Masculinity in the Reformation Era
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Masculinity in the Reformation Era

Edited by
Scott H. Hendrix
Susan C. Karant-Nunn

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Acknowledgments

This book is the expanded product of sessions organized by the editors for the annual meeting of the Sixteenth Century Society and Conference (formerly the Sixteenth Century Studies Conference). Scholars of the Reformation era whose research concentrates on different parts of Europe were asked to reflect on ways in which masculinity was constructed and expressed in the areas they studied. The sessions were held at three successive conferences in 2002, 2003, and 2004, and we thank the Society for allowing us to include these sessions in their programs. We are grateful to all the scholars invited to prepare papers for agreeing to publish their revised essays in this collection.

The editors are among those who contributed papers to those sessions. The essay by Scott Hendrix that appears in this collection, “Masculinity and Patriarchy in Reformation Germany,” is reprinted from the *Journal of the History of Ideas* 56 (1995). We thank the editors of the Journal and its publisher, Johns Hopkins University Press, for allowing the article to be reprinted here.

We also invited two other scholars of early modern Europe, Helmut Puff and Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks, to contribute essays on masculinity to our collection. The essay by Professor Wiesner-Hanks, “‘Lustful Luther’: Male Libido in the Writings of the Reformer,” was originally published in *Sexuality and Culture in Medieval and Renaissance Europe*, edited by Philip M. Soergel (Studies in Medieval and Renaissance History 3/2, New York: AMS Press, 2005). We extend our appreciation to AMS Press for allowing her essay to be reprinted in this collection. We also thank Sandra Kimball at the University of Arizona for her ongoing assistance, including the preparation of this manuscript. Her intelligent, watchful labors made it possible for Professor Karant-Nunn to take on activities that she otherwise could not have done.

Scott H. Hendrix
Susan C. Karant-Nunn
Introduction
Dimensions of Manhood

Scott H. Hendrix and Susan C. Karant-Nunn

If the first generation of researchers after 1970 discovered many facets of women’s history, including the multitude of ways in which European societies attempted to shape girls into the kinds of women they wanted, the second generation has also noted the ways in which those societies formed boys into men. Initially uneasy about seeming to revert to telling the stories of males, scholars are now exploring the simultaneous efforts to craft both sexes into adults who would conform to normative ideals of femininity and masculinity to which late medieval and early modern rural communities, towns, and noble courts aspired. Apropos of early modern Europe, Claudia Opitz has described how our pioneering colleagues gradually departed from an exclusive search for past women’s lives in favor of examining the interactive forces of women and men in their class-based variations. She traces the development of the innovative, useful category of gender, introduced by thinkers like Gerda Lerner, Gisela Bock, and Joan Scott. No later than the early 1990s, the search was on in North America and Great Britain for the formative and constitutive elements of masculinity, and that endeavor has quickly spread to the rest of Europe.¹ It has entailed the study of being-a-

¹Opitz, Um-Ordnung der Geschlechter, 58–86. See also Wiesner-Hanks, Women and Gender, 10–18; and Kühne’s recollection in Minnegeschichte, 9–10.
man from an entirely new perspective, one that could draw inspiration from the ethnographic scrutiny of other societies.

The fundamental insight that expectations of women equally entail understandings of manhood has become ubiquitous, and the examples multiply apace. Among the earliest in this country was Clare Lees’ anthology, *Medieval Masculinities.* After summarizing Aristotle’s thought on women as defective men, Vern Bullough declared: “We have tended to look at the restrictions put upon the woman by such assumptions. What is sometimes overlooked is that they also put limitations on male development.” With her 1991 introduction to a collection on gender, Heide Wunder both anticipated and stimulated more recent research. In Martin Dinges’ well-known volume, *Hausväter, Priester, Kastraten,* Heike Talkenberger perceived, in the sixty funeral sermons that she surveyed, the dimensions of Christian manhood in programmatic form. Along with the decisiveness and reason stereotypically ascribed to men, some qualities that were praised and simultaneously advocated were widely associated with being a woman: humility, chastity, tenderness, emotionality, and religiosity. Talkenberger also pointed to class differences as a factor in the shaping of gender ideals. Alison Levy has recently observed that Florentine portraits of widows in their mourning weeds implicitly contain the dead man and thus prolong his memory. These pictures were in fact commissioned by men. Levy’s insight that they have a nullifying effect on the women portrayed could be applied to Robert Schumann’s song-cycle, *Frauenliebe und Leben,* and most especially to the song, “Nun hast Du mir den ersten Schlag getan.” With the husband’s death, the wife in some sense, and certainly in her own eyes, has ceased to exist.

In English literature, Lynn Enterline and Mark Breitenberg have been early theorists of masculinity. Also in literary studies, Kathleen Long has edited a group of essays on a French crisis of masculinity that is

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2 Lees, *Medieval Masculinities.*
4 Wunder, “Überlegungen zum Wandel.” See also Wunder, “Wie wird man ein Mann?” Wunder’s publications since 1994 have often dealt with questions of gender. For a list of her publications from 1974 to 1995 see Wunder, *Der andere Blick,* 349–53.
5 Talkenberger, “Konstruktion von Männerrollen,” 59–62. Hadley’s Masculinity ranges through the medieval era with essays on such diverse topics as Byzantine eunuchs and William the Conqueror’s relationship to his son.
7 See Enterline, *Tears of Narcissus,* and Breitenberg, *Anxious Masculinity.*
Introduction: Dimensions of Manhood

perceptible in the works of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century writers. Most recently, Todd W. Reeser has put forward the concept of “moderate masculinity.” Examining literary discourse, he finds that Montaigne and other writers advocated restraint (but not abstinence) as the ideal, one that men could attain but women, who were by nature immoderate, could not. In examining the literary evidence, Reeser overlooks the considerable historical work on Stoicism and social discipline, which would provide even broader support for his thesis. Among historians of early modern England, Alexandra Shepard has taken both normative and practical masculinity into her account. She demonstrates that definitions of the masculine have been diverse because they are strongly affected by class, age, marital status, and situation. This point is invaluable.

We take inspiration from these scholars and from the many others who have preceded us. As historians who have concentrated largely on the sixteenth-century religious movements that are collectively referred to as the Reformation, we recognize that Reformation specialists were for a while hesitant to take up research on women in relation to the new confessions and that more recently they have been equally cautious about pursuing Protestant definitions of manliness. Over the last twenty-five years, however, historians have not confined themselves to studying prominent religious women like Katharina von Bora, Marguerite de Navarre, Katharina Schütz Zell, and Argula von Grumbach. They have also identified the differences that religious ruptures and reformations made in the existence of ordinary women. While much about the lives of early modern women remains to be investigated, a respectable beginning has been made.

The purpose of the present collection, however, is to increase the number of studies that piece by piece are reconstructing the identity of manhood in Reformation Europe. The authors of the essays in this volume...
examine the ways in which sixteenth- and seventeenth-century authori-
ties, both secular and religious, labored to turn those boys and men subject
to them into the Christian males they sought. The vision of these authori-
ties was still quite binary, despite the acknowledgment in erudite thought
of masculine women and feminine men, and despite the deviations that
real-life exigencies produced.¹⁶ Yet no one, whether highly educated or
not, advocated such departures; and ideal types of women and men, con-
veyed in normative media, were clustered at each end of what we in the
West may regard as the gender spectrum.

Although sixteenth-century ideals are also discussed in these essays,
they treat practice more than theory. As a result, they present evidence of
the disparities that existed between gender paradigms and lives-as-lived.
On the good advice of an anonymous assessor of this book when in manu-
script form, the nine contributions are organized as follows: (1) four essays
(Poska, Puff, Strasser, and Hendrix) treat departures from that abstract
standard that early modern models prescribed; (2) three others (Spierling,
Mentzer, and Tlusty) relate masculinity to concrete civic settings and the
expectation that men conform themselves to collective needs; and (3) two
further essays (Wiesner-Hanks and Karant-Nunn) take up again that irre-
sistible celebrity and prolific self-witness, Martin Luther.

Part One: Deviating from the Norms

In her essay, Allyson Poska takes us to the villages of Galicia in northwestern
Spain. Real conditions there, whether political or economic, were
rooted in class identity, and those conditions affected the behavior of both
men and women. Peasant men disregarded prescriptive treatises by elite
authors, who touted high birth, maintenance of honor, restraint but will-
ingness to fight, and provision for family needs. According to inquisition
records, these men displayed their maleness in premarital and extramarital
sexual relationships. Beginning in the sixteenth century, over half the men
in parts of the region migrated to new locales in search of sustenance for
themselves and their families. Galician uxorilocal customs kept those men
who remained in the region resident in the homes of in-laws and excluded
them from the control of household money. Since they rarely sent for their

¹⁶Cadden, Meanings of Sex Difference, 201–27.
wives at a later date, Galician men who ventured outward both gained independence and asserted their masculinity by choosing to migrate.

Helmut Puff draws on Lyndal Roper’s contention that two contrasting male figures, the well-disciplined and the unruly, dominated early modern conceptualizations of the man. He analyzes evidence taken from interrogations of Werner Steiner, a member of the Zurich elite and a former priest, whose faith authorities regarded as questionable owing to Steiner’s attraction to homoeroticism. Puff observes the association in history between heresy and “unnatural intercourse,” and he notes how yielding to such temptations posed a danger to Steiner’s soul and to society. In the course of Steiner’s life, Puff identifies different masculine codes that could conflict with one another: the military, the academic or clerical, the familial, and the humanist-Reformed. Steiner was a friend of Zwingli and a historian, who struggled to absorb a new religious identity and also enjoyed sex with men. Puff compels us to think not of two uniform, opposing masculinities, one dictated from the pulpit and one defined by praxis; instead he presents a spectrum of masculinity with overlapping expressions and ambiguities over a life span.

Assessing Ignatius of Loyola’s so-called Autobiography and the constitutions that he wrote for the Society of Jesus, Ulrike Strasser asks how Loyola and Jerome Nadal, his missionary-emissary, conceived of a complete manliness for their followers. After all, Jesuit men had to deny themselves the wedded bond and the progenitive function that European society included in its definition of maleness. Strasser proposes a “reimagined clerical masculinity,” which included spirituality that was clearly Catholic and emotionality that was stable and secure. Ignatius, as portrayed in the Autobiography, became a model for the numerous Catholic men who entered the Society of Jesus during the sixteenth century. In this “paternal instruction,” he can be seen to favor cooperation and affective ties among members, the readership that he imagined as “sons.” Jesuits were to seek chastity even in the midst of women, spiritual bravery that encouraged weeping, and spiritual paternity. In defense of the Virgin, they were to substitute the pilgrim’s staff for the dagger of the knight who defended female honor.

Scott Hendrix moves beyond the Protestant conception of patriarchy and asks what it meant for actual pater familias to bear the burdens of their theoretical headship. Having sifted through the prescriptive writings of ten

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17Roper, “Was There a Crisis?”
About the Contributors

Scott H. Hendrix is James Hastings Nichols Professor Emeritus of Reformation History and Doctrine at Princeton Theological Seminary. He chairs the planning committee of the International Congress for Luther Research and serves on editorial committees of several periodicals and monograph series. Recent books include Preaching the Reformation: The Homiletical Handbook of Urbanus Rhegius (2003) and Recultivating the Vineyard: The Reformation Agendas of Christianization (2004).


Raymond A. Mentzer holds the Daniel J. Krumm Family Chair in Reformation Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Iowa. His most recent publications include La construction de l’identité réformée aux 16e et 17e siècles: Le rôle des consistoires (2006) and Society and Culture in the Huguenot World, 1559–1685 (coedited with Andrew Spicer, 2002).

Allyson M. Poska is professor of history at the University of Mary Washington in Fredericksburg, Virginia. She is the author of three books: Regulating the People: The Catholic Reformation in Seventeenth-Century Spain (1998), Women and Gender in the Western Past (coauthored with Katherine French, 2006), and Women and Authority in Early Modern Spain: The Peasants of Galicia (2006).
Helmut Puff is associate professor in the Department of German and the Department of History at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. His research focuses on German literature, history, and culture in the late medieval and early modern period with specialties in gender studies, the history of sexuality, the history of reading, and nonfictional texts of the Renaissance. He is the author of *Sodomy in Reformation Germany and Switzerland* (2003).


Ulrike Strasser is associate professor of history and affiliate faculty in women’s studies and religious studies at the University of California, Irvine. She has written the award-winning *State of Virginity: Gender, Religion and Politics in an Early Modern Catholic State* (2004). Her current monograph, *Consuming Missions*, explores the activities and narratives of German missionaries in the Pacific Rim.


Merry E. Wiesner-Hanks is a Distinguished Professor in the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. She is coeditor of the *Sixteenth Century Journal*, and her books and articles have appeared in English, German, Italian, Spanish, and Chinese. They include *Early Modern Europe 1450–1789* (2006), *Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe* (3rd ed. 2008), and *Luther on Women: A Sourcebook* (with Susan Karant-Nunn, 2003).
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