licences were created by the crowns of Castile and Aragon and granted by the House of Trade and the Council of the Indies, which was established in Seville from the beginning of the sixteenth century.<sup>16</sup> The slave-traders, who were Sevillians, Portuguese, Genoese, Florentines, Catalans, Germans, French, and English, exported many of the slaves to the rest of the Peninsula and to the New World.<sup>17</sup> A significant number, however, remained in the city.

---

<sup>13</sup> Aurelia Martín Casares, “Free and freed black Africans in Granada in the time of the Spanish Renaissance”, in Thomas F. Earle and Kate J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 252.

<sup>14</sup> This quotation is cited in Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 170. See Antonio Domínguez Ortiz in Alfredo J. Morales et al. (eds.), *Velázquez y Sevilla: Estudios* (Seville, 1999), vol 2, pp. 20-21 and Domínguez Ortiz, *The Golden Age of Spain: 1516-1619* (London, 1971), pp. 162-72.

<sup>15</sup> José Luis Cortés López, *Los orígenes de la esclavitud negra en España* (Madrid, 1986), p.123 and Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 176-7.

<sup>16</sup> 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.

<sup>17</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 171 and Cortés López, *Los orígenes de la esclavitud negra en España*, p. 111.

Spanish slave owners most often belonged to the monarchy, aristocracy, religious orders, the high clergy (including the Archbishop of Seville), and the wealthy merchant class. Owners were also professionals, artisans and labourers, since most people could afford to have at least one slave. The upper echelons of society purchased slaves through intermediaries, whereas the rest of the social strata — such as lawyers, physicians, notaries, traders, conquistadors, sea captains, merchants, tailors, shoemakers, and builders — dealt with the transaction directly, as documents of sale, purchase, donation, declaration of escape, and manumission of slaves testify. Slaves were not only owned by individuals but also institutions. Hospitals, monasteries and cloistered nuns mainly acquired slaves through donations.<sup>18</sup> The latter institutions also obtained their respective male and female slaves through inheritance from the families of friars and nuns; or else through sale and purchase from the priors. Given that slave ownership was fairly widespread within society, this essay will explore the visibility of these slaves from a number of perspectives: visibility at the point of sale, work, domestic arrangements and religious life.

The monopoly of the slave trade with the Portuguese since the fifteenth century and the subsequent high concentration of African slaves in urban Spain created specific social conditions, such as the clear demarcation between slaves and servants.<sup>19</sup> The crucial difference was that the latter were never captured in wars or auctioned. Most black Africans were captured by the Spaniards, and particularly by the Portuguese, in present-day Guinea-Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Senegal, Gambia, part of Mali, and part of Burkina.<sup>20</sup> The enslaved

---

<sup>18</sup> Cortés López, *Los orígenes de la esclavitud negra en España*, pp. 64-75, Carmen Fracchia,“(Lack of) Visual Representation of Black Slaves in Spanish Golden Age Painting”, *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies (Tesserae)*, 10, 1 (June 2004), p. 28 and Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 175, 179.

<sup>19</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 174, Fracchia,“(Lack of) Visual Representation of Black Slaves in Spanish Golden Age Painting”, p. 27.

<sup>20</sup> Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla y su tierra a fines de la Edad Media*, pp. 73-103, 193.

Africans were then transported to Seville to be sold at auctions held in the most important spaces for the city's administrative and economic life.<sup>21</sup>

In the square of San Francisco and near the banks, on the steps of the Cathedral, slaves were sold with other precious commodities: “jewellery, gold and silver objects, rich tapestries, arms and slaves are sold in the continuous auctions that take place here [at the Cathedral steps] throughout the day”.<sup>22</sup>

From the end of the fourteenth century slavery was, as Antonio Domínguez Ortiz states, “essentially an urban and domestic phenomenon”, which explains why black women usually attracted higher prices. The great majority of female slaves worked as domestic servants, and were confined to the most menial tasks in the kitchen.<sup>23</sup> They accompanied their mistresses to public places, served as wet nurses and took care of their master's children. Slave owners also occasionally forced their slaves into prostitution. The relationship they shared with their masters was often ambiguous and complex. The sexual exploitation of female slaves and servants by their masters was widespread. In fact, during the sixteenth century between 80% and 90% 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 male white Christian.<sup>24</sup> Most slaves in general worked in the kitchen, in the laundry, cared for horses and mules in the stables, and worked as attendants to adults, doorkeepers, porters, waiters, and valets. Their masters also took their male slaves with them during their daily activities or as their escort on foot if they

---

<sup>21</sup> The map of Seville in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is to be found in Mary Elizabeth Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville* (Princeton, 1990), Fig. 2, p.15.

<sup>22</sup> Alonso Morgado (*History of Seville*, 1589), cited in Ruth Pike, *Enterprise and Adventure: The Genoese in Seville and the Opening of the New World* (London, Ithaca, 1966), p. 29.

<sup>23</sup> Domínguez Ortiz, *The Golden Age of Spain*, p. 163, Fracchia, “The Urban Slave in Spain and New Spain”, pp. 195-216, Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 177-8,180.

<sup>24</sup> Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada del siglo XVI*, chapter 1, Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla y su tierra a fines de la Edad Media*, p. 215.

were riding. Enslaved men in urban households were most commonly employed as carriers, watersellers, or errand boys.<sup>25</sup>

Slaves who worked outside the domestic environment to support their masters did not reside in their owners' homes. In Seville, they mainly lived in the poorer quarter of San Bernardo, outside the city walls, with other working people, such as bakers, gardeners and employees of the slaughterhouse.<sup>26</sup> Slaves also lived in the suburb of Triana, on the southern side of the city across the river Guadalquivir, where Gypsies had been separated from the rest of the city since their arrival at the beginning of the fifteenth century.<sup>27</sup> Most convicted galley slaves were gathered in the Arenal, the port of the city. Other marginal subjects were also concentrated outside the city walls: lepers were interned in the hospital outside the Gate of the Macarena, founded after the Reconquest, and nearby the blind and the mad were kept in the hospital of San Gil, erected in the fourteenth century.<sup>28</sup> Moriscos in contrast were admitted within the city walls, mainly in the district of San Marcos until their permanent expulsion from Spain between 1609 and 1614. In other slave cities in the crown of Castile, the poor were also relegated to peripheral districts; the exception was Valladolid, where they were concentrated in "central parishes".<sup>29</sup>

Slaves and freed slaves who were not in domestic service were part of the city's large unskilled workforce. In Seville, they were mainly employed in lowly tasks in the public

---

<sup>25</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp.177, 178, Martín Casares, "Free and freed black Africans in Granada in the time of the Spanish Renaissance", in Thomas F. Earle and Kate J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* pp. 255-6, Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla y su tierra a fines de la Edad Media*, p.193.

<sup>26</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 185-6.

<sup>27</sup> Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, p. 20, John Edwards, *Inquisition* (Stroud, Gloucestershire, 2003), p. 153, Isidoro Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas. Estructura, Simbolismo e Identidad* (Seville, 1985), p. 47.

<sup>28</sup> Antonio Collantes de Terán Sánchez, *Sevilla en la Baja Edad Media: La ciudad y sus hombres* (Seville, 1984), p. 261.

<sup>29</sup> Linda Martz, *Poverty and Welfare in Habsburg Spain: The Example of Toledo* (Cambridge, 1983), pp. 96, 117.



granary, and in soap factories in the Triana district. They also worked as porters, chairmen or street vendors of water, fireworks, fish, and vinegar.<sup>30</sup> Freed slaves found temporary employers in the main squares or public spaces of urban centres and they worked as carriers, diggers, paviors, casters in foundries, builders, tile makers, bakers and butchers. The latter generally served also as executioners.<sup>31</sup> Manumitted women had less opportunity to find paid jobs; therefore they mostly married to become housewives. Slave owners mainly opposed the marriage of their female slaves especially if their husbands were freedmen and could therefore buy their wives' freedom. Slave masters would occasionally provide their emancipated female slaves with "a few goods as dowry" so that they could get married. Freedwomen are recorded working in taverns and inns or earning their living as sorceresses, which involved "making love filters, finding lost objects" and "curing illnesses with herbal remedies".<sup>32</sup>

Urban slaves and ex-slaves suffered a series of social restrictions: only a limited number of them could gather in "taverns, inns, and cheap restaurants" and they were not allowed to carry arms unless "in the performance of their regular duties" or when they were with their masters.<sup>33</sup> They were also excluded, together with a significant sector of the population — "Jews, Moors, Indians, mulattos, and slaves" — from membership of the city's guilds.<sup>34</sup> However, in Seville and Granada, the two cities with the highest concentration of slaves in early modern Spain, slaves and freedmen trained as craftsmen in the owners' shops, such as printing houses or artistic workshops. Their exclusion from religious confraternities, which in

---

<sup>30</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 184, Collantes de Terán Sánchez, *Sevilla en la Baja Edad Media*, p. 96, Martín Casares, "Free and freed black Africans in Granada in the time of the Spanish Renaissance", p. 256, Luis Méndez Rodríguez, *Esclavos en la pintura sevillana de los Siglos de Oro* (Seville, 2011), p. 83.

<sup>31</sup> Martín Casares, "Free and freed black Africans in Granada in the time of the Spanish Renaissance", p. 256.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 257.

<sup>33</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 181.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 184, Martín Casares, "Free and freed black Africans in Granada in the time of the Spanish Renaissance", p. 256.

Spain “tend to be independent from guild sponsorship”,<sup>35</sup> partly prompted the foundation of exclusively “black” confraternities.<sup>36</sup> These institutions provided an opportunity for the support and representation of Africans within the city. The confraternities were intended to control the social behaviour of the enslaved and freed Afro-Hispanic population, were another specific outcome of the transatlantic slave trade in early modern Spain. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, the ‘ethnic’ brotherhoods and those of the nobility, like the Confraternity of Santa Caridad (Holy Charity) that clearly specified that their members should be Old Christians “of clean and honest generation” in their 1661 regulation, were socially and ethnically exclusive while most confraternities with members outside these categories were socially mixed and inclusive.<sup>37</sup>

The oldest black confraternity of Our Lady of the Kings was founded by Cardinal-Archbishop Gonzalo de Mena y Roelas of Seville (1394-1401) in the last decade of the fourteenth century.<sup>38</sup> The aims were to run the House-Hospital that was founded at the same time for the black population (especially for the sick and the disabled), to offer decent burials for their dead, and support for widows.<sup>39</sup> On 8 November 1475, owing to the increase of the black population in Seville, the Catholic Monarchs nominated their royal servant Juan de Valladolid as the first steward of black and mixed-race slaves and freed slaves. According to Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga (1677), Juan de Valladolid was an African of noble descent and a

---

<sup>35</sup> Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, p. 53, Perry, *Gender and Disorder in Early Modern Seville*, p. 24. See also Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain*, p.16.

<sup>36</sup> Isidoro Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla: Etnicidad, poder y sociedad en 600 años de Historia* (Seville, 1997); Maureen Flynn, *Sacred Charity: Confraternities and Social Welfare in Spain, 1400-1700* (Ithaca, 1989); Debra Blumenthal, “La Casa dels Negres”: Black African Solidarity in Late Medieval Valencia”, in Thomas F. Earle and Kate J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), pp. 225- 46.

<sup>37</sup> Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, pp. 46-51,53, 55, 194-7.

<sup>38</sup> This confraternity was founded “before 1400”- as Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga recorded in his *Anales eclesiásticos y seculares de la muy noble ciudad de Sevilla, metrópolis de la Andalucía, que contienen sus más principales memorias desde el año de 1246, en que emprendió conquistarla del poder de los Moros el gloriosísimo Rey S. Fernando III de Castilla y León, hasta el 1671 en que la Católica Iglesia le concedió el culto y título de Bienaventurado* (Madrid, 1677), pp. 77-8. See also Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, pp. 27, 49-56.

<sup>39</sup> Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, pp. 25, 35, 47.

servant in the royal chambers.<sup>40</sup> In fact, he was also known as the “Negro Count”<sup>41</sup> and his presence has been immortalized in the name of the Conde Negro street that still exists today behind the confraternity’s chapel. His main duties were to represent the Afro-Hispanic population and to organize their fiestas, processions, and weddings, since slaves and freed slaves were also employed as musicians and dancers at private and public celebrations.<sup>42</sup> In 1504, Juan de Castillo was the first designated confraternity leader elected and defined as the “King of Blacks”.<sup>43</sup> This black confraternity was poorer than the more traditional wealthy brotherhoods run by the nobility,<sup>44</sup> but rich individuals helped financially, such as the Duke of Medina Sidonia in 1463.<sup>45</sup>

The key source of funding was donations in wills of money, properties or belongings. This income enabled members of the confraternity to hire white priests to celebrate mass and perform the sacraments, to maintain and commission devotional images and altars and to meet the confraternity’s charitable aims.<sup>46</sup> The confraternity paid rent for almost three centuries to the Marquis of Castellón and, from 1722, to the convent of San Agustín.<sup>47</sup>

In the middle of the sixteenth century, the confraternity and house-hospital of Our Lady of the Kings changed their name into Our Lady of the Angels<sup>48</sup> and from 1784 to date, is known as the Confraternity of “little blacks”. It had been created in the parish of San Bernardo, where most black people lived. In Tridentine Spain, Carthusians and Capuchins regarded the

---

<sup>40</sup> Diego Ortiz de Zúñiga, *Anales eclesiásticos y seculares de la muy noble y muy leal ciudad de Sevilla*, p. 78.

<sup>41</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 174. Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, pp. 43, 53.

<sup>42</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 178-9. See also Méndez Rodríguez, *Esclavos en la pintura sevillana de los Siglos de Oro*, pp. 44-62.

<sup>43</sup> Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, p. 44.

<sup>44</sup> Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, p. 55.

<sup>45</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 173-4.

<sup>46</sup> Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain*, pp. 36-7, Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, pp. 59- 67.

<sup>47</sup> Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, pp. 45-6.

<sup>48</sup> Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, p. 55.

Cistercian abbot St Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) as a model reformer who combated heresy and promoted the second crusade against the infidel. On 11 December 1573, the Dean and the Chapter of the Cathedral of Seville designated the chapel of the hospital of the black confraternity as the new parish of San Bernardo and nominated the priest, Hernando de Aldana, and a sacristan to administer the sacraments.<sup>49</sup> In 1587, Our Lady of the Angels, a Marian devotional brotherhood, merged with the black Confraternity of Our Lady of Piety, a penitential group. The latter had been founded in 1554 in the chapel of the hospital of St Antony Abbot, a third-century African saint born in Egypt. The new black brotherhood adopted the name of Our Lady of the Angels and the penitential nature of Our Lady of Piety, which allowed their members to participate as equals in the city's religious celebrations and in the Holy Week processions with the rest of the city's confraternities that numbered forty by 1602.<sup>50</sup>

A proliferation of penitential confraternities in Spain took place after the reforms initiated by the Council of Trent. It decreed that all slaves and those "sent to the New World be Christians"<sup>51</sup> and this evangelical mission was partly fulfilled by the creation of exclusively black confraternities by the Crown and the Church. The last Tridentine sessions in 1562 and 1563 passed legislation to inspect the religious and financial activities of the confraternities.<sup>52</sup> Part of their duties was the inspection of the decorum of religious images to move the viewer to prayer. The most venerated images in Our Lady of the Angels were the three sculptures of their patron figure, Christ on the Cross, and St Benedict the Moor of Palermo, the first black

---

<sup>49</sup> Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, pp. 71-2.

<sup>50</sup> Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain*, pp. 33, 34, 35, 38. See also Franco Silva, *La esclavitud en Sevilla y su tierra a fines de la Edad Media*, p. 223; Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, p. 195, Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada del siglo XVI*, p. 423.

<sup>51</sup> Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain*, p. 34.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 23-4, 48. See *Canons and Decrees of the Council of Trent*, translated by H. J. Schroeder (St. Louis, 1950), Session 22, p. 157. See also Flynn, *Sacred Charity*, pp. 116-9.

European saint.<sup>53</sup> He was a black slave and a Franciscan lay brother from Spanish Sicily (1526-89), the son of Christianized African slaves, and, known during his lifetime as “The Holy Black”. He was beatified in 1743 and canonized in 1807. However, soon after his death and especially from 1606, following the arrival of his relics in the crowns of Castile and Aragon, he was adopted as the patron saint of black slaves in Spain, Portugal and the New World. In 1611, his body was reinterred in Rome in a “costly silver casket donated by King Philip III of Spain”.<sup>54</sup> The creation of new cults of the saints in Counter-Reformation Spain consolidated doctrinal points, such as the effectiveness of the sacraments and the veneration of relics, against the Protestants. The main aim was the “suppression of heterodoxy”<sup>55</sup> and they were regarded “as the resident patrons of their communities”.<sup>56</sup> The cult of saints became inseparable from the liturgy and feasts of saints and it gave a sense of social continuity and corporal identity to members of the same confraternity.<sup>57</sup> In 1627, Sandoval already promoted the image of “Ethiopian saints”, like Antonio and Benedict of Palermo and Princess St Iphigenia, as “model of black sanctity”.<sup>58</sup>

Black freedmen and slaves exclusively composed the governing board of Our Lady of the Angels.<sup>59</sup> Their members met periodically to organize and control their finances and their membership and they were chosen annually by general election: a supervisor to collect money from their members, a secretary to keep the books, a treasurer, a caretaker of the chapel, images and altars, four deputies, various magistrates, and the collector of alms from

---

<sup>53</sup> Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, p. 120.

<sup>54</sup> Nelson H. Minnich, “The Catholic Church and the pastoral care of black Africans in Renaissance Italy”, in Thomas F. Earle and Kate J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 299 and Joaneath Spicer, “Free Men and Women of African Ancestry in Renaissance Europe”, in Joaneath Spicer (ed.), *Revealing the African Presence in Renaissance Europe* (Princeton, 2013), p. 85.

<sup>55</sup> Sara T. Nalle, “A Saint for All Seasons: The Cult of San Julián”, in Anne J. Cruz and Mary Elizabeth Perry (eds.), *Culture and Control in Counter-Reformation Spain* (Minneapolis, 1992), p. 25.

<sup>56</sup> Fernando Cervantes, *The Devil in the New World: The Impact of Diabolism in New Spain* (New Haven and London, 1994), pp. 57-8.

<sup>57</sup> Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, p. 65.

<sup>58</sup> Joaneath Spicer, “Free Men and Women of African Ancestry in Renaissance Europe”, pp. 85-6.

<sup>59</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, pp. 188-9, Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain*, pp. 140-41.

the public. Their members considered their confraternities as their symbolic “black nation”. This civil “autonomy” exercised by freedmen and slaves in their confraternities was at the root of the ambivalent reception of Africans in early modern Spain. Wealthier confraternities and the royal authorities exerted strong social pressures to dissolve the black confraternities by constantly accusing them of theft, alcoholism, riots, and murders.<sup>60</sup> Black confraternities even asked for papal intervention to ensure their existence: when Our Lady of the Angels was suppressed in 1614, their members appealed to Pope Urban VIII and their confraternity was successfully reinstated in 1633.<sup>61</sup> These congregations were, as Moreno rightly argues, the only formal place for the black community to assert its collective identity with dignity.

In the Triana district of Seville, there was also another black confraternity and hospital founded in 1584, dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, a cult promoted by the Dominicans in 1571 after the Spanish victory of Lepanto over the Moors. There is documentary evidence however that from the middle of the seventeenth century their members were the poor of this district, who kept the images and advocations of the black confraternity.<sup>62</sup> In the middle of the sixteenth century, mixed-race slaves and freedmen created their own Confraternity of Our Lady of the Presentation, approved in 1572 by the Archbishop of Seville, Cristóbal Rojas y Sandoval (1546-1618). It was located inside the city walls, in the chapel of the Hospital of Our Lady of Bethlehem, at the back of the Jesuit Church of the Annunciation. A few years later the congregation moved to the parish of San Ildefonso, until its disappearance in the middle of the eighteenth century.<sup>63</sup> Saint Ildefonso was the seventh-century archbishop of Toledo (657-667), whose writings to prove “the holy mother’s perpetual virginity against three infidels” and about the biblical origins of baptism and Hispanic baptismal practices

---

<sup>60</sup> Verdi Webster, *Art and Ritual in Golden-Age Spain*, pp. 44-5 and Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, pp. 46-51, 55, 194-97.

<sup>61</sup> Moreno, *La antigua hermandad de los negros de Sevilla*, p. 34.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73-4, 76.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 76.

made him a key Tridentine patron saint of Spain and the Crown.<sup>64</sup> The mixed-race confraternity had their own chapel and entrance through the back door in the “Street of Mulattoes” which kept this name until the late twentieth century.<sup>65</sup>

The concept and infrastructure of Our Lady of the Angels was also adopted in other urban centres in the Crown of Castile, in Cádiz, Jerez de la Frontera, Puerto de Santa María, Málaga, Almendral, and Granada.<sup>66</sup> Most of these black Spanish confraternities—founded either with the advocacy of black patron saints, such as Benedict of Palermo or St Iphigenia of Ethiopia—, or mixed-race confraternities dedicated to Our Lady of the Rosary, generally for slaves and freedmen, disappeared after the eighteenth century when they opened their membership to whites. In the Crown of Aragon, groups of black freedmen created in 1455 the Confraternity of St James, patron saint of Spain, martyr and Moor-slayer, in Barcelona<sup>67</sup> and in 1472, the House of Black Africans, dedicated to Our Lady of Grace, in Valencia.<sup>68</sup> The first black confraternity of Seville also became the prototype for the Native American and black confraternities in the New World from the second half of the sixteenth century.<sup>69</sup>

### **Slaves in early modern Spanish visual culture**

The development of black confraternities, like the display of Velázquez’s portrait of Pareja with which the essay started indicates the deep belief in the universality of the Catholic Counter-Reformation Church and in its evangelical charitable mission, which made the

---

<sup>64</sup> Flynn, *Sacred Charity*, p. 30.

<sup>65</sup> Pike, *Aristocrats and Traders*, p. 186.

<sup>66</sup> Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, pp. 194-7, Joaquín Álvaro Rubio, *La esclavitud en Barcarrota y Salvaleón en el período moderno (Siglos XVI-XVIII)* (Badajoz, 2005), pp.173-6. It is interesting that the two black confraternities in the city of Granada, St Benedict of Palermo and Our Lady of the Encarnación were located in the Christian centre of the city: see Martín Casares, *La esclavitud en la Granada del siglo XVI*, pp. 422-3.

<sup>67</sup> Cortés López, *Los orígenes de la esclavitud negra en España*, p.175. William D. Philips, Jr., *Slavery in Medieval and Early Modern Seville* (Pennsylvania, 2014), p. 94.

<sup>68</sup> Blumenthal, “La Casa dels Negres”: Black African Solidarity in Late Medieval Valencia”, pp. 225- 46.

<sup>69</sup> Moreno, *Cofradías y Hermandades Andaluzas*, pp. 196-7.

Church in Rome “look positively on the presence of have-nots”.<sup>70</sup> It does not come as a surprise that Velázquez’s portrait of his slave became a popular image, since at least five very fine copies were made subsequently.<sup>71</sup> Other examples from Velázquez’s *oeuvre* reflect further, broader religious ideas. In Seville, Velázquez painted the only seventeenth-century portrait of a female slave at her workplace, in his *Kitchen with Supper at Emmaus* of c. 1617/18.<sup>72</sup>

[INSERT FIGURE 7.2 HERE]

Figure 7.2 *Kitchen Maid with the Supper at Emmaus*

Artist: Diego Velázquez

Spanish, 17th century, c.1617-1618

Oil on canvas

Unframed: 55 x 118 cm

Photo © National Gallery of Ireland.

This painting probably belonged to the Archbishop Castro y Quiñones who promoted the baptism of Africans in Seville.<sup>73</sup> In the background of Velázquez’s canvas, at the top left, one can see two men at a table, which has been accepted as the conventional religious depiction of the Supper at Emmaus. The presence of this religious scene inside the painting led to the traditional interpretation of this work in the context of the salvation of the poor; thus the expression of the female slave sitting at the table is seen as the effect of an “inner experience” of the miracle taking place in the dining room behind the kitchen. Velázquez is obviously aware of early modern notions of slaves and the significance of their conversion to

---

<sup>70</sup> Peter Higginson, “Poverty and Papal Piety in Rome c. 1600: Painting, Pastoralism and Spectacle”, in Tom Nichols (ed.), *Others and Outcasts in Early Modern Europe: Picturing the Social Margins* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 93 and Livio Pestilli, “Blindness, Lameness and Mendicancy in Italy (from the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries)”, in Tom Nichols (ed.), *Others and Outcasts in Early Modern Europe: Picturing the Social Margins* (Aldershot, 2007), p. 115. See also Francisco de Borja Medina, “La experiencia sevillana de la Compañía de Jesús en la evangelización de los esclavos negros y su representación en América”, in Aurelia Martín Casares and Margarita García Barranco (eds.), *La esclavitud negroafricana en la Historia de España. Siglos XVI y XVII* (Granada, 2010), pp. 75-94.

<sup>71</sup> Everett Fahy, ‘Provenance’, *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 29 (1970/71), p. 475. [453-74] and Joseph Focarino (ed.), *Velázquez in New York Museums* (New York: The Frick Collection, 2000), pp. 14-18.

<sup>72</sup> The painting is at the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin. David Davies and Enriqueta Harris (eds.), *Velázquez in Seville* (Edinburgh, 1996), pp.128-129, 132-139; Fracchia, “(Lack of) Visual Representation of Black Slaves in Spanish Golden Age Painting”, pp. 24-8.

<sup>73</sup> Tanya J. Tiffany, “Light, Darkness, and African Salvation: Velázquez’s Supper at Emmaus”, p. 42.



Christianity and the belief that salvation could reach every single person “irrespective of their social status or ethnic origin”.<sup>74</sup>

Velázquez’s portrait of Juan de Pareja was built from the availability of a black model (Pareja) and the visual template of the more realistic representation of black people produced in the Netherlands in the early decades of the seventeenth century, when the presence of African slaves from the Iberian Empire increased in their territories.<sup>75</sup> The embedded notions of Africans and their place in early modern Spanish society are represented in visual and literary forms. The authors of the Golden Age paid some attention to black slaves only from the second half of the sixteenth century: Mateo Alemán, Lope de Vega and Cervantes.<sup>76</sup> The Spanish visual production that represents black slaves is rare compared to its European counterpart, especially if we consider that the African presence during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was higher in Iberia than in the rest of Western Europe. The disproportion between the high visibility of African slaves in urban centres and their low invisibility in the art produced in the Crowns of Castile and Aragon is a feature of “slave-owning societies”.<sup>77</sup> The Spanish case is however more extreme. Anonymous Flemish artists from the Spanish empire in northern Europe executed few depictions of slaves in early modern Spanish urban views and those like the Flemish painter Joris Hoefnagel (1542- 1600) and the German goldsmith and sculptor Christoph Weiditz (c. 1500-1559) who codified the iconography of chained Afro-Hispanic slaves.<sup>78</sup> The latter made drawings of these subjects fulfilling their social functions, with his written comments. This work was put together in his costume-book

---

<sup>74</sup> Davies and Harris (eds.), *Velázquez in Seville*, p.134 and Tanya J. Tiffany, “Light, Darkness, and African Salvation: Velázquez’s Supper at Emmaus”, pp. 33-56.

<sup>75</sup> *Black is beautiful: Rubens to Dumas*, edited by Elmer Kolfin and Esther Schreuder (Zwolle, 2008), pp.75-85.

<sup>76</sup> Baltasar Fra-Molinero, *La imagen de los negros en el teatro del Siglo de Oro* (Madrid, 1995).

<sup>77</sup> Elizabeth McGrath, Preface, in Elizabeth McGrath and Jean Michel Massing (eds.), *The Slave in European Art: From Renaissance Trophy to Abolitionist Emblem*. The Warburg Colloquia Series, vol. 20 (London, Turin, 2012), p. ix.

<sup>78</sup> Fracchia, “The Urban Slave in Spain and New Spain”, pp. 197-200.

in the 1520s and 1530s.<sup>79</sup> In his sketch entitled “Ships taking in water in Barcelona”, the artist depicts black galley slaves, and adds the following comment: “In this manner they bring fresh water in Barcelona to the ships and galleys so that it may be done more rapidly when they provision the ships or otherwise need water”.<sup>80</sup> In another drawing, Weiditz’s annotation reads: “Black slave with a wineskin in Castile: Thus the Moors who have been sold carry wine in goatskins in Castile; if they run away from their masters, they have to work thus and wear chains”.<sup>81</sup>

The artist’s visual recording is a valuable testimony to the lives of Africans in early modern Spain. The rare iconography of a chained slave, which clearly expresses the notion of slaves as commodities, had no resonance in the art of the crowns of Castile and Aragon. Weiditz’s sketches were based on direct observation during his travels in these Spanish kingdoms. He joined the itinerant court of Charles V in Castile, either in Toledo or Valladolid, where he arrived by invitation of Joannes Dantiscus, the Polish Ambassador to the Emperor. Weiditz’s visual documentation shows the impact of the African presence in Spain when the number of slaves increased greatly between the Recapture of Granada in 1492 and the wars of Cardinal Cisneros and Charles V in Africa from 1505 to 1541.<sup>82</sup> African slaves were not depicted in Spanish royal portraiture until the last years of the eighteenth century, therefore the portrait of Pareja is extraordinary. The *Four studies of a young Moor’s head* of c. 1613-15 by Peter Paul Rubens (1577-1640), who was also a “diplomat, courtier, and, humanist”, proved most influential for Velázquez. Paintings and prints were made after this painting during the 1630s

---

<sup>79</sup> See Christoph Weiditz, *Authentic Everyday Dress of the Renaissance. All 154 Plates from the “Trachtenbuch”* (New York, 1994).

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., plates 63-64. See Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum: [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Trachtenbuch\\_des\\_Christoph\\_Weiditz#/media/File:Weiditz\\_Trachtenbuch\\_073-074.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Trachtenbuch_des_Christoph_Weiditz#/media/File:Weiditz_Trachtenbuch_073-074.jpg)

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., plate 47, on the left of the image in Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum [http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Trachtenbuch\\_des\\_Christoph\\_Weiditz#/media/File:Weiditz\\_Trachtenbuch\\_022-023.jpg](http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Trachtenbuch_des_Christoph_Weiditz#/media/File:Weiditz_Trachtenbuch_022-023.jpg).

<sup>82</sup> Elliott, *Imperial Spain 1469-1716*, pp. 53-56.

and 1640s.<sup>83</sup> This is not surprising since as Ernst van den Boogaart pointed out that in “Rubens’s circle the revival of the ancient Ethiopian Black encouraged a break with ethnocentric ideas of physical beauty and the reinvention of black beauty in its own right.”<sup>84</sup> Velázquez, who met the Flemish master at the Habsburg court in 1628, was certainly aware of these innovative studies. Contact with Rubens also had a decisive impact on Velázquez: his palette became less austere, the colouring richer and his technique freer. Rubens encouraged his younger friend to travel to Italy and he first went there in 1629 and again between 1649 and 1651.<sup>85</sup>

Velázquez legally granted freedom to Pareja in Rome, on 23 November 1650,<sup>86</sup> probably because in the Italian states, where domestic slavery was “a common feature... since the fourteenth century”, manumission was more frequently granted than in Spain.<sup>87</sup> Pareja worked at the Habsburg court where there were a high proportion of slaves and other marginal subjects, such as dwarfs, who were also subjects of Velázquez’s portraits for Philip IV. Dwarfs were indispensable royal servants at least from 1446,<sup>88</sup> and they were mainly employed as royal attendants, entertainers and companions. They were also exchanged as

---

<sup>83</sup> For Rubens’s paintings *Four heads* (Musées Royaux d’Art et d’Histoire de Belgique, Brussels) and *A head*, c. 1620 (The Hyde Collection Art Museum, Glens Arts, Brussels), see *Black is beautiful: Rubens to Dumas*, pp.76-78.

<sup>84</sup> Ernst van den Boogaart, “Black Slavery and the ‘Mulate Escape Hatch’ in the Brazilian Ensembles of Frans Post and Albert Eckhout”, in Elizabeth McGrath and Jean Michel Massing (eds.), *The Slave in European Art: From Renaissance Trophy to Abolitionist Emblem*. The Warburg Colloquia Series, vol. 20 (London, Turin, 2012), p. 234.

<sup>85</sup> Enriqueta Harris, *Velázquez* (Oxford, 1982), pp. 15, 67. Sarah Schroth and Ronni Baer (eds.), *El Greco to Velázquez: Art during the Reign of Philip III* (London, 2008), pp. 47, 92-95.

<sup>86</sup> Fracchia, “Metamorphosis of the Self in Early Modern Spain: Slave Portraiture and the Case of Juan de Pareja”, in Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal (eds.), *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, pp. 148-9.

<sup>87</sup> Rick Scorza, “Messina 1535 to Lepanto 1571. Vasari, Borghini and the Imagery of Moors, Barbarians and Turks”, in Elizabeth McGrath and Jean Michel Massing (eds.), *The Slave in European Art: From Renaissance Trophy to Abolitionist Emblem*. The Warburg Colloquia Series, vol. 20 (London, Turin, 2012), p. 139.

<sup>88</sup> Janet Ravenscroft, “Dwarfs—And a *Loca*— As Maids at the Spanish Habsburg Courts”, in *The Politics of Female Households: Ladies-in-waiting across early modern Europe*, edited by Nadine Akkerman and Birgit Houben (Leiden, 2013), p.151. José Moreno Villa, *Locos, enanos, negros y niños palaciegos. Siglos XVI y XVII: gente de placer que tuvieron los Austrias en la corte española desde 1563 a 1700* (Mexico City, 1939); and Janet Ravenscroft, “Invisible friends: Questioning the representation of the court dwarf in Hapsburg Spain”, in *Histories of the Normal and the Abnormal: Social and cultural histories of norms and normativity*, edited by Waltraud Ernst (Oxford, 2006), pp. 26–52.

gifts, like many court slaves, but they were never bought in auctions. In addition, dwarfs were allowed to own African slaves and other servants.<sup>89</sup> Dwarfs were also symbols of social prestige. The relationship between masters and slaves only occasionally and exceptionally transcended the hegemonic view of slaves and consequently few individuals could escape some of the social constraints suffered by the enslaved population, such as Juan de Pareja and the sixteenth-century “prodigious blacks” from Granada recorded by Francisco Bermúdez de Pedraza (*Ecclesiastical History of Granada*, 1639): Juan Latino,<sup>90</sup> the first known black humanist and Professor of Latin at the Cathedral of Granada, Cristóbal de Meneses, a Dominican preacher, the embroiderer Catalina de Soto, known as the “Queen of Black Africans”, and the mixed-race lawyer Licenciado Ortiz who worked at the royal court.<sup>91</sup> The presence of these individuals at the court and centres of learning, however, did not reflect their acceptance in broader Spanish society.

Pareja was a court slave when he became a painter in the face of the claim that visual art could only be practised by free men. His mechanical activities in the workshop, suited to a slave, are described by his earliest biographer Antonio Palomino (*Pictorial Museum and Optical Scale*, 1724),<sup>92</sup> where he claims that Pareja’s artistic success was achieved despite “the disgrace of his nature” and thanks to his own moral qualities that belonged to the soul.<sup>93</sup> Palomino emphasizes that Pareja acquired a second nature by the process of Christianization, by his “honest thoughts”, by his bondage to his master Velázquez, and, by his artistic abilities. It is believed that Pareja made one of the five copies after Velázquez’s *Juan de*

---

<sup>89</sup> Fernando Bouza, *Cartas de Felipe II a sus hijas* (Madrid, 1998), pp. 91, 99 and Ravenscroft, “Dwarfs—And a Loca— As Maids at the Spanish Habsburg Courts”, p. 164.

<sup>90</sup> Baltasar Fra-Molinero, “Juan Latino and his racial difference”, in Thomas F. Earle and Kate J. P. Lowe (eds.), *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe* (Cambridge, 2005), p. 331.

<sup>91</sup> Martín Casares, “Free and freed black Africans in Granada in the time of the Spanish Renaissance”, pp. 258-60

<sup>92</sup> Antonio Palomino de Castro y Velasco, *El Museo Pictórico y Escala Óptica* (1715-24) (Madrid, 1947), 3, pp. 960-61.

<sup>93</sup> Fracchia, “Metamorphosis of the Self in Early Modern Spain: Slave Portraiture and the Case of Juan de Pareja”, p. 151.

*Pareja*, now at The Hispanic Society of America in New York.<sup>94</sup> This portrait by his master, made when Pareja was legally a slave, became a template for his self-portrait as a freedman, one year after Velázquez's death. Pareja chose to represent himself in the religious composition of *The Calling of St Matthew* which he signed in Latin "Jo. de Pareja F[ecit]" and dated: "1661".<sup>95</sup>

[INSERT FIGURE 7.3 HERE]

Figure 7.3 Juan de Pareja,

*The Calling of St Matthew*, 1661,

Madrid, Museo del Prado.

In this large canvas, Pareja depicted an episode related in the Gospel of Matthew (9: 9): "Jesus saw a man called Matthew at his seat in the custom house, and said to him, 'Follow me', and Matthew rose and followed him". Matthew was a Jewish tax collector before he converted to Christianity to become an apostle of Christ and one of the four evangelists.<sup>96</sup> Pareja chooses to articulate his attachment to his Christian African past; therefore he establishes a direct relationship between Matthew and Moses by placing the painting of Moses and the Serpent on the wall of the tax office behind Matthew.<sup>97</sup> Moses is represented as the liberator of the Israelites from slavery in Egypt, where Matthew also preached. The latter, who is positioned between Moses and Christ, is seen as the instrument of Christ's liberation in Ethiopia, while Pareja inscribes himself opposite Christ and in this way refers to himself as a biblical Ethiopian and subsequently as a free man. In fact, Matthew was the

---

<sup>94</sup> Juan de Pareja, *Juan de Pareja* (copy made after Velázquez's original), is at The Hispanic Society of America in New York. For the history of this painting and attributions, see Elizabeth du Gué Trapier (ed.), *Catalogue of Paintings (16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, and 18<sup>th</sup> Centuries) in the Collection of The Hispanic Society of America*, pp. 162-65.

<sup>95</sup> Pareja's masterpiece is in the basement of the Prado Museum, Madrid.

<sup>96</sup> Fracchia, "Metamorphosis of the Self in Early Modern Spain: Slave Portraiture and the Case of Juan de Pareja", pp. 151, 156-7.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 159.

apostle of Ethiopia and in the early modern European social imaginary Ethiopia was associated with Christianity, since Ethiopia was considered the first nation to provide “the promise of Christian universality”. Thus, Pareja makes it clear to his audience that he himself belongs to the first Christian nation, which became the first source for “old Christians” before Spain.<sup>98</sup> Pareja’s self-portrait defies the core of the imperial policy of purity of blood in early modern Spain that excluded “new Christians”, Jews, Muslims, and black people in terms of their lack of purity of faith and therefore from economic and political power. Thus, Pareja implies that biblical Ethiopians are older and purer than the orthodox Christians of Spain.

In his depiction, Pareja took the decision to Europeanize his own features. I believe that this statement was the only clear way that Pareja found to convey his status as a man free from the stigma of slavery when the blackness of his skin would always have reminded his audiences of his enslavement and questioned the sincerity of his Christian faith. Pareja had to differentiate himself from Muslims and Jews who had converted to Christianity and whose religions were considered hostile to the Iberian Empire. He might have been aware of the whitening of an African man in the popular prints of the Baptism of the Ethiopian by Saint Philip, where the only clue to the ethnicity of the African neophyte, who was none other than the eunuch prime minister of Candace Queen of the Ethiopians, was to be found in the written inscription below the images, as in the engraving of the same subject by Michel Lasne: “You are not washing the Ethiopian in vain. Do not stop. The water poured by the priest can illuminate the black night”.<sup>99</sup> This image encapsulates not only the justification of slavery but also the deep Tridentine belief in the power of baptism. The artist was aware that only this sacrament and the subsequent whitening of his self could transcend the powerful

---

<sup>98</sup> Ibid., p. 160.

<sup>99</sup> Jean Michel Massing, “From Greek Proverb to Soap Advert: Washing the Ethiopian”, *Journal of the Warburg and the Courtauld Institute*, 58 (1995), pp. 188–91.

and older associations of blackness with sin and darkness and whiteness with purity and light.<sup>100</sup> Therefore Pareja decided to become Candace's minister by showing the whitening of his soul and physical appearance in his ambitious composition.

The visual and symbolic process of self-Europeanization cleansed the stigma of manumission to reclaim Pareja's social status as a free man at the Habsburg Court in Madrid. His case was exceptional because he was closer to the centre of the most powerful Empire in early modern Europe. Instead, most slaves and ex-slaves were kept separated institutionally and spatially in urban centres, even if they were vital in economic and social terms. The established association that existed between the early modern social condition of chattel slavery, the identity of "new Christians" and the non-white colour of the skin of enslaved Africans made sure that the latter group, even after their emancipation, could never escape their marginal position in imperial Spain. I also believe that the anxiety produced by these associations and the memory and fear of the Moors colonization of the Spanish kingdoms were the undercurrents that excluded African slaves and ex-slaves as subjects of visual representation. It probably explains why most depictions of black people who were perceived as slaves in early modern Spain are to be found in religious compositions, like the *Adoration of the Magi*, the *Miracle of the Black Leg*, the *Immaculate Conception* or depictions of black saints.<sup>101</sup> Christianization was a powerful tool of inclusion (and domination) of slaves into Spanish society, although baptism did not remove the stigma of slavery and did not improve the social condition of Afro-Hispanic slaves, freedmen and women. Spain was not to abolish all slavery in the colonies until 1886, while it never formally did so in the Spanish peninsula.<sup>102</sup>

---

<sup>100</sup> Favrot Peterson, "Perceiving Blackness, Envisioning Power", p. 64.

<sup>101</sup> Fracchia, "Constructing the Black Slave in Spanish Golden Age Painting", pp. 180-84; Ibid., "Spanish Depictions of the Miracle of the Black Leg", in Kees W. Zimmermann (ed.), *One Leg in the Grave Revisited: The miracle of the transplantation of the black leg by the saints Cosmas and Damian* (Groningen, 2013), pp. 79-91.

<sup>102</sup> Fracchia, "The Urban Slave in Spain and New Spain", p. 216.

