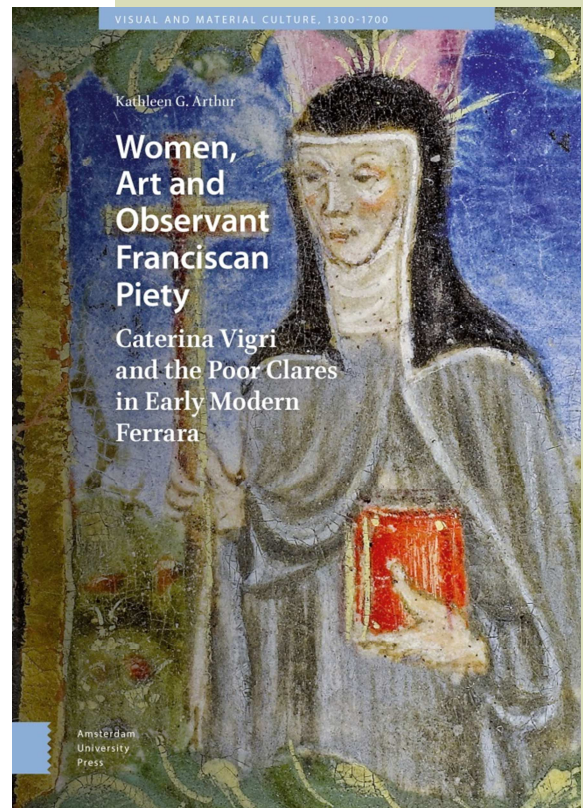


By Kathleen Giles Arthur

## Women, Art and Observant Franciscan Piety

*Caterina Vigri and the Poor Clares in Early  
Modern Ferrara*

Caterina Vigri (later Saint Catherine of Bologna) was a mystic, writer, teacher and nun-artist. Her first home, Corpus Domini, Ferrara, was a house of semi-religious women that became a Poor Clare convent and model of Franciscan Observant piety. Vigri's intensely spiritual decoration of her breviary, as well as convent altarpieces that formed a visual program of adoration for the Body of Christ, exemplify the Franciscan Observant visual culture. After Vigri's departure, it was transformed by d'Este women patrons, including Isabella da Aragona, Isabella d'Este and Lucrezia Borgia. While still preserving Observant ideals, it became a more elite noblewomen's retreat. Grounded in archival research and extant paintings, drawings, prints and art objects from Corpus Domini, this volume explores the art, visual culture, and social history of an early modern Franciscan women's community.



**Kathleen Giles Arthur** is Professor of Italian Renaissance Art (emerita) at James Madison University (Virginia), author of studies on fifteenth-century women artists, including Caterina Vigri (St. Catherine of Bologna) and self-portraitist Maria di Ormanno degli Albizzi, as well as Florentine art and patronage around the time of the Black Death.

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