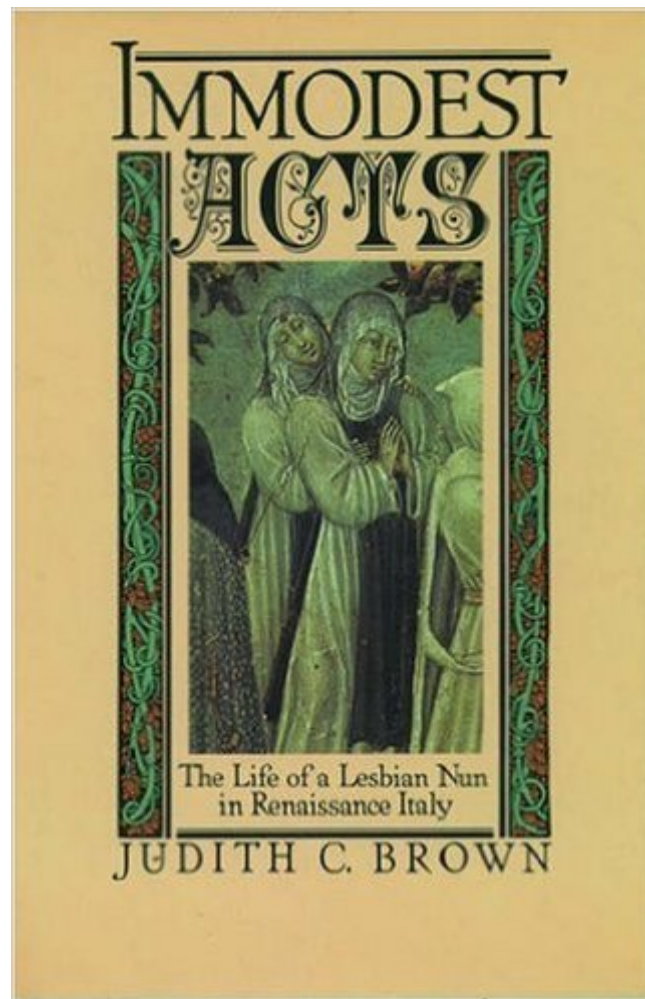


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Immodest Acts: The Life Of A Lesbian Nun In Renaissance Italy (Studies In The History Of Sexuality)



Synopsis

The discovery of the fascinating and richly documented story of Sister Benedetta Carlini, Abbess of the

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

In the year 1600, at the tender age of nine, Benedetta Carlini was sent to a nunnery in the small city of Pescia in north-central Italy. What today might be considered cruel and highly unusual was then a way for Benedetta's somewhat well-to-do parents to provide their daughter with protection. After several years at the nunnery which Brown describes as fairly unremarkable, Benedetta began to have a series of increasingly disturbing visions, including being sexually harassed by demons. Sister Benedetta was eventually assigned a companion named Bartolomea Crivelli (also a sister in the convent) whose presence, as the subtitle hints at, would later become problematic for her. Bartolomea's job was to assist Benedetta through her "periods of ecstasy," and was present when she supposedly received the stigmata and exchanged mystical hearts with Christ. Naturally, this caught the attention of a Counter-Reformation Catholic Church whose main goal was maintaining a sense of propriety. Two separate people (men, naturally) were set out to Pescia to investigate what was happening. Stefano Cecchi was the first to investigate Benedetta over a number of visits throughout late 1619. Cecchi's main purpose was to ensure that she was remaining within theologically accepted boundaries, which she was extremely conscious of doing, knowing that moving outside of them would have put her reputation, and more importantly her life, in danger.

Cecchi, satisfied that Benedetta was not a heretic, left quietly to resume his position as the provost of Pescia. At least for a while, things appeared to return to normal inside the convent. At some time between August 1622 and March 1623, the papal nuncio sent several representatives, led by Alfonso Giglioli, to examine Benedetta's claims again.

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