

Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas S. Freeman. *Religion and the Book in Early Modern England: The Making of John Foxe's "Book of Martyrs."* Cambridge Studies in Early Modern British History. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011. Pp. xiii + 388.

This is a book about the making of another book. Normally this would excite no one—but this is about the creation of one of the most influential Christian books in the English language: Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*. The life of this book is important; it has shaped not only the modern memory of the English Reformation but also the later accounts of martyrdom in English. Until now there has never been a deep study of the book—at least not to this extent—and so this offering by Elizabeth Evenden and Thomas Freeman is designed to fill that gap in history.

Those researching Tudor England or John Foxe will immediately recognize the names of Evenden and Freeman, as they have published on John Foxe, English history, and the formation of book culture in early modern England. The launching of Acts and Monuments Online (<https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/cics/support/hri-online>)—a free database with all editions of *Book of Martyrs* and a critical apparatus—has been an influential feature behind this book as well, as it is now the standard database for any scholar on the subject of Foxe and early modern England.

The eight chapters of the book follow an essentially chronological account of the making of the *Book of Martyrs*, though with several moments when the lens pulls back to see the book in its context. Chapter 1, for example, begins with the challenging world of book traders in sixteenth-century England. This chapter reveals how unique the influence of the *Book of Martyrs* would be, as the industry was focused on such a narrow slice of the populace—educated and literate persons. It was a “relatively backward industry” (p. 26), and so the creation of influential bestsellers running to multiple editions was an abnormality in early modern Europe.

Chapters 2 and 3 then focus on the men who would make the book, John Foxe and John Day. Foxe, of course, is the author and compiler of the material, and Day is the eventual publisher; both are evangelistically motivated, living first in the significant times of the Protestant Edward VI and the backlash under Catholic Mary I. The context and biographical pieces here are especially helpful in the sweep of the book, as it allows us to see not only the hands at work, but also some of the motivation behind those hands.

Chapters 4 through 8 and the conclusion then focus on the creation of the *Book of Martyrs*, both in terms of the sources Foxe used and the life of the book from its first edition in 1563 until its greatly expanded fourth

edition in 1583. One of the more intriguing portions is chapter 6, which looks at the woodcut illustrations in the book—many of which are still seen today, such as the execution of Tyndale. This chapter is a helpful reminder that the *Book of Martyrs* has had a visual legacy in later history as much as its words themselves.

Evenden and Freeman have written an exceptionally good book that is both readable and authoritative. It surpasses anything written on the subject until now—a rare feat. The book is obviously needed in scholarship, and Evenden and Freeman being so thorough in their analysis, their work should receive plenty of praise.

The book is especially strong on two key points: it has a tight thesis focusing on the creation of the *Book of Martyrs*, yet the authors do not limit themselves by simply sticking to the book itself. Along the way we learn countless things about the book industry, literacy in early modern England, the lives of Foxe and Day, and their connection to the wider Reformation. The only limitation of the book is that it is not for the novice or casual reader who lacks extraordinary interest in the subject: one needs at least basic familiarity with the Elizabethan world to read it through. This indirectly raises the question of the need for a popular presentation of Foxe's important book, as it is still in print and read today. But Evenden and Freeman cover the material so thoroughly that those who write on the *Book of Martyrs* will have this book as their guide.

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Christopher A. Daily. *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013. Pp. xiii + 261.

In *Robert Morrison and the Protestant Plan for China* Christopher Daily offers a fresh account to supplement the growing number of studies treating China's first Protestant missionary, the Presbyterian minister Robert Morrison (1782–1834). Eschewing the almost hagiographical tone of earlier, deliberately edifying biographies of the missionary, Daily's monograph is a work of critical scholarship not only in tone, but also in its divergence from the usual canon of Morrison material. Meticulously researched, and relying on previously unexplored archives, Daily tells the story of Morrison's undertaking in light of his training at the London Missionary Society's seminary of choice under the tutelage of David Bogue. Underlying Morrison's