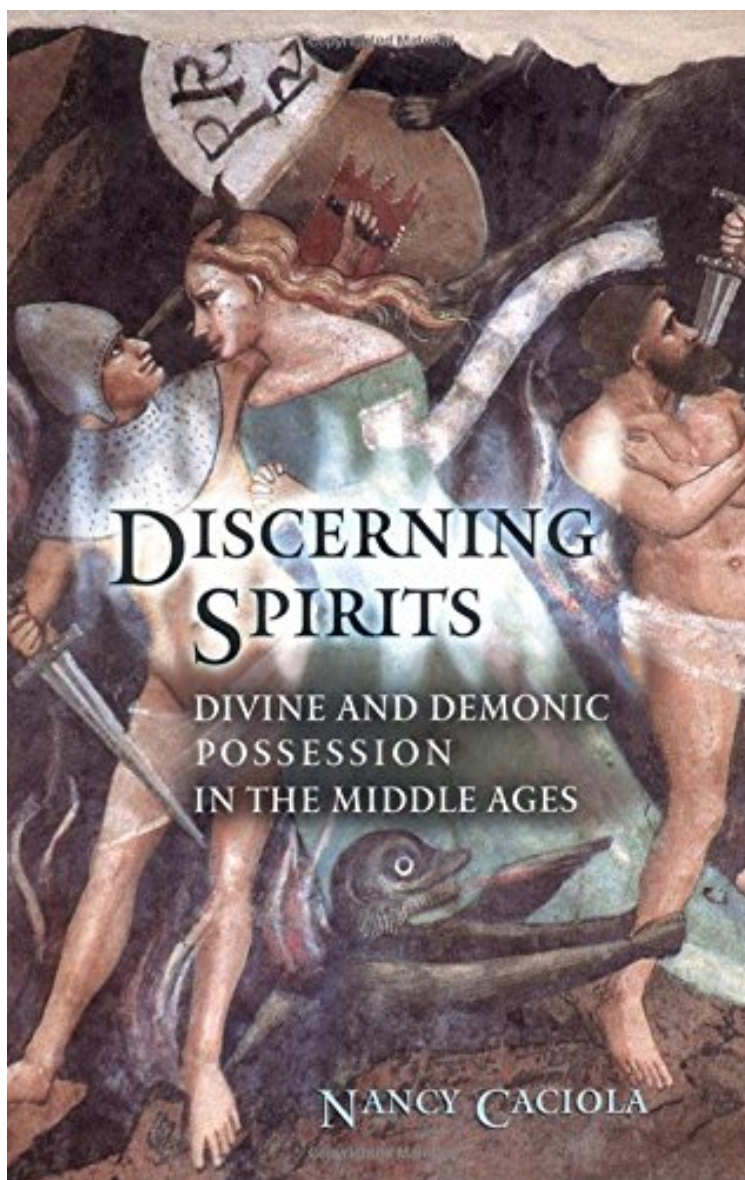


(Read free ebook) Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages (Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past)

Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages (Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past)

Nancy Mandeville Caciola

*DOC | *audiobook | ebooks | Download PDF | ePub*



[Download](#)

[Read Online](#)

#1082331 in Books Nancy Caciola 2006-07-13 Original language: English PDF # 1 9.25 x .20 x 6.13l, 1.12
#File Name: 0801473349352 pages Discerning Spirits Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages |
File size: 75.Mb

Nancy Mandeville Caciola : Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages (Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it

would be worth my time, and all praised *Discerning Spirits: Divine and Demonic Possession in the Middle Ages (Conjunctions of Religion and Power in the Medieval Past)*:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An excellent read; highly recommended
By A. Monteith
This book is an exceptionally well-researched, well-analyzed, erudite-yet-readable-and-accessible piece of work. The methodology is sound, and Caciola does a brilliant job not only of presenting the medieval understanding of demon/divine possession, but of demonstrating how gender influenced their interpretations of possession phenomena. One of the best academic books I have read in quite some time.
2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Possession -- female twist
By MnM
Great writing, smooth read. The chapters seem to always find their way back to the possession of females. Its geared mainly towards that. Cacciola gives great supporting knowledge of what is going on in the secular world around this and that provides excellent context.
0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Interesting
By Elizabeth
This book is ok . It very entertaining but it sometimes it's a bit dense. Good read though. Good

Trance states, prophesying, convulsions, fasting, and other physical manifestations were often regarded as signs that a person was seized by spirits. In a book that sets out the prehistory of the early modern European witch craze, Nancy Caciola shows how medieval people decided whom to venerate as a saint infused with the spirit of God and whom to avoid as a demoniac possessed of an unclean spirit. This process of discrimination, known as the discernment of spirits, was central to the religious culture of Western Europe between 1200 and 1500. Since the outward manifestations of benign and malign possession were indistinguishable, a highly ambiguous set of bodily features and behaviors were carefully scrutinized by observers. Attempts to make decisions about individuals who exhibited supernatural powers were complicated by the fact that the most intense exemplars of lay spirituality were women, and the "fragile sex" was deemed especially vulnerable to the snares of the devil. Assessments of women's spirit possessions often oscillated between divine and demonic interpretations. Ultimately, although a few late medieval women visionaries achieved the prestige of canonization, many more were accused of possession by demons. Caciola analyzes a broad array of sources from saints' lives to medical treatises, exorcists' manuals to miracle accounts, to find that observers came to rely on the discernment of bodies rather than seeking to distinguish between divine and demonic possession in purely spiritual terms.

"This book is a thoughtful and rich exploration of an important aspect of medieval religious culture. Discerning readers interested in spirituality, gender, or conceptions of the body in the Middle Ages will be well rewarded." *American Historical*
"Caciola brings to light lesser-known but textually documented visionaries of the Middle Ages, along with the big names, in her study of the fine line between 'delusional' and 'devotional' behaviors. In discussing these medieval women's behavior and writings, she highlights the fact that gender was often the factor that determined whether one was considered demonically or divinely possessed. . . . Caciola provides a perceptive piece of historical scholarship on a topic of great interest to religious studies and women's studies collections." *Library Journal*
"Discerning Spirits is clearly an important contribution to the study of medieval culture, demonic possession, sainthood, and women's history. Caciola has a strong command of Latin, French, German, and Italian as witnessed in the numerous translations dispersed throughout the text. . . . Ultimately, the work succeeds in laying out a framework for the discernment of bodies associated with divine and demonic possession, especially among women." *Comitatus*
"The point of departure for this remarkable and bracingly refreshing book on female spirit possession in medieval France, Italy, and the Lowlands is the observation that divine possession and demonic possession manifested themselves in almost identical ways in the human body. . . . The author has a remarkable gift for language and an obvious delight in the well-chosen word; her sentences crackle with energy and shine with a luminous clarity. . . . Discerning Spirits is a masterful achievement." *Renaissance Quarterly*
"The groundbreaking work on exorcism manuals and the impressive range of sources handled throughout the book are particularly noteworthy. Moreover, the striking visual evidence is clearly presented, lucidly analyzed, and tightly interwoven with the rest of the argument. Scholars, graduate students, and even advanced undergraduates interested in the history of women, the church, and the body will profit from reading *Discerning Spirits*." *Speculum*
"Nancy Caciola explores the deep misogyny in medieval culture as it appears in the treatment of female demoniacs, in clerical reactions to women's extraordinary piety, and in the literature on discernment of spirits. She traces the ambiguous boundary between sainthood and demonic possession. And she shows with unusual clarity how thinking about these matters developed in the specific circumstances of later medieval culture. *Discerning Spirits* will fascinate readers interested in sainthood, possession, women's history, and medieval culture generally." *Richard Kieckhefer, Northwestern University*
"In thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe, theologians and preachers could not decide how to interpret the behavior of certain inspired women who experienced trances and ecstatic states: were they possessed by the devil or filled with the Holy Spirit? With no objective criteria for 'discerning spirits' evaluating the soul based on outward appearances it was generally accepted that the signs were ambiguous and the nature of the women's souls uncertain. By exploring the historical record, Nancy Caciola helps us understand that the strict opposition between Good and Evil is not an

intrinsic aspect of religious and political discourse. Such a book is urgently needed today!"Jean-Claude Schmitt, author of *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society*From the Inside Flap"Nancy Caciola explores the deep misogyny in medieval culture as it appears in the treatment of female demoniacs, in clerical reactions to womens extraordinary piety, and in the literature on discernment of spirits. She traces the ambiguous boundary between sainthood and demonic possession. And she shows with unusual clarity how thinking about these matters developed in the specific circumstances of later medieval culture. Discerning Spirits will fascinate readers interested in sainthood, possession, womens history, and medieval culture generally."Richard Kieckhefer, Northwestern University "In thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe, theologians and preachers could not decide how to interpret the behavior of certain inspired women who experienced trances and ecstatic states: were they possessed by the devil or filled with the Holy Spirit? With no objective criteria for discerning spiritsevaluating the soul based on outward appearancesit was generally accepted that the signs were ambiguous and the nature of the womens souls uncertain. By exploring the historical record, Nancy Caciola helps us understand that the strict opposition between Good and Evil is not an intrinsic aspect of religious and political discourse. Such a book is urgently needed today!"Jean-Claude Schmitt, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, author of *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society*From the Back Cover"Nancy Caciola explores the deep misogyny in medieval culture as it appears in the treatment of female demoniacs, in clerical reactions to womens extraordinary piety, and in the literature on discernment of spirits. She traces the ambiguous boundary between sainthood and demonic possession. And she shows with unusual clarity how thinking about these matters developed in the specific circumstances of later medieval culture. Discerning Spirits will fascinate readers interested in sainthood, possession, womens history, and medieval culture generally."Richard Kieckhefer, Northwestern University "In thirteenth- and fourteenth-century Europe, theologians and preachers could not decide how to interpret the behavior of certain inspired women who experienced trances and ecstatic states: were they possessed by the devil or filled with the Holy Spirit? With no objective criteria for discerning spiritsevaluating the soul based on outward appearancesit was generally accepted that the signs were ambiguous and the nature of the womens souls uncertain. By exploring the historical record, Nancy Caciola helps us understand that the strict opposition between Good and Evil is not an intrinsic aspect of religious and political discourse. Such a book is urgently needed today!"Jean-Claude Schmitt, Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales, author of *Ghosts in the Middle Ages: The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society*