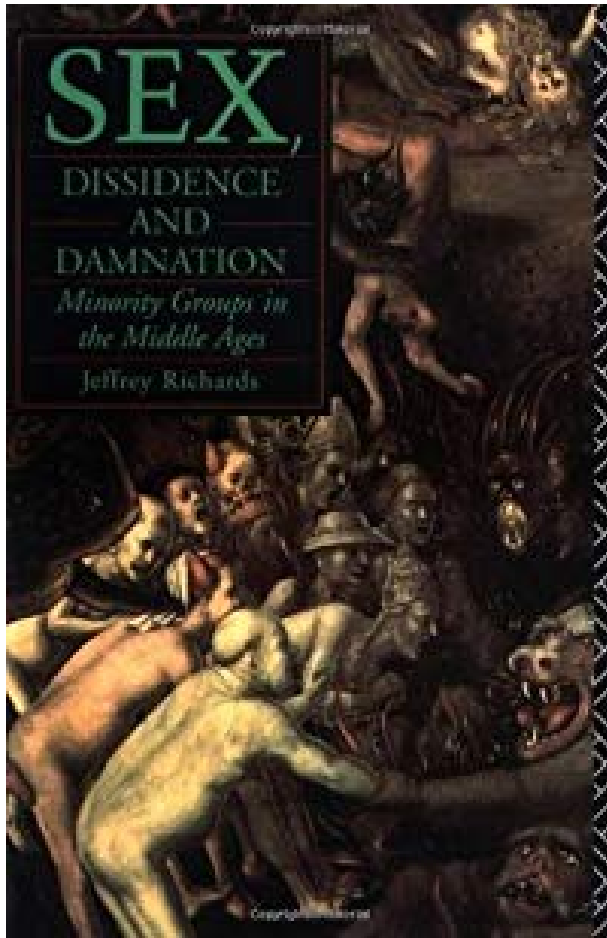


# Sex, Dissidence and Damnation Minority Groups in the Middle Ages



<b>Author:</b>	Jeffre Richards
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For the authorities in medieval Europe, both secular and ecclesiastical, dissent struck at the roots of an ordered, settled world. To allow a single heretic to escape just punishment would, it was believed, result in the decay and dissolution of the whole structure of society. So dissent was to be crushed - initially by reason and argument, but before long with increasing savagery: by torture and imprisonment, fire and the sword. In examining the persecuted lives of heretics, witches, Jews, lepers and homosexuals, Jeffrey Richards has uncovered a common motive for their sufferings: sexual aberrance.