Studies on the History of the Reformation in Hungary and Transylvania

by Katalin Péter, edited by Gabriella Erdélyi and associate editor Günter Frank, Barbara Mahlmann-Bauer, Johannes Schilling, Günther Wassilowsky, Siegrid Westphal, Tarald Rasmussen, Mathijs Lamberigts, Bruce Gordon, David M. Whitford and Zsombor Tóth

DESCRIPTION:
Katalin Péter offers is a vigorous and stimulating reassessment of the history of the Protestant Reformation in Hungary. The Reformation has traditionally been explained in terms of theology, the corruption of the church, and the roles of princes. Katalin Péter shifts the context of study of the Reformation in Hungary to a bottom-up examination of the social dynamics of religious change, producing a lively narrative of the experiences and reactions of contemporary actors — including rural town and village communities, local priests and landlords — to evangelical ideas. Through a close reading of church visitation records, common men and women emerge on the pages of the book both as the agents of religious change and as the defenders of the old faith, while local priests, as Péter, had to adapt to lay demands. A comparative analysis of the position and actions of landlords as church patrons in all three parts of contemporary Hungary — the kingdom under Habsburg rule, the Ottoman-vassal Principality of Transylvania, and Ottoman Hungary — leads to the conclusion that patrons did not interfere in local religious change, since this change did not interfere with the distribution of power. In addition to this radically new narrative of the social dynamics of the early Reformation in Hungary, Péter engages in the long-standing debates concerning the roles of the Protestant Reformation in intellectual culture, and she illuminates the scopes and limits of the confessional cultures that emerged in its wake. The book brings together a coherent body of work that began to be published in the 1990s and until now has only been available in Hungarian.

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