



# FRONTIERS OF HUMANITY AND BEYOND

TOWARDS NEW CRITICAL  
UNDERSTANDINGS OF BORDERS

## P03 - LEGAL BOOKS IN THE IBERIAN WORLDS. CROSSING THE BORDERS OF NORMATIVE KNOWLEDGE PRODUCTION IN THE AGE OF PRINTING PRESS

### ORGANISER

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### ABSTRACT

This panel aims at better understanding the phenomenon of early modern normative knowledge production in the Iberian Worlds, by combining, in a multi-disciplinary approach, legal-historical research with the categories and methodologies of book history and media history. The aim is to observe, from different angles, the case of a pragmatic normative book, which was both emblematic and extraordinary: *Manual de Confessores* by Martín de Azpilcueta (1492-1586). It was a book through which normative knowledge, namely canon law filtered by case-oriented moral theology, crossed both geographical, political, and social boundaries.

The *Manual* had an extraordinary success: it was a real best-seller in the early modern period. Mainly produced and largely used in Tridentine and Post-Tridentine Europe, it had a 'global' circulation, being omnipresent, from the New World book trade to Asian libraries. But Azpilcueta's case is also emblematic of the instability of normative knowledge in the age of the printing press: an incredible number of editions, translations, and compendia circulated between the 16th and 17th centuries, storing and mobilizing in different media forms, languages, and settings, the normative knowledge contained in the Manual.

The idea is to look at Azpilcueta's *Manual* from a global perspective by analyzing its global production, circulation, and consumption from some concrete, local, observation points on the Globe. The aim is to see if and how this global bestseller served and was adapted to the local needs. Moreover, the panel will analyze if and how, in the different geographical, political, and religious contexts of the early modern Iberian Empires, the Manual contributed to the 'legal literacy' reaching different kinds of readers: from learned jurists to common people.

**Manuela Bragagnolo** is a legal historian. She is Post-doctoral Researcher at the Max Planck Institute for European Legal History in Frankfurt. She has been Associate Research Scholar at Columbia University, substitute Professor of Christian Latin Culture at the University of Geneva and member of the academic staff of the Institut d'histoire de la Réformation, Geneva, Post-doctoral Fellow at the Laboratoire d'Excellence COMOD (Constitution de la modernité) at the University of Lyon, member of the research lab Triangle, at the École Normale Supérieure, Lyon. Her research interests include history of knowledge and history of the book. She is particularly interested in Digital Humanities. About her research on Azpilcueta's *Manual de Confessores* and early modern normative knowledge production, she recently published an article on Managing legal knowledge in Early Modern Times. Martín de Azpilcueta's *Manual for Confessors* and the Phenomenon of «Epitomisation», in *Knowledge of the pragmatici*.