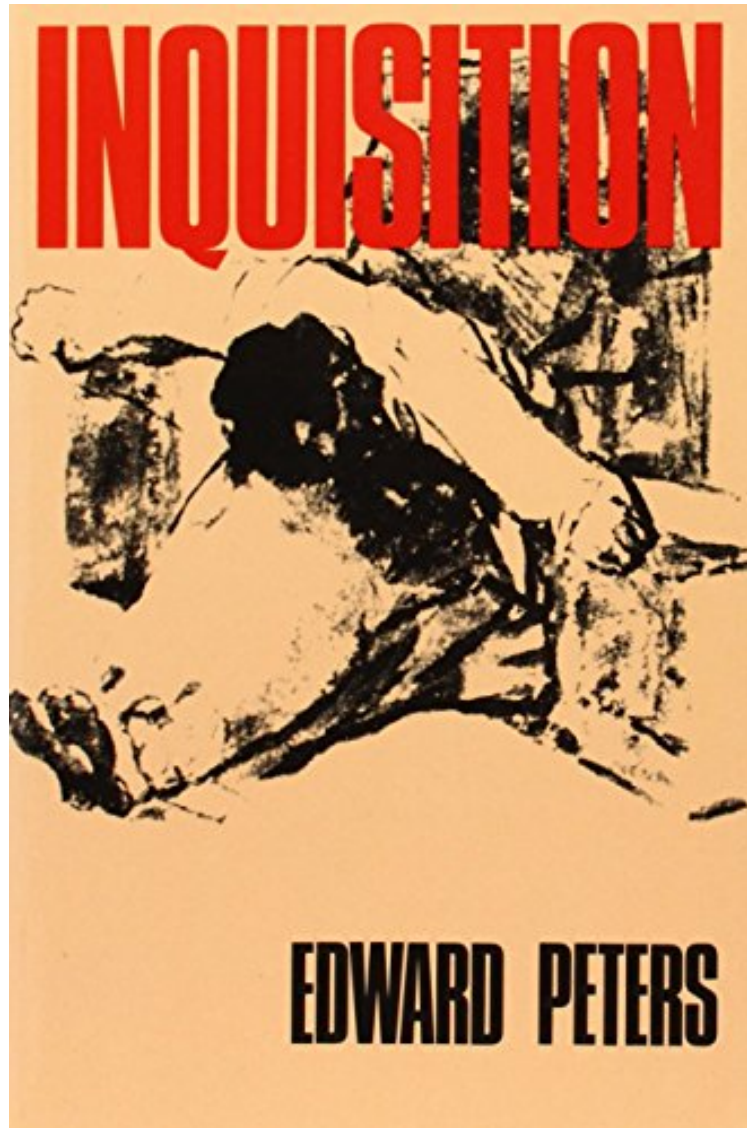


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This impressive volume is actually three histories in one: of the legal procedures, personnel, and institutions that shaped the inquisitorial tribunals from Rome to early modern Europe; of the myth of The Inquisition, from its origins with the anti-Hispanists and religious reformers of the sixteenth century to its embodiment in literary and artistic masterpieces of the nineteenth century; and of how the myth itself became the foundation for a "history" of the inquisitions.

From Publishers Weekly: Inquisition history, a developing field, provides a key to the "understanding of past societies in their entirety." Peters, professor at the University of Pennsylvania and author of *Torture*, demonstrates this key function as he traces the transformation of the inquisition tribunal from a simple legal procedural of ancient Rome to its employ as a feared instrument of enforcing religious orthodoxy in the medieval period, to its symbolic use in the works of such contemporary writers as Kafka, Koestler and Miller. In Peters's view, the societal divisions brought about by the Reformation in the 16th century provide the grounds for centuries of polemic, fiction and a vivid mythology that caused the term "The Inquisition" to be persistently associated with coercive authority that attempts to stifle free expression. Richly detailed and relevant in application to contemporary philosophy, this study, mainly of interest to historians and social scientists, establishes the thesis that "the history of myth is a valid part of history." Copyright 1988 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Tracing the Inquisition's history from its roots in Roman legal procedure through its growth under the Roman Church as an instrument to enforce religious orthodoxy and up to its depiction as a symbol of intellectual dissent (no longer simply the Inquisition, but now "The Inquisition) by such artists as Schiller, Verdi, and Dostoevski, Peters makes a forceful and cogent case that history and myth inform one another--thus making historical objectivity but another myth. Not only an excellent study of the Inquisition, but a piquant look at the methodology of historians."--"Kirkus sAbout the Author: Edward Peters, author of the highly acclaimed *Torture*, is Henry Charles Lea Professor of Medieval History at the University of Pennsylvania.