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INVITATION TO THE LECTURE

THE TRADE OF CONTROLLING IDEAS

INQUISITORIAL EXPURGATION IN THE EARLY MODERN SPANISH EMPIRE

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One of the most widely spread ideas about the circulation of books and ideas in the Spanish Empire is the inquisitorial control of that circulation. In this sense, the idea of a really thorough and complete censorship has been common in the general knowledge about the Inquisition and the Spanish world in the early modern period. However, when the historical sources are studied, the picture of the inquisitorial censorship changes, and we stand in front of an extremely specialized institution, with a strict hierarchy, where the censorship was a surgical activity in which the censors could not censor what they wanted, but what they could.

Following the previous idea, in this presentation I will analyse the way in which this censorship was made, through the study of one of its more common and effective forms: the expurgation. For that purpose I will go through the expurgation methods, legislation, the censors and different typologies which are present in the books that were checked by the inquisitorial censors. The sources used for this study come from the Historical Archive of the Universidad del Rosario, the Historical Fund of the National Library of Colombia, and the cases present in the Ship Registers to Cartagena from de Indias Archive in Seville.

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