

Explanation for Iconographic Changes in Eighteenth Century Gravemarkers

Taylor Cavanaugh

AN 426-01, HS 461-51

Dr. Bludau, Dr. Parkin

December 22nd, 2015

Abstract

There are clear shifts in the iconography on gravestones that have occurred overtime. One of particular importance and analysis is the appearance of child-like faces with wings, most commonly referred to as cherubs, which followed the dominant use of mortality images such as hourglasses and skulls. Researchers such as James Deetz, explained that mortality images had been a product of the Puritan's morbid belief on death and that the appearance of cherubs correlated with the religious movements known as The Great Awakening. Deetz and his adherents concluded that cherubs captured a positive, lighthearted outlook on life and death. This paper challenges that notion and suggests the greater impact that fashion, social status and consumerism had on those of the eighteenth century. Art movements including the Rococo effected many aspects of material culture and was especially evident in the naturalistic and curved designs reflected on gravemarkers at Christ Church in Shrewsbury, New Jersey.

Introduction

A popular subject within historical archaeology is the study of gravemarkers and the events that influenced specific iconography and inscriptions. As time passes different images or writings become popular and eventually new ones take their places. Many believe these changes are not random. Archaeologists suggest cultural movements are responsible for the clear shift in gravestone art. The prime examples for this paper are markers from the eighteenth century in the American colonies. The prominent design that can be seen on seventeenth century to mid-eighteenth century gravestones are mortality images, such as death heads, skulls and bones. By the mid-eighteenth century these images begin to fade out and a new style takes over. The new design is most commonly called a cherub and is described as a face, often child-like, with wings. Archaeologists such as James Deetz have in a way, paved the way for gravestone research in the

United States. Like many others, he reasons that the distinct switch from death heads to cherubs were religious, due to the movements known as the Great Awakening. Other archaeologists such as Adam Heinrich, have found evidence which suggests the change was brought on by the fashion coming out of Europe during a time when consumerism had increased dramatically.

Gravemarker research has been concentrated in areas such as New England and New Jersey. These regions were heavily effected during the colonial period and were popular destinations for early settlements in America. In order to narrow down the research and conclusions made within these areas, Christ Church in Shrewsbury, New Jersey is the case study for this paper. Christ Church has a history of Quaker, royal and Episcopalian influences. The church's first structure was built between 1732 and 1733, but the town of Shrewsbury dates back to 1664. The history includes English settlers with Dutch interest as well, and a town that fought against England's monarchy over a century before the American Revolution. Christ Church's burial ground predates the building of the church and includes over thirteen hundred burials and about eight hundred gravemarkers. By studying the parish's gravestones as well as other documents, one can determine the most influential events throughout its past. The answer as to whether or not the Great Awakening had a larger effect on gravemarkers than art movements, such as the Rococo can be determined through Shrewsbury's history and the people of Christ Church.

In order to come to a conclusion, the impacts of religious movements and ideals need to be compared and contrasted to the influences of artistic trends on material culture within Shrewsbury and Christ Church. The dates of these events are important as well because the correlations between them and the images found on the gravemarkers will imply whether or not they would have fit within the appropriate time frame. Because only one burial ground is being

focused on, more research is needed in deciding if the results on this parish will correlate with those of other burial grounds or cemeteries. It is possible that because of the location and the history of Shrewsbury, Christ Church was influenced both by the Great Awakening and the Rococo. Christ Church was granted its charter by King George II but had also been heavily impacted by the Revolutionary War and the need to separate from England. Although the Puritans had lost their influence at the time of the First Great Awakening, this was after they had inhabited the New England area which connects them to the English that had gone from Rhode Island to settle in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. Material culture found throughout New Jersey also shows the effect that art and consumerism had on the area. Pottery found by archaeologists displays the designs and colors used from the Rococo. Evidence suggests that the area of Shrewsbury, New Jersey had been effected by both the Great Awakening and the Rococo, but through studying defining characteristics of gravemarker iconography, it has become clear that art and consumerism had a stronger influence on gravemarkers than many have previously believed to be the case.

Fashion's Effect on Iconography

Archaeologist Adam Heinrich challenges the common idea that gravemarker iconography shifted from mortality images to cherubs due to change in religious morale brought on by the Great Awakening. Instead he suggests that the Rococo was an expansive artistic trend that had a major effect on material culture throughout the eighteenth century. Heinrich believes the winged face design is not a cherub but a *putto*, a Classical allegorical element that was common in architectural and mortuary sculpture (Heinrich 2014: 61). Overall, he suggests that it was high consumerism with fashion trends that impacted the change in gravemarkers, not influence from new religious attitudes brought on by the Great Awakening.

Heinrich explains that the reason so many archaeologists have attributed gravemarker iconographic change to religion, is because of the common association of death and afterlife with faith that has been connected to the images found on early gravemarkers (Heinrich 2014: 38). The earliest dated gravemarkers and first systematic study of iconography are from New England. This gives some explanation as to why influence by the Puritans, who settled in New England, has been connected to the mortality symbols on the early stones. Heinrich argues that the Puritans' emphasis on the temporariness of the worldly body and uncertainty of their fate after death has been overdrawn. Archaeologists continue to associate later images such as the winged cherubs with religion due to a freer, more optimistic outlook on life and death as the Puritans lost their influence. Others such as religious historian David Hall have rejected this view because of the idea that religious groups were not uniformly monolithic and that too many variables have gone unanswered through religious connotations (Heinrich 2014: 39). Mortality images were found in paintings around Europe and most religious burial grounds in the colonies, including the Quaker burial ground in Shrewsbury (Heinrich 2014: 39). Throughout the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, other images aside from cherubs, began to appear on gravemarkers that were not associated with religion. Many of these included floral designs that are often correlated with age and sex rather than with religion (Heinrich 2014: 40). As researchers became critical of relating religion to gravemarker iconography, they hypothesized that there must have been another cultural influence that had not yet been identified.

Heinrich theorizes the inspiration for the cherub décor to be the Rococo. Social status and consumerism had become a large part of colonial America during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Out of France derived the anti-Classical style that became popular within

Europe's elite by the 1720s, known as the Rococo (Heinrich 2014: 41). In order to move away from the designs of Classicism, Rococo artists began using curved lines and asymmetry in their designs. Included in this style was movement and lightness that worked towards naturalism, while including allegorical figures and satyrs such as the *putti*-winged infants associated with love and freedoms (Heinrich 2014: 42). The Rococo reached England through continental artisans and the French Huguenots who had established their crafts in London after fleeing Louis XIV (Heinrich 2014: 42).

After several other artists caught on to this trend, the fashion made its way to the American colonies by the late 1720s and 1730s. The upperclassmen had been ordering shipments of goods with this new style. Major port cities soon had numerous examples of the Rococo and influenced local industries to develop their own pottery and other goods. Keeping up with the latest styles and trends increased dramatically from 1700 to 1773 (Heinrich 2014: 43). The Rococo flourished in eighteenth century material culture. Gravestones are just as much material culture as pottery, books, and clothing. It seems unrealistic to say that artistic style and fashion would not have impacted gravemarkers, especially because they had been purchased by only those who could afford them. Gravestones were not a simple commodity that everyone was given when they died. Instead they were luxuries purchased by those with enough money to decorate them with the most popular decorations of the time. This is clear by the variety in size and design seen on each stone. Those of a higher class could purchase large tombstones with designs and emblems. The forming middle class who played a large role in the increasing consumerism, were soon able to afford stones with images such as the cherub or *putto* that became increasingly popular. Those without much income either bought small stones with little to no engravings, or none at all. Because the gravestone market was dominated by those who had

the most money, it makes sense that their gravemarkers would have images representing the highest fashions because they could afford it.

Putti, winged infants, displayed popularity on the most elite tomb monuments seen in churches throughout continental Europe and England during the Renaissance, Classical and Baroque periods (Heinrich 2014: 43). The increased buying and selling of printed architectural and decorative forms by the 1720s helped bring the *putto* to folk artisans who had incorporated them on generally consumed items such as gravestones (Heinrich 2014: 43). Heinrich agrees there is a correlation between one's social status and having a gravemarker. For example, in Monmouth County there are four hundred and thirty three recordable eighteenth century markers out of a population that was made up of sixteen thousand, nine hundred and eighteen citizens by 1796 (Heinrich 2014: 45).

The *putto* or cherub, was not the only evidence of the Rococo on gravemarkers. Other elements such as shells, tulips, acanthus leaves, hearts and epigraphy were also found on eighteenth to nineteenth century gravemarkers (Heinrich 2014: 53). These designs became popular by mid-eighteenth century, around the same time as the Rococo took off in the colonies. Shell motifs could also be found on materials such as architecture, furniture and ceramics. The designs used are often symbolic. Heinrich describes the shell as representing the "voyage of the soul in early Renaissance paintings like Botticelli's *Birth of Venus*. This may be true for gravemarkers as well and could include ideas of pilgrimage or baptism (Heinrich 2014: 54). When applied to Rococo art, shells may have had a different meaning. Because shells were found on artifacts such as furniture and ceramics, they were not attributed to memorizing the dead. Instead they might have represented the beauty of naturalism which is contributed to the Rococo (Heinrich 2014: 54). Floral designs such as tulips, leaves and vines displayed similar

naturalistic elements that were important to the Rococo. These motifs are associated with different populations around colonial America. In New York for example, tulips are paired with French or Dutch surnames, but in New Jersey they often mark the graves of young or unmarried women (Veit 2009: 123). Tulips show up on gravestones in the 1730s and continued into the early nineteenth century (Veit 2009: 123). It is clear that these elements were not those of religious connotations which could mean the same for the cherub or *putto*. The highly decorated and ornamental designs on eighteenth century gravemarkers are true to the Rococo. Designs included curling and twisting vines around the sides of the gravestones (Heinrich 2014: 55). Markers often display combined decorations including the cherub with a crown or the cherub with vines. Border designs such as those were found around mortality images as well.

Consumerism

The designs chosen were based off of the Rococo, but the reason for their increase in appearance on gravemarkers is due to consumerism of the eighteenth century. The explanation for a cultural shift during that time is attributed by many to the growth of mercantile capitalism and increasing class conflict (Veit 2009: 117). The increased amount of gravemarkers bought and decorated are just one example of the advancements in material culture throughout the colonial world. Household objects are believed to play an important role in one's social status as well. Veit explains the perspective that although not especially portable, gravestones could represent financial outlay and styles, much like the fashion of clothes which change in regular patterns (Veit 2009: 118). Shackel argues similar ideas to those of Heinrich and proposed that the wealthy used material goods to enhance their superiority over the other classes (Veit 2009: 118). Both perspectives are displayed within the stones at Christ Church. A clear pattern can be recognized between wealthy or high status members of the Shrewsbury community with the

most ornamented gravemarkers. This was true with families such as the Throckmortons, the Stelles and Dr. Eatton whose markers were filled with the mainstream carvings of mortality images and cherubs, but also included border designs and creative additions as well.

The increase in gravestones bought, especially those including popular iconographies of the time, can be attributed to the growing economy and population which began in the early seventeenth century. Historian Cary Carson noted the significant rise of people in Britain and northern Europe, who moved from their neighboring areas to large cities, foreign countries and colonies overseas (Pogue 2001: 51). A redistribution in population to largely urban areas was caused by new developments which had deemphasized agricultural life, an increased significance in commercial ventures, a rise in population and the aftermath of the English Civil War (Pogue 2001: 51). Life in the city had greater opportunity for employment as mercantilism was expanding. Throughout the seventeenth century, population grew at great rates. As cities such as London became filled with business and people, many made their way into the colonies in hopes of making their fortune in a less competitive environment. Through the increase in mercantilism and population which predated the Industrial Revolution, a culture of consumerism was beginning to form

Up until this time, consumer goods were for the most part limited and were obtained for their usefulness. Most families relied on very few tableware and bought only what was necessary to complete chores and fulfill their basic needs. The wealthy had specific items used to impress, such as jewelry and imported fabrics; however goods became more available, in turn losing their status significance (Pogue 2001: 52). The fact that items originally restricted to the rich were becoming affordable and accessible to a growing group now known as the Middle Class, meant the market was increasing along with the growing economy. The shift in social and economic

developments have been described by many researchers as “the consumer revolution” (Pogue 2001: 51). Meeting basic needs was no longer the leading motivation for purchasing consumer goods. “Well-made furniture, of local manufacture or imported, found its way into the houses even of the less well-to-do” (Wright 1962: 206). Conspicuous consumption took hold of the American colonies as class conflict began to form. The merchant class as well as the upper class had been purchasing similar items. There were many types of material culture gaining in popularity into the eighteenth century. One of particular value meant to survive after death, was the gravestone.

Gravestones were considered a luxury and had originally been another item reserved for the rich. Wooden gravemarkers had been used by the poor, but was not a material that could survive. Stone is the most durable, but also the most expensive form of gravemarker. By the eighteenth century gravestones became another commodity that could be afforded by the Middle Class. In order to keep up with this growing market, more carvers were needed. Shops began to spring up and carving became a career that was growing in popularity. Archaeologist Richard Veit found similar results in his study of New Jersey gravemarkers, “The number of gravestone carvers had also risen, and there was increasing competition among them” (Veit 2009: 136). It was not just the number of gravestones that had increased, but also the amount that had images carved onto them rather than being plain markers. This meant that without size differences or a title being carved onto a gravestone, it would be very difficult to distinguish an average person’s stone from that of a member of the upper class. This would prove to be an issue for many and resulted in elaborate ornamentations that could only be afforded on stones owned by the wealthy.

There are many designs seen on gravestones; however there was a motive behind choosing what iconography would be displayed. With a clear class conflict being undergone

within the eighteenth century and into the nineteenth century, it makes sense that one would want to distinguish their material items using the latest fashions. This can be seen through clothing and other commodities even today. The buying and selling of materials was heavily influenced by class conflict which is evidentially a secular phenomenon. “The astounding increase in grave markers and the appearance of monograms and signed stones at the end of the 18th century, however, seem more closely tied to the consumer revolution than to religious change” (Veit 2009: 138). The people of the eighteenth century became decorated in designs of the Rococo, whose popularity spread throughout the eighteenth century. Additional images to the dominant symbols such as the death’s head or cherub included acanthus leaves, floral displays and other curved or naturalistic designs, all of which embody the essence of the Rococo. By the nineteenth century the cherub had all but disappeared and been replaced by willows, urns and more commonly monograms in Monmouth County. This shift correlates with the changing fashion trends. Neoclassicism became the leading artistic style in the nineteenth century and can be seen in the monograms on New Jersey gravestones. Specific fashion iconography was displayed because it distinguished the upper class from the middle class who had recently been able to afford gravestones. “It is surmised that the presence of monograms has little to do with changing religious sensibilities but much to do with the increasing democratization of permanent grave markers and the rise of a consumer culture, where individuals besides the elite could afford to purchase grave markers” (Veit 2009: 136).

The Rococo

The Rococo is an art style which came out of Versailles, France in the early eighteenth century. The term Rococo had not been realized until the late eighteenth century or early nineteenth century; therefore then, the fashion would have been referred to as the “new” or

”modern” style (Heinrich 2014: 41). Its essence is one of grace and fluidness that had taken over material culture. Even centuries after the Rococo lost its supremacy as the leading artistic style, it has retained its reputation for being charming and frivolous. Irene Scalbert describes the Rococo as being syncretic. The new fashion had used elements from several artistic styles and became its own. It represented unclassical forms such as Gothic, baroque, rocaille, or Chinese (Scalbert 1999: 20).

Produced from these art forms was a style which had forgone the use of sharp angles and symmetry. Instead, the focus was on ornamentation, embellishments, naturalistic elements and curves as well as asymmetry (Heinrich 2014: 41). Natural aspects of the Rococo include floral designs and vine displays. Popular examples include tulips or acanthus leaves which are specific to the curved nature of Rococo art. The S and C curves can often be seen within plant-like designs as well as lettering. Patricia Crown described the fundamental form of the Rococo as consisting of “intertwining serpentine curves, endlessly and freely varied” (Crown 1990: 280). There is a clear defiance against formal structure and perfection of the artistic world. The Rococo was not just an opposition to the Classical arts. Instead it thrived in the American colonies where order had been disrupted and defiance was brewing. “Complexity, variety, multiplicity, nuance, irregularity, and lack of subordination pertain to early-and mid-eighteenth century society as well as to art” (Crown 1990: 281). Other elements of the Rococo incorporate popular Classical motifs rather than structure. Included are allegorical and satirical figures such as *putti*. Archaeologist Adam Heinrich has argued that these popular carvings and sculptures of human-like figures with wings, seen in concentration on eighteenth century gravemarkers, have been mistaken for spiritual cherubs (Heinrich 2014: 42).

Evidence of the Rococo's influence on life in eighteenth century is clear throughout material culture from Europe, England and the American colonies. The artistic movement had spread throughout Europe and made its way into England through artisans. The Spitalfields silk weavers were descendants of French Huguenots who had immigrated to England to escape political and religious oppression (Crown 1990: 275). It was specialists such as these who popularized the Rococo. Specific workers who took on these new styles included carvers like Thomas Johnson. Johnson had published a suite of his designs to promote British manufactures. What he wrote that was of particular significance to the spread of the Rococo was his dedication page. It was designed "in the most extravagant French Rococo style, a riot of C and S curves, waves and rocaille..." (Crown 1990: 279).

Johnson's work is just one example of how the Rococo has impacted material culture such as literature. Another contributor includes Alexander Pope who has been described as the "herald of the Rococo" (Sampson 1978: 360). Pope created the first Rococo epic called *The Rape of Lock*. How he structures his work differs from other popular works such as Milton's *Paradise Lost*. "Unlike the rambling *Hudibras* and the panoramic *Paradise Lost*, Pope's poem is structured along very tight lines. The Invocation immediately focuses on the range of the poem:" (Sampson 1978: 361).

What dire offence from amorous cases springs,
 What mighty contests rise from trivial things,
 I sing.

Pope rejected structure of magnificence in favor of harmony and proportion which influenced the work of his contemporaries (Sampson 1978: 362). The reason Johnson and Pope have become notable contributors to the popularity of the Rococo is because of their ability to spread their style to other specialists providing to the want of the consumer. Sampson further explained the

fashion's influence on music as well. Similar structural organization used within Rococo literature can be found in Rococo music. The framework of each cultivates movement, encourages allegorical satyr and demonstrates the impact the Rococo had on the culture of those in the eighteenth century.

Clearly art and fashion of the eighteenth century made a great impression on those throughout Europe, especially England. Further material evidence proves its impact was felt strongly in the American colonies as well. Items which displayed styles of the Rococo included furniture, clothing and ceramics to name a few. As the market for the French style grew, so did the competitiveness between craftsmen. Thomas Whieldon and Josiah Wedgwood designed white salt-glazed stoneware, creamware and early tableware settings with English Rococo using curved rims embellished with floral designs and the popular shell-edged motif (Heinrich 2014: 43). The shell-edged plate was particular to the Rococo due to its conveyance of nature and imperfect shape. The origin of the term Rococo is derived from the French words "rocaille" and "coquilles" which translates to rocks and shells (Heinrich 2014: 42).

A flower vase is defined by Henry Hawley for its clear Rococo elements. He points out the vessel's painted floral decorations and unique shape. The upper and lower edges are serrated to mimic the same shell edged design described by Heinrich. Lastly the vase has been decorated with leaves that open up from the bottom (Hawley 1961: 54). The style was detailed and full of embellishments. There are clear examples of these designs in many forms of ceramics. Another example of the Rococo in tableware includes an eighteenth century bowl described by Hawley as "...the light airy quality of their asymmetric composition is completely within the taste of the French Rococo" (Hawley 1961: 53). Ceramics are among the materials found most often by archaeologists at colonial sites in the United States. They are useful in telling researchers what

materials were being used, what changes there were in manufacture and especially in design. A clear boost in consumerism can be seen through the large amounts of ceramics found in homes of the elite and the Middle Class. Because there are large sample sizes being studied today, conclusions as to which styles were the most famous in the eighteenth century can be determined. The changes in fashion can be traced in music, clothing, ceramics and even gravestones.

As a clear aspect of material culture, gravemarkers should not be discounted on their ability to show artistic style based on their morbid connotations. Death is often connected to religion as a way to understand and accept the loss of the mortal body; however this does not mean that all gravestones will hold religious symbols or that all religions share the same symbols to begin with. The popular image of a cherub is often connected to spiritual values and its appearance on gravestones during the eighteenth century has previously been connected to the Great Awakening. Research has proved otherwise. The art movement known as the Rococo made its way into the American colonies at the same time the cherub and other key design such as acanthus leaves, floral displays and shell designs. In the case of the cherub, it has been argued that its identity has been mistaken in the context of gravestone art. If it is correlated with the Rococo than the human face with wings is not a cherub, but should be instead considered *putti*.

Dr. Heinrich makes a strong argument as to why this may be the case. For starters, the cherub or *putto* has been found on tombstones belonging to the elite in Europe during the Renaissance, Classical and Baroque periods (Heinrich 2014: 44). The Renaissance was a time for a “rebirth” of the ancient arts. Even though the Rococo was a response against many of the symmetrical and geometrical aspects of Classical art, it still borrowed from some of its allegorical facets. As previously discussed, allegories and satyr were key features within Rococo

art, including literature and sculpture. The cherub is closely connected to the fashion of the time as well as conspicuous consumption. Heinrich explained, “the cherub was a symbol used by participants in the regional market economics to conspicuously express their or family member’s gravemarkers (Heinrich 2014: 61). Purchasing products or designs of the latest fashion was the best way to display social status. As a symbol of the Rococo, cherubs would have been a clear status indicator. The Rococo followed the morbid beliefs from the medieval period and replaced them with symbols of nature and love. The *putto* also seen as a cupid was designed to incorporate love into an otherwise darkened display of mortality imagery such as hourglasses and death’s heads. A further implication of the cherub being a classic allegorical symbol rather than religious imagery is the fact that they can be seen in graveyards representing several different types of religion. The cherub is visible on gravemarkers in Quaker, Jewish and Catholic burial grounds to name a few (Heinrich 2014: 40).

The increasing amount of cherubs on eighteenth century gravemarkers is evident not only in popularity among the upper class, but also in its market aimed towards the middle class. Gravemarkers are generally consumed items and by the eighteenth century were no longer reserved for only the wealthy. It is true that the Rococo was of the highest fashion, but like ceramics, it made its way into the average person’s world. “The great dissemination of printed architectural and decorative forms in the eighteenth century helped bring the cherub or *putto* to folk artisans who incorporated them on more generally consumed items such as gravemarkers” (Heinrich 2014: 44). The “consumer revolution” had been a time for increased productivity in the consumer world. Business for merchants and artisans was booming. Through this distribution, the Rococo became the focused style for contemporary material culture. The medieval thoughts and art of the seventeenth century had transitioned into an enlightened world

filled with elements of the Rococo that resulted in the progression of the *putto* onto heavily consumed items such as gravestones. Due to being the most popular and well known of the terms, for the duration of the paper I will refer to the iconography of a human face with wings as a cherub.

Early American Gravemarkers

In order to appreciate the importance of changes in gravemarker iconography and culture, one must understand the history of when and why gravestones had been purchased. As the American colonies were first being settled, it was still uncommon for the average person to have their own gravemarker. This was due to the large gap between the upper class and the lower class which resulted in the reservation of luxury items such as gravestones for the wealthy. The majority of early settlers were buried in unmarked graves and could not afford a stone marker (Yalom 2008: 10). This explains why there is a clear lack of seventeenth century gravemarkers in early settlements including in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. Those who were fortunate enough to have gravestones would have had stones with specific looks based on their location. New England used slate which was most often carved with a rounded tympanum in the center with two shoulders on the sides (Yalom 2008: 12). The above design was continued into the eighteenth century throughout many of the colonies.

The typical inscriptions found on early gravemarkers consisted of the name, date of birth and date of death of the departed. Additional writing other than the biographical information is known as an epitaph (Yalom 2008: 13). Epitaphs may consist of small poems or verses relating to death or traveling to the afterlife. A pattern can be seen through early American epitaphs which were often larger in size and consisted of darker, more morbid material. Overtime epitaphs became shorter and more uplifting. The pattern coincides with gravemarker iconography which

in places such as New England, began with mortality images such as death's heads and hourglasses, but later changed to cherubs and monograms based off of increased consumerism and changes in fashion.

Marilyn and Reid Yalom agree that although popular among the Puritans in New England, the medieval mortality images can be seen on gravemarkers in every churchyard and in private family plots (Yalom 2008: 15). "Indeed, if New Englanders would have no traffic with art in their churches, they showed a morbid interest in mortuary designs and lavished upon tombstones some of the macabre artistry that we commonly associate with funeral monuments in medieval churches" (Wright 1962: 207). By the eighteenth century cherubs became another dominant iconographic symbol found on gravestones. There are examples of stones which have both skulls and cherubs present. This includes the marker carved for Governor Nott, whose social status and wealth allowed him to have a stone which was more elaborate and consisted of extra designs (Yalom 2008: 15).

The History and Differences between Cemeteries and Burial Grounds

Iconography is also based on the type of place one will be buried. The resting place for many of Shrewsbury, New Jersey was made in, under and around Christ Church. The terms graveyard, burial ground and cemetery have been used interchangeably, but there are several defining characteristics that can be used to determine what the final resting place at Christ Church should be characterized as. Julie Rugg explains the differences between types of burial grounds and the reasons for each. She analyzes cemeteries, churchyards, burial grounds, folk cemeteries and more through four categories. These include physical characteristics, ownership and meaning, the site's relationship to the individual and community identities, and finally its sacredness (Rugg 2000: 261). This analysis is used as explanation for why specific

ornamentations will be found in one type of burial ground, but rarely seen in another and why decorative markers may be more popular in one site over the other. Rugg starts by explaining qualities that pertain to cemeteries. She argues that they are more than a place to dispose of human remains. They are often large in size and likely owned by a secular authority (Rugg 2000: 261). Cemeteries became common starting in the nineteenth century, which also marks a change in gravestone iconography. If these larger cemeteries are being built after the eighteenth century, then popular images such as the death head or cherub may not be as prevalent in these burial sites. The above information makes the place of burial at Christ Church less likely to be classified as a cemetery. The land predates the building of the First Christ Church and therefore would have been in use well before the development of cemeteries in the nineteenth century.

Location is also distinctive to specific sites. Cemeteries are often found near the periphery of a community which contrasts to churchyards that are found near the center of towns (Rugg 2000: 261). This is due to the overcrowding of churchyards and fear of disease which led to the development of cemeteries. Christ Church is located at the center of Shrewsbury just past Main Street. It is adjacent to the Quaker Meeting House which is the first public building erected in Shrewsbury. The history of this site has seen many outbreaks of contagions including tuberculosis, then known as “consumption.” Many of those who are buried throughout the churchyard are recorded as having died from such ailment. Evidence from the Church suggests that the development of cemeteries took place around the same time as those outbreaks. Compared to churchyards, cemeteries are specifically organized and register graves in order to represent purpose and ownership. It is easier to locate a grave in a cemetery because there are documented addresses for each stone. Roads and paths within cemeteries are clear and easy to use. The purpose of a cemetery is to serve a complete community whereas a churchyard is

specific to its denomination and its rules of what would be considered holy or unholy (Rugg 2000: 266). A cemetery often has separate sections for different religions or other social divisions, but as a whole it includes the majority of a community. Churchyards often did not accept those who had committed suicide, were excommunicated or had otherwise been deemed unholy (Rugg 2000: 266). Christ Church has some records of who is buried there and where their markers are located; however much of these databases have been created over time and used obituaries to confirm which people are buried there. The burial ground at Christ Church is full as of today and would not have been able to serve as a final resting place for the entirety of the Shrewsbury community.

Rugg also explains how even though the term burial ground is used arbitrarily, it is also an explicit type of final resting place. Burial grounds are dedicated to specific minority groups within a community (Rugg 2000: 266). This includes immigrants and religious groups who may have been rejected from the mainstream cemeteries and instead built their own burial grounds to express their identities. In these plots, different symbols or languages may be found, such as those in Dutch burial grounds most often seen in Pennsylvania. In the interest of this paper, the term burial ground will be used to describe the resting place at Christ Church due to its small size and lack of cemetery characteristics. It signifies a Christian group predating the building of their church that had settled and contributed to the development of Shrewsbury, New Jersey.

History of Christ Church

Knowing the history of Shrewsbury is essential to understanding Christ Church and its burial ground. Like many territories in the American colonies, Shrewsbury was a place sought out by the English and the Dutch. Twenty Englishmen from Long Island were the first to arrive and negotiate purchasing land from Native Americans. The men wanted the area between the

Navesink and Shrewsbury Rivers from the Navarumsunks, the land south of the Shrewsbury River from the Portapecks and the region north of the Navesink River from the Navesinks (Kraybill 1964: 13). Many argue that Shrewsbury became an official town in 1664 after some of these negotiations became finalized and settlers began establishing homes close to the rivers. King Charles II had official control over the territory and made Richard Nicolls the governor of New Jersey. It was Nicolls who set the rules and conditions for establishing towns and purchasing lands from the natives. He also formed the Monmouth Patent of 1665 which gave the settlers title to the land they had previously purchased (Kraybill 1964: 14).

The Native American population was officially forced out through the Treaty of 1758 which resulted in the remaining land being bought for the settlers and three thousand acres in Burlington County being put aside for the natives. Their population dwindled to sixty people who later moved to New York, Wisconsin and eventually Oklahoma where their descendants live today (Kraybill 1964: 19). Shrewsbury was the ideal location for its original settlers because the land reminded them of where they had lived in England, which is how the city got its name. One of these settlers was James Grover who built the first iron works in New Jersey at “The Falls of Shrewsbury.” This was sold to Colonel Lewis Morris who renamed the site “Tintern” after his estate in Monmouthshire England, and eventually the site became known as “Tintern Falls” to “Tinton Falls” how it is known today (Kraybill 1964: 16).

Occupations in early Shrewsbury included iron working, farming and tavern keeping. Taverns became popular due to an order by the General Assembly in November 1668 that declared every town have a place for relief and entertainment to strangers. Transportation developed as well and included new roads which enhanced the economic, social and political aspects of life. The General Assembly was made up of elected officials and included original

patentee Peter Parker as constable. The Assembly's function was decided through the patent in 1665 to act as a legislature and a court system (Kraybill 1964: 21).

As Shrewsbury developed, tensions between the settlement and its allegiance to England became stronger. Governor Nicolls was replaced by Peter Carteret, who issued new rules for obtaining land that had differed from the conditions under the Monmouth Patent. He and Lord Berkley, another representative of England, expected to gain revenue from the land that had been bought. The new terms made it mandatory for settlers to secure new patents and pay the tax called quit-rents. Over a century before the Revolutionary War, the settlers had already refused to pay this new tax. They would only abide by the Monmouth Patent (Kraybill 1964: 22). A General Assembly was called and the Shrewsbury representatives were dismissed for not pledging allegiance to Carteret, Berkley and their government. After two years of ignoring the quit-rents, people of Shrewsbury and nearby territories developed their own independent government and elected James Carteret as "President of the Province" (Kraybill 1964: 23). An order encouraged by King Charles II was issued by the proprietors warning the people of the province that refusing to pay taxes would result in being dispossessed. After a year of Dutch power from 1763-1764, the English, including Philip Carteret regained control. A General Assembly was held and Shrewsbury delegates, including John Slocum who is buried at Christ Church, and William Shattock spoke for many people who were still unhappy with their taxes and English government. Shattock was thrown out of the meeting, but pardons were given to the people of Shrewsbury and they agreed to pay quick-rents (Kraybill 1964: 25).

Because Shrewsbury was in its early development years, there was a need for clearing land and building homes, which meant public buildings had not yet been a priority. Town meetings and religious services had been held within homes. Because many of the first settlers in

Shrewsbury were Quakers escaping religious oppression in Rhode Island and Long Island, the Quaker meeting house was the first public building and was erected in 1672 (Kraybill 1964: 37). Episcopalians were another dominant group in Shrewsbury and consisted of several Quaker converts. These settlers were the builders and original members of Christ Church. In 1706 the land where the church was to be built was deeded to Nicholas Brown. By 1733 the first Christ Church was built and stood a few feet from where the present church is located. Christ Church was not only a place of worship, but also a war setting that served as a barracks during the Revolutionary War. The church was against British rule and lent the American government six hundred dollars and was most likely never repaid (Kraybill 1964: 42). Over the years several alterations had been made to the church including a clock tower, bell and more. The second Church was completed in 1774 and was designed by architect Robert Smith. It is true that religion played an important role in lives of those in eighteenth century Shrewsbury, New Jersey; however the development of the town has proven to be driven by secular means. It is likely that the gravestones at Christ Church would have secular imagery as well.

Secular Imagery at Christ Church

Research completed at Christ Church in Shrewsbury, New Jersey includes databases, photographs and statistics, which better explain the iconographic change found on gravemarkers throughout the eighteenth century. There is evidence of the Great Awakening throughout the American colonies, which includes the appearance of new denominations within the Christian church; however data provided by the gravestones themselves indicates trends associated with fashion and social status. It has been argued by many that mortality images such as death-heads were used on gravemarkers because of the Puritan influence in New England, where many gravestones had been carved. It has been further deduced that mortality images are found on

seventeenth and eighteenth century gravemakers because the Puritan beliefs produced a morbid outlook on the mortal body and the unknowingness of the after-life. Cherubs were then assumed to prove the positive view of life and hope for a spiritual after life as an effect of the Great Awakenings. The timings of the cherub and additional symbols prove otherwise.

The Rococo style gained popularity throughout the American colonies by the 1720s (Heinrich 2014: 41). At this point, both mortality images and cherubs were present on gravemarkers. As artistic styles gained in popularity, gravemarkers integrated new designs such as vine borders with traditional mortality images such as death heads and hourglasses, until the cherub became fully established on gravestones. For example, a slate marker placed for Benjamin Stelle dating back to 1719 at Christ Church, displays a death's head with a vine border (Christ Church: stone 025). Acanthus leaves are present on this stone and were a major element from the Rococo (Heinrich 2014: 48). This is common of many mortality images of the time, but this particular stone, along with a few others at Christ Church, includes a vine border surrounding the inscriptions. A border design is particular to the Rococo style representing naturalistic images such as leaves and vines. The date of the stone represents a time when the Rococo became increasingly relevant in the American colonies and was being integrated with the already popular mortality images. Several stones that are adorned with cherubs include vine borders as well (Christ church: stones 594, 601).

The Rococo flourished across many materials, including gravemarkers from the 1750s through the 1780s (Heinrich 2014: 50). The cherub began to appear in larger quantities in the 1720s, peaked in 1760 and again in 1780. The legible dates on cherub adorned gravemarkers at Christ Church are from 1723, 1761, 1781 and 1789 (Christ Church Stones 307, 594, 600, 601). The correlation between the cherub and the Rococo is clear. The popularity of the Rococo grew

in the 1720s and faded out by the early nineteenth century, the same time cherubs disappeared (Heinrich 2014: 50). Cherubs and other naturalistic symbols represent the clear influence that fashion and art had on the community in Shrewsbury, New Jersey during the eighteenth century.

The results above contradict arguments relating iconographic change exclusively to the Great Awakenings. For starters, mortality images did not disappear purely because of religious movements. After the first Great Awakening, dating to the 1730s and 1740s, the death's heads could still be seen on stones throughout the colonies. In fact, they continued as the dominant gravestone adornment in Monmouth County in places such as Christ Church, throughout the eighteenth century (Heinrich 2014: 50). The appearance of death heads then decrease and eventually disappeared by the nineteenth century and the cherubs did as well. If cherubs were the light hearted symbol of religious revival, then it is uncertain why they would have faded out at the end of the eighteenth century during the Great Awakenings, and coexisted with the mortality images that they were supposedly replacing in religious ideology.

It is agreed by most archaeologists that status played an important role in the purchasing and designing of gravemarkers in the eighteenth century. As consumerism increased between 1720 and the 1740s, the amount of gravemarkers purchased amplified. The rise in consumerism was caused by the formation and growth of the middle class. As the middle class grew, it became more important for the upper classes to distinguish themselves. The best way to do this was to spend more and keep up with the latest fashions. Heinrich refers to this as “competitive consumption” (Heinrich 2014: 45). In the case of eighteenth century gravemarkers, particularly at Christ Church, the way to distinguish oneself from the middle class was to purchase gravemarkers with designs of the Rococo. As this art movement gained popularity within the colonies, stones within the churchyard became noticeably more adorned and ornamented. This

includes several mortality adorned stones at the church which are also decorated with vine borders consistent with Rococo designs.

Data and Methods

My research consisted of studying forty eight legible gravemarkers that are dated to the eighteenth century and reside at Christ Church in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. Throughout my study I found numerous examples of conspicuous and competitive consumption. Based on titles, prominent family names and other status indicators it became clear that there was a division between the average citizen and those of the highest class. There are large amounts of eighteenth century gravestones found with iconography at Christ Church which further supports the idea that a rising middle class had been able to afford material items previously reserved for the wealthy. The fact that a small amount of those stones consisted of extra embellishments is another example of how the upper class distinguished themselves from the larger population.

While at Christ Church, I photographed each eighteenth century stone and noted which ones and how many had images of either a cherub or mortality image, and further recorded the stones which consisted of extra ornamentation. This resulted in thirty four out of the forty eight stones having an image of a mortality symbol or cherub design. The remaining stones had been without iconography. This meant seventy percent of all eighteenth century stones in the burial ground had the popular symbols of the time. Clearly gravemarkers and their carvings had become affordable and accessible to more than just the elite.

Further research implicates that only thirty three percent of the stones with iconography have some kind of extra ornamentation. This includes crowns, vine and floral borders, stars etc. Such a small amount of heavily decorated stones represents the upper class who made up a smaller portion of the population. Previously these additional symbols would not have been

necessary because there was not as many people who could afford iconographic images or a stone at all. The larger amount of stones decorated with a mortality image or cherub correlates with the growing middle class, while the small number of extra ornamented stones correlates with those of the upper class.

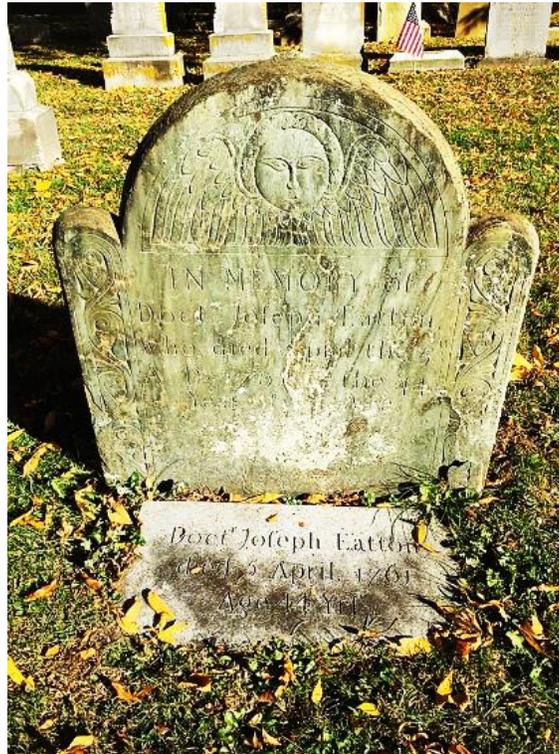


Figure 1 Gravestone of Joseph Eatton made of green slate displaying an elaborate cherub and floral border design in the burial ground at Christ Church in Shrewsbury, New Jersey.

Twenty five percent of stones with added embellishments are known to have belonged to those with a high status title. One stone that particularly stands out at Christ Church is dedicated to Doctor Joseph Eatton (Christ Church, stone 594) (See figure 1). His title as a doctor has been engraved on his stone, but even without such indicators it is clear that this marker belonged to someone other than the average person. Above the inscriptions is an elaborately designed cherub. Surrounding the stone is a vine and floral border adding to the intricate design. Another important feature is the type of stone that was carved for Dr. Eatton. A clear difference between

his stone and the majority of others is its green tint. The stone is made from slate which contrasts to the local brownstone purchased by many in Monmouth County. Slate would have been expensive and difficult to acquire because it had to be imported from Rhode Island (Veit, Nonestied 2008: 61). This is clear due to the fact that Dr. Eatton's marker is one out of only eight slate gravestones at Christ Church. The elaborate cherub, vine border and type of stone used are all indicators of a member of the upper class.



Figure 2 Gravestone of Richard Tole made of brownstone and displays two cherubs. Stone located at Christ Church burial ground in Shrewsbury, New Jersey.

My hypothesis about conspicuous and competitive consumption being relevant at Christ Church is further proved through the stone placed for Richard Tole (Christ Church, stone 600). His marker is made of brownstone, it is significantly larger than most of the other stones and it has two cherubs in the top corners (See figure 2). Again, just by looking at the stone one can assume wealth. As a large, flat slab, this stone would have been more expensive because of its size and the extra carvings. The cherubs represent the fashion of the time which was necessary for many distinguishing themselves through material culture.

Another prominent family buried at the site is the Throckmortons. Ten out of the seventeen of their family stones had mortality images present, but only three were designed with extra ornamentation. Another key aspect to these stones is that the few that were embellished

belonged to those with the highest status title. For example, Judge John Throckmorton has a brownstone marker with a death's head as well as two curved swirling designs at the top (Christ Church, stone 319) (See figure 3). It is unsurprising that the member of the family who was a judge would have a more decorated stone. His wife, Mary Throckmorton's marker was intricately designed as well (Christ Church, stone 321). A floral design borders the stone and a crown sits atop a death's head (See figure 3). The extra designs speak to her position as a Throckmorton and as the wife of a judge. It is clear that the economy and middle class had grown through the increased spending of material items. Conspicuous consumption was clear through the buying of items used to display status which resulted in competitive consumption as the wealthy found ways to distance themselves from the average person.



Figure 3 Gravestones of John and Mary Throckmorton display curved symbol, floral border and crown. Stones located at Christ Church burial ground in Shrewsbury, New Jersey.

The people of the eighteenth century chose specific designs to have carved on gravestones in order to display status. The best images to use would have been those of the highest fashion, which in the case of eighteenth century America was the Rococo. There is an overwhelming amount of Rococo art in the burial ground at Christ Church. Each of the previous stones discussed above show elements of the natural and curved designs which came out of the French style. Dr Eatton has an elaborate cherub which could symbolize the allegorical *putto*. His

and Mary Throckmorton's stones both have detailed floral borders, and John Throckmorton's waved lines above the death's head match the S and C curves that were representative of the Rococo.



Figure 4 Gravestone of Edward Stelle, decorated with hourglass and acanthus leaves border design. Stone located at Christ Church burial ground in Shrewsbury, New Jersey.

Other notable stones include that belonging to Edward Stelle who passed away in 1730 (Christ Church, stone 26). His stone is one of the few made of slate, but even more interesting is the combination of a mortality symbol with acanthus leaves of the Rococo (See Figure 4). The hourglass represents a mortality symbol from the medieval period. It had been a popular motif even into the eighteenth century. The acanthus leaves however, are clear symbols of the Rococo which had picked up in popularity during the time Stelle's stone was erected. From this a clear mixture of artistic styles can be seen due to a transition period when the medieval images were only just beginning to fade out, while the Rococo was making its way as the dominant style.

The stone belonging to Joseph Tole is an example of a style that no longer implemented the now outdated medieval images (Christ Church, stone 601). Instead, carved was a uniquely

shaped cherub with hair, a crown and two stars (See figure 5). The style was based off the work of carver Uzal

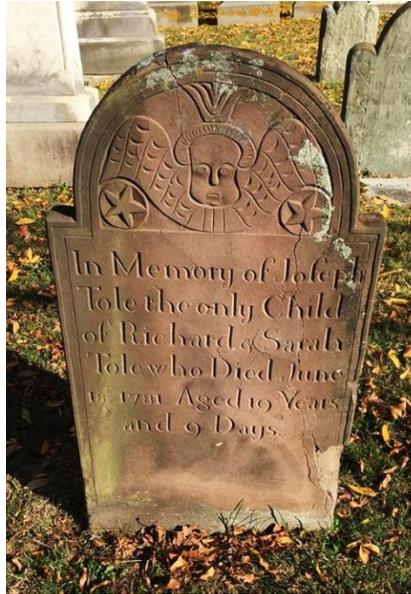


Figure 5 Gravestone of Joseph Tole decorated with pear shaped cherub and curved lettering. Carved by William Grant and located at Christ Church burial ground in Shrewsbury, New Jersey.

Ward, who was one of the few artists to be responsible for bringing the cherub and the Rococo to New Jersey. His pear shaped cherub was adopted by his contemporaries such as William Grant who carved Tole's stone. The rounded face which replaced Ward's original square-jawed cherub was not the only unique portion of his design (Veit, *Nonestied*: 41). By looking closely at the lettering on Tole's stone, one will notice the curved endings of the F, Y and Js. The Fs curve above the next letter and the Ys and Js curve under them. These rounded letters were specific to the works of Ward and Grant, who implemented elements of the Rococo into even the smallest of designs. Material culture throughout the American colonies and England reflected the Rococo style. From bedframes to ceramics and literature, naturalistic and unstructured designs took over the physical goods of the eighteenth century, and it was no different for gravemarkers. Each

stone represented a person's status and wealth which was done through iconography displayed for the living to admire.

Although they are the most common, cherubs and mortality images are not the only symbols found on eighteenth and nineteenth century gravemarkers at Christ Church. Its burial ground has gravemarkers adorned with both religious and secular symbols such as crosses, anchors, stars, trees, vines, flowers, bibles, monograms and chain links. Many floral designs are believed to have a variety of meanings. Some are thought to have meant beauty or youth, while others signify sudden death or sorrow (Keister 2004: 41). As previously discussed, the Rococo is a style that adheres to the natural world and included floral and vine designs. Tulips are present on some of Christ Church's markers and are thought to represent a young or unmarried woman, although not always the case (Veit 2009: 123). Even with these additional symbols, the majority of which were used in the nineteenth century, the cherub became the main icon that followed mortality images in the eighteenth century and were then proceeded by symbols of the neoclassical era (Heinrich 2014: 50). These included monograms and willow trees. Several of each can be found in the burial ground at Christ Church and date back to the mid nineteenth century when mortality images and cherubs had all but faded away. This became the second clear shift in gravemarker iconography and served as further proof of how art and popular fashion dictated material culture just as the Rococo dominated the eighteenth century and followed death heads with cherubs.

Carvers

Doctor Joseph Eatton's stone is believed to have been carved by Philip Stevens. The Stevens family was well known for their gravestone carvings. They were from Rhode Island where many of their stones were purchased from and sent to New Jersey. The John Stevens shop

was located in Newport, Rhode Island which was particularly significant to Christ Church. The history of Shrewsbury goes back to English settlers who first arrived in Rhode Island before making their way to the area of New Jersey of which they named Shrewsbury (Kraybill 1964: 13). Several settlers of New Jersey purchased land from Christopher Almy who had been a Newport merchant and was important for the shipping of goods to New Jersey from Rhode Island (Veit Nonestied 2008: 60). Even after Almy's death, stones continued to be shipped from Newport and carved by the Stevens. Isaac Stelle, son of Gabrielle and Elizabeth Stelle who are buried at Christ Church along with their other children, had relocated to Newport and became a prominent merchant. His family had purchased seven of the thirty two slate gravemarkers found in New Jersey that had been carved by the Stevens, some of which are intact at Christ Church (Veit Nonestied 2008: 60). Isaac's brother Benjamin Stelle, who died at age three in 1719, has a stone located against Christ Church. It was designed with a death head and bordered with acanthus leaves. His other brother, Edward Stelle, who died in 1730 at the age of nineteen, has a stone with an hourglass and acanthus leaves carvings. This is almost identical to the stones found in Rumson Burial Ground carved by John Stevens I. Rumson was also founded by settlers from Rhode Island (Veit Nonestied 2008: 60). It was not until Isaac's death in 1763 that Rhode Island gravestones had decreased in New Jersey.

The slate markers carved in Rhode Island were particular to that location and would have been rare in New Jersey. They were more expensive and clearly identified families of wealth and higher status. The Stelle family moved from Shrewsbury to Piscatawaytown in the 1770s and from then on only bought stones from local carvers (Heinrich 2014: 48). This could be indicative to the fact that Isaac had died and could no longer connect them to the importing of Rhode Island stones. Overall, the markers carved by the Stevens are stylistic and brought many aspects of the

Rococo to New Jersey. Their inclusion of the acanthus leaves are especially popular within Rococo art and were used to border a death head and hour glass displayed on stones at Christ Church. These mortality images represent the popular symbols of the early eighteenth century and because the Stelle family was wealthy, they could afford embellishments that had been the leading style out of Europe. Their expensive slate stones would have stuck out to onlookers who had been accustomed to the local brownstone markers. By the 1740s, the Stelles went from mortality images to cherubs and finally switched to monograms in the 1780s and 1790s, which stays true to their ability and want to keep up with the changing fashions throughout the eighteenth century (Heinrich 2014: 48).

Another carver whose work resides in the burial ground at Christ Church is that of William Grant of Newark, New Jersey. His work demonstrates how a carver's craft became stylized in order to be recognized and purchased based on a specific look. Grant used the style of Uzal Ward, whose carvings of cherubs and lettering demonstrates the inclusion of the Rococo in material culture. Ward's work was very influential and he is one of two leading contributors to the presence of cherubs throughout New Jersey (Heinrich 2014: 60). Ward was also responsible for many carvings of death's heads throughout the eighteenth century. What separates Ward from other carvers is his lettering. He was able to give emphasis to curved letters which kept to the Rococo's S curves found throughout eighteenth century material culture. Wards use of this technique can be most commonly seen with the letters J, Y and F (Heinrich 2014: 59). His style can be seen through Grant's carvings on the markers of Richard and Joseph Tole. Joseph's stone includes inscriptions that were standard for the time, but a closer look reveals Ward's Rococo trademark. Letters were more commonly carved to look straight and stiff, but with the naturalistic curving styles of the Rococo, many elements of art had changed. Both Richard and

Joseph's stones were carved for the 1780s when elements of the Rococo had still lingered on material culture. Ward's cherubs changed as well. His original design included square-jawed cherubs which can be seen in the 1750s, but by the 1760s as his letters became more curved, so did his new pear-shaped cherub, which can be seen on the Toles's stones (Heinrich 2014: 59, Christ church stones 600, 601). New Jersey markers with those stylizations can be attributed to the work of Ward, his workers and his contemporary William Grant (Veit 2009: 125).

Conclusion

There were two major shifts in iconography during the eighteenth century. The first includes a switch from mortality images such as death's heads and hourglasses to the human face with wings known as a cherub or *putto* during the 1720s and 1730s. The second shift consisted of cherubs being replaced by Classical images such as monograms, urns and willows at the turn of the nineteenth century. By studying the previous work done in Monmouth County by archaeologists Adam Heinrich and Richard Veit, as well as conducting my own research at Christ Church in Shrewsbury, New Jersey, I was able to attribute these shifts to the "consumer revolution" and changing fashion trends.

The "consumer revolution" was coined by several researchers who realized the increase in consumption by a growing middle class in the eighteenth century. Historian Cary Carson took this discovery to the next level by exploring its impact on conspicuous consumption which ultimately resulted in class conflict. A larger population was purchasing material items such as gravemarkers, which were previously reserved solely for the upper class. Even more outstanding was that the majority of markers being purchased had the dominate iconography carved onto them. Material culture wise, the upper class did not look so different from the middle class. What

resulted was competitive consumption leading to extra ornamentation and embellishments on consumed items.

The images selected to promote one's social status consisted of the Rococo style. This upcoming fashion influenced literature, music, furniture, ceramics, clothing and gravemarkers. From shell-edged plates to cherub adorned gravestones, the Rococo had thrived within the American colonies from the 1720s up until the nineteenth century. Typical designs of the Rococo include those of allegorical meaning and naturalistic or curved symbols such as the *putto* or acanthus leaves; all of which can be seen on the gravestones at Christ Church in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. The stone belonging to Doctor Joseph Eatton displays an elaborate cherub, as well as a floral border design carved onto a stone made out of green slate. The type of stone as well as the extra embellishments clearly display Eatton's status as part of the upper class. The cherub and floral border encompass the essence of the Rococo and its use to display wealth through fashion.

The artisans and carvers of the eighteenth century held responsibility for popularizing elements of the Rococo into material culture. Slate stones at Christ Church were carved by the Stevens family in Newport, Rhode Island. Their iconography displayed medieval images such as the death's heads and hourglasses while implementing the incoming style of the Rococo. This was true for Benjamin and Edward Stelle, whose stones displayed vine borders as well as mortality symbols. Uzal Ward and his contemporary William Grant had helped bring the cherub to New Jersey gravestones. Ward's iconic style can be seen through his pear shaped cherubs and curved lettering that clearly represent the allegorical and naturalistic themes of the Rococo.

My research included the study of thirty four out of forty eight legible eighteenth century gravemarkers at Christ Church in Shrewsbury, New Jersey. A history of the town explores a

society who shared religious beliefs, but was built through secular motives and events. This coincides with an art style created to go against the formal and strict elements of Classicism that was implemented while the country rebelled against the structured power of Britain. The gravemarkers at Christ Church may only represent the effects of the Rococo and consumerism in Shrewsbury, New Jersey; however, research performed throughout Monmouth County has similar results and further study may prove the larger impact that fashion and the “consumer revolution” had on the American colonies.

References

Crown, Patricia.

“British Rococo as Social and Political Style.” *Johns Hopkins University Press* 23, No 2 (1990):
269-282.

Deetz, James.

In Small Things Forgotten the Archaeology of Early American Life. Garden City, NY:
Anchor/Doubleday, 1977. Print.

Gabrielan, Randall.

Images of America Shrewsbury. Dover, NH: Arcadia, 1996. Print

Gabrielan, Randall.

Images of America Shrewsbury, Volume II. Charles, SC: Arcadia, 1998. Print.

Hawley, Henry.

“Ceramics of the Rococo Age.” *Cleveland Museum of Art* 48, No 3 (1961): 51-55.

Heinrich, Adam.

“Cherubs or Putti? Gravemarkers Demonstrating Conspicuous Consumption and the Rococo
Fashion in the Eighteenth Century.” *International Journal of Historical Archaeology* 18,
No 1 (2014): 37-64.

Keister, Douglas.

Stories in Stone: A Field Guide to Cemetery Symbolism and Iconography. Salt Lake City: Gibbs
Smith, 2004. Print.

Kraybill, Richard L.

The Story of Shrewsbury, 1664-1964. Red Bank, NJ: Printed by the Commercial, 1964. Print.

Nonestied, Mark. Veit, Richard.

New Jersey Cemeteries and Tombstones: History in the Landscape. New Brunswick, NJ:
Rivergate, 2008. Print.

Pogue, Dennis.

“The Transformation of America: Georgian Sensibility, Capitalist Conspiracy, or Consumer
Revolution?” *Society for Historical Archaeology* 35, No. 2 (2001): 41-57.

Rugg, Julie.

“Defining the place of burial: what makes a cemetery a cemetery?” *Mortality* 5, No. 3 (2000):
259-275.

Sampson, Grant.

“Rococo in England.” *Michigan State University Press* 22, No 3 (1978): 356-373.

Scalbert, Irénée.

“The Rococo Revolution.” *Architectural Association School of Architecture* 39, No 39 (1999):
10-20.

Veit, Richard.

“Resolved to Strike out a New Path: Consumerism and Iconographic Change in New Jersey
Gravestones.” *Society for Historical Archaeology* 43, No. 1 (2009): 115-141.

Yalom, Marilyn.

*The American Resting Place: Four Hundred Years of History through Our Cemeteries and
Burial Grounds*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2008. Print.

Wright, Louis B.

The Cultural Life of the American Colonies. New York: Harper & Row, Incorporated, 1962.
Print.

Other Sources

Christ Church and Christ Church burial ground. 380 Sycamore Avenue, Shrewsbury, NJ 07702.

Document on the history of Christ Church graveyard, including the lists of people buried there, their obituaries and gravestone descriptions. Supplied by Professor Robert Kelly, Christ Church historian.

Graveyard database of those buried in the Christ Church graveyard. Supplied by Professor Robert Kelly, Christ Church historian.