

A close-up photograph of a marble tomb sculpture. The central figure is a man's head and shoulders, wearing a hooded garment. His eyes are closed, and his expression is serene. To the left, there are other sculptural elements, including a circular medallion and a vertical column with decorative carvings. The lighting is soft, highlighting the texture of the marble.

REVISITING
THE MONUMENT
FIFTY YEARS SINCE PANOFSKY'S
TOMB SCULPTURE

EDITED BY
ANN ADAMS
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Revisiting The Monument: Fifty Years since Panofsky's *Tomb Sculpture*

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Courtauld Books Online is published by
the Research Forum of The Courtauld Institute of Art
Somerset House, Strand, London WC2R 0RN
© 2016, The Courtauld Institute of Art, London.
ISBN: 978-1-907485-06-0

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Detail of tomb of Jacopo de Carrara
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INTRODUCTION

JESSICA BARKER

An art historian can approach the subject of these lectures only with the greatest trepidation.¹

So begins Erwin Panofsky's *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on Its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, the most influential and comprehensive survey of funerary monuments to be published in the last fifty years. Panofsky's trepidation in dealing with the subject of tomb sculpture derived from its fundamentally interdisciplinary nature, requiring him to 'trespass' on the preserves of archaeology, Egyptology, theology, the history of religion and superstition, philology, and many others.² The need to draw from—and speak to—a wide array of academic discourses is one of the reasons why tomb sculpture continues to be a difficult subject for art historians, lying somewhat outside the mainstream of the discipline.³ Nonetheless, funerary monuments are fundamental to our understanding of the history of art. Tombs are arguably the oldest sculptural structures made by humanity; they are also a form of artwork shared by cultures across the world. Tombs comprise some of the most ambitious, expensive and spectacular artistic projects undertaken by past societies, involving the leading artists of their day. By concealing the corpse of the deceased in the grave, while simultaneously evoking their presence through a monument, tombs epitomise one of the central functions of art: namely, to render the invisible, visible. The great novelty of Panofsky's book was to treat tomb sculpture as a distinctive form of artwork, crafting a narrative of how man's hopes and fears in the face of death found expression in countless works of art.

Revisiting the Monument is the first book to examine the legacy and influence of Panofsky's work on funerary monuments. In June 2014 a conference was held at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London to celebrate the fifty-year anniversary of the publication of Panofsky's *Tomb Sculpture*. The aim of the event—and this publication—was twofold: to evaluate Panofsky's ideas and to examine new approaches, perspectives and material relating to the study of tomb sculpture. As the record of a conference and a project born out of the editors' own specialisms, this book does not seek to re-tread the exact path charted by Panofsky; the most notable difference being that this publication focuses on the medieval and renaissance periods, whereas *Tomb Sculpture* begins in ancient Egypt. While Panofsky wrote a single, epic narrative charting the development of tomb sculpture from Antiquity to the Baroque, this book is more akin to a series of short stories. Each chapter is a cross-section through the history of tomb sculpture, examining a particular tomb, group of tombs, or theme with wider implications for our understanding of funerary monuments. The contributors are art historians with a keen interest in funerary monuments, whose research represents new discoveries, ideas and approaches to the material. They cover a diverse range of geographies and periods, ranging from the eleventh to sixteenth centuries and including regions such as England, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Portugal.

The introductory chapter by Susie Nash, 'Erwin Panofsky's *Tomb Sculpture*: Creating the Monument', deals with the genesis, scope, language, illustration and immediate reception of Panofsky's book, drawing on the art historian's correspondence to reveal his own responses to the project. Nash reveals that Panofsky himself expressed ambivalence about the book, apologising to correspondents for what he considered to be the superficiality of his text. Despite the author's own misgivings, Nash emphasises the achievements of *Tomb Sculpture*: its geographical and temporal breadth, its wide disciplinary arc, and its formulation of questions and terminologies that still define debates about funerary monuments today.

This sets the context for the first section, '**Reassessing Panofsky**', which comprises three chapters re-evaluating monuments, concepts and terms that play an important role in Panofsky's narrative of tomb sculpture. Shirin Fozi's chapter, "'From the Pictorial to the Statuesque": Two Romanesque Effigies and the Problem of Plastic Form', examines the late-eleventh and early-twelfth century effigies of Rudolf of Swabia and Widukind of Saxony, two prominent examples from the first generation of effigies made in post-classical Europe. For Panofsky, these monuments exemplified the progressive development of plastic form in Romanesque sculpture, moving from the 'frail and floating' figure of Rudolf to the 'statuesque' effigy of Widukind. Fozi posits a more complex relationship between form and meaning, arguing that one must look to the particular context of each monument for an explanation of the plasticity of the effigy and its materials. The next contribution by Robert Marcoux, 'Memory, Presence and the Medieval Tomb', re-evaluates the two fundamental categories into which Panofsky organised funerary monuments: 'prospective' (monuments pertaining to life beyond death) and 'retrospective' (tombs emphasising biographical elements). Examining six French tombs dating from the mid-twelfth to late-thirteenth centuries, Marcoux argues against a rigid distinction between 'retrospective' and 'prospective' monuments, demonstrating that many memorials combine elements of both. Geoffrey Nuttall's chapter, 'Panofsky's *Tomb Sculpture* and the Development of the Early Renaissance Floor Tomb', is also concerned with Panofsky's dichotomy between the humanist glorification of the past and Christian concerns with the future. Panofsky claimed that Tuscan floor tombs which represent the body of the deceased as simultaneously standing and recumbent exemplified a new concern with the past rather than the future, a change in attitudes which he argued characterised the shift from the Middle Ages to Renaissance. Nuttall challenges this argument through a detailed examination of the fourteenth-century tomb slab of Lorenzo Trenta. He shows how a consideration of the monument's relationship to the space of the Trenta Chapel (and particularly its altarpiece) suggests that the spatial paradox of the effigy was actually intended to express the tension in Christian eschatology between the reality of death and certainty of bodily resurrection.

The following two sections extend Panofsky's work by charting new directions in tomb studies, not fully explored in *Tomb Sculpture*. While much attention has been paid

to the formal and iconographical development of funerary monuments, their patrons and conditions of manufacture, scholars have only recently begun to consider the perspective of the viewer. The three chapters that comprise **‘Monuments and their Viewers’** demonstrate different approaches to this often-nebulous topic. The contribution by Luca Palozzi, ‘Petrarch and Memorial Art: Blurring the Boundaries Between Art Theory and Art Practice in Trecento Italy’, examines the reception of funerary monuments in fourteenth-century Italy through the eyes of the poet Petrarch. By charting Petrarch’s activities as a composer of epitaphs, Palozzi reconstructs the poet’s remarkable engagement with funerary monuments as well as his ideas on the relationship between textual and sculptural commemoration. My chapter, ‘Stone and Bone: The Corpse, the Effigy and the Viewer in Late-Medieval Tomb Sculpture’, also considers funerary sculpture in relation to medieval poetry. An anonymous fifteenth-century Middle English poem describes how the experience of seeing a beautiful female effigy prompts a vision of the same woman’s decaying, verminous corpse. Taking this poem as my starting point, I explore the relationship between the corpse and the effigy—material, temporal, liturgical and imaginative—arguing that medieval viewers understood funerary monuments as containers, whose unseen interior provided an essential context for interpreting their seen exterior. James Cameron’s chapter, ‘Competing for *Dextra Cornu Magnum Altaris*: Funerary Monuments and Liturgical Seating in English Churches’, shifts focus from lay to clerical reception. Cameron draws attention to a remarkable letter from the turn of the fourteenth century in which the Archbishop of Canterbury orders the destruction of a monument at Worcester Cathedral whose location and size was judged to obstruct the celebration of Mass at the high altar. This leads Cameron to explore the issue of competition for space to the right of the high altar between objects of individual commemoration (tombs) and those of communal liturgy (sedilia), highlighting the importance of architectural context in defining the form and reception of medieval tombs.

The next section, **‘Monuments and Materials’**, comprises four chapters that focus on the materiality of monuments and their construction. These contributions rely upon first-hand access and/or technical innovations that were simply unavailable to Panofsky, who worked primarily from photographs. In her short introduction to this section, ‘Panofsky: Materials and Condition’, Kim Woods draws from her own work on alabaster to stress the importance of paying close attention to the symbolic and aesthetic qualities of materials. The next chapter by Ann Adams, ‘Revealed/Concealed: Monumental Brasses on Tomb Chests’, deals with a form of funerary monument that was entirely overlooked by Panofsky. Considering the decision to commemorate John I, Duke of Cleves, and Catherine of Bourbon with monumental brasses set into raised tomb chests, Adams argues that this distinctive type of memorial can only be understood by paying close attention to architectural context and visibility, patronal networks, and the symbolic significance of the material. Sanne Frequin’s contribution, ‘Veiling and Unveiling: The Materiality

of the Tomb of John I of Avesnes and Phillipa of Luxembourg in the Franciscan Church of Valenciennes', also draws attention to materials, this time in relation to a now-lost double tomb from the early fourteenth century. Two invoices—translated into English here for the first time—provide remarkable insights into the tomb's materiality, detailing its stone, polychromy and gilding, as well as tantalising references to an ironwork 'hughe' which may originally have covered the tomb. The chapter by Matthew Reeves, 'A Reconsideration of the Tomb of John, Duke of Berry, for the Sainte-Chapelle at Bourges: Its Inception, Revision and Reconstruction', is another perceptive and detailed study of a single monument. Drawing on a wide array of documentary evidence, as well as close examination of the surviving effigy, Reeves offers new insights into the patronage, making, and re-making of the tomb of the Duke of Berry, showing how this monument was a unique and highly personal commission by one of the leading artistic patrons of the Middle Ages. While Frequin and Reeves deal with the reconstruction of lost or fragmentary monuments, Martha Dunkelman 'deconstructs' an intact monument in order to analyse its constituent elements. In 'Deconstructing Donatello and Michelozzo's Brancacci Tomb', Dunkelman shows how the tomb was only partially finished, hastily assembled without the supervision of the artists, and arguably incorporates parts—including Donatello's relief of the *Assumption*—originally intended for other sculptural projects.

Despite the diversity of periods, geographies and methodologies covered, the chapters in this volume share a remarkable commonality of interests, revealing the shared concerns of current researchers into tomb sculpture. Recurring themes include monuments as sites of liminality, the reception and visibility of tombs, the relationship between corpse and monument, and the symbolic significance of materials. All the authors emphasise the importance of placing tombs within a wider context (whether artistic, spatial, liturgical, or historical), expanding and destabilising the neat teleological narrative proposed by Panofsky. It is here that we light upon the tension at the heart of the subject of this book. In returning to Panofsky's *Tomb Sculpture*—'revisiting the monument', as it were—one needs to draw attention to its lacunae and generalisations, while at the same time recognising its ambition and intellectual achievements. It is notable that no other publication on tomb sculpture—including the present work—has achieved a survey with comparable temporal or geographical breadth.⁴ The scale of Panofsky's work has allowed later researchers to set their more focussed studies of funerary monuments within a wider context. Many of the questions that Panofsky raised in *Tomb Sculpture*—whether effigies represent the deceased in life, death or the afterlife, how to untangle the relationship between monuments and belief(s), what was the meaning of symbolic and allegorical imagery on funerary sculpture—still provide the fundamental intellectual framework for tomb studies. It is the aim of this book to raise awareness of the great contribution made by *Tomb Sculpture* to the field, to continue the debates began by Panofsky, and to suggest new avenues of enquiry.

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1. Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture: Its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, ed. H. W. Janson (London: Thames and Hudson, 1964), p. 9.
2. Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, p. 9.
3. An overview of the state of tomb studies is beyond the scope of this book. For a discussion of recent advances and continued difficulties in the field, see Nigel Llewellyn, 'The State of Play: Reflections into the State of Research into Church Monuments', *Church Monuments* 28 (2013): pp. 7–12; Truus van Bueren, Kim Ragetli and Arnoud-Jan Bijsterveld, 'Researching Medieval *Memoria*: Prospects and Possibilities', *Jaarboek voor Middeleeuwse Geschiedenis* 14 (2011): pp. 183–234.
4. The closest contender is Kurt Bauch's survey of European tomb sculpture from the 11th to the 15th centuries: Kurt Bauch, *Das Mittelalterliche Grabbild: Figürliche Grabmäler des 11 bis 15 Jahrhunderts in Europa* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1976).