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2010 ,Heart burial in medieval and early post-medieval central Europe'. In *Body Parts and Bodies Whole*, pp. 119-134. Katharina Rebay-Salisbury, Marie Louise Stig Sorensen and Jessica Hughes (eds.). Studies in Funerary Archaeology 5. Oxbow Books: Oxford.

BODY PARTS AND BODIES WHOLE

CHANGING RELATIONS AND MEANINGS

Edited by
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and Jessica Hughes

OXBOW BOOKS
Oxford and Oakville

Published by
Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK

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ISBN 978-1-84217-402-9

This book is available direct from:

Oxbow Books, Oxford, UK
(Phone: 01865-241249; Fax: 01865-794449)

and

The David Brown Book Company
PO Box 511, Oakville, CT 06779, USA
(Phone: 860-945-9329; Fax: 860-945-9468)

or from our website

www.oxbowbooks.com

Cover image

A CIP record for this book is available from the British Library

Printed and bound at

STUDIES IN FUNERARY ARCHAEOLOGY

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12. Heart burial in medieval and early post-medieval Central Europe

Estella Weiss-Krejci

Introduction

Born out of the idea of resurrection of the dead with their own bodies, until the 19th century the ideal burial mode in Christianised Europe was the deposition of the whole, fleshed body. Yet there were also alternative ways of thinking about and treating the human corpse: already Augustine had criticised the doctrine of the resurrection of the flesh (Frederiksen 1991) and practical interactions with the dead also stood in contrast to popular sensibilities regarding the integrity of the corpse. For instance, it was quite common practice to remove bones from the graveyards and redeposit them in charnel houses (Legner 1989: 33–42), while embalming and the extraction of the inner organs were also common forms of mortuary behaviour among the upper strata of society (Brown 1981; Owens 2005: 204). Body processing and the division of the corpse allowed for separate burial of body parts. Since individuals of political importance were often subject to this practice, the political quality of the body (Kantorowicz 1957; Sheper-Hughes and Lock 1987; Verdery 1999) became more important than the individual. The physically fragmented body could serve as a metaphor for political and social conditions. In their ability to represent different but connected aspects, the parts of the corpse together – often buried in different territories or in different religious houses – confirmed the integrated quality of all its elements. Each part had the potential to represent the dead in a special way. In this chapter I will focus on heart burials as a particular version of this manner of dividing the dead body into different parts. I will discuss the development in Central Europe but also make a few comparisons with medieval England, as this area recently has been the subject of new work (Westerhof 2005, 2008).

Processing the corpse after death is of considerable antiquity and was practised in many parts of the world (see Aufderheide 2003). In medieval Europe, the practice may have originally

developed out of a necessity to delay putrefaction and preserve corpses for transport over long distances and extended time periods. Simple forms of embalming, which involved applying ointments to the body, were probably already used in the 7th century in the treatment of the corpses of Merovingian kings (Bradford 1933: 21–22). More efficient procedures, such as the disembowelment (evisceration or exenteration) of corpses began to be practised in the Frankish empire in the 8th and 9th centuries (Schäfer 1920: 493; Arens 1958: 43); although it only became standard practice in the Holy Roman Empire between the late 10th and 11th centuries, during the reign of the emperors from the Ottonian and Salian dynasties (Schäfer 1920; Erlande-Brandenburg 1975; Weiss-Krejci 2005; Westerhof 2005: 37, 2008). In the 12th century, defleshing by boiling (excarnation, also known as *mos teutonicus*) became quite common since at this time high-ranking warriors often died in Southern Europe and in the Holy Land. Burial in heathen and foreign territories was not desirable and medieval aristocrats usually had burial places assigned before death. Their dead bodies could be brought back from the Mediterranean to Central Europe only in a defleshed state (Schäfer 1920; Weiss-Krejci 2001: 771; 2005: 164; 2008). Despite being prohibited by the Pope in 1299 and again in 1300, both evisceration and excarnation endured (Brown 1981), although defleshing fell out of fashion in the first half of the 15th century. In the Middle Ages it was the priests or monks tending the dying who often processed their corpses, and by the 15th century doctors regularly conducted the procedures (Dodson 1994: 73; Senfelder 1898: 26–28; Wendehorst 1978: 48).

Originally, when bodies were processed the inner organs were buried at the place of death or wherever the corpse had been treated (Weiss-Krejci 2001: 771). It is therefore interesting that in the Middle Ages clear exceptions to this

general trend developed. The extraction of the inner organs and the separate burial of the heart and intestines was a hallmark of English and French aristocratic mortuary behaviour from the 12th century onwards. It is worth noting that the English often quickly discarded the viscera close to the site of corpse treatment, whereas the French treated them with great respect. The English aristocracy generally favoured a double interment (one for the body, the other for the heart), while French aristocracy often requested that their corpses be buried in three separate places (body, heart and entrails) (Westerhof 2008: 81). With a few exceptions in the German-speaking area of the Holy Roman Empire, in the Middle Ages the separate burial of the heart was traditional only amongst the prince-bishops of Würzburg. In this case, the body was divided into three parts: the corpse was usually sent to Würzburg cathedral, the intestines to the castle church of Marienberg (Würzburg), and the heart to the monastery of Ebrach. At Würzburg this separation fulfilled a symbolic purpose; whereas elsewhere in German-speaking Europe body processing and the separate deposition of inner organs remained predominantly functional until the end of the Middle Ages. To remove the inner organs for non-practical reasons and bury them in separate places first became a frequent procedure during the late 16th century, with heart burial appearing during the 17th century.

What is a heart burial?

In post-medieval times, body processing usually involved cutting open the thorax and the skull, but more evidence is needed to make the case for the Middle Ages (e.g. Mafart *et al.* 2004). The most common Latin terms by which the chroniclers at the time refer to body processing are *condire* (= to embalm), *exenterare* (= to exenterate), *solvere viscera* (= to free up the entrails), *coquere carnem* (= to boil the flesh) and *extrahere ossa* (= to extract the bones). The internal organs are usually called *exta*, *viscera*, *intestina*, *praecordia* or *vitalia*. Some texts specifically refer to viscera and flesh (*carnes et viscera*, Knipping 1901: 160), viscera and brains (*cum cerebro et visceribus*, Schäfer 1920: 479), and inner organs and the heart (*viscera corque* and *cor et vitalia*, Giesey 1920: 20; Seeliger-Zeiss 1981: 84). Hence, it is not always possible to state with certainty how corpses were treated (e.g. George 2006), precisely which inner organs were removed and whether the removal of the inner organs (*viscera*, *exta*, *vitalia*) automatically implied the removal of the heart (*cor*). Contemporary historic sources, inscriptions on grave slabs and visual representations on epitaphs often contain divergent information and care is needed when researching these types of burials.

In my definition of a heart burial, the heart must be deposited *without* other inner organs and in a *different physical location* to the corpse. I therefore exclude those instances in which hearts were placed in separate containers but nevertheless buried close to the corpse or buried in the

same location as the intestines. This practice was particularly common in the 16th and 17th centuries: for instance, two peculiar 16th century church epitaphs, one from Vaihingen (Petrus Trutwin, d. 1521), and the other from St Stephen's Mainz (Count Gottfried of Dietz, d. 1522) contain small square niches covered by little doors. The niches may have been the deposition places for the hearts of the deceased whose corpses were buried in the church crypts (Arens 1958: 541; Seeliger-Zeiss and Schäfer 1986: 147). The heart of Empress Maria Leopoldine – who died in 1649 in Vienna – was buried in her coffin at the city's Capuchin Vault: the inscription on the urn lid tells us that the silver vessel contains her heart (Hawlik-van de Water 1993: 98, Timmermann 1996: 4).

I also include only those instances where the heart burial seems to serve a symbolic rather than a functional purpose. Thus I would exclude the example of Emperor Frederick III, who died in 1493 in Linz. Frederick was eviscerated so that his corpse could be transported to Vienna: we know this because on the day after his death, Frederick's son Maximilian received reports that the corpse had been eviscerated “for sake of perceptible exigence” (*umb merklich notturfft willen*) (Lipburger 1997: 131). Another source states that the Emperor's viscera were buried in the Parish Church of Linz (*visceribus in templo Lincio*, Meyer 2000: 178). The marble grave slab in the church mentions not only intestines but also the heart (*Intestina cubant Friderici hac Caesaris urna/Et cor*). Since the only reason to eviscerate was apparently ‘exigence’, and since the heart was buried with the intestines in the city where the emperor had died, I hesitate to consider this a ‘true’ heart burial.

It is important to note in relation to my definition that it is not always possible to establish whether the heart is buried with the other inner organs. Artists sometimes only depicted hearts on epitaphs even when all the inner organs were buried together. We can take the example of Johann Heinrich Stattfeld, Abbot of St Lambrecht (Austria) who died in Piber, Styria in 1639. The abbot's inner organs were buried at Piber. The gravestone in Figure 12.1 only depicts a heart; however, the Latin inscription on the monument refers to the inner organs generally (*partes interiores*). The abbot's evisceration was a necessity as the corpse had to be transported across the mountains to St Lambrecht abbey. According to a folk tale a second carriage, filled with dry brushwood that could be ignited at any time, was brought along as a precautionary measure against attacking wolves (Lasnik 1982: 269–270).

Historians and writers also efface the real range of different types of visceral depositions through their focus on the heart (e.g. Dietz 1998). For instance, *The Handbook of Ecclesiastical Art and Archaeology of the Middle Ages* (Otte 1883: 351) states that the heart of St Boniface (who was murdered by the Frisians in AD 754) was buried at Mainz; whereas a 14th century copy of an even older tombstone in the church of St John in Mainz states that [all] the inner organs (*exta*) were buried there (Arens 1958: 44).

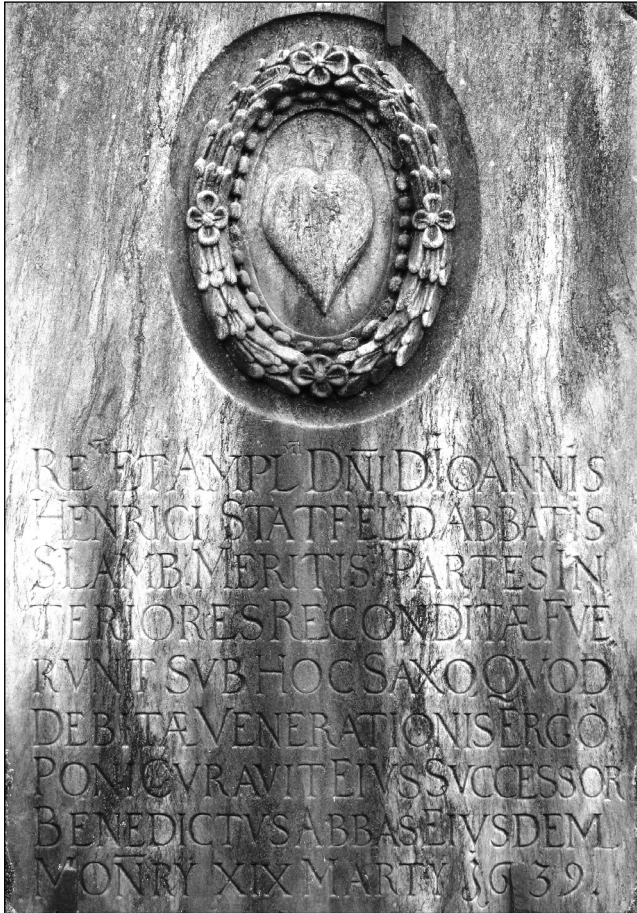


Fig. 12.1: Gravestone for the interior organs of Johann Heinrich Stattfeld, Abbot of St Lambert (d. 1639), Piber, Austria (© Estella Weiss-Krejci)

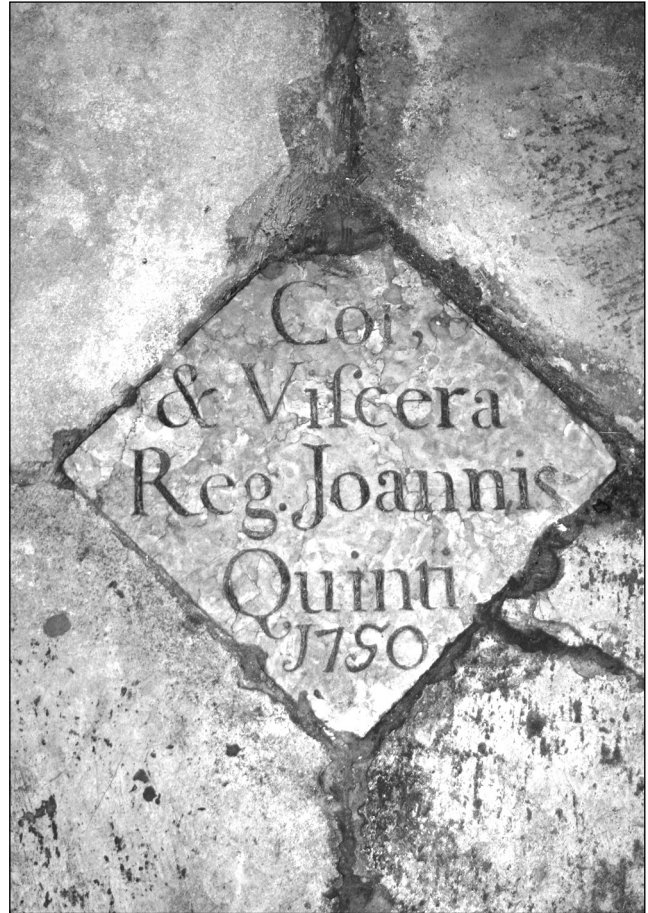


Fig. 12.2: Floor tile covering the heart and intestines of João V of Portugal (d. 1750), Chapel of the Meninos de Palhavã, São Vicente de Fora, Lisbon, Portugal (© Estella Weiss-Krejci)

This difficulty aside, my emphasis on the separation of the heart from the rest of the viscera reveals some interesting trends in heart burial practices. The distinction between the heart and the intestines became important to certain groups of people at certain points in time, for example to the medieval Würzburg prince-bishops, and the Habsburgs of the 17th and 18th centuries. Even when there was no functional necessity to preserve a corpse for transport or storage, some groups started to divide the body into different parts and bury the dead in three separate churches, sometimes shipping hearts over hundreds of kilometres. This burial rite is notably different from the tradition of burying heart and intestines together, as was practised, for example, by the post-medieval popes of Rome (church SS Vincenzo e Anastasio, Rome), and in the post-medieval Portuguese House of Bragança (S Vicente de Fora, Lisbon, Fig. 12.2). I think that the absence of the development of post-medieval separation of the heart from the intestines in these specific cases is connected to the lack of a widespread Reformation and Counter-Reformation movement or to the lack of territorial fragmentation.

A database of processed corpses

In order to better demonstrate the history of separation of the corpse and heart burial in Central Europe, I have compiled a list of individuals whose corpse was eviscerated, defleshed or otherwise processed in a similar manner. The majority of these are natives of the German-speaking part of the Holy Roman Empire and its successor states after the dissolution in 1806. The sample includes emperors, kings, queens and their children, princes, dukes, counts, lower nobles, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priests and a few commoners. A minor fraction is made up of foreigners who died in the old Empire and who were treated within its borders. It also includes natives of the Holy Roman Empire who died abroad such as Crusaders and a few royal women who had married into foreign dynasties but whose bodies or hearts were brought back to their homeland for burial.

The register in Figure 12.3 contains 339 individuals whose corpses have been treated in the relevant manner. The earliest eviscerated individual in the sample is Holy Roman Emperor Otto I (973); the latest is the Austrian Empress Zita who died in 1989. In the following I will predominantly concentrate

Time period	Type of body treatment			Gender		Age		Total treated
	eviscerated	<i>mos tentonicus</i>	other	male	female	> 12 years	≤ 12 years	
973–1000	2	-	1	3	-	3	-	3
1001–1100	6	-	1	6	1	7	-	7
1101–1200	6	14	2	22	-	22	-	22
1201–1300	4	6	2	11	1	12	-	12
1301–1400	8	2	1	11	-	11	-	11
1401–1500	12	-	-	11	1	12	-	12
1501–1600	27	-	-	25	2	27	-	27
1601–1700	88	-	-	66	22	80	8	88
1701–1800	88	-	-	61	27	78	10	88
1801–1900	62	-	-	35	27	57	5	62
1901–1989	7	-	-	4	3	7	-	7
Total	310	22	7	255	84	316	23	339

Fig. 12.3: Register with 339 individuals whose corpses have been treated throughout the course of one millennium.

on developments from the end of the first millennium to the end of the 17th century.

The beginning of separate burial of inner organs in Europe (973–1400)

The first chronicler to mention the separate burial of inner organs is Thietmar, bishop of Merseburg (975–1018). According to Thietmar, the viscera of Emperor Otto I (d. 973 at Memleben) as well as those of Walthard, Archbishop of Magdeburg (d. 1012 at Giebichenstein) were buried at the places of death (Thietmar of Merseburg: II, 43 and VI, 73); the intestines of Emperor Otto III (d. 1002 near Viterbo) were brought all the way from Italy to Augsburg in two containers while the corpse was transported further to Aachen (Thietmar of Merseburg: IV, 51); the viscera of Thietmar's cousin, margrave Werner of Walbeck (d. 1014 at Allerstedt) were buried at Helfta near Eisleben (Thietmar of Merseburg: VII, 7). In all four instances the inner organs were buried earlier, and in different locations to the corpse. In no instance does Thietmar make any mention of the hearts.

Explicit evidence for the deposition of viscera together with the heart exists for the second part of the 11th century. Emperor Henry III (d. 1056) wished his entrails and heart to be buried at his foundation in Goslar (St Simeon and Judas), where his daughter Mathilda rested (*cor suum cum precordiis apud filiam suam*, Schäfer 1920: 481). However, Henry's is not a true heart burial: although the Emperor's heart and entrails were transported to Goslar, the heart was not singled out for separate burial but was buried together with the intestines. All of the ten people in my sample who were processed between

973 and 1100 were transported from their place of death to their place of burial. With the exception of Henry III, hearts are never mentioned. That heart burial had not yet become a popular practice in the 11th century also holds true beyond the borders of the Holy Roman Empire. Though the inner organs and the heart of the Norman duke Robert Guiscard (d. 1085) were extracted and buried separately from the corpse in Sicily (Giesey 1960: 20), the motivation for this procedure seems rather functional. According to the *Gesta Roberti Wiscardi V*, Guiscard had died in Greece. As his body was being brought back to Italy, a storm hit the ship, washing the corpse overboard. After it had been recovered, it rapidly started to decay. Robert's wife therefore decided to remove the heart and entrails (*viscera corque*) and bury them at Otranto while the rest of the body was carried to the family burial site at Venosa (William of Apulia: V).

It was in 12th century France and England that the heart began to receive separate burial, not only from the corpse but also from the intestines (Bradford 1933; Brown 1981: 228; Gilchrist and Sloane 2005: 160; Westerhof 2005, 2008). Hearts were either buried at the place of death, where the body was usually treated, or they were brought to separate, sometimes distant burial locations. The heart of Robert of Arbrissel (d. 1117) was interred at Orsan, the place of his death (Brown 1981: 228); the heart of Pope Calixtus II (d. 1124) was brought to the abbey of Cîteaux (Gajewski 2005: 57). The heart of St Lawrence O'Toole, archbishop of Dublin, who died and was buried in Normandy in 1180, was buried at Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin, reputedly fifty years after his death and five years after his canonisation (Kinsella 2003: 21). Richard 'the Lion-Heart' (d. 1199 at Chalus) requested that his body be buried at Fontevrault and his heart

Time period	Total of persons treated = 100%	Corpse transported / %	Heart transported / %	'True' heart burials / %	Tripartite burial of corpse / %
973–1000	3	3/100%	- /0%	- /0%	- /0%
1001–1100	7	7/100%	- /0%	- /0%	- /0%
1101–1200	22	18/82%	2/9%	2/9%	1/5%
1201–1300	12	9/75%	1/8%	2/17%	- /0%
1301–1400	11	6/55%	1/9%	2/18%	- /0%
1401–1500	12	9/75%	2/17%	4/33%	2/17%
1501–1600	27	16/59%	7/26%	9/33%	5/19%
1601–1700	88	26/30%	29/33%	47/53%	16/18%

Fig. 12.4: Relationship between body processing, transportation of corpse and heart, heart burial and tripartition of the corpse in the Holy Roman Empire from the 10th to the 17th centuries

at Rouen. Meanwhile, he willed his brain, blood and viscera to the treacherous town of Charroux (Brown 1981: 228; Giesey 1960: 20; Schäfer 1920: 496). After being banned by the Pope in 1299 and 1300, the number of heart burials in England declined. In France, however, the difficulty in gaining papal permission made division of the corpse an even more desirable practice (Brown 1981: 253; Westerhof 2008: 90).

Body processing and heart burial in the Holy Roman Empire from the 12th to the late 16th century

During the Middle Ages the division of the corpse was much rarer in the Holy Roman Empire than in England and France. According to a study by Westerhof (2008: Appendix 1) in England, Scotland and in the French territories, which were in possession of the English kings (Angevin territories), at least 88 individuals were treated between the 12th and the 14th centuries. During the same time span only 45 individuals were processed in the Holy Roman Empire (Fig. 12.3). Whether these numbers are due to the scarcity of surviving records or reflect real conditions is difficult to assess. Figure 12.3 shows that, at least in the 12th and 13th centuries, excarnation by boiling (*mos teutonicus*) was the preferred 'German' body treatment (only 10 individuals were eviscerated whereas 20 were excarnated). This practice was especially common amongst warriors and Crusaders (see Weiss-Krejci 2008: 178). Additionally, a number of other types of corpse treatments (dismemberment without boiling, roasting, unspecified) were also tried out (Weiss-Krejci 2005: 163). Of the 45 treated corpses from the 12th, 13th and 14th centuries, 33 were immediately transported from their place of death to their place of burial (Fig. 12.4). Two corpses were transported at a later point in time; in two cases transport cannot be confirmed. The remaining eight corpses were not transported. Of these, seven belong to prince-bishops of Würzburg. The prince-bishops of Würzburg are the only people in the medieval

Holy Roman Empire who developed a tradition of eviscerating without necessity for long-distance corpse transport. I will discuss them at a later point.

In the 15th century 12 corpses were processed. Nine were transported after death (Fig. 12.4), two records are unclear and one corpse was not transported over a long distance (this corpse belongs to a prince-bishop of Würzburg). The number of processed corpses rises in the 16th century, while the necessity for transport slightly drops. Of 27 bodies treated in the 16th century, 16 were transported (Fig. 12.4), eight were not transported, while for three transport could not be determined with certainty. Five of the 27 corpses belong to prince-bishops of Würzburg. They were not transported over a long distance and all five received a tripartite burial (see below).

Heart burials

The Würzburg prince-bishops aside, only a few heart burials date from the period before the 17th century. These do not follow a uniform pattern and were either inspired by foreign influence or by the Würzburg tradition. One heart burial dates to the 13th century (Hademar of Kuenring), one to the 14th century (Wikbold of Holte), three date to the 15th century (James of Sierck, Nicholas of Cusa, John IV of Nassau-Dillenburg) and four to the 16th (Konrad of Rietberg, Philip the Handsome, Margaret of Habsburg, Wilhelm Werner of Zimmern). Apart from the earliest possible heart burials of two Würzburg prince-bishops, heart burials did not occur in the 12th century. Albero, Archbishop of Trier, died in Koblenz and was buried at Trier in 1152 eleven days after his death (Fuchs 2006: 292). His inner organs were transported to his foundation, the Cistercian monastery Himmerod. A tombstone which was still present in the 17th century makes reference to his heart and intestines (*Hic recondita sunt cor et exta*) (Schäfer 1920: 486). As was the case in the 11th century

with Emperor Henry III, Albero's corpse had to be eviscerated in order to be transported; moreover, the heart had not been separated from the intestines.

13th century

The crusader Hademar of Kuenring (d. 1217) made a wish that if it were not possible to bring back his whole corpse to his foundation, the Cistercian monastery of Zwettl, his heart should be brought together with his right hand (*cor meum et dexteram manum*). According to Ebro, the Abbot of Zwettl (1273–1304), after Hademar had died on his way back from the Holy Land in 1217 his servants divided his body and brought back his heart, his right hand and his excarnated bones (*manum eius dexteram cum corde ..., corpusque eius excoquentes ossa*, Frast 1851: 98–99).

14th century

When Wibold of Holte, archbishop of Cologne, died in Soest in 1304, his body was buried in the same city, his corpse at St Patrocli and his heart with the Franciscans (Kohl 1982: 425). In his lifetime, Wibold, at that time Dean of Cologne cathedral and provost at St Mary at Aachen, had helped the English king Edward I to form an alliance with the German king Adolf of Nassau. In return for this service, Wibold received *benefices* at Dublin cathedral, and in 1294 King Edward made him his secretary (*familiaris et secretaries*) and paid 20,000 pounds sterling for his services (Kohl 1982: 424). Wibold's 'English style' separation of the heart may have been inspired by his relation with the English king. The hearts of King Edward's mother Eleanor of Provence (d. 1291) and his brother (d. 1296) were buried with the London Franciscans; the heart of his first wife Eleanor of Castile (d. 1290) and son Alphonso (d. 1284) were buried with the London Dominicans (Bradford 1933: 90; Westerhof 2005: 42).

15th century

James of Sierck, Archbishop of Trier, who died in Pfalz in 1456 is – with the exception of the prince-bishops of Würzburg – the only individual from medieval Central Europe who wished to be buried at three separate places. According to his testament he wanted his corpse to be buried at Trier cathedral, his intestines at the Benedictine monastery of Mettlach, where his father was buried, and his heart at Metz cathedral (Fuchs 2006: 513; Heyen 1972: 121; Schmid 2000: 191). Sierck had travelled widely and maintained contacts throughout Europe; his idea for burial may have been inspired either by the Würzburg tradition or by French and English acquaintances. Sierck was acquainted with Nicholas of Cusa, Bishop of Brixen (Pauly 1980: 433). Cusanus, who like Sierck had tried to impose many reforms during his lifetime, died in Todi, Italy in 1464. His body was brought to Rome for burial,

while his heart was transported all the way back to Germany and deposited before the altar in the hospital church of Cues, which was his own foundation (Baum 1983: 421).

Count John IV of Nassau-Dillenburg died at Dillenburg in 1475. Since the count had inherited property in the Netherlands and served in the army of the Burgundian dukes Philip the Good (d. 1467) and Charles the Bold (d. 1477) his corpse was brought to Breda in the Netherlands. His heart was buried at Dillenburg where he had died. The inspiration for burial of the heart may have come from the Dukes of Burgundy who – as members of the French House of Valois – also practised this tradition. Although it is probable that the intestines were buried with the heart, the grave slab in the city church of Dillenburg does not make reference to the viscera. The inscription reads: 'Here lies buried his heart ...' (*hie ligt ... sin herz begraben*).

16th century

Konrad of Rietberg, bishop of Osnabrück and Münster, died at Rietberg Castle in Bevergern on February 9, 1508. It was his wish that his corpse be buried at Münster cathedral (where the funeral took place on 20 February 1508) and that his heart was buried at Osnabrück (Kohl 2003: 527; Wehking 1988: 82–83). Konrad's partition of the corpse reflects his wish to be present at both of his bishop's sees after his death.

Among members of the Habsburg family who resided in German-speaking Europe, evisceration still remained predominantly functional and associated with transport of the corpse. Meanwhile, the hearts of the Habsburgs of Western Europe received special attention. The hearts of Philip the Handsome (d. 1506 in Burgos) and his sister Margaret (d. 1530 in Mechelen) were both transported to Bruges in Flanders. However, as children of Mary of Burgundy and grandchildren of the Duke of Burgundy, Charles the Bold, this is probably better understood in the context of the Burgundian burial rites.

Wilhelm Werner, Count of Zimmern, died in 1575. After his death his corpse was buried at the family crypt at Messkirch and his heart was inserted into a leaden capsule and buried under the stair in front of the altar of the chapel at Herrenzimmern castle (Rottweil district). In 1645, while the Thirty Years' War was still raging, the heart capsule was transferred to the Capuchin monastery of Rottweil. After the dissolution of the monastery, the heart was incorporated into the Fürstenberg collections at Donaueschingen (Seeliger-Zeiss 1986: 221–223). Zimmern was a scholar and author of several chronicles, including the chronicle of the prince-bishops of Würzburg. His idea to separately bury his heart at his castle was probably inspired by his research and the Würzburg tradition of heart burial.

The separation of the corpse among the prince-bishops of Würzburg

It is unclear at what point tripartite burial was first practised among the prince-bishops of Würzburg; neither is it clear why this rite became customary. The medieval burial rites of the prince-bishops of Würzburg are known through several sources: the earliest source is a cartulary that dates to the reign of Prince-Bishop Rudolf of Scherenberg (1466–1495) (Merzbacher 1952: 501–505). A late 16th century copy of the Würzburg chronicle by Lorenz Fries (1489–1550), and a detailed description of the funeral of Prince-Bishop Melchior Zobel of Giebelstadt, who was murdered in 1558 (Brückner 1966: 31–33), leave no doubt that separate heart burial and burial of the corpse in three places was a regular custom among the prince-bishops of Würzburg at least by the 15th and 16th centuries. Fries argues that the funeral pomp associated with the burial of the prince-bishops of Würzburg and tripartition of the corpse originated in the 12th century during the rule of Prince-Bishop Embricho (1127–1146) (Rausch 1992: 361). His book contains a brief description and two miniatures that relate to the burial of the prince-bishops (Fries: 131v, 151r). The 15th century cartulary and the funeral report of Melchior Zobel of Giebelstadt describe what happened at the death of a Würzburg prince-bishop in much greater detail. In short, the prince-bishops of Würzburg resided at Marienberg castle, which is located outside the Würzburg centre on the left bank of the Main river; it is also the place where they usually died. After evisceration of a corpse at Marienberg castle, the intestines were mixed with lime and inserted into a container. This container was then buried at the castle church (Brückner 1966: 31; Fries: 131v; Merzbacher 1952: 501). Since it was a characteristic of the Würzburg burial ritual to display the corpse in a seated position, it had to be embalmed and impaled with a rod. The heart was also embalmed and inserted into a glass jar. It was present throughout the funeral ceremony (Merzbacher 1952: 502). In order to avoid the head of the seated corpse from slumping down, an old servant had to hold it upright throughout the funeral (Brückner 1966: 32). This servant was carried around with the corpse on the bier (miniature in Fries: 151r). The embalmed corpse was transported first from Marienberg castle to the monastery of the Scots where it remained for one night. This monastery, located on the left bank of the Main river between Marienberg castle and the centre of Würzburg had been founded during Embricho's reign (Wendehorst 1962: 146). On the next day the corpse was carried over the bridge – the stone bridge was also built under Embricho (Wendehorst 1962: 148) – to the right side of the Main to the Würzburg cathedral and placed on top of the baptismal font. One day later, after a third ceremony at the monastery of Neumünster, the corpse was buried at the cathedral. During the final deposition the office bearers of the town (usually the judges) cast their wands into the grave (Merzbacher 1952: 504). Rudolf II of Scherenberg

was actually buried with the shield and helmet of his family, because the line of Scherenberg had died out with him (Wendehorst 1978: 49). After the deceased prince-bishop had been laid to rest in the cathedral, his heart was brought to Ebrach abbey. This final transfer was performed by the servant who had been in charge of holding the bishop's head during the funeral: the heart was delivered on a carriage drawn by four horses (miniature in Fries: 131v; Merzbacher 1952: 505; Brückner 1966: 33).

The origins of tripartition of the corpse among the prince-bishops of Würzburg

Burial of the heart at Ebrach abbey

Ebrach is the oldest Cistercian foundation in Franconia and the first on the east side of the Rhine River. It was settled in 1127 by monk Adam from the abbey of Morimund in Burgundy and consecrated by Prince-Bishop Embricho of Würzburg in 1134. Although some sources claim that Embricho (d. 1146) was embalmed and transported to Würzburg after he had died in Aquileia on his way back from Constantinople (*corpus eius aromatibus conditum*, Wendehorst 1962: 150), the fate of his inner organs is not known. According to the bishop's chronicle compiled in 1550 by Count Wilhelm Werner of Zimmern, the tradition of heart burial at Ebrach started with the death of Embricho's successor, Prince-Bishop Siegfried of Truhendingen (d. 1150) (Kloos 1980: 6; Wendehorst 1962: 154–155; Zimmern 1952). Siegfried's heart burial at Ebrach is also mentioned on a commemorative plaque at Ebrach, which dates to the end of the 15th century. A similar plaque, dating from the same period, states that the heart of Prince-Bishop Reginhard of Abenberg (1171–1186) was buried at Ebrach, while his intestines were buried at Marienberg castle and his corpse at Würzburg cathedral (Kloos 1980: 39). However, John Nibling's chronicle (c. 1524) claims that the earliest heart burial at Ebrach was that of Berthold II of Sternberg, who consecrated the abbey church in 1286 and died in 1287 (Kloos 1980: 6; Wendehorst 1969: 26–28). Berthold's heart sepulchre is located behind the main altar at Ebrach. Its main feature consists of two larger than life-sized figures of bishops, each holding a heart and a crozier and armed with a sword (Fig. 12.5 and 6). The inscription was probably painted in the 17th century, and is almost a word for word copy of a medieval version: it states that Berthold's heart was buried at this place (*cor iacet hac/fossa*). We can therefore assume that one of the figures on the monument represents Berthold. We get no clues as to the identity of the other sculpted bishop; however, another (now lost) inscription from Ebrach suggests that it represents Berthold's successor, Manegold of Neuenburg (d. 1303) (Kloos 1980: 7–10; Wendehorst 1969: 35). The date of this monument is highly controversial. The statues were probably removed from medieval tombs in the

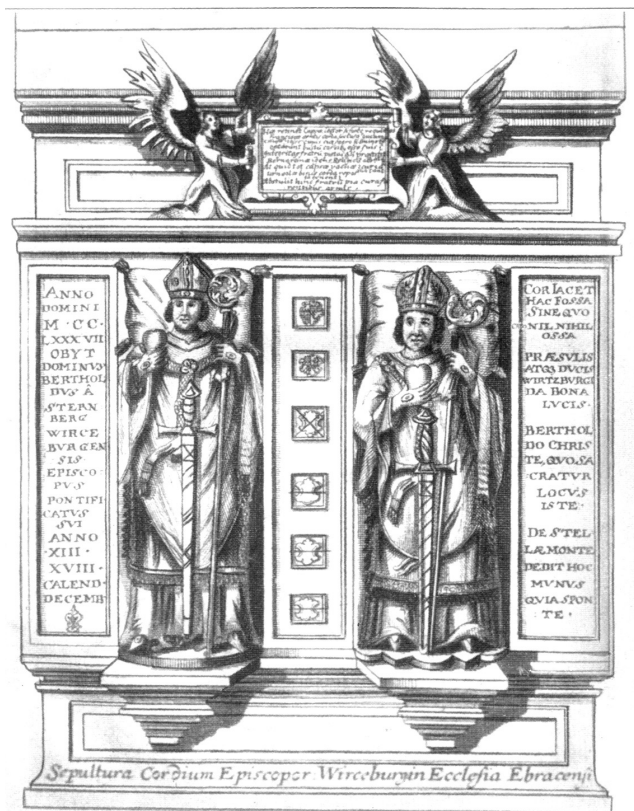


Fig. 12.5: Heart sepulchre of the prince-bishops of Würzburg at Ebrach monastery, Franconia, Germany. Engraving from Abbot Wilhelm Sölner's 'Brevia Notitia' of 1738 (Wirth 1928: Plate 24)



Fig. 12.6: Heart sepulchre of the prince-bishops of Würzburg at Ebrach monastery, Franconia Germany (© Estella Weiss-Krejci)

17th century. Wiemer (1992: 34) dates the statues to c. 1300, while Wendehorst (1969: 28) prefers a date of the early 14th century. According to Mayer they constitute 17th century copies of medieval figures (Kloos 1980: 7).

Between the two figures there is a vertical row of six niches (Fig. 12.5 and 6). The top two hold the hearts of Melchior Zobel of Giebelstadt (d. 1558) and Friedrich of Wirsberg (d. 1573) while the lower four niches are empty. A now-missing copper plaque, probably made in the late 16th or early 17th century, explained that the missing heart urns were removed by the monks and buried in a secure place in order to protect them from desecration (Fig. 12.5). Their present whereabouts are unknown.

Burial of the intestines at Marienberg castle

Unfortunately, no record for the intestines of any of these early prince-bishops exists. At the castle church of Marienberg, twenty slabs commemorate bishops whose viscera were buried there between the 14th and the 18th centuries. While the bulk of these 'visceral monuments' belong to prince-bishops who died in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries (respectively five, six and six prince-bishops), only three belong to prince-bishops

who had died earlier. These are Albert II of Hohenlohe, d. 1372; Gerhard of Schwarzburg, d. 1400 and Rudolf II of Scherenberg, d. 1495. Their visceral slabs are not contemporary to their deaths, but probably date to the reign of Julius Echter (d. 1617) (Borchardt *et al.* 1988: 55, 75, 163). The corpses of these three prince-bishops were buried in the Würzburg cathedral. Although their hearts were most likely buried at Ebrach, evidence for them has disappeared.

Tripartite burial

It is possible that tripartite burial was not yet a regular practice among the prince bishops of Würzburg in the 12th and 13th centuries and that in those early days the heart did not play such an important role. Prince-Bishop Gottfried of Spitzenberg, who died in 1190 during the third Crusade in Antioch, did not ask for the return of his heart to Würzburg, but rather his hand. Unfortunately it was lost on the way (Borchardt *et al.* 1988: 12). Again, not the heart but the right arm of Würzburg Prince-Bishop Otto I. of Lobdeburg (d. 1223 probably in Würzburg) was transported to the monastery of Auhausen, the burial place of the House of Lobdeburg (Wendehorst 1962: 209).

It is most likely that tripartite burial including burial of the heart became standardised at a later point in time, in the 14th or even in the 15th century when the cartulary was written. By the time Lorenz Fries wrote his chronicle in the 16th century, this form of burial had become uniform. All five prince-bishops who died during the 16th century (Lorenz of Bibra, d. 1519; Conrad II of Thüngen, d. 1540; Conrad of Bibra, d. 1544; Melchior Zobel of Giebelstadt, d. 1558 and Friedrich of Wirsberg, d. 1573) had their intestines buried at the Marienberg castle church, their bodies at the Würzburg cathedral and their hearts at Ebrach. All corpses were buried between two and four days after death.

While the custom of burying the viscera at Marienberg castle continued until the 18th century, the tradition of heart burial at Ebrach came to an end in 1573 (Wirth 1928: 287). Friedrich of Wirsberg's successor Julius Echter of Mespelbrunn (d. 1617), a strong advocate of the Catholic Reformation (see below), donated his heart to the University of Würzburg. This institution was his foundation and was under the care of the Jesuits, whom he had promoted during his lifetime. At Echter's heart burial a funeral speech was delivered by the Dutch Jesuit Maximilian van der Sandt, which, like all the other funeral speeches for Echter, was later printed (Michel 1971: 125; Rausch 1992: 365–366). Contrary to the older Würzburg tradition, Echter was not buried in a seated but in a reclining position and carried down from the castle in a tin coffin instead of on a bier (Rausch 1992: 362, 367). Since it was not necessary to hold the head of the deceased prince-bishop, nobody could claim the right to bring the heart to Ebrach.

The development of post-medieval heart burial: from the Catholic Reformation to the end of the 17th century

While a total of 27 people were processed in the 16th century, this number more than triples in the 17th century (88 persons) (Fig. 12.3). At the same time, the necessity for evisceration drops. Only 26 eviscerated corpses were transported from their place of death to their place of burial (Fig. 12.4). 50 were not transported and 12 cases could not be determined with certainty. A quarter of the corpses processed in the 17th century belong to women (n=22) and for the first time the interior organs of children were separately buried as well (n=8) (Fig. 12.3). In the House of Habsburg a fourteen-year-old (Johann Karl from the Inner Austrian line, buried at Graz) was eviscerated in 1619 and the two-year-old Maria Eleonora from the Tyrolean line was eviscerated in 1629 (Weiss-Krejci 2008: 184). While in the 16th century separate burial and transport of the heart had been rare, in the 17th century the hearts of 47 individuals were separately buried without intestines (Fig. 12.4). Tripartite burial was basically non-existent in the 16th century (not counting the prince bishops of Würzburg), but 16

out of 88 people were buried at three separate places in the 17th century. Heart burial and tripartite burial became especially popular in the House of Habsburg (14 heart burials at Graz and Vienna including 10 tripartite burials), and heart burial remained a dominant feature of the mortuary treatment of the prince-bishops of Würzburg (four heart burials at Würzburg and one at Mainz), but it was also practised by a variety of other groups such as the House of Wittelsbach (three heart burials at Altötting), the archbishops of Mainz and Trier, the bishops of Gurk, Salzburg and Regensburg, the princes of Nassau-Hadamar and the dukes of Palatinate-Neuburg.

Almost four decades ago Michel (1971: 123–125) proposed that the development of post-medieval heart burial has to be understood in the context of the foundation of new religious orders, especially the Jesuits, during the Catholic Reformation. This period, better known as the Counter Reformation, was a powerful religious time whose beginnings can roughly be equated with the pontificate of Pope Pius IV in 1560, and which lasted until the close of the Thirty Years' War in 1648. It was characterised by a tremendous political and social crisis, but also by artistic and ideological innovation. Before discussing heart burials and their relation to the Counter Reformation in greater detail I would like to briefly outline its major characteristics.

The Catholic Reformation

In the second half of the 16th century the south of Europe was Roman Catholic and the north Protestant, but in France and in the Holy Roman Empire both Roman Catholic and Protestants (Lutheran and Reformed) existed. The signing of the peace of Augsburg in 1555 had officially recognised the Lutheran Church and granted the princes the right to determine the religion of their subjects. With the exception of the ducal House of Wittelsbach of Bavaria and the Imperial House of Habsburg, the majority of Germany's secular imperial princes and the free cities had accepted the Reformation. Emperor Maximilian II (d. 1576) and his successor Rudolf II (d. 1612) were ideologically moderate, but the other members of the House of Habsburg were not. Maximilian II's younger brothers, archdukes Ferdinand of the Tyrol (d. 1595) and Charles II of Inner Austria (d. 1590) who ruled in the hereditary lands, were strong advocates of the Catholic cause as outlined in the last session of Trent (1562–1563). With the support of Pope Gregory XIII, the brothers pushed ahead the Counter Reformation, together with Charles' brother-in-law, Albert V of Bavaria from the House of Wittelsbach (d. 1579). The Pope supported the Jesuits, who had led the work of re-education wherever they had been able to establish themselves. For example, Archduke Charles II of Inner Austria brought the Society of Jesus to Graz, the capital of Inner Austria, which was a prominent centre of the Lutheran church and had a Lutheran school. The Jesuits first provided a college and school and in

1586 a university. Albert V of Bavaria financed a Jesuit college at the University of Ingolstadt. Ferdinand, son of Charles II of Inner Austria, who later became Emperor Ferdinand II, was trained at Ingolstadt University and his advisers were also Jesuit-trained, and mostly from the Spanish Netherlands. Already by 1600 the archdukes and dukes from the Houses of Habsburg and Wittelsbach had whittled away at the position of Protestant churches, closed most of their schools and abolished Protestant ministries (MacCulloch 2003: 449–457).

The Counter Reformation advocates in the Habsburg family were determined to end the moderate policy of the Habsburg emperors. After the death of the childless Habsburg Emperor Mathias, the ultra-catholic Ferdinand acceded to the throne as Ferdinand II in 1619. At that time the Thirty Years' War had already begun. The end of this devastating war, which had started as a conflict between Protestants and Catholics and eventually involved most of Europe's powers, officially marks the end of the Counter Reformation. Education and military force were not the only strategies applied in the process of the Catholic Reformation. The reformers also made a variety of efforts to increase people's spirituality and to emphasise that the Catholic Church represented the traditional norm in German religion. In the last part of the 16th century the bones of saints were brought out of hiding and shrines desecrated by the Protestants were restored. A central feature of the Jesuit campaign was devotion to Mary and revival of Marian shrines (MacCulloch 2003: 456).

As already observed by Michel (1971: 123), the spur of renovation and new foundation that accompanied the Catholic Reformation had a direct impact on the distribution of body parts. The newly founded orders, in this case the Jesuits and the Capuchins, benefited from the patronage of the Catholic rulers and competed with others over their postmortem remains. Since traditional burial places could not always be given up so rapidly, from the 1580s onwards there was a strong increase in burial of inner organs at newly founded religious buildings.

The separation of the corpse during the Counter Reformation

The electors and archbishops of Trier

Two known examples of medieval evisceration among the archbishops of Trier have already been mentioned (Albero d. 1152 and James of Sierck d. 1456). The earliest burial of heart and intestines that seems to directly relate to the Catholic Reformation is that of Archbishop of Trier, Jakob of Eltz who died at Trier in 1581 and who was deposited at Trier cathedral, in accordance with the old tradition. His intestines, however, were buried with the Trier Jesuits. The next archbishop, Johann of Schönberg, died in 1599 and was also buried in the Trier cathedral. As was the case with his predecessor, his inner organs

(*intestina, viscera, pulmones et cetera vitalia*) were buried in the Jesuit church (Michel 1971: 125). Archbishop Lothar of Metternich (d. 1623 in Koblenz) was also buried at the Trier cathedral. Only his heart was buried with the Jesuits.

The electors and archbishops of Mainz

To my knowledge, the intestines of only one archbishop of Mainz received separate burial in the period before the Catholic Reformation (the heart is not mentioned). Adolf of Nassau died in 1190 at Heiligenstadt. His intestines were buried at Heiligenstadt and his corpse was transported to Mainz. At Mainz, the division of the corpse is definitely associated with the Catholic Reformation. When the Mainz castle was renovated after its destruction by Margrave Albert Alcibiades in 1552, Daniel Brendel of Homburg, the elector and archbishop of Mainz, commissioned the new castle church St Gangolph, consecrating it in 1581. After his death at Aschaffenburg in 1582, both his corpse and inner organs were transported to Mainz. While his corpse was buried at Mainz cathedral, his heart and viscera (*cor autem cum reliquis visceribus*) were buried at St Gangolph (Arens 1958: 605). His successor archbishop Wolfgang of Dalberg, (d. 1601) who died at Aschaffenburg and was buried at Mainz cathedral, was also eviscerated (Brück 1971: 151) but there is no evidence that his intestines were left at St Gangolph. Brendel's example was followed by three of his successors who lived and died during the Catholic Reformation. The intestines, heart and brain (*exta, cor, cerebrum*) of Archbishop of Mainz Johann Adam of Bicken (d. 1604 at Aschaffenburg), the intestines, heart, tongue and brain (*exta, cor, lingua, cerebrum*) of Georg Friedrich Greiffenklau (Archbishop of Mainz and Bishop of Worms, d. 1629 at Mainz), and the heart and brain (*cor et cerebrum*) of Archbishop of Mainz Anselm Kasimir Wambold Umstadt (d. 1647 at Frankfurt) were all buried at St Gangolph (Arens 1958: 641, 667, 674). Only Johannes Schweikard of Kronberg (d. 1626) diverged from this pattern. His heart was buried without intestines at his foundation, the Jesuit church of Aschaffenburg (Michel 1971: 122).

The imperial House of Habsburg

Although in the House of Habsburg separation of the corpse and separate burial of inner organs in different places had been practised since the Middle Ages (e.g. Emperor Frederick III, see above), it was usually associated with transport of the corpse. Separation of the inner organs for non-practical reasons and separate burial of inner organs only developed in the 16th century among the children of Mary of Burgundy and Maximilian I (Philip the Fair and Margaret, see above). In Austria, the earliest evidence for separation of the inner organs from the corpse and the separation of hearts from the intestines comes from Graz. These practices developed gradually, but are clearly associated with the Jesuits and the



Fig. 12.7: Maria Anna's visceral urn or heart urn (d. 1616). Engraved inscription on the lid: •M•Æ•A•A• DEN 8 MARTI ANNO DOMINI 1616. Silver goblet with lid, total height 26 cm, manufactured in Augsburg 1560–1570. Current location: Mausoleum of Ferdinand II, Graz, Austria (© Estella Weiss-Krejci)

Counter Reformation. When Charles of Inner Austria died in 1590 his heart and intestines were buried with the Jesuits of Graz. His corpse was transported to Seckau. The heart and intestines of his wife Maria of Bavaria (d. 1608) were also buried with the Jesuits. She was not transported, but her corpse was buried in Graz with the Poor Clares. Also buried with the Jesuits were the inner organs of her son Maximilian Ernst (d. 1616), and her daughter-in-law Maria Anna, the first wife of Ferdinand II (d. 1616) (Fig. 12.7) and Johann Karl (d. 1619), son of Ferdinand II. Unfortunately the urns (which are located at Ferdinand II's mausoleum in Graz) give the name of the deceased but not the contents: it is therefore impossible to tell whether they contained only hearts or hearts

and intestines. The earliest secure heart burial in Graz is that of Emperor Ferdinand II (died in Vienna in 1637). His heart was not buried with the Jesuits but in his mother's coffin at the monastery of the Poor Clares (Gerbert *et al.* 1772).

Heart burial

These examples show that between 1580 and 1608 hearts and intestines were usually buried together at both Trier and Graz (Eltz 1581 and Schönberg 1599 in Trier, Charles of Inner Austria 1590 and Maria of Bavaria 1608 in Graz), whereas hearts were separated from the intestines only later (Metternich 1623 in Trier, Ferdinand II 1637 in Graz). The archbishops of Mainz do not follow this pattern exactly. Hearts and intestines of Greiffenklau (1629) and Wambold Umstadt (1647) are buried together; only Kronberg's heart (1626) is buried separately. So far I have not found a single example from German-speaking Europe where a heart was buried without other inner organs between 1580 and 1600.

A tradition of heart burial during the Counter Reformation only developed at the beginning of the 17th century. Strangely enough the earliest heart burial of the 17th century is neither an archbishop nor a person from the Houses of Wittelsbach or Habsburg. The earliest heart is not buried with the Jesuits but with the Franciscans. It belongs to Eitel Friedrich IV of Hohenzollern-Hechingen (d. 1605) and was buried at St Luzen in Hechingen/Swabia. Eitel Friedrich's heart burial is easily understood if one considers his lineage. His wife Sybilla was the daughter of the historian Froben Christoph, count of Zimmern, who was the nephew of Wilhelm Werner of Zimmern, chronicler of the Würzburg prince-bishops, whose heart had also been buried separately in 1575 (see above). The Zimmern family possibly inspired the developing tradition of heart burial. Eitel Friedrich's heart epitaph carries the inscription 'Ubi thesaurus meus, ibi cor meum' (where my treasure is, there is my heart, modified from Luke 12:34 'for where your treasure is there will your heart be'). This biblical passage was also cited by the Jesuit Maximilian van der Sandt in his speech on the occasion of the heart burial of Würzburg Prince-Bishop Julius Echter in 1617 (see above). On the other hand, Michel (1971: 124) has drawn a connection between the development of heart burial and the assassination of the French king Henri IV in 1610. Before ascending to the throne of France, Henri was a Huguenot and had been involved in the War of Religion. After his coronation he had converted to Catholicism, but had then granted religious liberty to the Protestants. Henri's heart is the first in France that was buried at a Jesuit location, the Paris College La Flèche. The deposition was a bombastic political spectacle in which the heart was put on a carriage and seen by a lot of people. The orations for and burial of the heart suggest that it was considered even more important than the corpse. Both the assassination and the heart burial certainly had repercussions in the Holy Roman Empire (Michel 1971: 124).

Whether the strong focus on the heart in the 17th century constitutes a German development or was brought over from France is hard to say. However, for a short period after Henri IV's heart burial in Paris, hearts seem to cluster in Jesuit churches in the Holy Roman Empire. I have already mentioned Echter from Würzburg (1617), Metternich from Trier (1622) and the archbishop of Mainz, Kronberg, whose heart was buried at Aschaffenburg (1626). Other examples include Charles of Austria, the posthumous son of Charles II of Inner Austria. He was prince-bishop of Wrocław and bishop of Brixen and died during a visit to Philip IV's court in Madrid in 1524. While his corpse was buried at El Escorial, his heart was sent all the way to his Jesuit foundation at Nysa in Silesia (today Poland). The heart of Melchior Khlesl, the Cardinal of Vienna, was buried with the Jesuits at Wiener Neustadt in 1630 (Kerschbaumer 1865: 365). Like all the others, whose hearts were separately buried with the Jesuits between 1617 and 1630, Khlesl was a strong advocate of the Counter Reformation. He had been converted to Catholicism by the Jesuits during his childhood and later on led 23,000 pilgrims to the Upper Styrian Shrine of Mariazell in 1599 (MacCulloch 2003: 454–455).

After 1630 heart burial becomes more widespread, but less frequent at Jesuit sites. Of the ten people in my database who were eviscerated between 1631 and the end of the Thirty Years' War in 1648, seven received a heart burial, but none were buried with the Jesuits. The remaining three individuals whose hearts were buried together with the intestines were also not buried with the Jesuits. In comparison, of 13 eviscerated individuals who died between 1617 and 1630, six received heart burial, all at Jesuit churches. One reason why the Jesuits lost interest in burial of the heart may have been that they were finally successful in burying corpses at their institutions. The Jesuit church St Michael in Munich became the burial place of the Wittelsbach family. This first major Jesuit church-building project in Central Europe was founded in 1583 by Bavarian Duke William V (d. 1626) and consecrated in 1597. The Jesuit church in Innsbruck was founded by Leopold V (d. 1632) and built during the Thirty Years' War. It received the bodies of the Tyrolean branch of the House of Habsburg. Another reason why fewer hearts were buried with the Jesuits after 1630 may be that there was much more competition with other Counter Reformation orders over body parts. One of the strongest motives, however, is that in the Houses of Wittelsbach and Habsburg hearts became associated with places of Marian veneration and turned into votive-like offerings, a development which naturally was in the Jesuits' interest.

Heart shrines in the Houses of Wittelsbach and Habsburg

The medieval Black Madonna shrine at Altötting had been revived by the Jesuits in 1570. The first heart to be buried there

was that of Elisabeth of Lorraine, wife of elector Maximilian I of Bavaria. She had died in Ranshofen in 1635, where her intestines were buried. While her corpse was buried with the Jesuits in Munich, her heart was brought to Altötting (Albrecht 1998: 899; Pritz 1857: 417). In 1651 Maximilian of Bavaria's heart followed; his corpse was buried with the Jesuits in Munich and his intestines were buried in Ingolstadt (Albrecht 1998: 1106). Altötting served as heart burial shrine for the House of Wittelsbach until 1954. The heart of Count Tilley was also buried at Altötting. He was the victor of the Counter Reformation Battle on the White Mountain in Bohemia, which annihilated the Bohemian Protestants. Tilley had died in 1632 and in 1637 Tilley's nephew was given permission to bury Tilley's heart (Michel 1971: 122).

The Habsburgs of Vienna followed a similar practice. Though the hearts of Empress Eleonore Gonzaga, second wife of Ferdinand II (d. 1655) and Ferdinand III (d. 1657) were still buried at Graz, King Ferdinand IV (d. 1654) started the Viennese tradition of tripartite deposition of the corpse (Fig. 12.8). On his deathbed he dedicated his heart to the Virgin of Loreto at the Augustinian church in Vienna. His intestines were buried at St Stephen's cathedral and his corpse at the Capuchin Vault in Vienna (Hawlik-van de Water 1993).

Because almost all adult members of the Habsburg family followed this new pattern, diverging wishes soon started to create problems. When Empress Claudia Felicitas (d. 1676) decided that her body should be buried with the Dominicans beside her mother Anna of Medici, the Capuchin monks who felt deprived of her body demanded her heart.

In the 18th century heart burial reached its peak in the House of Habsburg. Whereas in the 17th century exceptions had sometimes been granted to small children whose intestines and hearts were buried together at St Stephen's (Weiss-Krejci 2008: 184), after 1741 no hearts and intestines were buried together any longer. Intestines were exclusively deposited at St Stephen's and hearts in the Augustinian church. The tradition of the heart burial at the Augustinian church only came to an end in 1878.

Separation of the corpse remained of enormous importance in the Holy Roman Empire throughout the 18th century but became more sporadic in the second part of the 19th and during the 20th centuries (Fig. 12.3). In the 18th century burial places for interior organs were often invented. There are stories about King Rudolf I's heart in Tulln (d. 1291) (Lein 1978: 7–8) and Emperor Maximilian I's heart in Bruges (d. 1519). An epitaph (certainly fake) in the monastery Rheinau was made for the viscera of Duke Hartmann (d. 1281), a son of King Rudolf I (Gut 1999: 101).

Discussion and Conclusions

In popular opinion the heart is a powerful natural symbol and it is for this reason that it plays a particular role in mortuary

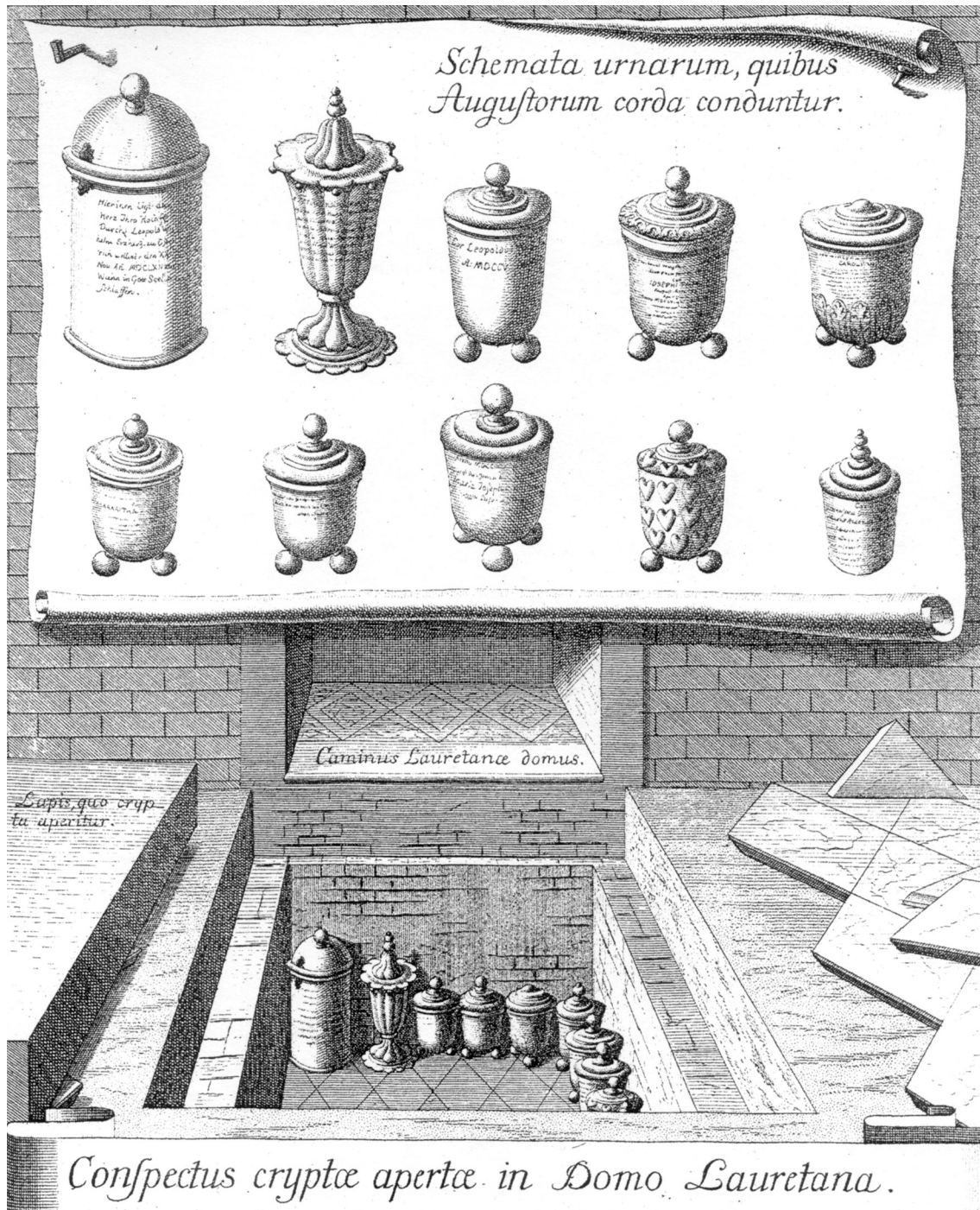


Fig. 12.8: Loreto vault at the Augustinian church in Vienna holding the hearts of ten members of the House of Habsburg who died between 1654 and 1740; drawn and engraved by Salomon Kleiner after 1740 (Gerbert et al. 1772: Plate CX)

rituals throughout the world (e.g. Dietz 1998). However, as I have shown in this paper, heart burial was not a dominant practice in medieval Central Europe. The preference given to heart burial in Central Europe is mainly a post-medieval phenomenon and developed during the Catholic Reformation when heart symbolism gained special importance in a specific

moment of spiritual and political crisis. A comparison of the development of heart burial in German-speaking Europe with Western Europe proves that meanings that are associated with symbols are predominantly embedded in the social and not in the natural world (Kehoe 1979).

The reasons for separate burial of body parts in medieval

Western Europe and its detachment from any necessity in terms of bodily preservation are manifold. In a recent study, Westerhof (2008: 82–86) reaches the conclusion that heart burials in England are predominantly related to ancestral and individual benefaction and patronage. Almost all such burials occur at a site favoured during the individual's life. There was also a trend for donating hearts to the newer religious orders which advocated personal spirituality – in 13th century England these were the Dominicans and Franciscans – while the older orders such as Benedictines and Augustinians received the bulk of the bodies. The burial of a founder in their own monastery often created a bond between that place and successive generation of the founder's lineage, who continued the patronage of the original foundations as well as endowing their own monasteries (see also Bradford 1933: 14).

The trend of burying hearts with the newer orders also existed in medieval Central Europe (mainly with the Cistercians and in one instance with the Franciscans). However, to understand fully the proliferation of medieval divisions of the corpse in Western Europe it is necessary to take into account the social aspects. English heart burial can be considered as a kind of fashion. Since the transportation of the corpse was almost always a marker of social distinction (see also Weiss-Krejci 2004; 2005: 170) it is no wonder that procedures associated with transportation and delayed burial, such as evisceration and separate burial of the inner organs, eventually developed into symbols of high status, even when transport was not necessary. The division of the corpse was a costly procedure. In order to show off their wealth, English people from a more modest background who gained roles in local government and administration also started to request separate burial (Westerhof 2008). The reason why this form of mortuary behaviour spread more rapidly among the English than in Central Europe may be explained by the fact that in medieval England separation of the corpse was a tradition which involved both genders, whereas in the Holy Roman Empire it was often practised by unmarried men without legitimate offspring. Of the 88 individuals from Westerhof's sample (Westerhof 2008: Appendix 1), 73 were male and 15 were female. In the Holy Roman Empire treatment of the corpse was mostly a male affair (44 males, 1 female) (Fig. 12.3). In contrast to England where even children had their inner organs buried separately (Westerhof 2008: 42), medieval body processing in Central Europe was restricted to adults.

Apart from these social differences, I believe that there were also diverging ideologies concerning the body. Embalming was the preferred option of body treatment among medieval English aristocrats from the 12th to the 14th centuries (Westerhof 2008: 79), whereas excarnation by boiling (*mosteutionicus*) was the preferred 'German' body treatment during the same time period (Fig. 12.3). Requests for the transportation of hearts to or from the Holy Land were quite popular among the English (Bradford 1933: 42). In contrast, Hademar of Kuenring was to my knowledge the only person

from the German-speaking region to ask for his heart to be transported back from a Crusade. In his case the heart was transported together with the right hand. In two other instances, involving two prince-bishops of Würzburg, a hand and an arm were transported. This also strongly contrasts with England where, according to Westerhof (2008: 88), not one aristocratic body was dismembered for the separate inhumation of arms or legs. It seems that for the English the heart was so important because it represented humanity's inner being. Among medieval German-speaking people – especially the prince-bishops who represented both secular and religious powers – other body parts such as bones or arms could also fulfil that function.

In contrast to medieval Europe, separation of the corpse in post-medieval Europe was more than just a means of duplicating the body. The heart took over additional functions by transforming into an artefact which was used to promote ritual action. Through the burial of the heart and its associated funeral orations and theatre plays – in 1653 two Jesuit plays were performed upon the heart burial of Prince Johann Ludwig of Nassau-Hadamar (Michel 1971: 136–139) – a new heart symbolism was propagated. Michel (1971: 139) has pointed to the fact that post-medieval heart burial is connected to the emerging cult of the devotion to the Sacred Heart of Jesus. The Sacred Heart of Jesus was the symbol of love in the speeches of Francis of Sales (1567–1622), one of the major contributors to restoring the reputation of French Catholicism (MacCulloch 2003: 476). It became a metaphor for the divine, and after sanctioned by the visions of Marguerite Marie Alacoque in 1673–1675, a widely popular object of devotion. The continuous association of noble hearts with sacred symbols, with the body of Jesus and the Virgin, eventually turned Catholic European monarchs of the 17th century into sacred persons too.

In both Central and Western Europe in the Middle Ages duplication of the body was the reason for separation. By physically fragmenting corpses, high-ranking individuals could express loyalty to more than one site (Binski 1996: 63) and comply with a range of political, religious and social demands (Westerhof 2008). Although the heart was sometimes considered as more important than the intestines, all body parts could stand for a person. On the other hand, separation of the corpse and heart burial in 17th century Catholic Europe had a different quality. Although the division of the corpse in post-medieval Central Europe repeats some of the trends of medieval Western Europe (for example, the body was divided up among the various new Counter Reformation orders; separate burial of the inner organs became common among women and children [Fig. 12.3]; the heart was favoured over the intestines) the heart turns into something more than just a representative of a person. It becomes a political artefact, which was used to renew spirituality and promote new types of religious beliefs.

Acknowledgements

This study was funded by the Austrian Science Fund FWF (P18949-G02). I would like to thank Danielle Westerhof, Ernst Lasnik and Gerhard Hotz for supplying literature and contributing information; Bernhard Hebert from the Austrian Federal Monuments Office and sacristans Wolfgang Plaschka and Günter Untersaubach from Graz Cathedral for giving me access to the heart urns in Ferdinand II's mausoleum; and the editors of this book for organising the session in Zadar, Croatia and their careful editing of my paper.

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