

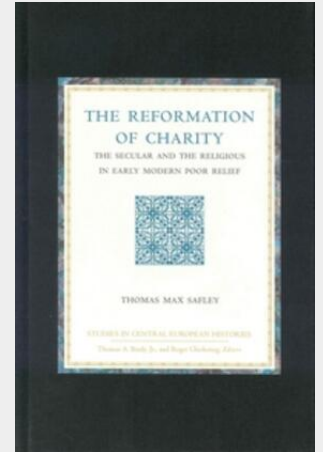
Safley

The Reformation of Charity

The Secular and the Religious in Early Modern Poor Relief

Early modern Europe witnessed changes in the social, political, and ecclesiastical structures supporting poor relief, but notions that sharp fault lines divide rationalized, secular poor relief from morally and spiritually motivated ecclesiastical charity need rethinking. Spiritual ideals shaped political and social poor relief structures just as much as rationalization and effective administration colored ecclesiastical charity efforts. Poor relief reflects a local community. A community's unique history, culture, political agenda, social mores, and religious ideals converge to shape how it responds to poverty, whatever the context: religious, political, or private (the élite). Sweeping statements and broad generalizations must be placed under the lamp of local circumstances. Theory and practice must unite. These studies take seriously the richness and humanity of early modern poor relief, the danger and desperation of poverty in a community, as well as the calculation and generosity of local charity. Contributors include: David d'Andrea, Susan E. Dinan, Nicholas Eckstein, S. Amanda Eurich, Timothy G. Fehler, Peer Friess, Philip L. Kintner, Charles H. Parker, Thomas Max Safley, Joke Spaans, Mary S. Sprunger, and Lee Palmer Wandel.

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171,50 €

160,28 € (zzgl. MwSt.)

Lieferfrist: bis zu 10 Tage

Artikelnummer: 9780391042117

Medium: Buch

ISBN: 978-0-391-04211-7

Verlag: Brill

Erscheinungstermin: 26.12.2003

Sprache(n): Englisch

Auflage: Erscheinungsjahr 2003

Serie: Studies in Central European Histories

Produktform: Gebunden

Gewicht: 508 g

Seiten: 206

Format (B x H): 161 x 236 mm

