

'ONELY BAITS FOR SACRILEGE'
GOOD DEATHS AND WORTHY REMEMBRANCES IN
GLOUCESTERSHIRE,
c.1350-1700¹

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by

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¹ Fuller, T. 1663 *The Holy State*. London: Printed by John Redmayne for John Williams, p.188.

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'Onely Baits for Sacriledge'

Dying Well in Gloucestershire, England c.1350-1700

Abstract

This thesis considers the definition of elite identity and its relationship to the constitution of power structures through the manipulation of material culture. The following discussion will assess the nature of identity and how it is comprehended within contemporary archaeological theory. Thereafter the formation of medieval and early modern elite identities will be considered with reference to the manipulation of ideals of piety through the funerary material culture of Gloucestershire c.1350-1700. This study will consider how monuments that proposed a link between worldly wealth and divine favour might articulate elite selves in relation to each other and in opposition to those unaccustomed or unable to erect a monument to themselves or their kin. Funerary evidence will be analysed alongside the ideal of dying well as presented in the *Ars Moriendi* texts. It will be found that the ideological potential of 'dying well' was exploited to its fullest potential during the period under study. The idealised pious death provided the affluent with a focus for competition, the significance of which can only be fully comprehended if the texts are analysed alongside other forms of material culture.

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Figure 1.1: An illustration from a 15th century German block book, depicting the temptations of the deathbed.

(Image: Harry Ransom Archive 2006)

Introduction

What Does It Mean to Die Well?

This thesis will consider the relationship between idealised pious death c.1350-1700, disseminated in the *Ars Moriendi* texts of the 15th to the 17th centuries and the reproduction of contemporary elite identity in Gloucestershire. It will address how pronouncements apparently intended to effect and to stress the equality of all individuals in death might actually be implicated in the definition of a minority and

how this was made manifest in other cultural productions related to death and dying, such as funerary monuments. From the 13th century, leading European thinkers produced vernacular texts intended to influence the popular devotions of the laity (Rubin 1991:98). Considering death on a daily basis and the consequent subjection of worldly pleasures to the promised rewards of appropriate deathbed conduct was an integral component of these meditations (Fig.1.1). Citing the penitential sources employed in the 15th century poem *Pety Job*, Greer Fein (1998:1) has proposed that the late medieval laity sought to imitate monastic practice. Vernacular texts encouraged the daily recitation of devotions traditionally controlled by the clergy. Rubin cites Richard Rolle's *Manuale Credencium*, which was 'in englisch tonge for lewid men that nought understond latyn ne frensch' (1991:98). The majority of surviving transcripts of *Pety Job* feature an allusion to its unversed audience:

Here begynneth the nyne lessons of the Dirige, whych Job made in
hys tribulacioun lying on the donghyll, and ben declared more
opynly to lewde mennes understanding by a solempne, worthy, and
discrete clerke Rychard Hampole, and ys cleped Pety Job, and ys
full profitable to stere synners to compunccioun.

(Greer Fein 1998:1)

Surviving evidence for the embellishment of the parish church by wealthy individuals and details of gifts and bequests from accounts and wills attests to the dynamism of vernacular piety. The majority of material evidence for lay participation in liturgical practice was destroyed in the 16th century. An inventory of the property of All Saints, Bristol, dated 1469 records items donated to the church, including 'a suit of white damask with flowers of gold and orfrees of cloth of tissue of the gift of Lady Spicer' (Haddon and Schoppe 1469 [1480?/1995]). The list includes over fifteen altar cloths, necessary for the large number of privately funded chantry chapels within the church. Among these was a cloth 'of black worsted for obits of the parish, given by Alice Chester with letters of gold H & C & A & C' (Haddon and Schoppe 1469 [1480?/1995]). Death was the central tenet of popular devotion in the later middle ages. This altar cloth used the communal liturgy of the church to perpetuate the piety of an individual and assure that her worthiness is recalled in the prayers of the parish. Dying thankfully and within the grace of God was intimately bound to salvation, since

it shortened the amount of time which the soul would serve in Purgatory and assured that the living community would esteem the dying man and pray for a speedier passage.

From the advent of printing in England in the late 15th century, informative tracts were produced which were specifically intended to educate lay Christians in appropriate deathbed conduct. Texts such as *The Art and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*, printed by William Caxton in 1485, advocated the renunciation of worldly effects and an unquestioning acceptance of death in order to secure divine favour. The large number of surviving 15th century examples attests to the popularity of the manuals from the onset of production. The earliest English texts are translated from works produced in France and Germany where *Ars Moriendi* treatises are known from at least the early 14th century. The German Mystic Henry Suso's *Horologium Sapientiae* (c.1334) features a chapter on how to die well. This work was popular in monasteries across Northern Europe (Knight 2003:1). However, it is only with the advent of print that the status of the *Ars Moriendi* among the laity becomes apparent. Texts extolling the virtues of dying well postdate sanctioned belief in Purgatory in the established English Church., persisting in various forms well into the 17th century. They thread through the religious and political upheavals of the late medieval and early modern periods, reflecting the doctrinal inclinations of their authors while retaining their basic 15th century framework.

To study the relationship between the *Ars Moriendi* and the values expressed through monumental commemoration is not simply to explore a contrast between ideal and reality. The two concepts were not mutually exclusive, nor did one unduly influence the other. Piety in death could be manipulated for social gain through the medium of public display. It could be rendered exclusive, a preserve of an affluent and educated minority. Clasped hands, serene angels and declarations of humility recur on Gloucestershire's funerary monuments, alongside heraldry, marks of office and proclamations of descent. The sanctity of the pious death in Gloucestershire existed alongside a materialistic concern for familial status and social superiority. Overt statements of pious superiority could contribute to impressions of social dominance, rendering dying well as a constituent of the elite self through material statements of piety in death within the parish space. Incorporating many forms of

evidence, the following research seeks to better comprehend the process of interaction between text and artefact and how this may reflect and constitute attitudes to death, commemoration and the disposition of society in general. This study focuses upon the role of piety in the constitution of elite selves in a single region of England. Historical and archaeological evidence will be drawn together in order to determine how piety in death was reinterpreted and manipulated by affluent members of Gloucestershire society. Instances of monumental commemoration will be contextualised within the immediate social and economic circumstances of the county and with regard for the greater historical record, providing some indication of what was considered to be customary, acceptable or controversial. Its ultimate purpose is thus to consider the interplay between different cultural productions in the constitution and statement of identities and how this is effected by the social and economic circumstances in which self-definition takes place.

CHAPTER ONE

Identity, Power and Ideology: Theorising Material Culture Manipulation

The Contribution of this Thesis to Wider Debates Within Historical Archaeology

Identity Studies in Historical Archaeology

The contribution of this thesis to wider debates within historical archaeology concerns the definition of identity and its relationship to the negotiation of power through the manipulation of cultural productions such as texts and monuments. The relationship between identity, power and material culture has been the subject of a number of recent contributions to the field of historical archaeology. Individual identities are made up of multiple strands, such as gender, class, national identity and race. Yamin (2005) has considered how the Five Points prostitutes of 19th century New York represented and reproduced aspects of their gender and class through the material culture of brothels. They shielded their economic and social situation through the creation of a false identity based on gentility stated and perpetuated through the use of high status material culture. Bell (2002) has examined the relationship between the economic and social identities of planters in the Virginian Piedmont, their desire to identify with past and extant local elites and how this was expressed in their architectural preferences. Brighton's (2004) analysis of the significance of the Red Hand of Ulster to Irish national identity in 19th century New Jersey considers how this antique symbol was imbued with contemporary resonance through its depiction on smoking pipes.

The meaning of the term 'identity' is not explicitly defined in any of these works, nor is the nature of the relationship between identity, power and material culture fully rationalized. This is noted by Diaz-Andreu and Lucy (2005:1) in an introduction to the edited volume *The Archaeology of Identity*. They express concern at the ambiguity of this modish term and attempt to clarify the situation by providing a comprehensive definition which will be maintained within the context of this study.

They describe identity as an 'individual's rapport with a broader social group on the basis of differences socially sanctioned as significant'. In other words, identity is the elucidation of self and similar, shaped by the perception of differences in others. This accords with the majority of recent case studies presented in historical archaeology identity studies. For example, Mullins (2001) has described how exotic Victorian bric-a-brac symbolised the otherness of cultures alien to the Western world. He suggests that the appeal of exoticism lay in its invocation of racial contrasts between the West and the rest of the world and associated connotations of worldliness and taste. Those purchasing and displaying such exotica located themselves in opposition to the base cultures imagined in the artefact and to those within their own society seen as lacking in the sophistication to appreciate them. The professed worldliness of those with an interest in exotica bolstered a cultured self-image formed in opposition to less sophisticated or wealthy individuals.

There are many facets to the definition of self against other. Identity formation is predicated on perceptions of ethnicity, age, gender, class and any other aspect of the self which can be contrasted between individuals. The relative importance of each is dependant upon the nature of the discourse in which the subject is involved, as self-definition takes place in relation to people and things particular to the exchange. All contributions to Diaz-Andreu and Lucy *et al* edited volume *The Archaeology of Identity* concur that identity is contextual and contingent, constructed through relationships with other people rather than an integral part of the person. It is a situational construct borne of individual perceptions within a particular instance of interaction. Identity is therefore created in the process of communication between individuals and groups and the resultant discovery and acknowledgement of similarities and differences.

Identity in Material Culture

Archaeologists have traditionally prioritised the formation of group identities over the definition of individual self-image, believing the relationship between material culture and identity to be relatively straightforward. Researchers working within the historic periods have conventionally sought to match artefact types to identifiable 'peoples'. Historically documented names such as Roman, Celt, Norman and Saxon drift easily from text to artefact on the basis of alleged geographical and

temporal relationships. Thomas has noted that archaeologists customarily view individual identity as a fixed entity which erodes over time in favour of a prevailing group configuration:

We see identity—often framed as ethnicity—as an essential category. Through time, as the outward trappings of ethnicity disappear, the ethnic category no longer applies. At that point, individuals are fully acculturated or assimilated, depending on which perspective one chooses to adopt. In this view, identity is lost; it is something that disappears through the process, rather than being something that is constantly renegotiated. In other words, we see identity as *lost* through the process rather than *being* the process itself.

(2002:144)

The simplification of identity formation has been facilitated by the linking of historical identities to material culture traces. This is typified for example by the conventional subservience of archaeological evidence recovered from the ‘Dark Ages’ to the later account of Anglo-Saxon Conquest related by Bede (Arnold 1997:9). As Sian Jones has affirmed, “popular historical representations provide a touchstone for ethnicity and nationalism and vice versa, the end product being a historically validated continuity of identity” (1997:135). The difficulties inherent in recognising ethnicity in the archaeological record and the validation of contemporary national identities obscures comprehension of the role of material culture in the negotiation of identities.

The relationship between material culture and identity is far more complex than the simple equation of pots with peoples would suggest. Material culture has a vital role to play in the statement and perpetuation of different strands of identity. The exotica which Mullins describes perpetuated imagined and embellished versions of other cultures. This allowed its owners to note the differences which they believed placed them against and above other peoples. Perceptions of the material world in which people move and meet is fundamental to the formation and perpetuation of identity. Material culture signifies and perpetuates social identities in relation to the greater context in which interaction takes place, affirming self-identity and

acknowledgement of membership to larger groups (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005:9). Material culture should in fact be considered as active force within the negotiation of interpersonal and inter-group relations (Jones 1997:114-116). For instance, Mullin's (1997:7) Victorian bric-a-brac affirmed and negotiated the identities of its owners in relation to other classes and cultures. Commenting on the role of personal adornment in 18th and 19th century slave culture, Heath (1999:48) has stated that buttons, beads and buckles conveyed and reproduced multiple aspects of their identity in relation to origins, age and gender, the relative importance of each working in relation to the context of the interactions in which they were implicated. Therefore, material culture does not simply reflect identity; it is both a context for and conveyor of a self image intended to negotiate and reproduce being in relation to that of others. The definition of group and individual identities are thus connected.

How material culture is interpreted and manipulated in the affirmation of a single strand of identity upon which group definition might be based is tied to other facets of self-definition, such as age, gender and class. An example of this has been described by Linda Colley. She has illustrated how 18th century Protestant English identity was configured in opposition to the 'otherness' of the French Catholic, articulated and reproduced through cultural productions such as the reprinting of John Foxe's *Book of Martyrs*, which detailed the persecution of Protestants at the hands of Catholics (Colley 2003:25-8). Colley proposed that a combination of religious and national aversion to the French helped to define and cement the bonds between the Protestant English, Welsh and Scots to form a united Britain in opposition to their Continental neighbours. Their religious and national affinities cooperated in order to create cohesive British identity formed in opposition. However, even within this apparently well defined historical grouping different levels of affinity and dissimilarity existed, predicated on other aspects of the self-image of its constituents. Colley (2003:90) acknowledges that bonding Francophobia was strongest among those lower down the social scale. She intimates that class and economic aspects of the self might have influenced perceptions of the otherness of the French, yet fails to elaborate upon why this should be or how these individuals contributed to the perpetuation and strengthening of this cohesive identity. Individuals within a group are possessed of multiple subject positions (Fesler and Franklin 1999:4). The existence of a multiplicity of identity threads which an individual might draw upon in

distinctive social situations militates against the inference of monolithic group identities and forces the realisation that the material culture traces which they supposedly left had meaning only in relation to the interactions of agents within those groups.

Each instance of identity formation is contextually unique, making it impossible to generalise among individuals disparate in space or time. McGuire and Wurst (2002:89) suggest that the character of an individual's identity changes as he or she enters into different social relationships. As identity is formed in the process of interaction, it is constantly in flux. Individuals continually redefine themselves with respect to context and company, in relation to the people they encounter and in what situation the encounter takes place. Each facet of identity, gender, class, ethnicity etc., is enmeshed with other strands, the relative importance of each at any point in time depending upon the nature and context of interaction (Franklin and Fesler 1999:6). Therefore, in order to gain a rounded perspective on how individuals perceived themselves in relation to others it is necessary to consider how multiple facets of self image worked together in order to constitute the person. Yamin's (2005:16) prostitutes faked a gentle identity predicated on the integration of class ideals with the reality of base female sexuality. Without an understanding of the varying gender roles among different classes in 19th century New York, it is impossible to understand how or why this idealised identity was created.

As Diaz-Andreu (2005:13) has stated, dealing with gender requires an awareness of other identities, since other types of identification affect the rules by which gender is understood and embodied in daily practice. This remains so when considering other strands of identity and how they might coalesce and interact in any given context. In summary, therefore, identity can be characterized as multifaceted self-definition coming into existence only in relation to others. Material culture is both context for and an active participant in these interactions, referenced in the negotiation and affirmation of identity as a means of highlighting the similarities and differences which emerge in the process of interaction. Cultural productions do not automatically reflect social identity. They are assigned social meaning where people create space for it within the context of specific relationships (Brighton 2004:156).

Relating Identity and Power

Diaz-Andreu (2005:18-21) has defined power as the ability to impose one's will on others in social action or interpersonal relations, and as such it can be seen to be exercised at all levels of society. Forms of power negotiation exist in everyday practices of living and relating as people seek to gain social and economic advantages which would allow them to survive and be successful. Power therefore is an important element of most dialogues in which identity is constituted. It is implicated in questions of political, economic and religious affinities and oppositions which affect all facets of self-definition. In relation to the formation of ethnic groups, McGuire (1982:169-70) has suggested that it is competition which motives people to join together and the distribution of power which determines how individual members regard those in groups perceived as dissimilar to theirs. Metz (1999:12) has examined the formation of Creole identities in 17th century Virginia. He proposes that new identities were formed in opposition to the political and economic governance of England. By adapting production methods to the particular conditions of the colony, Virginia's emerging industrialists attempted to renegotiate their relationship with the mother country from subordination to perceived parity (Metz 1999:26). This in turn altered perceptions of Virginian sovereignty and loyalty to the mother country. Readings of this relationship no doubt differed throughout Virginian society, contingent on the experiences of individual colonists.

Power negotiation is not solely the preserve of the politically and economically privileged. The disputed hierarchy of church pews in the early modern parish church, as noted by Richard Gough in his *History of Myddle* (1700 [1981]), is a good example of how the negotiation of power relations in public space over many generations allowed ordinary people to locate themselves in relation to the rest of society. Gough writes a history of his congregation, based on the allocation of pews within the church. He describes the affinities of each member of the community, how they related to each other socially, financially, sexually and spiritually and how this was made manifest in the arrangement of seating. How parishioners defined themselves in relation to their neighbours was tied to the negotiation of power relations within the public arena of the church, as different families claimed prominence over others through ownership of favourably positioned box pews. The composition of identity in

power relations can thus be linked to the production, consumption, display and control of material culture. As a facet of the relationships through which identities are brought into being, power is not created by individuals; it creates them and places them in relation to their surroundings and the identities of other people (Thomas 2000:150).

The unequal relationships between Metz's English and Virginians and Gough's parishioners demonstrate how relationships characterised by conflict can be created and reproduced in the production and consumption of food and things (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005:33). Artefacts, particularly those which are in some way restricted or prestigious, can be implicated in the negotiation of power as individuals attempt to assert their superiority over others. Neiman (1999) has observed that the conspicuous consumption of decorative items such as gilt buttons by enslaved individuals living in Jefferson's Poplar Forest at the turn of the 19th century is indicative of the existence of competition and conflicts of interest. He affirms that the dialogues in which slave identities were negotiated were characterised by conflict and cooperation, as individuals sought at once to define their affinities and impose their interests. Interactions in which identities are negotiated might therefore be characterised by both conflict and cooperation. As an element of the former, the struggle to influence and impose upon others can be regarded as an integral part of identity formation and an important means by which individuals come into being.

McGuire and Wurst (2002:7) have identified the materialisation of power relations as a significant preoccupation among historical archaeologists, referencing an overarching preoccupation with the definition of identity within the field. Research conducted in the Chesapeake in New England continues to make a significant contribution to this area, specifically through the work of Mark Leone and his students. Leone's (1984) formative work on the William Paca Garden stimulated subsequent considerations of the materialisation of power in architecture, town planning and formal gardens. He described how garden design in the Chesapeake might have been manipulated in order to reproduce inequalities in the social system, a method by which established leaders took themselves and their position for granted (Williamson 1998:91). This research is now somewhat dated, as is Leone's affirmation that 18th century formal gardens might directly reflect hierarchy and exert a deterministic force on contemporary understandings of the social order.

Subsequent research by Leone and others has acknowledged that the interpretation of such cultural products was multifaceted, considering formal gardens in the context of other forms of materialised power and mechanisms of control. Leone and Hurry (1998:58), for example, regard Paca's garden as part of an overarching attempt to promote and solidify a desired social order using material culture. They note the existence of numerous other formal gardens which adhere to similar principles. They were constructed with the intention of promoting a particular way of seeing, focusing attention on hierarchy and control. This accords with street design at St. Mary's and Annapolis, wherein major roads were planned with the intention of focusing the eye upon the principle institutions of authority (Leone and Hurry 1998:43). Perhaps more could be made of how the less affluent and privileged might have understood such cultural production in order to properly comprehend its importance in the formation of elite identities and their perception by others. How far the materialisation of power and authority was understood and accepted by those who witnessed it is debatable. This might become clearer if the power relations which the material culture articulated were regarded as a component of a dialogue between author and audience, thus averting the temptation to regard elite cultural production as exerting a deterministic role on how others regarded their place in the world. Houses, gardens and streets might all present aspects of elite social identity, but what the observer took from the experience of these productions was contingent upon their own social and economic background and how they imagined themselves in relation to those in positions of power. Relationships based on the negotiation of social power are in existence at all levels of society, engendering conflict among as well as between individuals from disparate social economic groups. Power negotiation should therefore be regarded as a component of the negotiation of self-image and personal advancement.

Archaeology, Imagery and Social Power

Defining Ideology

Leone and Hurry's (1998) work demonstrates how elite cultural productions can give form to elite aspirations of power and control, stating authority and endeavouring to regulate the behaviour of others. The use of a variety of forms of material culture,

such as houses, street plans and formal gardens in this capacity might be broadly defined as 'ideological'. Researchers working across a number of disciplines have been guilty of using the word 'ideology' without clearly defining what is meant by the term. As Walsby (1946 [2003]) pointed out, the Dictionary definition is dry and too broad to be used without some clarification to make it relevant to the context in question. The notion of 'a system of ideas at the basis of an economic or political theory' (Oxford Compact English Dictionary 1996:493) is rather superficial. This description seems to suggest that the term applies to overarching and dogmatic creeds promulgated by a central authority, such as Communism. It intimates that ideology is only an autocratic device; a set of ideas spread as part of an exercise in mass suggestion. Ideology is certainly a tool of power. However, an awareness of the existence of an ideology is not as socially restricted as the definition suggests. It is not conveyed solely from the top down, nor does it necessarily have to be exercised on such a grand scale.

For the purposes of this study, which focuses upon the relationship between ideology and material culture, ideology may be defined as a set of ideas pertinent to an individual which are produced in an accepted medium in order to state and advance their social position in a manner which might at first be imperceptible. The creation and circulation of ideologies might therefore take place at all levels of society. Ideology is related to the definition of identity, as it communicates aspects of the self, or at least the perceived self, through material culture to other individuals. It is an aspect of identity definition which is intimately related to the negotiation of power between different social groups. These aspects of the self must be accepted, or perceived to be accepted by the audience in order for that group to reproduce its position in society. This is facilitated by the use of apparently innocuous media for its conveyance. For example, Vardi has observed how the image of the peasant in early modern art was 'ritualised and circumscribed' (Vardi 1996:1358). The fixed image of the peasant, possessed in a frame, was a statement of how the owner regarded themselves socially and economically in relation to those of lesser means. If the relationship between ideology and material culture is regarded as the conveyance of an image of one social and economic self above others, then it might exist at all levels of society and be conveyed through many different forms of material culture.

Hodder has proposed that:

Material culture does not just exist. It is made by someone. It is produced to do something. Therefore it does not passively reflect society - rather, it creates society through the actions of individuals.

(1991:6)

Images and material culture might not simply state an ideology, but also create, reinforce and perpetuate it. Interpretations placed upon ideologically loaded imagery were rarely as consistent as the authors might wish. The recipients might place their own interpretations upon an artefact or image based upon their reaction to the perceived motives of the creators, perhaps responding with some material defence of their own position. An example of this has been described by Moreland (2001:93). Commenting on the power of the word in the middle ages, he suggested that those members of society so often assumed to have been disenfranchised by their poor level of literacy recognised the authority of the medium and manipulated it in their social transactions with the privileged. Books were often depicted in medieval manuscripts in the hands of the clergy. They were symbols of power which invested the holder with the authority to speak for God. However, the symbolic capacity of the Word to legitimise secular authority was not lost on the insurgents of the Peasant's Revolt of 1381 who, in communicating their demands by letter, adopted 'the language of the conquerors in order to borrow the conqueror's power and to protect themselves from exploitation' (Hopkins 1991:137, quoted in Moreland 2001:93). Instances of ideological display and manipulation are not contingent upon the possession upon a certain level of wealth or power. Ideologies can be created by individuals at all levels of society, regardless of the degree of political or economic influence which they are able to exert beyond their social bracket.

The ideological manipulation of images is integral to the negotiation of status among individuals, as well as social groups. An example of this is provided by the polite landscapes of 18th century houses, which presented an image of serenity only visible to those able to penetrate their hedges and walls. William Brummell's Donnington Grove estate is a good example of how a landscape can be manipulated in order to affirm the wealth and privilege of the owner to their peers, whilst defining the excluded by their location beyond the walls. Its strawberry gothic house, ruined castle and hermitage were set in a landscaped valley utopia. A paper mill was

demolished as it spoiled the view and eluded to a world of toiling and deprivation removed from the leisured classes. Having grown up in a London boarding house, it is not surprising that Brummell would choose to shun this world and hide his origins behind a veneer of fashionable Gothicism and landscaped luxury (Kelly 2005:57). Such properties displayed the wealth and refinement of the owner to a privileged few, perhaps prompting the viewer to try and imitate or even better what they saw and so challenge the assumption of superiority rendered within the landscape.

Ideologies can be at once binding and divisive. Several may operate at once; fusing social groups together through a shared system of ideas whilst instances of conflict and status negotiation persisted within the group. The meanings bestowed upon images implicated within this process were in constant flux, as the social superiority alleged by the instigator were reappraised and contested by the audience. The same material culture may be repeatedly implicated within these layered conflicts, manipulated in a variety of ways in order to state or advance the social power of individuals and interest groups.

The reinterpretation of ideologically loaded imagery by the recipient militates against the wholesale transplantation of a universalistic theory of ideological control. The tendency to regard ideology as something which is applied by one group to another has tempted researchers to veneer each new context with a predetermined thesis. It is assumed that it was in the interests of the affluent members of capitalist society to control their workforce and thus ideological manifestations of this are sought in their material culture. This inevitably results in a circular argument wherein the theory of ideological control through material culture is repeatedly proved with each application of the model. In actuality, each material instance of ideological control is rendered unique both by the modifications which its authors must make to suit individual circumstances and by the interpretations placed upon the resultant material culture by its audience.

An important component of this process of interpretation was undoubtedly the degree of individual access to other pictorial, textual and verbal sources of information, the majority of which will remain elusive. In the context of this study, for example, Henry Brydges' tomb at Avening is very similar to other kneeling effigies found throughout the country. The brief inscription states that it commemorates the son of John Lord Chandos and gives the date of his death, but it is

not really tenable to believe that this memorial could mask Brydges' nefarious past as a known pirate and highwayman, redeemed only by a pardon from James I in 1611. Most contemporary observers would surely have been aware of everything which the inscription did not say. It must therefore be conceded that the personal experiences of the observer will inevitably filter the ideological signification of the image. Images such as the Brydges tomb have an initial and projected meaning, as conferred by its author, but it is naive to assume that this would be maintained in the process of encounter. As a model, this definition of ideology will inevitably prioritise the author's initial interpretation of imagery, citing the affirmation of power and wealth. It is less easy to generalise with reference to the reactions of observers, and as a result some Marxist archaeologies, such as the earlier works of Leone, have failed to appropriately tackle the reception of imagery as opposed to its production.

Relating Imagery and Social Power

Material culture and the image of the self which it might convey are read and reinterpreted in different ways dependant upon the context of deployment. This has been noted by Graves in her study of the pervasiveness of medieval religious provision in Exeter and Norwich. She found that context dictates that people in different regions and different churches will experience religion in different ways (Graves 2000:151). A liturgical vacuum at Norwich created opportunities for secular display in Norfolk churches which would have been impossible under the stricter regimen of Devon. The medieval and early modern effigies which remain in parish churches around Gloucestershire were also erected with reference to a particular social and spatial context which was extant on their creation. For example, the early 17th century Delabere monument at Bishop's Cleeve, Glos. is an explicit statement of the power and authority of the family, its surfeit of heraldic appurtenances elevating it over the congregation. Such images were multi-vocal from the outset. Their original meaning and assigned value, as present in the mind of the artisan or the patron, was distorted in the first instance of encounter. The glance of each cleric and parishioner was coloured by an interpretative bias predicated on personal experience. As such, the loss of physical context experienced by these monuments over the centuries has not had such a drastic effect on the process of interpretation as may initially be assumed.

Since the voice of the author was continually diluted from the point of erection, any attempt to recover an 'original' meaning would not be facilitated by the restoration of a monument to its original setting. The Delabere monument is still subjected to the same individualised process of interpretation that it was in the 17th century. This is aptly illustrated by the differing perspectives of academics and local historians, who regard such memorials as valuable indicators of contemporary social and religious values, and the more practical outlook of the parishioners working in Bishop's Cleeve church office. They regard this monument as gaudy, inconvenient and a chore to clean. This perspective may not be too dissimilar to that of a 17th century parishioner, for whom the authoritarian overtones of such a sizeable edifice could easily have been eclipsed by its impracticality.

Some cultural productions were intended to be communicants of an accepted social order, referencing other images and texts which may or may not have been familiar to the observer. This would not have affected the ability of those witnessing the monument to form an opinion based upon their own experiences. However, the employment of unfamiliar or unintelligible symbols may conceivably have been one of the more effective facets of the deployment of ideology. The interpretation of unfamiliar symbols may be less fluid, as the spectator would be unable to link them to prior experience. Finch (1991:141) has highlighted the reintroduction of Latin into late 17th century epitaphs as a mark of social distinction. The fact of Latin was more effective as a tool of exclusion than an intelligible vernacular text, as it drew a clear line between literate and illiterate, rich and poor, accepted and excluded. This divide was not open to interpretation, although the more intelligible marginalia of putti, deaths heads and hourglasses may well have been. Restricted literacy and access to texts may therefore have been the most effective method of defining and securing difference.

Conclusion

Without a spatial, cultural or historical context, it is impossible to identify the ideological subtexts within material culture. Abstractions may provide an 'imaginative framework' upon which the elucidation of a new dataset may be based. However, generalising on the basis of an established model is a reductive exercise which serves only to confirm an accepted pattern and provides no new information about the societies under scrutiny. Who had access to displays of power, as well as

how and when they accessed it are key in understanding how it perpetuated the extant social order. This is exemplified by the presence of the screened medieval chantry chapel or sumptuous 17th and 18th century family pews in the parish space. A portion of the parish space was partially screened from the commonality, yet rarely completely closed off; A scrap of velvet visible in the window opening of a family pew, a glimpse of the Host through a parcloze screen; only enough to spark curiosity, awe or perhaps envy. Perceptions of this are likely to have been personalised and quite different from the conception of the author.

Prioritising the intentions of the producer over the attitude of consumers has two main consequences. Firstly, it gives the image a single voice. This makes it deceptively easy for researchers to interpret its ideological connotations, revealing only a fraction of its significance. Images of power become mouthpieces for the elite. They communicate to a passive and silent audience, which understands and accepts the truth of such ideological displays without dispute. This relates to the second point; such singular communication not only silences and simplifies the audience, but also the image itself. Material culture is an active constituent of social interaction (Trigger 1989:348). It shapes and is shaped by contact with its producer and audience. An altar cloth donated by a wealthy family member in the 15th century may be seen by their descendants on a weekly basis and so constantly reaffirm a family's bonds to the local church and their obligations to each other. The same benefaction may remind the priest of his church's obligation to that family, while affirming to other parishioners the intimacy of Church, Lordship and wealth. These are generalisations, but do emphasise the fact that material culture is active in maintaining and governing social relations rather than simply reflecting them (Johnson 1996:2). As Johnson (1996:2) has discussed, all material culture is embroiled in a war over meaning. Each viewer absorbs, manipulates and conveys the information gained from their encounter in a manner contingent upon their own circumstances.

CHAPTER TWO

The Study of Death in the Historic Periods

Approaches to Death and Commemoration in the 17th Century

There is an immense volume of literature dealing with the study of the material culture of death in the historic periods, crossing the disciplines of anthropology, art history, social history and archaeology. Only within the last 20 years have individuals working within these fields begun to regularly exploit different types of evidence and to borrow each others' techniques. By combining analogy with the study of texts and artefacts, such interdisciplinary research has greatly enriched our understanding of medieval and early modern attitudes to mortality. This chapter presents a brief outline of the divergent threads of academic research within the history of mortality, highlighting the shortcomings of the academic insularity common to researchers prior to the 1980s. Owing to the sheer volume of published literature, it will not be possible to examine every author's contribution in detail. The studies selected for examination are considered to exemplify key arguments and approaches in the history of the study of death. Where possible, I have chosen to consider works which focus on Gloucestershire, though some historians from other counties and national narratives are also included.

Some of the earliest studies of commemoration in the 17th and 18th centuries were characterised by the illumination of its most tangible and accessible manifestations, memorials within the parish space. Such monuments were regarded as palpable markers which could illuminate the history of documented individuals and families with historical links to the region. The earliest attempts to record memorials may have been prompted by iconoclastic attacks of the 16th and 17th centuries. John Weever prefaced his national study of memorials with the following inscription:

And also knowing withall how barbarously within these his Maiesties
Dominions, they are (to the shame of our time) broken downe, and
vtterly almost all ruinated, their brasen Incriptions erazed, tome away,
and pilfered, by which inhumane, deformidable act, the honourable
memory of many vertuous and noble persons deceased, is extinguished,
and the true vnderstanding of diuers Families in these Realmes (who

haue descended of these worthy persons aforesaid) is so darkened.

(1633:1)

Such early tracts provided a spur for later antiquaries seeking to record and comprehend the medieval past through its surviving material traces. Like Weever, they regarded an understanding of individual lineages as elemental to any conception of antiquity and a fundamental reason to record funerary material for posterity. Unsurprisingly, the majority of 17th and early 18th century studies were county specific, focusing on and often patronized by prominent local families. Smyth's *Lives of the Berkeleys* is a good example of this kind of acclamatory history. As a steward of the Berkeley family, he had an expressed interest in maintaining their approval. Sweet has noted similar characteristics in contemporary histories across the country:

The county history was a celebration of the power and wealth of the landed elite and as such necessarily emphasised this element to the cost of other subjects: hence the impressive bulk of the volumes, the dominance of pedigrees and the profusion of plates of country seats.

(2004:38)

Smyth's text adheres precisely to this formula. He wrote his text between 1616 and 1640, using sources from the muniment room at Berkeley Castle, London archives, family contacts and personal knowledge (Powys-Lybbe 1999:1). *Lives of the Berkeleys* is widely recognised as the most authoritative resource on the Berkeley family of Gloucestershire, utilising wills, benefactions and personal correspondence in order to elucidate the lives and deaths of their ancestors. Smyth's stated aims appear similar to those of John Weever. His *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (1631) was contemporary with Smyth's text. His was intended to be:

.. a worke reuiuing the dead memory of the Royall Progenie, the Nobilitie, Gentry, and Communitie, of these his Maiesties Dominions. Intermixed and illustrated with variety of Historicall obseruations, annotations, and briefe notes, extracted out of approued Authors, infallible Records, Lieger Bookes, Charters, Rolls, old Manuscripts, and the Collections of iudicious Antiquaries.

(1631: 2)

Like Smyth, Weever included detailed discussions of the lives of renowned individuals within his text, alongside stylistic descriptions of their memorials. However, these were approached within the context of the history of Britain as a whole, rather than that of specific counties. Both authors were motivated by a desire to solidify the deeds of their protagonists in text, though for very different reasons. Weever uses the 'faire monuments' of the wealthy, such as that of Thomas Arundell, as a route into a comprehensive account of the career of the individual concerned. He takes little interest in the stylistic attributes of the memorial and less still in his subject's actual demise. The monument is cited as a material correlate for documented accomplishments in life rather than evidence of a death. This contrasts with attitudes to death and commemoration within Smyth's county specific history. Like Weever, he is eager to glorify the achievements of his subjects, since their glory makes a valuable contribution to the prestige of his living patrons. His foremost concern was with the perpetuation of the wealth and lineage of the surviving members of the Berkeley family. The rupturing effects of a fatality would seem to conflict with these objectives. However, as he is not dealing with the achievements of a single evanescent life there is less need for caution when referring to the inevitability of death. The deaths of individuals are taken as opportunities to remark upon the abiding humility of the Berkeleys, even in the face of conclusive adversity.

The contrast between the subject matter of Smyth and Weever is ultimately between the perpetuity of lineage and the fragility of personal achievement. The individuality of the latter results in an almost complete avoidance of references to the manner of death. A small number of deaths are detailed. However, they are almost exclusively those of the Monarchy and highly polemical. Weever's treatment of the death and commemoration of the Black Prince is extensive, running into several paragraphs. For him, the royal lineage defines the history of England, just as that of the Berkeleys defines Gloucestershire for Smyth. Their heredity is a thread which links the fleeting achievements of all other individuals together. Smyth is unstinting in his use of wills, letters and deathbed accounts to detail the passing of his subjects. As with Weever's royal line, his Berkeleys form a baseline upon which the rest of county life can be charted. However, his portrayals are far from objective. He manipulates death, using it to bring each life to a pinnacle of achievement before moving onto the next descendant. His description of the death of Thomas V (d.1532) occupies several pages:

As hee lived like a noble honest lord, soe hee dyed like a saint, yea hee
did rather *migrare quam mori; abire, quam obire*; not dye, but fall
asleep.

(Smyth 1618 [1883-7]: 242)

Smyth's account is not intended to illuminate attitudes to Thomas's death in the 16th century. It is a eulogy, intended to be of educative and moralistic value to a 17th century audience eager to admire and learn from Berkeley's example. Like Weever, Smyth's leading protagonists are paragons of piety, bravery and intelligence. He refashions death as bringer of personal and familial glory, disregarding the patent threats which it presented to the perpetuation of lineal wealth and power. Smyth incorporates death into a narrative of intermittent personal achievement and final glory. *Lives of the Berkeleys* is cyclical, detailing the seamless continuation of virtuous lives and glorious deaths. This contrasts with Weever's approach to glory and achievement, which is much more episodic. The only exceptions to this rule are the achievements of royalty, the persistence of which forms the spine of historical narrative as a whole. The majority of his subjects could only achieve immortality through their deeds. Both authors assure the reader that great deeds will be remembered, and in doing so secure an elite audience for whom the perpetuity of wealth and influence was of great importance.

Neither Smyth nor Weever wrote for the sake of academic curiosity. Both men had motivations for including death within their studies which were dictated by their own circumstances and the contexts in which they wrote. Smyth's text was a eulogy to past greatness, and possibly an educative manual for the latest Berkeley heir, George (Powys-Lybbe 1999:1). Weever's stated aims were conservational and this is made explicit in the preface to his work detailed above. The main distinction between the two authors is in their focus; Smyth glorified a single family in one county, while Weever took an interest in the whole country. However, both authors pandered to a small and well defined audience of wealthy landowners, which included their patrons. Their main concern was to emphasise the great deeds of individuals, set against a never-ending cycle of familial greatness.

Early 18th century texts such as Atkyn's (1712 [1974]) *Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire* served to immortalise the status of local families in print, giving permanence to ancestral claims otherwise subject to the capability of the current incumbent. However, despite their county orientation, one of the principle aims of these

studies was to demonstrate the amalgamated greatness of the bloodline of England (Sweet 2004:38-9). Atkyns claimed to be writing for the edification of an audience of 'neighbours and countrymen' (1712 [1974]:1), suggesting that the histories of county and country were inseparable and that the former was of interest to those living elsewhere in Britain. However, in common with his predecessors Smyth and Weever, Atkyns' work highlighted the illustrious past of the affluent medieval families of Gloucestershire at the expense of the national context of the memorial. It was clearly designed to appeal to individuals with a professed link to such lineages. This is further emphasized by his decision to preface his History with the heraldic shields of all of the major families detailed in his work, emphasizing the domination of the landed elite over the text and so the present and future state of the county. Despite his affirmation that a 'hearty love for his country' inspired him to write his history, Atkyns makes little attempt to make his account relevant to the nation as a whole. He appears solely concerned with the exaltation of the county elite.

Despite the county based insularity of the text, the author's opening affirmation does suggest that he regarded himself as part of a local and national community. The equal relevance of county and country to the study of the past became increasingly apparent as the century progressed. The growing association of tributes to one's locality with national pride should be regarded within the context of late 16th and early 17th century politics as a whole. The county was the principle stage upon which local rivalries were played out. However, such platforms were increasingly well connected by a network of turnpikes and so drew together to contribute to an increasingly solid sense of national identity. There is a contrast between the slant of the earlier narratives such as Smyth's, which are concerned with the identification and glorification of local bloodlines, and that of the tracts of the later 18th century, which tended to glorify individuals of national eminence. This is perhaps not surprising given the increasing sense of pride in 'Britishness' which has been identified by researchers such as Linda Colley (2003), perhaps forged in opposition to other European powers. However, as Colley has pointed out, "identities are not like hats. Human beings can and do put on several at once (2003:6). The pattern of the antiquarian study of commemoration in the 17th and 18th centuries does not outline a progression from a preoccupation with localised familial study to the patriotic swagger of the emergent British identity. Both concepts were coincident and contingent within the mind of the antiquary and his audience. As such, later antiquaries such as Samuel Rudder

maintained their regional emphasis rather than attempting national a synthesis of British commemoration. Their texts chart recognition that the circumstances which created their subject matter were not dictated by the fortunes of individual families, yet the survival of the relics of lineage was vital in order to maintain tangible links with the past. This in turn was contingent upon the social and economic fortunes of the country as a whole, hence the interconnection of national and local histories. Given the socially restricted nature of the source material, the natural foci for the 18th century antiquary were the monumental vestiges of important individuals who helped to shape the county. Such relics could thus provide a focus for pride in past glories and in the present state of the country.

The antiquaries of the 17th century were reliant upon written sources, such as wills, letters and diaries as well as the affirmations of influential members of the local community in order to endow their subjects with biographies. Samuel Rudder sent out questionnaires to the lord of every manor when researching his later 18th century history of Gloucestershire, requesting information on the economic and social background of their lands (Moir 1957:68-71). The answers which he received would no doubt have been skewed by the interests of the contributors. The continuing necessity for patronage and primary source material further assured that early records of commemoration remained fixed upon the county. Funds, notoriety and an audience all depended upon the maintenance of the good will of the patron, which would often have entailed situating individuals of interest to them within the commemorative landscape. Sweet quotes the example of Charles Morant, much criticised by Richard Gough for bowing to the wishes of his patron, Lord Dacre of Belhouse. He had commanded him to:

... avoid minute detail or trifling and inconsiderable persons, advising him, 'especially not to give epitaphs indiscriminately at length: but only those of considerable persons'.

(2004:30)

This pressure to please a wealthy audience was common to the majority of 17th and 18th century antiquaries. It predictably resulted in the material traces of death being regarded as passive reflections of historically attested achievement and wealth. The resultant descriptions subordinated the style and context of their subject matter to the legacies of the deceased. The degree of attention accorded to individual memorials in 17th and 18th century histories was contingent upon the volume of associated documentation. This is

attested by Robert Atkyns' description of a nameless cadaver effigy in St. James the Great, Dursley:

In a nich of the wall, in the south aisle, is the effigy of a person lying along, supposed to be Tanner the founder of this aisle.

(1712 [1974]:411)

The lack of explicatory texts and living relations associated with this monument rendered it virtually mute to early historians such as Atkyns. Although accorded an illustration, such effigies merit little more morphological discussion than the other fixtures and fittings of the church.

A different attitude is evident in the work of Atkyn's successor, Ralph Bigland (1786 [1992]). Having chosen not to follow the conventional model of the county history, Bigland produced a descriptive catalogue of monuments and inscriptions from across the county. He displays nostalgia for his subject matter which was characteristic of antiquarians in the later 18th century, recalling Weever in his crusade to save funerary monuments from destruction and neglect. Trigger (1989:66) has suggested that the efforts of Bigland and his contemporaries should be regarded within the context of the Romantic Movement with its attendant exaltation of the nation's past. He affirms that an interest in ruins, graves and mortality symbolism was linked to the search for origins of greatness in antiquity. Although Bigland is keen to honour the Nation's past, his immediate concern is for the county's past. Like Atkyns, he affirms that the purpose of his work is to preserve the connections of Gloucestershire families. However, his study is less socially restrictive than that of his predecessor, encompassing every type of monument. Its attention to detail alludes to an obsessive devotion to the study of his county's genealogy in its entirety, rather than out of devotion to particular peer group or at the request of a patron.

As a former herald of the College of Arms and Garter King of Arms (Jack 2004:1), Bigland's personal and professional interests were coincident. As such, it is probable that he was motivated by a desire to achieve accuracy and order rather than to glorify a specific group. A number of antiquarians were heralds, such as John Charles Brooke of Somerset and Peter Le Neve, Norroy King at Arms (Sweet 2004:48). A distinction may be drawn between the motives of these men, whom Sweet (2004:48) has likened to 'professional' antiquaries, and the nostalgic hobbyists responsible for the majority of works. The endeavours of the former may have arisen from difficulties and deficiencies

encountered within their vocation, rather than an idealistic love of county and country. Unsurprisingly, Bigland's fastidious style resulted in a far more comprehensive work than that of Atkyns. Like his precursors, however, he is interested in the individuals behind the memorials rather than the aesthetics of his material. As a result, he neglects the stylistic features of the memorials in favour of the inscriptions. Bigland's principle concern is to document the lives of the individuals through their epitaphs. Neither he nor Atkyns is interested in details of funerary architecture or how they might be used to interpret the wishes of the deceased. Funerary monuments are symbols of human fragility and mortality. However, both Atkyns and Bigland recreate them as enduring witnesses to the immutability of ancestry. The experience of death itself is irrelevant in the context of these narratives. Atkyns and Bigland manipulate the past in order to keep vital contemporary allegiances. Their texts are intended to forge links between the present and the past, engendering nostalgic pride among a select readership.

The limit of Atkyn's and Bigland's nostalgia was defined by the borders of the county. Such displays of parochial pride existed in parallel to more nationalistic endeavours, such as that of Gough (1786-1791). The histories of county and country worked acted together in order to engender pride in the nation's past. Both Sweet (2004:309) and Trigger (1989:65-67) have identified this as the principle aim of the earliest antiquaries. They were heirs to decades of intermittent iconoclasm, working within an era characterised by repeated attempts to secure domestic and international economic security through intermittent conflict with France. The drama of the 17th century, with its wars, regicide and iconoclasm, rendered acute the sense of loss amongst the leisured classes, a perception which was strengthened by the perceived religious and economic threats to the country from the continent. Commemoration provided a stock of glorious individuals which could strengthen the nation in opposition to external intimidation. However, it should not be assumed that this was the only form of identity which the antiquaries were perpetuating through the study of funerary monuments. The fact that antiquaries such as Atkyns had the time to study the past reinforced the insularity of their own social group apart from those of lesser means. The study of death and commemoration maintained their social life, as society continually referred back to the monuments of its past in order to give meaning to the present social structure. The masses were excluded from the nationalistic county histories of commemoration, rendering them at once integrative and socially divisive. The early history of the study of

death reveals the dual importance of local and national allegiances in determining the significance funerary material culture. However, it also highlights the importance of social status as a determinant of relevance and so visibility within antiquarian study. The analysis of funerary monuments was manipulated in order to propagate both levels of identity. It linked wealthy families across the country, enabling them to situate themselves within the narrative of county and country whilst also placing them in opposition to those located outside that history by means or origins.

Stylistic Approaches to the Study of Commemoration

As the previous section has highlighted, the study of commemoration at county and national level up to the beginning of the 20th century focused upon the relationship between named individuals and lineages and funerary material culture. There was little consideration of the changing aesthetics of memorialisation, such as the poses in which effigies were set and embellishments such as cherubs and death's heads. Sweet (2004:68) has noted a rare exception in the work of Smart Lethieullier. His attempt to comprehend the evolution of church monuments in Gloucestershire was published posthumously in *Archaeologica* in 1773. However, the fact that he was trained in France and of comparatively modest social status may explain why the aims of his work lay outside the socially restrictive and nationalistic remit of most studies of memorials. In the early 20th century there appears to have been a movement against such socially and nationally divisive studies, within their concomitant emphasis upon the vital achievement of the deceased, towards an objective and aesthetic consideration of commemorative types.

The art historical studies of researchers such as Esdaile (1937, 1946) and Gardner (1937) were characterized by a detailed examination of the stylistic features of funerary art. The main purpose of this approach appears to have been to date the monuments and to identify individual craftsmen, as opposed to their illustrious patrons. In contrast to Gough and Bigland, Esdaile (1937:iv) was more concerned to identify a signature and date than to transcribe the epitaph. She derided the tendency of antiquarians to dismiss less striking memorials in favour of the more publicized examples, affirming the stylistic importance of all material culture. However, her work does not consider all types of commemoration, ignoring plainer memorials such as ledger slabs. Her study of church monuments between 1510 and 1840 is more concerned with the changing fortunes of

English carvers, marblers and lapidaries. The work of such artisans is intended to identify a series of typological reference points which could be used to illustrate the progression of monumental sculpture in England. Gardner (1937) chose to classify funerary architecture within the framework of traditional Gothic architectural period division rather than the traditional historical periodisation, stressing his belief that the utility of such artefacts lay in their stylistic affiliations rather than their relationships to individuals. He characterised funerary monuments as art objects, dispassionate expressions of a stylistic trend rather than the values and preferences of an individual or their kin. Early art historical studies such as Gardner's and Esdaile's display a shift in emphasis from the biographical and individualistic exposition of memorials, towards stylistic generalization and a tendency to categorize on the basis of chronology, region and artisan. As a result, the spatial and historical contexts of individual monuments were habitually neglected in favour of their position within a series of stylistic categories on an evolutionary scale. Dissatisfaction with existing subjective approaches to funerary monuments led to the dismissal of the role of the patron completely. Such reactionary approaches rendered the individuals commemorated by the memorials invisible in favour of the artisans, revealing a fundamental dissatisfaction with the subjugation of art objects to the elucidation of national history.

Gardner's (1937:5) attitude to his subject matter is coloured by his dissatisfaction with the subservience of the history of styles to historical and biographical enquiry. Out of this disillusionment arose an exhaustive analysis of types, styles and sculptors which formed the basis of the art historical genre. Unfortunately, the earliest instances of this approach effected the removal of material culture from its context to an abstract evolutionary scheme. Gardner evaluated his data on an aesthetic basis, founded upon notions of stylistic perfection which were basic to the art historical discipline. This attitude to commemoration resulted in a failure to accord much importance to the architectural and societal context of each example. This is also apparent in the methods by which Gardner illustrated his study. His subjects are photographed once from the front only, severing them from their surroundings and placing them within a typology of funerary art.

In the opening paragraph of his study, Gardner affirms that his intention is to:

.. cast light upon the conditions of the men who produced it (the art)
and the thoughts and aspirations which occupied their minds.

(1937:1)

However, his propensity towards stylistic generalization and the resultant loss of context veiled the intentions of both the artisan and the patron. As Finch (2000:1) has noted, it is ironic that early art historians chose to replace the antiquarian preoccupation with the vestiges of eminent patrons with a fascination with the works of infamous sculptors. This resulted in an interest in the same illustrious examples as their antiquarian forbearers and a tendency to draw attention to major historical events which might have influenced the evolution of a particular style. Therefore, the works of both Esdaile (1937, 1946) and Gardner (1937) are predominantly descriptive with little extended discussion of the individual experiences of mortality which led to the creation of these memorials. Both authors contextualise their subject matter solely in terms of overarching historical processes, such as the Black Death and the Reformation. The only memorials to receive anything more than a perfunctory discussion of the circumstances of their production are those of Royalty and the aristocracy which were inevitably associated with an illustrious and well documented artist. The voice of the artist is the only one which is audible throughout such accounts, which were clearly reacting against preceding lineal and socially restricted histories. In spite of this, the opulence and wealth of texts associated with these monuments encouraged early art historians to view them as specimens against which all others could be judged. The elucidation of individual attitudes to mortality was subordinated to the objective classification of the tangible artefact which inevitably led to generalization and categorisation on the basis of distinguished types.

Anthropology and *Annales* History

From the 1960s to the 1980s the study of death and commemoration in England was enriched by the adoption of social anthropological techniques by historians and archaeologists aiming to reaffirm the position of the individual within the history of commemoration. The notion of death as a 'rite of passage', popularized by Hertz (1960) and Van Gennep (1960) transformed the way in which researchers approached death over the next four decades (Jupp and Gittings 1999:2). Early 20th century studies of death tended to concentrate on its conclusive monumentalisation rather than the ephemeral rites

antedating the erection of a memorial. This resulted in a fixated interest in the stylistic features of memorials at the expense of their context of deployment. The prioritisation of stylistic detail over individual encounters with death rendered a more comprehensive discussion of societal attitudes to mortality impossible. Van Gennep's subdivision of death into a rite of separation, a transitional rite and ceremonies of incorporation (Van Gennep 1960:146-165) encouraged researchers to study death as a process, beginning at the deathbed and concluding with monumentalisation. However, the degree of disciplinary insularity evident prior to the 1960s precluded medieval death rituals from being analyzed from this perspective. The medieval *Ars Moriendi* texts, with their descriptions of how to leave this world in the grace of God, would be categorised as rites of separation in Van Gennep's scheme. However, these texts fell within the sphere of traditional history, which frequently did not acknowledge the relevance of anthropological theory.

The study of the *Ars Moriendi* and other aspects of the medieval and early modern death ritual were significantly advanced by the *Annales* School of history in the early 1980s, which borrowed extensively from social anthropology. The *Annales* study of death attempted to integrate all levels and aspects of society in order to facilitate an understanding of larger historical processes and events. Le Goff (1984b:19) regarded later medieval culture as a by-product of the interaction between related constituents of European society. In his investigations into journeys into the afterlife and establishment of the doctrine of Purgatory, he emphasized the interplay of economic, social and historical factors of geography beyond the grave (1984a:2-4, 1984b:32). He regarded Purgatory as an expression of unfamiliar concepts of time and space, engendered by the coincidence of new economic interests, world exploration and a heightened awareness of mortal frailty (Le Goff 1984a:132, 229). He relates its prominence to the medieval world 'setting itself in motion' from the 12th century, as people explored the world on crusades, as missionaries or on trade routes. As maps of this world were reshaped, so the afterlife grew and was divided into 'kingdoms' (Le Goff 1984a:229). By focusing upon the interplay of cultural entities rather than people, Le Goff avoided the propensity of traditional historians to fixate upon the most prominent historical figures and events. However, the subjection of individual experience to the theory of interacting cultural spheres resulted in a tendency to homogenize attitudes to mortality. His analysis does not

easily allow for personal encounters with death and the dead. His stated concern is to follow the historical development of a belief (Le Goff 1984a:358).

Le Goff's concern was to identify the long term formative processes which generated short term events such as the formalisation of the doctrine of Purgatory. He postulated the existence of a collective belief system, or '*mentalité*' in medieval Europe which defined and determined the experiences of the majority. This system existed above the acts and experiences of those governed by it. As such, it veiled the individual experience of death, denying the capacity of its subjects to interpret elements of the structure in accordance with their social context and to affect its shape in the process of experience. Considering the lack of importance accorded to individual responses to mortality, it is not surprising that the images of monuments employed by Le Goff are not fully incorporated into the author's thesis. He regards them as aesthetic and illustrative. They are superfluous to the argument presented within the text, tendering material culture as a passive reflection of Purgatory's theological basis and of belief in the power of intercession. In accordance with their passive status, Le Goff does not accord the memorials of the dead a role in the perpetuation of the '*mentalité*'. They are the by-products of a belief system formed through societal responses to external stimuli, manifestations of a historically documented process which lack any value as indicators of personal experience.

Although he neglects the study of material culture, Le Goff does draw other disciplines into his discussion. He references the work of social anthropologists such as Levi Strauss and Van der Leeuw when outlining the cleansing role of Purgatorial fire during the rite of initiation into the Third Place (1984a:7,72):

What is sacred fire? "In initiation rites", Van Der Leeuw tells us, "fire wipes out the past period of existence and makes a new period possible". Fire then is a rite of passage quite appropriate to this place of transition.

(1984a:7)

The disciplines of history and anthropology are deemed to be complimentary, since both can 'speak' to the researcher through texts and witnesses respectively. However, material culture is not silent, but has been rendered mute by the authors' failure to acknowledge its

role in the constitution of a belief system. The cultural spheres upon which Le Goff bases his conclusions are constituted and modified by individual action. As such, his failure to integrate the material traces of those actions into his discussion constitutes a fundamental flaw in his argument.

Greater concern for material culture is shown within the contemporary works of Phillipe Ariès. In *The Hour of Our Death* (1983), he provides an extended discussion of different forms of material practice. This includes a consideration of the context and purpose of *transi* tombs, linking them to the economic and social conditions of the 15th century (1983:113-114). However, Ariès highlights only the best and most aesthetically appealing examples in illustration of his arguments. These are given as evidence for prevailing ways of seeing the world and one's place in it. For example, *transis* are regarded as evidence of "a passionate love of the world and a painful awareness of the failure to which each human life is condemned" (1983:130). In common with Le Goff, Ariès fails to acknowledge that funerary monuments are capable of speaking without a textual referent. He details the writings of mystics and preachers alongside his analyses (1983:128). The experiences of the wealthiest patrons and observers are also detailed alongside cultural productions, such as one medieval commentator's description of the death of a greedy lawyer which he had witnessed (1983:313) or the death of Jesuit Robert Parsons (1983:312). However, they are subordinated to '*mentalities*', ways of seeing the world which supersede individual interpretation. Such an approach does not allow for differing opinions and dissenting voices.

Ariès claims that one of the fundamental trends in the history of death is the rise of individualism. With reference to the emergence of images of decomposition in the later middle ages, he writes:

The new image of the pathetic and personal death of individual judgement of the *artes Moriendi* was to have its counterpart in a new image of destruction.

(1983:112)

For Ariès, individualism is an outlook increasingly affirmed in funerary material culture as time goes on. It is presented as a unifying theme which does not translate into the presence of individual agency in material culture. The wealthiest individuals are

represented by their diaries, letters and cultural productions, but there is no room for dissent or difference among in the collective mindset afforded to them by the author.

Ariès's aim is to document the general development of mortality in Europe through documentary evidence. Themes such as individuality are discussed within the context of an evolutionary scale leading up the present. This process of social evolution is particularly evident in *Western Attitudes Towards Death* (1974), which concerns itself with the resolution of contemporary mortality through a retrospective analysis of European approaches to death. This relatively brief work documents roughly 500 years of mortality in Europe, outlining the historical constitution of modern mortality. Death is seen to move through successive states, beginning with a socialized 'tamed' death (Ariès 1974) in the 13th century which evolved into evasive contemporary attitudes to mortality. The value of each period is undermined by the brevity with which each is discussed. This highlights a subservience of detail to the identification of underlying historical processes which is common to the work of both Ariès (1974, 1983) and Le Goff (1984b). The identification of overriding themes and processes within history is perhaps a reaction against the descriptive methodologies of antiquarian History.

Finch (2000:3) credits Clare Gittings with the popularization of the concept of individualism in death studies. Building upon Ariès' affirmation of the growing importance of the individual in late medieval Europe, she highlights the personalisation of the deathbed rituals associated with doctrine of Purgatory. The involvement of the dying in planning their own funeral arrangements is cited as evidence of their centrality to the ritual (Gittings 1984:39). As Gittings (1984:39) applies Ariès' notion of the evolving importance of the individual to a shorter time frame, her arguments do not suffer from the same degree of generalization. Although she is still concerned to identify overriding themes within the study of death, this is mitigated by the elaboration of personal experience from selected documentary sources. She highlights the experiences of merchants, women and criminals, as well as the affluent. This accords her work a humanistic appeal, noticeably lacking in processual interpretations such as those of Le Goff. She also frames her discussion of Purgatory within Van Gennep's conception of rites of passage. However, where Le Goff chose to concentrate on the profit and spiritual power which Purgatory brought to the Church (Le Goff 1984b:12), Gittings (1984:23) regards it as a method of mitigating the anxiety over death which was attendant upon the

emergence of individualism. This highlights her interest in the human experience of death, rather than its function within society as a whole.

The Archaeology of Death in the Historical Periods

Despite incorporating both texts and material culture into her arguments, Gittings does not discuss the two sources of evidence concomitantly. She maintains a division between the use of material culture in rendering generalizations about society and the use of documents to recover individual experience. When discussing the artistic manifestations of death in late medieval society, she comments generally on their eroticism and newfound naturalism (Gittings 1984:35). A few choice examples are provided in illustration, whilst detailed discussion is reserved for wills and other forms of documentation. The study of death through the material culture of the later historic periods received little attention from social historians and archaeologists until the 1990s, prior to which it seems to have been the preserve of art history. Consequentially, the theoretical basis of death studies in archaeology has evolved within the context of 20th century prehistoric studies. Processual archaeologists of the 1960s, such as Binford (1962), adopted arguments from anthropologists such as Van Gennep (1960) in a similar manner to the social historians. Like Le Goff (1984a, 1984b) and Ariès (1983), Binford's intention appears to have been to supersede extant descriptive approaches to data with a more systematic approach. Despite the centrality of material culture to archaeology, some processual archaeologists of the 1960s and the *Annales* historians of the 1980s share the assumption that artefacts are a reflection of a cultural system rather than active agents in its constitution. Le Goff's (1984a) exposition of the 'birth' of Purgatory through the interplay of religious, social and economic subsystems mirrors the approaches of the New Archaeology of the 1960s, alluding to their common theoretical debt to social anthropology.

Given the analogous approaches engendered by their reliance upon anthropological theory, it is unsurprising that little attempt was made to integrate theoretical discourse within the two disciplines until the 1990s. At this point, post-*Annales* histories of death and commemoration such as chapters on *The Hour of Our Death*, *The Last Things* and *The Pains of Purgatory* in Eamon Duffy's *The Stripping of the Altars* (1991) and those featured in Jupp and Gitting's (1999) volume *Death in England*, were paralleled by the postprocessual archaeologies of Tarlow (1999), Parker-Pearson (1999) and Finch (1991, 2000). The bonding of archaeology and history within death studies was facilitated by

two key developments: the emergence of new ways of looking at material culture and the legitimisation of the study of the archaeology of the later historic periods. Processual archaeologists regarded material culture such as funerary monuments as a manifestation of cultural adaptation to permutations in the environment. This approach restricted the utility of archaeology to an illustrative tool, comparable with its conventional historical role. Recognizing the traditional subservience of archaeology to history and anthropology in Britain, some archaeologists in the mid 1980s began to seek equality for their discipline. They lamented the fact that the archaeological agenda was habitually set by the historical record, which established all of the main points of discussion based on documentary evidence (Austin 1990:11). Austin highlighted a tendency among archaeologists to focus upon the excavation of big sites which could be related directly to historical questions. As a result, they have had to neglect the economic and social basis of past life in favour of the politics of the affluent. He also noted the negative affect that this relationship was having on the reputation of the discipline. The use of archaeology to locate the foundations of documented nations and ethnic groups exposed it to the nefarious aims of racist and nationalistic groups (Austin 1990:14). Austin advocated the total severance of the traditional ties between the two subjects. However, such an extreme break and the mutual aversion which it implied could potentially damage research in both fields. However, it reflects an ongoing policy of tendency towards 'boundary policing' which is evident in a number of academic fields sharing comparative datasets, such as history and politics, and sociology and social work (O'Sullivan 2004 pers.comm).

Candlin has observed that:

To become an expert you have to have a specialised field, which can only be only mastered if it is enclosed, or defended if its borders are clearly defined and policed.

(2000:2)

The wardship of boundaries provides practitioners with assurance of the validity of their work and the security of their position. However, this separation is not just psychological. It is augmented by the segmented layout of academic institutions, the necessity of defining employment roles and the way grants are allocated, all of which are dictated by subject area. Such insularity inhibits the sharing of information and so places unnecessary limits upon the range of interpretative experience which can be brought to data. Austin draws a line between the use of documents to recover the actions of the elite and

archaeology to recover the experiences of the rest of the population. However, the two sources of evidence are inextricably linked, since it is documents which ultimately record and manage the production and consumption of material throughout society. The coincidence of historical and archaeological research is unavoidable as both deal with the material world of past societies. However, this division reflects not only the divisive effect of different datasets, but also distaste for practical subjects within established academia. Candlin (2000) explored the tensions between the practice of art and its academic pursuit. She highlighted the difficulties in justifying the theoretical competence of individuals working within a subject which is traditionally practice based. The academic validity of archaeology in the eyes of the historian is hindered by its popular image as a hands-on subject, which masks the theory which underpins the reconstruction of the tangible past.

The relationship between archaeology and history within the study of the historic periods cannot be severed, but it does require a degree of management. Hodder (1991:192-3) advocated a union with history which emphasises the capacity of material culture and texts to narrate individual action rather than collective behavior and processes (Hodder 1991:192-3). This has been facilitated by the popularization of the idea of material culture as a text. Summarizing the efficacy of this approach, Shanks and Tilley have contended that:

Conceived of as a form of communication, it (material culture) constitutes a form of 'writing' and is located along structured axes of signification. We are not attempting to argue that material culture, in a manner analogous to language, directly represents things, features or concepts in the social world, but that it is ordered in relation to the social.

(1987:116-7)

Therefore, every encounter with material culture is a different 'reading', specific to time, place and person. Just as the meaning of a text is filtered by the social and economic situation of the reader, so the significance applied to material culture is specific to the context of the encounter. Both text and artefact are constituted by and are equally active in the formation of experience. Material culture thus possesses a voice comparable to that of the printed word and as such is of equal importance to the text in the constitution of past attitudes to death. If artefacts can provide an insight into social and economic life

without a textual referent, then it can be reasonably argued that those of the historic period have as much potential to provide new information about their generative societies as prehistoric material. As such, an abundance of texts is not a valid reason to ignore the archaeology. This realisation is important to the development of death studies in Britain and has led to the archaeological consideration of funerary rites up to the present day. For example, in her appraisal of death in Victorian England, Pat Jalland (1999) highlights the importance of death-masks, busts, paintings and photographs in the perpetuation of the memory of the departure of loved ones. The integration of material culture and documentary sources thus provides a comprehensive context for the excesses of Victorian mortuary rituals and its role in civilizing death for the bereaved.

Recent Approaches to Art Historical Evidence

The integration of documentary history with material culture through historical archaeology highlights the merits of an interdisciplinary approach to the study of death. A number of recent art historical studies have sought to incorporate different types of evidence, striving to counteract their discipline's traditional fixation upon subjective concepts of aesthetic perfection in funerary art. Binski (1996:134) highlights the role of medieval *memento mori* imagery in the constitution of individual experiences of mortality (Fig.2.1). Images such as *The Three Living and the Three Dead* are described in terms of their ability to reflect the anxieties of the age and to arouse a devotional response in the viewer (1996:134). The reciprocal role of such imagery in the elaboration of corporealism in the later medieval period is also noted by Pearsall (2001:217). His study utilizes both documents and material culture in order to illuminate the role of late medieval *memento mori* imagery in the personalisation of death. Both authors are clearly indebted to Ariès' (1983) conception of late medieval individualism. Pearsall (2001: 227) cites the popularization of the *Ars Moriendi* block books as evidence of the need to prepare individually for death, but also concedes that their ubiquity may also have helped to perpetuate this desire. He acknowledges that material culture can be active in the constitution of individuality and not solely reflective of it.

Llewellyn (1991:9) also recognizes the active role of material culture in the formation of attitudes to death. In *The Art of Death* (1991), he focuses upon the material culture of early modern mortality, borrowing heavily from structural anthropology (Finch

2000:2). Robert Hertz's (1960) notion of the duality of social and physical being figures strongly in his discussion of post-Reformation commemoration:

The natural body after death was simply the corporeal remains which had to be removed or treated to contain the inevitability of decay. It was regarded as a source of danger, not so much to public health - as was to become the main source of concern in the 19th century - but rather to the public body whose immaculate memory could so easily be damaged.

(1991:46)

However, despite his employment of an anthropological methodology, his thesis does not entirely avoid the pitfalls of traditional art history. His examples are noticeably biased towards royalty and the aristocracy. Tarlow (1999:17) has suggested that this is a result of the emphasis which his study places upon the role of the monuments of the aristocracy in the statement of wealth and the reproduction of power relations. As a result of his lack of consideration for the experiences of the less affluent, his approach to death is better suited to the study of power relations than individual experiences of mortality. His illustrations to an extent still prioritise the grade of artistry over an understanding of the individual place of monuments in society, which perpetuates his discipline's traditional focus upon stylistic evolution. The author does however affirm that the search for perfection should not be the main focus of art history (Llewellyn 1991:115).

Summary

Humanity experiences and expresses its mortality through texts, artefacts and imagery. The extent of death studies is such that it the traditional academic division of subject by media. The deficiencies of disciplinary insularity have only recently been acknowledged by practitioners, segregated within disparate university departments and the conventions of their fields. Through the mutual application of binding theoretical prepositions, mainly borrowed from social anthropology and social theory, researchers have begun to work closer and more cooperatively. Artefacts and texts are increasingly regarded as equally articulate forms of evidence, which can be read and assimilated in different ways depending on the context of the interpreter. The idea of material culture as an architect which is capable of creating and changing the structure of society has

encouraged archaeologists and historians to recognize their mutual interests. The activation of material culture and the coincident elevation of its status has the potential to engender a greater degree of interdisciplinary research within the study of death. The human experience of death cannot be partitioned in accordance with contemporary academic discourse. It is only through a consideration of all media and an appreciation of the singularity of context that a thorough comprehension of individual mortality can be achieved. Such an understanding should not aim for a universal understanding of attitudes to death within a specific period, or fixate upon particular allusions to mortality. What is required is recognition of the reciprocal relationship between specific and general; how individuals from unique backgrounds approached and practiced death and how the uniqueness of that experience built upon and affected the structure within which it operated.



Figure 2.1: A 14th century image of the Three Living and the Three Dead from the church at Wickhampton in Norfolk.

(Image: Marshall 2006)

CHAPTER THREE

An Introduction to the English *Ars Moriendi* Tradition and Regional Book Trade

An Introduction to the *Ars Moriendi* Tradition in England



Figure 3.1: A page from Caxton's 15th Century *Ars Moriendi* Print.

(Image: Caxton c.1490)

'A compendulous and Fruitful Treatise'¹

From the 15th century, the virtues of dying well were expounded through a number of moralizing tracts which advocated indifference to worldly concerns to the benefit of the soul. The *Ars Moriendi* has received attention from both historians and

¹ Fuller, T. 1663 *The Holy State*. London: Printed by John Redmayne for John Williams, p.188.

scholars of English literature. There has been a tendency to generalize the role of these texts within specific periods, while literary critics have examined the form and content of individual examples. The limitations of these approaches are understandable consequences of the varying concerns of the two disciplines. However, neither has provided much insight into how these texts were received, interpreted and manipulated by individuals in medieval and early modern England. In order to understand individual perceptions of the *Ars Moriendi*, it will be necessary not only to combine these approaches, but also to consider the *Ars Moriendi* alongside other forms of death centred material culture. The following will examine extant approaches to the study of the *Ars Moriendi* within the fields of social history and literary criticism, tendering a new approach which acknowledges the participation of both text and artefact in a dialogue which framed perceptions of a good death among the laity.

The English Tradition

The *Speculum Artis Bene Moriendi* appeared in Europe in the early 15th century. It was formulated in order to equip the clergy and laity for the final deathbed struggle against temptation (Duffy 1992:316). From this progenitor, two versions of the *Ars Moriendi* are known to have developed, the longer *Tractatus* and a shorter block book version (Atkinson 1992: xiii). The six part *Tractatus* was initially available only in manuscript form. It was composed in early 14th century Germany by a Dominican monk and later translated out of Latin into French, German and other European languages. Access to the *Ars Moriendi* in England was limited at first, since in order to acquire such a work, patrons needed to be literate, wealthy and perhaps possessed of a knowledge of these languages. However, the coming of print in the 1470s resulted in a surge of publications (Duffy 1992:77), bringing the *Tractatus* to a much wider audience. The longer work was translated out of French and German by authors such as Wynkyn de Worde and William Caxton as *The Arte or Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye* (Fig.3.1).

The publication of the six chapter treatise was shortly followed with an abbreviated work in block book format, which focused upon the five temptations of the deathbed as outlined in the second chapter of the unabridged text. The coincident popularity of these two versions reflects the broad social appeal of the *Ars Moriendi*. The block books were based on images and so were accessible to all levels of literacy. The earliest abbreviated works were published in Holland in the mid 15th century, but found

their way to England and were disseminated in and around the towns, appealing to the less literate majority. The five deathbed temptations were perhaps prioritized over the rest of the treatise in recognition of their potential for illustration and so for broader popularity and comprehension. The block book's images of the demons assailing the dying Christian did not require any textual referent. Like the wall paintings in the local parish church, they served to educate the laity in Christian piety and morality. No doubt such texts would also have been bought by the wealthy. However, as literacy was not a prerequisite for their consumption, the market quickly expanded as print became cheaper and thus increasingly accessible and tailored to those of lesser means. Such works were printed in urban contexts and so were purchased by wealthy merchants, civic officials and the aristocracy.

The surge in devotional publications from the early 16th century included several editions of the *Ars Moriendi* (Duffy 1992:78). These texts worked in conjunction with the didactic sermons of the parish priest, as well as related discourses such as the *Ordo Visitandi*, or Last Rites, to ensure that all of the population was familiar with what was expected of them on the deathbed. The influence of the *Ars Moriendi* was not constrained by social and economic status. However, the split between the extended and abbreviated versions of the *Ars Moriendi* was maintained into the 1600s. Death and salvation are major themes in the chap books and broadside ballads of the 17th century. Watt (1991: 106-7) has noted the use of traditional deathbed imagery in *The Clarke of Bodham*, a popular 17th century ballad. She surmises that such works were sung to crowds in marketplaces and alehouses and pasted onto the walls of ignoble households (Watt 1991:194-5). They were the stock face of the *Ars Moriendi*, using verse and imagery to educate and entertain a largely illiterate audience. However, in the manor, a different form of treatise was popularized. The affluent branch of the *Ars Moriendi* became increasingly complex and abstract, its visual appeal decreasing in favour of classical rhetoric and biblical paradigms. The 'extreme scripturalism' of Thomas Becon's *A Sicke Mannes Salve* rendered it thoroughly impractical for use at the deathbed (Beaty 1970:112). It outlines an ideal death infused with Puritanical zeal, and so was less an instruction manual and more a declaration of faith in opposition to Popery. Jeremy Taylor's *The Holy Dying* (1651), a companion volume to *The Holy Living* (1650) which was printed the previous year, blends Anglicanism and Stoic philosophy in an attempt to provide a definitive guide to Christian existence. He portrays life as a process of

expiration best spent in pious contemplation. This results in a particularly extensive text which retains only the faintest shadow of its medieval ancestor.

The disparity between form and content of popular ballads and the more elaborate *Ars Moriendi* texts cannot be entirely attributed to their intended market. Watt (1991:257) has pointed out that the demand for cheap print in the 17th century was not socially restrictive. Those capable of reading the works of Taylor would also have been familiar with the ubiquitous 'chap' literature, hawked on every street and marketplace (Watt 1991:296). The distance between the two forms was mainly functional, rather than social. Not only were the extended treatises more expensive, they lacked the recreational edge of cheap print. Although both forms aimed to educate the reader in the art of death, Taylor and Becon's methods were staid and theoretical in comparison to the popular *Ars*. Reading such tracts was intended to be a meditative, pious and private experience. In terms of context, they were the antithesis of the ballad. Both forms can legitimately be considered to have had some bearing upon attitudes to death among the lay magnates of the Gloucestershire.

The *Ars Moriendi* in History

The existence of an evolving tradition of didactic literature is not accommodated within the traditional framework of historical study. Historians have divided the *Ars Moriendi* into specific periods which are delineated by recognized historical processes, such as the Black Death, Reformation and Restoration. The texts are employed in illustration of the broader thematic discussions which are attendant on each period. Duffy argues that *The Arte or Crafte to Lyve Well and to Dye Well* embodies the Christocentricity of late medieval religion (Duffy 1992:81), while Stannard employs Jeremy Taylor's 17th Century *Holy Dying* in his discussion of early modern conceptions of Hell (Stannard 1977:85-86). The contents of the texts are used to describe the prevailing spiritual beliefs of particular social groups. The texts are subordinated to the discussion of the historical phenomena by which they are segregated. To historians studying the Reformation, the pivotal role accorded to the godly friends of Epaphroditus in Thomas Becon's *The Sicke Mannes' Salve* (1561) is evidence of the diminishing role of the priesthood at the Calvinist deathbed (Houlbrooke 1989:26). Becon's (1561:382) derogatory references to 'mumbling massmongers' fossilize the anti-papal sentiments of the later 16th century. The illustrative role accorded to such texts is similar to that

traditionally assigned to archaeological evidence by social historians. Both are forms of material culture are regarded as reflective of attitudes to death among the laity. Pearsall highlights the popularity of the 15th century *Ars Moriendi* block books in Northern Europe. He writes that 'the availability and comparative cheapness of the technology may have preceded or generated or interacted with the need to prepare for death' (2001:227). Similarly, Muir (1997:45-48) affirms the central role of the 16th century *Ars Moriendi* in separating the living from the dead. However, there is little scope for idiosyncratic interpretation or a sense that how people interpreted and used these texts might in any way be affected by their particular social and economic circumstances. From its inception in the 15th century, the lofty expectations of the English *Ars Moriendi* set up the good death as a prestigious goal to be aspired towards. How this concept was received on an individual basis has been neglected as a result of the tendency of researchers to utilize the texts in illustration of general themes. As such, only the 'official' reading of the texts is customarily acknowledged. However, texts can be reinterpreted, misinterpreted and manipulated by those who encounter them. They can have multiple meanings imposed on them. Morgan has acknowledged the existence of inconsistencies between the *Ars Moriendi* and the reality of death. He states that although the medieval *Ars Moriendi* detailed how people should die, its existence is not an indication that everyone fulfilled the criteria (1999:128). The probability of discordance between ideal and reality in the art of dying suggests that numerous readings of these texts existed simultaneously.

The *Ars Moriendi* in Literature

Literary enquiries into the *Ars Moriendi* have tended to discuss the texts on an individual basis. As with historical accounts, most researchers restrict themselves to a particular period. Matsuda (1997:187-88) focuses upon the nature of the *Ars Moriendi* as part of a wider enquiry into death and Purgatory in Middle English didactic texts. Indeed, the majority of literary studies do not study the genre specifically, choosing instead to group it with contemporary texts. Once again, little sense of the art of dying as an evolving genre is afforded by such discussions. Two notable exceptions are Nancy Lee Beaty's *The Craft of Dying* (1970) and David Atkinson's *The English Ars Moriendi* (1992), both of which discuss selected texts from the 15th to the 17th century. Such an approach has the merit of according the reader some idea of permutations in the genre over time. Unfortunately, the evolutionary perspective adopted by Beaty has led her to

neglect the social context of each text. She provides a thorough critique of the structure and linguistic style of each of her subjects, but alludes only briefly to the historical processes which were responsible for their form. She chooses instead to contextualise each text in terms of the preceding works. This is understandable, since the author's overall intention is to provide a background for Jeremy Taylor's *The Holy Dying* (1651) which she regards as the 'climax' of the *Ars Moriendi* tradition. She extols its 'imaginative quality, rhetorical beauty and intensity of personal feeling' (1970:198). Beaty values Taylor's work in terms of its didactic mastery and fluidity of structure. Little attempt is made to locate it within the context of 17th century society. Atkinson is similarly enthusiastic about Taylor's work, praising its 'imaginative richness' (Atkinson 1992: xxiv) and upholding its esteemed status within the tradition. Unlike Beaty, however, he maintains the importance of examining the *Ars Moriendi* within their generative contexts. He regards the texts as 'barometers of religious and philosophical shifts' (Atkinson 1992: xi), implying their potential utility to historians as well as literary scholars. Despite this affirmation, he fails to properly contextualise his examples. A brief foreword to each text is provided in the introduction to *The English Ars Moriendi* (1992), but the sampled works themselves are without notes and so lacking in integrated discussion. Atkinson's book provides an extensive series of extracts which are intended to illustrate the progression of the *Ars Moriendi* tradition. However, his attempts to situate his texts are cursory, alluding to the same insular preoccupation with style and content as is evident in Beaty's study.

A greater interest in contextualisation is afforded by period specific studies such as that of Matsuda (1997). He draws heavily upon Jacques Le Goff's (1984) exposition of Purgatory in order to situate his study of Middle English didactic writings, focusing upon the practical role which the *Ars Moriendi* played in the doctrine of Purgatory. The texts are regarded as handbooks for the successful administration of the deathbed. However, the way in which they were actually used is not considered. Despite locating his discussion within the context of late medieval piety, Matsuda (1997) does not integrate the *Ars Moriendi* with its surroundings. His examination of the texts is somewhat superficial, acknowledging only the authors' aims in composing them with no consideration of how their meaning could have changed in the act of use. He writes that:

It (the *Ars Moriendi*) is essentially a manual for the instruction of the living person who, recognizing himself as the *Moriens*, practices in preparation for his own death.

(1997:192)

However, the extent of the final demands which are loaded upon *Moriens* render it unlikely that the craft of dying was ever carried out exactly as the text prescribes. Matsuda does not consider the lack of specificity conferred upon the deathbeds of the *Ars Moriendi*, which severely limits the extent to which its formula for a good death could be considered practical. An understanding of the aims of the author in creating the text does not equate with an understanding of its actual function on deployment. The extent to which those aims were realised was contingent upon the background of the audience and what they sought to gain from the experience of reading.

A New Approach

The *Ars Moriendi* is commonly regarded by historians and literary scholars as a body of instructive literature whose meaning and application were fixed by the author at its inception. Both disciplines acknowledge that the texts reflect aspects of their historical environment, but there is little consideration of their capacity to act back upon their surroundings through interaction with the readership. In order to comprehend the place of the *Ars Moriendi* tradition in medieval and early modern society, it is necessary to consider it alongside other manifestations of human mortality. These texts outlined the ideal death, regardless of the social and economic circumstances of *Moriens* or the nature of his/her demise. The ethos of the *Ars Moriendi* defined all deaths between the 15th and the 17th century as either good or bad. In reality, it is unlikely that any death met all of the criteria for either categorization. The addition of individual circumstance to the art of dying affords the capacity for a great deal of reinterpretation. The nature and extent of this process will only become apparent on comparison with the other forms of material culture. Funerary monuments, sermons and wills provide some insight into how particular social and economic classes approached death. Such lasting remembrances can be used to gauge how far the ideal of the *Ars Moriendi* was altered through its encounter with the reality of dying. Though often formulaic, such manifestations of human mortality convey socially acceptable responses to death. As such, the extent of

conformity between the sentiments of the *Ars Moriendi* and those conveyed through death-centred material culture may provide an insight into how the former was received by its intended audience.

Conclusion

The interpretations placed upon the *Ars Moriendi* by its readership were not necessarily the same as those which were accorded to it by its progenitors. Considering each text in context affords the possibility of multiple readings, since every reader reinterpreted the documents in accordance with his or her own social and economic circumstances. The tendency of social historians to generalize with regard to the role of these texts acknowledges only one interpretation of the literature. Similarly, those working within the field of literary studies have also managed to remove the readership in focusing solely upon the author's motives in constructing the texts. By considering the *Ars Moriendi* texts alongside other forms of material culture, such as funerary monuments, it is possible to contextualise them in terms of their relationship with prosaic mortality. These documents presented an ideal which was supposed to be emulated for the spiritual betterment of the dying and their kin. However, a lack of attendant context allowed for greater interpretative flexibility than the authors intended. The superficial neutrality of such texts facilitated processes of reinterpretation within specific contexts of deployment. Their skeletal framework was inevitably fleshed out with reference to the social and economic background of the consumer, overshadowing any moralistic purpose with more prosaic motives.

Print in Gloucestershire

Early Book Production in England

Prior to the late 15th century, the book industry in England was based on patronage and commission. New works were produced at the direction of wealthy families as gifts and benefactions (Friar 1998:55). Pearsall (1989:6) notes that Jean Froissant presented a copy of his poems to Richard II in 1395, while a copy of Chaucer's *The Legend of Good Women* was gifted to Queen Anne (Pearsall 1989:6). Records alluding to the movement of texts are restricted to the upper echelons of society. Supply was limited, books were expensive and trade restricted to second-hand titles. This exclusivity was compounded by

the relatively small size of the English medieval book industry. This led patrons to commission and collect books from the Continent (Pearsall 1989:7), which made them even more precious. The most frequently cited examples of documents predating 1475 are the fine illuminated manuscripts produced in the monastic *scriptoria*. It is clear, however, that by the mid 14th century non-clerical production, distribution and ownership of books was growing. Pearsall links this to the growth of universities in the 12th and 13th centuries, organising themselves independently of the monastic and cathedral schools which had previously monopolised education (2001:3). The text became a repository of both lay and religious wisdom. Secular and clerical custodians of that knowledge had reason to amass books in order to display that knowledge to their peers and mark themselves off from the rest of society. Early lay book ownership in Gloucestershire is exemplified by a single surviving volume, Bodley 953, which Hanna (1989:883) has attributed to Sir Thomas Berkeley. This Psalter, composed in English in the late 14th century, is a testament to the huge wealth and power of the Berkeley family in the 1300s. The sumptuous nature of this text marks it as a private commission and thus beyond the means of the vast majority of the population.

In this context, the displacement of vellum and parchment by paper and the introduction of print had a revolutionary impact upon perceptions of text and the type of people who had access to it (MacCulloch 1995:618). In addition to the manuscripts retained by the universities, the survival of 15th century fiscal texts from Bristol suggests that merchants also welcomed the introduction of paper (Lyall 1989:13). Books had always had an impact on the lives of ordinary people. The Bible and other liturgical texts structured religious life, whilst secular texts such as Domesday structured and mediated ownership. However, from the 15th century, block books and printed sheets placed text directly into the hands of the masses. Access alone was no longer an indication of wealth and status. Book production became increasingly entrepreneurial, as trade expanded from that of second-hand commissions to a thriving industry run by the Stationer's Company.

Some divisions seem to have persisted with regard to book ownership. The possession of a large library was an indication of rank and power. The printed works encountered by the majority would probably have been far less substantial, consisting of only one or two sheets. These divisions were also marked by the degree of literacy possessed by member of the population. This term is difficult to define within the context

of medieval society. For medieval scholars, *literati* were those versed in Latin, the favoured language of reading and writing prior to the 15th century. This would have excluded the vast majority of the population. In his *Policraticus*, John of Salisbury affirmed the importance of a knowledge of the great Latin orators and historian, affirming that “those who are ignorant of those writers are termed illiterate even if they can read and write” (1159 [1972]:97). The ability to read and write Latin was determined by wealth and privilege. However, colloquial reading and writing became increasingly widespread from the 12th century onwards (Bauml 1980:244). The introduction of print gave vernacular production a boost, associating literacy with English as well as Latin and so democratizing reading and writing. Early texts covered a variety of interests and came in many forms, ranging from thin pamphlets to weighty tomes (Bennett 1969:65). Within decades of Caxton setting his press in Westminster, there was something to suit every disposition, aptitude and nearly every pocket. Caxton appears to have focused largely on religious texts, perhaps through personal interest or in acknowledgment of the ready market for such texts (Bennett 1969:65). The coincident popularity of block books in France and Germany, which concentrated on biblical and other religious topics (Wood 2000) would have given the earliest printers an idea of what was likely to sell. Indeed, one of the earliest works to be printed by Caxton was *The Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*, the subject matter of which was popular within the block book tradition. The popularity of such works should be seen within the context of the increasing assumption of devotional forms by congregations from the 14th century. Aston (1993:2-4) highlights the appeal of tactile devotional forms, such as pilgrimages, saints’ cults and relics as evidence of the increasing desire for interaction with the Holy. The mass printing of works of Christian instruction catered to this desire, giving the laity palpable access to religious instruction in spite of well documented clerical misgivings.

Evidence for Regional Book Trading

The vast majority of evidence relating to the English book industry concerns the London businesses. Bennett (1969:178) notes the existence of approximately 12 printers working outside of London between 1478 and 1557, including those in Scotland, Ireland and the Provinces. In the late 17th century London was the publishing capital of England (Walker 1998:139). At this time there were around 150-250 well documented booksellers in London, and possibly many more keeping a lower profile (Walker 1998:140). The

Licensing Act of 1662 established a register of licensed books, along with a requirement to deposit a copy of the book to be licensed which was administered by the Stationers Company. Walker (1998:139) has also proposed that books may have been peddled by other companies, such as Haberdashers. Under these circumstances, it is difficult to see how the incidence of surviving texts and the probate inventories which occasionally detail their existence can be considered as a reliable index for the literary preferences of other regions of England. However, if books could be brought in from Continental Europe for rich patrons during previous centuries, it is not difficult to imagine texts making their way from London to Northumbria, Cornwall or Gloucestershire along with other produce. Cressy has cited numerous examples of 17th century consumers from across the country who regularly acquired books from London:

Sir Richard Leveson in Staffordshire received streams of newsbooks and pamphlets from London.. The Northamptonshire squire Roland St. John regularly thanked his cousin Hugh Floyde for ‘the books and letters of news, which to us in the country is of great contentment’. Richard Finch sent John Pym’s latest speech and ‘another scurrilous pamphlet which this day came forth, to make you a little merry withall’.

(2003:62)

No other city in Britain could compete with London’s manufacturing industry. However, access to the capital’s resources was maintained in tandem with ongoing social, political and economic communication. The presence of Parliament ensured that those in positions of power within the counties would have frequent contact with the capital.

Gloucestershire was no exception; county names such as Berkeley, Wynter and Percy frequently appear in Court records. Numerous memorials attest to the link between local personalities and London throughout the late medieval and early modern period. Edward II is interred in Gloucester Cathedral. The links between his government and the Despencers, buried in Tewkesbury Abbey, are well documented. George Monox, commemorated in St. John the Baptist, Cirencester, was a sheriff of London in the early 17th century. From the 13th century, Gloucester sent two burgesses to Parliament, and so maintained a constant link with the capital. Under these circumstances, book ownership within the county may be inferred even if no material testament survives.

In addition to printers, numerous other occupations were involved in the production and distribution of books, such as stationers, bookbinders, text writers and apprentices (Paul-Christianson 1989:88). As with the printers, it is not known how many of these craftsmen were working in Gloucestershire between the 14th and 17th centuries (Fig.3.2). Their presence cannot be discounted simply because no evidence survives. Paul-Christianson (1989:101) has highlighted the need for a clearer understanding of the nature of the early book trade outside of London. He has suggested that the study of the book trade in London should be regarded as the starting point for an extensive study of the early English printing industry. However, no trace of the earliest craftsmen remains in Gloucestershire. Even if this proves not to be the case in other regions, it is unlikely that any will equal the volume of evidence which survives from London.



Figure 3.2: 'The Road From Salisbury to Campden'. A map of Gloucestershire by John Owen dated to 1731. The caption below describes the prosperity of the county and its principle commodities.

The earliest evidence for the book trade in Gloucestershire dates from the early 17th century. A bookseller named Toby Jordan is known to have lived and worked in Gloucester in 1632 (Norris 1912). The only other surviving references from this century are to the Barksdales of Cirencester. Norris (1912) notes that the Barksdale name appears in a volume entitled *Pray for the Peace of Jerusalem*, which was printed for ‘John Barksdale, Bookseller in Cicester, 1680’. Norris also cites a notice of Clement Barksdale in Wood’s *Athene Oxoniensis*, Vol iv, cols. 221-5. This list of books given includes *Against Paganism, Judaism, Mahomatism, Together With Some Account of the Three Former Discourses. For God, Christ, Scripture. Newly Collected and Translated for John Barksdale, Bookbinder Next Door to the Five Bells in New Street 1678*. The most interesting aspect of this reference is that it also states that Barksdale was in London in 1678 (Norris 1912). This would indicate a direct link between the Cirencester book trade and that of the capital. Any text available in 17th century London could have found its way back to Gloucestershire with Barksdale and so be passed on to his patrons.

The first records of individual book ownership in the county also date to the 17th century. The majority of instances can be gleaned from wills and probate inventories. The number of entries is surprisingly small. Between 1661 and 1700, only 18% of probate inventories from Cheltenham mention book ownership (Sale 1999:xxi). These references are rarely comprehensive, referring to books collectively as ‘a library’ or ‘other small books’ rather than giving individual titles. The most commonly mentioned books are bibles. However, there are some exceptions. Gloucester Record Office holds a list of medical, historical and theological books owned by John Deighton, surgeon of Gloucester in 1640 (GRO TRS/103). His devotional texts included John Calvin’s *How Man May Live Among the Papists*, *A Christian Dictionary*, John Frith’s *Disputation of Purgatory* and Solomon’s *Divin Arts*. A list of books contained in a commonplace book owned by Nathaniel Clutterbuck of Eastington in 1656 includes *A Treatise of the Politician*, *Disputations Anti-Britannium* and works by Galen (GRO D149/F13). Thomas Daunt’s extensive library is detailed in an account book dating from 1639 to 1739 (GRO D979/E3). His possessions included including Dante in French and Italian, a French Bible, Spanish dictionaries, Essays of Sir Francis Bacon, a number of philosophy books and Odes of Horace. Although the list itself dates to 1728, it can be assumed that the texts were accumulated over a number of years and thus are relevant to this enquiry. The lists of books owned elsewhere in the country are no more comprehensive. Isolated instances

provide some clues to type of subjects which appealed to those with the means to purchase books. The inventory of Alexander Keswell, a Bristol woollen draper who died c.1644 listed the following texts in his inventory:

2 books of matins, the survey of London, Josephus his history, Rastall's abridgement, Dubartas, a booke of common prayer, The disruccion of Troy, A Defence of the way to the true Church, Primaleon of Greece, Daniell's history, Annales, The Seaven Champions, Preservacions against Synn, An exposition on the Lord's Prayer, George Withers, The plaine mans pathway to heaven, a bride bushe, Three French books.

(1644 [2002]:145)

There is a huge disparity between the number of texts which survive from the period c.1350-1700 and those whose ownership was documented. There is a clear preference for admonitory tracts within the surviving lists. However, this pattern may represent the books which consumers were most likely to keep, rather than those which were regularly purchased. There are no references to chapbooks, pamphlets or broadsides, but these can be assumed to have been encountered and purchased, if not retained, by a large percentage of the population.

It is clear that a variety of texts were available to consumers in and around the county. Book ownership in the 17th century was not restricted to the very wealthy. A surgeon such as John Deighton would have been of moderate means in comparison to the Daunt family of Owlpen, which resided in Owlpen manor and patronised the local parish church. The surviving traces of book ownership in the county are admittedly sparse. However, a lack of historical verification cannot be translated into proof of absence. Within the context of this study, it would seem particularly relevant that no evidence survives for the purchase of *Ars Moriendi* texts by consumers in the county. Gloucester Record Office records only 8 instances of book ownership known prior to 1700 (Table 3.1). Outside of the region covered by this study, Bristol's probate inventories are rather more comprehensive. Between 1542 and 1650, they record approximately 42 references in 334 transcribed inventories (George and George 2002:xii). It is a safe assumption that more than 42 people in the city owned or had access to a book. In these circumstances there is some justification for the inference of purchase by proxy. The increasing quantity

of print generated by London between the 15th and 17th centuries is well attested. A vast number of texts survive, as do the names of their producers, traders and consumers. Since Gloucestershire maintained strong links with the capital throughout the period under study, it is presumed that the output of the London printers would have reached the county by some means.

Conclusion

Instructive texts survive in the London records from the late 15th century onwards, not only relating to death, but also subjects such as hawking, farming and gardening. Even in the absence of provincial printers, the capital's extensive social and economic links would have ensured that these texts were carried to the rest of the country. The surviving evidence for the book trade in Gloucestershire is poor, but the county's social and economic ties with London are undeniable. As Bennett (1969:65) has stated, further research is needed in order to understand the true extent of the provincial book trade. Other counties may yield more material which could reflect favourably on the industry in Gloucestershire. Even in the absence of such research, however, it is reasonable to assume that any text produced in London could easily have found a market anywhere in the country.

Table 3.1: Known instances of book ownership in Gloucestershire prior to the 18th century as recorded in Gloucester Record Office.

GRO Ref	Date	Details
D149/F13, ff.1 127-8	1656	List of Books of Nathaniel Clutterbuck of Eastington.
D149/F16	1694	Will of Thomas Clutterbuck, Bequeathing Books.
D979/E3	1639-1739	List of Books Bought By Thomas Daunt of Owlpen in Account Book.
D1799/E235	c.1700	List of Books at Dyrham Park.
D1799/E247	c.1700	Sale of Books From Thomas Povey, Art Collector to William Braithwayte
D1799/E254-76 (E269)	1691	Household Inventories of Dyrham Park, Inc. Books.
TRS103	1640	List of Medical, Historical and Theological Books of John Deighton, Surgeon of Gloucester.
D37/2/1	1623-44	List of Books in a House in Thornbury and Bought in Bristol.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Regional Perspective on the Relationship Between the *Ars Moriendi* and Commemoration

Relating Funerary Monuments and the *Ars Moriendi*

The *Ars Moriendi* were preparatory texts, intended to instruct the reader in the proper performance of death well in advance of its occurrence. They constitute an idealized, anticipative beginning to the rite of passing within the context of orthodox spirituality. Funerary monuments manifest the realization and termination of the rite of death. The solidification of the memory of the deceased within the spiritual and social space of the church represents the imposition of the reality of death upon the ideals advocated by the ecclesiastical authorities. They are the end result of the filtration of the *Ars Moriendi* through the cultural and economic circumstances of the deceased and their kin. In order to understand the process of mediation which occurred between the reading of the text and the rendering of the monument, it is necessary to bring together the messages which they sought to convey. The majority of existing studies of the *Ars Moriendi* have chosen to regard them as unambiguous indications of how people sought to die. By comparing the aspirations of the literature with the material traces of death in the parish church, it is possible to determine exactly what the wealthy did with the knowledge gained from the conduct books. Collating text and material culture permits an understanding of how the social, economic and cultural tensions imposed by everyday life could be reconciled with the instructions conveyed by the *Ars Moriendi*.

Defining the Sample

Chronological Definition

The chronological scope of this enquiry was devised in order to take in the main florescence of the English *Ars Moriendi*. The inception of the tradition was marked by the translation of the *Tractatus Artis Bene Moriendi* c.1430, along with a number of shorter derivative texts (Atkinson 1992:xiii). The legacy culminates in the



Figure 4.1: Location of the county of Gloucestershire in relation to the rest of the England.



Figure 4.2 A map of Gloucestershire, showing its three geographical regions.

production of Jeremy Taylor's *The Holy Dying* in the later 17th century (Beaty 1970:198). Numerous authors remarked upon the subject of death prior to the 15th century and continued to do so after Taylor. However, it is only during the period covered by this study that texts were produced specifically to instruct the reader in how to die. Therefore, by tracing the development of the *Ars Moriendi* treatises, from William Caxton and the earliest translators to the extended works of Jeremy Taylor and William Perkins, this enquiry seeks to clarify the growth and decline of the instructive tradition. Beaty (1970) and Atkinson (1992) have also attempted to chart the progression of the *Ars Moriendi* in England. However, neither author has attempted to situate the texts within a material context. By contrast, this enquiry relates their development to other forms of material culture, specifically funerary monuments. The latter part of this period witnesses the first instances of extramural commemoration in Gloucestershire. As Mytum (2006:105) has pointed out, the cultural phenomenon of extramural commemoration, its links to identity, social ideology and the distribution of wealth have not been fully explored. This study will seek to find reasons for the growth of extramural commemoration which will consider the social and economic environment of those choosing to be commemorated in this way. The period between 1350 and 1700 embraces a number of historically contentious processes, most of which are traditionally affiliated to stylistic changes in funerary art. These include the aftermath of the Black Death, the rise of mercantile capitalism, the English Reformation and the Civil War. Some attempt will be made to clarify how far such events and processes are visible within the *Ars Moriendi* texts and the material culture of death. The impact of wider circumstances upon attitudes to death among the wealthy will thus be contrasted with the effects of localized concerns, such as status display and the affirmation of genealogy.

Why a Regional Study?

The significance of localized social, cultural and economic changes within the impact of wider historical processes is a central debate within modern historiography. Indeed, contemporary historical discourse appears to be polarized between researchers seeking to build history from the ground, through intensive regional study, and those working downwards from the national narrative. This study inclines towards the former. However, it also seeks to locate the history of death in Gloucestershire within a broader social context (Fig.4.1, 4.2). The relationship between local and national history should

be reciprocal. Intensive study within specific regions results in focused conclusions which can then be brought together to confirm or deny assumptions relating to the impact of documented historical processes. As such, this enquiry focuses incisively upon a single region of England, examining all its funerary art in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of how its affluent inhabitants approached death. This study can in turn be combined with similar endeavors across the country, in order to engender a comprehensive picture of English mortality.

Such an intensive study also reacts against the trend in some histories of death to decontextualise material culture and use it selectively in illustration of their arguments. Finch has remarked upon the tendency of extant studies of funerary monuments to ignore the immediate situation of their data:

This disregard for spatial contexts ranged from ignoring the relationship between monuments in the same church to overlooking the region of the country in which they were located.

(2001:7)

A regional enquiry such as this provides an opportunity to fix every monument within its physical and cultural landscape. The erection of each memorial is primarily regarded in terms of its proximate environment and the personal circumstances of the deceased, prior to its placement within the context of overarching historical phenomena. Such an approach personalizes the study of the art of dying, affording the possibility of individual agency. Therefore, this enquiry advocates the illumination of personal attitudes to death prior to the establishment of general conclusions with regard to its practice across England. Moving from specific cases to generic conclusions not only provides detailed information for local historians, but also particularizes the true impact of sweeping historical processes.

Gloucestershire's Historians

A number of antiquarian and secondary sources were consulted throughout the practical phase of this enquiry. These commentaries were vital in detecting the inevitable cultural and natural depredations which had acted upon the data set over time. The monuments had occasionally been moved in their early history, sundering their original

contextual relationships. Often inscriptions, heraldry and other attributes had become damaged or weathered. In such cases, the county's rich narrative tradition was of fundamental importance in the reconstructing the original countenance of the memorials. Willcox (1940:xii) is critical of the propensity of early antiquarians to focus upon people and events of national importance. He cites Samuel Rudder's statement that 'common occurrences are improper for history, because uninteresting' (Rudder 1779:vi). Although it is true the pre-20th century histories were written with the gentility in mind, they are certainly not without value. The meticulous recording of monuments by individuals such as the Lyson brothers and Ralph Bigland provides a two hundred year old window onto the memorials of Gloucestershire. Without their works, it would be impossible to determine how much information has been degraded, altered or destroyed in the interim.

The earliest local histories of Gloucestershire often pay particular attention to the memorials and antiquities of the county. This may be a consequence of the degree of damage inflicted upon many family monuments during the years of the Reformation. The fragility of the past was abundantly clear to the earliest Elizabethan historians. This is shown to an extent by Camden's *Britannia* (1588 [1610]) which provided the first comprehensive topographical survey of England. However, the fact that Camden was criticised by his contemporaries for not including enough information on individual families (Piggott 2000:12) reveals the main reason behind the proliferation of county histories from the late 16th century. The majority of early researchers were not simply alarmed by the destruction of the past, but more specifically by the severance of the ancient ties of the established families. The earliest extant history of Gloucestershire was composed by John Smyth in the early 17th century. His *Lives of the Berkeleys* (1618 [1883-5]) charts the history of the family whom he served, eulogizing each member and promulgating their role in the history of England. However, as Moir (1957:268) has noted, this is more than the history of a family. Smyth utilizes the family as a framework upon which to base a history of the lands to which he was steward, remarking upon agricultural regimes and industries. He not only places his lords at the heart of the county's history, but also at the core of its historiography.

Lives of the Berkeleys is the root of the historical tradition in Gloucestershire and therefore sets the standard for all subsequent county histories. Moir (1957:268) has labelled Smyth's text a work of patriotism. It is actually a decidedly parochial work,

manipulating the history of England to benefit the Berkeleys rather than extolling the virtues of the country itself. This is consistent with wider trends in the historiography of 17th century England. Richardson (2000:2) has suggested that such a tendency to focus upon counties was a hallmark of local history from the late 16th century, reflecting the sociopolitical realities of the day. The specifics of the county were the principal concern of the intended audience of these texts. The local elite maintained a substantial degree of autonomy and were keen to enact their power and wealth upon the restricted county stage. This was facilitated by the capacity to root themselves in antiquity through an authoritative county history, provided by local antiquarians. Robert Thoroton's (1677 [1972]) *Antiquities of Nottinghamshire* and William Dugdale's (1656) *Antiquities of Worcestershire* are similarly parochial. However, few focus so explicitly on a single family as Smyth. As they are both his patrons and his principle audience, Smyth is unapologetic in his manipulation of the history of the nation to their benefit.

Successive county historians maintained Smyth's propensity to exploit the grand narrative of English history in the glorification of their region and its affluent residents. Robert Atkyn's *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire* (1712 [1974]) has the tone of a gentleman addressing his peers. He describes each parish, focusing upon the nature of the church and the descent of the manor. Atkyn's work is of importance since it constituted the first printed history of Gloucestershire (Smith 1974:v) and was extensively utilized by all subsequent antiquaries. Unlike Smyth, he does not focus upon a single family. As a result, his work was deemed a vitally relevant source to successive county authors. It was followed by Samuel Rudder's *A New History of Gloucestershire* (1779). As Rudder had a much humbler background than Atkyns, it might be assumed that his history would be relevant to those of lesser social standing. Atkyns was a student of Oxford and member of three parliaments, whereas Rudder was the son of a Uley pig killer and the owner of a Cirencester printing firm (Moir 1957:277). However, non-elite social history was nonexistent at this time and Rudder effects no revolution with his decision to also focus upon the institutions of Church and State and the ancestry of the local dignitaries.

Much of Rudder's information was derived from questionnaires distributed to local landowners and as such it is natural that his work should favor them. However, his

ignoble background is noticeable in places. He disapproves of the enclosure of common lands and sympathizes with the tenants who lost their livelihood as a result:

Miserable! To be expelled from their place of their nativity, unworthy
to breathe the air in common with their lords and masters.

(1779:vi)

Such outspoken polemic would have appeared decidedly out of place in Atkyn's text. It offers a fleeting glimpse of the personal circumstances of the author from behind a cloak of established historical writing. Otherwise, however, Rudder and Atkyns have much in common. Both men define their county in terms of its leading families. Their texts are parochial, detailing the history and main institutions of each parish with little or no reference to the rest of the country. Both deemed history to be an exercise in the establishment of reputations. The national narrative constituted too great a stage on which to locate the petty landowners of Gloucestershire. Atkyns and Rudder restrict their focus to county level, contriving greatness within a circumscribed environment. This accords well with other county histories which were produced in the mid to late 18th century. John Throsby's work on the county of Leicestershire (1789, 1791) typify the late 18th century antiquarian's fixation with wealthy families and country houses. Barley and Train have commented derisively on Throsby's criteria for discussing an estate at length:

.. A handsome house, suitable planting and a lake or stretch of water.
Given all these three, he did not stint his praise, especially if the water
had a boat or two

(2000:63)

The histories of large country residences and the descent of their wealthy incumbents were thus the stock trade of the late 18th century historian.

However, Bigland's *Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections Relative to the County of Gloucester* (1786 [1992]) is something of an exception to the rule. This constitutes the most important reference work for anyone engaged in the study of Gloucestershire's memorials, as it comprehensively details almost every memorial in the county. Bigland was concerned not just with the landed wealth of the county, but with every family which could afford commemoration. In common with previous enquiries,

Bigland was concerned to detail the bloodlines of the country's families. As a genealogist and archaeologist, his methods differed substantially from those of Atkyns and Rudder. He achieved his aims almost through the study of elite commemoration and unsurprisingly the lower reaches of society receive no mention within his volumes. However, Bigland's work does provide a uniquely comprehensive insight into the nature of commemoration in Gloucestershire prior to the 19th century and so constitutes the main secondary source utilized in this study.

The purpose of the county history was decisively stated by TD Fosbrooke in his *Abstracts and Records of Manuscripts Relating to the County of Gloucester*, written in the early 19th century. Seemingly in response to some critical remark on a preceding text, he wrote that:

Record and pedigree are the grand fit constituent parts of every legitimate county history and if they are dull, it should be remembered that utility is the proper fit character of such works.

(1807:229)

Fosbrooke saw antiquarian writing as a functional activity, distinct from history. The former was concerned with genealogy, whilst the latter dealt with the deeds in individuals. Both he and Bigland sought to spin their county histories from a myriad ancestral threads. Each lineage played an equal part in the establishment of the regional narrative. Although still restricted to the upper echelons of society, these accounts were thus intended to exalt the counties' collective past, rather than to praise individual families.

From the mid 19th century, the study of Gloucestershire had diversified to include research into individual towns and villages, place names studies, family histories and architectural surveys. Moir (1957:283) has stated that this was the era which laid the foundations for the study of local history. Although genealogical studies were still produced, there was no longer deemed to be one purpose for history. Individual researchers concentrated upon the aspects of county history which interested them. Stratford (1867) chose to describe a number of famous inhabitants of Gloucestershire, such as Bishop John Hooper. Despite professing a desire to promote the interests of the inhabitants of the county, his *Good and Great Men of Gloucestershire* is essentially

hagiography and barely mentions them. The parochial histories of Blunt and Beecham, also highlight illustrious figures associated with their towns. Blunt (1877) uses the early influence of the Berkeleys in Dursley to tie the town into the history of the English aristocracy. Beecham (1887) provides an extended commentary on the capture of the Earls of Salisbury and Kent in 1400, affirming the importance of Cirencester during the Wars of the Roses. Such local studies attempted to find fame for their subjects by highlighting their fleeting presence upon the national historical stage. Such parochial eulogies also used archaeology as a source of fame, since its relative ambiguity permitted a welcome degree of interpretative latitude. For Blunt, the remains of Dursley Castle provided material confirmation of the town's past importance, while the Roman antiquities of Cirencester gave depth to Beecham's declaration of past greatness.

Early parochial histories were intended to bring notoriety to obscure regions by associating them with known historical events and personalities. However, they also helped to narrow the focus of county history, bringing it closer to the ordinary residents of the parishes. Richardson (2000:3) associates this trend with a widening of the social base of antiquarianism across the country. The development of railway transport combined with increased wealth and widening literacy to encourage more people to explore their surroundings (Richardson 2000:3). This in turn resulted in a diverse range of approaches to the study of county history. However, it was only in the early 20th century that the history of the towns and villages became the history of its inhabitants. The *Victoria History of the Counties of England*, begun in 1899, aimed to present a comprehensive picture of all aspects of life in the English counties. Vol. II of the Gloucestershire set included Butler's *Social and Economic History* (1907:41-55). This represented a decisive shift away from the study of documented individuals and families towards the nature of the livelihood of the majority of the county's residents. Butler took an analytical approach to his data, investigating how the social history of the county had been shaped by agriculture, the cloth trade and other prominent industries.

Towards the middle of the 20th century, an increasing number of researchers began to focus upon specific aspects of life in Gloucestershire. The style of parochial history which had been advocated by Blunt (1877) and Beecham (1887) persisted in the form of pocket guides and popular histories of Gloucestershire, such as Alexander's (1980) *The Story of Coberley* and Archer's (1982) *A New History of Dursley*. However,

the number of studies dealing with particular aspects of the economic, social and religious life of the county increased greatly into the latter part of the century. Researchers such as Willcox (1940) recognized that detailed local study was a necessary precursor to the creation of national social and economic accounts. Intensive provincial study not only enriched the county narrative, but also applied detail to the history of the nation as a whole:

The emphasis used to be on the policies and troubles of monarchs, or on the developments of opinion among their articulate subjects. It is becoming more and more evident that such matters were the facade of England, which can only be fully understood in relation to the interior.

(1940:xi)

The structural emphasis of such studies is linked to the increasing academic acceptability of local history.

The majority of works were produced in universities outside of Gloucestershire, by researchers with no personal connections to the region. Rollinson's (1992) *The Local Origins of Modern Society* was published in London, while Beaver's (1998) *Parish Communities and Religious Conflict in the Vale of Gloucestershire* was produced by Harvard Historical Press in Boston. These researchers managed effortlessly to avoid the eulogistic tendencies of the 18/19th century provincial historians. Their intention was to use local detail in order to deconstruct the presumptions of national history. The complexities of 16th century religious belief in Gloucestershire are revealed in Litzenberger's (1997) work, affirming the possibility of a similar lack of conformity across the country. Johnson (1989) highlights the difficulties involved in the economic and social definition of Gloucestershire's gentle classes, refuting the tendency of historians to use such labels indiscriminately. Rollinson's *The Local Origins of Modern Society* (1992) searches for the origins of modern day capitalism in the 16th century Gloucestershire's cloth trade.

Despite their divergent interests, Rollinson, Beaver, Litzenberger and Johnson are concerned to enrich the history of a single area in order to challenge and augment the study of the country as a whole. The county's socioeconomic regions are regarded as 'cradles of change' (Rollinson 1992:21) which, together with those of other regions,

engendered the broader structures of the nation. A similar approach has recently been adopted by Finch (2000) in Norfolk. His study of church monuments before 1850 elaborated upon systems of commemoration in a single region. In doing so, he aimed to create a comprehensive data set which would enable him to draw informed conclusions relating to the place of memorials in systems of social legitimacy among throughout the country. The elaboration of localized economic and social systems adds detail to the study of England as a whole, challenging the traditional thematic emphases of social historians. The local histories of the late 20th and early 21st century seek to contest and enhance the national debate. They link into the English narrative, providing a check on assumed economic and social trends.

Why Study Gloucestershire?

There are several reasons why Gloucestershire was chosen for study. As a lifelong resident of the county, the author was familiar with its fascinating historical development, significant role in the national narrative and rich commemorative material culture. All of these factors have been addressed by its antiquarians. However, the county, its material culture and its writers have received less extensive treatment than some other English counties, such as Devon and Norfolk. Between the 14th and the 19th centuries, Gloucestershire was a particularly affluent county. The ascendancy of the cloth trade between the 14th and 19th centuries was the determinant factor in the decision to study Gloucestershire alongside the *Ars Moriendi*. Writing in the early 18th century, Robert Atkyns proposed that:

The cloth trade is so preeminent in the county that no other manufacture deserves a mention. It is computed that 50,000 cloths are made yearly which may be calculated by the seals of the *Aulnage*, and by the many wagon loads which go weekly to London, besides the cloth vended in this county, at Bristol and other places.

(1712 [1974]:78)

The florescence of the trade from the 14th century is attested by the memorials and benefactions of wealthy merchants such as the Tames, which are scattered across Gloucestershire. The wealth brought upon the county by the cloth trade led to the erection of a significant number of memorials, many of which have survived well. The hereditary

wealth of the county and the incremental resources of individuals associated with the cloth trade were thus key to the production of a viable data set for this enquiry.

The Landscape

The landscape of Gloucestershire is routinely divided into Hill, Vale and Forest. The topography of each region is traditionally held to correspond to particular soil types, agricultural regimes and industries. Samuel Rudder links the nature of these regions to the character of their inhabitants. Of the people of the Forest, he affirms that the gentry are courteous and hospitable and the poor agreeable. However:

This country was formerly so entirely covered with wood and so dark and terrible and the roads so intricate, from crossing each other, that it rendered the inhabitants barbarous and emboldened them to commit many robberies and outrages.

(1779:37)

Obviously there is little accuracy in such stereotypes. The traditional threefold division of the country will be maintained within the context of this study in relation to topography. It is acknowledged that they do not represent geographical absolutes; there are low-lying areas in the Cotswold Hills, valleys in the Forest and elevated areas in the Vale. However, these broad differences undoubtedly played a part in shaping the economic life of the county. For this reason, and in respect of local historiographical traditions, the threefold subdivision of hill, vale and forest will be retained during this discussion .

In the early 14th century, the majority of the land across the county was retained by the major religious houses, such as Tewkesbury Abbey, Llanthony Priory and Hailes Abbey (Fig.4.3). Saul (1981:86-7) has stated that the extent and antiquity of these holdings played an important role in shaping the economic life of the county. However, much of this land was maintained by lay stewards, presiding over the manorial courts in lieu of the Abbot. Substantial estates were also held by aristocratic families, such as the Berkeleys, who also delegated responsibility to trusted vassals. Thus, despite the substantial ecclesiastical holdings within the county, it was the lay retainers who were truly responsible for the economic prosperity of the region. Regarded within this context, their assumption of monastic lands in the mid 16th century seems to be a logical

ECCLESIASTICAL MAP
of
GLOUCESTERSHIRE
showing **RURAL DEANERIES** and **RELIGIOUS HOUSES**
according to the Valor Ecclesiasticus of 1535



Figure 4.3: Rural deaneries and religious houses in Gloucestershire in the early 16th century.

(Image: Graham 1907:52)

progression of an extant system of land holding, rather than an abrupt seizure of religious property.

In the 14th century, Gloucestershire was preeminently a county of villeinage (Saul 1981:30). The Vale of Gloucestershire was characterized by dispersed settlement, surrounded by open fields which were divided into strips with earthen boundaries (Fig.4.4). Bounded by the Cotswold Escarpment to the east and the River Severn to the west, this area is conventionally noted for its rich, heavy soils and thus was extremely productive. Rudder (1779:21) extols the virtues of the area, contrasting the life and spirit of its soils with the thin marginality of the Cotswold earth. Accordingly, settlement within the Vale is and was more intensive than elsewhere in the county. There were few large settlements of any size (Saul 1981:2), but still more than any other region in the county. The proximity of the Vale to the Severn was a major factor in its prosperity during the medieval and early modern periods, facilitating the transportation of goods to the trading hubs of Bristol and Gloucester as well as to more distant markets. A comparatively mild climate, agricultural wealth and transport thoroughfares, in addition to the presence of the county town and proximity of Bristol, is probably the main reason behind the intense concentrations of lay magnates in this region. The region was easily the most populous in Gloucestershire.

The Cotswold region is demarcated on the west by the Cotswold Escarpment, which runs north east to south west from Chipping Campden to Bath. The thin, stony soils which predominate in this locality are usually associated with the pasturing of sheep (Fig.4.5). The high Cotswold downland in Brightwells Barrow Hundred was used as common pasture in the 14th century by landowners seeking compensation for the shortage of meadow land around the Thameside parishes (Herbert 1981:152). The area has also been mined for oolitic limestone, used to construct the buildings and drystone walls which are such a distinctive feature of the rural landscape. While it is important to note that mining and subsistence farming also contributed to the wealth of this region, the Cotswolds are undoubtedly best known for their associations with the cloth trade. Sheep were pastured on the thin soils of the hills by lay and monastic landowners; their wool, and later cloth was traded in the region's market towns. In the 15th century, the wealth of the cloth merchants is clearly evidenced by the rebuilding of churches such as St.Mary's in Fairford. This project, financed by the wool money of the Tames, clearly evidences the

increasing prosperity of the merchants and their desire to impress their status upon the landscape.

Centering on the Cotswold pastures, the cloth trade was responsible for the transformation of the landscape of Gloucester from ecclesiastical and hereditary properties to industrial and mercantile holdings. This change was greatly accelerated by the breakup of the monastic estates in the 16th century. Although the religious houses had pastured sheep in granges in the hills, the assumption of these lands by secular retainers added a commercial edge to pasturing. This speeded up the process of enclosure and so increased the productivity of the landscape. Therefore, although the exposed nature of the Cotswold hills and their comparatively thin soils encouraged the pasturing of sheep, the cloth trade was in turn to act back upon the landscape, laying down a patchwork of fields which greatly boosted the commercial viability of the region. The brasses of merchants which appear across the county from the 15th century are thus evidence of how far this system of land holding affected the social structure of the region. Men such as John Fortey, who gave £300 to the rebuilding of the nave at Northleach in 1458 (Morris 1989:357), and Edward Halyday, whose early 16th century brass is displayed at Minchinhampton, used the cloth trade to increase their fortunes and local standing. Therefore, aided by broader developments such as the dissolution of the monasteries, the geography of the region gradually allowed enterprise and capital to overtake hereditary principle as the main basis of authority.

The topography of specific regions within the county dictated how land was retained and exploited by its owners. Accordingly, the system of land holding in the Forest of Dean differs from that of the parishes east of the Severn. The region lies between the Severn and the Wye, stretching from Micheldean to Lydney (Evans 1909:13). Litzenger (1997:10) has defined the medieval Forest as a proto-industrial region, interspersed with pasture and mines. Similarly, Atkyns has written that:

.. the west part, or forest division, is sufficiently fruitful in good enclosed grounds and well furnished with woods and iron.

(Atkyns 1712 [1974]:32)

In addition to the provision of timber and iron ore, the region was noted for its coal mining and pasturing. This created a diverse landscape of forest, scattered fields and mines, which attest to the pre-industrial prosperity (Fig.4.6). The patchy nature of the landscape rendered it incompatible with the manorial system widespread in the Cotswold and Vale regions in the 15th century.

Saul (1981:5) notes that the medieval Forest had few affluent families in comparison with the rest of Gloucestershire. It maintained its own system of government, theoretically headed by the king's representative at the castle of St. Briavels, though this office was often held in absence by its incumbent (Wilcox 1940:6-7). Such political disparity was compounded by geographical segregation, furthering the sense of isolation felt by the inhabitants of the Forest and bestowed upon them by outsiders. The region rests between the Severn and the Wye, a situation which, in the absence of a bridge, effectively severed the region from the economic and social life of the county and even the country. The resulting sense of separation and autonomy among the inhabitants was further impressed by the ardent maintenance of the traditional rights of common bestowed in the 11th century. Although undeserving of the barbarous reputation which Rudder accords to them, the people of the Forest undoubtedly deserved their reputation for autonomous thinking. This is attested by a number of documented 16th century complaints against the Forest's residents, highlighting their refusal to uphold civil and ecclesiastical precepts circulated from across the river (Litzenberger 1997:11). Overall, it would appear that the Forest was less vulnerable to fluctuations in its economic fortunes than the regions to the east of the Severn between 1350 and 1700. Its residents were keen to maintain their traditions, and the principle attempts at enclosure and economic intensification came from outside the region. Willcox (1940: 92-4, 195-202) has noted that this region was especially prone to riots between the 16th and 17th centuries, as Dean's miners and lumber hands jealously guarded their autonomy in the face of Stuart encroachment on their rights. A collective desire to maintain such insular traditions, in spite of the instabilities of the 16th and 17th centuries, forced the residents of the Forest into an emphatic proclamation of independence. Unsurprisingly, accounts of transgressions against visiting governmental officials are manifold, increasing as a result of the Crown's attempts to curtail common rights from the 16th century.



Figure 4.4: A view of the Vale of Gloucestershire from the Cotswold Escarpment between Uley and Stroud, looking across to the River Severn and the Welsh Borders.



Figure 4.5: Sheep in pasture near Cirencester, once an important centre for the wooltrade in Gloucestershire.

The Urban Contrast

Gloucestershire has approximately thirty market towns, scattered across Hill, Vale and Forest. For the majority of the period under study, production and distribution were polarized between the countryside and the towns respectively. Prior to the late 14th century, a substantial degree of production did take place in larger centres such as Gloucester (Fig.4.7). However, in common with the rest of the country, this appears to have declined as manufacturing grew up on the periphery of smaller centres such as Stroud and Dursley. The relative proximity of resources such as wool and water, which became increasingly important as the export trade in wool declined to the benefit of the indigenous cloth trade, was undoubtedly a factor in the relocation of manufacturing. Like Lincoln and York, Gloucester lost its manufacturing industry to towns and villages located close to fast flowing rivers which could power the fulling mills. The consequent decline in the urban population of the city, no doubt aided by repeated outbreaks of plague, should not be equated with a decline in prosperity. Augmented production in the countryside was concomitant with the increasing importance of the larger towns as mercantile and organizational foci. The products of the countryside were traded out from Gloucester, which also acted as an administrative hub for the county. Such towns therefore became stages upon which the newly moneyed could enhance their reputation. They took up positions in local government and sought to represent the interests of their county in parliament. Merchants such as Reginald Spycer of Cirencester (d.1442) and John Tame of Fairford (d.1500) constituted the top economic and social tier in their towns. Their commanding presence in life was concomitant with a high degree of visibility in death, evinced by numerous brasses and generous benefactions to local churches. Wealth generated in the countryside was publically displayed through the media of Church and government. Therefore, by the late 16th century, the visibility of untitled wealth in the towns exceeded that of established magnates such as the Berkeleys.

Between the 14th and 18th centuries, the most wealthy and vital of Gloucestershire's market centres was the riverside county town. It stood apart from the other towns within the county by virtue of its size, autonomy and administrative complexity. Gloucester was the main mercantile and organizational centre between Worcester and Bristol throughout the period under study, trading the produce of its rural environs down the Severn. Despite suffering a population decline from the late 14th

century, the administrative system of the city grew steadily. Ripley (1976:120) has noted that the aldermen constituted the top social tier within the city. Civil administration appears to have been dominated by the mercantile and artisan classes. Between 1600 and 1640, the 31 aldermen who served as mayor included mercers, tanners and clothiers (Ripley 1976:120). The increasing prominence of such entrepreneurial wealth on the civil stage led to the increasing representation of governmental officials in the urban parish churches. The most striking 17th century memorials in Gloucester Cathedral are those of aldermen such as Thomas Machen (d.1614) and Abraham Blackleeche (d.1639).

The inclusion of the memorials of the Gloucester parishes in this study provides an opportunity to contrast the mortal concerns of the residents of the countryside with individuals who concerned themselves with the administration of the county. Those entrepreneurial individuals erecting memorials in urban churches ascended to office as a result of accumulated wealth from other professions, often outside of the city. The prioritization of civic office on memorials, combined with the decision to be commemorated in an urban context may be an indication of how highly such individuals regarded their situation in urban life and the prestige of lasting connections to county administration. By contrasting the monuments of town and country, it is hoped that this enquiry will be able to assess how far individual administrative and political visibility was a factor in their choice of commemoration and so the definition of a virtuous demise. Differences between the memorials of Gloucester and those of less politically significant areas of the county may also translate into the relative importance of outward display among the wealthier members of society. Monuments situated in urban contexts at Gloucester would be seen by far more people than those situated in rural churches such as Coberley or Ampney Crucis. As such, the comparative lavishness of rural monuments against urban memorials will also feature extensively in the context of this study.

Collecting the Data

Defining Gloucestershire

The county of Gloucestershire is bordered by Worcestershire and Warwickshire to the north, Oxfordshire and Berkshire to the east, Wiltshire and Somerset to the south and Herefordshire and Monmouthshire to the west. Its boundaries have not changed significantly since 1700. However, the late 19th and early 20th centuries saw a



Figure 4.6: The contemporary landscape of the Forest of Dean, near St. Briavels.



Figure 4.7: The city of Gloucester, illustrated in a map by John Speed.

(GRO MA-19-1-1)

number of minor exchanges with Monmouthshire, Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Fortunately, Robert Atkyns (1712 [1974]:33-40) has provided a list of the parishes contained within the county in the early 18th century. As he wrote his history only 12 years after the end of the period covered by this study, his definition of Gloucestershire will be retained for the purposes of this study. Atkyns segmented the county into four divisions and thirty hundreds. This list provided a convenient guide to the names and numbers of parishes in the county in the 17th century. This provided a starting point for fieldwork within the county, defining its borders during the period under study and giving an idea of how many churches might need to be visited.

The county is customarily divided between the geographical regions of the Cotswold Hills, Vale of Gloucestershire and Forest of Dean, with the city of Gloucester located in the Vale on the banks of the Severn. However, the boundaries of Hill, Vale and Forest are fluid among the county's inhabitants. As Verey and others have noted, the exact definition of the Cotswolds is subject to some dispute. This is particularly true of the parishes skirting the Cotswold Escarpment, such as Dursley, the residents of which are quick to claim residence of the Hills over the Vale. The Hills have a reputation for beauty and prosperity. The perceived affluence of the Cotswolds over the Vale is such that any attempt to define Gloucestershire geography based on local knowledge will inevitably be biased. This study defines the geographical regions of the county as impartially and diplomatically as possible, based on the indisputable features of the county landscape. The memorials of the City of Gloucester are those contained within the boundaries of the medieval city. The Forest region is bounded by the Severn to the east and the borders of the county to the west. Most controversially, however, the bounds of the Cotswold Hills is set by the visible elevation of the Hills from the Vale. The raised spine of the Hills is perceptible from the floor of the Vale for much of the county, thus anything to the east of this is considered to be 'Cotswold', while those parishes between the Severn and the foot of the Escarpment are 'Vale'. A degree of uncertainty is perhaps inevitable, particularly with regard to churches in towns such as Dursley, Eastington and Wotton-Under-Edge,

Table 4.1: Parishes included in this study and their location on Figure 4.8.

LOCATION	OS GRID REF	NAME OF PARISH	NUMBER OF INTRAMURAL MONUMENTS	NUMBER OF EXTRAMURAL MONUMENTS	MAP
CITY	SO830180	Cathedral	34	0	42
CITY	SO830180	St. Mary de Crypt	10	0	42
CITY	SO830180	St. Nicholas	17	0	42
SUBTOTAL			61	0	
HILLS	SP060010	Ampney Crucis	1	0	47
HILLS	ST880980	Avening	10	0	28
HILLS	ST860930	Beverston	7	4	25
HILLS	SP110060	Bibury	0	2	52
HILLS	SP160340	Blockley	4	0	76
HILLS	SP200270	Broadwell	0	9	71
HILLS	ST900980	Cherington	7	0	29
HILLS	SP150390	Chipping Campden	6	0	75
HILLS	SP020010	Cirencester	24	0	43
HILLS	SO960160	Coberley	14	0	40
HILLS	SP080100	Coln St. Dennis	2	0	53
HILLS	SU100970	Down Ampney	2	0	48
HILLS	ST730750	Dyrham	17	0	14

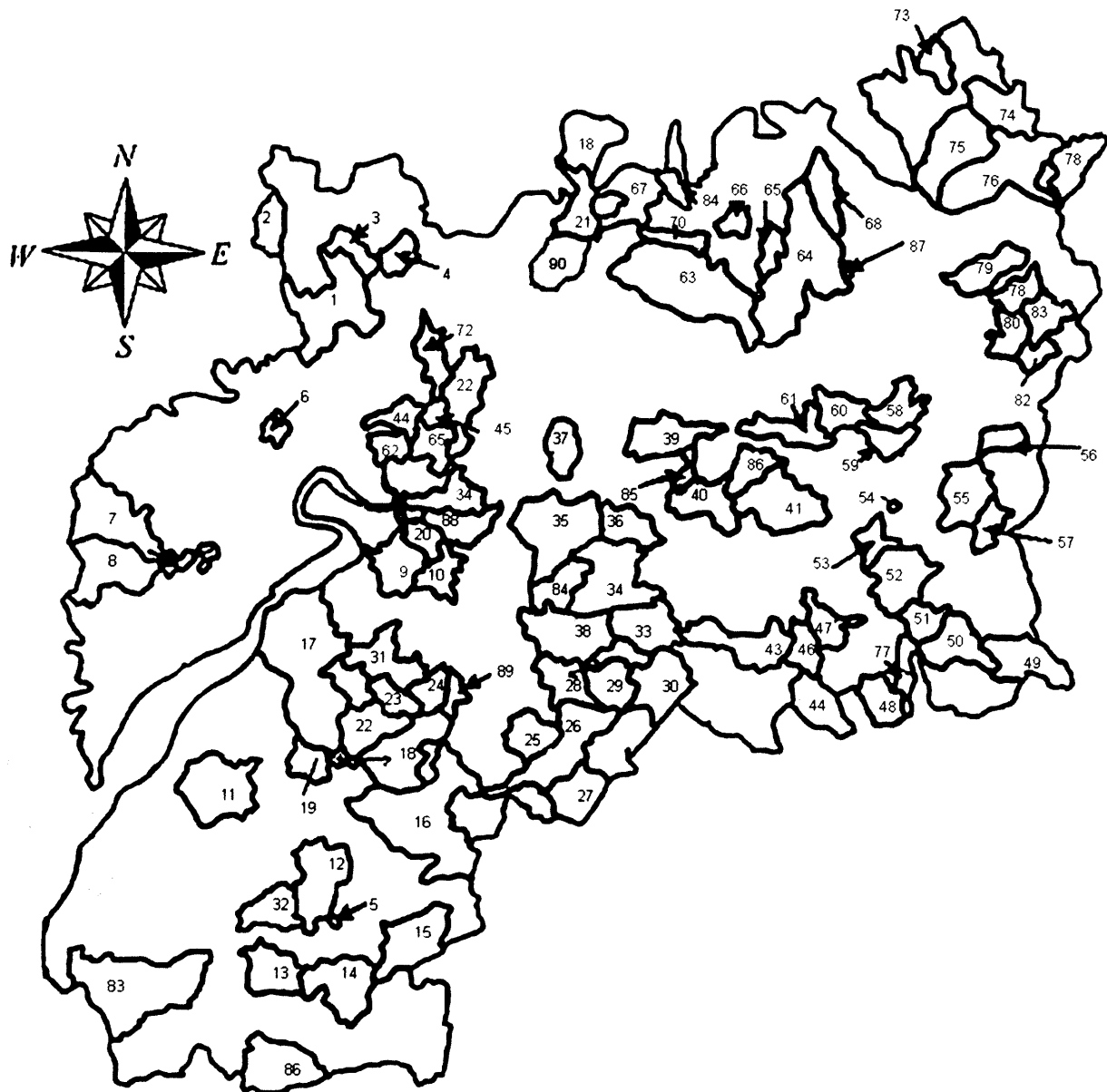
HILLS	SP180400	Ebrington	3	0	74
HILLS	SP150000	Fairford	3	4	50
HILLS	SP065289	Farmcote	1	0	87
HILLS	SP060230	Hawling	7	0	60
HILLS	SP210220	Icomb	2	0	82
HILLS	SU210990	Lechlade	3	1	49
HILLS	SP190190	Little Rissington	1	1	56
HILLS	SP170290	Longborough	1	0	79
HILLS	SU110990	Meysey Hampton	1	0	77
HILLS	SO860000	Minchinhampton	5	0	38
HILLS	SO930080	Miserden	4	0	36
HILLS	SP110230	Naunton	3	0	58
HILLS	ST730950	North Nibley	1	0	22
HILLS	SP110140	Northleach	10	0	54
HILLS	SP100200	Notgrove	4	0	59
HILLS	SP220250	Oddington	3	1	81
HILLS	ST800980	Owlpen	5	0	89
HILLS	SO860090	Painswick	4	1	35
HILLS	SP040000	Preston	2	0	46
HILLS	SP140040	Quenington	0	1	51
HILLS	ST940970	Rodmarton	2	0	30

HILLS	SO940030	Sapperton	10	0	33
HILLS	SP030210	Sevenhampton	10	1	61
HILLS	SP170140	Sherborne	2	0	55
HILLS	ST890890	Shipton Moyne	2	0	27
HILLS	SU040970	South Cerney	1	0	44
HILLS	SP190250	Stow-on-the-Wold	6	0	80
HILLS	ST890930	Tetbury	5	0	26
HILLS	SP240360	Todenham	1	0	78
HILLS	ST770780	Tormarton	3	1	15
HILLS	ST780980	Uley	0	3	24
HILLS	SP120410	Weston-sub-Edge	8	1	73
HILLS	SP020280	Winchcombe	7	0	64
HILLS	SP190130	Windrush	0	1	57
HILLS	SP030150	Withington	7	0	41
SUBTOTAL			221	31	
FOREST	SO690150	Flaxley	2	0	6
FOREST	SO670290	Kempley	2	0	2
FOREST	SO720250	Newent	5	0	1
FOREST	SO550090	Newland	34	0	7
FOREST	SO730290	Pauntley	2	1	3

FOREST	SO560040	St. Briavels	1	0	8
FOREST	SO550120	Staunton	1	0	4
SUBTOTAL			54	1	
VALE	ST600840	Almondsbury	7	0	83
VALE	SO920330	Ashchurch	12	1	67
VALE	ST680990	Berkeley	33	2	17
VALE	SO950270	Bishop's Cleeve	3	0	63
VALE	SO890160	Brockworth	1	0	37
VALE	ST740990	Cam	0	6	31
VALE	SO940220	Cheltenham	5	1	39
VALE	ST720820	Chipping Sodbury	2	0	5
VALE	SO875295	Deerhurst	8	0	90
VALE	SO990190	Dowdeswell	5	0	86
VALE	ST710820	Dumbleton	5	0	66
VALE	ST760980	Dursley	1	2	23
VALE	SO780050	Eastington	6	0	10
VALE	SO780150	Elmore	3	0	62
VALE	SO740070	Frampton-On-Severn	5	2	9
VALE	SO810100	Haresfield	0	2	34
VALE	ST760860	Hawkesbury	0	2	16

VALE	SO810160	Hempsted	3	2	45
VALE	ST670830	Iron Acton	3	0	32
VALE	SO940190	Leckhampton	3	1	85
VALE	SO810210	Maisemore	3	0	72
VALE	ST690760	Pucklechurch	13	0	13
VALE	SO810140	Quedgeley	3	0	65
VALE	SO800080	Standish	5	7	88
VALE	SO840050	Stroud	1	0	84
VALE	SO890320	Tewkesbury	42	2	21
VALE	ST640900	Thornbury	8	2	11
VALE	SP030320	Toddington	3	0	68
VALE	ST700930	Tortworth	3	3	19
VALE	SO890360	Twynning	18	0	69
VALE	SO770080	Whitminster	2	0	20
VALE	SO960300	Woolstone	2	1	70
VALE	ST760920	Wotton-Under-Edge	4	0	18
VALE	ST710820	Yate	23	0	12
SUBTOTAL			235	36	
TOTAL			571	68	

Figure 4.8: A map of parishes visited during this study. See Table 4.1 for number key.



which are located in 'liminal' terrain between Hill and Vale. However, such areas have been situated as objectively as possible with regard to their geography in order to provide as accurate a representation as possible of the relative wealth and commemorative preferences of individuals within each region (Table 4.1).

Fieldwork Methodology

Every parish deemed to have significant material in the Cotswolds, the Vale and the Forest of Dean was visited during the course of this study (Fig.4.8). The resulting dataset should therefore be fully representative of the region's physical and economic diversity. Unfortunately, the data from two parishes is incomplete or omitted due to lack of access. These are St. Katherine's church at Matson near Gloucester and St. Peter's church at Haresfield. Extramural monuments were recorded at Haresfield, though there were no notable examples at Matson. These churches were consistently locked and the church personnel inaccessible or uncooperative. This blocked access to approximately five memorials. At Haresfield the monuments not recorded were an effigy to John Rogers (d.1693) and stone wall monuments to Blanche Quaitt (d.1592), John Rogers (d.1683) and John Rogers (d.1670). At Matson, a large monument to William Selwyn (d.1649) with effigies of the deceased and his family are not included. In addition to these, St. Peter's church at Hinton-on-the-Green was visited and found to no longer contain a monument to Abbot William Halford, which according to Roper dated to c.1490 (Roper 1909:252). Roper (1907:133) also notes that an 'ancient crosslegged figure' briefly recorded by Samuel Rudder at Cromhall was missing when she came to record it and remains so. These monuments are also excluded. Overall, however, the number of omitted locations were few and so should have little bearing upon the results of this study. Further information on these monuments can be found in the volumes of Bigland (1786 [1992]) and Roper (1931).

In order to efficiently and accurately collect data from the county which would be pertinent to the research questions posed by this study, it was necessary to establish where monuments of the appropriate age were located and how many there were. A number of referential volumes on Gloucestershire's funerary monuments were consulted in order to assess which churches were likely to have material relevant to this enquiry. The principal texts employed in sample definition were Roper's *Monumental Effigies of*

Gloucestershire and Bristol (1931) and Bigland's *Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections Relative to the County of Gloucester* (1786 [1992]), as well as both volumes of Verey's contribution to *The Buildings of England* series for the county of Gloucestershire (1970, 1979). A list of monuments dating from the period c.1350-1700 was compiled from these sources. All intramural and extramural monuments which were accessible and erected during the period under study were considered in this study. These included brass effigies and inscriptions, chest tombs, stone effigies including busts, half length, kneeling, reclining, recumbent and standing examples, wall mounted stones, ledger stones, table tombs and baled table tombs. As this is a study of Gloucestershire, it was necessary to ensure that these monuments were actually contained within the boundaries of the county during the period under study. Therefore, after the monuments were identified within the volumes consulted they were then listed under the heading of their respective deaneries, as identified by Robert Atkyn's 1712 delineation in *The Ancient and Present State of Gloucestershire*. The resulting lists were used to create a spreadsheet and also transcribed into a notebook which could be taken out into the field for referential purposes.

Each of 93 churches identified which contained useful and accessible material was visited during the course of this study. On arrival at the church, the monuments detailed in the reference sources were located and their present position recorded. Throughout the act of collecting the data the main research focus of this enquiry was kept in mind. As such, an emphasis was maintained upon what aspects of elite identity were portrayed and what this might suggest about how the deceased regarded themselves and might have been regarded by their kin. The purpose of this enquiry was not to catalogue the funerary art of Gloucestershire. This has already been attempted by authors such as Roper (1931) and Verey (1970,1979). As the unfocused accumulation of material would have contributed little to the existing historical dialogue, it was necessary to design a fieldwork strategy which was carefully circumscribed by the aims of the investigation. Therefore, only material which could potentially illuminate the relationship between the *Ars Moriendi*, identity and affluent death was collected. Following church visits, the data gathered in the field was cross-referenced with Roper's (1931) *Monumental Effigies of Gloucestershire* and Bigland's (1786 [1992]) *Historical, Monumental and Genealogical Collections Relative to the County of Gloucester*. These texts served to increase the detail of the field notes by adding degraded and indecipherable inscriptions and detailing the

original positions of monuments prior to the 19th century. It might conceivably have been possible to ascertain details of the inscriptions surviving on memorials and some stylistic features of the more impressive examples from such texts, detailed archaeological fieldwork was required to comprehend the sample in its entirety.

The questions posed by this research required the focused collection of information relating to the location, positioning, stylistic and inscribed features of every monument. No single source could provide all of this information, which justified the fieldwork undertaken in the course of this enquiry. A record sheet was used in order to facilitate the recording process in the field and ensure consistency in terms of what was recorded and in how much detail throughout the process of data collection (Fig.4.9). A sample of the record for one monument, that of Henry Brydges in Avening, is given below as it was recorded in the field. The location of the monument in the county was noted and it was assigned an identifying code which reflected this. The date of each subject was recorded and they were assigned to a generic type, such as recumbent effigy, brass, table tomb or wall plaque. Where possible, the age, sex, social and economic status of the deceased was also recorded.

The information collected in written and photographic form was intended to consider manifestations of piety, familial relationships, attitudes to mortality and life beyond death, as represented by textual, morphological and stylistic features. Data collection focused upon these themes because they were identified as important and recurring themes on memorials throughout the period under study. They might therefore be relevant to elite perceptions of self as displayed and perpetuated by the memorial, how that self might come to be respected by those experiencing the monument in this world and be well regarded thereafter. The stylistic features which were recorded were features alluding to the deceased or their kin's stated social and economic position. This could include indications of wealth, status, learning or the perpetuation of lineage. Also noted were features describing the attitude of the deceased or their kin to death as a concept. This encompassed symbolic representations of mortality and immortality such as fetid corpses, death's heads, images of the Resurrection and *putto*. Epitaphs and other inscriptions which highlighted that which the deceased and their kin considered to be important elements of their existence and its termination were considered. In addition to personal epitaphs, this could also include requests for prayers and *memento mori* inscriptions.

Digital photography was of fundamental importance to this study. The monuments and their features were photographed a number of times with a good quality digital camera. All monuments were documented from a number of perspectives, including close up and inclusive of their localized spatial context. Where it was deemed necessary, an annotated sketch was produced detailing features of particular note. Further written notes were taken in a notebook relating to each photograph taken to avoid confusion between monuments and to identify the location of individual features taken in close up. This was particularly useful for the recording of inscriptions, which could be photographed rather than transcribed in the field where the inscription was lengthy, hard to decipher or difficult to read with the naked eye due to its height or an obstruction preventing better access. The use of a digital camera meant that a large number of photos could be taken of each memorial. This greatly expedited the process of data collection, as stylistic features and inscriptions could be considered away after the data had been collected and details missed in the field could be revisited later.

Once the monuments which had been identified prior to visiting the church had been recorded, it was deemed necessary to examine the church for other monuments which might have been missed by the secondary sources. The walls and floorspaces of the church were systematically examined, starting with the chancel and nave and moving on to consider aisles, chapels, porches and other annexes. The graveyard was then examined in order to determine whether any extramural monuments had been missed. The reference sources were found to be comprehensive, with no additional intramural monuments identified. Of the extramural monuments recorded, Bigland's text missed some examples at Broadwell in the Cotswolds which are detailed in Chapter Seven, but overall the number recorded was as expected. Most of the monuments had degraded to some degree since they were recorded by the reference sources, and in the case of the ledger stones and table tombs, there were some losses. The extent of this is detailed in Chapter Seven and illustrates the value of using volumes such as those of Roper and Bigland in order to gain an idea of how much might be lost or degraded over a relatively short space of time. The types of monument included in this study and overall numbers identified are noted in Table 4.4.

The format of the fieldwork recording sheets were designed so that the material could be transferred to computer and analysed as effortlessly as possible. The use of the

same headings to categorise the data collected in each church allowed the data to be inputted into a computer. Following data collection, information accumulated in the field was entered and analysed in a master spreadsheet produced in Microsoft Excel. A further spreadsheet was also produced which catalogued photographs taken during the course of fieldwork, a sample of which is detailed in Table 4.3. Table 4.2 details a sample from the master spreadsheet produced during the course of this enquiry, showing only monuments from Avening parish church. Using filters and by sorting the data by column it was possible to isolate material from particular years or locations or with certain characteristics. This could then be analysed as charts and tables in order to identify patterns in themes as they arose within the dataset. For example, by sorting the data from c.1350 to 1539 by date, it was observed that brasses came to outnumber stone effigies over the course of the 15th century. The social status of the deceased could also be observed to change. Some correlation between the two might therefore be suggested and the reasons for these changes deduced. The change became clearer still when the data was converted to graph form, as can be observed in Chart 5.2. Specific information on particular monuments, such as the format of observed allusions to mortality or to piety could be found either by cross referencing with field notes or the photographic record. The analysis of stylistic details necessitated the production of separate spreadsheets for each type of feature of interest to this study. There were four of these spreadsheets, detailing allusions to piety, lineage, resurrection and mortality. Maintaining a consistent format through the coalition of data allowed different types of allusions to be compared and contrasted easily and effectively. These spreadsheets were the basis of the graphs detailed in the following chapters.

Conclusion

Contemporary local historical practice has replaced the general county histories of Atkyns and Rudder with intricate studies of specific aspects of parochial life. This enquiry will sustain the latter approach, scrutinizing the practice of the art of dying among the county's wealthy inhabitants. The study of death has received scant consideration within recent local histories and generally been considered only within the context of religious conflict. Following the trend set by Litzenberger (1997) and Johnson (1989), this enquiry will endeavor to bring a comparable degree of intricacy to the study of everyday mortality among the wealthy. This subject has only be tackled at regional level by a limited number of studies, such as that of Finch (2000). The prevalence of

national studies of death has led to an undue degree of generalization. It should not be assumed that the conclusions reached here are applicable to every region of England. However, it is hoped that this study will serve as a model for similar endeavours in other counties, thus enriching the local study of death over the country as a whole.

Figure 4.9: Sample Records From Field Study

A Sample Field Record From Avening:

COMMEMORATION IN GLOUCESTERSHIRE RECORD SHEET	
Region: Cotswold/Vale/Forest/City	COTSWOLD HILLS
Quarter	SEVEN HUNDRED
Deanery	STONEHOUSE
ID Number	STONSEV 13
Location	AVENING, HOLY CROSS
Type	KNEELING EFFIGY
Probable Decade of Construction	1610
Name of Deceased	HENRY BRYOGES
Sex of Deceased	MALE
Date of Death	1615
Occupation of Deceased	ESQUIRE (PIRATE & HIGHWAY MAN)
Stylistic: Lineage	YES - HERALDRY & DETAILS IN INSCRIPTION
Stylistic: Learning	NOT PRESENT
Stylistic: Piety	YES - CLASPED HANDS, KNEELS AT PRAYER DESK
Stylistic: Memento Mori	NOT PRESENT
Stylistic: Eternal Life and Resurrection	NOT PRESENT
Notes	SITUATED IN EAST WALL OF NORTH SIDE OF CROSSING. LOCAL TRADITION NAMES HIM AS A HIGHWAYMAN. -PIRATE PARDONED BY JAMES I IN 1611

Table 4.2: Sample Spreadsheet Showing Erect Monument Entries For Avening.

ID Number	Location	Type	Decade	Name of Deceased	Sex	Date of Death	Occupation/ Status	Inscriptions	Lineage	Piety	Memento Mori	Eternal Life and Resurrection
StonSev11	Avening	Wall Mounted Stone	1630	Carolus and Mateus Driver	m/f	1636/1661	Gent	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
StonSev9	Avening	Wall Mounted Stone	1680	Dorothy Driver	Female	1683	Gent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
StonSev10	Avening	Wall Mounted Stone	1680	John and Elizabeth Driver	m/f	1681/1675	Gent	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
StonSev13	Avening	Effigy/ Kneeling	1610	Henry Brydges	Male	1615	Esquire	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
StonSev12	Avening	Effigy/ Demi	1680	John Driver	Male	1687	Gent	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
											TOTAL	5

Table 4.3: A Sample Photographic Record With Images Recorded From Henry Brydges Memorial at Avening.

REF	LOCATION	PARISH	TYPE	DECADE	NAME OF DECEASED	SEX	DATE OF DEATH
Ave1	Cotswold Hills	Avening	Effigy/Kneeling	1610	Henry Brydges	Male	1615
Ave2	Cotswold Hills	Avening	Wall Mounted Stone	1630	Carolus and Mateus Driver	m/f	1636/1661
Ave3	Cotswold Hills	Avening	Effigy/Demi	1680	John Driver	Male	1687
Ave4	Cotswold Hills	Avening	Wall Mounted Stone	1680	Dorothy Driver	Female	1683
Ave5	Cotswold Hills	Avening	Wall Mounted Stone	1680	John and Elizabeth Driver	m/f	1681/1675
						TOTAL	4



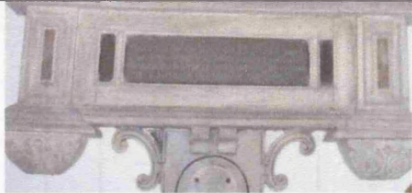
Full Size Monument



Detail of Effigy



Detail of Heraldry



Detail of Inscription

Table 4.4: Types of Monument Included in this Study.

TYPE OF MONUMENT	NUMBER OF EXAMPLES
Brass/Effigy	52
Brass/Tablet	56
Chest Tomb	2
Effigy/Bust	3
Effigy/Demi (Half Bodied)	10
Effigy/Kneeling	20
Effigy/Reclining	4
Effigy/Recumbent	63
Effigy/Standing	2
Incised Stones	3
Table Tomb	52
Table Tomb/Bale	16
Wall Mounted Stone	107
Flat Ledger Stones	246
TOTAL	636

CHAPTER FIVE

Dying Well in Medieval Gloucestershire

Introduction

This chapter will examine how elite identities were constituted and displayed in Gloucestershire in the middle ages. Identity is formed in exchanges between people, things and places and within a particular context of the material and social world which they inhabit at a given point in time. People reveal themselves through contact with other people and the world around them in which their identities find an outlet (O’Keeffe 2005:30). The relative importance of each constituent of the person changes depending on where, when and with whom the dialogue takes place, as does the manner in which material culture is implicated in these conversations. The role of Gloucestershire’s medieval funerary monuments in the negotiation of power relations and the formation of elite identities within those relationships thus requires a thorough understanding of possible social, economic and historical situations of encounter. Elite cultural productions such as funerary monuments might affirm the aspirations of the minority which they represent and permit them to persist beyond a single lifespan. The erection of lavish stonework in public could identify and bind a social and economic tier in opposition to those which they regard as beneath them. However, how and why such identities were stated and reproduced in a certain manner is dependent upon the spatial, social and historical context in which the cultural productions were created and deployed.

O’Keeffe has proposed that “identity cannot be separated from the other categories (such as those of history, metaphor, ownership) which we use in archaeology to describe the conditions of being human” (2005:31). Religious belief was a major facet of medieval self-definition. The erection of a lavish monument in communal church space may imply an attempt to affirm both social and spiritual pre-eminence. This chapter will examine how piety was referenced in the public affirmation of elite identities. It will focus upon the emphasis which the Medieval Church placed upon godliness in death, incorporating

the tenets of the *Ars Moriendi* in consideration of how religious instruction could be manipulated in the constitution of identity within relations of power. The principle *Ars Moriendi* texts to be employed in this discussion are the six part English translations of the *Tractatus* and its blockbook counterpart. Some discussion of these texts and their place in the history of the *Ars Moriendi* tradition was provided in Chapter Three. This chapter will attempt to locate them within the context of medieval social and religious life in England. Specific consideration will be given to how they interacted with other forms of funerary material culture such as funerary monuments.

I will suggest that that idealised death, promulgated in textual form and so widely understood, was remade through the act of memorialisation as an aspect of elite identity. The most pressing and widely understood idealised death was the concept of dying well as detailed explicitly in the *Ars Moriendi*. It outlined a levelling archetype, supposedly achievable regardless of social and economic status. The meanings attached to piety in death were not fixed. The simplicity of the text allowed for some interpretative flexibility and so for the ideal which it outlined to be understood differently depending on the social context in which it was read and applied. The following discussion will demonstrate how lavish funerary material culture aligned such piety in death with the most affluent members of society, made explicit in their public display. The effect was essentially to render those who publicly affirmed their piety as 'more equal than others'. Religious ideal was associated with social and economic privilege, portraying a good death and attendant divine sanction as aspects of elite identity.

The Literary Context: Genesis of a Tradition

The earliest English *Ars Moriendi* text educated people in how to die well in accordance with the Catholic faith. Its six chapters taught how to achieve a good Catholic death by not fearing death, heeding the five temptations of the deathbed (lack of faith, despair, impatience, spiritual pride and avarice), taking consolation in Christ's love and imitating his life. The final chapters outlined proper comportment at the bedside for family and friends and appropriate prayers. William Caxton (c.1490), Richard Rolle (c.1480 [1917]) and others produced tracts under various titles, including *A Treatise*

Speakyng of the Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye and *The Book of the Crafte of Dying*, which would seem to have had a shared antecedent. However, production was spurred and encouraged by an existing market for popular devotion. The impetus behind the reproduction of these tracts lay within a broader process of literary secularisation, brought about by a public desire to access the spiritual in the vernacular and so bring religion into domestic space. The lettered public were increasingly taking the words out of the clergy's mouths (Gillespie 1989:317). Prior to the 15th century, the *Ars Moriendi* was present principally within texts held by monastic communities, such as Henry Suso's early 14th century *Orologium Sapientiae*. The majority of the public obtained their religious instruction through the clergy. Only the wealthiest could afford to commission Psalters, Hours and Primers (Duffy 1992:121). However, with the inception of print and the concomitant spread of vernacular literacy alongside cheap literature, prayers, saints lives and didactic treatises became increasingly popular among the laity and were enthusiastically purchased and collected. Duffy (1992:82) describes *The Kalender of Shepherds*, a mix of calendrical, astrological and medical advice with religious instruction as an "unmistakably lay book". Like the *Ars*, it contained vivid imagery and offered a course in religious instruction which was aimed at a lay audience (Duffy 1992:82).

In addition to their foundation within a didactic ecclesiastical tradition, tracts such as *A Treatise Speakyng of the Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye* might also be linked to a tradition of guidance literature which burgeoned from the 15th century. Print brought advice on numerous aspects of everyday life. Jacques Le Grand's *Livre de Bonnes Moeurs* was translated by Caxton c.1507, while Heinrich Bullinger's *The Golde Boke of Christen Matrimony* was rendered in English by Theodore Basille from 1543. The authors of texts sought to regularise private behaviour, creating a society which was pious, ordered and manageable. The *Ars* rests on the cusp of sacred and secular traditions of counsel; its tracts were another facet of everyday direction and assimilation which linked spirituality into the general practice of living well. Like the preparation of a meal or the birth of a child, death often took place within a domestic setting. However, at the point of transition the dying man touched a world which was mediated to the laity though

the Church. The *Ars* outlined a means by which fleshly concerns could be filtered out, leaving *moriens* at the mercy of his own spiritual convictions:

That he may come to a goode end and that out of this worlde
full of wrechidnes and tribulacions: he may go to hevene unti
god / and his syntes into ioye perdurable.

(Caxton 1495:1)

However, given its varying contexts of deployment some conflict between the homogenising tendencies of spiritual advice and the social and economic realities of human death was inevitable. The *Ars* tracts were quarried, translated and adapted from tracts written to suit the needs of enclosed communities (Gillespie 1989:327). Monastic audiences rejected individualisation through economic and social status in favour of unity in the service of God. The removal of these texts from their unadorned context and dissemination amongst a heterogeneous audience opened them to an interminable process of reinterpretation by the laity. The *Ars Moriendi* were ostensibly do-it-yourself guides to pious death; skeletal, unadorned and applicable to all. However, from the point of inception, this simple design had the potential to be tempered by the economic and social realities of each reading.

In her 1970 critique of the tradition, *The Craft of Dying: a Study in the Literary Tradition of the Ars Moriendi*, Nancy Lee Beaty criticised the medieval *Ars*, labelling it crude, skeletal and scarcely worth considering as a literary work (1970:6). Empirically speaking, her denigrating critique of this insubstantial text seems justified. In historical terms, however, it is unhelpful to assess the virtues of such tracts without due regard for how they were received in context. The block books depict a black and white deathbed, surrounded by all the vivid company of Heaven and Hell, yet entirely devoid of secular ornamentation. This contrast was purposeful, presenting the irrelevance of worldly concerns when faced with the 'Last Things':

... therefore whosoever wyll well and surely dye he
ought to set sympfyne [simply?] and all from him all
outwarde thynges and temporall and ought all to
commytte to god fully.

(Caxton 1495:10)

In practice, however, there were no austere ‘black and white’ bedchambers outside of the monasteries; the tradition gained colour from its context of deployment, changing in accordance with the priorities of its lay readership. In Beaty’s opinion, the *Ars* manifested a keen popular awareness of mortality characteristic of the middle ages (Beaty 1970:3). This is certainly true, though it simplifies the role of the good death within the broader context of late medieval social life. These tracts were created with the intention of teaching the populace how to die well and so forestall damnation. No doubt this purpose was acknowledged by their readership, but at the same time their unregulated presence within the public sphere exposed the concept of a good death to reinterpretation, manipulation and misuse. The central tenets of the *Ars* were equality and conformity in death though the imitation and repetition of the example set by Christ:

every goode cristen persone disposyd well to dye ought to do
after his manere and possybylyte in his laste ende lyke as dyd
oure lorde Ihesu criste whan he dyed on the crosse.

(Caxton 1495:15)

In his unadorned state, *Moriens* was every man incarnate, capable of reforming himself in the image of the Saviour. However, lay experiences of death were infinitely variable. The facts of earthly existence, such as wealth, family, tradition and ceremony, intruded into the deathbed, militating against the regularisation of the Last Things.

Data Analysis

Medieval Commemoration in Gloucestershire: Types and Numbers

The memorials of Gloucestershire are a record of which individuals and social groups held power in the county. Their proliferation during the period under consideration is evidence of the importance which they attached to acts of display at death. The following discussion will consider the nature of the sample between 1350 and 1529 in Gloucestershire, followed by a discussion of why the erection of a monument was important to the elite during this period. At first glance, the number and variety of commemorative media present in Gloucestershire from 1350-1530 does not seem to be particularly great. Of the 80 monuments survive before 1530, 44 are brass effigies, 32 are

recumbent effigies, three are raised ledgers and one is a kneeling figure (Chart 5.1, 5.2). The sample has undoubtedly been subject to repeated phases of destruction, degradation and loss. The historically documented phases of iconoclasm under the later Tudors and during the Civil War clearly played some part in this debasement. A frieze of headless angel statues at Tewkesbury Abbey bears witness to the impact of the Reformations upon funerary art (Fig.5.1, 5.2). However, the damage caused by the Victorians during phases of church restoration should also be taken into consideration, as should subsequent acts of removal and degradation. Some idea of how much has been lost from the churches of Gloucestershire might be gleaned from John Leland's description of the memorials of Gloucester Abbey, dating to c.1541. Leland, 'the father of British antiquaries' (Latimer 1889:221) travelled around England investigating "England's antiquities, and to diligently search all the libraries and monasteries and colleges of this realm, to the intent that the monuments of ancient writers might be brought out of the deadly darkness to lively light (Leland 1541, quoted by Latimer 1889:222). This account predates the worst phases of Reformation iconoclasm and describes a number of memorials in Gloucester Abbey which no longer exist. An extract of Leland's account is given below, as written in Latimer's 1889 transcription of Leland's Gloucestershire itinerary. Leland's words have been abridged, as the original document has some repetition. The memorials described by Leland which can no longer be found are highlighted in italics:

The names of noblemen buried in the Monas'ery of Gloucester.

Osfric, Founder of Gloucester-Abbey, first laye in St.Petronell's Chappell, thence removed into our Lady Chappell, and thence removed of late dayes, and layd under a fayre tombe of Stone on the North syde of the High aulter. at the Foote of the Tombe is this written in a Wall:

Osirus Rex primus fundator hujus Monasterii. 681

Robtus, Curtoise, somme to K. William the Conquerour, lyeth in the midle of the Presbitery. There is on his Tombe an image of Wood paynted, made longe since his Death.

K.E of Carnavan (or K. E. 2.) lyeth under a fayre Tombe in an Arch at the Head of K. Osric Tombe.

Serlo, Abbot of Gloucester, lyeth under a fayre Marble Tombe, on the South syde of the Presbitery. *There was of late a cross wrapped in a Bulles Hide under an Arch at the Head of the Tombe of Edw, of Carnarvan,* where Malverne, alias

Parker, late Abbot of Gloucester made a Chappell to be buried in. A Monke tould mee that it was the Corps of a Lady Countesse of Pembroke.

Abbot Horton lyeth under a flatt Stone in the North Part of the Transept of the Church.

Abbot Froucester lyeth in a Chappell at the South West Part of the Quire.

Gamage a Kt. Of wales, and his Wife, lye in a Chappell in the North East part of the Body of the Church.

These Inscriptions be written on the Walles of the Chapter-House in the Cloyster of Gloucester.

Hic Jacet Rogerus (Roger Lacy) Comes de Hereford.

Hic Jacet Ricus Strongbowe filius Gilberte Comititis de Pembroke.

Hic Jacet Gualterus de Lacy.

Hic Jacet Phillious de Foye miles.

Hic Jacet Bernardus de Novo Mercatu.

Hic Jacet Adam de Cadurcis.

Hic Jacet Robertus Curtois.

Ex inscriptionibus in occidentalis parte Gloucester Church.

Osricus rex primus fundator of that Monastery in Anno Domini DCLXXXI. for Nuns.

Saynt Arild Virgin, martired at Kinton ny to Thornberye by one Muncius a Tiraunt, who cut of hir Heade becawse she would not consent to lye with hym. She was translatyd to this monastery and hathe done great Miracles.

The great Southe Ysle of Gloucester Church was made by Oblations done at the Tombe of Kynge Edward the Second.

.. Abbate Troncaster (sic) buried at the West End of the Quire made the Cloistar.

(Leland 1541, reproduced from Latimer 1889:239-244)

In Gloucester Abbey alone there are over 10 lost memorials since the early 1540s which date to the period under study. Only three currently survive in Gloucester Cathedral from before 1540. This suggests that much has been lost in the intervening years between Leland and the 18th, 19th and 20th century accounts referenced by this study.

Cecil Davis's 1899 volume *Monumental Brasses of Gloucestershire* details all brasses dating from this period in the churches considered by this study. Included in this

number is a single matrix dating to the early 16th century at Coberley, the robbed outline where a brass was formerly set. Using antiquarian sources such as Rudder's 1779 history and Atkyns earlier 17th century work, Davis (1899:206-220) notes 20 matrices in Gloucestershire as a whole. No other trace of these was found during this study, evidence of the degree of damage which the sample has suffered since the 17th century. There have been further losses in the last century. Mill Stevenson's 1923 list of monumental brasses in the British Isles includes a greater number of monuments at Cirencester and Chipping Campden, suggesting the loss or removal of at least five monuments from these buildings since publication. Ida Roper's *Effigies of Gloucestershire*, printed in 1931, also features a small number of monuments which have since disappeared.

The number of survivals in the county fluctuates dramatically between decades. There is a major drop in numbers between 1350 and 1380, whereupon the total recedes from seven to nothing, from 1400 to 1420 when it drops from five to one and from 1450 to 1460 when the total goes down from eight to three survivals. This fluctuation effects all parts of the county. The sample is much depleted and the numbers involved are small. It is therefore difficult to say whether these patterns are meaningful and if so why these peaks and drops occurred. What is clear from Chart 5.2, however, is that there was a gradual change from a sample dominated by stone effigies in the 14th century to one composed mainly of brass figures in the 16th century. The decisive period appears to have been sometime in the early to mid 15th century. Some possible explanations for this are detailed in the following sections. Brasses and recumbent effigies dominate the sample during this period. Other types of memorial which survive include a single kneeling knight which dates from the 1400s at Tewkesbury Abbey. There are also three raised stones recorded, two of which are incised.

The incised stones feature etched figures which have the appearance of brass effigies. Both Greenhill (1958:15) and Badham and Norris (1999:10) have suggested that brasses and incised stones were produced by the same workshops, citing the similarities in form. Badham and Norris (1999:11) describe documentary evidence from France



Figure 5.1, 5.2: Carved angels depicted on friezes at Tewkesbury Abbey. The angel at the top faces inwards towards the High Altar and is intact. All angels facing out into the ambulatory were defaced in a similar manner to the two at the bottom.

Chart 5.1: A chart showing the number of monuments surviving on Gloucestershire c.1350-1529.

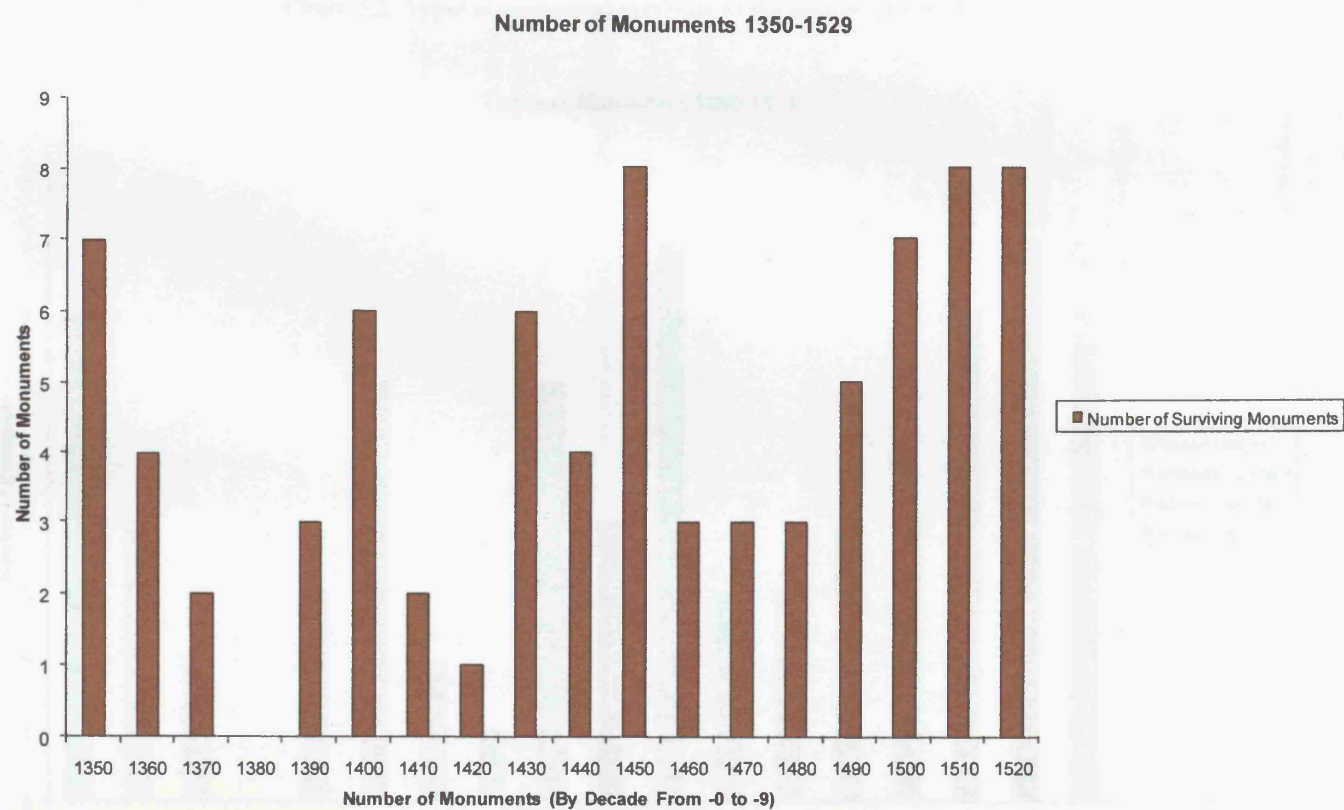
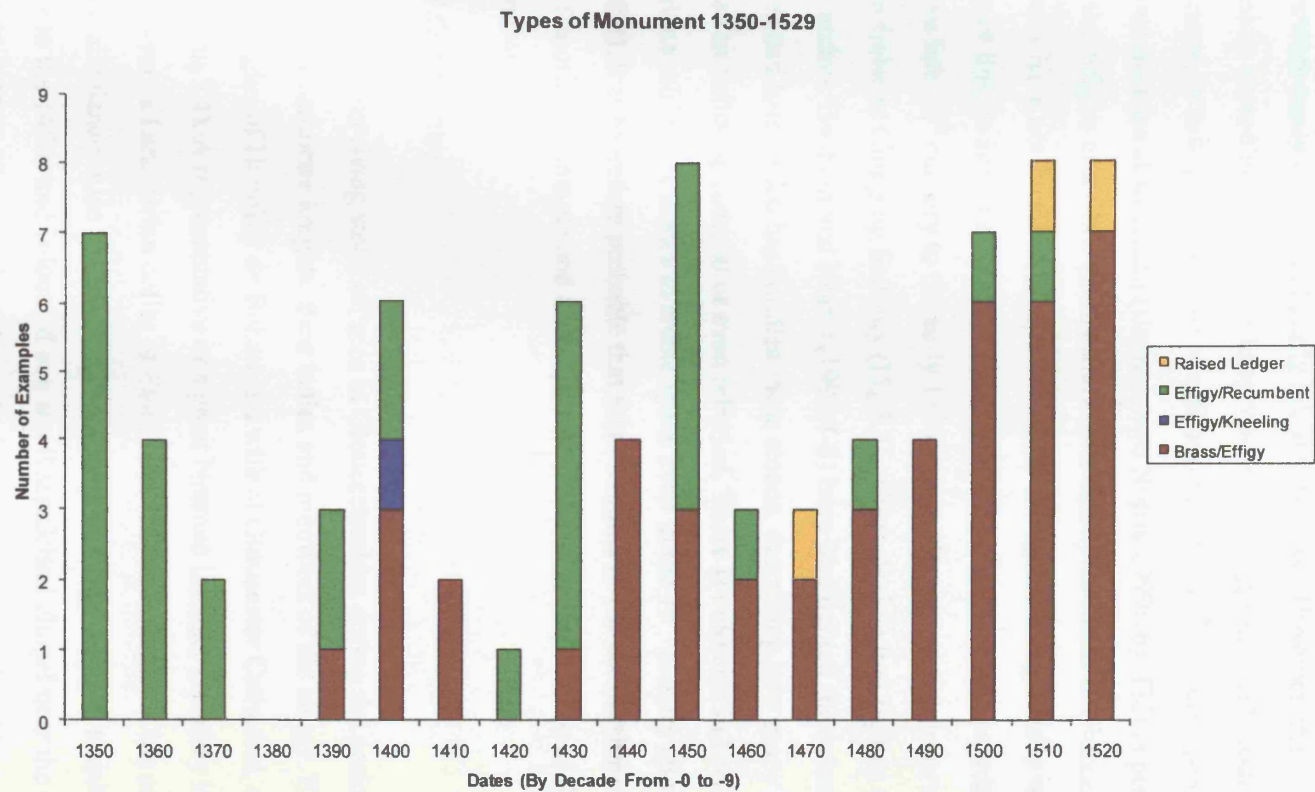


Chart 5.2: Types of monument surviving in the county c.1350-1529.



which suggests that craftsmen worked in both media and also examples wherein monuments were partly incised and partly inlaid with brass. However, the Gloucestershire examples are made of limestone, which suggests local production. Bristol is known to have produced carved effigies from the 13th century, using the lower lias limestone quarries at Keysham (Badham and Norris 1999:16). This is perhaps the source for the effigies described in this study. The examples found in Gloucestershire have generally have not survived well, the lines of the figures being mostly worn down by generations of fingers and church flower arrangements. All examples recorded appear to date from the late 15th century to the early 16th century. The stone which survives best is that of John Guise at Chipping Sodbury (Fig.5.3), which depicts two figures at prayer under ogee arches. Badham and Norris (1999:7-8) have highlighted the extent of deterioration and loss which has befallen these stones, describing how many have been worn, reused as building material or even reburied. There is evidence in London of churchwardens selling off stones to create space even in the 15th century (Badham and Norris 1999:8). It is therefore probable that what remains in Gloucestershire is only a fraction of the original sample and is unrepresentative of the importance of this form of commemoration.

Stone and Old Money

There are 32 surviving stone effigies in Gloucestershire during the period under study. They commemorate knights, their ladies and members of the clergy. Examples include the effigies of Humfrey de Bohun and wife at Gloucester Cathedral, dating to the early 1360s (Fig.5.4). A representative of a great Norman lineage, Humfrey is attired in armour and wears a Lancastrian collar of Esses about his neck, signs of his social status and political allegiance. Also at Gloucester is Abbot Thomas Seabroke's alabaster effigy, which dates to the 1450s and is located in a small sepulchral chapel near the choir (Bloxam 1888-9:255). The singular effigy which does not seem to be either aristocratic or religious is a full-length effigy from Pucklechurch, which clutches a purse and may commemorate a merchant (Fig.5.5) perhaps evidence of the emergent prosperity of the



Figure 5.3: Images of John Guise and wife on a stone at Chipping Sodbury, dating to around 1472.



Figure 5.4: Humfrey de Bohun, commemorated at Gloucester cathedral.



Figure 5.5: A stone effigy possibly commemorating a merchant, from Pucklechurch, Glos.



Figure 5.6: The execution of Hugh Le Despenser, as depicted in a manuscript of Froissart.

(Image: *Bibliothèque Nationale MS Fr. 2643, folio 197v*)

Gloucestershire wool trade (BGAS 1900:69). However, this individual's identity and background are uncertain.

The effigies of the aristocracy and higher clergy dominate the sample in larger centres such as Gloucester and Tewkesbury prior to 1530. The especial link between abbey churches and the nobility is particularly well illustrated by the dominance of the Despenser family over Tewkesbury Abbey in the mid 14th century. Horrox (1999:108) has observed that the apse of the abbey was colonised by the dynastic message of their tombs and commemorative stained glass. The deployment of their tombs behind the high altar emphasises their power and status (Lindley 2003:161). They beautified the north side of the ambulatory and adopted it as a family mausoleum (Morris 1974:142-55). Though it should be noted that Tewkesbury's monastic community probably contributed a considerable amount to the abbey's fabric (Morris 2003:125), the Despensers' involvement remains an unequivocal statement of the family's piety and of their devotion to the abbey church, its beautification and upkeep. However, there are also suggestions that the extravagant ambulatory in which its memorials are situated might have been intended to enhance the family's mortal as well as their spiritual credentials. The family's 14th century history is notable for political strife and dubious claims to wealth and power. Hugh the Younger, in particular, is known for having manoeuvred himself into the favour of Edward II, gaining landholdings through violence and tyranny and a particularly nasty execution (Fig.5.6). Both he and his grandfather forfeited their titles after being charged with treason. Therefore, it is not surprising that there was so much building activity in the 14th century, as the family sought to repair its reputation and secure its claims to power.

The erection of recumbent effigies seems to be associated with the commemoration of the feudal elite and ecclesiastics. Therefore, a decline in the number of monuments to 1380, followed by a series of peaks and dips suggests a sporadic inability or unwillingness to erect an effigy among this group. From a superficial point of view, it is tempting to regard a drop in numbers as a manifestation of a post-plague decline in population and prosperity of the hereditarily wealthy in Gloucestershire. In 1350, English

society was composed of three tiers; those who fight, those who pray and those who work to support them (Bolton 1996:21). A decline in the number of monumentalized representatives of the first two categories suggests that these individuals suffered a blow in the later 14th century from which there was not a sufficient recovery to drive the number of monuments up again. Platt (1996:49) has offered several related explanations for this. He argues that the post plague nobility were threatened by infertility, violence such as that of The Wars of the Roses and most importantly by the social mobility engendered by the Black Death (Platt 1996:51). Wages paid to agricultural workers rose. People moved around looking for the best wage. As a result, labour costs devoured the profits of the landed elite (Platt 1996:50). Those who could not adapt, perhaps by turning their land to arable, were likely to fail. Accordingly, the most successful of families in Gloucestershire right through the period under study was the Berkeley line.

As Smith (1952:116) has demonstrated, the family were often in financial trouble until the 14th century. Thereafter, through the accumulation of land by purchase marriage and some shrewd, progressive and ruthless land management, the Berkeleys prospered (Smith 1952:117-119). This is explicit in the survival of their memorials in the 1360s, 1390s, 1410s and 1460s in Gloucestershire. The monuments of the Berkeley family are also present in the counties of Worcestershire and Somerset. They are evidence of the wealth and influence of the family over the region, in spite of the fact that the only county over which they regularly acted in a judicial or executive capacity was their own (Smith 1952:112). These memorials provide a material correlate to the increasing fortunes of the family as detailed in Smyth's *Lives of the Berkeleys* (1618 [1883-7]).

Brass and New Money

The fluctuating prosperity of different social and economic groups within the county can be followed through changes in the numbers and types of monuments erected over the course of the 14th, 15th and 16th centuries. In the later 14th and 15th centuries a number of names emerge within the sample whose wealth was not drawn from traditional sources. Their appearance is marked in the increasing frequency with which brass effigies appear in the sample. For example, John Fortey 'wolman' is commemorated at

Northleach by a brass with six merchants marks (Davis 1899:56). Merchant's marks were used by traders to establish ownership of goods in a mixed cargo. Composed of letters and symbols, these were marks of individual and familial identity which could be passed from father to son. Rudder (1779:580) notes that Fortey was responsible for rebuilding the nave of the church in the 15th century. John Tame, a merchant who died in 1500, was responsible for rebuilding Fairford parish church in its entirety. The use of brasses thus identified and bonded together a group defined by entrepreneurial wealth and made up principally of individuals associated with the wool trade.

At least 12 of the surviving brasses from this period belong to merchants with links to Gloucestershire's wool trade. Knights are also represented, such as Robert Gryndour and wife (c.1445) at Newland in the Forest of Dean (Fig 5.7). These are few in comparison to individuals without titular claims to authority. There are no knights represented past the mid 1400s. At this time, brasses are particularly well represented in centres of the wool trade, such as Cirencester and Northleach. The burgeoning assets and social standing of the woolmen necessitated legitimisation and corroboration to a greater degree than more established aristocratic families such as the Berkeleys. Publicly stating piety in brass legitimated their position through reference to an already present tradition of monumentalisation in stone within the church space, so far represented by aristocratic recumbent effigies, while brass unified them as a group in opposition to those of differing economic and social status.

The 15th century also saw the first occasion of administrative and bureaucratic roles being represented in commemoration. This is attested by the brass of John Edward at Rodmarton, who is commemorated in the dress of a lawyer (Fig.5.8). His brass reads:

Hic iacet Job'es Edward qu'd'm'n's manerii de Rodmarton & verus
patronus eiusdem ffamosus apprentici in lege p'itus qui obiit viii die
Januarii A' d'n'o MCCC iri cui a'ie p'picietur de ame.

In English this reads:

Here lies John Edward, formerly lord of the manor of Rodmarton, and a



Figure 5.7: Brass images representing Robert Gryndour and wife at Newland in the Forest of Dean.



Figure 5.8: John Edward, a lawyer commemorated at Rodmorton Parish Church.

true and skilled parton of the same, a famous apprentice skilled in law,
who died on Jan. 8. AD, 1441: on whose soul may God have mercy.
Amen.

(Translation: Davis 1899:62)

John Edward's background certainly cannot be described as humble. Neither can that of William Henshawe, a bellfounder, but also sheriff and major. He is commemorated by a brass at St. Mary de Crypt in Gloucester (originally in St. Michaels). Brasses were much more affordable in the mid to late 15th century. They were adaptable in size and style, allowing for great variations in price. The price of a brass did not come close to that which might be spent on an effigy tomb. Norris (1978:52) cites a number of brass prices mentioned in English wills. In the 15th century these range from that of the wife of Richard Bamme of Kent, costing £14 13s 4d, to three effigies commissioned for Sir Robert Stathum of Derbyshire (d.1470) which cost just £4. Norris compares this to the alabaster tomb of Ralph Green, commissioned in 1419 and costing £40 and the effigy and chapel of Richard Beauchamp in the mid 15th century, costing an impressive £2481 (1978: 54).

Finch (2000: 40,43) has noted that changes in methods of manufacture and the growth of regional workshops brought prices down further from the mid 15th century. It is during this period that brasses begin to outstrip stone effigies as the dominant form of commemoration within the county. An increasing number of non-aristocratic labels and occupations are evident in commemoration after 1470. For example, John Guise's raised ledger at Elmore features the label 'esquire' around 1472. This provides further evidence the increasing affordability and consequent popularity of brass commemoration, since people of varying means were able to erect a brass within their budget.

Allusions to Piety

Out of 80 monuments which survive between 1350 and 1529, 76 feature some reference to piety. Therefore, the number of allusions to piety rises and falls in tandem

with the number of surviving monuments. For the purposes of this study, these references have been subdivided into hands in an attitude of prayer, other forms of pious iconography such as images of angels and textual allusions such as soul bequests on brasses (Chart 5.3, 5.4).

Hands at Prayer

The most common allusion is made using hands at prayer; hence they necessitate a category separate from other material references. Approximately 62 surviving monuments feature hands held in an attitude of prayer. The popularity of this form is not surprising since a human image features on every surviving memorial in the county. This was the most popular way to affirm the piety of the deceased on both brasses and effigies and a vital signal pertaining to the role of the memorial as a receiver of prayers for their soul. Good examples of effigies with hands in an attitude of prayer survive at Coberley. The effigies of Thomas de Berkeley and his wife date to around 1365. Angels support Berkeley's head while he lies piously in armour with his hands together and legs crossed, perhaps waiting to rise as a knight in service of God (Fig.5.9).

Other Types of Iconography

There are 19 examples of pious iconography surviving in Gloucestershire. On stone effigies these are most frequently angels supporting the heads of the effigies, such as on Thomas de Berkeley's memorial at Coberley. Other impressive allegorical figures survive on the tomb of Sir John Blaket (c.1430) at Icomb (Fig.5.10). Among those images depicted are a Crucifixion scene and an image of St. Michael smiting a dragon. Given their subsequent condemnation, it is not surprising that allegorical figures such as these should be the rarest of the surviving allusions, as these were badly hit by subsequent phases of iconoclasm. Heavenly images such as those featured on Blaket's tomb implied the intercession of higher powers on behalf of the soul and its eventual resurrection.

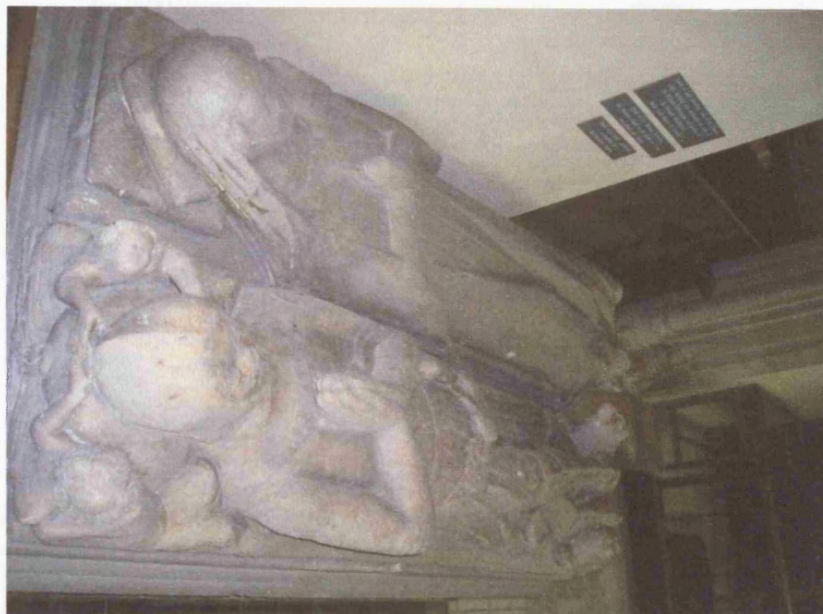


Figure 5.9: The effigies of Thomas de Berkeley and wife in the south aisle at St. Giles, Coberley.



Figure 5.10: A pious knight, lady and an image of the Crucifixion from the tomb of John Blaket at Icomb.

Chart 5.3: A chart illustrating the number of references to piety which persist on Gloucestershire's memorials c.1350-1529.

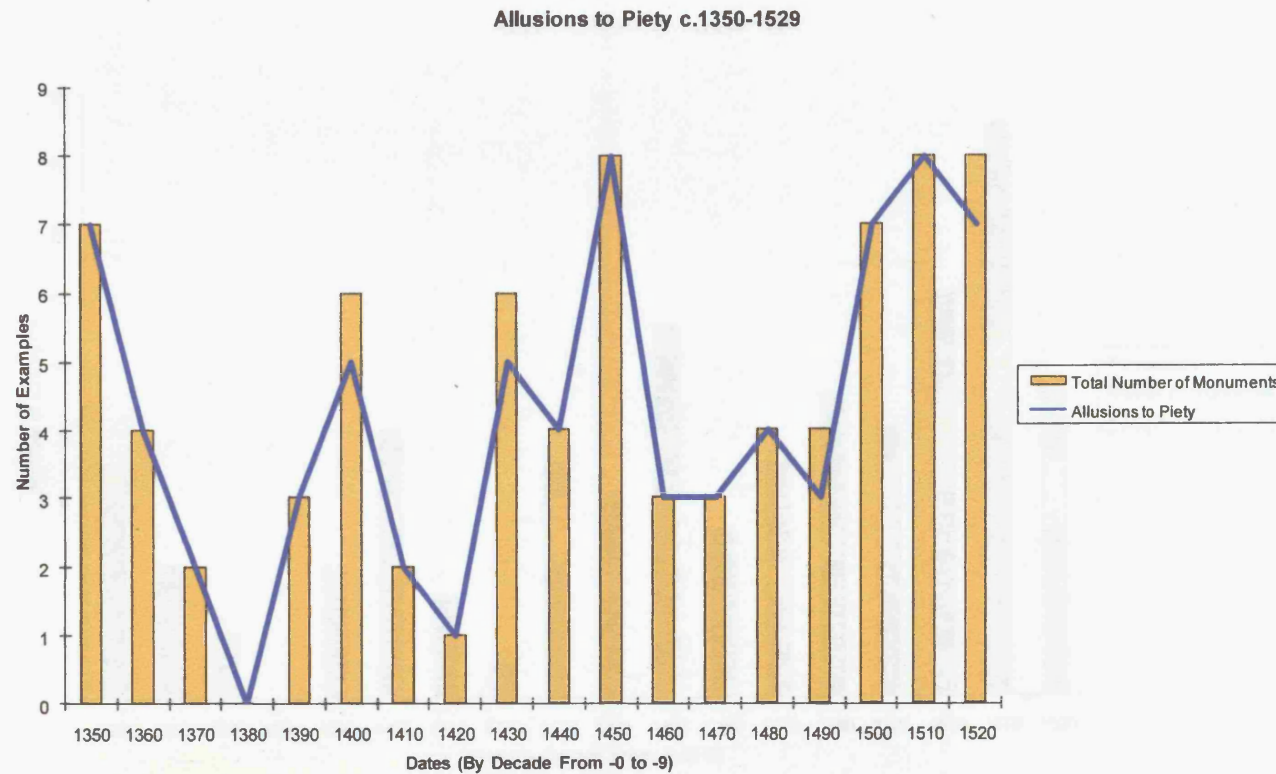
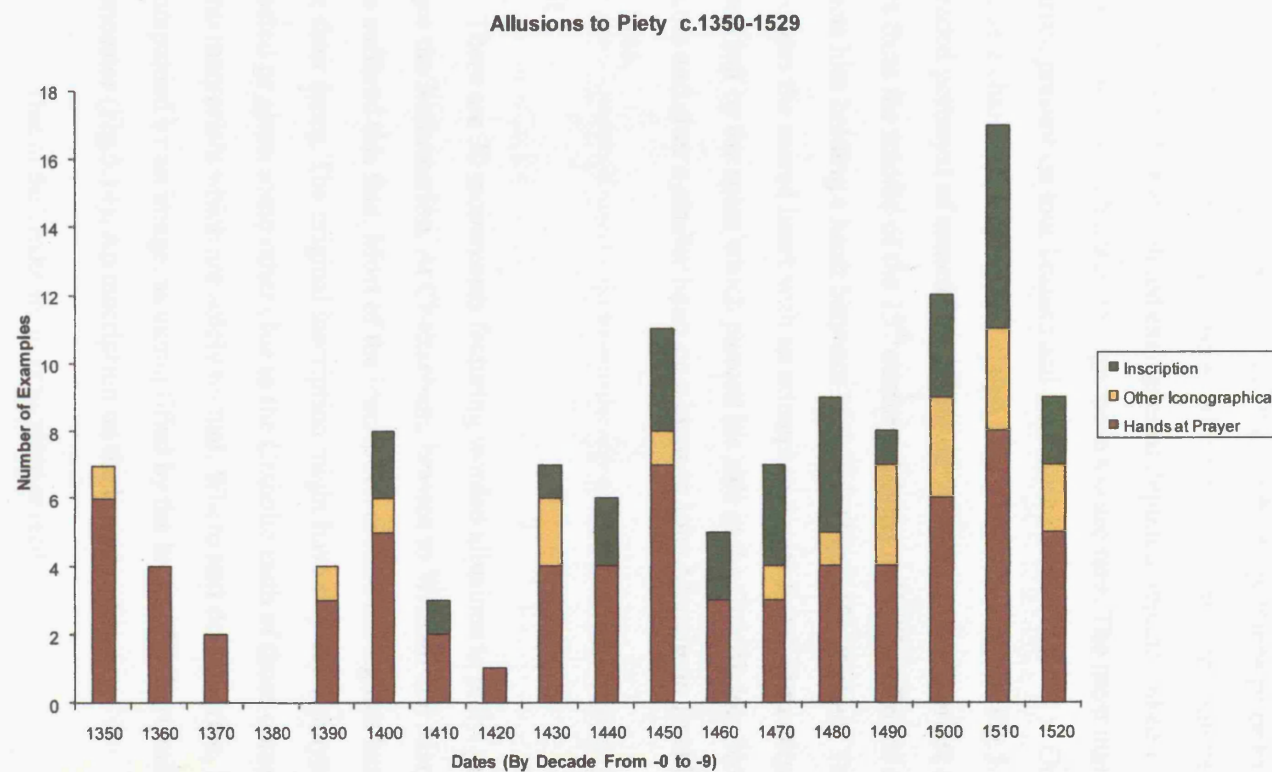


Chart 5.4: A chart illustrating the format of references to piety on memorials c.1350-1529.



They may also have been present on other such effigy tombs prior to the mid 16th century, although memorials erected within more prominent churches are unlikely to have survived. A few isolated examples of depicted objects linked to the piety of the deceased survive on brasses, though these too are rare. The most numerous examples are rosaries, present on four brasses and one incised stone (Fig.5.11). Other examples include a chalice on the brass of Ralph Parsons at Cirencester (Fig.5.12) and a much degraded portrayal of something similar on the memorial of a priest at Notgrove, which dates from the middle of the 15th century. A brass to William Freme at Berkeley (d.1524) depicts him holding a heart between his hands (Fig.5.13). Richard Taylor (2003:54) associates the sacred heart with an attempt to depict Jesus' humanity, referencing the wound left by the spear which pierced his side at the Crucifixion. Norris (1979:77) concurs and cites a similar heart on a brass to John Merstun in Buckinghamshire, dating to c.1446.

Text

There are 30 monuments featuring worded allusions to piety, probably many more before the Reformation. At Cheltenham, brasses to William and Margaret Greville might have suffered this fate. Most of the inscription around the figures has been erased, as have their faces. The original inscription might have requested prayers for the soul of the departed or given some other clue to the Catholic faith of those commemorated. There are no memorials which are solely textual. Where text does survive, it is universally accompanied by an image, as exemplified by the brass of Robert and Margaret Pagge at Cirencester (Fig.5.14). An inscription on the brass reads:

That to the Trinite for us pray, singe or read.

Hic jacet Robertus Pagge cum Margareta sibi spousa prole secunda

Vicinis gratus fuerat mercator amatus

Pacificus plenis manibus subventor egenis

Ecclesiaque viis ornator et his reparator
Will' C quator R quator anno sed Aprilis
Dnaba luce mortem p'transit ipse Cali solamen Deus, illi conferat,
Amen.

(Bigland 1786 [1992]:371)

Translated, this reads:

Here lies Robert Pagge and his wife Margaret. Respected by his
neighbours, this well-loved peaceful merchant with open hand
received the poor. Churches and roads he built and repaired. On 8
April he passed through death to light. Lord of the Heavens,
welcome him.

According to Bigland (1786 [1992]: 371) this was originally accompanied by a diagram of the Trinity on a pilaster, though this has subsequently been lost. Images of a man, a woman and their 14 children remain. Bigland records at least 9 other inscriptions on brasses at Cirencester which have a similar content to this one (1786 [1992]:370-2), both in Latin and English, such as that of Hugh and Joan Norys:

Merci God of my misdeede,

Lady helpe at my most neede

Keyes gracions J'hu to endles lyfe. At thy grete Dome where all schall
appere. Hughe norys, Crot' and Johan his wife, nowe dede in the grave and
beried here. Yo' p'yers desyryng their soules for chere, the I daye of July,
the yere of our Lorde God MCCCCIII

(Bigland 1786 [1992]:372)

Inscriptions are used to record the names of the dead, but more importantly to ask for assistance for their souls. For this reason, an inscription must be accompanied by an image so that readers can be drawn in from a distance to offer their spiritual support.



Figure 5.11: Four beads of a rosary depicted on a merchant's brass at Minchinhampton c.1500.



Figure 5.12: A chalice depicted on the brass of Ralph Parsons at Cirencester c.1478.



Figure 5.13: Thomas Freme's brass at Berkeley holding a heart.



Figure 5.14: A brass rubbing of Robert and Margaret Pagge (c.1440) from Cirencester.

The Nature of Medieval Piety and the *Ars Moriendi*

Relating Text and Image

The connection between images of pious death and the idealised deaths of the *Ars Moriendi* might be understood through a concept which Camille (1991:151) refers to as 'intervisuality', whereby images are conceived by their audience to work across and within different or conflicting value systems. Their meaning is not stable, nor is it formed solely with reference to their context of deployment, but is derived from the relationship with other instances of the same image (Camille 1991:151). He highlights the manipulation of the image of the kiss in courtly romance, which exploits notions of the sacred kiss of religious art and the kiss of feudal obligation. The kiss situates the illicit liaison alongside the unquestioned relationship between Heaven and earth and lord and vassal in order to legitimate clandestine love between a man and a woman (Camille 1991:169). In the case of the Art of Dying Well and commemoration, that sacral image is the deathbed of the *Ars* and all of the pious regard demonstrated therein. The *Ars Moriendi* describes an idealised sacral death, but as with Camille's kiss, the images of piety which it portrayed might move between different value systems, retaining a semblance of their original meaning, yet becoming active in different ways. Some recognition of the significance of the imagery of pious death might travel between contexts, as does that of the kiss. Displaying or stating piety in death alongside material marks of secular empowerment on the monument situated the latter beside a recognised image of devotion as portrayed in the *Ars*. Even the act of displaying death is given sanction by the inclusion of images of piety related to the *Ars Moriendi* since the pious death described therein has an audience who are supposed to both aid and learn from the dying man.

Piety is the central tenet of the *Ars Moriendi*. The introductory section calls upon the reader to acknowledge God's sovereignty over everyday life by following the Ten Commandments to the letter. Living is regarded as a necessary evil, a preliminary Purgatory which must be endured prior to Heaven:

...Doughte not that oure lorde thus entre in to his glorye and knowe ye that the infyrmyte tofore the deth id lyke as a purgatorye too be suffred lyke as it apperteyneth that is to say paciently / gladly / and agreably.

(Caxton 1495:7)

The arguments set forth in the tract are principally conveyed through the alternation of light and dark imagery throughout the tract. The 'Hevene' and 'joye' of God and the 'wretchidnes' of this world mark a contrast between the gloom of mortal existence and the light of Heaven (Caxton 1495:2). Divine sanction is invoked to discourage the reader from doubting either the author or God and so ignore the simplicity of the argument. The Devil, superstition and lies are contrasted with the consolations of faith and obedience to the Church. For example, in a discussion of the first temptation, against faith, the *Ars* states:

For by cause that feyth is fudacion of all helth. And without feyth it is impossible to please God. Therefore, it is that than in this poynte the deyvll with all his might enforceth to trouble ye persone from his feyth hooly... at the lest to make him to goo out of the way from his feyth. And labireth than moch strongly for to desceythe him by some ethoure superstycions or heresy.

(Caxton 1495:4)

The healthfulness which is extolled is that of the soul, that of the body having abandoned the dying man. The *Ars* author relies upon an acceptance of the merits of faith in God once all hope of bodily recovery has been abandoned in order to back up an otherwise simplistic argument.

Camille (1991:164) has suggested that texts such as these were intended to draw their readers into 'endless cycles of duplication', encouraging the reader to mimic *moriens* in his final moments. However, their lack of explicit detail also enhanced their potential for ideological manipulation. The exhibition of piety in the face of death was difficult and precise adherence to the teachings of the *Ars* when faced with feelings of suffering and loss on the deathbed was near to impossible. The difficulties of this are demonstrated by the death of Thomas Seymour, a London mercer who died in 1535. Tankard describes



Figure 5.15: Allegorical figures on the tomb of John Blaket at Icomb, c.1430.



Figure 5.16: The sin of pride, depicted in a Dutch block book c.1450.

his state at death:

William Bamforth, curate of St Leonard Shoreditch where Seymour was a parishioner, was summoned, arriving at nine or ten o'clock in the morning with the parish clerk, Henry Kettell. Bamforth deposed that at the time of his arrival Seymour was "speacheles and in extremys of deathe in so moche that this depo[nen]t coulde not shreff hym". Moreover, the "rotts of his tonge were so swolne that he coulde not receive any sustenance into his bodie by reason whereof he cowlde not receive his maker", that is, the host.

(2003:255)

In the face of such difficulties, succeeding at dying well, or claiming to, was a demonstration of the holiness of the deceased which could enhance the social status of their surviving kin.

Life and Death in Text and Commemoration

In superficial terms, the memorials of Gloucestershire appear to advocate piety over worldly concerns, mimicking the priorities of the text. However, those erecting them appear eager to emphasize the deceased's piety at death. This is demonstrated by the devout figures which surround John Blaket's early 15th century tomb at Icomb. They protect his monumental body in the same way that the Company of Heaven described by the imagery of the block book might protect his dying body and soul on the deathbed (Fig.5.15, 5.16). The contradiction between the metaphysical focus of the text and the transparent wealth displayed by Blaket's substantial effigy above the figures reveals apparent images of devotion to be at once religious and ideological.

Allusions to piety on memorials c.1350-1529 are always explicit, necessitated perhaps by their active role in the procurement of intercessory prayers. This virtual sanctity, manifested in hands at prayer and serene expressions was the most noticeable aspect of the enduring monumental body in the parish church. Among the most explicit references is the Cooke brass from St. Mary de Crypt in Gloucester, which features a reconstructed image of St. John the Baptist with the Lamb of God above the heads of the deceased (Fig.5.17). John's significance in Christianity is as a forward messenger for Jesus (Taylor 2003:93). The presence of Christ's envoy, who travels before him, with the

lamb of God which was sacrificed conveys faith in Christ's righteous death and his return. Christ's sacrifice is also central to the structure of the *Ars Moriendi*, which uses Christ as an example of the ideal death. Its presence on the Cooke brass affirms the importance of this image to the medieval rite of dying in its entirety. However, it might also be regarded as another example of Camille's 'Intervisuality'. The image of Christ might imply that the deceased died as Christ did and as such both they and their kin deserve a fitting social and economic position and of the respect of the rest of the community.

The *Ars Moriendi* retains overwhelming optimism in the virtues of death over life and in the certainty of redemption:

And therefore every good christen man : and also every sinner berely
contrite ought nat to be sorowfull ne trouble of the reposal or bodily
deth / he ought nat to fere ne doubte it.

(Caxton 1495:3)

A similar attitude is noticeable in the few inscriptions which survive on Gloucestershire's memorials. Both assume that the soul has passed Purgatory, making no reference to Hell or damnation. For example, the riband around the tomb of John Tame (d.1500) at Fairford acknowledges his presence in Purgatory through its request for prayers to speed the passage of his soul to Heaven, stating:

Pray for the souls of John Tame Esquire and Alice his wife, which same
John died on the eighth day of the month of May Anno Dm. Fifteen
hundred, and in the sixteenth year of King Henry the Seventh and the
aforesaid Alice died the twentieth day of the month of December in the
year of Our Lord a thousand CCCC and seventy-one, on whose souls
God have mercy.

Similarly, Hadley (2000:66-67) notes that late medieval renderings of Purgatory depict it as a prison, wherein the soul was trapped and tormented in retribution for venial sins

committed during life. However, the fact of the soul's passage into the Third Place takes for granted its eventual salvation.

Temptation

It oughthe to be known and be byleved certely that they that ben
in the article of deth have many grievous and stronge teptacions
beryly such that in their lyf they never had lyke. And of these
temptacions there be five principall.

(Caxton 1495:4)

The second section of the medieval *Ars*, detailing the deathbed temptations, is the longest and most quoted of the six parts. It moves from the abstract conception of a good death to a series of tangible trials, describing the five temptations which beset *moriens* on the deathbed. These are the abandonment of faith, despair, impatience, complacency through spiritual pride and an attachment to the mortal world. A spiritual battle is described, in which *moriens* must hold fast to hope and faith while the Devil tempts him to sin. Unsurprisingly, given the explicit nature of the setting, the Devil is a far more tangible presence in this section than in any other part of *The Arte or Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*. He is vividly represented by his minions at the deathbed, though not depicted himself. Beaty labels this as a vivid example of the naïveté and decadent physicality of medieval thought (1970:12). This is a somewhat pessimistic way of describing what seems essentially to be a vivid attempt to engage the reader in an otherwise dry and didactic text. The success of the dramatic format would be picked up by later *Ars* writers, such as Thomas Becon and is a feature of later mortality works such as Samuel Rowland's (1606) *A Terrible Battell Betweene The Two Consumers of the Whole World: Death and Time*. Animating the dangers encountered on the deathbed made it easier for the reader to envisage and to fear them. The comparatively incorporeal nature of faith accords with the Devil's intimate association with the material and the flesh. Evil is a less mysterious force, familiar in its perceptible form and so easier to recognise and avoid. Predictably, this section was also the basis for the *Ars Moriendi* block books, in which demons swarm around the bed in an attempt to distract *moriens* from the assurance of salvation.

Despite the palpability of the deathbed temptations, the second chapter still emphasises salvation and hope over the threat of damnation. The five deathbed temptations correspond to the five wounds of Christ, maintaining the generic Christocentricity of *The Arte or Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*. For each of the five burdens of *moriens*, there is an equal chance of salvation if he remains true to his Faith:

Of the thief that henge on the right side of Ihesu Criste Of saynt
mary And of many mo other which were gret sinners and horrible
which always set all their hope in god alon were saved.

(Caxton 1495:7)

However, this optimism is maintained only by virtue of the texts' failure to consider the effects of individual context upon *morien's* ability to brook the five temptations. Dying slowly in pain, surrounded by family members, friends, neighbours and the priest made it almost impossible ignore the world and focus upon recommending oneself to God. The author of the *Ars* works hard to make the *Ars Moriendi* as spiritual and otherworldly as possible, depreciating the relevance of worldly concerns to the dying. However, the practical setting for the *Ars* remained material and as such it was almost impossible to achieve the premature detachment demanded of the dying.

The Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye presents the body as a sickly burden, while the soul is noble and precious. Death is seen as a positive event, an 'ende of all maladyes' (Caxton 1495:2). The torments of Hell are overshadowed with an emphasis upon the evils of the world and so upon the benefits of leaving life behind rather than fearing what comes after. There may be a reactionary element to this affirmation, perhaps composed in response to the worldly preoccupations of the laity. This accords with earlier didactic works, particularly renderings of *The Three Living and the Three Dead* (Fig.5.18). The famed imagery of the De Lisle Psalter chastises the living for their avarice by confronting them with the ultimate inconsequentiality of their wealth. The necessity of putting aside all earthly pleasures would probably have made it easier for those in poverty to attain a good death. However, the presence of such images in a commissioned text such as the De Lisle Psalter suggests that the poor were not the intended audience.



Figure 5.17: Detail of the restored image of St. John the Baptist on the Cooke brass, St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester.



Figure 5.18: The Three Living and The Three Dead, a didactic image from the early 14th century De Lisle Psalter.

(Image: Schama 2000:243)

The individuals depicted are royalty, men who were far more likely to forget their fallibility in the midst of worldly pomp.

Binski (1996:43) has noted that the *Ars Moriendi* block book demons are always larger and more prominent than the Company of Heaven. He regards this as a metaphor for the narrowness of the path to salvation in comparison to the ease with which *moriens* may fall from grace. By contrast, the allegorical figures which appear on the memorials of Gloucestershire are always images of salvation, such as the Tewkesbury Abbey angels depicted in Figure 5.1 and 5.2. These memorials were erected in order to request intercession on behalf of the deceased. However, the presence of such images implies that those depicted already favour the deceased, rendering the former somewhat redundant.

Death and the Family

References to the family are less common than those to piety, averaging at one per decade throughout the period under study. However, when present such symbols are never found in isolation. They are always alongside pious images and text. This iconographic scheme is frequently linked to the social and economic standing of the deceased by the imposing nature of the memorial. For example, John Fortescue's mid 15th century memorial at Ebrington depicts him lying piously with his hands at prayer with angels supporting his head (Fig.5.19). However, he is lavishly dressed in the state robes of a Lord Chancellor, demonstrating his economic resources and social standing. Below him is the heraldry which demonstrates his descent. The effect of this is all the arresting for the addition of a rather gaudy Victorian paint job.

In order for merchants such as John Tame, William Greville and Reginald Spycer to promote the continued prosperity of the families after their deaths, it was necessary for them to give public warrant to the continuing prosperity of their families. Their wealth was self made rather than hereditary, their standing gained through hard work rather than aristocratic privilege. Combining images of piety, such as their praying hands with rows of their progeny beneath their feet justified the continued prosperity of a family in terms

of the loyalty of their ancestors to God. The piety of past generations was given permanence within the church, encircled by symbols which linked the dead to their descendants. Therefore, social status and economic resources dictated the extent to which piety could be publicly demonstrated, and that displayed piety in turn was intended to justify and perpetuate that social and economic identity (Chart.5.5).

Ancestry and Progeny: Heredity on Medieval Memorials

Allusions to lineage took two principal forms; those which looked back to an illustrious line and forward with prolific expectations. These were represented by armigerous displays and renderings of children respectively (Chart 5.6, 5.7).

Arms

Arms were the most popular and unambiguous form of status affirmation. There are 19 examples recorded for the period c.1350-1529, making up 79% of the total number of allusions to family. Out of the 19 references, 10 are from effigies. Recumbent effigies recorded in the sample before 1530 also do not seem to employ any other form of reference to lineage. During this period the majority of individuals who chose to erect a stone effigy were aristocratic, part of the traditional Gloucestershire elite. Among those who did so are Hugh le Despenser at Tewkesbury, James Lord Berkeley and Thomas Lord Berkeley at Berkeley and Sir Guy de Bryan at Gloucester Cathedral. The fact that these individuals are commemorated by effigies which feature arms only allies this type of display with the upper stratum of Gloucestershire society. Heraldry is a means by which a long and illustrious pedigree could be claimed and conveyed to an audience of parishioners.

Arms are also found on brass, though less frequently. This might be because most individuals erecting brasses between the 14th and 16th centuries were recently made prosperous through their own entrepreneurial endeavours. There is only one example on brass before the 16th century. This is erected at Deerhurst and belongs to Sir John Cassy (d.1400), a member of an old Gloucestershire family. After this date, those which are found tend to have been erected by men who were similarly affiliated to the traditional

elite, rather than those made wealthy through their own endeavours. Examples of heraldry on brasses include that of Elizabeth Knevett, the daughter of a local knight (Davis 1899:119), erected at Eastington in the second decade of the 16th century (Fig.5.20). This brass is of interest as she wears a mantle decorated with the arms of her husband, rendering herself a possession of his line and her brass a symbol of his social status. Another example is that of Giles Brydges at Coberley. This matrix, mutilated before Bigland recorded it in the 18th century, featured two shrouded figures at prayer above two rows of praying children (Fig.5.21). Arms are depicted in each of the four corners which state the pedigree of the deceased through their links to the Berkeley, de Chandos and Baynham families (Bigland 1786 [1992]:421).

Children

No examples of lineal affirmation survive on brasses exist before c.1440. This was the decade when the first peak in the number of surviving brasses occurs, with five examples recorded compared to just six in the preceding ninety years. This might also be said to be the time at which individuals moneyed through entrepreneurial wealth became prominent in the county. The most widespread reference to family on these memorials is the depiction of lines of children at prayer. There are 9 examples before 1530. The majority of the examples in brass are commissioned by merchants in towns connected to the wool trade. One such individual was Robert Pagge (d.1440), an entrepreneurial wool merchant, whose brass combines images of piety, representations of his descendants and a wool mark. His wool mark, an identifying mark of his trade, is set on a sack of wool below his feet. This image, placed below his feet and above their heads, links the families' future prosperity with their father's past successes. This in turn links to images of hands at prayer and to an inscription which affirms the earthly piety of the deceased. The union of past achievements and pious acts with future generations affirms the testator's belief that the transience of his own position should not preclude it from endowing his surviving kin with an appropriate degree of wealth and respect. The continued prosperity of his lineage is framed and legitimised in terms of the deserving



Figure 5.19: John Fortescue (d.1463), commemorated at Ebrington.

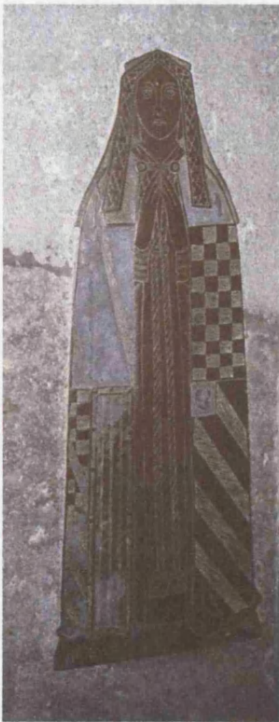


Figure 5.20: Elizabeth Knevett, mantled in her husband's heraldry at Eastington.

piety of the deceased, thus endowing the wealth and position of his descendant with a worthy ancestral base.

There is some ambiguity concerning whether the depiction of children was intended to imply the ongoing strength of a lineage, or whether the decision to depict children was linked to the innocence and purity of the soul. Medieval art frequently depicts the soul as a small child, sometimes escaping from the mouth of a dying man (Binski 1996:110). In the case of Robert Pagge and his wife Margaret at Cirencester, the lines of children are dressed in imitation of their mother and father (Fig.5.22). This would seem an obvious affirmation of familial piety, as all hold their hands in an attitude of prayer. The fact that there are many children depicted, even though some probably died in infancy suggests that this is another instance of the pairing of piety with lineage in order to suggest the continuing social and sacral superiority of the deceased. The children depicted beneath the larger images of Robert and Margaret were their legacy. They may not all have lived to adulthood, but their depiction is still evidence of the fruitfulness of the line and its continued devotion.

It is interesting that brasses erected by individuals of recently acquired social and economic importance should chose to depict children, whilst those of traditional aristocratic means used heraldry. A distinction might be drawn between averring social status through ancestral ties and through the future strength of the line, allied to arms and children respectively. This might give some idea of how the means by which status was achieved affected the identities of wealthy members of Gloucestershire society, leading them to see themselves either as the representative of a glorious and ancient line or the progenitor of a strong and vital new one.



Figure 5.21: The surviving matrix of a brass to Giles Brydges and family at Coberley.



Figure 5.22: The children of Robert and Margaret Pagge, c. 1440, at St. John the Baptist, Cirencester.

The *Ars Moriendi* and the Family

This emphasis upon the continuity of lineage seems to be at odds with the teachings of the *Ars Moriendi*. In death, *Moriens* is encouraged to be introspective, disregarding the fate of his family and friends and concentrating upon personal salvation. A preoccupation with family and friends is listed as one of the five temptations of the deathbed in chapter two:

The fyfte temptacion that moost troubleth the seculere and worldly men is the overgreat occupacion of outwarde thynges and temporall as towarde his wyf his children and hys frendys carnall towarse his riches or towarde other thynges which he hath moste louyd in his lyf.

(Caxton 1490:10)

This highlights the fundamental impracticality of the *Ars* which results from the stripping away of all traces of situation and individualism from the text. For most, a complete disregard for the fate of kin would have been almost impossible to adhere to in reality. It is a sentiment echoed by the Tanner memorial which, in its present state, appears to show a complete submission to the inevitable decay of temporal concerns. However, the monument is much damaged and it is possible that, in its original state, the monument may have featured the same allusions to family as its contemporaries. The *Ars* and the Tanner memorial, as it survives, reflect a prominent aspect of the medieval death ritual; the importance attached to liberating the soul from fleshly bondage. The doctrinal convictions of Christianity held this to be the only purpose of dying well. Family and friends were considered to be a burden. This is reflected in the perfunctory treatment given to the will making process in *The Arte or Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*. In actuality, however, dying well secured both the fate of the deceased and the future well-being of the family.

Chart 5.5: Iconographical allusions to piety and lineage, measured against each other for the period c.1350-1529.

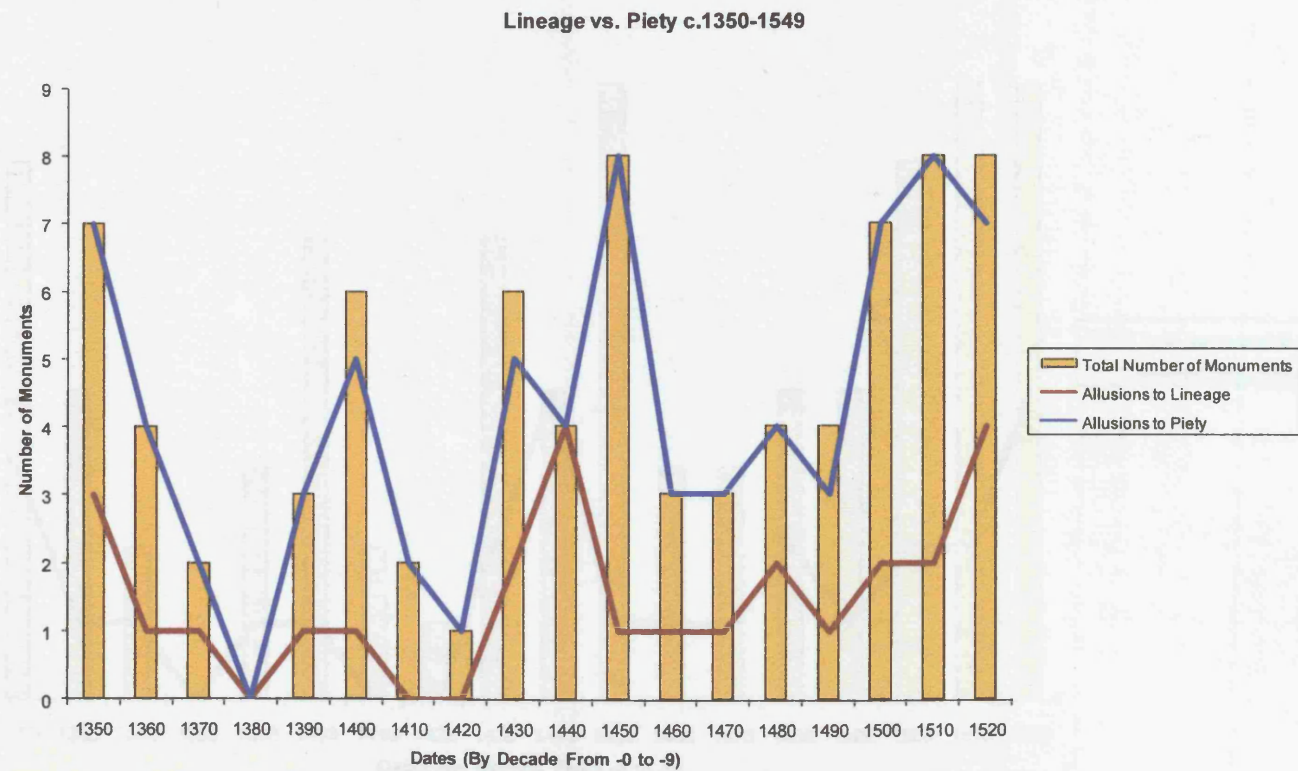


Chart 5.6: Number of Allusions to Lineage c.1350-1529.

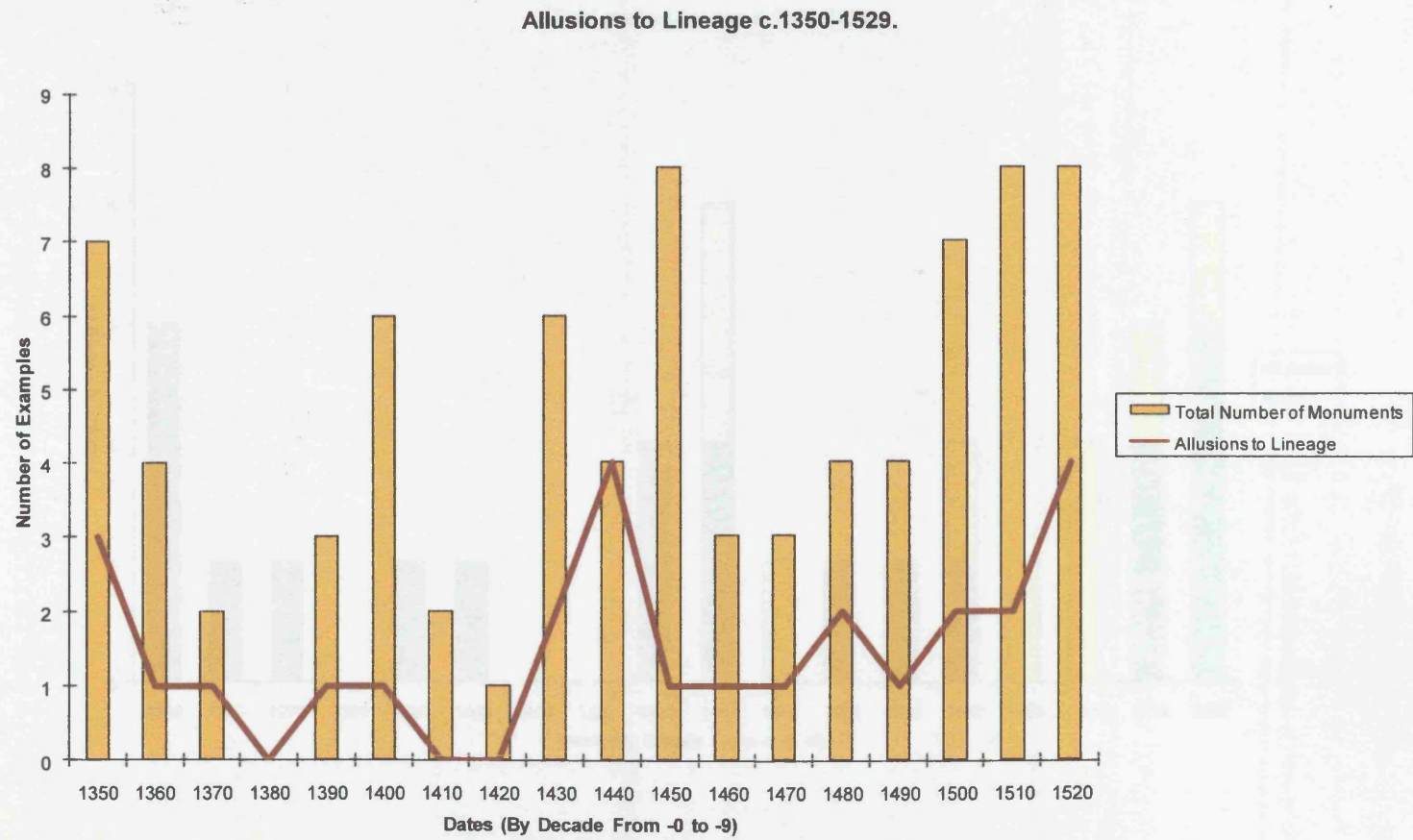
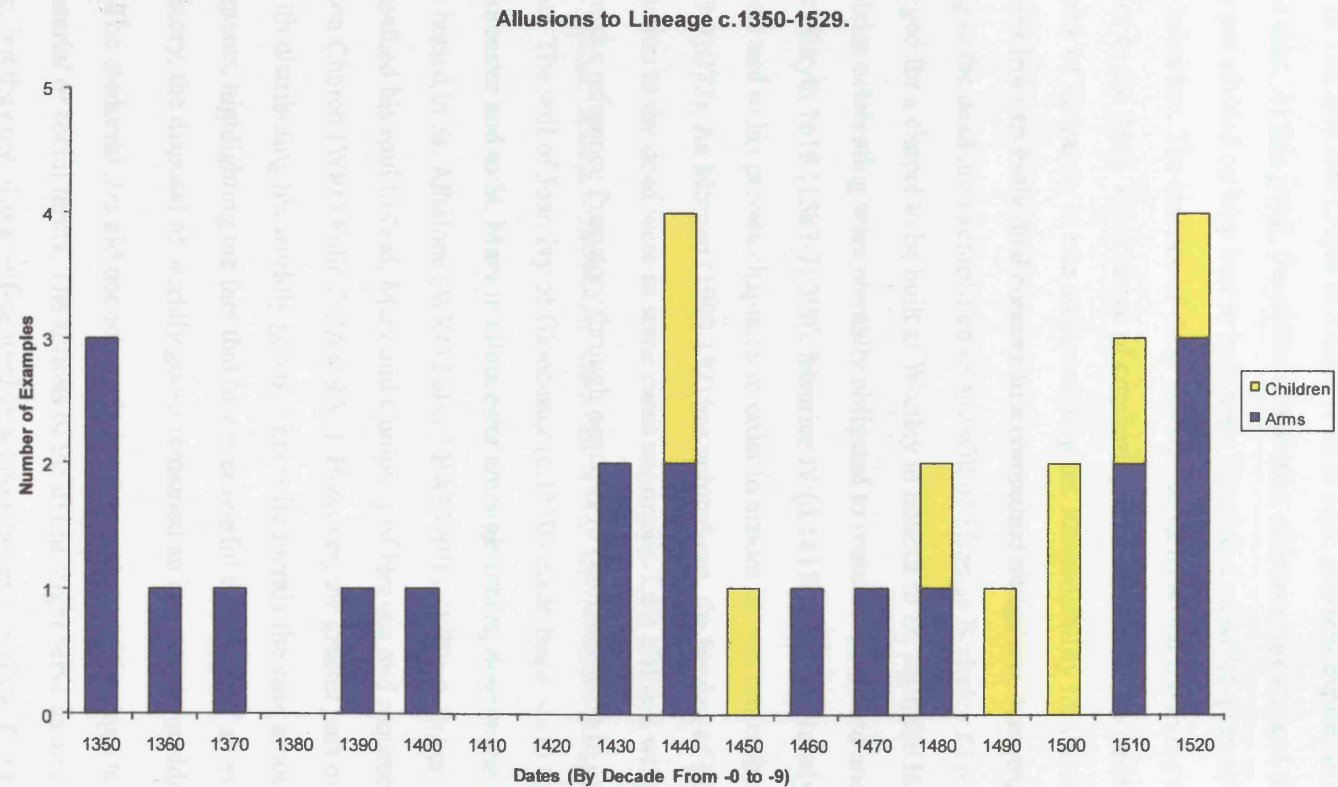


Chart 5.7: Types of Reference to Family and Descent c.1350-1529.



In *The Arte and Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*, *Moriens* expires in the fourth section of the tract. At this point, the author of the tract addresses his kin and friends directly. They are advised on how best to help their friend and on which prayers might be said for their salvation. The essence of these last two sections is that the living should be of service to the dead. This change of emphasis accords with the pre-eminence of the doctrine of Purgatory in late medieval religion. Responsibility for the soul of the dead changes from an individual concern to a communal obligation. The responsibilities of the living to the dead are exemplified by the will of Thomas Berkeley III (d.1361). He arranged for a chapel to be built at Wortley in honour of St. John the Baptist, wherein all chaplains celebrating were eternally obligated to remember the lord and his family in the Mass (Smyth 1618 [1883-7]:390). Maurice IV (d.1417) gave generously to a number of chapels and to his private chaplains in order to ensure he was remembered, (Smyth 1618 [1883-7]:372). As Morgan (1999:132) has pointed out, the burden of intercessory obligation to the dead were in some cases enormous. Less affluent wills from the county also make reference Purgatory through bequests to churches made in order to secure their favour. The will of Joan Ivy of Gloucester (c.1510) made bequests to the mother church at Worcester and to St. Mary in Gloucester amongst others, despite the fact that she was to be buried in St. Athalone (WRO Folio 3 BA3590/1). William Baker of Wotton bequeathed his soul to God, Mary and Company of Heaven and requested lights in Wotton Church (WRO Folio 5 BA3590/1). However, the greater part of the will is taken up with distributing his worldly goods. This is frequently the case among surviving testaments, highlighting the fact that however fearful the threat of an extended stay in Purgatory, the disposal of worldly goods remained an important consideration at death.

The medieval *Ars* did not acknowledge the capacity of the dead to benefit the living in material or social terms. The actions of the dying might serve as an example for the living, but they are also a self-centred in acknowledgement of the fact that this was *moriens* last chance to save himself. Thereafter the medieval dead were dependant upon the altruism of others. The Church regarded the living as waiting on death, as the sinfulness of their flesh rendered them inferior to the dead. They could offer reassurance, learn from conscientious deaths and offer prayers. However, once *moriens* has passed out

of the mortal world, the dead had little control over the actions of the living. The need to assist the soul was everywhere made apparent in churches (Hadley 2000:144). The acknowledged role of their monuments was to ensure that the living remembered to pray for them. However, the actions of the dying and the manner in which they were commemorated could also affect the fortunes of their living relations. The practical experience of affluent death in medieval England allowed for a more equal conversation between the quick and the dead than was acknowledged by the official role of the interceding memorial. The comportment of the dying reflected positively or negatively upon their family, while the contents of wills dictated the future well-being of those closest to them. More importantly within the context of the present study, the translation of their memory into stone within the parish church served to reproduce the wealth and authority of their family for all to observe. Effigies could state both worldly success and spiritual concerns, providing an opportunity to display heraldic imagery (Hadley 2000:153,155).

As Llewellyn (1991:46) has noted, medieval religious teaching divided the individual into body and soul, whereas the practical experience of death also distinguished between the natural and the social. As the natural body decayed, it was replaced by an more permanent image within the parish church which would guard against the disruption caused by a death within an insubstantial family line. The *Ars* makes no mention of commemoration. Firmly grounded within the material world of status display, they were an irrelevance to the abstraction of the *Ars Moriendi*. The text was reliant on simplistic oppositions; dark and light accorded with the Devil and the Company of Heaven, which in turn corresponded to body and soul. Good and evil were the only designations employed to classify the actions of the dying man and his surroundings. The distinction between the two was as black and white as the block book prints. The reality of social and economic differentiation rendered the ability to die well and display piety in shades of grey.

Resurrection and Mortality

Allusions to resurrection and mortality on monuments take three forms. Allegorical forms are those which depict a figure, such as an angel, or some other anthropomorphic being. Iconographic forms are inanimate references, such as a Bible and also scenes such as that of the Resurrection of Christ itself. Textual references are worded inscriptions featured on the monument.

Resurrection and the Immortal Soul

References to immortality are more common on medieval memorials than references to mortality. They are essentially statements of piety, as the fate of the soul was a central concern of the medieval parishioner (Chart 5.8). They are present on 36 memorials. By contrast, only 7 explicit references to mortality were noted.

Allegorical

There are four allegorical references to resurrection surviving in Gloucestershire. All of these are angels supporting the head of the deceased, a good example of which survives on the recumbent effigy of an anonymous woman at Bishop's Cleeve (Fig.5.23). The features of the angel have survived well. However, it is likely that many more such images were defaced as the angels depicted in Figures 5.1 and 5.2 were. These were images rendered in a Catholic milieu. Low numbers of survivals is understandable considering how such imagery might have been interpreted in a Protestant context.

Iconographic

Similarly, iconographic references to resurrection are unlikely to survive in great numbers considering their explicit relationship to Catholicism. There are two surviving examples. Both of these are images of divinity and neither has survived intact. The Cooke brass at St. Mary de Crypt features a restored image of St. John the Baptist, as shown in Figure 5.16. William Lawdner's brass at Northleach has only the matrix remaining, which shows a vague outline of the Virgin.

Text

Medieval textual references to resurrection and immortality all concern the fate of the soul, either requesting prayers or praying for its safe passage on to the Paradise. They are largely inseparable from written allusions to piety and are mainly associated with brasses on which inscriptions more commonly survive. There are 29 surviving references, making this the most well preserved allusion of the three forms. The best examples are to be found at Northleach, such as that of Thomas Bushe (d.1526) which asks:

Off your charitie pray for ye soule of Thomas Bushe, merchante of ye
staple of Calis and Johan his wife.

The Staple was a port in which trade in specific goods was regulated. For wool goods in the mid 16th century, this was Calais.

Many texts have either been damaged or are degraded. However, Bigland recorded a number of examples of references in his volumes. On a brass in the nave with a man and a woman he notes the following:

Farewell my frendes and tyde abydeth no man; I am departed from
hence and so shall ye but in the passage the best songe that I can is
requiem eternam now; Jhu. Graunte it to me when I have ended all
mine adversitie Graunte me in Paradise to have a mansion that shed
thy blode for my redemption.

(1786 [1992]: 945)

The comparatively good survival rate of these inscriptions compared to other forms may be because they are the most inconspicuous allusion to resurrection of the three and may have escaped damage for this reason.

Mortality

There are seven explicit statements of the physical effects of death in Gloucestershire prior to 1530, so few in fact that it is barely worth considering them under separate headings. There are four forms of cadaver in the sample. Their imagery is classed here as iconographical and includes shrouds, bones and in the case of the

Wakeman Cenotaph, a host of vermin. They include two stone cadaver tombs at Dursley and Tewkesbury Abbey. The matrix of Giles Brydges' brass at Coberley shows outlines of shrouded figures and the Hampton brass at Minchinhampton features two bony cadavers (Fig.5.24). The remaining two references are both inscriptions and include the following text present on a brass to Maurice and Isabel Russell at Dyrham, dating to around 1410:

Miles privatus vita lacet hic tumulatus
Sub petra stratus Morys Russel vocitatus
Isabel sposa fuit hulus militis ista
Que iacet absconsa sub marmoreal modo cista
Celi solamen, trinitas, his conferat, amer.
Qui fuit est et erit concito morte perit

Translated loosely, this reads:

A soldier, deprived of life, lies entombed here,
Laid beneath this stone, named Morys Russel,
Isabel was the spouse of that soldier,
Who lies put away in a marble tomb,
May the consolation of Heaven, the Trinity, bestow wealth upon these persons,
He who was, is, and shall be perishes early in death,

(Pers.comm Shipley 2006)

Acknowledging the physical effects of death was not unique to Catholicism. There are many examples of images of mortality from later centuries. The fact that there are fewer allusions to mortality than to resurrection might not suggest that more of these were destroyed. This imagery simply might not have been as popular and so was not employed as frequently.

Dying Well and *Transi* Memorials

References to resurrection and mortality have traditionally been contrasted as evidence of doctrinal optimism and pessimism respectively (Chart 5.9, 5.10). Shroud brasses and cadaver effigies were regarded by early commentators such as Johan



Figure 5.23: Angel supporting the head of a late 15th/early 16th century effigy at Bishop's Cleeve.



Figure 5.24: A Marian brass commemorating John and Elyn Hampton and their children at Minchinhampton

Huizinga (1955 [1987]:22) as evidence of a pessimism within late medieval theology, a melancholy which was a direct result from the crises of the 14th century. The Tanner effigy in Dursley, dating from around 1430, is one of only two surviving *transi* tombs in the county (Fig.5.25). The skeletal form of this partial cadaver suggests that the deceased acknowledged the inevitability of death and decay. However, neither the Tanner cadaver nor the Russell brasses are overtly pessimistic. The Russell brasses reveal the testator's confidence in redemption in spite of death, expressing joy and blessings in spite of death. Even the Tanner memorial, for all its grisly connotations, exalts death by inviting a comparison between mortal corruptibility and the virtues of the recently departed soul. The majority of medieval monuments betray the testator's confidence in the blessed hereafter. Morgan (1999:136) has observed that the cadaver memorial to Henry Chichele at Canterbury expresses hopefulness above all (Fig.5.26). He notes the inscription of the cry 'Emanuel, Emanuel' at the head and feet and an image of Christ facing the archbishop anticipating his arrival. In both spiritual and material terms, these monuments were intended to focus on the future rather than the past.

The creators of such monuments were mindful of the future wellbeing of the soul and the reputation which survived them. A fetid corpse was not intended to mourn a loss, but to honour the virtue of the departed spirit. Cadavers were not just statements of piety. They actively manipulated the emotions of the observer, encouraging them to pray for the deceased and perhaps to contemplate their own fate. *Transis* and shroud brasses were declarations of bodily ignominy, an acknowledgement of its worthlessness and transience. As Binski (1996:151) has stated, they exposed the 'myths and silences of the decorous medieval effigy tomb'. They were stone husks, depicting that which was left by the soul of the blessed on departure to the next life. Such tombs publicly affirmed that the deceased had understood their fallibility, accepted their fate and moved on. They were, however, decorous and lavish creations in their own right. Whatever the moralistic intentions of the creator, it is ultimately the piety of the deceased which is noted above all else. The familiar message of the Three Living and the Three Dead is 'as are you so once was I, as I am so will you be'. However, in social and economic terms, the majority

of people who observed the monument were never as the deceased was and will never appear in stone as they do before them.

Such memorials were participants within the same dialogue as the Berkeley effigies at Berkeley and Coberley. They were glorified statements of the piety of the deceased, displaying a 'devotional superiority' over the rest of the congregation. Possibly dating from the mid 14th century, the Wakeman Cenotaph at Tewkesbury is strikingly carved cadaver, covered in an assortment of vermin (Fig.5.27). The original memorial may have had a representation of the deceased in life placed above it, as is the case on Archbishop Chichele's lavish 15th century *transi*. The overall pomposity of the Chichele memorial, with its arching canopy and multicoloured saints, seems to contradict the message of mortal frailty implied by the cadaver. The same may have been true of the Wakeman Cenotaph. Both convey a message of worldly transience through memorials which belie this message through their enduring and impressive presence in the church. It is entirely possible that, whatever the intentions of their creators, observers would have recognised this contradiction and regarded the memorials as much as statements of power and wealth as principled didactic lessons.



Figure 5.25: A 15th century cadaver memorial, possibly that of a local merchant, situated in the south chapel at St. James the Great, Dursley, Glos.

Chart 5.8: Allusions to resurrection and mortality, measured against the number of surviving memorials in Gloucestershire c.1350-1529.

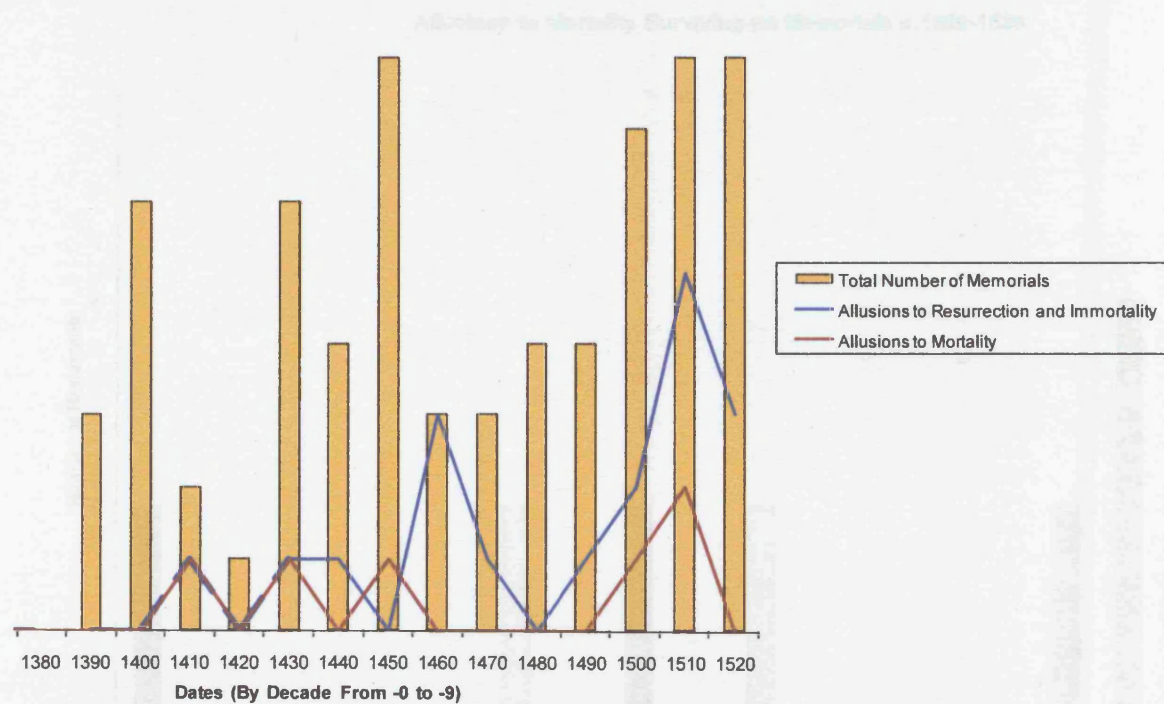


Chart 5.9: A chart illustrating the format of references to mortality on memorials c.1350-1529.

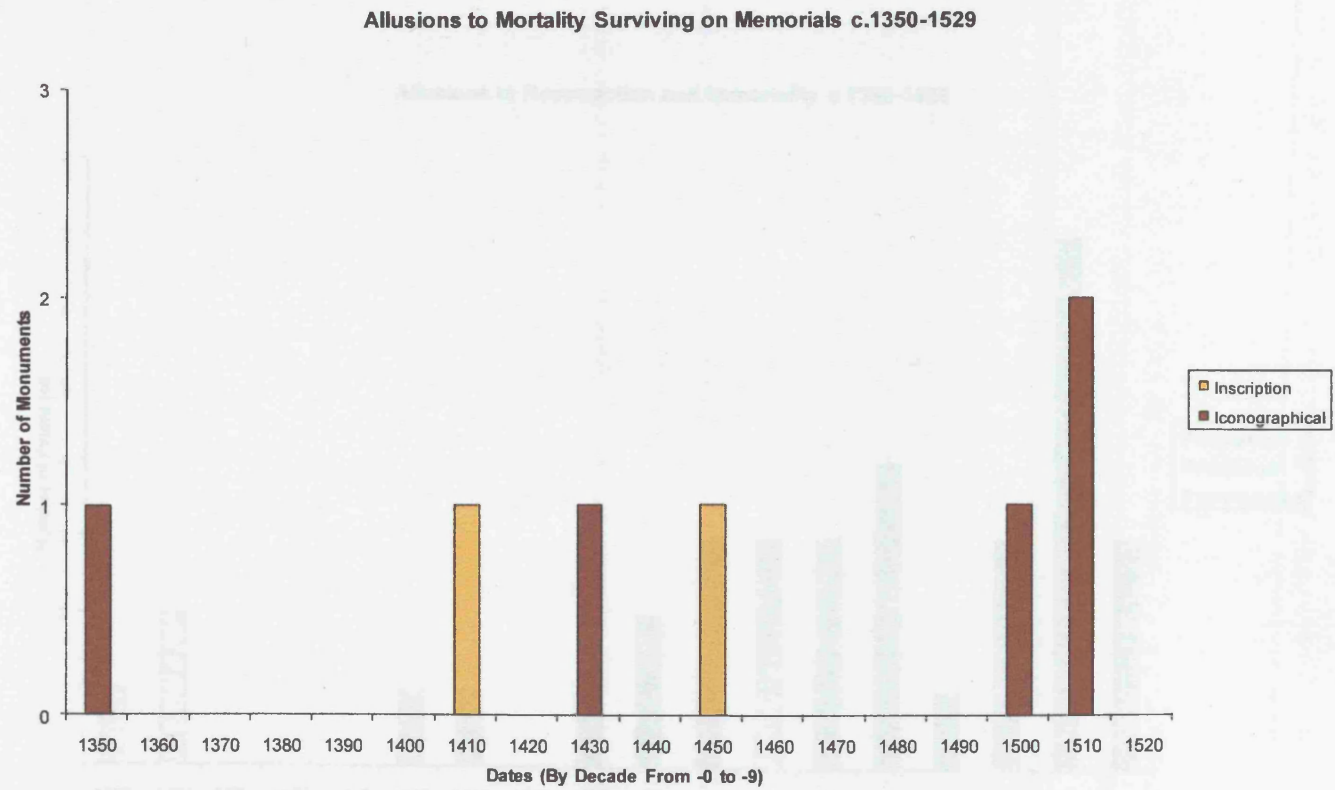
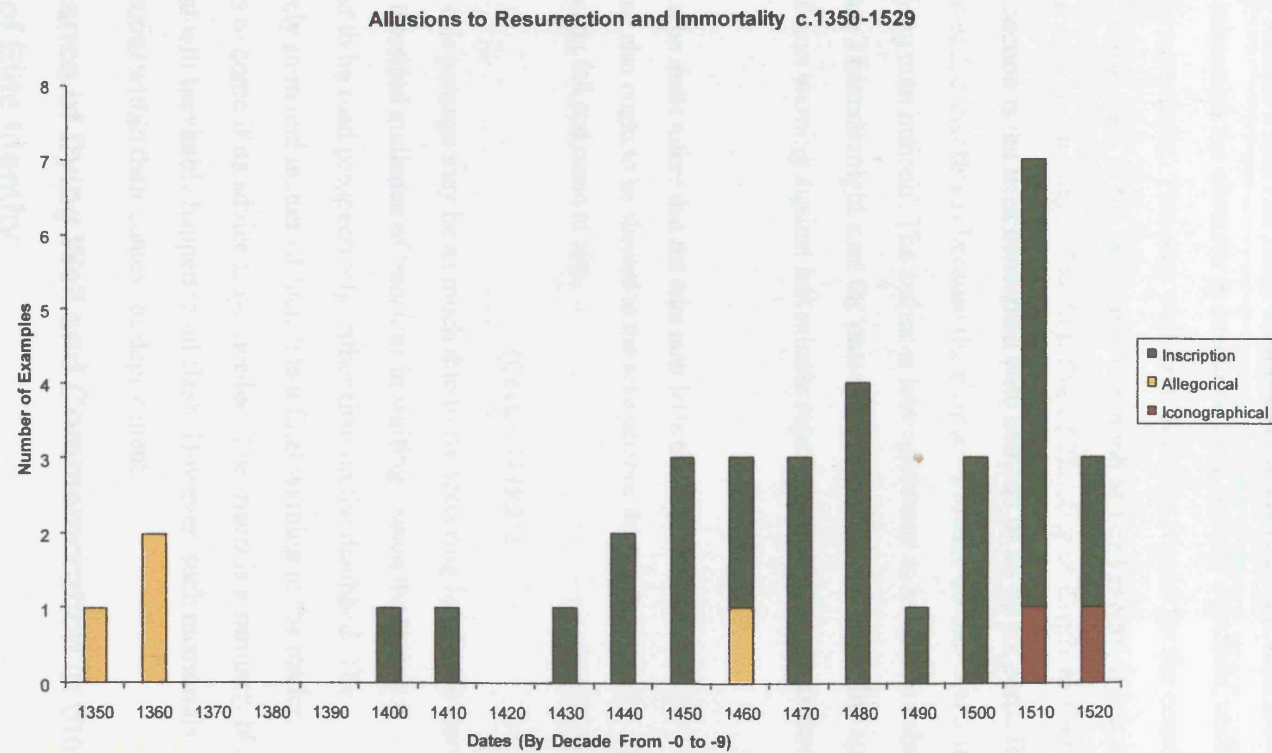


Chart 5.10: A chart illustrating the format of references to resurrection and immortality on memorials c.1350-1529.



Duffy (1992: 306-8) refers to the cadaver as a sermon in stone. Along with images such as the *Danse Macabre* and *The Three Living and the Three Dead*, such memorials were intended to admonish the observer to renounce their worldly comforts, underlining the urgent need for repentance. This may well have been one reason for the construction of this and other *Transis* such as the Wakeman Cenotaph at Tewkesbury. It is a sentiment which accord well with the message of section five of *The Arte or Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye*. The fifth section is the least concerned with comfort of all its six parts. Beaty (1970:26) has contended that this is because the chapter is meant for *moriens*'s friends, rather than the dying man himself. The author is less concerned to keep him calm. It details how *morien*'s friends might ease the passage of the dying man, yet this appears secondary to a solemn warning against last minute repentance, which echoes throughout the chapter:

Interogacions be made tofore that the seke man leffe the stage of
speech....And also ought to be shewed to the seke persone the greate
peryll that might fall and come to him.

(Caxton 1495:21)

The sternness of this passage may be as much due to its occurring late in the tract. It is aimed at an intended audience of '*moriens* in waiting', since the text as a whole is designed to be read prospectively, rather than on the deathbed. The statement is merely stern and matter-of-fact. It is a final warning to the reader, hinting at what is to come if its advice is not heeded. The *transi* is a similarly blunt statement of what will inevitably happen to all flesh. However, such memorials were far from neutral within their context of deployment.

The Significance of Dying Well and Commemoration in the Affirmation of Elite Identity

The Arte or Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye taught the laity how to die in accordance with the Christian belief that all were rendered equal by death regardless of material means. An unadorned, simple deathbed formed the central focus of the text with

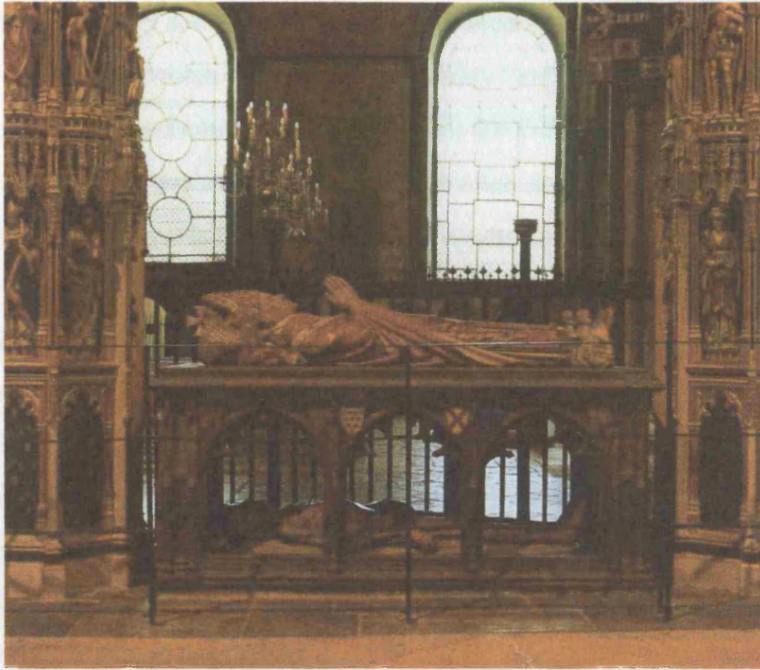


Figure 5.26: The cadaver tomb of Archbishop Henry Chichele, erected at Canterbury Cathedral in 1427, 16 years before his death.

(Image: Schama 2000:242)



Figure 5.27: The 'Wakeman Cenotaph' at Tewkesbury Abbey.

no allusions to any social class or economic means. The dying man is everyman and no man, an example which teaches that the ability to attain a good death is not a matter of means but piety and conviction. By contrast, the material culture of remembered death in medieval Gloucestershire is immersed within the social and economic context of its creation. The piety which the effigies and brasses display is made visible in the public space of the church by virtue of the wealth and power of its creators. As Llewellyn (2000:217) has affirmed, funerary monuments were “embedded within a rich visual culture within buildings which were the focus of social life”. They were set amongst the trappings of religious worship, helping to constitute the social life of the parish community within its shared space. Erecting a monument within the church served to render the power and position of the deceased and their family as immovable as the authority of God.

The religious unrest of the 16th and 17th centuries and the losses and damage of subsequent years removed much of commemorative paraphernalia which would have been given to churches in addition to the erection of brasses and stone effigies. Therefore, modern studies of commemoration will inevitably be devoid of the wall paintings, copes, armigerous chalices and altar cloths which would have kept the names of the donors alive in the parish consciousness and in close proximity to the Holy. The stated purpose of monuments and other commemorative media was to function alongside liturgical commemoration in order to speed the passage of the soul through Purgatory (Houlbrooke 1998:370). They were active in soliciting prayers and intercession to hasten the assent of the soul to Paradise.

Such material culture related social and economic aspects of the elite self alongside religious conviction. The medieval church was dependant upon lay donations and benefactions to maintain its complex and decadent liturgical practices. Individual contribution was integral to the maintenance of the communal (Duffy 2001:106). The names and heraldic insignia of donors decorated altar cloth, chalice and the ministering clergy. An example of this survives on the Syon Cope, which is decorated with the heraldry of families from around Thetford in Norfolk (Fig.5.28) (Woolley 2000:1). It is

evidence of their contribution to the religious life of the parish and a daily reminder of their prominence within the community; vital, raised and separated from the rest of the community on the person of the priest. Their identities thus emerged from the collective by virtue of wealth and privilege. Interwoven with homogenising spiritual activities were the material marks of individual secular empowerment.

Art and Power

Affirmations of power, status and the authority to command are often made using material culture. For example, in his study of the archaeology of the colonial Cape, Hall made reference to a painting by Holbein entitled *The Ambassadors* (1533). This image incorporated numerous symbols which relate to the foundation of its subjects' power and their right to continue to exercise it (2000:52-53). These ideological statements are fed to the observer through a decorative medium, disguising the presumption and privilege associated with colonialism within an apparently neutral form of artistic expression. Medieval memorials might be said to have acted in a similar capacity, blending affirmations of worldly privilege and achievement into an accepted culture of visual piety within the church space. This is exemplified by brass effigies from Cirencester and Minchinhampton (Fig.5.29, 5.30). The purpose of these memorials was to solicit prayers from the congregation in order to aid the soul of the deceased. This is shown by their hands at prayer and pleading inscriptions. However, marks of secular empowerment are present in the form of heraldry, wool marks and armour, as well as wealthy clothing. These monuments identify the deceased and their kin as pious, yet in depicting this piety alongside wealth and privilege the viewer is perhaps intended to perceive that the two are connected. Just as Holbein's painting incorporated symbols which communicated its subjects' right to hold power, so these brasses use imagery that immortalises their privilege and position within a medium which might appear at first to be entirely devotional and so innocuous. Wealth and advantage are made permanent and legitimised though their association with piety.

Despite their apparent links to the legitimatisation of personal and family authority, the brasses and stone effigies of the 14th-16th century are clearly not portraits. Their

features are standardised and impassive. An appropriate explanation for this might be that they were intended to depict the immortal soul of the deceased rather than their former vitality, averring the equality of all men under God. This certainly fits well with the Catholic conception of the equality of all men under God, as promulgated by the *Ars Moriendi*. However, this statement is contradicted by the presence of status labels such as heraldry and armour which are present on most brasses in Gloucestershire from this period. By placing a mark of familial status on a monument, the deceased or those erecting a memorial on their behalf could associate the piety professed by the memorial with the family rather than the individual. Equality in death is implied by the blandness of facial features, maintaining the pious regard of the deceased, yet the legitimating power of that devotion was transferred to their descendants by the incorporation of a mark of familial authority and to those following them in business by a merchant's mark.

The church was a focus for religious discourse and the secular affirmation of patronage and social status (Graves 1989:297). However, these two processes were not mutually exclusive. For example, Hadley (2000:160-63) has suggested that medieval ecclesiastical art helped to constitute the social order of the day. She describes how at the church of St. Denys in York, the donor of a window is depicted in the window itself requesting prayers whilst actually presenting the window (2000:163). There is an unsubtle association within such images between affluence, piety and divinity. This affiliation is continued through the direct intrusion of the wealthy into the liturgy. It was common for the chantry clergy celebrating trentals in parish churches to be required to name the patron for whom the mass was being offered (Duffy 1992:114). Powerful families and individuals manipulated the geography of the church space and its decoration in order to affirm their superiority over the rest of the community (Finch 1991:11). Examples of this survive at Cirencester, wherein a stone parclose screen closes off a chapel in the north aisle from the gaze of the congregation in the nave. Elsewhere, wall paintings have been shown to depict patron families, such as in the scene of the Coronation of the Virgin at Pickering in North Yorkshire (Giles 2000:47, 49).

Monuments were erected in positions which caused them to intrude upon the liturgy of the church. Many of Gloucestershire's medieval memorials have been moved in antiquity and it is often difficult to know how they were set out originally. In a small church such as St. Giles at Coberley, however, the monuments of Thomas de Berkeley (c.1365) and wife and Thomas de Coberley (c.1400) were so substantial that they could not have been anything but intrusive. The lavish memorials of Tewkesbury Abbey remain in situ and are good examples the patron's determination to bind worldly privilege and divine ceremony. The decorated canopies of Hugh le Despenser (d.1348) and his wife Elizabeth Montecute (d.1359) and that of Sir Guy de Brien (d.1390) arch towards the heavens, endowing the patrons with a saintly grandeur which served to impress their authority upon passers-by. In the case of Fairford, the entire church was shaped by the spiritual and social ambition of one mercantile family. The Tames rebuilt St. Mary's in the 15th century with wool trade profits (Fig.5.31). The founder's tomb of John and Alice Tame lies close to the chancel (Fig. 5.32). From a distance it appears to be rather simple, particularly in comparison with the decorated canopies of the Despenser memorials. However, its prominent position insured close proximity the rituals of the church which bonded the community together, while a wooden screen linked its purbeck slab into the essential fabric of the church and so to the complete schema of the Christian creed which endures to this day in the stained glass of the windows.

Individuals such as John Tame had no hereditary title. Their social positions were founded upon capital derived from entrepreneurial endeavour. In order to ensure lasting respect for their position and the continuing prosperity of their lineage, they sought to link themselves into the established discourse of the Church, weaving the story of their families into the fabric of the community through its religious observances. The most obvious way in which this persists is through the manipulation of acknowledged media of that discourse, such as the blazoning of arms upon altar furniture, the inclusion of patrons within stained glass windows. Finch quotes a description provided by Blomefield in the early 19th century of a medieval altar cloth at St. Gregory's in Norwich which served to keep the memory of the patron ever in the minds of the ministering priest:

Here are two very fair altar clothes, the first is of black silk, and was always used when Mass for the dead was celebrated here; it is adorned with dolphins embowed, embroidered thereon. Each having a fist in their mouths half devoured; there are also many angels, each holding a sheet; those like men, having a demi-man naked in each sheet; to represent, that by their ministration, the souls of the righteous are conducted to Heaven; on it is the inscription; Pray for the Sowles of Jhon Reede and Agnes his Wyff.

(Blomefield 1805-10, vol. iv. Quoted in Finch 2001:67)



Figure 5.28: The Syon Cope, decorated with the heraldry of families from around Norfolk.

(Image: BBC.co.uk 2006)



Figure 5.29: An example of a wool merchant's brass from Cirencester, showing standardized facial features.



Figure 5.30: An example of a wool merchant's brass from Minchinhampton, showing standardised facial features.



Figure 5.31: St. Mary's, Fairford, rebuilt by John Tame in the late 15th Century with money from the Wool Trade.



Figure 5.32: A brass commemorating John Tame and wife, set before the chancel at St. Mary's, Fairford.

At St. Peter's Church, Winchcombe, an altar cloth is preserved featuring a pomegranate symbol, which is traditionally attributed to Catherine of Aragon (Friar 1996:353). Both cloths situated the donor near to the Host during Mass and assured that they were remembered by the parish community. The motifs of 15th and 16th century patrons are constantly in evidence throughout the great wool churches of Gloucestershire. When the nave of St. John the Baptist in Cirencester was rebuilt in the early 16th century, the contributing local merchants raised angels on each pillar bearing the arms of the donors (Fig.5.33) (Hill 1981:24). The manipulation of the media of the parish church in social strategies of its control therefore is in evidence throughout Gloucestershire's churches. It has been noted by Graves (1989:311-12) and Llewellyn (1991, 2000), among others in numerous other locations in England. This strategy evidences the establishment of piety as a fundamental aspect of the elite self. The Berkeley alabasters and Tame brass linked the image of a good death to a privileged life, according the achievement of the latter a social and economic situation which its authors did not intend.

The Presentation and Reception of Elite Identities in the Parish Church

Hodder (1991:67) has stated that unquestioning acceptance of the ideological messages conveyed through a monument to the observer cannot be assumed. Interpretation was a dialectical process wherein the readers brought their own social and economic background to bear upon the monument. The majority of these readings never attained material form and so are lost. Hallam, Hockey and Howard (1999:11) have drawn a distinction between two types of participant within the construction of meaning, colourfully termed 'vegetables' and 'vampires'. The former refers to the socially excluded; those whose presence within the community is contemporaneous with their fleshly form. 'Vampires' assert a continuing social presence via the creation of monumental effigies which retain a perfected presence within the church and the collective memory of the community. They consider how representations of the dead body can continue to impinge upon the experiences of the living (1999:41). The Berkeley Family was the epitome of Gloucestershire 'vampires', ageless and omnipresent throughout the county within their recumbent memorials. The tactility of their memory



Figure 5.33: An angel bearing the arms of a local merchant, watching over the 15th century nave at St. John the Baptist, Cirencester.

and obvious belief in their own relevance might easily eclipse the possible transitory interpretations of their place within the community by those of less means, who were not necessarily deceived by the alleged immortality of wealth and power. Yet they might still speak to the living, perhaps invoking a sense of social order.

Unfortunately, the thoughts and opinions of the majority of observers are lost to the record, which leaves only the monument and its context to give clues as to the purposes of its erection and how it was received. Perfected images of death, such as the Berkeley memorials with their flawless alabaster images frozen in piety might also be said to freeze facets of the alleged identity of that person in the public space for all to see. This memorialisation states their devoutness and serenity in death, implying that theirs was a worthy life and a good end. Such devotion might be more apparently than real, attributed by those who commissioned the monument. This is inconsequential, since the image and

its identity are fixed in the public space and so that aspect of their self is unchanging. The image affirms and reproduces the pious identity of the deceased through the statement and display of a pious death and this in turn might reflect positively upon the identities of surviving relatives.

Although the reactions of those experiencing the monument within the church are not recorded and so cannot be determined, it might be possible to determine the effect that this was intended to have upon the audience. The monuments affirm a material association between piety and social prestige which might be intended to justify the social position of surviving kin. With their hands at prayer and stone angels in alabaster, they render devotion central to the elite identity. Thus piety is rendered as an aspect of elite identity and a legitimising facet of it through the act of commemoration. Such enduring statements of elite selfhood might influence perceptions of other manifestations of piety and good deaths in medieval material culture. Perceptions of manifestations of medieval beliefs such as the *Ars Moriendi* which discuss piety in death and are more transient, both in terms of their location and survival over time, might be influenced by such displays of piety. Visual representations of devout death are rendered only by the 'vampires', presenting it to posterity as something only achievable by their like. Devout death as conveyed in all its material forms might thus become associated with wealth and power and piety a justification of its continued possession by the kin of the apparently pious.

The Role of Text and Image in the Constitution of Medieval Mortality

Medieval Death

Historically speaking, the academic study of late medieval death has focused upon relative impact of ecclesiastical dogma upon popular mentalities against the effects of immediate crises, such as famine, war and disease. Falling shortly before 1350, the Black Death has been particularly influential in recent analyses of death in the late 14th and early 15th centuries. Johan Huizinga began his volume *The Waning of the Middle Ages* with the line 'No other epoch has laid so much stress as the expiring middle ages on the

thought of death' (Huizinga 1955:22). At first glance, this fixation seems entirely justified. The effects of the Black Death were devastating, with towns such as Bristol experiencing massive depopulation (Platt 1996:5). On the wall of a church tower in Ashwell, Hertfordshire is a group of inscriptions which would seem to capture this sentiment:

Pestilencia .I. quinque [*glossing* penta]

M C ter X penta miseranda ferox uiolenta

MCCCL

Superset plebs pessima testis in fine ije uentus ualidus MCCC

Oc anno maurus in orbe tonat LXI

('49/pestilence *that is* five / 1350 wretched, fierce, violent / 1350 / the dregs of the populace live to tell the tale. At the end of the second (pestilence) a mighty wind / this year Maurus thunders in the heavens 1361).

(Dickins 1967:182)

Surviving accounts by monastic commentators such as that of 14th century Leicester canon Henry Knighton, author of *Historiae Anglicanae scriptores decem*, narrate the ruin of buildings, deserted villages and financial destitution, the physical and psychological effects of plague which they describe doubtless accentuated by their enclosed situation (Martin 1996:xv). The effects of plague were therefore rendered all the more stark by the isolation of the commentators from the dangers which the majority of the population were subject to on a daily basis. The majority of written accounts were penned by men whose experiences need to be contextualised in terms of the privileged life to which they had become accustomed, away from the threat of famine, the dangers of childbirth and the everyday squalor of life in the streets. However, deserted villages, truncated architectural works and the numbers of individuals hurriedly buried in plague pits in the mid 1300s attest to the fact that plague did indeed cause disruption of unprecedented proportions. A pessimistic estimate puts the death rate from the first outbreak at 30-50% of the population across England (Roberts 2001:1). Such statistics,

combined with the effects of the Great Famine of 1315-1317, the Hundred Years War and religious unrest such as the Great Schism have led numerous historical commentators such as to label the 14th century an 'era of catastrophes' (Nelson 2001:1).

The 14th century witnessed a number of events which could give the affluent cause to doubt the integrity of their social and economic status. Quoting Gordon Childe's 1945 article *Directional Changes in Funerary Practices During 50,000 years*, Parker Pearson (1999:87) has suggested that instances of funerary ostentation often coincide with moments of political and economic instability. Arnold (1997:193) has made a similar suggestion with regard to the appearance of rich barrow burials in the 7th century at Taplow and Sutton Hoo. He argues that such forms represented a reaffirmation of pagan elite status through ostentatious display, fixing power in the landscape in the face of Christian encroachment. However, no clear material link exists between this alleged devastation of the 1300s, changes in popular attitudes to mortality and commemorative practices in the mid 14th century. There is a disparity between historically documented crises and the material renderings of decay which so often illustrate historical works on medieval death (Binski 1996:128, Horrox 1999:115). The early 14th century rendition of the of the Three Living and The Three Dead depicted in the Psalter of Robert de Lisle and gruesome cadaver tombs such as that of Henry Chichele were made years before the plague. The Decorated canopy of the so-called 'Wakeman Cenotaph' at Tewkesbury Abbey suggests a mid-14th century date, as does some of the graffiti on the uprights (Fig.5.34, 5.35). However, stylistic dating of graffiti is particularly difficult and the canopy and cadaver may not have originally been part of the same memorial. The name of the original owner has been forgotten, suppressed by a later attribution to John Wakeman who died in the mid 16th century.

Rather than relating it to specific crises documented in history, mortality imagery in medieval Gloucestershire fits in well with the 'aesthetic ethos' of medieval piety (Duffy 1993:305). It evolved spontaneously from a customary practice of using strong visuals in order to capture the attention of the masses. Rather than responding to an immediate crisis, such images should be regarded within the context of the importance

which the late medieval Church placed on the recognition of sin and the need to repent in anticipation of judgement. It was employed as a reminder of mortality and a corrective to worldly pride (Pearsall 2001:223). Cadavers might thus be situated within an evolving culture of anxiety and guilt regarding the comportment and requirements of fleshly being, wherein images, texts and oral ministrations acted to prompt the laity to pursue a devout and conscientious life in anticipation of judgement.

Lay Spirituality in Gloucestershire

Burgess has written that the parish church:

..existed to stimulate and satisfy spiritual aspiration and was bound in return to benefit from the parishioners' devotion and in particular penitential response.

(1988:71)

However, acts of piety within the parish space were often highly personal and as such might also serve purposes pertinent to the individual. Duffy has noted the manner in which the chantry chapel of John Greneway at Tiverton links piety with commerce and self-advertisement:

.. (He) decorated it with his initials, merchant's mark and coat of arms. He also commissioned for it a programme of carvings which proclaimed with equal insistence his worldly success and otherworldly aspirations. The chapel and porch are patently *expensive*, battlemented, elaborately pierced and emblazoned with heraldry, an exercise in conspicuous consumption, albeit of a sanctified sort.

(2001: 68)



Figure 5.34: The Wakeman Cenotaph at Tewkesbury Abbey.



Figure 5.35: Medieval graffiti from one of the uprights on the Wakeman Cenotaph at Tewkesbury Abbey. Medieval graffiti commonly assume a representation, rather than textual format. Thus this representation of a possible calvary cross is suggestive of an early date.

Parallels may be drawn between Greneway's chapel and the Tanner Chapel in the south aisle of St. James the Great, Dursley in Gloucestershire. The embattled parapet at Dursley pairs Tudor roses and marks identifying the donor, crowning a structure erected for the health of the immortal soul of the donor with images explicitly reflecting the status of the mortal body (Fig.5.36). The beautification of the church in such a manner might have inspired the collective devotion of the parish, yet such benefactions were also unequivocal statements of the link between worldly wealth and otherworldly privilege (Hadley 2001:175).

The vitality of individual piety is evidenced by surviving material culture from over half a century before the plague. However, such an onslaught of death may have given impetus to an existing tendency to over prepare for the end. Direct confrontation with the issue of death can bring into focus the fundamental cultural values by which people live and evaluate their lives (Metcalf and Huntington 1991:164). Lindley (1996:144) has proposed that outbreaks of plague may have increased the desire for chantry chapels and masses for the dead, accelerating an existing trend towards personal devotion as the imminence of mortality was brought into sharp relief. Surviving evidence is limited by subsequent acts of iconoclasm, which removed the majority of donated items from churches and so rendered this statement almost impossible to substantiate.

After 1547 commissioners oversaw the confiscation of the endowments of 4000 chantries, colleges and hospitals in England, as well as a much larger number of obits and parochial guilds (Marshall 2003:64). Chantries were founded around Gloucestershire both before and after the 1340s. McClean (1883:229) states that all that was needed was an altar and a space for an officiating priest and noted that many churches in Gloucestershire had eight or ten such endowments praying for the souls of the donors. He listed over 70 pages of chantry certificates from Gloucestershire and Bristol, including this one from Gloucester:

The P'she of Lady Crippa where are howseyynge people CClxxx
 Our Ladye Service.
 Ffounded oon Willm de Warwick and Edith his wife &dyice psons noe
 vse exp'ssed, neitheles the feoffeez have always wt the rente &c thereof
 &c maynteyned a prieste Singing at or lady alter in the seid Churche.

Sir John Myrre Incumbent there of the age of --- lv yere havinge noe
 other living then in the seid sevice wch is yerelie – Cvjs viij^d
 The lande & tente to the same belonginge are of the yerelie value of ixii
 ijs vid whereof
 In repisez yerelie - - - - ixli iij^s vsd ot
 And soe remayneth Clere yerelie - - - - viijli iij^s viij^d ot
 Ornamente therunti belonging valued att vij^s
 Plate and jewelle to the same - - - - noone

(McCleane 1883:259)

Dependant upon their means, the people of Gloucestershire also sought intercession from the saints at sites such as Hailes and images in beautified churches such as Kempley with its 12th century wall paintings (Fig.5.37) and Fairford with its Divine imagery in stained glass in order to secure divine approval (Fig.5.38). Lay devotional appetite inevitably led to a degree of reinterpretation grounded within the cultural milieu of the patrons, their everyday preoccupations and superstitions. At Widecombe-in-the-Moor in Devon, hares or rabbits running in a circle have been employed within the local church as a symbol of the Trinity, perhaps referencing the natural and landscape context of the church building (Greeves 2005). Taylor (2003) has suggested that they refer to the commercial rabbit warrens nearby, though they may also be a mark of the Tinner's Guild. The latter seems more plausible, as similar imagery can be found elsewhere in Devon. Andrew et al (2004) refute both explanations, pointing out that the symbol can be found in disparate contexts throughout Europe (Fig.5.39, 5.40). The symbols were probably interpreted differently depending on when and where they were observed and might serve to link sacred life in the church with the everyday subsistence of the parishioners. Economic, social and religious life blurred together as the congregation sought tangible connections to sanctity, reworking what they experienced in order to make it relevant to their everyday lives. There was a fine line between sanctioned participation and abuse. Rubin (1991:334) has noted several instances whereupon lay folk reinterpreted the magical powers of the Host, with heretical and sometimes painful consequences. These included a woman stuck by paralysis after she stole the Host to sprinkle on her cabbages (1991:41).



Figure 5.36: Marks identifying the donor of the chapel (far right) and Tudor Roses (left and centre) in the parapet of the Tanner Chapel, St. James the Great, Dursley.

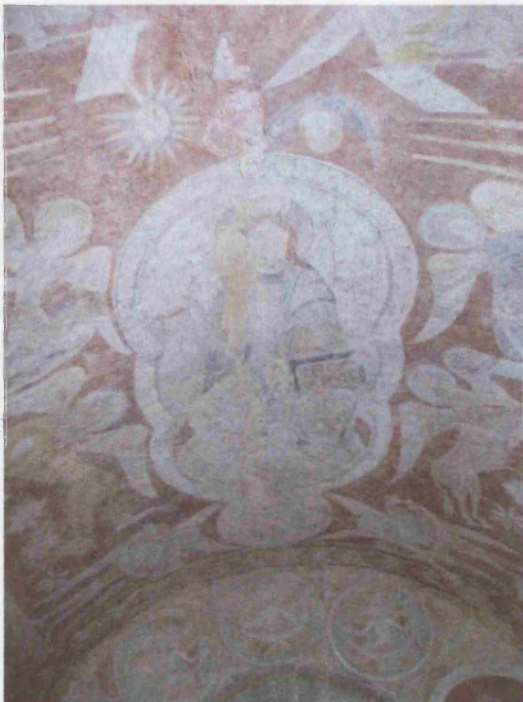


Figure 5.37: Christ in Majesty, as depicted on the barrel vault of the Chancel at Kempeley in the Forest of Dean, Glos.

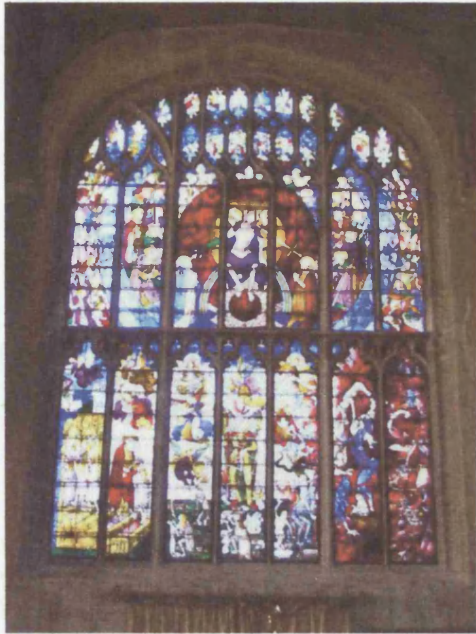


Figure 5.38: The 15th Century West Window at Fairford in the Cotswolds, depicting the Last Judgement.



Figure 5.39: Hares depicted on a bell, Kloster Haina, Germany.

(Image: Chapman 2006)



Figure 5.40: Hares on a roof boss, Widecombe-in-the-moor, Devon.

(Image: Chapman 2006)

and a sinful woman who kept it in her mouth and found it turned to flesh and stuck there (1991:36). Its magic was interpreted in a practical and tangible sense as something which could be seen, held and manipulated. Gilded idols in churches might be interpreted in similarly practical terms, and the tendency of the uneducated to confuse the person of a saint with their representation would later become one of the key tenets of the case for reform in the 16th century.

Pious Acts and Personal Display

Despite the professed equality of all in death as promulgated by the Catholic liturgy and individual *memento mori* such as that of the 15th century brass of Morys and Isabel Russell at Dyrham, the importance of individual privilege remained patent in death. The inventories of All Saints, Bristol, record the bequest of a ‘Dance of Pauls’ by William Wytteney costing an impressive £18 (Haddon and Schoppe 1460 [1480/1995]). This gift not only ensured that “everyman should remember his own death”, but also made certain

that every parishioner remembered the generosity of the donor to the benefit of his soul and his posthumous reputation. The latter had positive implications for Wytteney's surviving kin. It provided them with a link to a righteous and devout ancestor, made palpable through the fabric of the church and in a written record of benefactions which future generations might revere.

Sir Christopher Trychay's pre-Reformation records at Morebath in Somerset recorded numerous lay benefactions, immortalising the piety of the donor long after the items in question had ceased to be a part of religious life (Duffy 2001:106-7). Duffy's analysis of the piety of the Morebath laity and their priest's pleasure at every gift makes it clear that individual acts of devotion not only enriched the liturgy but also contributed to the bonding of the community through their collective pride in the beautification of the church. However, the poorer members of the community could not weave their names into the liturgy through the donation of a chalice or cope; they could not claim the intercessory rewards of a tangible link to a saint's effigy or secure the eternal prayers of the parishioners through the perpetual presence of their name or arms in the fabric of the church. Benefactions may have evoked pride in the beauty of the church and in the aura of communal devotion which they represented among the living. However, the bonding of communities in collective fidelity conflicts with the individualistic nature of bequests and devotions. Donations, intrusive memorials and chantry chapels ensured that social differentiation was written into the ministry regardless of its protestations of equality in death.

The association between piety and personal display existed apart from individual crises, such as wars, famines and outbreaks of disease. It was part of an ongoing strategy whereby those with the means to do so sought to embed fallible identities into the enduring fabric of the church. Prior to the 14th century, individuals solicited prayers in many locations through the foundation of chantry chapels, pious donations and the erection of memorials. The 13th century heart burial of Sir Giles Berkeley at Coberley, Glos., is a good example of this trend. It resides in a small recess to the south of the altar, recalling a holy relic rather than a memorial (Fig.5.41). This impression is reinforced by

the fact that the church is dedicated to St. Giles, patron saint of the Berkeleys. This close association between the man and the saint may have been intended to secure the favour of the latter. However, it is not inconceivable that Sir Giles hoped that their two identities would become confused. Giles's heart might come to elicit prayers from parishioners appealing to the saint in the manner of a relic. This would also have been a source of great prestige for his surviving kin. Giles's intentions are impossible to prove. However, by splitting his body between Coberley and Little Malvern, the knight not only invested his soul with prayers from multiple sites, but also consolidated the authority of his family in two disparate locations. The health of the soul was bound to the wealth of the body; the latter allowing the memory of the deceased to persist for longer and in a greater number of locations.

Though not always applicable to specific historical contexts, Parker Pearson's (1999:87) suggestion that ostentation might contribute to a process of political legitimisation is useful in identifying elite attempts to control the effects of death. Metcalf and Huntington (1991:164) have described how the 19th century Shilluk of Sudan related the person of their king to the overall wellbeing of their nation. As a symbol of unity and prosperity, the king could not be seen to decay or die. His fate was symbolic of that of his people (Metcalf and Huntington 1991:164). Sick monarchs are dispatched and replaced before any signs of weakness can be detected by the populace. Those responsible for this act may have some idea of the ideological fallacy of the eternal and deified king, yet maintaining the prestige of the office and those reliant upon it is clearly deemed to be of sufficient importance to merit continuing deception. The same fears and responses are implicit in the commemorative practices of Gloucestershire's elite in the Middle Ages, manifested in the translation of the temporal body of a family member into an enduring monument to familial prosperity. Ostentatious recumbent effigies such as the alabasters of the Berkeley family served to repair the breach formed at the death of an important individual, denying the fact of decomposition whilst also publicly affirming the status of surviving kin. The body might be dead, but its vital form remained an active object which continued to reproduce the social power of the surviving family (Fig.5.42).

Conclusions

Morgan (1998:5) has identified three attributes of artefacts which may serve to recreate the human self as a vehicle for ideological legitimisation. He alleges that objects have the ability to firstly display power and social status, secondly to secure the continuity of the self over time in relation to focal points in the present, past traces and future expectations and lastly to provide material evidence for the position of the individual and their family within a web of social relations. Therefore, material culture in itself is not a means by which power is displayed and transferred. This is achieved in a dialogue between the artefacts, their context of deployment and the consumer. This chapter has demonstrated how apparently a homogenising and regularising religious ideal, as those presented by the medieval *Ars Moriendi*, can be employed in the affirmation of individual social goals. It has demonstrated how imagery familiar from encounters with that ideal might attain new meanings when displayed on a monument alongside marks of secular empowerment, becoming part of an image of the self which the deceased and their kin desired to publicly convey. The collection and analysis of medieval commemoration surviving in Gloucestershire has revealed which social and economic groups were perpetuating their identities in this manner, how they chose to do this in relation to each other's social positions and with consideration for the religious context in which such images operated.

The explicit aim of medieval brasses and effigies was to solicit prayers from living members of the congregation in order to hasten the soul of the donor through Purgatory, affirming the religious identity of the departed through the statement of a belief in purgation and intercession. This purpose accords with the spirit of the *Ars*, which encouraged the dying to consider the fate of their souls over the future of their family and worldly possessions. However, the rendering in stone of past family members in the parish space also served a more terrestrial purpose. It gave an enduring presence to the wealth and authority of a particular family within the communal space of the parish church. The piety of the deceased in death was immortalised by hands held in an attitude

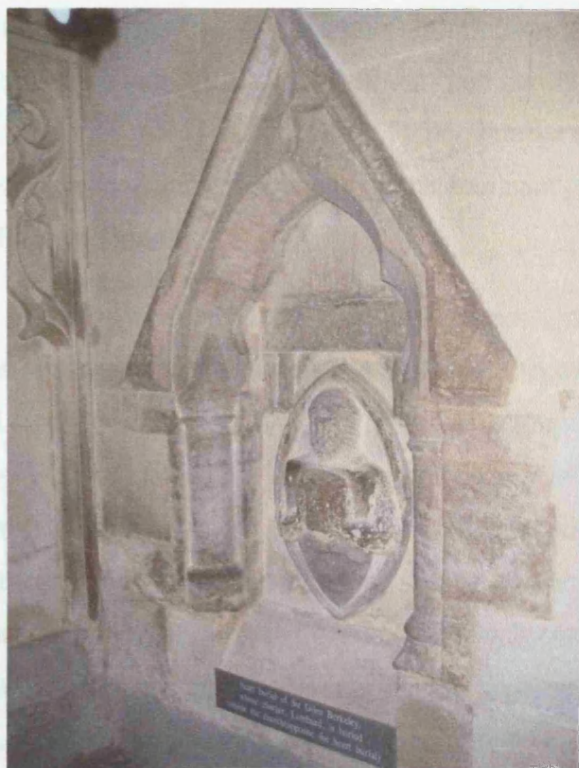


Figure 5.41: The heart burial of Sir Giles Berkeley in the south wall of the chancel, St. Giles Church, Coberley, Glos.



Figure 5.42: The recumbent effigies of Lord Thomas and Katherine Lady Berkeley in the nave at St. Mary's, Berkeley, Glos.

of prayer, statues of saints and a pious inscription. This iconographical scheme was further enriched by the depiction of arms and family members, at times surrounded by lavish carving and a vaulting canopy. Piety, lineage and wealth were blended together in order to bestow divine sanction upon the dominant position of particular families within the local community.

By comparison, the medieval *Ars Moriendi* texts were intended to convey the transience of worldly pleasures and possessions in comparison to the perpetuity of the soul. The fifth section of *The Arte or Crafte to Knowe Well to Dye* mentions the importance of making a will. However, there is brief reference to material life which seems almost to be an afterthought. The tract was concluded by a collection of intercessory prayers, affirming to the reader that security for the soul should be the ultimate concern of the dying. Beaty (1970:34-5) criticised the medieval *Ars*, labelling it chaotic and superficial. However, there is a clear moralistic thread running through the text, emphasising the transience of the mortal world and the need to keep faith until the last. Its lack of depth was a necessary sacrifice to ensure that its message is passed onto as wide an audience as possible. The vivid images of demons crowding the deathbed and of Christ's sacrifice drew the reader into the text. Whilst this potent combination of simplicity, magic and imagery guaranteed an audience for the *Ars*, it did not assure that the text would be used in the manner in which the author intended.

The presentation of this ideal to the laity involved the tenets of the *Ars* in the negotiation of power relations. Piety in death inexorably became another component of status display, joining the display of arms and wealth in the affirmation of the positions of newly endowed families. Diaz-Andreu (2005:19) has suggested that forms of power negotiation are present in all aspects of living and are a vital element in dialogues of identity negotiation. The manipulation of ideals of piety through the medium of affluent commemoration rendered dying well an overt component of elite social identity, defining and augmenting their superiority over the rest of society. The association of monuments, piety and power also created a means by which newly moneyed individuals such as prosperous merchants could claim parity with traditional landed authority, such as the

Berkeley families. Entrepreneurial families such as the Tames and the Grevilles identified with them creating an analogous presence in the public space.

Casella and Fowler (2005:1) have noted a persistent belief among archaeologists that the ability to uncover the meaning of material culture and its relationship to past peoples necessitates the assumption of a relationship between material remains and a social identity. However, the paraphernalia of medieval death acquired different meanings depending on how and where they were deployed and employed and who experienced them. The role of such material culture in the perpetuation of social identities is relational (Diaz-Andreu and Lucy 2005:6), in terms of the wider social and material context and so to other strands of identity formation. Therefore, a memorial pleading for intercessory prayers might at once be a statement of religious belief and a declaration of the possession of sufficient worldly wealth and status to demonstrate conviction in one's own piety above all others. Belief in divinity and redemption and assurance of social privilege are linked together in material display as connected components of identity constitution. The concept of a good death was the context in which social status could be stated and affirmed. This should not be taken to imply that portraying piety in death was only perceived as a way of gaining social currency. The importance of dying well had to be accepted and believed in its literal sense in order to be usefully manipulated. As an adopted component of elite identity, the use of images relating to a good death on memorials reinforced the religious and social being commemorated therein.

CHAPTER SIX

Death in Transition

Approaches to Death and Dying Well During the English Reformation c.1531-1600

Introduction

This chapter will compare and contrast the purposes of commemoration from the 1530s to the end of the 16th century with the content of contemporary *Ars Moriendi* texts and the motivations of the writers. The principle aims of this analysis will be to comprehend if the manner in which elite identities were articulated through memorials was affected by religious changes during this period and to consider the degree of change in comparison to that experienced by the *Ars* tradition. The contents of contemporary *Ars* texts illustrate the volatile religious and social climate in which commemoration took place. The writings of the *Ars* authors made strong statements about their religious affiliation and instructed accordingly. Their opposing Protestant and Catholic affiliations identifies their texts as having been produced during a time of ongoing conflict. Becon's Calvinistic version of Christianity evidences the credo of a religion based on the Word of God, whilst also betraying a hatred of Catholicism and its opposing beliefs. Such tracts and their authors might be subject to animosity when the adherents of competing doctrines came to dominate. The *Ars Moriendi* author Robert Parsons produced his Catholic *Christian Directorie* in exile, avoiding reprisal from English Protestantism. Despite their doctrinal partisanship, aspects of each tract continued to reference their shared medieval antecedent. The trials which necessarily preceded a pious end persisted, as did their potential for reinterpretation by the readership and so their manipulation by those seeking to link devoutness to social worth through images of spirituality.

Attitudes to religious change during the 16th century among the wealthy in Gloucestershire influenced and were influenced by other facets of elite identity. Political association and possession of wealth and social influence affected how religious affiliation was expressed and impacted upon the social and economic being

of the individual. For example, William Tyndale, translator of the bible and leading early Protestant, was able to enjoy a reasonable standard of living and the hospitality of Sir John Walshe of Little Sodbury, until an unfavourable religious climate changed his circumstances and forced him into exile (Litzenberger 1997:29). James Baynham was a member of the most prominent family in the Forest of Dean, until 1532 when he was burnt at Smithfield for his Protestant beliefs (Litzenberger 1997:31). Religious choice thus dictated whether individuals conflicted or found favour with those in a position to support or condemn them.

The prominence of commemorative material culture rendered it an obvious medium for those seeking to make clear their religious and political identities, highlighting their conflicts with others, as Elizabeth I's proclamation of 1560 demonstrates:

Her Majesty chargeth and commandeth all manner of persons hereafter to forebear the breaking or defacing of any parcel of any monument or tomb, or grave, or other inscription and memory of any person deceased being in any manner of place, or to break any image of kings, princes or noble estates of this realm, or any other that have been in times past erected and set up for the only memory of them to their posterity in common churches and not to any religious honour.

(Finch 2000: 128)

Commemoration establishes a permanent presence for the deceased, though this may be damaged or destroyed in time. The rendition of an identity in stone is an attempt to ensure that the characteristics of individuals commemorated will endure past their lifetime. This chapter will examine the degree of importance attached to creating a lasting remembrance in the church during a time of religious change. It will consider whether permanence was considered more or less important than the expression of religious affiliation. If stating one's faith was of greater concern to those erecting monuments in Gloucestershire than a lasting presence in the social space of the church then explicit references to the faith of the deceased should be as clear on memorials as in the *Ars* texts, regardless of the threat of destructive reprisal. The *Ars Moriendi* texts will provide an indication of the different religious positions which might have been held in the 16th century. Their medium was impermanent and easily reproduced in

comparison to the monument, intended for a contemporary audience of like minded individuals. They reflect religious change through the later 16th century and so give an indication of beliefs which might remain unspoken by the monument.

The Literary Context

A Text for All Tastes?

In the 16th century, the *Ars* tradition became more complex. Different texts emerged reflecting the doctrinal affiliations of their authors. All were loosely based upon the medieval *Tractatus*, remaining fundamentally instructive, yet within the boundaries of their respective faiths. As the complexity of the *Ars* increased, so their intended readership narrowed and they became increasingly inaccessible to those with limited literary skills. The structural and intellectual complexity of the texts demonstrated a willingness to experiment with different forms of delivery, from the polemic to the classically dramatic. Certain texts appealed to those of a particular religious disposition, suggesting a smaller readership than its medieval precursor. As will be shown in this section, the language and content of tracts such as Lupset's *Waye of Dyeing Well* and Becon's *Sicke Mannes Salve* made explicit the authors' doctrinal stance during a time of marked religious uncertainty.

This narrowing of the readership for the texts was economic and social as well as doctrinal. Access to education, principally relating to classical Roman and Greek literature and architecture played a part in individual comprehension of the content of the *Ars*. Lupset's *The Waye of Dyeing Well* employed classical illustration in order to convey his vision of how Christians should die. Such imagery may have been chosen in the interests of doctrinal neutrality, but it also recommended the text to a particular section within society. Bryson (1990:149) relates the increasing appeal of classicism in the 16th century to the political and social ambitions of the Tudor elite. The use of classical motifs on houses, in texts and on funerary monuments was related to a system of ideological dominance which connected education to power and social control. Therefore, the use of a classical structure and characterisation, as in Thomas Becon's *Sicke Mannes Salve*, endeared it to a particular social and economic set and affiliated the text to a other instances of ideological manipulation.

Thomas Lupset and *The Waye of Dyeing Well*

Thomas Lupset wrote *The Waye of Dyeing Well* in the early 1530s, an awkward time for those engaged in the tutelage of death and dying well. This decade marks the threshold of a period of religious upheaval, loosely termed the 'end' of the Middle Ages. Characterising the social and economic temperament of this period is problematic. It is often seen as a liminal phase, precursory to a more eventful period of historical change. When Lupset wrote his contribution to the *Ars Moriendi* tradition, death in England had not yet been hit by the full weight of reform. Chantries were still founded; masses were said for the souls of the departed and intercession sought through holy relics. However, in spite of its widespread popularity, traditional religion was coming under attack from some sections of society in the 1520s. Iconoclastic attacks were recorded in London and the east of England. In Bristol, Latimer's reformist preaching caused heated debate and riotous disputes following a provocative Lenten sermon (Duffy 1992:379-81). Against this background, Lupset wrote a variation on the medieval *Crafte* which Beaty calls 'humanistic' (1970:73), meaning based on the behaviour which he believed to be the best in human beings. He substituted the *Crafte*'s angels and demons with classical examples. Beaty regarded *The Waye of Dyeing Well* as 'a flowering of classical culture', a fruitful combination of new learning and the 'old wine of ecclesiastical tradition' (1970:73). However, a consideration of how and why this blending took place reveals it to have been far less smooth and creative than this quote would seem to imply. Lupset's attitude to death is much more philosophical than his medieval precursor. However, it is also pragmatic, reflecting the author's anxieties with regard to the inclusion of soon to be contentious religious teaching.

Lupset and the Changing Shape of Salvation

Unlike the medieval *Crafte*, Lupset's text is largely unconcerned with the deathbed. Salvation is a lifetime endeavour, rather than a matter for the last moments:

No man in mynde can effectuously teache the waye to dye well,
except he be one that knoweth the way to lyve well.

(1534:13)

Beaty (1970:63-5) has asserted that this move from the 'hapless *moriens*' to '*vivens*' breathes new life into Lupset's work. It is possible that the author avoided the deathbed setting because of his concern for emergent controversies regarding Purgatory and intercession. Although such doctrines would not be proscribed for another decade or so, Lupset cannot have failed to note the mounting controversy surrounding them. Bishop Latimer's support for the royal divorce linked radical reform to the Crown (Duffy 1992:293), investing that radicalism with an authority unnerving to staunch traditionalists.

Lupset's determination to avoid images associated with the deathbed led him to seek out new examples of how to die well. The classics boasted a wealth of illustrations:

.. for such alone as Marcus Cato was, were a man mete to entrete
this thyng: he knewe what valure ley in deathe, the whiche he
sought bothe with swerde, and his nayless tearynge out his owne
bowelles.

(1534:4)

The author is unconcerned with the friction between the pagan good death and that of Christian doctrine. This is symptomatic of the times in which he lived. The principal threats to Catholicism in the early 16th century came not from paganism, but from within Christianity itself. Those reading the text would have been more concerned to identify signs of schism. In any case, Lupset is keen to aver how Christianity could have benefited his subjects:

.. but none of all the paynymes canne eyther with worde or with
ensamples of theyr actes declare this thyng so trely and effectually
as may be that is exercised in Christes philosophye.

(1534:4)

There is a transitional section between the introduction and the main body of the text which provides a summary of the advantages of Christ's teachings, conferring a Christian perspective (Beaty 1970:67), though little attempt is made to censure the pagan examples.

Lupset and the Readership

An indication of the early impact of reform upon Lupset's text is given by his prioritisation of the Word of God over spiritual imagery. With reference to the pagans, he states that:

They were not pluckd to conceyve a love of vertue above nature as
the Holy Scripture draweth us from this worlde to the beholding of
an other place wher vertu recieveth her crowne.

(1534:9)

Although the traditional images of the parish churches would remain for a decade, in Lupset's tract visual signs were already coming to be replaced by scriptural allusions. Christianity provides the Word, whilst the Greeks and Romans provide figurative confirmation, thus creating a theologically neutral text which is neither traditional nor reformed.

The ambiguity of the tract may have curtailed its audience. Beaty (1970:76-77) has noted that Lupset's God has been commuted from the terrifying judge feared by medieval sinners to a detached upholder of law. *The Waye of Dyeing Well* therefore distanced its readership from divinity by removing the most tangible aspects of popular religion. The demons and saints which had embellished the medieval *Ars Moriendi* continued to instruct the laity from the church walls have been stripped from the text. Instead, the audience was offered classical figures, with which many of the less privileged may be unfamiliar. Overall, the tract is philosophical rather than practical. Whereas the medieval *Crafte* stood alone as a functional guide to dying, the principles of *The Waye of Dyeing Well* necessitated that its readers absorb the scriptures and the classics in order to achieve a good death. The vast majority of the literate public would not have had access to the necessary texts, though they might have valued Lupset's teachings and agreed with them in principle.

Lupset, Protestantism and Catholicism

Beaty (1970:107) has asserted that Lupset's aim was to reconcile the medieval and classical notions of a good death. However, she fails to clarify why he might choose to do so. The ambiguity of *The Waye of Dyeing Well* could be a reaction

to the attacks upon traditional religion, an expression of the unease which its author felt whilst observing the tide of national events. In 1534, the Act of Supremacy was passed and Thomas More, an ardent traditionalist, was imprisoned in the Tower (Duffy 1992:592). This was followed by the Dissolution of the Monasteries and the Pilgrimage of Grace in 1536. Under such changeable circumstances, Lupset may have felt it necessary to choose relatively neutral imagery with which to make his point. It is also possible that the author's intended audience influenced his use of classical illustration. Knowledge of Caius and Caligula was socially circumscribed. A 16th century wealthy, gentrified audience would be keen to purchase texts alluding to Greek and Roman authors. Whatever the reasoning behind these examples, it was much more difficult for less affluent Christians to relate their experiences to such inaccessible standards. Christianity was common to the vast majority of the laity, but the active pursuit of classical knowledge was not. It is likely that the author had a much more select audience in mind. The impression conveyed is that the *Ars* was intended less as an aid for the deathbed and its audience and more an aid to pious and private contemplation. Lupset's philosophical tone, his renunciation of the step-by-step format of the medieval *Tractatus* and its visually charged deathbed setting suggests that this text was intended for unhurried meditation rather than digestion and imitation, which again implies a wealthy, well educated readership with plenty of leisure time.

Lupset seems unwilling to speculate with regard to what lies beyond death:

This change of the bodies state, whether by itself hit be good or
yvelle, it is a harde thyng for us to iuge, being the trowth is, that man
lyning expertlye knvreth what thyng deathe is: and to determyne of
a thyng unknowen, hit semeth a presumption full of folye.

(1534:20)

This hints at the authors' concern to maintain doctrinal neutrality. However, the medieval heritage of his work was not dismissed so easily. The 'black and white' dualism which dominated the medieval *Ars* is retained throughout the text (Beaty 1970:86):

For lyke as the prince of this *worlde* never agree the with *god*, nor
yet the *bodye* with the *soule*, nor the *erthe* with *hevyn*: so he that
studieth for this *tyme* hath dene contrary opinions to hym that
folowth the *spiryte*.

(1534:11)

The contrast between Earth and Heaven, body and soul, mortality and immortality noted in this extract (my emphasis) flows throughout the text. It is a useful explanatory device, simplifying an argument which might otherwise be complicated by its classical abstractions and references to scripture. Beaty (1970:87) laments the poverty of Lupset's verbal equipment, which limits the effectiveness of his new material. However, the apparent paucity of the author's style may stem from a desire to retain some semblance of the medieval *Ars*, rather than lack of authorial skill. In spite of his new material, the essential message of this *Ars* remains that an excessive attachment to the world can be damning, yet salvation through faith is always possible. The tract's fidelity to this established message limited the ways in which the new classical material could be employed, locating its examples within predefined patterns of medieval thought. However, it also gave the author's arguments an aura of familiarity which might have made them easier for the readership to take in.

Thomas Becon and *The Sicke Mannes Salve*

In 1586, William Rushbrigg of Norfolk composed a will in which he bequeathed to his cousin 'one pair of spectacles, one service book, and another booke called the *sick mans salve*' (Marsh 1998:138). *The Sicke Mannes Salve* was originally composed c.1561 by Thomas Becon, chaplain to Thomas Cranmer (Houlbrooke 1989:26). It is a strongly Puritanical work replete with scriptural fervency and didacticism. Surprisingly, however, its structure has more in common with the medieval *Ars Moriendi* than with Lupset's humanistic tract (Beaty 1970:109). It resurrects the deathbed as its didactic setting, along with some of the dramatic intensity of the original. The action is immediate, centring upon those gathered around the deathbed instead of remote classical illustrations. Becon's decision to focus upon the deathbed may have been an attempt to reintroduce an element of practicality into the *Ars*. The *Salve* has a chronological structure defined by the bodily degradation and coincident

spiritual trials of the sick man, Ephaphroditus. Unlike the medieval text, the words of the dying man and his friends are its main structural impetus, rather than the conduct of the priest. Its dramatic structure might potentially render it easier to follow than Lupset's text. However, this is forestalled by the author's scripturalism which could alienate a less ardent readership. Whilst it is true that the basic form of the old conduct book persists within Lupset's work (Beaty 1970:109), a thorough immersion in biblical allusion renders it extremely difficult to follow in comparison. In the second paragraph of the tract, Becon states:

In the gospel of blessed Matthew he hath these words: "watch for you know not what hour the Lord will come". Of this be ye sure, that, if the good man of the house knew what hour the thief would come he would surely watch, and not suffer his house to be broken up.

(1564:3-4)

Although this statement is more than adequate to make his case, Becon provides five or six more biblical quotes in the same paragraph, all of which reiterate the same point. The medieval arguments are saturated in scripture, seemingly in an attempt to purge them of their more controversial ingredients whilst retaining a skeletal outline of the practical conduct book.

Becon and the Trials of the Deathbed

The authors' references to the pains of the flesh are direct and graphic, perhaps facilitated by the dramatic format which he has chosen to use. The body is a 'vile and wretched carcass', a burden to be cast aside:

(Epaphroditus, the sick man) "O cursed be the day wherein I was born; unhappy be the day wherein my mother brought me forth... Why slewest thou not me as soon as I came out of my mother's womb?

(1561:18)

The impure flesh receives extensive consideration compared to the incorruptibility of the spirit, which is an ephemeral and uncertain reward for *moriens*'s torment.

Similarly, the Devil maintains a very definite presence throughout the text in comparison to the company of Heaven. Imagining the Devil and the Flesh was less problematic for the Protestant than God and the soul. The former could be personified without fear of idolatry. Examples of sin pervaded everyday life, providing endless material examples and vocabulary with which evil could be described. Purity of the spirit existed beyond death and thus beyond the descriptive capabilities of the author. The Spirit within the *Salve* is embodied by the Bible and the Word of God, as these were regarded as its earthly forms and the only neutral means by which it could be depicted. Allusions to divinity are padded with biblical quotes, effecting a clear link between salvation and scripture. The Bible is both the method and material of salvation, revealing God and effecting deliverance. Its presence at the deathbed was mandatory. The Devil is associated with the image, the material and the flesh and as such retains an anthropomorphic and defined presence throughout the text. God is less visible, less corporeal and therefore ambiguous, yet pervasive; he acts through the scripture which saturates the dialogue and increases the length of the tract by at least at half.

It is conceivable that the density of scripture may have left some readers feeling distanced from God. The Devil is a more palpable presence, constantly affirming the ubiquity of temptation. However, the *Salve* is optimistic in tone and the saving power of faith is never really in doubt. Despite maintaining such a tangible presence in Becon's text, the Devil is never a particularly threatening character. Each of Epaphroditus's (the dying man's) worries are refuted by his friends with scriptural quotes and declarations of faith:

(Philemon) "Gentle brother, faint not in your faith, neither despair you of the great mercies of God, but love your God with strong faith; he full graciously will send present remedy to you from his holy temple".

(1561:182)

Like its predecessors, Becon's *Salve* emphasises the fact that death and sickness are not to be feared, but embraced. In the final section, Epaphroditus's dialogue reflects the concerns common to all *moriens*:

(Epaphroditus) Death is painful.

(Philemon) Who will not be content to suffer a little and short pain,
that he may for ever after enjoy continual quietness and everlasting
rest?

(1561:167)

Despite the Puritanical stance of the author, judgment and predestination are mentioned only briefly. Becon emphasises the fact that all those who die in faith can expect salvation:

For it is written 'repent you of your former life; for the kingdom of
God is at hand'.

(1561:404)

Becon's *moriens* is all men, suffering every physical pain and spiritual doubt that could be experienced on the deathbed. Despite his extreme oscillations of faith, his friends are keen to assure him that the window of salvation is never closed to him or the readership.

Becon, Wills and Worldliness

The principle distinction between Becon's tract and its predecessors is the extensive treatment given to the settling of *moriens* worldly affairs. *Moriens* is encouraged to make a will, providing for his family, his servants and showing goodwill, as well as settling earthly debts:

I think it best euen out of hand to dispose my temporall
possessions, and to set an order in such worldly goodes as God hath
lent me, that after my departure there be no dissension nor strife for
the (family?), among suche as I most wishe to be linked together
with perpetual amitie, and continuall frendship. It shall also, I trust,
be a great quietnes vnto my mynd.

(1561:132)

The making of the will is a business-like affair. This is reflected in Gloucestershire wills dating from this period which are mostly standardised. There are some 12339

wills preserved from the period 1541-1600 in Gloucester Record Office. The preservation of wills from the 1530s is patchier. Not more than 30 Gloucestershire wills are preserved in Worcester Record Office, as Gloucestershire fell within the diocese of Worcester prior to 1541.

Wills can supply indirect details of how a person died and are in themselves a mark of preparation for death (Tait 2002:8). This study examined approximately 40 wills from between 1531 and 1600, all of which were standardised. They begin with commendations such as 'to the blessed Virgin Mary and the Celestiall Company of Heaven (Mynors 1935:230), bequeath their soul and state a preferred burial location, followed by the itemisation of worldly possessions. A standard version of this preamble can be seen in the will of Thomas Throkmarston from 1537:

In the name of god amen In the yere of our lorde god a
Thousand fyve hundred Thirty and Two the xij daye of
december I William Throkmerton of Torteworth in the
countie of Glouc Esquyer hole in mynde and also in body
laude be to almighty god make and ordayne my last will and
Testament in maner and forme folowing. First I bequeth my
soule to my maker and redemer to our blessed lady and all
the holy company of hevyn and my bodie to be buried in
holy sepulture where it shall please god to call me from this
present lyf unto his marcy.

(P.R.O. PROB11/27, ff.51v-53r)

Some, such as that of Phillip Marner of Cirencester (d.1587) include lengthy affirmations of faith. Arkell, Evans and Goose (2000:48) have observed a similar degree of standardisation in contemporary wills from Gloucestershire and elsewhere in the country. They note that in a sample of 3000 Gloucestershire wills from between 1541 and 1580, 350 different preambles were used, but 325 of these were used by just 20% of the sample (Arkell, Evans and Goose 2000:54). This perhaps suggests that scribes provided neutral statements where no strong convictions were expressed (Arkell, Evans and Goose 2000:54). In her discussion of early modern Irish wills, Tait (2002:8-9) writes that wills from the late 16th and early 17th century invariably began with a dedication in the name of God, followed by a description of the

testator's mental and physical state, the bequeathing of the soul to celestial powers and the body to the earth. Although such standardisation might suggest that will preambles can provide little insight into the mindsets of the testator, Arkell, Evans and Goose (2000:57) warn against oversimplified interpretations of wills and their preambles. They suggest that a sophisticated analysis requires that the wills are cross referenced with other sources in order to fully comprehend the impact which the omission or commission of certain statements might have had within a particular historical context. An apparent pattern of religious conformity is apparent in Gloucestershire's wills during the late 16th century. Arkell, Evans and Goose (2000:53) observe a swing away from traditional preambles in Edward's staunchly Protestant reign, a revival of Traditional forms under Mary and tentative neutrality in early Elizabethan preambles. However, this pattern could have been created artificially, as only wills which fitted with prevailing doctrine might have been allowed to survive. Official reactions to the Protestant will of William Tracy, which was first disseminated in the 1530s and is described below, are an extreme illustration of how such controversial opinions might have been received.

Wills were made increasingly often in the 16th and 17th centuries (Tait 2002:8). It is possible that Thomas Becon chose to include such a lengthy discussion of the will-making process in an effort to render his tract more practical. However thorough the process of deathbed repentance was in reality, making a will and funeral arrangements would have been the most familiar and practical aspect of dying to the vast majority of his readership. Funeral arrangements in particular have been conspicuously neglected by previous *Ars Moriendi* texts. The author's decision to include them here concedes that the person and wishes of the dying could continue to affect the living community after death. However, this would take a retrospective form through material bequests and requests, rather than be actively perpetuated through beneficent prayer and indulgence.

Becon suggests that the process of will-making and burial arrangements should be educational. Christians can learn by example, improving their chances of dying well when their time comes:

(Epaphroditus) “.. at the time of my burial, when the people be gathered together, I would gladly have some learned men to make a sermon, wherein the people may be admonished of their mortality, and be taught how they ought to dispose themselves in this life”.

(1561:149)

Just as Becon uses Epaphroditus’s death to educate his audience, so Epaphroditus uses his own funeral to advise his friends and family. A good death was not merely a matter of affirming the spiritual well-being of the dying, but also of guiding souls gathered about the deathbed towards a good end. Becon’s conception of dying well is cyclical, each death an example for the next.

Becon on Protestantism and Catholicism

The reformed teachings of the late 16th century emphasised the merits of private devotion. This was manifested visually in the rendering of prayer desks and bibles on monuments and incised brasses, such as that of Elizabeth Norwood (d.1598) at Leckhampton. In Becon’s text, this is demonstrated by the fact that role of the minister was assumed by *moriens* friends, a “priesthood of all believers” or chosen people faithful to God without hierarchy or distinction (Beaty 1970:127). They represent the reformed desire for egalitarianism in religious practice, bringing faith to all though the medium of scripture. Epaphroditus’s friends are repositories of sacred knowledge and a reassurance to the dying man throughout his ordeal. While it would have been possible for kith and kin to provide some spiritual guidance on the deathbed, it is unlikely that many could claim to be as knowledgeable as Becon’s characters. The depth of scriptural knowledge required by Becon thus places limits on the accessibility of God to the reader which are defined by their scriptural knowledge. A Protestant good death was therefore personal in character, but also a testament to religious orthodoxy and intended to be an example to others (Tait 2002:14).

The role which *moriens* plays in the proceedings increases as his body weakens, perhaps reflecting an increased awareness of his spiritual state in the wake of imminent death. However, his contribution to the proceedings only approximates that of his friends when he comes to make a will and funeral arrangements. Becon regards commemoration and the disposal of worldly goods as a matter for the individual. This

is partially a manifestation of his rejection of Purgatory, expressing his belief that the actions of the living cannot affect the fate of the dead. However, Becon's decision to present the settling of earthly affairs in such a manner may also reflect the author's own experience of the disagreements which can result from the excessive intrusion of friends and family. Towards the end, *Moriens* friends are submissive, rarely contradicting or disagreeing with their friend. This scene idealises the will-making procedure, in which friends and family would presumably be eager to play a part.

The character of Epaphroditus is a didactic tool, rather than a being with unique thoughts and emotions. Epaphroditus's convictions are particularly strong in the second section of the *Salve*, reflecting the authors' desire to convey the importance of making one's last wishes known in order to die with a clear conscience and prevent later squabbling. In other parts of the tract, the dying man is filled with doubt, eager to accept everything his friends tell him. Beaty (1970:137) referred to his condition as 'spiritual schizophrenia' as *Moriens* cycles through states of awareness rendering an incarnation of every man at death. Becon intended to cater for every possible state of mind. Just as *moriens*' friends manifest a priesthood of all believers (Beaty 1970:127), so the dying man is the incarnation of all the mortal flock. He is a humanised statement of equality in death and, when regarded in terms of the optimism which pervades the text, an avowal of the universality of redemption in faith.

Beaty (1970:131-132) has asserted that Becon's resolute hatred of Papistry is better expressed than his teachings on the subject of death. Catholicism is regarded as a perversion of Christianity, and Becon is keen to highlight the ills of traditional ceremony. He takes every opportunity to criticise the Catholic faith, labelling its practices as ineffectual and exaggerated:

(Epaphroditus) "That one faythfull Preacher, which is able with the swete promises of the holy scriptures to co~fort the weake and desperate conscience: is better then ten thousande mumbling Massemongers whiche promise with their Massinge mountaines of golde, but perfourme molhilles of glasse."

(1561:383)

This attitude is to be expected, given the religious climate in which the text was composed and Becon's former position as Cranmer's chaplain. The main attack on the traditional religion comes in the central section of the text, which relates to *moriens* rejection of the world. Catholicism is associated with worldliness and superficiality. Just as the Devil personified the evils of the flesh, so Catholicism embodies the dangers of an undue attachment to material possessions. Epaphroditus's friends pose leading questions relating to his funeral and commemoration, which allow him to state his distaste for ceremony. This section recalls the test of faith detailed in the fourth section of the medieval *Ars*. As in the medieval tract, *moriens* is encouraged to display his worthiness. However, Becon's moralising appears to be oriented towards the rebuking of Catholicism rather than preparing the audience for death. The portrayal of Catholicism and the Devil as the twin threats to good Christian living and dying marks Becon's *Ars* as Puritan, post-Counter-Reformation and retributive. As Beaty has noted, "the Tudor Puritan never forgot or forgave the Catholic" (1970:132). The author's detestation of Papistry, rather than his promotion of proper deathbed conduct is most impressed upon the reader.

Like his predecessors, Becon tackles three traditional arenas of deathbed conflict; forsaking the flesh, shunning the Devil and turning away from his worldly possessions. He encourages a controlled, normative response from his readership. However, rather than assuming that everyone responds to death in the same manner, the author attempts to imbue his *moriens* with every conceivable human characteristic. In response, his ministering friends offer a surfeit of spiritual advice which caters to his every need. Considerably more is required of those around the deathbed than the dying man himself. This is understandable since the author makes it clear that a good death is the inevitable result of a life well lived and so their actions are important for their own salvation as well as that of their friend. This resounding optimism results from Epaphroditus's friends' assurances that he has lived a good life and will receive a just reward. The premise of the Catholic *Ars*, which Becon disdains, was that it was never too late to repent. Although he does not approach the issue directly, it is clear that Becon does not believe a life ill spent can be redeemed at death. However, visiting the sick does retain some of the redemptive properties which it possessed in the middle ages. It is a charitable work which serves to recommend

moriens friends to God. Visiting deathbeds was also a learning experience, whereby kith and kin could learn how best to compose themselves on their deathbeds. As such, *The Sicke Mannes Salve* is both an *Ars Moriendi* and an *Ars Vivendi*, detailing how to die well and how to live a life which will make such a death possible.

Robert Parsons and *The Christian Directorie*

Robert Parsons (d.1546) was a Jesuit priest, closely associated with the Counter Reformation in England in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. The second edition of his *Christian Directorie* is the third and final text to be considered in this chapter. The original Catholic edition was edited and reissued by Edmund Buny, a Calvinist minister, for use in Elizabethan Protestant ministry:

I thought good in the end, to get the same published againe in some better manner than now it is come foorth among them; that so the good, that the reading therof might otherwise do, might carrie no hurt or danger withal, so far as by me might be praevented. For this cause I have taken the pains, both to purge it of certain points that carried either some manifest error, or else some other inconvenience with them: and to join another short Treatise withal, t exhort those that are not yet persuaded, to join with us likewise in the truth of Religion.

(1584:3)

Understandably, Parsons took exception to Buny's rendering of his tract and endeavoured to produce a revision closer to his own religious beliefs:

...this shameles shift of corrupting other mens bookes, is an old occupation of heretiques from the beginning, as may appeare by the often complaintes of most ancient fathers, whos workes they were not ashamed to infect and corrupt whiles they were yet liuing.

(Parsons 1585:10)

He wrote a second edition of *A Christian Directorie Guiding Men to Their Salvation* in c.1585. Shortly before this date he and Edmund Campion had participated in a plot to re-establish Catholicism in England. Despite the author's Somerset roots, it is probable that this text was written in Rome, where he was forced to flee after

Campion was imprisoned. Considering Parson's radical pedigree, his contribution to the *Ars Moriendi* tradition is surprisingly innocuous. Beaty (1970:158) refers to it as a 'quiet purification of Catholic works'. This is an accurate description, given the author's decision to dispense with the more controversial tenets of Catholic doctrine. By his own admission, he makes only two changes to the original edition, emphasising the importance of faith in proportion to the value of charity and citing God's mercy as well his judgement. The traditional heritage of The *Directorie* is palpable in Parsons' treatment of Hell and damnation in chapters six and seven, towards the end of Book One. The demons of the medieval deathbed are reanimated through the author's graphic rendering of the fate of the damned. However, neither they nor the company of Heaven are made flesh. Heaven and Hell are indistinct provinces fighting for control of the mortal world. Purgatory is only briefly hinted at, whilst the intercessory saints of the medieval parish church are entirely absent. Parsons' is a suppressed *Ars Moriendi*, a Catholic tract which displays an obvious awareness of what would be considered acceptable and inflammatory in a post-reformation context.

Parsons, Living and Dying Well

The Christian Directorie ministers directly to the reader. Like Becon's *Salve*, it is an *Ars Vivendi* which advocates an awareness of imminent judgement in everyday life rather than pious deathbed conduct. Parsons is concerned to stir the impenitent (Beaty 1970:182). His text strays from the instructive tradition of his predecessors, adopting a verbose polemical form which presents death and judgement as the reward for a life well lived. Section one opens with a declaration of God's existence and his creation of humanity, moving through the nature of sin and self-examination to death and judgement. This structure emphasises the fact that Parsons intended his tract to be used as guide to pious living, rather than dying well. The two concepts are intimately connected. Although the medieval *Ars* admonished attachments to the flesh and the world, redemption was available until the last moments for those willing to confess. Parsons' conception of judgement incorporates the entire life of *moriens*. He does not assume that his audience has lived a resolutely Christian existence, as Becon did. The fact that he directed his text specifically at errant Christians warrants a

harsher tone than that of his predecessors. Judgement receives particularly fulsome treatment:

But the miserable damned spirites, beholding the carcaies which
were the instruments and occasiós of their sinne; & wel knowing that
their inspeakable tormentes, shalbe encreated by their mutual
coniunction and association.

(1585:369)

By his own admission, Parsons tends to concern himself more with God's judgement than with his mercy. The fears implicit in the medieval tract are now tended as an incentive to Christian living (Beaty 1970:183). Angels and demons return to the deathbed. However, as *moriens* was to be judged on a lifetime of good or ill endeavour, these apparitions no longer had the capacity to sway the fate of the dying:

And for that this holie father & learned Doctour in Christes Church,
maketh mentio~ in this place of good and euil Angels which are
redie at the houre of death to receyue the soules of such as depart
out of this life: it shal not be from our purpose to note, that
oftentimes God doth permit the apparitions of Angels both good and
euil, as also of other saintes, to some men lyinge on their death
beddes, for a tast ether of comforte or sorow, touchinge that which
shal ensue in the world to come.

(1584:435)

The value of a pious and conscientious life increases at the expense of the importance of a good death. There is no longer a 'last chance' to achieve redemption, since every good Christian should live their mortal life in anticipation of what will follow.

Parsons, Protestantism and Catholicism

In emphasising life over death, Parsons shows little concern for the aspects of the medieval church which had caused such controversy during the Reformation. He gives only passing mention of Purgatory. Masses and indulgences are not alluded to, maintaining the separateness of Earth, Heaven and Hell throughout. There is no suggestion that the living have any capacity to affect the fate of the dead. For

Parsons, salvation is a matter of individual endeavour. His conviction is even more extreme than that of his Calvinist counterpart Becon, since he also disputes the ability of *moriens*'s friends to help the dying:

Friends no use er dearest friendes who soothed her in time of
prosperitie, and promised assistance, as youth, agilitie, strength,
courage, diet, phisicke, and other humane helps; doe now vtterlie
abandone her.

(1585:427)

The Catholicism of this tract, though rarely explicit in its dialogue, pervades the text through the celestial fixations of its author. Parsons was unwilling to accept that anything in the mortal world could affect the salvation of *moriens*. Friends gathered about the deathbed only distract the dying with their "weepinge and howlinge", whilst the physician is concerned only with his fee. Parsons seems to have inherited the reformists' concern to establish a direct relationship between the dying and the Almighty, yet couples this with medieval Catholicism's emphasis upon the proactive role of the individual in salvation. This results in a text which candidly affirms the pre-eminence of God's ruling on the fate of the dying. Unlike Lupset and Becon, Parsons produced a tract which urged the reader to act on a daily basis while still healthy, rather than contemplate it in anticipation of the last things. As such, a step-by-step format such as that of the *Crafte* was not feasible.

The drama of medieval death and judgement are very much alive in the author's chosen vocabulary. The inheritance of wicked flesh will be "serpentes, beastes, and wormes" and those that live an evil life shall be "straw to that (Hell's) furnace". Parsons' preoccupation with judgement gives the tract an aura of cynicism. His God is a harsh judge and his concern to stir the impenitent leaves little space for Heaven and the rewards of the faithful. Together with a decreased emphasis upon the deathbed as a theatre of pious display, this would doubtless have affected the extent to which its audience could adapt the text to their circumstances. There is no space for the dying to glory in their own piety and little that could be manipulated to the posthumous advantage of the deceased and their families. Glory in death is subordinate to the renunciation of the Flesh, the World and the Devil in life. Parsons' conception of sin

and judgement is perhaps the most blatant of all of the *Ars* writers and as such cannot be easily misconstrued.

Despite his interest in rendering graphic images through his dialogue, Parsons affirms the importance of the scriptures in attaining salvation. He seeks to reclaim the text from his Calvinist counterpart, criticising their use of censored Catholic tracts:

.. seing that M. Buny is not able to name one on his side, from the first heretique that ever wrote, vnto this daie... (he) hath corrupted in englishe the most excellent worke of Thomas de Kempis of the imitation of Christ, striking out without conscience, whatsoeuer he pleaseth.

(1585:10)

This is the most direct assault which Parsons makes upon reformed religion. His denunciation is less venomous than Thomas Becon's attack on Catholicism in *The Sick Mannes Salve*, which was still in print when this edition of *The Directorie* was produced. However, this is not surprising given the controversy which Catholic works could cause in late 16th century England in comparison to Protestant works.

The *Christian Directorie* urges its readership to live a pious and charitable life in anticipation of swift and perfunctory judgement. It is an *Ars Vivendi*, intended to motivate unrelenting sinners rather than to tutor the faithful in appropriate deathbed conduct. Parsons uses graphic dialogue in order to provoke a similarly dramatic response from the reader. He is concerned with God's judgement rather than with his mercy. The entire text has an aura of cynicism, mingled with an urgency which emphasises the futility of last minute godliness. Parsons is largely unconcerned with the controversial trappings of medieval Catholicism. Salvation is regarded as the responsibility of the individual, and as such monuments and masses are of little use. The author's Catholicism, implicit in its dialogue, is made manifest in his celestial preoccupations. The central theme of divine judgement results in tangible images of Heaven and Hell, including angels, which remind the reader that these realms are as real and knowable as the mortal world. They are encouraged to act quickly, rather than contemplate their fate in anticipation of the Last Things.

Data Analysis

Reformed Commemoration in Gloucestershire: Numbers and Types

The Dissolution of religious houses from the 1530s allowed those in positions of authority to acquire the means to purchase large swaths of ecclesiastical land (Betley 1989:131, Aston 2000:161). Betley (1989:133) has stated that the people best placed to receive this land were primarily courtiers, councillors, office holders, royal servants and gentlemen of the royal household, followed by local gentry families, merchants, lawyers and officials. Many were wealthy enough to buy or had already been leasing land or acting as stewards, bailiffs, auditors or receivers for religious houses (Betley 1989:133). In a county such as Gloucestershire where so much land was held by the monasteries prior to the 1530s, there were many beneficiaries. Johnson (1989:36) has highlighted Sir Walter Arnold, Sir William Denys and Sir William Kingston among them. William Kingston, a royal servant and courtier, was granted Flaxley Abbey in March 1537 and later the Benedictine lands of the priory at Leonard Stanley (Betley 1989:135). Kingston remained Catholic into Elizabeth's reign, yet seems to have had no problem accepting monastic lands (Johnson 1996:36).

New residences were built within the ruins of abbeys (Aston 2000:161) (Fig.6.1). These new acquisitions increased the personal wealth of the newly landed elite. The Dutton family were able to acquire lands at Sherborne, which became the centre of an enormous estate stretching across the Cotswolds (Betley 1989:146). Such resources facilitated the purchase of prominent memorials which could then be deployed in churches unencumbered by religious paraphernalia. For example, Richard Master, a former physician to Elizabeth I, bought the site of Cirencester Abbey for £590 165s 3d in 1564 (Betley 1989:143). His family continued to possess the lands of Cirencester Abbey into the 18th century. The disdainful effigy of one descendant, William Master (d.1661) in Cirencester Parish Church is a tribute to the family's gains in the 16th century.

The memorials of the wealthy were rendered more prominent by changes in the appearance of the parish church which occurred as a result of religious change in the mid 16th century. Between 1547 and 1553, there was a campaign to transform

religious belief and practice (Marshall 2003:58). The Edwardian injunctions, visitations and Chantries Act of 1547 sanctioned the purging of the paraphernalia of Catholicism from religious spaces (Tankard 2003:258). Injunction 22 of 1547 describes scripture as 'the only stay of man's conscience' (Tankard 2003: 258). The destruction of the material culture of the old religion made the churches more 'bookworthy' places for reading and learning, rather than seeing and adoring (Aston 2003:15). Visibility was improved by the addition of large windows with clear glass which replaced coloured saints (Aston 2003:16). Purging the parish space of the paraphernalia of Catholicism may have worked to the social advantage of the affluent laity. Emptied space provided more room for ostentation, emphasising the trappings of secular power which may have previously been overshadowed by highly coloured walls and windows. This allowed a small number of families to use the church as a stage upon which to display their wealth and power in commemorative form.

Religious change and the resulting economic and social transformations laid the foundations for the dramatic increase in monumentalisation towards the end of the 16th century. It provided the means, through the increasing resources conferred by the monastic estates, and a motive in an increased sense of self-worth conferred by the associated wealth. Prominent individuals in public office could provide their families with material security through the acquisition of land. Wealth and achievement were embodied in an ancient and public space at the centre of a landscape purchased by the recently prosperous, solidifying secular authority and legitimising dominance through a tradition of magnate commemoration in the same spaces which stretched back into the Middle Ages.

There are 41 memorials surviving from the period 1531-1600, an average of around one per two years (Chart 6.1, 6.2). The average number of survivals is slightly higher than during previous decades. However, there is also a greater degree of variability in the number of memorials preserved across the four decades studied, perhaps an indication of the inconstant attitude to images which characterised the mid to later 1500s. Overall, the number of monuments is relatively small. However, correlations between the number and style of monuments and historically documented events imply that the patterns are relevant despite the sample size. The greatest numbers of survivals are from decades with a documented stable religious and

political climate, as during Elizabeth's reign in the 1580s. There is a diversification of monument types appearing in the record during these later decades. Recumbent effigies and brasses persist throughout the period. Brass plates, ledger stones, wall mounted stones and effigies in different postures begin to feature in the sample, including kneeling and reclining examples.

Effigies

Approximately 46% of monuments surviving from between 1531 and 1600 are monumental effigies. This compares with just 13% of memorials during the preceding 70 years. Iconoclastic attacks may have played some part in decreasing the size of the medieval sample. The post-Reformation examples not only more numerous than their predecessors, they are also larger and more colourful. Towards the end of the 16th century a few effigies begin to be depicted kneeling or reclining as in life, such as on the Warren memorial which dates to c.1572 at St. Briavels. Llewellyn (2000:103) has suggested that kneeling figures were a sign of submission to God. He argues that piety, submission and humility were a potent and appealing combination to post-Reformation audiences. They were an expression of bodily piety and inward devotion, and as such were in keeping with Reformed teachings (Llewellyn 2000:103). There are, however, seven surviving recumbent effigies from the 1580s and four from the 1590s which suggests that this antiquated form of display was still the most popular in spite of changes in attitude amongst the authors of the *Ars*. Llewellyn (2000:115) suggests that this form was popular because it suggested a lengthy lineage, powerful rituals and high social status, referencing a tradition of commemorating with recumbent effigies going back into the medieval period.

As Howarth (1997:156) has asserted, monuments were expressions of aspiration as well as commemoration. Examples of this include the colourful chest tomb of Thomas Throkmarton (d.1568) at Tortworth (Fig.6.2). This structure takes up most of the south wall of the chapel, blocking one of the windows in the south aisle. In the early 17th century it was joined by the tomb of another Thomas Throkmarton, which covered the east wall (Fig.6.3). Having only been granted lands in Gloucestershire at the Dissolution, the Throkmartons were a new addition to the county elite (Litzenberger 1997:49). However, their large and colourful memorials identify them

as a dominant force in local society. Coloured heraldry is displayed on each side of Thomas Throkmarion's (d.1568) chest tomb, leaving observers in little doubt of the wealth and antiquity of his family. This chapel was a shrine to an illustrious lineage. Their monuments were designed to be regarded on a daily basis by the rest of the congregation, continually reaffirming the power and position of the living representatives of the family.

This was by no means a new strategy. The 14th and 15th-century Despenser and Beauchamp memorials at Tewkesbury Abbey may have served a similar purpose, establishing and perpetuating the social positions of families with otherwise tenuous claims to authority. The landed yet untitled could perhaps claim to be the natural successors of the medieval feudal lords, as their monuments now occupied the same spaces. A good example of such an individual was Richard Pate (d.1588), a lawyer, official recorder at Gloucester, member of two royal councils and commissioner in charge of the confiscation of chantry lands (Betley 1989:142). He bought the monastic estate at Minsterworth and was commemorated by an effigy in Gloucester Cathedral (now lost) near to that of the eldest son of Duke William of Normandy.



Figure 6.1: Hailes Abbey, North Gloucestershire. The abbey was dissolved in 1539 and eventually became home to the Tracy family.

(Image: Matthews 2004)

Chart 6.1: A chart showing the number of monuments surviving on Gloucestershire c.1530-1599.

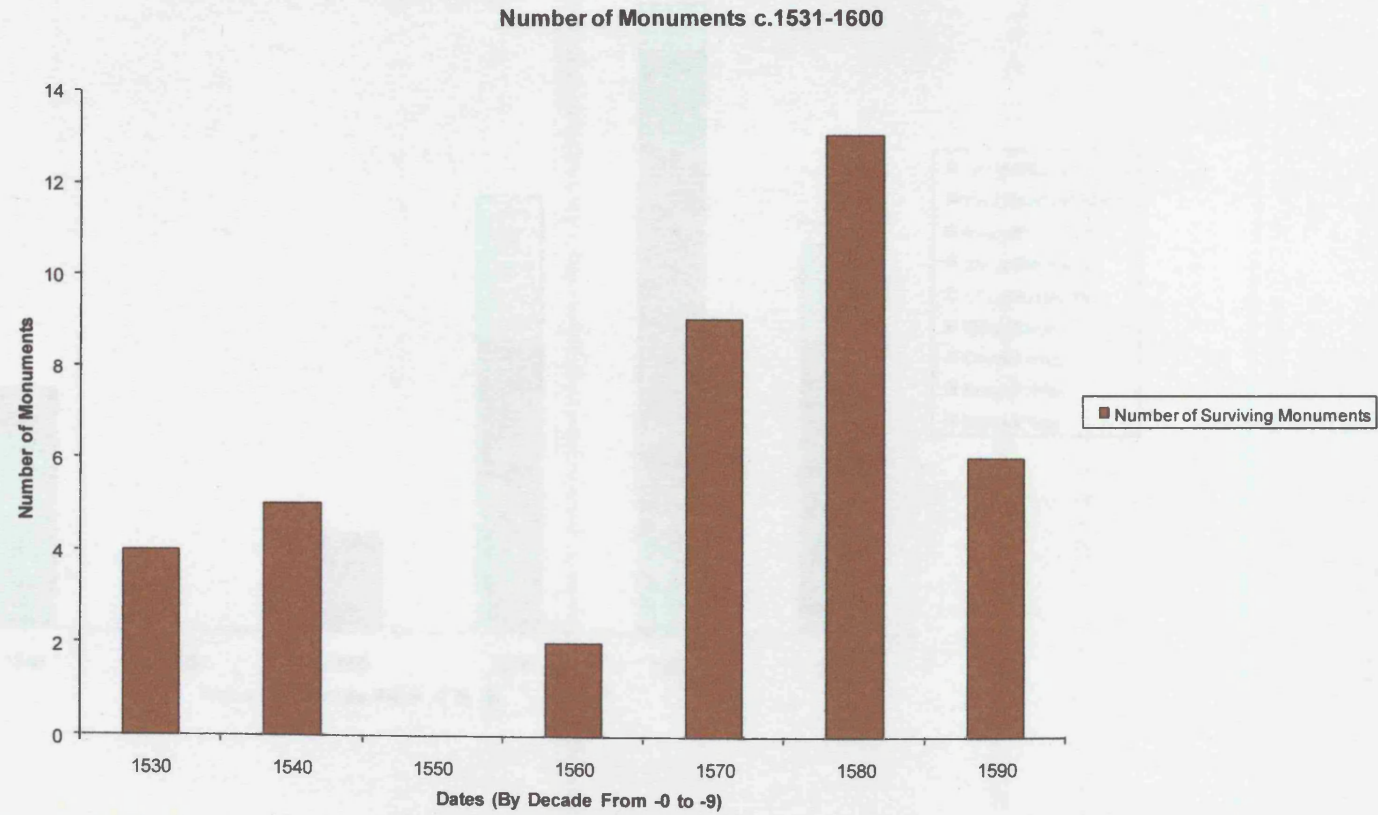


Chart 6.2: Types of monument surviving in the county c.1530-1599.

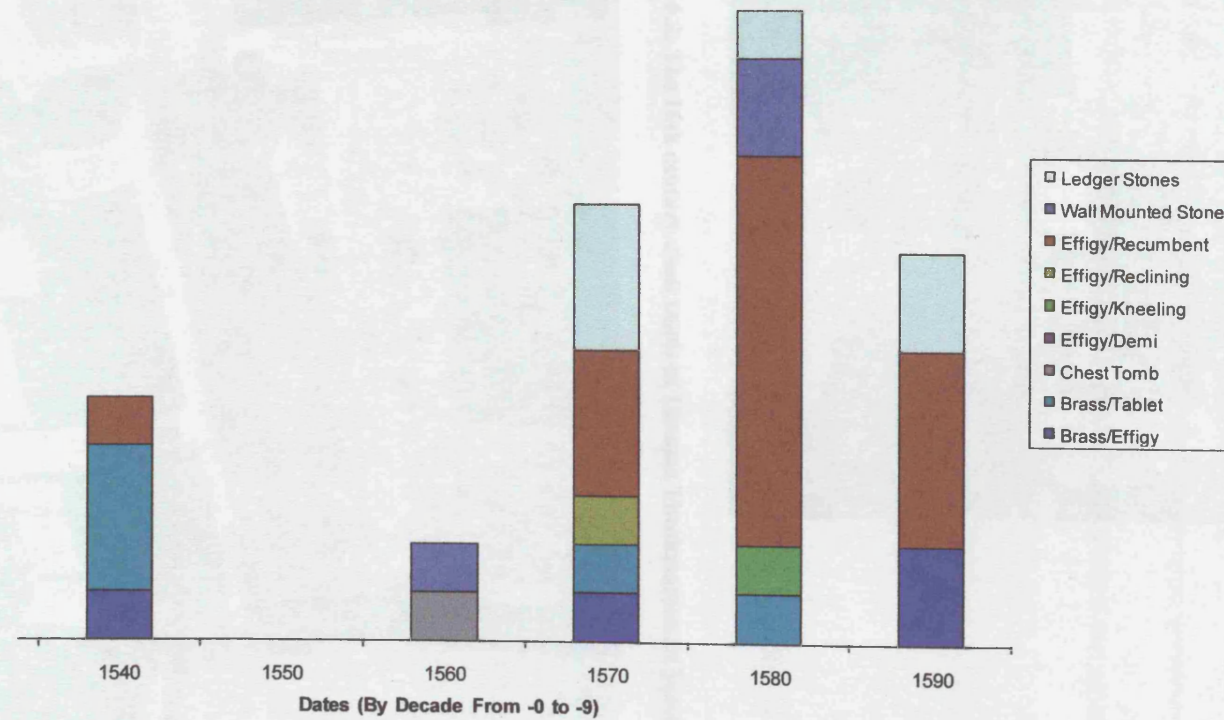




Figure 6.2: The 16th century chest tomb of Thomas Throkmarion at Tortworth.



Figure 6.3: A later Throkmarion tomb situated close to the 16th century examples, dating to the early 1600s.

Heal and Holmes (1994:34) highlight the production of counterfeit genealogies in the 16th century as evidence of the gentry's desire to emulate the illustrious pedigrees of the landed aristocracy. The Wellesbourne family of Hughenden, Bucks. were descended from a Wycombe clothier, enriched in the 15th century. They offered Wellesbourne de Montefort, a previously unrecorded relation of Simon de Montefort, as the progenitor of their lineage (Heal and Holmes 1994:34). Such families seem to have recognised the tenuous character of wealth founded on individual achievement and accordingly sought to ground their position in the past by whatever means necessary. They had good reason to believe that this was a legitimate goal. Such was the importance of a great ancestry that even prominent families in court circles, such as the Arundels and Spencers, claimed a more elevated pedigree than they actually had (Day 1990:95).

Brass

Monumental effigies were better suited to the task of filling space freed up by the removal of Catholic accoutrements than brasses, which had been so popular in medieval Gloucestershire. Unlike brasses, they could be coloured and so rendered



Figure 6.4: A brass to the children of Arthur Porter, erected at Quedgeley in the early 1530s.



Figure 6.5: Supplications from the brass of Thomas Tyndall, St. Mary's, Thornbury .

even more eye catching. This was particularly important for an emergent class which sought to affirm its claim to power through prominent armigerous displays. Effigies had a permanence which brasses lacked. Once set on the ground they could not be moved without a great deal of effort. The ease with which a brass could be transported and recycled might also explain why few survive. They could be melted down or reused on the back, creating so-called palimpsests (Page-Phillips 1996:132). As noted in the previous chapter, brasses had an intimate association with Purgatory and the supplication of souls (Clarke 2003:15). The association between brass and Catholicism rendered them an obvious target for the iconoclasts whose activities may have resulted in the destruction of some and deterred people from erecting more.

There are 12 brasses surviving from the period 1531 to 1600. Of these, six have effigies and six are purely textual. Of the three examples which survive from the 1530s, the two effigy examples, those of Edmund Tame and family at Fairford (c.1534) and an unknown woman from Cirencester (c.1531) have standardised features which recall earlier medieval brasses. The text based brass which

commemorates the daughters of Arthur Porter is of a different character (c.1532). It mentions the souls of the departed children, which aligns it with Catholic doctrine, yet stylistically it resembles a form of monument which would only become popular in the later 16th and 17th centuries (Fig.6.4). It might thus be regarded as an intermediary between the medieval intercessory brass and post-medieval text based commemorative plaques which would become more common in the 17th centuries.

The examples with effigies which survive from the later 16th century are of a different character to their pre-Reformation counterparts. Both effigy and text based brasses show less of a tendency towards standardisation than in previous years. The will of Thomas Tyndall who died in 1571 is certainly idiosyncratic (Fig.6.5:

Ye see how death doth weare no age no kynd
How I am lapt in claye and dedd you fynde
My wife and children lye here with me
No goulde no frend no strenthe could ransome bie

The end of care and matter to repent
The end of vayne delighte and ill intent
The end of faere for frynde and worldly wo
By deathe we have and of lyke thousande mo

And deathe of lynes in us hathe made an end
So that nothing can ouer estate amend
Who would not be content suche change to make
For worldly thynges eternall lyfe to take

Only an image of Tyndall's wife survives. This has more individualised facial features than its medieval precursors. This is also true of John and Alice Gunter, commemorated on a brass at Cirencester in the early 1600s (Fig.6.6).

Personal likeness was not a necessary attribute of the medieval memorial (Norris 1978:70). Medieval Catholicism held that the soul of the deceased achieved homogeneity in death (Binski 1996:138). The standardised facial features of the medieval brass effigy reaffirmed this. Only faith, manifested in indulgence, pilgrimage and a good death could affect the souls' fate. The rejection of papal authority and Catholic observance in England limited the function of brasses. They could no longer be used to solicit prayers, though this did not moderate their social

function (Norris 1978:61). Freed from the functional burden of prayer, memorials could now be endowed with a greater degree of selfhood. The brass to William Hodges at Weston-sub-Edge, though still featuring hands in an attitude of prayer, is clearly not an intercessory device (Fig.6.7). Hodges' image is a portrait, with his facial features and clothing carefully incised. Rather than suggesting the collective fate of the flesh, his image focuses upon the uniqueness of his position in life. Post-Reformation brasses seem to be retrospective rather than proactive. They therefore commemorate the lives of individuals rather than act on behalf of their immortal soul.

Inscriptions in Brass and Stone

Simple inscribed plaques are often ignored by studies of brass memorials, such as that of Norris (1978). Half of all brasses surviving from 1531 and 1600 are simple textual memorials. The majority displayed no more than the name of the deceased, their kin and date of death. It is conceivable that these may have satisfied a desire for commemoration among those of lesser resources, lacking any public means of commemoration following the cessation of the bidding of the bedes and corporate chantry foundations. The diminutive size of these memorials allowed for the commemoration of large numbers of individuals within a small space. They were also erected in memory of wealthier individuals such as Thomas Daunt (c.1573), whose family owned Owlpen Manor (Fig.6.8).

A series of large monuments would not have been practical in a tiny church such as Holy Cross (Fig.6.9). The Daunt memorials commemorated past members of the family without intruding into the space of their living representatives in the aisles. Their epitaphs were simple and retrospective, giving a name and date of death. They are notably 'reformed' in style. Their text is rendered unobtrusively on brass, now darkened but perhaps once polished, against a plain white background. The walls shown in Figure 6.8 have recently been whitewashed. It can be assumed that a similarly plain backdrop existed when these memorials were erected in the late 16th century, as this was common in reformed churches of this period. Smaller forms of memorial allowed a greater number of individual lives to be physically commemorated and so perpetually remembered within the parish church; though not necessarily resulting in the democratisation of commemoration.

The number of monuments which prioritised text over image in the manner of the plaques did not increase significantly from the late medieval period into the mid-16th century. The number of inscriptions present on Gloucestershire's memorials averages at three per decade between 1450 and 1550 (Chart 6.3). There is a wall mounted stone erected to Richard and Elizabeth Berow at Quedgeley with an early date of c.1568 (Fig.6.10). However, on close examination it looks suspiciously like a floor slab raised to the wall. Only 3 wall mounted stones predate 1600. In a reformed context, the use of text in commemoration was seemingly a more appropriate method of engendering a link between the transient position of the deceased and the enduring power of God, fitting well with an emphasis upon scripture, preaching and bible reading.

Decreasing prices are also likely to have been a factor in increasing numbers of monuments in the immediate aftermath of the Reformation. Finch highlights new production techniques as a possible reason for the increased numbers of brasses in his Norfolk sample from the late 16th century:

Water driven hammers beat the pieces of brass into thin plate, rather than the rolled ingots from which the medieval brasses were made. Although this process economised on the amount of metal needed, the thinner plate was also susceptible to damage.

(2000:99)

Both brass effigies and plaques were engraved rather than cut to a template, making them easier to produce (Finch 2000:99). Stripped of the apparatus of intercession, late 16th century text based brasses could be smaller, the majority comprising only 3 or 4 lines of text. They mostly conveyed brief factual information such as careers, marriages and children (Houlbrooke 1998:351). Prayers for the dead were discouraged by reformers (Houlbrooke 1998:352). The increased use of text focusing on the life of the deceased is suggestive of a desire to tie commemoration into the milieu of the Reformed church.



Figure 6.6: John and Alice Gunter, on a later 16th century brass at Cirencester.



Figure 6.7: A late 16th century brass to William Hodges at Weston-sub-Edge.

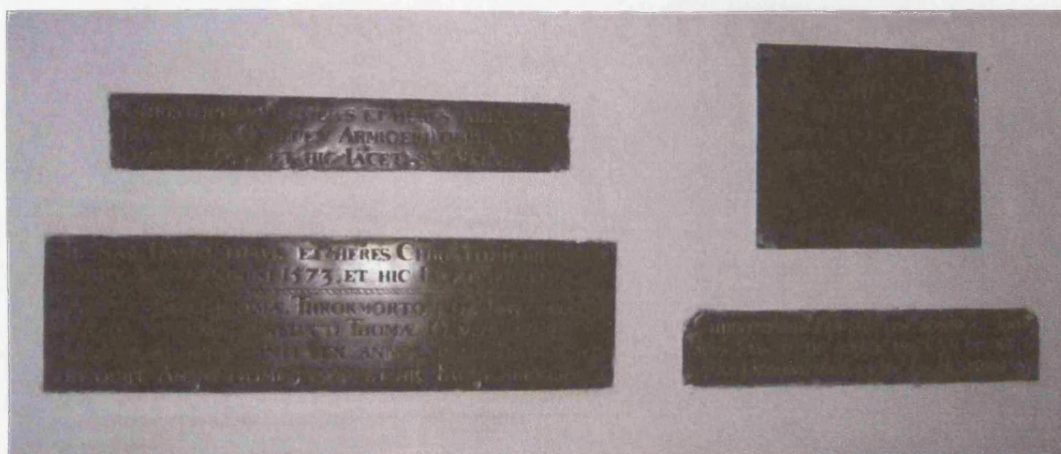
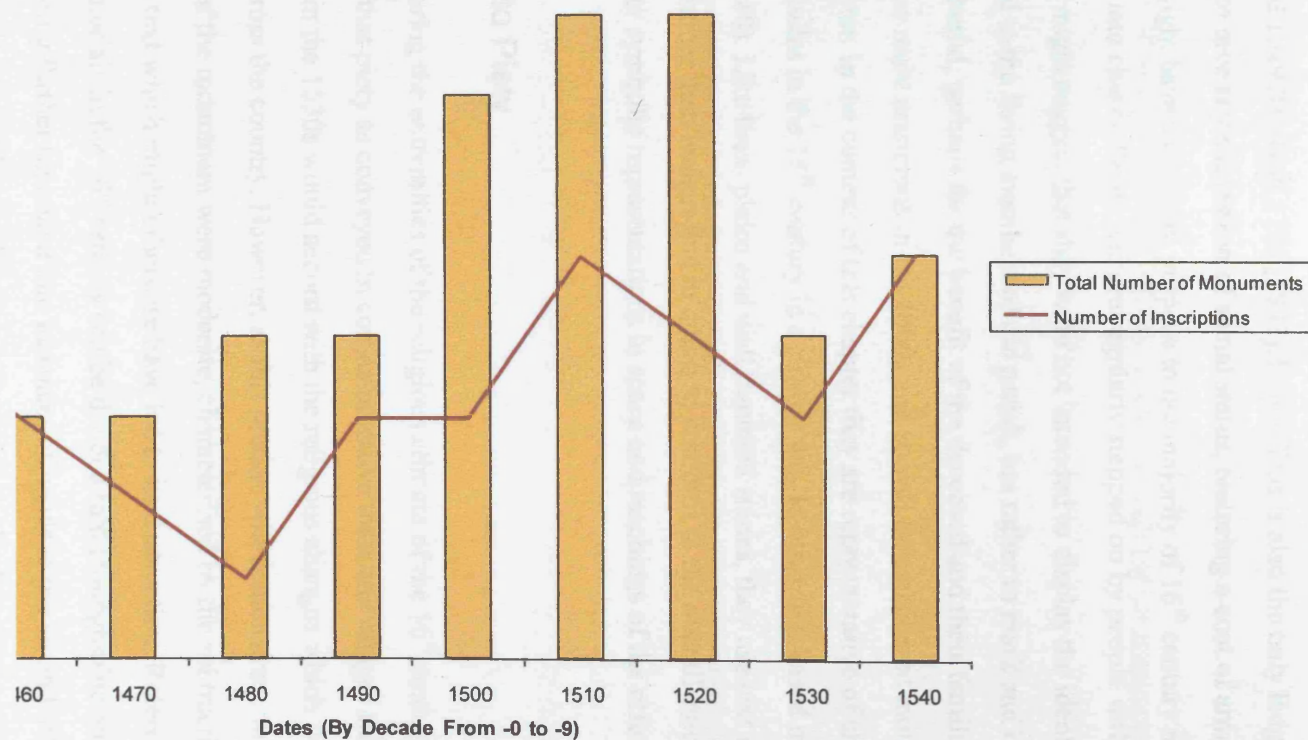


Figure 6.8: Brasses commemorating the Daunt family at Owlpen, grouped together on the north wall of the nave.



Figure 6.9: The tiny church of Holy Cross in Owlpen, near Uley.

Chart 6.3: A chart showing the number of inscriptions which survive in Gloucestershire from between 1450 and 1550



Ledger Stones

Ledger stones are first recorded in the sample in the mid 1500s. Bigland (1786 [1992]) noted 10 examples in total, though this study found only six surviving. The earliest example which might have been erected is no longer in existence. It was recorded in Bigland's volume and is attributed to L'Estante Southwood Austin, dating around 1549 (Bigland 1786 [1992]:1536). This is also the only ledger from the 16th century to give any suggestion of social status, featuring a coat of arms. These memorials might have a different purpose to the majority of 16th century monuments. They are set into church floors and are regularly stepped on by people walking in the church. This might suggest that they were not intended to display the identity of the person buried to the living members of the parish, but rather to mark and individualise the place of burial, perhaps for the benefit of the deceased and their families. Ledger stones became more numerous in the 1600s and so will be considered more fully in the next chapter. In the context of this chapter they are representative of changes in religious attitudes in the 16th century in a similar way to other text based memorials (Finch 2000:80). Like brass plates and wall mounted stones, they use text to convey information rather than images and in doing so conform to the overall emphasis on the Word over symbolic representations in space and teachings of the reformed church.

Allusions to Piety

Considering the extremities of the religious climate of the 16th century, it might be expected that piety as conveyed in commemorative texts and images surviving in churches from the 1530s would accord with the religious changes which were occurring across the country. However, as this section will demonstrate, most changes to the form of the monument were moderate, characterised by the subtraction of imagery and text which might otherwise have led to its destruction. References to piety on memorials in the 16th century can be divided into iconographic and textual, the former being further separated into instances of hands at prayer and other forms of iconography. There are 12 surviving inscriptions which allude to piety dating to this period, 21 instances of hands at prayer on memorials and just three other forms of iconographical imagery.

Hands at Prayer

Hands at prayer on memorials are consistently associated with effigies, both on brass and in stone. There are 16 recumbent figures with hands in an attitude of prayer, seven brasses and one kneeling effigy from c.1531 to 1600. The latter is that of Richard Pate, dating to the 1580s. The continued popularity of this form of display over other iconographic references to piety is understandable. It refers to an act of devotion shared by both Protestant and Catholic which has no explicit connection to either. As the recumbent effigy remained the most popular form of memorial throughout the 16th century, it was inevitable that a statement of pious regard such as clasped hands which was closely associated with it would also be retained.

Other Forms of Iconography

The shift from Catholic to Protestant within the Church removed aspects of presentation which were distasteful to Reformed religion, such as the image of St. John on the Cooke brass at St. Mary de Crypt, Gloucester (c. 1529). A restored image replaces an original which was destroyed around 20 years after its erection. Images of piety which might be associated with reform, such as prayer desks, bibles and allegorical figures such as Fame are less common on later 16th century memorials than they would become in the 17th century. This not surprising considering the controversy associated with images over the course of the period, which perhaps engendered some nervousness with regard to illustrated displays of devotion.

Three examples of pious imagery survive in the county from the 1500s, all of which have explicit connections to Protestant theology and in particular the saving power of the Word. William and Mariana Warren's reclining effigy at St. Briavels in the Forest of Dean features figures reading scripture (Fig.6.11) (c.1572). The effigies of Richard Pate and wife, formerly in Gloucester Cathedral (c.1588), kneel at a prayer desk. At Farmcote, the wife of William Stratford has a bible hanging at her side (c.1590) (Fig.6.12). These images are not particularly controversial. All date from a period when the country was settled, both politically and religiously. When considered alongside the rising number of praying effigies from the 1570s, such pietistic symbols are indicative of an increasing confidence in the maintenance of the status quo.

Textual Allusions to Piety

There are 12 of allusions to piety surviving from c.1531 and 1600 which are textual, a total of 19% of all references. However, this number is still in excess of the number of pre-Reformation examples recorded in the county. The format of such inscriptions is also much more variable than the standardised request for prayer. The latest supplicating inscription to survive is that of William Greville at Cheltenham, which dates to around 1540 (Fig.6.13). The actual solicitation was probably on the upper part of the memorial, which does not survive. However, the format of the surviving inscription locates it within the tradition of medieval Catholic brasses, seeking intercession for the soul of the deceased. Two other brass plaques from the mid 16th century feature ambiguous references to the fate of the soul. The variations on the epithet 'on whose soul may God have mercy' feature on the brasses of Elizabeth Pole of Pauntley (c.1543) and children of Arthur Porter at Hempsted (c.1548). However, after this date explicit references to the soul are replaced by verses from the bible, poems and eulogistic affirmations of the piety of the deceased.

The majority of later 16th century inscriptions prioritise the earthly piety of the deceased over their posthumous fate, the latter being more uncertain following the dismissal of Purgatory. A wall mounted monument to Edward and Joan Stephens of Eastington (c.1587) affirms that they feared God, hated evil, helped the poor and embraced the truth. George and Anna Wynter's memorial features a verse from Psalm 33 around the base of the effigies (c.1581). Elizabeth Norwood's brass at Leckhampton states that she died faithfully in Christ (c.1598). Such epitaphs aim to highlight the lifelong piety of the deceased, either by alluding to faith in scripture or the past good deeds. As with the iconographic hands at prayer, books and prayer desks, more numinous aspects of death such as the location of the deceased after bodily death are ignored. The reasons may be bound to unwillingness to speculate upon the fate of the soul after death, characteristic of reformed doctrine as a whole.

The Word as Image and the Teachings of the *Ars Moriendi*

Houlbrooke (1998:351) has suggested that the development of text on memorials after the Reformation was related to a new emphasis on the written word as a vehicle for religious instruction. The materialised texts depicted on the Warren, Pate and

Stratford memorials recall Becon's emphasis upon the importance of scripture to the achievement of a good death. Text is an integral feature of death as depicted on the memorial, just as is in the author's vision of the deathbed. As with other symbols of reformed piety, the Word was slow to contribute to the visual scheme of piety in death. Its physical incarnation on monuments such as that of the Warrens does not entirely accord with the sentiments of the *Ars*. Rather than being regarded as an intangible subject for pious contemplation, the text is given a visual form which would be easily recognised, even from a distance. This suggests that those featured on the monument intended their spirituality to be taken note of by an audience.



Figure 6.10: A questionable example of 16th century wall mounted commemoration at Quedgeley which might once have been set into the floor of the church.



Figure 6.11: William and Mariana Warren at St. Briavels. William holds a small book of scripture in his left hand.



Figure 6.12: A bible on the Stratford monument at Farmcote.

Chart 6.4: A chart illustrating the number of references to piety which exist on memorials c.1530-1599.

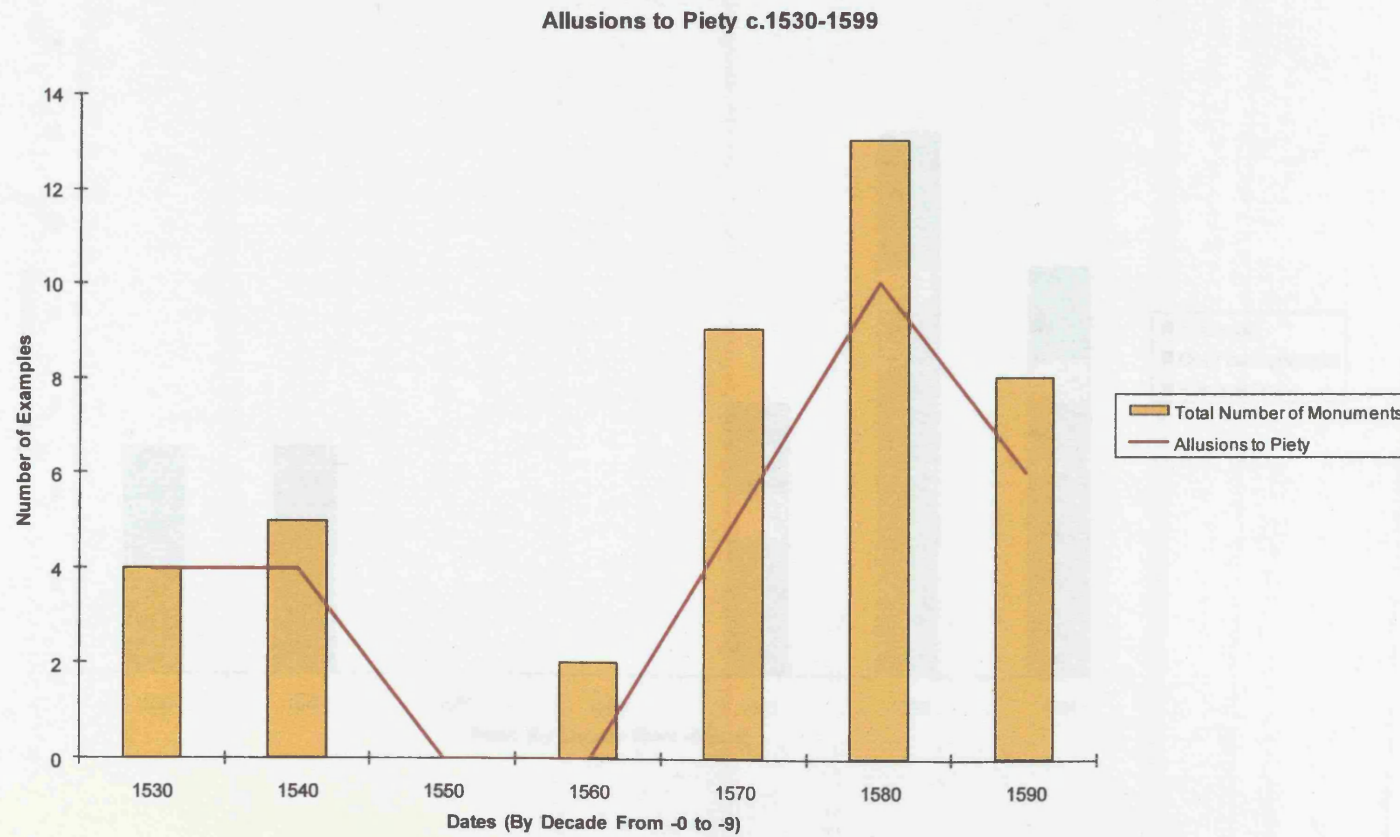
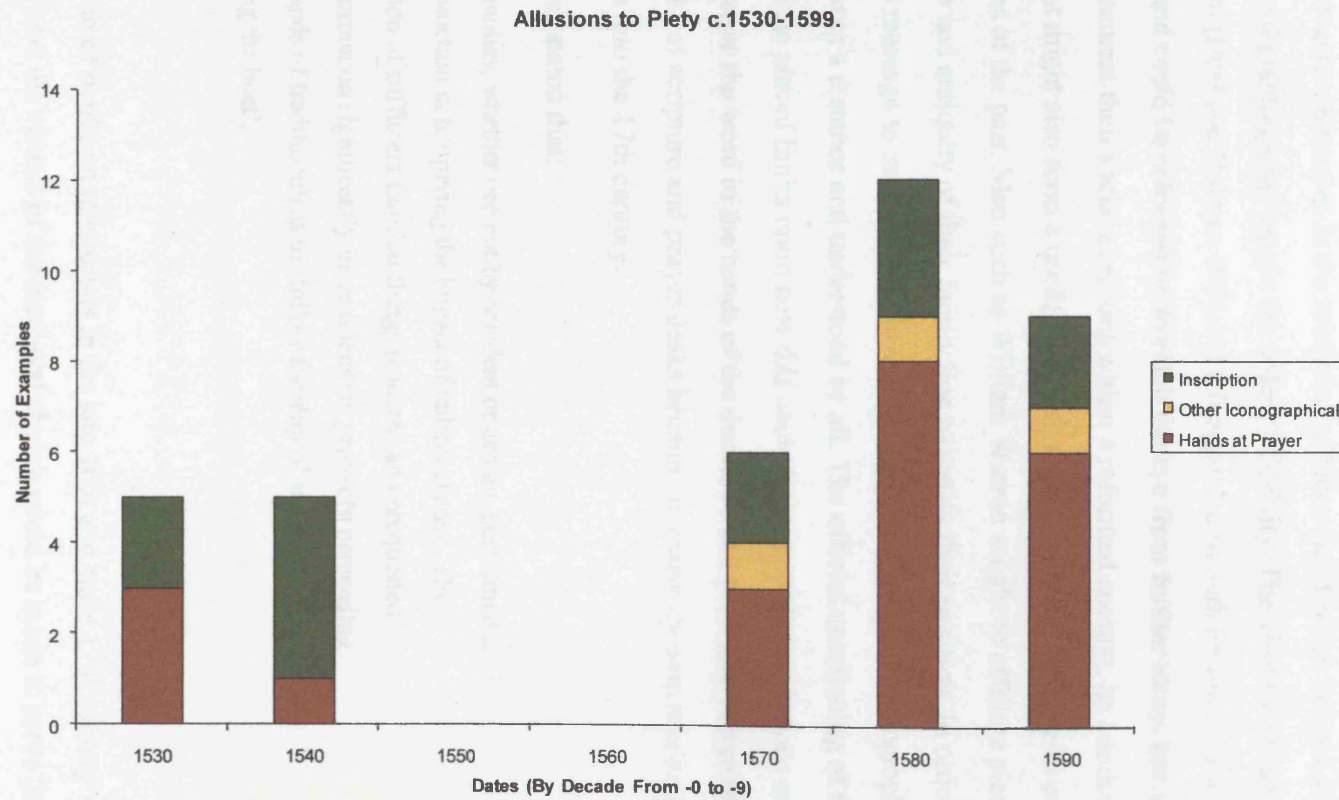


Chart 6.5: chart illustrating the format of references to piety on memorials c.1530-1599



The text displayed was not simply a personal statement of faith; it was a message to those watching regarding the link between piety and position in the community. The book is held in legitimisation of the wealth and power which surrounded it. The monuments of the 16th century, like their predecessors, remained dependant upon visual symbols in order to gain the attention of a largely illiterate congregation. They sought to educate the masses in the subtleties of hierarchy through images, just as the medieval wall paintings had taught the order of Divinity. The visual was as powerful as the verbal (Heal and Holmes 1994:105). It appealed to both literate and illiterate audiences and could be coloured up to catch the eye from further away. For those seeking to cement their social positions within a reformed context, its continued employment might also form a useful link with the aristocratic monuments and benefactions of the past. Men such as William Warren sought to affiliate piety with the strength and antiquity of their family line to justify their position. In order to convey this message to as many people as possible it needed to be iconographical and so visible from a distance and understood by all. The official sanctioning of the text over the image placed limits upon how this could be achieved. An obvious solution was to visualise the word in the hands of the deceased and their kin. Accordingly, bibles, books of scripture and prayer desks became increasingly common on funerary monuments into the 17th century.

Marsh has stated that:

Continuities, whether present by accident or design, performed a vital function in tempering the impact of radical change. The retention of sufficient familiar things rendered an unrequested transformation significantly more tolerable, probably persuading thousands of traditionalists to 'follow the ship of state without rocking the boat'.

(1998:209)

The depiction of books on memorials in the late 16th and early 17th century is a good example of how the visuals of the medieval church could be made to serve the priorities of the post-reformation elite. Camille (1989) has demonstrated the ubiquity of images of writing and reading in medieval iconography. Books were frequently employed as a visual sign for the authority of God in the hands of the Clergy. The

13th century *Bible Moralisée* features many such images. However, from the late 16th century memorials in Gloucestershire feature books clasped between the hands of the laity. This implies the increasing importance attached to individual knowledge of God and responsibility for one's own salvation. Significantly from the perspective of Reformed doctrine and elite ideological motivation, the power of the Word now lies in the hands of an individual. Such imagery stated the individual's responsibility for their own salvation and denied the efficacy of pleas for intercession. However, the iconography also candidly affirmed secular control over religious practice. Possession by an individual suggested that the owner of the book had possession of religiosity, education and authority.

Images of text in hand also appear to suggest the popularisation of the notion of a priesthood of all believers (Beaty 1970:127). The wealthy laity seems to be taking control of the Word of God using it for their own purposes. There is also a possessive aspect to such displays of piety which was not supported by the democratising spirit of Becon's *Ars*. The texts depicted were owned by wealthy *moriens* and his or her family, just as they might own the land around the church which the parishioners lived upon. Spirituality was held and manipulated in the legitimisation of privilege, giving credence to lay administration of matters such as tithes and clerical appointments through a stated relationship between piety and power. The *Ars Moriendi* authors censured material wealth. In the ideal set forth by Lupset, Becon and Parsons, the recognition of the equality of all is fundamental to their vision of a good death. This idealisation is contradicted by the reality of lavish monumental display, which reveals the incompatibility of lay religious determination and equality in death. There is irony in the fact that the text, a symbol of equality under God in reformed religion should become a key feature in the ideological scheme of post-reformation secular control. It joined heraldry, family members and classical allusions in articulating a dominant social and economic elite composed of families such as the Warrens and Stratfords against those unable to publicly state piety.

Death and the Family

Lineage and Commemoration

Familial connections seem to have been a major preoccupation of those erecting memorials in the later 16th century. With one or two exceptions, statements of lineal descent rise and fall with the number of surviving monuments c.1530-1599. Three forms of lineal articulation are evident on these monuments. These can be defined as heraldic, textual and effigial. Heraldic insignia are the coats of arms displayed on memorials which affirm the ancestry and familial connections of the deceased. Textual affirmations state the ancestry and progeny of the deceased. Effigies illustrate the abundance of the lineage through the monumental depiction of the children of the deceased.

Arms

Day (1990:93) has suggested that 16th and 17th century heraldry was an 'iconography of honour'. It was a social and economic symbol which defined the possessor as a member of the gentility (Day 1990:93). Arms remained the most popular expression of familial allegiance in Gloucestershire during this period. At least 55% of familial allusions between 1531 and 1600, around 28 recorded instances, are armigerous. Unlike inscribed lineages or the depiction of children, the public display of heraldry was exclusive. Not every family was entitled to bear arms, affording them particular resonance as a mark of officialdom and indicator of a position at the top of the social ladder. Coats of arms were often large and colourful. They drew the eyes of the congregation, superseding the glaring *Biblia Pauperum* of the medieval church. Such displays made little reference to religious practice and may even have sought to distract their audience from the pulpit since heraldic displays were far more striking than anything else in the reformed church.

The increasing prominence of coats of arms on memorials might also be linked to the intrusion of the royal coat of arms into the space above the chancel arch. Individuals such as William Kingston and Thomas Throkmarton could link their local prominence into the overall governance of the country through an affiliated display of heraldry. Such individuals had administrative interests both in London and in

Gloucestershire. Their heraldic displays within the church might be regarded as armigerous 'stations', marking familial allegiance to and association with the monarchy through affiliated displays of imagery in sight of the royal coat of arms. Such allied displays were homologous with the relationship between country and court, as the county elites represented their interests in London whilst drawing on their affiliation with state bureaucracy whilst in Gloucestershire. Such symbols superseded the painted saints of the medieval church. It is not inconceivable that their creators were aware of the past significance of these spaces and sought to draw upon this legacy of authority in assurance of their social position. Placing their own insignia around the church allowed wealthy families to link their identities to the Royal prerogative to control religious practice and thus the basis of parish social and economic life.

Text

Despite an increased emphasis upon text over image in the church space as a whole, the inclusion of epitaphs detailing family histories on memorials increases only slightly in the late 16th century. Between 1541 and 1600, only 12 of the 41 memorials recorded feature such references. However, this should be compared with the fact that none of the memorials surveyed in the previous 180 years featured a textual reference to family. They seem to have superseded requests for prayers as the principle purpose of text on a monument. This reflects an increased emphasis upon the prospective role of the monument, intended to enhance the fortunes of the living family, rather than an active tool raised to facilitate the passage of the soul. The removal of Purgatory extinguished public allusions to the location of the soul after death, encouraging the statement of mortal prominence. Hoped-for immortality could be replaced in its entirety by the imagined immortality of the family line. Inscribed lineages of the late 16th century emphasised continuity over transition, prioritising the vitality of the line over overt allusions to death and the passing of familial patriarchs. Preceding and surviving kin are named alongside the deceased in order to present their family as a continuum rather than a series of fallible beings. Houlbrooke (1998:355) has noted that such references might be found with suggestions of a virtuous life and good deeds. A monument to Edward Stephens at Eastington exemplifies this:



Figure 6.13: A mid 16th century brass commemorating William Greville and Wife at St. Mary's, Cheltenham.



Figure 6.14: A memorial to Humfrey and Elizabeth Bridges in the Lady Chapel at Cirencester.

Chart 6.6: Number of Allusions to Lineage c.1530-1599

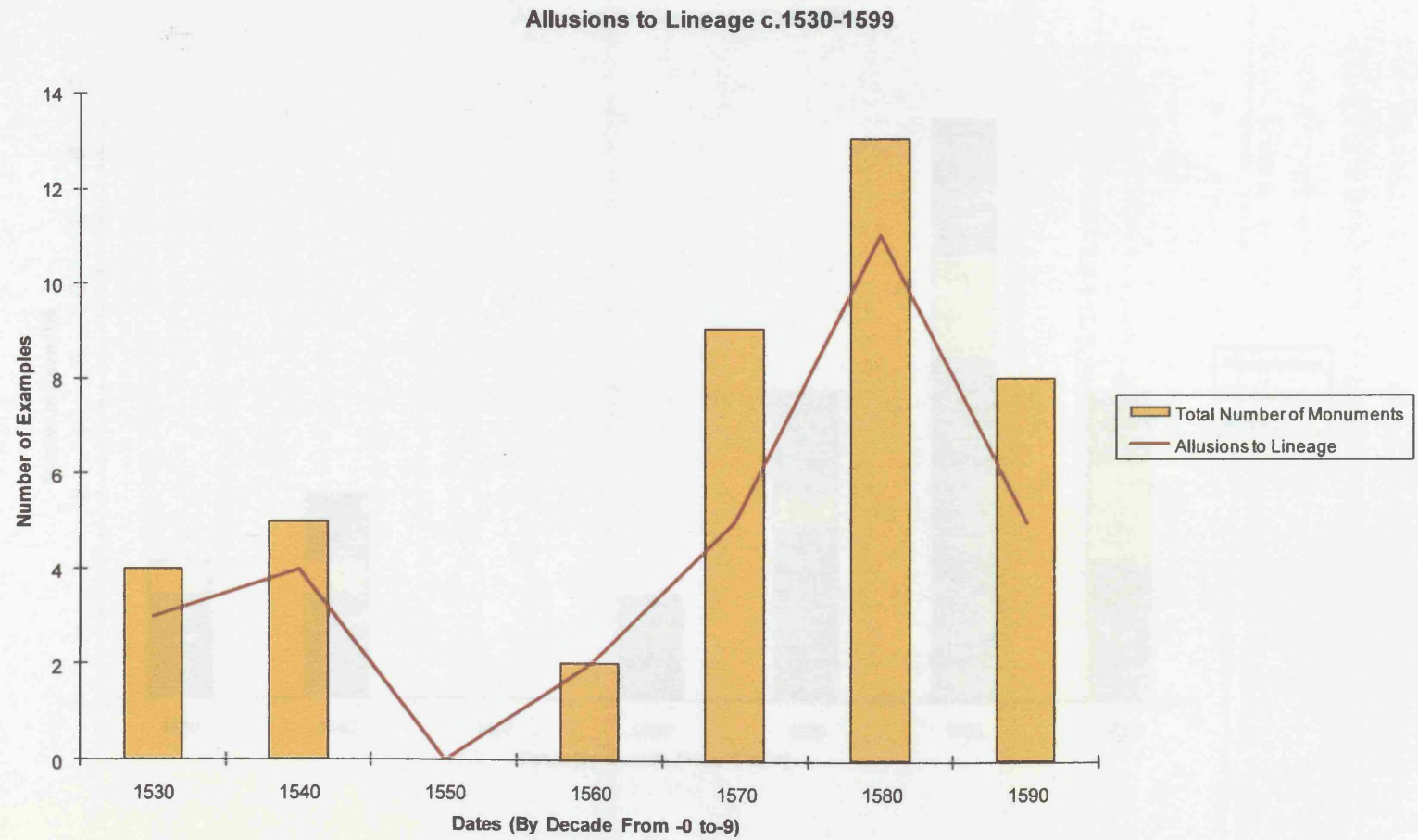
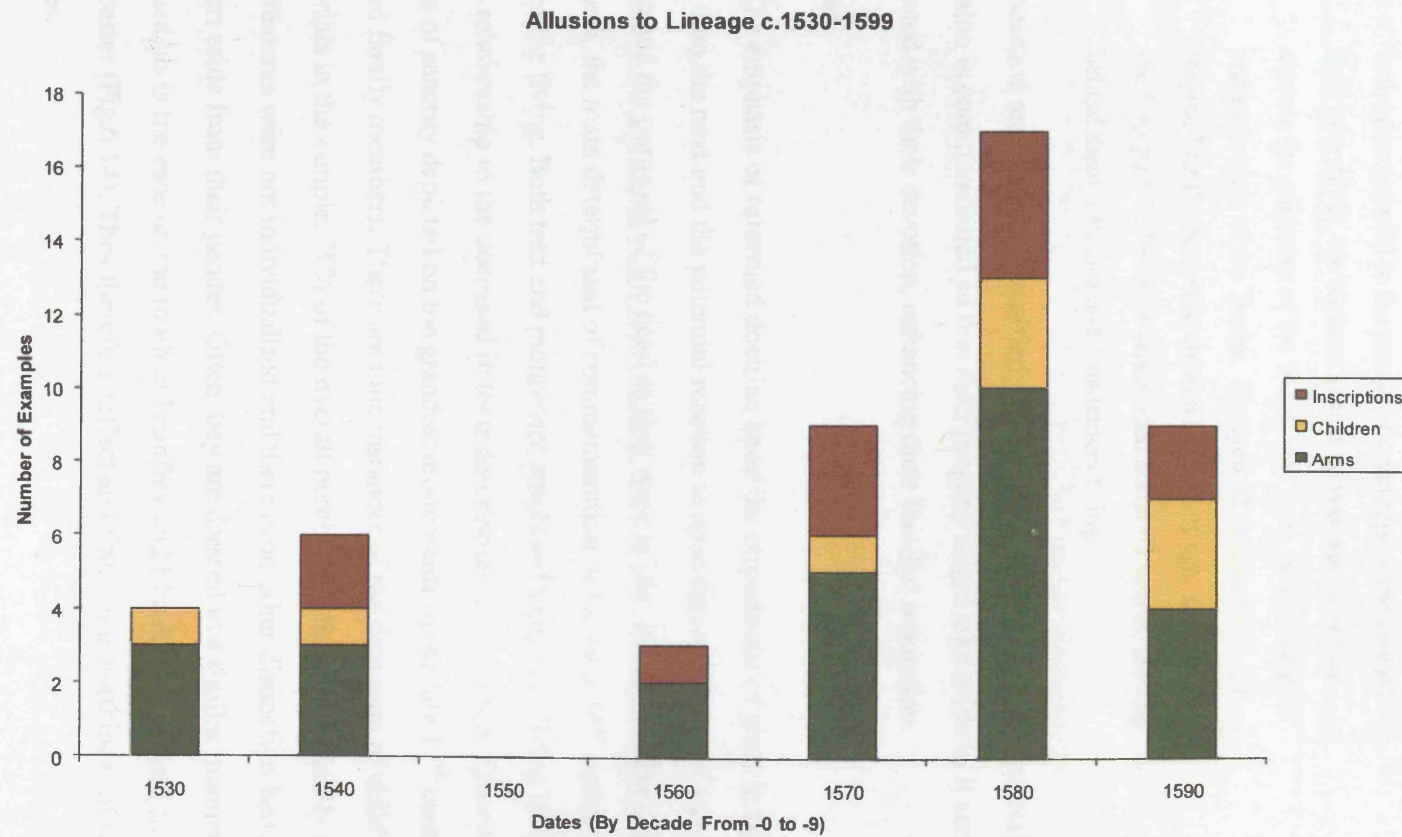


Chart 6.7: Types of Reference to Family and Descent c.1530-1599



Here underneath lye buried the bodies of Edward Stephens,
Gentleman, and Joan his wife, which both feared God, hated
evil, were helpful to the poore, of good report and toward
their later dayes, having here settled he was patron of this
church, the ministry of the Word; they were diligent hearers
and embracers of the Truthe. He dyed 22 Octob. 1587, 29
Regine Elizabeth, being about 61 yeares of age, and (she)
the 5 August in the same yeare, aged about 63 yeares, leaving
behind them 3 sonnes and 2 daughters living.

Both husband and wife are identified as good Protestants by their memorial. Their reputation is commemorated so that their progeny might take pride in it and become associated with their devotion, enhancing their familial reputation.

Effigies

The emphasis of reformed doctrine upon the importance of piety in this life rather than the next and the potential reaction to speculative images of sanctity encouraged the portrayal of the dead as they were in life. In Thomas Becon's *Ars Moriendi*, the main determinant of commemoration in the later 16th century was the piety of the living. Both text and monument employed images of living individuals with a relationship to the deceased in their descriptions of devotion. The central images of sanctity depicted on the grandest monuments of the late 17th century were devoted family members. There are nine instances of the depiction of children on memorials in the sample, 20% of the overall number of allusions to family recorded. Their features were not individualised and there is no other distinction between the children aside from their gender. Often they are dressed in a similar manner to the deceased, as is the case on the tomb of Humfrey and Elizabeth Brydges (c.1598) at Cirencester (Fig.6.14). They therefore reflect and frame the worthiness of the central effigies.

The Smyth Tomb in the chancel at Chipping Campden features 14 carved family members, crammed onto three panels in a somewhat undignified manner. The faces of the figures are standardised in deference to the body of Smyth, depicted above in a perfected state. Only his features are individual. These depictions give the impression

that the family are subordinate to the identities and achievements of the deceased. They are representatives of an ideal of familial continuity, rather than individuals. The images surround the monument, collectively denying the ability of death to end a legacy with a single life. They translate the individual achievements of the deceased into the foundation for a glorious dynasty, and as representations of the ongoing fruitfulness of the deceased family their individual identities are unimportant. Each child is defined by their piety and sex alone, highlighting the unbroken sanctity of the deceased's lineage. They recall Thomas Becon's deathbed aids, which also lacked personal features beyond their piety as these children do. The anonymity of these figures was in deference to the past achievements and future identity of the family rather than the shared fate of humanity. They represent a belief that individual achievement could perpetuate itself through surviving kin, rendered infallible by the continued devotion represented by their praying hands.

Piety and Lineage

The commemorative schemes of the later 16th century are in many ways conservative. They retain the trusted links between piety, wealth, position and family which were in evidence a hundred years before (Chart 6.6). Symbols of piety and lineal descent were intimately connected on the memorials of the later 1500s, just as they were on their medieval predecessors. For example, a memorial erected for Edward and Catherine Veele at Almondsbury in 1575 depicts them lying in prayer on a monument which is surmounted by a splay of arms (Fig.6.15). Six monuments survive from the 1570s, of which five feature both allusions to piety and to lineage. The majority of carved family members hold their hands in an attitude of prayer. In doing so, they link piety to the cultivation of a strong line. This implies that it is the religiosity of the family which affords them their social superiority and so helps to convey a worthiness which justified authority and social prerogative. In reality, however, the ability to display such images remained patently a function of economic resources. The fact that individuals continued to commission effigies with hands at prayer into the early 17th century further implies a confidence in their potency in spite of religious change.

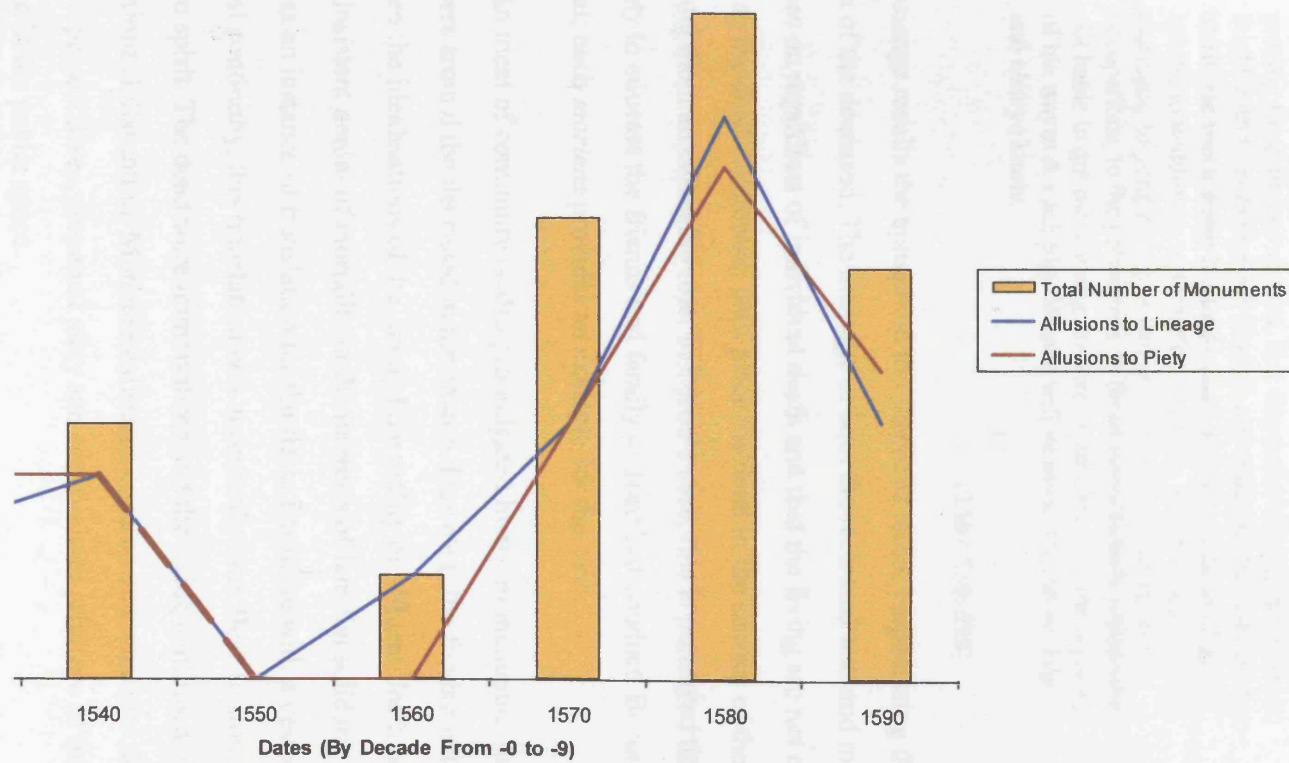
The *Ars Moriendi* and the Family

In *The Sicke Mannes Salve*, Epaphroditus conveys his intention to use his funeral to admonish his family for their worldliness. They play a minor part in the text and are only mentioned in connection with the final requests of the dying man. Whilst the family are physically subordinate to the deceased within the memorial, images of ancestry and progeny are still an important constituent of the scheme. Throughout the period c.1531-1600, the number of allusions to lineage, including heraldry, inscriptions and children peak and fall in line with the overall number of monuments within the sample. This suggests that such statements of familial allegiance were integral to the constitution of memorials in the late 16th century. The public statement and solidification of lineage was of particular importance to newly landed and moneyed families. Johnson (1989:4) has asserted that many of those who gained land from the Dissolution were moneyed and professional people looking for opportunities to increase their status. It was in their interests to make their lineage appear strong and antiquated in order to minimise the degree of dislocation to the new line brought about by death. Late 16th century memorials were thus both retrospective and prospective, looking back over the life of the deceased whilst also celebrating the future prosperity of the family which would spring from a solid and affluent base.

Unlike the *Ars*, these memorials did not seek to highlight the collective subordination of mankind to its mortality. Monuments such as the Brydges tomb employed piety as a component of privileged identity. They were intended to educate their audience not in the conduct of death, but in the social order existing in life. Privilege was to be passed onto the family lined up in rows below the effigy or mentioned in the epitaph. The importance of vital piety over posthumous repentance, used by 16th century *Ars* authors to highlight the collective fate of mankind, encouraged the creation of living images which retained their individualising marks of status in opposition to the spirit of mortal equality.

The theoretical death of the *Ars* texts is abrupt compared to commemorated death. Unlike its medieval predecessor, which continued its didacticism for two more chapters after the expiration of its subject, Becon's text ends shortly after the death of *moriens*:

Chart 6.8: Iconographical allusions to piety and lineage, measured against each other for the period c.1530-1599.



The Lord our God be prayed. Our brother hath made a godly end. He hath geuen vp a good spirit, into the hands of the liuing God. He is, I doubt not, of the number of them...His life before men was vnrebukeable and blameles. He liued iustly, and vprightly with his neyghbours. He was frendly to al godly men, and ennemy to no man. He was both a sincere fauourer, and a diligent folower of Gods most holy word. He abhorred all sectes, Papistes Anabaptistes, Libertins. &c. Not withstanding alway praying for their ame~dment, that they knowledging theyr errors, might with vs confesse one God, & one truthe in the vnity of the spirit. He was a deare frende to suche as were studious of good letters, to widdowes, to fatherles: children, to pore yonge maides mariages, to yong me~ that had not wherwith to set vp theyr occupations, to the prisonners, to those poore people which wer not hable to get theyr liuing, to pore housholders, to the reparing of hie wayes & such like. What a will he made ye knowe. His end also ye know.

(1561:538-539)

This passage recalls the epitaph on the Stephens tomb, emphasising the worldly virtues of the deceased. The message of both the reformed text and monument is that life goes on regardless of individual death and that the living are not capable of assisting the dead. Therefore, both place the dead in the service of the living, affording them an educative role. In Becon's case, this is portrayed through their capacity to educate the friends and family in deathbed conduct. Becon's ideal death is cyclical; each *moriens* provides an example for the next.

An ideal of continuity is also promulgated by the monumentalisation of family members around the deceased in the church. However, the fundamental conflict between the idealisations of the *Ars* and the reality of affluent death persists in the text's insistent denial of mortality in the interests of familial solidarity. Both regarded death as an instance of translation for the flesh. For those with a vested interest in familial continuity, this translation was necessarily from flesh to stone, rather than flesh to spirit. The dead were immortalised and the living continued in their stead with minimal disruption. Monumentalisation ensured that whatever the fortunes of its living representatives, perpetual piety and concomitant privilege of the family were assured in the public space.

Resurrection and Mortality

References to resurrection and mortality as noted on Gloucestershire's memorials are divided into textual, iconographical and allegorical (Chart 6.7, 6.8). Textual forms refer to allusions to resurrection and mortality which are inscribed on the memorial. Iconographical forms refer to imagery present on memorials which depicts a facet of resurrection or mortality as regarded by those who created the monument, but which cannot be described as a figure or character. These are described as allegorical images. They are divided from iconographical imagery for the purposes of this analysis since, particularly in the case of Heavenly images such as angels, they are likely to cause more controversy if depicted in a Protestant milieu.

Resurrection: Text as Image

All surviving allusions to Resurrection and eternal life from this period are textual, being highly visible and displayed in Reformed religious space. Mid to late 16th century commemoration avoided all symbols which could be interpreted as celestial and thus idolatrous. Executing allusions to Resurrection in text rendered them less controversial. Resurrection is mentioned briefly and always at the end of the epitaph. It is presented as a reward for a life well lived, suggesting an inevitable progression from a righteous life to Divine esteem. A good example of this can be regarded on Sybil Clare's (d.1575) lengthy epitaph at Twynning (Fig.6.16), the last lines of which are transcribed here (with my emphasis in italics):

.... She willinglye yealded her innocente soule to the handes of God
the xiii daye of Februarye in the yeare of our lord 1575, to the
unspeakable losse and sorrowe of her dear parentes, frendes and all
that knewe her, but most especiallye her lovinge husband beinge
departed from so deare a wyffe well endewed wyth sundrye rare
gyfftes bothe of bodye and minde, in whos remembraunce as an
eternal pledge of good will the sayed Frauncis caused this
monumente to be erected at his proper costes and charges, the 12th of
Auguste in the yeare of our lord 1577, *to whos soule graunte a joyful
resurrection, Amen.*

Incorporating resurrection into an epitaph personalised the experience of renewal, making it party to the person of the deceased along with the other qualities detailed. Worthiness in the eyes of God was as much a part of the individual's identity as the other qualities written in the epitaph. Houlbrooke (1998:353) has written that claiming a virtuous life was the surest basis of lasting fame, rendering the deceased immortal through their good deeds and a source of edification for coming generations. Thus an epitaph such as Sybil Clare's was a foundation for the immortality of her memory in this life and a suggestion of the persistence of her soul to the next.

Mortality

A rise in allusions to mortality over those referencing immortality might be expected during this period, since images of mortality did not imply presumptions about the next life and were not affiliated to any form of Christianity (Chart 6.9). Throughout the middle ages, allusions to mortality on monuments remained consistently less popular than those to resurrection and eternal life. Their numbers do not rise significantly during the period under study, but by comparison they can still be regarded as popular in reformed commemorative schemes. The number of monuments featuring allusions to mortality totals just eight, peaking at four in the 1570s. At this point the number elevates slightly above those memorials depicting resurrection. However, neither characteristic reaches a level of popularity at which it could be upheld as a substitute for the iconographic scheme of traditional religion.

As has been noted, images of continuity are central to the iconographic scheme. Memorials such as the Brydges tomb at Cirencester with its lines of children emphasise the continuity of life over individual death. Allusions to piety and lineal descent seem more credible iconographic substitutes for traditional imagery than images of death. This is demonstrated through the analysis of iconographic and textual allusions to mortality.

Iconography

There are only four iconographic images of mortality surviving from this period. These are consistently marginalised, often physically, and are therefore subordinate to more central images of piety and family. All the references noted feature skulls

situated on the fringes of the iconographic scheme. For example, Richard Pate's memorial in Gloucester Cathedral is surmounted by an image of death and a skull with a bone in its mouth (Fig.6.17). However, these figures are small and only perceivable upon close examination. They frame the central drama of the monument, in which vital images of the deceased and their family act out a perpetual lineage. George and Anna Wynter's memorial features a tiny image of a skull, which is lost in the earthly pomposity of their oversized monument (Fig.6.18). Its presence acquiesces to the inescapability of decay, but since death implies transience which might contradict the perpetuity of their identities, its image is diminutive and marginal. The image of mortality suggests an acknowledgement of the destabilising effects of death and its ability to overturn the fundamental message of longevity and perpetuity, but no attempt is made to draw attention to it. Death is acknowledged, but to emphasise it would undermine the fundamental ideological precepts of the monument.

Text

There is a single surviving textual reference to mortality, evident on the brass of Thomas Tyndall as detailed above. It is an optimistic epitaph, ending with a statutory expectation of resurrection. The brass originally featured coats of arms and children, linking this piety and the certainty of resurrection unambiguously to Tyndall's family. Tyndall's memorial takes a less triumphal attitude to death. It states unambiguously that death is final. The inscription is didactic, warning readers that death is no respecter of sex, age or rank. However, in making himself the subject of the inscription, Tyndall assumes the mantle of pious example. His submission to his own mortality is portrayed as an ideal which others should imitate.

Such *memento mori* might be regarded in a similar manner to the depiction of books of scripture, prayer desks and effigies with hands at prayer. They are another attempt to affirm the pietistic superiority of the deceased and his family. The ability to publicly prostrate oneself to Death was restricted to those who could afford such a memorial, equating prominent displays of godliness with wealth and power and so suggesting that the deceased merited their prominent position in the community on account of their humility. The obvious contradiction between the vanity of commemoration and the professed humility of the departed is not acknowledged here.



Figure 6.15: A memorial to Edward and Catherine Veele at Almondsbury.



Figure 6.16: Sybil Clare's commemorative brass plaque at Twyning near Tewkesbury.

Chart 6.9: A chart illustrating the format of references to resurrection and immortality on memorials c.1530-1599.

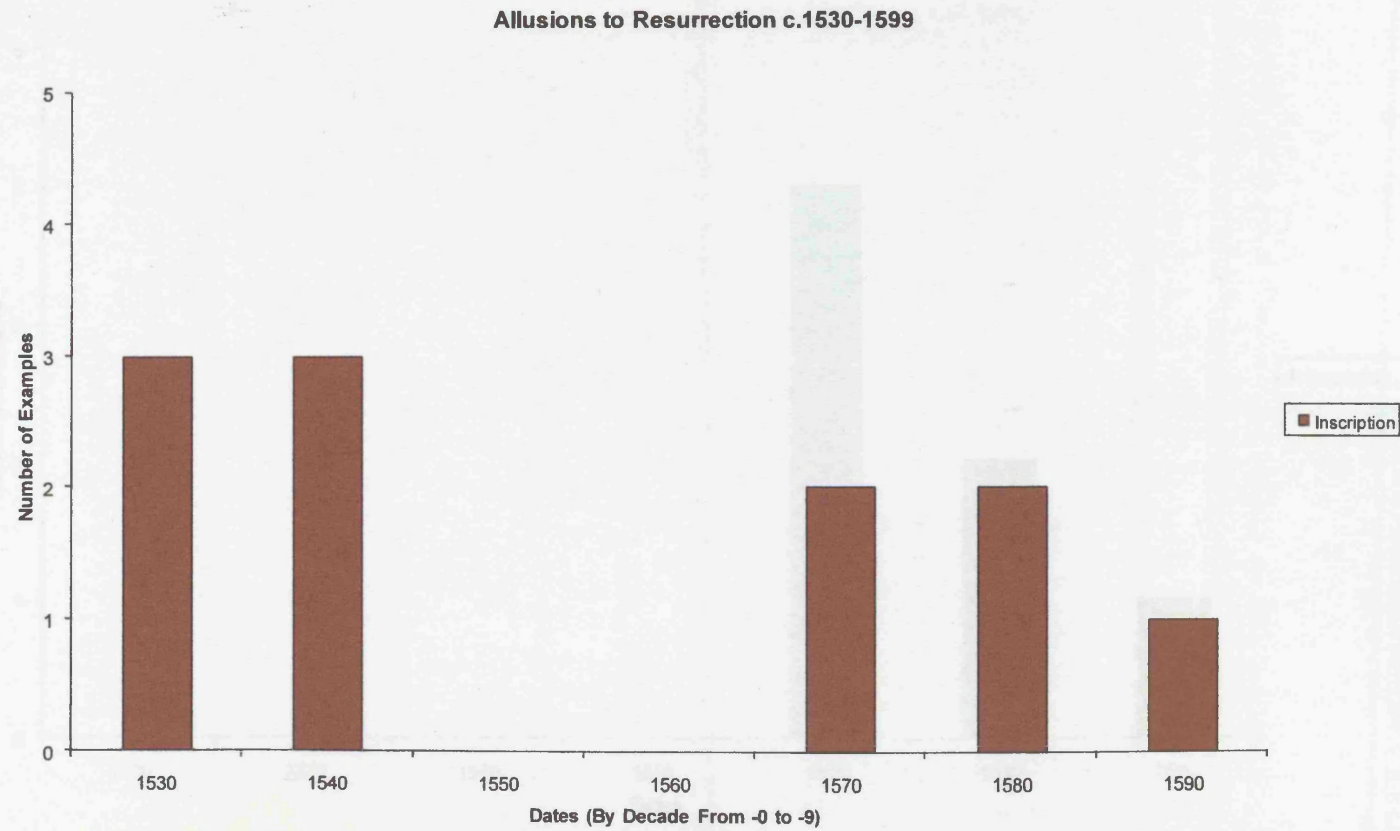


Chart 6.10: A chart illustrating the format of references to mortality on memorials c.1530-1599

Types of Allusions to Mortality Present on Monuments Surviving From c.1530-1599.

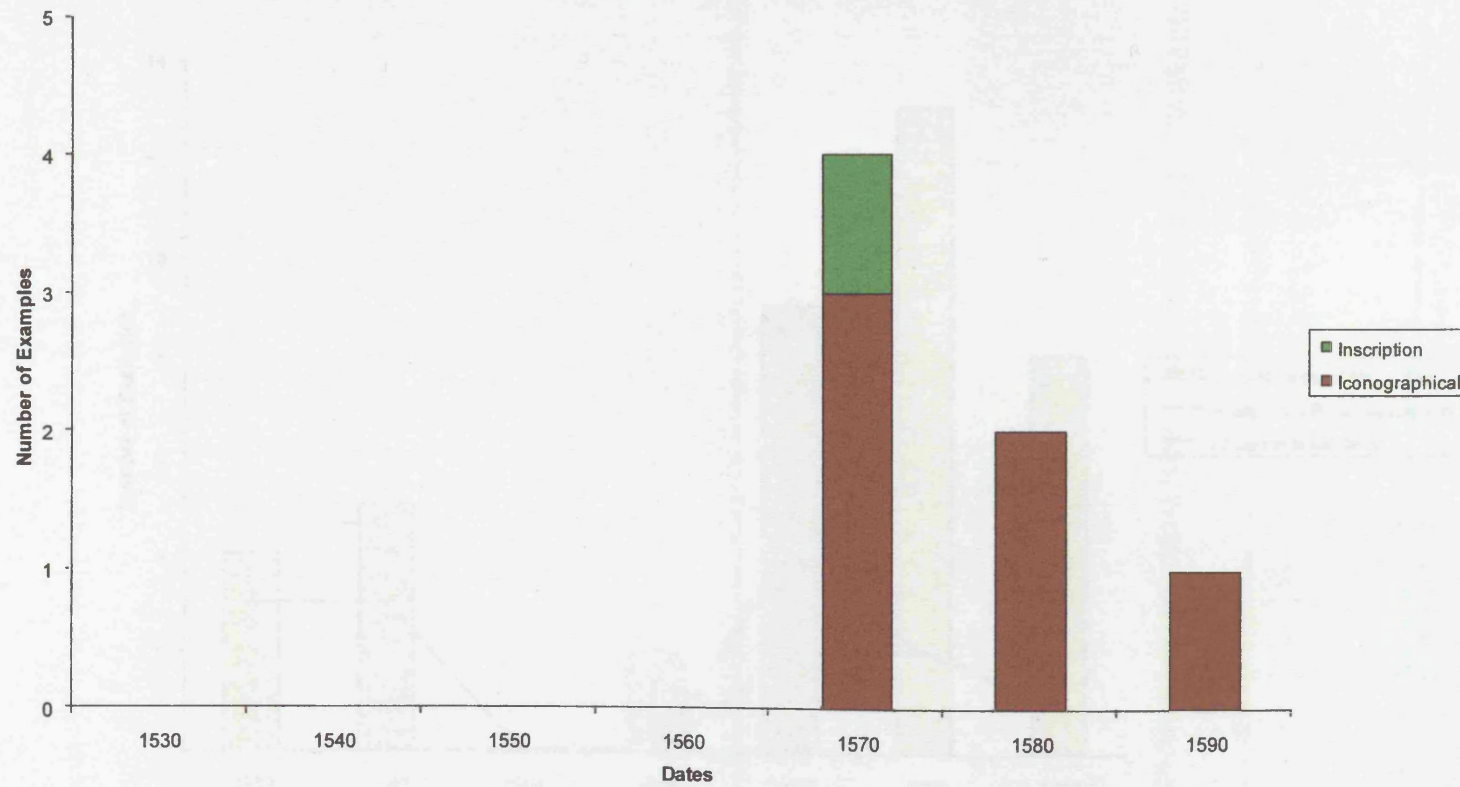


Chart 6.11: Iconographical allusions to resurrection and mortality, measured against each other for the period c.1530-1599

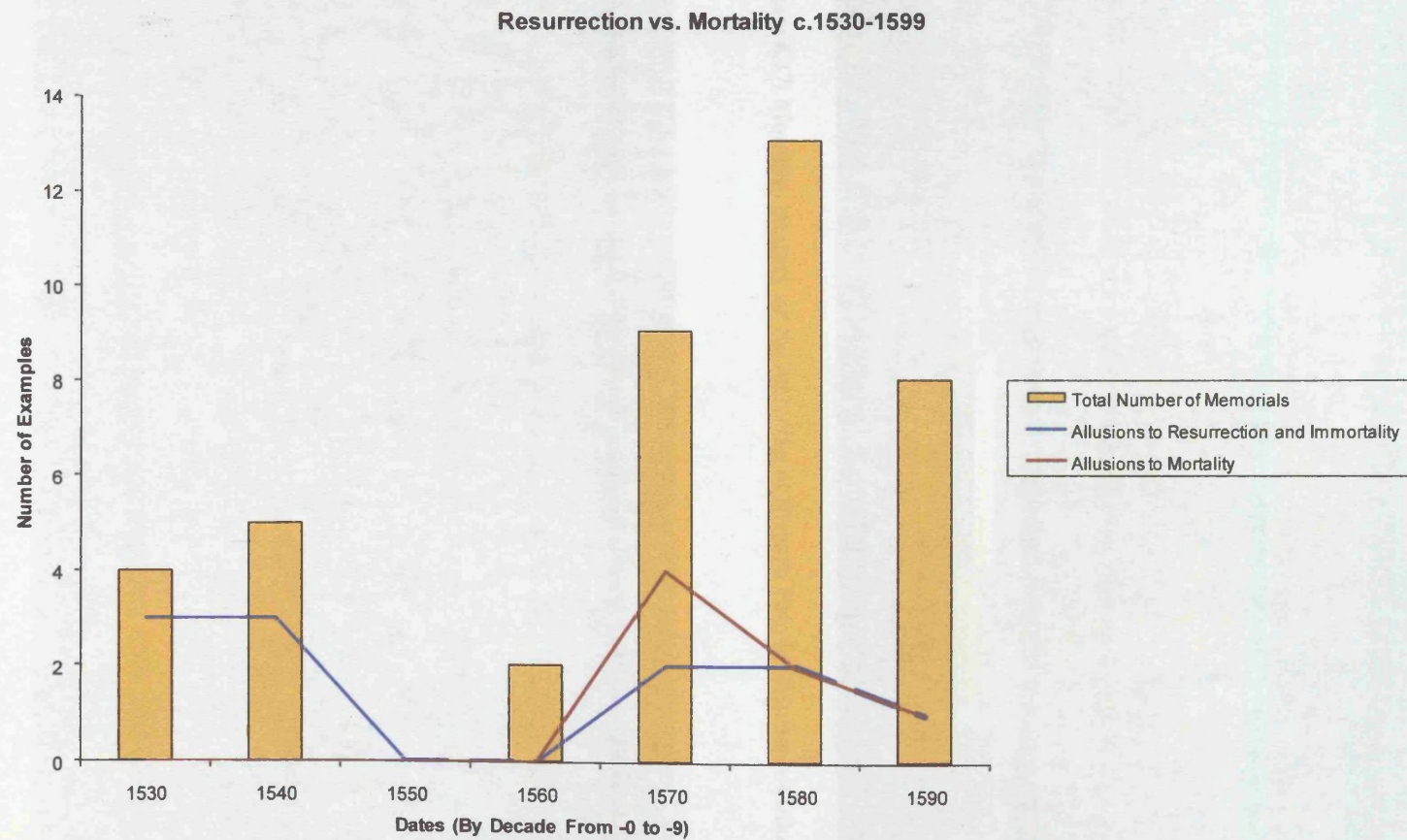




Figure 6.17: Mortality imagery on the memorial of Richard Pate in Gloucester Cathedral.

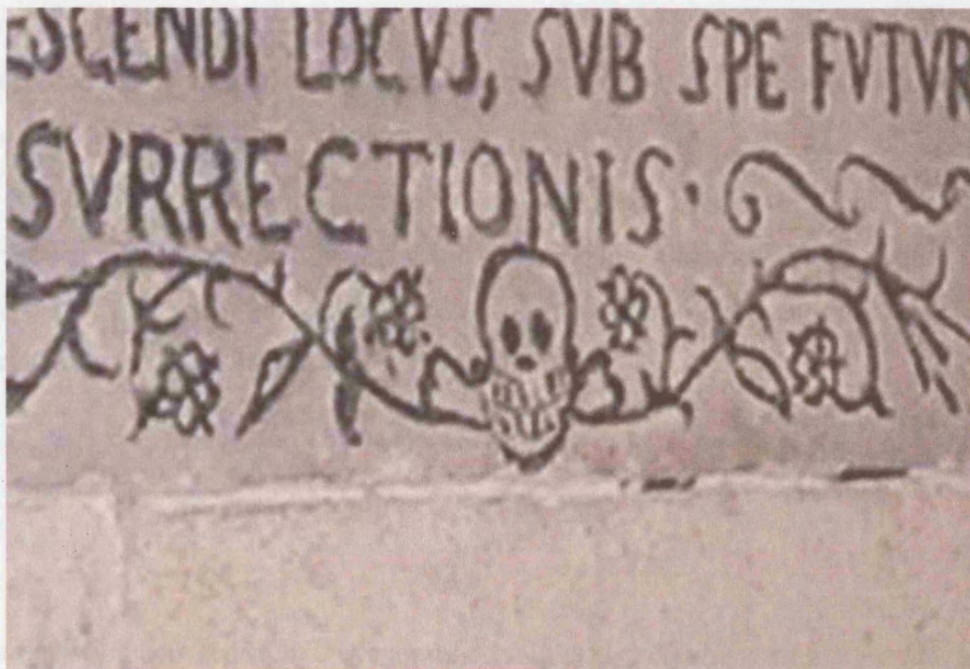


Figure 6.18: Mortality imagery, featured on an inscription above the heads of George and Anna Wynter at Dyrham.

The *Ars Moriendi*, Resurrection and Mortality

Although both the *Ars Moriendi* and the reformed funerary monument may allude to mortal frailty, their motives in doing so were divergent. The *Ars Moriendi* authors do not acknowledge the perpetuation of familial power and position through commemoration, thus avoiding a contradiction with Death triumphant. The erection of a monument proclaimed and manifested a victory over death, preventing the decay of the social body with the natural. As such, it militated against anonymity and provided a reference which would allow future generations to define their place within society with reference to their monumentalised ancestors.

Recognition of mortal frailty was a consistent feature of the 16th century *Ars Moriendi*, all of which reproved the flesh and promoted daily contemplation of one's fate. Parsons in particular concentrates upon the inevitable decay of wealth:

Riches shall not profit a man on the day of revenge; That
is; at the daie of death and iudgement.

(1585:710)

Images of the decay of worldly things rest uneasily with the worldly preoccupations of the 16th century funerary monument.

Both the *Ars* and monument use text to convey images of mortality and resurrection in preference to allegorical and iconographic imagery. The ease with which the Devil is given form in Becon's *Sicke Mannes Salve* highlights an association between text and God and image and Devil:

... the worde of God Christ droue away Satan and resisted all his wicked
temptacions.

(1561:371)

The association between Hell, the image and traditional religion meant that the Devil could be pictured and used as a didactic tool without causing too much controversy. Images of the Divine, however, were more problematic to portray. Contemporary monuments in Gloucestershire thus substitute images of resurrection with lengthy texts, concurring that God is in the Word, rather than of the image.

There were textual allusions to resurrection on monuments in the years before the Reformation. These explicitly sought prayers for the soul of the deceased and revealed their belief in Purgatory and assumptions about what would happen to the soul after death. The textual references to resurrection of the mid to late 16th century are more ambiguous, stating a desire for resurrection but not presuming to know what would come between death and rebirth. What would happen to the person following death was unknowable and was treated as such on the monument. Similarly, Lupset's *The Waye of Dyeing Well* sought to distance its audience from otherworldly powers by removing the dramatic images of deathbed saints and demons of the medieval tracts. Readers are encouraged to adopt a more earthly approach to salvation, seeking guidance in the scriptures and the Classics rather than an intangible divinity. Becon's tract similarly prioritised visible and tangible forms of guidance over the intrusion of mysterious Heavenly powers. The only allusions to salvation which are mentioned derive from passages copied from inflexible scripture. Neither Lupset's 'humanistic' attitude nor Becon's Calvinism sanctioned imaginings of what came after death, invalidating the role of the depictions relating to this, such as the allegorical angels of the medieval church in giving substance to individual fate. Visible and material text was the only legitimate tool for salvation.

Fervour and Pragmatism

Approaching Continuity and Change in the 16th Century

There have been few detailed enquiries into nature of the death ritual in the mid-16th century. The extent of evidential loss supposedly due to iconoclasm at this time could easily cause this interval to be regarded as a period of depletion and nothing more, a barrier to effective research into preceding periods. Finch has observed that studies of funerary monuments tend to neglect such difficult periods:

Studies of funerary iconography tend to pass over periods of iconographic controversy or iconoclasm as inconvenient interruptions to the teleological evolution of monument styles.

(2000:126)

The abiding impression left by this gap in research is that Catholic opposes Protestant, communal conflicts with individual and devout images are supplanted by secular iconography. This impression is reinforced by partisan writers who have recorded their thoughts. Gittings quotes one such commentary, authored by Elizabethan writer Phillip Stubbs:

But alas, who seeth not the vanity of thie fond opinion of
Purgatory? If masses, dirges, *de profundis*... and such pelting trash
could redeem us from pain and punishment after this life, and place
our souls in joy and bliss, I pray you then what is left to the blood
of Christ to do for us? Nothing at all.

(1992:173)

There were drastic changes to religious practice in the 16th century (Gittings 1992:173). However, as this chapter has discussed, differences in form will not necessarily result in a wholesale change in social meaning. Peter Marshall (2002:312) has noted a tendency to look for dislocations rather than continuities in the work of several leading researchers. He suggests that those studying this transitional period should try to understand what beliefs meant to people and were like, rather than forming abstract conceptions of what they were for (2002:313). In other words, it is necessary to understand how beliefs and practices fitted into peoples' social lives in order to understand what happens to them during periods of religious change. Their place might be taken by new ways of thinking and acting which fulfilled the same social role, whilst conforming to the rule of a different doctrine. For example, the emphasis on vital piety and worldly virtues noted in Reformed commemoration and in the *Ars* texts allowed for the manipulation of piety in the affirmation social status, just as medieval brasses and effigies pleading for prayers had done previously. Accordingly, Marshall (2002:312) explicitly states the need to use the terms 'pre-Reformation' and post-Reformation' as vaguely as possible. Neither should imply a unified cultural block or congruous social policy (2002:312).

Within the field of archaeology, the nature of the 16th century death ritual and its cultural productions has been addressed most thoroughly by Gaimster and

Gilchrist's 2003 volume *The Archaeology of Reformation 1480–1580*, which includes a number of papers describing the contribution of an archaeological approach to the study of death and commemoration during periods of religious change. Particularly pertinent to this study is Vanessa Harding's consideration of the survival of elements of the pre-Reformation death ritual and of the social messages which they continued to convey (Harding, 2003:386). She argues that rituals of death and burial in 16th century England were flexible and adaptable. Ceremony was abbreviated, but not stopped (2003:392-393). The same might be said of commemoration in Gloucestershire, which appears to have been as important in the 16th century as it was in the decades leading up to it. Its social purpose was retained in spite of religious change. In the same volume, however, Jonathan Finch considers changes in the post-Reformation monument and how they articulated the new Protestant theology (Finch 2003: 439). Collectively, these studies give an insight into how continuity in social purpose and changes in form might persist within cultural productions created in periods of dramatic change.

Conformity and Opposition in Gloucestershire

MacCulloch (1998:94) has noted that the clergy chosen to be bishops of Worcester Cathedral mirror the varying fortunes of the Reformation and consistently represent the leading figures on both sides. Official religious policy in Gloucestershire can also be charted through the control of the principle religious institution in the county town. Throughout the 16th century management of St. Peter's Abbey Church and Gloucester Cathedral followed the religious stance of the Crown. In 1541, Cromwell replaced the last abbot of St. Peters with the predictably moderate John Wakeman, who seems to have been happy to maintain his position through conformity (Litzenberger 1997:45). Despite an orthodox and unremarkable spell as the abbot of Tewkesbury, Wakeman's will employed some rather ambiguous imagery:

In the name of God Amen The xxxth daye of July in the
thirde yere of the reign of ... Edward VI... I john
Wakeman by the goodnes of god busshop of Gloucester
being in parfytt remembrance fealing and perceving
miche debilitie and weaknes daylie to encrease more and
more in my bodie, knowing my saide bodye to be
subjecte to death and mortalitie and being uncertyne of

the tyme daye and hour thereof willing therefore at all
tymes to be in a readynis do make this my last testament
as hereafter folowithye.. *First I bequeathe my soule to the
mercifull handes of the most glorious Trinitie trusting
stedfastly through the merits of Christes precious bloud
shedding my onelye Redemer to be the partaker of his
eternall kyngdome and glorious fruycion.*

(Baskerville 1930:290, my emphasis in italics)

The reference to the Trinity suggests a Catholic affiliation. However, Wakeman also professes to trust only in Christ to redeem him, a sign of Protestant faith. This document is therefore evidence of Wakeman's pragmatic attitude to religion, suggesting that he was capable of being as Catholic or Protestant as circumstances necessitated. The inevitable consequences of a more dogmatic approach to religious leadership are manifested in the fate of the succeeding Zwinglian Bishop John Hooper. His extremism mirrored that of Edwardian anti-Catholicism, fating him to a Marian bonfire (Foxe 1563 [2004]:258). The traditionalist Brookes ushered a return to Catholicism (Litzenberger 1997:83), while his successor mirrored the conservative pragmatism of Elizabeth's reign (Litzenberger 1997:106).

The commemorative conventions of the mid to late 1500s were purgative, removing elements which were likely to incur the wrath of the Establishment. The *Ars* authors sought to convey enthusiasm for a particular religious position. By contrast, the funerary monuments of Gloucestershire exhibit little tendency towards extremism, favouring quiet conformity and discretion over overt passion. However, funerary iconography was not impoverished in the 1500s. Its form changed in order to match prevailing religious sensibilities and so ensure the survival of the monument. It is, however, prudent to be wary of iconoclastic activity and the possibility that less agreeable public statements might have been subsequently destroyed. Although the monumental evidence suggests that the partisan sentiments of the *Ars* authors were not reflected by the religious inclinations of the majority, a small number of individuals stand out within the historical sources as having being either staunchly traditional or zealously Protestant. Bettey (2003:70) has stated that 16th century Gloucestershire was notable for the presence of a number of individuals who actively supported reform. Among the most notorious families were the Tracys. The Protestant

will of William Tracy, Esq. of Toddington, who died in 1530, states that he would rely on faith rather than monks for his salvation (Stratford 1988:1). It was published and distributed by Protestant reformers in the years following his death. As a consequence his body was subsequently exhumed and burnt (Litzenberger 1998b:30-1):

An esquire of Gloucestershyre called William Tracie by one
Doctour Parker, the byshop of Worcesters chancellour, was taken
out of his graue, and burnte after he had been dead .iii. yeres,
because he sayde in his wyll, he wolde haue no funerall pompe at his
burieng, neither passed vpon Masse, and that he trusted in god
onely, hopyng in hym to be saued, and by no saincte.

(Reprinted in Tyndale 1530 [1850]:272)

William's son Richard played an active role in dismantling the shrine at Hailes Abbey in 1538 (Betty 2003:70). Overall, however, the impermanence of the official line militated against absolute statements of belief in wills or memorials and any other medium which the authors wanted to endure. The fate of William Tracy illustrated the potential consequences of such enduring statements of partisanship.

Litzenberger (1998a:82-83) has noted the tendency of many of Tewkesbury's testators to preserve the format of the traditional soul bequest in their wills during the years of radical Protestantism under Edward, whilst retaining neutrality by not making an absolute statement of belief. This pattern is repeated elsewhere in the county, suggesting an unwillingness to display outright opposition whatever the devotional inclinations of the testator. The decision not to openly state opposition does not necessarily imply that hostility did not exist. Recusant behaviour was recorded in the county in the 1570s. Jane Dennis, Alice Hibbard of Leckhampton and Alice Harwood of Mickleton were all fined for their absences from church (Litzenberger 1998b:139). However, there is an obvious distinction between such fleeting acts of defiance and the permanent rendering of opposition within the public space. The insurgent activities of these women were documented within records which were not of their own making. They do not appear to have rendered public monuments to their beliefs which were likely to be judged by future generations.

Erecting a monument implied a desire for permanence and immortalisation in spite of social change. As Llewellyn (1991:48) has noted, commemorative art was concerned to establish a permanent image of the social body. Most recusants mentioned by Litzenberger, including Jane and the Alices, subsisted below the level of wealth required in order to render a social body and may not have had sufficient social standing to consider this a priority at death (Llewellyn 1991:46). Those without the means or authority to raise monuments could perhaps be freer with their opinions without fear of posthumous reprisal. A monument which referenced a specific religion risked becoming caught in the process of transformation and thus becoming a potential target for hostility. John Walsh of Little Sodbury, friend of William Tyndale and Protestant sympathiser has a monument which suggests a decision to err on the side of caution and does not reflect his beliefs. He is commemorated by a memorial in Chipping Sodbury parish church which is remarkable only for its impartiality (Fig.6.19). Such neutrality decreased the chances that a memorial would provoke destruction, allowing the deceased to retain their dignity and immaculate memory (Llewellyn 1991:47). The more permanent the media, the less overt the statement of hostility. It is thus unsurprising that the majority of names labelled as antagonistic by historians studying the county, including Protestant sympathisers such as Poyntz and Kingston do not appear on surviving monuments. This may be due either to their subsequent destruction or an unwillingness of the individuals in question to make a final statement of religious belief which might jeopardise their reputation and the standing of their family in a volatile religious climate. In either case, there is a clear tendency to prioritise the persistence of worldly reputation over the public declaration of moral and religious sentiment. The lasting reputation of the family was deemed to be more important than the religion of any one individual.

Word, Image and Authority

Aston (1997:168) has referred to the Reformation as an 'erosion of memory', a process whereby the antiquated medieval world of the image was replaced by the authority of the Word. It is true that the mid/late 16th century witnessed the destruction of the paraphernalia of visual piety, evidenced by ruined church crosses such as those at Bradbourne in Derbyshire and Newent in the Forest of Dean (Fig.6.20). However, attitudes to acts of effacement were not as perfunctory as it

would first appear. The feelings of the individuals witnessing and carrying out such acts are easily missed under traditionally blanketing and sequential labels such as traditional, Reformed, Catholic and Protestant. Documentary and archaeological evidence has revealed variations in responses to reform which contradict the apparent homogeneity of the historical narrative. The population of Tewkesbury appears to have swung between the extremes of Catholic and Protestant, always lagging slightly behind official policy (Litzenberger 1998a:88). Bettey (2003:72) notes the case of a priest who in 1536 caused controversy by criticising royal policy in a Tewkesbury alehouse. The concealment of proscribed images was common. For example, a diminutive head and foot of Christ were stowed in the masonry at South Cerney near Cirencester. Lindley's (2003:161-82) attempt to reconstruct the volume of medieval commemoration statuary in Tewkesbury abbey revealed multiple instances of concealment around the church. Correspondences from elsewhere in the country include the buried altar slabs at Royston, South Yorkshire, and Carlton-in-Lindrick, Nottinghamshire (Morris 1989:374). Denison (1998) cites the case of Roger Martin of Long Melford who concealed a triple crucifix in his house 'and the same I hope my heires will repaire, and restore again, one day'.

The idiosyncratic nature of response to religious change which might exist within a relatively small area is revealed through detailed consideration of documented examples of compliance and resistance alongside discovered material testaments to concealment and conformity. To imply that Gloucestershire, or specific locations therein were either traditional or reformed at any one point in time denies this particularity. The capacity of individuals to internalise their religious views whilst outwardly conforming to maintain the social and economic interests of their family should not be underestimated. Marsh (1998:159) has written that people's religious beliefs were not dictated to them by their environment. Personal choice played a part in how much people were willing to accept or reject, and what is seen to be accepted externally on a monument may not reflect the true feelings of the individual. Neither the *Ars* texts nor commemorative monuments can therefore be considered to be accurate indicators of individual religious belief. The *Ars* texts manifest extremities of thought, whereas commemoration reflects acquiescence which was necessary to avoid an extreme reprisal. What was depicted and how it was

shown was dictated by the religious context in which identities were created and displayed.

Conclusion

An analysis of the material culture of Gloucestershire's memorials c.1531 to 1600 reveals that despite changes in the style and religious significance of the monument, a relationship between piety and social status persisted through its reformed iconography and text. It is the conclusion of this chapter that in contrast to the oscillations of the *Ars Moriendi*, the funerary monuments of Gloucestershire suggest a continuity of social purpose through the 16th century which cannot be gleaned from surviving documentary material. Unlike the *Ars Moriendi* texts which have been considered alongside these monuments, the role of commemorative material culture in the statement and perpetuation of an elite identity based on idealised piety was unaffected by religious change. The shape and style of the media and its constituent iconography gradually altered to reflect sanctioned forms of worship, but the essential role of the monument as a statement of the elite self persisted.

The impression conveyed by Gloucestershire's memorials during the turbulent 16th century is of acquiescence and pragmatism in order to ensure the survival of the endurance of the memory of the dead. As was stated at the start of this chapter, commemoration is intended to effect permanence; the less partisan the monument, the more likely its survival. Conforming to religious orthodoxy, or at the least maintaining ambiguity in public, was necessary in order to ensure the survival of the memory of the deceased and so perpetuate its primary social role as a statement of individual identity and the continuance of a lineage. Funerary monuments in the mid to late 16th century retain an emphasis on heraldry and family connections, but were increasingly qualitative and individualistic in comparison with preceding decades. The size and colour of effigies such as that of Thomas Throkmarston and the extensive eulogy of Sybil Clare indicate a desire to individualise achievement and piety within the church space rather than concede deference to collective purgation. Real or apparent godliness was immortalised alongside personal and pietistic achievement framed by heraldic colour. A long line of devout ancestors and progeny was rendered

in stone or written out in order to convey the strength and antiquity of the line. Such intermingling of spiritual and secular power was particularly eye-catching when against the white walls and unadorned bible pages of the reformed church.

The use of memorials to convey the power and dominance of a family to the congregation seems to work in opposition to the didactic messages of the *Ars* texts of Lupset, Becon and Parsons, which affirm the equality of all in death. Becon, Lupset and Parsons do not endow their *moriens* with the trappings of wealth, preferring to leave the dying naked before judgement in a similar manner to their medieval forbearer. However, the 16th century *Ars* and monuments do have elements in common. Both focus upon the individual piety of the deceased and neither relies on the intervention of an invisible higher power for salvation. Accordingly, both emphasise the importance of living well in order to die well. There is no room for posthumous rehabilitation in either case. Commemoration in the 16th century was retrospective, looking back on the lifetime achievements of the deceased and describing the family that they left behind. The *Ars* instructed in how best to live during that lifetime in order to achieve an undisturbed and worry free death. In addition to this, both the *Ars* and the monuments are participants within the same restricted dialogue of educated wealth which helped to perpetuate a worldly division between rich and poor. Both employed similar forms of stylistic expression, such as classical allusions and biblical quotations, requiring literacy and a good education to be fully understood.

The principle correspondence between theory of dying well and the practice of commemorating lies in their mutual participation in the definition of 16th century affluent identity. Both the knowledgeable consumption of the *Ars Moriendi* tracts and an educated understanding of the iconographical scheme of a funerary monument were restricted to small portion of society. Both were elements of an elite culture wherein education perpetuated a divide between rich and poor. The *Ars Moriendi* texts of the 16th century were increasingly florid and philosophical in comparison with their predecessors. Their instructive aspect was ever more buried under metaphor and example, pervaded by the author's partisan religious convictions. The wealthy absorbed and interpreted the tradition in light of other aspects of their lives, using it to determine their own priorities at death and then to display them publicly to



Figure 6.19: A memorial to John Walsh at Chipping Sodbury.



Figure 6.20: A fragment of a 9th century churchyard cross at Newent in the Forest of Dean.

an audience which included the poor. The partisanship of the *Ars* authors demonstrates the extremities of the religious environment in which 16th century commemoration took place. The experiences of Becon and his Protestant patron and the exiled Parsons are illustrations of the hazards of affirming a strong viewpoint publicly in such a difficult climate. An apparently moderate attitude to religion displayed in stone may not therefore imply the true religious identity of the deceased or their family, but a pragmatic compromise which prioritises the survival of the social and political self over a religious persona.

CHAPTER SEVEN

In Hope of Resurrection: Death in the 1600s

Introduction

The preceding chapter established that the social role of commemoration was largely unaffected by religious changes in the 16th century. Memorials remained a medium through which affluent and empowered members of society could articulate aspects of their identities, setting themselves above and apart from the majority. They were the means by which power relations were articulated and the elite self-image was stated and promulgated. Towards the end of the century, commemoration in Gloucestershire became increasingly aesthetic and individualistic. Memorials grew larger and bolder, elevated above the living congregation and thus a physical testament to the social and economic superiority of the deceased, their ancestors and progeny. They empowered the economically and socially privileged by locating them above the masses and directly under God, usurping the place formerly occupied by medieval saints. Affluent material display professing divine sanction thus bound together the socially and economically privileged above and in opposition to a less privileged other.

This chapter will explore the development of the themes of elevation and introversion in the 17th century material culture of death, focusing on the constitution of identities within an increasingly restricted dialogue which carried identity negotiation among the most wealthy out of the public space of the church to private spaces. By the 17th century, the monuments erected in Gloucestershire's churches were beginning to consider the importance of sacred and secular lifetime achievement. Both are presented by the memorials as important aspects of the affluent self. Up to the early 1600s, the context for these associated statements of divine and social distinction was the parish space, framed within the public rites of death in the community and displayed to a congregational audience of varying means. Through the course of the 1600s, inclination towards the elevation and separation of secular achievement, perceivable in the raised and sizeable memorials of the early part of the century, began to reveal itself conceptually in other aspects of the material and social world of the affluent.

This chapter will also consider the separation of a highly literate *Ars Moriendi* and its enduring popular manifestations in the 1600s. This distinction is patent in the differences in the style and content of Jeremy Taylor's Anglican *The Holy Dying* and the many chapbooks and broadsides which survive from this period to the present day. The readership of the latter was probably broad, encompassing individuals from a variety of backgrounds (Watt 1991:261). The literary complexities of *The Holy Dying*, however, align it to a wealthy and educated readership. The following analysis will consider whether the development of the tradition through the 17th century can be seen as another aspect of a manifest trend towards the severance of wealthy and educated identities from those of the rest of the population in the 17th century perceivable through changes in commemoration.

The principal focus herein will be upon how wealthy families used their wealth to effect privatisation and so to exclude the majority, replacing public displays of wealth with private ostentation aimed specifically at members of their own peer group. It is no coincidence that parlour pews and viewing galleries also became popular during this period (Friar 1996:342), such as the Bathurst gallery at Sapperton which was built so that a wealthy local family could get the best view of the service (Fig.7.1). The role of commemoration in the physical and conceptual severance of the elite self from the rest of the parish community will be considered alongside other material manifestations of this trend. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the effects of disconnection upon the treatment of the parish space. The departure of the affluent self from the church space was accompanied by the increasing visibility of other identities previously absent from commemorative material culture. This is evidence of the fact that the negotiation of power through cultural productions can take place at all levels of society and is in this case implicated in the definition of the 'middling sort' as prominent members of the parish community in the later 1600s.

The Literary Context: Piety and Preparation in Life and Death

The Holy Dying

The principal Anglican contribution to the *Ars Moriendi* tradition was published in 1651 by Jeremy Taylor. *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Dying* followed *The Rule and Exercises of Holy Living*, published the previous year, forming a complete guide to the

Christian life cycle. The twinning of these two texts was basic to Taylor's conception of death and dying well; life and death are inextricably linked to each other through pious endeavour and its inevitable rewards. Taylor discounts the extremes of Catholic deathbed repentance and Calvinist predestination, advocating a worthy life spent in pious meditation and conscientious preparation for the end:

A repentance upon our death bed is like washing the corpse; it is cleanly and civil, but makes no change deeper than the skin.

(1651: 93)

Beatty (1970:197) has described Taylor's text as 'a masterpiece', a glorious climax to the *Ars Moriendi* genre. *The Holy Dying* is undoubtedly a much richer and more complex tract than its predecessors, replete with metaphor and simile. However, such an evolutionary approach to the constitution of this format is obstructive, since it devalues the contribution of previous texts in the genre and discounts the influence of the immediate social circumstance on the format of Taylor's work.

Each *Ars Moriendi* text was created and read within a different context, its style and content referencing contemporary politics, religion, literary trends and their interaction with the social and economic background of the author. Taylor uses Classical and scriptural imagery to present death as a gradual dissolution and not the perfunctory ending implied by some of his predecessors (Beatty 1970:217). His language reflects this view, obscuring death with metaphor rather than approaching it directly. Living is a process of dying, yet is best treated as a period of perfection rather than castigation. The reader is encouraged to seize the day and not to plan too far into the future:

This instant will never return again and yet it may be this instant will declare or secure the fortune of a whole eternity. The old Greeks and Romans taught us the prudence of this rule, but Christianity teaches us the religion of it.

(1651: 22)

The image of death presented by Lupset, Becon and Parsons was much more perfunctory than that put forward by Taylor. Their tracts were devoid of metaphor, portraying death with unambiguous finality. Although each believed that the dying would move onto another life, for good or ill, death was still presented as a hazardous time. Hints of

judgement lingered in their deathbed ministrations, endowed with added urgency by their reproachful attitude to repentance at the last. Taylor also considers deathbed repentance to be a futile act. However, as Beaty (1970:239) pointed out, his text does imbue the reader with 'fearful hope' rather than 'hopeful fear'. He does not moralize or scare his audience. He philosophizes with them through the medium of Christian and Stoic thought.

Taylor does retain a link to his predecessors through the established format of his work. The chronological structure of *The Holy Dying* references that of the medieval *Crafte*. The author begins with a consideration of death, followed by its practice, the temptations and the graces of the dying. From the daily contemplation of death to the act of commemoration, the authors' philosophizing is undercut by a practicality which was almost entirely absent from his immediate predecessors. However, Taylor's extensive secular and ecclesiastical education placed limits on who could read and act upon his advice. He assumes a great deal of prior knowledge and a high level of comprehensive skill, indicating that his text was intended specifically for individuals whose education and social status approximated his own.

Circulating alongside *The Holy Dying* were a number of alternative perceptions of Christian death, many of which were comparatively unsophisticated and easier to comprehend than Taylor's exalted tract. The contributions of earlier *Ars Moriendi* authors remained in print alongside *The Holy Dying*. In addition, contemporary chapbooks broadsides such as *The Clarke of Bodnam* presented images of the deathbed which were less intellectually demanding than Taylor's philosophical tract (Fig.7.2). As previously noted, the practice and portrayal of death among the laity rarely followed the instructions of the *Ars Moriendi* to the letter. The differences between these texts are of interest because the degree of accessibility evident may have perpetuated existing social divisions based on the relationship between wealth, comprehension and education. Taylor's complex writing style and profuse use of metaphor divided the wealthy from the poor. However, it also filtered the realities of universal death, distancing the affluent from their own mortality as well as from the squalor of everyday life through the use of cultured metaphor. Taylor draws his examples from nature, comparing the human plight to the expiration of mushrooms and violence of storms:

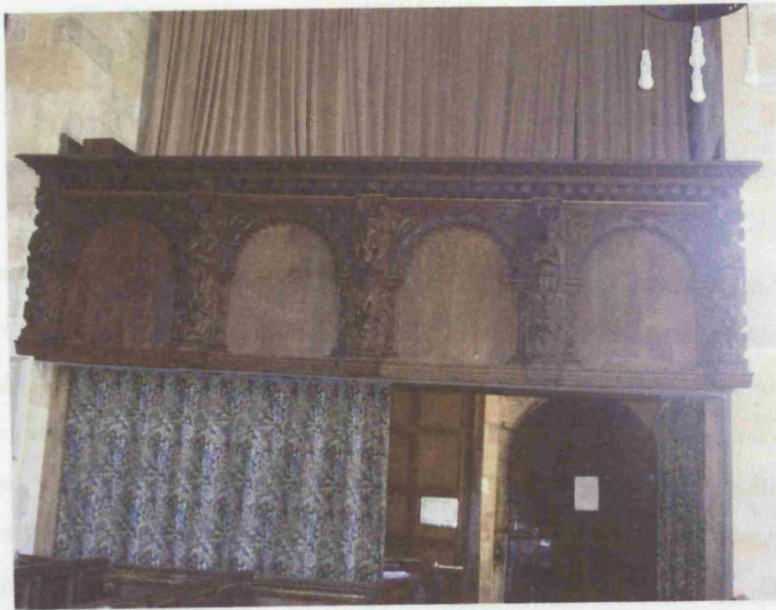


Figure 7.1: An ornately carved gallery at Sapperton church, inserted by the Bathurst family in the early 18th century.

- 4 A very godly Song, intituled, The earnest petition of a
fainfull Christian, being Clarke of *Salmon*, made upon his
Death bed, at the instant of his Trance, 1600.
In a pleasant new tune.

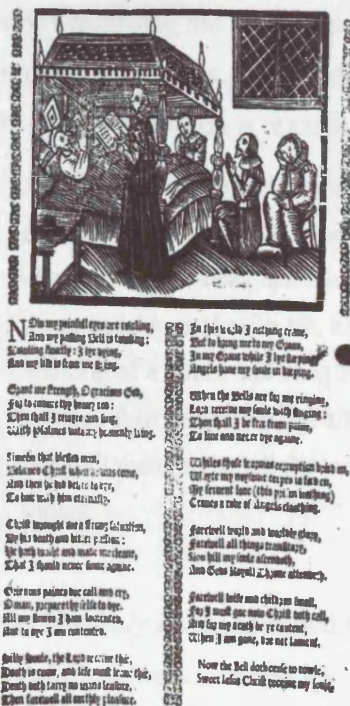


Figure 7.2: The Clarke of Bodham, a 17th century ballad depicting a deathbed scene.

Our virtues are but in the seed when the grace of God comes upon us first;
but this grace must be thrown into broken furrows, and must twice
feel the cold, and twice feel the heat, and be softened with storms and
showers; and then it will arise into fruitfulness and harvests.

(1651:58)

Such imagery was intended to naturalise the act of dying in the mind of the reader, stressing the common fate of all creations. This commonality is belied by the exclusivity of the text. The uncorrupted nature of these naturalistic metaphors and their familiarity and appeal to an educated readership forged a link between education, pious conduct and finding one's place in the world. This organic link between dying well, affluence and education reinforced a created link between devout display and power which had developed from the *Ars* tradition since at least the 15th century.

The sentiments conveyed by Taylor's tract are reminiscent of those of the 14th century De Lisle Psalter, with its proud princes reduced to humble bones by death. Unlike the Psalter, it is not aimed at a named patron, but its format and content suggests that it is aimed at a particular section of society. Those reading it might chose to draw similar conclusions regarding the inconsequentiality of wealth, and thus the futility of challenges to it. Throughout his tract, Taylor affirms his belief in the equality of man under God and in death. Commemoration is regarded as senseless and vain:

And it may happen that to want a monument may best preserve their
memories, while the succeeding ages shall, by their instances, remember the
changes of the world, and the dishonours of death, and the equality of the
dead: and James the Fourth, king of the Scots, obtained an epitaph for
wanting of a tomb; and King Stephen is remembered with a sad story,
because four hundred years after his death his bones were thrown into a river
that evil men might sell the leaden coffin. It is all one in the final event of
things.

(1651:153)

However, *The Holy Dying* affirmed notions of decency and social propriety which perpetuated the same social divides as commemorative monuments and other forms of elite cultural productions. The stoic and scriptural allusions of *The Holy Dying*, like fine clothes, country retreats and landscaped gardens could set rich against poor, separate fit

from unfit and mannered from base. It designated a way of dying which as in life allowed its readership to stress distance and decorum.

Holy Life and Death

The Holy Dying presented a model way of life, passed in constant awareness of the lordship of Christ and the frailty of one's own being:

... and pray perpetually, and be advised prudently, and study the interest of their souls carefully, with diligence, and with fear; and their old age, which, in effect, is nothing but a continual death-bed, dressed with some more order and advantages, may be a state of hope, and labour, and acceptance; through the infinite mercies of God, in Jesus Christ.

(1651:5)

The nature of social life amongst the 17th century elite would have rendered such a degree of pious regard almost impossible. They sought to retain their wealth and position through acts of public and private display which were incompatible with the spiritual purity of Taylor's *moriens*. In spite of the extremities of death which surrounded him in 1665, Samuel Pepys remained ever concerned with building upon his reputation and sampling the base pleasures of 17th century London (Tomalin 2003:xxxviii). The accounts of death which feature in the Diary focus upon the worldly achievements of the deceased, with little concern for their piety or the manner of their passing. Samuel's description of reactions to the death of Sir William Crompton in 1663 suggests that this attitude was not atypical:

I find the sober men of the Court troubled for him; and yet not so as to hinder or lessen their mirth, talking, laughing, and eating, drinking, and doing every thing else, just as if there was no such thing, which is as good an instance for me hereafter to judge of death .. all die alike, no more matter being made of the death of one than another, and that even to die well, the praise of it is not considerable in the world.

(1663 [2003]:163)

Pepys clearly did not think it important to consider the inevitability of death on a daily basis, other than as a reason to enjoy life all the more for its transience. Immediate acceptance by one's social peers was of greater importance than acknowledging the collective fate of humanity.

Data Analysis

Early Modern Commemoration in Gloucestershire: Numbers and Types

Houlbrooke (1998:344) has identified three main developments in the history of commemoration from the 15th to the 18th century. These are the increasing importance of commemoration of lives as distinct from encouraging intercession, a shift in emphasis from the visual representation of the dead to the epitaph and the gradual downward diffusion of the practice of erecting monuments. By the later 1500s, Gloucestershire's memorials no longer appear to be active in the solicitation of prayers. All of the monuments erected in the 1600s are reformed in their style and content. The liturgy of Protestantism had encouraged the development of new monument types in the early 17th century, depicting the deceased alive and sitting, standing or recumbent at prayer. Commemorative forms showed much variety up to the 1640s. Erect monuments are more numerous in the early 1600s. There are five different types recorded in the first decade. There are six ledger stones, one brass tablet, one kneeling effigy, two recumbent effigies and an early churchyard table tomb.

Llewellyn (2000:95) has noted that these immediate post-Reformation monuments were often highly decorated and coloured with 'busy' surfaces. Houlbrooke's suggestion of a shift in emphasis to texts over imagery is also borne out by the sample towards the end of the 17th century. As the century progressed, prominent memorials became fewer as effigies were superseded by text-based forms such as brass plaques, stone wall monuments and ledger slabs. The final decade features only text based memorials. As the following analysis will demonstrate, this trend was related to Houlbrooke's suggestion of a downward diffusion of commemoration. Changes in monument types are indicative of the presence of new identities in the commemorative material culture of the church with different social and economic priorities which are reflected in their choice of monument.

Effigies

Through the first three quarters of the 17th century diversification was most marked among the monumental effigies. Popular forms included reclining and kneeling effigies, as well as the more traditional recumbent form. Busts and standing effigies appear in the sample during the 1650s and 1660s, though in smaller numbers than their early 17th century counterparts. Finch (2000:134) noted a similar pattern in Norfolk and suggested

that this implies uncertainty with regard to what was acceptable and what was considered idolatrous in the aftermath of the 16th century. Recumbent effigies, a customarily medieval form, still made up a proportion of the sample in the early 1600s. There are nine examples dating to the first half of the 17th century, all of which lie in prayer, as did their medieval forbearers. For example, the effigies of Henry and Elizabeth Berkeley (c.1613) lie recumbent and pious on an altar (Fig.7.3). There is a crucial difference between these nine memorials and their medieval ancestors. All of the early 17th century examples are depicted alive, with eyes open and staring up. Despite their seemingly traditional form, these memorials were related to other vital postures which became popular in the 1600s. With hands clasped in prayer, monuments such as that of Thomas and Praxeta Escourt at Shipton Moyne reflect a Protestant emphasis on piety in life (Fig.7.4).

Finch (2000:135) has suggested that the new monumental forms were intimately connected to the liturgical changes of the last 60 years. The dominance of the kneeling effigy in the first few decades of the 17th century supports this view. A dead individual awaiting resurrection, the only form used during the middle ages, could only be recumbent. Of the 100 which survive from period between 1601 and 1639, 68 are raised from the floor and 37 of those are effigies and just under half of those are kneeling, frequently in front of prayer desks or books (Chart 7.1, 7.2). The effigies are depicted as in life. They are retrospective, suggesting the past piety of the deceased rather than their posthumous desire for indulgence. The events of the 16th century had a liberating effect upon monumental sculpture since they allowed for a greater variety of poses. However, this freedom was mediated by a fear of idolatry. Kneeling effigies were stiff and not lifelike, nor are they life-sized. Depicting people in life rather than death did encourage a greater variety of postures, but care was been taken to ensure that the religious convictions of the deceased were not misinterpreted.

Kneeling effigies did occur prior to the 17th century. These were of a more patently devotional character and a distinction can be made between these and later examples. The effigy of Edward Despenser at Tewkesbury Abbey (c.1400) kneels above his chantry chapel (Fig.7.5). A brass to William Lawdner at Northleach depicts him kneeling at prayer below a now lost image of the Virgin (Fig.7.6). However, both images are



Figure 7.3: Henry and Elizabeth Berkeley in the Berkeley Family Chapel at St. Mary the Virgin. Access to the memorials was restricted so the effigies are photographed from behind glass.



Figure 7.4: The effigies of Thomas and Praxeta Escourt at Shipton Moyne, dating to c.1624.

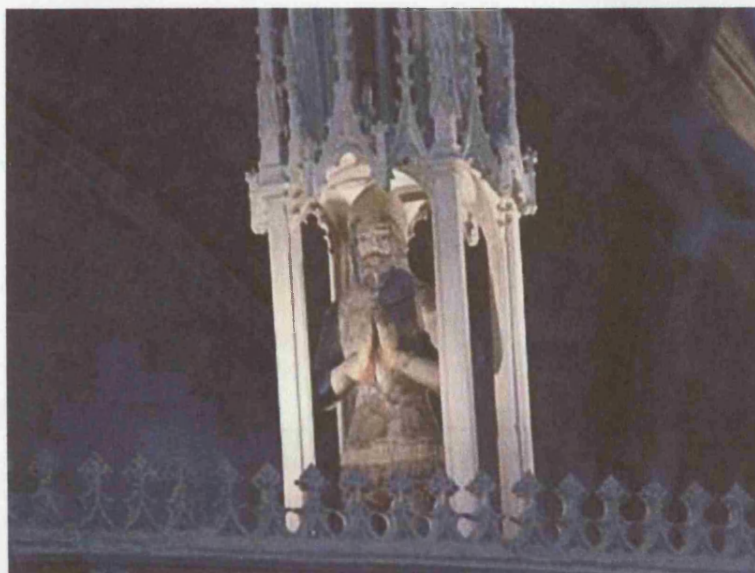


Figure 7.5: The medieval Kneeling Knight at Tewkesbury Abbey, situated high above the High Altar.



Figure 7.6: A brass to William Lawdner at Northleach, c. 1510.

(Image: The Monumental Brass Society 2002)

Chart 7.1: A chart showing the number of monuments surviving on Gloucestershire c.1600-1699.

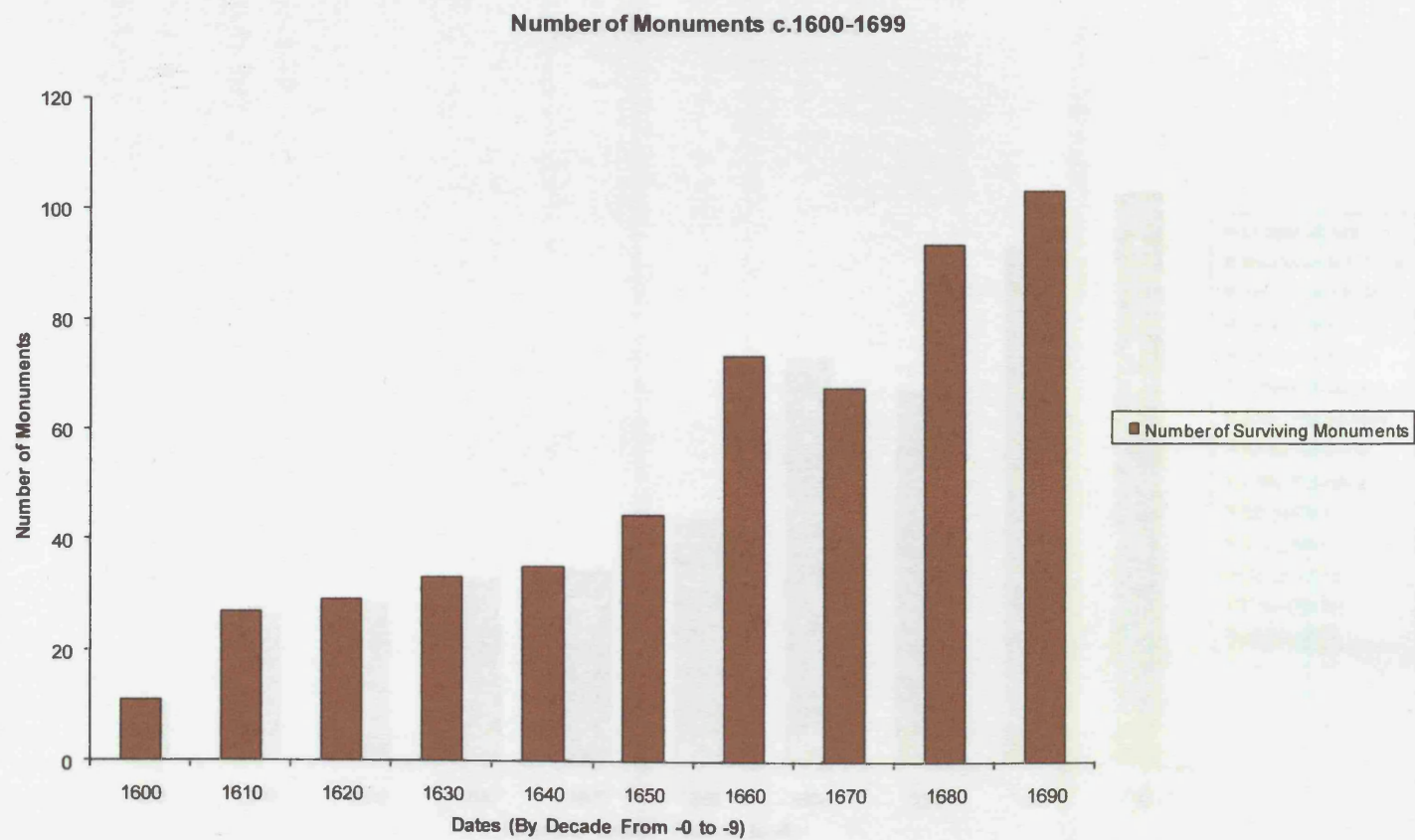
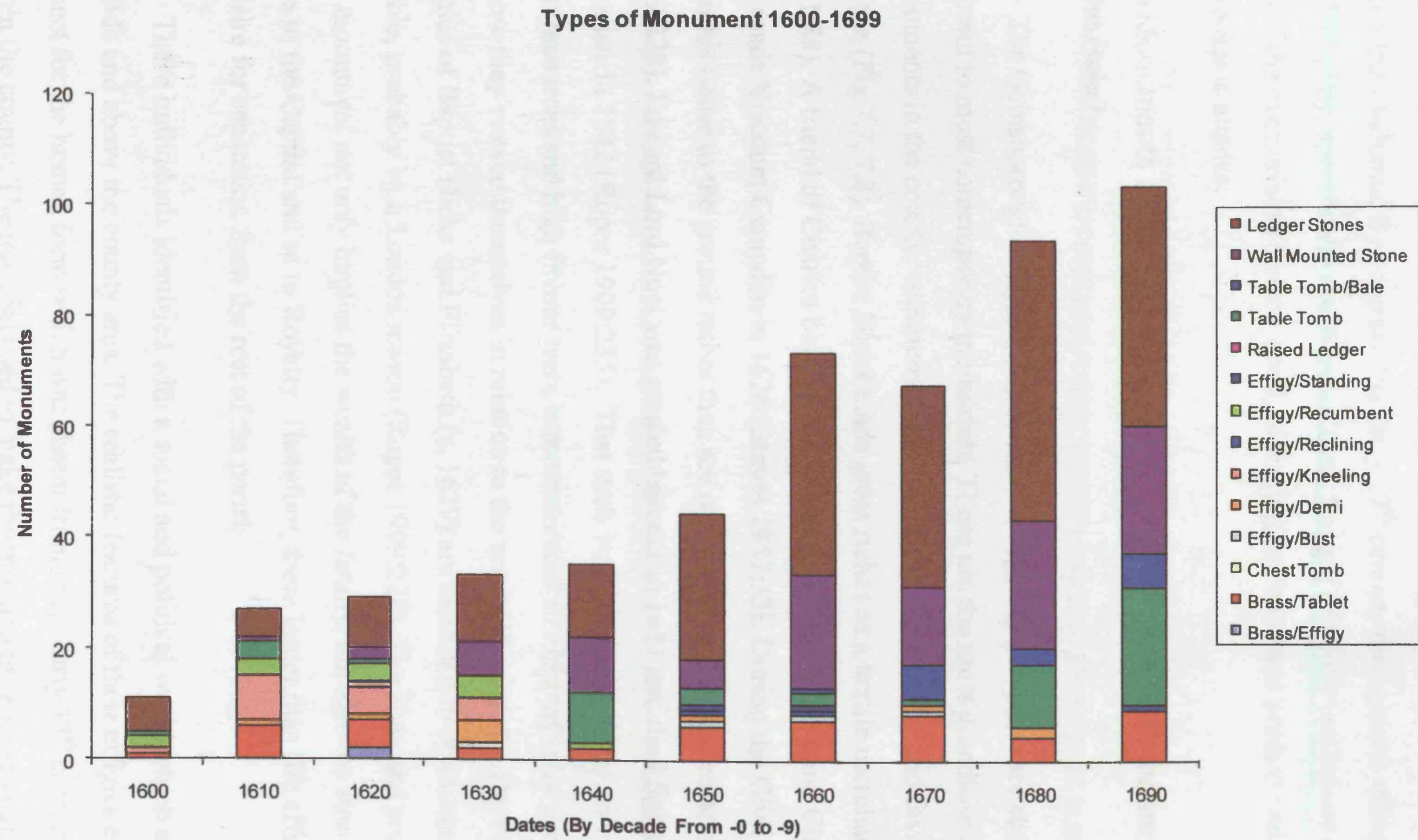


Chart 7.2: Types of monument surviving in the county c. 1600-1699.



eminently reverential. Despenser is raised midway between the earthly and the Divine, perhaps in reference to his penitent soul. Scrolls of prayer trail from Lawdner around the Madonna. By contrast, the early 17th century monuments reflect upon tangible piety, specifically the Word of God. Images of books and prayer desks ground the memorial in the corporeal, affirming its Protestant context and proscribing iconoclastic attacks.

The Monuments of the Gainsborough Chapel, Chipping Campden: Exceptions to the Rule?

The Gainsborough Chapel monuments at Chipping Campden are starkly different to most contemporary memorials. These are the most grandiose and lifelike monuments in the county, commemorating an extremely wealthy and favoured lineage (Fig.7.7, 7.8). Baptist Hicks made great riches as a textile merchant (Simpson 1931:88). A friend of Charles I and financial agent for both James and Charles, he was made Viscount Campden in 1628 (Mayes 1957:33). During the Civil War he burnt his house to the ground rather than see it captured by Parliamentarians (Roper 1909:228). Edward Lord Noel was created baronet in 1611 and died fighting for the Royalists in 1642 (Roper 1909:235). That such individuals of strong convictions, great resources and high favour were commemorated so extravagantly is an indication of how they viewed themselves in relation to the rest of the county. The recumbent effigies of Baptist Hicks and Elizabeth (c. 1629) are executed in black and white marble, probably by a London mason (Roper 1909:228). The style and provenance of this monument not only implies the wealth of the family, but also the strength of their links to the Capital and so to Royalty. Therefore, these larger than life effigies suggest a desire for separation from the rest of the parish.

These individuals identified with a social and political world which existed outside and above the county area. The realistic features of their effigies exhibit a respect for the human form which was absent from other early 17th century memorials within the county. The material used to make the monuments also separates them



Figure 7.7: The effigies of Baptist Hicks and wife, rendered in marble in the Gainsborough Chapel, Chipping Campden.



Figure 7.8: View from the Gainsborough Chapel into the nave. The chapel is raised, requiring a substantial step down to the church floor.

from their surroundings. The stark contrast of the black and white marble against the local limestone suggests that the memorials were intended to stand out from rather than blend in with their devout and communal setting. Set in a raised chapel, they suggest that the departed and their families regarded themselves as socially and economically elevated from their surroundings. There is one contemporary monument of comparable stateliness to that of the Campdens in the county, that of Abraham Blackleeche in Gloucester Cathedral (c.1639) (Fig.7.9). The origin of Blackleeche's monument is uncertain. Hartshorne (1902:141) suggests it was executed by Nicholas Stone or another prominent mason from outside of Gloucestershire. Blackleeche's desire to be connected with a social sphere beyond the county is affirmed by an inscription which details bequests in both London and Gloucester:

To the happy memorie of Abraham Blackleeche Gent, a sonne
of William Blackleeche Esq. A man not onely generally loved
in his life but deservedly endeared to posteritie by rare
example of seldome attained piety expressed in his bounty to
St. Paule's in London, to this Church, to the high wayes about
and the poore in this citie, who laying aside the vilenesse of
mortalitie was admitted to the glory of eternitie November
30th 1639.

(Transcribed from Blazeby and Blazeby 1904:320)

For the majority of 17th century gentlemen, the county was the principle arena of display. Johnson (1989:64) has suggested that an atmosphere of suspicion and alienation prevailed in early 17th century England. Neither James I nor Charles I cultivated close links with the wealthy gentry who had been so pivotal to the amelioration of Tudor administration. Stuart favour fell upon a small number of attractive and generous individuals, such as Baptist Hicks, Sir John Wynter and Endymion Porter (Johnson 1989:67). Hicks's effigies are superior in size and investment to other contemporary memorials, reflecting the magnitude of his wealth and strength of his connection to Court. The number of monuments surviving in Gloucestershire jumps from five in the first decade of the 17th century to around 20 per decade for the next 40 years, perhaps conveying an increased emphasis upon regional display and upon affirming one's identity locally. Bureaucrats who had bonded through the assertion and maintenance of county interests on the national

stage could affirm their connections to each other and to Gloucestershire through the deployment of comparable funerary media. These individuals solidified their collective interests in the county by investing in lavish displays of wealth and piety, such as the Monox tomb in Cirencester (c.1638) (Fig.7.10) and that of Henry Poole at Sapperton (c.1616) (Fig.7.11). A similar degree of solidarity is attested historically in their resistance to royal encroachment into county financial matters. The prioritisation of county interests over country was evident in 1627, when the Privy Council ordered the 'rotting up' of English grown tobacco in Gloucestershire, Worcestershire and Wiltshire (Saloutos 1946: 53), and in 1639 wherein the council complained of prolonged arrears in the payment of ship money (Herbert 1988:89).

Effigies in the Later 17th Century

Williamson (1995:8-9) has noted that in the early 17th century Charles I attempted to extend the powers of central government into the counties and in doing so conflicted with the local gentry jealous of their own local influence. The majority of effigies erected in the later 17th century are evidence of the domination of the families commemorated over local life. There are four full sized examples postdating 1640. Of these, three were erected by individuals whose residences had an intimate physical relationship with church buildings. John Dutton's effigy (c.1656) stands in the north aisle of a church in the grounds of his estate at Sherborne (Fig.7.12). Thomas Master (d.1661) owned land around the church of St. John the Baptist in Cirencester (Fig.7.13), while Edward Lord Noel and Lady Juliana (c.1662) inherited land at Chipping Campden from Baptist Hicks (Fig.7.14). In the case of the Hicks and Duttons, the areas of the church where their monuments are situated resemble private mausoleums. This impression is reinforced by the close link between Dutton's effigy and the house. The only other late 17th century effigy in the sample is a degraded effigy at Oddington (Fig.7.15), seemingly unique within the county, as it is in a churchyard and seems to have been there since its erection. As with the majority of 17th century church monuments, it is not overtly striking, lacking the prominence and fine workmanship of its intramural counterparts. Bigland (1786 [1992]:293) records an inscription which attributes it to Margaret Parsons, the wife of a rector who died in 1695.



Figure 7.9: A monument to Abraham Blacklee at Gloucester Cathedral.



Figure 7.10: The Monox memorial at Gloucester Cathedral.



Figure 7.11: A monument to Henry Poole, dominating the north transept at Sapperton.



Figure 7.12: A rendering of John Dutton at Sherborne. The style of this monument references a famous effigy erected to John Donne in London which was copied from a portrait of the poet in a shroud.

Wall Mounted Stones

There were 104 stone wall monuments recorded by this study. These less intrusive forms of commemoration were divorced from ceremonial activities within the church, raised up on walls away from the congregation. The majority were not large or bold enough to draw the eyes of parishioners, seemingly designed for purposeful study rather than catching the eye from a distance. In St. Mary de Crypt church at Gloucester, the wall monuments in the Nave are situated roughly at eye level, five to six feet off the ground. However, the positioning of the monuments varied considerably between and within churches. For example, at Avening there are a group of memorials in the south transept which commemorate the Driver family (Fig.7.16). They date from the 1630s to the 1680s and so cover a large proportion of the 17th century. These memorials are so high up the wall that a step ladder is required to reach them. Bigland records them in this position in 1786 and it is likely that this was their original situation. These monuments were unlikely to have been approached and read by anyone who did not have a specific interest in the family. They needed to be purposefully examined, probably from the top rung of a ladder. This seems to suggest that the lives of the dead as written on these memorials were not considered important to the education and salvation of the community, being solely of interest to those who had known the deceased personally.

The size of the memorials has a bearing upon how likely people are to see them and how easy they are to read from a distance. Shapes and sizes vary considerably throughout Gloucestershire in the 17th century. There is no clear progression from one type of memorial to another. The type of wall monument erected seems to have been a matter of personal preference and financial resources. For example, a memorial to William Nicolson, Bishop of Gloucester between 1660 and 1672 at Gloucester Cathedral is lavishly decorated in comparison to that of pastor John Lewes at the little church of Kempsey in the Forest of Dean (Fig 7.17, 7.18). Both were erected in the same decade but by men of very different economic means and are evidence that people simply bought what they could afford rather than what was customary or in vogue. Both have very small writing and Nicholson's memorial is written in Latin. This further suggests that neither were intended to be read by the majority of visitors to the church and were instead placed on the wall in accordance with the wishes of the deceased or their family.



Figure 7.13: Thomas Master, in languid pose at Cirencester.



Figure 7.14: The effigies of Lord Edward and Lady Juliana Noel, standing resurrected in an open marble tomb in the Gainsborough Chapel at Chipping Campden.



Figure 7.15: Margaret Parson's weathered likeness at Oddington.

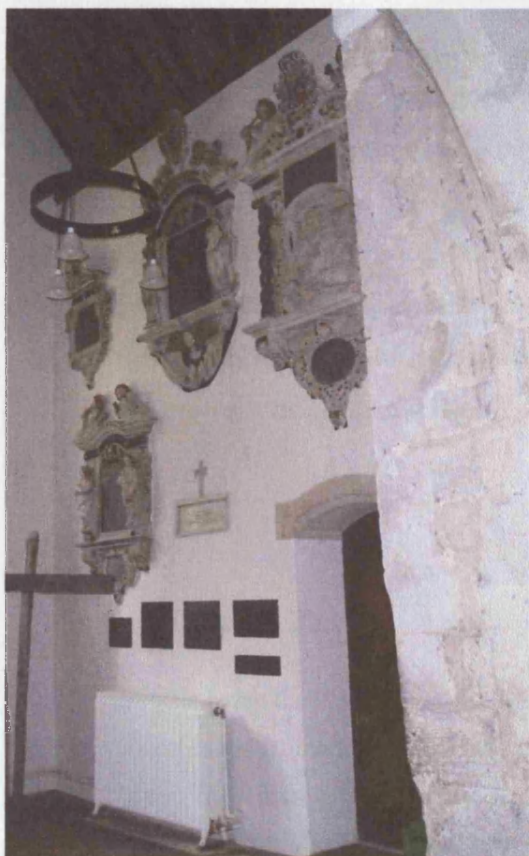


Figure 7.16: The Driver memorials in the south transept at Avening.

Status labels are noted on 30% of wall monuments (Table 7.1, 7.2). Of these, the most numerous is 'Gent' or 'Gentleman', with 12 references. Most 17th century commentators and present day historians define gentry as all non-noble landowners with a claim to exercise lordship or jurisdiction (Heal and Holmes 1994:7). In his preface to the work *Titles of Honour*, John Selden describes the title as follows:

Gentrie, or the same in another word, *Civill Nobility*, is, by which, as the first degree above the Multitude, an honoring distinction is made, either by *acquisition* from the Prince (everie Prince or State, having generall Power to make Lawes in their Territorie, may ennoble) or by *Discent* from Noble Ancestors. Or indeed you may not amisse comprehend *hereditarie Nobilitie* in that first kind, because a Gentleman, by birth, is not only so in regard of his Ancestors.

(1614:viii)

Heal and Holmes (1994:7) suggest that even those who did not own land, such as lawyers and academics, might claim to be gentry. Despite these ambiguities, the other status labels present on wall monuments suggest that the majority of individuals erecting these memorials were of reasonably high social status, including 11 knights and five esquires. Only 17 memorials record an occupation, 12 of which are ecclesiastical and would perhaps be expected to be located in the church. This suggests that the lay members of society choosing intramural commemoration either did not have professions or did not regard working as an important component of their identities.

Ledger Stones

In his 2001 study, Finch noted that:

Despite being the most numerous form of monument in most churches today, the ledger slab has escaped any form of serious study. The ledger slabs' apparent lack of artistic merit and, indeed, their enormous number seem to have made them uninteresting to archaeologists and art historians alike.

(2000:79)



Figure 7.17: A monument to William Nicolson, Bishop of Gloucester, at Gloucester Cathedral.



Figure 7.18: A memorial to John Lewes at Kempley in the Forest of Dean.

Ledger stones are an important part of the history of commemoration in Gloucestershire c.1600-1699. Bigland (1786 [1992]), who spent his adult life recording all instances of commemoration in Gloucestershire, records them in most churches. The possibility of such a large number was problematic considering the finite time scale available for their study. Owing to the large numbers involved, ledgers were noted only for the churches visited in the course of recording erect memorials. However, the number of monuments noted here and by Bigland does provide an insight into the dominance of this commemorative form towards the end of the 17th century and its implications for the changing role of commemoration in the church space.

The recording of these monuments presented some particular difficulties. A large number of them were degraded, defaced or inaccessible. This was more of an issue with this type of monument than with any other recorded, as they had been trampled or covered with furniture and other items over hundreds of years. In 1991 Jane Fawcett completed an ICOMOS survey of surviving ledgers and estimated that one third of the original stones had been destroyed, leaving around 165,000 in Britain (Fawcett 2001:31). Whole churches in Gloucestershire have been re-floored, as in the case of St. John the Baptist in Cirencester, or have fitted carpets as at Dursley. However, most of the damage to the sample appears to have occurred in the last two hundred years or so. Bigland's detailed survey was used as a reference to assist with inaccessible, degraded or missing stones to give some idea of the number extant in the 18th and early 19th century. However, throughout his study he too mentions instances of loss or damage to the stones, which could only have worsened over the last 200 years (Fig. 7.19, 7.20).

Bigland records approximately 560 such monuments surviving from the period c.1600-1699. He does not record memorials in Gloucester, which have as far as is possible been included in this study. Around 240 surviving ledgers were noted in Gloucestershire by this study (Chart 7.3). This is by necessity an approximate number. Most contained many names and dates of death inscribed at different times. The date of death is therefore only an approximation of the date of commemoration. Only stones with a characteristic capitalised script can be definitively dated to before

Table 7.1: Status labels noted on stone wall monuments c.1600-1699.

STATUS LABEL	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650	1660	1670	1680	1690	TOTAL
Gentleman				1	2		3	1	3	2	12
Knight			2	2	1		3		2	1	11
Esquire		1		1	.		1	2			5
Sheriff								1		1	2
Member of Parliament							1				1
TOTAL	0	1	2	4	3	0	8	4	5	4	31
% OF TOTAL FOR DECADE	0	100%	100%	67%	30%	0	40%	29%	22%	18%	30%

Table 7.2: Occupations noted on stone wall monuments c.1600-1699.

DATE (BY DECADE FROM -0 TO -9)											
OCCUPATION	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650	1660	1670	1680	1690	TOTAL
Ecclesiastical					1	1		2	2	2	8
Practitioner of Law							1		1		2
Carver					1						1
Alderman							1				1
Lord Chief Justice								1			1
Practitioner of Surgery								1			1
Servant (erected by employer)									1		1
Sergeant at Law								1			1
Overseer of Lord's Lands							1				1
TOTAL	0	0	0	0	2	1	3	5	4	2	17
% OF TOTAL FOR DECADE	0	0	0	0	20%	20%	15%	30%	36%	9%	17%

1700. According to Bigland, 13 people per year were commemorated by this means in the churches studied by 1700. These monuments were largely devoid of iconography, featuring only the names of the deceased, their place of residence and date of death. This study noted 38 examples featuring heraldry, less than 10% of the total number of stones. As regards other iconographic and textual information of interest, there are fewer examples still. There were less than ten allusions to resurrection and mortality in total. A singular iconographic image of a cadaver, found at Gloucester Cathedral, may not even be contemporary with the stone on which it is etched. It would therefore appear that these monuments were not erected to display pious qualities possessed by the deceased to an audience in the church as the erect monuments considered by this enquiry seem to have been. Therefore, in order to avoid distorting the patterns shown in the erect memorials, ledgers are represented separately on graphs depicting total monument numbers where they do not include material pertinent to the graph.

These monuments feature a small number of references to rank and occupation which give an indication of the type of people who chose them. These are difficult to read on most stones now, but noted by Bigland (Table 7.1, 7.2). The date of death noted for those individuals might not match the year the memorial was laid down, but is the only indication available of the occupations of those remembered in this way.



Figure 7.19: Some ledger stones under modern debris behind the organ at St. Mary de Crypt in Gloucester.



Figure 7.20: A badly degraded ledger in the Cloisters at Gloucester Cathedral.

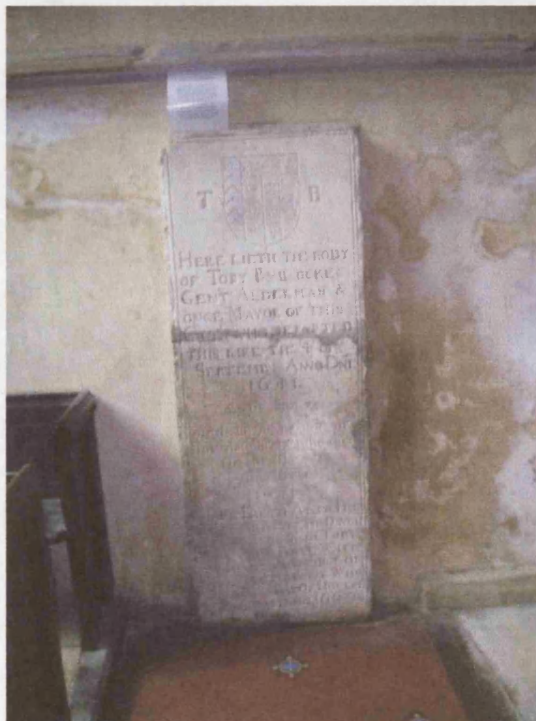
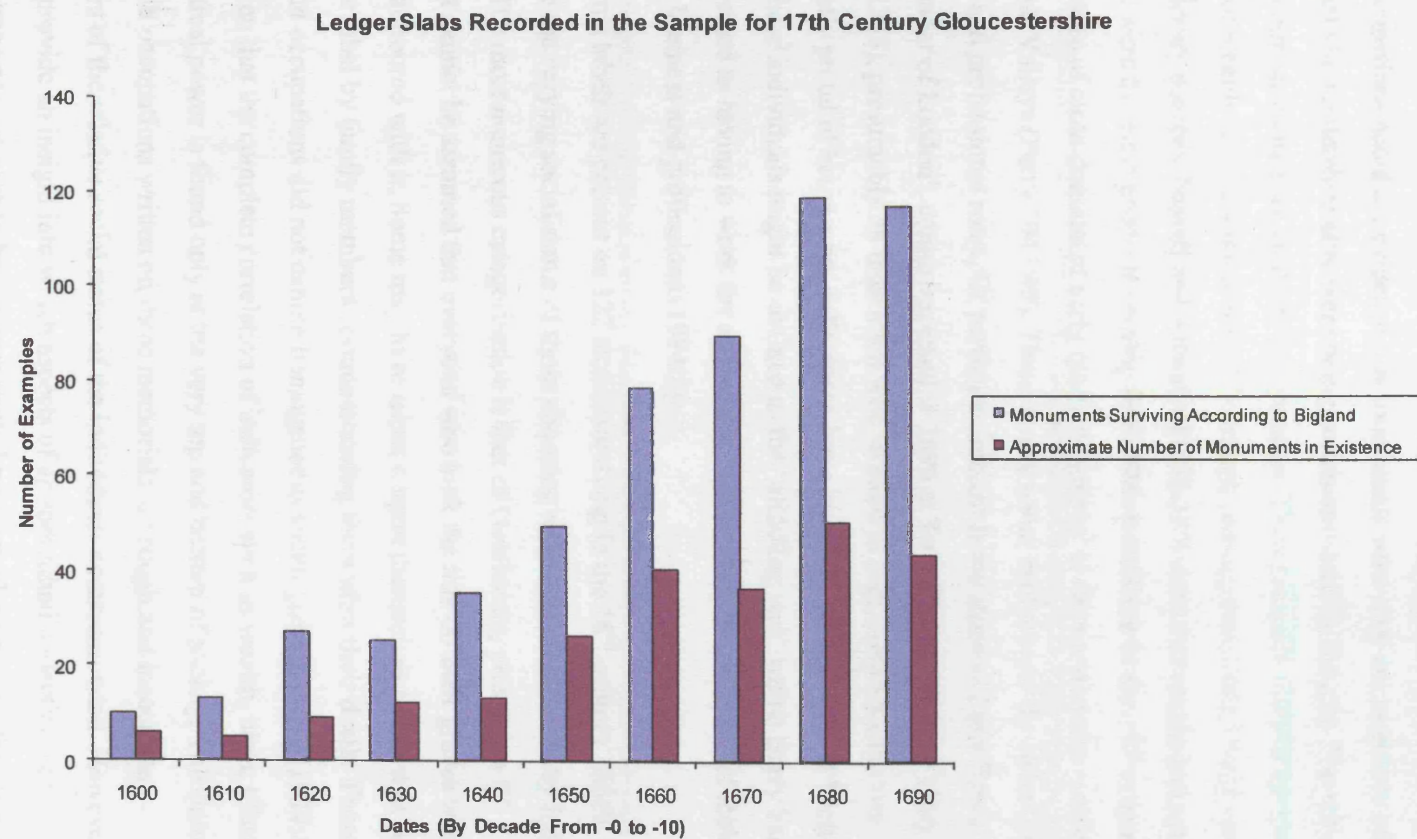


Figure 7.21: A ledger in the south aisle at St. Nicolas in Gloucester dating to c.1641. This is one of a minority to carry imagery.

Chart 7.3: Numbers of ledger stones recorded in churches by this study and by Bigland in the 19th century.



The most numerous occupations to be listed on ledger stones are ecclesiastical. The other occupations noted are evidence that individuals who were not members of the traditional Gloucestershire elite were being commemorated by ledgers. The majority of laymen commemorated are clothiers and yeomen. Their presence reflects the main sources of wealth in the county in the 17th century, farming and cloth. Using various contemporary sources, Fussell and Attwater (1933:385) state that textile and agricultural products were the main products coming from Gloucestershire in the 17th century. The manufacture of cloth dominated early modern industry in Gloucestershire, particularly in the Stroud Valleys (Perry 1945:49). There is also some evidence of the recording of artesian and professional roles. Of particular interest is the stone of Peter Read, a 'citizen and plumber of London', commemorated in 1699 at Toddington (Bigland 1786 [1992]:1333), presumably an individual who worked in lead. Ralph Keane was sufficiently proud of being a tax collector to have it written on his stone at Wotton in 1699. These individuals might be defined as the 'middling sort' which Barry has characterized as having to work for an income, trading with the products of their hands, skills in business and professions (1994:2).

Status labels are present on 122 stones surviving in the 18th century which evidence the varying social status of those choosing to be commemorated by ledger stones. The most numerous categorisation is that of Gentleman, present on 87 stones. It cannot be assumed that everyone who took the title on their graves was born or honoured with it. Some may have taken it upon themselves to use it or been given the label by family members commemorating them after their death. These labels and occupations did not denote homogeneous social groups. Barry (1994:17) has written that the complete correlation of indicators such as wealth, birth, lifestyle and political power is found only at the very top and bottom of society. The status labels and occupations written on these memorials are rough and inaccurate indicators of the relative social status of the individuals commemorated. However, they do provide an insight into which aspects of an individual's identity were deemed important enough to be commemorated by themselves or their families, conveying how they saw themselves in relation to their social context and how they wished to be seen by future generations.

Table 7.3: Occupations noted on ledgers by Bigland c.1600-1699, by decade of death recorded.

OCCUPATION	DATE (BY DECADE FROM -0 TO -9)										TOTAL
	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650	1660	1670	1680	1690	
Ecclesiastical	1	1	4	2	3	3	6	8	7	3	38
Clothiers	1				1	2		2	4	2	12
Yeomen							1	2	1	2	6
Merchants				1						1	2
Mercers					1		1				2
Clarks			1								1
Apothecaries					1						1
Aldermen								1			1
Mayors						1					1
Tax Collectors										1	1
Plumbers										1	1
TOTAL	2	1	5	3	6	6	8	13	12	10	66
% OF TOTAL FOR DECADE	20%	8%	19%	12%	17%	12%	10%	15%	10%	9%	12%

Table 7.4: Status labels noted on ledgers by Bigland c.1600-1699, by decade of death recorded.

STATUS LABEL	DATE (BY DECADE FROM -0 TO -9)										TOTAL
	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650	1660	1670	1680	1690	
Gentleman		2	3	3	3	3	15	13	25	20	87
Esquire		1	4	1	5	3	2	3	8	2	29
Knight							1		2		3
Baronet					1				1		2
General					1						1
TOTAL	0	3	7	4	10	6	18	16	36	22	122
% OF TOTAL FOR DECADE	0	23%	26%	16%	28%	12%	23%	18%	31%	18%	20%

Further insight into the social priorities of these individuals is provided by the form and positioning of the ledgers. They were situated underfoot and out of the line of sight of people visiting the church. Reading the slab required effort as it had to be looked down upon. There was little imagery, no colour and so less chance that it would attract the attention of the parishioner in the same way a colourful effigy might do. For example, a group of limestone ledgers in front of the altar at Newland would have been barely visible, even allowing for their subsequent degradation (Fig.7.22). This might suggest that the slabs were laid down not to display and perpetuate aspects of an identity to the rest of the parish or to solidify and perpetuate the social situation of a family. Their situation suggests a more individualised, private motive, perhaps as a remembrance for family and friends. Often the stones are grouped together as families, as is the case with the related ledgers of the Clifford and Clutterbuck families at Frampton-on-Severn. These are arranged in the manner of a familial burial plot in the church, reinforcing the impression that these stones were placed with thought to the family rather than the parish as a whole.

Extramural Commemoration

Extramural monuments are rare in the aftermath of the Reformation. Gloucestershire is one of a handful of regions with examples of churchyard memorials prior to the 18th century (Mytum 2006:97) Gloucestershire's churchyard memorials have degraded a great deal since the 17th century. As Elliot (1977:69) has noted, dating these tombs is very difficult. Tombs can predate or postdate the earliest inscription depending on when the family decided to erect it. As with ledger stones, table tombs often commemorated several members of the same family and so had many dates inscribed on them. They were erected in family groups, often so close together that the inscriptions could not be read. They are made from local limestone, which is easily dissolved by rain and inscriptions on the monuments have been badly affected. Elliot recommends that the memorials are assigned to a period rather than given a specific date (1977:70). In order to read and date the churchyard memorials Bigland's (1786 [1992]) text was used, as a hundred or so years has made a great deal of difference to the quality of the inscriptions. He neglected to record examples at Broadwell, Little Rissington and Quenington. Therefore, for these memorials and to back up the dating of the sample as a whole, some stylistic dating was necessary.

The thinner and plainer memorials generally belong to the earlier part of the century and as the years progressed they become increasingly decorated and elaborate. The problems which might be encountered during recording are illustrated by the disparity between the number of table and bale tombs noted by this study and the number which Bigland records as having a 17th century date. This study noted 52 surviving table tombs and 16 bale tombs. Bale tombs can be distinguished from table tombs by their corded 'bale', which sits on top. It has been suggested that this is associated with the textile industry in Gloucestershire (Taylor 2003:1), although not all of those commemorated in this way were direct participants in the industry. Bigland does not separate these from table tombs, noting 138 individuals commemorated with a 17th century date of death. The disparity between these numbers illustrates why it is important to use both the inscriptions and stylistic dating in order to give an accurate date.

Table tombs first appear in the sample recorded by this study in 1601, burgeoning in the mid/late 17th century. Of the 34 which are noted by Bigland as giving a profession, 15 are associated with cloth and nine are farmers (Table 7.3). As with ledgers, these monuments reflect the economic base of Gloucestershire in the 17th and 18th centuries. The number of professions detailed is twice what it is on the ledgers, with the greatest numbers clustered in Berkeley, Dursley, Haresfield, Painswick and Wotton-under-Edge. Mytum (2006:97) has observed that it is rare to find a number of early monuments in one place. Interestingly, these towns had prospered greatly through cloth and so might have had a more prosperous middling sort than other areas of Gloucestershire. There are also a number of other professions commemorated, such as that of Thomas Pierce of Berkeley, mayor and clockmaker (d.1665) (Fig.7.23). Individuals commemorated in the churchyard seem to have been less inclined to use status labels than their intramural counterparts. Only 10% noted by Bigland feature any such statement and of these almost three quarters are gentlemen (Table 7.3). Therefore, occupation seems to have been considered a more important aspect of social identity for those commemorated in the churchyard than a status label.

Unlike ledger stones, 17th century churchyard memorials seem to have been designed to impress their presence upon a wide audience. The single instance of effigies at prayer surviving in the late 17th century comes from a churchyard memorial. A bale tomb in the churchyard at Broadwell features four crude figures kneeling piously which may symbolise family members and were clearly intended to be noticed by passers-by.

Further evidence of the importance of display in the churchyard is provided by the Phillimore tombs at Cam. They are grouped together along the path before the south door (Fig.7.24). Their number and bulk is a testament to the standing of this dynasty of clothiers within the community, observable to anyone walking into the church. The erection of churchyard memorials in the 17th century therefore attests to the continuing use of the church for definition of identity through status affirmation, taken up by those previously unable to afford a memorial or concerned to erect one. Social status was certainly a concern for the less wealthy, as attested by Gough's *History of Myddle* (1700 [1981]), which he chose to preface with the parish church seating plan presenting the community in rank order. It is probable that this concern for status was present throughout the 17th century, rather than ensuing in imitation of the affluent. However, it is only in the late 17th century that this concern was made manifest in the parish churchyard.

Allusions to Piety

There are 148 different references to piety surviving on Gloucestershire's memorials. As in previous centuries, allusions to piety on 17th century erect memorials take three forms. These are defined here as textual, hands at prayer and other iconographical images. Textual allusions are the most frequently featured type of reference. They make up 92 out of the 148 examples recorded. Iconographic references, such as cherubim and angels feature 31 times, whilst instances of hands at prayer are the least numerous at 25 out of 148 references.

Text

Considering the increasing popularity of wall monuments and table tombs through the 17th century, it is perhaps not surprising that textual allusions to piety are the most numerous type of reference on memorials. They are at their least numerous in the first four decades of the 17th century when the sample is dominated by effigies and ledgers. Of the 100 memorials surviving, 37 are effigies and 32 are ledgers. There are only nine textual allusions surviving from this time as the effigies feature few textual allusions and the wording on the ledgers does not include any references. The incidence of textual allusions increases in the 1640s. All five pious references from this decade are textual and all are wall mounted stones. These are austere examples, with no religious references beyond the text. For example, Jane Baker's (d.1646) memorial at Thornbury lacks in

Table 7.5: Occupations noted on churchyard memorials by Bigland. Decade given is that in which the individual with the named occupation died.

DATE (BY DECADE FROM -0 TO -9)											
OCCUPATION	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650	1660	1670	1680	1690	TOTAL
Ecclesiastical	1	1	4	2	3	3	6	8	7	3	38
Clothiers	1				1	2		2	4	2	12
Yeomen							1	2	1	2	6
Merchants				1						1	2
Mercers					1		1				2
Clarks			1								1
Apothecaries					1						1
Aldermen								1			1
Mayors						1					1
Tax Collectors										1	1
Plumbers										1	1
TOTAL	2	1	5	3	6	6	8	13	12	10	66
% OF TOTAL FOR DECADE	20%	8%	19%	12%	17%	12%	10%	15%	10%	9%	12%

Table 7.6: Status labels noted on churchyard memorials by Bigland. Decade given is that in which the individual with the named label died.

DATE (BY DECADE FROM -0 TO -9)											
STATUS LABEL	1600	1610	1620	1630	1640	1650	1660	1670	1680	1690	TOTAL
Gentleman		2	3	3	3	3	15	13	25	20	87
Esquire		1	4	1	5	3	2	3	8	2	29
Knight							1		2		3
Baronet					1				1		2
General					1						1
TOTAL	0	3	7	4	10	6	18	16	36	22	122
% OF TOTAL FOR DECADE	0	23%	26%	16%	28%	12%	23%	18%	31%	18%	20%



Figure 7.22: Limestone ledger slabs in front of the altar rails at Newland.



Figure 7.23: An inscription to Thomas Peirce in the churchyard at Berkeley.



Figure 7.24: The table tombs of the Phillimore family, clustered along the path to the south door at St. Georges, Cam.

overt religious iconography. Its dense eulogistic epitaph is situated between two columns and bordered by lozenges and fleur-de-lys (Fig.7.25). The lack of explicit visual piety may suggest some anxiety regarding images, perhaps connected to the threat of iconoclasm. The number of pious allusions spikes in the 1660s, rising from 33% to 50%. This could suggest renewed confidence in the security of the church space in the later 17th century. Inscriptions remained the preferred method of professing piety up to 1700. However, post-Restoration phraseology can be fluid and engaging:

Under this stone interr'd doth lie
 The mirrour of true charitie
 To God, his Friends & Country dear
 The poores Supporter farr & near
 His days hee Spent in peace and Quiet
 He never gave himselfe to riot
 A Vertue Strange in those his days
 When it was Scorn'd & Vice had praise
 He lived long and did survive

Chart 7.4: A chart illustrating the number of references to piety which persist on Gloucestershire's memorials c.1600-1699. There are no surviving allusions to piety on ledgers. In order to avoid distorting patterns shown in the sample of erect memorials, these are divided from the total number of monuments.

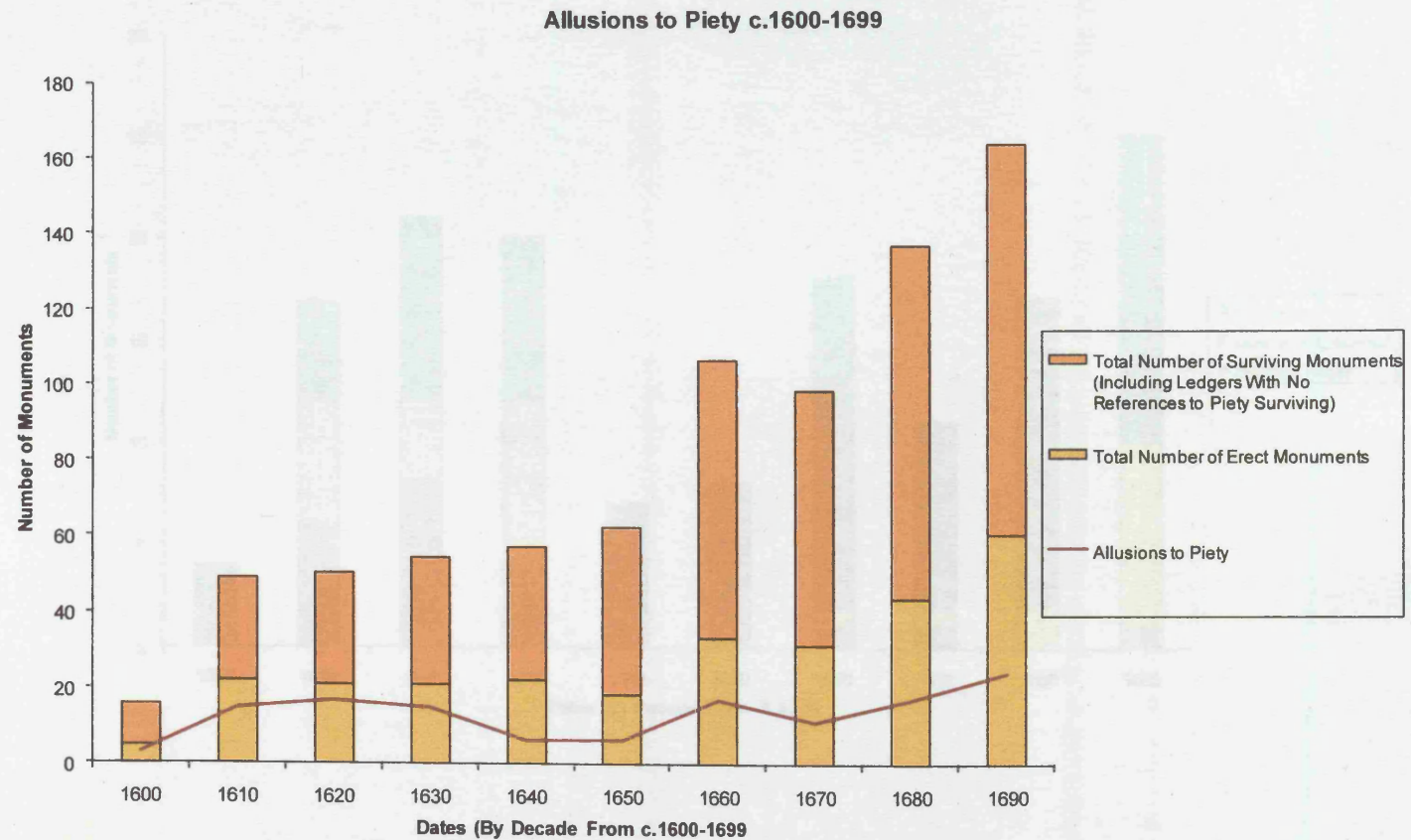


Chart 7.5: A chart illustrating the format of references to piety on memorials c.1600-1699

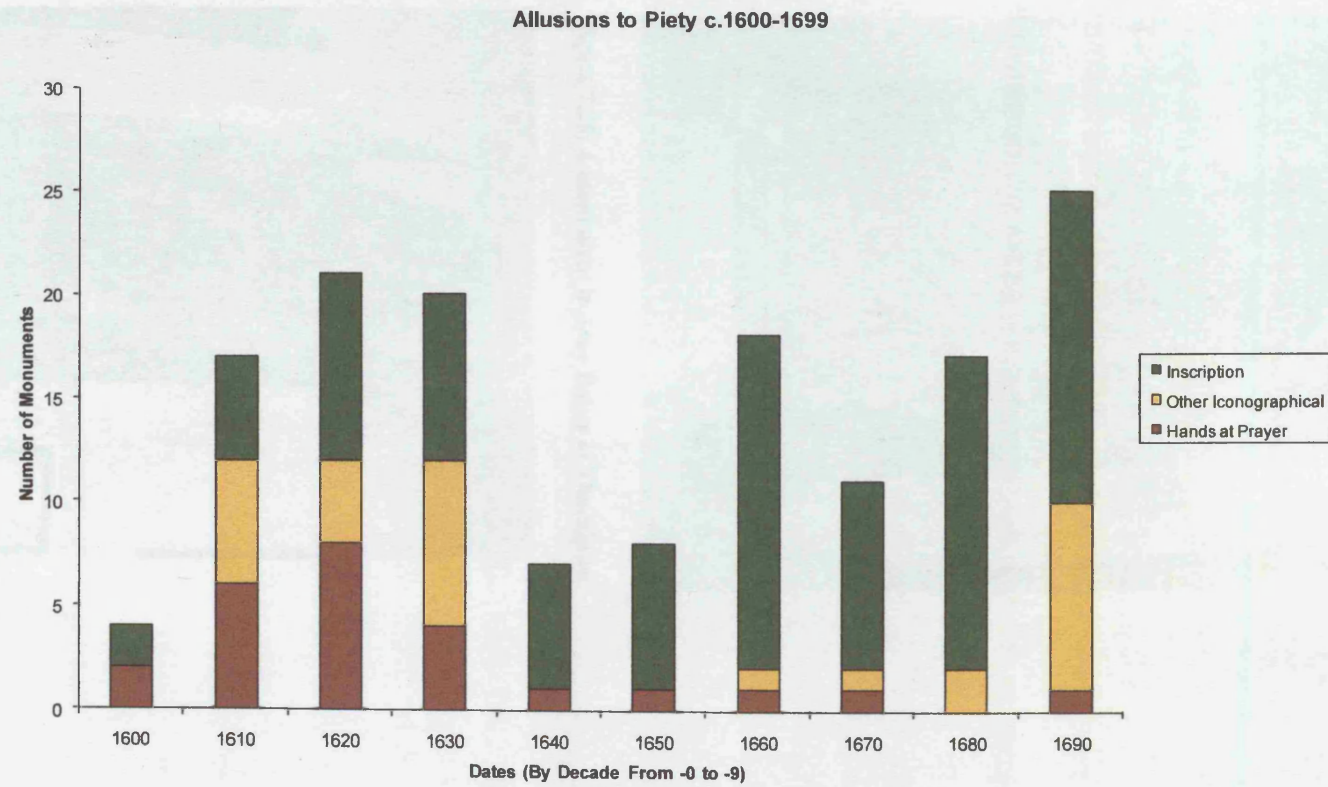




Figure 7.25: A monument to Jane Baker at Thornbury.



Figure 7.26: Thomas Stephens (d.1613), kneeling at a prayer desk in Stroud.

Fully the years of Seventy Five
And at y last expir'd his date
April the 5th 1668
Christopher Bond

This memorial was erected in Newland for an individual who had witnessed a succession of religious and political crises still ongoing in the late 17th century. Its tone is predictably pensive in retrospect.

Hands at prayer and Other Forms of Pious Iconography

The presence of hands in an attitude of prayer in the sample is dependant upon the continuing popularity of effigies in Gloucestershire. As such, their florescence was between 1600 and 1649, becoming less common thereafter. From the 1650s onwards, only one effigy survives per decade on average. Other forms of pious iconography on memorials are also coincident with effigies in the first half of the century. The most common forms of pious allusion on early 17th century Protestant memorials are prayer desks and books set about an effigy. For example, a memorial to Thomas Stephens, who died in 1613, shows him kneeling at a prayer desk, a typical example of reformed imagery advocating meditation on the Word of God (Fig.7.26). Protestant pious imagery suggests those aspects of devotion which could be seen and touched. Unsurprisingly given the potential for misinterpretation, naturalistic images of angels and cherubs are largely avoided.

The incidence of pious iconography drops off in the mid 17th century, which might indicate changes in attitudes and status among those likely to erect a monument during the Civil War and immediately after. There is a dramatic increase in the 1690s. These allusions are present on the 22 wall mounted stones, 22 table tombs and six bale tombs recorded in the sample. Books remain popular, featuring on eight memorials. However, celestial images were also beginning to be depicted, featuring on three memorials in the 1690s. A good example is provided by a stone from Leckhampton, dating to approximately 1692 (Fig.7.27). It features a winged angelic figure at the base and perhaps suggests that four decades on from the Civil War people were less nervous about choosing images with otherworldly implications which might be interpreted as Catholic.

The most overt allusions to piety in the later 1600s feature on churchyard memorials, epitomised by what Hilary Lee's refers to in her 2000 book as 'flamboyant'

table tombs, found close to the Severn. At Standish, there is a marked contrast between the earlier monument of Samuel Beard (d.1655) (Fig.7.28), with its plain capitalized script, and the elaborateness of some of the later memorials (Fig.7.29). Elliot (1977:85) has noted that the western table tombs of Gloucestershire are particularly heavy on symbolism in comparison to their eastern counterparts. He attributes this to the number of wealthy clients living in the region, suggesting that table tombs were popular among clothiers. His study found flamboyant memorials in areas with a past association with the wool trade, as did this study. None were recorded in the Forest of Dean, which drew most of its income in the 17th century from timber and mining.

All of the flamboyant examples might have been produced by a single workshop, which would explain their limited geographical spread (Elliot 1977:85). This would make sense considering that all of them were produced in a small space of time towards the end of the 17th century and beginning of the 18th. Stylistically, the figures on different tombs are also very close. Together with images of mortality, allegorical renderings of piety in the churchyard suggest an appreciation for striking external commemoration by individuals of lesser means. The angels rendered on the early 18th century monuments, such as the Knowles tomb at Elmore, were capable of drawing the eye from some distance away (Fig.7.30). Their flamboyance and individuality is suggestive of the economic means of the deceased and the prominent position which they held in the community. These memorials were imposing in size and appearance. Substantial memorials were a sensible choice given the extremes of the British climate. This added to the impressive nature of the monuments and allowed for greater space for expression.

Taylor's *Ars Moriendi* and Piety in 17th Century Commemoration

Contrasting with statements of piety on 17th century commemorative material culture, the text of the *Ars Moriendi* retains a principled distance from the definition of social and economic status. Taylor emphasises the daily observance of Christ as Lord and the importance of self judgment. The Anglican message of Taylor's tract denigrates worldly concerns. The author was continuing a tradition of admonishment which began with the medieval *Tractatus*. Comfort and reassurance are to be sought in the contemplation of Christ and the consolation which this imparted is emphasized over the horrors of judgment. Taylor's vision of judgment has more in common with the medieval *Crafte* than with Parsons, Becon and Lupset. A consideration of Christ on the



Figure 7.27: An angel displayed on a 17th century memorial at Leckhampton.



Figure 7.28: An early table tomb commemorating Samuel Beard at Standish.



Figure 7.29: A 'flamboyant' table tomb at Standish, featuring images of Death and Time.



Figure 7.30: The early 18th century Knowles tomb at Elmore, one of the best examples of the 'Flamboyant' table tomb.

cross aids the process of self-examination, yet also reminds the reader of the folly of physical comfort:

The deathbed of a voluptuous man upbraids his little and cozening
prosperities and exacts pains made sharper by the passing from soft
beds, and a softer mind.

(1651:32)

Taylor prioritizes spiritual consolation over sensual comfort, using the example of Christ to emphasize the fact that the two states cannot coincide. On a superficial level, this is mirrored in the stiff postures of early 17th century kneeling effigies, such as those of William and Elizabeth Childe at Blockley (c.1633) (Fig.7.31) and John and Anthony Hungerford at Down Ampney (c.1634) (Fig.7.32). They kneel uncomfortably at prayer, seemingly sacrificing worldly luxury for divine consolation. However, this message is undermined by the sumptuousness of the surrounding frame, with its Corinthian columns, Classical nudes and contradictory affirmation of mortal resources.

Some commentators, such as John Weever, regarded commemoration as a natural compulsion of the wealthy:

Noble men, Princes, and Kings had (as it befitteth them, and as some of
them haue at this day) their Tombes or Sepulchres raised aloft aboue
ground, to note the excellencie of their state and dignitie; and withall,
their personages delineated, carued, and embost, at the full length and
bignesse...

(1631:10)

Taylor accepts that post-mortem rites are an indispensable element of the practice of dying. However, he makes it clear that all forms of ceremony which follow death are for the benefit of the living. Mourning and funerals are of no consequence to the dead:

.. none of this concerns the dead in real or effective purposes, nor is it
with care to be provided for themselves, but it is the duty of the living.

(1651: 153)

Mourning is not afforded any purpose in religion within *The Holy Dying*, implying that the remembrance of the dead in thoughts and prayers can in no way alter their



Figure 7.31: The Childes, raised on the north wall at Blockley.



Figure 7.32: The Hungerford Memorial at Down Ampney.

posthumous fate. However, Taylor does not consider mourning to be a negative activity. It is a secular rite aimed at consoling the bereaved rather than assisting the deceased who 'cannot at all discourse of anything' (1651:337). No consideration is given to the ongoing importance of the physical memory of the deceased within the church. However, both *Ars* text and funerary monument emphasise the importance of the 'honour' of the dead.

Taylor writes:

That we performe their will the lawes oblige us, and will see to it;
but that we do all those parts of personall duty which our dead left
unperformed, and to which the lawes do not oblige us, is an act of
great charity, and perfect kindnesse: and it may redound to the
advantage of our friends also, that their debts be payed even beyond
the Inventory of their moveables. Besides this, let us right their
causes, and assert their honour.

(1651:334)

The erection of a memorial which preserves the name and deeds of the deceased, affords them dignity and respect and so preserves their honour (Fig.7.33). Taylor's description of what the preservation of honour might entail is vague and so might easily be interpreted as advocating commemoration by a reader.

The format of the post-mortem observances detailed in *The Holy Dying* is pervaded by an emphasis upon dignity in death. In his contribution to Jupp and Gittings' (1999) volume *Death in England*, Houlbrooke considers a concern for comeliness, fitness, avoidance of excess and vulgarity to be important in the 17th century death ritual as they upheld dignity and propriety (1999:174). He starts his so-called 'Age of Decency' at the Restoration, associated with a quietening of religious and political upheaval following the end of the Civil War. Taylor's text carries the idea back by a decade. The body is to be veiled in order to hide 'the dishonours wrought by the changes of death' from 'impertinent persons' (1651:339). The dignity of the deceased might be further compromised by ostentatious displays of ceremony and sorrow. Taylor is scornful of such conceits. The word vanity itself recurs 21 times in *The Holy Dying*:

... but kings and princes, great generals and consuls, rich men and
mighty, as they have the biggest business and the biggest charge, and are
answerable to God for the greatest accounts, so they have the biggest

trouble, that the uneasiness of their appendage may divide the good and evil of the world, making the poor man's fortune as eligible as the greatest; and also restraining the vanity of man's spirit, which a great fortune is apt to swell from a vapour to a bubble; but God in mercy hath mingles wormwood with their wine, and so restrained the drunkenness and follies of prosperity.

(1651:26)

His disdain for excess emphasizes the fact that *The Holy Dying* was intended for a wealthy audience which was in danger of succumbing to immoderation.

The ability to achieve a certain level of 'decency' was only possible for those with the resources to cushion themselves from the discomforts of exertion. Falling just before the turn of the 17th century, Lady Katherine Berkeley's funeral procession to her burial place in Coventry is a good example of the degree of ostentation which could surround death in the late 16th and early 17th centuries. John Smyth describes a letter written at the time:

First went six of your principall yeomen called the conductors of the traine in longe black clokes, with black staves in their hands, directed to conduct the traine all the length of the street, to the Barre gates, and thence to crosse cheeping.. through the northside of Trinity churchyard to the west door of St. Michaels, 1000s of people looking on, 6 conductors in mourning gowns, 70 poor women, 30 gentlemen servants, Followed by the servants of gentlemen and esquires in black clokes.. the train passed in slow steps and frequent pauses to the church.

(1618 [1883-7]:388)

Describing the death of Henry Lord Berkeley in 1613, Smyth affirms that he had 'a comfortable memory of a well led life' (1618 [1883-7]:406) and so faced death without fear. However, his admirable end was followed by lavish rites as his body toured from Berkeley Castle to Campden and Tetbury before being interred at Berkeley (1618 [1883-7]:408). In choosing to extend his discussion of death to an idealisation of posthumous rites, Taylor rendered explicit a clash between dying well and dying wealthy which had been in evidence for over 200 years previously. The sumptuousness of funerary observances among the wealthy probably would not have met with his approval.

However, the same ideals of decency in death are patent in his text, at the funeral and on the monument. Each was made to serve a different purpose, but their style and content are based upon principles of dignity and respect.

Taylor's motives in writing *The Holy Living* and *The Holy Dying* were not completely objective. As a representative of the Church of England, he had a vested interest in the reaffirmation of ministerial authority at the deathbed. There are signs within his text that he sought to reaffirm sacramental elements of Christian death which were extinguished in the later 16th century. He uses words such as 'remedie' and 'cure' to describe the role of the minister as a spiritual physician. The priest is called a physician of souls" (Taylor 1651: 283). Despite the alleged unimportance of deathbed deliverance against piety in life, the author's choice of wording suggests that he believes that a minister might heal the spiritual ailments of the dying. Reacting against the Calvinist ideal of the 'priesthood of all believers' (Beatty 1970:127), Taylor establishes the minister, and thus himself, as the key arbitrator of death. This objective becomes palpable towards the end of the tract, which becomes increasingly dogmatic concomitant with the increasing intervention of the priest as *moriens* expires. *The Holy Dying* may be intrinsically a work of art, but it was also a product of the diminished position of the Church in the 17th century, as well as perceived threats from alternative doctrines such as Calvinism and Catholicism. Seen within its particular context of creation, it is unsurprising that the spiritual endeavours of the author are tainted by a desire to advance the diminished position of the church in the everyday lives of its readership.

Death and the Family

The number of monuments displaying allusions to lineage in the 1600s was substantial with 197 examples noted in the sample. Those erect monuments which do not feature familial references were mainly small memorials, such as brass tablets, which did not have space for much information. Ledger slabs also have few overt allusions to lineage. Arms are depicted on only 38 of the total number, which backs up the suggestion that these memorials were intended as a familial remembrance rather than for general display. References to ancestry and progeny on monuments can be divided into three types. These are heraldic, where arms are featured, figurative, when a family member is depicted and textual, when a lineage is described.

For the first three decades of the 17th century, allusions to lineage on all memorials average at 46%. On erect memorials they seem to rise and fall along with the overall number of monuments which survive from each decade (Chart 7.6, 7.7, 7.8). They average at 74% on these memorials for this period, which implies that some reference to the family was integral to this form of monumental display. This drops to 35% during the 1640s and 1650s, accompanied by a slight dip in the overall number of surviving memorials during the time of the Civil War, rising to 60% for the following three decades. The fact that the number of allusions to lineage did not rise above 70% after the war might be due to the types of monuments which were being erected towards the end of the 17th century and the social status of those responsible for them. Smaller monuments on the walls, floors and in the churchyard did not lend themselves to figurative sculpture. Less wealthy families lacking an illustrious lineage may not have chosen to display their familial connections on a memorial, perhaps regarding them as less important to their perceptions of their place in the world. Allusions to lineage are only present on 16% of ledger stones surviving from the 17th century. This again alludes to the fact that these memorials were not intended to display an identity to a wide audience in the same manner as their upright counterparts. The majority of individuals erecting such memorials either did not come from an esteemed lineage or did not see this as an important part of their identities.

The most striking late 17th century allusions to lineage are predictably those of the wealthiest families, a minority of whom continued to erect monumental effigies past the middle of the century. John Dutton's standing effigy, dating to c.1661, features a particularly distinguished lineage. The inscription on the left of the memorial read as follows:

On the left:

His first wife was Elizabeth Daughter of Henry Bainton of Brumham in Wiltshire by whom he had 1 son who dyed young and three daughters wherof two only survived. Elizabeth married to George Codr Esq. & Lucy married to Thomas Pope Earl of Downe she deceased in ye 42 years of her age Ao Dm 1648.

On the right:

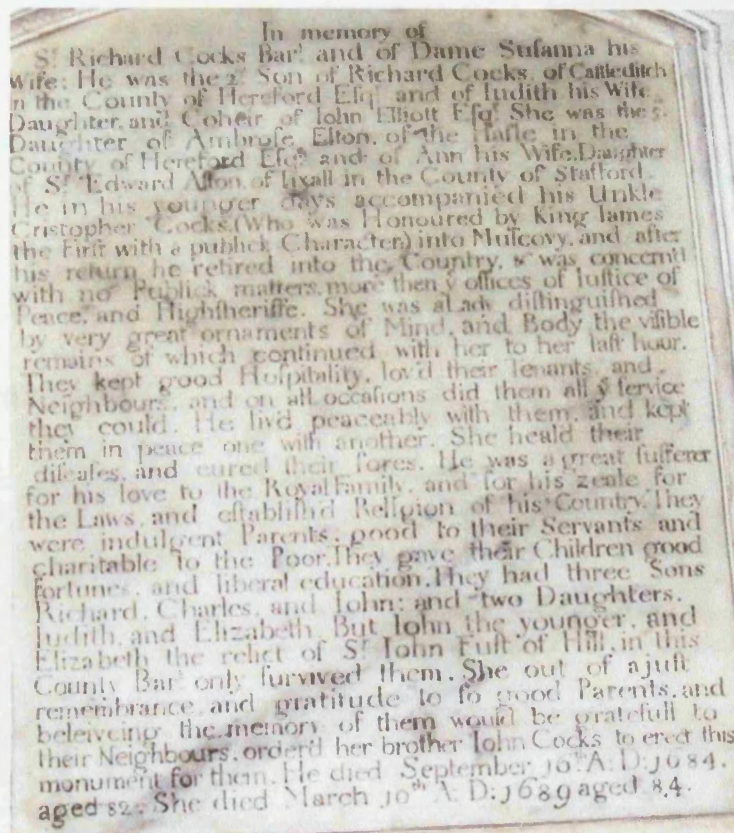


Figure 7.33: A lengthy inscription detailing the deeds and virtues of Richard Cox and his wife at Dumbleton.



Figure 7.34: The church of St. Mary Magdalene at Sherborne, joined to the Sherborne Estate and so to the interests of the family.

Chart 7.6: Number of Allusions to Lineage on erect monuments c.1600-1699. In order to avoid distorting patterns shown in this sample, references on ledgers are depicted overleaf.

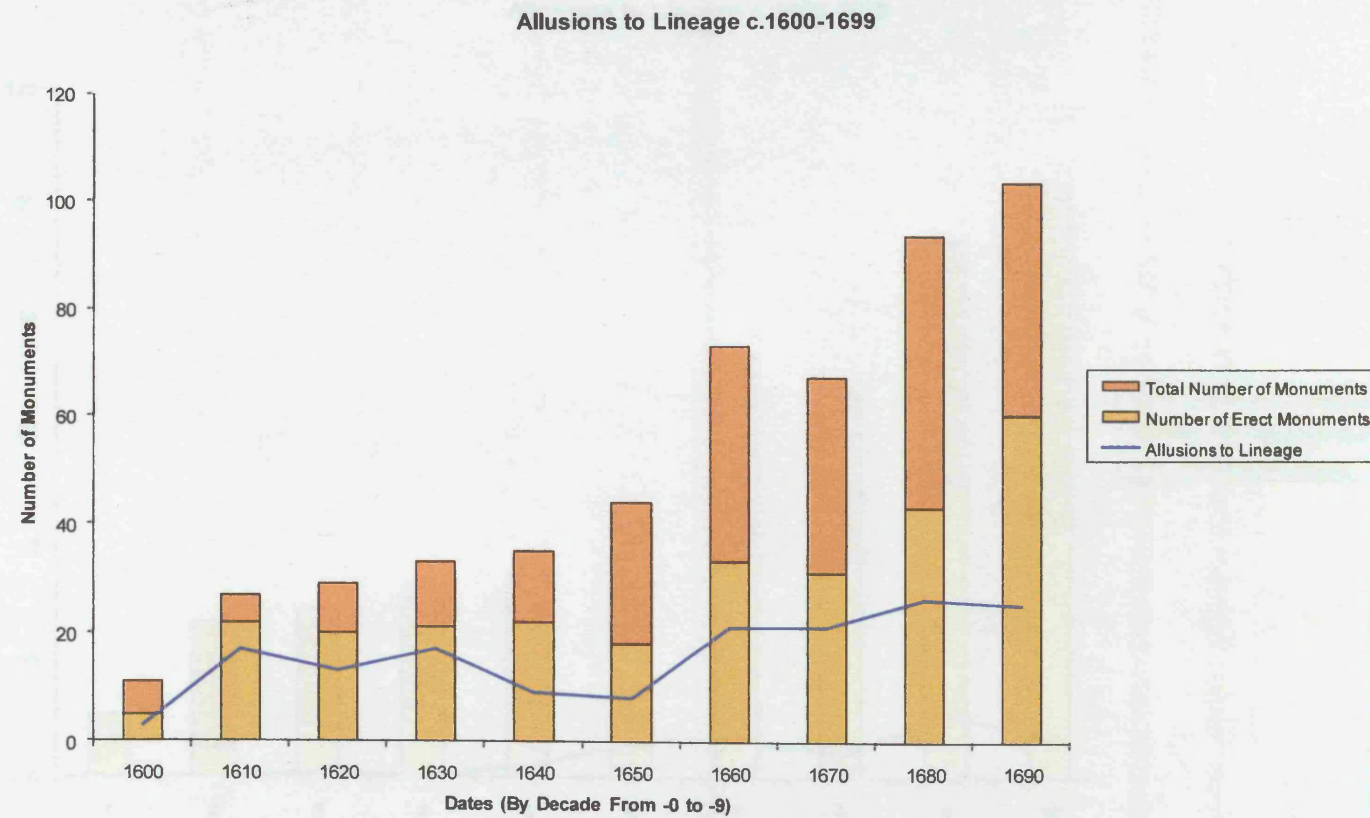


Chart 7.7: Number of Allusions to Lineage on Ledger Stones c.1600-1699.

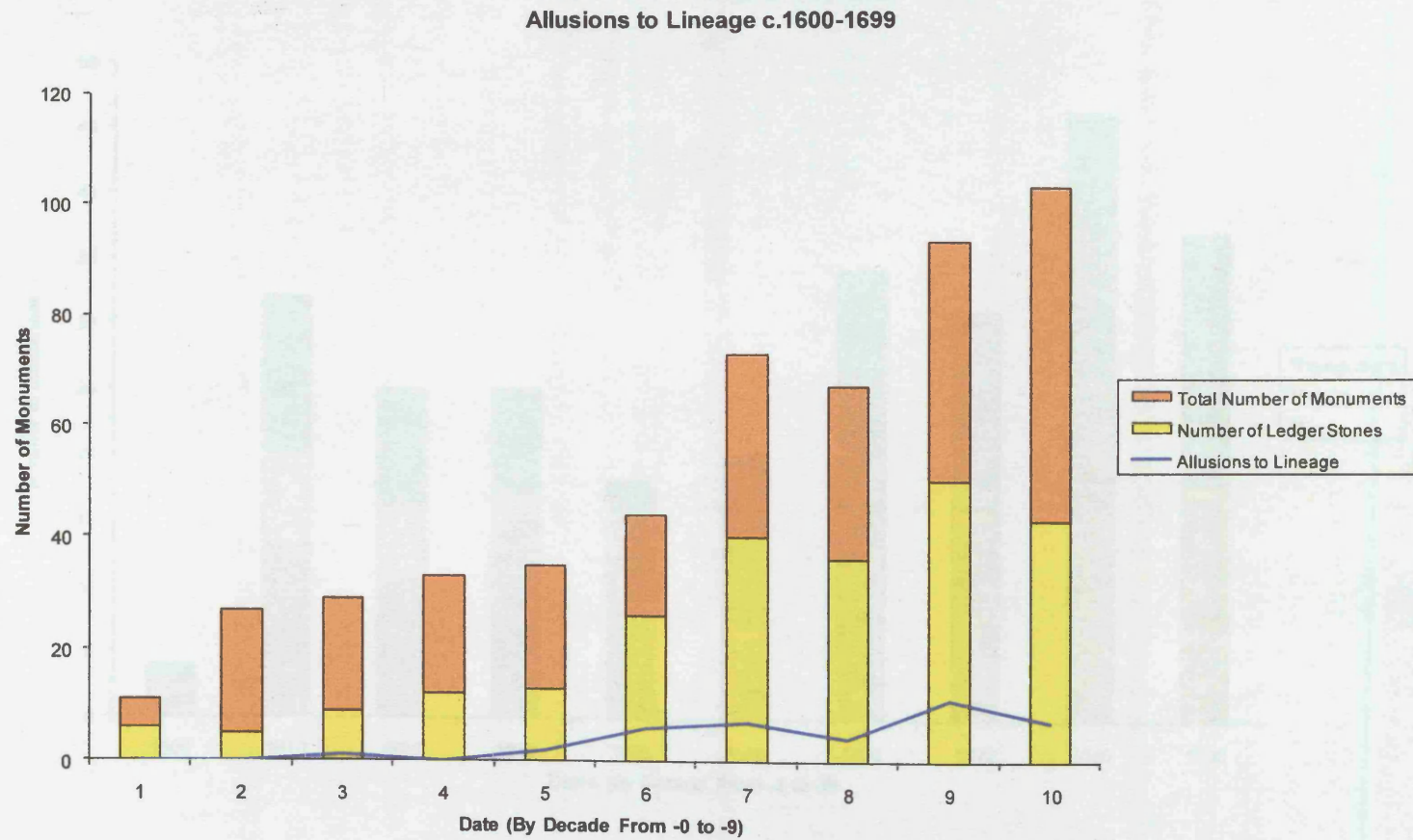
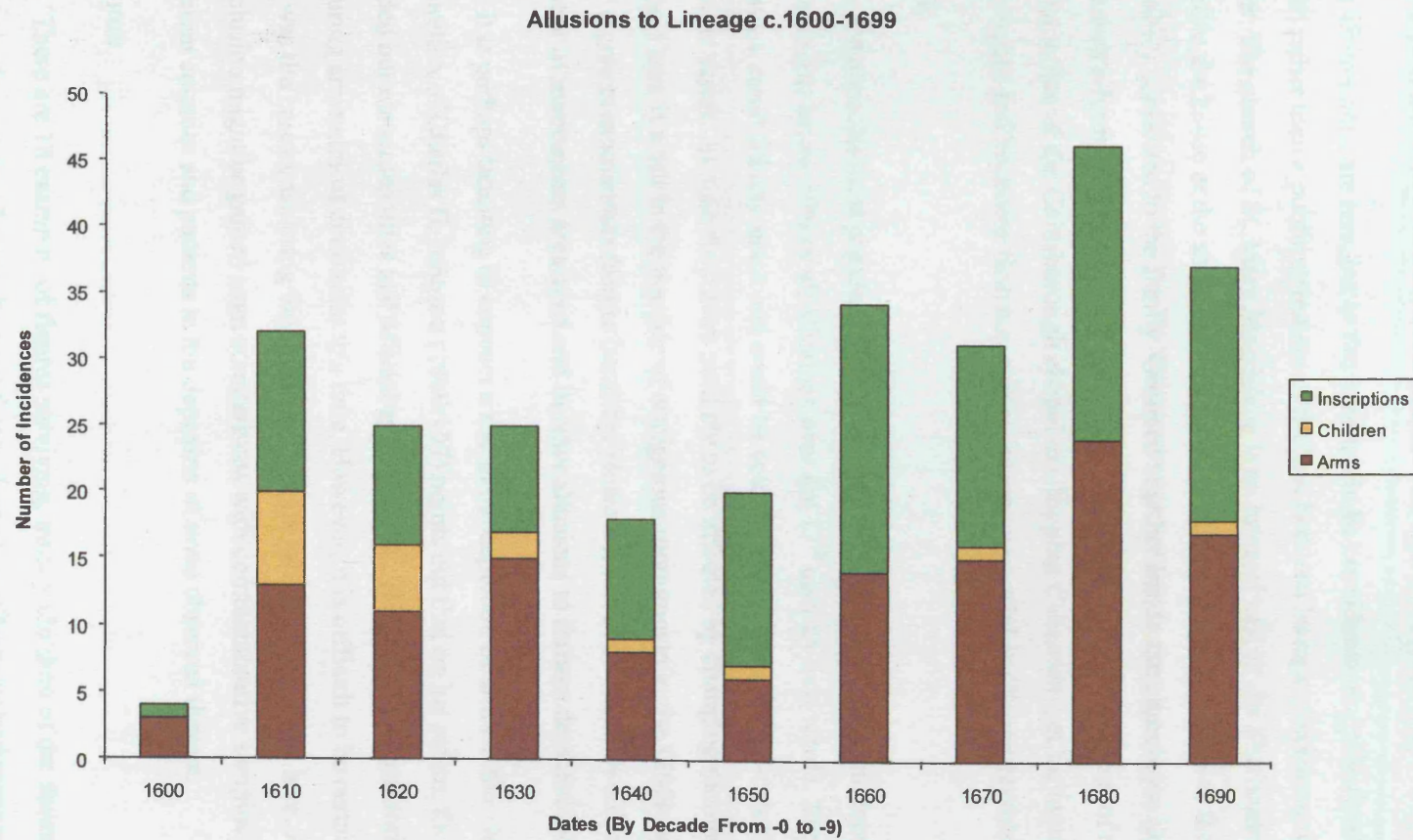


Chart 7.8: Types of Reference to Family and Descent c.1600-1699.



Ann, his second wife fourth daughter of John King Bishop of London
Descended from the Ancient Saxon Kings of Devonshire was married
8 years unto whose care the erecting of this monument was entrusted.

Such affirmations are rare, but in this case might be considered as a privatised display of wealth rather than a public statement of the link between lineage, commemoration and power. The church of St. Mary Magdalene is an integral part of the Sherborne Estate, joined to the house at the south-eastern corner (Fig.7.29). The church was therefore intimately connected to the family. Grouped together inside the church, the Dutton monuments form a conspicuous 'mausoleum' within the communal space of the living similar to that of the Gainsborough chapel in Chipping Campden, yet far more extravagant and imposing than any contemporary memorial in Gloucestershire.

Arms

Arms are the most popular form of familial reference featured on memorials. They make up just below 50% of all allusions over the 17th century as a whole. They were easy to depict, could fill any space and could be coloured up to make an eye-catching display of social status. As such they were unlikely to be affected by changing monumental styles. There is a fall in the number of armigerous monuments in the 1640s whereupon only eighteen monuments feature heraldry. However, this is matched by a decline in the number of monuments preserved and in other allusions to lineage depicted therein.

It is perhaps tempting to connect a rise in the depiction of arms in the 1660s to the restoration of Charles II. Johnson (1989:107) points out that on his return, the King handed out numerous titles and official appointments. The number of memorials featuring arms almost doubles at this time. However, it is difficult to be certain whether this was the case considering the small sample size which is dealt with here. A more solid conclusion might be gained from comparisons with commemorative samples from different counties and patterns in the depiction of arms observed therein.

Figures

There are 18 examples of figures surviving, mostly children of the deceased. In all but a single case, family members are featured on large effigy centred memorials such as that of Anthony and Alice Partridge at Miserden (c.1625) (Fig.7.35). The largest numbers of figures are thus found in the 1610s, 1620s and 1630s. An interesting exception to this



Figure 7.35: A memorial to Anthony and Alice Partridge at Miserden.



Figure 7.36: A late 17th century bale tomb at Broadwell, featuring a line of figures at prayer.

is the bale tomb which survives in Broadwell churchyard (Fig.7.36). As noted, this monument features four effigies kneeling at prayer on one side of the façade. They are simply carved in local limestone, with anonymous features which do not suggest that they are known family members. The monument seems to date to the late 17th century and the names of the deceased degraded long ago. It is possible that this memorial was rendered in imitation of earlier, more lavish effigy memorials inside the church, but it is difficult to be certain of this. As has been noted, figurative sculpture was not unknown on late 17th century churchyard memorials. However, this example is geographically distinct from the Severn table tombs. Its style suggests a different hand. It is also the only bale tomb with figurative sculpture. Unfortunately, not even Bigland's monumental study of commemoration can put a name to its owner, which leaves little which might explain this idiosyncrasy.

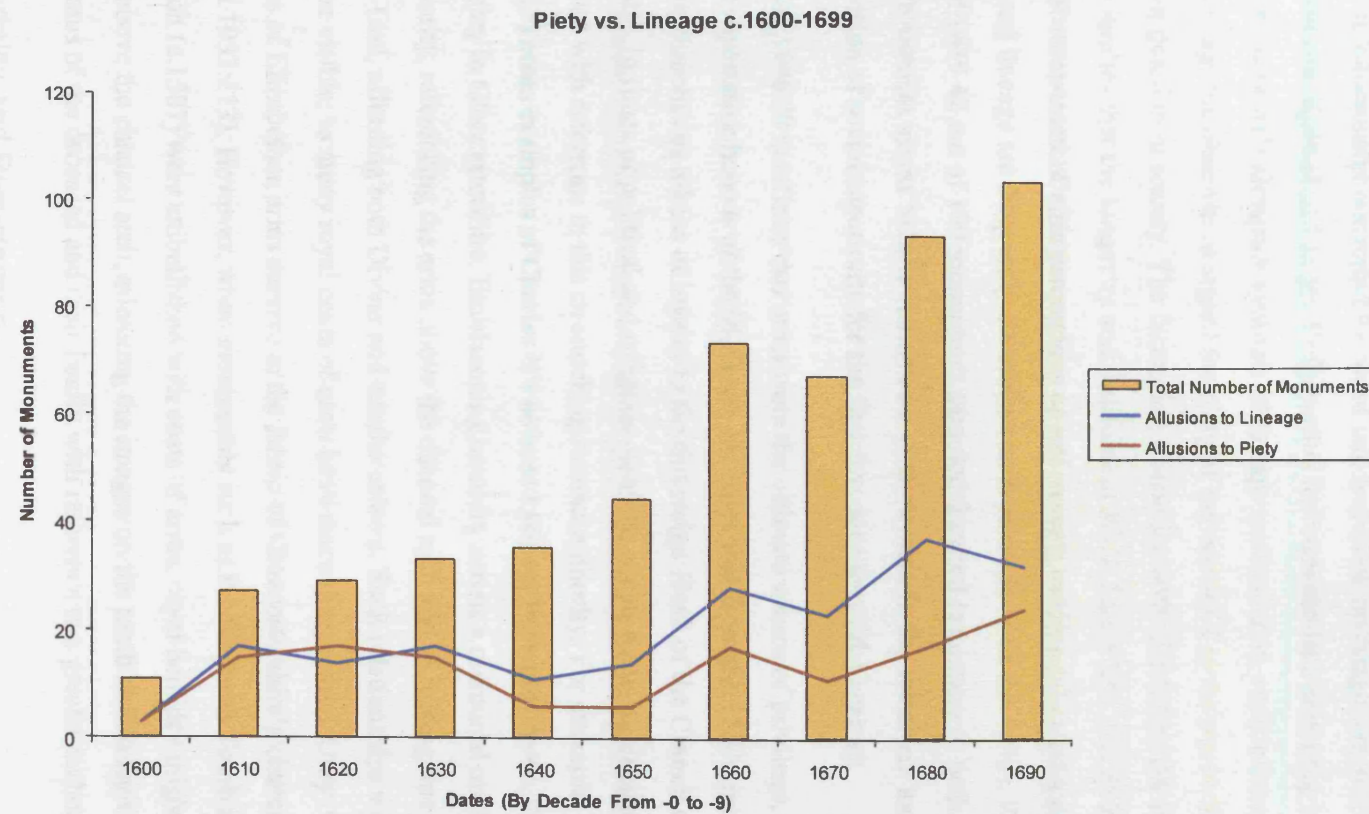
Text

Text is a popular way of affirming family connections throughout the 17th century, though mainly confined to erect memorials. Although ledgers often feature the names of several family members, this is generally because many are interred in the same place and thus not an attempt to claim an illustrious pedigree for the deceased. Textual references make up 38% of the total number of allusions to family surviving from the 17th century and average at 34% per decade. As the century progressed and the social backgrounds of the commemorated became increasingly varied, not all those erecting monuments might have had an illustrious pedigree to display, nor seen the merit in claiming one.

Piety and Lineage

Prior to the mid 16th century, references to piety occurred more frequently on Gloucestershire's memorials than images of the family. However, from the 1560s onwards, images of descent and progeny rise to equal and eventually overtake images of piety (Chart 7.9). This occurs gradually over the first five decades of the 17th century. The popularity of iconographical references to piety on memorials in the early 17th century such as hands at prayer, prayer desks and bibles maintains the presence of piety on memorials. In this early Protestant context, such imagery materialised the reformed

Chart 7.9: Allusions to piety and lineage, measured against each other for the period c.1600-1699. All monument types are included in the total number shown in orange, though it should be noted that allusions to piety are absent from ledger stones.



emphasis upon the saving power of the Word. Monuments such as that of Rebecca Lloyd (d.1625) at Whitminster converted the word into a symbol, an image which could be understood and digested just as pre-Reformation iconography had been (Fig.7.24). Present on memorials alongside symbols of lineage such as arms, such references might also encourage the observer to regard the piety of the deceased as the reason for their prominent position in society. The increasing frequency with which familial imagery is depicted implies that the longevity and fruitfulness of the family line was an increasingly important component of elite perceptions of self in early modern Gloucestershire. Images of piety and lineage are frequently coincident on memorials until the 1640s. Between 1601 and 1639 42 out of 100 monuments sampled featured references to both. Therefore, stating devoutness seems to have remained a vital element in the statement and legitimisation of social superiority for the first few decades of the century.

Friar (1996:235) affirms that arms were the ultimate source of privilege, emanating from the superlative honour of the Monarch. He notes that from the 1530s, arms were erected in churches as tokens of loyalty to the Sovereign Head of the Church of England (1996:392). In times of political and religious stability, social status might also be legitimised with reference to this overarching secular authority. For example, Fawcett (1933:115) notes examples of Charles II's arms at Lydney, Pebworth, Syde, Tewkesbury and Wapley in Gloucestershire. Emblazoning heraldry across a memorial might evoke this authority, referencing the arms above the chancel arch and so linking line to Crown under to God, affording both Divine and secular esteem. Such relationships will not always be visible, as many royal coats of arms have since disappeared. Only two examples of Elizabethan arms survive in the fabric of Gloucestershire's churches (Fawcett 1933:113). However, when monuments such as the Stephens Tomb at Eastington (c.1587) were embellished with coats of arms, royal heraldry might have been painted above the chancel arch, mirroring the images on the tomb and so legitimating the social status of the deceased and their family with reference to a greater authority.

Mortality and Resurrection

From the early 17th century, colourful images of Death, Time and Putti filled the margins of many monuments, framing the memory of the deceased as detailed in the

epitaph. They drew the attention of the congregation just as images of the apostles, angels and saints on medieval memorials had done. A number of theories have been put forward to explain why these images became popular by researchers working on similar forms of iconography in other parts of the world. Deetz and Dethlefsen, in their classic study of the gravestones of Colonial New England alleged a progression from death's head, through cherub to urn and willow motifs within the iconography of memorials. They suggested that this was linked to shifts in religious thought and to an ambiance of optimism or pessimism among the New England population as a whole (Owen 2006:79):

The earliest of the three is a winged death's head, with blank eyes and a grinning visage. Earlier versions are quite ornate, but as time passes, they become less elaborate. Sometime during the eighteenth century -- the time varies according to location -- the grim death's head designs are replaced, more or less quickly, by winged cherubs. This design also goes through a gradual simplification of form with time. By the late 1700's or early 1800's, again depending on where you are observing, the cherubs are replaced by stones decorated with a willow tree overhanging a pedestaled urn.

(Deetz and Dethlefsen 1967:29)

This explanation seeks to link material culture to documented religious change, providing a generalised explanation for the appearance of these images which fails to consider the individual contexts in which they were deployed. A similarly historically based explanation is offered by Ludwig (1966:21). He suggests that such visual symbolism filled a void in the minds of the laity which had been opened up by the demise of the palpable and visual world of Catholicism. These symbols are alleged to have imagined the afterlife in a manner which was theologically neutral, yet proved more accessible to the illiterate than the scriptures exalted by Protestantism. It seems unlikely that those erecting the memorials intended them to function in such an overtly functional and altruistic capacity, considering how difficult some, such as the Driver memorials at Avening, were to view up close. As Hall (1976:32) has suggested, both Deetz and

Dethlefsen and Ludwig are indulging in the simple technique of parallels; Puritanism existed in the 17th century, therefore the stones must stand for Puritanism (Hall 1976:32). There is little suggestion of how these symbols might relate to their context of deployment, or how they were perceived by their audience.

The use of symbols of death and resurrection cannot easily be linked to any particular historical event or religious change. However, their proliferation was made possible by the extinction of religious symbolism which made space for them on the monument. Interestingly, there are less than 10 surviving examples of references to resurrection and mortality on ledger stones. This might be a bias resulting from the degradation of the stones over time. However, few examples are noted by Bigland. It seems more likely that the lack of explicit references relates to the fact that unlike more prominent forms of commemoration from this period, these memorials were not intended to be overt displays of individual identities.

Symbols of resurrection and mortality are present together and separately on memorials from the beginning of the 17th century (Chart 7.10). They are rendered in three different ways. Texts might include *memento mori* inscriptions or allusions to resurrection and immortality. Allegorical images are those of full size figures such as Death, Time and Angels as well as images such as death's heads and putti heads or anything else which can be related directly to the human condition. Iconographic motifs include scallop shells and any other image which cannot be regarded as anthropomorphic. (Chart 7.11, 7.12).

Resurrection

Considering the erratic survival of pietistic allusions in the 17th century, it seems strange that references to Resurrection should attain a regular profile of growing popularity as the century progresses. They appear on approximately 128 memorials throughout the century. The lowest number occurs during the 1640s, at which point only six out of 35 monuments feature such references, five wall mounted stones and one brass tablet. Thereafter the number of references rises to a relatively steady peak in 1670s, whereupon 21 monuments feature references. This establishes resurrection as one of the

Chart 7.10: Allusions to resurrection and mortality, measured against the number of surviving memorials in Gloucestershire c.1600-1699. Only a very small number of allusions to resurrection and mortality survive on ledgers. To avoid distorting patterns shown in the rest of the sample, erect memorials are divided from the total number of monuments.

Resurrection vs. Mortality c.1600-1699

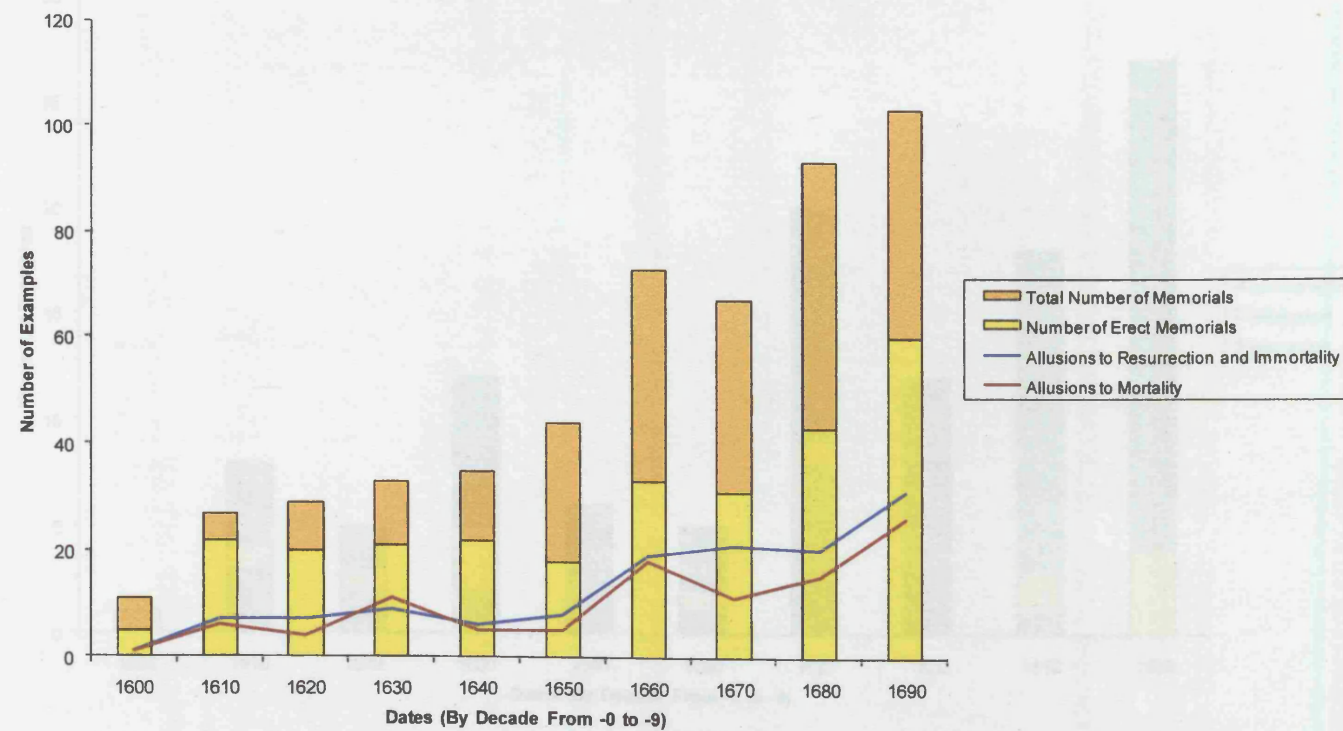


Chart 7.11: A chart illustrating the format of references to mortality on memorials c.1600-1699.

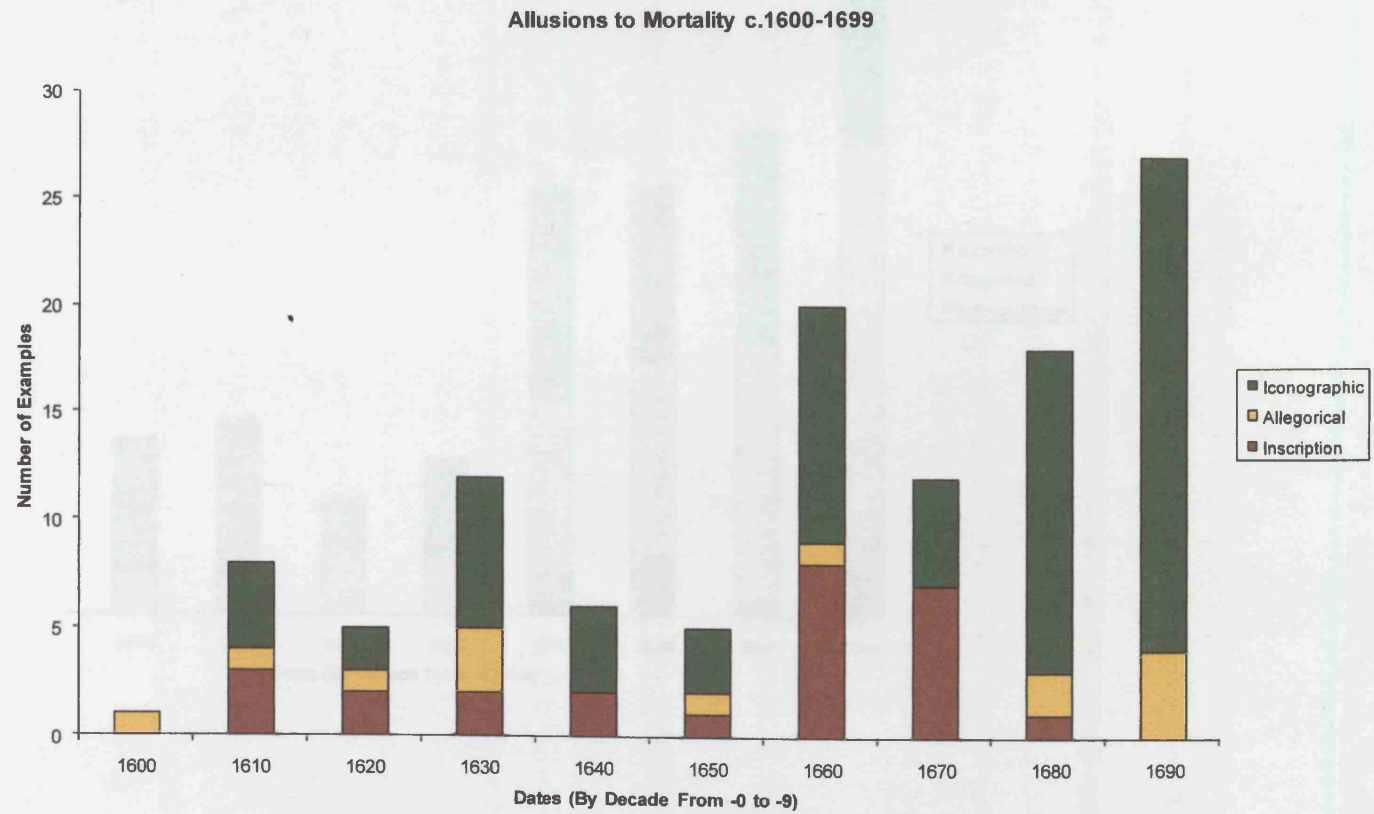
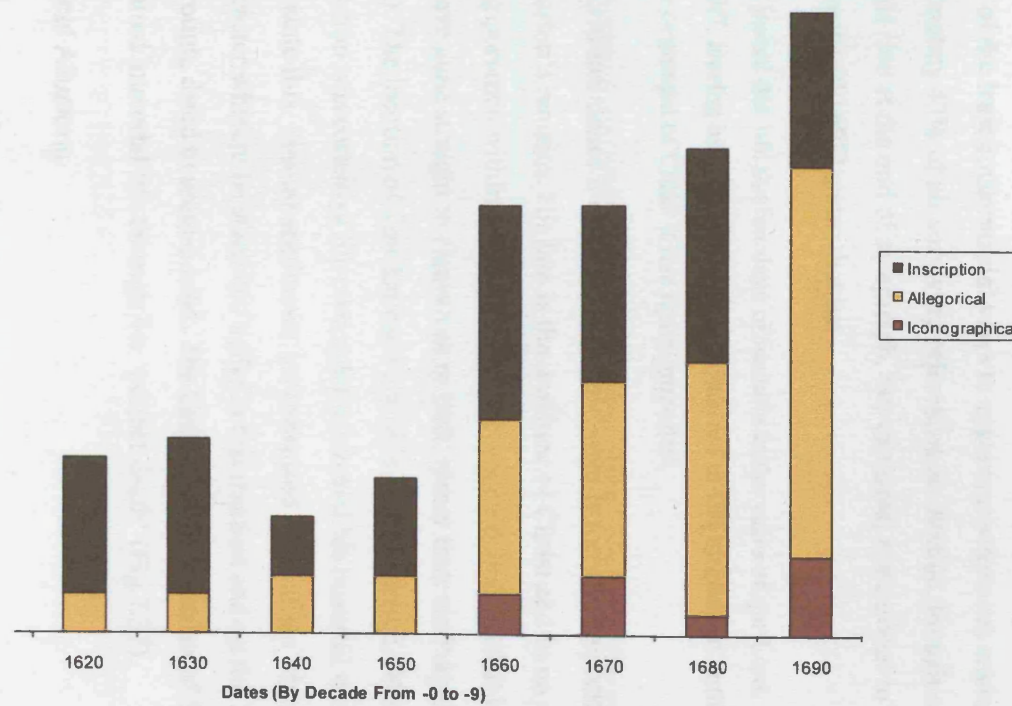


Chart 7.12: A chart illustrating the format of references to immortality and resurrection on memorials c.1600-1699.



most widespread allusions to be featured on memorials in the 17th century and a belief in and statement of such to be fundamental to the religious identities of those raising the memorials.

Text

Text and resurrection are intimately related in Protestant doctrine. The saving power of the Word over the image was one of the principle tenets of reform in the mid-late 16th century (Davis 2002:4). As such, stating a desire for a glorious resurrection in an epitaph was one of the least controversial ways to express posthumous aspiration on a monument. Approximately 47% of all surviving references are textual, though often consisting only of a single line at the end of an epitaph. For example, a memorial to Thomas Throkmarton (d.1607) states that he:

... parted this life the last daye of ianuarie in the yeare of our Lord,
1607, leaving here his mortail partes interred in this monument until by
the command of Christ it rise again immortail.

This inscription makes it clear that the monument is merely a repository for Throkmarton's remains. His fate is the province of Christ and in no way influenced by its imposing presence within the church. Protestant creed dictated that his "immortail part", would have gone straight to Heaven or to Hell, rather than via Purgatory (Houlbrooke 1998:39). The location of Throkmarton's soul is not mentioned. What is clear is that Throkmarton was certain of his own redemption and his material wealth allowed him to publicly state this. Similar sentiments are expressed on William Master's wall monument at Cirencester wherein he states his belief in resurrection and on the Leigh memorial at Longborough, dated to around 1664. The Latin inscription states of Elizabeth Leigh that she acquired immortal life through her 'perfect death' (Fig.7.37).

Allegorical Allusions

An average of two allegorical images per ten years appear in the sample during the first half of the 17th century. However, this rises to 13 per decade during the last four decades, with a surge in allegorical allusions to resurrection and immortality from the 1660s. This is marked by the inclusion of winged putti, which often frame wall mounted monuments. For a number of reasons, the increasing popularity of resurrection allegories might be associated with the aftermath of the Civil War. Outwardly, their particular



Figure 7.37: Detail of effigies on the Leigh memorial at Longborough with an inscription behind them.

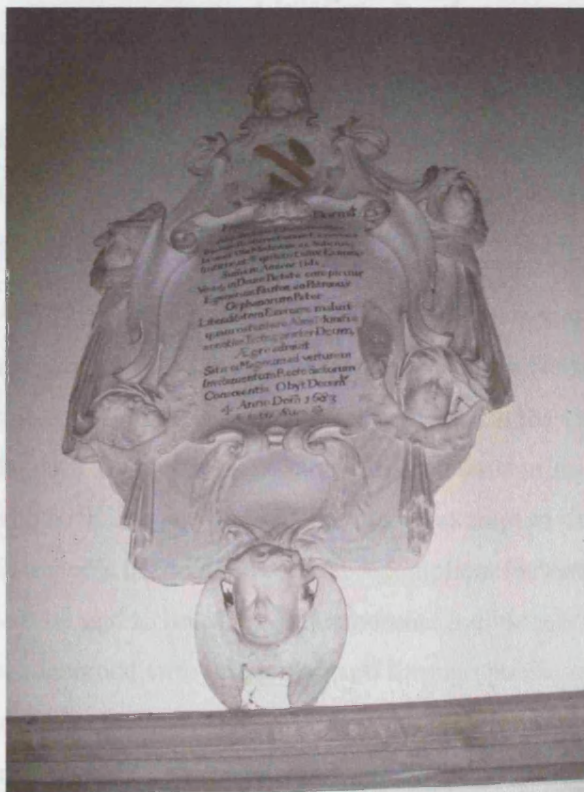


Figure 7.38: Putti decorating the margins of a late 17th century memorial at Flaxley in the Forest of Dean.

association with wall monuments, which are inconspicuous compared to the early 17th century effigies which survive in the county would perhaps mean that they were less likely to suffer accidental damage from the purposeful actions of iconoclasts. There might also have been greater confidence in the use of such images in a relatively peaceful and steady political and religious context. On initial inspection putti appear to be a more precarious form of imagery to adopt than books and prayer desks. The rendering of allegorical images did not follow the practice of materialising aspects of Protestant iconography such as *The Word* for public consumption. They explicitly portrayed an element of a world deemed unknowable to the reformed Christian, placing imagined Heavenly imagery above the Word. However, these cherubim were not the fiery angels of the Old Testament choir, but the plump children of Renaissance art (Fig.7.38). It is this association which merits their inclusion on 17th century memorials. They referenced the educated background of the deceased, suggesting a particular level of culture and refinement, rather than religious affiliation. Williamson has spoken of a 'collection of shared cultural values' among the gentry in the early 18th century, including polite behaviour, knowledge of taste and fashion and the ability to hold intelligent conversation (1998:17). The iconography of resurrection on these 17th century memorials might also affirm membership of a group identity based on education and knowledge of fashion, distinguishing the gentry from less privileged members of the community even before the turn of the 18th century.

Allegorical figures are universally accompanied by an inscription, framing the memorial and sometimes gesturing towards it from the margins. An example of the pairing of image and inscription is shown on the Guise memorial at Elmore (Fig.7.39). If the putti are taken as abstract representations of resurrection, the framing of an inscription with such images might be seen as an attempt to link the individual details of the deceased's life to an inevitable redemption. However, their presence in the margins might also be said to link the commemorated individuals into an educated culture increasingly unconcerned with justifying itself through public reference to pious acts. The depiction of putti around the text tied the deeds of the deceased into an elite discourse through the intimation of refinement. An example of the qualities which those erecting memorials claimed for themselves is evident on a memorial to Dorothy Driver at Avening dating to the 1660s (Fig.7.40):

Could prudence piety or beauty (reader) save from the dishonour of the
 silent grave. Here, to this pious Virgin had been given That immortality,
 she now enjoys in heaven, for she was virtues true Epitome. As
 innocently liv'd as others dye. In her humility with greatness thou
 mightst find. And affability with Wisdom joyn'd, Patience with hope
 which she did still maintaine. Even in the tempest of a fierce decease.
 Until her Dove like soul perceiving twas in vain. To seek for rest on
 there disquiet seas Fled to the Ark where pain and trouble Cease. But
 here the frame of Clay with Closed Eyes Safe harbour'd from the
 furious deep. But tir'd with toil and labour lies. Forgetfull in a gentle
 sleep.

Idealised qualities, such as those attributed to Dorothy and a number of other women commemorated in the 17th century were correlated with a certain level of refinement and 'politeness'. This could be augmented by the rendering of inscriptions in Latin, common on Gloucestershire memorials such as the Leigh memorial in Longborough in the later 17th century. Using Latin put the details of the epitaph beyond the comprehension of the baser elements of society, claiming membership to a shared affluent identity based on civility.

Iconographical

Iconographical allusions to resurrection are the least common type of allusion. There are only 10 examples in the 17th century and all of these occur in the last 40 years. Eight of the iconographical references to resurrection and eternal life present in the county in the late 17th century are scallop shells. With the exception of a single wall mounted stone at St. Nicholas in Gloucester, all are found on bale and table tombs (Fig.7.41). The scallop shell was a mark of pilgrimage which dated back to the middle ages, a badge worn by *peregrini* returning from Santiago de Compostela in Spain. They were a traditional symbol of St. James the Great, whose relics were held at the great medieval pilgrimage site. In a famous verse composed shortly before his death in 1618 and published in 1681, Walter Raleigh made this link explicit:

Give me my Scallop-Shell of Quiet,
 My Staff of Faith to lean upon;
 My Scrip of Joy, Immortal Diet,
 My Bottle of Salvation;

My Gown of Glory, Hopes True Gage:
And thus I'll go my Pilgrimage.
Blood must be my Body's Balm,
For here no other Balm is given;
Whilst my Soul, like a quiet Palm,
Travels to the Land of Heaven,
And there I'll kiss the Bowl of Bliss.

(Reproduced by Endicott 2005)

The scallop shell seems out of place in a Protestant milieu, given its antiquated associations with indulgence and the intercession. This might be why it is only present on monuments dating to the later 1600s and was most popular in the churchyard rather than in sight of the act of worship. The stone in St. Nicholas dates to the very end of the 17th century. The presence of the scallop shell is evidence that it retained its associations with travel and death despite its association with the medieval *peregrini*, continuing to imply a desire for a trouble-free journey for the soul. Raleigh's poem contrasts images of the animated and glorious spirit with that of the still bound body. A shell depicted on a table tomb at Standish has skulls in it (Fig.7.42). This combines resurrection symbolism with that of mortality in a similar manner to the poem. The shell fans out from the skull, dominating mortality as the hope of resurrection dominates Raleigh's poem. Mortality is played down in favour of the glorification of the immortal soul, implying the deceased confidence in their worthiness.

Mortality

There are approximately 100 memorials in the sample between 1600 and 1699 which feature some allusion to mortality. To this can also be added a singular and ambiguous instance recorded on a ledger stone. An anonymous stone from Gloucester Cathedral depicts a cadaver (Fig.7.43). The cadaver is degraded and hard to make out. Thus it illustrates why ledgers did not often carry imagery. Such carvings are easily ignored under foot. It is also possible that this image was inscribed later than the inscription, as it seems to be carved over the degraded stone. The decomposition of the natural body was a necessary prelude to resurrection and salvation (Cohen 1973:44). Alderman Job Yates' (d.1668) memorial at Rodmarton illustrates this relationship perfectly:

Trust not the world remember deth and often think of Hell



Figure 7.39: A memorial to members of the Guise family at Elmore, dating to the middle of the 17th century.



Figure 7.40: A memorial to Dorothy Driver at Avening.



Figure 7.41: A scallop shell on a bale tomb at Fairford.

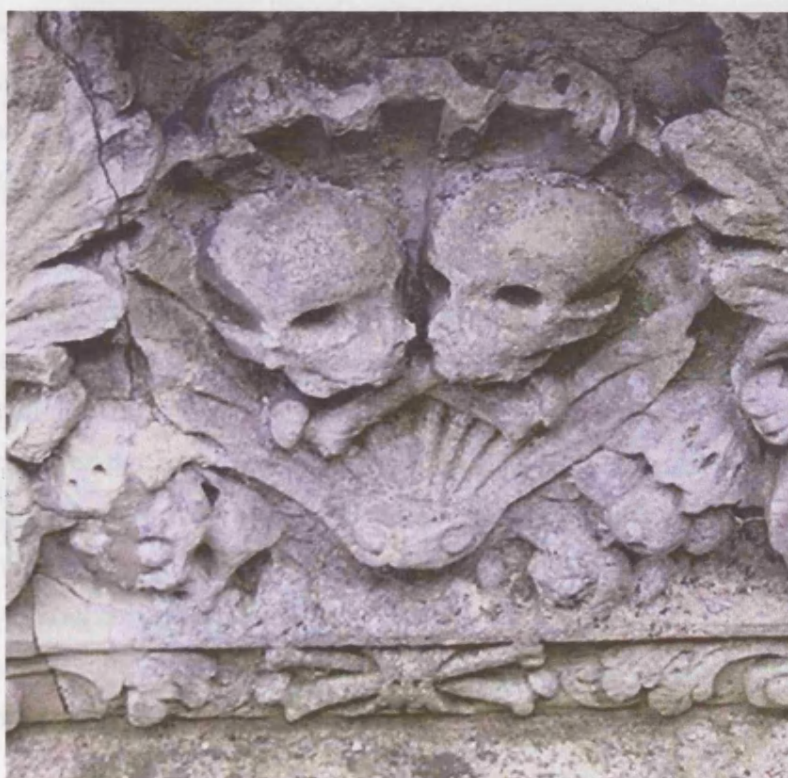


Figure 7.42: Skulls in a scallop shell on a table tomb at Standish.

Think often on the great reward for those that do live well
Repent amend then trust in Christ
So thou in peace shall dye
And rest in bliss and rise with ioy
And raine eternally.

However, as a theme resurrection seems to be preferred over mortality within and without the church walls. Excluding ledgers, an average of 17% of monuments erected in the 1600s feature allusions to resurrection only, which compares to an average of 10% which reference only mortality. The relative advantage of associating salvation with wealth and social superiority over commemorating its invariable dissolution was perhaps a factor in this preference. Memorials which do materialise death consistently subjugate it to the worldly achievements of the deceased. For example, the allegorical Time on the Machen memorial at Gloucester Cathedral stands in the centre of the mural in acknowledgment of the transience of mortal things. However, he is a minor figure, easily missed in a lavish scheme dominated by the effigies (Fig.7.44). The De La Bere memorial at Bishop's Cleeve features winged hourglasses surmounted by skulls, yet these seem inconsequential compared with the gaudy heraldry which surrounds them (Fig.7.45). Death is present, but seemingly ineffectual. Monumental commemoration and the immortality which it bestows thus betrayed the ineptitude of Death in failing to completely extinguish the worldly presence of the deceased.

Mortal death was a disruptive and distasteful event. It temporarily exposed the frailty of the family line and its reliance on transient achievement. Death's lack of respect for established definitions of difference in wealth and status necessitated its iconographic suppression. Lord Edward and Lady Juliana's memorial at Chipping Campden affords little consideration of the mortal frailty of those depicted. The fact of death is relegated to a small skull which surmounts the memorial. It is overpowered by the inevitability of resurrection, as symbolised by the opening tomb and its unspoiled occupants (Fig.7.46). The universal corruption which it caused to the body was at odds with privileged cultured ambience within which families such as the Campdens and the Noels were increasingly choosing to situate themselves.



Figure 7.43: A faint image of a cadaver on a ledger stone in Gloucester Cathedral.



Figure 7.44: An image of Time with scythe, in the margins the Machen monument at Gloucester Cathedral.



Figure 7.45: A winged hourglass and skull in the top corner of the De La Bere Monument at Bishop's Cleeve.



Figure 7.46: A skull, depicted above the resurrected images of the Noels in the Gainsborough Chapel at Chipping Campden.

Text

There is no clear pattern to the survival of written allusions to mortality on erect memorials. The number of instances seems to peak in the 1660s and 1670s, with five and seven references noted respectively. Unlike other forms of text on memorials, such as allusions to resurrection and to the piety of the deceased, textual references to mortality do not survive in greater numbers than their iconographical and allegorical counterparts. However, there are some texts among this small sample which make explicit a connection between commemoration and the importance of dying well and so perhaps imply that dying well was still an important part of the self which these monuments conveyed. At Ashchurch, there are two inscriptions which state that the deceased died a good death. On a demi effigy erected to William Ferriers, born in Gloucestershire but buried in London, there is an inscription which states:

Live well and die never,
Die well and live ever,

A brass memorial to Robert Barker has a lengthier and slightly nonsensical text:

Whilst active heat inspired his youthfull bloud. His unstaid heart priz'd
that miss-called Good abortive pleasure. pittying his mistake, God gave
him summons better choice to make. Now loathing ye worls
experienced vanitie unskillfull how to live *hee learn'd to dye*. Blessd
with th advantage of a lingring call Hee crowned (*sic*) his life bys
better funeral.

His body for a space rests lodgd in this cold house of clay, but Heaven
reserves his soul for meet again at Judgement Day.

There is some evidence here that the concept of a good death was known to some of those erecting memorials in Gloucestershire and that the achievement of such was important enough to display.

Images

Allegorical and iconographic references to mortality are consistently more popular than textual and allegorical allusions throughout 1600s. There are 88 examples recorded in total and 50% of these are from the last two decades, wherein there is an association with wall monuments and churchyard memorials. Allegorical and iconographic can be

considered together since they were both used in similar ways and so were perhaps intended to perform a similar function. This imagery framed text and was never present without an inscription, exemplified by the imagery surrounding William Nicolson's memorial at Gloucester Cathedral (Fig. 7.47). Images of mortality provided theologically neutral decoration which could be used to fill the margins.

Unlike images of putti or scallop shells, grinning skeletons and skulls could shock and intrigue, drawing viewers in closer in order to read the accompanying inscription. Extramural mortality imagery may be regarded as an enticement attracting readers towards a text detailing the deeds and pedigree of the deceased. The graphic imagery featured on the table tombs of Standish illustrates this particularly well. Images of Death and Time often surround inscriptions, gesturing at the text (Fig. 7.48). These large allegorical figures can be seen from the church path and as such would draw the eyes of the congregation as they left the church. Text and image worked together to pass messages onto the reader. Death and Time might be regarded as having defeated those whom they gestured at; their allegorical forms tower over the inscriptions personifying the fate of all mortals. However, their memory lives on as a result of these figures which were there to ensure that the monument and its words are noticed and read.

Memorial, Mortality and the Plague

Plague had been a feature of life in Gloucestershire since the 14th century. However, the early modern outbreaks are known to have been particularly harsh. Epidemics hit Gloucester in the years 1565, 1573, 1575-6, 1577-8, 1580, and 1593-4 (Herbert 1988:73-75). There were fewer outbreaks in the 17th century, but these may have been more severe (Herbert 1988: 73-75). There are epidemics documented in the 1630s and 1660s. A register of burials for Brimpsfield parish records the burial of suspected plague victims in Rudge Lane in 1665 (GRO P58 IN 1/1). There are also notes on plague burials at North Nibley in 1638 (GRO P230 IN 1/2). Coinciding with this, mortality allusions peaked and were comparable with references to resurrection. Recorded references to mortality exceed allusions to immortality during the decade encompassing 1638, though resurrection imagery is otherwise much more widespread.

The timing of these peaks invites a link to the plague outbreaks of the 17th century. However, clearly not all outbreaks are marked by rises in mortality references. The economic and social climate of the 17th century was well suited to the proliferation of



Figure 7.47: Winged hourglass, skull, gravedigger's tools and shrouds around William Nicolson's memorial at Gloucester Cathedral.



Figure 7.48: An image of Time with hourglass and scythe, gesturing at an inscription in Standish churchyard.

memento mori. Following the reforms of the later 1500s, theologically neutral symbols such as anthropomorphic Time, Death and skulls flourished in lieu of controversial religious iconography. Bones, time and decay were acceptable representational subjects. All were experienced corporeally by everyone on a daily basis. They did not encourage speculation or presumption about the shape of life beyond the grave. It is unlikely that the plague epidemics had a deterministic effect upon the employment of *memento mori* symbols in commemoration. The choices made by individuals with regard to their preferred iconographical schemes were probably more individualised than a simple comparison of historical narrative with material remains would allow for. The perceived link between plague and mortality symbolism is an attractive one. However, a simple correlation between immortality and mortality and optimism and pessimism is not sufficiently supported by the evidence to be put forward here.

Death, Resurrection and *The Holy Dying*

There are correlations between the relationship between life and death as depicted on the monument and in contemporary *Ars Moriendi* texts. Jeremy Taylor's decision to compose twinned tracts on holy living in 1660 and holy dying a year later suggests a relationship between conduct in life and fate at death. Vital acts of piety could increase the chances of salvation and resurrection:

let us in every minute of our life, I mean in every discernible portion,
lay up such a stock of reason and good works, that they may convey a
value to the imperfect and shorter actions of our death-bed, while God
rewards the piety of our lives by his gracious acceptance and
benediction upon the actions preparatory to our death-bed.

(1651:279)

Wealth enabled apparent piety to be publicly affirmed in stone. In the context of commemoration, the relationship between appearing to act piously and divine favour led to the equation of worldly worth and with salvation within public statements of elite identities. For example, Thomas Throckmorton's declaration of imminent immortality on his memorial in 1607 is preceded by details of service to King, Country and Christianity, suggesting that his duties in life effected his salvation. However, Taylor's text implies that anyone can achieve salvation regardless of their mortal state. Stating public service and charitable acts on such a memorial gave this notionally democratic concept an exclusive quality.

Jeremy Taylor regarded the mortal world as a forum for redemption and repentance. In his first chapter, he castigated those who wasted the opportunity, refusing to acknowledge the transience of mortal things:

... there warlike and the peaceful, the fortunate and the miserable, the beloved and the despised princes mingle in their dust and play down their symbol of mortality and tell all the world that when we die our ashes shall be equal to kings and our accounts easier and our pains or our crowns shall be less.

(1651:14)

Lavish funerary monuments, such as the effigies of early 17th century Gloucestershire might be regarded as symbols of earthly pride and pomp. However, their form reveals the shared cultural background of the *Ars* author and this wealthy audience. The illustration of death and rebirth in both text and monument favour the use of florid allusions and metaphors:

In vain am I lamented in mournful marble; I shall burst through my tomb of marble and enter the starry skies.

An ostentatious memorial which claims to be meek and unworthy may seem at first to be a contradiction in itself. However, affirmations of humility and self-depreciation in public might render the deceased as worthy example to follow and forestall challenges to their social status. This inscription, from William Childe's memorial at Blockley (c.1615), acknowledges the futility of commemoration. However, the fact that the monument has been erected at all suggests that such sentiments were not sufficient to detract from the merits of public displays of piety. By admitting the worthlessness of his marble, Childe's memorial endows him with a humility which, despite his assurance of salvation, might render him a figure of esteem. It states an acceptance of the unimportance of earthly wealth, exalting those who recognise this and disdaining challenges to the continued prosperity of kin.

The *Ars* employed an exclusive style in order to condemn an over-concern with the world. The philosophical tone of Taylor's work invited his audience to resign themselves to their fate:

So is every man. He is born into vanity and sin; he comes into the world like morning mushrooms, soon thrusting up their heads into the air and conversing with their kindred of the same production, and as soon they turn into dust and forgetfulness.

(1651:9)

The familiar assertion that men 'shall all be turned into dust' (1651:332) had been echoed by countless ecclesiastical commentators from the Middle Ages onwards. Taylor couches his assertions in terms which suggest the organic inevitability of death. His chosen metaphors; mushrooms, storms and thorns imply that dying flows naturally from existence and is neither abrupt or cause for concern. For Taylor, all things lead to death:

Death reigns in all portions of our time; the autumn with its fruits provides disorders for us and the winter's cold turns them into sharp diseases and the spring brings flowers to strew our hearse and the summer gives green turf and brambles to bind upon our graves.

(1651:11)

This democratic Death is belied by its presentation within a tome intended for a restricted audience of the wealthy and worthy. From its inception, the *Ars* tradition was defined by its emphasis upon the general state of mankind. Its impracticality therefore increased considerably when rendered in a style which was specifically aimed at a particular group in society. This conflict is rendered explicit when the text is considered alongside funerary monuments, which emphasise the distinction of individuals and of family within an increasingly detached elite.

Death and Popular Literature

As Beaty (1970:202) has pointed out, Taylor's was a well bred Anglican *moriens*, pious and cultured with a high level of literacy. It is unlikely that his teachings would have engaged the majority of the population. However, similar questions regarding the acceptance of one's mortality, renunciation of worldly goods and avoidance of pomp were propagated in contemporary ballads such as *The Clarke of Bodnam* (1624) and Samuel Rowland's *A Terrible Battell Betweene the Two Consumers of the Whole World: Time and Death* (1606):

One builds a house and titles that his owne,

Gives it his name, to keep his name in sound,
When presently a grave with one square stone,
Will serve his bodies turne to ly in ground,
Ten thousand pounds his costly house requires, a coffin of a crown's al
death desires.

(Rowland 1606)

Rowland's text echoes the sentiments of the of Taylor's tract, wherein he derides those who put stock in mortal wealth at death:

We cannot deceive God and nature; for a coffin is a
coffin, though it be covered with a pompous veil.

(1651:3)

The *Battell's* vision of death itself is very different to Taylor's. Rowland's is an anthropomorphic Death, an unabashed reaper who may strike at any time. His lack of discrimination is much starker in Rowland's ballad than in Taylor's text, since the former features no classical allusions and makes no attempt to restrict itself to a particular audience. *The Clarke of Bodnam* identifies its *moriens* with every man, according him no dialogue or features which would affiliate him to a particular social class:

Now my painfull eyes are rowling, And my passing Bell is
towling:
Towling sweetly: I lye dying, And my life is from me flying.
Grant me strength, O gracious God, For to endure thy heauy
rod:
Then shall I reioyce and sing, With Psalmes vnto my heauenly
King.
Simeon that blessed man, Beleeued Christ when he was come,
And then he did desirs to dye, To liue with him eternally.
Christ wrought me a strong saluation, By his death and bitter
passion:
He hath washt and made me cleane, That I should neuer sinne
again.

(Anon 1624)

The ballad features a deathbed scene much like that of the *Crafte*. The Clarke is everyman, defined only by his faith in Christ.

Both *The Clarke* and *The Battell* propagated an image of death which had much in common with that of Taylor. Their characters censured worldly pomp and pride, encouraging their reader to accept the inevitability of death. However, the balladeers offered versions of death which were more concrete and accessible than *The Holy Dying*. Neither the form nor the content of the text restricted it to a particular section of society. Classical allusions are absent, while the use of metaphor was diminished in favour of the stark admittance of the human condition. Another popular ballad, *A Bell-man for England*, epitomizes the bluntness of the ballads in comparison to *The Holy Dying*:

The wicked shall be damned,
To sorrow, paine and grief,
In boyling brants of brimstone,
With dolefull bearly cheats,
Repent therefore oh England,
The day it draweth near.

(Anon 1620)

The colourful and dramatic language of the ballads recalls the imagery of the medieval block book. The angels and demons of the deathbed are replaced by Death and Time, who continue the fight over the soul of the deceased in similarly dramatic style. *Lo Here I Vaunce with Spear and Shield*, dated c.1579, features a menacing image of Death gloating over his victories:

Loe here I vaunce, with speare and shield,
To warche my pray, to spoyle, to kill;
By day, by night, on sea, one land, noe tyme I stay;
But toyling still, my force I try, to worcke the will of ruling Jove;
With deathfull dart, eache hart I heave, though hard as flint.

(Anon 1579 [1920])

It is difficult not to regard such tracts as *The Clarke of Bodnam* as the natural inheritors of the block book tradition, whilst the *Tractatus* elaborated into more socially exclusive texts such as the works of Lupset and Becon.

There are a number of similarities in form and style which affiliate the medieval block book and the 17th century ballad. Both were short and easy to understand. They

played upon dramatic images of Death, Hell and Judgment, whether in textual or illustrative form, in order to convey simple didactic arguments. Watt (1991:104) has asserted that ballads were intended to function as guides to appropriate deathbed conduct. However, neither the ballad nor the block book provided detailed instructions. They advocated recognition, repentance and renunciation. Dramatic exchanges between images of light and dark mirror allusions to life and death, resurrection and damnation. The language employed in a ballad entitled *Come on Good Fellow Make an End*, which appeared c.1563, typifies the simplicity of these oscillations:

My bewty like the rose to red, my heare like glistening gold;
And canst thou now of *pity* then transforme me into *mold*?

(Anon 1563 [1920])

The unsophisticated opposition of light and dark, good and bad, Heaven and Hell has been noted by Beaty (1970:35) in connection with the medieval *Ars*. Such a dramatic motif could be used to convey the essentials of dying well to the masses. It was easily adapted to rhyme in order to make the message memorable and entertaining. Such tracts educated through drama and play, instilling the tenets of a good death without actually preaching to the audience.

Taylor portrayed death as a state of being, a quiet dissolution of the mortal self at the end of a life of pious endeavour:

He that would die well and happily must in his lifetime,
according to all his capacities, exercise charity and because
religion is the life of the soul, and charity is the life of
religion, the same which gives life to the better part of man,
which never dies, may obtain of God a mercy to the inferior
part of man in the day of its dissolution.

(1651:37)

However, the Death of the ballads is a predator, the incarnation of disease, accident and old age waiting to strike down the proud (Fig.7.49). Since the fact that the ballads would have been read by more people than *The Holy Dying*, it is probable that the image of death and dying portrayed therein was the more socially pervasive of the two forms. Anthropomorphic images of Death with his dart and Time with his scythe and hourglass are present on a small number of 17th century intramural monuments. The most colourful

and animated figures are associated with Gloucestershire's churchyards, perhaps indicating that their artisans felt less constrained in an outdoor environment.

The occupations noted in inscriptions by Bigland suggests that table tombs were erected by individuals who, though prosperous, were not within the same social bracket as great Gloucestershire families such as the Berkeleys. A number of the flamboyant churchyard memorials at Standish, Elmore and Painswick feature explicit carvings of Death, which may imply a link between the popularity of figurative forms of mortality and those of the 'middling sort' (Fig.7.50,7.51). Such merchants, tradesmen and professionals seem to have favoured images found in the cheapest and most accessible forms of text. Striking representations such as these may indicate that these families did not place the same emphasis upon the importance of maintaining an attitude of restraint and decency in death as their intramural counterparts.

Ostentatious portrayals of death and the dead in the later 17th century are rarely found inside, restricted to a small number of churches which were affiliated to wealthy families. The memorials of St. Mary's at Sherborne are the best example of this trend. John Dutton's (d.1656) shrouded effigy, with its references John Donne's memorial at Westminster, portrays affiliation to a cultured upper stratum. Conspicuous allusions



Figure 7.49: An image from the front of Samuel Rowland's 1606 ballad.



Figure 7.50: An anthropomorphic carving of Death on a table tomb at Elmore near Gloucester.



Figure 7.51: Death and Time rendered on a memorial at Painswick.

to Death seem to have been popular within art and literature which might be experienced more privately, away from public spaces. For example, the person of Death and the experience of dying are referenced in numerous paintings of the 17th and early 18th centuries, including Robert Walker's rendering of John Evelyn in 1648 (Fig.7.52), preserved at the National Portrait Gallery. For the most affluent members of society in the late 17th century, consideration of death was thus becoming an increasingly private matter. Its image was experienced through arts and literature which encouraged private contemplation over open confrontation in public. Taylor's *Holy Dying* fits comfortably within this tradition. Using a complex and restricted medium, he remakes death as a sanitised and cultured feature of affluent society.

Elaborate portrayals of death persisted at Sherborne into the late 18th century. However, considered alongside the other Dutton memorials, they affirm the church's role as a family mausoleum rather than a place for public worship. A monument to James Lennox Dutton Esq. and Jane his second wife (c.1791) depicts a starkly realistic Death trampled under the foot of an angel (Fig.7.53). Again, this memorial is intended to identify rather than edify. Its content is secondary to its form, which recalls a renaissance sculpture. Its imposing form states the wealth and refinement of the deceased.



Figure 7.52: A portrait of John Evelyn with a skull, painted by Robert Walker in 1648.

(Image: National Portrait Gallery 2006)

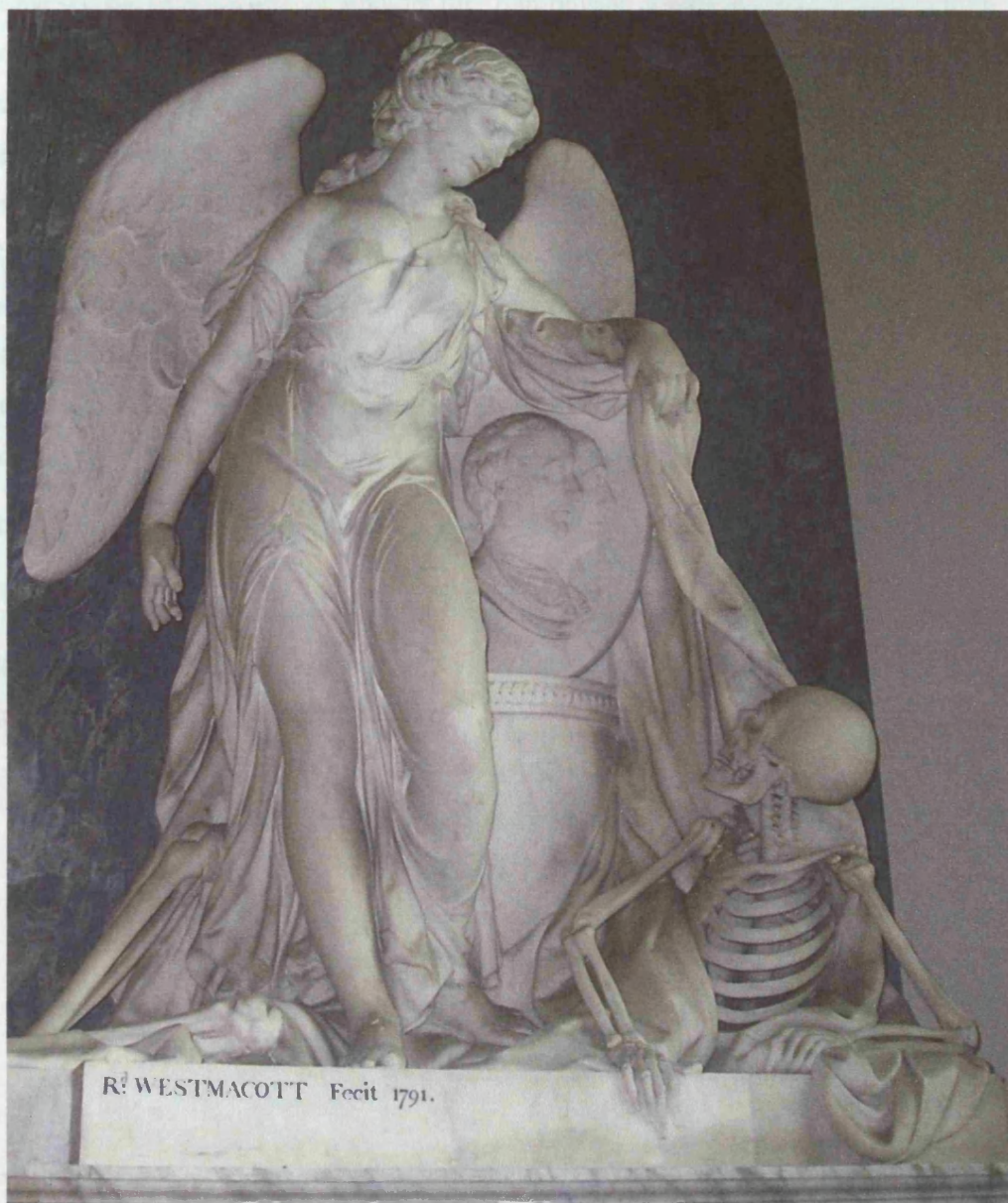


Figure 7.53: A lavish monument commemorating James Lennox Dutton Esq. and Jane his second wife on the north wall of the chancel at St. Mary Magdalene at Sherborne.

It is not possible to say whether such monuments were inspired by the sentiments conveyed by Taylor's text, or whether the 'flamboyant' tombs of East Gloucestershire were erected with the words of the balladeers in mind. Both works were derived from and added to the social and cultural background of the deceased, restating the difference between some individuals and affiliating others through the recognition, employment and interpretation of familiar images. Like *The Holy Dying*, the Noel tomb at Chipping Campden originated within an area of early modern society which increasingly sought to define difference and establish cultural and physical distance from the majority. Images of pious worth manifested in the affirmation of biblical learning and assurance of rebirth, and social worth through Classical learning and mannered discourse defined families such as the Noels and the Duttons apart from their contemporaries.

From *Ars Moriendi* to *Ars Vivendi*

The 17th century saw preparations for death definitively changed from a final concern to a life long process. Jeremy Taylor encouraged his readership to spend each day in contemplation of its own frailty:

Death meets us everywhere, and is procured by every
instrument, and in all chances and enters in at many doors;
by violence and secret influence; by the aspect of a star and
the stink of a mist; by the emissions of a cloud and the
meeting of a vapour; by the fall of a chariot and the
stumbling at a stone; by a full meal or an empty stomach; by
watching at the wine or by watching at prayers.

(1651:12)

This sentiment is mirrored in a poem featured in a common place book by a member of the armigerous Clutterbuck family from Frampton-on-Severn:

Time passeth and fadeth not, Death cometh and waketh not.
Repent today and stay not long tomorrow those cause not. Behold
those seeth the house doth passeth. They waketh like a shadow.
Thy beauty withereth like the grasse. That is cut from the
meadow.

(GRO D149/F13, FF.6)

The Holy Dying used similarly naturalistic wording in its evocation of a life well spent over last minute preparation for a good end. Both the *Ars* author and the Gloucestershire gent who wrote the poem considered death in similarly abstracted ways. Death is presented as something natural and inevitable, yet removed from the person by metaphor and simile. It was made 'polite' and refined.

This detached and culturally sophisticated image of death is suggestive of a more contemplative attitude to preparation prior to dying, possibly taking place in quieter, private spaces outside of the church. This detachment is mirrored by changes in attitudes to public images of the dead among the wealthiest members of society. Towards the end of the century the importance of monumental commemoration in stone appears to have lessened in favour of privatized displays of wealth. Heal and Holmes (1994:70) concur that the public affirmation of lineage was a waning practice in the later 17th century. They suggest that this was due to the fact that social mobility was finally accepted; pointing to Robert Atkyns' acknowledgement in the early 18th century that few wealthy Gloucestershire families lasted more than three generations. Accordingly, the focus of status affirmation changed from overt avowals of position in public to competition between individuals closely matched in position and wealth.

This took place away from public spaces such as the local church. The embellishment of country houses and gardens in the late 17th and 18th centuries suggests that those families previously responsible for monumental commemoration were now spending their money on privatised acts of display. Williamson and Bellamy have noted the increasing seclusion of 18th century houses such as Chatsworth within extensive parkland, suggesting that the owners sought to effect a physical and cultural detachment from the rest of the parish (Williamson and Bellamy 1987:116, Williamson 1998:174-175). Within such a context, prominent displays of familial wealth and strength within the communal setting of the church seem somewhat redundant. William Temple's essay *Upon the Gardens of Epicurus* sums up this new found preference for distancing oneself from town life:

The sweetness and satisfaction of this retreat, where since my resolution taken of never entering again into any public employments, I have passed five years without once going to town, though I am almost in sight of it, and have a house there always ready to receive me.

This desire for separation among the elite of county society became increasingly explicit in the material culture of the 18th century. Williamson and Bellamy (1987:116) and Williamson (1998:174) have argued that changes in the organisation of country estates into the 18th century reveal the demise of medieval face to face communities and a purposeful movement towards the spatial separation of the social classes. This process began with the creation of deer parks which gradually evolved into the landscaped gardens of the 17th and 18th centuries. This was demonstrably the case at Highham Court in Gloucestershire as well as at other houses across the country, such as Chatsworth in Derbyshire (Barnatt and Smith 1997:86).

The landscape paintings which were displayed in such houses contributed to this ideal of separation. They sanitised rural poverty, whilst also marking the gulf between rich and poor. Barrell (1980:22) has highlighted the subtle use of light and dark in George Lambert's *Woody Landscape with a Woman and Child Crossing a Bridge* (1757). The poor and their dwellings are shaded in comparison to the mansions of the rich. The peasants depicted have beautiful and serene faces. They are idealisations rendered for an audience which denied the existence of conflict in the countryside, viewing their world as ordered and hierarchical, yet entirely organic. Such images rendered the landowner a casual observer rather than an active participant in parish life.

It has been suggested that this attitude was a result of the political and religious turmoil associated with urban life in the 17th century, particularly with regard to the Civil War (Turner 2000:1). However, intimations of withdrawal from and privatisation of space were occurring simultaneously in other media. For example, parlour pews and galleries such as the one preserved at Hinton-on-the-Green (Fig.7.54) were erected in churches so that families might enjoy the service in private (Friar 1996: 342-3). Display appears to have become a practice internal to a select group of affluent individuals, contained within walled and distant spaces. This also applied to commemoration. Samuel Richardson described one such instance of privatised commemoration in grounds of Stowe in the early 18th century:

As the Gothick Building is on the Right-hand, so on the Left appears an
Egyptian Pyramid, dedicated to the Memory of Sir *John Vanbrugh*...
which is 60 Feet high, and about half Way up, is this Inscription in very

large Characters:

*Inter plurima hortorum horum aedificia a JOHANNE VANBRUGH,
equite, designata, hanc pyramidem illius memoriae sacram esse voluit
COBHAM.*

In English thus:

*Among a very great Number of Structures in these Gardens, designed
by Sir JOHN VANBRUGH, Knight, COBHAM thought fit that this
Pyramid should be sacred to his Memory.*

(Richardson 1742 [2003])

This form of commemoration was divorced from the space and rites of Christian death, and so seemingly from Taylor's *Ars Moriendi*. Both were active in separating the wealthiest members of society from the rest of the community.

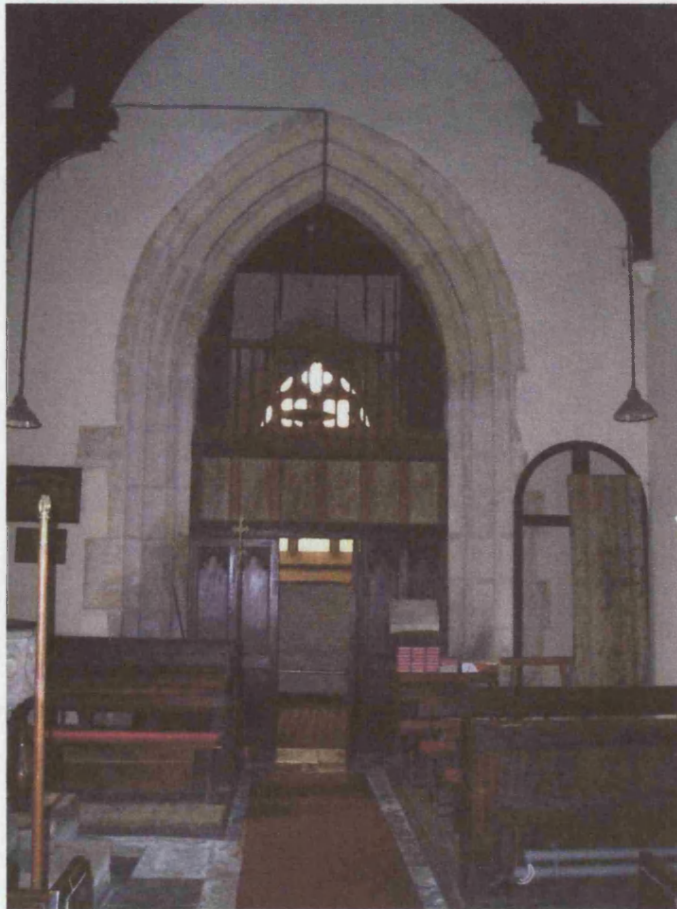


Figure 7.54: A view of the west end of the church at Hinton-on-the-Green in Gloucestershire, showing a gallery in the arch.

The most substantial memorials of the late 17th and early 18th centuries come from churches which were intimately associated with particular families, such as the Dutton memorials at Sherborne. They intimate a desire to escape public life and to focus on the quiet seclusion of the country. However, as Williamson has highlighted in his study of the landed classes in later 17th century Norfolk, major landowners were dependant upon their involvement with in the state machinery in order to thrive:

It was .. the exploitation of government office and sinecures – as well as, to some extent, their investment and involvement in trading enterprises - which enabled members of this group to flourish in the late 17th and early 18th centuries in spite of a climate generally unfavourable to landed estates.

(1998:15)

Williamson cites the 1693 Land Tax, falling populations and agricultural prices as further reasons why involvement in urban, public life was vital in order to maintain an affluent lifestyle in Norfolk. Men such as William Blathwayt, a civil servant under James II and later William III's Secretary of State would have been obliged to retain their positions in London in order to maintain lavish estates such as Dyrham Park (Murison 1990:22). This could be mediated by the creation of extensive gardens around country houses, which shielded the county elite from life beyond the walls when they were not required to be part of it.

A 'class consciousness' and desire to maintain social and economic boundaries is highlighted by an interchange between the Earl and Lady Sandwich. This was detailed in the diary of Samuel Pepys and highlighted by Claire Tomalin in her recent biography:

Lady Sandwich was present at the dinner, and made the mistake of saying that she would like to marry their daughter Jem to a good merchant, unleaching a scornful comment from her husband, who told her he would rather see Jem with a pedler's pack at her back than let her marry a common citizen.

(1660 [2003]:116)

In Gloucestershire, the well-to-do middle class were increasingly taking over from the aristocracy in using the parish space for acts of display. The erection of table tombs in family groups, such as those of the Phillimore family in Cam, reveals the increasing

importance of display in the affirmation of rank among those of lesser means. The negotiation of status was therefore a component of interaction at all levels of society throughout the period covered by this study. The increased range and affordability of memorials and resultant encroachment of merchants, professionals and craftsmen into the church space materialised this process. Individuals such as the John Deighton of Gloucester (d.1676), 'practitioner in physick and chyrugery' and Thomas Peirce the Berkeley clockmaker (d.1665) would have been out of place in the church a hundred years earlier.

Conclusions

Through its analysis of the commemorative material culture in the 1600s, this chapter discussed the severance of the affluent self from the communal space and experiences of the majority, its correspondences in texts and other media and the effects of disconnection upon commemoration in the parish space. The *Ars Moriendi* registers this process of disconnection and the formation of a separated and elevated group identity through facets of its style and content which correspond with themes expressed in commemoration. A noticeable shared theme is that of living justly and piously. Jeremy Taylor encouraged his readership to treat life as preparation for death. Taylor's text is contemplative and philosophical. It was intended to be read well in advance of death in order to augment daily meditation. Lifetime achievement was of similar importance to those erecting memorials in the first half of the 17th century. A number of early 17th memorials centralise effigies in living poses holding prayer books and kneeling at desks, suggesting that individual piety should be seen as a principal facet of their public countenance. However, elites erecting these memorials were motivated by gains in this world rather than salvation after death. Piety in death was displayed prominently as a facet of the elite self to be conveyed to an audience. Imagery and text which described the devotion of the deceased might then reflect positively upon other aspects of the self conveyed in the memorials, such as a glorious ancestry and healthful progeny. This in turn might benefit the memory of dead and their surviving kin.

The importance of living well over dying well manifested itself differently in the later 1600s, as public display gradually lost its significance and the affluent secluded themselves within parlour pews and inside country estates. Throughout most of the century, a trend towards elevation and separation of the elite was registered by Taylor's

Ars and in commemorative forms through shared allusions to refinement and education. Both text and monument betrayed their privileged derivation through the complexities of the metaphors which they conveyed, either as words or in iconographical display. The linguistic complexities of the *Ars* and the leisure time required to absorb and reflect upon its lessons allied it to a social and economic select and betrayed it as a component of an elite identity set aside and above from the majority. On memorials, artful images of cherubim and Latin inscriptions suggested the refined background of the deceased. Elite culture was increasingly defined by affluence, education, fashion and taste, all of which were conducive to its separation from the comprehension of the majority of the local community.

The resources of the aristocracy and gentry were invested into internal display and living well in expansive houses and gardens. However, the church and dying well still had a part to play in the articulation of power relations among the laity. The parish church continued to be implicated in the negotiation of local power relations. Commemoration was increasingly practiced by the so-called 'middling men'; tradesmen, professionals and entrepreneurs seeking to secure a legacy for their families. The emergence of their names in the material culture of the parish church is evidence that the negotiation of power relations can occur at all levels of society, though they might not always be archaeologically identifiable. Commemoration in 17th century Gloucestershire also hints that memorials were made with an audience of just family and friends in mind. An incremental increase in comparatively plain and inconspicuous ledger stones perhaps suggests that the majority of people commemorated in the later 1600s sought nothing more than to be remembered by their kin. The desire to publicly affirm one's social importance in the 1600s, as in previous years, was the wish of a small number of individuals. The ability to erect a memorial in the 17th century became more widespread. However, how an individual might chose to be commemorated and the purpose which that monument was intended to serve was dictated by how they regarded their social and economic selves in relation to the rest of society.

The imagery depicted and written on some of the more prominent later 17th century memorials, particularly those outside, recalls popular images of the deathbed which were ubiquitous in broadsides and chapbooks throughout the 1600s. These texts instructed in a more simplistic and colourful form of the *Ars*, which could be read and absorbed by anyone. Though doubtless encountered by both the affluent and the impoverished, the

anthropomorphic Death of the ballad was quite different from of the metaphorical abstractions of *The Holy Dying*. Combined with imagery such as that of table tombs of the Severn Vale, it both described the distance between the detached culture of Classicism and country houses and vernacular perceptions of the reality of death and dying. They also suggested that ideals of dying well still had popular social currency, remaining a focus for imitation, aspiration and prestige.

CHAPTER 8

Summary

At the beginning of this enquiry, it was suggested that identity might be understood as multifaceted self-definition existing only in relation to the distinctiveness from others. It was stated that material culture could be both context for and participant in these interactions, referenced in the negotiation of identity as a means of highlighting the similarities and differences which emerge in the process of interaction. The identities which emerge from the records of medieval and early modern Gloucestershire are fixed on as the pages in which they persist. They are historically known representatives of their social and economic group, creators of material culture, holders of office, incumbents of title and protagonists in history. Their identities are unchanging on the page and, without consideration of other forms of material culture, appear so in life. However, as this study of the relationship between the elite self and commemoration in Gloucestershire has shown, identity is created through a variety of cultural productions and is active and changeable, dictated by circumstance rather than intrinsic to the person.

Statements based upon historical texts alone do not permit a grasp of how individuals truly saw themselves or elucidation of which aspect of the self was held to be most important in particular instances of encounter and negotiation. Considering texts apart from their material context might also obscure individual understandings of the person and their place in the world beneath the motivations and biases of the author. This is certainly the case with the *Ars Moriendi* texts. Each presented a single interpretation of the relationship between God and humanity at death which was unambiguous on the page, yet might not remain so on dissemination into the encompassing material and social sphere. This study considered a variety of forms of evidence in order to comprehend how strands of identity interacted in relation to their context, creating and recreating the self in accordance with circumstance. Disciplinary and evidential insularity limits the range of interpretative experience which can be brought to the comprehension of medieval and early modern identities. As is the case when considering the relationship between an ideal such as the good death and the

realities of contextualised self-definition, this might create false homogeneity and unjustified simplicity in interpretation.

The foregoing chapters suggested that the reinterpretation and manipulation of *Ars* in service of the social and economic aims of the elite happened throughout the period under consideration. The *Ars Moriendi* defined an idealised death, but cannot be regarded as a straightforward statement of widespread religious practice, nor can didactic instruction be considered to have been its sole meaning or purpose on creation or dissemination. Chapter five demonstrated how the idealized concept of a good and pious death was drawn upon and manipulated in the constitution of elite identities in medieval Gloucestershire. It discussed how piety was associated with images of economic and social superiority in the commemorative scheme of the memorial. This rendered piety in death as something which only the wealthy possessed. The image of pious death referenced ideal death as promulgated in the *Ars*. However, its ideological meaning within its social context was defined by its deployment within public space and relationship with other images such as heraldic devices.

Historical events and processes were vital in determining the format and content of the *Ars* texts, how they were interpreted and so how it might be conveyed through material culture. The events of the later 16th and early 17th centuries purged commemoration of its proactive role in hastening the deceased through Purgatory. In doing so it encouraged the use of secular imagery over religious iconography. Symbols of office, wealth and family gained increased prominence. Certain religious symbols such as bibles and prayer desks continued to advertise the piety of the deceased and their descendants as text gradually took over from image as the principle means of pious expression. However, as was discussed in Chapter six, the events of the Reformation did not significantly affect on the relationship between pious death and elite commemoration. Stylistic change on memorials was subdued and conservative, maintaining suggestions of economic and social superiority alongside allusions to the piety of the deceased. Changes were made to the form and style of the monument which muted the religious sympathies of the deceased and so decreased its chances of incurring damage during times of conflict. Reactions to reform evidenced through changes in the imagery used in commemoration can be contrasted against changes in the style and content of the *Ars Moriendi*. The texts of

Lupset, Becon and Parsons are explicit in their adherence to their respective beliefs. This contrast illustrates the hazards of relying solely upon texts to decipher the prevailing social and religious priorities of a particular time.

Funerary material culture was not the only medium through which identities in Gloucestershire were created and displayed. Therefore, it was important to situate the role of commemoration and the *Ars Moriendi* in the definition of self within the context of the material and social world beyond the parish church. Chapter seven demonstrated how the affluent self was gradually disconnected from the public space over the course of the 17th century. Images of Gloucestershire's wealthiest families such as the Duttons, Brydges and Braithwaytes retreated from the church into the privatised world of the country estate. A fundamental aspect of this was the achievement of segregation and distance from everyday life in the parish, patent in the fashion for secluded houses in ordered gardens, the provision of box pews in the local church and in the changing nature of the *Ars Moriendi*. The style and content of the 17th century *Ars Moriendi* both reflected and contributed to this process. Jeremy Taylor's contribution to the tradition, with its abstract metaphors, Classical references and stress upon dignity and propriety was angled towards an audience which wished to physically separate themselves from those who were economic and socially distant from them. Taylor's was a conceptual text for a detached audience, replete with metaphor and simile and too complex for the majority of people to read. By contrast, ballads such as *Come on Good Fellow Make an End* present a death which is perceptible and universal and so accessible to all. The disparity between the two marks the distinction between the educated and distanced world created by the wealthiest members of society in Gloucestershire and the reality of the shared human condition which this world sought to discount. In Gloucestershire it is reflected by disconnection of the identities of the most affluent members of society from the parish space, divorcing themselves and their fate from that of the majority.

This thesis discussed how the relationship between elite identity and idealised death was articulated through public displays of material culture, focusing upon the funerary monuments of a single region. Finch has noted that few studies have attempted the "systematic and comprehensive examination of a tightly defined sample population of artefacts" (2000:7). This is surprising, as such a rigorous study of the

material culture of a single region would seem to be the most effective way to assess the veracity of nationally observed patterns in religious and commemorative symbolism (Finch 2000:7) and to understand the relationship between such material culture, its physical situation and consequent role in the articulation of individual identity.

Of the few regional studies which have been carried out, Graves (2000) research into the fabric of belief in Devon and Norfolk is of particular interest. Her work suggests that the experience of Christianity and power relations are inseparable. She considers the use of scales within the iconographic context of judgement as depicted in the Doom paintings of the Middle Ages and how this might be related to the increasing patronisation of such works by members of the mercantile class, with whom the image of weighting struck a cord. She cites the depiction of the tools of the Passion on John Lane's merchant mark on his chapel at Cullompton as further evidence of relationship between self-made wealth and Christian imagery (2000:106). Graves' work examines a number of material themes evident in the later medieval period, such as the proliferation of Doom paintings and the increasing visibility of merchant wealth. The comprehensive and controlled nature of her regional sample adds intricacy and substance to these themes. Not only is our understanding of the region under study embellished, wider trends which might have been noted from less intensive studies are questioned, refuted or rendered more explicit. This thesis sought to comprehend how idealised death, as presented in literature found throughout the country was received and comprehended by individuals. It too examined material themes which might be widespread throughout the country, such as the relative importance of appearing to die 'well' and piously against forms of imagery which might be important in commemoration, such as regard for ancestry and progeny. Many of the conclusions reached during the course of this study are related to the geographical, social and economic situation of Gloucestershire during the period under study, such as the wealth generated by wool and cloth. However, there is no reason why the manipulation of pious ideals in the definition of elite identity might not be more widespread. Further regional studies of commemoration in the medieval and early modern period are needed to assess the prevalence of this facet of the elite self and to highlight any differences between funerary material culture in Gloucestershire and elsewhere in the country.

To summarise, the evolution of the *Ars Moriendi* tradition was characterised by the manipulation of didactic convention to the social and economic benefit of an influential minority. The edicts of the texts were caught up in dialogues of power negotiation, referenced in the definition and perpetuation of the identities of those who manipulated them. The relationship between the good death and its audience cannot be understood through isolated readings of the text, nor can such an abstract consideration of its teachings provide a useful insight into the nature of death and dying during the period under study. To comprehend how the ideal of pious death operated in society it is necessary to contextualise it in terms of social, economic, religious and political concerns of those who might have experienced it, how these concerns related to each other and to their material environment. Through a more comprehensive consideration of the manipulation of material culture in dialogues of identity formation, the concept of pious death can be understood as an important ideological tool in the negotiation of power relations. Idealised death and the prestige associated with it was referenced and reproduced in text and monument in order to place certain individuals above others through apparent piety and actual economic resources and social status.

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