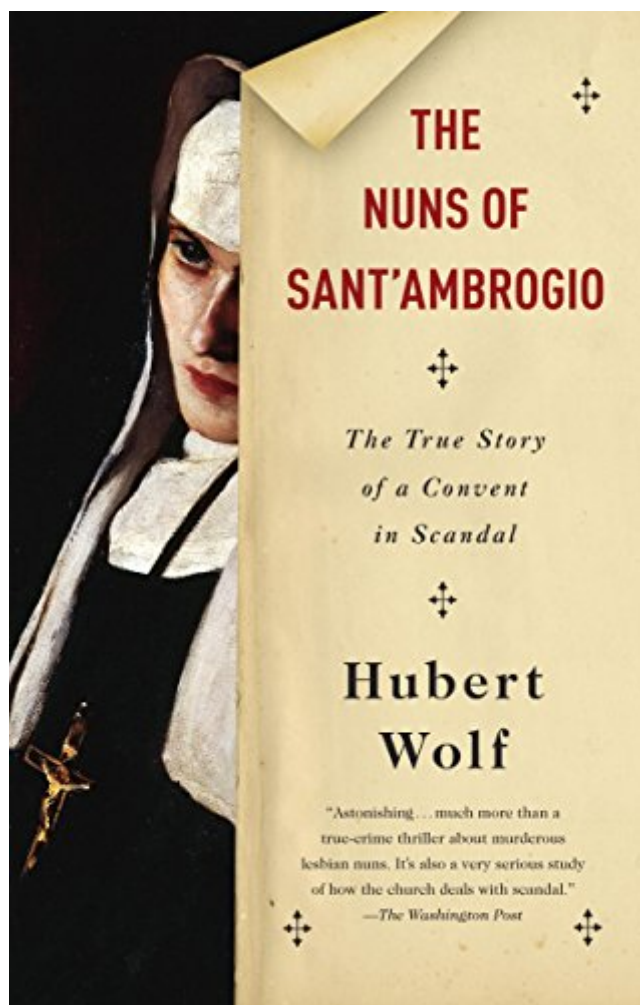


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The Nuns Of Sant'Ambrogio: The True Story Of A Convent In Scandal



Synopsis

A true, never-before-told storyâdiscovered in a secret Vatican archiveâof sex, poison, and lesbian initiation rites in a nineteenth-century convent. In 1858, a German princess, recently inducted into the convent of SantâAmbrogio in Rome, wrote a frantic letter to her cousin, a confidant of the Pope, claiming that she was being abused and feared for her life. What the subsequent investigation by the Churchâs Inquisition uncovered were the extraordinary secrets of SantâAmbrogio and the illicit behavior of the conventâs beautiful young mistress, Maria Luisa. Having convinced those under her charge that she was having regular visions and heavenly visitations, Maria Luisa began to lead and coerce her novices into lesbian initiation rites and heresies. She entered into a highly eroticized relationship with a young theologian known as Padre Petersâurging him to dispense upon her, in the privacy and sanctity of the confessional box, what the two of them referred to as the âspecial blessing.â What emerges through the fog of centuries is a sex scandal of ecclesiastical significance, skillfully brought to light and vividly reconstructed in scholarly detail. Offering a broad historical background on female mystics and the cult of the Virgin Mary, and drawing on written testimony and original documents, Professor WolfâGermanyâs leading scholar of the Catholic Church, and among the very first scholars to be granted access to the archives of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, formerly the office of the Inquisitionâtells the incredible story of how one woman was able to perpetrate deception, heresy, seduction, and murder in the heart of the Church itself. From the Hardcover edition.

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Customer Reviews

"No one expects the written Inquisition." Time magazine found this book, now available in translation from the German, an interesting read--and I did too. Although the book appears to have solid academic and theological credentials, I read as an uninformed lay person and a Protestant at that, so the church history and processes were completely new to me. It helps if you keep front and center that neither Europe nor the Catholic Church in the mid-19th century were anything like they are today. We're talking pre-papal infallibility! Don't worry this will be too dry. You've got political intrigue, both secular and religious, Catholicism versus the Protestants, conflicting opportunities and relative positions of male and female religious, double identities, heresy, miracles, visions, cult formation, letters from heaven, enough lascivious behavior to shock TMZ, multiple murders/attempts--and a beautiful, radiant psychopath of a novice mistress. The account of how the novice mistress came to rule the convent has all the techniques and hallmarks of development of cults in the 21st century--effective methods will remain in vogue. When we get to the work of the Roman Inquisition itself, there are a few aspects that are a wee bit "inside baseball." It can be difficult keeping the nuns straight with all the Maria Luisas and Luisa Marias. But it's worth the effort as Wolf explores the individual and institutional dynamics that contributed to this dangerous cult, interfered with the judicial procedures and impacted how the episodes are reflected in church and secular history 150 years later. And that impact is not inconsequential.

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