

period's scientific and "chymical" (10) investigations while at the same time it hinders our familiar, prevailing narratives of the eighteenth-century novel.

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THEA TOMAINI. *The Corpse as Text: Disinterment and Antiquarian Enquiry, 1700–1900*. Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017. Pp. 241. \$99.00 (cloth).
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In 2012, the remains of King Richard III were discovered under a parking lot in the city of Leicester. Thanks to Richard's distinctive physiognomy, they were swiftly identified, and a decision was made to reinter the bones in Leicester Cathedral, in keeping with standard British archaeological practice that human remains discovered in excavations should be reburied in the nearest consecrated ground. In this case, however, the choice of reburial site proved controversial: some people wanted to see Richard's remains interred in Westminster Abbey alongside over a dozen other British monarchs, while others argued that his purported wish to be buried in York Minster should be honored. Under the name "Plantagenet Alliance," a group claiming to be Richard's descendants brought a legal action demanding that York be his ultimate resting place, but the judges found no evidence that he had ever expressed such a desire, and so Leicester got his bones—and 100,000 annual visitors eager to see their final resting place—after all.

As Thea Tomaini makes clear in *The Corpse as Text: Disinterment and Antiquarian Enquiry, 1700–1900*, this was far from the first time that a royal disinterment has caused controversy and debate. Tomaini tackles the delightfully macabre subject of the disinterment of the corpses of prominent, mostly royal Britons between the early eighteenth and late nineteenth centuries. Rather than being treated with reverence, the remains of John I, Henry VIII, Charles I, and others were seen as objects of antiquarian interest, as curious investigators sought to resolve various mysteries about their lives and deaths by inspecting the contents of their coffins. Questions such as whether the corpse of Henry VIII had literally exploded—either due to an incompetent embalmer or the effects of a moral corruption that had lingered after the king's death—became the foci of examinations with major significance for present-day debates about important political, social, and religious questions. This was in part because these morbid investigations took place in the context of the emergence of a new sense of the English past that relied upon key moments from the medieval and early modern eras to establish a broadly accepted conception of national history and heritage. Their conclusions were thus heavily influenced by present-day concerns. But at the same time, the dead rarely yielded incontrovertible evidence, as their remains almost never allowed clear conclusions to be drawn. (It could not be definitively determined, for example, whether a skeleton with a smashed skull that was unearthed in the crypt of Canterbury Cathedral in 1888 really was that of Henry II's "troublesome priest" Thomas Becket.) This is ultimately the key point that emerges from Tomaini's work: disinterment, which ignored scruples about the potential desecration of the dead in order to obtain what was supposed to be uncontested empirical evidence, almost always led instead to the production of "a complicated narrative of the corpse" (132).

Tomaini organizes her argument into discrete chapters focusing on individual cases. This biographical structure makes for more compelling reading than a thematic approach might

have done, but it also means that some chapters work better than others, because it requires her to spend a considerable amount of space summarizing the long histories of the bodies and burials in question. This causes her ostensible focus on the period after 1700 to be at times obscured, as in several chapters she turns to it in their final pages. It also means that, although the chapters are arranged roughly chronologically by the dates of the respective disinterments, there is some redundancy and little sense of change over time. Late eighteenth-century conceptions of the English past, though also reliant on medieval and Tudor precedent, were very different from late Victorian ones, but this is not always apparent in Tomaini's work. Nor is a key aspect of Tomaini's case—that corpses were “texts” that could be read in various ways—as revelatory as she claims. Rather, it is an interesting and important but ultimately conventional point about the complexity of interpreting the past dressed up in the fashionable lingo of present-day literary criticism. (In Tomaini's defense, she generally employs a light touch with jargon.)

But these caveats aside, the best chapters in *The Corpse as Text* are well worth perusing. The debate over the identity of the bones in Canterbury Cathedral served as an uncomfortable reminder that England had not always been Protestant, complicating the relationship between the (Protestant) present and the (Catholic) pre-Reformation past. The corpses of Katherine de Valois, Anne Boleyn, and Katherine Parr raised challenging questions about female political power and sexuality, while those of Charles I and Oliver Cromwell reactivated the still-relevant debate over the proper balance between monarchical and parliamentary power. Tomaini is not a historian, and there are times when her sense of the specific context of a particular disinterment could be more detailed. In general, however, her treatments of the individual case studies are sharp and insightful, as well as readable and full of entertaining and amusing detail. One cannot help but sometimes feel sorry for the deceased, as the antiquarian investigators themselves not only behaved in ways that we would find disrespectful, but also frequently uncovered evidence of grave robbing and other cavalier disturbances of their mortal remains. But their zeal to uncover the “truth”—was Anne Boleyn really buried with her head tucked under her arm?—was matched by the reluctance of the dead to yield up their secrets. In none of the cases that Tomaini describes was a clear answer obtained to the question or questions that had justified the disinterment of the corpse. The bones of the dead should have provided the ultimate empirical evidence of “what really happened.” Instead, disinterment almost always served only to intensify debate about the past, and the present.

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LESLIE TOMORY. *The History of the London Water Industry, 1580–1820*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017. Pp. 314. \$54.95 (cloth).
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In recent years, histories of urban water supply have been written for cities such as Philadelphia, Chicago, and New York, rightly focusing on the importance of nineteenth-century developments in their specific water networks. One of the great successes of Leslie Tomory's richly detailed *History of the London Water Industry, 1580–1820* is tracing the origins of urban water networks back to early modern London.

Focusing on the rival companies that supplied piped water to private addresses in London, Tomory opens with three chapters that address technology, company structures, and public