

doi:10.1017/S0144686X06255727

Peter C. Jupp, *From Dust to Ashes, Cremation and the British Way of Death*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, Hampshire, 2005, 232 pp., hbk £50.00, ISBN 0333692985.

This is the first major published work to deal in detail with the birth and growth of cremation, largely in England and Wales. Firmly historical, it approaches the subject in a progressive fashion with chapters on, 'How the church lost its monopoly of burial, 1820–1852'. 'Cremation legalised, 1852–1884'. 'The early years of cremation, 1884–1914.' 'The development of cremation, 1914–1939'. 'The advance of cremation: wartime and reconstruction, 1939–1952', and 'The popularization of cremation in England, 1952–2000'. An Introduction and Conclusion both embrace historical and religious issues, from the rise of early and medieval Christianity, through the conflicts of the Reformation, to 19th- and 20th-century social changes in death-related beliefs and customs.

Peter Jupp has turned his historian's eye to the question of how a culture long wedded to burial could, within decades, shift to a majority practice of cremation. He identifies five main factors, first, the desire to foster public health by physicians and other social reformers in the shadow of Britain's industrialisation and urban population growth; second, the innovative cultural challenge to the legal and ecclesiastical establishments that maintained the tradition of burial. The third element, explicitly economic, was the desire to reduce funeral expenses, not least amongst those less well able to afford them. Here again, social reformers had a part to play, as also with the fourth factor, land-use planning. The desire to 'save the land for the living', as the motto of the Cremation Society of Great Britain expressed it, was also of importance given the accelerating expansion of the nation's towns and cities. It came to prominence during the 1890s with the issue of re-using graves in cemeteries where space was at a premium. This is mentioned in passing (p. 183) but a detailed treatment lies beyond the scope of this book. Jupp's fifth and final motivating factor for cremation is secularisation, embracing the decreasing belief in an afterlife, declining church membership and attendances, and the cultural shifts associated with the world wars: all this, he suggests, led to a growing view of cremation as 'the democratic way of disposal' (p. 125). The issue of social class recurs, and it is shown that attitudes to death are not only deeply embedded in particular sectors of the population but also that in certain circumstances they undergo radical change.

There is a great deal in this book for various readers. The issue of old age and choice in relation to form of funeral, for example, is considered in Chapter 7 in a brief but important account of the recent emergence of pre-paid funeral plans. That issue is framed by a discussion of ethical matters concerning services and the standard of service provided by funeral directors. Jupp also briefly examines ethical issues relating to the environment and the problems raised by gaseous emissions. Others will find interest in the historical detail of how Roman Catholic opinion against cremation originated in the 19th century and came to be officially changed after the Second Vatican Council. The role of English Catholics in this was notable, as was that of Freemasons, although somewhat underplayed, especially in the Italian context.

Overall this study can be read with benefit both by scholars with historical, sociological or theological interests and by non-specialists interested in how societies change their customs. At the same time, it also bears upon the issue of death and of our own desired form of funeral, though that is not the main aim of the book. Jupp informs us in the Preface that he is both a minister of the United Reformed Church and, as Chairman of the British Cremation Society, a cremationist: on both counts, he is a funeral reformer who desires the best for people at a difficult time in their lives. His work reflects something of the liberal British non-conformist ethos. This book is a worthy complement to Stephen Prothero's (2001) excellent, *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America*, and provides detailed case-studies of the many international cases contained in the *Encyclopedia of Cremation* (Davies and Mates 2006).

## References

- Davies, D.J. and Mates, L. H. (eds) 2006. *Encyclopedia of Cremation*. Ashgate, Aldershot, Hampshire.  
 Prothero, S. 2001. *Purified by Fire: A History of Cremation in America*. University of California Press, Berkeley, California.

Durham University, UK

DOUGLAS J. DAVIES

doi:10.1017/S0144686X06265723

Sally J. Redfern and Fiona M. Ross (eds), *Nursing Older People*, Elsevier, Edinburgh, fourth edition, 2006, 778 pp., pbk £34.99, ISBN 0 443 07459 3.

First published in 1986, the fourth edition of this compendium proves to be a seminal text. Despite the title's focus on nursing older people, the text is relevant to practitioners from all disciplines working in a wide range of care settings. Whilst it has four sections, as did the last edition, it has been substantially updated with only 14 out of the 43 chapter authors remaining the same. Contributions are now included from a head orthoptist, a specialist nurse, a consultant nurse for older people, and a healthcare ergonomist. The other chapters are written by lecturers, senior lecturers and professors eminent in their multidisciplinary fields. The book takes a person-centred approach to understanding and meeting the complex needs of older people. Section 1, 'Ageing and old age', considers the nature of old age, demographic and epidemiological trends in ageing, together with the psychology and biology of human ageing. This is followed by a section on 'Policy change and contexts of care'. The third section focuses on 'Nursing older people' and emphasises independence, autonomy and self-fulfilment. The final section addresses 'Current issues in caring for older people', and includes chapters on assessment, older homeless people, health promotion, complementary therapies, abuse of older people, carers and lay caring. The section ends with