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FUNERARY PRACTICES AND POLITICAL SUCCESSION: THREE REGIME TYPES

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## Introduction

This dissertation asks why in some countries death practices of rulers are politicized whereas in other countries this occurs with much less frequency. I answer this question in regard to three important types of political regimes, non-elective monarchical systems (the most common form of monarchy), Communist systems, and the modern representative democracy referred to henceforth simply as “democracy.” I use “politicization” to refer to techniques aimed at obtaining, securing or increasing support among the population or segments of the population for rulers or rivals for authority. I argue that the answer to my question lies in the system of succession employed in these regimes. Specifically, I claim that when succession occurs immediately upon the death of a ruler that ruler’s death practices will be highly politicized. This occurs as a mechanism to ensure the legitimacy of the deceased ruler’s successor. When, however, rotation in office occurs due to elections I follow the established literature in arguing that popular selection rather than death practices confer legitimacy.

Of course in democracies succession sometimes also occurs upon death rather than via elections. In this case I argue that the mechanism of the theory applies just as much as it would in a monarchy or Communist country. In other words, the issue is not the process of succession most widely practiced in different regimes, but the process practiced in the case of any given transfer of power. Therefore, the independent variable of this study is the process by which succession **occurs** in any given transfer of power. Although I have divided this study by regime type, regime type is not an independent variable in this study, but merely a set of conditions that *tend* to lead to a particular process of succession.

This study employs three variables in a way that goes against the manner in which each variable has been treated in the existing literature. Although political succession is often the subject of political science research, here I employ the process of political succession as the independent variable. Likewise, while there is a great literature on political legitimacy, here I employ political legitimacy merely as an intervening variable; in other words, I claim that different processes of political succession must be legitimized in different ways. This in turn answers the question of this dissertation, “Why are death practices sometimes politicized and sometimes not?” Although death practices, especially European practices, have been the subject of extensive social and cultural history, the question of why and under what circumstances they are politicized has yet to be clearly addressed in a comparative form.

The use of death practices to legitimize succession arises out of the lack of a clear mechanism connecting the accession of new rulers who are not popularly elected to the will of the people. It is not enough merely to declare a blood line or the decision of the Party as decisive proof of the legitimacy of a new ruler. Even loyal citizens will expect some assurance of continuity and competence. In monarchical and Communist regimes this is demonstrated in large part through death practices. This same logic applies when a democratic ruler dies in office, but, of course, this occurs much less frequently. This may seem strange or mystical, but this is true only from the point of view of the overly strict definitions of rationality that dominate Western political science.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see Robert O Keohane, *After Hegemony: Cooperation and Discord in the World Political Economy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005); James D. Fearon, "Rationalist Explanations for War," *International Organization* 49, no. 3 (Summer 1995): 379-414; James D Fearon and David D. Laitin, "Explaining Interethnic Cooperation," *American Political Science Review* 90, no.4 (December 1996): 715-735; Barbara Koremenos, Charles Lipson, and Duncan Snidal, "The Rational Design of International Institutions," *International Organization* 55, no. 4 (Autumn 2001): 761-799.



This leads to the question of how death practices are used to convey a political message. I argue that the first element of this political message is the amount of lavishness of these practices. This lavishness is meant to convey a message about the deceased. In the case of deceased rulers the message is that the deceased deserves to be honored because of his greatness during life. Although this supposed greatness involves supposed personal qualities, it conveys, first and foremost, a message about the deceased's qualities as a ruler. Of course the idea that because someone receives great honors in death they deserve them is more or less a logical fallacy. This fact however does not make this kind of symbolic argumentation unpersuasive. For one thing, the use of symbols and practices can obscure the blatant character of political messages. To give an example, at Henry VIII's funeral the effigy was dressed in the same "purple mantle, and robes of crimson velvet, adorned with miniver and ermine" as had bedecked the effigies of Henry V and Henry VII.<sup>2</sup> In this way the funeral created a visual image that both attracted through its elegance and conveyed a specific political message. This was not an attempt to hypnotize so much as to orient the observers and to make the message esthetically pleasing. It must be admitted that this is not an attempt to persuade in the sense of an academic research paper, but this does not make it irrational.

I argue instead that lavishness in this context is a form of persuasion that appeals to cultural standards both of elegance and of fairness. By elegance I mean the presentation of argument in a way that is esthetically pleasing and includes many visual and auditory elements other than mere speech. In reference to fairness I mean that such display implicitly argues that the deceased deserves to be honored because obviously people do not dress scoundrels in expensive clothing

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<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Woodward. *The Theatre of Death: The Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England, 1570-1625* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK, Rochester, NY, USA: Boydell Press, 1997), 90.

and place them in expensive and elaborate coffins and tombs. The fact that a given ruler might actually have been a scoundrel is obfuscated to the fullest extent possible.

To recap, since people expect lavish honors to be given to those who deserve them, then, bestowing such honors on a particular person is a form of argument that is directed toward praising that person. Again, I acknowledge that this manner of reasoning involves logical fallacies, but this does not make it an ineffective political strategy. The extent to which this logic will pass the breaking point is an empirical question. This question is important, but is separate from whether rulers will choose to employ this strategy in a given case. Furthermore, the fact that a given strategy will not work does not mean that a different strategy would work. It may well have been, for example, that Gorbachev's attempt to secure legitimacy through praising his predecessor Andropov was bound to be perceived as ludicrous. It does not follow, however, that Gorbachev had a more effective means at his disposal. Therefore we cannot judge the rationality of a strategy merely by whether it works in a given case. Before we can judge the effectiveness of the strategies discussed in this dissertation it is important to explain why and when they are employed. I have confined myself here to achieving the latter goal.

Since lavishness is a culturally determined concept it is not enough simply to examine the death practices of rulers. In this dissertation I also examine the death practices of the rest of the population, for two reasons. In order to establish whether the death practices for a given ruler are lavish or not these practices must be compared to the practices of the rest of the population. Henry VIII's ermine cloak, for example, would not be considered lavish if everyone of his time had been buried in an ermine cloak.

This comparison of ordinary and elite death practices leads us to the second reason for studying the death practices of the general population: I hypothesize that when lavish death practices are used to secure succession there will be some political controls to ensure that these practices are not appropriated by the general population or by classes or groups attempting to challenge the political leadership. Therefore, I also argue that, in regimes where death practices are used to secure succession, religious and ideological standards will not be applied uniformly to the death practices of the ruling strata and to the practices of ordinary people. For example, even if a country were primarily Calvinist or Presbyterian and such religion were enforced by the regime, an heir to a deceased monarch would still institute lavish elements into the obsequies. I acknowledge, however, that there probably would be less lavishness in such a monarch's funeral than in a Catholic monarch's funeral. Thus standards of lavishness in a particular culture are similar to standards for determining who is wealthy. In a country ridden with famine a person who is consistently able to eat three healthy meals a day will be considered rich, but such a person would obviously not be considered rich in Taiwan. Likewise, standards of lavishness will vary from culture to culture, but we can discover these standards through examination of the common person's funeral and burial.

## **Research design**

This dissertation is designed in such a way that it is not dependent on the existence of the modern state. By focusing on the process of succession I intend to illustrate strategies employed by rulers in polities under which different conceptions of sovereignty dominate.<sup>3</sup> In particular the case of

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<sup>3</sup> Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999); Henrik Spruyt, *The Sovereign State and its Competitors : An Analysis of Systems Change* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1994); Alexander Wendt, "Anarchy is what

the English monarchy stretches over 500 years during which time the monarchy enjoyed differing levels of political dominance. In this vein I believe that my arguments regarding monarchy should be applicable over most of human history and from poorly organized tribes with a monarchical head all the way up to the few remaining monarchical societies of today. It is true, however, that the other two types of regime covered have existed only in relatively modern times. The representative democratic republic, though having some antecedents in ancient and even early Christian Europe, is mostly a product of the modern written Constitution with its formal combinations of popular sovereignty and highly structured legal institutions.<sup>4</sup> The Communist regime is the most modern of all three, having existed only since the October Revolution of November 1917.

Even the principles of succession employed in these regimes differed greatly in their level of institutionalization. Although the British monarchy generally accepted the principle of *prima genitor* this principle was quite often violated. Indeed these violations resulted in quite interesting political gymnastics that will be discussed in the British case. The American case illustrates a highly formalized system of succession that is tied to the attempts of the Founders and future generations to enhance stability by creating legal principles that would govern not only general cases but exceptions. The Communist case, finally, illustrates the dominance of an informal principle of succession over legal principles often not intended to be followed.

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States Make of it: The Social Construction of Power Politics,” *International Organization*, 46: no. 2 (Spring, 1992): 412-16.

<sup>4</sup> Thomas L. Pangle, *The Spirit of Modern Republicanism: the Moral Vision of the American Founders and the Philosophy of Locke* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988); Edmund S. Morgan, *Inventing the People: the Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America* (New York: Norton, 1988).

The second aspect of this dissertation which separates it from many other political science and historical studies is the comparison of ordinary death practices to the practices of the political rulers. As I have stressed before this method will provide a baseline by which the meaning of elite practices can be interpreted. This is important not only for distinguishing between the political and the mundane, but also for showing how elite death practices would have been understood by the contemporary populace. Of course this cannot indicate whether such messages were accepted or rejected, but it can tell us what message the rulers meant or mean to convey.

This dissertation assumes merely that rulers upon assuming office wish to have their rule accepted as legitimate by as much of the citizenry as possible. Citizenry, in this sense, may not be synonymous with population but is not at all limited to those with political influence. For example, I accept that the vast majority of the Soviet population had citizenship, even though their role in the political process was limited. I merely exclude those groups such as slaves or serfs whom the political system more or less explicitly claims not to represent.

### **Plan of the dissertation**

This dissertation contains six chapters. In Chapter II I set out the theory in detail and explain the causal mechanisms contained in the theory. I review the political science approach to the study of political legitimacy and forward a theory of how and under what circumstances death practices are used to legitimate succession. In Chapter III I examine the case of monarchical England from 1307 to 1837. This long time frame allows me to control for both major cultural changes and political and social upheaval that might plausibly have altered the level and nature of politicization of death practices.

In Chapter IV I explore the case of the Soviet Union. Here I explain how Marxism-Leninism and the political needs of the Soviet regime were at cross purposes in regard to death practices and how this resulted in radically different approaches for ordinary and elite death practices. Also, in contrast to other English language works, I give a complete, though not overly detailed, picture of how ordinary Soviet citizens experienced funerals and burials. In Chapter V I review the case of the United States of America from its founding to the present day. The sheer number of American presidents provides a good test for the theory's applicability to democratic countries. Although there is some notable deviation from the theory I argue that overall my thesis holds up well. In Chapter VI I summarize the findings of the dissertation and offer ways in which the theory could be expanded and tested further. In particular I point out that the theory should apply also to other forms of authoritarian rule in which there is a top official, or are top officials, who ordinarily enjoy life tenure.

## **Hypotheses**

The argument of this dissertation is based on the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1. When succession occurs upon the death of a top leader in office death practices will be used to legitimate the successor.

Hypothesis 2. Specifically, the deceased leader will be portrayed as great through lavish death practices.

Hypothesis 3. By linking themselves to their predecessors, rulers who ascend to office immediately upon the death of their predecessor and without direct popular election will seek to portray themselves as the rightful heir of the great deceased leader and thus to legitimate their new rule.

Hypothesis 4. When succession occurs following elections rather than upon the death of a ruler death practices for deceased rulers will be much less politicized, and, therefore, much less lavish.

Hypothesis 5. In countries where succession usually occurs upon the death of a ruler the death practices of top rulers will be much more lavish than those of ordinary people.

Hypothesis 6. In countries where succession usually occurs upon the death of a ruler the form and scale of death practices of ordinary people will be determined by religion or by the regime's ideology, except that such practices will conform to Hypothesis 5.

## Chapter I: Theory of the Politicization of Death Practices

In this chapter I set out my theory explaining when and why death practices are politicized. I will present a causal logic that shows why under certain circumstances we should expect death practices to be politicized, while when these circumstances do not prevail we should not expect the politicization of death practices. Specifically, when succession occurs upon the death of a ruler that ruler's death practices will be politicized by means of lavish displays. By lavish I mean "Expending or bestowing without stint or measure; unboundedly liberal or profuse; prodigal."<sup>1</sup> This lavishness can refer to any element of death practices with the exception of the size of crowds and number of attendees; I exclude these elements because they are often – albeit not always – beyond the control of those organizing the obsequies. Lavish displays serve not merely to glorify the deceased but, above all, to legitimate his successor.

In this dissertation the politicization of death practices refers to the use of these practices to lobby for political support among the population or segments of the population. Death practices are ceremonies and actions that honor the dead, provide for their disposition, and create and maintain a context in which the relationship between the dead and the living is defined. I do not mean to imply that the politicization described here is the only conceivable form in which death practices might be politicized. It is theoretically possible that death practices could be used for political ends

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<sup>1</sup> The Oxford English Dictionary Online, s.v. "lavish," accessed September 18, 2014.  
<http://www.oed.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/106392?rskey=O129N5&result=2> .



other than lobbying for support. These ends, however, are not seen in the cases discussed in this dissertation.

In this chapter I also elaborate the role the death practices of ordinary citizens play in this theory. Since lavishness is a culturally specific and exclusively comparative concept we cannot say that a ruler's obsequies were lavish without establishing a cultural baseline for death practices. This is especially true because we want to understand, to the fullest extent possible, how the political messages contained within death practices are presented to the intended audience. Therefore, by examining the death practices of ordinary people, we will more easily grasp both a context and the specific political messages contained in the death practices of rulers.

Also, by examining ordinary death practices we can understand two factors that are critical to proving the argument of this dissertation. First, since death practices contain many elements, it is only by comparing crucial aspects to societal norms that we can see the specific undercurrents contained in any given element. This, in turn, allows us to understand the overall political message that is being conveyed by any given leader's obsequies. Of course we cannot know if this message is accepted or rejected but we can grasp what the political leadership is intending to convey. Crucially, this allows us not only to understand the politicization of death practices, but to explain both the nature of that politicization and the motives underlying it. Secondly, by examining ordinary death practices we can see the extent to which a regime's ideology is consistent with the way in which it politicizes death practices. This helps us to test whether the politicization of death practices is indeed provoked by the need to legitimate succession, rather than by ideological or cultural preferences.

The determining factor in my argument is the form or forms of succession practiced within a regime, not the form of regime itself. In regard to ordinary death practices I argue merely that within a given polity these practices will be less lavish than the practices of the highest officials of that country who die in office. In all three types of regimes the politicization of death practices is employed as an important strategy by new unelected rulers to glorify the old ruler, to link the deceased ruler and his heir, and, thereby, to legitimize the rule of the latter. This politicization seeks to elevate both the deceased ruler and the successor or successors above the level of those over whom they ruled or will rule. By doing so, the new authorities argue for the legitimacy of their rule by directly linking their authority to a supposedly great predecessor.

I assert that the degree and nature of politicization depends upon the differing forms of succession to office and the fact that these forms require differing modes of legitimation. In general, modern democratic republics seek to legitimize succession in office by reference to standards for expressing the will of the people through elections. I assert, however, that when death in office occurs in democracies this leads to lavish politicized death practices just as it does in many types of undemocratic regimes. Non-elective monarchies and Communist systems rely on rank within a corporate entity – be it a family or party -- to determine what Goody calls “succession to high office.”<sup>2</sup> By corporate entity I mean a hierarchical group distinct both from the mass of the polity, on the one hand, and not coterminous with a particular ruler, on the other. Such entities are themselves headed by an individual or a small group of individuals with higher rank than the other members of the entity. Not all of these entities control a polity, but all seek to do so. For example,

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<sup>2</sup> Jack Goody, “Introduction,” in *Succession to High Office*, ed. Jack Goody (Cambridge: Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at the Cambridge University Press, 1966).

throughout history there have been various royal houses that do not actively govern anything but that claim the right to rule over this or that polity.

This concept is a broader form of the phenomenon identified by Kantorowicz as *The King's Two Bodies*. Kantorowicz explains that medieval European monarchies developed political theology to deal with the discontinuity caused by a king's death. According to this explanation the king had two bodies, his body natural that perished with each individual king and his body politic that was eternal.<sup>3</sup> The King's Two Bodies is only a particular, though important, manifestation of the corporateness of monarchies and the role this plays in succession.<sup>4</sup> This corporateness, while existing in many different societies and across time, is not always the subject of theorizing or legal justification. This, however, is primarily descriptive and should not be seen to limit the theory to polities controlled by corporate entities. For example, a dictatorship centered on a single individual with no prominent party or similar political structure should still exhibit the behavior predicted by this theory so long as succession in this hypothetical dictatorship occurs upon the death of a ruler in office. Also, it will be seen in Chapter 3 that theories such as those of Kantorowicz often exaggerate the complexity of royal practices.

Regimes can face significant difficulties in maintaining their popular approval following the death of a ruler in office. Death is not like retirement in that it not only removes the possessor of authority but undermines the notion of continuity by demonstrating the susceptibility of the powerful. The

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<sup>3</sup> Ernst Hartwig Kantorowicz, *The King's Two Bodies: A Study in Mediaeval Political Theology* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1957).

<sup>4</sup> For example, see Adrian C. Myer, "The King's Two Thrones," *Man: New Series* 20, no.2 (June 1985): 205-211.

specter of the death of the embodiment of the public order also presents the uncomfortable possibility of the death of the order itself.

Again, the key to the politicization of death practices in all three regimes is the degree of lavish honors that are employed. Although whether a particular death practice will be deemed lavish varies widely among societies, some common markers include size of ceremony, location, amount of ornamentation, style of coffin, size and location of interment site, and so forth. Within a given society, it is feasible to determine which funerary customs are considered more or less lavish, but these distinctions may not carry over to other cultures. For example, in pre-Christian Scandinavia it was apparently considered prestigious to be buried with a horse or ship, and sled burial was practiced in Russia up to and during the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> In each case study I set forth the elements of lavish death practices in the given society.

The first goal of such lavishness is to overshadow any perceived flaw in the previous rulers and to establish as much as possible a consensus that the deceased was a great and just ruler who deserved the honors being accorded. With this goal achieved, the second goal is to establish by implication that the successor to office is also a successor to the greatness of the previous ruler. Succession parallels other conceptions of immortality -- so central to funerary practices -- by perpetuating both a myth of a grand past and a public lineage tracing that past into the future.

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<sup>5</sup> Maeve Sikora, "Diversity in Viking Age Horse Burial: A Comparative Study of Norway, Iceland, Scotland and Ireland," *The Journal of Irish Archaeology* 12-13 (2003-2004): 87-109; U. Loumand, "The Horse and its Role in Icelandic Burial Practices, Mythology, and Society," in *Old Norse Religion in Long-Term Perspectives: Origins, Changes, and Interactions*, eds. Anders Andrén, Kristina Jennbert and Catharina Raudvere (Lund: Nordic Academic Press, 2006): 130-133. On sled burials see M. I. Vasilev, "Sanii v Russkom Pogrebal'nom Obriade: Istoriia Izucheniya i Problema Interpretatsii," *Etnograficheskoe Obozrenie* 4 (2008): 151-164.

So far the theory as presented may seem somewhat circular, since we have only a series of successors, but it is not clear how this process could begin in a particular polity. Furthermore, there are undoubtedly many situations in which a new ruler does not wish to use his predecessor to legitimate his rule, either because that predecessor was so widely deemed illegitimate that no rituals could undo this, or, more often, because the new ruler is not positively connected to the previous one in any plausible way. Similarly, a new ruler may feel his programs cannot be accomplished without a complete repudiation of his predecessor. Under these and perhaps other circumstances the new rulers have recourse to two alternative modes of legitimacy that are still based in reverence for the dead. The first of these is to make use of or create a myth of an heroic founder whose aura could be used to argue for the legitimacy of a whole line of rulers. A second, related, mode of legitimacy which can and does in practice sometimes overlap with the first is to tie oneself to a ruler farther back in time and to literally exhume this ruler for the purpose of a ceremonial reburial. Other honors, such as erecting a new funerary monument, can be used either in combination with reburial or as an alternative. The practice of reburial attempts to symbolically right a wrong that has been said to have been done to a past ruler. This wrong is generally a lack of proper respect having been paid to the deceased. By exhuming such a ruler the current leadership can not only hope to benefit from the honor given the deceased but can also attempt to establish for themselves a reputation of justice insofar as they have finally given the deceased the honors due to him.<sup>6</sup>

It is possible, on the other hand, to repudiate ones predecessor when necessary by means of exhumation and the administration of some sort of post mortem chastisement. For example, Paul I of Russia exhumed both his father and mother for the purpose of dethroning Catherine the Great,

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<sup>6</sup> See especially Chapter III, Monarchical Britain 1307-1837.

recrowning his deceased father Peter III and thus tying his succession and descendants to his paternal lineage.<sup>7</sup> Similarly, during English political struggles it was not uncommon for various factions to exhume and “execute” or otherwise “punish” their deceased opponents.<sup>8</sup> A parallel was the Soviet destruction in the 1920’s of cemeteries located on the grounds of monasteries.<sup>9</sup>

My theory of the politicization of rulers’ death practices of the political elite does not depend on either the elite’s ideology or their religious beliefs. Although I do not deny that a polity’s religion and culture contribute certain elements to elite death practices, I do not believe that these are determining factors. It cannot be denied that religion and other cultural and social habits shape the form of death practices, but I argue that political elites do not allow mores to prevent them from establishing death practices that are differentiated by degree, that is, more lavish than ordinary death practices. In other words, elite death practices can share symbols with ordinary death practices even under monarchies, but these symbols will be displayed in a more lavish manner.

In democracies, on the other hand, when succession occurs following election rather than upon death in office, I argue that religious and other standards for the conducting of death practices are more universally adhered to and that distinctions between ordinary and political death rituals are less pronounced. I cannot deny that there are some distinctions between the deaths of political figures who do not die in office and ordinary citizens. I argue, though, that these differences are much less pronounced and therefore attract less attention and are less politically salient. All this

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<sup>7</sup> Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995), 173.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Loma Clymer, “Cromwell’s Head and Milton’s Hair: Corpse Theory in Spectacular Bodies of the Interregnum,” *The Eighteenth Century* 40, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 91-112.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter III.

helps to ensure that the degree of lavishness contained in a given set of obsequies will reflect rather than contradict degrees of honor accorded for the purpose of maintaining the political hierarchy.

In Communist countries, in contrast, there is a distinction between elite and ordinary practices as in monarchies, but laws and government-endorsed mores dealing with ordinary death practices are determined primarily by the ideology of Marxism-Leninism, rather than by the evolution of cultural and religious norms. I would like to note, however, that Communist beliefs regarding the deaths of ordinary citizens are not really a separate category but are only a part of Communism's overall ideological struggle against religion. Nonetheless, the fact that even Communists cannot deny some human need for consolation does require a somewhat different approach to ordinary death practices than to other aspects of the anti-religious struggle.

In theory, the approach to ordinary death practices in Communist countries is similar to the approach to other kinds of ceremonies such as weddings, that is, to replace religious customs with customs that are believed to support the adoption of a Marxist-Leninist world view. In practice, however, the replacement of traditional death practices with Communist ones has led many Communist authorities primarily to focus on eliminating old death practices rather than on building new ones. These factors help to explain why the Communist approach to ordinary death practices was much less consistent and enjoyed less success than the promulgation of death practices for the elite.

My argument draws on the insights of those who have argued that ritual is an important but neglected aspect of even modern politics. According to this view, rituals can be used not only to express power status but also to express specific political messages that are important either to the

regime or to certain political actors.<sup>10</sup> Although this runs counter to the rationalist tilt of much of social science, it should not be seen as an irrational or psychological approach. These rituals may not be merely a form of hypnosis, but can also be an effective way to convey certain political arguments or facts, as I have stressed before. These arguments include the continuity of the regime and the greatness of political leaders linked both to successors and to the regime. Of course, while monuments and other media such as eulogies also convey these messages, ritual can be an especially subtle and effective mechanism.

Ritual displays such as funerals are used to demonstrate consent on the part of those participating because they seem to have chosen to integrate themselves within the display of power taking place. Furthermore these rituals have a broader impact because those who participate are said to be capable of giving some form of consent or approbation on the part of a larger constituency. This larger constituency need not be explicit, but officials can be said to have some larger backing even if this is not a constituency in the formal or legal sense.<sup>11</sup>

## **Death Practices**

The dependent variable of this study is the degree and nature of politicization of death practices. This study is primarily concerned with how and why regimes politicize death practices, but actors outside of the regime can also politicize death practices for their own ends. Indeed, death practices

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<sup>10</sup> See, for example Wortman, *Scenarios of Power*; Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages*, ed. Sean Wilentz (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 13-40.

<sup>11</sup> David Beetham, *The Legitimation of Power (Issues in Political Theory)* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 16-19.



often play a part in challenges to a regime. For example, Lenin used the 1905 funeral of Nikolai Bauman to attempt to motivate laborers to revolt against the Tsar.<sup>12</sup>

While the current study is concerned with the extent to which these practices are or are not interwoven with politics, most literature on death practices takes a sociological approach. One of the main focuses of the extant literature has been the debate regarding the extent to which modern Western societies have a uniquely unhealthy approach to death which has been dubbed

“the denial of death.”<sup>13</sup> Most participants in this debate implicitly apply a model of an independent civil society that seems to be little impacted by political forces.<sup>14</sup>

The use of death practices to convey political or other messages is not limited to ritual but also includes what has been dubbed “material culture.” This line of scholarship explains how rituals and practices are interconnected with memory of the deceased “through material forms and as part of social and cultural processes.”<sup>15</sup> Material culture can be especially useful for the politicizing of

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<sup>12</sup> Vladimir Dmitrievich Serykh, *Voinskie ritualy* (Moscow: Voenskoe izdatel'stvo, 1986), 196-97.

<sup>13</sup> Outstanding in this discussion proposing the concept of death denial as a cultural issue in the West is Phillippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, trans. Helen Weaver, 1<sup>st</sup> American ed. (New York: Knopf, 1981). Ernest Becker, *The Denial of Death* (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1973) provides psychoanalytical explanations for death denial. Geoffrey Gorer underscores the psychological issues related to death denial in *Grief and Mourning in Contemporary Britain* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1965). Countering these authors, some have argued that belief in the prevalence of the denial of death is based on conjecture and sloppy methodology, or is just mistaken. See Tony Walter, “Modern Death: Taboo or Not Taboo,” *Sociology* 25 no. 2 (May, 1991): 293-310 and Allen Kellehear, “Are We a Death-denying Society? A Sociological Review,” *Social Science & Medicine* 18, no. 9 (1984): 713-723.

<sup>14</sup> See, for example, John Seery, *Political Theory for Mortals: Shades of Justice, Images of Death* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1996), 28. Seery says, “Civil society, separate from the state, in fact supports a profusion of alternatives for imagining and negotiating with the prospect of death.”

<sup>15</sup> Elizabeth Hallam and Jenny Hockey, *Death, Memory, and Material Culture* (Oxford, New York: Berg, 2001). See also Richard Jenkins, *Social Identity* (London, New York: Routledge, 2008); William Outhwaite and Larry Ray, *Social Theory and Postcommunism* (Malden, MA :

the deaths of officials because it can convey important political messages without being so direct as to appear blatantly cynical.

This study will especially stress ways in which distinctions in death practices convey distinctions in political status. Although this topic has been explored,<sup>16</sup> by comparing these distinctions across countries and regime types we will be able to see more clearly the difference between politically salient funerary distinctions and the conveying of social and cultural status. Specifically I will show how lavishness in death practice marks off certain members of a polity for political adoration.

## **Succession**

The independent variable of this study is the process of political succession to high office. The question of how succession occurs is linked to the principles on which a regime rests. Nonetheless, in some regimes, especially modern democratic republics, there is more than one principle of succession. For our purposes we can dichotomize the process of succession as succession occurring after the death of a ruler in office as against all other processes of succession.

In monarchies succession reflects not the sovereignty of the people but the role of the leading family or families. Goody identifies four types of royal houses, each with its own system of

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Blackwell, 2005); Harold Mytum, *Mortuary Monuments and Burial Grounds of the Historic Period* (New York : Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers, 2004); John Bodnar, *Remaking America : Public Memory, Commemoration, and Patriotism in the Twentieth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1992); John R. Gillis, ed., *Commemorations : The Politics of National Identity* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994); Susan-Mary Grant, "Raising the Dead: War, Memory and American National identity," *Nations and Nationalism* 11, no. 4 (October 2005): 509-529.

<sup>16</sup> Thomas A. Kselman, *Death and the Afterlife in Modern France* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

succession.<sup>17</sup> I argue that death practices are crucial for legitimizing succession in all of these dynastic structures. In Communist countries life tenure in office for the highest officials is not *de jure* principle as in most monarchical systems, but generally a *de facto* political reality. This, however, is not always the case, but this dissertation does not at all seek to explain why a regime employs one process of succession instead of others. Therefore, my argument is not contradicted by the existence of Communist countries where succession does not occur upon death, but according to some other principle.

Not all monarchies employ systems of life tenure, though most do. Abdications do occur. Therefore, we can essentially view succession in this study as a dichotomous variable that occurs either following elections or upon the death of someone in office. Obviously, the variable is not perfectly dichotomous in real life, but it approaches this enough in this study to render this generalization valid. As with legitimacy, it is more common to employ succession as a dependent variable, but that is not the purpose of this study.

## Legitimacy

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<sup>17</sup> Four types of royal houses and their systems of succession: “(a) The stem dynasty, with the possibility of only a limited degree of lateral succession, combined with a radical elimination that places the monarch in lone control but bereft of a support and therefore liable to fall under the sway of his troops or his officers of state (e.g. Turkey, late nineteenth-century Buganda). (b) The familial dynasty (e.g. post-Norman England) with dynastic shedding (royalty to nobility), with male office holders but a bilateral emphasis that opens up the possibility of female kings. Only a limited degree of lateral succession is possible. (c) Dynastic descent groups (e.g. Gonja, Hausa, Lozi). These are largely political in character and are often made up of the descendants of an invading army who maintain their claim to office by ties of descent; these ties are of minor importance for the population at large, which in the above cases is 'bilateral'. Such dynasties are often non-exogamous in character. (d) Royal descent groups (e.g. Ashanti, Yoruba, Southern Bantu), where the dynasty is but one of a number of similar groups. This implies greater cultural homogeneity than in the case of dynastic descent groups, since the UDG's have a wider range of function that may include property rights, exogamy, and ancestor worship, with the royal ancestors being propitiated on behalf of the kingdom as a whole.” Goody, 45-46.

The intervening variable in this study is the different forms of legitimation necessitated by different processes of succession. In this section I discuss the concept of legitimacy in the study of politics. Although legitimacy seems to be a rather straightforward concept, there is a wide range of approaches to the study of political legitimacy. Most modern scholars have taken Weber as their starting point for an elucidation of the concept of legitimacy. Weber argued that a legitimate order “enjoys the prestige of being considered binding.” Weber proposed a four-type schema of legitimacy.<sup>18</sup> I believe, however, that for our analytical purposes the model I shall employ is more useful.

It is possible to divide the literature into four broad approaches. Although one could identify many areas of agreement and disagreement most approaches can be classified as to the level of the political structure being analyzed. Broadly speaking, these levels are 1) the state itself; 2) the regime; 3) the leadership of the regime or elites, in a broad sense; and finally 4) the legitimacy of day-to-day policies pursued. Although this is not a study of legitimacy as such, I employ the second and third levels of legitimacy here identified to explain variations in the politicization of death practices across different types of political systems.

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<sup>18</sup> Max Weber, “The Fundamental Concepts of Sociology,” in *Max Weber: The Theory of Social and Economic Organization*, A. M. Henderson and Talcott Parsons trans. (Glencoe, IL: Free Press, 1947), 125. Weber’s four types are “(a) By tradition; a belief in the legitimacy of what has always existed; (b) by virtue of affectual attitudes, especially emotional, legitimizing the validity of what is newly revealed or a model to imitate; (c) by virtue of a rational belief in its absolute value, thus lending it the validity of an absolute and final commitment; (d) because it has been established in a manner which is recognized to be legal. This legality may be treated as legitimate in either of two ways: on the one hand, it may derive from a voluntary agreement of the interested parties on the relevant terms. On the other hand, it may be imposed on the basis of what is held to be a legitimate authority over the relevant persons and a corresponding claim to their obedience.” 130.

The first of the four levels of analysis of legitimacy commonly employed aims to analyze the state as a separate autonomous entity that can be perceived as legitimate or illegitimate.<sup>19</sup> Analysis of the legitimacy of the state, while useful in some contexts, suffers from many practical and conceptual flaws. In the first place, if the state is thought of as an entity existing in some way independently of the regime, this does not prove that the populace in general has a concept of *state* that is separate from the concept *the government*. In certain situations, of course, such as nationalist and separatist movements, the populace or parts of the populace may come to see a particular state as such, for example, Czechoslovakia or Yugoslavia, as an illegitimate entity. Not only are these situations more rare, however, but also it is almost certain that in these circumstances the populace would also view the political regime that controls the state as illegitimate. Therefore, I believe that this level of analysis presents too many conceptual difficulties and too little benefit to be of great use.

The second level of analysis, that is, of the regime, has been employed commonly from at least the time of classical Greek philosophy to the present day. According to this approach we can identify different types of legitimation that have been applied or should be applied to different political systems. Russell presents a concise explanation of this approach: “A regime is legitimate when its constituents believe—whether because of ideological solidarity, patriotism, nationalism, or good

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<sup>19</sup> See for example, Rodney Barker, *Political Legitimacy and The State* (Oxford: Clarendon Press ; New York : Oxford University Press, 1990); Bruce Gilley, “The Meaning and Measure of State Legitimacy: Results for 72 Countries,” *European Journal of Political Research* 45, no. 3 (2006): 499–525; John A. Rohr, *To Run a Constitution: The Legitimacy of the Administrative State* (Lawrence, KS.: University Press of Kansas, 1986); *Legitimacy and The State*, ed. William Connolly (New York: New York University Press, 1984); A John Simmons, “Justification and Legitimacy,” *Ethics* 109, no. 4 (July 1999): 739–771; Giandomenico Majoneab, “The Regulatory State and its Legitimacy Problems,” *West European Politics* 22: no. 1 (1999): 1–24.

governance-that a government has the right to exercise authority in its regime.”<sup>20</sup> In current scholarship it is especially common to assert that democratic forms of representation lead to a higher likelihood of citizens’ identifying their regimes as legitimate.<sup>21</sup> Some, however, have criticized this approach and have argued that across political systems citizens are more interested in the results of policy than in the way in which it is formed.<sup>22</sup> The regime-centered approach lends itself both to broad studies of legitimacy and to questions of the legitimacy of a particular form of government in a particular country.<sup>23</sup> This study incorporates the regime-centered approach to legitimacy in that I argue that different forms of succession that stem from different regime types are legitimated in different ways.

The third level examines whether particular officials are viewed as legitimate possessors of authority. In monarchical systems this can be seen in questions surrounding pretenders and usurpation. This level can be combined with the second level when we ask how regimes seek to

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<sup>20</sup> Jacob Hale Russell, “Regime Legitimacy and Military Resilience: Lessons from World War II and Yugoslavia” (MA Thesis, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2008), 2.

<sup>21</sup> L.P. Feld, G. Kirchgässner, “Direct Democracy, Political Culture and the Outcome of Economic Policy,” *European Journal of Political Economy* 16 (2000): 287–306.

<sup>22</sup> Bo Rothstein, “Creating Political Legitimacy: Electoral Democracy Versus Quality of Government,” *American Behavioral Scientist* 53 (2009): 311–30; M. G. Schatzberg, “Power, legitimacy and 'democratisation' in Africa,” *Africa* 63, no. 4 (Oct. 1993): 445–461; Mitchell A. Seligson, “The Impact of Corruption on Regime Legitimacy: A Comparative Study of Four Latin American Countries,” *The Journal of Politics* 64, no. 2 (May 2002): 408–433.

<sup>23</sup> Andrew Moravcsik, “Reassessing Legitimacy in the European Union,” *CMS: Journal of Common Market Studies* 40, no. 4 (November 2002): 603–624; James L. Gibson, “Challenges to the Impartiality of State Supreme Courts: Legitimacy Theory and ‘New-Style’ Judicial Campaigns,” *American Political Science Review* 102, no.1 (Feb. 2008): 59–75; James L. Gibson, Gregory A. Caldeira, and Lester Kenyatta Spence, “Why do people accept public policies they oppose? Testing legitimacy theory with a survey-based experiment,” *Political Research Quarterly* 58, no.2 (2005): 187–201; Christopher Meyer, “Legitimacy Problems in Deliberative Democracy: Exploring the European Union’s Communication Deficit,” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 37, no. 4, (December 1999): 617–39 (see especially page 636.)

ensure that not only the regime itself but also successive possessors of high office enjoy legitimacy.<sup>24</sup>

A fourth level, that of legitimacy of government policy, is utilized especially by researchers who rely heavily on opinion data.<sup>25</sup> This approach is very hard to apply to societies where the collection of opinion data is difficult or even illegal. This approach has the drawback that it is often hard to distinguish from mere dissatisfaction with particular policies. But one must admit that continuous policy dissatisfaction may eventually lead people to see rulers as usurpers or the regime as illegitimate. In any case, this approach has practically no relevance to this study.

### **Theoretical Model**

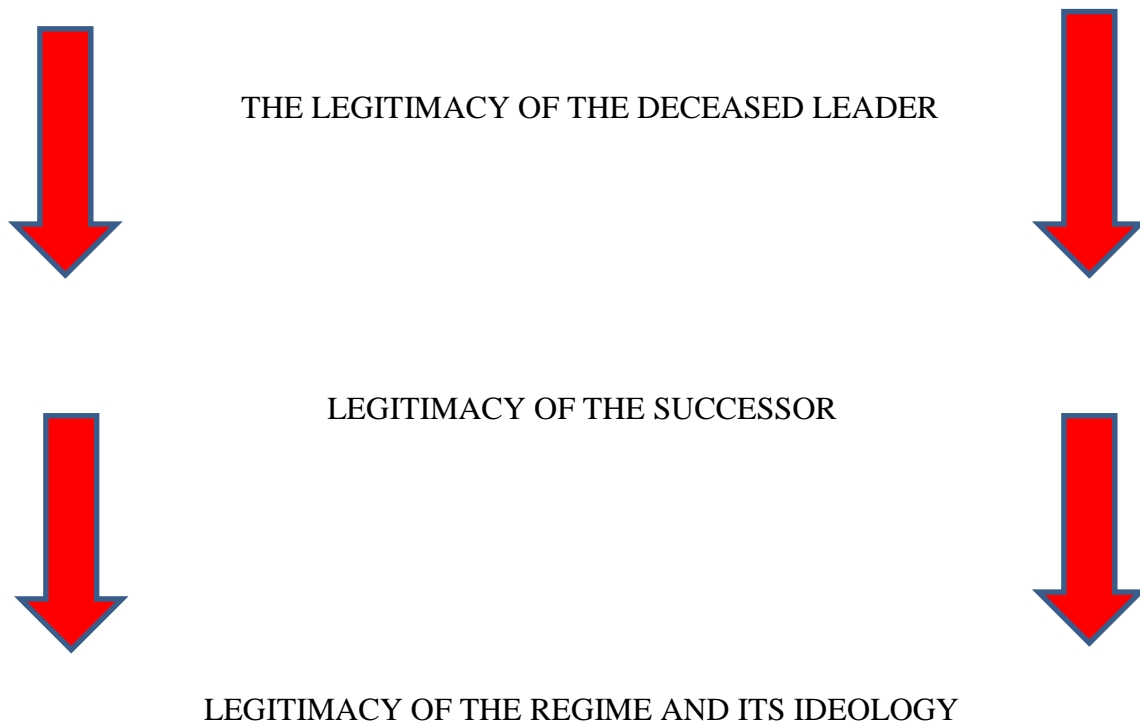
Here I present a more specific model of the use of death practices to legitimate succession upon death in office. My model of the way in which death practices are used to transmit legitimacy to successors and to reinforce the regime is based on Easton's model.

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<sup>24</sup> Jean-Marc Coicaud. and David Ames Curtis, *Legitimacy and Politics : A Contribution to the Study of Political Right and Political Responsibility* (Cambridge, UK ; New York, USA: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

<sup>25</sup> Ronald Rogowski, *Rational Legitimacy: A Theory of Political Support* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1974; Bruce Gilley, "The Determinants of State Legitimacy: Results for 72 Countries," *International Political Science Review* 27, no. 1 (January 2006): 47-71; Yunhan Chu, Michael Bratton, Marta Lagos, Sandeep Shastri, and Mark Tessler, "Public Opinion and Democratic Legitimacy," *Journal of Democracy* 19, no. 2 (April 2008): 74-87; M. Stephen Weatherford, "Measuring Political Legitimacy," *The American Political Science Review* 86, no. 1 (March 1992): 149-166; Bert Useem and Michael Useem, "Government Legitimacy and Political Stability," *Social Forces* 57, no. 3 (1979): 840-852.

FIGURE 1. MODEL OF LEGITIMATION OF SUCCESSION  
THROUGH DEATH PRACTICES.



Easton divided legitimacy into three types: Ideological, Structural and Personal Qualities. According to Easton, legitimacy could overflow from one type to another in the direction of ideological to structural to personal. Overflow is achieved through association, both explicit and symbolic.<sup>26</sup> In the case of death practices I propose to rearrange the process and to argue that personal legitimacy is passed from one generation to the next. Personal legitimacy then “overflows” to legitimize the ideology of the regime, which then is used to justify the regime structure itself. This model is a combination of the second level (regime) and third level (personal / leader) approaches discussed above. The model is summarized in Figure I. below.

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<sup>26</sup> David Easton, *A Systems Analysis of Political Life* (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965).



A typical example would run as follows: A deceased leader is portrayed through lavish death practices as having been great. This greatness is transmitted via symbols, and sometimes by explicit claims contained within death practices, to his successor, who is said to share the ideology both of the deceased and of the regime. The deceased, therefore, both legitimizes the successor and the ideology that is said to motivate their actions. This also is used to legitimize the regime that has allowed for or has produced such great leaders. The greatness of the deceased, is not merely assumed, but is argued for through the lavishness of the death practices dedicated to him or her.

## **Conclusion**

This chapter has set forth a theory of the degree of politicization of death practices under Communist, monarchical and democratic regimes. I have argued that while the death practices of ordinary citizens are generally not the subject of politicization, those of the ruling strata in Communist and monarchical regimes have special political importance. I have argued that this is also true in democracies when rulers die in office. This importance derives from the fact that succession upon death in office is not directly linked to mechanisms for expression of popular approval. As a result, new rulers who take power upon the death of their predecessors seek first to glorify the deceased through lavish death practices and then to have that claimed greatness overflow to themselves and, if possible, to the regime itself. This process attempts to guarantee the legitimacy of each succession in the hope that citizens come to believe in a perfect chain of just and great rulers stretching back to the founders of the regime. Finally, I argue that in order to understand the political messages contained in the death practices of successive rulers we must compare these practices to those of the ordinary populace. Without this comparison the death practices of the elite would be extremely difficult to interpret.

## **Chapter II: Monarchical Britain 1307-1837**

This chapter examines the degree and nature of the politicization of death practices in Monarchical England from the death of Edward I in 1307 to the death of William IV in 1837. I have chosen this time period, first, because Edward I was the first king to secure monarchical supremacy over the Isle. Secondly, William IV's death marks a valid end to this chapter since during the reign of his successor Victoria Britain formally instituted its modern Constitutional Monarchy.

I argue here that the nature of succession to office practiced in Monarchical England led to a highly differentiated set of death practices that sought to underline and legitimize the transfer of authority from one generation to the next. This focus on succession was evident not only in the practices of the monarchy, but also throughout the rites of the hereditary aristocracy. This differentiation, which extended all the way down the ranks of British society, was marked by varying degrees of honors for the dead according to their rank. While religion was important to these practices it was political exploitation of death practices that ultimately determined this differentiation.

Funerary distinctions were key to legitimizing the claims of new monarchs throughout this period. The displays of funerary splendor gave notice of the relative political status of each section of society. The crucial elements that determined whether death practices were or were not lavish in this case were the following:

1. The nature of the clothing in which the deceased was buried, or whether the corpse was dressed at all.

2. The symbolic and decorative nature of goods used to enhance the display of the corpse, or placed on or around the site of interment.
3. The type or style of coffin, if any, in which the deceased was placed. Also, the style of the hearse or other objects used to enhance the display of the coffin and /or the corpse.
4. The nature and amount of display employed in obsequies. Especially important in this regard were the order of ceremonies, the regulation of mourners, and the regulation of clothing and symbolic objects used in the obsequies.
5. The size and nature of the place of interment. The degree of individualization in this regard was also an important marker of status throughout most of the time period examined in this chapter.

In this case, lavish and complex practices bestowed varying degrees of honor on deceased persons according to their rank in the English monarchical-aristocratic order. These honors were strictly determined by hereditary rank and not by the amount of wealth individuals were able to amass. Although the most complex of these distinctions were contained in the funeral, political importance also was attached to the building of monuments, the reburial of various individuals, and attacks on the corpses or graves of political opponents.

Through an examination of the death practices of the various ranks of British society we shall see how these distinctions functioned in practice and how they served the goal of legitimizing succession to hereditary political status. In the following sections I present the contrast between politicized and ordinary death practices. This is done so that the amount of lavishness contained in monarchical death practices can be compared against the death practices of the rest of society. Furthermore, without comparing ordinary death practices to those of the elite the claim that the latter's practices were politicized through lavishness is unprovable.

This case is divided into time periods corresponding to the rule of each dynasty.

## THE HOUSE OF PLANTAGENET

In the reign of Henry III and before, the English aristocracy repeatedly attempted to compete with the monarchy for prestige and allegiance. One means the aristocracy used to compete with the monarchy was the employment of lavish death practices emphasizing the barons' claims to political authority as against those of the crown. The barons succeeded in limiting monarchical authority at times. Over time, however, the barons lacked the resources and prestige to contend for public attention against royal funerary practices.<sup>1</sup> In this sense the resources of the Crown helped it to create lavish death practices, but this does not mean that the Crown's wealth was itself the cause of the extent of the practices, as will be seen.

In 1291, Edward I reburied his father and predecessor Henry III – who had been interred in the old tomb of Edward the Confessor at the time of Henry's lavish funeral in 1272 -- at Westminster Abbey.<sup>2</sup> The new and ornate tomb, complete with a detailed full-sized bronze effigy, signaled Edward's desire to use Henry's prestige to help secure his own position on the throne. According to Hallam, "Edward was well aware of the implications of such actions." By going to such lengths to honor Henry III, Edward attempted not only to demonstrate that Henry was a great king worthy of great honor, but to link himself to Henry by justly bestowing such honors.<sup>3</sup> In this way the legitimacy that Henry III could have been said to have enjoyed could overflow to Edward. The

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<sup>1</sup> John M. Theilmann, "Political Canonization and Political Symbolism in Medieval England," *Journal of British Studies* 29, no. 3 (July 1990): 241-266.

<sup>2</sup> "Henry III," The Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey. 2015. Online at <http://westminster-abbey.org/our-history/royals/henry-iii> .

<sup>3</sup> Elizabeth Hallam, "Royal burial and the cult of kingship in France and England, 1060-1330," *Journal of Medieval History* 8, no.4 (December 1982): 375.

point is not whether Henry was or was not believed to have been a great king, but that Edward bestowed, post-mortem, the honors befitting a great king and thereby linked himself to that greatness. This shows how obsequies can be used to emphasize certain aspects of a ruler's reign over others and thus to shape how one's predecessor is viewed post-mortem. I do not mean to claim that these messages are divorced from reality, but simply that they emphasize what is most convenient to the needs of the new ruler.

This was also part of a process by which Westminster became the royal necropolis. Griffiths argues that Henry III's establishment of a firm system of succession in the male line necessitated the prominent exaltation of predecessors. Glorifying past rulers through lavish funerals and tombs was important for establishing the greatness of the hereditary line and thus its continued claim to legitimate rule.<sup>4</sup> Edward I died in 1307 and was buried at Westminster Abbey on October 27.<sup>5</sup> His body was displayed in elaborate style, dressed as if in coronation robes with a crown and scepter and various other impressive items signifying wealth and power.<sup>6</sup> This was not some strange attempt to send wealth with the deceased; in fact these items were faked and used only to impress.<sup>7</sup> This exhibition of "wealth," though deceptive, was clearly meant to portray the deceased king as worthy of the great expense associated with such lavish display.

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<sup>4</sup> Ralph Griffiths, "Succession and the royal dead in later medieval England," in *Making and Breaking the Rules: Succession in Medieval Europe, c.1000-c.1600 : Proceedings of the Colloquium Held on 6, 7, 8 April 2006, Institute of Historical Research*, eds. Frédérique Lachaud and Michael Penman (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008), 104-05.

<sup>5</sup> Mark Duffy, *Royal Tombs of Medieval England* (Goucestershire, UK: Tempus, 2003), 96.

<sup>6</sup> "Edward I and Eleanor of Castile," The Dean and Chapter of Westminster, 2015. Online at <http://westminster-abbey.org/our-history/royals/edward-i-and-eleanor-of-castile> .

<sup>7</sup> Hallam, "Royal Burial," 375.

Historians have traditionally claimed that Edward II was murdered in Berkeley Castle in 1327.<sup>8</sup> Ian Mortimer, however, presents a very strong case that, as was widely believed by both powerful people and the masses at the time, Edward II escaped and was still alive at the time of his funeral.<sup>9</sup> In any case, the funeral was a very lavish affair including “a hearse<sup>10</sup> with images of the four Evangelists standing on it, four great golden lions at the side and eight figures of angels swinging gold censers and two great lions rampant surrounding it.”<sup>11</sup> The preparations were so elaborate and the need to display Edward (or his stand-in) so crucial that about three months elapsed between the proclamation of his death and the funeral. Edward II’s funeral is most noted for the first confirmed use of a funeral effigy at an English royal funeral.<sup>12</sup> This effigy was complete with a

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Philip Lindley, *Gothic to Renaissance: Essays on Sculpture in England* (Stamford: Paul Watkins, 1995, 105-106; *Edward III*, William Parsons Warburton (Estes and Lauriat, 1875), 15-16; Julian Litten, “The Funeral Effigy: Its Function and Purpose,” in *The Funeral Effigies of Westminster Abbey*, eds. Anthoney Harvey and Richard Mortimer (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1994), 4.

<sup>9</sup> Ian Mortimer, “The Death of Edward II in Berkeley Castle,” *English Historical Review* 120, no. 489 (December 2005): 1175-1214. Elsewhere, Ian Mortimer has forcefully shown that objections to his argument are not based on fact but merely on the opinions of scholars who “have continued to judge the argument as a matter of personal opinion. In so doing they have strayed into the area of dubious integrity that Hayden White identified more than forty years ago. To be specific, they have disregarded the information-based argument and assumed that their professional opinions are a meaningful form of discourse.” In Ian Mortimer, *Medieval Intrigue: Decoding Royal Conspiracies* (London; New York: Continuum, 2010), 109.

<sup>10</sup> Oxford English Dictionary Online. “Hearse,” accessed September 2014 <http://www.oed.com.proxy.uchicago.edu/view/Entry/85060?redirectedFrom=herce> In this context a “herce” or “hearse” was not a vehicle, but was “[a]n elaborate framework originally intended to carry a large number of lighted tapers and other decorations over the bier or coffin while placed in the church at the funerals of distinguished persons; also called castrum doloris, chapelle ardente, or catafalco.”

<sup>11</sup> London, Public Records Office (PRO) E 101/383/3 m.6. in Lindley, 107.

<sup>12</sup> Joel Burden, “How Do You Bury a Deposed King? The Funeral of Richard II and the Establishment of Lancastrian Royal Authority in 1400,” in *Henry IV : the establishment of the regime, 1399-1406*, ed. Gwilym Dodd and Douglas Biggs (Woodbridge, Suffolk ; Rochester, NY : York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2003), 26. “Unlike tomb effigies, funeral effigies were not constructed as permanent monuments to the deceased. Typically, they were manufactured within a few days of a king or queen's death, and as far as we can tell, their function ceased with the completion of the funeral celebrations.”

gold scepter and a rod, wearing a crown and prominently displayed during the funeral procession, atop the coffin.<sup>13</sup> These elements emphasized Edward's special status, not only through religious symbolism, but, importantly, also, through beautiful and expensive objects that symbolically reflected the monarchy's self-portrayal as the embodiment of England represented by the lion.

According to Lindley, the main purpose of the effigy was to convince viewers that Edward II was not still living.<sup>14</sup> This goes against Giesey's prominent but – in the case of English monarchs – perhaps overly complex theory according to which the effigy was a symbol of the eternal body of the kingship as against the mortal body of the king.<sup>15</sup> Given-Wilson criticizes Giesey's thesis as “hyperfunctionalist” and claims that at least in the English case the effigy was meant as a literal representation of the dead king.<sup>16</sup> Burden points out that the new aspects of Edward's funeral rites were not meant to call attention to the particulars of Edward's supposed death, but to focus on the question of succession by obscuring any doubt about Edward II's and Edward III's legitimacy.<sup>17</sup> In other words, although Edward II had been deposed and, at the very least, imprisoned, by Mortimer and Isabella, the funeral was designed to obscure the difference between Edward III's accession and more ordinary transfers of power. The obsequies, therefore, were intended to finalize Edward III's status as well as to legitimize it. This was important because many doubters would not fully accept the son's claim so long as they believed the father to be living.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> John de Sleaford, “Wardrobes Accounts Lists: TNA, PRO, E 101/397/20, m. 12.” in C. Given-Wilson, “The Exequies of Edward III and the Royal Funeral Ceremony in Late Medieval England,” *English Historical Review* 124, no.507 (April 2009): 267-268.

<sup>14</sup> Lindley 97–112.

<sup>15</sup> Ralph E. Giesey, *The royal funeral ceremony in Renaissance France*, (Geneva: E. Droz, 1960).

<sup>16</sup> Given-Wilson, 258.

<sup>17</sup> Joel Burden, “Re-writing a rite of passage: the peculiar funeral of Edward II,” in *Rites of passage: cultures of transition in the fourteenth century*, eds. Nicola F. McDonald and W.M. Ormrod (York, England: York Medieval Press in association with Boydell Press, 2004), 14.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, 26

Burden points out that at the funeral of Edward II the “invented tradition of deploying a funeral effigy of the dead king represented a more extreme example of the politicization of ritual performance.”<sup>19</sup> This shows how the lavishness of royal funerals often served not only to magnify the positive qualities of the deceased, but also to obscure any doubts about the correctness of the transfer of power. In other words, the effigy and the ceremonies as a whole sought to create a narrative that argued that the succession was occurring according to just and natural criteria. These criteria were that a legitimate king would be succeeded upon his death by the next in line, who shared both with his predecessor and with the royal house the qualities of a great and, therefore, legitimate monarch. This was important because even those who had doubted Edward III’s legitimacy would find it difficult to dispute his role as king once Edward II was known to be dead.

The death of Edward III’s son, the heir apparent Edward of Woodstock or “The Black Prince,” on July 8, 1376, created a kind of political crisis. The Black Prince was not only the heir apparent, but also a popular military hero. His military achievements and political status were emphasized at his funeral on September 29. As directed in his will, two knights in his armor and helmets (one with his arms of war, the other his tournament arms) led his coffin, which was followed by an additional two pairs of knights, each pair carrying a banner of his coats of arms. Decoration of his tomb-chest in Canterbury Cathedral also emphasized his military prowess. His life-sized tomb effigy, of bronze, showed him fully armored and armed. These lavish displays were used to portray the Black Prince as an heroic defender of England against the French. The Black Prince’s honors did not ignore religious belief but sought also to include his political achievements in what became a pattern for the “chivalric funeral.”<sup>20</sup> Although The Black Prince never became king, his funeral

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<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, 29.

<sup>20</sup> J. Nichols, ed., “A Collection of all the Wills now known to be extant of the Kings and Queens of England” (London, 1780), 66–77 in Given-Wilson, 279.



sought to assuage the sense of crisis surrounding his death and to signal the continuance of the royal line despite its shocking interruption.

We know that in 1377 ceremonies upon the death of Edward III cost more than £1447, an enormous sum at the time. Edward's funeral took place on July 5. His carved wooden funeral effigy was an impressive 5'10" long. A scepter, orb, and cross of gilded silver also were displayed on the coffin. His week-long funerary services included a procession through the streets of London, the corpse apparently bedecked in a "mantle, tunic and hood made from cloth of gold and silk, to dress the body of the dead king lying openly on the hearse at the time of the said funeral...; secondly, a pillow of fustian, stuffed with down and covered with cloth of gold, 'lying under his head ...' ; thirdly, a large canopy, also of cloth of gold, with silken fringes, 'for carrying above the body of the king on the road .'"<sup>21</sup>

The message of all this was clear: the king was a great ruler and no expense would be spared to honor him. In this way the new government sought to capture the honors bestowed on Edward and use them to enhance the legitimacy of his grandson Richard II, son of the Black Prince. The objects used at Edward's funeral were not only opulent but also exceptional. It is not that Edward simply had higher quality trappings at his obsequies; these trappings were unique to him as a king. In this way lavish display merged with status to create a clear political narrative.

In contrast to the funerals of these three Edwards, the services for Richard II were an ambivalent affair owing to the fact that his successor, Henry IV, had deposed him and was believed to have been responsible for his death. Richard was given a rather lavish funeral, with burial on March 6, 1400. Nonetheless, his burial at King's Langley was reportedly rushed and unceremonious. Burden

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<sup>21</sup> De Sleford, "Wardrobes Accounts Lists" in Given-Wilson, 266.

tells us that “[t]he reluctance of Henry IV to allow Richard II to be buried at Westminster Abbey undoubtedly responded to a perceived danger that Richard's corpse could become a dangerous focus of memory within an environment that was redolent with Ricardian associations.” Due to these circumstances Henry tried to legitimate his new rule through observance of the cult of the king and saint Edward the Confessor (d. 1066).<sup>22</sup>

It is important, however, that the ambivalence of Henry's behavior toward his predecessors prevented him from being viewed as a truly legitimate king.<sup>23</sup> This shows that while death practices are important for legitimizing new monarchs, they are not magic and cannot solve all political difficulties.

### **ORDINARY DEATH PRACTICES, HOUSE OF PLANTAGENET**

Unlike the practices of royals described above, during this time period the funerals and burials of the poor and middle classes were rudimentary. The poor were buried generally without clothing, often in a shroud made of sack cloth, and, according to Aries, for centuries were simply thrown into common graves. In general, there was nothing to preserve the memory of the poor, not individual tombs nor grave sites nor markers.<sup>24</sup> The wealthy, who had more power than the poor, but less power than the aristocracy, held ostentatious displays which, especially in urban areas, were meant to attract the attention of the townspeople.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Burden, “How Do You Bury a Deposed King?” 45, 52. Burden comments that “In essence, the imagery of the funeral sought to construct Richard's identity in terms that were literally true at the time of his death, so Richard was buried not as a dead king like Edward II in 1327, but as a dead former king. The symbolic separation of Richard II's dynastic and institutional identities was achieved by denying Richard's corpse access to the formal imagery of kingship.” 52.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 37-39.

<sup>24</sup> Philippe Ariès, *The hour of our death*, trans. Helen Weaver (New York : Knopf, 1981), 207.

<sup>25</sup> Robert Dinn, “Death and rebirth in late medieval Bury St Edmunds,” in *Death in Towns*, ed. Steven Bassett (Leicester; New York: Leicester University Press, 1992), 164-166.

In contrast, as Bassett tells us, “For the poor among the urban population...there can have been little chance of the consolation of a good funeral. At the worst there would have been the hurried rites by a pauper's grave, and then oblivion - and at last the charnel house, when the unmarked grave was disturbed by later burials.”<sup>26</sup> Of course the practice of reusing graves has existed in other societies at other times, but it was in stark contrast to the establishment and care of the expensive tombs of British royalty. As we saw with the reburial of Henry III, disturbing the tombs of the latter was considered an exceptional event with much political import. For the poor, these disturbances were common.

Due to the level of stratification of English society and the importance attached to funerary distinctions at this time, disputes arose about who could be buried where. One priory experienced friction among servants when some were granted the right to be buried in the priory itself while other servants were shunted off to the parish church. Sometimes these disputes could even lead to bloodshed.<sup>27</sup> Not only did the wealthier and more politically powerful enjoy more opulent practices, but the fact that the funerals and burials of the most politically important sectors of society were not simply lavish, but outrageously so, served to underline their political standing above that of all other inhabitants. For the nobility in this time period “the most important reason behind the choice of burial place was to show family stability and permanence.”<sup>28</sup> In other words, burial practices of the aristocracy were primarily determined by the need to pass on status from

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<sup>26</sup> Steven Bassett, Christopher Dyer and Richard Holt, “Introduction,” in *Death in Towns*, 6.

<sup>27</sup> Christopher Daniell, *Death and burial in medieval England, 1066-1550* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997), 90.

<sup>28</sup> Brian Golding, “Burials and benefactions: an aspect of monastic patronage in thirteenth-century England” in *Symposium on England in the Thirteenth Century: Harlaxton Conference Proceedings* (Nottingham: University of Nottingham, 1985) in Daniell, 92.

one generation to the next, thereby maintaining the legitimacy of their political claims and holdings.

## THE HOUSES OF LANCASTER AND YORK

Henry IV's funeral in 1413 stressed his greatness through an extremely costly display. The *herce*, surrounded by 120 candles that burned for nearly a full day, cost £200, "a remarkably large sum," according to Given-Wilson. As part of the succession ritual, the new king Henry V also made an offering at the shrine of St. Thomas Becket of a golden and bejeweled head-shaped ornament costing £160. The goal of this offering was not only to honor Henry IV, but to prevent the stigma of his crimes from overflowing onto the reputation of Henry V and the Lancaster house in general.

<sup>29</sup> The embalmed corpse of Henry IV was transported by torch lit barge and carriage from Westminster Abbey, where he had been laid in state, to Canterbury Cathedral, where he was buried on Trinity Sunday, June 18, 1413 in a royal mausoleum he had built. Thus he tied himself further to St. Thomas Becket.<sup>30</sup>

By acting as the agent of expiation for his father's sins, Henry V achieved three goals. First, he distanced himself from any acts that might make the House of Lancaster seem illegitimate. Secondly, he sought to absolve his father so that Henry IV could be honored without staining his son's reputation. Finally, Henry V sought to enhance his legitimacy further by demonstrating both his piety and his sense of justice. Although Henry V did not repudiate his father, he sought to

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<sup>29</sup> For Henry IV, see J.H. Wylie, *History of England under Henry IV* (4 vols., London, 1884 – 98), iv. 114 – 6, in Given-Wilson, 274, n.74; J.H. Wylie and W.T. Waugh, *The Reign of Henry the Fifth* (3 vols., Cambridge, 1914 – 29), i. 47– 8, in Given-Wilson, 274, n. 74.

<sup>30</sup> C. Wilson, "The Medieval Monuments", in *A History of Canterbury Cathedral*, ed. P. Collinson, N. Ramsey and M. Sparks (Oxford, 1995), 498-506, in Burden, "Bury a Deposed King" 38, n. 13.

secure the legitimacy of the Lancaster dynasty by restoring the honor of Richard II, thus absolving the House of Lancaster of any remaining guilt. In this vein he decided to exhume Richard II and give him the full burial honors of a king.<sup>31</sup> As Griffiths has argued, “By this public act, Henry hoped to end the divisions created by Richard’s deposition and legitimize the succession of the Lancastrian house.”<sup>32</sup>

Reburial of prominent political figures is a more powerful symbol than burial itself for two reasons. First, it is unusual and even sometimes macabre and thus arouses intense interest. Secondly, it can bestow the new ruler with an aura of justness because he is willing to take steps to right a wrong, that is, the improper treatment of the worthy deceased.<sup>33</sup> Thus, by balancing the memory of his father with the restoration of Richard II’s reputation, Henry V sought to put the Lancastrian House on a more secure footing than Henry IV had managed to.

Henry V died in his French territory, in Chateau de Vincennes, France, on August 31, 1422, after an English reign of just nine years. After embalming, his body was transported to the Cathedral of St. Denis – traditional burial place of French kings – for a funeral Mass. Another, more elaborate service was held at Rouen. Then the body was sent via Calais to Dover and on to London.<sup>34</sup> Henry V’s obsequies provide an interesting window into the interplay of religion and politics surrounding the deaths of English monarchs. Although Henry V’s will insisted against “damnable pomp and outrageous superfluities,” in practical terms this had little meaning. Griffiths points out that Henry’s funeral on November 7, 1422 was “among the most stately of the entire Middle Ages.”<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Griffiths, 99ff.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 99.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid., 102.

<sup>34</sup> Ralph E. Giesey, *The Royal Funeral Ceremony in Renaissance France* (Genève: E. Droz), 1960.

<sup>35</sup> Griffiths, 102.

According to Griffiths, Henry's desire for the legitimacy of his house led to his decision to be buried at Westminster. His effigy included his image holding the scepters of France and England, underlining his family's claim to the French throne.<sup>36</sup> This claim was further illustrated by the following dramatic ritual at Henry V's requiem Mass:

three destriers with their riders were led up to the high altar of Westminster, as is customary (ut moris est), splendidly armed with the royal arms of England and France, and there the riders were stripped [of their arms]; and, once the arms had been completely removed, they were carried, together with banners of the arms of St George, England and France, and images of the Holy Trinity and St Mary, in an unbroken line around the corpse.<sup>37</sup>

In this way the funeral sought to emphasize Henry VI's inheritance of the deceased king's achievements and political program. Both the ceremony itself and the objects used in it marked the king off as unique and of a higher status than his subjects. In this manner the lavish and extraordinary nature of the obsequies sent a clear political message about the dead king. This allowed the dynasty to claim not only the crown, but the continuation of an heroic legacy. This was especially important given the regime's relatively recent accession.

Henry VI died in the Tower of London on May 21, 1471, His funeral was scaled down because he had been deposed, imprisoned and killed by the House of York. He was buried out of the way, in Chertsey, Surrey, in an attempt to extinguish reverence for him among the populace. As we shall see, however, this attempt failed: later he was reburied by Richard III.<sup>38</sup>

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., 108.

<sup>37</sup> Thomas Walsingham, *Historia Anglicana*, 2 vols., ed. H.T. Riley (London, Rolls Series, 1863-4), ii.346 in Given-Wilson, 272.

<sup>38</sup> Leigh Ann Craig, "Royalty, Virtue, and Adversity: The Cult of King Henry VI," *Albion: A Quarterly Journal Concerned with British Studies* 35, no. 2 (Summer 2003): 188-189; D.M. Palliser, "Royal Mausolea in the Long Fourteenth Century (1272-1422)" in W.M. Ormrod, ed., *Fourteenth Century England III* (Woodbridge: 2004), 15-16.

The funeral of Edward IV on April 20, 1483 emphasized not only the status of the deceased king, but the ranks of the attendees and, therefore, the continued political hierarchy. Edward sought to emphasize the new status of his house by being buried in the newly constructed (but not yet completed) Windsor Castle instead of at Westminster. Edward's funeral effigy was made to resemble the dead king, with crown, scepter and orb. There is no complete extant account of Edward's obsequies; however, certain important ritual elements are known. During the funeral Mass in St. George's Chapel, Windsor, a man-at-arms, Sir William Parr, entered on horseback, in full armor carrying a battleaxe turned downward. Next, "the deacon took the horse, which was caparisoned with a rich trapping of the king's arms, while Lord Audley and Lord Ferrers received the man-at-arms and with the aforesaid company of knights and esquires, heralds and pursuivants accompanied him to his offering."<sup>39</sup> Here the status and achievements of the king -- both symbolic and literal -- were emphasized, along with the fact that he was no longer alive to exhibit them himself. The transition from the great dead king to his heir was emphasized at the grave when the heralds divested themselves of the dead king's arms and put on those of the new sovereign.<sup>40</sup> In this way they emphasized both the continuity between the dead king and the new king as well as the fact that the arms of Edward were no longer the symbolic compass of the kingdom. Therefore, it is clear that these practices, taken together, not only served to honor the deceased, but also to link him to the new king, and thus to legitimize the latter.

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<sup>39</sup> *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII*, ed. J. Gairdner (2 vols., Rolls Series, London, 1861), i. 9-10 in Given-Wilson, 272-73.

<sup>40</sup> Anne F. Sutton and Livia Visser-Fuchs, *The Royal Funerals of the House of York at Windsor*, (London : Richard III Society, 2005) 41-5, in Given-Wilson 273; and *Letters and Papers Illustrative of the Reigns of Richard III and Henry VII* , i, 3- 10, xvii, reprinted in Sutton, in Given-Wilson, 273.

Due to lingering loyalty to Henry VI, Richard III decided to unite the myths of York and Lancaster by reburying Henry in Edward IV's new chapel of St. George at Windsor. The goal of this reburial was to cast the new house as legitimate by erasing the discontinuity between Lancaster and York. Thus the York dynasty could be portrayed as a more natural and legitimate successor.<sup>41</sup>

Neither Edward V nor Richard III were given funerals to commemorate their deaths.<sup>42</sup> Edward disappeared from the Tower of London and his body never has been definitively identified. Edward was never crowned because Richard III arranged to have Edward declared illegitimate and himself crowned.<sup>43</sup> It has generally been accepted that Richard arranged to have Edward and his brother Richard Duke of York murdered, but there is no direct evidence of this.<sup>44</sup> Richard III was defeated and killed by Henry Tudor's forces. After Richard's death on Bosworth Field on August 22, 1485, his body was quickly interred on the grounds of the Greyfriar's Church in Leicester. His remains were discovered on that site in 2012.<sup>45</sup>

## **ORDINARY DEATH PRACTICES, HOUSES OF LANCASTER AND YORK**

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<sup>41</sup> Griffiths, 100.

<sup>42</sup> Litten, "Funeral Effigy," 6.

<sup>43</sup> Charles Ross, *Richard III* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983), 93-94.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 102-103.

<sup>45</sup> John F. Burns, "Bones Under Parking Lot Belonged to Richard III," *The New York Times*, February 4, 2013. Online at [http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/05/world/europe/richard-the-third-bones.html?\\_r=0](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/02/05/world/europe/richard-the-third-bones.html?_r=0)



In this period the Black Death curtailed funerary ritual, but since the funerals of the monarchy remained much the same as ever the plague did not result in a leveling of mortuary distinctions.<sup>46</sup> Outside of the plague years, in towns the display of status in death practices was even more important than in rural areas because, as Harding points out, there was a larger audience in towns.<sup>47</sup> The more well-to-do in the towns used their wealth in funerary displays, usually planned prior to death, to express particular aspects of status. Town-dwellers of this period also were concerned with the status associated with burial places.<sup>48</sup>

The distinction between those who were buried in shrouds and those who were buried in clothes remained prevalent and important. Burial in clothing was usually reserved for those of some distinction, including clerics and political figures.<sup>49</sup> Unlike the elaborate hearses and coffins of the royalty and nobility, a single hearse and a single coffin belonging to the parish were reused for each burial. This illustrates the fact that the common funeral involved much less individualization. Such distinctions applied only among the rich and powerful.<sup>50</sup>

Funerary hierarchies in English society were becoming the subject of more formal control mechanisms at this time. The heralds, though in the royal households from at least the 13<sup>th</sup> century, were becoming gradually more of an institutionalized force. Though they were only granted a charter in 1484 they were active in the funeral of the Black Prince and in other ceremonies a hundred years earlier. They regulated the amount of pomp that was allowed in English funerals –

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<sup>46</sup> David Herlihy, *The Black Death and the Transformation of the West*, ed. Samuel K. Cohn, Jr. (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1997), 61, 69.

<sup>47</sup> Vanessa Harding, "Burial choice and burial location in later medieval London," in Bassett, S., ed., *Death in Towns: Urban Responses to the Dying and the Dead 100-1600* (Leicester, 1992), 119.

<sup>48</sup> Steven Bassett, Christopher Dyer, and Richard Holt, "Introduction," *Death in Towns*, 3.

<sup>49</sup> Daniell, 31, 52

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, 47.

for example, the number of mourners allowed according to hereditary rank as well as the amount of black cloth a person of a particular rank could wear at a funeral. Indeed, in this period of time almost every aspect and article of the funeral was subject to regulation by the College of Arms.<sup>51</sup>

The goal of these regulations was to realize two main objectives. First, the amount of pomp at a funeral had to be correlated to the hereditary status of the deceased so that the lavishness of the funeral would indicate the deceased's rank in the political hierarchy. Also, the funerals would serve as a clear indication of the political status of the participants, since their outward appearance and levels of participation were directly correlated to their rank, for example, the mourners could not be of lower rank than the deceased.<sup>52</sup> We can see again, here, that the amount and nature of the trappings at English funerals were not merely a question of what the deceased's relatives could afford, but also a matter of regulation. This regulation sought to ensure that the amount of symbolic honors bestowed upon the deceased would strictly accord with the deceased's rank in the political hierarchy.

As at the funeral of the English monarchs, the heraldic focus on rank was explicitly acted out at aristocratic funerals through the "ritual of the offerings," which was "a ritual of succession."<sup>53</sup> The

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<sup>51</sup> Mirrors of mortality 74-76

<sup>52</sup> Daniell, 46. Cf. John P.B. Brooke-Littles, "Commemorative Heraldry," *Journal of the Royal Society of Arts* 133, no. 5350 (September 1985): 724-731. The numbers of official mourners were as follows: "an Emperor (fifteen), a King (thirteen), a Duke (eleven), an Earl (nine), a Viscount or Baron (seven), Knight baronet or bachelor (five), and esquire or gentleman (three)." College of Arms / Stephen Martin Leake Manuscripts / 28/ Ceremonial, in Paul S. Fritz, "From 'Public' to 'Private': the Royal Funerals in England, 1500-1830," in *Mirrors of Mortality: Studies in the Social History of Death*, ed. Joachim Whaley (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1981), 76.

<sup>53</sup> Jennifer Woodward, *The Theatre of Death: the Ritual Management of Royal Funerals in Renaissance England, 1570-1625* (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, N.Y.: Boydell Press, 1997), 28-31.

key element of this occurred when the heir (or, often, a chief mourner representing the heir) would receive the arms of the deceased in the following fashion:

And that his heire, if he have any, or next of whole blood, or some one for him (which commonly is the chief mourner) may publickly receive in the presence of all the mourners, the coate armour, Helme, Creast, and other Achievements of honour belonging to the defunct: whereof the King of Armes of the Province is to make record, with the defuncts match, issue and decease for the benefit of posterity.<sup>54</sup>

This aspect of the ceremony combined the legal and formal elements of succession with the symbolism of ritual and mourning in order to legitimize the transmission of noble titles from one generation to the next. Above all, this was achieved by integrating this political end with the powerful imagery of the heraldic commemoration of the deceased.

These practices not only displayed the hierarchy of the English political system, but served to perpetuate it by marking its continuation across generations. The following example, though taken from a slightly later time period, was characteristic of the noble funeral in the late 15<sup>th</sup> century, as well:

At the funeral of Thomas Howard, second duke of Norfolk, in 1524, for example, a nightly watch was kept by members of the household, the duke's title and style was repeated at each service by a herald, his standard, his banner and his achievements were borne in the procession, a knight wearing the dead duke's armour entered the church on horseback and offered the duke's battleaxe, its point downward, and the officers broke the staves of office and threw them into the tomb.<sup>55</sup>

In this way, death practices sought to reinforce the legitimacy not only of the hierarchy itself, but of each successive holder of hereditary titles. Also it is evident from this example that the

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<sup>54</sup> Sir William Segar, *Honour Military and Civill* (London: [n.pub.], 1602), IV, 254, in Woodward, 30-31, n.75.

<sup>55</sup> Jennifer Loach, "The Function of Ceremonial in the Reign of Henry VIII," *Past & Present* 142 (February 1994): 43-68, 60.

symbolism of these funerals was explicitly political, in that the rank of the deceased was repeatedly emphasized in word and through symbols that marked his hereditary status.

## THE HOUSE OF TUDOR

The May 11, 1509 funeral of Henry VII, the first Tudor king, was modeled closely on that of his wife Elizabeth of York.<sup>56</sup> The effigies of both Henry VII and his wife were very lifelike and elaborately decked out in royal garb with jewels, crown, scepter and robes. Henry VII's corpse was surrounded by a "herce" displaying banners and other heraldic devices.<sup>57</sup> Henry's effigy was displayed at St. Paul's Cathedral overnight. The funeral took place with tremendous pomp. 'In Westminster cherche was a marvelousle curiouse grete herce of principalles full of lights which was lighted agaynst the coming of the corps, which was taken owt of the chayre with ... lords and set under the herce the Representation lying upon the Cofifyn on a pall of golde.'<sup>58</sup>

The display of candles and the gold pall not only created an elegant scene, but emphasized that both cost and care were being taken to honor Henry VII. This lavish display placed Henry above the rest of his subjects, who were not honored in such elaborate fashion. This was important to reiterate both the Tudor claim to the throne and Henry's greatness. The use of the symbols of the royal houses at funerals served to connect the deceased and the successor and to emphasize the

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<sup>56</sup> S. J. Gunn, 'Henry VII (1457–1509)', Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, Jan 2008. Online at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/12954>; *Westminster Abbey : the Lady Chapel of Henry VII*, ed. Tim Tatton-Brown and Richard Mortimer. (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2003), 59.

<sup>57</sup> Sir William St. John Hope, "On the Funeral Effigies of the Kings and Queens of England, with special reference to those in the Abbey Church of Westminster. With a note on the Westminster tradition of identification by the Very Rev. Joseph Armitage Robinson, DD, FSA, Dean of Westminster," *Archaeologia* (Second Series) 60, no. 02 (1907): 517-570, in Litten, "The Funeral Effigy," 6-7.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*

qualities of a just king. These qualities were said not only to reside in the particular king, but in the dynasty as a whole. The consequent achievements of one king thus could overflow to the successor, who also shared membership in the royal house.

Henry VIII's funeral on February 16, 1547 is particularly important for this study because although it occurred at a time of great religious change and upheaval there was a concerted effort to maintain as much of the old symbolism as possible.<sup>59</sup> Loach notes that only those elements of the traditional royal funeral that confirmed the supremacy of Rome and thus directly contradicted the supremacy of Henry's new church were excluded.<sup>60</sup> Instead of any references to Henry's role as a Protestant trailblazer, the funeral avoided religious controversy and rather "sought to impress simply by its scale and its opulence."<sup>61</sup> One important display of continuity at the funeral was the dressing of Henry VIII's funeral effigy in the Parliamentary robes also worn by the effigies of Henry V and Henry VII: "a purple mantle, and robes of crimson velvet, adorned with miniver and ermine."<sup>62</sup> By utilizing these robes Henry sought to place himself and his successor clearly within the context of the heritage of great rulers and thereby to continue to enhance the legitimacy of the Tudor line. Edward's proclamation on Henry's death praised the deceased as "the most excellent high and mighty prince, King Henry VIII of most noble and famous memory" and stressed the correctness

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<sup>59</sup> Unknown Author, Oxford, Bodleian Library, Ashmole Ms. 1109, fo.148 (copy of College of Arms, MS. 14) and C. Ross, *Edward IV* (London, 1974), 417, in Loach, 63, n.121. Loach tells us, "The banners of the Trinity, the Virgin and St. George that surrounded the coffin were the same as those that had ranged round earlier kings: banners of the Trinity and the Virgin had appeared at the funerals of Henry V, Edward IV and Henry VII, while Henry V, Edward and Henry VII also had standards of St. George. Only the use of Henry VI's standard, which was specially made for the 1547 funeral, was innovative: like Edward the Confessor's crown at the coronation, this banner wrapped round the English monarchy an aura of sanctity." 63.

<sup>60</sup> Loach, 61-66.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 62.

<sup>62</sup> Woodward, 90.

of the succession.<sup>63</sup> For the child king Edward VI and the political elite, the traditions underlining royal rule, not the religious changes Henry instituted, were central to help ensure a smooth succession. In fact, continuity, both political and cultural, was the primary focal point of the funeral.<sup>64</sup>

Edward VI's obsequies provide strong support for the theory advanced in this dissertation. Although the new queen, Mary Tudor, wished to give Edward a Catholic funeral, she was persuaded that this would be a politically disastrous move.<sup>65</sup> Indeed, Edward's obsequies marked the first royal obsequies in which the Book of Common Prayer was used. Edward's funeral took place on August 8, 1553.<sup>66</sup> It is interesting, as well, that Mary allowed Archbishop Cranmer – later executed by her order -- to perform the service at Westminster. At the funeral leading the procession was a banner of a dragon, representing Wales, followed a short time later by a banner of a greyhound, the symbol of the Tudor dynasty.<sup>67</sup> The procession included a chariot covered in cloth of gold bearing the king's body and an effigy with a gold crown, scepter and robes. The chariot was pulled by mounted horses covered in black to the ground. Each horseman carried a banner emblazoned with Edward's arms. The use of the lavishly decorated chariot and the effigy

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<sup>63</sup> Paul H. Hughes and James L. Larkin, *Tudor Royal Proclamations, Volume I*. (New Haven, 1964-69: Yale University Press), 381; Proclamation 275 made at London on 19 July, 1553, in "Proclamations of Accession of English and British Sovereigns (1547-1952)," online at <http://www.heraldica.org/topics/britain/brit-proclamations.htm#Edward6>.

<sup>64</sup> Loach, 44.

<sup>65</sup> Clements R. Markham, *King Edward VI, his life and character* (London: Smith, Elder, 1907), 197.

<sup>66</sup> The Dean and Chapter of Westminster, "Edward VI," <http://westminster-abbey.org/our-history/royals/edward-vi>.

<sup>67</sup> Markham, 196-200; Woodward, 92.

were props that singled out Edward for veneration. Edward was buried in the Lady Chapel of Henry VII at Westminster.<sup>68</sup>

In accordance with these honors Mary Tudor's proclamation both praised Edward and stressed her right to rule.<sup>69</sup> The key to understanding the funeral of Edward VI is that, although Mary wished to use it as an occasion to emphasize the triumph of Catholicism, she was persuaded instead to use it to stress monarchical continuity and to secure the succession to the throne, which was threatened by the objections of Protestants.<sup>70</sup>

Mary Tudor died on November 17, 1558. A funeral effigy in fancy dress was featured at her funeral. The funeral effigy was "appareled in robes of Estate with a crowne on her head the ball and scepter in her hand as her fingers being richly set with ringes and the same rich stones the scepter and crowne garnished in like manner." The hearse was covered at the bottom in black taffeta; a dome for the hearse also was of taffeta decorated with the Four Evangelists in gilding. Figures of angels, mourners and queens decked out in "Robes of Estate" made of wax also decorated the hearse. Mary Tudor was buried at Westminster Abbey on December 14, 1558.<sup>71</sup>

In spite of Elizabeth's having been imprisoned by Mary, the new queen did not scale down the honors for the deceased. This is especially noteworthy since Elizabeth did not share Mary's Catholicism and thus did not sympathize with her agenda. The accoutrements at Mary's funeral emphasized not only the wealth of the monarchy, but stressed Mary's queenship in elegant style.

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<sup>68</sup> Markham, 196-200.

<sup>69</sup> Larkin, Proclamation 388, vol. 2, p. 3.

<sup>70</sup> Jeffrey S Doty, "Selling the Tudor Monarchy: Authority and Image in Sixteenth-Century England," *Philological Quarterly* 88, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2009): 251.

<sup>71</sup> Anthony Harvey and Richard Mortimer, "Catalogue of the Effigies," in *Funeral Effigies of Westminster Abbey*, 55.

The lavish display, including rings, scepter, and orb and the gilded Evangelists underlined simultaneously several elements of the monarchy's claim to authority while drawing attention to these claims through impressive and esthetically pleasing exposition.

Elizabeth I's funeral also was a combination of opulence and political symbolism. The funeral emphasized various symbols that had developed across the reign of Elizabeth in order to restore her reputation as a great monarch. Once again, the effigy emphasized in grand fashion the status of the monarch, with crown, orb and scepter. According to Woodward, "The image of the dead queen functioned as a means of generating an expression of community feeling, or 'communitas' to borrow the term used by Victor Turner."<sup>72</sup> In other words, the effigy was part of an effort to create a consensus around the meaning of Elizabeth's death that would serve the monarchy's political image. This consensus was based in large part on a particular picture of Elizabeth that was meant to elicit the sympathy of her – and now James's – subjects.<sup>73</sup>

James I was faced with an awkward dilemma when he succeeded to the throne as the first Stuart monarch. On the one hand, he needed to be seen as honoring his popular predecessor in order to secure his position. On the other, James felt it necessary to restore the reputation of his mother, Mary Queen of Scots, whom Elizabeth had executed. He solved this problem by building a tomb for Elizabeth and also elaborately reburying his mother in a grander tomb of her own. It is very clear that these actions were political since it is well known that James blamed Elizabeth for his mother's execution.<sup>74</sup> The purpose of the monument-building was to rewrite the history of the

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<sup>72</sup> Woodward, 91.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Nigel Llewelyn, "Monuments to the Dead, For the Living," in *Renaissance Bodies : The Human Figure in English Culture, c. 1540-1660*, eds. Lucy Gent and Nigel Llewelyn (London : Reaktion Books, 1990), 226.



English monarchy so that James could be seen both as the successor of a great queen and as the son of one. As Sherlock puts it, “The geography of royal interment is crucial to understanding how the two monuments were to legitimize and foreground James’s role as peacemaker in two kingdoms.”<sup>75</sup> Llewellyn explains that “James’s tomb-building helped construct a political legitimacy with a continuous history.”<sup>76</sup> Thus, James sought to rewrite the narrative of the British monarchy through a grand and expensive program of tomb building. This shows how honoring one’s royal predecessors not only reflects on the new monarch, but can be used to create a myth of continuity despite changes in the dynasty.

### **ORDINARY DEATH, HOUSE OF TUDOR**

While continuity was being stressed in the death practices of the monarchy of this time the Reformation was bringing sweeping changes to the form of commemoration of the ordinary deceased. Of special note is the fact that the renunciation of the belief in Purgatory led to a scaling down of services in that it was no longer considered appropriate to perform rituals and prayers for the souls of the dead.<sup>77</sup> *The Book of Common Prayer* was altered in 1549 and in 1552, with the 1552 edition doing away with all prayers for the dead.<sup>78</sup> Old practices continued in this period, however, as most were not as eager as reformers to abandon the traditional services. On the other side, Puritans and other reformers attacked the Anglican funeral service as “popish” and superstitious. In particular the question was whether the Anglican service still implicitly sought to

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<sup>75</sup> Peter Sherlock, “The Monuments of Elizabeth Tudor and Mary Stuart: King James and the Manipulation of Memory,” *Journal of British Studies* 46, no. 2 (April 2007): 266.

<sup>76</sup> Nigel Llewellyn, *Funeral Monuments in Post-Reformation England* (Cambridge, UK; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 228.

<sup>77</sup> David Cressy, *Birth, Marriage and Death: Ritual, Religion, and the Life-Cycle in Tudor and Stuart England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), 399-406.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, 398.

pray for the souls of the dead. Extreme Puritans wanted to abandon funeral services altogether, but unsurprisingly this idea did not catch on. It is important, however, that reformers' zeal for simplified services did not always extend to the elite.<sup>79</sup> In Scotland, for example, the famous reformer John Knox insisted that while ordinarily pomp was damnable it was acceptable at the funerals of the aristocracy, for the purpose of maintaining social order.<sup>80</sup>

## THE HOUSE OF STUART

James I died March 27, 1625. His funeral took place on May 17, 1625.<sup>81</sup> The obsequies featured a hearse designed by Inigo Jones and a funeral effigy including a shield with the arms of the king emphasizing his royal lineage and his supremacy through the use of realistic mockups of his sword, crown and orb.<sup>82</sup> Underlining its role as a representation of the dead king, the funeral effigy was modeled on a death mask.<sup>83</sup> While this was the custom in France, the funeral of James I marked the first time an effigy was used as a stand-in for the remains of a British monarch, with no coffin present. The reign of James I featured the return to court to outward displays of religious sentiment, and James funeral reflected this shift.<sup>84</sup> The funeral was quite poorly timed for James's son Charles I since his wedding was imminent, but there were still strong political reasons for Charles to make

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 412-13.

<sup>80</sup> Gordon Raeburn, "The Changing Face of Scottish Burial Practices, 1560-1645," *Reformation & Renaissance Review* 11, no. 2 (August 2009): 184-85.

<sup>81</sup> "James I and Anne of Denmark," The Dean and Chapter of Westminster, online at <http://westminster-abbey.org/our-history/royals/james-i-and-anne-of-denmark>.

<sup>82</sup> Llewellyn, "The Royal Body," 240.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., 229.

<sup>84</sup> Woodward 187

the affair as grand as possible.<sup>85</sup> The display he organized was not only impressive, but utilized the trappings of the monarchy to propagandize in favor of the Stuart house.

As is well known, “The most interesting thing about King Charles, the first / Is that he was 5 foot 6 inches tall at the start of his reign / But only 4 foot 8 inches tall at the end of it.”<sup>86</sup> While this is true, it did not last long, since Charles’s head was sewn back on for his burial on February 8, 1649 in St. George’s Chapel at Windsor.<sup>87</sup> He was given a private funeral during which he was unceremoniously and without prior planning placed in the tomb of Henry VIII and Jane Seymour. The only honor he was given was a silver plate hastily affixed to his coffin. Thus Charles was buried with fewer honors than a gentleman received, since the attending bishop was not allowed to perform a religious service at the burial. On the other hand, the burial avoided maximum political controversy due to its private nature.<sup>88</sup>

When Oliver Cromwell died on September 3, 1658 his son Richard succeeded to his pseudo-monarchical title of Lord Protector of the Commonwealth of England, Scotland and Ireland. Cromwell’s effigy was laid out for viewing in Somerset House. The effigy was made of wood, with a wax likeness of Cromwell laid over the face<sup>89</sup> Cromwell’s funeral was grand and essentially royal in nature and was modeled after the obsequies of James I. The effigy was similar to that of a

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<sup>85</sup> Gervas Huxley, *Endymion Porter, The Life of a Courtier, 1587-1649* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1959), 123.

<sup>86</sup> John Cleese, “The Ballad of Oliver Cromwell,” in the album “Monty Python Sings,” Virgin Records America, December 11, 1989.

<sup>87</sup> Mark A. Kishlansky, John Morrill, “Charles I (1600–1649),” *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, Oct 2008, <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/5143>.

<sup>88</sup> Unknown Author, *The Trials of Charles the First and of Some of the Regicides : with Biographies of Bradshaw, Ireton, Harrison, and Others : and with Notes* (London : John Murray, 1832), 116-17.

<sup>89</sup> H. F. McMains, *The Death of Oliver Cromwell* (Lexington, Ky.: University Press of Kentucky, 2000), 77-78.

king, wearing a crown and purple robe, and surrounded by a scepter and orb. For some time the effigy was displayed standing, in its regalia.<sup>90</sup> The funeral procession was also regal in nature, including silver and gold trumpets, drums, banners, streamers, and standards, with the effigy of the king in full regalia and “being placed in a stately chariot adorned with [e]scutcheons, armes, bannerettes, etts., drawne with six horses covered downe to the ground with blacke velvet and blacke plumes.”<sup>91</sup> Although Cromwell’s political status was different than the other cases discussed in this chapter, still his rule and succession make his obsequies relevant to the theory. Clearly his obsequies conform to the theory in spite of his own austere style and religion.

At the time of the Restoration it was thought necessary symbolically to punish the crimes of Oliver Cromwell, Henry Ireton (d.1651); and John Bradshaw (d.1659) in order to cast the Commonwealth as an illegitimate usurping regime. Therefore, the opulent funeral that Cromwell had received was, in a sense, reversed when he and the others were exhumed and their corpses hung and decapitated, in spite of the difficulties removing their heads caused by the state of their shrouded bodies.<sup>92</sup> This, of course, was not a ritual of succession, but of repudiation. By playing on the dissonance between the honors normally accorded a high ranking figure upon death and the seemingly less than civilized treatment of the corpse, the deceased is disgraced and his political status posthumously revoked.

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<sup>90</sup> Laura Lunger Knoppers, *Constructing Cromwell: Ceremony, Portrait, and Print, 1645-1661* (Cambridge, UK ; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000, 143-144.

<sup>91</sup> Mundy, Peter, Richard Carnac Temple, and Lavinia Mary Anstey. *The Travels of Peter Mundy in Europe and Asia, 1608-1667* (Cambridge [Eng]: Printed for the Hakluyt Society, 1907), Volume V, 143-145, in Knoppers, 143.

<sup>92</sup> Lorna Clymer, “Cromwell’s Head and Milton’s Hair: Corpse Theory in Spectacular Bodies of the Interregnum,” *The Eighteenth Century* 40, no. 2 (Summer 1999): 96-99.

It is sometimes claimed that the funeral of Charles II lacked pomp, but this is somewhat imprecise.<sup>93</sup> His funeral was scaled down compared to most previous royal funerals, but the transition from Catholicism to Protestantism had led to a general reduction in lavishness so that Charles II's funeral remained lavish compared to those of his subjects. A clothed standing figure of the king was created after his death, although there is no evidence that the impressive effigy was used during the obsequies. The funeral was held after dark. "During the procession from Whitehall to Westminster the coffin, surmounted by an imperial crown of tin gilt with a cap of crimson velvet turned up with ermine on a purple tasselled cushion, was borne under a fringed canopy to the solemn beat of muffled drums and accompanied by many dozens of lighted flambeaux."<sup>94</sup> The February 14, 1685 burial of Charles II took place at Westminster Abbey.<sup>95</sup> Thus, although the change to a night-time funeral undoubtedly represented a scaling down of the royal obsequies as a whole, there remained many impressive elements. Charles II was entombed in Henry VII's chapel with his life-sized effigy standing over his grave.

The relative simplicity of these death practices was due in part to Charles' heir James II, who reportedly despised pomp. In any case, James II's dislike of pomp should hardly be taken as an indication that it was no longer necessary for the legitimization of succession, since James was deposed.<sup>96</sup> James II died in exile in France on September 16, 1701. His supporters hoped to bury him later at Westminster Abbey, so he was entombed in France. His body itself was never buried. His brain and his heart were entombed separately, in part because some Catholics revered him as

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<sup>93</sup> See Woodward 146.

<sup>94</sup> Litten, *The Funeral Effigy*, 13-14.

<sup>95</sup> "Charles II," The Dean and Chapter of Westminster, online at <http://westminster-abbey.org/our-history/royals/charles-ii> .

<sup>96</sup> Litten, *The Funeral Effigy*, 13-14. See Allan Fea, *James II. And His Wives* (London: Methuen and Co), 1908.

a saint. James' body disappeared during the French Revolution and its final disposition is unknown.<sup>97</sup>

Queen Mary II died December 28, 1694. Unlike the deaths of other monarchs discussed in this chapter, Mary's death did not lead to the accession of a new ruler, since she ruled jointly with her husband William III, who survived her until 1702. Due in large part to the desire to use Mary's funeral on March 5, 1695 for political purposes it was the grandest royal funeral of the era.<sup>98</sup> According to Claydon, "William revived much of the Tudor ceremonial, and buried his wife with the most pompous ritual and trappings."<sup>99</sup> Mary was laid out for public viewing in Kensington Palace Banqueting Hall for three weeks, from noon to 5 p.m. each day. The room was covered in mourning cloth, with black glass candelabra adorning the room. Further, "The queen's body lay in an open coffin, her hands crossed on her breast, robed in purple and gold, with the crown, sceptre and orb, a sword and a shield placed about her."<sup>100</sup>

On the day of the funeral, Mary's coffin, with crown and scepter on top, was transported in a grand chariot to Westminster Abbey for a full Anglican funeral Mass. This procession, which was intended to extol the dead queen and her Protestant virtues, was the largest ever in England.<sup>101</sup> The lavish details of the funeral were intricately planned to reflect the image of Mary that William wished to present to the public.<sup>102</sup> Of course Mary's Protestantism was not just a question of piety,

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<sup>97</sup> Allan Fea, *James II. And His Wives* (London: Methuen and Co), 1908, 285-297.

<sup>98</sup> W. A. Speck, "Mary II (1662–1694)", Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edn, May 2012 <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/18246> .

<sup>99</sup> Tony Claydon, *William III and The Godly Revolution* (Cambridge, England; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 78.

<sup>100</sup> N.M. Dawson, "The Death Throes of the Licensing Act and the 'Funeral Pomp' of Queen Mary II, 1695," *The Journal of Legal History* 26, no. 2 (August 2005): 123-24.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid.

<sup>102</sup> Fritz, "The Trade in Death: The Royal Funerals in England, 1685-1830," *Eighteenth Century Studies* 15, no. 3 (Spring 1982), 292-93. Fritz tells us, "Every detail for the forthcoming

it was the reason her husband was made king. Thus, Mary's funeral certainly was a politically important event that was meant to benefit King William, but it does not have much direct bearing on my theory as no succession, *per se*, occurred following her death.

William III's funeral was relatively simple, in accordance with his will. Nonetheless the Privy Council added a procession from Kensington Palace to Westminster in which William's coffin was carried on a chariot covered in purple cloth and surrounded by 300 torch bearers.<sup>103</sup> Drummers provided cadence as the coaches of many nobles followed the coffin to Westminster.<sup>104</sup> On balance William's funeral does not quite meet the expectations of the theory, although the Privy Council thought it necessary to add some grand spectacle to make the whole affair appear more royal. He was buried on the night of April 12, 1702.<sup>105</sup>

Queen Anne died on August 1, 1714. Her death set off serious political concerns in London, as there was great fear that a Catholic coup would occur before her successor, George I, arrived from his home in Hanover. Queen Anne's funeral was private, which did mean a scaling down of services, but not their being hidden from the public as the term seems to – but does not – indicate.

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ceremonial was carefully laid down. The bed of state for the queen's body to rest within was to be of black velvet 9 foot long and 7 foot broad with four pillars at the corners covered with velvet, supporting the tester or canopy, the valance whereof to be fringed with black silk and furnished with escutcheons and adorned with six large plumes of black feathers. ... Within the frame of the bed of state are to be placed two tressels ... on which is to be placed the coffin covered with purple and garnished with gilt nails. ... Over the coffin is to be laid a fine holland sheet and over that a large pall of velvet ... garnished with escutcheons of satin and at the top of the coffin is to be laid a purple velvet cushion ... and thereon an Imperial crown gilt and the other regalia."

<sup>103</sup> Fritz, 71.

<sup>104</sup> Amy B. Oberlin, "'Share with me in my Grief and Affliction': Royal Sorrow and Public Mourning in Early Eighteenth-Century England." *Parergon* 31, no. 2, July 2014, 103.

<sup>105</sup> Tony Claydon, 'William III and II (1650–1702)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004; online edition, May 2008, online at <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/29450>.

The funeral itself was a compromise between Anne's expressed wishes and the obsequies of William III, whose obsequies the Privy Council wished to emulate. This occurred because the Council viewed her desire for a scaled-down service as unfitting her status.<sup>106</sup>

On August 23 Anne's body was transported in a hearse bedecked in purple cloth and drawn by eight horses from Kensington Palace to Westminster Palace.<sup>107</sup> The body stayed overnight in the Prince's Chamber, which was elegantly decorated with "45 large silver sconces with double Branches in two Rows in each of which were placed two wax Candles."<sup>108</sup> The next day the body was carried from Westminster Palace to Westminster Abbey "under its canopy of state to be met by 'the Dean and Prebends attended by the Choir in their habits having wax tapers in their Hands'"<sup>109</sup> The funeral was held in Westminster Abbey on August 24, 1714 and Queen Anne's body was placed in the Stuart Vault in Henry VII's chapel.<sup>110</sup>

While certainly Anne's funeral represented a scaling down of royal obsequies, the funeral remained lavish in comparison to the rest of British practices. Although the succession from Anne to George I was important, the primary focus of attention seems to have been on preventing Catholic pretenders from using Anne's death to legitimate a potential coup. Given this, George's decision to have Anne buried before his arrival was a politically understandable move. Thus, one could argue that Anne's funeral was less about guaranteeing succession than about preventing a counter movement from arising, though this also was due to issues of succession.

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<sup>106</sup> Fritz, 61-62, 72.

<sup>107</sup> Edward Gregg, *Queen Anne* (London; Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980), 397-98.

<sup>108</sup> Public Record Office, London, State Papers (Foreign), Public Record Office SP35/1, ff. 70-80: extracts from the Chapter Books of the Heralds, in Gregg, 398.

<sup>109</sup> Litten, *The Funeral Effigy*, 17.

<sup>110</sup> Gregg, 398.



## ORDINARY DEATH, HOUSE OF STUART

During the Stuart era, both for the average citizen and the gentry, headstones were not used to memorialize the dead in the churchyard. This in itself might not be remarkable, but the practice of the aristocracy was quite different. For the aristocracy and those with heraldic arms burial inside the church also included the construction of markers and monuments to commemorate the lineage of the deceased. According to Cressy, “The artistic energy and cultural investment that an earlier age had devoted to representations of the saints now proclaimed the social position of great secular families.”<sup>111</sup> In other words, the iconography of the Catholic era had faded, but this did not mean the erasing of impressive monuments for the aristocracy.

A typical middle-class funeral of the time involved first wrapping the corpse in a shroud and placing a (night) cap on its head. The coffin remained in the house for three or four days because there was still a common fear of being buried alive. Shortly before the funeral there was a visitation of invited guests. A funeral procession would be led by a beadle (usher) followed by

the minister and the clerk of the parish. The corpse carried by six or eight men followed the clerk. Relatives and friends made up the rest of the procession.<sup>112</sup>

Although the ordinary funeral and burial in this period were not altogether drab, the practices still could not compare to those of the aristocracy, let alone those of the monarchy. The marking of the aristocracy’s graves and the anonymous nature of the ordinary person’s final resting place represented the key distinction between the former and the latter. While each aristocrat was a cog in the wheel of political authority the lives of ordinary people were barely a drop in the ocean.

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<sup>111</sup> Cressy, 470.

<sup>112</sup> Cressy, 454-56.

## THE HOUSE OF HANOVER

George I died, had his funeral and was buried not in Britain, but in Hanover, where he was born and where his family still reigned. His son George II made the formal decision to have him buried on the continent.<sup>113</sup> The burial took place on August 30, 1727 in Leineschloss Church. Although mourning was held in Britain, it was nothing like the lavish obsequies we have seen earlier in this chapter.<sup>114</sup>

George II died October 25, 1760 and was buried on November 11.<sup>115</sup> Although his services at Westminster Abbey were private, Black characterizes his funeral overall as “spectacular.”<sup>116</sup> The funeral was held at night; foot soldiers lined the route, and every seventh soldier held a torch. Mounted horse guards, their officers riding with sabers drawn, moved along the outside of the procession. Bells were rung, and guns were fired once each minute.<sup>117</sup> In keeping with George’s earlier promises that he and his wife Queen Caroline would be together in death, the two coffins of queen and king were joined by the removal of a side board from each at the time of George II’s burial.<sup>118</sup> The lavish nature of George’s funeral primarily was seen in the procession, though the

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<sup>113</sup> Ragnhild Hatton, *George I Elector and King* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 280-284.

<sup>114</sup> Michael Schaich, *Monarchy and Religion: The Transformation of Royal Culture in Eighteenth-century Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 429.

<sup>115</sup> “George II and Caroline,” The Dean and Chapter of Westminster Abbey, 2015, online at <http://westminster-abbey.org/our-history/royals/george-ii-and-caroline> .

<sup>116</sup> Jeremy Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicians?* (Exeter: Exeter University Press, 2007), 253.

<sup>117</sup> Robert Shepherd, *Westminster: a Biography : From Earliest Times to the Present* (London ; New York: Bloomsbury, 2012), 213.

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.

cacophony created by the bells and cannons was also an important symbolic honor meant to draw everyone's attention to the events.

George III's funeral was officially private, but 30,000 people were in attendance. George was buried in the royal vault at St. George's Chapel, Windsor on February 16, 1820.<sup>119</sup> Inside the chapel black cloth adorned the stalls. A canopy of royal blue velvet, bedecked with a royal crown, was erected over the sepulcher. All the heraldic rituals for a king were observed. The king's son George IV, who had been serving as regent since 1811, during the period of his father's active mental illness and dementia, prominently attended his father's coffin throughout the service.<sup>120</sup> Thus, while George III's funeral was not especially notable for its pomp, it maintained a level of lavishness above many other funerals. In addition, George IV's prominent role, combined with the honors given to the deceased, illustrates, even in the case of an active regency, the use of death practices to connect the new king to the old, as we have seen throughout.

The funeral of George IV took place July 15, 1830 by torchlight.<sup>121</sup> George's coffin had a stately appearance with the accoutrements of royalty: "The body was covered by a black velvet pall bearing the royal arms and the imperial crown and the royal crown of Hanover beneath a canopy of purple cloth. The Royal Standard, the banners of the Union, of St George, of Scotland and of Ireland, of Hanover and of Brunswick, were arranged nearby."<sup>122</sup> Since the House of Hanover was

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<sup>119</sup> "Royal Burials in the Chapel since 1805," St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle (Dean & Canons of Windsor, 2008-2015), Online at <http://www.stgeorges-windsor.org/about-st-georges/royal-connection/burial/burials-in-the-chapel-since-1805.html> .

<sup>120</sup> Robert Huish, trans., *The public and private life of His late Majesty, George the Third, embracing its most memorable incidents...and tending to illustrate the causes, progress, and effects, of the principal political events of his glorious reign. Comprising, also, a...historical memoir of the house of Brunswick...translated expressly for this history, from the celebrated Latin work, entitled Origines Guelphicae* (London: Kelly, 1821), 706-710.

<sup>121</sup> "Royal Burials in the Chapel," Dean & Canons of Windsor

<sup>122</sup> E.A. Smith, *George IV* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 272-75; 680.

still relatively new and foreign it was important to tie George not only to his closest lineage, but to the symbols of the monarchy itself. This served to underline William IV's claim to the throne as being of undoubtable character.

The procession from Windsor Castle to St. George's Chapel for the burial of George IV followed a 15-foot wide track along which soldiers held torches. Large crowds gathered at the short route to witness the procession, which included a cart drawn by six black horses to carry the corpse. Although George was widely held in contempt it was nonetheless deemed necessary to symbolically stress his great lineage in order to underline both his and his successor's claim to the throne. There can be little doubt that the spectacle for George IV's funeral was intended exclusively for public consumption since essentially everyone associated with the dead king and the new king perceived the proceedings as a joke. Thus although few really believed that George deserved much in the way of honors his obsequies still were relatively lavish.<sup>123</sup>

The reforms of William IV helped to ensure that his obsequies would be the last of a British monarch before the formal transition to Constitutional Monarchy. While William was a controversial figure, in no small part due to his having fathered 11 illegitimate children, his obsequies were nonetheless grand and treated with much more respect than were those of his brother George IV. William's body lay in state in the Waterloo Chamber of Windsor Castle. A large octagonal pavilion was constructed of black cloth blocking out light and creating a somber appearance in combination with the many candles in silver sconces within the room.<sup>124</sup>

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<sup>123</sup> Ibid., 273-75.

<sup>124</sup> Robert Huish, *The history of the life and reign of William the fourth, the reform monarch of England, comprising an interesting detail of the scenes of his private and public life* (London: William Eamons, 1837), 698-701

The coffin, with gold handles at each end, was adorned with purple velvet studded with gold-headed nails. The crown of Hanover was placed at the foot of the coffin, underlining both William's lineage and the end of his reign. The imperial crown was placed over his breast. The relationship between William's house and the monarchy – the head of which was now being passed to Queen Victoria – was underlined by display of the Union banner, the banner of St. George, and the banners of Scotland, Ireland, Hanover and Brunswick. Although Victoria's accession marked the end of the union with Hanover, the lineage of the monarch and its continuation were still stressed at William's **lavish** funeral.<sup>125</sup> He was buried in St. George's Chapel, Windsor Castle, on July 8, 1837.<sup>126</sup>

The funeral itself began with a procession after dark during which 12 artillery guns saluted every 30 seconds until the end of the funeral ceremony. The funeral in the parish church was solemn and was marked by a much higher level of decorum than had been seen at the funeral of George IV. It can be seen, then, that the last British monarch before the completion of the transition to Constitutional Monarchy received great honors which, though differing in some respects from those of his predecessors, nonetheless served a similar purpose. Not only did the trappings afford William great respect but they underlined his lineage and sought to link him both to his predecessors and to Victoria.<sup>127</sup>

Fritz tells us that the royal obsequies of the late Georgian period attracted much public attention and were carefully orchestrated in relation to mass opinion:

So, too, preparations for the [royal] funeral itself—from the detailed plans for public seating to the opening of the royal vault were widely publicized. The planning procedures also clearly

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<sup>125</sup> Ibid.

<sup>126</sup> "Royal Burials in the Chapel," Dean & Canons of Windsor

<sup>127</sup> Huish, *William the fourth*, 698-701.

reveal the existence of a constituency that went far beyond the rank and file of the aristocracy, for at every stage precautions were taken to keep a wider public distanced from the actual proceedings; hence, the provision for railings about the bed of state and along the processional route and the large number of troops called up to keep public order. By the end of the Georgian period so great had public interest become in a royal funeral that not only did the time period for the lying-in-state have to be lengthened but admission had to be regulated by tickets supplied by the Lord Chamberlain's department.<sup>128</sup>

This is important because it demonstrates that even so-called private ceremonies were intended for wider political purposes. Also, Fritz is providing us clear evidence that those in charge of the obsequies knew that their planning had wider implications and were not simply engaged in the rote repetition of upper class ritual.

### **ORDINARY DEATH, HOUSE OF HANOVER**

By the 1750's funeral patterns for all those above the level of the poor but below the prominent nobility were beginning to employ a more uniform set of props and symbols. Nonetheless, the style and cost of these items continued to mark status.<sup>129</sup> In the 18<sup>th</sup> century funerals were being transformed by the combination of urban growth and new forms of transport for the corpse. Though the traditional procession by foot persisted among the lower classes, among the middle class and wealthier the horse drawn hearse came into fashion and replaced the traditional procession. This marked less a change in tone than an attempt to maintain some of the older spirit of the ceremony within the context of an increasingly populace and urbanized society. Due to the introduction of the private cemetery the location of some of the solemnities for the middle-class and wealthy shifted to the grave site. Thus, to some extent, the visibility of the ceremonies was reduced.<sup>130</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Fritz, "The Trade in Death": 294.

<sup>129</sup> Julian Litten, *The English Way of Death: The Common Funeral since 1450* (London: Robert Hale, 1992), 164.

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 84-86.

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century more guilt appeared in society with regard to the drab conditions of pauper burials. Some attempts were made to mitigate these conditions through the establishment of burial clubs for the poor, but some of these clubs were, in fact, scams. In any case, the pauper burial was still degrading.<sup>131</sup> A barely respectable pauper funeral which included some additions paid for by the family consisted of a simple coffin with four bearers and a rented pall of poor material.<sup>132</sup> The funerals of the middle class in this period were like the funerals of those without arms in prior periods; they were exclusively intended for the local community, not as a display of political status to subjects.<sup>133</sup>

## CONCLUSION

In this chapter we have seen how throughout the period discussed death practices were hierarchically differentiated in order to ensure the continuity of hereditary authority from one generation to the next. Through lavish displays and highly calculated burial practices the monarchy sought both to glorify deceased rulers and to ensure that that glory would be attached to each new ruler. This was not a question of mere rote repetition of ritual but involved clear attempts by new monarchs to legitimate their rule by taking into account the political circumstances of the day. For example, I have discussed how James I delicately balanced his need to honor both his mother Mary Queen of Scots and Queen Elizabeth I, despite his sincere hatred of the latter.

Also in this chapter I have demonstrated the clear gap between the amount of pomp and honor afforded ordinary subjects, on the one hand, and the ruling strata, on the other. Although this gap

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<sup>131</sup> Ibid., 164-165.

<sup>132</sup> Ibid., 114.

<sup>133</sup> Thomas Laqueur, "Bodies, Death, and Pauper Funerals," *Representations* no. 1 (February 1983): 112.

lessened as time went on, it was nonetheless clear and allowed for lavishness of death practices to take on important political saliency.

While the theory does seem to explain later practices with more difficulty, nonetheless there were clear indications of funerary honors being used for propaganda purposes in this era as well. Throughout most of this period the institution of the heralds guaranteed that the degree of lavishness of English obsequies was correlated with the hereditary political status of the deceased. The highest status was, of course, that of the monarch, who received the most lavish and intricate honors in death. This system ensured that political status, rather than mere wealth, would determine the lavishness of death practices. While wealth played a role, those with more resources were not permitted displays of pomp beyond what was allotted to their status. The institution of heraldry was an important institution of social control that ensured that political consideration, rather than mere status or class, ultimately would determine the shape of death practices.

Finally, we have seen that honoring ones immediate predecessor was not always politically convenient for English monarchs, especially those who had killed or otherwise deposed their immediate predecessor. This can be seen, for example, in the behavior of Henry IV, who chose to base his legitimacy on the cult of Edward the Confessor and to deny his predecessor a prominent burial. This chapter has demonstrated that death practices differentiated by degree of lavishness were, in the case of the British monarchy, an important and flexible tool for arguing in favor of the legitimacy of each succession to hereditary title.



### Chapter III: The Soviet Union

In this chapter I examine the degree of politicization of death practices in the Soviet Union. The Soviet system consisted of two supposedly separate, but overlapping, hierarchies that of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union and that of the Soviet State itself. In reality and as enshrined in the Soviet Constitution of 1977 the Communist Party controlled the Soviet State and leadership of the State was attained according to one's position in the Party.<sup>1</sup> Although most of the General Secretaries of the Communist Party served for life, this was never an articulated principle of the Soviet system. In addition, the General Secretary held a concurrent high level post or posts in the Soviet government, especially the title of Chairman of the Council of Ministers of the USSR.

Since the General Secretary of the Communist Party usually served until death, succession to this key post most often occurred in the immediate aftermath of the General Secretary's demise. Although the ideology of the Bolsheviks viewed most death practices as dangerous and wasteful manifestations of religious belief, in practice this ideological doctrine was applied quite differently

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<sup>1</sup> "Constitution (Fundamental Law) of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, Adopted at the Seventh (Special) Session of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR Ninth Convocation on October 7, 1977" Section I.1.6. <http://www.departments.bucknell.edu/russian/const/77cons01.html#chap01> (Accessed April 12, 2014)

According to the Soviet Constitution of 1977, "The leading and guiding force of the Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organisations and public organisations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union (CPSU.) The CPSU exists for the people and serves the people. "The Communist Party, armed with Marxism-Leninism, determines the general perspectives of the development of society and the course of the home and foreign policy of the USSR, directs the great constructive work of the Soviet people, and imparts a planned, systematic and theoretically substantiated character to their struggle for the victory of communism. All party organisations shall function within the framework of the Constitution of the USSR."

to different sections of society. In regard to ordinary Soviet citizens, the Party's focus was on undermining religious rites and replacing them with a much simplified set of practices. While the death practices of the leaders of the Soviet Communist Party and State shared certain important symbolic elements with the ordinary Communist-created rites, the death practices for important Soviet "actors" were distinguished by their lavish nature. If the ordinary Soviet funeral and burial were rather dull and brief expositions of Soviet clichés, those for the elite were grand and ornate.<sup>2</sup>

Of course, elite death practices also contained many Marxist-Leninist clichés, but the focus was directed toward supposedly heroic characters rather than the everyday labors of members of the collective. Underlying the death practices for the Soviet elite was the need to ensure a smooth and legitimate transition upon the death of key party figures, especially of the General Secretary. The Soviet Communist Party sought to achieve this through lavish death practices that included ornate rites, prominent burial places, and coordinated use of mass propaganda to guarantee the dissemination of an heroic aura around the deceased. Furthermore, by giving the deceased leaders' successors key roles in the funeral and its organization, the Party sought to pass this aura on, and thus to guarantee legitimate succession.

In this case the lavishness of death practices can be measured especially in terms of the following elements:

- 1). the duration and prominence of the viewing of the corpse
- 2). the nature and size of the funeral procession and also whether such processions occurred at all
- 3). the level of personalization of funeral speeches, specifically the nature of the praise of the deceased and whether such praise was at all individualized.

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<sup>2</sup> Catherine Merridale, "Death and Memory in Modern Russia," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 42 (Autumn, 1996): 8.

4). the use of wreaths and portraits in the obsequies. In regard to wreaths, the important question was the number, whereas in regard to portraits the distinguishing features were both number and size.

5). the amount of noise accompanying the closing of the obsequies. While whistles and bells sounded at the conclusion of the obsequies of General Secretaries, the ringing of church bells for ordinary deceased Soviet citizens was banned.

## **The Pre-History of Soviet Death Practices**

The origins of Soviet funerals can be found in the pre-revolutionary practices of the Communist movement. It is not surprising that the Russian Communists, as a revolutionary movement aimed at the violent overthrow of the Tsars, developed their own way of dealing with the deaths of their members in the struggle. The first of these so-called Red Funerals was that of N. A. Nekrasov in 1887.<sup>3</sup> These funerals included many aspects of the later Soviet funerals, including the mourning procession and the prominent use of wreaths. An early revolutionary-era Red Funeral was witnessed by Albert Rhys Williams in July 1917 in Vladivostok. At this funeral “a hundred girls in white, carrying the green wreaths from forty-four unions of the city, formed a guard of honour for the coffins.”<sup>4</sup> The use of wreaths to represent various entities during funeral ceremonies was a very important part of the Soviet funeral, as can be seen throughout this chapter. Although these Red Funerals were not identical to the Soviet, they set the tone for the new rituals the Soviet Communist Party would introduce. Another forerunner of the Soviet funeral ceremony was the interment in Moscow of those who had died during the Bolshevik seizure of power. Important

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<sup>3</sup> Anna Sokolova, “Pokhorony Bez Pokoinika: Transformatsii Traditsionogo Pokhoronnogo Obriada,” *Antropologicheskoy Forum* 15 (2011): 187-88

<sup>4</sup> Albert Rhys Williams, *The red funeral in Vladivostok : an account of the funeral of the Russian people killed on July 1st, 1917, when Czecho Slovak, Japanese and British troops seized the Vladivostok Soviet* (London : Workers' Socialist Federation, c.1919), 1-2.

<http://pds.lib.harvard.edu/pds/view/32813872>

elements of this ceremony included red banners and marching military guards representing the power of the new rulers.<sup>5</sup>

### **The Deaths of the General Secretaries of the CPSU**

When Vladimir Ilyich Lenin died on January 21, 1924, his demise was not a shock to the leadership of the Communist Party, but was not expected by the general Soviet population. Though Lenin had been ill and not participating in decision-making for quite some time, this was not revealed in the press.<sup>6</sup> Lenin's funeral contained many of the key elements of the funerals of later General Secretaries, but also some unique aspects. In particular, since Lenin died in Gorky rather than in Moscow, most of the key figures of Soviet politics went by train on January 22 to return his body to the capital.<sup>7</sup> His body was returned to Moscow on January 23. A large procession accompanied his body to the House of the Unions where it was to lie in state. Lenin's body, in a red coffin, a red pillow beneath his head, lay in the Hall of Columns of the House of the Unions where it was viewed by 700,000 people. This part of the obsequies was used to emphasize the unity of the Soviet people in their grief: "As one man the workers passed the coffin as if it were the coffin of their best friend."<sup>8</sup>

The emphasis on Lenin as someone with whom the people could easily identify would become a very important aspect of his cult. Further, declaring the people to be one in their grief was an important way of emphasizing the support of the people for the Party. This, in turn, was a key

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<sup>5</sup> Catherine Merridale, "Death and Memory in Modern Russia," *History Workshop Journal*, no. 42 (Autumn, 1996): 7-8.

<sup>6</sup> Nina Tumarkin, *Lenin lives: The Lenin Cult in Soviet Russia* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1983), 113-14.

<sup>7</sup> "Shest' Dnei Kotoryx Ne Zabudet Rossiia," *Pravda*, January 30, 1924, 1.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid. My translation. All translations from Russian are my own unless otherwise noted.

element of these funerals. Lenin was declared to be a guiding force that would guarantee the victory of the Revolution. Pravda declared, “The old world does not have a future...Comrade Lenin is with us, the great leader is with us.”<sup>9</sup>

Besides exalting Lenin, the events surrounding his death played up the importance of the collective leadership that would succeed him. This was achieved through giving key roles in the funeral to the leading political figures. Clearly there was nothing that made Stalin, Bukharin, Tomski, Kalinin, and Kamenev uniquely qualified to put Lenin’s body onto a train and bring it to Moscow. As Zbarskii notes, “From the time of Lenin's funeral, it has been possible to tell, from the order of precedence among the guests and from the presence or otherwise of Soviet notables at such ceremonies, which officials are in favourable positions in the struggle for power.”<sup>10</sup> Party leaders stayed close to Lenin’s body and would serve as pallbearers at the funeral itself.

Over a three day period Lenin’s body was laid out in the House of the Unions. Large numbers of people came through to view the remains. Members of the Plenum of the 11<sup>th</sup> Party Congress including Stalin, representatives of groups of workers and peasants, Red Army representatives, and members of other groups maintained an honor guard around the casket.<sup>11</sup>

By also making themselves the pallbearers, Stalin, Zinoviev, Ramenev, Molotov, Bukharin, Rudzutak, Tomski and Dzerzhinsky sought not only to associate themselves with Lenin but to be seen paying homage to him.<sup>12</sup> The funeral sought to announce the key leadership changes and to

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ilya Zbarskii and Samuel Hutchinson, *Lenin's Embalmers*, trans. Barbara Bray (London: Harvill, 1998), 17.

<sup>11</sup> “Редкие кадры с похорон Владимира Ленина / Уникальная Кинохроника 1924 г.,” YouTube. Flash video file.[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J\\_iaVAKJ39A](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_iaVAKJ39A).

<sup>12</sup> Zbarskii, 17.

seek legitimation for these changes through allowing the new leadership to honor the old. A key element of Stalin's attempt to set himself up as Lenin's successor was a speech he delivered in Lenin's honor on January 26, 1924. The speech, which was structured somewhat strangely as a list of commands that Lenin had given when "departing from us," was intended to paint Stalin as Lenin's loyal and ideologically faithful heir. Important themes of this speech included the "special" and "heroic" nature of Communists, the importance of the unity of the Party, the responsibility to guard and strengthen the dictatorship of the proletariat and the alliance of workers and peasants, as well as the responsibility to strengthen the Union of Republics.<sup>13</sup> The melodramatic form of the speech, as if Lenin had given a bedside bequest, was meant to imbue Stalin and his allies with an aura of men on a righteous mission. In this case the succession was meant to be secured by demonstrating that the new leaders were faithful to the great cause of the deceased.

Of course, Lenin's death is not so much remembered today for the funeral as for the burial, or, rather, the lack thereof. The idea of preserving Lenin's corpse was first brought up by Stalin at a meeting of the Politburo sometime in the fall of 1923. For some time it had been claimed that embalming Lenin was a reaction to the widespread public grief following his death, but this is now known not to have been the case<sup>14</sup>. Although Stalin could not have known for how long Lenin could be preserved, embalming the deceased leader was apparently an attempt to prolong the mourning process and further elevate Lenin's status after his death.

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<sup>13</sup> Josef V. Stalin, "On The Death Of Lenin: A Speech Delivered at the Second All-union Congress of Soviets," in *V.I. Lenin: Selected Works in Two Volumes* (Moscow: Foreign Languages Publishing House, 1952), 21-22. No translator listed.

<sup>14</sup> Zbarskii, 16-18; Tumarkin, 174-75.

The completion of a permanent Mausoleum in 1930 and the use of this Mausoleum as the center of Soviet public political displays, for example, as the reviewing stand on which stood top Party officials for parades on the anniversary of the Great October Revolution and on Victory Day, sought to establish Lenin as the founder of the Soviet state and Communist Party. This, along with other uses of the Mausoleum, especially the constant tours by school children and others, was meant to engrave Lenin's image deeply into the consciousness of the Soviet people and to establish the leadership of the Communist Party as his heirs. By keeping Lenin on display to "meet" generations of Soviet citizens, the Party aimed to obscure the finality of his death as if Lenin was still a personal guide for everyone in the Soviet Union.<sup>15</sup> Thus, there was a constant reminder that, however imperfect Soviet leaders seemed, they were in fact deriving their authority and even their day to day policies from the infallible founder of the Party and state.

The death of Stalin on March 5, 1953 created different circumstances than did the death of Lenin. Due to Stalin's prolonged leadership of the country, as well as the Cult of Personality, Stalin's role was much more important than Lenin's in the actual functioning of the Soviet system. The fact that the Party leadership was concerned primarily with facilitating a smooth succession supported as much as possible by the Soviet people can be seen from the following statement in Pravda:

The Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Soviet of Ministers of the Union of SSRs, The Praesidium of the SUPREME SOVIET of the USSR, consider the most important task for the Party and government at this difficult time for our Party and country to be guaranteeing an uninterrupted and appropriate leadership of all the life of the country which, in its turn, demands the greatest unity of leadership, not allowing any kind of disorder and panic so that in this way the successful conducting of the policy

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<sup>15</sup> Tumarkin, *passim*.

worked out by our party and government in regard to both internal and external affairs can be guaranteed without doubt.<sup>16</sup>

The goal of this statement was not so much to maintain calm as to underline the continuity between Stalin and his successors. Also, expressing the unity of the Party and its top leadership was seen as essential to underlining the commitment of the successors to Stalin's legacy. Furthermore, the goal of using the commemoration of Stalin to guarantee support of his successors was succinctly expressed by the Party: "In these difficult sad days...the people more closely rally around the Central Committee of the Soviet Union and the Soviet government."<sup>17</sup> The claim that the people would rally around the Central Committee during the "difficult sad days" was a persistent theme of propaganda surrounding the deaths of the General Secretaries of the Central Committee.

Stalin's funeral on March 9 was very lavish by Soviet standards. Huge crowds assembled to honor him. Coverage of his funeral shows more emotional response than coverage of the funerals of other General Secretaries. Video of reactions to Stalin's death shows people, especially women, collapsing in tears.<sup>18</sup> Stalin was laid out for viewing in the Hall of Columns in the House of Unions. His corpse lay in an open casket surrounded by wreaths brought by important delegations. These wreaths were described as being from certain key institutions such as the Central Committee of the Communist Party, as well as from foreign delegations. They were designed to express the unity of institutions in grief as well as the continued status of these institutions. There were so many of these wreaths that a line of them stretched from the House of Unions to the Kremlin. Inside the

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<sup>16</sup> "Postanovlenie Sovmestnogo zasedaniia Plenuma Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuz, Soveta Ministrov Soiuz SSR, Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR," *Pravda*, March 7, 1953, 1.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> "Великое Прощание - Great Farewell." YouTube. Flash video file. Online at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C7SjHnL3huE> This video is contemporary Soviet news film of Stalin's funeral, one hour twenty-five minutes in length. Note that the title of the original Soviet film is "Velikoe Proshanie," the same title as that of the Pravda article cited in n. 21.



Hall of Columns Stalin's corpse was placed in a red coffin, his head placed on a red pillow, and the coffin surrounded by wreaths.<sup>19</sup>

This was a visual display of the endless amount of respect that people throughout the world supposedly felt for Stalin. The people who came to view Stalin were described as "an endless rain of people overflowing"<sup>20</sup> and as "the live human rain which in the course of the last three days had filled up the streets of the capital."<sup>21</sup> The analogy of rain expressed the absolute unity of the Soviet people in their grief. Just as drops of rain, the Soviet people were indistinguishable in their emotions, but strong and united.

After the viewing in the House of Unions Stalin's casket was carried out and placed on an artillery carriage. Then a procession formed made up of the leading figures of the Communist Party and the Soviet State, as well as the family of the deceased and representatives of the Union Republics and various organizations. The procession set out accompanied by tanks and slow-marching soldiers. Along the route large crowds were amassed, backed by huge portraits of Stalin. When the procession arrived at Red Square the leaders of the Communist Party ascended to the Tribune of Lenin's Mausoleum, together with the coffin. There the leading members of the Party delivered speeches glorifying Stalin and urging unity. Then Stalin's remains were placed in the Mausoleum and the mourning demonstration was declared closed. All across the Soviet Union whistles in factories and on boats and trains sounded.<sup>22</sup> All this was meant not only to express a deep sense

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> "Velikoe Proshanie," *Pravda*, March 9, 1953, 1.

<sup>22</sup> "Velikoe proshanie – Great Farewell" Youtube.

of loss, but also to show the leading members of the Communist Party together with all of Soviet society paying homage to Stalin.

Pravda coverage of Stalin's death and funeral, as well as the speech given by Malenkov at the funeral, can be divided roughly into four important political themes:

First, the new leadership tried to merge the images of Lenin and Stalin, giving Stalin credit for essentially every positive development in Soviet history. The triumvirate of Marxist-Leninist history was expanded from "Marx-Engels-Lenin" to "Marx-Engels-Lenin-Stalin."<sup>23</sup> Secondly, the Party emphasized that Stalin was a great man who would "live forever in our hearts."<sup>24</sup> Third, Stalin's death had caused great sadness, but as a result all the people would "rally ever closer around the Communist Party and its Central Committee."<sup>25</sup> Finally, the current course of policy was justified as having derived from Lenin's and Stalin's policies.<sup>26</sup> All of this served to emphasize that the new collective leadership was the correct successor to the great Stalin.

The attempt to merge the figures of Lenin and Stalin can be seen not only in such outrageous claims as that Stalin had founded the Soviet Union and its Communist Party together with Lenin, but more concretely in the decision to embalm Stalin and place him in the Mausoleum. Initially the Party declared that they would build a Pantheon and place the sarcophagi of Lenin and Stalin

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<sup>23</sup> "Ot tsentral'nogo komiteta kommunisti cheskoï partii sovetskogo soiuza, soveta ministrov soiuza, soveta ministrov soiusa ssr, i presidiouma verkhovnogo soveta. Ko vsem chlenam partii ko vsem trudiashimsia sovetskogo soiuza," *Pravda*, March 6, 1953.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> "Rech tovarisha L. P. Beriia," *Pravda*, March 10, 1953, 2; "Velichaishaia splochnost' i edinstvo," *Pravda*, March 7, 1953, 1.

there.<sup>27</sup> As part of de-Stalinization, however, Khrushchev demoted Stalin, as it were, by removing him from the Mausoleum and burying him in the Kremlin Wall. Although this was not a complete repudiation of Stalin, Khrushchev sought to repudiate the most extreme aspects of Stalin's legacy and base his own rule more firmly on the founder Lenin. From this point on Lenin was deemed the sole father of the Soviet Communist Party and state, though official criticism of Stalin later abated.<sup>28</sup> Nikita Khrushchev died after having been removed as General Secretary in 1964, but was accorded a grave in the prestigious Novodevichi Cemetery in Moscow.<sup>29</sup>

Leonid Ilyich Brezhnev died in office on November 10, 1982. His funeral took essentially the same form as Stalin's, but coverage in the Soviet press and on television was somewhat toned down. First Brezhnev's body was displayed in the Hall of Columns of the House of Unions from November 11 to November 14.<sup>30</sup> His body was surrounded by flowers, and the coffin itself was surrounded by wreaths from all important Soviet institutions as well as from foreign delegations. At the time of his funeral Brezhnev's coffin was carried out of the House of Unions and placed on an artillery carriage drawn by a tank decorated with a red flag bearing a red star. Flags of the different services indicated the presence of Soviet military might. A portrait of Brezhnev was borne before the parade of the wreaths, at the front, then all the medals he had been awarded were carried on red pillows by soldiers. All the service members in the procession marched in time to Chopin's

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<sup>27</sup> "Postanovlenie tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi partii Sovetskogo Soiuza I Soveta Ministrov Soiuza SSR O sooruzhenii Panteona – pamiatnika vechnoi slavy velikikh liudei Sovetskoi strany," *Pravda*, March 7, 1953, 2.

<sup>28</sup> Simon Sebag Montefiore, *Stalin: The Court of the Red Tsar* (London : Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2003), 579.

<sup>29</sup> Yuri Riabinin, *Zhizn' moskovskikh kladbishch : istoriia i sovremennost* (Moscow: Ripol Klassik, 2006), 363.

<sup>30</sup> Ot Komissii Po Organizatsii Pokhoron General'nogo Sekretaria TsK KPSS, Predsedatelia Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR Leonida Ilyicha Brezhneva, *Pravda*, November 12, 1982, 1.

Funeral March. When the procession arrived at Lenin's Mausoleum, the leaders of the Party ascended the Tribune, where they stood with the top military leadership and Brezhnev's family. Speeches by Brezhnev's successor Yuri Andropov and others then were given in Brezhnev's honor. Brezhnev was portrayed as a tireless leader who always gave everything to the cause of the people and the party.<sup>31</sup> The procession resumed from the Tribune down to the Kremlin Wall where Brezhnev was interred. The National Anthem played. All work stopped for five minutes and whistles blew for three minutes from every factory, boat and train in the entire country. Artillery salutes were fired off in the main cities of the Soviet Union.<sup>32</sup>

The themes of the Pravda coverage of Brezhnev's death were similar to those of the coverage of Stalin's: First, Brezhnev's role in the history of the Soviet Union was recounted.<sup>33</sup> The purpose of this was to link Brezhnev to most of the major achievements of the Communist Party. Secondly, it was stressed that Brezhnev "will live forever in our hearts."<sup>34</sup> Third, it was claimed as an obvious fact that the sadness caused by Brezhnev's death prompted everyone "to rally even closer around the Communist Party and the Central Committee."<sup>35</sup> Finally, Brezhnev's great deeds were used to justify the current course of Soviet policy. Of course, in passing responsibility for policy from Brezhnev to his successor nothing would be lost. "The Soviet people know that the banner of Lenin, the banner of October under which were gained the all-world-historical victories, is in

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<sup>31</sup> "Программа "Время" 15.11.1982 Похороны Л.И.Брежнева," YOUTUBE. Flash video file. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iOSPicTud44>

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> "Leonid Il'ich Brezhnev," *Pravda*, November 12, 1982, 2.

<sup>34</sup> "Ot Tsentral'nogo Komiteta Kommunisticheskoi Partii Sovetskogo Soiuza, Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, Soveta Ministrov SSSR," *Pravda*, November 12, 1982, 1.

<sup>35</sup> "Narod i Partia Ediny", *Pravda*, November 15, 1982, 1.

reliable hands.”<sup>36</sup> In other words, Brezhnev’s achievements were used to justify Soviet policy in general and to underline that leadership was in the hands of those who would carry on Brezhnev’s heroic legacy.

Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov died on February 9, 1984, just 15 months after delivering his speech at Brezhnev’s funeral. Although Andropov had not been General Secretary for long, he had been an important figure in Soviet life, having served for 15 years as head of the KGB. His funeral took largely the same shape as Brezhnev’s. The same elements formed the focus of Soviet television and newspaper coverage. In the Hall of Columns of the House of Unions Andropov’s body was laid out from February 11 to February 13.<sup>37</sup> The coffin was surrounded by wreaths from different Soviet entities and foreign delegations. As at the funerals of the other general secretaries, at Andropov’s funeral on February 14 all the members of the Politburo of the Central Committee came to view the body and to give their respects to the family. On Soviet television each member of the Politburo was listed, in order of procession, both as he entered the Hall of Columns and later as he ascended to the Tribune on top of Lenin’s Mausoleum. This emphasized both the importance of the leadership and their continued solidarity.<sup>38</sup>

The procession from the House of Unions to Lenin’s Mausoleum included the top figures of the Soviet Communist Party and government. Andropov’s medals were carried each on a scarlet pillow by a separate soldier, underlining the General Secretary’s long and supposedly

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<sup>36</sup> “Obrashenie Tsentral’nogo Komiteta KPSS, Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR, Soveta Ministrov SSSR. K Kommunisticheskoi Partii, K Sovetskomu Narodu,” *Pravda*, November 12, 1982, 1.

<sup>37</sup> “Ot Komissii Po Organizatsii Pokhoron General’nogo Sekretaria TsK KPSS, Predsedatelia Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR Yuria Vladimirovicha Andropova,” *Pravda*, February 11, 1984, 1.

<sup>38</sup> Soviet Leader Yuri Andropov's Funeral / Похороны Андропова, Youtube. Flash video file. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmGC\\_5Qu3bg](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmGC_5Qu3bg)

distinguished service. The procession then headed to the Lenin Mausoleum where the leaders of the Party, with other dignitaries and Andropov's family, ascended to the Tribune along with the casket.<sup>39</sup>

The speech of successor Konstantin Chernenko's is notable in that it was more specifically policy-oriented than similar speeches at the funerals of other General Secretaries. Chernenko was clearly attempting to utilize the occasion to signal the importance of a new attitude toward policy. His speech touched on four familiar themes, that is, Andropov's role in the history of the Soviet Union, the perpetual memory of Andropov in the hearts of the people, the sadness of the people yielding a greater need than ever for the Communist Party, and the justification of the continuation of the current course of policy by the incoming leadership. Chernenko described how "[t]he best political and human qualities of Yuri Vladimirovich Andropov unfolded especially brightly in the post of General Secretary of the CC of the CPSU and Chairman of the Praesidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR. He did not spare any effort, always on top of the problems standing in front of him."<sup>40</sup> This not only sought to praise Andropov's efforts but to imply that the post of General Secretary inspired its occupants to hard work and persistence. Thus by praising Andropov, Chernenko sought to inspire confidence in himself. Chernenko also argued for continuity in policy in the name of Andropov's memory: "The best way to give his memory its due is to continue and to move forward by means of our collective strength, to continue the work that was begun under the leadership of Yuri Vladimirovich, and to guarantee continuity in policy."<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> "Rech' K U Chernenko," *Pravda*, February 15, 1984, 1.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

The succession was justified not only in the name of Andropov's legacy but specifically as a continuation of it. By honoring Andropov, Chernenko sought to justify his new role in terms of old achievements. It is true that Chernenko claimed to intend improvements, but this was worded in such a way as to not reflect badly on Andropov. Thus, Chernenko tried not only to legitimate his new role, but to set out an approach justified in terms of Andropov's legacy while not claiming to be merely a clone of the deceased General Secretary.

Just thirteen months later, once again the mourner became the mourned. Konstantin Chernenko was the last General Secretary to die in office, on March 10, 1985. It is interesting that even with three funerals in such a short time span the Communist Party thought it best simply to repeat the same order of ceremonies with essentially no innovation. The body was laid out in the Hall of Columns for viewing on March 11 and the morning of March 12.<sup>42</sup> Again the coffin was surrounded by wreaths from all important institutions and by Chernenko's medals. On March 12 after everyone, including especially the top officials of the Party and government, had viewed the body, the coffin was carried out and placed on a gun carriage, after which the procession proceeded to Lenin's Mausoleum.<sup>43</sup> Unlike the usual bearing of a deceased leader's coffin by important political figures, only soldiers carried Chernenko's coffin.<sup>44</sup>

Gorbachev's speech at Chernenko's funeral on March 13 also departed from precedent. The speech itself focused primarily on policy and was delivered in an unprecedented monotone.<sup>45</sup> Still

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<sup>42</sup> "Ot Kommissii Po Organizatsii Pokhoron General'nogo Sekretaria TsK KPSS, Predsedatelia Prezidiuma Verkhovnogo Soveta SSSR Kostantina Ustinovicha Chernenko," *Pravda*, March 12, 1985, 2.

<sup>43</sup> "Funeral of USSR Leader Konstantin Chernenko Похороны Черненко," Youtube. Flash video file. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nY4zH4OErMk>

<sup>44</sup> Serge Schmemmann, "Chernenko buried in red square to the funeral strains of Chopin," *New York Times*, March 14, 1985.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*

Gorbachev attempted to justify the policies he was advocating in terms of Chernenko's legacy. For example, Gorbachev claimed "The implementation of the external political course of the Soviet state, the massive peace-loving initiatives directed toward the cessation of the arms race, and the elimination of the threat of world thermonuclear catastrophe are tied with the name of Konstantin Ustinovich Chernenko"<sup>46</sup> Therefore, in spite of Gorbachev's apparent boredom, he felt it necessary to stress Chernenko's achievements by way of pledging to continue them. Likewise, despite the short term of Chernenko's tenure, he received the same honors in death as the other successors of Lenin and Stalin. It does seem, however, that Gorbachev's demeanor indicated a diminishing amount of faith in the political utility of the spectacle. Of course it is difficult to say for certain, and other interpretations of Gorbachev's behavior are possible.

### **Ordinary Death Practices in the Soviet Union**

We have seen that the death practices of the Soviet elite were lavish affairs that sought to glorify the deceased and legitimate succession in the Communist system. This, however, was not what Marx had had in mind. Marxism -- and Marxism-Leninism no less -- held hostility to all religion as a central tenet of its philosophy. Since Marxists viewed existing and past death practices as having derived mainly from religion and from the fear of death supposedly instilled by religion it is no surprise that the Bolshevik regime wanted to destroy religious funerary customs. Also, there is no denying Pinnow's thesis that the Soviet authorities viewed the lives of Soviet citizens in the context of each person's contribution to the collective rather than in terms of the value of the individual in the Western sense.<sup>47</sup> While eventually the Soviet regime constructed an alternative,

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<sup>46</sup> "Rech' M.S. Gorbacheva," *Pravda*, March 14, 1985, 1.

<sup>47</sup> Kenneth Martin Pinnow, *Lost to the collective: suicide and the promise of Soviet socialism, 1921-1929* (Ithaca : Cornell University Press, 2010).



the primary focus of the regime was always on obliterating most aspects of religious death rituals. As a result of this ideological approach, the civic rituals that the regime promulgated were quite rudimentary and bland. Also, due to the ideology of the regime, these rituals focused primarily on the deceased's contribution to building the socialist society. These contributions, however, like most of the ritual, were expressed in general ways and lacked attention-grabbing elements of individualization.

In order to understand the nature of the shift brought about by the enforcement of Soviet ideology regarding death it is necessary to first briefly outline the pre-Revolutionary Russian practices. In rural areas, where the vast majority of the population of the Empire lived, religious rituals dominated death practices. Also, the community as a whole participated in these practices. From death to burial generally three days would elapse. All this time someone had to be present at the side of the deceased.<sup>48</sup> Incidentally, this appears to be an origin of the “mourning watch” carried on at the funerals of General Secretaries of the Soviet Union.

The pre-Soviet Russian burial required a priest under most circumstances. The “carrying out” of the body from the house occurred either the night before the funeral or before morning Mass on the day of the funeral. Prior to the carrying out the village would gather at the home of the deceased and the priest would sprinkle holy water on the coffin before the deceased was placed into it. Donations of candles and money were made to the church by all those who attended.<sup>49</sup> The wealthy often paid for church bells to be rung at their funerals; bell ringing was believed to be capable of saving the soul from hell. The priest often accompanied the mourners to the grave and read the

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<sup>48</sup> I. A. Kremleva, “Pokoronno-Pominal'nye Obriady U Russkikh Traditsii i Sovremennost,” in *Pokhoronno-pominal'nye obychai i obriady*, ed. I.U.B. Simchenko (Moscow : Rossiiskaia akademiia nauk, Institut etnologii i antropologii im. N.N. Miklukho-Maklaia, 1993), 16.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid.

burial service a second time. At the time of the burial, money would be thrown into the grave “so that the soul had something with which to pay for its transport to the edge of the earth or so that there was something with which to buy one’s way out of sin.”<sup>50</sup> It is clear from this that the pre-Soviet Russian funeral was intertwined with the Orthodox faith, although it included some pre-Christian and other more or less heretical folkways.

In December 1918 the Soviet government took one of the first practical steps in its campaign against religious funerals. According to a decree signed by V. I. Lenin the state would pay for civic funerals, but not for religious ones. The decree allowed for religious funerals, but in practice these were discouraged by a variety of means. Also, in the 1920’s, the regime first introduced a Red funeral ceremony for the general population. However, even official Soviet sources admitted these attempts largely failed.<sup>51</sup>

Later, however, the regime attempted to institute a more uniform funeral and burial that would be used by the mass of the population. An important step in this process was the introduction in 1964 of a civil funeral ceremony in the Russian Federated Soviet Socialist Republic.<sup>52</sup> By the beginning of the 1970s a precise order of ceremonies for the Soviet civil funeral existed. These ceremonies took place in a so-called ritual hall. The ritual hall contained a plinth, and opposite the plinth stood chairs for those attending the funeral. A mourning banner lay on the coffin, a portrait of the deceased was displayed at the head of the coffin along with his or her medals on velvet pillows. The medals emphasized one’s degree of service to the State and Communist Party. Wreaths from

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<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>51</sup> Vladimir Aleksandrovich Rudnev, *Sovetskie obychai i obriady* (Leningrad : Lenizdat, 1974), 19; Vladimir Aleksandrovich Rudnev, *Sovetskie prazdniki, obriady, ritualy* (Leningrad : Lenizdat, 1979), 12-16. These two works contain almost identical information

<sup>52</sup> Rudnev, *Sovetskie obychai i obriady*. 122.

the place of the employment of the deceased, or from other prominent organizations in which the deceased participated, stood at the foot of the coffin and on a shelf nearby. A mourning guard stood, two people at a time, one at the head of the coffin and one at the foot. The need to complete the ceremony quickly was underlined by the fact that the guard rotated every two to three minutes to give all the closest mourners the chance to participate.<sup>53</sup>

The Master of Funeral Ceremonies, who was usually unacquainted with the deceased or with the family, would enter and convoked the ceremony. Short speeches were given by those who knew the deceased. The goal of all of this, according to the Soviets, was to engender a “feeling of respect to the services of the deceased to society.” In other words, the focus of this ceremony was supposed to be on one’s role in building Socialism or Communism, depending on the particular time period. After the closing statement by the Master of Funeral Ceremonies, “the Requiem by Shostokovich is played and the mourning flag is taken off to prepare the coffin for the carrying out. As the music stops, the members of the mourning guard disburse and mourners pass by the coffin for the final farewell.”<sup>54</sup>

Everyone then accompanied the wreaths, the honors and medals and the coffin to the grave. At the grave, one of the relatives or a close friend would give a short speech, after which there was a minute of silence and the coffin was closed and lowered into the ground. Then each mourner threw a handful of soil into the grave. A grave marker engraved with the last name and initials of the deceased and the year and month of birth and of death was put into place.<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 126.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, 127.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

Rouhier-Willoughby has argued that it was especially difficult for the Soviet regime to mold a compelling funeral ritual that would be consistent with its ideology:

...[T]he funeral ritual posed a problem for ritual specialists, because it is radically different from the other two rituals we have examined. Childbirth and wedding rites are designed to establish family identity. The funeral, in contrast, deals with the destruction of that identity as a result of the loss of one of its members. Because no obvious ideological vision existed for how to deal with the dissolution of the family, theorists were never able to realize the same kind of consistency in the funeral rite as they had in birth and weddings.<sup>56</sup>

It is probably more correct to say that Soviet ideology had a clear vision of what it wanted to destroy in the funeral ceremony, but not a clear vision of what would replace it. The Soviet solution, as has already been seen, was to focus on the deceased's contribution to society, that is, on the labor of the deceased. Given the nature of the Soviet economy, however, most ceremonies in this mold would not be especially personal. Furthermore, as we have seen, the focus of this ceremony was on the benefit given by the deceased to the collective. This necessarily sidelined those who actually participated in the funeral ritual, i.e., the friends, family and colleagues of the deceased. Also, the importance given to the deceased and his works had to be kept to a relative minimum so as not to contradict the role given by Soviet ideology to the elite of the Party.

According to Rouhier-Willoughby "Interment during the Soviet period remained largely unchanged from the nineteenth-century Orthodox ritual, except for the elimination of the priest who would celebrate a funeral mass."<sup>57</sup> In the literal sense this is true, however, Rouhier-Willoughby obscures the centrality of the Mass to the service. This is like saying that a dance party was little changed except for the elimination of the music. It is not as if the Mass was replaced by

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<sup>56</sup> Jeanmarie Rouhier-Willoughby, *Village values : negotiating identity, gender, and resistance in urban Russian life-cycle rituals* (Bloomington, IN : Slavica Publishers, 2008), 177

<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 178

some equally elaborate Socialist rituals. Rather, the Mass was replaced by short dull speeches with little to no emotional content. The burial ritual, as with the funeral ritual, certainly did include many pre-Revolutionary elements, but the attempt to Sovietize these rituals completely shifted their focus and greatly diminished their theatrical and emotive elements. Ultimately, the overall theme of these common funerals was just as clichéd as the rest of Soviet mass propaganda. Undoubtedly this had some appeal for the most ardent Communists, but in Soviet common funerals there was little glitter to make the ideas shine.

As I have mentioned, one of the main goals of the Soviet ceremony was to change the focus from one's familial and social ties to one's role in the collective. This can be seen from the following remark in a Soviet study of death practices in the Caucasus: "Up to the present time there exist survivals of the old mutual help when the whole village materially helped the family of the deceased."<sup>58</sup> The term "survivals" had a strictly negative connotation in Soviet ideology. In other words, the fact that people rely on their social structure for support in times of grief was being criticized. This was because such behavior was believed to reinforce pre-Communist social structure and to illustrate a lack of faith in the collective.

Much of the previous literature on Soviet funerals neglects to detail the effects of logistical difficulties on ordinary Soviet citizens attempting to honor and bury their relatives. Specifically, despite the fact that these funerals and burials were supposedly low-cost, in reality they were extremely expensive. As the Duke Study on the second economy in the Soviet Union has pointed out, "These expenditures may comprise one or some combination of the following: 1) tips and

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<sup>58</sup> A.E. Ter-Sarkisints, "Sovremennye Etnicheskie Protessy U Armian Nagornogo Karabakha," in *Etnicheskie i kul'turno-bytovye protsessy na Kavkaze*, ed. N.G. Volkova (Moscow : Nauka, 1978), 113.

bribes to employees of the state funeral services facilities; 2) payments to private individuals for services such as grave digging, arranging a wake or for flowers; and, 3) donations for religious ceremonies.”<sup>59</sup> For purposes of this dissertation, we are primarily concerned with the findings of the Duke study regarding tips and bribes and, to a lesser extent, payments to private individuals. This black market was very profitable for state employees, estimated to have generated between 90 and 161 million rubles per year.<sup>60</sup> Of course all sectors of the Soviet economy generated opportunities for capturing rents in the form of bribes, but the study found that the managers of funeral homes had among the highest black market incomes.<sup>61</sup>

The time sensitive nature of funerals and burials, as well as the lack of alternatives, made the necessity of bribery even higher than in most other sectors of the Soviet economy.<sup>62</sup> Every aspect of the funeral and burial, from transportation to coffin requisition to grave digging and burial, required a separate bribe.<sup>63</sup> This demonstrates that while the official aspects of the Soviet common funeral were hardly inspiring, the realities were grueling and taxing, both on income and on emotions. According to one Muscovite, the burial of her mother cost 2,000 rubles, or roughly three months’ family income.<sup>64</sup> Thus, although the funeral was supposedly taken care of by the state, in reality it was a stark example of the difference between the myth of a workers’ paradise and the reality of corruption in everyday Soviet life.

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<sup>59</sup> Kimberly C. Neuhauser, *The second economy in funeral services* (Bala Cynwyd, PA : WEFA Group Special Project, 1992), iii.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 18.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 6-7.

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*, 12.

<sup>64</sup> David Remnick, *Lenin's Tomb: The Last Days of the Soviet Empire* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), 185.

Burial, however, was the subject not merely of corruption, but of considered Soviet policy. In general, there were two aspects of policy toward the place of burial: first, the destruction of the old religious-based system of burial, together with the political meaning that it held under the old regime; secondly, the establishment of a new hierarchy of burial that fit with the political and ideological preferences of the Communist Party. Specifically the regime sought to destroy the old religious-based system of burial as a part of the general anti-religious policy of Soviet Communism. Also, it was important for the regime to replace old burial distinctions with those based on the new order.

The physical closure and destruction of cemeteries was an important aspect of the Soviet attempt to transform the order of burial. For example, in Moscow the authorities destroyed more than 400 parish cemeteries.<sup>65</sup> It should be noted, however, that the majority of parish cemeteries were not destroyed due to the fact that they were given over to the “Living Church,” which was a Soviet-sponsored church created essentially for the purpose of destroying the Russian Orthodox Church.<sup>66</sup> Also, in Moscow every monastery cemetery was destroyed, with the exception of Donskoi, which was spared apparently because the Patriarch of the Russian Orthodox Church was being held under house arrest there.<sup>67</sup> As Ivanov has explained, the mass destruction of cemeteries occurred “for objective reasons, the root reconstruction of Moscow, but also for obviously subjective reasons, nihilism in relation to the past on the part of the new revolutionary authority.”<sup>68</sup> Kremleva also claims that Bolshevik hostility to the values of the old society is key to understanding the policy in regard to death, in general, and cemeteries in particular. Essentially hostility to the dead was a

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<sup>65</sup> Riabinin, *Mistika*, 55-56

<sup>66</sup> Ibid, 313.

<sup>67</sup> Riabinin, *Zhizn' moskovskikh kladbishch*, 110.

<sup>68</sup> Nikita Ivanov, *Skulptura Vagan'kovskogo nekropolia* (Moscow: [s.n.], 2002), 16-17.

manifestation of general Soviet hostility to the non-Communist past.<sup>69</sup> We should not pretend, however, that this hostility applied to all of history or that the Soviets did not distinguish in any way between historical classes.

Obviously all modern societies have experienced the destruction of cemeteries due to urban growth, but Soviet hostility to the old order in its religious, political and economic forms motivated a purposeful campaign of closure and destruction of cemeteries. For example, Alekseevskoe Cemetery in Moscow was destroyed primarily because it contained the graves of many “bloodsuckers and Tsarist Satraps.” As was often the case, this was justified on the grounds that no one took care of the graves, but Riabinin points out that this neglect was due to the fact that taking care of the graves of enemies of the people could get one repressed.<sup>70</sup> Further, Riabinin shows that the Soviet authorities considered the destruction of the graves of the old ruling classes to be an essential element in the class warfare needed to firmly establish the new regime. As Lenin put it in regards to the graves of certain officials on the Kremlin grounds, “Away with all the memorials to the czars and their servants. The proletariat should decisively pull down all that abomination that recalls the autocracy.”<sup>71</sup> As with all such liquidations, the destruction of Alekseevskoe was also justified on utilitarian grounds, but in fact the space was never reused.<sup>72</sup> This illustrates how, in relation to not only cemeteries but to religious institutions in general, the Soviet regime adopted for ideological reasons the position that such institutions were *a priori* wasteful.

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<sup>69</sup> Kremleva, 35.

<sup>70</sup> Riabinin, *Mistika*, 195. Cf Riabinin, *Zhizn' moskovskikh kladbishch*, 134

<sup>71</sup> Riabinin, *Mistika*, 82

<sup>72</sup> Ibid, 195



Likewise, in the 1930's the authorities in Moscow closed Lazarevskoe Cemetery and replaced it with a children's park, although Riabinin points out that the cemetery clearly was not destroyed just to build a park.<sup>73</sup> Most famously, the Cathedral Church of Christ the Savior – built in 1812 to commemorate the victory over Napoleon -- and its necropol were destroyed to be replaced by the Palace of the Soviets, which, however, was never completed.<sup>74</sup> All of this illustrates that the destruction of cemeteries and their replacement was not generally motivated by reference to the needs of economic and civic planning. Rather for reasons either of anti-religious or general class-based hostility, the Soviets closed cemeteries and then utilized the space if it happened to conform to some need. As with the destruction of churches, however, the Soviets more consistently found uses for the materials harvested from cemeteries than for the spaces themselves. Merridale has pointed out that significant portions of the Moscow metro, including whole stations, were adorned with materials harvested from liquidated cemeteries.<sup>75</sup>

It is important to realize, however, that this sort of recycling befell not only cemeteries, but religious institutions in general. The Danilov Monastery, for example, was similarly destroyed and the material used in the construction of the Revolutionary Square Metro Station.<sup>76</sup> Indeed, this was common practice. In the 1920's, for example, many cemeteries were destroyed and gravestones used as building material valued at 25 to 30 rubles each.<sup>77</sup> Kremleva shows that “the mass

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<sup>73</sup> Riabinin, *Zhizn' moskovskikh kladbishch*, 162

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid*, 128.

<sup>75</sup> Catherine Merridale, “Revolution Among the Dead: Cemeteries in Twentieth Century Russia,” *Mortality* 8: no. 2, (2003): 181.

<sup>76</sup> Paul Froese, “Forced Secularization in Soviet Russia: Why an Atheistic Monopoly Failed,” *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion* 43, no.1 (2004): 42.

<sup>77</sup> V.F. Kozlov, “Sudby Monastyrskikh Kladbish Moskv (1920 – 30- e gg.),” in *Moskovskii nekropol': istoriia, arkheologiia, iskusstvo, okhrana*, eds. V.F. Kozlov and E.A. Shulepova (Moscow : Nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut kul'tury : Moskovskii fond kul'tury, 1991), 51.

destruction of churches was carried out alongside the mass destruction of cemeteries.”<sup>78</sup> We can see from this that although the campaign against cemeteries had its own ideological features, it was pursued in the same vein and for most of the same reasons as the anti-religious campaign in general.

The life of cemeteries in Soviet times included not only the destruction of the old but also the creation of a new hierarchy and system of honors. The replacement of crosses with simple columns, and later with pyramids supporting a red star above, marked the transition from the old religious cemetery to the new Communist one.<sup>79</sup> Although the ways of marking prestige in the new Soviet cemetery were different, they were no less important than in monarchical times. Riabinin shows that the system of burial was highly regulated to conform to the hierarchy of the Soviet system: “In Soviet times the burial of any honored personages was strictly regulated according to his lifetime achievements.” The highest honor was burial in Red Square, followed by Novodiviche, where Khrushchev and many other important figures were buried. After Novodiviche there came burial in Vagankovskoe and Vvedenskoe. Cemeteries farther out from the center of Moscow were for those of lesser rank, though such cemeteries were by no means disgraceful.<sup>80</sup> The prestige attached to various cemeteries was not merely a question of petty competition among the elite but was used to inculcate respect for the political hierarchy among the population.<sup>81</sup> By calibrating prestige of burial site to rank in the Soviet system the Party attempted to ensure that the death of important figures reinforced the system rather than weakening it.

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<sup>78</sup> Kremleva, 35.

<sup>79</sup> N.M. Dmitrienko. . *Tomskii nekropol': spiski i nekrologi pogrebennykh na starykh tomских kladbishchakh 1827-1939* (Tomsk : Tomskogo universiteta, 2001), 6-7.

<sup>80</sup> Riabinin, *Zhizn' moskovskikh kladbishch*, 397-98.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid*, 234.

## Conclusion

As we have seen in this chapter, the Soviet funerary system involved a hierarchy of honors that glorified the Party elite while providing simple services to the great mass of the population. On the one hand, Soviet ideology condemned elaborate funerary practice as a wasteful survival of the pre-Revolutionary past while, on the other hand, an extravagant system of ritual for the Party elite was developed. This contradiction was created by the need of the Communist Party to legitimize its successive leaders in a system that had no clear principle of succession. The grand pageantry of the funerals of General Secretaries served to emphasize that only great men led the Communist Party and, therefore, only great men would replace them.

While the Soviet elite funeral and burial were developed as a positive force to increase the stability of succession in the political system, Soviet policy toward the common funeral and burial was much more negative. In other words, the policy toward the latter was primarily aimed at destroying the hold of religion and only secondarily at developing an appropriately socialist way of mourning. The destruction of cemeteries was not accompanied by democratization of burial but by the establishment of a new anti-religious hierarchy. While the Soviet common funeral and burial should not be viewed as a kind of Gulag for the dead, the high level of corruption in the funerary industry underlined the already obvious discrepancy between Soviet myth and reality. Nonetheless, if we keep in mind the political role of death practices for the Soviet elite and the anti-religious ideology of Marxism-Leninism, the discrepancy between elite and ordinary Soviet death practices is easily comprehensible. The system as a whole sought merely to strengthen two needs of the Soviet regime, that of insuring legitimate succession to high office and that of inculcating Marxist-Leninist ideology in the populace at large.



## **Chapter IV: The United States of America**

We have seen thus far that death practices are of great political significance in countries where, as a rule, succession to high office occurs on the death of the occupant. Although this rule is official law in monarchies and merely customary in most Communist countries, nonetheless the theory set forth in this dissertation can explain both phenomena. Also we have seen that in monarchies and Communist systems death practices of the vast majority are determined by other factors, specifically religious-cultural trends in the former and official Marxist-Leninist ideology in the latter.

In democracies, however, the situation is more complex. Especially in the United States there is not a single generally applicable rule of succession to high office. While we can distinguish several such rules, the two most important are the normal system of rotation according to election and the system of succession upon death according to which the Vice President occupies the office of his deceased predecessor. It will be seen later that this latter was not exactly intended by the framers of the Constitution but became enshrined in the US system due to a lack of clarity.

I argue that death of the President in office creates essentially the same kind of political vacuum as the death of a king or a Secretary General. This is because a Vice-President who succeeds a President who has died in office lacks the legitimacy bestowed by elections. Given this situation, the new President uses the lavish death practices of his predecessor both to cement the greatness of his predecessor and to establish his own legitimacy through his connection to the deceased.

On the other hand, when presidents die after their term in office the solemnities are generally not elaborate. Compared to the monarchical and Communist cases, however, there are more exceptions and the general rules have less predictive power. In particular, military generals who have occupied the presidency have received far greater honors at their funerals than do other presidents who did not die in office. It must be concluded, therefore, that while the American case does not conform to the theory as much as the Communist and monarchical cases, it still indicates that my argument is a good predictor of when and why death practices will be politicized.

The kind of political regulations that control funerary distinctions according to rank in monarchies and Communist countries simply do not exist in the United States. This has led to the decentralization of funerary decisions. Even when lavish funerals occur for former presidents this is often at the behest of local officials and communities who seek to magnify their own connections to the deceased. Finally, although America does officially have a national cemetery, the disbursement of presidential graves throughout the country limits their potential for political appeal and emphasizes the role of local communities as against the federal government. This stems from the fact that the American federal government has made no concerted effort to create a political iconography of dead rulers such as exists at Westminster Abbey or the Lenin Mausoleum and The Kremlin Wall.

In the case discussed in this chapter “lavishness” includes the following aspects of obsequies:

- Military salutes and other military honors performed at the funeral or burial
- The participation of a riderless horse or riderless horses in the obsequies
- The use of a catafalque or other platform or specially constructed buildings or other edifices
- The amount or nature of decorations on coffins and / or hearses
- The duration and nature of any lying in state

- The accoutrements on any horses participating, as well as the costuming of their grooms
- The size and number of floral displays

## **The Presidents of the United States**

George Washington died December 14, 1799 at his estate, Mount Vernon. Washington was mourned not only as the first president, but also as the foremost hero of the Revolutionary War. Washington left specific instructions for his funeral and burial in his will: “[I]t is my express desire that my Corpse may be Interred in a private manner, without parade, or funeral Oration.”<sup>1</sup> The funeral of Washington, on December 18, 1799, included not only a benediction by a clergyman and full Masonic rites at the grave, but also a military parade of his saddled horse, uniformed militia and musicians, ministers, family, friends, slaves and members of the public.<sup>2</sup> Contrary to Washington’s wishes, a procession and oration sponsored by both houses of Congress took place in the nation’s capital on December 26. Public obsequies were held across the country, as well.<sup>3</sup> The first president was laid to rest in a crumbling vault at Mount Vernon. More than thirty years later George and Martha Washington were reinterred in a new vault.<sup>4</sup> Washington’s funeral was

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<sup>1</sup> George Washington’s Last Will and Testament, July 9, 1799. The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition, ed. Theodore J. Crackel, et al. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2007-)

<sup>2</sup> Meredith Eliasson, “George Washington, Death and Mourning,” in *A Companion to George Washington*, ed. Edward G. Lengel (Chichester, West Sussex; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), 579.

<sup>3</sup> George Tucker, *The life of Thomas Jefferson, third president of the United States: with parts of his correspondence never before published, and notices of his opinions on questions of civil government, national policy, and constitutional law, Volume II* (London: C. Knight, 1837), 66.

<sup>4</sup> “George Washington’s Last Will and Testament, July 9, 1799” in *The Papers of George Washington Digital Edition*.<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-06-04-02-0404-0001> .

Original source: Retirement Series (4 March 1797–13 December 1799), Volume 4 (20 April 1799–13 December 1799), ed. Theodore J. Crackel, et al. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, Rotunda, 2007), n 40.<http://rotunda.upress.virginia.edu/founders/GEWN-06-04-02-0404-0001> .

certainly more lavish than predicted by the theory, although, as we shall see, generals who later serve as president have had more funerary honors bestowed on them than have other presidents who did not die in office.

John Adams died on July 4, 1826. His funeral took place at the First Congregational Church in Quincy, Massachusetts. Although some had wanted to hold lavish obsequies at public expense, the Adams family instead held simple services as Adams had desired. On the other hand, large crowds did gather to observe. A large gathering from Boston and around the state of Massachusetts assembled at the home of John Adams on the afternoon of his funeral. At 4 p.m. a funeral procession "of great length" moved to the Church, where the minister offered a prayer as well as a eulogy. A corps of artillery fired minute guns during the service, and nearby towns tolled bells and set their flags at half-mast. The governor and lieutenant governor of the state were among the pallbearers.<sup>5</sup> While Adams' funeral attracted many people, the services themselves were designed to deemphasize any special status Adams held, therefore, Adams' obsequies were not lavish, overall, and thus conformed to the theory.

Thomas Jefferson also died on July 4, 1826. He was buried the next day on his estate, Monticello, "without any pomp or procession, in compliance with his dying request, but very many attended the burying place at Monticello to see him interred."<sup>6</sup> Jefferson's services were very simple in accordance with his philosophy of republicanism. Previously the British *charge d'affaires* had accurately described Jefferson's strong political opposition to pomp and distinction: Edward Thornton had characterized Jefferson as "careful in every particular of his personal conduct to

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<sup>5</sup> "Interment of Mr. Adams," *The Pittsfield Sun*, (NewsBank/Readex, America's Historical Newspapers, SQN: 105E5E22C4F2C1E6, July 13, 1826), XXVI, 1327, 3.

<sup>6</sup> "Letter from the University of Virginia, July 6, 1826," *Daily National Intelligencer*, July 10, 1826, 3.



inculcate upon the people his attachment to a republican simplicity of manners and his unwillingness to admit the smallest distinction, that may separate him from the mass of his fellow citizens."<sup>7</sup>

In contrast to these services, military honors were accorded to Jefferson on his death, consisting of twenty-one-gun salutes on the day of receipt of the Naval order, flags on all ships being flown at half-mast for one week, and officers wearing a mourning band for six months.<sup>8</sup> Jefferson's political ideals explain why his obsequies themselves were not lavish but simple.

James Madison died on June 28, 1836. The next day, after a procession led by his widow Dolley Madison and consisting of friends, family and his slaves, Madison was buried on his estate, Montpelier, near the graves of his parents. There was a simple Episcopal service with no eulogy. Later, however, memorial services were held across the country to praise Madison's various contributions to the Republic. Although Madison was prominently memorialized, his funeral services were simple and lacked political symbolism or even speeches exalting his accomplishments.<sup>9</sup>

James Monroe died on July 4, 1831 in New York City. His funeral took place on July 7. Monroe's body was first taken from his house to City Hall, where it lay in state for two days outside on a temporary covered platform approximating a catafalque.<sup>10</sup> The hearse that transported the coffin was covered in black cloth trimmed with gold braid with eight black feathers on top and was drawn

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<sup>7</sup> Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and His Time, Volume IV Jefferson the President, Jefferson the President, First Term, 1801-1805* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1948), 93.

<sup>8</sup> Letter from the University of Virginia, 374

<sup>9</sup> Ralph Louis Ketcham, *The Madisons at Montpelier: Reflections on the Founding Couple* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 172-174.

<sup>10</sup> Harlow G. Unger, *The Last Founding Father: James Monroe and a Nation's Call to Greatness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Da Capo Press, 2009), 345-47.

by four black horses. The U.S. flag hung down from the center of the hearse. Monroe's body was encased in a leaden coffin inside a mahogany coffin. Three days after Monroe's death an Episcopal Service was performed at St. Paul's Church on South Broadway. A funeral procession led by two ministers in carriages and a large contingent of mourners on foot brought Monroe's body to the cemetery. After the burial, troops performed a salute at the vault.<sup>11</sup> Monroe's obsequies included quite a few elements of honorary distinction that were meant to mark the death of the last major political figure of the Revolutionary period. While not rising to the level of those of presidents who have died in office, Monroe's obsequies did surpass in lavishness the expectations of the theory.

John Quincy Adams died on February 23, 1848. Adams died in office, not in the Executive Branch but as a member of the United States House of Representatives from Massachusetts. The funeral was held in the Hall of the House of Representatives and was attended by many prominent federal office holders from all three branches, including President James Polk, along with Adams' family and members of the public.<sup>12</sup> The service was performed by the House Chaplain, the Rev. Mr. Gurley. Adams was buried in the House Burying Ground, but later his remains were moved to his family plot in Massachusetts.<sup>13</sup> The journey by train of Adams' remains was a very prominent public spectacle and the first such funeral procession in the United States.<sup>14</sup> Adams' obsequies were clearly inspired by his status as former Secretary of State and President, but he was most

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<sup>11</sup> "Death Of James Monroe Fifth President Of The United States, At the house of his son-in-law Samuel L. Gouverneur, esq. New York at half past 3 o'clock, P.M., July 4, 1831," *Niles Weekly Register*, No. 21, Vol. IV, Baltimore, Maryland, July 23, 1831.

<sup>12</sup> Lynn H. Parsons, *John Quincy Adams* (Madison, Wis.: Madison House, 1998) xiv.

<sup>13</sup> James K. Polk, *The Diary of James K. Polk during his Presidency, 1845 to 1849*, 4 volumes (Chicago: A.C. McClurg, 1910), v.2, 262-63, 356.

<sup>14</sup> Parsons, xiv-xv.

renowned for his 14-year Congressional career.<sup>15</sup> Considering also that he died as a member of the House of Representatives, his death is not a good test of the theory.

Andrew Jackson died June 8, 1845 at his estate, The Hermitage, outside of Nashville, Tennessee. Jackson's funeral was one of the most basic of any President. He was laid out in his parlor, where a sermon was given emphasizing Jackson's 1838 religious conversion. After the sermon Jackson was carried out to his garden where he was buried next to his wife. An important military hero of his time, Jackson was mourned by men who had served with him as well as some prominent officials, neighbors and his servants.<sup>16</sup> Jackson's obsequies not only support the theory, but also are not among the exceptions of former generals who received lavish honors due to their status as national heroes.

Martin Van Buren died on July 24, 1862.<sup>17</sup> On July 27 a private funeral was held at his home, followed by a public service at his Dutch Reformed Church in Kinderhook, New York. The church service was simple, in accordance with Van Buren's religious tradition. The pastor did, however, attempt to link Van Buren's legacy to the cause of Union. A funeral procession led by the local Fire Department took place. Van Buren was buried in the local cemetery next to his wife.<sup>18</sup> While there were certainly some efforts made to politicize Van Buren's obsequies for the cause of the war effort, overall the simple nature of the proceedings did not lend itself either to grandstanding or to the glorification of the former president. Van Buren's funeral is a good example of the fact

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid., vii-viii.

<sup>16</sup> Mark Renfred Cheatham, *Andrew Jackson, Southerner* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2013), 201.

<sup>17</sup> "The Death of Martin Van Buren. Letter From The Mayor," *The New York Times*, July 28, 1862, 4.

<sup>18</sup> "Funeral Of Ex-President Van Buren: The Ceremonies on the Occasion," *The New York Times*, July 29, 1862, 8.

that religion has often been a decisive factor in determining the nature of the funerals of American Presidents. Van Buren's obsequies were simple and conform to the theory.

William Henry Harrison died on April 4, 1841, exactly one month after taking office. He was the first president to die in office. His funeral took place on April 8 in Washington, D. C. The executive branch played a large role in the days immediately following the funeral. Secretary of State Daniel Webster initially took charge and consulted with family and friends. They set the funeral date and Webster requested that The Major General of the Army of the United States and the Major General of the Militia of the District of Columbia jointly plan the event. On April 5 the body was available for viewing all day in the White House.<sup>19</sup>

On the day of the funeral, a short Episcopal service took place in the "President's House" before the removal of the coffin. The obsequies focused primarily on a large procession to the grave. The coffin received a large military escort from the President's House past the Capitol to the Congressional Burying Ground. The procession consisted of the family and friends, all levels of the Executive Branch, the Judiciary, members of Congress in the city at the time, members of the Washington municipal government, many military units, members of Harrison's military unit and members of various religious and civic organizations. Several bands took turns playing mournful music.<sup>20</sup> The "funeral car" was a stately hearse with black cloth skirting and an impressive funeral wreath. The hearse was drawn by six white horses that contrasted sharply with black-suited pallbearers. The Episcopal burial service was read as the procession approached Harrison's final resting place in the Congressional cemetery. After the burial the Light Artillery units present began

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<sup>19</sup> *National Daily Intelligencer*, April 5, 1841, 2.

<sup>20</sup> United States. President, and James D. Richardson, *A compilation of the messages and papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897, Volume 4: Harrison, Tyler, Polk*, 22-30.

a salute that was continued by the other units down the line of the procession.<sup>21</sup> Harrison's funeral was an impressive spectacle that sought both to honor the deceased president and to underline the maintenance of the political order. Harrison's obsequies were not only lavish, but also obviously politicized in that they stressed the role and importance of all branches of the federal government.

The issue of when and how the Vice President constitutionally assumed the duties and / or the office of President of the United States arose at the time of William Henry Harrison's demise and obsequies and continued up to and including the aftermath of the death of John F. Kennedy in 1963. On April 6 John Tyler requested and received the administration of the oath of office by the chief judge of the circuit court of the District of Columbia, William Cranch. Cranch announced immediately afterwards that Tyler did not think an oath was necessary beyond his Vice Presidential oath, since Tyler claimed that his Vice Presidential oath was sufficient and that he was qualified to and already had filled the vacancy left by the April 4 death of President Harrison.<sup>22</sup> This confusion is important both from a practical and a theoretical perspective. Practically speaking, the course of events set a precedent that significantly altered the original intent of the Framers of the Constitution in regard to Presidential succession. Theoretically speaking, this incident demonstrates the difficulty in balancing stability and democratic legitimacy when a high government official dies in office. Since the Constitution was interpreted by the majority in Congress as creating no direct mechanism for popular election of a successor, the question of the appropriateness of the transition remained open and provided the

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<sup>21</sup> "The Funeral," *The Daily National Intelligencer*, April 9, 1841, 3.

<sup>22</sup> Leonard Dinnerstein, "The Accession of John Tyler to the Presidency," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, Vol. 70, No. 4 (Oct., 1962), 448. Published by: Virginia Historical Society. Dinnerstein notes the statements of Congressman McKeon regarding the status of John Tyler in regard to the office of the President: "From this he concluded that the framers of the Constitution intended the Vice President to execute 'the powers and duties' of the presidential office while actually remaining Vice President." (452).

basis for present and future fears about legitimacy under such circumstances. In fact, newspapers aligned with the Democratic Party refused to recognize Tyler as President rather than Vice President Acting as President.<sup>23</sup>

Nearly two months after Harrison's death, on May 31, 1841, the House debated a routine resolution to invite John Tyler to speak, as President, to a joint session of Congress. An amendment challenging the use of the word "President" and asking to substitute "Vice President acting as President" was voted down in the House. The following day the Senate also voted to invite the "President," so both houses had rejected these amendments.<sup>24</sup> Tyler's insistence on being the "President of the United States" had paid off. Later, James Madison's journals of the Constitutional Convention revealed clearly that it was the Framers' intent that only the powers of the Presidency would devolve on the Vice President. The latter could then either exercise these powers for the remainder of the term of the deceased President or Congress could call for a special election. Congress even was supposed to possess the authority to call for new elections for a new four-year Presidential term.<sup>25</sup> Since none of this was known at the time of Harrison's death a different system evolved, which was finally codified only by Amendment XXV.

John Tyler's inaugural address sought to reassure the nation that Tyler would pursue the projects Harrison had been elected to carry out: "While standing at the threshold of this great work, he [Harrison] has, by the dispensation of an all-wise Providence, been removed from among us, and, by the provisions of the constitution, the efforts to be directed to the accomplishment of this vitally-

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 450-451.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 451-453.

<sup>25</sup> Martin S. Nowak, *The White House in Mourning: Deaths and Funerals of Presidents in Office* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Co, 2010), 29-30.

important task have devolved upon myself.”<sup>26</sup> Although Tyler’s statement was rather matter-of-fact, this was important given that he was the first vice-president to succeed a president under these circumstances. As a result, the whole process became a matter of debate and had, itself, to be legitimated by Tyler and his party.

John Tyler died January 18, 1862 at his home outside of Richmond, Virginia. Since Tyler had sided with the Confederacy his death was largely ignored in the North. Tyler was honored by a lying-in-state in the Halls of the Confederate Congress, to which he had been elected shortly before his death. Jefferson Davis and others paid their respects as part of a rather clear attempt to appropriate whatever prestige Tyler had left. His funeral in Richmond on January 20, 1862 included a procession of 150 carriages to his burial place at Hollywood Cemetery, where James Monroe had been reburied in 1858.<sup>27</sup> There is no doubt that Tyler’s death was politicized and that this had nothing to do with any issues of succession. Nonetheless, the extraordinary circumstance of Tyler’s having died in a supposedly independent country greatly complicates the case and, thus, the extent to which Tyler’s death undermines my theory is minimal.

James Polk died on June 15, 1849, in Nashville, Tennessee, possibly of cholera, just two and half months after leaving office. When word reached Washington President Zachary Taylor ordered the trappings of mourning for the White House as well as military honors including the firing of minute guns from all vessels in commission. Flags were ordered at half staff.<sup>28</sup> The funeral and

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<sup>26</sup> United States. President. and Edwin Williams, *The Statesman's Manual: The Addresses and Messages of the Presidents of the United States, Inaugural, Annual, and Special, from 1789 to 1854: With a Memoir of Each of the Presidents and a History of their Administrations*, ed. Edwin Williams (New York, Buffalo: E. Walker and William S. Hein and Company, 1854, 2011), 1230.

<sup>27</sup> Edward P Crapol, *John Tyler, the Accidental President* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2012), xviii, 268-69.

<sup>28</sup> *Commercial Advertiser* (New York, New York), June 21, 1849, 3.

burial in Tennessee were rushed due to fears of an epidemic, yet the funeral was noted primarily for the large crowds that attended.<sup>29</sup> Polk was buried with a copy of the U.S. Constitution.<sup>30</sup> Due to the timing and circumstances of Polk's death he was temporarily entombed in the Nashville City Cemetery and moved to a plot on his estate a year later. Polk's obsequies were simple and support the theory.

Zachary Taylor died in office of a disease resembling cholera on June 6, 1850. The manner of his death also created fears of a cholera epidemic, and thus led to a scaling down of funeral plans. In his proclamation announcing Taylor's death, Vice President Millard Fillmore portrayed himself as deeply grieved by his predecessor's passing: "Having announced to you, fellow citizens, this most afflicting bereavement, and assuring you that it has penetrated no heart with deeper grief than mine, it remains for me to say, that I propose this day, at twelve o'clock, in the hall of the house of representatives, in the presence of both houses of Congress, to take the oath prescribed by the constitution, to enable me to enter on the execution of the office which this event has devolved on me."<sup>31</sup> Upon taking the oath of office, Fillmore urged Congress to organize solemn obsequies

to signify the great and affectionate regard of the American people for the memory of one whose life has been devoted to the public service; whose career in arms has not been surpassed in usefulness or brilliancy; who has been so recently raised by the unsolicited voice of the people to the highest civil authority in the government, which he administered with so much honor and advantage to his country; and by whose sudden death so many hopes of future usefulness have been blighted forever.<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> Mark Eaton Byrnes, *James K. Polk: a biographical companion* (Santa Barbara, Calif. : ABC-CLIO, 200), 51-53.

<sup>30</sup> John Stilwell Jenkins, *The Life of James Knox Polk: Late President of the United States* (Hudson: P.S. Wynkoop, 1850), 329.

<sup>31</sup> W.L. Barre, *The Life And Public Services of Millard Fillmore* (Buffalo: Wanzer, McKim & Co., 1856), 318.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.



Taylor's military achievements, his political career, and his untimely demise were combined by Fillmore to elevate the former above his already-high reputation.

The viewing and the funeral both took place in the White House, the former on June 12 and the latter on June 13. Representatives of all branches of government attended and there was a eulogy praising Taylor given by Reverend Mr. Smith Pyne, a noted Episcopal cleric from St. John's Church, near the White House.<sup>33</sup> The procession from the White House included a hearse drawn by eight white horses led by grooms in white turbans and clothing. The hearse included a large elevated platform covered in black with white silk streamers. Above the black canopy stood a figure of an American eagle. In addition to Taylor's own horse there was a very impressive contingent of 35 military units in a procession consisting of 100,000 people.<sup>34</sup>

The two-mile route from the White House to the Congressional Burying Ground was filled with onlookers. At the cemetery artillery stood ready. The burial service from *The Book of Common Prayer* was pronounced by Rev. Mr. Pyne at the vault. Taylor was temporarily interred in a vault until lower temperatures allowed for the transfer of the body to Louisville, Kentucky.<sup>35</sup> Although public health concerns constrained the nature of Taylor's obsequies, nonetheless a significant effort was made to honor the deceased through elaborate displays and symbolic honors. Overall, Taylor's obsequies should be classified as lavish; his death in office certainly led to an impressive

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<sup>33</sup> U.S. Congress. House. *Obituary addresses delivered on the occasion of the death of Zachary Taylor, President of the United States, in the Senate and House of Representatives, July 10, 1850: with the funeral sermon by the Rev. Smith Pyne, preached in the presidential mansion, July 13, 1850* (Washington: United States Congress, 1850).

<sup>34</sup> John S.D. Eisenhower, *Zachary Taylor: The American Presidents Series: The 12th President, 1849-1850* (New York: Times Books, 2008), 134-35.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 136.

display. Also, it is clear that Fillmore attempted to honor Taylor and, thus, to legitimize his own sudden ascent to the presidency.

Millard Fillmore died at home in Buffalo, New York on March 8, 1874. Fillmore was honored on March 12 with both private and civic obsequies. The route along which the funeral procession moved from his home to the Episcopal Cathedral and from the Cathedral to the cemetery was fully decorated with mourning drapes. The services began in the morning with a private prayer service in the home for family and close friends. The white silk-covered rosewood coffin, bearing a simple silver plate with Fillmore's name and birth and death dates, was carried to the hearse by pall bearers from the local military guard unit. A procession through the streets of Buffalo then took place. At the Episcopal Cathedral the body lay in state until 2 p.m. A brief Episcopal service at the Cathedral and burial rites from *The Book of Common Prayer* at Buffalo's Forest Lawn Cemetery concluded the obsequies. Fillmore was buried in the same plot as his law partners.<sup>36</sup> While Fillmore's obsequies were not lavish overall, the decoration of the route does stand out from the other elements. The overall lack of lavishness conforms to the predictions of the theory.

Franklin Pierce died in Concord, New Hampshire on October 8, 1869. Pierce was a controversial figure due to his support of slavery. *The New York Times* commented on the former president's passing, "From his non-connection with public matters, his place will not be missed by those actively engaged in political affairs, and although his record as a statesman cannot command the

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<sup>36</sup> "MILLARD FILLMORE.: OBSEQUIES OF THE LATE EX-PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES," *New York Times*, Mar 13, 1874, 1.

approbation of the nation, still he should be followed to the grave with that respect that is due to one who has filled the highest office in the gift of a people – a President of the United States.”<sup>37</sup>

In spite of the disdain for Pierce felt by many northerners, he was laid out for viewing in the New Hampshire State House. His coffin was adorned with black mourning cloth and a large cross of flowers. A black silver-trimmed pall covered the coffin during the funeral at St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in Concord, where several Episcopal ministers presided. Burial was at Concord Cemetery.

<sup>38</sup> At his funeral on October 11, 1869 Pierce was accorded a fair degree of honor as to his death, but at the same time his public career was ridiculed in the press and he was not held up as a very positive example. Therefore, while Pierce’s obsequies were somewhat more lavish than the theory predicts, he was lambasted in the press more than was customary either for a President or for an ordinary American.

James Buchanan died June 1, 1868. In comparison to Pierce’s, Buchanan’s funeral on June 4 was large in scale. Although there was some pomp in the form of large floral displays and a band accompanying the body to the grave, his coffin and hearse were both plain. The funeral took place at his estate in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and many politicians and political supporters from Harrisburg, Philadelphia and New York were present. Despite the scale of these proceedings, they are best described as large rather than grand. Many people paid their respects, but there was little

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<sup>37</sup> “Death of Ex-President at Concord, N.H.; Official Announcement by President Grant – Sketch of His Life,” *The New York Times*, October 9, 1869, 3.

<sup>38</sup> “Ex-President Pierce: The Funeral at Concord, N.H.,” *The New York Times*, October 12, 1869, 1.

in the way of symbolic honors.<sup>39</sup> Therefore, although these obsequies attracted important attendees, Buchanan's funeral was not lavish and thus conforms to the theory.

Abraham Lincoln was shot on April 14, 1865 and died the following morning. On Wednesday April 19 funeral ceremonies were held in the East Room of the White House. Guests included members of various civic organizations, congressmen and senators, governors of several states, delegations from Lincoln's home states of Kentucky and Illinois, the Chief Justice and two other justices of the Supreme Court, several top military heroes of the War, including Grant and Burnside, local mayors, the pall bearers and many others, including six women. President Johnson was in attendance seated to the right of the coffin. Johnson's placement as well as his comparatively late entrance to the gathering emphasized his central role as Lincoln's successor.<sup>40</sup>

On the previous day Johnson had addressed the Illinois delegation in regard to Lincoln's death and his own approach to the future.

Your words of countenance and encouragement sank deep in my heart, and were I even a coward I could not but gather from them strength to carry out my convictions of right. Thus feeling, I shall enter upon the discharge of my great duty firmly, steadfastly, it not with the signal ability exhibited by my predecessor, which is still fresh in our sorrowing minds. Need I repeat that no heart feels more sensibly than mine this great affliction? <sup>41</sup>

Johnson was careful to promise steadfastness without comparing himself to Lincoln. He attempted to gain the support of the North by honoring Lincoln. At the same time, Johnson wanted to dispel any hint of the idea that he had benefited from Lincoln's death. Campbell has argued that Johnson's

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<sup>39</sup> "Buchanan: The Ex-President's Funeral at Wheatland, Pennsylvania," *Chicago Tribune*, Jun 7, 1868, 1.

<sup>40</sup> "The Obsequies: Funeral Of Abraham Lincoln," *The New York Times*, April 20, 1865, 1.

<sup>41</sup> Andrew Johnson, *Speeches of Andrew Johnson : President of the United States: With a Biographical Introduction*, ed. Frank Moore (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1866), 469.

approach was essentially incompetent because he focused too much on himself and not enough on Lincoln and his legacy.<sup>42</sup> This argument, however, requires a detailed analysis of Johnson's political position and his level of commitment to Lincoln's principles. Also, it is understandable that Johnson wished to harness Lincoln's image without tying himself to particular policies, all of which were extremely controversial even if they enjoyed some support.

Lincoln's service included the Episcopal Burial Rite and prayers by a Methodist Episcopal minister; in all, four ministers participated. After this service concluded there was a procession carrying Lincoln's body from the White House to the Capitol. The procession was led by "colored troops," emphasizing Lincoln's having freed the slaves. The procession lasted for quite some time, "taking two hours to pass a given point." At the Capitol Lincoln's body was placed on a catafalque and the Washington funeral ceremonies ended with Rev. Mr. Gurley reading a burial service. Then Lincoln lay in state in the rotunda until 8 a.m. Friday.<sup>43</sup>

On Friday after a final prayer Lincoln's body was transported on a hearse to the railroad station. This began the most famous aspect of Lincoln's obsequies, the journey by train from Washington to Springfield, Illinois. Along the line various local obsequies were performed. The honors given to Lincoln, therefore, were a national affair that countless people observed. These obsequies were quite stately in nature and helped to cement Lincoln's status as one of the three most eminent presidents. In Philadelphia, for example, the head of Lincoln's coffin rested beside the Liberty Bell. This was a clear attempt to make the figure of Lincoln inseparable from the ideals of the

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<sup>42</sup> Campbell 42-43. Although Campbell referred to Johnson's inaugural speech of April 16, 1865, Johnson's approach was essentially the same in both.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

nation.<sup>44</sup> In this way Lincoln was becoming a kind of new founder who had perfected the basis of the founding.

Later, in Cleveland, obsequies were performed, including another Episcopal burial service by the Episcopal Bishop there. A building 24 x 32 feet and 14 feet high had been built to house Lincoln's remains in the city. About 180 persons per minute viewed the dead president's exposed remains at the Cleveland site.<sup>45</sup> This illustrates how each city along the route attempted to participate in the honoring of the dead president. This was important because it allowed the citizens to express solidarity with the rest of the nation and to confirm their loyalty to Lincoln's cause. The next night the train's progress after dark was marked by a continuous display of bonfires constructed by those who wished to glimpse the deceased as he moved westward toward Illinois.<sup>46</sup>

Although the outpouring for Lincoln reflected genuinely-held emotions, the political leadership sought to harness these feelings to justify their authority. From the beginning President Johnson sought to associate himself closely to Lincoln, both physically and politically. This was especially important for Johnson, who was a pro-Union Democrat before being chosen as Lincoln's running-mate. There is no denying that there were other political considerations involved, but above all Johnson and the rest of the federal government sought to portray themselves as the legitimate successors to Lincoln's authority. This was done through extremely lavish obsequies that involved both Federal and local authorities.

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<sup>44</sup> "The Funeral Cortège: The Manifestations of Respect at Harrisburg and Philadelphia. At Philadelphia," *Chicago Tribune*, Apr 24, 1865, 1.

<sup>45</sup> "The Obsequies: Westward Progress of the Funeral Cortège," *The New York Times*, April 29, 1865, 1.

<sup>46</sup> Benjamin Franklin Morse, *Memorial Record of the Nation's Tribute to Abraham Lincoln*, (Washington, DC: W.H. & O.H. Morrison, 1865), 197.

Andrew Johnson died on July 31, 1875. Johnson's funeral took place on August 3. The affair was large in scale and did have some notable pomp. In particular, there were large floral displays and many portraits of the former President on display in the hall of the Greenville, Tennessee Court House. Nonetheless, the service was a typical Masonic funeral, with an abridged burial service. There were no added political or military honors at the funeral to mark Johnson's status.<sup>47</sup> Overall Johnson's obsequies were simple in nature. Johnson's obsequies support the theory in spite of the use of a small number of frills.

Ulysses S. Grant died on July 23, 1885. Grant's remains were laid out first where he had died at his cottage home on Mount McGregor in the Adirondack Mountains. Private services were held for the family at the cottage, after which the body was removed to New York City, where Grant was to be buried in a temporary tomb at Riverside Park.<sup>48</sup> His body lay in state at New York City Hall, where about 6,000 persons an hour passed the open coffin. An estimated 1.5 million persons participated in the obsequies of the Civil War hero.<sup>49</sup> Waugh stresses that at the time of Grant's death he was viewed as one of the central figures of American history, together with Lincoln and Washington. Grant's funeral, therefore, was far more central to American culture and politics than one might believe given that his presidency is generally viewed as a corrupt failure.<sup>50</sup>

On the day of his funeral, August 8, the rites began at just after 9 a.m. His funeral procession of about 40,000 participants was led by a catafalque with a canopy covered in ostrich plumes and

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<sup>47</sup> "Andrew Johnson: Funeral of the Late Ex-President at Greenville, Tenn. – A Large Crowd of Persons Present," *The New York Times*, August 4, 1875, 1.

<sup>48</sup> "The Day On The Mount: Gen. Grant's Remains Again Exposed to View," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug 1, 1885, 1.

<sup>49</sup> "Mourning Millions," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug 7, 1885, 1-2.

<sup>50</sup> Joan Waugh, "'Pageantry of Woe': The Funeral of Ulysses S. Grant," *Civil War History* 51, no. 2 (June 2005): 157.

drawn by 24 horses. What were essentially military funeral rites were held at Riverside Park in the afternoon, culminating in Grant's burial there at about 5:30 pm.<sup>51</sup> The central theme of Grant's funeral was reconciliation between the North and the South. Although Grant was remembered as a great hero, especially in the North, southerners also widely praised him for his decision not to humiliate Lee's Army at Appomattox. As part of this theme two Confederate generals were among the pall bearers.<sup>52</sup> Grant's obsequies were not only large, but also lavish and impressive. Though politicized, Grant's obsequies were not connected to his presidency but to his role in the war and the surrender of Lee's Army. He became a symbol of healing and thus rose far above his lackluster presidency. Grant was clearly buried as a preeminent national hero. Although his obsequies seem to contradict the expectations of the theory, this was due to his military status, rather than his presidency.

Due to Rutherford B. Hayes' status as a Civil War hero his funeral on January 20, 1893 was a mix of simple services at his home and a military parade to the burial site. Hayes died on January 17, 1893. He was laid out in his dining room in a simple cloth-covered coffin with a silver plate bearing his name and date of death. Three palm branches held in purple ribbon were the only adornment. On the day of his funeral, the first to view his remains were local school children. The service was religious in character without any flourishes and was held in his parlor and an adjoining bedroom.<sup>53</sup>

A group of notables including Ohio Governor William McKinley, Hayes' long-time friend, along with former President and President-elect Grover Cleveland, participated in the prayer service and

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<sup>51</sup> "At Rest In The Tomb: The Grant Funeral Procession in New York," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Aug 9, 1885, 10.

<sup>52</sup> Waugh, 161-162, 173.

<sup>53</sup> "Obsequies Of Hayes. Impressive Service At The Funeral," *The Chicago Daily Tribune*, Jan. 21, 1893, 6.



in the procession to the cemetery in the bitter cold. Hayes was noted for having been wounded five times during the Civil War and having climbed the ranks due primarily to his bravery.<sup>54</sup> The parade to the graveyard emphasized Hayes' military achievements, rather than his presidential service. Military units from Ohio were a prominent part of the procession. His coffin was borne by men he had commanded during the Civil War. Thousands marched behind the coffin to the graveyard.<sup>55</sup> We can see in this that generals who have become presidents remained most renowned for their martial exploits rather than their political status. Hayes' obsequies, however, still lacked much in the way of pomp. Therefore, in spite of Hayes having been a military hero, his obsequies were rather simple, in accordance with the theory.

James Garfield died September 19, 1881, 200 days after being inaugurated and 11 weeks after being shot at the train depot in Washington, D.C. Garfield languished and died at the Jersey Shore. A brief viewing in Long Branch, New Jersey accommodated tourists and then family members; then the casket was closed.<sup>56</sup> President Garfield's body was transported back to Washington by train and was greeted by great crowds along the route. In Washington large crowds viewed a procession that took Garfield's body in a hearse from the train station to the Capitol, a distance of approximately  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile. To underline Garfield's new status as a national martyr, the body was placed on the same catafalque used for Abraham Lincoln. The procession was met by a large Congressional delegation. The body lay in state until it was removed to be transported to Cleveland for the funeral.<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid

<sup>55</sup> Charles Richard Williams, *The life of Rutherford Birchard Hayes, nineteenth president of the United States*, Volume 2 (Best Books, Jan 1, 1914), 398-400.

<sup>56</sup> "The Nation's Dead Chief: President Garfield's Body Taken To Washington," *The New York Times*, Sept. 22, 1881, 1.

<sup>57</sup> "The Journey To The Capitol," *The New York Times*, Sept. 22, 1881, 1.

In Cleveland the same six grooms who attended the horses for Lincoln's Cleveland obsequies assisted with the 12 black horses pulling Garfield's hearse. The link to Lincoln was a key aspect of the attempt to unite the nation around Garfield's suddenly elevated status. Six columns on a gigantic platform supported the canopy of the hearse, which was decked in black broadcloth with floral decorations of immortelles.<sup>58</sup>

As had been done in Cleveland for Lincoln's coffin, a giant pavilion was built, rising to a globed roof that was topped at 96 feet in the air by the figure of a gilt angel. The *Boston Globe* described all this as "the most impressive funeral ever witnessed in America," which cost a whopping \$247,650.<sup>59</sup> It is clear that the attempts to associate Garfield with Lincoln were part of an attempt to elevate the status of the former to that of national martyr. The lavish display for Garfield's obsequies, including his funeral on September 26, 1881, sought to assuage the sense of national crisis by focusing on Garfield's newly-earned heroic status. This confirms the predictions of the theory.

Later, in December 1881 in his first annual message to Congress, Garfield's successor Chester Arthur extolled the dead president. "The memory of his exalted character, of his noble achievements, and of his patriotic life will be treasured forever as a sacred possession of the whole people."<sup>60</sup> Arthur thus honored Garfield and committed himself to follow Garfield's legacy. All

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<sup>58</sup> "The Martyr Laid At Rest: Last Sad Rites Over President Garfield's Body," *The New York Times*, Sep 27, 1881, 1.

<sup>59</sup> Joan Kapsch, "'The Most Impressive Funeral Ever Witnessed': The Funeral of President Garfield," in "The Garfield Observer," The Blog of James A. Garfield National Historic Site. September 28, 2012. <http://garfieldnps.wordpress.com/2012/09/28/the-most-impressive-funeral-ever-witnessed-the-funeral-of-president-garfield/> .

<sup>60</sup>Chester A. Arthur: "First Annual Message," December 6, 1881, ed. Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project.<http://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=29522>.

of this demonstrates that Garfield's funeral was both lavish and politicized, confirming the predictions of the theory.

The death of Chester A. Arthur on November 18, 1886 at his home in New York City was followed by services that had none of the splendor of Garfield's obsequies. Indeed, *The New York Times* described the whole affair as "Simple Ceremonies, But Very Many Mourners."<sup>61</sup> While Chester Arthur was referred to as "General Arthur" by at least one New York publication at the time of his death, his military service had been brief – 1861-63 – and as an administrator: he was a political appointee who became a very able quartermaster general in those years.<sup>62</sup> His funeral was arranged by a close personal friend of the Arthur family, former Marshal of Washington, D.C. Clayton McMichael. As with the deaths of many ex-presidents, the death of Arthur was deemed to merit significant attention, but not great pomp, although prominent citizens were in attendance. Robert Todd Lincoln, son of the president and secretary of war at the time of Arthur's death, was one of the honorary pall bearers at the funeral. Only mourners traveled the short distance from the home to the church for the service.<sup>63</sup> The Episcopal service on November 22 took less than an hour and was followed by a procession to Grand Central Station. The press noted the lack of decoration on the funeral cars, an indication of the ordinary nature of the proceedings. Arthur was buried in The Rural Cemetery, Albany, New York beside his wife Ellen. Not only were Arthur's obsequies not

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<sup>61</sup> "Taken Away To His Grave: Simple Ceremonies, But Very Many Mourners," *The New York Times*, Nov 23, 1886, 1.

<sup>62</sup> George F. Howe, *Chester A. Arthur; a Quarter-century of Machine Politics* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Company), 1934, 25-26.

<sup>63</sup> "Gen. Arthur's Funeral: Details Of The Services To-morrow Simple Ceremony At The Church--the Burial At Albany The Pall-bearers Chosen Honored By The Union League Club Action By Various ... Draping Public Buildings To Attend General Arthur's Funeral Respect For The Dead Ex-president Well-known Men In Town Friendly Reminiscences In Washington The Heartfelt ... Over General Arthur's Death--his Social And Official Life A Tribute From Boston Resolutions Adopted By The Ancient And Honorable Artillery Company," *New York Tribune* (1866-1899) [New York, N.Y.] 21 Nov 1886: 2.

lavish, but the press noted this fact at the time. Therefore, Arthur's rites provide clear support for the theory.

Benjamin Harrison died on March 13, 1901. His funeral was held in Indianapolis on March 17, with the governor of the state taking an active part in the preparations. Attendees included President William McKinley, many governors of states, and a great many other notables. Railroads cut fares in half to make it possible for crowds of people to attend from around the country.<sup>64</sup> During the Civil War, Harrison had served as a distinguished commander at several battles, chiefly those during Sherman's march to the sea.<sup>65</sup> His remains were laid out for a viewing at the State Capitol, his coffin surrounded by thousands of flowers and topped with the Stars and Stripes. There was a large procession from the State House to the Harrison home, led by members of the Grand Army of the Republic along with a military brigade. The service and the coverage of the procession emphasized Harrison's Civil War accomplishments over his status as a former president.<sup>66</sup> We can see, therefore, that the events honoring Harrison were more lavish than predicted by the theory, but this was due more to his Civil War exploits than to his status as a former president.

Grover Cleveland, who died June 24, 1908, was certainly an imposing figure during his lifetime, but his funeral service and burial in Princeton, New Jersey on June 26 were exceptionally simple. A service was held in a room at the Cleveland home in Princeton, with about 200 attendees. An oak coffin on which rested numerous loose flowers held the body of the former president. A

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<sup>64</sup> "Gen. Harrison's Funeral: Arrangements Completed For Services On Sunday President And Cabinet To Attend-- Many Dispatches Of Sympathy-- Body To Lie In State Action Of State Officials Cabinet Associates For Pallbearers Recent Views Of General Harrison," *New York Tribune*, Mar 15, 1901, 3.

<sup>65</sup> Charles W. Calhoun, *Benjamin Harrison* (New York: Times Books), 2005

<sup>66</sup> "50,000 Persons View Gen. Harrison's Body," *The New York Times*, Mar 17, 1901, 7.; "Gen. Harrison's Body Rests In The Tomb," *New York Times* (1857-1922); Mar 18, 1901;

Wordsworth poem, “Character of the Happy Warrior,” served as the only commentary on Cleveland’s life.<sup>67</sup> No eulogies were given; no praise of Cleveland was allowed; and his widow would not allow “any display.” A short religious service at the church was followed by the conclusion of the funeral rites at the grave. All of this was considered simple even for ordinary people, the press focusing most on its brevity.<sup>68</sup> Cleveland’s funeral not only supports the theory, but also illustrates the importance of former presidents’ families in determining the scale and shape of their obsequies.

On September 6, 1901, President William McKinley was shot at close range during a visit to the World Exposition in Buffalo, New York. One bullet penetrated his abdomen; McKinley died of infection on September 12, 1901.<sup>69</sup> After a simple prayer service for family and close friends immediately after his death, his body lay in state first at Buffalo City Hall and was transported on September 16 to Washington, where his body lay in the East Room overnight.<sup>70</sup> His comrades from his Civil War service formed part of the honor guard at the White House. On September 17 an elaborate procession to the Capital included the following: a military escort featuring the Marine Band and the Artillery Band, along with numerous military units; a civic section composed of honor guards, the pall bearers, the hearse, and numerous dignitaries, including veterans’ groups, the clergy, and McKinley’s family and friends; and a section of government officials, including

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<sup>67</sup> “Grover Cleveland Buried At Princeton: Great Men Of Nation At Simple Ceremony All Princeton Silent as Ex-President Is Borne to His Last Rest. Mr. Roosevelt's Arrival Dr. Van Dyke Reads Poem The Funeral Procession Old Nassau's Bell Tolls Unpleasant Incidents Arrival Of Troopers Ex-president Cleveland's Funeral,” *New York Tribune*, July 27, 1908, 2.

<sup>68</sup> “No Eulogy Over Mr. Cleveland: The ex-President Laid at Rest with the Simplest Rites, as He had Wished,” *The New York Times*, Jun 27, 1908, 1.

<sup>69</sup> “Attempt To Murder President M'kinley.: Nation's highest Official Shot ...” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sep 7, 1901, 1.

<sup>70</sup> “Tears Shed For M'kinley, Man And President: Family and Close Friends Say Their Farewells to the One They Loved So Much.” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, Sep 16, 1901, 1.

President Theodore Roosevelt, many federal officials, District of Columbia and other dignitaries from various governmental bodies. The procession from the Capitol to the train station featured the hearse pulled by six black horses covered in black netting with long fringe and included symbolic honors such as the firing of minute guns from nearby naval vessels, the ringing of bells and the blowing of whistles.<sup>71</sup>

Vice President Theodore Roosevelt responded in his inaugural message with a promise that tied him to McKinley's legacy: "I shall take the oath at once in response to your request; and in this hour of deep and terrible national bereavement I wish to state that it shall be my aim to continue absolutely unbroken the policy of President McKinley for the peace and prosperity of our beloved country."<sup>72</sup> Roosevelt's comments demonstrate the possible legitimacy problems of a new president who takes office following death rather than following election. Roosevelt sought to assuage these fears by tying himself unconditionally to McKinley's policies. It is interesting that Roosevelt not only honored McKinley abstractly but also underlined his own desire for continuity in government. The obsequies for William McKinley included many symbolic honors and lavish details, supporting the theory.

Theodore Roosevelt died at home in Oyster Bay, New York on January 6, 1919. Roosevelt's funeral was simple, with the Episcopal funeral ritual but no eulogy. The events put some emphasis on his military service, but little on his presidency. Along with the American flag, his plain oak casket was adorned with the regimental flags of Roosevelt's Rough Riders unit and a wreath sent

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<sup>71</sup> "Nation Bids Farewell To Martyr Dead: Simple Funeral Services Are Held Over the Body of William McKinley in the Capitol," *Chicago Daily Tribune* (1872-1922); Sep 18, 1901, 1.

<sup>72</sup> "The Inauguration of Theodore Roosevelt," *Harper's Weekly* 45 (1901): 957, in Campbell, n. 17, 231.

by members of the unit.<sup>73</sup> No hymns were sung. In accordance with Roosevelt's wishes, his family turned down a military escort and turned away numerous requests from people who wished to attend the obsequies.<sup>74</sup> Very little of any note occurred during Roosevelt's obsequies. Roosevelt's obsequies were simple, in accordance with the theory and his own wishes.

William Howard Taft died on March 8, 1930, just over a month after resigning as Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. He lay in state in the Capitol, attended by top officials, albeit only for a period of three hours. His widow and their sons visited Arlington National Cemetery to pick a grave site for former President Taft; he was buried on a knoll from which a beautiful view of the Potomac and the city was seen.<sup>75</sup> The service for him took place on March 11. On the day of the funeral a day-long salute was carried out by the Army and the Navy. The funeral service was held at the Unitarian church Taft attended in Washington and lasted merely half an hour, with no sermon or eulogy. There was a huge floral display at the church consisting of arrangements sent by political figures from the world over. The procession to Arlington National Cemetery featured a motorized hearse and about 100 other vehicles, a cavalry escort, and a 21-gun salute upon entry to the cemetery gate. The burial service consisted of a Scripture reading, a favorite poem of Taft's, a volley, and Taps.<sup>76</sup> Taft's obsequies were more lavish than predicted by the theory, although this

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<sup>73</sup> "Bury Roosevelt With Simple Rites As Nation Grieves," *The New York Times*, Jan. 9, 1919, 1.

<sup>74</sup> "Colonel Roosevelt's Funeral To Take Place at Noon To-day," *New York Tribune*, Jan 8, 1919, 1.

<sup>75</sup> "Taft Funeral Tomorrow; to Lie at Capitol: Body of Former President to Rest in State Under the Dome From 9 to 12 With Church Service at Noon Army and Navy Guns Boom Tribute Today Mrs. Taft Selects Grave on Wooded Arlington Knoll Near Robert Todd Lincoln Capital Mourns Death of Former Chief Justice and Ex-President," *New York Herald Tribune*, March 10, 1930, 1-2.

<sup>76</sup> Richard Oulanan, "Taft Borne To Arlington, Receives Soldier's Burial As The Nation Pays Homage," *The New York Times*, Mar 12, 1930, 1.

was due, in large part, to his unique status as both a former president and as a former Supreme Court justice who had only recently retired due to his ill health.

Woodrow Wilson died February 3, 1924, almost three years after leaving office. Wilson's funeral, held on February 5, was private and small in scale. This was praised by *The New York Times* as being in line with the precedent set by the funerals of Cleveland and Theodore Roosevelt. Services at the home preceded an understated funeral in the small chapel of the Washington National Cathedral.<sup>77</sup> Bishop Freeman of the Episcopal Church read a portion of the burial rite of *The Book of Common Prayer*. Organ music, including Chopin's Funeral March, was played. Then Wilson was buried in the vault near the underground chapel. Wilson's services were simple in nature, despite his status of having led the United States to victory in World War I.<sup>78</sup> The funeral service at the Cathedral was followed by some 5 million radio listeners east of the Mississippi.<sup>79</sup> While it is true that Wilson received a rather distinguished form of burial, overall contemporaries perceived his obsequies as modest and believed this was proper for a former leader of the American Republic. Therefore, Wilson's obsequies should be seen as conforming to the theory.

Warren G. Harding died in office of heart disease on August 2, 1923 in San Francisco, California. In San Francisco huge crowds watched the body being transferred from the Palace Hotel where he had died to the funeral train that would carry his body back to Washington.<sup>80</sup> In the distance from Omaha to Chicago it was estimated that a million people turned out along the route including an

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<sup>77</sup> "Throngs Follow Dead Chief," *The New York Times*, Washington, February 6, 1924, 1.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> "Millions By Radio Listen To Services," *The New York Times*, Feb 7, 1924, 3.

<sup>80</sup> "San Francisco Pays Tribute To The Dead: Thousands Line the Streets," *The New York Times*, August 4, 1923, 1,



estimated 40,000 people in Omaha alone. Veterans, including Civil War veterans, stood saluting the train all along the journey.<sup>81</sup>

The night of Harding's death, Calvin Coolidge took the oath of office at his family's home in Vermont. In his autobiography he wrote,

I had been examining the Constitution to determine what might be necessary for qualifying by taking the oath of office. It is not clear that any additional oath is required beyond what is taken by the vice president when he is sworn into office. It is the same form as that taken by the president. Having found this form in the Constitution, I had it set up on the typewriter, and the oath was administered by my father in his capacity as a notary public, an office he had held for a great many years.<sup>82</sup>

On August 4 the new president issued a proclamation praising Harding and declaring a national day of mourning. Coolidge praised Harding both as a president and as an individual:

The Nation has lost a wise and enlightened statesman and the American people a true friend and counselor, whose public life was inspired with the desire to promote the best interests of the United States and the welfare of all its citizens. His private life was marked by gentleness and brotherly sympathy, and by the charm of his personality he made friends of all who came in contact with him.<sup>83</sup>

Harding's funeral train arrived in Washington on August 7. The body was transported to the White House for a small private viewing. On August 8 there was a funeral procession from the White House to the Capitol. The service was attended by the members of the Cabinet and of Congress,

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<sup>81</sup> "Trip Is One Huge Tribute: Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois and Indiana Honor Dead President. Crowds Become Greater," *The New York Times*, August 7, 1923, 1.

<sup>82</sup> Calvin Coolidge, *The Autobiography of Calvin Coolidge* (New York: Cosmopolitan Book Corporation, 1929), 175-178.

<sup>83</sup> "Coolidge Proclaims Friday Day Of National Mourning: Calls on People of Country to Pay Homage of Love and Reverence to Memory of 'Great and Good President,'" *The Boston Globe*, August 4, 1923, 14.

along with prominent guests.<sup>84</sup> At the Capitol a short benediction was said by a minister, then a Baptist choir sang a hymn, and the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm and other Scripture passages were read. These passages included the verse from the book of Micah that Harding kissed when he took his oath of office: “He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good: and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” A short prayer and hymn followed, then the viewing. One hundred people a minute passed the coffin in the Capitol Rotunda during a five hour viewing. “The casket was walled-in by solid banks of flowers extending right across the rotunda.” As the flag draped coffin was carried down the steps a booming salute echoed from Fort Myer across the river. The caisson then was moved to the special train that would bear Harding’s body to Marion, Ohio.<sup>85</sup>

Harding was buried with simple rites at Marion Cemetery on August 10. The obsequies reflected “[a]ll that could be done was done by Mrs. Harding to deprive her husband’s requiem of every and any appearance of pomp and ostentation.”<sup>86</sup> No military or other official obsequies were held at the funeral, in spite of the attendance of numerous dignitaries, including the newly-sworn President.<sup>87</sup> This ambivalent mixture of types of services for Warren Harding reflects the fact that although on the death of a President in office there are political reasons to commemorate the death lavishly ultimately decisions are made by family members who are not part of the ruling strata.

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<sup>84</sup> “Warren G. Harding Funeral, August 8, 1923,” The White House Historical Association, <http://www.whitehousehistory.org/warren-g-harding-funeral> .

<sup>85</sup> “Nation Bows in Capitol Rites; Hymns Harding Loved Sung. Boom of Requiem Guns and Toll of Bells Echo Benediction as Simple Services in the Flower-Banked Rotunda Close – Throngs Salute the Dead in Endless Lines Till the Final Hour,” *The New York Times*, August 9, 1923, 1.

<sup>86</sup> “Simple Service At Tomb: Prayers and Hymns and Bugler’s Taps Comprise the Final Scenes. Widow Takes Last Leave,” *The New York Times*, Aug 11, 1923, 1.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

Thus, although the first part of Harding's obsequies support the theory, the Ohio portion contradicts my argument.

Calvin Coolidge died at home in Northampton, Massachusetts on January 5, 1933. He had a simple service at Edwards Church in Northampton on January 7; no eulogy was preached. A five minute burial service was carried out at the grave in Plymouth, Vermont, a hundred miles from Northampton. Although some had suggested a military honor guard, Mrs. Coolidge refused this. Instead, six police officers acted as pall bearers. In addition to these simple services there was a religious memorial service in Washington, D.C. attended by Vice President Charles Curtis and many other officials.<sup>88</sup> Coolidge's obsequies again illustrate the central role of the family of the deceased in determining the level of pomp bestowed upon many former presidents. Coolidge's funeral rites were quite simple, as the theory would predict.

Herbert Hoover died October 20, 1964 at his home in New York City. A memorial service on October 21 with 500 guests in attendance was held in New York City's St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church. The service, only fifteen minutes in length, featured prayers from *The Book of Common Prayer* as well as Scriptural readings. Hoover's coffin lay in state both in New York City and in the Capitol in Washington. His private burial took place on October 25 at his birthplace in Iowa.<sup>89</sup> In spite of the attendance of President Lyndon Johnson and other prominent politicians, Hoover's funeral service was so simple as to leave little room for political maneuvering.<sup>90</sup> Hoover's obsequies were not politicized and were not lavish in any way.

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<sup>88</sup> Russell Porter, "Hail Falls At The Grave," *The New York Times*, January 8, 1933, 1.

<sup>89</sup> Donald Janson, "Hoover to be Buried Today in Boyhood Village: Simple Graveside Ceremony Is Scheduled in Iowa – Goldwater to Attend," *The New York Times*, October 25, 1964, 85.

<sup>90</sup> Peter Kihss, "Leaders Attend Funeral. Johnson and Goldwater Join City in Paying Tribute at a Simple Service," *The New York Times*, October 23, 1964, 1.

Franklin Roosevelt died suddenly at Warm Springs, Georgia on April 12, 1945. He did not lie in state, nor was the Capitol building opened for any obsequies. His body was transported by train from Georgia to Washington, arriving on the morning of April 14, and was met by President Truman, other officials and members of the Roosevelt family. The National Anthem was played and those few people admitted to the train platform stood at attention. A military escort, including the Marine Band, a naval band, a battalion of Marines and additional military units, preceded the coffin on its caisson drawn by six white horses from the train station to the White House. Behind solid lines of troops along the way, about half a million people filled the streets of Washington to watch the coffin pass. Rooftops and windows were filled with onlookers.<sup>91</sup>

Simple services in the East Room followed on the afternoon of April 14. Lilies, roses and other flowers formed a wall 10 feet high behind the mahogany coffin. As the funeral began at 4 p.m. factory production stopped, government offices closed, and armed forces not in combat paused for five minutes of silent prayer. Roosevelt's two favorite hymns were sung and the Episcopal funeral invocation recited. Short scripture passages were read. The presider, Bishop Angus Dun, Episcopal Bishop of Washington, gave the final prayer, including a reference to Roosevelt's inaugural message "the only thing we have to fear is fear itself."<sup>92</sup>

The overnight train from Washington to the Roosevelt estate in Hyde Park, New York carried President Truman and other officials, members of the Roosevelt family, Supreme Court justices and others. On April 15 there was another military procession from the Hyde Park train station to the Roosevelt estate. Six brown horses pulled the caisson, and a riderless hooded brown horse, stirrups reversed, boots upside down and sword hanging, followed the coffin. Selected servicemen

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<sup>91</sup> Frank Kluckhohn, "Rites At Capital," *The New York Times*, April 15, 1945, 1.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*

participated in the procession. Funeral music played. At the estate, a 21-gun salute and other martial obsequies took place, ending with the blowing of taps. In all, the burial service at Hyde Park took 17 minutes. Neighbors, friends and employees of the Roosevelts, along with their local political allies, attended the burial along with the nation's leaders.<sup>93</sup>

Harry Truman's speech on the day after Roosevelt was buried sought to honor the dead president and to underline Truman's commitment to finish the war:

In His infinite wisdom, Almighty God has seen fit to take from us a great man who loved, and was beloved by, all humanity. No man could possibly fill the tremendous void left by the passing of that noble soul. No words can ease the aching hearts of untold millions of every race, creed and color. The world knows it has lost a heroic champion of justice and freedom. Tragic fate has thrust upon us grave responsibilities. We must carry on.<sup>94</sup>

Although due to the conditions of the ongoing Second World War Roosevelt's obsequies were not a large public affair, there were two grand processions allowing for a public outpouring. It is clear, however, that Roosevelt received much less in the way of honors than most presidents who died in office. Certainly this does not provide strong support to the theory, but the war-time conditions do explain why Roosevelt's funeral was somewhat scaled down from the expectations of the theory.

The state funeral for Harry Truman, who died December 26, 1972, was substantially simplified in rites and length in relation to the original plans sketched out by Truman in cooperation with the Fifth Army Headquarters. President Truman's widow Bess requested local family-centered

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<sup>93</sup> "Hyde Park, Draped in Black, Awaits Arrival Of Roosevelt's Body for the Burial Today," *The New York Times*, April 15, 1945, 3.

<sup>94</sup> Harry S. Truman, "Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress, April 16, 1945," Harry S. Truman Library and Museum, <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/whistlestop/tap/41645.htm> .

services, with public viewing in the Truman Presidential Library in Independence, Missouri.<sup>95</sup> The viewing took place from the afternoon of the day before the funeral to 11 a.m. the day of the funeral, December 28. In all, 75,000 people paid their respects at the Truman Library.<sup>96</sup> Truman was buried on the grounds of the library.<sup>97</sup>

Although Truman's obsequies attracted great public attention, they lacked significant pomp. Overall, the services were drastically scaled down from those that the military had hoped to execute. In the case of Truman, though there were significant pressures to turn the obsequies into a lavish display, ultimately his family thwarted plans set in place by Fifth Army Headquarters, although at one point after President Truman's death the Army considered circumventing Mrs. Truman's wishes.<sup>98</sup> The relative simplicity of the obsequies clearly supports the theory, although it is undeniable that there was significant governmental pressure to politicize Truman's obsequies. This pressure ultimately came to naught, again illustrating a central role for the family in determining the manner of public mourning for former Presidents.

Dwight Eisenhower died March 28, 1969 in Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington, D.C.. His funeral proceedings began on March 30 with a simple private service in the Bethlehem Chapel of the Washington National Cathedral.<sup>99</sup> An afternoon procession the following day from the Cathedral to the Capitol featured an honor guard at the Cathedral from 5 military and naval

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<sup>95</sup> James T. Wooten, "Army Lays Intricate Plan for a Presidential Funeral," *The New York Times*, December 28, 1972, 24.

<sup>96</sup> B. Drummond Ayres, "Truman's Body Lies in State in His Library," *The New York Times*, December 28, 1972, 1.

<sup>97</sup> B. Drummond Ayres, "Truman Buried in Presidential Library Courtyard," *The New York Times*, December 29, 1972, 1.

<sup>98</sup> Wooten, *ibid.*

<sup>99</sup> Felix Belair, "Eisenhower's Family and Friends Bid Him Farewell: Private Service Starts Three Days of Mourning," *The New York Times*, March 30, 1969, 1.

services, as well as the Coast Guard band, an antique caisson bearing the casket, a riderless horse, with a motorcade of family, friends and U.S. officials along with dignitaries from 75 nations. President Richard Nixon gave a eulogy in the Capitol Rotunda, calling General Eisenhower “one of the giants of our time.” About 100,000 people viewed the casket as it lay first in Bethlehem Chapel and then in the Capitol Rotunda.<sup>100</sup>

The following day a thirty-minute religious service combining elements of Presbyterian and Episcopal traditions was held at the Cathedral. Eisenhower’s body was then returned to Abilene, Kansas where on April 2 he was buried across the street from his childhood home.<sup>101</sup> Eisenhower’s services were certainly much grander than predicted by the theory. There is little doubt, however, that this was due to his status as a foremost military hero rather than to his presidency. Nonetheless, his obsequies contradict the theory.

John F. Kennedy was assassinated on November 22, 1963 in Dallas, Texas. His body was returned to Washington in the mid-afternoon of that day. Before the plane left Dallas, Lyndon Johnson insisted on getting Attorney General Robert Kennedy’s opinion on whether Johnson needed to take the oath of office and who could administer it. Although Robert Kennedy only offered opinions as to who could administer the oath, Johnson claimed to others on the plane that Bobby wanted Johnson to take the oath in Dallas. This decision by Johnson delayed the departure of the

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<sup>100</sup> Felix Belair, “Eulogy By Nixon Calls Eisenhower Giant Of His Time,” *The New York Times*, March 31, 1969.

<sup>101</sup> E.W. Kenworth, “Solemn Abilene Throng Pays Last Honor to Its Famous Son: Eisenhower Buried Near His Boyhood Home,” *The New York Times*, April 3, 1969.

plane and infuriated the Kennedys' entourage. This was the first of a series of events that deepened animosity between Johnson and Bobby Kennedy.<sup>102</sup>

Although the generals at the Pentagon believed they would be in charge of Kennedy's obsequies, in fact, Robert and Jacqueline Kennedy arranged for the Kennedy's brother-in-law Sargent Shriver to coordinate the planning and fulfill Jacqueline Kennedy's wishes.<sup>103</sup> This was a very important aspect of the obsequies, and it does not conform well to the theory. Although one could not say that the Kennedys' actions were apolitical, the political focus was on John Kennedy and the family rather than on the continuity of the political system. This is not to say that the obsequies focused entirely on the Kennedy family, but we must not discount this crucial theme.

On November 23, after a private Mass at 9 a.m. in the East Room for family and friends, Kennedy's body lay in state at the White House from 10 am to 6 pm on November 23, although only diplomatic and government officials could attend.<sup>104</sup> The next day a procession brought the body to the Capitol on a caisson accompanied by a riderless horse. The procession to the Capitol included an honor guard of Washington police, three military officers, 26 drummers, a Navy Guard, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Commandants of the Marine Corps and Coast Guard. The caisson was preceded by a rider on a white horse who was followed by three pairs of greys, each pair including one riderless horse. Immediately behind the caisson came a car carrying Jacqueline Kennedy, Caroline, John Jr. and Robert F. Kennedy, along with President Johnson and his wife Ladybird. This emphasized the connection between the national grief and the family's grief. This was an important message, although in fact there was little in the way of solidarity

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<sup>102</sup> Jeff Shesol, *Mutual Contempt: Lyndon Johnson, Robert Kennedy, and the Feud That Defined a Decade* (New York; London: W.W. Norton, 1997), 114-117.

<sup>103</sup> Nowak, 199.

<sup>104</sup> Robert Young, "Kennedy Is Laid To Rest," *Chicago Tribune*, 26 Nov 1963, 1.



between Johnson and the Kennedys. Outside the Capitol honors included a 21-gun-salute, the playing of “Hail to the Chief,” and the bearing of the coffin by eight military pallbearers into the Capitol to Lincoln’s catafalque.<sup>105</sup>

In the Rotunda, speeches by Majority Leader Mike Mansfield, Chief Justice Earl Warren and Speaker of the House John W McCormack stressed Kennedy’s contributions and hope for the nation’s future. President Johnson placed a wreath of red and white carnations by the bier.<sup>106</sup> All this stressed both the connection of the political leadership to Kennedy’s legacy and the idea that Kennedy’s death would not eclipse the goals of his presidency. In this way, Johnson and the other top leaders tried to depict themselves as a continuation of Kennedy’s legacy rather than mere caretakers who could not match the dead president. It is important to emphasize that the active participation of the leaders of each branch of the Federal government was not at all typical for presidential funerals and underlined the new heroic image of Kennedy.

On the morning of November 25 about a hundred heads of state and other dignitaries arrived at the White House to pay their respects to Jacqueline Kennedy. They, together with officials of each of the three branches of the federal government, then participated in the procession on foot from the White House to St. Matthew’s Cathedral. At the Cathedral Richard Cardinal Cushing of Boston said the funeral Mass.<sup>107</sup>

The official procession from the Cathedral to Arlington National Cemetery was watched by crowds totaling around one million people. At the grave the Catholic burial service was conducted.

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<sup>105</sup> Marjorie Hunter, “Mrs. Kennedy Leads Public Mourning,” *The New York Times*, November 25, 1963, 1.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Edward T. Folliard, “Nation Buries Its Martyred President; Million Form Lane to Arlington,” *The Washington Post, Times Herald*, November 26, 1963, A1.

Ceremonies also included a flyover by military jets including Air Force One, the playing of “Ruffles and Flourishes” and the national anthem and bagpipe music. Finally, Mrs. Kennedy lit the Eternal Flame at the grave site.<sup>108</sup>

Kennedy’s obsequies contained several key themes. The most prominent was the shared grief between Jacqueline Kennedy, on the one hand, and the nation, on the other. Additionally, the top political leadership, especially, but not only, President Johnson, pledged to unite around Kennedy’s legacy as they moved forward. By honoring Kennedy, Johnson and others sought to underline the continuity in government in spite of tragedy. Of course, they acknowledged the terrible blow to the morale of the country, but they tried to signal their willingness and ability to go forward in the spirit of Kennedy’s abbreviated presidency.

Two days after Kennedy’s funeral, President Johnson gave a speech to Congress in which he held Kennedy up as a hero beyond compare. “The greatest leader of our time has been struck down by the foulest deed of our time,” Johnson said. “Today John Fitzgerald Kennedy lives on in the immortal words and works that he left behind. He lives on in the mind and memories of mankind. He lives on in the hearts of his countrymen. No words are sad enough to express our sense of loss. No words are strong enough to express our determination to continue the forward thrust of America that he began.”<sup>109</sup>

While promising to follow Kennedy’s path, Johnson was careful to legitimize his new presidency by glorifying Kennedy rather than drawing parallels between himself and the slain president.

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<sup>108</sup> Ibid.

<sup>109</sup> “LBJ addresses Congress following JFK's assassination. Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress November 27, 1963,” in “Ladybird Johnson, Portrait of a First Lady,” online at [http://www.pbs.org/ladybird/epicenter/epicenter\\_doc\\_speech.html](http://www.pbs.org/ladybird/epicenter/epicenter_doc_speech.html) .

Overall, Kennedy received lavish honors that involved clear political signals that the new leadership would continue Kennedy's heroic legacy.

Lyndon Baines Johnson died on January 22, 1973 at his ranch in Johnson City, Texas. He lay in state at the Johnson Library on the University of Texas campus in Austin from January 23 until 9 a.m. January 24.<sup>110</sup> His body was then transported to Washington. A horse-drawn caisson carried Mr. Johnson's body from 17<sup>th</sup> and Constitution Avenues to the Capitol Building, where a service and laying-in-state occurred in the Rotunda. Forty thousand passed by his coffin in the Rotunda. Aside from the military honor guard and a large motorcade there was little in the way of pomp at Johnson's funeral. At 10 am on January 25 a primarily religious service was held at Johnson's church in Washington, National City Christian Church. Scripture readings as well as eulogies were featured.<sup>111</sup>

At the Johnson Ranch later on January 25, eight military pallbearers suspended the U.S. flag over the coffin while evangelist Reverend Billy Graham eulogized the former President at a short service at the grave. President Johnson was buried on the ranch near his parents. In the nearby pasture the Texas National Guard shot off a twenty-one gun salute inexplicably using six 105mm howitzers.<sup>112</sup> Johnson's funeral was more lavish than the theory would predict, although it was not as lavish or obviously politicized as that of presidents who died in office.

Richard Nixon died April 22, 1994. His funeral took place at the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace in Yorba Linda, California on April 27. Governor Pete Wilson and Henry Kissinger

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<sup>110</sup> Roy Reed, "Thousands at Johnson Bier," *The New York Times*, January 24, 1973, 1-2.

<sup>111</sup> James T. Wooten, "Washington Pays Final Tribute to Johnson: Outdoor Loudspeakers Voice Break," *The New York Times*, January 26, 1973, 1.

<sup>112</sup> Roy Reed, "Johnson Buried at Texas Ranch: Johnson Buried Under Oak at Family Ranch in Texas," *The New York Times*, January 25, 1973, 1, 14.

gave eulogies, and many former staffers of and campaigners for the former President attended the last rites. Rev. Billy Graham and Captain William L. Perry, the Navy's Chief of Chaplains, officiated.<sup>113</sup>

President Clinton asked the nation to remember Nixon's successes rather than his felonies, which Clinton quaintly referred to as "mistakes." Nixon's funeral certainly was more overtly political than many presidential funerals, though it lacked much in the way of symbolic honors.<sup>114</sup> Indeed, the speeches were geared more toward purifying the memory of Nixon than toward harnessing Nixon's own image for political gain. Of course, there was something to be gained by reinforcing the principle that politicians are not responsible for their behavior, but the connection of this to tangible political goals is complex. Nixon's funeral was clearly more politicized than the theory would predict.

Gerald Ford died December 26, 2006 in Rancho Mirage, California. After an Episcopal service in Palm Desert, California, his remains were flown to Washington, where viewing was held in the Capitol outside both the entrance of the Senate and the entrance of the House of Representatives. Dick Cheney and others praised Ford's career, especially for his decision to pardon Richard Nixon. The service at the National Cathedral, following the Capitol viewing, was simple with only a single candle and bouquets of white flowers adorning the casket. Speakers included President Bush, George H.W. Bush, Henry Kissinger and Tom Brokaw.<sup>115</sup> On January 2, thousands passed the coffin of President Ford as he lay in state at his presidential library in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A mile-long line of mourners waited in the winter weather to bid farewell to the Michigan native.

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<sup>113</sup> Maureen Dowd, "Clinton Asks Nation to Judge Ex-President on His Entire Life," *The New York Times*, April 28, 1994, A1.

<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, A21

<sup>115</sup> "38th President Lies In State, Recalling Life of a Leader," *Newsday*, December 31 2006, A4.

Ford was buried January 3 at the Gerald R. Ford Presidential Library.<sup>116</sup> While Ford's obsequies did include some honors, they were not especially grand, particularly in comparison with Reagan's, which they followed in time. Ford's funeral was not lavish, but was politicized in a way not anticipated by the theory.

Ronald Reagan died June 5, 2004 and was buried on June 12. Reagan's obsequies were elaborate, taking place both in California and in Washington, D.C. They marked the first American state funeral in 30 years, held June 9, 2004. The obsequies began with a 15 minute service performed by a Presbyterian minister at Reagan's Presidential Library in Simi Valley, California.<sup>117</sup> More than 100,000 people passed by his coffin in the Library after the short service.<sup>118</sup>

In Washington Reagan's casket was first transported to the Ellipse in President's Park by motorcade, and then transferred to a caisson for a procession to the West entrance of the Capitol. At the Capitol, 21 F-15 Eagle fighter jets flew over and there was a 21-gun salute by three howitzers. There was then a 45-minute service in the Capitol; Speaker of the House K. Dennis Hastert and Vice President Dick Cheney delivered speeches. Lincoln's catafalque was used as part of the general glorification of the Republican Party.<sup>119</sup>

At the National Cathedral eulogies were given by President George W. Bush; Margaret Thatcher; Brian Mulroney; and George H. W. Bush. Reagan was buried on the grounds of his presidential

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<sup>116</sup> Suzette Hackney, Zachary Gorchow and Kathleen Gray, "Gerald R. Ford 1913-2006: Tears, Pride Welcome Ford: Thousands Mourn in Grand Rapids," *Tribune Business News*, January 3, 2007, 1.

<sup>117</sup> Charlie LeDuff and John M. Broder, "First a Private Farewell, Then a Public Outpouring: The Mourning Begins," *The New York Times*, Jun 8, 2004, A23.

<sup>118</sup> Todd S. Purdum, "The Capital Pays Homage to 'a Graceful and a Gallant Man': The 40th President: Honoring Ronald Reagan," *The New York Times*, Jun 10, 2004, A20.

<sup>119</sup> Todd S. Purdum, "The 40th President: In Washington; At Rites for Reagan, Soaring Farewells," *The New York Times*, June 12, 2014, A1, A10.

library in Simi Valley. On the way from Washington back to California the jet flew over his birthplace, Tampico, Illinois. Military components of the burial services included the flyover of four Navy jets in the Missing Man formation and a 21-gun salute.<sup>120</sup>

There is little doubt that the amount of pomp at Reagan's funeral exceeded what would be predicted by the theory. It is clear that the Republican Party and its leadership attempted to use Reagan's obsequies to cement his role as the leading ideological figure of the Party. The attempts to associate Reagan with Lincoln and thus to complete the circle of Republican hagiography are especially noteworthy.

### **Ordinary Death in the United States**

In contrast to the practices of ordinary citizens in Monarchical Britain and the Soviet Union, the death practices of ordinary Americans have been more varied in terms of style and in terms of levels of lavishness. Early on, the presence of relatively large numbers of religious dissenters in America led to the prevalence of simple funerals and burials. Later, however, this trend altered in response to both demographic and cultural patterns. Overall, the American common funeral and burial illustrate a higher level of lavishness than the ordinary British or Soviet. This, in combination with the lower level of lavishness exhibited at the funerals of most American presidents, illustrates that differentiation of death practices for political purposes has been far less common in the United States than in Monarchical Britain or the Soviet Union.

In keeping with the view advocated by religious reformers in Great Britain, early American funerals and burials tended to be simple. The earliest Puritans in New England viewed the funeral

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<sup>120</sup> William Branigin, "Thousands Bid Farewell to Reagan in Funeral Service," *The Washington Post*, June 11, 2004, 1.

and burial in extremely utilitarian terms. This was due to their belief that most funeral rituals derived from Catholic-inspired heresy and were unfitting for true Christians.<sup>121</sup> A typical Puritan burial of the 1630's – 1640's -- strictly speaking there was not much of a funeral -- was described by British traveler Thomas Lechford as follows: "At Burials... nothing is read, nor any Funeral Sermon made, but all the neighborhood, or a good company of them, come together by tolling of the kell, and carry the dead solemnly to his grave, and there stand by him while he is buried."<sup>122</sup> The early Puritans opposed the expression of grief and in general followed religious reformer John Calvin's asceticism regarding funerary customs, which reflected Calvin's views on all of life.<sup>123</sup> The early Puritans in New England used *The Directory for the Public Worship of God* of the Church of Scotland as the guide to their public worship. The section "Concerning the Burial of the Dead" set out the church's guidelines for a properly simple Christian burial:

Concerning Burial of the Dead. When any person departeth this life, let the dead body, upon the day of burial, be decently attended from the house to the place appointed for public burial, and there immediately interred, without any ceremony.

And because the customs of kneeling down, and praying by or towards the dead corpse, and other such usages, in the place where it lies, before it be carried to burial, are superstitious; and for that praying, reading and singing, both in going to, and at the grave, have been grossly abused, are no way beneficial to the dead, and have proved many ways hurtful to the living, therefore let all such things be laid aside.

Howbeit, we judge it very convenient that the Christian friends which accompany the dead body to the place appointed for public burial, do apply themselves to meditations and conferences suitable to the occasion; and that the minister, as upon other occasions, so at this time, if he be present, may put them in remembrance of their duty.

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<sup>121</sup> See Chapter 3.

<sup>122</sup> David E. Stannard, *The Puritan Way of Death: A Study in Religion, Culture, and Social Change* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979), 109.

<sup>123</sup> Glenn Lucke and Richard B. Gilbert with Ronald K. Barrett, "Protestant Approaches to Death Overcoming Death's Sting," in *Death and Religion in a Changing World*, ed. Kathleen Garces-Foley (Armonk, N.Y.: M.E. Sharpe, 2006), 130-131.

That this shall not extend to deny any civil respects or deferences at the burial suitable to the rank and condition of the party deceased while he was living.<sup>124</sup>

In the days preceding the burial members of the family would wash and prepare the body in the home. In addition, people would gather either at the house or at the church to view the body and say prayers for the survivors.<sup>125</sup> Initially most colonists used shrouds to bury the dead, though later crude wooden boxes came into use.<sup>126</sup> In some sense, then, the early colonial funerals resembled the funerals of the poor in England, but there were important differences. The Puritans of New England accepted the tolling of church bells at the time of death or burial, even though Puritans in Britain continued to view this as an heretical practice inexorably linked to prayers for the soul of the deceased.<sup>127</sup> Indeed Coffin points out that “[a]lmost as soon as there were bell towers on churches [in the American colonies], the bells were used to toll an announcement of death.”<sup>128</sup>

Later in the 17th century the New England Puritan stance against pomp began to disintegrate. The funerals of New England Puritans increasingly included outlandish expenditure, especially on funeral gifts for mourners. Prominent among these gifts were “mourning gloves” and “mourning rings.” It became common for each invited guest to a funeral to receive, along with the invitation, a pair of mourning gloves of value in accordance with the size of the estate of the deceased. Those who attended funerals regularly, for example, ministers, could assemble large collections of these

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<sup>124</sup> “The Directory for the Public Worship of God,” in Daniel Neal, *The History of the Puritans, Or Protestant Nonconformists: From the Reformation in 1517, to the Revolution in 1688; Comprising an Account of Their Principles; Their Attempts for a Farther Reformation in the Church; Their Sufferings; and the Lives and Characters of Their Most Considerable Divines*, Volume 3 (Great Britain: Harper), 1844, Appendix VIII, 542-543.

<sup>125</sup> Stannard, 111-112

<sup>126</sup> Farrell, 101.

<sup>127</sup> Ibid., 112.

<sup>128</sup> Margaret Coffin, *Death in Early America: The History and Folklore of Customs and Superstitions of Early Medicine, Funerals, Burials, and Mourning* (Nashville: Nelson), 1976, 72.



gloves which could be sold for a significant amount of money.<sup>129</sup> As for the mourning rings, these were distributed following the burial to those who attended the meal at the end of the obsequies: “The rings distributed in this fashion would not easily have been mistaken for ordinary ones; they were fashioned of gold and were often inlaid with delicately carved black enamel death's-heads, skeletons, coffins, and other reminders of the frailty of life.”<sup>130</sup> These rings illustrate how American Puritans maintained a fatalistic and even macabre attitude according to which the fate of the soul was sealed immediately upon death and any hint of religious services for the benefit of the dead was condemned. At the same time, in laying out these special expenditures for funerals Puritans reneged on prohibitions that were considered crucial by reformers in Britain.

Similarly, 18th-century New England funerals included eulogies, pall bearers and processions – all elements that riled reformers in England and Scotland.<sup>131</sup> In response to the shift away from English Puritan values, in some parts of New England in the 18<sup>th</sup> century it became illegal to give gifts before, after and at a funeral. Other, similar sumptuary laws were enacted to limit expenditure on funerals.<sup>132</sup> It can be seen from this that although religion was decisive in determining the form of colonial practices, these practices were not merely a copy of co-religionists’ practices in Britain but, to a significant degree, developed independently.

Burial in churches and church yards predominated in the colonial and into the early period of American independence. This was a practical solution at the time, since relatively low populations did not require elaborate systems of interment. Nonetheless, such places of interment became neglected and overcrowded, over time. This neglect created both a cultural and a public health

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<sup>129</sup> Stannard, 112-113

<sup>130</sup> Ibid., 114

<sup>131</sup> Stannard cited in *Under the Cope of Heaven* Bonomi, Patricia U [109-22]

<sup>132</sup> Farrell, 94; Stannard 115.

dilemma.<sup>133</sup> As French points out, “The neglected graveyard was characteristic not only of New England but was common throughout the other colonies and states.”<sup>134</sup> Indeed, it was deemed necessary to pass laws to help assure that gravediggers could no longer dispose of corpses at random locations before they had reached the cemetery.<sup>135</sup>

Since most early American Protestants opposed the removal of corpses from graves it was difficult to address the issue of overcrowding and lack of places for burial. Most Protestants objected to such practices because they regarded the reuse of graves as disturbing the “sleep of the dead.” As a result of this the level of churchyards was raised significantly over time as one deceased was buried on top of another.<sup>136</sup> Even less sanitary practices still occurred, for example, it remained common in the early 19th century to bury deceased family members on one’s property. This practice, however, became increasingly frowned upon due to considerations of public health.<sup>137</sup>

Aries shows that three factors brought American communities to shift away from neglect of graveyards: The poor sanitary conditions; the public outcry at the neglect of prominent Americans; and the important role of the graveyard in local culture.<sup>138</sup> These shifts resulted in the emergence of the so-called rural cemetery movement, which saw its most prominent manifestation arise in the 1830’s. The Mount Auburn Cemetery outside of Boston combined both a naturalistic

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<sup>133</sup> James Stevens Curl, *A Celebration of Death: An Introduction to some of the Buildings, Monuments, and Settings of Funerary Architecture in the Western European Tradition* (New York : Scribner, 1980), 269-270; Stanley French, “The Cemetery as Cultural Institution,” in *Death in America*, ed. David E. Stannard, (University of Pennsylvania Press, 1975), 70-71.

<sup>134</sup> French, 71.

<sup>135</sup> Phillipe Aries, *The hour of our death* (New York : Knopf, 1981), 350.

<sup>136</sup> David Charles Sloane, *The Last Great Necessity: Cemeteries in American History* (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins University Press, 1991), 19-20.

<sup>137</sup> Gary Laderman, *Rest in Peace: A Cultural History of Death and the Funeral Home in Twentieth-Century America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 33.

<sup>138</sup> Aries, 350.

environment and a less urban milieu aimed at improving health standards for the disposal of the dead. Mount Auburn imitated the Père Lachaise Cemetery in Paris and was the first landscaped cemetery in the United States.<sup>139</sup> Although the cemeteries of Louisiana were an important departure from the churchyards of the rest of the country, still, Mount Auburn represented the beginning of a new trend in the United States.<sup>140</sup> Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn was an extremely important continuation of the trend represented by Mount Auburn. In contrast to the churchyards of Puritan America, Green-Wood was an extremely attractive location resembling in its large size and wooded grounds the features of Pere Lachaise.<sup>141</sup>

The rural cemeteries – in this sense “rural” was intended to reflect a mood rather than a physical location -- were also modeled after the Athenian Kerameikos. It was claimed that by giving “people more of a sense of historical continuity, a feeling of social roots”<sup>142</sup> it would be easier to cultivate a culture appropriate to the new republic.<sup>143</sup> Aries points out that at this time the term cemetery began to replace the terms “graveyard” and “churchyard,” since it was believed these terms focused too much on the dead as opposed to the moral education of the living.<sup>144</sup> This education was in part to be achieved through intricate control of the behavior of visitors to the rural cemetery. For example, “[a]t Mount Auburn the cemetery was open from sunrise to sunset, carriages could not be driven faster than a walk, refreshments could not be brought in, no flowers could be picked

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<sup>139</sup> Curl, 269.

<sup>140</sup> Ibid, 273-274.

<sup>141</sup> Ibid, 217-271.

<sup>142</sup> French, 49.

<sup>143</sup> Susan-Mary Grain, “Raising the Dead: War, Memory and American National Identity,” *Nations and Nationalism* 11: no.4 (October 2005): 510-11; Blanche M. G. Linden, *Silent City on a Hill : Landscapes of Memory and Boston's Mount Auburn Cemetery* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1989).

<sup>144</sup> Aries, *The hour of our death*, 532.

and decorous behavior would be enforced at all times.”<sup>145</sup> In spite of these rigid norms, the so-called rural cemetery became a predominate trend in the United States, one which was only reversed by the Civil War.

Laderman argues that high mortality rates led to a familiarity with death that strongly influenced the shape of 19th-century American death practices.<sup>146</sup> Although this is undoubtedly true in comparison to the 20th century it is arguably a complicated thesis that is too broad to explain the specifics of American funerals and burials. Whether Laderman’s thesis is correct or not, it is important that during this time period “[d]eath was integrated, through a series of rituals and symbols, into the life of the community.”<sup>147</sup> Preparation of the body for burial was considered an important community responsibility in pre-Civil War America. Prior to laying-out, the body was washed and placed in a winding sheet or shroud made of muslin or other material.<sup>148</sup> Viewing of the body was considered important to most – not all – people. Many coffins were made so that the upper portion could be removed or swung away to allow this viewing. Typically the body was attended overnight for three days as preparations were made for the funeral.<sup>149</sup> Coffins were first made by furniture makers, but as these professionals became involved in more and more aspects of the funeral some of them split off to form the undertaker trade.<sup>150</sup>

The mass slaughter of the Civil War effectively destroyed the idea of death as an harmonious part of the natural process that undergirded the *ethos* of Mount Auburn in particular and the rural

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<sup>145</sup> "Regulations concerning visitors to the Cemetery," in Jacob Bigelow, *A History of the Cemetery of Mount Auburn* (Boston: J. Munroe, 1860), 252-54 in French n.58, 84.

<sup>146</sup> Laderman, 24.

<sup>147</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>148</sup> Ibid., 29.

<sup>149</sup> Ibid., 31.

<sup>150</sup> Farrell, 147-148.

cemetery in general. Although the Civil War did not eliminate the desire for a rural –like setting for social gatherings and recreation, this desire was now fulfilled in newly-constructed parks rather than in cemeteries, where reminders of death were omnipresent. This change led to a transformation of cemeteries in which the rural model gave way to cemeteries modeled on parks.<sup>151</sup> This was achieved in part through the removal of fencing surrounding individual graves so that the space became more open and inviting. Additionally, the abolition of regulations in the cemetery was part of an overall attempt to democratize the cemetery and move away from the rural cemetery model.<sup>152</sup> The park model in the 20th century is claimed to be more egalitarian because of the abolition of headstones and monuments that often distinguish one grave from another. Also, these cemeteries are less costly.<sup>153</sup>

We can see in the park cemetery model, as in the rural cemetery model, the creation of a place of burial that was supposed to embody an idealization of the political culture. This, however, is a far cry from the kinds of politicizations seen elsewhere in this dissertation. One could argue that this is a mere matter of definition and that, in fact, these cemetery movements should be seen as contradicting the theory in regard to democratic societies. This is not entirely misguided, but it ignores the distinction between goals of societal organizations, on the one hand, and political regimes on the other. Specifically, the kind of politicization to which my theory relates is much more concrete than the mere inculcation of political culture. There is no doubt that all sorts of private activity could be said to aim ultimately at some political goal, but in this case, as in many

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<sup>151</sup> Sloane, 117-119.

<sup>152</sup> French, 83-84

<sup>153</sup> Curl, 276.

others, labeling such activity as political would lead to a complete lack of clarity, not to mention the probable elimination of any pretension to falsifiability.

As with trends in cemeteries, the nature of the American funeral was fundamentally altered by shifts in attitudes precipitated by and following the Civil War. Due to the need to return the bodies of dead soldiers to their homes with limited decay, techniques of mass embalming were firmly worked out during the war. This, in turn, allowed the body to be laid out either for longer periods of time or after longer delay from death to viewing.<sup>154</sup> It should be pointed out, however, that the key figure in this trend, Thomas Holmes, practiced his trade on dead officers whose corpses were of special importance.<sup>155</sup> Embalming represented an important shift in American practice, especially since historically in England, embalming had been reserved for the nobility and royals whose corpses were displayed for political purposes.<sup>156</sup>

Mitford argues that the extension of the practice of embalming was central to the development of the commercial funeral industry in the United States. Since embalming was a complex process its widespread use required simultaneously the transfer of the body from the home to a commercial setting and the care of specialists who would embalm the corpse.<sup>157</sup> Walter argues that this, in turn, allowed for the commercialization of objects such as the casket that add other elements to the display of the embalmed corpse.<sup>158</sup> Farrell points out that embalming was part of a wider esthetic trend toward preservation in Victorian America, which also included the preservation of flowers.

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<sup>154</sup> Lewis R. Aiken, *Dying, Death and Bereavement* (Mahwah, New Jersey, London: Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates, 2001), 130.

<sup>155</sup> Coffin, 82.

<sup>156</sup> Danielle Westerhof, *Death and the noble body in medieval England* (Woodbridge ; Rochester, NY : Boydell Press, 2008), 79-80.

<sup>157</sup> Mitford 200-201.

<sup>158</sup> Tony Walter, "Three ways to arrange a funeral: Mortuary variation in the modern West," *Mortality* 103 (2005): 173-192 passim.

Of course, these preserved flowers also became an iconic part of the American funeral.<sup>159</sup> In the late 19th century an important change took place as the time between death and burial increased, especially among the more affluent. This shift was both caused by and enabled the further expansion of the commercial funeral industry.<sup>160</sup> Aries has described the point to which embalming ultimately led the funeral in America:

The laying out of the body is the beginning of a series of complicated and sumptuous rites: embalming the body in order to restore to it the appearance of life; laying the body out for viewing in the room of a funeral home where the deceased, surrounded by flowers and music, receives a last visit from his relatives and friends; solemn funeral ceremonies; burials in cemeteries designed like parks, adorned with monuments and intended for the moral edification of visitors who are more tourists than pilgrims.<sup>161</sup>

Aries has also claimed that the funeral home service has, especially due to embalming, tended to obscure the finality of death and thus tended to lead to the denial of death.<sup>162</sup> In other words, the deceased is laid out to look like a live person so that the mourners are not forced to cope fully with the meaning of mortality. One's point of view on this question is essential to the debate on death denial discussed in Chapter 1. Often, however, the debate on the funeral industry has descended into arguments about the virtues of capitalist enterprise, on the one hand, as against those who decry profit motive and argue that the funeral-home-centered rituals are psychologically unhealthy and, it seems, somehow degrading.<sup>163</sup> We can say, however, that this is not so much about the level of lavishness as about the virtues of commercial pomp as opposed to more traditional religious and

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<sup>159</sup> Farrell, James J., *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1980), 161.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid. 208.

<sup>161</sup> Phillipe Aries, "The reversal of death: Changes in attitudes toward death in western societies." tran. Valerie M. Stannard, *American Quarterly* 26, no.5 (Dec., 1974): 556.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid.

<sup>163</sup> For the classic attack on the funeral industry as being nothing but a profit-driven disaster for American culture see Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death*. James Farrell provides counterpoints to Mitford's view in *Inventing the American Way of Death, 1830-1920* (Philadelphia : Temple University Press, 1980).

civic forms. Therefore, it is not necessary to take a position on this polemic to see that the 20<sup>th</sup>-century American funeral has discarded many of the old symbols of lavishness in favor of commercial ones that more blatantly stress one's economic position.

Funeral homes began to take on an important role in America in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. One of the crucial factors in enabling this role was the drastic increase in the numbers of people dying in hospitals. The funeral home sought to dispense with services in the home and, instead, began to transport the body from the hospital to the funeral home. This allowed the funeral home to take on a more prominent place and, over time, even those who died outside of hospitals were transported to the funeral home for the preparations for burial.<sup>164</sup> World War I was an especially important event in expanding and consolidating the role of the commercial funeral home in the United States. The funeral industry was instrumental in arguing for the return of war dead from France, despite the objections of most of America's top political and military figures. The latter claimed that the transportation of the dead would be an unnecessary strain on France and a logistical nightmare. Ultimately, however, the funeral industry and its allies succeeded in convincing the public and Congress that the return of the dead was a patriotic necessity.<sup>165</sup>

In the 1920's and 30's religious leaders attacked the funeral industry as a commercial monstrosity that was alienating Americans from religious comfort in time of need. Although Laderman does not accept this critique, his own work does demonstrate that funerals were increasingly being commoditized and that the industry was eager to attach prices to absolutely every element of the funeral and burial. In this way, the funeral home became a kind of bazaar where the level of

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<sup>164</sup> Farrell, 210-211.

<sup>165</sup> Laderman, 48-54.



ornateness could be judged by the price of specific elements such as the coffin, the pall, and other accoutrements.<sup>166</sup>

The Second World War did nothing to reduce the trend toward commercialization. Although many Americans were buried in Europe this was not a serious blow to the funeral industry. Indeed, the postwar mood provided the funeral industry with an opportunity to attack anyone who criticized their business model. Now, according to the leaders of the industry, they were the defenders of American culture, against various leftist and totalitarian plots to regulate society. One member of the funeral industry attempted to explain how regulation of the industry fit into the worldwide Communist plot:

The 'Socialistic Planners' are laying siege to your business. The aim is to place all burial business in the hands of the State. . . . Your business is a natural for the Socialists to take over. . . . Because there are a few unscrupulous operators who charge more for caskets and funerals than the traffic should bear, the socialistic planners have a 'cause' and a sympathetic audience. . . . So, Funeral Directors, awaken!<sup>167</sup>

This kind of McCarthyism helped to protect the funeral industry from its critics at a time of fear and of hostility to upheaval. We can see in this way that although the industry continued to operate according to the profit motive it was able to frame its cause in the general politically inspired paranoia of the time.

The result of the dominance of the commercialized funeral industry has been the increased uniformity of American funerals:

"Given . . . the cultural heterogeneity of American society, the expectation is that funeral practices will vary widely from one region, or social class, or ethnic group, to another. The

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<sup>166</sup> Ibid. 58-67.

<sup>167</sup> "Truth vs. Fiction," *American Funeral Director* 74, no.7 (July 1951): n.35 in Laderman, 82.

odd fact is that they do not. The overall form of funerals is remarkably uniform from coast to coast. Its general features include: rapid removal of the corpse to a funeral parlor, embalming, institutionalized 'viewing,' and disposal by burial."<sup>168</sup>

Therefore, no matter how one judges the commercialization of funeral rites in America it is undeniable that this has been the trend for roughly the last century. Although certain cultural and religious differences still exist, the current American funeral can largely be judged by the quality of commodities used in the ceremony and burial. This, in turn, creates certain methodological problems, as it is somewhat difficult to compare this kind of pomp to earlier American funerary honors. On the other hand, as we have seen from the chapter on monarchical Britain, comparing the cost of funerals can be a useful tool of analysis.

We have seen, then, that while religion has been important in determining the shape of the American funeral other factors have also played key roles. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, for example, ideals about civic culture and death that were, in large part, secular played a crucial role in determining trends in American burial. Likewise, population growth and other demographic patterns made the old form of burial impractical, thus leading to significant and irreversible changes in American death practices. The old Puritan attitudes toward funerals, while still practiced among reformers, have lost their hold on American society at large.

These trends illustrate that generalizations about ordinary death practices in America are more perilous than similar levels of generalization in regard to Soviet and British trends. This is due in large part to two related factors. In the first place, the diversity of American religiosity and the lack of an established church led to a wide variety of religious funerals in America. Of course, we

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<sup>168</sup> Laderman, 164.

have seen that commercialization has greatly reduced this diversity, but it has not been eliminated. Secondly, while the Soviet Union also was a very culturally diverse country the Soviet authorities tried very hard to reduce the impact of this diversity through anti-religious policies. In America, on the contrary, there has been no effort to interfere with the funerary rites of different religions, though, of course, certain trends have increased uniformity. Thus, we can see that in the United States cultural and economic trends have led to funerary practices that, while increasingly lavish, are also distinctly modern and commercial in form.

## **CONCLUSION**

In this chapter we have seen that the different forms of succession to the American presidency do influence the level of lavishness seen in the death practices of American presidents. In particular, presidents who die in office do receive generally more lavish obsequies than those who die after leaving office. We also have seen, however, some important exceptions to this trend. Most consistently, generals who later occupy the presidency have received grander obsequies than other American presidents who have not died in office. This trend is not predicted by the theory, although it says less about the politicization of the presidency than about the level of prestige attached to the military. While I cannot deny that this is an important issue I believe that accounting for it within the theory would severely damage the theory's parsimony. The question of the connection between military and political honors is important, but one which is better left for further study.

In comparison to ordinary death practices, the deaths of presidents who have died after leaving office have occasionally been more lavish, but there is a significant and undeniable trend toward the decisiveness of culture in determining these obsequies. In particular, religion and other cultural attitudes, rather than former political status, have clearly determined the shape of the funerals of

former presidents. This could be seen in the obsequies of men as diverse as Jefferson, Van Buren, and Theodore Roosevelt. There is no denying that the last few American presidents to die have received lavish obsequies. This, however, is too small a sample to indicate an important trend. It will be important in future years to observe whether this trend continues or if, on the contrary, newly deceased presidents will not receive elaborate state funerals. There is no denying that many will see these deaths as an opportunity for politicization, but whether this will translate into increasingly grand funerals has yet to be determined. Given, however, the lack of tangible political connections between current office holders and former presidents the theory predicts that this trend will again reverse itself.

## **Chapter V: Conclusion**

In this dissertation I have asserted that the degree of politicization of death practices depends on the form or forms of succession practiced in any given regime. I have demonstrated that symbolic honors given to political officials who die in office are intended both to glorify the deceased and, above all, to legitimize those who have taken their place. This is done through lavish trappings, elaborate ceremonies, and, often, through vociferous praise. Of course in monarchies and Communist countries this occurs more frequently than in democracies, where death in office is the exception. This explains in large part why these practices have not been sufficiently analyzed by Western political scientists. Nonetheless, given the historical prevalence of monarchies as well as the persistence of various forms of authoritarian regimes this study makes an important contribution to the study of political stability and legitimacy. Also, although I do not wish to dispute that democratic regimes are more stable than others, understanding the strategies that non-democratic regimes use to increase the chance of a successful transfer of power deserves careful attention. Finally, as we have seen in the American case, election is not the only form by which democratic leaders come to power, and it is important to understand how political officials handle this implicit challenge to the principle of popular selection.

As for the other aspect of this dissertation, by analyzing ordinary death practices we have been able to put the death practices of deceased rulers in their proper context. This is important not only for measurement purposes, but also because it allows us to gain perspective on how death practices are used to convey a particular political message. Concretely, by examining the different levels of honors accorded to different sectors of the population, we have been able to see how new rulers

place their predecessors above other inhabitants of their polities. In this manner rulers send a political message about the qualities of their predecessors and the new ruler's commitment to the legacy of those he honors. Thus, the new ruler not only glorifies the deceased, but more importantly he places himself as the logical successor to this glory. Beyond this, through this comparative perspective, we can see the tension or complementarity between favored cultural and ideological standards on the one hand and political needs of rulers on the other.

Although this tension was most striking in the Soviet case, it was also evident in the other cases that lavishness of death practices was tailored to meet specific political needs. In the English case, for example, we saw that the amount of pomp allowed in obsequies was strictly regulated according to rank and was not merely a function of wealth. While this lavishness was enabled by the wealth of the ruling strata and the institutions they controlled, this is true of all government functions. The fact that these practices were regulated according to rank demonstrates that they were calibrated to reflect and reinforce the political hierarchy. In the English case nobles and lower ranking members of the royal family were not permitted whatever amount of display they wished, but were strictly limited by the rules of the heralds. Perhaps one could create a more complex, Marxist analysis of these facts, but even such an analysis would have to incorporate many of the elements of my argument. At best such an analysis could claim that both the political hierarchy and hierarchical death practices were rooted in the form of production, but, still, political factors might be said to have a clearer and more immediate impact.

The fact that regimes are willing to prioritize political needs over ideological preference in times of succession is an important element of the thesis of this dissertation. This was especially striking in the Soviet case, where elaborate and lavish practices for General Secretaries existed side by side with attempts to obliterate the complex cultural systems of the masses. Though clearly this did not

correspond to the stated line of Marxism-Leninism, the leadership was more than willing to obfuscate ideological inconsistency in order to maximize the chance of legitimate succession. Such obfuscation also occurred in early Reformation England, where death practices of the elite changed more slowly than the religious orientation of the authorities. This illustrates how the use of death practices for political ends is not merely a matter of the manipulation of culture, but a delicate balancing act in which political messaging must be tailored to commonly-understood cultural standards and practices.

I believe that these processes should not be understood in the commonly-employed language of “discourses.”<sup>1</sup> Although the adaptation of Marxist ideas to non-material concepts should not be dismissed out of hand, I believe it grossly misrepresents the type of political-cultural interactions described in this dissertation. In contrast to constructivist theories, I, following Geertz and others, have argued that the practices described in this dissertation are more a matter of extra-linguistic communication.<sup>2</sup> In other words, the death practices of rulers are often more of an attempt to appeal to the standards of the population than a scheme or process for the imposition of hegemonic discourses. In the case of the Soviet Union, for example, the leadership adopted a much more traditional approach to their own death practices than their ideology actually favored. This could

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<sup>1</sup> James F. Keeley, "Toward a Foucauldian analysis of international regimes," *International Organization* 44, no.1 (1990): 83-105; Richard Price, "Dangerous Liaisons? Critical International Theory and Constructivism," *European Journal of International Relations* 4, no.3 (September 1998): 259-294.

<sup>2</sup> Clifford Geertz, "Centers, Kings, and Charisma: Reflections on the Symbolics of Power," in *Rites of Power: Symbolism, Ritual, and Politics Since the Middle Ages*, Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies., Sean Wilentz, and Shelby Cullom Davis Center for Historical Studies. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1985), 13-38; Richard Wortman, *Scenarios of Power: Myth and Ceremony in Russian Monarchy* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1995. 20; Christel Lane, *The rites of rulers: ritual in industrial society : the Soviet case* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

not have been a question of discourses for two reasons. First, the Soviet regime did attempt to impose an ideological framework for the discussion of death practices in general, but this framework contradicted the practices of the funerals of the General Secretaries. Specifically, as I have shown, the anti-religious framework according to which ordinary death practices were regulated led to simple, and even rudimentary, rituals among the population. Secondly, the rituals promulgated by the new regime for its leadership corresponded much more to the practices of monarchical regimes than to the discourses of Bolshevism. If anything, the Soviet regime directly contradicted its own ideological discourse rather than being in any way constrained by it. This is exactly what is predicted by the theory, but I believe it runs contrary to any constructivist thesis that could be presented for this topic.

In monarchical England elites often attempted to meet the standards of the populace rather than attempting to shape them. For example, the inclusion of the poor in the funerals of the British monarchs clearly occurred out of a genuine belief that this segment of the population was closer to God than the monarchs themselves. I do not mean to imply that there is no manipulation occurring in elite death practices. I merely mean to suggest that death practices also include an element of argumentation of which the population is not unaware and which they do not always evaluate uncritically. One could argue that this is a misstatement of the issue, since much of British religious practice was imposed, or at least supported, by the power of the Crown in the first place. While this is true, it is not as if each monarch was free to favor whatever aspects of religiosity he chose. Thus, the monarchs of the Reformation period were not able immediately to eliminate all vestiges of Catholicism and therefore maintained many aspects of the old royal funerals. On the other side, Queen Mary strongly desired to give her predecessor Edward VI a Catholic funeral, but she was persuaded that this would interfere with her political interests. One cannot deny that there



is some endogeneity at play here, but there were also issues of choice among difficult political options. It is therefore important that Mary and others emphasized succession and continuity over religious dispute.

Another possible objection to the thesis of this dissertation is that the categories in which I have placed deceased persons are overly broad. A similar objection is that I have compared the deaths of rulers to the wrong groups. It is true that in the cases of the Soviet Union and the United States I have left out important groups whose death practices might shed light on the theory. For example, between the ranks of General Secretary and average Soviet worker there were many levels of intellectual and political elites who received differing levels of honors in death. It is more important, however, to prove the applicability of the theory to the top political leadership, on the one hand, and the mass of the population on the other. Doing so requires quite detailed analysis and the information to perform such analysis is more difficult to obtain for, say, intellectuals and writers, especially given the taboos against discussing funerals in the Soviet press. In the case of the U.S., on the other hand, the rules of succession are not the same for, say, a Congressman as for the President. Also the nature of the U.S. system of representation would make it much more difficult to control for cultural variations in regard to the deaths of Representatives who, after all, represent relatively small populations and geographic areas. Finally, one Congressman or Senator is only a small percentage of the legislative branch and her death is in no way politically comparable to the death of the head of the Executive branch or the General Secretary of the Communist Party.

One peculiarity of Communist regimes that makes the theory somewhat difficult to distinguish from other explanations is the way in which other regimes copied the practices of the Soviet Communist Party and state. Indeed, some have even objected to the notion of treating Warsaw

Pact members other than the Soviet Union as sovereign states at all.<sup>3</sup> It may well be that the theory is not well tested by the cases of Eastern European Communism, but this point should not be exaggerated. Although application of the concept of sovereignty to these countries is perilous this does not mean that those ultimately in control did not wish populations to see the governments of these states as legitimate. Therefore, death practices of the elite in these states would have aimed at the same goal, although it may well be that these cases are not independent of the Soviet case. Also, even given objections to the use of Eastern European Communist states as tests of the theory there are enough other Communist states past and present to allow for further testing of the theory.

### **Future Iterations of This Project**

The most immediate task that could be accomplished using this framework would be to test the theory further in regard to different countries that fit within any or all of the three regime types.

This does raise the question of whether the theory could be tested using large numbers of cases. In general I believe that the aspect of the theory regarding funerals requires detailed analysis if for no other reason than that characterizations of lavishness will inevitably be disputed. In particular, without a broad context it is difficult to say whether one set of funeral practices in a given country are more or less lavish than other practices even in the same polity. In regard to burial practice, however, it is possible to develop more specific criteria that could be tested using larger samples. For example, aspects of burial honors such as size of gravestone, amount of decoration and

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<sup>3</sup> See, for example, Stephen D. Krasner, *Sovereignty: Organized Hypocrisy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1999), 50; Alexander Wendt and Daniel Friedheim, *Hierarchy under anarchy: informal empire and the East German state* (Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1996).

sculpture, as well as location of burial sites are more easily quantifiable and require less detailed proof.

The clearest way to expand this project, however, would be to perform detailed case studies of other polities. In particular the theory should be tested on monarchical polities located on different continents and across very broad time frames. There is no reason to believe that this theory as applied to monarchies cannot explain, for example, the politicization of death practices in Asian or African kingdoms three thousand years ago. The largest barrier to this sort of research would be the availability of secondary sources or scholars' ability to find and use detailed first-hand accounts of funerals and burials. I expect the theory to have a very high degree of accuracy in regard to monarchies no matter what time period is studied. In regard to Communist countries again the theory should be applied to other states. A particularly useful study would be the comparison of West and East German practices. Also, a comparison of Mainland Chinese and Taiwanese practices could be interesting, although less useful considering cultural differences.

Finally, it would be very useful to compare the use of the Lenin Mausoleum to the use of Westminster Palace or the Basilica of St. Denis. A study of this kind would allow us to see in more detail the similarities as well as certain differences that exist between the politicization of death in Communist and monarchical countries. Of course the same type of study could be undertaken in regard to Tsarist Russia and the Soviet Union.

### **Future directions**

This project, though an important step in understanding the relationship among ritual, death, and politics, by no means exhausts the subject. In particular the findings of this work in relation to monarchies and Communist countries can and should be tested in other types of regimes. Let us

recall that the independent variable in this study is not regime type itself but the process of succession practiced in a given regime. There are, of course, other historically important regime types in which succession occurs upon the death of a ruler. In particular many modern dictatorships have seen one man rule that was passed on upon the death of the leading political figure. Of course some of these regimes have collapsed, for example, Franco's regime in Spain, but still others have survived. Due to the nature of these regimes the theory could be tested not only in regard to forms of succession but also in regard to other factors. For example, are death practices even more important to a dictatorship facing internal rebellion?

I have demonstrated that even though monarchical regimes and Communist countries operate under completely different principles regarding who is a legitimate ruler, the form of succession rather than these disparate rules lead to similar outcomes in regard to the politicization of death practices. I believe the same should be true in regard to dictatorships where relatives succeed relatives and dictatorships where the identity of the successor is determined by another principle, such as status within the armed forces. There are enough examples of both types of regimes for this hypothesis to be tested. Also these observations should lead us to question to what extent countries like North Korea – where family connection determines a hierarchical status – are really even distinguishable from feudal-or-later monarchies.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, a secondary, but related, question is the extent to which hierarchical death practices undermine a state or party's claim to be practicing egalitarianism. Even beyond questions of whether a regime reflects the wishes of the

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<sup>4</sup> Eyal Zisser, "Does Bashar al-Assad Rule Syria?" *Middle East Quarterly* (Winter 2003): 15-23; David W. Lesch, *The New Lion of Damascus: Bashar Al-Asad and Modern Syria*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), 3-4; Flynt Lawrence Leverett, *Inheriting Syria: Bashar's Trial by Fire*, (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press, 2005); Bradley K. Martin, *Under the Loving Care of the Fatherly Leader: North Korea and the Kim Dynasty* (New York: Griffin, 2006); Andreï Nikolaevich Lankov, *From Stalin to Kim Il Sung : the formation of North Korea, 1945-1960* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2002), viii.

population is the extent to which the population views as hypocritical the attempts of Communist regimes to glorify deceased leaders.

I have chosen not to explore the question of success or failure of death practices in their role in legitimating political succession. Nonetheless through examining diaries and what in the Soviet Union was called *samizdat* (self-published work, i.e., unauthorized publications in the underground press) researchers can gather data on public perception of these rites. I concur with Kramer, however, in being skeptical of the use of oral history.<sup>5</sup> In particular, people in formerly authoritarian countries such as Russia have a long history of sensing what people want to hear and then saying it. This is probably an unavoidable consequence of Soviet-style policing and has not gone away just because the political climate has changed.

Furthermore, there is no good reason to suppose that the subsection of a given population willing to discuss their experiences with Western academics is at all representative of the population of a given country.<sup>6</sup> It simply is impossible to believe, for example, that the majority of Russians in the early 1990's were similar in crucial respects to the relatives of the victims of Soviet terror. This can be seen by the fact that the Communist Party enjoyed a political comeback in the elections of 1995 and 1999, indicating that hostility toward Communism, though real, was not in the form of a mystical Slavic blood feud. Thus, while attempts to attain an accurate picture of public opinion

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<sup>5</sup> For a discussion of this issue, see "Remembering the Cuban Missile Crisis: Should We Swallow Oral History?" Mark Kramer, Bruce J. Allyn, James G. Blight, David A. Welch, *International Security* 15:1 Summer 1990, 212-218. In particular here I am not referring to the methods of field work widely practiced in Comparative Politics. I refer to the unfortunate practice of interviewing selected groups of a population, then taking their claims at face value or claiming that they represent an important section of public opinion.

<sup>6</sup> Catherine Merridale, *Night of stone : death and memory in Russia* (London : Granta, 2000).

on these types of questions may be possible even in a Communist or other authoritarian type country, it must be done carefully and without being burdened by accepted Western political slants.

Finally, death practices can also be manipulated for political gain by non-state actors, especially rebel movements. This was already documented in this dissertation in the case of Bolshevik death practices prior to the October Revolution. It is no secret that other rebel organizations perform elaborate funeral services for those who die in the service of the cause. These are especially important in the case of rebel leaders, but extend often to other members of these organizations. I believe, however, that the political ends being sought in these cases often are distinct from those being pursued in the case of rulers. I believe that this is due to the fact that the kind of support needed to sustain a rebel movement often entails more risk than the kind of support sought from the leadership of a state. Of course these two situations resemble each other in times of war, but many rebel movements are in a constant state of war and, thus, require even more commitment than do states. I do believe, however, that death in war adds many new dimensions to this sort of study and thus would likely require more modifications to the theory.

## Appendix: List of Obsequies

Table I: Obsequies of English and British Monarchs 1307-1837

| <b>Name, Date of Death</b>          | <b>Lavish, Conforms to Theory</b> | <b>Not Lavish, Conforms to Theory</b> | <b>N/A</b>      | <b>Lavish, Contradicts Theory</b> | <b>Not Lavish, Contradicts Theory</b> |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Edward I<br>7/7 /1307               | X                                 |                                       |                 |                                   |                                       |
| Edward II<br>9/21/1327 (or unknown) |                                   |                                       | X Deposed       |                                   |                                       |
| Edward III<br>6/21/1377             | X                                 |                                       |                 |                                   |                                       |
| Richard II<br>2/14/1400             |                                   |                                       | X Deposed       |                                   |                                       |
| Henry IV<br>3/20/1313               | X                                 |                                       |                 |                                   |                                       |
| Henry V<br>8/31/1422                | X                                 |                                       |                 |                                   |                                       |
| Henry VI<br>5/21/1471               |                                   |                                       | X Deposed twice |                                   |                                       |
| Edward IV<br>4/9/1483               | X                                 |                                       |                 |                                   |                                       |
| Edward V<br>Unknown                 |                                   |                                       | X Not crowned   |                                   |                                       |
| Richard III<br>8/22/1485            |                                   |                                       | X Deposed       |                                   |                                       |
| Henry VII<br>4/21/1509              | X                                 |                                       |                 |                                   |                                       |

Table I: Obsequies of English and British Monarchs 1307-1837 (continued)

|                          |   |  |                                |  |   |
|--------------------------|---|--|--------------------------------|--|---|
| Henry VIII<br>1/28/1547  | X |  |                                |  |   |
| Edward VI<br>7/6/1553    | X |  |                                |  |   |
| Mary Tudor<br>11/17/1558 | X |  |                                |  |   |
| Elizabeth I<br>3/24/1603 | X |  |                                |  |   |
| James I<br>3/27/1625     | X |  |                                |  |   |
| Charles I<br>1/30/1649   |   |  | X<br>Deposed                   |  |   |
| Charles II<br>2/6/1685   | X |  |                                |  |   |
| James II<br>9/16/1701    |   |  | X<br>Deposed                   |  |   |
| Queen Mary<br>12/28/1694 |   |  | X<br>Joint rule<br>William III |  |   |
| William III<br>3/8/1702  |   |  |                                |  | X |
| Queen Anne<br>8/1/1714   | X |  |                                |  |   |
| George I<br>6/11/1727    |   |  | X<br>† Hanover                 |  |   |
| George II<br>10/25/1760  | X |  |                                |  |   |
| George III<br>1/29/1820  | X |  |                                |  |   |



Table I: Obsequies of English and British Monarchs 1307-1837 (continued)

|                         |   |  |  |  |  |
|-------------------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| George IV<br>6/26/1830  | X |  |  |  |  |
| William IV<br>6/20/1837 | X |  |  |  |  |

Table II: Obsequies of the Leaders of the Soviet Union

| <b>Name</b><br><b>Date of Death</b> | <b>Lavish,<br/>Conforms<br/>to Theory</b> | <b>Not Lavish,<br/>Conforms<br/>to Theory</b> | <b>N/A</b> | <b>Lavish,<br/>Contradicts<br/>Theory</b> | <b>Not Lavish,<br/>Contradicts<br/>Theory</b> |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|------------|---|---|
| V.I. Lenin<br>1 / 21 / 1924         | X   |   |            |   |   |
| Josef Stalin<br>10 / 16 / 1952      | X   |   |            |   |   |
| Nikita Khrushchev<br>9 / 11 / 1971  |   |   | X          |   |   |
| Leonid Brezhnev<br>11 / 10 / 1982   | X   |   |            |   |   |
| Yuri Andropov<br>2 / 9 / 1984       | X   |   |            |   |   |

Table III: Obsequies of the Presidents of the United States

| <b>Name</b><br><b>Date of Death</b>                   | <b>Lavish,<br/>Conforms<br/>to Theory</b> | <b>Not Lavish,<br/>Conforms to<br/>Theory</b> | <b>N/A</b> | <b>Lavish,<br/>Contradicts<br/>Theory</b> | <b>Not Lavish,<br/>Contradicts<br/>Theory</b> |
|---|---|---|------------|---|---|
| George Washington<br>12 / 14 / 1799                   |   |   |            | X   |   |
| John Adams<br>7 / 4 / 1826                            |   | X   |            |   |   |
| Thomas Jefferson<br>7 / 4 / 1826                      |   | X   |            | .   |   |
| James Madison<br>6 / 28 / 1836                        |   | X   |            | .   |   |
| James Monroe<br>7 / 4 / 1831                          |   |   |            | X   |   |
| John Quincy Adams<br>2 / 23 / 1848                    |   |   | X          |   |   |
| Andrew Jackson<br>6 / 8 / 1845                        |   | X   |            |   |   |
| Martin Van Buren<br>7 / 24 / 1862                     |   | X   |            |   |   |
| William H. Harrison<br>4 / 4 / 1841<br>Died in Office | X   |   |            |   |   |
| John Tyler<br>1 / 18 / 1862                           |   |   | X          |   |   |

Table III: Obsequies of the Presidents of the United States (continued)

|  |   |    |  |   |  |
|--|---|----|--|---|--|
| James K. Polk<br>6 / 15 / 1849                                       |   | X  |  |   |  |
| Zachary Taylor<br>7 / 9 / 1850<br>Died in Office                     | X |    |  |   |  |
| Millard Fillmore<br>3 / 8 / 1874                                     |   | .X |  |   |  |
| Franklin Pierce<br>10 / 8 / 1869                                     |   |    |  | X |  |
| James Buchanan<br>6 / 1 / 1868                                       |   | X  |  | . |  |
| Abraham Lincoln<br>4 / 15 / 1865<br>Died in Office<br>(Assassinated) | X |    |  |   |  |
| Andrew Johnson<br>7 / 31 / 1875                                      |   | X  |  |   |  |
| Ulysses S. Grant<br>7 / 23 / 1885                                    |   | .  |  | X |  |
| Rutherford B. Hayes<br>1 / 17 / 1893                                 |   | X  |  |   |  |

Table III: Obsequies of the Presidents of the United States (continued)

|  |   |   |  |   |  |
|--|---|---|--|---|--|
| James A. Garfield<br>9 / 19 / 1881<br>Died in Office<br>(Assassinated) | X |   |  |   |  |
| Chester Arthur<br>11 / 18 / 1886                                       |   | X |  |   |  |
| Grover Cleveland<br>6 / 24 / 1908                                      |   | X |  |   |  |
| Benjamin Harrison<br>3 / 13 / 1901                                     |   |   |  | X |  |
| William McKinley<br>9 / 14 / 1901<br>Died in Office<br>(Assassinated)  | X |   |  |   |  |
| Theodore Roosevelt<br>1 / 6 / 1919                                     |   | X |  |   |  |
| William Howard Taft<br>3 / 8 / 1930                                    |   |   |  | X |  |
| Woodrow Wilson<br>2 / 3 / 1924   |   | X |  |   |  |
| Warren G. Harding<br>8 / 2 / 1923<br>Died in Office                    | X |   |  |   |  |

Table III: Obsequies of the Presidents of the United States (continued)

|   |   |    |  |   |   |
|---|---|----|--|---|---|
| Calvin Coolidge<br>1 / 5 / 1933                                       |   | X  |  |   |   |
| Herbert Hoover<br>10 / 20 / 1964                                      |   | X  |  |   |   |
| Franklin D.<br>Roosevelt<br>4 / 12 / 1945<br>Died in Office           |   |    |  |   | X |
| Harry S. Truman<br>12 / 26 / 1972                                     |   | .X |  |   |   |
| Dwight D.<br>Eisenhower<br>3 / 28 / 1969                              |   |    |  | X |   |
| John F. Kennedy<br>11 / 22 / 1963<br>Died in Office<br>(Assassinated) | X |    |  |   |   |
| Lyndon Baines<br>Johnson<br>1 / 22 / 1973                             |   |    |  | X |   |
| Richard Nixon<br>4 / 22 / 1994  |   |    |  | X |   |
| Gerald Ford<br>12 / 26 / 2006   |   |    |  | X |   |

Table III: Obsequies of the Presidents of the United States (continued)

|               |  |  |  |   |  |
|---------------|--|--|--|---|--|
| Ronald Reagan |  |  |  | X |  |
| 6 / 4 / 2004  |  |  |  |   |  |

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