

**Invitation** to the lecture by

**Dr. Max Deardorff**

(Frankfurt am Main)

Tuesday, January 19, 2016,

6 p.m.

**Personal Details**

## The Tightening Vise of Christian Citizenship: Converts from Islam and the Law in Sixteenth Century Granada

Max Deardorff received his Ph.D. in History from the University of Notre Dame (Indiana) with a dissertation entitled “A Tale of Two Granadas: Tridentine Reform, Rebellion, and the Formulation of Christian Citizenship in Southern Spain and the Andes, 1563-1614” in 2015. He taught at Indiana University South Bend and at the University of Illinois and received numerous research grants, *inter alia* from the Kellogg Institute for International Studies and from the Fulbright Scholar Program. Since 2015, he is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History in Frankfurt am Main, where he is working on the research project “Indios, moriscos, y españoles – Cultural Mestizaje and the Christian Republic of Philip II”, which is part of the wider project “*Convivencia*. Iberian to Global Dynamics, 500-1750” of the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History in cooperation with the Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz – Max Planck Institute, the Max Planck Institute for the History of Science (Berlin), and the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology (Halle/Saale).



**Abstract**

Between 1568 and 1570, much of southern Spain was embroiled in a deadly civil war sparked by inter-ethnic hostility. In 1567, royal officials of the Spanish Crown publicized a set of repressive prohibitions targeted at the community of Christian converts from Islam (cristianos nuevos de moros or, more pejoratively, Moriscos) in Granada. Among the proclamations were prohibitions against use of the Arabic language, the bestowal of “Moorish” names, and a host of other cultural touchstones that included “Moorish” bathhouses, clothing, music, and wedding ceremonies. In response to the persecution, the convert community soon broke into revolt. After two hard years of civil war, the Crown defeated the rebels and subsequently expelled all New Converts from their homes. However, it allowed a certain few “innocent” converts to return, given that they be approved by a panel of Three Judges to whom they submitted evidence of their loyalty and good citizenship.

This talk will analyze the content of those applications. What evidence could converts provide to prove that they were “innocent” and good citizens? Comparing the applications’ content with that of similar bureaucratic documentation from earlier in the century, I will show how conceptions changed along the course of the sixteenth century, drawing a stark contrast with the heralded days of *convivencia* – characterized by the relatively tolerant coexistence of Muslims, Christians, and Jews – in medieval Spain. In the end, I will make the case that ever more specific notions of “good Christian” citizenship in the sixteenth century were not only the product of Reformation-era concerns about the collapse of the “Christian republic” and fears about the ascendance of the Ottoman Empire, but more importantly the result of a drive by Philip II’s monarchy to create legal standards for membership in a rapidly growing empire.