



Carnal Commerce in Counter-Reformation Rome (New Studies in European History)

Tessa Storey

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Carnal Commerce in Counter-Reformation Rome (New Studies in European History) Tessa Storey
Focusing on the period 1566-1656, this original and lively study sheds light on the daily lives and material culture of ordinary prostitutes and their clients in Rome after the Counter-Reformation. Tessa Storey uses a range of archival sources, including criminal records, letters, courtroom testimonies, images and popular and elite literature, to reveal issues of especial concern to contemporaries. In particular, she explores how and why women became prostitutes, the relationships between prostitutes and clients, and the wealth which potentially could be accumulated. Notarial documents provide a unique perspective on the economics and material culture of prostitution, showing what could be earned and how prostitutes dressed and furnished their homes. The book challenges traditional assumptions about the success of post-Tridentine reforms on Roman prostitution, revealing that despite energetic attempts at social disciplining by the Counter-Reformation Popes, prostitution continued to flourish, and to provide a lucrative living for many women.

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