

to propose stoning him out of town (p. 252); such anecdotes provide individual insights into ordinary social lives that have the church at their centre. These stories thus go further than connecting readers to the human communities that existed around and within the medieval church; they often offer glimpses into lives that were connected to and recorded by medieval churches, evidencing the varieties of divergent, sometimes contradictory experiences of those within a parish across time, building to a similarly complex, country-wide picture.

When addressing the confessions of penitents during Lent, Nicholas Orme describes the questions that medieval clergy asked parishioners to discern the details of the individual cases: ‘who, what, where, by whom, how often, in what way, and when’ (p. 271). They are, indeed, questions that Orme himself raises and answers with thoughtfulness and curiosity – Who went to church, and what did they do when they were there? When and why did people go to church, and how does that answer change when we consider the poor, the young, or the socially-outcast? What did a church service entail, and how did those listening to, attending, or performing such services engage? In what ways did the medieval church change over time, as a result of discontent, passionate devotion, or apathy? In this book, Nicholas Orme asks, builds answers to, and seeks further nuances in all of these questions, and more, that a student of the English medieval church might ever think to ask.

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Jane Whitaker, *Raised from the Ruins: Monastic Houses after the Dissolution*, London: Unicorn, 2021, pp. 404, £35.00, ISBN: 9781913491918.

The dissolution of the monasteries (1536-40) dramatically altered the physical landscape of sixteenth-century England and Wales. The suppression of more than eight-hundred religious houses by Henry VIII’s government was one of the greatest acts of iconoclasm of the Reformation. Structures that had stood at the heart of local communities were systematically dismantled in order to symbolise the triumph of the Henrician regime and to make it difficult for religious communities to return, as well as for the material gain of the crown, nobility, and laity. Put simply, for those who lived through it, the world looked different after the dissolution. On the one hand, processes of spoliation and demolition created an evocative landscape of monastic ruins. These damaged structures served as tangible reminders that the break with Rome represented a break with the medieval Catholic past. On the other hand, the dissolution also opened up new possibilities for converting and adapting monastic structures into buildings more

sited to the age of Reformation. If the suppression of the monasteries was highly destructive, it was also highly creative.

Processes of creation, architectural conversion and adaptation are at the heart of Jane Whitaker's beautifully illustrated book, which traces the post-dissolution fates of thirty-six houses that were repurposed for a range of new uses and owners. A short introduction offers a concise and accessible chronology of the years between the first visitations in 1535 and the closure of the last abbeys in the early spring of 1540. The remainder of the book is devoted to Whitaker's case studies, which include examples of cathedrals, university colleges, royal properties, and domestic houses that were — to borrow from her title — 'raised from the ruins' of the religious houses. Each short case study provides a brief history of the site, an account of its suppression in the late 1530s, and an analysis of the architectural changes made after the dissolution. Whitaker shows, for example, how at St Peter's Abbey, now Gloucester Cathedral, the abbey church was preserved almost entirely intact, together with the cloister, because these structures needed almost no adaptation to serve their function in the new secular cathedral. The Prior's Lodging became the Deanery; the library became a schoolroom. For those undertaking domestic conversions, the alterations required were more significant. Of the properties retained by Henry VIII, the most extensive conversion was Dartford Priory, formerly England's only Dominican convent, where little of the original fabric was retained and a new house built to replace it. Elsewhere, Whitaker uncovers evidence of a greater degree of adaptation and concealment. At Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire, the new lay owner, Sir William Sharington, turned the cloister into the foundations for a new private house, only pulling down those elements — including the church — that did not fit his design. The house built at Leez Priory, Essex, by Sir Richard Rich featured the original medieval fireplaces and simply refaced much of the old monastic structure. In different ways, then, Whitaker's examples demonstrate how medieval architecture was adapted, re-used, and effaced for new generations of owners, from the mid-sixteenth century to the present day.

In describing these processes of conversion, *Raised from the Ruins* will undoubtedly raise questions in the minds of many readers about the re-use of sacred space and the ongoing Catholic and monastic associations of these sites. These questions go largely unanswered: this is not a book intended for an academic audience (or at least not *only* for an academic audience), although the case studies explored here speak to recent work on the reformation of the landscape by Alexandra Walsham and the archaeology of the dissolution by Hugh Willmott. In particular, Whitaker's study reminds us that this moment of rupture was not simply the death knell of a waning medieval world, but also the beginning of a story about architectural

adaptation and the fortunes of those who came into the possession of ex-monastic property. This book will be of particular value to anyone seeking a potted history of a particular site, as well as those with an interest in early modern architecture more generally. It would also make a beautiful coffee table book: every case study features multiple illustrations and photographs, totalling 235 in all, with most reproduced in full colour and many at full-page size. Indeed, the care and thought with which the illustrations have been selected, presented, and incorporated into the text is one of the great strengths of Whitaker's work.

*Raised from the Ruins* is a beautiful, interesting, well-researched study of architectural conversion after the dissolution for a general audience. It does not seek to change or overturn our understanding of the process of the suppression itself, nor does it engage critically with the historiography of this episode or debates about its significance for the wider Henrician Reformation, relying principally on foundational studies of the dissolution by Joyce Youings and David Knowles that are now some fifty years old. Whitaker does make use of a rich seam of early modern antiquarian writing, as well as material from the State Papers and the Victoria County History project, which adds depth and detail to her case studies. But although there is little in the way of argument presented here, this is nevertheless a book that contributes to the wider and very welcome trend of thinking about the dissolution and its consequences over the *longue durée*. Precisely because it emphasises the creativity of this rapid, almost unparalleled turnover in land and property, it should encourage us to shift our attention at least in part away from monastic ruins, and towards the interesting and important stories about the impact of the Reformation that can be told through the religious houses that were given a new lease of life in the decades and centuries after the dissolution.

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Allan I. Macinnes, Patricia Barton, and Kieran German, eds., *Scottish Liturgical Traditions and Religious Politics: From Reformers to Jacobites, 1540–1764*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2021, £85, ISBN: 978-1-4744-8305-6.

The field of Scottish religious history has long been dominated by studies of church polity, discipline, and worship. This edited collection valuably shifts the focus toward liturgy, a customary ritual performance including both verbal and physical signs of public worship (p. 19). It includes thirteen chapters (arranged chronologically) that examine how Scots drew upon their own liturgical inheritances to respond to political and ecclesiastical change between the