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Cook, Karoline P. Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America

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[See table of contents](#)

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du dialogue érasmien » occupe les pages 95 à 108 —, ce livre illustre la longévité savante et la pragmatique du dialogue, précisément, érasmien : une remise en cause de l'autorité admise pour un véritable partage de la parole. L'on ne saurait penser meilleur hommage à un collègue et à son œuvre que d'avoir ainsi donné un ouvrage de référence sur un sujet qu'il avait développé, et d'avoir démontré, par les textes et par leur analyse, l'importance des échanges d'idées.

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Cook, Karoline P.

Forbidden Passages: Muslims and Moriscos in Colonial Spanish America.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016. Pp. 261 + 3 maps. ISBN 978-8122-4824-1 (hardcover) US\$45.

In 1594 the Spanish-born María Ruiz denounced herself to the Inquisition in Mexico City. Married to an old Christian merchant, she wished to eradicate the traces of Islam that she had learned in childhood and be fully reconciled to the Catholic Church. With this intriguing case, Karoline Cook draws the reader into a fascinating world of intersecting and conflicting identities. It is well known that early-modern Spanish authorities were obsessed with religious and ethnic purity. To ensure this goal, the crown exported the Reconquista against Islam to its growing global empire and established colonial inquisitions in Lima (1570), Mexico City (1571), and Cartagena de Indias (1610). It also promulgated the “purity of blood” statutes that decreed that no one tainted by Jewish or Muslim blood could hold office in government or the church, or gain *encomiendas* (grant of indigenous labourers). For Spanish rulers, the empire was a body politic needing protection from the taint of Muslim, Jewish, and Protestant infection. They wanted the Amerindians to have absolutely no contact with the Muslims or new Christians, to ensure that their conversion to pure Catholicism was unimpeded. It was thus decreed illegal for anyone not in possession of documentary evidence of purity of blood to cross the Atlantic; yet Cook presents a significant number of cases where Moriscos and Muslims did just that. Her analysis of these examples sheds new light on the experience of Moriscos in the Americas.

Deftly analyzing inquisitorial and court records and colonial legislation, Cook reveals how Iberian anxiety over purity of blood was transported across the Atlantic along with Moriscos and *conversos*. The vast expanse of the empire made effective oversight impossible. Competing jurisdictions, usually between bishops and inquisitors or ecclesiastical and state officials, also opened cracks through which Morisco slaves, sailors, translators, and others could slip across the ocean. New World governance was relatively weak, and in the early days of European settlement it was possible for soldiers of new Christian background to achieve *encomiendas* through their bravery, or for Muslim slaves to marry into old Christian families and gain their freedom. Cook also exposes how a few Moriscos or new Christians could inspire “extraordinary fears” among Spanish imperial authorities already shaken by the Morisco uprisings in Iberia.

In New Spain, Iberians thus negotiated a range of complex interpersonal and social relationships wherein a hastily expressed slur of “Morisco” could set off an inquisitorial investigation or a legal rebuttal to protect a reputation. Conversely, if one wanted to get rid of a current holder of an office or *encomiendas* to benefit oneself, a suggestion of Morisco ancestry could work wonders. Away from the inquisitorial oversight of Lima or Mexico City, however, people with suspect lineages could easily live as old Christians and interact with indigenous residents and African slaves. In her chapters on medical and magical practices, Cook demonstrates how Morisco practitioners not only possessed reputations as successful healers and diviners, but adopted and adapted various rituals, recipes, and incantations from Catholic and even African traditions to appease a Christian clientele. Inquisitors attempted to disentangle these elements so as to discern the natural from the demonic, looking especially for references to blowing on the ill, drawing sacred characters, wearing talismans, or consuming words written on paper or food as evidence of Islamic influence, along with the more typical search for signs of scepticism toward the Trinity. When one healer claimed that his breath worked to cure an illness because he had a “Holy Christ” on his palate (110), we see the fusion of Muslim and Catholic beliefs. Cook neatly illustrates how Spanish churchmen linked diabolical heresy, including Muslim variants, with witchcraft by reference to the *Disquisitiones Magicae* of the Spanish Netherlandic Jesuit Martin del Rio, although Cook has its publication date as 1608 rather than 1599–1600 (121).

Fearful of religious contagion, colonial officials increasingly racialized Morisco bodies, over time superimposing that image onto indigenous

bodies—as natives either proved resistant to conversion or rebelled, as they did under Tupac Amaru I in 1570. The result was an image of unconverted natives as disloyal by nature, justifying their subjugation and enslavement. At the same time, Catholic indigenous people often shared Spanish anxiety over Islam, as seen when some of them reported a sighting of a Turkish fleet off the Pacific coast, for which no corroborating evidence could be found. Cook provides a simple explanation in that since the incident occurred shortly after the government mandated celebrations of the victory of Lepanto against the Ottoman fleet, the native population had clearly been influenced by such ritualized propaganda.

Cook concludes that purity of blood became aligned with prejudices over skin colour, and that these were increasingly used as determinants of public reputation and morality in New Spain. Her carefully constructed argument is convincing, her prose clear, and her examples intriguing. The book has high production values, with useful maps, a thorough index, bibliography, and glossary of terms. It is a must read for anyone interested in religious beliefs and interaction in the early modern world.

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Eggert, Katherine.

Disknowledge: Literature, Alchemy, and the End of Humanism in Renaissance England.

Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2015. Pp. 351. ISBN 978-0-8122-4751-0 (hardcover) \$55.

The decline of humanism created both an epistemological crisis and a crisis of representation. As confidence waned in the promise of some of humanism's guiding assumptions—about the interpretive authority of ancient sources, the preeminence of rhetoric, and the possibility of enumerating and synthesizing all human, natural, and metaphysical knowledge—readers and writers were faced with two discrete but related problems. First, in the absence of a theory of inquiry that might replace humanist thought, scholars, theologians, and poets were forced to continue to rely on the intellectual resources of humanism, even