

Michael Penman (ed.), *Monuments and monumentality across medieval and early modern Europe*, Proceedings of the 2011 Stirling Conference (Donington, Shaun Tyas, 2013), 22 + 298 pp. text plus 96 pp. b/w and colour plates. ISBN 978-1-907730-28-3. Price £35.00 (cloth).

The ‘Monuments and Monumentality’ conference that was held at the University of Stirling (Scotland) in August 2011 attracted so many speakers from across Britain and Europe that papers were divided across parallel sessions. The present volume contains two thirds of the papers presented at this conference. It may not have quite the wide interdisciplinary scope of the recently published volume *Graven spreken* (reviewed by Truus van Bueren in this MMR Newsletter), but it does offer an international perspective on the monumental aspect of medieval and early modern *memoria* from Scotland to Scandinavia and Portugal to Poland. Moreover, it has the advantage of being published in English, thereby making its contents accessible to a much wider audience.

A short introduction by the editor is followed by twenty papers divided into five distinct sections (see table of contents below). Of the four papers in the first section, Fraser’s short survey of pre-Reformation tomb monuments in Scotland serves as a general introduction to the Scottish-themed papers by Fawcett, Oram, Holmes and Penman later on in the volume. As Scotland has lost so much of its medieval heritage and what remains is often fragmentary and relatively unknown, it is good to have these five papers together in this volume. While Fawcett concentrates on the architectural evidence to propose a chronology and stylistic comparisons for Scottish canopied tombs, Oram’s focus is on episcopal patronage and commemoration and Penman’s on the available evidence for royal Scottish monuments between the burials of Queen (or St) Margaret in 1093 and James V in 1542. A map accompanying Fraser’s paper shows what medieval monuments are recorded to date across Scotland. Holmes’s paper actually extends beyond Scotland in that it discusses medieval burial practice in the light of William Durandus of Mende’s thirteenth-century liturgical commentary *Rationale divinatorum officiorum*. Durandus’s work is based on a variety of earlier texts and thus shows inconsistencies: on the one hand he argued against indiscriminate burial inside churches, but on the other he recognised the merit of being buried near an altar or near the relics of martyrs. Durandus himself was buried near one of the altars inside Santa Maria sopra Minerva in Rome. Holmes then takes the argument to post-Reformation Scotland where the General Assemblies also specifically forbade burial and tombs within kirks, although

in practice this prohibition was ignored and the authorities actually made money from the fines that eventually became fees. Yet the injunction against burial in the sacred space within the church was underlined in a verse inscription on the outer wall of the kirkyard tomb that Sir James Melville of Halhill (d. 1617) had erected for himself in Collessie (Fife) in 1609.

There are also three Scandinavian contributions. In Norway the introduction of Christian laws in the early eleventh century changed burial culture dramatically, but burial inside churches remained highly restricted for most of the medieval period, as Ekroll explains in his essay. From 1280 the royal family were buried in vaulted brick graves in the floor and some of these were covered with Flemish brasses. Stone monuments were produced for the privileged few, but these were always incised slabs and never carved effigies. Of course, wood is the prime material in Norway and many wooden grave markers have failed to survive in the cemeteries. The first known headstone in Norway was actually a Scottish-made import dating from the later eighteenth century. Kryger's paper introduces the ambitious Danish royal tomb project, which was started in 1992 with the aim of surveying all royal tombs from King Gorm (d. c.958-9) to Queen Ingrid (d. 2000). The resulting publication is finally due to appear in late 2013 or early 2014 and will contain fascinating findings, *e.g.* about unknown royal tombs. Unfortunately the work will be only in Danish, but Kryger is still hopeful of publishing an English translation perhaps online. Johannsen also discusses Danish royal tombs, but her focus is on King Frederick II (d. 1588), who undertook the restoration of a number of medieval royal tombs, thereby deliberately cultivating royal memory and past glories. That this campaign was not unique in Europe is illustrated by Spicer's paper, which relates the restoration of the choir of Fontevraud Abbey and the English royal Plantagenet tombs therein by its abbess, Jeanne-Baptiste de Bourbon (d. 1670).

Four further papers provide an international angle. Frequin's paper, which is an English version of her contribution in the Dutch *Graven spreken* volume, attempts to compare and categorise praying figures and *pleurants* or 'weepers' in the Office of the Dead in Netherlandish illuminated books of hours and on medieval tombs. Lamia uses depictions of the tomb of Christ in Visitation scenes in Romanesque sculpture across France and Italy to discuss how these were intended to evoke the memory of the actual *locus sanctus* in Jerusalem. Ramôa Melo offers fascinating insights into the important role of royal and aristocratic women in commemoration in medieval Portugal and how this is reflected in the extant tomb monuments. Łabno argues how the position and self-image

of the Polish nobility was very different from that of the nobility elsewhere in Europe, and how this resulted in their commissioning costly tomb monuments in the Renaissance period.

The remaining seven papers cover aspects of English commemoration. Important among these is the essay by Brian and Moira Gittos, which presents their preliminary findings after many years' investigation into a poorly researched subject: the appearance of the medieval churchyard. The essay opens with a striking quotation from the *Vita Dunstani*, in which William of Malmesbury describes the cemetery of Glastonbury Abbey as so richly covered in tomb monuments that one can scarcely walk there – an image that may run counter to the common conception of medieval burial grounds. Drawing on documentary and visual evidence, archaeology and extant examples of churchyard monuments in Britain but also abroad, they conclude that the English medieval cemetery contained many monuments of a considerable variety. Their survey continues and the aim is to publish their findings in full at a future date. Richardson offers a survey of late-sixteenth-century town wills in the Canterbury diocese in which testators bequeath material gifts, such as rings and clothes, as a memento of the deceased; the examples are interesting, but it is annoying that the relevant dates are hidden in the footnotes. Bartram looks at the literate activities of the Kentish herald and antiquarian Francis Thyne in the period 1596-98, while Jones's paper concentrates on early modern family monuments in fifty parish churches either side of the East Hampshire and West Sussex border. Lepine looks at Lincoln Cathedral in particular for his study of types of monuments to the higher clergy, their inscriptions and iconography. Sweetinburgh discusses the attempts by Christ Church Priory in Canterbury to create a cult around the tomb of King Richard II's murdered archbishop Simon Sudbury alongside that of St Thomas Becket. Hicks has also chosen a monastic angle to dynastic *memoria*, but the scope of his paper is much wider as he draws on a range of post-Conquest religious houses with identifiable patrons across England.

The volume also includes lists of common abbreviations, of contributors, and of maps and plates, and an extensive index, but sadly no bibliography. As usual with Shaun Tyas books, the plates can be found in a separate section in the back: they are all of decent size, although some might have been sharper, and it can be cumbersome to find the illustrations that go with a particular article as there is no consecutive numbering. There are other editorial lapses and inconsistencies, such as the misspelling 'motive' for 'motif' in the title of one paper. However, the book's greatest weakness is the brevity of

all essays except Oram's: the strict word limit imposed by the editors evidently constrained some authors too much and thus does not do justice to the information they have to offer. Nonetheless, this is an important new study on the subject of monuments and commemoration across medieval and early modern Europe, and it whets the appetite for more such conferences.

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Table of contents

Part one: Surveys and projects

Iain Fraser:	Medieval funerary monuments in Scotland
Østein Ekroll:	Burial monuments and commemoration in medieval Norway
Brian and Moira Gittos:	The English medieval churchyard: what did it really look like?
Karin Kryger:	The Danish royal tombs project

Part two: Tomb, narrative, text, and monuments without monumentality

Sanne Frequin:	Pleurant or priant – an iconographical motive in medieval sepulchral art
Catherine Richardson:	'Make you a cloak of it and weare it for my sake': material culture and commemoration in early modern English towns
Jude Jones:	Embodied shadows: reading gender issues embedded in early modern tomb effigies and mortuary memorials 1500-1680
Claire Bartram:	'Honoured of posterity by record of wrytinge': memory, reputation and the role of the book within commemorative practices in late Elizabethan Kent

Part three: Piety, agency, hierarchy and stylistic influence across time and space

Stephen Lamia:	Nostalgia, memory and <i>loca sancta</i> : Romanesque monuments as macrocosmic pilgrimage souvenirs
Joana Ramôa Melo:	Listening to women through funerary art and practices: an overview of the feminine agency in Portuguese church monuments of the fourteenth century
Richard Fawcett:	Aspects of Scottish canopied tomb design
Jeannie J. Łabno:	The monumental body and Sarmatian ideology in Renaissance Poland

Part four: Clerical monumentality and memory

David Lepine:	'A stone to be layed upon me': the monumental commemoration of the late medieval English higher clergy
Richard D. Oram:	Bishops' tombs in medieval Scotland

- Sheila Sweetinburgh: Canterbury's martyred archbishop: the 'cult' of Simon Sudbury (d. 1381) and relations between city and cathedral
- Stephen Mark Holmes: 'Defyle not Chrysts kirk with your carrion': William Durandus (c.1230-96), medieval burial and two tombs in Rome and Fife

Part five: Programmatic monumentality

- Michael Hicks: English monasteries as repositories of dynastic memory
- Michael Penman: A programme for royal tombs in Scotland? A review of the evidence, c.1093-c.1542
- Birgitte Bøggild Johansen: Back to the future: renovating royal funeral monuments during the reign of Frederick II, king of Denmark (1559-1588)
- Andrew Spicer: Jeanne-Baptiste de Bourbon, the Plantagenets and the restoration of royal tombs in early seventeenth-century France