

popes: Sixtus IV was a patron of the house.

Lowe does a good job of showing how all of the chroniclers highlighted prominent patrons of their communities. In the case of Le Vergini, links with an emperor of the Holy Roman Empire and a whole series of Venice's doges receive much attention as a way of validating and defending the importance and independence of the convent. For Le Murate, Catherine de Medici was by no means the only Medici to have supported the community. Not surprisingly, for Rome's San Cosimato papal patronage could be especially useful to have and to make known.

This study also does a fine job of showing how blind most (male) historians have been to the significance of women's narratives—such as the convent chronicles examined here. Lowe traces such blindness to the biases of nineteenth-century scholars who “imbibed and accepted the cultural norms of their time, which decreed that women were weak, foolish and unreliable” (52). It is thus ironic to see Lowe mimic nineteenth-century historians when she relentlessly scorns and condemns the “Counter Reformation” of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Whether or not the data from the convent chronicles supports such un-nuanced conclusions, Lowe portrays the nuns as victims of an evil Council of Trent and of clerical “abuse” of authority. The chronology of the chronicles in question corresponds poorly to such a picture. The reform program imposed on Le Vergini by the patriarch of Venice was instituted in 1519, long before Trent (1545–63), and it is precisely those events of 1519 and the years immediately following that form Lowe's strongest case for a “gloomy” (299) Counter Reformation. Study of early modern convents in Italy and elsewhere has become an exciting and prolific field of scholarship. This book makes a solid contribution to further growth of the field. Though some of its interpretive framework may not be altogether persuasive, the volume succeeds admirably in underscoring the importance of previously ignored sources.

Thomas Kranidas. *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal*. Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2005. xvi + 255 pp. \$58.00. Review by JAMES EGAN, THE UNIVERSITY OF AKRON.

Published in Duquesne University Press's distinguished Medieval and Re-

naissance Literary Studies series, *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal* reads Milton's antiprelatical tracts in the context of a pervasive seventeenth-century tradition of Puritan zealous writing, with substantial reference to the Thomason Collection, arguably the most valuable set of early modern texts in the British Museum. As Kranidas notes in the preface, the book's first chapter doubles as an anthology of seldom studied yet important political and theological pamphlets. He describes his analytical method as "historical, with a touch of the New Historicist in a respect for nonliterary discourse" (xiii). Neither at this point of introduction nor later does *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal* indulge in tub-thumping or self-congratulatory digressions on the virtues of its methodology; instead, the conclusions Kranidas draws about the tracts under consideration will themselves referee his *modus operandi*.

Chapter One identifies zeal in seventeenth-century texts as essentially "righteous indignation and ardor," while conceding that the contemporary Christian connotations of the term had considerable ambivalence, so much so that it is necessary to incorporate several adjacent concepts ("lukewarmness," decency, and indifference) into a comprehensive explanation of zeal. By reviewing at length these ideas, contested and negotiated between Anglicans and Puritans, Kranidas achieves, if not definition by opposites, then at least a secure sense of the volatile nuances of zeal. Puritans, notably the influential Thomas Brightman, equated the Church of England with the "lukewarm" Church of Laodicea, and the lukewarmness trope was still current when Milton's polemic career began in the 1640s. Like most Puritan activists, Milton demystified the "elegant poise" of the *via media* into hypocritical "self-serving" and "cowardly moderation" (17). The Church of England aggressively countered Puritan ridicule and contempt with a vigorous defensive rhetoric meant to validate the Beauty of Holiness. Kranidas considers the pamphlet wars of the 1640s as the front lines of this battle. Controversy over the meanings of "indifference" evolved along a parallel, occasionally intersecting path. The pulpit was another locus of ideological skirmishes, which here took the form of a heated contest between Puritan suspicions over "learned sermonizing" and Anglican caricatures of Puritan preaching as the work of an overreaching ministry of low birth and high pretension. Milton entered the debate on the non-preaching ministry in the digression of "Lycidas"; his Puritan readers would have recognized Milton's allusion to "Blind Mouths" as the paradoxical but appropriate poetic appropriation of a polemic image

ubiquitous in recent public debate. The chapter ends with a postulate addressing the analytical methodology Kranidas puts into play, a methodology, as noted earlier, which “values texts over critical or theoretical positions” (46). In practical terms, this declaration means that *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal* avoids critical self-referentiality and circular elaborations which privilege method over text and often read like postmodern fictions gone bad. What Kranidas aims at, and frequently achieves, is a form of critique which merges the strengths of the traditional historicism practiced by the editors of the *Yale Complete Prose*, Joan Webber, C.A. Patrides, and others with the New Historicism well represented in the work of David Loewenstein, Sharon Achinstein, and David Norbrook.

Chapter Two touches on Milton’s first antiprelatical offering, the brief “Postscript,” which clearly anticipates the characteristics of his later contributions and emphatically laments the deficiencies of episcopal zeal. Kranidas’s version of *Of Reformation* (1641) effectively challenges Loewenstein’s insistence that the tract traces “a tragic process of degeneracy” (58) by arguing for Milton’s emphasis on the momentous, positive transformations that Reform entails. As he consistently does, Kranidas here contextualizes the violence of Milton’s rhetoric by locating it in the lengthy, fully established tradition of militant Christian advocacy. Finally, he offers an alternative to the reading of the pamphlet’s prayer-peroration as overreaching and simplistic by Stanley Fish and Hugh Trevor-Roper, pointing out that Milton’s vision of apocalypse forecasts not only a day of judgment but a day of rewards and honors as well. Kranidas’s reading valuably shows that Milton’s enactment of apocalypse involves both cause *and* effect. This analysis can be reinforced by reference to another major Puritan rhetorical mode, the American jeremiad. In the influential interpretation of Sacvan Bercovitch, the jeremiad juxtaposes divine favor and wrath. Kranidas correctly insists in this case upon the complex dialectic of tensions which typify Milton’s controversial prose.

Chapter Three studies *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* (1641), and Kranidas’s treatment of it is one of two persuasive current readings, the other being that of Stanley Fish. According to Kranidas, *Of Prelatical Episcopacy* qualifies as a “methodological treatise on Christian polemic,” a polemic about writing polemic, and specifically about standards of evidence, scriptural injunction and example, anecdote, and the creation of legend (79-83). Milton adds to his previous discussions of zeal by characterizing “inconsiderate zeal” as per-

sonal, anecdotal, and suggests that, for the most part, "Truth is printed" (81). In a reversal both polemical and epistemological, Milton demonstrates that the authority of the Fathers cited by his episcopal antagonists must be recognized as a "measure of distance from truth" (84). He maintains the tonal complexity he had set in the prayer-peroration of *Of Reformation* by adding to his admonition that the search for truth must be cautious and skeptical: scriptural truth, Milton suggests, may yield to the application of human reason.

Chapter Four covers the major Smectymnuan pamphlets, including Milton's *Animadversions* (1641). In what has proven to be the definitive reading of the Smectymnuan controversy, Kranidas shows how Bishop Hall constructs an image as an "authoritative peace-maker" (89). Yet the rectitude Hall tries to project proves theatrical—he insults while denying that he does so. The Smectymnuan exchange becomes a war between the rectitude of the speakers, rectitude typically expressed by prose style. Participants "search for the style of truth-from-scripture" (92), for what Kranidas calls kerygmatic authority. Though his polemic was sophisticated, sophistication did not prevent Hall from underestimating his Puritan adversaries and their ethos. The Smectymnuans showed themselves to be astute readers of early modern polemic and shrewd deconstructors of Hall's invented rectitude. Whatever the strategical outcome, however, the Humble Remonstrant, Bishop Joseph Hall, attempted to control the Smectymnuan debate by means of an "initiator and initiating decorum" (94), one which is essential to understanding Milton's response in the *Animadversions*. For his part, Milton uses anger and laughter as an antidote to the dangers posed by Hall's persona. Kranidas accurately contextualizes the rhetorical precedents for Milton's satiric tactics and the personal digressions of the *Animadversions* (though such digressions do not qualify as formal polemic rebuttals), pointing to their aesthetic qualities which move the *Animadversions* toward an "eschatological poem" (115) and begin to fuse the "offices of poet and preacher" (117) at the same time that Milton continues to de-iconicize Hall. Throughout this pioneering analysis of the Smectymnuan debate, Kranidas remains sharply aware of the intricate dialogues among tracts in the series, the complexity of reciprocal relationships among participants, and the ways in which rhetorical decorum is established in pamphlet warfare. His conclusions anticipate much recent work on polemic exchanges and self-fashioning in seventeenth-century tract writing. Moreover, the attention Kranidas pays to the aesthetic qualities of Milton's

digressions connect his interpretation to the influential essays in *Politics, Poetics and Hermeneutics in Milton's Prose* (1990), the collection widely recognized as the most comprehensive modern study of the prose-poetry interface in the Milton canon. If one had to single out the most persuasive, authoritative chapter in *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal*, Chapter Four might be it.

Chapter Five examines *A Modest Confutation* (1642) and Milton's answer to it, *An Apology Against a Pamphlet* (1642). The argument in this debate moves away from the particulars of church discipline toward the personal agendas of the debaters—in both Milton and the Confuter erudition and vehemence contest the claims of humility and moral capacity. Milton's attempts to proclaim and justify his own kerygmatic authority must avoid the “pitfalls of professional and technical pride” (123). Surprisingly, Kranidas dismisses the *Modest Confutation* as moribund and pretentious, more pretentious than Milton's *Animadversions*, despite the *Confutation's* uncommon alertness to Milton's own theatrical self-fashioning. Clearly, Milton's I was “beleaguered” by the Modest Confuter, yet at the same time Milton managed to turn the Confuter's attack to his own advantage by using it as a way of proclaiming the uniqueness of his own I and its emerging kerygmatic authority (140–43). Current scholarship has reinforced Kranidas's argument by showing how pervasive Milton's inclination is during his entire pamphleteering career to define himself in opposition to his antagonists. *An Apology* ends by summarizing the case Milton has made for kerygmatic authority, stressing the power of censure and sounding imagistically the note of prelatical failure to fulfill its ministerial mission, while at the same time redefining Anglican devotion as empty exteriority.

The climactic and lengthiest chapter of *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal* examines kerygmatic authority in *The Reason of Church-Government* and the status of the pamphlet as a “major work of intellectual autobiography” (164) in which Milton begins to redefine the hero as intrinsically kerygmatic, a Christian proclaimer who has the right to rebuke and chastise as well as to celebrate. When Kranidas reviews Milton's claims to kerygmatic authority in book one, he proceeds topically and thematically, mirroring Milton's own accumulative practices, rather than “systematically”; here the reader might wish for a tighter, more systematic organization, even at the risk of oversimplification, because of the demands the presentation makes for precise familiarity with details of imagery and allusion. Kranidas interprets the renowned autobiographical preface to book two as a clarification of Milton's awareness of kerygmatic

authority and examines the emotional resonance of his accepting the sacred office of speaking Christian truth, truth both radiant and hard (183). This interpretation of Milton's mapping of his literary career comes down on the moderate side of the ongoing debate over whether Milton privileged poetic accomplishment, and perhaps laureateship, or polemic activism in the cause of Reformation. Milton's "literary energies," Kranidas charges, "are in the service of the kerygmatic force of English Protestantism" (185). He also suggests that Milton recognized both the superior reader and a populist audience as he outlined his career plans. The paradox of how Milton proposed to connect with an often conservative populist audience, especially in light of the radicalism of much of his intellectual agenda, has just begun to receive its fair share of scholarly attention. Milton returns to polemic censure at the close of *Church-Government*, though his chapter headings seem to indicate otherwise. As Milton judges individual error in church discipline, his rhetoric takes on the idealistic, sometimes antithetical quality Kranidas had examined in *Of Reformation*, the *Animadversions*, and *An Apolog*—while Milton makes allowances for human frailty, he is punitive, sometimes "voluptuously" punitive, as well. In the logic of Christian paradox, Milton's intention would be salvific, though he calls for the abolition of episcopacy and excludes the unworthy from the "holy and humane community" he prophesies (199).

The coda, "Rhetoric and Revolution: The Eccentric Equation," reviews several parallels Kranidas has experienced between the "radical rhetoric of the 1640s in England and the 1960s in the United States" (206), examining the agendas of each polemic set and their analogous goals of mocking, appropriating, and ultimately destroying the decorum of the social-political Establishment. The topic of zeal, he concludes, has a nearly archetypal relevance. Particularly intriguing here is Kranidas's own point of view as detached recorder of and participant in political turmoil. His meditation reenacts the interplay of critical distance from and enthusiasm for polemic literature evident in the body chapters.

This book synthesizes extremely well what might appear to be opposed qualities. On the one hand, its focus is close, properly limited to Milton's antiprelatical tracts and the literature of zeal which frames them. On the other, Kranidas loses no relevant opportunity to range widely, to address Milton's prose and poetry as a whole, and to link his conclusions to appropriate current critical debates. The persuasiveness of his historical methodology is

complemented by the anecdotal, refreshingly unpretentious quality of the coda, which animates and personalizes the act of literary criticism. *Milton and the Rhetoric of Zeal* proves itself to be an urbane, graceful, and pointed study, one which regularly records the sort of appreciation for both the intricacy and the immediacy of Milton's prose which can be found in the work of Webber, Parker, Lewalski, and Corns.

Susannah Brietz Monta. *Martyrdom and Literature in Early Modern England*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005. viii + 245 pp. + 4 illus. \$75.00. Review by LISSA BEAUCHAMP, ST. FRANCIS XAVIER UNIVERSITY.

The subject of martyrdom in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England has been largely dominated by studies of the various editions of Foxe's *Acts and Monuments*, also called the *Book of Martyrs*, due to recent and ongoing digital editions published by Oxford University Press (1583 edition, 2001) and Ohio State University Libraries (1563 edition, 2003). Susannah Monta's book, though it ranges through the martyrologies of the early and later volumes of Foxe's *Acts*, goes well beyond Foxe to consider the spectacular elements of English Protestant and Catholic recusant martyrdoms in narrative allegories, lyric poetry, drama, sermons, and prose polemics. In other words, Monta's study offers a much-needed religio-cultural context for Foxe's work, as well as delivering a focused consideration of how this sub-culture operates in literary and theatrical settings.

Monta's book is divided into two parts. In a brief introduction, she establishes the themes and "questions concerning authority and resistance, the nature of the church, religious subjectivity, justification and sacrament, and historical continuity (or discontinuity)" (1) that form the basis of her subsequent arguments in Part One, where she lays out the hermeneutics of martyrological discourses in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Despite the common proposition that "the cause, not the death, makes the martyr (*non poena sed causa*)" (9), religious affiliation as cause is a somewhat confused issue when the spectacle of death is presented using similar persuasive techniques, and as often as not, "The deaths are superior to discourse itself" (10). The three chapters of this section establish and discuss the issues of conscience as a determinant of truth and the problems associated with portraying in-