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The new behavioral sciences—and linguistics—have introduced the notions of diachrony and synchrony, which will perhaps be helpful to us historians. Since many factors relating to the mentality, or turn of mind, are *long term*, the attitude toward death may appear almost static over very long periods of time. It appears to be a-chronic. And yet, at certain moments, changes occur, usually slow and unnoticed changes, but sometimes, as today, more rapid and perceptible ones. The difficulty for the historian lies in being sensitive to changes, but yet not being obsessed by them to the

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point of forgetting the great forces of inertia which reduce the real impact of innovations.¹

With this in mind, I divided the topics under discussion here into four parts. The first chapter is essentially synchronic. It covers a long chain of centuries, approximately a millennium. I have called it: "Tamed Death." In the second chapter we shall encounter diachrony. What changes occurring during the Middle Ages, beginning approximately with the twelfth century, began to modify the a-chronic attitude toward death, and what can be the meaning of these changes? The final two chapters will be devoted to contemporary attitudes, which are reflected in the cult of cemeteries and tombs and in the interdict laid upon death by industrialized societies.

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We shall begin with tamed death. Let us first see how the knights in the *chansons de geste* or the oldest romances faced death.

First of all, they were usually forewarned. They did not die without having had time to realize that

¹Historians today are discovering the quasi-static nature of traditional cultures. Even their demographic and economic equilibria change little or, when they are upset, tend to return to their habitual state. See the works of E. Le Roy Ladurie, primarily *Les Paysans de Languedoc* (Paris, 1966).

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they were going to die. If their deaths were terrible ones, such as by the plague, or abrupt, they had to be presented as the exception, something one did not talk about. Normally, then, the man was forewarned.

“Know ye well,” said Gawain, “that I shall not live two days.”²

King Ban had taken a bad fall. When he regained consciousness, he noticed the crimson blood running from his mouth, his nose, his ears. “He looked up to heaven and uttered as best he could . . . ‘Ah, Lord God, help me, for I see and I know that my end has come.’ ”³ *I see and I know.*

At Roncevaux, Roland “feels that death is taking hold of him completely. From his head it is moving down toward his heart.” “He feels that his time has come.”⁴ Tristram “sensed that his life was ebbing away, he understood that he was going to die.”⁵

² “La mort d’Artus,” *Les romans de la Table ronde*, ed. J. Boulenger (abridged ed.; Paris, 1941), p. 443.

Translator’s note: These details are generally not found in Sir Thomas Malory’s *Morte d’Arthur*; the author’s references to the older French versions of these romances have therefore been used.

³ “Les enfances de Lancelot du Lac,” *ibid.*, p. 124.

⁴ *La chanson de Roland*, ed. J. Bédier (Paris, 1922), chaps. CLXXIV, CLXXV, CLXVIII.

⁵ *Le roman de Tristan et Iseult*, ed. J. Bédier (Paris, 1946), p. 233.

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Pious monks behaved in the same manner as knights. At Saint Martin de Tours, in the tenth century, after four years of seclusion, a venerable hermit “felt,” in the words of Raoul Glaber, “that he was soon going to leave this world.” The same author recounts how another monk with some medical knowledge had to hurry the brothers he was treating. Time was running out: “He knew that his death was near.”⁶

Let us note that the warning came through natural signs or, even more frequently, through an inner conviction rather than through a supernatural, magical premonition. It was something very simple, something prevailing throughout the ages, something which persists even today as an anachronism within industrialized societies. A sort of spontaneous realization, it was foreign both to the cults of the miraculous and to Christian piety. There was no way of cheating, of pretending one hadn't noticed. In 1491, in the midst of the humanist Renaissance which we have the bad habit of contrasting with the Middle Ages—in any event in an urbanized world far different from that of Roland or Tristram—a *juvencula*, a very young girl, pretty, coquettish, loving life and pleasures, was taken ill. Would she, with the complicity of her

⁶Quoted by G. Duby, *L'an Mil* (Paris, 1967), p. 89.

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intimate friends, cling to life by acting, by pretending that she did not realize the seriousness of her ailment? No. She did, however, rebel; but this rebellion did not take the form of a refusal of death. "*Cum cerneret, infelix juvencula, de proxima situ imminere mortem.*" *Cum cerneret*: She saw, the wretched girl, her approaching death. Then, despairing, she offered her soul to the devil.⁷

In the seventeenth century, mad though he was, Don Quixote made no attempt to flee from death into the daydreams in which he had passed his life. On the contrary, the warning signs of death brought him back to his senses: " 'Niece,' he said very calmly, 'I feel that death is near.' "⁸

Saint-Simon said that Madame de Montespan was afraid of death. Actually, she was afraid of not having a forewarning and also (and we shall return to this point) of dying alone. "She would go to bed with all her bed curtains open and a great number of candles in her room, and women watching about her whom, whenever she awoke, she expected to find chatting, playing games, or eating to prevent themselves from falling asleep." But despite her anguish, on May 27, 1707, she too knew that she

⁷Quoted by A. Tenenti, *Il senso della morte e l'amore della vita nel Rinascimento* (Turin, 1957), p. 170, n. 18.

⁸Cervantes, *Don Quixote* (Baltimore: Penguin Books, 1950), Part II, chap. LXXIV, pp. 934-40.

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was going to die and made ready.⁹ On July 29, 1750, the day of Johann Sebastian Bach's death, Anna Magdalena Bach used the same phrase: "... feeling his end approach."¹⁰

The same words are passed on from age to age, unchanged, like a proverb. We find them in Tolstoy in a period in which their simplicity had already become blurred. But Tolstoy's genius lies in having rediscovered them. On his deathbed in a rural railroad station, Tolstoy murmured: "And the mujiks? How do the mujiks die?" The mujiks died like Roland, Tristram, or Johann Sebastian Bach. They knew what was happening. In Tolstoy's "Three Deaths" an old coachman lies dying in the kitchen of an inn, near the warm brick oven. He knows it. When a woman asks him kindly how he feels, he replies, "It hurts me all over. My death is at hand, that's what it is."¹¹

Death still sometimes came like that in the rationalist and positivist, or the romantic and exalted France of the nineteenth century. Take M. Pouget's mother. According to Jean Guitton, "In

⁹ Saint-Simon, *Mémoires*, ed. A. de Boislisle (Paris, 1901), Vol. XV, p. 96.

¹⁰ A. M. Bach, *The Little Chronicle*, trans. Esther Meynell (London, 1925).

¹¹ L. Tolstoi, "Three Deaths," from "The Death of Ivan Ilyitch, and Other Stories," *Works of Lyof N. Tolstoi* (New York, 1899), Vol. XI, p. 81.

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1874 she was seized by a *colérine* [a serious illness]. At the end of four days: 'Go get the priest.' The priest came. He wanted to administer the last rites. 'Not yet, Monsieur le Curé, I will notify you when the time comes.' And two days later: 'Go tell Monsieur le Curé to bring me the extreme unction.' " And Jean Guitton—who was writing this in 1941—remarked, "We can see how the Pougets in those bygone days [1874!] passed on from this world into the next, as simple and practical persons, observers of signs and above all of themselves. They were in no hurry to die, but when they saw that their hour had come, then without haste or delay, but with a sense of proper timing, they died as Christians."¹² But non-Christians died just as simply.

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Knowing that his end was near, the dying person prepared for death. And everything would be done very simply, as with the Pougets or Tolstoy's mujiks. In a world as steeped in the supernatural as that of the Round Table, death was a very simple thing. When Launcelot, wounded and dazed in a deserted forest, realized that he had "lost even the

¹² J. Guitton, *Portrait de M. Pouget* (Paris, 1941), p. 14.

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strength of his body," he believed he was about to die.¹³ So what did he do? His gestures were fixed by old customs, ritual gestures which must be carried out when one is about to die. He removed his weapons and lay down quietly upon the ground, though as last wills and testaments would state over several centuries, he should have been in bed—"Gisant au lit malade," lying on my sickbed. He spread his arms out, his body forming a cross—which, too, was not the usual procedure. But he remembered to lie in such a way that his head faced east, toward Jerusalem.

When Iseult found Tristram dead, she knew that she too would die. So she lay down beside him and turned toward the east.

At Roncevaux, Archbishop Turpin awaited his death lying down, and "on his breast, in the very middle, crossed his beautiful white hands." This is the posture of funerary statues beginning with the twelfth century; in primitive Christianity the defunct was portrayed with his arms outstretched, in the manner of a worshipper.

One awaited death lying down, *gisant*. This ritual position was stipulated by the thirteenth-century liturgists. "The dying man," according to Guillaume Durand, bishop of Mende, "must lie on

¹³"La quête du Saint Graal," *La Table ronde*, p. 347.

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his back so that his face is always turned toward heaven." This posture was not the same as that of the Jews; according to descriptions in the Old Testament, the Jews turned to the wall when dying.

Thus prepared, the dying man could carry out the final steps of the traditional ceremony. Take the example of Roland in the *Chanson de Roland*. The first step was to express sorrow over the end of life, a sad but very discreet recollection of beloved beings and things, a summary which was reduced to a few images. Roland "was seized by several things to remember": first, "of so many lands which he, the valiant one, had conquered," then of sweet France, of the men of his lineage, of Charlemagne, his lord who had nurtured him, of his master and his companions (*compains*). No thought for his mother or his fiancée, just sad, moving recollections. "He wept and could not keep himself from sighing." But this emotion was short-lived, as was the subsequent mourning by the survivors. It was a ritual moment.

After the lamentation about the sadness of dying came the pardoning of the always numerous companions and helpers who surrounded the deathbed. Oliver asked Roland forgiveness for any harm he might have unintentionally done him: " 'I pardon you here and before God.' At these words the one bowed to the other." The dying man com-

mended the survivors to God: “ ‘May God bless Charles and sweet France,’ implored Oliver, ‘and above all Roland, my companion.’ ” In the *Chanson de Roland* the question of a tomb and the selection of its location does not arise. The choice of a tomb does exist however in the later poems of the Round Table.

Now it was time to forget the world and think of God. The prayer had two parts. The first was the *culpa* (“God, by thy grace I admit my guilt for my sins . . .”), which later developed into the *confiteor*. “Oliver confessed his sins aloud, his two hands joined and lifted toward heaven, and begged God to grant him paradise.” This was the gesture of the penitent. The second part of the prayer was the *commendacio animae*, a paraphrase of a very old prayer borrowed from the Jewish synagogue. In the French of the sixteenth to eighteenth centuries, these prayers were called the *recommandaces*. “True Father, who never lies, who recalled Lazarus from the dead, who saved Daniel from the lions, save my soul from all peril. . . .”

At this point came absolution, indisputably the sole religious, or rather ecclesiastic (for everything was religious) act. It was granted by the priest, who read psalms, the *libera*, burned incense over the dying man, and sprinkled him with holy water. This absolution was also repeated over the dead

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body, at the moment of its burial, at which time it was called the *absoute*. But the word *absoute* was never used in common speech; last wills and testaments used the words *les recommandaces, le libera*.

Later, in the Romances of the Round Table, the dying received the *Corpus Christi*. Extreme unction was reserved for clerics, especially monks.

After the final prayer all that remained was the wait for death, and there was no reason for death to tarry. Thus Oliver's "heart fails him, his entire body sinks upon the ground. The Count is dead; he lingers no longer." Should death happen to come more slowly, the dying man waited in silence: "He said [his last prayer] and never again uttered a word."¹⁴

* * *

Let us stop here and make a few general observations. The first—death in bed, the recumbent figure "lying on its sickbed"—has already been sufficiently set forth.

The second is that death was a ritual organized by the dying person himself, who presided over it and knew its protocol. Should he forget or cheat, it

¹⁴ *La chanson de Roland*, chap. CLXVI; Durand de Mende, "Du cimetière . . .," chap. XXXVIII, XXXIV, *Rationale divinorum officiorum*, ed. C. Barthelemy, Paris, 1854, Vol. IV, chap. 5.

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was up to those present, the doctor or the priest, to recall him to a routine which was both Christian and customary.

It was also a public ceremony. The dying man's bedchamber became a public place to be entered freely. At the end of the eighteenth century, doctors who were discovering the first principles of hygiene complained about the overcrowded bedrooms of the dying.¹⁵ In the early nineteenth century, passers-by who met the priest bearing the last sacrament still formed a little procession and accompanied him into the sickroom.¹⁶

It was essential that parents, friends, and neighbors be present. Children were brought in; until the eighteenth century no portrayal of a deathbed scene failed to include children. And to think of how carefully people today keep children away from anything having to do with death!

A final point, and the most important one, is the simplicity with which the rituals of dying were accepted and carried out,—in a ceremonial manner,

¹⁵ "Dès que quelqu'un tombe malade, on ferme la maison, on allume les chandelles et tout le monde s'assemble autour du malade." Enquête médicale organisée par Vicq d'Azyr, 1774-94. J. P. Peter, "Malades et maladies au 18^e siècle," *Annales. Économies, sociétés, civilisations*, 1967, p. 712.

¹⁶ P. Craven, *Récit d'une soeur* (Paris, 1867), Vol. II, p. 197. There are numerous portrayals of this scene in the academic paintings of the second half of the nineteenth century.

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yes, but with no theatrics, with no great show of emotion.

The best analysis of this attitude is found in Alexander Solzhenitsyn's *The Cancer Ward*. Yefrem thought he knew more about death than the old folk. "The old folk, who never even made it to town, they were scared, while Yefrem rode horses and fired pistols at thirteen. . . . But now . . . he remembered how the old folk used to die back home on the Kama—Russians, Tartars, Votyaks, or whatever they were. They didn't puff themselves up or fight against it and brag that they weren't going to die—they took death *calmly* [author's italics]. They didn't stall squaring things away, they prepared themselves quietly and in good time, deciding who should have the mare, who the foal. . . . And they departed easily, as if they were just moving into a new house."¹⁷

It could not be better expressed. People had been dying like that for centuries or millennia. In a world of change the traditional attitude toward death appears inert and static. The old attitude in which death was both familiar and near, evoking no great fear or awe, offers too marked a contrast to ours, where death is so frightful that we dare not utter its name. This is why I have called this

¹⁷ A. Solzhenitsyn, *Cancer Ward* (New York, 1969), pp. 96–97.

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household sort of death "tamed death." I do not mean that death had once been wild and that it had ceased to be so. I mean, on the contrary, that today it has become wild.

* * *

We shall now touch upon another aspect of the old familiarity with death: the coexistence of the living and the dead.

This is a new and surprising phenomenon, unknown in pagan Antiquity and even in early Christianity. And it has been completely alien to us since the late eighteenth century.

Our knowledge of the ancient pre-Christian civilizations comes in large part from funeral archeology, from objects found in tombs. One of the aims of the ancient funeral cults was to prevent the deceased from *returning* to disturb the living.

Philology provides another insight into ancient beliefs and feelings. The word *funus* can be translated as either the dead body, the funeral ceremony, or murder. *Funestus* means a profanation provoked by a cadaver; in French it became the word *funeste*, or deadly, ill-omened.¹⁸

¹⁸"Ad sanctos," *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne* (Paris, 1907), Vol. I, pp. 479ff.

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Thus, despite their familiarity with death, the Ancients feared being near the dead and kept them at a distance, honoring the sepulchers. The world of the living had to be kept separate from that of the dead. In Rome, the law of the Twelve Tables forbade burial *in urbe*, within the city. The Theodosian Code repeated the same interdict, so that the *sanctitas* of the inhabitants' homes would be preserved. This is why cemeteries were located outside cities, along roads such as the Appian Way of Rome or les Alyscamps of Arles.

St. John Chrysostom experienced the same revulsion as his pagan ancestors when in a homily he directed Christians to oppose a new practice, as yet infrequent: "Watch that you never build a tomb within the city. If a cadaver were placed where you sleep and eat, what protests you would make. And yet you place the dead not near where you sleep and eat, but upon the very limbs of Christ,"¹⁹ that is, in the churches. But the practice denounced by St. John Chrysostom was to spread and become common usage, despite the interdicts of canon law.

This began not so much with Christianity as with the cult of martyrs originating in Africa. Martyrs were buried in extra-urban necropolises

¹⁹ St. John Chrysostom, *Opera . . .*, ed. Montfaucon (Paris, 1718-38), Vol. VII, p. 71, homily 74.

shared by Christians and pagans. The venerated sites of their tombs soon attracted other sepulchers. St. Paulin had his son's body carried to a spot near the martyrs of Aecola in Spain, "so that he might be associated with the martyrs through the union of the tomb, in order that in the vicinity of the blood of the saints he may draw upon that virtue which purifies our souls against fire."²⁰ "The martyrs," explained another fifth-century author, Maximus of Turin, "will keep guard over us, who live with our bodies, and they will take us into their care when we have forsaken our bodies. Here they prevent us from falling into sinful ways, there they will protect us from the horrors of hell. That is why our ancestors were careful to unite our bodies with the bones of the martyrs."²¹

This union began in the extra-urban cemeteries where the first martyrs had been buried. Over the saint's tomb a basilica would be built and entrusted to monks. Christians sought to be buried close to this structure. Diggings in the Roman cities of Africa or Spain reveal an extraordinary spectacle concealed by subsequent urban growth: piles of stone sarcophagi in disorder, one on top of the other, several layers high, especially around the

²⁰ "Ad sanctos," *Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne*, Vol. I, pp. 479ff.

²¹ *Patrologia latina*, Vol. LVII, cols. 427-28.

walls of the apse, close to the shrine of the saint. This accumulation bears witness to the desire to be buried near the saints, *ad sanctos*.

A time came when the distinction disappeared between the suburbs, where people were buried *ad sanctos* because the site was *extra urbem*, and the city, where tombs had always been forbidden. We know how this occurred at Amiens in the sixth century. St. Vaast, a bishop who died in 540, had selected his tomb outside the city. But when the pallbearers tried to carry him away they could not move the corpse, which had suddenly become too heavy. Then the archpriest begged the saint to command "that you be carried to the spot which we [the clergy of the cathedral] have prepared for you"²² within the church. He was correctly interpreting the saint's wishes, for the body at once became light. In order for the clergy to circumvent the traditional interdict and to make provision within the cathedral for the tombs of the saints and the sepulchers which the holy tomb would attract, the old revulsion would already have had to become much weakened.

Thus, the distinction between the abbey with its cemetery and the cathedral church became blurred.

²²Quoted in E. Salin, *La civilisation mérovingienne* (Paris, 1949-59), Vol. II, p. 35.

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The dead, which already mingled with the inhabitants of the popular quarters that had been built in the suburbs about the abbeys, also made their way into the historic heart of the cities from which they had been excluded for thousands of years.

Henceforth, there would be no difference between the church and the cemetery.

* * *

In medieval speech the word “church” did not mean solely the church buildings but the entire space around the church. In the customary law of Hainault the “parochial” or parish church included the nave, the belfrey, and the “*chimiter*” or cemetery.

Sermons were preached, sacraments were distributed on high holy days, and processions were held within the courtyard or *atrium* of the church, which was also hallowed ground. Reciprocally, people were buried either in the church, against its walls, in the surrounding area (*in porticu*), or under the rain spouts (*sub stillicidio*). The word cemetery was more specifically used for the outer part of the church, the *atrium*, or in French the *aitre*. *Aitre* was one of two words used in common speech to designate the cemetery, for until the fifteenth cen-

bury the word cemetery belonged to the Latin of the clerics.²³ Turpin urged Roland in the *Chanson de Roland* to sound his horn so that the king and his army could come to avenge them, weep over them, and "bury them in the *aitres* of the monasteries." The word *aitre* has disappeared from modern French, but its Germanic equivalent has persisted in English, German, and Dutch as "churchyard."

In French another word was used as a synonym for *aitre*: the *charnier* or charnel house. In the *Chanson de Roland* it appears as *carnier*. It has persisted, in its most primitive form, the form which is closest to the Latin word *carnis*, in popular French slang: "*une vieille carne*," an old nag or a tough piece of meat; and it probably was, in Roland's day, a sort of slang term for something for which classical Latin had no name and which church Latin had christened with the scholarly Greek word *cimeterium*. It is interesting to note that for the Romans the funeral structure itself—*tumulus*, *sepulcrum*, *monumentum*, or more simply *loculus*—was more important than the space it

²³C. Du Cange, "Cemeterium," *Glossarium mediae et infimae latinitatis* (Niort, 1883-87); E. Viollet-le-Duc, "Tombeau," *Dictionnaire raisonné de l'architecture française* (Paris, 1870), Vol. IX, pp. 21-67; *La chanson de Roland*, chap. CXXXII.

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occupied. To the medieval mind, on the contrary, the enclosed space about the sepulchers was more important than the tomb itself.

In the beginning *charnier* or charnel house was synonymous with *aitre*. By the end of the Middle Ages it meant only a part of the cemetery, that is to say the galleries which ran along the churchyard and above which were ossuaries. In fifteenth-century Paris, the Cemetery of the Innocents "is a great cemetery, a very large enclosure of houses called *charniers*, in which the dead are piled up."²⁴

Thus we can imagine the cemetery as it appeared in the Middle Ages and even into the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, until the Age of the "Enlightenment."

It was a rectangular churchyard, with the church itself generally forming one of its four sides. The three others were often decorated with arcades or charnel houses. Above these galleries were the ossuaries in which skulls and limbs were artistically arranged. This striving after artistic effects with bones—a form of decoration which was both baroque and macabre—ended in the mid-eighteenth century; examples can still be seen in Rome in the Capuchin Church or in the church which stands

²⁴G. Le Breton, *Description de Paris sous Charles VI*, quoted in J. Leroux de Lincy and L. Tisserand, *Paris et ses historiens* (Paris, 1867), p. 193.



“The Cemetery of the Innocents and Its Charnel House, Paris, during the reign of Francis I” (sixteenth-century Flemish), in the Musée Carnavalet, Paris. Photo Lauros-Giraudon.

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behind the Farnese Palace, where chandeliers and ornaments are made solely of small bones.

Where did the bones thus displayed in the charnel houses come from? They came chiefly from the great common graves—called the *fosses aux pauvres*, the ditches for the poor. Several yards deep and wide, they were gradually filled up with cadavers sewn into their shrouds. When one ditch was full it was covered with earth, an old one was reopened, and the bones were taken to the charnel houses. The remains of the more wealthy dead, buried within the church itself, were not placed in vaults but in the dirt, under the flagstones. They too eventually followed the path to the charnel houses. As yet unborn was the modern idea that the dead person should be installed in a sort of house unto himself, a house of which he was the perpetual owner or at least the long-term tenant, a house in which he would be at home and from which he could not be evicted. In the Middle Ages and even as late as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the exact destination of one's bones was of little concern so long as they remained near the saints, or in the church, near the altar of the Virgin or of the Holy Sacrament. Thus the body was entrusted to the Church. It made little difference what the Church saw fit to do with these bodies so long as they remained within its holy precincts.



The fact that the dead had entered the church and its courtyard did not prevent both from becoming public places. The use of the cemetery for non-funeral purposes developed from the notion that it was an asylum and a refuge. For the lexicographer Charles Du Cange (1610–88) the word *cimetière* did not always necessarily denote the place of burials; it could also mean a place of asylum independent of any funeral usage. He defined cemetery in terms of the notion of asylum: *Azylus circum ecclesiam*.²⁵

Thus, within this asylum called a cemetery, whether or not bodies were buried there, people began to reside, to build houses, and then the word “cemetery” came to mean, if not a quarter of the city, at least a cluster of houses enjoying certain fiscal or domanial privileges. More broadly speaking, people became accustomed to meeting within this asylum, as had the Romans in the Forum or the Mediterraneans on the Plaza Major or the Corso, in order to carry on business, to dance and gamble, or simply for the pleasure of being to-

²⁵Du Cange, “Cemeterium”; E. Lesnes, “Les cimetières,” *Histoire de la propriété ecclésiastique en France* (Lille, 1910), Vol. III; A. Bernard, *La sépulture en droit canonique* (Paris, 1933); C. Enlart, *Manuel d’archéologie médiévale* (Paris, 1927), p. 909.

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gether. Shops and merchants appeared along the charnel houses. Within the Cemetery of the Innocents public scribes offered their services.

In 1231 the Church Council of Rouen forbade dancing in cemeteries or churches under pain of excommunication. Another council held in 1405 forbade dancing in cemeteries, forbade carrying on any form of gambling there, and forbade mummers and jugglers, theatrical troops, musicians, and charlatans to carry on their doubtful trades there.

A text dated 1657 reveals that people were beginning to be disturbed by the juxtaposition in a single place of tombs and "five hundred sorts of sports which can be seen within these galleries." "In the midst of this throng [of public writers, seamstresses, booksellers, second-hand clothes dealers] people had to go about conducting a burial, reopening a tomb, and removing cadavers which were not yet entirely decomposed; here, even in the dead of winter, the earth of the cemetery gave off mephitic odors."²⁶ But although at the end of the seventeenth century signs of intolerance began to appear, the fact remains that for more than a thousand years people had been perfectly adapted

²⁶Berthold, *La ville de Paris en vers burlesques. Journal d'un voyage à Paris en 1657*, quoted in V. Dufour, *Paris à travers les âges* (Paris, 1875-82), Vol. II.

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to this promiscuity between the living and the dead.

The spectacle of the dead, whose bones were always being brought up to the surface of the cemeteries, as was the skull in *Hamlet*, made no more impression upon the living than did the idea of their own death. They were as familiar with the dead as they were familiarized with the idea of their own death.



One's Own Death