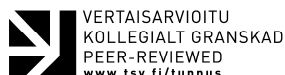


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Gentle Ladies and ‘Gipsie’ Queens: Constructing and Performing Gender in the Glasgow Necropolis

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Abstract

The Necropolis in Glasgow, Scotland stands as a classic example of a Victorian-era garden cemetery. Opened in 1833, the site is home to 50,000 burials, of which only an elite few are marked with an array of gravestones, tombs, and mausoleums. Not surprisingly, the numerous monuments to Glasgow’s merchants, middle classes, and gentlefolk predominantly conform to the expected Victorian models of appropriate mourning and memorialisation, with distinct parameters for men and for women. Throughout the cemetery, the graves signal the appropriate social roles, attitudes, and final remembrances appropriate to Glasgow’s ‘merchant patriarchs’ and for the women associated with them. The stones demonstrate not only how nineteenth-century Glasgow saw fit to remember its dead, they were also intended to inspire and instruct the living mourners and cemetery visitors in the suitable ways that gender should be performed in the public eye. An elevated monument to Protestant reformer John Knox dominates the cemetery, an overarching figure of proper religious and social masculinity. Men are well represented throughout the Necropolis. Their names are fully recorded on the tombs, as are often their deeds and social position. In some cases, their faces and forms may be immortalised in stone, showing them looking sober, masterful, and wise. Proper Victorian femininity centred on the ‘Angel in the House’ archetype – a docile nurturer who devoted herself to her husband and the domestic sphere. Women’s markers regularly assigned priority to their relationship with a male relation: husband, father, and sometimes son. Female images appear infrequently. However, within this defined world of gender, a number of memorials stand in opposition to convention and defy societal ideals through their unexpected variation. Through a selection of case studies, this paper will explore the ways in which the Victorian society of Glasgow performed and resisted gendered roles in death through the monuments of the Necropolis cemetery. By highlighting both standard and non-standard funerary choices, a more nuanced sense of the Victorian perspective on gender can be found.

To the east of Glasgow's city centre, the Victorian-era Necropolis cemetery sprawls over some 37 acres, serving as the final resting place for 50,000 members of Glasgow society.¹ By the 1830s, Glasgow had become Scotland's most populous city and was experiencing a period of booming industrial and business activity.² Even in death, the increasingly prosperous merchant classes of the city were eager to mark their place in society, commissioning elaborate and expensive funerary monuments for the newly established burial ground. This form of material culture and the choices made regarding grave ornamentation, memorial inscriptions and placement of the markers represent powerful and influential statements, in particular, expressing nineteenth-century Glasgow's perspectives on gender ideology. Within the Necropolis, ideals of gender are literally written on the landscape. Through a lens of gender archaeology, this work will consider a selection of the graves as expressions of Victorian gender expectations and roles, how they were constructed, performed, conformed to, and resisted. Even within the strongly regimented and structured world of Victorian public display and commemoration, a number of the monuments demonstrate elements of resistance to expected social norms of both femininity and masculinity. A selection of case studies will illustrate these themes: the neighbouring graves of Corlinda Lee and her son, Ernest; the tombs of Isabella Elder, Mary Ann Baxter, and the Misses Buchanan of Bellfield; and the incongruous memorial to Charles Tennant. Each example offers a unique window into the attitudes of Victorian Glasgow towards proper expressions of gender.

The City of the Dead

The Glasgow Necropolis, officially opened in 1833, was created as an interdenominational garden cemetery to replace the overcrowded and increasingly unhygienic churchyard burying grounds of the city. A contemporary commentator described the problematic conditions at one urban burying ground, stating, "For want of

¹ History - Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis <https://www.glasgow-necropolis.org/history/>

² Fraser, W. Hamish. n.d. "Second City of the Empire: 1830s to 1914" <https://www.theglasgowstory.com/story/?id=TGSD0>

room, the coffins are frequently laid so near the surface as to be injurious to health” (Cleland 1840, 28). Glasgow’s expansive new ‘City of the Dead’ was directly modelled after Paris’s famed Père Lachaise cemetery, which had opened in 1804, and was inspired by the broader European move towards artfully designed cemeteries.³ In the same decade as the Necropolis was founded, these cross-cutting interests in aesthetics and public health inspired comparable cemetery projects around England and Scotland. In London, a series of cemeteries were established around the outskirts of city, beginning with Kensal Green Cemetery in 1833.⁴ Often called the ‘Magnificent Seven’ they are some of the best known examples of this shift in burial practice, although most major urban centres in England would eventually set up similarly styled burial sites (Tarlow 2000, 218).

Occupying a prominent hill overlooking Glasgow Cathedral, the new burial ground was laid out on a parcel of land called Fir Park that had previously served as a public arboretum and green space.⁵ The Necropolis rapidly gained popularity with Glasgow’s elite, becoming the resting place of the “merchant patriarchs of the City”.⁶ As Necropolis historian Ronald Scott states, the cemetery developed as:

a significant cultural enterprise in the city [...] principally for the benefit of the established rulers of the city and the emerging middle classes, who wanted to demonstrate their taste, status and wealth by being buried and commemorated there. (2005b, 244)

Prior to the area’s use as a cemetery, a memorial to the Scottish Presbyterian minister, John Knox, had been erected in 1825 on the highest point of the site (Photo 1). The monument features a 58-foot Doric column, topped with a larger-than-life statue of Knox (Blair 1857, 169-172). The new Necropolis grew up around his monument, with burial in proximity to the influential Reforming preacher’s column becoming a prized mark of

³ History - Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis <https://www.glasgowcemetery.org/history/>

⁴ Kensal Green (All Souls) Cemetery <https://historicengland.org.uk/listing/the-list/list-entry/1000817>

⁵ History - Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis <https://www.glasgowcemetery.org/history/>

⁶ Glasgow City Council n.d., 5 “Glasgow Necropolis Heritage Trail” <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=32366&p=0>

status and social position.⁷ A series of extensions in the late nineteenth century significantly increased the Necropolis to its present size of 37 acres. Fifty thousand burials have been recorded in the cemetery, with a select portion of those interred in elaborate tombs and crypts, or commemorated with markers designed by acclaimed architects of the time.⁸ Beyond a simple resting place for the dead, the Necropolis was also conceived as an urban park space for walking and contemplation, where visitors could be instructed and inspired by the surroundings (Scott 2005a, 10). Garden cemeteries, generally, were designed as spaces for “seemly and appropriate



Photo 1. John Knox Memorial rising above the Necropolis. Photo: Vanessa Smith, 2015

recreation”, where the setting might offer an atmosphere that was “intellectually improving and morally uplifting” (Tarlow 2000, 229). The elaborate commemorative markers and memorial inscriptions, acting as complex expressions of status, identity, and social attitudes, were central to this experience. One contemporary author asserted that cemetery-goers might feel “a laudable ambition to imitate and emulate” the lives of those buried within the grounds (Blair 1857, 8). Within a few years, the new Glasgow cemetery was attracting visitors and occupants from the city, and beyond. The Necropolis had quickly become a fashionable locale for edifying strolls and for eternal rest. With this growing popularity and development as an important public space, the Necropolis

⁷ History - Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis <https://www.glasgowneecropolis.org/history/>, Glasgow City Council n.d., 37 “Glasgow Necropolis Heritage Trail” <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=32366&p=0>

⁸ History - Friends of the Glasgow Necropolis <https://www.glasgowneecropolis.org/history/>

emerged as an influential arena for the maintenance and performance of gender roles and ideologies in the nineteenth century city.

This paper considers the material culture and mortuary landscape of the Glasgow Necropolis through the lens of gender, and particularly gender archaeology. This theoretical framework scrutinises the various ways that gendered identities might be structured, promoted, and performed within a particular society or social group. Gender is understood as a highly variable, fluid, non-dichotomous social construct, acquired through “historically specific processes of socialisation” (Gilchrist 1999, 9). Ethnographic studies and historical evidence have repeatedly demonstrated that gender has been constructed in widely varying ways by different groups and in different time periods; and modern gender studies in archaeology rejects the biological determinism and biased attitudes that regularly plagued earlier research into societal roles and motivations. However, as pioneering authors Margaret Conkey and Joan Gero have asserted, considering gender in the past is a more complicated matter than to simply “add women and stir” (1991, 14). Instead, gender-centred archaeology strives to perceive and understand the nuanced world of gender as experienced by all participants, including power relations present between the various genders (Conkey and Gero 1991, 14, Spencer-Wood 2011, 3-4). Conkey (2007, 306) speaks for the need to understand the everyday contributions of women, men, children and “all sorts of social personae”. As well as highly variable, gender is also a dynamic, ongoing social negotiation and a performative expression of those negotiations, created with “repetitions that constitute and contest the coherence of personal identity” (Gilchrist 1999, 82). Finally, gender roles and ideology never exist in a vacuum. Within every social setting, gender is intimately enmeshed with other core aspects of identity. Any discussion of gender must necessarily articulate with the parallel issues of class and social standing, age, and ethnicity (Diaz-Andreu et al. 2005, 9). Not all men, nor all women, in a community (or in a cemetery) experience gender ideals and expectations in the same way. The ability to define and resist gendered roles frequently resolves differently along class and economic lines, or can vary based upon the individual’s age (cf. Gräslund 2001).

Within gender-focused work, funerary archaeology can be a particularly productive avenue for understanding how gender is conceived and promoted. Through the investigation of graves, funerary activities, and rituals and the trappings of death and commemoration, a picture of the mechanisms by which the social identities of an individual, expressed during life, are translated meaningfully in death can emerge. This knowledge can, in turn, inform our broader understanding of gendered social meaning (Sofaer and Sorensen 2013, 355, 532). Material culture has long been an important way to signal and affirm social identities, as well as membership in wider social groups (Diaz-Andreu, 2005, 23). The entire cemetery landscape itself functions as a focal point for public performance, where, “appropriate ways to treat the deceased are negotiated, including the definition of categories and gender roles” (Diaz-Andreu, 2005, 39). In considering funerary monuments and Victorian commemorative choices, Conkey and Spector’s (1984, 15) interlinked concepts of gender roles and gender ideology are particularly effective for illustrating the function and performative nature of gender in the Victorian cemetery. Gender roles define the varying ways women, men, and other genders, actively participate in social, economic, religious, and political institutions. These roles define expected and appropriate behaviours and activities. Gender ideology describes overarching symbolic meanings within a given society for such concepts as male and female. While connected, these concepts are context dependent, with the broader purview of gender ideology sometimes superseding the gender roles practiced in day-to-day life. For example, certain tasks might be performed by either men or women, while the tools for the tasks themselves act as strongly gendered symbols (Gräslund 2001, 133).

Embodying the Angel in the House

Broadly speaking, Victorian society promoted a binary set of genders, with women’s roles and ideal behaviour strongly influenced by an iconic archetype of Victorian womanhood: the ‘Angel in the House’. This pervasive representation was enshrined and popularised in Coventry Patmore’s narrative poem of the same name. As promoted in

the poem, the Angel was docile and virtuous, an obedient, sweet-tempered wife and mother. She was devoted to her husband and family above all else (Patmore, 1858). The woman's role within the home and her work as a caregiver and nurturer were lauded; and the Angel seemed to have no capacity or inclination to move beyond the domestic sphere.

The archetype of the Angel in the House regularly followed Victorian women to their graves, expressed in the ways their families chose to posthumously commemorate their lives. Inscriptions placed strong emphasis on the deceased's role as a wife and mother. Women were often buried within a familial group, with the grave marker primarily dedicated to the patriarch of the family. Female identity was secured through her male family members, be it her father, husband, or occasionally, brother or son; and it was through these male relations that she was afforded her own social standing. While men's grave markers regularly reference their professions and celebrate their works in the community, women are, on the whole, strictly listed as being a wife or a daughter exclusively (Mytum 2004, 127-128). This arrangement served to reinforce and instruct a viewing public on the appropriate roles for women during the period and clearly illustrates the gender ideology being constructed and celebrated. Commenting on these dynamics, Spencer-Wood (2011, 23) has suggested a possible model for understanding ideas of power and agency in the Victorian world. She describes the masculine ideal as a commanding "power over" identity, whereas women were able to exert agency through a co-operative "power with". While this model is perhaps overly generalising, it does offer a potential starting point for assessing the ways men and women might move with agency through their social worlds.

These ideas can be readily observed within the gravestones and tombs of the Glasgow Necropolis. The case studies explored within this paper were selected as illustrative examples of the range of gendered commemoration present within the cemetery. The monuments were chosen through a physical exploration of the cemetery landscape, walking the pathways and reading the epitaphs, in much the same way as a Victorian

visitor might have done. Memorials that were prominently located, in highly visible locations, were of particular interest, while others were selected for the availability of biographical information about the deceased.



Photo 2. Detail of Mary Anne Baxter grave. Photo: Vanessa Smith, 2015

The grave marker of Mary Anne Baxter (Photo 2) conforms to an expected pattern. Her inscription begins: “Sacred to the memory/of/Mary Anne Baxter/relict of/Henry David Hill D.D./Professor of Greek in the/University of St. Andrews”. In this example, Baxter herself is the main burial in the plot and the first name on the stone, yet she is remembered exclusively as the relict (or widow) of Henry David Hill, with the inscription recording his profession and

affiliation as a marker of his status, through which Mary Anne, as well as the female children listed later on the stone, were invested with their own social standing. The viewer can only know that Mary Ann Baxter was a wife and a mother. While there is an abundance of information on her husband recorded on the stone, Henry David Hill is actually buried elsewhere.

Another grave demonstrates how class divisions might act on and alter Victorian gender expectations and ideology. The grave of Barbara Hopkirk is extolled in an early Necropolis guide as “the first Christian lady, moving in the upper or respectable ranks, whose remains were deposited in the cemetery” (Blair 1857, 269). Hopkirk was the wife of Laurence Hill, a prominent Glasgow businessman, Collector of the Merchants’

House, and one of the founders of the cemetery (Scott 2005a, 2, 20). Contrary to the guide's assertion, Barbara Hopkirk was actually the third woman interred in the Necropolis, preceded by both Elizabeth (Miles) Milne (4 April 1833) and Isabella (Milne) Kennedy (4 April 1833). Elizabeth and Isabella were the mother and the sister, respectively, of the Superintendent of the Necropolis, George Milne (Scott 2005a, 119, 221). While Milne's title may appear noteworthy, in practice he was a landscape gardener by trade, appointed by the cemetery committee to execute the founders' vision of the new Necropolis (Scott 2005a, 76). George Milne certainly held a less prestigious role than Barbara Hopkirk's illustrious spouse. The Necropolis Committee minutes demonstrate that Milne was answerable to Hill on matters relating to the construction and management of the new cemetery (c.f. Scott 2005a, 135). A biographic note from Hopkirk's life may also shed light on her elevation over the Milne family women. In her short life, Barbara Hopkirk bore a remarkable 13 children and would have spent almost all of her married life pregnant.⁹ The potent mix of her husband's elevated social status and her extraordinary embodiment of the Angel in the House model of Victorian motherhood could explain why Hopkirk was celebrated and the earlier burials ignored.

In some cases, the deceased woman might not require any name or identity at all, beyond her role in procreation. One mysterious obelisk takes the Angel in the House ideal and the veneration of motherhood to an extreme, showing only a relief carving of four mourning children, including an infant, and the inscription, "*Beloved Mother*" (Photo 3). The occupant of this grave is likely to be a woman of higher status, owing to the monument's proximity to the Knox memorial, yet she is nameless. Here we see Victorian female gender ideals essentialised to a single function, that of child-bearer. The only name present on the monument is that of its male designer, George Mossman. Researcher Diana Burns suggests that this unnamed woman is Agnes Strang, who died in childbirth in 1849, leaving behind three small children and her newborn.¹⁰ Her

⁹ Glasgow Women's Library 2011. "Necropolis Women's Heritage Walk". <https://womenslibrary.org.uk/gwl/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/GWL-Glasgow-Necropolis-Womens-Heritage-Walk-Map-PDF.pdf>

¹⁰ The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis n.d. "Agnes Strang" <https://www.glasgownecropolis.org/profiles/agnes-strang/>

husband and family have opted to elevate her in this singular role, ignoring all other information about her life, including her very name.



Photo 3. Detail of Beloved Mother/Agnes Strang marker. Photo: Vanessa Smith, 2015

While the historical record contains scant detail for the majority of the women, like Mary Ann Baxter, Barbara Hopkirk, and Agnes Strang, who are commemorated in the Necropolis, some few have been regarded as important members of Glasgow society. During their lifetimes, they were recognised as notable social players, and honoured for their philanthropy upon their deaths. Yet, even the most prominent of women were customarily commemorated in the expected manner. It is possible that there was even greater societal pressure for these influential gentlewomen and their families to conform to standard modes of commemoration, with the intersection of wealth, status, and gender binding them even more rigidly to social expectation. Two graves serve as testaments to this pattern.

At the death of her husband, John Elder, of the prosperous marine engineering firm, Randolph, Elder and Co., Isabella Ure Elder became a wealthy widow. Mobilising her social standing and economic position, she initiated a range of philanthropic projects promoting women's higher education within the University of Glasgow, as well as endowing the Elder Chair of Naval Architecture and other funds towards the Chair of

Engineering. For the people of Govan, where her husband's shipyards were located, Elder also established numerous health and educational initiatives, including building a Cottage Hospital. In 1883, she purchased land for a large open park in Govan, which she named for her husband and her father-in-law. Near the end of her life, Elder was awarded an honorary degree of L.L.D., the first woman to receive this honour. Following her death in 1905, a memorial garden and statue were placed in Elder Park as a public tribute. Highlighting her educational work and achievements, the statue depicts Elder wearing her academic robes. She is also commemorated at the University of Glasgow with a memorial window and named on the university's Memorial Quincentennial Gates.¹¹



Photo 4. Isabella Elder/Elder family tomb.
Photo: Vanessa Smith, 2015

Despite her well-known philanthropy and social presence, Isabella Elder's tomb in the Necropolis conforms with the expected standards for Victorian women's graves. She is buried in a family tomb, beside her husband John, with his name and profession paramount on the inscription (Photo 4). Below him, she is listed as "his wife". The only

¹¹ The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis n.d. "Isabella Elder" <https://www.glasgowncropolis.org/profiles/mrs-elder-pioneer/>, University of Glasgow n.d. "The University of Glasgow Story - Isabella Elder" <https://www.universitystory.gla.ac.uk/biography/?id=WH0024&type=P>

indication of her life's accomplishments and activities is the notation "L. L. D." following her name, referencing without fanfare her honorary degree.¹² This is in keeping with the commemorative style previously seen on the grave of Mary Ann Baxter, where a noteworthy portion of the inscription is dedicated to recording the deceased's husband's professional achievements.

The memorial for the three Buchanan sisters of Bellfield is another reminder that even women with access to the higher strata of society, with means and authority to orchestrate their own commemoration and legacy, may still be expected to abide by social norms. The three sisters, Margaret, Jane, and Elizabeth, were the daughters of George Buchanan of Woodlands, a well-to-do Glasgow merchant. The three, known collectively as the 'Misses Buchanan of Bellfield', never married and outlived their parents and three bachelor brothers.

With their inherited wealth, the sisters supported various charitable causes. Their joint will, called the 'Buchanan Bequest', endowed monies for ecclesiastical student bursaries, the founding of a hospital for the poor and indigent, as well as other supports for the disadvantaged, and the donation of their former estate at Bellfield for use as a publicly accessible library. Their activities also included estate planning and arrangements for their eventual deaths and commemoration. In their bequest, the Buchanan sisters left £10, 000 to the Merchants' House specifically to ensure the maintenance of their tomb in perpetuity. This preparation suggests that they had a direct hand in selecting how they wished to be commemorated. Their crypt is large and placed in a desirable area of the Necropolis, with the entrance marked by two veiled urns. Inside, a decorative plaque simply states: "*The burying place of/Mary, Jane and Elizabeth Buchanan/of Bellfield./in the county of Ayr/Daughters of George Buchanan, Esq. of Woodlands/Merchant in Glasgow*" (Photo 5). The evidence indicates that the Misses Buchanan had free rein to memorialise themselves, their lives, and their philanthropic works however they desired. Their various bequests suggest they were not reticent about making their specific wishes

¹² The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis n.d. "Isabella Elder" <https://www.glasgow-necropolis.org/profiles/mrs-elder-pioneer/>

known. Nevertheless, their grave inscription reads modestly, omitting even their birth and death dates. The words demurely avoid any mention of their beneficence, and primarily serve to connect them to their father and his place in Glasgow's social world.¹³



Photo 5. Misses Buchanan plaque inside Buchanan tomb. Photo: Vanessa Smith, 2015

Corlinda Lee, 'Queen of the Gipsies'¹⁴

A pair of graves in a less prominent location of the Necropolis demonstrate the ways one family effectively sidestepped many of the Victorian expectations surrounding femininity and appropriate female activities, family roles, and structure, both in life and in death. These memorials resist preferred burial convention while continuing to move within the constraints of expected Victorian commemoration. The larger of the two memorials marks the grave of Corlinda Lee (Photo 6). While much of the inscription employs conventional references to her status as the "beloved wife of George Smith" and her

¹³ The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis n.d. "Buchanan Sisters". <https://www.glasgowneecropolis.org/profiles/buchanan-sisters/>

¹⁴ The terms 'Gipsy' or 'Gipsies' or, more frequently, 'Gypsy/Gypsies' are considered offensive by modern Roma/Romani groups. See, for example, 'Gypsy' in the European Roma Rights Centre terminology guide <http://www.errc.org/cikk.php?cikk=4840>. This language is only included when the term has been used in a historical context, e.g. the epitaph on Corlinda Lee's grave marker, and reflects the diversity of spellings in use during the period.

relationship to her “beloved son”, who predeceased her and is buried in the adjoining plot, she is first and foremost identified as the “Queen of the Gypsies”. This is a startling departure from the Angel in the House norms and serves to highlight her activities as a woman who moved well outside of the domestic realm.



Photo 6. Corlinda Lee grave marker.
Photo: Vanessa Smith, 2015

In life, Lee was born Kurlinda Lee in 1831, into a prominent English Traveller family. When she married George Smith in 1865, the union merged two important Traveller lines. Despite the prestige of her new husband’s family, Lee continued to use her original surname.¹⁵

Lee and Smith toured under the title ‘King and Queen of the Gypsies’, hosting ‘Gypsy Balls’ around the country where, for a fee, curious visitors were welcomed to view the caravans, attend a dance, or have their fortune told.¹⁶ Lee reputedly once read the fortune of Queen Victoria when the Queen and her entourage passed near the festive encampment in Scotland.¹⁷ The inscription on Lee’s grave marker goes on to reference

¹⁵ Curiously, her husband, George Smith, used his mother’s family name of Smith, not his father’s surname as would be expected. (The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis - Corlinda Lee profile, n.d.)

¹⁶ Borrow’s Gypsies Blog 2010. “Corlinda Lee: a star attraction at Glasgow’s Necropolis” <https://borrowsgypsies.wordpress.com/2010/07/28/corlinda-lee-a-star-attraction-at-glasgows-necropolis/>

¹⁷ The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis n.d. “Corlinda Lee <https://www.glasgow-necropolis.org/profiles/corlinda-lee/>

her alternative lifestyle and suggest tensions related to Lee's outsider status: "*Her love for her children was great and she was charitable to the poor/Wherever she pitched her tent she was loved and respected by all*". Despite this, Lee was still enough of a Victorian woman to be given a proper burial with headstone in the socially expected locale of the Necropolis. When first erected, the monument featured a bronze plaque of the deceased, now missing. This image also acts as a contrarian gesture. Amidst the numerous male busts, plaques, and statues, the only female faces in the Necropolis belong to the stylised angels, not as the representations of the interred women. Indeed, there appears to be no other woman commemorated with her own image anywhere in the main sections of the Necropolis. Like Corlinda Lee herself, this grave is unique.

The smaller monument to the right of Corlinda Lee's marks the grave of her son, Ernest. One of Lee's eight children, Ernest died in 1898, at the age of 27. Of particular note is the change in convention and voice on this grave's inscription, which reads: "In loving memory of my dear husband, Ernest Smith" and below his birth and death dates "Erected by his wife". This phrasing is a striking departure from the expected customs of commemoration. While the wife is nameless, it is unusual to see an inscription speaking in a female voice. The act of commissioning a headstone and directing the carving in this unexpected style of wording expresses a level of resistance to expected gendered roles in mourning and commemoration.

As an interesting footnote to this case study, there is evidence for present-day social interactions with the Corlinda Lee grave. When the site was visited for this study, numerous coins, both British and foreign, had been placed in the crevices of the gravestone (Photo 7). A spray of artificial flowers and a votive candle cup were also present. In a cemetery where few of the Victorian graves appear to be actively visited by family or descendants, this continued attention by cemetery visitors should be viewed as ongoing recognition of Corlinda Lee's special status and widespread appeal.



Photo 7. Detail of coins left at Corlinda Lee grave.
Photo: Vanessa Smith, 2015

Charles Tennant of St Rollox

Victorian manhood is decidedly well represented throughout the memorials of the Necropolis. Elaborate markers demonstrate appropriate expressions of masculinity and social presentation. The interred man might be sculpted as a classically styled bust, looking sober but wise. If full-figured, he may stand in a thoughtful or commanding pose. The prime example of this manner of representation is the towering representation of John Knox, around which the Necropolis was built, with numerous other examples dotting the cemetery.

In stark contrast to these representations, the memorial of Charles Tennant of St Rollox reflects resistance to expected gender representations. In this instance, Victorian ideals are contested, albeit in perhaps a less flattering manner.

Charles Tennant was a prominent Glasgow industrialist and inventor. With his partners, Tennant pioneered a chemical bleaching process that revolutionised the industry. The

massive 455-foot chimney at his St Rollox factory became a local landmark and the sprawling site was the largest chemical plant in Europe by 1799 (Blair 1857, 161). While Tennant and his business associates prospered, chemical exposure at his factories was known to be detrimental to the health of his employees, with contemporary accounts calling the ailing workers ‘Tennant’s White Mice’.¹⁸

Upon his death in 1838, Tennant was interred in a prominent location in the Necropolis, his grave marked with an impressively large white marble and granite marker. In stark contrast to the idealised male portraits around him, the Tennant tomb features a large figure of the industrialist slouched in a seat, appearing inebriated, unwell, or despondent (Photo 8). The inscription informs us that the marker was: “*Erected by a few of his friends as a tribute of respect*”. As the axiom goes, the dead don’t bury themselves, and it is challenging to comprehend the motivations of Tennant’s friends, who commissioned this marker to him. A cynical interpretation of this statue and text suggests that these unnamed friends are using the monument to undermine aspects of Tennant’s gendered persona in life, depicting him as lacking in an appropriately masculine stance and leaving him without an inscription describing his achievements. While Blair’s 1857 cemetery guide suggests Tennant is posed in “an attitude expressive of meditation” (161), newspaper accounts of the time were critical, commenting that the representation made Tennant look “like a casualty of the product that made his family fortune”, referencing the chemical bleaching that Tennant pioneered.¹⁹ The scale of the monument and its proximity to the prestigious and most costly area of the Necropolis near the Knox memorial speaks to Tennant’s economic and social standing in the community. Yet his colleagues have chosen to represent him in an unflattering fashion that ignores many of the expectations of Victorian masculinity and styles of appropriate burial for Glasgow’s great and good.

¹⁸ Glasgow City Council n.d., 28 “Glasgow Necropolis Heritage Trail” <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=32366&p=0>

¹⁹ Glasgow City Council n.d., 28 “Glasgow Necropolis Heritage Trail” <https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=32366&p=0>

Photo 8. Charles Tennant of St. Rollox monument. Photo: Vanessa Smith, 2015



Conclusions

This study has offered a necessarily select and brief glimpse into the gendered world of Victorian Glasgow, as it was inscribed in the landscape of the Necropolis cemetery. Choices of depiction, inscription, location, and language all offer insights into how Victorian Glasgow wished to portray their deceased relations and friends, not only as private monuments for family commemoration, but also as durable testaments instructing the visiting public on appropriate Victorian gender roles and ideology. These markers illuminate important aspects of the construction, promotion, and performance of appropriate femininity and masculinity in nineteenth-century Glasgow, as well as suggesting the ways that these expectations might be resisted or subverted.

It should be noted that the small number of graves sampled here pose certain limitations to a full and representative sense of gender in Victorian Glasgow. This paper was

conceived as a single step in a wide-ranging journey, attempting to tease out select examples of how the people of the city perceived and performed gender through their funerary choices. Additionally, any study considering gender exclusively illustrates only one portion of a much larger social picture. As noted earlier, studies of gender in archaeology frequently interrelate with work considering other areas of social distinction, such as age, ethnicity, and status. When employing the grave markers present at the Necropolis, the researcher must bear in mind that only a small portion of female and male burials are memorialised in any fashion, with only 3,500 known markers for over 50,000 recorded burials.²⁰ Large numbers, of women in particular, lie in unmarked graves. There is clearly a significant divide in the experience of Victorian gender roles and assumptions, in life and in death, between the well-to-do women of status, like Isabella Elder and the Buchanan sisters, and the scores of women buried without monuments in less prominent areas of the Necropolis. And certainly the same statement can be made regarding the elite and working class men interred at the Necropolis and their associated expectations of masculinity. While this study has attempted to touch on some of these considerations, it is vital to note the issue of their absence and importance.

Going forward, a more robust methodology would incorporate both a systematic survey of all extant grave markers and their inscriptions, as well as the complete burial records for the cemetery housed at Glasgow's Mitchell Library. While only a small number of the Necropolis burials were ever marked with a lasting stone monument, every interment in the cemetery was duly documented in the burial records. Information on the deceased's age, employment, and the cost of the burial (as a proxy for economic status), as well as gender could be collected and analysed for overall commemorative trends.

Beyond a consideration of understandings of gender roles and ideology in the past, this research and future investigation also have the potential to widen modern-day perspectives on the Necropolis and its gendered landscape. At present, the majority of

²⁰ Glasgow City Council n.d., 37 "Glasgow Necropolis Heritage Trail"
<https://www.glasgow.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=32366&p=0>

research and heritage promotion for the site concentrate almost exclusively on elite male burials within the cemetery (cf. The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis - Profiles, n.d., Glasgow City Council - Glasgow Necropolis Heritage Trail, n.d., Scott 2005a, Scott 2005b). There are obvious reasons for this focus, particularly the availability of information on the lives and activities of Glasgow's celebrated 'merchant patriarchs', as well as the visual prominence and artistic merit of their elaborate tombs. Nonetheless, this emphasis ignores the lives of women and children generally, and of working class and marginalised people of all genders, who are also buried at the Necropolis. Fortunately, some community organisations are making inroads into fuller documentation of the people buried within the cemetery. The Glasgow Women's Library regularly offers guided tours of the site that highlight the biographies of Glasgow's women, and the Friends of Glasgow Necropolis organisation has begun to profile World War I burials, bridging class divisions between the deceased.²¹ Each of these approaches brings added insight into the dead of the Necropolis and through a more balanced exploration of gender and its intersections with class, age and ethnicity, we are able to gain a fuller picture of society in Victorian Glasgow.

Biographical note

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²¹ Glasgow Women's Library 2011. "Necropolis Women's Heritage Walk" <https://womenslibrary.org.uk/gwl/wp/wp-content/uploads/2011/07/GWL-Glasgow-Necropolis-Womens-Heritage-Walk-Map-PDF.pdf>, The Friends of Glasgow Necropolis n.d. "Roll of Honour" <https://www.glasgownecropolis.org/rollofhonour/>

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