Provincial Luxury:
Buying and Selling High-End Goods in Liverpool and Manchester, 1700-1800.

A thesis submitted to the University of Manchester for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Humanities

2016

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# Table of Contents

List of Tables ........................................................................................................... 3  
List of Maps, Figures and Illustrations ................................................................. 4  
Abbreviations ......................................................................................................... 6  
Abstract ................................................................................................................ 7  
Declaration ............................................................................................................. 8  
Copyright Statement ............................................................................................. 9  
Acknowledgements ............................................................................................... 10  

Introduction .......................................................................................................... 11  
   Historiography: Consumption, Local History, Shopping Streets ..................... 14  
   Liverpool and Manchester in the Eighteenth Century .................................... 20  
   Methodology, Sources and Structure of the Thesis .......................................... 32  

Chapter One: ‘Not Much in the London Mode’? Establishing Commercial Identity in  
Liverpool and Manchester .................................................................................. 37  
   Visitors to the Towns ....................................................................................... 39  
   Residents of the Towns ................................................................................ 51  
   Conclusion ...................................................................................................... 61  

Chapter Two: ‘Elegance and Convenience are to be Found United’: The Commercial Geography of Liverpool and Manchester ................................................. 64  
   Staged Improvement and Piecemeal Development in Liverpool and Manchester 68  
   Mapping the Shopping Streets ........................................................................ 78  
   ‘Most Desirable Buildings’: Selling the Shop ............................................... 94  
   Markets, Cleanliness, Dispute: Protecting Investment on the Street ............. 98  
   Conclusion .................................................................................................... 109  

Chapter Three: Suppliers and their Marketing ..................................................... 111  
   Newspapers and Advertising, 1753-1796 ...................................................... 115  
   Type of Goods on Sale .................................................................................. 118  
   Language of Advertising .............................................................................. 122  
   Lure of the Metropolis .................................................................................. 123  
   Individual Suppliers and their Impact ........................................................... 126  
      Joshua Lawton ......................................................................................... 127  
      Elizabeth Raffald and Aulay Macaulay .................................................. 130  
   Selling Spaces: the Shop in Advertising ..................................................... 139  
   Conclusion ................................................................................................... 148  

Chapter Four: Elite Consumers in North-West England ....................................... 151  
   The Aristocracy ............................................................................................ 158  
   The Landowning Gentry ............................................................................. 170  
   The Professional Lesser Gentry ................................................................... 182  
   Conclusion ................................................................................................... 188  

Conclusion ............................................................................................................ 190  

Bibliography ......................................................................................................... 197  

Word Count: 74996
List of Tables

Table 2.1: High-end suppliers advertised in Liverpool and Manchester, 1756-57, p. 85

Table 2.2: High-end suppliers listed in trade directories of Liverpool and Manchester, 1773-4, p. 87

Table 2.3: High-end suppliers listed in trade directories of Liverpool and Manchester, 1781, p. 87

Table 3.1: Types of Goods/Services featured in advertisements for high-end consumer goods in the Liverpool Advertiser and the Manchester Mercury during sampled years, p. 119

Table 3.2: Vocabulary used in advertisements for high-end consumer goods in the Liverpool Advertiser and the Manchester Mercury during sampled years, p. 122

Table 3.3: References to London in the sampled advertisements of the Liverpool Advertiser and the Manchester Mercury, p. 125

Table 4.1: Estimated household income for the Earls of Warrington, Derby and Sefton, p. 161

Table 4.2: Purchases made locally and in London by the North Western aristocracy, p. 164

Table 4.3: Purchases made locally by aristocratic family, arranged by type of goods, p. 165

Table 4.4: Purchases made locally by landowning gentry family, arranged by type of goods, p. 172
List of Maps, Figures and Illustrations

Figure 0.1: Graph showing provincial urban population in thousands, c. 1670-1801, p. 20
Sources: Rosemary Sweet *The English Town 1680-1840* Table 1, pp3-4; Peter Borsay (ed.) *The Eighteenth Century English Town: A Reader in Urban History* Table 1, 42; John Langton ‘Urban Growth and Economic Change from the Late Seventeenth Century to 1841’ in Peter Clarke (ed.) *The Cambridge History of Urban Britain, Volume II, 1540-1840* Table 14.4, 473.

Figure 0.2: Map of Lancashire and Cheshire, showing principal towns, p. 22

Figure 0.3: Map of Liverpool, 1766, p. 25
Source: R. Williamson *A Plan of Liverpool with the Docks*, 1766

Figure 0.4: Map of Manchester, 1751, p. 26

Figure 2.1: St. George’s Crescent and Castle Street, Liverpool, p. 70
Source: R. Brook, *Liverpool as it was during the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century*.

Figure 2.2: Lord Street and St. George’s Church, Liverpool, p. 70
Source: R. Brook, *Liverpool as it was during the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century*.

Figure 2.3: Lord Street and South John Street, Liverpool, p. 71
Source: R. Brook, *Liverpool as it was during the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century*.

Figure 2.4: Castle Street from above, Liverpool, p. 71
Source: R. Brook, *Liverpool as it was during the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century*.

Figure 2.5: St. Ann’s Square, c.1740, p. 76
Source: Chetham’s Library Manchester Scrapbook.

Figure 2.6: Market Square, c.1750, p. 76
Source: Chetham’s Library Manchester Scrapbook.

Figure 2.7: Market Square, c.1750-60, p. 77
Source: Chetham’s Library Manchester Scrapbook.

Figure 2.8: Market Street, c.1770-1790, p. 77
Source: Chetham’s Library Manchester Scrapbook.

Figure 2.9: Demolishing old style buildings on Market Street, c.1770-1790, p. 78
Source: Chetham’s Library Manchester Scrapbook.

Figure 2.10: Map displaying district in Liverpool identified as high-end by urban Histories, p. 83

Figure 2.11: Map displaying district in Manchester identified as high-end by urban Histories, p. 84
Figure 2.12: Map displaying High-end district of Liverpool, with shop clusters, p. 86  
*Sources*: advertisement pages in *Liverpool Advertiser* 1756; R. Williamson, *Plan of Liverpool with Docks*, 1766.

Figure 2.13: Map displaying High-end district of Manchester, with shop clusters, p. 86  
*Sources*: advertisement pages *Manchester Mercury* 1753; W. Green *Plan of Manchester and Salford* 1794.

Figure 2.14: Map displaying clustering of high-end shops Liverpool: 1750-60; 1770-80; and 1780-90, p. 89  

Figure 2.15: Map displaying clustering of high-end shops Manchester: 1750-60; 1770-80; and 1780-90, p. 90  

Figure 3.1: 19th Century engraving of 18th Century Market Street, Manchester, p. 140  
*Source*: John Ralston, *Views of the Ancient Buildings in Manchester*, image reproduced with kind permission of Hannah Barker.

Figure 3.2: 19th Century engraving of 18th Century Lord Street, Liverpool, p. 141  

Figure 3.3: Trade Card for Stringer, Manchester c.1770, p.143  
*Source*: Chetham's Library Manchester Scrapbook.

Figure 3.4: Trade Card for W.W. Paul, Manchester c.1780, p.143  
*Source*: Chetham's Library Manchester Scrapbook.

Figure 3.5: Trade Card for Gregson's Upholsterer, Liverpool, c.1777-1784, p.145  
*Source*: Liverpool Record Office, Binns Collection.

Figure 3.6: Trade Card for the Liverpool Cloth Establishment, c.1790-1800, p.146  
*Source*: Liverpool Record Office, Binns Collection.
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CRO</td>
<td>Cheshire Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JRULSC</td>
<td>John Ryland’s University Library Special Collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LRO</td>
<td>Lancashire Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LivRO</td>
<td>Liverpool Record Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCA</td>
<td>Salford City Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHLHAL</td>
<td>St. Helen’s Local History and Archive Library</td>
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<tr>
<td>SLHA</td>
<td>Stockport Local History Archives</td>
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Abstract

This dissertation explores how high-end goods were bought and sold in Liverpool and Manchester during the eighteenth century. It examines the physical development of the two towns, and the behaviour of local suppliers and consumers. It will demonstrate that both Liverpool and Manchester were able to sustain vibrant luxury economies prior to 1800. The thesis will highlight how the consumer markets of Liverpool and Manchester bore differences from one another in terms of their emphases on fashion, value and the lure of London. By focussing on the presence of high-end shops and the development of districts with a high volume of such premises, it will show that the town’s suppliers were operating in organised and confident – but distinct – commercial environments. It will also be shown that the efforts of suppliers to attract consumers from the highest ranks of society were successful, and that the elite in and around Liverpool and Manchester patronised local shops rather than London for the majority of their high-end goods. In doing so, this thesis aims to contribute to the discussion of northern towns that has until recently been dominated by a focus of nineteenth-century expansion and industrialisation.

This thesis will make original contributions to a number of debates. It challenges some traditional views of provincial emulation by evaluating the way goods were marketed and consumed, revealing a more complicated role played by London in provincial markets than has previously been identified. In focusing on two rapidly expanding provincial towns with dramatic population growth during the eighteenth century, the thesis extends the analysis that has been undertaken of the shopping streets of London and provincial ‘leisure towns’ to new and evolving consumer markets. By exploring the spending habits of members of the elite in and around Liverpool and Manchester, this thesis identifies nuances in elite spending that expands on the very recent examination of this group as consumers.

The first half of this thesis explores the commercial environments of Liverpool and Manchester. Chapter One examines the way the towns were perceived by visitors in terms of the fashion, trade and character of the people. It argues that while both towns were seen as thriving centres for trade, the nature of their expansion was perceived differently. The chapter also addresses a temporal shift in the perception of luxury consumption from residents in the towns that is in keeping with the wider debates on luxury in of eighteenth-century Britain. Chapter Two discusses the creation of districts with high concentrations of luxury shops in both towns, and highlights the relationship between shopping streets and urban improvement. The second half of the thesis looks at the way people operated in the towns. Chapter Three focuses on suppliers, identifying key individuals whose behaviour epitomised the main differences between the consumer markers in the towns. It examines newspaper advertising and trade cards to explore how suppliers marketed themselves to attract customers of the highest status and spending power. Chapter Four examines some of these elite consumers, and argues that patterns in habits of consumption within the elite are a useful way of re-examining influential and important groups that have been relatively neglected in terms of their spending.
Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in the thesis has been submitted in support of an application for another degree or qualification of this or any other university or other institute of learning.
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Acknowledgements

I would first like to thank my supervisor, Prof. Hannah Barker, whose guidance throughout the creation of this thesis has been thorough, thoughtful and patient. Thanks also to my second supervisor Dr. Aashish Velkar for his constructive and timely recommendations throughout the writing process. Hannah and Aashish have been outstanding supervisors, particularly in the last twelve months, and have frequently gone above and beyond the call of duty to ensure that this thesis is the best version it can be. I am indebted to the University of Manchester, the Antiquarian Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, and the Economic History Society for their generous grants that helped to make this research possible.

Becoming part of the research community at the University has been the most rewarding aspect of my time at Manchester. In addition to being the most impressive and varied group of scholars I could ever wish to work alongside, the PhD candidates in the history department have become lifelong friends. Special thanks go to Sheona and Jim, who first took me under their wing, and to Sarah, Maarten, Jess, Luke, Ali, Nathan, Jan, and Tom. Kathleen and Michael in particular have made the final writing process a kind, tranquil and constructive experience.

I don’t know what I did to deserve such an excellent support system outside of academia, but I am grateful for it every day. To Paul, Heather and Daniel Wilcock, and to Marie Crook, thank you: I have always felt supported and loved. To my friends – especially the members of The Golden Age – I don’t think could ever make you appreciate how important you have been this year, I hope I can return the innumerable favours. And to my partner Chris, your logical, loving kindnesses and consistent ability to help me to see the bigger picture amaze me every time. Thank you all for always caring, and for never me asking how the thesis is going.
Introduction

My experience, dearly enough bought, teaches me that manufacturing towns are not proper places of residence for idle people, either on account of pleasure or profit; the expenses of living being as high as at St. James’s in every such town, how far distant so ever from the capital. The spirit of bargaining and taking advantage runs through every line of life there, but in the North it is cruelly predominant. I know not but I may ramble before cold weather again to the west, for Exeter with all its faults is paradise itself to Manchester, or any town in the north I have seen.¹

For the American diarist Samuel Curwen, the eighteenth-century North West was no place for gentlefolk. Fast growing, hard bargaining towns had little to offer the leisured classes besides burgeoning prices and greedy merchants. Curwen’s comments, echoed by some — but by no means all — of his contemporaries who visited towns in the region, suggest a new urban commercial landscape characterised by a lack of refinement and a vulgar preoccupation with profit. The town Curwen encountered was in the process of enormous expansion. Between 1700 and 1800, Manchester, along with Liverpool, the two largest towns in the North West, was undergoing dramatic changes in terms of physical development, population growth, and wealth.

With the rise of trade, manufacture and industry there came an increased appetite among the inhabitants of Liverpool and Manchester for what the contemporary economist and philosopher, David Hume, described as the ‘commodities which serve to the ornament and pleasure of life’.² The towns’ developing statuses as centres of national importance for industry and international trade afforded residents new opportunities to spend their disposable income on luxury goods and services that had not been available previously. Of course, increases in purchasing power were not unique to the residents of Liverpool and Manchester. Indeed, the products of the ‘consumer revolution’ have come to be considered as some of the defining features of the social history of eighteenth-century Britain as a whole.³ Yet historians have not fully uncovered a

picture of the early commercial development of two of the most rapidly expanding towns in eighteenth-century Britain, Liverpool and Manchester, whose histories have been dominated by discussions of growth and industrialisation in the nineteenth century.\textsuperscript{4}

This thesis is an investigation into the supply and demand of ‘high-end’ consumer goods in Liverpool and Manchester between 1700 and 1800. By ‘high-end goods’, this study is concerned with the non-essential, luxury goods that were available to increasing numbers of people during the eighteenth century. These are the products that, historians have argued, came to mark a person’s taste, fashion and standing.\textsuperscript{5} The buying and selling of durable goods such as artisan furniture, clothing, wigs, wallpaper, earthenware and china will be considered, as will perishable consumer goods such as tea and coffee, sugar and spices, and the novel and exotic foods that were newly available in the eighteenth-century consumer market. The high-end goods of this study are the products that Maxine Berg has described as ‘non-necessities’ or ‘luxuries’, and Jon Stobart has defined as ‘goods with a high cultural capital’.\textsuperscript{6} This thesis will examine how

\textsuperscript{4} Liverpool and Manchester are well-served by histories of their nineteenth-century development, and while such volumes have provided valuable accounts of the towns during industrialisation, they have tended to overlook the towns’ position as developed centres for trade and retail prior to 1800. Examples include A. Lees and L.H. Lees, \textit{Cities and the Making of Modern Europe, 1750-1914} (Cambridge, 2007); M. Hewitt, \textit{The Emergence of Stability in the Industrial City: Manchester, 1832-67} (Aldershot, 1996); A. Davies and S. Fielding (eds.), \textit{Workers’ Worlds: Cultures and Communities in Manchester and Salford} (Manchester, 1992); A.J. Kidd and D. Nicholls (eds.), \textit{City, Class and Culture: Studies of Cultural Production and Social Policy in Victorian Manchester} (Manchester, 1985); R. Dennis, \textit{English Industrial Cities of the Nineteenth Century: A Social Geography} (Cambridge, 1984); A. Briggs, \textit{Victorian Cities} (Berkeley, 1965); A. Kidd, Manchester (Keele, 1996); R. Lloyd-Jones and M.J. Lewis, \textit{Manchester in the Age of the Factory: The Business Structure of Cottonopolis in the Industrial Revolution} (London, 1988).


such goods were bought and sold in Liverpool and Manchester in order to explore the consumer markets in both towns.

The thesis has three main arguments. First, it will be argued that Liverpool and Manchester both had vibrant and confident markets for high-end consumer goods by the middle of the eighteenth century. Despite differences in economic specialisation and civic structure, both towns had thriving and well-organised trading environments which were able to sustain high-end shopping streets and districts. Secondly, although the consumer markets of Liverpool and Manchester were comparable in terms of the availability of goods on sale, differences in the way that these goods were marketed belied distinct consumer concerns in each town. Goods were marketed in Liverpool in a way that underlined gentility, metropolitanism and quality, while in Manchester the same goods were marketed in a manner that highlighted cheapness and value for money. The distinction between the two consumer markets indicates a more nuanced picture of the buying and selling goods in provincial towns than has been presented previously, and further highlights the need for research on individual towns for a better understanding of urban social history. Thirdly, the thesis will argue that examining the spending habits of consumers from the social elite in and around Liverpool and Manchester reveals distinctions in the social and economic experiences of buying and owning goods that differentiate groups within the wider elite. It will be shown that while those members of society who have been traditionally classified as ‘elite’ – from earls to country squires – all gave their custom to local shops for significant purchases, differences in the types of goods purchased locally and in London reveal patterns that are as distinct and significant as differences in the political and social experiences of these individuals, families and households.
Historiography: Consumption, Local History, and Shopping Streets

This thesis will contribute to three principal historiographical discussions: the re-evaluation of northern towns in an eighteenth-century context; the discussion of shopping practices in urban and social history; and the examination of the spending patterns of elite consumers in eighteenth-century Britain. The study offers new analyses of the commercial environments of two important towns that have been largely overlooked in terms of their eighteenth-century development, and in narratives of provincial consumption. Although consumption in the eighteenth century has been the subject of a great deal of scholarship, much of the early work in this field was focused on consumption practices in London, and tended to consider the provinces as a homogenous area that collectively represented an ‘other’ from the capital. More recently, scholars such as Jon Stobart, Hannah Barker and Amanda Vickery have sought to re-evaluate the assumptions of northern backwardness in terms of fashionable consumption by analysing the availability and consumption of goods in northern towns. This scholarship has shown that a more complicated picture of provincial consumption emerges when town- and region-specific research is undertaken, but there remains room for more in-depth studies of buying and selling practices in northern towns during the eighteenth century.

This thesis is contextualised by thirty years of historiographical discussion on eighteenth-century consumption. The move away from industrialisation as the dominant narrative of the eighteenth century, towards a focus on consumption, came with the publication of The Birth of a Consumer Society: The Commercialization of Eighteenth-Century England by Neil McKendrick, John

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Brewer and John Plumb. This volume offered new insights and methodologies for understanding social experiences during England’s long eighteenth century, and argued that there was a revolution in terms of the type and quantity of new goods available, and an unprecedented market for these goods, that ran parallel to the traditional timeframe of the industrial revolution and histories that focused on the production of goods. The Birth of a Consumer Society generated a great deal of debate among social historians of the eighteenth century, whose period had hitherto sat relatively ignored between the socially and politically tempestuous seventeenth and nineteenth centuries. Inevitably, such pioneering work did not go unopposed. Among the elements for which The Birth of a Consumer Society was most challenged was its allegedly over-simplified analysis of the expenditure of the new middling sort of consumer. McKendrick applied earlier arguments about the ‘trickle down’ theory of social emulation to his analysis, and suggested that ‘in imitation of the rich the middle ranks spent more frenziedly than ever before’. This model of social emulation was contested by much of the work of the 1990s that presented a more thorough analysis of middling spending. Indeed, reassessment of the buying and selling of the middling sorts of people continues to dominate current discussions of consumption. Historians have been interested in the way middling consumers bought and sold goods, how they responded to the contemporary philosophical debates on luxury, and the cultural value of the


goods they were now able to possess. Very recently, historians have started to apply these methodologies to other social groups, and have argued that the elite have been overlooked as a category in the narrative of consumption. By analysing the way members of the Warwickshire aristocracy bought consumer goods, Jon Stobart has started to shift the focus onto consumers with significant economic and political power in eighteenth-century Britain. This thesis aims to contribute towards this fledgling discussion.

Another recent historiographical trend with which this thesis will engage is the focus on region- and town-based case studies. As has been noted, the early discussion of the expansion of the luxury trade in Britain was centred on consumers and suppliers in London. Towns in the north were often presented as ‘also-rans’ during the post-McKendrick discussion of eighteenth-century luxury consumption. In 1989, Hoh-Cheung and Lorna Mui wrote that Manchester ‘lagged behind’ London, Bristol and Norwich in terms of the distribution of shops offering luxury goods or services and that it took the city ‘several decades to catch up’ in terms of establishing high-end retail economies: a charge disproven by later work. As with many other regions outside of the capital, towns in the north fell victim to an assumption of provincial emulation that assumed the capital dictated fashions and notions of respectability to the deferential provinces. Just as notions of social emulation on the part of individual consumers

15 Mui and Mui, Shops and Shopkeeping, p. 89. The Muis’ theories about the lack of availability of consumer goods in northern towns are problematised by the findings of work more closely based on analyses of primary material from the locale, such as Barker, “Smoke Cities”, pp. 180-182.
were challenged, ideas of provincial emulation have been contested. But despite the moves that have been made towards a more thorough understanding of luxury trade in Britain, scholars have continued to identify a need for localised case studies to assess social practices and experiences in provincial towns.

This thesis is one such study. Local and regional history has graduated from being the domain of independent scholars and enthusiastic local and family historians to become a mainstay of established academics. University history departments have underlined the academic value of local history by creating institutes such as the English Local History research centre (University of Leicester) and the Manchester Centre for Regional History (Manchester Metropolitan University), to contribute to publications such as the *Journal of Regional and Local Studies*, and to engage with formal independent initiatives such as the British Association for Local History and the Conference of Regional and Local Historians. This regional focus has been applied to some discussions of trade and consumption, and over the past few years there has been the start of a discussion of the North West as an area of interest in terms of its trade.

Hannah Barker has worked extensively on businesswomen in the development of commerce in

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the late-eighteenth and early-nineteenth centuries in Manchester, shedding light on the types of goods and services available to consumers in other northern towns, while Sherylynne Haggerty has researched entrepreneurs and traders in Liverpool to produce similar information about goods sold here. Amanda Vickery has researched the consumption of goods and the employment of services by Lancashire consumers in the period, highlighting complex relationships between the cultural value attached to consumer goods that were dependent on individual consumers’ geographic location, gender and social status. Jon Stobart has identified commercial districts and consumer habits in Liverpool, Chester and smaller towns in the region, concluding that many local urban centres developed spatially to reflect their capacity for trade and the ideas of respectability that accompanied consumption. These studies have ensured that northern towns are starting to be recognised in terms of their eighteenth-century transformations, and are included in the wider discussion of urban renaissance and as centres of trade and consumption before 1800. By presenting analyses of the high-end retail markets in Liverpool and Manchester, and by comparing these markets, this study will build upon the recent reassessments of towns in the north, and their residents, in the context of trade and consumption.

The thesis will also engage with the large and well-established literature on the improvement of provincial towns during the eighteenth century from scholars such as Rosemary Sweet and Peter Borsay. This literature has established the creation and careful promotion of provincial towns’ capacity to accommodate notions of respectability and politeness through

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urban planning, architecture and public spaces. Within this historiography of urban improvement, there has been a recent interest in the process of shopping. The effects that the creation of high-end shopping areas had on the towns has been identified as an important facet of histories of urban improvement, and has expanded on early research on retail practices. Jon Stobart has led this charge, and has argued that the spirit of improvement seen in the public spaces of eighteenth-century towns was extended to the shops and homes of those who lived there, which means that further discussion of shops and shopping is needed to better understand of urban life in eighteenth-century Britain. Helen Berry, Ian Mitchell, Clé Lesger, Laura Ugolini, John Benson, Nancy Cox and Claire Walsh have also argued for more attention to be paid to the spaces and practices of shopping in urban centres, in order to situate the process and significance of shopping at the forefront of discussions of provincial consumption. By analysing the buying and selling of high-end consumer goods in Liverpool and Manchester, this thesis will contribute to ongoing discussions of consumption, provincial history, and shopping in eighteenth-century Britain. The thesis will draw attention to two large, evolving and important towns whose pre- and early-industrial development is yet to be fully explored.


Liverpool and Manchester in the Eighteenth Century

Liverpool and Manchester are two towns connected as much by their histories of trade, industry and eighteenth-century expansion as by their geographical proximity. Situated around thirty miles apart, the two towns grew at a rate that made them conspicuous on a regional, national and international level between 1700 and 1800.

Figure 0.1: Provincial urban population in thousands, c. 1670-1801.

As Figure 0.1 demonstrates, both Liverpool and Manchester were remarkable for the rate and extent of population growth throughout the eighteenth century, both having grown from populations well under ten thousand inhabitants in 1700 to surpassing all other provincial towns by the end of the century. As both towns are also similar in that they both lay in geographically advantageous positions to capitalise on the new commercial possibilities that came with the start

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of industrialisation. The developments in transport infrastructure between northern towns and the industrialising Midlands outstripped developments elsewhere and increased domestic trade, which benefited both Liverpool and Manchester. The proximity to the coalmines of South Lancashire allowed for easy access to raw materials, which fuelled growth and industry. And the heavy silting of the River Dee meant that ships were no longer easily able to access the traditional market town of Chester, and Atlantic merchants were forced to seek an alternative port, and viable urban marketplaces. Linked by the textile industry that had already become developed enough to define the North West by the end of the seventeenth century, both towns became established as examples of the new regional centres identified in the literature of eighteenth-century development: Liverpool for its port and trading capacity and Manchester as the administrative centre for the ‘satellite towns’ of the cotton industry. However, the administration and governmental structure of these two towns differed significantly. Liverpool had a long established mandate to legislate locally – at least in theory – while Manchester’s administrative structure was much less equipped to deal with the issues that arose with rapid urban expansion. The differences in administrative structure, alongside the related issue of landownership in Liverpool and Manchester had an impact on the way the towns and their shopping streets developed during the eighteenth century.

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30 Vigier, *Change and Apathy*, pp.4-5.


33 Vigier, *Change and Apathy*, pp. 4-5.
Liverpool is a town that owed its reputation to its mercantile expansion in the eighteenth century. Located on the eastern bank of the Mersey estuary, Liverpool was a port town situated on the Lancashire side of the historic border with Cheshire, now in modern-day Merseyside (Figure 0.2). The creation of Liverpool’s innovative enclosed wet dock in the early years of the eighteenth century positioned the town as a real challenger to Bristol’s dominance of the west coast, and the town profited from the expansion of imports, and the trafficking of slaves between Britain and the Americas. As a consequence of increased Atlantic trade, Liverpool expanded in a dramatic and unprecedented way both in terms of physical growth and population increase. Over the course of the eighteenth century, Liverpool’s inhabitants had risen in number at a rapid pace: from around 5000 inhabitants at the end of the seventeenth century to around

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**Figure 0.2:** Map of Lancashire and Cheshire, showing principal towns.


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Despite the need for swift expansion within a relatively small geographical location, landowners in Liverpool were keen to protect the reputation of the town as a handsome and well-planned national centre of trade.

Jane Longmore has highlighted the fundamental importance of merchants to the development of Liverpool as a civic and commercial centre. Her persuasive view, corroborated by other scholars of early eighteenth-century Liverpool, is that the governmental structure and, as a consequence, the physical development of the town itself, was powered by a dedicated group of ambitious and organised merchants. These men were determined that Liverpool’s political and commercial structures should be independent from monarchical and aristocratic control, and effectively created a mercantile oligarchy which, alongside the administration of the port, took responsibility for urban improvement and civic legislation. In eighteenth-century Liverpool, capital was key, and affiliation with powerful mercantile communities was often more powerful than familial rank.

Nowhere was the influence of merchants in Liverpool more apparent than in the town’s Corporation. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, the Corporation had taken out a 1000-year lease of a 900-acre parcel of land from the Lords Molyneux, Earls of Sefton, at a nominal fee of £30 per annum. This leasehold put Liverpool in the unparalleled position of having a huge piece of land available for development that could be determined by the burgesses.

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38 Friedrichs, The Early Modern City, p. 267; Longmore, ‘Civic Liverpool’, p. 120.
of the Corporation’s Common Council: of whom the majority were merchants. As Sidney and Beatrice Webb noted, the Corporation ‘acted itself as Lord of the Manor’: governing the port, improving the town’s streets, and taking financial responsibility for the town’s development. Liverpool merchants’ effective monopoly of the Corporation and of other administrative bodies meant that issues such as urban and civic improvement would ‘run in tandem with the interests of the port’, and ensured that Liverpool’s credentials as a commercial centre were protected. Throughout the eighteenth century, the Corporation’s influence over how the town was improved and developed was substantial. The construction of the town’s dock and the resultant expansion in the port’s capacity for trade was entirely due to the endeavours of the merchant members of the Corporation’s Common Council, and, as the century progressed, the income from town dues and rents was second only to London. The large sums of money paid to the Corporation, coupled with the merchants’ prioritisation of trade, resulted in significant expenditure on urban improvement that coupled investment in trade with investment in culture. As will be shown, urban planning in Liverpool was such that the physical appearance of the town was an important consideration, and as well as ensuring the visual impact of the main streets of the town’s commercial districts, developers made provisions for spaces of polite sociability – including public walks and gardens – which were precocious in national terms. The effect of the physical development of Liverpool meant that visitors to the town often expressed surprise and delight at the juxtaposition of expanding mercantile success and the provision of the types of leisured, pleasurable services and places also available in London, and comparisons with other provinces, and with the capital itself, were usually favourable. This thesis will show that consumers in the town were keen to perpetuate their reputations as fashionable, metropolitan,

42 Longmore, ‘Civic Liverpool’, p. 119.
and polite. The study will return to the theme of Liverpool’s perceived metropolitanism in terms of the towns’ physical appearance and the way that fashionable consumer goods were marketed to highlight the key distinctions between buying and selling high-end goods in the town compared to that of Manchester.

Merchants maintained their dominance of the local administrative and political structures throughout the eighteenth century – 57 of the 73 men who became members of the Common Council between 1780 and 1800 were merchants – and the influence of mercantile concerns on civic improvement continued well into the nineteenth century. The history of the development of Liverpool, from a relatively minor Atlantic trading post in 1700, to a major port town that had eclipsed all of its provincial rivals by 1800, is the history of mercantile ambition, civic expansion, and financial success.

**Figure 0.3: Map of Liverpool in 1766.**


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46 Longmore, ‘Civic Liverpool’, p.113.
Enclosed by the Pennines to the north and the Cheshire plains to the South, Manchester was a town that also saw considerable and well-documented growth throughout the eighteenth century. Whereas Liverpool’s expansion in this period was the result of the increase of trade in the town’s port and docks, Manchester rise was based on industry. Capitalising on the successes of the towns’ textile trade prior to 1700, Manchester had become synonymous with industry and the creation of ‘Manchester goods’ by the middle of the eighteenth century, and served as an administrative matrix to surrounding manufacturing towns such as Bolton, Oldham and Wigan by the 1750s.⁴⁷ Although recent scholarship on Manchester has identified amenities, goods and services within the town, contemporary accounts of the town’s physical development were not as positive as was the case for Liverpool, and visitors such as Samuel Curwen, whose comments

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about the town introduced this thesis, identified a sense of unrefined commercialism here. Manchester’s population was also deeply divided in terms of religious and political factions, particularly in the first half of the eighteenth century. Even the town’s politest entertainment were affected, with rival assemblies and associated dances signifying Party affiliation to the Tories or to the Whigs, support for the Hanoverian succession or the Jacobite cause, and to High Church doctrine or Non-Conformity. The public display of factionalism in Manchester undoubtedly contributed to the perception of the town as tumultuous and disjointed in terms of its political and social environment. Part of the unease around Manchester was due to the difficulties in categorising the town. The physical growth of Manchester was not matched by an evolution of the town’s civic, administrative structure: still governed by the Court Leet until incorporation in the 1840s, Manchester did not send a representative to Parliament, and much of the town’s commercial space was still controlled by the Lords of the Manor.

Manchester’s governmental structure was disjointed in comparison to Liverpool’s, with varied and diverse bodies responsible for different aspects of the town’s administration: the remnants of a rural administrative system that were simply not sufficient to meet the needs of a population increase which saw the population rise from around 4000 in 1700 to around 79000 in 1800. The Court Leet administrated the dominion of the Lords of the Manor, the Mosely Family, and met bi-annually to choose officers and a boroughreeve. The Leet had nominal responsibility for the policing, improvement and cleansing of Manchester’s streets, but in

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50 Langford, Public Life and the Propertied Englishman, p. 120.


52 Sweet, The English Town, pp. 8, 3-4.
practise it was often ineffectual and slow-moving.\textsuperscript{53} The Vestry was the other main branch of Manchester’s administrative structure, whose main responsibilities were the upkeep of churches, poor relief and maintaining highways.\textsuperscript{54} Unlike Liverpool, there was no cohesive group of landowners, merchants or industrialists with a shared interest in improving the town’s streets to protect trade and promote civic building projects. As a result, urban improvement in the town was primarily left to individual landowners, resulting in the piecemeal development of streets and districts. Liverpool’s growth in the early eighteenth-century was not mirrored by Manchester, and it was not until later Acts of Parliament in 1765, 1776 and 1792 that the responsibility for large-scale widening, paving, lighting and protection of the town’s streets was officially delegated.\textsuperscript{55} The anomalous governmental structure for so large a town led to Daniel Defoe famously describing Manchester as the ‘largest mere village in England’, and, as will be shown, other observers frequently commented on Manchester’s unusual development in terms of the physicality of the town, its civic structure, and the fashions and manners of the inhabitants.\textsuperscript{56}

As this thesis will demonstrate, Manchester’s consumers were also noted as distinct. Residents practised patterns of consumption that marked the town’s commercial identity as distinct from that of Liverpool, London or other provincial towns, and warrants further investigation. Part of the reason for the distinction between Liverpool and Manchester is the possible demographic difference. Historians have estimated that the urban middling sort – those whom Maxine Berg described as ‘leading the expansion of urban and consumer culture’ – grew


\textsuperscript{54} Scola, \textit{Feeding the Victorian City}, p. 24.


from around 170000 in 1700 to 475000 in 1800. In London, where the majority of studies of middling society have been based, the percentage of those classed as middling was around between 20% and 25% of the population, with most approximations for towns outside of London at the lower end of this estimate. While this figure may appear high for many provincial towns of eighteenth-century Britain, what is clear from recent scholarship is that as the populations of northern urban centres increased, so too did the number of residents with the taste and the budget for high-end goods.

Calculating the exact number of middling consumers of this type in Liverpool and Manchester is extremely challenging for historians. Craig Horner has attempted to identify cohorts of middling residents of eighteenth-century Manchester based largely on estimated income and poor ley payments, a methodology that, while useful in assessing elements of the domestic economics of some non-elite households, is limited in scope. However, historians have indicated that the proportion of middling residents of Manchester has traditionally been smaller than in Liverpool, and there were certainly fewer wealthy people of taste in Manchester in the early part of the century. This disparity is, perhaps, due in part to the specific governmental structures of our towns: the administrative structure of Liverpool was controlled by a wealthy group of middling merchants, who effectively acted as a civic elite. The concerns of this group were protected in legislation; while the manorial Court Leet in Manchester

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60 Horner, C., ‘Proper Persons to Deal With’: Identification and Attitudes of Middling Society in Manchester, c1730-c1760’, Unpublished PhD thesis, (Manchester Metropolitan University, 2001). See in particular Chapter 4: ‘Principal Inhabitants’ and ‘Inhabitants’: a Socio-Economic Exploration’, pp. 99-130. Horner acknowledged the limitations of his methodology, (i.e., that they do not take into account social or cultural experiences of middling residents of Manchester, the subjectivity of the study, and that the analysis is restricted to men), p. 17.
perpetuated more traditional modes of social hierarchy. While Liverpool’s merchants had become established enough to wield real power in the town by the start of the eighteenth-century, Manchester manufacturers took longer to establish comparable status. As will be demonstrated, the apparent differences in the demographic make-up of the towns were reflected in the way goods were marketed and sold, and the consumer market of Manchester was distinctive in comparison with Liverpool and in a national context. Just as growing provincial towns developed into ‘distinctive centres of intellectual ferment, industrial and scientific innovation, and provincial and regional pride’ throughout the eighteenth century, so too did the residents of these towns develop as distinctive in terms of their habits as consumers and their attitudes and priorities in terms of consumer goods.62 This thesis will explore the way that this distinctiveness was manifested in the markets of Liverpool and Manchester.

In addition to the differences in civic and administrative structure between Liverpool and Manchester, the socio-economic distinctions between the towns need to be acknowledged. Jon Stobart and Leonard Schwarz have argued that scholarship on urban centres needs to challenge traditional socio-economic profiling of eighteenth-century towns, and reframe the analysis to focus on patterns of leisure, retail and spatial organisation of provincial towns.63 However, Penelope Corfield has made a convincing case against this, by showing that established economic specialisms in the towns are corroborated through the examination of trade directories and analyses of individual supplier activity.64 Our towns’ specialisms did have an impact on their provision of goods: as a rapidly growing port town, Liverpool had greater access to goods imported by Atlantic merchants throughout the century, while Manchester’s position as the hub of the textile industry led to a proliferation in the availability of clothing textile goods in the town. As the second chapter of this thesis will demonstrate, the increased availability of products that

were related to the economic specialisms of our towns predictably resulted in increased numbers of associated shops. However, as will be shown, high-end goods and services that were not associated with the Liverpool’s port or Manchester’s dominance of the textile trade (for example, wig makers, jewellers and painters), appeared in similar numbers proportionate to the populations of the towns throughout the century.65

Nationally recognised as two towns undergoing significant transformations in terms of physical size, wealth and importance, Liverpool and Manchester were both changing and expanding at a rapid rate throughout the eighteenth century. The unprecedented growth and dynamism of our towns between 1700 and 1800 provides unique opportunities for historians interested in consumption to answer questions such as: what were the attitudes towards the spread of luxury in new and changing urban centres? What was the relationship between provincial towns and London? What kind of goods were available in these towns, and how were they marketed? How did trade in two geographically close, but substantially different, towns differ? This thesis’s contribution to the discussion of the role of trade in urban history is to focus attention on domestic retailers: those who Neil McKendrick termed the ‘hordes of little men [and women], who helped boost the demand side and who succeeded in exciting new wants, in making available new goods, and in satisfying a new consumer market of unprecedented size and buying power’.66 By focusing on the development of high-end retail in these towns rather than the traditional narratives of mercantilism and industrialisation, this thesis will address the questions raised above and provide a more thorough overview of the supply and demand of high-end goods in Liverpool and Manchester than has previously been undertaken.

65 See Chapter Two of this thesis, particularly Tables 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3.
Methodology, Sources and Structure of the Thesis

The thesis makes use of a range of primary material, and applies methodologies that have been used to assess patterns of shopping and consumption in London and a small number of provincial towns to Liverpool and Manchester. In extending existing methods of analysis to two towns whose significant eighteenth-century growth and commercial development has not yet been fully examined, and by offering a comparison of these towns, this thesis furthers our historical understanding of the complexities and nuances in patterns of consumption in the provincial towns of eighteenth-century Britain.

In terms of the physical appearance of shopping streets, an analysis of the same types of source material used in Nancy Cox’s and Claire Walsh’s studies of shops and shopping in London will be applied. Images of shops that feature in contemporary sketches and engravings, and on some suppliers’ trade cards, will be examined to assess how districts, streets and commercial buildings appeared to residents. Descriptions of the towns in visitors’ accounts and local histories are also examined in the first chapter to contextualise the contemporary perception of the urban environments in which high-end trading took place. The identification of high-end shopping streets and districts within the townscape of Liverpool and Manchester is made possible by using information contained in the towns’ trade directories and newspaper advertisements. These sources are used together to identify the urban areas in which high-end goods were bought and sold. This is a similar approach to that incorporated in Jon Stobart’s analysis of shopping in Chester, wherein the identification of street specialism was taken as an indicator of organised and established luxury economies. This thesis’s application of similar methodologies to map shopping streets in newer towns produces different findings that contribute to the broader discussion of commercial townscape. By plotting the towns’ high-end goods

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68 See Stobart, *The First Industrial Region*, pp. 153-158, particularly ‘Figure 6.1, Retailing and Leisure Infrastructure in Chester, c. 1780’, p. 155.
traders onto contemporary maps, this study will show that while street specialism was not present to the same extent in Liverpool and Manchester as in Chester, or the ‘leisure towns’ examined in similar studies, clearly identifiable districts with large distributions of comparable high-end shops existed in both subject towns. This problematises some existing histories of these towns, and of eighteenth-century consumption more generally, that have underestimated the sophistication and development of high-end shopping outside of London.

Alongside accounts of the physical development of Liverpool and Manchester’s shopping districts, this thesis is concerned with the consuming behaviour of the towns’ residents. It will analyse the conduct of both suppliers and consumers who lived in and around the towns to identify patterns, trends and idiosyncrasies in the way that consumers and suppliers bought and sold high-end goods. Within the historiography of consumption, historians have often used the experiences of individuals to provide both wider narratives and analytical threads through their research. This methodology has informed this approach in this thesis. Where the source material of individual suppliers or consumers has been particularly rich, these individuals’ stories have been told to illustrate wider patterns of buying and selling in our towns. The types of sources that have been used to access the experiences of individuals in this study include autobiographical writing, personal correspondence, newspaper advertising and personal and business accounts.

It should be stated that this study is intended as a social history of the towns and their residents. Although some of the primary source analysis is rooted in private and business account books, it is not one the aims of this thesis to present an economic history of pre- and

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69 See Glennie and Thrift, ‘Consumer Identities and Consumption Spaces, pp. 25-45.
early-industrial Liverpool and Manchester, or to challenge the results of economic studies of the towns’ trade in a national or international context. Rather, this thesis is concerned with the history of how shopping and consumption were experienced within the towns. An analysis of primary source material that reveals both wider patterns and provides more detailed case studies focused on individuals and families is used to exemplify the experiences of shopping for, and consuming, luxury goods. Considered together, the wide variety of primary sources utilised in this thesis provides us with a more thorough picture of buying and selling high-end goods in Liverpool and Manchester than before.

This thesis is divided into four chapters that examine the supply of, and demand for, high-end goods our towns in terms of commercial identity; physical development; suppliers and consumers. Chapter One explores the formation and development of the commercial identities of Liverpool and Manchester. This chapter starts by examining visitors’ accounts of our towns, and highlights the similarities and the distinctions between them in terms of their physical appearance, trade, and the manners and fashions of the people. Perceptions of the towns’ capacity for luxury and refinement are analysed to show how Liverpool and Manchester were considered in national terms. The chapter argues that while visitors to both towns identified thriving consumer environments, differences in the way the towns and their inhabitants were compared to London indicate distinctive attitudes towards metropolitanism, luxury and refinement. By examining the autobiographical writing of suppliers in the towns, the chapter goes on to address the concerns about consumption voiced by residents, and how these fit into a national context of debates on luxury, consumption and vice. While the first chapter establishes how high-end trade was considered in the towns by visitors and residents, subsequent chapters will explore high-end trade in terms of urban spaces, selling and buying.

Chapter Two explores the commercial geography of Liverpool and Manchester throughout our period. By mapping the towns’ high-end shops, this chapter will identify and
examine the creation of new shopping streets and the formation of specialised high-end shopping districts, and will explore the process by which the towns developed to provide a physical context for high-end shopping. Through the examination of shopping districts in the towns, this chapter seeks to engage with existing work on eighteenth-century commercial history and contribute to a small, but important, body of work on the urban commercial development of the North West. This chapter will explore how shopkeepers responded to the commercial environment in the context of a form of urban development in Liverpool and Manchester that was both rapid in its timing and dramatic in its scale. It will argue that shopkeepers specialising in the sale of high-end goods responded actively and directly to the way that their towns were developed by clustering around streets with the best reputations for politeness and improvement. Exploring the establishment and development of commercial districts and high streets in new and rapidly developing towns such as Liverpool and Manchester contributes to providing a fuller picture of the commercial history of Britain’s provinces.

Chapter Three investigates the role of suppliers in more detail, and examines some of the behaviour of individual suppliers in our two towns. Based on an examination of retailers’ marketing material, the main argument made in the third chapter is that suppliers in Liverpool and Manchester served two different markets and acted accordingly. Liverpool suppliers marketed their goods to consumers led by metropolitan fashions and a desire to match their peers in London, while in Manchester, affordability was the principal driving force, and comparisons were made more locally. Suppliers in both towns practised the sorts of pioneering methods of sales and marketing that have previously been associated with the nineteenth century. The chapter examines three supplier case studies whose experiences and behaviour epitomise the distinction in the consumer markets of the two towns: Joshua Lawton, a clothing and textiles merchant in Liverpool; and Elizabeth Raffald and Aulay Macaulay in Manchester. The differences in markets and supplier behaviour identified in this chapter, between towns as
geographically close as Liverpool and Manchester, further highlights the importance of regional and town-based case studies of markets and supplier activity that have been less common than in studies of provincial consumers.

Chapter Four concentrates on the consumers whose custom the towns’ suppliers were keen to attract. The chapter’s argument is that analyses of the accounts and records of elite consumers suggest different habits in spending and the selection of goods that helps classify and differentiate social groups within the eighteenth-century elite. The chapter explores the kind of products that elite consumers in the towns were buying, where they were making their purchases and how much money was spent. It shows the elite in this context encompasses a large group of quite disparate people, but that accessing consumption habits is a useful way to differentiate between the various groups that made up a wider elite. This chapter organises elite consumers into three categories: the aristocracy; landed gentry and professionals, by analysing their spending habits. It demonstrates that one of the ways that these subgroups can be defined is in terms of their different attitudes towards provenance, taste and value for money in their consumption habits.

These chapters, taken together, will illustrate how high-end trade was conducted in and around Liverpool and Manchester during the eighteenth century. By drawing on both an examination of the development of these towns, and analyses of the behaviour of suppliers and consumers, the thesis will examine the processes of, and distinctions between, the buying and selling of goods in the two towns. In focusing on shopping and consumption, the thesis will present an alternative narrative of the histories of Liverpool and Manchester to the traditional focus on industrialisation. It will offer an insight into consumer markets in new urban landscapes, assess the role of the supplier in the creation and protection of these markets, and examine the behaviour of consumers in two of the most dynamic and fast-growing towns in eighteenth-century Britain.

This chapter explores perceptions of commercial growth in Liverpool and Manchester during the eighteenth century. It will examine how the towns were considered to be centres of high-end trade in our period by visitors and residents, what the characteristic elements of the nature of supply and consumption in these towns were, and how perceptions of distinctly regional customs, fashions and behaviours evolved over the period. How were the towns seen as distinctive from other provincial towns in Britain, and from each other? What was the perceived relationship to London in terms of trade, fashion and emulation? How did local conceptions of trade and consumption change over the century? In addressing these questions, this chapter will contextualise the wider thesis and contribute to the recent discussion on the growth of provincial luxury markets.

As identified in the introduction, research by Hannah Barker, John Stobart and Amanda Vickery has identified the North West as an area of commercial development and opportunity for high-end trading and consuming. But towns in the region have not been explored in this context to the same extent as other areas of Britain. This chapter aims to address this imbalance. The main argument advanced is that although connected by both geography and some continuity in regional customs and traditions, Liverpool and Manchester served as examples of two towns with distinct reputations for politeness, metropolitanism and trading in eighteenth-century Britain. Liverpool was a ‘London in miniature’ that could offer many of the luxuries and

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pleasures of the capital in a commercial environment familiar to visitors, and Manchester was seen as a brash, new and self-confident trading town that eschewed the fads and fashions of the metropolis. This distinction is significant in terms of our understanding of regional identity and provincial consumer markets. The growth and changes within Liverpool and Manchester during the eighteenth century, highlighted in the introduction to this thesis, suggest that these towns are interesting and under-explored case studies by which to assess the development of high-end trade, the formation of consumer individualism, and the development of luxury markets in provincial towns.

The chapter examines the development of the towns’ suppliers and capacity for high-end trade, starting in 1700 and ending in 1800. The century witnessed transformations in both Liverpool and Manchester, and in the ways the towns were portrayed. The manner in which residents of the towns thought about themselves as suppliers and consumers also changed over the period. The chapter will first address descriptions of Liverpool and Manchester in travel literature. The way that our towns were compared with London is illustrative of a nuanced picture of provincial relationships with the capital, and demonstrates the importance of specific town-based approaches to regional history. The chapter will go on to examine the accounts of the towns’ residents, focusing on the autobiographical writing of two suppliers from the beginning and the end of our period: Edmund Harrold and John Coleman. These suppliers discussed their own consumption habits, and their writing is representative of a shift in the way the spread of luxury was conceived by some inhabitants of the towns, that is in keeping with a national shift in the perception of high-end trade. By engaging with recent debates about the significance of commodities and the rise of consumer identity, the chapter will show that the early-to-mid eighteenth century was an important period in establishing provincial self-confidence in terms of trade and consumption in two of Britain’s most rapidly evolving towns. The existing historiography suggests that as the century progressed and both towns saw dramatic
growth, there was a perceptible abandonment of frugal, God-fearing temperance in consumption, and a move towards a more cosmopolitan attitude towards supplying and consuming high-end goods. The chapter will demonstrate how this change was met with concern and resistance, particularly from religious groups, but that the force of change was such that the commercial environment of both towns had irreparably changed from the beginning of our period to the end.

Visitors to the towns

Among the largest of the emergent genres of eighteenth-century publishing was domestic travel literature. Volumes that discussed the state of settlements, towns and regions that had long featured on the periphery of British readership became increasingly popular, and by mid-century were firmly established as a mainstay in the libraries of discerning book collectors. As Rosemary Sweet tells us, the eighteenth-century surge in interest was largely due to the improvements in transport and travel infrastructure that eased the journeys of prospective writers, coupled with an increased audience for such volumes that came with a new interest in the trading and manufacturing capabilities of Britain. These volumes are valuable sources for historians interested in urban development and the creation of identity within towns, and have been used to draw conclusions about the social and cultural experience of living and trading in towns during the eighteenth century. The limitations of travel literature as a historical source are well documented: accurate descriptions of the towns and their inhabitants were often extraneous to the authors’ own biases and agendas; towns with flourishing trade in the mode of London were generally favoured; and authors were keen to entice the interest of their genteel readership and so

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adapted their accounts accordingly. However, these sources are useful to historians interested in the perception of particular towns in terms of how they were considered in comparison to other centres of luxury. Visitors to the towns, usually based in London, often acknowledged the physical improvement and capacity for trade and luxury in both towns – as they did with other urban centres in eighteenth-century Britain. As will be shown, references to the shopping streets and public spaces were usually made with a metropolitan focus, and comparisons with London paint two different pictures of how Liverpool and Manchester were perceived. Visitors to the towns such as Daniel Defoe and Celia Fiennes wrote about Liverpool and Manchester in a way that was illustrative of wider trends in travel writing. Their concerns about gentility, urban trade, and commerce were by no means unique to the two towns in the wider trope of eighteenth-century travel writing, but these descriptions are still useful to assess the different perception of Liverpool and Manchester in terms of high-end trade.

Travel literature reveals information about the perceptions of towns’ identity in a national context; how provincial towns were compared against each other; and, crucially, how they were compared to London. Notions of provincial emulation have long been discussed within the historiography. Scholars such as Peter Borsay have refuted ideas of widespread emulation of the capital, arguing that eighteenth-century towns were developing their own, distinct identities in architecture, fashion and consumption that was not reliant on the capital for guidance. Despite the historiographical resistance to blanket provincial emulation, Borsay has

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argued that for travel writers, London was the ‘cultural benchmark against which all towns were to be measured’. While Borsay’s focus has primarily been on towns that bore marked differences to proto-industrial Liverpool and Manchester – concentrating mainly on more established towns in terms of politeness and developed urban spaces such as Bath, Norwich and Winchester – his observations about comparison to London also ring true for visitors to Liverpool and Manchester. The early-century travel writers who visited the towns generally commented on development in favourable terms, but always with reference to how far they reflected the capital in terms of architecture, fashion and provisions for polite visitors and residents.

Celia Fiennes, daughter of the Civil War Parliamentarian colonel Nathaniel Fiennes, was a travel writer from Wiltshire who visited several towns in Britain between 1684 and c.1703, and who recorded her experiences. Fiennes visited Liverpool and Manchester during horseback tours through Britain at various points throughout her travels. Her observations of the towns, as with the majority of her reports of other locations, were primarily focused on the appearance of the streets and the fashion and manners of the people. Fiennes favoured towns that offered the same amenities as could be found in London, and her observations on Liverpool and Manchester provide comparisons between the towns in terms of their relationship with the metropolis. Fiennes wrote of Liverpool’s ‘mostly new built houses of brick and stone after the London fashion’, and furthered her comparisons with the capital by concluding that ‘there are abundance of persons you see very well dressed and of good fashion; the streets are fair and long, 


8 Biographies of Celia Fiennes are provided in twentieth-century edited volumes of her writing. See in particular C. Morris (ed.), The Journeys of Celia Fiennes (London, 1947); and C. Morris (ed.), The Illustrated Journeys of Celia Fiennes 1685-c.1712 (London, 1982).
its London in miniature as much as I ever saw anything’. Of Manchester, Fiennes wrote that the town ‘looked exceedingly well’ and was a ‘thriving place’, but besides recording that the town had a ‘schoole for young gentlewomen as good as some in London’, she did not reference the capital, nor did she suggest that the town’s shops, buildings, or public spaces were any rival to those in London. Fiennes’ reports of the towns indicate that from the very start of the eighteenth century, there were already differences in the way the two towns were perceived by some visitors. As the next chapter will show, the scale of urban development in Liverpool and Manchester differed at the beginning of the century, and while Liverpool’s finest streets and districts were established by Fiennes’ visit, Manchester was still in the early stages of urban improvement. The differences in the scale of development between the two towns likely led to differences in the way Fiennes recorded her perceptions. This distinction became more pronounced in travel writing as the century progressed, as other visitors continued to reflect on differences in changes to the towns, and built on established stereotypes of both places.

Fiennes’ praise of Liverpool in terms of its similarity to London was echoed by perhaps the most renowned eighteenth-century chronicler of English towns, Daniel Defoe, who described Liverpool thus in the 1726 edition of his *Tour Throu' the Whole Island of Great Britain*:

Liverpool is one of the wonders of Britain, because of its prodigious increase of trade and buildings, within the compass of a very few years; rivalling Bristol in the trade to Virginia, and the English colonies in America. They trade also round the whole island, send ships to Norway, to Hamburg and to the Baltic, and also to Holland and Flanders; so that they are almost become, like the Londoners, universal merchants.

[…]

In a word, there is no town in England, except London, that can equal Liverpool for the fineness of the streets, and beauty of the buildings.  

Defoe’s comments reflect the establishment of the belief that Liverpool was a viable northern capital from early in the century. As the introduction to this thesis has addressed, the well-established and wealthy merchant population of Liverpool, coupled with the town’s status as an Atlantic port encroaching on the dominance of Bristol by the middle of the century, gave the town a vibrant and thriving commercial milieu. It is therefore unsurprising that the discussions about Liverpool by early travel writers are complimentary. The praise bestowed upon Liverpool by Defoe and Fiennes is illustrative of the tendency of many travel writers to describe, praise, and defend trade, industry and commerce, and to give a favourable impression to readers of towns that excelled in these areas.\footnote{Sweet, \textit{The Writing of Urban Histories}, pp. 102; 151-3.} Defoe’s praise of Liverpool was similar to his assessment of Bristol, which he described as ‘the greatest, the richest, and the best port of trade in Great Britain, London only excepted’, and Defoe’s assessment of the buildings, merchants and independency from London was similarly fulsome. His comments suggest that there was widespread recognition that the town’s international trade was developing at such a rate that the dominance of the more established Atlantic trading docks at Bristol were threatened, and that Liverpool matched London in terms of physical refinement and gentility.

When describing Manchester however, Defoe – like Fiennes – praised some of the town’s buildings and institutions, but his description focused on what marked the town out as different to other provincial towns rather than claiming it to be in the London model:

\begin{quote}
The increase of buildings in Manchester within these few years is a confirmation of the increase of people; for here, as at Liverpool, the town is extended in a surprising manner; abundance of new built streets are added, as also a new church, dedicated to St. Ann; and they talk of founding another, and a fine new square, by which means the town is almost double to what it was some years ago: so that it is an open village, greater and more populous than most cities in England.\footnote{Defoe, \textit{Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain}, p. 165.}
\end{quote}
In this description Defoe highlighted the rate of expansion and change in Manchester, and discussed the anomalous governmental structure of a town of such size, but there was not a sense that the town was a replica of London in terms of its trading, manners or architecture. Defoe’s apparent preference of Liverpool over Manchester is illustrative of a trend in travel writing to compare towns with London, and to praise towns which bore similarities to the capital. The elements that made Liverpool comparable to London in the early part of the eighteenth century – the town’s corporation, the administrative and political structure, and, crucially, the port – were not found in Manchester. While Defoe’s observances of Liverpool and Manchester were not specific or unique to the towns in a national context, they do illustrate the differences between the perceptions of our towns from a commercial perspective in the early century. While writing within established tropes and conventions, Fiennes and Defoe both set out what they saw as the differences between the two towns in terms of trade, gentility and similarity to London that were then echoed by later visitors.

Although these early-century visitors to Liverpool and Manchester recorded the towns in different terms according to their similarity to London, they did note similarities and connections between the inhabitants of the towns, particularly in terms of their religious and moral behaviour, and the rate of population increase. Celia Fiennes wrote of a collective religiosity in the North West, recording the ‘exceeding well filled’ churches and noted that ‘in these parts religion does better flourish than in places where they have better advantages’. Defoe echoed Fiennes in his reports of the piety of the inhabitants of the towns, and the need for the expansion of churches and civic buildings, reporting that in Manchester ‘such was the increase of buildings and inhabitants employed in trade and commerce… so that the said two churches could not contain the good inhabitants of the said town’. Defoe also highlighted how northern towns were

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16 Defoe, *Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain*, p. 227. For secondary discussions of Lancashire inhabitants’ religiosity during the eighteenth century, see J. Albers, “Papist Traitors” and “Presbyterian Rogues”: Religious Identities in Eighteenth-Century Lancashire in J. Walsh, C. Hayden and S. Taylor (eds.), *The Church of England c.1689-1807*. The history of religion in Lancashire is chronicled in J. Walsh, *Lancashire in the Early Modern Period*. Other discussions of the religious situation in Lancashire in the eighteenth century include D. Etlin, *The Church in Lancashire in the Eighteenth Century*. The legal framework within which the church operated is also considered by D. Etlin, *Church and State in Lancashire, 1680-1832*. These sources provide a valuable insight into the religious landscape of Lancashire during the eighteenth century.
connected by a sense of collective responsibility and civic identity: ‘There are few towns in the kingdom that have such ample and such various sums bequeathed to the poor; and the charity, generosity and public spirit of the inhabitants is very great’.17 These descriptions illustrate that although considered distinct in terms of their relationship to the capital, Liverpool and Manchester were seen to be connected by the decency and public spiritedness of their inhabitants. This perception survived, in part, throughout the century, and as Barker has argued, ‘northern urban renaissance was the product of middling, consumerist cultures, firmly rooted in their localities and subject – at least in theory – to the sobering influences of hard work and religion’.18

The generally favourable accounts of the towns from the early visitors were, in the main, continued by the visitors of the 1740s, 1750s and 1760s. By the middle of the century, visitors’ accounts of the towns were primarily focused on their increasing capacity for national and international trade. In his account of the Jacobite rebellion, James Ray, a Cumbrian historian who had been part of the contingent that pursued the Young Pretender through Manchester in 1745, gave his description of the town. Ray reported that:

The town is very populous and the inhabitants are very industrious…[the trade] has been very much improved of late, by some inventions of dyeing and printing which with great variety of other manufacturers known by the name of Manchester Goods enrich the town and render the people industrious… As an inland town, it has the best trade of any of these parts.19

Ray’s description of the town featured an acknowledgement of distinct behaviour in fashion and customs on the part of mid-century visitors to Manchester. Alongside his reports of the industriousness of the people, he commented on the unusually dressed but ‘generally very handsome’ women in the town – who he noted were often named ‘Lancashire witches’ for their

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17 Defoe, Tour through the Whole Island of Great Britain, p. 278.
18 Barker, “Smoke Cities”, p. 177.
bewitching charms. Principally though, the emphasis of Ray’s and other mid-century accounts of the town was on the recent development of the capacity for trade and a tacit understanding that the growth was set to continue. The same is true of contemporaneous descriptions of Liverpool. The growth that Liverpool and Manchester had already experienced by the 1740s was mentioned by visitors who were starting to acknowledge the potential of the towns as regional centres for trade and industry whose influence was only set to increase. Visitors to Liverpool during the 1740s and 1750s were building on Defoe’s earlier observations, acknowledging that the town’s docks looked set to become the principal provincial port in England, likely to surpass even Bristol – still a much larger and more established port in the mid-century. Despite its size, which was still fledgling compared to Bristol in 1750 (see figure 0.1 in this thesis’ introduction), there was already an acknowledgement that Liverpool looked set to overtake its rival to be the principal Atlantic trading port. Ray wrote of Liverpool’s expansion, and praised the physical development of the town that accompanied the expansion of trade:

It is the most flourishing seaport town in these parts, and it may be justly said to vie with the city of Bristol, the second port in England, its customs being increased eight- or tenfold within these thirty years past. And tho’ the town is said to be above three times as large as it was in the beginning of the late King James’s reign, yet they continue still to build considerably, being well provided with clay for making brick, of which there are many stately houses built.

Other travellers who visited Liverpool in the middle of the century also addressed the town’s growing potential. J. Gregory, a traveller interested solely in the capacity for trade and industry of the towns he visited, wrote of the recent emergence of Liverpool as a real contender for Atlantic trade: ‘[Liverpool is a] good port and another populous T[own]. 3rd in the nation for trade to


our plantations and growing. It has a fine Dock, capable of holding 70 or 80 ships’.\textsuperscript{23} Despite the rapid growth of the town, many visitors still referenced the neatness of the developments, such as George Beaumont, who noted that Liverpool was ‘not a very ancient town, but very neat and populous, and the most flourishing sea port in these parts, very nearly equal to the City of Bristol’.\textsuperscript{24} Analysis of travel literature from visitors to Liverpool and Manchester indicates that by the middle of the century, the two towns continued to establish distinct reputations. While both were seen as exceptional compared with the other provincial towns of Britain in terms of their trade, growth and development, they differed from one another in terms of their relationship to the capital. The perception of Liverpool as a facsimile of London and Manchester as a strange, anomalous, and yet successful, entity continued throughout the 1770s, during key periods of both towns’ most dramatic changes to the urban landscapes.\textsuperscript{25} By this time, inhabitants of both towns had developed a sense of confidence in their respective identities, an aspect that was frequently commented upon by visitors.

Johann Georg Busch of Hamburg was one such visitor who toured the provincial towns of England in 1777, commenting on the business of a rapidly growing Manchester:

The first thing that strikes you about Manchester is the bustle: a drive rewarded by ample profit and proven by the continuing growth of the town. [...] The inhabitants here are of a different spirit.\textsuperscript{26}

Busch’s identification of a ‘different spirit’ in the people of Manchester, characterised by a drive to work and succeed, was mirrored in the comments of another foreign visitor to the town during the mid-1770s. The American Jabez Maude Fisher conducted a tour of the towns of

\textsuperscript{23} J. Gregory, \textit{A Manual of Modern Geography, Containing a Short, but Comprehensive and Entertaining Account of all the Known World} (London, 1760), p. 149.


\textsuperscript{25} C.W. Chalkin, \textit{The Provincial Towns of Georgian England: A Study of the Building Process, 1740-1820} (London, 1974) discusses the process and timeframe of Manchester’s urban development, pp. 93-5. The periods of urban development, urban improvement and the effect on the streetscapes of the commercial districts of the towns, are discussed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

\textsuperscript{26} J. G. Busch, \textit{Bemerkungen auf einer Reise durch einen Theil der Vereinigten Niederlande und Englands} (Hamburg, 1786), cited in translation in Bradshaw, \textit{Visitors to Manchester}, p. 14. Similar accounts of the singular nature of Manchester’s residents’ dress, customs and living conditions from German visitors can be found in works such as J. J. Volkmann, \textit{Neueste Reise durch England} (Leipzig, 1781); and J. L. Hogreve, \textit{Beschreibungen der in England seit 1759} (Hanover, 1780).
Britain between 1775 and 1779, and wrote of Manchester that ‘the value of an enterprising and economical spirit seems to pervade all of its inhabitants: idleness is disgraceful, and a man without business, or some occupation, Manchester does not own’. For Busch, Fisher and other visitors, the acknowledgement of a ‘different spirit’ in Manchester that was the product of expanding trade and manufacture. However, this perception was not universally held, and for some other visitors, the way that residents of Manchester conducted themselves and the pride they took in their unashamedly profit-driven ventures was problematic. Samuel Curwen, a self-styled ‘American Refugee in England’ whose disparaging remarks about Northern towns introduced this thesis, wrote of the inhabitants of Manchester that:

The disposition and manners of this people, as given by themselves, are inhospitable and boorish. I have seen nothing to contradict this assertion, though my slender acquaintance will not justify me in giving that character. [...] The dress of the people here savours not much of the London mode in general; the people here are remarkable for coarseness of feature, and the language is unintelligible.

Curwen’s comments indicate that the unabashed commercialism of the merchants, suppliers and residents that many visitors considered a positive trait was unattractive to others who considered the attitudes of Mancunians to be vulgar, unrefined and distinctly provincial. This supports the arguments of Barker and Sweet, who have both suggested that despite recognised improvements to the town’s urban streetscapes and provision of commodities, Manchester and other towns in the north were considered by many outsiders to be lacking in terms of refinement, culture and politeness until well into the nineteenth century.

Liverpool was also given mixed reviews in the travel literature of the 1770s. Curwen was almost as scathing about the town as he had been about Manchester, writing of the inhabitants

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that he ‘scarcely saw a well-dressed person’. He was also unmoved by the development of Liverpool itself, and remarked that ‘few of the shops appeared so well as in other great towns’ and proclaiming that the town’s residents were decidedly provincial and un-metropolitan in their manners and dress. He wrote that ‘dress and looks more like the inhabitants of Wapping, Shadwell and Rotherhithe than in the neighbourhood of the Exchange, or any part of London above the tower’ – marking a contrast to the earlier praise of Liverpool’s buildings and principal street from other commentators. Some other visitors shared Curwen’s distaste at the physical development of Liverpool in the 1770s. Fellow American and Quaker, Jabez Maud Fisher, whose praise for the industry of Manchester’s inhabitants was fulsome, visited Liverpool in 1776 and wrote that he found the town ‘dirty, irregular, illy (sic) paved and in general indifferently built’ and the people ‘troublesome’. Fisher’s hostility is unsurprising given his religious and moral concerns about the town’s involvement in the slave trade, being ‘more largely in the infamous African Trade than any other place in England’.

Sweet notes how other contemporary visitors and residents identified problems with Liverpool, especially regarding architecture. The town’s first history was nominally authored by William Enfield but drew heavily on the papers of the iron founder and mineralogist George Perry, who provided the maps, engravings and details of trade and improvement, and the artist and surveyor Peter Perez Burdett, who contributed much of the (often unflattering) commentary about state and design of Liverpool’s civic buildings. Enfield’s volume claimed that ‘from that
spirit of frugality which always prevails among a people who are beginning the career of commerce, it has happened, that in far the greater part of the streets of Liverpool, there is little appearance of elegance, much less of magnificence’. Enfield’s, or, more likely Burdett’s, claim was that the municipal frugality of the mercantile Corporation had prevented non-essential spending on building projects. Burdett’s rancour is perhaps attributable to a suspicion of merchant-led improvement rather than improvement by the design of his fellow artists, draughtsmen, and more learned men of taste. Nonetheless, the descriptions of the town’s building in Fisher and Enfield’s volume were the minority and, as with earlier accounts, reports on Liverpool’s urban development were generally favourable. In a more positive vein, Sir Richard Sullivan’s account of his visit to northern towns in the 1770s described Liverpool in favourable terms for the fashionable dress, trade and manners of the people. He wrote of the town:

This town, next to London, has the greatest appearance of wealth and industry of any in the kingdom; every street is crowded with fine people, the docks and the river are filled with shipping, the quays are piled with goods, and the merchants and traders carry the ostensible marks of riches in their looks.

Sullivan’s positive impressions of the town in the 1770s were mirrored in the majority of his contemporaries’ accounts of their visits. Continuing this praise, Edward Clarke described in enthusiastic terms his visit to the town’s theatre, assembly and shopping streets, which he described as ‘inferior to very few in London’, and several other visitors made direct assertions that Liverpool could, as a trading town with respectable inhabitants, rival the capital.

Eighteenth-century visitors’ accounts of Liverpool and Manchester conform to Borsay’s interpretation of the way that towns were recorded in travel literature in terms of their similarity

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34 Enfield, History of Liverpool, p. 20.
37 E. Clarke, A Tour Through England, Wales, and Part of Ireland (London, 1793). See also accounts of the town in A. Young’s A Six Month Tour through the North of England (London, 1770).
to London.\textsuperscript{38} Both towns were noted for their flourishing trade from early on in our period, with visitors highlighting the differences between the towns with increasing frequency as the century developed. The perception of Liverpool as a cosmopolitan trading town that mirrored London in terms of trade, fashion, and urban landscape, which was already identifiable in travellers’ accounts of the early century, intensified as the years progressed. Similarly, the idea of Manchester as an anomalous town that did not reflect the capital or other towns with a more established luxury market, but whose inhabitants were industrious, self-confident and driven by profit and success was already apparent at the start of the century, and firmly established by 1780. This distinction is significant, as it lays a foundation for the subsequent chapters of this thesis: just as visitors referred to differences in their own perceptions of the two towns, the same kinds of differences were apparent in the way towns developed physically, the behaviour and marketing of suppliers, and the concerns of consumers: topics which will be examined in the following chapters.

**Residents of the Towns**

At the end of the eighteenth century, the Leicestershire-born surgeon and writer John Aikin reflected on the growth of trade and luxury in Manchester, a town he was familiar with having practised medicine in nearby Chester and Warrington. Struck by the speed of change observable in his lifetime, Aikin wrote:

\begin{quote}
The trade in Manchester may be divided into four periods. The first is that, when the manufacturers worked hard merely for a livelihood, without having accumulated any capital. The second is that, when they had begun to acquire little fortunes, but worked as hard, and lived in as plain a manner as before, increasing their fortunes as well by economy as by moderate gains. The third is that, when luxury began to appear, and trade was pushed by sending out riders for orders to every market town in the kingdom. The fourth is the period in
\end{quote}

which expense and luxury had made great progress, and was supported by a trade extended by means of riders and factors through every part of Europe.\textsuperscript{39}

Aikin’s stages of luxury echo the findings of much of the research that has been undertaken on spending and living conditions: broadly, that there was a shift from modest hand-to-mouth existence for much of the population to a comparatively widespread luxurious standard of living within the timespan of the long eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{40} But Aikin’s account also suggests that the speed and rate of change was remarkable, and visitors’ reports of the growth in Liverpool and Manchester in terms of trade and luxury were matched by discussions about the changes to the commercial environment from permanent residents. The rapid changes in both Manchester and Liverpool were unnerving for some residents, particularly in the early years of the eighteenth century. As Berg tells us, the new goods available to new sorts of consumer that were ‘enthusiastically invented, produced, shopped for and displayed were also the subjects of introspection, misgivings, and social exclusion’.\textsuperscript{41} And for some, the temptations of consumption caused spiritual angst, depression and self-reproach.

Edmund Harrold was one such resident. A Manchester wigmaker who recorded his experiences during what Aikin would classify as the second stage of the town’s development towards luxury, Harrold’s diary serves as a rare and valuable source to access the thoughts and experiences of an early eighteenth-century supplier.\textsuperscript{42} Harrold lived in Manchester all his life, and his diary records his experiences between the ages of 34 and 36, detailing his active engagement

\textsuperscript{39} J. Aikin, \textit{A Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles round Manchester} (London, 1795), pp. 181-182.


\textsuperscript{41} Berg, \textit{Luxury and Pleasure}, p. 326.

\textsuperscript{42} Chetham’s Library, ‘Edmund Harrold, his book of remarks and observations: manuscript diary covering the period 1712-1716’. The diary has been transcribed and annotated in C. Horner, \textit{The Diary of Edmund Harrold, Wigmaker of Manchester 1712-1715} (Aldershot, 2008), it is to this edition that subsequent references to Harrold’s diary refer.
with his social circle, his avid reading, his problems with alcohol, his emotional and sexual relationship with his wives, the state of his businesses and his relationship with God. Harrold, a conformist who, while visiting several churches in Manchester (most notably St. Ann’s Church and Cross Street Chapel), favoured the sermons of the High Church clerics of the Collegiate Church. Written between 1712 and 1715, Harrold’s diary chronicles his personal, business and spiritual activities on a daily basis, and offers a testimony of some of the early developments made in eighteenth-century Manchester, including the consecration of St. Ann’s church and the building of the adjoining square – the town’s first area for high-end trade. Harrold made wigs for, and dressed the hair of, some of Manchester’s most prominent citizens, and fulfilled some of the traditional roles of a barber-surgeon. Often regretful and self-flagellating, the diary presents a tortured, pious man shamed by his alcoholism, passions and volatile temper who was keen to reconcile his behaviour and become a better husband, father and Christian.

Given the rare, rich and varied nature of Harrold’s diary, the volume has been used by scholars writing on subjects as varied as the practice of book buying and popular reading in the lower/middling classes to the experiences of pre-diagnosed sufferers of depression in early modern Britain. Harrold’s diary is pertinent to this study because he frequently made a direct correlation between the success of his business, his own consumption habits, and divine retribution. Harrold’s diary is representative of the type of self-writing that has been used in scholarship to demonstrate the how individuals reconciled their relationship with God and their

43 Harrold was present at the consecration of St. Ann’s Church in 1712, and made occasional (and despairing) references to his second and third wives’ Low Church and possibly non-conformist religious beliefs. See Horner, ‘Introduction’ to Diary of Edmund Harrold, pp. xxviii-xxix.
44 Harrold, Diary of Edmund Harrold, p. 18, (12 Jul. 1712).
own consumption: Harrold’s is a spiritual journal, an example of the proliferation of life writing from the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that scholars such as Michael Mascuch, Patrick Coleman and Rebecca Earle have argued document the perception of the self, reflections on morality and personal relationships with God.46

Harrold made clear that he associated the success (or otherwise) of his business with the judgement of God, often ending passages with reflections such as ‘I had good business to day, bless’d be God for’t’, or, when business was looking less bright, ‘poverty staring me in ye face. Indisposition of mind and body, crosses, loses and disappointment comes now dayly upon me: O Lord, sanctify afflictions, reflections’.47 At the end of one particularly unprofitable year, Harrold wrote:

And so I end this year in sobriety and books, only I’m ill set for money. Very dull business, also much indisposed in body and sometimes wandering thoughts comes on me with melancholy. A great rent and little trade, so that I am in a great state what to do. I’ve no way but to do my best by frugality, sobriety and laboriousness, and leave ye issue for divine providence, for I believe yt he will either remove my troubles or sanctify them to me.48

This passage suggests a perceived relationship between godliness and profit. Harrold’s diary indicates that for some of the region’s suppliers in the early part of the eighteenth century, God-fearing religious beliefs had, at least in theory, a significant influence on the way business was conducted publically, and on the way business owners behaved in private. Of course, Harrold’s drunkenness makes him an atypical case study, and the specific anxieties and experiences he

47 Harrold, Diary of Edmund Harrold, p. 28, (August 15th 1712); p. 118 (March 17th 1714).
48 Harrold, Diary of Edmund Harrold, p. 98, (December 31st 1713).
reported cannot be taken to represent those of all his contemporaries. Nonetheless, because his diary makes explicit the link between supply, consumption and God, it is a valuable example of what Mascuch has termed the ‘discourse of life and death’ between writer and God in chronicling the Christian experience.

For Harrold, modesty, frugality and temperance were covetted, while intemperance and excess were considered sinful. Among the most troubling aspects of Harrold’s own personality – frequently mentioned in the diary – was his forgoing of religious observance and contemplation for material objects and consumption. After recording particularly large purchases or non-essential luxuries, he often indicated that he subsequently felt that such fripperies were ungodly and caused him to feel significant guilt. He wrote that he had ‘sadly fal’n off from religion and grown instable’ after spending too much of his money on non-religious books, fine clothing and alcohol, lamenting ‘I love ye things of ye world too much and ye flee from me O Lord’. And after a similar bout of consumer excess he asked ‘O my soul, wilt thou lose eternall pleasures for momentary ones?’, further suggesting a perceived correlation between consumer/supplier behaviour and the judgement of a Christian God. Harrold also records instances where his frugality paid off, for example when he was able to pay for a doctor to tend to his dying wife, he wrote ‘I am satisfied that it is good to be frugal and to keep something against sickness and affliction, and I bless God yt He has enabled me to undergo this’.

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49 A few diaries of Harrold’s contemporaries in the north survive, such as Nicholas Blundell’s Diary and Letter Book which covers his experiences as a Lord of the Manor in Crosby, Lancashire between 1702 and 1728: N. Blundell, *Blundell’s Diary and Letter Book, 1702-1728*, M. Blundell (ed.), (Liverpool, 1952); and the diaries of Ralph Thoresby of Leeds which cover the Thoresby’s life and a descriptions of that town’s history up to 1724: R. Thoresby, *The Diary of Ralph Thoresby, 1677-1724*, J. Hunter (ed.), (London, 1830). Neither of these volumes discuss the authors’ personal relationship with God, or their reflections on their own consumption to the same extent as Harrold’s writing, nor were they based in the towns with which this thesis is principally concerned.


52 Harrold, *Diary of Edmund Harrold*, p. 84 (10 Aug. 1713).

Harrold’s tortured accounts of his consumption correspond to many of the principal conclusions within the secondary discussion on the relationship between consumption and vice throughout the century. Harrold’s anxieties over his own consumption and associated behaviour were the anxieties of a drunkard whose actions were impacting his familial and social relationships, but they were also concerns shared by many at this time. The piety and frugality of northern towns’ inhabitants identified by some of the early visitors manifested itself in Harrold’s writing, and Harrold equated excess with ungodliness. Harrold’s spiritual journal was written before the concepts of luxury, commerce and consumption had been digested and reconciled by contemporary economists and philosophers.

The extensive discussion of luxury in eighteenth-century Britain witnessed a shift later on in the century that saw traditional concerns about excess, vice and wastefulness replaced by the idea that luxury was a force for good: an improving concept that benefitted Britain and the individual. On the birth of domestic luxury, David Hume wrote in 1752 that Britons had ‘become acquainted with the pleasures of luxury, and the profits of commerce; and their delicacy and industry being once awakened, carry them on to further improvements’. Over the course of the eighteenth century, luxury ‘lost its former associations with corruption and vice and came to

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include the civilising impact of superfluous commodities’.\(^{56}\) As the new goods available to new groups of people came to symbolise taste and civility, these anxieties about personal consumption featured less frequently in autobiographical writing.\(^{57}\)

This shift in approach towards luxury can be seen in the journal of the Liverpool baker, and some-time merchant, John Coleman, written some fifty years after Harrold’s diary. While, unlike a wigmaker, a baker may not naturally qualify as the kind of supplier of high-end goods with which this thesis is primarily concerned, Coleman ensured that his journal made clear that he supplied and associated Liverpool’s principal merchants, and would certainly have classed himself as high-end. As will be shown, Coleman also prided himself in his own consumption of high-end goods. Stark differences in the approach to piety and consumption are apparent in Harrold and Coleman’s self-writing, which suggest that suppliers and consumers in Manchester and Liverpool were subject to national trends concerning attitudes towards luxury.\(^{58}\) Both Harrold and Coleman wrote descriptively about their respective towns and made comparisons with other places they had visited, and both men discussed interpersonal relationships between their friends, family and business associates. But there the similarities between the recorded lives of the two men end. Harrold’s frugality, attempted adherence to religious doctrine and his striving towards temperance were countered by Coleman’s unabashed celebration at partaking in the finer things of life – frequently making reference to the fineness of his clothing, the fashionable goods he bought to furnish his home and business premises, and the select company he kept. Where Harrold was frugal and self-abasing after an indulgence, Coleman celebrated his refinement and considered his ability to spend money on fashionable diversions a virtue. John Coleman’s journal is an example of autobiographical writing written after the acceptance of


\(^{58}\) Liverpool Record Office, Ledger of the Life of John Colemen, 920 COL./1 and 920 COL./2.
luxury as an improving element to a gentleman’s character. His writing is indicative of the development of self-identity and the establishment of the individual as consumer, citizen and recorder of experience that has been mooted as a key development in autobiographical writing of the eighteenth century.\(^5^9\)

Coleman ensured that he recorded instances of his generosity in hosting his friends in their shared passion for respectable and fashionable socialisation, and makes clear to the reader that before his eventual fall from grace and bankruptcy – of which he assures the reader he was entirely blameless – he kept the choicest company in the town and was well-regarded by the principal inhabitants of Liverpool, not only as a businessman but as a friend and associate:

During the period from 1765 to 1789 I acquired many new friends in my business, and most of them merchants of the first class in town, all of whom noticed me not only with their orders but also with their company. It was always a rule with me to be neat and clean in my person and dress, and also to be very choice with my associates.\(^6^0\)

The difference between Harrold and Coleman was largely generational. Coleman was raised in a strict Anabaptist household, and self-consciously rebelled against the abstinence of his parents in later life, particularly in terms of his consumption.\(^6^1\) Coleman’s father, who founded the original bakery in Liverpool, was described in the journal as a dour, pious man who lived humbly, feared God and engaged in daily acts of public and private devotion – very much in the mould of Harrold.\(^6^2\) Coleman saw his father’s attitude towards business and social life as unambitious, and a severely limiting factor in the success of the family business and John’s own personal social life.

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\(^6^0\) Coleman Ledger, fo. 72.

\(^6^1\) While it is unclear how Coleman self-identified as an adult in terms of his religious beliefs, his Ledger makes frequent reference to his upbringing, and his determinism not to deny himself material goods, as his father did. For more details of Coleman’s background, see H. Barker, ‘The Rise and Fall of a Liverpool Biscuit Baker: John Coleman (1743-1815)’; *Liverpool History Society Journal*, 8 (2009).

\(^6^2\) Coleman describes how his father would lead his family in reading the bible at the back of the house after meals. Coleman Ledger, fo. 12.
As soon as financially able, John took steps to distinguish his own life from that of his father. On having served his informal apprenticeship with his father, Coleman wrote:

> On the completion of my seven years servitude with my father on 21st March 1764 I then began to think of having some money at my own disposal [...] imagining I should furnish myself with clothes as I thought fit, I had in my own mind furnished myself with a pair of dancing shoes, being very fond of that exercise and excelled by very few in that polite accomplishment.  

This passage is indicative of the way Coleman, as a representative of a new, ambitious and urbane breed of supplier, sought to distinguish himself from the parochial and pious frugality of his father’s generation. On discovering that his father’s plan for him was of a different sort, and that at John’s coming of age he was expected to keep working on the same terms as before sans dancing shoes, John fled to London, where he remained for a few weeks observing the practices of the capital’s bakeries – which he did not compare favourably to those of Liverpool – and partaking in the diversions of the capital. When his conscience and wallet eventually got the better of him, he returned to the family business with a renewed insistence for more say in how the business was to be managed.

The fifty years separating the lives of these two men in comparable professions were formative in the development of trade and consumption in their respective towns, in keeping with national trends. The differences in Harrold and Coleman’s lives illustrate how such developments were considered. Of course, personal taste, circumstance and personality had a role to play in our understanding of the two suppliers’ self-writing. Nonetheless, the way shopping, self-identity and luxury were discussed by Harrold and Coleman are representative of an abandonment of the traditional elements of trade and traders that were rooted in frugality and religion, towards an unapologetic acceptance, even celebration, of commercial indulgence among not only the elite, but among the region’s trading classes which fits into a national context of the

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63 Coleman Ledger, fo. 34.
64 For discussions on the importance of personal taste in analyses of consumption, see Vickery, *The Gentleman’s Daughter*, pp. 162-3, 191-2; Berg, *Luxury and Pleasure*, pp. 43, 88, 256.
development of luxury and self-identity. As with the descriptions of our towns by travel writers, the examples cited here reflect wider trends in the way that trade, commerce and urban development were recorded in eighteenth-century Britain, and are not unique to the individuals, nor to our towns.

Although the journals of Edmund Harrold and John Coleman illustrate a shift within the concerns of the towns’ suppliers’ from traditional, temperate values at the beginning of the century, to cosmopolitan notions of consumption and leisure by the end, this shift did not go unopposed. Concerns were raised publicly by influential clergymen about the abandonment of traditional values in favour of a more lavish styles of life supplemented with frivolous goods. While the work of Mark Smith and Jan Albers has suggested an optimistic view of the state of the Church in Lancashire’s pre-industrial towns throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, concerns about religious observance were starting to be raised towards the end of our period, that were directly linked to consumption.65 Beilby Porteus was ordained Bishop of Chester in 1776 and served in that capacity until 1787, when he became Bishop of London. Considered to be a proponent of doctrinal purity, Porteus saw part of his role being the reorganisation of the parishes under his charge to better reflect the changing demographics and new habitations that came with early industrial development. Porteus wrote the following in an open letter ‘to the inhabitants of Manchester, Macclesfield and adjacent parts’ in 1777, following an earthquake in the area:

By the flourishing state of your trade and manufactures, you have for many years been advancing rapidly in wealth and population. Your towns are every day growing in size and splendour; many of the higher ranks among you live in no small degree of opulence; their inferiors in ease and plenty. What the usual fruits of such affluence as this are, is but too well known. Intemperance and licentiousness of manners, a wanton and foolish extravagance in dress, in equipage, in houses, in furniture, in entertainments; a passion for luxurious indulgences and frivolous amusements; a gay thoughtless indifference about

future life, and everything connected with it; a neglect of Divine Worship, a profanation of the day peculiarly set apart for it, and perhaps, to crown all, a disbelief and contempt of the gospel.66

The Bishop’s letter illustrates contemporary concerns at the perceived shift from modest, Christian values to wanton, irreligious consumption. The qualities of temperance, modesty and observation of the Sabbath identified as thought desirable by a tormented Harrold were, according to Porteus, being eschewed for the sinful distractions championed by Coleman, to the displeasure of God. Porteus’ attempts to attribute the earthquake to divine anger at the frivolous and excessive habits of the region’s consumers are indicative of the awareness, and sometime unease, at the rapidly changing nature of the local economy, and they were echoed in many of the contemporary sermons and religious writings published during our period.67 However, despite the opposition exhibited by clerics in the towns, Liverpool and Manchester’s development toward luxury trading was unstoppable. The move away from Harrold’s traditional, modest values, towards the flashy cosmopolitanism of Coleman, is representative of changes in the way individuals more generally thought about themselves as consumers in the towns from the start of our period to the end.

Conclusion

This first chapter has set out to establish two things: that, as for most towns, the mid-eighteenth century was a transformative period in the way suppliers and consumers behaved and thought about themselves in Liverpool and Manchester; and that the differences in the way these

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transformations were recorded between the two towns means that a closer examination of the region – and more specifically of the towns themselves – is warranted.

Through an examination of visitors’ accounts to the towns throughout the century, the chapter has explored how Liverpool and Manchester were perceived by outsiders in order to establish what made the region distinct from other parts of Britain and, crucially, what differences were perceived between the two towns themselves. Both towns were noted for their flourishing trade from early on in our period, with visitors highlighting the differences between the towns with increasing frequency as the century developed. Broadly defined, the recorded differences between Liverpool and Manchester were metropolitan in focus. While most visitors to the towns mentioned the distinct modes of fashion and manners that underlined their provincialism, there was undoubtedly a difference in the perception of London’s influence. Liverpool was noted for its similarity to London in terms of architecture and trading capacity from early on in the century, with later visitors also expressing surprise and delight that many commodities and services available to them in the capital could be obtained in the same manner in Liverpool. In Manchester, such easy comparisons with London were not apparent, and visitors observed self-conscious and unashamed expressions of newness, flourishing local trades and fashions. As will be demonstrated in Chapters Two and Three, this is a distinction that was echoed in the towns’ urban commercial development and in the way that suppliers marketed themselves to attract the highest of high-end consumers.

This chapter has also explored differences in the way that people in Liverpool and Manchester discussed their businesses and spending habits during both the start of our period and the end. Edmund Harrold’s diary, in which he made clear the close relationship he perceived between his expenditure and the judgement of God, adheres to the impression of a pre-industrial God-fearing northerner of simple taste and unostentatious spending. By comparing Harrold’s diary to the autobiographical work of John Coleman, this chapter demonstrated that a more
complicated story of the supply and consumption of high-end goods and fashionable pursuits emerged as the century progressed. Coleman, unconcerned with maintaining the kinds of characteristics and ideas about frugality championed by his father’s, and by Harrold’s, generation, reflects that by the mid-century the emphasis had shifted – at least for some residents of the towns. Where it was once discouraged and seen as a source of shame, conspicuous consumption was now starting to be seen as a virtue in the North. Coleman’s writing suggests that it was not just the regional elite for whom this temporal shift occurred, but that shopkeepers, traders and manufacturers were active participants in the consumption of luxury goods and refined amusements. This move towards luxury was not universally approved, and opposition on moral and religious grounds was still present in the 1780s – even if it was largely ignored. Having established that Liverpool and Manchester were perceived differently by outsiders, and that a closer look needs to be taken at the towns than the historians have attempted thus far, we will now go on to discuss changes to the physical structure of the towns’ shopping districts over the same period, in order to explore further differences between the two towns and the ways in which they developed during the eighteenth century.
Chapter Two: ‘Elegance and Convenience are to be Found United’: The Commercial Geography of Liverpool and Manchester.

This chapter investigates changes to the commercial geography of Liverpool and Manchester during the eighteenth century. It will explore the creation of new shopping streets and the formation of specialised high-end shopping districts, and will examine the processes by which the towns developed to provide an environment for high-end trading. The chapter argues that both towns had established districts for high-end shopping by the middle of the eighteenth century, but the way that these districts developed differed significantly, due in part to differences in local governmental structure and land ownership. By examining the specific processes of improvement and development in these two expanding and evolving towns, this chapter will analyse the environments in which high-end shopping took place. When and where were distinctive areas for buying and selling luxury goods created? Who was responsible for developing and maintaining these areas? What were the similarities and differences in the scope, methods, and significance of urban development and improvement in Liverpool and Manchester? In addressing these questions, this chapter will engage with existing scholarship on eighteenth-century urban improvement. It will show how different models of improvement to commercial districts, other public spaces, and housing, produced varying forms of development in expanding provincial towns.

To do this, the chapter will first examine the process of urban development in Liverpool and Manchester. It will identify the principal landowners and developers responsible for improving the streets, and will address the specific timescales and distinct areas of improvement in the towns. The chapter will go on to map the physical geography of these new districts according to the number of shops specialising in high-end goods, and will make the connection between a high concentration of such shops and what were considered to be the smartest, most improved streets. Through an examination of local historical accounts of the towns, trade directories and newspaper advertisements, the chapter will demonstrate that shopkeepers in both
towns migrated to specific streets and buildings reflecting the high-end nature of their goods and services. The concentration of similar businesses within small locations led to the formation of shopping districts that were perceived as elegant, high-end, and polite. As will be demonstrated, shopkeepers took an active role in marketing themselves, and their businesses, as belonging to this category of superior purveyors. References to the location of the shop and the elegance of the building were often highlighted over the specific goods on sale to prospective consumers. Finally, the chapter will show that shopkeepers were actively involved in maintaining the state and cleanliness of the streets within their districts. They sought to protect their investments against factors that threatened the integrity of the districts they had helped to create.

The physical growth of towns in eighteenth-century Britain has long been the subject of historical interest. By the end of the 1980s, Penelope Corfield, C.W. Chalkin, Peter Clark and Peter Borsay had established that the transformation of eighteenth-century provincial towns had a significant impact on the urban landscape of Britain, but the physical urban development of pre-industrial towns remained underexplored in comparison with that of nineteenth-century expansion.¹ As Rosemary Sweet suggested in 1999, ‘we are accustomed to associate the building projects of Victorian towns with the expression of civic pride, but less has been made of the more restrained gestures of earlier generations’.² More recently, the call for more in-depth analysis of urban development in the eighteenth century has been answered, and both urban and social historians have re-examined the expansion of towns in the eighteenth century to help better our understanding of urban living in pre- and early-industrial Britain. Historians such as Jon Stobart, Helen Berry, Peter Borsay and Lindsay Proudfoot have explored the physical development of provincial towns to describe the living conditions, the amenities available to

residents, and the physical appearance of the streets and buildings of towns outside of London. These scholars have argued that the need to expand the urban infrastructure of towns in order to accommodate expanding populations was inextricably linked with a concern for ‘improvement’. Town planners in the eighteenth century made new efforts that ensured that existing streets were adapted to reflect contemporary concerns with politeness and respectability, and new streets were developed in a way to showcase both ease of navigability and appearance: and in doing so were primarily concerned with paving and lighting. Sweet tells us that ‘local legislative initiatives had been very infrequent prior to the eighteenth century’, marking the period as instrumental in the history of local urban improvement. Acts of Parliament to improve and keep clean the streets of London that had been in force since the late-seventeenth century influenced the spread of Improvement Commissions in provincial towns, and improvements to street paving and lighting were being undertaken in the majority of Britain’s larger towns by the middle of the eighteenth century. The two principal aims of this kind of urban improvement were allowing for better transport links in the towns for ease of trade and communication, and producing ‘urban space conducive to polite and civilised behaviour’ in order to create a physical manifestation of the contemporary ideals of leisure and respectability in provincial towns. The specific Acts relating to the improvement our towns will be examined in this chapter, and will show how north-western town planning was driven by the sorts of concerns demonstrated in other provincial towns of eighteenth-century Britain.

5 Sweet, The English Town, p. 44.
Although the subjects of planning, development and improvement in the eighteenth century have been given more attention of late, there remains room for a more in-depth account of the development of the principal commercial streets of Liverpool and Manchester. While provincial shopping districts have been the subject of some significant scholarship, the bulk of the existing analysis is focused on well-established districts in long-established towns. Existing research on urban improvement in Liverpool and Manchester has focused primarily on housing and public spaces. Two notable exceptions are Hannah Barker’s work on the physical and commercial development of Manchester in the late-eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, and Jon Stobart’s research on the shopping districts of Liverpool and other towns in the pre- and early industrialised North West. Both scholars have identified established markets for luxury goods in the two towns, and have shown that their shopping districts were adapted to accommodate the increased market for such goods. This chapter contributes to the ongoing discussion about the development of the two towns by comparing the nature and timeframe of their development. By moving the spotlight onto shopkeepers and their response to such changes, this study shows that traders responded to their specific physical environments, rather than following a national or regional model.

As scholars such as Clé Lesger and Claire Walsh have told us, the eventual dominance of shops in fixed buildings at the expense of street traders and markets, and the shopping streets

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and districts that this shift created, was as attributable to civic regulation, property ownership and administrative authority as to trends in consumer and supplier behaviour.\textsuperscript{11} The differences in the administrative and legislative structures of our towns that were detailed in the introduction and, in particular, differences in the way urban improvement was financed in Liverpool and Manchester, had a significant bearing on the different ways in which their commercial districts were shaped. The development of urban retail districts was further constrained by factors related to property ownership. The rents for buildings in the smartest streets in the best districts would have been significantly higher than elsewhere in our towns, and would therefore be affordable only to those traders whose high-end, high-priced products would have attracted the richest customers.\textsuperscript{12} Such practical concerns had a significant impact on the way high-end shopping districts in Liverpool and Manchester developed.

**Staged Improvement and Piecemeal Development in Liverpool and Manchester**

Unlike towns such as Edinburgh, Newcastle, Bristol and Bath, that saw comprehensive large-scale development and improvement to streets during the eighteenth century, the development of the two largest towns in the North West was piecemeal.\textsuperscript{13} Development in Liverpool and Manchester was undertaken in stages, sometimes with several blocks of land undergoing improvement at once, but more often with individual streets – or individual buildings – being


\textsuperscript{12} While primary sources on shop rental in our towns and period have not survived, scholars have noted the propensity of urban areas with high rents to attract traders of luxury goods. See for example Stobart, Hann and Morgan, *Spaces of Consumption*, pp. 58-62; Lesger, ‘Patterns of Retail Location’, pp. 17-18; Walsh, ‘Stalls, Bulks, Shops and Long-Term Change’, pp. 32-33.

developed one by one. The reasons for this mode of development are largely to do with ownership and accountability. In both Liverpool and Manchester, land that was ready for development was owned by a combination of titled estate owners, private lesser landowners, and — crucially, in Liverpool — the Corporation. Furthermore, unlike elsewhere in the country, leaseholds of estates were often offered for several hundred years, meaning that long-term leases were granted to various landowners of different means and diverse objectives. As a consequence of the shared responsibility of land development in the centre of both Liverpool and Manchester, improvement to the towns was often a united effort by local government, private collectives and individuals. The way that the towns’ streets were kept lit is an example of this kind of collaborative responsibility. As in many other provincial towns, lighting the streets was a combination of public and private endeavour in both Liverpool and Manchester. The Corporation in Liverpool had provided forty-five street lamps by 1720, and by mid-century had offered to erect lamps outside any shop or private house that requested one, provided the individual was prepared to light and maintain it. In pre-incorporated Manchester, the 1792 Act allowing police commissioners to manufacture and distribute gas for lamps in the town in the early-nineteenth century, the task of lighting the streets fell to private developers, with owners and tenants of individual buildings accountable for the maintenance of the lamps on their property.

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16 Chalkin, Provincial Towns, p. 74.  
19 Act of Parliament, 32 Geo. III. C. 69 (Manchester Police Commissioners Act, 1792); Sweet, The English Town, p. 82.
Images of Liverpool’s Principal Shopping Districts

Source: Liverpool as it was during the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century, by Richard Brook. These images were engraved in the nineteenth century, but were reported to have been based on earlier sketches. ²⁰

Figure 2.1: St. George’s Crescent and Castle Street

Figure 2.2: Lord Street and St. George’s Church

²⁰ R. Brook, Liverpool as it was during the Last Quarter of the Eighteenth Century (Liverpool, 1853).
Figure 2.3: Lord Street and South John Street.

Figure 2.4: Castle Street from above.
As established, in Liverpool, the Corporation had acquired much of the land for
development from the titled landowners, the Earls of Sefton and Derby, by the start of the
eighteenth century.\footnote{For details on the acquisition of land by the Corporation in Liverpool, see J. Longmore, ‘Liverpool Corporation as Landowners and Dock Builders’, in C.W. Chalkin and J.R. Wordie (eds.), *Town and Countryside: The English Landowner in the National Economy, 1660-1860* (London, 1989), pp. 116-147; J. Touzau, *The Rise and Progress of Liverpool* (Liverpool, 1910), pp. 282-284; H.T. Hough, ‘The Liverpool Corporate Estate’, *Town Planning Review*, 21 (1950), pp. 234-252 (p. 242); Chalkin, *Provincial Towns in Georgian England*, p. 100. The consumption habits of the Molyneux family (Earls of Sefton) and the Stanley family (Earls of Derby) are explored in Chapter Three of this thesis.} By the 1740s, over 1000 acres of the centre of the town were owned by the
Corporation, with the remaining pockets falling under the ownership of independent merchants,
minor gentry or remained part of the Earls of Derby’s urban estate.\footnote{Chalkin, *Provincial Towns of Georgian England*, p. 100.} While the merchant-
dominated Corporation was the main landowner, the capital brought into Liverpool through
mercantile successes of the seventeenth and early-eighteenth century also resulted in wealthy
Clayton, was one such individual.\footnote{S. A. Harris, ‘Sarah Clayton’s Letter and John Wood of Bath,’ *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, (Liverpool, 1948), pp. 55-72.} Inspired by her visits to Bath and London, Sarah Clayton was
instrumental in commissioning the famed architect John Wood to design and build The
Exchange between 1749-1754, an elegant and much-admired building on the junction of Dale
Street and Castle Street, which also served as the Town Hall and Assembly Rooms.\footnote{Longmore, ‘Civic Liverpool’, p. 163.} Clayton
also financed Clayton Square, a smart residential area that was home to some of Liverpool’s
principal merchants.\footnote{Burdett’s comments on Liverpool’s Exchange, while generally favourable (particularly in comparison to other
buildings in the town), cited the fact that John Wood’s work was not observable in full from any part of the town,
contributions to Enfield’s history of the town were noted in the previous chapter and who was
himself a friend of Wood, these developments remained unsatisfactory.\footnote{Burdett’s comments on Liverpool’s Exchange, while generally favourable (particularly in comparison to other
buildings in the town), cited the fact that John Wood’s work was not observable in full from any part of the town,
demonstrated, some visitors to the town made plain their discontent that Liverpool was not able to follow a model of comprehensively planned networks of streets and districts as seen in other eighteenth-century English towns.\textsuperscript{29} However, large areas of the town were much admired by visitors and residents alike for the fineness of their streets and buildings, from early on in the century. As was discussed in the previous chapter, Daniel Defoe famously described Liverpool as one of the ‘wonders of Britain’, declaring that ‘there is no town in England, except London, that can equal Liverpool for the fineness of the streets, and beauty of the buildings’.\textsuperscript{29}

The fine streets of Defoe’s description were developed in the town’s first stage of improvement. In the early years of the eighteenth century, Liverpool saw large-scale development that was focused on improving the town’s international and domestic trading capacity. The first dock was built by the Corporation between 1709 and 1715, and in the 1720s a new network of wide, well-paved streets had been built along the streets of the original settlement of the fourteenth century.\textsuperscript{30} It was these well-established, wide and well-paved thoroughfares that continued to be the most attractive to shopkeepers selling high-end goods in the town throughout the century. Figures 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4 show illustrations of these streets towards the end of our period, depicting well-dressed people and smart stagecoaches along these improved streets. As will be shown, owners of such shops clustered around those streets that were spacious, well-paved and well-lit, such as Castle Street, Lord Street, Hanover Street and Paradise Street and the surrounding side-streets within a ½ mile radius. There was little evidence of competing luxury districts appearing in other parts of the town, even after the development of

\textsuperscript{28} For example, J.A. Picton’s The Architectural History of Liverpool (Liverpool, 1858) laments the ‘zigzag winding streets’ of the town. Cited in Chalkin, Provincial Towns, p. 101.
other parts of Liverpool, including the large scale development to the south of the town during the 1770s.\(^{31}\)

In Manchester, as with Liverpool, the long-established landowning families, such as the Byrons, the Mynshulls, and the Moseleys, had relinquished control of much of their urban acreage to individuals by the mid eighteenth century.\(^{32}\) Unlike Liverpool, however, Manchester was unincorporated until 1837, a consequence largely of the unusual governmental system of the town and its rapid expansion that was examined in the introduction to this thesis.\(^{33}\) As a result, the capacity for centralised, large-scale improvement was smaller than in Liverpool. Development in Manchester was thus mostly dependent upon private subscription. Examples of this form of raising money included the £10000 raised in 1776, principally by the town’s textile merchants, for the expansion of the streets around The Exchange, and that collected by private landowners such as William Stevenson, whose development of Stevenson’s Square and the surrounding streets is explored later in this chapter.\(^{34}\) New landowners in Manchester relied less on outsourcing improvement to developers, and were often actively involved in the development of the land that they had acquired. However, progress was sporadic, and less centralised or cohesive than in Liverpool.\(^{35}\) Three periods of extensive expansion are observable in the town throughout the eighteenth century, and shopkeepers responded to the various developments in different parts of the town. The first was the development of St. Ann’s Square in the early years of the century. John Aikin in his *Description of the Country from Thirty to Forty Miles Round Manchester* wrote:

> In 1708 the act passed for building St. Ann’s church, which in a few years was followed by the Square and Streets adjoining, where was displayed a new style

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\(^{33}\) Sweet, *The English Town*, p.158.


of light and convenient rooms, very different from those in the rest of the town.  

The widened streets and elegant buildings around St. Ann’s Square quickly became desirable for shopkeepers, and as will be shown, the district soon became established as Manchester’s main centre for high-end trade, with warehouses and fixed shops housing many of the town’s principal jewellers, dressmakers, watchmakers and tea dealers. Figure 2.5 illustrates the shops and warehouses around St. Ann’s church, which were in the fashionable, large-windowed style that came to exemplify high-end shopping later in the century.

The second surge of development came during the 1770s, when landowners made improvements to the streets and lanes surrounding Market Street and Market Square: figures 2.6, 2.7, 2.8 are contemporary prints of these streets. Again, these developments quickly attracted the interest of shopkeepers keen to capitalise on the scope for trade in newly developed districts, which were now more attractive to both sellers and consumers. The late 1780s and 1790s saw the final phase of the town’s extensive development, and took place in the Piccadilly area of the town around Oldham Street, when Sir Ashton Lever sold a large parcel of land for development to William Stevenson, a lesser landowner who took a more active role than Lever in developing his assets. Stevenson’s development of the land was a lengthy process, but, as this chapter will demonstrate, the Square and the streets in the new district became desirable locations for fashionable living and high-end trade by the end of the century. The gradual, piecemeal nature of the development of Manchester’s shopping streets that has been described meant that it was common for juxtapositions of new and old buildings to exist along even the smartest shopping streets, and for almost perpetual building work to be underway in even the most respectable of shopping districts. Figure 2.9 illustrates the processes of demolishing a squat seventeenth-century

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38 Barker and Harvey, *Women Entrepreneurs*, pp. 124-129.
building on Market Street to make way for a new, larger brick building that was deemed more suitable for high-end shopping.  

Images of Manchester’s Principal Shopping areas.
Source: Chetham’s Library Manchester Scrapbook.

Figure 2.5: St. Ann’s Square, c.1740.

Figure 2.6: Market Square, c.1750.

Figure 2.7: Market Square, c.1750-60.

Figure 2.8: Market Street, c.1770-1790.
The development of high-end shopping areas in Liverpool, and especially in Manchester was set against a backdrop of continuing but piecemeal development. Both of the towns saw ongoing expansion and improvement to some of their streets, squares and districts throughout the century, with periods of heightened activity and areas of more intensive improvement. High-end shopkeepers actively migrated to these better-developed areas, ensuring that by the end of the century, the areas that had undergone the most improvement were synonymous with areas of high-end shopping. This chapter will now explore the way that shopkeepers clustered within the improved areas of both towns.

Mapping the Shopping Streets of Liverpool and Manchester

The idea that street specialism, in terms of goods on sale, was an indicator of a sophisticated, well-organised local economy is well established in the literature on trading goods in eighteenth-century provincial towns. Paul Glennie and Nigel Thrift wrote in 1996 that shops were ‘an active
context rather than a passive backdrop’ for consumption and urban development, and suggested that the situation of retail premises within a town offered a clear indication of the function and status of various districts. Helen Berry has suggested that the ‘degree of respectability held by the shopping district’ was among the most important factors for consideration by the smartest London consumers, and has also identified location as a principal concern when the Newcastle Assembly Rooms were established. When mapping the shopping streets of Chester, Jon Stobart noted that ‘high status retailers were concentrated at the very centre of the city close to the social infrastructure’, and argued that the position and local environment of shops was increasingly important with the ‘emergence of shopping as leisure (at least for the wealthy)’. This chapter will now describe the ways in which the shopping streets of Liverpool and Manchester developed, and will demonstrate that by the 1790s there were distinct areas of each town that catered exclusively for consumers shopping for high-end goods. The development of such locations, and the level of specialism associated with them, echoes the findings of other works on provincial towns with more established markets for high-end trading.

Besides the travel accounts by visitors discussed in the previous chapter, the three other main sources available to historians interested in the presence of shops and businesses in particular towns in the eighteenth century are trade directories, newspaper advertisements and local histories and guides. None of these sources can offer a complete account of all the shops or retailers present in any locality: the problems associated with each type of source are well documented, and analyses based on one type of source will always paint an incomplete picture. Nonetheless, when considered together these sources can provide us with the most complete record possible about the commercial geography of eighteenth-century towns. For the earlier

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42 Berry, ‘Polite Consumption’, p. 379; Berry, ‘Creating Polite Space’, pp. 120-122.
43 Stobart, The First Industrial Region, p. 115.
part of the century, before trade directories and newspapers were produced, we are reliant upon contemporary accounts of urban streetscapes. The problems associated with the use of local guides in terms of offering an accurate picture of the physical urban landscape are that they often reflect the preoccupations of the writer first, with an accurate account of the town coming second, or not at all.45 Because of this, contemporaries writing about the same town could arrive at different conclusions about the size, quality and physicality of the streets they describe, as the conclusions of the previous chapter have demonstrated. Nonetheless, provided that the motives and limitations of this type of source are taken into account, local history writers can provide historians with evidence of the types of shops that could be found in specific locations.

In Liverpool, William Moss and James Wallace were two such writers whose descriptive histories were first published in the 1790s, and were reprinted in several editions during the following decades. Both Moss and Wallace are keen to underline the qualities of their town to the point of bombast: Wallace wrote that ‘amusements are never wanting to fill the vacant hour…while brilliant shops offer all things for the indulgence of luxury, the aggravation of taste, and the improvement of fashion’.46 Yet providing some scepticism at the fulsome endorsement of the local writers is afforded, these local histories do provide us with evidence of distinct districts in Liverpool in areas that had undergone the most improvement, and specifically about those that specialised in high-end goods. Both writers identified Castle Street as the long-established centre of Liverpool’s best-developed shopping district, with what Wallace described as the ‘principal and most elegant improvement’, he wrote:

the rents in this street average high, and the shops are large and handsome, and fitted up in such a manner as would credit and of the principal streets in London, they are so well furnished with great variety of every required

46 J. Wallace, A General and Descriptive History of the Ancient and Present State, of the Town of Liverpool (Liverpool, 1795), p. 192.
commodity for the convenience or luxury of life, it is well lighted by a regular arrangement of lamps on each side.\textsuperscript{47}

Moss provided further detail about the types of businesses that were situated in and around Castle Street, emphasising those linked to polite accomplishments and appearance:

The silversmiths and jewellers shops in Castle Street contain china, trinkets, and valuable curiosities both natural and artificial. At Mr Preston’s, in Castle Street, is an Artist’s repository, musical instruments, etc. There is a music shop in Lord Street, Paradise Street and Castle Street. Book-sellers, Print, Linen and Woollen drapers, and most of the best shops for wearing apparel, are to be found in Castle Street, Pool Lane, Lord Street and Paradise Street.\textsuperscript{48}

These histories of Liverpool identified five streets as being the most improved in the town: Lord Street, Paradise Street, Castle Street, Duke Street and Hanover Street (see Figure 2.10). The streets, as already noted, were all developed by the Corporation in the first round of Liverpool’s improvement in the 1720s. By identifying jewellers, china shops, music shops and artists’ residencies, Moss and Wallace highlighted the superior nature of businesses on these streets, and recognised a level of distinctness or specialism in terms of the types of goods on sale.

In Manchester, local writers also mentioned the status of shopping streets and the relationship between improved streets and high-end shops. Works such as John Aikin’s \textit{A Description of the Country From Thirty to Forty Miles Around Manchester} and James Ogden’s \textit{A Description of Manchester}, identified the high-end shopping districts of their town that were centred around St. Ann’s Church and the accompanying square. As has been noted, St. Ann’s Square in Manchester had been built in the early years of the century, and it was one of the town’s earliest spaces dedicated to commercial buildings. A tree-lined open space built alongside St. Ann’s Church, the square was home to the shops and warehouses of some of the town’s tea dealers, jewellers and furniture makers. In 1783, Ogden described the need to develop those streets, which ran between St. Ann’s Square and Exchange Street, another of the town’s dedicated shopping streets. He wrote:

\textsuperscript{47} Wallace, \textit{A General and Descriptive History}, p. 79.
\textsuperscript{48} W. Moss, \textit{The Liverpool Guide, Including a Sketch of the Environs: with a Map of the Town} (Liverpool, 1796), p. 97.
Before the present avenue was opened between St. Ann’s church and square to the Exchange, the communications went under the Old Coffee House fronting the Exchange, in a line with the corner shop towards Market Street Lane; that for carriages, through a narrow gateway, which was rather disgraced by a cobbler’s stall, and over this by narrow stairs, in the true garret style, there was one way to the Old Coffee-house rooms above, those being let for shops.\(^49\)

Here Ogden identified the need to widen streets as a consequence of the increase of carriages in the town, and in the process noted a disjuncture between the best developed areas in the town and those shabby and undeveloped side streets which connected them to each other: the result of the sporadic, piecemeal development of the town streets described previously. The streets identified as luxurious or high-end by the Manchester writers are indicated on Figure 2.11.

While the local histories or guides to Liverpool and Manchester highlighted some of the smartest shopping streets, and allow us to gauge where the high-end shopping districts of the town might have been, the advertisements in Liverpool and Manchester’s local newspapers have the advantage of providing further and more thorough detail. Newspapers and newspaper advertisements appeared in Liverpool and Manchester during the 1750s.\(^50\) The advertisements in The Liverpool Advertiser and The Manchester Mercury provide us with the addresses of some of the high-end retail premises available to mid-century consumers in the towns, and allow us to situate specific shops and businesses within the towns. Of course, not all businesses chose to advertise, and newspaper advertisements do not offer reliable information about the success or longevity of the business. They are, however, a useful tool for locating shops within the towns some 20 years before the appearance of the first trade directories, and consequentially provide us with the earliest information to map individual shops and to identify clear patterns in terms of location.

\(^{49}\) J. Ogden, *A Description of Manchester: Giving an Historical Account of Those Limits in which the Town was Formerly Included* (Manchester, 1783), p. 63.

\(^{50}\) The *Liverpool Advertiser*’s first edition was published in 1757; the *Manchester Mercury*’s in 1753.
Figure 2.10: Map displaying district in Liverpool identified as high-end by urban histories.

Streets identified as high-end in Liverpool:
- Castle Street (Figure 2.1)
- Duke Street
- Hanover Street
- Lord Street (Figure 2.2, 2.3)
- Paradise Street
- St. George’s Crescent (Figure 2.1)

Source: W. Moss, The Liverpool Guide; J. Wallace, A General and Descriptive History; R. Williamson, A Plan of Liverpool with the Docks, 1766.
Figure 2.11: Map displaying district in Manchester identified as high-end by urban histories.


Streets and Squares identified as high-end in Manchester:
- King Street
- Market Square (Figures 2.6, 2.7)
- Market Street (Figure 2.8, 2.9)
- St Ann's Square (Figure 2.5)
Table 2.1 details the numbers of different advertisers of high-end products who promoted their business in the newspapers over a two year period from January 1756 to December 1757, and figures 2.12 and 2.13 locate these businesses in the two towns.

Table 2.1: High-end suppliers advertised in Manchester and Liverpool, 1756-57.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liverpool</th>
<th>Manchester</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>121 total advertisements</td>
<td>95 total advertisements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewellery/Gold/Silversmiths</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock/watch/toymakers</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture/Cabinet makers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>16</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wine/liquor merchants</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>8</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tea Dealers/Confectioners</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
<td>Stationers/Booksellers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>11</td>
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<tr>
<td>Hairdressers/peruke makers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Milliners/dressmakers</td>
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<td>24</td>
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<tr>
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</table>

Source: Advertisement pages of the Liverpool Advertiser and the Manchester Mercury.

At this time, the approximate population of Liverpool was between 22,000 and 28,000, and that of Manchester, somewhere between 18,000 and 25,000.\(^{51}\) The numbers of high-end advertisers identified in newspaper adverts would therefore have been quite thinly spread, and must have served a small, distinct section of the local population. The maps indicate that among the fairly small number of advertisers in the 1750s, there was a clear concentration of suppliers of high-end goods in relatively restricted areas of both towns. The maps of Liverpool and Manchester do not present evidence of street-trade specialism to the same extent as Berry or Cox have identified in London, or as Stobart and Mitchell have both identified in the closer leisure-town of Chester.\(^{52}\) However, there is a clear indication here that both towns had distinct areas for high-end trade by the 1750s, which was indicative of sophisticated consumer markets and an awareness within the towns that particular districts were reserved for particular types of trading.

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Figure 2.12: High-end district of Liverpool, with shop clusters.

Figure 2.13: High-end district of Manchester, with shop clusters.

Sources: advertisement pages in Liverpool Advertiser and Manchester Mercury 1756-1756; R. Williamson, A Plan of Liverpool with the Docks; 1760; W. Gorse, Plan of Manchester and Salford 1794.
Table 2.2: *High-end suppliers listed in trade directories of Liverpool and Manchester, 1773-4.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liverpool 155 total entries</th>
<th>Manchester 148 total entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jewellers/Gold/Silversmiths</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock/watch/toymakers</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture/Cabinet makers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine/liquor merchants</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea Dealers/Confectioners</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationers/Booksellers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers/peruke makers</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milliners/dressmakers</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters/Musicians</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: *Gore’s Liverpool Directory 1774*; *Elizabeth Raffald’s Manchester and Salford Directory 1773.*

Table 2.3: *High-end suppliers listed in trade directories of Liverpool and Manchester, 1781.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liverpool 183 total entries</th>
<th>Manchester 189 total entries</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jewellers/Gold/Silversmiths</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock/watch/toymakers</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture/Cabinet makers</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine/liquor merchants</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea Dealers/Confectioners</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationers/Booksellers</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers/peruke makers</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milliners/dressmakers</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters/Musicians</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


There is little evidence from these newspaper advertisements of high-end districts developing outside of the Castle Street area of Liverpool or the St. Ann’s district of Manchester. However, by the time that both towns began to produce trade directories, new patterns of district development become apparent.\(^53\) The first such directory was published in Liverpool in 1766, and in Manchester in 1772.\(^54\) While, as has been noted, directories share some of the same constraints as newspaper advertisements, and cannot be said to present a complete and

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\(^{53}\) While newspaper advertisements can provide us with some valuable information, they are limited in their scope: they cannot accurately measure the success or longevity of a business; and they are by their very nature promotional, so declarations of quality must be treated with caution; and, crucially, by no means all suppliers advertised in the local press.

\(^{54}\) John Gore wrote and published Liverpool’s first trade directory, *Gore’s Liverpool Directory*, in 1766. Elizabeth Raffald wrote and published Manchester’s first directory, *The Manchester and Salford Directory*, in 1772. Raffald is one of the case studies of the next chapter of this thesis for her role as a key supplier in Manchester as well as her prolific publishing career.
comprehensive picture of all businesses in a particular location at a specific time, they are certainly more thorough than other sources available. Tables 2.2 and 2.3 provide a comparison of the numbers of high-end businesses listed in Manchester and Liverpool directories in the 1770s and 1780s.

As the tables indicate, trade directories show a small increase across all high-end trades in both towns between 1773-4 and 1781. During this same period the population of Liverpool probably grew from 53,000-60,000 to 65,000-75,000 and that of Manchester from around 48,000-58,000 to 62,000-70,000 so the growth in the number of retailers, prompted by a rise in demand for consumer goods from a larger potential market is unsurprising. The biggest variations between our two towns in terms of the types of goods available concern wine and liquor merchants, of which there were significantly more in Liverpool, and textile goods retailers, who were found in a higher concentration in Manchester. These types of supplier reflected the particular specialism of their towns. Liverpool’s port afforded more imported alcohol from Europe and the Americas, and Manchester’s dominance in the textile industry naturally resulted in a preponderance of associated retailers. More significant to this chapter’s argument are the patterns that emerge when these shops and businesses are plotted on the maps of the town. The maps of Liverpool show that the streets associated with this sort of retail in the histories of the town, and which featured prominently in the newspaper advertisements of the 1750, continued to attract high-end businesses. While these streets became more densely populated by such businesses, there is little evidence of an emergence of new districts specialising in high-end shops in the maps of Liverpool.

56 For a good discussion the importance of urban socio-economic specialism in terms of urban trade, see P. Corfield, ‘Business Leaders and Town Gentry in Early Industrial Britain: Specialist Occupations and Shared Urbanism’, Urban History, 39:1 (2012), pp.20-50.
57 This point is revisited in Chapter Three, ‘Suppliers and their Markets’.
Figure 2.14: Map displaying clustering of high-end shops Liverpool: 1750-60; 1770-80; and 1780-90.

Figure 2.15: Map displaying clustering of high-end shops Manchester: 1750-60; 1770-80; and 1780-90.

- Streets identified as high-end by 1760 (red frame):
  - King Street
  - Market Square
  - Market Street
  - St. Ann's Square

- Streets identified as high-end by 1780 (blue frame):
  - High Street
  - Cannon Street
  - Marsden Square

- Streets identified as high-end by 1790 (green frame):
  - Cumberland Street
  - Stevenson's Square
  - Oldham Street
  - Dale Street
  - Nicholas Street
  - Queen Street
  - Beresford Street

Noteworthy buildings:
1. Town Hall (King St.)
2. Assembly Rooms (Mossley St.)
3. Exchange (Market Sq.)
4. Theatre – (King St.)
5. Concert Rooms (Marsden St.)

Sources:
- J. Ogden, A Description of Manchester;
- J. Aikin, A Description of the Country;
- E. Raffald, Manchester and Salford Directory 1773;
- E. Raffald, Manchester and Salford Directory 1781;
- W. Green, Plan of Manchester and Salford 1794.
In Manchester, the streets around the St. Ann’s district, which had already been hotspots for luxury trade in the 1750s, continued to house shops supplying high-end goods and services. However, new districts had also developed in the later part of the century, away from the established areas around St. Ann’s Square, which also featured a concentration of these types of shops. By the 1780s, Piccadilly and Oldham Street boasted jewellers, goldsmiths, painters, and clock makers – none of which were located in this area in advertisements of the 1750s. Maps 2.14 and 2.15 demonstrate the principal difference between the development of high-end shopping districts in Manchester and Liverpool: a clustering of high-end shops around the established high-end area in Liverpool, expansion in the form of the creation of new districts for high-end shopping in Manchester.

Those streets associated with high-end trade in both towns were also the areas where other specialist services for the use of moneyed residents were located in the later period. Many of Liverpool’s attorneys were clustered in the principal high-end shopping districts, such as John Brownwell on Harrington Street, William Rowe of John Street, and James Sudell of Castle Street. The same pattern was true in Manchester, where attorneys could be found on streets in all of the principal high-end shopping districts identified on Figure 2.6. Similarly, insurance brokers in both Liverpool (for example, ‘Matthew Forde and co., Insurance Brokers, Castle Street’) and in Manchester (for instance, ‘Baynon, William, insurance officer, Oldham Street’) were frequently in the same districts as high-end retailers. Individuals listed as ‘gentleman’ in the directories for both towns also often resided in and around the same streets as the high-end retailers. Furthermore, as shown on Figures 2.5 and 2.6, the towns’ principal public buildings

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59 For example, in E. Raffald *The Manchester and Salford Directory* (Manchester, 1781), are listed ‘Barlow, Thomas, attorney, Market Street’ p. 7; ‘Stonehewer, James, attorney, Cannon Street’ p. 57; and in Scholes, *Manchester and Salford Directory* (Manchester, 1797) is listed ‘Knight, James, attorney, 1, Brazenose Street’, p. 74.
61 7 of the 15 references to gentlemen in the 1766 directory for Liverpool were listed as residing at one of the streets identified as high-end on Figure 2.5 – for example, ‘Marsden, John, gent. Castle Street’ *The Liverpool Directory* (1766), p. 5. Five of the 12 references to gentlemen in the 1781 directory for Manchester were listed as residing at one of the streets identified as high-end on Figure 2.6 – for example, ‘Eyre, Nathaniel, gent. Market Street’, Raffald, *The
and places of leisure were generally situated in the same districts of the high-end shops, contributing to an atmosphere of urban politeness that served as a backdrop to retail in these districts.\(^{62}\) The proximity of high-end retailers to buildings, professional services and individuals of this type would have further increased the social cachet of the high-end shopping districts in our towns.

The comparison of the newspaper advertisements of the 1750s, and the trade directories of the 1770s and 1780s, shows that high-end shops in Liverpool gravitated towards existing, well-established streets in which comparable businesses already operated. The maps for Liverpool demonstrate a consistent concentration of high-end businesses throughout the century in the same streets. While this was also true in Manchester, where the maps demonstrate gravitation towards an established centre of trade (namely the streets around the St. Ann’s district of the town), shopkeepers were also willing to set up shop in new areas from the 1770s, providing developments and improvements in the streetscape and other facilities had already been undertaken.\(^{63}\) The area around Oldham Street and Stevenson’s Square (marked in green on the Figure 2.15) was firmly established as a discernible and thriving luxury shopping district by the 1780s, following Stevenson’s development of the area in the late 1770s.\(^{64}\) The distinction between the way shopping districts evolved in Liverpool and Manchester is unsurprising – Liverpool had undergone large-scale growth and development prior to Manchester, and the town’s areas for high-end trade were better established and more stable. Manchester was still establishing itself as a centre for trade in the second half of the eighteenth century, and the

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\(^{63}\) As discussed in the previous section, the three stages of Manchester’s eighteenth-century development are discussed in W.H. Thompson, The Byroms of Manchester III, p. 20; Chalkin, Provincial Towns, p. 98; Stobart, First Industrial Region, p. 183.

\(^{64}\) Chalkin discusses Stevenson’s acquisition of land and active role in developing the streets around Oldham Street in Provincial Towns of Georgian England, pp. 93-97.
development of new districts in different parts of the town throughout the century was a consequence of the creation and development of new markets and new sites for high-end retail.

As has been noted, Liverpool’s first phase of eighteenth-century urban improvement had already taken place by 1720. The Corporation had improved the thoroughfares adjacent to the town’s first dock (marked in red on Figure 2.14), and produced streets that were wide, long, well paved, and well lit.\(^{65}\) By the mid-century, these streets were the centre of the town’s luxury trading and much admired for their refinement and elegance.\(^{66}\) Shopkeepers here thus had a large, established and vibrant district around which to base their businesses, comprising of Castle Street, Paradise Street, Hanover Street and some of the surrounding smaller streets, lanes and squares. As the century progressed, shopkeepers specialising in high-end trade gravitated towards these streets and were less willing to set up business in streets far from this established district. The reluctance of Liverpool’s high-end shopkeepers to stray from the few streets that had developed a reputation for luxury shopping speaks of conservatism in the town’s market for luxury that is evident elsewhere. As the following chapter of this thesis will explore, suppliers in Liverpool were keen to highlight their gentility, refinement and propriety, to customers they represented as particularly discerning. By situating their premises in the town’s oldest and most elegant luxury streets, the Liverpool shopkeepers were ensuring that their credentials were underwritten by being located in areas whose connection with elegance was well-established.

In Manchester, the only firmly established district for luxury trade before the 1750s was St. Ann’s Square and the surrounding streets, which, although well-developed, were few in number. Space around St. Ann’s was limited, and capacity was soon reached. Many of Manchester’s streets in the first high-end district were full by the 1750s, and the shops located here appear to have been insufficient in number to meet the demand of a rapidly increasing


\(^{66}\) See Defoe, *A Tour through the whole Island of Great Britain*, among the other visitors to Liverpool who were discussed in the previous chapter of this thesis. See also Wallace, *A General and Descriptive History*; and Moss, *The Liverpool Guide*. 
population with a taste for luxury. After the second and third main stages of development in Manchester, the creation of new streets, the widening of existing ones, and improvements to paving and lighting meant that high-end proprietors were willing to situate themselves in areas that would not have been conducive to high-end trading earlier in the century. These changes took place throughout the eighteenth century, with the development of different areas being undertaken at different times and organised by different agencies. As a consequence of this, pattern of development, the concentration of high-end shops moved to different areas of the town at different points in the century. This presents a picture of a dynamic and evolving geography of luxury retail in one of Britain’s fastest growing towns. Suppliers of luxury goods in Manchester were willing to set up shop in new districts and embraced the creation of new commercial space. The willingness of shopkeepers to take chances with their businesses is indicative of a spirit of commercial enterprise and risk-taking identifiable in the suppliers and consumers in the town, which will be discussed in the subsequent chapters of this thesis.

Despite differences in the timescale and scope of expansion of high-end retail districts between the two towns, the maps of Liverpool and Manchester’s shopping streets clearly indicate distinct districts with high concentrations of shops specialising in the supply of high-end goods that were present at least by the 1750s, and fully established by the end of the century. Addressing how these areas were marketed as desirable districts by developers and building owners to shopkeepers is an important element in terms of establishing how these districts came to be. This chapter will now go on to explore the processes by which shopkeepers moved to these areas, and how the high-end nature of the districts was established and protected.

‘Most Desirable Newly-Erected Buildings’: Selling the Shop in Liverpool and Manchester.

The way shopkeepers chose their premises – the manner in which an individual selected the district, street and building from which to conduct their business – is a useful way of assessing
the perceived value of a particular area. As well as showing the various types of shops and goods that were available within a certain location in the towns, the advertisement pages of the *Liverpool Advertiser* and the *Manchester Mercury* reveal the ways buildings themselves were marketed to prospective tenants looking to set up shop. In both Liverpool and Manchester, premises were advertised as desirable to prospective shopkeepers in terms of the building’s location, but differences in emphasis existed between the two towns. References to the quality of the buildings and state of the facilities in the already established high-end districts of Liverpool were common – primarily in the streets around Castle Street and Hanover Street. In Manchester, mention of newly developed districts was much more common, and the details of the building itself were frequently presented as secondary concerns to the fashionable location of the building on offer. These differences may be subtle, but they further demonstrate the diversity of commercial concerns between the two towns.

In Liverpool, advertisements for shop premises for sale or let were primarily focused on the state and scope of the building. References to the quality of associated lodgings were common, and advertisements often featured details about the size and state of the house, fixtures and shop front. Advertisements for premises such as Mr Walker’s shop on Castle Street, featured details of dimensions and frontage, so that prospective new tenants might assess the capacity for window display and the setting out of their trade. Besides including the address of the shops, the Liverpool advertisements did not typically include further references to the location of the buildings or state of the street and district in which the property was situated. The focus of the property advertisements in Liverpool remained consistent throughout our period, with the advertisements from the 1750s and 1760s paying as much attention to the building and

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68 For an account of the living quarters attached to shops in Liverpool and Manchester in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, see Barker, and Hamlett, ‘Living Above the Shop’, pp. 311-28, and H. Barker’s (forthcoming) *Family and Business*.
69 Mr Walker’s shop is listed in the *Advertiser* as ‘containing in front to the said street 14 feet, and runs in depth backwards 45 feet’, *Liverpool Advertiser*, 13 Jan. 1763.
state of the shop as the advertisements of the 1790s. This is significantly different to the Manchester advertisements which evolved from a focus on the extant business of the property on offer in the 1750s to an emphasis on the quality of the street by the end of the century. As has been established, the bulk of Liverpool’s development had taken place by the 1750s, and high-end shops had consolidated around the streets that had been long associated with refinement and gentility. Unlike in Manchester, the maps presented in the previous section showed little evidence of the creation of new high-end districts throughout the century in Liverpool. That these districts were well-established by the time that newspaper advertisements appeared explains the focus on the shop, rather than the district.

In Manchester, the development of high-end shopping districts was ongoing, and different parts of the towns were undergoing improvement at different points in the century. Consequently, advertisements for shops situated within these districts tell a slightly different story. Advertisements for the sale or letting of shop premises in Manchester demonstrate a significant shift in focus from the specifics of the business and facilities available to the location and quality of the buildings between the 1750s and 1790s. When the first newspaper advertisements of the 1750s advertised shop premises for sale or let, the focus was on the state of the facilities. Details specific to the trade of the seller were incorporated into the advertisements, such as Samuel Mellor’s advertisement for a ‘good, convenient grocer’s shop, with three ovens, large yard and warehouse and other conveniences for a grocer’. The advertisements of the 1750s suggest that prospective tenants or purchasers would continue the existent trade in the same premises. Often shops were advertised for sale or let alongside the stock in trade of the business associated with the building, such as the linen drapery and millinery goods of Mrs Oldham’s Queen’s Street shop ‘who is in a state of bad health, and hath declined business’, or Mary Fenshaw’s advertisement for the shop and stock of her baker’s business following her husband’s death, which promised ‘the whole stock in trade of the late Daniel

70 *Manchester Mercury*, 27 Dec. 1757.
Fenshaw, at the lower end of Smithy-Door, Manchester, Bread Baker, deceased: a well accustomed shop neatly fitted up. The shop is in a very convenient House with good Warehousing and cellaring to be let to the purchaser. Alongside this shop was offered ‘A good house and shop, adjoining to the above, late in the possession of Mr. William Hall, linen-draper’. Readers were told that ‘Both the above houses are four stories high, and have been built but a few years’. These advertisements suggested that the quality and newness of the buildings was very important, while references to the quality of the streets or the area in which the business was situated were uncommon, with just 6 of the 95 (6%) advertisements sampled in the 1750s displaying this tendency.

As the century progressed, and Manchester’s provision for high-end trade developed, the focus of newspaper advertisements for shops shifted. While previously the assumption had been that the new proprietor would continue the business of the previous one, this kind of stipulation was much less frequent by the 1770s. The outgoing business ceased to be the principal attraction, and the location of the building became the main selling point. From the mid-1760s, advertisements started to include more overt references to the benefits provided by the specific location of the shops being advertised. Descriptions such as ‘situated on a good accustomed lane’, and ‘situated on one of the most public streets near the centre of the town’, highlighted the capacity of the premises to capitalise on passing trade in the busier shopping districts of the town. Following the improvements to the buildings and streets of many of the town’s shopping districts in the 1770s, advertisements started to reflect the desirability of the location of the buildings for reasons of elegance and gentility rather than commerciality and passing trade. Descriptions such as ‘shop to be let, in a genteel part of Manchester’; ‘a very pleasantly situated shop’; and ‘house and shop to let in an agreeable part of the town’, were a much more common method of advertising shops and warehouses for sale from the mid-1770s – some 38% (25 of 66)
of advertisements for property in 1775 and 42% (33 of 78) in 1785 featured this type of detail – and references to the specifics of trade of the outgoing owners or tenants were relatively infrequent. Advertisements such as this from 1778 show that the position of the building was in itself an indicator of the desirability of the business:

To be LET

And entered upon on or before the 24th June next, that newly-built elegant SHOP AND PREMISES which fronts to St. Ann’s Square and Exchange Street, which for eligibility of Situation, is not exceeded; as the premises is now ready for occupation, a good tenant offering, will meet with every encouragement he would wish, and rent so moderate, as to furnish him with the shop equally cheap to any in Manchester in a like valuable situation.

For further particulars apply to James Wardle, who also has to let a good, roomy warehouse in Crow Alleys, Exchange Street and several in Shepherd’s Court in Deansgate.

The shift in focus apparent in the Manchester advertising demonstrates a direct response to the development of the town on the part of its retailers. It shows that as streets were improved and new districts created, shop premises along these streets became valuable assets and were advertised accordingly. By the 1770s, building owners were marketing their properties to prospective shopkeepers in a way that highlighted the position of the building on the established centres for high-end trade, or in the recently developed new areas of the town. As has been shown, this was a successful strategy, and shopkeepers specialising in high-end goods migrated to the areas that had undergone the most improvement. The next section of this chapter will examine the maintenance and protection of these assets once shopkeepers were situated in their new and elegant surroundings.

Markets, Cleanliness, Dispute: Protecting Investment on the Streets.

Suppliers were not only active in creating distinct areas of high-end trade in Liverpool and Manchester, but also took on the responsibility of maintaining the appearance, cleanliness and

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73 Manchester Mercury, 12 Jul. 1773; 28 Apr. 1778; 3 Nov. 1778. All advertisements for property for sale or to let in the Mercury in the years 1775 and 1785 were surveyed for the percentages cited here.

74 Manchester Mercury, 10 Jun. 1778.
reputations of these districts. Local policing and legislation ensured that the regulation of the streets was partly the responsibility of local government. However, individuals were primarily responsible for maintaining the standards of respectability associated with the improved districts and complying with the demands of the landlords. This chapter will now examine some of the issues that arose when the way land was developed by landlords was at odds with the interests or opinions of tenants, in order to assess how active high-end retailers were in the practices of the regulatory authorities in our towns.

In 1748, following petitioning from the merchant-led Corporation, Liverpool was granted what Sidney and Beatrice Webb described as ‘the real start of an almost continual steam of Local Acts establishing bodies of improvement commissioners’ throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The terms of this Act were that the town would elect commissioners who would be accountable for improving and maintaining the town’s streets, squares and common areas. The model of Liverpool’s 1748 Act, wherein the new commissioners were given responsibility to ensure that the town was kept clean, lit, repaired and secure, and to punish inhabitants of the town who contravened the terms of the Act, was one that had been adopted by a small number of towns earlier in the century (Salisbury in 1737, for instance). This model grew in popularity during the middle of the century, with some fifty-two Improvement Commissions having been created by 1769.

Unsurprisingly, the individuals listed in the 1748 Act itself were all merchants, and as such were primarily concerned with the development of the town’s port and the money generated by importing and exporting goods. As has been noted, this was also true of the make-

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76 Act of Parliament, 21 Geo. II. C.24 (Liverpool Improvement Act, 1748).
up of the Common Council of the Corporation, and the individuals named in the later Act of 1785 that was chiefly concerned with the improvement of the port.\textsuperscript{78} However, once the Improvement Commissions had been established, retailers formed a significant proportion of the commissioners in the town, and as such took an active role in the maintenance and protection of their streets. Gore’s 1766 directory includes the peruke maker, Thomas Leatherbarrow, the painter, Edward Alcock, the wine merchant, Robert Hesketh and the grocer, William Edwardson, among a list of ‘Commissioners of the Watch, Lamps and Scavengers’, indicating that retailers, some of whom were high-end, were actively involved in the physical improvement of their commercial environment.\textsuperscript{79}

Despite the comparatively disorganised structures of local government in Manchester, retailers in the town also took an active role in regulating their streets. Prior to the 1790s, just two Parliamentary Acts had been passed concerning improvement to Manchester’s streets. The first of these was the 1765 Manchester and Salford Police Act – which, while ostensibly allocating responsibility for the cleanliness of some parts of the town, did not go beyond confirming that constables had some power to organise this.\textsuperscript{80} The second Act, the Manchester Improvement Act of 1777, authorised the expansion and paving of some of the streets around The Exchange, which would be paid for by public subscription.\textsuperscript{81} The principal and most effective Act, which explicitly stated responsibility for improving and regulating Manchester’s streets, came in 1792, although as Sweet has noted, ‘it was always possible to introduce improvement without seeking statutory authority for it’, and the absence of earlier legislation does not indicate an absence of earlier improvement in the town.\textsuperscript{82}

\textsuperscript{78} Act of Parliament, 25 Geo. III. C.15 (Liverpool Street Improvement Act, 1785).
\textsuperscript{79} Gore, \textit{The Liverpool Directory} (1766), p. 20; 3; 16; 11. The other commissioners listed in this 1766 volume were Thomas Birch, merchant; Joseph Jackson, gentleman; Nicholas Crook, gentleman; James Barton, brewer; Caryl Fleetwood, brewer; Thomas Payne, brewer; George Mort, tanner; Charles Woods, merchant; Thomas Mears, merchant; John Beckwith, merchant; John Leather, currier; Richard Townsend, chandler and Thomas Jennion, brewer.
\textsuperscript{80} Act of Parliament, 5 Geo. III. C. 81 (Manchester Police Act, 1765).
\textsuperscript{81} Act of Parliament, 16 Geo. III. C. 63 (Manchester Improvement Act, 1777).
\textsuperscript{82} Sweet, \textit{The English Town}, p. 46.
the context of what the Webbs termed the ‘indescribable disorder’ of the many and varied bodies of local government with a responsibility for improvement – which was noted in the introduction to this thesis and included churchwardens and overseers, the Justices of the Peace, the assembled members of the Vestry, and the officers of the Court Leet.\(^83\) One of the intentions of the Act was to simplify the process of improvement while clarifying who had responsibility for the regulation of the streets.\(^84\) The 1792 Act repealed the confusing and complicated 1765 Act, and stated that two commissions would be set up: one for Manchester and one for Salford, and that these commissions would be organised by elected Police Constables. Each commission would be responsible for street building and improvements, for appointing special constables whose responsibility it was to watch the streets and keep the peace, and could contract lamp-lighters, scavengers and other workers to ensure that the streets of Manchester were kept clean, well-lit and safe.\(^85\)

Manchester’s new Police Commissioner system was anomalous in the national context, and was a symptom of how Manchester had outgrown its system of governance by the mid-to-late century. The new system allowed for an increased number of Manchester’s residents to become active in the regulation of their streets, and to ensure that the streets were clean, well-lit, and secure. John Scholes’ 1797 directory lists the special constables of Manchester by district and, as with Liverpool’s improvement commissioners, many of the town’s constables with a responsibility for maintaining cleanliness, lighting, and security were retailers. Scholes’ list for the St. Ann’s District of the town included Robert Tate, tea-dealer and confectioner; Benjamin Wilson, shop-keeper; James Kay, tailor, who also served as the clerk of St. Ann’s church; and

\(^85\) Act of Parliament, 32 Geo. III. C. 69 (Manchester Police Commissioners Act, 1792).
Jospeh Owen, grocer. Of the 212 individuals listed as a Special Constables in Manchester in 1797, 43 (some 20%) were listed in the same directory as also being the retailers of goods.

Predictably, shopkeepers who had paid a premium for premises in the best parts of the towns were active in protecting their investment, but shopkeepers in high-end districts were quite tolerant of other, less elegant purveyors of goods on their doorstep. Unlike in many other provincial towns, suppliers selling high-end goods from fixed-shops in both Liverpool and Manchester appear to have been happy to coexist alongside the traditional market places – providing that the noise, odours and bustle of the market was properly regulated, while cleanliness and aesthetics were seen as being of paramount importance. The shift from weekly markets as the principal outlet for the purchase of goods to fixed shops has been frequently identified and examined by historians. While markets were still a primary source of trade for foodstuffs in urban centres, fixed shops were increasingly becoming the method of sale for high-end goods throughout the early-eighteenth century, and were well-established as standard by 1800. Alongside the identification of a shift from markets to shops, some historians have identified a difference in the perception of quality and refinement between shopping in markets and visiting permanent shops. Mitchell has argued that ‘increased specialisation and concentration on luxury trades’ saw markets decline as a desirable method of retail in the smartest districts. He contends that ‘as town populations grew the nuisance became worse and, at least in those places which had pretensions as shopping and cultural centres, the smell, filth

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86 Scholes, *Manchester and Salford Directory* (Manchester, 1797), p. 175. The full list of Special Constables is incorporated in the listings for the ‘Boroughreeve Constables etc. of the Towns of Manchester and Salford’ in this volume, pp. 170-178.
and chaos [of markets] were intolerable'. Mitchell provides examples of attempts to improve and maintain market places from the middle of the century, and suggests that there was a ‘gradual abandonment’ of the market place by suppliers who retreated into their own private premises, and which was indicative of a ‘growing demand for retailing facilities’ in Cheshire. He suggests that in the leisure towns of his study, consumers were put off by sensory experience of the market place, and that shopkeepers were keen to distance themselves from them.

Over the border in Lancashire however, the distinction between shopping street and market place was less acute. As has been noted, the smartest shops in Liverpool were to be found in and around Castle Street. However, this area of the town was also home to the green market, which sold fruits, vegetables and produce. Wallace’s *General and Descriptive History of the Ancient and Present State of Liverpool* notes this anomaly, but his objections to the situation were aesthetic, and he claimed that the elegance of Castle Street was not mirrored by the view of the back of the market stalls, ‘unless a general prospect of cabbages and potatoes can be so called’. Wallace wrote:

> Looking to the south [of Castle Street], you see nothing but a confused group of matter in the vicinity of the green market[…]If from the bottom of the street the view is taken northward, the impropriety is most glaring. […] it thereby totally destroys the effect of the most elegant, magnificent and pleasing vista.

Although Wallace discussed the ‘impropriety’ of the view of the market place, his objections were not based on the juxtaposition of the two methods of selling goods, but rather on the displeasing visual effect that came about through a lack of centrally planned development. Wallace went on to suggest that the market place could actually have enhanced the streetscape of Castle Street had the buildings been planned better, writing that ‘the obelisk in the market place would in no small degree have increased embellishment’ if the developers of the district (i.e., the

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91 Mitchell, ‘The Development of Urban Retailing’, p. 266.
92 The way historians have used smell as a way of accessing experiences of urban space in the eighteenth and nineteenth century has been strongly influenced by A. Corbain, *The Foul and the Fragrant: Odour and the French Social Imagination* (Harvard, 1988), which theorised the effects odour exercised over the lives of industrialising towns.
Corporation), had given greater consideration to the placement of buildings and the arrangement of market stalls. That Wallace did not mention any sense of displeasure at the closeness of the green market to the town’s most elegant shops in terms other than aesthetics is significant, and suggests that the concerns identified by Mitchell in Chester, and by others in more established southern provincial towns, were not shared by shopkeepers in Liverpool – at least not for the relatively inoffensive goods on sale at the green market. The idea that market places and shopping streets ought to be distinct in order to separate the unrefined hustle and bustle of the market place from the elegant experience of shopping as a social activity was apparently not a concern of suppliers and consumers in Liverpool, and no other complaints have been identified.

The tolerance of busy market places alongside the smartest shopping streets was mirrored in Manchester, where in some cases the presence of markets was actively celebrated as a welcome addition to newly developed, high-end districts. In his Description of the Country, Aikin boasted of a new market in New Cross, built after Stevenson’s development of the area in the late 1770s, writing:

Manchester possesses a neat theatre, an elegant and capacious concert room, and large and commodious assembly rooms. It has two commodious market-places near the centre of the town. Another market at the New Cross, top of Oldham Street, has in some measure formed itself, and is very convenient for this new and populous part of the Town. Aikin described Manchester’s market places alongside the theatre (built in 1753), concert rooms (from 1780), and assembly room (early-eighteenth century), and mentioned the proximity of the markets to the centre of the town and in the new district, further indicating that suppliers of high-end goods seemed content to conduct their business alongside market places that were often eschewed in other towns, such as Bath or Chester. That Liverpool and Manchester both saw a juxtaposition of markets with the most elegant, high-end shopping streets in a way that

94 Wallace, A General and Descriptive History, p. 89.
95 Aikin, A Description of the Country, pp. 201-202.
96 See Stobart, First Industrial Region, p. 152; Borsay, English Urban Renaissance, p. 142; Sweet, The English Town, p. 235.
would have been unacceptable in contemporary leisure towns is indicative of an awareness of a practical need to develop the towns’ centres in a way that could accommodate both the expanding taste for luxury and the expanding populations. While those responsible for the commercial geography of more established leisure towns might not have countenanced markets next to the smartest streets, the expanding and dynamic shopping districts of Liverpool and Manchester had to cater for thousands of residents, and this necessitated the optimal use of space in the towns’ central shopping streets. Moreover, the proximity of shops to market stalls was convenient, and, for the new consumer markets, provided shoppers with a retail environment with which they were more familiar.

The proximity of shops and markets did, however, necessitate stringent rules about cleanliness and hygiene to keep the streets clean, in which shopkeepers of both towns took an active role. Sweet has suggested that the regulation and cleanliness of shopping streets was ‘the most visibly pressing administrative need in any town’, and has argued that dirty, impassable streets, as well as being aesthetically displeasing, ‘acted as an impediment to trade and deterred visitors’. It was crucial that the privately developed premises on public streets were properly and collectively maintained to protect the commercial interests of towns. But differences in the level of civic involvement, and the timescale of regulation, provide us with further evidence of distinctions between our two towns. As previously noted, in Liverpool, detailed instructions for maintaining the cleanliness of commercial streets were written into law in the 1740s. The town’s 1748 Act instructed that:

all and every person and persons inhabiting within the said borough and town, shall, from and after the said first day of July seven hundred and forty eight, sweep and cleanse, or cause to be swept clean, all the Streets, Lanes and Publick Places before their respective houses, buildings, and Walls, Twice in

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every week at least; that is to say, every Monday and Thursday in the week, or oftener, if occasion be, between the hours of two and five in the morning.  

The obligation on the individual to maintain his or her own property, and the surrounding area, in a clean and tidy manner was written into official local regulation in Liverpool by the middle of the century. Fines were levied by the new commissioners against those who failed to comply with the instructions for bi-weekly dirt and refuge collection (i.e., that refuge was left for collection in a specified place), which was undertaken by Scavengers paid for by the local authority. In Manchester, the official stipulation that residents and business owners must take responsibility for the sweeping and cleanliness of their own premises was not a matter for the constables of the towns until much later in the century with the aforementioned 1792 Act, which formally ratified police commissioners in the town with powers to enforce street cleanliness. The terms of this Act were explained to the town’s residents in an advertisements taken out in the *Manchester Mercury*:

> all persons shall sweep before, and on the sides of their houses, Warehouses, Shops and other buildings, to the middle of the street, on Mondays and Fridays, between the hours of Six and Ten o’clock in the Forenoon, and collect and put together the dirt into heaps, upon pain of forfeiting Five Shillings for every Offence or Neglect.  

This notice in the *Mercury* indicates that the protection and upkeep of Manchester’s developed streets was, by the end of the century, a requirement for residents of the town and that failure to do so was punishable by fines collected by the new special constables. Manchester’s legislation for organised, compulsory street cleaning came some years after the comparable Liverpool Act of Parliament, and is a further indication of the differences in the way the commercial districts of the two towns developed. By the end of the century, rather than being an important but optional way for individual shopkeepers to entice custom, exterior cleanliness in both towns was

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100 Act of Parliament, 21 Geo. II. C.24 (Liverpool Improvement Act, 1748).
101 See also an account of the role of scavengers in Liverpool (albeit from the nineteenth century), in Sweet, *The English Town*, p. 76.
102 *Manchester Mercury*, 2 Jan. 1792. This notice also featured an advertisement for ‘a number of Scavengers wanted, to whom good Wages will be given’, and an offer of a reward of twenty guineas for information leading to the arrest of ‘some malicious person or persons unknown’ who had been stealing the lamps from the lamp irons in the town.
regulated and enforced by commissioners, of whom a significant proportion were retailers, and
the foundations for a much greater level of involvement from civic authorities in town planning
had been laid.

Although dissent from such regulations appears to have been rare, inevitably disputes
arose between individual shopkeepers and the authorities. As Chalkin tells us, the responsibility
for urban street improvement lay with a wide variety of organisations and individuals, and
differed from borough to borough: ‘Parish surveyors of highways had a general responsibility.
Sometimes the manorial Court Leet, individual landlords, private corporations or charities
holding considerable private property, or wealthy private subscribers took action.’

Manchester, as has been established, was one such town that relied on private individuals to raise the capital
for improvement, and, unsurprisingly given the number of cloth merchants with a need for
warehouse and retail space in the town, the textile industry took an active role in attempting to
organise and improve the town’s commercial streets – albeit later in the century than Liverpool’s
merchants. In 1775 a list was published by the Cotton Manufacturer’s Company which detailed
individuals who had ‘subscribed to the improvement of the streets in Manchester’, with records
taken of monies expended and subscriptions that had been pledged but not yet received. The
accounts made by the treasurer, John Potter, were carefully examined by James Hodson, James
Billinge, Daniel Whittaker, and Nathaniel Philips – chief subscribers who were all involved in the
textile trade in the town. These accounts detail some 78 subscribers to the cause, many of
whom were listed as suppliers of high-end consumables in the town’s trade directories. This list
is particularly pertinent because of an intriguing postscript which details an instance of
contention between the board and one of the shopkeeper-tenant subscribers, which reads:

103 Chalkin, Rise of the English Town, p. 32. See also Sweet’s work on Improvement Commissions in The English Town,
104 Potter was listed as a yarn merchant in Raffald’s 1781 directory, Hodson a check manufacturer, Billinge as a silk
and check dyer, Whittaker as a check manufacturer, and Philips as a hatter. Raffald, The Manchester and Salford
Mr Stevenson paid the 50l. to the Cotton Manufacturer’s Company, but insisted on a conditional Receipt, to have his money back with 4 per cent interest in case his shop in Old Mill Gate should be taken down; which receipt was given, but on further consideration, they thought it an improper one and returned the money in a few days, and took back their receipt. Nothing has since been paid, Mr. Stevenson alleging that he did not subscribe his money to take down his own shop, and appeals to the Subscription Articles.105

The objection of Mr. Stevenson, who is listed as a tobacconist on Old Mill Gate in Raffald’s 1772 directory, suggests that despite his initial subscription to the improvement of shopping streets in Manchester, there would be no guarantee that the shop he rented would remain standing. Stevenson’s case is particularly unusual: he was certified as insane and was committed to the local asylum, and although his wife attempted to continue the business in the same premises, she was ultimately evicted by her landlord – although she continued to trade listed as tobacconist at other addresses throughout the 1780s and 1790s.106 However, the argument is suggestive of a system of improvement that did not assure that the interests of subscribers would be protected solely on the basis of monies paid, but rather took a wider approach whereby improvement was undertaken which best served the collective interest and the town.

Evidence of the maintenance of improved streets and supplier-led protection of the genteel environments for high-end shopping reveals the importance shopkeepers attached to their premises and immediate environment. The commercial streets in Liverpool and Manchester were subjected to civic regulation at different points throughout the century, but both towns saw suppliers take responsibility for the cleanliness and protection of both their façades and the streetscape. As will be explored in the next chapter, the frontage of the shop and the street on which it was situated was an important marketing tool for suppliers. This section has demonstrated that although disputes between landowners, commissioners and subscribers

105 Subscribed to the Improvement of the Streets in Manchester, as by List Dated 25th July 1775, list reprint (Manchester 1783), p. 4.
occasionally occurred, shopkeepers were generally willing to work together to regulate the streets and protect their collective investments.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to build upon existing research on improvement in eighteenth-century provincial towns by focusing on the way shopkeepers responded to urban development and created new districts for high-end trade. It has examined the creation of commercial space in Liverpool and Manchester, and has explored the value that shopkeepers attached to elegant premises on the smartest streets. The retail industry, and particularly the sale of high-end or luxury goods, was an important part of the economy for growing provincial towns throughout the eighteenth century. As Berg and Hudson suggest, in seeking to understand the processes and geography of industrialisation, we should not ignore changes in the wider economy.\(^{107}\) Studying the retail industry is thus vital for historians interested in how towns developed commercially, culturally and geographically. Understanding the layout of commercial space and the process of urban improvement and development allows us to better comprehend the social and economic history of towns and their inhabitants. As Stobart argues, ‘the spatial structure of the urban system thus becomes central to understanding the nature and development of the regional space economy.’\(^{108}\) The way shopping streets and districts developed in Liverpool and Manchester are particularly pertinent because they shed new light on the creation of shopping districts in newly developed areas of industrialising towns.

This chapter has shown that shopkeepers in Liverpool consolidated around well-established districts that had been long associated with luxury trade, whereas the Manchester suppliers were keen to explore new and developing areas. Although Manchester and Liverpool were geographically close towns, whose economies flourished throughout the eighteenth and


\(^{108}\) Stobart, *First Industrial Region*, p. 169.
nineteenth centuries, significant differences existed in the processes of their development that reflect the differences in the town’s systems of civic administration. The differences serve to highlight some of the variable concerns, perceptions and priorities of shopkeepers and those responsible for urban improvement. Such case studies reveal the importance of examining provincial towns individually, and investing in the research required to paint an accurate picture of commercial development. Provincial towns, even closely related ones, did not develop in the same way or with the same priorities, and should not be grouped together because they share a common region.

Together, the first and second chapters of this thesis have set out the backdrop against which high-end shopping took place in Liverpool and Manchester. The notions of Liverpool as a well-established, genteel place in which residents and visitors to the town could experience the same type of goods and services in the same type of urban landscape as in London was echoed in the development of the high-end shopping districts in the town. Largely thanks to the efforts of the Corporation, the streets that had already been improved and much admired at the start of the century continued to attract shopkeepers of the highest status, with little evidence of a divergence into new districts. In unincorporated Manchester, the sense of newness, bustle and ‘different spirit’ of the traders that had been remarked on by visitors was also manifested in the town’s commercial geography. New areas for high-end shopping appeared at every stage of the town’s piecemeal improvement, resulting in at least three distinct areas for high-end trade in the town by 1800. Having established the context of the way the towns were perceived and the physical layout of the shopping areas, the final two chapters of this thesis will examine how suppliers and consumers operated within this commercial environment and partook in both the supply of, and in fuelling the demand for, high-end goods.
Chapter Three: Suppliers and their Marketing in Liverpool and Manchester

This chapter examines the way high-end suppliers marketed and sold their goods in Liverpool and Manchester during the eighteenth century. It will address the activity of suppliers in the towns’ distinct consumer markets by examining how products were advertised, by establishing what the principal selling points were in enticing custom, and by identifying patterns in the behaviour of suppliers in the two towns. The questions that this chapter addresses are: who were some of the key individual suppliers operating in the towns, and how did their behaviour exemplify the actions of suppliers in the region? What types of high-end goods were advertised in each of our towns? What methods of advertising and marketing did suppliers employ? What differences existed between advertising in the towns, and what do these tell us about the markets of Manchester and Liverpool? In addressing these questions, the chapter will demonstrate how an analysis of supplier behaviour in provincial towns reveals the nuances and differences between consumer markets that strengthen our understanding of the commercial environment of eighteenth-century Britain.

The main argument made in this chapter is that suppliers in Liverpool and Manchester served different markets, and that their behaviour reflected this. Liverpool suppliers marketed their goods to consumers led by metropolitan fashions and a desire to match their peers in London, while in Manchester affordability was the principal driving force, and comparisons with other markets were usually made more locally. The significant differences in markets and supplier behaviour between the two towns that this chapter identifies highlight a need for regional and town-based case studies of markets and supplier activity that have not appeared in the literature of regional markets to the same extent as in studies of provincial consumers.

A further argument made in this chapter concerns the way individual traders marketed themselves as desirable people with whom to do business. Suppliers in both towns practised distinct pioneering methods of sale and marketing that have primarily been identified in supplier
activity of the nineteenth century. Unsurprisingly, many of the public roles played by suppliers—such as involvement in active networks of commercial interest—were directly related to the protection of their markets or promotion of their goods. The absence of established guilds has been cited as a reason for the early industrial success of towns in the North West. However, networks of mutual security between traders did exist which served to protect the interests of those who were traditionally competitors. Suppliers in both Liverpool and Manchester also played prominent roles in their society that, at least on the surface, had little to do with their commercial endeavours. Prolific publishing careers, active roles in civic development and contributions to literary, philosophical and theatrical organisations were not uncommon among suppliers, and their involvement in such activities and organisations was deliberately conspicuous, fuelled in part by a desire to signify a sense of gentility that consumers could buy into when choosing to purchase from a particular supplier.

Addressing how suppliers operated in their local economies is important in furthering our understanding of the commercial history of provincial towns, but has been a relatively unexplored avenue in the historiography of provincial consumption. When compared with the body of work on consumers in the eighteenth century, the literature specifically focused on the role of suppliers is small. Following McKendrick’s work on Wedgwood, Lorna and Hoh-Cheung Mui’s *Shops and Shopkeeping in Eighteenth-Century England* was the first volume to present research solely based on the activity of eighteenth-century suppliers. This book provided a valuable analysis of London-based supplier activity which has served as a benchmark for subsequent studies on suppliers, but was rather less convincing in its accounts of ‘provincial traders’. The data from the Muis’ analysis of consumer markets in towns outside of London was

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3 The historiography of the eighteenth-century consumer will be discussed at length in the next chapter.

considered as a single body of evidence, and towns such as Bristol, Norwich and Manchester were considered as a homogenous group in a way that did not take into account differences in the towns’ infrastructure, socio-economic profiles, or how established they were as centres for trade. More recently, John Benson and Laura Ugolini’s edited collection, *A Nation of Shopkeepers: Five Centuries of British Retailing* featured work based on eighteenth-century suppliers by Claire Walsh and Nancy Cox, who have both analysed supplier behaviour in subsequent work, although this too has been based primarily on London markets. Studies more focused on suppliers in northern towns have been undertaken by Jon Stobart and Hannah Barker, who have shown that many towns in the north had sophisticated retail markets that were able to sustain luxury economies prior to industrialisation. The existence of such a relatively small literature on eighteenth-century suppliers means that there is scope for more detailed analysis of the provincial supplier in the eighteenth century.

This chapter’s analysis is based on three distinct areas: an exploration of newspaper advertisements; case studies of key individual suppliers; and an investigation into how the physical spaces of exchange were used to entice buyers. As noted in the previous chapter, the towns’ newspaper advertisements further reinforce the argument that the consumer markets in Liverpool and Manchester were distinct, and reflected that way that residents in the towns thought about themselves. Newspaper advertisements provide evidence of the way in which suppliers marketed and sold their wares, and we can see key differences in the way that the language of advertising was used by suppliers. This chapter explores the way that ideas of politeness and gentility were evoked in advertisements. It also addresses the role of London in

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5 See Mui and Mui, *Shops and Shopkeeping*, pp. 62-72, particularly ‘Table 6: Major Shop Trades in London and the Provinces’, (p. 62); and ‘Table 7: Major Shop Trades: London, Bristol, Norwich and Manchester’, (p. 67).


selling products to provincial consumers in the most widely circulated newspapers in the towns by exploring whether consumers were being urged by suppliers to emulate metropolitan styles. Analysis of the language used in newspaper advertisements further reveals the relationship between politeness, taste and trade.

Alongside advertising in the towns’ newspapers, suppliers frequently advertised their goods and premises through trade cards, some of which have survived. Trade cards of suppliers in Manchester and Liverpool are significant in the way they incorporated (or ignored) the physical spaces of exchange and the exterior of the shop. This allows us to visualise how suppliers represented their window displays and the ‘kerb appeal’ of their shops, but also suggests that suppliers in Manchester were keen to advertise that their premises were situated in one of the newly developed areas of the town that were identified as desirable in the previous chapter. Again, a different story is told by the Liverpool trade cards and images, where the process of exchange is disguised by imagery of ornate respectability. The chapter explores some of the surviving trade card images, and argues that the imagery chosen by suppliers in their trade cards further demonstrates differences between the consumer markets of Liverpool and Manchester during the eighteenth century.

The chapter also examines the behaviour of three individual suppliers in order to demonstrate differences in supplier behaviour, and particularly regarding the way that London was used as a point of reference in selling goods in Liverpool and Manchester. The individual suppliers studied in this chapter were chosen because they demonstrate the active, entrepreneurial and pioneering role of some of the suppliers in the towns. They are examples of the way contemporary suppliers in neighbouring towns behaved differently in order to meet the demands of their specific markets, and their behaviour demonstrates some of the main differences in the consumer markets of the towns. In Manchester, confectioner, inn-keeper and writer, Elizabeth Raffald, and tea-dealer, Aulay Macaulay, both worked to strengthen their town’s
commercial independence. Alongside offering the kinds of high-end goods available in the more established local leisure towns at prices more attractive to the Manchester pocket, Raffald and Macaulay made contributions to the civic development of the town that would help strengthen the commercial competitiveness of Manchester and lessen the need for prospective consumers to seek alternate centres of luxury trade. By contrast, clothing merchant Joshua Lawton of Liverpool was operating in a very different market, and was catering for a discerning clientele to whom budget was a small obstacle in achieving the finest London fashions. Lawton exploited the demands of his market and provided consumers in Liverpool with direct access to information about, and access to, the goods being purchased in London.

**Newspaper advertising in Liverpool and Manchester 1753-1796**

Advertisements in the press provide clear information about the types of goods that were on sale and who was selling them, but they also shed light on how these goods were marketed, give us indications of price and method of sale, and provide us with information about local markets that would not otherwise be available. Through the analysis of the language used in newspaper advertisements, the method of sale advertised, and the role of price and quality of goods, this section will demonstrate that suppliers in Liverpool were inclined to highlight the superior quality of their goods, and that consumers in the town could purchase the fashionable products of the metropolis locally. Mancunian suppliers were, by contrast, much more likely to focus on the affordability of the products on sale, and their advertisements were less concerned with London fashions. The differences between markets that the newspaper advertisements highlight are significant as they reflect the demography of consumers in the towns. Liverpool’s wealthy mercantile population had long seen itself as refined, tasteful and a real contender to London, not only in terms of the port, but in the manners and fashions of its inhabitants. This was not so in Manchester, where the capital bought to the city through manufacture and industrialisation came later. As the two largest towns in what was arguably the most vibrant and rapidly expanding economic region of later eighteenth-century Britain, newspaper advertising in
Manchester and Liverpool is valuable as a source in accessing the diversity of provincial markets. The differences identified in newspaper advertising in the two towns support one of the overarching themes of this thesis: that in order for conclusions to be drawn about the nature of provincial supply and demand, more focused and region-specific research needs to be undertaken.

Newspaper advertisements have often been used by historians as a tool to gauge consumption and commercial development in a particular town or region, but primarily from the perspective of the consumer, or to assess the types of goods that were on sale. Much less present in the literature on printed advertisements are in-depth supplier-focused studies of the way newspaper advertisements were used as a marketing tool. The work of Hannah Barker and Jon Stobart has shed some light on the way that suppliers operated in northern towns – particularly in terms of the goods available – and it is to this recent discussion of suppliers in provincial northern towns that the following comparison of two of the fastest-growing economies in the north aims to contribute.

As with the previous chapter, the newspapers used here are the Manchester Mercury and the Liverpool Advertiser. For the Manchester advertisements this survey starts in 1753, the first full calendar year of the Mercury's circulation. The surveyed years for Manchester are therefore 1753, 1763, 1773, 1783 and 1793. For the Advertiser, advertisements samples have also been taken at

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ten-yearly intervals from 1756 (then 1766, 1776, 1786 and 1796). The total number of advertisements surveyed in this study is 1784: 728 from the *Liverpool Advertiser* and 1056 from the *Manchester Mercury*. The presence of over 300 fewer newspaper advertisements for high-end goods in Liverpool compared to Manchester is explained by the differences in suppliers’ motivation for advertising. Establishing these motivations is inevitably difficult given that suppliers did not record their reasons for advertising in this way, but the most likely explanations are re-location and novelty. Because Manchester developed in a way that created new high-end markets in new parts of the town, migration to these newer districts required suppliers to advertise their change of address to notify their existing customers of their new premises and to encourage new custom. In Liverpool, re-location to new areas was less common, and suppliers tended to congregate around established high-end districts where they would stay, as shown in Figure 2.14, in the previous chapter of this thesis. The discrepancy in the number of newspaper advertisements does not necessarily indicate fewer high-end businesses in the town. As table 2.2 and 2.3 in the previous chapter have shown, analyses of the towns’ trade directories suggest that the total number of high-end supplies was broadly similar in Liverpool and Manchester. Nor were the types of goods being advertised in the towns significantly different, as will be demonstrated. The proportion of advertisements in the *Manchester Mercury* that were notifications of a change in address are significant: 204 of the 1056 (19.4%), compared to 47 of the 728 (6.5%) of similar notifications in the *Liverpool Advertiser* advertisements.

Another possible explanation for the difference in the number of advertisements is the less established nature of Manchester as a market for luxury in comparison with Liverpool. As Berg tells us, new businesses, or businesses in newer markets, were more likely to advertise in newspapers and elsewhere than businesses that were well-established with extant customer bases, in order to develop the ‘consumer consciousness’ within emergent markets. 10 Although by the

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middle of the century Manchester had the types of businesses that had long been identified in
Liverpool (and indeed the Mancunian suppliers had slightly overtaken those in Liverpool in
terms of numbers), the market for such goods in Manchester was newer. It is possible that
advertisements in Manchester surpass those in Liverpool as a result of the relative novelty of the
types of goods available in the town, and the need for suppliers in Manchester to make
themselves known to increasing numbers of consumers was greater than in Liverpool.

Type of Goods and Services Advertised

As shown in the previous chapter and in existing research, the availability of high-end goods in
Liverpool and Manchester was widespread by the middle of the eighteenth century. The
Manchester Mercury in 1753 and the Liverpool Advertiser in 1756 featured advertisements for the
towns' jewellers, florists, picture frame makers, furniture makers, tea and coffee merchants,
wines, brandy and rum salesmen, and for tailors, dressmakers, leather goods, guns and pistols.
By the 1760s this list had expanded in both towns to include such businesses as painters,
perfumers, toy shops, luggage shops, stationers and organ builders. In the 1770s, confectioners,
ladies' wigmakers, glovers, gold dealers and foreign china merchants were included in both the
Mercury and the Advertiser – and the presence of businesses specialising in these trades is
confirmed by listings in the towns new trade directories. By the 1780s, the Mercury included
examples of advertisements for paint makers, wax models and portraits, paper hangings and the

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11 Barker, ““Smoke Cities””, p. 181; Stobart, Hann and Morgan, *Spaces of Consumption*, p. 178.
12 See for example: Manchester Mercury, 9 Jan. 1753; 13 Feb. 1753; 20 Feb. 1753; 27 Feb. 1753; 17 Apr. 1753; 22 May
13 See for example: Manchester Mercury, 22 Feb. 1763; 24 May 1763; 12 Jul. 1763; 30 Aug. 1763; 1 Nov. 1763. Liverpool
14 See for example: Manchester Mercury, 9 Mar. 1773; 13 Apr. 1773; 13 Jul. 1773; 31 Aug. 1773; 14 Dec. 1773. Liverpool
Advertiser, 12 Jan. 1776; 19 Jan. 1776; 24 May 1776; 30 Aug. 1776. See also E. Raffald, *Directory of Manchester and
Salford* (Manchester, 1772); and J. Gore, *Gore’s Liverpool Directory, for the Year 1774* (Liverpool, 1774).
Advertiser featured advertisements for pianos and harpsichords, painting on silk, umbrella manufacturers, and glass manufacturers.\textsuperscript{15}

Table 3.1: Types of Goods/Services featured in advertisements for high-end consumer goods in the Liverpool Advertiser and the Manchester Mercury during sampled years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Types of goods/services advertised</th>
<th>Liverpool (728 total)</th>
<th>Manchester (1056 total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jewellers/Gold/Silversmiths</td>
<td>110 (15%)\textsuperscript{16}</td>
<td>148 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clock/watch/toymakers</td>
<td>90 (12%)</td>
<td>103 (10%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture/Cabinet makers</td>
<td>92 (12.5%)</td>
<td>148 (14%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wine/liquor merchants</td>
<td>98 (13.5%)</td>
<td>63 (6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tea Dealers/Confectioners</td>
<td>79 (10.5%)</td>
<td>117 (11%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stationers/Booksellers</td>
<td>54 (7.5%)</td>
<td>74 (7%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hairdressers/peruke makers</td>
<td>38 (5%)</td>
<td>68 (6.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Milliners/tailors/dressmakers</td>
<td>140 (19%)</td>
<td>281 (26.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painters/Musicians</td>
<td>27 (3.5%)</td>
<td>54 (5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: advertisement pages in the Manchester Mercury for the years 1753, 1763, 1773, 1783 and 1793; advertisement pages in the Liverpool Advertiser for the years 1756, 1766, 1776, 1786 and 1796.

As shown in table 3.1, there was a broad similarity between the advertisements of Liverpool and Manchester in terms of the proportion of newspaper advertisements given over to specific types of goods and services, with small discrepancies of between around 0.5% and 2% of total advertisements in most categories. There were two exceptions: the advertisements for wine and liquor merchants, which made up 13.5% of the Liverpool advertisements and only 6% of the Manchester advertisements; and the advertisements for suppliers offering textile goods, which despite representing the highest proportion of Liverpool advertisements at 19%, were eclipsed by Manchester’s 26.5% of total advertisements printed. These figures suggest two things:


\textsuperscript{16} Percentages have been rounded up/down to the nearest 0.5%.
that in most businesses, suppliers were equally as likely to advertise their goods in Liverpool as in Manchester, and, where significant differences occurred, these differences were related to the trades in which the towns specialised.

As noted, textile goods and imported alcohol clearly demonstrated the largest discrepancies in the number and proportion of advertisements in the towns, with differences of around 7.5% each. As shown in the previous chapter, these industries also differed in terms of the proportion of shops according to the trade directories of the 1770s and 1780s: Liverpool had significantly more liquor merchants than Manchester, which, in turn, had a comparable preponderance of suppliers dealing in textile goods.\(^\text{17}\) Considering the differences in numbers of these types of supplier in our towns, a comparable difference in the number of advertisements featured in the newspapers is unsurprising. The proportional differences in some of the types of goods available are also to be expected given the towns’ socio-economic profiles: Liverpool’s port allowed for ready access to large quantities of wholesale imported goods that the town’s retailers evidently capitalised on, while Manchester’s established dominance of the textile industry resulted in a large supplier base of tailors, dressmakers, and other clothing suppliers in the town. The towns’ specialisms represented themselves in the advertising pages of the towns’ newspapers, conforming to notions of specialised urban retail economies in Manchester and Liverpool, as put forward by Penelope Corfield, Jon Stobart and Leonard Schwarz, although their conclusions have differed.\(^\text{18}\) These scholars have argued that the socio-economic and cultural characteristics of ‘residential leisure towns’, a category in which Liverpool and Manchester are included, were primarily reflected in the towns’ ability to provide ‘a range of luxury goods and services’.\(^\text{19}\) While such towns specialised in some types of luxury goods

\(^{17}\) Tables 2.2 and 2.3.


according to their geographic location and established traditions of trade and industry, they were
united in their ability to provide high-end commodities and services to residents and visitors, and
newspaper advertisements for supplies of luxury goods are useful in demonstrating this
relationship. As will be shown in the next chapter, elite consumers in the region sometimes
spread their purchasing over different towns for particular goods, and, as the newspaper
advertisements suggest, the main difference between our towns is that Manchester was
patronised more by the regional elite for textile goods and Liverpool for imported, high-end
consumables.

It is not surprising that the types of products available in Liverpool and Manchester, and
the proportion of advertisements for these products, is broadly similar given that the towns were
the largest within the ‘economic region’ of the North West of England, and both have been
identified as to provide similar goods and services by Stobart and Langton. Indeed, arguably one
of the reasons that towns within this region have often been considered together in terms of
their trade and retail is because of the cohesion in terms of the types and availability of goods on
sale. The fact that the proportion of advertisements for products other than textiles or imported
alcohol is broadly similar is indicative of comparable advertising environments in Liverpool and
Manchester. Advertisements were equally likely to appear in either town, regardless of the types
of goods on sale, except where the advertised goods were directly related to the products for
which the towns were renowned. These similarities makes the differences in the methods of
advertising more compelling, as it suggests that differences in the way products were advertised
was related to varied market perceptions of these products, rather than the availability of goods,
or the likelihood of their appearance in the advertising pages of newspapers. However, looking

more closely at the advertisements themselves reveals differences in marketing, suppliers and consumers in our towns that is suggestive of more nuanced markets than an analysis of just the goods themselves reveals. This chapter will now seek to identify differences in the language of newspaper advertising in order to demonstrate differing perceptions and representations of the products on sale in our towns.

Table 3.2: Vocabulary used in Newspaper advertisements for high-end consumer goods in the Liverpool Advertiser and the Manchester Mercury during sampled years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word(s) incorporated into advertisement</th>
<th>Liverpool (728 total)</th>
<th>Manchester (1056 total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Genteel/Gentle</td>
<td>314 (43%)</td>
<td>96 (9.0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cheap/Reasonable/Lowest-Price</td>
<td>368 (50.5%)</td>
<td>892 (84.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Refined/Refinement</td>
<td>135 (18.5%)</td>
<td>32 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finest/Best</td>
<td>306 (42%)</td>
<td>313 (29.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: advertisement pages in the Manchester Mercury for the years 1753, 1763, 1773, 1783 and 1793; advertisement pages in the Liverpool Advertiser for the years 1756, 1766, 1776, 1786 and 1796.

The Language of Advertising

Although the types of products on sale were largely comparable in Liverpool and Manchester, suppliers incorporated different advertising techniques in order to market these goods to their prospective consumers, which suggests that there existed different urban markets within a small geographical region. Among the most striking ways in which the suppliers of the two towns differed in marketing their wares was through the incorporation of references to respectability. Words like ‘refined’, ‘genteel’ and ‘finest’ or ‘best’ were far more likely to be present in the advertisements of Liverpool than in Manchester, and references to low prices – although present in both markets – were more frequent in Manchester advertisements. Table 3.2 indicates the frequency of these words in the sampled advertisements in the Liverpool Advertiser and the Manchester Mercury.
There is a clear indication in the advertisements surveyed that suppliers in Liverpool were more likely to incorporate concepts of gentility and refinement into the language of their advertisements than in Manchester, where advertisers were more likely to highlight the inexpensive nature of the goods or services on sale. This suggests a market in Liverpool more concerned with the perceived quality of the goods that came with ideas of refinement rather than a primary focus on affordability – which reflects the visitors’ accounts that compared Liverpool favourably with London which were examined in the first chapter of this thesis. Although both towns have similar instances of ‘finest’ or ‘best’ being included in the advertisements, the proportion is significantly higher in advertisements for products or services in Liverpool (42%) than in Manchester (29%). A large proportion of the Liverpool advertisements (some 43%) invoked a vocabulary of gentility to the prospective customers. In Manchester just 9% of the higher-end goods were advertised this way. Similarly, although less frequent, 18% of the Liverpool advertisements mentioned ‘refinement’ explicitly in their text; this is true of just over 3% of the Manchester advertisements. Suppliers in Manchester seem to have identified a lack of interest in this mode of advertising on the part of Mancunian consumers: in a comparatively new and rapidly developing luxury market in which fewer people than in Liverpool were firmly established as being able to afford the types of high-end goods on sale, affordability and competitiveness were the main concerns. Once again we can see that suppliers in Manchester judged their consumers to be more concerned with the price of the goods on sale, while suppliers in Liverpool emphasised the quality and respectability of these same goods, often by referring explicitly to their metropolitan origins.

The Lure of the Metropolis

An important difference in the way suppliers advertised in Manchester and Liverpool is the way London was incorporated into the newspaper advertisements. Much of the historiography on eighteenth-century suppliers outside of London has engaged with the idea of provincial emulation: that the provinces ‘bought second hand from the metropolis’ when planning, building
and supplying in the area of luxury trade. As Helen Clifford has claimed, ‘provincial manufactories produced wares for both metropolitan and provincial markets that demonstrated a stylistic independence that challenged simplistic emulative models’. But although notions of blanket emulation have been problematized, historians have identified a tendency of suppliers in northern towns to include references to London in their advertising material. Stobart, Hann and Morgan have found that direct references to London were made in one fifth of newspaper advertisements sampled in Newcastle, Liverpool and Blackburn, and Barker has argued that there was a ‘specific kudos associated with something from London’ in the consumer markets of Manchester, Leeds and Sheffield. A comparison of the way suppliers in Liverpool and Manchester incorporated references to London into their newspaper advertisements reveals differences in the role that the capital played in the two markets: suppliers in Liverpool incorporated London into their advertisements for reasons of fashion, while in Manchester, allusions to the capital in advertisements were principally to highlight relative value for money.

As Table 3.3 demonstrates, the suppliers of both towns frequently used references to the capital as a comparator in their advertisements, but for different purposes. Suppliers in Liverpool often highlighted London’s fashions and gentility as a prime selling point, and indicated that their goods were of comparable style and quality to those available in London. Advertisements such as that of the mercer D. Campbell, who wrote of the ‘great variety of newest elegant patterns from London for the new season’, made up 32% of advertisements; similar references to the capital were present in only 4.5% of the advertisements in Manchester. Both towns’ suppliers did use...

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23 Stobart, Hann and Morgan, Spaces of Consumption, p. 98; Barker, “Smoke Cities”, p. 103.
references to the prices paid for goods in London to demonstrate the cheapness of their own wares. However, there was a difference in proportion, with Manchester suppliers invoking the price and good value of luxury goods in London in 29% of advertisements, while Liverpool suppliers did so in around 15%.

Table 3.3: references to London in the sampled advertisements of the *Manchester Mercury* and the *Liverpool Advertiser*.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Liverpool (728 total)</th>
<th>Manchester (1056 total)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>London – for value</td>
<td>113 (15%)</td>
<td>314 (29%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London – for fashion/prestige</td>
<td>236 (32%)</td>
<td>48 (4.5%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: advertisements in the *Manchester Mercury* for the years 1753, 1763, 1773, 1783 and 1793; advertisement pages in the *Liverpool Advertiser* for the years 1756, 1766, 1776, 1786 and 1796.

The advertisements strongly suggest a concern in Liverpool with the fashions available in London that is not apparent to the same extent in Manchester. A clear example of the different ways London was incorporated into the advertisements of Manchester and Liverpool can be found in the 1750s sample. Adam Hill, a grocer with a shop on Liverpool’s High Street advertised ‘Fine London Tea, Coffee, Chocolate &c’ alongside ‘Fine old London made wine’, and James Evans, a ‘London Engraver’ claimed to execute ‘copper plates, seals, and other engravings in the most elegant manner as seen in London’. By contrast, in Manchester the jeweller Edward Creswell advertised for the first time in September of 1753 and stated that he ‘hath just received from London a large quantity of the best and newest fashioned Jewels and Plate’. The following week Creswell’s advertisement noted that he ‘makes it his business to deal in all sorts of new and second hand plate, watches and jewels, of which he has constantly great variety and is determined to sell at the very lowest London prices’. In the space of seven days Creswell had altered his advertisement from highlighting the quality; fashionable nature and London connection of his wares to stressing the cheapness of his products, reassuring his

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cliente in Manchester that they could expect the same discounted prices as their counterparts in the capital. Value for money had become the main selling point of Creswell’s second advertisement.

Historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have identified competitiveness between Liverpool and Manchester, with Liverpool often cited as the more cosmopolitan centre with a port to rival London, and Manchester seen as more insular and provincial in nature. A comparison of the way London was invoked as a selling tool in the eighteenth-century newspaper advertisements surveyed indicates that this distinction also existed prior to 1800. As we have seen, suppliers in Liverpool were more likely to advertise the metropolitan nature of the goods they sold, and gentility was highlighted over value. The Manchester advertisements presented a more localised market, uninterested with the fads and fashions of the capital. The dichotomy of ‘a Liverpool gentleman’ and a ‘Manchester man’ that became a byword for the differences between inhabitants of the towns in the nineteenth century seems to have been already in evidence by the middle of the eighteenth century.

Individual Suppliers and their Impact: Joshua Lawton, Elizabeth Raffald, Aulay Macaulay

This chapter will now examine three individuals who supplied goods to consumers in the North West between 1750 and 1780: Joshua Lawton of Liverpool, and Elizabeth Raffald and Aulay Macaulay of Manchester. The behaviour of these suppliers supports the findings of the analysis of advertisements. The case studies of specific suppliers also offer further insights into the role that suppliers had in shaping the commercial environments in which they operated. Information about specific advertising strategies, the marketing of the individual and the physical

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development of shopping districts in provincial towns, is all illuminated through individual case studies of suppliers or businesses. By examining the various commercial concerns of these suppliers, alongside their behaviour when not behind the shop counter, this section will further demonstrate the role and impact of suppliers in Liverpool and Manchester. Historians of eighteenth-century consumption have often incorporated in-depth case studies of the ‘life-narratives’ of their subjects in their analysis.28 Amanda Vickery’s work on Elizabeth Shackleton, and Maxine Berg’s examination of William Hutton and James Bisset, are examples of the way that consumers’ lives and actions have been presented to add a deeper understanding of provincial markets.29 The way that Joshua Lawton, Elizabeth Raffald and Aulay Macaulay conducted their business in Liverpool and Manchester is indicative of the market differences in the two towns. Joshua Lawton’s draw was that he was able to provide high-quality, metropolitan goods directly to female consumers in Liverpool, who could be assured that they would be among the very first provincial ladies to sport the fashions of the capital. By contrast, in Manchester, Elizabeth Raffald and Aulay Macaulay demonstrated a provincial self-confidence. Their efforts to make their town easier to navigate, better commercially connected and better equipped to provide desirable goods at prices and in quantities available in London, reflects Manchester’s swiftly developing ability to compete in the national arena as a self-sufficient centre for trade that was independent of metropolitan influence.

Liverpool Case Study: Joshua Lawton

Born to a linen-draping family in Liverpool in 1729, Joshua Lawton grew up around textiles and, by the age of 28, had opened his own business in the centre of the town, becoming a successful clothing and textiles merchant. Liverpool’s 1766 trade directory – the town’s first – listed Lawton as a ‘silkware mercer’ based at a shop on Fenwick Street, close to Castle Street and

within the town’s principal high-end shopping district. He referenced this same shop regularly in his advertisements some ten years earlier in the 1750s, where he often mentioned that his wife Isabella could be found to ‘accommodate the millinery and drapery needs of the ladies in Liverpool’ in his absence. Although little biographical information survives, his contributions to the Advertiser tell us much about his role as a supplier in Liverpool, and he exemplified the way suppliers marketed their goods in the town. Lawton was the single most frequent advertiser for the year 1756, and his advertisements are unusual both for their length and their content. This advertisement from March 1756 typifies Lawton’s style:

I return my sincere thanks to my friends who may reasonably imagine from the demand I have had, my stock is greatly reduced: I take this opportunity to inform them, I have still a genteel assortment remaining, the material part of which are entirely new, and is intended for the Spring Season.

Those ladies who are not provided and would wish to furnish themselves with goods that they may be assured is really new, have an opportunity of doing it. I have the pleasing occasion of assuring the ladies of Liverpool, that, by the opportunity my being in London gave me of proving the first pieces out of the Looms, they will appear in the newest silks for the ensuing season.

Attracting the custom of clients of high social standing was as important to the reputation of a tradesman in the Liverpool consumer market as maintaining a reputation for providing goods and credit. While conforming to the style common in newspaper advertisements of the eighteenth century, Lawton’s mode of address tacitly indicates the perceived high status of his clientele. The semi-intimate tone of Lawton’s advertisements reflects an element of personal connection between the supplier and his consumers. In addition to flattering his ‘genteel’ existing customers, by advertising his products in a way that highlighted the gentility of his

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30 The Liverpool Directory, for the Year 1766 (Liverpool, 1766), p. 20.
31 Liverpool Advertiser, 11 Jun. 1756.
32 Liverpool Advertiser, 7 May 1756.
34 Cox, Complete Tradesman, pp. 127-139; Stobart, Hann and Morgan, Spaces of Consumption, p. 181.
clientele, Lawton fed into the desires of prospective consumers to procure the smartest and most fashionable goods from a supplier whose detailed knowledge of the metropolitan scene made him a trustworthy tradesman.\(^{35}\)

Lawton was one of several suppliers in Liverpool who sold ready-made garments alongside materials and accessories for domestic dressmaking. The alleged unique selling point of Lawton’s business was that he claimed to have direct access to the styles of clothing worn by fashionable Londoners, and that he brought these styles back to Liverpool. Lawton detailed how he travelled to London, visited the clothing shops and manufactories while keeping his keen eye on the fashionable clothing worn by the capital’s ladies, and then reported back to his clientele. His advertisements often read as the reports of a foreign correspondent, and are always addressed ‘to the ladies’ – marketing himself as a reliable source of information for the town’s most discerning and fashionable female consumers. Lawton’s advertisements relayed information about the types of garments he had been able to procure in the capital, and promised potential customers that, should they place an order with him or his wife, they could be the ‘first ladies in the Kingdom’ to wear the most *a la mode* items fresh from the looms of London.\(^{36}\) The advertisements are peppered with the kind of vocabulary that Liverpool suppliers so frequently incorporated to invoke ideas of the genteel metropolis.

Liverpool-based suppliers such as Lawton capitalised on the desires of some of his fellow townspeople to match London shoppers in their refinement and modish taste.\(^{37}\) Although Lawton worked as a scout, and spent time in London acting as the eyes and ears of his concerned customers, plenty of his contemporaries offered clothes made to follow London designs using local fabrics to reduce costs. But it was only by buying from him, Lawton argued,

\(^{35}\) Cox, *Complete Tradesman*, p. 133.

\(^{36}\) *Liverpool Advertiser*, 16 Jul. 1756.

that consumers in Liverpool could be sure that they were getting the real deal. Although it is not clear how many patrons made use of Lawton’s services, the fact that he was able to advertise so regularly throughout the 1750s and 60s, and that his premises in Liverpool continued to exist on one of the principal shopping streets in the town, indicates that his London to Liverpool trading was lucrative. Lawton’s mode of business suggests a drive within Liverpool to match London in terms of fashion and trade, but his business depended on the continued perception on the part of his customers that London represented quality and gentility.

Lawton took the marketing of gentility beyond his advertisements for his products, and was, alongside many of Liverpool’s merchants, shopkeepers and suppliers of consumer goods, actively involved in the town’s social, intellectual and theatrical societies. He was listed as a member of Liverpool’s Society for Science and Philosophy, as a subscriber to the town’s new library and was a regular patron of the theatre. By his conspicuous involvement in the public and civic life in the town, Lawton presented himself as a polite, fashionable purveyor of goods. Lawton took advantage of a market that was concerned with gentility, and placed great importance on the fashions of London. The suppliers who placed newspaper advertisements in Liverpool, of which Lawton was one of the most prolific, identified a consumer desire to emulate London modes of fashion. Advertisements like Lawton’s suggest that suppliers and consumers in Liverpool were operating in a market that sought to match London in terms of luxury trade. In this sense he epitomised the resourcefulness and tactical marketing that mark out the provincial entrepreneur in eighteenth-century Britain.

**Manchester Case Studies: Elizabeth Raffald and Aulay Macaulay**

Elizabeth Raffald and Aulay Macaulay were contemporaries who supplied Manchester with various goods and services between the 1750s and the 1780s. Although both were important figures in developing the market for consumer goods in the town, their methods of selling showed some differences. Elizabeth Raffald is an example of a supplier with several commercial
interests, who identified numerous opportunities and worked to build up multiple business concerns in Manchester and Salford throughout her short life, whereas Macaulay identified one key opportunity – the wholesale supply of tea direct from East India House – and managed to supply the region with high quality tea, coffee and chocolate for over thirty five years. Despite the differences in their approaches to business, Raffald and Macaulay demonstrated similarities in their behaviour outside of their commercial endeavours: both were prolific and conspicuous published writers, both were key contributors to commercial networks and to the collective protection of the market, and both were heavily involved in social and intellectual societies in Manchester.

Both Raffald and Macaulay moved to Manchester from smaller northern towns in order to develop their fledgling careers, and both quickly changed the course of their trading concerns within a few years of arrival. Macaulay moved from his home town of Huddersfield sometime between 1741 and 1746 and on his arrival in Manchester advertised himself as a linen draper in The Manchester Magazine.\(^{38}\) He soon embarked on a change of career, and took up the proprietorship of a tea warehouse in St. Ann’s Square in the early 1750s. Elizabeth Raffald’s move was some fifteen years later, leaving a career as live-in housekeeper to the Warburton family at Arley Hall in Cheshire in 1763.\(^ {39}\) She and her husband moved to Manchester so that John Raffald could set up a horticultural business with his family who were already established in the town. The Raffalds’ business was steady, but, like Macaulay, Elizabeth Raffald soon identified an opportunity for a change in vocation, and eight months after arriving in Manchester she opened a grocer’s shop in Fennel Street.\(^ {40}\)

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38 *The Manchester Magazine*, Nov. 1744.
39 For a full biography of Raffald and an account of her background, businesses, marriage, death and significance to Manchester and Salford, see Barker and Harvey, ‘Women Entrepreneurs’, pp. 124-30.
40 Raffald gives a brief account of her arrival and early years in Manchester in a preface to the 1773 edition of *The Manchester and Salford Directory*. Further biographical details feature in the 1889 reprint of this edition which includes a prefatory obituary of Raffald, ‘Preface’, *The Manchester Directory for the year 1773* (Manchester, 1889).
A year after the opening of the shop, Raffald began to advertise an agency for the recruitment of domestic servants at the same address, marking the birth of her commercial empire in Manchester. In 1764, business concerns outgrew the property on Fennel Street and Elizabeth and John moved to a larger shop in Market Place, which sold exotic seeds, alongside the groceries and dry goods that Elizabeth was advertising prolifically in the *Manchester Mercury*. By 1768, Elizabeth had expanded the scope of the Market Place shop to include the kind of cakes, desserts and confectionary she had presumably been responsible for creating at Arley, the recipes for which she had published the preceding year in the first edition of her cookery and household management book, *The Experienced English Housekeeper*. Within seven years of arriving in the town, Elizabeth had started up at least five distinct business concerns, and, further to these ventures, she and her husband became the proprietors of various inns in Manchester and Salford and, for a short time, ran the Exchange Coffee House during the 1770s.

Macaulay’s career trajectory was steadier than Elizabeth Raffald’s, and after the original change in career from draper to tea dealer, he continued in the same premises in St. Ann’s Square until his death in 1788. Macaulay’s dealership was successful and had a wide reach: his name appears in the account books of the many of the region’s principal families, including the Assertons of Middleton Hall, the Legh Family of Lyme Park, and the Earl of Derby’s Knowsley’s accounts from the 1760s. The advertisements for the Macaulay’s tea dealership began in 1753, and of the twenty-eight advertisements for tea dealers in this year, sixteen belonged to Macaulay. Advertisements for new tea and coffee dealers in both Liverpool and Manchester were relatively common in the newspapers from the 1750s but the trade was

41 *Manchester Mercury*, 22nd November 1764.
42 Barker and Harvey, ‘Women Entrepreneurs’, p. 126.
43 The household accounts of these families will be discussed in the following chapter. Macaulay’s name appears in the Earl of Derby’s accounts in 1781-2, LRO DDM 1/155; and in the Legh of Lyme accounts in 1763, SLHA B/JJ/6/3.
The earliest advertisement available for shopkeepers based in the North West who specifically marketed themselves as tea dealers is for the partnership of Scaribrook and Setton of Manchester in March of 1753, but in December of the same year, the dissolution of the partnership was announced, and Scaribrook was listed in the bankruptcy records. Aulay Macaulay, however, was able to buck the trend of short-lived tea dealerships in the region, and founded a successful tea dealing dynasty that lasted well into the nineteenth century.

The novelty of Macaulay’s business was that his warehouse was the first to offer tea, coffee and chocolate for wholesale and retail exclusively from a large and elegant warehouse in Manchester, rather than in smaller grocers’ shops. He claimed to be able to purchase his tea directly and in large quantities direct from East India House, and he consistently alluded to the savings his customers would make as a consequence of his procurement methods, as this advertisement from 1753 shows:

A Macaulay

Has lately got down from the East India House to his Tea Warehouse in St. Ann’s Square near the New-Church, Manchester a Variety of all sorts of teas, which prove extraordinary good, and are sold at the very lowest London Prices.

Macaulay’s advertisements echo the results of the wider analysis of advertisements in the *Mercury*, and, while he referenced his gentility as a selling point, Macaulay was clearly aware that the driving force of the Manchester market was affordability rather than gentility. Despite the elite status of some of his clientele, Macaulay did not advertise his wares in a way that overplayed the genteel nature of his product: his newspaper advertisements always underlined the fact that despite the quality of his goods and the gentility of his St. Ann’s warehouse, the best possible

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45 *Manchester Mercury*, 18 Mar. 1753 and 4 Nov. 1753. This is indicative of a larger pattern which sees many tea-dealers in the town leaving the trade during the 1750s after a period of 6-18 months business.


47 *Manchester Mercury*, 17 Jul. 1753.
deal could be found at Macaulay’s. The appeal of his goods was not just that they came from London and therefore signified the fine tastes of the metropolis, as was the case for Joshua Lawton’s enterprise in Liverpool. Like many of his fellow Manchester suppliers, Macaulay incorporated London into his marketing to signify that his goods could be bought in Manchester as cheaply as they could in London, and, as such, he serves as an example of a Manchester supplier who knew and could respond to the market in which he operated.

Among the most striking similarities between Raffald and Macaulay were their publishing careers. Both suppliers wrote and published commercially successful volumes that ran to several editions. Shortly before opening the warehouse in St. Ann’s Square, Macaulay had written his own method of shorthand entitled *Polygraphy; or Short-Hand Made Easy to the Meanest Capacity*, which ran to several editions in Manchester and in London. The first national advertisement for *Polygraphy* appeared in London’s *General Evening Post* in 1747, in which notice was given to ‘lawyers, merchants, and other gentlemen of distinction’ that they might come to the Union Coffee House, London, to witness a demonstration of the Macaulay method of short hand.48 Macaulay continued to advertise his manual in London and Manchester throughout the 1750s and 1760s, evidently achieving success in his endeavours, and developing on his early aspirations to attract the interest of respectable and scholarly professionals. The *Public Advertiser* reported in 1756 that Macaulay ‘had the honour to be presented to their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and Prince Edward at Kew, to whom he presented his Third Edition of Short Hand […] He was most graciously received, and had the honour of kissing their Royal Highnesses hands’.49 The evident success of *Polygraphy* was a badge of pride for Macaulay, and he was keen to draw attention to his learned and well-connected credentials in the advertisements for his tea dealership. Many of these advertisements began ‘A. Macaulay, author of *Polygraphy*, supplies the highest quality teas, coffees and chocolate at the most reasonable London Prices, available at his

48 *General Evening Post*, 30 Apr. 1747.
49 *Public Advertiser*, 18 Sep. 1756.
warehouse in St. Ann’s Square’ and went on to describe both the range of his goods as well as
details about his book. By drawing attention to his literary merits and status as a local celebrity,
Macaulay was marketing himself and his trade as a renowned and genteel individual with whom
prospective customers could associate themselves through their patronage.

Elizabeth Raffald also incorporated her celebrity into her advertising, and Raffald’s
advertisements in the *Mercury* draw attention to her several successful publications. In addition to
*The Experienced English Housekeeper*, Raffald penned a book on practical midwifery and, in 1772,
she published *Mrs. Raffald’s Directory of Manchester and Salford*, the first complete trade directory
listing the majority of shops and businesses in Manchester and Salford. This volume is doubly
significant, as alongside providing further evidence of Mancunian suppliers presenting
themselves as respectable and successful writers, Raffald’s directory gives a clear indication that
suppliers in the town took an active role in chronicling and developing their commercial
environment. Manchester was relatively late in producing a directory, but Raffald took on the
‘arduous task of compiling a complete guide’ to the retailers and warehouses of Manchester.

Prior to the directory’s publication she had advertised in the *Manchester Mercury* calling for
contributors:

> It is proposed, in order to make such a useful work as correct as possible, to
send proper and intelligent persons round the town, to take down the name,
business and place of abode of every gentleman, tradesman, and shopkeeper.

[…] The proprietor therefore humbly requests that everyone will please to give the
necessary information to the persons appointed, so she may be enabled to give
an accurate edition of work so advantageous to such a large, populous and
trading town as this.

The ‘large and populous trading town’ of Manchester, Raffald believed, needed a record
of the various traders and suppliers in order to record the expansion that had taken place in the
town over the previous 40 years. Such a volume was overdue, and Raffald’s introduction to the

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50 See, for example, *Manchester Mercury*, 1 Jul. 1766.
53 *Manchester Mercury*, 16 Mar. 1772.
1772 edition claimed that her primary reason for the undertaking was ‘the want of a Directory for the large and populous town of Manchester having been frequently complained of’.

Having taken on the task of creating the original directory, Raffald advertised for contributors for a further three editions. Raffald was a product of Manchester’s rapidly expanding and changeable regional market, indeed, as Barker and Harvey suggest, she became ‘one of the prime movers in that changing environment’.

Adaptable, resilient and opportunistic, she pounced on chances for new business ventures and took full advantages of the unique opportunities mid-century Manchester offered to cash in on rapid expansion. But more than simply responding to the changes and opportunities the market put forward, Raffald took an active role in shaping the local economy in which she operated. Raffald took a leading role in the formation of commercial networks between the town’s traders, and ensured not only that her many commercial ventures were easily identifiable and readily available to prospective consumers from within the Manchester area and further afield, but that the town itself was able to qualify and advertise its expanding trade. Her sustained commitment to chronicling the town’s suppliers is one example of the active role suppliers took in Manchester to protect the market in which they operated.

Further examples of the way that suppliers in Manchester were active in protecting their markets can be found in the Mercury’s advertisement pages. One of the key aspects attributed to Manchester’s original competitiveness, as identified by Horner and others, was the lack of established guilds in the town.

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55 *Manchester Mercury*, 14 Jun. 1773; *Manchester Mercury*, 3 Apr. 1778; *Manchester Mercury*, 18 Jul. 1780
56 Barker and Harvey, ‘Women Entrepreneurs’, p. 128.
merchants were not uncommon. In December 1773, both Aulay Macaulay and Elizabeth Raffald were among the 32 signatories to an open letter to the people of Manchester from the ‘grocers, tea dealers and tobacconists of this town’. This letter informed their customers that it had been unanimously decided to ‘abolish the oppressive custom of bestowing cards, boxes, tea, spice, tobacco, snuff or any other gratuity whatsoever upon customers or their servants under the denomination of Christmas boxes or New Year’s gifts’. The reason given for the ending of the Christmas tradition is that the custom had become ‘intolerably expensive’ in recent years given the small profits made by the tradesmen, although it was promised the custom might return. This letter is significant as it demonstrates not only that tea, spice and tobacco no longer generated the level of profit that could justify the giving out of free produce to all customers, but also because it provides further evidence that Manchester traders actively worked together in order to protect a collective interest. Business networks of this type have been frequently identified in discussions of early modern urban markets. That such networks existed in the fast changing environment of commercial Manchester is indicative of the adaptable and organised, if unofficial, cooperation of suppliers that was able to set aside individual interest for the good of the collective.

As with Lawton and other principal Liverpool suppliers, Raffald and Macaulay also engaged in conspicuous public roles in their town. Macaulay was one of the original benefactors of Manchester’s theatre, and was listed as one of the founder members of the Manchester Literary and Philosophical Society in 1780. Of the other sixteen members, eight were principal

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tradesmen in the town, including John Raffald. Elizabeth Raffald herself made sure to highlight the public function that her business concerns could serve, and in advertising her proprietorship of the Bull Inn she alluded to the suitability for ‘societies of gentlemen’ to make use of the facilities, a tactic she continued during her tenure at the Exchange Coffee House. The marketing and self-promotion of the celebrated, genteel individual by the Manchester suppliers in their public activity and their publishing suggests the ambition of suppliers in the North West to associate trade with respectability. Even in Manchester, a market that valued affordability over gentility, Raffald and Macaulay took steps to present themselves as key players in the town’s intellectual and social elite. Both Raffald and Macaulay were unashamed of their background as suppliers. Their work was not a means to achieve an elevated status in retirement: Macaulay continued to trade into his seventies despite the evident success of his business and the availability of his sons and daughter to take over the dynasty, while three of Macaulay’s children continued trading in tea in and around Manchester after their father’s death. Although Raffald’s entrepreneurial endeavours were cut short by her early death at the age of 48, it is clear that she was never shy of including references to her various business concerns, or her time as a housekeeper, even after the commercial success of *The Experienced English Housekeeper*. Elizabeth Raffald and Aulay Macaulay were confident, self-sufficient suppliers in Manchester who strove to elevate the perception of commercial suppliers within their town. Their understanding of the concerns of new commercial classes saw them adapt and flourish in the transforming commercial environment of eighteenth-century Manchester.

The three case studies presented in this section have served to illustrate the main differences between the markets of Liverpool and Manchester: Lawton influenced and

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63 At Macaulay’s daughter Harriet’s wedding in 1789, the bride and her brothers James and William are described as ‘tea dealers of Manchester, all’ in the official record on the ceremony. JRULSC, 133 RYCH/3320.
64 Barker and Harvey, ‘Women Entrepreneurs’, p. 128.
responded to a well-established market for goods that was strongly influenced by London, while Raffald and Macaulay demonstrated the growing self-confidence and independence of Manchester as a centre for trade. Despite the differences in their markets, these suppliers were all active participants in their towns’ social networks. Lawton, Raffald and Macaulay presented themselves as respectable and prominent members of their communities, and created reputations for themselves with which consumers could choose to associate. Their actions as suppliers, like those of the other advertisers in the Liverpool Advertiser and Manchester Mercury, indicate distinct consumer markets in Liverpool and Manchester. However, the shared emphasis on public contribution is suggestive of a conscious drive to raise the profile of individual suppliers in both or our towns.

**Selling Spaces: the shop in advertising**

The recent historiography of eighteenth-century retailing has identified the appearance of shop exteriors as an important factor in the sale of goods. Alongside the work of Stobart, Hann and Morgan on the physical spaces of exchange in eighteenth-century towns, Nancy Cox, Claire Walsh and Peter Borsay have explored the importance of shop façades in the creation of shopping areas with a polite reputation, challenging earlier work that claimed shop exteriors were not used in this way until the mid-nineteenth century. This scholarship has shown how the architecture of eighteenth-century shops tended to conform to a particular style as the number of retail premises rose. Claire Walsh has argued that, in London, ‘as the number of shops increased they developed a distinct architectural format, with fascia boards, hanging signs, projecting or bow windows, and a painted surround which delineated the boundaries of the premises and marked them out as retail shops’. These patterns in the physical appearance of fashionable

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shops’ exteriors have been identified in many provincial towns. Although the presence of brick built, large-windowed shops as a signifier of quality and polite consumption has mainly been identified in London and provincial towns whose shopping districts and reputations for politeness were well established by the eighteenth century, this style of shop was also the favoured architectural design for new built shops in the smartest areas of Liverpool and Manchester. As Borsay has argued, ‘even towns which had recently ascended to a regional capital, and done so as commercial or manufacturing communities, such as Liverpool, Manchester or Birmingham, developed their commercial buildings in this way’.

Figure 3.1: Engraving of Market Street, Manchester in 1821


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67 Cox, The Complete Tradesman, pp. 95-97; Borsay, Urban Renaissance, pp. 35, 93, 166; Stobart, Hann and Morgan, Spaces of Consumption, pp. 110-113.
68 Borsay, Urban Renaissance, p. 30. See also Stobart, First Industrial Region, pp. 142-5, 208-11.
As identified in the previous chapter, the development of urban streets in Manchester and, to a lesser extent, Liverpool was piecemeal, and this resulted in a mixture of styles of architecture in the towns’ shopping streets, unlike the development of towns such as Bath, Norwich and Bristol, where the development of shopping streets tended to be more cohesive.\(^6^9\)

Figure 3.1 shows an early-nineteenth-century engraving of Market Street in Manchester, and Figure 3.2 depicts Lord Street in Liverpool as it was in the mid-eighteenth century. While the artists may have made deliberate efforts to accentuate the picturesque nature of these buildings and their effect on the streetscapes, these images do suggest that shopkeepers in both of the towns’ main trading streets were selling from a mixture of different buildings. Both images feature some small seventeenth-century buildings with little window space, and some newer three- or four-storey brick buildings that conform to Walsh’s description of the preferred retail premises for high-end trade. The mix of styles of shops in Manchester in particular resulted in a direct relationship between the style of the shop premises’ building and the way in which products and services were advertised. The creation of genteel places for exchange resulted in a hierarchy of Manchester’s shops in terms of their physical appearance and the shopping experience. Suppliers whose premises were in new buildings on recently developed streets

advertised that they represented the high-end of shopping hierarchy in the town. Just as property owners advertised their shops in terms of the location of the buildings in the Manchester Mercury, shopkeeper tenants of newly built premises on recently developed streets were keen to advertise themselves as superior spaces of consumption. Commercial trade cards provide valuable visual evidence of the exterior of shops, and have been used by historians to gauge the way that goods were displayed.70 While the trade cards that have survived from eighteenth-century Liverpool and Manchester are limited, those that have are further suggestive of diverse marketing techniques in the towns. The trade card for Stringer (figure 3.3), a fine linen merchant in Manchester who marketed his goods around 1770, drew attention to the large windows of his premises, through which the discerning customer could view Stringer’s artfully displayed superior products.

Stringer’s trade card depicts a new-style, three-storey brick building on a well-paved, clean street. His products are visible and artfully displayed through the large bow window, and the name, nature and location of the business is clearly signed. Alongside advertising the products on sale, Stringer’s trade card promoted the location in which shoppers could purchase goods: the building was afforded equal importance to the product on sale. As Walsh has argued, ‘the shop-front advertised the business to the passing public, proclaiming its fashionable standing and drawing attention to extensive window displays’ – and Stringer’s trade card shows how the promotion of the kerb appeal of shops was important to some suppliers in Manchester, and that window displays and the quality of buildings were presented in advertising material in order to be visible to a wider audience than just passing trade.71

Figure 3.3: Trade Card for Stringer, Manchester c.1770.

Source: Trade Card for Stringer, Manchester c.1770, Chetham’s Library Manchester Scrapbook, 141.

Figure 3.4: Trade Card for W.W. Paul, Manchester c.1780

The attention Stringer’s trade card paid to the shop exterior is mirrored in the trade card of W. Paul’s wallpaper shop (Figure 3.4). W. Paul was listed in Elizabeth Raffald’s *Manchester and Salford Directory* in 1781 at Dolefield, and had, by 1790, moved to the newly-developed Oldham Street in the Piccadilly area of Manchester – part of Stevenson’s development identified in the previous chapter. Like Stringer’s card, the trade card for W. Paul paper-hangings shows the exterior of the premises, drawing attention to the brick-built building, the large and numerous windows, the well-paved, well-lit streets, and the spacious well-situated corner building. The goods available to consumers are clearly visible through the windows of Paul’s shop, and the various patterns of wallpaper are arranged in the manner of a caricaturist’s shop. The display of goods in the windows of the new styles of shops in Manchester further illustrated the high-end status of the business to those passing by. The displays were designed to entice the most discerning customers into buying the fashionable products on display and to signify their own taste. Helen Berry has argued that elegant window displays that featured the finest products available in the shop ‘were no doubt as much a deterrent to those who could not afford the goods within as a magnet to those who could’, and in choosing to purchase high-end goods from shops that ostentatiously displayed their wares in the window, customers could publicly display their credentials as shoppers with discerning tastes and deep pockets. As with Stringer, the focus of Paul’s advertisement was divided equally between the goods on sale and the fact that his shop was well-located and desirable.

In Liverpool, the surviving trade cards of the eighteenth-century do not feature the physical places of exchange to the same extent as in Manchester. Figure 3.5 is the trade card for Gregson, an upholsterer based in Preeson’s Row, a small lane of shops and houses off Castle Street, which was one of the principal high-end shopping streets identified in the previous

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chapter. Gregson was listed in the trade directories between 1777 and 1784, and his trade card features a finely engraved piece of cloth hanging over a tree, with an image of gentlemen riding horses toward a large castle in the background. There are a number of small tools in the foreground, but were it not for the name and nature of the business being detailed in an ornate Rococo frame in the centre of the picture, it would be difficult to establish the nature of the business. The trade card for the Liverpool Cloth Establishment (Figure 3.6) probably dates from between 1790-1800. In this trade card, imagery depicting the kind of trade conducted by the company does feature, but this is overshadowed by images of gentility, wealth, power and particular notions of Britishness. The trade card features a warehouse and a ship in the background, Britannia has her elbow resting on boxes that are presumably intended for export or import, but unlike in the Manchester trade cards, the products or venues of exchange are not the primary selling points.

Figure 3.5: Trade Card for Gregson’s Upholsterer, Liverpool, c. 1777-1784.

Source: Liverpool Record Office, Binns Collection, C103 J:11.

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74 Gore, Liverpool Directory, for the year 1777, pp. 34, 37.
Figure 3.6: Trade Card for the Liverpool Cloth Establishment, c.1790-1800.


For suppliers in Liverpool, the location of the shop within the town was advertisement enough for establishing credentials of politeness and respectability. The reputation of shops in the Lord Street/Castle Street area was such that, providing the address of the business was clearly stated, it was not necessary for suppliers to feature assurances to consumers about the quality of the buildings or the state of the streets in their advertising material. Liverpool’s high-end shopping districts were well-established compared to the newly improved and spread-out streets of Manchester, and their renown had extended throughout the county. Some examples of trade cards featuring the exterior of shops do feature in some Liverpool trade cards of the nineteenth century, especially during periods of expansion that resulted in the creation of new districts, but prior to such expansion these measures were unnecessary.⁷⁵

Significant differences exist between the surviving trade cards used by suppliers of Liverpool and Manchester to advertise their shops: the exterior of the shop, and the structure, position and façade of specific buildings manifest themselves in surviving trade cards from

⁷⁵ The Binns Collection at Liverpool Record Office contains many nineteenth-century trade cards of this type.
Manchester, while in Liverpool, places of exchange are secondary to images of leisure and gentility. While the Stringer, Paul and Gregson’s trade cards are broadly contemporaneous, the Liverpool Cloth Establishment trade card is from the tail-end of the century, and so differences in imagery from the Manchester trade cards could simply be due to the evolution of wider trends in advertising imagery. However, collections and analyses of trade cards from other scholars have presented examples of the exterior of buildings as the main feature of advertising across several trades in other towns well into the nineteenth century, suggesting that the type of imagery used in the Manchester trade cards was not specific to the 1770s and 80s, and is more likely to be representative of suppliers advertising their superior buildings and locations in emergent shopping districts.\footnote{Hubbard’s ‘The Art of Advertising’ features several examples of the exterior of shops as the main image on trade cards from London, Bristol, Leicester, Leeds and Birmingham for suppliers including dressmakers, tea and coffee merchants, jewellers, tailors, wigmakers and painters. See also Stobart, Hann and Morgan, \textit{Spaces of Consumption}, particularly ‘Chapter 5: The Building, Representation and Display’ pp. 111-139, and the 1837 trade card of Hill and Turley, silk mercers of Worcester. Very many other examples can be found in A. Heal, \textit{London Tradesmen’s Cards of the Eighteenth Century: An Account of their Origin and Use} (London, 1968); A. Heal, \textit{The London Goldsmiths 1200-1800: A Record of the Names and Addresses of the Craftsmen, Their Shop Signs and Trade Cards} (London, 1972); and in P. Agius, ‘Cabinet-Makers not in Heal: Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Trade Cards of Furniture Makers in the John Johnson Collection of Printed Ephemera’, \textit{Furniture History}, 10 (1974), pp. 82-84.}

The differences in the trade cards that do survive are likely to be representative of the way that districts for high-end shopping developed in our towns, as identified in the previous chapter. The differences suggest that the two towns’ suppliers were aware of the concerns of their respective markets. In Manchester, suppliers sought to reassure their customers that theirs was a superior place of business situated in a new building on a clean and convenient street. In Liverpool, these features were taken for granted given the established renown of the district, and the imagery used to promote shops on the smartest streets was instead focused on notions of gentility and refinement. Where the towns’ trade cards depict the exterior of the shops, they offer some details about what the physical streetscape of rapidly developing commercial centres looked like, how goods were displayed, information on street paving and lighting, and the structural qualities of the buildings themselves. Where the trade cards depict other, more abstract
imagery to advertise shops, they suggest a cultural link between shopping and the imagery of politeness, taste and respectability that is indicative of the way suppliers advertised themselves to respond to the concerns of prospective customers.

**Conclusion**

This chapter has sought to demonstrate that Manchester and Liverpool, although geographically close as towns, were distant as markets. The survey of newspaper advertisements revealed that suppliers in Liverpool were much more likely to invoke the idea of the polite metropolis to entice trade. As has been noted, the process of exchange and discussion of price tended to be secondary to highlighting the quality, respectability and fashionable nature of the goods on sale. The market for quality goods that drew inspiration from London led Joshua Lawton to leave his silk shop in the hands of his wife, and make several trips a year to the capital. Here he acted as an envoy for the ladies of Liverpool and relayed the fashions he encountered, which then became available from his shop.

The kind of service that Lawton offered was not required, or at least not to the same extent, in Manchester. The results of this chapter’s survey of *Manchester Mercury* advertisements indicate that suppliers recognised the Mancunian consumers’ concerns with getting the best possible deal on high-end products. There was little interest in London besides price comparison, and unlike in Liverpool, there was little evidence of a significant market for metropolitan fashions in the town. Manchester’s suppliers recognised this frugality, and marketed their goods accordingly. Aulay Macaulay reassured his customers that the goods in his warehouse could be had at the lowest London prices and, because of his innovative trade in purchasing huge quantities of tea, coffee and chocolate direct from London and selling wholesale and retail to consumers in the town, patrons could expect not to have the price of their purchases augmented by the tax and travel costs of suppliers who had bought their wares in smaller quantities. Elizabeth Raffald too recognised the importance of maintaining Manchester’s
competitiveness and independence, and her publication of the first trade directory in the town was a clear attempt to create a comprehensive record of the town’s trade and create a market that was easier to navigate for townspeople and outsiders alike. In publishing the directory alongside her multiple commercial interests in Manchester, Raffald represented the kind of entrepreneur whose approach to business ventures was wide-ranging. By contrast, Macaulay and Lawton both represent entrepreneurs who identified a single niche and exploited it to commercial success. Both forged links to London and made a name for themselves by offering goods bought in the capital in their premises in the North West: for Lawton the selling-point of his product was that the clothing was fresh off the London looms and his customers would be the first to sport the items anywhere in the country; Macaulay’s relationship with large-scale London tea dealers was motivated entirely by the desire of his consumers to pay less for their tea.

By addressing the role and behaviour of suppliers of high-end goods in eighteenth-century Liverpool and Manchester, this chapter set out to further our understanding of provincial markets. By analysing newspaper advertisements, the behaviour of individual suppliers and the imagery used in trade cards, the chapter has shown that while the kinds of goods available to consumers were similar in both towns, the way that suppliers worked to market these goods differed, and this is indicative of distinct consumer markets where suppliers took an active role in shaping these markets and responding to them. While newspaper advertisements, case studies of individuals and analysis of trade cards have been used by historians interested in consumption, the analysis in this chapter has focused instead on suppliers. Although suppliers in Liverpool were clearly driven by consumers influenced by the purchasing habits and modes of fashion of their London contemporaries, and met their demands accordingly, this chapter has demonstrated that just thirty miles away in Manchester, suppliers were responding to a set of very different demands. The novelty of this chapter’s approach has been to extend an established methodology of using individual case studies and advertisements in the study of consumption.
and consumers, to explore the role of those suppliers who brought high-end goods to the provinces. That the suppliers of Liverpool and Manchester clearly operated in different commercial environments, and adapted their practices accordingly, has more significance than simply representing an interesting example of local civic difference for regional historians. One of the primary aims of this chapter has been to suggest that the examination of provincial markets needs to be based on a deeper analysis of different towns, rather than being regionally-based, as well as needing to explore suppliers in addition to consumers. This study has thus highlighted the importance for town- and region-specific case studies to strengthen a collective understanding of provincial trade in Britain.
Chapter Four: Elite Consumers in the North West of England.

This thesis has so far concentrated on the suppliers of high-end goods and the commercial environment in which these goods were sold. This chapter will now turn our attention to consumers of these products in and around Liverpool and Manchester, specifically concentrating on the elite. Existing research on elites as consumers is scarce in comparison to other social groups. While elites have long been the subject of analysis for their economic, political, and social significance, the literature on the group as consumers is small. Yet analysis of the way that those in the highest ranks of regional society spent their money is crucial to our understanding of taste, fashion and luxury in provincial markets. Also, the primary source material for elites is rich in comparison with other social groups. The journals of middling suppliers and consumers like Edmund Harrold and John Coleman, while valuable, are rare. Much more common – although still not complete – are the account books, correspondence and material objects that survive for those consumers with the most economic and political power in society who regularly purchased high-end goods. Such material is analysed to address how and where elite members of society were spending their money. This chapter demonstrates that large amounts of money was spent locally on high-end goods by elite members of North Western society, and argues that groups within this wider elite exhibited distinct patterns of spending. By examining those individuals, families and households that have traditionally been classified as belonging to the elite into smaller subgroups according to wealth, rank and status in society, and by analysing spending habits accordingly, this chapter argues that consumption is a useful way of defining, differentiating and categorising the wider elite.

This chapter addresses the following questions: which kinds of products were being purchased locally by elite families around Liverpool and Manchester, and which products were purchased elsewhere? What was the role of London in the consumption habits of elite consumers in and around Liverpool and Manchester? How did specific social groups within the elite consume differently, and what is the significance of this? By focusing on these questions, the chapter will demonstrate that shops in Liverpool, Manchester and the surrounding area were, in the main, able to attract the custom of the local elite. Further, the definition of ‘the elite’ needs to be re-evaluated for an accurate account of buying high-end goods in eighteenth-century Britain to be produced. For the purposes of this study, personal and household account books have been used to examine what purchases were being made where, as these sources provide the most thorough accounts of the provenance of goods. This chapter also incorporates personal correspondence between suppliers and consumers, personal papers and receipts as sources to show how the individuals and families sampled bought their goods.

Despite the claims of Samuel Curwen that ‘manufacturing towns are not proper places of residence for idle people, either on account of pleasure or profit’, several idle, leisured and elite families existed in and around the towns. As a working definition, this chapter breaks down the elite into three subgroups: the aristocracy, defined by hereditary rank of baron or higher; the landowning gentry, leisured individuals defined by significant income from landownership, but without a hereditary title; and the professional lesser gentry, defined as individuals of some local economic and political power whose incomes were derived from professional work. The hypothesis of this chapter is that just as differences in the political and social experiences of

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these categories differed, so too did their experiences and behaviour as consumers. This chapter argues that distinctions in spending are as important as distinctions in rank, wealth and social experiences when classifying the elite. Three families were selected from each category according to the availability and quality of the surviving source material. The families belonging to the aristocracy are: the Stanley family, Earls of Derby; the Molyneux family, Earls of Sefton, and the Booth family, Earls Warrington. The aristocratic account books and papers surveyed indicate that many purchases of high-end goods were made locally, but that London was still the place where some larger purchases were made. For the landowning gentry category, the accounts of Peter Legh XIII of Lyme Hall, along with the Leicester and Assheton/Harbord families’ account books indicate that while London still played a role in providing consumer goods, the capital was less significant than for the aristocracy. These accounts suggest that while regularly spending significant amounts of money on high-end, high-quality items, consumers within this category were content with local provincial styles of fashion and furniture. For the final category, the professional lesser gentry, the chapter examines the Kenyon, Crompton and Twist families’ spending by exploring their personal accounts and papers. These sources show that all purchases of high-end goods were made locally. The source material for this final category suggests that personal relationships with suppliers, and getting the best deal, were particularly important to consumers in this category.

Of course, the patronage of local shops by the regional elite could easily be attributed to reasons other than the successful marketing of the shopkeepers and the availability (or otherwise) of the goods desired. The financial position of the consumer, along with their personal tastes and political leanings, need also to be considered. High social rank did not necessarily correlate to high income, and some of the families whose accounts are analysed in this chapter were in financial difficulty during our period – particularly the household of George Booth, Earl of
Warrington, whose finances were severely depleted at the start of the century. This may reasonably be supposed to have had an impact on the way goods were purchased, with local traders favoured for their relative cheapness compared to those further afield, and because of the costs associated with transit and delivery. Similarly, those of the social elite whose politics deviated from those of the mainstream establishment may have found it necessary to maintain local goodwill by fostering good relations with local traders and businesses: to become ‘integrated into the social and economic milieu of their localities’. Some of the families in this study, such as the Molyneuxs, the Earls of Sefton, whose support for the Jacobite cause spanned most of the century, might have been expected to attempt to maintain a low profile by purchasing goods locally rather than attract attention by ostentatiously taking delivery of large quantities of goods from London or elsewhere. Politics as well as pocket had a bearing on the way money was spent in eighteenth-century Britain, and as Elaine Chalus has argued, for the social and political elite in the eighteenth-century, ‘society became an extra-parliamentary stage upon which both small and large political dramas could be enacted’. However, this chapter seeks to demonstrate that even taking these varied and diverse factors into consideration, some patterns existed in the way elite consumers bought their high-end goods.

The chapter will address each category of consumer systematically, presenting the patterns of consumption that best exemplify their spending habits. By focusing primarily on the provenance of the goods purchased, the chapter demonstrates that, while London was still a

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draw for some products for a minority of consumers, the majority of high-end goods were purchased locally by those of the highest ranks in society. Elite consumers looked to London for their high-end items less often than anticipated. There was variation within the wider elite in terms of consumption habits that reflects the way that families within the group differed in terms of social, economic and political power. Although by no means fully comprehensive, this study is based on a larger sample of consumers from the highest ranks of North Western society than has previously been examined in order to give a fuller picture of elite spending in the region.

The way in which the role of eighteenth-century consumers have been studied by historians has shifted over the past two decades. Before the 1990s, historians of consumption focused their research on two primary areas: the examination of probate inventories to demonstrate possession of goods, and the marketing process by which suppliers created a demand for their wares. Studies of elite consumption in this period were restricted to examinations of estate management, and of income and expenditure for the largest aristocratic houses. These studies were significant to our understanding of high-status consumers and their goods, but were limited in scope by the restrictions of their source material. Little examination had been undertaken into the personal and household account books of specific individuals in order to assess the significance of material items to those who owned them. By the mid-1990s, prompted by developments in social and cultural history which focused attention onto the role of objects in everyday life, historians were starting to ask questions about the value of consumer goods in monetary and cultural terms, by analysing material culture, household account books, correspondence and diaries. Historians such as Amanda Vickery, Maxine Berg and Helen

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Clifford redefined how historians thought about consumption by emphasising consumers and their relationships with the goods they bought.11

This methodological shift in the historiography of consumption was accompanied by a move towards the middling sort of people as a primary focus of interest. Margaret Hunt argued in 1996 that this new and rapidly expanding group had been a ‘rather impoverished category from the historiographical point of view’.12 Hunt echoed many of her contemporaries in claiming that research focused on social elites was disproportionate, and that there was little examination of the family or social lives of middling Britons within the historiography.13 The work of scholars such as Hunt, Earle, Davidoff and Hall signalled the arrival of a body of literature that saw the new purchase-power of the middle classes thoroughly examined. McKendrick, Brewer and Plumb’s theories of social emulation – which suggested aspirational middling sorts would routinely engage in imitation of their perceived social betters – was problematised by deeper analysis of the consumption of the middling sort.14 Historians who have worked on towns in the eighteenth-century North West have focused almost exclusively on case studies of individuals of the middling sort, and analysis of the consumption habits of the elite has not been undertaken to the same extent, or with the same methodology, as other social groups.15

The work of Amanda Vickery and Jon Stobart mark notable exceptions to the lack of recent research on the elite as consumers. Vickery’s work has examined the spending habits of women from the gentry through analysis of household accounts, diaries, material culture and correspondence. Jon Stobart has also examined elite consumers, and has focused on the personal and estate accounts of various members of the Leigh family, lesser members of the Warwickshire aristocracy. Yet, examinations of the individuals and families categorised as elite within this recent historiography show that defining the term is a difficult task. While some patterns of leisured consumption can be identified across social groups, the social and economic experiences of Vickery’s Lancashire gentlewoman, Elizabeth Shackleton, and Stobart’s Thomas, 4th Baron Leigh, differed significantly. It is therefore necessary for historians writing about the elite to approach this group in a more nuanced way. Some years ago, Laurence and Jeanne Stone acknowledged the difficulties in defining the elite, and restricted their own sample ‘in terms of ownership of (as residence in) a country house of a certain minimum size’. Vickery has disagreed with the need for a prerequisite of country house ownership, and has used the term ‘elite’ to describe individuals who identified themselves as having belonged to the gentry, which, in turn, she defines broadly: ‘the provincial women at the heart of this study’, she claimed in 1998, ‘hailed from families headed by lesser landed gentlemen, attorneys, doctors, clerics, merchants and manufacturers… as a group they described themselves as ‘polite’, ‘civil’, ‘genteel’

18 Stone and Stone, An Open Elite, p. 11.
and ‘polished’. By contrast, Stobart’s use of the term ‘elite’ is exclusively focused on a higher, hereditary rank. Although the regrouping and redefining of the elite is not new within the historiography, regrouping the elite in terms of consumption habits is a new approach, and this is the contribution to scholarship that this chapter aims to make.

**The Aristocracy**

This first section will explore the accounts and spending habits of families from three of the principal aristocratic estates in the eighteenth-century North West: the Molyneuxs (Viscounts, later Earls of Sefton) at Croxteth Hall; the Stanleys (Earls of Derby) at Knowsley Park; and the Booths/Egertons (Earls of Warrington, later Stamford) at Dunham Massey. Unlike the other two categories in this chapter, the definition of aristocracy is objective, and is clearly defined as members of the peerage. Studies on the political role of the titled eighteenth-century elite have existed for many years, and have ranged in political focus from apologist works defending the presence of hereditary peers to Marxist critiques of unearned prestige and power. Aristocrats’ provincial country houses too have been the subject of in-depth study. Research has long been undertaken on the cultural significance of country houses to the local landscape, the role of the titled landowner’s estate in provincial towns, and on the material culture of aristocratic houses. Yet little accompanying evidence has been presented on the supplying of goods to these culturally and politically important spaces of consumption. As Stobart has argued, ‘viewing the great house as the embodiment of social and cultural capital places emphasis on outcomes and

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19 Vickery, The Gentleman’s Daughter, p. 3.
20 Stobart, ‘Gentlemen and Shopkeepers’, p. 901.
21 The highest rank being Duke, then Marquis, Earl, Viscount, through to Baron. Two of the subjects in the ‘Landowning Gentry’ category of this chapter are Baronets who, while holders of honorific titles, are not peers. Baronets rank higher than a knight (except Order of the Garter and Order of the Thistle) and lower than Baron. C. Mosley (ed.) Burke’s Peerage and Baronetage (London, 1999), p.14.
22 A good overview of the historical debates on the role of the eighteenth-century aristocrat over the past thirty years can be found in Goodrich, ‘Peers or Parasites’, particularly pp. 29-34. See also Beckett, The Aristocracy in England, pp. 59-63; Beckett, ‘The Pattern of Landownership in England and Wales’, pp. 4-7; Massey and Catalano, Capital and Land; Mingay, English Landed Society; Porter, English Society; Stone and Stone, An Open Elite?
often overlooks the processes of consumption and the systems of supply which met the needs and wants of the elite."  

Even in the comparatively full accounts and purchase records of aristocratic families, details about the provenance of goods often prove elusive to historians. Little has survived in the archives for the household and personal account of the Dukes of Bridgewater, for example, whose accounts would have enriched this study. Extensive inventories survive from Francis Egerton, the 3rd Duke of Bridgewater’s furniture and linen at the estate at Worsley, but, while useful in assessing the belongings of a local aristocrat in the latter part of the century, neither these sources nor the Worsley household accounts contain much information about where these goods were purchased. For two of the families explored in this section, the Molyneuxs (Earls of Sefton) and the Stanleys (Earls of Derby), full and detailed accounts survive from the late 1730s and continue relatively uninterrupted throughout the century. It is these two families’ accounts that will form the backbone of the analysis that follows. Sample periods of the accounts for both families have been taken to allow for an in-depth account analysis across the period, and in order to both identify any temporal differences, and to draw direct comparisons between the two families. The sample years chosen are 1738-40 (the earliest available complete account books for the Earls of Sefton); 1758-60 and 1778-80. Sustained, detailed accounts for the third family, the


25 Salford City Archives (SCA), BW/A/11/1, Inventory of the furniture in Worsley Hall, belonging to his Grace the Duke of Bridgewater, 1796; BW/A/11/2, Inventory of the Duke of Bridgewater’s goods left in Worsley Hall the day when Mrs. Gilbert left, 1796; BW/A/11/3, Inventory of the linen belonging to his Grace the Duke of Bridgewater of Worsley Hall at the time Mrs. Gilbert left there, 1796. Mrs. Gilbert appears to have been the housekeeper at Worsley until her retirement in 1796, and these inventories were likely taken to inform her replacement.

26 Raised from the Baronetcy in 1628, the Viscounts Molyneux remained as powerful and politically active members of Lancashire society throughout the early-to-mid eighteenth century and after their promotion to the new Earldom of Selfon in 1771. Accounts for the Molyneux family begin in the late 1730s at the death of Richard, 5th Viscount Molyneux and the succession of his younger brother Caryll. The 6th Viscount was evidently more assiduous in his account keeping than his brother, and the first surviving account book that survives for Croxteth Hall is for 1738-1740, in tandem with Caryll’s ascension to the Sefton estate. This sample focuses on the account books of Caryll Molyneux, his younger brother and successor William Molyneux, and their nephew Charles Molyneux who become the eighth viscount and first Earl of Sefton. The Molyneux seat was at Croxteth Hall approximately five miles north east of Liverpool (see map). The members of the Stanley family of Knowsley Hall whose accounts will be investigated in this section are Edward Stanley, the 11th Earl of Derby, whose tenure lasted from his succession in 1736 to his death in 1776, and his grandson Edward who became the 12th Earl, his own father James Smith-Stanley (Lord Strange) having died in 1771. See W. Courthope, (ed.) Debrett’s Complete Peerage of The United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (London, 1838), p. 555.
Booths/Egertons, do not begin in earnest until much later in the century, although as will be demonstrated, some valuable information about the reported spending of individuals exists prior to this. The Booth family papers are incomplete, and little information about spending and household accounts was preserved following the culmination of the Booth dynasty and the Earldom of Warrington at the marriage of Lady Mary Booth to the 4th Earl of Stamford in 1736. The few remaining Dunham Massey accounts for Mary and her sons between 1760 and 1800 indicate that, in keeping with the other aristocratic samples of this chapter, purchases were made locally for all goods except clothing, references to which barely feature in the accounts for Dunham Massey.

The first consideration when assessing aristocratic spending is the disposable income for each household within this social category. Measuring aristocratic income in the eighteenth century is a difficult task. Even for titled households whose records are comparatively complete, information about income and expenditure has rarely survived in full, and comprehensive accounts of monies incoming throughout the century are rare. Despite the elusiveness of quantitative data, some scholars have attempted to broadly estimate aristocratic income. In 1984, John Cannon used three contemporary calculations from 1696, 1760, and 1803 to gauge the average income of aristocratic families throughout the eighteenth century. While Cannon was more concerned with the total income received by peers as a group and the proportion of national wealth that this represented, his calculations about the average incomes aristocrats could expect to receive at various points in the century are useful in assessing how wealthy our three families were in the context of their social position. According to Cannon’s estimations, the

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27 JRUL(SC), EGR/3/7/1/2, Mary Booth’s Account Book; EGR/7/1/4, Household Accounts. As Countess of Stamford, Mary divided her residence between Dunham Massey, Enville and the town-house in London, generally residing in Cheshire between July and late November or early December each year. This pattern was continued by her son and grandson, the 5th and 6th Earls of Stamford, who both sought to uphold the family’s influence in Cheshire.

‘average’ peer (a term Cannon acknowledged as incongruous due to huge variation in estate size, location, and prominence) had an income of around £5000 at the beginning of the century, this increased to £6000 by 1760, and stood at somewhere between £8000 and £10000 by 1800. Table 4.1 gives the best available assessment of income and expenditure of the three aristocratic families of this chapter, according to their household income and expenditure account books and papers.

Table 4.1: *Estimated Household Income for the Earls of Warrington, Derby and Sefton, 1738-1780.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Years sampled</th>
<th>Income of family</th>
<th>Household expenditure (local estates only)</th>
<th>Difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Booth, Earl of Warrington</td>
<td>1714</td>
<td>£3045</td>
<td>£3842</td>
<td>-£797</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>[reference to finances for this date in papers written later]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stanley, Earls of Derby</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>£10220</td>
<td>£3653</td>
<td>+£6567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1760</td>
<td>£13460</td>
<td>£4543</td>
<td>+£8917</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>£14043</td>
<td>£5002</td>
<td>+£9041</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Molyneux, Earls of Sefton</td>
<td>1740</td>
<td>£8103</td>
<td>£2745</td>
<td>+£5358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1760</td>
<td>£9476</td>
<td>£3993</td>
<td>+£5458</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>£9460</td>
<td>£4221</td>
<td>+£5239</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

We can see from the table that within the three principal Earldoms of the eighteenth-century North West there was significant variation in disposable income. The reported income of George Booth in 1714 was well under Cannon’s stated average for a peer of his standing; although it should be noted that the only surviving references to Booth’s accounts were recorded some years later.29 Booth’s own correspondence further demonstrates that the Warrington finances were dangerously low: in letters to his brother, Booth states explicitly how expenditure

29 EGR3/6/2 ‘bundle of papers by the hand of George Booth’. These figures have been taken from the few surviving references to expenditure in Booth’s annotated papers, likely penned in the 1720s once the family finances had improved. See D. Eastwood, *The Booths of Dunham Massey* (Leek, 2004), pp. 118-133.
exceeded yearly income by around £800 each year, even with the stringent cost-saving measures put in place by Booth himself at Dunham Massey.\textsuperscript{30} In contrast to the Earls Derby and Viscounts Molyneux/Earls Sefton, little detailed material survives regarding the accounts of George Booth.\textsuperscript{31} The same sorts of archival material used to assess the Sefton and Derby consumption habits cannot therefore be applied to Warrington.\textsuperscript{32} But although the account books for Booth are lost, some of his surviving papers do offer an indication as to what sort of consumers he and his predecessors had been. When the second Earl inherited his title and the seat at Dunham Massey, the estate was in financial trouble. Warrington wrote:

Besides, when my father dyed the buildings etc. at Dunham were in the upmost disorder for want of repairs, money always being so much wanted for other uses, that it could not be spared for those so necessary purposes that has consequently been the greater expense to me. So that at the rate our family lived, and served the public, they could neither furnish the house with necessary goods, nor hardly keep the house itself up [...] and besides all that, run every year more into debt.\textsuperscript{33}

In his papers, Booth made plain his near-destitution at the start of the century, which undoubtedly had an impact on his spending, as will be demonstrated. By contrast, the Sefton and, particularly, the Derby accounts suggest robust incomes that were consistently above the average expected income for aristocrats throughout the century, according to Cannon.

As demonstrated in Table 4.2, both the Molyneux and the Stanley families purchased the majority of their goods in the local area between 1738 and 1780, with 73.7% and 60.3% of purchases respectively being made within 25 miles of the family estates in Croxteth and Knowsley. However, Table 4.3 demonstrates there are significant discrepancies between the

\textsuperscript{30} JRUL(SC), EGR/3/6/2/2/1.
\textsuperscript{31} In his extensive and detailed catalogue of the Dunham Massey estate papers, the archivist John Hodgson writes of the dearth of surviving material on the Booths: ‘the quantity of Booth family papers is disappointing; the material occupies a mere sixteen archive boxes compared with over one hundred for the Grey family papers… material may have been discarded when the Booth line came to an end and Dunham Massey passed to the Grey family with the death of Mary Countess of Stamford in 1772…One may conjecture that the Grey family did not feel any great attachment to their predecessors’ papers’, in the catalogue entry for ‘Papers of the Grey Family, Earls Stamford: Booth Family Papers’. JRUL EGR.
\textsuperscript{32} Some limited accounts survive for Booth’s daughter, Lady Mary Booth (later Stamford) and her son, George Harry Grey the 5th Earl of Stamford.
\textsuperscript{33} JRUL EGR3/6/2/2.
types of good purchased locally and further afield. Unsurprisingly, the Earls of Derby and the Earls of Sefton purchased almost all groceries for their estates in the local area. Alongside the more mundane purchases of meat, dairy, bread and similar items listed in housekeepers' accounts in the sample are entries for higher-end groceries such as wine, sherry, Madeira, champagne, spirits, figs, oranges, lemons, limes, sugar and spices. This pattern is repeated in the Sefton accounts, and in the few surviving accounts of Warrington’s daughter, Lady Mary Booth, and her son, the 5th Earl of Stamford. Although the Molyneuxs exclusively bought their tea, coffee and chocolate from local merchants, the purchasing pattern of these goods by the Stanley family is mixed. Aulay MacAulay, the Manchester tea dealer featured in the previous chapter, achieved his aim of attracting high-status customers, and makes several appearances in the Derby accounts for the 1780s. However, Thomas Twining, of the famous London-based tea and coffee dynasty, also features in the account books for these years. Similarly, although most purchases of wine are made locally, both samples of accounts contain references to cases of wine being purchased from London, and around 15% of the highest-end groceries purchased in the sample years were bought in from the capital. The accounts suggest that aristocrats in the North West were content to buy the perishable goods available locally, but looked to London for favourite suppliers encountered there, or where the level of quality, service or selection was unavailable in the vicinity of their estates.

For both the Molyneux and the Stanley families, many smaller sundry household objects which were not singularly expensive enough to merit individual account references were recorded in vague entries such as ‘Mr. Houghton of Liverpool, for several things according to his bill- 14s.4d’ [Molyneux] or ‘To Thomas Allbright for all his goods bought at Lancashire’

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34 All sundry groceries are bought locally by all families in all categories of this chapter, and for this reason references to this sort of purchase are not included in the data contained in Table 4.1.
35 Sources for the purchasing of groceries for the Derby accounts include LRO DDK 2011/1 ‘Mrs. Ann Barton’s (the housekeepers) account; DDK 2013/1-3, Mr. Richard Walker’s rough cash books; 2014/12 Account and Order book and selections from the Knowsley accounts, DDK 2001-2038. The Sefton groceries are typically included in the ‘promiscuous accounts’ section of their general household accounts, and sections have been used from LRO DDM 1/14through to DDM 1/157. Lady Mary's Book, although significantly less complete than the Molyneuxs’ or the Stanleys’, JRUL EGR3/6/5/7 also contains references of this nature, i.e.- wine, cinnamon, nutmeg lemons and limes are purchased from a Manchester merchant in July 1768.
Table 4.2: *Purchases Made Locally and in London by the North-Western Aristocracy, 1738-c.1780.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>Years sampled</th>
<th>Individual listed on bills and receipts</th>
<th>Total Purchases Local</th>
<th>Total Purchases London</th>
<th>Percentage Purchases Local</th>
<th>Percentage Purchases London</th>
<th>Total family purchases local</th>
<th>Total family purchases London</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Molyneux</strong></td>
<td>1738-1740</td>
<td>Caryll Molyneux, 6th Viscount</td>
<td>278</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>735 (73.7%)</td>
<td>261 (26.2%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Viscount Molyneux/ Earl Sefton)</td>
<td>1758-1760</td>
<td>William Molyneux, 7th Viscount</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>68.9%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1778-1780</td>
<td>Charles Molyneux, 1st Earl of Sefton</td>
<td>242</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>71.1%</td>
<td>28.8%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanley</strong></td>
<td>1738-1740</td>
<td>Edward Stanley, 11th Earl of Derby</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>288</td>
<td>52%</td>
<td>47.9%</td>
<td>1168 (60.3%)</td>
<td>766 (39.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Earls Derby)</td>
<td>1758-1760</td>
<td></td>
<td>462</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>70.2%</td>
<td>29.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1778-1780</td>
<td>Edward Smith-Stanley, 12th Earl of Derby</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>282</td>
<td>58.2%</td>
<td>41.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Booth/Grey</strong></td>
<td>Very sporadic accounts between 1714-1758.</td>
<td>George Booth, 2nd Earl Warrington</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>76.6%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>191 (70.7%)</td>
<td>68 (29.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Earls Warrington/ Earls Stamford) (incomplete)</td>
<td>1768 and 1769</td>
<td>Lady Mary Booth (later Grey)</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>16 (11 purchases made in other areas)</td>
<td>80.9%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1780</td>
<td>George Harry Grey, 5th Earl of Stamford</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>65.3%</td>
<td>34.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Sources:* LRO, Molyneux, Ears of Sefton Accounts DDM 1/141; DDM 1/144; DDM 1/145; DDM 1/155; DDM 1/156; DDM 1/157. LRO, Stanley, Ears of Derby Cash Books, Estate and Household Accounts DDK 001/1-5; DDK 2005/1-18; DDK 2006-2012 (selection); DDK 2015/1-10; DDK 2020/1-8. JRUL, EGRJ: Papers of the Booth Family EGRJ/6/2/1; EGRJ/6/2/2; EGRJ/7/1/7; EGRJ/8/1/6.
[Stanley]. For the Molyneuxs, Liverpool was a regular centre for purchasing smaller household items which the Molyneux family or their servants were prepared to outsource to third parties: one entry in the accounts sees a Mrs. Rylance, who had previously provided Croxteth with 3 bed quilts at £3.5s.8d, paid a further five shillings ‘for her trouble in buying goods at Liverpool since my lord begun house at Croxteth’. Ten shillings are also paid to William Chamberlain for the ‘selection and carriage of 2 loads of goods from Liverpool to Croxteth’. For the Stanleys, similar references feature in the accounts of unspecified and relatively low value ‘household goods’, ‘things for the Hall’ and purchases ‘for the house at Knowsley’ are bought from Liverpool, Manchester, Preston and Warrington. Services were exclusively purchased locally by both the Stanleys and the Molyneuxs. Local businesses such as wigmakers, hairdressers, dancing masters, writing masters, upholsterers, watch and clock repairs feature frequently in the account books, and there is no evidence that the members of these families felt the need to seek the services of metropolitan practitioners for the provision of these types of services.

Table 4.3: Purchases made Locally per Aristocratic Family, Arranged by Type of Goods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>High-end groceries</th>
<th>Furniture</th>
<th>Clothing: garments</th>
<th>Clothing: fabric</th>
<th>Glass, Pottery, China</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Jewellery, clocks, art, watches</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Molyneux (Sefton)</strong></td>
<td>654 of 738</td>
<td>19 of 20</td>
<td>89 of 392</td>
<td>33 of 50</td>
<td>60 of 63</td>
<td>83 of 158</td>
<td>33 of 316</td>
<td>197 of 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stanley (Derby)</strong></td>
<td>304 of 418</td>
<td>42 of 48</td>
<td>46 of 208</td>
<td>84 of 87</td>
<td>40 of 46</td>
<td>49 of 52</td>
<td>43 of 60</td>
<td>80 of 80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Booth/Grey (Warrington)</strong></td>
<td>77 of 102</td>
<td>[No references]</td>
<td>5 of 30</td>
<td>38 of 38</td>
<td>2 of 2</td>
<td>10 of 12</td>
<td>0 of 16</td>
<td>5 of 12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Sources: LRO, DDM1: Molyneux Earls of Sefton Accounts (selection); LRO, DDK Stanley, Earls of Derby Cash Books, Estate and Household Accounts (selection); JRUL EGR3 Papers of the Booth Family (selection)

36 LRO DDM.1.141 20; LRO DDK 2006/5.
37 LRO DDM.1.141 22
38 LRO DDM.1.141 20
39 Various accounts from LRO DDK 2001-2038. These references 2003/5, 2006/1, 2006/4.
More interesting for the historian concerned with local purchasing among the provincial aristocracy are the larger, more permanent and more expensive items that feature in the account books. These are items, such as jewellery or pieces of furniture, that both Stobart and Vickery have referred to as ‘dynastic’ in their analyses of high-end consumption: goods which ‘emphasized traditional concerns of the elite: patronage, display, and heritance’. Among the most prominent sets of entries in the Molyneux account book for 1738-40 are those for altering, repairing and refurnishing the family seat at Croxteth Hall. It appears that the 6th Viscount was keen to put his own stamp on Croxteth, and a series of costly and extensive alterations and improvements took place upon to his accession, as did a large spate of furniture and fixture buying. What is striking about the furnishing of Croxteth is the exclusive use of local merchants, workmen and suppliers. For instance, among many other examples, £8.1s was paid to Mr. Richard Simpson for ‘10 Windsor chairs and half a dozen stools from Preston’ in October 1739. And the following month £7.13s was paid ‘to Mr. Roberts of Lancaster in full for 8 mahogany chairs and for a coach glass’. After the initial period of change for the Molyneuxs, and the developments that came with the 6th Viscount’s succession and move to Croxteth, the frequency of significant purchases bought locally decreased. However, locally bought goods still account for the overwhelming majority of purchases, and the Molyneuxs continued to buy many high-value, high-end items in Lancashire and Cheshire.

41 LRO, DDM 1.142.
42 Mr. Roberts’ services were also used for a dressing chest and 3 looking glasses in June of the same year (£3.1s.2d). Repeat purchases were made from a Mr. Rigby, ‘joyner’, who provided ‘a writing desk bought for Mrs. Molyneux’s room’ in May 1739 (£3.3s), a ‘hard board for coffee cups’ (£5) and a ‘bill for good chairs, &c.’ amounting to £8.1s. Rigby also appears to have been employed to work directly at Croxteth Hall and to have undertaken many of the repairs to the house between 1739 and 1740; his name was finally entered in May 1740 next to the largest single amount discharged that year: ‘the remainder of his bill for goods and work done to Croxteth – £26.18s. LRO, DDM.1.141 ‘General Accounts 1738-1739’ p 23.
43 For example, The account books for 1758-60 contain entries such as a clock from Mr. Thomas Waller (Manchester, £7.7s); be hangings from James Royle (Manchester, £2); a marble bust from James Fleetwood (Lancaster, £5.11s) pictures from Mr. Diccousoit of Whittington (in the Lune Valley, Lancashire, £30); wine from Mr. Evington (Liverpool, £9.6d) and coach wheels from Mr. Green of Liverpool. For the Stanleys, the names of suppliers are not always listed, but notable items bought locally include picture frames (Liverpool, 16s.); servants’ livery (Manchester, £6.8s6d); wigs (Manchester, £4.4); the mending of a gold watch (Liverpool, £1.4.6); and ‘a magnifying glass and spectacles’ (Manchester, 17s).LRO DDK 2005-08 items listed in the various account books for
The accounts of the Stanley family, Earls Derby, tell a slightly different story. Although smaller household furnishings feature in the Derby accounts (there are references to china, cutlery, bed hangings and small tables, all purchased locally) there is little evidence in the sample years of large pieces of furniture being bought, either locally or in London. Furthermore, the largest, most expensive, items in the Stanley accounts, most frequently paintings and items of sculpture, were bought almost exclusively from merchants based in London. A section for ‘pictures’ appears at the end of almost every annual account, and includes entries for items by Caravaggio (£126) and a Roman bust (£327) as well as references to less substantial and more vaguely described but still very significant purchases made, such as ‘To Mr. Wicker of London for 2 pictures, £63.’\(^{44}\) This suggests that the availability in regional markets of specialist, top quality goods such as the Derby works of art needs to be considered when analysing account books of the aristocracy alongside the personal tastes and interests of the consumer. The Stanleys were clearly fervent art collectors, the Molyneuxs were not. While the account books for the Molyneuxs feature 60 individual purchases in the category ‘jewellery, clocks, art, watches etc.’, 43 of which were bought locally, the Stanleys purchased more than six times this amount, and only 10% of the purchases of products in this category were made in the North West. The types of goods in this category featuring in the Stanley accounts are highly specialised collectables bought from agents in London trading in the international market – a market that had not yet fully manifested in provincial towns.\(^{45}\) As such, significantly more references to London exist in the Stanley accounts than in the Molyneuxs’. However, the two families revert to similar patterns of consumption when it comes to mid-range purchases and to clothing.

One of the most striking correlations between both families’ accounts is the relative absence of clothing purchased locally by the families. While locally bought servants’ and

1743-1750. The Stanleys also patronised the Mr. Dicoussou, spending £8 on ‘gold dust’ in 1743 (LRO DDK 2004 6).

\(^{44}\) These three entries all feature in the account book for 1748, LRO DDK 2007. Similar types of entries exist in most of the sampled account books for the Stanley family.

children’s clothes make several appearances in the accounts for the Earls of Derby (a Mr. Warbuton of Liverpool was patronised every January between the late 1760s and the 1780s for ‘servants’ livery’), the Earls’ personal clothing largely appears to have been procured from the metropolis. A similar pattern is apparent in the Sefton accounts. Lesser members of both households were clothed by local merchants, but for the Earls’ and their wives’ personal wardrobes, local purchasing is far less common. The accounts occasionally contained entries such as ‘Mr. Matthews for some cloth for my lord’ (£5.18s.8d) [Sefton], or, more frequently, smaller items for the Stanley family: ‘Stockings for your lordship’ (£2.5s); ‘Mr. Tyler for your new clothes’ (£5.10s); ‘6 pairs of gloves for your lordship’ (7s.6d); ‘Mr. Thomas, Shoemaker’ (£2.16), but these are rare compared to the much larger and more frequent references to sums paid to London tailors. Table 4.3 shows that 46.2% of the Molyneux’s clothing purchases (of which 37 of the 96 listed purchases were for children) and only 22.7% of the Stanley’s personal clothing were bought in the area. In the years sampled, the Molyneuxs collectively spent over £860 at London tailors, the Stanleys over £1100. The absence of references to locally purchased clothing in the aristocratic accounts suggests that qualitative judgements were being made about the availability of appropriate clothing from suppliers close to the northern estates. While the Molyneux and Stanley families were content to purchase many household furnishings locally – either for reasons of convenience or because the style, price and range of furniture made by local crafts people was deemed satisfactory – clothing was not similarly regarded, and was almost exclusively bought in London.

For the comparatively impoverished Earl of Warrington, the few references recorded in his papers to the purchasing of clothing suggest that his family did not look to London when dressing themselves. Among a bundle of Booth’s well-preserved personal documents is a copy of a letter written in response to his brother, Henry Booth, in response to a teasing letter sent by Henry. Henry had apparently berated George for not fulfilling his duty as one of the region’s

principal peers, for refusing to attend local public engagements, or to present himself in a manner befitting of his social rank. George Booth annotated his indignant response: ‘I wrote this in January 1714 to my brother Henry Booth, to endeavour to convince him of his impudent thoughts, that I should give in to such a popular expensive way as my grandfather and my father had done in their time’.  These papers include some specific legacies of debt left to the 2nd Earl:

Then my father dyed these were shop debts owing to all sorts of local tradesfolk, some very large, for example to his hatter £19.6s, hosier £20.10s, shoemaker £5.10s Tailor £115.19s Saddler £193.5s.6d. And even a bill for wine at my grandfather Delaney’s funeral for £22.6s.  

That Booth makes reference to large amounts of money owed to local traders, and particularly clothing, suggests that as a consequence of financial hardship and a significantly smaller income than the Stanleys or the Molyneuxs, the Booths did not practise all of the same patterns of consumption as their regional social equals. This was considered noteworthy enough for Henry to mention George’s prudence, and for George to preserve his own reaction and justification. Once the family finances improved, it is possible that the Booths did buy their clothing in London, although the accounts do not survive to demonstrate this. What is evident is that the account book of Booth’s daughter Mary, who remained at Dunham Massey after her father’s death, only makes reference to clothing bought in London. After a period of increased financial security for the Booth family, and having become Countess of Stamford upon her marriage in 1736, Mary likely had the funds available to purchase clothing from London in almost all recorded transactions, as befitting a woman of her wealth and status.

The aristocratic account books examined here show that throughout the century almost all groceries for the North Western estates, every day and high-end, were purchased in the region. Furniture was often bought locally – in large quantities for the Earls of Sefton, and to a lesser but still significant degree by the Earls of Derby. Other expensive items were also bought

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47 JRUL item: EGR3/6/2 ‘bundle of papers by the hand of George Booth’.
48 JRUL EGR3/6/2/1.
49 JRUL(SC), EGR/3/7/1/2, Mary Booth’s Account Book; Eastwood, The Booths of Dunham Massey, p. 166-168.
from towns in the North West: clocks; portraiture; sculpture; china; cutlery and other household and personal items befitting a person of high rank, with some notable exceptions: namely art for the Stanleys, and adult clothing for all parties. While comparable accounts do not survive in full for the Earl of Warrington, his papers indicate frugality, and it is likely that the patterns of local consumption of the goods explored in this section were repeated in his spending. The accounts and papers of the aristocratic families surveyed in this chapter indicate that in terms of consumption, aristocrats in the North West could usually be categorised by widespread patronage of local shops, but London was the preferred market for clothing purchases and works of art. Analyses of the way clothing and furniture were bought also serve to differentiate between another social category: the gentry. This chapter will now go on to examine the spending habits of some of the region’s families who qualify as belonging to this broadly defined category in order to further explore the nuances of spending within the eighteenth-century elite.

**The Landowning Gentry**

In the absence of a hereditary title, historians have struggled to define the specific criteria for ‘the gentry’ as a diverse but distinct social group. Mingay tells us that, compared to the aristocracy, the gentry, was ‘far larger, much less exclusive and more diverse in origins’. 50 Heal and Holmes have suggested that identifying who classified as the gentry is particularly difficult for historians of the eighteenth century given the evolution of social hierarchy between 1700 and 1800, stating that ‘flexible definitions of gentry were a necessary feature of the rather mobile society of early modern England’. 51 Porter tells us that the gentry ‘ranged from baronets, who in 1700 might have over £1500 a year (by 1800 perhaps £4000), down to the squire feeling the pinch on as little as £300’, arguing that belonging to the gentry denoted a high but indeterminate social status,

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encompassing several diverse incomes or roles in society.\textsuperscript{52} The widespread acknowledgment within the historiography that the gentry comprised such socially diverse members is in itself a justification for a dissection of the group and extensive further study, and analysis of consumption patterns is an effective way of conducting such a study.

In this chapter, members of the gentry in the eighteenth-century North West have been arranged into two subgroups. This section focuses on families who had been firmly established for generations, whose ties with the aristocracy were longstanding, and whose estates and incomes were large and significant. The three families presented in this section were all landowners without a hereditary title but who, like the aristocrats explored in the previous section, derived the majority of their income from rents and leases. All of the families here also had an active public role in their specific locale and/or at court in London. The next section of this chapter will deal with the lower end of the region’s gentry: professionals who, although serving important functions in local society, were not truly of the highest social rank.

As has been noted, account books and details of estate expenditure from the great estates of the aristocracy are more likely to have survived than those of smaller, poorer or less socially significant households. Records of accounts are almost complete in the case of the Legh and Leicester families and more sporadic for Sir Harbord and his wife. The analysis is based on the accounts for the household of Peter Legh XIII at Lyme Hall, which indicate an income of between around £2800 and £3200; the Leicester family’s accounts for their residence at Tabley House in Knutsford, and suggest an income of between £1700 and £2200; and the receipts and

\textsuperscript{52} Porter, \textit{English Society in the Eighteenth Century}, p. 66. For other examples of historians’ difficulties in defining the eighteenth-century gentry as a group, see also Stone and Stone, \textit{An Open Elite}, particularly the third section of their first chapter, ‘The Problem: the seat’ which sets out their criteria for subjects included in their study and breaks the group down into ‘country gentry’ and ‘parish gentry’, pp. 5-11. Also Vickery’s introduction to her ‘Gentility’ chapter in Vickery, \textit{The Gentleman’s Daughter}, pp. 13-17; and G. E. Mingay, \textit{The Gentry: the Rise and Fall of a Ruling Class} (London, 1976).
papers of Sir Harbord Harbord and his family at Middleton Hall, which are not complete enough to estimate an income, but do offer an insight into the family’s spending habits.  

**Table 4.4: Percentage of Purchases made Locally per Landowning Gentry Family, Arranged by Type of Goods.**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Family</th>
<th>High-end groceries</th>
<th>Furniture</th>
<th>Clothing: garments</th>
<th>Clothing: fabric and accessories</th>
<th>Glass, Pottery, China</th>
<th>Household</th>
<th>Jewellery, clocks, art, watches.</th>
<th>Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Leicester</td>
<td>304 of 318 (95.5%)</td>
<td>30 of 36 (83.3%)</td>
<td>96 of 102 (94.1%)</td>
<td>50 of 50 (100%)</td>
<td>36 of 36 (100%)</td>
<td>68 of 68 (100%)</td>
<td>31 of 40 (77.5%)</td>
<td>26 of 29 (89.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assheton</td>
<td>222 of 239 (92.8%)</td>
<td>22 of 24 (91.6%)</td>
<td>46 of 46 (100%)</td>
<td>52 of 54 (96.2%)</td>
<td>18 of 18 (100%)</td>
<td>60 of 63 (95.2%)</td>
<td>28 of 28 (100%)</td>
<td>19 of 19 (100%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legh</td>
<td>402 of 430 (93.4%)</td>
<td>12 of 17 (70.5%)</td>
<td>62 of 62 (100%)</td>
<td>55 of 55 (100%)</td>
<td>40 of 40 (100%)</td>
<td>54 of 59 (90.4%)</td>
<td>66 of 73 (100%)</td>
<td>38 of 38 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources:** GMCRO, GB124.E7/23 Personal Accounts of Harbord Harbord within Papers of Assheton Family of Middleton (selection); CCRO, DLT 5/4/7 Leicester-Warren family of Tabley, records (selection); SLHA, B/JJ/6/5, Legh of Lyme Disbursements (selection).

The family with the largest estate in this section's analysis was the Legh family, whose property, social roles, and connections made the Leghs one of the most powerful commoner families in the eighteenth-century North West. The accounts for Lyme Hall during the thirteenth Peter Legh’s tenure (1744-1792) were undertaken by his steward, Richard Orford, whose surviving records are extensive. Orford solely recorded the disbursements made on behalf the Legh family at Lyme, with expenses incurred while his master was at the Soho residence recorded only in vague terms. While Orford’s accounts tended to include just the name of the supplier and the amount paid, the provenance of the goods can be cross-referenced with contemporary trade directories, and with the extensive correspondence that survives between Orford and the suppliers of goods to Lyme Park.

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53 The sources used for the purposes of this section are: For the Legh family, selected volumes of Richard Orford's disbursements for the Lyme Hall, from SLHA B/JJ/6/5, *Legh of Lyme Disbursements*, and selected correspondence to Peter Legh the Younger and Richard Orford, from JRUL(SC), *Legh of Lyme Correspondence*; for the Leicester family, various account books for the ‘Leicester-Warren family of Tabley, records’ collection at CCRO, DLT 5/4/7 (selection). For the Harbord family's accounts 'Personal Accounts of Harbord Harbord' in the 'Papers of Assheton Family of Middleton' collection held at Archives+, GB124.E7/23 (selection).

54 An example of the way Orford recorded Peter Legh’s spending in London is a disbursement for £40 17s, recorded on 17th February 1769 as ‘my master being in London’, SLHA B/JJ/6/5, *Legh of Lyme Disbursements* ‘Disbursements by Richard Orford for the Cheshire Estate, 1st December 1768 – 30th November 1769.'
In common with all consumers examined in this chapter, the vast majority of the Legh household’s perishable goods were purchased locally. Groceries tended to be paid for annually, and were recorded in the Lyme accounts in non-specific terms, such as ‘Peter Swindley for groceries from 1768, £111 5s 6d’ and ‘John Wood for cheese and sundry shop articles, £46 3s 6d’. Two notable exceptions involve two Manchester suppliers who were examined in the previous chapter, Aulay Macaulay and Elizabeth Raffald, who both supplied Lyme Park with their goods in 1768 and 1769. The perishable goods featured in the accounts, including rum, wine and brandy, were sourced from Stockport, Liverpool and Manchester. The local purchasing of high-end groceries is, unsurprisingly, repeated by the Leicesters and the Harbords. As demonstrated in Table 4.4, the surveyed accounts of Sir John and Lady Catherine Leicester, and the accounts of the Harbords at Middleton, tell similar stories in terms of the provenance of the types of product bought. High-end groceries were almost exclusively purchased locally, and goods such as raisins, ginger, cinnamon, nutmeg, rice, caraway seeds, black pepper, cloves, nutmeg, anchovies, lemons, limes, capers, oranges, large quantities of sugar, tea, coffee and chocolate are common in the records, and were all purchased in Knutsford or Chester by the Leicesters, and in Manchester, Bolton or Oldham by the Harbords. Both families did purchase a small proportion of their perishable goods, particularly wine, from London, and entries such as ‘Mr. Holland for carriage of a hamper of wine from London’ (Harbord) or ‘a hamper of Bristol water bought from London’ (Leicester) feature in both sets of accounts, although less frequently than in the peerage families’ records. Other small goods appear to have been bought from London, but, as with the aristocratic consumers examined previously, these references are usually

55 Swindley was paid on 11th April 1769, as recorded in SLHA B/JJ/6/3; Wood on 28th November 1775, SLHA B/JJ/6/9.
56 Macaulay was paid £58 for ‘2 years coffee and tea’ on 21st October 1768, SLHA B/JJ/6/3; Raffald was paid £1 8s 2d on 8th May 1769, SLHA B/JJ/6/5 Legh of Lyme Disbursements ‘Disbursements by Richard Orford for the Cheshire Estate’, 1st December 1768 – 30th November 1769.
57 ‘Catherine Fleming, Lady Leicester’s personal accounts’: CCRO, DLT 4996/85/9; ‘Household accounts signed off by Lady Leicester’ CCRO, DLT 4996/81/3; DLT 5524/8/6. Selected entries in the Harbord bundle, Archives+, E/7/20/7/1/6.
58 Archives+, E/7/20/7/1/6; CCRO, DLT 4996/85/9/16.
vague, and the items are of low value: a typical entry being ‘Carriage of a small parcel from London’ (Harbord).

The most significant difference in the purchasing of high-end goods between the aristocratic families of this chapter and those of the landowning gentry was in the way clothing was purchased. While the previous section has shown that the region’s aristocrats purchased the bulk of their clothing from London regardless of their financial situation, this is not true for the accounts of the gentry. Like the local peers, the Leghs, the Harbords, and the Leicesters purchased clothing for servants and children from local merchants: entries like ‘pair of gloves for the game keeper’ (Leicester) and ‘paid James Haworth a bill for shorts and shoes for Charles’ (Harbord) are common in the records. The uniforms of the Lyme Hall servants were also purchased from shops in Manchester, where the town’s traders’ expertise and range of textile goods was able to cater for the intricate demands of a large and liveried staff. References in Orford’s disbursements to Leighs and Darwell, listed in Raffald’s 1772 directory as fustian manufacturers of Fennel Street, show that large sums of money were paid for the servants’ livery: £13 13s in 1768 and £16 15s 3d in 1773. Gold laced livery hats and hose were purchased at a shop in Shudehill; livery buckskin breeches were bought at King Street; and tailor’s services on Deansgate were employed to ‘make livery and children’s clothes, etc.’. Unlike the aristocrats though, the clothing for the heads of the landowning gentry households was also bought locally. Large bills for Manchester tailors exist the accounts for the Harbords and the Leicesters. For the Harbords, individual garments are frequently listed, such as an extensive bill paid to James Brunswick, a Manchester tailor who was paid £129.11s.6d in 1763. Other bills are for cloth and

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59 CCRO, DLT 4996/85/9; GMCRO E/7/20/7/1/4.
60 Leighs and Darwell are listed in the disbursements for most years. These references: 16th November 1769, SLHA B/JJ/6/5 and B/JJ/6/7. The company is listed in Elizabeth Raffald’s 1772 directory as ‘Darwell and Lees, fustian manufacturers, Fennel Street’, E. Raffald, Manchester and Salford Directory (Manchester, 1772), p. 13.
61 James Bancroft, listed in Raffald’s 1781 directory on Shudehill, is cited several times in Orford’s disbursements as providing liveried hats and hose, including £10 3s paid on 17th August 1768, SLHA B/JJ/6/3 and £11 12s paid on 16th August 1773, SLHA B/JJ/6/9; Peter Gaskell was paid for liveried buckskin breeches on 11th October 1773, SLHA, B/JJ/6/7, and is listed in Raffald’s 1772 directory as a yarn merchant of King Street, p. 17.
62 Archives+, E/7/20/7/1/6
clothes-making materials, such as several small bills from Ryder and Wilson, also at Manchester, including references for silk, cotton, flannel, damask – buckles, tape, cloth, thread – and 12 yards of crimson velvet at £7.10.6. The Leicesters’ accounts are similar, with all fabric and material listed bought locally, and 94.1% of individual garments purchased or commissioned from tailors within 20 miles of Tabley. For the Leghs, references to ‘Miss Thornley, for making my master’s shirts’ were not accompanied by references to Miss Thornley in the trade directories for Manchester, Chester, or Liverpool, but Orford’s correspondence shows that she was a seamstress based in Stockport who provided Peter Legh with shirts made with fabric spun at her brother’s fabric manufactory, also located in Stockport. It was Manchester that provided the bulk of Peter Legh’s and his family’s wardrobe. William Burchell’s silk and fustian manufactory at Marsden Square was also patronised for Peter Legh’s shirt cloth, as were John Deacon of Manchester’s Market Street for ‘hair shag corduroy for my master’, William Rhodes of Shudehill ‘for Miss Legh’s shoes’, John Wozenbroft of King Street provided ‘cambric for my master’s shirts’, and ‘beaver breeches, etc.’ were sourced from William Taylour of Manchester.

The Legh of Lyme correspondence also shows us that not only were local traders regularly patronised for the Leghs’ clothing, but that the local tradesmen were considered highly by the family. During the amiable correspondence between Peter Legh and his brother Ashburnham Legh, who resided at Golbourne Park near Wigan, Ashburnham stated in the postscript:

My box is arrived, and I am in high fashion for Lent. Monsieur Taylour is a judge in colours, a deeper black and a fuller trimmed coat I never was master of!

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63 Archives+, E/7/20/7/1/6; E7/20/7/3/10.
64 Elizabeth Thornley sent several bills to Richard Orford for the manufacture of cloth, and the making of shirts, JRUL(SC), Legh of Lyme Correspondence Box 34, folder 113 ‘Letters to Richard Orford’. Elizabeth Thornley appears periodically throughout Orford’s accounts, including £3 13s 4d paid on 7th December 1780, B/JJ/6/10. Her brother Thomas Thornley also appears several times in Orford’s accounts for weaving table linen and towels.
65 SLHA, B/JJ/6/7; B/JJ/6/10; B/JJ/6/3.
66 Letter to Peter Legh the Younger from his brother Ashburnham Legh, dated 24th March 1760. JRUL(SC), Legh of Lyme Correspondence, Box 14, Folder 48.
Ashburnham Legh’s letter, although light-hearted in tone, suggests his satisfaction with the clothing provision available in the North West. That Ashburnham wrote to his brother Peter, who was at the time of this correspondence staying at the family’s home in Soho, praising the quality of a coat bought from a supplier based in Manchester, suggests that locally-bought clothing was favoured not simply for reasons of convenience or expense – the Leghs could easily afford to have parcels of goods delivered to Lyme or Golbourne from the capital – but because of the quality of the goods available.

The three families analysed in this section shared a pattern of local purchasing of clothing, just as the accounts for the aristocrats were connected by the purchasing of clothing from London. We know from the surviving correspondence, receipts and accounts that all three landowning gentry families spent significant amounts of time in the capital. Yet they spent locally, unlike the aristocrats who also spent more time in London and purchased goods in the capital. We also know that higher rank did not necessarily translate to greater financial security or disposable income: the Legh family’s coffers certainly surpassed the Earl of Warrington’s, and Peter Legh would have been far more able and willing than George Booth to pay for carriages of clothing to his Cheshire estate, were such an expense deemed necessary. The landowning gentry families’ accounts suggest that while wearing clothing purchased in London may have been a requirement for an aristocrat regardless of wealth, status or politics, this was not so for lower ranks within the regional elite. The families within the landowning gentry whose accounts and correspondence have been examined here were able and happy to dress themselves in fashions and fabrics purchased locally, and appear to have been content with the range, price and quality of the goods available to them.

Alongside purchases of clothing, consumption of furniture is also conspicuously local in the accounts of the landowning gentry, particularly for the Harbords and the Leicesters. The Harbords’ receipts contain 24 references to furniture purchased, 22 of which were for items
made in Manchester, Rochdale or Bolton. For the Leicesters, this figure is slightly lower, although still high, with 29 of a total 36 purchases of furniture recorded as being bought locally. Both families appear to have bought their more specialist items in London, such as oil lamps (Harbord) and a lantern and carved lectern by Ince & Mayhew of London (Leicester), again indicating that some elite consumers in the North West shopped in London where the technical expertise for the required products was unavailable closer to home. All records indicate a strong preference for local suppliers of furniture. Many of the surviving items of furniture from the Leicesters’ Tabley House are from Gillows of Lancaster, such as the wine table in the entrance hall, the mahogany furniture in the common parlour, and the console tables and mirror in the common parlour.

Amanda Vickery has written of Gillow’s shop and furniture, that ‘stylistically its furniture was characterised by a rather provincial fashionability. Anyone who wanted high design would betake themselves to a London showroom, not a Lancaster workshop’. The presence of Gillows’ pieces in Tabley House suggests that the Leicesters were not interested in the ‘high design’ of London. R.S. Clouston, an early twentieth-century enthusiast writing in The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs, recognised the discrepancy between London fashions and the furniture produced by Gillows. He stated that ‘the Gillows seem to have avoided the Chinese influence, though having a strong leaning to the “Gothic”, which would tend to show that their productions were not entirely dependent on the popular taste of the moment’. But for Clouston, being distinct from London and indifferent to the modish fashions of the capital was

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67 A typical example reads ‘Paid to Samuel Lawton for two chests of draws and one desk- £7.14s. - 1766 (entered in E/7/20/7/1/6 account book, receipt).
68 Ince and Mayhew was a London based firm of upholsterers, furniture designers and cabinet makers. Their premises were listed in London directories in Broad Street, Soho, 1763–83, and in Marshall Street, Carnaby Market, 1783-1809. The partnership’s volume of engraved designs, The Universal System of Household Furniture, dedicated to the Duke of Marlborough (published in parts, 1759–63), was issued in imitative rivalry with Chippendale. A. Heal, London Furniture Makers (London, 1988), p. 132.
69 A short overview of some of the surviving furniture at Tabley – including the Gillow’s pieces – can be found in C. Cannon-Brookes, Tabley House (Manchester, 1991). I am grateful to the ‘Friends of Tabley House’ group, and particularly Alexandra Mitchell, for allowing me access to the house outside public opening times and their help with the catalogue of furniture.
one of the real attractions of Gillows’ furniture during the eighteenth century. When, in the
nineteenth century, both the design and some of the manufacture of the furniture was
undertaken in London rather than in the Lancaster workshop, Clouston bemoaned the loss of
provincial, counter fashionable charm that had served as Gillows’ unique selling point: ‘during
this most terrible period in the history of our design the Gillows became a much too accurate
reflex of surrounding influences’. By choosing to furnish the principal rooms of their large
house with Gillows’ furniture, the Leicesters who were prepared to shop for furniture in London
when required, made a decision to embrace the display of locally bought furniture.

While much of the Legh’s furniture at Lyme was inherited from previous generations,
acquisitions of new pieces were also made locally. The Manchester cabinet maker Thomas
Arrowsmith was paid £45 9s 6d for bedroom furniture in 1768, and featured sporadically in
Orford’s disbursements for furniture throughout the 1770s and 80s. Given the large amounts
of money spent locally on furniture by the Leghs in this period, it is likely that some of the
unmarked furniture that survives at Lyme from the mid-to-late eighteenth century was purchased
from local suppliers. Household goods such as table linen and bed sheets were also bought from
suppliers in Manchester, often by the same traders who provided the material for the Legh
family’s clothing. While some of the house’s more specialist goods, such as the prized
Hitchcock harpsichord, and some of the older furniture, were purchased from merchants in
London by previous generations of Leghs at Lyme, the maintenance and repair of these pieces
was entrusted to local tradesmen: Mr. Kirkshaw of Tib lane in Manchester was employed to tune
the harpsichord in 1781, and a Micha Marchland, listed in the Lyme accounts for papering a

72 Clouston, ‘Minor English Furniture Makers’, p. 44.
73 Arrowsmith sent several bills to Lyme from Manchester, JRUL(SC), Legh of Lyme Correspondence Box 19, Folder 70,
‘Letters to Richard Orford, steward to Peter Legh the younger’, letters from Thomas Arrowsmith, Manchester.
Arrowsmith is featured throughout the Orford accounts, this ref. SLHA B/JJ/6/3.
74 Thomas Thornley, who provided the cloth for Peter Legh’s shirts made by his sister Elizabeth, is recorded in the
disbursements as having been paid for weaving table linen and towels on 7th March 1769 and 12th May 1769, SLHA
B/JJ/6/3. William Burchell, who also provided shirt cloth for Peter Legh, was paid for table cloths on May 18th
1773, SLHA, B/JJ/6/7.
bedroom in 1767, and for upholstering some chairs in 1773, sent his invoices to Orford from his workshop in Stockport.\textsuperscript{75}

The Harbords’ Middleton Hall was also elaborately furnished, although neither the furniture nor the house have survived. Sir Ralph Assheton died in 1765, ending the Assheton family’s 380 year dynasty at Middleton Hall, and the estate passed to his only daughter and her husband Sir Harbord Harbord. On her husband’s death, Sir Ralph’s widow, Lady Eleanor Assheton, moved out of Middleton Hall to Church Street in Manchester.\textsuperscript{76} Sir Ralph’s will was accompanied by a probate inventory that included a detailed survey of the pieces of furniture she was leaving behind. The annotations on the inventory indicated that most of these pieces remained at Middleton either out of goodwill to Lady Eleanor’s daughter, or because of the inconveniences of moving furniture to a more modest dwelling.\textsuperscript{77} A few concessions were made, and the following qualification appears at the end of the inventory:

Lady Assheton has taken the worsted wrought bed to Manchester, and reserved to herself the wrought bed standing in the Alcove Room to be removed at pleasure. All the furniture belonging to Mr. Harbord or brought at joint expense remain. The yellow stone ware, white ware, and china that were brought by Mr or Mrs. Harbord are left at Middleton.

The inventory listed furniture and furnishings by room, and some 286 entries are provided. The provenances of these items are not recorded, but as Sir Harbord’s personal accounts tell us that he bought the bulk of his furniture in the local area, it is reasonable to assume a large proportion of the elegant furniture at the Middleton house was also bought

\textsuperscript{75} Marchland’s name and services are listed on 8\textsuperscript{th} June 1768, SLHA B/JJ/6/3; and 18\textsuperscript{th} May 1773, SLHA B/JJ/6/7. Kirkshaw was listed in the Lyme accounts on 23\textsuperscript{rd} June 1768, SLHA B/JJ/6/3 and is also included in Elizabeth Raffald’s first trade directory as a harpsichord maker of Tib Lane, Raffald, \textit{Manchester and Salford Directory} (1772), p. 26.

\textsuperscript{76} Lady Assheton is listed as one of the principal residents of Manchester in Elizabeth Raffald’s trade directories until her death. See for example E. Raffald, \textit{Manchester and Salford Directory} (Manchester, 1781), p. 5.

\textsuperscript{77} Archives+, GB124.E7/6/1/18; GB124.E7/6/1/20.
locally from one of the several cabinet makers and suppliers of fine furniture in the surrounding towns.\textsuperscript{78}

As established, Richard Orford’s accounts for Peter Legh at Lyme dealt solely with local transactions, and they demonstrate that large sums of money were being spent locally on a wide range of high-end commodities, from groceries to furniture and household goods, and clothing for the house’s masters and servants. However, a relationship to London and the unparalleled range of specialist goods available there was maintained. Lyme Hall’s most celebrated furnishings by some of the capital’s most fashionable craftsmen were prominently displayed and much complimented by visitors, and Orford’s accounts show that several carriages of unspecified ‘goods from London’ were brought to the house at considerable expense each year.\textsuperscript{79} The patronage of local tradespeople by the Leghs did not preclude a willingness to buy from London if higher quality or fashionable products were available there, or if the goods available locally were unsuitable. The correspondence between Orford and local traders suggests that, where local stock was lacking in range or quality, some suppliers of high-end goods were prepared to work in collaboration with their London counterparts, and would advertise their metropolitan connections to their elite customers. Richard Rothwell, a wallpaper merchant based in Stockport wrote to Orford regarding the steward’s efforts to decorate his own lodgings in 1779:

\begin{quote}
Since you have been at my shop [I] have endeavoured to get a paper to match your bed furniture but cannot meet with anything near the pattern in Manchester. The enclosed pattern is the only one that comes anything like. Hope you will favour me with a pattern of your stripe. I doubt not but [I] can get the same or something very near it by sending it to my correspondent at
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{78} Raffald’s trade directory for 1781 contains 16 references to such furniture makers in Manchester, around six miles away from Middleton. Raffald, \textit{Manchester and Salford Directory} (1781).

\textsuperscript{79} Examples of such references in Orford’s disbursements include £2 2s 4d paid for ‘Carriage of two cases from London’, 18\textsuperscript{th} December 1767, B/JJ/6/3; £16 4s 4d paid to Baker and Morris ‘for carriage of goods from London’, 15\textsuperscript{th} February 1768, B/JJ/6/3; 10s 4d paid to Thomas Shallcross ‘for carriage of some small parcels from London’, 25\textsuperscript{th} November 1773, B/JJ/6/7.
London if you can wait the time which will be three weeks or a month if it comes by the waggon.\textsuperscript{80}

This correspondence indicates that Rothwell acted as an agent to Orford and the Leghs, providing a service whereby a knowledgeable insider used his London connections to best meet the demands of the customer based in Cheshire, and no doubt taking a commission on any sales made. Whether or not Orford took up Rothwell’s proposal is unclear, but he appears to have been impressed with the products and services on offer. Orford’s accounts for Lyme Hall show Rothwell’s appointment to provide wallpaper Ann Legh’s bedroom in 1781 at a cost of £1 8s 6d.\textsuperscript{81}

The households whose accounts have been analysed in this section shared three patterns that mark them as distinct from the aristocratic accounts, and from the spending habits of those lesser elite families examined in the next section of this chapter. First, purchases of clothing for adult family members as well as for children and servants were always bought locally. Several local suppliers of clothing and fabrics are listed in all three sets of accounts, implying that consumers within this category were able to find everything they wanted to wear locally rather than having to shop further afield, as their social betters did. Secondly, large amounts of furniture procured from local suppliers are listed in the account books for this class of consumer: significantly more individual purchases feature than in the aristocratic sample or in the accounts for the lesser gentry, analysis of which follows this section. This suggests that not only were consumers of this type willing to adorn themselves in clothing bought from local suppliers, but that non-aristocratic elite homes were extensively furnished with locally crafted fixtures, fittings and furniture. Thirdly, the consumers of this study had the knowledge and resources to look to London for technical goods that, despite the recent advances of the local consumer

\textsuperscript{80} JRUL(SC), Legh of Lyme Correspondence Box 33, Folder 110, ‘Letters to Richard Orford, steward to Peter Legh the younger’, letter from Richard Rothwell, Stockport, dated 13\textsuperscript{th} September 1779.

\textsuperscript{81} Orford’s accounts state that Rothwell was paid ‘for paper to hang Miss Legh’s bed room’ on 8\textsuperscript{th} January 1781. SLHA, B/JJ/6/10, Legh of Lyme Disbursements ‘Disbursements by Richard Orford for the Cheshire Estate, 1\textsuperscript{st} December 1780 – 30\textsuperscript{th} November 1781.
markets, were not yet available in Liverpool, Manchester or the surrounding satellite towns. While the vast majority of high-end goods could be purchased locally, a small number of specialist items were bought up to the northern estates from the capital. Unlike the consumers in the next category, the families of the landowning gentry were able to arrange for goods such as decorative furnishings from leading craftspeople to be delivered. The procurement of goods from London, when local traders were unable to oblige from their own stock, was occasionally abetted by the traders themselves, undoubtedly keen to profit by taking a cut of the sale, and to foster sustained and favourable relationships with elite consumers. That buying from London makes up such a small proportion of the total accounts listed implies that, for the most part, consumers who were of the landowning gentry were able to source almost all fashionable, high-end goods required locally.

The Professional Lesser Gentry

The subjects identified in this final section lie at various points along the scale of the lesser-gentry of the eighteenth-century North West. The Kenyon family of Peel Hall, situated between Manchester and Bolton, were influential in Lancashire for many generations through their official positions and through their work as attorneys, clergymen, doctors and members of parliament. Sir George Kenyon II served as Clerk of the Peace for Lancashire, and he and his wife Eleanor, whose accounts and receipts are incorporated into this section, resided at Peel Hall between 1728 and 1770. Samuel Crompton of Hall’th’Wood, Bolton was from less genteel stock, and although his family were by no means badly off, the bulk of his income was gained from his success in industry as the inventor of the spinning mule, a machine that spun yarn

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82 Discussions of the similar individuals or families belonging to this varied category can be found in Vickery, The Gentleman’s Daughter, pp. 13-38 and p. 298; Mingay, English Landed Society; Jenkins, Making of a Ruling Class; D. W. Howel, Patriarchs and Parasites: The Gentry of South-west Wales in the Eighteenth Century (Cardiff, 1986).

83 For example, Roger Kenyon II, as well as being Clerk of the Peace for Lancashire and Governor of the Isle of Man, was a Member of Parliament for Clitheroe from 1690-1695. George Kenyon II whose accounts are examined here should not be confused with George, 2nd Baron of Kenyon, who was from a different branch of the Kenyon family. It is with kind permission from the current Lord Kenyon that I was able to access, record and photograph these items, and it is from this series that my account of Peel Hall has been taken.
suitable for the manufacture of muslin. Thomas Twist of Newton-le-Willows, situated approximately midway between Manchester and Liverpool, was a tax-collector, and financially involved in the iron and coal industries in the neighbourhood of Parr and Blackbrook, St. Helens. Twist kept a relatively large house and servants, his accounts indicate large scale spending on high-end goods.

The individuals of the professional lesser gentry analysed here were more in the mould of Vickery’s elite than the Stones’: they were professionals in the sense that they earned their money through other means than the collection of rent from land or property, they did not own large country estates, and their incomes are modest compared to the subjects of the previous two categories; although we do know that the individuals form this lesser gentry section earned significantly more than the average income for most residents of the eighteenth-century North West. Twist’s sporadic accounts between 1760 and 1799 indicate an annual income of around £300–£500; Crompton’s recorded annual income between 1775 and 1800 varied dramatically from £230 (1777) to £740 (1792); and the Kenyon family’s income appears to have ranged from £480–£660 in the surviving accounts for the years 1728 to 1770. None of the accounts are as complete as the accounts for most of the aristocracy or landowning gentry, but even at the most conservative estimates, the apparent incomes for the three families in this section comfortably exceeded the figures put forward by Elizabeth Gilboy in her analysis of average ‘money wages’ and ‘real wages’ in eighteenth-century Lancashire, and the estimates of subsequent scholarship.

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84 The mule was previously known as the ‘Halli’th’Wood wheel’, after Crompton’s residence. Crompton lacked the capital required to patent his invention, and was not compensated for the wide-scale use of his invention until 1812. In the intervening years between invention and payment, Crompton earned his money through his own spinning business at Halli’th’Wood. Crompton’s account book is included in the collections of Archives+, at the Bolton Archive and Local Studies Service, GB125.ZCR.

85 Twist’s account book is at the St. Helens Local History and Archive Library (SHLHAL), MM/29/1.


87 SHLHAL, MM/29/1; Archives+, (Bolton repository), GB125.ZCR; The Kenyons’ accounts and receipts are held at Lancashire Record Office, item numbers DDKE 4/6/1-7.

At first glance, the group of consumers identified in this category do not have much in common. A Justice of the Peace, an industrialist and a tax-collector may seem a diverse set, but these members of what Everitt labelled the ‘pseudo-elite’ have more in common as consumers than their diverse occupations might suggest. While there was some variation in income, recorded spending on the kinds of high-end goods that have been examined in previous chapters of this thesis was proportionately similar in the families’ accounts. Of 312 references to expenditure in Twist’s accounts, 103 were for high-end items (33%); for Crompton, 217 of the 682 items listed were high-end goods (31%); and of the 786 references to spending in the Kenyons’ accounts and receipts, 323 were for high-end goods (41%). Within this expenditure on high-end goods, 100% of recorded purchases by the three families were made in the North West. The accounts for the professional lesser gentry indicate that significant purchases were consistently made in the region by moneyed families and individuals who had the means to buy such goods further afield, had the necessity or desire arisen. That these individuals were apparently entirely content with the provision of goods available locally marks them as distinct from the consumption habits of the individuals of the previous two sections of this chapter.

There is no evidence that the Kenyons, the Cromptons or Twists purchased any of their goods in London. Indeed, all recorded purchases were made from within 20 miles of the subjects’ residences. As with the aristocrats and landowning gentry families, all sundry groceries were purchased locally. Also present in the household accounts for the three families were: tea, chocolate, coffee, sugar, mace, cinnamon, nutmeg, almonds, rice, raisins, currants, wine, port (Kenyons only), green tea (Kenyons only), oranges, caraway seeds (Kenyons and Twists), cinnamon oranges, lemons, limes and nutmeg – all purchased from local suppliers. Unlike those in the


90 SHLHAL, MM/29/1; Archives+, GB125.ZCR; LRO, DDKE 4/6/1-7.
previous two categories, all larger, more expensive goods were also bought entirely locally by all three families. Wallpaper (bought in Manchester by Kenyon and Crompton), mahogany furniture (7 items from the Kenyon accounts bought in Preston and Manchester, 3 mahogany items from Manchester bought by Crompton) beds, tables, chairs and stools were purchased by all three families locally. All clothes, and, much more frequently, materials used in the making of clothes were primarily bought in Manchester and Liverpool, with Warrington, Bolton, Oldham and Wigan also featuring regularly in the accounts of all families. That the accounts and papers of these three families show that purchases of high-end items were exclusively made locally to their residences suggests that for members of the lesser gentry around Liverpool and Manchester, the shops and services available in the region were sufficient. Of course, time spent in London partly explains this. Unlike the families of the aristocracy, the Kenyons, Crompton and Twists had no cause to spend long periods of time in London. But this is also true of the Leicester and Assheton family of the previous section, whose accounts indicate that London was still a source of consumption for some items. That the consumers of the lesser gentry did not appear to purchase anything from London, despite recording purchases of the same type of goods and spending similar amounts of money as the landowning gentry, suggests a distinct set of priorities in terms of fashion and possible attitude to the provenance of goods.

The distinctiveness of the accounts of those in the consumers of the lesser gentry is further illustrated by the way purchases of clothing were recorded. The accounts of Samuel Crompton and Thomas Twist, although not as complete as the accounts of many of the landowning gentry or aristocratic accounts explored previously, do give a decent indication of spending. As noted, all purchases were made locally, and neither family’s sets of accounts suggest a direct consumer relationship with London. The references to clothing within Crompton’s and Twist’s accounts also indicate that rather than employing the services of tailors and dressmakers, both families regularly dealt directly with local drapers, textile manufacturers and suppliers of
material necessary for making garments at home. Of the 29 references to clothing in Crompton’s account, just three were for ready-made items: gloves, boots and hats. In Twist’s accounts, none of the 25 references to purchasing textiles suggest that ready-made or bespoke items were bought. Historians of clothing and fashion have identified greater personal involvement in the creation of garments by individuals of lower social rank.91 The accounts of Crompton and Twist suggest that members of their families or domestic staff were making the majority families’ clothes, unlike the families in the previous categories, where the services of tailors were employed. This further suggests distinctiveness in the patterns of consumption of families in this category.

Buying fabric to make clothes at home is also evident in the papers of the Kenyon family. While the Kenyons are not survived by complete account books, several bundles of receipts and sporadic household account papers exist that allow for an analysis of their spending.92 Among one of these collections of receipts, bills and credit notes is a letter dated February 1762 to Lady Caroline from Margery Royton, a dressmaker or cotton merchant from the town of Wigan, approximately sixteen miles to the west of Manchester. This letter includes the following passage:

Have sent you 12 yards of the pattern which was all we had and doubt but it will make 2 gowns. Had a customer who would have took 6 yards of it for a gown, but thought of it for you. I vouch you we never sell it under 2s1d per yard to anyone only it would cost about 2s3d in London. 12 yds. fine cotton at 2s3d- £1.7s0d.93

This letter suggests that Lady Kenyon, like the Cromptons and Twists, had a personal relationship with how her clothes were made. Lady Kenyon had commissioned Royton to send

92 LRO, item numbers DDKE 4/6/1-7.
her the cotton necessary to make two gowns, and 138 similar references to fabric and materials used to make clothing exist in the Kenyon receipts, compared to just 38 references to specific garments, most of which are hats and shoes, goods for which specialised skills were required to manufacture them. Royton’s letter indicates that Lady Caroline was concerned with the price of the cloth on sale. That cotton was the material that was discussed in the context of making gowns may in itself be significant, as the material was inevitably cheaper than materials such as silk or velvet that featured heavily in the accounts of the aristocracy or the landowning gentry – although without the context of knowing for whom these gowns were intended it is not possible to say for sure. It could be that this letter is part of a wider correspondence between consumer and supplier, wherein Lady Caroline has questioned the expense of the material, or attempted to haggle with Royton. Royton sought to reassure her client that not only is she giving Lady Caroline the best possible price for the fabric, but also that she has favoured Caroline over other prospective purchasers of the cotton.

The reference Royton made to London in her letter to Lady Caroline is also significant. Margery Royton’s reference to the capital was not to do with following metropolitan fashions, but to illustrate value for money. The way London is used to highlight cheapness in Royton’s letter here is markedly different to the way Richard Rothwell, the wallpaper supplier whose letter to Peter Legh’s steward was examined in the previous section, highlighted London goods. Where Rothwell cited the range and quality of wallpaper in London as a solution to the steward’s dissatisfaction with wallpaper available in Stockport, Royton used the price of cloth in the capital to convey the cheapness of her goods to Lady Eleanor. In the same way that purveyors of goods such as Aulay Macaulay or the jeweller Edmund Creswell, who were discussed in the previous chapter, mentioned London primarily to highlight the affordability of the products or to suggest value for money, Royton was invoking the same associations of value for money to her client here. This is the only reference to London found in the Kenyon accounts, or in the
accounts of any other subject in the professional lesser gentry category of consumer, further indicating that the capital was not seen as a necessary place from which to buy goods for the professional lesser gentry, regardless of their financial ability to do so.

The accounts and papers of the three families in this category indicate that local markets were sufficient to meet the needs of the lesser gentry of the North West. Although incomes varied for the three households in this section there were no significant differences in the way this money was spent. This category of consumer did not have the same relationship to London as those of the aristocracy or more established gentry. The families here exclusively purchased their high-end goods locally, and there is evidence of a personal involvement with suppliers in the acquisition of goods, particularly fabric.

Conclusion
This chapter set out to examine three distinct areas: the types of goods that were bought locally by elite individuals and families living close to Liverpool and Manchester; the role of London as a consumer market for some of these elite residents; and how exploring consumption habits further might illustrate social, economic, and cultural differences between groups within the elite. The results of this study suggest that, to a large extent, the type of suppliers of high-end goods that were examined in the previous chapter of this thesis were able to attract the custom of elite residents in the North West. Significant exceptions applied: the aristocracy appeared to buy the majority of their own clothing from London rather than local to their estates in the North West; and some purchases of art, furniture and household fixtures were also bought from the capital by families of the aristocracy and landowning gentry. It is these patterns that can help distinguish subgroups within the wider elite in terms of their behaviour as consumers. While it has been beyond the scope of this study to address the full extent of elite spending, the results of the analysis are suggestive of distinct patterns of spending for the aristocracy, landowning gentry and professional lesser gentry that mirror the distinctions in social, political and economic power of
these groups in eighteenth-century society. The chapter has also indicated that the specific towns of this study could, in the main, cater for the most demands of many customers with the most financial capital and social influence.

The study of elites as consumers is a relatively new facet of the wider interest in eighteenth-century consumption. Much more work is necessary before those with the most influence in eighteenth-century society will have been studied with the same rigour as consumers of the middling sort. While this study represents the most comprehensive appraisal of elite consumers in the North West to date, further research will benefit our understanding of the social, economic and urban history of Britain in the eighteenth century. Such studies are necessary not only because they will elucidate upon the social and economic experiences of families who still held significant cultural influence in eighteenth-century Britain, and who often (but not always) had the deepest pockets. More of this kind of study could also contribute to our understanding of the way towns in Britain developed and evolved during the ‘consumer revolution’. By investigating whether provincial towns were able to cater for a wide range of high-end goods, and whether suppliers in the town could count the regional elite as their customers, could reveal the range and sophistication of regional markets and deepen our understanding of commercial environments outside of London. An effective way for this to be achieved is through focused, regionally specific case studies that examine where elite families made their most significant purchases. Jon Stobart’s recent work on consumption habits of the Warwickshire aristocracy signals a long overdue reassessment of the historiography of consumption to a focus on elites, towards which this chapter has aimed to contribute.
Conclusion

This thesis has shown that reconsidering our approach to eighteenth-century consumption is fundamental to a more nuanced understanding of the commercial development of provincial towns. By investigating the buying and selling of high-end goods in Liverpool and Manchester, this study has emphasised the need to acknowledge town specificity when considering physical urban development and the behaviour of suppliers and consumers. It warned against considering the commercial markets of provincial towns within one region as a homogenous group, and instead advocated analysing them on an individual town level. This approach informed three primary arguments. First, that both Liverpool and Manchester had established consumer markets for high-end goods that were thriving by the middle of the eighteenth century. Secondly, the way that suppliers marketed their goods in the two towns differed as they evoked different notions of fashion, metropolitanism and value for money. The two markets were thus distinct, although both towns were evenly matched in terms of the range, quality and quantity of goods on sale. Thirdly, analysis of elite spending is a valuable way for historians to distinguish groups within the wider elite, and to assess the success and social reach of towns’ high-end retail economies.

In the eighteenth century, Liverpool and Manchester were establishing themselves as two of the principal centres for Britain’s increasing trade, industry and manufacture. This thesis has challenged the notion that these towns were dominated by proto- and early-industrialisation in this period, or that industrial development here precluded the development of retail environments specialising in the new and luxurious goods. Instead, it emphasised the presence and development of high-end, luxury economies throughout the eighteenth century. This does not mean that industrialisation is not a useful tool for the analysis of development in Liverpool and Manchester, or to suggest that industry did not feature at all in the eighteenth-century formation of these towns. Instead, the thesis responded to calls from historians to address the development of provincial towns before the nineteenth century, and to apply methodologies for
examining consumption that have been used elsewhere to two new, dynamic and vibrant provincial markets.

Retailing was a fundamental element of the urban development of Liverpool and Manchester. Between 1700 and 1800, districts for high-end trade appeared in both towns that suggest the existence of more structured and organised luxury markets than previously thought. Retailing shaped the towns’ built environment and the everyday life of its inhabitants. As Chapter One argued, retailing, fashion and polite trade were significant factors in how visitors perceived the towns, and how residents thought about themselves as consumers. The autobiographical writing of Edmund Harrold and John Coleman suggests a different set of concerns related to personal consumption and luxury at the beginning of our period compared to the end. In the context of the philosophical and economic debates about luxury, this shift in the perception of consumption is unsurprising. But matched by the changes in the way consumption was viewed by the residents of Liverpool and Manchester was a dramatic transformation of the towns themselves. Visitors made frequent reference to the rate of growth of both towns, and references were also made to the thriving nature of trade, and the fashions and styles of the inhabitants. Whether these styles were perceived as conforming to London modes, as in Liverpool, or were brash, self-confident, and distinctly provincial, as in Manchester, visitors to these towns identified consumption as central to their distinct identities. Likewise, local history writers in Liverpool and Manchester often discussed improvement to the streets in terms of increased space, paving, and lighting alongside references to the location of the towns’ smartest shops. In calling attention to polite improvement and the relationship to retailing, these authors were acknowledging the changes brought about by urbanisation in a context of opportunity, refinement and consumption. The ways in which the local history writers discussed shops and urban improvement in the towns demonstrates the importance of shopping and retailing, not just in terms of how they viewed their towns or themselves as consumers, but also
how they wished others to view their towns. Retailing was particularly important in towns with new and evolving streets such as Liverpool and Manchester, where the townscapes were continually changing and expanding. In establishing specific areas of town as being associated with luxury and refinement, local history writers were reflecting contemporary concerns about the consumption of luxury, urban space, and politeness. Liverpool and Manchester were showing that they were open for business not only in the context of Atlantic trade and the textile industry, but also that they could compete with leisure towns, provincial towns in the South, and even London, in terms of an environment of high-end retail trade.

Despite the shared concerns of Liverpudlian and Mancunian residents to present their towns as sophisticated centres for trade, there were differences in the way the towns were identified by visitors: Liverpool was seen as a ‘London in miniature’ from early in our period, whereas Manchester was noted for its self-sufficiency and atypical civic structure and industry. Such distinctions intensified as the century progressed. Differences in the development of high-end trade are also apparent in the physical development of the towns’ shopping streets and districts. As Chapter Two demonstrated, plotting high-end shops onto maps of the towns over the course of the century reveals distinct modes of development. While neither town experienced the level of street specialism in terms of specific trades that have been identified elsewhere, and in London in particular, both had streets and districts in which shops of comparable status were clustered. In Liverpool, the streets that had already established a reputation for their elegance and architectural beauty by 1720 continued to attract the tenancy of the town’s smartest shopkeepers throughout the century. In Manchester, the piecemeal development of the town saw the creation of several new, dispersed shopping districts during the same period. This resulted in Manchester’s landlords advertising premises to shopkeeper-tenants according to their location within the new, elegant shopping districts in the town. These shopkeepers in turn advertised their building and its location as prominently as the goods on sale to consumers.
This thesis has contributed to three strands of historiographical discussion. First, the project has contributed to the re-evaluation of provincial towns in an eighteenth-century context. It has responded to the calls of Rosemary Sweet and Peter Borsay to pay closer attention to the development of provincial towns before industrialisation, and it has built on the findings of extant studies of towns in the North West.\(^1\) By concentrating on the buying and selling of high-end goods, this thesis has built upon the idea that Liverpool and Manchester should not be considered solely in terms of their status of the shock cities of the nineteenth century. The thesis has shown that the two towns had each developed a strong and distinct sense of commercial identity by 1800, which furthers our understanding of the towns’ urban, social and economic histories.

Secondly, by focussing on Liverpool and Manchester, this study has extended the discussion of high-end shopping practices within urban and social history to encompass two underexplored towns that are both rich in source material and add to our historical understanding of provincial consumer culture. The dramatic and unprecedented growth of the towns of this study has allowed for analyses of the way that suppliers and consumers responded to transforming townscapes and rapidly evolving consumer markets. The thesis has applied the types of analyses utilised in the examination of shopping streets in London by Nancy Cox and Claire Walsh to explore two towns whose transformation between 1700 and 1800 was dramatic,

but quite different to other towns that historians have studied in these ways, thus extending our knowledge of retail and consumption more generally.²

Thirdly, the thesis has examined patterns in spending by elite consumers in eighteenth-century Britain, thus contributing to the fledgling discussion of elites within wider dialogues of eighteenth-century shopping and consumption. The thesis has expanded on Jon Stobart’s recent analysis of aristocratic spending by comparing the way both aristocrats and other elite consumers bought goods. It has shown that analysing a wider elite and their patterns of consumption suggests clear divisions within the elite which were expressed in terms of what they bought and from whom.

Practices of buying and selling in eighteenth-century Liverpool and Manchester reflected both patterns and distinctions between the two towns. The towns were connected by similar patterns of population growth and urban expansion, and by the inhabitants’ appetite for high-end goods and services. However, differences in the civic and administrative structure of the towns, their economic specialisms and their demographics were mirrored by differences in the buying and selling of these goods resulted in two distinct consumer markets. As the towns’ suppliers responded directly to the specifics of their evolving commercial environment, they actively shaped the markets in which they were operating. Liverpool’s similarity to London, identified by early-century visitors to the town in both architectural terms and in the manners and fashions of the inhabitants, was mirrored in the way suppliers behaved. They clustered around the streets that had established reputations for politeness and gentility, and evoked ideas of fashionable, metropolitan consumption in their advertising material. In Manchester, the anomalous ‘different spirit’ of the people marked the town as distinct from established modes of business. While still concerned with a quality shopping experience, consumers were prepared to buy their high-end goods in new and evolving districts, providing a good deal could be found.

The Liverpudlian concerns with protecting an image of established refinement were not as

apparent in the Manchester market. Nonetheless, Manchester shops did, like those of Liverpool, attract the custom of the local elite, who purchased the majority of their high-end consumer goods in and around Liverpool and Manchester. By means of a case study of two towns, this thesis has argued that engagement with the formation of consumer markets has to take place at individual town level to identify nuances and distinctions between markets in provincial towns. Examining the urban environments in which shopping took place can help us understand the relationship between consumption and locality, as well as further uncover and interpret everyday experiences in evolving eighteenth-century towns.

Assessing the extent to which buying and selling in Liverpool and Manchester reflected the wider experiences of high-end trade in other provincial towns is a difficult task. Many of the experiences and discussions of consumption covered in this project, particularly in terms of shopping, were widespread in eighteenth-century Britain. However, this thesis has emphasised that town specificity and subjectivity shaped the ways in which retailing and consumer identity was formed and practiced. Much of the extant research on shopping practises has been focussed on London, a city unique and culturally specific in terms of size and social significance. Comparisons with other towns are problematic and consequently analyses of high-end trade should broaden focus to provincial practices. Future research might provide further comparative studies, either of smaller towns in the North West such as Bolton, Oldham and Wigan, or comparisons of Manchester and Liverpool with other provincial centres of longer standing, such as York, Bristol or Norwich. The value of such a project would not be to examine the extent to which provincial towns were similar in terms of trade and shopping, but to illustrate the relationship between place-identity, high-end consumption, and experiences of shopping in other locations. Other follow-up studies could further investigate elites as consumers in provincial markets. Future research might also incorporate or build upon the framework of categorisation of elite consumers put forward in this study to explore more of the rich and varied primary material available on elite consumers. A study to advance our historical understanding of
gendered patterns of elite spending would be valuable, as would closer examination of each elite sub-group’s relationship with individual suppliers and the products they sold.
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