INSTITUTE FOR
ADVANCED JESUIT STUDIES
BOSTON COLLEGE

CENSORING SCIENTIFIC BOOKS IN EARLY
MODERN EUROPE

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017
BURNS LIBRARY

HANNAH MARCUS
FRANCISCO MALTA ROMEIRAS
TODAY’S SPEAKERS

Hannah Marcus is an assistant professor in the Department of the History of Science at Harvard University. Her research focuses on the scientific culture of early modern Europe between 1450 and 1700. Marcus earned her BA at the University of Pennsylvania and her Ph.D. at Stanford University in 2016. Marcus has two book projects underway. The first, Forbidden Knowledge: Science and the Paradox of Censorship in Early Modern Europe, 1500-1664, explores the censorship of medical books from their proliferation in print through the prohibitions placed on many of these texts during the Counter-Reformation. The second book, co-authored with Paula Findlen, is a study of Galileo’s correspondence called Galileo’s Letters: Experiments in Friendship. This book grows out of their collaboration on The Galileo Correspondence Project, a digital humanities project begun at Stanford.

Francisco Malta Romeiras is a senior research fellow at the Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies. He received his Ph.D in history and philosophy of science from University of Lisbon in 2014. His research interests include the history of science in Portugal, the history of Jesuit science and education, and the history of book censorship. In 2015 he published Ciência, prestígio e devoção: Os jesuítas e a ciência em Portugal (séculos XIX e XX) (Cascais: Lucerna, 2015), a revised and shortened version of his doctoral thesis on Jesuit science and education in modern Portugal. In the past few years, he edited with Henrique Leitão the selected works of the molecular geneticist and Jesuit scientist Luís Archer: Obra Selecta do Padre Luís Archer, S.J., 4 vols. (Lisbon: Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian, 2015-2017). Romeiras has served as a member of the editorial board of the Jesuit learned journal Brotéria since 2013.

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The Roman, Portuguese, and Spanish Inquisitions printed Indexes of Prohibited Books—lists of condemned authors and books that threatened Catholic orthodoxy—and distributed them widely in early modern Europe. Clerics, lay readers, librarians, and booksellers, though, were responsible for preventing these books from circulating and being read.

This colloquium moves beyond the traditional understanding of the censorship of science texts, which assumes the Indexes exerted a normative influence. Instead, Hannah Marcus and Francisco Malta Romeiras reveal the processes and effectiveness of ecclesiastical control in the Roman and Portuguese Inquisitions by examining the material evidence of censorship’s mechanisms, especially expurgation practices. This colloquium highlights the differences between what the Inquisitions wrote in the Indexes and what others put into practice.

Introduction

Christian Dupont, Burns Librarian
Casey Beaumier, Director, Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies

Material Practices of Censorship in Early Modern Europe

Hannah Marcus, Assistant Professor, Harvard University

Censoring Medicine and Natural Philosophy in Early Modern Portugal

Francisco Malta Romeiras, Senior Research Fellow, Institute for Advanced Jesuit Studies

Questions