“Whan the Turuf is Thy Tour”: Analyzing Gender Codes of Burial Monuments in Late Medieval and Early Modern England

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"WHAN THE TURUF IS THY TOUR": ANALYZING GENDER CODES OF BURIAL MONUMENTS IN LATE MEDIEVAL AND EARLY MODERN ENGLAND

by

Shelbie Durrant

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

in

History

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UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY
Logan, Utah

2023
"Whan the Turuf is thy Tour": Analyzing Gender Codes of Burial Monuments in Late Medieval and Early Modern England

by

Shelbie Durrant, Master of Arts

Utah State University, 2023

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Department: History

In late medieval and early modern England, high status elites mourned their deceased family members by commissioning and erecting funerary monuments in their honor. These funerary monuments, a kind of memorial within death culture, were generally a stone likeness of the person and were emphatic of status, achievement, religious belief, and gender. Like many socially constructed ideologies, gender norms came with power structures. Most of society agreed with and perpetuated these norms which were communicated and reinforced through social, legal, economic, religious, and cultural forms. The societal importance of gender performance in life was highlighted by mourners capturing it in death through rituals and material items. Prior to this work, the Russell family, buried in a private chapel in St. Michael’s church in Chenies, London, had yet to be utilized as a case study for detecting gender in funerary monuments. When analyzed, these monuments give one a greater understanding of socially assigned, ideal qualities for women and men of this era. By utilizing the Russell family chapel, other monuments, the writings of Geoffrey Chaucer, and other writings and artwork of this time, I will illustrate that the material culture of death monuments is a rich source of information on inherent gender norms. I will also show that the
death monuments of women were coded with femininity and the death monuments of men were coded with masculinity.
"Whan the Turuf is thy Tour": Analyzing Gender Codes of Burial Monuments in Late Medieval and Early Modern England

Shelbie Durrant,

The cultural pressures of gender conformity and "norms" have lasted as long as the social constructs of gender themselves. Gender is present and can be analyzed in symbols within material culture such as the Russell family funerary monuments located in their private chapel in Chenies, London. Gender, although not always transparently at the front of consciousness, was interacted with, performed, and memorialized in life and death, especially for families that were high status. The presence of gender in these funerary monuments illuminates how expected conformity of gender norms were in this time — so present that they were literally set in stone.
DEDICATION

For Roofus, my four-legged friend and midnight confidant.
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Shelbie Durrant
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This thesis seeks to identify and analyze gender codes that are portrayed in funerary monuments. Analyzing the material culture surrounding death can provide a clearer understanding of the culture surrounding gender of the medieval era. Specifically, I explore in this thesis how gender is expressed in the visual culture that surrounds death and memory, for both women and men. Utilizing primarily both the works of Chaucer as well as the Bedford Russell monuments at their family chapel in Chenies as case studies, I will show that in short, the material culture of death monuments is a rich source of information on inherent gender codes of that time. I will also demonstrate that the death monuments of women were coded with femininity and the death monuments of men were coded with masculinity, contributing to the ongoing scholarly conversation regarding gender coding in medieval and early modern times.

“I had so spoken with every one of them
That I was of their fellowship straightway,
And made agreement to rise early,
To take our way where I (will) tell you.
But nonetheless, while I have time and opportunity,
Before I proceed further in this tale,
It seems to me in accord with reason
To tell you all the circumstances
Of each of them, as it seemed to me,
And who they were, and of what social rank,
And also what clothing that they were in;
And at a knight then will I first begin.”

Many historic writings written in the medieval era relied on oral tradition and were meant to be heard aloud. This meant that stories would often be shared to countless numbers of people without much of a record for the modern historian to estimate how many people had heard it. Stories and the oral tradition are some of the best insights to the popular culture of the time the story was from. One famous writing of this nature is told: a knight, a pardoner, a wife, a miller, and a host were once on a road together making a pilgrimage. The host of the group

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offers the suggestion to pass time by having a story telling contest. This story of course, is *The Canterbury Tales* by Geoffrey Chaucer. Multiple adaptations of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* are still produced and enjoyed by countless people today such as the hit film, “A Knights Tale” or the young adult fiction novel, *Sometimes we Tell the Truth*. *The Canterbury Tales* remains an accessible source to help readers understand the role of gender.

Chaucer discusses the various spheres of society such as status, religion, and wealth through his characters. Most notably, however, he discusses gender and gender norms of the time in the same way that gender appears within funerary monuments. Gender is rarely shown but it is present and readable through symbols that represent family lines, status, religion, and wealth.

Misconceptions regarding the culture of late medieval and early modern England are commonly portrayed in pop culture films, cartoons, and television shows. These stereotypes, painted with a broad brush, portray the society, archaic; the people (especially the women), trapped in a state of underdevelopment; and the interactions between people are reduced to uncivilized exchanges of violence. Scholars of the period have provided deep analyses of gender roles and expectations of this time, but not as much attention has been paid to how gender roles were reified even after death. Gender is not overtly presented in these monuments nor is it coded the same as it is in the present day. Through the use of methods found within the scholarly intersection of gender and material culture, uncovering these gendered symbols reveal that after death, gender was materialized as worth remembering. Gender norms were complex and not always inflexible. This complicates the pop culture stereotype often assigned to people of this time. Addressing the complicated myth surrounding the culture of late medieval and early modern England while also critiquing past and modern notions of gender is how this thesis will be the original contribution of this work.
I acknowledge the responsibility that by discussing the wealthy and societally elite people of late medieval London, it is possible that I could unintentionally contribute to an academic erasure of lower class and minority groups of the time. To avoid this, I will attempt to also acknowledge wherever possible that the experiences of upper-class medieval people were not universal or even global experiences. Because my thesis is surrounding funerary monuments, it will discuss women and men of privilege; both in wealth and social standing. Most medieval funerary monuments belonged to these people of privilege.

Funerary Monuments

The material culture surrounding death in late medieval and early modern England, but especially the former, often seems morbid and grisly because it depicts raw, unedited scenes of death, dying, and injury. The famous artwork, "The Danse Macabre" is a great example of death culture arising in the thirteenth century along with the popularization of the famous Latin tagline "Memento mori" which means "remember death". Often the Danse Macabre is misinterpreted as connoting vulgarity or primitivity, but rather, it promotes a different confrontation of death.

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2 Eileen Power presents that the lack of average women in existing medieval sources is because the primary sources surrounding women's lives were the church and the aristocracy. Barbara Hanawalt has also noted this challenge, explaining that at this time, documentation was primarily used by the rich or the religious leaders and if the laity were portrayed in documents, it was mostly in legal disputes, contracts, or ledgers and wills, none of which were specifically helpful in identifying how the person felt about the society they interacted with.
one's mortality. This "macabre" death culture persisted into the late medieval and early modern eras and motivated a sense of reverent mortality that was evident in material culture such as funerary monuments.

The primary function of funerary or death monuments is memorialization. Death monuments are not unique to the time or place of late medieval or early modern England. However, what is unique is the elaborate stonework employed by stonemasons to capture the likeness of the deceased. Funerary monuments can be sculpted from any medium but are most popularly made from stone. Early examples of these include stone structures of ancient Mycenae or Stonehenge, or the mysterious portal tombs of the ancient Celts.

Like other mediums of art (paintings or tapestry, or architecture), Funerary monuments can be treated as primary sources of culture of the time. Gender was captured in funerary monuments. This was not only in the feminization or masculinization of heraldic symbols, but also in the mediums, liminal spaces, and the attached epitaphs. Although stonemasons did not enjoy creative liberties but were working from instructions, their clients were not requesting symbols representative of gender, whether subconsciously or as a side effect of memorializing the values of the time.

These stonemasons created monuments in light of the customs and traditions of the time, and perhaps accidentally or subconsciously, literally set gender in stone. Although late medieval and early modern Stonemasons lacked free reign over their designs, they were hardly detached. Malcolm Hislop explains, "...we are also bound to recognize that there was a fundamental difference between the ways in which he [the medieval mason] and his modern counterpart approached the design… design was not the detached occupation that it is today."3 The semantics varied greatly depending on the wishes of the deceased or the wishes

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of the family commissioning the piece. The living commissioners determined what was worth remembering about the dead.

These funerary monuments serve the living as physical placeholders for abstract memories of the deceased they represent. They generally have similar layouts with exceptions of the depiction of the deceased regarding pose, clothing, and elaboration. As guardians of memory, they depict obvious things such as birth and death dates, familial lineage, a likeness of the person, and simple details about the person's life. However, there are more elements being memorialized such as class, religion, culture, and most relevant to this project, gender. The vast majority of them were elaborate and expensive, and portrayed likenesses of upper status people or rather, the “…very illustrious patrons, from among the most politically influential families at the royal court.” Upper status people were memorialized by monuments that were meant to stand the test of time while lower status people were buried in the churchyard with simple or no headstones.

Material Culture and its Methodology

Material culture offers scholars a visual source that reflects social and cultural values. Material culture applies to simply the "stuff" of medieval London whether it be the clothing they wore, the stone monuments they were remembered by, or even the buildings and spaces that they interacted with. Peter Sherlock utilizes funerary monuments as a window to the past by reading them as messages to the future. Memory is carefully constructed by those that lived in the past. People that designed funerary monuments not only were constructing a memory of the deceased, but they also constructed memories for people in the future. Masons were fluent in visual culture, and they would have known which symbols were attached to

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5 Peter Sherlock, Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England, (Farnham: Ashgate, 2008).
women or men as well as the messages they sent. Jasmine Killburn-Toppin discusses the traits and trades of craftsmen such as Nicholas Stone, a master mason that died in 1647 and left his notebooks to his sons. Killburn-Toppin writes, “The easy juxtaposition of texts, designs, and physical tools in [his] will demonstrates that Nicholas Stone understood his labors to have been both ‘theoretical’ and ‘practical’. The master mason would have had little appreciation for the classically inherited distinction between ‘liberal’ (intellectual) and ‘mechanical’ (manual) arts.”

Peter Erickson and Clark Hulse define visual culture as an encompassing observance of visual art and pieces with mindfulness of the cultures from which they emerged. It takes into consideration the process in which the piece was made, the people it was made for, and who it was commissioned by. The same theories can apply for material culture as well.

The methodology utilized in reading material culture is one of observation and analysis for all aspects of the material object. Scholars believe that material culture can be "read" like any other source with a tweak in methods. When considering an object as a culturally significant source, it is important to ask questions that assist in viewing it as a sum of its parts: Where is it originally? Was there a function? What was that function? Who created this? What is it made out of? What tools were used to create this? What is the environment of this item like? All of these larger perspective views of the material source contextualize it in a way that provides more clarity when observing more closely. This methodology can be applied to both the funerary monuments and the chapel where they are kept. David Hinton argues that, "As in any society, medieval people expressed themselves through their buildings, their appearance, their behavior, and their modes of burial…" The

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6 Jasmine Kilburn-Toppin, Crafting Identities, 46.
8 Julian Yates writes that, "Material culture studies attends to the situation of “things,” their accreted associations and meanings as they are successively performed," cited on: https://sites.udel.edu/materialculture/about/what-is-material-culture/
burial chapel of Chenies that houses the funerary monuments could itself be a representation of material culture and Hinton would support this sentiment because he would infer that it could serve as a, "path into their customs, mind-sets, beliefs, economic behavior, social ambitions, and choices."^{9}

The field of history is not the first to participate in prioritize the interpretation of material objects as sources. In fact, according to Karen Harvey, “The discipline of history was perhaps once an inhospitable home for material culture studies.”^{10} According to Harvey, this was because historians sought out what happened and why rather than the “marginal” pursuit of what objects mean.^{11} However, a greater appreciation of what can be learned from the interpretation of material objects has since been adopted to the field. Scholars believe that material culture can be “read” like any other source with a tweak in methods. Ivan Gaskell and Sarah Anne Carter argue that material items are just as valuable as primary sources as written documents. Interpreting these items, “…requires the application of interpretive skills appropriate to it [which] overlap with those acquired by scholars in disciplines that may abut history but are often unfamiliar to historians.”^{12} To utilize these skills, historians must, “…adopt and apply the same skills they honed while studying more traditional text-based documents as they borrow methods from [other] fields.”^{13}

As well as the monuments inside, the structure of the Bedford Chapel, mimicking that of the traditional medieval Christian church it is attached to, is a material source itself that can be analyzed. The liminal spaces between the monuments can be interpreted or rather, the position of the monuments can be. With the patriarch of the family, John Russell, 1st Earl of

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Bedford (1485-1555), being in an elevated spot at the front of the chapel; the commissioner of many of the monuments Francis Russell, 2nd Earl of Bedford, KG (c. 1527-28 July 1585) in the middle; and the women of dual monuments being the side that is pushed against a wall. Contextualizing the funerary monuments with information about the deceased is necessary by the scholars interpreting said monuments. It is important to discuss who the Russells were in order to better understand their monuments.

Who are the Russells?

Hailing originally from Dorset, the Bedford Russells made their fortune in the 14th century French wine trade. However, they made their name in the 16th century when John Russell, later the 1st Duke of Bedford, was appointed as a lawyer to King Henry VIII. Not only did he give the King legal advice, but advice about his personal affairs as well. According to his deposition, the first Earl of Bedford noted that the King asked his opinion on the looks of Anne of Cleaves. When asked if he had thought Anne to be fair in complexion, he returned that, "he toke her not for faire, but to be of a brown complexion." To which Henry responded, "[I] am ashamed…and like her not." The first Earl of Bedford was in such good standing with Henry VIII that he was given Woburn Abbey when the King died. John Russell married Lady Anne Sapcote, Countess of Bedford (c. 1489-1559).

Countess Anne, like most upper-class women of this era, was remembered mostly by her parent's house she came from, the men she married, and the sons she birthed and raised.

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14 The family chapel in Chenies, London Buckinghamshire, is the built addition of St. Michael's. It is closed to the public.
However, when her husband died in 1555, she was left with little written instruction on his burial preferences. With the only wish being listed in his will that he wanted a "Christian burial," it was up to Countess Anne to decide how her husband should be remembered.\(^{17}\) She commissioned not only the side-by-side funerary monument depicting her and her husband, but she also wrote the inscription, and she commissioned the entire chapel to be constructed to serve as a final resting place for descendants of the Russells.\(^{18}\)

The Russell family was and is still influential and prominent in England. However, the relevance of family to this work is no different than any other noble family of the time. The Russell family chapel in Chenies is a wealth of sources that has yet to be analyzed in this light. The Russell family monuments serve as a case study of how most other monuments represented and portrayed gender at the same time.

**Historiography**

Gender in late medieval and early modern England was constructed under the highly prevalent social construct of gender. It was adopted either knowingly or unknowingly by the masses as normalcy. They perpetuated gender into various aspects of their lives, and more relevant to this argument, their deaths. Beginning in the 1980s, gender analysis has been an increasingly significant part of the study of late medieval and early modern European history. Third wave feminism provided critical introspection amongst historians that led to the branching out into other aspects of gender analysis.\(^{19}\) Within the umbrella of the shift to gender studies, newly emerging conversations such as Masculinity studies were brought to light. Masculinity studies arose with unease from some feminist scholars feel that by

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\(^{18}\) Bamford et. al, *Record of Heraldry*, 4-6.

embracing this new field of study, it would be contributing to the erasure of women’s stories. Karen Harvey explains why the field of masculinity is so reactionary by saying, “For women’s and feminist historians, the problem is a political one: gender history can be depoliticized or antifeminist because it allows us to forget the material workings of power in the past." In a juxtaposition, gender, according to Joan Scott, should not be analyzed in a vacuum. Instead, they must be analyzed in opposition to one another. Scott argues, “Any analysis of meaning involves teasing out these negations and oppositions…often in patriarchal discourse… (the contrast masculine/feminine) serves to encode or establish meanings…” These shifts have all contributed to an ambient and ongoing conversation about the manifestations of the genders in relationship to one another.

This ongoing conversation amongst scholars has worked to bring voices to those often forgotten about and correct fallacies surrounding the people of the time. These fallacies often surround the misconception that pre-modern gender constructs are predictable, over-exhausted, and that there is nothing more to raise from the existing overarching narrative than repetitive patriarchal overtones of oppressing women and the erasure of their ideas, presence, and contributions to anything progressive. For example, Caroline Barron was among the first to argue that the post-plague years were the "Golden Age" of women because, according to Barron, women were more likely to have more opportunities in terms of legal rights, work, and ownership of property. Or rather that, "that women living in the period of demographic decline precipitated by the Black Death of 1348–1349, and recurrent outbreaks of plague, were ‘thrown into the manpower breach’, finding more regular paid employment and playing

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an enhanced role in local economies and societies."²³ For example, scholars like Judith Bennett have contested the idea of “the golden age of women”, claiming that women were just as oppressed with or without the plague.²⁵ Regardless, women, of the upper statuses at least, held more power and privilege than many modern people assume.

The existing scholarship is basically divided into two camps: the analysis of medieval and early modern material culture and the analysis of medieval and early modern gender. Medieval and early modern material culture as a field has sought to include material objects as primary sources in order to further understand the society which they are from. Scholars of visual and material culture don’t blatantly disregard gender, but their main prerogative is to gain a comprehensive look into an entire person or people based on objects. For example, Peter Sherlock, in his book Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England finds voices in objects such as monuments and, “…listen[s] to these voices for what they have to say and…frame[s] questions… in such a way that the past can answer back.”²⁶ He seeks to know people and their intentions through their objects and the uses they assigned to them. However, no in-depth analysis is done regarding gender. Scholars that analyze gender of this time often utilize document sources more than material objects. As mentioned throughout this historiography recent scholarship has been done by the likes of many gender historians such as Katherine French and Karen Harvey to incorporate material culture into their studies. However, many works on medieval and early modern gender utilize sources like parish records, wills, and correspondence. I hope to enter this ongoing discussion by analyzing gender within late medieval and early modern material culture through a fresh source bank of

the Russell Family monuments while also exploring the overt nature of gender norms in Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*.

As an approach to a critical theory, this thesis interrogates the symbols in funerary monuments that represent how one aligned with contemporary gender expectations. People conforming to gender norms, earned specific societal benefits such as a better societal influence and acceptance and an easier navigation through life. This applied across status groups. What would define "womanhood" and "manhood" looked differently based on status. The power dynamics that one would be subjected were also determined within the social hierarchy of gender or status. For example, Susan Dwyer Amussen argues regarding gender and status, “Both systems provided power to superiors at the same time they demanded obedience from inferiors.” Status was a power dynamic that mostly was comprised of superiors being of higher social ranks and the inferiors being those of lower social ranks that answered to them. However, gender was more complicated than it appeared from surface level because it included more than just relationships between husband and wife. Amussen continues, “As parents, mistresses, and even as wealthy neighbours women might have authority over men- a contradiction which made gender a problem in the class system, just as class became a problem in the gender system.” Gender and status are separate power dynamics that weave together and intersect. Barbara Hanawalt highlights the benefits of adhering to gender norms by discussing the economic contribution of women in late medieval London both to the family and to the government. Hanawalt argues that "...the circulation of wealth, talent, and service through women contributed to capital formation in late medieval London and paved the way for the development of London as an international player."29

Although the position of medieval women was within an oppressive power dynamic, nevertheless navigated a difficult social landscape often by playing into their socially given gender roles. Once a woman was married, she could also benefit from participating in trade as a “femme sole”. However, navigating finances as an unwed woman was difficult. Aside from benefitting from both the rewards of conforming to gender norms as well as making money through marriage, Marjorie McIntosh discusses working women and their contributions to the economy by other means. According to McIntosh, obtaining generating income was difficult for most women. “They provided services, mainly those that took place within a domestic context,” but this led to them being seen as undesirable to men and not being able to marry later. Women of upper statuses, as well as women that were able to marry upper status men, were able to generate revenue and livelihood through marriage while women of the lower statuses stood to risk their eligibility for marriage by working.

The field of late medieval and early modern masculinity is itself a relatively new approach in the cultural realm of studies. Mostly, until the last 30 years or so, the field of medieval and early modern gender was mostly analyzed through the lens of femininity. Recent additions to the field have set out to not only right the misconceptions of gender but also to critique the culture of people through a lens that takes note of all hegemonic power structures aside from gender such as race, class, and wealth. Scholars like Alexandra Shepard argue that gender-specific social norms that granted men of this time honor are “less well explored” by modern scholarship than that of women. There seems to be a consensus among historians of gender that understanding both sets of gender norms is better done when

31 Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620 (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 250.
analyzing them as interactions rather than in isolation. By understanding what made a “good woman” we better understand what made a “good man” and vice versa.

Scholars of masculinities such as Ruth Mazo Karras and Elizabeth Foyster analyze the gender norms of men in their late medieval and early modern societies. They both contribute to the ongoing conversation about what these societies deemed “good men”. They do this by discussing the ways that men asserted dominance over women. By claiming as much dominion over others as possible within reasonable bounds of their family names, men rose in social status. However, no matter the social sphere they operated within, men showed their "manhood" by practicing dominion over women. Karras argues that, “Different walks of life created different expectations for men, and individuals did or did not live up to those expectations in a variety of ways.”33 These different walks of life can be distilled into three categories; First, university scholars were able to participate in a social sphere not accessible to women; Second, was knighthood which men were able to perform acts of physical dominance. And third, “Within the towns, many young men followed a path that traditionally led from apprenticeship in a craft to mastery and independence.”34

Foyster discusses the performance of manhood within marriage. She and Karras align in their discussion of the social importance of men having dominance over women. However, it is more complicated as men, "were all too aware that their honour depended on the actions and words of their wives.”35 The reputations of men to their peers depended on the word of mouth from their wives. This demonstrates a more subtle power dynamic of husbands depending on their wives to spread good words about them within a more obvious power

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34 Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 1.
dynamic of wives answering to their husbands in legalities and matters of physical and social dominance.

Operating according to this social and often physical dominance over women made it easier for men to better navigate and climb the social ladders of their male peers. Once again, status was a major indicator of how far one was able to climb social ladders and often held more societal weight in determining one’s place in life. For example, an elite woman was not subordinate to a man below her status.

Scholars have grappled with British late medieval and early modern femininity, or, "womanhood" and masculinity, or, "manhood" in earnest since the 1980s. Scholars have focused on the role of women in various societal discourses such as the economy and marriage, women and religion, and the culture surrounding gender and death.

Navigating women’s narratives of medieval British society is difficult because surviving, handwritten sources lack the laywoman’s representation. Eileen Power argues that the lack of women in existing medieval sources is because, "...what passed for contemporary opinion came from two sources-- the Church and the aristocracy."36 This led to the only ideas being expressed about women in surviving sources are only in the words of male religious clerks and those sources that aren't are few in number and often in regard to wealthy, elite women. Documentation was primarily used by the rich or the religious leaders and if the laity were portrayed in documents, it was mostly in legal disputes, contracts, or ledgers and wills, none of which were specifically helpful in identifying how the person felt about the society they interacted with.37 However, it is also the result of what kind of documents were considered worth keeping. For example, according to James Daybell, documents such as land deeds, and correspondence related to business matters rather than exchanging news or

36 Eileen Power, Medieval Women, 9.
enhancing social bonds which were most often produced by men as well as correspondence related to legal or economic issues was prioritized for preservation in family archives while other types of correspondence that was more often written by women, were not.\textsuperscript{38} Women were not only disregarded in the preservation of family archives but in public archives as well. Marjorie McIntosh notes that working women were mostly left out of public records. “If women were labeled at all, it was usually by their marital status.”\textsuperscript{39}

Although women of medieval England were often left out of document-based sources, the field of material culture allows scholars to find representation of these women through analysis of the "stuff". The answers to the questions, like who these women were that have been erased through lack of sources, are often answered through material objects. For example, knowing what a material object meant to a person or a group of people gives insight to who those people were. The reverse is also true. Catherine Richardson and Tara Hamling argue that the way that social identities are formed, “…are particularly pertinent to the analysis of material forms because such analysis reveals the ways identities were constructed…”\textsuperscript{40} The methods of material culture are utilized among many disciplines. For example, Behavioral Archaeology a study of human behavior in association with material objects, developed by Michael B. Schiffer in 1975, was a theory that relied heavily on, “cultural anthropology, sociology, and history.”\textsuperscript{41} Katherine French writes about the importance of material culture in identifying gender codes. French asserts that material objects give insight to a person's identity. She suggests that when gender is studied through these items that one is more able to understand how women and men navigated space, interactions, and their society. She writes, "Material culture carries values and expectations

\textsuperscript{39} Marjorie Keniston McIntosh, \textit{Working Women in English Society}, 15.
\textsuperscript{40} Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson, \textit{Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and Its Meanings} (Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010), 5.
that are not readily expressed verbally, giving scholars access to unspoken assumptions about medieval men's and women's everyday experiences.\textsuperscript{42}

Over the years, scholars have grappled at the best technique for dissecting gender and the set of societal pressures that came with conforming to constructed gender norms. This becomes especially complicated when acknowledging how much and in what nature women are represented in surviving sources. Regarding the lack of women’s voices, Susan Signe Morrison poses the question, “Uncredited, unacknowledged, unnoticed- is this what women have been?”\textsuperscript{43} Women of course were a part of history but, according to Elizabeth Van Houts, prior to the twentieth century, most taught and discussed history was that of men and their big moves in politics and government. The twentieth century is when women were added to the conversation.\textsuperscript{44} This addresses the “when” of women in history. Many historians of gender in the late medieval and early modern era address how women are discussed in the few sources that survived time. Barbara Hanawalt in her book, ‘Of Good and Ill Repute': Gender and Social Control in Medieval England, argues that often, medieval primary sources are written and narrated by men and encountering women in a source is hearing about a woman from a man's perspective. She further analyzes the meaning of the case studies by dissecting the voices telling the stories rather than the content of the stories themselves. Morrison resolves her question of who these medieval women were that historians study by concluding, “Medieval women lived vital lives, proving their attitudes and beliefs had validity. Medieval women were active intellectually, defended women’s moral and spiritual equality, and contributed richly to the social, political, imaginative, artistic, and theological fabric of


\textsuperscript{44} Elisabeth van Houts, Medieval Memories: Men, Women and the Past, 700-1300 (London; New York: Routledge, 2014), 2.
medieval life." There is still much to understand about the women of the past and acknowledging that they were contributive toward their societies is a good place to start.

Status and its interaction with gender is another important category of analysis. Anne Marie Rasmussen’s book, *Rivalrous Masculinities: New Directions in Medieval Gender Studies*, analyzes many sources of medieval art and concludes that servants, both male and female, are portrayed in a defamatory light that marginalizes them when contrasted with their masters. She argues that artists were making an intentional statement that these male and female servants were, "...not quite men," because of their stature in life. Van Houts agrees that the status of medieval people cannot be understood in gender alone. "Class, age, health, morality and religion are other factors that decide how men and women perform their roles in society." Because of this, it is important that one does not analyze gender in a vacuum. Judith Butler argues that gender itself is performative. Because of the performance, gender has to be analyzed as an interaction. How is this societal performance analyzed? Katherine French theorizes that it’s through material objects. She argues that the analysis of material objects is especially important when studying medieval women. She claims, “Because we have relatively few things by medieval women, the objects they owned and used…offer us an alternative view of their everyday life unfettered by the rhetorical devices and clerical biases of so many literary works.” These material objects can be things like paintings, clothing, or funerary monuments.

This thesis presents both feminine and masculine gender norms and their presence in death monuments. Rasmussen utilizes the context of gender in the light of heteronormativity.

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surrounding masculinity in medieval England. She discusses the scholarly work surrounding gender studies and the new emerging study of masculinity in an intersectional light. Not only can this disappearing female voice and overtaking male voice in medieval discussions regarding women tell us about the misogynist tones of female representation, but it can also be dissected further to convey the masculine gender codes of a forced machismo in the heteronormative narrative.\textsuperscript{51} Van Houts offers a healthy middle ground, marrying these ideas of interpreting gender codes in the feminine and masculine sense. She offers that since gender is performative and determined by biological difference as well as, "...in conjunction with so many other factors that constitute the gender aspect," respective gender norms can only be understood when observing the codification in relation and interaction with one another.\textsuperscript{52} This performance of gender identity is learned and taught and always in process.\textsuperscript{53}

Although there is not much in terms of sources discussing gender being symbolized or depicted in medieval death monuments, and a shortage of sources regarding gender in medieval death and burial, there are gender codes enshrined in the culture around them. Anthony Fletcher argues that funerals themselves were heavily gendered, especially regarding the religious language. Fletcher writes that what determined a woman to be "godly" was her ability to fulfill her wifely duties.\textsuperscript{54} Similarly, Peter Sherlock argues that funeral and death monuments reflect societal and cultural values.\textsuperscript{55} Because of the gender codification of religion, it is a fair assumption that even religious symbols on a monument could be considered to be a representation of gender. Regarding funerals and burials, van Houts argues that, "The gendered tasks of men and women were clear. Men were expected to fight and

\textsuperscript{51} Ann Marie Rasmussen, *Rivalrous Masculinities*, XV.
\textsuperscript{52} Elisabeth Van Houts, *Medieval Memories*, 2.
\textsuperscript{53} Ruth Mazo Karras, *From Boys to Men*, 3-5.
\textsuperscript{54} Anthony Fletcher, *Gender, Sex, and Subordination in England 1500-1800* (United Kingdom: Yale University Press, 1995), 349.
\textsuperscript{55} Peter Sherlock, *Monuments and Memory in Early Modern England*, (United Kingdom: Ashgate, 2008).
die...while women were expected to remember their menfolk's deeds ..."56 Barbara Harris writes that the duty of women curating the memory of their deceased husbands was, " far from passive: in addition to providing the funds needed to construct them, many of their wills included detailed directions about the design and location of the tombs they were commissioning."57

The culture of late medieval and early modern England surrounding Gender and death, often intersects with material culture. Although, death is not the only phase of life that gender was depicted in within material culture. The rituals surrounding death in this time were also very gendered. For example, Helen Frisby in her book, Traditions of Death and Burial, agrees with Van Houts, adding that the women were charged with washing and dressing the body of the dead. Men charged with carrying and burying the dead.58 Marjorie McIntosh discusses women's role in skilled crafts such as cloth and clothing. Not only are women primarily responsible for dressing the dead but they craft the clothing and cloth they are buried in.59 This thesis builds on the work of historians like Fletcher and Sherlock, and also on archaeological studies. For example, Roberta Gilchrist's work on medieval nunneries established how archaeology can reveal representations of gender and the marginalization of women. Gilchrist maintains that the nunneries themselves were pushed out to the fringes of populated areas, "Urban growth and male clericalism left little opportunity for the isolation required by women's religious communities."60 The analysis of structures such as chapels as well as material objects such as funerary monuments convey further examples of gendered symbols in death.

56 Elisabeth van Houts, Medieval Memories, 11.
57 Barbara Harris, English Aristocratic Women and the Fabric of Piety, 1450-1550 (Amsterdam University Press, 2020), 28.
60 Roberta Gilchrist, Gender and Material Culture: The Archaeology of Religious Women, (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2013), 65.
Conclusion

This thesis will build on existing scholarship on gender, death, and material culture to contribute new analysis of how gender is reflected in the monuments of one elite family. My research should fill a gap in the literature by showing the presence of codified gender codes in death monuments as a reflection of culture. This thesis is divided into 3 chapters. This introduction, which provides context, a brief overview of the thesis, and a historiography. Chapter 2 utilizes Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales* to delve further into late medieval and early modern gender. Chapter 3 is about the funerary monuments themselves. The Russell monuments are the main source bank for this chapter.

Gender in late medieval and early modern England had attached and respective societal expectations. While women were expected to prove their womanhood by becoming wives and mothers and displaying traits of meekness, softness, introspection, and humility, men were expected to prove their manhood by establishing dominance over women, no matter the sphere, and displaying traits of courage, virility, and dominance, these gender norms were not monolithic and inflexible. It is also nearly impossible to base blanket claims that all people of the past viewed gender norms as oppressive and imprisoning. Because of the vast status divides of late medieval and early modern England, status was much more determinative of one's position in life over gender. A medieval woman in the gentry status was more well off in society's social binoculars than a peasant man. For members of the upper class especially, there were societal rewards given to those that conformed to gender normatives. Although there were many people who did not fit or have interest in fitting into heteronormative gender coding and wished to separate themselves from societally imposed gender, there were certain societal benefits to people living as a "good man" or a "good woman", especially in the upper classes. However, I do not seek to make conjecture claims or speculate on the feelings of the people surrounding gender but rather, as an approach to a
critical theory, I attempt to raise questions about the symbols in funerary monuments that represent gender in symbols, writings, and mediums.

Finally, the historiography surrounding this topic is generally distinct and separated into works concerning gender and works concerning material culture. It is rare that they often intersect into an extensive and single scholarly source. Because of this, the historiography of this chapter is divided into these two camps and brought together in a conversation with one another whenever possible. Because material culture can provide another source and insight into the culture of the time, and gender is a prevalent aspect of any society, it is reasonable to conclude that gender is captured in funerary monuments and other mediums of material culture.

The cultural pressures of gender conformity and "norms" have lasted as long as the social constructs of gender themselves. Through the analysis of material culture, it is apparent that medieval gender codes are no exception to this rule. However, the true question that begs to be answered is how the codification of gender is captured in death. Gender was prominent in the lives of all people living in late medieval England and it can be seen and analyzed in symbols within material culture such as the Russell family funerary monuments and, more broadly, the stone they were literally set in.
Chapter 2: Chaucer's Guide to Gender and Hegemony

"How many [Husbands] might she have in marriage?
   I never yet heard tell in my lifetime
   A definition of this number.
   Men may conjecture and interpret in every way,
   But well I know, expressly, without lie,
   God commanded us to grow fruitful and multiply;
   That gentle text I can well understand.
   Also I know well, he said my husband
   Should leave father and mother and take to me.
   But he made no mention of number,
   Of marrying two, or of marrying eight;
   Why should men then speak evil of it?"\(^{61}\)

Some believe that the Wife of Bath is a farcical character that Chaucer created to critique the church. However, she is an interesting example of how women of the medieval era could manipulate gender expectations in their favor. The Wife of Bath, after justifying her 5 marriages to a group of men, tells her tale that will answer the age-old question: "what do women want?" Her tale surmises, quite controversially among the group, that women want control in the marriage and that although men may act as though they are in charge, they want women to be in control and be told what to do. The end of the tale contains an exchange between a husband and wife that concludes, "Then have I gotten mastery of you," she said… "Yes, certainly, wife," he said, "I consider it best."\(^{62}\)

The Wife of Bath defies the very gender norms that she is critiquing by Chaucer’s pen. She, a medieval, British woman, is neither meek nor humble. She is neither passive nor cooperative. She would not have even been called "beautiful" given that she is depicted as an aged woman with a gapped-tooth smile and a large derriere. Although she was rich from the inheritance of her deceased husbands, she didn't have money of her own. Chaucer used the Wife of Bath to convey disapproval for women who transgressed behavioral norms and to

\(^{61}\) Chaucer, “The Canterbury Tales.”

\(^{62}\) Chaucer, “The Canterbury Tales.”
emphasize the social disgust toward such women. Bradley Irish discusses the ways that Shakespeare uses disgust in his writing. He argues, “Disgust...played a crucial component in how Shakespeare understood the ways that people...interact with each other, with vital implications for his portrayal of social configurations like class, gender and sexuality, race and disability.”63 A weddable woman of this time, according to Suzanne Hull, would have been morally chaste, gentle, and as she quotes from Castiglione’s *The Courtyer*, “the vertues of the minde, as wisdome, justice, noblenesse of courage, temperance, strengthe of the minde, continency, sobermoode, etc.”64 The chaste, silent, and obedient qualities that Hull discusses were not embodied by the Wife of Bath. She would have been considered by her medieval peers to be unweddable and yet, she was married 5 times.

*The Canterbury Tales* are a good examination and critique of many of the different spheres of hegemony of the medieval era; especially for its discussions and critiques surrounding status, wealth, and the church. Most important for this thesis, these tales offer readers and historians alike a clear message regarding gender in the medieval era: it was being discussed, it was being navigated, and it was being critiqued.

This chapter explores gender as a category of analysis in the lives of people living in late medieval and Early Modern England. By exploring the origins and motivations of gender norms for both women and men and how they performed these norms in their everyday life, it is apparent that these norms were captured in material objects. Gender can be analyzed in interactions throughout various social spheres such as gender and the church, gender and the marriage and household, and gender and status.

Like many societally constructed ideologies, gender norms came with power structures and, in general, most of society agreed with and perpetuated these norms. Gender

norms were communicated and reinforced through social, legal, economic, religious, and cultural forms. The people of this time were aware of the social expectations of their individual genders as they were communicated in every step of life as well as legal and economic structures. This was apparent in such legal structures as primogeniture, the inheritance of an estate being passed down to the eldest son rather than the eldest child, as well as the somewhat surrender of economic autonomy in marriage. Women and men were aware that living in accordance to these gender norms was both important in life and death as discussed by Lucinda Becker who analyzes funeral sermons and argues, “The clergyman could choose to highlight those events in the life of a woman that would most clearly show her to be ideal in terms of gender, rather than...religiousity.”

Gender Norms of Late Medieval and Early Modern England

There was also a Nun, a PRIORESS, Who was very simple and modest in her smiling; Her greatest oath was but by Saint Loy; And she was called Madam Eglantine. She sang the divine service very well, Intoned in her nose in a very polite manner.

The life of the Prioress is Chaucer’s way of communicating that the gender expectations of society triumphed over even the pious expectations of God. Like the other characters in the works, she depicts a representation of the gender norms present in the medieval era. The Prioress is described as kind and gentle. She dresses as extravagantly as her status as the head of a convent can. When she eats, she eats modestly and neatly. She is a

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67 Chaucer, “The Canterbury Tales.”
lover of animals and a sensitive woman that only speaks when spoken to. Most importantly, although she chose a life of celibacy and service to God, she has some regrets about not having a family.\textsuperscript{68}

Gender norms are socially constructed and individually performed. The responsibility to perform one's societally imposed gender lies solely on the individual based on their biologically assigned sex. Candace West and Don Zimmerman define gender as an achieved status, "that which is constructed through psychological, cultural, and social means."\textsuperscript{69} Performance of gender, or "doing gender" is guided through social pressures and formed into separate categories of "femininity" and "masculinity."\textsuperscript{70} Both Gerda Lerner and Judith Butler offer definitions by gender. Both scholars emphasize the performance aspect of gender with Lerner making a distinction between culturally created gender and biological sex;\textsuperscript{71} and Judith Butler focusing on the performance of gender norms.\textsuperscript{72} Judith Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras offer definitions of medieval gender. They argue that medieval gender must be a study of both genders in relation to one another. Gender, according to Bennett and Karras, is a shaper. It, "shaped the life options of medieval [people]. "\textsuperscript{73} The gender expectations of the early modern era are like that of the late medieval. Historian Susan Amussen reiterates Lerner’s focus of gender as a social construct while adding class into consideration.\textsuperscript{74} Merry Wiesner-Hanks in the same vein as Amussen, argues that this concept of gender is what


\textsuperscript{70} West and Zimmerman, “Doing Gender,” 13-14.

\textsuperscript{71} Gerda Lerner, Women and History (Oxford University Press, 1986), 238.


\textsuperscript{73} Judith M. Bennett and Ruth Mazo Karras, The Oxford Handbook of Women and Gender in Medieval Europe (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 2.

forms hierarchies in the early modern era. These categories were referred to as "womanhood" and "manhood" in late medieval and early modern England. The various pressures to perform these norms and the construction of the norms in their entirety were contributed to by social spheres such as status, religion and age for example. A woman's power depended on her marital status, age, social and economic status, and education.

Although it is important to acknowledge the power structure within gender, viewing women solely as oppressed or victims minimizes their experiences and does not reflect the full scope of women’s lives across socio-economic groups. When viewing women from a one-sided paradigm in their relation to men, it is easy to understand why scholars such as Penny Richards and Jessica Munns argue that "...women in the past were invariably oppressed, excluded and marginalized. If they were not, then they were exceptions who proved the rule of victimization." However, this is, as Joseph and Frances Gies argue, a result of only analyzing the status of women “relative to men.” and considering too many records talking about women (i.e. sermons, tax records, and court documents) and disregarding sources written by women (i.e. poetry, letters, and diaries). By considering this as well as analyzing material sources as primary sources, one can avoid the misconceptions of women that Melissa and Michael Rank refers to as “damsels in distress, wearing a traffic-cone for a hat.” In order to understand gender norms of the late medieval and early modern era, women and men must be equally considered in relation to one another.

In the fifteenth century, English society expected elite men to display certain levels of courage, strength, valour, and domination. White and Christianity was also expected of “true” men. In the 16th-17th century the codes of masculinity were mostly carried over from the medieval era with special attention toward power, governance, control, and responsibility. Ruth Mazo Karras articulates three distinct spheres wherein these masculine codes were constructed in the late medieval and early modern eras: First, education at a university, which is a form of dominating women as this is a sphere that women are not welcome or allowed in. Second, knighthood, which is a form of dominating women as they are used as pawns and trophies in a competition between men. Third, overseeing inferior workers in workshops which are forms of dominating women because they are natural inferiors and are also not allowed or credited to have this much authority in an economic sphere.

Social norms of the time were shaped by the patriarchal nature of English society. Patriarchy is defined by Gerda Lerner as, “the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general.” Susan Amussen has argued that it is often difficult to discern the interactions of the patriarchy. Elizabeth Foyster notes that the patriarchal order of late medieval and early modern English society is a, “powerful ideology in early modern England which sets out notions of appropriate gender roles for both men and women.”

81 Karras, From Boys to Men, 153-160.
84 Foyster, Manhood in Early Modern England Honour, Sex and Marriage, 8-10.
order of patriarchal norms was nearly impossible to achieve entirely but Foyster argues that most men tried to model their life after these norms. As Karras agrees, a way to establish masculinity within the household was to prove dominance over women.

While women living in England during the late medieval and early modern era were subject to laws and gender norms that were often restricting, it is important to note that many scholars such as Anthony Fletcher argue that they were among the most privileged women in the world. It is difficult to know if women of this time and place felt this way. The extension of privilege was mostly in the spheres of civics and generally reserved for those women of the upper status. As Fletcher notes, in the case of those primary sources that discuss the privilege of English women compared to other places of the world simultaneously, "...almost every one of [them] is derogatory. All of them [are] deeply rooted in an abiding European antifeminist tradition, for the female sex as a whole had long been a target of proverbial utterance." The overwhelming number of writings regarding "womankind" shows how truly vulnerable men felt towards women. Men of the time were creating women that they were somewhat afraid of. Alexandra Shephard adds that men, in an effort to establish their social position, often had deep anxieties about suppressing the lasciviousness of women. Rather, "Manhood was won through the assertion of heterosexual male identity, ideally within the confines of marriage, which in turn rested on men's efforts to tame female sexuality, itself paradoxically constructed as naturally unruly and largely beyond control." This anxiety that men felt toward women had overtones of morality which could be seen in religious texts and teachings. The gender expectations of women in late medieval and early modern England can be found throughout the Bible they read from but most notably in this case in the book,

85 Fletcher, Gender, Sex and Subordination in England 1500-1800, 4.
86 Fletcher, Gender, Sex and Subordination, 4-6.
Genesis, which discusses the creation of the world, woman and man, and all the duties of living creatures. Genesis 3:16 reads, "Unto the woman he said, I will greatly multiply thy sorowe and thy conception. In sorow thou shalt bring forth children: and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and hee shall rule ouer thee."\(^88\) Women were expected to be pious, submissive, nurturing, wives and child bearers. Steven Ozment notes that women were expected to become mothers and wives because it was believed that it was a special blessing. Both childbearing and loving their husbands were special labors.\(^89\) The performance of manhood in late medieval and early modern England can also be explained simply in the biblical text they read. Proverbs 27:17 reads, "Iron sharpeneth iron: so a man sharpeneth the countenance of his friend."\(^90\) Manhood, or masculinity was best displayed in terms of besting another, whether that was an equal, someone in a subservient position, or women. This further perpetuated that in terms of gender, men acted, and women were acted on.

**Gender and the Church**

He had glaring eyes such as has a hare. He had sewn a Veronica upon his cap. Before him in his lap, (he had) his knapsack, brimful of pardons come all fresh from Rome. He had a voice as small as a goat has. He had no beard, nor never would have; It (his face) was as smooth as if it were recently shaven. I believe he was a eunuch or a homosexual.\(^91\)

Perhaps the most intriguing character in *The Canterbury Tales* is the gender ambiguous Pardoner. The Pardoner is described with physical attributes such as being hairless save his slick and stringy yellow hair. This character, given the nature of the descriptions and the discontent that the Narrator of the story holds for him, is Chaucer's caricature of the corruptness of the church. With the Pardoner's knapsack full of riches,


\(^{90}\) “Official King James Bible Online,” https://www.kingjamesbibleonline.org/.

\(^{91}\) Chaucer, “The Canterbury Tales.”
Chaucer villainizes him for his manipulative collecting of indulgences for his own benefit. This is done by undermining the Pardoner's manhood and replacing his masculine features with feminine features. His voice is described as "small," his face smooth. Even his sexuality is questioned based upon these features. The villainization of The Pardoner in The Canterbury Tales by feminizing him is further evidence that in the medieval era, not conforming to gender norms was viewed societally as disgraceful or shameful. By feminizing a pardoner, Chaucer was making a point that a corrupt church was no longer embodying masculine traits and instead embodying traits of a deceitful woman such as the Wife of Bath. Not only was Chaucer critiquing the church, but he was making a statement that women were unfit to preach.92

Since priests and other men in the church did not lead a traditional household, their manhood was constructed differently than that of male householders. Men in the church were also encouraged to be peacemakers and maintain a tepid temper, so displays of manhood through physical dominance were also off the table. Of course, much like the university settings that Karras discusses, with the exception of convents, church leadership positions were male dominated. This means that the primary display of manhood within the church resided on both that men in certain roles within the church ruled over other men, giving them opportunities to construct their manhood, and that women were not able to participate. Aside from that, Lydia Walker asserts that preaching the word of God could serve as a display of manhood because, the voice, "...if exercised correctly, the preacher's voice could in a way become weaponized as it incite others to support acts of violence."93

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These male clergy members were the very same complaining that more women than men attended church and that those women attended church for the reasons of, "lust, ambition, and vanity, [rather than] piety, devotion, or spiritual motivat[ion]" and, "As proof, the clergy offered up examples of women who gossiped with neighbors, flaunted new clothing, and flirted with men while in church, instead of attending to their prayers or the liturgy." This skewed and villainized stereotype appearing in parish records combined with the rules prohibiting women to hold titles of responsibility within the parishes displayed a pattern of social hierarchy and oppression within churches. With some exceptions, women were painted as temptresses and distractions who were unable or uninterested in worship while men were the ones tasked with reining them in. Women were asked to be the Mary's and not the Bathsheba's.

Women were seemingly oppressed by the religions that they subscribed too and yet they remained actively involved. Aside from the societal expectation of women to be God fearing, docile, and obedient, there were more elements at play. According to Katherine French, if a woman was not born into a leadership position (such as the lady of the house or of the ruling class) her parish was often an opportunity for, "...leadership, visibility, and even on occasion authority, all in the name of religious devotion and in seeming contradiction to the goals of submission and silence." Although women were unable to participate in the social spheres of clergy, their local parish was often a place to participate in leadership-type positions. Women also served religiously as nuns and as such, "within the confines of her chosen monastery, each nun developed her own individual devotion and spirituality." The organized religions that contributed to the gender norms that painted women as weak also prompted women to seek their own conversion narratives. Sari Katajala-Peltomaa

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and Maria Raisa, write, "The misogynistic and patriarchal basis of culture that connected the feminine to weakness and emotion gave women the incentive and option to cultivate religion in a way that promoted their own way of practicing religion."\textsuperscript{97} This freedom to establish belief was more accessible to women when they were practicing independence from their husbands or fathers. Martin Ingram argues that, “the only area of public life in which women were regularly separated from men was in church.”\textsuperscript{98} Even though women were painted in an unfriendly and hedonistic light by church leaders, church courts and participation in organized religion were some of the only places that women were able to speak publicly and make public spaces for themselves. This helps to illustrate that there was a commonly found loophole to the restrictive gender codes women were pushed into by women taking charge of their own conversion and faith narratives. As a side effect, women were able to assert their own leadership and individuality.

**Gender and Marriage and Households**

\textit{There was a good WIFE OF beside BATH, But she was somewhat deaf, and that was a pity. She had such a skill in cloth-making She surpassed them of Ypres and of Ghent. In all the parish there was no wife Who should go to the Offering before her; And if there did, certainly she was so angry That she was out of all charity (love for her neighbor).}

The Wife of Bath is an insight to the "norm" of gender within medieval marriage and household. Although she is nearly the opposite of the gender norms of the time, she is also a reflection of how the social role of women within households may not be as constrictive as

\textsuperscript{97} Sari Katajala-Peltomaa and Maria Raisa, \textit{Lived Religion and Gender in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe}. (United Kingdom: Taylor & Francis, 2020), 9

\textsuperscript{98} Martin Ingram, \textit{Church, Courts, Sex and Marriage in England 1570 - 1640} (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Pr, 1988), 156; See also Bronach Christina Kane, Jacqueline Murray, and Diane Watt, \textit{Popular Memory and Gender in Medieval England: Men, Women, and Testimony in the Church Courts, C.1200-1500} (Martlesham: The Boydell Press, 2021).
some may believe. Or, at least, that although writings about women may have been different than women really would have conducted themselves on a daily basis. John Ray, an early modern naturalist (one of the writers that Anthony Fletcher said wrote in a derogatory way toward women) wrote regarding the popular proverb, 'better a shrew than a sheep'. He, "commented about this proverb that it was held true 'for commonly shrews are good housewives.'"99 In fact, late medieval and early modern households were spheres where women could act with some capacities of authority. Though a husband would have legally and socially held the true authority in a household, privately, many women ran the house. Marriage itself was a sphere in which women could advocate and provide for themselves.

Marriage not only was a way that women advocated for themselves, but the way that noble women especially approached marriage inadvertently helped the economy as well as women in general. Women's role in the medieval economy is often misunderstood or ignored. Women's most prominent role of the wife was actually her largest contribution to England’s economy.100 That is not to say that marriage was the only role that women played in the economy. Marjorie McIntosh notes the many other jobs that women held including, “...boarding other people in their homes...moneylending, pawning, and real estate,” as well as” craft and trading activity.”101 The patriarchy did have a firm grasp on the lives of women in medieval England from the way they were raised and educated to the social norms they were subjected to as married, single, and widowed. However, women found a way to navigate around this constricting society to make it work more in their favor. Medieval marriage, although an overt patriarchal institution, became a way for women to at least have a chance and a voice by giving them more legal options and authority in society. According to Martin Ingram, marriage could serve as a bargaining chip to make alliances between

99 Fletcher, Gender, Sex and Subordination, 4.
100 Hanawalt, The Wealth of Wives.
101 Marjorie McIntosh, Working Women in English Society, 1300-1620, 5.
powerful families, thus achieving more influence. This influence and authority would also be passed down through generations via property and inheritance.\textsuperscript{102}

Women, under their husband's name were more apt to deal in business and real estate land transactions and the markets if they so wished. For example, although women did not have equal footing as their male counterpart in this arrangement, a woman achieved a legal position called a "femme covert" which protected a woman in the circumstances that her husband would attempt to alienate and dominate all financial decisions.\textsuperscript{103} Marriage became a corporate ladder of sorts in which women were able to promote their status. Barbara Hanawalt gives the example of Thomasine Bonaventura, a high-class servant woman who married and outlived a wealthy shop owner, remarried with half of his dower to an even wealthier man and outlived him, and remarried and-outlived a third rich man until she was considerably very wealthy.\textsuperscript{104} Although medieval women could make money by selling their wares, developing a trade like weaving or brewing, or sadly through prostitution, the greatest economic contribution they could achieve was through marriage and remarriage.\textsuperscript{105} Marjorie McIntosh discusses remarriage in the early modern era. Aside from receiving access to her new husband’s wealth, a widow remarrying would benefit financially from the act by being allotted a third of her previous husband’s property that she had the right to sell.\textsuperscript{106}

Within the household, social norms suggested that women and men of a certain age should become wives and husbands and then mothers and fathers. Women as wives were expected to emulate, "beauty, chastity, and devotion…as well as the emotional fulfillment of
the home."¹⁰⁷ Men as husbands were expected to be prosperous, strong, and virile. However, upon the approach of childbearing, all of these expectations remained the same with the addition of parenthood. The most commonly utilized example of parents expected for mothers and fathers to emulate were no other than the Virgin Mary and Joseph the Carpenter.¹⁰⁸

Although the physically impossible standard of being both the Virgin Mary and a fruitful mother was not necessarily expected of women, achieving the likeness of the chaste and virtuous Holy Virgin was. Medieval birthing scenes that were often depicted in art captured the culture surrounding childbirth which was very gendered in its roles and perceptions. Because conceiving and birthing a child began with lustful and unvirtuous thoughts and feelings, women that gave birth were expected to follow church laws and statutes to be welcomed back into church parishes and more importantly, the grace of God.

For 40 days after giving birth, women entered a phase called "churching" which involved the cleansing of the new mother so she could again attend church. This "churching" is depicted in late medieval art works such as Presentation in the Temple, by Hans Hemling, c. 1470. David Cressy writes that despite current connotations of churching, many women of this time would have looked forward to it.¹⁰⁹ However, the father, notably guilty of the same lustful and virtuous thoughts and feelings, is not required to go through a 40-day cleansing process.

Another recourse was the process of childbearing and childbirth themselves. Carrying and then delivering a child in the late medieval and early modern era was a dangerous task, and although they, "...were not as foreign or as dangerous as originally assumed," still,
"...approximately 1 out of every 20 women would die in childbirth."\textsuperscript{110} Although these statistics would be enough to make anyone think twice, motherhood was still an expectation. Within birthing practices, such as the "Caesarean Section," or surgical birth it is clear that unofficially, the child was prioritized above the mother. Although surgical delivery was a rare practice (only performed if the mother was dead or dying), it would almost always kill the mother in order to save the child. The existence of medieval recreations such as the manuscript artwork, \textit{The Birth of Julius Caesar}, shows how glorified this feat of motherly love was. As motherhood was portrayed as a holy and righteous endeavor as well as a societal expectation of women, it was no wonder that women risked death or difficulty in both the carrying and delivering processes. The sacrifice of a woman's body during childbirth added a pressure to the feminine gender norm for women to be mothers.

While mothers were gendered as nurturing caregivers, fathers were gendered as fierce protectors and patriarchs. Although fatherhood, at least within the upper status, is captured in many late medieval and early modern funerary monuments, it is depicted differently than the tender and nurturing ways that motherhood is depicted. Fatherhood is depicted with more connotations of patriarchy and paternity by means of displaying progeny or symbols that I will discuss further in a later chapter. It is rare to find a funerary monument from this time with the depiction of a father with his child. When it is found, generally it is within monuments that depict both wife and husband.

Tenderness of fatherhood can be depicted in other ways. In 1677 Mary Rodd and Edmund Spoure had a child named Henry. Henry would be the only son of the family destined to carry out the family name. However, tragically at the age of 10, Henry died. After many years, Mary and Edmund were not able to conceive another son to carry out the family

name and the line ended with the death of Henry. Edmund, in his sadness, erected an elaborate monument in memory of his son. The colored marble monument depicts the family in mourning. The children are depicted tucked in between Corinthian pillars. The parents kneel before the epitaph, their hands raised in prayer. The epitaph, written by Edmund shows true mourning and fatherly love. He urges the traveler to stop and observe the monument, promising that the, "delay’s not worthlesse here." He describes his son as, "his parents' short delight." Edmund closes the epitaph by mourning the loss of his son and the end of his family line writing:

"With Wealth nor Strength nor th’ Stocke from Whence he sprung Could repercuss deaths dart; the force was so strong By which at once in One was lost A thousand Beauties, without boast Yea and a thousand Eligances too Such rare accomplishments when living was his due Goe Traveller now, and mindfull be Of Death, and of Eternitie" 111

Although it could be said that the elaborateness and ostentatiousness of this monument was motivated by the mourning of the end of a family line or a display of the death of Edmund's virility. It is also worth note that this appears in the late seventeenth century. However, the

vulnerability and sadness captured in both the epitaph and the monument itself tells another story. Notably, the combination of the softness of mourning a child and submissive positioning of the father, Edmund, is pointedly different from most depictions of paternity in funerary monuments of this time.

Gender and Status

A FRANKLIN was in his company. His beard was white as a daisy; As to his temperament, he was dominated by the humor blood. He well-loved a bit of bread dipped in wine in the morning; custom was always to live in delight, For he was Epicurus' own son, Who held the opinion that pure pleasure Was truly perfect happiness. He was a householder, and a great one at that; He was Saint Julian (patron of hospitality) in his country. His bread, his ale, was always of the same (good) quality; Nowhere was there any man better stocked with wine. His house was never without baked pies Of fish and meat, and that so plentiful That in his house it snowed with food and drink;"112

The Franklin in Chaucer's tales is a good example of how gender and status are separate hegemonic power structures that often interact and influence one another. He also serves as further evidence that wealth did not equate status and vice versa. As a non-noble landowner, the Franklin was effectively a yeoman. The Franklin, although a man of middling status lived a life without want. A man of the Franklin's status would have performed his gender in different ways than someone within the Wife of Bath's status. The Franklin is not able to display his manhood by participating in spheres unwelcome to his wife, nor is he able to display his manhood by means of titles. The Franklin is able to assert himself as the sole owner of his land, which his wife would not be able to. However, Chaucer does other things to ensure the coding of masculinity. Generally, within the four humors, those that were classified as "sanguine" or as Chaucer says, "dominated by the humor blood," were physically attributed to be well fed.

112 Chaucer, “The Canterbury Tales.”
While this bearded, well-fed man was described as masculine in his physical body and his assets, his mindset poses an interesting juxtaposition. "Virtus", was the Latin term used by the Romans to define "manhood" and more specifically, "designates the activity and quality associated with the noun from which it is derived; Virtus characterizes the ideal behavior of a man."113 Virtus was the antithesis of the Greek Epicurean's pleasurable approach to life. Epicurean was considered by most Romans and many Greeks to be effeminate and weak. If the Franklin was Epicurean in mind, he was also rejecting the Virtus mindset that, "...loyalty, bravery, and love of country should rightly lead one to shun pleasure… and to endure pain."114 By giving the Franklin the Epicurean lifestyle of pleasure, Chaucer was pointing out that this lower status landowner, although wealthy and well off, lacked manly virtue or "Virtus" and instead was feminine in his mind.

Land ownership itself was indeed a way to prove one's manhood, As Richards and Munns discuss, "Of course, not all men became soldiers and justices, or married, property holders. In early modern culture, manhood depended not on having a penis, but on owning property,"115 but land ownership could not equate nobility and the level of masculinity that came with noble birth. As can be observed from the depiction of the Franklin, those men of lower statuses could not measure up to the manhood that those in the upper statuses were born of, regardless of wealth, ownership, and progeny.

115 Richards and Munns, Gender, Power and Privilege in Early Modern Europe, 16.
The Franklin serves as an example that wealth does not equate status and that lower status men were considered to be depicted as more feminine than men of the upper statuses. An example of members of society that shows the opposite is true are knights. Knights, being of noble blood, were in the upper status. Where nobility did not equate wealth, it did often equate a heightened state of masculinity. Knights lived by a code of Chivalry and, "Chivalric texts present a version of noble masculinity whose practitioners possessed economic assets and political authority, but who also embodied certain fundamental qualities."\textsuperscript{116} Knights had several ways to perform their manhood. The sphere of their works not open to women, they participated in many feats of physical dominance and bravery, and they held a title of nobility that made them socially considered to be more masculine than non-nobles because they, "derive their patriarchal authority from the subordination not just of women, but of other, lesser, men."\textsuperscript{117} This title of Knight often outweighed even the individual identities of the men knighted. This can be seen in The Tomb Effigy of an Unknown Knight. This unknown knight is depicted in his armor with his shield in an active position. The crossed placement of his feet is specifically notable, this connotes an active stance and a dedication to duty even after death. The knight's effigy lacks an epitaph, meaning he is lacking the identification of self, family, birth date, progeny, and death date.

\textsuperscript{116} Katherine J. Lewis, “... Doo as This Noble Prynce Godeffroy of Bolyone Dyde Chivalry, Masculinity, and Crusading in Late Medieval England,” 312.
\textsuperscript{117} Katherine J. Lewis, “... Doo as This Noble Prynce Godeffroy of Bolyone Dyde Chivalry, Masculinity, and Crusading in Late Medieval England,” 312-313.
The monument may have had an epitaph when it was constructed that did not survive. However, without it, it is apparent that in the Knight’s death, he was reduced to his status and the masculine connotations that came with it.

The experience of women and the performance of their gender was often outweighed by their placement within the social hierarchy of status. Not only did noble women hold more social influence than women of lower statuses but they held more social influence than men of lower statuses as well. However, women of the upper status were subjected to harsher gender norms than women of the lower status because with respect to titles, resources, and wealth, they had more means to perform gender norms in their dress as well as in their positions of wifehood and motherhood within the household.

With this excess of means, social elevation, and resources, women of late medieval and early modern England had more opportunity as well as expectation to contribute to the physical encapsulation of status and gender. Of course, men of this type had these means as well, but they generally dealt with courtly and professional things while women of the noble household were running the decorative and familial aspects of the estates. Barbara Harris writes that, "scores of the wives and widows of knights and noblemen commissioned tombs and stained glass, whose location, effigies and painted images, epitaphs, and heraldry fashioned and recorded the identities by which they wanted to be remembered." Generally, through the execution of their own wills or through the execution of their authority upon the passing of their husbands, women of noble households took it upon themselves to oversee the capturing of memory.

More social pressure and responsibility fell to noble women than to noblemen to preserve memory. Not only in the ways discussed above, but also in the ability to carry on the family line through childbearing. The birth of children to noble households is a prime

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118 Harris, *English Aristocratic Women and the Fabric of Piety, 1450-1550*, 118.
example of how noble women were expected to preserve memory not only in death but in life.

Conclusion

As we were entering at edge of a village; For which our Host, since he was accustomed to guide. On this occasion, our jolly company, Said in this manner: "Gentlemen, every one, Now we lack no tales more than one. Fulfilled is my plan and my decree; I believe that we have heard from each social class; Almost fulfilled is all my governance. I pray to God, give right good luck to him, Who tells this tale to us pleasingly. "Sire priest," said he, "art thou a vicar? Or art thou a parson? Tell the truth, by thy faith! Be whatever thou may be, break thou not our rules; For every man, save thou, has told his tale...For truly, it seems to me from your appearance Thou shouldest well conclude a long discourse."

Chaucer concludes his work with a tale from the Parson. The Parson, a man of the cloth and Chaucer's only non-hypocritically religious character in the tales, is a simple man from a simple town with simple but fully held beliefs. He states that he will not be telling a fable but instead he will tell a true story. He will not speak in verse, but he will speak in prose. These are the ways the Parson is able to participate in the Host's games while upholding his religious beliefs. The Parson's prose tale is disruptive for these differences. The tale is so disruptive in fact that many scholars debate whether or not it was truly written by Chaucer. Scholars also debate whether the combination of this religiously devoted tale and Chaucer's own retraction in which he credits all the good to Jesus Christ is satire or not. Regardless, Chaucer uses the disruptive tale of the Parson to create an undertone of agency and a theme of accountability. Chaucer is claiming that it is up to the reader to find the meaning after hearing from "each social class." So must it be up to the modern historian to find concrete evidence within the abstract ideals presented in late medieval and early modern England.

119 Chaucer, “The Canterbury Tales.”.
There is perhaps no better concrete evidence of social culture than material history. Material history looks at objects themselves as case studies or microcosms of what they mean socially. Gender is one of the most prominent elements captured within these objects and the bigger the life event, the more emotional weight of said object. This is why funerary monuments are such historically wealthy sources to dissect.

By analyzing gender in its interactions with other hegemonic structures such as status, religion, and households, it becomes clearer to the observer that although it may not have been fore fronted in the conscious mind of all those participating and performing their respective gender norms, it was always present and affecting social structures.

The next chapter of this thesis explores the presence of gender in funerary monuments and more specifically, in the monuments of the Russell family, earls of Bedford. Within the hidden symbols of gender, there are symbols of familial love, status, and religion.
Chapter 3: 'Monumento' Mori: The Analysis of Funerary Monuments Using the Russell Earls of Bedford as a Case Study.

When the turf is thy tower,  
and the pit thy bower,  
thy well-being and thy white throat  
for the benefit of worms.  
What helpeth thee then  
all this world's joy?

This 13th century poem by an unknown author captures the modernly tagged, "macabre" nature of medieval death culture. It was also around the 13th century that the famous Latin tagline Memento Mori, began appearing in religious art. Both of these warn the listener and observer to be mindful of their death. A medieval person should not only be mindful that they will inevitably die but also that no matter what stature they held in life, the worms that will devour them and the dust they will turn into, care not for social status, gender, wealth, or any other socially constructed identifier. When observing funerary monuments, it is important to remember that they were created by and for the living, not the dead.

This chapter argues that a gender analysis of funerary monuments reveals how gender is enacted in this status and how funerary monuments both perpetuated and broke gender norms. This analysis will be done as a case study utilizing the funerary monuments located in

the private family chapel of the Russell family, Earls of Bedford, in Chenies, Buckinghamshire. This case study will be supplemented by other medieval and early modern art, and literature which will help to contextualize the monuments in light of death culture.

Funerary Rituals and Their Associated Spaces

Burial in late medieval and early modern England was nearly solely determined by one's social status in life. Societal influence and wealth did not always correlate. For example, a successful merchant could be wealthier than a knight, but the knight was held to be in a higher social status than the merchant.123 Someone occupying a lower social or economic status had different burials from those of upper status. For those former members of society, burial was inevitably less expensive, less concerned with memory, and had far fewer rings of a bell during their funeral service.

There were socially coded acts of remembrance in which the people of medieval England participated such as bell ringing at a funeral. Christopher Daniell notes that the amount of bell strokes was determined by the social status of the deceased.124 The more times the bell was rung at a funeral, the more societally influential the person was held. These funerary acts contained layers of social articulation of gender, wealth, and status. These acts were concrete rituals executed by material objects for abstract feelings of mourning and grief, while the material objects used for memory were the concrete evidence left behind. This was part of the sensory landscape of early modern England. The senses (i.e., hearing, smelling, feeling) all contributed to personal conversion narratives. Matthew Milner explains that

123 Karras, From Boys to Men.
sensory participation, such as hearing church bells or smelling incense not only facilitated an individual’s faith, “it proved it.”

Status differences were separated metaphorically in society as they are physically in burial. Members of the lower status were usually buried in a churchyard. Nicholas Orme estimates that at least tens of thousands between late Roman times and the reign of Charles I were buried in the churchyard of Exeter alone. The grounds of St Michaels Church (the church that the Russell chapel is attached to) is filled also with deceased patrons. Some graves are marked but most are not. Not only were monuments, such as the ones displayed in the Russell family chapel, expensive, but they reflected the ostentatious lives that the upper statuses participated in. This display of prosperity would seem irrelevant to the utilitarian lives that peasants in the lower status lived. Although both the church itself and the churchyard are held in by a small stone fence, the distinction of the Russells being on the inside of the church and the hundreds of people on the outside in the yard is an architectural connotation that demonstrates how social strata is often defined by space as well as by wealth and influence.

There is a durable or constant style seen in the funerary monuments of prominent late medieval and early modern families. This style seems to depict 5 main components: the body, the headrest, the footrest, clothing, and an inscription somewhere along the raised, rectangular base. In short and as a general reference for the remainder of the chapter: the body depicts the likeness of the deceased; the headrest is typically a cushion or a piece of equipment; the footrest most often is an animal of some kind; clothing varies from person to

person but generally is an intentional choice to reflect the status of the wearer; and the
inscription can include a lengthy genealogy but at least offers a birth and death dates. The
Russell family's monuments adhere to these basic practices.

The chapel that houses the monuments of the Russells is a material source itself.
Denis R. McNamara utilizes the first century Vitruvian architectural principles that define the
two components of buildings, "the building itself and the idea that its architect tried to
express." McNamara expresses that these principles can be applied to churches. On a
smaller scale, they can also be applied to private chapels such as the Russell family chapel.
As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the Chenies chapel was built in 1556,
commissioned by Anne Sapcote according to her interpretation of her husband's ambiguous
burial request. The chapel was rebuilt in 1906 adding on the North Aisle and the Chancel,
which is the small, somewhat removed, space at the head of the chapel, where John, first Earl
of Bedford and Anne, Countess of Bedford's monument resides. Although there is no public
record of the original layout commissioned by Anne Sapcote, nor of the shifts in positioning
of the monuments throughout the years, the placements as they stand today represent
statements of the past.

The placement of the funerary monuments within the chapel makes a statement about
gender and status. At the head of the chapel, at the top of a small step or two up from the
other monuments, John Russell, Earl of Bedford and Countess Anne reign as the patriarch
and matriarch of the family as stated by the structure and the idea of the architect as
evidenced by the nature of the intentional liminal space. The remainder of the monuments are
distributed throughout the chapel along a linear grid system. This grid system allows aisles

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between the monuments. These aisles, according to the components defined by Vitruvius and reiterated by McNamara, emphasize that these monuments were meant to be observed.

Family crests, which are typically seen on or near funerary monuments, communicate the importance of family lines in late medieval and early modern British society. Peter Coss and Maurice Keen note that family crests were popularized in the twelfth century as a desire by the upper statuses to display social status by means of heraldry and pageantry. The ornate and picturesque detailing that went into these crests was because, "...in an earlier era when literacy was much more thinly spread in the lay world, visible rituals and ceremonies had often to carry the force and convey messages that later would be expressed in writing." ¹²⁸

The Russells took great pride in their family line as seen by the displays of their heraldry throughout the chapel. The Russell family crest displays heraldic achievement and is depicted surrounded by a lion on the left, an antelope on the right, and a passant goat on top, resting on top of branches stemming from a coronet.¹²⁹ The crest itself portrays three escallops over a rampant lion.¹³⁰ A banner beneath the coat of arms that reads in Italian, "Che Sera Sera," or in English, "What will be, will be."¹³¹ This crest would have communicated the Russell's strength, military prowess, and their peacemaking status within the society to the illiterate onlookers of the time.

The displays of heraldry and embellishments of late medieval architecture and art are exaggerated for the purpose of being readable by the illiterate laity. For every pictured symbol, there is a readable meaning. Charles Elvin's A Dictionary of Heraldry gives a quick guide to these symbols. Applying Elvin's principles a quick interpretation of symbols on the Russell's family crest is as follows: the lion was a symbol of strength and honor, perhaps the

¹²⁸ Peter Coss and Maurice Keen, Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2008).
¹³⁰ Bamford, et al, Record of Heraldry.
¹³¹ Bamford, et. al, Record of Heraldry, 2.
most noble of all.\textsuperscript{132} The antelope was an elegant symbol of peace and harmony but also an often symbol of purity.\textsuperscript{133} The goat often appeared in symbolism of armory.\textsuperscript{134} Finally, escallops were associated with pilgrims and pilgrimage.\textsuperscript{135} More will be said about these heraldic symbols later in regards to their appearance in the funerary monuments.

John Russell, First Earl of Bedford (1485-1555) & Anne Sapcote, Countess of Bedford (c. 1489-1559)\textsuperscript{136}

The physical appearance of John Russell, 1st Earl of Bedford, and Countess Anne, captured in their monuments by clothing, body, and embellishments, establishes the presence of readable gender in material culture. As mentioned in the introductory chapter, the couple shares a monument located in the chancel of the chapel. Their likeness, even the crow's feet around their eyes and the slight rounding of their bellies, are carved in stone. Specifically captured are the details of the first Earl of Bedford's face.

His eye droops to represent an injury he received from an arrow during battle when he was nearly 40.\textsuperscript{137} Armed with a sword, he is dressed in full

\begin{flushright}
\textbf{Figure 5}: Photograph of monument John Russell, first Earl of Bedford and Anne, first Countess of Bedford. Image courtesy: The National Archives UK.
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\textsuperscript{134} Fox-Davies, \textit{A Complete Guide to Heraldry}, 213-214.
\textsuperscript{135} Bamford, et. al, \textit{Record of Heraldry}, 56.
\textsuperscript{136} The Russell women will be introduced in the section title with their maiden name according to the 1980 Heraldry Report conducted by the Middlesex Heraldry Society. After the initial introduction in the section title, they will thereafter be referred to by their married name, "Russell". Bamford, et. al, \textit{Record of Heraldry}.
\textsuperscript{137} Bamford, et. al, \textit{Record of Heraldry}, 41.
armor with the exception of his exposed head, which bears a coronet. His crowned head rests on a helmet that displays the symbol of a goat. At his feet, a docile, but intimidating lion.\footnote{Bamford, et. al, \textit{Record of Heraldry}, 41.} The Earl's inscription identifies his birth year as 1485 and his death year as 1555. This inscription also memorializes his feats in battle and his work in the courts.

Proven by his placement in the chapel, the material codification of his manhood, and the coronet on his head, John, first Earl of Bedford is the patriarch of the Russell family. The family patriarch, the male head of household, is defined by Susan Amussen as someone who governed over women and children who submitted to their authority obediently. She argues that this was not only in a family structure of father, mother, and children, but that, “Single adults continued to live in a patriarchal household governed by their father or master.”\footnote{Susan Dwyer. Amussen and David Underdown, \textit{Gender, Culture and Politics in England, 1560-1640: Turning the World Upside Down} (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2018), 27-30.} His monument is an example of a non-religious patriarch. By contrast, \textit{The Tomb of Ernst, Duke of Saxony and Archbishop of Magdeburg}, is an example of a religious patriarch. The main differences between the Earl's and the Archbishop’s monuments can mostly be related to status. Although Russell was among the upper status, he did not reach the level of social hierarchy that Ernst had as a church official. The embellishments of Ernst's tomb including cherubs, saints, crosses, and religious inscriptions are indicative of a life dedicated to the service of God and overseeing the souls he was charged with. On the other hand, Russell's
own embellishments of fierce heraldic lions, full suited armor, the coronet upon his head, and
inscriptions of his achievements, depict a reigning familial patriarch whose work was secular,
political, and when necessary, warlike.

The monument commissioned for Countess Anne by her son, Francis, 2nd Earl of Bedford, and the chapel she commissioned herself convey very different messages. She is depicted in Peeress robes, with a clearly defined waistline. Around her waist is a tied girdle. Her hair is uncovered and flowing along her shoulders, notably the only Russell woman not wearing a ruff or some other type of hair cover. She also wears a coronet. Her head rests on a floral cushion with intricate detailing. Her feet rest on an antelope couchant. A draped chain hangs from the neck of the antelope which is encircled in a coronet. Her inscription does not note a death date, nor lifetime achievements. Her inscription simply states who her father and husband were. Although it was she who commissioned the building of this chapel that hosts her monument, her identity in her monument's inscription is reduced to the men who held supremacy over her.

Anne's flowing, uncovered hair might have been intended as an allegory to the Virgin Mary, and therefore reflective of her son's desire to portray his mother as the height of femininity. Roberta Milliken notes that this hair style, specifically in the time when it was expected to keep the hair neatly tucked away, when displayed in art, is symbolic of virginity, purity, innocence, chastity, and all other characteristics associated with the Virgin Mary.

After all, Mary was considered to be the "second Eve" and thus the main archetype for good women behavior. It was these kinds of symbols captured in Anne's appearance that demonstrate the clear symbols of gender in funerary monuments.

140 Bamford, et. al, Record of Heraldry, 41.
On her funeral monument, Anne, Countess of Bedford like many of the women depicted in death, was reduced to many elements of femininity rather than character or lived experiences. Funerary monuments were meant to communicate such things as gender norms in a way that made the observer epitomize the English elite such as Lady Anne as good and pious English gentlewomen. The same is true of men being epitomized as strong and courageous English gentlemen. According to the Heraldry report, Anne, Countess of Bedford commissioned the chapel and her husband’s monument but she died before they were complete, leaving it up to the responsibility of her son Francis, second Earl of Bedford, to erect them. As noted by Barbara Harris, a widow’s duty was to memorialize her husband and his name. So, as Lady Anne commissioned the chapel and their monument, she was ensuring the legacy of her and the first Earl of Bedford.

In 1556, at the request of her husband in his will to have a "Christian burial," Anne commissioned the building of the Bedford chapel within the St Michael's Church in Chenies, Buckinghamshire. The dedication inscribed into the stone near the entrance to the chapel reads:

Anno Dni 1556
Thys Chappel ys built by Anne
Countysse of Bedforde wyfe to
John Erle of Bedford accordyg to
ye last wyll of the sayd erle.

This chapel not only housed the joint funerary monument of her deceased husband and herself, it also would serve as a site of memorial to the Russell family, serving as a resting place for several of their descendants.

143 Bamford, et. al, Record of Heraldry, 41-42.

144 Harris, English Aristocratic Women and the Fabric of Piety, 1450-1550, 118.

145 Bamford, et. al, Record of Heraldry, 6.
The commissioning of this chapel was not the only power of estate that Countess Anne utilized. Even while her husband, the first Earl of Bedford, was alive, there are records of many letters that she wrote on behalf of the estate, often handling day to day dealings with the household and family name. For example, in one of these letters, she writes to Lord Cromwell asking for some powder from “the king’s grace” for her sick husband. She signs the letter, “By your poor beadswoman, Anne Russell.”

Although they are depicted at one another's side, there is clearly a power hierarchy displayed between the first Earl and Countess of Bedford. In accordance with gendered expectations of clothing, he is depicted in full armor, representing masculine attributes of politics and war. She is portrayed in robes and a girdle, the expected dress of a noblewoman. This display of clothing not only depicts the separate spheres in which the deceased could be assigned in clothing choice but also shows a distinct line: although he could dress in courtly attire, she could not dress in military attire. At the Earl's feet is a lion; at the Countess's, a gorged antelope. These animals echo those on the Russell heraldry and are paired with the Earl and Countess, respectively, to highlight certain gendered qualities.

Figure 7: Russell family chapel, St. Michaels, Chenies. Image Courtesy: The National Archives, UK.

Bravery, loyalty, courage, ferocity, leadership, and pride are all characteristics associated with lions and desired by those performing masculinity or "manhood" in late medieval and early modern England. Majesty, humility, innocence, quiet dignity, and subservience (such as a 'herd mentality'), are all characteristics associated with antelopes and imposed upon those participating in femininity or "womanhood" in late medieval and early modern England. The lion and the antelope both lay at the feet of the stone persons in a docile yet active posture. Both animals have muscular forms that can be seen carved into their stone figures. The lion at the foot of John, Earl of Bedford is the most esteemed animal in heraldry and as such is a symbol of power and governing. The antelope at the countess’s feet is gorged or has a coronet around its neck. A chain hangs from this coronet and drapes across the antelope's back, a device that represents high esteem.

Francis Russell, Second Earl of Bedford (c. 1527-1585) & Margaret St. John, Countess of Bedford (1533-1562)

The monument of Francis Russell the second Earl of Bedford and Margaret St. John, second Countess of Bedford, is very similar to that of the first earl and countess of Bedford in how the couple is dressed and posed as well as the heraldic animals guarding their feet. There are similarities between all of the monuments in this family chapel which is relevant because it displays the pattern among all funerary monuments of the time. The similarities and patterns prove the common cultural values that were desirablel memorialized. The second Earl commissioned the monuments of many of his family members. Francis is depicted in full armor, "with collar and mantle of the garter and coronet." Margaret, like all of the women in this chapel, is depicted in peeress robes with a girdle hanging about her waist.

149 Bamford, et. al, Record of Heraldry, 43.
Both heads of the pair are resting on cushions. At his feet, a heraldic goat; at hers, a gorged falcon as presented in the St. John family crest. The goat as mentioned above, is representative of military success. Falcons are birds of prey with sharp talons and an intimidating wingspan. They are hunters by nature. By their fierceness and prowess, they are masculine. However, falconry, a courtly sport of training falcons, as discussed by Diane Wolfthal, has been around well before the medieval and early modern era. Falcons can carry connotations in visual culture of obedience and a power structure. Wolfthal continues that falcons can also connote aristocratic love and eroticism because the level of patience and sensitivity a handler would have with his falcon, like an intimate relationship was, “much like an ideal lover.”

Like the heraldic animals at the feet of many other Russell women in this chapel, the falcon at Lady Margaret's feet is representative of her natal family's crest (the St. Johns). The animal at her feet is representative of her heraldry rather than her husband's heraldry being appropriated to her, which is a common theme of the women's monuments in the Bedford chapel due to the high status of the families that married into the Russell name. High-status women of this time remembered in death by the men that they were associated with, whether it be their husband, or their father.

Francis Russell, the 2nd Earl of Bedford was married twice. First, to Margaret St. John whom he is seen next to in their shared funerary monument. Second, to Bridget Hussey (c. 1525-1600), whose final resting place is now across the aisle from the tomb her husband shared with Anne St. John. The monument of the second Earl and Countess of Bedford was erected in 1619. It is unclear who commissioned the monument but according to the heraldry report, it was erected by their grandson, Francis Russell, fourth Earl of Bedford, and was

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created by William Cure, the Master Mason to Queen Elizabeth I and King James I.\textsuperscript{151} Being able to use the monarch’s master mason was a signal of the Russell’s high status.

Having the master mason to the monarch as the mason for this monument would be a status marker for the Russells. The small placard at the base of the monument serves as a microcosm of the valued early modern titles. Not only was it viewed by medieval mourners as impressive to have the master mason of Queen Elizabeth I on the Russells funerary monument, no doubt a display of expensive grandeur, but it was also telling of a personal relationship with the Queen herself.

Cure’s position at court indicates that he was probably among the most accomplished stonemasons working in England at the time. As someone well-versed in the symbolism of his craft he would have known how to best portray an individual’s status and with that, their adherence to proper societal roles, including gender roles. Thus, he captured the elements of womanhood and manhood. The highlighted features of the Russell monument then become the "why". The inscription regarding the second Earl of Bedford's achievements during the Troubles with Scotland, his personal relationship with the Queen, the name of his father, his titles, and even his family are all details used to communicate certain aspects of manliness. The monument of the second Earl and Countess captured gender codes such as the wording of the epitaphs, the burial clothing the family was depicted in, the symbols surrounding the bodies, and even the ways the bodies were depicted according to how families commissioned the monuments as it was the living that determined memory, not the dead.

\textsuperscript{151} Bamford, et. al, Record of Heraldry, 43.
Francis Russell, fourth Earl of Bedford (1587-1641) & Catherine Bruges, Countess of Bedford (1580-1656)

Families also used monuments to communicate familial affection and solidarity. The family funerary monument of Francis Russell, fourth Earl of Bedford and Catherine, Countess of Bedford, however, tells a different story of familial love. This monument is the most elaborate in the chapel. The fourth Countess and Earl lay side by side. She in peeress robes, he in armor. At their feet, a Bruges panther, and a Russell Goat. Behind and above the couple is a large, double arched structure with a broken pediment. Many of the other funerary monuments display acknowledgement to the children of the deceased but this monument, aside from the likeness of Francis and Catherine, contain the likeness of their 2 children as well. On each side of this structure is both of their prematurely deceased children. On the left is their daughter Frances who died as a young girl in 1612 and is depicted lying on her side, holding a small bird. On the right side is their daughter Elizabeth who died in 1616, as an

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infant and is shown lying on a small, cradle shaped burial bed in swaddling clothes. The monument is especially colorful, displaying rich shades of reds and golds.

The brilliance and condition of this monument is unique within the Bedford chapel. These bright and brilliant colors draw in the onlookers and help to demonstrate that the message of familial love is one that should be stated boldly. The children’s names are inscribed under their likenesses. The fourth Earl’s inscription depicts his achievements and accomplishments and the Countess’ inscription is obscured by the wall it abuts. Each likeness on this monument was given their individual inscription and although the children’s is but a simple name and date, it shows the level of detail that went into equally memorializing each person as a beloved family member. The elaborateness of the children’s depiction alone indicates the dedication to the memory of the deceased children.

Gender within the household of upper status families is demonstrated by this monument but not as directly seen as the display of family ties. The tenderness of portraying the likeness of their children within this monument are the main focal points and the main message. Small details are present in the effigies of the children like the bird in the hand of young Frances. This bird, unlike most of the animals within the monuments of this chapel, is not heraldic. It is rare that a bird would appear for an aesthetic effect, so this bird is representative of something. Even birds themselves of most kinds are representative of souls, spirits, the infant Christ, or the Virgin Mary. This bird is most likely either a dove, which comes with religious connotations regarding the holy ghost or an ascension to heaven, or it is the likeness of a pet bird. The detailing of the young baby, Elizabeth, in swaddling clothes is either a religious allegory relating to the infant Christ or it is a simple representation of putting one's baby to sleep but in this case, a warm, eternal rest. The baby's swaddling

153 Bamford, et. al, Record of Heraldry, 45.
155 Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art, 109.
clothes, and coverlet are feminized with embellished details of softness, intricate detailings, and docility. Both monuments of the respective daughters display clear elements of familial love and gendered children.  

Bridget Hussey, Countess of Bedford (c. 1525-1600)

The funerary monument of Bridget, second Countess of Bedford is a clear example of women breaking gender norms within material culture. Her funerary monument was erected sometime after her death in 1600. She is depicted in peeress robes fastened at the waist with a girdle. Her hair is fastened in a tight cap and a ruff, her hands raised in prayer. Likenesses of her two grandsons are captured kneeling on both sides of her. They could be praying to God on her behalf. However, they are two men in a submissive position (both in body language as well as their lower position on the monument) on a woman's monument of the same status. Under her head is a pillow, at her feet a white hart, indicative of her natal family’s heraldry. Or, on a more ambiguous note, a stag could be associated with the characteristics that they connote such as, "fleetsness and sharp senses, which make it difficult to catch." The white hart lies regardant, meaning that it is looking back over its shoulder, and is chained up beneath a tree, or Hawthorne bush. All of these expressions of grandeur, heraldry, and virility seem to break from the gender norms that are displayed on many other funerary monuments of elite women with the exception of the bush at the foot of Countess Bridget which could connote to viewers the likeness of Eve and the Tree of Jesse. This is another symbol that compares Lady Bridget allegorically with Eve, but it is also representative of her

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156 Pets often appear in funerary monuments in late medieval and early modern England. However, pets are nearly always shown in women's monuments over men. Most of the animals appearing in monuments are representative of the family's heraldry such as the horned white goat at the foot of Francis or the panther at the foot of Catherine.
157 Hall, Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art, 289.
158 Bamford, et. al, Record of Heraldry, 56-57.
ties to family. This monument contains many obvious signs of family connections such as the two sons kneeling below but the connotation of the tree of Jesse is more subtle. Alexandra Walsham calls the Tree of Jesse a “classic symbol of divine genealogy” in early modern visual culture.\textsuperscript{159}

The strength of elite women of this time was often seen in their comparisons to their religious paradigms such as Eve and Mary. Despite this funerary monument alluding to Eve who was known for her connection to Adam, Lady Bridget was a woman that stood on her own in life and was depicted resting on her own in death. Of course, in a Christian chapel, when observing a woman's funerary monument from the early 1600s, it is easy to associate her with Eve, especially upon learning that she is the second wife of Francis Russell 2nd Earl of Bedford. Eve herself was the second wife of Adam, the first being Lilith. This could be analyzed as a post-reformation symbol for second wives. Merry Wiesner-Hanks argues that Eve and the creation in general were so often “portrayed visually” that “medieval and early modern Europeans were…familiar with.”\textsuperscript{160} Wiesner-Hanks also notes that although the comparisons of women of this time to women of the bible was common, they came with both positive and negative connotations. Afterall, Eve gets the biblical blame of the first sin.\textsuperscript{161} Reducing Lady Bridget’s identity to the allegorical wife of Adam would be perpetuating what most of these monuments do on their own: identifying women, based on the men they were associated with. It is unclear if she would have considered herself to be like Eve. Most likely, this alluded similarity was much like the likeness of Mary in Countess Anne. Women like Lady Bridget were depicted in their monuments as "meek," "humble," "pious," "chaste," or "innocent," as an effect of popular culture and gender norms of the time.

\textsuperscript{160} Merry Wiesner-Hanks, \textit{Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe} (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2019), 24.
\textsuperscript{161} Wiesner-Hanks, \textit{Women and Gender in Early Modern Europe}, 24-25.
Lady Frances Chandos, Baroness of Sudely (1552-1623)

The funerary monument of Lady Frances, which is quite different from all of the other Russell monuments of this time, demonstrates the state of sacred contemplation that women of this status are depicted in. Lady Frances, rather than lying on her back with her hands in prayer as all the other monuments are, she is depicted reclined on her side, holding an open book. Although other women in this chapel were depicted as dead, Lady Frances is depicted as alive, innocent, and virtuous as if this was a portrait made in the peak of her life. Her funerary monument depicts many elements representative to the Virgin Mary.

In the absence of heraldic animals, detailed inscriptions, and symbolic details, it is particularly notable that gender was still captured in Lady Frances' monument. Although this could be evident of a shift in styles of monuments, it is interesting to consider the stark contrast between the simplicity of this monument of someone who lived from 1552-1623 to the elaborate and embellished nature of the monument of Countess Bridget who died only 20 years earlier. It is also noted in the heraldry report this monument is, “queari[ed] whether it is complete.”\footnote{Bamford, et. al, \textit{Record of Heraldry}, 47.} It is most likely the result of unfinished, rushed, or a less expensive
commissioning that this monument lacks many of the embellishments from others of this time.

Books in art and sculpture are often considered to be a symbol of learning or of intellect and it is not unusual for women of elite status to be depicted in deep thought or reading a book.\textsuperscript{163} Reading, especially religious texts, would have advertised both her high status and honor. Barbara Whitehead explains that education for elite women looked different than that of elite men. For example, women were taught household skills like needlework or dancing. However, as Whitehead concludes, being an “ideal” elite woman came with the social expectation of being educated.\textsuperscript{164} Susan Groag Bell argues that because of their special relationship to books and their lack of invitation to participate in academic spheres, women valued and even needed books more than men, because of this, the act of women silently reading is not a rare depiction in visual culture.\textsuperscript{165} D.H. Green argues that this act of silent reading carries connotations of meditation and deep thought. Women reading, such as Lady Frances in her monument, is commonly captured in visual and material culture. D.H. Green in agreement with Groag Bell writes, that because women were barred from academia, they instead turned to silent reading as a means of, “meditational inwardness.”\textsuperscript{166}

How the act of reading is interpreted within visual culture depends on what the book is that is being read. Within the examples consulted for this study, elite women were increasingly portrayed with books, which signaled both their status and their adherence to gender norms. The monument was intended to remind viewers that the deceased woman was of a status high

\textsuperscript{163} This theme is seen in art as ancient as the thinking queen in the Lewis Chessmen set, 12th-13th century CE. The Virgin Mary is also depicted often in art with books or in pondering poses (i.e., hard pressed to the side of the face).


\textsuperscript{166} D. H. Green, \textit{Women Readers in the Middle Ages} (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 15.
enough to receive an education, that she was wealthy enough to own books, and that she embraced quiet and worthwhile pursuits such as reading. However, books are also used to symbolize many things in art. Books occasionally depict authors, members of religious clergy, and other formally trained intellectuals.\textsuperscript{167} A book could be a book of hours, alluding to one's spiritual devotion. These virtues aside, reading could just have been a beloved aspect of life for Lady Frances and thus she was memorialized doing what she loved. Because there are many meanings of books in material culture, it is helpful to reach outside of the case study to another example to contextualize this symbol for proper analysis.

The tomb of Valentine Balbiani (1583), currently at the Louvre Museum in Paris, provides the contextualization needed to claim that the book in Lady Frances' monument symbolizes intellect and religious devotion.\textsuperscript{168} Valentine is portrayed in a nearly identical pose as Lady Frances. She rests, propped on a cushion with her open hand on a small book. Both the size of the book, which is the general size of a book of hours, and the poses of the respective women depicted in both monuments convey religious overtones because they bear likenesses to the Virgin Mary in other art from late medieval and early modern Europe. In the painting \textit{The Annunciation} (1465-1490), Mary is depicted in this painting lounging with her side profile to the viewer. She holds a small book of hours. This is a prime example of the Virgin Mary that women's monuments were often emblematic of.\textsuperscript{169}

As related earlier in this chapter with the discussion around Countess Anne's hair, the Virgin Mary was the archetype that every woman was expected to follow in late medieval and early modern British society. That expectation is portrayed even in death as seen in the monument of Lady Frances. Although just because Lady Frances and Valentine Balbiani are depicted with books that connote religious expectations does not mean that all women seen

\textsuperscript{167} Hall, \textit{Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art}, 50.
\textsuperscript{168} Germain Pilon, \textit{The Tomb of Valentine Balbiani}, ca 1574, stone, The Louvre, Paris, France.
\textsuperscript{169} Groag Bell, “Medieval Women Book Owners: Arbiters of Lay Piety and Ambassadors of Culture,” 762.
with a book are being portrayed in the likeness of Mary. Eleanor of Aquitaine, her funerary monument, presents a closed book with a smaller likeness of herself carved on the cover. This is representative of her life's patronage to poets. However, given the modeled body language, the size of the books, and the simplicity of monuments themselves, it is clear that Lady Frances was being likened to the Virgin Mary and all of the characteristics of piousness, chastity, meekness, and others therein.

Conclusion

Gender is detectable in late medieval and early modern funerary monuments. In such Inscriptions revere men for acts of courage and women for their marriages. Clothing for women consisted of peeress robes and armor for men. Various symbols of heraldry being made more feminine for the women and masculine for the men as a display of the performance of their womanhood or manhood. The Russell family chapel serves as the perfect case study because the monuments demonstrate this performative gender in material culture which can be easily applied to other monuments outside of the family as well. Gender was such a prevailing social construct in the late medieval and early modern society of England that it was literally set in stone.

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Chapter 4: Conclusion

Gender can be analyzed as an agent and as such interacts with other hegemonies such as religion and status. While gender was not always at the front of the collective society's consciousness, it was at least present enough for society to establish certain "norms" for the respective genders. Men were expected to be strong, virile, courageous, and fierce. Women were expected to be pious, humble, chaste, and gentle. These gender norms were the set of unwritten (but sometimes written) "rules" that simultaneously prevented women from fighting in battle and shamed men for refusing. Women were societally pushed into domestic roles of wifehood and motherhood and men into public roles of courts and clergy. Of course, there were exceptions to these rules. The existence of gender norms is also illuminated by those that did not conform.

The combination of gender and status determined one's lifestyle as well as how one's gender was performed. The gender norms of those of the higher status were stricter, scrutinized, and expected. Women of the upper status performed their womanhood by becoming wives and mothers, in their dress and their actions to memorialize their family lines, such actions as erecting monuments as widows. The performance of manhood was generally the ability to dominate women socially and physically interacting in spheres unwelcoming to women such as battle, university, and roles of upper clergy, and having inferiors at their command.

Knowing this context of late medieval and early modern gender helps to detect it more easily. The codification of gender in funerary monuments shows how gender, even if unconsciously, was something that people of the late medieval and early modern time interacted with and valued societally. This can be seen in the creation of "womanly" or "manly" symbols such as portraying women as mothers and virgins and men as knights and patriarchs. The interaction with gender can also be seen in the feminization and
masculinization of existing symbols such as choosing a more feminine heraldic animal to be placed at the feet of women and the more masculine heraldic animal to be placed at the feet of men. Material culture, but more specifically, funerary monuments create a window to the past to see the value that social constructs, like gender, hold.

Through the analysis of the monuments in the Russell family chapel in Chenies, London, supplemented by other funerary monuments, artwork, poetry, and the writings of popular authors such as Geoffrey Chaucer, it is concluded that gender, although not always transparently at the front of consciousness, was interacted with, performed, and memorialized in life and death for people of late medieval and early modern England. The presence of gender in late medieval and early modern funerary monuments illuminates how expected conformity of gender norms were in this time — so present that they were literally set in stone.
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