

THE
BARBER
INSTITUTE OF
FINE ARTS

PAYING RESPECTS



MONEY &
MORTALITY

8 JULY 2022 - 25 JUNE 2023

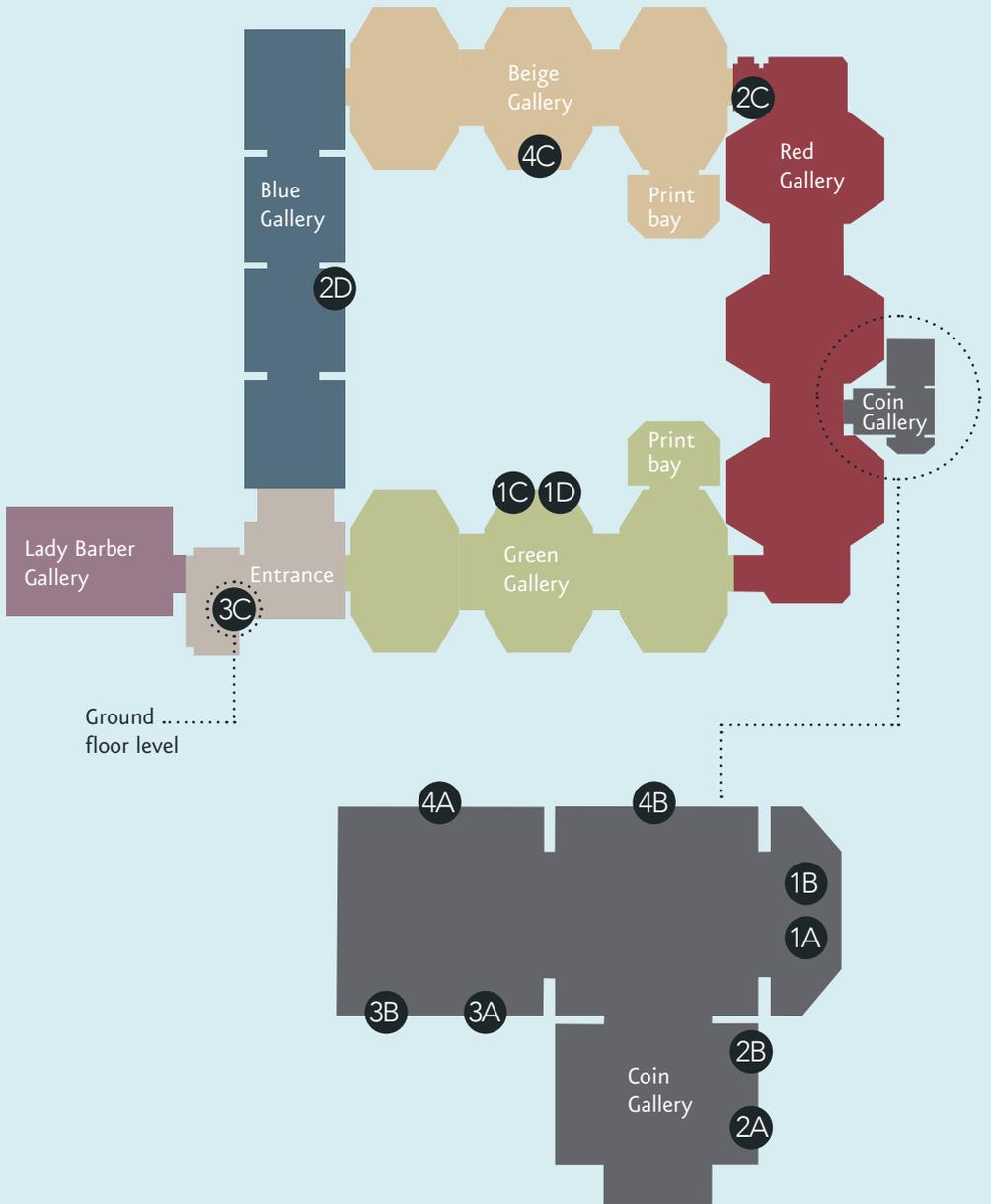
INTRODUCTION

This booklet is designed to accompany the exhibition *Paying Respects: Money and Mortality*, which runs from 8 July 2022 to 25 June 2023. Both the exhibition and this booklet also form part of the Barber Health programme, which aims to use our collections for 'social prescribing', helping people manage their mental health. Barber Health is a long-term strategy which goes beyond the year run of the coin gallery exhibition, and is increasingly infused into aspects of life at the Barber more widely.

This booklet considers four themes around death and dying: final acts of caring, grief, afterlives, and commemoration and memorial. Each theme has a two-page spread with a word from a relevant professional or institution about the theme, and some links on the theme between objects in the exhibition and in the wider galleries. The page overleaf shows you where these objects can be found.

For events related to Barber Health and the exhibition, please visit our website, www.barber.org.uk where you can also find our Barber Podcasts to listen to at your own leisure, or while visiting the galleries and viewing the object(s) discussed.

Please let us know how you find this exhibition and booklet by contacting us at info@barber.org.uk or our social media accounts. All feedback helps us mould future exhibitions and programmes. At the back of this booklet are the names of some helpful organisations relating to the themes discussed within.



FINAL ACTS OF CARING

When we come to die, there are certain acts of preparation that will be made by those around us. Some of these can be ritualised, either as facets of religion or culture, or they can be more medical. Taken together, we can call these the ‘final acts of caring’.

One of the most touching final acts of caring shown in *Paying Respects* is the use of two coins depicting the Anatolian mother goddess, Cybele (1A), and the Roman god of war and father of the Roman people, Mars (1B), as surrogate divine parents for a deceased child to help them pass over to the next life. These are similar to those used in real fourth-century Roman child burials near Colchester.

Elsewhere in the galleries is a triptych (1C & 1D) painted by an Early Netherlandish artist in the circle of Rogier van der Weyden depicting the loving care and attention paid to the body of Christ by his disciples.

Three individuals are engaged in gently and carefully removing Christ’s body from the cross, watched over by mourners, including his mother. As a viewer, we are put in the position of these mourning onlookers at the practical business of preparing a body for burial.

On the back of the wings are Saints Veronica and Helena. Saint Helena is shown in the case ‘Death and Divinity’ in *Paying Respects* as a mortal who became a saint after death. Her appearance here is more specifically connected to her recovery of the ‘True Cross’ that Christ died on, which is why she appears with Veronica, who mopped Christ’s brow, creating a relic.



1A

Silver denarius of Julia Domna, made 196-211 in Rome, R1341.



1B

Base metal follis of Constantine I, made 307 in Trier, R2771.



1C

Circle of Rogier van der Weyden (c.1399-1464), *The Deposition* (centre), *Adam and Eve mourning Abel* (left), *Joseph's coat shown to Jacob* (right), c.1470-75, oil on panel (No. 60.4).



1D

Circle of Rogier van der Weyden (c.1399-1464), *Saint Helena* (left verso), *Saint Veronica* (right verso), c.1470-75 (No. 60.4).

Aside from simply needing to be respectful to the person, caring well for their body after they have died can have a huge positive impact on the people who love them. Not everyone wishes to see a person after they have died, but where someone has witnessed a particularly difficult death, seeing that person again looking relaxed, and essentially at peace, can be extremely beneficial. As funeral directors, we understand the huge role we can play in helping people move forward from those moments. Through properly caring for a person's body we can help to replace unpleasant images in people's minds with an image and sense of calm that is more reassuring and helpful in the grief process. We can help their families, or the people that care about them, to remember them more as they were, not what they had become.

- Fran Glover, Funeral Director,
A Natural Undertaking

I wanted him to feel loved and looked after, to be gentle and kind to him after the pain he endured. Closing the curtain, I felt we could shut out the loud noises of the ward around us and create some peace together. I found talking to him whilst I washed and wrapped him helped to calm me. I wanted him to know what I was doing, that he was informed of each stage of care - like I would do if he was alive.

- Rachel James, Student Nurse,
University of Birmingham

GRIEF

Once the loved one has passed on, most of us will experience grief in some form, though it will be a deeply personal and unique experience.

The examples of grief in *Paying Respects* are both of fathers for their sons. The coins do not display grief, but were made out of grief.

Both emperors wanted to ensure that their sons were not forgotten. In the fourth century, Maxentius not only produced coins commemorating his son's life (2A), he also built a temple to his memory.

In the ninth century, Theophilos' immortalisation of his son in metal (2B) is one of only two reasons we even know of his existence. There is only one mention of him in written records, describing his small sarcophagus at the Church of the Holy Apostles in Constantinople.

Grief is a potent muse for artworks, as it is a near-universal human experience.

In the Christian-Islamic tradition, the archetype of grief is that of Mary/Mariam for her son, Christ/Isa. Though Christ/Isa's ascension is theologically important for both Christianity and Islam, its depiction often includes the visceral grief of his mother. On the bronze relief (2C), it is Mary's grief, not her son's death, which is the central focus.

Just as Mary's grief was the most important aspect of Christ's death portrayed in the bronze, so was the grief following the martyrdom of Saint Stephen, first Christian martyr, the most important part of the story for the artist Eugène Delacroix to portray (2D). It is not the acts of Stephen's life, nor the graphic manner of his death that is captured here, but the grief of the believers that helped to cement this saint's cult.



2A

Base metal *follis* of Maxentius in the name of Romulus, made 309-10 in Rome, R2729.



2B

Gold *solidus* of Theophilos, made about 830-40 in Constantinople, B4685.



2C

After Cesare Targone (active 1573-85), *The Madonna mourning the dead Christ*, c.1582-84, bronze relief (No. 50.4).



2D

Eugène Delacroix, *Saint Stephen borne away by his Disciples*, 1862, oil on canvas (No. 62.1).

I believe nothing could have prepared me for the emotional distress the patient's death brought to me. However, I would like to believe that as a student, I have slowly learnt to develop my own coping strategies. Death never gets any easier, but we learn how to cope with it so that we do not compromise other patients' care.

- Mthokozisi Mabhena, Student Nurse, University of Birmingham

There is no 'right' way to grieve. Grief is personal, influenced by culture, religion, our relationship with the deceased, and our previous experiences of bereavement. Grief is less about 'getting over' the death of someone close to us, it is more about learning to find a way to live with our grief. To find a 'place' for the person in our current life that allows us to continue to 'live' our life – whatever that life is. How we find this 'place' will be unique to us all. We may go to a specific place (geographical or spiritual), carry out specific rituals, wear an item of jewellery, or use our memories of the person to guide our decisions.

Following a bereavement our grief can seem all encompassing, with our life filled entirely with our grief and our responses to it. Over time we learn to live with our grief, we go back to work, we meet friends, we try a new hobby. Little by little, our life around our grief grows, our grief is still there, but our life grows bigger around it – our life cushions our grief.

- Jane Nicol, Associate Professor, University of Birmingham and Nurse in Residence Barber Institute of Fine Arts

AFTERLIVES

One of the things that gives many people hope through their grief is the belief in an afterlife.

In many southern Asian (Vedic) religious beliefs, death is closely associated with life and birth as part of a wheel, or the deity commonly called Shiva, from whom everyone comes, to whom we return and from whom we are born again. This is reflected in art from prehistory to the modern day.

In *Paying Respects*, you can see a second-century CE coin of Kanishka I (127-50 CE) of the Kushan Empire (3A). The Empire included many religious beliefs, which were shown on their coins. In this depiction, Shiva holds in four hands a trident, drum, vase and wreath, representing some of his many aspects. He is also here combined with the Bactrian god of the wind, Oesho. One of Oesho's aspects was as the shepherd of souls between this life and the next, while Shiva's related role was as the dancer of the cycle of creation and destruction, life and death.

In the Foyer is another, later, but clearer representation of Shiva as the god of life and death (3C). In this 15th-century depiction, Shiva is shown as Nataraja, the lord of the dance, which consists of the dance of creation and the dance of destruction. As the dance, called the Tandava, changes, people die and are reborn. The people we loved will live and love again.

Back in the coin exhibition is a slightly different depiction of Shiva (3B), this time with his guardian cow, Nandi, and only his trident. In this depiction, he is not present as a god of life and death, but simply as a ruler god, one of his other aspects.



3A

Base metal tetradrachm of Kanishka I, made 127-52 in Kashmir. WH0100.



3B

Base metal tetradrachm of Vima Kadphises, made 113-27 in Kashmir, WH0099.



3C

Unidentified Maker, Vijayanagar, India, Shiva Nataraja,
Lord of the Dance, 15th-16th century, copper alloy (No. 46.3).

I do absolutely believe that this is it, and I find huge comfort in that...It's such a personal choice... it is definitely mine... that we live in this world together and make the best of it. I hope that helps us to inform the choices we make daily about how we conduct ourselves, the relationships we have, and also, to get every last bit out of it.

- Janet Ellis, Presenter and author,
and a Patron of Humanists UK

The Christian promise and hope of resurrection means that death and all the other terrible, awful, no-good things the world throws at us are never the last thing. There is a divine power at work in our world which keeps the worst thing from being the last thing.

- Rev Mindy Bell, Methodist Chaplain,
University of Birmingham Chaplaincy Centre

Judaism affirms a belief in the afterlife but does not focus on it. It is our deeds on earth that matter, as it is said: 'The righteous require no memorial; their deeds are their memorial.'

- Rabbi Margaret Jacobi, Progressive
Jewish Chaplain, University of Birmingham
Chaplaincy Centre

COMMEMORATION AND MEMORIAL

For believers and non-believers alike, remembering the deceased is an important part of keeping them alive.

Paying Respects features examples of how the ancestors of emperors were commemorated on coins. Though these have a propaganda value of demonstrating the living ruler's legitimacy through their family right, they also serve as a form of immortalising their memory.

In the eighth-century Byzantine Empire, this culminated in the appearance of three ancestors on one face of the coin: Constantine VI's father, Leo IV; his grandfather, Constantine V; and his great-grandfather, Leo III (4A).

Roman coins could be more literal in their commemoration. The coin (4B) made in the name of Faustina the Elder after her death depicts her literal tomb, called a mausoleum.

While almost any artwork within the galleries is a form of memorialisation of the subject, one painting stands out as an example of memorialisation.

The painting by Marco and Sabastiano Ricci (4C) depicts an imaginary memorial to the Duke of Devonshire, a prominent member of the Whig Party. Unlike the mausolea depicted on Roman coins, this built memorial did not exist in reality. It reflects a yearning for a physical memorial, complete with mourners, which will endure intact amidst the crumbling ruins of its surroundings. Ironically, the painting of this imaginary memorial is itself a form of memorial.



4A

Gold *solidus* of Constantine VI, made in Constantinople 780-87, B4598.



4B

Base metal *sestertius* of Antoninus Pius in the name of Faustina the Elder, made about 141 in Rome, R1216.



4C

Sebastiano Ricci (1659-1734) and Marco Ricci (1676-1730), *Allegorical Tomb of the 1st Duke of Devonshire*, c.1725-28, oil on canvas (No. 58.4).

As we know when we become older, our memories of childhood can diminish. When someone we love has a life-limiting illness it is so important to focus on positive, meaningful memory-making for the child/young person to take forward with them in the future, this makes their grieving journey so much easier.

There are so many valuable activities that can support a child through these challenging times. Some of them include hand casting (child and adult hold hands and from this a 3D cast can be created): this is a treasured item that the child will have forever. Memory boxes are also a lovely activity to do, items can be placed in a decorated box such as, special photos, favourite perfume, letters, and drawings, anything that is significant to that person. Recordable devices are also a wonderful way of capturing their loved one's voice and keeping it forever (we often speak to adults who feel so sad that they have 'forgotten' what their loved one's voice sounds like). Making memories like those listed can be done whatever the circumstance.

- Samantha Kelly, Hospice based Children's Therapeutic Practitioner, St Mary's Hospice Birmingham

'Memories are part of our past and very much part of our future'

FURTHER INFORMATION AND SUPPORT

For further support and guidance on the themes raised in this booklet:

NHS support for bereavement in Birmingham:

→ <https://forwardthinkingbirmingham.nhs.uk/bereavement-support-services/>

Support for the death of a child in the West Midlands:

→ www.edwardstrust.org.uk

Support for UoB staff and students dealing with bereavement:

→ <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/2020/bereavement-support>

On discussing death as an important part of life:

Dying matters awareness week:

→ <https://www.hospiceuk.org/our-campaigns/dying-matters/dying-matters-awareness-week>

The Order of the Good Death:

→ <https://www.orderofthegooddeath.com/death-positive-movement/>

We would like to thank all contributors to this booklet from -

A Natural Undertaking

→ <https://www.anaturalundertaking.co.uk/>

The University of Birmingham Medical School

→ <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/schools/medical-school/index.aspx>

Humanists UK

→ <https://humanists.uk/>

The University of Birmingham Chaplaincy

→ <https://www.birmingham.ac.uk/staff/campuslife/faith/faithcopy.aspx>

The Hospice Charity Partnership

→ <https://www.birminghamhospice.org.uk/>