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# Building Magic

Ritual and Re-enchantment in  
Post-Medieval Structures

Owen Davies · Ceri Houlbrook



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The history of European witchcraft and magic continues to fascinate and challenge students and scholars. There is certainly no shortage of books on the subject. Several general surveys of the witch trials and numerous regional and micro studies have been published for an English-speaking readership. While the quality of publications on witchcraft has been high, some regions and topics have received less attention over the years. The aim of this series is to help illuminate these lesser known or little studied aspects of the history of witchcraft and magic. It will also encourage the development of a broader corpus of work in other related areas of magic and the supernatural, such as angels, devils, spirits, ghosts, folk healing and divination. To help further our understanding and interest in this wider history of beliefs and practices, the series will include research that looks beyond the usual focus on Western Europe and that also explores their relevance and influence from the medieval to the modern period.

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## CHAPTER 1

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# Introduction

Buildings contain many secrets and hidden histories concealed from the human eye. We may think we know our homes intimately and then one day renovations, the cleaning of an old chimney, or the investigation of an obscure corner of the rafters reveal objects that intrigue, raise questions, and sometimes unsettle. Old clothes, shoes, bones, desiccated animals, human bodies, money, figurines, bottles, playing cards, books, newspapers, old documents, knives, horseshoes, animal hearts, holed stones, bits of old iron, and prehistoric stone tools have all been found over the centuries. Some were intended to be recovered by their concealers, some were left for posterity, some were never intended to be revealed again, and some were merely accidental losses. In the past some such finds were considered curious enough to be deemed newsworthy, particularly with the rise of regional and local newspapers from the mid-nineteenth century. In 1921, for instance, the *Lancashire Daily Post* reported that during the renovation of the now Grade II listed Admiralty Cottage, Broadstairs, workmen found under the floorboards some coins of George III, some old visiting cards, a pack of playing cards, and an old military pike head.<sup>1</sup> A few items found their way into the curio collections of the numerous local museums that sprang up across the country, but many such finds went unrecorded or were thrown away as household rubbish.

<sup>1</sup> *Lancashire Daily Post*, 20 May 1921.

During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Irish, British, and Scandinavian folklorists began to take an interest in certain types of concealed objects, namely thunderstones (prehistoric stone tools), coins, horse skulls, and dried cats. They seemed to be evidence for archaic ritual practices. Then, in the 1950s, attention also turned to the many old shoes, mostly dating to the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, found in buildings during demolition and building work. The pioneer here was June Swann, Keeper of the Boot and Shoe Collection at the Northampton Museum and Art Gallery, who set up a systematic, long-term recording programme from the late 1950s onward. At the same time, Ralph Merrifield (1913–1995), a Roman archaeologist who spent much of his career at the Museum of London, was taking an interest in a range of post-medieval building concealments, particularly late seventeenth-century ‘witch bottles’, on which he first published articles in the mid-1950s. Merrifield’s original approach to the inter-connections between ritual deposition practices over millennia were set out in what became the foundation text for building concealment studies, *The Archaeology of Ritual and Magic* (1987), which he wrote and published during his retirement. Swann and Merrifield were joined in their endeavours during the 1970s by artist and vernacular buildings researcher Timothy Easton, who began a long-term research project on symbols and marks found in Suffolk churches, houses, and historic farm outbuildings. In 1989 he also coined the term ‘spiritual midden’ to describe caches of objects in voids close to chimneys that could be accessed from upper levels, which seemed to result from a long-term depositional practice, as distinct from one-off concealments.

By the late 1990s, university academics were finally starting to take an interest in the work of these pioneers. Inspired by June Swann’s endeavours, in 1998 Dinah Eastop set up The Deliberately Concealed Garments Project, based at the Textile Conservation Centre, which was then part of the University of Southampton. With the project receiving significant funding from various sources, including the then Arts and Humanities Research Board (the AHRC today), the subject of concealments was finally being recognised through academic peer review.<sup>2</sup> Over in America, the historian and ethnographer Robert Blair St. George’s book *Conversing by Signs: Poetics of Implication in Colonial New England Culture* (1998) made a significant theoretical contribution by considering concealed finds

<sup>2</sup><https://www.concealedgarments.org/>.

in relation to the venerable idea of the home as analogous with the human body, with its openings and vulnerabilities to external threats. Around the same time the anthropologist and historical archaeologist Amy Gazin-Schwarz published important reassessments of the archaeological interpretation of everyday ritual and methodological approaches to folkloric material culture.<sup>3</sup> And, in 2004, the initial results of Brian Hoggard's postal survey of over 600 British museums, archaeology units, and builders firms were published in an academic collection of essays that emphasised the importance of the continued belief in witchcraft and magic beyond the era of the witch trials.<sup>4</sup>

The third wave of research was defined by the first raft of PhDs and postgraduate dissertations to emerge on the topic between 2010 and 2015.<sup>5</sup> Those by Ian Evans, Cynthia Riley Auge, and M. Chris Manning shifted the parameters significantly by looking at the migration (or not) of British concealment practices to Australia and North America. While colonial era American sources had long confirmed the use of witch bottles and other British apotropaic practices like horseshoes, awareness of the material evidence was limited.<sup>6</sup> Australia was a blank canvas until Evans' extensive and ongoing fieldwork generated a wealth of material finds that mirror most of the British evidence of building deposits. In 2014 the first PhD

<sup>3</sup> Amy Gazin-Schwartz, Cornelius J. Holtorf (eds), *Archaeology and Folklore* (London, 1999); Amy Gazin-Schwarz, 'Archaeology and Folklore of Material Culture, Ritual and Everyday Life,' *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 5, Issue 4 (2001) 263–80.

<sup>4</sup> Brian Hoggard, 'The archaeology of counter-witchcraft and popular magic', in Owen Davies and Willem de Blécourt (eds), *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe* (Manchester, 2003). See also, Hoggard, *Magical House Protection: The Archaeology of Counter-Witchcraft* (New York, 2019).

<sup>5</sup> Jonathan Duck, 'The Profane and the Sacred: Expressions of Belief in the Domestic Buildings of Southern Fenland, circa 1500 to 1700 AD', PhD thesis, University of Leicester 2015; Ian J. Evans, 'Touching magic. Deliberately concealed objects in old Australian houses and buildings', PhD thesis, University of Newcastle, NSW, 2010; V. Lloyd, 'The ritual protection of buildings in East Anglia, 1500–1800', MA thesis, University of Durham, 1997; Freya Massey, 'Ritualisation and Reappropriation: Special Deposits and Ritual Activity in Domestic Structures in Early Modern England', PhD thesis, Sheffield University, 2014; M. Chris Manning, 'Homemade Magic: Concealed Deposits in Architectural Contexts in the Eastern United States', MA dissertation, Ball State University, 2012; Cynthia Riley Auge, 'Silent sentinels: Archaeology, magic, and the gendered control of domestic boundaries in New England, 1620–1725', PhD, University of Montana, 2013.

<sup>6</sup> As well as Robert Blair St. George, Christopher C. Fennell has been a pioneer here. See his, *Crossroads and Cosmologies: Diasporas and Ethnogenesis in the New World* (Gainesville, 2007).

study of English concealments, Freya Massey's 'Ritualisation and Reappropriation: Special Deposits and Ritual Activity in Domestic Structures in Early Modern England', produced the most extensive and methodologically rigorous survey of the data since Merrifield's book, with a focus, like Auge, on the relationship between objects, homes, and their inhabitants in early modern society. In the same year a thematic issue of the journal *Historical Archaeology*, guest edited by Christopher Fennell and M. Chris Manning, and dedicated to Ralph Merrifield, brought together a series of papers on material aspects of domestic magic in colonial and modern America that included an article by Tim Easton on spiritual middens. The following year Ronald Hutton put together a state-of-the-field edited collection on British concealments and building marks that reached across the three waves of British researchers.<sup>7</sup>

After an early flurry of interest in the first half of the twentieth century, research on the European continent has been slower and more sporadic. The work of Rainer Atzbach in the early 2000s introduced a more rigorously critical archaeological approach to the interpretation of organic concealed finds in Central Europe, and Peter Carelli's 1997 reassessment of thunder stones as domestic deposits in Scandinavia gave new impetus to the deposition of prehistoric stone tools in historic contexts.<sup>8</sup> A flourishing body of original research on European material has been appearing over the last few years, though.<sup>9</sup> Baltic scholars have been particularly active,

<sup>7</sup> 'Manifestations of Magic: The Archaeology and Material Culture of Folk Religion', *Historical Archaeology* 48(3) (2014), 1–200; Ronald Hutton (ed.), *Physical Evidence for Ritual Acts, Sorcery and Witchcraft in Christian Britain: A Feeling for Magic* (London, 2015).

<sup>8</sup> See the collection of essays in Ingolf Ericsson and Rainer Atzbach (eds), *Depotfunde aus Gebäuden in Zentraleuropa: Concealed finds from buildings in Central Europe* (Berlin 2005); Rainer Atzbach, 'The concealed finds from the Mühlberg-Ensemble in Kempten (southern Germany): Post-medieval archaeology on the second floor', *Post-Medieval Archaeology* 46 (2012) 252–80; P. Carelli, 'Thunder and lightning, magical miracles. On the popular myth of thunderbolts and the presence of Stone Age artefacts in medieval deposits', in H. Andersson, P. Carelli, L. Ersgråd (eds), *Visions of the Past: Trends and traditions in Swedish medieval archaeology* (Stockholm, 1997), pp. 393–417.

<sup>9</sup> See, for example, Marion Dowd, 'Bewitched by an Elf Dart: Fairy Archaeology, Folk Magic and Traditional Medicine in Ireland', *Cambridge Archaeological Journal* 28 (2018) 451–73; Iris Nießen, 'Building Sacrifices and Magical Protection: A Study in the canton of Grisons (CH)', in Christiane Bis-Worch and Claudia Theune (eds), *Religion, cults & rituals in the medieval rural environment* (Leiden, 2017), 325–36; Morten Søvso, 'Votive offerings in buildings from rural settlements. Folk beliefs with deeper roots', in Bis-Worch and Claudia Theune (eds), *Religion, cults & rituals*, pp. 227–47; Beatrix Nutz, 'Peasants and Servants': Deliberately Concealed Garments, Textiles and Textile Tools from a Rural Farm Building',

and most recently the archaeologist Sonja Hukantaival has pushed forward the study of building concealment traditions with a detailed survey of the rich literary and material evidence in Finland. She makes a welcome call, echoing Gazin-Schwarz, for historical archaeologists to be more sensitive to expressions of folk religion and its rituals in the material record of the past.<sup>10</sup>

In the meantime, the spread of the internet has proliferated public knowledge about and engagement with the subject through websites such as those maintained by Brian Hoggard, the Deliberately Concealed Garments Project, and the History Pin Concealed Revealed virtual museum. Back in the 1970s and 1980s most of the limited body of published research was in specialist newsletters that have now been digitised and made freely available.<sup>11</sup> In recent years social media platforms have also enabled the regular dissemination of finds shortly after discovery by professionals and members of the public. But the democratisation of knowledge enabled by the internet has also generated new challenges to those researching in the field. Informed suppositions developed over the decades are now bandied around as accepted facts. The theory of survivals, which will be discussed in the next chapter, permeates online discourse about building concealment traditions. Since 2004 the term ‘witch mark’ to describe various incised marks found in wooden and stone structures has become pervasive in digital and print media, even though the leading experts on the subject dislike the term.<sup>12</sup> The viral spread of misleading terms with regard to popular ‘tradition’ is not a new phenomenon. We see it with the term ‘witch post’, and as will be discussed later, with the popularity of ‘witch balls’.<sup>13</sup> We do not see such cultural issues as necessarily

in Milena Bravermanová, Helena Březinová and Jane Malcolm-Davies (eds), *Archaeological Textiles – Links Between Past and Present NESAT XIII* (Liberec-Praha, 2017), pp. 207–16; Lenka Uličná, ‘Modern Genizot: “Sacred Trash” Reconsidered’, *Muzeológia a kultúrne dedičstvo* 7 (2019), 143–154.

<sup>10</sup> Sonja Hukantaival, ‘*For a Witch Cannot Cross Such a Threshold?: Building Concealment Traditions in Finland c. 1200–1950*’ (Turku, 2016); Sonja Hukantaival, ‘The Goat and the Cathedral – Archaeology of Folk Religion in Medieval Turku’, *Mirator* 19 (2018) 67–83.

<sup>11</sup> Timothy Easton has, for example, helpfully made digitised copies of his articles available: <https://independent.academia.edu/TimothyEaston>.

<sup>12</sup> Matthew Champion is the leading researcher on graffiti and ‘ritual marks’ in medieval contexts, and is highly critical of the term. He is currently producing major revisionist works on the subject. See his *Medieval Graffiti: The Lost Voices of England’s Churches* (2015).

<sup>13</sup> On the problem of ‘witch posts’ see Owen Davies, ‘The Material Culture of Post-Medieval Domestic Magic in Europe: Evidence, Comparisons and Interpretations’, in

problematic, though, but rather as an aspect of ethnographical and historical processes that need recording and study. The invention and reinvention of traditions regarding building magic and ritual are ongoing and central to this book. Interpretations and terminology need to be challenged but not necessarily as a censorious, debunking mission.

## RISE OF THE MODERN HOME

The house is the most central building to our lives in the post-medieval past and present, and the location for most of the recorded finds. The idea of a ‘Great Rebuilding’ of rural British houses between the mid-sixteenth and mid-seventeenth centuries was proposed by the pioneering landscape historian W.G. Hoskins in the early 1950s. While his thesis has been rightly critiqued and qualified over subsequent decades, particularly with regard to his chronology and in relation to urban and regional building traditions, there is little doubt that, in terms of surviving houses, the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were a key period for establishing the permanence of British homes.<sup>14</sup> The houses of farmers, artisans, professionals, and the gentry were increasingly built to last. The homes of the poor began to undergo the same process later in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Renovation, adaptation, and extension, rather than rebuilding, became the norm. Stone, slate, and brick began to replace medieval wattle and daub in some regions. In those areas where thatch and wattle and daub, or clunch, remained significant building materials the timber structures became much more resilient compared to most medieval houses. There were, of course, poor, relatively impermanent rural houses across the country that changed little in structure and living conditions over the centuries.

The fabric of the interior of houses, as well as the structure, also undoubtedly changed significantly for many. To begin with, the removal of central open hearths and the adoption of lateral wall fireplaces began in the fourteenth century in London and had become widely adopted by the

Dietrich Boschung and Jan N. Bremmer (eds), *The Materiality of Magic* (Paderborn, 2015), pp. 402–3.

<sup>14</sup> W.G. Hoskins, ‘The Rebuilding of Rural England, 1570–1640’, *Past & Present* 4 (1953) 44–59; R. Machin, ‘The Great Rebuilding: A Reassessment’, *Past & Present* 77 (1977) 33–56; Matthew H. Johnson, ‘Rethinking the Great Rebuilding’, *Oxford Journal of Archaeology* 12 (1993) 117–25. For a good overview of recent work see Massey, ‘Ritualisation and Reappropriation’, pp. 45–77.

seventeenth century, giving rise to the age of chimneys in domestic architecture. As interior spaces became increasingly divided up from the old open hall structure, fireplaces multiplied in homes, heating different parts of buildings with different functions, such as cooking and sleeping areas. The hearth and chimney provided new social and psychological focal points as well as potential concealment spaces and entry points. The creation of first and second storeys in domestic buildings began in urban areas in the late medieval period to maximise space and create rentable living quarters, though many rural homes remained ground floor structures into the modern era. A second floor required the addition of stairs and this, again, created new domestic spaces, while living and sleeping quarters moved closer to the roof.

Floors in early medieval homes were generally of beaten earth and clay or compacted chalk. The placing of flag stones and tiles (under which things could be buried) began to spread during the sixteenth century. While wooden planks had long been used as flooring between ground and upper floors in multi-storey buildings, suspended timber ground floors began to proliferate in vernacular housing during the eighteenth century for damp-proofing.<sup>15</sup> Such wooden floors provided an insulation gap, but also a greater fire risk. Until tongue-and-groove joinery became a common flooring practice, the boards were nailed or pegged down to the joists and so they contracted and expanded due to heat and moisture. Gaps opened and closed between the boards for accidental and potential deliberate concealment and disposal on a seasonal basis. In some buildings attic boards were not nailed down at all. Investigations at a Tyrolian farmhouse dating back to the sixteenth century found that the space under the extensive attic floor had been used as a disposal and concealment site for centuries by simply lifting up the boards, which had never been fixed. Finds ranged from a late sixteenth-century pilgrim's badge to plastic hairpins and ice cream punnet spoons. Public refuse disposal in the area was introduced only as late as 1974 and the use of voids in the farm and its buildings was clearly part of domestic waste disposal activity—what Rainer Atzbach has described as 'inner-house middens'.<sup>16</sup> Beatrix Nutz, who has

<sup>15</sup> English Heritage, *Energy Efficiency and Historic Buildings Insulating Suspended Timber Floors* (London, 2012).

<sup>16</sup> Nutz, 'Peasants and Servants', pp. 207–16; Atzbach, 'The concealed finds from the Mühlberg-Ensemble', p. 275.

assessed the evidence from the Tyrolian farmhouse, observes well, though, that ‘to throw something away is a conscious decision too’.<sup>17</sup>

For much of the period covered by this book, walls were usually solid structures until cavity walling became widespread in urban Britain and Ireland during the early 1900s. But during the early modern period wood panelling became popular in the homes of the prosperous. Panelling protected wall plaster and provided a form of cavity insulation. It also provided ample void spaces for the deliberate concealment of objects and also new opportunities for animals to live and move around houses. Windows made of mullioned glass panes began to spread in domestic buildings from the sixteenth century, replacing wooden shutters and skin and oiled canvas coverings. The introduction of a window tax in England and Wales in 1696, and in 1748 in Scotland, was a sign of how the window had become a sign of increasing prosperity reflected in vernacular architecture. With the repeal of the tax on glass in 1845 and the window tax in 1851 manufacturing innovation received a boost, and the development of cheap, plate glass production meant that glass windows slowly but surely became the norm in the houses of the poor as well as the wealthy by the early twentieth century.<sup>18</sup>

It was not only architecture and building practices that changed the way people experienced and interacted with their domestic environment. The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries also provide clear evidence of how Catholic devotion began to spread from church to the home. The rise of print, technical advances in ceramic production, and miniaturisation, meant that religious imagery, texts, and objects, once only found in religious establishments, were domesticated.<sup>19</sup> Piety was represented in the display of pipe-clay images of the saints, for example, and woodcut depictions of Biblical scenes and miracles. Household items were also inscribed with devotional legends such as ‘Ave Maria’ and the abbreviations for

<sup>17</sup> Nutz, ‘Peasants and Servants’, p. 214.

<sup>18</sup> See Michael Tutton, Elizabeth Hirst and Jill Pearce (eds), *Windows: History, Repair and Conservation* (London, 2007).

<sup>19</sup> David Gaimster, ‘Pots, Prints, and Protestantism: Changing Mentalities in the Urban Domestic Sphere, c. 1480–1580’, in David Gaimster and Roberta Gilchrist (eds), *The Archaeology of Reformation, 1480–1580* (Leeds, 2003), pp. 122–44; Alexandra Walsham, ‘Domesticating the Reformation: Material Culture, Memory, and Confessional Identity in Early Modern England’, *Renaissance Quarterly* 69 (2016) 566–616; Abigail Brundin, Deborah Howard, and Mary Laven, *The Sacred Home in Renaissance Italy* (Oxford, 2018).

Christ IHS, IHC, or INRI.<sup>20</sup> It has been suggested, furthermore, that in late medieval and early modern Catholic homes religious items such as pilgrim's badges, paternosters, and rosaries were placed in domestic spaces as items of protection as well as devotion. Pilgrim's badges and other devotional objects were also probably placed around farmsteads and in fields for the same purpose.<sup>21</sup> New mass-produced items and icons appeared in Catholic homes over the ensuing centuries in response to social, economic, and cultural change. One modern example is the red Sacred Heart lamps that proliferated in Irish homes with the widespread adoption of electricity in the 1950s.

Come the Reformation and Protestant populations were warned that such objects were pernicious Catholic 'superstition' and not to be tolerated. Still, in Protestant popular culture the private ownership of the Bible, which was encouraged by the Protestant churches in contrast to Catholic obscurantism at the time, became the preeminent and often only religious symbol in the home. It also became an important aspect of domestic protection. The Bible was considered to have talismanic properties. It was reported from nineteenth-century Wales, for example, that on the larger farms a Bible was locked in a chest to protect the house from harm.<sup>22</sup> Other pious literature served a similar purpose. Well into the nineteenth century, cheap, printed pious broadsides known as Heaven or Saviour's letters were pasted on British cottage walls for the protection of women in childbirth and more generally against witchcraft. They contained apocryphal legends, prayers, and a chain letter instruction that the text had to be copied and passed on to be efficacious.<sup>23</sup> But personal Bibles also held

<sup>20</sup> See Gilchrist, *Medieval Life*, pp. 158–63; Sarah Randles, 'Signs of Emotion: Pilgrimage Tokens from the Cathedral of Notre-Dame of Chartres', in Stephanie Downes, Sally Holloway, and Sarah Randles (eds), *Feeling Things: Objects and Emotions through History* (Oxford 2018), pp. 43–58; Jean-Marie Blaising, 'Archéologie des pratiques apotropaïques entre Lorraine et Luxembourg', in Bis-Worch and Theune (eds), *Religion, cults & rituals*, pp. 350–54.

<sup>21</sup> W. Anderson, 'Blessing the Fields? A Study of Late-Medieval Ampullae from England and Wales', *Medieval Archaeology* 54 (2010) 182–203; Johan Verspuy, 'Brabantian fields, blessed land – a study about the origins of artefacts found in arable land', in Bis-Worch and Theune (eds), *Religion, cults & rituals*, pp. 315–325.

<sup>22</sup> Elias Owen, *Welsh Folk-Lore: A Collection of the Folk-Tales and Legends of North Wales* (Oswestry, 1896), p. 246. See also Kevin J. Hayes, *Folklore and Book Culture* (Knoxville, 1997), pp. 33–7.

<sup>23</sup> Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture 1736–1951* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 126–9.

sentimental and emotional value, which might have led to their secretion rather than because they were thought to have protective properties. This is the more likely explanation for a curious cache reported in the 1820s. Builders pulling down a ruined building near Maidstone, Kent, in 1823, found in the wall a large earthen vase with a closed lid, wrapped in folds of leather and linen cloth. Opening the vase they found a Bible in old font, and on the blank pages various memoranda of a gentleman's travels that appeared to date to the mid-sixteenth century. There were also two coins, one Roman and the other a copper coin of Elizabeth's reign.<sup>24</sup>

So, what we think of as the 'normal' house today has its origins in the architectural, economic, and religious developments of the early modern era. But we also need to understand the development of the house in terms of cultural and inter-personal relationships.<sup>25</sup> Generational shifts in the lives of an ever expanding rural and then urban population were shaped as architectural developments and building practices transformed the domestic sphere and how inhabitants felt about their homes and each other—the ways in which they were negotiated as emotional, social, and gendered spaces.<sup>26</sup> The creation of separate bedrooms, for example, generated new geographies of privacy. As Irene Cieraad's work illustrates, the expansion of glass windows and the nature of their design changed women's domestic relationships with the public gaze.<sup>27</sup> In his influential essay 'Bridge and Door' (1909) the pioneering German sociologist Georg Simmel explored how house doors, and also their multiplication internally, created further levels of domestic decision-making as to leaving them open or closed. This was, in turn, revealing of social connectivity and the liminality of external and internal thresholds. Such developments also had an influence on relations with the supernatural or preternatural world. Relations with neighbours suspected of witchcraft, and the opportunities for bewitchment were determined, in part, by levels of access to parts of

<sup>24</sup> *The Cambrian*, 18 October 1823.

<sup>25</sup> See, for example, Matthew H. Johnson, *Housing Culture: Traditional Architecture in an English Landscape* (London, 1993); Matthew H. Johnson, *English houses 1300–1800: vernacular architecture, social life* (London, 2010); Kathy Mezei and Chiara Briganti (eds), *The Domestic Space Reader* (Toronto, 2012).

<sup>26</sup> Roberta Gilchrist, *Medieval Life: Archaeology and the Life Course* (Woodbridge, 2012), pp. 114–54; Amanda Flather, *Gender and Space in Early Modern England* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 39–75.

<sup>27</sup> Irene Cieraad, 'Dutch Windows: Female Virtue and Female Vice', in Irene Cieraad (ed.), *At Home: An Anthropology of Domestic Space* (New York, 1999), pp. 31–53.

the home or related buildings.<sup>28</sup> The same developments likewise determined the focal points for external spirit threats, with any gaps, holes, or external visibility of the interior, however tiny, proving vulnerable entry points.

We have so far used house and home interchangeably, and we will continue to do so. But, the house can be more than a home and a home more than a house. The latter is a physical space, or combination of physical spaces, whereas the home is an emotional and psychical state related to a place. A house may not ‘feel like home’, for instance, and such sentiments have shaped domestic relations for many over the centuries. In her study of contemporary ghost experiences and the domestic uncanny Caron Lipman also talks about the differentiated spaces within the *home* mapped out in terms of ‘micro-geographies, myths, memories and emotions’, of ‘spaces used and underused, hidden and revealed’. From this ‘the home emerges as a singular entity, something with its own atmosphere, an agency in its own right. It is *more than* the sum of its parts.’<sup>29</sup> It is important to bear in mind, then, whether the practices and artefacts discussed in the ensuing chapters are related to house or home—or both. This book is not solely about domestic structures and places, though, as some processes and practices concerned buildings generally—and the craftsmen who built them. The builders, occupants, and cunning folk who were responsible for concealing objects are obviously as important as the finds themselves, and yet have received less attention than the archaeological remains.

### ABOVEGROUND ARCHAEOLOGY

Over the last few decades the establishment of historical archaeology as a scholarly discipline has further enhanced our understanding of building deposits, complementing the work of vernacular architecture specialists. The ‘above ground’ archaeology of buildings or the ‘archaeology on the upper storeys’ has informed the growing interest in the material culture of everyday life and emotions, and inspired a closer attention not just to building structures, décor, and furnishings, but also the objects that found

<sup>28</sup> See Owen Davies, *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture, 1736–1951* (Manchester, 1999), pp. 207–12.

<sup>29</sup> Caron Lipman, *Co-habiting with Ghosts: Knowledge, Experience, Belief and the Domestic Uncanny* (London, 2014), pp. 193, 196.