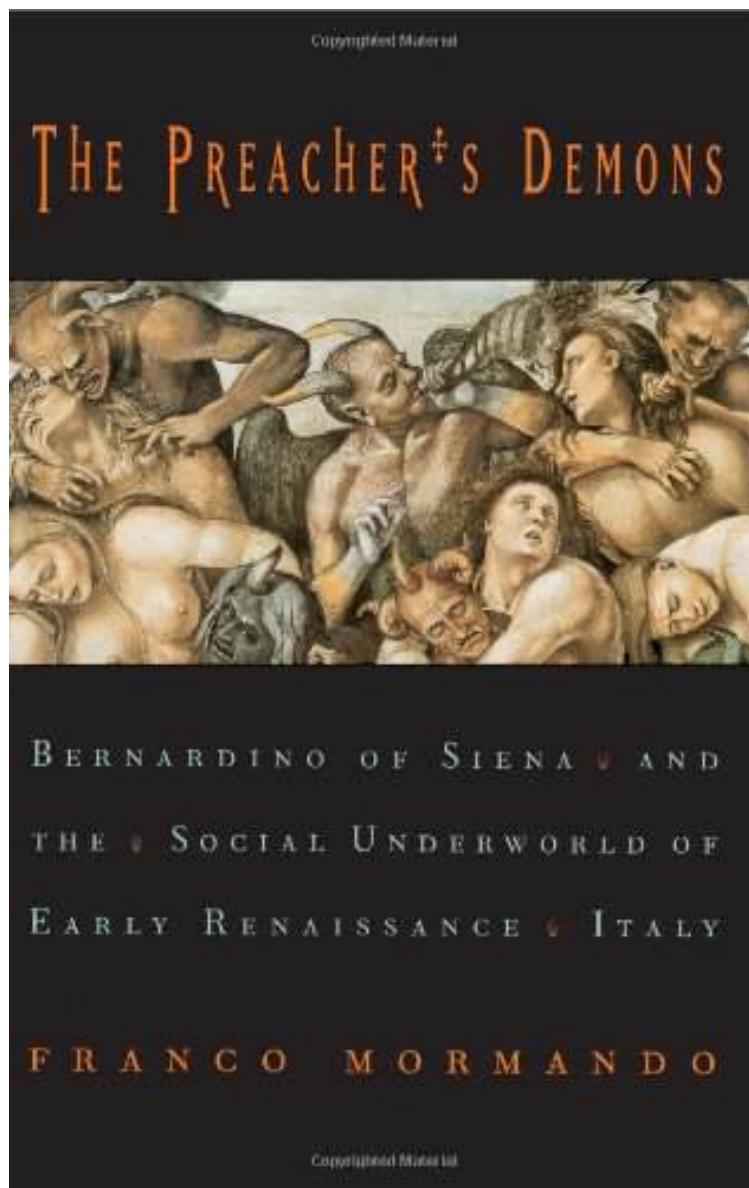


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# The Preacher's Demons: Bernardino of Siena and the Social Underworld of Early Renaissance Italy

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0 of 0 review helpful The darker side of a saint's sermons By John L Murphy Bernardino of Siena was an extraordinarily popular preacher during the first half of the thirteenth century His fame exploded suddenly and his sermons drew in many all over Italy In spirited earthy conversational language he urged his listeners to reform their lives in fidelity to the Catholic faith So far nothing unsurprising But When the city was filled with these bonfires he then combed the city and whenever he received notice of some public sodomite he had him immediately seized and thrown into the nearest bonfire at hand and had him burned immediately This story of an anonymous individual who sought to cleanse medieval Paris was part of a sermon delivered in Siena Italy in 1427 The speaker the friar Bernardino 1380-1444 was one of the most important public figures of the time In the age before Gutenberg's printing press preaching was the most important means of mass communication and persuasion in Europe Dominicans and Franciscans the major preaching orders of the period served as the influential information disseminators

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