



Inquisitorial Inquiries: Brief Lives of Secret Jews and Other Heretics (Heroes and Villains Series)

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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 provides rich insights into both the personal lives of the persecuted and the social, cultural, and political realities of the age.

In *Inquisitorial Inquiries*, Richard Kagan and Abigail Dyer have collected, translated, and annotated six of these autobiographies from a diverse group of prisoners, five tried in Europe and one in Mexico. 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 identity of the prisoners. Among them are a politically incendiary prophet; a self-proclaimed hermaphrodite charged with having violated the sacrament of marriage for having married a woman; a female convert to Catholicism who betrayed her Jewish origins by serving as a rabbi and preaching heretical doctrine in the New World; and a *morisco*, an Islamic convert to Catholicism who claimed to have been circumcised against his will. In their introduction, Kagan and Dyer stress the "collaborative" nature of these texts, stressing the coercion involved and the purpose of the interrogations that solicited them. Making these invaluable primary sources available for the first time in English, *Inquisitorial Inquiries* will be of interest to students and scholars in the fields of early modern Europe, colonial Latin America, gender studies, and religious history.

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