



The Myth of Ritual Murder: Jews and Magic in Reformation Germany

R. Po-chia Hsia

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From the mid-fifteenth century to the early seventeenth, German Jews were persecuted and tried for the alleged ritual murders of Christian children, whose blood purportedly played a crucial part in Jewish magical rites. In this engrossing book R. Po-Chia Hsia traces the rise and decline of ritual murder trials during that period. Using sources ranging from Christian and Kabbalistic treatises to judicial records and popular pamphlets, Hsia examines the religious sources of the idea of child sacrifice and blood symbolism and reconstructs the political context of ritual murder trials against the Jews. "This volume combines clarity of thinking, elegance of style, and exemplary scholarly attention to detail with intellectual sobriety and human compassion."-Jerome Friedman, *Sixteenth Century Journal* "Hsia has... succeeded in turning established knowledge to illuminatingly new purposes."-G.R. Elton, *New York Review of Books* "This meticulously researched and unusually perceptive book is social and intellectual history at its best."-*Library Journal* "A fresh perspective on an old problem by a major new talent."-Steven Ozment, *Harvard University* R. Po-chia Hsia, professor of history at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, is also the author of *Society and Religion in Münster, 1535-1618*

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