



Research Focus Area « Translation »

All welcome on **11th January in the Seminarraum (Z02) at 14.00**

Invited Speaker

Claire Gilbert

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Between Legal Pluralism and International Law in the Early Modern Mediterranean:

Adjudicating a Moroccan Saadi Inheritance dispute through the Court of Philip III of Spain (c. 1614)

In 1614, an inheritance dispute among members of the Moroccan royal family was brought to the attention of King Philip III of Spain (r. 1598-1621). The dispute involved competing claimants to the Moroccan throne in the midst of a civil war which had begun in 1603. Because the property was located in Spanish territory and had belonged to a Spanish ally (Muhammad al-Shaykh, d. 1613), the Spanish government became the arbiter of this contention over Islamic inheritance law and custom, which was also being used by all parties as a strategy to secure international alliances. This talk will explore how Moroccan rulers and their agents presented legal arguments to the Spanish government and what role translation (and translators) played in this episode. It also discusses potential points of comparison with other cases of Arabic-Spanish legal translation involving Spanish and Moroccan agents in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Spanish and Moroccan rulers were accustomed to legal disputes across religious and linguistic lines in the context of domestic policy and international relations, and the Muslim translator of the Moroccan letters in 1614 had previous experience in European Christian courts. Through this case, I hope to foster a discussion about the place of translation in sustaining diplomatic exchanges across religious lines and legal regimes in the context of inter-imperial rivalry in the early modern Mediterranean.