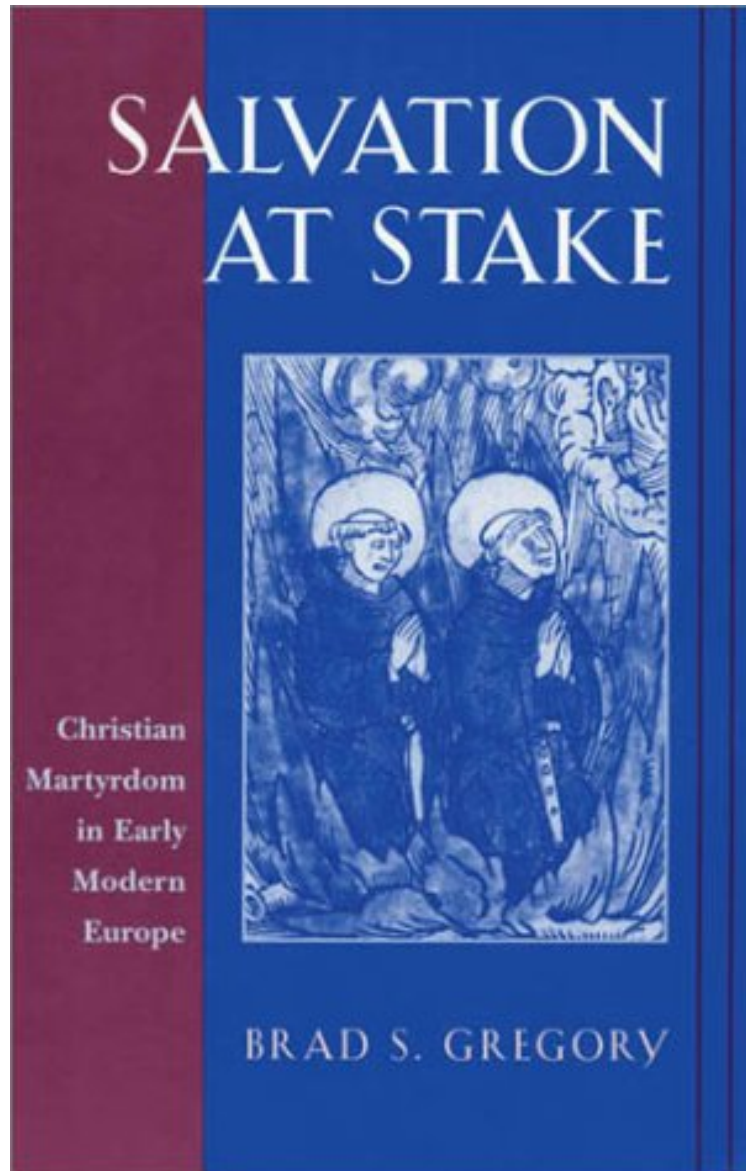


(Ebook pdf) Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe (Harvard Historical Studies)

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Brad S. Gregory

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Brad S. Gregory : Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe (Harvard Historical Studies) before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe (Harvard Historical Studies):

4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. No Hermeneutic of Suspicion Here
By Stephanie A. Mann
Unlike Anne Dillon's study, "The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community", Brad S. Gregory's "Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe" takes the martyrs of the Reformation period seriously and without what he calls "the hermeneutic of suspicion", which undercuts the reality of the martyr's devotion and belief. He dedicates the first chapter, "A Complex of Martyrs" to explaining why and how he has done so, at one point stating: My depiction of sixteenth-century Christians is intended to be one in which they would have recognized themselves, not puzzled over modern or postmodern configurations of who they were. I have sought to reconstruct, not deconstruct, their commitments and experiences as far as the evidence permits. This holds not only for the martyrs, but also for fellow believers who encouraged them, authorities who tried to dissuade them, and those who responded to their deaths both positively and negatively. Several objectives can be achieved by telling a story of embattled convictions in action not from an external perspective based on explanatory theory, but rather through an exploration of the relevant traditions in turn, one that is sensitive to their emphases, nuances, and changes over time. I think Gregory achieved his goals: he balances the three groups of martyrs (Protestant, Anabaptist, and Catholic) well; acknowledges their different understanding of the martyrs' impact on their communities; notes the reluctance of the officials (except for Richard Topcliffe, torturer and executioner extraordinaire) to condemn the accused, as they hoped for conversion and public recantation; and the crucial distinctions each group made between their martyrs and the others condemned for false religion. I was most interested in the chapter on the Catholic martyrs, in which Gregory explores the rather muted reaction to St. Thomas More's and St. John Fisher's martyrdoms (Francis I of France planned some demonstration of his disapproval but then deferred to Emperor Charles V since it was his Aunt Catherine who was treated so badly by Henry VIII). He refers to the Catholic martyrs under Henry VIII as "defensive" martyrs who died to protect the unity of the Church under the Vicar of Christ. While describing those whom I call the Recusant Martyrs he notes how the "emphasis on the glory of martyrdom spurred the zeal to die for Christ" and yet "how the virtue of humility bridled the same desire." This certainly reminded me of St. Robert Southwell, who called himself a mere "worm" while acknowledging that he was in his thirty-third year, the same age as Jesus when He suffered and died. Gregory notes a pattern of the martyrs imitating Christ through their suffering and death, while they became the pattern for others (like St. Henry Walpole and St. Philip Howard following St. Edmund Campion to the Church and to martyrdom). Indeed, William Allen and others emphasized the potential for conversions when the stories of the martyrs were told and offered as examples of this intense and complete imitation of Christ. Gregory notes that 203 editions of 50 works recounting the suffering and execution of the English Catholic martyrs were published between 1580 and 1640--and 95 of those editions appeared in the 1580's alone. These books, illustrations of the executions at Tyburn Tree were disseminated to the Catholic world, where the majority of Catholics had no opportunity for such sacrifice, thus spurring the interest in relics, praying to the martyrs as saints for intercession for miracles, and, generally, to devotion to the martyrs as saints, even though no cause for canonization was started until the mid seventeenth century and later. This is an effective and well-balanced history of martyrdom in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. 16 of 19 people found the following review helpful. Impressive Read about What Is Really at Stake
By rodboomboom
This quote makes the point of this fine historical investigation into 16thC martyrdom: "Eternal salvation was at stake even without martyrdom." 21stC culture (even those who would identify "themselves" as Christian) cannot identify with this at all. Neither could 16thC saints with ours, as Gregory writes: "The prospect of doctrinal pluralism horrified and disgusted them. They preferred a world in which truth did battle, come what may, to one swarming with ever-proliferating heresies." This very fine written account of Protestant, Anabaptist and Roman martyrology in the early modern period gives one great insight into this very different world of committed believers in a time when governing rulers held orthodox vs. heterodox seriously, even at times serious to the point of capital punishment for non-repudiation of false doctrine. What strikes the careful reader is the amazing research and documentation that is here presented at a reasonable price for such a record. Thanks to the publisher for the notes tied to page number for those of us who like to see the documentation as we're reading easily, conveniently. His introduction and challenges to modern mind and academia is outstanding and worthwhile just for this beginning which this reviewer amens! One will grasp much more about this time by this read. Neat to learn that Luther wrote first hymn in honor of martyr. One of the best reads for me in quite some time. 0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Not easy reading. This is for scholars only
By Customer
Not easy reading. This is for scholars only.

Thousands of men and women were executed for incompatible religious views in sixteenth-century Europe. The meaning and significance of those deaths are studied here comparatively for the first time, providing a compelling argument for the importance of martyrdom as both a window onto religious sensibilities and a crucial component in the formation of divergent Christian traditions and identities. Gregory explores Protestant, Catholic, and Anabaptist martyrs in a sustained fashion, addressing the similarities and differences in their self-understanding. He traces the processes and impact of their memorialization by co-believers, and he reconstructs the arguments of the ecclesiastical and civil authorities responsible for their deaths. In addition, he assesses the controversy over the meaning of executions for competing views of Christian truth, and the intractable dispute over the distinction between true and

false martyrs. He employs a wide range of sources, including pamphlets, martyrologies, theological and devotional treatises, sermons, songs, woodcuts and engravings, correspondence, and legal records. Reconstructing religious motivation, conviction, and behavior in early modern Europe, Gregory shows us the shifting perspectives of authorities willing to kill, martyrs willing to die, martyrologists eager to memorialize, and controversialists keen to dispute.

From Library Journal Awarded this year's Thomas J. Wilson Prize, this book by Gregory (history, Stanford Univ.) covers martyrdom in the 1500s, when thousands died for their respective Christian beliefs. Separate chapters look at Protestant, Anabaptist, and Catholic martyrs. Strikingly, he suggests, martyrs believed that prolonging their lives was secondary to the absolute value of fidelity to God. As members of their religious communities, they were the living embodiment of what they believed; they showed a purposeful clarity and articulate resolve startling to modern readers. Gregory also examines such contested beliefs as papal primacy, believer's baptism, and justification by faith. He draws from any and all sources, including those written by antagonists who often intended to condemn false martyrs and justify their executions. And although he often allows the martyrs to speak for themselves, he also assists us in understanding these people without judging them by our current cultural or psychological theories. This extensive, well-written, and gripping book is highly recommended for both history and theological collections. -George Westerlund, Providence P.L., Palmyra, VA Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc. In *Salvation at Stake*, Brad Gregory tries to ground the motives of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century martyrs in their sense of Christian doctrine. And though his scholarship is impeccable, Gregory's achievement lies as much in the defense of a historical method as in explaining why these believers chose to die rather than deny their faith. He rises to occasional eloquence--and more frequent elegance--while arguing for a study of martyrs which will take these individuals on their own terms, not those of modern critics. At crucial points throughout his book, Gregory properly condemns the historical arrogance that ignores religion's hold upon the faithful. (Steven Stryer Harvard Book)The martyrs of early modern Europe are something of an embarrassment. Men, women and even children who had the bad taste to consider religious faith, of all things, something to die for, exceptions even in their own time, are especially unpalatable to an age in which faith has become a kind of fashion accessory. Brad S. Gregory has changed all that, and perhaps more, in *Salvation at Stake*...His ambitious survey breaks the mould of both confessional and reductionist historiography with an even-handed and sympathetic account of Anabaptist, Catholic and Protestant martyrdom which casts fresh light on early modern Christianity as a whole as well as on the emerging denominations. It should be emphasized that this book is an analytical study of martyrdom, and not itself a martyrology. It draws on original compilations such as those of John Foxe, Thieliman van Braght and Richard Verstegan, yet it is itself historical, not hagiographical...Unlike many monographs arising from doctoral dissertations, this one has been distilled, rather than diluted, on its way to the press. The distillate is all that you might expect from Princeton-trained scholar: learned, logical, lucid. The inspiration of Peter Brown, Anthony Grafton and Heiko Oberman is not only invoked in the acknowledgements, but evident in the intellectual breadth of the achievement, which boldly transgresses confessional, national and linguistic boundaries at a time when myopic specialization has become normative. So many books are published now that it seems arrogant to define any of them as required reading. But *Salvation At Stake* is a book which nobody working in the field of Reformation and early modern history can afford to pass over. And it is not just required reading; it is rewarding, too, amply deserving the Harvard University Press Thomas J. Wilson Prize for the best first book of the year. Anyone who enjoyed Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars*, or Diarmaid MacCulloch's *Cranmer*, will find this just as good. (Richard Rex Times Literary Supplement 2001-03-09)This book covers martyrdom in the 1500s, when thousands died for their respective Christian beliefs...Gregory also examines such contested beliefs as papal primacy, believer's baptism, and justification by faith. He draws from any and all sources, including those written by antagonists who often intended to condemn false martyrs and justify their executions. And although he often allows the martyrs to speak for themselves, he also assists us in understanding these people without judging them by our current cultural or psychological theories. This extensive, well-written, and gripping book is highly recommended. (George Westerlund Library Journal)As learned, sympathetic, and deeply penetrating a treatment of the period's religious history as will ever be written. It is the definitive study of its subject in solid, tried and true, traditional historical terms. (Steven Ozment, Harvard University)This is a genuinely impressive piece of work. Brad Gregory has really defined a completely new subfield of Reformation studies, the cross-confessional study of martyrologies. (William Monter, Northwestern University)This is undoubtedly a major achievement, particularly for a first book. Gregory has read extraordinarily widely in both primary and secondary sources, and dissects both the assurance and lan. It deserves a wide readership both for its substantial contribution to the scholarship on martyrdom, and for the vigour of its polemic about good and bad ways to write religious history. (Peter Marshall French History)Brad Gregory's important and highly original book is a social history of religion that eschew the reductionism that treats religious practices as "behaviors" having no transcendent meaning. That is welcome news, as is the forthright way in which Gregory critiques earlier scholarly approaches to his topic...Aside from enriching our understanding of how martyrdom functioned for Reformation Christians, and aside from his trenchant critique of methodologies that fail to give martyrs

their due, Gregory offers something to readers seeking transhistorical insights. The very empathy, evenhandedness, and historical imagination that enable Gregory to recapture the age of religious intolerance can enable ecumenically minded Christians to listen to Christians of other persuasions, and to take their doctrines seriously while avoiding the temptation to trivialize or relativize them in aid of an easy but ultimately vacuous accommodation. By showing us where we have been, Gregory gives us intellectual tools for envisioning and shaping the kinds of destinations we may define for ourselves. (Marcia L. Colish *Commonweal* 2002-03-08) Gregory's massive research has emphasized how Protestant, Anabaptist, and Catholic martyrs rooted their actions in their understanding of the scripture. Certainly the modern reader, in our ecumenical age, is repulsed by the concept that men and women could read the same gospel and kill each other over its interpretation. This lack of comprehension, however, is a modern problem, one that those pursuing historical theology cannot ignore. Here Gregory's study returns us to the fundamental issues that both supported and created the early modern martyr and the subsequent martyrologies of the age. (Michael W. Maher, *S.J. Theological Studies*) This well-structured book focuses on the engagement of English Protestants with the history of the medieval church from whose rites and values they had so decidedly disengaged... This book offers a fresh, slightly provocative perspective and as such is to be warmly welcomed, not least as the debates about the periodization of church history continue. (Peter Matheson *Church History* 2008-03-01) As learned, sympathetic, and deeply penetrating a treatment of the period's religious history as will ever be written. It is the definitive study of its subject in solid, tried and true, traditional historical terms. (Steven Ozment, Harvard University)