The English Martyr from Reformation to Revolution. By ALICE DAILEY. Notre Dame, Indiana: University of Notre Dame, 2012. xv + 352 pp. £32.50. ISBN 13: 978-0-268-02612-7.

This book, based on Dailey's PhD Dissertation (UCLA, 2003), examines the development of English martyrological writing, from the medieval to the early modern period, and includes a 'Postscript' on perceptions of martyrdom in the aftermath of the events of September 11, 2001. Its central premise is that 'martyrdom is not a death but a story that gets written about death' (p.2) and so sets out to examine 'the relationship between the paradigmatic martyr story and the unruly exigencies of history' (p.2). Through an examination of the literary construction of a number of texts, including *The Golden Legend*, medieval Corpus Christi plays, John Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, the writings of Cardinal William Allen, John Mush, and John Gennings, as well as Charles I's *Eikon Basilike*, and John Milton's *Eikonoklastes*, Dailey explores the paradigmatic structure of martyrological writing, laying heavy emphasis on the 'victim's anticipation of being narrativized' (p.5) and how this concern structured their response to their situation.

Dailey's eloquent prose takes the reader through a detailed assessment of both the 'dominant performative and narrative topoi' (p.6), during which she identifies key texts whose very form and content determined and reinforced the essential character traits and actions expected of 'a martyr'. Her assessment of the martyr/heretic paradigm leads to a close analysis of the impact the charge of 'treason' (rather than 'heresy') had on Elizabethan Catholics. Dailey posits that this shift in prosecution tactics disrupted the martyological paradigm, and so led to new forms of discourse, which are then further explored.

In this altered discourse, Catholics such as Clitherow and Gennings become 'caught in the representational crux between martyr and traitor or martyr and suicide' (p.162). 'Miraculous intervention' becomes central to proving their 'sanctity' (p.162) in such circumstances. Charles I's role as 'martyr' depends on subverting the paradigm, for he 'would naturally occupy the role of persecutor in the paradigms of Christian martyrology' (p.209); his role as 'victim' is only made possible by his altered position from powerful to powerless. Milton subsequently challenged Charles' rhetoric, seeing not confessional truth in his words but mere literary artifice. For Milton, Charles merely 'acted over us so stately and so tragically' (cited on p.239); his words and actions are those of a player, not of a martyr.

The close textual analysis is commendable, although at times more detailed referencing would have beneficial. There is a tendency, in places, to lay little emphasis on scholars who have examined the primary sources previously. For example, the narrative of events in the lead up to the death of Edmund Campion, makes little reference to work done by others in the field; it is surprising to see Gerard Kilroy's work on Campion reduced to a single footnote. Similarly, the account of Margaret Clitherow gives minimal acknowledgement to the work of Peter Lake and Michael Questier. Often Dailey is at pains to state where she sees modern scholarship to be in error. Yet this frequently happens without actually identifying just who these scholars are. In the discussion of 'recent criticism' (p.54) of John Foxe's narrative, for example, those with whom Dailey disagrees remain elusive.

Dailey's analysis of martyrological writing takes the reader on a grand tour through a wealth of material on saints, miracles, biblical and medieval narratives, as well

as key early modern texts in this most fascinating of genres. The breadth of texts and chronologically covered is commendable in its ambition and in its engaging narrative style.

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