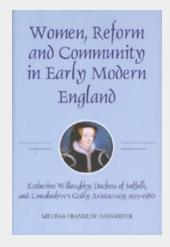
Women, Reform and Community in Early Modern England: Katherine Willoughby, Duchess of Suffolk, and Lincolnshire's Godly Aristocracy, 1519-1580

A study of one of the most influential women of her day has much to reveal about the developments which shaped the English Reformation. Katherine Willoughby, duchess of Suffolk, was one of the highest-ranking noblewomen in sixteenth-century England. She wielded considerable political power in her local community and at court, and her social status and her commitment to religious reform placed her at the centre of the political and religious developments that shaped the English Reformation. By focusing on her kinship and patronage network, this book offers an examination of the developmentof Protestantism in the governing classes during the period. It begins by looking at the process through which Willoughby and her associates embraced reform, arguing that the spread of Protestantism among the political elite was an intermittent and complex process shaped in part by myriad kinship and patronage relationships: Willoughby and her godly associates played a crucial role in encouraging religious change in Lincolnshire through their patronage ofreformers and their support of a variety of domestic, educational, and religious institutions. It also demonstrates the importance of gender in the process of spiritual transformation, and shows how the changing religious climateprovided new opportunities for women to exert greater influence in their society. MELISSA FRANKLIN HARKRIDER is Assistant Professor of History, Wheaton College.



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