From a Record of Death to a Memory of Life:  
The Rise of the Biographical Obituary in the *Gentleman’s Magazine*  
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**ABSTRACT**

The need for an examination of the rise of various journalistic and print forms in *The Gentleman's Magazine* is evident from the absence of scholarship in this area. One of the most important forms born in *The Gentleman's Magazine* is the obituary. Beginning as a sparse list of deaths appended to the back of each issue of the magazine, it came to occupy a larger role in the publication within a hundred years of its inception.

My study proposes to examine the reasons for this shift, focusing on the rise of the biographical form as it is treated in the works of Samuel Johnson, a prominent contributor to *The Gentleman’s Magazine*, and practiced at the hands of John Nichols, one of the magazine’s most prominent editors. My study also seeks to characterize the content of the obituaries by historicizing them in the context of the period and within the confines of the editorial policies of the magazine itself. The magazine’s editorial persona, Sylvanus Urbanus, provides general terms whereby the dead may be characterized. Ultimately, my study is interested in examining the representations of the deceased in the obituary form as social markers, that are necessary for understanding how groups and individuals represented society.
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