



Life Writing in Reformation Europe: Lives of Reformers by Friends, Disciples and Foes (St Andrews Studies in Reformation History)

Irena, Professor Backus

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The Reformation period witnessed an explosion in the number of biographies of contemporary religious figures being published. Whether lives of reformers worthy of emulation, or heretics deserving condemnation, the genre of biography became a key element in the confessional rivalries that raged across Europe in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Offering more than a general survey of Life writing, this volume examines key issues and questions about how this trend developed among different confessions and how it helped shape lasting images of reformers, particularly Luther and Calvin up to the modern period.

This is the first-ever full length study of the subject showing that Lives of the reformers constitute an integral part of the intellectual and cultural history of the period, serving as an important source of information about the different Reformations. Depending on their origin, they provide a lesson in theology but also in civic values and ideals of education of the period. Genevan Lives in particular also point up the delicate issue of 'Reformed hagiography' which their authors try to avoid with a varying degree of success. Having consistently been at the forefront of the study of the intellectual history of the Reformation Irena Backus is perfectly placed to highlight the importance of Life writing. This is a path-breaking study that will open up a new way of viewing the confessional conflicts of the period and their historiography.

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