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Lumière des martyrs: essai sur le martyre au siècle des  
Réformes (review)

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contribute to his overarching argument. In addition to a more detailed analysis of the texts it treats, this book could have also benefited from a more fully developed theoretical frame. Riley does not thoroughly define and explain the concepts of conversion and character as they relate to his thesis. He does summarize some of the theoretical and historical work that has been done on the concept of conversion in the book's notes, including some that claim it is inappropriate to use the concept of conversion as an analytical tool, but he does not explain or defend his own use of this concept in any detail. Rather he leaves this task to the reader: 'It is for the reader to decide whether the use of the term "conversion" in this book, *both* as a tool and a subject of analysis, as a rubric for thinking about a genre and the contours of a life, appears legitimate' (p. 180). In this book, Riley presents an intriguing thesis and some interesting insights, but he does not defend his thesis thoroughly and conclusively.

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*Lumière des martyrs: essai sur le martyre au siècle des Réformes.* By FRANK LESTRINGANT. (Études et essais sur la Renaissance, 53). Paris, Champion, 2004. 277 pp. Hb €39.00.

The topic of martyrdom during the early modern period has recently been the focus of several important studies, particularly since the publication of Brad S. Gregory's *Salvation at Stake* (Harvard, 1999), a groundbreaking study that attempted to provide a cross-generic synthesis of the subject; it continues to generate intense critical debate. It is therefore timely that Frank Lestringant has gathered together revised versions of articles produced between 1991 and 2003 under the title *Lumière des martyrs*. In period, chapters cover the beginnings of the Reformation to the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes; the subjects range from early Huguenot martyrs to friars murdered by pirates in Brazil. Despite the apparently disparate nature of its scope and chronology, two major themes underpin, and unite, the different sections. First is the notion that 'les protestants finissent par combattre les catholiques sur leur terrain et en se servant de leurs propres armes'. Vivid martyrdom scenes are a commonplace of Counter-Reformation art; yet, as Lestringant points out, the first illustrated Catholic martyrology only appeared two decades after Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*. The appropriation of a culture of martyrdom is all the more remarkable since the Council of Geneva originally vetoed the use of the term in 1554, believing it indistinguishable from relics and hagiographic excess. For Lestringant, the manner in which the early Protestant martyrs faced their fates is reflected in the sombre garments they wore, this vestimentary difference exemplifying 'la nudité de la cause exprimée dans une parole dont l'origine est antérieure à toute institution humaine'. The attachment to the 'Cause' allowed persecuted religious minorities to transcend the apparent victory of their oppressors: 'Seule la Cause les rend intelligibles et, en un sens que ne peut concevoir d'emblée l'entendement humain, leur donne un début d'explication.' Lestringant's second underlying thread is his refusal to view the sixteenth-century fascination with martyrs as 'une attirance morbide de caractère sadomasochiste'.

The visual depictions of martyrdom owe much to the martyrology marking out a new genre, a fusion of the historiographic and hagiographic. As Lestringant reiterates, 'il n'est pas de martyr sans martyrologie'.

The development of theatre and advances in anatomy are suggested as factors contributing to the growth in illustrated martyrologies. In an incisive chapter on Richard Verstegan's *Théâtre des cruautés des Herétiques de notre temps* (1588), Lestringant analyses how the engravings are manipulated (different events and geographies are sometimes seamlessly merged into one scene) to achieve the maximum impact on the Catholic readership. Although recognizing Verstegan's talents in this respect, Lestringant persuasively, yet ruthlessly, undermines the martyrologist's status by demonstrating that he substantially plagiarized an earlier work by Matthieu de Launoy (1579). The bibliography contains succinct comments on standard editions and variants; a notable absence is Eamon Duffy, whose work, with its close reading of source material and obvious sympathy to individuals unwittingly caught up in political events, has many affinities with Lestringant's own methodology, albeit dealing with the other side of the Channel, and confessional divide. Lestringant argues that it is the Huguenots, above all, who developed and nuanced the contemporary interest in martyrdom, a focus that would be absorbed within post-Tridentine spirituality. This readable and impressive study is an indispensable guide for the investigation of martyrdom in early modern culture.

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*Paris in the Age of Absolutism: An Essay.* By OREST RANUM. University Park, Penn State University Press. 2003. viii + 403 pp. Hb \$35.00.

This new edition of Orest Ranum's essay on Paris from 1590 to 1715 is a very attractive, slightly larger format book produced in hardback with a pleasing array of key sixteenth- and seventeenth-century illustrations (especially those by Abraham Bosse). From dust jacket to font, this book is beautifully produced and a sheer pleasure to read. Fans of the first edition published in 1968 will be pleased to see a key essay updated and expanded, including a very sensitive — and timely — new chapter entitled 'The First Women Writers'. The primary attraction of this essay is that it focuses on Paris — in itself a source of pleasure. Moreover, the textual lens captures the city from myriad angles: kings, history, civil war(s), religion, architecture, literature, art, theatre, society (all levels), economics and politics. 'A Traveler's View in 1600' sets the scene by depicting the physical city in all its heaving and pungent post-medieval sprawl. Ranum catches the reader's attention by alternating fact with visual detail, such as the open common graves in the Cemetery of the Innocents 'that aroused the morbid curiosity of visitors in 1600'. It shocks the modern visitor to learn that two or three common graves stood open at the same time. This is what Ranum calls the 'medieval burden' borne by Paris in its failed attempts to move towards Modernity. His essay also follows this progressive sweep. A clear historical account of the League, the Civil War factions, and their divisive effect on Parisian society is swiftly followed by a practical review of Paris under Henri IV, 'a builder', who undertakes a programme of construction in the city — both physical and psychological.