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### Purity and Impurity of Blood in Early Modern Iberia

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## PURITY AND IMPURITY OF BLOOD IN EARLY MODERN IBERIA

*Rachel L. Burk*

The Spanish term *limpieza de sangre* and its Portuguese equivalent *limpeza de sangue* began as a legal designation of religious identity attributed to the supposed purity or impurity of one's blood. Instituted via local statutes beginning in the mid-1400s in Spain and a century later in Portugal, the *pureza* laws were propagated widely by the end of the sixteenth century in the whole of the Peninsula.<sup>1</sup> Local regulations on *limpieza-limpeza* prohibited recent converts to Christianity and eventually their descendants from holding select offices in government, the Church, guilds, schools, and universities. To qualify for these positions, proof of lineage free from Muslim and Jewish relatives even in generations past was required. With these entrance demands developed an inquisitional process for accessing and certifying a supposedly physical verity that ended in a set of documents called blood purity proofs, as well as a generalized social preoccupation with lineage.

Although the real discriminatory impact may have been small, the ideological shift blood purity instituted had far-reaching effects. From this point forward, identity – national, religious, ethnic – was associated with an internal differential, a difference in bodies regardless of creed. To be Old Christian (a *cristiano viejo* in Castilian, or *cristão-velho* in Portuguese) rather than a *converso* (converted Jew) or Christianized Moor (*Morisco* or *Mouresco*) bespoke an innate ancestral inheritance of superiority, registered physically in one's blood.<sup>2</sup>

The first blood purity law, the *Sentencia-Estatuto* for the Cathedral of Toledo issued in 1449, made explicit the association between genealogy and the physical body of Castilian subjects. The rules for excluding New Christians from Church employment emphasized that all *conversos* by their nature were *manchados* [stained] and thus *infames* [infamous], suggesting a religious category of lasting dishonor, a stain not removed by baptism akin to the curse of Ham. Envisioning this difference between peoples as explicitly corporal and located in the blood obviated practice, will, and belief in the creation of social identity. While medieval anti-Semitism had attributed to Jews a constellation of dishonorable qualities in addition to mistaken belief, blood purity located the source of infamy in a genealogical trace that could not be easily erased.

It can be said that blood law remained limited in scope, that in many places statutes went unenforced well into the sixteenth century, and that, in practice, the dispersed system of requirements was easy to sidestep. Nonetheless, the importance of blood purity is not that it did what it purported to do: that is, keep Iberian New Christians from participating in civic and

economic life on equal footing with Old Christians. Rather, its significance is as a new idea in the larger history of exclusion, as an early instance of the institutionalization of biopolitics, and an ideological inheritance left to the Spanish and Portuguese colonies, but once there transformed. Blood purity modeled a kind of body-based power relationship that, although in many cases more symbolic than real, marked a significant ideational step in the progression from medieval to modern imaginations of community.

### ***Ex illis: origins, laws, and blood purity as social phenomenon***

The close of the Christian Conquest in 1492 marked the end of the last Iberian Islamic polity and the ascent of Castile-Aragon as the most powerful kingdom on the Peninsula. The incipient consolidation of the Spanish nation-state, along with the founding of the Hapsburg empire and growth of both Iberian empires, led to the forced conversion of Jews, Moors, gypsies, Amerindians, and non-Arabized Africans to Christianity. Portugal, less powerful than in previous centuries, felt Castilian influence acutely during the Iberian Union (1580–1640), as Feros and Ponsen in this volume discuss. Throughout the period, Portuguese and Spanish kingdoms acted reciprocally, although many times distinctly, on matters of minority populations. At the same time, both societies confronted the creation of new social categories of Old and New Christian and the bringing of the whole of the Iberian populace under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition.

Late medieval Iberia was home not only to a significant Islamic presence, but also to a large, ancient, and robust Jewish population that formed an influential portion of society.<sup>3</sup> As of the 1300s, tensions between majority Christians and minority Jews and Muslims were on the rise because of economic instability, brought on in part by internecine war and bouts of plague; jostling between princes, nobility, and rising bourgeoisie; and the consolidation of Christian dominance among other factors.<sup>4</sup> By a century later under the Catholic Kings and with the conquest of Granada, the double movement of unification of Iberian kingdoms at home and expansion abroad brought an end to medieval *convivencia-convivência* between Muslims, Christians, and Jews, who had lived together as unequal partners throughout the eight centuries of the Islamic rule and Christian Conquest. In advance of the imposition of the blood purity statutes, the scapegoating of Jews led many to convert to Christianity in the late fourteenth century. This was most prominently the case after 1391 when a pogrom broke out in Seville, followed by violence against Jews in Toledo, Valencia, and Barcelona. Similar events followed in 1412. The first generations of Spanish *conversos* encountered a varied landscape for integration into Christian society. Before the hardening and proliferation of the blood purity doctrine, many found acknowledged routes to success via the Church or state or were incorporated easily into a growing urban bourgeoisie. This kind of public assimilation was made difficult by the Decree of Alhambra in 1492, which demanded conversion or expulsion for all Spanish Jews, as Rawlings in this volume elaborates.

Jews in Portugal received better protection from the Lusitanian monarchs well into the period of Union. The late medieval incidences of anti-Semitic violence in Portugal were markedly fewer, and the kingdom protected its Jewish and *converso* population for almost a century and a half after the pogroms, creating distinct circumstances for them once Catholic orthodoxy was finally enforced. João II (1481–1495) resisted Spanish pressure to expel his Jewish population, and his successor, Dom Manuel I (1495–1521), managed a détente with Spain that allowed *conversos* religious and social latitude. As a result of Alhambra, approximately 120,000 Spanish Jews took refuge in Portugal legally in the 1490s. While the reprieve from mandated conversion was short – the official order came in 1497 – Jews and nominal *conversos*

had fifty years mostly free from persecution before the Portuguese Inquisition was founded in 1536 (Costigan 2010).

Moors under Christian rule were less often victims of mob violence because they tended to live in isolated rural communities and had a less visible role in the economy. Indeed in Portugal the last vestiges of Moorish presence were gone by 1496. With the conquest of Granada, however, Castilian monarchies turned their attention to the remaining concentrated Moorish population in Iberia. After short-lived assurances that Granadines could remain Muslim, they were Christianized by force in the first two decades of the sixteenth century. Repressive edicts, prohibiting the use of Arabic along with other practices as much cultural as religious, followed, fomenting dissent that erupted in the Alpujarras War (1568–1571). As a consequence, Granadine *Moriscos* were dispersed by royal order to smaller communities and, although Christian, eventually expelled (1608–1614). Different from *conversos*, *Moriscos* were regularly seen as a Fifth Column, as colluding with the powerful Turkish empire. As several recent historical studies have elaborated, this slowly realized eviction was less than absolute: the Expulsion often ordered *Morisco* children into the care of Christian families. As well, there were many Ricotes, Sancho Panza's *Morisco* friend who, once expelled, sneaks back into Spain, a not unsurprising outcome among a group of Christians with weak ties to the larger Islamic world.

While throughout the sixteenth century New and Old Christians alike sought a peaceful incorporation of former religious minorities into the majority, *pureza de sangre-sangue* grew up to counteract the movement towards sanctioned assimilation. The humanistic vision of a big-tent Christian nation gave way to a more complex reality of official intolerance – at times acute – and extra-official lenience.

Out of this complex political and social landscape arose the doctrine of blood purity. Often referred to in relation to official statutes, blood purity extended beyond its initial life as a legal mechanism and grew into a full-fledged culture-wide obsession by the turn of the seventeenth century. What are often considered the first blood purity statutes were instituted by the ambitious mayor of Toledo, Pedro Sarmiento, in 1449. They banned *conversos* from holding Church positions on the basis not of any misdeed but genealogy as manifested in their impure blood, in the terms of the statute. Sarmiento's decree was one act in a larger revolt against Castilian King Juan II and his proxy, Álvaro de Luna, who was sympathetic to Jews and a *converso* himself. It concerned the imposition of what many Toledans considered an unjust tax in support of the Castilian war against Aragon. In response to the levy, a crowd attacked Alonso Cota, a *converso* tax collector and landowner, along with other wealthy New Christians in the Magdalena neighborhood. The blood purity statute was in support of the mob. When Toledo came back under monarchical control in 1451, Juan II forgave the rebels but disputed blood purity. Early incidents of blood purity discrimination suggest the ways in which it began as a convenient excuse, a secondary “offense” that would become primary, and that it did not have a stable coalition that supported blood purity so much as it was used opportunistically as a mechanism in larger politics (Sicroff 1985, 51–56).

Blood purity never constituted pan-Iberian law although at its height requirements were in place at a broad swath of religious, political, and social institutions. Instead, the statutes appeared unsystematically and spread piecemeal, reflecting the diffuse character of authority in the period and the debate that *limpieza-limpeza* provoked. Religious brotherhoods, churches, cathedrals, individual trade unions, schools, universities, and city governments established their own policies on blood purity, demanding “pure bloodedness” of their members in fits and starts. In the course of progressive implementation, requirements for blood purity were sometimes rescinded, reinstated, vigorously challenged, and kept but not enforced. The end result,

however, was the impression of a general saturation that encouraged intense concern for blood purity as part of the culture of honor.

Soria Mesa (2013) among others has showed the ways in which blood purity postulated the far-reaching exclusion of former religious minorities, creating an image of what we might now call ethnic cleansing so impactful that it remains to the present. The reality was distinct, however. “The spectacular façade” (11) of blood purity law masked the documented presence of *conversos* in all ranks of Spanish government and aristocracy, not only in the fifteenth century as F. Márquez Villanueva (1965) had detailed previously, but throughout the period in which blood purity was on the books. Soria Mesa identifies a number of avenues for eluding blood purity requirements, from the common practice of falsifying proofs to the equally common practice of paying for advancement, including noble titles.

Blood purity grew up as a social phenomenon with legal grounding from the fifteenth through the end of the sixteenth century, when it reached a stable form. It went into decline by the end of the seventeenth century. Official suppression of the distinction between Old and New Christian was enacted by law in Portugal in 1773 and in Spain in 1870.

Scholars have offered differing accounts of what blood purity did to early modern society on large scale and whom it benefited. One significant result was that the spread of blood distinctions potentially provided every Old Christian Spaniard with a claim to a kind of nobility, particularly in the North where the Islamic empire ruled for only a short period or not at all. Everyone who could assert Old Christian status gained honorable standing (“honra de los villanos” in the term of the *comedias* of the time), conveying moral-cultural capital to non-nobles although no explicit legal rights. The role of the lower castes in upholding the statutes was substantial in the process for proving or disproving purity. The Santo Oficio demanded testimonies to lineage and denunciations by neighbor and kin, institutionalizing a form of community self-monitoring that created fear, regardless of ancestry. Kamen (1986) has argued that blood purity at first served as a check on the rising bourgeoisie and later brought together the rural peasantry with the urban underclass, forming a national popular culture that could be directed from above.

### “Raza en los linges se toma en mala parte:” blood purity and the history of race

Early modern forms of exclusion are not the same as “race” in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, notably in the later period’s emphasis on visible, external physical traits to distinguish one race from another.<sup>5</sup> Nonetheless, the early modern discourse of *limpieza-limpeza* in Iberia represents a critical transition in European thought from conceiving of divisions between what had been “peoples” or “nations” as multivariable, based on geography, culture, common history, beliefs, and caste as well as bodies, to a taxonomical system based explicitly and essentially on physicality and thus reducing difference to a single, unchanging term. In Covarrubias’s *Tesoro de la lengua castellana o española* (e.p. 1611; 2006), he lists meanings for *raza* in horse breeding and weaving before arriving at “race in lineage,” which he defines as having “some Jewish or Muslim race.” Although in later manifestations *raza-raça* will come to mean skin color, the religio-racial identities discussed here did not correspond in any meaningful way to darkness or lightness of complexion. Fuchs (2007) explains: “[B]lackness emphatically does not equal Moorishness within Spain. Instead Spanish racial hysteria focused on covert cultural and religious practices, and on the much more ambiguous register of blood” (95).

Balibar and Wallerstein (1991), Mariscal (1998), and Mignolo (2007) have offered a corrective to generalist histories of race that disregarded Portugal and Spain, insisting on their

centrality and the idea that the conceptual framework for race is born of religious difference and the suppression of Judaism and Islam in early modern Iberia. It is this proto-racial foundation, they proffer, which in turn is translated, adapted, and expanded by post-Enlightenment science and philosophy.

In Hispanism, the relationship between early modern blood purity and race has been at issue since the 1940s. Maravall (1979), Roth (1940), and Sicroff (1985) postulated a clear link to post-Enlightenment racism, while Kisch (1943) and Márquez Villanueva (1965) objected strongly to the notion of blood purity as a conceptual or practical forerunner of contemporary race. More recent historians and cultural critics, particularly Hering Torres (2003, 2012), Martínez (2008), and Nirenberg (2009) have eschewed easy anachronism and begun rethinking the premises of modern race in ways which allow us to respect continuities with past forms of difference as well as their historical specificity. The first generations of race theorists insisted on a time frame that views the advent of race as a radical disjunction from the past and a unique hallmark of modernity unknown to the premodern era. In this, they err, these critics would say, in replicating a fallacy of racism by insisting on a single definition of race rather than viewing the phenomenon as a related “series of historical racisms” in Martínez’s term or “imaginaries of racism” according to Hering Torres. Further, within Iberian Studies, race and racial identity have tended to remain either peninsular or colonial, a trend reversed by recent transatlantic studies (Costigan 2010; Herzog 2012, 2013; Martínez 2008), as well as those that consider other parts of the empires such as Barreto Xavier (2003, 2012).

While unprecedented, the Castilian blood purity statutes did not appear *ex nihilo*. They grew out of a specific political and social climate in late medieval Iberia and have a place in larger religious-theological and cultural developments at work throughout Europe. Anidjar (2005) insists that conditions that facilitated the emergence of blood purity in the Iberian Peninsula (concern over the Eucharist; growing blood piety such as the veneration of blood relics and miracles of the stigmata; the association of Jews with blood, most notably the so-called blood crimes; etc.) were common to all of western Christendom.

Thanks to their inherent “impurity,” *conversos*’ status was as heretics, disobeyers within the fold, rather than heathens, disbelievers outside the fold. It was this double proximity, both spiritual and physical, that supposedly threatened Old Christians. (Unlike Jews and Muslims, New Christians no longer lived in separate enclaves and were party to Church institutions.) The lexicon of contamination, suggesting that the presence of New Christians put the orthodoxy of Old Christians in jeopardy, confused religion and biology. Alarm at what *conversos* might say or do in the company of non-*conversos* became a fear of their mere physical presence. This line of thought may have begun in fears about judaizing, that is, *marranos*, cheek to jowl with Old Christians, sharing their beliefs and thus spreading heresy. By 1600, however, the material body was so conflated with religion that it usurped belief as the more important term. As Nirenberg explains, “Judaizers were to be identified by their behavior, but that behavior only gained meaning in light of their genealogy” (1996, 82).

Root (1988) places the *limpieza de sangre* statutes in a dynamic relationship with an ideological progression taking place over the course of the sixteenth century in which Catholic orthodoxy and *españolidad*, a kind of proto-national identity, became equivalent. Heresy came to function as a social and genealogical category, rather than one purely indicative of religious affiliation (118). In the mandated culture of Catholicism, customs of all kinds, even those less associated with religious belief per se like language, dress, and cuisine, came under scrutiny and were lauded as orthodox or suppressed as heterodox. That heterodoxy was then understood as evidence of innate difference. Edicts of Faith, issued regularly by the Inquisition, criminalized cultural practices such as the use of Arabic and Hebrew, marking the Sabbath on

Saturday with clean linen and special foods, and avoidance of pork and wine. Distinguishing between Catholic and Moorish or Jewish conventions was not simple. Given the long history of *convivencia-convivência*, practice was often as much a cultural and regional as a religious matter, as explored by Fuchs (2009).

Blood purity laws initially extended the period of transition from one religion to another; the instantaneous conversion of baptism became a period of assimilation and a generation of converts, which in turn extended to generations. Ultimately, as the laws grew in scope to affect four or more generations post-conversion, *limpieza-limpeza* undermined genuine conversion under most circumstances. Blood purity naturalized social and cultural diversity, thus making it absolute in a way previously inconceivable, given that the multi-fold cultural, religious, historical, and geographical difference of old – what we would now call ethnicity – was inexact, open to conversion, chance, and change. At the level of the individual, blood purity became fundamental to creating and reproducing a new norm: old Christian, male, and aristocratic. At a larger societal level, blood purity promoted a new model of community that affected understanding of related notions such as Christendom, nation, and empire. It is the reduction of variables, hardening of categories, and prioritizing of physicality that are critical to modern notions of race that suggest that sixteenth-century blood purity should be viewed as continuous with race in its post-Enlightenment form.

### ***Sangre enemiga, alma israelita: debate and resistance***

From its beginnings, the notion of blood purity provoked a vigorous debate within the Old Christian community, as well as among New Christians, during much of the sixteenth century and again in the 1620s. *Pureza* as concept and institution met with vocal resistance from many quarters: among outspoken *conversos* and *Moriscos* such as Miguel de Luna and Francisco Nuñez de Mula; among a few aristocrats who stood to lose standing because of prevailing documented Jewish ancestry and agricultural workers who farmed their lands; among reformers, humanists, and *alumbrados* who saw it as a perversion of Christ's Millennialism. Even some in positions of power openly resisted the statutes: Ignatius of Loyola famously refused to demand proof of purity for entrance into the Jesuits.

The founding tract against blood purity was published within a year of the events of Toledo. Alfonso de Cartagena's *Defensorium Unitatis Christianae* [*A Defense of Christian Unity*] (1450), an apology for *conversos*, argues that blood purity contradicts long-held notions of Christian community and denies the efficacy of baptism to incorporate new followers into the fold.<sup>6</sup> Cartagena uses the Old Testament story of Ruth, who converted to Judaism, as exemplary of the primacy of faith over blood, posed in no uncertain terms as the substance of difference: while she was born of "foreign blood, or better said enemy blood," by accepting the true faith she made "her soul an Israelite" (Mariscal, 190).

Many critics of blood purity pointed to the well-known practice of intermarriage in noble families that threatened to jeopardize their standing if *limpieza-limpeza* was taken into consideration. In 1449, Fernán Díaz, relator of Juan II of Castile, pointed to the riskiness of a genealogical system for the aristocracy, contending that most noble families had *converso* ancestry (Nirenberg 2007, 82). Indeed, the most infamous text of the age, the *Libro verde de Aragón* (1507), elaborated the "tainted" lineage of noble families, exposing just this caste vulnerability.<sup>7</sup>

Once blood purity had a firm foothold, reformers penned critiques to the end of changing its applications. These included Fray Domingo de Baltanás's *Apologia* (1557), Fray Luis de León's *De los nombres de Cristo* (1583), and Juan de Mariana's *De rege et rege institutione*

(1598). In this vein, Fray Augustín Salucio in his *Discurso* (1599) suggests any test of blood purity should include an evaluation of Christian knowledge and practice. Further, he argues, dividing the Christian community into lesser and greater goes against the Pauline ideal of unity expressed in his letter to Galatians. All professed believers should be incorporated into the *corpus mysticum*, the mystical body of the Church, which constitutes the spiritual community of Christians, defined by practicing the sacraments, not birthright.

Miguel de Cervantes takes up this anti-*limpieza* strain of Christian thought, influenced by Erasmian humanism, in *El retablo de las maravillas* (published 1615) and *Numancia* (1582–87), as explored in Burk (2012). As Cervantes suggests in his one-act *Retablo* with satirical incisiveness, the doctrine preys on our worst instincts and fears of exclusion. His two shyster play producers, Chanfalla and Chirinos, convince a small town's leaders that a stage show, in which nothing actually occurs, can only be seen by the pure-blooded. No one fesses up to the sham for fear of betraying that they cannot see the production and doubt their own "purity" for it. The comedy closes with the arrival of a soldier unaware of the terms of the fake production. He sees nothing on stage, says so, and is taunted by the frenzied participants who call him "Ex illis" ["one of them"]. Enraged, he slays the audience, leaving Chanfalla and Chirinos to put on their performance again the following night, suggesting that adhering to blood purity is fatal yet the premise lives on.

### Empires of blood

Blood purity arose in the Peninsula during the incipient moments of Iberian colonialism, as Portugal rapidly expanded its worldwide medieval possessions and Castile founded the first modern European empire. Recent transatlantic scholars such as Costigan (2010), Herzog (2012, 2013), Martínez (2008), and Monteiro et al. (2011) have explored the relationship between blood purity and the hierarchical *sistema de castas* that grew up in many parts of Latin America under Portuguese and Spanish rule. Others such as Barreto Xavier (2003, 2012) have considered blood purity as influential in race/caste structures in colonies outside the Americas, such as that in Goa. Although resulting social orders were manifestly different from those in early modern Iberia, blood purity bequeathed to the Spanish and Portuguese empires two ideological tenants of social organization: genealogy and faith. It passed on to colonial subjects the notion that inheritable characteristics, originating in religion, left a bodily trace.

To begin with, assuring blood purity was a determining factor in whom the Spanish allowed to immigrate abroad during most of the colonization period. Despite stipulations against New Christian colonizers, which were easily got around according to Soria Mesa, there were early-established and well-documented crypto-Jewish communities in Mexico City among other Latin American communities, as studied by Gitlitz (1996) and others. Cook (2016) even offers evidence of American *Moriscos* in Spanish America, although numbers were surely smaller. Because of the late introduction and slow implementation of the Inquisition to the Lusitanian empire (only beginning in 1596), Portugal allowed the immigration of Jews and *conversos* to the Americas early in colonization, many of whom played pivotal roles in the founding of Portuguese Brazil as well as the expansion of trade (Bomfim 2008, Olival Rigor 2004). But even the most generous estimates suggest that Old World New Christians were but a small percentage of colonial populations. Nonetheless, the specter of Moorishness and the threat of judaizing had outsized influence in these societies, especially in the first centuries after conquest.

To wit, the impact of blood purity in the American and Indian colonies was as a classificatory framework that lingered in spirit even though the European historical reality it described was distant in time and space. Martínez asserts that Iberian "blood purity," along with "caste"



and “race,” were reformulated in the distinct and changing circumstances of sixteenth- to eighteenth-century Mexico that included native communities with pre-Hispanic nobilities, African slaves, *mestizos*, and poor Spaniards. By the late seventeenth century, a tiered system of social classification based on European, indigenous, and African ancestry had grown up that also figured in caste and belief. *Limpieza de sangre* in this context was often vexed: for example, an Aztec could be seen as both pure, of “unmixed” blood and belonging to the parallel Indian Republic, and impure, that is, non-Spanish and non-Christian. The secularization of the concept in the eighteenth century linked purity to whiteness, resulting in an elaborated race rubric based on miscegenation and exemplified in *casta* paintings. Even then, however, the remaining religious dimension to late colonial categories of identity suggest the roots of the *sociedad de castas* found in blood purity.

The early establishment and longevity of Portuguese Goa (1510–1961), on the Indian west coast, makes it an interesting case. The majority of Indians under Portuguese rule converted to Christianity from Hinduism quickly after conquest. Xavier (2012) points out the ways in which blood purity standards were a Portuguese imposition, but also in juxtaposition with similar Indian concepts, as part of elaborated notions of bodily purity. Genealogical purity was a term in power struggles between elites to establish dominance, notably in opposition between the Portuguese born in India (*casados*) and those from Portugal (*reinóis*); the *reinóis* regularly accused the *casados* of mixed blood. The Goan colonial race/caste system included a “race of Indian,” that was roughly equivalent to Jew or Moor in the Iberian context. Equally the pre-colonial purity discourses meant that *limpeza de sangue* served not only as an “imperial tool for social differentiation,” but also as a “vehicle for empowerment of the colonized,” that led to the association of whiteness with purity in order to ensure Portuguese dominance (Xavier 2012, 143).

### “Bloody” Spain and the Black Legend

The irony of the blood purity doctrine and its performative insistence on purity as prerequisite to national identity was its perception outside the Peninsula. Early modern anti-Spanish propaganda, particularly of the 1580s and ’90s, characterized Iberia as oriental as part of efforts to challenge its imperial domination by England, the Netherlands, Italy, and France. “Blood” was a central term condemning Spain’s growing reputation as violent (“bloody” and “blood-thirsty”) and racially, as well as religiously, impure (“of mixed blood”). Born of imperial rivalry, the Black Legend was a tenacious discourse of Spanish difference that conflated violence, heretical – this often meant Catholic as well as Muslim and Jewish – practice, and “blackness,” qualities associated with or even ascribed to blood. In this view the Spanish were characterized by a fundamental, suspect, and unique hybridity, Spain as Europe’s mongrel nation. Significant, much Black Legend rhetoric read Spain’s continued Moorishness as physical as well as moral “blackness,” although such an association had no currency in Spain itself (Fuchs 2007, 116–9).

It is fair to point to a broader, although less marked, anti-Iberian sentiment in Europe: Portugal was often painted with the same brush as Spain, but without the vehemence that its neighbor elicited, given the larger country’s political and imperial weight. While Portugal escaped some of the negative repute of African-ness, at least in early modernity, anti-Lusitanian sentiment pegged Portuguese culture as appreciably Jewish, and Iberians abroad were often labeled “Jews” contemptuously.

## Conclusion

Viewed transhistorically, blood purity served as a transitional concept, located in between older discourses on purity and modern race, with elements of both. The symbolic function of blood purity, its propagandistic role in creating embodied social categories, was crucial, though it did not reliably fulfill its stated intent. Through blood purity, the body itself came to be seen as recalcitrant: it passed on group, rather than exclusively familial, identity, irrespective of an individual's actions or desires. For all the instances in which pure-bloodedness ended up being a porous category, the idea of a physical, transmittable inheritance of religio-racial identity and its institutionalization contributed to an epistemic change in the European notions of collective identity.

## Notes

- 1 The initial comprehensive historical studies of *limpieza de sangre* come from Caro Baroja (1961), Domínguez Ortiz (1955), Márquez Villanueva (1965), and Sicroff (1985). More recent contributions in monographs and broader works include Böttcher et al (2011), Hering Torres (2003, 2012), Hernández Franco (1996, 2011), Kamen (1986, 1996, 1999), Maravall (1979), and Méchoulan (1981). Portuguese blood purity has received recent attention by Barreto Xavier (2003, 2012), Figuerôa-Rêgo (2008), and Olival (2004).
- 2 *Converso* refers to converts from Judaism and their descendants in Portuguese and Spanish, but the term could indicate either Jewish or Muslim converts, depending on the situation. *Morisco* – *mouresco* (little Moor) always pertains to those converted from Islam. *Cristianos nuevos* – *crístãos-novos* includes both and was a less precise term used to differentiate new converts from *cristianos viejos* – *crístãos-velhos*.
- 3 Other European kingdoms exiled, or attempted to exile, their smaller populations of Jews by the twelfth century while Jews often prospered under medieval Iberian rulers, both Muslims and Christians.
- 4 Mounting conflict between religious populations in late medieval Iberia was a complex phenomenon. See Netanyahu (1995) and Nirenberg (1996).
- 5 For a discussion of the early modern terminology of race in Spain, see Hering Torres (2003); for Spanish America, see Hill (2015). For a broader study of racial lexicon in early modernity, see Loomba (2002).
- 6 Kamen (1996) details the movement against blood purity, with Cartagena as point of departure. Amelang (2013) traces different trajectories for *morisco* and *converso* communities throughout Iberia, including the resistance of Granadan Old Christians to laws that would discriminate against the majority of their fellow *granadinos*.
- 7 *El libro verde* and *El tizón de la nobleza* were anonymous compilations of genealogical information on principal noble families that cast doubt on the purity of lineage of many; copies were eventually banned. See Beusterein (1998).

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