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# The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg (Oxford Studies in Social History)

By Lyndal Roper



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This is a fascinating study of the impact of the Reformation idea of "civic righteousness" on the position of women in Augsburg. Roper argues that its development, both as a religious credo and as a social movement, must be understood in terms of gender. Until now the effects of the Reformation on women have been viewed as largely beneficial--Protestantism being linked with the forces of progressivism, individualism, and modernization. Roper here argues that such a view of the Reformation's legacy is a profound misreading, and that the status of women was, in fact, worsened by the Reformation. A number of themes are explored: the economic position of women in the household economy; the nature of "civic righteousness" and how it applied a "reform moralism" to the role of marriage and the household; the efforts of civic authority to reform sexual deviance; the attempts to control marriage and the breakdown of marriage; and the role of convents and nuns. *The Holy Household* is the first scholarly account of how the Reformation affected half of society. It combines sound application of feminist theory with careful, open-ended archival research to advance our understanding of the Reformation, of feminist history, and of the place of women in modern European society.



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#### Review

"Offers a fascinating and convincing history of patriarchy and Protestantism."--*Journal of Social History*

"One of the most enlightening studies of the role of gender in the reformation era I have ever read. It sheds much light on marriage as a social institution. But most of all, it shows particularly how women became a focus and target of the social discipline protestants were so well known for."--Mack P. Holt, *George Mason University*

"A major contribution to Reformation studies and a landmark in gender studies of early modern Europe....Represents the outcome of a very demanding and (unobtrusively) theoretically sophisticated rethinking of the meanings of political communalism and the urban Reformation....It is her union, I think, of theoretical clarity, scholarly learning, and broadly humane attitude, which makes *Holy Household* an exciting book to read."--*Sixteenth Century Journal*

"My students and I were very pleased with *Holy Household*....Provocative, scholarly, and well written."--J.W. Zophy, *University of Houston-Clear Lake*

#### About the Author

Lyndal Roper is at University of London.

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