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Review of David Loades, ed., *John Foxe and the English Reformation*

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David Loades, ed. *John Foxe and the English Reformation*. (St. Andrews Studies in Reformation History.) Aldershot, U.K.: Scolar Press; dist. by Ashgate Publishing Co., Brookfield, Vt. 1997. Pp. xii, 340. $93.95. ISBN 1-85928-351-9.

One of the most influential books of sixteenth century England was John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, commonly known as *The Book of Martyrs*. For over a hundred years what has readily been available to students has been either Stephen Cattley's or Josiah Pratt's nineteenth century editions. In 1993 the British Academy agreed to produce a complete critical edition of the work, which will be of enormous value to scholars and students. Once a director, research assistant, and committee were selected, they began to identify scholars who were doing research on Foxe and his influence. They arranged a colloquia at Cambridge University in 1995 to discuss the significance of Foxe and most of the papers there presented comprise this thorough and thought provoking volume. A number of the most influential scholars of early modern English religious and cultural history are represented in this collection.

Loades' introductory essay, "John Foxe and the Editors," places the four editions of Foxe's work for which he himself was responsible within the context of religious and

political changes in mid-sixteenth century. The earliest edition of his work, published in Basle in 1559 was in Latin, and thus not so accessible to most English people. All subsequent editions were in English, and Foxe's work was widely read and seen. Yet each edition had different perspectives. The 1563 edition, soon after Elizabeth's accession, lavishly praised the new queen in a support of the religious settlement and was optimistic in tone. By 1570, after the rebellion of the northern earls and the threat of Mary Stuart's presence in England, Foxe was anxious that the Roman enemy had not been finally defeated and the focus of his book became much wider. By the last edition of his lifetime, in 1583, there was less concern, Loades argues, about the Catholic threat, but more pessimism about the vocation of most of the English people.

Loades also addresses how differently later audiences have read it and, highly significantly, how later generations have rewritten it for their own purposes. Foxe was important not only in his age but in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries as well. In the earlier part of the seventeenth century Foxe was claimed by the Puritan opposition, while later in that century and the next establishment authors such as John Strype and Gilbert Burnet wrote to reinforce the Anglican Church and used Foxe as an important source. Political insecurity in the latter part of the eighteenth century also made reading Foxe reassuring and there were a number of editions. The traumas of the early nineteenth century Anglican Church inspired the important editions of 1837—41 and 1877.

The essays are of a uniformly high quality. Especially valuable are John N. King's "Fiction and Fact in Foxe's Book of Martyrs," which considers the diversity of literary genres in the book, Susan Felch's "Shaping the Reader in the *Acts and Monuments*," which places the *Acts and Monuments* strongly within the context of other books and sixteenth century English translations of the Bible, Margaret Aston and Elizabeth Ingram's "The Iconography of the Acts and Monuments," which thoughtfully analyzes the illustrations in terms of the impact of the text, Brett Usher's essay on the secret Protestant congregation in Marian London and its later influence on nonconformity in Elizabeth's reign, Glyn Parry's essay on Foxe and the Papists, and Damian Nussbaum's "Appropriating Martyrdom: Fears of Renewed Persecution and the 1632 Edition," which examines the changes in the work after Foxe's death and the significance of early seventeenth century religious controversy.

Also very useful are Julian Roberts' work on the bibliographical aspects of Foxe, Eirwen Nicholson's careful analysis of the impact of Foxe in the eighteenth century, Tom Betteridge on Foxe as a historian, David Watson on Jean Crispin and his printing for the English congregation in Geneva, Andrew Penny on prophetic interpretation, and Andrew Pettegree's comparison of Foxe with Adrian van Haemstede, the martyrologist of the Dutch Calvinist Church. The book is beautifully illustrated with examples of *Acts and Monuments* and other works that place Foxe's illustrations within context. While there is a very useful appendix compiled by David Newcombe of extant sixteenth- and seventeenth-century editions of Foxe, there is no bibliography of modern scholarly work, and no listing of modern scholars in the index. Unfortunately, there was also occasionally careless editing, such as referring to Edward Seymour, Duke of Somerset, as Edmund Seymour, but this little distracts from an impressive collection. *John Foxe and the English Reformation* is a prelude, a celebration, and an advertisement for the coming edition of Foxe's Acts and Monuments. This is an even for which all early modern English scholar will be eagerly waiting.

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