

INTRODUCTION

The Events

In December 1608, a young woman named María de Ximildegui returned to the village of Zugarramurdi, in northern Navarre, after working across the French border in the Pays de Labourd. María announced to Zugarramurdi's residents that she had belonged to a witches' coven while living in the French Pyrenees; she also asserted that she had attended diabolical gatherings in Zugarramurdi itself.¹ Though now reconverted to Christianity, María remembered the witches she had seen and began to name them. Within four weeks, at least ten men and women, ranging in age from twenty to eighty, confessed to witchcraft in Zugarramurdi's parish church and begged their neighbors' pardon for having committed harmful magic. Those events soon were reported to the tribunal of the Spanish Inquisition in the city of Logroño: Logroño lay outside Navarrese territory, but its inquisitors were responsible for monitoring heresy there.² Within two months, or by February 1609, Logroño's inquisitors had seized four alleged ringleaders of the Devil's sect, and they had imprisoned six more individuals who had confessed to witchcraft in Zugarramurdi but then tried to retract their admissions. The inquisitors refused to believe their recantations and started investigations instead.³

In the wake of rising accusations, one of Logroño's inquisitors, Juan de Valle Alvarado, went into the field in the second half of 1609 with an

edict of faith, which broadcast the inquisition's interest in finding witches and their accomplices. While on visitation, Valle heard three hundred adults confess to witchcraft and sent seventeen of them to the tribunal for trial. By November 1610, in a public ceremony of sentencing called an *auto de fe*, or "act of faith," the inquisition tribunal handed out punishments to thirty-one defendants who had been convicted of the heresy of witchcraft.⁴ Eleven of the thirty-one were burned at the stake because they refused to confess and repent; five of those eleven were burned in effigy because they had died in prison during their trials. The other twenty defendants—who had confessed their guilt and repented—were reconciled to the Catholic Church and given penances of imprisonment and exile.⁵

The witches sentenced in November 1610 had described astonishing events while they were under interrogation. Their deeds were read aloud during the *auto de fe*; a printed pamphlet about them appeared within weeks.⁶ The witch suspects said they had deliberately turned away from Christianity in order to worship the Devil. They reported that the Devil had arranged a diabolical apprenticeship, with each stage having its own responsibilities. For example, child-witches were put in charge of guarding toads that the older witches used to make poison. Adult witches sought to wreak as much physical harm as they could and thus damaged crops, raised storms, and poisoned neighbors. The Devil always wanted to recruit more people into his service, so older witches tricked adults into attending his meetings or kidnapped children for the same purpose.⁷

Heresy

From the viewpoint of the Spanish Inquisition and early modern Christianity, Protestant as well as Catholic, the witches of Zugarramurdi were actively engaging in heresy. Heresy has been a concern within Christianity for as long as Christianity has existed. The term comes from the Greek word *haireisis*, which meant "choice" in the ancient world. After Paul the Apostle's encounters with religious dissidents in the first century CE, *haireisis* gradually came to be associated with religious errors voiced stubbornly and publicly.

It bears emphasizing that heresy was not doubt. Furthermore, heresy could only be defined in opposition to orthodoxy, for Christians had to express what was acceptable before they could tag what was in error. Because the Christian New Testament was not formally codified until the Council of Carthage pronounced its content in 397 CE, and because Christianity's

theology and rituals changed over time, the characteristics of heresy altered, too. The earliest heresies in Christianity pertained to Jesus's relationship to God (Arianism); the relative power of God and the Devil (Manicheism); the impact of a priest's ethics on the power of the sacraments he administered (Donatism); and the existence of original sin and free will (Pelagianism). In the twelfth and thirteenth centuries in western Europe, new heresies were labeled as such on account of stubborn public statements about the holiness of poverty (Waldensianism) or apparent belief in a dualistic universe that pitted good against evil (Catharism).⁸ In the sixteenth century, followers of Martin Luther, Ulrich Zwingli, and John Calvin were categorized as heretics by Catholic popes because of their insistence, among other things, that the Bible was the only true touchstone for Christianity.

As for the heresy of witchcraft, modern historians now know that the complete stereotype of the European witch came together in the early fifteenth century.⁹ When baptized members of early modern Christian communities chose to follow the Devil, they were turning their reverence, trust, and obedience toward God's enemy and violating their baptismal vows: they were deemed heretics as a result. In Navarre in 1608, María de Ximildegui's statements and witch suspects' confessions seemed to make it clear that villagers had joined the Devil's congregation. The Spanish Inquisition—founded to combat heresy—consequently stepped in.

The Spanish Inquisition

From its origins in 1478, the Spanish Inquisition was an institution that blended religious duties and political loyalties. Inquisitors owed their ability to investigate heresy to the papacy, but they were put into office by Spanish kings, and if they had to choose between pope and monarch, they almost always sided with the latter.¹⁰ This does not mean that inquisitors' religious objectives were a cover for political strategies. There was no separation between church and state in early modern Europe. Spanish sovereigns always cared deeply about Catholic orthodoxy; inquisitors knew that their primary responsibility, like that of their medieval predecessors, was to guard the Catholic faith. By 1609, *how* they should protect Catholicism had been laid out in detail.¹¹ Inquisitors were only supposed to prosecute baptized Christians, because it took a rejection of baptismal vows to make a heretic. The extent of the apostasy should have been persistent and public; in early modern Spain, it could also be implicit. Inquisitors could read heresy into various

actions, such as avoiding Mass, following Jewish dietary laws, disputing the virgin birth of Jesus, endorsing sexual intercourse between unmarried, consenting adults, or swearing while gambling.

When such actions came to their attention, inquisitors pursued defendants in various ways. Sometimes, inquisitors (and their employees) could remain relatively passive, for it was not unusual for individuals to denounce themselves for religious errors and beg for forgiveness. If self-denunciations were not in play, witnesses to a potential heresy could appear voluntarily or be solicited by an inquisition tribunal. Once enough testimony had been collected to make proof seem secure, the prosecutor would present an indictment to the inquisitors and request an arrest. The suspect would then be seized and brought to the tribunal for trial. The charges would be read before the defendant, who had to respond immediately and orally to the accusations. Crucially, identifying details about witnesses would be kept secret from defendants in all communications with them, because the Spanish Inquisition, like its medieval counterpart, worried about vengeance from the families of accused heretics. That rule of secrecy was supposed to apply to everyone employed by the tribunal as well as everyone who appeared before it. Witnesses, too, had to swear oaths not to divulge what they said or what they might have learned while testifying.

If an inquisition defendant declined to confess after hearing the charges, inquisitors and their prosecutor proceeded to trial. A silent or stubborn defendant would be presented with a written statement of prosecution testimony, from which specifics again had been expunged to preserve the rule of secrecy. People on trial could try to fight back by guessing the identity of the prosecutor's witnesses and then attacking the motives of those who might have testified against them. This sort of defense strategy typically included the naming of mortal enemies, whose depositions, if they existed, should have been nullified if capital enmity was sufficiently proven. A defendant also could present character witnesses for support as well as people who could contradict the prosecution's evidence. In the end, though, it was rare for inquisitors not to prove their cases.

As for punishment, if a defendant quickly admitted sins and named accomplices, the sentence typically involved readmittance to the Catholic Church through a process of social humiliation and religious reeducation. It bears emphasizing that inquisitors and their theorists had a religious goal behind their legal process, which was to win convicted heretics back to the Catholic Church. Physical discipline was supposed to be applied for spiritual ends.¹² The guilty could be "reconciled" to the church in private

ceremonies with the inquisitors and then commanded to carry out penances in the world: they might be required to sponsor a certain number of Masses, to fast, or to recite particular prayers on specific days. The guilty also could endure hearing their crime and punishment read aloud before a large audience in an *auto de fe*. *Autos de fe* were grand events for individual tribunals: they required a great deal of planning, as well as enough convicted and reconciled heretics to make the ceremony worthwhile. *Autos de fe* usually involved a wide range of sentences for a significant variety of offenders. The convicted could be required to wear a penitential garment, called a *sambenito*, whenever they left the house. They could be exiled or condemned to a period of incarceration in a monastery. They also could be sentenced to “perpetual prison”—which was never actually perpetual—with the prison being owned and monitored by the inquisition tribunal. Individuals who were convicted of heresy but did not confess in a timely manner also could be reconciled to the church, though with a much more severe sentence, such as time in the royal galleys. Meanwhile, defiant suspects, and people who had relapsed a second time into heresy, were supposed to be released to secular justices—called “relaxation to the secular arm”—and burned at the stake.

The inquisitors in Logroño who took charge of the witches’ investigation in 1609 knew they might face competition from other legal authorities. They could expect interest from Pamplona’s bishop, since bishops traditionally monitored their dioceses for religious errors of all kinds; bishops had their own court system, which was called the episcopal legal jurisdiction. Because the Devil helped his followers practice harmful magic (called *maleficium*) against people and property, the secular court system, based in Pamplona, also paid serious attention to suspected witches.¹³ Witchcraft in early modern Navarre thus could potentially draw the attention of three legal jurisdictions: inquisitorial, episcopal, and secular. The fact that multiple court systems were interested in the heresy and crime of witchcraft generally held for Catholic environments across early modern Europe.

The Inquisitors’ Visitations

This particular witch persecution in Navarre was both wide-ranging and dramatic. In 1609, witchcraft accusations not only spread rapidly beyond the village of Zugarramurdi but also continued even after the inquisition’s public *auto de fe* in November 1610. Denunciations moved west to a cluster of five hamlets, called Las Cinco Villas, on the Spanish-French border. Accusations

also spread east and south, to an area known as the Valle de Baztan. They occurred even farther afield in Olague, a short distance from Pamplona, as well as in San Sebastián, in the Basque province of Gipuzkoa. To make matters worse, children almost immediately began to play a crucial role in the accusations. Not only were they victims of the witches' harmful magic, but also hundreds insisted that witches were taking them to the Devil's gatherings against their will. Parents became desperate; village officials wrote to the inquisitors in Logroño; the bishop of Pamplona traveled throughout his diocese to investigate. Eventually, the governing royal council of the Spanish Inquisition, which was called the Suprema and located in Madrid, decided that an inquisitor would have to go back into the field to resolve the situation. At this point, the Logroño tribunal had three inquisitors. Alonso Becerra Holguín had toured the district in 1601; Juan de Valle Alvarado had done the same in 1609. The trip in 1611 thus fell to Alonso de Salazar Frías, who was the tribunal's junior member.

Salazar left on visitation on May 22, 1611, and did not return until January 10, 1612. While on the road, he resolved 1,802 cases of witchcraft. He absolved 1,384 children "as a precaution" (*ad cautelam*): in accordance with canon law, he defined "children" as under age twelve for girls and under age fourteen for boys. He also absolved 41 adults for having incurred a light suspicion of heresy (*abjuración de levi*) and reconciled 290 people for the heresy of witchcraft: 190 members of the latter group were under age twenty. Salazar heard 81 children and adults revoke confessions to witchcraft; he also heard 6 people tell him they had relapsed into that heresy.¹⁴

Once Salazar returned to the inquisition tribunal in Logroño, he refused to follow standard protocol, which dictated that he first should have shared his case notes with his colleagues, inquisitors Becerra and Valle, after which all three would have voted on the guilt of individual suspects. Instead, Salazar locked himself in his office and rebuffed consultation.¹⁵ He declined to follow the usual process because he had decided he had something radical to say. In the report he ultimately sent to the Suprema, on March 24, 1612, he argued that given what he had seen and heard on visitation, the Logroño tribunal lacked sufficient proof to put current and future witch suspects on trial. There were too many contradictions in the witches' statements. There also was a near-total lack of physical evidence that devil worship and evil magic had actually happened. While he was away, Salazar learned how local bribery, coercion, and even torture had produced witchcraft confessions. All these findings gave him pause. His fellow inquisitors were outraged by his position; their conflict continued for a full year and half, with documents

flying back and forth to the Suprema. Eventually, in 1614, that council invited Salazar to Madrid.

Revised Instructions

Once there, in consultation with his superiors, Salazar expanded and codified the rules for the inquisition's prosecution of witches. The new rules stressed ascertaining the difference between reality and illusion, verifying intent, discouraging forced confessions, inviting other explanations for catastrophic events, and allowing the revocation of witchcraft admissions made under oath. Finally, the new instructions stated that the witch defendants who had been executed or penanced in the November 1610 auto de fe would have their sentences lifted: they would not lose their property, wear penitential garments, or see their descendants labeled infamous. They could leave the monasteries or convents in which they were secluded and return to Navarre from exile. The new instructions were endorsed in 1614 and sent to every inquisition tribunal in Spanish imperial territory.¹⁶ As a result, modern scholars have believed that the Spanish Inquisition basically never prosecuted witches again.¹⁷

Modern Appraisals

The Spanish Inquisition hardly ever admitted error or exonerated the dead, and the way this witch hunt ended has astonished historians for centuries. Earlier experts agreed that what mattered most about the episode was its revelation of a skeptical, rational outlook where it was least expected, namely, in a Spanish inquisitor, Salazar, who seemed to confront and overturn superstitious beliefs, and thereby appeared to be ahead of his time.¹⁸ Spain has been associated with anti-modern tendencies and values ever since Dutch and British Protestants created the Black Legend of Spanish atrocities in the sixteenth century.¹⁹ Finding a Spaniard, and an inquisitor, who appeared to dismiss witches as an invention of the imagination allowed the country figuratively to jump ahead of supposedly more progressive countries that experienced severe witch-hunting, such as Germany. In sum, Inquisitor Salazar stood out for his proto-modernity.²⁰ The story of his battle to reverse false charges of witchcraft became a matter of national pride and a way in which Spanish exceptionalism had positive rather than negative connotations.²¹

New Evidence

Earlier scholars of the Zugarramurdi witch hunt knew that significant evidence about it could not be recovered. For example, none of the witches' trial records survived because Napoleon's troops burned down the Logroño inquisition tribunal as they invaded Spain in 1808. Key researchers—ethnographer and folklorist Gustav Henningsen, along with anthropologist Julio Caro Baroja—consequently believed they had to rely upon the surviving documents that Logroño's inquisitors happened to send to Madrid as well as the papers that the Suprema sent to the inquisitors and preserved as copies. In fact, it was Henningsen who discovered an enormous dossier of such materials in Madrid's Archivo Histórico Nacional (AHN) in 1967.²² Because he and Caro Baroja assumed the Spanish Inquisition was supremely authoritative during this witch hunt, they did not look beyond its records for other possible sources.

Not seeking out other materials was a mistake. It turns out that critical sources about the witch hunt are held in Pamplona's archives as well as Madrid's. Notaries in Navarre always recorded important village events, while the episcopal and secular court systems in Navarre had long-standing interests in witchcraft prosecutions. Navarrese notarial records and trials in other legal jurisdictions constitute a stunning new body of evidence for this witch hunt, one that is much closer to the ground than what most of the inquisition's holdings can offer. For example, notarial records reveal not only an accused witch's property holdings but peace contracts forced upon neighbors who had bludgeoned others with verbal and physical abuse during the witch hunt. Meanwhile, census registers demonstrate that multiple villages were depopulated as the witch hunt came to an end.

Even more remarkably, sources produced and stored in Navarre demonstrate that the Spanish Inquisition was not the only legal authority in play during the persecution, and Salazar was not the only witch's advocate.²³ Some accused witches decided to seek redress for their dishonor through other legal jurisdictions, even as inquisitors were trying in vain to manage the investigation. Those litigating witches won multiple cases against their accusers in the secular and episcopal courtrooms of Navarre's viceroy and Pamplona's bishop. Other secular prosecutions likewise had this witch hunt as their foundation, even though the catalogued titles of the trials never mention "witch": these prosecutions arose from defamation, intent to murder, aggression with a rock, insults shouted out a window, and dereliction of duty by village constables.²⁴ Two such trials were only found by Pamplona's

archivists in 2014 and 2018: they come from the village of Olague, and their manuscripts contain dozens of statements by self-identified child-witches ranging in age from five to fifteen. Some of these materials are unique in European history; some of the trial manuscripts run to hundreds of folios; until my investigations, none had been studied in any detail.²⁵ These notarial documents, censuses, and trials are located in the Archivo Real y General de Navarra (AGN) and the Archivo Diocesano de Pamplona (ADP). Many of the surviving inquisition texts about this witch hunt are incomprehensible without these newly discovered sources.

Previous research on this witch persecution was overwhelmingly grounded in descriptions and observations by inquisitors and thus written according to the perceptions of intellectual elites. In contrast, Pamplona's archives reveal what happened from the points of view of the children, women, and men who suffered from, engaged in, and witnessed the miseries of witch-hunting.²⁶ Their testimonies expose the emotional logic, legal reasoning, and religious and social values of a whole range of hitherto unknown and unheard actors, a number of whom spoke to Inquisitor Salazar when he was in the field.²⁷ Their depositions reveal the environment that Salazar discovered when he left Logroño and help us understand how he came to his epistemological break. Salazar was not so much ahead of his time in his reasoning as he was capable of being persuaded by emotionally compelling stories of what people said they had endured. He came to doubt not whether witchcraft was possible in theory but whether his tribunal was proceeding against witch suspects with sufficient proof. Notably, too, Salazar did not solve the witch problem on his own. The archives reveal that personnel from the inquisitorial, secular, and episcopal justice systems deliberately collaborated with each other to rectify the miscarriages of justice that the witch hunt entailed, despite those systems' competing sense of privilege.

Witchcraft Scholarship

This book brings this witch hunt in line with fundamental advances made over the last forty years in the study of early modern witchcraft and early modern inquisitions. For much of the twentieth century, scholars who studied witch trials in western Europe from 1500 to 1700 had to answer questions about whether witches had really existed and whether there was any point to exploring them. They had to confront the thesis of Margaret Murray, who asserted in 1921 that women categorized as witches were simply misunderstood

members of a pagan fertility cult.²⁸ They were challenged to explain how witchcraft accusations and prosecutions fit into a progressive vision of European history as moving toward reason and science; one scholar posited that only illiterate peasants in mountain hamlets took witch beliefs seriously.²⁹

Then, in the 1960s and 1970s, European historians began to notice modern anthropologists' work on witchcraft in Africa.³⁰ Anthropologists did not endorse the notion that witches and sorcerers were real, but they did seek to discover what witch beliefs meant and how they worked for the societies that had them. Some English scholars emulated the anthropologists' methods and mapped early modern witchcraft along functional systems; other European historians recognized the value of the social science or anthropological approach but hesitated to apply it to their research areas.³¹ Nonetheless, every historian of early modern witchcraft in Europe, Britain, or America realized that anthropologists were attempting to understand the phenomenon on its own terms and were inspired accordingly. Questions about truth and reality became irrelevant; instead, scholars began to pay attention to the process—the how and the why—of accusations.

As their studies went on, historians recognized the impossibility of coming to single, overarching causes for large-scale persecutions. They also became aware of the ways in which early modern witchcraft required multilayered research.³² The phenomena of worshipping the Devil and using diabolical help to carry out harmful magic did not truly occur, but trying to explain beliefs that they did necessarily involved attention to intellectual, religious, gender, social, political, and economic issues rooted in specific environments. Modern scholars found that European witch beliefs were shared across lines of class, sex, and profession, including between elite and popular culture.³³ They discovered that witch accusations often thrived on anxiety about fertility and depended upon authorities taking seriously the complaints of women.³⁴ Once, historians had imagined that prosecuting witches benefitted central governments, but with time, they also realized that central governments often tried to stop witch-hunting because it had such profoundly negative social effects.³⁵ All of these angles added to our understanding of the processes and outcomes of witchcraft accusations.

Inquisition Scholarship

Practically concurrently, another scholarly revolution in the study of early modern Europe began in November 1975, when Spanish dictator Francisco

Franco died after ruling Spain since 1939. Once Franco was gone, historians could begin to explore the Spanish Inquisition in an uncensored environment.³⁶ Studies exploded about the inquisition's structure, processes, and victims. Researchers made efforts to publish transcriptions and collections of primary sources.³⁷ They learned how the inquisition survived financially. They discovered that clusters of targets seemed to appear at particular chronological moments, which allowed them to suggest phases of inquisitorial activity.³⁸ Historians also studied specific inquisition tribunals, which revealed interactions among inquisitors, staff, and urban or rural populations.³⁹ Forty-five years ago, scholars were sure the Spanish Inquisition functioned like a machine; now, we know how uncoordinated and fractious it could be. The best recent work on the Spanish Inquisition in the Spanish Empire focuses on the ways in which particular environments affected practice and highlights the range of priorities that inquisitors could bring to their offices.⁴⁰

Revisions

Significantly, Henningsen and Caro Baroja completed their archival work on this witch hunt as these scholarly revolutions about witch-hunting and the Spanish Inquisition were underway, but they did not take advantage of them.⁴¹ Their research did not allow them to see potential gaps between theory and practice when it came to inquisitors' actions in seventeenth-century Navarre; Henningsen was not sufficiently familiar with early modern Catholicism to appreciate the role that religious fervor could play in the persecution. While both scholars believed the Spanish Inquisition was in charge, inquisitors in Logroño never had a direct line of control over Navarrese villagers, because they lived miles away and depended upon their locally embedded employees to achieve anything. Pamplona's archival sources demonstrate that those inquisition employees bent procedures and norms in the field and actually encouraged vigilante justice. Meanwhile, Navarrese villagers were not only willing to attack their neighbors in extralegal ways but were also legally astute and thoroughly familiar with litigation. Like their peers elsewhere in pre-modern Europe, they used the court systems for private ends when they attempted to recover their honor and exact revenge after suffering witchcraft accusations.⁴² As for the question of whether inquisitors, bishops, and other intellectual elites dictated witch beliefs to Navarre's illiterate populace, people there did not need tutorials in the fundamental theology of Christianity, and Navarrese culture had long-standing, terrifying traditions about what

witches could do. The interactions between elite and popular culture in this persecution were mutual rather than top-down.

Contributions

This book adds in multiple ways to our understanding of early modern European history. It confirms the benefit of studying various legal jurisdictions where witchcraft is concerned but also adds new twists to findings about witches in other locales. For example, one acclaimed scholar of witchcraft has found that German citizens in Rothenburg were dissuaded from labeling neighbors as witches because city magistrates were very willing to prosecute the accusers for slander.⁴³ While adults in Navarre could find themselves on trial for defamation over the slur of witch, it turns out that Navarrese *children* were the perfect vehicle for such allegations because they could not be sued for libel. Other scholars recently have highlighted the importance of emotions to the process of witch-hunting. My evidence also demonstrates that emotions were crucial, but with a significant difference: in this persecution, witches were seldom angry themselves; instead, this witch hunt was fundamentally a children's event driven by parental terror and rage.⁴⁴ Their dread was as much religious as practical, and a sense of spiritual combat galvanized entire villages. Finally, modern historians have taught us to notice sex, age, and socioeconomic status in witch-hunting, but the Navarrese findings capsize our presumptions in these regards. Men were accused when they had no genealogical links to other witch suspects. Allegations were hurled at fertile female teenagers, pregnant women, new mothers, and the wealthy. This witch hunt did not target poor crones.⁴⁵

In examining the processes of witchcraft accusations and confessions, this study contributes to our grasp of religion, society, family, and gender in the early seventeenth century. And when it comes to the "why" of accusations and confessions, Navarrese evidence illustrates an endless combination of possibilities. Subsistence crises in Navarre were routine.⁴⁶ Children in this witch hunt could be bribed into allegations through gifts as meager as a single chestnut; adults could be induced into accusations through gifts of clothing. Some parents encouraged their offspring to accuse neighbors or even family members in an attempt to evade a debt or end a marriage. Yet religious motives also were obvious. Many parents interrogated their children for weeks, came to believe their children were serving the Devil, and highlighted their own spiritual despair at their offspring's fate. Certain

youngsters and adults seem to have absorbed so thoroughly the label of “witch” that it became part of their identity: they repeatedly told relatives and neighbors how much they wanted to leave the Devil’s service but were unable to do so; they called themselves “the bewitched” of such-and-such a place. Their testimonies speak to current scholarly debates about witchcraft and the development of subjectivity.⁴⁷ Did witch suspects put psychic content into their confessions, or did the process of confessing create a sense of self-identity? Moreover, was the witch’s identity fixed, or subject to change? The evidence from Navarre indicates that these should not be framed as either/or questions, for all these possibilities were present.

Beyond witchcraft, this book adds to our grasp of the Spanish Inquisition, community responsibilities for children, and popular access to the law. If recent studies have highlighted the importance of placing inquisitors in their intellectual and social contexts, the material here charts the effects of distance, poverty, rebellion, and bad management on inquisitorial practice. My work restores Inquisitor Salazar to his legal, religious, and administrative environment; it reveals that the conflicts between him and his colleagues were more nuanced as well as more multifaceted than we had imagined. Thanks to new archival discoveries, this study adds children’s voices to the mix, while simultaneously pondering what those children can tell us about adult senses of obligation.⁴⁸ Finally, the only reason many of my findings are even possible is because illiterate villagers turned to legal systems for help. Their astute use of the law to fix dishonor and achieve vengeance—as well as their occasional, dreadful legal mistakes—is breathtaking. Their example, as well as the inquisitors’, speaks to larger questions about the reach of centralized authorities in what amounted to a hinterland in the Iberian Peninsula.

Organization

This study consists of five chapters, organized topically with an eye to chronology. Chapter 1, “Trauma,” is grounded in legal sources that relay the opinions and experiences of illiterate, Basque-speaking men, women, and children. It describes community interactions as witches were suspected, denounced, harassed, and tortured. It highlights some of the difficulties encountered by Spanish inquisitors as they attempted to manage the rising number of accusations. Those inquisitors’ absence from the field created a vacuum that was filled by their employees, with horrific consequences.

Finally, chapter 1 charts the analogous fates for accused witches in the inquisition tribunal and accused witches who remained at home.

Chapter 2, “Spiritual and Social Combat,” demonstrates that allegations of witchcraft could develop out of parental fear, religious fervor, and social tensions. There is no doubt that a portion of the witchcraft accusations here occurred out of hatred and vengeance, and Pamplona’s archival holdings present such motives in detail for the first time. Yet the same holdings also corroborate that the terror and dismay of parents were powerful motivators in the accusation process, and the rhetoric of religious warfare permeated everyone’s speech. The language of this witch hunt was firmly indebted to the Catholicism forged at the Council of Trent.

Chapter 3, “Legal Struggles, Legal Errors,” explains how the inquisitors made their decisions as the persecution continued. Scholars usually presume the Spanish Inquisition was a thoroughly centralized and efficient authority. Yet in this instance, the sources demonstrate a fractured structure, with both micromanagement and disconnections between the Suprema in Madrid and the tribunal in Logroño. The standards of proof and legal preferences that were supposed to guide inquisitorial procedure came apart from 1609 to 1612; Logroño’s inquisitors became positively obstinate when faced with legal threats from the secular and episcopal courts in Pamplona. The inquisitors’ legal errors had a parallel in the legal decisions made by certain accused witches in the village of Olague. There, a gang of children accused multiple adults of taking them to the Devil’s gatherings. Adult neighbors acted upon the children’s allegations by insulting and physically attacking three of the witch suspects. Those suspects in turn hurled public insults of their own against the adults who had assaulted them, even though they should have known the legal consequences for slander. The witch suspects were taken to court, and while they attempted to mount countersuits, they were extremely poor. The legal outcome for them was ruinous.

Chapter 4, “Collaboration, Obedience, Resistance” focuses on 1611, when all three legal jurisdictions began to make some headway in ending the witch hunt and yet were blocked by various actors, from certain inquisitors in Logroño to witch torturers in Navarre. There were striking collaborations that year among the leaders of Spain’s religious institutions: for example, the inquisitor-general and the bishop of Pamplona started to liaise, with the bishop’s advice being funneled back secretly to the Logroño tribunal. Concurrently, the same bishop and the secular court instigated trials against clerics and villagers who had tormented their neighbors over suspicions of witchcraft. Finally, Inquisitor Salazar left in May 1611 with an edict of grace,

which allowed him to begin immediately reconciling confessed witches to the Catholic Church. He ultimately heard revocations of forced or induced admissions to witchcraft. Yet the two inquisitors who stayed in Logroño swore that the secular and episcopal courts were doing the Devil's work and ultimately insisted that Salazar's visitation was a failure. At the same time, legal victories by maltreated witch suspects, who collaborated in order to succeed, did not translate seamlessly into punishment for their attackers, because the latter fiercely resisted the penalties handed down to them. These collaborations and conflicts enhance our grasp of why the end of this witch hunt took so much time to achieve.

Chapter 5, "Transgressions and Solutions," is devoted to the period from 1612 to 1614, when Inquisitors Becerra, Valle, and Salazar were willing to publicize their rifts, in increasingly profound ways, to the Suprema. Our awareness that they came to disagree fiercely about the witches they were prosecuting is not new: forty years ago, Henningsen made their dissent with one another the centerpiece of his monumental study, *The Witches' Advocate*. What is original in chapter 5 is attention to barely studied archival documents, as well as scrutiny of new materials only discovered in 2020. Some of these sources illuminate the inquisitors' legal reasoning and legal combat as they battled for the right to be heard and believed by their superiors. Other documents reveal telling incompetence, both in terms of law and administration, on the part of the Logroño tribunal. This section presents startling evidence that the crucial notaries *del secreto* of the tribunal, whose duty was to transcribe trial testimony, were rogue agents whom the inquisitors, including Salazar, declined to control. Awareness of the notaries' delinquency undoubtedly contributed to the Suprema's 1614 decision to suspend witchcraft cases in Navarre as well as to acquit people punished for witchcraft in the *auto de fe* of 1610.

Finally, the epilogue lays out the most important results of this new investigation. Children and teenagers drove this witch hunt. The persecution emphasized pastoral concerns and religious combat. It made local life topsyturvy. Yet Navarrese villagers, despite speaking only Basque and being illiterate, were nimble users of the courts and knew how to seek vengeance through the law. Spanish inquisitors, on the other hand, allowed their various chains of command to crumble and neglected well-known legal standards when it came to the collection and evaluation of proof. The leadership of the Spanish Inquisition exonerated the witches when evidence of coercion and malfeasance became too obvious to ignore. As for Inquisitor Salazar, he was alternately flexible and adamant when it came to his job's legal privileges and processes.

Ambitions

Village Infernos and Witches' Advocates seeks to expand our grasp of the distribution, timing, actors, processes, complications, and consequences of this most famous witch hunt. It works from the principle, demonstrated repeatedly by the sources, that there could be breaches and alterations as orders were given in Madrid, received in Logroño, and enacted in Navarre. It offers a portrait of dysfunctional inquisitors whose decisions and actions actually botched the processes their tribunal was bound to uphold. On the village level, this investigation uncovers the emotional and social tumult in communities besieged by witchcraft accusations. Finally, this inquiry restores religion to an episode abounding in it and sheds light on historical actors who are often nearly impossible to hear. My hope is that the book will increase our understanding of inquisitorial practice, community norms, relationships between children and adults, and this particular witch hunt in early seventeenth-century Navarre. The study may also startle readers with the wonders that can lie in historical archives, even though the very construction of archives expunges and silences so many human beings.⁴⁹

Courts, Sources, and Money

The three legal jurisdictions that played a role in this witch hunt had certain features in common. Guilt was always presumed. Ideal witnesses for both the prosecution and the defense were men over the age of twenty-five, but because witchcraft was an exceptionally atrocious crime (*crimen exceptum*), less-than-ideal witnesses could be called to testify, such as other people accused of heresy or children under the age of fourteen for boys and twelve for girls.⁵⁰ Testimony was written down and was supposed to be ratified by the deponent before it could be used in court: that testimony was collected by deputized notaries who went into the villages to hear from witnesses.

Once they reached court, defendants had lawyers: in the inquisitorial and episcopal courts, those lawyers were employees of the inquisition and bishop, which did not mean that they did their job half-heartedly. Defendants and their families were supposed to pay for their upkeep while they were in jail and prosecutions were underway, though inquisition tribunals would always feed poor prisoners if the latter had no other recourse. The royal court in Pamplona conducted investigations to see if particular prisoners were truly so poor that they warranted free food, which could result

in several weeks of starvation before a decision was reached. The episcopal system too had a jail, which was referred to as the bishop's tower. Duration of cases in all three jurisdictions could occasionally last for years, though quicker trials were the norm. The prosecutors in the secular, episcopal, and inquisitorial courts always wanted a confession, which was known as the "queen of proofs" (*regina probationum*). Full proof also could be obtained via two eyewitnesses to the same event. A sequence of eyewitnesses to different events only amounted to partial proof, and partial proofs should not have been enough to convict. The secular and inquisitorial jurisdictions would conduct torture in pursuit of a confession, which the defendant had to ratify after the torture had ceased. For the inquisitorial system, torture had an interrogatory purpose, not a punitive one, and no confession was as valuable as a spontaneous one.

As for differences, the royal secular court in Pamplona only heard cases that could not be fixed in the villages: the latter had what were called courts of "first instance," in which local justices heard complaints about crimes and offenses and sought to resolve them. The secular court required defendants to pay for their court processes, unlike the episcopal and inquisitorial varieties. The secular jurisdiction could condemn people to death or exile. The episcopal jurisdiction never handed out death sentences. The inquisitorial jurisdiction could issue rulings of death (rare) or exile (not rare), or sentence defendants to various penances that were intended to expiate the defendants' guilt for their religious errors. Penances were the most common sentences from inquisitors everywhere in the Spanish Empire. Proven capital enmity—wishing someone was dead—should have nullified witnesses in all three jurisdictions. Finally, the Spanish Inquisition and Spanish bishops, like their Catholic counterparts elsewhere, were supposed to prosecute only baptized Christians. Inquisitors were supposed to target heresy, while bishops were engaged with a broad range of clerical and lay offenses in the religious sphere. Meanwhile, the secular jurisdiction could prosecute anyone for a wide variety of harmful physical and verbal acts, ranging from counterfeiting currency to murder to theft to slander and beyond.

Trials in the secular, episcopal, and inquisitorial jurisdictions had their proceedings copied down by notaries, who undoubtedly took notes in real time and then filled in the substance later. These court cases exist only in manuscript form, and the content of the manuscripts does not necessarily proceed in chronological order. Pamplona's AGN and ADP contain the secular and episcopal trials used in this book. The ADP possesses a magnificent catalogue of its holdings, with indices, which was compiled over thirty

years by its former archivist, Don José Luis Sales Tirapu. The ADP's trials are organized according to the notaries who transcribed them: each trial has been given a file, and each file is put into boxes that contain twenty to forty files in all. The boxes of files can overlap by date, since they were governed by the individual notary's ongoing work. Researchers have to search via trial/file, versus box, and it can be challenging to search via locality.

As for inquisition documentation, we lack all the inquisition trials for this witch hunt as well as trial transcripts for the Logroño tribunal's prosecutions of other heresies. But we do have books of correspondence sent from Logroño to Madrid, and vice versa—this correspondence too is in manuscript form—as well as a gigantic file (*legajo*) of assorted documents about this witch hunt and other inquisitorial concerns of the tribunal. That file contains some nine hundred folios of material, only a tiny portion of which is in chronological order. It is no wonder that it took Henningsen six years to read its contents.⁵¹

Finally, notarial records from Pamplona's AGN have provided crucial evidence for this study. Notaries copied down legal agreements by the millions in medieval and early modern Europe, and literally thousands of these documents exist for early modern Navarre. They are always in manuscript form. In the AGN, they are bundled individually in large boxes, without indices or lists of their contents, though each individual document within the boxes has been numbered. Often full of surprises, notarial records usually require detective work.

All translations are my own unless otherwise noted. With the much-appreciated help of senior archivist Peio J. Monteano Sorbet at the AGN, I have done my best to bring the names of Navarrese villages and villagers into line with modern Basque orthography. Exceptions are the city of San Sebastián, because its Castilian name is so well known, and María de Ximildegui, because she is a pivotal character in the witch hunt and because Henningsen rendered her surname in that way. It is important to note that the village of Olague in modern Basque does not carry a dieresis, but the surname "Olagüe" might, which is why both spellings will appear in this book.

The reader will encounter multiple terms for money here. The *maravedí* held the lowest value. The silver coin used in Navarre was the *real*, worth 34 maravedis. Though the *ducado*, or ducat, was a gold coin whose value fluctuated in this time frame, it always was more valuable than the silver real and was worth 375 maravedis.