The Spanish Inquisition

The common denominator linking these diverse lives is, of course, the Spanish Inquisition, otherwise known as the Holy Office of the Inquisition (Santo Oficio de la Inquisición). No matter how unusual the case before it, the Holy Office acted in accordance with a consistent set of internal procedures that applied equally to all of its far-flung tribunals. Integral to these procedures was the requirement that its judges collect detailed information about every individual it prosecuted, a stipulation that harks back to the beginnings of the institution itself.

The Spanish Inquisition belonged to a long line of ecclesiastical tribunals, also called inquisitions, that the papacy created for the purpose of extirpating heresy from within the confines of Christendom. The name *Inquisition* derives from *inquisitio*, a particular form of juridical procedure that evolved out of earlier Roman practices and found its way into the canon law of the medieval church. This procedure, utilized only in exceptional circumstances, empowered the presiding judge or judges to order arrests, gather evidence, interrogate witnesses, and render judgment, that is, to direct the entire court proceeding. The papacy first deployed this legal weapon in the late twelfth century against deviant communities of monks and nuns and then, with greater determination, at the start of the thirteenth century against Cathar heretics gathered in southwestern France. Subsequently, it authorized individual bishops to institute inquisitorial tribunals whenever the need arose. But whereas these medieval inquisitions were essentially papal or at least episcopal institutions, the Spanish Inquisition, authorized by papal bull in 1478, was directly under the auspices of the Spanish Crown. Initially, the papacy, fearing loss of power, was reluctant to sanction this new arrangement, but the reigning Spanish monarchs, King Ferdinand (1479-1516) and Queen Isabella (1479-1503), pre-

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vailed, having insisted that a new and somewhat extraordinary institution was necessary to suppress heresy among Spain's large and growing population of New Christians or *conversos*, a term that initially applied to converts from Judaism but which later, and for reasons discussed below, also applied to the descendants of converts.

Spain's *converso* problem dated from 1391. In that year a wave of violent pogroms that swept across the Iberian peninsula prompted large numbers of Spanish Jews to convert, at least nominally, to Christianity. Subsequent pogroms prompted further conversions, as did the royal decree of 31 March 1492 ordering all Jews in Spain to convert or face expulsion. Numbers are vague, but in the course of the fifteenth century, perhaps as many as one-third to one-half of the kingdom's former Jewish population had been baptized. These Jews officially changed their faith, becoming what was popularly known as *cris­tianos nuevos*, or New Christians, a term that distinguished them from *cris­tianos viejos*, or Old Christians, individuals whose lineage was supposedly free from either Jewish or Muslim blood. Some of these conversions were sincere, and many others were not, but whatever the circumstances of their private devotions and religious rituals—and there was astonishing array of such practices, many of which had little to do with orthodox Judaism per se—New Christians were widely suspected of "relapsing" into the faith of their ancestors. Canon law classified *relapsis* as guilt of the sin of apostasy, a capital crime. More prosaically, the Spanish Inquisition labeled these heretics as *judai­zantes*, or Judaizers. In Portugal they were known as *marranos* (pigs), a term that was occasionally used in Spain as well. The important to thing to remember here is that whatever the terminology employed—*conversos*, *judai­zantes*, or *marranos*—these New Christians were not all alike. Their backgrounds differed, and so did their devotions. But in general the Inquisition erroneously lumped these individuals together into a single, homogeneous group. Modern scholars, using such labels as crypto-*Jew*, have done likewise. While these terms also appear in this book, largely for the sake of convenience, we employ them guardedly and with the understanding that they do not do justice to the broad range of religious devotions followed by New Christians, whether in Spain, Portugal, or the New World.

But whatever the precise nature of New Christian belief, central to inquisitorial understanding of this religious group were issues of inheritance and blood. As David Nirenberg has argued, the sudden appearance of ever-increasing numbers of converts in late-fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Spain fundamentally transformed the nature of Spanish society itself. In the Middle Ages Jewish converts to Christianity were by no means unknown—the twelfth-century scholar Petrus Alfonsi is a famous example—but, starting in 1391, *conversos* emerged as a large, powerful, and in many ways unclassifiable social group that did not mesh neatly with the tripartite division of Spanish society into separate "nations" or ethnoreligious groups: Christian, Jewish, and Muslim. *Conversos* were regarded as outsiders, individuals whose very existence threatened the cohesion of the existing religious communities. Jews labeled sincere *conversos* as apostates, or *meschumad*. Old Christians were reluctant to accept them as equals, as repeated fifteenth-century outbreaks of anti-*converso* violence among Old Christians readily attest. Furthermore, starting in the early fifteenth century, various cathedral chapters, religious orders, and university colleges instituted *estatutos de limpieza de sangre* ("purity of blood" statutes) in an effort to restrict membership to individuals of proven Old Christian blood. In the process, genealogy, formerly something that mainly concerned the high nobility, acquired new importance: ordinary Spaniards sought to demonstrate a lineage free from *converso* taint. Once an Old Christian, always an Old Christian; and by this same logic New Christians were accorded a separate and seemingly immutable social status, one that not even the sacrament of baptism had the power to erase. As a result, the term *converso* was applied not only to actual converts, but also to their children and grandchildren, even those who were devout Catholics.

It follows that the Holy Office had a particular interest in the family history of *conversos* arrested on suspicion of heresy. Previous papal inquisitions had been aware that heresy tended to propagate itself in family groups, but in general medieval inquisitors were more interested in belief than in blood and questions of inheritance. In accordance with the trial procedures outlined in Nicolau Eymeric's *Directorium inquisitorum* of 1339 and other inquisitorial manuals of the late Middle Ages, these judges secured information about a prisoner's place of origin and current residence, along with others, "both living and dead" with whom she or he had been in contact. However, inquisitors rarely made a systematic effort to extract detailed biographical information

sessions that formed the heart of inquisitorial trials, otherwise known as “trials of faith.”

The Spanish Inquisition was equally concerned with such matters, and its question and answer sessions were modeled upon those of earlier inquisitions. In keeping with contemporary notions of purity of blood, moreover, Spanish inquisitors also subscribed to the notion that heresy could be inherited along with other family traits, such as eye color, stature, and the like. They consequently set out to learn about the family history of the accused, generally by asking them questions about their genealogy and family background. Initially, only conversos had to answer these questions; but by the sixteenth century, genealogical queries, as noted above, formed part of most important inquisitorial trials. By 1561 the Inquisition’s trial procedures, called “instructions,” included these specific requirements:

[Inquisitors are to have accused heretics] state their genealogy as expansively as possible, beginning with their fathers and grandfathers, together with all the collateral lines they can remember. They are to also state the professions and residences of their ancestors, and the persons to whom they were married, whether they are living or dead, and the children descended from these ancestors and collateral lines. The accused are also to state whether they are married and with whom, the number of times they have been married, and the names and ages of their children. And the Notary will write this genealogy into the transcript, putting [the name of] of each person at the start of a line, and listing if any of his ancestors or members of his lineage has been arrested or punished by the Inquisition.¹⁵

Later “instructions” included even more detailed questions, and by the 1580s the accused, as part of what was by this time expressly referred to as “el discurso de su vida,” was required to provide information about where he (or she) was raised, the places where he had lived, and the persons with whom he had contact and communicated, “all extensively and with great detail.”¹⁶ Thus, by the end of the sixteenth century, life histories became a regular and distinctive feature of inquisitorial practice, although, as noted above, inquisitors had considerable leeway to prosecute individual cases as they saw fit.

Inquisitorial procedures were also unique in other important ways. One was the secrecy with which Inquisition trials were marked at every stage. The Inquisition initiated its cases by a secret process called denunciation, which differed substantially from the secular and ecclesiastical court process of accusation. Crimes prosecuted in these latter tribunals had human victims who, assisted by a prosecutor, had the right to enter an accusation of wrongdoing against the perpetrator. Accusers could expect monetary compensation for their suffering in case of a guilty verdict and could themselves be prosecuted in case of false accusation. In contrast, the individuals who reported heretical acts to the Inquisition were, technically speaking, not accusers since they were not victims. They were more like witnesses, persons who had stepped forward to alert the Holy Office to crimes that had been committed against God and his Church. Furthermore, the persons who filed these reports could not expect any compensation if the denunciation resulted in a guilty verdict. Nor, on the other hand, did they have to fear punishment for “false witness,” a real possibility in other criminal proceedings where the accused was judged innocent. In inquisitorial trials, “witnesses” were offered the additional guarantee of anonymity, which protected them from reprisal. Keeping the names of witnesses secret helped provide the Inquisition with cases, but it also led to many abuses, among them denunciations that had less to do with actual instances of heresy than with personal enmity and ill will.

Following an anonymous denunciation, inquisitors began an investigation into the accused’s alleged heresies. Inquisitors interviewed witnesses to the heresy and known associates of the accused, conducting their depositions with the utmost secrecy. These witnesses swore never to reveal that they had spoken with inquisitors, and inquisitors did not inform prospective defendants that they were under suspicion. If the depositions lent credence to the initial denunciation, the judges put the case before a calificador, a theologian or canon lawyer especially appointed to determine the merits of a case. Pending the


¹⁶. The inquisitorial “instructions” of 1561 are printed in their entirety in Miguel Jiménez Montserrat, Introducción a la inquisición española (Madrid: Editorial Nacional, 1950), 198–240.

¹⁷. Ibid., 401.
calificador's approval, inquisitors dispatched their bailiffs to make an arrest and imprison the accused in a secret Inquisition jail to await the start of her or his trial.

Once imprisoned, accused persons could often wait for months, sometimes years, before the inquisitors summoned them for an audiencia (audience, or hearing). Even then, inquisitors did not reveal to the accused the reasons for the arrest. Instead, as already seen in the case of Francisco de San Antonio, they began the first interrogation by asking, "What do you think you have done to be arrested?" hoping for a complete and truthful confession. It was also during this initial hearing that inquisitors posed a series of routine questions to defendants, among them the request for a life history. No matter how much or how little information prisoners revealed in the course of their first audience, inquisitors ended the audience by "warning" them to make a "full and complete confession," adding that the Holy Office did not arrest prisoners without good reason. "The Holy Office [of the Spanish Inquisition]," they announced, "is not accustomed to arresting people without having sufficient information that they have said, done, and committed ... an offense against God and against the Holy Roman Catholic Faith."

Once this initial session was over, bailiffs escorted the accused back to their cells, to await the next audience. In the meantime, the inquisitors warned them to search their consciences and provide the inquisitors with the confession they sought. After three such audiencias, the Inquisition's prosecutor (fiscal) drew up a list of charges and presented it to the accused. It was only at this point that the accused had an opportunity to examine the witness testimony against him or her (with the witnesses' names omitted) and consult with a lawyer and prepare a written defense. Yet the legal assistance provided was often quite dubious. Paid by the Holy Office, the lawyer's primary task was not to "defend" the accused but rather to persuade the accused to make a full confession. The lawyer had the further obligation to reveal to the judges any additional information he may have garnered about the heresy of the accused. Following these consultations, the accused submitted a response to each of the prosecutor's charges.

It was also after the completion of the three initial audiences that inquisitors had the power to have the accused tortured in order to hasten a full confession. These tortures ranged from forcing the prisoner to swallow huge amounts of water to the use of such instruments as the potro or rack (to stretch the prisoner's body) and the garrucha, a kind of pulley system in which the prisoner was hung by the wrists; none of these means violated the (narrowly construed) clerical injunction against spilling blood. Make no mistake: inquisitorial justice was harsh justice, although compared to other courts of the era, the Holy Office was actually rather sparing in its use of torture, and by the seventeenth century some of its judges went so far as to discount entirely the veracity of confessions extracted by means of torture. But whether or not the trial involved torture—most did not—after more witness interviews and more responses, the prosecutor drew up a final list of charges and a request for sentencing. The inquisitors then weighed the merits of the case, voted, and handed down a sentence.

Unlike royal and ecclesiastical courts, which understood their sentences as retributive for injuries done to the accuser, the Inquisition framed its punishments as atonement, a penance that had to be done in order to make amends for the defendant's injury to God, the Church, and the sacraments. Penance, as imagined by the Holy Office, usually included large doses of public humiliation. Most minor offenses—blasphemy, for example, or insulting an inquisitorial official—often resulted in little more than a private reprimand from the inquisitorial tribunal. This might be coupled with an order to attend a certain number of Sunday masses and offer a designated number of prayers. The Holy Office punished most heretics, however, in a public ceremony of penance called an "act of faith," or auto de fe. An auto was a public gathering in which the "penitents," as the Inquisition called them, paraded before a gathered crowd, wearing garments known as sanbenitos (smocks bearing an insignia symbolizing the prisoner's crime) and corozas (similar to dunce caps), symbolizing shame. At the auto, the crimes of the penitents were read aloud. One by one, those who confessed their guilt stepped forward for sentencing. Individuals accused of minor offenses who had willingly repented of their "sins" and promised to reform were "reconciled" to the Church in a short, formulaic speech pronounced by one of the Inquisition's officials: "Considering that Our Lord does not wish the death of sinners, but that they turn from their ways and live, since said [name of prisoner], with a pure heart, converts to our Holy Catholic faith, we should and do admit him to be reconciled."

The penalties were then announced. Those accused of minor heresies could expect to receive what was called an abjuración de levi (literally, abjuring or forsaking minor heresies). These individuals generally could get off with as little as a whipping and a public shaming, although the Inquisition often required these penitents to wear their sanbenitos on Sundays and holidays for
a specified period of time. Thereafter, the Holy Office mandated that the penitential garments be hung from the rafters of the penitent's parish church, where they remained on display as permanent reminders of the person's crimes. Those guilty of more serious offenses (abjuración de vehementi) could suffer seclusion in a monastery, exile, or (as in the case of San Antonio) several years of galley slavery in the king's Mediterranean fleet. The harshest penalties were reserved for heretics who had not confessed or who were repeat offenders, the infamous relapsos. They were "relaxed" (handed over) to the secular justices to be burned at the stake. By not executing prisoners itself, the Inquisition could claim that it was acting in accordance with the canonical injunction prohibiting clergy from engaging in bloodshed. Otherwise, the Inquisition was determined not to allow any heretic to go unpunished. Adhering, moreover, to the concept that heresy could be inherited, the Inquisition regularly subjected the heirs of relapsos, as well as those who confessed to serious heresies, to infamia (infamy). Infames and their descendants for three generations could not hold public office, join clerical orders, wear luxury items, carry arms, or ride horses.

As the late Francisco Tomás y Valiente has observed, the true horrors of the Spanish Inquisition were not the numbers of prisoners burned at the stake nor the excessive use of torture commonly attributed to this institution. The Inquisition was, in fact, less prone to torturing and executing prisoners than were secular courts in Spain and other parts of Europe. Further, as the case records presented in this volume suggest, the Inquisition was something less than the faceless, monolithic machine that it is commonly conceived to have been. The Holy Office maintained a set of uniform procedures, but individual tribunals and individual inquisitors applied them in differing ways and in a manner that often allowed prisoners room for maneuver and even for negotiating their trial's eventual outcome. The same cases further suggest that, contrary to expectation, the Holy Office exercised a considerable degree of leniency in the handling of individual cases. Nonetheless, it remained for most Spaniards a terrifying institution, and as Tomás y Valiente has suggested, perhaps the Inquisition's most sinister aspect was its "mechanism of secrecy"—its practice of holding prisoners incommunicado and in undisclosed locations, its refusal to reveal to its prisoners either the nature of the charges against them or the names of the witnesses who had originally denounced them, and its determination to drape a mantle of silence over every aspect of its proceedings. In some cases, this mechanism of secrecy ground to a halt, but generally it served to foster fear of the Holy Office, a fear that the Inquisition ably exploited to its own advantage. This fear also had its creative side, inasmuch as it was directly responsible for the creation of the autobiographies assembled in this book.

Note on Transcriptions

The process of editing these lives has been a balancing act, with a need on one hand to maintain the integrity and flavor of the original trial transcripts and, on the other, to render them in a legible, concise format. The documents used are preserved in Madrid's Archivo Histórico Nacional, which contains the case files of the inquisition of Toledo; Cuenca's diocesan archive, with the case files of the tribunal that was once located in that city; and the Archivo General de la Nación in Mexico City. They are handwritten accounts of the actual trial proceedings as transcribed by an Inquisition scribe. The transcripts have no standardized spelling or punctuation and no regular spacing between words, and they are padded with gratuitous legalese. Transcripts range anywhere from tens to hundreds of pages long. Included in this volume are lengthy excerpts from each case file that shed light on the prisoners' life experiences and defense strategies as well as the Inquisition's institutional framework. On occasion, we include various inquisitorial marginalia—marked marginalia—written in the original documents, as they help pinpoint certain issues or facts that the inquisitors found pertinent to the case. However, we have omitted other information included in the trial transcripts for the sake of streamlining and shaping each narrative.

The task of translating these documents by its nature involved editing as well. Run-on sentences, which often ran on for several pages, had to be corralled and shortened into manageable bits, spelling of proper names standardized, spaces put back between words, abbreviations spelled out, and legalese reduced. Furthermore, the scribe's third-person transcription ("she or he said . . .") of the prisoner's first-person narrative has been transformed into an approximation of the original first-person testimony. It is our hope that through the process of editing and translation we have made it possible for the prisoners' stories, coerced, untruthful, or too truthful for the defendant's own
A Protestant Threat?
Esteban Jamete

Esteban Jamete, born Etienne Jamet, was one of many French artists and artisans who migrated across the Pyrenees to Spain. Art historians associate this migration with the arrival in Spain of various architectural styles, including the Romanesque in the twelfth century and, later, the Gothic. Spanish polychrome wood sculpture is also attributed to the arrival of sculptors from Flanders and France and, in the case of Jamete, to the sculptural designs and traditions that originated in Italy during the Renaissance.

The stylistic components of this artistic migration are well known, but studies examining the integration of northern craftsmen into Spanish society are few. In the Middle Ages, a shared religious culture facilitated integration, but Jamete arrived in Spain in the wake of the Protestant Reformation and at a moment when the Catholic monarchy was becoming ever more fearful that the heresies associated with Martin Luther and his ideas, yet a string of witnesses who testified at his trial maintained that he was a "bad Christian" who regularly criticized both the Church and its doctrines. Was Jamete the luterano these witnesses claimed him to be? The following extract from his inquisitorial trial, which includes a lengthy autobiographical statement, might help to provide an answer.1

In Cuenca, on the morning of 27 April 1557 in the trial room, Dr. Riego, Inquisitor, ordered that the prisoner, Esteban Jamete, sculptor, be brought before him. Once present, His Reverence asked that he take a public and lawful oath [promising to tell the truth], which he did. Asked to give the story of his life, he said:

"My name is Esteban Jamete, sculptor and stone worker. I am forty-one years old. I am French by birth, from the city of Orleans, a French city whose artisans had warmly embraced what was then known as the Reformed religion. Initially, Jamete told the Inquisition that he knew little about either Luther or his ideas, yet a string of witnesses who testified at his trial maintained that he was a "bad Christian" who regularly criticized both the Church and its doctrines. Was Jamete the luterano these witnesses claimed him to be? The following extract from his inquisitorial trial, which includes a lengthy autobiographical statement, might help to provide an answer.1

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"My name is Esteban Jamete, sculptor and stone worker. I am forty-one years old. I am French by birth, from the city of Orleans, thirty-four leagues from Paris, but in the direction of Spain. I came to Spain about twenty years ago, more or less; [it was] the same year in which His Majesty [Charles V] conquered [the city of] Tunis and [the fortress of] La Goletta.2 The first place in Spain that I went to was Fuenterrabia, but I was only there in passing and I did not stop there. [From there] I went to León, Zamora, and Benavente, and then Salamanca, where I began to work as a stone carver [cantería]. I stayed there for about eight or ten days, and then went to Medina del Campo, where I stayed for two or three months, working on several medallions for the house of Dr. Beltrán, as well as several gargoyles and other stone objects. From there I

1. The transcript that follows has been adopted from that included in J. Domínguez Bordona, Proceso Inquisitorial contra el Escultor Esteban Jamete (Madrid: Blass, S.A., 1933).
2. Emperor Charles V conquered Tunis and the fortress of La Goletta in Malta in 1535.
went to Valladolid, where I stayed for one and one-half months. I worked there on the house of [Francisco de los] Cobos\textsuperscript{3} as a sculptor. From there I went to Medina de Rioseco where I worked for a month on the monastery of San Francisco, making several stone arches. From there I went to Santiago [de Compostela] in Galicia, because it was Jubilee year. I was there two days, during which I time I confessed and took communion. I then went back to Medina de Rioseco, but I did not remain there. I went instead to Burgos for three months. I worked there in the house of Maese Felipe\textsuperscript{4} as a sculptor. Working in wood, I made a model of the choir stalls for the cathedral of Toledo. From Burgos I went [back] to Valladolid, where I made some carved plaster windows in the house of a certain captain. I cannot remember his name, but he lived opposite the parish church of San Esteban. I stayed in Valladolid for a month and one-half, also working on a couple of medallions. From there I went to León, staying for about five months. I made a wood box and small statue for the Count of Luna. From there I went back to Burgos for about three months. I was in the public jail there for a month and one-half, but also worked in the main church of that city. I then returned to León for about four or five months, and I worked there in [the monastery of] San Marcos on sculpture in both wood and stone. From there I went to Carrión de los Condes, working for about four months in the monastery of San Gil, which is Benedictine, as a sculptor. I then went back to Valladolid for about two months. I worked in theFranciscan monastery and I also made some coats of arms in its cloister for the Bishop of Mondonedo. From there I went to Segovia, working on two medallions for a month. I then went to Toledo for just about a year, working in the cathedral and also in the Augustine monastery as a stonemason. From there I went to Madrid, for about a year. There I made an alabaster tomb for the Bishop of Calahorra. From there I returned to Toledo and for eight months I worked on the [wooden] choir stalls for the cathedral. I also worked in alabaster. From there I went to Chinchilla for a year, working on religious sculptures in both stone and wood. From there I went to Ubeda, where I spent two and one-half years working in both stone and wood and on sculptures for the chapel of los Cobos.\textsuperscript{5} From there I went to Seville for a year working as a

\textsuperscript{3} Francisco de los Cobos, Comendador Mayor de León, served as the emperor's secretary of state.

\textsuperscript{4} This Maese Felipe is probably Felipe de Vigarny, the French sculptor best known for his work on the choir stalls of the cathedral of Toledo.

\textsuperscript{5} Jamete refers to the family chapel built by Francisco de los Cobos in Ubeda's Church of the Holy Savior (San Salvador).
sculptor, in both stone and wood, in the Carthusian monastery of Las Cuevas, the Franciscan monastery, the town hall, as well as the cathedral. And from there I went to Marchena for two months where I made a pair of bas-relief 'savages' for the duke of Arcos. From there I returned to Seville, where my wife lived. And I was also in Seville when I received a letter from this city of Cuenca, inviting me to come here. And so I went to Cuenca and I have been here for about twelve years as a stonemason and maker of religious figures. I arrived in this city as a married man, as I have already said. I remained here, both in the city and the surrounding area, until the day of my arrest in Castillo de Garciñufioz, where I was working on an alabaster figure for the church of La Concepción. This Holy Office arrested me on the Lazarus Sunday, which this year fell on the fourth of April. I was imprisoned the following Wednesday, which is the seventh day of this month."

He gave his genealogy as follows:
Parents: "Jamet Loxin, from the town of San Denis [d'Orléans in France], who is deceased. Nicola, from San Mame, three leagues from Orléans. Also deceased. My father was a stonemason."
Paternal Grandparents: "I never knew them and don't know their names."
Maternal Grandparents: "I never knew them nor do I know their names."
Aunts and Uncles on his Father's side: "I never met them and don't know their names."
Aunts and Uncles on his Mother's side: "I know that she had a sister. I cannot remember her name. Only that she got married in Orléans to a weaver whose name I do not know. I do not know about any others, or their names."
Siblings:

- "Guillen. A stonemason. Deceased. He died in Orléans. He was married."
- Juan. A sculptor. He died in Orléans. He died young, without ever marrying.
- Dionisio. I do not know what job he had or whether he is dead or alive.
- Mema. She died as a young girl when my father's house caught fire and burned. She burned [to death].
- Juana. She was killed in the same fire.
- Maria. I don't know if she is dead or alive.
- Juana. I don't know if she is alive or dead."
Office is accustomed to do with those who voluntarily manifest their sins and ask for the mercy and pardon of Our Lord.

[He responded:] “It was about twelve years ago, after I had recently arrived in Cuenca from Seville, that several young men arrived here. They were foreigners, all about twenty-five or twenty-six years old. They were stonemasons. One was called Santos Picardo, and he is now married and living in [the village of] Cañaveras, which belongs to the Count of Pliego. The other was named Juan. I believe he was a Gascon, or at least that is what he looked like, and the guy named Santos Picardo is from Picardy. Later these two came to Cuenca and came to my house when I was living in the Corral de San Nicolás and chatted with me. They had arrived exhausted from their trip. It was a Sunday morning. I invited them to my house and there, that same day, I gave them something to eat. Now I don’t remember if it was that same day or another, but the two of them showed me a small book. It was in French with parchment covers. It had about two quires of paper but they were small, less than an octavo in size. I opened the book and saw that it did not give the name of an author nor the place it was published. It was bound [de molde], and written in French. I first thought that it contained [a series of] short French poems [cántaricos]. But when I read the book, I thought it was very bad because it said things against the Pope and against the sacrament of the mass, saying that the Host was only soup and wine. As for the mass, it [said it] was dirty, horrible. It also said that the Pope was pretending to be God and that he deceived men everywhere. It also said—I remember now—“extinguish your hypocritical candles, cast your idols aside, and open yourselves to God.” All this seemed to me so bad that I closed the book and went to see Giralte, the German sculptor who lived in the [street of the] Carretería, and I showed him the book. Giralte told me, ‘This book is by Martin Luther.’ I also remember that I showed the book to Giraldo, the glassmaker. I read him a bit of it as he couldn’t read, and I believe that he told me that it was a Lutheran book. I returned home with the book, opened the stove [lumbre], threw it inside and burned the whole book. In doing this, I began to cry, beating myself with my hands on the chest. Upon hearing me cry and hit myself, Mari González, my first wife, came to where I was and said, ‘What’s going on?’ I answered that I had seen a Lutheran book and that I burned it. She then told me that I should go confess and I did. I later—it was another day—I went to the church of San Pedro in this city and there I confessed with Pedro de Frias, a priest. But he then told me that I had done wrong in not having brought the book to the Inquisition. At the time I confessed, the two foreigners who had brought me the book were still in this city. And when Juan learned that I burned the book, he left Cuenca. I never saw him again nor did I know anything about him. As for the other one, he lives, as I have said, in Cañaveras.

The same day, in the afternoon

[He said:] “This guy Giralte, the sculptor [imaginario], was once in the cloister [of this city’s cathedral]. There were also several Vizcayans there; I don’t remember their names except for one, named Adrián. He was a stonemason [cantero] and is now dead. All of us were there, working when a farmer [labrador] who had good lands and who is rich and who plants good wheat on them [came in] and [claimed] that his land after the harvest was exactly the same as before. He then compared this to Our Lady, claiming that after she gave birth to Our Savior, she was exactly the same woman she was before. But the idea that she was the same after as before the birth did not make any sense; it is the same thing as saying the land was the same after the wheat harvest as before. Giralte then chimed in and said, ‘This is the same thing they say in my land, Germany.’

“It was also about four or five years ago, more or less, when I was going with Iniga [sic], a painter who lives in Huete, and another painter, I don’t remember his names, from Huete to Cañaveras to look for the bishop’s inspector [visitador]. This Iniga told me that once [when he was] traveling with Giralte, the sculptor who lives in Cuenca, they came across a religious sculpture [imagen]. This Iniga removed the hat he was wearing, but Giralte said, ‘I do not take off my hat before the imagenes that I make unless it happens to be a cross.’

“It was about four or five years ago when I was in this city and visiting the house of Giraldo, the glassmaker, I saw on the wall a painted piece of Flemish paper [a woodcut]. The picture I saw depicted an owl and in one of its claws it had some eyeglasses. There was a candle with a candelabra and at the bottom an inscription written in German. I asked Giraldo what does this owl represent. Giraldo responded that it was the Pope who did not wish to see or think about anything. He then translated the inscription, which was either in German or Flemish, into our Castilian language. It said, ‘They give me eyeglasses and a candle so that I understand what I otherwise cannot see nor comprehend.’

“Then later, more or less a year afterwards, I went [again] to the house of Giraldo the glassmaker, and I saw a painted paper and saw that it had an
inscription in French that said the same thing. I then asked him, 'Why do you have this here? You should take it away as it could even get you into trouble with the Holy Office.' Giraldo answered, 'It's nothing, just a bird.' I believe that this picture is still in his house.

"It could have been about three months later, when I was in the [town] of Castillo de Garcimuñoz. It was lunchtime, or just a bit afterwards, and I was angry and had an argument with my wife. Pedro Cerezo, the carpenter, a resident of this city, was there. Although he is my friend, we also had an argument; he criticized me, and among the things he said was 'Look, you should go off and die.' I responded angrily, telling him to 'go die with the devil.' And there was another time this Pedro angered me for some reason, and I shouted, referring to another person, 'For the life of God, I'd kill him if I see him.' I very much regretted what I said about both, and I ask God for his pardon and Your Reverence for penitence.

"I have eaten meat during Lent for the past four, or five, perhaps even six years. I did so because of illness and ill health, and in order to do so, I obtained a bull [of indulgence] even though I do not have much respect for bulls and I would not have done it except to eat meat and eggs. I have also been advised not to eat salty foods nor fish. Among the illnesses I have is a wound that I have on my head and some sores on both sides of my tongue. Maestro Andrés, a surgeon in this city, was the one who advised me to eat meat and to avoid salty things.

"Among my books there is one by Clément Marot. He was a servant of the king of France. One of the things in this book is a story about friars. It is written in French. Of the things I have read in this book all are good, except for the story about the friars. The book is like a book of hours, bound in tooled black [leather?]. It is also old, and about two fingers high. I don't have anything else to say about it."

His Reverence then charged him that, for love of God, to check his memory carefully.

[He now began to say:] "The painter who went with Iñiga, the painter from Huete, is named Juan Ximénez, and that the book that I mentioned was by Clément Marot, I really cannot say whether it is good or bad as I am not a learned person."

6. The book in question was either Clément Marot's *Oeuvres*, printed in 1538, or his *Cinquante Psalms de Davide* (Geneva, 1543).

He was ordered to read through [the transcript of] his confession. Asked, [he answered] "It is clearly and accurately written."

Hearing of 30 April 1557

"I have gone through my memory and I cannot find anything more to say."

[Another warning from His Reverence follows.]

"I have nothing more to say."

Hearing of 10 May 1557

"[Now] I remember that it was just about two months ago when I was in my house in Castillo de Garcimuñoz, when the church bells of the church rang to announce the Ave Maria prayer [plegaria] that begins at noon. My servant Isaac being present along with my wife, I went to him and said, 'Why are you praying for the souls in purgatory and why are you saying the Paternoster?' I also said, 'By Mary, Mother of God, how can we say the Paternoster for the souls in purgatory when this prayer is asking things for the living and not for the souls? In that case you have to say "de profundis et fidelium Deus;'' as it seemed to me that the purpose of the Paternoster was not to pray for the souls in purgatory. That was my doubt. If I am wrong about this, I am ready for any correction that you might give me and to receive information about it that I ought to have, as I am not a learned person who knows [about such things]. But you should know that even though I had this doubt, I never stopped reciting the Paternoster for the souls in purgatory, because I have always believed in the efficacy of prayers [sufragios] done for those [poor] souls.

"In many places I have seen representations of the image of the Holy Trinity—the Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost—and I have also seen, both painted in oil as well as in sculpture, differences in the way the image of the Father, that of the Son, and the Holy Ghost are represented. God the father is seemingly always drawn as being much older than the Son, and the Holy Ghost is represented in a variety of different ways. On seeing all these differences, in my imagination it has frequently crossed my mind that these images are wrong and that one has to represent the same figure in exactly the same way, because even though there are three persons, God is eternally one. If I am wrong about this, I submit myself to the teachings of the Holy Mother Church, and I ask His Reverence to tell me whether I am mistaken or not. I also want to say that all
that I said on this issue and the previous one, I do not remember ever reading about in books. It is simply my imagination.

"I also remember that it was about seven years ago when I was in the village of las Mesas and in the house of the church warden, I found there a book entitled Mount Calvary and read about the time of the passion of Our Lord, when they placed him on the cross and his mother, Our Lady the Virgin Mary, was there. I saw that even though she saw him crucified, she did not change her demeanor [estado] but maintained her spirit and contemplated the sufferings of her son, which is the basis of our faith, although here in the paintings that are made of this moment, she is depicted fallen into the arms of Saint John [of Aramethea]. I have nothing else to say or declare, as it is all I can remember."

Later that day, the Inquisition's fiscal, Bachiller Serrano, presented the judges with a written copy of the acusación, a document listing various charges against Jamete. These included the following:

I criminally accuse Esteban Jamete, sculptor and painter, who is from France and currently resident in this city and now present, that he has done, said, perpetrated, and committed many ugly, scandalous, and rude heretical acts, especially the following:

1. Firstly, the above-named person, a heretical apostate who approves of and follows the heresiarch Martin Luther and his disciples, prevented a certain person who wanted to go to confession from doing so. He berated her and quarreled with her, telling her that there was no reason to confess. And not being content with this, when certain persons instructed him to take confession at the time the Church required it, his response was that he "had no problems with anyone nor had killed anyone, so what crimes do I have to confess?" as if to say that there were no other sins except those he had mentioned.

2. Item. The same person, with heartfelt enthusiasm, firmly believes in and is convinced by the errors and heresies of the above [Martin Luther and his disciples]. With a great outpouring of heretical words, he has dogmatized certain persons, telling them [such things as] "it is enough to confess only to God." It follows that he does not confess with priests during times of illnesses or at times the Church orders but does so only when opportune and with stubborn determination to do as he pleases. . . .

3. Item. The above mentioned, as a tenacious heretic, has said and advised that "one has only to pray to God and not to the saints, because the saints are not good for anything nor can they do anything; it is stupid to pray to them and idiotic to rely on them. Also, on the altarpieces the figures of saints should not take precedence over other figures and fantastical [beings]."

8. Item. The above mentioned is a man whose only desire and pleasure is to sow heresies and false and scandalous ideas. One All Saints' Day, speaking with great authority, he told certain persons that there was no need to pray for the dead because these prayers were useless and that the dead were where they were supposed to be, therefore there was no need to light candles nor give offerings or make other sacrifices.

9. Item. The above mentioned, in view of the lack of respect, lack of obedience, and lack of fear that he has and has had for Our Lord Jesus Christ, and given that he does not feel obligated to obey and follow what is ordered and decreed by the Holy Mother Church either during Lent or on Fridays, Saturdays, and on days and periods of abstinence, he has eaten meat even though he was not ill nor had any legitimate cause to do so. Rather, [on these days] he has eaten meat and engaged in other gluttonies that, even for health reasons, are dangerous and ill-advised... .

11. Item. The above mentioned, as a person determined to ignore the obedience owed to the most holy pontiffs, is accustomed to sing in French songs that others do not understand. He especially sings a song that begins "The Pope in Rome who pretends to be God," and the entire song, when translated into Castilian, means "The Pope in Rome who pretends to be God deceives everyone everywhere. Put out your candles, you hypocrites, cast aside the idols, and adore God." What is more is that the above mentioned, in public as well as in secret conspiracies, openly espouses and approves the ideas and heresies of the said Lutherans....

14. Item. The above mentioned is so heretical, so sacrilegious, scandalous, ugly and rude in all his ideas, life, and customs that all of the faithful Christians he deals with and who know him are terribly scandalized. . . .

Signed: Bachi{l]lr Serrano

Jamete categorically denied all these charges. Assisted by a lawyer, Dr. Muñoz, Jamete then introduced into the trial record testimonials of nine "testigos de abono," witnesses prepared to testify in his defense. Among these witnesses were seven
clerics who affirmed that Jamete was a “buen cristiano” who went to mass, took confession, communion, etc. Then, on 2 June, Jamete introduced his tachas, or dismissals of the validity of the testimony of the witnesses upon which the fiscal had based his accusations. Jamete, after having managed to connect these testimonials with specific individuals, argued that this evidence was invalid as it came from witnesses who were his “capital enemies;” a defense the Inquisition was often prepared to accept. The rest, he claimed, came from individuals who testified against him because of “hatred” and “enmity” occasioned by “angry differences” arising from various personal squabbles [riñas] and family disputes. Having introduced these individual tachas into the trial record, a process that required several months, Jamete made a more general statement designed to demonstrate that he was in fact a good Christian:

“I have always attended mass except for the times that I was in ill health and in bed. And even during those times I was in bed. I got up to hear and see mass as I was able, even from my bed, to listen to mass [being sung] in the castle [chapel]. I even tried to attend mass on work days, and the days I failed to do so I believe that I was not here [in Cuenca].

“That I have eaten meat on prohibited days but with the permission of a physician.

“That I have never believed nor said that it is not good to pray to a saint, male or females.

“With a physicians’ permission I ate meat on prohibited days, but I never did so on Fridays nor doing the first or last week of Lent unless I was very, very ill.

“I never said that I renounced God although on occasion I might have said nor por visa a pese a Dios [a type of curse].

“I have heard it said that purgatory will no longer exist after the Day of Judgment.

“That I was very ill on the days I was supposed to receive the holy sacrament because my stomach was always upset and gave out a lot of bile, so much so that my confessor ordered that I should fast after I took communion.

“With respect to the accusation relating to statuary and the idea that I was opposed to putting carved figures on altarpieces, I remember that, as a building foreman, I said that it was better not to put carved figures on altarpieces because they [rapidly] turned into rats’ nests: better to put up paintings rather than carved figures. Whoever said this was against me. I said it only because it was far cleaner to put up painting [than figures carved out of wood].”

Having heard this defense, on 11 December 1557, the Inquisitors decided that Jamete should be tortured (with “cords and a rack” [cordeles y escalera al bedrial]) in order to convince him to tell the truth. The torture was delayed until 18 February 1558, when Jamete was finally taken to the “torture chamber” and forced to take off [desnudarse] his clothes. Wearing only an “undershirt and shorts” [camisa e caragüellas], Jamete initially asserted that he had nothing to add to what he had already testified, but as soon as the cords around his wrists were tightened, he professed, “God . . . I believe in God, and I believe that in matters of faith I have not offended God except in occasional blasphemies [curses] and other pranks.” As the torture proceeded, the Inquisitors peppered Jamete with a series of leading questions, and gradually he revealed more about his religious views. When asked about his ideas on confession, for example, Jamete responded:

“I think it was about eight years ago that I imagined and doubted that it was not necessary to confess except to God, and it is true that, about ten years ago, I thought it was enough to confess only to God when I was in the countryside or in la cámara [confessional box?]. And it was also about seven or eight years ago that I was of the opinion that it was not necessary to pray to the saints but only to God. Many workers who happened to be in my house heard me say this, among them a certain Francisco, a stonemason, the one who was hit by stone and has a hole in his forehead. I also maintained that there was no purgatory and that souls went where they had to go inasmuch as purgatory was in this world. But all these were beliefs I held five or six years ago.

Then, when asked about the holy sacrament, he responded:

“I believe and believe that Our Lord Jesus Christ is entirely present in the Host. As for the French book that they brought to me, I destroyed it within two days. I believed like a Catholic. And if anything otherwise is said about me, it is a lie.”

At this point, the cords were tightened still further, and Jamete was urged to tell the truth. Asked about his thoughts on the Papacy, he responded, “It is true that the book and the men who brought it to me said that the Pope was powerless. Afterwards, I often pondered whether the Pope had power or no power.”

Asked again about this matter and especially about the book, he answered, “I knew that the Church believes that the Pope has the power to absolve and make whole and all those doubts about the Pope only came after I had seen that book. After seeing that book, I also thought about and even had doubts about whether God was in the sacrament [i.e., the Host], and then whether what the Lutherans said about it only being ‘bread in wine’ was true. Like a bad Christian, I had doubts about whether God was in the Host, and it certainly bothers me for being so bad.”

After a few more questions, the recording scribe noted the following:

Later the said Esteban Jamete begged to be untied as he was exhausted, and with signs of good spirit and contrition he said and promised to tell, under oath, that,
untied, he would declare the whole truth about the ways in which he had offended God and that they shall see how he, from now on, wishes to serve God and to be a good Christian. And if given a piece of paper, he would write down everything that he had done to offend God.

The Inquisitors responded to this plea by ordering Jamete to be untied, albeit with the understanding that if they were not satisfied with his declarations, the torture might be repeated. Once free, "the said Esteban Jamete, on bended knee and with signs of repentance, begged Their Reverences for mercy, declaring that he would say and confess everything that he needed to confess." A week later the Inquisitors resumed their interrogation, and on this occasion Jamete provided a few more details about his beliefs:

"I said that purgatory could be any place on this earth, even in a hazelnut shell, because with God everything is possible, and I believed this because I had a book called the Propalladia, where one sentence stated 'Judas que das jubeleo penitentes giminundo tu seras segun que veo condenatus in profundo.' And I thought that this Judas was the Pope. And what I said about purgatory I had not read in any book. Rather I invented it in my dreams."

Jamete continued by offering some additional clarifications, but when asked by the Inquisitors why there were some contradictions between what he was now saying and what he had previously confessed to under torture, his only response was to refer to the "great sufferings he experienced during the torture," and to insist upon his firm belief in God. The Inquisitors, however, were not impressed, and ordered him back to the torture chamber for further questioning, again admonishing him to tell them the truth. During this session, Jamete admitted to having had doubts about the need to confess to anyone other than God, and attributed these doubts wholly to "the book that has no title." This same volume, he added, was also responsible for his doubts about purgatory, the Host and the Papacy. However, he now admitted to having recognized that these doubts were unfounded and that he had erred in having them. Pressed for more details, he provided them, insisting that he was now a good Christian and telling the truth. At twelve noon, the Inquisitors brought the session to a close.

Subsequently, on 3 March, Jamete requested another audience with the Inquisitors and during the course of this session added a few additional details. Their response must have been surprising, as they informed him that there were "so many discrepancies" between his various confessions that they "did not know which to believe." Jamete elaborated a bit further on his previous testimony, and also provided his judges with a written statement attesting to the truth of his confession and his belief in the Church. This document ended with a plea for mercy. The Inquisitors, however, remained skeptical, and on 8 March, while recognizing that Jamete had demonstrated "sincere signs of repentance," they still detected "contradictions in his confessions." Consequently, Jamete was returned, now for a third time, to the torture chamber, where he was again subjected to questioning under duress.

Jamete's trial finally came to an end on 10 March 1558—almost eleven months since its inception—when the Inquisitors, Dr. Diego García del Riego and Lic. Moral, decided that he was indeed "a heretic, apostate, promoter and protector of heretics." They consequently ordered his excommunication from the Church and declared that, given the nature of Jamete's crimes, it was their right to "relax" Jamete to the secular arm for execution. However, they elected instead to accord Jamete mercy and "not to pursue the rigor of justice attendant to the fact that he, in the confession he made to us, showed signs of contrition and repentance," and that he was now a true believer in "Our Holy Catholic Faith." Accordingly, they revoked the sentence of excommunication provided that Jamete publically abjure his past errors at an auto de fe and wear a sanbenito for three years. Some additional penalties were also ordered, including one hundred lashes, confiscation of Jamete's goods, and the requirement that he attend weekly mass and go off every Saturday on a pilgrimage [romeria] to the nearby shrine of Nuestra Señora de la Fuente. Jamete had also to swear to "keep secret everything that he had seen or heard while in this Holy Office."

By his own account, Esteban Jamete had been living in Cuenca and nearby towns for almost twelve years before his arrest by the Inquisition on 4 April 1557. All reports indicate that he was a "bad Christian," one who went only sporadically to church, ate meat during Lent, and, even worse, openly criticized the Church and its doctrines. Witnesses, moreover, claimed that he could often be heard singing, admittedly in French, verses that represented the Pope as an "old whore." Jamete was even known to have referred derogatorily to the holy sacrament as nothing more than "sopa en vino." In addition, his young wife, María Fernández de Castro, complained that Jamete forcibly prevented her from attending Sunday mass and taking confession, further insisting that she remain in bed with him. María, together with other members of her family, also informed the Inquisition that Jamete had often told others that it was only

7. This is a reference to La Propalladia, a satirical book by the Spanish author Bartolomé de Torres Naharro (1485–1520) first published in Naples in 1517. Jamete's quote, a garbled mixture of Spanish and Latin, paraphrases one verse in La Propalladia's Canción IV, which reads: "Judas, que das jubileo penitentibus in mundo, tás serás, según que veo, cum dannatus in profundo." Here the figure of Judas refers rather maliciously to the Pope together with the papal practice of granting jubileos or dispensations to sinners, as a result of which the Pope is likely to find himself among the damned in hell. For a modern edition of the Propalladia, see Bartolomé de Torres Naharro, La Propalladia (Madrid: Real Academia de la Lengua, 1990).
necessary to confess to God, as opposed to priests. He was even alleged to have said “one needs to pray only to God, not to the saints.” On top of all this, Jamete reportedly owned certain books, one of which “ridiculed and mocked the mass and the [holy] sacrament,” and another, evidently some kind of treatise on magic, that supposedly enabled a man to become invisible and even “have access to” a naked woman in the middle of the street.

In the eyes of the Holy Office, these and other accusations immediately suggested that Jamete, if he was not himself a luterano, harbored beliefs and ideas closely related to those of the heresiarch, Martin Luther. In addition, his house seems to have served as a way station for various foreign artisans known for their Protestant beliefs. One of these foreigners was the Frenchman, Santos Picado, who reportedly gave Jamete the book—evidently a Lutheran pamphlet containing illustrated woodcuts attacking the Pope—that figured so centrally in his trial. Under the circumstances, therefore, what took Cuenca’s Inquisitors so long to arrest Jamete on charges of heresy? And then, given the weight of the evidence presented against him, what persuaded these same Inquisitors to release Jamete with only a minimal punishment?

The answer to the first of these questions is not easy to pin down, but it is likely to have been connected with the decision of the local tribunal of the Inquisition to designate Jamete as one of its familiares: individuals charged with supporting the Holy Office, a responsibility that also entailed reporting on individuals whose actions and beliefs were deemed contrary to Church doctrine. Although Jamete was never formerly included in that tribunal’s list of familiares, he was known to have served in this capacity starting in 1547, that is, within two years of his arrival in Cuenca.8 This, in itself, is rather extraordinary, since Jamete was a foreigner. The appointment, however, speaks less to the orthodoxy of Jamete’s Catholicism than to his reputation as the city’s most eminent sculptor, together with the support and protection he received from Cuenca’s cathedral chapter, bishop, and other clergymen, notably the priest in the parish of San Nicolás where Jamete lived and maintained his workshop. Jamete acknowledged that he had moved to Cuenca to work on its cathedral at the invitation of its wealthy bishop, Sebastián Ramírez de Fuenleal. Over the course of the next twelve years, Jamete received a string of commissions from Cuenca’s cathedral chapter, most of which entailed the decoration of several chapels, notably that of the important Mendoza family. These commissions provided Jamete with a steady income, together with a modicum of prestige that other artisans working in Cuenca seem to have lacked. The exact point at which Jamete began his alleged flirtation with luteranismo remains somewhat vague, but except for a brief scrape with the Holy Office in 1550 on charges of blasphemy, his status as a familiar appears to have offered protection from inquisitorial scrutiny for more than a decade.

Yet Jamete’s days as a free spirit were numbered, largely as a result of changes in inquisitorial policy initiated by Fernando de Valdés, the archconservative ecclesiastic who was appointed to the office of the Inquisitor General in 1547. For the first sixty years of its existence, the Holy Office focused its energies almost exclusively on conversos, and to a much lesser degree, small groups of religious enthusiasts known as alumbreados. Starting in the 1520s, however, the success of Martin Luther and other Protestant Reformers in northern Europe gradually instituted changes in inquisitorial policy, and by the 1540s the Holy Office woke up to the possibility that Protestantism—referred to as luteranismo—was making important inroads into Spain. In reality, the extent of the so-called “Protestant menace” was exaggerated, but Valdés skillfully used this threat to reorganize the Holy Office and make it more efficient through a series of wide-ranging administrative and procedural reforms.

In addition, Valdés endowed the Inquisition with a new mission: the persecution of Protestants, luteranos in inquisitorial parlance, of every stripe. Together, these reforms brought immediate results. In the 1530s and the 1540s, the Inquisition’s case load had been sagging, as the number of New Christians brought to trial was shrinking. But by emphasizing the danger posed by luteranos, the Inquisition was given an entirely new lease on life. As a result, inquisitorial case loads began to move upwards. The most important arrests occurred in 1557–1558 when the Inquisition “discovered” important Protestant cells in Seville and Valladolid. In 1559, Valdés even orchestrated the arrest of Spain’s highest-ranking prelate, Fray Bartolomé de Carranza, Archbishop of Toledo, on suspicion of Lutheranism.

Compared to Carranza’s high-profile arrest, that of Jamete in Cuenca caused hardly a stir, but it was a sign that inquisitorial recognition of luteranismo had even reached Cuenca, at that time a somewhat sleepy, woolworking city of about fifteen thousand inhabitants.9 As it turned out, Cuenca harbored a sizeable number of foreign craftsmen—artists, sculptors, glassmakers, printers—who, like Jamete, had migrated to the city either to work on the cathedral or to take advantage of the comparatively high salaries that artisans working in Spain then enjoyed. Most of these workers came from northern Europe, among them Hance (or Hans) de Brabant, a native of Antwerp;


Esteban Giralte, a Flemish or German stonemason; and Giraldo de Olanda, the glassmaker, all of whom appeared as witnesses in Jamete’s trial. Some of these foreigners were orthodox Catholics, but others were not, and as early as 1554, one Frenchman, a lanternmaker residing in the nearby town of Huete, was arrested by the Inquisition on suspicion of luteranismo. These same foreigners, regardless of their religious beliefs, were also deemed responsible for bringing to Cuenca heretical books and pamphlets of the kind that Lutheran presses in northern Europe churned out in enormous numbers. Jamete was residing temporarily in the town of Cuenca, given to him by Santos Picardo. He also owned a book attributed to the French poet and Protestant sympathizer, Clément Marot, whose translation of the Psalms into the vernacular was put on the Index of Prohibited Books published by the Inquisition in 1559. Yet another controversial book in Jamete’s possession was the Propalladia by the Spanish author, Bartolomé de Torres Naharro (d. 1530), first printed in Naples in 1517. This collection of satirical comedies, inspired by the anti-clericalism of Erasmus, also wound up on the list of books that Inquisitors were instructed to confiscate and destroy.

Jamete’s arrest, in short, occurred almost at the very moment when the tribunal in Cuenca, together with those in other cities, identified luteranism as a heresy of special concern. As noted above, this tribunal’s first arrest of a suspected luterano, Pedro Baleta, occurred in 1554. Others soon followed, and in 1556 Cuenca’s Inquisitors arrested, in addition to Jamete, five other suspected luteranos, all but one of whom were foreigners and whose names may have figured in some sort of inquisitorial “watch list” of suspected heretics. If such a list existed, Jamete was almost certainly on it inasmuch as he had been arrested by the Inquisition in 1550 on charges of blasphemy but was subsequently released, apparently for lack of evidence. In 1556 Jamete was residing temporarily in the town of Castillo de Garcimuñoz, where he was working on an alabaster statue for the local parish church. But this did not deter the Holy Office. Acting upon new information provided by Jamete’s wife and father-in-law, on 4 April the Inquisitors ordered Jamete’s arrest and had the Frenchman brought to Cuenca and imprisoned in the inquisitorial jails. Jamete’s trial began on 27 April, when he was brought to the tribunal’s sala de audiencia, seated before Inquisitor Dr. Diego García del Riego, and instructed to narrate “el discurso de su vida.”

As he did so, Jamete was cautious, apparently having decided to provide Riego with only a minimum of information. He deliberately neglected, for example, to say anything about his upbringing, religious education, or experiences in Orléans, a city known for its Protestant sympathies and indeed one in which Jean Calvin, early in the 1530s, had begun his conversion to the Reformed religion. Instead, Jamete began his “life” at the age of thirty and the moment when he arrived in Fuenterrabía, the Basque city that symbolically marked the border between heretical France and Catholic Spain.

What followed was something akin to what Inquisitor Riego would have understood as a relación de méritos, the sixteenth-century term for a curriculum vitae. Accordingly, Jamete constructed his “life” around his professional—artistic in his case—accomplishments, possibly hoping to impress the Inquisitor with the extent and number of his commissions and thus establish himself as a widely respected entallador whose services were much in demand. To do so, he listed, one by one, the many towns and cities in which he had worked (see map), the amount of time he had spent in each, together with the names of churches, monasteries, and other places where his artistry was on display. He also made sure to mention the names of several illustrious patrons, among them the Count of Luna; the royal secretary, Francisco de los Cobos; and Dr. Beltrán, a member of the Royal Council of the Indies. In addition, Jamete purposely wrote into this “life” a spiritual message that affirmed his belief in several of the central doctrines and dogma of the Catholic Church. He did this by indicating that his visit to Santiago de Compostela coincided with a Jubilee year, that is, the year in which pilgrims who journeyed to that city and visited the tomb of St. James received a papal indulgence for their sins. This seemingly minor detail underscored Jamete’s belief in saints, indulgences, purgatory, as well as the Papacy, aspects of Roman Catholicism that Luther and his followers had rejected.

Jamete’s next effort to bolster his reputation occurred when he informed Inquisitor Riego that he had come from “gente limpiea,” that is, Old Christian as opposed to New Christian or converso stock. He further insisted that “in France they do not know what a convert is. There aren’t any. Only knights, gentlemen, noblemen, and workers. In France, there aren’t any Jews nor Muslims nor slaves,” a statement that Riego probably found difficult to believe.

At this point the interrogation shifted to the sculptor’s twelve years in Cuenca, but rather than narrate this period of his life chronologically, Jamete decided to highlight a series of potentially incriminating incidents stemming from his ownership of Lutheran (or Lutheran-inspired) pamphlets and books. His strategy was this: feign ignorance of Lutheranism and admit to having had these items in his possession—and to have understood that they contained ideas critical of the Church—thus his insistence that he felt compelled to burn one of these books and subsequently take confession. Jamete further insisted that his ownership of these items had in no way affected or
influenced his fidelity to the Catholic Church, something that Riego, aided by torture, would soon learn was a lie. At this juncture, however, Jamete was eager to please and did so by expressing regret about his possession of these objects as well by listing the names of other individuals who had seen them and who, in his view, knew far more about Luther and his heresies than he did. In making this confession, Jamete was clearly attempting to deflect culpability to others and get himself at least partially off of what was proving to be a very sharp hook.

Similarly, Jamete provided excuses for his failure to adhere strictly to the religious observances prescribed by the Church, notably the obligation to refrain from eating meat during Lent. In this instance, he confessed to having violated this precept, but claimed to have done so only for reasons of “indisposition and illness” and then upon the advice of a surgeon, his friend Maestro Andries. He further admitted to confusion about whether the precept should be used to pray for the good of souls still in purgatory. In this instance, however, his excuse was ignorance, or as the notarial scribe recorded his words: “he is not learned enough to know anything about it.”

After Jamete related a few more such incidents, including one in which he thought that God—Father, Son, and the Holy Ghost—should be painted alike inasmuch as they formed the Trinity, the admoniciones or opening segment of his trial came to an end. Up to this point his strategy had been to demonstrate his ignorance of Protestant doctrine and to provide excuses for certain ideas and practices that he understood were wrong, if not deviant. For one thing, the tribunal had previously deposed a string of witnesses, virtually all of whom had testified that Jamete had repeatedly voiced criticisms of Catholic dogma. Particularly damning, in this regard, was the testimony offered by Jamete’s father-in-law, Juan Fernandez de Castro, who insisted that Jamete was a “mal cristiano” who never went to mass. Juan Fernandez de Castro also hinted at Jamete’s attraction to certain key Lutheran doctrines when he affirmed that his son-in-law regularly uttered such statements as “one has to pray only to God and not to saints, because the saints cannot do anything or make anything happen.” Jamete’s wife, Maria, reported much the same, adding that Jamete regularly prevented her from attending Sunday mass on the grounds that “it was enough to pray at home and that it was unnecessary to attend mass and hear the sermon.”

Testified that Jamete “had a book which he used to do things of necromancy,” a suggestion that he dabbled in black magic, yet another religious crime. Yet this was not all. Several artisans with whom Jamete worked on a regular basis gave the Inquisitors additional reasons to think that the Frenchman’s initial confession had been something less than sincere. One asserted that Jamete was a notorious blasphemer; another that he had insulted the holy sacrament when “being inside a certain church, he ate, drank, gambled, and fought with someone right in front of the holy sacrament”; and a third noted that Jamete claimed “that it upset his stomach every time he went to take communion.” More damning testimony came from Giraldo de Olanda, the glassmaker who testified to having known Jamete for over “twenty years.” Olanda confirmed Jamete’s ownership of a “librico” [little book] by Morot, together with a book of poetry that contained such verses as: “Rome is a big garden where they blaspheme and deny God for a pittance [quatrin].” Olanda also claimed to have overheard Jamete singing a French song that included such words as “The Pope in Rome pretends to be God and deceives the whole of mankind; put out your hypocritical candles and leave the idols, and we will adore God.”

When presented with copies of these testimonial—remember that, according to inquisitorial procedure, the defendant was not given the names of the witnesses—Jamete, aided by a lawyer, rejected them out of hand. Managing somehow to connect the text of these testimonials with specific individuals, Jamete argued that these witnesses should be classified as his “capital enemies,” and therefore individuals whose testimony should be discounted as false. This was undoubtedly a defensive strategy, possibly conceived by his lawyer, but there is evidence to suggest that Jamete may have been right. Many of the individuals who testified against him, especially his in-laws, were—if not his sworn enemies—nevertheless quite pleased to see him caught in the machinery of inquisitorial justice.

Jamete was without question the most talented sculptor working in Cuenca, but his personal relations were tumultuous to say the very least. Jamete’s first known fistfight in Cuenca was in 1548, but he got into others, including several with his in-laws following the death of his first wife, Maria Gonzalez, in 1554. At issue here was Jamete’s obligation to return to his wife’s family a portion of the dowry he received at the time of his marriage, something that Jamete steadfastly refused to do. A key factor here was Jamete’s quarrelsome personality. In the course of his trial he himself admitted to having a “filthy tongue” [mal lengua], although his tendency to curse and otherwise speak his mind was probably related to his fondness for wine, which, by all reports, was out of control. His father-in-law, for example, reported, “Esteban Jamete is a man who drinks a lot,” and even one of Jamete’s own “good-faith wit-
as it may, Jamete's drinking. As one of his apprentices reported. Seems to have inspired his artistic imagination: Better at his art than warder] felt required to inform the Inquisition that this city's royal connected with the sculptor's ongoing quarrels with the family of his first wife. Other witnesses reported that whenever Jamete was drunk—apparently a regular occurrence—he was also "out of his mind," and this helps to explain why he tended to brutalize his second wife, María Fernández de Castro, a woman less than half his age (when they married, in 1555, Jamete was already forty while she was only eighteen). Several witnesses, for example, reported that sometime in July 1555, in the midst of an argument with María, Jamete struck her with an iron bar, injuring her severely. Small wonder then that Jamete was on bad terms with his in-laws, all of whom, starting with his father-in-law, testified against him.12 Jamete, however, also got into fights with his apprentices, including one he suspected of sleeping with his wife.13 And then there were numerous squabbles with fellow artisans, including one Basque who had insultingly referred to Jamete as a "gavacha." Other artisans resented Jamete for his social pretensions, among them his habit of dressing as a nobleman in black satin and purple taffeta as well as a cape and a sword!14 Jamete, therefore, was probably right to claim that much of the evidence against him was sparked by "hatred and enmity [odio e enmistado]. In fact, other than the nine "good-faith witnesses" he summoned to testify on his behalf, only two of the twenty witnesses summoned by the Holy Office had anything positive to say about him.

In this respect, Jamete seems to have been something of a controversial figure in Cuenca—admired for his artistry, but otherwise resented, even despised. These resentments were among the factors contributing to Jamete's arrest, but once his trial began his judges were far less concerned with these personal issues than with the nature of his religious beliefs. Their main concern was to establish whether Jamete was in fact a luterano, and if so, the sources of his heretical beliefs. They also wanted to know whether there existed in Cuenca other persons who harbored similar ideas. As far as Inquisitor Riego was concerned, Jamete's opening statement was less than truthful. Consequently, after having decided that Jamete was "negativo," Riego, now joined by his fellow Inquisitor, Lic. Moral, voted again on 18 February 1558 to submit Jamete to torture in an effort to obtain what they considered a full and frank confession.

What followed for Jamete could not have been pleasant, as he was led down to the tribunal's torture chamber. Once there, wearing only his undergarments [camisa e caraguellas], Jamete was forced to suffer several lengthy interrogations while strapped to the rack, an instrument of torture that—with the use of wheels, pulleys, and cords—stretched his limbs and caused excruciating pain. The notary transcribing these interrogations records none of Jamete's screams, although he once noted that Jamete, exhausted from pain, begged his Inquisitors to have mercy and to loosen the cords fastened to his wrists and legs. Otherwise, the notary focused on the verbal interchange between Jamete and the Inquisitors, and the resulting transcript indicates that, by means of a series of leading questions asked over and over again, the Inquisitors gradually managed to get Jamete to reveal details about his life and religious beliefs that he had previously either forgotten or conveniently overlooked. Thus Jamete told them that when he first came to Spain "he was a very good Christian and he had never heard anything about Lutheran doctrines," but that he later learned about these ideas in the book given to him by Santos Picardo and which he later decided to destroy. The Inquisitors, determined to learn more about this book, prodded Jamete for more information, and aided by a few more turns of the wheel, they finally learned that it was indeed the source of the "false opinions" that

12. Witnesses reporting this particularly nasty incident included Alonso Vázquez de Cuellar, who asserted that Jamete "wounded the said María Fernández de Castro, his wife, by throwing an iron bar at her that struck her in the hip. She was in very bad condition; this took place about a year ago. . . . the said Esteban Jamete was drunk at the time." Another, Francisco de Vezerril, a silversmith, testified he knew that "Jamete wounded his wife when he threw an iron bar at her . . . she was at the point of death." Gines de Guimiel, a notary, further testified that "after this incident Jamete and his brother-in-law, Tomás Vázquez, left the case in the hands of an arbitrato." The arbitrato ordered Jameto to pay 100 ducados in damages to Maria's family, and also referred Maria to an ecclesiastical judge who, under the circumstances, might have anulled her marriage to Jamete. At one point Maria moved out of Jamete's house, but the Inquisition ordered her to return and "live a married life with her husband." For this last incident, see Dimas Pérez Ramírez and F. Javier Triguero Cordente, Papeles Sueltos de la Inquisición de Cuenca (Cuenca: Diputación Provincial, 1999), 36.
13. This was Isaac de Juni, son of the famous Flemish painter, Juan de Juni.
14. Fights prior to Jamete's arrest included one in front of the cathedral, which involved Sebastián de Arnaqui, a Basque artist who had called Jamete a gavacha, a derisory Spanish term for a Frenchman (like the English "frog"). Another, which took place only a month before his arrest by the Inquisition, involved two carpenters, Gutierre Díaz and Pedro de Saceda. This fight left Jamete with a head wound. His last recorded fight, in 1563, five years after the conclusion of his trial, began when Jamete hurled a chamber pot at a French silversmith, Tristán del Vago.
he had once embraced. These “false opinions” included the idea that the holy sacrament was a “joke,” and the notion that confession was something that needed only to be made to God because “priests are men just like us and do not have any power over others.”

For the Inquisitors, these admissions smacked of luteranismo, and convinced them that Jamete’s opening confession had been less than complete. They consequently pressed on, asking the sculptor to explain his opinions about purgatory. Jamete responded by admitting that he had formerly had so many doubts about purgatory that he felt obliged to inform others that purgatory, if it existed, could be located anywhere, even inside “the shell of a hazelnut.” However, having made this admission, Jamete quickly added that he had he dreamed up this idea rather than reading about it in any book. (“I have not read about it in any book but dreamed it up in my head.”)

In keeping with inquisitorial procedure, each time a prisoner confessed to something under torture, this testimony had to be ratified outside the cámara de tormento. However, if there were any discrepancies between these two testimonies—contradictions in the language of the Holy Office—or if the Inquisitors sensed that the prisoner was still not telling the truth, they reserved the right to submit the prisoner to torture once again. Unfortunately for Jamete, this happened to him. and the Inquisitors discovered that there was not much more to learn. On 3 March, for example, the only tidbit of new information that torture extracted was that Jamete’s ideas about the Pope and the iniquities of Rome probably had less to do with Luther than with Torres Naharro’s Propalladia. Otherwise, they listened to Jamete insist that he while he was once in error, he had mended his ways, repented his errors, and was now a “good Christian” once again. They also listened to him beg for mercy, and the next session in the cámara de tormento, held on 8 March 1558, only produced more of the same.

Two days later, Inquisitors Riego and Moral, assisted by Dr. Vergara, an ecclesiastical judge, reviewed Jamete’s trial testimony and determined that, as the fiscal had originally charged, Jamete “had been a heretic, apostate, promoter, and protector of heretics” as well as a heretic himself. They further declared that while it was within their right to “relax” him, as a heretic, to the secular arm for execution, they had decided, out of “equity and mercy” not to “follow the rigour of justice.” The sincerity of Jamete’s repentance also convinced them to revoke Jamete’s excommunication and to readmit him to the Body of the Church upon the condition that he publically abjure his sins at an auto de fe and wear a yellow sanbenito over his clothes for three years. They also obliged Jamete to follow a strict routine of religious observances, evidently in the hope of guaranteeing that he would at least appear the “good Christian” he professed to be. But perhaps the harshest of all the penalties decreed by the Inquisitors was to seize Jamete’s worldly goods and possessions, and prohibit him wearing any kind of finery, notably silk, gold, silver, or jewels. Jamete, in short, was to live as like the artisan he was, and like it or not, to be a practicing Catholic.

This sentence, harsh as it might seem to today’s readers, was probably just inasmuch as Jamete, for all his doubts about Catholic observance and belief, had never formally renounced the Church. In fact, there are pieces of evidence—among them the Inquisition’s decision to make Jamete a familiar—that suggest that he knew little about Protestantism prior to his arrival in Cuenca and his encounter there with the likes of Santos Picardo, the French artisan who presented him with a Lutheran pamphlet and seemingly introduced him to the ideas of Clément Marot, and taught him a number of anti-papal ditties and songs. As a result, one suspects that Jamete probably knew more about Luther’s ideas than he ever admitted. But the evidence that he was truly a convinced Protestant is rather slim. Rather, his religious proclivities, together with those of Luis de la Ysla (chapter 1), and Diego Díaz (chapter 6), are best defined by the French term bricolage: a grab bag or mixture of diverse practices and ideas gleaned from various sources.13 Jamete’s anti-clericalism, for example, derived principally from Torres Naharro, and ultimately from Erasmus, a Catholic reformer whose writings and ideas were especially influential both in France and in Spain during the first half of the sixteenth century. Anti-clericalism, in turn, rendered Jamete susceptible to certain aspects of the Reformation, notably criticism of the Papacy and the need to confess only to God. Yet there is no doubt, that Jamete, having read various Lutheran pamphlets, came to have doubts about various key aspects of Catholic dogma, notably the miracle of the mass, the existence of purgatory, the worship of saints, etc. According to one scholar, Jamete’s criticism of these aspects of Catholic piety first manifested itself following the death of his first wife, María González, a period during which his alcoholism went from bad to worse and one in which, by his own admission, “he stopped attending mass” and openly began express to his criticisms of various aspects of Catholic dogma.14 At the same time, however, Jamete never—and we should probably believe him when he says so—stopped believing that he was a “Christian,” that is, Catholic. He was, to be sure, a bad Catholic, but a Catholic nevertheless. In a sense, therefore, the Inquisitors

probably made the right call by punishing him, within the otherwise harsh parameters of inquisitorial justice, rather lightly.

On 15 May 1558, Jamete, together with fifty-seven other penitents, publicly abjured his sins at an auto de fe staged in the plaza in front of the cathedral in which, over the previous thirteen years, he had labored so diligently. Sometime afterwards, he moved from his old house and workshop, both located near the cathedral in the parish of San Nicolás, to humbler quarters located in a peripheral part of the city. Jamete, moreover, faced hard times. Prior to his inquisitorial trial, lucrative commissions came easily his way, but these were now beyond his reach. The social stigma that generally adhered to persons subjected to inquisitorial justice continued to cause him trouble, as in October 1559 when his father-in-law, supported by several other witnesses, denounced Jamete to the Holy Office for having complained about having to wear his sanbenito and also for having failed to wear it outside his home. After hearing these denunciations, the Inquisitors summoned Jamete for questioning. His excuse: “carelessness [descuido],” as opposed to “evil intent [malicia].” At this point, the Inquisitors, sensing that the cause of this denunciation had more to do with personal animosity than any wrongdoing by Jamete, allowed this particular matter to drop after dutifully reminding the sculptor that he was never to leave his sanbenito at home.17

Jamete’s remaining years in Cuenca were surely not his best. Commissions were few, squabbles with in-laws continued, and his health, undermined by years of hard drinking, got worse and worse. Yet he remained as quarrelsome as ever and, in 1563, got into a fight with a French silversmith, Tristan, alias Alexandre, del Vago, who had been living as a lodger in his house and who was subsequently arrested and tried by the Inquisition on charges of luteranismo.18 The circumstances surrounding this squabble are vague, but according to testimony provided by several witnesses, including María Fernández de Castro, Jamete’s long-suffering wife, it had something to do with Vago’s habit of referring to the holy sacrament by the banal and seemingly insulting name of Jehan le Blanc or Juan Blanco. Was this fight a sign that Jamete, following his own brush with the Inquisition, had in fact discarded his previous flirtation with luteranismo and become a sincere Catholic who took instant offense at anyone who dared insult the Church? Or was his relationship with this silversmith testimony to the fact that Jamete continued to welcome Protestant sympathizers such as Vago into his house? Or, as in the case of Jamete’s own trial, were there other, more personal issues involved, including the suggestion that Vago had slept with his wife?19 The truth in this instance, as in so many inquisitorial trials, is difficult to ascertain, but one can at least imagine Jamete gloating when he learned that Vago would be required—as he was almost ten years before—to abjure his sins at a public auto de fe. But whatever his motivations, Jamete did not live long enough to witness this spectacle, as he died in Cuenca, aged fifty, on 6 August 1565.

FURTHER READING

The best introduction to the city of Cuenca in the time of Jamete is Sara T. Nalle, God in La Mancha: Religious Reform and the People of Cuenca, 1500–1650 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992).


An excellent introduction to foreign artisans working in sixteenth-century Spain may be found in Clive Griffin, Journeymen-Printers, Heresy, and the Inquisition in Sixteenth-Century Spain (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

17. For details on this, Jamete’s last encounter with the Inquisition, see Turcat, Annex X.
19. See Werner, Los Protestantes y la Inquisición, 2:342, where Jamete’s wife is described as a “loose” woman.