The London School of Economics and Political Science

The Funeral in England in the Long Eighteenth Century

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Declaration

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Abstract

This thesis examines the development of English funerals through the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. By using a large new sample of Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) probate accounts, the study demonstrates how the funerals of the aristocracy, gentry, and the middling sort interacted and changed over this period, through a detailed investigation into the commodities and services provided at their funerals and the pattern of expenditure. It also explores the activity of the College of Arms and the work of undertakers in the same period.

While most historians have argued that middle class funerals saw increased consumption, the records of funeral expenditure show that it was the aristocracy and gentry whose spending behaviour changed the most. The main reasons for this were an institutional change, the decline of the College of Arms in the late seventeenth century, and the expansion of the undertaking trade over the next hundred years. The College's loss of control over the funerals of the aristocracy and gentry allowed these groups to opt for a heraldic funeral prepared by an undertaker, at a much lower price. For the middling sort, the undertakers created new value chains allowing them to achieve a different kind of funeral. By offering expensive funeral items for hire rather than selling them, undertakers enabled people to have a lavish funeral without massive expense. While heraldic items were still limited to aristocratic and gentry funerals, a close connection emerged between the concept of 'decency' and the use of more beautiful and more sophisticated items at the funeral and the grave. The findings in this thesis help us to widen our understanding of funeral changes as a whole, as well as changes in consumption patterns occurring in a period of important transformation in England.

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Foremost, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dr Patrick Wallis, for his support, his patience, and his useful comments throughout these past four years. My sincere thanks also goes to Professor Janet Hunter, my second supervisor, who has provided me with her different perspective on my work.

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Introduction and Literature Review

My research is a study of the history of funeral consumption in England in the long eighteenth century.[1] The initial question I ask is if there was any change in the funeral during this period. Previously, historians of death have claimed that the English funeral underwent several drastic changes during the early modern period, especially through the impact of the Reformation in the sixteenth century and the influence of Puritanism in the mid-seventeenth century. Some later works also illustrate a number of changes in funerals but use the rise of individualism as their explanation.[2] Both arguments are based on a large amount of historical evidence, both qualitative and quantitative. While the former explanation has been employed by many social and cultural historians, the latter is rarely used.

Most studies have paid greatest attention to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, rather than extending into the eighteenth century. This is due to two reasons: first, the limitations of the primary sources and, second, the analytical frameworks mentioned above. An even more popular focus of study is the Victorian way of death.[3] Nineteenth-century England manifests several specific traits, but these cannot be seperated from the previous century. The absolutely commercialised Victorian funeral, which was particularly extravagant in its own way, can be traced back to the seventeenth and eighteenth century. The term "commercialised funeral" refers to a funeral which is supplied as just another

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[1] Funeral consumption refers to expenditure on funerals, including services and commodities consumed after the deceased died up until they were buried.

[2] Many well known historians have studied the history of death in the early modern period by linking the topic with broader political, economic, social, and cultural contexts of the period. One of the earliest works is Philippe Aries, *The Hour of Our Death* (New York: Vintage, 1982). Other significant pieces on religious explanations include David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press,, 1998; paperback 2000), and P. Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002). Others emphasise the rise of individualism, including Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England, 1500–1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977) and Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (Berkenham: Croom Helm, 1984).

[3] See the study of death in the Victorian era in Patricia Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996) See also James Steven Curl, *The Victorian Celebration of Death* (Newton Abbot: David and Charles, 1972) and John Morley, *Death, Heaven, and the Victorians* (London: Studio Vista, 1971). For a more specific study see Julie Rugg, "Constructing the Grave: Competing Burial Ideals in Nineteenth-Century England" *Social History* 2013, 38(3), 328-45. See also Mark Sandy, *Romanticism, Memory, and Mourning* (Farham: Ashgate, 2013)

commodity, with marketing, mass production of components, package deals and so on.

Based on the evidence for funeral expenditure extracted from more than 3000 probate accounts held in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC), this thesis aims to answer three main questions:

1. Was there any change in funerals in the light of wider changes in consumption in England in the long eighteenth century?
2. How and why did funeral consumption change or continue in this particular place and period?
3. How can this study fit into a larger picture of changes in consumption during the long eighteenth century and also be linked to consumption in the later period?

Responses to these three questions cannot be easily made; they weave together the study of consumption history and the history of death.

1. The History of Death in Early Modern England

The history of death has received much interest from scholars since Philippe Aries's *The Hour of Our Death* was published in 1977.[4] Many subjects involving death have been variously investigated, including the deceased, the bereaved, funerals, changes in medical knowledge, attitudes towards death, religious and social beliefs, community, family and the individual, and consumption. Each issue can be examined independently, and historians, anthropologists, archaeologists, and sociologists have studied each aspect extensively. The rise of anatomical study helps us to understand the development of modern physiology, pathology and medicine. It studies how the knowledge and practice of medicine had been developed through the use of dead bodies.[5]

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[4] Aries, *The Hour of Our Death.* The next paragraph summarises his study of death.
[5] Druin Burch, *Digging Up the Dead* (London: Vintage, 2008), Roger French, *Dissection and Vivisection in the European Renaissance* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999) and Jonathan Sawday, *The Body Emblazoned: Dissection and the Human Body in Renaissance Culture* (London: Routledge, 1995). For a discussion on the nineteenth-century resurrection men and the development of human anatomy see Wendy Moore, *The Knife Man: Blood, Body-snatching and the Birth of Modern Surgery* (London: Bantam Press, 2005) and Ruth Richardson, *Death, Dissection and the Destitute* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001).

Apart from a focus on the dead body, the impact of death and how death has been managed are equally important. Anthropologists concentrate on the similarities and the differences of how human societies respond to the demise of their members. They have documented the enormous cultural variation in the methods for disposing of the corpse, the expected behaviour of the bereaved, and the relations between the living and their dead.[6] For sociologists, death reflects attitudes and mentality of people in society. More recent works on this subject are in the archaeological field.[7] By relying mainly on materials recovered from funerary contexts, death, responses to death and the treatment of the dead are their main focuses. The 'grave goods' are the centre of the archaeologists' attention.[8] However, the connection between them should not be underestimated since it helps to develop a precise picture of the topic.

Philippe Aries and David Stannard can be considered as pioneers in the study of death. While the works of both are interesting and provocative, their uses of evidence have been widely criticised. Aries initially interprets the western attitude towards death as moving from the traditional concept of death as a customary unifying event to the suppression of death in the modern era.[9] His use of evidence is problematical, however. Most of his evidence belongs to the upper class but he barely acknowledges this, letting his primary sources speak for the collective attitudes of society as a whole. Later, David Stannard tried to avoid this flaw by focusing only on the Puritan community. Nonetheless, this

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[6] Robben, C.G.M. Antonius (ed.), *Death, Mourning and Burial: A Cross-Cultural Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2004) and Humphreys, H., & King, H. (Eds.), *Mortality and Immortality: The Anthropology and Archaeology of Death* (London: Academic Press, 1981). For more specific studies see *Loring M. Danforth, The Death Rituals of Rural Greece* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), Jonathan Parry, *Death in Benares* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1994) and C-W. Park, *Cultural Blending in Korean Death Rites: New Interpretive Approaches* (London & New York: Continuum, 2010).

[7] Michael C. Kearl, *Endings: A Sociology of Death and Dying* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989) pp.42-6. For a broad discussion on the sociological aspect of death see Clive Seale, *Constructing Death: The Sociology of Dying and Bereavement* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998) and Jon Davies (ed.), *Ritual and Remembrance: Responses to Death in Human Societies* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994).

[8] Jonathan Finch, *Church Monuments in Norfolk before 1850: An Archaeology of Commemoration* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2000), Sarah Tarlow, *Bereavement and Commemoration: An Archaeology of Mortality* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1999) and for more recent work see S. Tarlow, *Ritual, Belief and the Dead in Early Modern Britain and Ireland* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011). Many of Harold Mytum's books and papers explore and examine the grave artefacts see *Monuments and Burial Grounds of the Historic Period* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum, 2004), *Death, Burial and Commemoration: An Archaeological Perspective on Urban Cemeteries* (2006) and 'Death, Burial and Commemoration' In: Smith, C ed(s). *Encyclopedia of Global Archaeology* (New York, Springer, 2014).

[9] This statement is concluded from Aries, *The Hour of Our Death*.

narrow and selective body of evidence casts doubt on the coherence of what is described as 'Puritan attitudes'. Attention to the significance of social context and a more robust methodology have become a strength of English scholars working on the English history of death.

The Reformation in the reign of Henry VIII, the Civil War, the Interregnum, and the Restoration distinguished early modern England from the continental countries. For the continental counterpart, funeral rituals in Germany and France had evolved differently. In Germany, Luther's attack on indulgences led to the rejection of purgatory. The new church also denied the living any ability to help the dead achieve salvation. The Lutheran funeral evolved essentially in 'social needs'. They tried to eradicate the simple death ritual by encouraging 'the development of a structured funeral ceremony, which included a communal procession, a sermon, and the extensive participation of the clergy'.[10]

This new pattern of funeral then gave a large opportunity for displays of wealth, status, and power. However, by the end of the sixteenth century, critics began to complain about the ostentatious funeral and this later led to the development of the Beisetzung in the late seventeenth century. Beisetzung was a new style of funeral which was private in character, without a sermon, and with only a small role for clergymen. It limited the expenditure on the funeral and reflected the greater exclusivity of religious services focusing on the family rather than the Church. But when it came to aristocrats or courtiers it soon developed a lavish character.[11] By the eighteenth century, the funeral became a nice tool for the elites to preserve their social distinction. 'The uneasy balance between Christian ritual and social display that shaped the Lutheran funeral from the beginning' was the main explanation for the changing pattern of funeral consumption in Germany.[12]

Unlike Germany, the pattern of change in Paris had developed similarly to London. The privileged corporation of jures-crieurs de corps et de vin had functioned similarly to the College of Heralds in terms of 'supervision, direction, and in some aspects monopoly supply over funerals of the elite. They normally

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[10] Craig M. Koslofsky, *The Reformation of the Dead: Death and Ritual in Early Modern Germany, 1450-1700* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000), p,114.
[11] This is summarised from Ibid.
[12] Ibid., 23-7.

took place in the countryside where most aristocrats lived. However, many occurred in the city which later familiarised people with this kind of funeral. In order to acquire the funeral organised by the Crieurs, people had to pay a large sum of money. Due to the fact that the Crieurs, like the College, could not serve all classes in society, some interlopers emerged in Paris, who were similar to the undertakers, seeking the profits from making such a business. However, their number was not large and did not influence the Parisians much compared to the number of undertakers and their roles in setting up funerals in London. The Crieurs still enjoyed their privileges in Paris and made their large profits throughout the eighteenth century.[13]

In the eighteenth century, New England funerals developed in a markedly contrasting way to English funerals. Trade embargoes during the American War of Independence forced significant changes in funerary practice on the colonists. The embargo policy made the trade between the colonists and their homeland impossible. They could only wear the mourning paraphernalia they had available.[14] William Weeden notices that the avoidance of importations from Great Britain had brought some changes in 'the management of funerals and their attendant ceremonies'. He describes[15]:

> The full suits worn by all the connections were dispensed with, bands of crepe for the gentlemen and black ribbons for the ladies being substituted. The gloves, formerly being distributed generally, were now only presented to the pall-holders.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the colonial funeral became less expensive and less conspicuous where scarves, gloves or rings were not allowed to be given away to those attending the funeral. Mourning clothes were more simplistic and with only a few decorations. As the awareness of social status increased, the funeral custom was regarded as 'an instrumentality to express

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[13] V. Harding, *The Dead and the Living, 1500-1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 211-13.
[14] D. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death,* 87
[15] Weeden, William Babcock, *Economic and Social History of New England, 1620-1789* (2 vol. 1890), old but highly detailed and reliable source.

status aspirations and pretensions by the socially class-conscious members of an expanding urban society'.[16]

Early modern historians connect the issues around death to religious change, especially the Reformation. Most of them connect the changing practices and attitudes towards death with changes in context in the early modern era. The works of Ralph Houlbrooke, Peter Marshall, Nigel Llewellyn, and David Cressy initially delved into this topic by emphasising the relationship between the Reformation and changes in practices along with attitudes towards death.[17] Clare Gittings, while partially agreeing with them on the impact of the Reformation, sees the rise of individualism as the main explanation for the changes.[18]

Significant changes occurred in 'death' in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, such as the declining role of the clergy, the end of intercessory rites for the deceased, the rise of commemoration and the emphasis on condolence. These were followed in the eighteenth century by changes such as more secular attitudes towards will-making, the medicalization of the deathbed, the decline of hell as a religious theme, and a desire for privacy. These were the results of the religious changes started by the Reformation and some special subsequent events such as the Civil War, the Interregnum and the Restoration.[19] The changes that occurred in funeral ceremonies and burial rites were the most concrete example of the overall changes. Houlbrooke, Marshall and Cressy agree that the abolition of the concept of purgatory in the mid sixteenth century became the essential factor in the changing experience of death. For the funeral, the eradication of

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[16] See A. Earle, *Customs and Fashion in Old New England* (New York, 1894). [Online]. Available from: http://www.scribd.com/doc/2377522/Customs-and-Fashions-in-Old-New-England-by-Earle-Alice-Morse-18511911. D. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death,* 85-9; and C. Andrews, *The Fathers of New England: A Chronicle of the Puritan Commonwealths* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919). For more recent works relating to the funeral of the eighteenth-century New England see Steven C. Bullock and Sheila McIntyre, "The Handsome Tokens of a Funeral: Glove-Giving and the Large Funeral in Eighteenth-Century New England" *The William and Mary Quarterly* 2012, 69(2), 305-46.

[17] See Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England*, Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750* and Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England.*

[18] See Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual.* For Gittings, the shift of the public heraldic funeral to the private night burial was due to the growing desire of family members to privately lament for the deceased while Cressy and Houlbrooke argue that this change was due to the desire for decorum. The concept of civility played an important role especially among the upper class. See Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death,* 446-9. See also R. Houlbrooke, "Civility and Civil Observances in the Early Modern English Funeral", P. Burke, B. Harrison, and P. Slack, eds., *Civil Histories: Essays Presented to Sir Keith Thomas* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000), 67-86.

[19] See the introduction part from Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 396–412, and Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 255–78.

intercession produced an extensive change in the ceremony. When there was no hope for intercession, the eloquence of the language of inscriptions and epitaphs increased. Moreover, the attendance of the poor at funerals was no longer necessary since they could not help the souls of rich people out of purgatory, and charitable activity seemed to decline.[20]

Funeral sermons and condolence letters became more popular during this period. The former gave the bereaved some hope for the deceased's salvation while the latter functioned as a comfort to the grieving relatives and can also be seen as a shift toward more open expressions of sympathy.[21] The lavish heraldic funeral had not totally disappeared, but by the end of the seventeenth century well-to-do middle-class people could have funerals similar to those of the gentry in an earlier period, conducted by undertakers.[22] Almsgiving not only declined but also came to be regarded as unfair to the heirs.[23] As Houlbrooke briefly concludes, the Reformation brought a new religious context; the Civil Wars and Interregnum weakened the 'neo-feudal' foundations of the aristocratic public funeral; and the non-conformists simplified burial rites.[24]

From the late seventeenth century until the end of the eighteenth century, some changes in funeral ceremonies could be viewed in the light of changes in funeral consumption.[25] More attention to the funeral came with a shift away from specifically religious concerns. People tended to employ the funeral as a display

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[20] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 396–98, Marshall, *Beliefs and the Dead in Reformation England*, 73–75.

[21] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 260. For more recent works on funeral sermons in the long eighteenth century see Penny Pritchard, 'The Protestant Funeral Sermon in England, 1688-1800' and Jeffrey S. Chamberlain, 'Parish Preaching in the Long Eighteenth Century' in *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon, 1689-1901*, eds. Keith A. Francis and William Gibson (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012). For the funeral sermons of other sects of Christianity see Bob Tennant, 'The Sermons of the Eighteenth-Century Evangelicals' and Keith. A Francis and Robert J. Surridge, 'Sermons for End Times: Evangelicalism, Romanticism, and Apocalypse in Britain' in *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon, 1689-1901* and for a full discussion on the funerary practice of the Evangelical church see D. Beddington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain* (London: Routledge, 1993). For Catholic funeral sermons see Geoffrey Scott, 'Sermons in British Catholicism to the Restoration of the Hierachy (1689-1850)' and Melissa Wilkinson, 'Sermons and the Catholic Restoration' in *The Oxford Handbook of the British Sermon, 1689-1901*. See also Peter Marshall, 'Confessionalisation and Community in the Burial of English Catholics, c.1570-1700 in eds. Nadine Lewycky and Adam Morton, *Getting Along?: Religious Identities and Confessional Relations in Early Modern England: Essays in Honour of Professor W.J. Sheils* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012).

[22] Ibid., 271.

[23] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 401.

[24] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 6–8.

[25] Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, 272. See also Jeremy Boulton, "Traffic in corpses: interment, burial fees and vital registration in Georgian London" *Continuity and Change* 2014, 29(2), 20-34.

of social status. Social and cultural historians whose work is largely concerned with religious change have also interpreted the change in economic terms, especially the increasing expenditure on funerary rituals, and the emergence of an undertaking trade. Still they do not see the funeral changes in terms of consumption.

Gittings believes that the growing importance of the individual can explain an increasing fear of death and bodily decay, which later led to a corresponding rise in the practice of embalming and the rise of professional undertakers to take care of the unpleasant details.[26] Like other historians working on the subject, Gittings begins her study by accepting the changes caused by the Reformation. The medieval funeral, in her opinion, concentrated on the viability of the community due to the reliance of the dead upon the prayers of their fellow faithful Christians to escape purgatory. Additionally, it was a way to sustain the traditional social order.[27] The Reformation, which destroyed the belief in purgatory except for the Catholics, then led to a change in the perception of death. Death was no longer part of a gradual process of the soul moving forward to the afterlife but was regarded as final. It was a matter for the individual or the family rather than the wider community.[28]

Although Gittings partly agrees with her precursors, her work differs from them in many aspects. It is narrower in terms of geography (Kent, Lincolnshire, Somerset and Berkshire) and chronology, as well as putting much emphasis on the impact of death and especially on the burial and funerary rites. Furthermore, she breaks with the orthodoxy by arguing that the Puritanism prevailing from the Civil War up to the Interregnum did not affect contemporary funeral ritual.[29] She notices that the rites that lost their religious importance

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[26] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 13. For a history of embalming see Pascal Trompette and Melanie Lemonnier, "Funeral Embalming: The Transformation of a Medical Innovation" *Science and Technology Studies* 2009, 22(2), 9-30. For a full discussion of the practice of embalming see Robert G. Mayer, *Embalming: History, Theory, and Practice* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2000) especially 589-606.

[27] Ibid., 19–35. See also Philippe Aries, *Western Attitude towards Death: From the Middle Ages to the Present* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England* (London: Routledge, 1997), David Park, "Medieval Burials and Monuments", R. Griffith-Jones and D. Park, eds., *The Temple Church in London : History, Architecture, Art* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2010), 67-92, and Sarah Schell, "Death and Disruption: Social Identity and Representation in the Medieval English Funeral" in S. Cardarelli, E.J. Anderson and J Richards, eds., *Art and Identity: Visual Culture, Politics and Religion in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars, 2012), 71-96..

[28] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 39–40.

[29] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*,, 53–55.

during the Reformation retained and even increased their social significance. The cost of funerals remained and in many areas increased despite the Puritans' strictures.[30] She eventually finds that all changes can be explained by the rise of individualism, reflected in the aristocracy moving away from the lavish heraldic funeral to night burials, and also the emergence of the undertaking trade in the late seventeenth century.[31] The hygienic practices and the art of embalming were tied in with a concern for appearances. Gittings still leaves some questions unanswered, however, leaving a wide gap for other explanations to fill.

Ruth Richardson offers another view. Her essay, 'Why was death so big in Victorian Britain?', argues that the costly trappings of Victorian death served to display the social worth of both deceased and bereaved, while the undertaking trade developed to combat the activities of 'grave-robbers', which ended when the Anatomy Act of 1832 provided the anatomy schools with pauper corpses.[32] Richardson's essay covers a short period of time and is limited to the medical context of the era. It ignores a link between the earlier period and her period of study. Moreover, there is no evidence to suggest that people actually invested more in funerals, especially in coffins.[33]

In Sociology, it has long been believed that funerary practices played a part in the reproduction of social order. Historians, while still seeing the rites involving death as a preservation of social class, try to connect the issue with other subjects. Nigel Llewellyn's study on funeral monuments in post-Reformation England demonstrates that the function of monuments during the period between the Reformation and the Civil Wars had an ideological basis:

> In their exemplification of virtue and achievement, in their identification with the value of state, sovereign and blood and in their upholding of patriarchal degree, the monuments personify the self-esteem and self-image of the ruling class and aspiration of those entering that class. Given the importance of these functions, it is clear why the funeral monuments of Tudor and Stuart England were protected from the physical assaults of

[30] Ibid., 52.
[31] Concluded from ibid.
[32] Ruth Richardson, "Why Was Death So Big in Victorian Britain?" in *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, ed. R. Houlbrooke (London, 1989), 115. For more recent work on the grave-robbers in the nineteenth century see Louise Fowler and Natasha Powers, *Doctors, Dissection and Resurrection Men: Excavations in the 19th-Century Burial Ground of the London Hospital* (London: Museum of Archaeology, 2012). See also fn. 5 for more references on this topic.
[33] From the analysis on the costs of funeral and each particular item from the PCC probate accounts done fully in Chapter 2 and 4 of this thesis.

> iconoclasts and the intellectual and moral criticisms presented by opponents.[34]

Llewellyn still views the Reformation as a major factor leading to the functional change of funeral monuments as he insists that there was no connection between the patrons of English monuments and their interests in art.[35] He adds that a history of the post-Reformation monument 'should seek to uncover the effects of the Reformation rather than to search in vain for the Renaissance'.[36]

The arguments made by these historians still leave some gaps to be filled. The religious changes caused by the Reformation and Puritanism partially explain several changes in funerary ritual, but they do not explain all the changes that occurred during the period. For example, the Reformation, leading to an abolition of intercessory ritual and making the poor less significant, cannot be directly connected to a decline of funeral feasting a hundred years later. Puritanism, as Stannard claims, seems to explain the declining trend of funeral spending on feasting. However, Gittings contends that Puritanism only had a minor effect on funeral expenditure. Moreover, if Puritanism had played a major role in explaining changes in funerals, we would not have expected to see increased spending on items such as mourning clothes, gloves, scarves, hatbands, and jewellery.

A changing attitude towards death apparently had a large impact on funerals. Gittings suggests that the rise of individualism led to a significant decline in the role of the College of Arms and also helped expand the undertaking trade. A number of changes in ritual are illustrated in each chapter of Gittings' monograph.[37] However, by focusing solely on the concept of individualism, she omits a link between the funeral of the early modern era and

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[34] N. Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (2000), 141. and *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual, c1500-c1800* (London: Reaktion Books, 1990). See also Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2008), K. A. Esdail, *English Church Monuments 1510-1840* (London: Batsford, 1946), N. Penny, *Church Monuments in Romantic England* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), and Brian Kemp, *English Church Monuments* (London: Batsford, 1980). Commemoration also includes memorials in graveyards: see Frederick Burgess, *English Churchyard Memorials* (Cambridge: Lutterworth Press, 1963 - reprinted in paperback edition 2004), Hilary Lees, *English Churchyard Memorials* (Stroud: Tempus, 2000), Brian Bailey, *Churchyards of England and Wales* (London: Robert Hale, 1987) and Harold Mytum, *Recording and Analysing Graveyards* (York: Council for British Archaeology, 2000).
[35] Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments*, 153.
[36] Nigel Llewellyn, "Honour in Life, Death and in the Memory: Funeral Monuments in Early Modern England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* Six Series 6 (1996), 182.
[37] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 10-11.

that of the Victorian despite the fact that they shared several similar characteristics. The most extreme form of commercialised funeral was visible throughout the Victorian period. By viewing the funeral as a mode of consumption situated in a growing market economy, it becomes clearer that the roots of the Victorian funeral had been laid out a century earlier.

Recently, works on the funeral have attempted to integrate the history of funeral spending and growing consumption. The concept of the Consumer Revolution has been employed to explain the changing behaviour in consumption during the early modern period. The Consumer Revolution had occurred by the third quarter of the eighteenth century. The term may be clearly defined – it was a period when a variety of goods were consumed by people from different social and economic backgrounds. Diverse groups were allowed to possess and consume similar items and services to the upper classes. This supposition spurred the discussion concerning necessary items and luxuries. Scholars examined how people spent their money and what they spent it on.[38] The concept has been widely used by Early Modern historians especially when discussing the consumer society and consumerism.[39]

One of the most important works is that of Vanessa Harding on funeral consumption in London. Harding examines how the funeral was becoming a secular and social ritual of consumption. She successfully shows the interplay between the growing funeral trades and the increasing demand for more luxurious funeral ceremonies with more complicated rituals. She initially describes how the College of Arms exercised its power to manage the funerals of the upper classes. Harding briefly describes the role of this institution as 'to ensure that the rank of the deceased was appropriately reflected in the funeral ceremony, using a carefully graded display of attendance, dress, and heraldry itself, and to see that the proper sequence of actions was fulfilled'.[40] The role of the College of Arms, however, declined throughout the seventeenth century and almost disappeared in the eighteenth century.

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[38] N. McKendrick, J. Brewer and J.H. Plumb (eds.), *The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England* (London: Europa Publications, 1982)

[39] See Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1990). Papers include C. Fairchilds, "Review: Consumption in Early Modern Europe. A Review Article," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35 (1993): 850–58 and L.M. Roberts, "Gender, Consumption, and Commodity Culture," *American Historical Review* 103 (1998): 817–44.

[40] V. Harding, *The Dead and the Living*, 210.

Ken Sneath, in his PhD thesis, studies funeral consumption in Huntingdonshire and Yorkshire in the eighteenth century.[41] He suggests that the consumer revolution from the seventeenth century was a dynamic process that was not limited to the middle classes but also penetrated down to the poor. His study on funerals concludes that the median amounts of funeral expenditure between the middle and the lower ranks of people were not significantly different, and even the poorest could possibly hold a funeral similar to their richer counterparts. His work emphasises specifically changing funeral expenditure during the period of his study by estimating the mean and median expenditure on different items used at funerals. However, he provides insufficient explanations of his findings. Additionally, his study does not refer to the upper class whose funerals could be different from the groups he studied. His claim that the middle classes had copied the upper ranks is undermined by a lack of evidence presented on upper-class funerals.

Most historians working on death-related consumption in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England tend to conclude that the funeral rite changed throughout the period in the same direction as other patterns of consumption, offering McKendrick's theory of a consumer revolution as their main explanation.[42] Houlbrooke claims that the undertakers brought new aspirations to the middle classes and led to a higher cost of funerals.[43] Earle concludes that emulation caused the middle classes to consume funerals similar to upper class ones. He further points out that: "Generally speaking, the richer the deceased the more extravagant and lavish was the funeral."[44] Gittings, while not stating explicitly that the middling sorts imitated the funerals of the upper class, makes it clear that the rise of individualism created the desire for the former to acquire the sort of funeral consumed by the latter.[45] They simply explain these changes as a result of a process of the middle classes emulating the upper class. In addition, they consider that this new aspiration definitely led to greater

[41] K. Sneath, "Consumption, Wealth, Indebtedness and Social Structure in Early Modern England." Ph.D. thesis,University of Cambridge, 2008.
[42] Neil McKendrick, "The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England," in *Birth of Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth–Century England*, ed. Neil McKendrick, John Brewer and J.H. Plumb (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 29–55. This concept is explained in ch. 3.
[43] "The Age of Decency: 1660–1760," in *Death in England: an Illustrated History*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 193
[44] Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, 158.
[45] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 86–88

investment of the middling ranks in funerals. The items consumed at the funeral, according to this view, must be similar to those of their upper-class counterparts. However, to date, no extensive research has been undertaken to test this argument.

The history of the eighteenth-century undertaking trade has been little studied. One of the earliest works on the history of the undertaker is *The History of American Funeral Directing* by Robert Habenstein and William Lamers. This work explores the development and role of undertakers since ancient times to the twentieth century. Its first chapter gives many useful details on what the undertakers were like in the past. The rise of the undertaking trade started from 'its dispersed beginnings in the seventeenth century' to 'the trade which gathered functions formerly scattered over several trades into a unified single occupational task' at the close of the nineteenth century.[46]

This development took place for several reasons. It was partly due to the inability of the church to influence every aspect of the burial of the dead. It could also be accounted for by the development of medical knowledge and techniques to preserve the dead body by the anatomist, the chemist and the surgeon and their inability to retain their discoveries. Finally, it can be explained in terms of the changing social order. Habenstein and Lamers claim that urbanization 'threw aside the funerary vestiges of the feudal system, but retained the 'decent funeral' as a social axiom.' Therefore, the undertakers who were able to manipulate many tasks in displaying a funeral were popular for those middle classes.[47]

While the development of American undertakers has captured many scholars' interest and been the subject of several studies, English historians have rarely studied the history of the undertaker. The detailed studies on the eighteenth-century English undertaking trade can only be found in Julian Litten's and Paul Fritz's work.[48] Other historians of death in early modern England have only slightly touched upon the topic. Despite this work, several major questions remain unanswered regarding eighteenth-century undertakers. These questions

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[46] Robert Habenstein and William Lamers, *The History of American Funeral Directing* (Wisconsin: Blufin Printers Inc., 1962), 169.
[47] Habenstein and Lamers, *The History of American Funeral Directing,* 169-71.
[48] See P. Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England: Its Origin and Early Development, 1660–1830," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1994-1995): 241–53; Julian Litten. "The Funeral Trade in Hanoverian England, 1714–1760," in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Glennys Howarth (London: Macmillan Press, 1997), 48–61.

focus on three different aspects. They provide an overview of the early expansion of the trade by employing many qualitative documents to describe and explain the nature of the trade. A lack of quantitative studies and deeper details of the topic are the major problems that the last chapter of this thesis will focus on. By achieving these two aspects, several hypotheses posed by previous scholars will be tested and resolved.

Firstly, there is still uncertainty over the question of when the undertaker became widely accepted among the English people and when the English funeral began to be commercialised. Secondly, a wide range of causes have been identified as explaining the turn to the undertaker and the expansion of the undertaking trade. Fritz sees late seventeenth-century English society as a consuming society where people with wealth tried to imitate the higher classes in several ways. He suggests that the undertaker trade emerged and developed in order to respond to their demand. Houlbrooke portrays a similar picture to Fritz while Gittings views the expansion of the undertaking trade as a response to a more individualistic society.[49] Finally, studies of the English undertaker still lack robust evidence to indicate how the management of funerals by undertakers led to the changes in the nature of funerary ritual.

2. Thesis Outline

The main objective of this thesis is to examine the development of the early modern English funeral in the neglected long eighteenth century. Therefore, this study is one of the pieces of the puzzle missing from previous studies. With the study of funeral consumption, the history of death can be viewed from a different perspective. It can also address the broader context of society and can be linked to both earlier and later periods.

This thesis, in order to test the hypotheses proposed by those previous historians, offers an analysis of quantitative data collected from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) probate accounts. It will present how expenditure on different funerary goods changed throughout the long eighteenth century. It will also examine how the undertaker transformed the funeral of the eighteenth century as well as draw a link with the funeral of the nineteenth century. In order to achieve the main objective and answer the questions of this thesis, the probate

[49] A full discussion of this topic will be presented in Chapter 5.

accounts of the PCC will be employed as the major primary source. Probate accounts were drawn up from the Middle Ages, being required for the final stage of probate administration. They normally record the deceased's personal estate, known as 'the charge', and many other payments including funeral expenditure.[50] Until now, they have not been fully exploited by English historians of consumption; only the probate accounts for some specific regions have been examined. For example, Mark Overton uses probate accounts in order to study consumption in Cornwall and Kent, Sneath uses probate accounts from Huntingdonshire and Yorkshire, while Gittings concentrates on Kent, Berkshire, and Lincolnshire. In addition, probate accounts can be used for a range of topics. Peter Spufford's study of long-term rural credit in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries is based on probate accounts from East Kent.[51] Also using the same evidence, Ian Mortimer finds that, in the seventeenth century, demand for health care in east Kent and parts of southern England changed dramatically.[52] A study of probate accounts in Durham has been completed but I am not aware whether any historians have used it.[53]

My choice of the PCC probate accounts as the main primary source means that the period studied can be extended beyond those relying on other types of material. As previously discussed, scholars have substantially employed probate inventories to study patterns of consumption. However, most studies focus primarily on the seventeenth century, due to the creation and survival pattern of this particular source. The number of probate inventories decreased substantially by the end of the seventeenth century.[54] Therefore, they cannot be used in historical research for much of the eighteenth century. The PCC probate documents, however, cover the period up to 1822. Extending the period of study allows us to see a broader picture of the change in funeral consumption.

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[50] Peter Spufford, "Long-Term Rural Credit in Sixteenth- and Seventeenth-Century England: the Evidence of Probate Accounts," in *When Death Do Us Part*, ed. T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000), 214.
[51] Ibid., 213-28.
[52] Concluded from, and for full details see, Ian Mortimer, *The Dying and the Doctors: The Medical Revolution in Seventeenth-Century England* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 2009).
[53] An exploratory project has been undertaken for the Durham probate accounts funded by the North East Inheritance. More details can be found online: http://familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei/NEI_account.pdf
[54] Amy Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," in *When Death Do Us Part*, ed. T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000), 105.

Chapter 1 provides a full discussion on the PCC probate accounts. Since the PCC probate accounts have not been fully studied before, this chapter contributes to the understanding of a new source. It begins with how the accounts were created and their surviving numbers, then it moves on to discuss their characteristics and limitations. Wealth, social status, and geography are investigated in relation to the probate accounts as the data shows that these accounts have biases toward those three aspects. These limitations lead this study to focus on the aristocrats and the gentry, and the middle classes. Previously, most studies have been concentrated particularly on the middling sorts while a few have touched upon the upper and the lower classes. In addition to this, the PCC probate accounts allow our study to go beyond the countryside and put emphasis on London and its periphery.

Chapter 2 aims to investigate the pattern of funeral consumption by using funeral expenditure recorded in accounts as a proxy. It begins by examining how the cost of the funeral changed through time. By framing this chapter with the idea of a consumer revolution proposed by McKendrick, this hypothesis can be tested at the same time. It firstly explores the trend in funeral expenditure across 130 years. In later sections, it delves into more detail by investigating the relationships between funeral expenses, social status, wealth, gender and geography. The findings presented in this chapter qualify the scale of the consumer revolution in this period. We observe a large gap between the funeral expenditure of the upper and the middle classes. Moreover, it is the first group whose spending behaviour changes most, while that of the latter group remains rather stable. Wealth plays a role in explaining the spending behaviour but only between the extremely rich and others. While we do not notice any drastic difference across gender, geography does matter; the spending trend between London and provincial areas converges at the end of the century.

This chapter explores the overall trend of funeral expenditure in England in the long eighteenth century. It concludes that there is no revolution in funeral consumption in this period. Four explanatory variables match the trends shown earlier in the chapter; however, they only explain spending behaviour. This suggests that they are insufficient to describe the change in funeral consumption. While emulation fails to explain the changes that occurred in funeral

consumption during the period of study, it opens a gap for other explanations to be explored, which is the subject of the next three chapters.

Chapter 3 examines the patterns of expenditure on many particular items used in funerals. By extracting the cost of particular items, such as mourning clothes and accessories, coaches and hearses, food and drink, gravestones and monuments, coffins and shrouds, as well as services such as undertaking services, parish duties, and searchers, changes of funeral consumption patterns can be revealed. The shift in the usage of certain items towards others is studied alongside the shift of their function and their representation at the funeral. There are some common payments that appear in most probate accounts, such as for the coffin, shroud, and burial fees, while there are some other extra payments that were made only in particular funerals, such as feasting, mourning jewellery and gifts, hearses and coaches, and memorials.

The changes in both the amounts of money spent on these items and the number of funerals for which the items were purchased, as recorded in the probate accounts, reflect shifts in the consumer's choice on what to provide at the funeral. Some people spent more on the items in which artistic beauty and sophistication could be tailored to their preferences, such as coffins and gravestones. The higher share of money expended on mourning items indicates that these goods became more important during the period. In the late eighteenth century, however, a massive decline in numbers of accounts referring to various funeral items is clearly seen. This is to be explained, however, not by a disappearance of these items but by an increasing number of undertakers and their expanding roles in managing funerals.

Chapter 4 studies the declining role of the College of Arms. Continuing from the previous chapter, it initially identifies the decreasing number of heraldic funerals provided by the College of Arms. It links this with decreasing funeral expenditure by the upper class and explains how this can be connected to an expansion of the undertaking trade. The heraldic items provided at funerals by the two institutions are examined for both the upper and middle classes. The similarities and differences will be compared across regions. This chapter complements Chapter 2 as it concludes that the decline of the College of Arms explains a dramatic drop in funeral expenditure and accelerates the spread of the undertaking trade among the upper ranks.

Chapter 5 is a study of eighteenth-century English undertakers. It examines the development of their trade and their roles in funerals. This subject has never been discussed extensively. In this chapter, the history of undertaker can be studied from the information extracted from probate accounts. From the late seventeenth century, there emerged a new type of professional called an undertaker. By investigating the probate accounts, the services offered and the items provided by the undertakers can be studied. Additionally, the number of people employing undertakers to organise their funerals, and the details regarding the undertaking services prescribed in the probate accounts, will help explain how or in what way they became widespread. The cost of undertaking services can also be examined alongside expenditure on other services to see if the trend matches other services during the period of study.

Chapter 5 links closely with the previous chapter in two aspects. Firstly, it explains a decreasing number of probate accounts recording payments made to several suppliers. Secondly, it suggests that the undertakers had their greatest impact on the upper ranks. With the provision of funerals similar to those managed by the College of Arms, the greatest impact of undertakers was on the funeral expenditure for the upper class. For the middle classes, undertakers partly created the change in people's preferences by building a value chain through their special selling techniques. Once this new taste had become more widespread, the undertakers could participate more in funerals. By the end of the eighteenth century, a majority of people among both upper and middle classes in London and its periphery hired undertakers to manage all the processes in their funerals.

This thesis concludes that the changes in funeral expenditure reflect how this final mode of consumption related to the changing social and economic contexts of long-eighteenth-century England. To answer whether a consumer revolution occurred in funeral consumption, as some previous scholars have claimed, is beyond the scope of this study. I can only conclude that this well known concept initiated by McKendrick fails to explain it during our period of study, although people's changing preferences can be clearly seen within this context. These changes in the consumer's choice of funeral closely relate to the expanding undertaking trade, since the latter had created a new service in keeping with a more secularised society. By viewing funerals in the light of

consumption, a more complete picture of overall consumption can be drawn. Finally, this study suggests a close link between the eighteenth-century funeral and the Victorian funeral since many elements grounded in the former period led to the intensive form of commercialised funeral in the next century.

Chapter 1: Survey of PCC Probate Accounts: PROB 5, PROB 31, PROB 32 and Other Sources

1. Introduction

Most work on the history of funerals in England, usually focusing on the impact of the Reformation, covers only the sixteenth to the mid seventeenth centuries. Other work concentrates on the Victorian period when changes can be clearly seen.[1] One way to fill the gaps in terms of the previous research, the period and the sources mentioned above is to employ probate accounts which allow us to observe changes in the amount spent on funerals as well as the types of goods and services purchased. Generally, at the final stage of administration, these accounts had to be prepared for the court by the executors or the administrators (in cases of intestacy). They record the initial value of the deceased's personal estate ('the charge'), and then several types of payments made by the administrator to discharge the deceased's debts, and these often also include funeral costs.[2] This thesis will primarily employ three series of probate accounts from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) to study changes in funeral consumption in eighteenth-century England.

It is appropriate to give a brief background to the PCC and the documents of the court. The majority of the PCC records include wills and other probate matters. They date from 1383 to around 1900. The court had its origins in the thirteenth century when archbishops of Canterbury began to claim prerogative authority to administer and grant probate for persons who died with 'personalty or debts' in more than one diocese. However, it was not until the fifteenth century that the Prerogative Court officers were formally referred to as such.[3]

From the sixteenth century the PCC sat principally in Doctors' Commons in London and had jurisdiction where the deceased owned personal property being credit

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[1] The work of Aries and Stannard can be considered as pioneering in the study of death. See Aries, *The Hour of Our Death* and Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death*. Other significant work on English history of death includes that of Cressy, Harding, Houlbrooke, Llewellyn, and Litten. See David Cressy *Birth, Marriage and Death*, Litten, *The English Way of* Death, Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments,* Jupp and Gittings (eds), *Death in England,* 174–201; Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, Harding, *The Dead and the Living*.

[2] See Clare Gittings, "Probate Accounts: a Neglected Source," *The Local Historian* 21 (1991): 51–59. For other uses of other probate accounts see also Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (Abingdon: Routledge, 1993); and Peter Spufford, in *When Death Do Us Part*; Paul Slack, *The Impact of Plague in Tudor and Stuart England* (London-Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985).

[3] This occurred in the period of the archiepiscopate of John Morton (1486–1500). See more details in A.K. McHardy, "Bishops' Registers and Political History: a Neglected Resource," in *The Foundations of Medieval English Ecclesiastical History: Studies Presented to David Smith*, ed. Philippa Hoskin, Christopher Brooke and Barrie Dobson (Woodbridge, Suffolk: Boydell & Brewer, 2005), 179.

or debts[4] to the value of £5 or more, and also 'within the jurisdiction of more than one bishop within the southern province of the church and for those who died at sea or abroad'.[5] It was replaced by a Court for Probate of Wills and Granting Administrations during the Interregnum and was brought back again after the Restoration in 1660.[6] The PCC was abolished permanently in the 1850s under the Court of Probate Act 1857.

Even though the PCC no longer exists, the records it created have been preserved and provide historians in several fields with valuable sources for their studies. Most documents from the Court are now kept in the National Archives at Kew (TNA) and are listed under the 'PROB' index. Without a unifying system for each PROB series, these documents are mainly covered by personal name indexes. Among the more than 500,000 documents of the PCC held by TNA, this thesis will examine mainly probate accounts.

As indicated above, a probate account is a document created after the death of an individual by an accountant or an executor to clarify the value of the estate, the costs of the administration, distribution of the deceased's goods, and the discharge of his or her debts. These documents contain many details on the expenses of the funeral, such as burial fees, payments to the undertaker, and other necessaries.[7] The PCC probate accounts held at TNA have not yet been explored, however; indeed, they have not yet been comprehensively listed and indexed. This is because probate accounts are normally filed together with probate inventories and these are kept in several different series. As Bower noted, it is extremely difficult to search through these collections to identify the probate accounts surviving among them.[8]

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[4] Debts owed to the deceased are where he gave credit to others which are treated as assets of the deceased while debts owed by him are liabilities, not his 'property' as such.

[5] C. Kitching, "Probate during the Civil War," *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 5, Nos 5 and 6 (1976), 285. For more details on surviving wills see M. Takahashi, "The Number of Wills Proved in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries. Graphs, with Tables and Commentary," in *Records of the Nation*, ed. G.H. Martin and Peter Spufford 188–192 (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1990).

[6] G.I.O. Duncan, *The High Court of Delegates* (Cambridge Studies in English Legal History, 1972), in Chapter 1 Historical Survey, 22.

[7] There have been some studies of provincial probate accounts: in Berkshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Kent, Lincolnshire, Sussex, and Wiltshire, and some other districts. A major work using the provincial probate accounts is in Gittings, *Death, Burial and Individualism.* For other studies see P. Spufford, "Long-Term Rural Credit in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England: the Evidence of Probate Accounts" and A. Tarver, "Understanding Probate Accounts and their Generation in the Post-Restoration Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry to 1700" in *When Death Do Us Part*. Ken Sneath, in his PhD thesis, uses probate accounts from Gloucestershire and Yorkshire see 'Wealth, Indebtedness and Social Structure in Early Modern England' (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2008).

[8] J. Bower, "Introduction to Probate Accounts" in *Index to the Probate Accounts of England and Wales, Vols I* (London: British Record Society) Volumes 112 & 113, 5.

This chapter will provide a detailed study of the PCC probate accounts, including their creation and process, their rate of survival and their characteristics. This examination of these three aspects of the sources provides a basis for their use in this study. It will focus primarily on the characteristics of probate accounts based on the data collected from the PCC records in TNA. The accounts viewed in this research cover a 130-year period from 1671 to 1800. They allow us to go beyond what has been studied previously by those who have also based their work on probate accounts, in terms of both time and place.

The rest of this chapter is divided into three sections. Section 2 will begin by examining the surviving number of the PCC probate accounts for the given period as well as discussing the reasons for the creation of probate accounts. The distinctive nature and characteristics of the accounts will be discussed in section 3. The characteristics presented are based on an analysis of probate account data. Specifically, their demographic and geographical aspects as well as wealth are explained and partly studied together. Section 4 discusses the identification of those who made decisions on funeral spending. Section 5 evaluates the use of probate accounts as a historical source. Some concluding remarks are made to justify the use of PCC probate accounts as appropriate historical evidence for studying the history of funeral consumption. Section 6 presents other sources employed in this thesis to complete the picture of the eighteenth-century English funeral.

2. History, Surviving Number and Characteristics of Probate Accounts of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury

2.1 History of the Probate Accounts: Before and after 1685

Probate accounts were initially surveyed by Peter Spufford and colleagues in the British Record Society Probate Accounts Index Project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council.[9] This preliminary research aimed to explore probate accounts kept at different record offices in England and Wales. It reported that there are approximately 43,000 probate accounts surviving across England and Wales. Around 34,000 probate accounts from thirty-one different provincial record offices were abstracted by the project (Table 1.1).[10] As Table 1.1 shows, the period in which

[9] Amy Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," in *When Death Do Us Part*, ed. T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000), 105.
[10] The table was created by Peter Spufford for the British Record Society Probate Accounts Index Project.

probate accounts were produced spanned from 1521 to 1855. However, Spufford suggests that the largest surviving numbers of probate accounts range only between 1570 and 1720.[11] He suggests that there is a sharp decline of surviving accounts especially after 1690 when they drop from around 400 accounts per annum to around 100 in the following year and remain below 100 per annum throughout the eighteenth century.[12]

Table 1.1: Surviving probate accounts in England and Wales.

Record Office	Number	Dates
Aberystwyth	44	1620–1693
Aylesbury	7	1617–1684
Bristol	133	1575–1783
Bury St Edmunds	44	1521–1818
Cambridge: Record Office	12	1700–1823
Cambridge: University Library	202	1561–1730
Chester	275	1569–1807
Chichester	1,217	1578–1714
Dorchester	103	1599–1702
Gloucester	138	1601–1834
Hertford	549	1556–1753
Huntingdon	340	1597–1825
Ipswich	1	1754
Leicester	369	1639–1687
Lichfield	1,361	1576–1850
Lincoln	6,044	1524–1853
London: Greater London Record Office	172	1666–1816
London: Lambeth Palace	116	1555–1756
London: Public Record Office	c.10,568	1665–1754
Maidstone	13,586	1568–1740
Northampton	196	1668–1816
Norwich	206	1626–1824
Oxford: Bodleian	96	1577–1720
Oxford: Record Office	845	1547–1810
Preston	307	1574–1799
Reading	1,661	1564–1783
Taunton	927	1577–1748
Trowbridge	1,696	1567–1827
Truro	393	1600–1650
Winchester	451	1569–1716
Worcester	667	1583–1825
York: Borthwick	536	1606–1855

Source: Peter Spufford (ed.), *Index to the Probate Accounts of England and Wales A–J* (London: British Record Society, 1999)

[11] Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts,", 105.
[12] Ibid., 105.

The number of surviving accounts is relatively low, especially when compared with the surviving number of wills and probate inventories, as displayed in Table 1.2. There are merely thousands of probate accounts in contrast to more than a hundred thousand probate inventories or wills. As shown in Figure 1.1 and Table 1.2, the number of surviving wills increases over the 130-year period while those of inventories and accounts do not. Figure 1.1 shows that PCC probate inventories and probate accounts follow a similar trend. One particular feature is the sharp drop of both from the 1710s. Although the reason for such a decline in the number of probate inventories is still unclear one possibility is that inventories may only have been exhibited to the probate court upon citation.[13] On the other hand, the reason for the sharp decrease in probate accounts is much clearer – the passing of the 1685 General Act.[14] However, contrary to Spufford's expectation, the survival of probate accounts in the mid to late 18th century was substantial.

Table 1.2: Number of PCC wills, probate inventories and probate accounts, 1671–1800

Year	Probate account		Probate inventory		Will	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
1671–1680	213	7.5	8,928	8.6	17,566	4.1
1681–1690	220	7.7	8,875	8.6	18,971	4.4
1691–1700	143	5.0	4,400	4.3	27,017	6.3
1701–1710	88	3.1	2,573	2.5	27,928	6.5
1711–1720	134	4.7	2,509	2.4	25,542	5.9
1721–1730	291	10.2	9,554	9.2	28,994	6.7
1731–1740	356	12.5	9,808	9.5	28,725	6.7
1741–1750	313	11.0	10,557	10.2	39,360	9.1
1751–1760	231	8.1	9,765	9.4	37,264	8.6
1761–1770	231	8.1	9,166	8.9	46,130	10.7
1771–1780	268	9.4	8,325	8.0	40,584	9.4
1781–1790	224	7.8	9,350	9.0	48,138	11.2
1791–1800	146	5.1	9,637	9.3	44,634	10.4
Total	2,858	100.0	103,447	100.0	430,853	100.0

Source: Numbers and percentage of above documents are calculated from the PCC probate documents catalogued in PROB 5 (1671-1720), PROB 31 (1722-1800), and PROB 32 (1671-1720) for probate inventories and probate accounts and in PROB 11 for wills (1671-1800) from the National Archives.

[13] A project conducted by the University of Durham to abstract and index the Durham probate documents also shows that the number of probate inventories dropped significantly after 1690. This can be accessed online: http://familyrecords.dur.ac.uk/nei/NEI_account.pdf

[14] For a discussion on the effect of this Act on funeral see p. 7-8 in this chapter.

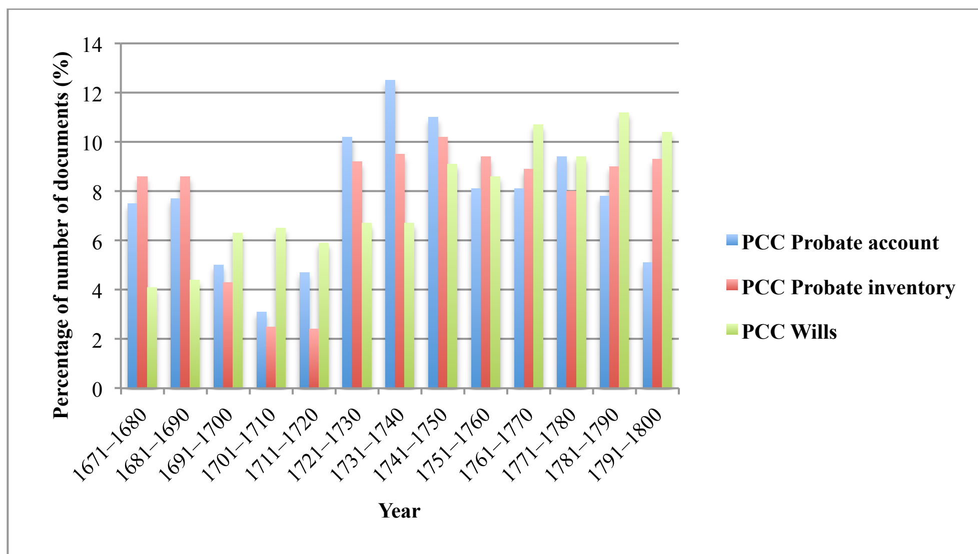

Figure 1.1: Distribution of probate series by decade, 1671-1800

Note: This is a percentage of each type of document in each 10-year period compared to the total number.

The history of probate accounts can be traced back to the late Middle Ages. When the court granted probate to the executor, it required the executor to report back on how he or she had carried out the responsibility of managing the goods of the deceased. However, there was a change during the third quarter of the thirteenth century when Archbishop Boniface's Lambeth Statutes of 1261 stated that accounts were to be rendered only if demanded.[15] The law changed again under the Probate Act of 1530 which required the court to impose a bond, with a heavy financial penalty, to penalize those who did not carry out the administration properly.[16] This forced executors and administrators to keep a strict record of all payments in order to be accountable to the court. Therefore, accounts were prepared as frequently as inventories. There were two copies of the account: one for the court and one for the accountant who had rendered it. In the first decades of the Probate Act, until the early seventeenth century, these documents were costly to produce as the court copy had to be formally inscribed on parchment. Thus, only these two copies of the account were created. The accountants' copies were presumably kept in private family or business archives and the vast majority lost or destroyed when they ceased to be relevant. The

[15] Michael M. Sheehan, *The Will in Medieval England* (Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, Toronto, 1963), 218.
[16] M.A. Faraday and E.J.L. Cole, eds., *Calendar of Probate and Administration Acts 1407–1541, and Abstracts of Wills 1541–1581 in the Court Books of the Bishop of Hereford*. (London: British Record Society, 1989), 21.

court copies were not kept in registers, but kept loose and seemingly filed with the documents regarding each case.[17]

The accounting process took place in the three highest levels of the church courts – the province, the diocese, and the archdeaconry. The accounts were created in the last step of administering the estate.[18] Nevertheless, the process might begin at different times in different cases. It could start right after the death of a person, but presumably a delay was more common since most probate accounts record expenditures on the funeral. Several accounts also record the exact date when payments were due. In most cases, accounts were prepared approximately one year after the death, but in some extreme cases they could be up to ten years or more later.[19] Thus, the details inscribed in probate accounts can vary. According to Ian Mortimer, the form of probate accounts did not change significantly between the late sixteenth century and the early eighteenth century.[20] The account started with the inventory total, known as 'the charge', and listed other assets which were now in the hands of personal representatives. It then listed all expenditures, and most of them, except for the PCC probate accounts, end with a final sum left for distribution.

Before the 1685 General Act, the reasons for exhibiting probate accounts were various. According to Amy Erickson, it is not possible to know in precisely what circumstances probate accounts were required. However, she does suggest two reasons which might have caused the court to require an account. The first reason involves conflict over the estate. This case did not happen regularly and only 10% of probate accounts mention litigation.[21] The second possible reason why the court might ask for the filing of an account is 'the estate's actual or potential liability of debt'.[22] This 'bias in the surviving documents'[23] might cause a problem when we try to interpret the accounts. Erickson points out that approximately 15% of all probates ended in debt. No matter how or why those accounts were created, Erickson concludes that 'while the selectivity of probate accounts' survival is not clear, there is

[17] Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," 110. More details can be found at http://www.origins.net/help/aboutNWI-procoll-EW112-intro.aspx
[18] Gittings, "Probate Accounts: a Neglected Source," 55–6.
[19] Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," 114–16.
[20] Ian Mortimer, "Medical Assistance to the Dying in Provincial Southern England, 1570–1720" Ph.D. thesis, University of Exeter, 2004. 56.
[21] Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," 114–16.
[22] Ibid., 115.
[23] Ibid., 114.

no pattern to suggest its being anything other than random, at least prior to 1685, when the law changed and the number of accounts plummets'.[24]

Similarly, Anne Tarver assumes that 'the pattern of [the] accounts' survival is probably very closely connected to the number of probate accounts created'.[25] Ian Mortimer concludes that there might be some other reasons; about 5% of probate accounts 'were called for by the courts due to there being a nuncupative will, a caveat or another legal issue arising in the course of the probate process, such as a renunciation of executorship'.[26] Another 20% were for the allocation of intestate estates. In support of Erickson's second reason, Mortimer found the remaining 75% of probate accounts were for estates burdened in some way by debts and other expenses. Mortimer gives East Kent from the 1570s to 1685 as an example where he finds that the diocesan court of Canterbury, Salisbury and Chichester or family members called for accounts to be created for two-thirds of the estates.[27] The deceased's family members had a right to make a query to the court regarding the distribution of property when they considered it unfair or not plausible.

For the PCC probate documents, only about 800 inventories have survived from before 1660. They are kept in the series PROB 2. Most of the PCC probate documents that have survived are those officially created after the Restoration and the revival of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury to deal with probate.[28] The real changes came in the final quarter of the seventeenth century. Up to 1671, the courts had made particular arrangements for 'a distribution of the residual assets if any'.[29] After that, the formula, in accordance with the Act for the Better Settling of Intestates' Estates of 1671,[30] was that an administrator 'shall' or 'may' be called to render an account, thus still allowing for discretion. Hence no effect was clearly seen until 1685.

In a general Act of 1685, the courts, which initially intended merely to extend the validity of several Acts of Parliament, misleadingly called 'for the Reviving and Continuance of several Acts of Parliament' which caused a modification of many

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[24] Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," 119.
[25] Anne Tarver, "Understanding Probate Accounts and their Generation in the Post-Restoration Diocese of Lichfield and Coventry to 1700." In *When Death Do Us Part*, ed. T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000), 229.
[26] Mortimer, "Medical Assistance to the Dying in Provincial Southern England, 1570–1720", 69.
[27] Ibid, 70.
[28] J. Raithby, *Statutes of the Realm: volume 5: 1628–80* (1819), 701.
[29] Ibid., 702.
[30] Charles II, 1670 & 1671: An Act for the Better Settling of Intestates Estates., *Statutes of the Realm: volume 5: 1628–80* (1819), 719–20. Available from: http://www.british–history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=47432 [Online].

statutes. It is possible that the legislation of 1685 was a response to the judicial interpretation of the 1671 Act. The Act of 1685 provided that:[31]

> No administration shall … be cited … to render an Account … (otherwise than by an inventory … thereof) unless it be … in behalf of a Minor … or as a Creditor or next of Kin, nor be compelled to account before any of the Ordinaries … anything in the said last Acts contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

A direct effect of this legal change was the big fall in the number of probate accounts produced across England. The practice of presenting probate inventories instead of probate accounts continued after 1685, however. According to Henry Swinburne, sixteenth-century guardians of ecclesiastical court records were more familiar with inventories as current legal documents than the accounts.[32] They probably saw the account as an unnecessary document with no reason to be created or exhibited in a normal process. The process of producing probate accounts had become more complicated and time-consuming. If this process took a longer time and more people had to get involved, the money the accountant or the executor spent on this legal procedure must have increased.

The second reason is its high cost. The literacy rate in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England was relatively low, so the cost of producing documents was high. The cost of producing a probate account varied greatly depending on the parish or the court in which it was produced as well as the number of pages it contained. From my sample of PCC probate accounts, the minimum cost was £2 and it could cost up to £50.[33] Such high costs limited people from poorer backgrounds from requesting this procedure. Additionally, cases involving very small estates were less likely to have any reason to produce a probate account. People whose fortune was large tended to have more problems with distributing their wealth among family members, relatives or friends. However, while the survival of any particular account can sometimes seem a result of chance, it is quite clear that a majority of the surviving accounts from after 1685 relate to estates that were subject to disputes or debts. Several PCC accounts fall into this category.

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[31] James the Second: An Act for Reviving and Continuance of Severall Acts of Parlyament therein mentioned. [Chapter XVII. Rot. Parl. Nu. 17.], *Statutes of the Realm: volume 6: 1685–94* (1819), 19–20. Available from: http://www.british–history.ac.uk/report.aspx?compid=46284 [Online].

[32] Henry Swinburne. *Briefe Treatise of Testaments and last Willes* (first edition. London. 1590). Pan VI. chapter xvii.

[33] This is from raw data of the three series of the PCC probate accounts provided in a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet.

2.2 Format and Content of the PCC Probate Accounts

Probate accounts follow a set formula. Each begins with the name of the executor or accountant, usually stating that the document is the 'true' and 'only' account of a particular executor for this estate. The relationship between the executor and the deceased is normally indicated here or it can be inferred from the document. The most frequent accounts are for men's estates, when the normal executor would be the deceased's widow.[34] Like the probate accounts of provincial courts that have been surveyed, in the PCC probate accounts investigated in this research more than 60% were estates with the deceased's widow acting as accountant. Apart from the widow, the executor could be a son, brother, other close relative or a close friend; these account for around 20% of all PCC accounts. In approximately 3% of the cases a creditor of the deceased assumes this duty. While the estates of men were typically accounted for by their widows, there is a greater variety of relations accounting for the estates of women. Since a majority were already widows when they died, the obvious candidates to account for their estates can be difficult to identify.[35]

After the name of the executor comes the name of the deceased. The preamble of the account generally provides the parish where the deceased resided. The status and occupation of the deceased, unlike the previous details, are not regularly stated in the accounts. In the sample of PCC probate accounts in this study, of the total of 2,684 accounts, 600 record the deceased's occupation (21%), while there are 643 accounts with a reference to the deceased's social and marital status (24%). While it is usual among probate accounts from other courts to record the date on which the account was presented after the preamble, the PCC probate accounts put the date after the last expense.

After the preamble, the document is normally divided into two parts: the charge and discharge (Plate 1.1). The accountant states 'the Charge' or gross value of the estate, frequently derived from the probate inventory. Itemised beneath this are the disbursements and expenses incurred during administration, known as 'the Discharge'. These typically include the payment of funeral costs, medical costs, legal costs for probate or administration, costs incurred in the recovery of assets, rents and taxes, debts, legacies, and schooling expenses; and also the distribution of clothing and other necessaries among family members and relatives and occasionally among

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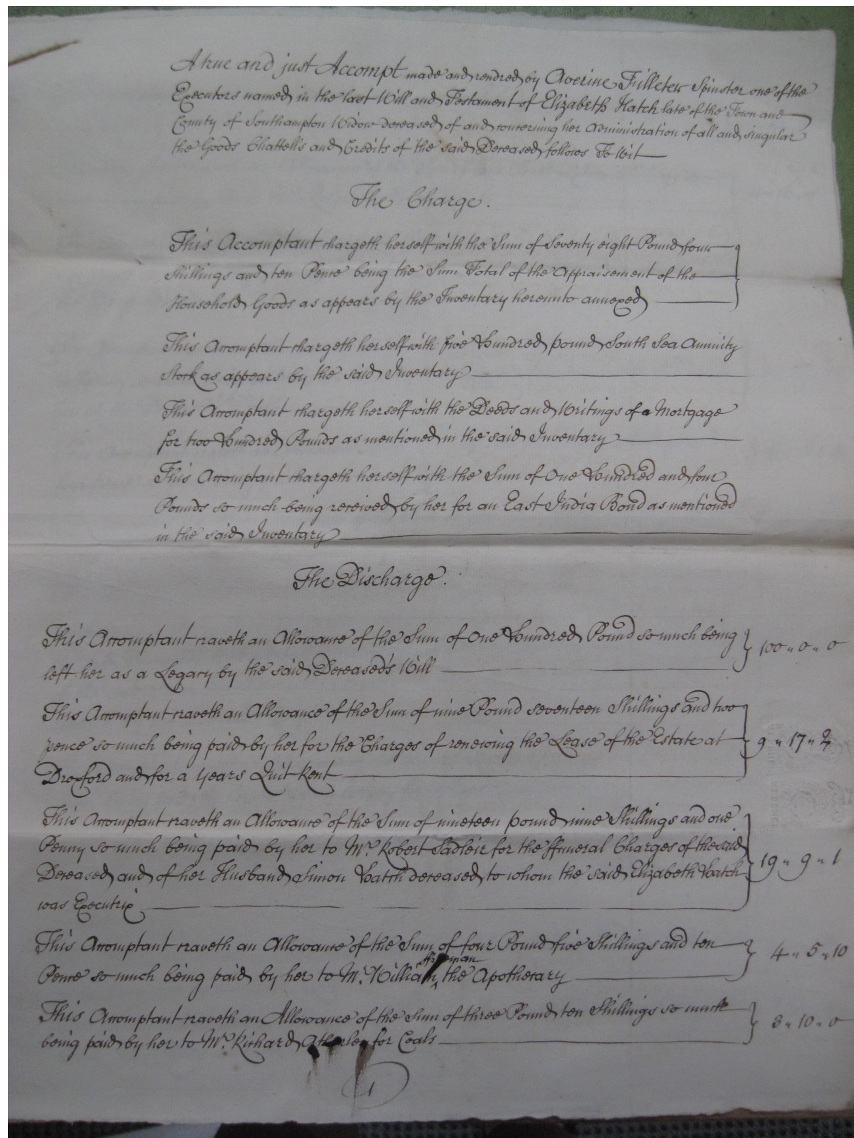
[34] Allen E. Marion (ed.), *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Suffolk, 1625-1626*. Vol. 1 (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1995), 20.

[35] Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," 112.

servants and friends, and so on. In most provincial probate accounts, information on the deceased's holdings including crops sown or reaped and animals possessed was included. The PCC probate accounts do not provide much information on this since a majority of the deceased concerned lived in London and urban areas.



A true and just Accompt made and rendred by Aveline Filleter Spinster one of the Executors named in the last Will and Testament of Elizabeth Hatch late of the Town and County of Southampton Widow deceased of and concerning her administration of all and singular the Goods Chattells and Credits of the said Deceased follows To Wit

The Charge.

This Accomptant chargeth herself with the Sum of Seventy eight Pounds four Shillings and ten Pence being the Sum Total of the Appraisement of the Household Goods as appears by the Inventory hereunto annexed

This Accomptant chargeth herself with five hundred pounds South Sea Annuity Stock as appears by the said Inventory

This Accomptant chargeth herself with the Deeds and Writings of a Mortgage for two hundred Pounds as mentioned in the said Inventory

This Accomptant chargeth herself with the Sum of One hundred and four Pounds so much being received by her for an East India Bond as mentioned in the said Inventory

The Discharge.

This Accomptant craveth an Allowance of the Sum of One hundred Pound so much being left her as a Legacy by the said Deceased's Will } 100 „ 0 „ 0

This Accomptant craveth an Allowance of the Sum of nine Pound seventeen Shillings and two pence so much being paid by her for the Charges of renewing the Lease of the Estate at Droxford and for a Years Quit Rent } 9 „ 17 „ 2

This Accomptant craveth an Allowance of the Sum of nineteen pound nine Shillings and one Penny so much being paid by her to Mr. Robert Sadleir for the ffuneral Charges of the said Deceased and of her Husband Simon Hatch deceased to whom the said Elizabeth Hatch was Executrix } 19 „ 9 „ 1

This Accomptant craveth an Allowance of the Sum of four Pound five Shillings and ten Pence so much being paid by her to Mr. William [illegible] the Apothecary } 4 „ 5 „ 10

This Accomptant craveth an Allowance of the Sum of three Pounds ten Shillings so much being paid by her to Mr. Richard [illegible] for Coals } 3 „ 10 „ 0

1

Plate 1.1: A sample PCC probate account from the probate account of Elizabeth Hatch in PROB 31/243/935 (1748)

2.3 Number of Surviving PCC Probate Accounts and Their Filing System

The initial estimation made by Spufford was that there are approximately 10,000–15,000 probate accounts from the PCC for the period from 1665 to 1754 held by the (then) Public Record Office, and yet to be abstracted.[36] However, they 'survive among thousands of other probate documents which have not been individually listed

[36] Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," 105.

or indexed. It has not been possible to search through these collections to identify the probate accounts surviving among them.'[37] Just 584 PCC probate accounts were catalogued by Spufford's team. All of them are the accounts for deceased persons residing in London, Middlesex and Westminster.[38] It can be assumed that the PCC accounts examined by Spufford are only those from PROB 5 and PROB 32 as he suggests that many accounts that were created in the course of litigation or disputes surrounding the administration are from those two series. PROB 31 is possibly missing from his calculation.

In this research, I have examined 2,864 PCC probate accounts – of which 2,361 were usable for studying the funeral expenditure – from 1670 to 1800 from three record series; PROB 5, PROB 31 and PROB 32. PROB 5 and PROB 32 are used for the period from 1671 to 1730. In PROB 5, the vast majority of the documents fall within the period 1661–1732 while those in PROB 32 are from the period 1658–1723.[39] A fairly small number of accounts in this probate series are 'no longer physically filed together, but they appear to have been foliated so as to preserve the extant evidence of original file order'.[40] Not mentioned by Spufford are the probate accounts in PROB 31, which survive in the greatest number, covering the period from 1722 up to 1858. A selection process from the PCC probate accounts used in this thesis is essentially random. I worked through boxes and took those I identified. While Spufford estimated that more than 10,000 PCC probate accounts survived, the probate accounts which I viewed were around 3,000. The explanation is the number of boxes I reviewed. I only looked through 705 boxes out of 925 boxes due to the period of this study.[41] Besides, some documents are not in a readable condition. However, it is clear that Spufford has overestimated the number of the PCC probate accounts.[42]

Table 1.2 shows that the probate accounts comprised only about 0.5-1% of wills while they account for around 3% of probate inventories.[43] Probate accounts are very rare compared to the other two sources but a much larger number survived in the

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[37] Peter Spufford (ed.), *Index to the Probate Accounts of England and Wales A–J* (London: British Record Society, 1999), xvi.
[38] Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," 105.
[39] TNA, "Index to Prerogative Court of Canterbury and Other Probate Jurisdictions: Miscellaneous Inventories, Accounts, and Associated Documents, on PROB 5 and PROB 32".
[40] Ibid.
[41] The PCC probate accounts from series 5, 31, and 32 cover the documents from 1648 to 1856 but this thesis only covers the period from 1671 to 1800.
[42] According to Table 1, Spufford has estimated that 10,568 probate accounts survived in the Public Record Office ranging from 1665 to 1754. This is not possible since I show that from 1671 to 1760 fewer than 2,500 probate accounts survived.
[43] Table 1.2 can be found earlier on page 30.

Prerogative Court of Canterbury. Mortimer argues that courts are different in their practices so their survival probably reflects the practice of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury. The quantity that survives reflects the wealth of PCC testators and the court's role in settling disputes. Presumably, there would have been large quantities of accounts from before 1660, but these have been lost.

The modern filing system of each series is different. Probate inventories and accounts in PROB 5 are kept individually in separate envelopes and most of them have been repaired by the conservation room at TNA (Plate 1.2). It is not possible to identify an exact filing system for this series since they are not in chronological or alphabetical order. In PROB 32, which covers much of the same period as PROB 5, the documents are no longer physically filed together and some documents from PROB 32 cases are now filed with PROB 5. Still, there has been an attempt to foliate them in order to preserve the extant evidence of original file orders. PROB 32 thus preserves the best evidence of the original filing order.[44] PROB 31 covers a different period from the previous two series and is the most structured collection. These accounts were assigned running numbers and kept in bundles by date of exhibition (Plate 1.3). The beginning of the sequence of numbers was in January of each year. The combination of registry number together with the date of exhibition made the original system of reference for the class.[45]

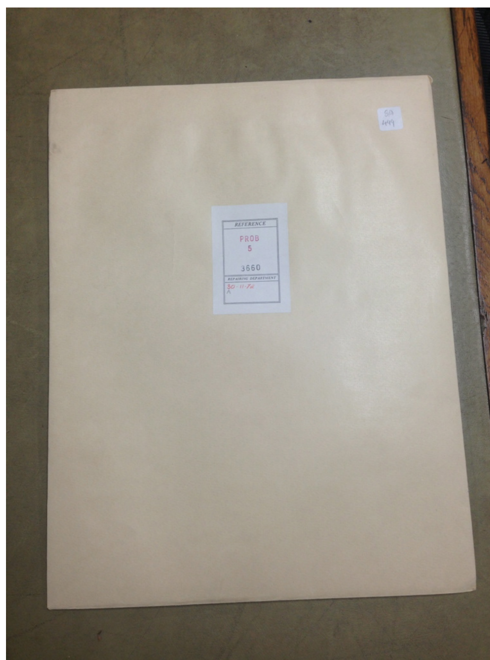

Plate 1.2: One of the documents from PROB 5 kept separately in envelope.

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[44] TNA Index Reference on PROB 32.
[45] Ibid., on PROB 31.

Plate 1.3: One of the bundles from PROB 31

Even though the accounts examined are not all of the accounts exhibited in the PCC in the period of this study, they are still substantial in number especially when compared with the numbers of accounts from most of the different provincial courts (Table 1.3). Each of our three series provides a dissimilar number of usable documents, as shown in Table 1.4.[46] The number of accounts found in PROB 31 are the highest (2,034) while the lowest are in PROB 32, with 237. In PROB 5, there are 587 accounts. The earliest account in this sample was produced in 1643, and the vast majority in PROB 5 date from between 1661 and 1732. The PROB 32 files mostly date from between 1666 and 1717. The last document of PROB 5 is from 1723 when it was replaced by the court's main series of exhibits from 1722 onwards known as PROB 31. PROB 31 probate documents are the main series of exhibits brought into the registry of the PCC from 1722 until the abolition of the PCC in 1858. This enables

[46] There are also two other probate series: PROB 2 and PROB 4. PROB 2 contains probate documents produced before 1660, while PROB 4 covers a period similar to PROB 5. As this research covers the period from 1670 to 1800, PROB 2 will not be discussed. In order to test whether PROB 4 is a viable series for use in this research, I conducted a sampling exercise by randomly selecting fifty probate inventories from every 10-year period from 1670–1680 to 1710–1720. Not one of these had a probate account filed with it. It was thus reasonable to assume that there are very few or no probate accounts attached to the inventories in PROB 4. For PROB 5, it is relatively convenient to check if there is any probate account filed along the inventories since the TNA online catalogue offers this information.

me to extend this probate-based research on funerals to cover a longer period than most research conducted hitherto.

Table 1.3: Surviving PCC probate accounts and probate accounts abstracted by Spufford in England (1671–1750) compared with total households in England (mid-1680) and total population in 1700 and 1750.

County	Number of Households in mid-1680s	Number of probate accounts abstracted by Spufford	Number of PCC probate accounts 1671–1700	Number of PCC probate accounts 1701–1750	Population in England as estimated by Rickman 1700	Population in England as estimated by Rickman 1750
Bedford-shire	12,170	16	5	3	53,706	59,542
Berkshire	16,906	1,765	15	16	77,845	92,393
Bucking-hamshire	18,390	74	7	6	76,325	87,821
Cambridge-shire	17,347	225	7	4	82,227	78,097
Cheshire	24,054	275	1	2	101,598	115,681
Cornwall	25,374	396	5	5	124,084	141,744
Cumber-land	14,825	4			91,421	87,109
Derby-shire	21,155	367			115,564	108,251
Devon	56,310	11	7	12	335,667	329,398
Dorset	21,944	206	5	10	88,628	94,909
Durham, Northumb-erland and Berwick	38,725	7		1		
Essex	34,819	15	12	23	170,842	193,932
Gloucester-shire	26,764	282	12	20	157,348	218,149
Hampshire	26,851	449	11	21		
Hereford-shire	15,006	5	15	13	75,229	75,682
Hertford-shire	16,569	519			73,599	82,163
Huntingdon-shire	8,217	354	1	2	31,966	32,516
Kent	39,242	13,601	18	66	157,833	181,267
Lancashire	40,202	278	1		242,014	341,451
Leicester-shire	18,702	379		2	80,210	98,488
Lincoln-shire	40,590	5,989	4	4	181,555	164,708
London, Middlesex and Westminster	100,136	584	278	653	729,082	553,047
Norfolk	47,180	209	6	6	245,842	237,766
Northampto n-shire	24,808	205	6	11	113,670	120,180
Nottingham-shire	17,554	37			86,315	91,353
Oxford-shire	19,007	925	11	15	85,159	95,886

County	Number of Households in mid-1680s	Number of probate accounts abstracted by Spufford	Number of PCC probate accounts 1671–1700	Number of PCC probate accounts 1701–1750	Population in England as estimated by Rickman 1700	Population in England as estimated by Rickman 1750
Rutland	3,263	2		1	15,616	12,618
Shropshire	23,284	209	2	4	118,981	135,480
Somerset	49,808	929	22	20	217,037	239,132
Stafford-shire	23,747	479	2	4	125,856	151,051
Suffolk	34,422	46	8	12	163,460	171,485
Surrey	34,218	51	41	128	132,764	143,384
Sussex	21,537	1,221	9	8	98,534	101,353
Warwick-shire	21,973	432	7	6	98,725	134,070
Westmor-land	6,501	0			40,685	38,634
Wiltshire	27,093	1,453	10	18	152,372	168,937
Worcester-shire	20,634	536	4	8	104,132	102,910
Yorkshire	106,151	488	0	2	435,443	520,384
Total	1,115,478	33,023	532	1,106	5,281,334	5,600,971

Source: Number of households in mid-1680 and number of probate accounts are from Spufford, Peter(ed.), *Index to the Probate Accounts of England and Wales A–J*. London: British Record Society,1999. The estimation of population in England in 1700 and 1750 are from E.A. Wrigley's re-workings of John Rickman's estimation population in England published in the 1841 census from E.A. Wrigley, "Rickman Revisited: The Population Growth Rates of English Counties in the Early Modern Period," *Economic History Review* 62(32): 721. Number of PCC probate accounts (1671-1700 and 1701-1750) are from three different series of PCC probate documents; PROB 5, PROB 31, and PROB 32.

Table 1.4: Number of PCC probate accounts in each PROB series by decade.

Decade	Number of probate accounts			Total for decade
	PROB 5	PROB 31	PROB 32	
1671–1680	174		39	213
1681–1690	125		95	220
1691–1700	100		43	143
1701–1710	59		29	88
1711–1720	103		31	134
1721–1730	26	265		291
1731–1740		356		356
1741–1750		313		313
1751–1760		231		231
1761–1770		231		231
1771–1780		268		268
1781–1790		224		224
1791–1800		146		146
Total	587	2,034	237	2,864

The PCC probate accounts employed in this research include most of the counties in England and Wales. Only Cumberland, Derbyshire and Westmorland are missing. The counties in Wales are not presented here, however, since the number of PCC accounts is very small (6 out of 2,864). While Spufford's data shows that the highest number of surviving accounts is from Kent, the highest numbers of the PCC accounts are from London and Middlesex.[47] The surrounding areas including Surrey, Essex and Kent also contain a relatively high number of accounts while those from more distant provincial areas are low. The second highest number in Spufford's work is from Lincolnshire, which is not the case for the PCC accounts.[48] The number of households and population, as provided by Spufford and Rickman, is also added in Table 1.3 to compare the number of accounts created with the size of the population and the number of households.[49] According to Table 1.3, there is no obvious correlation between the numbers of provincial accounts and numbers of households or population. This reflects variation between probate courts.[50] Only in the PCC is there a positive correlation between numbers of accounts and both population and households, as shown in Table 1.5. Thus, although scattered, the PCC probate accounts give a good overview of the rest of England.

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[47] Spufford, *Index to the Probate Accounts of England and Wales A–J,* xviii.

[48] Ibid., xvii.

[49] In the 1830s, John Rickman, who had supervised the taking of the first four censuses, secured additional returns of baptisms, burials, and marriages from all Anglican incumbents whose registers began early. He made use of the returns to produce new estimates of the population of each county from the sixteenth century onwards. His estimates were published in the 1841 census after his death and have been very widely quoted ever since. In this thesis, population figures for 1700 and 1750 are used to see if the numbers of PCC probate accounts have any correlation with these. See E.A. Wrigley, "Rickman Revisited: The Population Growth Rates of English Counties in The Early Modern Period," *Economic History Review* 62(32): 711–735. Spufford's numbers of households in 1680 and numbers of probate accounts in the same year are also added to compare with the PCC probate account samples. See Spufford, *Index to the Probate Accounts of England and Wales A–J,* xviii.

[50] Different courts had very different habits in keeping the probate accounts and probably most of them just did not keep them.

Table 1.5: Correlation between number of probate accounts abstracted by Spufford, number of PCC probate accounts, number of households and number of population.

Correlation coefficient	No. of Spufford's accounts	No. of households	No. of population in 1700
No. of PCC probate accounts	-0.01	0.56	0.77
No. of Spufford's accounts		0.12	0.04
No. of households			0.94

Sources: Number of households in mid-1680 and number of probate accounts are from Spufford, Peter (ed.), *Index to the Probate Accounts of England and Wales A–J*. London: British Record Society,1999. The estimation of population in England in 1700 is from E.A. Wrigley's re-workings of John Rickman's estimation population in England published in 1841 census from E.A. Wrigley, "Rickman Revisited: The Population Growth Rates of English Counties in the Early Modern Period," *Economic History Review* 62 (32): 721. Number of PCC probate accounts (1671-1700 and 1701-1750) are from three different series of PCC probate documents: PROB 5, PROB 31, and PROB 32.

The creation of the majority of the PCC probate accounts relates chiefly to litigation especially after 1685. Most of the documents from PROB 5 were produced in the course of litigation. For PROB 32, there is no clear information as to why these documents were produced. However, with the impact of legal change in 1685, these documents were presumably created for the same reason as those in PROB 5. For PROB 31, the exhibits are produced in causes. In this way, probate accounts could be used for three primary functions. First of all, they assist the administrator in administering the deceased's estate when the person died intestate. For example, William Boulter died intestate. His only child, Elizabeth, promoted a case, claiming administration against the deceased's sister, Ann Harrison, and his principal creditor, William Johnson. The probate accounts were created to record the distribution of the deceased's assets. Subsequently respondents are named as Ralph Hicks and the London College of Medicine. Hicks put himself forward to claim the estate. Elizabeth, however, alleged that she was married to one Miles Bourke. She must have won her case but died without administering, as a *de bonis non* grant on William Boulter's estate was made to Miles Bourke in January 1711.[51]

[51] PROB 18/29/74 and PROB 18/30/21. This is from the TNA Index Reference for PROB 18. PROB 18 consists primarily of documents on allegations containing the initial statement of a case by the proctor acting for the plaintiff. They were the first stage in pleadings before a civil law court. Exhibits cited in the allegations are frequently filed with them. Exhibits include such documents as will drafts, extracts from registers of baptisms and marriages, lists of debts, and inventories of the deceased's estate. An original document is in Latin. Probate lawsuit Hicks otherwise Boulter v Hicks, concerning the deceased William Boulter esq. (died in 1708).

Secondly, the account helped to clarify the honesty of the administrators in case the deceased's creditors or family members were not satisfied with what they received from the deceased according to the will. This is shown in the case between Betty Shipton and John Lywood. The former was a daughter of Thomas Twine (the deceased) while the latter was his creditor. On the petition of Lywood's proctor a commission was issued for the 'appraisement and faithful valuation of the goods, chattels, and credits of the said deceased and for the inspection of the bonds, leafs, accounts, and books of account, and all other writings and papers whatsoever relating to the personal estate of the said deceased'.[52] The executor followed the procedure and displayed all the documents in the court.[53] It is unknown how this case ended but it gives an idea of the circumstances in which a probate account was created during that period.[54]

Thirdly, accounts were used in litigation related to disputes over probate documents, especially wills, such as the validity of a will, the claims of people seeking letters of administration, and disputes about the terms of wills. In this way, the probate account was employed to confirm the validity and the transparency of the will and inventory. For instance, the will of Sir John Fowell was proved in common form in May 1677. His widow (one of the six executors named in the will) initiated an action against the heir-in-law, Sir John Fowell junior, to have the will propounded in solemn form. A commission to take evidence on her behalf was issued in May 1677. In June 1678 one John Heskett promoted a cause against the executors, in an attempt to have the probate revoked and the codicil in his favour proved instead. Concurrently, Hugh Osborne, one of the executors, was alleging that a nuncupative codicil had been made in his favour. Several written documents including probate accounts were created.[55]

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[52] PROB 31/235/326, Thomas Twine, widower of Andover, Hampshire (1743).

[53] Ibid.

[54] I have searched through the catalogue but there is no evidence of how this case ended.

[55] This case is from PROB 28, which contains several cause papers taken by commission between 1642 and 1722. The majority of probate causes were of two types: (1) the authenticity of a will was contested, or (2) in intestacy where one of the parties to the estate sought letters of administration to administer the deceased's estate, and the identity of the deceased's next of kin was disputed. Answers of respondents and depositions of witnesses in the first type of cause therefore relate to the circumstances in which wills were made and the states of mind and testamentary capacities of testators. In the second type of cause respondents and deponents usually supplied evidence about relationships and marriages. Documents in this series and related series therefore sometimes supply precise and intimate information about the lives of testators and their associates. The TNA index covering PROB 28 includes inventories and accounts. This case is from PROB 28/987. There are three different cases here: 'Lady Fowell con Fowell, per cur, Also Heskett con Carew et al., Also Osborne con Carew et al. Sir John Fowel, bart., dec. 1677–9'.

In addition, there could be cases where it was alleged that a probate inventory and probate account created for the court had been falsified. An example is the case of Sir William Glynne, who died intestate. Administration of his estate was granted to his widow, Lady Penelope, in December 1690. She died without administering. Administration of her estate was granted to her son, Sir William Glynne, in June 1692. A *de bonis non* grant of the administration of his father's estate was granted to Sir William, the heir, at the same time. An action in objection to the inventory and account returned by Sir William was initiated by Penelope Arnold, daughter of the deceased.[56]

The cases shown above might lead to problems regarding the use of probate accounts especially the records regarding inheritances, bonds, credits, or other expenses with large amounts of money involved. In this work, however, only the funeral expenditure will be extracted. This expenditure is normally recorded at the beginning, since it was paid soon after the person died. Those probate accounts without a record of funeral expenditure are mostly of seamen, since their funeral was normally performed on board by their companions and crew.[57] Furthermore, the situations that led to an account's creation should not cause any problem for funeral expenditure since the sum of money spent on the funeral is much less compared to other expenses.

In this section, the surviving number of PCC probate accounts has been shown to differ from the initial estimation by Spufford. Even though the number of accounts presented in this research is much lower than had previously been estimated, they still survive in a significant number especially when compared with other provincial probate account series. The main characteristics of the probate accounts will be examined in the next section.

3. Main Characteristics of PCC Probate Accounts

As Erickson illustrates, the probate accounts from most regions cover a wide range of social strata who were principally engaged in agriculture. The accounts which have already been analysed were from the rural areas, while 'the as yet unexamined accounts originating in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury will

[56] From PROB 28/269: Arnold als. Glynne con Glynne, Sir William Glyne, bart., et Lady Penelope Glynne, dec. (1693).
[57] See chapter 3 for more details

represent a different clientele'.[58] This section will investigate and analyse the occupational, social status, gender, geographical (place), and financial (material wealth) data of the probate accounts collected. I will concentrate mainly on comparisons between the characteristics of three series of PCC probate accounts. After this, the nature and the biases of each series will be presented and discussed in Section 4.

3.1 Occupation, Status and Wealth Data

The three series of probate documents examined for this thesis contain the probates of a wide range of social and occupational groups. Significant information such as names, occupation, places of residence or of death is mostly taken from the registered wills or probate account entry. Names of the deceased and the executors or the administrators and the places of residence or of death were normally recorded as well as wealth but the deceased's occupation was not. The accounts with occupation and status data are given in approximately 20% of accounts.

Most historians have tried to avoid some problems which occur from fitting people into either their occupation or their status by combining both and examining them together.[59] In this research, these two types of data are also analysed together and combined with wealth. The details given in probate accounts seem to be clear. If the deceased possessed a title – Lord, Baronet, Knight, Esquire, and Gentleman – it will be stated in the preamble. I assume that most people whose status titles are not recorded should be regarded as the middle classes. Marital status is sometimes indicated as bachelor, widower, widow or spinster. This, in many cases, corresponds to their occupation and the wealth they possessed.

In this research, wealth will be inferred from the value of the 'charge' in the probate account. This value is often brought directly from the inventory total. It reflects the value of the deceased's possessions as well as the money owed to him or her by other people.[60] The material wealth recorded in the inventory should reflect how rich the deceased was or how well off they were during their lifetime.[61] However, there have been many criticisms from historians who consider that the inventories 'are not a reliable guide to the total wealth of any individual' or 'do not

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[58] Erickson, "Using Probate Accounts," 114.

[59] Lorna Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture in Britain, 1660–1760* (London: Routledge, 1988), 167.

[60] Tom Arkell, "Interpreting Probate Inventories," in *When Death Do Us Part*, ed. T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press, 2000), 73.

[61] Arkell, "Interpreting Probate Inventories", 74.

provide information concerning the "wealth" of testators'.[62] This is due to the fact that the inventory does not include the deceased's landholding, thus it does not capture his or her total wealth or debt. When the total discharge was valued, there are often cases where it exceeded the amount of the charge, causing the account to end in a negative balance. For example, the East Kent accounts show that two out of every five surviving accounts ended with a negative balance. For the PCC probate accounts studied, 123 out of 300 sampled probate accounts end with debts (almost 50%). There are also a handful of accounts in which the funeral expenditure cost more than the total charge value.[63]

Although the total value of the probate account could be useful in estimating the real wealth of the deceased by comparing this value with the inventory value, a problem emerges. There is a lack of data on the 'discharge'. Hence, it would be more viable for the research to employ the inventory wealth instead of using wealth calculated from both. The PCC probate accounts are different from accounts in other diocesan archives since many of them omit the final balance and even more often omit the household expenditure. According to Mortimer, the accounts without a record of household expenses frequently appear when the executor was unwilling to act.[64]

A more serious problem proposed by historians is the link between wealth and social status; whether the former can be an indication of the latter and vice versa. This is the reason why the occupation and the social status data are required in this research. There have been some attempts made by historians to justify the wealth indicated by the inventories as an appropriate representation of the deceased's wealth; for example, Cressy claims that inventories give 'an adequate distribution of wealth'.[65] Since there is no information of the net estate provided, the gross personal estate is the best option available. Zell's study on the relative wealth of the different trades in the Elizabethan Weald indicates that probate inventories are better than taxation returns as a source for studying the changing distribution of wealth.[66]

[62] Arkell, "Interpreting Probate Inventories",, 95–96.
[63] The probate account, on the other hand, usually gives some clues about the individual's landholding. Both the rents owed to the deceased before his death and to his survivors after he passed away convey the scale of tenancies held of the deceased. Sometimes, the probate account also states the type and size of holding.
[64] Mortimer, "Medical Assistance to the Dying in Provincial Southern England, 1570–1720," 69–70.
[65] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 110
[66] Michael Zell, "The Social Parameters of Probate Records in the Sixteenth Century," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research* 57 (1984): 107–13.

The average amount of wealth possessed by the people whose probate accounts were preserved in PROB 5, PROB 31 and PROB 32 shows that the people in the probate accounts are rich (see Figure 1.2). The mean and median values differ due to the large gap between the richest and the poorest in the samples. For most of the periods across the three series, the standard deviations are high indicating a high dispersion of the data.[67] The mean values between each series do not seem to be much different. In Figure 1.3, we can observe a range of wealth starting from those whose wealth was below £50 to those whose wealth was more than £5,000. The majority fall within £200–£300. There are also those with extreme wealth who were worth more than £5,000. However, there is a lack of trend over time for the average estate wealth shown in Figure 1.4.

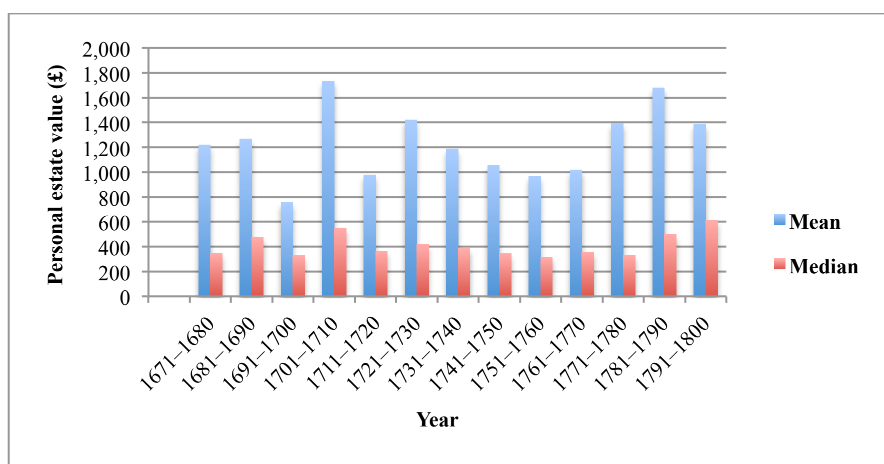

Figure 1.2: Distribution of mean and median estate values by decade

Figure 1.3: Distribution of range of estate value of deceased persons (%)

[67] A t-test for independent samples from PROB 5 and PROB 32 revealed no significant difference in most periods except the period 1691–1700.

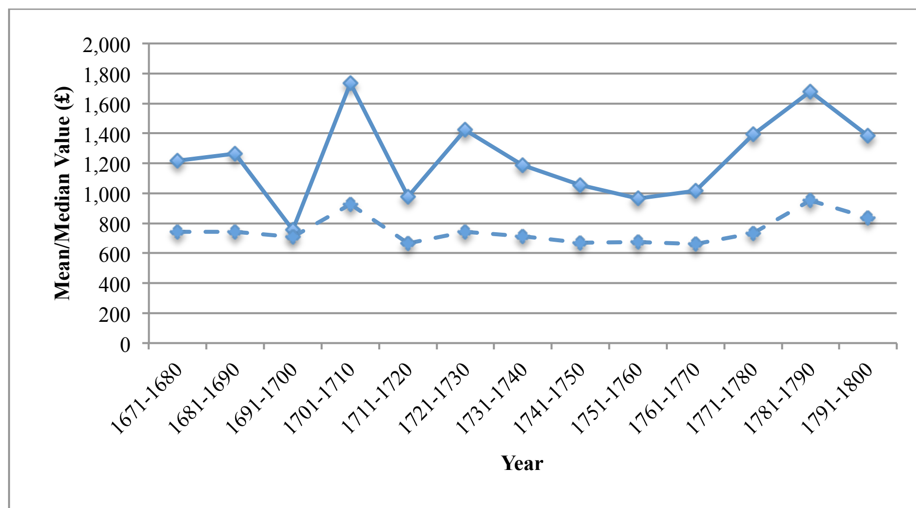

Figure 1.4: Mean and median values of estate wealth

While it is reasonable to conclude that the samples used in this study represent only the middle class and above by looking at their level of wealth, there are many issues to be aware of. Occupation and status data as well as definition of 'gentry' or 'middle class' should primarily be taken into consideration.

The data on occupation, status, and wealth derived from the probate accounts are closely connected and will be examined together in order to illustrate the nature of the people considered here. Two social tables constructed by Peter Lindert and Jeffrey Williamson are presented in order to display the groups of people in two periods: 1688 and 1759.[68] The tables show different groups of people in England and Wales categorised by both status (titles) and occupation or economic sector (commerce, industry and building, agriculture, and labourers). The first social table (Table 1.6) is based on Gregory King's estimation of income, while the second one (Table 1.7) is based on Joseph Massie's estimation. However, one has to be aware that Massie's table was prepared for a specific purpose as an indictment of the powerful colonial sugar lobby, and it is less reliable than King's table. The occupations mentioned in Massie's table also differ from those of King's. Artisans and handicraft workers as well as shopkeepers are not presented in the industrial sector and might be replaced by master manufacturers. While the merchants in King's table are separated by their location (by sea or on land) and by their statuses (greater or lesser), Massie distinguishes them by their estimated average income.

[68] The first table is constructed based on the revised social table by Lindert and Williamson based on Gregory King's estimation, see P. Lindert and J. Williamson, "Revising England's Social Tables 1688–1812," *Explorations in Economic History* 19 (1982): 393.

Table 1.6: The revised social table by Lindert and Williamson based on Gregory King's social table with number of PCC probate accounts and average wealth of deceased persons.

Class	King, revised		PCC testators	
	No. of families	Average family income (£)	No. of families	Average wealth (£)
A. High Titles and Professions				
Temporal Lords	200	6,060	8	5,439.5
Spiritual Lords	26	1,300		
Baronets	800	1,500	5	4,532.6
Knights	600	800	9	10,187.7
Esquires	3,000	562.5	153	2,972.2
Gentlemen	15,000	280	65	884.9
Persons in offices, greater	5,000	240		
Persons in offices, less	5,000	120		
Persons in the Law	8,062	154	92	956
Clergymen, greater	2,000	72		
Clergymen, lesser	10,000	50		
Persons in science and liberal arts	12,898	60		
B. Commerce				
Merchants by sea, greater	2,000	400		
Merchants by sea, lesser	8,000	200	64	1,257.50
Merchants on land, greater	3,264	400		
Merchants on land, lesser	13,057	200		
Shopkeepers and tradesmen	101,704	45	192	1,377
C. Industry and building				
Artisans and handicrafts	6,745	200	53	1,416
Manufacturing trades	162,863	38	41	1,669
Building trades	73,018	25	34	1,265
Miners	14,240	15		
D. Agriculture				
Freeholders, greater	27,568	91		727
Freeholders, lesser	96,490	55	34	
Farmers	103,382	42.5	6	954
E. Military and maritime				
(excluding traders)				
Naval officers	5,000	80	66	1,807
Military officers	4,000	60	9	204

Class	King, revised		PCC testators	
	No. of families	Average family income (£)	No. of families	Average wealth (£)
Common seamen	50,000	20		
Common soldiers	35,000	14		
F. Labourers and the poor				
Labouring people and outservants	284,997	15		
Cottagers and paupers	313,183	6.5		
Vagrants	23,489	2		
All families	1,390,586		831	
Total pre-fisc household income		£54,440,248		£11,632.50

Sources: The revised social table is from Peter H. Lindert and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Revising England's Social Tables 1688-1812" *Exploration in Economic History* 19: 393. For the latter two columns: numbers of families and average wealth of the PCC testators are from PROB 5 (1671-1720), PROB 31 (1722-1800), and PROB 32 (1671-1720)

Table 1.7: The revised social table by Lindert and Williamson based on Massie's social table with number of PCC probate accounts and average wealth of deceased persons

Class	Massie, revised		PCC testators	
	No. of families	Average family income (£)	No. of families	Average wealth (£)
A. High Titles and Professions				
	10	26,940		
	20	13,470		
	40	10,776		
Temporal Lords	80	8,082	8	5439.5
Spiritual Lords	160	5,388		
Baronets	320	2,694	5	4,532.6
Knights	640	1,347	9	10,187.7
Esquires	800	1,078	153	2,972.2
Gentlemen	1,600	808	65	884.9
	3,200	539		
	4,800	404		
	6,400	269		
Clergymen, superior	2,000	100		
Clergymen, inferior	9,000	50		
Persons professing laws	12,000	100	92	956
Persons professing liberal arts	18,000	60		
Civil officers	16,000	60		
	-75,070			
B. Commerce				
Merchants	1,000	600		
Merchants	2,000	400	64	1,257.50
Merchants	10,000	200		
Tradesmen	2,500	400		
Tradesmen	5,000	200		
Tradesmen	10,000	100		
Tradesmen	20,000	70		1,377
Tradesmen	125,000	40	192	
Innkeepers and ale-sellers	2,000	100		
Innkeepers	3,000	70		
Ale-sellers, Cottagers (greater)	20,000	40		
	-200,500			
C. Industry and building				
Master manufacturers	2,500	200		
Master manufacturers	5,000	100	(cont.)	(cont.)
Master manufacturers	10,000	70		

Class	Massie, revised		PCC testators	
	No. of families	Average family income (£)	No. of families	Average wealth (£)
Master manufacturers	62,500	40		
Manufacturers of wood, iron, etc. (London)	9,854	41.25	41	1,669
Same (country)	70,384	25		
Manufacturers of wool, silk, etc. (London)	9,853	41.25		
Same (country)	70,384	25		
Building trades (London)	3,910	41.25	34	1,265
Building trades (country)	107,567	25		
Mining	14,300	23		
	-366,252			
D. Agriculture (excluding labourers)				
Freeholders	20,124	152		
Freeholders	40,249	76	34	727
Freeholders	80,498	38		
Farmers	3,354	150		
Farmers	6,708	100	6	954
Farmers	13,417	70		
Farmers	80,498	40		
Husbandmen	134,160	16		
	-379,008			
E. Military and maritime (excluding traders)				
Naval officers	6,000	80	66	1,807
Military officers	2,000	100	9	204
Common seamen, fishermen	60,000	20		
Common soldiers	18,000	14		
	-86,000			
F. Labourers and the poor				
Labourers, London	20,000	27.5		
Labourers, country	200,000	16.25		
Ale-sellers, cottagers, lesser	20,000	20		
Cottagers & paupers	178,892	7		
Vagrants	13,418	3.2		
	-432,310			
All families	1,539,140		778	
Total pre-fisc household income		£71,366,441		£10,216.50

Sources: The revised social table is from Peter H. Lindert and Jeffrey G. Williamson, "Revising England's Social Tables 1688-1812" *Exploration in Economic History* 19: 396-7.

For the latter two columns: numbers of families and average wealth of the PCC testators are from PROB 5 (1671-1720), PROB 31 (1722-1800), and PROB 32 (1671-1720)

For each table, I show the numbers of probate accounts and the average of total estate value. One of the difficulties most historians have encountered when dealing with the occupational data is how to fit one occupation into one group. I use the PST system created by E.A. Wrigley to categorise the occupations.[69] The PST data groups people into different sectors similar to King's and Massie's tables. A few adjustments had to be made to the social tables since the information the probate accounts provide is not as complete as that employed by Lindert and Williamson. Instead of separating the professions into six categories, I combine them as professions. The commercial sector seems to be the most problematic sector. The occupational detail available from the probate accounts do not specify whether a merchant is a sea or a land merchant and their positions have not been mentioned. In order to lessen the difficulty raised, I put all merchants into one group and distinguish the shopkeepers and tradesmen as another group. This is also the case for the agricultural sector, where I only distinguish between the freeholders and farmers. For the revised version of Massie's social table, I group all the professions into one group.

The tables show clearly that the PCC probate accounts do not represent all the groups in society. Spiritual lords, miners, common seamen, common soldiers, and the lowest group (the labourers and the poor) are totally missing. There are few military officers and farmers. Before further discussion, there are some limitations which should be mentioned. First of all, the social tables present average incomes, while the information obtained from the probate accounts is the values of the estate excluding land and the money people owed to the deceased. It is not possible to make a precise comparison between estate value and income. Still, there are some points which should be observed. The people whose wealth is highest are the esquires (provided that the first three highest ranks are not included) with an average of £3,321 while the lowest are, surprisingly, the gentlemen.

The accounts capture a disproportionate percentage of the gentry while the largest share of people with probate accounts were from the middle classes. This suggests that disputes over estates occurred more frequently among the upper class.

[69] L. Shaw-Taylor et al., "The Occupational Structure of England c.1710 to c.1871. Work in Progress." Available from: http://www.geog.cam.ac.uk/research/projects/occupations/britain19c/papers/paper3.pdf [online].

This is not surprising since most upper-class people owned a massive amount of land and assets to be distributed among numerous people.

The average income of different groups in the revised social table does not match with the total material wealth recorded in the accounts. For example, the gentlemen, who according to King had a higher income than merchants and tradesmen, had a lower average total estate value. The artisans and handicraft workers whose average income is very different (£200 and £38) seem to have similar amounts of average wealth. Those who have relatively low income (e.g. tradesmen, people working in manufacturing trades and building trades) seem to have high average wealth. According to Earle, all merchants' and wholesalers' inventories were worth more than £1,000 while poorer shopkeepers or those in poorer suburbs might be worth a lot less. An expansion of trade since the sixteenth century paved the way for many merchants and those who ran their own businesses in London to become more economically powerful. For example, Paul Dominic, a merchant from Tottenham High Cross in Middlesex, possessed a gross domestic value of £15,384 while Martin William, a gentleman of St Martin-in-the-Fields in Middlesex, possessed a probate value of £587. A higher social status does not generally predict a higher level of wealth. For instance, the material wealth of Charles Stanley, earl of Derby, was £582. One explanation is that those trading people who exhibited their probate accounts at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury were at the upper end of wealth in their group. Another significant explanation is the use of inventory value as a proxy for wealth. This is because commercial income relates to property that is captured by inventories, while landed income relates to property that is not in inventories.

How extreme was the wealth of the people with PCC accounts? We can compare the average wealth recorded in probate inventories with others' work as in Table 1.8. For example, the highest average net value of moveable goods in the work of Weatherill is £320.[70] Spufford's investigation into the Canterbury diocese probate accounts covers all towns in East Kent and partly in West Kent which he claims in the mid-seventeenth century was 'the second or third wealthiest county in England. The highest values of moveable wealth found in East Kent between 1591 and 1680 are £3,633.'[71] The highest total moveable wealth from the PCC probate accounts from 1671–1680 was up to £7,000 which was double those studied by Spufford. Median values of charges in 1671–1680 in the city of Canterbury and in Dover, Faversham

[70] Peter Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660–1730* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 270.
[71] Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture*, 167.

and Sandwich were £48 and £79, which are far less than those found in the PCC accounts.[72] The richest man found in the East Kent probate acounts between 1671 and 1700 is Edward Philpott whose net moveable wealth was £1,870 7*s* 6*d* while Figure 1.3 shows that more than 10% of people represented by PCC probate accounts had movable wealth of more than £2,000.[73]

Table 1.8: A comparison of different average wealth between deceased persons according to the PCC probate inventories and Weatherill and Spufford

Wealth (£)	Pirohakul (PCC Inventories)	Weatherill	Spufford
Highest Average Inventory Value (by social status)	10,187 (Knights)	320 (Gentry)	n/a
Highest Inventory Value	58,062	3,633	1,870
Mean Inventory Value	1,183	n/a	79
Median Inventory Value	415	n/a	48

Source: The data in the first column is taken from PCC probate inventories, The National Archives, PROB 5 and PROB 32 (1671-1700). For the other two columns the data are from Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture* (167) and Spufford, *Index to the Probate Accounts of England and Wales A–J* (57-9).

To an extent, this difference can be explained by the difference in locations. London, Middlesex and the surrounding areas are where the majority of people in the PCC probate accounts lived, while those studied by Weatherill and Spufford were from provincial areas. One must remember that the expansion of commerce made London a place where, as Earle puts it, 'by virtue of its great size and drawing power, its wealth and its position as the national capital, London was the pacesetter of everything that was new and historically interesting. A large variety of lifestyles and sources of wealth made it more difficult to research the whole of London society.'[74] The difference in the average values of wealth between London and the provinces could challenge the concept of the middle class since the studies of Earle, Weatherill, and Mortimer as well as my own focus primarily on this group of people.

Most deceased in the PCC probate accounts are the middle classes and those above them. Their wealth was large; however, the average wealth for the gentlemen seems to be relatively low especially when compared with those who were in a lower status. By the seventeenth century, the line distinguishing the gentry from those below them, especially the well-to-do people in the middle rank such as merchants, businessmen or even professionals, became blurred due to the expansion of both

[72] Spufford, *Index to the Probate Accounts of England and Wales A–J,* 57.
[73] Ibid., 60.
[74] Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, 270,

domestic and international trade. Wealth alone could not indicate the rank of people in society. Still, it is clear that a majority of people in the samples apart from those with a high status must have possessed quite a high level of wealth.

3.2 'Gentry' and 'Middle Class'

The idea of gentry has to be clearly defined. Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes show that from 1500 to 1700 the term 'gentry' was not defined easily: 'flexible definitions of gentility were a necessary feature of the rather mobile society of early modern England'.[75] It was a wide ranging group of people, from leading gentry families who had much in common with the peerage at one end of the scale to some gentlemen differing little in socioeconomic status from their yeoman neighbours at the other. Material possessions alone cannot be identified with status, as Heal and Holmes point out: these landowners were eager to attain and maintain gentle status, and ultimately were no more than 'that body of men and women whose gentility was acknowledged by others'.[76]

In terms of geography, Heal and Holmes largely focus on those gentry from provincial areas instead of London. For London, they eventually observe that it is easier to generalise about London's influence on the gentry than to flesh out the detail.[77] They describe how the growing conformity to London patterns of consumption affected the development of a provincial civil culture. They finally suggest that changes in the forms in which elite identity and status could be expressed are a clue to the gentry's withdrawal from administration in the late seventeenth century.[78]

The growth of social and business ties between land and trade throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries led to what K.G. Davies calls 'the mess of the middle class'.[79] Henry Horwitz asserts that for the successful businessmen, who aimed to perpetuate their family name and to achieve social recognition, encouraging their daughters to marry landed men and establishing landholdings for their sons could be the best way.[80] Nicholas Rogers, in his study of the 'big bourgeoisie' of mid

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[75] Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes. *The Gentry in England and Wales, 1500–1700* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 207.
[76] Ibid., 19.
[77] Ibid., 278.
[78] Felicity Heal and Clive Holmes. *The Gentry in England and Wales,* 280.
[79] K.G. Davies. , "The Mess of the Middle Class", *Past and Present* 22 (1962): 77.
[80] Henry Horwitz, "'The Mess of the Middle Class" Revisited: The Case of the 'Big Bourgeoisie' of Augustan London," *Continuity and Change* 2 (1987): 270.

eighteenth-century London, sees this century as a new phase in the relationship between businessmen and landed gentry. By comparing seventy-four aldermen with their Restoration counterparts, he finds that the latter were mostly London-born, more likely to marry the daughters of landed men and marry their daughters to landed men. By 1750, the quest for landed status had become looser and this established what Rogers calls 'the age of permanent City dynasties'.[81]

Given these interactions between the landed gentry and the middle class, the line between them was unclear. Paul Langford, in his study of the middle class in *A Polite and Commercial People: England, 1727–1783*, indicates that the middle class was the group of people with a minimum income of £50. These people had a 'limitless appetite … for social status' and a 'lust for worldly goods'.[82] The most desirable aim was the striving to acquire polite manners and genteel status that unified an otherwise disparate class.[83] The process of emulation by the middle class of the manners of their social superiors was the catalyst for the transformation that took place in the eighteenth century.[84] Material wealth allowed the expression of the middle-class urge to mimic their betters by purchasing the new variety of consumer goods available in England.[85] London was the centre of fashion and taste.[86] It played a central role in diffusing metropolitan mores to the middle class outside the capital and in affecting broader social change.

Additionally, these gentlemen realised that they needed to make profits out of their lands and one way to do this was to be trained as professionals especially at the Inns of Court. They could acquire the legal knowledge for estate management and personal litigation from this. Many gentry then became professionals.[87] A complication of the relationships between the gentry and those who were above and below them was that the gentry were a wide-ranging group of people with a collective

[81] N. Rogers, "Money, Marriage, Mobility: The Big Bourgeoisie of Hanoverian London," *Journal of Family History* 24 (1999): 19–34.
[82] Paul Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People: England 1727–1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 65.
[83] Ibid.
[84] Ibid., 65.
[85] See McKendrick, "The Consumer Revolution of Eighteenth-Century England," in *Birth of Consumer Society,* 29–55; Weatherill, *Consumer Behaviour and Material Culture*; Carole Shammas, *The Pre-Industrial Consumer in England and America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990); Langford, *A Polite and Commercial People*.
[86] Maxine Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Oxford University Press, 2005). See also M. Berg, "Consumption in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain," in *The Cambridge Economic History of Modern Britain, Volume I: Industrialisation 1700–1860*, ed. R. Floud and P. Johnson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).
[87] Heal and Holmes, *The Gentry in England and Wales*, 283.

mentality. They employed several ways to preserve their status and distinguish themselves from other social groups through their interactions with them.

For the middle class, some historians believe that it did not emerge until the late eighteenth century and became a well established class only in the nineteenth century. Edward Thompson significantly questioned the importance of the middle classes in a changing society especially in the Early Modern period. Thompson claims that the middle class 'did not begin to discover itself (except perhaps in London) until the last three decades' of the eighteenth century.[88] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall similarly focus on the middle class from the late eighteenth to the mid nineteenth century. For them, the period from 1780 to 1850 was the time when 'middle class people had established a whole cultural world.'[89]

However, the more widely accepted view is that the middle class emerged and became widespread during the Early Modern period. Historians of the sixteenth to early nineteenth centuries hold a strong belief that during this period the middling sorts played many major roles in English society. Peter Earle concludes that, 'the period 1660–1730 saw fundamental changes in the lives of the middle class … which have never been reversed and lead inexorably to the even more middle-class of the nineteenth century and today'.[90] In this thesis, the 'middle class' or, as most Early Modernists call it, the 'middling sort', is assumed to exist in the seventeenth century and to become wider in the eighteenth. However, it remains necessary to give an exact definition of the 'middle class' as used here.

Definitions of the middle class vary. Some suggest a solid unifying definition while others tend to emphasise diversity and lack of unity. Earle believes that, 'in some very general senses, the middle class can be treated as homogeneous' due to their capitalistic instincts: his middle class consists of 'people of capital who were interested in profit, accumulation and improvement'[1] and that 'they shared many common experiences'.[91] John Smail traces the gradual emergence in eighteenth-century Halifax of a mercantile, manufacturing, and professional group he calls the 'middle class', distinguishing them from a mass of smaller yeoman clothiers (the middling) whose roots stretched back into the seventeenth century.[92] Jonathan Barry

[88] E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1980) and E. P. Thompson, "Patrician Society, Plebeian Culture," *Journal of Social History* 7 (1974): 382–405.
[89] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780–1850* (London: Routledge, 2002), 75.
[90] Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, 334.
[91] Ibid., 332
[92] John Smail, *The Origins of Middle Class Culture: Halifax, Yorkshire, 1660–1780* (Ithaca NY: Cornell University Press, 1994), 67. Some works also portray some definite characteristics of the

and Christopher Brooks, on the other hand, indicate that the definition of the middle class cannot be exactly defined.[93]

The largest numbers of people in the probate accounts are in the commercial sector. These people belong to what Earle considers 'a complex hierarchy of four groups': first, national and international merchants who actually produced little of what they sold; second, modest retailers who produced goods both for their own customers and for wholesalers; third, small masters who produced goods rather than sold them; and, fourth, journeymen who might work for any of the other three groups. The upper classes supplied the second largest number in the sample. People in the industrial sector, agricultural sector, and the maritime sector recorded in the PCC probate accounts also had greater wealth than the average person.

Although there have been many arguments over the emergence and the collective mentality and characteristics of the middle class, historians largely agree that the middling sort in London played a primary role in the country's economy during the Early Modern period, as can be seen from the work of Earle and Hunt. Additionally, the role of the urban economy and society based on guild systems and trades which trained people through an apprenticeship and in the professions, as studied by Barry and Brooks, could shape the collective identity of the middling sort. In addition, the training system would help mobilize people vertically in the city.[94] As the majority of the people analysed in this research were from the city of London and Middlesex and their surrounding areas, as shown in Table 1.9, we can to some extent avoid the problem of the emergence, the collective characteristics and the definition raised by many historians.

3.3 Geography and Wealth

It is not possible to consider the occupation data without considering where people came from. For instance, if we look at probate accounts from provincial areas where agriculture is the main sector of the economy, we would suppose there to be a

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middle class. Margaret Hunt, *The Middling Sort: Commerce, Gender and the Family in England 1660–1780* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1996) 15. See also S. D'Cruze, "The Middling Sort in Eighteenth Century Colchester: Independence, Social Relations and the Community Broker," in *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550–1800*, ed. J. Barry and C. Brooks (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1994), 231, J. Kent, "The Rural 'Middling Sort' in Early Modern England, circa 1649–1740: Some Economic, Political and Socio-Cultural Characteristics," *Rural History* 10 (1999): 19–54 and Henry French, *The Middle Sort of People in Provincial England, 1660–1750* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 56.

[93] See the chapter by Brooks and Barry in J. Barry and C. Brooks (eds.), *The Middling Sort of People: Culture, Society and Politics in England, 1550–1800* (Basingstoke, 1994).

[94] Ibid.

high number of farmers and yeomen. However, the PCC probate accounts, as the occupation data has already shown, portray a 'different clientele'. According to Table 1.9, more than half of the deceased persons in the PCC probate accounts lived in London (57%). A significant number lived in the areas surrounding London including Surrey, Kent and Essex, accounting for 20%. The remaining 24% lived in forty-nine different provincial areas.

Table 1.9: Numbers of people from different counties as a % of the total numbers of people in the PCC probate accounts, 1671–1800.

County	**1671–1680**	**1681–1690**	**1691–1700**	**1701–1710**	**1711–1720**	**1721–1730**	**1731–1740**
London & Middlesex	48	58	50	67	61	60	60
Surrey	7	6	12	5	10	14	11
Kent	3	5	2	3	6	5	6
Essex	2	1	5	3	4	2	1
others	40	31	31	23	20	20	22

County	**1741–1750**	**1751–1760**	**1761–1770**	**1771–1780**	**1781–1790**	**1791–1800**	**Total percentage of all counties in England**
London & Middlesex	54	59	59	61	51	56	57
Surrey	13	16	11	15	14	23	12
Kent	8	5	3	3	5	2	5
Essex	2	1	5	3	4	4	3
others	23	18	23	17	26	15	24

Source: Percentage numbers are calculated from the PCC probate documents catalogued in PROB 5 (1671-1720), PROB 31 (1722-1800), and PROB 32 (1671-1720) from the National Archives.

Because a majority of people in the PCC probate accounts came from London and its surroundings counties, we would expect different characteristics from other provincial probate accounts collections examined by other historians. Their occupation and status data are one example. The great number who worked in service sectors implies that many of them would have been living and working in large cities, like London. Moreover, most of the probate accounts with occupation data pertain to the estates of deceased persons from London and its surrounding areas. By contrast, generally the upper classes were originally from the provincial areas, where they owned considerable amounts of land.

The geographical data can be examined in more detail for deceased persons from London and Middlesex (Table 1.10). Craig Spence in his work *London in the*

1690s: A Social Atlas, maps London in the 1690s linking geography with some social indicators including the occupation, status, and wealth of inhabitants in each parish in the City of London. The people in the PCC probate accounts are the well-to-do, and Spence's examination of the London parishes confirms this. The parishes where Spence identifies the largest numbers of the upper class, including aristocrats and gentry, are to the west of the metropolitan area. St Ann Soho and St James Westminster are the two parishes with the largest numbers. Other parishes with concentrations include St Andrew Holborn, St Giles in the Fields, St Martin in the Fields and St Margaret Westminster.[95] As Table 1.10 shows, these parishes are also among the parishes whose deceased residents had the highest numbers of probate accounts.

Table 1.10: Parishes with more than 20 PCC accounts exhibited with average total of estate value and Spence's average rent value and average stock value

Parish	Total number of probate account presented	Percentage of total London accounts (%)	Average total of estate value (£)	Spence's average rent value (£)	Spence's average stock value (£)
St Andrew Holborn	58	4.5	1,979	15	210
St Ann Westminster	26	2	850	23	221
St Botolph Aldgate	40	3.1	992	11	100
St Botolph without Aldersgate	20	1.5	1,656	14	86
St Brides	24	1.8	598	18	100
St Clement Danes	43	3.3	1,309	22	132
St Dunstan in the West	21	1.6	902	33	-
St Dunstan Stepney	28	2.2	1,800	11	171
St George Hanover Square	42	3.2	987	-	-
St Giles in the Fields	43	3.3	942	18	199
St James Westminster	59	4.5	1,832	22	163
St Leonard Shoreditch	20	1.5	725	13	90
St Luke	31	2.4	541	-	-
St Margaret Westminster	42	3.2	539	12	150
St Martin in the Fields	96	7.4	803	24	165
St Mary Whitechapel	38	2.9	761	10	148
St Paul Covent Garden	25	1.9	1,679	34	303
St Paul Shadwell	26	2	277	8	85
St Sepulchre	34	2.6	543	23	73

Sources: The data in the first three columns are from the PCC probate documents catalogued in PROB 5 (1671-1720), PROB 31 (1722-1800), and PROB 32 (1671-1720) from the

[95] Craig Spence, *London in the 1690s: A Social Atlas* (London: Centre for Metropolitan Research, Institute of Historical Research, 2000), 147.

National Archives. The average rent and stock values are from Craig Spence, *London in the 1690s: A Social Atlas.*

In order to make a connection between wealth and geography, household rent values and stock values are employed as the indicators. According to Spence, the parishes in which the aggregated values of rent and stock were highest were St James Westminster, St Paul Covent Garden, St Martin in the Fields and a few parishes surrounding them. One of the reasons for this was the relatively high percentage of the upper class and the well-to-do mercantile class among their inhabitants. As the City gentry preferred occupying lodgings to becoming householders, many of the wealthy lodgers recorded within these City districts were members of this social group.[96] Therefore, the three areas with a higher than average proportion of wealthy lodgers also had high rents: the southern part of St Ann Soho, Covent Garden and the area to the south of the Strand.[97]

In contrast to the West End, a majority of people living on the east side of the metropolitan area were poor. While affluence was associated with high status, and essentially with commerce, trade and maritime occupations, poverty was tightly connected to industry. St Paul Shadwell, St Dunstan Stepney and the ward of Bishopgate were the areas where most neighbourhoods were poor.[98] However, these parishes are also represented in a relatively high number of PCC probate accounts. Some rich people lived in poor parishes. The deceased former residents of West End parishes such as St Andrew Holborn, St Paul Covent Garden, St James Westminster and St Clement Danes have a high average estate value. However, so do those from St Dunstan Stepney, one of the poorest parishes. Presumably, most of the people from this parish who exhibited probate accounts were the wealthiest ones.

The PCC probate accounts allow us to go beyond what the historians of provincial probate accounts have previously discussed in terms of periods and places, since these accounts provide a great number of those who lived in London. The PCC accounts offer significant insight into the lives of the middle classes and above, especially those who lived in London.

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[96] Spence, *London in the 1690s: A Social Atlas*, 147.
[97] Spence, *London in the 1690s: A Social Atlas*,, 99.
[98] Ibid., 107

4. Who decided how the funeral should be carried out?

It is important to identify who made decision on how the funeral should be set up since this reflected the attitude of people towards death and also conveyed the functions of funerals among the dead and the living. The PCC wills are analysed in this section. They identify a person who made a decision about their funeral. By investigating 100 PCC wills, 50 from 1671-1680 and another 50 from 1791-1800, it appears that most testators only wished to be decently buried and left the decision of their funeral to their executor. Many of them required their body to be buried in a 'Christian' manner. In some other cases, the deceased might have specified the place they wanted to be interred.

For instance, Anthony Jenkins, gentleman of Southampton in Hampshire, wished his body to be 'decently interred in Christian-like manner (with the prayers of the church) in the parish church of St. Lawrence in the said town and county of Southampton within the chancel foot of the same church'. However, there were some cases where the actual funeral did not follow what the deceased had requested. The testator James Palmer requested that 'My bodie would be buryed without any worldly pomp or ceremony more than what Catholic rite require'.[99] But his probate account detailing his funeral expenditure shows a totally different picture. His executor had to pay more than £150 in total for the items listed below:[100]

Discharge:
7.0.0 paid for the said deceased's coffin
21.0.0 paid for the herald's bill for escutcheons for the deceased's funeral
1.16.0 paid for hats for two of the principal mourners
1.9.0 paid for large mourning hatbands and shammey gloves for the said funeral
3.12.0 for more hatbands and kids leather gloves for the said funeral
60.9.9 paid for fine cloth for mourning for the said deceased's funeral
1.15.0 for the deceased's shroud
2.15.10 paid for wax candles for the said deceased's funeral
0.14.0 paid for two pairs of stockings for the two principal mourners of the funeral
0.8.0 for mourning shoes for them
1.1.6 paid for three swords for some of the mourners at the funeral
0.3.6 paid for shoe buckles for the said funeral
1.5.6 paid for three servants' hats for the said deceased's funeral
0.2.0 paid for the searchers' fees
1.18.2 paid for the bill of Parish duties on the said deceased's interment

[99] PROB 11/379/193, Will of James Palmer, esquire, of Buttington (1696)
[100] PROB 5/819 James Palmer, esquire, of Buttington (1697)

4.17.7 paid to the taylor for making the two principal mourners' suits
1.10.11 for mourning suite
2.0.0 paid for mourning suite for the servant
1.7.9 paid for mourning suite for the deceased's footman
7.11.6 paid for coaches for the said deceased's funeral
4.14.0 paid in discharge of a bill brought in by Mes. Hops my lord castleman's steward to defray the hearse and coaches to accompany the corps to Dorney the place of his interment
6.17.0 for meat provisions and some gloves for the said deceased's funeral
1.8.6 paid for things for the said deceased's funeral

This seemed to be far from what he had previously stated in his will. It was clear that his funeral was a heraldic one with some decorations such as escutcheons and swords. His executor spent much money on mourning items including clothes and accessories. It implies that a display of his social status did matter to his family members.

It was clear that in most cases the executor or the family members decided how the funeral should be carried out. While the dead seemed concerned only that their body be buried decently, the living defined decency by linking it with their growing desire to present either their social status or their wealth, reflected in their choices of funerary items and spending patterns for funerals in the eighteenth century.

5. Prerogative Court of Canterbury Probate Accounts as a New Historical Source

As the history of funeral consumption from the late seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century is the main topic of this thesis, it is important to justify the PCC probate accounts as an appropriate source for this study. The surviving numbers, the people who made them, the reasons for creating them, along with their characteristics and nature, have been examined in the previous sections.

The large surviving number of PCC probate accounts as well as the period they cover, especially PROB 31, allows us to go beyond the boundaries set by preceding work. PROB 5 and PROB 32 can be combined and examined together for the period from 1670 to 1720 while PROB 31 covers a later period. The advantage of using PROB 31 is that the number of inventories, declarations, and accounts in the series does not decline with the passage of time, so we can extend our period of study to the late eighteenth century. It has been claimed that since the Prerogative Court of Canterbury's business grew over time, the number of exhibits increased

considerably.[101] Whereas PROB 31 can be beneficial in terms of expanding the period, we should be aware of the legal change in 1685 as already discussed. Thus, after 1685, accounts were only required under restricted circumstances.

Although the PCC probate accounts offer a great opportunity for the study of funeral consumption, they do also contain some biases due to the circumstances of their creation and the people who created them. There are several aspects one needs to be aware of when using PCC probate accounts as a primary source. In particular, there are two biases created by the nature of these probate accounts: social class and geography, which are worthy of attention.

The analyses of occupation, social status and wealth of people in Section 3 of this chapter clearly display the social class bias. Most people recorded in PCC probate accounts from 1670 to 1800 are the middle class and above. This is due to the court's requirements and also the legal change in 1685 which meant that the accounts were to be created only when there was a dispute over the estate or in case of debt. Thus, we have to bear in mind that they do not represent all classes of people in society. Moreover, the lifestyles of the upper classes and the wealthy middle classes were totally different from those below them, pointing to different patterns of expenditure and consumption.

Another bias of the probate accounts is in terms of geography. The majority of the deceased persons were from London and Middlesex and their surrounding areas including Essex, Surrey and Kent. Although probate accounts were created primarily for estates which were the subject of dispute, or had financial problems regarding indebtedness, funeral expenditure was a totally separate element. The estimated number of surviving probate accounts is sufficient for researching the topic. The biases from the PCC accounts are to some extent advantageous for this study, since they capture the trend of funeral consumption in London of the wealthy groups of people including the upper, the upper middle, and the middle classes.

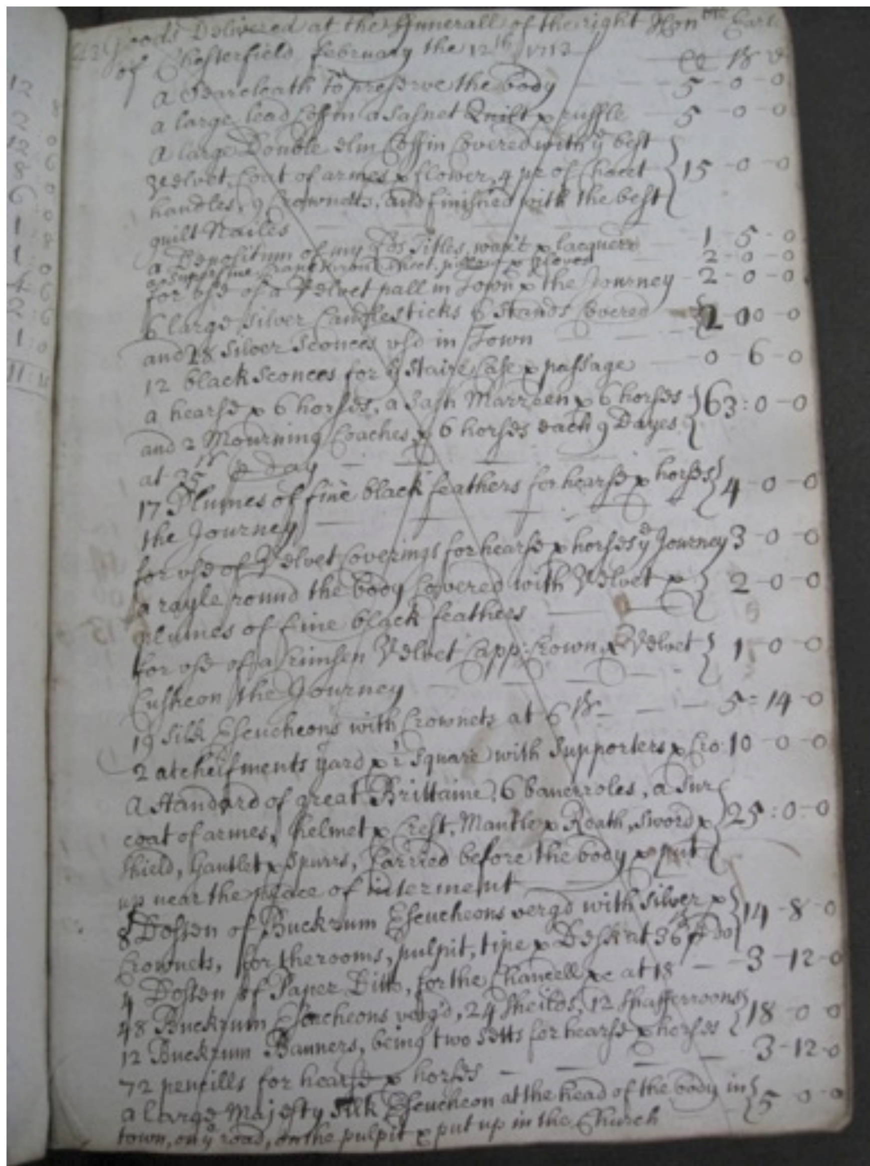
6. Other Sources

Another type of evidence used in this thesis are the undertakers' account books. There are eight account books which will be examined in this chapter. This thesis uses the PCC probate accounts as its main primary sources; therefore the

[101] From information provided by the National Archives Catalogue Online [Online], Accessible: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/catalogue/displaycataloguedetails.asp?CATLN=3&CATID=10929&SearchInit=4&SearchType=6&CATREF=PROB+31

account books are analysed in order to enrich the results presented by the PCC probate accounts. Although it is not possible to analyse the account books in full, this study opens up the sources and allows historians to conduct further research on the history of undertaking business as well as the history of death. Seven of these are from the National Archives. These account books concern the estate of Robert Legg, a milliner, upholsterer ('upholder') and undertaker of St George's Bloomsbury in Middlesex. However, there are several undertakers and upholders working for Legg's company involved and recorded in these books. They were among documents delivered to the equity court of Chancery as evidence in the case of *Leaves v. Green*. There are four undertakers' account books ranging from 1713 to 1738 and three undertakers' shop accounts from 1707 to 1738.[102] In addition, there are some separate individual funeral accounts and other related correspondence of Robert Legg kept along with the account books.

[102] C/112/48: Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738) and C/112/49: Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' shop accounts. 3 vols. (1707–1738).



Goods Delivered at the Funerall of the right Honble Earl of Chesterfield February the 12th 1713

a Bareclooth to preserve the body — 5-0-0
a large lead Coffin a Sasnet Quilt & ruffle — 5-0-0
a large Double Elm Coffin Covered with ye best
Velvet, Coat of armes & flower, 4 p^r of Chased
handles, ye Crownets, and finished with the best
guilt Nailes — 15-0-0
a Deposit[illegible] of my L^ds Titles, wash't & lacquer'd — 1-5-0
[illegible] — 2-0-0
for use of a Velvet pall in Town & the Journey — 2-0-0
6 large Silver Candlesticks & Stands Covered
and 28 Silver Sconces used in Town — 2-0-0
12 black Sconces for ye Staire case & passage — 0-6-0
a hearse & 6 horses, a Sash Marreen & 6 horses
and 2 Mourning Coaches & 6 horses each 9 Dayes
at 25^s p^r Day — 63:0-0
17 Plumes of fine black feathers for hearse & horses
the Journey — 4-0-0
for use of ye Velvet Coverings for hearse & horses ye Journey — 3-0-0
for use of [illegible] a rayle round the body covered with ye Velvet & [illegible] Plumes of fine black feathers — 2-0-0
for use of a Crimson Velvet Cap, Crown & Velvet
Cushion the Journey — 1-0-0
19 Silk Escucheons with Crownets at 6^s — 5-14-0
2 atcheifments yard & ½ Square with Supporters & [illegible] — 10-0-0
a Standard of great Brittaine, 6 Banerroles, a Surcoat of armes, helmet & Crest, Mantle & Wreath, Sword &
Shield, Gauntlet & Spurrs, Carried before the body & put
up near the place of Interment — 25:0-0
8 Doson of Buckrum Escucheons verg'd with Silver & Crownets, for the rooms, pulpit, [illegible] at 36 [illegible] — 14-8-0
4 Doson of Paper Bills, for the Chancell &c at 18 — 3-12-0
48 Buckrum Escucheons verg'd, 24 Sheilds, 12 Shaffroons [illegible] — 18-0-0
12 Buckrum Banners, being two setts for hearse & horses — 3-12-0
72 pensills for hearse & horses
a large Majesty Silk Escucheon at the head of the body in
town, on y^e road, on the pulpit & put up in the Church — 5-0-0

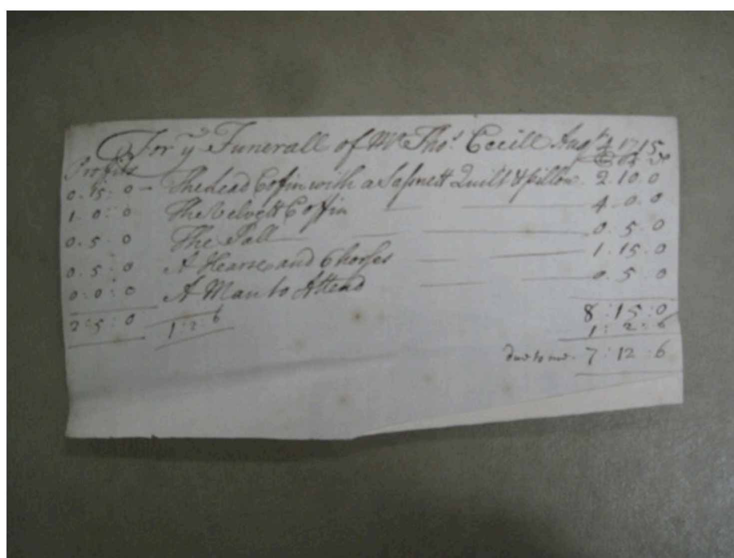
Plate 1.4: Robert Legg’s account recording the payments he received directly from his client (left) and the payments he received from the upholder (right).
(Source: TNA, C/112/48: Chancery: Master Rose’s Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers’ account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738), these photos are from Vol. 2)

The account books record the amount of money the undertaker received for each funeral (Plate 1.4). In many cases, it is clear that customers only paid for the goods delivered to their funerals. In some cases, Legg received payment from the person who acted as a middleman between him and the client.[103] This will be fully studied in this chapter. The shop accounts record both payments Legg had to pay to other suppliers and payments he received from others. The case of Robert Legg is special since his shop accounts show that he did not start his business as an undertaker but as a milliner, so his account books record the money received from customers for

[103] The details are discussed in the later section in this chapter together with some examples.

garments such as hats, cloaks, gloves, and so on that he sold.[104] Legg received many payments from his customers for his millinery goods especially gloves. Therefore, the shop accounts will not be fully exploited here. It is possible that Robert Legg later became primarily involved with the undertaking business but still kept his millinery shop throughout his lifetime.

The account books together with some individual funeral accounts and other related correspondence kept in a separate box are very valuable evidence for this study. While the individual funeral accounts provide details similar to the account books, some correspondence offers some more detail on the relationship between the undertaker and his clients and how the latter could be in contact with the former. There are the funeral bills which record the profits the undertaker made on each funeral (Plate 1.5).[105] In this way, we can get an idea of the profit one undertaker could possibly make from his/her business. Additionally, there are a few estimations, according to Robert Legg, of how one's funeral should be arranged and what it should cost (Plate 1.6). More importantly, the prices of the eighteenth-century funeral can be extracted directly from the account books. Also, many similarities and many differences can be seen among the clients especially for the items prepared by the undertaker at the funerals. The question of how the undertakers changed the nature of the funerals can be answered by looking at what the undertaker mainly offered at the funerals.

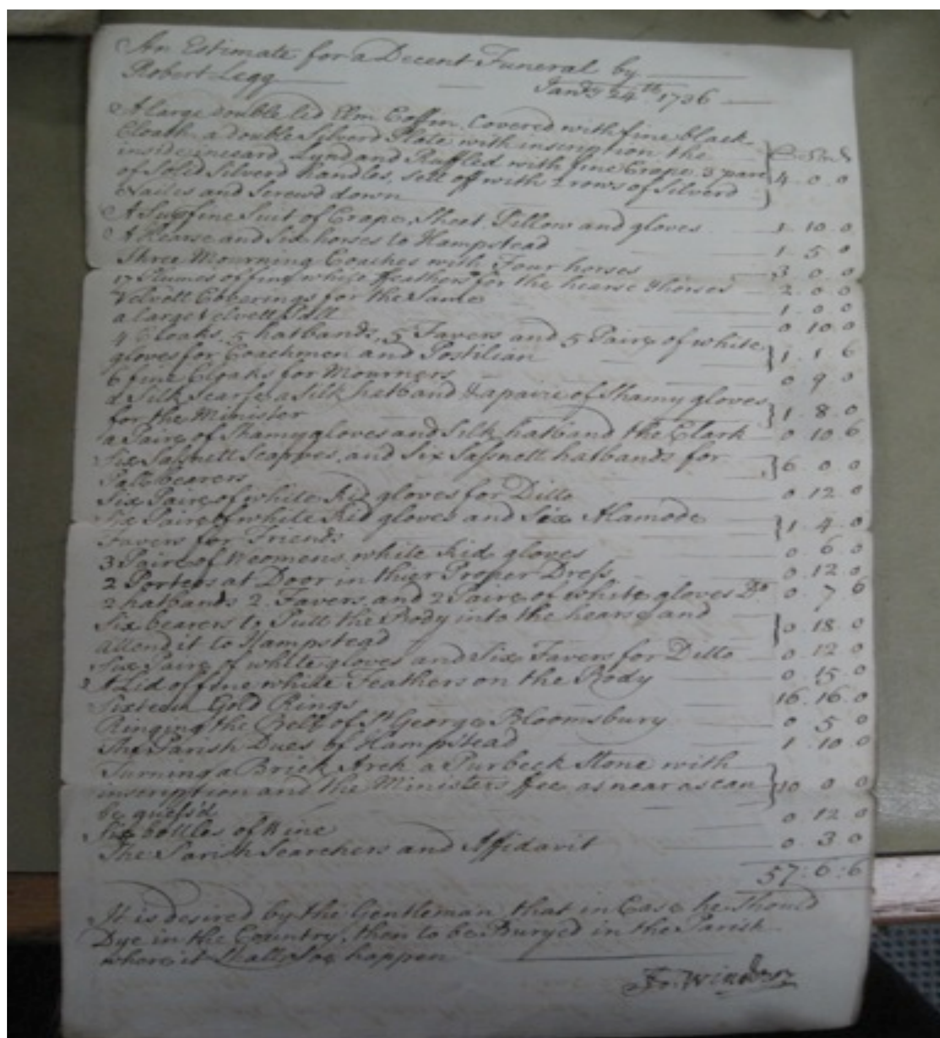


Dr For ye Funerall of Mr Thos Cecill Augt 1715

Profits		£ s d
0.15.0	The Lead Coffin with a Sasnett Quilt & Pillow	2.10.0
1.0.0	The Velvett Coffin	4.0.0
0.5.0	The Pall	0.5.0
0.5.0	A Hearse and 6 Horses	1.15.0
0.0.0	A Man to Attend	0.5.0
2.5.0	1.2.6	8.15.0
		1.2.6
	Due to me	7.12.6

Plate 1.5: A funeral bill with estimate of profits.
(Source: TNA, C/112/50)

[104] See TNA, C/112/49.
[105] This is one example of individual correspondence. Funeral of Mr. Thomas Cecill in 1715. Profits shown in this bill indicate margins in the modern sense.



An Estimate for a Decent Funeral by Robert Legg
Jan.ry 24th 1736

Item	£ s d
A large double lid Elm Coffin Covered with fine black Cloath a double Silvered Plate with inscription the inside [illegible] Lyned and Ruffled with fine Crape 3 pair of Solid Silvered handles sett of with 2 rows of Silvered Nailes and Screwd down	4. 0. 0
A Superfine Suit of Crape, Sheet, Pillow and gloves	1. 10. 0
A Hearse and Six horses to Hampstead	1. 5. 0
Three Mourning Coaches with Four horses	3. 0. 0
17 Plumes of fine white feathers for the hearse & horses	2. 0. 0
Velvett Coverings for the Same	1. 0. 0
a large Velvett Pall	0. 10. 0
4 Cloaks, 5 hatbands, 5 Favors and 5 Pair of white gloves for Coachmen and Postilian	1. 1. 6
6 fine Cloaks for Mourners	0. 9. 0
a Silk Scarfe a Silk hatband & a paire of Shamy gloves for the Minister	1. 8. 0
a Pair of Shamy gloves and Silk hatband the Clark	0. 10. 6
Six Sasnett Scarffes, and Six Sasnett hatbands for Pallbearers	6. 0. 0
Six Pair of white kid gloves for Ditto	0. 12. 0
Six Pair of white kid gloves and Six Alamode Favors for Friends	1. 4. 0
3 Pair of Weomens white kid gloves	0. 6. 0
2 Porters at Door in their Proper Dress	0. 12. 0
2 hatbands 2 Favors and 2 Pair of white gloves Do	0. 7. 6
Six bearers to Putt the Body into the hearse and attend it to Hampstead	0. 18. 0
Six Pair of white gloves and Six Favors for Ditto	0. 12. 0
A Lid of fine white Feathers on the Body	0. 15. 0
Sixteen Gold Rings	16. 16. 0
Ringing the Bells of St George Bloomsbury	0. 5. 0
The Parish Dues of Hampstead	1. 10. 0
Turning a Brick Arch a Purbeck Stone with inscription and the Ministers fee as near as can be guessd	10. 0. 0
Six bottles of Wine	0. 12. 0
The Parish Searchers and Affidavit	0. 3. 0
	57: 0: 6

It is desired by the Gentleman that in Case he should Dye in the Country, then to be Buryed in the Parish where it shall so happen

[illegible]

Plate 1.6: Business correspondence being an estimation for a decent funeral for Robert Legg (Source: TNA, C/112/50)

Another important account book is that of Richard Carpender from the London Metropolitan Archives (LMA). It contains several copies of bills for individual funerals during 1764-5; a ledger account of purchases such as coffins, coffin-plates, textiles, gloves, feathers during 1746-7; and accounts of corn bought for horses and of the hiring of horses for journeys from London during 1763–6. In this study, only the ledger account will be analysed.[106] Unlike Robert Legg's account books, this account book only provides a small number of the payments the undertaker received; however, this account book contains several payments Carpender had to pay to different suppliers who provided the funerary items (Plate 1.7). Fritz examined Carpender's account book in his study on the eighteenth-century

[106] CLC/B/227–044: Account book of undertaker Richard Carpender, containing copies of bills for individual funerals, 1764–5; ledger account of purchases such as coffins, coffin-plates, textiles, gloves, feathers, 1746–7; and accounts of corn bought for horses and of the hire of the horses for journeys from London, 1763–6.

undertaking trade[107] yet he only made use of it to show that the undertaker had to be in contact with different suppliers in order to run his business. He pointed out who the persons were who most profited from Carpender's business. Not only can we extract the cost of these items, but we can also get many thorough descriptions of them. Furthermore, how the undertaking trade was run in the eighteenth century becomes clearer from this source.

[107] Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England," 248.

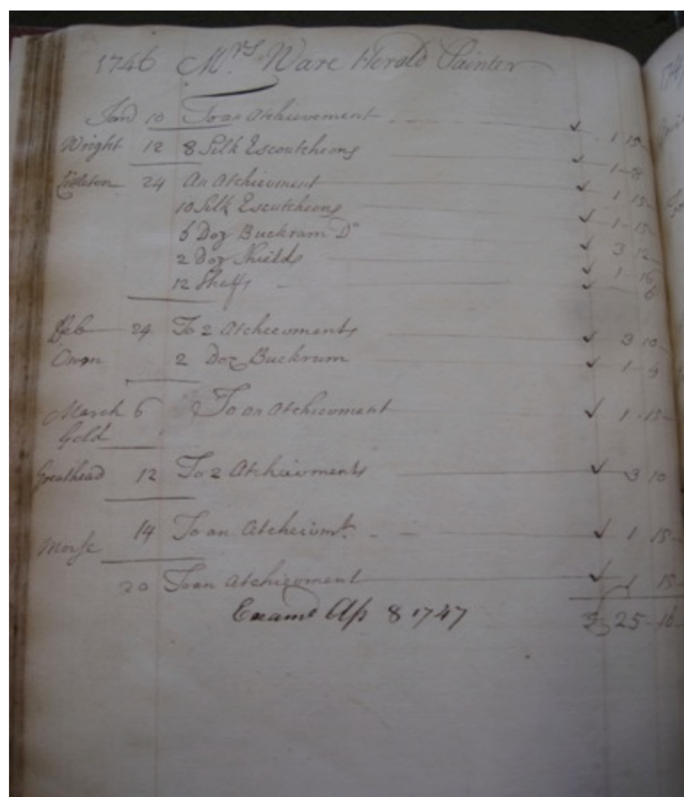

1746 Mrs Ware Herald Painter
Jan 10 To an Achievement
Wright 12 8 Silk Escutcheons
24 An Achievement
10 Silk Escutcheons
6 Doz Buckram Do
2 Doz Shields
12 Staffs
Feb 24 To 2 Achievements
2 Doz Buckrum
March 6 To an Achievement
Gold
Greathead 12 To 2 Achievments
14 To an Achievmt
Morse
20 To an Achievement
Examd Ap 8 1747

Plate 1.7: Richard Carpender's account book recording payments to different suppliers. (Source: LMA, CLC/B/227-044).

While the PCC probate documents will be analysed quantitatively using the data from probate accounts, a few probate inventories from the same series will be employed to give more qualitative details in this study. The first of these belongs to Mary Ann Carter, a broker and undertaker of St Leonard Shoreditch, and was proved in 1788 (Plate 1.8).[108] Another inventory, that of Thomas Williamson, a carpenter and undertaker of Lambeth Road in the parish of St George Southwark, was proved 40 years later.[109] There is also a probate inventory from the London Metropolitan Archives, that of Thomas Phill, an undertaker of St Martin in the Fields, which was proved much earlier than the two others, in 1718.[110] These three probate inventories of undertakers from different periods will partly but significantly demonstrate what the undertakers normally had in their stocks, how big the business could be, and how well-off the undertakers might be.

[108] PROB 31/775/295: Mary Ann Carter, St Leonard Shoreditch, broker and undertaker.
[109] PROB 31/1252/236: Thomas Williamson, Lambeth Road in the parish of St George Southwark in the county of Surrey, carpenter and undertaker.
[110] DL/AM/PI/1/1719/3: Probate inventory of Thomas Phill, undertaker, St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, Westminster, Middlesex.

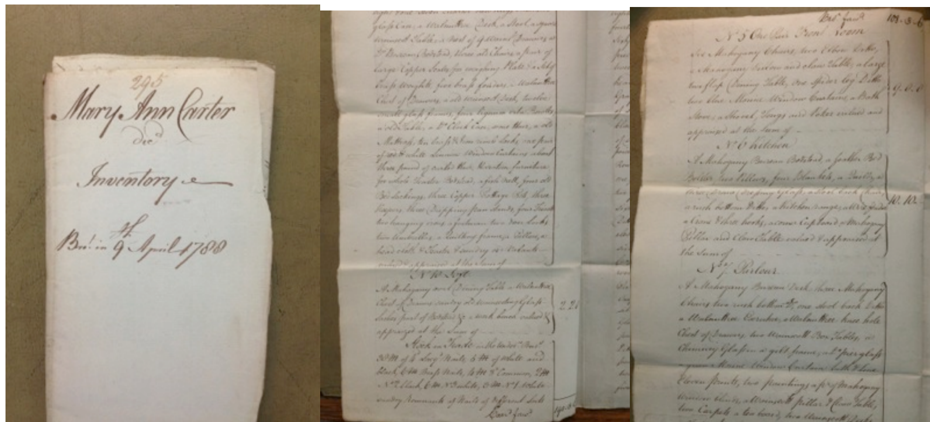
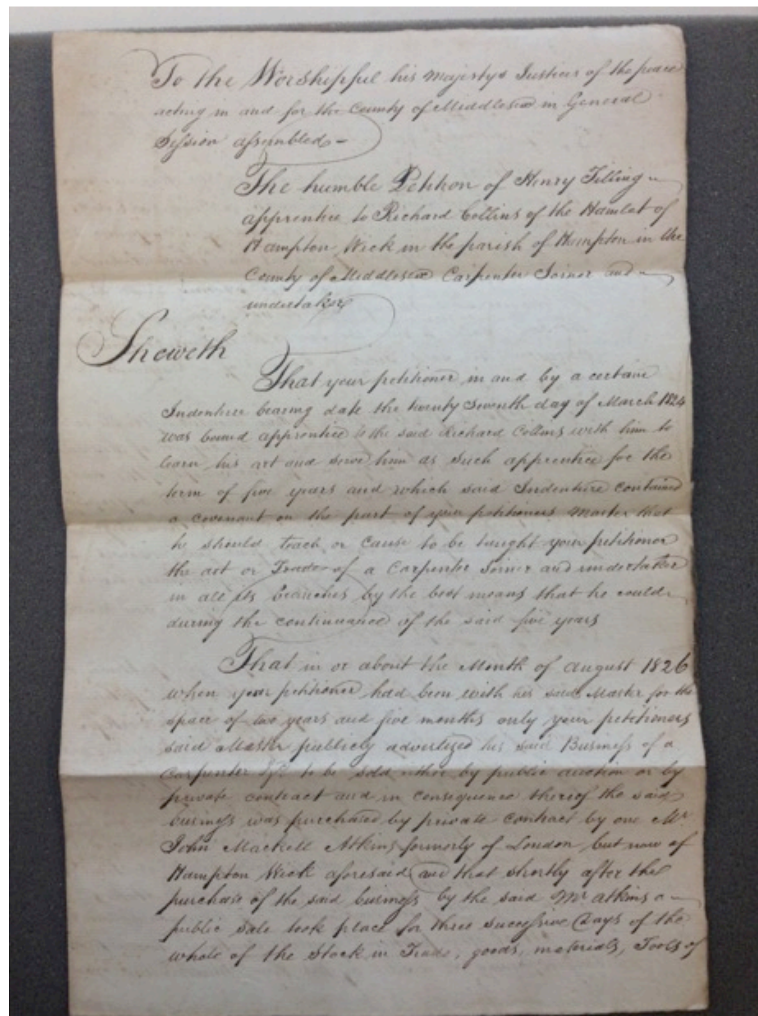


Plate 1.8: Probate inventory of Mary Ann Carter, a broker and undertaker of St Leonard, Shoreditch, Middlesex. (Source: TNA, PROB 31/775/295).

Apart from probate inventories, I have used two apprenticeship indentures. This type of indenture was a legal document in which a master, in exchange for a sum of money known as a premium, agreed to instruct the apprentice in his or her trade or 'mystery' for a set term of years. The provision of food, clothing and lodging was commonly part of the agreement. Along with the apprenticeship indentures, the petitions that the apprentices filed against their masters in these two cases will be investigated. The first one was the case between Richard Collins, a carpenter, joiner and undertaker of Hampton Wick and his apprentice, Henry Tillings, due to Collins as a master not instructing the latter in his trade (Plate 1.9).[111] The second case involved Sarah Houghton who made a request for her son who had been apprenticed to Joseph Scourfield, a glover, leather seller and undertaker, to withdraw from the training.[112] These two petitions were filed during the early nineteenth century. Still, these documents are useful in providing some details on how one could become an undertaker through different channels and how stable the trade could be.

[111] MJ/SP/1827/10/025: Richard Collins, Hampton Wick, carpenter, joiner, undertaker and master of Henry Tilling, apprentice: Petition for Tilling to be discharged from his indenture of apprenticeship, due to his master not instructing him in his trade

[112]MJ/SP/1807/04/021: Sarah Houghton: Petition asking for her son James Houghton's indenture of apprenticeship to Joseph Scourfield, glover, leather seller, and undertaker, to be cancelled.



To the Worshipful his Majesty's Justices of the peace acting in and for the County of Middlesex in General Session assembled –

The humble Petition of Henry Tilling apprentice to Richard Collins of the Hamlet of Hampton Wick in the parish of Hampton in the County of Middlesex Carpenter Joiner and undertaker

Sheweth

That your petitioner in and by a certain Indenture bearing date the twenty seventh day of March 1824 was bound apprentice to the said Richard Collins with him to learn his art and serve him as such apprentice for the term of five years and which said Indenture contained a covenant on the part of your petitioners Master that he should teach or cause to be taught your petitioner the art or Trade of a Carpenter Joiner and undertaker in all its branches by the best means that he could during the continuance of the said five years

That in or about the Month of August 1826 when your petitioner had been with his said Master for the space of two years and five months only your petitioners said Master publicly advertized his said Business of a Carpenter &c. to be sold either by public auction or by private contract and in consequence thereof the said business was purchased by private contract by one Mr John Mackell Atkins formerly of London but now of Hampton Wick aforesaid and that shortly after the purchase of the said business by the said Mr Atkins a public sale took place for three successive days of the whole of the Stock in Trade, goods, materials, Tools of

Plate 1.9: A petition of Henry Tillings, an apprentice who filed the case against his own master, Richard Collins, who did not instruct him properly in the trade. (Source: LMA, MJ/SP/1827/10/025).

The newspapers from the British Library's Burney Collection, especially the advertisements, provide many substantial and various details on the undertakers' businesses. In this study, I examined newspapers from the late seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century. Information on undertakers' stocks, their bankruptcy, their prosperity, their clients, and their business succession and how the business changed hands after the owner had gone bankrupt or passed away can be acquired from this evidence.

The discussion presented in this chapter explored different types of historical sources both qualitatively and quantitatively. It introduces new primary evidence, the PCC probate accounts, which is not only useful for my study on funeral consumption but also for several other topics in economic and social history. This chapter does not only set out the introduction to the source but also sets out its general limitations which could raise awareness for those using the source in the future. Other sources

mentioned in this thesis help complete the picture of the English funeral in the eighteenth century.

Chapter 2: Funeral Expenditure in England, 1671-1800

1. Introduction

> Are you aware that the array of funerals, commonly made by undertakers, is strictly the heraldic array of baronial funerals, the two men who stand at the doors being supposed to be the two porters of castle, with their staves, in black; the man who heads the procession, wearing a scarf, being a representative of a herald-at-arms; the man who carries a plume of feathers on his head being an esquire, who bears the shield and casque, with batons, being representatives of knights-companions-at-arms; the men walking with wands being supposed to represent gentlemen-ushers with their wand: are you aware that this is said to be the origin and type of common array usually provided by those who undertake to perform the funeral?

This passage from the 'Supplementary Report into the Practice of Interment in Towns' (1843) portrays a pompous funeral in the Victorian period.[1] The funerals of the middle classes managed by the undertakers were similar to the heraldic funerals of the upper ranks in earlier centuries. Managed by the College of Arms, the heraldic funeral was established and strongly enforced by the state among the aristocracy and the upper ranks during the late Middle Ages and reached its peak in the Elizabethan period. It faced decline throughout the seventeenth century and was replaced by a new form – night burial. By the nineteenth century, many aristocrats' funerals were managed by undertakers. For the middling sorts, funerals were quite different. During the seventeenth century, most corpses were simply buried without any pompous or complicated processions. Two centuries later, however, elaborate funerals could be seen almost everywhere. This raises the question of what happened in the period before the nineteenth century that led to these changes in the funeral. How did these changes occur? What could have been the main driver(s) of this change?

Historians of death in early modern England have provided a great many details and explanations for the shifts in funeral practices during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Ralph Houlbrooke emphasises the major change in religious belief in the sixteenth century as the primary factor while Gittings stresses the rise of individualism as key. Arguably, however, Houlbrooke and Gittings both neglect the connections between the funeral practices in their periods and the lavish funerals of the Victorians: eighteenth-century funerals seem to be outside their interest. What Houlbrooke fails to offer is a strong argument for how these religious changes could

[1] Edward Chadwick, *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population of Great Britain. A Supplementary Report on the Results of a Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns. Made at the Request of Her Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for the Home Department* (1843), 8.

have led to the pompous Victorian celebration of death. What he seems to stress in his study on the later period (especially from the late seventeenth century onwards) is the consumption side of the funeral. He admits that by the mid eighteenth century funerals:

> increasingly came to reflect wealth and personal choice rather than the deceased individual's precise position in the social hierarchy. The private funeral of the wealthy was more readily imitable by the middling sort than heraldic obsequies had been. The rise of undertakers facilitated imitation and fostered emulation. The genteel funeral spread outwards from the greater towns and down the social scale.'[2]

The work of Ruth Richardson, even though it connects the funerals of the earlier period with the Victorian ones, only captures a short period of time and is limited to medical developments.

This chapter provides an empirical study of how people's spending behaviour on funerals changed throughout the long eighteenth century, examining in particular the relationships between funeral expenses and social status, levels of wealth, consumers' places of origins or residences, and gender. These variables will help to shed light on why funeral expenditure changed over a 130-year period. By establishing these expenditure trends, I go further than the previous historians. I also attempt to show that a simple emulation process cannot explain changes in funeral consumption, as many scholars believe.

My conclusion is that the high-status families are the ones whose funeral spending behaviour changes the most over the specified period. In contrast to Houlbrooke's claim that the undertakers brought the new aspirations to the middle classes and led to a higher cost of funerals, the funeral consumption of the middle classes especially in London had already changed before the late seventeenth century. The undertakers allowed people to hire many items necessary for the funeral instead of selling them. This could either stabilise or reduce the cost of funerals since people did not have to buy some of the expensive items. A converging trend of funeral expenditure between London and the provincial areas throughout the century might be explained by the spread of fashion from the metropolis to rural areas.

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[2] Ralph Houlbrooke, "Death, Church, and Family in England between the Late Fifteenth and the Early Eighteenth Centuries," in his *Death, Ritual and Bereavement* (London: Routledge, 1989) and also Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford, 1998; paperback 2000) in Introduction. For the most distinguished work on early modern death and individualism see the work of Gittings discussed fully in Section 8.

2. Funeral Expenditure in the Probate Accounts, 1671–1800: Introduction

There are various ways in which the probate accounts of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC) set out the costs of funerals. In some cases, there is a single 'entry' with a figure covering the total funeral expenditure. In these cases, the expenses are usually listed as 'being paid for the funeral expenses of the said deceased' or 'paid for the funeral charges' or 'paid for the charges of the deceased's funeral'. In a few cases, the accounts enumerate the items paid for. For example, the account of William White (1692) records:[3]

> **Discharge**
> 242.11.6 paid for the deceased's funeral, for a coffin hence charges in bringing the body out of the country, also for mourning for about sixteen persons being the deceased's relations, and for rings given away to his friends and kindred for church dutys and for all other necessary disbursements at the funeral

This single entry is often listed as the first item of expenditure in the 'discharge' section. This kind of entry may take a different form, however, when the funeral expenses are paid to the undertaker. In many cases, especially from the early eighteenth century until the end of the century, the expenditure is listed as 'paid to (name of undertaker) an undertaker for the deceased's funeral' or 'paid to the company of the undertakers for the funeral of the said deceased' instead of referring only to an amount paid for the funeral charges.

However, there are also cases where the total funeral expenditure is a combination of several entries. These allow us to study those involved, such as the glover, milliner, draper, vintner, coffin maker, carpenter, parish clerk, sexton, friends and family members (in most cases for mourning clothes given to them), goldsmith and so on, and also the sums spent on mourning, including, amongst other disbursments, the shroud, coffin, food and wine, hearse and coach, and parish duties. These items are recorded separately in the accounts. For example, the probate account of Edward Marshpile from St John Wapping in Middlesex (1742) records:[4]

> **Discharge:**
> 0.5.6 paid for gloves given at the deceased's funeral
> 1.2.0 paid for a coffin and shroud for the said deceased
> 1.13.0 paid for 5 coaches and a hearse at the deceased's funeral
> 0.9.0 paid for wine drunk at the deceased's funeral

[3] PROB 5/2820, William White of Salisbury, Wiltshire (1692).
[4] PROB 31/221/156, Edward Marshpile, of St John Wapping, Middlesex (1742).

0.2.0 paid for links at the deceased's funeral
0.0.6 paid the searcher
0.13.4 paid the parish of St Mary Magdalen Bermondsey being the parish dues for the interment of the said deceased

In a few cases funeral costs are recorded as a separate section of the account. An example of this is the probate account of John Knight (1674) whose discharge begins with the funeral charges as the first section:[5]

Funeral Charges
2.15.0 paid for a coffin for the said John Knight deceased
0.3.0 paid the searchers to come and view the corpse of the said John Knight deceased and for Rosemary for the funeral
9.10.0 paid to Mr. Alexander Cartenwell for maples biscake and cakes and other things bought of him for the funeral of the said John Knight deceased
12.12.0 paid to Stephen Lock for wine for the funeral of the said John Knight deceased
1.4.0 paid for gloves for the funeral of the said deceased
1.0.0 paid for bread given to the poore at the funeral of the said deceased
1.17.0 paid for the church duty in and about the interment of the corps of the said deceased
1.0.0 for the sermon preached at the said deceased's funeral

In other accounts these items are recorded in the chronological order in which various payments were made, so one funeral-related item might be listed at the beginning while other items might be in the middle or at the end of the account and not all of the details are recorded in the same account. Less clear are the cases where the funeral costs are combined with other costs. In such cases, this is put together with the cost paid for the legal fees and the medical expenses from the deceased's illness. The account of Anthony Chion from St Giles in the Fields in Middlesex (1736) records that £26 8*s* 8*d* was paid to John Peter Cretor for the deceased's funeral and other charges during his illness.[6] Another example is the account of Ann Walton from St Gregory in London (1775) from whose estate £30 is:

> …paid for funeral expenses of the said deceased, and also for money paid to the appraiser for appraising the plate, wearing apparel, household furniture, linen and other effects of the said deceased and also for the expenses of the letters of administration of the said deceased'.[7]

[5] PROB 5/1393, John Knight, of St Leonard, Shoreditch, Middlesex, citizen and merchant tailor of London (1674).
[6] PROB 31/150/175, Anthony Chion otherwise Anthony Sion of St Giles in the Fields, Middlesex (1736)
[7] PROB 31/617/105, Ann Walton of St Gregory, London (1775)

There are also a few cases where the probate accounts refer to funeral expenditure but the accountant was not able to ascertain the amount spent. For instance, the probate account of Charles Livingston from St Botolph Bishopgate in London begins by stating, 'First this acct. craves an allowance of the sum of … paid for the funeral of the said deceased the amount of which this acct. is unable to present to set forth …'.[8] However, the latter two cases are not very common; therefore, I will exclude them from the sample since it is not possible to derive from them any exact amount spent on the funerals for these cases and since they are rare cases, their exclusion will not significantly decrease the number of accounts in the sample.

There are some other probate accounts that were not useable for my analysis. Most of these belong to people who lived and died abroad, mostly in the British colonies of, for example, Jamaica, Barbados, Antigua, and the Island of Grenada. Most of these accounts tend not to have funeral information. Another group whose probate accounts tend not to have any funeral details on are seamen. For instance, there is no information on the funeral of John Dipper, a bachelor in Madras in the East Indies, who died abroad HMS *Panther*.[9] These people lived and died at sea. In addition, there is one case when the deceased died in hospital and the funeral cost was not recorded: Gregory Cobdon, a marine who died in a naval hospital.[10] However, some seamen's accounts are used where they did record information on funeral expenditure.

A lack of funeral information in an account could possibly be due to the fact that a cost-less funeral had been conducted. When a person died on board a ship, burial at sea was required. A funeral at sea, a simple yet most impressive and dignified ceremony, is the most natural means of disposing of a body from a ship at sea. The process is brief and simple. The ship's sail maker or one of his mates stitched the body into a shroud. To ensure that the body was actually dead, the last stitch of the sailmaker's needle was through the nose. The body would be weighted down with lead shot to ensure it sank properly and did not find its way to a shore. After being given a religious service presided over by the captain of the ship, the body would be

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[8] PROB 31/789/552, Charles Livingston, of St Botolph Bishopgate, Middlesex (1789).

[9] PROB 31/507/879, John Dipper, bachelor, at Madras, East Indies, formerly of HMS Bridgwater, HMS Tiger and HMS South Sea Castle, died abroad on HMS Panther (1765)

[10] N.A.M. Rodgers, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649–1815* (London: Penguin, 2006), 321.

slid overboard. Ensigns of ships and establishments in the port area were half-masted during a funeral.[11]

Although there was no practical way of preserving cadavers, the bodies of some important people who died at sea were brought ashore for land burial. The process became complicated when the body had to be moved more than once. One of the best examples is that of Lord Horatio Nelson's funeral. His body was initially unloaded from the *Victory* at the Nore. Then his body was conveyed up-river in Commander Grey's yacht *Chatham* to Greenwich. His body was placed in a lead coffin and also in another wooden coffin. He was laid in the Painted Hall at Greenwich for three days. The state funeral of Nelson was conducted on 9 January and his body was buried in the crypt of St Paul's Cathedral in London.[12] The probate account of Joseph William Douglas (1781), bachelor of HMS Phoenix and also of HMS Savage, HMS Amazon, and HMS Corn, who died on board ship, shows that his funeral was managed by the undertaker and expenses for mourning were presented.[13]

3. Overall Picture: Funeral Expenditure Trends, 1671–1800

In this chapter, the trend of funeral expenditure in the long eighteenth century will be mainly examined using three sub-periods. The 10-year period cannot be applied to all the factors tested to explain funeral expenses due to the numbers of accounts. Therefore, at times three sub-periods, 1671–1710, 1711–1760 and 1761–1800, are discussed. There are three reasons for the division of these three periods: first, the number of people represented in the sample shrinks, especially when dividing by social status. Second is to observe the effect of the undertakers, who emerged around the 1680s and whose businesses became widespread in London by around the 1710s. Their businesses took around 50–60 years to develop throughout the country. Finally, I investigate the effect of the disappearance of the heraldic funeral as well as the appearance of the nocturnal funeral by the early eighteenth century.[14]

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[11] Pryor, Jonathan. "Interment without Earth: A Study of Sea Burials during the Age of Sail." Writing 20 (Spring 2008): Archaeology of Death. Available from: http://twduke.edu/uploads/assets/Pryor.pdf. See for further details on the navy N.A.M. Rodgers, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (London: Fontana, 1988). See also N.A.M. Rodgers, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain,* 362.

[12] Hibbert, Christopher. *Nelson: A Personal History* (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1995), 115-117.

[13] PROB 31/688/72, Joseph William Douglas, Bachelor of HMS Phoenix, also of HMS Savage, HMS Amazon, and HMS Cornwall (1781)

[14] Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral since 1450* (London: Robert Hale, 1992).

The average expenditure recorded in funeral accounts from 1671 to 1800 was £37. However, the level of spending was not stable over time. In this chapter, funeral expenditure is adjusted for inflation rates using 1671 as a base year. Consumer Price Index (CPI) data for London from 1671 to 1800 is from Robert Allen's project.[15] By adjusting for inflation, the funeral expenses for the three sub-periods, shows an average nominal funeral expenditure of £56, £31, and £33, respectively,while the real funeral expenditure was £53, £31, and £26, respectively (Table 2.1). The medians of funeral expenditure in the three sub-periods exhibit a similar trend to the averages (Figure 2.1). While there was a rise in nominal spending on funerals in the late eighteenth century, as figure 2.1 shows, adjusting for inflation, funeral spending fell in real terms.

Decreasing funeral expenditure over the course of the long eighteenth century suggests that the goods consumed at funerals were possibly becoming cheaper. This may have been due in part to an 'industrial revolution effect' which led to a more efficient manufacturing process and kept the prices of industrial goods down. One example that supports this explanation is the popularity of the coffin plates which became more complicated in style at the same time as their price fell in this period.[16] Therefore, people could achieve a more ostentatious funeral with less expense.

Table 2.1: PCC probate accounts with funeral expenditure: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure in three periods.

Year	Number	Mean_Real Expenditure (£)	Median_Real Expenditure (£)	Mean_Nominal Expenditure (£)	Median_Nominal Expenditure (£)
1671–1710	520	53	24	56	26
1711–1760	1,123	31	18	31	18
1761–1800	718	26	15	33	19

[15] Robert Allen's database for Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the raw data in Craftsman and labourers in several European towns, 1260-1913. This displays in excel file.

[16] Harold Mytum, *Mortuary Monuments and Burial Grounds of the Historic Period* (New York: Springer+Business Media, 2004), 255-6.

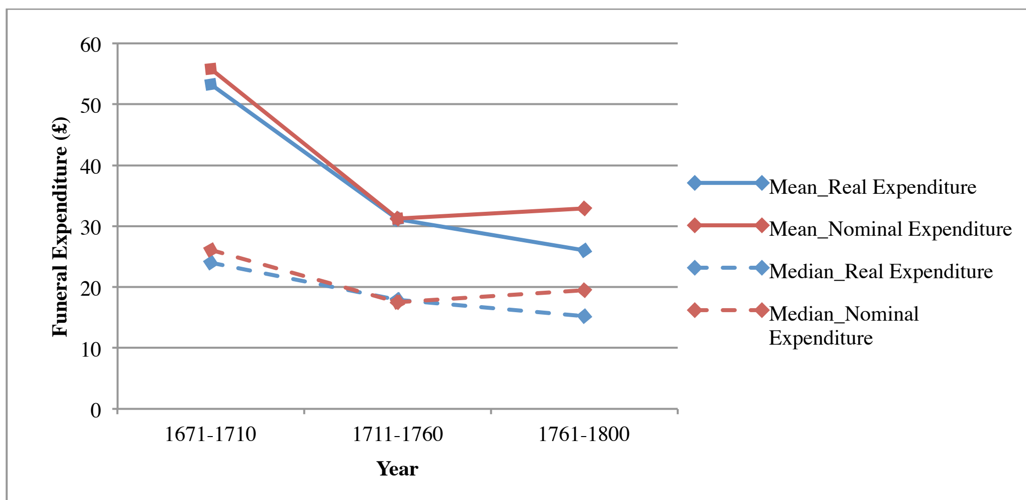

Figure 2.1: Mean and median values of funeral expenditure by three periods.

Funeral costs in early modern England, as Gittings pointed out, varied greatly.[17] However, the distribution of expenditure (in percentages) on funerals in the accounts shows that very expensive funerals were relatively rare. Figure 2.2 shows that more than 50% of the deceased in this sample had funeral costs ranging from nothing to £20. There is also a high percentage of people whose funeral cost between £20 and £30. The higher the funeral costs, the lower the percentage of cases falling within those ranges.

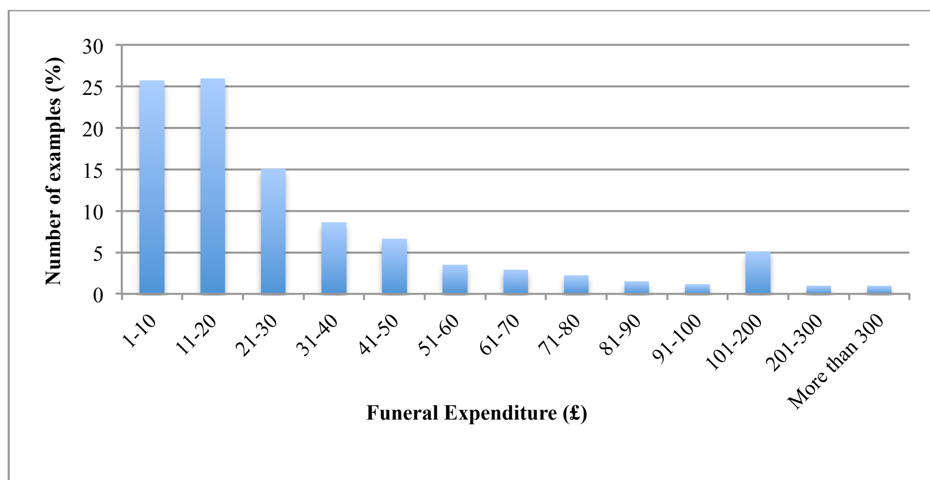

Figure 2.2: Distribution of expenditure (percentage) on funerals.

It is also interesting to compare these percentages across the different periods. Figure 2.3 presents the pattern of funeral expenses across time. The three sub-periods indicate very similar results. More than 60% of funeral costs in the samples fall

[17] Gittings, Clare, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1984), 91.

between £0 and £30 in all periods. However, between 1761-1800 the number of exceptionally high cost funerals was very low.

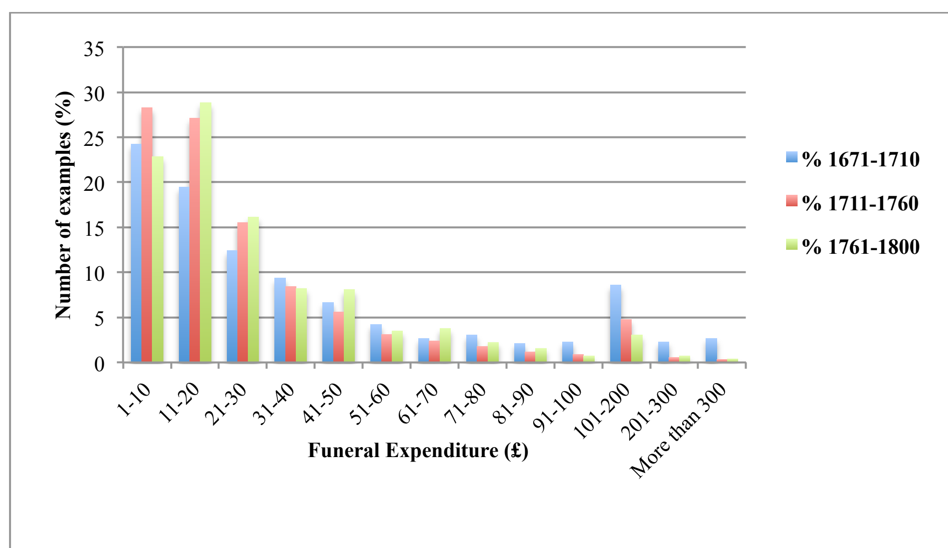

Figure 2.3: Distribution of funeral expenditure (percentage) compared across the three periods.

4. Social Status and Funeral Expenditure

Status is one of the most significant factors in explaining the levels of funeral expenditure, as this section will show. Changes in social structure, as Houlbrooke claims, influence all sorts of rites and practices associated with death.[18] It is important to note that a few centuries before the eighteenth century, the funeral of the upper class, the heraldic funeral, was totally different from the funerals of the rest of society. However, we will see that by the eighteenth century, the funerals of the upper and the middle classes became very similar though managed by different people.

Because this chapter investigates the funeral expenditure of three different classes: the aristocrats, the gentry, and the middle classes of the late seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century we can also test the assumption, made in many studies on consumption in seventeenth- and eighteenth-century England, that the growth of the middle classes drove major changes in consumption patterns (Table 2.3). These people became wealthier. Their increasing spending power led to changes in their tastes and fashion, and they desired to consume and invest in the luxurious items which were once possessed only by the upper classes. This idea does not hold well for death. Changes in funeral expenditure were, in this study, seen most commonly in the upper class especially in the aristocracy. However, we need to be

[18] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 2.

aware that this group of people is estimated to constitute less than 8% of the total sample.

Table 2.2: PCC probate accounts with funeral expenditure: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure by status groups.

Status	Number	Percentage (%)	Mean (£)	Median (£)	SD (£)
Aristocrat	13	0.4	108	74	108
Knight	8	0.3	228	240	211
Esquire	149	5	54	33	66
Gentleman	65	2	32	20	37
Middle Class	2,625	92	28	14	61

4.1 Aristocratic Funerals

Heraldic funerals had almost entirely disappeared by the late seventeenth century. There were only a few examples of the heraldic funeral remaining in the period of study, for instance the funeral of Lord Brooke in Warwick (1677) which cost £1,191, and that of Edmund, the seventh duke and last of the Sheffield line, in 1735. The latter funeral was directed by his mother whose pride and, perhaps, snobbery led her to stage an extravagant funeral for her son.[19] In my research I found only twenty-five probate accounts from 1671 to 1710 which include a payment made to a herald painter.[20] The total cost of each funeral seems to be far more than those managed by the College of Arms. From 1721 to 1800, there are only two probate accounts which recorded monies paid for a heraldic funeral.

I use the data collected from the PCC probate accounts to examine the funeral expenditure and consumption of the upper and middle classes. In this section, the aristocrats are combined with the knight and esquire class. This is due to the relatively small number of such people in the sample of accounts. There are only twelve deceased aristocrats and most of their deaths fall in the period between 1671 and

[19] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*,19–20.
[20] The term 'herald painter' refers to a person whose main duty is to paint the heraldic items such as banners, pennons, escutcheons of arms and crests. Up to the sixteenth century these people worked directly for the College of Arms. One of the valuable sources worth looking at is the funeral certificate since they depict the painted heraldic items. In the seventeenth century, however, not all the herald painters worked for the College since the College itself failed to control the unlicensed practitioners. The Painter Stainers' Company of London also had a right to control the herald painters. During the seventeenth century, the term was flexibly used. It could either be a coach-painter or an artist working at the College. In the eighteenth century, the relationship between the College and the herald painter deteriorated due to a decline of the former. When the heraldic funerals almost disappeared in the early eighteenth century, most of the herald painters left the College. Examples of famous herald painters and more details can be found at
http://www.theheraldrysociety.com/articles/heraldry_as_art/the_herald_painter.htm

1730, with just two aristocrats from 1731 to 1800. The average funeral expenditure of the aristocrats, as shown in Table 2.3 suggests that their funerals were not even close in cost to the heraldic funerals held two centuries before. The mean and median of funeral expenses of the aristocrats are £108 and £74. The mean funeral expense of the aristocrats combined with the upper gentry is £143 and the median is £99 in the late seventeenth century. Most studies unanimously agree that the average cost of a heraldic funeral exceeded £1,000.[21]

There are only two aristocratic funerals in this sample which cost more than £1,000. The most expensive funeral, which cost his accountant £1,100, was that of John, Earl of Middleton, Lord of Clairmont and Fettercairn, Governor of the City of Tangier, whose account was created in 1683.[22] For this particular case, it is not clear if the funeral was managed by the College of Arms since that detail was not recorded in the account. Another case was the funeral of Sir Isaac Newton whose account was recorded in 1735. This funeral cost £1,036 and the most expensive element being the monument to the deceased which cost nearly £500. The payment of £372 for the funeral was made to Mr. Clarke while £87 was paid to the goldsmith for rings given at the funeral. It is apparent that Newton's funeral was free from the College of Arm's control.

Among the aristocracy, there was a decline in funeral expenditure, as shown in Figure 2.4, especially from 1670 to 1760. The mean drops almost by 50% while the median drops by more than half. One reason for the falling cost was that the College of Arms no longer played a role in directing aristocratic funerals, and by the mid eighteenth century these had transformed into funerals managed by undertakers.[23] Apart from the freedom of choice they had due to the withdrawal of the College of Arms, the growing business of undertakers who could provide everything one requested for his/her funeral could be another reason that explained this crucial drop in expenditure. My evidence shows that 70 out of 172 aristocrats and upper gentry, around 40%, had their funerals managed by undertakers by the end of the eighteenth century.[24]

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[21] See Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual,* 169. This is also asserted by Litten and Houlbrooke.

[22] PROB 32/24/89, John, Earl of Middleton [Lord of Clairmont and Fettercairn], Governer of the City of Tangier Account

[23] Julian Litten, "The Funeral Trade in Hanoverian England, 1714–1760," in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Glennys Howarth (London: Macmillan, 1997), 15.

[24] Gittings claims that even without the heralds, an eighteenth-century nobleman's funeral could be a magnificent affair. In many respects, the undertakers replaced the heralds as the organisers and masters of ceremonies at aristocratic funerals. One of the clearest examples was the burial of the First Duke of

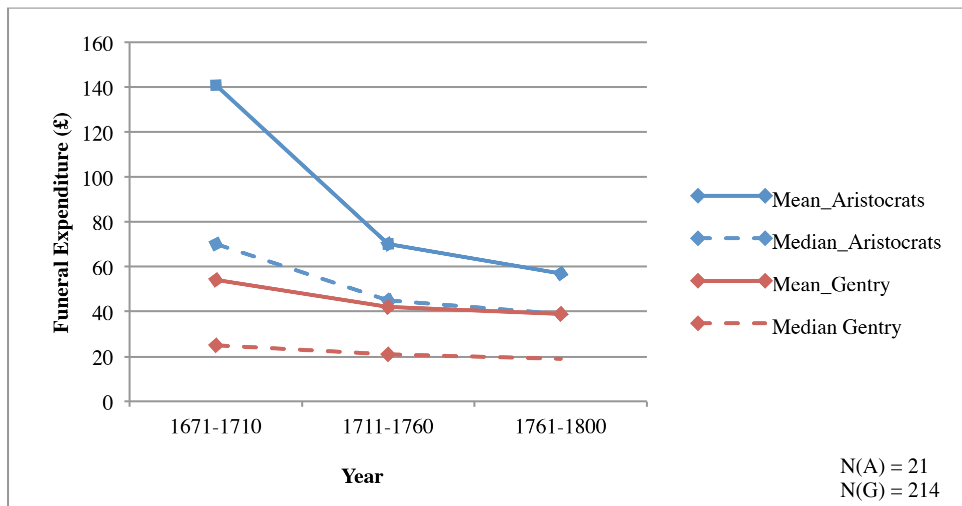

Figure 2.4: Mean and median values of funeral expenditure of the aristocracy and gentry, by the three periods.

By the later eighteenth century the aristocrats whose choices were not limited by the College of Arms opted for much cheaper funerals offered by undertakers or for several suppliers to provide their funerals. These changes in upper-class funeral practices led to a sharp decline in their funeral spending.

4.2 Gentry Funerals

In this section, I focus mainly on the lower gentry represented by gentlemen and esquires to identify the trend in their funeral expenditure throughout the eighteenth century. The reason I group esquires with gentlemen is that they had quite similar funeral spending patterns (similar to the middle classes as well), especially among those who were in London and Middlesex.

The funeral of the gentry was situated in between the heraldic funeral and the common funeral. Although many gentry met with the College of Arms's requirements, they do not seem to have had heraldic funerals. According to Houlbrooke, most of the gentry had considerably less costly funerals. The median of their funeral costs in Kent was just £23 15*s* 0*d*.[25] Some gentry were given a modified form of public funeral. For example, the Lancashire gentleman Thomas Ireland stated

Richmond in 1723. Nicholas Strawbridge and the Company of Upholders were responsible for the funeral with their services and the decorations. This possibly indicates that there was a transitional stage between the College of Arms and the private undertakers in setting up the funeral for the upper class since before this the upper classes' funerals especially for the aristocrats were managed by the former. The undertaker's bill for the duke's burial came to £656. See Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 207.

[25] Houlbrooke, "Death, Church, and Family in England". This information originally came from Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, Table 1, 239.

clearly that his funeral should take place during the day, not at night, but with little pomp. The order of procession specified that there should be no poor people attending his funeral.[26]

Furthermore, the declining role of the College of Arms also led to 'great confusion among the gentry of the kingdom'.[27] Since the officers of arms could not issue official certificates, all sorts of heraldic irregularities were perpetrated. Moreover, there was an infringement on the heralds' monopoly by craftsmen who offered heraldic services at lower prices.[28] Apart from the option of a simpler form of heraldic funeral provided by the funeral furnishers or herald painters, many gentry opted for a nocturnal funeral. A more private funeral, according to Litten, was primarily desired by the lesser nobility.[29] This innovation was due to the increasing backlash against the expensive pomp of the College of Arms.[30] Lower status people could easily imitate this more private funeral since it was not controlled and monitored by the College of Arms.

The funeral expenditure of the gentry, especially lesser gentry like gentlemen, is interesting in the way in which it was similar to that of the middle classes. The mean funeral expense for gentlemen in the sample was £32 while the median was £20, much less than the expenditure of the aristocracy. Referring back to Figure 2.4, we can observe that the percentage decline in funeral expenses of the gentry is more than 20% less than that of the aristocrats. Moreover, the funeral expenses of the aristocrats were much higher than the gentry from the beginning but the gap became narrower over time. In Figures 2.5 and 2.6, the funeral expenditure of the gentry was higher than that of the middle class throughout the long eighteenth century. However, the gap was not as large when compared to the expenditure between the aristocrats and the rest. There was a decline in funeral expenses for both the gentry and the middle class but the decline was not as marked as for the aristocrats. The increase in the median of the gentry's funeral expenditure after the mid eighteenth century may reflect their attempt to distinguish themselves from the middle classes by spending more on funerals since it was one way to display their social status.

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[26] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 275.
[27] Ibid., 265.
[28] Ibid., 73.

[29] Litten, The English Way of Death, 167.
[30] The night burial or the nocturnal funeral differed mostly from the heraldic funeral in that it was a private, rather than public funeral. Being a private funeral, many fewer people attended. In many cases, there were only family and friends in attendance. The heraldic funeral, by contrast, was characterized by a large number of people participating. For full details see Gitting's chapters on the nocturnal and heraldic funerals.

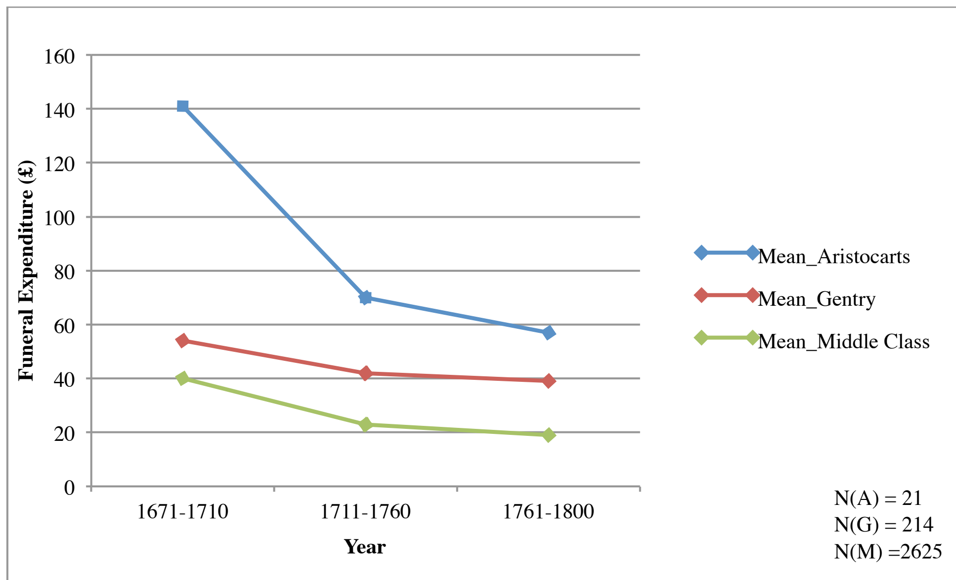

Figure 2.5: Mean of funeral expenditure of the aristocracy, gentry, and the middle class by the three periods.

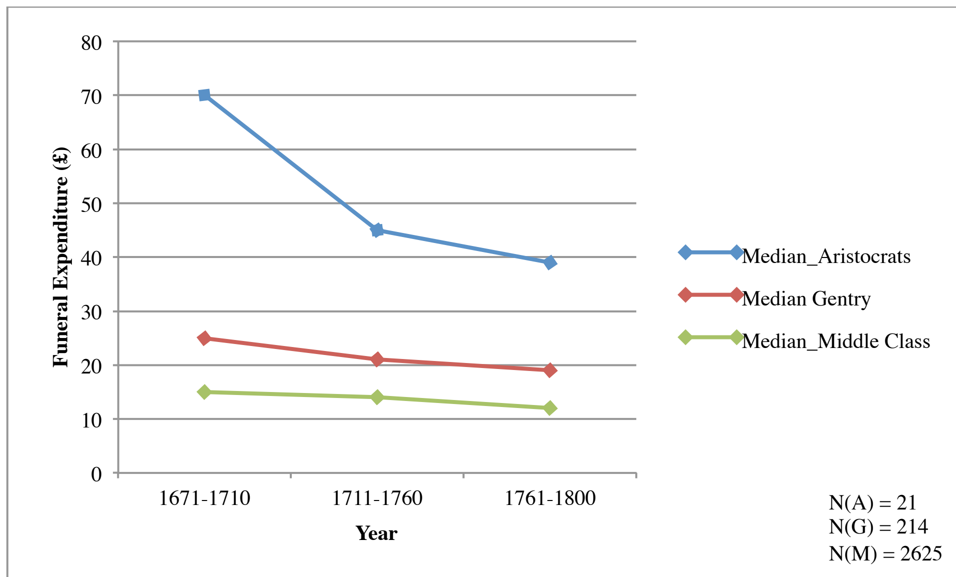

Figure 2.6: Median of funeral expenditure of the aristocracy, gentry, and the middle class by the three periods.

4.3 Middle Class Funerals

The funerals of the gentry and the middle class in the two centuries preceding the eighteenth century had been different. However, they had become similar by the eighteenth century. Before the seventeenth century, the dead bodies of less wealthy people were simply shrouded. By the seventeenth century, as the study of Gittings suggests, the people who were wealthy enough to make wills had their bodies placed in coffins. This was quite common in sixteenth-century Kent while it remained rare in Lincolnshire although the numbers increased throughout the seventeenth century.

These people, without pretensions to gentility, had no need to concern themselves with the heraldic items such as hatchments and blacks.[31]

The most usual funeral expenses in the sixteenth century and up to the mid-seventeenth included the burial fees, in which the minister would charge a few shillings for performing the ceremony.[32] A payment to the bell-ringers was also usual and can be found in many probate accounts.[33] This could cost the executor another shilling.[34] The bearers would be the deceased's friends or family, or sometimes the poor.[35] According to Houlbrooke, the largest funeral expenditure of people of lesser rank than gentry would be on the food and drink served after the burial itself. This could account for half of the total funeral costs.[36] In the seventeenth century, it became increasingly popular for those who could afford it to pay 10 shillings for a funeral sermon to be preached as part of the ceremony.[37] Gifts in memory of the deceased were rarely recorded in accounts of expenditure at the funerals of country people of middle rank.[38]

The funeral expenditures of the middling sorts in provincial areas during the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries have been estimated by Gittings and Mortimer. The mean and median funeral expenses of the middling sorts in Mortimer's study of 169 Berkshire probate accounts from the mid-sixteenth century to the early eighteenth century are £4 and £3 respectively. These probate accounts are quite various, ranging from yeomen, tradesmen, and professionals to husbandmen. The study of Gittings on Berkshire, Lincolnshire and Kent probate accounts show some similar funeral expenses to those of Mortimer. The medians for funeral expenditure range from £1 to £3 for the former two counties and from £1 to £5 for Kent. The low expenditure on funerals of the middling ranks in the provinces reflect simpler funerals compared with those in London.

Unlike their provincial counterparts, the funerals of the middle classes in London were more complicated. The funeral customs in London in the later Stuart period were well described by Henri Misson de Valbourg in an account that was first

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[31] Blacks refer to several heraldic items in black such as black drapes used for hangings and for covering the pall and pulpit; black robes, cloaks, and gowns for participants of the funeral procession.
[32] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family,* 275.
[33] Ibid., 276.
[34] Clare Gittings, "Sacred and Secular: 1558–1660," in *Death in England: an Illustrated History*, ed. Jupp and Clare Gittings, 157.
[35] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 152.
[36] Ibid., 155.
[37] Ibid., 158. See also in Houlbrooke, "Death, Church, and Family in England," 34. The Protestant Reformation led to this increase in funeral sermons preached at the funeral since the reformers made the funeral first and foremost a vehicle of instruction for the living, not a means of assisting the dead.
[38] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 276.

published in 1698. The invitations were sent out when a person died and after three or four days of the deceased being laid out the funeral took place. On the day of the funeral, the coffin was laid on two stools, its lid removed, and the face of the corpse uncovered, so that all might come and see it. Those who were close to the deceased including the relations, the chief mourners and more intimate friends had a chamber to themselves. A servant handed out sprigs of rosemary, to be thrown into the grave on top of the coffin. It was the tradition to offer the guests something to drink such as wine boiled with sugar and cinnamon. One or more beadles with their staffs of office led the procession, followed by the ministers and parish clerk. The coffin, carried by six or eight men, came next, hidden by a pall, usually hired from the parish. The specially invited pallbearers were generally given black or white gloves and black crepe hatbands, sometimes white silk scarves as well. The relations and all the guests made up the rest of the procession.[39]

The middle classes represented in the PCC probate accounts are not the middling sorts that Gittings refers to. The PCC probate accounts primarily provide the details of the upper ranks' funerals while her study aims to reveal 'the usual and commonplace practices rather than the peculiar or the rare'.[40] It is not very clear what she means by the upper ranks of the society since her sample also includes esquires and gentlemen.

From this study, it is clear that the funerals of the wealthier middle classes likely to be included in the PCC in the late seventeenth century were costly. The mean and median funeral expenses from 1671 to 1710 are £39.2 and £14.7. Comparing this to the average family income in Massie's social table, £39.2 was 10% of an average family income for the second richest group of merchants and the richest group of tradesmen.[41] The median funeral cost, £14.7, was more than 10% of the average family income of the richest group of master manufacturers and the third richest group of tradesmen. Earle's study of London's middle class from 1660 to 1730 asserts that a typical middling funeral in London was quite modest but still expensive. His calculation of the average cost of funerals for the least wealthy people in his sample (those whose estates were under £1,000) was £43.3.[42] However, Houlbrooke's investigation of London and suburban probate accounts exhibited between the 1660s

[39] For a full description see Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 143–46.
[40] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 19.
[41] See Massie's figures in Table 9 appended to Chapter 1 of this thesis.
[42] Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class,* 312.

and 1740s illustrates that the funerals of the lower fringe of the middling sort cost under £10.[43]

While some scholars assert that the changes in middle-class funerals in eighteenth-century England were driven by social emulation, my research suggests this is a myth. Houlbrooke asserts that well-off people of middling ranks imitated the funeral fashions of their social superiors, even including elements of the heraldic funeral.[44] Due to their new aspirations, they spent more money on funerals. However, this is in contrast to actual funeral expenditure trends in the eighteenth century. These suggest a decline and then stability in spending. The mean and median funeral expenditure follow different trends. The mean of funeral expenditure displays a significant drop from the first period to the second period, from £39.2 to £25.4, a decline of approximately 37%. This trend in funeral expenditure also moves differently to consumption patterns on industrial goods (Figure 2.5 and 2.6).

This falling trend in the mean of funeral spending is similar to that spent by the aristocracy, suggesting that different explanations are necessary. Unlike their gentry and aristocratic counterparts, the median in middle-class funeral expenditure through this century is rather stable. This could possibly be explained by a combination of new aspirations and the way the undertakers tried to keep the prices of the funeral services they offered affordable. A full discussion on the undertaking trade will be presented in chapter 5.

In this section, it is clear that status is extremely significant in explaining the funeral expenditure patterns from the late seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century. The declining role of the College of Arms, the shift to more private funerals, the herald's and tradesmen's search for profits as well as the rise of undertakers all drove the changes in funeral expenditure. This section argues that the expenditure of the aristocrats, whose funeral spending fell sharply, changed most. But they were not the primary driver of changes since there were a small number of them (less than 0.4% for the aristocrats in the sample). There was a fall in expenditure on funerals across the upper levels of society throughout the century but to different extents. Yet, the observed changes for each social rank required different explanations.

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[43] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 254.

[44] Ralph Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency: 1660–1760," in *Death in England: an Illustrated History*, ed. Jupp and Gittings, 190.

5. Wealth and Funeral Expenditure

Wealth might be another factor that can explain the shift in funeral expenditure, as many historians have claimed that the display of people's wealth through a funeral is one way for them to convey their social status. It is generally assumed that wealthier people tend to spend more than poorer people. The eighteenth century was the period when money became much more important and wealthy people, even though considered as members of the middle class, were very influential. It is also a period when it became more difficult to draw the line between wealth and social status, and it might not be possible to definitively categorise the funeral costs of a particular social class except for the aristocrats.[45] Earle concludes in his work on the middle class in London from 1660 to 1730 that: 'Generally speaking, the richer the deceased the more extravagant and lavish was the funeral.[46]'

This section will evaluate whether Earle's statement can be applied to eighteenth-century English society by investigating funeral expenditure among different wealth groups. It will then look at some particular similarities and differences between the wealthy groups and the poorer groups. The trend in funeral spending of each group points to different explanations. Status as well as the development of undertakers are closely connected to the patterns of funeral spending.

An inventory value will be employed to represent the wealth of the deceased persons. As discussed in Chapter 1, inventory wealth reflects the value of what goods people possess as well as the money other people owe them.[47] Material wealth as recorded in the probate inventories could significantly reflect how rich the deceased were or how wealthy they had become during their lifetime.[48] However, one of the most significant problems of using inventories to determine wealth is that they lack descriptions of property value. This could affect the correlation between wealth and expenditure especially for the upper class whose primary wealth was in the form of land. The probate inventories for many landed gentry show a much smaller amount of wealth than those of the middle classes. This does not mean that the gentry were poorer, but excluded land value means that more than half of their wealth has not been taken into account. For most of the middle class this seems to be less of a

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[45] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 91.
[46] Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class,* 310.
[47] Tom Arkell. "Interpreting Probate Inventories," in *When Death Do Us Part*, ed. T. Arkell, N. Evans and N. Goose (Oxford: Leopard's Head Press , 2000), 73.
[48] Ibid., 74.

concern except for those who were rich enough to purchase land in the countryside or whose relationships were closely linked to the gentry.

Although the PCC probate accounts are biased toward the wealthy, the distribution of average wealth amongst the deceased in the PCC accounts is considerable (Table 2.3).[49] For wealth, I divide the deceased into five groups based on the 'charge' in the probate accounts. Group 1 includes the deceased with wealth between £0 and £300. Group 2 are the deceased with wealth between £300 and £600. Group 3 are the deceased with wealth between £600 and £1,200. Group 4 are the deceased with wealth between £1,200 and £2,400, and Group 5 are the deceased with wealth of more than £2,400. One of the reasons for categorising the deceased in this way is found in the numbers which make up each group, since more than 50% of the sample had wealth within £0–£300, it would be sensible to group them together. Group 3 is another group with a relatively high number of individuals. However, there should also be sufficient numbers in other groups. I will use the sub-periods instead of using the decades again due to the size of the samples.

Table 2.3: Inventory wealth of the PCC probate account samples in percentage compared across the three series.

Wealth (£)	PROB 5 (%)	PROB 32 (%)	PROB 31 (%)	All
0–50	9	10	8	8
51–100	8	6	9	7
101–200	14	17	15	16
201–300	12	11	12	12
301–400	8	9	7	7
401–500	5	7	5	6
501–600	5	6	5	5
601–700	3	4	4	4
701–800	2	3	3	3
801–900	3	2	3	3
901–1000	3	3	2	3
1001–2000	14	12	12	13
2001–3000	6	4	5	5
3001–4000	3	3	3	3
4001–5000	2	0	1	1
Above 5000	4	3	4	4
Total	**100**	**100**	**100**	**100**

A test on correlation shows how closely wealth is associated with funeral expenditure. Table 2.4 indicates that the correlations between wealth and funeral

[49] This table only aims to present that people in the PCC probate accounts are the wealthy ones. The groupings that are used throughout this section can be seen from Figure 2.10-12 and Table 2.5-7).

expenditure in the first and the second periods are statistically significant if we use 0.4 as a benchmark for a horizontal correlation.[50] The highest correlations between the two variables are in the period 1711–1760.

Table 2.4: The correlations between wealth and funeral expenditure by three different periods

Year	Correlation b/w wealth and funeral expenditure
1671-1710	0.4
1711-1760	0.5
1761-1800	0.3

Figures 2.7-2.9 present visual correlations between wealth and funeral expenditure. The correlations exhibited in this section seem to suggest that the lack of land value (not providing information on wealth) might not have had a significant effect on funeral expenditure since the first and the second periods, in which larger percentages of the upper class (whose wealth was based largely on land) are contained, have higher correlations than the third period. This could possibly be due to the fact that there were not many landed aristocrats and gentry. Apart from the nature of the samples, the low correlation of the last period could possibly be due to the fear of graves being robbed by the resurrectionists. This concern led to more money being spent on funerals by poorer people. This will be discussed in more detail later in this section.

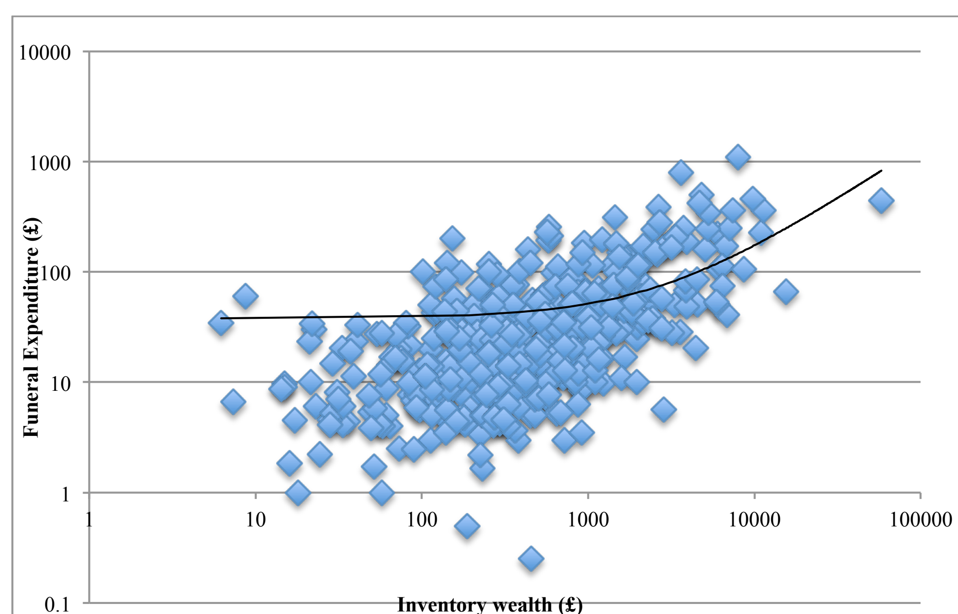

Figure 2.7: The correlations between wealth and funeral expenditure, 1671–1710 (in log scale).

[50] In statistics, the correlation is statistically significant if the value is more than 0.4 for a horizontal correlation.

Figure 2.8: The correlations between wealth and funeral expenditure, 1711–1760 (in log scale).

Figure 2.9: The correlations between wealth and funeral expenditure, 1761–1800 (in log scale).

The initial results show that the families of the deceased with higher wealth tended to spend more on the funeral, as one would expect. However, trends in funeral expenditure among the wealthier groups show that from the late seventeenth to the mid-eighteenth century there was a decline in funeral expenditure, albeit by different degrees (Figure 2.10 and 2.11). From the mid to the end of the eighteenth century the trends differ between the wealthier groups (4 and 5) and the poorer groups (1, 2, and 3). The funeral expenses of the poorer ones are quite stable with some slight increases, while those of the wealthy continually drop.

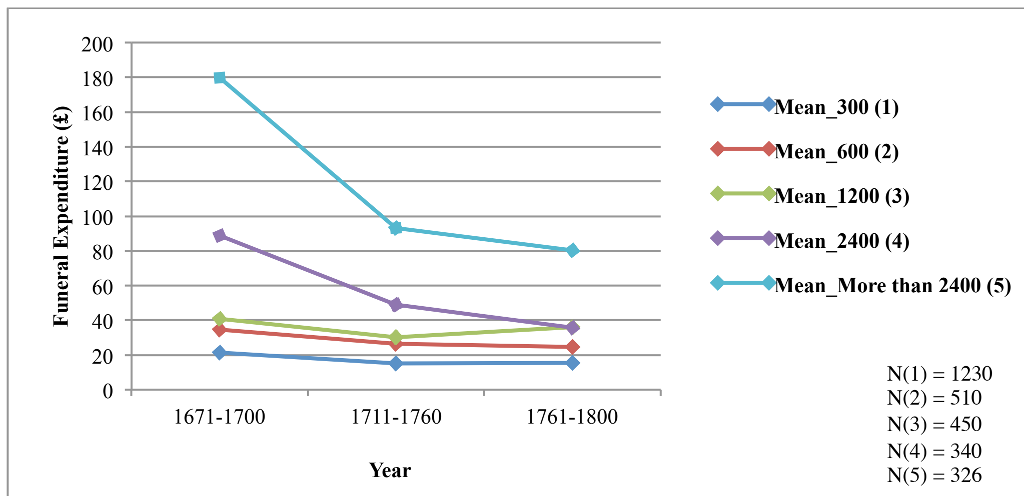

Figure 2.10: Means of the PCC probate samples by wealth groups compared across the three periods.

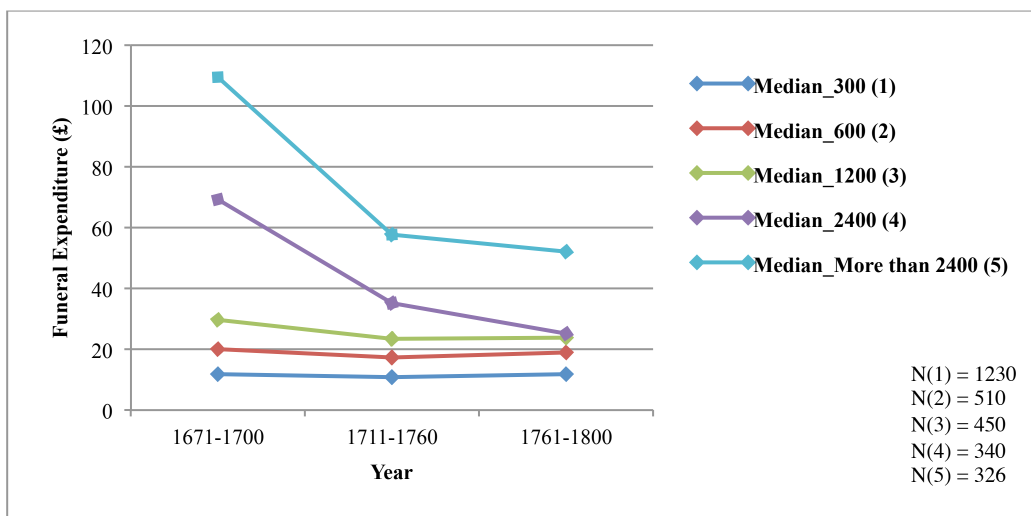

Figure 2.11: Medians of the PCC probate samples by wealth groups compared across the three periods.

The most significant drop is seen among the people whose wealth was more than £2,400 where the mean of funeral expenses drops by 50%. A similar drop, 44%, is also seen among the second wealthiest group. One of the reasons for this might be social status.

When considering wealth alongside social status, the richer gentry and the richer middle class spent more on funerals than their poorer counterparts while there was no clear pattern for the aristocratic group. Still, a large gap between the funeral expenditure of the rich aristocrats and the other two groups is clearly seen. Thus, it is apparent that wealth played an important role among the gentry and the middle class but not for the aristocrats who held a different type of funeral (see Tables 2.6-2.8).

Table 2.5: probate accounts of the aristocracy: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure.

Status/Wealth	Number of PCC probate accounts	Expenditure on funeral (£)		
		Mean	Median	SD
Aristocracy (300)	5	27	18	27
Aristocracy (600)	2	127	180	180
Aristocracy (1200)	4	93	85	98
Aristocracy(2400)	3	77	77	108
Aristocracy (more than 2400)	7	289	303	165

Table 2.6: PCC probate accounts of the gentry: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure.

Status/Wealth	Number of PCC probate accounts	Expenditure on funeral (£)		
		Mean	Median	SD
Gentry (300)	53	24	15	31
Gentry (600)	39	27	17	21
Gentry (1200)	33	36	25	36
Gentry (2400)	42	68	51	63
Gentry (more than 2400)	47	88	78	83

Table 2.7: PCC probate accounts of the middle class: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure.

Status/Wealth	Number of PCC probate accounts	Expenditure on funeral (£)		
		Mean	Median	SD
Middle class (300)	1172	13	8	16
Middle class (600)	469	24	16	30
Middle class (1200)	415	28	20	36
Middle class (2400)	297	44	30	69
Middle class (more than 2400)	272	89	50	148

The funeral expenditures of the gentry and the middle classes were not strikingly different. This could mean that it was wealth, rather than status, which affected decisions regarding funerals. For the earlier period, Gittings suggests that between 1580 and 1660 there were many yeomen who were richer than gentlemen.[51] In the eighteenth century, the PCC probate accounts show that there were many merchants whose wealth was greater than the esquires and gentlemen. One example would be Thomas Hatton, a London merchant, whose inventory wealth is £7,648.[52] There are only eight esquires with more wealth than him while there is no gentleman whose wealth reaches even the level of £5,000. A similar pattern can be found for the

[51] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 91.
[52] PROB 5/3089, Thomas Hatton, of Mark Lane, London, merchant (1706)

funeral expenditure of different social classes. For 122 esquires buried between 1671 and 1800, the funeral expenses ranged from £5 to £419, while those of 50 gentlemen ranged from £0.2 to £154. For London citizens, the funeral spending ranged from £0.8 to £341. Many merchants had funeral costs of more than £100 while there was only one gentleman with a funeral exceeding £100.

From the middle to the end of the eighteenth century, the trends of funeral expenditure of the poorer groups are fairly stable with only a minor increase in terms of medians. This stability is surprising given the various changes in the form of funerals in this period. The widespread availability of burial grounds throughout the century provided people with more space for their graves. This coincided with a rise in the desire for beautiful gravestones and occasionally monuments.[53] Moreover, a fear of bodysnatching became widespread in the eighteenth century. The growth of private anatomy tuition led to more demand for corpses. But the only legitimate source for corpses for dissection during the entire period was the gallows. This meant that there were an insufficient number of bodies for the expanding and profitable business of medical teaching, which finally led to a development of new entrepreneurs known as 'grave-robbers' or 'resurrectionists'. The trade was at its peak from 1750 to the introduction of the Anatomy Act in 1832.[54] Expenditure on funerary items analyzed in the next chapter will enable us to see whether these two new developments significantly affected expenditure.

When calculating the percentage of funeral expenses in relation to average wealth, Figure 2.12 shows that those with lower average wealth spent a higher percentage of their wealth on funeral costs compared with those with higher average wealth. The three different periods show similar patterns. The first period (1671–1710) presents slightly higher funeral expenditure as a percentage of wealth while the other two periods show similar percentages. This suggests that there could have been either fixed prices or fixed items used at funerals. Although the wealthy normally lavished more money on funerals, paying for a better quality and larger number of items, the highest funeral expenditure among them was still much lower than those of the upper classes.

[53] Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency," 194–98.
[54] Ruth Richardson, "Why was Death So Big in Victorian Britain?" in *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, ed. Ralph Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989), 108.

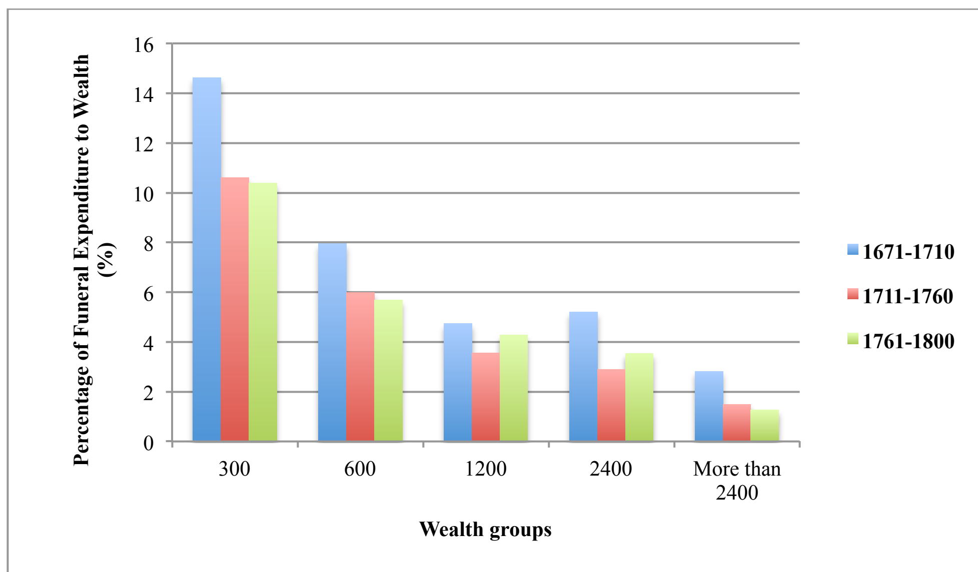

Figure 2.12: Distribution of percentage of funeral expenditure to wealth by wealth groups compared across the three periods

It was very rare for the funerals of the middle ranks to cost more than £100 even when their wealth was as high as the upper classes. In Legg's account books, the average funeral expenses range between £10 and £20 while those of the upper classes cost more than £80. In the PCC probate accounts, as shown in this chapter, there was a wide gap in the expenditure between these two groups. The funeral of the wealthiest middle-class person, whose inventory wealth was £41,917, cost his executor only £28.[55] The highest funeral expenditure of the middle classes was £341 including the monument - without management by an undertaker.[56] The largest amount spent on a funeral managed by an undertaker among the middle classes was £181.[57] The highest expense on a heraldic funeral for the upper class cost more than £1000, while a funeral organized by an undertaker cost £404.[58]

The declining trend in funeral expenditures among different wealth groups possibly relates to the importance given to 'family' membership.[59] Many studies on early modern funerals suggest that a large sum of money was spent on blacks and mourning. The elites were the only group who had a concept of lineage. Ordinary

[55] PROB 31/273/515 John Goodman of St James, Westminster, Middlesex (1746)
[56] PROB 32/25/427 John Newman, barber and citizen of London, St James Garlickhythe [London], d. in Streatham, Surrey (1685)
[57] PROB 31/30/139 William Robert, St Olave Southwark, Surrey (1725)
[58] PROB 32/24/89 (1683), John, Earl of Middleton, [Lord of Clairmont and Fettercairn], Governor of the City of Tangier and PROB 31/886/670, Richard Myddleton, Chirk Castle, Denbeighshire (1797)
[59] See *Lawrence Stone, The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), Edward Shorter, *The Making of the Modern Family* (New York: Basic Books, 1975) and Randolph Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth-Century England* (New York: Academic Press, 1978). See also Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the English Family*. For another notable work on this argument see Keith Wrightson, *English Society 1580-1680* (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2003), ch.3-4.

people used the concept of "family" to negotiate social, economic, and political relationships that suited their interests. As a result, family membership was largely elective. Without the constraints on the concept of "family", people had more freedom to shape their family and friendship than the later generations.[60] With this freer choice of whom to regard as the members of the family, the numbers of mourning and other items distributed among them could vary. Ordinary people apparently defined their family as those living under the same roof.

Even if people did not have to spend money on a great quantity of items at funerals due to a possible decline in the importance of giving to members of their extended family, they still might spend money on something else, which could be equally expensive. The services offered by the undertaker could have lowered funeral costs and the competitive nature of the business should have cut the prices of funerals. This was generally the case when the funeral became commercialised.

This section argues that the main changes in funeral expenditure were among the wealthier sections of society. Wealth played an important role in funeral expenditure among the gentry and the middle class but not for aristocrats. Although a funeral was clearly a reflection of wealth during the Victorian period, its extreme lavish form had not been fully developed until the eighteenth century. The results and explanations presented in this section show that Earle's finding of a strong correlation between wealth and funeral expenditure in London could not be applied to everyone.[61]

6. Gender and Funeral Expenditure

Gender should be taken into consideration when examining the factors that can explain the changes in funeral consumption. Males and females could be expected to spend differently for their funerals. We might expect that men's funerals would have been more expensive since most females during the period were financially dependent on their husbands if they were married due to their legal position. Upon marriage, as Earle mentions, a woman 'lost her financial independence under English common law' through primogeniture for inheritance and coverture.[62] Females were likely to possess less wealth, especially when their husbands passed away and left

[60] Naomi Tadmor, *Family and Friends in Eighteenth-Century England: Household, Kinship, and Patronage* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 1-17.
[61] Peter Earle. *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660–1730,* 313.
[62] Ibid.,158. The law of coverture states that married women were unable to dispose of goods at death because once married a woman's legal identity was subsumed in the identity of her husband.

them with debts and burdens they had to take care of. Their wealth could then be whatever they received after their husband had died.

In contrast to this, Amy Erickson, by examining a variety of sources including parliamentary statutes, manorial or borough courts, equity and ecclesiastical courts, argues that women had substantial property interests and holdings throughout the early modern period.[63] Susan Dwyer Amussen asserts that land was left by men to their sons and by women to their daughters. Women appear to have expected that their daughters could profit from land and transact business competently.[64]

Apart from the benefits women received from the law, the ideological and the changing economic and social contexts were equally important in understanding the position of women in eighteenth-century England. Women in this period, according to Amussen, were not necessarily passive, demure and meekly obedient.[65] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall demonstrate that women made a substantial contribution to the success of family businesses by examining the way capital was accumulated through marriage and inheritance. They argue that middle-class family life in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century was very flexible, and that gender roles were quite fluid. While men retired early to enjoy time with their children, women remained active helpers in business.[66]

Spinsters might have enjoyed their freedom through setting up their own businesses or working in any particular sectors that allowed them to. However, they were still under the control of their father or guardian. Table 2.8 shows that the means and medians of spinsters' wealth are higher than those of widows. In contrast, the funeral expenditure of the spinster is lower than that of widows both in means and medians.

Table 2.8: PCC probate accounts of spinsters and widows: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure

Status	**Number**	**Mean Wealth (£)**	**Median Wealth (£)**	**SD Wealth (£)**	**Mean Exp (£)**	**Median Exp (£)**	**SD Exp (£)**
Spinster	18	1,153	509	1,419	14	14	49
Widow	106	806	261	1,772	38	16	111

[63] Amy Louise Erickson, *Women and Property in Early Modern England* (London: Routledge, 1995), ch.2-4, 49-204.
[64] Susan Dwyer Amussen, *An Ordered Society: Gender and Class in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1988), 72-73.
[65] Ibid., ch.2-3, 34-94.
[66] Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, *Family fortunes: men and women of the English middle classes, 1780-1850* (London: Hutchinson. 1987), 52-54.

In this section, the differences in funeral expenditure between men and women will be examined. However, it must be noted that most probate accounts of women were those of widows and spinsters. It was nearly impossible for wives to have their probate accounts created since they rarely made wills. The questions of how far women could control their funeral expenditure or how much money husbands were willing to spend on their wives' funerals cannot be fully answered here due to the limitation of the sources. This section will also further investigate the trends in funeral expenditure between the wealthier and upper status groups and the poorer and middle status groups. I separate the sample into four groups: Group A, males of higher status and wealth of more than £400 (1,090), as this amount is the median of wealth across the whole male sample; Group B, middle-class males with wealth of less than £400 (991); Group C, females of higher status and wealth of more than £300 (139), the median for the whole female sample, and Group D, middle-class females with wealth of less than £300 (151).[67] This will give a clearer picture of how gender affected funeral expenditure in the eighteenth century.

The means and medians of funeral expenditure between men and women indicate that the spending patterns of both groups were not significantly different in the eighteenth century as shown in Figures 2.13 and 2.14.[68] In the late seventeenth century, we observe higher means and medians for males. Yet the trends had converged by the mid-eighteenth century. The funeral expenditure of both men and women declined throughout the first half of the eighteenth century. For both groups, the patterns follow those discussed in the previous sections on status and wealth.

[67] For full data on each status in three different periods see Tables 15–18 in Appendix.- normally Appendices are numbered…

[68] The main results of the t-test is that the t-stat was 0.64 which is well below conventional levels of significance.

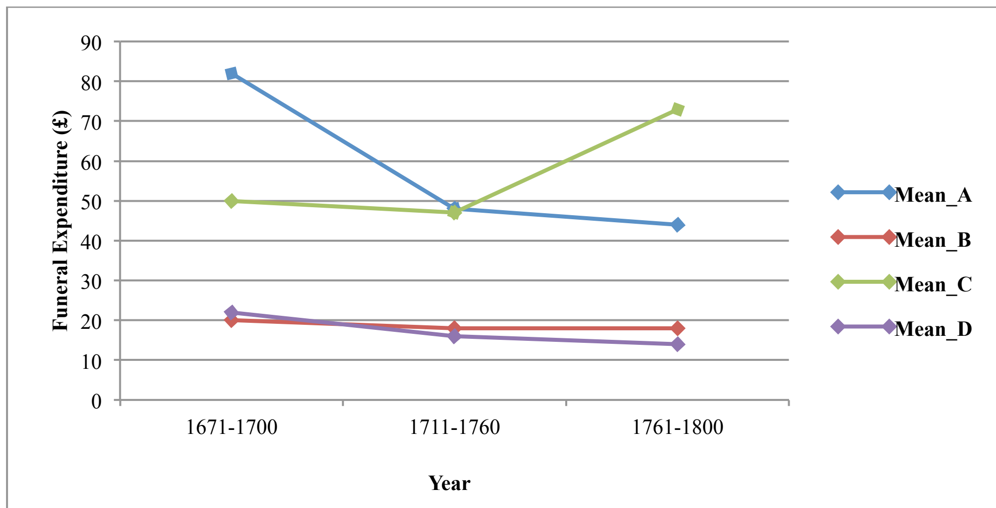

Figure 2.13: Means of the four status groups (A, B, C and D) in three different periods.

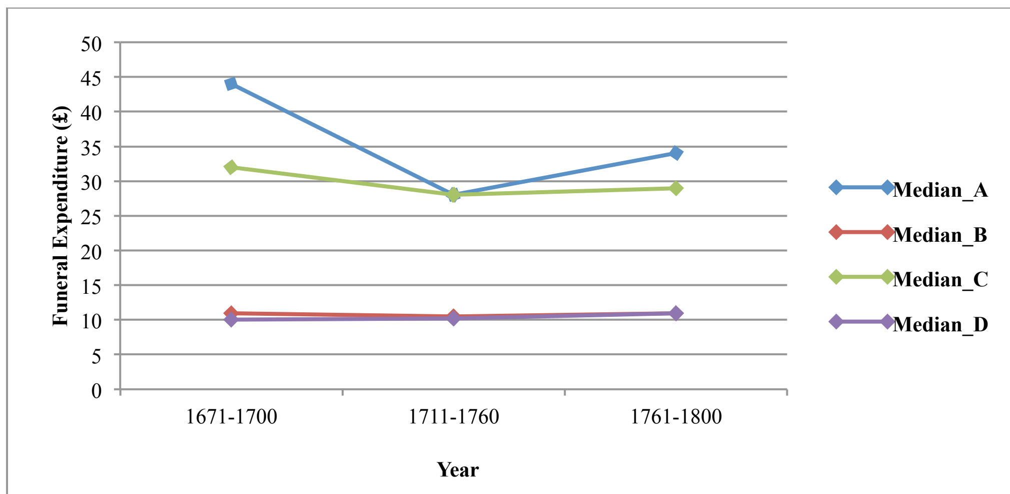

Figure 2.14: Medians of the four status groups (A, B, C and D) in three different periods.

Status and wealth should also be taken into consideration when analysing gender as a factor. For the poorer and those of lesser status, the funeral expenditure trends of both sexes are similar: quite stable throughout the century. This section shows that there was no significant difference in funeral expenditure between males and females in the eighteenth century. The downward trends in expenditure between the first and the second period of both groups follow the picture displayed by the previous sections on how funeral expenditure changed throughout the eighteenth century.

7. Geography and Funeral Expenditure

As well as social status and wealth, geography is another important factor. Different areas can display different patterns of consumption, especially between

large urban areas, such as London as compared with the provinces. London was believed to be the centre of fashion. It was a primary driver of changes in tastes and fashions during the early modern period. Elite culture not only extended downwards but also spread outwards to rural areas. Not only can similarities and differences be observed between the metropolitan and the rural areas, but also within the metropolis itself due to its diversity and dynamics. Differences in consumer behaviour can be connected to the culture shaped within any particular community, the effects of fashion on any group of people, the choice of goods and services provided for them, or even their perceptions of consumer goods and services.

Previous literature on the early modern English funeral has mainly established the picture of funeral consumption and funeral expenditure in the provinces. Gittings presents the funeral expenditure trends in four different counties: Kent, Lincolnshire, Berkshire and Somerset, between 1580–1660. Although a division between the rural and the urban areas is made by Gittings, she notes that:[69]

> The towns chosen for this study, although urban in comparison with the surrounding area, are mainly very small and are often simply overgrown village communities. It seems reasonable to expect a similar pattern of ritual, conducted on a slightly larger scale, in these places, than in the countryside and it would have been interesting to see whether a different picture is presented in London parishes, perhaps indicating a greater impersonality in city life.

Sneath's and Mortimer's studies also concentrate more on the provincial areas.[70] These counties share many similarities due to the nature of the English rural community. Yet in London the context was significantly different.

There are only a few studies on London funeral practices, such as Julian Litten's *English Way of Death* and Vanessa Harding's *The Dead and the Living in London and Paris, 1500-1670*. Litten concentrates on the development of funeral trades, especially the undertaking services from the late seventeenth to the nineteenth century, while Harding focuses on the interplay between the growing funeral trades and the increasing demand for more proper funeral ceremonies in the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.[71] Their studies do not explore the pattern of funeral spending in London. The only work which gives some details on funeral expenditure in London is Earle's study of the middle class from 1660 to 1730. He places emphasis

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[69] Clare Gittings, "Funerals in England, 1580–1640: The Evidence of Probate Accounts" (M.Litt. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1979), 120.
[70] See Section 8 for full details in both works.
[71] See Litten, *The English Way of Death*; Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in London and Paris, 1500–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

on the well-to-do middle class whose lowest wealth group are those with wealth less than £1,000. His examination of 134 probate accounts shows that there was a strong correlation between wealth and funeral spending. Wealthier people in London during that time tended to have more expensive expenditure.[72]

This section aims to examine the pattern of funeral expenditure across London, its surrounding areas including Middlesex, Kent, Essex and Surrey, and other provincial areas. I divide the sample into four groups: London, Middlesex, the counties near London (Essex, Surrey, Kent: ESK), and other counties (Table 2.9). London is distinguished from Middlesex and those areas surrounding it in case there might have been a price effect of burial in the more extensive new cemeteries as opposed to the urban graveyards. Areas near London are distinguished from other counties as there might be some influences from London on these areas. I will further investigate people from different status groups in different places.

Table 2.9: PCC probate accounts with funeral expenditure: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure by geography.

Area	Number of probate accounts	Mean Funeral Exp. (£)	Median Funeral Exp. (£)	SD Funeral Exp. (£)
London	516	44	25	74
Middlesex	767	33	18	66
ESK	431	30	16	42
Other counties	547	38	20	71

As discussed earlier, aristocratic funerals saw many dramatic changes in the seventeenth century, with heraldic funerals gradually replaced by the nocturnal funeral. These practices varied by region. During the reign of James I, the night burial became commonplace especially in London.[73] Houlbrooke assumes that in the provinces privacy could be more easily achieved in the daytime, especially the areas far from the nearest herald's deputy, than it was in London. By the mid-seventeenth century, however, the nocturnal obsequies also became fashionable in the provinces. This could have been caused by the metropolitan example and the aesthetic appeal of a torchlit ceremony by night.[74] Examples are the funerals of Sir Henry Creswick of Bristol and of Sir Robert Mason of Winchester which cost their executors £385 and

[72] Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*. 313-4.
[73] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 272.
[74] Ibid., 274.

£500, respectively.[75] In the eighteenth century, the use of undertakers for the funerals of the upper class also varied geographically. Half of the esquires had their funerals provided by undertakers from the end of the seventeenth century (61 out of 122). Out of these 61 esquires, 45 lived and died in London and Middlesex.

For the middling sorts, funeral consumption and funeral expenditure in the seventeenth century apparently differed between urban and rural areas. In the late seventeenth century, it is clear that the mean and median values of funeral costs of London are higher than for other areas. Figure 2.15 illustrates that the distance between London and other areas mattered during this period.[76] The nearer to London, the more expensive were the funerals especially from 1671 to 1710. One reason for high average funeral costs in London could be the high wages. It is clear from Allen's study on long-term wages that London had higher wages than other cities in Europe.[77] The highest wages both in nominal and real terms were in London compared with other European cities.[78]

By the mid eighteenth century the funeral expenses of the four areas were much closer and the average funeral costs in Middlesex and ESK were even lower than in provincial areas. All four areas showed a decrease in average funeral costs throughout the long eighteenth century. At the end of the century, the provincial funeral expenses were higher than in the other three areas; this suggests that, alongside the effect of the fall in the price of funerary components caused by the early industrial revolution, we can see the impact of the undertaking trade on cutting costs through greater efficiency and specialization, as professional undertakers still largely operated primarily in London and the surrounding areas. Thus, the development of more extravagant funerals seen in this period was supply- rather than demand-driven. The effect of the Industrial Revolution on funerals cannot be easily assessed, since it requires more data on funeral commodities than the available sources provide. However, I will offer new data and a new analysis of the undertaking trade in Chapter 5.

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[75] PROB 5/ 2973, Sir Henry Cresswick, knight, of Bristol, Gloucestershire (1673) and PROB 5/5064 Sir Robert Mason, knight, of Winchester, Hampshire (1674).
[76] See page 109 for this figure.
[77] R.C. Allen, "The Great Divergence in European Wages and Prices from the Middle Ages to the First World War.", *Explorations in Economic History* 38 (2001): 432.
[78] Ibid.

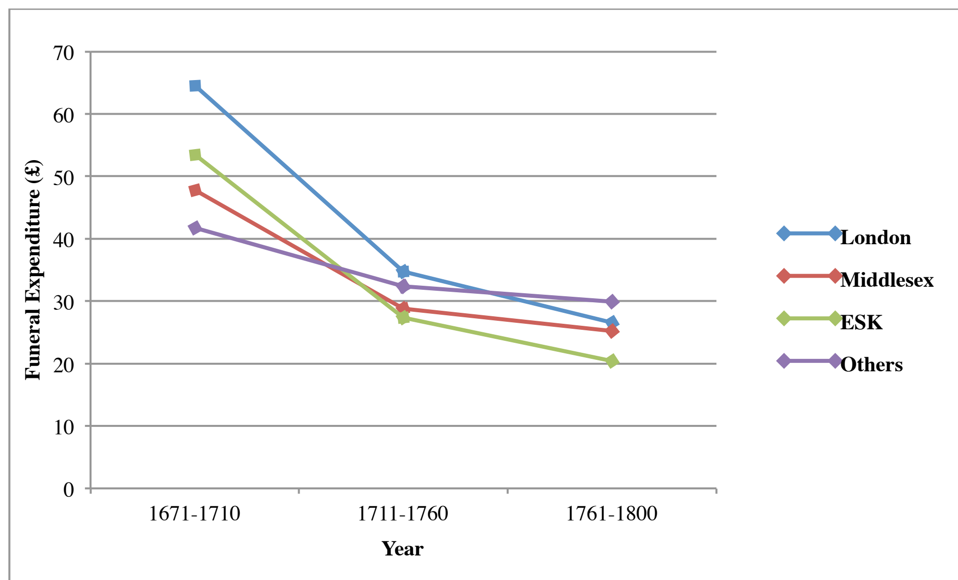

Figure 2.15: Means of funeral expenditure compared across different areas in three different periods.

Status could be a factor underlying the expenditure trends between London and other areas. By dividing the sample by geography and status, it is clear that the funeral expenses of the aristocrats and gentry were higher in London than in the provinces. The median of the aristocrats and gentlemen from London was £49 while that of Middlesex and other provinces was £43 (Table 2.10). The lowest median of the aristocrats and gentlemen belongs to the deceased from Kent, Essex and Surrey.

Table 2.10: PCC probate accounts of aristocrats and gentlemen: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure by geography.

Area	Number of probate accounts	Mean Funeral Exp. (£)	Median Funeral Exp. (£)	SD Funeral Exp. (£)
London	29	67	49	82
Middlesex	53	85	44	154
ESK	34	78	36	104
Other counties	79	75	43	85

However, if we exclude the gentlemen who represent the lesser gentry in this work from the upper-class deceased, we find different results (Table 2.11). We see a very high median of the aristocrats and esquires in the provinces (£76) while the medians of London and its surrounding areas are less than £50. This suggests that the provincial aristocrats and the esquires still paid much more for their funerals throughout the eighteenth century. Given the more stable nature of the provinces, their funerals could still strongly display the deceased’s political as well as social

status. A link between the deceased of upper rank and the whole community they lived in survived, although it was slowly replaced by a more individualised society. Most gentlemen's funerals had been much cheaper than those of their social superiors since the sixteenth century. The median of funeral costs of knights and esquires in Kent between 1580 and 1640 was £24, while that of gentlemen was only £5. In Lincolnshire during the same period the median of knights was £20 while that of gentlemen was £4.[79]

Table 2.11: PCC probate accounts of aristocrats and esquires: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure by geography.

Area	Number of probate accounts	Mean Funeral Exp. (£)	Median Funeral Exp. (£)	SD Funeral Exp. (£)
London	22	71	47	92
Middlesex	46	87	43	165
ESK	28	88	40	112
Other counties	52	95	74	95

The middle classes would tell another story. By linking status with geography, the figures for the middle class shows a similar trend to their upper-class counterparts. The median of the middle classes in London was £25 while it was around £16 in other areas (Table 2.12). The differences in median values can be connected to changes in the personal tastes and fashions of the London middle classes and the spread of fashion and taste outwards from the centre. In the seventeenth century, the middle classes in London were spending large sums of money. Their desire for funerals resembling that of the upper class encouraged them to spend more money on their funerals, buying items such as coffins, coaches and hearses, drinks, mourning clothes and gifts. For the middle class from London and Middlesex in the period from 1671 to 1710 in 80% of probate accounts the largest sums of money were paid for mourning clothes and accessories such as mourning gloves, hatbands, and rings.

Table 2.12: PCC probate accounts of middle class: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure by geography.

Area	Number of probate accounts	Mean Funeral Exp. (£)	Median Funeral Exp. (£)	SD Funeral Exp. (£)
London	485	42	25	73
Middlesex	714	28	17	34
ESK	406	27	15	33
Other counties	473	32	17	66

[79] Gittings, "Funerals in England, 1580–1640," see Table 2.8 in the second chapter.

This funeral consumption pattern only gradually spread to the provinces. Houlbrooke points out that in later Stuart Berkshire, far less was spent on funerals than in the metropolis.[80] This again could be confirmed by the higher mean and median costs of London middle class funerals than those of other areas. The largest expenses were paid for food and drink to entertain the guests. Gifts distributed in memory of the deceased were rarely recorded in the accounts during the first half of the seventeenth century but became more popular among people such as traders, victuallers, innkeepers, and professional men in towns. For these people, gloves were generally distributed while hatbands and scarves were occasionally given. At the end of the seventeenth century, these items were still rarely mentioned in the accounts for members of rural society below the level of gentry. The trend of the medians of expenditure in different areas further suggests that there was a significant decline in funeral expenses in London; however in Middlesex, Kent, Essex and Surrey, they remained stable but with a slight increase from the first to the second period and exhibited a slight drop by the end of the century in the provincial areas (Figure 2.16).

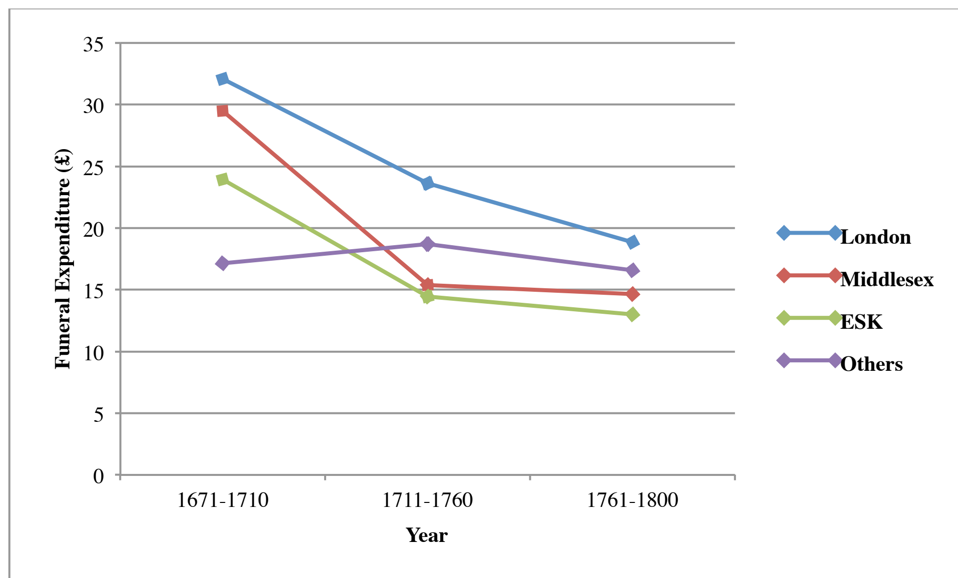

Figure 2.16: Medians of funeral expenditure compared across different areas in three different periods

This section shows the trends in funeral expenditure from the late seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth centuries, in which geography clearly plays an important role in explaining the funeral consumption patterns. These patterns were closely linked with status as well as changes in fashions in funerals which, initially emerged

[80] Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency," 195.

in London from the seventeenth century onwards. For status, we seem to see continuity in the pattern of funeral consumption from the seventeenth century, especially for those from the provinces. Also, we clearly see this continuity in the middle classes' funerals. A declining trend in funeral expenses in London and its surrounding areas, especially for the middle classes up to the mid-eighteenth century, could be due to the undertaking business providing more cheaply the items that had already been used by the middle classes in London. New burial grounds provided people with more options for their burial places. The competitive nature of business helped control the prices. The increasing funeral spending of the provincial areas indicates that those areas started to follow the metropolis in terms of taste: what Londoners had consumed in the previous century became popular among the people in the provinces.

8. Comparisons with Previous Research

My findings on the overall funeral expenditure produce different results from the findings of previous research on the subject, in particular the work of Gittings, Mortimer, and Sneath. However, many of the differences in results are due to the different periods and the areas studied. The earliest account was produced in 1544 in Berkshire (from Mortimer's study) and the latest was created in 1800 (from my own study). I have composed a table to display the results from these previous studies and from my own research (Table 2.13).

Table 2.13: Means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure by geography

Area	Period	Number of accounts analysed	Mean Funeral Exp. (£)	Median Funeral Exp. (£)	SD (£)	The lowest funeral costs (£)	The highest funeral costs (£)
Berkshire	1544–1712	162	5	3	5	0.1	36
Berkshire	1581–1655	508	n/a	3	n/a	0.1	110
Lincoln-shire	1581–1655	337	n/a	5	n/a	0.1	39
Kent	1581–1655	764	n/a	15	n/a	0.1	111
Somerset	1581–1655	385	n/a	4	n/a	0.1	21
Hunting-donshire	1675–1700	249	5	3	8	0.4	106
London	1671–1800	516	44	25	74	0.5	1100
Middlesex	1671–1800	767	33	18	66	0.8	1115
Surrey, Kent, Essex	1671–1800	431	30	16	41	0.3	457
other counties	1671–1800	547	38	20	71	0.2	1007
Yorkshire	After 1750	n/a	13	7	20	0.8	155

Sources:
* The data of means, medians, standard deviation, the lowest funeral costs and the highest funeral costs of the deceased in the probate accounts from Berkshire are from Clare Gittings, *Funerals in England, 1580-1640* and Ian Mortimer, ed., *Berkshire Probate Accounts, 1583–1712*. The calculation for Huntingdonshire and Yorkshire is from Ken Sneath, *Consumption, Wealth, Indebtedness and Social Structure in Early Modern England*. For Lincolnshire, Kent and Somerset, the calculations are also from Gittings, *Funerals in England, 1580-1640*. Those for London, Middlesex, Surrey, Kent, Essex and other counties are calculated from PROB 5 (1671-1720), PROB 31 (1722-1800), and PROB 32 (1671-1720), the National Archives.
** Mean values are not presented in Gittings's study. Additionally, the highest and the lowest funeral costs from Gittings's study are the average of the three highest and the three lowest funeral costs from each area. The medians for her study used in this table are the highest median from four counties. The records for Berkshire are from Mortimer's Berkshire probate account index. I calculate the mean and median values of funeral expenditure from the Berkshire probate accounts transcribed by him. Sneath's thesis provides all the information put in this table.

The medians from these studies are relatively low compared with the medians of the PCC probate accounts, except for the Kent accounts. For Mortimer's study, the account with the highest value is £643.[81] For Sneath, the highest inventory value is £3,018.[82] The inventory value of the wealthiest person from the PCC probate accounts is £58,062 which is far higher than those found in the previous studies. This is not surprising since these accounts cover a much wider social range than the diocesan probate accounts from other areas.[83] The reason for Kent's distinctiveness was that the person who was in charge for the Kent Consistory Court was the archbishop. Since his personal jurisdiction covered the whole metropolitan area, the court could prove the wills of people who died in Kent and whose property did not fall exclusively in the Canterbury diocese. This helps explain why the Kent accounts include such a large number of wealthy people who, had they lived outside the diocese of Canterbury, would have had their wills proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.[84]

When comparing the funeral expenditure of a particular social group, we see both similarities and differences. For the esquires, the median, the three highest and lowest funeral costs, and the differences between the highest three and the lowest three are similar in Kent(Table 2.14). Moreover, the funeral costs of esquires in

[81] The transcription of 162 Berkshire probate accounts in Ian Mortimer, ed., *Berkshire Probate Accounts, 1583–1712* (Reading: Berkshire Record Society, 1999). See the probate account of William Jeffry, Tanner, of Bradfield (D/A1/199/143c).
[82] See Ken Sneath, "Consumption, Wealth, Indebtedness and Social Structure in Early Modern England" (Ph.D. thesis, University of Cambridge, 2008), ch. 4 on social structure. Table 9 in that chapter shows the inventory values categorised by status and occupation. The highest inventory value is £3,018 which belongs to one of the gentry group.
[83] Gittings mentions that the Kent probate accounts cover a wider social range than other areas in her study. For full details see Gittings,"Funerals in England, 1580–1640," ch. 1 and 2.
[84] Ibid., 49–50.

London between 1671 and 1800 are similar to those of Kent a century earlier. When we compare PCC accounts from 'Other counties' to Gittings' Berkshire and Lincolnshire, we find that the esquires in provincial areas during the eighteenth century had a much higher funeral expenditure than those who had lived and died in the earlier century. This matches the discussion above on the impact of fashion spreading out from London to other areas, this diffusion of style leading to increased costs. The highest median is a group of esquires from Middlesex who appear to have had similar funerals to the London esquires. Thus, the reason for exceptionally high funeral expenses could be that the probate accounts from Middlesex contain a larger number of esquires with expensive funerals.

Table 2.14: Means, medians and standard deviation of esquires' funeral expenditure by area

Places	**Year**	**Number**	**Median**	**The highest three funeral costs (£)**	**The lowest three funeral costs (£)**	**Differences between the highest and the lowest (£)**
Berkshire	1581–1655	5	5	112	4	108
Lincolnshire	1581–1655	24	20	93	4	89
Kent	1581–1655	25	24	139	5	134
Kent	1671–1800	8	22	120	7	113
London	1671–1800	17	27	104	8	97
Middlesex	1671–1800	39	44	468	8	460
Other counties	1671–1800	41	50	182	8	174

Sources: The data of means, medians, standard deviation, the lowest funeral costs and the highest funeral costs of the deceased in the probate accounts from Berkshire, Lincolnshire, Kent and Somerset are from Clare Gittings, *Funerals in England, 1580-1640.* Those for London, Middlesex, Surrey, Kent, Essex and other counties are calculated from PROB 5 (1671-1720), PROB 31 (1722-1800), and PROB 32 (1671-1720), the National Archives.

While we see some similarities between the esquires in cities and towns in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries, as shown in the case of Kent, the group of gentlemen presents a completely different picture (Table 2.15). London and its surrounding areas including Middlesex, Essex, Kent and Surrey exhibit much higher funeral expenditure for gentlemen compared with Kent in the mid-sixteenth to mid-seventeenth century. This trend also applies to the case of Berkshire where we see substantially larger sums of money spent on funerals. There are two possible explanations for this. Firstly, the gentlemen in the PCC probate accounts are the wealthy ones who could afford pricey funerals. Secondly, the gentlemen started to change their spending behaviour on funerals. The consumption pattern of this group was very similar to the upper middle classes and it is very difficult to draw a clear line between them. This can be seen even in the seventeenth century. Gittings finds that

money spent on the funeral of gentlemen was only slightly higher than or equal to that of the middling ranks.[85] The gentlemen who lived in urban areas, especially in London and the areas nearby, tended to have high funeral expenses due to the effects of the fashion for lavish funerals.

Table 2.15: Means, medians and standard deviation of gentlemen's funeral expenditure by area

Places	Year	Number	Median	The highest three funeral costs (£)	The lowest three funeral costs (£)	Differences between the highest and the lowest (£)
London	1671–1800	7	66	88	17	72
Middlesex	1671–1800	7	77	115	24	38
Berkshire (Mortimer)	1544–1712	13	5	16	2	14
Berkshire (Gittings)	1581–1655	20	4	19	1	18
Berkshire (Pirohakul)	1671–1800	5	25	77	17	60
Kent (Gittings)	1581–1655	121	6	149	1	148
Essex Kent Surrey	1671–1800	7	24	47	14	33

Sources: The data of means, medians, standard deviation, the lowest funeral costs and the highest funeral costs of the deceased in the probate accounts from Berkshire are from Clare Gittings, *Funerals in England, 1580-1640* and Ian Mortimer, ed., *Berkshire Probate Accounts, 1583–1712* and the PCC probate accounts from the National Archives. Those for London, Middlesex, Surrey, Essex and other counties are calculated from PROB 5 (1671-1720), PROB 31 (1722-1800), and PROB 32 (1671-1720), the National Archives.

For the middle classes, it is more difficult to compare findings, since the middle classes in the PCC probate accounts are a wealthier group than the middle classes studied by Gittings, Mortimer and Sneath. Sections 3 and 4 of this chapter offer many comparisons between my study and the others. The PCC probate accounts contain a higher number of high status people as well as those who worked in the trading sector such as merchants, drapers, and victuallers. These people had much higher inventory wealth and possibly different consumption behaviour which might explain why they had much higher funeral expenditure given that inflation was quite stable throughout the period.[86]

Another interesting result is the similar trend in the percentage of inventory wealth spent on the funeral between the PCC probate accounts and those analysed by Gittings. Even though the classification into wealth groupings by Gittings is different

[85] Gittings,"Funerals in England, 1580–1640," see Tables 2.5–2.10.

[86] The table of Consumer Price Index in London and Southern England confirms that from 1671 to 1789 the prices were quite stable while the last decade of the century saw a significant increase in prices. See the full data in Robert Allen, *Consumer price indices, nominal / real wages and welfare ratios of building craftsmen and labourers, 1260-1913. [Online]. Accessible: http://www.iisg.nl/hpw/data.php.*

as the deceased in her samples present much lower wealth than those from the PCC probate accounts, it shows that the deceased with less wealth spent a higher percentage of the inventory value of their estate on funeral expenses.[87] Stannard concludes that even in the case of the wealthiest individual it was not normal for funeral expenditure to exceed 20% of the deceased's inventory value.[88] This statement is in contrast with the findings of Gittings and of my study. As formerly discussed, families with lower inventory value spent a higher percentage of their wealth on funerals. According to Gittings, those whose inventory wealth ranged from £0 to £10 could expend on average 19.6% of their wealth on the funeral while those whose wealth exceeded £300 spent less than 2% of it on the funeral.[89] My study indicates that those with wealth of less than £300 could spend up to almost 15% of their wealth on their funeral while those with much greater wealth would only spend around 1–2%.

There was not a continuation of rising funeral expenditure from the late seventeenth century. While Gittings shows a rising trend of funeral expenditure from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century, the funeral expenses found in the PCC seem to drop from the late seventeenth century before becoming stable from the mid-eighteenth century, both in terms of averages and medians. The medians of Kent, Berkshire and Somerset reported by Gittings show that the funeral costs tended to increase from 1581 to 1655 while the Lincolnshire sample presents quite a stable trend over time.[90] There have been many claims that by the mid-seventeenth century English funerals were much simpler. Keith Thomas asserts that:

> 'In England funerals became so much simpler that by 1649 a contemporary could describe them as "in a manner prophane, in many places the dead being thrown into the ground like dogs".'[91]

David Stannard sees this as the effect of Puritanism when he says: 'In England during the seventeenth century there was a powerful, successful and largely puritan motivated effort to reduce the complexity and significance of funeral ritual.'[92] A

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[87] See Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 239, Table 2 in the statistical appendix section.
[88] David Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 73.
[89] See Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 239, Table 2 in the statistical appendix section.
[90] See ibid., 238, the first figure in the statistical appendix section.
[91] Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in Sixteenth and Seventeenth-Century England* (London: Penguin University Books, 1973), 710.
[92] Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death*, 35.

lamentation for the passing of the heraldic funeral by Weever also stresses the decline of luxurious funeral rituals.[93]

Gittings challenges this view and shows that funeral costs were rising up to the mid-seventeenth century.[94] We have to be aware that the upper class had a different type of funeral in the sixteenth century, when the middle classes had 'common' funerals. My study suggests that up until the late seventeenth century, the costs of funerals were high, especially for the well-to-do middle classes in the metropolis, while the funeral expenses of the upper class indicated that the heraldic funeral eroded substantially. However, we see a decrease in the funeral costs of all social groups from the beginning of the eighteenth century. This is unlikely to be due to the influence of Puritanism as it had already declined after the Restoration. The main explanations this thesis proposes for the funeral expenditure trends displayed in this chapter will be fully presented in the next three chapters. This study, by employing the new primary source, namely the PCC probate accounts, can help explore what the previous historians of funerals have failed to cover.

9. Conclusion

This study shows that changes in funeral expenditure trends, in contrast to other types of consumption, changed most not for the middle classes as most historians have previously suggested, but for the upper ranks and the extremely wealthy, as we see the largest drops in their funeral expenditure in the long eighteenth century.

A declining role of the heraldic funeral since the early seventeenth century and more freedom of choice for testators and their executors are important points. Another change has to do with the middle classes. This chapter shows that the funeral expenditure of these people was relatively stable, especially compared with their upper counterparts, with a less significant drop from the late seventeenth century to end of the eighteenth century. While the results show a rise in nominal expenditure in the late eighteenth century, the real expenditure indicates that funerals were, in fact, becoming cheaper. Therefore, people could afford a more ostentatious and elaborate funeral. The simpler funeral of the middling sorts in the earlier period had already been replaced by a more complicated funeral practice similar to those of the upper

[93] Gittings, "Funerals in England, 1580–1640," 98.
[94] Ibid. See also the first figure in the statistical appendix section in Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 238.

ranks especially in London before the late seventeenth century. The services provided by the undertakers did not drive down or increase the cost of funerals of these middle classes but these services may help explain the drop in the funeral spending of the upper classes. While the eighteenth century was the period when the middle classes were the main driver of consumption trends in English society due to their rising income as well as their taste and fashions, the narrowing gap in funeral expenses between the upper and middle classes was driven mainly by the former.

People with greater wealth spent more on their funerals than the poorer ones; however, the percentage of funeral expenditure to wealth presents a contrasting picture. The poorer spent a much higher percentage of their wealth on their funerals. These findings match what scholars have previously proposed, that by the nineteenth century, even the lowest wealth groups could save a reasonable sum of money to make sure that they could afford to provide a decent funeral for themselves and their families.

The fall in funeral expenditure in London and its surrounding areas could be strongly linked to the changes in people's tastes and fashions, especially in the case of middle-class Londoners. This fall could also have been hastened by cheaper funeral components due to the effect of the Industrial Revolution and the expansion of undertaking services. A smaller drop in funeral expenses in provincial areas implies a slow spread of fashion and trends between urban and rural communities. This slow diffusion of fashion could be due to the many difficulties of transportation and the interaction between the metropolis and the countryside and the growing effects of the Industrial Revolution and the undertaking business.

By establishing the trends in funeral expenditure in eighteenth-century England using new evidence, the PCC probate accounts, I have surpassed the scope in terms of period, geography, and social groups set by previous scholars. A focus on the upper class and middle class in their funeral consumption allows us to reflect on many complexities of eighteenth-century English society especially in terms of social status as well as social mobility. The eighteenth century saw a 'Consumer Revolution' in funeral consumption. The middle classes clearly required more extravagant funerals with more beautiful and sophisticated decorative items as will be shown in the next chapter. However, this consumer revolution in funerals was different from other types of consumption since the expenditure of the middle classes did not increase overall. Death, in this period, was another type of business. Like the 'all-in-one' treatment of

marriage packages in the eighteenth century, funeral services run by undertakers as middlemen became widely popular as will be presented in Chapter 5.

This period was also a period when demand developed through changing consumer choices in funeral arrangements. Changes in the supply chain made funerals become more commercialised across the whole society and this was eventually fully achieved in the next century. A lavish funeral was a way to display wealth as well as respectability and gentility for the middle classes, while the upper class opted for cheaper but still extravagant funerals.

Chapter 3: Expenditure on Funerary Items, 1671–1800

1. Introduction

Chapter 2 established the trends in funeral expenditure from 1670 to 1800. It considered how wealth, social status, geography, and gender related to the total funeral expenses for an individual. This chapter is complementary to the former chapter. It will focus primarily on the demand side by examining spending patterns on six main funerary items: food, drink and doles; mourning clothes, jewellery and gifts; the coffin and shrouds; the burial ground and burial fees; the hearse and coach; and monument and commemoration, from the late seventeenth to the end of the eighteenth century. Moreover, the functions of each item will be examined. Changes in the purpose of consuming any particular commodity could reflect how society changed over 130 years.

Previous research on early modern funerals has largely interpreted changes in funeral practice during the period as a transition from a strictly religious ritual to a secular one and from a public display to a private family matter.[1] This chapter has two aims. Firstly, it will help create a more complete picture of changes in funeral consumption and practices in the early modern period. While most former studies tend to focus on the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries, this work will be a study of eighteenth-century funeral consumption choices. Secondly, this chapter shows how the consumption in funerary items changed, reflecting preference changes. In order to achieve both purposes, I employ data from the three series of PCC probate accounts described in Chapter 1 to analyse funeral expenditure on each particular item, its usage, and its popularity among people from different groups. Furthermore, it will suggest that choices between different kinds of things used at the funeral were linked to funeral processes and practices, which can imply something about the dynamics of social structure and social relations.

A detailed study of funerary items in the Early Modern period, apart from heraldic items, has not been carried out. There are only two major works on the topic: Julian Litten's *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral since 1450*, and Clare Gitting's *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*. The

[1] See Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford, 1998; paperback 2000); Ralph Houlbrooke, ed. *Death, Ritual and Bereavement* (London: Routledge, 1989); David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997); Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (Kent: Croom Helm, 1984).

former is a study of changes in funerals from the mid-fifteenth century with a description of the goods common people consumed at the funeral. Litten covers several changes in funeral practices over more than 500 years.[2] Since the period of study is long, Litten places unequal emphasis on different periods. It is clear that he places much less importance on the earlier period. Since the nineteenth century was the period when changes in funerals could be seen most, Litten mostly skips the eighteenth century, with just scattered details on eighteenth-century funeral consumption. Due to a lack of evidence, the study being heavily based on a small number of trade cards, we do not see any clear change or continuity in funerals during this century. Gittings's work gives a clear picture of funeral processes in her period of study. Although her work deals essentially with the gentry and middle classes, she devotes four full chapters to the funerals of the upper class and of the lower class.[3] However, her study stops in the mid seventeenth century, so it is not possible to know what happened next – or what led the drastic changes seen in the nineteenth century. Gittings shows that coffins were increasingly used, while funeral feasting and dole-giving had been declining throughout the period.[4] In addition, her work has a regional limitation, as discussed in Chapter 2. Therefore, we only observe a clear picture of funerals in provincial areas and not in a big city like London.[5]

There had been large changes in funeral practices before the eighteenth century. Two major changes which initially occurred in the mid sixteenth century were a decline in both lavish funeral feastings and charity through doles given to the poor. The expenditure on these two items began to decrease from the mid-seventeenth century. This thesis suggests that this trend continued throughout the eighteenth century for both upper and middle classes. The continued decline in doles was mainly due to legal changes, especially a full enforcement of poor relief legislation since the late sixteenth century.

It is evident from previous studies that other items, such as mourning, coffins and shrouds, and burial fees, were the most common items of funeral expenditure.

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[2] This work of Julian Litten studies the development of death through long term changes. It provides the readers with lots of detailed descriptions of the funeral items as well as the funeral itself. See *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral Since 1450* (London: Robert Hale, 1992).

[3] Her third chapter is on funerals of the unfortunate (pp. 60–85). The last three chapters, on the heraldic funeral, the nocturnal funerals of the aristocracy, and royal and state funerals, are specifically concerned with upper class funerals. See Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (Kent: Croom Helm, 1984).

[4] See Table 3 and Table 6 in the Statistical Appendix: ibid., 240–41.

[5] In Gittings's thesis, she acknowledges that her study does not cover a big city like London which could give a totally different picture. Clare Gittings, "Funerals in England, 1580–1640: The Evidence of Probate Accounts" (M.Litt. dissertation, University of Oxford, 1979), 120.

According to Gittings, both quantities of and expenditure on these items increased from the mid-sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century.[6] In the nineteenth century, these items were even more common, even in the funerals of the poor.[7] Mourning and coffins became more extravagant for the wealthy. Burial fees were normally paid to the parish officials. In this study, it is clear that the number of people spending money on these expenses declined. This, however, does not imply a decreasing use of them.[8] On the contrary, they became more widely used through their provision by undertakers. Expenditure also decreased, except for spending on coffins and shrouds. As eighteenth-century English society was moving toward a desire for 'decency' and 'luxury', these were the two items which could be adjusted in several ways to serve the client's satisfaction.[9] Moreover, in the late eighteenth century, especially in London, the fear of body snatchers, as mentioned above, drove the development of more secure coffins.

Memorials, as well as hearses and coaches, were strictly limited to the upper class before the late seventeenth century.[10] Hearses and coaches were used widely among the upper and middle classes in the nineteenth century.[11] Their popularity began in the late seventeenth century and grew throughout the eighteenth century. The monument, in contrast, was still restricted to the upper class. Gravestones became common for the middle classes and, in a similar way to coffins, became more complicated and more beautiful through time, and we can observe a rising expenditure on them. According to undertakers' trade cards, a hired hearse and coach was a normal means for delivering the corpse to the burial place. The undertaker would provide them for the client. Therefore, with the popularity of undertakers, these items would not be mentioned separately from the undertaking service in accounts.

This chapter will show that there were changes in people's preferences, reflected in the selection of items used for funerals during the long eighteenth century.

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[6] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 239–41.
[7] Litten, *The English Way of Death*.
[8] For coffins and shrouds, we observe a significant decline in the number of probate accounts with expenses to both items over time (40% to 13% for coffin and 19% to 4%).
[9] The concepts of 'decency' and 'politeness' have been discussed clearly by Houlbrooke in, "The Age of Decency," in *Death in England: an Illustrated History*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings, Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999, 187–98. In this chapter of the book, he mentions: "The prosperous middling ranks of society were seeking during this period not only to protect the bodies of their relatives by means of more durable and substantial coffins but also to preserve their memories in stone. There were two manifestations of standards of politeness and decency which were shared by an increasing proportion of the population.' (197).
[10] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*. See also Litten, *The English Way of Death*.
[11] P. Jalland, *Death in the Victorian Family* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996), 15; J. Morley, *Death, Heaven, and the Victorians* (London: Studio Vista, 1971), 11; T. May, *The Victorian Undertaker* (Colchester: Shire Publications, 1996), 54.

Preference in this context refers to that of the bereaved primarily, since it was the executor who decided on the funeral.[12] The deceased, as shown in their wills, generally expressed the desire simply to be buried and remembered in a 'decent' way. This concept of decency closely relates to how one's funeral was displayed. The exhibition of a decent funeral is visually reflected in the beauty and sophistication of the items consumed. Remembrance also followed this pattern, mirrored in more investment in gravestones. Most expenditure on the main items analysed in this chapter matches an overall trend of funeral expenditure, beginning with a drop from the first period (1671–1710) to the second period (1711–1760), then remaining constant, with a slight increase by the end of the eighteenth century. However, it is important to note that from the mid eighteenth century the numbers of PCC probate accounts recording payments for these items decreased significantly due to the undertaker effect which will be fully discussed in chapter 5.

2. Primary Sources

This chapter is based primarily on the PCC probate accounts which provide many descriptions and details of the amounts of money the executors spent on the goods and services regarding the funeral. In this section, I separate the items into six categories:

1. Funeral feasting and doles to the poor: food, sweets, and drinks.
2. Mourning and mourning gifts: mourning cloth, dresses, suits, shoes, and stockings, mourning rings, necklaces, bracelets and other jewellery given to the relatives and friends at the funeral.
3. Shrouds and coffins, including their decorations
4. Burial fees: payment for breaking the ground, parish dues and duties, burial tax, and for preaching the funeral sermon (the payment for the sermon to be preached will be included here, but I will discuss this in a separate section)
5. Funerary transport: hearse, coach, palls and escutcheons
6. Funeral memorials: gravestones, headstones and footstones, epitaphs, and monuments

[12] For a full discussion on this see chapter 1 section 4.

A substantial number of detailed probate accounts will be employed in this chapter. Out of 2,361 PCC probate accounts, there are 1,390 that record funeral expenditure. Of the 1,390, I exclude two types of account. Firstly, there are many accounts without specific details of funeral expenditure on particular items; the expenses are usually simply recorded as 'being paid for the funeral expenses of the said deceased' or 'paid for the funeral charges' or 'paid for the charges of the deceased's funeral'. There is also a handful of probate accounts that contain a description of the items provided at the funeral, but do not give details of how the payment is distributed among the items. For example, the 1713 account of Rebecca Fettyplace from Stepney in Middlesex, states[13]:

> Discharge:
> 22.16.1 paid for the said deceased's coffin and shroud and for gloves and wine and mourning cloaks used at the said deceased's funeral and for a hearse three coaches and for the church and parish dutys where the said deceased died and also at the place where she was buryed and other charges and expences in and about the said deceased's funeral

Together with this type of account, there are also some accounts that record only a lump-sum payment to an undertaker. This type of account will be examined in detail in the next chapter on the undertaking trade. The numbers of the accounts with no specific details on funeral items and also the detailed accounts decrease through time, while the probate account that just records a lump-sum payment to an undertaker presents a totally different trend with an increase in numbers.

The numbers of probate accounts in which the various classes of item are listed in detail also vary. Out of 795 probate accounts[14], 763 record the payment of burial charges. Mourning is also a frequently recorded item – there are 551 accounts with details of expenditure on mourning. Drinks are mentioned in 520 of the accounts. A coffin is recorded in 492 accounts. Mourning gifts are mentioned in 348 accounts, 272 include details on the grave and its decorations, and 216 mention mourning jewellery. Payment made for food and sweets, hearse and coach, pall and escutcheon, to the searchers and bearers, and things given to the poor, respectively, are recorded in around 100 to 200 probate accounts. Items categorised as 'other necessaries' are recorded in 434 probate accounts. Payments for burial tax and for rosemary are mentioned in less than 100 accounts.

[13] PROB 32/57/143, Fettyplace, Rebecca, widow, Stepney, Middlesex (1713)
[14] This figure is the balance of 1390 after removing accounts that lack sufficient detail.

3. Funerary Items

3.1 Food and Sweets, Drinks, and Doles

The regular ritual of funeral feasting among the upper class and the middling sorts declined substantially throughout the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century, most funerals in towns, especially in London, seemed not to spend a large sum of money on them anymore. While drinks such as wine, beer, and whisky were still served before and after the burial, expenditure on food was rarely recorded in the funeral spending. This change could be due, first of all, to the impact of Protestantism. Since intercessory prayer was abolished and the attendance of the poor might no longer assist the deceased in their afterlife, there was no need to invite the whole community to the funeral. The function of funerals as a form of 'social healing' which re-established bonds within the group fractured by the loss of one of its members declined. A shift away from feasting was then fueled by the undertakers who, as Gittings points out, were keen for their customers to spend as much as possible on the items they were offering, rather than on things purchased elsewhere.[15] The undertaker offered more in the way of decorations for funerals instead of the provision of food and drink.

Before the mid-seventeenth century massive amounts of money were spent on the funeral feast or funeral dinner. According to Gittings, the largest item of expenditure for the grandest funerals was the food and drink served after the burial. This could account for up to half of the total funeral cost.[16] Meats and sweets were normally provided for the 'better sort', while bread and leftovers were usually given to the poor. One example was the funeral of the earl of Shrewsbury in 1560. At his funeral, 320 'messes', which could serve approximately 1,280 people, were available 'to all manner of people who seemed honest'. The dishes included venison from fifty does and twenty-nine red deer.[17] Sweets were also provided for the funeral guests. For example, at the funeral of a gentlewoman in 1578 at Abingdon, along with gallons of sack, white wine and claret, there were 60 pounds of comfit (a type of sweet), 15

[15] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 154.
[16] See ibid., 151–59. See also Ralph Houlbrooke, "Death, Church, and Family in England between the Late Fifteenth and the Early Eighteenth Centuries," in. *Death, Ritual and Bereavement,* ed. Ralph Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989) and also Ralph Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750* (Oxford, 1998; paperback 2000).
[17] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 444.

pounds of biscuits and 40 dozen cakes. These were served together with dried fruits, pears, pippins, quinces, plums, almonds, macaroons, marzipan, and violet cake.[18]

For the lesser gentry and the middle classes, food and drink provided for funeral-goers also accounted for the largest funeral expenditure. According to Houlbrooke, the expense on these could cost half or in some cases three-quarters of the total funeral cost.[19] This did not decrease before the Civil War. There seemed to be a rise in spending on funerals from 1580 to 1640 which at least kept pace with inflation. However, the amount of food provided could not be compared with the funerals of their more upper-class counterparts. For instance, the funeral of John Coult of Heydon in 1561 included three fat sheep, three barrels of beer and six dozens of loaves of bread to be provided for both the rich and the poor neighbours.[20]

Drinking and feasting have particular functions in society, especially where a strong sense of group or community still exists, such as in a primitive or pre-industrial society. In its sociological aspect, the serving of food and drink is one way to express the social status of the deceased and his or her family. The giving of food and drink at the heraldic funeral, apart from the religious purpose, was to express the importance of the deceased in the community. In the view of many anthropologists, this ritual helped preserve the social cohesion which was weakened by the 'disintegrate impulses' aroused by death. In a similar view to the sociologists, they thus regard the purpose of acts of giving and feasting as maintaining the status of the individual.[21]

In the seventeenth century, funeral feasting began to change in its form. Since the funeral became more private, the guests attending the funeral might only be those who were invited. According to Cressy, the custom of funeral dining continued in this century, but it was rare to provide a table for all comers. Normally there would only be tables for family members, relatives, and friends. Instead of letting the host provide all the food and drink, guests at Stuart funerals often contributed to the meat and drink, which established reciprocity between them and the bereaved family.[22] At the funeral of Colonel Edward Phelips of Montacute in 1680, relatives brought 3 gallons

[18] Gittings, "Sacred and Secular," 159.
[19] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 275.
[20] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 445.
[21] Anthropologists such as Bronislaw Malinowski, Marcel Mauss, and Arnold van Gennep emphasise the importance of a gift exchange as distinguished from a gift-giving in different primitive societies such as the Trobriand Islands. They believe that a primary function of the gift was to preserve social cohesion in any particular community. See B. Malinowski, *Argonauts of the Western Pacific: An Account of Native Enterprise and Adventure in the Archipelagoes of Melanesian New Guinea* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1922). See also M. Mauss, *The Gift: Forms and Functions of Exchange in Archaic Societies* (London: Routledge, 1990).
[22] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 446.

of sherry sack, 10 gallons of port wine, 264 cakes and 19 pounds of 'biscake'. However, much of the food and drink was provided by the estate. The payments for food and drink at the funeral were made to baker, butcher and vintner.[23] In 1629, an executor of Thomas Dier of Sutton Courtney in Berkshire had to pay 10*s*. to a baker of Abingdon for bread and 23*s* 10*d* to a butcher for meat delivered for the funeral. Sweets such as cake, biscake, confit, dried fruits, and macaroons were served before the funeral, as one Kentish account shows.[24] Spices and sugar were occasionally provided for the funeral. The 1722 account of John Williams from Farnham, Surrey recorded '0.3.5 paid for sugar and spice at the funeral of the deceased'. [25]

From the late seventeenth century to the eighteenth century, there were further changes in funeral spending on food and drink. Wine and other alcoholic drinks could be served 'at her carrying forth', eating and drinking in front of the corpse. For the upper class, public funeral feasting rarely took place any longer since more funerals were held privately, at night. The dinner provided for the funeral guests, who mostly were the deceased's close relatives and friends, was still massive, however.[26] After the funeral of John Underwood, a gentleman whose funeral was in 1625, the mourners and the bearers as well as his close relatives and friends went back to his house to have a 'very handsome supper'.[27] The mean and median values of expenditure on food went down between 1671 and 1800. Between 1671 and 1710, they were £5 (mean) and £3 (median). The expenses for food provided at the funeral range from 8% to 20% of the total funeral cost.

Bread was normally given to the poor at funerals. However, people tended to come to funerals to enjoy the meat and cakes generally distributed. For example, the 1705 account of Jerard Newcourt recorded that £2 14*s* was paid for twelve dozen four-penny cakes and two dozen three-penny cakes, 6*s* for six nine-penny loaves and one five-penny loaf, and £2 for butchers and other provisions.[28] The funeral of Francis Sandell in 1704 provided the attendees with 260 pounds of cake which cost the executor £5 9*s*.[29]

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[23] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 281–84. This example is also employed by Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 22–3.
[24] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 156.
[25] TNA, PROB 31/1/40 John Williams, Farnham, Surrey (1722).
[26] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 446.
[27] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 15.
[28] PROB 5/4961 Jerard Newcourt, gent, of Ivythorne in Street, Somerset (1705).
[29] PROB 5/2971 Francis Sandell, of Christ Church Newgate Street, London, died in Malling, Kent (1704)

For the latter two periods, 1711–1760 and 1761–1800, the expenditure for food was around 7% and 4% of the total funeral expenditure respectively. Not only did the expenditure decline, but the number of accountants recording their expenses on food also declined substantially. The number of funerals with a reference to payment for food drops from 9% in the earlier period to only 2% by the end of the eighteenth century (Table 3.1). Both declining trends in expenditure and the number of probate accounts recording expenditure on food reinforce the idea that the feasting which represented a religious ideal and a strong sense of being part of a community was becoming far less common over the two centuries.

Table 3.1: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on food compared across three periods.

Year	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with food	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
1671–1710	71	9	5	3	5
1711–1760	30	4	2	1	3
1761-1800	14	2	1	1	1

Even though payments for food were higher in the late seventeenth than in the later century, they were still far less than for funeral feasting in the earlier period. In addition, the type of food also changed. In the previous century, the hosts of funeral feastings often provided their guests with meat. One example is the funeral of Charles Tip in 1630, where swan was served. Beef, turkey, veal, geese, pork, capons, chickens, larks and rabbits were prepared for the funeral guests of Matthew Mennyce, mayor of Sandwhich in 1632.[30] The amount of meat used was massive and might cost more than £20. However, provision of meat was rare at eighteenth-century funerals and involved much less expense. Only eight probate accounts from 1701 to 1780 record a payment for meat while there are none for the last twenty years studied (1781–1800).

The highest payment on meat in my sample was recorded in the probate account of Robert Dyer (1738) at £1.[31] Another example is the payment recorded in the probate account of Robert Bush (1775), a bachelor of London, of 13*s* 8*d*.[32] Sweets were also rarely recorded in the eighteenth-century PCC probate accounts. Only ten probate accounts make a reference to sweets from 1701 to 1800. Cake, biscake and

[30] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 154–59.
[31] PROB 31/174/186, Robert Dyer of Combe St Nicholas, Somerset (1738).
[32] PROB 31/622/487 Robert Bush, bachelor and citizen of London. (1775)

biscuits were typical sweets served at the funeral. Providing these sweets could cost the executor a great sum of money, but again, it was still less than in the earlier period. A payment for cakes and wines at the funeral of the Warden of All Souls College, Oxford in 1636 cost more than £100.[33] For the funeral of John Knight in the early 1670s his executor made a payment of £9 to Mr. Alexander Cartenwell for maple biscakes and cakes.[34] However, the provision of sweets would normally cost less than £1 at middle-class funerals. The executor of Robert Felgate (1677) paid 18*s* 4*d* for fruit and spice for cakes made at home for the said deceased's funeral, while that of Susanna Robinson (1773), a spinster of Cambridge, paid £1 for cakes at the funeral.[35]

While food tended to gradually disappear from funerals in the course of the long eighteenth century, drinks were still generally provided at the funeral up to the mid-eighteenth century (Figure 3.1). In my sample of 795 probate accounts, less than 10% record a payment made for food and sweets served at the funeral, for both the upper and the middle class, while 29% of the upper class and 38% of the middle class accounts record payments made to vintners or for wine provided at the funeral.

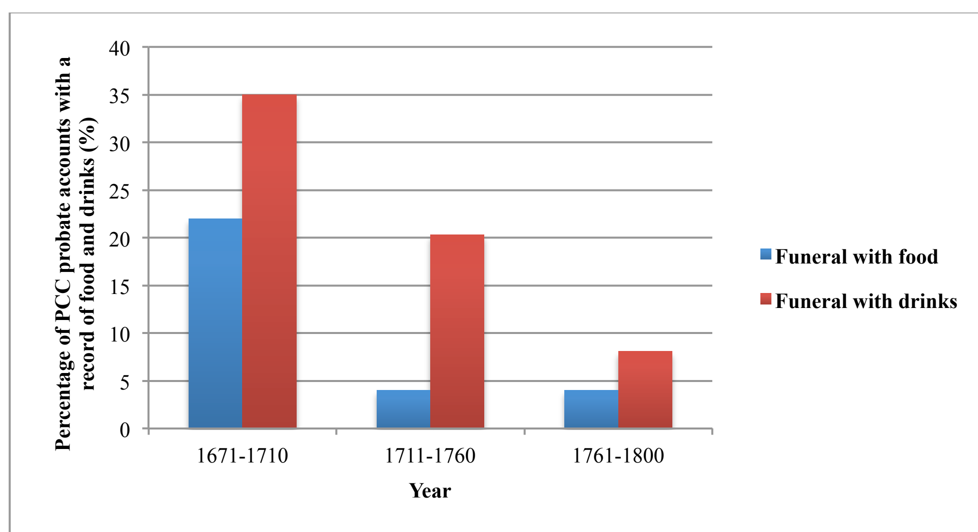

Figure 3.1: The detailed PCC probate accounts with reference to food and drink (%)

When looking at geography, it is clear that more funerals in the countryside still held a funeral feast during this period, while in London and the nearby areas there tended to be fewer funerals with food provided (Figure 3.2). Only 3%, 4%, and 6% of the London, Middlesex, and Essex, Kent and Surrey (ESK) accounts give a detailed

[33] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 446.
[34] PROB 5/1393 John Knight, of St Leonard, Shoreditch, Middlesex, citizen and merchant tailor of London (1674),.
[35] PROB 5/4718 Robert Felgate, gent, of Burnham-on-Crouch, Essex (1677).

record on food, compared with 18% for those from other areas. By comparing these percentages with the findings of Gittings, it is clear that this is a continuing decrease. From the late sixteenth up to the mid-seventeenth the payments made on these three items recorded in Berkshire, Lincolnshire and Kent probate accounts dropped from 54.5% to 16.7%, 42.1% to 35.2%, and from 58.1% to 6.7%, respectively.[36]

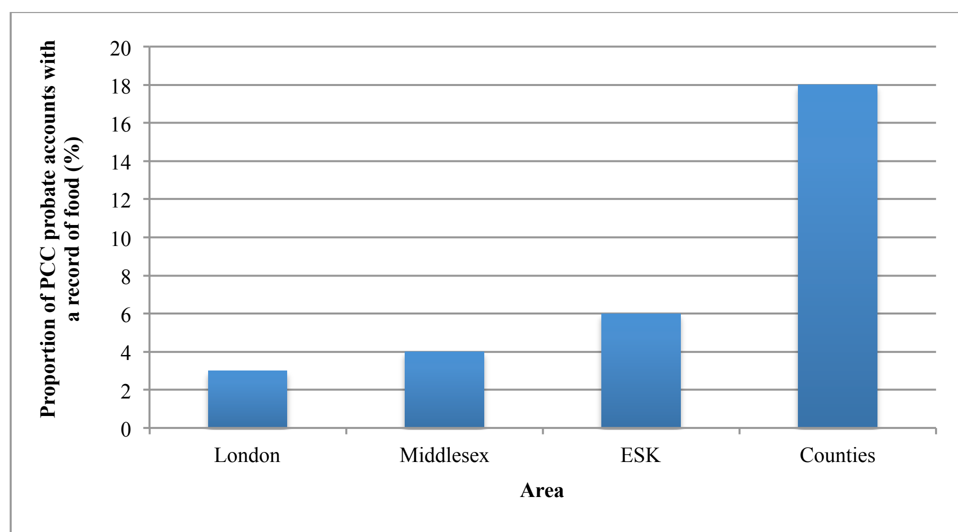

Figure 3.2: PCC probate accounts with reference to food in four different areas(%).

A decreasing percentage of probate accounts referred to payment on drink, from 55% in the first period to 16% at the end of eighteenth century.[37] Wine could be supplied by vintners or undertakers. For example, the 1735 account of John Farrer of Bristol contains a payment made 'in full' to Mrs. Haythorn, the undertaker, for her bill for the deceased's funeral. Another £4 payment was made to the vintner for wine used at the funeral.[38] However, the probate accounts and the anonymous undertaker's account book discussed in the previous chapter show that at least some undertakers did supply wine. For more than 50% of the funerals the undertaker provided drinks, especially wine.[39] It seems likely that some undertakers sub-contracted to vintners and supplied the wine, while others did not – or individual clients chose their own wine supplier, while others asked the undertaker to supply the wine. Thus, the decline in

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[36] See Table 6 in the statistical appendix in Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 241.
[37] See Figure 1.
[38] PROB 31/94/490 John Farrer, Bristol, Gloucestershire. (1735)
[39] The undertaker would buy wine directly from the vintner. See account book, Delivered at Mrs. Hanbury Felby (1715), which records that the undertaker "paid for 8 bottles of wine" which cost 15*s*. The figure of 'more than 50%' is counted from Kew, The National Archives (TNA), C/112/48: Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738) and C/112/49: Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green.

the share of wine could be because people were increasingly using undertakers to supply wine. *

The average amount of money spent on drink at funerals in the period 1671–1710 was £5 (mean) and £3 (median) (see Figure 3.3). The decrease in spending on funeral drinks from £5 to £1 (mean) and from £3 to £1 (median) observed after 1710, as we observe in food, had nothing to do with the price of goods. Drinks served at the funeral in this period remained the same, including wine, claret, brandy, sack, canary, and beer. In the long eighteenth century, wine became common among both upper and middle classes and was frequently recorded in the probate accounts. The sum of money spent on drink varied during this period, from less than 10*s* up to more than £30. The highest expenditure on this item is recorded in the probate account of William Cooper of London in 1674. His accountant paid £60 for four tuns of French wines for the funeral. However, the mean and median are £3 and £1 respectively.[40]

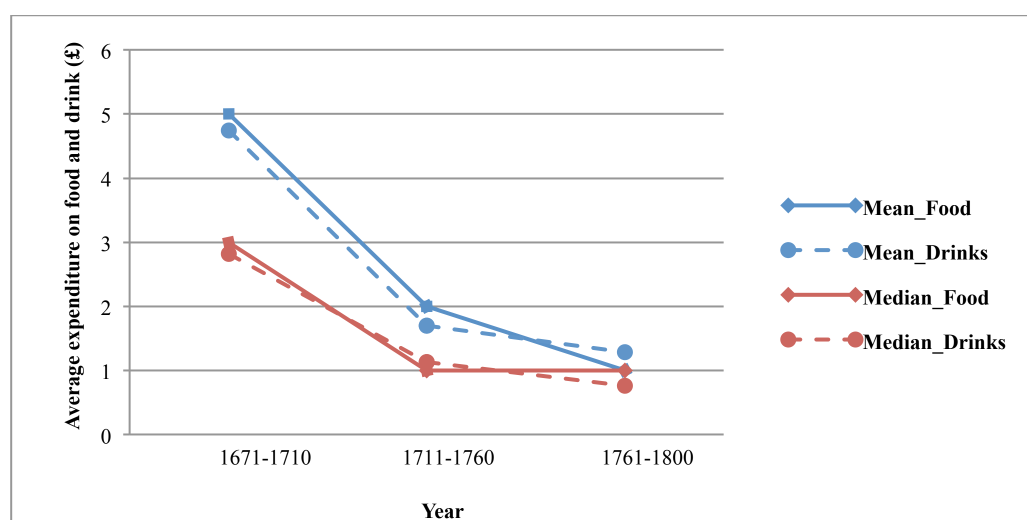

Figure 3.3: Average expenditure (mean and median) on food and drinks in three different periods.

As one would expect, wealthier people spent more than the poorer group on drink (Table 3.2). The average expenses were £2, £4 and £6 for those with less wealth than £1000, those with wealth between £1000 and £5000, and those with wealth more than £5000, respectively. However, the median values of the three groups show that those who are wealthier than £1000 tend to have similar spending behaviour on drink, with £7 for the former group and £6 for the latter group.

[40] PROB 5/5353 William Cooper, of London (1674).

Table 3.2: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on drink compared across wealth groups

Wealth group	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with drink	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
Lower than 1000	395	78	2	2	2
1000–5000	110	48	4	2	7
5000+	14	24	7	4	6

Since the funeral meal no longer played a major role in this period, its main functions, as mentioned earlier, began to disappear. The display of the social status of the deceased through the giving of food and drink was replaced by the overall presentation of the funeral, especially the decorations and mourning. A lavish funeral now did not have to involve a massive provision of food and drink, but instead a sophisticated coffin, pall, mourning cloth, mourning dress and mourning gifts.

Apart from providing food and drink at the funeral, charity, in the form of doles given to the poor at the funeral and money left to the poor of the parish in the deceased's will, declined substantially during the period of this study. The sixteenth century and seventeenth centuries were a period when the attitude towards the poor and almsgiving dramatically changed. Before these centuries distribution to the poor was one of the most important duties of the well-off in society, as it was an act of giving necessary for being a good Christian, which could be seen through several acts, including almsgiving at funerals.[41] *

While in the sixteenth century attitudes towards the poor started to change, they still remained objects of charity. Almsgiving was still commonly practiced among people in this period, but charity was becoming limited more to those who deserved it.[42] Those who were considered dangerous and threatening, like beggars or vagrants, were not included in charity or poor relief.[43] From the sixteenth century, many testators clearly expressed the view that 'common beggars' and 'mighty vagabonds' should be kept away from their funeral and funeral feasts.[44]

The Poor Laws and changes in ideas of what was considered appropriate charity led to the decline of almsgiving at funerals. Considering that the deserving poor were supported through the institutional means of poor relief, there was not the

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[41] P. Slack, *Poverty and Policy in Tudor and Stuart England* (London: Longman, 1988), 18–19. In this he states that: "Charity would provide for them; and they should be welcomed and admired as people nearer to God than the rest." (19).
[42] Ibid., 18.
[43] Ibid., 24.
[44] Ibid.

necessity for the rich to support them through charity anymore, as it was now being done via taxation. Furthermore, the poor who did not receive any support from the state were those who were viewed as socially dangerous and who should not, therefore, receive any kind of support.

In the sixteenth century many extravagant funerals of the wealthy and the upper class had distributed large sums of money to the poor who came. At the funeral of Sir Nicholas Bacon in 1579, £193 6*s* 8*d* was given to the poor.[45] According to Houlbrooke, doles of £100 or more could sometimes be given but much smaller sums were recorded as well.[46] The middle classes, if they were wealthy enough, also did the same, with a wide range of payments. Francis Jobson directed in his will in 1588 to leave £10 to the poor at the rate of 2*d*. Much less money was given to the poor at the funeral in 1593 of Thomas Beake who allocated 7*s* to the poor.[47]

Up to the late seventeenth century, distribution of money to the poor at funerals was still seen, although less than the century before due to the changes mentioned above. However, this practice had almost disappeared by the end of the eighteenth century. Almost 70% of the PCC probate accounts recording payments to the poor are in the first period (1671–1710) of this study. However, these are much less frequent than payments made for other items. These payments include money given to the poor of the parish or for the charity and doles, either cash or bread, distributed at the funeral. From the PCC probate accounts, 50% of funerals with doles distributed among the poor were aristocratic or gentry funerals.[48] This is relatively high compared to their percentage of the total number of PCC probate accounts in this study, as well as compared to other items. One way to explain this was their sense of social responsibility to the area they resided in. Although the notion of religious reciprocal exchange between the rich and the poor was in decline, it did not totally disappear. Moreover, the poor were targets for 'pity, sympathy, and aid'. In this way, the social order would be better preserved.

From the late seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century, the amount of money given to the poor at funerals fell. From 1671 to 1800, it ranged from

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[45] Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency," 190.

[46] Ibid., 191.

[47] Ibid., 192.

[48] Most probate accounts recording doles given to the poor or charity belong to benefactors or the well-known people in a community, which could be either the upper or the middle classes. The highest amount of money paid for charity was £100 made by the executor of Joseph Chaplin from Suffolk (1734). However, the largest amount of money spent on funeral feasting for the poor was £25 spent on bread and cakes at the funeral of Thomas Bishop, an esquire of Suffolk (1675). See PROB 31/105/379 and PROB 5/2970.

approximately 5*s* to £31 with most in a range from 10*s* to £5, and with mean and median values of £3 and £1.50. Average doles offered to the poor at the funeral were greater among the upper class than the middle class. The highest payment for the poor was recorded in the account of Theodore Walpoole, at £31.[49] Dame Grace Pickering, a widow of Whaddon, Cambridge, paid £17 16*s* 6*d* to the poor and her executor distributed £20 for clothes to the poor.[50] Cordelia Harris and Elizabeth Allen both paid around £2 to the poor.[51] Many deceased included a direction in their will before they died for their executor to give money to the poor. For example, Edmund Philips paid £2 1*s* 6*d* to the poor of the parish the day after the funeral by the particular orders given him by the deceased in his sickness.[52]

Funerals also sometimes included a provision of food, especially bread, for the poor. Leftovers were given to the poor and an enormous amount of bread was provided at funerals. Expenses on bread alone ranged from 10*s* to £5. At the funeral of George Poyner in the late 1670s forty dozen loaves of bread for £2 were given to the poor.[53] The funeral of William Peace in the same period provided even more bread for the poor at a cost of £5.[54]

Unlike the earlier centuries, in a big city like London where the sense of community was weak, the public funeral was limited to those of very high social status. The wealthy middling sort instead opted for a more private funeral which placed more emphasis on mourning and funerary decorations. At the same time as a growing number of funerals were managed by the undertaker in the eighteenth century, food and doles almost disappeared from most funerals. By looking at geography, it is clear that drink illustrates a different picture from food. We observe similar percentages in a number of probate accounts recording money paid for drinks among different areas with 19% in London, 20% in Middlesex, 21% in Essex, Kent and Middlesex, and 22% in other provinces. The provision of drink was relatively uniform at funerals in the period of study.

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[49] PROB 5/1401 Theodore Walpole, gent, of Caistor, Lincolnshire (1684).
[50] PROB 31/172/74, Dame Grace Pickering, widow of Waddon, Cambridgeshire (1738)
[51] PROB 5/5549, the Honourable Cordelia Harris, of St Martin in the Fields, Middlesex (1691) and PROB 5/594 Elizabeth Allen, of St Andrew Holborn, Middlesex (1678).
[52] PROB 11/438/237 Edmund Philips, of Fetter Lane, City of London (1697).
[53] PROB 5/4457 George Poyner, gent, of Codicote, Hertfordshire (1684).
[54] PROB 5/4004 William Peace, St Katherine Coleman, London (1687).

3.2 Mourning and Mourning Gifts

Mourning dress, which was once worn only by the upper class, became widespread among the middle classes by the late seventeenth century. From the Middle Ages up to the sixteenth century mourning was a public display of social status. It reached its peak when the College of Arms managed aristocratic funerals. As we will see in Chapter 4, the College had the right to prescribe the exact amounts of cloth that had to be used.[55]

A very long or very elaborate mourning, even used as a means of emphasising personal grief, was regarded as bad form: eccentric, extravagant, and ostentatious.[56] The idea of mourning dress was attacked by those of more puritanical belief. One of the popular lines of argument was the insincerity of wearing mourning, 'there being under a mourning gown often times a merry heart'.[57] Bolton called such black clothes 'artificiall forms of sadnesse and complementall representation of Sorrow'.[58] The impact of puritanical attacks seemed to be minor since a large sum of money was still lavished on mourning for many heraldic funerals or even more private funerals. More effect on changes in mourning was seen when the heraldic funeral was replaced by the night burial.

Among the aristocrats, a shift from heraldic funerals to nocturnal funerals, which began from the beginning of the seventeenth century, decreased the amount of mourning dress distributed among the funeral guests. Mourning dress was now only worn by the deceased's family members, relatives, close friends and servants. The wearing of mourning dress was a means of showing respect for the dead person as well as expressing a personal sense of loss. Apart from a marking of their status, the polite and gentry classes were also interested in impressing each other. Although grand families still wanted their funerals to be extravagant they began to limit the number of guests invited.

When looking at the wealth groups, however, the percentage of probate accounts recording a payment for mourning for the wealthier groups is greater than for the poorer group (Table 3.3). This could be due to the fact that mourning dress in

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[55] C. Gittings, "Expressions of Loss in Early Seventeenth-Century England," in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Glennys Howarth (London: Macmillan, 1997), 26.
[56] R. Trumbach, *The Rise of the Egalitarian Family: Aristocratic Kinship and Domestic Relations in Eighteenth Century England* (New York and London: Academic Press, 1978), 40.
[57] This statement was made by Thomas Cartwright. Quoted from Vincent, *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England*, 67.
[58] R. Bolton, *Mr Boltons Last and Learned Worke of the Foure Last Things* (London, 1635), 82–3.

this period was still quite costly and could only be adopted by the more well-to-do middle classes and not all of them.

Table 3.3: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on mourning clothes compared across wealth groups

Wealth group	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with mourning clothes	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
Lower than 1000	324	64	15	9	20
1000–5000	179	77	38	21	53
5000+	47	81	64	30	74

In the early seventeenth century, mourning dress became less rigid in its form and style. By the late seventeenth century, mourning had become simpler, with the abolition of mourning mantles (Plate 3.1). Ladies mourned in black gowns, with extra long trains and fine black silk veils. For men, mourning cloaks and hats became very popular and replaced mourning gowns and hoods by the 1690s.[59] The most fundamental rule applied to both sexes was that everything must be matt and dull. Broadcloth and other specially woven dull fabrics, such as paramatta trimmed with crape, were required. In the probate account of Thomas Cawcutt in 1684, there were payments made for his two sons' mourning which included mourning frocks, two pairs of stockings, two mourning suits, and two pairs of mourning shoes.[60] Edward Rice's account in 1688 records some payments for his daughter, Dorothy Rice, for a black mantua gown and petticoats and also for a hood and scarf.[61]

[This image has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.]

Plate 3.1: Mrs Anne Hogarth, in deep mourning for her husband, 1735.
Painted by her son, William Hogarth.
(source: Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History*, 114)

Apart from mourning cloth and dress, at grander funerals black cloth hangings ('blacks') could be hung in the church. It could cost a massive amount of money to buy the great amount of blacks needed to hang in the church so normally they were hired instead.[62] A detail of hangings was recorded in the probate account of Richard Mocket who was buried in Oxford in 1645. Both the chapel at All Souls and the University Church were festooned with cloth; 86 yards of cotton and 57 yards of

[59] Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History*, 94.
[60] PROB 5/3941 Thomas Cawcutt, St Benet Fink, London (1684)
[61] PROB 5/2295 Edward Rice, of St Saviour, Southwark, Surrey (1688).
[62] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 135.

baize were hired at 1*d* a yard.[63] Such hangings of blacks in the church became very rare from the late seventeenth century and there is no record of the hiring of cotton or baize to be hung in the church in the PCC probate account samples. The disappearance could be due to the fact that fewer people were interred in the church in the eighteenth century when many people were buried in either in burial grounds or cemeteries. The drop in the use of 'blacks' would lower funeral expenditure for the upper class and very wealthy people.

From the late seventeenth to the eighteenth century, the wearing of mourning by family members, close relations and friends, and servants was usual. This can be seen from the similar share of probate accounts recording payments for mourning (Figure 3.4). The average values of mourning in the period 1671–1710 were £44 and £23 for mean and median respectively.

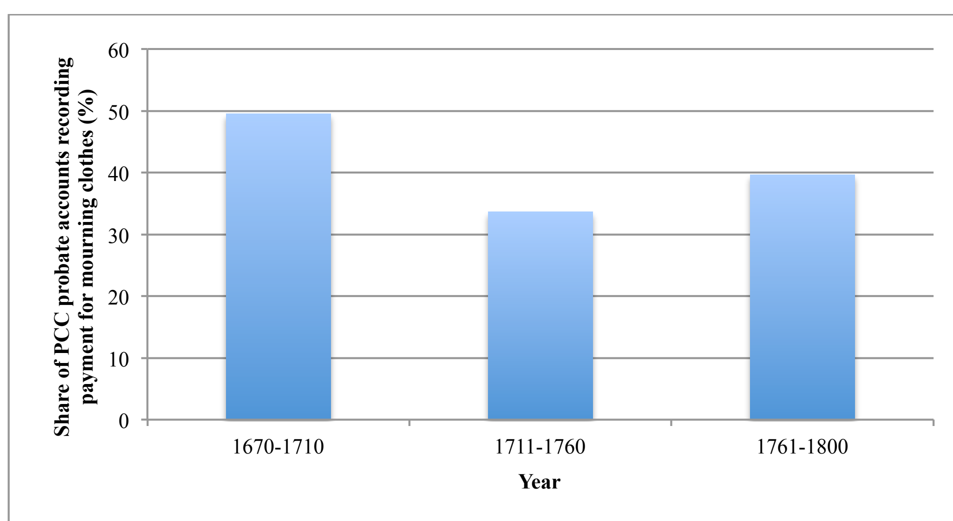

Figure 3.4: PCC probate accounts with a reference to mourning clothes in three different periods (%).

If we consider overall expenditure on mourning clothes at non-heraldic funerals, there was a decline in expenditure throughout the eighteenth century. Although the style of mourning clothes became more extravagant, the move towards private funerals reduced the numbers of people who had to wear mourning clothes. Interestingly, it was also during this period that the Earl Marshall ordered shorter periods of mourning.[64] This pattern is also apparent for mourning gifts where we observe a similar decline in average expenditure (Figure 3.5). However, it is

[63] This example is from Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 438.
[64] http://artofmourning.com/2010/07/06/textiles–tuesday–18th–century–part–1/

important to note that the percentage share of average mourning expenses with regard to total funeral spending rises by the end of the century.

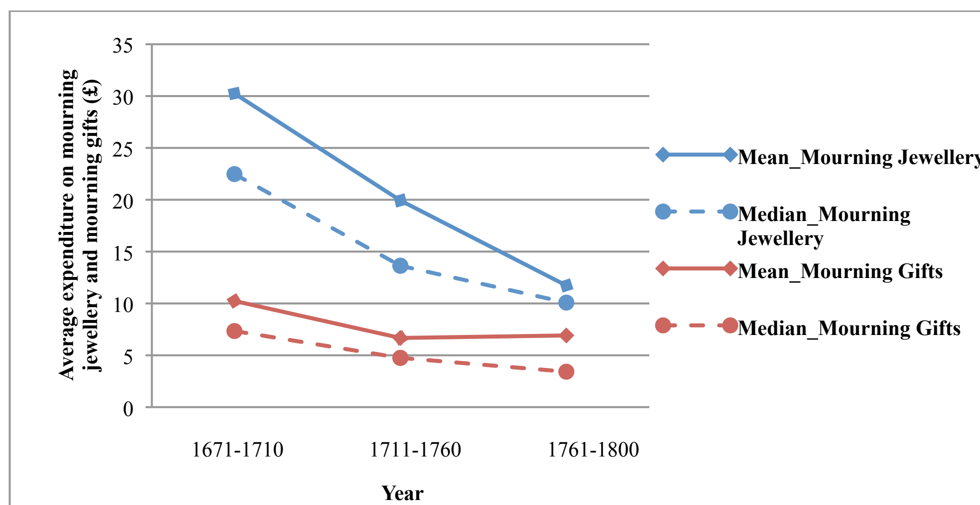

Figure 3.5: Average expenditure (mean and median) on mourning jewellery and mourning gifts in three different periods

A large percentage of funeral expenditure was still spent on mourning for those intimately connected with the deceased. Reserving the mourning for the immediate kin distinguished the wearer from the rest of the guests. This conveyed continuity from the earlier period but in a narrower social spectrum. Normally, the deceased's wife or husband (in many cases the accountant or the executor of the deceased) would receive the largest amount of money to spend on their mourning clothes. For example, the sum of £50 (out of £80) was paid to Vincent Sheppard, citizen and haberdasher of London for the mourning of the accountant (his wife) in 1733.[65] Another case was the 1679 funeral of Thomas Mudd of St Augustine Watling Street in London, citizen and grocer, where £11 was paid for his wife's mourning and to attend his funeral.[66]

Apart from the deceased's spouse, money was also allocated to pay for the mourning dress of the deceased's children. In the account of Thomas Cherington of St Andrew Undershaft in London, £14 14*s* was paid for 'silk and crape for mourning' for the deceased's wife and children, while in that of Humphrey Lamplee £40 6*s* was paid for mourning the deceased's children.[67] Relations and servants sometimes received mourning as well. For instance, £31 was spent on William Etherington's relations for

[65] PROB 31/112/26 Vincent Sheppard, citizen and haberdasher of London (died Richmond, Surrey) (1733).
[66] PROB 5/5354 Thomas Mudd, of St Augustine Watling Street, London, citizen and grocer (1679).
[67] PROB 31/14/410 Thomas Cherington of St Andrew Undershaft, London (1723), and PROB 31/23/417 Humphrey Lamplee of St James, Westminster, Middlesex (1724).

their mourning and £20 more was paid for his wife's mourning and again for his relations.[68] Joseph Bowles's probate account records £29 15*s* 4*d* to be paid for mourning to the relations and servants attending the corpse.[69]

The large amount spent on mourning for the deceased's wife (or husband) and their children reflected the extended periods of mourning required of the closest relatives.[70] A wife or a husband would be expected to wear mourning up to one year, while the deceased's parents or parents-in-law would wear mourning for six months. Sisters and brothers could wear mourning for three months. However, this was less restricted among the second degree of kinship to the deceased; for instance, for an aunt and uncle it could vary from three weeks to three months. Moreover, there was a rule distinguishing phases of mourning – full or deep mourning, followed by the second and then by the half-mourning stages. Full mourning contained the most rigid rule by not allowing any jewellery or any shiny cloth to be worn. Only dull black broadcloth, dull silk and crape [modern 'crêpe'] were permitted.[71] Peter Culley's probate account (1676) states a payment of £9 to Thomas Coles, a draper, for black cloth for mourning for the accountant and testator's sons and for black baize for the pulpit.[72] Thomas Wardall's accountant had to pay £15 in 1686 for fine black cloth for a mourning gown and petticoat for herself and for the tailor's bill.[73] The second mourning was said to be less austere, and some jewellery could be worn. The last stage of mourning, the half-mourning, afforded some relief when dull mauve and grey were permitted as well as subdued patterns and silk. All this could lead to higher payments for mourning dress.

Household servants also had to go into mourning (Plate 3.2). However, the quality of fabric allowed them was lower, hence the lower cost of their mourning. For instance, £2 was assigned to William Hambley's maidservants for their mourning. For the funeral of Daniel Wescombe in 1735, £30 was paid for mourning to his accountant (his wife) and his daughter, while £15 15*s* was paid for mourning to all the servants.[74] In most of the cases, the total amount of money spent on servants' mourning was approximately £2 to £5. This was a small expense especially when compared with the deceased's family members who tended to receive more than £5

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[68] PROB 5/3601 William Etherington, gent, of St Dunstan in the East, London (1681).
[69] PROB 5/1560 Joseph Bowles, of St Mary Abchurch, London (1703).
[70] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite: Clothes in Early Modern England*, 65–6.
[71] Ibid., 67.
[72] PROB 5/3899 Peter Culley, citizen and apothecary, of London (1676).
[73] PROB 5/1811 Thomas Wardall, esq, of London, died in Aveley, Essex (1686).
[74] PROB 31/145/561 Daniel Wescombe, esq of St Katherine Coleman, London (1735).

each. There are a few cases when a particular servant received quite a large sum of money for their mourning. Samuel Cromleholme's account refers to an amount of £5 paid for mourning to Mary Read, the deceased's servant, 'who had been very serviceable to him in his life time'. His two brothers-in-law received only the same amount as his servant.[75]

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Plate 3.2: 'Mr B. finds Pamela writing', Joseph Highmore, 1743-4. Pamela wears fashionable servant's mourning, after the death of her mistress. (Source: Tate Gallery, London)

Apart from mourning clothes, the seventeenth century saw an increasing use of mourning tokens including rings, gloves, scarves, hatbands, and ribbons. Most mourning jewellery took the form of rings; however, there were other items including necklaces, bracelets, or lockets (Plate 3.3). The mourning ring was considered to be one of the mourning gifts (Plate 3.3). Other mourning gifts that were distributed at the funeral were gloves, scarves, and hatbands. The act of gift-giving, as mentioned in the section on food and drink, could be for a more emotional reason, such as a bond between a giver and a receiver. It also marked overlapping hierarchies of status, kinship, friendship, and regard.[76] The giving of the ring was more personal than the wearing of mourning.

Such gifts in memory of the deceased were rarely recorded in accounts of expenditure at the funerals of country people of middling rank in Berkshire from the late sixteenth to the early seventeenth century.[77] However, rings became more common as mourning jewellery to be distributed among those who were close to the deceased throughout the seventeenth century and by the eighteenth century they were given in large numbers. According to Houlbrooke, superior workmanship and more precious metal were indicators of the closeness between the deceased and the recipient. Apart from distribution as a mourning gift, a ring could also be a symbol or a display of love or affection in courtship or marriage. After the Reformation, an increasing number of people, mostly of the rank of knight or esquire, left rings, or the money to buy them. The numbers of rings ranged from one to twenty but Houlbrooke

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[75] PROB 5/545 Samuel Cromleholme, of St Faith the Virgin, London, master of the Free School of St Paul's, London (1673).

[76] Harold Mytum, *Mortuary Monuments and Burial Grounds of the Historic Period* (New York: Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2004), 15.

[77] From the probate accounts in Ian Mortimer, ed., *Berkshire Probate Accounts, 1583–1712* (Reading: Berkshire Record Society, 1999)

found that in most cases fewer than ten were given.[78] In contrast, in the eighteenth century many upper-class people gave a large of number of rings at the funeral. These could cost the deceased's estate a vast amount of money. For example, at the funeral of Thomas Bury, Lord Chief Baron of the court of Exchequer in 1725, 126 rings were given away, costing £133, while 101 rings were distributed among the funeral guests of Sir Isaac Newton in 1727 costing £87.[79]

For the middle classes, fewer rings were given at funerals, yet there were still more widely distributed than in the century before (Table 3.4).

Table 3.4: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on mourning jewellery compared across social classes

Social status	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with mourning jewellery	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
Aristocracy and Gentry	26	14	27	18	22
Middle class	190	31	21	14	30

At the funeral of Richard King in 1729 at St Faith, London, twenty-three rings at £1 each were given to 'the pallbearers and others who attended the deceased's funeral and to relations'.[80] At some funerals, cheaper rings were disbursed. At Joseph Bowles's funeral in 1703, thirty-four rings were given away, which cost his accountant £13 10.[81] Gold rings were generally made for close friends and relatives. At the funeral of Michael Coles of Stepney in Middlesex in 1736, gold rings, which cost £13 13*s*, were given away to the deceased's friends while £18 6*d* was spent on the rings given to the relations and friends at Richard Marples's funeral.[82] At the funeral of Mary Minshall in 1744, £7 7*s* was lavished on mourning rings distributed among the guests while more expensive rings were given to the deceased's relations.[83] Apart from rings, other accessories could be distributed at the funeral, for example, at Isaac Puller's funeral in 1700 two lockets were given along with two rings.[84]

[78] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 235–37.
[79] PROB 31/33/422 Thomas Bury, Lord Chief Baron of his majesties court of Exchequer (1725), and PROB 31/47/220 Sir Isaac Newton, of St Martin in the Fields, Middlesex (1727)
[80] PROB 31/69/522 Richard King, citizen and joiner of St Faith, London (1729)
[81] PROB 5/1560 Joseph Bowles, of St Mary Abchurch, London (1703).
[82] PROB 31/153/370 Richard Marples of St Gregory, London (1736).
[83] PROB 31/255/784 Mary Minshall, widow of St Augustine, London (1744)
[84] PROB 5/1985 Isaac Puller, of St Olave, Southwark, Surrey, citizen and draper of London (1700).

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Plate 3.3: Examples of mourning jewellery including ring and bracelet, c. 1600–1800 (Source: http://imageevent.com/bluboi/early;jsessionid=ubzx8e4g01.tiger_s)

Mourning clothes and mourning jewellery were more popular in London, Middlesex, and their surrounding areas than in the provinces (Table 3.5 and 3.6). Fashion took time to spread to the further areas. This would go along with more suitable mourning becoming cheaper and more readily available. There was a wish to be in tune with Court customs on the issue of mourning as "there were occasioned hurried letters between family living in London and the countryside requiring exact detail on the current mourning fashions".[85] In the nineteenth century the spread of fashion magazines hastened the communication of fashion information to the provinces.[86]

Table 3.5: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on mourning clothes by geography

Area	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with mourning clothes	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
London	73	49	27	16	37
Middlesex	55	39	23	14	31
ESK	39	37	26	12	41
others	49	28	25	9	48

Table 3.6: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on mourning jewellery by geography.

Area	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with mourning jewellery	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
London	73	14	25	17	27
Middlesex	55	7	26	18	42
ESK	39	9	16	10	19
others	49	9	16	10	15

[85] Rugg, "From Reason to Regulation, 1760–1850," in *Death in England: an Illustrated History*, ed. Jupp and Gittings, 221.
[86] Ibid., 222.

Gloves, scarves and hatbands were normally mentioned together in the probate accounts as mourning gifts distributed to the funeral guests. Scarves became more popular during the eighteenth century as mourning gowns went out of fashion. Black scarves were worn at men's funerals and white scarves at women and children's funerals. There were different types of fine silk for scarves, referred to as 'love' and 'tiffany'. There were three sorts of gloves: shammy, cordovan leather and kid, and 'sheepes and tanned'. Men's and women's gloves were also distinct. These gloves were often different in quality and prices, as recorded in the account for Edward Grise's funeral in 1728[87]:

4.8.0 for three dozens and eight pairs of men's gloves
1.0.0 for ten pairs of corvidant gloves
0.4.6 for one pair of shammy gloves for the minister
0.7.4 for four pairs of women's gloves
0.5.0 five pairs of women's gloves
0.4.0 four pairs of men's gloves
0.4.0 five pairs of children's gloves

This act of giving luxury goods to the guests involved the display of social status and the reintegration of the social group. According to Vincent, the distribution of mourning accessories came to have a similar function to the giving of mourning black, and the amount of money spent on these items could be as large as on the mourning cloth and dress.[88] For example, the accountant of Samuel Cordington, esquire of Frampton Cotterell in Gloucestershire, paid £24 in 1703 to Mr. William Bush for gloves used at the funeral while £27 17*s* 11*d* was paid for mourning.[89] While the average payment for mourning gloves, hatbands and scarves was £3, the account of William Bonner, 1733, of Bristol shows that these items alone could cost up to £55.[90]

In the eighteenth century 'mourning' was a necessary item for funerals for both upper and middle classes. We observe a higher share of expenditure on mourning clothes and gifts with regard to the total funeral expenditure and a stable share of expenditure on mourning jewellery (Figure 3.6). It is clear that there was no drastic change regarding mourning clothes since the share of people consuming them remained quite stable in this period. What is interesting here is a significant drop in mourning gifts (Figure 3.7).

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[87] PROB 31/58/342 Edward Grise, of St Martin in the Fields, Middlesex (1728).
[88] Vincent, *Dressing the Elite*, 87.
[89] PROB 5/4332 Samuel Cordington, esquire of Frampton, Gloucestershire (1703)
[90] PROB 31/113/138 William Bonner, of Bristol (1733).

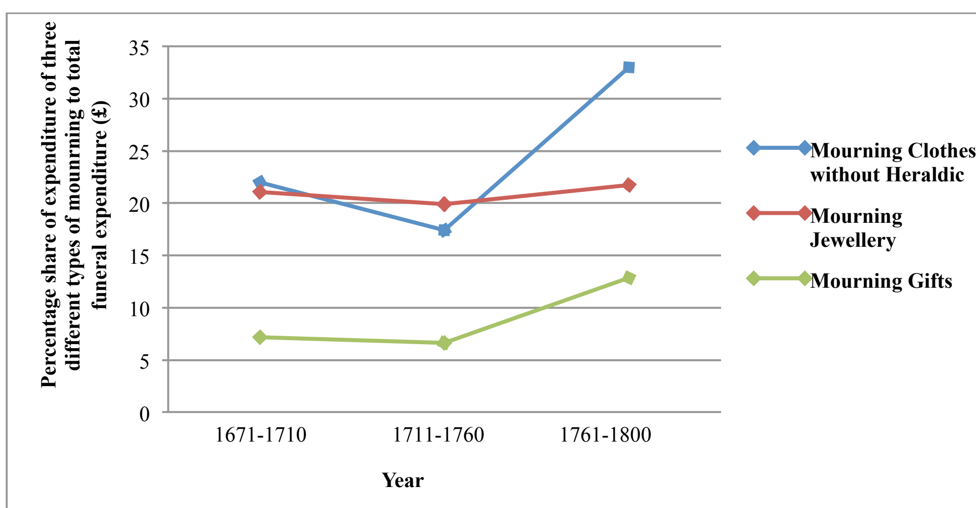

Figure 3.6: Percentage share of expenditure on three different types of mourning items to total funeral expenditure in three different periods

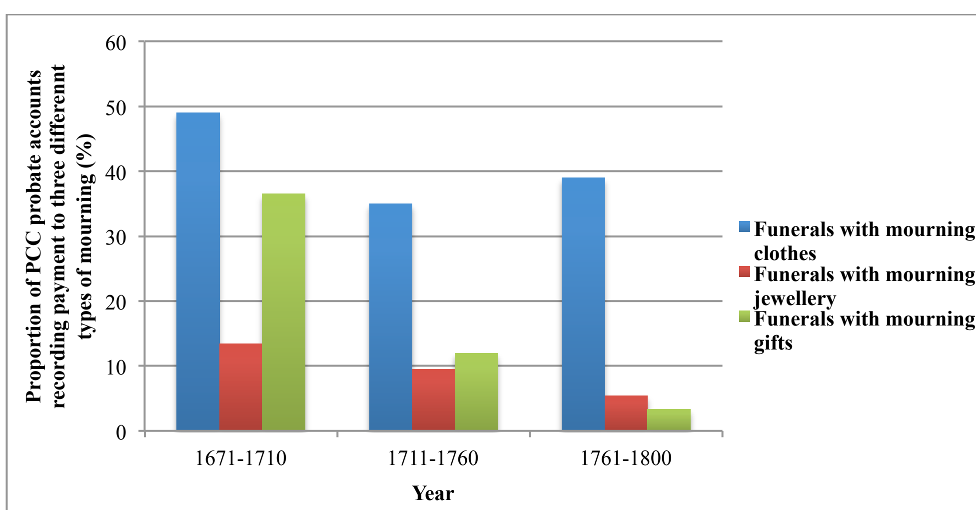

Figure 3.7: PCC probate accounts with reference to three different types of mourning items in three different periods (%)

As with coffins and shrouds, these items were still in use throughout the eighteenth century. A sharp decline of accounts mentioning mourning jewellery, gloves, hatbands and scarves might indicate that the undertakers began to provide these items at the funeral, as their clients requested, while mourning cloth and dress might still be prepared by the estate. Sir Frederick Eden reported the items provided by a London undertaker in 1800[91]:

> The deceased to be furnished with the following articles: a strong elm coffin covered with superfine black … For use, a handsome velvet pall, three gentlemen's cloaks, three crape hatbands, three hoods and

[91] Julian Litten, "The Funeral Trade in Hanoverian England, 1714–1760," in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal*, ed. Jupp and Howarth, 50.

> scarves, and six pairs of gloves, two porters equipped to attend the funeral, a man to attend the same with hat and gloves; also the burial fees paid if not exceeding one guinea.

By examining the functions and trends of mourning cloth, dress, and gifts, both continuity and change can be seen. It seems that the function of all mourning items as a way to display social status still continued, while during this period the greater popularity of giving mourning tokens to the funeral guests could function as a way to commemorate the dead as well as a bond between the dead and the recipient. It is clear that from the late seventeenth to the end of eighteenth century there was no difference between upper and middle classes in consuming mourning clothes. A higher percentage share of these expenses with regard to the total funeral expenditure suggests that people placed importance on mourning throughout the century. A declining number of the PCC probate accounts recording mourning jewellery and gifts by the end of eighteenth century could possibly be due to the provision of these goods by undertakers. The undertaker was able to provide a variety of mourning to mourner or executor: the hire or outright purchase of gloves, mourning hatbands and scarves, except for mourning dress, which in many cases was still prepared by the estate.

3.3 Coffin and Shroud

Coffins and shrouds are the items found in most PCC probate accounts from 1671 to 1800. This section will show how the upper and middle classes consumed coffins and shrouds. The numbers of probate accounts that record these two items decrease through time. However, this simply reflects the rising use of undertakers for managing funerals. The expenditure on coffins and shrouds shows different and more interesting trends (Figure 3.8). While the expenditure on shrouds remained quite stable from 1671 up to 1760, that on coffins gradually increased.

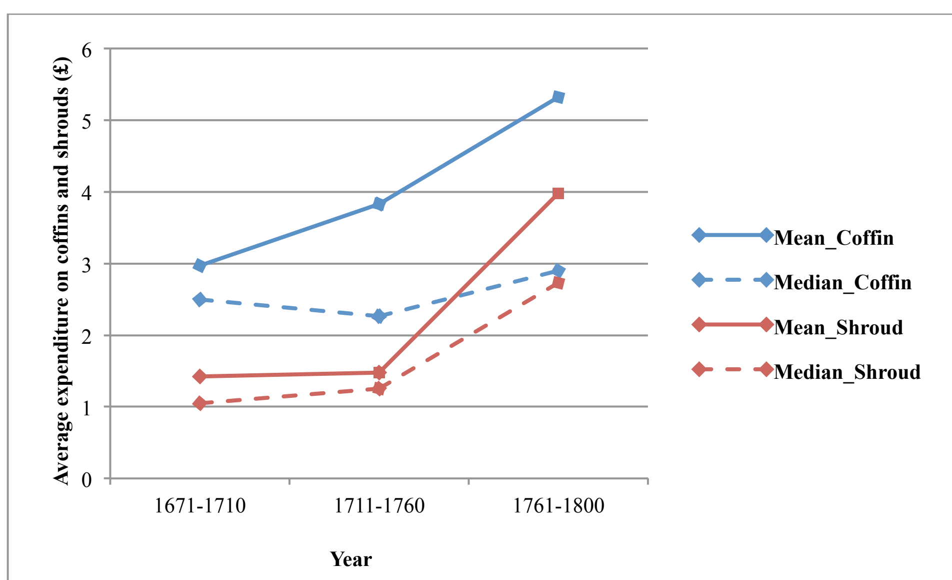

Figure 3.8: Average expenditure (mean and median) on coffins and shrouds in three different periods

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Plate 3.4: An early example of the 'night-dress' type of shroud, with vertical ruching and ribbon wrist-ties, depicted on a c.1720 trade card of Eleazor Malory (Source: Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 78)

Before the seventeenth century, most dead bodies were simply shrouded. The body would normally go to the grave simply wrapped in a shroud or winding-sheet. The requisition of a single linen sheet from the household supply seems to have been the norm in the sixteenth century. For the rich, the sheet would be purchased specially rather than sacrificing a useful item of domestic furnishing since linen 'of any appreciable width was a luxury and worthy of bequest'.[92] This practice remained in the provinces before 1700, while in London it was unusual. It was near-universal that the dead body was coffined by the beginning of the eighteenth century.[93]

Shrouds were normally white in colour and could be of different types of fabric including linen, wool or silk. The choice of material was important and almost a status symbol. The body that was wrapped in linen would give a 'neat, crisp appearance and presentable for viewing'.[94] Holland[95], which was less attractive than linen, had some special qualities, being water-resistant, which should be taken into account when dead bodies were concerned. Cerecloth, which was waxed unbleached

[92] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 60.
[93] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 145.
[94] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 112.
[95] This is a fine plainwoven linen originally from Europe used for window shades, insulation, labels and tags, sign cloths, etc.

linen, was very occasionally used for shrouds. It was used when the body had to make a long journey from the place of death to the place of burial.[96] The shroud or winding-sheet originally covered the corpse completely and was tied at head and foot. People started to use undershifts in the early seventeenth century and the well-to-do were buried in both a shift and a shroud.[97]

There was a change with the introduction of the Burial in Woollen Acts of 1666-80 which forbade the use of any other thread or fabric but wool for burial. The requirement for woollen shrouds was a form of protectionism, 'for lessening the importation of Linnen from beyond the Seas, and the encouragement for the Woollen and Paper Manufacturers of the Kingdome'. In order to comply with the law, the executor had to swear an affidavit that the body of the deceased was buried in woollen fabric. The executor of William Wimpie of Chelsea was charged 6*d* for 'an affidavit according to the account of Parliament for burying in woolen'.[98] According to Litten, this restriction helped stimulate the ingenuity of manufacturers.[99] One example was Mrs. Porter who in 1678 claimed to be the first to make '[d]ecent and fashionable laced shifts and dressings for the Dead made of woolen'.[100] Flannel shrouds and shirts were sold in large numbers. The body was dressed in a shift which was supposed to be at least 6 inches longer than the body so that it could be tied 'into a kind of Tuft'.[101] A cap was placed on the head, gloves on the hands, and a cravat around the neck.

By the late seventeenth century, it was normal that the bodies of upper- and middle-class people were shrouded and coffined: the winding-sheet had almost disappeared. There are only five probate accounts which refer to the winding-sheet, and all are from the earlier period of 1671 to 1690. This corresponds with Litten's study. He claims that the use of the winding-sheet with its top and bottom knots declined during the last quarter of the seventeenth century. Its place was taken by the 'open backed long-sleeved shift with draw-strings at wrist and neck, either with or without integral hood'.[102]

Although the law required a woollen shroud, linen was still occasionally used, especially for the wealthy and the upper classes. The penalty for not complying with

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[96] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 61.
[97] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 70.
[98] PROB 31/177/413 William Wimpie, Chelsea, Middlesex (1738)
[99] Litten, "The Funeral Trade in Hanoverian England, 1714–1760," 57.
[100] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 69.
[101] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 70.
[102] Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History*, 85.

the law was a fine of £5, half of which would be paid to the poor of the parish.[103] The executor of Alexander Campbell, esquire, of Bath had to pay £5 to 'the informer and poor of the parish of Walcot for burying Alexander Campbell in Linnen' (1773).[104]This action displayed a mark of difference between those who could afford to flout the law and the ranks below them in the social scale. The tradition of being buried in linen survived into the late seventeenth century, but in the eighteenth century it became quite rare. There are less than twenty PCC probate accounts recording a payment of £5 for 'the forfeit money for burying the deceased in linen'. Among them is James Barlow (1792), of city of Bristol.[105] Some deceased did make a request to be buried in linen, for example, the account of Grace Masters (wife of John Masters) of Deptford, Kent states that £5 was paid 'as forfeited for the deceased's burial in linen being her request' (1726).[106]

The undertakers provided different kinds of shroud. They kept ready-made shrouds in stock in a multitude of patterns and sizes. Consequently, many specialist workshops sprang up, supplying different types of 'soft goods', including shrouds and coffin linings. Since it was illegal to provide the clients with a linen shroud, with these manufacturers, who provided blank affidavits so that the undertakers could make false statements, rather than an alternative source.a[107]

The price of shrouds remained quite stable throughout the long eighteenth century (Table 3.7). The Burial in Woollen Act was in force between 1666 and 1814, but the law was generally ignored after 1770, which possibly explains why the use of the shroud by the end of the century had increased. When the Burial in Woollen Act was in force, however, people still had options as they could choose from different qualities of wool. In the account book of Robert Legg, shrouds are categorised into three types: normal, fine, and super fine. During this period, a shroud came with pillow and gloves. A superfine shroud together with the two latter items would cost on average £2, while a fine shroud cost half that amount (£1).[108]

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[103] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 212.
[104] PROB 31/598/554 Alexander Campbell, esq, widower, of St James Westminster, Middlesex, Captain in HM 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards (1773).
[105] PROB 31/866/736, James Barlow, of city of Bristol, Gloucestershire (1792)
[106] PROB 31/44/538 Grace Masters (wife of John Masters), [and money lender], who lent out money weekly to workmen in the Kings Yard at Deptford upon credit of their pay in the said dockyard (1726).
[107] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 70.
[108] C/112/49, Robert Legg's shop accounts, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' shop accounts. 3 vols. (1707–1738).

Table 3.7: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on shrouds compared across three periods.

Year	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with shroud	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
1671–1710	96	12	1	1	144
1711–1760	54	7	1	1	100
1761-1800	28	4	3	1	54

Instead of providing a full-length shroud, some undertakers preferred to adapt the coffin lining for the same purpose. Litten describes how:

> Once the coffin had received its primary lining and edged frill, two rectangular sheets – both the length and width of the coffin – were tacked to the base at its sides. Once the body had been placed in the coffin and the fitted pillow positioned under the head, these sheets were folded over the remains and either pinned together or roughly sewn into place. The upper section of the sheet was left parted to expose the features to view and remained so until the time came to secure the lid. In this way the body was put into the coffin wearing just a shift and bonnet. It was not only a neat way to finish the interior but also gave the dressed corpse the appearance of being in bed. This would have been more expensive than the winding sheet but it presented the body in a more natural attitude of repose.[109]

Once the body was shrouded, it might then be placed in a coffin. These were usually bought ready-made, 'in the whole'. Sometimes planks and nails would be bought separately and then assembled. Before the seventeenth century, as might be expected, wealthier people tended to be buried in coffins more often than the poor. In some cases, the coffin was employed as a display of social status, For example, in the town of Rye in Sussex in 1587 the deceased's social status indicated whether a coffin could be used, and it was regulated by order:

> No person … under the degree of Mayor Jurat or Common councilman, or of their wives, except such person as the Mayor shall give licence for … shall be chested or coffined to their burial, and if any carpenter … make any … coffin (or other than for the persons aforesaid excepted) he shall be fined 10s.[110]

The use of coffins became more popular across wider social groups in the eighteenth century. People interred in the church had their bodies coffined. For poorer people in this period, in some parishes a communal coffin was available, which was used to carry the body to the grave, where it was buried in just a shroud or winding

[109] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 79.
[110] In Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 114–15.

sheet. These were quite common in sixteenth-century Kent, but quite rare in Lincolnshire, although the numbers increased throughout the seventeenth century (Plate 3.5).[111]

[This image has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.]

Plate 3.5: "Of thousands produced over the centuries, only two parish coffins survive. This one, at Howden Minster in Yorkshire, was provided by the Churchwardens in 1664." (Source: Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 98)

There were three further reasons for the use of coffins before the eighteenth century. First of all, it was for the peace of the deceased since it hid the corpse from view and gave it some protection against subsequent disturbance.[112] The second reason was a continuing motive from the earlier period, that is, the demonstration of social status, as a coffin burial was more expensive than an earth burial. The last was due to sanitary reasons. An example is the decision taken in 1565 that no corpse could be buried within the church of St Helen Bishopgate in London unless coffined in wood.[113]

From the late seventeenth to the end of eighteenth century a coffin came to be regarded as indispensable to a decent burial. During this period even paupers were buried in coffins in many parishes.[114] The awareness of graveyard sanitation, which has partially shaped the concept of modern death, according to Mark Jenner, had emerged earlier than the late eighteenth century, as suggested by Thomas Laqueur.[115] Some early eighteenth-century pamphlets convey fears created by the presence of the corpse. Church graveyards over-crowded with too many corpses might be shut down. The graveyard of St Andrew Holborn was ordered to be closed in 1720 because it was too overcrowded.[116] Throughout the century, the idea of a decent funeral was instilled in English society. To prevent undesirable odours and bad air from the corpse, it was necessary for the corpse to be put into a coffin.

In the sixteenth century, even the well-off were interred in quite simple coffins, as just being buried in a coffin was a sufficient indication of one's social status, while from the late seventeenth century this was not enough. By the eighteenth

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[111] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 114; Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 285.
[112] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 478.
[113] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 92.
[114] Houlbrooke, "Death, Church, and Family," 31.
[115] Laqueur, Thomas. "Bodies, Death, and Pauper Funerals." *Representations* 1(1983), 108-109.
[116] For the original source see below in Section 3.4. Also in Mark Jenner, "Death, Decomposition and Dechristianization? Public Health and Church Burial in Eighteenth-Century England," *English Historical Review* 120 (487) (2005): 616–18.

century there was a wider range of prices with the most expensive becoming very costly.[117] The price of a coffin and its decorations ranged from 1*s* up to £79. According to Gittings, a sum of 5*s*–7*s* was paid for most of the coffins mentioned in Berkshire probate accounts from the sixteenth to the seventeenth century.[118] A coffin for a member of the middling ranks in the early eighteenth century, according to Houlbrooke, could cost between £1 and £4.[119] In the second half of the eighteenth century, the coffin would cost over £1 and in some cases more then £20.[120] However, the average values were £4 and £2 for mean and median respectively. The mean rose through time (Figure 3.9), as the wealthy bought more elaborate coffins.

[This image has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.]

Plate 3.6: "Two mid-eighteenth-century coffins in the south-west corner of the Berite Vault at Branston, Lincolnshire, showing (left) strip coffin lace and (right) pierced coffin lace"
(Source: Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 112)

More elaboration also included more layers of coffin, sometimes including a lead coffin, a lead inner coffin, and an outer wooden case. For instance, Dame Grace Pickering was put in three coffins for her funeral in 1738 which cost her executor £26 8*s* 3*d*.[121] Another case was that of Alexander Campbell whose body was put in a three-layer coffin in 1773 costing £22 18*s* 10*d*.[122] Higher expenditure in the later two periods could relate to the use of lead which greatly increased the cost of interment. The main purpose of sealing the corpse in lead was 'to prevent the escape of noxious odours and effluvia'. This was common since a long interval was expected before burial and especially burial inside the church.[123] A lead coffin cost between £5 and £10. The account of Linthwaite Farrant (1736) of Canterbury records that £5 5*s* 5*d* was paid to James Cups for a lead coffin while that of Joseph Chaplin of Suffolk cost his executor £10 10*s* (1732).[124] Thereafter, a lead inner coffin, between inner and outer wooden coffins, replaced the earlier close sheathing of the body.

[117] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 286.
[118] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 114–15.
[119] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 290.
[120] From the PCC probate accounts recording payment for coffins.
[121] PROB 31/172/74 Dame Grace Pickering, widow, of Waddon, Cambridgeshire (1738).
[122] PROB 31/598/554 Alexander Campbell, esq, widower, of St James Westminster, Middlesex, Captain in HM 3rd Regiment of Foot Guards (1773).
[123] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*. 481.
[124] PROB 31/152/305 Linthwaite Farrant of Doctors Commons, London, and of Hayes, Kent (one of the Procurators General of the Arches Court of Canterbury and Deputy Registrar of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury) (1736) and PROB 31/105/379 Joseph Chaplin, of Bergholt, Suffolk (1732).

According to Litten, by 1750, there were four main types of coffin: the single case, the single case with a double lid, the double case, and finally the triple case 'comprising an inner wooden coffin, a lead shell and an outer wooden case'. The last sort was the most suitable for vault burial.[125] The slightly lower median expenditure of the funerals in 1711-1760 than those in 1671-1710 could be due to the fact that there were just a few cases where the cost of a coffin was very high, while most of them were similar to those in the first period. Additionally, in the first half of the eighteenth century, growing competition among the suppliers of coffins might have driven the price down.

Another reason for an increasing investment in coffins was the rising concern with decency. The upper class and the wealthy tended to seek more beautiful and sophisticated coffins to be displayed at the funeral and along the route of the journey to burial.

As shown in Table 3.8, the deceased of higher social status had far more expensive coffins than the middle classes. Their coffins cost more than double those of the middling ranks, at £6 (mean) and £4 (median) compared with £3 and £2. For the three wealth groups, it is also apparent that the greater the inventory value the deceased had, the more they spent on their coffin. This is especially the case for the wealthiest group (>£5000), whose mean and median for expenditure on coffin were £13 and £8 respectively, while those of the less wealthy were £3 and £4 (for mean) and £2 and £3 (for median) as shown in Table 3.9.

Table 3.8: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on coffins across social classes

Social status	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with coffin	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
Aristocracy and Gentry	47	34	6	4	11
Middle class	445	73	3	2	5

Table 3.9: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on coffins across wealth groups

Wealth group	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with coffin	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
Lower than 1000	356	70	3	2	6
1000–5000	111	48	4	3	7
5000+	25	43	13	9	15

[125] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 100.

The ornamentation of coffins was evident from 1660 onwards. Basically, a cheap coffin had the date and symbols of mortality composed of a pattern made out of small nails. A more decorated coffin might have a cover of black fabric, 'grips' (handles) and grip-plates, angle brackets, as well as a pattern of nails on the lid in the shape of the deceased's initials and date of death, and in a single row around the sides.[126] In the eighteenth century, coffin-plates, lid decorations, and more elaborate grip-plates began to be widely used and were available in a variety of finishes (Plate 3.7). The descriptions in executors' accounts illustrate a vivid picture of the coffin and its furniture. For example, £5 5*s* was lavished on the coffin of Henry Cooper for 'an elm coffin and foot double lidd covered with fine black cloth set of with 2 rows and 2 Ditto(?) with burnish brays nails double paneled the lid dimonded an oveil plate and 3 pair of ovell Handles gilt lin'd with white crape and ruffled and a man's shroud sheet and pillows brann'.[127]

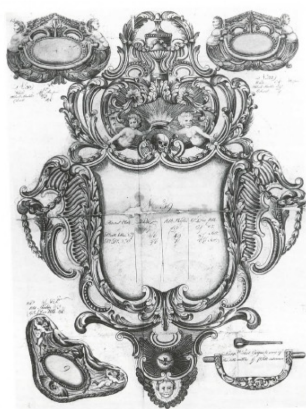

Plate 3.7: Design for a depositum plate from Tuesby & Cooper's coffin furniture catalogue of 1783. Tuesby & Cooper provided coffin furniture for upmarket funerals only (Source: Filed along with the 18th Century Trade Cards Collection at London Metropolitan Archives)

It is clear that the last forty years of the eighteenth century saw an increase in the expenditure on coffins both in terms of mean and median. One reason for this could be a fear of the deceased's body being stolen by 'resurrection men'. The fear of body snatching, according to Ruth Richardson, penetrated the whole of society from rich to poor and from metropolitan to rural districts. It started in London where medical practices and private medical schools flourished. The businesses of resurrection men were most widespread in London, especially in the eighteenth century. People were willing to spend more money on the coffins to keep their bodies

[126] Litten, *The English Way of Death*,100.
[127] PROB 31/406/405 Henry Cooper of St Mary Mounthaw, London (1757).

safe.[128] Popular death culture posed the idea that 'customary care of body would somehow safeguard both the dead and the living: both the future repose of the soul and the comfort of the mourners could thus be assured'.[129] People wanted to make sure that their loved ones were safe. Stronger coffins with secure locks and other accessories such as patented coffin screws which could not be loosened after fastening were employed.
(Plate 3.8).

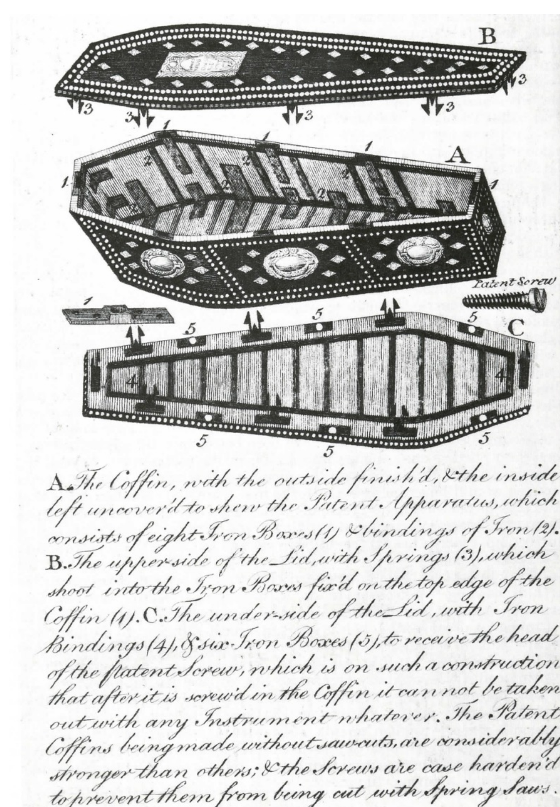

Plate 3.8: Jarvis's Patent Coffin of c.1810. 'The fastening of these approved receptacles being on such a principle as to render it impracticable for the Grave Robbers to open them.' (Source: London Metropolitan Archives: 18th Century-Trade Card Collection)

The impact of this concern can be seen when we divide the sample up geographically. London and Middlesex had the highest spending on coffins while other counties had the least. However, there was not a great difference, being £3 for London and £2 for the provinces. This would suggest that in the eighteenth century, the price of coffins was relatively uniform throughout the country. However, it is

[128] Ruth Richardson, "Why was Death So Big in Victorian Britain?" in *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, ed. Houlbrooke, 108–11. She, however, begins her period of study with the late eighteenth century.
[129] Ibid., 105.

important to note that the rising expenditure on coffins had continued from the early eighteenth century as shown earlier.

Throughout the 130-year period, coffins and shrouds were generally used and became more elaborate with the passage of time. A simple coffin was not a sufficient way to express one's social status, so a more extravagant furnishing was required for the upper class and the wealthy. Along with this came the emergence of the 'resurrection man' trade which led to a development of stronger and more complicated coffins, which pushed up the prices.

By the end of the eighteenth century, a variety of coffins was available and those who could afford to pay more would purchase as sumptuous a coffin as they could. For shrouds, a legal change affected the type of fabric, limiting the choice to being buried in wool. This limitation, however, did not prevent the rich from choosing not to comply with the law. The upper class still had higher expenditure on these items since they were still a mark of social status, but there were many middle class people who were also willing to pay large sums of money for the most extravagant coffins and shrouds.

3.4 Burial Ground and Burial Fees

It was necessary to pay burial fees to ministers, parish clerks and sextons. In principle, there was no fee for Christian burial since anyone could be interred by the minister in the churchyard of the parish where they died. However, in practice, death involved a variety of payments to the church.[130] Many parishes had turned the voluntary payments into a standard scale of charges.[131] Higher costs could also be due to the deceased not being interred in the parish he or she lived in. Some parishes had a fixed cost for burial fees which could be doubled for non-parishioners.[132] The clergy of all the Christian sects in the sixteenth and the seventeenth century were famous for their exaction of fees for tasks and services to boost parish funds and to supplement meagre clerical incomes. The services included tolling the bell, breaking the ground, digging the grave, attending the funeral and preaching the funeral sermon.

The upper class and the wealthy would pay higher burial fees. The average burial fee for the upper classes was £5, while it was £2 10s for the middle classes. The highest burial charge in my sample of PCC probate accounts was that of Richard

[130] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 456.
[131] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 335.
[132] Ibid., 337.

Jones, Earl of Ranelagh, whose executor in 1727, had to pay £103 9*s* 'to Mr. Whitehead the fees due for burying the deceased in Westminster Abbey'.[133] However, there are a few instances of middle class deceased whose charges for burial were high. The executor of Stratford Canning of St Clement Eastcheap in London had to pay in 1790 more than £30 for the burial fees.[134]

The wealthier the deceased in terms of their inventory sum, the more they tended to pay in burial fees. This is apparent when looking at Table 3.10 which shows that the poorest group in the samples had the lowest average values at £2 mean and £1 median, while the wealthiest group made the highest payments made to the parish at £8 mean and £3 median. The reasons behind these differences in burial fees lie in the service provided by the parish officials.

Table 3.10: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on burial fees across wealth groups.

Wealth group	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with burial fees	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
Lower than 1000	474	94	2	2	2
1000–5000	155	67	4	3	4
5000 +	33	57	8	3	19

In the seventeenth century, there was a standard payment for those services, for example, the clerk or sexton would receive about 4*d* for digging the grave.[135] In the eighteenth century, the fee for digging a grave was frequently made with a payment for ringing the bell. A bell was tolled when a person lay dying so that he or she and the neighbours would know that the end was approaching.[136] It would also be tolled after the person had passed away and it could continue for several hours.[137] The passing bell consisted of nine strokes for a man, six for a woman and three for a child.[138] It could be that the bell was rung with a stroke for every year of the deceased's age.[139] Many accounts recorded a payment of 4*s* made 'to a sexton for ringing the bell and digging a grave for the deceased'. However, there was no standard price for them. At the funeral of William Bud in Southampton in 1745, a payment of 3*s* was made, while at Sarah Humble's funeral in 1741 £1 9*s* and 6*d* was

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[133] PROB 31/45/13 Richard Jones, Earl of Ranelagh, of Chelsea, Middlesex and of a dwelling house in Lady Catherine Jones's house, St James' Place, Middlesex (1727).
[134] PROB 31/803/576 Stratford Canning, merchant of St Clement Eastcheap, London (1790).
[135] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 226.
[136] Ibid., 277.
[137] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 132.
[138] Ibid.
[139] Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency", 157.

paid for grave digging and tolling the bell.[140] Besides, in some cases the person who dug the grave was a gravedigger. The amount of money being paid to the gravedigger could range from 6*s* to 1*s*.

There was also a payment made to a sexton for breaking the ground. The body of the deceased could be buried either in the church or in the churchyard, for which various charges were levied by the parish officials. More importantly, it depended on how big the grave was. In the sixteenth and the early seventeenth century, when the bodies were shrouded, only the size of graves could be smaller, but by the late seventeenth century, most bodies were coffined before being put in the grave. The highest cost of breaking the ground was for those interred in a vault. Mostly, only the very well-to-do or the upper class could pay for a vault. In the eighteenth century, vaults were made of bricks and were costly to erect. The probate account of Samuel Billiard of St Saviour Southwark in 1722 refers to a payment of £5 7*s* 6*d* for bricks and for making the vault.[141] The executor paid £9 11*s* 10*d* for John Cater's vault at St Clement Danes where he was buried in 1727.[142]

The position of the grave mattered during the late Middle Ages. According to Cressy, this was determined by social rank. Members of the upper class would demand to be buried in a prominent position, normally inside the church. Intramural burial was more expensive than burial outside.[143] The decision was mainly made by the executor, especially after the Reformation, as Houlbrooke suggests that by the 1640s the majority of testators did not specify their resting place.[144] However, the Reformation affected this burial practice. Discarding prayer for departed souls and denying any possible advantage from interment close to altars or shrines removed the pretexts for burial in the church or churchyard.

There were different fees for burial even within different parts of the church. According to Gittings, burial inside the church was expensive; usually 6*s* 8*d* for burial in the church and 10*s* in the chancel.[145] However, burial inside the church started to become less common from the beginning of the seventeenth century due to overcrowding. In the long eighteenth century, it was quite rare for people to be interred in the church, even in the chancel, and the cost involved was higher than in

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[140] PROB 31/261/497 William Budd of Southampton, Hampshire (1745) and PROB 31/218/727 Sarah Humble, of Thrope Underwood, Northampton (1741)
[141] PROB 31/2/101 Samuel Billiard of St Saviour Southwark, Surrey (1722).
[142] PROB 31/52/582 John Cater of Carshalton, Surrey (1727).
[143] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 139.
[144] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 125.
[145] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 142.

the century earlier. Therefore, burial inside the church was limited to the wealthy or the upper class. Edward Hughes, an esquire of Hertingfordbury in Hertford, had his body buried in the chancel. In 1736, his executor had to pay £5 to the rector of Hertingfordbury for breaking up the ground in the chancel for the deceased's grave and another £1 for breaking the ground and depositing the body in the chancel in the church.[146] Another example was Richard Rice, an esquire of Little Easton in Essex, whose executor had to pay £4 4*s* in 1771 to Reverend Swallow, minister of the parish of Writtle, as burial fees on burying the deceased in the chancel of the parish church of Writtle.[147]

Another payment made to the church was for taking down pews and then putting them back after the interment. There was no standard price for doing this, it varied across parishes. For example, it cost George Sclater's executor £1 6*s* to remove the pews in the parish church of Fareham in order to dig the said deceased's grave and replace the pews in 1746, while only 6*s* was paid in 1725 for doing the same in the case of George Austin.[148] This operation could cause a disruption to church furniture. A sum of £8 6*s* was paid for mending the pews damaged by making Adam Beddent's grave.[149]

Higher demand in densely populated urban areas, together with a limitation of burial places, could lead to higher burial fees. According to Table 3.11, London had the highest average burial fees while the lowest were in provincial areas. The nearer to London, the higher the burial prices were. In the eighteenth century, there emerged many new spaces for burying the dead. Both burial grounds and cemeteries became widespread in the areas around London. This would explain why the overall expenditure in these areas tended to decrease throughout the eighteenth century while the burial fees were still higher in these areas than their provincial counterparts.

Table 3.11: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on burial fees by geography

Area	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with burial fees	**Share (%)**	**Mean**	**Median**	**SD**
London	194	62	3	3	4
Middlesex	200	50	3	2	3
ESK	153	55	2	2	3
Others	186	46	1	1	2

[146] PROB 31/154/439 Edward Hughes, esq, of Hertingfordbury, Hertfordshire(1736).
[147] PROB 31/579/851 Richard Rice, esq of Little Easter, Essex (1771).
[148] PROB 31/277/731 George Sclater, of Fareham, Hampshire, commander of HMS Somerset (who died Kensington, Middlesex) (1746).
[149] PROB 31/32/370 Adam Beddent, of Peckham, Camberwell, Surrey (1725).

Another service provided by the church was the preaching of a funeral sermon. After the Reformation, intercessory masses were abolished. This preaching of a funeral sermon might be regarded as a replacement for the Roman Catholic mass.[150] It benefitted the dead in terms of reputation since the reputation they made during their lifetime would be praised.[151] The Church of England tended to favour the funeral sermon as a means of guiding the living towards the rightful way.[152] The funeral sermon had a set pattern. The first half included a biblical text to remind the hearers of their own mortality.[153] The second half contained both excerpts from the Bible and a biography of the deceased. It presented his or her merits and virtues while lamenting their sad departure from the world.[154]

This practice, however, was attacked by many Puritans and Catholics. They saw the funeral sermon as a way to make profits for the clergy, whom they considered to be 'greedy of funerals as vultures after dead carcasses'.[155] According to Gittings, the spread of the funeral sermon came together with printing technology. This allowed the sermons to be printed and sold in large numbers. Her evidence suggests that preaching the funeral sermon became more frequent in Kent from 1580 to 1640.[156] It would normally cost 10*s* up to the mid-seventeenth century and by the late eighteenth century the price had gone up to £1.[157] The sermons might be preached by the minister, but in the eighteenth century, payments for funeral sermons might record the specific name of the person preaching them, for instance, the funeral sermon of Mary Scarth (1723), a widow of St Pancras in Middlesex, was preached by Dr. Knaggs, while that of Elizabeth Wiburd (1729) of St Leonard Shoreditch was preached by Dr. Denne.[158]

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[150] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 137.
[151] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 297.
[152] Ibid., 280.
[153] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 158, and "Sacred and Secular," 137.
[154] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 158, and "Sacred and Secular,", 160.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Table 4 in an appendix of Gitting's study shows that the percentages of detailed probate accounts mentioning a payment for preaching the funeral sermon increased substantially in Berkshire, Lincolnshire and Kent, from 18.2 in 1581–90 to 59.6% in 1641 in the first county and from 25% to 70.6% in the second county and from 33.3% to 86.9% in Kent during the same period. See Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 240. For full details see Clare Gittings, "Funerals in England, 1580–1640: The Evidence of Probate Accounts" (M.Litt. diss., University of Oxford), 133–34 in Tables 3.7 to 3.9.
[157] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 242 for the cost of funeral sermons up to the mid-seventeenth century. For the late eighteenth century, the funeral sermon cost was from the PCC probate accounts.
[158] PROB 31/11/151 Mary Scarth, widow of St Pancras, Middlesex (1723) and PROB 31/62/668 (1729)

In the late seventeenth century, there was still a lack of standard prices for preaching funeral sermons. There was a range in the earlier period from 10*s* to £1 in many parishes. There were also cases when the payment was higher or lower than these prices. For instance, the preaching of a funeral sermon for John Pressor of Bromyard in Herefordshire (1676) cost only 5*s* 8*d* while that of Thomas Grover of St Giles without Cripplegate in Middlesex (1677) and Samuel Cromleholme of St Faith the Virgin in London (1673) cost £2 and £3 4*s* 6*d* respectively.[159] This could reflect a longer duration of the sermon with a longer text. While Gittings observed a rising number of funeral sermons, the eighteenth-century PCC probate accounts indicate the opposite. Payments for funeral sermons become rare in the eighteenth century. Only six probate accounts record a payment made to a preacher for a funeral sermon in each decade from 1701 to 1760. In the late eighteenth century, very few accounts made reference to such services.

There were cases when the preacher was less than eulogistic about the deceased. For example, White Kennett referred to the duke of Devonshire in 1681 as a nobleman who had 'Wallow'd in Fornifications' but had been washed clean by his chaplain 'With Funeral Orations'.[160] According to Houlbrooke, the printing of the funeral sermons preached by the divines of the Established Church declined substantially, especially among the upper class.[161] The hypocrisy of the funeral sermon in some cases was also a cause for criticism. One contemporary priest, George Lewis, made a clear statement in 1726 that 'it is not the common Custom or the Genteel Part of the degenerate Age we live in, to be attended to the Grave with a Funeral Sermon'.[162] The reason for this would be misuse of the funeral sermon and in his opinion it served people who sometimes might not deserve to be preached about.[163]

The funeral sermon was gradually replaced by the obituary notice. This could be said to have begun with *The Gentleman's Magazine* which started to print death notices in 1731.[164] A description of the deceased would be given including his/her

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[159] PROB 32/32/181, John Pressor of Bromyard, Herefordshire (1676), PROB 5/5500 Thomas Grover, St Giles without Cripplegate, Middlesex (1677) and TNA, PROB 5/545 Samuel Cromleholme, of St Faith the Virgin, London, master of the Free School of St Paul's, London (1673).
[160] White Kennett, *A Sermon Preach'd at the Funeral of the Right Honourable William Duke of Devonshire, in the Church of All-Hallows in Derby* (1681).
[161] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 279.
[162] Ibid, 280.
[163] Ibid.
[164] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England*, 329.

name, occupation, place of origin, skills, and virtues.[165] The fully developed obituary - which was 'rather impersonal, aspiring to impartiality, free of poetic emotion, concerned mainly with the public career rather than the domestic sphere, and with the pattern of a life time rather than the last hours of life and the soul's prospects - would perfectly suit the period when the secular aspect of life became more important and the privacy of individuals and family was highly respected.[166]

According to Table 3.12, higher burial fees were paid to churches in the earliest period (1671–1710) at £4 mean and £2 median, while they were approximately £2 mean and £1 median for the latter two periods. One of the reasons could have been a decline in a popularity of the funeral sermon as discussed above. Another reason was burial tax. This was imposed under the Burials, Births and Marriages Act in 1694 in order to 'provide revenue, for carrying on the war against France, by levying taxes upon burials, births and marriages'. The Act had come into force in 1695 and was repealed in 1706. Different classes of people were required to pay different amounts of money. From the probate account of Sir John Mill, who died in 1706, his executors had to pay £15 4*s* due to 'the Queens Tax for the burial of the said deceased according to an act of Parliament in that law made and proved the said deceased being of the quality of a baronet'.[167] The executor of Henry Davis who died in 1703 had to pay £5 4*s* for the tax as the deceased was a doctor in divinity. Henry Bankes, a merchant, who died in 1701 was requested to pay £1 4*s* for 'the Kings duties for his burial'.[168]

Table 3.12: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on burial fees across three periods.

Year	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with food	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
1671–1710	249	31	4	2	3
1711–1760	421	53	3	2	5
1761-1800	92	12	2	1	5

Burial charges included several services provided by the parish officials. From the late seventeenth century until the end of eighteenth century there were not many changes in this except a massively decreasing number of probate accounts recording

[165] Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency," 190.
[166] Gittings, "Sacred and Secular," 159.
[167] PROB 5/4394 Sir John Mill, Berry within the parish of Eling, Hampshire (1707).
[168] PROB 32/46/146 Henry Davis, Doctor of Divinity, Rector of Cheam Rectory, Surrey (1704) and PROB 32/44/43 Henry Bankes, Stepny, Middlesex (1702).

the payment of these fees. This reflects the role of undertakers, whose services included making payment for burial charges, especially after 1760.

The late seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century saw both continuities and changes in burial practices and expenditure on burial fees. People were still buried in parish churches, whether in the church or in the churchyard. The fees had to be paid to the minister, clerk, and sexton as in earlier periods, for their services. The cost of burial services provided by the parish officials varied across parishes; there was a lack of standard burial charges across the country. This was also due to the changing requests for burial made by testators or executors, which were possibly framed by their social status or their wealth. The full effect could well be seen in the latter half of the eighteenth century with the widespread use of burial grounds and cemeteries in London and its nearby areas.

3.5 Hearse and Coach

In the seventeenth century, most bodies were laid on a bier or similar equipment that belonged to the local community, while the bodies of upper class people would be put on an open coach in order to bring them from their residences to the church and finally set in the ground. A street procession for the heraldic funeral in the sixteenth century was massive. It took a long time and many people were involved.

Most funerals were totally different from the heraldic funerals in their form and also their function in the sixteenth century. The corpse was put on a bier, a wooden frame with handles designed for supporting and transporting a body (Plate 3.9). A local carpenter could make one easily and most parishes provided it for people in the community. A pall, sometimes described as a bier cloth or mortuary cloth, was draped or held over the bier or coffin. The hearse cloth was the piece of black material placed over the wooden hearse or frame surrounding the coffin. Hearses, during the sixteenth and seventeenth century, were not used for the funerary transportation, as was understood in later centuries. Palls and hearse cloths became amalgamated by the eighteenth century, producing the white-hemmed pall. This was to remain in fashion until the last quarter of the nineteenth century.[169]

[169] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 127.

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Plate 3.9: "The bier was the cheapest form of conveyance and doubled up as a catafalque for the funeral service. This example, dated 1663, is at South Creak, Norfolk." (Source: Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 128)

In the late seventeenth century, at an upper-class funeral, the body was still carried in an open coach. At Sir Samuel Mico's funeral in 1671, £18 was 'paid for hyre of six coaches to attend the funeral'.[170] A payment of £2 was paid in 1677 for coach hire at the funeral of Dorothy Robinson 'the corps being brought about'.[171] In the probate account of Sir Jonas Moore in 1680, a payment of £6 15*s* 6*d* was made to 'Henry Patton and John Porter for coach hire at the said deceased's funeral and for the hearse'.[172] Normally, the journey to the church and to the place where the body would be buried was short. This allowed the corpse to be carried on foot. However, when the deceased requested to be buried in a particular place, it was not always possible to carry the body on a long journey. This was when the coach and also the hearse, which in this period became a means of transporting the corpse to the church, became necessary for the funeral. At the funeral of Cordelia Harris, a hearse and six horses were hired (1691).[173] In the case of John Wetherid, £10 10*s* was paid for two coaches and a hearse 'to carry and attend the body of the said deceased from the place where he died (St Paul Covent Garden in Middlesex) to Berkhamsted in Hertfordshire' (1699).[174]

An extravagant funeral display in London in the 1720s, as criticised by John Gay, gives a picture of the use of these items[175]

Why is the Hearse with 'Scutcheons blazon's round,
And with the nodding Plume of Ostrich crown'd
No, the Dead know it not, nor profit gain:
It only serves to prove the living vain.
How short is Life! how frail is human Trust!
Is all this Pomp for laying Dust to Dust?

From the last decade of the seventeenth century into the eighteenth century, hearses and coaches became widely used among the well-to-do middle classes.

[170] PROB 5/840 Sir Sameul Mico, kt, of St Andrew Undershaft, London (1671).
[171] PROB 5/4837 Dorothy Robinson, Aldenham, Hertfordshire (1677)
[172] PROB 5/4229 Sir Jonas Moore, kt, master surveyor of HM Ordnance (1680).
[173] PROB 5/5449 the Honourable Cordelia Harris, of St Martin in the Fields, Middlesex (1691).
[174] PROB 5/4205 John Wetherid, esq, of Ashlyns Hall, Berkhamsted, Herts, died in St Paul Covent Garden, Middlesex (1699).
[175] John Gay in Trivia, Book III. Line 231.

However, this was still less common than for the upper classes.[176] The parish of Bolton in Lancashire bought its first hearse in 1723 and it proved to be profitable. They hired out this hearse within their county whenever it was requested.[177] In London and the surrounding counties, hearses were normally provided by the undertakers in the eighteenth century so it is not surprising that the number of probate accounts referring to hearses and coaches dropped when the undertaking business grew. The hearses were the largest item owned by the undertaker. They bridged the gap between the chariot used at the heraldic funeral and the bier used by most people in the previous century. In the eighteenth century, a hearse was now often employed for both short and long journeys. In 1703, the body of Samuel Godfor, clerk of Huish in Wiltshire, was carried in a hearse to the country.[178]

It seems to have become fashionable to have a hearse and coach at the funeral. Many probate accounts record a payment made for ‘hearse and coach used at the deceased’s funeral’. However, the numbers of coaches and prices varied. At the funeral of Edward Mashfield of St John Wapping in Middlesex in 1725, five coaches and a hearse were provided, which cost his accountant £1 13s, while a similar amount of money (£1 15*s*) was paid for four coaches and a hearse at Margaret Bayley’s funeral in 1742.[179] In the provinces, provision of a hearse and coach could be more costly as £5 was paid for three coaches and a hearse at John Bisley’s funeral in Berkshire in 1726.[180] According to Houlbrooke, the number of coaches bringing up the rear of the funeral procession was often mentioned as a measure of the social success of the occasion.[181]

As for the decorations of hearse and coach, the palls and escutcheons, it has been suggested in many studies, were the most common items used in the middle classes’ funerals from the late seventeenth century. Before the undertakers took over provision of these items, most London parishes owned cloths which they lent out for parishioners’ funerals.

In the early eighteenth century, there was still a mixed picture between the hiring out of the pall by the parish and that carried out by the undertaker. The

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[176] While the percentage of upper class funerals with hearse and coach in the PCC probate accounts is more than 30%, those of the middle classes are 10%.
[177] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 132.
[178] PROB 5/2796 Samuel Godfor, of Huish, Wiltshire, clerk. His body was carried from the parish of St Andrew Holborn in Middlesex to the town of Huish in Wiltshire (1703).
[179] PROB 31/221/156 Edward Marshpile of St John, Wapping, Middlesex (1725), and PROB 31/31/250, Margaret Bayley, of Stepney, Middlesex (1742).
[180] PROB 31/38/182 John Bisley, of New Windsor, Berkshire (1726).
[181] Houlbrooke, “The Age of Decency”, 190–91.

accountant of Francis Ricketts of St Mary Athill in London had to pay £2 4*s* in 1728 for 'the parish duties and for the pall used at the funeral of the deceased' while in the case of Thomas Colling, £1 10*s* in 1723 was paid to the clerk and sexton for the use of a pall.[182] Robert Cooks's accountant paid £4 in 1728 to 'Mr. Hobbs of new Windsor undertaker for hatbands, cloaks and the pall used at the said deceased's funeral'.[183] This was taken over by the undertakers, especially in the second half of the eighteenth century. For example, an advertisement by Robert Green, Coffin Maker & Undertaker at the Four Coffins, St Margaret's Hill, Southwark (1753) included in full detail all the items needed for the funeral[184]:

> Sells and Lets all Manner of Furniture for Funerals, on Reasonable Terms, Viz., Velvet Palls, Hangings for Rooms, large Silver's Candlesticks & Sconces, Tapers & Wax Lights, Heraldry, Feathers & Velvet Cloth Coats & middling Do…

Escutcheons had once only been provided by the College of Arms and used by the upper class to display their social superiority in public funerals. In the late seventeenth century, escutcheons began to be used among well-to-do middle classes in London and Middlesex. At the funerals of Thomas Grover of St Giles without Cripplegate in 1677 and of Thomas Jordan of St Michael Wood Street in London in 1678, escutcheons were provided, costing around £3, together with hire of a pall.[185] In the eighteenth century, escutcheons became more common among the middle classes. However, most PCC probate accounts from 1671 to 1700 which include a payment for escutcheons belong to the upper class. A payment of £21 was made for a herald's bill for escutcheons provided for James Palmer, esquire, of Buttington, Montgomeryshire, while £3 and £2 8*d* were paid for 'silk and Buckeram escutcheons' at John Wetherid's funeral in 1699.[186]

The items for the street procession discussed in this section became more popularly used during the eighteenth century, though they were still limited to the well-to-do middle classes. These items were clearly a symbol of social status in the earlier period, especially the funerary hearse and coach as well as the escutcheons. The greater choice over funerals provided by the undertakers allowed more people to

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[182] PROB 31/55/92 Francis Ricketts of St Mary Athill, London (1728) and PROB 31/13/281 Thomas Colling, St Lawrence Jewry, London (1723)
[183] PROB 31/55/142, Robert Cooke of New Windsor, Berkshire (1728).
[184] Litten, "The Funeral Trade in Hanoverian England, 1714–1760," 53.
[185] PROB 5/5500 Thomas Grover, St Giles without Cripplegate, Middlesex (1677) and PROB 5/3909 Thomas Jordan, St Michael, Wood Street, London (1678).
[186] PROB 5/819 James Palmer, esquire, of Buttington (1697) and PROB 5/4205 John Wetherid, esquire of Ashlyns Hall, Berkhamsted, Hertfordshire (1699)

get access to these items more easily. However, quite a large amount of money had to be paid in order to hire them, thus preventing the less wealthy from having them at the funeral.

3.6 Memorials and Commemoration

The most distinguished form of commemoration of the deceased among the living was achieved by the erection of monuments, tombstones, and epitaphs. These items were mostly restricted to the upper class in the sixteenth century. Most people were buried in the local churchyard in an unmarked grave. Memorials became more common from the late sixteenth to the mid-seventeenth century for those who could afford to have their bodies interred in a church. The century following the Reformation led to more contact with the continental Renaissance. It brought new styles and types of memorials, along with a rising number of sculptors, especially the immigrants who could provide a more sophisticated form of monument and tombstone.

Monuments were strictly limited to the upper class and very well-known or extremely wealthy people (Plate 3.10). Normally, they were erected inside the church. Many aristocratic families commissioned the construction of a monument as a permanent reminder of their lineage, status, and power.[187] According to Nigel Llewellyn, the elaboration of funeral monuments in Early Modern England was required to confront fragmentation, preserve social differentiation, and 'help the culture to survive'. These functions were expressed through rich and complex forms.[188] During the early seventeenth century, the cost of erecting the monuments was very high, especially when compared with the common funeral which would normally cost less than £5. The wall monument with a Latin inscription below of William Goodwin, D.D., Dean of Christchurch, Oxford, which was erected in 1620, cost £13. The stone monument of Edward Crayford, esquire, of Great Mongeham in Kent cost £40, more than his funeral, which cost £30.[189] The great cost of monuments raised many criticisms. One of them was from John Donne who thought that the extravagant monuments in the church 'claimed too much for insincere Christians', while John Weever was anxious that the vulgar wealthy could rise above the upper

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[187] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 470.
[188] Nigel Llewellyn, *The Art of Death: Visual Culture in the English Death Ritual c. 1500–c.1800* (London: Reaktion, in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, 1991), 104, 121–23.
[189] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 144.

class since during this time 'more honour is attributed to a rich quondam tradesman or gripping usurer, than is given to the greatest potentate entombed in Westminster'.[190]

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Plate 3.10: Monument to Sir Geoffrey (d. 1670) and Lady Palmer, at East Carlton Northamptonshire
'At the moment of resurrection, the amply shrouded couple, risen from their funeral urns, pause in wonder at the door of their tomb. Their love has survived the grave.' (Source: http://www.flickr.com/photos/40878011@N07/5190157219/)
Monument attributed to Joshua Marshall (1629–1678) a master mason to the Crown after 1660.

From the late seventeenth to the end of eighteenth century, monuments were still primarily the preserve of the upper classes though there were some in the middle classes. The cost of erecting a monument in a church changed little but in some cases was even greater than in the earlier period. Memorial monuments varied in their cost, ranging from slightly below £20 to more than £300. There was no fixed cost for monuments, even for people of the same social status. The monument of Sir Thomas Alston, baronet, of Odell in Bedfordshire cost £100 (1679), while a marble monument in the Temple Church of Sir John Witham, baronet of London, cost £54 (1696).[191] Making and erecting the monument of Francis Bolton, esquire, of Pinner, Middlesex, cost £84 12*s* 6*d* (1747), while that of Thomas Willings, esquire, of Langford in the same county, cost only £18 18*d* (1776).[192] Sometimes, the wish to have a monument erected came from the deceased. The monument of Elizabeth Mapleton, spinster, of St George the Martyr in Canterbury, Kent, was erected to the deceased's memory 'to the directions of her will and expenses in putting up for the same'. Her monument cost £100 13*s*.[193]

There were a few middle class people whose monuments were erected in a church. In 1752, the accountant of Thomas Peach, boatbuilder of St Mary Rotherhithe in Surrey, paid £31 to 'Mr. Root the mason for erecting the said deceased's tomb or monument as by bill' and £4 4*s* more was made to 'Mr. Cox for carving the coat of arms upon the said tomb or monument'.[194] John Burckell's monument cost his

[190] Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 471.
[191] PROB 5/5599 Sir Thomas Alston, bart, of Odell, Bedfordshire (1679) and PROB 5/4201 Sir John Witham, baronet of London (1696)
[192] PROB 31/290/919 Francis Bolton, esq of Pinner, Middlesex (1747) and PROB 31/637/627 Thomas Willings, esquire of Langford, Middlesex (1776)
[193] PROB 31/414/178 Elizabeth Mapleton, spinster, of St George the Martyr, Canterbury, Kent (1758).
[194] PROB 31/344/334 Thomas Peach, boatbuilder of St Mary, Rotherhithe, Surrey (1752).

executor £20 (1734).[195] Monuments in churches, however, became a lot less common in the eighteenth century than the previous century, due to the growth of the population, the great wealth obtained by successful merchants, professionals, and courtiers, the existence of a competitive society, and possibly the increasing consumerism which had filled up the church very quickly with many statues and monuments since the seventeenth century.[196]

The most common element of memorials in churches during the sixteenth and seventeenth century was the epitaph. Epitaphs developed quickly during the century after the Reformation when there was a general rise in literacy, especially among gentlemen with a background in classical literature, and also with the new emphasis on the written word as a vehicle of religious instruction. Apart from giving information about the deceased, epitaphs were also a display of affection to those who had passed away, to keep their memory, to comfort their friends, and to put the reader in mind of human frailty (Plate 3.11).[197] They could be either simple or sophisticated (see Plate 3.12 for a more sophisticated epitaph). As with the decrease in monuments, epitaphs also declined in the late seventeenth and eighteenth century due to very limited space in the church. Unlike the gravestones, they are still to be seen in good condition. They were mostly replaced by the gravestones in the eighteenth century as there is only one probate account referring to an epitaph.

[195] PROB 31/127/208 John Burchell of Stepney, Middlesex (1734).
[196] Harding, *The Dead and Living in Paris and London,* 160.
[197] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 352.

Plate 3.11: Three epitaphs: Percival Bentley (1800), Thomas Arne (1778), and the Stephens family (1775), in St Paul's at Covent Garden. (Source: Author's photograph)

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Plate 3.12: Hanging wall monument to John Rudge (d.1740), at Wheatfield, Oxfordshire, by Peter Scheemakers. An epitaph concerning Rudge's distinguished public service, marriage, and surviving children, occupies the central space. (Source: http://www.speel.me.uk/gp/chmonsintro.htm)

The highest expenditure on a monument found in the PCC probate accounts is that of Sir Isaac Newton, whose monument cost £521: £200 to Mr. Rrysbrack 'on account of the deceased's monument'; £21 to Mr. Kent for 'designing and conversing the said monument'; and £300 paid among three different people also on the work of the monument. There was also an extra payment of £11 for 'a gravestone of marble 7 foot 3 inches by three feet nine and cutting the inscription'.[198] The monument, in

[198] PROB 31/47/220 Sir Isaac Newton, of St Martin in the Fields, Middlesex (1727).

Westminster Abbey, is made of white and grey marble.[199] There is a Latin inscription engraved in the base. The base also supports a sarcophagus with large scroll feet and a relief panel. The relief panel depicts putti using instruments related to Newton's mathematical and optical work (including the telescope and prism) and his activity as Master of the Mint. Above the sarcophagus is a reclining figure of Newton, in classical costume, his right elbow resting on several books representing his great works. They are labelled 'Divinity', 'Chronology', 'Opticks' [1704] and 'Philo. Prin. Math' [Philosophia Naturalis Principia Mathematica, 1686-7)]. With his left hand he points to a scroll with a mathematical design shown on it (the 'converging series'), held by two standing putti. The background is a pyramid on which sits a celestial globe with the signs of the zodiac, and of the constellations, and with the path of the comet of 1680. On top of the globe sits a figure of Astronomy leaning upon a book.[200] The inscription may be translated as:

> Here is buried Isaac Newton, Knight, who by a strength of mind almost divine, and mathematical principles peculiarly his own, explored the course and figures of the planets, the paths of comets, the tides of the sea, the dissimilarities in rays of light, and, what no other scholar has previously imagined, the properties of the colours thus produced. Diligent, sagacious and faithful, in his expositions of nature, antiquity and the holy Scriptures, he vindicated by his philosophy the majesty of God mighty and good, and expressed the simplicity of the Gospel in his manners. Mortals rejoice that there has existed such and so great an ornament of the human race! He was born on 25th December 1642, and died on 20th March 1726.

The inscription displays Newton's virtue as well as his discoveries, which were so powerful in advancing mankind's knowledge. This type of monument puts more emphasis on a secular individual, and his success as a scholar, more than the intimate feeling expressed in many monuments, as described in Gittings's work, or the monuments of family groupings which were once popular in the sixteenth century among aristocrats (Plate 3.13).[201]

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[199] Sir Isaac Newton's monument cannot be accessed by the public at the time of writing. It stands in the nave against the choir screen, to the north of the entrance to the choir. It was executed by the sculptor Michael Rysbrack (1694–1770) to the designs of the architect William Kent (1685–1748) and dates from 1731. See: http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/sir-isaac-newton

[200] The translation is from a project undertaken by Westminster Abbey and can be found online, at: http://www.westminster-abbey.org/our-history/people/sir-isaac-newton

[201] Section on 'Memorials and Commemoration' in Gittings, "Sacred and Secular," 166–69. See also the section on 'Markers and Memorials' in Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*, 470–2 and Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency," 194–97.

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Plate 3.13: Sir Isaac Newton's monument (1731) in Westminster Abbey.
(Source: http://dumevepo.nu-jrzy.us/sir-isaac-newtons-tomb-photos.php)

While monuments costing a enormous amount of money restricted the number of people who could erect them, tombstones or gravestones were much cheaper and could be put on the graves in the churchyard. They gradually became popular among the middle classes throughout the seventeenth century and this trend accelerated in the eighteenth. There were two types of gravestone: headstones and footstones. Most eighteenth-century churchyard gravestones have deteriorated. In London, it is almost impossible to find them since the sites have been lost. In the provinces, some still exist since they are more well-preserved, but many are in a rotten condition (Plate 3.14). Like epitaphs, gravestones could be inscribed with either verse or prose (Plate 3.15). The gravestone shown here is from the early nineteenth century but it can be seen from the picture of the late eighteenth-century headstone that they are similar. Another kind of memorial in the churchyard was a sculpture or statue, less popular due to its much greater cost (Plate 3.16).[202] An increasing percentage of probate accounts record a payment for a gravestone from the late seventeenth century to the end of the eighteenth century (Table 3.13).

Table 3.13: Number of PCC probate accounts and expenditure on memorials across three periods

Year	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
1671–1710	62	8	7	1	18
1711–1760	113	14	9	2	33
1761-1800	96	12	9	2	23

This increase is even more apparent when dividing the samples by social class, since the percentage of middle-class accounts with payments for gravestones continually rose throughout the eighteenth century.[203] Up to the mid-seventeenth century, only a handful of people's graves were decorated with a gravestone. However, gravestones had become more common by the late eighteenth century,

[202] There is no record of this in the PCC probate accounts, but it is clear that their prices must be higher due to an aesthetic requirement which was more beautiful and more complicated.
[203] The number of PCC probate accounts recording payment for memorials (gravestones) rose from 3% in the late seventeenth century to 20% by the end of the eighteenth century.

though the prices varied. The gravestone of Thomas Harris of Upper Haliford in Middlesex cost his accountant £21 (1788), while the accountant of Edward Cannell of St Mary Islington, also in Middlesex, paid less than £2 to a mason for the deceased's gravestone (1771).[204]

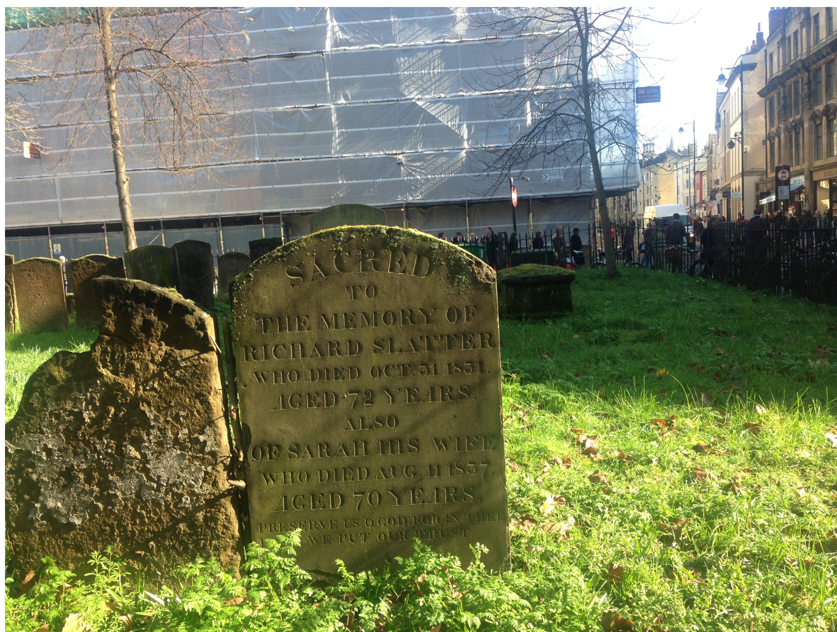

Plate 3.14: Gravestone in the churchyard of St Mary Magdalen, Oxford.
This belongs to Richard Slatter who died at the age of 70 and was buried in 1837.
(Source: Author's photograph)

Plate 3.15: Two eighteenth-century gravestones: Hannah Twynnoy (1703) in the churchyard of Malmesbury (Wiltshire) (left) and Joseph Whittington (1800) in St Peter's churchyard in East Carlton, Northamptonshire (right).
(Source: Author's photographs)

[204] PROB 31/758/832 Thomas Harris, of Upper Haliford, Middlesex (1785) and PROB 31/568/23 Edward Cannell, of St Mary, Islington, Middlesex, (1771).

Plate 3.16: Monument in the churchyard of St Mary Magdalen, Oxford, for three children of the Ward family; Mary Ward, Eliza Ward, and Thomas Ward, erected in 1825. (Source: Author's photograph)

There are a much higher percentage of wealthier people in the samples who had their grave decorated with gravestones (Table 3.14). 31% of the detailed probate accounts of the least wealthy group have a record of a gravestone, while the figure is 50% for the wealthiest group. However, we still observe an increasing number of people having their grave decorated, even among less wealthy people (people with an inventory wealth of less than £1,000). Charles Darby of Lincoln's Inn, whose wealth was £26, had his gravestone cut and carried at a cost of £3 4*s*.[205] A plain gravestone might cost less than £1. Such stones offered rudimentary but reasonably robust reminders of individuals' burial places, bearing the deceased's name in full, together with the date of death.[206] Benjamin Cooper's executor paid 9*s* 6*d* for the making of a flat stone and for having it laid it upon the grave.[207]

Table 3.14: Number and expenditure on memorials across wealth groups.

Wealth group	Number of PCC probate accounts		Expenditure (£)		
	Number with memorials	Share (%)	Mean	Median	SD
Lower than 1000	156	31	4	1	17
1000–5000	86	37	9	3	29
5000+	29	50	35	10	85

205 PROB 31/140/308 Charles Darby, bachelor, of Lincolns Inn, Middlesex (1735)
206 Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 364.
207 PROB 31/117/393 Benjamin Cooper of Bradford, Wiltshire (1733).

Along with an increasing number of gravestones, the expenditure on gravestones, compared with other items, rose from 1671 to 1800 (Table 3.13). One of the reasons for this was the disappearance of figurative brass, which was once popular in the later Middle Ages. People preferred durable stones and beautiful marble in this period even though brass was apparently cheaper.[208] These gravestones also cost more since people would have to pay for the inscription, which became longer and more sentimental. In Anne Mead's probate account(1764), a payment of £1 10*s* 4*d* was paid for the inscription on the deceased's gravestone.[209]

More burial grounds and the beginning of the construction of cemeteries from the second half of the eighteenth century allowed more space for graves. With more burial space, larger and more sophisticated forms of gravestones, as well as monuments outside the church, became more popular but also more expensive, since they required more artistic work. It became customary to erect a headstone over a grave with an elaborate design. Eighteenth-century tombstones have hour-glasses, scythes, cherubs' heads – blowing or smiling or weeping – elaborate scenes, generally allegories of the flight of time, and epitaphs upon which much thought and care were expended.[210] Beautifully constructed churchyard monuments which had once 'seldom if ever matched the elegance and sophistication of the best work within the church' began to be seen in the late eighteenth century.[211]

This section shows that memorials became more popular among the middle classes, especially throughout the eighteenth century and especially in the form of gravestones with inscriptions. Moreover, these beautiful gravestones became more elaborate and sophisticated, leading to increasing cost. A growing desire to have the deceased commemorated by putting up a head- or footstone, according to Houlbrooke, reflected standards of 'politeness'.[212] The former could be linked with the concept of 'respectability' which came with a growing desire of the middle classes to be regarded as gentlefolk.

[208] Gittings, "Urban Funerals in Late Medieval and Reformation England," 181.
[209] PROB 31/486/295 Ann Mead, widow, of Harold, Bedfordshire (1764).
[210] B. Holmes, *Burial Grounds in London: Notes on their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day* (London: T. Fisher Unwin, 1938), 95–96.
[211] This requires more exploration of churchyard monuments in the churchyards and cemeteries, both in London and other areas. See B. Holmes, *Burial Grounds in London: Notes on their History from the Earliest Times to the Present Day,* 92.
[212] Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency," 197.

4. Conclusion

This chapter has examined the functions of and expenditure on the main items consumed at the funerals of the upper and middle classes. It shows both continuities and changes from the earlier period that led to the Victorian funeral. The most obvious change during this period was a sharp decline in funeral feasting and dole-giving, especially in London and its surrounding areas. Instead of feasting, by the eighteenth century people tended to pay more attention to the items where their social status could be clearly displayed by materials. As with the case of more sophisticated coffins with full decorations, the middle classes started to have their graves decorated with beautiful gravestones which led to an increased expenditure for these two items.

Mourning became more widespread among the middle classes as well as mourning jewellery; however, the latter seemed to be limited mostly to the wealthier middle classes. Even though the expenditure on mourning clothes and mourning presents dropped throughout the long eighteenth century, the percentage of the deceased's inventory spent on mourning increased. Since the funeral became less rigid and more private with fewer people attending, the quantity of mourning items consumed decreased, causing a decline in the extent of mourning across a family and social group, while the mourning used by those in the core family became more extravagant in its style. The decreasing number of accounts that recorded items such as coffins, shrouds, mourning gifts, and other funeral decorative items, does not indicate their absence from the funeral but rather that they were provided by undertakers. A full discussion on undertakers will be found in the next chapter. Hearses and coaches came into use for the middle classes' funerals as a means of transporting the bodies as well as a type of funerary decoration. However, these were restricted to wealthier people.

This chapter maps the changes in choices of funerary items reflecting changes in consumers' preferences. The changing preferences in items relating to funerals in the long eighteenth century reflect the way religious rituals shifted towards secular ones. With a rapidly growing economy, things had become commercialised so that money could buy 'better' commodities. Most items mentioned in this chapter can be regarded as necessary. However, the eighteenth century was not a period when new items for funerals emerged, but rather when necessity increasingly came to overlap with beauty and luxury, as seen in the more sophisticated coffins and gravestones. Artistic sophistication could serve an important purpose for those with money – a display of their wealth. The construction of these tastes requires more study in

cultural history, but for funerals these practices developed along with the growth in demand from the middle class as well as an expansion of the undertaker trade. Items in which complex artistry could be employed were more expensive. Funeral feasting, on the other hand, was a different kind of consumption, closely linked with religion and a sense of the wider community. In a period where both aspects had been weakened, the ritual of feasting could serve only a minor purpose, hence it disappeared.

Chapter 4: The Decline of Funeral Management by the College of Arms

1. Introduction

Most historians see the decline of the College of Arms' control over upper-class funerals as one of the most significant reasons explaining the rapid expansion of the undertaking trade in England throughout the eighteenth century. In this chapter, I will argue that this decline led substantially to the rise in the numbers of undertakers managing funerals among the upper class, which accounted for just 5% of the whole population. Therefore, the impact of the decreasing power of the College of Arms does not seem to have played an important role in the popularity of undertakers across the whole of society.

From the analyses carried out in the previous chapters, it is apparent that the upper classes were the group whose funeral spending behaviour changed the most. Previous historians of Early Modern death have seen the decline in the role of the College of Arms as an important factor leading to the emergence of undertakers. These studies, however, have concentrated on the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries.[1] They do not go beyond the late seventeenth century and simply conclude that the College of Arms had lost control of the upper classes' funerals in this period. The picture of these funerals is left somewhat vague and it is not possible for the reader to imagine what heraldic funerals transformed into during the next century. Moreover, these scholars tend to assume that the withdrawal of the College of Arms led to a total change in the management of funerals across the social spectrum. They do not distinguish the effects of the decline of the College of Arms on different social groups. The decay of this institution had only a minor impact on the middle classes as their funerals had not been managed by the College of Arms even before the eighteenth century. On the other hand, it had a much greater influence on the upper classes, as this chapter will show.

The idea of emulation, as the main explanation for the rise of undertaking, presumes that during this period the funerals of the upper and the middle classes were

[1] Vanessa Harding, *The Dead and the Living in London and Paris, 1500–1670* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002). See also Clare Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London, 2001). Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England: Its Origin and Early Development, 1660–1830," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1994–1995): 241–53. David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997) and Ralph Houlbrooke, "Death, Church, and Family in England between the Late Fifteenth and the Early Eighteenth Centuries," in his volume*, Death, Ritual and Bereavement* (London: Routledge, 1989).

similar and that the latter would invest larger sums of money in them to match the spending of their social superiors.[2] Building on the previous chapter, in this chapter I suggest that it is important to draw a distinction between these two social groups. My research further indicates that the declining power of the College of Arms directly affected only the upper classes, allowing them more freedom of choice. The upper classes then opted for the cheaper 'imitation' heraldic funeral offered by undertakers, which explains their decreasing expenditure on funerals.

This chapter will also show that the 'real' and the 'imitation' heraldic funerals have both similarities and differences. When the College of Arms controlled every aspect of the funeral, including the funerary items and funeral attendees, a huge amount of money had to be lavished on it. By transferring the management to the undertakers, the clients could be more flexible, especially in their mourning dress, which the undertakers did not normally provide for them. People participating in the funeral did not have to follow the different ranks of officers, since no rigid regulation was imposed by the undertakers. Funerary items could still be relatively similar to the 'real' heraldic funeral, with the presence of heraldry, including escutcheons, crests, helmets, and swords. With an increasingly commercialised and materialistic society, where commodities defined social status, this was sufficient for the upper classes to distinguish themselves from those below them by hiring the undertakers who would also provide particular heraldic items.

In this chapter, three primary sources will be employed to examine the role of the College of Arms in the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and the extent to which they had control and power over the upper classes' funerals. The first is the funeral certificate.[3] This is a document granted to the upper class for their funerals to confirm that these noblemen were qualified to hold a heraldic funeral. It contains the details of these ceremonious funerals, with banners and escutcheons of arms and the achievements of the deceased carried in procession, conducted by the heralds in accordance with successive Earl Marshals' orders; with accompanying particulars of the deceased and their families. This is a valuable source for this thesis since we are

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[2] Ralph Houlbrooke clearly states that it was the desire of the middle classes to consume a similar type of funeral to those of the upper ranks which led to their imitation: "The Age of Decency: 1660–1760," in *Death in England: an Illustrated History*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 189. Earle also makes a similar point, that the emerging wealthy middle classes in the seventeenth century, especially the merchants, aspired to a luxurious type of consumption which encouraged them to spend a large sum of money on their funerals. See Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London*, 158.

[3] I am unable to include an image of a funeral certificate as the College of Arms does not permit photography of its collection.

able to examine how the heraldic funeral looked and are also able to match the names of people having heraldic funerals in the certificates with those in the probate accounts.

All the certificates are still held at the archive of the College of Arms, and most of them are preserved in series I, of which they occupy eighteen volumes (I. 3–5, 6, 8, 10–16, 19, 22–24, 30, 31). In this chapter, I will refer in particular to the last two volumes: I. 30 and I. 31. Volume I. 30 contains funeral certificates of gentry, that is knights, esquires, and gentlemen, for the period 1660–1714, with one entry from 1735/6. Volume I. 31 consists largely of funeral certificates of the nobility, and accounts of funerals, for the period 1659–1805.

The second set of sources are undertakers' account books. Robert Legg's account books, held in the National Archives, will be examined in this chapter. These concern the estate of Robert Legg, a 'milliner, upholder and undertaker' of St George's Bloomsbury in Middlesex. The names of several undertakers and upholders working for Legg's company are also recorded in these books. They were among the documents delivered to the equity court of Chancery as evidence in the case of *Leaves v. Green*. There are four undertaker's account books ranging from 1713 to 1738 and three undertaker's shop accounts from 1707 to 1738.[4] In the next chapter I will also employ these account books to study the eighteenth-century undertaking trade. The account books are useful for this chapter since they illustrate a number of upper class funerals organised by the undertakers. They give detailed descriptions of what items were employed in funerals and how much they cost. Although the funeral certificates do not give the prices of the funerals, we are still able to make a qualitative comparison between the 'real' and the 'imitation' heraldic funerals managed by different institutions.

The third source for this chapter is, as before, the probate accounts of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PCC). A handful of accounts also include information on expenditure that can help us to imagine what heraldic funerals of the late seventeenth century looked like. In this chapter the PCC probate accounts with details of the funerals of the upper ranks will be matched with the heraldic funerals recorded in the funeral certificates to investigate the declining controlling power of the College of Arms over funerals from the late seventeenth up to the end of eighteenth century.

[4] C/112/48: Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738) and C/112/49: Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' shop accounts. 3 vols. (1707–1738).

The following section explains the decay of the College of Arms and its power over the upper classes' funerals. Section 3 will analyse how the undertaking trade became more popular among the aristocrats and the gentry. The chapter will conclude with a discussion of how both the decline of the College of Arms and the services and the type of funeral the undertakers offered at a much lower price led to the expansion of the undertaker trade as well as to a significant decline in the upper classes' funeral expenditure.

2. The Decline in Control of the Upper Classes' Funerals

During the early sixteenth century, the heraldic funeral, which was introduced in the fifteenth century, was legally enforced among the aristocracy. By the mid-sixteenth century this type of funeral also applied to any lesser people who had the right to a coat of arms.[5] It is evident that the College of Arms held a monopolistic power and authority over the funerals of the upper class. The College employed the herald's visitation to control the upper class. The heraldic visitation, reinforced widely during the period, regulated the right to bear arms and the use of arms. Heralds carried out visitations in each county and a large number of counties were visited every few years or decades. Those with the right to bear arms would be required to hold a heraldic funeral when they died. Those who abused the rules would be punished.[6]

The most frequent causes appealed for in the Chivalry Court were prosecutions of those who usurped the privileges, and received the fees, of heralds at funerals, by providing and marshalling 'achievements of arms' without the heralds' authority. One example was a case concerning a display of arms at the Grocers' Hall and in the church of St Martin's. The funeral of Mirabella Bennett in May 1639 was attended by 'three aldermen of London, 60 women in mourning gowns and 120 boys from Christ's Hospital, of which she was a benefactor'. In her will, Mrs. Bennett gave clear instructions that her father's and husband's arms should be displayed on her hearse but that no heralds should attend. However, passing the duty to manage the funeral to a Mr. Holland, Mr. Myles (an executor of Mrs. Bennett) did not monitor the funeral closely. Mr. Holland happened to employ one Knight, an under-officer to the heralds, who had told him that the funeral could be conducted in this way without any

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[5] See Clare Gittings, "Urban Funerals in Late Medieval and Reformation England," in *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 100–1600*, ed. Steven Bassett (London: Leicester University Press, 1992), 176, and see also Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 166.

[6] Janet Verasasno, "The Staffordshire Heraldic Visitations: Their Nature and Function." *Midland History* 26 (2001): 128. See also Wagner, *The Records and Collections of the College of Arms*, 5.

problems. Both Myles and Holland were prosecuted for falsely displaying arms at the funeral place. They had to pay £200 in fines to the Court of Chivalry.[7]

Apart from the visitations, the Court of Chivalry was another tool used to control the upper class by ensuring that people bore arms that accurately represented their social position. This court was established in the fourteenth century to deal with the many cases of the misuse of heraldic arms. The authority of the Court of Chivalry had begun to decline before the mid-seventeenth century due to their abusive use of power. Its abuses became so notorious that Mr. Hyde (who later became Lord Chancellor Clarendon), in the Journal of the House of Commons on the 16th of April 1640, proposed the dissolution of the Court of Chivalry as a public improvement:[8]:

> That he was not ignorant that it was a court in times of war anciently, but in the manner it was now used, and in that greatness it was now swollen into, as the youngest man might remember the beginning of it, so, he hoped, the oldest might see the end of it. He descended to these particulars, that a citizen of good quality, a merchant, was by that court ruined in his estate and his body imprisoned, for calling a swan a goose.

Although Mr. Hyde's proposal was not approved, this corrupted Court went into further decline, due to the increasing favour for canon law together with a number of unreasonable decisions and penalties it imposed on various occasions. Moreover, it was an obvious target for Oliver Cromwell's efforts to destroy institutions that represented the old regime.[9] At the Restoration, many traditional rituals and institutions were reinstated, the Court of Chivalry among them. However, the attempt of the Court of Chivalry to re-establish its judicial power kept failing and the last cause concerning the right to bear arms (that between Blount and Blunt) was tried during the reign of King Charles II.[10]

The most important factor that had authorised and legitimised the power of the College of Arms was support from the monarchy. In the sixteenth century, heraldic funerals were either controlled by Queen Elizabeth I and Lord Burghley, or managed by the College of Arms which was then part of the Royal Household.[11] The main reason for this was political; their function was to preserve the upper classes' political

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[7] The case is from P. Stein, "Arthur Duck," Oxford DNB (Oxford, 2004). Several cases can be found in G.D. Squibb, ed., *Reports of Heraldic Cases in the Court of Chivalry 1623–1732*. Harleian Society, vol. 107 (1955) and R. Cust and A.J. Hopper, eds., *Cases in the High Court of Chivalry, 1634–1640*. Harleian Society, new series vol. 18.

[8] Charles Knight, ed., *London*, 6 vols (London: Charles Knight, 1841–1844), vol. VI, chapter CXXXI, 89.

[9] G.D. Squibb, *High Court of Chivalry: A Study of Civil Law in England* (Oxford, 1959), 2–3.

[10] Ibid,, 90.

[11] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 173.

and social status in order to stabilise society. As Gittings points out, 'the death of a powerful subject weakened the social hierarchy and had to be compensated for by a display of aristocratic strength'.[12] In order to retain the power held by the deceased, the heralds' role at the funeral had more to do with the transfer of titles and honours to the heir, which reflected the fact that any one person could be replaced by another person of the same rank.[13]

In addition, on a symbolic level arms represented the monarchy's authority, 'a salient reminder to all present of the origin of aristocratic power'.[14] The funerals controlled by the College of Arms were very elaborate, involving a street procession and the provision of chivalric elements within the church building. The exact numbers of people with the required status had to be appointed. The quantities of accessories, 'blacks' and mourning were listed and had to be provided accordingly.[15] The heralds' ruling was absolute and their decision was final. Their restrictive rules were followed rigidly by the upper classes.[16] A funeral certificate had to be signed by a member of the College to affirm that the funeral was performed in an appropriate way. For example, the certificate issued for the funeral of the Right Honourable John Egerton, earl of Bridgewater, records[17]:

> This certificate was taken by Laurence Cromp Esquire York Herald, who attended at the said Funeral for Charles Mawson Esquire Chester Herald, and the Truth thereof attested by the subscription of the Honourable Charles Egerton Esquire before mentioned

The heralds began eventually to lose their power after 1688 when the government under William III tried every possible way to collect revenue in order to fight the French. Instead of upholding the absolute authority of the College of Arms to gather fees from the upper class burials, Parliament opted for the collection of a new

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[12] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England,* 166.
[13] Clare Gittings, "Sacred and Secular: 1558–1660," in *Death in England: an Illustrated History*, ed. Jupp and Gittings, 159.
[14] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England,* 174.
[15] Blacks include hangings and other necessary items in black used to decorate at the funeral or at the deceased's place. Mourning refers to mourning dresses for the deceased's family members and the funeral attendants. It also includes mourning garb such as gowns, hats, gloves, and etc.
[16] Litten, *The English Way of Death,* 173.
[17] London, College of Arms, MS series I. 31: This is not a full text. I put the detail here only to provide a background for the deceased: 'The Right Honourable John Egerton, Earl of Bridgewater, Viscount Brackley and Baron of Ellesmere Commissioner of Executing the office of Lord … Admiral of England Lord Lieutenant of the county of Buckingham one of the Lords of HM most honourable Privy Council. He was also one of the Lord Justices for the administration of the Co… during HM absence in the year 1699 and 1700. He departed this mortal life at his house neare the Palace of St James in the County of Middlesex.' NB. The individual certificate does not have either its specific reference number or a folio number.

type of taxation for ‘granting his majesty certain rates and duties upon marriages, births, burials, etc.’. The visitation also started to disappear in the late seventeenth century. After the Glorious Revolution, the king (and his later successors) did not order any commissions to carry out visitations. London and its periphery were more affected by this cessation than the outlying provinces.[18] The last visitation was in London in 1700, while for the northern provinces the last visitation was in 1670 in Flintshire.[19] Without herald’s visitations, it was difficult for the College to maintain their control and power over the upper class. The funeral certificates issued by the College of Arms for heraldic funerals ceased in the early eighteenth century. Even though the primary aim of the College of Arms in maintaining its control was to preserve social distinction for the sake of political stability, Harding sees in it a form of exploitation. The College of Arms was viewed as a group of independent entrepreneurs who could find a way of making a profit out of their offices.[20]

Another sign of the College’s decline can be traced back to the early seventeenth century. The fact that the heralds failed to control unlicensed practitioners caused their institution to deteriorate. A clear example was when they lost control of the production of heraldic arms and came into dispute with the Painter Stainers’ Company of London. The latter attempted to claim the right to supply heraldic decorations.[21] Moreover, many artists not tied to the College, working independently, opted for other ways to make money, especially when the College was in decline. This was still seen at the beginning of the eighteenth century, as there were no heraldic funerals between 1704 and 1706 and not a single coat of arms was registered.[22] In this way, the art of heraldry could easily be opened up to other craftsmen. The art of making heraldry was not limited to the College, and people with the appropriate skills would later operate in business with the undertakers.

There were several reasons for these changes in funeral practices. The excessive cost of the heraldic funeral was one of the reasons, as Gittings claims that not everyone was prepared to spend such vast amounts on heraldic funerals.[23] Such funerals, as Litten indicates, became too expensive and “whilst a family might have

[18] Noble, *A History of the College of Arms*, 361.

[19] T.C. Wales and C. Hartley, eds., *The Visitation of London begun in 1687: Part 2*. Harleian Society, new ser. 17, 2004; M. Siddons, ed., *Visitations by the Heralds in Wales*. Harleian Society, new ser. 14. London, 1996.

[20] Harding, *The Dead and the Living in London and Paris*, 212–13.

[21] R.J. Parsons, “The Herald Painter,” in *Heraldry as Art* from the Heraldry Society website [Online], accessible: http://www.theheraldrysociety.com/articles/heraldry_as_art/the_herald_painter.htm

[22] Knight, *London*, chapter CXXXI, 93.

[23] Gittings, “Urban Funerals in Late Medieval and Reformation England,” 181. See also Gittings, “Sacred and Secular: 1558–1660,” 162.

been able to afford the necessary public honour provided by the College of Arms for the holder of the title, they would have been strained if required to repeat the performance for the deceased's widow and children."[24] Lou Taylor points out that by the end of the sixteenth century the cost of grand funerals led to the decline of the College of Arms since the prices were not reasonable and the willingness to pay for extravagant funerals declined among aristocratic families.[25] The spread of Puritanism in the mid seventeenth century is often seen as another cause for the decline of heraldic funerals, especially in the city, due to its strict code on expenditure.

Another reason might be a revolt among aristocratic women. One of their objections was to the practice of embalming,[26] on ideological grounds. Gittings suggests that there was an conflict between the rigid rules of the College and the more individualistic attitudes and characters of people in society.[27] Another objection was that the College of Arms, as noted above, regulated who might act as chief and principal mourners at such funerals, and one rule was that the mourners had to be the same sex as well as the same status as the deceased. This meant that the deceased's spouse, as well as his daughters, were mostly left out of the major parts of the ceremony. During a period in which the growth of affectionate relationships was seen, a desire to emphasise private loss led to the fashion for burial by night.[28]

The introduction of night burials further reflected the unpopularity of the College of Arms. It was more private and fewer people participated. Although night burials were successful in providing a more private atmosphere, they were 'seldom parsimonious' affairs.[29] The funeral of the Duchess of Richmond in 1639 cost £2,000.[30] Double fees were charged by the church due to the inconvenient hour. Moreover, significant amounts were spent on the mourning items distributed to family members, friends and relatives instead of the massive amount of money spent on blacks.[31] Despite its cost, the night funeral spread down the social hierarchy by the mid-seventeenth century and continued through the eighteenth century. Even though

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[24] Julian Litten, "The Funeral Trade in Hanoverian England, 1714–1760," in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal*, ed Peter C. Jupp and Glennys Howarth (London: Macmillan), 50.
[25] Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History*, 31–32.
[26] Gittings, "Urban Funerals in Late Medieval and Reformation England," 181. See also, for the case of Duchess of Richmond, Gittings, "Sacred and Secular: 1558-1660," 162.
[27] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 14.
[28] A brief account of the concept of 'affective individualism' can be seen in Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual,* Introduction and also 175.
[29] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family*, 274. See also Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual,* 189, 196–97.
[30] Gittings, "Expressions of Loss in Early Seventeenth-Century England," 26.
[31] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family,* 274.

night burials were not popular with the College of Arms, they still offered the opportunity of work for the herald painters,.[32]

Without the herald's oversight, the upper class became more independent in arranging their funerals. Earlier, when bound by the restrictive regulations of the College of Arms, the aristocrats seem to have had the least freedom of choice of any social group concerning the funerals of either themselves or their relatives. The requirements of the College of Arms had to be taken into consideration at all times. The College officers had to be notified of the death of all noblemen, knights and esquires, including their wives.[33] Heraldic funerals were extremely expensive; most cost more than £1,000 and they could cost up to £50,000.[34] The money was spent on many items, with the largest sums being paid to the drapers for black cloth. Another large sum of money was required as a payment to the College of Arms for their services and the obligatory attendance of heralds at the funeral.[35] Robert, Earl of Dorset, in his will created in the year of his death in 1609, complained that 'the usual solemnities of funerals such as heralds set down for noblemen are only good for heralds and drapers'.[36]

The concept behind this was that a heraldic funeral had to display a sense of continuity after the disruption of the dead person's status, which was caused by death, had occurred.[37] Mourning and mourning gifts played a major part in this function. The exact amount of mourning clothes used was regulated by the heralds, which made it difficult to economise on the funeral expenses. A requirement to follow the rules of the College of Arms caused Sir Nicholas Bacon's executor to pay £669 (out of £910 for total funeral expenditure) on mourning (1579), while for Lord Henry Hunsdon's funeral £836 out of £1079 was lavished on mourning cloth (1596).[38]

The number of heraldic funerals managed by the College of Arms saw a dramatic decline in the long eighteenth century. Both PCC probate accounts and the College of Arms's funeral certificates present a falling number of heraldic funerals during this period. The probate accounts include a few instances of this prestigious

[32] Litten, *The English Way of Death,* 14.
[33] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 168.
[34] Ibid., 180. See also Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency: 1660–1760," 188.
[35] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 181.
[36] T. Weil, *The Cemetery Book: Graveyards, Catacombs, and other Travel Haunts around the World* (New York, 1992), 40.
[37] This claim has been made by some historians of mourning and death such as Gittings, Cressy, Taylor, and Houlbrooke. See C. Gittings, "Sacred and Secular," 159, and also in her book. See also in Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death*438–41 and Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History*, 92.
[38] Houlbrooke, "Death, Church, and Family," 36.

funeral for the late seventeenth century, but none in the eighteenth century. The last two volumes of funeral certificates go up to the end of eighteenth century; however, those of the gentry end in 1736, with most of them being between 1661 and 1700.[39] For the nobility's certificates, there are only three recorded heraldic funerals in the eighteenth century, while out of 139 heraldic funerals for the gentry, just 17 were in the period from 1700 until the last recorded, in 1736. In addition, there is no match between aristocratic and gentry funerals in the PCC probate accounts and the College's funeral certificates. This is consistent with Lou Taylor's study which adds that there were only three true heraldic funerals recorded in the eighteenth century.[40] This confirms that the College had mostly lost control over the gentry, especially the lesser gentry, as Noble commented in 1805.[41]

These findings may be compared with the two social tables discussed in the first chapter. By comparing the number of heraldic funerals extracted from the funeral certificates with King's table (1688), it shows that these were most common among the aristocracy and declined with each step down; while there were quite a large number of knights with heraldic funerals, there was only a minority of esquires and gentlemen whose funerals were recorded in funeral certificates (Table 4.1).[42] In turn, Legg's account books from the the 1710s to 1730s include more than thirty funerals of the upper ranks organised by an undertaker.[43]

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[39] There are 166 funerals of nobility and aristocrats in total, with 139 in I. 30 (17 after 1700) and 26 in I. 31 (with 8 from 1700 to the mid nineteenth century).

[40] Lou Taylor, *Mourning Dress: A Costume and Social History* (Oxford: Taylor & Francis, 1983), 35.

[41] Noble points out that the landed gentry, especially the lesser ones, did not favour the restrictive regulations of the College of Arms, especially the grants of arms through their visitations. These people, as the primary power base of King William of Orange, led to the change in royal policy whereby the College of Arms lost power drastically. M. Noble, *A History of the College of Arms: And the Lives of All the Kings, Heralds, and Pursuivants, from the Reign of Richard III, Founder of the College Until the Present Time* (London: Debrett, 1805), 352–75.

[42] The table is constructed based on King's table discussed in the first chapter.

[43] TNA, C/112/49, Robert Legg's shop accounts, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' shop accounts. 3 vols. (1707–1738)

Table 4.1: Number of heraldic funerals from the College of Arms' funeral certificates from the late seventeenth century to the early nineteenth century compared with the number of noble, aristocratic, and gentry families in King's table (1688)

Social Status	Number of families	Number of heraldic funerals	Heraldic funerals per hundred families
Temporal Lords	160	40	25
Spiritual Lords	26	4	15
Baronets	800	24	3
Knights	600	34	6
Esquires	3,000	24	1
Gentlemen	12,000	5	0

Although it is apparent that the College's control over the upper ranks' funerals was in substantial decline throughout the long eighteenth century, they still retained an importance in the management of major state funerals. An example was the funeral of William Pitt in 1778. Upon his death, the House of Commons agreed to make an address to the king asking His Majesty to 'give Directions that his Lordship's remains should be interred at the Public Charge and a monument erected in the Collegiate Church of Westminster to the memory of that excellent statesman with an inscription expressive of the public sense of so great and irreparable a loss and to assure His Majesty that the House would make good the expenses attending the same'. Later, Lord North reported to the House that

> the said address had been presented and that he [the king] had commanded him to acquaint the House that he would give directions as desired by the said address. In consequence of HM directions The Right Honourable the Earl of Hertford, Lord Chamberlain of His Majesty's Household, requested the attendance of Mr. Garter who being absent through illness, Mr. Clarenceux, and Mr. Norroy waited upon his Lordship who desired that a scheme of a ceremony for the said public funeral might be drawn out which was accordingly done but being objected to in several particulars a second was prepared which after some alterations was approved and the funeral appointed for Tuesday the 9th of June following.[44]

3. The Expansion of the Undertaking Trade among the Upper Class

A heraldic funeral set up by the College of Arms in the seventeenth century is well described in the funeral certificate of Sir John Stawell, who died in 1661, while a description of the Duke of Manchester, whose funeral was set up in 1721, presents the heraldic funeral of 60 years later, which was managed by the undertaker (Appendix

[44] London, College of Arms, MS I. 31.

1).[45] The main difference between these two funerals was that the former was a 'real' heraldic funeral organised by the College of Arms while the latter was managed by an undertaker. We should observe that the items employed at both funerals were similar, although the procession and people involved in the funeral differed. Table 4.2 clearly shows that hiring the undertakers to manage the aristocracy's and gentry's funerals was quite common throughout the eighteenth century. Their expenditure on undertakers, while much lower than on the College of Arms, was apparently higher than the expenditure of the middle classes (Figure 4.1). However, the payments both groups made to undertakers remained quite stable during this period. More discussion on the payments made to the undertaker will be fully discussed in chapter 5. This section aims to explore how the undertaking trade had become more popular among the upper class by considering the expenditure and the funerary goods consumed at the funeral. It will conclude that by offering a much less expensive funeral with the provision of similar items to the upper class, the undertakers were able to expand their business easily and quickly throughout the eighteenth century.

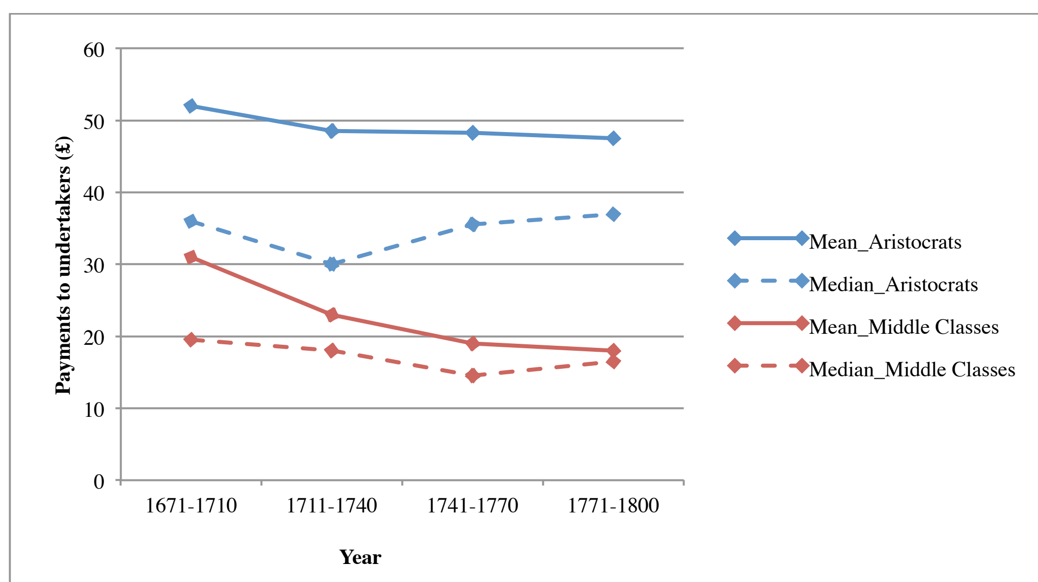

Figure 4.9: The mean and median of payments to undertakers between the aristocracy and the gentry and the middle classes, 1671-1800

[45] For funeral of Sir John Stawell see London, College of Arms, MS I. 30 (1661). For funeral of the Duke of Manchester see TNA, C/112/49, Robert Legg's shop accounts, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Vol. 2 (4 September 1717 to 3 April 1725), No. 85, 21 January 1721.

Table 4.2: Number of PCC probate accounts and the payment to undertakers of the aristocracy and gentry whose funerals were partially or fully managed by undertakers, 1671-1800

Year	Number of PCC probate accounts	Number of PCC probate accounts (%)	Payment to undertakers (£)		
			Mean	Median	SD
1671-1710	9	10	52	36	37
1711-1740	24	49	49	30	49
1741-1770	17	37	48	36	27
1771-1780	26	50	47	37	45

The decorative funeral items provided by the undertakers at the aristocratic and noble funerals were not different from those of the heraldic funeral as required by the College of Arms. Richard Carpender's account book illustrates the transformation of the relationship between the undertaker and the herald painter.[46] As the official herald painters worked under the College of Arms, the painters whom the undertakers could engage were members of the Company of Painter Stainers or other painters whose skills included the painting of heraldry. In 1735, there was a lawsuit against 'undertakers, painters, and others who have frequently presumed to marshal and direct the proceedings of solemn funerals without regard to the rights of arms and likewise employ mean persons to carry trophies of honour at such funerals'; the College of Arms was the plaintiff.[47] This lawsuit clearly suggests that some of the painters producing heraldic decorations for funerals were not official herald painters. Moreover, there was an attempt by the College to prevent the Company of Upholders from obtaining a new charter. Many upholders (upholsterers)[48] were working as undertakers in the eighteenth century.[49] The payment made to the upholders became a large part of the total payment.

As shown in Carpender's account, the undertaker could place an order with the herald painter directly. Carpender ordered heraldic items from one particular herald painter named Mr. Ware. This suggests that the herald painters who once worked only under the order of the College of Arms could work more independently. The basic items ordered from the herald painter included an achievement,

[46] CLC/B/227-044: Account book of undertaker Richard Carpender from the London Metropolitan Archives.
[47] Litten, *The English Way of Death,* 16.
[48] The term upholder was used interchangeably with upholsterer in the 18th and 19th century. The upholders of the 18th-century London normally worked as interior decorators. Before this, they traditionally provided upholstery, textiles, and fittings for funerals. However, this argument indicates that the term 'upholder' as in the traditional sense could have been used in the eighteenth century funeral. The history and the full definition of the 'upholder' and the 'upholsterer' is from http://upholder.askdefine.com/
[49] See 'undertaker' in a paper index of trade cards entitled "Trade Cards: Alphabetical by Trade" at London Metropolitan Archives.

escutcheons, buckram, shield, and shaffron.[50] In order to provide proper heraldic funerals for the upper class, many items were required. Carpender's account lists the items acquired from Mr. Ware for the Earl of Danby's funeral in 1712[51]:

> The Standard of England… £3
> A great banner… £4
> 6 banner rolls… £7 10s
> a Sir coate… £1
> Helmet Crest Mantle… £2 5s
> Sword and Shield… £1
> Gauntlet & Spurs… £1 5s
> A vauze for the arch… 15s
> 6 shield and coronets… 18s
> 3 ditto with supporters and coronet… 18s
> 2 yards and ½ achievement with ditto…. 15s
> 2 dozen silk escutcheons… £5 8s
> 22 dozen buckram ditto… £16 10s
> 27 dozen crest with ditto… £16 4s
> 22 Ell verging… £5 10s

It is unclear whether the costs of the heraldry were less than what would have been charged by the College of Arms. The amount paid for heraldic items used at the earl of Danby's funeral was £72 10*s*. However, it seems likely that his executor did save money by not using the College's services. According to Gittings, the payment to the College of Arms for their services and attendances would generally cost more than £100.[52] The four volumes of Robert Legg's account books offer a great many details on upper-class funerals. Some funerals managed by Legg show that the heraldry cost up to £100, as seen in the funeral of Theophilus Napier (a baronet) whose heraldry cost his executor £112 (1714).[53] This was in accordance with the deceased's rank, however. The lower ranks of the gentry could pay much less, as can be seen from Legg's account for the funeral of the Honourable Mrs. Calthrope (£23) in 1723[54]:

> 2 Atcheivements, Frames & Bayes & Cramps ……. 8.15.0
> 12 Silk Escutcheons for the Pall ………………………... 3.0.0
> 24 Buckrum Escutcheons 12 Shields 6 Chapps and 12 Long pencils and 36 small for the hearse and horses………………………….. 8.0.0
> 2 Dozen of Buckrum Escutcheons verged for the Church … 3.0.0

[50] Shaffron is a protective armour for a horse's head, especially the face and ears
[51] London Metropolitan Archives, CLC/B/227–044: Account book of Richard Carpender.
[52] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 182.
[53] C/112/48, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertaker's account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738), Vol. 1 (8 April 1713 to 7 September 1717), No 37, 17 April 1714.
[54] Ibid., Vol. 2 (4 September 1717 to 3 April 1725), No. 54, 30 October 1723.

These items were the common heraldic items seen generally in upper-class funerals. However, some funerals were also equipped with more items, such as velvet mantles, helmets and crests, gauntlets and spurs, swords and shields, and surcoats of arms.[55]

Not only the heraldic items, but also coffins for the upper classes were much more sophisticated and expensive than common coffins. The common coffin, used by the middle class, was an elm or a double-lid coffin. The use of a lead coffin inserted into a wooden coffin was popular among the upper classes since it helped preserve the body for a longer period of time. Another large expense for the heraldic funeral was mourning coaches and horses, which were hired for several days. The average expenditure for two coffins together for the aristocracy and the gentry was £10; however, it could range from £8 up to £20.[56] For instance, there were two coffins for Sir Yeo Thorold – a large lead coffin inside an elm coffin – costing his executor £10 10*s*. The large elm case was covered with 'the best velvet, a double quilt, plate with inscription, angel and flower, 4 pairs of large quilt chased handles, and set off with 2 rows of best quilt nails drove close'.[57] For the middling sort, an elm coffin with decorations would cost approximately between £1 and £7.

Where the upper classes could certainly save money was by not having to pay for the attendance of heralds and the different ranks of officer involved in a heraldic funeral. The College of Arms charged a vast amount of money for the attendance of heralds at funerals in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, while under the management of the undertaker the client would not have to pay this. The fees heralds charged for their services were known as 'funeral droits' and could be enormous.[58] The amount was dependent on the deceased's rank and degree.

The procession in a heraldic funeral involved a large number of people, which varied depending on the social rank of the deceased. For example, the funeral of duke of Kingston who died in Bath in 1773 is described in the College of Arms funeral certificate:

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[55] Only a few heraldic funerals managed by Legg were decorated with these items. One of those funerals was that of Sir Yeo Thorold, baronet: Ibid., Vol. 1 (3 April 1713 to 7 September 1717), No. 79, 14 March 1716.

[56] This is calculated from 4 volumes of Legg's account books: TNA, C/112/48.

[57] The payments that Sir Yeo Thorold's executor paid to Robert Legg in C/112/48, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738), Vol. 1 (3 April 1713 to 7 September 1717), No. 79, 14 March 1716.

[58] The funeral of John, first and only Duke of Rothes, who died on 27 July 1681 and whose state funeral on 25 August in the same year cost £30,000 paying mainly for whole regiments of ceremonial guards, soldiers, banners, trumpets, heralds and coaches which was organised by the College of Arms. From Henderson, T.F., "Leslie, John (1630-1681)" in Lee Sidney. *Dictionary of National Biography* (1893), 33).

> The corpse of this most noble Duke was on the 13 October conveyed from the city of Bath in solemn procession towards Holme Pierrepont; in all great towns through which it passed every mournful testimony was given by the inhabitants of their veneration for so benevolent so good a man! And on Tuesday morning the body was met near Notthingham Bridges by the nobility and gentry of the county and vast number of other persons, who attended it in a solemn and respectful manner to Holme Pierrepont from whence about 3 o'clock it was conveyed to the church and deposited in the family vault with his grace's ancestors. The supporters of the Pall were the Dukes of Portland and Newcastle, Lord Lincoln, Lord George Sutton, Lord John Clinton, Sir George Saville, Sir William Boothby and Sir Thomas Parkyns Baronets: Samuel Shering Esquire, his Grace's Auditor, went as chief mourner.[59]

Although the expenditure on these funerals was not recorded in the certificates, we can gain an idea of how much they might have cost. According to Stone and Gittings, the heraldic funeral of the sixteenth century (even up until the seventeenth century) would hardly cost less than £1,000 for the nobility and aristocracy.[60] For example, the funeral of Elizabeth, countess of Shrewsbury, in 1608 cost £3,257, while the funeral of Thomas, second duke of Norfolk, in 1524, cost £1,340.[61] The heraldic funerals involving undertakers in the long eighteenth century were far less expensive, as in the case of the funeral of the Countess Dowager of Suffolk in 1720, which cost her executor £158 to be paid in full to the undertaker.[62] The funeral of the Countess of Halifax in 1726 cost £266.[63]

The much higher funeral expenditure of the upper classes could stem from the fact that their funerals lasted longer and that they had to invest in a hearse and coaches as well as in people looking after the corpse. Although the period in which the hearse was displayed for the funeral was shorter than in the previous century,

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[59] London, College of Arms, I. 31: 'The most high mighty and most noble Prince Evelyn Pierrepont, Duke of Kingston upon Hull Marquis of Dorchester, Earl of Kingston upon Hull, Viscount Newark, Baron Pierrepont of Holme Pierrepont, Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, General in HM's army and recorder of the town and county of the town of Nottingham, was the only son of William Pierrepont Esquire (commonly called Lord Kingston) by Rachell his wife daughter of Thomas Bainton Esquire, which William was also an only son and died in the lifetime of his father Anno 1713, whereby his Grace became heir to his Grandfather Evelyn Pierrepont Duke of Kingston and Marquis of Dorchestor, Earl of Kingston and Baron Pierrepont, Knight of the most noble Order of the Garter, Lord Privy Seal, Lord President of the council during the reign of HM George the First, and three times one of the Lords Justices of GB during his said Majestie's stay at Hanover; departed this mortal life in the City of Bath on Thursday the 23rd Day of Sep 1773 in the 62 year of his age without issue by which all his graces titles are extinct.'

[60] "A few, of course, were considerably cheaper than these, but if a major aristocrat were to be buried in reasonable style, with a proper heraldic funeral, the executors could expect to spend at least £1,000, certainly after about 1580" from Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 181. See also L. Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy: 1558–1641* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965).

[61] A sum unsurpassed in real terms by any subsequent known aristocratic funeral cost: Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 180. Also Stone, *Crisis of the Aristocracy* (Oxford, 1965), 784–85.

[62] C/112/48, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738), Vol. 2 (4 September 1717 to 3 April 1725), No. 72, 29 October, 1720.

[63] TNA, C/112/48, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738), Vol. 3 (5 April 1725 to 9 July 1735), No. 10, 18 September, 1726.

when it took some weeks, it still took longer than the normal funeral of those below them.[64] The number of days varied but during the first half of the eighteenth century it would not last longer than a week.[65] For example, £17 10*s* was paid for 'A hearse and 6 horses 5 days at 35s per day' and 'A mourning coach and 6 horses at 35s per day', while £42 was paid to the undertaker for 'A hearse and 6 horses and 3 mourning coaches and 6 horses 6 days each at 35s per day' for the funeral of Right Honourable Countess Dowager of Denbeigh in 1720.[66] A few funerals, however, were accomplished within one day, such as those of Lady Phillippa Bateman, Sir William Oldes (knight), and Thomas Peck (esquire).[67] Compared to the middle classes' funeral expenditure, the amount of money the upper class spent on these items was large.

Unlike the heraldic funerals of the nobility and aristocrats, those of the lesser gentry were not described in great detail. The funeral certificate would normally provide details on when the person died and where the body was interred. There was no reference to the people involved or the heraldic items employed at the funeral. An example is the funeral of Justinian Pagitt, esquire, 'who departed this mortal life at his house in High Holborn in the parish of St Giles in the Field in 1668 (29 Dec). On the second day of January following was carried to the said church of St Giles and interred in the Chancel thereof near unto south side.'[68] Apart from these details, most certificates provide information on the deceased's family members e.g. their husbands, wives, sons, and daughters.

Hiring undertakers led to a cost-saving funeral for the upper class. As a result, undertakers had become more popular among the elite by the end of the century. The choices were the most flexible for mourning. However, the cost of their funerals was still high compared with those of their middling counterparts since most heraldic items could not be hired but would be treated as an outright purchase on the part of their clients. The heraldic funerals managed by the College of Arms in the PCC probate accounts cost more than £300, while the average cost of a funeral managed by the undertaker was around £45. However, a handful of the upper-class funerals provided by the undertaker could cost more than £100. The average funeral costs of

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[64] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 183.
[65] For heraldic funerals the process could take up to some months, see ibid.
[66] C/112/48, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738), Vol. 2 (4 September 1717 to 3 April 1725), No. 44, 25 November 1720.
[67] Ibid., Vol. 1 (8 April 1713 to 7 September 1717), No. 13, 6 May 1713, No. 57, 19 September 1714, and No. 78, 9 January 1715.
[68] London, College of Arms, I. 30, 42.

the upper classes in Legg's account books is slightly above £100. In addition, several items displayed at the upper ranks' funerals differed from those of the middle ranks.

In the seventeenth century, the largest bill had to be paid to the draper for the yardage of black cloth for mourning. The quantity needed for one funeral could be so large that it was often not possible for a single merchant to supply the total amount. It was unavoidable for the upper class to spend such a large sum of money when they had to act according to the rules of the College of Arms. Even though the hangings could be hired, the cloth given to the mourners had to be bought in a quantity dictated by the College.[69] The expenditure on mourning could amount to more than 60% of total expenditure. For instance, the executor of Robert Cecil had to pay £1,544 for black cloth out of a total funeral cost of £1,977 (1612), while the executor of Nicholas Bacon paid £669 out of the total of £910 (1579).[70]

The funerals of the nobility and the aristocrats in the eighteenth century were evidently cheaper under the undertaker's management. However, it has to be noted that the costs exclude the mourning clothes and clothing, which the undertakers did not normally provide for their customers. Their funerals would not cost more than £500, while some lower ranking people could pay a higher amount of money for their funeral (without mourning clothes). This was due to the flexibility the undertaker offered to their clients. The funeral of the Right Honourable Lord Chief Baron Montague in 1723 cost £101 and that of the Right Honourable the Earl of Radnor in 1725 cost £262. Others could cost more, even though they were in lower social positions, as for Sir Yeo Thorold's funeral in 1728 (£340) and Edward Colston's funeral in 1731 (£320).[71] The money spent on those funerals of upper-ranking nobles was slightly higher: for example, the executor of the duke of Manchester spent £362 for goods consumed at his funeral in 1722, while the duke of St Albans's executor paid £364 in 1789 to the undertaker and £101 for embalming the body of the deceased.[72] The spending on mourning was recorded in many probate accounts. They varied across funerals and they were in accordance with the executor's preference. The executor of Sir Justus Back, baronet, paid £26 to the undertaker for the funeral in 1729 and another £35 for 'all mourning'.[73] Expenses on mourning cloth were various and were far less than what the upper class had to pay under the College's regulation.

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[69] Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 181–82.
[70] Ibid.
[71] All the funerals are from TNA, C/112/48, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. (1713–1738).
[72] PROB 31/795/1010, George Duke of St Albans, 1789.
[73] PROB 31/70/529, Sir Justus Beck, baronet of St Nicholas Cole Abbey, London (1729).

While Charles Feltham's executor paid only £8 to the draper for 'mourning clothes and other goods had at the deceased's funeral in 1750, the executor of Daniel Pettiward paid £191 for the same.[74]

Undertakers did not normally provide mourning clothes, although they did supply other mourning items, including millinery. Gloves, scarves, hatbands, and a few other items were primarily given to the mourners. Mourners, without the College's control, could be much fewer in number. The numbers of people attending the heraldic funeral varied, but normally it would be more than 100 people, including people from different official ranks as well as the poor. The funeral of a very high-ranking person such as the Earl of Derby could have more than 1,000 people participating in it.[75] A large number of attendees would cost a huge amount of money since the deceased's estate had to pay for the items worn by the mourners. With a shift towards more private funerals, the quantities of mourning garb were much less since the attendees would only include the relatives and friends. The average expenditure of the upper class on mourning millinery was £28.[76] However, the cost varied depending on the number of people participating in the funeral. For example, John Diggs's executor paid £23 for different types of gloves, hatbands and favours, and cloaks for mourners who attended the funeral in 1721, while £57 was paid for the same items at the funeral of the Countess Dowager of Denbeigh (1720).[77]

A much larger quantity of millinery - especially when compared with the funerals of the middle classes - such as gloves, favours, scarves, and hatbands, were distributed at the aristocratic funeral. For instance, 54 new crape hatbands, 26 second best hatbands, 31 ordinary hatbands for horsemen, coachmen, postilions, porters and pages, 31 pairs of black top gloves for the same, 10 pairs of ordinary gloves for the pages to the hearse, 26 pairs of double sewed gloves, 8 pairs of the same for his Grace's servants in town, 8 hatbands for the same, 48 pairs of men's best shammy

[74] PROB 31/12/250, Charles Feltham, esquire of Enfield, Middlesex, 1723, and PROB 31/320/308 Daniel Pettiward (esquire) (1750).

[75] For example, the funeral of Duke of Kingston as recorded in the funeral certificate previously mentioned. See more examples of royal funerals from the late sixteenth up to the early seventeenth century in J. Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: the Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England, 1570–1625* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 1997).

[76] Calculation from Robert Legg's four account books.

[77] John Diggs is an esquire whose funeral was in 1721 (No. 32). All the funerals mentioned here are from C/112/48, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. Vol. 2 (From 4 September 1717 to 3 April 1725). See p. 172-4 for the Countess Dowager of Denbeigh.

gloves, and 6 pairs of the same' were ordered and delivered at the funeral of the Duke of Manchester in 1721.[78]

Apart from the quantities of mourning, a majority of the upper class could exercise their freedom by choosing what they desired to wear, since the undertakers did not get involved with that aspect of the funeral. In Legg's account books, no funerals including those of the upper classes refer to any payment made by his customers on mourning clothes. The evidence from the PCC probate accounts indicate the same, when the payments for mourning are recorded separately from the payments made to undertaker, as shown below:

> John Cater, Carshalton, Surrey, esquire
> Charge: 164.11.9
> Discharge:
> 5.10.6 paid for wine provision for the said deceased's funeral
> 63.10.0 paid for Mr Masters the undertaker for his bill of charges on account of the deceased's funeral
> 9.12.6 paid for mourning
> 10.0.0 paid for mourning
> 10.0.0 paid for mourning
> 40.0.0 paid for mourning
> 12.0.0 paid for mourning[79]

Thus, it is evident that with the employment of undertakers in managing funerals, the upper classes could enjoy a freedom previously constrained by the College of Arms. With undertakers, those who wished their funerals to be private and humble could easily request it without any restrictions that were once enforced by the College. Approximately 40% of the upper class funerals recorded in Legg's account books cost less than £100. They could easily save their money by opting for a smaller quantity of mourning and did not have to pay for the heralds' services and attendance.

By offering such a service, the undertakers gradually replaced the College of Arms in providing the funerals of the upper classes. The decline of the College due to the political reasons given above in the late seventeenth century was significant in the way that it accelerated the substitution process. However, the main reason for the general acceptance of the undertakers' management of the funerals of the upper classes was due to the fact that it saved them a huge amount of money on their funerals.

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[78] C/112/48, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols. (1713 –1738), Vol. 2 (4 September 1717 to 3 April 1725), No. 85, 23 January 1722.
[79] Ibid.
[79] PROB 31/52/582, John Cater, esquire of Carshalton, Surrey, 1727.

Chapter 5: The Undertaking Trade in Eighteenth-Century England

1. Introduction

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Plate 5.1: Funeral procession in the eighteenth century led by an undertaker followed by bearers. Engraving by Thomas Bewick (Northumberland). (Source:http://www.thewarblers.org.uk/Images/Funerals/Bewick%20funeral.jpg)

[This image has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.]

Plate 5.2: A night funeral. (Source: I.N. Hume, "Alas Poor…Who? Or Melancholy Moments in Colonial and Later Virginia," *Colonial Williamsburg Journal*, Spring 2005).

[This image has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.]

Plate 5.3: Invitation card for the funeral of Mrs Mary Thomas at St Marylebone church. This card is illustrated with scenes of the funeral performed inside the church (1738). (Source: T. Friedman, *The Eighteenth Century Church in Britain* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011, 185)).

The final chapter of this thesis is an extensive study of the eighteenth-century English undertaker. It attempts to resolve the arguments previous scholars have made on this topic. The three images above give an idea of how the funeral was set up during the eighteenth century, from the procession to the performance in the church led by the undertaker. The simple funeral of the middle classes in the sixteenth century, when the body was shrouded then placed in the grave, had by the eighteenth century been transformed into a funeral with a procession led by a group of people engaged by an undertaker. This procession, although not as extravagant as the public heraldic funeral of the nobility and aristocrats, was far more complicated than the middle ranks' funerals had been in the previous century. Early Modern historians, so far, have scarcely studied this topic. Unlike the clear picture of undertaking as a profession in the nineteenth century, which most scholars are agreed upon, the understanding of this group in the eighteenth century is rather vague.[1] In order to achieve the aim this study has set, this chapter will focus on three different aspects:

[1] There are only two works exploring the undertaking trade in the eighteenth century: Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England: Its Origin and Early Development, 1660–1830," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 28 (1994–1995): 241–53; Julian Litten, "The Funeral Trade in Hanoverian England, 1714–1760," in *The Changing Face of Death: Historical Accounts of Death and Disposal,* ed. Peter C. Jupp and Glennys Howarth (London: Macmillan), 48–61.

the chronology of the early undertakers, their expansion, and their impact on funeral consumption.

Historians of English death have widely accepted that the demand for lavish consumption leading to the emergence of the undertaker caused a commercialisation of the funeral. However, they have disagreed on the time when undertaking became widespread. Peter Earle seems to suggest that professional undertakers are generally accepted to have emerged in the 1680s.[2] Since his study ends in 1730, it is not possible for him to pay much attention to this new emerging business. Like Earle, Fritz asserts that undertaking had developed during the same period, despite strong opposition from the College of Arms.[3] According to Fritz, as well as Houlbrooke, undertakers began to gain popularity after the end of the seventeenth century. The assumption about the popularity of undertakers made by Fritz and Houlbrooke is based primarily on their claim of institutional change as the College lost its legitimate control over the funeral. In the same way, Gittings implies that the use of undertakers became more general throughout the eighteenth century but she does not provide any strong evidence to support this assertion.[4]

Yet, there are a few historians who hold some different views on the timing of the rise of undertaking and the commercialisation of the funeral. Ruth Richardson indicates that a fully commercialised funeral was the lavish Victorian one, but this had its roots in the phenomena of the earlier period. She places the popularity of undertakers and the early development of more expensive funerals in the changing medical and business context in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The fear of the deceased's body being snatched by the 'resurrection men' led to more sophisticated coffins and safer processes of delivering the corpse to the burial ground.[5] As she only links the popularity of undertakers to a demand for stronger coffins and more secure delivery of corpses, she fails to establish a robust connection between the increasing demand for undertakers within the whole context of the late eighteenth century.

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[2] Peter Earle. *The Making of the English Middle Class: Business, Society and Family Life in London, 1660–1730* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1989), 138.
[3] Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England," 246.
[4] Ibid., 248. See also Ralph Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency: 1660–1760," in *Death in England: an Illustrated History*, ed. Peter C. Jupp and Clare Gittings (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), 188. More details in Clare Gittings, "Expressions of Loss in Early Seventeenth-Century England," in *The Changing Face of Death*, ed. Jupp and Howarth, 22. For full details on the heraldic funeral see Chapter 3.
[5] Ruth Richardson, "Why Was Death So Big in Victorian Britain?" in *Death, Ritual and Bereavement*, ed. Ralph Houlbrooke (London: Routledge, 1989), 108.

In addition to the debate on the timing, historians have not been clear in terms of how widespread the undertaking trade was during their period of study. It has been generally believed among scholars that by the second half of the nineteenth century undertakers operated across the country from the big towns to the countryside. However, the chronology of undertaking remains obscure for the earlier period. Without supplying any evidence, Litten suggests that during the eighteenth century, the undertakers normally offered their services only in the parish where their shop was situated.[6] This is highly questionable since the trade cards indicate that the undertakers offered their services across the country. Fritz points out that by the mid eighteenth century undertaking services did reach other areas outside London but the role of undertakers in managing funerals was very limited.[7] His claim was, however, based solely on a diary of single local undertaker.[8] Other studies do not give any clear information about this. Houlbrooke, by employing nearly 150 London probate accounts relating to cases in the bishop's commissary court between the 1660s and 1740s, indicates that the use of undertakers rose rapidly after 1720, and within just ten years most funerals were wholly or partially arranged by them.[9] It is difficult to justify this assertion since his sample is relatively small (approximately 20 accounts per decade), and we do not know of which groups of people the sample consisted. A clarification of the evidence and a larger sample would be required for making such a strong statement.

By employing quantitative data from the probate accounts of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, this study offers much clearer evidence for the chronology of undertakers taking over the management of funerals as well as the location of their businesses. Similarly to Houlbrooke, my data clearly shows that undertakers started to become common in London and Middlesex after 1710, but they had not yet specialised fully since many of them only played certain parts at the funeral. Undertakers then expanded their businesses to the surrounding areas such as Kent, Essex, and Surrey from around 1750. These tradesmen then became more specialised and developed their role as funeral directors from the mid eighteenth century up to 1800, when most funerals in London and Middlesex had undertakers performing the whole ceremony. By tracing their business back to the eighteenth century, this work

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[6] Litten, "The Funeral Trade in Hanoverian England," 54.
[7] Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England," 249.
[8] This was Thomas Turner's diary. Turner was a village shopkeeper in East Hoathly, Sussex. He was not only the grocer, draper, mercer, and tax gatherer but also the undertaker. In his diary, several details of his undertaking work are described. More details in ibid., 250–51.
[9] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England, 1480–1750*, 286.

demonstrates that the undertaking trade was still limited to London and the surrounding areas at that time. Only a very small number of funerals in the provinces were under an undertaker's management and then only in big cities such as Bristol.

Similarly, Gittings does not provide a detailed study on the link between the rise of individualism and the rise of undertakers. She links the idea of individualistic and competitive elements and a love of display and conspicuous show with enabling the undertakers to make more profits. A sense of community had been replaced by the idea of individualism and the immediate family: city life had destroyed group ties. This is further supported by the study of McManners, who argues that there was a decline in a collective conscience. Funerals gradually moved away from a public expression to a privatisation of death which could be clearly seen through a strong nuclear family.[10] Since Gittings does not have any evidence on undertakers and provides only sources from the seventeenth century which are not connected with undertakers, her attempt to draw a connection between rising individualism and the emergence and development of undertakers seems weak.[11]

There are two main lines of argument to explain the growth of undertakers during the eighteenth century, one being the profit motive for undertakers and another the rising consumption of the middle classes. Peter Earle clearly identifies funerals as 'another institution which illustrated the increasing penetration of the profit motive into the fabric of society, the main innovation here being the rise of the professional undertaker from the 1680s.'[12] He further reiterates this point by stressing that from 1660 to 1730 English society was increasingly driven by the profit motive.[13] He seems to suggest that the involvement of undertakers means that their motivation for making profits appeared in an area of life that was previously not 'commercial' – it was organised by the family. This argument, however, does not match with the fact that the family was buying goods from commercial providers, who have a profit motive. This chapter claims that undertakers were middlemen, essentially, and that even without undertakers there were numerous commercial interests involved in funerals in the period of this study.

Similarly, Gittings portrays the undertaking trade as a profit-making business which shifted a conventional communal ritual into a private familial ritual. Since her

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[10] J. McManners, *Death and Enlightenment: Changing Attitudes to Death among Christians and Unbelievers in Eighteenth-Century France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1981), 75.
[11] From the third chapter in Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 115-137.
[12] Earle, *The Making of the English Middle Class*, 138.
[13] Ibid., 106.

study concentrates more on the seventeenth century, she does not have a clear picture of the undertaking business and only bases this point on what was a general condition for trade to flourish. Litten also asserts that undertakers made large profits in general but his evidence is mainly from the nineteenth century. His only strong evidence for the eighteenth century is trade cards: these indicate nothing about the profitability of the business.[14]

Another line of argument is on the demand side. McKendrick's thesis of a "consumer revolution" has been adapted to fit funeral consumption. Fritz sees the late seventeenth-century English society as a consuming society where people with wealth tried to imitate the upper classes in several ways, and that the undertakers emerged and developed in order to respond to their demands.[15] Houlbrooke also asserts that from the late seventeenth century conspicuous funerals reflected 'wealth, taste and personal circumstances as well as rank'.[16] As with Houlbrooke, Gittings suggests that the better-off middle classes, trying to display their social superiority, employed lavish funerals, including elements seen in the heraldic funeral. These historians strongly believe that this was a part of a process of emulation which had begun in the late seventeenth century. However, most of the literature only gives a brief discussion without providing any convincing evidence to support this claim.

My work emphasises the importance of consumption and shows that there was a demand among the middle classes for lavish funerals. This demand was met by the effective selling technique of the undertakers who inscribed the idea of how decent the funeral should be and offered 'new' and 'more sophisticated' items which had not been used in funerals before. This accelerated the demand for conspicuous funeral consumption among the middle classes. The undertakers then further supported this increasing demand by allowing their clients to rent instead of buying the items which would be used only once. Evidence such as account books, funeral bills and correspondence, as well as trade cards, will be examined thoroughly to illustrate how undertakers both created and responded to the middle classes' demand in the eighteenth century, especially in London and other nearby areas.

This chapter will show that the undertaking trade, as an emerging retail business, offered the goods and services for funerals directly to the end-user. During

[14] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 153.
[15] Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England," 245–50.
[16] Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency," 187.

this period, the trade aimed particularly at the upper and middle classes.[17] It saved time and the many errands that their customers might have had to run, had they been dealing with several different suppliers. The simple funeral of the middle classes in the previous century had been transformed to a more lavish funeral similar to that of the century later. The growing concern with decency mentioned in ch. 3 was encouraged by the undertaker, who reinvorced the idea by offering a wide range of items differing in price and quality. This sector grew extensively throughout this century and the trade itself had become more specialised by the end of the century. I will also argue that this motive did not affect the funeral costs among the middle classes since there was a similar trend for funerals without undertakers. Their profits, however, were not enormous, as I will show later in this discussion. It more likely affected the shaping of the manner and style of funeral.

In previous studies by Fritz, Harding and Houlbrooke, one of the main reasons leading to the rapid expansion of the undertaking trade was given as the decline of the College of Arms from 1685 onwards. Houlbrooke, for example, sees the declining power of the College of Arms in controlling the funeral ceremony as allowing emulation by the middle classes,[18] while, the gentry who were not willing to pay the high cost of the full heraldic funeral turned their attention to other providers.[19]

One of the problems in this argument is a failure to take account of the population concerned. The College of Arms had control over funerals, but the most restrictive regulations were imposed only on the funerals of the upper class, ranging from the king down to the gentry as shown in ch. 4. Hence, only about 5% of the population were directly affected by its decline. This study suggests that only the upper class would have gained significant benefits from the shift away from the heraldic funeral controlled by the College and by their turning to undertakers, since they were then able to have similar funerals but at a much lower cost. This institutional change did not affect the middle classes in the same way it did the upper class. For the middle class, the decline of (the College?) simply allowed them to adopt paraphernalia that had previously been limited to the gentry.

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[17] Like other retail businesses of the eighteenth century especially in London, see H. Berry, "Polite Consumption: Shopping in Eighteenth-Century England," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* sixth series 12 (2002): 378.
[18] Houlbrooke, "The Age of Decency," 190.
[19] Ibid., 187.

2. Changes in the Middle Classes' Funerals in Eighteenth-Century England.

Among many other questions, one of the most significant is how the nature of funerals had changed as a result of management by undertakers before the beginning of the Victorian period. This section will deal primarily with the impact of undertakers' management of funerals on the funeral expenditure of the middle classes. In addition, it will explore how provision and consumption had changed from the earlier period and transformed itself into the extremely lavish funeral of the next century.

It is clear that there was an increase in hiring undertakers to fully manage funerals throughout the eighteenth century (Table 5.1-5.3). While this type of funeral rose from 21% to 43% from 1711 to 1780, those partially managed by undertakers decreased from 45% to 21% and those managed without an undertaker dropped from 24% to 17% during the same period. This section attempts to explain the reason why people, by the end of eighteenth century, chose undertakers to fully manage their funerals,

Table 5.1: Numbers of funerals fully, partially, and not managed by undertakers, 1671-1800

Period	Fully	Partially	Without	Total	Fully (%)	Partially (%0	Without (%)
1671-1710	1	28	490	519	0	6	94
1711-1740	75	265	339	679	11	39	50
1741-1770	129	167	337	633	20	26	53
1771-1800	160	125	243	528	30	24	46

Table 5.2: Cost of funerals fully managed by undertakers, 1671–1800

Period	Number	Mean (£)	Median (£)	SD (£)
1671–1710	1	N/A	N/A	N/A
1711–1740	75	23	17	22
1741–1770	129	21	15	20
1771–1800	160	29	20	39

Table 5.3: Cost of funerals partially managed by undertakers (only payment to undertaker), 1671–1800.

Period	Number	Mean (£)	Median (£)	SD (£)
1671–1710	28	40	30	31
1711–1740	265	30	18	37
1741–1770	167	21	17	19
1771–1800	125	36	27	40

Table 5.4: Cost of funerals without undertaker's management, 1671–1800.

Period	Number	Mean (£)	Median (£)	SD (£)
1671–1710	490	52	24	98
1711–1740	339	29	16	59
1741–1770	337	19	12	23
1771–1800	243	28	16	36

Expenditure was not the main reason for people's decision to opt for the full management of undertakers on funerals. In ch. 2, I concluded that funeral expenditure remained quite stable throughout the century. The third chapter indicates that the costs of most items provided at the funeral continued to drop until the last quarter of the century. The fourth chapter suggests that undertakers made the high costs of heraldic funerals avoidable and, thus, how they became more attractive to the aristocracy and gentry. According to Figure 5.1, the payments the middle classes made to undertakers did not increase significantly over time, which does not support the assumption made by Gittings, Houlbrooke and Litten that the rise in funeral expenses among the middle classes was due to the presence of undertakers.[20]

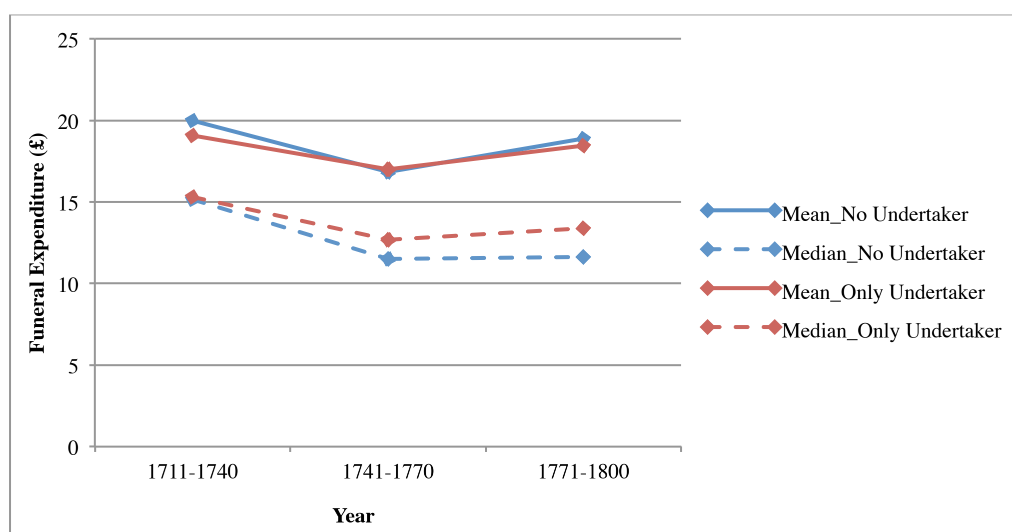

Figure 5.1: The mean and median of payments of middle-class funerals between those without undertaker and those with full management by undertaker across three periods, 1671–1800.

The employment of undertakers to take care of funerals did not make much difference in terms of expenditure among the middle classes. In eighteenth-century England, people paid similar amounts of money whether their funerals were managed by undertakers or provided by different suppliers, as Figure 5.1 shows. The costs

[20] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England,* 231. See also Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England*, 134 and Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 112.

between those funerals with and without undertaker's management follow the same trend, which is consistent with the overall funeral expenditure presented in ch. 2. Moreover, the costs of the former type of funeral are even higher than the latter. Since the hiring of undertakers was limited primarily to London and Middlesex, it would be more plausible to compare the expenses of these two types of funeral in these two areas. Figure 5.2 confirms that employing the undertaker would cost almost the same as contacting different suppliers for funeral provisions. Thus, this would reject the assumption made by Houlbrooke that the increase in middle-class funeral expenses was caused by undertakers.

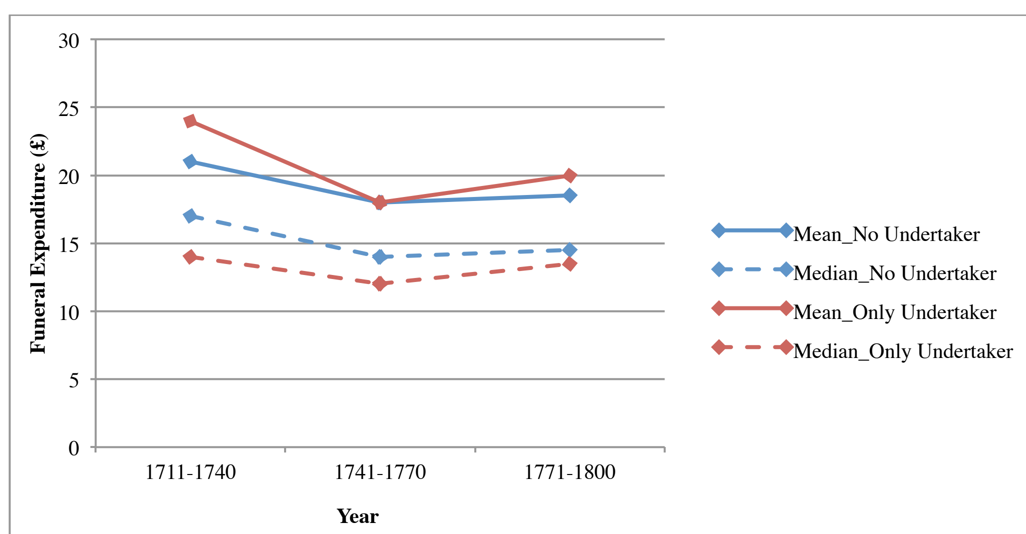

Figure 5.2: The mean and median of payments of middle-class funerals between those without undertaker and those with full management by undertaker in London and Middlesex across three periods, 1711–1800.

Although the hiring of undertakers did not save on funeral costs for the middle classes, undertakers became more popular throughout the century. They operated their trades based on 'all-in-one' packages which allowed people to save time by not having to deal directly with numerous other sellers. While Gittings suggests that undertakers had begun to usurp the functions of heralds at the funeral by 1700 by acting as masters of ceremonies and also providing all the necessary funeral commodities, my work paints a different picture. There was an increase in the percentage of people hiring undertakers to fully manage their funerals while there was a decrease in funerals with no undertaker involved and funerals partially managed by undertakers. This reflects the growing specialisation of undertakers. It took time for them to become established as a distinctive occupation. Gittings seems to overstate the speed at which undertakers gained control over the ceremony.

Undertaking probably had more effect in shaping the funeral ritual of the eighteenth century. Undertakers made funerals more sophisticated by offering a wider range of decorative items and furnishings. Houlbrooke and Gittings propose that the better-off middle classes attempted to display their social superiority over those below them by paying for lavish funerals, including some elements seen in the heraldic funerals.[21]

The majority of funerals without an undertaker's management were simple. The usual payments were made for coffins and shrouds, mourning, burial fees paid to the parish, fees for the church officers, and wine, as discussed in ch. 3. The undertakers' account books provide more details of the items provided by them at the funerals of both the middle and the upper classes. For the sum of approximately £5 in the 1720s, one would normally have the coffins and shrouds, wine provided at the funeral, and the burial fees paid, while a £5 funeral managed by the undertakers would also include the provision of gloves, funeral tickets, 'crape' hatbands, a strong coffin covered with fine cloth, a velvet pall, a fine shroud pillow, hearse, cloaks, flambeaux (for a night burial), as well as payments for burial fees and affidavit.

The more well-to-do middle classes who could afford to pay more would wish to add more elements in terms of quantity and luxury for their funerals. By adding £10 to £20 more, the customer would get mourning coaches and a hearse with horses decorated with plumes of feathers. They would also get higher quality shroud, gloves, 'crape' hatbands, and scarves, all of superfine quality. More than twenty different kinds of gloves would be distributed among those involved in the funeral. Candlesticks and sconces would normally be provided.

However, these were small in cost when compared with the heraldic funeral, as we saw in ch. 4. In Legg's account books, funerals costing £10 to £30 were provided to 30% of his customers. There were only a handful of Legg's clients, apart from the upper classes, whose funeral would cost more than £50. The normal extra charges would be for a mourning room (possibly in the house of the deceased) 'hung deep with black cloth, the staircase and passage with bayes and the floor covered'.[22] While the cost of setting up mourning in the room(s) for the middle classes was around £10, it would cost at least £40 for the upper classes. A larger number of funerary items mentioned earlier would be prepared. However, there is no record

[21] Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England,* 271. See also Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, 189.

[22] A majority of funerals costing more than £40 would have one of the rooms hung with black cloths and so on.

suggesting that heraldic items were allowed at the middle classes' funerals. Therefore, it might be an exaggeration to conclude that in the eighteenth century the middle classes had emulated in every detail the funeral of the upper classes.

The decline of public funerals had been ongoing since the seventeenth century, as we saw in ch. 4. A shift to management by undertaker would have accelerated this decline. Firstly, the sending out of invitation tickets would limit the funeral guests. One of the payments the undertakers received from several of their customers was for printing and delivering these tickets .

Secondly, undertakers focused more on the provision of decorative and millinery items, since they were more specialised in providing them. For example, a draper or a milliner who worked as an undertaker on the side could encourage their customers to buy mourning or millinery goods rather than convince them to spend more on food or drink. Robert Legg was a milliner turned undertaker. His wealthy customers spent more than 40% of their funeral expenditure on millinery goods. The higher the funeral expenses, the higher the profits he would make. The two funeral bills shown below recorded the profits made out of each funeral he provided.[23] The total amount of the first funeral (1715) is £8 15*s* with a total margin of £2 5*s* (22%). However, the total he received was £7 12*s* 6*d* instead of the full amount, which cut his profit to 14%.[24] It is unknown to whom half of this profit was paid or for what. It might possibly have been paid to another upholder who furnished the funeral under the name of the company. The second funeral in 1716 cost Mrs. Hopkins's executor £53 16*s* 10*d* (Plate 5.4).[25] The executor paid £25 for the first partial payment. Legg would make a 30% profit margin out of this funeral. However, as a milliner, he would make additional profit from the millinery items.

[23] His 'profits' include his overheads and other costs of running a business, so they are not profit in the modern sense but margins.
[24] A funeral bill for Mr. Thomas Cecill in 1715 with a record of profit made from the funeral: C/112/51 Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Individual funeral accounts and related correspondence.
[25] A funeral bill for Mrs. Hopkins's funeral with a record of profit made from the funeral in 1716: C/112/51.

Plate 5.4: An account for the funeral of Mrs. Hopkins with a record of profit made from the funeral. (Source: TNA, C/112/51)

Similarly, coffin-makers would try to sell more sophisticated coffins to increase their profit margin. The trade card of Jarvis and Son reflects this technique (Plate 5.5).[26]

Plate 5.5: Trade card of Jarvis and Son, undertakers and coffin makers of Charing Cross and Great Marylebone Street, advertising their 'improved coffins' (1797)
(Source: British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings).

[26] Trade card of Jarvis and Son, undertakers and coffin makers of Charing Cross and Great Marylebone Street advertising their improved coffins (1797): British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings.

The profits undertakers made in the eighteenth century might not have been as large as some historians have previously estimated. Chadwick's 1843 report contained information on undertakers' prices.[27] This work, which Litten uses for his calculation of the profits of a funeral furnisher, indicates that the undertaker made an average of 175% profit on his original outlay. This profit would have reached up to 500% for the funerals at the top end of the market.[28] However, this calculation is purely based on the size of the retail mark up. Litten ignores any other costs an undertaker's business faced, thus over-stating the possibility for profits in this trade. The profits made by Robert Legg's business suggest a different picture. Although he was already trading as a milliner or an upholder, who already stocked many necessary funeral items, with the expenses on the overheads, the average profits he made were below 50%.

Undertakers employed several techniques to form popular opinion of what a 'decent' funeral should be. One of the methods they used was to introduce 'new' and more 'complicated' funerary commodities, such as feathers, velvet pall, hearse, and coaches or more complicated coffins with a 'fine' or 'superfine' 'crape' sheet and shroud. By introducing new or more luxurious items to customers, the undertakers also inflated the notion of a 'decent' funeral.[29]

Trade cards illustrate some of the developments in the kinds of funeral that undertakers encouraged customers to adopt. In the earliest year of the undertaking trade, 1675, William Boyce, a coffin maker, advertised his business by displaying what should be consumed at the funerals (Plate 5.6). The trade card of Thomas Salter in 1737, while similarly advertising that he 'Makes and sells all sorts of coffins and shrouds at moderate prices', also offered more details on the items used to furnish funerals, as shown above in Plate 5.7. The items mentioned in Salter's trade card were consistent with what could be found in the undertakers' account books. During the same period, there is also an estimation for a decent funeral found among Robert Legg's correspondence. This was the calculation for Legg's own funeral but it explicitly conveys the picture of a proper funeral for the middle classes, including for the undertaker himself. Like many of his middle-class clients, the common things I have discussed above would have been provided. Many items recorded in probate accounts but not found in Legg's account books are included in this correspondence,

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[27] Edwin Chadwick, *Report on the Result of a Special Inquiry into the Practice of Interment in Towns* [the 'Burials Report'], published in 1843.
[28] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 28–29.
[29] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 150.

for example, gold rings given at the funeral, a gravestone with an inscription, and the ringing of the bell.[30]

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Plate 5.6: Trade card of William Boyce, a 'coffin maker at the Whight Hart & Coffin in the Grate Ould Bayley' near Newgate, London.

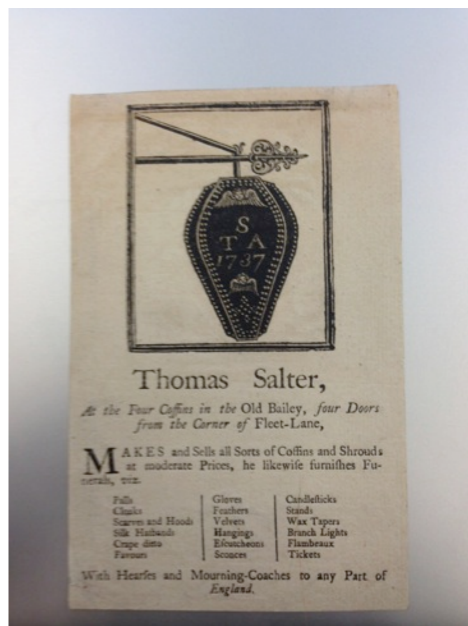

Plate 5.7: Trade Card of Thomas Salter (Source: LMA, A paper index of trade cards entitled 'Trade Cards: Alphabetical by Trade', SC/GL/TCC/Salter)

The trade cards of undertakers, selectively including expressions such as 'funerals decently performed' or 'funerals performed with respectability', conveyed the idea of decency or respectability, as in Plate 5.8.[31] Such cards display the decoration on the coach and coffin as well as the heraldic items on the lower part of the design.

[This image has been removed as the copyright is owned by another organisation.]

Plate 5.8: Trade card of Thomas Eyre, an undertaker of Oxford Street showing how the funeral procession looked and also presenting the heraldic items on the bottom.

[30] Correspondence of Robert Legg on his own funeral. See C/112/51 Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Individual funeral accounts and related correspondence.

[31] From several eighteenth-century trade cards from the collections in the London Metropolitan Archives and British Museum

The trade card in Plate 5.9, in contrast, describes the items necessary for the funeral in 'the best manner'.[32] Through these techniques, the undertakers successfully built a value chain among their clients.

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Plate 5.9: Trade card of Stephen Roome, an undertaker at the Four Coffins, Fleet Street.

Undertakers not only served the rich or those who required a lavish funeral but also offered their services to the poor. They provided funerals, on contract, for parish paupers.[33] In the second half of the eighteenth century, the parish generally paid for pensioners' funerals. For example, burial fees were paid to Richard Rokes, an undertaker, in 1781 by James Crozier, governor of Clerkenwell House of Correction, for John Pott, William Wake, and Richard Pink. All of three men were buried in the lower burial ground, which was the cheapest, costing the governor just 5*s* 8*d*.[34] In Legg's account books, there were at least fifty funerals with expenses lower than £1: only coffin, shroud, and a use of pall were seen in these funerals.

3. Professionalisation of the Undertaking Trade

> He is master of ceremonies at burials and mourning assemblies, grandmarshal at funeral processions, the only true yeoman of the body, over which he exercises dictatorial authority from the moment that breath has taken leave to that of its final commitment to the earth. His ministry begins where the physician's, lawyers, and diviner's end … He is bed maker to [the] dead. The pillows which he lays never rumple. The day of interment is the theatre in which he displays the mysteries of the art.[35]

Thus Thomas Lamb in 1811 portrays an image of an undertaker as a director of the funeral in such a way that he has an absolute right to manage the burial ceremony. According to him, the funeral was 'the theatre in which he displays the mysteries of his art'. During the late seventeenth and the early eighteenth centuries, an undertaker was not a distinctive occupation and was usually a sideline for people engaged in trades such as coffin maker, cabinet maker, upholsterer, carpenter, draper,

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[32] From several eighteenth-century trade cards from the collections in the London Metropolitan Archives and British Museum

[33] Samantha Williams, *Poverty, Gender and Life-cycle under the English Poor Law, 1760–1834*, 42–43.

[34] MJ/SP/1781/12/027: Richard Rokes, undertaker, receives payment from James Crozier, Governor of Clerkenwell House of Correction, for the burials of John Pott, William Wake, and Richard Pink.

[35] Thomas Lamb, "On Burial Societies, and the Character of An Undertaker," *The Reflector. A Collection of Essays on Miscellaneous Subjects of Literature and Politics*, vol. 2 (London, 1812), 143.

mercer, appraiser, glover, or milliner.[36] According to Robert Campbell, the undertaker was portrayed as:

> A set of Men who live by Death, and of the [newer or never] care to appear but at the End of Man's Underlife, they may then properly enough serve to taker, bring up Rear of our Trades; their business is to watch Death, and to furnish out the Funeral Solemnity, with as much Pomp and [reigned] Sorrow, as the Heirs or Successor of the Deceased chose to purchase: They are a hard-hearted Generation, and require more Money than Brains to conduct their Business; I do not know, that they take Apprentices in their Capacity as Undertakers, for they are generally Carpenters, or Herald-Painters beside: And they only employ, as Journeymen, a Set of Men whom they have picked up, possessed of a sober Countenance, and a solemn melancholly face, whom they pay at so much a job.[37]

During the eighteenth century, the undertaking trade became more professionalised. This particular trade had also become almost commercialised. Undertakers acted as middlemen and provided time-saving services that their customers requested. Although it was not a basic requirement to enter the undertaking trade, an apprenticeship was available for those seeking to enter it.[38] For example, an undertaker and coffin-maker advertised for an apprentice in 1752. The apprentice should be 'a young person of a grave disposition and deportment' as he engaged to instruct him 'in the whole art and mystery of business'.[39] There were also some petitions filed by the apprentice against his master, such as in a case of Thomas Woodgate in 1717. His master, Valentin Dickins, who was an undertaker in Middlesex for seven years, was claimed to be ignorant and unable to train him properly.[40]

Most undertakers were trained not only in undertaking trade but also in other occupations which required an individual to gain an apprenticeship before starting up their businesses. This was another considerable source of money for them. The petitions filed against the masters by the apprentices confirmed this. In one case, Henry Tilling addressed a petition for him to be discharged from his indenture of apprenticeship due to his master not instructing him in his trade. His master was

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[36] From trade cards collected from the British Museum and LMA. Also, from the wills of eighteenth-century undertakers whose wills were proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury.
[37] Robert Campbell, *The London Tradesmen* (London T: Gardner, 1747), 329-30.
[38] See Campbell, *London Tradesmen*. See also the trade card index from the London Metropolitan Archives and wills from the TNA in Appendix 3.
[39] *Morning Chronicle* (London, England), Issue 13267. Wednesday, 12 February 1752.
[40] LMA, MJ 74, Middlesex Sessions: Sessions Papers – Justices' Working Documents, the case of Thomas Woodgate.

Richard Collins, a carpenter, joiner and undertaker of Hampton Wick. Tillings was bound as an apprentice to Collins to learn his art and serve him as such apprentice for the term of five years. This indenture contained a covenant on the part of Collins that he should teach Tillings the art or trade of a carpenter, joiner and undertaker. After two years of contract, Collins sold his business to Mr. Atkins forcing the petitioner to work for a different job which did not follow what had been stated in the contract.[41]

There is also another case when Sarah Houghton appealed to the court asking for the indenture of apprenticeship of her son, James Houghton, to Joseph Scourfield, glover, leather seller, and undertaker to be cancelled. She paid £50 for her son to be instructed his apprenticeship by Scourfield in 'the art or mystery of glover, leatherseller and undertaker as aforesaid'. Two years after the said James Houghton had been bound an apprentice to the said Joseph Scourfield, Scourfield failed in his business and had to shut down his shop. His stock in trade was sold or transferred and his house let, and Scourfield remained sometime out of employment. He then ordered his apprentices to do the servants' jobs such as cleaning his house instead of directing them in his skills in trade.[42] It was clear from the evidence that becoming an undertaker needed some specific skills and practices.

This section will explore the emergence of undertaker as a full-time occupation. It will also provide discussion on how the undertaking trade specialised throughout the eighteenth century. This will give an idea of how undertakers developed to become the way in which Lamb portrays them in the early nineteenth century.

In the eighteenth century, some undertakers transferred their skills to their children or some other family members. The business of John Page, an undertaker, was continued by his son, as announced in a newspaper advertisement.[43] The business of Mr William Sheppard, an eminent and wealthy upholder (upholsterer) and undertaker at the Rising Sun in Mark Lane, was managed by his wife after he had died.[44] The business also might be passed on from a master to an apprentice, as in the case of William Peer. He was a coffin-maker and undertaker and was apprenticed to Mr. Lionel Leonard, late of Duke Street, Lincoln's Inn Fields. In a newspaper

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[41] MJ/SP/1827/10/025: Richard Collins, Hampton Wick, carpenter, joiner, undertaker and master of Henry Tilling, apprentice: Petition for Tilling to be discharged from his indenture of apprenticeship, due to his master not instructing him in his trade

[42] MJ/SP/1807/04/021: Sarah Houghton: Petition asking for her son James Houghton's indenture of apprenticeship to Joseph Scourfield, glover, leather seller, and undertaker to be cancelled

[43] *World* (1787) (London, England), Issue 285, Wednesday, 12 December 1787.

[44] *Penny London Post* (London, England), Issue 41, Wednesday, 28 November 1733.

advertisement, Thomas Buckland, the apprentice to undertaker, Henry Gent, thanked 'the friends and customers of his late master as well as the public in general who had favoured him with their commands, and further hoped for their continuance, as they may depend on being served in the best manner.' He assured readers that he had an 'entire new stock of the variety of articles in the business', which enabled him 'to furnish as well, and as cheap, as at any shop in London'.[45] Another example was John White, leather-dresser, breeches-maker, glover and undertaker, who had bought the wholesale and retail trade of Mr. John Pullin and purchased his stock in trade. White moved all Pullin's stock to his house where he intended to continue the business 'in all its parts and branches'.[46]

There are several other sources such as trade cards[47] or newspapers which suggest that in the late eighteenth century, especially in London, undertaking was known as a distinct occupation. At the beginning of the period, the undertakers' businesses existed alongside their main occupations. During this period, they mostly sold or provided particular goods for their clients, such as coffins and shrouds, hearses and coaches, mourning millinery, and flambeaux and sconces for night funerals. However, not all funerals were decorated with these items while some other funerals had far more lavish decorative items.

According to Litten, the funeral trade had three separate branches: coffin-making, undertaking and funeral furnishing. These three branches could either be fulfilled by three different persons, or one person could take on two or all duties at the same time. The coffin-maker made coffins, the undertaker performed funeral rituals, and the funeral furnisher provided things used at the funeral. The coffin-maker could run the undertaking business alongside other trades and crafts, for example, as in the case of William Guyer, who was both a coffin-maker and a furnishing undertaker in

[45] *Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Issue 14402. Thursday, 13 February 1777.

[46] *Felix Farley's Bristol Journal* (Bristol, England), Issue 2137, Saturday, 3 October 1789.

[47] Trade cards were the commercial notices employed by businessmen to promote the goods and services they offered as well as the names and the locations where their shops were situated. Some trade cards contained complete details while some only presented particular information the seller would like their buyers to know regarding certain services or products. There are two relevant collections of trade cards, as identified by Fritz: the Index of Trades and Products represented in the Heal and Banks Collection of Trade Cards in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum; and the Guildhall Collection of Trade Cards at the Guildhall Library, Art Gallery and Print Department. Additionally, the works of Sir Ambrose Heal, including The London Furniture Makers: From the Restoration to the Victorian Era, 1660–1840 and The London Tradesmen's Cards of the XVIII Century, are very useful for understanding undertakers' backgrounds and their services provided for customers. See Litten, *The English Way of Death*. Litten bases his study of undertakers on a small number of trade cards from Guildhall Library and LondonVictorian and Albert Museum (Department of Design, Prints and Drawings), London. See also R. Habenstein and W. Lamers, *The History of American Funeral Directing* (Wiscousin: Bulfin Printers, 1955), 180-188.

the mid eighteenth century at 106 St John Street, Clerkenwell.[48] Richard Middleton was also a coffin maker and undertaker who possibly made a good profit out of the business as he had more than one shop in London. His first shop was in Stone Cutter Street, Fleet Market, with a second shop in Duke Street, Chelsea.[49] The undertaker and the funeral furnisher could overlap, as was the case for John Gladmand and Thomas Watkins of Fleet Bridge, both of whom were both undertaking and furnishing funerals in the same period.[50] Sometimes, it is difficult to tell from trade cards which occupation the person performed since they were only written as 'Funerals completely furnished' or 'Funerals furnished on the shortest notice'.

Additionally, the eighteenth century, especially the first half, saw carpenters, joiners, cabinet-makers, and upholsters working as undertakers on the side. Most of the eighteenth-century London trade cards of undertakers show most businessmen were not working as undertakers only. By the late eighteenth century, being an undertaker as a single occupation had become more common. The wills of the undertakers from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury demonstrate this, since there was an increasing number of the deceased whose occupation was given only as undertaker (Appendix 2).[51] Having had their wills proved in this court implies that these undertakers were well-to-do people. The trade card of L. & T. Mitchell in 1789 reveals that undertaking was their main business, or the main service they wanted to offer, unlike what had happened in the earlier century, since the word 'undertakers' was the largest in the text while their other two occupations, 'carpenters' and 'joiners', were written below in smaller size.[52]

Throughout the eighteenth century, the undertaking trade grew. Advertisements in newspapers suggest that there was a secondary market in undertakers' goods during the eighteenth century. Those businesses sold or auctioned in the market were aimed primarily at undertakers, which reflects that by this time they had become well established as a distinct occupation. A notice from the *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* in 1778 reads:

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[48] Trade card of William Guyer from the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Trade Card Collection.

[49] Trade care of Richard Middleton from the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Trade Card Collection.

[50] Trade card of John Gladmand and Thomas Watkins from the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Trade Card Collection.

[51] I have collected 127 wills of the eighteenth-century undertakers whose wills were proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PROB 11). The wills indicate that in the earlier period a majority of undertakers had other occupations while in the later period the occupation 'undertaker' was normally recorded solely.

[52] Trade card of L. & T. Mitchell, from the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Trade Card Collection.

> To the Undertakers. By Henry Watkins,
> At his Sale Room, Holborn-bridge, on Tuesday, Aug. 18,
> And the following day, at 12 o'clock,
> The large and valuable Stock in Trade of
> Mr. Thomas Walters,
> Coffin-maker, Undertaker, and Upholder, of Kenington,
> Retiring from Business,
> Comprising a great assortment of Geneva velvet palls, and sets of velvet, cloaks, scarfs, and hoods, … 76 sets of wax lights, and every other requisite in complete order and together with the remaining part of other goods.
> To be able to viewed Monday preceding the sale, and catalogues then had.[53]

This was addressed specfically to undertakers, suggesting that the sale was of particular interest only to them and not to other occupations. In order to capture the attention of other undertakers, the details or descriptions of the stock are published. The sale of undertaking businesses could also be done by an executor of the deceased undertaker, as in the case of Mr. Thomas Tredway, when one Samuel Burton offered for sale Tredway's business by the order of his executor in 1780.[54] Sometimes a business might be sold as a going concern to undertakers who wished to expand their branch or to start up the business, as advertised in the newspaper by Thomas Griffiths in 1772.[55]

The undertakers' account books provide evidence that expansion was proceeding along with the specialisation of the undertaking trade, which had begun before 1750. However, it was still not possible for undertakers to stock all the requisites and certain items had to be ordered from different suppliers.

In the case of Robert Legg we can see this development. His first shop accounts in 1707 indicate that he was, at that stage, a milliner who primarily provided gloves and other small millinery goods for his customers. However, from 1717 his account books began to record several payments from his clients for the goods delivered to their funeral. More than 75% of the payments he received in the earlier years were mainly for provision of funerary items.[56] After 1725, his company began to expand, since Legg was now an upholder, appraiser and undertaker. He established the 'United Company of Undertakers'. He hired both undertakers and upholders to

[53] *Morning Post and Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Issue 13245, Tuesday, 10 August 1778
[54] *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Issue 16086, Wednesday, 30 August 1780.
[55] *Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Issue 12848, Thursday, 27 February 1772.
[56] C/112/49: Robert Legg's shop accounts, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' shop accounts. 3 vols. (1707–1738).

furnish and manage complete funerals. Apart from preparing goods for funerals, they were also responsible for paying the burial fees. They might also order wine from the vintner. If a client requested an affidavit of being buried in woollen cloth, they could include it in the service. Even though the United Company of Undertakers was quite short-lived, the Company of Upholders continued to support those members who furnished funerals as part of their trade.[57] An account book with the title 'Funeral Book with Upholders' recorded the payments Legg received from his clients via upholders from 1725 to 1736.[58] The upholders named in the book are: Mr. Green, Mr. Mansel, Mr. How, Mr. Mason, Mr. Middlemore and Mr. Greenhill, Mr. Greenwell, and Mr. Allen. Mr. Green was responsible for the highest numbers of funerals, hence it is not surprising that he was the sole executor of Mr. Legg. His son, Robert Legg Jr., became an upholder and inherited his father's business afterwards.

Since the account books do not give an idea of how large the undertaker's stock was, probate inventories of the undertakers are useful since they portray what the undertakers might have had in their shops or stocks. These inventories show that businesses were varied in size. For example, Thomas Phill, an undertaker of St Martin in the Fields, who died in 1719 had in his inventory:

> a little close bed, a little feather bed, and bolster two old blanket, two pairs of old engg, two topps of tables, two old chairs, 160 yards old course bay, 3 porter gowns, 2 old cloaks, 13 old cloaks at pawn, an old velvet pall at pawn at the value of £1 10s more than pawn for, 8 children's coffins of elm, 4 deal children coffins one six-foot deal coffin, one work bench, some old tools with other lumber'

with a total value of £11 8*s* 6*d*.[59] With evidence from the account book illustrated above, it appears that, during the early years of their business, undertakers rarely had sufficient capital to establish their own warehouses to store their own stock. They acted as middlemen who undertook to arrange the supply of whatever items met the family's or the deceased's desires for their funerals.[60]

A larger undertaking business can be seen from the probate inventory of Mary Ann Carter in 1788, a bookseller and undertaker of St Leonard Shoreditch, which

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[57] Litten, *The English Way of Death*, 143-4.
[58] C/112/48: Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Undertakers' account books. 4 vols., Vol.4, 25-78.
[59] DL/AM/PI/1/1719/3: Probate inventory of Thomas Phill, undertaker, St Martin in the Fields, Trafalgar Square, Westminster, Middlesex
[60] Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England," 248.

records a stock in trade of her undertaker's business including plates, nails, handles, 'crape', gloves, scarves, hatbands, velvet palls, and blacks valued at £115 8*s*:

> Stock in trade in the undertaker's business 38 M of 4(d) nails, 5M of white and black, 6M brass nails, 4M 3(d) common, 2M No2 black, 3M No1 White sundry remnants of nails of different sorts, 49 dozen of bows and loops for ???, 27 pair of wrought grips and loops black and gilt, 36 angel and flower pots, 1 double oval lead plate, 4 tine and 8 common [cha…] Plates, 9 side pieced plates, 15 8-inche plates, 41 5 and 6-inch plates, seven dozen 4-5-inch oval, 9 dozen 6-inch ditto, two ditto 8 inches, 4 dozen 8-inch oval handles, 2 dozen of small head black, one ditto of 4-inch head patent, 3 dozen 7-inch ditto, 10 small oval handles, 16 double oval handles, 18 small ditto, 58 inch [lozeng] plates, 14 small double over handle, 4 6-inch plates, 60 shew handles and plates in window, 4 side piece plates, one double oval ditto, 5 dozen of letters, 12 dozen of drops, 5 dozens 4-inch head handles, 17 yards and a half of yard wide grey baize, 6 yards of common ditto, 34 yards of superfine ditto, 12 yards of common black, 5 yards of fine ditto, sundry remnants of ditto and cloth three pieces of lining crape, three pieces of No.2 crape, two pieces of No.5, 5 remnants of crape containing 19 yard one fine No.8 sheet three yards long, one ditto no.9 two yards ¾ long, 8 No.5 large shrouds and caps, 16 yards of [ruffling] and sundry remnants, 6 yards of crape, 2 pound wool beds, seven silk scarfs and hoods, 2 porter's covers, 2 silk hatbands, 34 old crape hatbands, 10 new crape hatbands, 1 new silk ditto, 38 pair of old black white gloves, 14 pair of new men's white ditto, 10 pair of women's white kid gloves, 4 pair of ditto lamb, 3 pair of woman's black kid, 2 pair of laced ditto, 5 pair of men's love gloves, 2 pair of boy's ditto, 11 pair of old gloves, 5 pair of new lopped lamb, 3 pair of men's kid, 3 pair of women's ditto, 24 pair old gloves, 1 new crape hatband, 2 old white silk hatbands, an old Sarsenet for a pall 6 midling hatbands, 12 tryncheons, 4 pages wands, 4 porters poles, 2 coach boards, 1 pair of trussels, 1 pair of shop stools, 12 best cloaks, 14 common ditto, three boys ditto, a remnant of cloth, 2 porter's gown, one four breadth velvet pal, one three breadth Manchester velvet ditto, one ditto one best two breadth, one ditto white lining, one breadth half ditto with double sarsenett, one breadth a quarter ditto, 2 one breadth ditto, one set of velvets for a hearse and four horses, 3 dozen of common silk gloves, two dozen of women's ditto, 11 pair of girl's ditto, 10 pair of grey ditto, 10 pair of women's best and 14 pair of men's ditto valued and appraised at the sum of 115.8.0

Coffins, boards, and some other wooden items were kept in the cellar. These items were valued at £17 2*s*. We can observe the differences between the two inventories, especially in the quantity of items present in the shops at the time of their owners' death.

While undertakers like Legg, whose other occupation was an appraiser and upholder, owned most of the funerary necessaries, there were also some undertakers

who had to make requests from different suppliers, including engravers, coffin makers, drapers, wax chandlers, coffin-plate makers, plumbers, glovers, and herald painters, as shown in the account book of Richard Carpender from 1764 to 1765. He was an undertaker with premises in Fleet Street. His account book shows many payments made to those mentioned above. However, it seems that he contracted specialised suppliers. For instance, money paid to Mr. Goodwin, a plumber, who provided the inner lead coffin as well as accompanying Carpender to solder up the body in a sheath of lead.[61] The most frequent payments were made to Messieurs Sedgewick & Company for provision of sundries for the funeral such as feathers, different types of gloves, 'crape', satin and 'alamode'.[62] Coffins were supplied to him mainly by Mr. Gladman every month in 1746. Most of the coffins, either single or double lid, cost Carpender less than £1. Apart from the coffins, coffin plates and inscriptions on them could cost large amounts . Coffin plates could cost as much as coffins themselves.[63] His account book records the payments to Mr. James Wigley, an engraver, generally for plates(with the size) to be inscribed, waxed, and polished. The coffin-plate maker, namely Mr. Nowell, was responsible for gilt, silver, or brass plates differing in sizes and styles.[64] It is unclear whether these orders were kept in Carpender's stock or were made by order, except the coffin plates which were made for particular customers.[65]

The increasing number of people hiring undertakers to manage their funerals in the eighteenth century implies greater competition. Only 6 undertakers out of 722 probate accounts were recorded in more than one document.[66] Robert Legg was very successful, directing more than 100 funerals per year from 1717 to 1735. Richard Middleton was also a coffin maker and undertaker who thrived, with more than one shop in London. His first shop was in Stone Cutter Street, Fleet Market, with a

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[61] Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England," 248. See also the account book of Richard Carpender: MLA, CLC/B/227-044.

[62] There are several payments made by Richard Carpender to his suppliers. The payments made to Messrs Sedgewick & Company represented the largest amount of money compared to other suppliers. See The account book of Richard Carpender: MLA, CLC/B/227-044, Payment no. 2, 15, 22, 47, and 55, p. 4, 33, 97, and 115.

[63] Fritz, "The Undertaking Trade in England," 248.

[64] The account book of Richard Carpender: MLA, CLC/B/227-044, Payment no. 7, p. 15.

[65] It is clear from his account book that each coffin plate was made for the individual client. For example, a payment of £1 1*s* 6*d* was paid for "a brass plate 10 by 12 waxt polisht & vanisht for Mr. Jone Lovett".

[66] There are 722 probate accounts in total with a reference to the name of undertakers from 1671 to 1800. There are 6 of them whom were mentioned multiple times in different documents. Therefore there are 715 undertakers referred in the PCC probate accounts from 1671 to 1800. Mr. William Ayscough was referred to in 5 probate accounts while Mr. Robert Green and Mr. John Atkins were recorded in 4 probate accounts. Mr. William Pitt and Mr. James Cooper were mentioned in 3 probate accounts and Mr. Charles Mill was mentioned in 2 accounts.

second in Duke Street, Chelsea.[67] Many undertakers such as James Watkins, Henry Grubb, and Mary Millen died as 'very wealthy' or 'well-to-do' undertakers. However, establishing the business could be risky at the same time.[68]

While some London undertakers were very successful in their business, there were some who went bankrupt and were sent to the debtors' prison. The undertakers who went bankrupt can be found in notices in the newspapers. On Tuesday, 17 March 1797, John Holiday, a carpenter and undertaker of North-Audley Street, St. George Hanover Square in Middlesex, was announced bankrupt.[69] The sale of their businesses to the market was also advertised in the newspaper. One example was the business of Mr. Daniel Stanley, a coffin-maker and undertaker. On Thursday, 13 February 1777, he was announced bankrupt and had to sell all his stock in trade which consisted of 'a quantity of elm board, oak plank, deals, about 100 elms and deal coffins, crape, shroud … 83 mourning cloaks, scarves and hoods, velvet palls…'.[70]

Most undertakers ran their businesses individually. Some built the company with partners, while others expanded their trade as a family business. From the trade cards, most of them operated under one owner. However, a few of them were run as a partnership, for example, the company of John Gladman and Thomas Watkins, whose shop was the 'Four Coffins & Crown' at Fleet Bridge.[71] Ayscough, Wood & Holmes were also running their business near Cripplegate Church together as undertakers.[72] Working as a partnership, while helping enlarging the business, could also cause problems between parties. Some conflict between George Page and William Brussett caused the former to remove his stock from the Four Coffins and Glove, opposite St George's Church, Southwark, to 'the Corner of the Three-Tun Tavern', St. Margaret's Hill, Southwark, while the latter continued his business at the same place.[73]

Apart from being run as partnerships, many companies were operated as a family business where father and son were both undertakers. Presumably, the skills were passed on from father to son. The trade card of Jarvis & Son in 1797, undertakers and coffin makers, shows that either or both of them were able to perform

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[67] Trade care of Richard Middleton from the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Trade Card Collection.
[68] *Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Issue 14121, Thursday, 15 March 1776, *Public Advertiser* (London, England), Issue 8765, Tuesday, 19 April 1796, and *Public Ledger* (London, England), Issue 1912, Thursday, 25 November 1766.
[69] *Public Advertiser* (London, England), Issue 9865, Tuesday, 17 March 1797.
[70] *Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Issue 14402, Thursday, 13 February 1777.
[71] *Gazetteer and New Daily Advertiser* (London, England), Issue 13420, Wednesday, 15 September 1776.
[72] Trade card of Ayscough, Wood & Holmes from the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Trade Card Collection.
[73] *Public Ledger* (London, England), Issue 1811, Thursday, 24 October 1765.

funerals.[74] For forty years (1755-1795), Ayscough also ran his business with his son under the name 'Ayscough & Son'.[75] The son of Robert Legg also became an upholder and took care of the business established by his father.[76]

This section has provided clear evidence that undertakers had become more specialised during the eighteenth century. It was a well-established occupation by the end of the century. They had developed and expanded from other trades in order to respond to demand from the middle classes.

4. Location

Location, together with the undertakers' professionalisation, also mattered in explaining the expansion of the undertaking trade. The business became more specialised in the sense that they dropped other trades to focus only on undertaking from around the mid eighteenth century when the number of funerals managed solely by undertakers increased significantly in London and Middlesex. By the third quarter of the century, the trade spread to new locations, and the other three areas saw a rise in the numbers of specialised undertakers (Figure 5.3). In London and ESK, percentages of people hiring undertakers to totally manage their funerals jump by two to three times from 10% to 25% for the former and from 5% to 25% for the latter. For Middlesex, the percentage increases more in the first half of the century, suggesting the undertaking business was flourishing in this area. These figures are consistent with the falling percentage of the numbers of funerals with partial or no undertaker's involvement in London and the nearby counties (Figure 5.4 and 5.5). This rising trend continued to the end of the century.

[74] Trade card of Jarvis & Son Company from the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Trade Card Collection.
[75] A paper index of trade cards entitled "Trade Cards: Alphabetical by Trade": LMA: SC/GL/TCC/Ayscough & Son.
[76] PROB 11/695/109: Robert Legg, undertaker, proved at the Prerogative Court of Canterbury in 1739.

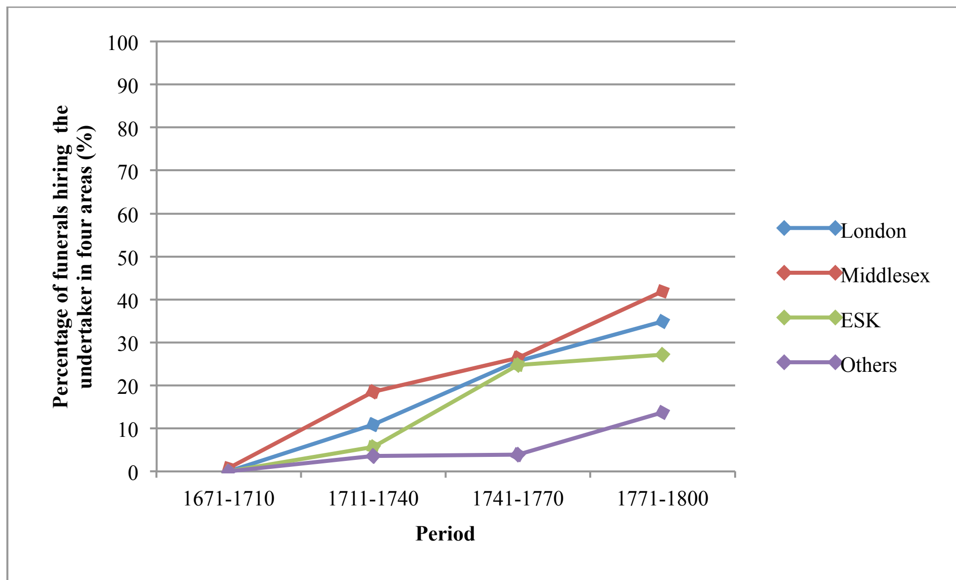

Figure 5.3: Percentage of funerals managed solely by undertakers in three different areas, 1671–1800.

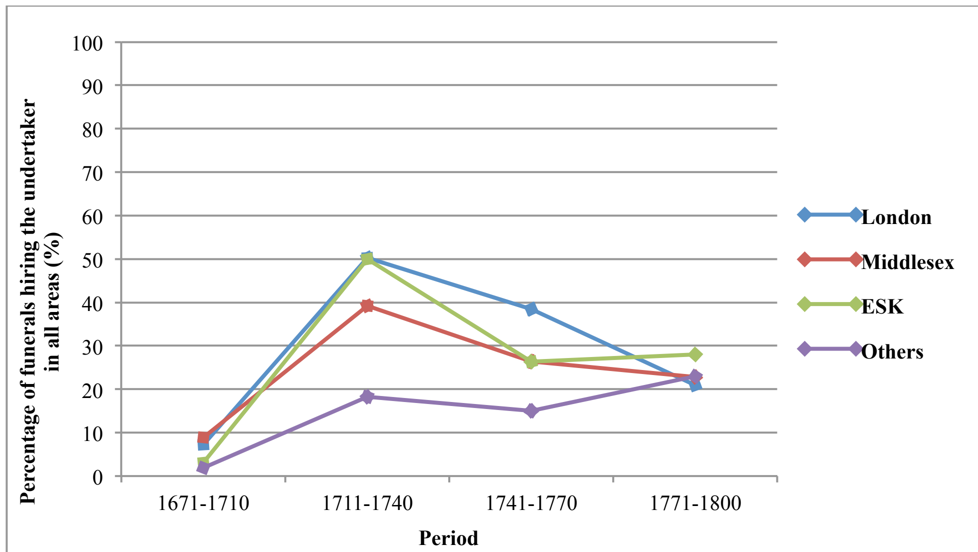

Figure 5.4: Percentage of funerals managed partially by undertakers in three different areas, 1671–1800.

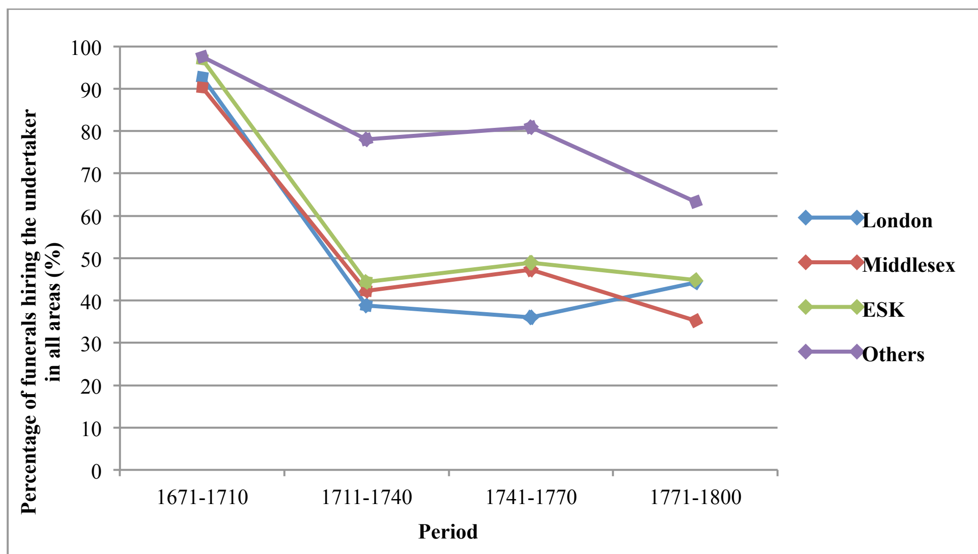

Figure 5.5: Percentage of funerals without undertakers in three different areas, 1671–1800.

It is clear that the wide expansion and specialisation of undertaking were London phenomena. This trade spread mostly in the City of London and the surrounding areas, including Middlesex, Surrey, Kent, and Essex. The locations of London undertakers' shops in the eighteenth century were not very specific. However, there were two areas where the funeral furnishing trading houses and manufacturers were situated in particular: Whitechapel and Southwark. The former specialised in the production and manufacture of coffins and fabric-covered outer cases, while the latter concentrated on the production of coffin furniture especially plates, handles, and escutcheons. For the undertakers' shops, the largest number were in the county of Middlesex and the second most numerous were in the city of London.[77]

The undertaking trade concentrated in the areas surrounding the City of London, for example in Middlesex and Surrey. For the former, the areas included both the east and west sides of London. There were some parishes which housed a substantial number of undertakers, such as St Sepulchre, St Martin in the Fields, St Giles in the Fields, St Leonard Shoreditch, St Luke, St James Westminster and St George Hanover Square.[78] An online database from London Lives confirms this. The samples from the PCC wills of undertakers and the fire insurances registered between 1670 and 1800 show that more than 50% were from the above parishes. In Surrey, the parishes accomodating many undertakers' premises included St Saviour Southwark,

[77] I investigated all the PCC wills of eighteenth-century undertakers and the majority of them lived in Middlesex. These wills are kept under the PROB 11 series.
[78] TNA, PROB 11.

Christ Church, and St Mary Rotherhithe. There were a handful of undertakers from Kent, Essex, and other counties.[79]

By looking at the map, we can see that the parishes mentioned above form a concentrated area (Plate 5.9). More importantly, these parishes constituted one of the largest urban districts, for example, St Martin in the Fields housed almost thirty thousand residents throughout the century.[80] In the eighteenth century, these areas had a lively economy, with large numbers of domestic servants and luxury trades serving often wealthy and titled residents.[81] There were also significant levels of deprivation, squalor and poverty, notably in parts of St Margaret's Westminster and St Giles in the Fields. All these parishes housed large parish workhouses throughout the period and expended massive sums of money on outdoor relief.[82]

Additionally, in Jeremy Boulton's article, "Saving the Poor Worms from Starving? Traffic in Corpses and the Commodification of Burial in Georgian London", he points out that these parishes had a large number of corpses being buried each year. For example, the parish of St Martin in the Fields had expanded its burial spaces throughout the eighteenth century due to a higher demand for interment. Many bodies were imported from different parishes, due to the lack of burial spaces, although most bodies were from the nearby parishes.[83] Also having more people being buried in a parish meant an increase in burial fee income for that particular parish. Thus, it is not surprising that a lot of undertakers lived in these areas. Many trade cards of the undertakers indicated that the well-known area for the undertaking shops was around 'the Four Coffins', situated along Fleet Street and the nearby area. There were fewer undertakers' premises on the other side of London, such as in Chelsea or Hammersmith. This was not surprising since these areas were further from the centre of London's trading market.

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[79] The data are from the London Lives database. These include the wills registered with the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, Records of Baptism, Marriage, and Burials (1681-1709), Middlesex Sessions Papers - Justices' Working Documents, Old Bailey Proceedings: Accounts of Criminal Trials, Fire Insurances registered in the eighteenth century.

[80] The inhabitants mixed between some of the richest in London and the more disorderly neighbourhoods around Charing Cross. See "St Martin in the Fields Settlement Examinations, 1725-93" in London Lives 1690 to 1800: Crime, Poverty and Social Policy in the Metropolis [Online]. Available from: http://www.londonlives.org/static/SMDSSET.jsp

[81] Jeremy Boulton, "Saving the Poor Worms from Starving? Traffic in Corpses and the Commodification of Burial in Georgian London," *Continuity and Change* 29(3) (forthcoming, 2014).

[82] Laqueur. "Bodies, Death, and Pauper Funerals," 110.

[83] Boulton, "Saving the Poor Worms from Starving?".

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Key: 1. St Anne, Soho; 2. St Paul, Covent Garden; 3. St Giles in the Fields; 4. St George Bloomsbury; 31 St Andrew Holborn; 10 and 10a St Clement Danes; 11 Precinct of the Savoy; 12 St Mary le Strand.

Plate 5.10: London parishes in the mid eighteenth century.
(Source: http://www.british -history.co.uk)

While there was a specialisation of undertakers in the areas discussed earlier, this study suggests that this phenomenon barely occurred in other provincial areas. Throughout this century, there were only twenty-five funerals with the full management of undertakers in provincial areas, and more than half of them were between 1771 and 1800. During the eighteenth century, the London and Middlesex undertakers promised to provide their services for clients across the entire country, as many trade cards declare, 'Funerals performed in Town and Country', 'Funerals decently performed to any part of the Kingdom', or 'on reasonable terms, funerals to any part of England'. The trade card of Richard Rattenbury in 1792, an undertaker of Sloane Street, Chelsea, advertised his service as 'Funeral performed at any distance', with a picture of a hearse and two coaches following two men riding on horses along a long road, suggesting that they could provide their services even at a long distance.[84] However, most of the funeral furnishers, according to Litten, appeared to have restricted their operation to the parishes in which they were situated.[85] The probate accounts only show a small number of undertakers providing services in the provinces and there were no details indicating where the undertakers were from.

According to the probate records, Litten seems to have given too narrow an account of the undertakers' operations. Most undertakers whose names are found more than once among all probate accounts did not limit their funeral management to within their parishes. Since the City area was small, it would not be surprising to find tundertakers providing their services outside of their parishes. For example, all four funerals ranging from 1741 to 1790 managed by Mr. Ayscough, whose business was located near Cripplegate Church in the City of London, took place in this area. Three out of four funerals were in the parish of St Giles Cripplegate, while the other one was in the parish of St Peter le Poor.[86] All the funerals directed by Mr. Enoch Barrack

[84] Trade card of Richard Rattenbury from the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Trade Card Collection.
[85] Trade card of Richard Rattenbury from the British Museum, Department of Prints and Drawings, Trade Card Collection
[86] This information is extracted from probate accounts that provide the names of undertakers: PROB 31/262/585, Sarah Wrathall, St Giles Cripplegate, London; PROB 31/606/209, Elizabeth Holton, St

were in different parishes but they were all in Middlesex, while those directed by Mr Edward Simmond were in Surrey, across several parishes.[87]

We begin to see a gradually increasing number of funerals in provincial areas during the eighteenth century partially directed by undertakers. The undertaking trade had been established in some other developing towns. John Miller, an Ipswich draper and undertaker, provided many funerals in his town from 1788 to 1831. In order to perform a funeral, he consulted some London undertakers for guidance on how to set up the funeral correctly. However, the London undertakers overcharged him on many occasions. For example, he sent his son to obtain a consultation from Moss and Witt, a London undertaking firm, and was charged £582 11*s* 1*d*. This, in his opinion, was hugely excessive since he had estimated £200 or less for the consultation. By 1815, he had his first chance to perform a 'heraldic style funeral' furnishing a funeral with heraldry and plumage as well as the hearse, horses, escutcheons, and family arms.[88] Most provincial undertakers were originally from the areas where they arranged funerals, for instance, Mr. Hobb, an undertaker of New Windsor in Berkshire, directed the funeral of Robert Cooks who died and was buried in the same parish.[89]

The case of John Miller may be exceptional, however. As the undertakers' businesses expanded slowly in provincial areas, they would not have developed to the same degree of specialisation. It was a slow change and more than 80% of the provincial funerals were only partially managed by undertakers in the eighteenth century. This is confirmed by the diary of Thomas Turner, a village shopkeeper in East Hoathly, Sussex. He was not only the grocer, draper, mercer, and tax gatherer but also the undertaker. He provided a great deal of detail about his job as the undertaker and it is clear that his main duty was to supply the mourning gloves, hatbands, and mourning rings as requested by the deceased's family. He did not manage the whole ritual and did not direct any of the processes. However, it is clear that he wished to continue to improve and continue his business as he appointed his brother to come and learn how to serve the funerals properly.[90] In order to be as fully developed as the city undertakers, there was a need for appropriate rules and codes of conduct which

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Giles Cripplegate, London; PROB 31/793/838, John Hagger, St Peter le Poor, London; PROB 31/357/428, Theophilus Pertin, St Giles Cripplegate London. See also trade card of Mr Ayscough and of Ayscough & Son from a paper index of trade cards entitled "Trade Cards: Alphabetical by Trade", London Metropolitan Archives.

[87] Enoch Barrack managed funerals in the parishes including St Andrew Holborn, St Marylebone and St Paul Covent Garden (1701–1730), while those managed by Mr Edward Simmond include St Saviour Southwark, St Mary Magdalen and St George Southwark (1751–1780).

[88] Fritz. "The Undertaking Trade in England," 251–52.

[89] PROB 31/55/142, Robert Cooks, New Windsor, Berkshire.

[90] Fritz. "The Undertaking Trade in England," 251–52.

could only be gained directly from contact with some of the undertaking firms in the city.

5. Conclusion

This chapter has shown that the undertakers emerged in the late seventeenth century and rose throughout the eighteenth century. The expansion of trade came together with the specialisation of the trade. It is clear from the analysis here that funerals managed solely by undertakers increased and later exceeded the numbers of funerals managed partially by undertakers. However, this was a London phenomenon. During the eighteenth century, the undertaker's business was popular among the upper classes and middle classes in the City of London and a few surrounding areas including Middlesex, Surrey, Essex, and Kent. The area where undertakers were most widespread was Middlesex. The undertaking trade was gradually developing in the provincial areas but at a very slow pace. By the last thirty years of the century, there were still only a small number of funerals fully directed by undertakers in the provinces.

This study has attempted to test several hypotheses proposed by scholars on how English undertakers expanded during the eighteenth century. It shows that recourse to their services varied across the social groups. For the middle classes, undertakers were successful as they innovated through the introduction of 'new' and 'more sophisticated' funerary items and created a new value of how a 'decent' funeral should be. This eventually met with the middle classes' desire to possess more conspicuous goods as well as services. This was also topped with an effective selling approach of renting out some of the costly items instead of selling them to customers. In this way, funerals became more lavish while prices remained relatively unchanged. This is one of the main reasons why the undertaking trade expanded so quickly.

Finally, this chapter has drawn a picture of this particular occupation during the period after the city of London had grown substantially and several assumptions have been made on the rising consumption patterns of the middle classes in London. The expanding undertaking trade examined in this chapter could conform this broader story, to indicate that the eighteenth century was a significant period which moved the funeral practice towards what we know as the Victorian funerals.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the complexity of funerals over the course of eighteenth-century England. While most historians of Early Modern death focus more on religious and ideological aspects, this research adopts a different perspective to the history of death focussing on funeral consumption patterns. . This approach has been popular among historians of Victorian death. Most scholars have neglected the long-eighteenth-century funeral for one main reason: a lack of evidence. This has led to a lack of connection between the earlier and the later periods. With the probate accounts from the Prerogative Court of Canterbury, this gap can be filled. A full discussion on the PCC probate accounts is in Chapter 1. By viewing funerals in the light of consumption, the picture of how funerals changed from a rigid religious ritual in the Middle Ages up to the end of sixteenth century, to a commercialised one in the Victorian period has become clear. Moreover, it is clear how this type of consumption fits into a broader picture of the economically and socially changing society of eighteenth-century England.

This thesis began with the trends of funeral expenditure over 130-year period, examined in Chapter 2. This responded to the first question addressed in the introduction, giving a picture of how spending behaviour on funerals changed throughout this time span. It tested several basic assumptions that have often been used to explain spending behaviour of the upper and middle ranks. The results indicate that there was a consumer revolution in funeral consumption in eighteenth-century England as people acquired more extravagant funerals with more ostentatious items on show. Yet, it is not possible to prove whether a social emulation process occurred due to the limitations of the primary sources: these sources only represent the wealthiest slices of the middle classes. While the funerals were more ostentatious, the funeral expenses decreased throughout the century especially when looking at the real funeral expenditure. The demand of people could not be matched with spending behaviour. The expenditure was presumably the effect of the supply side being cheaper as cheaper funeral components due to the industrial revolution or the growth in the undertaking trade were more readily available. The 'industrial revolution effect' requires much more study and it is out of scope of this thesis. This thesis, however, covers the study of undertaking trade in the last chapter.

There are two primary findings detailed in Chapter 2. The first is the difference between the expenditure trends of the upper and the middle classes. While we observe a sharp decline in expenditure of the former group from 1670 to 1760 and

a further slight drop by the end of eighteenth century, that of the latter group remains rather stable. This contrasts with what previous studies have suggested. These studies have asserted that the new aspirations of the middle classes to have luxurious funerals, fuelled by undertakers, led to large sums of money being invested in their funerals. This study suggests instead that spending behaviour changes most among aristocrats and the wealthiest groups, not among the middling ranks. Another important finding is that expenditure trends vary across areas. We observe a declining trend in funeral expenses in London and its periphery while those of the provinces remained relatively stable.

In Chapter 3, I show that changes in consumer choices regarding items used at funerals reflected that funerals of well-to-do middle classes become increasingly showy over the course of the eighteenth century. In this century, few people spent much money on food and charity at funerals. A century earlier, at least half of the expenses for a funeral would have been on food and doles. In this work, we can see that people shifted their expenditure to different kinds of items, especially items for mourning. More than 30% of funeral costs were spent on mourning. Mourning clothes become fashionable among the middle classes during the period of my study. It was necessary for the bereaved to wear a black suit or black dress. We see the peak of this tradition. The wealthy bought large pieces of luxurious fabric to make their mourning clothes. A long mourning period of family members required the spending of a large sums of money. However, the financial effect of this was different for the upper class since they paid a lower amount of money for mourning than they had previously due to having escaped from the restrictive rules of the College of Arms.

During the eighteenth century, two items attracted increasing expenditure: coffins and shrouds, and memorials (mainly gravestones). The concepts of 'decency' and 'respectability' were highly valued among middle-class people in this period. A close connection emerged between the concept of 'decency' and the more beautiful and more sophisticated items to make a funeral and grave unique. These two items developed throughout the period to fulfil this purpose. Wealthy people were already choosing beautiful and strong coffins by the eighteenth century, but the fear of body snatchers helped hasten the process of improving the quality of coffins both practically and artistically. For gravestones, this was a popular way for the deceased to be memorialised. People spent more money to have the stone erected on the deceased's burial space.

An increasing use of hearses and coaches indicates that people began to consume new items that were once limited to the upper class only. Undertakers introduced these two items offering a faster and better way to transport the corpse to the burial ground. Although this fashion had not yet fully developed during this period, we observe a rising share of the middle classes hiring hearses and coaches for funerals. All the changes mentioned in this chapter illustrate how the middle classes altered their preferences over time. These changes closely reflect the picture of English society at that time: luxurious goods and consumption defined one's position in society and connected with the ideas of 'decency' and 'respectability' especially for the middle ranks. For the upper class, the funeral items they consumed remain similar to the earlier period, but with a much lower cost than before as undertakers now supplied them. Changing preferences occurred not only as people altered the choices they made on funerary items but also through weighing up options between buying goods from different suppliers or hiring an undertaker.

It is clear in Chapter 5 that having an undertaker to arrange a funeral became increasingly popular over the course of the eighteenth century in England among both the upper and middle ranks, especially in London and its periphery. One of the reasons leading to the expansion of the undertaking trade is institutional change. This is an important factor that dramatically changed the spending behaviour of the upper class. The sharp decline of the College of Arms, which had been powerful through the sixteenth century, occurred as shown in Chapter 4. This was initially due to a lack of royal favour and the unpopularity of the Court of Chivalry. Moreover, the extremely high costs of running a funeral and the restrictive codes imposed by the College were driving the upper class away. During the eighteenth century, it is clear that the decline of the College of Arms paved the way for undertakers to advertise and expand their services not only among the middle but also the upper ranks. One significant finding in Chapter 5 is the extraordinary number of upper-class people hiring undertakers to manage their funerals by the end of the century.

The increasing number of upper-class people employing undertakers shares similarities with the trends among the middle classes. An expansion of the undertaking trade is seen throughout the century. This went along with a professionalisation of their trade. Undertakers began with the provision of particular items at the funeral. At the beginning, many of these undertakers carried on other occupations, such as coffin-making, upholding , carpentry, and joinery. They attempted to promote their goods and their services by creating value chains, for

example, a more sophisticated coffin, better quality of gloves and other mourning items, and uses of velvet palls, hangings, and escutcheons (in some cases). They used a cost-saving selling technique by offering their customers the opportunity to hire pricey items. In this way, they could successfully define how a 'decent' and 'respectable' funeral should look. By the end of the eighteenth century, undertakers seem to have provided most of the necessary items at funerald and even performed sections of the ceremony.

Hiring an undertaker did not increase or decrease funeral costs. By examining the amount of money paid for funerals in both cases, there does not seem to be any significant difference. One of the reasons for this is the difference of items consumed in funerals. Those prepared by undertakers include extra items such as velvet palls, hangings, cloaks, hearses and coaches, and some other luxurious items, while some of the individuals organising the funeral by contacting different suppliers would have purchased only necessary items. Therefore, hiring an undertaker, although it did not reduce the funeral expenditure, would provide customers with a more conspicuous funeral. Moreover, the undertakers offered 'all-in-one' services for funerals, which helped save time. By this approach, the eighteenth-century English undertakers laid the ground for the materialistic Victorian funeral.

This study, then, offers a new look at the history of death in the eighteenth century. By using the PCC probate accounts, some of the chronological and geographical boundaries that limited the work of earlier historians have been surpassed. Beyond this, the history of funeral consumption helps us to widen our understanding of funeral changes as a whole, as well as changes in consumption patterns occurring in a period of important transformation. By presenting new evidence as well as combining a more quantitative approach with a qualitative approach, this research paves the way for more work on the subject of death as well as on other subjects. However, it needs to be emphasised that more studies are required in both the economic and cultural aspects of consumption as well as a deeper study of death in terms of ideology and religion. There are still many issues to be addressed. For instance, funeral consumption in other regions might display a different story, and this should be studied more intensively if more sources become available.

Appendix

Appendix 1: PCC probate accounts with funeral expenditure: means, medians, and standard deviation of funeral expenditure by decade.

Year	Number of probate accounts	Mean of Funeral Expenditure (£)	Median of Funeral Expenditure (£)	SD_of Funeral Expenditure (£)
1671–1680	213	45	15	75
1681–1690	220	45	16	79
1691–1700	143	33	12	109
1701–1710	93	53	24	118
1711–1720	134	32	17	37
1721–1730	291	37	17	63
1731–1740	356	29	16	69
1741–1750	313	18	11	25
1751–1760	231	18	11	24
1761–1770	231	25	12	77
1771–1780	268	25	13	36
1781–1790	224	30	18	47
1791–1800	144	30	19	58

Appendix 2: Funeral of Sir John Stawell in 1661 and funeral of the Duke of Manchester in 1721

Knight of the Bath, who departed this mortal life in his House at Ham in the county of Somerset upon the 21 day of February in the year of our Lord 1661 at aged 62 years. And on Wednesday 23th of April next following his body coffind in lead was solemnly interred in the south side of Chancel at Colchestone (5 miles from [Taunton]) in the same county; the proceeding to his funeral being from Ham aforesdaid on Tuesday 22 April on horseback through Langport and Taunton unto Lidiard Episcopi in this manner

First two conductors in riding coats with black staves in their hands.

Then the servants of such Gents: Esquires: Knights: & etc. as are hereafter named in this proceeding, to the number of about 40: (two and two)

Next two trumpets with Banners of his Arms

Then the Bayliffs of his Several Mannors, with his Cognizance cast in silver fixed on the left sleeve of their respective coates; each of them bearing his staffe in his hand at the top where of was a short fringed Penon of Crimson Taffata whereupon the name of the Mannour of which he was bayliffe was expressed in Capital Letters (21 persons)

Then his Domestick Servants in long cloaks;

2 for Huntsmen
2 for Grooms of the stable
Baker
Caterer
Gardener
Cook
Butler
Chamberlaine
2 for Gent
Steward of the House
His Page alone, Gerard Newcourt
10 gents (2 being officers of his land)

Divines two and two (8 persons)

Captain Lieutenant Wilde
Other 7 Captains
Major George Sydenham
Doctor of Physicks
8 esquires (one being a colonel)

4 knights
The Lord Poulet
George Speke Esq. High Sheriff of Somersetshire

Two trumpets
The Guidon borne by Mr John Newcourt
The mourning horse with plumes of feathers led by Mr. Thomas Spicer
The preacher, Richard Meredith, bachelor of Divinity

Two Penons the one of his single coat & other of his quarterings with the armes of his Lady in an escort of presence borne by

The Gantlet and Spurs by Fran: Sandford Rouge dragon
The Helme & Crest by Robert Chaloner Blewmantle
The Swords & Target borne by Henry St George Richmund Herald

The Coat of Arms borne by William Dugdale Norroy
Kings of Arms

His body in chariot covered with velvet, drawn by six horses
George Stawell, esq. chief mourner with 4 of his assistants

Then divers other Knights, esquires and gentlemen not in mourning

On the same Tuesday evening being come to Lidiard above mentioned the said chariot was set in the churchyard on which attended some of his Domestick servants all that night. And on the morrow being 23 of the said month of April was brought into the church of Colhelston aforesaid and there placed within a hearse of velvet, adorned with his Arms and Badges till divine service and sermon upon that occasion (performed by Mr Meredith) was ended his Achievements were offered, according to the manner in such solemnities usually performed and then interred as aforesaid close by his lady whom he survived about 5 years.[91]

Sixty years later the funeral of the duke of Manchester appeared to be similar.

Goods Delivered at the funeral of his Grace Duke of Manchester (January 27th 1721)

A Lead Coffin the inside inserted and the body put up with sweets ... 5.0.0
A Sassnett Sheet, Quilt and ruffle Pillow, a pair of kid gloves and 6 yards of white ribin ... 4.0.0
An Elm Case covered with the best velvet Coat of Arms and flower quilt with gold, 3 pair of quilt chacet handles, 9 quilt coronets, and set of with 2 rows of best quilt nails drove close ... 16.0.0

[91] London, College of Arms, Vol. I. 30: Funeral Certificates, 1660–1714, 15 (1661).

A Depositum of his Grace's Titles, Engraved on two brass plates lacquered and waxed … 2.10.0
A Hearse and 6 horses 5 days at 35s per day … 8.15.0
3 Mourning Coaches and 6 horses 5 days each at 35s per day … 26.5.0
A sashmareen and 6 horses 4 days at 35sper day … 7.0.0
8 Men in mourning with sadle horses 5 days each at 10/per day … 3.0.0
8 Pages in mourning to ride behind the coaches take the corpse out and unto the hearse and attend the coaches … 10.0.0
17 Plumes of fine black feathers for the hearse and horses … 3.0.0
For use of a large velvet pall … 2.0.0
For use of velvet coverings for the hearse and horses … 3.0.0
A Room hung in deep mourning 2 nights on the rod with black cloth … 4.0.0
8 large silver candlesticks and 18 silver sconces for the room … 2.10.0
24 pound of wax lights and tapers for the room … 3.0.0
For use of a crimson velvet cap and cushion … 1.0.0
A large ducal crown put up in the church … 1.0.0
A large silk majesty with crown and supporters at the head of the corpse and put up in the church … 5.0.0
3 large atchievements, frames, and coverings … 15.0.0
A Guidon carry before the corps and put up in the church … 3.0.0
A large standard … 5.0.0
A great banner … 6.0.0
24 silk escutcheons for the pall crown and cushion and with crownets at 6/each … 7.4.0
10 Dozen of buckrum, escutcheons verged with silver for the room and church … 18.0.0
48 Buck escutcheons verged 24 large shields and 12 chaps being 2 sets for the hearse and horses
16 Buckrum Banners being 2 sets for the hearse … 8.0.0
24 large pencils and 72 small being 2 sets for ditto … 6.0.0
The surcoat of arms … 3.0.0
The mantle helmet and crest … 2.10.0
The gauntlet and spurs … 2.0.0
The sword and target … 2.0.0
2 white wands for the stewards … 0.1.0
8 yards of black cloth for the pulpit and communion table … 4.0.0
12 yards of prest bayes to hang the type and desks … 1.4.0
90 yards of bayes to hang 3 chancels … 6.15.0
15 yards of Lutestring in 4 clergymen's scarves … 4.10.0
A long traine cloak and 2 cloaks with sweeps for supper … 1.5.0
48 cloaks for mourners officers for 5 days … 12.0.0
54 new crape hatbands … 9.9.0
26 second best hatbands … 3.5.0
31 ordinary hatbands for horsemen, coachmen, postilians, porters and pages … 2.6.6
31 pair of black topt gloves for ditto … 2.1.4
10 pair of ordinary gloves for the pages to the hearse … 0.10.0
26 pair of double sowd gloves … 2.12.0
8 pair of ditto for his grace's servants in town … 0.16.0
8 hatbands for ditto … 1.0.0
48 pair of men's best shammy gloves … 8.8.0

6 pair of ditto … 1.1.0
1 pair of men's topt shammy and hatband his grace 0.8.6
1 pair of shammy gloves and hatband Lord Robert … 0.6.0
For use of 9 black coats for underbearers … 2.5.0
A buckrum escutcheon for the sashmareen with crown and supporters … 0.10.0
4 porters at door in gowns hatbands scarves …1.0.0
10 pages in black with caps and truncheons to attend the hearse to the town's end … 1.5.0
Paid the parish dues of St Martin's … 3.6.2
Paid the parish searchers … 0.5.0
Paid the turnpikes going and returning … 1.8.6
For use of 3 ducal crowns behind the coaches … 0.7.6
For use of 8 black housings for the horses … 0.16.0
Total … 300.15.6
My own horse hire and attendance … 1.10.0
April the 5th 1723 Paid in full … 302.5.6

Set mourning for his Grace the Duke of Manchester's house in Arlington Street
In the Drawing Room 10 breadths ½ of grey cloth in hangings
3 yards ¼ long, 7 curtains 4 yards each 3 Villens & 10 chairs
In the Dining Room the same as in …
In the Passage Room Ditto
In the Fore Room Ditto
In the Dressing room above the Stairs Ditto
To continue 12 months for …
Total … 60.0.0[92]

[92] TNA, C/112/49, Robert Legg's shop accounts, Chancery: Master Rose's Exhibits. Leaves v. Green. Vol. 2 (4 September 1717 to 3 April 1725), No. 85, 21 January 1721.

Appendix 3: Wills of English undertaker proved in the Prerogative Court of Canterbury (PROB 11), 1702 – 1800.

Name	Year (of will proved)	Occupation	Parish	County
James Merilees	1702	Undertaker	Saint John Wapping	Middlesex
Edward Evans	1722	Painter and Undertaker	Saint Mary Le Strand	Middlesex
Isaac Stephens	1724	Hosier and Undertaker	Saint Margaret Westminster	Middlesex.
William Smith	1724	Undertaker	Tettenhall	Staffordshire
Randall Nicholls	1729	Undertaker and Glover	Saint Martin in the Fields	Middlesex
Henry Watkinson	1729	Undertaker		City of London
Alexander Horrocks	1732	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Andrew Holborn	Middlesex
Benjamin Doe	1733	Joiner and Undertaker	Saint George Hanover Square	Middlesex
Thomas Elmes	1737	Glover and Undertaker	Saint Botolph without Aldgate	Middlesex
Robert Legg	1739	Undertaker	Saint Georges Bloomsbury	Middlesex
Richard Browning	1739	Upholder and Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre without the Barrs	Middlesex
William Galen	1740	Carpenter and Undertaker	Christ Church	Surrey
Thomas Shell	1742	Undertaker	Saint Paul Shadwell	Middlesex
Charles Doe	1742	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint George the Martyr	Middlesex
Robert Prettie	1743	Broker and Undertaker	Tettenhall	Staffordshire
John Evans	1743	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint James	Middlesex
Jeremiah Martin	1747	Carpenter and Undertaker	Chelsea	Middlesex
John Fluck	1748	Undertaker	Saint Paul Shadwell	Middlesex
Philip Barron	1748	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Giles in the Fields	Middlesex
Thomas Capper	1748	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Giles without London	
John Clarke	1749	Carpenter and Undertaker	Grape Street Saint Luke	Middlesex
Thomas Tull	1749	Undertaker	Saint Martin in the Fields	Middlesex
Henry Prichard	1749	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Martin in the Fields	Middlesex
Nathaniel Season	1752	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Luke	Middlesex
John Preston	1752	Undertaker	Saint James Westminster	Middlesex
William Lane	1756	Victualler and Undertaker	Fleet Ditch	City of London
John Hull	1756	Carpenter and Undertaker	Islington	Middlesex
John Andrews	1756	Glover and Undertaker	Saint Martin in the Fields	Middlesex
Edward Reed	1756	Undertaker	Saint Giles in the Fields	Middlesex
Benjamin Hume	1758	Carpenter and Undertaker		London
John Purdey	1759	Undertaker	Saint Mary Le Strand	Middlesex
James Griffiths	1759	Undertaker	Saint Paul Covent Garden	Middlesex
Robert Rampshire	1760	Undertaker	Saint Thomas the Apostle	City of London
Henry Lawrence	1760	Undertaker	Saint Anne	Middlesex
William Barber	1762	Undertaker	Saint George Bloomsbury	Middlesex
Joseph Garnett	1762	Undertaker	Christ Church	Surrey
John Gibbons	1763	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Leonard Shoreditch	Middlesex
Richard Snagg	1763	Undertaker	Saint Speculchre	City of London
Robert Howlett	1765	Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre	City of London
Walter Preist	1766	Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre	City of London
John Howard	1766	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Ann	Middlesex
Jonathan Dean	1766	Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre	Middlesex
Peter Deschamps	1766	Appraiser and Undertaker	Saint Anne Westminster	Middlesex
Charles Smith	1767	Undertaker	Saint Leonard Shoreditch	Middlesex
Robert Cable	1768	Undertaker and Victualler	Saint Mary Magdalene Bermondsey	Surrey
William Hamilton	1768	Undertaker	Whitechappel	Middlesex

Name	Year (of will proved)	Occupation	Parish	County
John Marlow	1768	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint James Westminster	Middlesex
Thomas Watkins	1768	Undertaker	Saint Bridget otherwise Brides London	City of London
Thomas Hilliard	1769	Undertaker	Saint Andrews Holbourn	City of London
Edward Williams	1769	Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre	London
Robert Rymell	1769	Carpenter Joiner and Undertaker	Saint Botolph Aldersgate	City of London
Ann Barron	1770	Undertaker	Saint Giles in the Fields	Middlesex
Andrew Cutler	1771	Undertaker	Lambeth	Surrey
David Raine	1771	Undertaker	Christ Church	Middlesex
Philip Paumier	1771	Undertaker	Saint Martin in the Fields	Middlesex
Edward Simonds	1774	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Giles Camberwell	Surrey
Samuel Sorsby	1774	Undertaker	London Colney	Hertfordshire
Joseph Remnant	1774	Undertaker	Saint Andrew Holborn	Middlesex
Thomas Matthews Murton	1775	Undertaker	Saint Paul Shadwell	Middlesex
James Graham	1775	Undertaker	Sunbury	Middlesex
Lionel Leonard	1776	Undertaker	Duke Street Lincolns Inn Fields	Middlesex
John Biss	1777	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Martin in the Fields	Middlesex
Thomas Salter	1778	Undertaker	Little Old Bailey	City of London
Edward Compton	1778	Undertaker	Saint Luke	Middlesex
Richard Carpender	1778	Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre	City of London
John Ashley	1779	Glazier and Undertaker	Islington	Middlesex
Thomas Parsons	1781	Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre	London
John Leonard	1781	Undertaker	Saint Giles in the Fields	Middlesex
Richard Chapman	1781	Undertaker	Rotherhithe	Surrey
John Shore	1782	Undertaker	Greenwich	Kent
Philip Josling	1782	Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre	London
James Greenwood	1784	Undertaker	Bethnal Green	Middlesex
Mary Ann Morgan	1785	Undertaker	Saint John Wapping	Middlesex
James Gordon	1785	Cabinet Maker and Undertaker	Saint James Westminster	Middlesex
William Carter	1785	Undertaker	Saint Mary at Hill	City of London
John Hamman	1786	Undertaker	Saint Leonard Shoreditch	Middlesex
John Bird	1786	Undertaker	Saint Ann	Middlesex
Richard Aslat	1787	Undertaker	Saint George Hanover Square	Middlesex
John Page	1787	Undertaker	Saint George Bloomsbury	Middlesex
Anthony Fry	1787	Undertaker	Westminster	Middlesex
Thomas Chandler	1787	Undertaker	Fleet Market Saint Sepulchre	London
Robert Davis	1787	Undertaker	Trowbridge	Wiltshire
George Draper	1788	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Andrew Enfield	Middlesex
John Needham	1788	Undertaker	Saint Andrew Holborn	Middlesex
Robert Rymell	1788	Undertaker	Saint Luke	Middlesex
Francis Joyce	1788	Undertaker	Minories	City of London
James Bazley	1788	Undertaker	Bristol	Gloucestershire
John Emmett	1789	Undertaker	Saint Benet Fink	City of London
Joseph Stringer	1789	Undertaker	Saint James	Middlesex
Isaac Whitchurch	1789	Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre	London
John Hirst	1789	Undertaker	Saint James Westminster	Middlesex
Clayton Hand	1790	Undertaker	Saint Benet Fink	Middlesex
William Meggott	1790	Undertaker	Bedford Court	Middlesex

Name	Year (of will proved)	Occupation	Parish	County
John Topham	1790	Undertaker	Strand	Middlesex
Thomas Martin	1790	Undertaker	Saint Leonard Shoreditch	Middlesex
Thomas Hamilton	1791	Undertaker	Saint Giles Cripplegate	City of London
Mary Durade	1793	Undertaker	Christ Church	Middlesex
Richard Collier	1794	Undertaker	Saint Pancras	Middlesex
James Thomas Dent	1794	Undertaker	Whitechapel	Middlesex
John Alldis	1796	Undertaker	Saint Marylebone	Middlesex
John Simmons	1797	Undertaker	Old Street Saint Luke	Middlesex
Philip Buckley	1797	Undertaker	Strand	Middlesex
William Elderton	1797	Undertaker	Salisbury	Wiltshire
Thomas Judd	1798	Undertaker	Saint Botolph Bishopsgate	City of London
Horton Crippen	1798	Undertaker	All Hallows Barking	City of London
Michael Downs	1798	Undertaker	Piccadilly	Middlesex
Thomas White	1798	Undertaker	Saint Mary Newington	Surrey
John Coultroup	1799	Undertaker	Saint George in the East	Middlesex
William Sawyer	1799	Carpenter and Undertaker	Saint Mary Magdalene Old Fish Street	City of London
Thomas Gosheron	1799	Undertaker	Westminster	Middlesex
Erasmus Jones	1800	Undertaker	Saint Sepulchre	Middlesex
Thomas Melton	1800	Undertaker	Christ Church	Surrey
John Arnold	1800	Undertaker	Bristol	Gloucestershire
William Ayscough	1800	Undertaker	Saint Giles Cripplegate	Middlesex

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A paper index of trade cards entitled 'Trade Cards: Alphabetical by Trade'

SC/GL/TCC/Ayscough

SC/GL/TCC/Ayscough&Son

SC/GL/TCC/Boyce

SC/GL/TCC/Butler

SC/GL/TCC/Burr

SC/GL/TCC/Case

SC/GL/TCC/Chandler

SC/GL/TCC/Handisyde

SC/GL/TCC/Harris

SC/GL/TCC/Longhurst

SC/GL/TCC/Rokes

SC/GL/TCC/Salter

SC/GL/TCC/Smith

ACC/0612/046: Apprenticeship Indenture: Cabinet maker and undertaker.

CLC/B/227-044: Account book of undertaker Richard Carpender, containing copies of bills for individual funerals, 1764-5; ledger account of purchases such as coffins, coffin-plates, textiles, gloves, feathers, 1746-7; and accounts of corn bought for horse and of the hire of the horse for journeys from London, 1763–6.

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MJ/SP/1781/10/053: A bill of the dues for the burial of Mrs Mary Anderson, Mrs Sarah Stoneman, Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, Mr William Poster, Mr William Morez in the Lower ground of St James Clerkenwell.

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