In Depth: A Boy in Seville: The Representation of Black Identities in a 17th-century Spanish Painting

Helen Cobby, Assistant Curator at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, and Rebecca Randle (previously Learning and Engagement Coordinator at the Barber, now Audience Development Officer at Warwick Arts Centre), share their research on a painting by the Spanish artist Bartolomé Esteban Murillo from the collection at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts. They discuss what this work can tell us about the visibility of Black history in art museums.

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Collection: Barber Institute of Fine Arts, Birmingham

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> 'What we see and do not see in art museums – and on what terms and by whose authority we do or do not see it – is closely linked to who constitutes the community and who defines its identity.'
>
> Carol Duncan, *Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship* (1994)[1]

Introduction

In early 2020, staff at the Barber Institute of Fine Arts began exploring questions of identity and representation in the painting *The Marriage at Cana* (fig.1). This work, which hangs in the Barber's Red Gallery, was painted in Seville in about 1672 by Spanish artist Bartolomé Esteban Murillo (1617-1682). It was commissioned by the Flemish silk merchant, Nicolás Omazur (c.1630-1698), a resident of Seville, who owned more works by Murillo (31) than any other seventeenth-century collector and was his most important private patron. This article documents our ongoing collaborative research into the representation, possible identity and lived experiences of the young Black boy who appears so prominently within Murillo's composition.[2] His presence has hardly been discussed in previous art historical and gallery-related material, either at the Barber or beyond.[3] However, his position in this image is important to explore, because only a few paintings produced in early modern Spain depict Black or enslaved people, even though, from the 15th century, Seville was one of the most important markets for the slave trade in Western Europe.[4] Murillo was an artist favoured by the Catholic Church as we will discuss, and religion and slavery were so intertwined during this period that Murillo's contributions to the representation of Black people is highly significant and deserving of in-depth scholarly attention.

Duncan's quote above reminds us of the power of museums to assert and maintain cultural narratives through their display, interpretation and educational programmes. It encourages us to think about the silence around Black history in museums. The absence of information about these histories, in works that are visibly relevant to Black history, can have an 'othering' effect that situates Black people outside of 'the community'. The research presented in this article was motivated by our many conversations with visitors, including people of colour, who, mirroring the concerns raised by Duncan, have asked questions such as 'why are there people [in these artworks] that look like me?' As two white women, we as the authors of this article cannot claim to understand the lived experiences of Black people. Instead, as cultural professionals we utilise our research skills to explore the boy's possible identity and in turn gain some insight and share information about Black histories and experiences in early modern Seville. In attempting to name the boy, and exploring his story, we hope to make steps towards better recognition and sharing of Black histories in the Barber's collection.

This article shows how an analysis of Murillo's work can help us understand Spain's role in the slave trade and what the social conditions for people of colour and enslaved Africans may have been like during Murillo's career in Seville. In particular, we focus on the relationship between race and religion in early modern Spain. There was an obsession among white Spanish Christians at this time with baptism and conversion to Catholicism, especially of enslaved Black African and Afro-Hispanic people.[5] This obsession resonates with the Biblical New Testament story of the Marriage Feast at Cana, the subject of Murillo's painting at the Barber, where Christ performs his first miracle of turning water into wine (John ii, 1-11). To address these ideas, we have included several quotations from original historic sources which are shocking and may be upsetting to readers.

Murillo's representation of The Marriage at Cana

The Barber's collection of paintings, owned by the Henry Barber Trust, comprises just shy of 200 works, with only a handful depicting people of colour. Murillo's *The Marriage at Cana* is one of the most high profile works in the collection, by virtue of its splendour and the renown of the artist. It is also extremely large and the figures in the foreground are more or less life size. It makes an imposing impression upon the viewer in the Red Baroque Gallery, accompanied mainly by other European works from the seventeenth century (fig.2). Across public collections worldwide, it is also, perhaps surprisingly, one of the few paintings from early modern Spain to depict a Black figure.[6] It is a busy scene, with over twenty figures sitting, standing, leaning into and working alongside an extensive banquet table. People gather around this table mid-conversation or mid-feast. A newly married couple are shown at the centre, facing the viewer. The figures are predominantly white Europeans, but one exception to this is the young boy in the right foreground of the painting, who is shown to be Black African or perhaps Afro-Hispanic. The table is heavily laden with bread, apples,

chicken, and a cake decorated with small white and orange flowers. Large plates of food are being passed overhead and the table has been adorned with gold and red fabric, on top of which are white tablecloths decoratively edged with lace. Fine silks, embroidery, and expensive tableware add to the abundant scene. There are few architectural details to contextualise the setting; there is a single Doric column in the distance and some pilasters, while a swag of red cloth, similar to a theatrical curtain, cuts across the plain grey walls directly behind the feasting table. In this sense, the figures are suspended within a loosely classicised past.

Murillo has painted the moment in this Biblical story when Christ's first miracle is just about to happen or has just begun. The viewer cannot see either the water being changed into wine or the outcome of the miracle - maybe Murillo is playing with the characteristics of belief itself, that it cannot be seen or measured. By not clearly revealing the process of the miracle, he also relies on viewers knowing the Biblical story in order to make sense of the painting and to imagine the miracle for themselves. In doing so, this is arguably a form of flattery towards his patron and other contemporary elite viewers, who would have been thoroughly educated in Biblical texts.[7] This simultaneously asserts both their socio-economic status and their informed faith, as well as inviting them into the painting, perhaps as though they are being given exclusive access to Christ's first miracle and the founding of their faith. Murillo's educated contemporary viewers, and of course his patron Omazur, would have felt comfortable with the scene he presents; the bride and groom are clearly of high socio-economic status and so would have been relatable figures.

It has been proposed that Omazur and his wife Isabel Malcampo are themselves represented as the bride and groom, thus suggesting the work was made to celebrate and sanctify their actual marriage in 1672.[8] The Old Testament Scriptures speak of wine being a symbol of joy, so to run out of wine is, so to speak, to run out of joy (Book of Judges 9:13, Psalm 104:15 and Isaiah 55: 1-13 in the Old Testament typify this symbolism). This would imply that Murillo's portrayal of Christ blessing the marriage is a powerful gesture to immortalise it as a joyful occasion, one that is just, proper and permitted in the eyes of God. As the identity of the couple is not defined in the Gospel of John, this gave artists like Murillo the creative license to insert their own selected figures into their paintings of the story.[9] However the couple's identity is still disputed by scholars, particularly because some date the work several years earlier (around 1669-70) than the year of the couple's marriage in Seville.[10] The miracle within the Biblical story of the Marriage Feast at Cana is linked to a broader transformation that is fundamental to the Catholic faith: transubstantiation – the idea that during Mass, when consecrated in the Eucharist, the bread and wine used for Communion become the body and blood of Christ (either spiritually or symbolically, depending on one's beliefs). A person cannot convert to Christianity until they have had this bread and wine. Once consecrated by the priest, the simple everyday objects of bread and wine are, symbolically, are in a form with which anyone can easily engage. This suggests there are no obstacles to

faith other than one's own attitude and belief. Christ's presence in the bread and wine cannot be visually or scientifically proven, and therefore this presence corresponds to the virtue of faith. With this in mind, this transformation is symbolic of the transformative process of conversion itself. These notions are crucial for our following argument addressing the ways in which Murillo has communicated the story of the Marriage Feast at Cana in the Barber painting, and, specifically, how the inclusion and portrayal of the enslaved boy is fundamental to the artist's portrayal of this Biblical story and its meaning within the context of seventeenth-century Seville.

Servant or enslaved?

The figures in the process of filling numerous Sevillian water pots are in a prominent position to the right of the scene, signaling, in part, that they are integral to the miracle of the Marriage of Cana and instrumental in providing the wine to the newly married couple and their wedding guests (fig.3). The boy is situated just off centre of the composition, looking upwards towards the three servants providing and pouring the water. His hands fold around one of the water pot's rim and handle, perhaps indicating his eagerness to be part of the action. Compared to the guests around the table, three of the four servants are dressed in simple tunics, which leave the legs and arms of the man pouring water exposed. They are also some of the only figures depicted without elaborate headdresses and shoes, suggesting perhaps their status as servants. To try to find out who this boy may have been and what his inclusion in the painting may have meant, our first step was to consider how he is currently described in the interpretative label displayed next to the painting at the Barber. As with many labels referencing people in conditions of domestic servitude, the boy is referred to as a servant. We questioned if it is accurate to describe the boy as working consensually (with the choice to leave), or whether he was more likely to be in domestic enslavement?

In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, a high percentage of people of colour, whether enslaved or freed, lived in Seville. It was also a main centre for the slave trade in the Iberian Peninsula, which bolstered the wealth of the Spanish Empire.[11] At the height of the Spanish slave trade, in the mid-1500s, up to 2,000 enslaved people were forcibly brought from Africa to Spain each year. By 1600 Seville had the largest enslaved population in Europe outside of Lisbon,[12] and the enslaved population of Spain is estimated to have been 100,000.[13] The liberation of enslaved people was possible at this time, and in the 1600s the number of enslaved people being brought to Spain had dwindled due to both the competing demand for labour in the new world and a decrease in the Spanish population after the plague of 1640.[14] However, the historian Carmen Fracchia points out that the number of freed slaves in Spain was much smaller than the enslaved population.[15] Therefore, the inclusion of the boy in Murillo's painting should be considered in the context of a city highly populated by enslaved Black Africans and Afro-Hispanics.

Looking at the boy's dress could provide further clues to his identity and status. The boy is shown wearing a red-orange tunic, with intricate gold stitching and fastenings (Fig.3). He wears a white scarf and a blue bow around his neck. This is in contrast to the water carriers, who are wearing much simpler clothing, or are even partially unclothed. Enslaved people are often depicted wearing expensive clothes that had been bought by their 'owners' as an external display of wealth.[16] The boy's activity in the painting may support this interpretation: enslaved men were often water carriers in Spain, the boy's hands on the water pot could indicate the typical tasks awaiting him in adult life.[17] The description in the gallery label introduces the boy as a servant.[18] This may have come about due to his domestic setting, with ideas of enslavement perhaps being tied to plantations. However, a servant or an enslaved domestic worker were two distinctly different social and in fact legal positions. Fracchia describes the gap between the role of a butler for example and that of a slave as being 'insurmountable'.[19] Servants were not abducted, nor were they sold at auction, and the term also suggests that the work being carried out is consensual and paid for. Most enslaved Africans in Seville were abducted by the Spanish and Portuguese from Guinea Bissau, Guinea Conakry, Senegal, Gambia, and parts of Mali and Burkina.[20] They would then have been auctioned, often on the steps of the Cathedral in Seville, where young female slaves fetched the highest prices.[21] If the boy who modelled for this painting was a real person, it is likely he started out life in one of these countries, or that they may have been the homeland of his parents. Although white people were enslaved in this period, Black slaves suffered a greater degree of stigmatisation, even after gaining freedom, due to the derogatory and even violent associations with the word 'black' and the physical appearance of Blackness being synonymous with the condition of enslavement.[22] Enslaved people who rebelled against their captors would be punished by law, enforced by 'the Holy Brotherhood,'[23] by means of 'whipping, yokes placed on the hands, feet or neck ... sale to the colonies or donation to the crown for use as a galley slave'.[24] Indeed, Black skin was regarded by white Europeans in this period as a negative sign of 'otherness', that limited freedoms, rights, livelihoods and safety even of free men and women.[25]

The Boy's identity

After considering how to describe accurately the boy's status in the painting, the next step in our research was to look for an individual that may have been Murillo's model. The boy certainly seems to have been depicted as an individual, with convincing and expressive facial features, rather than as a stereotype. Scholar Peter Cherry has observed how Murillo was an innovator in including real people in works with a religious subject. Murillo was also interested in the everyday person, especially children, evidenced by the fact that he made many canvases of street children, for example *Three Boys* (c.1670, Dulwich Picture Gallery). It is likely Murillo would have chosen a model to whom he had easy access. Could the boy have been an enslaved domestic worker in the household of the patron Omazur, or perhaps the studio of the artist? Unfortunately, we were unable to find any records of Omazur's

household, or details of any enslaved Africans or Afro-Hispanic people who may have lived there. Murillo did, however, have enslaved workers in his studio, who mainly carried out menial work such as crushing and mixing pigments; this was a common practice for Sevillian painters at the time, and enslaved people could be sold on to make money for the artist if commissions became scarce.[26] With this in mind, we considered the possibility that one of the enslaved people within Murillio's household could be represented here as the boy in *The Marriage at Cana*.

Records show that there were at least five people of colour enslaved by Murillo over the whole of his career.[27] A boy named Thomas was born into Murillo's household in 1656, to an enslaved woman of colour, probably originally from North Africa. Until recently, Thomas seemed like the best candidate for the model for the other work by Murillo that features a young Black boy, *Three Boys,* as mentioned above.[28] As this work was painted around the same time as *The Marriage at Cana*, it is possible Murillo may have used the same model for both pictures.[29] However, a recent discovery has given us an account of what Thomas looked like, which does not match the figures in either of these two works by Murillo. In the documentation for his manumission in 1676, Thomas is described as 'white of good body and curly hair'.[30] The second candidate was Sebastien Gomez (born 1646), who worked in Murillo's household at the time the painting was made. As Sebastien would have been 26 years old at the time, he is perhaps an unlikely candidate for the artist's model. However, his story sheds light on the experience of enslaved workers in artist's studios. Gomez not only made the journey to freedom, but became known as an artist in his own right. Although this story is largely thought to be highly fictionalised, dramatised by later writers such as Hans Christian Anderson, there are similar accounts of the relationship between the two artists, Velásquez and his formerly enslaved assistant, Juan de Pareja (1606-1670).[31] It may be that the boy modelled for Murillo in conditions that left no traceable record, or that these records are yet to be uncovered. Another possibility is that the boy did not exist in reality and he was invented for the composition. Those considered 'other' were often imagined by artists, depicted as characters, rather than being based on specific individuals.[32] Although he does appear individualized, perhaps it is possible that he has been built up from sketches of real people over many years.[33] With this in mind, our next step is to consider what the boy's identity may have symbolised to seventeenth-century Sevillian viewers, and how his inclusion in this religious scene aids its meaning and makes him part of the primary subject of the painting.

Christian conversion at the heart of Murillo's painting

In the Biblical story of the Marriage Feast at Cana, one of the lessons that followers can learn is that obedience is key to being granted redemption, and, with this attitude, anyone can be saved. It was argued by elite society that the natural state of Black Africans and Afro-Hispanics was one of enslavement, in order for them to repent and be guided by 'Old

Christians' (an identity synonymous with slave owners) into a reformed purified state of 'New Christian' through baptism.[34] Black Africans and Afro-Hispanics were not normally considered to be Old Christians, as Spain deemed African cultures to be originally unaware of Christianity.[35] The Archbishop Juan Martinez Guijarro (Siliceo) even stated, in 1547: '[New Christians] still hold upon their lips the milk of their ancestors' recent perversity'.[36] This statement comes from the same year that the Purity of Blood Act was signed in Spain, which made a distinction between those who were recent converts to Christianity by baptism and those who had a long lineage of the faith. These beliefs perpetuated during the Early Modern period in which Murillo painted *The Marriage at Cana*, making Seville part of 'a society obsessed with "purity of blood"' and the baptism of those deemed to be impure.[37]

In seventeenth-century Seville, conversion was the desired outcome for not just people of African descent (as we shall explore later), but Jews, Muslims and anyone else deemed 'sinful' or 'other'. Fracchia has described how the word 'black' in seventeenth-century Spain designated a diversity of ethnic backgrounds and included not only people of colour but also, although to a lesser extent, Jewish people.[38] It is important to note that the Biblical story of the Marriage Feast at Cana is often thought to be centred around a Jewish marriage, thereby the realisation of Christ's identity signifies a story of conversion from Judaism to Christianity (Book of John, 2:6. Book of Luke [5:29-32] - Christ tells the Pharisees that his mission is to preach to sinners rather than to those already converted). This would have had particular resonance in seventeenth-century Spain, whose society was violently hostile towards Jewish communities.[39] Forms of control pervaded all levels of society and culture. The decrees of The Council of Trent held in Trent (Northern Italy, 1545-63) had a profound impact upon the perception of visual imagery in Spain. Fracchia explains that the bishops at the Council of Trent, and in particular those from Spain 'manipulated clients and artists to implement mechanisms of exclusion and domination of 'New Christian' subjects, such as the Afro-Hispanic people in the vast Spanish empire'.[40] With this in mind, the purpose of Murillo's painting, *The Marriage at Cana*, should be considered both within the context of its educational function, but also for its perceived value of reinforcing supremacy over those considered 'other'.

Murillo arguably references the practice of enforced Christianisation of enslaved Africans in Seville. He uses Biblical motifs of water and wine and the Eucharist to emphasise this notion and make it resonate with, and uphold the values of, those in the position of privileged white power in Seville during the Early Modern period. Indeed, a silver flash of water is, albeit subtly, a point of focus in the painting. The diagonal lines running through the composition - created by the clustered formation of the water pots, and Christ's focused gaze and that of the servants - point towards the water being poured from one pot to another. The way that both servants holding water pots seem to caress tenderly their curved sides heightens this sense of the importance and significance of their task. Murillo also shows us that the water is being poured alongside the bare arm of a servant. Both these

details could further hint at the conditions required for baptism, where water needs to be moving, and poured, over exposed flesh in order to serve the purpose of ritually carrying away one's 'impurities' - a symbolic cleansing from sin and guilt so they can pass into a new life as a Christian, transforming their identity.

The Spanish elite enforced baptism and saw it as a symbolic 'whitening' of Black Africans' bodies and souls, which Fracchia describes as being 'achieved by use of the symbols of purification and renewal'.[41] This was sometimes interpreted as a physical phenomenon in works of art and ephemeral media of the time, for example in the print *Baptism of the Ethiopian by Saint Philip* by Michel Lasne after Aubin Vouet (c.1640). The young man being baptised by Saint Philip next to a stream of running water has nothing Ethiopian about his appearance. The only clue to the ethnicity of the African man is in the written inscription below the image, which reads, in translation from the Latin: 'You are not washing the Ethiopian in vain. Do not stop. The water poured by the priest can illuminate the black night'.[42] The art historian Jean Massing argues that 'the effect of the inscription is to present the picture as a sort of miracle of St Philip - a case of a "successful" Ethiopian bath'.[43] The combination of this image and text certainly implies the 'success' of baptism to purify (whiten) his body and soul, where the change from dark to light implied by his apparent physical transformation from one ethnicity to another adds both clarity to this change and symbolic resonance. Furthermore, in 1627 the Jesuit Alonso de Sondoval wrote in his treatise on slavery; 'although they [slaves] are black to the eye, they can have the innocence and whiteness that Christ's blood gives to one who is washed in it'.[44] This reveals the extremities of the dichotomy at the time between notions of light and dark, and Blackness and whiteness of the soul - the 'colour' of one's moral, physical, religious and social identities. However, there was also unease about the extent to which someone could be completely 'whitened', which, in addition to Seville's obsession with ancestral lineage and purity of blood as described above, stems from the Biblical text, Jeremiah 13.23: 'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? 'Then may ye also do good that are accustomed to do evil?'.[45]

Murillo's painting suggests that Christ is not just performing the miracle for wealthy people, but for everyone - implying that everyone has the opportunity to be saved. After all, Christ is believed to be of the people, and was once a carpenter and thus an ordinary working man. For example, here he wears humble clothing and has bare feet, just like the servants. This emphasises Christ's humanity and the 'ordinariness' of the miracle. He also points towards common Sevillian water pots to aid his miracle, not to ornate vessels like the golden ewer on the table behind him, which alludes, to some extent, to a Eucharistic chalice. The boy, then, represents part of 'ordinary' society, that of enslaved people, who are also able to be saved and included in Christ's work. He therefore appears as a vehicle for the Christian message that promises Christ's redemption for any and every 'sinner'. The way he is shown to be witnessing the miracle - by appearing transfixed and intently and respectfully looking

up at the servants pouring water - could be read as the Christianisation of the boy. He is in the process of becoming a 'New Christian', therefore simultaneously emphasising his identity as an enslaved person. In this way, while his facial features are of an individual, his pose and expression build upon the insidious racist stereotype of enslaved people as gratified and docile.[46]

As Black subjects like Murillo's boy would not have had a choice in their conversion to Christianity, the presentation of eagerness arguably serves as an illusion of agency, thus giving a palatable framework to what was actually a highly violent practice. This would frame the painting as a positive image for white Spanish Christian viewers in seventeenth-century Seville, who would have regarded the boy's soul as innately 'evil', 'sinful' and Godless, but ultimately a soul that could be saved and made civilised by conversion to Christianity.[47] This belief gives some insight into the anxiety about Blackness in Seville at the time, where it was predominantly associated with hell, animality and irrationality - viewpoints that could be traced back to the Renaissance.[48] However, the painting ameliorates anxiety over the 'otherness' of Black Africans by anticipating a desired outcome - a harmonious Christian setting where every believer is contained within their appropriate roles. Even if the boy was modelled on a real individual, this suggests he is, to some extent, a token figure - a vehicle for this white Christian message of adherence and transformation of the 'other'.

If the boy in Murillo's painting was indeed enslaved by Omazur, then his depiction and centrality within the composition would serve to demonstrate Omazur's piety and righteousness for giving the boy his religious education and saving his soul.[49] From what we know from the contents of his art collection, Omazur was a devout Catholic and fascinated by religious art. In his collection, the largest subject category was saints and about 60% of his paintings by Murillo were religious works; his two largest works (and among his most expensive commissions) were *The Marriage at Cana* and the *Inmaculada*.[50] Both depict religious subject matter, the latter is an example of Murillo's best loved images, which present the Catholic dogma that Mary was conceived without sin. It is interesting that both of these grand paintings by Murillo are concerned with a main subject being pardoned from sin. This may suggest an emphasis on the pure foundations, the righteousness and the redemptive possibilities of the Christian faith, as well as an assertion of disciples' places within it - the very things with which Omazur's Sevillian society was so concerned. If so, these works act as a clear declaration of Omazur's faith and a testament of his commitment to Seville's socio-religious values. Did the fact that he was Flemish and not native to Seville fuel this possible desire to reflect and build upon such values, himself perhaps anxious not to be seen in any way as 'other'? After all, the earliest reference to Omazur in Seville is a document from 2nd July 1669 (only about three years before Murillo painted *The Marriage at Cana)*, which identifies him as a 'residente', a term that indicates a recent arrival in the city.[51] As such, this suggests how people from all levels of Early Modern Spanish society

could be scrutinised and subjected to some forms of conformity if deemed, in some way, 'other'. It also perhaps indicates the lengths to which they may go to conform, and how precarious power, prestige and control could be during this period.

Conclusion

This research aims to explore, critique and subsequently lead us away from inherited knowledges, or gaps in knowledge, that are centred around dominant white patriarchal experiences or world views. We hope this article has illustrated that Blackness was highly charged in Spanish society in the Early Modern period, with race and religion being tightly interconnected. We have considered the potential identity of the boy, his possible 'back story' of origin and what his life may have been like as an enslaved domestic servant or enslaved studio assistant. The image builds a picture of Christian harmony, when the reality for Africans and Afro-Hispanics would have largely been the opposite, one of violent restriction of selfhood, denouncement of their own religion and erasure of identity.

We set out to question received knowledge by making a case that there may be more to the boy's inclusion within the composition than simply his signification of the groom's/patron's wealth and status. Indeed, Murillo tells us about the boy's imposed identity by signifying that he is enslaved and by showing him witnessing the first miracle of Christ. By including the boy in *The Marriage at Cana* and making him a central part of the primary subject of the painting, we argue that Murillo builds an image of the 'other' under various forms of social control, while simultaneously and necessarily creating a picture of what white Spanish Christians would perceive as 'the self' or 'in-group'. In this way, *The Marriage at Cana* is as much about constructing whiteness as it is about the history of Black representation.

We, as museum professionals, recognise that dismantling dominant narratives in art museums is a monumental task that requires ongoing and committed work, continual re-looking and re-listening and rigorous self-aware critical reflection. We will build on this research and conduct analysis of other artworks through our collaborative work with curators, cultural professionals, academics, schools, families, artists and the public in order to strive towards more inclusive futures.

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Images

Fig. 1 The Marriage Feast at Cana, about 1672, oil on canvas, 179 x 235 cm. The Henry Barber Trust, the Barber Institute of Fine Arts, University of Birmingham.

Fig 2. The Marriage Feast at Cana, Gallery View.

Fig 3. The Marriage Feast, Detail of Sevillian water pots being filled.

[1] See Duncan's Museums and Citizenship, *Art Museums and the Ritual of Citizenship,* Routledge, 1994, p.102.
[2] A note on capitalisation: we have been guided by the work of leading authorities on the capitalization of the word 'Black', for example, David Olusoga's book, Black and British: A Forgotten History, 2016. We have adopted this current usage to acknowledge that although 'Black' can include multiple ethnic identities, it encompasses identities that have been specifically shaped by the legacy of Atlantic slavery and empire.
[3] Professor Carmen Fracchia, from the department of Cultures and Languages at Birkbeck University, is one of the few authorities on the subject of Black representation in the art of early modern Spain, although the majority of her published works focus on the art of Velazquez (1599-1660) rather than Murillo. See for example Fracchia, 'The Urban Slave in Spain and New Spain', *The Slave in European Art: From Renaissance Trophy to Abolitionist Emblem*, The Warburg Colloquia Series, Vol.20 (London, 2012).
[4] Ibid.
[5] See Fracchia, 'The Urban Slave in Spain and New Spain', p.204, and 'Metamorphoses of the self in early-modern Spain: Slave portraiture and the case of Juan de Pareja', Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal (eds.), *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, (Cambridge and New York, 2013), p.154.
[6] See Fracchia's '(Lack of) Visual Representation of Black Slaves in Spanish Golden Age Painting' in *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 2004, 10:1, pp.23-24.
[7] For example, see Antonio Frago's 'History of Literacy in Spain: Evolution, Traits, and Questions' in *History of Education Quarterly*, Winter 1990, Vol.30, No.4, pp.581-83.
[8] See Kinkead 1986, pp.132, 134-44, and Salomon & Treves 2017, pp.34, 37-38, 113, as referenced in Robert Wenley's entry for the exhibition catalogue edited by Ignacio Cano Rivero and María del Valme Munñoz Rubio, *Murillo IV Centenario*, Museo de Bellas Artes de Sevilla (29.11.2018-17.03.2019), Seville (Junta de Andalucía), 2018, pp.273-77, 483-84 [English], no.36.
[9] However, the bridal couple can be identified as John and Mary Magdalen in several scenes of the Marriage at Cana from Giotto to Hieronimus Bosch, perhaps because according to a late-medieval tradition, the wedding feast at Cana celebrated the marriage of John the Evangelist and Mary Magdalen. See J.P. Filedt Kok, 'Jan Cornelisz Vermeyen, *The calling of St John during the marriage at Cana*, Mechelen, c. 1530 - c. 1532', in J.P. Filedt Kok (ed.), *Early Netherlandish Paintings*, online coll. cat. Amsterdam 2010: hdl.handle.net/10934/RM0001.COLLECT.6422 (accessed 8 January 2021).
[10] See, for example, Robert Wenley, *Murillo IV Centenario*, pp.273-77, 483-84 [English], no.36.
[11] Fracchia, '(Lack of) Visual Representation', pp.23-34.
[12] Fracchia, 'The Urban Slave in Spain and New Spain', p.195.
[13] Thomas F. Earle, *Black Africans in Renaissance Europe*, (United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p.70.
[14] Fracchia, '(Lack of) Visual Representation' pp.23-34. See also Dominguez Ortiz in Morales et al (eds) II, (1999), pp.20-21. Further research is needed to explore the possible relevance of the 1640 plague to Murillo's work, and its impact on Africans and Afro-Hispanics.
[15] Fracchia, 'Constructing the Black Slave in Early Modern Spanish Painting', Tom Nichols (ed.), *Others and Outcasts in Early Modern Europe: Picturing the Social Margins*, (Aldershot, 2007), p.179.
[16] Titian created the earliest known freestanding portrait of an identifiable European individual with an attendant black African figure in his portrait of Laura Dianti (about 1523-29) now in a private collection. This became a prolific and extensive motif, common not just throughout Italy but also in the Low Countries, Great Britain, France and Germany, and in the nineteenth century it still flourished in Russia and the US. See David

Bindman and Henry Louis Gates Jr (eds.), *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Volume III: From the "Age of Discovery" to the Age of Abolition, Part 1: Artists of the Renaissance and Baroque,* (Harvard University Press, 2010), p.44.

[17] Fracchia, 'The Urban Slave in Spain and New Spain', p.202.

[18] The gallery label has since been updated, as a result of this research project, to refer to the boy as enslaved.

[19] Fracchia, '(Lack of) Visual Representation', p.28.

[20] Ibid., p.24.

[21] Ibid., p.28.

[22] Fracchia, 'The Place of African Slaves in Early Modern Spain', in A. Spicer and Stevens Crawshaw (eds.), *The Problem and Place of the Social Margins,* Oxford, 2016, p.161.

[23] Fracchia, 'The Urban Slave in Spain and New Spain', p.200.

[24] Fracchia, 'Constructing', p.186.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Carmen Fracchia and Hilary Macartney, 'The Fall into Oblivion of the Works of the Slave Painter Juan de Pareja', *Art In Translation*, Vol.4, Issue 2, (2012), pp.163-184.

[27] The documents relating to Murillo's life and work transcribed and published by Corpus Murillo: biografía y documentos P. Hereza - 2017 - Sevilla, Ayuntamiento de Sevilla.

[28] With thanks to Xanthe Brooke for interpreting and detailing *Corpus Murillo: biografía y documentos* P Hereza - 2017 - Sevilla, Ayuntamiento de Sevilla with regards to enslaved workers in Murillo's studio and household. Email to Robert Wenley, 24 July 2020.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Thomas's manumission document is contained in the folio of documents relating to Murillo's life and work, ibid.

[31] Larry H. Peer*, Transgressive Romanticism***,** (Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018), p.135. Juan de Pareja's notable works include a self-portrait, 1650, now in the Metropolitan Museum, New York and *The Calling of Saint Matthew*, 1661, Museo Del Prado. See Fracchia's analysis of how Pareja wrestled with his own race and religion in his art to transform his identity and social standing in 'Metamorphoses', pp.146-69.

[32] David Bindman, 'Subjectivity and Slavery in Portraiture: From Courtly to Commercial Societies', in Agnes Lugo-Ortiz and Angela Rosenthal (eds.), *Slave Portraiture in the Atlantic World*, (Cambridge, 2013), pp.71-88.

[33] Ibid., p.73, 77.

[34] Fracchia, *Black but Human: Slavery and Visual Arts in Hapsburg Spain, 1480-1700,* (Oxford, 2019), p.39.

[35] Fracchia, 'Metamorphoses', p.154, and Fracchia, 'Picturing the Afro-Hispanic struggle for freedom in early modern Spain', J. Branche (ed.), *Post/Colonialism and the Pursuit of freedom in the black Atlantic*, Routledge studies on African and Black diaspora, (Abington, 2018), p.16. There are some opposing arguments, when alignment could be drawn to Saint Philip, the Ethiopian saint as in the case of Pareja.

[36] Fracchia, 'Metamorphoses', p.154.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Fracchia, 'Picturing the Afro-Hispanic struggle for freedom in early modern Spain', p.5.

[39] For example, *conversos* (Jews who had converted to Catholicism in Spain, mostly as a result of the pogroms of 1391) were closely monitored and continually persecuted by the Spanish Inquisition. See Fracchia, *Black but Human: Slavery and Visual Arts in Hapsburg Spain, 1480-1700*, and 'The Place of African Slaves in Early Modern Spain'.

[40] Ibid.

[41] Ibid., p.42.

[42] 'Abluis Aethiopem, nec frustra. haud desine, noctem / Illustrare nigram flaminis unda potest'.

[43] Jean Michel Massing, 'From Greek Proverb to Soap Advert: Washing the Ethiopian' in *Journal of the Warburg and the Courtauld Institutes*, 58, (1995), p.190.

[44] Fracchia, 'The Place of African Slaves in Early Modern Spain', p.119.

[45] Ibid., pp.182-3.

[46] There are numerous historical records of confrontations between enslaved people and slave owners, for example, in Andalusia. Fracchia, '(Lack of) Visual Representation', p.28.

[47] Fracchia, *Black but Human: Slavery and Visual Arts in Hapsburg Spain, 1480-1700*, p.39.

[48] The 1490s is especially rich in pertinent images and texts, due at least in part to the increased presence of Africans in Italy as a result of the rise of the West African slave trade. Furthermore, there is a long tradition of identifying the Canaanite descendants of Noah's disobedient and mocking son Ham with whatever subaltern group a given culture tended to expropriate or enslave, and the idea that Noah's punishment of his son had given rise to the 'natural' enslavement of Black people reappears in Christian Renaissance writing. See David Bindman and Henry Louis Gates Jr. (eds.), *The Image of the Black in Western Art, Volume III: From the 'Age of Discovery' to the Age of Abolition, Part 1: Artists of the Renaissance and Baroque*, (Harvard University Press, 2010), ch.2. Also, see Stephen R. Haynes*, The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam,* (Princeton, 2003).

[49] It is worth noting that although conversion would not actually free the boy from slavery, Fracchia states that 'conversion to Christianity was the key to freedom from spiritual slavery'. Fracchia, 'Metamorphoses', pp.158-9. So, in some sense Christianisation was a powerful tool of inclusion for enslaved people, but equally - and mutually inclusively - about domination and ultimately the stigma of slavery and terrible social and physical conditions would stay the same.

[50] Duncan Kinkead, 'The Picture Collection of Don Nicolas Omazur' in *The Burlington Magazine*, Vol.128, No.995, Feb. 1986, (pp.132-144), p.135.

[51] Ibid., p.132. We intend to explore the Flemish experiences within Seville at this time in our future research to better build up a picture of Omazur's possible life in the city as a foreigner. This may potentially establish him as a foil to the enslaved boy, and allow us to explore the social mobility afforded to him and not to the latter.