

Ralph Houlbrooke, ed. — *Death, Ritual, and Bereavement*. London and New York: Routledge, 1989. Pp. viii, 250.

The essays in this collection represent a variety of approaches to the history of death and dying in England from the sixteenth through the early twentieth century. Originally presented at a 1987 conference sponsored by the Social History Society of the United Kingdom, they range widely in both subject matter and evidence. There is, nonetheless, an overall focus in the essays, which aim at reconstructing the emotional atmosphere surrounding deathbeds, funerals, and cemeteries. The editor, Ralph Houlbrooke, notes in his introduction that the studies do not touch on either the demographic realities that might help explain changes in the culture of death or on theological speculations about the afterlife. But Houlbrooke is right to mention that the eleven essays evoke common themes and suggest some interesting confirmations and qualifications of the seminal work on death by Philippe Ariès.

Houlbrooke's essay on "Death, Church, and Family" opens the collection with an overview of the effects of the Reformation on the social history of death. According to him, wills from the seventeenth century reveal "a gradual secularization" as pious bequests declined and references to saints disappeared. His focus on "secularization" is shared by many of the contributors to this volume. Roy Porter demonstrates that doctors had already established themselves as crucial intermediaries between the living and the dead by the end of the eighteenth century. The willingness of physicians such as Sir Henry Hallford to manage pain and treat the dying with opium won them popular support; Porter pushes back the process of the "medicalization" of death described by Ariès well into the eighteenth century, and also provides a much more positive interpretation of the role of the medical profession, which has been criticized by both historians and social commentators. Jim Morgan's examination of the burial question in the middle years of the nineteenth century shows how health concerns and the objections of Nonconformists resulted in the creation of public cemeteries outside the control of the Anglican church. The availability of cremation and the attempts of unbelievers to console each other without reference to the Christian doctrine of immortality are other signs of the loss of church power starting in the latter years of the nineteenth century.

But how much of its power over death had official Christianity really lost by the end of the nineteenth century? Despite the evidence of "secularization" in several of the essays, Martha McMackin Garland, in her work on Victorian unbelief, also notes that:

In Victorian England, it was Christianity, including beliefs, rituals, and consolatory language, which provided the emotional and social structure that almost all human societies seem to find necessary (169-170).

In an essay that summarizes part of her important work on death and burial in the nineteenth century, Ruth Richardson refers to "the persistence of resurrection and judgement imagery and the currency of belief in physical resurrection in the popular death songs of this era (109). In the closing essay on the culture of death among the Lancashire working class in the early twentieth century, Elizabeth Roberts acknowledges that she never raised the issue of religious belief in the oral interviews that constitute her evidence. She speculates, nonetheless, that:

Perhaps underpinning and ultimately explaining the working-class attitude to death and bereavement was a belief that the dead wife, husband, child, or parent was going to a better place (207).

The essays in this collection raise other questions beyond that of religion and religious belief. Jennifer Leaney links the introduction of cremation in the 1870s to the movement earlier in the century to prohibit burial in overcrowded churchyards. The hygienic arguments in favor of the removal of the dead from cities and of cremation both derived much of their force from an abhorrence of the corruption of the corpse, and of contact between the living and the dead. Such fear of the dead was much less evident among the Lancashire working people studied by Elizabeth Roberts. Neighbors in this industrial city continued to take responsibility for laying out the dead, who were displayed in an open coffin in their homes, well into the twentieth century. Finally, a number of essays, including Pat Jalland's review of the funeral customs of the upper classes, suggest an increasing reliance on family members rather than community as the source of consolation. The role of religion is nevertheless central to this volume, and the authors' different view on this matter suggest that the concept of "secularization" employed by Houlbrooke needs to be applied cautiously. These essays, which are for the most part studies of specific bodies of evidence over a relatively brief period, need to be placed in broad chronological framework, a point which Houlbrooke recognizes in his introduction. They would also profit from more systematic comparisons with France, where similar research is being conducted. *Death, Ritual, and Bereavement* is nonetheless a valuable and suggestive set of essays that illuminates how the English have dealt with loss and grief over the past four centuries.

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Bruce Kuklick — *To Every Thing a Season. Shibe Park and Urban Philadelphia, 1909-1976*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1991. Pp. xiv, 240, ill.

"There used to be a ball field at Twenty-first and Lehigh" (196) in North Philadelphia. It was called Shibe Park from 1909 (when it was opened) until 1953, and Connie Mack Stadium from 1953 to 1976 (when it was torn down). It was the first of many concrete and steel parks built for major league baseball clubs in the first quarter of the twentieth century; among the others soon constructed were Forbes Field in Pittsburgh, Wrigley Field and Comiskey Park in Chicago, Fenway Park in Boston. Some of the most interesting sections of this handsome, well-researched book by intellectual historian Bruce Kuklick deal with the stadium itself — with the advantages of this steel and concrete park over the wooden ones it replaced, with the ways in which the park was altered and expanded over the years, and with how the facility originally was built so that "the imperatives of the urban landscape" were "synthesized...with the demands of [baseball]...as both sport and business" (20).

This volume is not primarily about the stadium, however, but about the people whose lives "intersected" (6) with it. It is about owners of and players for the Philadelphia Athletics, the American League baseball club that played in the park from 1909 through 1954, then moved to Kansas City and eventually to Oakland. It is about the members of the Philadelphia Phillies, the National League baseball team that rented or owned Shibe Park from 1938 through 1970. It is about the National