CHAPTER 10
FUNERALS AND BURIAL

Funerals probably provided the best opportunity for many people to have prayers said for their soul. They also had other functions, including the symbolic transfer of rights, obligations and social position within the family, and the expression of solidarity in mourning by the deceased's social group.[1] Medieval people regarded the funeral as covering an extended succession of events, including pre- and post-interment soul masses, but for the purposes of this chapter the actual service itself and burial will be the primary foci.

In the medieval period, funerals can be broadly divided into two main types, the common funeral and the heraldic funeral. There was considerable overlap between the two, and there were also significant variations in the elaboration and thus expense in both categories. A less significant third category was the guild funeral.

In the later medieval period, funeral and burial would not take place until at least three days after death, not least because of anxiety regarding occasions when the apparently deceased person recovered consciousness.[2] If elaborate arrangements needed to be made by the executors, such as the provision of special vestments for the clergy and black garments for the poor, the funeral would probably not have taken place until some weeks after death. Such arrangements applied mainly to heraldic funerals, but also to the common funerals of rich merchants and other rich members of the laity of sub-noble status.

Many nobles lived mobile lives but chose to be interred in a specific place, such as family mausoleum. They were not always buried where they died. Transport of a corpse was a status marker, and a corpse had to be treated to enable this to happen. How this was done depended on the place of death, the distance from the chosen burial place, the climate and the prospective time before burial. Various mortuary practices were adopted.[3] Bodies that were transported in the flesh, rather than buried and subsequently exhumed for transportation, were usually embalmed and eviscerated. The body would have been soaked in vinegar or wine or treated with aromatics, and usually wrapped in animal hide for transport.[4] Examples are also known of bodies being wrapped in a lead sheath. In 2012 a remarkable discovery was made during conservation work on the stunning tomb

1 R. Houlbrooke, *Death, Religion and the Family in England 1480–1750* (Oxford, 1998), p. 255.

2 R. C. Finucane, 'Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion: Social Ideals and Death Rituals in the later Middle Ages', in J. Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality. Studies in the Social History of Death* (London, 1981), pp. 40–60, at pp. 41–42.

3 E. Weiss-Krejeci, 'Excarnation, evisceration, and exhumation in medieval and post-medieval Europe', in G. F. M. Rakita, J. E. Builstra, L. A. Beck and S. R. Williams (eds), *Interacting with the Dead. Perspectives on Mortuary Archaeology for the New Millennium* (Florida, 2008), pp. 155–172.

4 Finucane, 'Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion', p. 46.

monument of Blanche de Grandison (d. 1347), at Much Marcle (Herefordshire). Within the tomb chest was found Blanche's body, shrouded in lead sheet.[5] It is the only known medieval example from a parish church, but there are parallels. In 1772, the reputed body of Thomas Beaufort, duke of Exeter (d. 1424), was exhumed at Bury St Edmunds abbey.[6] He had been buried in a lead wrapper and two or three layers of shroud. The best-documented comparator for Blanche's lead-wrapped figure is 'St Bees Man', found in 1981 at St Bees Priory (Cumberland) on the site of the former south chancel aisle, added after 1290 and abandoned before the dissolution. He has been identified as Anthony de Lucy, last lord of Egremont and Cockermouth, recorded to have died abroad in 1368.[7] If his body was brought home from the continent it would explain why it was embalmed and protected in this way.

For medieval funerals we have to rely almost totally on documentary evidence. Funeral processions were quite commonly depicted in the subsidiary imagery of French, German and Iberian monuments, but they did not form part of the mainstream iconography of English monuments. The tomb at Cartmel (Lancashire) commemorating Sir John Harrington (d. *c.*1347) has unusual iconography which incorporates processions of canons holding books, as well as groups of attendant canons.[8] An incised alabaster slab of *c.*1480 to John Lawe in the former collegiate church of All Saints', Derby, shows a funeral procession in the compartments of the sideshafts of the canopy (Pl. 89). His figure is flanked by depictions of members of the college in cappa and biretta, one of whom is holding a covered ciborium.

Of the various funerals shown in manuscripts, the most notable is that in the obituary roll of Abbot Islip (d. 1532), with the catafalque before the high altar of Westminster Abbey (Pl. 94). This is especially valuable as it provides a clear impression of the array of lights with their elaborate supporting structures, forming an equivalent of the French *chapelle ardente*, the chapel or room in which the corpse of a sovereign or other exalted personage lay in state pending the funeral service. It also shows clearly the railed enclosure surrounding the hooded mourners and the bedes-men with their torches. The pall and wall hangings would have been black with the painted and gilded arms of the deceased. Funerals in parish churches would not have been as grand, but those of the better-off sections of society, especially those who had heraldic funerals, would have incorporated similar elements.

5 S. Badham, ' "What lies beneath". A discovery at Much Marcle (Herefordshire)', *CMS Newsletter*, 29.2 (Spring, 2014), pp. 16–19.

6 E. King, 'Remarks on the Abbey Church of Bury St Edmund's in Suffolk', *Archaeologia*, 3 (1775), pp. 311–15.

7 R. Wilkinson, *The Fireside Book of Death* (London,1990), pp.134–35, illus. p. 137; C. Knüsel, C. M. Batt, G. Cook, J. Montgomery, G. Müldner, A. R. Ogden, C. Palmer, B. Stern, J. Todd, A. S. Wilson, 'The Identity of the St. Bees Lady, Cumbria: An Osteobiographical Approach', *Medieval Archaeology*, 54, (2010), 271–311. See also http://www.stbees.org.uk/history/stbeesman/stbees_man1_todd.html.

8 M. Marcus, '"An Attempt to Discriminate the Styles" – the Sculptors of the Harrington Tomb, Cartmel', *Church Monuments* 11 (1996), pp. 5–24.

Miniatures accompanying the Office of the Dead in many books of hours show funeral processions or services. One such, the hours of Catherine of Cleves, is an ornately illuminated manuscript, produced *c.*1440 by the anonymous Dutch artist known as the Master of Catherine of Cleves.[9] One miniature shows the Office of the Dead being conducted, while another illustrates a wooden coffin being lowered into the grave while a priest sprinkles holy water onto it. Some of the mourners may be poor people for whom the deceased had made provision for the purchase of mourning clothes.

Although mocking in intent, illustrations of funeral processions conducted by animals found in the margins of some manuscripts are informative regarding the reality of funerals in the parish. A typical example with hares officiating at the funeral of a dog is to be found in the Gorleston Psalter of the early fourteenth century.[10] Dogs carry the hearse covered in a pall, while a hare wearing vestments asperges the coffin with holy water and an acolyte hare censes it. A hare carrying the cross is flanked by others with tapers. The procession is led by a bell-ringer, and another hare brings up the rear.

The details of funeral requirements set out in wills vary. Most wills barely mention this aspect, apart from demonstrating a desire that the funeral should be conducted properly. Such was the case with William Mayhewe (d. 1499) of Whepstead (Suffolk), who asked that his wife should bury him 'honestly'.[11] In medieval wills this word can be interpreted as meaning 'appropriately' or 'with dignity', and according to the testator's status. Hence, John Barown (d. 1452), a mercer of Bildeston (Suffolk), referred to the duty of his executors to pay 'the honest expenses of my funeral, according to my present status'.[12] John Fyssher (d. 1485), mercer of London, noted, unhelpfully for the historian, that 'at all maner exequies to be don for my soule after my decesse as the maner is to be don for dede people aswele at my burying as at my moneth'.[13] Where details are specified of what was desired to happen at funerals, the most common provisions concern wax candles to burn round the body in the church. Candles served the dual purpose of warding off demons and lighting the soul on its way to the afterlife. However, a minority of testators were sufficiently concerned about the nature of their obsequies to set down their wishes in greater detail, examples of which will illuminate the account below.

The Common Funeral

The heraldic funeral and those organised by religious guilds took the same basic form as the common funeral, but with added elaboration, hence the latter is a sensible starting point to describe the routine elements of all funerals. The medieval custom was for the

9 Morgan Library and Museum, New York, now divided in two parts, M. 917 and M. 945, the latter sometimes called the Guennol Hours or, less commonly, the Arenberg Hours.

10 BL, Add. MS. 47682, fo. 41v, detail in top right hand corner.

11 C. Harper-Bill (ed.), *The Register of John Morton, Archbishop of Canterbury 1486–1500. Volume 3 Norwich Sede Vacante 1499* (Woodbridge, 2000), p. 104.

12 Northeast, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury 1439–1471*, 1, p. 271.

13 Boatwright, Habberjam and Hammond (eds), *The Logge Register of PCC Wills 1479 to 1486*, 2, p. 124.

body to be brought to the church on the day of burial, but the obsequies started the day before, when the first part of the Office of the Dead, the *Placebo* (Vespers of the Dead), was performed, after which a vigil was held. This did not necessarily take place at the church where the main service and burial were to be held. What was involved is exemplified by the testamentary provisions of Richard Oliver (d. 1535), vicar of All Saints', North Street, York, who stands out among York city clergy of the first half of the sixteenth century for both his piety and his learning. He asked to be buried at St Benet's in York and left detailed instructions for his pre-funeral arrangements. After his body had turned cold it was to be brought to the nave of All Saints' church 'in the myd alle oon thys syde the fount', and to stay there after a *Dirige* and a Mass to the 'Tryniters [Trinity]'. Throughout the time that his body was there, a wax candle weighing one pound was to be set on the altar before the Sacrament, and 'the lamp lyght with vii odre perchers tallow of the greatest sisse'. He directed that widows should watch over him after nine o'clock at night and that there was to be 'no revell of yong folkes'. Two or three poor scholars were to say the David Psalter, and bread and ale were to be provided until nine o'clock at night for those who came into the church. He also requested,'vii wauxes aboute me, foure to the Tryniters tobe brought and thre tobe left at my churche', that is St Benet's.[14] In many cases, however, the body was kept, not in a church, but at home; in 1434 the London widow Margarete Asshcombe asked for, 'ij tapres to stande at my hed while my body resteth in my hous of dwellyng or in eny Churche'.[15] However, the format of the service and respectful vigil would have been much the same.

On the day that the body was to be interred, before it was moved to the church of burial, the priest sprinkled it with holy water. Only the wealthy would be placed in a coffin, the bodies of the lower orders of society having been sewn into a shroud. William Barton (d. 1486), baker of Southwark (Surrey), left to the Fraternity of St Mary in St Olave's church 5*s.* in part so that he could have their cloth of gold about his body at the time of his funeral.[16] The corpse would be carried to the church of burial by men of the same social status as the deceased. Most people would be carried to church on biers made of boards, though the better-off would have a hearse. These might be newly provided: the wealthy York mercer William Vescy (d. 1407) left 20*s.* for the construction of what was probably a very elaborate hearse.[17] The corpse was accompanied by a procession singing psalms and antiphons. At the front of the procession a bell was rung, and the body was preceded by priests carrying a cross and lights. All these elements were important; in the thirteenth century the parishioners of Worth and of Deal were censured because the bell was cracked or missing.[18]

[14] C. Cross, *York Clergy Wills 1520–1600: 2 City Clergy*, Borthwick Texts and Calendars 15 (York, 1989), p. 13.
[15] Furnivall (ed.), *Fifty Earliest English Wills*, p. 96.
[16] C. Lethbridge Kingsford , *Surrey Wills*, p. 23.
[17] Barnwell, Cross and Rycraft, *Mass and Parish in Late Medieval England*, p. 62.
[18] C. Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England* (London, 1977), p. 44–45.

The funeral procession was a significant part of the proceedings, whatever the status of the deceased. Friends of the person who had died would doubtless have either joined it or watched it, especially in rural locations where funeral processions were less common than in urban areas. Thomas Robertson (d. 1531) of Algarkirk (Lincolnshire) planned a lavish funeral, deploying inducements to ensure that many people attended the funeral and presumably therefore joined in the procession.[19] The priest, deacon and sub-deacon received red damask vestments and a cope worth £10 for the day of his burial. Twelve poor men were each to receive black garments and a payment of 4*d*. to bear torches at his 'buryall day, sevynday and thirty day' and 'first yere day' masses. The poor were an important part of any funeral as it was believed, based on the Gospel teaching, that 'It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of heaven.'[20] Their prayers for the deceased were especially beneficial. The prayers of the clergy were also regarded as very beneficial, hence the clergy attending Robertson's funeral were to receive doles according to their degree: 8*d*. for parsons and vicars, 6*d*. for parish priests and chantry priests, 4*d*. for deacons and 2*d*. for clerks. Priests of the Corpus Christi Guild at Boston were treated particularly generously: those going to Algarkirk for his burial would receive 3*s*. 4*d*., and those staying at home would have 2*s*. In addition, every priest attending his burial-day, seven-day and thirty-day masses would receive a further 4*d*. The display that he planned for his funeral would have impressed itself on the minds of the people of the small village of Algarkirk and beyond: it would undoubtedly have been recalled for years after – and with it the memory of Thomas himself. These arrangements would have involved considerable work, but such effort was evidently thought worthwhile by testators, even though they had to rely on the executors to carry out their wishes. All this serves to emphasise the strong belief in the power of commemorative masses and related prayers.

On arrival at the church the body would again be sprinkled with holy water and censed. For some élite funerals the church was also decked in readiness for the funeral service, as at Pyrton (Oxfordshire) for the funeral of Thomas Stonor (d. 1474). A memorandum in the Stonor Papers records that the high altar was to have black ornaments on it, with silver candlesticks, censers and basins, while the chancel and church were to be adorned with black hangings. The rector's choir clothes were to be of black and white, while over the hearse and coffin was a black cloth hanging to the ground, over which was a white cloth with a cross of silver gilt.[21] The corpse would then have been placed in position for the remainder of the services. In the case of high-status members of the congregation, this would have been in front of the high altar (or sometimes the altar of the guild chapel). Whether those of lower social status were accorded this privilege is unclear; they may instead have had their body positioned in the nave in front of the rood screen.

19 TNA: PROB 11/24/105; Badham, 'The Robertsons Remembered', pp. 202–16.
20 Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:25, Luke 18.25 (Douai-Rheims version).
21 C. L. Kingsford, *The Stonor Letters and Papers 1290–1483*, 1, Camden Third Series, 29 (1919), p. 143.

The bier or coffin was draped with a funeral pall, and placed beneath a hearse, rectangular at the base and normally with a triangular vertical profile. This would be surrounded by candles of varying weights, either fixed to the hearse on tall holders called 'standards', or held by men, usually paupers. Held in the hands of the poor, candles were regarded not only as a prayer in themselves but also as a means of ensuring the powerful intercession of their bearers. A draped hearse surrounded by candles is shown in a funeral scene at the foot of an incised slab to Eudeline de Chanbrant (d. 1338) at Châlons-sur-Marne (France) (Pl. 95). A rare survival of a medieval hearse with prickets for candles encloses the alabaster tomb monument of Sir John Marmion (d. 1387) and his wife at West Tanfield (Yorkshire) (Pl. 96). Usually the parish would provide a pall at a small charge, but some testators specified that new ones should be specially made. This was probably the case with William Place (d. 1504), priest of Bury St Edmunds (Suffolk), who asked for 'a blak clothe steynyd w^{t} an ymage of deth' to be set upon his hearse on his burial day; both it and a black vestment were then to be given to Friar William, an anchorite in King's Lynn (Norfolk).[22]

Few medieval palls survive apart from those still owned by the London livery companies, and that donated by the Fayrey family of Dunstable to the guild of St John the Baptist. This was appropriately labelled to enable the donors to be identified long after their deaths (Pl. 75).[23] On the long side are groups of standing figures, presumably representing members of the guild, the foremost figures in each being identified by an inscription as Henry Fayrey and his wife Agnes. On the short sides are figures of their son John, a merchant of the Staple of Calais, and his wife Mary, again identified by their names on scrolls. The patron has traditionally been thought to have been Henry but John more likely to have commissioned the pall in memory of his parents, as is indicated by aspects of the design: bales with a merchant's mark and the initials 'I.F.'. Heraldry embroidered on the pall includes the arms of Fayrey and of the Mercers' company and the Staple of Calais, the last two again pointing to John as the principal donor, especially as he did not become a mercer until after his father died. The Dunstable guild register is patchy in its coverage and begins only in 1506; Henry and Alice's admissions are not recorded, although their son John was admitted in 1522.[24] The couple were commemorated after their deaths by a shroud brass, formerly in the nave of Dunstable priory church but now, like their pall, in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. Henry and Alice's executors thus adopted a number of strategies to ensure that prayers were said for their souls. The funeral pall was the most inventive. Draped over the coffin at the funerals of guild members, the pall gave a splendid reminder of the Fayreys' patronage and in a sense turned every funeral into a commemoration of this family. Alice Chester, a rich widow of

22 Tymms (ed.), *Wills and Inventories from Bury St. Edmund's*, p. 105.

23 S. Badham, 'The Fayrey family of Dunstable, their brass and their involvement with Bedfordshire religious guilds', *Monumental Brass Society Bulletin* 119 (February 2012), pp. 374–76.

24 Register of the Fraternity of St John the Baptist, Dunstable, Luton Museum Service 191/46. I am grateful to Barbara Tearle for information.

Bristol (d. 1485), similarly gave to All Saints' church a pall with the initials of herself and her husband and an inscription 'Orate pro animabus Henrici Chestre et Alicie uxoris ejus (*Pray for the souls of Henry Chester and Alice his wife*)'.[25] Another pall, with a cross, appears on a tiny unattended bier which forms part of the subsiduary imagery on the brass at Cowthorpe (Yorkshire) to Sir Brian Roucliffe (d. 1495).

Once the body was in position, the second element of the Office of Dead, the *Dirige* (Matins and Lauds), was performed, to be followed later in the day by the Requiem Mass, the climax of the funeral services. The body was censed at key points, and mourners made monetary offerings, termed 'mass pence', for the soul of the deceased. Testators sometimes directed how this was to be spent; Peter Qwyntyn (d. 1462) of Hitcham (Suffolk) wanted his to go to the friars of Sudbury, who would undoubtedly have prayed for his soul.[26] The London stockfishmonger and merchant of the Staple of Calais Thomas Betson (d. 1486) directed that the wardens and fellowship of the stockfishmongers should have keeping of his 'preestes money' and 'obite money', to pay out as he had directed.[27] Elsewhere donations were made from a wider population: the Hull widow Elizabeth Garner (d. 1513) referred to mass pence given by the mayor; this was directed towards a yearly obit, which she asked to be registered in the Mass Book 'as strongly as it can'.[28]

When this service was over the priest, divested of the cope he had worn, went to the burial location, made the sign of the cross over it and sprinkled it with holy water. The burial service could then begin. It was usual for the body to be removed from the coffin, where one was provided, before burial. The procession re-formed and moved off towards the grave, with the priest at the head of the corpse. The seven penitential psalms and other prayers would be offered along the way. Before the body was placed in the grave the priest might throw into the grave nuggets of incense or sprigs of ivy or laurel, as well as holy water.[29]

Wills frequently direct that alms should be given to the poor at the funeral, and perhaps also on the month-mind and anniversary of death. These acts of charity were 'good works' for which the deceased would gain credit. In addition, the testators evidently hoped that the recipients of this largesse would express remember the deceased in their prayers. Sir Edmund Rede (d. 1489) of Boarstall (Buckinghamshire) directed:

> To every poor person at my funeral praying for my soul 1*d.* with food and drink in abundance ... At my month's mind my executors to provide four tapers to stand about my tomb, each taper to weigh five pounds of wax, with twelve torches of good wax bought in London to cost 6*s.* 8*d.* each, and twelve gowns with black hoods newly made for twelve poor persons among

[25] Burgess (ed.), *All Saints' Bristol*, 1, p. 17.
[26] Northeast and Falvey, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury 1439–1471*, 2, pp. 23–24.
[27] Boatwright, Habberjam and Hammond (eds), *The Logge Register of PCC Wills 1479 to 1486*, 2, p. 329.
[28] Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 5, p. 40.
[29] Finucane, 'Sacred Corpse, Profane Carrion', p. 42–43.

my tenants to hold the said torches at mass in the chapel on the day of my burial and at my month's mind, to each poor man 4*d*.[30]

Black was not always the colour of mourning, white apparently usually being preferred in Yorkshire and perhaps also elsewhere. Hence Dame Margaret Pygot (d. 1485), widow of Clotherham (Yorkshire), wanted, 'vj olde men standing ther [about her herse] ilkon [each one] a torche in his hand and ilkon a white gowne'.[31] Similarly, Alice Thwates (d. 1486), who was buried beside her husband at Selby (Yorkshire), asked for, 'iiij torches tobe borne with iiij poer men unto my grave which shall have iiij white gownes and iiij white hodes by waye of distribucion and almose', while Edmund Copyndale (d. 1490), merchant of Hull (Yorkshire), wanted 'no white gownes be yeven at my said buryall'.[32] White cloth for mourning was also mentioned in the will of Reginald Mertherderwa (d. 1448), rector of Creed (Cornwall): 'I bequeath to each poor person carrying a torch around my corpse, one new gown of white cloth'.[33]

The recipients of these alms, known as bedesmen, are frequently depicted on tombs, usually in the form of diminutive figures crouched at the feet of the effigy, wearing the hooded gown, and usually holding a looped chaplet of beads, because they were expected to pray for their benefactors and for all Christian souls. Typical examples are found at the foot of the effigies of the earl of Wiltshire (d. 1498) at Lowick (Northamptonshire) (Pl. 90); and John de Strelley (d. 1501) at Strelley (Nottinghamshire) (Pl. 91) and on the tomb chest of Sir Richard Vernon (d. 1517) at Tong (Shropshire) (Pl. 92). The tomb chest of John and Alice Anne, d. *c.* 1480, at North Aston (Oxfordshire), has panelled sides on which are carved a series of fourteen bedesmen. They are shown as they would have been at the funeral: all hold torches, but they are inverted, with the wax dripping from the wick shown at the bottom end, perhaps to symbolise the extinction of life. All but one, who holds a book of hours still in its bag, hold either a straight string of beads or a looped chaplet (Pl. 93). John's brother William Anne (d. 1451) specified in his will that 40s.was to be distributed to the poor at his funeral; the iconography of John's tomb chest suggests that he had followed his brother's example.[34] In the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, English monumental inscriptions often specify the common prayers for the bedesmen, and the passers-by to say. These are usually the *Pater Noster, Ave* and *Credo*, which all knew by heart, and could say on any occasion. Those who could not read often repeated these basic prayers or 'bedes' 150 times in honour of the 150 Psalms. Repeated prayers provided a regular background rhythm to the mental prayer which was being promoted by the followers of the *Devotio Moderna*, a fourteenth-century new religious movement with Gerard Groote as a key founder, stressing methodical prayer based on meditation and

30 Weaver and Beardwood (eds.), *Oxfordshire Wills*, p. 42.
31 Falvey, Boatwight and Hammond, *English Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of York 1477–99*, p. 43.
32 *Ibid.*, pp. 44 and 86.
33 Orme (ed.), *Cornish Wills*, p. 77.
34 Weaver and Beardwood, *Oxfordshire Wills*, p. 101.

the inner life. At Stoke Lyne (Oxfordshire), on the brass to Edward Love (d. 1557 but made on the death of his wife Alice in 1535), the inscription ends, 'on whose soules and alle cristen soules of your charyte say a pater noster and an ave'.

As well as acting as a prompt for prayers by all who heard it, bell-ringing was an important element of the medieval funeral. The sound was believed to drive away devils, who might be lurking in the hope of attacking the soul of the deceased. W. Dyckyns (d. 1546) of St Mary Northampton directed that, 'the bells shall ryng for me viij days after my death – a peyll at masse, & another at even; & the ryngers to have a penny apec every day, and the church to have for the bells ij*s*. viij*d*., that mye lovyng frends heryng ye sownd of the bells may make yr supplycacyon to Allmighty God for me'.[35] Some testators paid for a bedesman or bellman to walk around the town or district encouraging people to pray for the deceased, either immediately following death or during the funeral service.

Wakes were commonly held after funerals, although again their elaboration varied. Alexander Foster (d. 1520) of York left 10*s*. to 'Mastres Evers x*s*., to drinke for my saulle with heir frendes and myne'.[36] He also stipulated that provision should be made of a total of 8 gallons of 'reddde wyne & clarett' for the parsons and vicars involved in his funeral. John Champneys (d. 1529) of Greenwich (Kent) made provision for a fine funeral feast, comprising bread, spiced bread, ale, malmsey, 'cumfets' and two cheeses.[37] Myles Roos (d. 1529) of Naseby (Northamptonshire) set out the following requirements for his exequies:

> I wyll that ther be ij blake clothes with white crosses on my grave & on my wyvis, & ther on to be sett ij sergis [torches] to bren att all masses that shall be sayd for me and my wyve, & all massis at the hy auter during one yere. Item every person that shall be att my beryall shall have ij*d*. Also I wyll that every house in the town shall have a chese, & the porest house the best chese.[38]

Those involved in the funeral – and in soul masses – were explicitly named as beneficiaries in some wills, although other testators left it to their executors to take care of such matters. One of the former group was Robert Sparowe (d. 1469) of Long Melford (Suffolk) who left 12*d*. to each chaplain, 8*d*. to each 'outside priest', 8*d*. to each of the two holy water clerks of Melford, 2*s*. to the sacrist ringing the bells, marking his grave and performing other duties, 4*d*. to each adult clerk and 2*d*. to each surpliced boy clerk singing and reading.[39]

35 Serjeantson and Isham Longden, 'The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire', p. 380.
36 Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eborencensia*, 5, p. 120.
37 Duncan (ed.), *Testamenta Cantiana*, 1, p. 32.
38 Serjeantson and Isham Longden, 'The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire', p. 369.
39 Northeast and Falvey, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, 2, p. 259.

This account has set out the main elements of the medieval funeral, although there would have been variations, notably when particular arrangements were made to reflect the status of the deceased. Heraldic funerals, dealt with below, are the main variation, but there are others. Modified arrangements were probably made for the funerals of clerics, as indicated by the example of Thomas Fletcher (d. 1557), priest of Scaldwell (Northamptonshire):

> Item I will & comaunde to laye the best vestment uppon the bere suche tyme as my bodye shall lye there, & the crosse upwards, & they to sett a chalice & a patent uppon the same vestment, & the stole & fanon to be layed crosse over the chalyce, & to be maide fast to the vestment in iiij places that the chalys fall not, & yf there be no mo chalys in the churche but one, then I will they borowe one other to do the same feate, & for doinge of the said feate I will & bequeathe to the prest & clarke or ether of them iiij*d*..[40]

It was clearly important to him that at his funeral there should be no doubt that he was a man of God and therefore worthy of the prayers of onlookers.

It is clear from this brief survey that the complexity of the elaborations attaching to the funeral rites, and the cost, varied according to status, wealth and religious inclinations. In contrast with the many wills which barely mentioned funeral arrangements, John Baret (d. 1463), the wealthy clothier who also served as an official in the household of the abbot of Bury St Edmunds (Suffolk), made very detailed provisions as to his funeral, including naming the personnel to conduct it. John Hert and William Housher were to 'do seruyce', and Master Thomas Harlowe to say the sermon.[41] A Mass of 'prikked song' was to be sung at St Mary's altar at seven o'clock or soon after, followed by the Mass of Requiem and a sermon. After the gospel the priest of St Mary's church was to say the *De profundis* 'rehersyng my name with a memorye of *requiem*'. Gifts and money were to be given to clergy attending, including for each priest at first dirige and burying 4*d*., and to every priest at his 'solempne execuies a peyre bedys [rosary] with a litel purs and ther in iiij*d*.'.

By acting to attract a large attendance of priests at his funeral, Baret aimed to receive many prayers for his soul, but it was not just prayers of priests that he encouraged. In the evening that his *Dirige* was to be performed every poor man and woman there would receive 1*d*. in return for prayers; two children would receive 1*d*.; each 'bedred man and woman that can be fowunde within Bury' to receive 2*d*. for prayers; the prisoners in the gaol were given bread, meat and drink and 1*d*., and the keeper 2*d*.; and all lepers within Bury were given 2½*d*. and a loaf of bread. At his interment, *Dirige* and Mass, five men were to be clad in black in worship of Jesus's Five Wounds, and five women in white in worship of Our Lady's Five Joys, each of them holding a torch of clean wax. Poor men

[40] Serjeantson and Isham Longden, 'The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire, p. 404.

[41] Tymms (ed.), *Wills and Inventories from Bury St. Edmund's*, pp. 16–21.

and women were also to be clad in black and white and to hold torches, and his executors, kindred, servants and friends were given black gowns for the funeral. The alderman, burgesses, gentlemen and gentlewomen were to be entertained at a dinner on the day of his funeral together with 'other folkes of wourshippe', priests, good friends and tenants. Baret also requested that during the mass at St Mary's altar, before his funeral Mass the St Mary's priest should wear 'a whith vestement whiche is redy made ageyn y^{t} tyme, bought and payd fore, with a remembraunce of my armys and my reson [motto] therto, *Grace me gouerne*.' The St Mary's priest was to wear this vestment while saying the Mass of Our Lady daily for a year at St Mary's altar; after the gospel he was to stand at the altar's end and 'reherse John Barettys name opynly, seying *De profundis* for me, for my fader and my moder, and for alle Crysten sowlys, and to haue mynde on vs and Edmond Tabour in his *memento*, and after the seid messe to sey a memorie of *requiem* for vs and for alle Crysten sowlys'. The decoration on the chasuble would be a constant reminder of Baret to the pious faithful, thus providing further encouragement for them to pray for him. In a similar canny vein, he directed that his chantry priest should pray for his soul wherever he should dine, 'and yif he gynne gracys [say Grace]and sey *De profundis*, he to reherse my name, John Baret, opynly, that they y^{t} here it may sey, *God haue mercy on his soule*'. This provides a very clear picture as to the form and nature of his funeral and related obits. Many scholars have interpreted this will as indicating extreme anxiety on Baret's part about the fate of his soul. However, it can also be seen, at least in part, as the natural reaction of a rich old man with no male heir, who was used to getting exactly what he wanted in life and who continued to expect the same in death. The detailed provision may not necessarily have stemmed from a desire to have something different, although the funeral was certainly elaborate, but from a wish to exercise control. Baret went into similar detail as to his monument in what was an unusually long will, and was keen to ensure not just that prayers would be said for his soul, but that those prayers should be precisely to his taste.

This last example of a common funeral was, however, exceptional. Most funerals would have been far less elaborate and would have cost a great deal less. John Rus (d. 1454) of Woolpit (Suffolk) set aside a maximum of 40*s*. for his funeral.[42] The same sum was allocated by Ralph Hildreth (d. 1521) of Frodingham (Lincolnshire).[43] Neither gave their occupation, but they were probably of the middling sort in society. The funeral expenses detailed in the inventory of John Underwood (d. 1515), an advocate in the Court of York and therefore higher up the social ladder, totalled £4 1*s*. 5*d*.[44] Those of Sir William Melton (d. 1528), chancellor of York, came to £19 3*s*. 4*d*. (including a brass costing £2).[45] In contrast, Sir William Taylour (d. 1483), grocer and alderman and mayor

[42] Northeast and Falvey, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury 1439–1471*, 2, p. 15.
[43] Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 5, p. 136.
[44] *Ibid.*, p. 70.
[45] *Ibid.*, p. 261.

of London, set aside for his funeral and burial 'but onely' £100.[46] Perhaps this was not uncommon for a man of his status in the great metropolis, where shows of status and wealth would not have been out of the ordinary. Such extravagance was unlikely elsewhere, apart from at a magnate's funeral.

A minority eschewed funeral pomp, even when they could afford it. The influence of the Lollard movement on funeral arrangements has been frequently debated, but it is not easy to prove clear links between Lollard belief and simple funerals. For many it was perhaps just personal preference, even if they were of relatively high status. George Talbot, 4th earl of Shrewsbury, (d. 1539), directed burial in Sheffield, but that, 'myn executours to cawse my bodye thither to be brought and entierid as shortely as they canne without tarying past ij dayes, and withowte ceremonyes but dirige over evin, iij masses and a symonde [sermon] on the morowe'.[47] Similarly, John Don (d. 1480), mercer of London, required that, 'their be no pompous ariae doen att my buriyng nor att my monethes mynde nor in lyghts, clothyng nor in no grete dyners but in especiall that the cost and charg maye be doen and given among poure peple in mete, drynke, clothyng and in money bi the gode discretion of myn executours'.[48] His lengthy will includes many detailed bequests to help the poor and needy, indicating a genuine desire to alleviate the suffering of those less fortunate than himself, but also includes provisions for the health of his own soul indicative of a conventional piety. He left funds for soul masses, notably for 'C vertuous prestes religious and secular withinne London and aboute London' all to sing fifteen masses, 'every masse of the annunciation of oure blissed lady *Rorate celi desuper* (Drop down, ye dews, from heaven) and a memorie bufore or aftir alle the masses off *Requiem eternam* (Rest eternal)'. Sir Marmaduke Constable (d. 1520) of Flamborough (Yorkshire) objected to just one aspect of the usual form of funeral; he directed that, 'ther noo daile be maide nor gyffyn for me, callede penny dolle, nor eny almesse delt nor gifen under that maner and forme'.[49] Instead he had provided for alms for inhabitants of various named towns and parishes in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire. Thomas Walwyn (d. 1415), esquire of Much Marcle (Herefordshire), asked that his funeral should be 'with oute pompe', although what is especially informative as to his learning and beliefs is that he recognised that it 'may not profyt myn soule'.[50]

This last case demonstrates just how much the minority who sought modest funerals were acting against common belief in the value of funerary prayers in the late medieval period. Yet by the mid sixteenth century the religious persuasions of some people were changing, some rejecting Catholic teaching and practices in favour of simpler religious forms. The Boston merchant William Brynkley (d. 1549) not only requested, 'my bodie

46 Boatwright, Habberjam and Hammond (eds), *The Logge Register of PCC Wills 1479 to 1486*, 1, p. 338.

47 Clay (ed.), *North Country Wills*, p. 144.

48 Boatwright, Habberjam and Hammond (eds), *The Logge Register of PCC Wills 1479 to 1486*, 1, p. 38.

49 Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 5, p. 91.

50 Furnivall (ed.), *Fifty Earliest English Wills*, p. 23.

to the yerthe in whatsoever churcheyarde wheresoever I departe this world', but also directed that it should be, 'withoute any carying into the churche as it hathe byne used or any ceremonnies but onely buried'.[51] This is an extreme reaction against the funeral pomp which was commonplace in the pre-Reformation English parish.

The Heraldic Funeral

Heraldic funerals, essentially a display of status and power, were generally organised by the College of Arms and were by definition restricted to the upper, armigerous sections of society. The heralds were part of the royal household from at least the thirteenth century. From 1420 they had a common seal and acted in some ways like a corporation. By the fourteenth century it had become the practice at funerals of royalty and the nobility for a prominent display of heraldry to be included in the pageantry of the event, and these heraldic funerals became increasingly elaborate statements of the deceased's social status and wealth.

It is only at the highest level that we have detailed contemporary accounts of medieval funerals, for example those of various members of the house of York and that of Prince Arthur in 1502.[52] Although outside the period covered by this study, the *Unton Memorial Picture* of *c.* 1596 in the National Portrait Gallery provides valuable evidence in terms of the depiction of his magnificent funeral procession before his burial and commemor-ation in Faringdon (Berkshire). Sir Henry Unton was given a baron's funeral, two ranks higher than that of a knight, because he was an Ambassador when he died. His funeral was organised by the College of Arms. Three heralds lead the funeral procession wearing tabards with the Royal Arms embroidered on them; the third herald is carrying a griffin crest. Sir Henry's coffin, draped with a black pall painted with his coat of arms, is carried by eight men and preceded by a herald bearing his helmet and crest. All the mourners are wearing totally enveloping black robes and hoods, and some carry a banner and two pennons. In essence this is little different from a medieval heraldic funeral.

Many people, both religious and lay, would have formed part of the procession at an heraldic funeral, with the intention that large number of prayers would be said for the deceased's soul, both by them and by those who witnessed its passing. For much of the period covered by this volume royalty and the nobility were mostly buried in monastic and mendicant houses, although some heraldic funerals appear to have taken place in parish churches. While the heraldic funeral is thus of limited importance in a study of commemoration in the parish it needs to be addressed and so, to get a fuller understanding, probate evidence of those who chose burial in monastic houses will be included.

[51] TNA: PROB 11/32/591.

[52] A. F. Sutton and L. Visser-Fuchs with R. A. Griffin, *The Royal Funerals of the House of York at Windsor* (London, 2005); P. S. Fritz, 'From "Public" to "Private": the Royal Funerals in England, 1500–1830, in Whaley (ed.), *Mirrors of Mortality*, pp. 61–79. For the heraldic funeral of Prince Arthur (d. 1502) and a modern re-enactment of it, see J. W. S. Litten, 'The Re-enactment of the Funeral of Prince Arthur', in S. Gunn and L. Monckton (eds), *Arthur Tudor Prince of Wales. Life, Death and Commemoration* (Woodbridge, 2009).

Unfortunately the records at the College of Arms are severely limited before the late sixteenth century, hence we cannot easily get nearly as good an understanding of the medieval heraldic funeral as is available for the Early Modern period onwards.[53] Details mostly have to be picked up here and there from individual wills, but a rare insight is provided by a copy made in the early sixteenth century of a schedule for the 'beryyng of any astate' which specifies what might be involved: the offering of the deceased's shield, coat-armour, and helm with crest; the provision of banners representing the Trinity, the Blessed Virgin Mary, St George and the deceased's patron saint; various banners and pennons displaying his arms and motto; a hearse with a double valence; shields of arms and tapers; placement of a shield with the deceased's arms on every wall and pier of the church; as many torches as the deceased had years at his death; five officers of arms to guard the hearse; garments of cloth of gold for his kinswomen; 'innocents' clothed in white and bearing tapers; and the presence of the deceased's war-horse, as a mortuary gift, trapped with his arms, ridden by a kinsman holding a spear, sword or axe and accompanied by three others, one to lead the horse into the church and the other two to stand either side as the horse approached the high altar.[54]

Two comments need to be made about the document. The first is that this list of items does not explain precisely how each element was deployed. Secondly, this document probably represents a menu rather than a meal. Not all elements listed would necessarily have been present at all heraldic funerals. Everything was carried out according to the rank of the deceased but an element of personal choice was undoubtedly involved. Just as with the variations in elaboration of the common funeral, not all those entitled to an heraldic funeral desired one, although what they ruled out provides an insight into what might have been regarded as usual for someone of their status. Richard, earl of Arundel (d. 1376), directed in his will that 'no men of arms, horses, hearse or other pomp, be used at my funeral, but only five torches, with their morters', while Guichard D'Angle, earl of Huntingdon (d. 1380), required burial 'without any hearse, arms, or banners'.[55] Hence, it is not easy to determine who had heraldic funerals, although funeral budgets and costs in probate evidence can be a guide. In the period up to 1400, some high-status male testators left large sums for their funeral, which almost certainly indicate that they were heraldic: for example, William Beauchamp, earl of Warwick (d. 1298), bequeathed £200 for his funeral, at which his two great horses were to carry his armour; William, lord Ferrers of Groby (d. 1372), left £100 'to poor people and for my funeral expences'; John Hastings, earl of Pembroke (d. 1376), left £300 or more, the sum to include a dole to the poor.[56] By the late-fifteenth century, expenditure on high-status funerals in particular had

[53] J. Litten, *The English Way of Death* (London, 1982), p. 173.

[54] BL, Cotton MS Julius B VII fos. 7v–8r; full transcript in M. H. Bloxam, *A Glimpse of the Monumental Architecture and Sculpture of Great Britain from the Earliest Period to the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1834), pp. 95–97.

[55] Nicolas, *Testamenta Vetusta*, 1, pp. 94 and 109.

[56] *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 76 and 88.

escalated considerably. In 1489 £1,038 was spent on the funeral of Henry, 4th earl of Northumberland, while that of Thomas, 2nd duke of Norfolk (d. 1524), cost £1,340.[57]

Although most people might have expected to die relatively near the church in which they wished to be buried, this was not necessarily the case with the nobility and the gentry. Sir William Fitzwilliam (d. 1542) of Midhurst (Sussex), for example, requested burial 'in the parishe churche of Mydhurst in the Countie of Sussex yf it fortune me to decease within oon hundreth myles of the said Parishe Churche'.[58] Particular arrangements would need to be made for a journey which took an extended period. An exceptionally full specification for an heraldic funeral procession that took place over several days is provided by the will of Sir Bartholomew Burghersh (d. 1369) of London. He directed:

> My body to be buried in the Chapel of Walsyngham, before the image of the Blessed Virgin, and thither to be carried with all speed, having one taper at the head and another at the feet where it rests the first night. Also I will that a dirige shall be there said, and in the morning a mass, whereat a noble shall be offered for my soul; that two torches be carried along, one on one side, and the other on the other side, which are to be lighted at passing through every town, and then given to that Church wherein it shall rest at night. Likewise I will that the chariot in which it be carried shall be covered with red cendall [a fine thin silk] with the lion of my arms thereon [the arms of Burghersh were *Gules a lion rampant tail fourchée or*] and my helmet at the head; and to every Church wherein it may rest all night the like cloth of cendall with my arms thereon, to be left. Also I will that every morning there shall be given to the poor of that place as much dole as my executors may think fit, and that on the day of my funeral no other cover be laid on my body than that of red cendall, with the lion of my arms, with my helmet, and also a taper at the head and another at the feet, and on each side a torch.[59]

A visual parallel for this funeral cortège can be found in an anachronistic depiction of that of Alexander the Great in a miniature dating from the 1470s in Jean Wauquelin's *Livre des Conquestes et Faits d'Alexandre*.[60] The body (in this case visible and identifiable as a king, as it wears a crown) is carried in a chariot, a wheeled horse-drawn cart with an heraldic cloth draped over the canopy. The procession, with noble mourners dressed in black on horseback and poor men, also garbed in black, holding lighted torches, is passing through the gate to a town. Burghersh's will and the miniature throw light on several important aspects of the procession. First, it was clearly important that the deceased was

57 C. Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual in Early Modern England* (London, 1984), p. 26.
58 Garraway Rice, *Sussex Wills*, 3, p. 220.
59 Nicolas, *Testamenta Vetusta*, 1, p. 77.
60 Paris, Petit Palais, MS Dutuit 456, fo. 305v. Illustrated in Sutton *et al.*, *Royal Funerals of the House of* York, pl. III.

to some extent identifiable by those who saw the procession. Burghersh placed importance on the heraldic pall and the heraldic cloths to be donated at churches en route to Walsingham in his memory, which proclaimed his family and his status. Only a small minority of viewers might recognise the arms of Burghersh, but all would realise that he was a man of importance. The heraldic cloths left behind would act as a reminder long after the funeral procession had moved on its way.

Secondly, he aimed to attract prayers for his soul throughout the journey. The torches lit at every town on the route would draw attention to the procession. Torches were regarded as indispensable even by those who rejected much of the pomp of an heraldic funeral, such as Thomas Montacute, earl of Salisbury (d. 1428), who specified that when his body was carried through any city or town 'in my native country' on the way to burial at Bisham Priory, 'four torches only be lighted at its entrance therein and borne therewith'.[61] The distribution of alms would encourage those who benefitted to commend Burghersh's soul. He did not specify the amount to be spent on doles but Elisabeth Montacute, countess of Salisbury (d. 1415), allowed £20 'or thereabouts' for alms, masses and other charges during the journey of her body to Bisham Priory.[62]

Thirdly, it is clear that the funeral would take place rather longer than was normal after death. Such a delay may not have been unusual in the case of the nobility, particularly if special arrangements had to be made for purchasing clothes and equipment for the funeral. Hence Joan, lady Bergavenny (d. 1435), specified in her will that her body was to lie unburied where she happened to die, 'until the time my maygne [household] be clothed in black; my hearse, my chare, and other convenable purveyance made'.[63] This may have taken quite a time and cost a considerable amount, for she went on to specify a procession, 'with all the worship that ought to be done unto a woman of mine estate', with offerings of multiple gold cloths and payments ranging from 12*d*. to 6*s*. 8*d*. to all clergy at those places where an overnight stay was needed.

These examples still do not provide a complete picture of all elements of an heraldic funeral for a man of magnate status. Officers of the deceased's household carrying their staves of office would have formed part of the early part of the procession, together with the officers of the College of Arms carrying the dead man's helmet with crest and mantle, target [ceremonial shield of arms], coat-armour, sword and perhaps other items of armour. Banners might well also have been displayed, showing the pedigree and family connections of the deceased. When the wife of Sir John Cobham of Cobham died in 1395, he commissioned for her funeral an extravagant series of banners and pennons showing his own arms, those of the Cobhams of Sterborough and of other families to which he was related, including lord Grey of Codnor, and Edward Courtenay, earl of Devon, and his family.[64]

[61] Nicolas, *Testamenta Vetusta*, 1, p. 215.
[62] *Ibid.*, p. 183.
[63] *Ibid.*, p. 225.
[64] Saul, *Death, Art and Memory*, p. 121.

Such limited evidence as is available from probate records suggests that perhaps the most valued and commonly-found element of the heraldic funeral was the involvement of the war-horse in the funeral procession. War-horses had been associated with funeral rites and monuments as far back as Roman times, and in the medieval period there is even evidence of *destriers* being buried with their masters. For example, the will of Giles de Berkeley (d. 1294) of Coberley (Gloucestershire) directed that his body should be buried in the chancel of the church at Little Malvern before the image of St Giles the Confessor, and, before his body, the horse which carried his trappings. His heart was to be buried in the chancel of St Giles of Coberley, where his heart monument still survives (Pl. 97), and, before his heart, his horse called 'Lombard'.[65] Thus he had two of his horses killed and buried at different places. Ralph, lord Dacre of Gilsland, who was killed at the Battle of Towton (1461), at which he commanded the left wing of the Lancastrian army, was buried in an upright position, his horse under him, beneath a tomb-chest in the churchyard (as explained in Chapter 11) at Saxton (West Yorkshire).[66]

Sir Hugh Hastings (d. 1347) is buried near his brass in the church dedicated to the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Elsing (Norfolk), which he and his wife Margery had been largely instrumental in rebuilding. In his will, Hugh left just £30 to cover all the expenses 'to be done at the time of my death until my burial is entirely ended'.[67] What was included is unclear, but since a brass of this elaboration is unlikely to have cost less than £20, it must surely have been excluded. The cost of soul masses immediately following his death would probably have been included, although he also left separate sums for anniversaries. Hence the funeral is unlikely to have cost the full £30, assuming that his executors stuck strictly to his budget. This is a small sum for an heraldic funeral, although we know that it included at least a war-horse. In 1408 the case of Hastings *v.* Grey was taken to the Court of Chivalry to determine which of the contestants was entitled to bear Sir Hugh's arms.[68] Part of the case was heard at Elsing, where one of the witnesses, Thomas Codlyng, who had been present at Sir Hugh's funeral, stated that he had seen at the Requiem Mass a courser trapped in black presented as an offering, led by one man and with another riding it. Other examples of heraldic funerals involving the presence of the war-horse date back at least to the mid thirteenth century: William de Beauchamp (d. 1268) directed that at his funeral at the Friars Minor at

[65] B. and M. Gittos, 'Motivation and Choice: The Selection of Medieval Secular Effigies', in P. Coss and M. Keen (eds), *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England* (Woodbridge, 2001), pp. 143–68, at p. 154. The body of his horse was, perhaps subsequently, buried outside.

[66] In 1787 John Rogers, vicar of Saxton, dug up the skull of Lord Dacre, while in 1861 the sexton digging a grave nearby dug into the horse's skull. Its vertebrae extended into its master's grave. W. E. Hampton, *Memorials of the Wars of the Roses* (Gloucester, 1979), p. 229.

[67] Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 1, p. 38.

[68] A. R. Wagner and J. G. Mann. 'A Fifteenth-Century Description of the Brass of Sir Hugh Hastings at Elsing, Norfolk', *Archaeological Journal* 106 (1949), pp. 421–28; Luxford, 'The Hastings Brass at Elsing, at pp. 196 and 205–11.

Worcester, 'a horse, completely harnessed with all military caparisons, precede my corpse'.[69]

A small number of military monuments dating from the period 1270–1350 include imagery of the war-horse.[70] This may again be an indication of status and wealth, *destriers* being extremely valuable possessions. However, Richard Marks has persuasively argued that the monuments at Minster-in-Sheppey (Kent), probably commemorating Sir Robert de Shirland (d. c. 1323–25), and in Exeter Cathedral to Sir Richard Stapleton (d. 1332), represent *tableaux* of funerary rites and customs.[71] This is particularly likely in the case of the Exeter tomb; at the foot of the effigy is a prominent sculpture of a groom (or perhaps a kinsman), holding the reins of Sir Richard's *destrier* (Pl. 98). Significantly, the horse is fully harnessed but the saddle is empty, perhaps to signify that the customary rider is dead. Both horse and groom are shown in forward motion, as if taking part in a procession. At the head of the effigy a damaged figure probably represents an esquire; he was holding something, but what exactly is impossible to tell: it could be part of Sir Richard's armour, possibly his helm, or possibly a candle. At Old Somerby (Lincolnshire), the feet of the effigy to a member of the Sleyt family are supported by a war-horse; close by are the remains of an esquire in a crouching position, holding the reins of the horse. It is likely that all these men would have had heraldic funerals, and the iconography of their monuments reflects this.

Another important element of the heraldic funeral was the carrying of the armour of the deceased into church. This was not uncommonly given as a mortuary, or gift, to the parish priest, as was the case with Sir Robert Swillington (d. 1379) of Swillington (Yorkshire), who gave his better animal, presumably a horse, with coat-armour, helm, shield and sword to the church.[72] Similarly in 1434 John, lord Greystoke of Greystoke (Cumberland), gave as a mortuary his best horse, 'and also all my habiliments of war, viz. coat armour, penons, gyron, &c'.[73] Again Richard Neville, earl of Salisbury (d. 1460), ordained that on the day of his funeral at Bisham Priory, 'there be offered two coursers, one of them completely harnessed, with caparisons of my arms, and that there be banners, standards, and other accoutrements, according as is usual for a person of my degree'.[74] Lower down the social scale, Robert Roos (d. 1532), esquire, of Ingmanthorpe (Yorkshire), requested that his coat armour [in this sense meaning a display of his arms] should be borne before his body on the day of his burial 'according to my degre'.[75] The practice

69 Nicolas, *Testamenta Vetusta*, 1, p. 51.
70 Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages*, pp. 210–15.
71 R. Marks, 'Sir Geoffrey Luttrell and Some Companions: Images of Chivalry c. 1329–50', *Weiner Jahrbuch Für Kunstgeschichte*, 46–47 (Vienna, 1993–94), pp. 343–55, at pp. 349–50. N. Saul, 'An Early Private Indenture of Retainer: The Agreement Between Hugh Despenser the Younger and Sir Robert De Shirland', *English Historical Review*, 128, no. 532 (2013), pp. 519–34.
72 Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 1, p. 107.
73 Nicolas, *Testamenta Vetusta* (London, 1826), 1, pp. 230–31.
74 *Ibid.*, p. 287.
75 Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 1, p. 277.

can certainly be traced back to the mid thirteenth century. Richard II de Clare (d. 1262) had a funeral at Tewkesbury Abbey (Gloucestershire) attended by the bishops of Llandaff and Worcester, twelve abbots, and a great multitude of barons, knights and magnates. He was buried on the right hand of his father in the presbytery; his wife commissioned an elaborate tomb ornamented with silver, gold and jewels, and hung on it 'the sword and spurs he used when alive'.[76] The practice of hanging armour over the tomb of the deceased, forming an integral part of the overall commemorative scheme, is best illustrated by the ensemble forming the monument in Canterbury Cathedral to Edward, the Black Prince (d. 1376) (Pl. 99). It was replicated in parish churches; significant numbers of helms, gauntlets and other items of armour remain above tomb monuments, while the loss of others is attested by empty brackets.[77]

This evidence, for the importance placed by men of the noble and gentry classes on the involvement in the funeral service of their war-horse and armour, encapsulates their status and the core of their self-image. The same is true of their monuments, which invariably show them attired in armour, irrespective of whether they had seen military service. Being armour-clad identified them as forming part of the dominant landed and politically-active second estate in society.

There were other aspects of the heraldic funeral which would not have occurred at a common funeral. These were mostly concerned with the symbolic transfer of rights, obligations and social position. Before the *Dirige* a herald would announce the dead man's name and rank and invite prayers for his soul. Also the mass pence offering made by the chief mourner was presented to the senior officiating priest, together with the deceased's arms. They were in turn given to the heir, investing him with his predecessor's dignities. Finally, at the burial, once the corpse was in the grave, the officers of his household broke their staves of office and threw them in, making the final break with their former master. There is a parallel here with the breaking of a bishop's seal and placing it in his tomb. It was only at this point that the heir could truly claim to have entered into his inheritance. It was essential that these acts which transferred status and power were carried out in public. They were an open confirmation to the community as to who was the new lord. In conclusion, it should be noted that some men of armigerous status appear to have had funerals which judging by the essentials requested or the funds allocated, fell far short of the full pomp and circumstance set out in the early-sixteenth-century schedule cited at the beginning of this section. Others, including the examples already cited of Richard, earl of Arundel (d. 1376), and Guichard, earl of Huntingdon (d. 1380), rejected heraldic funerals, or elements of them that smacked of personal pride and unseemly flaunting of status. Yet even those who espoused modesty were keen that a degree of ceremony should

[76] W. Dugdale, *Monasticon Anglicanum*, 6 vols in 8, ed. J. Caley, H. Ellis and B. Bandinel (London, 1817–30), 2, 61 (col. b).

[77] F. H. Cripps-Day, 'On armour preserved in English churches', in G. F. Laking, *A Record of European Armour and Arms*, 5 vols, 5 (London, 1922) and F. H. Cripps-Day and A. R. Dufty, *Fragmenta armamentaria 4, Church Armour* (Frome, 1939).

nonetheless remain. Three elements appear time and again in the specifications of simple funerals for those who might be thought to have qualified for an heraldic funeral. Two are the emphasis on lights and the provision of alms, both already discussed. The last is the involvement of paupers beyond their role as the recipients of alms. In 1520, the Yorkshire knight Sir Henry Thwaites specified only that thirteen poor children should hold tapers at his burial 'having on rochets with myne arms thereupon'.[78] The number thirteen is significant, being symbolic of Christ and his Apostles. Sir Robert Swillington (d. 1379) of Swillington (Yorkshire) specified that the expenses of his exequies should be only, 'as much as for poor and needy people', but he directed that six paupers dressed in russet should sit praying round his body until it was buried.[79] This suggests that the desire for simple funerals amongst those in the upper reaches of society reflected not an absence of faith, but a desire for humility which might earn them a speedier passage though Purgatory. It might well have been regarded as mirroring the enactment of the Seven Works of Mercy in life, discussed in Chapter 4, and reflecting Biblical teaching that for the rich to have Heaven, they must purchase Paradise from the poor.

Funerals involving Religious Guilds

The second special form of funeral which merits separate examination is the guild funeral. As was explained in Chapter 9, the density of guilds varied considerably, with a far greater concentration in the eastern parts of the country. Where guild culture was deeply entrenched they were found mainly in towns, although in some areas they were also to be found in larger villages. Little material culture survives to illustrate the ceremonial and display at a guild funeral, with the exception of two monuments which probably show the deceased dressed in guild robes. At Ingham (Norfolk), Sir Roger de Boys I (d. after 1390) and Lady Margaret (d. 1365) both effigies wear white floor-length mantles with, on the dexter shoulder, a circular badge featuring what appears to be a Tau cross with Lombardic letters above reading 'AL IN ON', an obvious reference to the Trinity (Pl. 101). The 1389 guild certificates reveal that a guild of the Holy Trinity was established at Ingham in 1370 and that two of the four founders were Roger and John de Boys. They also show that in the first year of reception into the confraternity the brothers and sisters were provided with a white mantle decorated with the cross of the fraternity, which they kept until they died. The document, which is badly damaged and in places illegible, does not describe the badge in greater detail, but there can be little doubt that what is shown on the de Boys tomb is this mantle.[80] No other effigy can be said definitely to be in clothed in guild robes, but a civilian effigy at West Leake (Nottinghamshire) is in robes covered with large crosses of

78 Gittings, *Death, Burial and the Individual*, p. 29.

79 Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 1, p. 107.

80 S. Badham, 'Beautiful Remains of Antiquity': the Medieval Monuments in the Former Trinitarian Priory Church at Ingham, Norfolk Part 2: The High Tombs, *Church Monuments*, 22 (2007), pp. 7–42 and 161–74.

St Andrew, which may possibly also be guild robes (Pl. 102). These robes indicate the sort of dress which guild members might well have worn at funeral services.

The annual fees paid by guild members in life would ensure that they would have the support of their brethren in death. Their families could depend on the guild for assistance with preparations for the funeral and regular prayers for the dead. The duties of the 'apparitor' of the guild of the Purification of the Blessed Virgin Mary at Great St Mary's church, Cambridge, included to inform the brethren of funeral services, meetings and other gatherings; to preside over the Offices of the Dead; and to organise the torches and conveying of the body to the church. The guild of the Assumption of the Virgin in Tydd St Giles (Cambridgeshire) employed a bellman who went round the village ringing his bell to encourage people to pray for the soul of the deceased and to summon the brethren to the funeral.[81]

In major guilds, the cortège and services could be elaborate and extensive, but the same basic format was set out in many guild ordinances. On the day before interment, members gathered around the corpse, lit candles, and sang a *Placebo* and a *Dirige* from the Office of the Dead. On the day of interment, a procession made its way from church to grave, buried the body, distributed alms, and attended mass. This would have been witnessed by the parishioners, for whom the pageantry would have provided a spectacle. What precisely was done varied according to the guild, but of all the 1389 guild ordinances, those of the Corpus Christi guild at St Michael on the Hill, Lincoln, were among the most detailed.[82] The guild banner was borne to the house of the dead brother and there displayed publicly to show that he was a member of the guild, whence together with a great burning torch it preceded the corpse on its journey to the church. On arrival at the church, the body was set upon a hearse and the priest would provide 'four soul candles', perhaps with others, to set around it. He would also 'fulfil all other usual ceremonies'. At the funeral mass the graceman and *custos* of the guild offered 1*d.* each from the guild funds as mass pence. Other guild members were expected to attend the funeral and to make an offering, and to give ½*d.* in bread in soul-alms. On the octave of Corpus Christi, mass would be celebrated for both living and dead brethren and a bell would ring on vigil. Finally, the 1389 ordinance declared that when it had increased its store the guild would support a guild priest to sing for the souls of deceased members.

Other guild ordinances also included details regarding the conduct of funerals. The guild of St Katherine in the church of Saints Simon and Jude, Norwich, made a curious distinction between what would be expected of 'lettered' and 'unlettered' brothers; the former would say the full *Placebo* and *Dirige*, but for the latter group 'simpler devotions' were regarded as sufficient, indicating an element of hierarchy as well as collectivity.[83] The Palmers' Guild of Ludlow (Shropshire) was founded in 1284 by a group of Ludlow

[81] Bainbridge, *Gilds in the Medieval Countryside*, pp. 87 and 88.
[82] Westlake, *Parish Guilds*, pp. 167–68; J. T. and L. Toulmin Smith, *English Guilds: the Original Ordinances of more than One Hundred Early English Guilds* (London, 1870), pp. 178–79.
[83] Westlake, *Parish Guilds*, p. 203.

burgesses. All brothers and sisters of the guild were to attend the funerals of guild members, on pain of a fine. Nocturnal wakes were permitted, but no women other than kin were to attend and participants were forbidden to wear 'hideous masks', to jest about the deceased, or indulge in improper games.[84]

The mutual prayers and support of fellow guild members were an attractive benefit of guild membership, such that many guilds made attendance at funerals compulsory. The guild of St John the Baptist at Stow (Cambridgeshire) was relatively unusual in expecting attendance only 'if convenient'.[85] As indicated above, many guilds imposed a fine for non-attendance at funerals, in the case of the guild of the Resurrection at Chesterton (Cambridgeshire) a pound of wax.[86] In some parts of the country, there were multiple guilds attached to a single church. St Botolph's in Boston (Lincolnshire) had nineteen guilds, for example, and probate evidence indicates that many testators were members of several guilds.[87] Presumably the officers and brethren of all the guilds of which they were a member would have attended the funeral, enhancing the processional display and the number of prayers offered up by individuals. This is specifically requested in the will of Margaret Pepis (d. 1529) of Cottenham (Cambridgeshire); she left 8*d*. to every guild in the town, 'so that they come with their banners to bring my body to burial'.[88] Such a display would also remind onlookers of the prestige both of the guild and, by reflection, of the deceased.

Members of some guilds had the reassurance that if they died away from home, they would not be buried as strangers in another town. This was the case for 20% of Cambridgeshire guilds included in the 1389 returns.[89] Guilds in March, Stow-cum-Quy and Stretham placed a limit on the distance within which the body would be carried home, in the last case ten leagues. Guilds in the trading centres of Cambridge and Ely (Cambridgeshire), as well as Norwich and King's Lynn (Norfolk), appear to have taken for granted that some members would die while away on business, and made arrangements that the bodies of those concerned should be buried wherever lawful. Some individuals made their own arrangements. Thomas Gladman (d. 1443) of Cambridge was a member of the fraternity of St Thomas the Martyr at Bruges (Belgium), presumably an English expatriate organisation, thus ensuring that he would receive burial and commemoration appropriate to his status if he died there.[90]

Burial in the guild chapel, if the fraternity was rich enough to have one, was especially desirable, but undoubtedly reserved only for the wealthiest brethren. In his will Simon Brayfield (d. 1492) of Northampton asked to be buried 'in capella beate Marie Virginis in ecclesia Omnium Sanctorum in illo loco vacuo jacenti ante sedem juxta

84 *Ibid.*, p. 224.
85 *Ibid.*, p. 145.
86 Toulmin Smith, *English* Guilds; Westlake, *Parish Guilds*, p. 141.
87 Badham, 'He loved the Guild', pp. 49–73.
88 Bainbridge, *Gilds in the Medieval Countryside*, p. 91.
89 Bainbridge, *Gilds in the Medieval Countryside*, p. 90.
90 TNA: PROB 11/3/480; Bainbridge, *Gilds in the Medieval Countryside*, p. 90.

lavatorium ordinatum pro manibus presbiterorum ad altarem ejusdem capelle celebrancium lavandis (*in the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the church of All Saints in that empty place situated in front of [my] seat next to the piscina ordained for the washing of the hands of the priests celebrating at the altar of the same chapel*)'.[91] He bequeathed for the maintenance of the fraternity of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the same church 40*s*. in cash:

> On this condition, that my grave and sepulchre are in the said chapel in the manner aforesaid and that a priest shall celebrate mass at the customary eighth hour daily in the same chapel, and at the same time shall pray for my soul and the souls of my parents and the souls of my friends and all faithful departed with special devotion, and shall say the *De Profundis* with the intercessions of the same prayer in this manner in perpetuity, and also in the same way and condition that my name should be entered and registered for special memory in the missal of the same chapel'.[92]

John Robinson (d. 1529), perhaps the richest merchant in late-medieval Boston, was from a family who were staunch supporters of the élite guilds dedicated to Corpus Christi and the Blessed Virgin Mary. He ensured that both guilds had grounds for wishing to commemorate him and they were undoubtedly both involved in his funeral, for which he left 20*s*. in his will.[93] This was a modest sum, but doubtless he was expecting the guilds to bear much of the expense. Robinson had been alderman of the Blessed Virgin Mary guild in 1520–22, as well as being alderman of the Corpus Christi Guild in 1484 and 1514. In his will, made in 1525, he left all his extensive portfolio of landed property to St Mary's guild in return for soul masses, an exceptionally valuable donation confirmed by his wife Eleanor on her death in 1528.[94] This bequest was of such significance that long after the property passed into the hands of Boston Corporation, who took over the administration of the town at the Reformation, it was collectively known as 'John Robinson's Lands'. Despite this, he chose burial in the guild chapel dedicated to the Corpus Christi, in which his parents and a previous wife had been buried and where their obit was celebrated. John and his four wives were commemorated by a lost brass; the inscription, which is known from antiquarian notes, included the information that '... he founded two chaplains in the guild of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the parish church of St Botolph in Boston, to celebrate [Mass] for his soul for ever'. John's will and that of his wife, Eleanor, explain this by revealing that an obit was to be said for the pair and their children in St Mary's chapel for ninety years following John's death. The way in which

[91] Serjeantson and Isham Longden, 'The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire', p. 371.

[92] D. Edwards (ed.), *Early Northampton Wills Preserved in the Northamptonshire Record Office*, Northamptonshire Record Society (2005), p. 181.

[93] TNA: PROB 11/23/84.

[94] Foster (ed.), *Lincoln Wills*, 10, pp. 100–01.

the obit was to be celebrated is set out in detail, and the sum of money to be expended on each occasion was significantly in excess of any other obit celebrated by this guild.

It was made clear earlier in this chapter how in rural areas there would have been a huge difference between the simple common funerals of ordinary people and the heraldic funerals of important local landowners. In urban areas, especially in large towns, funerals would have been more frequent. In consequence, more pomp and circumstance was probably required fully to engage the attention of the local population and therefore attract their prayers. Inevitably the grandest funerals would be those of the aristocracy, many of whom still preferred burial in monastic and mendicant houses. Slightly less grand funerals would have been those of guildsmen, marked out by the spectacle of guild solidarity and display. Was this grandeur of the urban ceremony aimed in part at least mimicking the heraldic funerals of the nobility and gentry, reflecting the desire of merchant guildsmen to climb the ladder of social respectability?

Burial Location

The location chosen for burial, as well as the funeral arrangements, formed an important part of the overall commemorative strategy of a significant number of the nobility and better-off members of the laity. Before the Norman Conquest most burials were in churchyards, but burial inside churches for the higher clergy, kings, princes and patrons was permitted following the Council of Mainz's decree of 813. The extent to which this happened in England is difficult to establish. For some pre-Conquest burials there is documentary evidence, including the interment inside the church of St Olave, York, of its founder, Earl Siward (d. 1055). That burial inside churches was becoming more widespread is clearly indicated by the survival in significant numbers in northern England of tenth- and eleventh-century cross-slabs in parish churches in particular, where regulation may have been less rigorously enforced. Some may commemorate clerics, but many more probably mark the church burials of the local lay élite. Gradually non-clerical burials inside churches, particularly in monastic churches, became more common, as is demonstrated by successive Cistercian legislation. The burial of lay founders within the confines of Cistercian monasteries was first permitted in 1157; by 1217 founders and their descendants were allowed burial in cloister walks; from the mid-thirteenth century this was extended to the churches themselves; and by 1322 anyone who had contributed to the construction of the church could be buried within it.

Intramural burial and monumental commemoration nevertheless remained a privilege, and the majority of people would have been buried in the churchyard with at best a temporary grave marker: the grieving Dreamer in the fourteenth-century poem *Pearl* refers several times to the 'huyle' or 'hyul' (grave-mound) in which his beloved little girl lies buried and on which he falls asleep.[95] Even so, the location of the grave mattered to some testators, including those who wished to be buried near close relatives. Such was

[95] E. V. Gordon (ed.), *Pearl* (Oxford, 1953), lines 41, 1172, 1205, and the note to line 41 on pp. 47–48.

the case with two Boston testators: John Qwykerell (d. 1465) wanted to be buried in St Botolph's churchyard near his father Adam; and James Rowe (d. 1531) directed that he be buried in Boston churchyard in the 'halle' by his brother.[96] At Faversham (Kent) Thomas Cooke (d. 1508), Thomas Childemill (d. 1510) and Katherine Smyth (d. 1521) all requested burial beside the Palm cross in the churchyard.[97] Palm crosses were usually sited in the churchyard on the north side of the church and at the east end. It must have been a crowded location, as Cooke's children and Childemill's first wife were already buried there. Richard Crispe (d. 1535) gave very specific instructions for his burial in St Peter's churchyard at Sandwich (Kent), 'in the north side of the Church between two crosses of stone, where one Emmotte Crispe my awnte was late buried'.[98] John Pynok (d. 1501), a draper of the same parish, chose an especially prominent position for his grave, 'in the churchyard of St Peter before the procession door of the Church', where the monument would be visible and hopefully attract the prayers of the clergy when they entered the church.[99] A similar hope undoubtedly informed the request of John Elston (d. 1483), parson of Shelton (Nottinghamshire), to be buried 'in the kirk yerde of Shelton afore the kirk dore at the est side'.[100]

An analysis of 500 wills of Londoners in the period 1380 to 1541, taken in samples of 50 at 20-year intervals has shown that between 62% and 86% chose parochial burial, split more or less equally between intra-mural and churchyard burial.[101] A sample of 147 wills dated between 1445 and 1545 from Boston (Lincolnshire) throws interesting light on intentions for burial and commemoration in a provincial town.[102] Only nine testators make no disposition as to the place of their burial. In some cases, this may be because they had already made provision in their lifetime; for instance, Eleanor Robinson (d. 1528), the widow of John Robinson, did not specify where she was to be buried since she would undoubtedly have expected to lie with her husband in the chapel of the Corpus Christi guild under the brass commissioned for him described above.[103] A further eight testators request, with ostentatious indifference, to be buried 'where God pleases' or some similar formulation. Eight more individuals wished to be buried outside Boston, including four in London and one in Calais. Seventeen (12% of the sample) opted for burial in one of the four friary churches in Boston, and one for burial in St John's church. Of the testators

96 Gibbons (ed.), *Early Lincoln Wills*, p. 188; LRO, Lincoln Consistory Court, 1520–31, fo. 335r.
97 Duncan (ed.), *Testamenta Cantiana*, 2, p. 129.
98 *Ibid.*, p. 287.
99 *Ibid.*, p. 287.
100 Falvey, Boatwright and Hammond, *English Wills proved in the Prerogative Court of York 1477–99*, p. 24.
101 V. Harding, 'Burial choice and burial location in later medieval London', in S. Bassett (ed.), *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead, 1000–1600* (Leicester 1992), pp. 119–135.
102 Badham, 'From remembrance almost out araced', pp. 101–02.
103 Foster (ed.), *Lincoln Wills*, 10, pp. 100–01.

who chose burial in the mendicant houses and whose wills record their occupation or status, two were country esquires, while one spinster and three widows may also have come from gentry families. Although many Boston residents chose to support the friaries in life and also remembered them in their wills, there appears to have been something of a social distinction between those who were buried there and those who opted for the parish church and churchyard.

The remaining 104 testators (71% of the total sample) chose burial at St Botolph's, and were almost exclusively better-off townspeople who can be categorised as merchants, professionals and tradesmen. Thirty-eight chose churchyard burial, while sixty-six requested intra-mural burial. Most of this last group would probably have had some form of monument, whether as individuals or as part of a family grave marker. Forty-one of those opting for intra-mural burial (61% of this category) gave further details as to where in St Botolph's they should be buried. Burial in guild chapels or before guild altars was specified by 37%, those dedicated to Corpus Christi, the Blessed Virgin Mary or SS Peter and Paul being popular, but other locations were also mentioned. Most interesting of all are the nineteen testators buried in the church who requested a specific burial location only by reference to the grave of a family member, in some cases under a pre-existing floor monument. For example, following the custom of widows who had not remarried Elizabeth Rede (d. 1486), widow of John Rede, merchant of Boston, requested in her will that 'my body to be buried in the parish kyrke of Boston under the same stone where myn husbond ligges'.[104]

Intramural burial was highly valued in the late medieval period, although a burial position in the porch had the attraction of prominence. Hence Alice Igo (d. 1503) requested burial by the holy water stoup in the porch at Ashford (Kent), where all those entering the church would stop to cross themselves with holy water.[105] The purpose of this is explained more fully by H. Goodwyn (d. 1526) of Irchester (Northamptonshire), who asked to be buried 'next unto the holy water stoke as may be so the people may tredde & come over my grave or sepulture'.[106] Richard Wryght (d. 1462) of Bures St Mary (Suffolk) exercised overt financial pressure to secure burial in the church, rather than the graveyard; the church would receive 13*s.* 4*d.* and a quarter of malt if they acceded to his wishes, but only half that if they did not.[107] One limiting factor to church burial was the fees charged for digging a grave, usually 6*s.* 8*d.*, with a sliding scale adopted for some London churches.[108] It could be cheaper, the parish of Stratton (Cornwall) charging just 3*s.* 4*d.*[109]

104 TNA: PROB 11/17/360.

105 Duncan (ed.), *Testamenta Cantiana*, 2, p. 6.

106 Serjeantson and Isham Longden, 'The Parish Churches and Religious Houses of Northamptonshire', p. 347.

107 Northeast and Falvey, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, 2, p. 36.

108 N. Rogers, 'Hic Iacet ...: The Location of Monuments in Late Medieval Parish Churches', in C. Burgess and E. Duffy (eds), *The Parish in Late Medieval England: Proceedings of the 2002 Harlaxton Symposium* (Donington, 2006), pp. 261–81, at p. 263.

109 Peacock, 'On the Churchwardens' Accounts of the Parish of Stratton', pp. 195–220.

Another factor discouraging some, especially in popular urban churches, might have been that old memorials were routinely removed from church floors to make room for new burials. New burials attracted fees and there is ample evidence that the churchwardens sold the stone and brass from discarded monuments for profit.[110] The impermanence of monuments must have been apparent to some patrons, leading them to devise strategies to try to ensure their preservation. In his will, Dany Leyson (d. 1513), merchant of Bristol, left a bequest to St Lawrence's church on condition that his tomb be kept for his use and 'the bodyes comyng of my children'.[111] Similarly, Walter Stoket (d. 1380), citizen of London, included a bequest of 10*s*. to the church 'if the parish do not disturb me in my burial'.[112] John Derby (d. 1454), a mercer of Sudbury (Suffolk), was more trusting, directing his executors to buy for £4 a 'marble stone [a stone slab with a brass] ... to put on the grave where my body is buried, and it to stay there for ever'.[113] Needless to say, no traces of any of these grave markers survive.

As we have seen in the case of Boston, a significant minority of testators specified precisely where they wanted to be buried, not just in which parish church. The vital consideration was the visibility of the monument to the congregation and, even more importantly, the clergy. If it was prominent, it would be more likely to attract prayers for the soul. Burial in the chancel was predominantly the prerogative of the clergy. Ralph Babington (d. 1521), rector of Hickling (Nottinghamshire), chose to be buried, 'in the chauncell, streght before the high alter, so that my feete rest undir the preste as he standes at Masse'.[114] This would make it especially likely that he would be remembered and prayed for during Mass. His brass showing him in mass vestments with chalice and wafer survives. In parish churches the family which held the manor may also have claimed burial rights in the chancel. The position to the north of the altar was a privileged location and thus often reserved for founders. Those who chose burial in the chancel other than on the north and south sides often had to compromise regarding the type of memorial they could choose. In 1474 William Fitzwilliam of Sprotbrough (Yorkshire) asked to be buried in a manner befitting the lord of the manor in the choir of the parish church, but 'in such a way that those celebrating divine service might not be impeded'.[115] He was commemor-ated by a floor brass, as were others with the same priorities (Pl. 114). The chancel of the collegiate church of Cobham (Kent) is paved with serried ranks of brasses to the Cobham family, who evidently preferred proximity to the high altar over monumental grandeur.

Nicholas Rogers' important survey of burial places indicates unsurprisingly that positions of liturgical significance were prime locations, especially before the high altar.[116]

[110] Badham, 'Medieval Greens' pp. 673–74; Lindley, *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship*, pp. 6–8.
[111] TNA: PROB 11/17 fos. 117v–120r.
[112] Harding, 'Burial choice and burial location', pp. 119–35, at p. 128.
[113] Northeast, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, 1, p. 289.
[114] Raine (ed.), *Testamenta Eboracensia*, 5, pp. 124–25.
[115] M. Vale, *Piety, Charity and Literacy among the Yorkshire Gentry 1370–1480*, Borthwick Papers 50 (York, 1976), pp. 17–18.
[116] Rogers, 'Hic Iacet', pp. 263–64.

An important locus of Eucharistic devotion was the Easter Sepulchre. John Pympe (d. 1496) of Nettlestead (Kent) requested commemoration by a brass and to be buried:

> Before the Image of oure blessed lady in the selfe place whereas the Sepulchre of oure lord is wounte to stonde at the Fest of Ester and so to be leyde there in a tombe of stone made under such forme as the blessed sacremente and the holy crosse may be layde upon the stone of the said tombe bere the Ephiphanye'.[117]

Similarly, Thomas Wyndesore (d. 1486), esquire of Stanwell, Middlesex, directed:

> My body to be buried in the north side of the quere of the chirch of oure lady of Stanwell afor the ymage of oure lady where the sepulture of oure lord stondith, whereupon I will there be made a playn tombe of marble of a competent hight to thentent that yt may bere the blissid body of oure lord and the sepulture at the tyme of Estre to stond uppon the same, and with myn armes and a scripture convenient to be sett aboute the same tombe'.[118]

Burial and commemoration by a monument which doubled as the Easter Sepulchre was very desirable. Yet, to choose this location also sometimes involved compromises regarding the type of effigial commemoration on the tomb, as the top of the chest had to be flat. At Lingfield (Surrey), Reginald, 2nd lord Cobham (d. 1403) was commemorated by a brass, unlike his father and son who both had carved effigies. Since it was originally under the easternmost arch in the chapel, it could have been used as an Easter Sepulchre. He too clearly preferenced location over a more prestigious monument.

There are many other such examples, some of which indicate that the imagery and texts of funeral monuments in this positon reflect the significance of the location. An indent at Faversham (Kent) above a canopied tomb in the northeast of the chancel has heraldry linking it with Joan Norton (d. 1535). She willed that, 'myn executours shall fynyshe upp my tombe in ffeversham churche according to the bargeyn that I have made ... and it to be used for a sepulcre place in the same churche to the honour of God and the blessed Sacrement'.[119] The indent shows her kneeling in prayer with an invocatory scroll linking her to an image of Christ rising from his grave. This is not the only example of resurrection imagery shown on monuments which functioned as Easter Sepulchres. The incised slab at Ashby Folville (Leicestershire) to Ralph Wodford (d. 1498) shows him as a *transi* [shrouded figure], but he is casting aside his shroud and the image is accompanied by an inscription asking for prayers for the souls of Ralph and his wife and for their bodily resurrection, together with the familiar text from Job 19, 'I know that my Redeemer liveth

[117] TNA: PROB 11/11/375.

[118] Boatwright, Habberjam and Hammond (eds), *The Logge Register of PCC Wills 1479 to 1486*, 1, p. 458.

[119] F. Lambande, 'The Easter Sepulchre in Faversham Church', *Archaeologia Cantiana* 41 (1929), pp. 107–153, at p. 110.

...' (Pl. 103). The slab, on a tomb on the north side of the chancel, would undoubtedly have acted as an Easter Sepulchre, again completing the link between tomb design and location. In contrast, nothing about the brass to Christopher Urswic (d. 1521) at Hackney (Middlesex) featuring a priest and a shield appears out of the ordinary, until one learns that it was erected by Urswic on the floor next to an altar tomb on the north side of the chancel of the old church. This tomb has an inscription including the phrase ' ... hic sepultus carnis resurreccionem in adventu Christi expectat (... *buried here awaits the resurrection of the body at the coming of Christ*)'.

Locations near altars and devotional images of saints were also considered desirable. On Thomas Bloxham's brass of 1519 on a tomb chest at Great Addington (Northamptonshire), he prays to God to have mercy on him (Pl. 104). Although there is no saint above his prayer scroll, he was clearly also seeking intercession, as his will confirms. He requested burial before the image of St Anthony of Egypt, who lived an exemplary life, putting the love of God before all else, and was thus widely venerated by clerics.[120] Who can doubt that Bloxham hoped that St Anthony would intercede on his behalf? Similarly John Delfras (d. 1521) of Holy Cross, Canterbury, willed to be buried, 'at such place as the parishioners will be agreeable to make an Altar to set up an Image of St Martin, which I have given to the Church'.[121] Again, the 1506 will of Richard Gennire, vicar of Willesborough (Kent), requested burial 'in the choir ... near the Image of the Blessed Virgin Mary ... for my sepulchre called my epitaph an image of the Blessed Mary and figure of my body kneeling before the image'.[122] This suggests a mural brass with devotional imagery. As with Ralph Woodford's incised slab, the design of Gennire's monument was chosen to reflect its intended location. Burial in the chancel before the rood or near the font were other desirable locations highlighted in Rogers's study. Some examples have been referred to in Chapter 6. Another is at Sawley (Derbyshire). The brass on a tomb-chest to Robert Bothe (d. 1478) and his wife is in the nave, immediately next to the chancel arch and right up against the screen. It was thus highly visible but needed no compromise as to monumental grandeur.

Many testators were keen to be buried next to a spouse or other relative or in a place in the church that was special to them. Some hoped to have a location in death that they occupied in life. The merchant Nicholas Blackburn the younger (d. 1448) worked his way up the York civic élite; he was a chamberlain in 1424, sheriff in 1427 and became mayor in 1429. In his will he asked to be buried, 'In the choir [chapel] of St Mary where I was accustomed to sit within my parish church of All Saints in North Street in York near the tomb of my children buried there'.[123] Nothing is known of this lost monument, although a floor monument is indicated, strongly suggesting a brass. It is significant that the glazing

[120] Marks, *Image and Devotion*, p. 102.
[121] Duncan (ed.), *Testamenta Cantiana*, 2, p. 47.
[122] *Ibid.*, p. 365.
[123] For the Blackburn family including transcripts of their wills see Rycraft *et al.* (eds), *The Blackburns in York* (York, 2006).

donated by the Blackburns and others, now in the east window, would originally have been placed near or over the place he was accustomed to sit in church and where he, his wife and his children were subsequently buried. Although this did not compare with the élite space of a chantry chapel partitioned off from the rest of the church, it did associate this part of the church with the Blackburn family.[124] He was also retaining in death the place he had occupied in the church community in life. Occasionally testators desired burial near a part of the church fabric which they had helped to fund. Marion Fenkele (d. 1447) of Gipping (Suffolk) asked to be buried at St Peter's, Stowe, next to the grave of her husband or outside the church near the window that her late husband had 'lately made anew with glass'.[125] Again, Thomas Thursby (d. 1510), merchant of Bishop's Lynn (Norfolk), asked to be buried, 'at the north ende of o^{r} ladyes aulter which I caused to be made adioynyng to the place where as my fader lyeth buried in the churche of seynt margarett of lynne aforesaid. Itm I will that there be made a tombe of marble at the same place where I shall lye at thende of the said aulter by the discrecion of myn executours'.[126] Burials before religious images were also popular: typical is William Castell of King's Lynn (d. 1524) who asked to be buried in the church of St Margaret 'before the pictur of saint Savyour at the north ende of saint William's awter'.[127]

An appropriate end to this survey of choices of burial location is that made by the pious John Baret (d. 1467), clothier and burgess of Bury St Edmunds (Suffolk). He went into unusual but characteristic detail in his will as to where he was to be interred. This was 'by the awter of Seynt Martyn, namyd also our Ladyes awter, in Seynt Marye chirche at Bury, vnder the parcloos of the retourne of the candilbeem, be fore the ymage of oure Sauyour, and no stoon to be steryd [disturbed] of my graue, but a pet [pit] to be maad vnder the ground sille ther my lady Schardeloe was wont to sitte, the stoolys removyd, and the body put in as neer vndyr my grave as may be wythoute hurt of the seid grave.' He asked that there be written on the 'fore part of iren abowte my graue soone aftyr my dissees these vers, *Sis testis xp'e tumulus non hic manet iste Corpus vt ornetur sed sp'us ut memoretur* (Be witness, Christ, that this tomb is not set here to honour the body but to commemorate the spirit)'. This iron grille and its inscription no longer survive, but the tomb monument which he had made in his lifetime does (Pl. 100).[128]

[124] Badham, 'Commemoration in brass and glass of the Blackburn family of York'.
[125] Northeast, *Wills of the Archdeaconry of Sudbury*, 1, p. 130.
[126] TNA: PROB/11/16/265.
[127] TNA: PRO 11/21/319.
[128] Tymms (ed.), *Wills and Inventories from Bury St. Edmund's*, pp. 15 and 19.