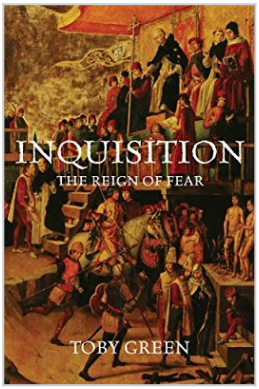

Inquisition: The Reign of Fear

By Toby Green

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A journey across centuries of religious conflict

Toby Green's incredible new book brings a vast panorama to life by focusing on the untold stories of individuals from all walks of life and every section of society who were affected by the Inquisition. From witches in Mexico, bigamists in Brazil, Freemasons, Hindus, Jews, Moslems and Protestants, the Inquisition reached every aspect of society. This history, though filled with stories of terror and the unspeakable ways in which human beings can treat one another, is ultimately one of hope, underscoring the resilience of the human spirit. Stretching from the unification of Spain under Ferdinand and Isabella in the fifteenth century to the Napoleanic wars, *The Inquisition* details this incredible history in all its richness and complexity.

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Inquisition: The Reign of Fear By Toby Green Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Booklist
For this historical exploration of Catholicism's Inquisition, Green focuses on Spain, Portugal, and their empires. Considerable archival research lies behind the author's treatment, which is especially evident in his narratives of specific cases and of Inquisitorial vigilance against heretics. This creates an episodic effect, in which the chronology of the Inquisition in Iberia (1478–1834) relaxes before aspects of the Inquisition that Green emphasizes. He grounds the institution in the context of its establishment, the Christian reconquest of Spain and the associated conversion or expulsion of Jews and Muslims. Details of specific investigations prompt Green's interpretations that factors in addition to theological enforcement brought suspects before the Inquisition: local politics, vengeance, or avarice could doom a victim to an auto-da-fé. This approach accords a social and political complexity to the Inquisition that informs readers of the popular support it received and how its power emanated through the means of fear. A readable choice for those in need of a general history of the Spanish Inquisition. --Gilbert Taylor

About the Author

TOBY GREEN is the author of three previous books, *Saddled With Darwin*, *Meeting of the Invisible Man*, and *Thomas More's Magician.* He has traveled widely in Africa and Latin America, and now lives with his family in the west of England.

Chapter One
THE END OF TOLERANCE

Who can doubt that what seems in this tribunal to be
severity of justice is in fact a medicine, ordained by mercy
for the health of the delinquents?

Teruel and Zaragoza 1484–1486
IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF Juan Garces de Marcilla, hatred coursed its prey. Marcilla was a local noble in the remote Aragonese town of Teruel. Ashamed of his indigence, he had married Brianda, daughter of a powerful local businessman, Jaime Martinez Santángel. Marcilla loathed his in-laws and this was an era in which such workaday odium could be taken to its extreme: he made sure that they would be burnt to death. The new inquisitor, Juan de Solibera, arrived in Teruel in May 1484. There was no welcoming committee. In fact, the local authorities were appalled. They probably knew that there had been resistance in some parts of Castile to the introduction of the Inquisition there.1 They determined to follow suit. When there were so many great and elegant cities in the kingdom of Aragon, why had their remote settlement high in the bare hills been selected as the first calling point for the new institution? What were the implications of the sacking of the old inquisitors and the introduction of the new? The town leaders wrote that they feared the Inquisition would bring the same chaos as it had 'in Castile, and that [the inquisitors] would bring the very same heinous procedures that they had used there, in violation of all law'.2 Yet not everyone was as fearful; some, like Marcilla, sensed an opportunity in the interstices of hatred.
Initially, however, Marcilla was in the minority. The authorities held out. In resisting, they were not merely standing up for local autonomy; they perhaps sensed that the new Inquisition, designed to persecute people who were different, would destroy the delicate cultural fabric which made the town what it was. For the

inhabitants of Teruel were a mixed bunch. In addition to the majority Christian population, there was a large community of people descended from Jewish converts to Christianity–*conversos*.e Between 1391 and 1413 there had been many such conversions, some of them voluntary and some of them forced;3 the children and grandchildren of these converts were mostly sincere Christians, but they maintained some of the cultural practices of their Jewish ancestors. In addition to the *conversos*, Teruel had a large population of converted Muslims who had switched to Christianity along with the Jews after listening to the preaching of St Vincent Ferrer in the early 15th century. These converts–known as *moriscos*–had abandoned Moorish dress and no longer spoke Arabic; they had assimilated fully into society.4

The arrival of the inquisitor caused panic. The Inquisition had been created in Spain within the past few years to target alleged bad Christians among the *conversos*, and three years previously the first auto had been staged, in Seville. The combination of fear and local official resistance meant that as soon as he appeared in Teruel Solibera was shut up in a monastery for three weeks and prevented from preaching his inaugural sermon. Eventually he had to move to a nearby hamlet, from which he righteously thundered excommunications at the town officials.5 They responded with gusto. In open mockery of inquisitorial procedure, they built a great fire with a stake in the middle. Yet instead of this serving as a place for the burning of heretics, they surrounded the fire with stones which were hurled at anyone who came to the town with royal letters or decrees supporting the Inquisition.6

Marcilla organized the inquisitor's fightback. First he ensured that Solibera was given an armed guard. Then he used the guard to ensure that Teruel's rebellious officials were arrested. All of them were sacked. Marcilla was made captain of the town. He was instructed to seize Teruel, appoint new officials and install the new Inquisition.

In March 1485 Marcilla took the town and the Inquisition began work. In August the first auto was held and two *converso* effigies were burnt; in January 1486 there was another auto and nine *conversos* were burnt. The most important of them was Jaime Martinez Santángel, the brother-in-law of one of the officials who had resisted Inquisitor Solibera the year before. Two of Santangel's sons were burnt alive and one was burnt in effigy.7 Jaime Martinez Santángel, one recalls, was the father-in-law of Marcilla, and his sons were Marcilla's brothers-in-law. Through the Inquisition Marcilla had set about destroying his relatives by marriage.8 He had also given his support to an institution which the new monarchs of Aragon and Castile, Ferdinand and Isabella–known as the Reyes *Católicos*–had placed at the forefront of their domestic policy. This alone was enough to see him rise through the ranks even as his wife's family was destroyed.

Soon enough, in Zaragoza, the capital of the kingdom of Aragon on the banks of the Ebro river, events in Teruel would be echoed. Zaragoza was renowned for its nobility and the beauty of its women. Just eight years before the Spanish conquest of Granada in 1492, there was still a large Moorish quarter with an oil press and functioning mosque,9 while travellers often admired its houses of thin red Roman-style bricks and its bevy of churches.10

Soon, however, there would be blood. Word of events in Teruel began to reach the town. Anger in the converso community grew. It was bad enough that the Inquisition had begun work in Castile, but now who was this Marcilla, to bring down Don Jaime Martinez Santángel of Aragon! Doubtless this doughty champion of the Inquisition had married Brianda for her *converso* money: he despised her, although perhaps her family had slighted him, flaunting their wealth in the face of his much-vaunted but straitened nobility. Beneath the anger pulsed fear. For what Marcilla had really done was to effect a coup. With the Inquisition, there was the prospect of power.

SOLIBERA'S FELLOW inquisitor was Pedro de Arbues. Arbues had been born not far from Zaragoza in 1441.11 He had studied at Bologna in Italy and risen through the ranks of the Church before being made an inquisitor alongside Solibera in 1484. His attachment to the ideology of the times was revealed by the inaugural speech he made to the Council of the Inquisition in Zaragoza. 'Our purpose,' he said, 'is to watch over the vine of the Church as careful sentries, picking out heresies from the wheat of religion … if it is carefully considered, it will be seen that all this, which seems horrible at first glance, is nothing but mercy … Who can doubt that what seems in this tribunal to be severity of justice is in fact a medicine, ordained by

mercy for the health of the delinquents?'12
With Arbues and Solibera, the Inquisition set up shop in Aragon. As edicts of faith were read, people began to follow the initial rebellious example of Teruel. Both Catholics who had no Jewish or Islamic ancestry–the so-called Old Christians–and *conversos* started to murmur against the Inquisition in Zaragoza. The *conversos* were joined by members of the nobility and the richest people of the city, who complained that the new Inquisition acted in violation of the laws of Aragon, confiscating goods and keeping secret the names of witnesses, two things 'most new, and never seen before, and most prejudicial for the kingdom'.13 By February 1485 the indignation was such that some *conversos* decided to attempt something outrageous: the assassination of the feared Arbues.14
The plot was hatched in the house of the leading *converso* Luis de Santángel. A bounty of 500 florins was placed on the head of Arbues, and a team of six assassins was chosen. The team was a mixture of *conversos*–the father of one of them, Juan de Esperandeu, had already been imprisoned by the Inquisition–and Old Christians, including Vidal Duranzo, the Gascon servant of Juan de Abadía, another of the assassins.15 The idea was that if Arbues was killed, no inquisitor would dare to fill his shoes.16
Rumours were rife. The first auto in Zaragoza, with burnings, took place in May. Another followed in June. Indignation rose all the while among the *converso* community. Assuming a conspiracy, Arbues took to wearing a chain-mail undershirt and an iron helmet beneath his hat.17 One night, Juan de Esperandeu tried to cut away one of the bars of his window while Arbues was asleep in bed but he was discovered and ran off in the dark.18
On the night of Wednesday 14 September 1485, the assassins gathered by the cathedral. Three entered by the main entrance, three by the sacristy. They knew that that night Arbues, a Dominican, would come to midnight mass. Towards midnight the cathedral canons assembled in the choir. Arbues entered from the cloisters in his canonical dress, bearing a lantern in his hands, and walked towards them. He knelt next to the pulpit on the left and began to pray. Charging from the shadows, Vidal Duranzo stabbed the inquisitor through the back with such force that he pierced the chain mail and cut his jugular vein; Esperandeu, probably overexcited at the prospect of gaining revenge on his father's nemesis, stabbed weakly and grazed Arbues's arm. Duranzo now struck again, the helmet pitched from Arbues's head and the inquisitor fell to the floor.19
Arbues was carried back to his lodgings. He died before dawn. The news spread at once and the cry went up throughout the town: *'A fuego con los conversos*!'–'To the fire with the *conversos*!' It was only through the intervention of Don Alonso de Aragón, viceroy and arc...

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Frederick Warren:

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