

***Utopia* in early modern Portugal and Spain: the censorship of a nest of vipers**

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Abstract

This paper revisits the issue of Thomas More's inquisitorial censorship in the Iberian Peninsula [1]. Some historians have investigated the Portuguese case as *Utopia* was first censored by the Portuguese Inquisition in 1581; little critical consideration has been given to the Spanish censorship. An Iberian perspective on this question has never been previously adopted. The premise of my unifying approach is not historical, according to the Double Monarchy, or the traditional relationship within this geographical area. Both censorships appear at the same historical moment but submit the narrative and the other texts often published alongside it to different measures, legally binding through the Indexes, which suggest different receptions of More's writings in a similar context. Describing these differences leads us to distinguish two forms, or levels, of censorship, micro and macro-censorship, or, expurgation and prohibition. Both exist in this instance, proving the Portuguese reaction to the texts to be the most repressive. A second aspect is the question of the effectiveness of controlling access to books. A difficult problem when it deals with simple prohibition, the methodology of micro-censorship studies helps evaluating to some extent what was achieved by the censors. The present analysis, limited to the Portuguese data, tends to invalidate previous conclusions on a wide and lasting reception of *Utopia* in Portugal and to confirm the efficacy of the local controlling system.

Keywords: Thomas More, Erasmus, Censorship, Portugal, Spain.