

Introduction, Dying, Death, Burial and Commemoration

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Introduction: Dying, Death, Burial and Commemoration in Reformation Europe.

Elizabeth Tingle and Jonathan Willis

In recent years, the history of death (and its related processes) has proven itself to be a lively and active area of investigation for scholars of early modern religious, social and cultural history. The essays in this volume contribute to on-going debates about the experience of dying, death, disposal and commemoration, and about the ways in which these processes were affected by the great religious changes of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The idea for such a volume emerged from work presented at meetings of the European Reformation Research Group (ERRG) during the early 2010s. They offer a series of case studies of how regional and national communities coped with religious change, through an investigation of the impact of change on the most vulnerable members of those societies, the dying, the deceased and their kin and friends.

The current volume is in some ways a companion piece to an earlier collection of essays to emerge from the activities of the ERRG; Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (eds), *The Place of the Dead. Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (2000). In that volume, the central questions examined were the status of the dead, socially and ontologically, and the nature of their relations with the living, benign and malevolent. A major theme was ‘how the relations of the living with the dead were profoundly embedded in religious cultures, and, further, how those relations were not only shaped by, but themselves helped to shape, the processes of religious change’.¹ This volume seeks to move the discussion begun in that earlier work forward, by considering different themes in the art of dying (such as sainthood and martyrdom), and by translating more familiar motifs into a

¹ Bruce Gordon & Peter Marshall (eds), *The Place of the Dead. Death and Remembrance in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 3.

range of different contexts. If anything, more than a decade on, studies of mortality and the afterlife are even more central to the way we understand the religious history of early modern Britain and Europe, as this collection of essays seeks to demonstrate.

The impact of Reformation was most profound (and most traumatic) where it challenged long-held certainties, and nothing was more certain in early modern Europe than death. As well as throwing into question the fate of the eternal soul, the Reformation also challenged traditional beliefs and practices concerning attitudes to the sick and dying, death itself, the burial of corpses, and the manner in which individuals were remembered – or might make arrangements for their own post-mortem commemoration. But the influence of the Reformation on dying, death and burial was not a one-way street, or a simple matter of cause and effect. When theology and dogma impacted upon the essential social practices of comforting the dying and disposing of their mortal remains, it was often the formal strictures of the institutional Church which were forced to give way. Studies in this area therefore reveal an important series of insights not only in terms of the social and cultural practices concerning human mortality, but also the ways in which the Reformation itself was negotiated by individuals and communities, Catholic and Protestant, across Europe. This introduction will chart the modern historiography of dying, death, burial and commemoration across seven key areas (demography and mortality; post-mortem intercession; dying well; funerals and burial; memorials and commemoration; execution and martyrdom; the dead and the undead), as well as introducing the essays that form the rest of the volume.

Demography and Mortality

The modern history of dying, death and disposal has its origins in the quantitative demographic studies of the French *annaliste* historians and in *histoire sérielle*.² Beginning with the pioneering study of the population history of the Normandy village of Crulai by Louis Henry and Étienne Gautier in 1958, quantitative studies have charted the statistics of mortality and burial in early modern France.³ In an influential work of 1960, Pierre Goubert published a demographic model of the city of Beauvais and its region in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, in which he argued that death and mortality conditioned structures of life more than birth.⁴ François Lebrun's landmark study of early modern Anjou similarly examined demographic structures, mortality cycles, death rates and their change over time and inspired numerous other regional studies during the 1970s and early 1980s.⁵ Historians measured and analysed the contours of death and a 'north-west European demographic pattern' of mortality appeared, in contrast with that of the Mediterranean south. High infant death rates and an adult life expectancy of forty-something, and a fragile population prey to epidemics and famines – where population increase was dependent on improved mortality rates rather than higher reproduction rates – conditioned social institutions and cultural practices. For scholars of the *Annales* School, mortality was a problem of nature rather than of culture and formed a fundamental structure of early modern society.⁶ Their originality lay in charting these structures in detail, over long periods of time and in the model of their pre-industrial immutability, *la longue durée*.

² A very useful short introduction to the French historiography of death can be found in Régis Bertrand, 'L'histoire de la mort : de l'histoire des mentalités à l'histoire religieuse', *Revue de l'Histoire de l'Eglise de France* 86, (2000): pp. 55-559.

³ Étienne Gautier and Louis Henry, *La population de Crulai, paroisse normande. Étude historique* (Paris, 1958).

⁴ Pierre Goubert, *Beauvais et le Beauvaisis de 1600 à 1730. Contribution à l'histoire sociale de la France du XVIIe siècle* (Paris, 1960).

⁵ François Lebrun, *Les hommes et la mort en Anjou aux XVIIe et XVIIIe siècles. Essai de démographie et de psychologie historiques* (Paris, 1971).

⁶ Michel Bee, 'La société traditionnelle et la mort', *XVIIe siècle* 106-107 (1975): p. 81.

In England, it was primarily the new social history of the 1960s and 1970s, perhaps best exemplified by the activities of the Cambridge Group for the History of Population and Social Structure, founded by Tony Wrigley and Peter Laslett in 1964, that focused historical attention on the nature and extent of mortality in pre-industrial society (and led to the creation in 1968 of a journal, *Local Population Studies*).⁷ It was during the sixteenth century that English churchwardens were ordered to start keeping parochial registers of baptismal, marriage and funeral services, and the ensuing data formed the foundation of much of this later demographic work. These datasets facilitated the questioning of many old myths and assumptions, such as those regarding life expectancy. In *The World We Have Lost*, for example, Laslett noted ‘that expectation of life in the middle years was surprisingly long in relation to expectation of life at birth’. In other words, high infant mortality skewed statistics (and therefore assumptions) about life expectancy, and children who survived into adulthood might at least expect to achieve their three-score and ten years, even if the percentage who managed this was relatively small in absolute terms.⁸ Studies of mortality remain a small but significant trend in early modern scholarship on death, and the sub-discipline has evolved in recent years to take account of developments in gender history, the history of medicine, and broader interdisciplinary approaches.⁹

⁷ Edward Anthony Wrigley and Roger Schofield, *The population history of England, 1541-1871 : a reconstruction* (London, 1981); Edward Anthony Wrigley and Roger Schofield, ‘English population history from family reconstitution : summary results 1600-1799’, *Population Studies* 37 (1983), pp. 157-84; Lloyd Bonfield, Richard Smith, Keith Wrightson (eds), *The World We Have Gained : Histories of Population and Social Structure. Essays presented to Peter Laslett on his Seventieth Birthday* (Oxford, 1986).

⁸ Peter Laslett, *The World we have lost* (London and New York, 1965), p. 100.

⁹ Rebecca Oakes, ‘Adolescent mortality at Winchester College, 1393-1540 : new evidence for medieval mortality and methodological considerations for historical demography’, *Local Population Studies*, 88 (2012), pp. 12-32; Richard M. Smith, ‘Measuring Adult Mortality in an Age of Plague : England, 1349-1540’, in Mark Bailey and Stephen Henry Rigby (eds), *Town and countryside in the age of the Black Death : essays in honour of John Hatcher* (Turnhout, 2012), pp. 43-85; Louis Schwartz, *Milton and maternal mortality* (Cambridge, 2009).

Many of these studies of mortality, in both the English and European contexts, moved far beyond statistical analysis, and authors increasingly examined the impact of demographic structures on popular attitudes to death, an important part of the *histoire des mentalités* which emerged in the 1970s, influenced by the theory and methods of sociology, ethno-anthropology and psychology. Of particular interest to historians was the debate about the ‘rise of the individual’, associated with the emergence of capitalism and ‘modernity’ towards the end of the Middle Ages. John Bossy’s work on Catholic belief and practice, Peter Burke’s work on Renaissance Europe, and Robert Muchembled and Carlo Ginzberg on popular and elite culture, to name just a few, made important contributions to this discussion, for their work emphasised the social and cultural dimension of religious experience and the ‘history’ of the believer as much as the belief.¹⁰ Studies of death contributed greatly to an emergent view that the early modern period was a watershed in a transition from collective to individual mentalities.¹¹ The most influential work of this genre was that of Philippe Ariès, published in English as *The Hour of Our Death*. Using a wide range of sources – literature, memoirs, religious and administrative records, monuments and pictures – Ariès argued that the early modern centuries witnessed a move away from a concept of death as a collectively-experienced event to an individualisation of mortality. This was accompanied by a rise in the

¹⁰ John Bossy, *Christianity in the West 1400-1700* (Oxford, 1985); see also his articles ‘Some Elementary Forms of Durkheim’, *Past and Present*, 95 (1982), pp. 3-18 and ‘The Mass as a Social Institution 1200-1700’, *Past and Present*, 100 (1983), pp. 29-61.

¹¹ Allan Mitchell, ‘Philippe Ariès and the French Way of Death’, *French Historical Studies* 10 (1978): p. 685. C.f. Ferdinand Tönnies’ 1887 work on *gemeinschaft und gesellschaft*, which was translated into English in 1957 by Charles Loomis as *Community and Society* (East Lansing, 1957). It is worth mentioning that the suggestion that the early modern period marked such a profound break with the medieval past is increasingly being questioned, for example in Alexandra Walsham’s recent article, ‘Migrations of the Holy: Explaining Religious Change in Medieval and Early Modern Europe’, *Journal of Medieval and Early Modern Studies*, 44.2 (2014), pp. 241-280.

belief in a particular judgement at death rather than the final, collective ‘doomsday’ of humanity.¹²

Michel Vovelle, who has written extensively on the demography and culture of death in the Midi of France, criticised Ariès for his assumption of an undifferentiated European experience and particularly for his lack of discussion of spiritual context. In the 1970s, the great studies of mortality turned to theology, to understand attitudes of the dying and beliefs about the fate of the soul, as well as the physical processes of mortality and interment. Vovelle used pictorial evidence and wills to argue that new, individual attitudes to death and the afterlife emerged in the later Middle Ages, based on the increasing importance of belief in Purgatory. This was reinforced during the Counter Reformation, which taught that the whole life of humankind should be lived with the end in mind, culminating in the great baroque ceremonial of death.¹³ This cosmology changed in the eighteenth century: the fear of Hell and the role of corporate salvation declined and mortality was contained within the family; a private individual tragedy, part of what Vovelle calls ‘de-Christianisation’.¹⁴ Pierre Chaunu’s great study of Paris likewise combined demographic work with a history of attitudes towards the afterlife. Chaunu largely supported Vovelle’s model of the rise of individual sensibilities in the early modern period. He showed that in the French capital, there was a move towards belief in particular rather than collective judgement after death, but with continued co-operative forms of mutual assistance between the living and the dead, and of permeability between their worlds. He saw this world view declining after 1720.¹⁵ Several other urban and

¹² Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death* (London, 1983).

¹³ Michel Vovelle, *Piété baroque et déchristianisation en Provence au XVIII^e siècle. Les attitudes devant la mort d’après les clauses de testaments* (Paris, 1973); *La mort et l’Occident de 1300 à nos jours* (Paris 1983).

¹⁴ Craig Koslofsky has commented that as an historian of mentalities, Vovelle ‘is concerned primarily with death as understood and experienced in daily life’, a focus which characterizes French historians’ approach to studies of death more generally. Craig Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead: death and ritual in early modern Germany, 1450-1700* (Basingstoke, 2000), p. 5.

¹⁵ Pierre Chaunu, *La mort à Paris: XVI^e, XVII^e, XVIII^e siècles* (Paris, 1978).

regional studies have confirmed this periodisation for France, with local nuances on the central theme. One of most prominent is Alain Croix's magisterial thesis on Brittany, published in 1981, which provides a detailed description of mortality trends and an 'essay' on the culture of the macabre. He argues for Breton distinctiveness; that the province exhibited a special focus on death, which had ancient Celtic roots.¹⁶ Croix argued that the cult of the dead was especially important in the dissemination of Counter Reformation ideas after 1600, for the province was 'an ideal terrain for a pastorate based on death', a marked feature of church teaching after 1640.¹⁷

Post-Mortem Intercession

Since the 1980s, studies of the whole 'process' of mortality – that is, dying, death, burial and commemoration – have flourished across Europe, above all in the context of the great changes wrought by the Protestant and Catholic Reformations. Studies of attitudes to and practices surrounding the afterlife have been particularly prominent. By the later Middle Ages in western Europe, the relationship between the living and the dead was mediated in large part by the Catholic Church. The souls of the departed went to hell or to heaven, the latter usually after a time in Purgatory. A central theme of histories of the afterlife in the Christian West is the importance of the emergence of beliefs in Purgatory in the central Middle Ages. Eamon Duffy has argued that Purgatory was the single most influential factor in shaping both the organisation of the Church and the physical layout and appearance of its buildings in the Middle Ages.¹⁸ The celestial or infernal destination of the soul was determined by an individual's actions in this life, but the length of time it took a departed soul

¹⁶ Alain Croix, *La Bretagne aux XVI^e et XVII^e siècles: la vie, la mort, la foi* 2 vols., (Paris: 1981).

¹⁷ Alain Croix, *L'âge d'or de la Bretagne, 1532-1675* (Rennes, 1993), p. 391.

¹⁸ Eamon Duffy, *The Stripping of the Altars: traditional religion in England c.1400-c.1580* (New Haven and London, 1992), p. 301.

to reach heaven was also influenced by the ongoing community of the living. This responsibility was discharged through the process of intercession, a petition made to God on behalf of others, either directly, through Christ, or through the mediation of the saints and the Church.¹⁹ For the Medieval period, the ‘rise’ of the doctrine of Purgatory has been studied for different European regions. The classic work on the origins of the ‘third place’ is *The Birth of Purgatory* of Jacques Le Goff, although this study ends in the fourteenth century.²⁰ Following on from Le Goff’s work, a number of studies of written and visual depictions of Purgatory and of methods of intercession for the dead have been undertaken for late medieval France, for example by Jacques Chiffolleau on Avignon and Michelle Fournié for the Toulouse region, again in the tradition of *mentalités*.²¹ Artur Bissegger’s work on the necrology of Villeneuve in Switzerland and Charlotte Stanford’s examination of Strasbourg Cathedral through a study of its book of donors, emphasise just how wide-spread commemoration was across the social spectrum in late medieval towns, from artisans to bishops; and therefore how keenly Reformation changes would be felt.²²

The Protestant Reformations of the sixteenth century saw this eschatology challenged. Purgatory was denied as non-Biblical; the intercession of saints for the living and for the dead was rejected, for faith in Christ eliminated the need for mediation with God, and therefore after final judgment the afterlife was a straight choice between heaven or hell. In regions won for the Reformation, the institutions created to service the needs of souls – post-mortem

¹⁹ C.f. Robert Swanson’s recent and very detailed consideration of *Indulgences in Late Medieval England: Passports to Paradise?* (Cambridge, 2007).

²⁰ Jacques Le Goff, *La naissance du purgatoire* (Paris, 1981).

²¹ Jacques Chiffolleau, *La comptabilité de l’au-delà. Les hommes, la mort et la religion dans la région d’Avignon à la fin du Moyen Age (c.1320-c.1480)* (Rome, 1980); Michelle Fournié, *Le Ciel, peut-il attendre? Le culte du Purgatoire dans le Midi de la France (c.1320-c.1520)* (Paris, 1997).

²² Arthur Bissegger, *Une paroisse raconte ses morts. L’obituaire de l’église Saint-Paul à Villeneuve (XIVe – XVe siècle)* (Lausanne, 2003); Charlotte A. Stanford, *Commemorating the dead in late medieval Strasbourg: the cathedral’s Book of Donors and its use (1320-1521)* (Farnham, 2011).

masses, priests and colleges, memorials and chapels – were largely swept away. In England, the final death-knell for traditional post-mortem provision was effectively sounded in 1547, with the passage through Parliament of the Edwardian ‘Acte wherby certaine Chauntries Colleges Free Chapelles and the Possessions of the same be given to the Kinges Majestie’.²³ The opening sentence of the act declared that

A greate parte of Supersition and Error in Christian Religion hath byn brought into the myndes and estimacion of men, by reasone of the Ignoraunce of their verie trewe and perfect salvacion through the death of Jesus Christ, and by devising and phantasisinge vayne opynions of Purgatorye and Masses satisfactorye to be done for them which be departed.²⁴

Purgatory, the organising principle of much of late-medieval religion, was therefore dismissed by the Protestant reformers as superstition, error, fantasy and vain opinion.

In the introduction to *The Place of the Dead*, Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall stressed that:

It has become something of a truism to state that the Reformation fractured the community of the living and the dead ... it would be difficult to overstate the importance, in terms of formal theology, liturgy, ecclesiastical structures and ritual practice of the abrogation of Purgatory and the repudiation of any form of intercession for the dead.²⁵

²³ I Edw. VI c. 14. The brief reign of Edward’s Catholic half-sister, Mary I, failed to see the restoration of such institutions, practices and bequests to anything like pre-Reformation levels.

²⁴ Eamon Duffy has described the traumatic impact of this act upon the sleepy Devon parish of Morebath: Duffy, *The Voices of Morebath: Reformation & Rebellion in an English Village* (2001). C.f. Peter Cunich, ‘The Dissolution of the Chantries’, in Patrick Collinson and John Craig (eds), *The Reformation in English Towns 1500-1640* (Basingstoke, 1998); Alan Kreider, *English Chantries: The Road to Dissolution* (London, 1979).

²⁵ Gordon & Marshall eds., *The Place of the Dead*, p. 9.

The challenging of received ideas and institutions also affected Catholicism. Historians have proposed a ‘history’ of Purgatory, with a rise in its belief up to the early sixteenth century, a subsequent ‘fall’ with the Reformation, followed by even greater prominence in the seventeenth century of Catholic/Counter reform until its undermining by the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century. Purgatory and its edifices had to be justified anew and rebuilt as a result of the Reformation, Trent, and afterwards in the face of religious wars. One of the seminal works on Purgatory is for Spain, where Carlos Eire has examined beliefs about the afterlife and practices of intercession for the citizens of Madrid and for two well-documented individuals, Philip II and Teresa of Àvila.²⁶ Elizabeth Tingle has examined the evolution of teaching and practices related to post-mortem intercessions in Brittany across the long period 1480-1720.²⁷ This is one of a number of recent regional and local studies for France which examine the impact of the Catholic and Counter Reformations on mortuary practice associated with Purgatory, especially commemoration and intercession, usually as part of wider studies of seventeenth-century reform on clergy and parish life. The works of Pierre Goujard, Serge Brunet and Bruno Restif, on Normandy, the South East of France and eastern Brittany respectively, are good examples.²⁸ There has also been interest in the history of the role of Hell in the Christian soteriology of the Latin West, both Catholic and Protestant. Pietro Camporesi used mostly Italian sources to reconstruct changes in the nature and representation of Hell in the Baroque period; Georges Minois surveyed biblical and devotional texts for his short *Histoire de l'enfer* and recently, beliefs in the afterlife generally

²⁶ Carlos Eire, *From Madrid to Purgatory. The art and craft of dying in sixteenth-century Spain* (Cambridge, 1995).

²⁷ Elizabeth Tingle, *Purgatory and Piety in Brittany 1480-1720* (Farnham, 2012).

²⁸ Philippe Goujard, *Un catholicisme bien tempéré. La vie religieuse dans les paroisses rurales de Normandie* (Paris, 1997); Serge Brunet, *La vie, la mort, la foi. Dans les Pyrénées centrales sous l'Ancien Régime: Val d'Aran et diocèse de Comminges* (Aspet, 2001); Bruno Restif, *La Révolution des paroisses: culture paroissiale et Réforme catholique en Haute-Bretagne aux XVIe et XVIIe siècles* (Rennes, 2006).

have been examined in a range of works, of which *The Oxford Handbook of Escatology*, John Casey's *Afterlives. A guide to heaven, hell and Purgatory* and Carlos Eire's *A Very Brief History of Eternity* are a few examples.²⁹ Peter Marshall even has mapped the geographies of the afterlife in Tudor and early Stuart England, and has also suggested that reformation England witnessed a 'so-called "decline of hell"'.³⁰ Heaven, too, has had its historians with Jean Delumeau's *Une Histoire du paradis* in French and Alistair McGrath's, *A Brief History of Heaven* in English.³¹

Dying Well

Ritual is of perennial interest to historians, and the praxis of assisting the dying, burial, funerary rites, and forms and practices of commemoration, have been reconstructed in detail for many regions as indicators of belief, social and civic status and values, and sites of identity.³² The changing rituals of dying have been of particular interest to historians of print culture, especially the *ars moriendi*. As the *ars* tradition faded across the sixteenth century, the huge industry for handbooks on the good death continued to blossom throughout Europe, even if by the later seventeenth century a life lived well, rather than a final deathbed contrition, was advised as more efficacious by contemporary writers. Roger Chartier and

²⁹ Piero Camporesi, *The Fear of Hell. Images of damnation and salvation in early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 1991); Geroges Minois, *Histoire de l'enfer* (Paris, 1994); Jerry L. Walls ed., *The Oxford Handbook of Escatology* (Oxford, 2008); John Casey, *Afterlives. A guide to heaven, hell and Purgatory* (Oxford, 2009); Carlos Eire, *A Very Brief History of Eternity* (Oxford, 2009).

³⁰ Peter Marshall, "'The Map of God's word': geographies of the afterlife in Tudor and early Stuart England', in Gordon & Marshall (eds), *The Place of the Dead*, pp. 110-130; Peter Marshall, 'The Reformation of Hell? Protestant and Catholic Infernalisms in England, c.1560-1640', *Journal of Ecclesiastical History*, 61.2 (2010), pp. 279-298..

³¹ Jean Delumeau, *Une Histoire du paradis* (Paris, 1992) revised as *A la recherche du paradis* (Paris, 2010); Alistair McGrath, *A Brief History of Heaven* (Oxford, 2003).

³² E.g. Philippe Buc, *The dangers of ritual: between early medieval texts and social scientific theory* (Oxford, 2001).

Daniel Roche's works on *ars moriendi* literature have shown that during the Middle Ages, dying a good death was vital to salvation, but by the early modern period, living a good life in preparation for eternity was more important.³³ More recently, the collection edited by Patricia Eichel-Lojkine, *De bonne vie s'ensuit bonne mort : récits de mort, récits de vie en Europe* gathers together studies across communities and over time.³⁴ Their works have reinforced the chronology and motors of change in attitudes to mortality, again privileging the Counter Reform of the seventeenth century. For Germany, Luther's Reformation acts as an inevitable watershed. Austra Reinis has charted the *ars moriendi* tradition across the sixteenth century and the differences wrought to the nature of consolation wrought by Protestantism.³⁵ Lynne Tatlock has edited a useful collection of essays on mourning, *Enduring Loss in Early Modern Germany*, focussing on those who remain behind, rather than those who have gone before.³⁶ Ruth Atherton's essay in this volume adds to the scholarship on Germany with an examination of the instructions for pastors contained within Lutheran and Reformed Church orders of the Upper Palatinate, for their ministry to the dying and the interment of the dead. Atherton contributes to the broader debate about confessionalisation, arguing that Church orders are regional examples of the ways in which secular rulers attempted to implement social control and encourage the education of society. However, this quest was often limited by the firmly-held beliefs of the local populace, and therefore the Upper Palatine Electors were regularly forced to modify their ordinances to make them more palatable to society. Thus, a study of the treatment of the dying and recently dead shows that attempts to cultivate

³³ Rogier Chartier, 'Les Arts de Mourir 1450-1600', *Annales Economies Sociétés, Civilisations* 31 (1976): pp. 51-76; Daniel Roche, 'La mémoire de la mort. Recherche sur la place des arts de mourir dans la librairie et la lecture en France aux 17^e et 18^e siècles', *Annales Economie, Sociétés, Civilisations* 31 (1976): pp. 76-119.

³⁴ Patricia Eichel-Lojkine, *De bonne vie s'ensuit bonne mort : récits de mort, récits de vie en Europe : (XV^e-XVII^e siècle)* (Paris, 2006).

³⁵ Austra Reinis, *Reforming the art of dying : the ars moriendi in the German Reformation (1519-1528)* (Aldershot, 2007).

³⁶ Lynne Tatlock ed., *Enduring loss in early modern Germany : cross disciplinary perspectives* (Leiden, 2010).

religious uniformity were subject to popular negotiation and adaptation. When it came to the ministration of the sick and dying, confessionalisation was not simply the top-down enforcement of an officially-sponsored hegemony upon a reluctant populace: rather, in the tri-confessional Upper Palatinate, secular rulers were forced to engage in a delicate and complex dialectic with religious authorities, and with various special interests within the broader populace itself.

The deathbed was a powerful place, where abstract ideas, new doctrines, old habits and almost-forgotten shreds of half-belief crystallised into a messy and imperfect expression of individual identity. No wonder then, that various elements of the final moments leading up to death itself have come under scrutiny, including prayers, angelic beliefs, and Puritan religious practices.³⁷ In Protestant England, death could be a testing time – even a time of crisis – for some of the more uncompromising aspects of the reformed faith, especially regarding the doctrine of predestination. With moments to live, there was little comfort to be taken by those who allowed doubt to creep in to their minds, and whose faith was temporarily overshadowed by the terrifying enormity of God's twin decrees of election and reprobation. As Alec Ryrie has recently observed, 'the early modern Protestant deathbed' was therefore 'a highly structured cultural site. Dying was too important a business to be improvised ... the deathbed was the ultimate place of crisis and self-definition'.³⁸ The description of the final days of the twenty-two year old godly wife and mother Katherine Brettergh is somewhat typical in this regard: having led an exemplary life, Katherine suffered a deathbed crisis of faith, 'during which she raged against God's unmercifulness and threw her Bible repeatedly

³⁷ Steve Hindle, 'Prayers for the dying in early modern England', *Journal of British Studies*, 39.1(2000), pp. 99-105; Peter Marshall, 'Angels around the deathbed: variations on a theme in the English art of dying', in Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham (eds), *Angels in the early modern world* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 83-103; Ralph Houlbrooke, 'The Puritan death-bed, c. 1560-1660', in Christopher Durston and Jacqueline Eales (eds), *The Culture of English Puritanism, 1560-1700* (Basingstoke, 1996), pp. 122-44.

³⁸ Alec Ryrie, *Being Protestant in Reformation Britain* (Oxford, 2013), pp. 460-468.

to the floor'. Her modern biographer has described how her death 'became not only a gigantic struggle between God and Satan for her soul, but also ... a furious debate between Romanists and Puritans over which religion could promise the most merciful death'.³⁹ Katherine eventually overcame the tribulations that beset her, whether of her own or demonic inspiration, and sang Psalms of praise and thanksgiving 'before falling "asleepe in the Lord" and yielding "up the Ghost, a sweete sabboath's sacrifice" on Whitsunday 1601'.⁴⁰ Hannah Cleugh's essay in this volume offers an examination of the official prayers for the sick and dying in the Books of Common Prayer issued in England across the mid-sixteenth century. Changes in the prayers and instructions of the Visitation of the Sick reveal the evolution of beliefs about illness and death, and the reception of Protestant theology in the privacy of the home. Cleugh and Atherton highlight two practices as the foci of particular tension: the nature of confession and absolution, and also the question of the legitimacy of private communion. Protestant worship rejected sacramental confession and priestly absolution, which was of great comfort to the sick and dying, and they also insisted that the Eucharist was a public and corporate act of grateful thanksgiving, not a rite to be celebrated privately. The pastoral and the theological impulses therefore found themselves in serious conflict with one another; and official compromise is revealing of both popular and official attitudes to death – and of the character of religious belief more broadly – in both cases. Studies of death in a range of urban and national contexts abound, and continue to appear at an astonishing

³⁹ Steve Hindle, 'Brettergh, Katherine (1579–1601)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, Jan 2008 [<http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/3351>, accessed 18 Dec 2013].

⁴⁰ Jonathan Willis, *Church Music and Protestantism in Post-Reformation England: Discourses, Sites and Identities* (Farnham, 2010), p. 194; William Harrison, *Deaths aduantage little regarded, and The soules solace against sorrow Preached in two funerall sermons at Childwal in Lancashire at the buriall of Mistris Katherin Brettergh the third of Iune. 1601* (London, 1602), STC2: 12866, pp. 25–37.

rate: proof that there is still a great deal of vitality in a topic which hardly promises a great deal of longevity.⁴¹

Funerals and Burial

Funerals and burial places have long been a rich site of scholarship. If the social history of early modern death has benefited enormously from collaborations with demographers, sociologists and anthropologists, then the histories of burial and commemoration have equivalent debts to a growing interdisciplinary dialogue with archaeology, literary studies and art history. The relationship between death and politics is closely drawn in studies of elite burial. The nature and place of the interment of the great was an important source of authority and legitimacy for kings, queens and their dynasties; hence the patronage given to mausolea such as Saint-Denis in France, Westminster Abbey in England, and Philip II's Escorial project in Spain. An early study was that of Ralph Geisey, of the political functions of royal obsequies in Renaissance France.⁴² In a similar vein, Steven Orso has provided a study of the exegies for Philip IV of Spain, through a study of court art.⁴³ In Catholic regions, music played an important part of funerary ritual before and after the Reformation, with the requiem mass receiving many settings across the sixteenth century, and in recent years studies of music have become an increasingly vibrant, important and important part of scholarly investigations into the Protestant and Catholic Reformations.⁴⁴ Hyun-Ah Kim's essay in this

⁴¹ Mairi Cowan, *Death, life and religious change in Scottish towns, c.1350-1560* (Manchester, 2012); Vanessa Harding, *The dead and the living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge, 2002); Clodagh Tait, *Death, burial and commemoration in Ireland, 1550-1650* (Basingstoke, 2002).

⁴² Paul Binski, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (London, 1996); Ralph Geisey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Geneva, 1960).

⁴³ Steven N. Orso, *Art and Death at the Spanish Habsburg Court : the Royal Exequies for Philip IV* (Missouri, 1989).

⁴⁴ E.g. Jonathan Willis, *Church Music and Protestantism in Post-Reformation England: Discourses, Sites and Identities* (Farnham, 2010); Hyun-Ah Kim, *Humanism and the Reform of Sacred Music in Early Modern*

volume offers a detailed study of English Protestant music for funerals and commemorations, revealing its close link to Renaissance art forms. She argues that the musical compositions of her case studies, Merbecke and Tomkins, illustrate the way music could be made to embody and move the emotions involved in death. Furthermore, she contends that they did this in a very different way from medieval liturgical music which, in its social and institutional settings, was more a sonic manifestation of order and ratio than an attempt to provide empathy with human emotions.

Funeral rites and burial places of commoners in town and countryside have also been studied extensively across Europe, as indicators of the regional nuances of religious change, and there is a strong current scholarly interest in the broader religious significance of burial.⁴⁵ As many local studies of the Reformation have depended on wills, so there has been consideration of funeral rites and burial places as an indicator of changing spirituality. Again burial studies have been used as evidence in ongoing debates about the nature of individual consciousness and the relationships between elites and popular groups. Vanessa Harding has added to these considerations in a study of Paris and London, where she argues for the increased ‘privatisation’ of death rituals and funerary arrangements for the elites of the two capital cities during the seventeenth century, in stark contrast to the communal and anonymous burial of paupers.⁴⁶ A Nordic view of change over time is provided by Kristina

England: John Merbecke the Orator and The Booke of Common Praier Noted (1550) (Aldershot, 2008); Beth Quitslund, *The Reformation in Rhyme: Sternhold, Hopkins and the English Metrical Psalter, 1547-1603* (Aldershot, 2008); Rebecca Wagner Oettinger, *Music as Propaganda in the German Reformation* (Aldershot, 2001); Alexander J. Fisher, *Music and Religious Identity in Counter-Reformation Augsburg, 1580-1630* (Aldershot, 2004).

⁴⁵ Duncan Sayer, ‘The organisation of post-medieval churchyards, cemeteries and grave plots: variation and religious identity as seen in Protestant burial provision’, in Chris King and Duncan Sayer (eds), *The archaeology of post-medieval religion* (Boydell, 2010), pp. 199-214; Annia Cherryson, Zoe Crossland and Sarah Tarlow, *A fine and private place: the archaeology of death and burial in post-medieval Britain and Ireland* (Leicester, 2012).

⁴⁶ Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in Paris and London, 1500-1670* (Cambridge, 2002).

Jonsson's examination of Scandinavian burial across the medieval and post-medieval 'divide'.⁴⁷ Comparative studies of death and its associated rituals have been particularly rich for Spain and Italy. More generally, there is the survey of Máximo García Fernández, *Los castellanos y la muerte: religiosidad y comportamientos colectivos en el Antiguo Régimen*.⁴⁸ Regional studies provide nuances and confirmations of the growing importance given to funerary ritual in Spain in the Baroque. Sara Nalle's work on the diocese of Cuenca; Manuel José de Lara Ródenas on Huelva; Juan C. Bermejo de la Cruz on Avila; Francisco Javier Lorenzo Pinar on Zamora are excellent examples.⁴⁹ Similarly for Italy we have city studies of the evolution of spirituality and burial with Sharon Strocchia's study of Renaissance Florence and Samuel Cohn's examination of Siena.⁵⁰ For German, mostly Lutheran, territories, Craig Koslofski's study of death rituals across the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries has offered a discussion of the importance of site and representations of authority.⁵¹ Andrew Spicer has highlighted the difficulties faced by the reformed Scottish Kirk in dealing with popular fears and superstitions surrounding death, whilst also exposing the uncompromising attitude of religious leaders towards the sensitive issue of interment.⁵² Burial could be a site of dispute

⁴⁷ Kristina Jonsson, *Practices for the living and the dead : medieval and post-Reformation burials in Scandinavia*, (Stockholm , 2009)

⁴⁸ Máximo García Fernández, *Los castellanos y la muerte : religiosidad y comportamientos colectivos en el Antiguo Régimen* (Valladolid, 1996)..

⁴⁹ Sara T. Nalle, *God in La Mancha: religious reform and the people of Cuenca, 1500-1650* (Baltimore and London, 1992); Manuel José de Lara Ródenas, *La muerte barroca : ceremonia y sociabilidad en Huelva durante el siglo XVII* (Huelva, 1999) ; Juan C. Bermejo de la Cruz, *Actitudes ante la muerte en el Ávila del siglo XVII* (Avila, 2008) ; Francisco Javier Lorenzo Pinar, *Muerte y ritual en la edad moderna : el caso de Zamora, 1500-1800* (Salamanca, 1991).

⁵⁰ Sharon T. Strocchia, *Death and Ritual in Renaissance Florence* (Baltimore and London, 1992); Samuel K. Cohn, *Death and Property in Siena, 1205-1800. Strategies for the afterlife* (Baltimore and London, 1988).

⁵¹ Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead*.

⁵² Andrew Spicer, "'Rest of their bones': fear of death and Reformed burial practices", in William G Naphy and Penny Roberts (eds), *Fear in early modern society* (Manchester, 1997), pp. 167-183; Andrew Spicer, "'Defyle not Christs kirk with your carrion': burial and the development of burial aisles in post-Reformation Scotland", in

as much as a reinforcer of legitimacy in communities of mixed confessions and sectarian conflicts, and where people remained deeply attached to traditional religious forms.

Burial was one of the most personal, visible and lasting expressions of religious identity, and burial practices, particularly in areas, regions or communities where there was confessional conflict or tension, assumed a particular significance during the period of the Reformation. In a recent article on Catholic burial in Protestant England, Peter Marshall has noted that the subject was one in which ‘fears about absorption and contamination contended with concerns about dignity, status and salvation’.⁵³ Penny Roberts’ essay on burial disputes between Huguenots and Catholics in sixteenth-century France also provides an interesting comment on this subject.⁵⁴ In this volume, † Linda O’Halloran and Andrew Spicer provide a case study of confessional conflict for England, this time for persecuted Catholics refused burial in Protestant churchyards. The Harkirke cemetery, created in 1611 by William Blundell in Little Crosby, Lancashire, provided a burial place for those excluded from the parish graveyard because of their recusancy, and for Catholic priests. Blundell also kept a register of those buried, a form of textual commemoration which endured for longer than the physical site itself. The burial ground received 107 interments before it was destroyed by order of Star Chamber in 1634. Nevertheless, the Harkirke provides an exceptionally well-documented example of the confessional differences surrounding death and burial in early modern England.

Bruce Gordon and Peter Marshall (eds), *The place of the dead: death and remembrance in late-medieval and early modern Europe* (Cambridge, 2000), pp. 149-169.

⁵³ Peter Marshall, ‘Confessionalisation and Community in the Burial of English Catholics, c.1580-1700’, in Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton (eds), *Getting along? Religious identities and confessional relations in early modern England: essays in honour of Professor W. J. Sheils* (Farnham, 2012), p. 75.

⁵⁴ Penny Roberts, ‘Contesting sacred space: burial disputes in sixteenth-century France’, Gordon & Marshall eds., *The Place of the Dead*, pp.131-148.

Memorials and Commemoration

The cultural dimension of burial has attracted a great deal of attention for the value of its testimony on matters such as social status, identity, and self-fashioning; and the study of memorials and commemoration has become almost an industry in itself.⁵⁵ The nature and function of late-medieval memorials – for the elicitation of intercessory prayer – and changes across the Reformation to individual expressions of virtue and dynastic status, are perennially popular subjects for local and regional studies, especially as part of art and architectural church histories. Two aspects of post-mortem commemoration have received particular attention over the past several decades above all others. The first are the sermons, orations and elegies that were delivered at (and often revised and printed after) the funerals of particularly wealthy and important figures. In the recent *Oxford handbook of the early modern sermon*, one of the editors, Peter McCullough, examines the funeral sermons of John Donne, and another *Oxford Handbook* contains work on the Protestant funeral sermon in England during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁵⁶ While most funeral sermons focused around the lives of great individuals, they have also been used to explore more general trends in arenas such as mourning and gendered patterns of devotion.⁵⁷ Cornelia

⁵⁵ David Cressy, 'Death and the social order: the funerary preferences of Elizabethan gentlemen', *Continuity and Change*, 5.1(1990), pp. 99-119; Ralph Houlbrooke, '"Public" and "private" in the funerals of the later Stuart gentry: some Somerset examples', *Mortality*, 1.2 (1996), pp. 163-76; Ralph Houlbrooke, 'Civility and civil observances in the early modern English funeral', in Peter Burke, Brian Harrison and Paul Slack (eds), *Civil histories: essays presented to Sir Keith Thomas* (Oxford, 2000); Steven Bullock and Sheila McIntyre, 'The Handsome Tokens of a Funeral: Glove-Giving and the Large Funeral in Eighteenth-Century New England', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 69.2(2012), pp. 305-346.

⁵⁶ Peter E. McCullough, 'Preaching and Context: John Donne's Sermon at the Funerals of Sir William Cokayne', in Peter McCullough, Hugh Adlington and Emma Rhatigan (eds), *The Oxford handbook of the early modern sermon* (Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 213-67; Penny Pritchard, 'The Protestant Funeral Sermon in England, 1688-1800', in Keith Francis and William Gibson (eds), *The Oxford handbook of the British sermon 1689-1901* (Oxford University press, 2012), pp. 322-227.

⁵⁷ James Doelman, 'John Earle's Funeral Elegy on Sir John Burroughs', *English Literary Renaissance*, 41.3(2011), pp. 485-502; Daniel Blank and Leah Whittington, 'John Hales funeral oration for Sir Thomas

Moore's study of Lutheran funeral biographies has further demonstrated that commemoration could come through sermon and text.⁵⁸ Laura Branch's essay in this volume shows how commemoration changed over the Reformation period in the Drapers' Company of London, a long-term study of change over time. Traditionally, research has cast the livery companies as examples of institutions that conformed to religious changes and in doing so secularized their religious culture and ethos to maintain corporate and civic harmony, including commemoration of deceased members. Branch argues, however, that the Draper's Company changed their ritual practices, to remember their members in different ways, but that this was certainly not irreligious; rather, it was in harmony with new spiritual mores. The chantries and obits swept away by the pace of official Protestant reform were therefore reformed (and reimagined) in the form of funeral sermons and anniversary dinners, mirroring the links between spiritual and secular sociability recently highlighted by, amongst others, Alexandra Walsham.⁵⁹

The single aspect of early modern death that has received by far and away the most attention, however, is the practice of commemoration and memorialisation through the commissioning, construction and installation of funerary monuments of various kinds. The most influential piece of modern scholarship on this topic for early modern Britain is probably the art historian Nigel Llewellyn's *Funeral Monuments in post-Reformation*

Bodley: an edited translation', *Bodleian Library Record*, 25.2 (2012), pp. 43-64; Andrea Brady, *English funerary elegy in the seventeenth century: laws in mourning* (Palgrave MacMillan, 2006); Femke Molekamp, 'Seventeenth-Century Funeral Sermons and Exemplary Female Devotion: Gendered Spaces and Histories', *Renaissance and Reformation*, 35.1 (2012), pp. 43-64.

⁵⁸ Cornelia Niekus Moore *Patterned lives : the Lutheran funeral biography in early modern Germany*, (Wiesbaden, 2006).

⁵⁹ Alexandra Walsham, 'Supping with Satan's disciples: spiritual and secular sociability in post-Reformation England', in Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton (eds), *Getting along? Religious identities and confessional relations in early modern England: essays in honour of Professor W. J. Sheils* (Farnham, 2012), pp. 29-56.

England.⁶⁰ A consideration of far more than just the monuments themselves, this monumentally significant work helped to set the parameters for a field which has seen exponential growth since the millennium. Monuments, effigies, marbles and brasses have come under renewed consideration from Reformation historians, archaeological and antiquarian societies, art historians and others.⁶¹ If death sits at the intersection of early modern religious, cultural, and social concerns and identities, then funerary monuments are a perfect microcosm of that broader nexus, at least for a narrow social elite (with the added bonus of a range of political and economic considerations thrown in for good measure). Added to that, the term palimpsest – as used to describe a recycled funeral brass – has come increasingly to be seen as an apt metaphor for the Reformation itself, especially given the current stress of much post-revisionist scholarship on accommodation, mediation, compromise, and modification, as opposed to an absolute break or disjuncture with the beliefs and practices of the past.

For Germany, a recent study by Inga Brinkman examines the physical memorials of Lutheran nobles in the later sixteenth century.⁶² For France, there has been recent interest in funerary chapels as sites of remembrance and authority. Jean Guillaume has edited a

⁶⁰ (Cambridge University Press, 2000). See also Nigel Llewellyn ‘Honour in life, death and the memory: funeral monuments in early modern England’, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, 6th series. 6 (1996), pp. 179-200; *The art of death: visual culture in the English death ritual, c.1500-1800* (Reaktion, 1991).

⁶¹ Margaret Aston, ‘Art and idolatry: reformed funeral monuments?’, in Tara Hamling and Richard Williams (eds), *Art re-formed: re-assessing the impact of the Reformation on the visual arts* (Cambridge Scholars, 2007), pp. 243-66; Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and memory in early modern England* (Ashgate, 2008); Nigel Llewellyn and others, *East Sussex Church Monuments, 1530-1830: with additional genealogical research* (Sussex Record Society, 2011); George Elliott, ‘A monumental palimpsest: the Dacre tomb in Herstmonceux Church’, *Sussex Archaeological Collections*, 148 (2010), pp. 129-144; Madelaine Gray, ‘The brass of Richard and Elizabeth Bulkeley in Beaumaris: Some new light on the Reformation in Wales’, *Transactions of the Anglesey Antiquarian Society and Field Club* (2010), pp. 9-25.

⁶² Inga Brinkmann, *Grabdenkmäler, Grablegen und Begräbniswesen des lutherischen Adels : adelige Funeralrepräsentation im Spannungsfeld von Kontinuität und Wandel im 16. und beginnenden 17. Jahrhundert*, (Berlin, 2010).

collection *Demeures d'éternité : églises et chapelles funéraires aux XVe et XVIe siècles*, with essays on France, Italy and Spain, following a conference held at Tours in 1996.⁶³ Following on from this, Julien Noblet has recently published a work on Saintes-Chapelles and other castral colleges in France, memorials built by aristocrats as family mausolea. In the case of certain founders related to the Valois ruling house, their chapels contained special relics obtained from the Sainte-Chapelle in Paris, establishing their symbolic and sacred links with the Crown, while acting as platforms for salvatory intercession and political status.⁶⁴ Rebecca Constabel's essay in this volume follows in the tradition of using art history to understand religious change, with a study of artistocratic funerary sculpture in France across the wars of religion that explores the effects of iconoclasm and emerging Tridentine ideas about the representation of saints. Both contributed to a shift in the appearance and function of monuments, from soliciting intercession to the portrayal of individual and family status and merit. The monumental funerary sculpture of early modern France, Constabel proves convincingly, has much more to offer the historian than the scars of iconoclastic fury. The Renaissance was also a vital influence on monuments. Italy itself is full of monuments to the dead and there are many studies of its churches. One example is Giovanni Ricci's study of princely effigies in the Renaissance.⁶⁵ Others tend to be subsumed in studies of artists, patrons or churches. Similarly for Iberia, although the *Grabkunst und Sepulkralkultur in Spanien und Portugal/ Arte funerario y cultura sepulcral en Espana y Portugal* is useful.⁶⁶ The moderately wealthy also wanted to be remembered, even if it was merely with an incised

⁶³ Jean Guillaume ed., *Demeures d'éternité : églises et chapelles funéraires aux XVe et XVIe siècles : actes du colloque tenu à Tours du 11 au 14 juin 1996* (Paris, 2005).

⁶⁴ Julien Noblet, *En perpétuelle mémoire : collégiales castrales et saintes-chapelles à vocation funéraire en France (1450-1560)* (Rennes, 2009).

⁶⁵ Giovanni Ricci, *Il principe e la morte : corpo, cuore, effigie nel Rinascimento* (Bologna, 1998).

⁶⁶ Barbara Borngässer, Henrik Karge & Bruno Klein eds., *Grabkunst und Sepulkralkultur in Spanien und Portugal = Arte funerario y cultura sepulcral en Espana y Portugal* (Frankfurt am Main and Madrid, 2006).

grave slab rather than a sculpted memorial on the lines of Pope Julius II. We have fewer studies of these. Gendered and age-related status are also important in memorialisation, as the study of Polish children's monuments across the Renaissance by Jeannie Łabno reminds us.⁶⁷

Execution and Martyrdom

More recently, studies of mortality have been enriched by the work of cultural historians on histories of the body. From this, and from the huge literature on the history of crime, has emerged an interest in violent death, particularly homicide and judicial execution, again relating politics and dying. Pascal Bastien has recently provided *Une histoire de la peine de mort: bourreaux et supplices* for Paris and London across the period 1500-1800, and there is also Freddy Joris's study of executions over the Medieval and Early Modern Periods, *Mourir sur l'échafaud*.⁶⁸ The salutary public ritual of violence – which did not always go well – is examined for Renaissance Italy in a collection edited by Nicholas Terpstra.⁶⁹ Capital punishment has also received detailed attention for Germany across the early modern period, by Richard Evans.⁷⁰ All of these return us to Michel Foucault's world of bodies and punishment as a site of state power, in which the theatre of execution was a ritual form of the expression of authority. Drawing directly or indirectly on Michel Foucault's influential work of 1975, *Discipline and Punish*, some historians have sought to deconstruct the layers of meaning to be found in the brutal rituals of state-sanctioned murder, in such a manner as to emphasise the surprising capacity for agency possessed by the accused: notable examples

⁶⁷ Jeannie Łabno, *Commemorating the Polish Renaissance Child: Funeral Monuments and their European Context* (Burlington VT, 2011).

⁶⁸ Pascal Bastien, *Une histoire de la peine de mort: bourreaux et supplices: Paris, Londres, 1500-1800* (Paris, 2011); Freddy Joris, *Mourir sur l'échafaud: sensibilité collective face à la mort et perception des exécutions capitales du Bas Moyen Âge à la fin de l'Ancien Régime* (Liège, 2005).

⁶⁹ Nicholas Terpstra ed., *The art of executing well: rituals of execution in Renaissance Italy* (Kirkville, Mo, 2008).

⁷⁰ Richard J. Evans, *Rituals of retribution: capital punishment in German 1600-1987* (Oxford, 1996).

include James Sharpe's classic essay on 'Last dying speeches', and Peter Lake and Michael Questier's description of 'Agency, appropriation and rhetoric under the gallows'.⁷¹

Studies of judicial execution naturally bleed into the religious history of early modern England, in part because the rhetoric, rituals and beliefs surrounding the end of life were so heavily imbued with religious meaning, but also because so many individuals died for their religious beliefs during the tumultuous decades of the Reformation. For historians of the Reformation, execution has been studied much more through the medium of martyrdom, which has been an area of extraordinary interest and growth in recent decades, and whose literature has a vast and venerable tradition. Jean Crespin in Geneva and John Foxe in England provided the Ur-texts of Reformation martyrologies, and perhaps the best known and most-studied example, is the Elizabethan martyrologist John Foxe, whose great *Actes and Monuments* – part history, part martyrology, part hagiography – did so much to condition the religious identity of the English–post-Reformation, as well as giving English Protestantism an occasionally tendentious sense of its own long, proud heritage.⁷² Huguenots in France have also been the subject of much scholarly attention, from Raymond Mentzer, William Monter

⁷¹ James Sharpe, "'Last dying speeches': religion, ideology and public execution in seventeenth-century England", *Past & Present*, 107 (1985); pp.144-67; Peter Lake and Michael Questier, 'Agency, appropriation and rhetoric under the gallows: Puritans, Romanists and the state in early modern England', *Past & Present*, 153 (1996): pp. 64-107.

⁷² It would be impossible to provide a full list of titles on Foxe and his work, so the following is merely indicative: David Loades (ed.), *John Foxe at Home and Abroad* (2004); Christopher Highley and John King (eds), *John Foxe and His World* (2002); David Loades (ed.), *John Foxe: an Historical Perspective* (1999); Patrick Collinson, 'Truth and legend: the veracity of John Foxe's "Book of Martyrs"' in his *Elizabethan Essays* (Cambridge: 1994), pp. 151-178; Thomas S. Freeman, 'Fate, faction and fiction in Foxe's Book of Martyrs' in *The Historical Journal* 43.3 (2000), pp. 601-623; Megan L. Hickerson, 'Gospelling Sisters "goinge up and downe": John Foxe and Disorderly Women' in *Sixteenth Century Journal* 35.4 (2004), pp. 1035-51; Susan Wabuda, 'Henry Bull, Henry Coverdale and the Making of Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*' in Diana Wood (ed), *Martyrs and Martyrologies* (Studies in Church History vol. 30, 1993), pp. 245-258.

and Nikki Shephardson, principally in the context of heresy trials.⁷³ Bill Naphy has reminded us that Geneva, too, executed religious deviants, whether Anabaptists or Michel Servetus.⁷⁴ Jameson Tucker's essay in this volume examines the different ways in which Protestant martyrs were represented in Jean Crespin's work and how this changed over time. The judicial martyr, executed by the authorities for a particular doctrine or belief was a relatively straightforward trope, but the massacres which took place during the religious wars gave new challenges to martyrologies, for the beliefs of the slaughtered were unknown and unknowable. Representing confessional ideas through portrayals of violent death could be problematic.

But while Protestants had the best publicised martyrs, Catholics had them too, particularly the Jesuits who died in England or on missions to the Far East and Americas. Of course, the phenomenon of Reformation martyrdom, and of death in the name of religion more generally – and its subsequent historical exploration – was a European (indeed, a global) phenomenon. From the brutal repression of the Anabaptist uprising in Münster in 1534-5 to the burning of the anti-Trinitarian Michael Servetus in Geneva in 1553; from the fierce persecution of witches in central Europe and the Holy Roman Empire to the gruesome rites of violence which characterised the bloodiest massacres and conflicts of the French Wars of Religion, the study of violent death has contributed enormously to our understanding of the character of religious conflict and change in the era of the Reformation.⁷⁵

⁷³ Raymond Mentzer, *Heresy Trials in Sixteenth-Century Languedoc* (Philadelphia, 1984); William Monter, *Judging the Reformation. Heresy Trials by Sixteenth Century Parlements* (Cambridge MA, 1999); Nikki Shephardson, *Burning Zeal. The Rhetoric of Martyrdom and the Protestant Community in Reformation France, 1520-1570* (Bethlehem, 2007).

⁷⁴ William Naphy, *Calvin and the Consolidation of the Genevan Reformation* (Manchester, 1994).

⁷⁵ Two of the most significant recent studies of martyrdom are Anne Dillon, *The Construction of Martyrdom in the English Catholic Community, 1535-1603* (Ashgate, 2002) and Brad Gregory, *Salvation at Stake: Christian Martyrdom in Early Modern Europe* (Cambridge MA, 2001).

The Dead and the Undead

Finally, scholars of the Reformation have come to place an increasing amount of emphasis on the dead themselves, and their uneasy place in larger evolving frameworks of belief and identity. Although not the first, perhaps the most important modern contribution in this field is Peter Marshall's *Beliefs and the dead in Reformation England*.⁷⁶ It has often been assumed that the Reformation and its attendant religious and theological upheavals created a stark disjuncture in the relationship between the community of the living and the community of the dead, resulting in an irrevocable fissure between the two. For Marshall, however, while the 'religious and cultural odyssey' of the English Reformation 'was undertaken by the living, not by the dead' the dead nevertheless remained 'treasured cargo that had to be carried along the way'.⁷⁷ As with so much else in the study of the Reformation, the question of the cultural impact of processes of religious change on beliefs concerning death and the dead eschews simple functionalism, and requires a complex, nuanced and multivalent response. Beliefs about the dead were also a moving target, continuously evolving over the course of the long Reformation.

The historiography of the unquiet dead – bodies and souls that would not rest, ghosts and spirits – has also recently become extremely popular.⁷⁸ Influenced by Keith Thomas's study of ghosts in *Religion and the Decline of Magic*, as well as by popular religious culture more generally, historians have explored the supernatural world of the dead. Two seminal works are Jean-Claude Schmitt's study of medieval French apparitions and William

⁷⁶ (Oxford University Press, 2002). C.f. David Cressy, *Birth, marriage and death: ritual, religion, and the life-cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford, 2007).

⁷⁷ Peter Marshall, *Beliefs and the dead in Reformation England* (Oxford, 2002), p. 316.

⁷⁸ A useful survey of the historiography of ghosts is Kathryn A. Edwards, 'The History of Ghosts in Early Modern Europe: Recent Research and Future Trajectories', *History Compass* 10/4 (2012): pp. 353–366.

Christian's historical anthropology on apparitions in Spain.⁷⁹ Schmitt examined a variety of medieval texts, mostly by monastic authors, and used sociological models to interrogate the relationship between *revenants* and the living represented in these works. Schmitt's study provided an important model for studies of ghosts in early modern Europe, where the impact of the Reformation on beliefs about spirits is evident. Bruce Gordon's essay on apparitions in Reformation Switzerland of 2000 offers a survey of Reformed attitudes to ghosts (largely bad – for Calvin they were always demonic). In Timothy Chester's work on the evolution of ghost stories in Renaissance France, using Protestant and Catholic texts he argued that the two confessions shared many basic premises about the supernatural and that stories about spirits became more secular by the seventeenth century. However, ghosts were important in 'pastoral demonology' and, given their ubiquity across Europe, the faithful needed specialist advice on what to do in the event of a supernatural encounter.⁸⁰ Peter Marshall has written on ghosts in a number of recent books and articles.⁸¹ Marshall has demonstrated that English Protestant divines rejected the existence of ghosts as part of a wholesale denial of the Catholic theology surrounding purgatory and post-mortem intercession: spectral emanations in post-Reformation England were therefore either angels or (much more probably) demons, sent to tempt, bewitch or ensnare the credible. However, popular belief in ghosts remained stubbornly persistent, and even godly authors disagreed over the precise details of 'ghost

⁷⁹ William Christian, *Local Religion in Sixteenth-Century Spain* (Princeton, 1981); Jean-Claude Schmitt, *Ghosts In the Middle Ages. The Living and the Dead in Medieval Society*, transl. Theresa Lavender Fagan (Chicago & London, 1998).

⁸⁰ Bruce Gordon, 'Malevolent ghosts and ministering angels: apparitions and pastoral care in the Swiss Reformation,' Gordon & Marshall eds., *The Place of the Dead*, pp. 87-10.; Timothy Chesters, *Ghost Stories in Late Renaissance France. Walking by Night* (Oxford, 2011).

⁸¹ Marshall, *Beliefs and the dead in Reformation England*, chapter 6; Peter Marshall, 'Deceptive appearances: ghosts and reformers in Elizabethan and Jacobean England', in William Naphy and Helen Parish (eds), *Religion and Superstition in Reformation Europe* (2002), pp. 188-208; Peter Marshall, *Mother Leakey and the Bishop: A Ghost Story* (Oxford, 2007).

lore'. Sasha Handley has also written a great deal on Ghosts and apparitions in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England.⁸²

Heavenly spirits – angels – have attracted a fair amount of attention too. Laura Sangha has charted the nature of angelic belief in England over the long Reformation, as reformers sought to present a biblically-sanctioned aspect of belief in such a way as to avoid the dangers of idolatry and 'popish' misuse.⁸³ Recently, Claire Copeland and Jan Machielsen's edited collection of essays *Angels of Light* has examined popular ideas about apparitions and the discernment of such spirits.⁸⁴ Finally, ghosts and spirits have also been considered as part of the huge historiography of witchcraft and demonology. Standing at the pinnacle of scholarly works on these topics, Stuart Clark's *Thinking with Demons* examines the interrelationship of all kinds of supernatural creatures and ideas.⁸⁵ Clark argues that contemporary concerns with extra-natural processes arose from a mainstream providential and eschatological world view shared by Catholics and Protestants; 'eschatology was essentially an orthodox and reinforcing element rather than a vehicle for radical dissent ... apocalyptic versions of history were designed to maintain order and uniformity rather than overthrow them.'⁸⁶ To understand ghosts and demons was perhaps to begin to comprehend Providence and to prepare for God's plan for the world.

⁸² Sasha Handley, *Visions of an Unseen World: Ghost Beliefs and Ghost Stories in Eighteenth-Century England* (London, 2007); Sasha Handley, 'Apparitions and Anglicanism in 1750s Warwickshire', *The church, the afterlife and the fate of the soul* (Woodbridge, 2009); Sasha Handley, 'Ghosts, Gossip and Gender in Eighteenth-Century Canterbury', in S. Blazan (ed.), *Ghosts, Stories, Histories: Ghost Stories and Alternative Histories* (Newcastle, 2007); Sasha Handley, 'Reclaiming Ghosts in 1690s England, in *Studies in Church History* 41 (2005).

⁸³ Laura Sangha, *Angels and Belief in England, 1480-1700* (London, 2012).

⁸⁴ Claire Copeland & Jan Machielsen, *Angels of Lights? Sanctity and the Discernment of Spirits in the Early Modern Period* (Leiden, 2013). C.f. the collection edited by Peter Marshall and Alexandra Walsham, *Angels in the early modern world* (Cambridge, 2006),

⁸⁵ Stuart Clark, *Thinking with Demons. The idea of witchcraft in early modern Europe* (Oxford, 1997).

⁸⁶ Stuart Clark, *Vanities of the Eye. Vision in Early Modern European Culture* (Oxford, 2007), p. 344.

The final two essays in this volume contribute to the history of spirits in different ways. Elizabeth Tingle's essay, on the 'history' of ghosts and their relationship to Purgatory, as revealed in the works of the French Franciscan Noël de Taillepied, shows how the nature of the afterlife and the treatment of souls there was contested by different confessional groups. Reformed attacks on Purgatory led to a resurgent Catholic interest in the third place in the afterlife and in ghosts. The dead therefore played an important role in doctrinal retrenchment in the face of Protestant attacks on the afterlife and in strengthening the traditional tenets of Catholicism. Writing about ghosts did not just have a theological significance: it had a polemical one too, and chronology and context were also important factors in the mobilisation of the dead in defence of the orthodoxy of the living. María Tausiet's essay on the 'afterlife' of Bishop Ildephonsus of Toledo and of his 'spiritual relic', a holy chasuble given to him by the Virgin Mary herself, reveals how relics linked closely (and therefore also blurred the boundaries between) this world and the hereafter. When the Protestant Reformers launched a comprehensive attack on the use of relics, Catholicism responded with a defense of their sacred nature. Death understood as a different form of life – and in the distinctive case of the saints, as the fulfilled or accomplished life – found its material expression in Baroque Spain in the worship of relics. And relics like Ildephonsus' chasuble had long afterlives, during which they continued to evolve, and to demonstrate miraculous agency long after the death of the saint to whom they had initially belonged.

Over recent years, the history of death has come to merge with that of religious life more generally. It has lost some of its distinctiveness as a separate genre of study, but has gained enormously and contributed much by becoming an important part of the wider study of spirituality. Salvation and the afterlife; attitudes towards dying, death and disposal as markers of belief and confessional identity; the social role of intercession for the dead; the history of liturgy and the sacraments; these and other themes mark the entry of the dead into

the mainstream of religious history. Death itself came (indeed, still comes) to everybody with a striking finality, but the beliefs and practices surrounding dying, death, burial and commemoration were (and are) cultural artefacts, the messy outcome of a series of negotiations between tradition and innovation, theology and folk belief, aspiration and reality. As we are coming to appreciate was the case with so much of the Reformation, the transformation of society involved complementary and competing processes of continuity, adaptation and change. The resultant frameworks for coping with mortality were not always coherent, and rarely ideal, but in spite (perhaps because) of this they were heavily invested in significance and meaning. The Reformation did not see the death of traditional beliefs about the ends of life: rather, it witnessed their continuing evolution. The essays in this volume demonstrate the sheer geographical, disciplinary, thematic and chronological diversity of studies of dying, death, burial and commemoration in reformation and counter-reformation Britain and Europe, as well as confirming the continuing significance of this topic for our understanding of the reformation more broadly. The prism of death allows us to refract official doctrine and popular belief regarding a whole range of key questions, topics and debates: from grief and emotion; confessionalisation; sin and salvation; memory and commemoration; individuality and community; tolerance and intolerance; religion and magic; even (in the case of Ildephonsus' miraculous chasuble) fiction and reality. The rituals surrounding death comprised a complex performance, involving physical and emotional props, texts and liturgy, sound and music, monuments and inscriptions, ritual and memory, and a huge cast, including both the living, and the quiet and unquiet dead. For Hamlet, death was famously 'the undiscover'd country from whose bourn No traveller returns'.⁸⁷ We are still far from possessing all of the answers, but we increasingly know a lot more about that undiscovered country than once we did.

⁸⁷ William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*: Act III, Scene I, lns. 81-2.