

## **“Empire in the *Oikumene*: Situating Spain’s Mediterranean Interests in its Early Modern Global Empire”**

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This paper considers the Mediterranean as a zone of imperial ambition for the early modern Spanish Empire, arguing for new approaches that transgress traditional temporalities and geographies that have long been employed in scholarship on early modern Spain. Particular attention will be given to recent scholarship that works across the 1492-boundary often invoked as a delimiter between the medieval era and the early modern. As this talk reveals, this boundary carries implicit geographical valances, marking the transition from a medieval Catalan-Aragonese form of Mediterranean empire to an early modern Castilian Atlantic empire. This paper points to the potential benefits for our understanding of a variety of phenomena when we shift our gaze to include the Mediterranean as a zone of early modern Spanish imperial interest. Not only does this reveal significant continuities in the form of imperial ideologies and practices; this shift likewise points to certain continuities spanning the medieval and the early modern eras in interfaith relations, while simultaneously bringing greater nuance to our understanding of how doctrines governing slavery and constructions of racial and ethnic difference shifted during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In addition to addressing recent scholarly trends, this paper will gesture toward potential new directions for the future in the fields of early modern Iberian and Mediterranean studies.