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A Tradition of Invention
Rites and rituals surrounding
the death and funeral of Queen Elizabeth II

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Abstract

Queen Elizabeth II died on 8 September 2022. Her death, after a reign of over 70 years, set in motion a series of events, political and constitutional, religious and ceremonial, which both conformed to a long-established pattern while also introducing new elements. The death of the monarch, the proclamation of the successor, and the mourning and funeral rites are, as they always have been, vehicles for more than the bare protocol itself contains. Choices are made, even – and perhaps especially – when the desired impression is one of continuity; the very presentation of these events requires decisions to be taken and plans to be made which project a certain aura, and attempt to direct the ways in which they are received. This article places those rites in their liturgical and historical context, and asks what meaning can be discerned in the liturgical and other choices made.

Keywords

Queen Elizabeth II | Funeral Rites | Transition of Power | Tradition | Innovation

 indicates an embedded hyperlink, the full link is given in the bibliography.

A Tradition of Invention

Rites and rituals surrounding the death and funeral of Queen Elizabeth II

Daniel LLOYD

Queen Elizabeth II died on 8 September 2022. Her death, after a reign of over 70 years, set in motion a series of events, political and constitutional, religious and ceremonial, which both conformed to a long-established pattern (and followed a plan the existence of which had been publicly known for some time), while introducing within those events a number of elements which had not previously been present. In outline, the death of the monarch, the proclamation of the successor, and the mourning and funeral rites are, as they always have been, vehicles for more than the bare protocol itself contains. Choices are made, even – and perhaps especially – when the desired impression is one of continuity; the very presentation of these events requires decisions to be taken and plans to be made which project a certain aura, and attempt to direct the ways in which they are received.

From a liturgical perspective, this allows us to see the different ways in which meaning is projected, attributed, discerned. Individuals and groups engaging with prescribed acts, which may or may not derive from practical or pragmatic motives, even as they become linked with allegorical or other interpretations, are as much part of the exercise of secular power as they are of the liturgy. Elements may be retained, revived, or fall into desuetude; meaning may be projected or read into such elements, their use or disuse; that meaning may be received in a different way from what was intended. No liturgical action, whether it be during the Mass or in any other rite or ceremony of the Church, is precisely identical to another: context shapes it just as much as text. This is especially true in those liturgical elements which are regarded as “traditional”: in an ecclesiastical and sec-

ular culture of pluralism, being “traditional” is a choice, not a given. One question, beyond the scope of this essay, is how much that has always been the case. Another, which we will attempt to answer, is the role of tradition and innovation in this very particular set of liturgies from 2022.

“The simple word ‘liturgy’ covers a multitude of forms of celebration that are associated in a broad variety of ways with the life of the church, society, and individuals, and are given a great many different interpretations.”¹ If liturgy can be defined as encompassing such breadth, then it is surely appropriate to regard some of the apparently non-ecclesial elements of these death and succession events as at least broadly liturgical in character. Indeed, the nature of the established Church in England ensured a visibly Christian character to most of them, even if that was confined to the prayer (for that is of course what it is) of “God save the King!” Although these are the first words of the British national anthem, and are as such as much at home at, for instance, sporting occasions and, once upon a time, at the end of the showing of films in cinemas, they are also, and indeed primarily, a plea for divine involvement in the life of the head of state. The inclusion of a prayer (even if only four words long) in a given occasion does not a liturgy make, but if that occasion is following a series of rules, spoken or unspoken, and if it is in part about the facilitation of a personal, local connection to a broader, shared event, and if, in addition to local and national considerations, there are participating Christian clergy who are there not (simply) because of status, but because they have a specifically Christian part to play, then we are not very far from a very basic idea of a liturgy.

Accession Proclamations

This survey begins, therefore, not with the church rites, but with a piece of political theatre. Like all such rituals, it points to something beyond itself. The Accession Council met at St James’s Palace on Saturday 10 September. As the Royal website explains, “While the new Sovereign succeeds to the throne as soon as his or her predecessor dies, they are formally pro-

¹ Albert GERHARDS – Benedikt KRANEMANN, *Introduction to the Study of Liturgy*, Collegeville/MN 2017, 1.

claimed at the Accession Council.”² This is also the occasion on which the new monarch makes his or her first public foray into matters liturgical, promising that they “shall inviolably maintain and preserve the Settlement of the true Protestant Religion as established by the Laws made in Scotland”³. The proclamation is then made on the balcony of the palace by Garter King of Arms, and repeated at various points throughout London and the rest of the country in the coming days. All this, including the accession council’s meeting, was televised for the first time in 2022. We see in the historical accounts of such proclamations a mixture of continuity and change. At Oxford, for example, the proclamation was made by the civic authorities, led by the mayor, at various points throughout the city. One of these included a halt in front of the University Church of St Mary the Virgin, such that the proclamation was made as it were in the presence of the University. Over the course of the twentieth century, the repetitions of the proclamation throughout the city ceased, and it was done once, with civic, university, and religious representatives, at the main crossroads, Carfax. A stone water conduit, which was in fact owned by the University, and which brought water from outside the city to its centre, stood at Carfax between 1610 and 1687: “at Proclamations that took place between those dates, it was made to flow with free wine.”⁴ Even after the demolition of this structure, it is recorded the Proclamations for George IV (1820) and William IV (1830) involved at least some free beer. It is not recorded that this happened for Victoria (1837) or for her successors.⁵ In 2022, the proc-

² The Accession Council and Principal Proclamation (10 September 2022). [↗](#) – All hyperlinks have been accessed on 16 November 2022.

³ The full oath is: “I, Charles the Third, by the Grace of God of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and of My other Realms and Territories, King, Defender of the Faith, do faithfully promise and swear that I shall inviolably maintain and preserve the Settlement of the true Protestant Religion as established by the Laws made in Scotland in prosecution of the Claim of Right and particularly by an Act intituled ‘An Act for securing the Protestant Religion and Presbyterian Church Government’ and by the Acts passed in the Parliament of both Kingdoms for Union of the two Kingdoms, together with the Government, Worship, Discipline, Rights and Privileges of the Church of Scotland. So help me God.” See: His Majesty The King’s Oath relating to the security of the Church of Scotland (10 September 2022). [↗](#)

⁴ Stephanie JENKINS, Proclamation of new Sovereigns at Oxford. [↗](#)

⁵ This did not happen in 2022 either.

lamation was made at 1.00 pm on Sunday 11 September. Civic, county, university, and religious representatives were present. Accompanying the reading of the proclamation, some short speeches were given, and prayers were led by the rector of St Michael-at-the-Northgate (the city church, as opposed to the university church); the Anglican bishop of Oxford; and the Oxford Inter-Faith leader, also a Deputy Lieutenant, a local imam. We might find a warrant in 1 Timothy 2:1–2: “I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for all men, for kings and all who are in high positions, that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life, godly and respectful in every way (RSV).” The bishop gave a blessing, and the national anthem was sung. Gathering for such an event is unusual, and perhaps the closest UK parallel is the annual marking of Remembrance Sunday, the Sunday closest to 11 November (the anniversary of the Armistice at the end of the First World War). This would also include various representatives, civic and religious, trumpets or bugles, prayers, and the national anthem. The last such accession proclamation was of course in 1952, and the event in 2022 was, at least in Oxford, well attended. However, though the reading-out of the text of the proclamation remains the core over the centuries, people’s experiences of it have clearly been quite different. Gone were the horses of old, and the stations throughout the city; gone too was the free refreshment. Lengths of reigns, and thus the length of time between accession proclamations, are of course varied, but in the 70 years before 1952, there had been four: Edward VII, George V, Edward VIII, and George VI. The lack of corporate memory in 2022 of what happened at such occasions was therefore in contrast with how things had been at Elizabeth II’s own accession proclamation. This observation gives a clue to a theme which recurs throughout the course of this article: what is counted as traditional, and what is expected of how such events will take place, changes: tradition is malleable, and can be instrumentalised.

Funerals in the Church of England

Before discussing the funeral and burial itself, it will be useful to provide an overview of the Church of England’s tradition and practice in this regard. The pre-Reformation roots of the Church of England’s funeral rites are usefully summarised in A. Jefferies Collins’ edition of the *Manuale ad*

usum percelebris ecclesiae Sarisburiensis.⁶ Indeed, to the texts on which he principally relied, Collins added the rubrics “on the composing of the body of a dead sovereign” taken from various Westminster Abbey sources.⁷ There are lengthy instructions on the washing of the body and its anointing with perfumed balsam, and the dressing and arraying of the body before taking it from the place of death to the location of the funeral and burial.⁸ What follows is a single, comprehensive version of the funeral rites, albeit one assembled from a variety of sources. Collins noted that “independent traditions persisted to the end” [i.e. to the Reformation], and that some manuscripts did not contain Masses for the Dead, passing “from ‘commendatio animarum’ to ‘Ritus sepeliendi Mortuos’”⁹. The Office of the Dead follows, with prayers and the use of holy water and incense. Mass is offered, and there is considerable variety in the texts used, not only in which prayers are used for whom, but also, as we have seen, in the various books and MSS from which Collins’s edition is derived. The burial rites begin with the absolution of the deceased (the rubric given indicates that this is “post missam”¹⁰), then “finitis orationibus aperiatur sepulchrum”¹¹, the grave is blessed, and the body placed into it. Finally the tomb is made ready to be closed, and a scroll with an indulgence for the dead placed on the body; after further prayers, earth is cast on the body in the form of a cross. This is done by the “executor officii”¹², the officiating cleric: Sally Harper notes a rubric in which the “executor officii” is responsible for beginning the versicle after the post-compline Marian anthem;¹³ and

⁶ A. Jefferies COLLINS (ed.), *Manuale ad usum percelebris ecclesie Sarisburiensis* (HBS 91), Chichester 1960. For the series of rites for the anointing of the sick, dying, death, and burial, see 107–162.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 121, fn. 16.

⁸ Cf. *ibid.*, 121 f.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 144, fn. 1.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 152.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 155.

¹² *Ibid.*, 158.

¹³ Cf. Sally E. ROPER, *Medieval English Benedictine Liturgy. Studies in the Formation, Structure, and Content of the Monastic Votive Office, c. 950–1540* (Outstanding Dissertations in Music from British Universities), New York – London 1993, 154.

the rite ends with the clergy reciting the seven penitential psalms as they return from the grave.¹⁴

In the First Prayerbook of Edward VI, the rites are much simplified. The Visitation of the Sick, and the Communion of the Sick, do not anticipate the death of the sick person, and there are no rites dealing with the process of dying itself. Procter and Frere noted of the rites for the burial of the dead that in “1549, though it represented a great departure from the old lines, it had a character of its own”¹⁵. The “Ordre for the Buriall of the Dead”¹⁶ then begins simply with the “priest meting the Corps at the Church style”, the simple gate or covered lychgate still a feature of many English churches. The procession goes either into church, or directly to the grave, with the Sentences (John 11:25–26¹⁷; Job 19:25–27¹⁸; 1 Tim 6:7 with Job 1:21) said or sung to accompany the procession. The body is placed in the grave, to “Manne that is borne of a woman, hath but a shorte tyme to lyue...” (cf. Job 14:1–2¹⁹), followed by “In the midst of lyfe we be in death...”. This new composition is traced by Procter and Frere to an antiphon for Compline on the Third Sunday of Lent²⁰, via a translation of a hymn by Luther founded on the text which was made by Miles Coverdale

¹⁴ Cf. COLLINS, *Manuale*, 162.

¹⁵ Francis PROCTER – Walter Howard FRERE, *A New History of the Book of Common Prayer with a Rationale of its Offices*, London 1910, 631.

¹⁶ Frank E. BRIGHTMAN (ed.), *The English Rite. Being a Synopsis of the Sources and Revisions of the Book of Common Prayer*, vol. 2, London 1921, 848–878.

¹⁷ Cf. *Sarum Officium Defunctorum, ad laudes* (antiphon for the Benedictus): “Ego sum resurrectio et vita...” (COLLINS, *Manuale*, 141).

¹⁸ Cf. *Sarum Officium Defunctorum, ad matutinum* (resp. lect. i.): “Credo quod redemptor meus viuit...” (COLLINS, *Manuale*, 137).

¹⁹ Cf. *Sarum Officium Defunctorum, ad matutinum* (lectio v.; Job xiv, 1–6): “Homo natus de muliere...” (COLLINS, *Manuale*, 138).

²⁰ Cf. *Dominica iii. Quadragesimae, ad completorium*: “Media vita in morte sumus, quem querimus...” (*Breviarium ad usum insignis ecclesiae Sarum*, vol. 1, ed. by Francis PROCTER – Christopher WORDSWORTH, Cambridge 1882, dcliii. [↗](#) See for the “Media vita” also Peter WAGNER, *Das Media vita*, in: *Schweizerisches Jahrbuch für Musikwissenschaft* 1 (1924) 18–40.

in his *Ghostly Psalms*.²¹ In continuity with the previous rites, the priest casts earth on the body, saying “I commende thy soule to God the father almyghtie, and thy bodye to the gronde, earth to earth ...”²². Words from Revelation are said (“I heard a voyce from heaven, saying vnto me: Write, blessed are the dead which dye in the Lorde...” [Rev 14,13]²³), and a prayer commending the soul of the deceased, who is mentioned by name, follows, including the phrase “earth to earth” etc.²⁴, ending with a prayer of thanksgiving and trust²⁵. An oddity of this rite is that there is considerable

²¹ Cf. PROCTER – FRERE, *A New History*, 637, fn. 3. – The first verse of Coverdale’s hymn is as follows:


“IN the mydde of our lvyng
 Death compaseth us rounde about:
 Who shulde us now succour brynge,
 By whose grace we maye come out?
 Even thou, Lorde Jesu, alone:
 It doth oure hartes sore greve truly,
 That we have offended the.
 O Lord God, most holy,
 O Lord God, most myghtie,
 O holy and mercyfull Savioure,
 Thou most worthy God eternall,
 Suffre us not at our last houre
 For any death from the[e] to fall.

Kirieleyson.”

Remains of Myles Coverdale, Bishop of Exeter. Containing Prologues to the Translation of the Bible [...], ed. by George PEARSON, Cambridge 1846, 554 f.

Luther’s original as printed in 1524 reads:

“Mytten wir ym leben synd / mit dem todt vmbfangen. Wen suchen wir der hulffe thu / das wir gnad erlangen / das byst du herr alleyne. Vns rewet vnser missethat / die dich herr erzurnet hat. Heyliger herre Got / Heyliger starcker gott / Heyliger barmhertziger heyland / du ewyger Gott las vnns nicht versyncken / yn des pittern todes nott / Kyrieleyson.”

Martin LUTHER, *Eyn Enchiridion oder Handbüchlein. eynem ytzlichen Christen fast nutzlich bey sich zuhaben [...]*, Erfurt 1524, fol. 11 , reprint: *Das Erfurter Enchiridion [...]* (DMus.D 36), ed. by Konrad AMELN, Kassel et al. 1983, fol. 11.

²² Cf. Sarum *Inhumatio Defuncti*: “Commendo animam tuam deo patri omnipotenti: terram terre...” (COLLINS, *Manuale*, 158-159) combined with Phil 3:21.

²³ Cf. also Sarum *Officium Defunctorum, ad vesperam* (antiphon for the Magnificat): “Audiui vocem de celo dicentem...” (COLLINS, *Manuale*, 133 f.).

²⁴ This prayer contains allusions to John 5:22 and Matthew 25:34.

²⁵ This prayer has allusions to Romans 7:24, Psalm 31:6, and Hebrews 9:39–40; 12:23.

variation available regarding what happens where, and various options given which may or may not be used. A sort of office of the dead, including psalms 116,²⁶ 139,²⁷ and 146,²⁸ “with other suffrages”, may be said before or after the burial: an epistle is given (1 Cor 15:20–58), which was in the corpus for Masses for the dead, as given in the *Manuale Sarum*, albeit there considerably shortened (1 Cor 15:20–23 only²⁹), together with “Lorde haue mercy vpon us, Christ haue mercy...” (also called “Lesser Litany”), the Lord’s Prayer and preces or suffrages (= versicles and responses) founded on the Absolution for the Dead and a concluding collect.³⁰ There is also provision for “the celebracion of the holy communion when there is a Burial of the dead”³¹. The introit, psalm 42, is in the *Manuale Sarum* both at Matins of the Dead and at the moment of burial.³² It was also, in part, used as one of the options for the gradual and also for the tract at the Requiem Mass.³³

²⁶ In the *Manuale* at the *Commendatio Animarum* (cf. COLLINS, *Manuale*, 120).

²⁷ In the *Manuale* after the burial (cf. COLLINS, *Manuale*, 158).

²⁸ In the *Manuale* at Vespers in the *Vigilia Mortuorum* (cf. COLLINS, *Manuale*, 134).

²⁹ Cf. COLLINS, *Manuale*, 147.

³⁰ The versicles and responses “Entre not (o Lorde) into iudgement with thy seru-ant. [...] For in thy sight no lyuyng creature shalbe iustified”, at BRIGHTMAN, *English Rite II*, 872 are formed from the prayers “Non intres in iudicium cum seruo tuo domine. Quia non iustificabitur in conspectu tuo omnis viuens.” (COLLINS, *Manuale* 154). The concluding prayer, “O Lorde, with whome do liue the spirites of them that be dead...” (BRIGHTMAN, *English Rite II*, 872. 874), includes several phrases from prayers in the *Sarum Use*, two of which are in the *Gelasian Sacramentary* (GeV 1617; RED.F 4, 236 MOHLBERG [GaB 539; HBS 48/49, 164 LOWE], and GeV 1627; RED.F 4, 238 MOHLBERG); the final petition is based on the Collect of the *Sarum* “Mass of the Five Wounds of Our Lord Jesus Christ” (*Missa de quinque vulneribus D.N.J.C.*): Francis Henry DICKINSON (ed.), *Missale ad usum insignis et praeclarae ecclesiae Sarum*, Burntisland et al. 1861–1883 [reprint: Farnborough 1969], 751*.

³¹ BRIGHTMAN, *English Rite II*, 874.

³² Cf. COLLINS, *Manuale*, 138. 157.

³³ It was to be used as the Tract at Mass for the dead when the body was present, and on the anniversary Masses for deceased bishops. In other cases, “De profundis” was used. For the Gradual, two options were provided: in the presence of the body, “Si ambulem”, from Psalm 22 [23], otherwise “Requiem aeternam.” Cf. COLLINS, *Manuale*, 148.

The provision of the Second Prayer Book (1552) is greatly reduced.³⁴ The body is met, as before, at the entrance to the churchyard; the sentences are said or sung; the body is buried, with the casting of earth – done “by some standyng by”³⁵, no longer by the priest – accompanied by a prayer. The initial sentence of the committal is changed from “I commend thy soule to God the father almyghtie, and thy bodye to the grounde, earth to earth...” to

Foreasmuche as it hath pleased almightie god of his great mercy to take vnto hymselfe the soule of our dere brother here departed, we therfore committe his body to the grounde, earth to earth [...].³⁶

The first part is from the second funeral sermon in Hermann von Wied’s *Consultation*.³⁷ The epistle which had previously been used in the quasi-Office of the Dead is now part of the burial service, which concludes with “Lorde haue mercy vpon vs ...”, the Lord’s Prayer, and two further prayers, partly based on those of 1549, the first of which names the deceased. The second prayer, “The Collect”³⁸, is substantially based on the collect for the celebration of the Holy Communion. The Elizabethan Book of Common Prayer 1559 retains the 1552 rite in its entirety.³⁹

1662 precedes the rubrics about meeting the body with an injunction that “the Office ensuing is not to be vsed for any that die vnbaptized, or excom[m]unicate, or have laid violent hands vpon themselves”⁴⁰. To the three sentences of 1552/59 are added two psalms, of which one or both may be read: Psalms 39 and 90. Neither of these is found during the funer-

³⁴ Cf. BRIGHTMAN, English Rite II, 845–877.

³⁵ Ibid., 859.

³⁶ Ibid.

³⁷ A simple, and religious consultatio[n] of vs Herma[n] by the grace of God Archbishop of Colone [...], London (1547) ²1548 [= English transl. of the Latin version], fol. CCxxxix: “Forasmuche as it hath pleased allmightie God, that according to his mercye, he would take this oure brother out of this world vnto hymselfe...”.

³⁸ BRIGHTMAN, English Rite II, 877.

³⁹ Cf. *The Book of Common Prayer: Commonly Called The First Book of Queen Elizabeth*, Printed by Grafton 1559, ed. by William PICKERING, London 1844, fols. 103^r–105^r.

⁴⁰ BRIGHTMAN, English Rite II, 849.

al rites in the *Sarum Manuale*; neither was used in previous Prayer Book burial services. The epistle from 1 Corinthians 15 remains. If this first part has taken place in church, the party now comes to the grave, where “Man that is born of a woman” and “In the midst of life” are said or sung. Earth is cast on the body, again, not by the priest. “Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God” is followed by “I heard a voice from heaven”, then by “Lord have mercy upon us ...” and Lord’s Prayer, and the two prayers as in 1552, which now no longer give a place to name the deceased. The service concludes with the Grace (cf. 2 Cor 13:14).

1549	1552	1662
Sentences (John 11; Job 19; 1 Tim 6 with Job 1)	Sentences (John 11; Job 19; 1 Tim with Job 1)	Sentences (John 11; Job 19; 1 Tim 6 with Job 1)
		Ps 39 or/and 90
		Epistle (1 Cor 15:20–58)
[At the grave]	[At the grave]	[At the grave]
“Manne that is borne of a woman”	“Man that is borne of a womanne”	“Man that is born of a Woman”
“In the middest of lyfe”	“In the middste of lyfe”	“In the midst of life”
<i>Earth is cast</i>	<i>Earth is cast</i>	<i>Earth is cast</i>
	“Forasmuche as it hath pleased...	“Forasmuch as it hath pleased...
“I commend thy soul to God...”	... we therefore committe his body...”	... we therefore commit his body...”
“I heard a voyce”	“I heard a voyce”	“I heard a voice”
“We commend into thy handes”		
“Almyghtie God we geue thee heartie thanks”		
[Short office: Pss 116; 139; 146;		
Epistle (1 Cor 15:20–58)]	Epistle (1 Cor 15:20–58)	
“Lorde haue mercy...” and Lord’s Prayer	“Lorde haue mercy...” and Lord’s Prayer	“Lord have mercy...” and Lord’s Prayer

<p>Preces "Entre not into iudgement..."</p> <p>"O Lorde, with whome do liue the spirites of them that be dead"</p> <p><i>[Celebration of Holy Communion:</i></p> <p>Introit: Ps 42</p> <p>Collect: "O mercifull god..."</p> <p>Epistle: 1 Thess 4:13–18</p> <p>Gospel: John 6:37–40]</p>	<p>"Almightye God, wyth whom doe lyue the spyrytes of them..."</p> <p>"O mercyfull God..."</p>	<p>"Almighty God, with whom do live the spirits of them..."</p> <p>"O mercifull God..."</p> <p>"The grace of our Lord..."</p>
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The various proposals for Prayer Book revision in the nineteenth century included suggestions directed at the funeral rites. R. F. Littledale proposed the restoration of a communion service with proper texts, together with "express prayer for the dead"⁴¹. As Ronald Jasper noted, "his scheme did give a clear picture of an Anglo-Catholic point of view", but that "subsequent events were to prove that authority showed no desire to avail itself of his liturgical scholarship"⁴². Unofficial books of prayers and devotions did, however, contain such texts.⁴³ The 1928 proposed (English) Book of Common Prayer⁴⁴ offered various other options for existing texts in the 1662 rite, shown in the table below in italics. It also added, again as options, some prayers taken from various sources (those taken from 1549 are shown in the table below in **bold italics**) including a "special celebration of Holy Communion", which included the Epistle and Gospel from 1549, with 2 Cor 4:16–5:4 and John 5:24–29 as alternatives (the first of these being also an alternative epistle in the burial service). A prayer for the blessing of the grave, if the ground was unconsecrated, is also pres-

⁴¹ Richard F. LITTEDALE, *Catholic Revision. A Letter to Charles Thomas, Lord Archbishop of Canterbury*, London 1867, 29.

⁴² Ronald JASPER, *Prayer Book Revision in England 1800–1900*, London 1954, 85.

⁴³ See below, fn. 123.

⁴⁴ Cf. BCP 1928, 467–484.

ent⁴⁵, as well as the practice, then current in the Roman Rite, of replacing the “Gloria Patri” at the end of the psalms with “Requiem aeternam”⁴⁶. There is a further service provided for use at the burial of a child.⁴⁷ It is worth noting that, despite the reclamation of previous texts, some in closer continuity with pre-Reformation custom (and also with the then-current Roman Catholic texts), and the addition of prayers for those who mourn, 1928 does not provide for the naming of the deceased.

1662	1928
Sentences (John 11; Job 19; 1 Tim 6 with Job 1)	Sentences (John 11; Job 19; 1 Tim 6 with Job 1; <i>Ps 25:6; Deut 33:27; Rom 8:38–39; Rom 14:8–9; Matt 5:4; John 14:1</i>)
Psalm 39 or/and 90	Psalms with optional <i>Anthem</i> “O Saviour of the world...”; Pss 39, 90, 23, 130; “Rest eternal...” may be said instead of “Glory be...”
Epistle (1 Cor 15:20–58)	Epistle: 1 Cor 15:20–58 or 2 Cor 4:16–5:10; Rev 7:9–17; Rev 21:1–7 <i>Blessing of grave when ground is not consecrated</i>
“Man that is born of a Woman...”	“Man that is born of a woman”
“In the midst of life...”	“In the midst of life...” or <i>Ps 103:13–17</i>
Earth is cast	Earth is cast
“Forasmuch as it hath pleased...”	“Forasmuch as it hath pleased” or “ <i>We commend...</i> ”
“I heard a voice...”	“I heard a voice...” <i>“Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible...”</i>
“Lord have mercy...” and Lord’s Prayer	“Lord have mercy...” and Lord’s Prayer

⁴⁵ “If ground be not consecrated, the Priest on coming to the grave may say the Prayer following. O God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...” (ibid., 484).

⁴⁶ Ibid., 468,

⁴⁷ Cf. ibid., 485–488.

<p>"Almighty God, with whom do live..."</p>	<p><i>"Enter not into judgement..."</i></p> <p>"Almighty God, with whom do live..."</p> <p>"O merciful God..."</p> <p><i>"O Father of all..."</i></p> <p><i>"Almighty God, Father of all mercies..."</i></p> <p><i>"O heavenly Father, who in thy Son..."</i></p> <p><i>Other prayers</i></p> <p>"The grace of our Lord..."</p>
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The *Second Book of Homilies*, printed in 1563, contained the following statement of Anglican teaching on prayer for the dead:

neither lette vs dreame any more, that the soules of the dead are any thyng at all holpen by our prayers: But as the Scripture teacheth us, let vs thynke that the soule of man, passyng out of the body, goeth strayght wayes eyther to heauen, or els to hell, whereof the one needeth no prayer, and the other is without redemption.⁴⁸

The most important and distinctive feature of 1928 in comparison with its predecessors is that it provides the option to pray for the departed. It commends the soul of the departed to God's mercy, and further asks that the departed be granted "eternal rest". These differences mean that, in addition to thanksgiving for a person's life (and indeed for that person's deliverance "out of the miseries of this sinfull world"⁴⁹), prayer for those left behind, and an expression of hope in the resurrection, there was now an element of petitionary prayer included in the rite.⁵⁰ The next large-scale moment for liturgical revision in the Church of England coalesced, through

⁴⁸ The *Seconde tome of Homilies*, of such matters as were promysed and intituled in the former part of Homilies, set out by the authorities of the Queene's Majestie. B.L., London 1563, fols. 130^v–137^r ("The thirde part of the Homilie of Prayer"), here: fols. 135^v–136^r.

⁴⁹ BCP 1662 (BRIGHTMAN, *English Rite II*, 873).

⁵⁰ For an account of, in particular, Evangelical Anglican reactions to this, see: Arthur BENNETT, *Prayer for the Departed*, in: *The Churchman* 81/4 (Winter 1967) 252–264, and H. R. M. CRAIG, *Prayer and the Departed*, in: *The Churchman* 86/3 (Autumn 1972) 201–204.

the various “Series” services, in the *Alternative Service Book* 1980 (ASB)⁵¹. The Liturgical Commission’s commentary on the new liturgical rites noted that “although the 1928 Burial Services had been in use for some time, it was not until September 1966 that they were finally authorized for use as Series 1 Services; thus the public use of prayer for the departed was officially recognized and authorized in the Church of England for the first time since 1552”⁵². It goes on to describe the debates between 1966 and 1980 around this issue, and how the Liturgical Commission then proceeded in putting together the texts for the ASB. In brief, the use of at least one of the Sentences (“I am the resurrection, and I am the life...”, John 11:25–26) was mandatory, though there were various options for others in addition to this (1 Tim 6:7 with Job 1:21; Deut 22:27; Lam 3:22–23; John 3:16; Rom 8:38–39; 1 Cor 2:9). The collect “Heavenly Father, in your Son Jesus Christ...” centres around faith, hope, and comfort for the bereaved. Various psalms were provided (Pss 23; 90; 121; 130 et al.), of which most were those offered in 1928; a number of readings were given, including the 1 Cor 15:20–58 epistle which has been a constant since before the Reformation. A sermon was possible, but not mandatory. Other prayers followed, of which the Lord’s Prayer was mandatory: “here the resolution passed at the debate on the Report *Prayer and the Departed* is operative, since the rubric (not mandatory) simply says that ‘Prayers may be said here’”⁵³. A mandatory concluding prayer, with repentance as its theme (“Grant us, Lord, the wisdom...” et al.), concluded this section. Finally, the Committal revises earlier forms, drawing heavily on 1662. In its ancillary provision, the ASB offered texts for the funeral of a child⁵⁴, and prayers relating to other bereavements⁵⁵, as well as the burial or interment of ashes, a service before the funeral⁵⁶, and a funeral eucharist⁵⁷.

⁵¹ ASB, 305–336 (Funeral Services).

⁵² The *Alternative Service Book* 1980. A Commentary by THE LITURGICAL COMMISSION, Oxford 1980, 132.

⁵³ ASB 1980: Commentary, 135; cf. also ASB, 314.

⁵⁴ ASB, 318–321.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 322 f.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, 325–327, 334–336.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 328–333.

The most recent Church of England liturgical revision is 2000's *Common Worship* (CW). This is also, unlike previous iterations, an authorised alternative to BCP 1662. *Common Worship* greatly increased the ritual provision around dying and death, building on the variety available in the ASB.⁵⁸ It includes texts for "Ministry at the Time of Death" including laying-on of hands, anointing, and holy communion, a rite for the gathering of the deceased's family and friends after the death and before the funeral, and a rite for receiving the coffin modelled closely on the Vigil in the postconciliar Roman rite order of funerals. There is a tremendous variety of options for biblical texts and prayers as part of this provision. For the funeral itself, *Common Worship* presents the following outline⁵⁹:

Gathering

[Sentences: John 11; Rom 8; 1 Thess 4; 1 Tim 6 with Job 1; Lam 3; Matt 5; John 3]
 Introduction
 [Prayer]
 [Prayers of Penitence]
 The Collect

Readings and Sermon

Prayers

Commendation and Farewell

The Committal

The Dismissal

The deceased is named, and the Introduction ("in these or other suitable words"⁶⁰) sets out the understanding of the rite as

... to remember before God our *brother/sister N*;
 to give thanks for *his/her* life;
 to commend *him/her* to God our merciful redeemer and judge;
 to commit *his/her* body to be *buried/cremated*,
 and to comfort one another in our grief.⁶¹

⁵⁸ See: CW: PS, 214–460, also available online here. [🔗](#)

⁵⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 257. – The funeral service may also take place "within a celebration of Holy Communion" (*ibid.*, 257 and 292), which comes with further texts.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 260.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

Amid the multiplicity of choices, what is required? Introduction, Collect, Reading, Sermon, Prayer, [Lord's Prayer], Commendation, and Committal. These are explained in the rubrics and accompanying notes. There must be an introduction: the rubric reads "*The minister says* 'We meet in the name of Jesus Christ, who died and was raised to the glory of God the Father. Grace and mercy be with you.'"⁶² A collect is prayed ("God of all consolation..." or "Almighty God, you judge us..."⁶³). "There must always be one reading from the Bible"⁶⁴: among these is 1 Cor 15:20–58, also available in shortened forms. "*A sermon is preached.*"⁶⁵ There are to be Prayers of the People, at which the Lord's Prayer may be used⁶⁶ – if it is not said here, it is used later, but it must be used at some point.⁶⁷ A "prayer of entrusting and commending"⁶⁸ is prayed, and one of the forms of committal provided is used, each of which includes the deceased's name.⁶⁹

The effect of *Common Worship* on the Church of England's funerary tradition is, evidently, greatly to expand the provision and possibilities involved in it. Accompanying the overall sense of plurality are, however, two new elements not present in previous versions of this rite: the first is the sermon. Its purpose is "to proclaim the gospel in the context of the death of this particular person." The second is the use of the name of the deceased: those texts which must be used do not give the option of omitting it, still less are they present as though there were an option to include it. The other provisions from 1662 onwards remain, to a degree, operative: if not as formally-authorized liturgical forms, then as sources of inspiration, for instance for "other suitable words."

The purpose of this overview has been to show that contemporary liturgical provision in the Church of England for funeral rites is extremely broad, not only in its content but also in its theology. It would be entirely

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Ibid., 291 (no. 2). The Bible readings are in *ibid.*, 383–389 and 390 f. ("Further Readings").

⁶⁵ Ibid., 263.

⁶⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 264–266.

⁶⁷ Cf. *ibid.*, 270: "*The Lord's Prayer (if not used earlier)*".

⁶⁸ Ibid., 267; cf. also *ibid.*, 373–377.

⁶⁹ Cf. *ibid.*, 269.

possible to conduct a funeral according to BCP 1662, with no alterations or omissions; it would equally be possible to approximate in form, and to a not insignificant degree in content, the Ordinary Form funeral Mass of the Roman Rite. One option for the funeral of Elizabeth II would have been the former. As we shall see, despite the wealth of traditions on which that occasion drew, there was an almost entirely *sui generis* placement of text, action, and music.⁷⁰

The funeral rites for Elizabeth II fell into three parts: the lying-in-state, the funeral, and the committal and subsequent private burial. Prior to these, however, came a series of preparatory memorial events.

Memorial Services

One of the aims for the liturgical revision which led to the ASB 1980 was that “the orders of service provided should, the committal of the body being omitted, be suitable for use as memorial services”⁷¹. In addition to services of prayer and thanksgiving which took place throughout the UK in local churches and communities,⁷² there were four larger-scale ones in the capitals of the UK’s constituent countries. Three, in Edinburgh, Belfast, and Llandaff, were attended by HM the King.

⁷⁰ WESTMINSTER ABBEY, The State Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Monday, 19th September 2022 at 11.00 a.m. [↗](#)

⁷¹ ASB 1980: Commentary, 134.

⁷² This includes Roman Catholic churches: most diocesan bishops seem to have offered requiem Masses. The Bishop of Portsmouth requested that one Sunday Mass be offered as a Requiem, and provided choices of readings and music, as well as directions about Mass propers.

London	Edinburgh	Belfast	Cardiff
St. Paul's Cathedral ⁷³	St Giles' Cathedral ⁷⁴	St Anne's Cathedral ⁷⁵	Llandaff Cathedral ⁷⁶
9 September "Service of Prayer and Reflection"	12 September "Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of HM the Queen"	13 September "Service of Reflection"	16 September "Service of Prayer and Reflection"
Hymn <i>All my hope on God is founded</i>	Introit <i>Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace</i> (S. Wesley)	Introit <i>Confortare "Be strong and of a good courage"</i> (G. Dyson)	Hymn <i>Tydi a wnaeth y wyrth</i> (W. R. Nicholas/Pantymfedwen)
Bidding	Call to worship	Hymn <i>Christ is made the sure foundation</i> (Latin 7 th c./J.M. Neale)	Bidding Prayer (bilingual Welsh/English)
Collect	Hymn <i>All people that on earth do dwell</i> (Old 100 th)	Bidding Prayer	Lord's Prayer
Anthem <i>Behold, O God our defender</i> (H. Howells)	Sentences from Holy Scripture	Lord's Prayer	Psalm 121 (B. Rose)
Reading Isaiah 61:1–3	Preces	Reading Joshua 4:1–3,8, 9–14	Reading 1 Kings 3:4–15 (Welsh)
Anthem <i>Bring us, O Lord</i> (J. Donne/W. Harris)	Bidding Prayers	Psalm 96 (C. V. Stanford)	Gospel Matthew 5:1–10,14–16 (English)
Reading Romans 14:7–12	Psalm 118:17–21 (sung in Gaelic)	Reading Philippians 4:4–9	Anthem <i>A Welsh Prayer</i> (P. Mealor)
Hymn <i>O thou who camest from above</i> (C. Wesley/Hereford)	Reading Ecclesiastes 3:1–15	Nunc Dimittis (C. Wood)	Address (Archbishop of Wales)
	Psalm 116	Act of Commemoration	
	Reading Romans 8:18,28,31–36a,37–39		

⁷³ ST PAUL'S CATHEDRAL, A Service of Prayer and Reflection for Her Majesty The Queen, Friday 9th September 2022, 6 pm. [↗](#)

⁷⁴ Service of Thanksgiving for the Life of Her Majesty the Queen at St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh. [↗](#)

⁷⁵ BELFAST CATHEDRAL, A Service of Reflection for the Life of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at 3.00pm on 13th September 2022 in the Presence of His Majesty the King and the Queen Consort. [↗](#)

⁷⁶ LLANDAFF CATHEDRAL, Gwasanaeth o Weddi a Myfyrdod am fywyd Ei Mawrhydi y Frenhines Elizabeth II. Eglwys Gadeiriol Llandaf Dydd Gwener 16 Medi 2022. [↗](#) Llandaff Cathedral is dedicated to St Peter and St Paul, St Dyfrig, St Teilo, and St Euddogwy, but is generally known as "Llandaff Cathedral".

Address (Bishop of London)	Hymn <i>The Lord's my shepherd</i> (Crimond)	Prayer (based on the Prayer for the Sovereign in the BCP)	Hymn <i>God is Love</i> (T. Rees/Blaenwern)
Nunc Dimittis (C. V. Stanford)	Gospel John 14:1–4,6,27	Sermon (Anglican Archbishop of Armagh)	Prayers (led by Christian, Jewish and Muslim representatives)
Prayers (led by the Minor Canons)	Homily (Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland)	Anthem <i>They are all gone into the world of light</i> (H. Vaughan/J. Tavener)	Hymn <i>Guide me, O thou great Redeemer</i> (W. Williams/Cwm Rhondda; sung in English and Welsh)
Lord's Prayer	Anthem <i>Justorum animae</i> (W. Byrd)	Prayers (led by representatives of Christian denominations)	Blessing
Prayer	Prayers (led by the Dean, an Elder, and a student)	Hymn <i>O Christ the same</i> (T. Dudley-Smith/Londonderry Air)	National Anthems of Wales and UK
Hymn <i>The Lord's my shepherd</i> (Crimond)	Prayers (led by the Dean, an Elder, and a student)	National Anthem	
Act of Commendation	Lord's Prayer	Blessing ("A Celtic Blessing")	
Bagpipe lament	Hymn <i>Glory to God!</i> (L. Fisher, The bleacher lass o'Kelvinhaugh)		
Anthem <i>The souls of the righteous</i> (G. Lewis)	National Anthem		
Blessing (Archbishop of Canterbury)	Benediction		
National Anthem			

Three of these four were Anglican services (the *Church of Scotland* service at St Giles' Cathedral, Edinburgh, is the exception), but only one was Church of England, the others being Church in Wales and Church of Ireland. Across all four, though, there are common elements: they include aspects of the structure, with readings, music, and hymns, as well as the Lord's Prayer, the National Anthem, and sermons preached by significant clerics: in London and Belfast, the local bishops preached in their cathedrals; in Llandaff, the bishop gave way to the Archbishop of Wales; in Scotland, the Moderator is described as "an ambassador for the Church of

Scotland, frequently being invited to represent the Church at official events at home and abroad”⁷⁷. The titles of the services themselves are similar, too: prayer and reflection feature prominently. In the choices of participants, particularly readers and leaders of prayers, as well as, in Scotland and Wales, in the use of language (most notably in Wales), efforts were made to fashion these events into statements of local identity. Philip Williamson points out another way in which these events, in these places, take on a wider significance beyond the local Churches:

The union has weakened since 1952, with the development of independence parties and devolved administrations. The plans include events to help sustain the monarchy’s position in the different parts of the union during the delicate transition between sovereigns. As such, the new king and queen consort will attend “national” memorial services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.⁷⁸

When her father George VI died in 1952, Elizabeth II was in Kenya. The idea that she and her husband would have been able to attend three memorial services within a matter of days was logistically impossible. It would have been most unlikely to have happened even had they been in the UK. Partly, that was a function of the perceived expectations of the monarchy in 1952. That King Charles did so was, partly, a function of the perceived expectations of the monarchy in 2022.

Lying-in-State

Since Queen Elizabeth had died in Scotland, her body was brought to London for the lying-in-state a few days later. The lying-in-state was preceded by the Service for the Reception of the Coffin at Westminster Hall, on Wednesday 14 September at 3.00 pm.⁷⁹

⁷⁷ THE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND. The Moderator. [↗](#)

⁷⁸ Philip WILLIAMSON, Queen Elizabeth II: the history of royal funerals and how this one will be different, in: The Conversation (16 September 2022). [↗](#)

⁷⁹ The Lying-in-State of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II. Service for the Reception of the Coffin at Westminster Hall, Wednesday 14th September 2022 at 3.00 pm. [↗](#)

Psalm 139:1–18, 23–end

Opening Prayer

Reading: John 14:1–6

The Prayers

“Merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ...”

Lord’s Prayer

Motet

Collect

Blessing

The service began with a setting of verses from Psalm 139, which was included in the Sarum funeral texts, and is also provided as an option in CW at various points, including for the Funeral Vigil. The opening prayer, “O God, the maker and redeemer of all mankind”, appears in CW, for 2 November,⁸⁰ and a version of it is found in the appendix of BCP 1928 for the same day.⁸¹ Although propers for that day appeared in the initial draft book of 1923,⁸² this prayer was not among them, and it was not among other proposals for prayers either for funerals or for the dead in general. It seems to have emerged therefore in 1928. Indeed, W. K. Lowther Clarke gave it particular notice in his short pamphlet on the proposed BCP 1928:

The Collect for the Commemoration of All Souls, an addition (November 2) to the Calendar, deserves special notice, because it is a feature of the book to which some may object. [...] Prayers for the Dead, it may be argued, are excluded from the public services of the Reformed Church of England, or at most merely hinted at in ambiguous language; in thus sanctioning them the new book upsets the existing doctrinal balance. The best answer is that a revised Prayer Book must to a large extent register the changes which have gradually taken place in religious practice. Prayers for the Departed — this is a better phrase, because we

⁸⁰ Cf. CW: TS, 564: “Everlasting God, our maker and redeemer”.

⁸¹ Cf. BCP 1928, 743.

⁸² The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments [...]: Draft Revision: corrected February 1923 in accordance with N.A. 84, Oxford 1923, 258. The prayer here reads: “Almighty, eternal God, who wouldst have all men to be saved: Be merciful, we beseech thee, to the souls of thy servants, who have departed from this world in the confession of thy Name, that they may be joined to the company of thy Saints...”.

pray not for the dead but for those who are alive in God—are now used so widely by Churchmen of all schools of thought that a book intended for Churchmen must recognise them. No one could maintain that they are wrong; the most that can be said is that we have no ground for believing them to have any effect. That is to say, while many believe them to be an indispensable, or at least a highly desirable, part of Christian devotion, some consider them unnecessary, but harmless. Clearly the reasons for their inclusion are very strong.⁸³

BCP 1928	Lying-in-state
<p>O Lord, the maker and redeemer of all believers: Grant to the faithful departed all the unsearchable benefits of thy Son's passion; that in the day of his appearing they may be manifested as thy true children...⁸⁴</p>	<p>O God, the maker and redeemer of all mankind: grant us, with thy servant Queen Elizabeth, and all the faithful departed, the sure benefits of thy Son's saving passion and glorious resurrection; that in the last day, when all things are gathered up in Christ, we may with them enjoy the fullness of thy promises...⁸⁵</p>

The beginning of the prayer in BCP 1928 is evidently based on the Roman prayer “Fidelium Deus omnium Conditor et Redemptor”⁸⁶, where the “faithful” and “believers” are equivalent. Noting the subsequent alteration of “all believers” to “all mankind”, it is nevertheless equally representative of a sentiment expressed in the 1662 BCP Catechism:

¶ Question.

What dost thou chiefly learn in these Articles of thy belief?

Answer.

First, I learn to believe in God the Father, who hath made me, and all the World.

Secondly, in God the son, who hath redeemed me, and all mankind.⁸⁷

⁸³ W. K. Lowther CLARKE, *The New Prayer Book Explained*. Revised Edition, London 1927, 12 f. The prayer was taken up for use in the South African Book of Common Prayer. See: BCP-SA 1954, 355.

⁸⁴ BCP 1928, 743.

⁸⁵ *The Lying-in-State of HM Queen Elizabeth II*, p. 2.

⁸⁶ Cf. In Commemorazione Omnium Fidelium Defunctorum (die 2 Novembris), Oratio (MRom 1570, 4183; SODI – TRIACCA).

⁸⁷ BRIGHTMAN, *English Rite II*, 781.

The Gospel, John 14:1–6, was read by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Dean of Westminster then led “The Prayers”, which consisted of the collect at the conclusion of the burial service in BCP 1662, followed by the Lord’s Prayer. A motet followed, “Jesu, the very thought of thee”, setting words by St Bernard of Clairvaux, as translated by the Oratorian and sometime Anglican clergyman Edward Caswall, to music by Edward Bairstow. The Collect was a lightly-edited version of that for the Fourth Sunday after Trinity in BCP 1662; it is not the version which appears in the CW traditionh al language provision for that day:

BCP 1662	Common Worship	Reception of Coffin
O God, the Protectour of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:	O God, the protector of all that trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:	O God, the protector of all who trust in thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy:
increase and multiply vpon vs thy mercy, that thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass thorow things temporall, that we finally lose not the things eternal:	increase and multiply upon us thy mercy that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal that we lose not our hold on things eternal;	increase and multiply upon us thy mercy; that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not things eternal.
Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christs sake our Lord. Amen. ⁸⁸	grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ’s sake our Lord, who liveth and reigneth with thee, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God, now and for ever. ⁸⁹	Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ’s sake. Amen. ⁹⁰

⁸⁸ Ibid., 475. The BCP-US 1979, 180 has an almost identical version of this prayer in traditional language for Proper 12 in the Season after Pentecost (the Sunday closest to July 27), except that the ending “Grant this, O heavenly Father” is replaced by “through Jesus Christ our Lord...”

⁸⁹ CW, 482.

⁹⁰ The Lying-in-State of HM Queen Elizabeth II, p. 4.

The concluding blessing, pronounced by the Archbishop, is found originally in the “Visitation of the Sick” in BCP 1662⁹¹. It was offered for use outside this context, with the prayer altered from the singular “thee” to the plural “you” as the conclusion of the prayers at the services held to mark the end of the First World War in 1918.⁹² It is also in US BCP 1928, both at the Visitation of the Sick and at the funeral service.⁹³ It is worth noting at this point the effect of the First World War on prayer for the dead in the Church of England. Special prayers for use in wartime had been composed from 1914 onwards.⁹⁴ It was from 1917 onwards that these began to offer prayer for the dead.⁹⁵ As Alan Wilkinson puts it, “in 1914 public prayer for the dead was uncommon in the Church of England; by the end

⁹¹ Cf. BRIGHTMAN, English Rite II, 835. This blessing is based on Numbers 6:24–26 and is also called “Priestly Benediction/Blessing”. This form of blessing was introduced into the Christian liturgy by Luther, especially as a final blessing in his *German Mass (Deutsche Messe)* of 1526 (cf. WA 19, 72–113, here: 102). See also Bernd-Jörg DIEBNER, Der sog. “Aaronitische Segen” (Num 6,24–26), in: Heinrich RIEHM (ed.), *Freude am Gottesdienst*, Heidelberg 1988, 201–218; Hans-Jürgen FEULNER, One Lord – One Faith – One Baptism. Die Feier der Kindertaufe gemäß *Divine Worship: The Order of Holy Baptism* in den Personalordinariaten für ehemalige Anglikaner: Eine Spurensuche, in: Christoph FREILINGER – Florian WEGSCHEIDER (eds.), “... und Christus wird dein Licht sein” (Eph 5,14). Taufberufung als dialogisches Christus-Geschehen (SKUL 11), Regensburg 2022, 402–442, here: 435 with fn. 215.

⁹² [WESTMINSTER ABBEY], Forms of Thanksgiving to Almighty God to be used on Sunday, the 17th of November, 1918, Being the Sunday after the cessation of hostilities between the Allied Powers and the German Empire. Issued under the Authority of the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, 6. [🔗](#)

⁹³ BCP-US 1928, 314 and 332. It was also in the proposed version of 1925: The Revision of the Book of Common Prayer as Amended 1919, 1922, and 1925 [...]. Edition A Complete, Milwaukee 1925, 110. When used at a funeral, in both cases it concludes the portion of the service conducted in church before moving to the grave.

⁹⁴ For example, A Form of Intercession with Almighty God on behalf of His Majesty’s Naval & Military Forces now engaged in War to be used in all Churches and Chapels in England and in the Town of Berwick-upon-Tweed On such occasions as each Bishop shall appoint for his own Diocese, Oxford 1914. There is a reference to such orders at BRIGHTMAN, English Rite I, viii.

⁹⁵ See: Stuart Andrew BELL, Faith in Conflict. A Study of British Experiences in the First World War with particular references to the English Midlands [unpubl. dissertation University of Birmingham], 2016, 166.

of the war it had become widespread"⁹⁶. This initial openness to praying for the dead was, as noted above, not without controversy when it came to incorporating it into (proposed) official liturgical books of the Church of England. Yet as the century moved on, so did Anglican attitudes, and by 2022 such prayers could be seen, not as reflecting the personal belief of the late Queen, but as a public liturgical expression of the Church of England's teaching.

The ceremonial setting of the lying-in-state involved the archbishop and dean in Anglican choir-dress, the catafalque covered in purple, with the coffin itself covered by the royal standard serving as a pall, with a floral wreath and the Imperial State Crown on a cushion on top of that. The catafalque was surrounded by four candles of unbleached wax, and a crucifer in an alb and black tunic placed the Cross of Westminster at the head of the coffin.

The State Funeral and Burial of Elizabeth II

The lying-in-state having begun on Wednesday 14 September, the funeral itself was held on Monday 19 September at Westminster Abbey.⁹⁷

The Procession of the Coffin enters the Abbey

The Sentences (John 11; Job 19; 1 Tim 6 with Job 1)

"Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts" (BCP 1549)

"I heard a voice..." (Rev 14:13)

The Bidding

"In grief and also in profound thanksgiving..."

"O merciful God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ..."

Hymn "The day thou gavest..."

First Lesson: 1 Cor 15:20–26, 53–end

Psalm 42:1–7

Second Lesson: John 14:1–9a

Hymn "The Lord's my shepherd..."

Sermon

⁹⁶ Alan WILKINSON, *The Church of England and the First World War*, Cambridge 2014, 176.

⁹⁷ Cf. WESTMINSTER ABBEY, *The State Funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II*.

Anthem “My soul, there is a country...”

The Prayers

Lord’s Prayer

Hymn “Love divine...”

The Commendation

“Heavenly Father, King of kings...”

“Go forth, O Christian soul...”

Anthem “Who shall separate us...” (Rom 8:35a,38b–39)

The Blessing

The Last Post

Reveille

The National Anthem

The Procession of the Coffin

The short journey between the two buildings involved the coffin being carried on a gun-carriage drawn by naval ratings, and accompanied by the music of pipes and drums. Members of the royal family and royal household walked behind. At the Abbey, following the various processions of dignitaries, the service began with the Sentences as set by William Croft (1678–1727), then Henry Purcell’s setting of “Thou knowest, Lord, the secrets of our hearts”⁹⁸. This was described as from “The Book of Common Prayer 1549”⁹⁹, but is also found in BCP 1662¹⁰⁰ and BCP 1928¹⁰¹, all of which place this immediately before the burial, rather than at the beginning. Croft’s “I heard a voice” was also sung here, displaced from its prior position immediately after the burial. The heralds, royal household, chapter of Westminster Abbey, Lord Chamberlain and Earl Marshall then preceded the coffin, which was followed by members of the royal family. A bidding was spoken by the Dean, and printed in the order of service, which drew on themes of grief and thanksgiving, placing the late Queen’s life and reign as the impulse to prayer, and directing those present to “recall our many reasons for thanksgiving, pray for all members of her family, and

⁹⁸ Henry Purcell wrote this anthem for the funeral of Queen Mary in March 1695.

⁹⁹ Cf. BRIGHTMAN, *English Rite II*, 858.

¹⁰⁰ Cf. *ibid.*, 859.

¹⁰¹ Cf. BCP 1928, 477.

commend Queen Elizabeth to the care and keeping of almighty God”¹⁰². This was concluded with the prayer, “O merciful God”, as at the end (“the Collect”) of the BCP 1552 and 1662 services¹⁰³. A hymn followed (“The day thou gavest”). The first reading was a shortened version of the BCP epistle, in this case 1 Cor 15:20–26,53–58. Verses from Psalm 42 were sung, set by the Master of the Queen’s Music (as she then was) Judith Weir (b. 1954). Psalm 42 had its place in the BCP 1549 rites and Sarum (though not subsequently, until its use in the extensive provisions of CW), although unlike the somewhat tenuous attribution of the Purcell, that was not mentioned in the order of service. The Gospel, read by a lay person (the former Prime Minister Liz Truss) was John 14:1–9a. John 14:1–6 is in the CW provision,¹⁰⁴ and was used at the Reception of the Coffin in Westminster Hall, but the longer version as used here has no precedent. A further hymn was sung: “The Lord’s my shepherd”, setting Psalm 23 which was first used in BCP 1928, though some words from it formed the Gradual at the Sarum funeral Mass (“Si ambulem... Virga tua”).¹⁰⁵ This hymn was sung at the Queen’s wedding in Westminster Abbey in 1947, the versification coming from the 1650 Scottish Psalter. The Archbishop of Canterbury then preached a sermon. An anthem was then sung: “My soul, there is a country”, setting words by the Welsh poet Henry Vaughan (1621–1695) to music by Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848–1918). The prayers followed, each consisting of a bidding and a collect, read by representatives of sundry Christian denominations, including the Church of Scotland, the Church of England, the Free Churches, and the Catholic Church. The first of these prayers, “O God, from whom cometh everything that is upright and true...”, appears to have been a new composition following the death of the Queen Mother in 2002.¹⁰⁶ The second, “Almighty God,

¹⁰² WESTMINSTER ABBEY, *The State Funeral of HM Queen Elizabeth II*, p. 9.

¹⁰³ Cf. BRIGHTMAN, *English Rite II*, 877.

¹⁰⁴ Cf. CW: PS, 384.

¹⁰⁵ Cf. COLLINS, *Manuale* 148. This text was to be sung at Mass for the dead when the body was present.

¹⁰⁶ “The prayers have been drawn up specifically with congregations in mind but are also suitable for use in individuals’ personal devotions. They are written in a variety of liturgical styles, encompassing both the traditional and the contemporary.”, in: ANGLICAN COMMUNION NEWS SERVICE, *Prayers at a time of mourning for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother* (3 April 2002). [↗](#)

Father of all mercies and giver of all comfort” is from BCP 1928.¹⁰⁷ The third, “Almighty God, the fountain of all goodness”, is the Prayer for the Royal Family from Morning and Evening Prayer in BCP 1662.¹⁰⁸ The fourth, “Almighty God, whose will it is that all thy children should serve thee” seems have its base in a prayer attributed to Geoffrey Fisher, Archbishop of Canterbury 1945–1961, circulated from various Anglican sources as a prayer for use during the Coronavirus pandemic.¹⁰⁹ The fifth, a prayer for the Commonwealth, seems to be a new composition. The sixth is the BCP 1549/1552/1662 Collect for the twenty-second Sunday after Trinity.¹¹⁰ The seventh and final prayer (“Bring us, O Lord God, at our last awakening”) is based on the conclusion of a sermon by John Donne (1572–1631).¹¹¹ Another anthem followed, “O taste and see”, composed on a line from Psalm 34 by Ralph Vaughan Williams for the coronation in 1953. The Lord’s Prayer was prayed, followed by a hymn, “Love divine, all loves excelling” by Charles Wesley (1707–1788) to the Welsh tune *Blaenwern*. The Commendation was lengthier than the liturgical books might suggest, beginning with a prayer “Heavenly Father, King of kings, Lord and giver of life” which draws strongly on biblical and other texts. A version of the *Proficiscere*, “Go forth, O Christian soul”, followed: this was at the rite of Extreme Unction in the *Sarum Manuale*¹¹² and is also found with slightly different wording in CW among the prayers for the dying.¹¹³ Another anthem, by James MacMillan (1959), on a text from Romans 8:35 ff. followed, and the service in the Abbey concluded with the blessing, using the text found, *inter alia*, in the Remembrance Sunday¹¹⁴ service (“God grant to the living

¹⁰⁷ Cf. BCP 1928, 481.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. BRIGHTMAN, English Rite I, 151 and 167.

¹⁰⁹ See, from the SCOTTISH EPISCOPAL CHURCH, Intercessions for use during the pandemic. [🔗](#)

¹¹⁰ Cf. BRIGHTMAN, English Rite II, 538 f.

¹¹¹ Cf. John DONNE, A Sermon preached at White-hall, February 29, 1627, in: David COLCLOUGH (ed.), The Oxford Edition of the Sermons of John Donne, vol. 3: Sermons Preached at the Court of Charles I, Oxford 2014, 174–191, 191.

¹¹² Cf. COLLINS, Manuale, 117.

¹¹³ Cf. the second prayer at the Commendation during “Ministry at the Time of Death” (CW: PS, 229). – See also BCP 1928, 460 f.; BCP-SA 1954, 470.

¹¹⁴ Remembrance Sunday is observed on the Sunday nearest to 11 November. Since 1968, a Service for Remembrance Sunday has been commended for

grace...¹¹⁵), the Last Post and Reveille, and the National Anthem. The coffin and those in the procession left to bagpipe music and Bach (BWV 562) on the organ.

The Committal then took place at Windsor Castle:¹¹⁶

Psalm 121

The Russian Kontakion of the Departed “Give rest, O Christ, to thy servant...”¹¹⁷

The Bidding

Hymn “All my hope on God is founded...”¹¹⁸

Reading: Rev 21:1–7

The Prayers

Lord’s Prayer

Motet “Bring us, O Lord God...”

Hymn “Christ is made the sure foundation...”¹¹⁹

The Committal

Psalm 103:13–17

“Go forth upon thy journey from this world, O Christian soul...”

The Styles and Titles of Queen Elizabeth II

“Let us humbly beseech Almighty God...” (for King Charles III)

The Blessing “Go forth into the world in peace ...”

The National Anthem

general use by the Archbishops of Canterbury, of York, and of Wales, the Cardinal Archbishop of Westminster, and the Moderator of the Free Church Federal Council. This service was reissued in 1984 with modest updating of the language and a fresh choice of hymns.

¹¹⁵ CW: TS, 581.

¹¹⁶ ST GEORGE’S CHAPEL WINDSOR CHAPEL, The Committal of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II, Monday 19th September, 2022 at 4.00 p.m. [↗](#)

¹¹⁷ This kontakion of the dead from the Russian Orthodox funeral rite (“Co святыми упокой, Христе”) was translated by William J. Birkbeck (1869–1916), music edited by Walter Parratt (1841–1924). – See also below fn. 148. It can be watched here [↗](#). It is in the New English Hymnal at number 526: New English Hymnal, Norwich 1986.

¹¹⁸ Original German hymn “Meine Hoffnung stehet feste” by Joachim Neander (1650–1680), trans. by Robert Bridges (1844–1930), tune “Michael” by Herbert Howells (1892–1983).

¹¹⁹ John M. Neale (1818–1866) translated the Latin 7th cent. hymn “Angularis fundamentum lapsis Christus missus est” (*Common of the Dedication of a Church*; cf. Hermann A. DANIEL, *Thesaurus Hymnologicus* [...], vol. 1, Leipzig 1855, 239).

The actual burial itself, finally, was private, and no published order of service exists for it. As such, one of the most familiar funeral prayers in English, “Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God...” with its phrase “earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust”, was not heard publicly during the funeral rites at all. As with the funeral, the liturgical texts used at the committal were accompanied by hymns and motets; where some of those texts are from Anglican and other sources, other texts were composed for the occasion, most notably the Bidding. Some words were repeated from earlier moments: the words of John Donne, which had been used among the prayers during the Abbey service, recurred in musical form in their setting by William Henry Harris (1883–1973). The *Proficiscere*, “Go forth... O Christian soul”, was also repeated¹²⁰, as was the National Anthem. The concluding prayer, based on 1 Thessalonians 5:13–22, appears in the *New Patterns for Worship* provision.¹²¹ Looking briefly at The Prayers¹²², which, at the funeral, were assembled from a wide variety of sources, we see a similar pattern here:

1. “Remember, O Lord, thy servant Elizabeth” contains lines directly taken from the Roman Canon: “gone before us with the sign of peace”, and “refreshment, light and peace.”¹²³

¹²⁰ Cf. CW: PS, 229.

¹²¹ *New Patterns for Worship: J – Conclusions*, J104. [↗](#)

¹²² Cf. ST GEORGE’S CHAPEL WINDSOR CHAPEL, *The Committal of HM Queen Elizabeth II*, p. 9.

¹²³ This prayer is found in various forms. See: Francis WHEELER, *The Unfolding Year. Devotions for the Liturgical Seasons for Public and Private Use*, London 1958, 94. It seems to have first been used in English in: George Rundle PRYNNE, *The Eucharistic Manual*, London 1864, 82. The Eucharistic Manual includes the prayer without attribution, but with a lengthy note about the propriety of prayers for the dead in the Church of England where, it is contended, “those who profess the Roman religion” pray for relief from the pains of purgatory; the “Primitive Christians” pray for “rest and quiet in the interval between death and the resurrection.” As given in *The Eucharistic Manual*, it is printed in a collection compiled by one “L. P”, where it is attributed to the “Eucharistic Manual” and additionally to the “Ambrosian Liturgy.” L. P. (ed.), *The Inheritance of the Saints: or, Thoughts on the Communion of Saints and the Life of the World to Come*, London 1903, 272. The attribution to the “Ambrosian Missal” elides the fact that both the Ambrosian and Roman Missals contains the words “qui nos præcesserunt cum signo fidei”, and “locum refrigerii, lucis et pacis.” *The Inheritance of the Saints* contains a preface by Henry Scott Holland, who preached

2. “Merciful Father and Lord of all life” is in CW;¹²⁴
3. “O Father of all, we pray to thee for those whom we love, but see no longer” is in CW;¹²⁵
4. “O Lord, support us all the day long”, is in CW, and is a long-circulating prayer culled from a sermon by John Henry Newman;¹²⁶
5. “Lord God Almighty, King of creation, bless our King” seems also to be a new composition;
6. “God save our gracious Sovereign” is a prayer associated with the Order of the Garter.¹²⁷

The pattern is relatively eclectic, and it is not without interest that of these six, only one appeared in BCP 1928 (number 3, “O Father of all...”¹²⁸), and none is in the BCP 1662 burial service. The form of language is traditional “thee, thy, thou”, but it is difficult to characterise the liturgy, at least looking at these prayers, as traditionally Anglican.

Comparisons with Other Royal Funerals

Is there, then, such a thing as a traditional Anglican royal funeral? The most useful recent text on royal funerals is Matthias Range’s *British Royal and State Funerals: Music and Ceremonial since Elizabeth I*.¹²⁹ Range’s

the sermon “The King of Terrors” at St Paul’s following the death of Edward VII. See: Geoffrey ROWELL, Henry Scott Holland (1847–1918). *Life and Context*, in: *International Journal for the Study of the Christian Church* 15/1 (2015) 1–6.

¹²⁴ Cf. CW: PS, 351.

¹²⁵ Cf. *ibid.*, 440.

¹²⁶ Cf. *ibid.*, 362. Newman’s original text is the conclusion of his sermon *Wisdom and Innocence*: John Henry NEWMAN, *Sermons, Bearing on Subjects of the Day*, London 1844, 347.

¹²⁷ The Garter Prayer is prayed regularly in St George’s Chapel, Windsor. During the reign of George VI (1936–1952) the prayer, in full “God save our gracious Sovereign and all the Companions, living and departed, of the Most Honourable and Noble Order of the Garter” had the words “living and departed” added to it. See: THE SOCIETY OF THE FRIENDS OF ST GEORGE’S AND THE DESCENDANTS OF THE KNIGHTS OF THE GARTER, *Report to 31st December, 1957*, Windsor 1957, 26.

¹²⁸ Cf. BCP 1928, 481.

¹²⁹ Cf. Matthias RANGE, *British Royal and State Funerals. Music and Ceremonial since Elizabeth I*, Woodbridge 2016. See also: Olivia BLAND, *The Royal Way of*

work covers the period 1603 to 2002. He points out that “more or less all sorts of a grand funeral are usually heavily dominated by a military aspect”¹³⁰, and argues that this, together with music, are probably the most notable aspects of royal funerals. The text and liturgy are less important. Other “traditions” are malleable: between the death of James I, and the attendance at his funeral by his son Charles I in 1625, and the death of George IV and the attendance at his funeral by his brother, William IV in 1830, “no other monarch attended any predecessor’s or indeed any other funeral”¹³¹. Moreover, it was far from uncommon for royal funerals to be held by night, and in relatively private circumstances: “for royalty, the gradual return to the daylight, and eventually also to the public, was not to take place until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries”¹³². Elements of Elizabeth II’s funeral which perhaps seemed very significant had therefore only relatively recent precedents. Westminster Hall has been the location for the lying-in-state only since 1910: “an innovation which proved extremely popular” which by 1952 (in other words, with only one deceased monarch in between, George V) “had become ‘a firm tradition’”¹³³. Equally, Westminster Abbey as the location for the funeral had not been used for a monarch since 1760 and the death of George II, although the funerals of Princess Diana in 1997 and Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother had both taken place there. St George’s Windsor had been the usual place. In this case, then, the funeral of Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh in 2021,¹³⁴ which was in the middle of coronavirus restrictions, and involved the mourners wearing face-masks and sitting according to a socially-distanced plan,¹³⁵ was much more like the majority of earlier royal funerals: it was later in the day (3.00 pm); it was at Windsor; there was no sermon (Justin Welby, the Arch-

Death, London 1986; Michael EVANS, *The Death of Kings. Royal Deaths in Medieval England*, London 2003; Jennifer WOODWARD, *The Theatre of Death. The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England, 1570–1625*, Woodbridge 2007.

¹³⁰ RANGE, *British Royal and State Funerals*, 6.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 13.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 15.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³⁴ Cf. ST GEORGE’S CHAPEL WINDSOR CASTLE, *Funeral of His Royal Highness The Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh*, Saturday, 17th April, 2021 at 3.00 p.m. [↗](#)

¹³⁵ Cf. *The Funeral of The Duke of Edinburgh*. [↗](#)

bishop of Canterbury, preached at the funeral of Elizabeth II; his predecessor George Carey preached at that of Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother;¹³⁶ at the funeral of Princess Diana, her brother, Earl Spencer, had delivered what was described in the order of service as “The Tribute”¹³⁷).

Conclusions

These examples show the breadth of approach taken in the funeral rites of Elizabeth II. Whilst the elements of the lying-in-state and the funeral procession (between Westminster Hall and Westminster Abbey, and from the Abbey to Windsor) had been part of royal funerals for a century, it is arguably in the heraldic aspects – the reading of the titles and styles at the end of the rite – the military presence and the quantity and quality of the music which marked them out, and not their liturgical contents. Over the course of the twentieth century and into the twenty-first, the liturgical order has become increasingly variable: there are readings and prayers, which sound to those who have perhaps relatively little to do with organised religion, very much like other readings and prayers. Elements are omitted, moved around, edited. “Funeral planning” is a significant endeavour these days: it may be that, in addition to the military and heraldic elements, one of the biggest differences between the funeral of Elizabeth II and an ordinary church funeral of whichever denomination is that the music was sung live, rather than being recorded. Indeed, the three stages of lying-in-state, funeral, and burial would, in a more modest version, have been much more familiar to some of Her Majesty’s Roman Catholic subjects, for whom the body of the deceased comes into the church on the evening before the funeral Mass, and is then taken to be buried, than to her fellow-Anglicans (or Presbyterians when in Scotland), even if the use at Westminster and Windsor of unbleached candles and black vestments (tunicle, copes) are far from being as prevalent among Roman Catholics as once they were. Compared with the Roman Catholic funeral Mass for

¹³⁶ Cf. Order of Service for Funeral of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother (7 April 2002). [↗](#)

¹³⁷ WESTMINSTER ABBEY, Funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, Saturday 6 September 1997 11.00 a.m. [↗](#)

King Baudouin of Belgium in 1993¹³⁸ or the funeral of Pope John Paul II in 2005,¹³⁹ the liturgy itself is much more elastic in the Church of England. Baudouin's funeral liturgy was very much like any other Catholic funeral Mass; likewise, the elements pertaining to the Papacy seemed rather to surround than to shape the funeral Mass for John Paul II. In the Church of England's liturgy as experienced in the funeral of Elizabeth II, the "personal" elements shaped the liturgy, rather than being encompassed by it.

On a counterfactual: if the death and succession rites here followed precisely the pattern of previous such occasions, that would lead in one direction. We would note that they were not only unchanging, but that this unchanging nature was itself a choice; that those involved in planning and executing them have chosen not to allow themselves to choose. Had BCP 1662 been used as it is, let us say with some of the music composed for the sentences and psalms over the course of the centuries, and no additions or modifications, that would be both a tradition and a choice, since a much greater variety is in fact provided for in the Church of England's corpus of rites. In such a case, whatever might be read into them would be contextual rather than textual. It is difficult to imagine an alternative scenario in which they were based on no precedents at all: even doing something completely new has to take account of precedent, so as to avoid repeating something which has already happened. What we in fact have is something which is reasonably like, but not identical to, what has come before. This then requires us to see what is different and, where reasonable, to account for, or to speculate, why that might be and to draw conclusions from this. We have noted speculations about, for instance, the various memorial services before the funeral itself. The choices of music in the funeral service were (with the exception of the organ music before and afterwards) entirely British, some old, some new. The guest-list included some, and excluded others.

The next event in the royal calendar about which such discussions will be had is the coronation, the date now set for 6 May 2023. Since it has been 70 years since the last one, there will inevitably be comment and

¹³⁸ It can be watched here: [Funérailles du roi Baudouin 1993](#). 

¹³⁹ Cf. *OFFICIUM DE LITURGICIS CELEBRATIONIBUS SUMMI PONTIFICIS, Ordo Exsequiarum Romani Pontificis*, Vatican City 2000.

analysis. What will it convey about the monarchy, the country, the past, the future? The Britain in which Elizabeth II was crowned is very different from that over which Charles III now reigns. What are those involved in planning intending to convey, and what will be the impressions received by those who take part, or watch, or decline to watch? Here, a non-liturgical, but nevertheless important discussion partner is David Cannadine's seminal essay of 1983 on the monarchy and "the invention of tradition"¹⁴⁰. Cannadine traces the development of a culture of concerted ritual skill surrounding the monarchy, which grew from a quite different mode: "as the population was becoming better educated, royal ritual would soon be exposed as nothing more than primitive magic, a hollow sham"; alternatively, "in any case the pageantry centred on the monarchy was conspicuous for its ineptitude rather than for its grandeur"¹⁴¹. As he goes on to note: "Today in England the situation is the exact reverse."¹⁴² Thus, "the public image of the British monarchy was fundamentally transformed in the years before the First World War, as the old ceremonial was successfully adapted in response to the changed domestic and international situation, and new ceremonial was invented and added"¹⁴³. With the invention of radio, and later television, "the combination of the novelty of the media and the anachronism of the ceremonial rendered royal ritual both comforting and popular in an age of change"¹⁴⁴. For Cannadine, "in the case of ritual and ceremonial, the performance itself is also elastic and dynamic"¹⁴⁵. This means that "their 'meaning' [is] specifically related to the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of the time"¹⁴⁶. Those who used BCP 1662, and those who at various times and in various ways advocated for changes, might not have felt that this description fitted them very well. However, the plurality now available to those who must plan funerals in

¹⁴⁰ David CANNADINE, *The Context, Performance and Meaning of Ritual. The British Monarchy and the "Invention of Tradition", c. 1820–1977*, in: Eric HOBBSBAWM – Terence RANCER (eds.), *The Invention of Tradition*, Cambridge 1983, 101–164.

¹⁴¹ Cf. *ibid.*, 102.

¹⁴² *Ibid.*

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*, 137.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 143.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 106.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 161.

the Church of England, whether they be in parishes or in the royal household, means that such considerations have got to be addressed.

One final illustration suggests how we might best understand the relationship in the funeral rites of Elizabeth II between, on the one hand, theology and the given-ness of liturgy, and on the other, how that is discerned to be malleable and is instrumentalised in relation to the “social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of the time.” At the Committal at Windsor, and at her late husband’s funeral¹⁴⁷, there was sung “The Russian [K]ontakion of the Departed.” This is, in fact, in the *New English Hymnal*, at number 526. There appears to have been no comment on the theological content of the words, which are given below as sung in the version by W. J. Birkbeck (1896–1916):

Give rest, O Christ, to thy servant with thy Saints:
 where sorrow and pain are no more; neither sighing but life everlasting.
 Thou only art immortal, the Creator and Maker of man:
 And we are mortal, formed of the earth, and unto earth shall we return:
 For so thou didst ordain, when thou createdst me, saying,
 Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.
 All we go down to the dust; and, weeping o’er the grave we make our
 song:
 Alleluya, alleluya, alleluya.
 Give rest, O Christ, to thy servant with thy Saints:
 Where sorrow and pain are no more; neither sighing but life everlasting.¹⁴⁸

It had been planned that this exact piece should be sung, in the very same chapel at Windsor, at the funeral of Queen Victoria in 1901. Her daughters had requested it, and it had been sung at the funeral of Victoria’s son-in-law Prince Henry of Battenberg in 1896, at which Victoria was present, and at a liturgy on the occasion of Tsar Alexander II’s death in 1894. The then bishop of Winchester, and future archbishop of Canterbury, Randall Davidson, wrote:

¹⁴⁷ Cf. ST GEORGE’S CHAPEL WINDSOR CASTLE, Funeral of HRH the Prince Philip, Duke of Edinburgh, p. 9.

¹⁴⁸ *New English Hymnal*, no. 526. See also above fn. 117.

I felt it my duty to point out to the King that the use of this anthem on such an occasion would certainly hurt the feelings of very many, and might do real harm. I had some difficulty in getting an interview with him about it, but the moment I explained the matter he saw it and felt that it must be altered, but that his sisters would make objections. [...] They did object most strongly, on the ground that the Queen liked the anthem and that it had been used both in the Mausoleum and at Whippingham in the Memorial Services [i.e. for Prince Henry]. I reminded them that his had caused much discussion, as the Queen's use of it on those occasions had everywhere been quoted as giving an official sanction to Prayers for the Dead. We Bishops had had more than once to point out that the Services in question were private services, and that no authority had been given for the use of this Anthem at a public service. But the Funeral at Windsor would be a great national occasion, and the eyes of all the world would be turned to what we did. The use of this anthem would rejoice many, and others would deplore and denounce it. Was it desirable to make the occasion one of such controversy?¹⁴⁹

Davidson and the King prevailed against the princesses: the printer was telephoned, and the words changed to something else at the last minute. It is possible that some musical or textual selections had been made for Elizabeth II's funeral which were vetoed on theological grounds, and about which historians will not know for many years. The relative lack of Latin is noticeable: in fact, it seems only to have been used at one of the state occasions by the Church of Scotland. There are no pieces drawn from any Requiem Mass settings: again, existing compositions of the kinds used here would tend not to be drawn from that genre. But of the kinds of criticism which Archbishop Davidson foresaw in 1901, and which the various prayer book revisers grappled with throughout the twentieth century, concerning the nature and content of prayer for the dead, there appears to have been none. The tentative steps taken in this direction as a consequence of the First World War led the Church of England ultimately down a path whereby it could move on from this controversy; although, using CW, a variety of teaching about the nature and efficacy of prayer for the departed may be nevertheless conveyed by those of differing theological

¹⁴⁹ This quotation, and the preceding information is in RANGE, British Royal and State Funerals, 271.

opinions. Indeed, only one element of the funeral rite appears to have drawn negative comment relating to what it actually said: James MacMillan's setting of Romans 8:35 ff., about which he wrote:

others were annoyed at the title of my anthem "Who Shall Separate Us?" implying that this contained some dastardly hidden Unionist code designed to mess with Scottish brains. They seemed unaware that St Paul's Letter to the Romans was short on advice on Scottish constitutional rearrangements.¹⁵⁰

Royal funerals, and other comparable events, will always draw viewers. As the ways in which such events are presented, and the meanings they embody, are dynamic and elastic, so the tradition of invention which they represent is always engaging with something new, in social, political, economic, and other realms. Perhaps, in hindsight, theological and liturgical controversy can profitably be viewed as an extension of those: if not entirely so, then at least as a means by which to engage with the effects which liturgical celebrations can have on those who participate in them.

¹⁵⁰ James MACMILLAN, There was no "hidden Unionist code" in my Queen's funeral anthem, in: *The Spectator* (24 September 2022). [↗](#)

Abbreviations


ASB	Alternative Service Book. Services Authorized for Use in the Church of England in Conjunction with The Book of Common Prayer Together with The Liturgical Psalter, Cambridge 1980
BCP 1928	The Book of Common Prayer with the Additions and Deviations Proposed in 1928, London 1928
BCP-SA 1954	A Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments [...] Set Forth by Authority for Use in the Church of the Province of South Africa, London et al. 1954
BCP-US 1928	The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church According to the Use of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. Together with the Psalms of David, Boston 1929
BCP-US 1979	The Book of Common Prayer and Administration of the Sacraments and Other Rites and Ceremonies of the Church. Together with the Psalms of David According to the Use of The Episcopal Church, New York 1979
CW	Common Worship. Services and Prayers for the Church of England, London 2000
CW: PS	Common Worship. Services and Prayers for the Church of England: Pastoral Services, London ² 2005, available online here 🔗
CW: TS	Common Worship. Services and Prayers for the Church of England: Times and Seasons, London 2006 [reprint: 2020]
DMus.D	Documenta Musicologica. Erste Reihe: Druckschriften-Faksimiles
GaB	The Bobbio-Missal. A Gallican Mass-Book (MS. Paris. Lat. 13246) (HBS 48/49), ed. by E[lias] A. LOWE, London 1920 [reprint: Woodbridge 1991]
GeV	Liber Sacramentorum Romanae Aeclesiae Ordinis Anni Circuli [...] (RED.F 4), ed. by Leo C. MOHLBERG, Rome 1968
HBS	Henry Bradshaw Society
MLCT	Monumenta Liturgica Concilii Tridentini


MRom 1570	Missale Romanum. Editio princeps (1570), ed. by Manlio Sodi – Achille M. TRIACCA (MLCT 2), Vatican City 1998
RED.F	Rerum Ecclesiasticarum Documenta. Series Maior: Fontes
SKUL	Schriften der Katholischen Privat-Universität Linz
WA	D. Martin Luthers Werke. Kritische Gesamtausgabe, Weimar 1883–2009


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