

Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman. *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of Foxe's "Book of Martyrs."*

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Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman's *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of John Foxe's "Book of Martyrs"* has long been awaited among scholars of John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments of these latter and perilous days*. First published in 1563, Foxe's work (popularly titled the *Book of Martyrs*) followed upon two preceding accounts, *Commentarii rerum in Ecclesia gestarum* (1554) and *Rerum in ecclesia gestarum . . . commentarii* (1559), and went into nine unabridged editions prior to 1700. Among many important contributions, *Religion and the Book* provides the most detailed account to date of the vast amount of research and complex, evolving composition which underlies Foxe's magnum opus. For this reason alone this pioneering study belongs in the library of all scholars of Foxe, the English Reformation, medieval and early modern literature, and the history of the book.

Evenden and Freeman demonstrate that market forces alone cannot account for the popularity and influence of the *Book of Martyrs*. They persuasively argue that its production was only made possible by the cooperation of important officials in the Elizabethan government, including William Cecil and Archbishop Matthew Parker, who offered patronage to the book's printer, John Day. At the same time, the authors provide a convincing discussion of Foxe's wide use of sources, identifying

previously unknown sources and showing how he arranged these materials in successive editions of the *Book of Martyrs*. The authors' account of the genesis of Foxe's Latin martyrologies alone makes *Religion and the Book* required reading. Foxe's relationship with his mentor, the dramatist and polemicist John Bale, comes into greater focus in this very insightful discussion of Foxe's reading of Bale's manuscript of Lollard documents, which is now known as the *Fasciculi Zizaniorum*, along with other sources. Cecil was likely the intended recipient of this work's little-known original dedication, which survives only in manuscript. The authors also demonstrate conclusively that the *Commentarii rerum in Ecclesia gestarum* affords a more important source for Continental Protestant martyrologies than has previously been thought. This section of *Religion and the Book* concludes with extremely insightful discussion of Foxe's reading of specific books which he encountered in the printing house of Johannes Oporinus, the Basel printer who produced his second Latin martyrology, and through Oporinus's network of scholars and other associates.

The remainder of this study, with its focus on the four editions of *Acts and Monuments* that Foxe produced in collaboration with Day, is also very valuable. Especially valuable is the discussion of the bibliographical instability and editorial exactitude (or lack thereof) that resulted from the changing circumstances governing the production of each of these editions. Notably, these shifting sands are only partially based on market demand. Evenden and Freeman offer considerable new information detailing Foxe's use of chronicle sources provided by Archbishop Parker in the 1570 expansion of the book. These components afford a small taste of the numerous riches that *Religion and the Book* affords.

The present reader encountered two minor points of confusion in the discussion of the book's illustrations. In their discussion of an illustration that Foxe titles "The Image of the true Catholicke Church of Christ," which first appears in the 1570 edition, the authors argue that "the figure of the emperor and his courtiers were part of a larger picture carved on a separate block, which was then joined to the original woodcut" (216). This is possible, as there does appear what may be a vertical seam across the woodcut. As Evenden and Freeman note, this image does resemble the larger "X Persecutions" illustration, but the conclusion that this was once two separate blocks would seem to require further discussion. The authors also identify "exceptions" to the general trend of illustration in Foxe's second Latin martyrology that "show a greater tendency to lean towards the symbolic than the illustrations in even the 1563 edition" (201). According to the authors, the illustrations of William Gardiner and Sir John Oldcastle demonstrate this symbolic tendency, while those of John Hooper and Thomas Cranmer afford exceptions. This description of a general trend seems to require clarification because, in actual fact, the 1559 *Rerum* contains a total of just four illustrations.

These insignificant points aside, *Religion and the Book* unquestionably offers a seminal study of its subject and deserves the widest possible readership.

MARK RANKIN

James Madison University