Empresses Adapted to Impress: Examining adaptation and translation in the TV Series *Empresses in the Palace*

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ABSTRACT

This article examines the interrelation between adaptation and translation and the impact of this interrelation on the communication of cultural content in audiovisual products. The paper focuses on the case of the American adaptation *Empresses in the Palace*, which is based on the Chinese TV series *The Legend of Zhen Huan*. *Empresses in the Palace* was subtitled from Chinese into English and it was broadcast on US Netflix. The study discusses the adaptation changes that occur between the Chinese and the American version and the subtitling strategies used to render culture-specific references (CSRs). The American adaptation is a considerably edited version of the Chinese series; yet it is overloaded with cultural information which may be inaccessible to an English-speaking audience. The analysis shows that the condensation involved in the American adaptation affects the translation of CSRs and has potential implications for the circulation of cultural products in a digital era.

KEYWORDS: adaptation, audiovisual translation, culture-specific references, subtitling