

This book does an admirable job of setting out a figure long recognized as both significant and shadowy. At one point, Monfort reminds us that medical humanism was hardly one thing. Despite his time at Wittenberg, Cornarius later told his students and colleagues at the University of Marburg that his medical teachers there had been “untaught, unlearned, and sometimes even illiterate in their teaching” (“homines indocti, ineruditi, aliquando etiam ipsarum literarum lectionis ignari,” 328). Monfort suggests that this reveals tensions between versions of medical humanism of the early sixteenth century. Three decades ago, Vivian Nutton suggested that in the late sixteenth century Hippocrates rose in favor, compared to Galen. Monfort not only supplies evidence that Latin translation facilitated Hippocrates’s rise, but that such translation was combined with programmatic efforts to offer alternative accounts of disease. Translation was a core tactic in the politics of early modern medical knowledge.

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*Le sang en Espagne: Trésor de vie, vecteur de l'être, XV<sup>e</sup>–XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècles.*

Christine Orobítg.

Corps et âmes. Aix-en-Provence: Presses Universitaires de Provence, 2018. 418 pp. €29.

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In her fascinating and eloquent monograph Christine Orobítg explores the meaning and virtues of blood in medieval and early modern Iberia. The Spanish medical treatises referenced in her study overlap with those from other parts of Europe and represent a clear continuity with theories of humoral pathology firmly rooted in classical antiquity. And yet, as her book clearly shows, there are particular traits in an Iberian context, which are explored in a series of essays that can be read both separately and as an ongoing narrative.

Spain’s many centuries under Muslim rule and its sizable populations of Jews, conversos, and Romany were instrumental in the Iberian sovereigns’ later top-down ethnic and social regulation and hierarchization of their subjects according to the ominous concept of *limpieza de sangre*. The belief in insurmountable differences between Iberia’s inhabitants rooted in their seemingly incompatible blood (which could not even be overcome by conversion or intermarriage) would contribute significantly to the later development of racism and anti-Semitism. This obsession with blood, however, targeted not only the ethnic groups of the Spanish kingdoms and their overseas empire, but also Spain’s own neighbors, its women, and its poor. Through their selective reading of the mythical and imaginary history of Iberia during and before the Roman Empire, Spanish chroniclers presented the Iberian descendants of Hercules as a race almost twice as old and pure as the French. And while almost a millennium of Muslim rule and presence in Iberia was hard to ignore in such narratives, documented cases of intermarriages

and interaction with the foreign conquerors was blamed primarily on the bad blood of Jews and a few rotten apples among the old Christians.

In a system of hierarchies and correlations blood was seen as by far the most noble of the four bodily humors, a status that corresponded to the primacy of the heart among the bodily organs, the sun amid the heavenly bodies, or the king among his subjects. In such treatises the fair, sanguine Christian noble born under Jupiter was contrasted to the lowly and melancholic races born under Saturn. Medical treatises suggested that the generosity and fair complexion (and the love of honest work) of the well-bred Spaniard was the product of an extremely low percentage of black bile in his veins, compared to the more avaricious and darker races and religious minorities where this humor would prevail and often lead its carriers to exploit their generous Christian hosts.

Treatises on humoral pathology were furthermore used to promote theories of the inferiority of female blood, and even the potentially poisonous and lethal properties of menstrual blood. Since Aristotle, this ominous substance was said to have killed both plants and living creatures (fruit would fall from infected trees, metals would rust and darken, and dogs would become rabid upon direct contact), as repeated for centuries by authors such as Isidore of Seville and numerous later authorities. The paranoia surrounding a belief system of confessional, ethnic, and social purity was manifest in numerous ways. Mules and other half-bloods had allegedly not been permitted into Noah's ark, according to the *Discurso sobre la fuente de la verdadera nobleza* from 1616, and therefore no hidalgo could risk his noble lineage by producing *bastardos* among inferior classes and races. There were some dissenting voices, however, who suggested that Jews should not forever be vilified for their deicide, just like a son should not be blamed for crimes committed by his father. In the clergy, moreover, there were examples of social mobility that seem to contradict the idealized rigid caste and class society proposed in contemporary treatises on nobility and body politics.

Orobítg has left no stone unturned in her analysis of medical, legal, and literary sources dealing with the properties and virtues of blood within the Spanish realms. Perhaps a chapter on the visual arts could have supplemented her treatment of the numerous written sources. In their hyper-realistic depictions and sculptures of blood-soaked bodies, pulsing veins, and open wounds, Spanish artists were unequaled until the era of twentieth-century special effects. Not only were the Spanish kingdoms built with blood, sweat, and tears, but their administrative, medical, and artistic heritage reveals an almost obsessive focus on bodily fluids, with blood at center stage, as is revealed clearly in this fine monograph.

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