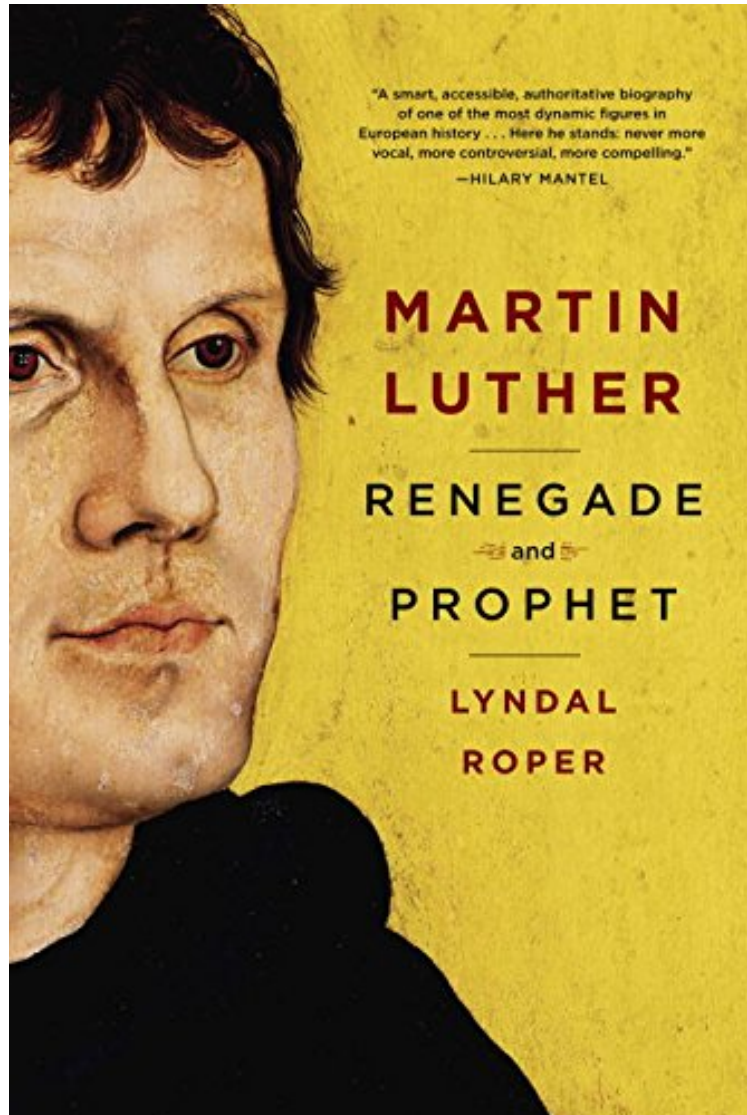


Martin Luther: Renegade and Prophet

Lyndal Roper

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This definitive biography reveals the complicated inner life of the founding father of the Protestant Reformation, whose intellectual assault on Catholicism ushered in a century of upheaval that transformed Christianity and changed the course of world history. On October 31, 1517, so the story goes, a shy monk named Martin Luther nailed a piece of paper to the door of the Castle Church in the university town of Wittenberg. The ideas contained in these Ninety-five Theses, which boldly challenged the Catholic Church, spread like wildfire. Within two months, they were known all over Germany. So powerful were Martin Luther's broadsides against papal authority that they polarized a continent and tore apart the very foundation of Western Christendom. Luther's ideas inspired upheavals whose consequences we live with today. But who was the man behind the Ninety-five Theses? Lyndal Roper's magisterial new biography goes beyond Luther's theology to investigate the inner life of the religious reformer who has been called the last medieval man and the first modern one. Here is a full-blooded portrait of a revolutionary thinker who was, at his core, deeply flawed and full of contradictions. Luther was a brilliant writer whose biblical translations had a lasting impact on the German language. Yet he was also a strident fundamentalist whose scathing rhetorical attacks threatened to alienate those he might persuade. He had a colorful, even impish personality, and when he left the monastery to get married (to spite the Devil, he explained), he wooed and wed an ex-nun. But he had an ugly side too. When German peasants rose up against the nobility, Luther urged the aristocracy to slaughter them. He was a ferocious anti-Semite and a virulent misogynist, even as he argued for liberated human sexuality within marriage. A distinguished historian of early modern Europe, Lyndal Roper looks deep inside the heart of this singularly complex figure. The force of Luther's personality, she argues, had enormous historical effects both good and ill. By bringing us closer than ever to the man himself, she opens up a new vision of the Reformation and the world it created and draws a fully three-dimensional portrait of its founder. Praise for Martin Luther A smart, accessible, authoritative biography of one of the most dynamic figures in European history . . . Here he stands: never more vocal, more controversial, more compelling. Hilary Mantel [Luther] leaps off the page in a vivid array of colours. . . . The work of one of the most imaginative and pioneering historians of our generation. The Guardian Its difficult to see how anyone could improve on this superb life of Luther. Lyndal Roper, Regius professor of history at Oxford University, has an extraordinary talent for making complex theological issues not just clear but entertaining. Luther jumps from these pages with immense vitality, as if his exploits occurred last week. Theological history often seems monochrome. This is Luther in colour. The Times Enlightening . . . [a] formidably learned biography . . . [Roper's] approach is avowedly new. The Sunday Times Beautifully written . . . It is certainly among the most interesting, provocative, and original biographies of Luther to appear in recent years one that tackles head on the challenge of entering into and exploring the interior life of its subject. . . . Anyone seriously interested in one of the most influential figures of the last half-millennium will need to make time to read this one. Literary Review

A smart, accessible, authoritative biography of one of the most dynamic figures in European history . . . Here he stands: never more vocal, more controversial, more compelling. Hilary Mantel [Luther] leaps off the page in a vivid array of colours. . . . The work of one of the most imaginative and pioneering historians of our generation. The Guardian Its difficult to see how anyone could improve on this superb life of Luther. Lyndal Roper, Regius professor of history at Oxford University, has an extraordinary talent for making complex theological issues not just clear but entertaining. Luther jumps from these pages with immense vitality, as if his exploits occurred last week. Theological history often seems monochrome. This is Luther in colour. The Times Enlightening . . . [a] formidably learned biography . . . [Roper's] approach is avowedly new. The Sunday Times Beautifully written . . . It is certainly among the most interesting, provocative, and original biographies of Luther to appear in recent years one that tackles head on the challenge of entering into and exploring the interior life of its subject. . . . Anyone seriously interested in one of the most influential figures of the last half-millennium will need to make time to read this one. Literary About the Author Lyndal Roper is the first woman to hold the prestigious Regius Chair at Oxford University. She is one of the most respected scholars of early modern history on both sides of the Atlantic. She is the winner of the Gerda Henkel Prize (2016), and her previous books include *Witch Craze: Terror and Fantasy in Baroque Germany*; *Oedipus and the Devil: Witchcraft, Religion, and Sexuality in Early Modern Europe*; *The Witch in the Western Imagination*; and *The Holy Household: Women and Morals in Reformation Augsburg*.