



The Grand Inquisitor's Manual: A History of Terror in the Name of God

By Jonathan Kirsch

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The Grand Inquisitor's Manual by nationally bestselling author Jonathan Kirsch is a provocative popular history of the Inquisition, the 12th century reign of church-sanctioned terror. Ranging from the Knights Templar to the first Protestants, from Joan of Arc to Galileo, *The Grand Inquisitor's Manual* is a fascinating and sobering study of the torture and murder of hundreds of thousands of “heretics” in God’s name—the original blueprints for persecution originally drafted in the Middle Ages but followed for centuries afterwards, up to and including the “advanced interrogation methods” recently employed at Guantanamo Bay.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. Mention the Inquisition to any informed person and you're likely to garner a response somewhere between horror and disgust. Kirsch, a prolific writer and documenter of our past (*A History of the End of the World; Gods Against the Gods*), offers up an amazing recounting of the abuses by clergy and state in those terrible times. Clinical in its descriptions, the narrative's lively and crisp prose brings us right into the torture chamber, shining a much-needed light into the mindset of the church and its representatives. Alarmingly, the author insists that although the Inquisition is but a memory for us today, the inquisitional mindset is alive and well. Kirsch discovers many examples in more modern and familiar history: the Salem witch trials, Hitler's Germany, Roosevelt's placing Japanese-Americans in internment camps and Senator McCarthy's Communist-hunting. All of these injustices, he says, find their root in the same sense of power and privilege. Kirsch's forceful and cautionary account is essential reading for historians and anyone who wants to understand the potential dark side of religion. (*Oct.*)

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Review

"Kirsch offers up an amazing recounting of the abuses of clergy and state in those terrible times. Kirsch's powerful and cautionary account is essential reading for historians and anyone who wants to understand the potential dark side of religion." (Publishers Weekly, Starred Review)

"A scathing account of the Inquisition's 600-year campaign to stifle religious dissent, as well as to persecute various groups of people it branded as alien menaces to communal security." —Los Angeles Times (Los Angeles Times)

"Jonathan Kirsch is a fine storyteller with a flair for rendering ancient tales relevant and appealing to modern audiences." --Washington Post (Washington Post)

From the Back Cover

The Surprising History and Legacy of the Inquisition

The renowned historian and critic Jonathan Kirsch presents a sweeping history of the Inquisition and the ways in which it has served as the chief model for torture in the West to this day. Ranging from the Knights Templar to the first Protestants; from Joan of Arc to Galileo; from the Inquisition's immense power in Spain after 1492, when the secret tribunals and torture chambers were directed for the first time against Jews and Muslims, to the torture and murder of hundreds of thousands of innocent women during the Witch Craze; and to the modern war on terror—Kirsch shows us how the Inquisition stands as a universal and ineradicable reminder of how absolute power wreaks inevitable corruption.

Users Review

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Angela Yoder:

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