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

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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