



# Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics

*Richard L. Kagan, Abigail Dyer*

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On the first day of Francisco de San Antonio's trial before the Spanish Inquisition in Toledo in 1625, his interrogators asked him about his parentage. His real name, he stated, was Abram Rubén, and he had been born in Fez of Jewish parents. How then, Inquisitors wanted to know, had he become a Christian convert? Why had a Hebrew alphabet been found in his possession? And what was his business at the Court in Madrid? "He was asked," according to his dossier, "for the story of his life." His response, more than ten folios long, is one of the many involuntary autobiographies created by the logic of the Inquisition that today provide rich insights into both the personal lives of the persecuted and the social, cultural, and political realities of the age.

In the first edition of *Inquisitorial Inquiries*, Richard L. Kagan and Abigail Dyer collected, translated, and annotated six of these autobiographies from a diverse group of prisoners. Now they add the fascinating life story of another victim of the Inquisition: Esteban Jamete, a French sculptor accused of being a Protestant. Each of the autobiographies has been selected to represent a particular political or social issue, while at the same time raising more intimate questions about the religious, sexual, political, or national identities of the prisoners. Among them are a politically incendiary prophet, a self-proclaimed hermaphrodite, and a *morisco*, an Islamic convert to Catholicism.

*Praise for the first edition*

"A highly readable account... provides a very useful look into the lives of individuals whose activities brought them before the Inquisition." -- *Sixteenth Century Journal*

"Kagan and Dyer have provided a useful service in translating excerpts from inquisitorial documents housed in Spanish and Mexican archives." -- *Journal of Church and State*

"Through depositions related to Judaism, Islam, heretical Christianity and sexual deviance, the book effectively addresses many of the ethnic, racial, religious, and social tensions that plagued early modern Spain and its colonies... An excellent resource for the history classroom." -- *Gender and History*

"The editors of this volume have performed a useful service for anyone interested in the Inquisition's activities." -- *Renaissance Studies*

"The authors have edited and translated the original documents with skill and sensitivity and accompanied each testimony with useful explanatory notes. The resulting autobiographies are of primary importance to historians of the period for what they teach us about prisoners' lives, their tactics of dissimulation and the power of their testimony which, it might be argued, went as far as to challenge the authority of the Inquisition itself." -- *History*

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