English analogues (the other being Peter Happé's identification of lacuna in both scriptural and dramatic representations of the resurrection). She highlights a particularly English anxiety around the right to preach in the early fifteenth century that circumscribes the dramatic material in extant plays featuring John the Baptist, drawing tantalizing attention to the phenomenology of performed preaching. Elisabeth Dutton and Stephanie Allen consider the only Latin drama in the collection, demonstrating Nicholas Grimald's synthesis of scriptural and classical sources and models. This engaging discussion reveals Grimald's expert manipulation of reception as he leads audiences to consider how we know and manipulate truth. Also noteworthy is Katie Normington's demonstration of a temptation motif in a range of cycle pageants which helps to address perceived flaws in the often overlooked Newcastle *Noah*, although she misses the opportunity to discuss important distinctions between Eve's temptation in the Fall and later scriptural episodes that demonstrate the motif. Overall, this compilation gives a good overview of current scholarship, reflecting the continued priority given to English cycle drama in medieval drama studies; at the same time, select contributions demonstrate the fruitful results we can gain by applying theoretical lenses to familiar texts and turning our scholarly attention to material outside of the familiar English context.

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Margaret Aston, *Broken Idols of the English Reformation*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015, pp. 1136, £120, ISBN: 9780521770187

This book—a sequel of sorts to Margaret Aston's *England's Iconoclasts. Vol 1: Laws Against Images* (Oxford, 1988)—was completed by the late Margaret Aston shortly before her death in 2014. It is a remarkable testimony of her potency as a historian and a writer. Where the former work was chiefly concerned with the intellectual or theological foundations of iconoclasm, the bulk of *Broken Idols* details iconoclasm in practice: that is the debates which iconoclasm triggered in post-Reformation society, the varied and often contested nature of destruction it spawned, and the contrary urge to preservation it fomented. Above all else, this is a book which shows us that images remained important in post-Reformation society, and often in ways which the Reformers themselves did not anticipate. Written in lively, clever and clearly elucidated prose, this is a book of extraordinary detail which—despite its very large size—wears its learning lightly. Readers are in the hands of a master historian who spent an academic life immersed in this subject.

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The book is divided into three parts. The first examines the rationale and mentality of iconoclasm, weaving together in a sinewy fashion official attitudes—sermons, books, laws and so on—and popular participation to demonstrate how the two were in tension as often as they were in harmony. Chapters 1 and 2 detail the imperatives to destroy images and illustrate how this was not an uncomplicated impulse: far from casting images to oblivion, violence often sparked an impulse to preserve. Chapter 3 demonstrates that laws and theology were not the only factors determining the fate of images, and stresses that the fate and use of the building of the church was an equally important context in conditioning and limiting iconoclasm in each generation. In each of these chapters, 'image' is shown not to have been a stable category, and although iconoclasm initially transformed the meaning of icons into idols, their status was not fixed: scarred and disfigured statues were initially monuments to the Reformation's progress and markers of a break with old patterns of belief and worship; in subsequent generations, however, the zeal and violence which their bodies manifested sat uncomfortably with conceptions of sanctity, and stimulated the Laudian impulse to 'beautify' sacred space. For all the energy placed into removing the material from the sacred, images were in many ways made more visible as a result of iconoclasm, not less.

The second part contains three chapters which serve as highly detailed case studies of iconoclasm's limits and contradictions. Chapter 4 contrasts the fate of the good St. George—whose hold on the English imagination continued, albeit in a transformed manner, despite the iconoclasm which the cult of saints was subjected to—with that of the demonised St Thomas Becket, whose exhumation from English history at the hands of Henry VIII's regime is shown to have been carried out with distasteful diligence across images, monuments, service books and histories. Here, in crisp detail, is revealed the extent to which iconoclasm could be part religious duty and part political expedience. Chapter 5 considers a much less heralded (and well known) story, the fate of bells and organs, and chapter 6 focuses on the destruction of images and representations of the Trinity.

Throughout this book, Aston demonstrates that destruction could never be complete or final simply because the categories with which the Reformers worked were contested, confused and always developing. What, precisely, constituted an 'image'? At what point did it become an 'idol', at the moment of creation or at the point of improper reverence? Were images permissible in some contexts, as narrative scenes rather than as points of veneration, for example? And if images of God the Father were utterly forbidden under the second commandment, were images of Christ in human form or the crucifix, which could be seen to have scriptural sanction? None of these questions were met with answers which gained anything approaching consensus during the long Reformation.

Aston shows that the Reformers inherited concerns and questions about the status of the material in Christian practice from the medieval church, which had never been as iconophilic as the caricature created by Protestant polemic suggested. The impression throughout this book is that the Reformation was in many ways a difference in degree rather than in kind from earlier concerns, and protests, most noticeably the Lollards.

The chapters in part three illustrate most thoroughly the capacity of these unresolved questions to animate and excite the four generations following the Reformation. Here we are shown that the Reformation was no linear process in which iconoclasm became steadily more severe. Each impulse to destroy often triggered counter-impulses to preserve. Chapter 7 focuses on the fate of stained-glass windows, perhaps the most difficult images to destroy because of the practical implications involved in doing so, building maintenance being just one example. Debates raged for generations, and the level of destruction during the Civil Wars indicates that although for many 'hotter' Protestants iconoclasm remained an unfinished business, for others it was a deeply unseemly one.

It is perhaps in chapter 8—on the fate of the Cross—where all of the book's themes are woven together most sharply. As with each chapter in this book, the theme is pursued from the late medieval church through to the Civil Wars in order to show the strains and tensions at the heart of the image debate which was itself at the heart of the Reformation. Aston shows us that the Reformers were more radical than the Byzantine iconoclasts on the image of the cross, traces Reformation debates on the Continent about whether or not it was permissible to depict Christ as a man, charts the emergence of the cross in medieval liturgy, and outlines Lollard objections to it by showing their stress on man as the true image of Christ. She argues that the range of uses of and objections to veneration of the cross in the late medieval Church shows that this 'meeting point of divinity and humanity' (p. 707) was never uncontroversial. She then demonstrates in rich detail the place of the cross in Henry VIII's contradictory iconoclastic policy: never prohibited outright but subject to key moments of iconoclastic propaganda. Aston outlines how the more rigid Edwardian position emerged from frustrations with the illogical theological position of Henry's Church, and demonstrates how tensions between Elizabeth I and many of her Reformers on the issue of the cross went to the core of strains between monarch and Church inherent in the Royal Supremacy. Questions about the permissibility of the cross became a focal point of debates between Catholics and Protestants and Puritans and anti-Puritans, and in turn about the nature of authority in the Church and the acceptability of iconoclasm itself. As a result of these debates, Aston demonstrates that the meaning of the cross was further translated as an emblem of 'popery', and that attachment to it and similar 'Romish trash' became a central element of anti-Catholic polemic from

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the late-sixteenth century. Such was its odiousness to some Protestants that a debate soon emerged about the permissibility of ministers making the sign of the cross with their hands during baptism—here an image became central to debates between Puritans and the Church. The chapters ends with a detailed treatment of the fate of the Cheapside Cross which highlights how easily iconoclasm could become a platform for debate about other issues—royal authority, national memory, popular politics to name only three.

Each of the book's nine chapters treats its themes in equivalent chronological scope and forensic detail. Throughout readers are shown that debates about images were emblematic of debates and contradictions within the Reformation itself. Images were central to the Protestant protest against Rome because they encapsulated the divisions over spirit, matter and authority between the old faith and the new. Putting that protest into practice raised a host of other issues—the nature of representation, the relationship between word and image, the boundaries of authority in the church, the legitimacy and seemliness of violence—which made images central to the Reformation, state and belief in subsequent generations. The problems posed by iconoclasm were unresolved and ever potent.

This is an important book by a very fine scholar. One wishes, however, that Aston had integrated her work more closely into the historiography of the Reformation. Doing so would have done her remarkable scholarship justice. We learn a great deal here about the debates surrounding images and their destruction, and we are shown the huge variety in the practice of iconoclasm and the old and new uses of imagery in post-Reformation society. How this relates to current post-revisionist debates about the reception of the Reformation, to emerging work on the role of the senses (Milner/Hallet) and the emotions (Ryrie/Karant-Nunn) in both Catholic and Protestant piety, or to the vibrant body of scholarship which is demonstrating the vitality of the many strains of Catholicism in English society after the Reformation is not spelt out, however. Aston has created an important and fascinating account of images and their destruction: it will be for future scholars to place her insights in a wider context.

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Salvador Ryan and Clodagh Tait, eds. *Religion and Politics in Urban Ireland, c. 1500–c. 1750: Essays in Honour of Colm Lennon*, Dublin: Four Courts, 2016, pp. 288, €55.00, ISBN: 978-1-84682-574-3

As the opening sections of this volume clearly illustrate, Colm Lennon has shaped significantly the trajectory of scholarship on early modern

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