

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

WORDS TO REMEMBER: CRAFTING EPITAPHIC ENVIRONMENTS IN
MEDIÉVAL AND CONTEMPORARY COMMEMORATIVE ART

A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED TO
THE FACULTY OF THE DIVISION OF THE HUMANITIES
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ROMANCE LANGUAGES AND LITERATURES

BY

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CHICAGO, ILLINOIS
MARCH 2024

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To my kindred spirit, whose memory resounds in my every earthly step,
Carmela Gómez de León Sánchez (July 16, 1933- November 20, 1986)

Après avoir pleuré le père, moi, Charles, j'ai écrit ces vers,
Je me lamente ta mort, père, sois très doux avec moi,
Souviens-toi de moi, que mon esprit te suive toujours.
-*Annales de Lorsch*, ll. 17-19, late 8th century

It was only lost to sight, not to memory.
-Augustine, *Confessions* X.18

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Acknowledgements

My heartfelt thanks go first to my committed committee members: Daisy Delogu, Alison James, Tamara Golan, and Seth Estrin. Their thoughtful and meticulous feedback was invaluable to honing my myriad ideas into the interdisciplinary narrative I dreamed of writing. Their support of my analysis and thought process over the last three years have bolstered my confidence as a scholar, humanist, and living being.

I am also greatly indebted to reading room staff at the British Library, Bodleian Library, The National Archives, Kew; James and Linda at the Sussex Archaeological Society and the Lewes Priory Trust; Geoff and Brenda at the Bedale Museum and tourist center, as well as Sarah, Linda, Philip, and Rev. Simon at St Gregory's Church; Tom Richardson at the North Yorkshire County Record Office and Ellen Gage at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge for their time, enthusiasm, insight, and dedication to keeping memory alive in their communities. It has been a true privilege to work and learn with you all.

Finally, I offer my eternal gratitude to my family who has supported my niche curiosities for the past thirty years. Thank you to my Mom and Dad for their unflagging love, care, and intellectual inspiration-thank you for teaching me to ask questions and think critically in the world. Grandpa, your loving and generous support has not only facilitated my scholarship but has also been a source of motivation and pride in each new phase of my work. Thank you to you and Grandma Carmela for envisioning a future without boundaries for your family-I strive always to see your work through. To my beloved fiancé I offer my sincere thanks for keeping me alive and functioning and for thinking with me. I could not imagine a more generous and brilliant partner

to have had by my side. Thank you to my friends for their love and encouragement that endures undaunted by distance or time.

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Abbreviations

CM: Cimetière merveilleux

DG: Douleureuse Garde

EYC: Early Yorkshire Charters

NCPL: Non-cyclic Prose Lancelot (ed. Mosès, 1991)

PPLM: Pas pu saisir la mort, Sophie Calle

RM: Rachel, Monique, Sophie Calle

Rachel, Monique...: Rachel, Monique... Elle s'appelle successivement Rachel, Monique, Szyndler, Calle, Pagliero, Gonthier, Sindler. Ma mère aimait qu'on parle d'elle

tep: the epitaph project, Joyce Burstein

Abstract

The complex monuments associated with both historical and fictional medieval tombs are particularly notable for their ability to create an architectural place as well as an intentional and culturally meaningful space in which to read and interpret the epitaphs. These are not stand-alone sculptures that synonymously convey their meaning in any context. Rather, such monuments have an architectural quality to them that both affects and is affected by their surroundings and necessitates crossing a boundary-physical or metaphorical- in order to access and experience the tomb and epitaph. In doing so, these medieval epitaphs become part of what I identify as an installation. Generally speaking, I argue that the way installation theory centers around the dynamic relationship between structure, site, and public is in keeping with medieval commemorative art's emphasis on architectural design, visibility, and social legacy that makes medieval tombs a productive aesthetic precursor to creating contemporary commemorative experiences.

Preface

Prevailing assumptions regarding the success of a commemorative monument (which mediates the dead or absent rejoining society as culturally significant narratives) suggest commemoration is best achieved through permanence, defined as the “action, fact, or state of lasting or remaining; continued or enduring existence or duration; continuation; persistence”.¹ The often ruinous state of historical monuments, with their inscrutable Latin and lichen-covered symbolism, attests to the idea of permanence as a struggle to survive. These structures exist in spite of time and change. Indeed, it is their very ruin that communicates the authority, aura sanctity, and awe that often imparts a protected status. In this dissertation I propose a reframing of commemorative monuments according to which we see them instead as epitaphic installations that perpetuate memory through immersive environments in which the viewer literally enters into the art and experiences it in multiple dimensions and with multiple senses.

What is so often overlooked with regard to historical, particularly pre-modern memorials, and what I advocate in this dissertation is worth preserving, is their potential to adapt materially and semantically in response to changes in their context. As I show throughout this dissertation, while the physical forms associated with traditional memorials have perhaps run their course, the impetus behind commemorative art remains vital, as evidenced by the creation of temporary memorials that fill a need to grieve communally when official channels do not allow for such a practice. Fulfilling this need hinges on building relationships not only between artist and art, but

¹ *Oxford English Dictionary*, s.v. “permanence (*n.*)”, September 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1093/OED/3404361276>.

also between the public and the artwork, and between individual and public.² Epitaphic artworks tend to include a textual element that mediates the public's encounter with the work and offers a means of interaction through public reading. Joyce Coleman's concept of "aurality", referring to the state of textual autonomy achieved through the iteration or performance of writing, is at work throughout epitaphic installations activated by public interaction.³

Aurality is also central to the contemporary study of medieval texts and text-bearing artifacts to the point that the public,

« ...détermine en grande partie les conditions de production et d'émission du message, ainsi que le statu de l'inscription dans la culture écrite... le public des inscriptions médiévales doit être abordé comme une potentialité... en sachant que cette capacité doit être activée par une série de phénomènes propre au document perçu ». ⁴

This symbiotic activation between public and perceptible text certainly aligns with installation art in its immersion of the participant, but it also accords with a shift that occurred in the medieval west when « l'opposition traditionnelle entre vecteur oral et vecteur écrit implose » such that « une grande perméabilité apparaît entre les deux medias » that indicates the intermediality of contemporary installation.⁵ Linked to the political and humanitarian crises of the 1960s and

² As Brault and Naas explain, "Derrida suggests that it is only 'in us' that the dead may speak, that it is only by speaking *of* or *as* the dead that we can keep them alive," Jacques Derrida, *The Work of Mourning*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2017), 9.

³ Joyce Coleman, *Public Reading and Reading in Public in Late Medieval England and France* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1996), 12.

⁴ Vincent Debais, *Messages de pierre* (Brepols, 2009), 15.

⁵ Debais, *Message de pierre*, 18. A famous example of this intermediality is of the so-called 'Eleanor crosses' that Edward I commissioned upon the death of his wife, Eleanor of Castile in 1290. Erected at each stop of the body's translation to Westminster, the monuments were placed at the center of town and depicted Eleanor amid both the sacred symbolism of the cross and saints and secular heraldic devices.

1970s especially, installation art has motivations that resonate with contemporary experiences of grief. In this dissertation, installation art theory serves as a framework for reimagining commemorative art in the 21st century.⁶

Conceptually, the disconnect between available forms of commemoration and the uses of commemorative art that underpin this dissertation is derived from the compounded loss of human life during the 2020 coronavirus pandemic and following the murder of George Floyd and the subsequent outcry against police brutality. Throughout the United States people marched across towns and cities holding signs with the names and faces of victims, urging the public not to forget them. In Chicago, protestors in September 2020 held signs reading ‘Say her name’ or simply ‘Breonna Taylor’ written over and over [FIG 1 & 2].⁷

⁶ The first iterations of installation art were “happenings” held by members of the artistic Fluxus movement in the 1950s, the most famous of which are John Cage’s 1952 *Untitled Event* in the cafeteria of Black Mountain College in North Carolina and Allan Kaprow’s 1957 *18 Happenings in 6 Parts*, held at the Reuben Gallery in New York (Anne Ring Petersen, *Installation Art: Between Image and Stage* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2015), 269]. While the Black Mountain College event was innovative in its “multi-focus production of concurrent actions that placed new and greater demands on the viewer’s ability for co-creative interpretation”, Kaprow’s public environments actually allowed visitors to “make additions to the many texts that formed the installation” in what historically opened the “important crossover field between installation and performance, pictorial expression and scenic expression” (Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 269-70). Interestingly, the installations discussed in Chapter 1 are good examples of how these two forms of happening have evolved since their inception.

⁷ Hilary Flores, “Breonna Taylor Rally Raises \$45,000 to Support Black Women and Girls: ‘It’s Time for Our Voices to be Heard’”, *Block Club Chicago*, September 27, 2020, <https://blockclubchicago.org/2020/09/27/breonna-taylor-rally-raises-thousands-to-help-support-black-women-and-girls-its-time-for-our-voices-to-be-heard/>; Pat Nabong, “Hundreds gather to ‘say her name’ at Daley Center rally for Breonna Taylor”, *Chicago Sun-Times*, September, 26, 2020, <https://chicago.suntimes.com/metro-state/2020/9/26/21457677/breonna-taylor-rally-daley-center-my-block-my-hood-my-city-jahmal-cole-niama-malachi>.

Passing through the Loop one day I saw a giant banner bearing the single word 'Breonna' floating down from an office window and was struck by how few words it took to commemorate someone-just a name was enough to create what was recognizably an epitaph. After years studying the long, elaborate inscriptions found on medieval tomb monuments I began to question what an epitaph really entailed. Then, in 2021, the cumulative grief after the first year of pandemic demanded acknowledgement. With no official commemoration of COVID-19 victims from the US government, people took to the streets once again, this time setting up mass memorials with the names and faces of their dead installed in public spaces.

As these temporary memorials continued and expanded in the US and internationally the question of what constitutes legitimate commemoration resurfaced. Where the current 19th century inspired tomb and epitaph fight against the ravages of exposure and time, the temporary memorials in 2020 called on a much older tradition of commemorative art. The combination of publicly used space and represented individual identities emerges as essential to contemporary commemorative art and is strongly reminiscent of medieval tombs, specifically those produced in Anglo-Norman and Angevin England after 1066. These complex tombs used form and text to establish individual value physically and affectively within the daily context of social relationships. Understood in this way, medieval and other pre-modern monuments that have either lost or dramatically changed in signification over time can be repurposed as exemplars of how commemorative environments can facilitate narrative creation.

Despite any physical deterioration, medieval tombs stand out, retaining what might be termed their monumentality.⁸ Using language, form, and spatiality to indicate and thus maintain the distinction between a monument and its context, historical tombs remind us less perhaps of an individual and more of a commemorative need that transcends history. Society continues to ponder how and where the dead might reside among the living, and medieval commemorative art models a contemporary practice of spontaneous memorialization that engages with its context but can also shift meanings when its framing changes. Temporary memorials create commemorative art installations in spaces actively occupied by the living, not hidden away in cemeteries cut off from daily life. Like the plaza or street corner, churches were high traffic environments that already served as vectors between the lay public and monastic communities.

Epitaphic installations in the form of tombs and memorial sculpture enabled, then as now, organic dialogue between participants, commemorative art, and physical site. In working with both pre-modern and contemporary commemorative art there arise certain issues of anachronism to address. First, the application of the contemporary term 'installation' to medieval memorials is intended to highlight characteristics of what might be considered old-fashioned tombs and epitaphs that actually incorporate site-specificity, theatricality, and intermediality in ways now associated with contemporary art. Medieval tombs and other memorial structures were conceived as both universal evocations of grief and as individual representations of the dead that parallel contemporary installation in being interactive, multisensory, and mobile.

⁸ Chris Scarre, "Monumentality," in *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, ed. Timothy Insoll (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2011): Chris Scarre describes the quality of monument as an ability "to take ritual and cosmology beyond the realm of the domestic and quotidian, and express or embellish them in a special, dedicated setting." [9]

As we will see in the subsequent chapters, the complex monuments associated with both historical and fictional medieval tombs are particularly notable for their ability to create an architectural place as well as an intentional and culturally meaningful space in which to read and interpret the epitaphs. These are not stand-alone sculptures that synonymously convey their meaning in any context. Rather, such monuments have an architectural quality to them that both affects and is affected by their surroundings and necessitates crossing a boundary-physical or metaphorical- in order to access and experience the tomb and epitaph. In doing so, these medieval epitaphs become part of what I identify as an installation. Generally speaking, installation theory centers around the dynamic relationship between structure, site, and public; very much in keeping with medieval commemorative art's emphasis on architectural design, visibility, and social legacy.⁹

The physicality of an epitaphic installation within a unique and composite setting allows artists to fully stage and enact immersive commemorative sites that disrupts audiences' emotional state, making people encounter grief, whether their own or another's. The commemorative installation experience of living with the dead naturally imparts a highly affective and multisensory memory that the public carries away with them. Each narrative retelling of the individual installation experience reiterates and to a certain extent resurrects the memorial's commemorated subject(s) in the present. As a reactive and personalized piece of writing the

⁹ Cf. Paul Binsky, *Medieval Death: Ritual and Representation* (Cornell Univ. Press, 1996); Elizabeth Valdez del Alamo and Carol Stamatis Pendergast, *Memory and the Medieval Tomb* (Routledge, 2019); Ann Adams and Jessica Barker, *Revisiting the Monument: Fifty Years Since Panofsky's Tomb Sculpture* (Courtauld Institute of Art, 2016); Lucie Doležalová (ed.), *The Making of Memory in the Middle Ages* (Brill, 2009), in particular Milena Bartolová, "In Memoriam Defunctorum: Visual Arts as Devices of Memory", 473-86.

epitaph relies on narrative adaptability and interpellative potential to continue signifying its subject to changing audiences separated across time. Contemporary memorials are a genre of installation artwork when they can establish a relevant relationship with their surroundings, imparting and gaining meaning from the installation site in equal measure.

Part I contextualizes a deeper understanding of the epitaphic installation as currently practiced, and Parts II and III examine how pre-modern commemorative art has the potential to broaden what commemoration looks like and does for us at present and in future. In tandem, I wish to offer a new mode of looking at medieval sculpture that reinvigorates understanding of the work's original environment. I consider the concept of epitaphic installation, which demands an interdisciplinary and transtemporal study, in three contexts: contemporary commemorative art, Anglo-Norman tomb programs, and medieval courtly literature. In a preface I propose the critical term "epitaphic installations", which Part I considers from the viewpoint of contemporary commemoration. My first chapter, "Reviving the Epitaph", introduces key concepts of installation art theory that anchor my subsequent analysis of two contemporary epitaphic installations. The following chapter, ...provides a basis for understanding the underlying assumptions and requirements society has of commemorative art that changes how we understand pre-modern monuments. The final analysis of Chapter 3 unites contemporary and medieval conceptions of death in Sophie Calle's *Rachel, Monique...* (2010) and Joyce Burstein's 'the epitaph project' (2005). Part II of this dissertation applies the hybrid critical lens used for contemporary installation art to medieval tombs. Chapter 4, "Mobile Commemorative Networks in Post-Conquest England", proves pre-modern tombs to be far from the disconnected monoliths that radical changes in their environment would have them appear. Chapter 5, "Medieval

epitaphic installations”, regards two Anglo-Norman case studies. The first is the de Warenne family memorials at St Pancras Priory in Lewes, Sussex., while the second case turns to the later FitzAlan effigies found in St Gregory’s Church in Bedale, Yorkshire. In each chapter I discuss the formal and symbolic elements of each commemorative environment in terms of how those constructed spaces produce an interactive and multisensory experience that is highly memorable for both medieval and contemporary publics. So persistent was the tomb in medieval culture that its literary treatment is the subject of Part III. Chapter 6 provides historical insight into how medieval people experienced and imagined memorials physically and textually. With medieval reading practices in mind, Chapter 7 engages with the *Non-Cyclic Prose Lancelot* (c. 1225) -the earliest known original Anglo-Norman version of a French text that formed the basis for the sprawling *Lancelot-Grail Cycle*. My analysis focuses on the tombs belonging to Lancelot and his families, that is to say his biological family and the confraternity he joins as a knight of the Round Table.

Part I focuses on how installations construct narratives in the form of immersive memorializing environments, in which techniques of theatricality, intermediality, and site-specificity enable an installation to do epitaphic work, that is, to establish sites of interaction between living and dead, as well as among living participants. I use the terms *parergon*, an aesthetic concept distinguishing the space within the artistic work (Gr. *ergon*) from what is outside the work, and *paratexte*, Gérard Genette’s coinage for making the same distinction with works of text, to describe the relationships between public, site, and installation.¹⁰ This

¹⁰ Cf. Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 78; Gérard Genette, *Seuils* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2002), 374-75. I use the term *parergon* in a the Derridean sense, according to which that which is

relationship fosters affective bonds whose creation occurs within and around the commemorative work, but whose existence stays with the participant beyond the installation site. French conceptual artist Calle's commemoration of her mother disrupts notions of singularity when it comes to the representation of the dead. *Rachel, Monique... (RM)* uses new and archival photography, video, and text-bearing artifacts to recreate the dead symbolically within changing *parergons*.¹¹ Installation participants in the present converge with the past through these objects and their dialogues of experience create new narratives that perpetuate memory forward and beyond the work at hand. As is customary of her work, Calle juxtaposes private and public life, here her dual experiences as biographer and grieving daughter, and she invites her participants to immerse themselves in every step of both processes.

American artist and educator Joyce Burstein's installation, *the epitaph project*, uses a mobile set up providing chalk and an eraser in a bronze tin at the foot of a traditional tombstone carved of slate to activate her participants as not only interlocutors, but contributors, whose messages participate in the artwork's production. By framing them within a traditional shape and

external to the work is simultaneously supplemental as "the internal structural link" between external and internal, and "disappears, buries itself, effaces itself, melts away at the moment it deploys its greatest energy." That is to say, in the very act of framing the frame recedes in order to present the work [Monica McTighe, *Framed Spaces: Photography and Memory in Contemporary Installation Art* (Dartmouth College Press, 2012), 27]. For installations both physical and narrative, the inconspicuousness of the boundary separating art from not-art is routinely achieved through either visual or verbal ekphrasis, or both. As is seen in all of my case studies, the work of art has ways of perforating the frame and confusing our categories of reality. Monica McTighe cites Rosalind Krauss's astute description of the sensation when what is framed becomes convincingly real to the point that viewers experience "the paradox of being physically present but temporally remote" from the narrative represented by the work (McTighe, 37).

¹¹ See the introduction in Ludger Lieb, Ricarda Wagner and Christine Neufeld, *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, 5-7.

context for epitaphic writing, Burstein legitimates all contributions as equally valid and authoritative in their act of commemoration. The epitaphs' ephemerality allows the artist to represent multiple individuals in sequence and, thanks to the chalk's stubborn trace, simultaneously. The resulting palimpsests mediate encounters between the present and the absent. *The epitaph project (tep)* provides a guided but malleable space in which the public may practice confronting death from multiple perspectives.

Burstein's imposed constraints on contributors and the inclusion of erasure as part of the epitaphic process recodes the fragility of temporary memorials into its strengths. Here is the place to practice commemoration of others and of oneself as a kind of exposure to posthumousness without the physical sacrifice. The subsequent exhibitions of photography and video chronicling the installation's life recontextualizes participants' separate experiences as a comprehensible narrative, further broadening the commemorative community extant among contributors. Through physical intervention, Burstein's installation expands the *parergon* to include participants and to produce a paratextual narrative of their experiences. Both Burstein and Calle's construction of paratextual narratives that survive independently from the installation in participants' memories exemplify the commemorative potential of narrative installation.

In Part II, I demonstrate how the same principles guiding Burstein and Calle's work functioned before the coining of contemporary terms and theorization of installation art. To this end close readings of two dynastic monument programs offer insight into the transhistorical motivations behind installation art. Where theatricality, site-specificity, and intermediality apply to the modern installation, techniques of repetition, recontextualization, and resurrection are identifiable more generally in relation to commemorative sculpture and culture that fulfill

comparable aesthetic and affective needs in their community. Such communities, bound by memory, evolve through the forging of what I term “mobile commemorative networks,” that is to say, people and places connected by objects and sites that perpetuate the memory of someone or something by virtue of not being fixed to a single location. Predicated on “narrativity,” Marie-Laure Ryan’s appellation for a textual work’s active state of narrative creation, mobile commemorative networks use activated text-bearing artifacts to establish a self-perpetuating narrative that expands awareness of the dead by physically evoking them in language. Like the names of victims in 2020, the deceased’s name and biography are infinitely replicable, and thus are able to spread a curated commemorative narrative.

The theoretical concept of peritext refers to the proliferation of written documents in addition to the tombs and their inscriptions. Poetic, legal, and historical motivations in the case of both the de Warenne and FitzAlan monuments result in a surprisingly holistic representation of the dead through mobile, text-bearing artifacts. The chapter’s two central sepulchral matrices, or tomb arrangements, are St Pancras’ Priory (c. 1077) in southern Lewes, and St Gregory’s Church (late 12th c.) in northern Bedale. Analysis of these medieval epitaphic installations focuses on a sculptural object both alone and within its context. The monuments’ associations with religious houses connected both families to a larger monastic installation that spread faith through relics, rituals, and miracles. As part of this grander campaign, families like the de Warenne’s and FitzAlan’s that were wealthy but not royal could access a ready-made infrastructure to distribute their own commemorative narratives. Through my analysis I also aim to show how the performance and narration of death and grief of medieval memorials can still be meaningfully engaged with today. The experience of being alive to see one’s future funerary

monument echoes the practical encounter with death of *the epitaph project* and Monique Sindler's lifelong self-fashioning in *Rachel, Monique...*'s archival content.

The intersection between medieval commemorative installation and literature in the Anglo-Norman orbit is the focus of Part 3. Using the concept of "narrated installation", I unite the characteristics of narrativity and textuality previously associated with epitaphic writing to discuss those epitaphs which are only accessible through text, but whose presence in the text is key to anchoring the divergent storylines of medieval romance. I consider literary monuments associated with these narrated epitaphs as either legendary or empty tombs, with an emphasis on how the use of illustrious characters known to the reader, and of the corpse's absence, elicit interaction from both intratextual and extratextual readers to create a mobile commemorative network which eternalizes the dead on the infinitely adaptable plane of the imagination. In an Anglo-Norman context, rulers at all levels also often mobilized such symbolic commemorative communities to legitimate power by inscribing a real person into a mythical lineage.

I argue in this chapter that the existence and practice of meditative reading, first among monastic readers and later aristocratic ones, complemented literary experimentation with allegory and descriptive language and the public performance of literature by incorporating practices of slow reading that equipped readers to decipher multiple layers of meaning within courtly literature. Due to its density, my analysis focuses on a single foundational text, the 13th century *Non-cyclic Prose Lancelot (NCPL)*, which primarily tells the story of Lancelot's youth and early quest for the holy grail. I consider the text in both literary and historical capacities. The literate baronial and aristocratic classes systematically imported Arthurian courtly literature into medieval history writing to fill in gaps or curate a more favorable series of events, as in the case

of Edward I.¹² The impact of fictional experiences on historical memory speaks to contemporary concerns about posthumous existence. Besides proving that the manipulation of memory is no modern phenomenon, such fluidity between fiction and fact also raises the stakes for what commemorative art must achieve when threatened with historical erasure.

I concentrate on two commemorative sites: the *Moutier-Royal* and the *Douloureuse garde*. In both contexts, I discuss legendary and empty tombs in terms of their construction and composition, highlighting the sensory experience of each monument by setting the stage for readers to visualize. By building vivid and immersive environments within readers' imaginations, medieval romance re-presents the dead as textual bodies able to exist and act independently from their fictional source. I close Part III with a discussion of books as text-bearing artifacts that people exchanged and altered, yielding an intermedial mobile commemorative network that allowed localized narratives to interact. The resulting adaptation of characters like Lancelot in other literary and performance traditions continues to be a primary means of interacting with the past, exploring the boundaries of perpetuity in epitaphic installation.

My dissertation concludes with a brief Coda in which I apply the results of my investigation to the current commemorative crisis. This section reiterates the argument for legitimizing temporary memorials as commemorative and/or epitaphic installations that faithfully represent both the dead and the bereaved. The hand-painted posters and murals of police violence victims, like the impromptu memorials of COVID-19 victims, draw on centuries of commemorative representation in their use of theatricality, site-specificity, and intermediality to

¹² See, for example, Elizabeth Salter's monograph *English and International: Studies in the Literature, Art and Patronage of Medieval England* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1988).

create an active encounter between public and individual. Only through such personal and organic interaction can society successfully perpetuate the dead, embedding them into public and private memory through adaptation of expression.

Part I

« Le soleil ni la mort ne se peuvent regarder
fixement. »

-La Rochefoucauld, *Maximes*, 3

Chapter 1: Reviving the Epitaph

In late October of 2020, artist Suzanne Brennan Firstenberg installed almost 250,000 small white flags on the Armory Parade Ground in Washington, D.C.: one for every American COVID-19 victim to that date. “Each flag has a soul”, she captioned a photo of the installation shared on social media.¹³ She went on to explain in an interview that “this is public participatory art... I want the community to come plant flags right alongside me. I want them to realize the importance of individual lives.”¹⁴ The resulting field of shivering white pennants leaves no ambiguity in its message [FIG 1.1]. With her title, “IN AMERICA How Could This Happen...”, Firstenberg poses a question that speaks to the feelings of despair and incomprehension that such a massive loss of life provokes, but she also creates the physical space in which to reflect on an answer. It is easy to imagine posing and re-posing the eponymous question at each little flag, growing hoarse and receiving no reply. This exhausting repetition, paired with the visual spectacle of a quarter million flags carpeting a manicured field, is Firstenberg’s way of making us encounter our dead and the situation that led to their deaths.

¹³ Suzanne Firstenberg (@inamericaflags), Instagram photo, October 23, 2020, https://www.instagram.com/p/CGsL3CtAXgK/?utm_source=ig_web_copy_link.

¹⁴ Mikaela Lefrak, “This Artist Installed Over 220,000 White Flags in D.C. to Represent COVID-19 Deaths”, Oct. 23, 2020, NPR (<https://www.npr.org/local/305/2020/10/23/927203388/this-artist-installed-over-220-000-white-flags-in-d-c-to-represent-c-o-v-i-d-19-deaths>). Interestingly, Firstenberg’s 2020 installation has been documented as a digital installation (<https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/d4e4404b38b8485297a11ef30dd6f93e>) by Dr. Sarah Wagner and Maggie Petersen (The George Washington Univ.) and Adam Fracchia (Univ. of Maryland). Firstenberg followed up with her 2021 installation on the lawn north of the Washington Monument, *In America: Remember*, as part of GWU’s ongoing project *Rituals in the Making* (<https://ritualsinthemaking.com/in-america-remember/>).

Importantly, the flags are left blank, but visitors are encouraged to write the name of a lost loved one and claim a part of this public act of commemoration. The creation of these ad hoc epitaphs brings Firstenberg's hope for the art to fruition by imbuing anonymous flags with the memory of "individual lives". The question posed also becomes personalized by the name on a flag. One no longer asks "How could this happen" in general, but rather 'How could this happen *to them*' or '*to me*'? Focusing a very broad question on the personal experience of each visitor evokes the cemetery -in particular, nearby Arlington National Cemetery [FIG 1.2]- with its rows of identical white headstones, each with a different name, marking a different body. Like the personal-public space of the cemetery, Firstenberg's 'epitaphic' installation is a place to mourn alone and collectively, legitimizing grief and creating a physical point of contact between mourners and the dead. Although this installation was disassembled after November 6, 2020, it remains a prescient reminder of the epitaph's power in enabling us to confront and even share the most intimate and complex emotions. It is through the forging of such affective networks that grief can be overcome, and memory can be established. Mourning collaboratively and collectively creates and strengthens interpersonal bonds that help individuals cope more effectively with grief, but this behavior often requires an initiating gesture.

As I will show in this chapter, epitaphic art installations -commemorative art installations that incorporate commemorative language into the construction of an immersive memorializing environment- are exceptionally well-suited to this provocative work due to their combination of certain qualities: theatricality, intermediality, and site-specificity. These concepts manifest differently across my case studies, whether it is the theatricality of home video, the site-specificity of a graveyard or gallery, or the intermediality of photographed writing, or of a

recorded reading. This chapter will focus on the epitaphic works of two contemporary artists in particular, Sophie Calle's *Rachel, Monique...* and Joyce Burstein's 'the epitaph project'. Both works use the medium of installation to construct points of interaction between the living and the dead and, moreover, of interaction among the living. Their use of epitaphic text or their invitation to the public to provide one, has the potential to facilitate communication of deeply personal experiences to others: to practice grief. I argue that Calle's and Burstein's installations rely upon the epitaph form, each one including crafted text that visually or aurally evokes the dead to construct individualized narratives about their subjects. The epitaphic text defines both artists' work such that installation might be thought of as the next evolutionary form of the epitaph in general.

The epitaph, as it has come to be known, is the product not of any sacred template, but of recently standardized mortuary trends. It is helpful to examine the modern epitaph's constituent parts, before considering its contemporary artistic interpretation. The word 'epitaph' typically evokes a short piece of text (as brief as 'RIP') inscribed on some kind of surface that marks the place of burial. The OED defines an epitaph as: "An inscription upon a tomb. Hence, occasionally, a brief composition characterizing a deceased person, and expressed as if intended to be inscribed on his tombstone." But this and other definitions are misleading in their simplicity and have led to a narrow concept of what an epitaph should be. The term 'epitaph' conjures a generally consistent mental image precisely because of acculturation. However, the epitaph seems to have certain consistent elements that have been interpreted in different ways across time. Chiefly, there must be text written on *or* in a stone surface. This text typically relates

biographical, descriptive, and limited information about the dead. This monument must in turn be located at or near a grave or similar space dedicated to the commemoration of the dead.

Such prescriptions misrepresent the epitaph as inextricable from a memorializing tradition that no longer resonates. Practical concerns about limited burial space and urban development, the prohibitive costs of burial and commemoration, and the normalization of cremation make the memorial parks inherited from the 19th century an impractical tradition to maintain. Although thano-tourism is as lucrative an industry as ever, Karl Guthke keenly observes that the “art of writing original, ‘unique’ epitaphs has been lost in our time”, and that “the disappearance of grave markers altogether and the growing popularity of ‘strewing’ [ashes]” has made the cemetery “a doomed institution bearing witness to an aspect of civilization that is now in rapid decline.”¹⁵ A once thriving artisanal market of stonemasons, engravers, writers, and sculptors has given way to mass-produced markers whose affordability overshadows any artistic significance.

Yet, a second glance shows how codified expectations are anything *but* intrinsic to the epitaph. The popular image of the western epitaph is as much the result of arbitrary cultural tradition as it is of necessity. A 1955 study commissioned by the National Funeral Directors Association presents a monolithic history of American funeral customs reaching back “in a direct line several thousand years to early Judaeo-Christian beliefs... influenced to some extent by even older beliefs and practices.”¹⁶ Not only is this inaccurate, it is also prohibitive of any change lest

¹⁵ Karl S. Guthke, “Talking Stones: Anothologies of Epitaphs from Humanism to popular Culture”, *Harvard Library Bulletin New Series* 10, no. 4 (Winter 1999): 22.

¹⁶ Robert Habenstein and Williams Lamers, *The History of American Funeral Directing* (Milwaukee: Bulfin, 1955), 361.

we upheave some foundational pillar of our society.¹⁷ The epitaph text has at different times communicated biographical information, intercessions for prayer or of belief in Resurrection, appeals to the passerby, elegiac verses, and even humorous quips. This wide range of themes is equaled by the variety that exists in funerary sculpture. Be it an effigy, a *transi* tomb, a floor slab, or a mausoleum, the strongest predictors of what a tomb will look like are the architectural fashions and prevailing concepts of the afterlife at the moment of its creation.

Given this heterogeneity, how do we know an epitaph when we see it? The term 'epitaph' derives from the Greek *epi* ("at", "over") and *taphos* ("tomb, burial, funeral"). Originally related to the *epitaphion* (funeral oration), there is no mention made of any material qualities and indeed the term refers to an altogether more ephemeral speech act. Even the Anglo-Saxon term *byrgelsleoð* indicates a song or verses to be read at a place of burial, but nothing more in terms of a material form. Western written epitaphs going back to Antiquity have made use of certain formulae such as "the Roman formulaic dedication of graves to the undying spirit, 'dis (diis) manibus'", "'to the spirits of the dead'", or the *ci-gît* labeling medieval tombs.¹⁸ However, although the dead were believed to "reside either in the tomb itself" or "near the grave", we might distill the epitaph to the essential but not necessarily physical features that facilitate its variety of functions in society.¹⁹ As a simultaneously private and public creation, the epitaph

¹⁷ In 1963, Jessica Mitford asserted that "there is no resemblance between the funeral practices of today and those of even seventy-five to one hundred years ago." Jessica Mitford, *The American Way of Death Revisited* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1998), 141.

¹⁸ Maureen Carroll, *Spirits of the Dead: Roman Funerary Commemoration in Western Europe* (Oxford; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2006), 4.

¹⁹ As Maureen Carroll goes on to say, "None of these terms or phrases, however, is a reference to a particular type of tomb architecture." (Carroll, *Spirits of the Dead*, 10)

creates a complex place around it in which narrative can occur. Supposedly a permanent mediator between the living and the dead, the successful epitaph actually adapts to changing audiences and environments without a loss of authority or commemorative meaning.

Such flexibility seems at odds with permanent commemoration but is, in reality, inherent in its creation. To begin, the epitaph is burdened with the tasks of summarizing, memorializing, and contextualizing the dead for the reader who cannot be assumed to have any knowledge of them. If these demands are met, then there is little inherent in the epitaph to dictate its material or textual form. Indeed, even the previously given etymological indication of the epitaph as “at” or “over” a tomb is ambiguous when one considers that a funerary speech can be spoken over a tomb just as words might be inscribed on top of it.

It is a work of art that holds abstract meaning for its contemporaneous viewer, contains an initial symbolism, and is not physically or conceptually diminished in the process of its reinterpretation over time. Everyone’s epitaph is for everyone else to stop and consider, on display as in a museum gallery. Beyond this, the epitaphic installation implies a high level of interaction between public and work that introduces the audience as a critical factor for activating the installation. Through physical as well as intellectual immersion, the epitaphic installation functions as a set of focal points like Nora’s *lieux de mémoire*. These were sites of memory that gave the viewer access to an experience that Nora mourned the loss of: *milieux de mémoire*, “environments of memory”.²⁰ A site for pilgrimage and tourism, grief and curiosity, the

²⁰ Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: *Les lieux de mémoire*,” *Representations* 26, (Spring 1986), 7. Pierre Nora’s discussion of the *lieux de mémoire* in this article continues with the statement: “No doubt, none of the great historians, since Froissart, had the sense that he

epitaphic space is familiar and forbidding, personal and public. Commemorative installations define a space in which that rupture of death can be experienced individually and collectively.

If it is accepted that formal epitaph conventions pertaining to length, aesthetic, and content are ultimately conventional, I propose that the epitaph ought not to be initially considered in terms of its physical manifestation, but rather in terms of what purposes it must be capable of serving and what impetus has made it indispensable to (modern) funerary tradition. Commemorative art on display gives an idea of what else an epitaph could look like. Questioning the necessity of the epitaph's typical features opens new possibilities for the material expression of commemoration and thus for the epitaph's renewed dynamism in contemporary society. It is the aim of this chapter to provide a re-characterization of the epitaph in its totality with the conclusion that memorial sites -especially those whose construction is more ephemeral- ought to be seen as works of installation art.

Thus, these memorials can be considered as part of the same tradition as the medieval funerary architecture that, I argue in the following chapters, displays many of the same aesthetic qualities now associated with installation and performance art. Both the medieval funerary monument and the ephemeral epitaphic installations construct spaces in which constitutive parts coalesce to create a "constitutive role of the viewer for the ontology of the work of art in

was representing only a particular memory." The polyphony of History is not, according to Nora, the equal representation of individual memories but rather the incorporation of these memories into a single representational narrative. Regarding commemorative monuments, their function as sites of memory and thus instruments of disruption to the historical current is associated with the elite of history. There is, however, no reason that the same power of disruption cannot be wielded by those individuals and communities "haunted", as Nora puts it, "by the need to recover their buried pasts" (Nora, "...Memory and History" 15).

general”.²¹ Unlike a static work, whose display context affects how art is interpreted but does not affect the work fundamentally.

Commemorative installation art incorporates the audience, artist, and subject as active participants in the creation of epitaphic space capable of acting as both content and frame relies on the concept of the *parergon* (“by-work”) or frame, which has been used to describe the “spatial expansion” of art installations that incorporates.²² As with any art form, both formal and interpretative aspects must be considered in the process of translating epitaphic expression into the conceptual arena of installation art. As such, the category of installation must also be further defined, vague as it is. For the purposes of this chapter, I follow the guidelines set out by Anne Ring Petersen, who describes installation as breaking with tradition “in that it strives to combine space and time into a unified representation”.²³ For Petersen, as for Calle and Burstein, the installation is a process in which the successively read parts of the work “stretch the work in time, whereby its character becomes that of situation and process” for both audience and artist.²⁴ To this I would add that it is an intentional work that, as Rebentisch rightly observes, elicits an aesthetic experience that “enables exchanges between the work’s spaces, the audience and the surroundings.”²⁵ In such a relationship, there exists a mutual dialogue between the viewer and the object upon entering the installation space that is unique to installation art in that the viewer surpasses the role of passive spectator and takes on the role of actor within the

²¹ Rebentisch, *Aesthetics of Installation Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012), 15.

²² Ring Petersen, *Installation Art: Between Image and Stage* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum Press, 2014), 149; Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 225.

²³ Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 225.

²⁴ Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 41.

²⁵ Rebentisch, *Aesthetics*, 189.

installation boundaries as in a lucid dream. While this may seem at odds with a contemporary experience of epitaphs, that is only because the modern epitaph has shifted from being an active interpellator to a passive object of contemplation.

Rather than a static monument whose meaning time obscures, I argue that contemporary commemoration in the form of temporary epitaphic installation art iterates the processes of grief and memory productively in functional terms that by definition challenge formal and symbolic convention. As a simultaneously private and public creation, the epitaphic installation must disrupt its landscape with language or symbolism to create a dialogic environment around it in which narrative and remembrance can openly occur. The term ‘rupture’ has been used anthropologically to describe “life crises” like death;²⁶ historiographically as a sign that “different ways of negotiating the past, or modes of thinking about it, can coexist, not just in societies but indeed in individuals”;²⁷ and art historically in terms of the multisensory engagement of installation works as opposed to sculpture or painting.²⁸ ‘Rupture’ in this study

²⁶ This is VanGennep’s “notion of ‘life crises’, as moments in which ruptures to the social fabric threaten community bonds.” Islam, Gazi, “Rituals in Organizations: Ruptures, Repetition, and the Institutional Event” (2015), 6.

²⁷ Brecht Deseure and Judith Pollmann, “The Experience of Rupture and the History of Memory,” in *Memory before Modernity: Practices of Memory in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Erika Kuijpers, Judith Pollmann, Johannes Müller, Jasper van der Steen (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 329.

²⁸ Defined generally as an event of unpredictability and instability, I employ ‘rupture’ in the context of epitaphic installations in a more specific way informed by Mary Ann Doane’s notion of “the contingent” -the ephemeral element of chance- and Rosalind Krauss’ idea of “the shifter”, or “a word that gains its particular meaning by its circumstance”, (McTighe, *Framed Spaces*, 36).

refers to that physical and psychic conspicuousness that renders installation art perceivable as separate, though not independent, from its contextualizing place of installation.²⁹

Installations are broadly definable as artworks that create environments through site-specificity, theatricality, and intermediality which the public experiences, and epitaphic installations use language associated with the dead to individualize and claim the memory of that experience. I take Juliane Rebentisch's definitions of these characteristics according to which "site-specificity" refers to how installations are "context-sensitive with regard not only to the interior or exterior space in which they are exhibited but also to the social frameworks that influence the reception of art in general".³⁰ "Theatricality" refers more to the performative element of the artwork, that is to say how the art or artist acknowledges the public, while "intermediality" denotes the multimedia element of installation that can manifest as physical or methodological hybridization and therefore includes the merging of genres alongside the use of photography, film, etc. These three installation traits manifest in infinite ways within the work to reflect the historical, cultural, and personal norms surrounding the art's creation.

In witnessing the creation of commemorative networks in 2020, it was the inclusion of a person's name that particularized these installations and turned them into what I refer to as

²⁹ Krasova describes how in the field of semantics, Emile Benveniste argued that the conveyed meaning of words, and by extension images, is "defined by their relation to the event of speech" or perception, that renders these arbitrary forms the "instruments through which we conceive ourselves, through which the subject articulates" itself. Eva Krásová, "Words that refer to their utterance: Jakobson and Benveniste on shifters," in *Roman O. Jakobson: A Work in Progress*, ed. Tomáš Kubíček and Andrew Lass (Olomouc: Univerzita Palackého, 2014), 8. See also, McTighe *Framed Spaces*, 25.

³⁰ Rebentisch, *Aesthetics*, 16. "Intermediality" is where Rebentisch distinguishes her lexicon from previous theorists. In terms of the relationship between work and site, installation is inherently linked to the world it appears in and "always addresses its own social dimension" (Rebentisch, *Aesthetics*, 221).

epitaphic installations. The primary difference between the term ‘epitaphic installation’ and a conventional commemorative monument is that the former implies that the artwork exists with the context of its installation and not as separate from it. Flexibility of form, both materially and narratively, is important for an epitaphic installation to survive natural and intentional changes to its display environment and to engage with shifting audiences over time. This epitaphic space can be engineered, organic, or both. It must, however, provide a recognizable physical site “meant to bind the living and the dead, and ‘preserve a material presence in the face of an embodied absence.’”³¹ Each site denotes an initial rupturing act of installation in an existing place that calls attention to itself and initiates reaction and interaction from the public.

Like the classic epitaph that opens a line of communication by directly addressing passersby, the installation is an event, an intentional act of interruption done to elicit comment. This call for the public to participate in the deixis signals a transition from witness to activated participant who in turn reactivates the installation through their response, establishing dialogue. However, there is no reason the installation site should remain the same and epitaphic installations introduce another level of mobility due to the ease of replicating text. On one hand, the installation does constitute a specific site that maintains noticeable boundaries with intelligible markers signaling a distinct semantic space, while on the other hand this constructed space perpetuates itself by being nebulous and ephemeral in both form and meaning. The simultaneity of temporal existences that an installation can support is vital to bringing together

³¹ Erika Lee Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorial: Towards a Theory of Temporary Memorials* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2008), 16.

past, present, and future in commemoration and to initiating the dialogue between activated participant and artwork that is the work's ultimate goal.

Yet, this is a necessarily temporary place whose components can survive a certain amount of rearranging and interference without losing their commemorative effect and which can be reinstalled effectively in different sites that bring different meanings to light. Again, paralleling the empty tomb or blank slate that signifies death but shifts indications depending on the subject and context of the epitaph's (pro)claimant, an installation is crucially a transitory space through which visitors pass but cannot stay, just as the cemetery visitor is ontologically excluded from belonging to it. The epitaphic space can only represent people, and thus constitutes a reality distinct from the visitor's in which one is able to move freely around the space and eventually decide how long to stay and when to leave. It is little wonder that the often deteriorated state of cemeteries and tombstones leave their public with as much a sense of disappointment as of curiosity.

A worn away name or inscription is intriguing but ultimately falls short of imparting real insight into the person as they conceived of themselves. The random piecing together of an image of the dead is not the action that such structures were meant to trigger. Quite to the contrary, the intended material permanence of an epitaph carved in stone was meant to function as an ever-present evocation of the dead as an active, unified whole in contrast to the physical deterioration of their body. The employment of the 'Viator' intercession on Roman epitaphs lining the main road out of town, for instance, interrupted potential interlocutors in their daily lives with their direct address. An interjection does little good if the addressee does not immediately perceive the identity and importance of the commemorated individual. The

persistent model of the epitaph as a brief piece of writing enshrines the priorities of immediacy and accessibility to the epitaph's message.

The use of biographical information and superlative descriptions in epitaphs further underscores the importance of instantaneous intelligibility by the reader. The loss of this immediacy due to physical deterioration of the funerary monument suggests that it is perhaps not physical permanence that should be sought, but rather renewable perpetuity of memory. With 'perpetuity' I refer both to the construction of long-lasting objects and to a way of introducing a forward-looking continuity in the life of epitaph structures. The impulse to memorialize is not limited to individual or modern experiences of loss. What I will refer to as 'epitaphic space' continues to develop in contemporary, even urban landscapes where temporary memorials proliferate. In the absence or protest of more 'official' memorials, epitaphic installations have the potential to reclaim memory by restoring the epitaph's ability to attract its own audience and provide a meaningful experience for any reader.

Like the installation, although perhaps not as evidently, the epitaph's communicative ability depends upon its constituent parts to produce a comprehensible and memorable message to its audience. This means that epitaphs do not simply perpetuate existing memory, but actually create it in a way that is potentially meaningful to everyone, like the artwork. No two people will experience the epitaph alike and so the proffered memory must adapt and appeal to the individual viewer's sense of memorability. The installation accomplishes memorability by creating a composite site, rather than a monolithic monument, which uses multi-sensory and multi-perspectival elements to captivate its viewers.]

Epitaphic work

In an attempt to revive the performative epitaphs, I turn the question of how the epitaph accomplishes its memorializing task. It seems that while tombs and epitaphs are generally talked of in terms of the permanence they bestow upon the memory of a person, it is a tradition whose conventional practice is, with the benefit of historic hindsight, counterproductive to its intent. The “permanence” of stone is borne out by the soaring cathedrals and medieval fortresses that still survive after centuries, but it is in actuality often only the general form/shape of these constructions that remain visible. These vestiges are a trace of their original majesty and require huge efforts of conservation to maintain. The trope of the abandoned cemetery is ubiquitous and Robert Levesque’s citation from *La fortune des Rougon* —« l’aire est comme une place qui ne conduit nulle part et que les promeneurs seuls traversent » - captures perfectly how the graveyard has become a place that sits detached from the world around it, useful more as a park than as a place of remembrance. If the ravages of time and the elements are so visible on even these massive structures, how much more affecting might these forces be on something as delicate and intricate as a tombstone?

The fragility of even marble when exposed to weather and theft with minimal attempts to combat degradation ought not to be ignored. Indeed, no matter how grand a funerary monument may have been, the crumbling stones and faded, lichen-covered words now present the problem of what to do with the tombstones that already exist, and of whether traditional stone markers are really worth preserving. These « patrimoines funéraires » are in a state of emergency since, as one Canadian conservationist put it, « le rôle d’une stèle étant de marquer l’emplacement d’une dépouille » means that the erosion of that marker equals the loss of

cultural and historical knowledge.³² I do not mean to suggest a wholesale abandonment of funerary sculpture/architecture, but rather to encourage a detachment from the notion that an individual is best commemorated by a single static object, no matter how intricate. It is impossible to reduce the singularity of a human life and the inscribed epitaph's obsolescence lies with the established execution of material commemoration and not its concept. Here is where practices of theatricality, intermediality, and site-specificity allow for new experiences and interpretations of death and grief.

While all installations can do epitaphic work, there are certainly those installations which specifically take on an epitaphic purpose. In this chapter I will turn to two such installations. The first work is by French conceptual artist Sophie Calle. *Rachel, Monique (RM)* was created in response to her mother's impending and eventual death. First exhibited in its entirety at the Palais de Tokyo in Paris (2007), *Rachel, Monique* is both a departure from and natural progression of Calle's existing oeuvre. The 67-year-old artist first established herself in the conceptual art world with her 1979 project *Les dormeurs*, in which a series of recruited strangers slept in Calle's bed for eight-hour shifts with Calle acting as a participant-observer sitting in the room and collecting minimal/basic data (name, relation to artist, itinerary, meals eaten, etc.) from each sleeper. The juxtaposition of private and public and the transgression of their supposed boundaries seen in this early work remain characteristic of Calle's art.

There is an observable shift, however, in how Calle is herself represented in these works that seems to begin with *Douleur Exquise* (2003), a simultaneous travelogue of a train trip from

³² France Rémillard, *Cimetières en sursis*. *Continuité* 107, 11-13.

Paris to Japan and re-telling of the painful breakup that Calle experienced while traveling. It is with this work that Calle fully inverts her lens to capture and then represent her own internal experiences. In the ensuing artbook this inversion is marked by a material shift about halfway through, when the letters Calle has been writing to the man (« *Mon amour* ») she is traveling to meet suddenly stop. In 2007, Calle represented France at the Venice Biennale with her short documentary film, *Pas pu saisir la mort*. The movie was edited from a longer bedside recording and showed the final living minutes and peaceful death of Monique Sindler, Calle's mother. This film became the basis for the conglomerate exhibit in 2010 of *Rachel, Monique* that included both *PPSLM* and a related series *Voyage au pôle nord* (2009). This installation was repeated within the walls of churches in Avignon (2012) and New York (2014), and at the Castello di Rivoli (2014-15) as part of the installation *MADRE*. An artist's book was also published in conjunction with the project in 2012 and features a cloth cover with embroidered title. The English edition reads, *She was called successively Rachel, Monique, Szyndler, Calle, Pagliero, Gonthier, Sindler. My mother did not appear in my work, and that annoyed her.*³³

According to photographic and written records of the installations in Paris, Avignon, and New York, the recurring elements of the exhibit were the looping 11-minute video of Calle's mother dying, the word 'souci' (her mother's last word), photographs of the artist's mother from childhood through adulthood, excerpts from her mother's personal journals, and large-scale photographic representations of Sindler's tombstone and coffin. Both French exhibits also

³³ Sophie Calle, *Rachel, Monique... She was called successively Rachel, Monique, Szyndler, Calle, Pagliero, Gonthier, Sindler. My mother did not appear in my work, and that annoyed her* (Paris: Editions Xavier Barral, 2017). To distinguish the book from the installation, I will refer to the former as *Rachel, Monique...* and the latter as *RM*.

included a wall-mounted taxidermy giraffe head named Monique. In the exhibit publication, all of these components are replicated photographically, including the journal entries, and are interspersed with pages of white embossed text that narrate the collection in the artist's voice. Calle's epitaphic cabinet of curiosities is dedicated specifically to her late mother. *Rachel, Monique* is contrasted by the second work to be discussed in this chapter, Joyce Burstein's *the epitaph project*.

While similar in some respects to Calle's work –both have multiple iterations and prioritize writing as a physical component of the art– Burstein's focus is not on the many ways one might represent an individual, but on the representation of many people via a single medium. In doing so, Burstein contends with the difficulties of limited representative media and the ensuing creativity of form that makes the epitaph such a varied genre. Joyce Burstein is an American installation artist and educator whose works “explore permanence and the ephemeral”, attempting “to contravene associations of the monument with death and history by presenting works that interact with life and the present.”³⁴ About *the epitaph project*, Burstein writes,

The epitaph project exists as a traditional tombstone carved from slate, finished as a chalkboard and accompanied by a bronze chalk box sited in the cemetery as well as other permanent and intermittent locations. Passersby are invited to write an epitaph in chalk on the tombstones which are photographed to illustrate projections of meaning upon self and death as well as introducing people to a public parkland that is virtually unused. There's something clarifying about composing or even thinking about one's own epitaph. There can be a sense of self discovery to it as well as both humor and high seriousness. In this way all spectators are also

³⁴ Jose Villareal, ed., “the epitaph project: 1995 -”, *ArtDaily*, n.d., (<https://artdaily.cc/news/16714/-The-epitaph-project--1995--->).

performers and the project, while attempting to engage taboos on death, is ultimately about life. Finally it is an open possibility lying in wait for whoever might pass.³⁵

the epitaph project originally appeared in 1995 at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Los Angeles, California. The whole assembly sits on a burial plot leased and maintained by the artist, who then installed the tombstone and tin of chalk, photographing the different messages left by visitors.

This experiment was reiterated at Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio (2001) and in the Socrates Sculpture Park in New York (2002). The work was exhibited at the American Folk Art Museum in New York, as “a portable tombstone/chalkboard used to collect epitaphs at lectures and exhibitions” in 2016.³⁶ This was part of the ongoing exhibition, *Securing the Shadow: Posthumous Portraiture in America*.³⁷ It also exists in online image archives, and as the published artist’s book cited at length above. Two videos are available online in which the artist narrates a walk through the Hollywood cemetery and a man tells the folktale of Hodja Nasruddin over a time-lapse video of writing on and erasing the slate installation. In each instance, visitors were invited to write on the blank tombstone and photographs of the various messages were collected by the artist.

³⁵ Joyce Burstein, *the epitaph project* (Ben Maltz Gallery at Otis College of Art and Design: Autonomedia, 2006).

³⁶ Joyce Burstein, *the epitaph project*, 2017, erasable slate tombstone, American Folk Art Museum, <https://folkartmuseum.org/exhibitions/the-epitaph-project/>.

³⁷ Stacy C. Hollander, *Securing the Shadow: Posthumous Portraiture in America*. New York: American Folk Art Museum, 2017. Published in conjunction with an exhibition of the same title, organized and presented at the American Folk Art Museum, Oct. 6, 2016–Feb. 26, 2017.

What makes Burstein's installation important is not only that the dynamic interaction between the artist and the public is responsible for eliciting the ultimate dialogue, but that so much of the installation's actual content is determined by people other than Burstein. Traditionally, the epitaphic dialogue is between the static voice of the epitaph and the varying voices of its readers. In this case, the focus is not on the reaction of visitors to an existing inscription, but rather on the way different audiences respond when prompted to create a new, unique composition given the same two materials. Hundreds of distinct messages are conveyed on the same slate slab with the same white chalk. As opposed to Calle's disparate tokens evoking the same person, Burstein's many contributors manage to create distinctive expressions out of uniform elements. Burstein seizes on another common practice in installation art by taking black and white photographs of every epitaph. In doing so she enacts the process by which originally ephemeral objects, "as they are photographed and collected... enter into new taxonomic registers".³⁸ This transformation, from being the real object to being represented by another object, evokes the process of creating memories and indeed aids it by disseminating the concept of the original object far beyond its physical capacity.

While in her own installation Calle plays on the individual-communal duality of memorabilia to produce a publicly displayed curation of a highly personal series of experiences, Joyce Burstein's *the epitaph project* merges the individual experience of death with the communal practice of memorializing. Calle particularly relies on the effects of repetition, reinvention, and resurrection to imbue the exhibition's sentimental but inert objects with her

³⁸ Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials*, 8.

mother's epitaphic voice and presence. Through literal re-embodiment, echoing of speech, and a continued dialog between rememberer and remembered, Calle collaborates with her mother across existential planes to construct a commemorative space that does not simply speak for the dead, but actually allows the dead to speak for and represent herself. In a similar vein, Burstein's pared down installation attempts a similar authenticity in its sharing of memory as Calle does, but also confronts the dominance in Western commemoration of traditional symbols such as the tombstone. Burstein distills the highly customized forms of *RM's* memory work into three basic elements: a writing implement (chalk), a surface (slate) and a means of editing (eraser). Beyond an example of how we might engage with memory in a more dynamic way, Burstein provides a prototype for how that engagement can be introduced into current commemorative culture. These carefully chosen materials make those acts of presencing done, in Calle's case, by the artist, accessible to the public. This chapter turns first to Sophie Calle's installation, focusing primarily but not exclusively on the first two exhibitions of *Rachel, Monique*.

Chapter 2: *Rachel, Monique* – Sophie Calle

Premiering at the Palais de Tokyo (Paris) in 2010, Sophie Calle's installation is technically about her mother, Monique Sindler, inspired not only by her life and death, but also by the over 70 hours of deathbed footage Calle captured during Sindler's final days. A multimedia exhibit about the artist's deceased mother that combines video, collage, text, and constructed objects creates what amounts to a mausoleum in the museum's basement.³⁹ Aside from the inherent ephemerality of a temporary installation, a sustained emphasis on the moment of passing from living to dead-the gerundive act of dying- gives the entire work a feeling of precariousness. The difference here is that rather than watch events unfold in their present, the public is immersed in Sindler's personal past, witnessing her death on a resurrecting loop before encountering Calle's presence as both grieving daughter and artist and Sindler's spectral presence in every detail of the installation.

The presumably singular subject is shown through the installation to be anything but unified. From the outset the work's title, *Rachel, Monique*, disrupts any notion of singularity regarding Calle's mother, who cannot even be referred to by a single first name.⁴⁰ The opening text of the installation, « Elle s'appelle successivement Rachel, Monique, Szyndler, Calle, Pagliero,

¹ Elisa Fedeli, "Rachel, Monique" *Parisart*, 9 November, 2010, <https://www.paris-art.com/rachel-monique-2/>

² On the use of names as titles cf. séance 5 in Jacques Derrida, *Séminaire la bête et le souverain*, vol. II, eds. Michel Lisse, Marie-Louise Mallet, and Ginette Michaud, (University of Chicago Press, 2011): « car tout titre et un nom propre et quand le titre prend la forme du nom propre, il est deux fois un nom propre », which can reference multiple things/people who « sont tous morts vivants, régulièrement enterrés et avalés tout vifs. Mais... comme on ne peut pas être à la fois mort et vivant, le mourir vivant ne peut être qu'une virtualité fantasmatique, une fiction... [qui] ne diminue en rien la toute-puissance effective de ce qui ainsi se présente au fantasme » (Derrida, *Séminaire*, 192).

Gonthier, Sindler. *Ma mère aimait qu'on parle d'elle* », which also serves as the full title for the French edition of the accompanying artist's book, further complicates the desire of those who remember for coherence of identity and therefore of commemorated narrative.⁴¹ Not only does the artist's text add more names, the reflexivity and perpetual present-ness of the French « *Elle s'appelle* » implies that even the subject considered and continues to consider all of these names to be equally representative of her in some respect. The simultaneity of present and past tense in this phrase resembles that of the epitaphic language "Here lies", which at once announces the state of being dead and attributes sustained being to the inanimate body.⁴²

Undoubtedly, *RM* is as much for and about Calle as her mother, yet another similarity to the epitaph, which is about the dead but for the living. This tension between being, not being, being cohesive, being heterogeneous, or multiple—all of which, I argue, are active states—defines the entire work not only in terms of its subject, but also of its creator. Calle's installation manifests between the personal experience of grief and the aesthetic curation of a life lived, in which she creates a transitory space where the living must encounter the dead on equal footing, as co-authors of memory. The ensuing mnemonic process becomes formalized in the way *RM* invites viewers to literally immerse themselves in the cognitive process of mourning as experienced by the artist.

At the Palais de Tokyo [FIG. 1.3 & 1.4], the parallel of descending into the subterranean level of the museum to the act of burial is unmistakable, and the sparse layout of the installation

³ Sophie Calle. *Rachel, Monique... Elle s'appelle successivement Rachel, Monique, Szyndler, Calle, Pagliero, Gonthier, Sindler. Ma mère aimait qu'on parle d'elle* (Paris: Editions Xavier Barral, 2017).

⁴ Cf. Helen Swift, *Representing the Dead: Epitaph Fictions in Late-Medieval France* (Rochester: D. S. Brewer, 2016).

brings a sense of both abandonment and noncompletion, as if stumbling upon either the very beginning or the very end of an event in progress, an impression that is reinforced by the in-progress remodeling of the future gallery space. At the Eglise des Céléstins in Avignon [FIG. 1.5-1.7] *Rachel, Monique* makes its home in the undisturbed rubble of the medieval structure. In this case, the paucity of interior finishes is juxtaposed with increasingly elaborate elements of the installation, such as the full-size wax effigy of Sindler that was introduced in this version of the installation.⁴³ The French iterations of *RM* are very much contrasted by both the Italian and American versions. At the Castello di Rivoli in Turin, the assembled parts are increasingly ornate and displayed in well-appointed rooms with gilt furnishings and elegant murals.

Instead of concrete and stone, at the Church of the Heavenly Rest in Manhattan the custom embroidered lace curtains repeated from the Turin exhibition combine with golden fleur-de-lis wallpaper and the word *souci* spelled out using real butterflies [FIG. 1.8-1.10] to create a space that is “decorous to a fault” in the words of one critic.⁴⁴ While the installation continued to be exhibited in parts or in conjunction with Calle’s other work, images of these first four re-installations were collated into the artist’s book *Rachel, Monique...* in 2017. Both book and exhibit clearly illustrate the complexity of tangibly expressing authentic and sincere commemoration to a wide audience. Just as Calle represents her mother by displaying the often-dissonant versions, the artist’s book represents the life of the installation by juxtaposing sometimes significantly

⁵ The effigy was produced by collaborating artist Serena Carone.

⁶ One assumes the word ‘decorous’ was used here in reference to the overwrought stylization of the installation rather than its propriety, which is highly contested by the very same critic: Ken Johnson, “As Maman La Dying, Her Spirit Became Art”, *The New York Times*, May 15, 2014, <https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/16/arts/design/in-rachel-monique-sophie-calle-eulogizes-her-mother.html>.

different versions of it that all contribute to the narrative of Calle's unique yet universal experience of mourning.

For the spectator of such a work, witnessing a stranger's publicized grief can elicit discomfort for various reasons including helplessness or guilt at objectifying and consuming another's suffering. Although her mother had previously participated in her daughter's work, she only became the central subject once she was gone, hearkening back to a strong theme of absence in Calle's *œuvre*. In an interview for the Avignon show, Calle admits, « J'ai donc attendu qu'elle devienne effectivement absente », but she goes on to specify that « Je ne travaille pas sur le souvenir de l'absence, mais sur son immédiateté ».⁴⁵ So while Calle does make a point of underlining her mother's complicity in all parts of the admittedly revealing installation, she also characteristically accentuates the public's unease through certain components of the installation.

For example, the use of repeated textual and visual motifs – *souci*, “mother”, tombstones, even the repetition of previous installations within each other- across different media ensures a memorable experience that is centered around the act of encounter with the source of anxiety, not avoidance. Calle also read her mother's diaries covering twenty years aloud over the course of the Avignon installation, « pour la première fois et sans doute la dernière fois », in a public act of encounter. This live reading was replaced by a recording of actor Kim Catrall reading excerpts for the New York installation, which also includes framed diary pages for visitors to read. Calle's relationship with text is as much material as it is sentimental, and text often acts as a mediating

⁷ Sophie Calle, *Rachel, Monique*, ed., Jean-François Perrier. Avignon: Eglise des célestins, 2012. Exhibit brochure.

body between present and absent. « Dans mon travail, le texte est primordial », Calle tells us, « c'est un plaisir sensuel ».⁴⁶

So it is that, structurally, the exhibit mimics the hauntedness of loss in which involuntary remembering and forgetting unpredictably punctuates the highly edited mnemonic narrative we construct to cope with loss. Calle acknowledges this struggle to control what one remembers by juxtaposing artifacts from the various facets of her mother's life as equally legitimate ways of remembering Sindler. Calle's viewer is overwhelmed with choices yet unable to construct a unified concept of Monique. The more she is represented, the more potent Sindler's actual absence and the impossibility of personally encountering Sindler become. Thus, the spectator might experience, in a small way, the empty space left by a dead mother. The other side of Calle's (and Sindler's) thematic repetition is that the installation form carries an inherent polyphony and ambiguity that leaves it open to *re*-definition by individual viewers.

In a sense, this multiplicity of voices is a fitting metaphor for memory itself. The presence, disappearance, reappearance, jumbling past and present imitates the ongoing process of forgetting and remembering that necessitates acts of commemoration in the first place.⁴⁷ The enduring custom of temporary memorials, such as those found at the site of car crashes or victims of police violence, testifies to the basic needs met by commemorative practices. And, like

⁸ Sophie Calle, *Rachel, Monique*, ed., Jean-François Perrier. Avignon: Eglise des célestins, 2012. Exhibit brochure.

⁹ Barry Schwartz differentiates between commemoration and history, describing the use of "objects which lift from the historical record those events and persons representing a society's conception of its ideals and depravities". Commemorative writing, buildings, etc. represent a commitment to someone or something "deserving of celebration" as opposed to "being merely remembered." Barry Schwartz, "Rethinking the concept of collective memory," in *Routledge Handbook of Memory* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 9-21.

the art installation, these temporary memorials highlight the important commemorative role of site-specificity and contextualization when erecting memorials.⁴⁸ What the installation offers that site-specific memorials do not is the possibility of adapting in order to avoid the interruption of their commemorative message when they are inevitably disturbed by people or climate. *Rachel, Monique* is a master of such metamorphosis.

Exhibited wholly or in part in six separate instances over a decade (2007-2017), *RM* gives no sign of exhaustion as it continues to adapt to various host spaces. Like an evolving organism, *RM* sheds and grows new appendages, morphing and adapting to new environments while remaining recognizable as the “same” work of art. It is this renewable aspect of temporariness that Calle capitalizes on to create a new posthumous relationship with her mother, as well as Sindler’s constant reinvention that continues in death. Both repetition and reinvention are hard at work throughout the exhibit. These strategies for creating a historical truth, while distinct, interact and shape the exhibit’s narrative(s).

I employ the terms repetition and reinvention as used in the studies of memory and spectrality to show how traces of the absent (generally, dead or presumed dead) can be used as mnemonic tools that, through their material representation of the absent subject, will trigger personal memories in perceptive audiences.⁴⁹ The repeated embodiment of absent (or simply

¹⁰ On roadside shrines in particular, cf. Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials*, 22.

¹¹ The recognition and experience of conspicuous absence as well as the reframing of time is found throughout Calle’s oeuvre, notably her 1991 *Last Seen...* and its 2013 follow up, *What Do You See?*, at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum, <https://www.gardnermuseum.org/experience/contemporary-art/artists/calle-sophie>); Richard Candida Smith, *Art and the Performance of Memory: sounds and gestures of recollection* (Brunswick, New Jersey: Routledge, 2002), 7.

imperceptible) bodies leads to the creation of a memorial network in which the viewer begins to merge their individually prompted recollections with the memory of experiencing the installation. Especially given the topics of 'death' and 'mothers' found in the work Calle can count on her audience's own experience to affect their shared memory as installation participants. Personal memory, as a fluid and malleable archive, can be the conduit for the creation of communal memory that exceeds the limits of any single rememberer and allows a commemorative act to be experienced by a potentially endless public. The themes of reinvention and repetition are perhaps inevitably joined by the notoriously ill-fated one of resurrection.

Rather than become mired in horror, however, Calle's interpretation of resurrection is instead an act of transition in which Calle must gather together the material traces of her mother and re-present her in order to determine the new shape of their relationship. Far from "getting over" her loss, Calle makes room for « la convalescence, la consolation après les blessures liées à la rupture, la disparition » by creating a space in which the living pass through but the dead never entirely leave.⁵⁰ This attempt at "learning to 'live *with* ghosts'" rather than in spite or in denial of them borrows Merleau-Ponty's concept of what is now called installation art, as a "gesture" that "spontaneously takes account of the other person and goes beyond itself in its singular aspects toward a universal meaning."⁵¹ In Calle's case, universalizing her grief via the exhibited commemoration of her mother reestablishes Sindler as a tangible, interactive presence in every

¹² Redaction, "Sophie Calle: « Rachel, Monique », *Le bruit du off*, March 30, 2011, <https://lebruitduoff.com/2011/03/30/sophie-calle-rachel-monique/>.

¹³ Maria del Pilar Blanco and Esther Peeren, eds., *The Spectralities Reader* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013), 14; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, "Man and Adversity" in *The Merleau-Ponty Reader*, eds., Ted Toadvine and Leonard Lawlor (Evanston, Ill: Northwestern Univ. Press, 2007), 203.

place the installation is shown. By exhibiting these interactions, Calle forces herself to confront her grief almost exhaustively, and by exposing this process to the viewer the artist provides her own mourning as a template for the viewer's own experiences of loss.

Calle crucially manages to avoid the haunting effect that such an installation could easily develop. She has often referred to the influence her mother had –both before and after her death– on the installation, having always expressed the desire to be the focus of her daughter's work.⁵² Sindler's active role in self-documenting her life means that the installation's material representations become portals of communication between Sindler and the viewer. Additionally, while examples abound of preservation within the installation, these uncanny bodies function not as expressions of denial, but as re-embodiments of that spectral body that is only perceptible to us with the support of a physical form. Two examples of this are the taxidermy giraffe head Calle purchased and named Monique, which specifically re-embodies Sindler's gaze, and the butterflies pinned to spell out 'souci' in some iterations of the installation.

Lastly, *RM* does not limit itself to displaying content created in the past. It is instead a space of ongoing interaction with the dead and among the living audience who move through the space concurrently. Calle's purpose of maintaining her relationship with her mother is evident in

¹⁴ del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, eds., *The Spectralities Reader*, 17; Jennifer Krasinski, "Sophie Calle's *Rachel, Monique*", *BOMB*, *Spring 2017*, <https://bombmagazine.org/articles/sophie-calles-rachel-monique/>; "Calle's mother gave her a box of her photographs and diaries, which Calle has edited to conjure a phantom who was once near, if not always dear. We learn of her mother's many husbands, lovers, and one-night stands. » (Krasinski, « *Rachel, Monique* », 2017); « Sophie Calle a disséminé dans les moindres recoins de l'espace des vidéos, des photos, des objets et des textes, dont les dates de réalisation s'échelonnent entre 1990 et 2010. Ils se relient les uns aux autres comme un puzzle, telles les bribes d'un récit fragmentaire. Plus qu'un dernier hommage, il s'agit d'une narration où la fille tente de surmonter la nouvelle de la maladie, puis la mort et l'absence de la mère. » ("*Rachel, Monique*", ParisArt, October 20, 2010, <https://www.paris-art.com/rachel-monique/>).

the use of quoted language and home video footage that enact her mother in the real time of the exhibition.⁵³ Traces of Sindler as she was in life make up the majority of the installation's archival content, and as these traces accumulate, conjuring Sindler's *fantôme* at her own memorial, it becomes clear that although her daughter may have curated this space, it is Monique who continues to codirect and be embodied by it. Described by F. R. Ankersmit as a space "in which disparate places and times intersect via the objects and materials they contain", the "heterotopia" of Calle's installation goes a step beyond enacting the transitoriness of life by approaching transcendence of "the 'here and now' with intimations of a previously unthinkable fullness of contact" between the living and their ghosts.⁵⁴ The artwork produced from Sindler's archives can reasonably be construed as being expected or even informally commissioned, given Sindler's stated wish to play a bigger role in Calle's art, once again imbuing Calle's contemporary memorial with long-established traits of elite commemoration.⁵⁵

To facilitate the exploration of the three broader themes of reinvention, repetition, and resurrection within a work as dense with content as *RM*, I will focus my analysis on five specific elements that I consider representative of the work as a whole and particularly insightful about the process of transforming thought or experience into memory as a means of engaging with grief. I have selected the video *Pas pu saisir la mort*; Sindler's final word ('*souci*'); her chosen epitaph (« *Je m'ennuie déjà.* »); a taxidermy giraffe head that Calle named Monique; and

¹⁵ On "enactive knowledge", cf. Warren Linds, Alejandra Medellin, and Kadi Purru, "Resonating testimonies from/in the space of death: performing Buenaventura's *La maestra*, in *Art and the Performance of Memory*, ed., Candida Smith, 5.

¹⁶ McTighe, *Framed Spaces*, 187-88; cf. Frank Ankersmit, *Sublime historical experience* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005).

¹⁶ McTighe, *Framed Spaces*, 188.

documentation of Calle's trip to the North Pole in honor of her mother.⁵⁶ These components of the installation were all present in its first complete showing at the Palais de Tokyo and will be considered primarily, but not exclusively, in this context. Along with the main body of work there exists a paratextual network of art objects that contextualize the installation's content when it is removed from its exhibition site.

An *objet précieux*, the artist's book (2017), presents selected photographed scenes from each version of *RM*, and functions as a primary source in lieu and as a continuation of the physical installations beyond the physical frame.⁵⁷ This book is "an elegy of sorts posthumously coauthored by the artist and her mother" that memorializes the memorialization of Monique Sindler.⁵⁸ The installation's extra-*parergonic* form functions for the artwork much like Genette's *paratexte* does for text, as an official supplement intended « de lui [le texte] assurer un sort conforme au dessein de l'auteur... une sorte d'écluse qui leur permette de rester 'à niveau', ou si l'on préfère, un sas qui aide le lecteur à passer sans trop de difficulté respiratoire d'un monde à l'autre » in the absence of contemporary voices.⁵⁹ It functions more or less as an archive of *RM*'s lives as an installation and should be considered as an art object in its own right.

The volume [FIG 1.11 & 1.12] is bound in white silk cloth with the title embroidered in a bright yellow satin stitch. Unnumbered matte white pages with glossy exhibition photos are

¹⁷ The film itself is titled *Maman*, however it was first shown at the 2007 Venice Biennale as a film installation under the title *Pas pu saisir la mort*. I will use the latter in this paper since it is again seen as a video installation within *RM*.

¹⁸ "Rachel, Monique... Elle s'appelle successivement Rachel, Monique, Szyndler, Calle, Pagliero, Gonthier, Sindler. Ma mère aimait qu'on parle d'elle," Deditre, <https://www.deditre.fr/livres/elle-s-est-appelee-successivement-rachel-monique-szyndler-calle-pagliero-gonthier-sindler-9782915173789.html>

¹⁹ Krasinski, "Sophie Calle's *Rachel, Monique*".

²⁰ Genette, *Seuils*, 374-75.

joined by minimalist transcriptions of journal entries and pages of Calle's narration embossed in all white. Thinner pages are sprinkled throughout the book featuring only a full-page photograph of 'souci' sandblasted onto black paper.⁶⁰ The text transcribes Calle's original permanent marker on concrete seen in the exhibition. Far from redundant, « le supplément est un adjoind, une instance subalterne qui *tient-lieu* » for the impossible voice of the dead.⁶¹ Like the epitaphic monument itself, the artist's book exists where the installation's original body cannot. So, while it will be put to work presently as a primary source in lieu of the full installation, the artist's book could well be interrogated independently as the embodiment of a curated environment, and my final chapter will engage with this phenomenon in the context of medieval manuscripts. One aspect of the installation that is not so easily replicated in the book, although it does exist virtually, is the short film at the core of *RM*, to which I shall now turn.

Pas pu saisir la mort/ Couldn't capture death

*"De crainte que ma mère expire dans mon absence, j'ai installé une caméra au pied de son lit."
(Rachel, Monique...)*

The creation of temporal intersections is central to the theory of installation art, and Sophie Calle's short video installation, *Pas pu saisir la mort*, plays on the cinematic ability to juxtapose "the strange here and now of the viewer's body with the there-and-then of the photographic image."⁶² Calle's audience is watching someone dying in real time, but in the viewers'

²¹ Jørgen Bruhn and Henriette Thune, "In between Life and Death: Sophie Calle's Rachel, Monique (2014)," in *The Power of the In-Between: Intermediality as a Tool for Aesthetic Analysis and Critical Reflection*, eds., Sara Callahan, Magdalena Haldar, Christer Johansson, and Sonya Petersson (Stockholm: Stockholm Univ. Press, 2018), 34.

²² Jacques Derrida, *De la grammatologie* (Paris : Editions de Minuit, 1967), 208.

²³ McTighe, *Framed Spaces*, 186.

chronological past. Each loop of the film resurrects Calle's mother before making her, and the audience, relive the dying moment. About nine minutes into the recording Calle and a nurse check for signs of life before concluding that Monique has died almost imperceptibly.⁶³ The short film, cut down from over eleven hours of video, was undertaken by Calle out of a declared fear of missing her mother's death.

« [J]'ai posé ma caméra au pied du lit dans lequel elle agonisait, » Calle explains, « parce que je craignais qu'elle n'expire en mon absence. »⁶⁴ To prevent this Calle created a prosthetic body using the camera's mechanical eye and three legs of a tripod, duplicating her own material presence so that she could be at her mother's bedside by proxy [FIG 1.13].⁶⁵ Of note, however, is that Calle did not set up a live video of her mother that could be viewed remotely in real time. Instead, using the video camera means that Calle can only ever catch up on events after they have already happened. Since the recording itself provides only a secondhand experience, Calle still runs the same risk of not being technically present at her mother's death. What she gains by recording on tapes, however, is the ability to edit the film and make decisions about the version displayed publicly.

Calle has also expressed how operating the recording equipment provided "a way of displacing the anguish," and the potential for artifice and thus performativity that a screen death possesses has led many commentators to use the language of voyeurism when describing the

²⁴ « Elle a écouté le Concerto pour clarinette en La majeur, K. 622 de Mozart. Pour la dernière fois. Son dernier souhait : partir avec, en musique. » (Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*)

²⁵ Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*; "Apparently people always choose to die the minute you look away, so I wanted to be there." (Alice Pfeiffer, "All about her mother", *Art in America*, November 5, 2010, <https://www.artnews.com/art-in-america/interviews/sophie-calle-palais-de-tokyo-56160/>).

²⁶ Indeed, one could think of this moment as the originary installation.

experience of watching the film [FIG 1.14].⁶⁶ There is, admittedly, something inherently unsettling about watching someone die before one's eyes—even more so given the knowledge that this is a “real” death, theatrical but not theatre. But a look at the installation's textual component reveals a concerted effort by Calle to contextualize this recurring tragedy within a narrative of collaboration between herself and her mother. She recounts events leading up to filming and in doing so brings the past to bear on the present via an intermedial dialogue across time.

Each medium (photo, film, text) follows its own chronology of the same event (Sindler's death being filmed) while also being integrated into the present of the exhibition. It is the redefinability of a supposedly singular event that subsequently creates an ongoing conversation between audience and artist. Thus, the film is never marginalized as an object of inappropriate voyeurism but is instead an act of « fidélité à la mort » in which the living must take death on and « supporter de regarder la mort en face de façon endurente, durable, en prenant le temps, en se donnant le temps qu'on donne ainsi à la mort. »⁶⁷ The repetition of the film allows the viewer to move beyond the initial affective shock to understand the recording as the creation of the « mourir vivant » that produces the maternal ghost whose form and voice are present

²⁷ For example, curiosity turning into “a less comfortable sensation of nosy prying” (Bruhn and Thune: 2018, 26) or blurring “private and public so thoroughly you feel like a voyeur who can't stop rubbernecking some particularly gruesome splattered roadkill” (Ellen Perlman, “The Mordant Absence of Sophie Calle, *Hyperallergic*, November 6, 2013, <https://hyperallergic.com/91160/the-mordant-absence-of-sophie-calle/>); Calle continues, “instead of counting the minutes she had left to life, I counted the minutes left on the tape.” (Pfeiffer, “All about her mother”)

²⁸ Jacques Derrida, « Sixième séance (12 février 2003) » in *Séminaire la bête et le souverain, vol. II*, 223; “in an enduring, durable way, taking the time, giving oneself the time that one thus gives to death... a fidelity to death” (Derrida, “Sixth session,” in *The Beast and the Sovereign Vol. II*, 153)

throughout the rest of the installation.⁶⁸ Sindler's imperceptible moment of death seems to sidestep the actual act of dying, blurring the boundary between life and death and elegantly obscuring the fact of her death.⁶⁹ This distinction is only further complicated by the looping of the film and its cinematic resurrection of its subject that allows viewers to acclimate to the morbid content.

Within the Tokyo installation, *Pas pu saisir la mort* is housed in a wooden shed open on one side. Inside, the full back wall serves as a projection screen, while the minimal audio is transmitted through two large speakers. By creating this sub-space within the installation, Calle interrupts the viewer's visual access to their own ongoing temporality and forces them to exist inside the created experience-time of the film.⁷⁰ What is more, Calle influences the viewer's perception of time throughout the installation due to the fact that "video works often require that a *loop* is seen from beginning to end in order to totally understand the work's content and

²⁹ « ...cet état où la mort vit assez pour se voir et se savoir mourir, pour vivre sa propre mort, pour durer, perdurer et endurer le temps de sa mort, pour être présent à sa mort et au-delà, sans néanmoins manquer de mourir, pour survivre à sa mort tout et mourant effectivement, pour survivre la mort ». (Derrida, « Sixième séance (12 février 2003) », 217); "that state in which the dead man is alive enough to see himself die and know that he is dying, to live his own death, to last, perdure, and endure the time of his death, to be present at his death and beyond without however failing to die, to survive his death while really dying," Derrida, "Sixth session," 148.

³⁰ "She [Sindler] had asked me to put on a Mozart piece after her last breath. But I didn't see any breath, she had been breathing so softly. So for eleven minutes I was touching her heart and her hand to look for respiration, it took me eleven minutes before I understood to put on the Mozart." (Sophie Calle, "Death Watch", *Harper's Magazine*, (April 2016), [https://harpers.org/archive/2016/04/death-watch/.](https://harpers.org/archive/2016/04/death-watch/))

³¹ In addition to the real time of the world and the narrative-time of the exhibit; the exhibit space on the whole might also be referred to as womblike.

idea” and each viewer enters the film at a different point, so that the audience experiences this nested temporality.⁷¹

Mary Anne Doane’s conclusion that “while still photographs could render a moment into a visual object, film was able to preserve the experience of duration in time itself”⁷² is supported by the way the medium of film is used in *RM* to impose the ‘represented time’ upon the viewer and thus re-contextualize both the viewing experience and the visitor’s memory of that experience.⁷³ As the originary element of the installation, *Pas pu saisir la mort* frames the entire work so that the different media inform and reinforce each other, “connected internally by the plot [that the artist is following],... that *it’s as though there is a ‘text’ behind them which explains and provides for their presence.*”⁷⁴ In *RM*, the loop of living and dying and living again informs every material representation of Monique Sindler. But a representation of something is also contingent upon the medium that materializes it. In this case, the video allows for a reproduction of the dying subject that is present yet untouchable (there and *not* there). This specter interacts with and affects the viewer but is itself *insaisissable*.

However, the idea of Monique is borne away in the viewer’s memory of their experience and goes back into circulation within a larger ‘living’ memory. *Pas pu saisir la mort* inscribes Sindler’s dying moment into the installation story and its *insaisissabilité* inspires “making absence present” through the “materializations of invisibility, translucency, and transparency” of a

³² A play on the concentric narrative spaces within medieval romances that will be further discussed in Parts II and III.

³³ McTighe, *Framed Spaces*, 176.

³⁴ McTighe, *Framed Spaces*, 176.

³⁵ Ilya Kabakov as cited in Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 234.

projected image.⁷⁵ Monique's spectral uncanniness is thus transcended because the death witnessed in the video is only temporary and allows Sindler's presence to remain active in the installation space even after her moment of death. Calle then goes a step beyond just representing her mother by actively co-authoring the commemorative narrative with Sindler before and after her death. *RM* displays an intentionality of the commemorated to self-subjectivize in order to maintain a level of sovereignty over one's body in death.

Sindler, who had worked as an archivist for a current events magazine, seems likely to have appreciated the power of self-documentation.⁷⁶ Sindler is both subject and co-author, since it is her act of self-archiving that informs the entire exhibit. Calle has repeatedly described being given « [s]eize carnets datés 1981, 1984, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996, 1997, 1999, 2000 », and that her mother « a choisi de ne pas les détruire. Ma mère n'était pas dupe de ce qui pourrait arriver si elle me les abandonnait. *Sinon je ne me serais pas permis* [my emphasis]. »⁷⁷ Without the initial impetus from her mother, Calle's work is not a true re-embodiment of Sindler. That desire to perform oneself as the protagonist is necessary for a second-hand commemoration to feel authentic, not exploitative; comforting, not disturbing. The same is true of the public diary readings that expose the dead on their own terms. As we learn from Calle, « Sa [Monique] vie n'apparaît pas dans mon travail. Ça l'agaçait » and when Calle began recording, « elle s'est exclamée : 'Enfin !' »⁷⁸

'Monique', la girafe

³⁶ del Pilar Blanco and Peeren, eds., *The Spectralities Reader*, 10.

³⁷ Krasinski, "Sophie Calle's *Rachel, Monique*".

³⁸ Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*, 2017.

³⁹ Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*, 2017.

Finally, Monique Sindler takes center stage in her daughter's work.⁷⁹ Sindler's likeness and personality are ubiquitous in the installation space, with seemingly no limit to how either might materialize. For example, in one corner of the museum basement is the taxidermy head of a giraffe [FIG 1.15] mounted upon the concrete wall along with a few other objects. Written in blank permanent marker on the stone wall, Calle recounts:

« Quand ma mère est morte, j'ai acheté une girafe naturalisée. Je l'ai installée dans mon atelier et prénommée Monique. Elle me regarde de haut avec ironie et tristesse. »⁸⁰

There is a wooden stand with a sheet of paper at the front reading: « Je suis morte de très bonne humeur ». To the side, on top of one of the wooden shipping crates used to transport the installation, is stationed a small photo of a person's silhouette cast onto the road. Stuck to the photo is a neon sticky note promising that « si je devais un jour disparaître, je te laisse 'mon' ombre qui veillera sur toi ». Both of these messages are handwritten in a script that matches Sindler's photo album captions, but there is no body to definitively attribute these words to other than the truncated body of the giraffe. The physical presence of this giraffe functions not to compound or mock the morbid potential of the exhibition, but instead as what Clifton Bryant has termed "Nostalgia taxidermy", or the use of taxidermy in "managing grief and dealing with emotional loss" –again using another body as a mediating presence between living and dead.⁸¹

Nostalgia taxidermy's aim of accomplishing "a more diffuse and subjective effect or goal" is mirrored by Calle's own anthropomorphizing of the giraffe by naming it after her mother and

⁴⁰ In some ways, it seems like she could only be exhibited posthumously, after the puzzle was completed, since any one section of her life was only a fragment of her existence.

⁴¹ Sophie Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*, 2017.

⁴² Clifton D. Bryant & Donald J. Shoemaker, "Dead Zoo Chic Some Conceptual Notes on Taxidermy in American Social Life", in *Handbook of Death and Dying*, ed. Clifton D. Bryant (Sage Publications, Inc., 2003), 1021.

attributing to it human emotions. In *RM*, the taxidermy is a tool whose combined realism and theatricality signals a space where the intentional intermingling of reality and subjectivity is possible. While Calle does not go so far as to taxidermy her mother, she does play with the possibilities that come with choosing a new body. The giraffe, with its elegant neck and doe eyes, is as faithful a recreation of Sindler as any of the identities she assumed in life. Perhaps even more than an actual image of Monique, the “impression of both viability and the potentiality of reanimation” created by taxidermy, instead of risking imperfect resurrection, transcends spectrality by narrowing the perceptible divide between life and death.⁸²

In a description of the taxidermy that might be found in a turn-of-the-century home, Bryant speaks of “giraffes which seem to step out of walls”, and this architectural rupture engages one of Anthony Vidler’s tenets of “the architectural uncanny”, according to which a building can not only represent bodies but is itself a body.⁸³ To be inside a building is thus to inhabit a body, and the giraffe would seem to invade the home Calle has built for her mother’s posthumous residence.⁸⁴ By naming the animal ‘Monique’, Calle not only integrates the extra body into the domestic bubble, but also co-opts it as yet another manifestation of her mother’s specter.⁸⁵ Familiarity

⁴³ Bryant and Shoemaker, “Dead Zoo Chic”, 1019.

⁴⁴ Bryant and Shoemaker, “Dead Zoo Chic,” 1022; Vidler 70

⁴⁵ On the Palais de Tokyo’s significance as the first exhibition site of *RM*, Calle told interviewer Alice Pfeiffer, “I guess it was the resemblance to a mausoleum. The space feels like entering a crypt. I liked the idea of not knowing where you were exactly, because this space doesn’t have a precise status yet. It looks and used to be abandoned, and this allowed me to keep an element of mystery to the project whilst losing the intimate aspect of it between my mother and I.” This instability enabled an in-between space where Calle was able to artistically objectify her mother while their personal relationship remained separate until the exhibit was opened and Calle resumed her filial role.

⁴⁶ Calle specified this link in one interview, saying: “In my studio there is a stuffed giraffe that I bought when my mother died, to replace her. Her name is Monique too, and she looks at

enhances memorability and this merging of the strange and the familiar—a sort of domestication of the uncanny—helps *RM* establish a space in which the audience can feel at home with the dead enough to overcome culturally-ingrained separation between audience and performance, between living and dead.

The taxidermy giraffe is both exotic and domesticated in a way that parallels Calle's depiction of her mother and, in a more general sense, the concept of death on the whole. Such simultaneity is why "it has always been fashionable, at one socioeconomic level or another, to use zoological specimens (real or imitation) as items of decorative interest and appeal in the home"⁸⁶ that mask death "through the theatrical staging techniques that "bring the animal to life" and allow an encounter with death mediated by a non-human corpse.⁸⁷ Such a high standard for the performance of realistic representation means that contemporary taxidermy "joins a historical/aesthetic trajectory that moves from painting to photography to moving pictures" in a quest for a level of authenticity that fools even other animals in a natural environment.⁸⁸ Rather than the meticulous reconstruction of a savannah, however, Calle has placed 'Monique' into a habitat created for her human namesake.⁸⁹ Bought upon Sindler's death, Monique both symbolically and physically fills the space once occupied by Sindler as one of the many physical instantiations of Sindler's specter. As far as Calle is concerned, the glass eyes that

me from on high with sadness and irony, just like my mother did. So in a way it is the image of my mother that keeps me company," "Questionnaire: Sophie Calle, *FRIEZE*, June 15, 2009, <https://www.frieze.com/article/questionnaire-sophie-calle>.

⁴⁷ Clifton & Shoemaker, "Dead Zoo Chic", 1025.

⁴⁸ Desmond, "Displaying Animals" in *Representing Animals*, ed., Nigel Rothfels (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana Univ. Press, 2002), 160.

⁴⁹ Desmond, "Displaying Animals," 161.

⁵⁰ Even Sindler's gender is projected onto the giraffe who, being only a neck and head, is not obviously identifiable as one or another sex.

watch from on high are her mother's, carrying out Sindler's promise of leaving her shadow as a sentinel over her daughter.

This giraffe is no longer a giraffe, but a temporary body allowing Sindler's shadow to exist in the world. Moreover, Sindler seems to hint at the possibility of such a radical re-embodiment by placing quotation marks around the possessive pronoun « *mon* » in her note, undermining any presumed sovereignty over our shadows and the bodies that cast them. In other words, her original human body "no longer serves to center, to fix, or to stabilize" because:

"...its limits, interior or exterior, seem infinitely ambiguous and extensive; its form, literal or metaphorical, are no longer confined to the recognizably human... its power lies no longer in the model of unity but in the intimation of the fragmentary, the morselated, the broken."⁹⁰

Calle privileges the fragmented body and subject throughout *RM*, but "Monique" exceeds the horror of this disarticulation by suggesting the "ability to encompass and overcome death" via such metamorphic re-embodiments. This comprehension of death, according to Vidler, is necessary for the creation of "homeliness" (*heimlich*), the opposite of uncanniness (*unheimlich*) and an affective state that encourages visitors to settle in rather than hurry through the installation.⁹¹ This is yet another example of how installations provide mediated encounters by mimicking life realistically but in a controlled environment in a sort of emotional rehearsal for 'real' death.

The use of taxidermy as the medium for this transcendence of uncanniness and thus of death is also curious because of taxidermy's history combining violence (against nature) and

⁵¹ Anthony Vidler, *The Architectural Uncanny: Essays in the Modern Unhomely* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1992), 70.

⁵² Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny*, 62; this slowed pace, as with the medieval tombs discussed in Parts II and III, compel visitors to linger despite their proximity to death.

domestication (of nature) into a staged artistic work aimed at “[r]eplication, rather than preservation” of a living animal.⁹² *RM* gains from this synthesis a means of expressing how the loss of our socially constructed human bodies frees our identities from having to manifest in one prescribed form. A human identity with an animal body, for example, is as valid an existence as any. As unembodied memory, the dead exist imperceptibly in our world with the potential to manifest infinitely, taking on different bodily and material forms with which we interact.⁹³

‘*Souci*’

« *Ne vous faites pas de souci.* »

Monique Sindler’s last words to her daughter have the potential to mean a few different things. Taken altogether, this is a mother’s final comforting phrase to her daughter: don’t worry yourself.⁹⁴ A gentle but imperative piece of advice that might equally be self-referential for the woman facing life’s greatest threat. Alone, without the negation and deprived of both subject and action, the last word that lingers is one of anxiety: *souci*, “worry”. Instead of freeing Calle from her duty as caregiver, the effect of this recontextualized word echoing is to reinforce uncertainty for both Calle and her audience. Calle reiterates ‘*Souci*’ on its own throughout the

⁵³ Jane C. Desmond, *Displaying Death and Animating Life: Human-Animal Relations in Art, Science, and Everyday Life* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2016), ProQuest Ebook Central, <http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/uchicago/detail.action?docID=4443103>, 166.

⁵⁴ There is one photograph in the installation/book of a little girl (presumably Sophie) standing in front of a large plush giraffe toy. This, along with the hugely popular French toy ‘Sophie the giraffe’, adds some interesting layers Calle’s animal choice.

⁵⁵ Luis Gusman describes the vocative character of such speech acts that “se realiza acabadamente en la formula de la *consolatio*... en la que les pide a los deudos de que cesen el duelo, ya que la muerte es algo comun a todos los humanos [are eventually realized by the formula of the *consolation*... in which the grieving are implored to cease their grief since death is a universal experience. My translation],” (Luís Gusmán, *Epitafios: El derecho a la Muerte escrita* (Buenos Aires: Grupo Editorial Norma, 2005), 82.

installation and the word has the potential to be a source of haunting and fear as a *memento mori* of sorts that reasserts itself unexpectedly so that the installation audience is kept in a suspended state of worried uncertainty.

Despite these words reportedly being spoken to her daughter, Sophie, Monique's curious use of the pronoun « *vous* » immediately brings up the question of intended audience. Translatable as both the singular formal 'you' and the informal plural 'you all', Sindler could just as well be addressing a future audience, telling them-us- not to worry. The ambiguity of what to worry about includes 'souci' as a harbinger of death or the dreaded revenant, but I argue that Calle overcomes this threat of uncanniness by contextualizing her mother's disembodied voice within the ritual of commemoration as intentionally created peritextual *objets d'art*, that is, crafted representations of language that surround the artwork and that, like the *parergon*, necessarily [*nécessairement*] have "un *emplacement*, que l'on peut situer par rapport à celui du texte lui-même : autour du texte" where the text is the main work.⁹⁵ This concretization of the spectral replaces the feared unknown with intelligible structures whose recurrence unifies the installation environment and anchors its participant.

Furthermore, these recognizable objects are kept from becoming banal repetitions by their structural variation, all of which connote or exhibit motion, implying life. The word 'souci' manifests in diverse and almost whimsical media such as lace, paper, stone, canvas, pinned butterflies, feathers, gilt inscription, neon lights, and printed text. The butterflies, like the giraffe, show the possibility of using non-human bodies to re-presence otherwise intangible traces of the dead. Textile versions, such as lace curtains or altar dressings, mimic the diaphanous floating of a

⁵⁶ Gennette, *Seuils*, 10.

ghost while functioning domestically to partially obscure one's view and draw attention to themselves, initiating encounter. There and not there, these literal fabrications have a structural purpose as interpellative agents in the installation space. [FIG 1.16-1.17]

'*Souci*' metonymically represents the overarching life narrative composed by and for Sindler. As an action only experienced in life, 'souci' echoes Sindler's living voice and therefore symbolizes her life and presence while also reminding audiences of her present absence. One version of 'souci' is made with feather boas hung above the life-like wax *gisant* of Sindler lying in bed.⁹⁶ In this context, the imagery of worry hanging ponderously over one's head is transformed and the placid-looking Sindler seems to only imagine 'souci' now that she is dead. Each new form of 'souci' likewise re-frames the word and creates new meaning for the exhibition audience. Like the absurdist giraffe taxidermy, Calle's effigy of her mother combines a serious act of conservation with fanciful settings that infuse the installation with a shocking dark humor similar to that found in Sindler's own writing and quotes. By rupturing the solemnity of death Calle makes it acceptable to enjoy the art, to laugh in death's face in a reclamation of worry and grief that allows people to live with and even benefit from an often isolating experience.

So, although the word being materialized is itself a fragment of a longer phrase, Calle uses this disambiguation as an opportunity for a "reinscription of the body... as referent and figurative inspiration" such that 'souci' moves from being a haunting refrain to being an active site of meaning-making within the installation.⁹⁷ This ability to particularize and totalize 'souci' also makes the word an ideal mnemonic for the installation as a whole; something that every visitor

⁵⁷ Embracing a more naturalistic effigial representation was also characteristic of 12th and 13th century funeral art.

⁵⁸ Vidler, *Architectural Uncanny*, 69.

can agree was part of the exhibit.⁹⁸ The word is all over the installation such that every visitor is guaranteed to see at least one, but probably multiple, 'soucis'. Calle thus creates a site of communal memory in that while each materialization provides a unique sensory experience of embodying and embodied text, the shared content unites all audience members' individual experiences and creates a shared reference point for the installation as a whole. Calle's publication of her mother's last word illustrates how emotions and memories, "even those we think to be private, connect us with others" and exist in and because of a site-specific context.⁹⁹

The *re*-contextualization of memories is built into *RM*. The semi-finished museum basement and repurposed wooden shipping containers in the Palais des Arts provided an overall context for reconstructive work, but within the installation landscape elements are repeated in varying contexts. 'Souci', the most prominently repeated element in the installation, illustrates the interpretative effects of this recontextualization. While 'souci' is a universal experience within the installation, like grief in the real world, the distinctiveness of each instantiation and the self-determined order of the exhibit conjure distinct associations for each visitor, making the experience and its memory personal as well as communal. This simultaneously private and public memory can be conceptualized using the concept of echoing, as something that cites but also reframes and mediates another's speech act. In particular, the creative repetition of speech in Ovid's "Narcissus and Echo" and the forward-moving repetition theorized in Kierkegaard's *Repetition* provide a critical framework for Calle's literal reframing of quoted speech.

⁵⁹ A comparison could be made to the Proustian madeleine, which it seems Sindler would have appreciated given her party trick of reciting the first page of Proust's *A la recherche du temps perdu*.

⁶⁰ Janet Donohoe, *Remembering Places: A Phenomenological Study of the Relationship Between Memory and Place* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2014), 33.

Describing the Ovidian Echo, Gertz reminds us that “Echo is characterized as one formerly skilled in shaping language”, so much so that “she was punished for her skill, doomed to repeat *the forms* of others’ words, without being able to change a syllable.”¹⁰⁰ This emphasis on form is key because, as Gertz adds, “no form exists without a historical frame” and this creates the possibility of re-framing echoed forms.¹⁰¹ By creating new meaning within imposed limits, Echo is able to sustain conversation through “doubled language” reminiscent of one of Sophie Calle’s artistic influences, the Oulipo movement.¹⁰² As Fulkerson and Stover state in the introduction to their volume, “boundaries are not always bad: generic rules, for instance, compel and *therefore free an author*” [my emphasis].¹⁰³ The creative freedom that imposed rules can have is essential to Calle’s own artistic process, in which serendipity overtakes intent within self-imposed limits. Calle’s interest in the effect of context on artistic subjects comes through in the restatement of ‘*souci*’ throughout the exhibit.¹⁰⁴

This process of creative repetition operates on the interpretation postulated in Kierkegaard’s essay *Repetition*, in which the pseudonymous narrator explains that “that which is repeated has been-otherwise it could not be repeated- but the very fact that it has been makes

⁶¹ SunHee Kim Gertz, “Echoes and Reflections of Enigmatic Beauty in Ovid and Marie de France”, *Speculum* 73, no. 2 (April, 1998), 375.

⁶² Gertz, “Echoes and Reflections of Enigmatic Beauty in Ovid and Marie de France”, 377.

⁶³ Laurel Fulkerson and Tim Stover, eds., *Repeat Performances: Ovidian Repetition and the Metamorphoses* (University of Wisconsin Press, 2016), 3-25.

⁶⁴ Fulkerson and Stover, *Repeat Performances*, 12.

⁶⁵ Susanne Kuchler writes that “Both [Paul] Auster and Calle are concerned with how social space surrounding people frames them. In particular they highlight the dependency of the subject upon the construction of an object, which alternately, turns people into objects and objects into persons,” Sophie Calle, *Sophie Calle: the Reader* (Whitechapel Books, 2009), 92. Pre-determining the frame allows for the content to be spontaneous while still yielding artistic control altogether.

the repetition into something new”.¹⁰⁵ Exact replication is deemed impossible, so true repetition only occurs when something past is reintroduced into a new context and thus becomes a new thing altogether.¹⁰⁶ In terms of ‘*souci*’, every repetition of the word equals realization of a memory that makes it possible to reckon with.¹⁰⁷ Such nodes of encounter fill a need for new places for remembering that allow true repetition and with it a perennially relevant memory of encountering the dead. Because of Calle’s physical construction of these repetitions, these textual sites become real encounters between site, structure, and public that mirror the site-specificity, theatricality, and intermediality of the quoted speech’s original context but leave room for new dialogue and new narrative.

Midway through the artist’s book, in between a retelling of Monique’s last experiences and before recounting her final moments, Calle quotes her mother’s last words before admitting that « [e]lle ne voulait pas mourir. Elle a remarqué que c’était la première fois de sa vie qu’elle n’était pas impatiente. »¹⁰⁸ The ‘*souci*’ that Calle forces her public to reencounter in the installation space is the very same fear that gripped Sindler during her encounter with mortality. These last

⁶⁶ The “dialectic of repetition” (*Repetition*, 149); Ferreira characterizes this model of repetition as involving “continuity and discontinuity; it does not annihilate what has been, but allows the old to be made new, re-newed, repeated as new,” Ferreira, M. Jamie, “*Repetition, Fear and Trembling, and More Discourses*,” in *Kierkegaard* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 2008) ProQuest Ebook Central, accessed 26/4/21, 44.

⁶⁷ Benjamin sees de-contextualization as imperative to the writing of history, “means to *quote* history. But the concept of quotation implies that any given historical object must be ripped out of its context,” Jennifer A. Gonzalez, *Subject to Display: Reframing Race in Contemporary Installation Art* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2011), 19.

⁶⁸ Nyman Eriksen describes the moment when “the poetic reproduction of life replaces recollection” as conditional for “reconciliation with past” when the present no longer accommodates it easily. See Niels Nyman Eriksen, *Kierkegaard’s Category of Repetition* (Berlin, New York: De Gruyter, 2000), 35.

⁶⁹ Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*, 2017.

moments are those presented in the short film *Pas pu saisir la mort*, but the accompanying emotions are imperceptible until Calle embodies them as *soucis* in the present, projecting them onto the installation participant.¹⁰⁹ Calle makes it possible for her audience to laugh and cry with her as a way of preserving memories of Sindler's life besides her death. Like the re-embodiment of her gaze in a taxidermy giraffe, the repetition of 'souci' re-presents Sindler in spite of her bodily absence.

Sindler's voice and gaze are experiences that endure as Calle's memory. Calle manifests these memories to create new experiences that simultaneously transmit and inspire memories and their narratives among *RM*'s audience. Sindler, like Echo, "leaves behind a still active voice while her body is transformed into another form", or forms, that project her voice farther than humanly possible.¹¹⁰ But while Calle's curatorial intervention is necessary, it is striking how much of the content for *RM* was intentionally supplied by Sindler herself. As seen in the following section, her habits of self-documentation in life via diaries, correspondence, and captioning qualify Sindler as co-curator of her posthumous narrative and as a commemorative artist in her own right.

« *Je m'ennuie déjà!* »: an epitaph in an epitaphic space

Up to this point, my analysis of *Rachel, Monique* has emphasized how elements of the installation seemingly created by the artist were also the product of Sindler's own initiative and a notable amount of curatorial collaboration between mother and daughter- artist and subject.

⁷⁰ This offering of 'soucis', which is also the French word for marigolds (*calendula officinalis*), can potentially be interpreted as something akin to placing flowers on a grave, given various cultural associations of marigold and funeral rituals.

⁷¹ Gertz, "Echoes and Reflections", 70.

Monique Sindler's epitaph epitomizes this joint effort while also furthering the installation's work of re-inscribing an active and intentional representation of Sindler into living memory. Monique Sindler's epitaph is something that Sindler created by and for herself that was then incorporated into Calle's installation. Calle's framing makes Sindler's epitaphic voice an active participant in the encompassing work that can both initiate and maintain a unique dialogue with the installation's visitors. The text of the epitaph gives the impression that the deceased is present and participating in an ongoing conversation.¹¹¹ Although Calle cannot truly resurrect her mother, she can recreate through installation the experience of being with her mother and invite the public to interpret her memories, in keeping with Calle's long-standing practice of exposing personal vulnerabilities in her art.¹¹²

Such self-exposure almost seems inherited and the content of Monique Sindler's self-authored epitaph, *Je m'ennuie déjà!* ("I'm already bored!") in particular demands closer inspection as an example of intentional posthumous dialogue.¹¹³ First, this is an epitaph composed by the then-living, now-deceased individual and not by someone who survived them. The first-person voice establishes the physical presence of the dead who speaks here and now through this stone using "epilogue time" to allow "a moment after the end of life in order to sum

⁷² Swift's discussion of Boccaccio's DVCI: "It is such a perspective of death -the sense of the first-person deceased speaking in a death-oriented way about themselves, and of any third-person account having proximity (temporally, spatially, through some stage (re-)enactment) to the deceased's moment of demise" that defines an epitaph as "an inscription of identity, or, indeed, an inscription *as* identity." (Swift, *Representing the Dead*, 156)

⁷³ In *Prenez soin de vous* (2020), for example, Calle asked 107 women (including her mother) to read and analyze a real break-up letter sent to her. She then displayed both the letter and the commentaries in a public installation as part of Paris Gallery Weekend. Sophie Calle, *Prenez soin de vous* (Paris : Perrotin, 2020), <https://leaflet.perrotin.com/view/25/prenez-soin-de-vous>.

⁷⁴ A detail surrounding Sindler's death that is highlighted by Calle (perhaps even at her mother's request).

it up for others” despite composing her opinion before the fact.¹¹⁴ Beyond the first-person, the tone of the epitaph is ambiguous and deictic, leaving plenty of room for the reader’s interpretation.¹¹⁵ Each viewer thus enters into a transtemporal exchange with Sindler that begins anew with each person. One prompt has potentially infinite outcomes.

The ambiguity of the phrase extends to the syntactic level, where the reflexive structure of the verb *s’ennuyer* can be interpreted idiomatically as “being bored” or literally as “boring oneself”. The use of boredom to describe death also alludes ironically to the idiom of being “bored to death”. The phrase is also punctuated so that it functions simultaneously as a communicative and informative sentence. At the rhetorical level, Sindler’s epitaph is difficult to define. Rather than being an admonition to the living, a plea for prayers, or a euphemistic one-liner, Sindler’s statement is ambiguous in what it asks of the reader. Not exactly an address, Sindler plainly informs the reader that she is already bored without elaborating what, if anything, she wants done about the situation. The ambiguity of the epitaph means that it, more so even than other epitaphs, can be experienced due to the first person singular and interpreted by the installation viewer in multiple ways that are not necessarily incompatible. In this way, ambiguity

⁷⁶ Gary Saul Morson, *The Words of Others: From Quotations to Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2011), 204.

⁷⁷ By ‘tone’ I refer to “an intangible quality which is metaphorically predicated of a literary work or of some part of it such as its style” that colors the work “like a mood in a human being, so that the tone becomes its pervading ‘spirit’, ‘atmosphere’, or ‘aura’.”; T. V. F. Brogan and Fabian Gudas, *Tone*, eds., T. V. F. Brogan, O. B. Hardison Jr, Alex Preminger, Frank J. Warnke, and Earl Miner (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/encyclopedias-reference-works/tone/docview/2137930447/se-2?accountid=14657>.

of meaning and grammatical subject elicits a linguistic exchange or even conversation within the installation environment.

Coupled with the use of the first-person, Sindler's epitaphic voice seems to be carrying on a conversation that started when she was still alive. A not-so-subtle "I told you so" hides behind her statement that one can imagine being directed at her daughter as the culmination of an unfinished discussion of what death is like. The metaphor of "stones that speak" is commonly used in reference to epitaphs, and in Monique Sindler's case the epitaph's interpellative ability is used to interpolate Sindler's own voice back into conversation with the present public both via stated text and via the implicit emotional state that the public attributes to the dead as part of their reception of the epitaph. Sindler's epitaph thus facilitates communication between artist, mother, and spectator. Calle then amplifies this effect spatially by deciding how to frame-or not-the epitaph text and tombal image in her installation.

Calle's choices accentuate the sense of communication between living and dead by re-creating a recognizable cemetery space within the installation using life-sized photographs of tombstones, including her mother's. A series of twenty blown up prints was curated from several black-and-white photographs of anonymous graves bearing the epitaph 'MOTHER' that were taken by Calle on a trip to the US in the 1990s.¹¹⁶ They are supplemented by various other photos of graves reading 'MAMAN' elsewhere in the installation. In Paris (2010), the large rectangular images were placed side-by-side on the subterranean ground, imitating the slabs found in church floors and compounding Calle's original encounter of the individual tombs with her mother's

⁷⁸ Alice Pfeiffer, "Sophie Calle's 'Rachel, Monique'", *dazed*, November 22, 2010, <https://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article/8992/1/sophie-calles-rachel-monique>.

burial rituals. In other versions of *RM*, the epitaphs are wall-mounted and arranged like a mosaic. In the original showing, and in the artist's book, nineteen of the twenty epitaphs read 'MOTHER' while the twentieth reads 'DAUGHTER'. The row of tombs that the viewer must walk past is punctuated at its end by a similar photographic print of Sindler's tombstone hung vertically on the wall [FIG 1.18-1.20]. Aside from once again demonstrating the repetition of textual motifs that is visible throughout the installation, the Mother epitaphs provide a homogenous context against which Sindler's epitaph emerges as a disruption, literally standing up to installation participants.

Calle's ready cache of sepulchral photography testifies to the artist's abiding interest in commemoration, and Sindler's journal entries also contain several mentions of death that range in tone from blasé to irreverent to distraught.¹¹⁷ Such an enduring relationship with death unsurprisingly culminated in Monique Sindler's meticulous direction of her final months. Perhaps the knowledge of imminent death, as with Sindler's terminal cancer diagnosis, was an incentive to make the absolute most of the time left, or perhaps Sindler had determined what she would do in such a situation decades ago. Indeed, the latter is remarkably probable given the detail and apparent swiftness with which end-of-life decisions were made. Calle chooses to paratextually frame her mother's epitaph within a precise account of these final choices:

⁷⁹ Examples include Sindler's own mother's death, « Aujourd'hui ma mère est morte » (Dec. 27, 1986); a flight to NY, « Adieu Journal. Je me tire à New York. Espérons que tout sera merveilleux ! Si l'avion tombe, adieu joyeux à la vie ! » (Apr. 28, 1987); her brother's death, « C'est aujourd'hui à 10h30 que mon frère est mort à Villejuif. Il avait 69 ans et nous sommes tous accablés. Je n'y comprends rien. Je ne crois plus à mon invulnérabilité, moi qui croyais tellement à la sienne. » (Nov. 22, 1994) ; and a supposed lack of attention from her children, « Seule consolation. Elle [Sophie] est tellement morbide qu'elle viendrait me voir sous ma tombe plus souvent qu'à la rue Boulard. » (Dec. 28, 1985), Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*, 2017.

Monique voulait voir la mer une dernière fois. Le mardi 31 janvier, nous sommes allées à Cabourg. Dernier voyage. ... Le lendemain, “pour partir avec de beaux pieds” : dernière pédicurie. Elle a lu *Ravel*, de Jean Echenoz. Dernier livre. Un homme qu’elle admirait depuis longtemps, sans le connaître, est venu à son chevet. Dernière rencontre. Elle a organisé la cérémonie des obsèques : dernière fête. Derniers préparatifs : Elle a choisi sa robe de funérailles -bleu marine à motifs blancs-, une photographie où elle grimace pour sa pierre tombale, et comme épitaphe : Je m’ennuie déjà ! Elle a écrit un dernier poème, pour son enterrement. Elle a retenu le cimetière du Montparnasse comme adresse définitive.¹¹⁸

With every ritualized last occasion Calle conveys the complex way her mother approached death: as much a formal event as a final hurrah, a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, or a challenge.

But while each act was choreographed by Sindler, Calle’s account shapes these unique obsequies into a eulogy by combining enduring memories with the repeated structure ‘dernier’ + ‘activity’ that recalls epitaphic formulae and closes each vignette, contributing to its prosody.

What could have been a utilitarian list thus becomes poetic. The events Calle chooses to emphasize seem also to represent those intangible parts of her mother’s life that were impossible to recreate within the installation –a party, a trip, meeting one’s idol– and are therefore provided in this paratextual addendum, similar to the inventory of Sindler’s grave goods that accompanies a black and white photograph of Sindler in her coffin [FIG 1.21]. Calle asserts her artistic prerogative again by singling out her mother’s epitaph as that which she does attempt to reconstruct for the viewer. Around each instantiation Calle creates a place in which her voice simply conveys her mother’s speech, giving context but allowing Monique to speak for herself.

⁸⁰ Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*, 2017; a similar list accompanies a black and white photo of Sindler in her coffin and enumerates the objects buried with her and their significance. The list uses a parallel structure of ‘object description’ + ‘parce que...’ (typically, ‘parce qu’elle...’).

Monique Sindler's epitaph and the word 'souci' constitute and at times surpass all three techniques of representation, repetition, and reinvention. The first, representation, is inherent in the function of an epitaph to evoke and commemorate the dead. But in Sindler's case her epitaph represents not only her societally perceived identity, but also, since it is self-authored, an internal perception captured in an intentional speech act. As far as repetition, the separation and repetition of the lone word 'souci' plays out the fate of echo as it both loses its context and searches for a new use for its latent meaning. In addition, the nomadic 'souci' envelops the audience in a palpable simulation of Calle's personal sorrow that is amplified by the ruins and/or sacred settings of the installation. The same goal of defining her mother is continued in the row of tomb photographs whose repeating traditional and unspecific 'Mother' epitaph set up an expectation for Sindler's gravestone that is wholly and predictably transgressed. These manifestations of Sindler's voice effectively reinstate her into the ongoing narrative of the installation, reinventing past as present.

Paratextually, the textual manifestations of Sindler's voiced thoughts regarding dying and living frame Calle's commemorative work within an epitaphic space that is predicated upon the words of a dead woman. Sindler's remarks contextualize the objects, images, and feelings that make up the installation within her personal understanding of experiencing life. As opposed to relying upon some external actor to fill in that absence of meaning, Sindler provides her own reflexive framing for her daughter's artwork. Her *présence-absence* as both object and subject throughout the installation is key to accomplishing its commemorative work. In addition to Calle's representational elements like the giraffe or 'MOTHER' tombs, *Rachel, Monique* employs Sindler's

already materialized life as the frame for her epitaph, that which distinguishes her voice from the din.

Voyage au pôle nord

I end my study on Sophie Calle's installation piece *Rachel, Monique* by looking at Calle's trip to the North Pole, which acts as a sort of culminating event in the installation and in the artist's book. It is with this final pilgrimage made on behalf of her mother that Calle adds a sense of futurity to the past and present represented by the previously discussed sections of the exhibit. Her act of (re-)burying her mother as represented by a photograph of Sindler along with some of her jewels that Calle left on a glacier is, on the one hand, a moment of posthumous wish-fulfillment for Sindler and, on the other, of relic translation for Calle:

J'ai enterré les bijoux et le portrait de ma mère sur le rivage du glacier du Nord... Ma mère avait toujours projeté d'aller un jour au pôle Nord. Elle est morte il y a deux ans sans accomplir ce rêve. Pour le garder intact peut-être. Invitée à naviguer dans l'Arctique, j'ai accepté pour elle. Pour l'emmener. Dans ma valise : son portrait, son collier Chanel et son diamant.¹¹⁹

The artist tells of her mother's lifelong plan to go to the North Pole and told *Interview* magazine in 2014 that when the chance to go to the Arctic circle arose, Calle realized that "it was impossible to go there without thinking about her [Sindler]" so she found a way to make the trip adequately symbolic.¹²⁰

⁸¹ Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*, 2017.

⁸² "I didn't go to the North Pole to do something about my mother. I was invited to the North Pole and I realized it was impossible to go there without thinking about her. So I found the idea, because I could not go there and not bring her. I knew how much she dreamed of going there, and I had to find a symbolic action that would bring her there. It had to be a strong gesture. I had to do something more emotional. So, to bury a diamond, the value of it -and because diamonds are supposed to be eternal -was symbolic," Heidi Julavits, , "Sophie Calle", *Interview Magazine*, May 28, 2014.

Buried in the ice, Calle placed a photograph of her mother that seems, fittingly, to be from a ski trip, a Chanel necklace, and a diamond ring. The ring, with its clear gem set like a tiny Art Deco ice cap, is the truly totemic item in this trio. Intertwined with the account of her expedition, Calle relates the wartime tale of her grandfather who, expecting it to be commandeered, exchanged his house in Grenoble for that very diamond ring to avoid full financial loss. « Mauvais calcul », Calle reveals. His wife did not speak to him for a year, but she kept the diamond and, eventually, it fell into her daughter's hands. Although all three of the interred objects surely had interesting histories and monetary value, Calle selects the ring as the primary totemic object within the installation, its preexisting narrative serving as a point of elaboration for Calle. The diamond's metonymic relationship to a lost ancestral home connects generations and mirrors the cyclical nature of history as Calle fulfills her mother's lifelong dream.

The ring's allegorical work begins when, after installing her arctic shrine, Calle speculates on the miraculous adventures her mother might yet have with her new glacial body:

[d]ans des milliers d'années peut-être, des glaciologues trouveront la bague et débattront sans fin de l'éclat de ce diamant dans la culture inuit. A moins qu'un batteur de grève ne la découvre et n'aille l'échanger contre une maison à Grenoble.¹²¹

Calle's imagined scenarios play off of her mentor Baudrillard's warnings of the "proliferation of mediated communication, symbolic consumption, and the compression of time and space."¹²²

The thought that academics would search endlessly for the meaning of a commodity out of context is juxtaposed with the alternative of an Arctic beachcomber repeating Calle and Sindler's

⁸³ Calle, *Rachel, Monique...*, n.p.

⁸⁴ Jan Pakulski, "Postmodern Theory" in *The Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*. Ed. Turner, Bryan S. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&db=e000xna&AN=217997&site=ehost-live&scope=site&ebv=EB&ppid=pp_459.

familial anecdote and bringing Sindler, as the ring, back to the specific location where this particular object achieves symbolic realization. Monique is thus reinscribed back into her own ancestral history. Whether the diamond ring incident took place before or after Sindler's birth, if at all, Calle once again inverts the trope of the revenant-in which the past typically haunts the present or future- and makes Sindler's past her new future, a second chance at life, so to speak, that feeds into the common desire to fix something in the past based on the insights of hindsight. Reminiscent of Vonnegut's concept of being "unstuck in time", Calle merges all tenses when speculating about her mother's future 'haunting' of a specific site contextualized by family lore.¹²³

The diamond ring reinforces this infinitude with its physically recursiveness, and the relationship between diamonds and eternity is culturally engrained to such an extent that having one's ashes compressed into a diamond has become a glib reply to talk of end-of-life wishes.¹²⁴ Calle shows herself to be completely aware of the diamond's long recognized properties of durability, strength, and imperviousness so that its use here as a modern symbol of eternity and means of approaching physical immortality is well-founded and highly intentional. This much is certainly evident in Calle's decision to elevate the ring's narrative above even that of Sindler's designer necklace, which might seem a more obvious indication of identity creation via

⁸⁵ In *Slaughterhouse 5*, the protagonist time-travels while physically remaining in the same place. He is able to "recognize sequence of events" but not "to distinguish temporal relations among them" so that present, past, and future are able to impact each other regardless of diachronic order. Martin Coleman, "The Meaninglessness of Coming Unstuck in Time", *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society*, 44(4), 2008, 681-698.

⁸⁶ Cf. Suzanne Falls, *Clarity, Cut, and Culture: The Many Meanings of Diamonds* (New York; London: New York Univ. Press, 2014).

conspicuous consumption. Instead, Calle chooses an heirloom with its own biography and whose presence in Sindler's life was transitory and beyond her control. Just as the ring accompanied Sindler's mother, so too it accompanied her until Calle breaks the cycle of inheritance by definitively associating the jewel with Monique.

Calle consistently presents the three objects all together and it seems that this is how she visualizes them in her hypothetical futures. Using the order chosen for the artist's book, the first five photos are of Calle's porthole looking out to the sea [FIG 1.22-1.24]: In photos 1 and 2, the full porthole is visible from inside and frames a daytime and nighttime view of a glacier. Photos 3-5 are closeups of the windowsill, in which Calle has arranged her mother's photo and jewelry like an altar offering. The sixth photo is of a mountainous glacier rising up from the snow. The seventh photo shows the photograph of Calle's mother and the necklace and ring tucked into some snowy rocks. The final photo of the series zooms out again on the rocky arctic landscape. In the bound version, a ninth image is added that shows all of the previous eight photographs *in situ* within the Palais de Tokyo exhibit. The image is two full facing pages in color and is followed by a two-page closeup of the sticky note that heralds 'Monique' the giraffe.

The reprinted photos in Calle's book follow the narrative order of the diamond story during which Calle recalls her theory that Monique never took her trip in order to « garder intact » the dream of the voyage. Given her penchant for self-mythologizing, it is easy to believe that Sindler preferred the speculative ideal versus the possibly disappointing and certainly finite reality. With this in mind, Calle ensures that the three relics are buried together in the ice and that their photographs are always presented together in the installation. The glacial setting of the small shrine already evokes an unearthly, even heavenly atmosphere that contextualizes

death as both a return to the earth and a reunion with family. The unity of this quasi-trinitarian group of objects is further emphasized by Calle's contrasting close-up photos of the relics and wide-angle shots of empty landscape. Wide and sparkling expanses of ice and sky evoke the infinity of space and experience. There truly seems to be an effort on Calle's part to safeguard Sindler's experience of the Arctic, even while pondering her glacier breaking off into the sea.

The mystique of the North Pole is also retained since Calle does not take her mother all the way to the actual North Pole, simply to the northernmost stop of the boat she was on. As she suggests in her hypothetical situations, it is impossible to know which of the truly infinite things will happen to her mother and it seems fitting that only Monique should know the truth about her posthumous future. In the end, all memory can do is invoke the past and speculate on a future that may, but not necessarily, have anything to do with a person's actual lived life. Faithfully, Calle brings the relics to the sacred place but leaves the rest up to "divine intervention" or its modern equivalent, nature.

In the following installation, *the epitaph project*, a similar speculation on life after death engenders individual memories of shared experiences that ultimately legitimate the subjective expression of grief. Akin to Calle's conspicuous evocation of her mother, the epitaphs left by visitors to Burstein's installation represent an individual expression that, repeated over and over in multiple locations, becomes a shared experience, generating its own community of people who have stood before the same stone and used the same chalk to write a personally meaningful epitaphic message. These messages, like all epitaphs, are as important for creating individual memory narratives as they are for creating a customary space for public commemoration. The mobility of Burstein's installation allows the work to move between traditional and institutional

settings, expanding its experiential network and proposing the temporary memorial as a legitimate form of shaping public memory.

The individual components of the installation (slate tombstone, chalk, eraser) along with the photographs and display of the project are each integral to the elevation of a temporary memorial above a practice of convenience or necessity. Burstein reimagines such sites as organic manifestations of grief whose adaptability and mobility make them ideal for propagating commemorative narratives in a more accessible and personal experience of communal memory. As an immersive installation, Burstein's epitaphic space supplies participants with elementary tools with which to revive the tombstone by (con)textualizing it. Burstein also intentionally defies natural decomposition of the epitaph by intervening in the texts' life cycle when she captures fresh inscriptions photographically before systematically wiping the slate clean with water. Such continuous renovation of the epitaphic installation proffers an alternate form of perpetuity based on a functional permanence rather than a material one.

Chapter 3: *The epitaph project* – Joyce Burstein

Whereas Sophie Calle's installation *Rachel, Monique* offers a highly embellished and materially dense example of commemorative art pushed to the limits of the social conventions in which it is contextualized, the second work of installation by American artist Joyce Burstein presents a pared-down, mass-produced interpretation of epitaphic art. Formally, the primary installation of Burstein's *the epitaph project* is an upright slab with a highly conventional, even antiquated, half-round or fully arched shape within a traditional cemetery setting [FIG 1.26]. There is nothing special about this tomb aside from its emptiness. Burstein even seems to play up the potential monotony of cemeteries by eschewing any structural decoration or personalization of the slate tombstone she installed.¹²⁵ The tombstone has at its foot a small bronze box containing white chalk and an eraser with the project's name on one side. My discussion of *the epitaph project* is configured around these three components-chalkboard tombstone, white chalk, eraser- and considers them within a paratextual network of photographs and an artist's book, *the epitaph project* (2006).

In the accompanying artist's book, Burstein recounts the many iterations of the project in a prologue that reads like an obituary of the installation itself:

the epitaph project is a traditional tombstone carved from slate and finished as a chalkboard that sits atop an empty grave in the cemetery. Passersby are invited to write epitaphs in chalk on the tombstone; these are photographed to illustrate projections of meaning upon self and death as well as introducing people to a public parkland that is virtually unused. In this way all spectators are also performers—an open possibility lying in wait for whoever might pass. *the epitaph project* exists in different sites and different forms. It existed 1st in Hollywood Forever Cemetery in Los Angeles, CA, where I purchased a grave site which I tended and still visit every fall for Dia de los Muertos where I encounter writers in the night. *the epitaph project* exists also in Lake View Cemetery in Cleveland, Ohio, and The Fields Sculpture Park in upstate New York. It also exists as

¹ Such as the universality exhibited by Calle's impersonal 'Mother' epitaph photos.

a portable tombstone/chalkboard used to collect epitaphs at lectures and exhibitions. It existed for a summer in Socrates Park, NYC, and Spaces gallery in Cleveland. *the epitaph project* is also an archive of epitaphs that viewers have offered; taken with throw away to digital cameras by gardeners to gallery sitters with me. It also exists here in your hands.¹²⁶

This artist's statement describes, but also exhibits, many of the installation practices used in *tep* such as site-specificity, intermediality, and theatricality in pursuit of perpetuity. By listing the different manifestations of the installation along with the materials used to create it, Burstein legitimates all of the work's forms as equally representative of the project's intent regardless of duration. The site-specificity of each installation, meanwhile, speaks as much to the influence of setting over the artwork as it does to the potential for installations to affect their environments and, as here, revive static space. Finally, Burstein's statement directly addresses readers and iterates the community of installation participants that includes the present reader. It is this community of contributors that perpetuates the installation beyond its physical forms, integrating its existence into living memory.¹²⁷

Importantly, the slate and chalk were presented as a roving interactive work [FIG 1.26] at the American Folk Art Museum in 2016-17 and had a custom briefcase made to carry and display the "portable tombstone" at museum events.¹²⁸ This mobility emphasizes the tombstone's active role in the processes of interaction and creation within the installation. One other effect of the tombstone's inviting emptiness is that the onus is placed upon the participant-spectator to activate meaning within the installation. The epitaphic texts (or images, symbols, etc.) drawn

² Joyce Burstein, *the epitaph project* (Autonomedia, 2006).

³ The artist has always been the one to physically craft the tomb and inscribed epitaph but typically remained anonymous, as in the medieval tombs discussed on chapters 2 and 3. But by signing her artist's statement Burstein self-identifies and becomes the public voice of a commemorative installation whose content and contributors remain anonymous.

⁴ Hollander, ed., *Securing the Shadow*, 2016.

onto the stone are the mutable evidence of interaction between the installation and its viewers. This mutability is key in distinguishing Burstein's installation from a 'real' tombstone, and manifests in the three physical components of the installation epitaph that will also serve to organize my analysis of Burstein's work.

The chalkboard, the chalk, and the eraser all participate in the ephemerality of *the epitaph project* whose voluntary temporariness apparently flouts the most basic premise of the epitaph, which is to last. In actuality, the inherent temporariness of the installation offers an alternate route to perpetuity by constantly renewing its message. Unlike Calle, who finds multiple narratives for a single person, *tep* provides a more materially limited but also more changeable space where a commemoration represents a plurality of individuals. When photographed, these replicated epitaphs become a commemorated community that can exist simultaneously on the pages of a book or a gallery wall. The photographs of each message allow a single structure to represent and/or evoke multiple commemorated experiences simultaneously despite material ephemerality. Just as the multiplicity of voices in *Rachel, Monique* imitates the ongoing process of forgetting and remembering, so too Burstein's systematic documentation and publication of contributions liberates individual messages from a fixed site while also curating a narrative of interaction that is indelibly linked to the original blank slate.

The dynamism of the text is compounded by the chosen writing medium of chalk. Rather than incising letters and shapes into the stone in an ablative process, the additive use of chalk builds up on the surface of the slate without fundamentally changing it. Instead, the chalk writing is easily erased and replaced, not lasting much longer than the physical presence of the writer at the site. Each claim to the installation's space is finite in a way that alludes to the very real

problem of overpopulation in existing burial grounds and the leasing practices often associated with burial plots in areas of high demand.¹²⁹ Ghostly smudges sometimes remain, palimpsests creating cross-temporal epitaphs. But even these are only surface-level and are intentionally washed away by the artist after capturing the message photographically in order to make space for the next contribution.

There continues to exist, however, an essential symbiosis between writing (*ergon*) and writing surface (*parergon*) since neither one can fulfill its purpose without the other.¹³⁰ The chalk, of course, must be cast upon a receptive surface in order to form legible words or symbols. But the surface is equally beholden to the writing medium to become a writing surface that is fit to carry meaning beyond its own potential inherent material symbolism. A tombstone is distinct because of its commemorative text and it, along with other surfaces, have become either conventional or preferable for specific purposes or methods of writing.¹³¹ Burstein poses the question of how such icons work when no text is provided and it is left for participants to decide what can or should occupy that space. There are good technical reasons for such couplings as pen and parchment or chisel and stone, but such conventions come at the risk of ignoring other possible text-surface combinations that may have different advantages beyond convenience or durability.

⁵ Julie Rugg, "Social justice and cemetery systems", *Death Studies* (46:4, 2002), 861-874, <https://doi.org/10.1080/07481187.2020.1776791>.

⁶ Cf. Laura Velte and Michael R. Ott, "Writing between stillness and movement: script-bearing artefacts in courtly German literature," in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, eds., Lieb, Neufeld, and Wagner, 20.

⁷ Katja Schulz, "Inscriptions in Old Norse Literature," in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, eds., Lieb, Neufeld, and Wagner, 46.

The stones popular for monuments-especially gravestones- are chosen largely for material endurance, like marble that resists erosion and erasure due to physical hardness. But the relative permanence of stone has translated into the assumption that commemorative structures must be as permanent as possible to be considered successful. Naturally, physical durability gives way to a fixed concept of memory in which physical permanence denotes importance and stability, and which circumscribes what might be considered appropriate materials for legitimate commemoration. Yet such immutability is antithetical to the mutable nature not only of memory, but of human existence. People, and the memory of them, cannot be qualitatively evaluated based on longevity and the ephemerality of a life is precisely what renders it precious. The question becomes how the memory-or rather, memories- of an individual can be embodied materially without diminishing that very individuality. In *tep*, Burstein's work is a frame that conveys a stable concept or process. At the same time, the changing chalk text is contextualized by the tombstone's consistency and minimal reaction to intervention. The installation is a framing device for cultural and individual interpretations of commemoration.

Personal experience is often preserved in tangible ephemera that hold great sentimental value but are not expected to last forever. Like the conserved Post-It notes in *Rachel, Monique*, the temporary chalk messages left by Burstein's participants oppose the misleading essentialization of "permanent" monuments, exploiting multiple media to infinitely represent reproductions of the temporary chalk text. Each epitaph is valuable despite its short existence and is preserved in a snapshot by the artist before being erased and replaced, a portrait of memory that commemorates a person's societally derived identity. The photographic re-instantiation of the epitaphs creates a "locomobile" text capable, like the self-fashioning living, of

being replicated and disseminated ad infinitum in a way that satisfies that desire for memorability and immortality without over-privileging a singular instance of commemoration.¹³² In a digital age, the photographic representation of a monument can reach a much wider audience than the “locostatic” original and in turn perpetuate the captured memory or sentiment far beyond its original spatio-temporal boundaries.

Unlike a typical tombstone, Burstein’s version is only superficially installed in the cemetery ground, and also is highly mobile thanks to its custom travelling briefcase that can be shown in a gallery or public event setting. More so even than Calle’s many re-installations of *Rachel, Monique, the epitaph project*’s ease of transition makes it truly locomobile. So, while the “canvas” is not large the work’s wholesale locomobility accesses a different kind of expansiveness by moving as a unit to various locations and has the potential for endless additions and revisions. Wherever Burstein installs *tep* becomes a communal and individual space of gazing, writing, reading, editing, erasing, and remembering. The portable version of the installation also increases opportunities for interaction in varied settings, letting the installation epitaphs actively communicate and disseminate their memorial text so that any space in which the installation can be logistically housed becomes an epitaphic space, regardless of its usual purpose.

Furthermore, the epitaph installation can combine architectural and literary techniques of repetition so that the viewer sees, hears, reads, and even touches the text through various

⁸ Wagner & Neufeldt use Chaganti’s term derived from *Gestalttheorie*. *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, eds., Lieb, Neufeld, and Wagner, 5.

media.¹³³ Epitaphs are, as Laura Velte points out, part of “the semiotic paradigm of *quid pro quo*, aiming to make the deceased appear spatially present”.¹³⁴ Commemorative installations like *tep* provide a new physical body for the dead via the text-artifact. This temporary embodiment functions as a representative personal narrative that can be mobilized beyond the installation site. In exchange, the dead are given new purpose in life as culturally interpretable symbols used to express new ideas.

While ways of representing the dead, textually or artistically, are “undoubtedly historically variable” and while the convention of inscribed epitaphs may be familiar and meaningful to some, there is a greater need to represent the dead in an historically relevant manner than there is to cling to aesthetic habits.¹³⁵ Epitaphic installations like *tep* illustrate how the basic elements of text and substrate not only suffice for the creation of commemorative narratives, but actually have a greater commemorative potency due to the mobility and adaptability of form and especially content. In the case of *the epitaph project*, the context and elicited texts are superficially conventional and thus highly recognizable. But the material qualities of the slate and chalk defy the presumed permanence of inscribed stone, resulting in an adaptable and site-specific space of commemoration that changes with individual grieving and the ensuing commemorative process. This capacity for metamorphosis is demonstrated by Burstein removing the tombstone and reinstalling it within another setting or mobilizing it with a bespoke valise.

⁹ Following Reid’s assessment of the epitaph, it is precisely this kind of improvisational instantiation that characterizes its existence. Ian Reid, “Genre and Framing: The case of epitaphs”, *Poetics* 17 (1988), 25-35.

¹⁰ Velte, “Sepulchral Representations”, 255.

¹¹ Velte, “Sepulchral Representations”, 255.

Just as Calle's installation adapts to each new exhibit environment, Burstein's minimal construction is small and unobtrusive enough to blend into various display contexts. Each epitaph, and its photographic double, has a mixture of conventional and innovative traits that tangibly echo the nature of epitaphic writing as both private and public; identifiable and unique. This contrast is especially evident in Burstein's bound volume of images from different iterations of the installation. In the artist's book, every page is greyscale, yet each image is visually distinct. Group and individual sometimes even coexist in the book, as with the series of three epitaphs playing out a game of Hangman to spell 'home'.

The visual simultaneity of these epitaphs would be impossible to experience without the use of photographic representations curated by the artist in a continuation of the work's artist-public collaboration. In addition to the installations and artist's book, Burstein filmed two short videos at installation sites. In the first, she narrates a photographic tour of the Hollywood Forever Cemetery. In the second, a male voice retells the Turkish tale of Hodja Nasreddin over a time-lapse of epitaphs being written and erased. As with the installation's other modes of transmission, Burstein's videos rely on tensions between permanence and ephemerality that exist due to the use of chalk and slate for a tombstone. The added intermediality of video recording and photograph and the artist's staging of the installation experience merges multiple realities and represents them as part of a unified narrative within *the epitaph project*.

Another key feature of the installation, the ability to erase epitaphs, seems contradictory and even trivializing, but it also acknowledges the changing face of memory and lowers the stakes of a single permanent textual representation of the dead while legitimizing temporary acts of commemoration as authentic memory work. Burstein validates epitaphic expression done with

temporary media by photographing each contribution and binding them together as a mobile anthology to create a more permanent and replicable object that commemorates both the subjects of each message and the project's life overall. These photos are collectively referred to as epitaphs and thus function as a new paradigm for commemorative texts that prioritizes meeting the current needs of those practicing commemoration.

Chalkboard tombstone

The first installation component is the blank headstone. Fabricated out of slate, the thin slab has a traditional oval top and is installed vertically in the ground. It is an object instantly recognizable as a Western-style tombstone and also immediately reads as incomplete due to its lack of text or imagery. Like a fresh grave, the blank slate indicates recent death but belies the fabrication of memory with its lack of personalization; this tomb has the potential to belong to anyone. From at least as early as the 7th century, tombstones and stelae had taken on the task of recording and perpetuating the memory of the deceased. This personalization was distinct from the previous "purely abstract and generic discourse" found on tombstones, leading to rupture with "the intrusion of likeness and of writing... and with them came a new range of meanings, the possibility of a dialogue with the reader, and the participation of kinfolk" in the creation of posthumous dialogue.¹³⁶ The slate marker's non-textuality is perceived as emptiness due to a culturally signifying form that implies textual framing and becomes an invitation to the viewer to fill in that space.

The slate tombstone thus encourages interaction, but also prescribes it to a certain extent although not necessarily to the installation's detriment. The traditional shape and funereal

¹² Armando Petrucci, *Writing the Dead* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1998), 5.

context of the tombstone mean that a certain commemorative tone will prevail among the messages left and that death will be a constant theme. While no instructions are left by the artist regarding epitaph content, contributors often follow patterns in wording, structure, placement, and lettering that derive from pre-modern epitaphic formulae. For example, several epitaph contributions use literary or historical quotations (e.g., Simonides, Whitman, Yeats, Hendrix, Marx). Most of these quotes are attributed correctly, but some have either no attribution or are parodically attributed to someone else.¹³⁷ Others are traditionally formal in their expression, for example “Damon, We Miss You Died Vietnam 1968” or “R.I.P Marina Augustine Beloved Daughter, Sister 1988-2002”, and directly connect the dead to an ongoing present by contextualizing their lives within their communities in life.

There are, however, plenty of contributions that offer insight into what commemorative writing might look like beyond prevailing epitaph norms. Such contributions as “I told you I was sick” and “Mom, I was the one who broke your heirloom vase” speak to that continuous dialogue between living and dead already discussed regarding Monique Sindler’s epitaph. The epitaph addressed to “Mom” in particular recalls the ambiguity of Sindler’s epitaph in that it is unclear who is dead, the speaker or the mother. If the former, then the message is a deathbed confession; if the latter, it is an attempt to reach the *au-delà* that implies some expectation of response, even if only imagined by the writer. In lieu of physical presence, *tep* offers the epitaph as a vehicle for re-embodiment. Several submissions are non-textual drawings that include the outline of Ohio and a handicapped symbol. Without any instructions, the epitaphs left on the

¹³ For example, “An unexamined life is not worth living” and underneath: “Janet”.

chalkboard represent the full range of epitaphic conventions and *also* present non-traditional epitaphs that nevertheless fit within the epitaphic context by doing the epitaphic work of representing the dead in a way that allows readers to imagine an individual within a specific role or context.¹³⁸ The scene is set for posthumous interaction and reintegration of the dead in the living world by, like Calle, making the dead familiar and thus memorable.

One example of such reframing is found about halfway through the artist's book reimagines intermediality's role in creating immersive encounters by presenting a parergonic film whose material existence is left for the reader to imagine:

"daisy"
produced and directed by
Daisy Church
All rights reserved
©2002
All characters + persons depicted
in this film are based on real events
-places.

Nothing about this epitaph is certain-who is Daisy? Why is 2002 important?-but it is certainly intended to commemorate an individual. However, because there is no specific reference to the person's death and no use of pronominal pronouns, the epitaph could refer to either a life lived or a life in progress that will eventually end.¹³⁹ Details about the characters and events remain privileged knowledge and that gap tempts outsiders to invent their own version of a stranger's life based on context clues. This epitaph presents a divergence from tradition via ambiguity and

¹⁴ Epitaphs also include formulaic phrases, memento mori, personal addresses, puns or witticisms, diatribes, and political statements.

¹⁵ There is a sense of dark humor, as well, both in the stylized form of the text and in the potential allusion with the name 'Daisy' to the euphemism 'pushing up daisies'.

inversion that, in contrast to *Pas Pu Saisir la Mort* with its explicit content and ambiguous representation, uses figurative language, special characters, and text alignment to designate its own contextual parameters to interpretation on top of those imparted by the artist or installation. The finished product respects certain formal conventions while simultaneously appending to itself a cultural context in which to be read and interpreted.¹⁴⁰

The tombstone also poses a physical limitation in terms of the content that can fit on the writing surface. In response, most participants left shorter remarks in larger lettering but there are also cases where cramped writing and images in all directions cover the entire writing surface. Some of these seem to be by children, but not all. Brevity is a learned characteristic of epitaphic writing that is societal, not innate, as proven by the multiple transgressions of the physical frame. This material limitation is also countered by the mobility of the entire installation. Each left message constitutes a kind of Derridean signature in that its performance and materialization forces participants in the present to imagine themselves in the future as “a posthumous self” whose hypothetical existence determines what is written in the present. The act of writing is akin to a promise, as Vanessa Lemm puts it, that the present self “will become the self that one is not yet” since by imagining our future selves we wager in favor of their eventual realization.¹⁴¹ Posthumousness is therefore framed as an active state in which the epitaph permits continued communication with the living.¹⁴²

¹⁶ Saul Morson, *The Words of Others*, 212.

¹⁷ Vanessa Lemm, “The Spectrality of Responsibility”, *“Einige warden posthum geboren”*: *Friedrich Nietzches Wirkungen*, no. 1 (2012), eds., Renate Reschke, Marco Brusotti, 153.

¹⁸ This commitment to our future selves can also be thought of in terms of Sartre’s *littérature engagée* in which “the writer’s investment (*engagement*) of herself in the present age can be understood as the bet or gamble (*gage*) of the future in the present,” Lemm, “Spectrality”, 154.

Burstein's tombstone set up within existing cemeteries is also interesting, especially in the unique context of Hollywood Forever Cemetery, because it is unadorned in any way.¹⁴³ Unlike many of the surrounding graves, there are no sculptural or structural details to tease meaning out of, and the plot is devoid of any other funeral items such as flowers or candles. Knowing as we do that the corresponding grave is unoccupied, the blank tombstone truly comes to represent everyone and no one simultaneously. The entire installation remains anonymous until outside intervention claims it for an individual. Even then, the knowledge that one is participating in a work of public art means that every intervention of an individual is also the ritual by which each person enters into the dispersed confraternity of installation contributors. Like Ryan's "braided narrativity" mode, which "follows the intertwined destinies of a large cast of characters", installations have "no global plot, but a number of parallel and successive subplots developing along the destiny lie of characters" who may or may not intersect but nevertheless co-exist.¹⁴⁴ The open-ended blank tombstone thus signals a commemorative space that is both personal to and universally claimed by its visitors. It is simultaneously one person's headstone and everyone's headstone.

¹⁹ Hollywood Forever Cemetery, we learn in the video tour, is unique in allowing just about any kind of memorial structure, resulting in an aesthetically diverse and even contradictory landscape.

²⁰ Ryan admittedly "cannot find a convincing transposition of the temporal parallelism of braided narrativity into the spatial terms of visual art" ("The Modes of Narrativity", 375), but installation art certainly possesses the same capacity for experiential parallelism and the kind of temporal folding associated with an "Augustinian, nonlinear presence of time" (Pranger, "Time and Narrative in Augustine's *Confessions*", 377) that Ricoeur concludes can only be represented through narrative invention following Aristotle's *poiesis*. Paul Ricoeur, « Rhétorique – Poétique – Herméneutique » in *De la métaphysique à la rhétorique*, ed. Michel Meyer (Brussels: Editions de l'Univ. De Bruxelles, 1986), http://digistore.bib.ulb.ac.be/2010/DL2353705_000_f.pdf, 147.

This duality of public and private is what truly defines the installation and is at the root of its significance for contemporary commemorative culture. By representing self and group simultaneously, this tombstone materializes the process of “what had begun as a document inviting the commemoration of a single individual” becoming “an obituary compiled by dozens or hundreds of communities that amassed the names of those to be commemorated”, like the medieval necrologies and obits consulted in Part II that were brought from town to town for mourners to add their intercessory prayer to the expandable roll of parchment.¹⁴⁵ What results is the enactment of “the death system” as defined by Robert Kastenbaum, in which the installation represents the entire space of the cemetery, taking on the symbolic power of a commemorative monument; not of a past event, but of an imagined future that will come to pass.¹⁴⁶

Performing commemoration through public writing benefitted both community and deceased. First, the community was able to practice encountering death vicariously through the staged commemorative act. Familiarization with the possible events surrounding one’s own future death and the chance to imagine a potential posthumous narrative could reasonably provide a sense of agency when faced with the unavoidable. By travelling to perform commemorative ritual in public spaces the deceased also benefits from a larger pool of intercessors and a greater distribution of their memory. Once again, past, present, and future converge when the posthumous narrative is constructed as part of a documented public event.

²¹ Petrucci, *Writing the Dead*, 50. Petrucci is speaking here about “scrolls of the dead” that passed through towns in the 12th century.

²² Robert Kastenbaum, *Death, Society, and Human Experience*, 12th ed, (Boston: Pearson, 2012), 77; 102.

The same is true of the encounter between installation participants with mortality in *the epitaph project*, which turns the epitaph writing into an act of transcendence since contributors must consider past, present and/or future selves to decide what to write. For most, this seems to have been a chance to represent themselves as they might wish to be represented posthumously. Crucially, the installation indulges this conditional decision by allowing people to erase and re-write their own epitaphs. The opportunity to try on different epitaphs without consequence has precedents in literary practices such as what Gary Saul Morson terms “closet epitaphs”.¹⁴⁷ Borrowing the term from closet drama, Morson offers Thomas Hobbes’ unused epitaph and Thomas Gray’s “Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard” as examples of epitaphic writing intended as poetic exercise with little expectation of actual inscription on a tombstone.

These, along with parodic and “anti-” epitaphs, are sometimes embedded in or combined with other commemorative genres like elegy and were commonly written among poets for peers or muses who may or may not have been their contemporaries. The advantage of the poetic epitaph is that it is duplicable and distributable to a shifting readership without loss of interpretability. Functionally, Burstein applies the mobility associated with the closet epitaph to her entire installation by creating a portable and reusable tombstone reminiscent of the wax tablets Plato imagined as the site of continual impression and memory creation within the soul.¹⁴⁸ The sense that this tombstone is meant as a place for continuous, overlapping epitaphic

²³ Saul Morson, *The Words of Others*, 208.

²⁴ Christian Lexcellent, *Human Memory and Material Memory*, (Cham, Switz.: Springer Nature, 2019), <https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-99543-4>, 27; Petrucci, *Writing the Dead*, 81; cf. Ricarda Wagner, “Tablets and the Poetics of the Premodern Post-It”, in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, eds., Lieb, Neufeld, and Wagner (de Gruyter, 2019), 239-253.

writing is heightened by the artist's provision of multiple sticks of chalk. Not only can multiple voices be represented on the same surface the polyphonic slate itself can be cleaned and ready for new content like the stacking of new burials over old in an overcrowded graveyard.

White chalk

Burstein's installation thus provides both writing surface and implement for its public. The chalk sticks convey multiple symbolic messages to the installation's audience, including impermanence, the effect of uniformity on individuality, and the possibilities of replicable commemoration. Paired with the slate headstone, the chalk also evokes the school setting, suggesting a certain universal capacity for epitaphic writing and that the installation is meant as a lesson or practice. This use of chalk for preliminary drawings has also made chalk an essential medium for fine artists, for whom the ability to produce lines of varying width and subtle gradient shading is vital to producing a useful study. The same is true of historical crime scenes, in which chalk is used to preserve the outline of a figure, or in the case of gravestone rubbings. The use of chalk to practice or take the impression of something in turn helps democratize the epitaph via chalk's broad capabilities as a highly sensitive medium that is also forgiving when paired with the slate surface.¹⁴⁹

The chalk's first implication, impermanence, is directly related to the material composition of the medium. Most often made of calcium carbonate, white chalk has become linked to the schoolroom as a cheap and easy writing utensil. But this belies the medium's history as an essential tool for artists, architects, and tailors. Chalk (black, red, or white) was popularized

²⁵ This is opposed to using the medium on more porous material like paper, from which chalk is particularly difficult to erase without damaging the writing surface.

in the 15th century for preparatory studies or sketches that could be done quickly yet with sufficient detail.¹⁵⁰ Chalk's versatility also meant that precise lines and subtle shading could be accomplished using different techniques, such as *deux* or *trois crayons*, *chiaroscuro*, and heightening. These effects take advantage of the contrasting spectrum of black, red, and white chalks to portray depth and motion.¹⁵¹ This visual contrast, particularly sharp between white chalk on a dark background, is also key to larger scale art such as the ancient hill figures found in the United Kingdom. In short, the use of white chalk in *the epitaph project* calls upon millennia of chalk art used to depict the three-dimensionality of life so that the writing tool itself becomes a historical nexus of dynamic representation.

This is one of many ways in which processes of accumulation underlie the importance of Burstein's work. First, there is the literal accumulation of chalk powder as it is transferred onto the slate. Second, the repeated use of the same slate throughout the project results in the symbolic accumulation of voices such that the slate is both tombstone and tomb. Finally, the entire installation relies on the accumulation of shared social symbolism among its visitors, alluded to by Burstein's combination of two highly recognizable contexts: the tombstone and the schoolroom. All three of these accumulations result in *the epitaph project* being a simultaneously individual and communal experience for its participants, similar to experiences of grief and mourning. Writing with chalk in particular is an additive process and so, unlike the typical incised

²⁶ "Chalks." In *Encyclopedia Britannica*, <https://www.britannica.com/art/drawing-art/Chalks>.

²⁷ <https://www.metmuseum.org/about-the-met/curatorial-departments/drawings-and-prints/materials-and-techniques/drawing/chalk>; <https://www.britannica.com/art/drawing-art/Chalks>; Millidge, Shirley. "Chalk." *Grove Art Online*. 2003; Accessed 29 May. 2021.

<https://www.oxfordartonline.com/groveart/view/10.1093/gao/9781884446054.001.0001/oao-9781884446054-e-7000015736>.

letters of an epitaph, the chalk only has a superficial interaction with the writing surface. In material terms, this means that the writing surface can be restored to its original state after each use so that each installation visitor is met with the same, apparently virgin, space to write.

The importance of perceiving the installation as a unique experience is critical to evoking the gravity and sanctity associated with gravestones. Burstein facilitates each visitor imagining the blank stone and empty plot as their own by resurrecting an *Ur*-context for each contribution.¹⁵² In this way, Burstein accepts certain cultural protocols regarding graves and epitaphs before subverting others that might be considered more fundamental, such as the presencing of the dead. Superficially, the impermanence of chalk writing on slate gives the impression of undermining the memorializing work of the epitaph. Instead, it promotes a Wordsworthian forging of “bonds of mourning” that occurs when expressions of individual mourning interact via their written manifestations.¹⁵³ Like the 2020 BLM rallies across the United States or the dynastic commission of art, these individual epitaphs are united in exhibition as a mobile commemorative network.

Speaking of inscriptions as a category, Silvio Panciera posits that “the distinctive quality of inscriptions lies... in their more or less intentional deviation from what may be said to be ‘normal’ writing in the context in which it was produced.”¹⁵⁴ This is precisely what occurs in

²⁸ The perennially erased slate participates in the confrontation of the participant “with the presence of the difficult to imagine”, specifically one’s own death. (Preface to *the epitaph project*, Lamborn Wilson, 2017)

²⁹ Kurt Fosso, *Buried Communities: Wordsworth and the bonds of mourning*, (Albany: SUNY Press, 2004), 7.

³⁰ Silvio Panciera, “What is an Inscription? Problems of Definition and Identification of an Historical Source”, in *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*, Rudolf Habelt. 183 (2012), 8.

Burstein's installation when she compels the participant to use a medium whose ephemerality is apparently antithetical to the purpose of the epitaphic inscription. But the temporariness of a single epitaph, imitating the fleetingness of human life, is also what allows the accumulation of unrelated commemorative voices within a single monument. The power of epitaphs comes largely from their ability to evoke an entire human life, and often to convey something of the dead individual's essence in life. In *the epitaph project*, the audience is presented with an alternative in which the dead can be re-represented by changing the epitaph text.

Human complexity and the creation/curation of memory is, in this way, conveyed by the adaptable text. That the epitaphic text embodies a voice is clear. Most epitaphs, however, are only capable of voicing the perspective of one person or, if written collectively (by a family, for example) of reducing the sentiments of the individuals into one representative expression so that multiple people still speak with a unified voice. Burstein offers the opportunity for multiple voices to be represented on the same surface. Beyond this, Burstein allows individual writers to voice various thoughts either simultaneously or in succession. Thus, the use of chalk subverts the spatial limits of the tombstone by eschewing the permanence of traditional engraving in exchange for the malleability of expression that comes with an impermanent medium like chalk.

The result is an opportunity to practice an epitaph *in situ* and to witness one's own grave and act as reader of one's own epitaph. Recalling medieval practices of pre-commissioned tombs that will be discussed in the following chapters, the ability to commemorate oneself is the ultimate example of posthumous portraiture in which the process of self-representing becomes as important as its outcome. In searching for the right form to visually represent oneself, "a profusion of sign and traces of selfhood... are generated as the autobiographer 'processes'

memories” into a satisfactory memorial narrative.¹⁵⁵ The process of attempting self-representation of a life still in progress aligns quite perfectly with the original notions behind the development of installation art, for example, that the work is a process, and that representation of any kind must have an active spectator to whom the referent idea or object is represented and whose interaction with symbolic text-objects generates new narratives to be broadcast.¹⁵⁶ Here again, the use of a signature style or rhetoric distinguishes individual acts of commemoration and also helps define them when considered in the context of the installation and when recontextualized at a later date as part of a curated exhibition.¹⁵⁷

This accumulation of roles within the installation (spectator, creator, subject) means that it is only through interaction with the art that a uniquely meaningful experience is created. However, in order to activate this interaction with the installation, Burstein relies necessarily on certain assumptions about her audience, namely, that the tombstone shape is recognizable as such, and that the relationship between the chalk and slate is self-explanatory. Employing the typical structural arrangement of a vertical board with chalk and eraser along its base, the installation makes the purpose of the chalk very clear, and the act of writing of the slate tombstone mimics the presumed common experience of the blackboard as a site of (public) writing.

An epitaph is partly defined by its original “intention to communicate something publicly”, as opposed to a letter that may be made public after the fact despite its specified addressee.¹⁵⁸ Burstein highlights this publicity by making her participants write with an audience. This audience

³¹ Hannah Westley, *The Body as Medium and Metaphor* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008), 18.

³² Interestingly, it is not the artist who is represented within this installation but their audience.

³³ Lemm, “Spectrality”, 153.

³⁴ Panciera, “What is an Inscription?”, 3.

varies with each version of the installation, at times consisting of companions, strangers in the same space, or even the dead residents of a cemetery whose own epitaphs may set a certain standard. The establishment of such temporary communities works in tandem with the temporary tomb and epitaph so that each expression of self is also the construction of a contextually relevant social identity. In terms of creating memory, *TEP* privileges both social, communal memory and personal recollection.

The public space of the installation, combined with the communal setting of a cemetery, park, or museum exhibit, “helps to sustain an active social memory that is based, though not dependent upon, the personal memories of the living.”¹⁵⁹ Burstein’s photographic accumulation of singular experiences with the installation coalesce into a tapestry compressing time to present non-extant epitaphs as perpetual contemporaries bound as a re-printable artist’s book. This book becomes a guestbook of sorts that records individual commemorative expressions as a history of the installation. As with the process of (self-) commemoration, interacting with the installation is experienced differently by each individual but nevertheless results in their joining a community of individuals who have participated in the same ritual with unique results. As a result, the uniform white chalk serves as a tangible link between individuals whose cumulative individual messages inscribe their writers into a community whose shared memory is reinforced by personal experience.

³⁵ Aubrey Cannon, “Spatial Narrative of Death, Memory, and Transcendence”, in *The Space and Place of Death*, eds. Helaine Silverman and David B. Small (Arlington, Va.: American Anthropological Association, 2002), 194.

Eraser

Burstein's choice to provide a chalkboard eraser labeled with the installation's title promotes the chalk's ephemerality not as a point of memorial vulnerability, but as a necessity for producing new and ongoing dialogue across time and space. The provision of a chalkboard eraser gives a clue about Burstein's expectations of her public. First of all, she presumes that people may want to erase what they have written, either in the process of or after leaving their contribution. Burstein emphasizes the erasability of the chalk and the participant's ability to make mistakes or make multiple attempts.

Above all, Burstein wants people to try and engage with the process of epitaphic writing, beyond cold reading the graves of others, and experience the act of writing their own past while shaping their future. Burstein's video "Mirror", in which the writing of different epitaphs is time-lapsed and played twice in the same viewing, solidifies the tombstone's metonymic relationship to the writer and merges numerous epitaphs into a continuous narrative. Furthermore, the re-writing of epitaphs seen in the video illustrates the practices of ritualization and repetition. By creating an inter-textual historical narrative of the installed tombstone via intermedial representations, Burstein transforms all of her authors into historical eyewitnesses whose combined interventions form "a specific mythological precedent" based on a prospective (or speculative) act of commemoration.¹⁶⁰

The chalkboard eraser also makes it so that participants cannot completely erase their mistakes without leaving a trace [FIG 1.27-1.28]. Although Burstein wipes the stone clean with

³⁶ Erwin Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture: Four Lectures on its Changing Aspects from Ancient Egypt to Bernini*, (New York: H. N. Abrams, 1992), 23; Jeannie Łabno, *Commemorating the Polish Renaissance Child* (Farnham, Surrey, Eg.: Ashgate Publishing, 2011), 117.

water between each interaction, she captures these traces in her photography of the installation. These images essentially constitute the commemoration of the installation itself, a trace of *TEP*. The concept of erasure is parsed in the installation since the ability to amend the epitaph and the inability to fully remove the existing content—so that rejected epitaphs haunt their replacement—are both present for the contributors. This tension reflects debate surrounding permanent and temporary modes of commemoration, in which temporary memorials are praised for their site-specificity and communality, but also critiqued for being unorganized and disruptive of public space.¹⁶¹

Burstein's inclusion of this shadowy epigraphy among the images chosen for exhibition and publication indicates that, rather than an invasion, these traces symbolize the impression left on our memories by our interactions with others. That is, by inscribing ourselves into shared memory via our relationships, we increase the likelihood of being remembered.¹⁶² Traces left after erasing serve as a reminder that by requesting commemoration from a community, the individual agrees to return the favor.¹⁶³ Similar to Calle's domestication of her mother's uncanny

³⁷ Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials*, 7-8.

³⁸ This is not unlike Benjamin's *aura* in that, like the chalk traces, is also perceived on account of its decay. Cf. Carolin Duttlinger as cited in Melanie M. Brannagan, "The Memory of Things: Walter Benjamin's Modernity" (PhD diss., Univ. of Manitoba, 2013): " 'Aura is thus a concept coined with hindsight, describing an elusive phenomenon from the perspective of its disappearance,' " 156-57.

³⁹ Talking about folktales, Bradford Vivian notes how "a paucity of information concerning the history and genealogy it [the story] is supposed to preserve" can turn a narrative from being an adaptable representation to being a simulacrum of authentic experience. Bradford Vivian, " 'A Timeless Now': Memory and Repetition" in *Framing Public Memory*, ed., Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2004), 194. In this case, the general lack of signatories or context for the individual epitaphs beyond that of the installation *adds* to the authenticity of the collated group of epitaphs presented as personal yet anonymous Platonic examples of

revenant, Burstein's contributors watch themselves become ghosts but the self-fashioned epitaphs turn a potential haunting into a moment of self-actualization. Knowledge of the installation's fictionality, in that the tomb is non-functioning and the dead are not necessarily dead yet, along with its intentional impermanence allows participants to rehearse the generally once-in-a-lifetime experience of posthumousness by trying on different epitaphic identities that, regardless of their eventual fruition, work as aspirational narratives against which the present self may be compared and modeled. This staged "near death experience" also provides an alternate, less estranging context for discussing death in personal terms.

Based on its exhibition at the American Folk Art Museum (AFAM) as part of the 2016 exhibit "Securing the Shadow: Posthumous Portraiture in America", *tep*, like *RM*, embraces both sides of the temporary memorial's nature, capturing the ephemeral and the residual to introduce private commemoration into a public expression. The sheer diversity of epitaphs left by the public is striking when the images are viewed concurrently (as at the AFAM) in what amounts to a temporary memorial of the installation's different manifestations. By placing such a work within the context of a museum exhibit, specifically in conjunction with one focused on the rise of subjective mourning practices in the United States, Burstein legitimizes this subjectivity through temporary or spontaneous memorials that also succeed at crafting narratives that both memorialize and resurrect the agency of their subjects. Physical and commemorative erasure are

epitaph that might refer to anyone who relates to the sentiment. As in Firstenberg's 2020 installation of blank flags, the presence of absence invites the audience to interact and fill the blank space with their personal experience –to claim part of the work, of the narrative, for themselves and in turn fill the psychological lacuna of grief with tangible commemoration.

thus shown to be independent phenomena, and creating a paratextual network derived from the epitaphic text demonstrates how absence is defied through individual narrativization.

Audience interaction with the epitaphic installation is critical, as the initial writing act co-activates both the participant and the work, using mirroring as a way of folding past, present, and future into a single textual and figural representation. This process of self-writing unfolds differently for each interaction, but all the contributors will at some point be face to face with the manifestation of their own voice as with their own mortality. With prompting from the eraser's ironic visibility, participants may also practice re-voicing if they choose to leave multiple epitaphs.¹⁶⁴ Whether or not the writer is the epitaph's subject, there is nevertheless an estranging experience of auto-lecture when the voice in one's imagination is suddenly read as another's. This dissociation of the epitaph writer from the text allows multiple temporalities to occur at once since the writer will always constitute their own present but the epitaph invokes a relative past (in the case of a second- or third-person subject) or a future-past (first person).

The installation's telescopic temporality is actually a locomobile component of the work, as it follows the audience home. By participating in the installation, the hypothetical "prospective", as Panofsky would have it, becomes retrospective (and vice versa) due to the effect on interpretation of changing context.¹⁶⁵ As participants continue to move in the wider world, their installation experience supplies new associations, embedding itself into the

⁴⁰ Interestingly, nowhere in the installation's paratext does Burstein name contributors or attribute works, much like the anonymous sculptors of pre-modern tombs.

⁴¹ On the critique of Panofsky's iconographical terms, see Robert Marcoux, "Memory, Presence, and the Medieval Tomb" in *Revisiting the Monument: Fifty years since Panofsky's Tomb Sculpture*, eds. Ann Adams and Jessica Barker (Courtauld Institute of Art, 2016), 49-67.

participant's network of memories whenever they think back on their encounter. The mobility of the installation not just in space but in time is reflected in various of the epitaphs, such as:

“The space between your world and mine is filled only with time”

“I am no longer here”

“Here lies one whose name was writ in chalk”

These and many others destabilize the present in which the installation audience exists, creating what Lynne Goldstein refers to as “time depth, during which ideas about the space and place of death may have changed one or more times” to form a framing memory based on the present immersive experience of a past or future event.¹⁶⁶ This subjective memory will in turn be corroborated and turned into historical fact by the public exhibition of a photographic representation that attests to the event remembered. Goldstein goes on to say that “we cannot assume that a mortuary site represents a single, unified ‘finished picture’ of mortuary ritual”, and Burstein captures the repetition of “different ritual stages that have changed in meaning and form” over time.¹⁶⁷ She constructs a self-perpetuating commemorative sequence before removing the passage of time altogether in the artist's book.

This historicizing of the individual epitaphs under the communal past of the installation is foregrounded by Burstein's act of mythologizing the messages in her video, *Mirror* [FIG 1.29]. At six-and-a-half minutes long, the brief film shows anonymous arms reaching into the frame to write on the slate tombstone. At the beginning, halfway point, and end the stone is wiped with a

⁴² Lynne Goldstein, “Afterword: Visible Death: mortuary site and mortuary landscape in diachronic perspective”, *Archeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 11, no. 1 (2002): 201-205.

⁴³ Goldstein, “Visible Death”, 202.

wet cloth and the viewer watches as the surface changes from glossy black to marbled and half-dry and finally to dry and unreflective. The difference in state is accentuated by the gradual disappearance of the cameraman's reflection in the stone. Between these intermissions, anonymous hands reach into the video and installation frame to write different epitaphs before erasing them in a time-lapsed blur. Like the videographer whose presence is visible before slowly fading away, each epitaph lasts only long enough to be read before it dissolves into a wash of white dust that accumulates with each added voice. The video is an example of time erasure on Burstein's part similar to Calle's depiction of imperceptible looped death. Both videos play with the erasure of memory, with Burstein appropriating the eraser as a tool of proliferation versus destruction, allowing new texts to take place. This cumulative process is compounded in the book by minimal inclusion of the installation environment and monochrome images that make each image seem like it was taken on the same day.

Upon close inspection, it also appears that only two or three different people are writing all the epitaphs. While no caption is provided, the voiceover provides some clues into what is, presumably, the re-writing of other people's compositions to facilitate a continuous shot of writing and erasing. Such theatrical representation of a history of events immortalizes the impermanent and places the value of the chalk epitaphs on their affective power, not their formality. The story told in the video voiceover is of Nasreddin, who traveled the world after declining to take over as caretaker of a holy shrine. On a mountain pass one day his beloved donkey dies and Nasreddin sorrowfully buries him, sitting by the grave in mourning. The rumor spreads that he is keeping vigil over a saint's tomb, and eventually an entire mosque is built around him.

Knowing that the grave was of a donkey and not a holy person, Nasreddin's guilt builds until, upon seeing his father once more, he confesses. In response, Nasreddin's father says, "My saint was a donkey too!". The story and accompanying time-lapsed succession of epitaphs both attest to the power of speculation to convert object into symbol regardless of the original or "true" origin. There is also a trace of *vita brevis* regarding both the inevitability of certain things, like death, but also regarding the impermanence of all things including memory and truth. While Burstein relies on others to invent the content of the installation's narrative, her role as artist is to reproduce, remove, and (re-)contextualize this process indefinitely as a cohesive work of installation.¹⁶⁸ Rather than lose historical credibility due to the separation from "its authentic presence in space and time", Burstein's epitaphs were only ever conceived of as *potential* memorials and so their true claim to historic testimony is as part of the installation, whose boundaries are self-determining and thus impossible to anachronize.

Burstein's epitaphic installation enshrines all aspects of the creation process by presenting new and erased text simultaneously, juxtaposing the slate tombstone as an empty form with potential and the same space full of context and imbued with voice. Allusive to the relationship between the living and remembered dead, the eraser, unless wet, does not produce a perfectly clean slate-another part of the artistic process that Burstein preserves. Instead, several of Burstein's photos show the ghostly trace of previous text that has not been fully effaced, and full erasure requires an intentional intervention that is ritualized in Burstein's videos. In some images, the dark fingerprints of an unknown participant are visible in the chalk dust. In others, text is still

⁴⁴ This also counters Benjamin's definition of 'authenticity' that counts "physical duration" as a tenet (Melanie Brannagan, "The Memory of Things," 95).

legible and comes to bear upon the fresh inscription.¹⁶⁹ A few particularly uncanny companions, for example “Tired of all this eternal buttoning and unbuttoning” with the lingering words “the grave next opened maybe [sic] thine” or “transcend transcend transcend!” written over the still legible “ ‘dearly’ departed”, mimic the interaction of distinct memories that merge and conflate over time. Reminiscent of spirit photography, in which real and fake are intentionally confused in order to feign supernatural presence, these photographed epitaph traces allude to the malleability of memory and the impossibility of an objective truth representative of a history of subjective interpretations of experience. The past, present, and future all inevitably come to bear upon each other in each participant’s imagination as an encompassing narrative rooted in memory.

By publicly displaying a collection of subjective truths under the title *the epitaph project*, Burstein answers the question “what is an epitaph?” by concluding that everything can be if it uses epigraphy to enshrine memory. Her installation proves that context alone determines the function of inscriptions as epitaphic such that any textual content that is activated by a commemorative parergon has epitaphic potential. This site-specificity that is essential to temporary memorial and installation art is proven here to also be key to the construction and retention of commemorative narratives. By linking the installation’s content so indelibly to participant intervention, *tep* creates an epitaphic space of perennial significance.¹⁷⁰ The traces of

⁴⁵ In a particularly eerie example, handprints are visible above the note “Gone to Croatan”. ¹⁷⁰ As Rosenthal says, “as the work of art became increasingly intertwined with its location in installation art, the context itself became triumphant in the field of art,” Mark Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art: from Duchamp to Holzer* (Munich; New York: Prestel, 2003), 27.

chalk remind spectators of the community of epitaph writers into which each new message is inscribed.

The opportunity to practice commemoration safely imparts a sense of mastery that transcends the physical realm. We are moved to write when silence is emotionally unacceptable, but we are simultaneously frozen with the responsibility, as Derrida would say, of doing the dead justice.¹⁷¹ The solution that epitaphic installations like *Rachel*, *Monique* and *the epitaph project* offer is to rehearse before opening night. The installation community is one that, like Wordsworth's "One life", "remains ever in need of supplementation insomuch as it is unfinished, unresolved, and even in dispute-its *raison d'être* and source of strength."¹⁷² To be remembered is to remember in kind and the life of the community is prolonged by continuing to add new subjects whose memory and memories prevent the communal mourning from concluding. *The epitaph project* urges its audience to embrace this self-perpetuating grief as a sign of humanity and interconnectedness that builds upon a social phenomenon of mourning in which individual showings of commemoration reinforce and legitimate each other.

Joyce Burstein's *the epitaph project* redefines the creative limits of the epitaph by capitalizing on the mnemonic capabilities of repetition and representation that participants activate. The repeated process of picking up the chalk and interacting with the installation becomes a shared experience among those who remember their individual interactions that germinates into a network of public memory. Burstein frames the subjective epitaphs as the production of a community. The resulting book and gallery display of these anthologized

⁴⁶ Derrida, *The Work of Mourning* (ed. Brault and Naas), 6.

⁴⁷ Fosso, *Buried Communities*, 124.

subjectivities as ‘epitaphs’, broadens the term to include and affirm temporary expressions of commemoration within a new tradition of public mourning. These temporary memorials offer new representational possibilities that are better equipped to adapt to and not merely withstand the passage of time. A locomobile network of commemorative paratexts reframes erasure as renewal and allows the drafting of posthumous narratives.

Conclusion

The contemporary theorization of installation art is diffuse and far-reaching in its influences. From the “happenings” and “passageways” of mid-century installation to the ever-evolving digital collages and socially responsive examples that continue to be seen in works from Firstenberg, Calle, Burstein and others, installation has prioritized the creation of experience within both ordinary and ritually coded epitaphic spaces. Immersive installation experiences, and in particular the memories that are retained of them, mirror the merging of individual and collective knowledge that occurs in the wake of loss and throughout the grieving process. Just as an installation is interpreted internally by the individual audience member and externally as a publicly displayed work of art, the act of commemoration necessarily occurs in the margin between public and private. In order to persist, memory must be shared in some way, but commemoration also demands a certain authority behind the shared narrative in order to serve definitively as it does as a representation of real lives and events.

In Sophie Calle’s case, the artist is representing her own experience of loss and asks the public to share in her grief to create their own memories of Monique Sindler based on the collaboratively curated resurrections of her life experience. For Joyce Burstein, the artist is responsible for producing a setting in which the audience decides how to represent themselves

or others as participants in Burstein's publicly curated photo-archive of voices representing epitaphic practice as much as its results. In both circumstances, the installation emerges as an ideal context for the accumulation of memory and meaning that is likewise associated with sites of commemoration. These spaces become saturated with personal connections, inferences, allusions, metaphors, and reactions such that the installation defines whatever space it is moved into and thus reaches a level of locomobility that could be fruitfully applied to the practice of commemoration. Moreover, the site-specificity that comes from installation's interaction with its surroundings is already a key part of ongoing traditions of temporary memorials.

As I have shown in this chapter the definition of permanence applicable to commemorative works of art is more in keeping with the idea of perpetuity than with that of physical immutability. Flexible and adaptable within time and space, Sophie Calle's and Joyce Burstein's installations represent two approaches toward the institutionalization of temporary memorials as legitimate and complex expressions of remembrance that combine the private and public, rendering singular grief a shared concern and worthy of communal recognition. The use of repeated acts of remembering in both *Rachel, Monique* and *the epitaph project* precipitate participation creating epitaphic spaces in which the dead are not only represented, but re-presented within the communal exhibition space through the application and manipulation of text-objects. By reframing current temporary memorials as epitaphic installations, dynamic spaces can be created in which the dead may speak for themselves with authority. Each artist ensures an encounter between life and death with the means to engage in a sustainable dialogue limited only by imagination. Combined with the perpetual presentness of the dead, epitaphic installation allows for new meaning to be interpreted from intermedial resurrections of the past

and representations of the future. The ability for these installations to develop and change capitalizes on the epitaph's amorphousness and thus resurrects the epitaph not as a static monolith, but as a true point of interaction around which memories continue to form.

Part II

« Ou soit que ls fortune, ou soit que le chemin
T'ait conduit à ma tombe : écoute à quelle fin,
Passant, je te supply d'arrester pour entendre,
Tant sois-tu bien appris , ce qu'il faut apprendre
Pour mespriser le monde, & lever ton esprit
A Dieu, dont tu es filz par un seul Jesus Christ »
-Pierre Ronsard, *Epitaphe de Loyse de Mailly*

Chapter 4: Mobile commemorative networks in post-Conquest England

The arrival of fewer than ten thousand Norman aristocrats in Britain is notable as much for its cultural as for its political influence in Great Britain. The strategic building plan that sprinkled the British landscape with distinguishably Norman churches and castles is perhaps the most readily visible result of the Conquest today.¹⁷³ Within these complexes were built thousands of abbeys, monasteries, priories, and chapels whose inhabitants were commissioned to pray for the souls of their ascendant Norman patrons. The spiritual concerns of the incoming ruling class coincided with a new concept of mortality that emerged in the 11th and 12th centuries in which the liminal space of Purgatory and thus individual salvation overtook older beliefs of a single collective Judgment of mankind.¹⁷⁴ In this atmosphere, funerary art and architecture commemorating individual souls flourished, with private cemeteries and intra-mural church burials of secular persons establishing a new monumental trend that remains one of the defining legacies of Anglo-Norman culture.¹⁷⁵

¹ Some primary characteristics of these structures are the use of stone (often imported from Normandy), “the vaulted gallery, the clerestory walk, the towers flanking the apse, and the great lantern crossing tower,” Lindy Grant, *Architecture and Society in Normandy, 1120-1270* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale Univ. Press, 2005), 81.

² Nigel Saul, *English church monuments in the Middle Ages: history and representation* (Oxford; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2009), 33.

³ By monument I am referring to monolithic and static structures, manmade or in some way altered by humans that physically mark or refer to a person, place, or event deemed worth remembering. Timothy Insoll, ed., *The Oxford Handbook of the Archaeology of Ritual and Religion* (2011; online edn, Oxford Academic, 2012), <https://doi-org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199232444.001.0001>; the section on ‘monument’ begins with its etymological derivation “from the Latin *monumentum* ‘something that reminds’ which is related to the verb *monere* ‘to remind’ or ‘to warn’”, (Insoll, ed., *Oxford Handbook...Archaeology of Ritual and Religion*, 9).

In this chapter I will consider two examples of Anglo-Norman commemorative installations that were created and used between the years 1066 and 1348, that is, from the Battle of Hastings to the first wave of bubonic plague in Britain. The mortuary culture born of that pestilence, while better documented, certainly continued but also radically transformed thanatological customs established during the three centuries of Norman, and later Angevin, dynastic rule.¹⁷⁶ It is this transitional Anglo-Norman period that will be the focus of my investigation. While there is no end of innovations that could be studied in Anglo-Norman commemorative culture, I seek to highlight how changing concepts of death and memory turned tombs and other memorials into dynamic participants in inscribing individuals into history, ones whose repetition, recontextualization, and resurrection of the powerful dead was based on the same tenets of theatricality, intermediality, and site-specificity that have been used to describe modern installation art.

The first section of my analysis will center on the context of commemoration in Normandy from which my Anglo-Norman case studies emerge. Following this I will introduce the chapter's two central sepulchral matrices, or tomb arrangements, in northern and southern England. In both instances, my analysis will focus on the sculptural object alone and within the context of its display and use. As will be shown, installation as a practice describes the construction of not only monuments and buildings but indeed the entire imposition of Norman settlement on the English land and appending of Anglo-Norman narratives through shareable

⁴ While the Anglo-Norman dynasty stemming from William I ceded the English crown to the Angevins after Matilda and Geoffrey of Anjou's son, Henry III, acceded in 1154, the dissertation's focus on Norman commemoration in England does not engage directly with Angevin influences and I will therefore refer to the period in question from 1066-1348 as Anglo-Norman.

texts. In conclusion, I will offer some thoughts on how modern societies may best make use of these potent processes of memory based on examples of commemorative installations that have already begun to mobilize memory in the service of historical representation.

Anglo-Norman innovations in the use of epitaphic installations as a means of claiming and maintaining power in both this life and the next exemplify an evolving theology in which an increasingly “standardized burial liturgy”, perhaps best exemplified by the extended Cluniac death liturgy, employed performative and even interactive rituals surrounding the corpse, aimed at securing safe passage for the soul. The ringing of bells, lighting of candles, chanting of prayers, procession of holy objects, and careful preparation of the body for burial demanded the multi-sensorial participation of an entire community. The ritual even included a ceremonial beating of the cloister door whose sound would echo across a community and initiate their commemorative interaction with the dead.¹⁷⁷ In this context, memorials were conceived of as tangible elements that maintained an ongoing dialogue with the physical spaces used in the liturgical ritual and procession.

More recent funereal art was consumed alongside any existing sacred art and artifacts, compounding their existing symbolic functions. For example, looking upon the image of St Christopher and seeing the host raised were both said to ward off sudden death. Such actions required physical interaction with the church space and even inspired a sort of express pilgrimage as parishioners reportedly took to “running from church to church to see as many

⁵ The striking of the cloister door gave way to “beating of the ‘the board of the dead’” when the liturgical procession had to be brought to the deathbed. Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial in Medieval England, 1066-1550* (London; New York: Routledge, 1997), 27-28.

elevations as possible” in a day.¹⁷⁸ In keeping with the Norman fondness for architectural *spolia*, old and new symbolic artifacts are incorporated into conquering ideologies by way of a sensory experience. Specific commemorative monuments claimed physical space within more generally sacred locations, carving out a space for the memory of individuals within the site’s collective history. Such “contextual awareness” of symbolic representations pervaded the wider expression of Norman power on English soil.¹⁷⁹ More affixed commemorative monuments such as tombs were supplemented by the proliferation of paratextual documentation of the dead, as in mortuary rolls, chronicles, and epitaphic poetry, whose portability expanded a monument’s sphere of influence within the broader public consciousness. The addition of these aide-memoires to the large-scale construction of commemorative monuments also produced a desirable dissemination of an individual’s memory across a wider field, which was itself opening up to include participants beyond the royal family. Such a tangible reach had the anticipated effect of greater intercession on behalf of one’s soul, a sustained influential presence in the living community left behind, and a material legacy to perpetuate one’s name into the future.

This creation of what I call “mobile commemorative networks” –people and places connected by objects and sites that perpetuate the memory of someone or something by virtue of not being fixed to a single location– capitalized on a concept that has in the 20th century become central to the contemporary theorization of installation art, namely, “narrativity”.

⁶ Daniell, *Death and Burial*, 29.

⁷ Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 43. On other ways of tangibly representing the transition to Norman power, cf. Christopher Harper-Bill and Elizabeth Van Houts, eds., *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World* (Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2003) for coinage and seals, and cf. Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans: ethnic hostility, assimilation, and identity, 1066-c. 1220* (Oxford; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), 122 on heraldry representing advantageous intermarriage.

Derived from Ricoeur's concept of *narrativité* as a product of consciousness, Marie-Laure Ryan offers three basic criteria for the trait that she defines as "a dimension of the semantic domain projected by some texts...a narrative text must create a world and populate it with characters and objects...[t]he narrative world must undergo changes of state that are caused by physical events...text must allow the reconstruction of an interpretative network of goals, plans, causal relations, and psychological motivations around the narrated events".¹⁸⁰ Just as Ryan demands certain components that determine a work's degree of narrativity, I reserved the term mobile-commemorative network for assemblages that include some element that can be removed from the initial commemorative site and reactivated at will, such as text, sound, or photographic access.¹⁸¹ The establishment of a critical discourse between artwork, space, and audience distinguishes installation art as a genre which incorporates object and site in its activation of multiple narratives immersing both the work and its reception.

⁸ Regarding the potential of narrative to solve the paradox of time simultaneously being and not being, Ricoeur says: « Il faut être plus radical et porter au jour les expériences où le temps en tant que tel est thématiqué, ce qui ne peut se faire sans introduire le troisième partenaire du débat avec l'historiographie et la narratologie, la phénoménologie de la conscience du temps... le problème de la refiguration du temps par le récit se trouve porté au niveau d'une vaste confrontation entre une *aporétique de la temporalité* et une *poétique de la narrativité*, » Paul Ricoeur, *Temps et récits* (Paris : Seuil, 1983-1985), 10. Marie-Laure Ryan, "Modes of Narrativity," *Style* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1992), 370-71: Ryan considers narrativity as a spectrum along which texts curate their own imagined worlds in order to communicate subjective experience more or less coherently.

⁹ I subscribe to Neufeld and Wagner's explanation of "assemblage" as "various juxtapositions of heterogeneous components as abstract as linguistic signs and semiotic meanings" that has also been interpreted "to mean the 'ad hoc groupings' of multiple material elements such as humans and things," cf. Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: a political ecology of things* (Durham, N. C.: Duke Univ. Press, 2010). Focusing on "text-bearing artefacts", Neufeld and Wagner crucially note that, "In such assemblages, the agency is not located with any one entity, but distributed among all elements that are topologically associated with one another." (eds., Lieb, Neufeld, and Wagner, *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment*, 5).

This proliferation of meanings, composed by multiple people at once and by individuals across time, allows the integral work to be thought of as actively “possessing narrativity” rather than more passively “being a narrative”.¹⁸² The dynamic collaboration between creator, artifact, audience, and site is thus key to describing a work as an installation versus a tableau or sculpture, whose unified contents take up space but do not shape it. Unlike the latter forms, an installation occupies a space intentionally, rupturing the boundaries between spectator and displayed work. The viewer, moving through and reacting to both visual and spatial aspects of the art, transforms from passive spectator to active collaborator in the meaning-making process.

The idea of rupture is, unsurprisingly, also highly applicable to most facets of the Anglo-Norman period, and funerary architecture is no exception.¹⁸³ It is art that interacts with and even undermines its *parergon* and forces its audience to consider the place of display—the stage—as a non-neutral component of the installation. Given these characteristics, Norman tomb programs can, I contend, be reframed as having an installation-like relationship with the landscape and gallery-space that house them. Indeed, the complex networks of commemoration initiated by such monuments rely just as heavily as modern installations on the meaningful connections made by viewers between site and subject. Like the meaningful pairing of tomb and burial or place of interment, the monument is accorded value based on its setting within a community.

¹⁰ Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 231; specifically in installation theory, narrativity refers to “a cognitive construction that the interpreter creates as a response to the text”, in which the viewer supplies the narrative links between ‘nodal points’, or “privileged signifiers around which other signifiers in the discourse are arranged and from which they acquire their relative meaning.” (Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 231; 59); i.e., synchronically, and diachronically

¹¹ Hadley and Dyer’s edited volume *The Archaeology of the 11th Century: continuities and transformations* (Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2017) provides an in-depth study of Norman disruption in all aspects of English life.

The dynastic tombs discussed in this chapter are examples of symbolically successful memorials that were placed in the most sacred spaces of a church, near the altar and in the chapterhouse.¹⁸⁴ According to this level of importance to location is not in itself unique—a monument in a government building is imbued with a different kind of authority than one in, say, an alleyway— but these tombs go a step further. Like the art installation, the so-called monuments at hand derive and shape symbolic and political meaning from the narratives—factual or legendary— associated with their historically significant locations. The work of Anne Morganstern and Jessica Barker has shown the effectiveness of medieval tomb sculpture in establishing complex ties of kinship and allegiance across both time and space, and Shirin Fozi’s recent book builds on the established notion of tombs as a means of representing the dead to argue convincingly that funerary sculpture not only depicted the dead but was also capable of redefining them through the construction of an authoritative personal narrative that would then be carried into posterity via public memory.¹⁸⁵ Posthumous reinvention is ubiquitous among the medieval tombs considered by existing scholarship, although it is often the *creation* of the tomb object, with the dense symbolism of its formal features, that is the focus of these analyses. What has not been so thoroughly explored, and what I broach in this chapter, is a post-facture analysis of the process by which meaning communicated by monuments influenced the narrativization of the dead within public memory.

¹² Saul, *English church monuments*, 114.

¹³ Anne Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2000); Jessica Barker, *Stone Fidelity* (The Boydell Press, 2020); Shirin Fozi, *Romanesque Tomb Effigies* (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2021)

The human experience of deliberate manual fabrication of such environments is itself at the core of many installation artist's philosophies. In her chapter "The Poetics of Experience", Monica McTighe considers how "the process of making is opened up and transformed into its various experiential modes: material sensations, traces, and actions" in the work of artists such as Anne Hamilton and "shifts the interest from a permanent object to the components of an experience" –a phenomenon quite compatible with medieval commemoration in which monuments served as points of evidence that anchored individuals' integration into a broader historical narrative.¹⁸⁶

Consideration of these medieval monuments on par with modern examples of installation art illuminates aspects of commemoration like adaptability and interaction that might be thought of as essential to the creation of historical memory full stop. My discussion of Anglo-Norman memory construction is further supplemented by surviving paratextual documentation of the families and religious communities, allowing for an economic and political contextualization of these monuments as part of continuously active networks of memory. This parallel between Norman monuments and installation art, it is hoped, will offer a new understanding of the societal role that commemorative structures continue to play in the creation of historical memory. Zooming out and considering those elements that have remained integral to successful commemoration for nearly a millennium will initiate a reassessment of commemorative practices in our own time.

¹⁴ McTighe, *Framed Spaces*, 136.

Commemoration in pre-Conquest Normandy

The duchy of Normandy, named after the Viking ‘north men’ who raided and then settled in the northern province in the 10th century, functioned as an autonomous principality after Rollo’s conversion. This independent duchy lasted until the beginning of the 13th century when the siege of Chateau-Gaillard in 1204 signaled France’s ultimate sovereignty over Normandy. A prevailing theme in the study of Norman expansion is, interestingly, that of adaptability. While the debate on the existence of a “Norman” identity endures, the very possibility of this contestable *Normanitas* is indicative of neither disorganization, nor unity, but instead, of Norman colonizers’ ability to maintain a perceptible cultural presence during the execution of a comprehensive invasion. During the drawn out process of colonial assimilation; this flexibility is proof of a rare capacity for adaptation without capitulation. Strategic use of incorporation versus eradication resulted, ironically, in the creation of hybridized norms that could be incorporated into the Norman political machine such that the amalgamated practice became the ‘Norman’ way of doing things, for example, the adoption of local administrative terminology and encouraging beneficial intermarriages with the local aristocracy.¹⁸⁷ One tangible example of cultural adaptation that is present in both of my case studies is the room that English conquest and cross-Channel alliances opened up for non-inheriting sons and daughters of Norman nobility to achieve political and economic notoriety through large-scale seizure of wealth, land, and status.¹⁸⁸ In the

¹⁵ This assimilation was part of a strategy Hoofnagle calls “conversion politics” in which the superficial acceptance of cultural practices allowed the systematic submission of the conquered people to appear as a paternalistic, rather than militaristic act. Wendy Hoofnagle, *The Continuity of the Conquest: Charlemagne and Anglo-Norman imperialism* (University Park, Penn.: The Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 2016), 22. See also, Hugh M. Thomas’ discussion of assimilation and the survival of English identity in *The English and the Normans* (2003)).

¹⁶ Elaine Jamieson, “Castles and the Biography of Place: Boundaries, Meeting places and Mobility in the Sussex landscape, *Landscapes* 20, no. 1, 28.

end, “Normanness” may be most consistently associated with a pragmatic and opportunistic ambition for supremacy and distinction. This is no less true in the case of commemorative culture and is particularly notable in the material representation of memory.

The accelerated development of a distinctive mode of Norman commemoration emerged from the geopolitical instability following the 1066 death of Edward the Confessor, whose empty throne left a power vacuum with multiple claimants and led to immediate civil war, a period known tellingly as “the Anarchy”.¹⁸⁹ The English crisis of succession remained unsettled through the 11th and 12th centuries, with short periods of relative stability under Angevin rule, until the establishment of the Plantagenet dynasty in 1216 under Henry III. This precarious political context necessitated constant re-constructing of the historical narrative to support Norman claims to the English throne and legitimize longtime long term campaigns in Wales, Scotland, and the Mediterranean.¹⁹⁰ One of the best-known strategies for securing at least geographic domination was the Norman building program that literally installed Norman authority in the form of stone keeps and churches across the British landscape, often on the site of existing Anglo-Saxon buildings.¹⁹¹ Within these enormous structures, the construction of authority

¹⁷ Interestingly, although entombed at Westminster, Edward the Confessor is not among the tombs studied in Morganstern’s survey, likely due to the original having been destroyed in the 15th century dissolution; the “Anarchy” in England refers to Stephen of Blois’ rule lasting from roughly 1135-54, Paul Dalton, *Conquest, anarchy, and lordship* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1994), 2.

¹⁸ For summaries of these conflicts cf. Thomas Glyn Watkin, *The Legal History of Wales* (Cardiff: Univ. of Wales Press, 2012), 76-105; Paul Dalton, *Conquest, anarchy, and lordship*, 196-230; Michael Bennett, “The Normans in the Mediterranean”, in *A Companion to the Anglo-Norman World*, eds. Harper-Bill and Van Houts (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; New York: Boydell Press, 2003), 87-102.

¹⁹ Sara Nair James, *Art in England: The Saxon to the Tudors, 600—1600* (Oxford; Philadelphia: Oxbow Books, 2016), 43. Elaine Jamieson rightly notes how “although castles were largely a new

continued with commissioned paintings, reliefs, tapestry, and sculpture that testified to the terrestrial power derived from and constitutive of a perceived spiritual superiority.

Long before 1066, the Norman duchy had developed ways of symbolizing unity and centrality despite conflict between neighboring regions. Funerary monuments enhanced individual or family authority by extending it into the afterlife and across a present public consciousness. A need for displays of unity and centrality at all levels of Norman governance in the face of the French crown led to dynastic constructions of churches and mausoleums as well as fortresses to establish a distinctly Norman sphere of cultural influence. One major testament to memory's political power is the investment made by even minor nobility such as the Gouvix and Crespin families, to found or endow monastic institutions.¹⁹² Such acts ensured the Norman nobility of an encomiastic legacy and a place of rest.¹⁹³ A major motivation behind these endowments was the newly heightened concern for the fate of individual souls. From a theological point of view, the advent of Purgatory as a mainstream belief is impossible to understate as a major source of commemorative innovation in light of increased consideration of an individual soul's experience of the afterlife. The idea that souls were judged on the day of their death and not all together on *the* Day of Judgment validated and indeed encouraged the performance of intercessory prayers by the living on behalf of the dead.¹⁹⁴

tradition of building imposed on the English landscape, there are good reasons to believe that they adopted places which already held meaning for local communities and which had acquired significance many centuries earlier. (Jamieson, "Castles and the Biography of Place", 2019)

²⁰ Instead of entire monasteries or hospitals, "Foundations of military knights suited the lesser regional aristocracy" (Grant, *Architecture and Society*, 36).

²¹ Daniell, *Death and Burial*, 112.

²² Paul Binski, *Medieval death: ritual and representation* (Ithaca, N. Y.: Cornell Univ. Press, 1996), 24 and 71; Daniell, *Death and Burial*, 107.

The vast rise in monastic patronage among the Norman aristocracy, as elsewhere in France, that continued through the 12th century led to greater distribution of the dead in rural as well as urban settings.¹⁹⁵ Transportation of bodies through public spaces, either from the place of death or to the place of interment, created a more consistent landscape of commemoration across England observable in Anglo-Norman literature as the network of commemorative sites like cemeteries, battlefields, chapels, and shipwrecks where the heroic dead are evoked and memorialized by readers and characters alike. As locally sponsored monasteries proliferated, representations of the deceased on commemorative sculpture became a way of prompting intercession for a named individual.¹⁹⁶ Although not a uniquely Norman practice, William I “reinvigorated” monastic patronage as a particularly useful tool in the cross-Channel governance of Norman territories.¹⁹⁷ His tomb is currently found in the Abbaye aux Hommes in Caen that he founded before invading England [FIG 2.1].

At a time when the monarch and his forces were often absent from the seat of government, monumental placeholders kept the king’s name and authority from falling into obscurity. Authority over high-level clerical appointments and the approval of both English and papal church leaders gave William “legitimacy, political support and military resources”, not to mention control over landownership, and the link between Norman monasteries and their English daughter establishments additionally allowed a direct implementation of ongoing ecclesiastical reform and regulation.¹⁹⁸ The aristocratic control of land and tithes by way of

²³ Hadley and Dyer, *The Archaeology of the 11th Century*, 6.

²⁴ Saul, *English church monuments*, 24,

²⁵ Richard Huscroft, *Ruling England, 1042-1217* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2016), 122.

²⁶ Huscroft, *Ruling England*, 123-24.

monastic patronage, as will be seen in greater detail, was operative in the founding of the de Warenne necropolis at St. Pancras' Priory. A similar tactic of monastic endowment was also used to appease younger or illegitimate sons who would not inherit a family's primary assets but could be installed in a comfortable country manor, as was the first Brian FitzAlan of Bedale.¹⁹⁹

Back in Normandy, the creation of large-scale dynastic mausolea was largely limited to the ducal family, of which Notre-Dame-de-Rouen is exemplary.²⁰⁰ The stone effigies of Norman rulers [FIG 2.2-2.5] indicate a strong attempt at asserting dynastic continuity within a duchy whose own political status vis à vis the kingdom of France was perpetually in flux.²⁰¹ From the initial adoption of Frankish customs and language in the 10th century, the strategy of incorporating existing practices that were either too specialized or too expensive to overhaul is visible in the pre-Conquest ducal tombs found in the Norman cities of Rouen and Fécamp.²⁰² In Rouen, the Notre Dame's reconstruction in the later 12th century shows the profound impact of changing architectural styles due to its near constant state of repair between 1145 and the

²⁷ Brian was the eldest of Alan of Brittany's illegitimate sons. Alan's eldest legitimate son became Conan IV, Duke of Brittany. Pierre Le Baud, *Cronicques et ystoires des Bretons*, Tome IV (Rennes : Société des bibliophiles bretons, 1922), 20.

²⁸ The tombs or memorials are those of Rollo, first duke of Normandy, Richard I, Matilda, and William Longsword.

²⁹ Charles III of France initially gave Normandy (and his daughter in marriage) to the Viking Rollo in 911. Normandy was conquered by the Angevins in 1144, but the Capetian French crown continued fighting to regain control of the region (that technically remained a vassal of the French king) until finding success in 1204, when John I was forced to cede Normandy to Phillippe II Auguste. In 1259, the Plantagenet claim to Normandy was officially withdrawn by Henry III in return for keeping the English crown.

³⁰ The effect of such disruptions after the Norman Conquest are also attested to by the number of burial sites -seven- for the Norman dukes between the establishment of the duchy and the end of John I's tenure. Members of the House of Normandy are buried at the Abbeys of Saint Bertin, of Saint Wandrille, and of Sainte-Trinité, as well as in England at Reading Abbey, Gloucester Cathedral, and Winchester Cathedral. Cf. François Neveux, *La Normandie des ducs aux rois (Xe-XIIIe siècle)* (Rennes : Editions Ouest-France, 1998).

French Revolution. Art historians consider the current edifice to be « la seule église de France qui permette de suivre l'évolution de l'art gothique, non seulement dans toute son étendue mais encore dans toute sa variété ». ²⁰³ It remains significant for its organic fusion of Roman, Scandinavian, Romanesque, and Gothic elements such as subterranean crypts, pitched roofs, ribbed vaults, and elongated windows [FIG 2.6].

Such an aesthetic hybrid displays a ruptured narrativity with the manufactured encounters between contrasting building styles that force visitors to glean meaning from multiple distinct spaces. The rearrangement of nodal points defines the temporary installation, which reemploys elements but means something different in every exhibition. The cathedral of Notre-Dame in Rouen offers a prototype for embracing the imposition of change and reconstruction to create a truly singular monument to Norman power. After a devastating fire in 1200, Rouen cathedral became a vestige of ducal glory and a nostalgic attempt at reconstruction that hoped to revive the church's reputation as "both ducal mausoleum and coronation church" of the so-called "mother church" of Normandy. ²⁰⁴ The cathedral's new choir, for example, displays a "stylistic ambivalence" with references to French and Flemish buildings, while the ambulatory quotes other Norman foundations. ²⁰⁵

Moreover, the patronage of Jean I *sans Terre*, king of England (r. 1199-1216) and duke of Normandy (r. 1199-1204), at the turn of the 13th century is testament, through confirmation charters, ceremonial practices, and royal burial, of an attempted revival of Notre-Dame de Rouen

³¹ Jacques Le Maho and Anne-Marie Carment-Lanfry, *La Cathédrale Notre-Dame de Rouen* (Mont-Saint-Aignan : Presses universitaires de Rouen et du Havre, 2010) DOI : <https://doi-org.proxy.uchicago.edu/10.4000/books.purh.3779>, 23-46.

³² Grant, *Architecture and Society*, 121-22.

³³ Grant, *Architecture and Society*, 139.

in the face of encroaching French annexation. Paul Webster offers Rouen cathedral as an example of intense ducal devotion within the context of international war that, although not strong enough to stop Philippe Auguste's royal army, is echoed in Rouen's privileged role as "the first of the Norman cathedral communities to recover its lands in England" after 1208.²⁰⁶ Even amidst the uncertainty of disinheritance, Rouen's Notre-Dame cathedral upheld its function as a historically prominent stabilizing capital in which Norman bonds of loyalty based on familial and economic interests were strengthened and defended.

On the shores of the English Channel, the Benedictine abbey of Fécamp [FIG 2.7] housed the remains of dukes Richard I and II of Normandy, which were transferred from their original tombs to ones commissioned by Henry II during the rebuilding of the abbey.²⁰⁷ In an instance of

³⁴ Paul Webster, "King John and Rouen", in *Cardiff Historical Papers* (Cardiff School of History and Archaeology), 332-33.

³⁵ The famous necropolis of French kings at St Denis gives a good idea of how tumultuous a body's existence could be even after death. Robert Guiscard, duke of Norman Apulia and Calabria, died on campaign in 1085 and was taken from Greece to Italy for burial. Unfortunately, his body fell overboard during a shipwreck and his internal organs had to be removed and the body embalmed with aromatics to survive the journey to the family chapel at Venosa. Elizabeth Van Houts, *Memory and Gender in medieval Europe, 900-1200* (Toronto, Buffalo: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1999), 94-5. William I's infamous burial in a too-small grave after his intended burial plot was found to be already claimed led to his body infamously bursting open. Even prior to this, a fire in Caen had disrupted the funeral procession, see the chapter "Death and Legacy" in David Bates, *William the Conqueror* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2016), ch. 13. Royal tombs in Westminster Abbey have also suffered at the hands of iconoclasts during the Protestant Reformation and English Civil War. Similarly, Alexandre Lenoir's *Musée des monuments français* served as a repository of medieval religious art salvaged during the French Revolution, David Freedberg, *Iconoclasm* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2021), 24. On the shift from "a praxis of recycling and new construction and toward an appreciation of antique structures as historical documents that record shifting human taste", see Elizabeth Emery, "Meubles: The Ever-Mobile Middle Ages," *The Medieval Globe* 6, no. 1 (2020), 125. <https://doi.org/10.17302/tmg.6-1.6>.

narrative rupture, the bones were moved and placed behind the high altar in 1162 as part of Henry's transition to power.²⁰⁸

The abbey also claimed to possess the relic of a vial of Holy Blood, which was actively promoted to pilgrims.²⁰⁹ Both of these newly acquired features of the abbey materially altered the abbey structurally, but in doing so they also changed the experience of visiting Fécamp for subsequent pilgrims. The 1162 renovations mark narrative transitions by disrupting the content of the holy site, in turn providing a new environment for visitors to interpret. Simultaneously local and international in symbolism, Fécamp Abbey blended cutting-edge French masonry and style with Norman political interests to create what has been referred to as 'Norman Gothic', but which is at its core the product of architectural customization bridging stylistic genres to represent and perform political dominion. The fortress functioned as both monastic house and ducal residence and was subject to gradual reconstruction from the original wood structure to stone. The inclusion of a formal court ("*aula ducale*") gives some idea as to the level of theatricality that would have been infused into religious activities at the abbey.²¹⁰

What is more, the success of Fécamp as a site of pilgrimage directly influenced the physical characteristics of the church: a long ambulatory with radiating chapels was added at the end of the 11th century to provide dedicated space for pilgrims and the sick without interrupting

³⁶ Jean-Guy Gouttebroze. "Pourquoi congédier un historiographe, Henri II Plantagenêt et Wace (1155-1174)," *Romania* 112, no. 447/448 (3/4) (1991): 289–311, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/45039302>.

³⁷ Grant, *Architecture and Society*, 82; The relic of Christ's blood was stolen in June 2022 but were recovered within a month (Paul Kirby, "French Fécamp 'precious blood' relics recovered after abbey theft," *BBC*, July 12, 2022, <https://www.bbc.com/news/world-europe-62092195>).

³⁸ Neveux, *La Normandie*, 395.

monastic life, while also supplying a new context for people to experience and interpret.²¹¹ While these are but two examples of the monumental Norman style, they allow us to grasp not only the ostentatious projection of power, but also the effective use of the installation methods mentioned earlier-theatricality, intermediality, and site-specificity- through the repetition of dynastic symbols linking new kings to the ancient Norman dukes back to Rollo, the recontextualization of successful French monumental architecture, and the resurrection of epic folklore that painted the Normans as the rightful heirs of their ancient birthright.²¹²

Judging from its architectural production there is little doubt that ducal Normandy counted upon the consistently reiterated projection of a strict and centralized governance to remain more or less unified throughout the 11th and 12th centuries. And while this unification was perhaps “a short-term creation of duke William II”, it was hugely successful during that time.²¹³ The same tactic is present in funeral customs that were (re)codified in post-Conquest Britain, such as ceremonial procession, monumental burial, effigies, and lay church interments. An increased clientele for commemorative monuments among the baronial class occurred both before and after 1066, expediting geographic transferal of stately Continental structures into the

³⁹ Leonie V. Hicks, *Religious Life in Normandy, 1050-1300: space, gender, and social pressure*, (Woodbridge; Rochester, N. Y.: Boydell Press, 2007), 25.

⁴⁰ This narrative revival was centered around the Treaty of Claire-sur-Epte signed by the Viking Rollo and French king Charles “the Simple” in 911, in which Rollo was baptized in return for the city of Rouen and coastal territories that would coalesce to become Normandy. The legend of Christian Norman rule took off when the “pagan marauders, responsible at least in part for the devastation of the thriving monastic life of northwestern France, then became the patrons of these very same institutions,” Lisa Reilly, “Vikings to Normans,” *The invention of Norman visual culture: art, politics, and dynastic ambition* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2020), 38.

⁴¹ Hadley and Dyer, *Archaeology of the 11th Century*, 7.

new physical and cultural context of Norman England.²¹⁴ In the Anglo-Norman iteration of Norman funeral customs, the vast rural holdings at all levels of the ruling class allowed for an expansion of posthumous representation in the form of familial crypts and detailed effigies contemporaneous with the royal post-Conquest Norman building program. Indeed, the commission of lifelike effigies for family crypts emphasizes a newly individual commemorative impulse. Memorials like those at Lewes and Bedale translated the trappings of Norman dynastic power into the hands of the newly enriched Anglo-Norman gentry.

The following chapter's analysis focuses on two tomb programs in England that were established by Anglo-Norman nobility at the beginning and late phases of Norman rule. While there is much to be desired regarding complete extant Anglo-Norman funeral installations, the two examples used herein offer reasonably well-preserved artifacts while representing both northern and southern regions of Norman England.²¹⁵ The first, in Sussex, is the Priory of St Pancras' Lewes, established between 1078 and 1082 by William de Warenne, 1st earl of Surrey and his wealthy Flemish wife, Gundrada, as the first Cluniac community in Britain.²¹⁶ Within the Chapterhouse were the commemorative monuments of William and Gundrada; their son and successor William (or, "Earl Warenne"); his wife, Elizabeth de Vermandois; and the 6th and 7th

⁴² Saul, *English church monuments*, 57.

⁴² Shirin Fozi sums up the difficulty of studying the funeral monuments of the 11th-12th century as being "geographically scattered... diverse in style and materials", with "no unifying presence of a single workshop or known patron... poorly preserved, removed from their original sites of installation, and notoriously difficult to date," (Fozi, *Romanesque*, 4).

⁴³ William de Warenne is a confirmed member of William, Duke of Normandy's invading army in 1066. (Keats-Rohan, *Domesday*, 480).

earls of Surrey, both John de Warenne.²¹⁷ In addition to the tombs, there exists the Lewes Breviary (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum), which contains feasts days for several English saints, “a series of requests for mercy and deliverance”, and alternate litanies for “the sick and dying” that correspond to a high level of adaptability in the Cluniac liturgy.²¹⁸ Dated to the 13th century, the richly decorated breviary was likely commissioned for St Pancras and created in England. The manuscript known as the ‘Crowland Psalter’ was also at St Pancras in the 12th century, with some characteristics of the text suggesting personal use by Gundrada de Warenne.²¹⁹

The Priory [FIG. 2.8] was also the site of Henry III’s defeat at the hands of his barons after the Battle of Lewes in 1264, with an 1864 railway construction project uncovering a mass grave attributed to the battle.²²⁰ Simon de Montfort’s triumph over Henry III in 1264 at the Battle of Lewes was also commemorated in the anonymous *Song of Lewes*, of which a copy survives in MS Harley 978.²²¹ Archaeologically, St Pancras has a checkered history since many of its supposed founding documents are now accepted as post-dating their purported dates of creation by as much as three hundred years. This post-facto documentation has cast unfortunate doubt upon even the

⁴⁴ The church also houses the tombs of the 1st Baron of Arundel, 10th Earl of Arundel, Hamelin de Warenne, Eleanor Maltravers, Eleanor of Lancaster, Elizabeth de Bohun, and the 4th Baron Bergavenny. However, these burials all post-date 1348 and therefore fall outside the delimited time period for this chapter.

⁴⁵ Graham Mayhew, *The Monks of Saint Pancras: Lewes Priory, England’s Premier Cluniac Monastery and its Dependencies, 1076-1537* (Lewes, UK: Lewes History, 2014), 108-109.

⁴⁶ Oxford, Bodleian Library, MS Douce 296 (S. C. 21 Oxford; Bodleian Librqry ?S Douce 269 (S. , 21870); Rebecca Rushforth, “The Crowland Psalter and Gundrada de Warenne”. In *The Bodleian Library Record* 21(2), (Oxford, 2008), 156-168.

⁴⁷ “History Overview” St Pancras Priory, <https://www.lewespriory.org.uk/history-overview>.²²¹ Charles Lethbridge Kingsford, ed., *The Song of Lewes*, The Clarendon Press 1890, viii, folios 107r-114v

most recent excavations from 1969-82.²²² The priory is therefore a work of amalgamation in both its physical and historical identity.

The second location is the Church of St. Gregory in Yorkshire. Founded in the market-town of Bedale, North Riding by Brian FitzAlan around 1290 and certainly before 1300, the church contains the extant effigies of Brian and his first wife, Muriel, along with an unnamed priest and the effigy known as the 'Sheffield' knight.²²³ The Bedale FitzAlan traced their position in Anglo-Norman aristocracy back to the sons of Eudo, Conte de Penthièvre, two of whom had fought at Hastings.²²⁴ Brian FitzAlan's direct ancestor, Stephen, was a younger son of Eudo's and the third brother to inherit the family's holdings in Richmond, England. It would be Stephen's grandson, Sir Brian FitzAlan, who would become the 1st Lord (later Baron) of Bedale and founder of St. Gregory's.²²⁵ St. Gregory's is a fortified building featuring wall paintings and stone

⁴⁸ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 453.

⁴⁹ Brian Gittos and Moira Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies: The Evidence from Yorkshire to 1400*, (Oxbow Books: Oxford, 2019)

⁵⁰ K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, *Domesdays People: a prosopography of persons occurring in English documents, 1066-1166* (Woodbridge, UK; Rochester: Boydell Press, 1999—2002), 47.

⁵¹ K. S. B. Keats-Rohan, "The Bretons and the Normans of England 1066—1154: the family, the fief and the feudal monarchy," *Nottingham Medieval Studies* 36, no. 42 (January 1, 1992): 42, <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.proxy.uchicago.edu/scholarly-journals/bretons-normans-england-1066-1154-family-fief/docview/1299555050/se-2?accountid=14657>. After Stephen, Alan IV of Brittany and was among Stephen of Blois' supporters against Empress Matilda. In return for his service, and in an effort to ally Bretagne more closely with the House of Blois, Alan was given his uncle Alan le Roux's lands and the title of Earl of Richmond. On another unduly confusing note, the Lords of Bedale are named Alan or Brian in alternating generations through the 12th and 13th centuries. The founder of St Gregory's was the great-great-great grandson of Alan IV. "Alan de Penthièvre," Find a Grave, added February 27, 2012, https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/85845695/alan-de_penthi%C3%A8vre; "Brian I Fitzalan," Geni, last modified April 26, 2022, <https://www.geni.com/people/Brian-Fitzalan/6000000000424801702>; "Parishes: Bedale," in *A History of the County of York North Riding: Volume 1*, ed. William Page (London: Victoria County History, 1914), 291-301. *British History Online*, <https://www.british->

sculptures dating to the 10th and 11th centuries.²²⁶ A 2012 excavation in Bedale yielded the Bedale Hoard of Viking artifacts dating to the 9th or 10th century [FIG 2.9].²²⁷

The textual legacy of Bedale tends toward legal documents, such as grants and pardons found in pipe rolls, Domesday Book, and the Battle Abbey Roll.²²⁸ But the complicated pattern of inheritance at Bedale makes the information found in these sources particularly interesting in terms of maintaining dynastic control. Combined with Brian FitzAlan's illustrious military career under Edward II, the Bedale archival material casts the family's highly detailed effigies as narrative vessels of both individual and dynastic history. The Bodleian Library also holds a manuscript (Hatton 82) of *Perlesvaus* owned by 'Sire Brian fiz alayn' in the 13th century [FIG 2.10].²²⁹ The story of *Perlesvaus* is particularly heavy with descriptions of tombs not unlike those found at Bedale and across the estates of Anglo-Norman barons and attests to a practice of chivalric commemoration that bridged fiction and reality. As seen in the next chapter, the use of literary texts is another fruitful avenue for understanding how curated memorialization functioned in the creation of commemorative narratives. This section of analysis will thus conclude with a comparative study of historical and fictional representations of tombs using Bedale and MS Hatton 82 (*Perlesvaus* or, *Li haut livre du graal*) as a point of departure.

history.ac.uk/vch/yorks/north/vol1/pp291-301#anchorn11; Paul Carnell, "St. Gregory's Church," History, The Benefice of Bedale, last modified April 21, 2020, <https://bedale.church/?tag=history>.

⁵² "Church of St Gregory," Historic England Research Records, Heritage Gateway, last modified December 31, 2014, https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=52197&resourceID=19191.

⁵³ "The Bedale Hoard," Yorkshire Museum, <https://www.yorkshireremuseum.org.uk/collections/collections-highlights/the-bedale-hoard/>.

⁵⁴ "Parishes: Bedale," 291.

⁵⁵ Nicolette Zeeman, "Tales of Piers and Percival: *Piers Plowman* and the Grail Romances", *Yearbook of Langland Studies* 22 (2008), 205.

The commemorative programs at Lewes and St. Gregory's both employ theatricality, intermediality, and site-specificity in their establishment of individual and collective Norman hegemony, and the extant tomb arrangements at both sites are thus considered within the wider context of imported Norman burial practices visible in the ducal tombs in Notre-Dame de Rouen, and in contrast with the existing Anglo-Saxon traditions in England, whose combination with Scandinavian and French practices resulted in a unique Anglo-Norman culture of commemoration. To this end, a brief discussion of pre-Conquest Norman commemoration before considering Lewes and Bedale is necessary to set the stage for the hybrid Anglo-Norman system of memorialization.

Chapter 5: Medieval epitaphic installations

Lewes

An attested companion of William the Conqueror's and major beneficiary of the conquest, William de Warenne hailed from the aristocratic Norman family of *Varenne*. However, as the non-inheriting second son of Rodulf de Warenne, William was forced to distinguish himself elsewhere.²³⁰ After making his name as a war hero during the Conquest and a successful leader at the Battle of Mortemer in 1054, de Warenne was given extensive lands confiscated from English nobles in four counties and was eventually made the earl of Surrey.²³¹ William's reputation as a skilled soldier and loyal commander was further cemented during the baronial uprisings in 1075 and 1088.²³² In a time when the population was growing and resources were stretched thin among noble Norman families, colonization in Sicily, Italy, and Britain opened new opportunities for non-inheriting children like William.²³³ De Warenne was able to accumulate lands seized during and after the conquest that placed him among the five wealthiest baronial landholders recorded by the 1086 Domesday survey.²³⁴

Of particular relevance to this chapter is that this newly dispersed wealth manifested in the foundation and construction of private homes, monastic institutions, and family necropolises. The founding of ecclesiastical houses in England and their use as dynastic burial locations by the

¹ McCall, *EYC*, 1.

² McCall, *EYC*, 3.

³ McCall, *EYC*, 3.

⁴ Stephanie Mooers Christelow, "The Division of Inheritance and the Provision of Non-inheriting Offspring among the Anglo-Norman Elite," *Medieval Prosopography* 17, no. 2 (1996), 12-13; Sharon Bennett Connolly, *Defenders of the Norman Crown* (Barnsley, UK: Pen and Sword, 2021), 4; these included lands in the Pays de Caux.

⁵ Nicholas Hopkinson, "The Cross-Channel Interests of the Baronage of the Pays de Caux and Cotentin, 1189-1204." (PhD diss., University of Cambridge, 2020), 26.

Norman elite was in full swing under William I, in emulation of royal necropolises in Normandy and Paris, such as St. Denis, that physically established a favorable historical reputation for the ducal family. Both William de Warenne and his first wife Gundrada, along with several descendants, are documented to have been buried at St Pancras, with an 1854 railway excavation of the priory confirming thirteen graves in the chapterhouse alone.²³⁵ All family burials after 1215 were in the Great Church near or in front of the high altar.²³⁶ William's monument, now lost, and Gundrada's extant tomb were originally found in the chapterhouse along with that of their eldest son. Before approaching the de Warenne monuments, however, the larger priory structure merits further attention both in its capacity as the setting for the funeral monuments and as an example of installation art in its own.

Installing the Priory

The first English Cluniac priory [FIG 2.10] was a religious, economic, and artistic center whose fortune outlived even that of the Warennes themselves (the last earl died June 1347), surviving as it did until Henry VIII's Dissolution in 1537.²³⁷ As Lindy Grant keenly observes, while the "Anglo-Normans and Angevins were careful to observe the proprieties of conventional piety:

⁶ W. H. St. John Hope, "The Architectural History of the Priory of Saint Pancras at Lewes," *Archaeological Journal* 41, no. 1 (1884), 19, DOI: 10.1080/00665983.1884.10852119.

⁷ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 222; eight other burials are mentioned in the chartulary, cf. Priory of St. Pancras, L. F. Salzman, and Sussex Record Society, *The Chartulary of the Priory of St. Pancras of Lewes part I*, *Sussex Record Society* 38 (1932) and Priory of St. Pancras, L. F. Salzman, and Sussex Record Society, *The Chartulary of the Priory of St. Pancras of Lewes part II*, *Sussex Record Society* 40 (1934).

⁸ "Houses of Cluniac monks: Priory of Lewes," in *A History of the County of Sussex: Volume 2*, ed. William Page (London: Victoria County History, 1973), 64-71. *British History Online*, accessed January 3, 2022, <http://www.british-history.ac.uk/vch/sussex/vol2/pp64-71>. The de Warenne dynasty endured for seven generations before petering out in the mid-14th century (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 222).

that does not mean that they were merely conventionally pious” and, in addition to the upkeep of existing buildings, new construction of a vast and elaborate ecclesiastical buildings spread across England.²³⁸ Among these foundations was St Pancras Priory [FIG 2.11], which would become the wealthiest Cluniac house in Norman/Angevin England.²³⁹ In 1077, after an “unplanned” detour to the abbey of Cluny II (consecrated 1088 and the order’s mother house in Burgundy), while on pilgrimage in the decade following the Battle of Hastings, the 1st earl Warenne and his wife Gundrada founded St Pancras in Lewes, Sussex.²⁴⁰ This was to become one of the most powerful monastic centers of Anglo-Norman Britain, but initial resistance to its foundation from the Norman clergy and the difficulty the Warennes faced in obtaining permissions and priors made the priory’s foundation myth all the more important as a legitimizing narrative. The facticity of this story will be revisited shortly, but either way the historical record shows that the Cluniac order was granted the church of St Pancras outside the town of Lewes, first in 1077 and later confirmed in 1087/8 under the second earl.

By the second half of the 12th century, the original timber church had already been rebuilt in stone and incorporated into the priory’s self-styled history as a tangible link to pre-Norman use of the land for worship.²⁴¹ Although archaeological evidence indicates a “free-standing chapel” under the Cluniac church, there is “no secure archaeological dating” to determine Anglo-Saxon origins.²⁴² From its very foundation, St Pancras’ Priory was invested in producing a legally and

⁹ Grant, *Architecture and Society in Normandy*, 33; *ibid.* 55-6.

¹⁰ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 16.

¹¹ St John Hope 2; <https://www.lewespriory.org.uk/history-overview>

¹² The timber church is mentioned in the first charter.

¹³ Roland B. Harris, *Lewes Historical Character Assessment Report* (2005), 17.

morally beneficial narrative for itself and its patrons. The legacy of Lewes Priory is one of ongoing expansion and reconfiguration throughout the ensuing four hundred years.²⁴³ It is in this fluctuating setting that both the identified and unidentified interments in the chapter house ought to be considered.

Rather than taking a purely individualized approach to the St Pancras burials, I propose to treat them as intermedial components of what I have defined above as the “monastic installation”, or the geographic expansion of centralized ecclesiastical power through the foundation of daughter houses and reclamation of land and resources, referring to the buildings and lands that made up the priory’s immediate domain. St Pancras’ sprawling network existed within the larger web of English and European Cluniac institutions and of the Warenes other architectural foundations, notably Castle Acre castle and priory.²⁴⁴ Like an installation, the priory’s holdings were disparate and yet bound together by their shared narrative purpose and subject matter. In terms of installation theory, the story that the Norman construction at Lewes was physically installed on top of and around an existing Anglo-Saxon church acknowledges the potency of site-specificity to establish social memory – “memory shared by those who are *already* related to each other” – by claiming common ground.²⁴⁵ The strategic use of existing structures

¹⁴ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 11.

¹⁵ Castle Acre Priory was founded by William de Warenne II c. 1089 and construction continued into the 1160s. In November 1537, the priory surrendered to Henry VIII, but it remains one of the best preserved examples of Anglo-Norman ecclesiastical architecture (“Castle Acre Priory,” Castle Acre, English Heritage, <https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/castle-acre-castle-acre-priory/history/>).

¹⁶ Edward S. Casey differentiates “social memory” from “collective memory”, “in which different persons, not necessarily known to each other at all, nevertheless recall the same event -again, each in her own way” (Edward S. Casey, “Public Memory in Place and Time,” *Framing public*

and infrastructure as bases for new constructions is arguably the secret behind the prolific building of churches achieved under Norman rule.

Three characteristics of installation art-narrativity, immersion, and rupture- characterize the phenomenon of memory creation and perpetuation that incentivized situating these burials within the working spaces of a priory that was itself an architectural amalgam. St Pancras disrupted but did not destroy the Anglo-Saxon historical narrative, choosing to integrate it into the new Anglo-Norman historical and religious narratives instead of attempting an utter erasure, as would be the case during the priory's own dissolution. The resulting priory site would invite visitors to participate in rituals whereby individuals act collectively to establish a sacred place. The sacralizing effect of the priory over the immersed landscape materialized as dependencies across England, notably in Norfolk.

On a local scale the priory's infrastructure spread over the Ouse River floodplain, taking up considerable space with its numerous out-buildings in addition to the extended footprint of the great church.²⁴⁶ Along with the typical monastic amenities such as a cloister and dormitory, St Pancras also ran an on-site watermill, a "Great Malthouse", exchequer, blacksmith, dovecote, and fisheries in addition to the basic domestic infrastructures needed for survival, including orchards and immense gardens.²⁴⁷ In 1889, thirteen burials were discovered to the north and east of the

memory 68 (2004), 22-23. This appropriately reflects the Norman practice of assimilation and legitimization through the inheritance of locally meaningful sites and practices.

¹⁷ The original "Infirmary church" was replaced in the 12th century by the Great Church ("Houses of Cluniac monks," 64-71).

¹⁸ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 74-5, 79, 221-22: A town unto itself, St Pancras' prior had a "private kitchen and bakehouse" next door and "two wine cellars" in his basement (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 74).

Great Church, “indicating, in all probability, the site of the Priory cemetery” and thirty-five years earlier a mass grave had been discovered that contained hundreds of dead from the Battle of Lewes (1264).²⁴⁸ The ample space surrounding the priory where the cemetery was located also allowed for a larger number of interior church burials due to the five radial chapels at the eastern end [FIG 2.12] of the church.²⁴⁹ The multiple instances of inhumation found on monastery grounds intensifies the daily interactions between people (living and dead) and land already present in the priory’s continuous agglomeration of lands and resources that still defines the town’s geography.²⁵⁰

During the tenure of the first seven earls de Warenne there exists a rich documentation in the form of annals, chartularies, and attesting to a tradition of bequeathing land and money to St Pancras in exchange for prayers in favor of individual souls. From the priory’s inception donations made by local benefactors “created a network of interrelationships between Lewes Priory and the knightly families which stretched across half the country and beyond” and allowed the priory to expand quickly in its first hundred years.²⁵¹ St Pancras’ charters from all eight earls de Warenne include in their contents grants of land and tithes from chaplains, rectors, clerks,

¹⁹ “Battle of Lewes,” History, Lewes Priory Trust: The Priory of St Pancras Lewes, <https://www.lewespriory.org.uk/battle-of-lewes#:~:text=During%20excavations%20to%20lay%20the%20railway%20line%20in,these%20external%20links%3A%20Battle%20of%20Lewes%20-%20Wikipedia>; C. T. Phillips, “Archaeological Discovery at Southover, Lewes,” *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 37 (1890), 194, <https://archive.org/details/sussexarchaeolog37suss/page/194/mode/2up?view=theater>.

²⁰ The monk’s cemetery lay to the east of the Great Church, outside the high altar and radiating chapels and with “the ‘Great Garden’ of the convent next to the cemetery” (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 75).

²¹ For example, Friars Walk, Priory Crescent, and Priory School (Harris, *Lewes Historical Character Assessment Report*, 3.5.3; *ibid.*, 4.5.1; *ibid.*, 4.6.1).

²² Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 27.

bishops, sheriffs, and summoners, among others.²⁵² The number and variety of benefactors is one of the best attestations to the renown that Lewes Priory enjoyed at its height in the 1140s.

In addition to “the core holding around the site of the monastery itself” that was granted to the monks in 1086, within fifty years of its foundation the priory held “48 churches and chapels in Sussex and 29 elsewhere”, with lands and privileges in five counties. St Pancras had grown rapidly and “for many of the new Anglo-Norman landholders in Sussex” had become “the major focus of their spiritual life and the main recipient of their largesse” with donations from fifty-six tenants recorded in 1121.²⁵³ The personal connection between donors and the priory cannot be overstated, and Mayhew accurately describes the creation of “a community of lay support for the monks amongst many of Sussex’s leading landowners” who benefitted in turn from spiritual rewards such as “an obvious choice” of burial location and inclusion in Lewes’ *Liber Vitae* “for a perpetual remembrance and prayers” by the monastic community that assured “safe passage for their souls through whatever torments lay ahead until they were reunited in heaven” with their loved ones.²⁵⁴ Not only were such benefactors directly involved in the physical construction of the priory, they also affected the content of the rituals practiced in the sacred spaces within priory walls.

Regarding narrativity and rupture, the monastery can be spoken of as a geophysical rupture upon the land and the older Anglo-Saxon construction. The considerable additions made to the church and surrounding buildings also attest to the impressive growth of the priory and

²³ L. F. Salzman, *Lewes Chartulary part II*, *Sussex Record Society* 40 (1934).

²⁴ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 30.

²⁵ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 30.

the ensuing economic and political ruptures that such a large institution caused between William de Warenne, his tenants, the monks, the Cluniac order, and the Church. All these singular events punctuate the history of St Pancras and have been rendered in both administrative (cartularies, annals, etc.) and literary (missals, chivalric romance, psalms) texts that informed the priory's narrative epitextually since their inception. The narrative potency found in the carved epitaphs and the continuous disruption of the church with new burials is thus activated like an installation by the presence of an audience whose subjective reading of the monuments is codified through their collective performance of commemorative ritual.

Tombs and monuments within these sacred spaces arise as literal pillars of the community around which neighbors, "people who potentially share locality-based interests and can potentially form a *community* furthering them", are galvanized by commemorative acts to fulfill this communal potential and thus immerse themselves fully in a commemorative network.²⁵⁵ Even making a distinction between being *within* as opposed to *without* a commemorative space is complicated, both because of the centuries of architectural rearrangement and because St Pancras did have two functioning cemeteries outside its easternmost apse.²⁵⁶ That is to say, the act of intramural burial was an intentional re-integration of certain dead within the space of the living. Intramural or not, no space related to the monastery was completely devoid of the dead, especially given the daily intercessory prayers and

²⁶ Hannu Ruonavaara, "The Anatomy of Neighbour Relations," *Sociological Research Online* (2021), 8.

²⁷ One lay, to the north, and another to the east for the monks (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 79).

bells that would have echoed across town.²⁵⁷ The de Warenne family capitalized on this diffusion of lay and monastic commemorative infrastructure to install their own memorials.

For the souls of those deemed worthy of an interior tomb, a commemorative connection to the priory meant the protection of St Pancras, the teenage Phrygian martyred in Rome (3rd/4th c.) who was associated with the punishment of perjurers and known for his direct intercession on behalf of “the faithful dead”.²⁵⁸ These services were particularly extensive in the Cluniac liturgy, which was especially conducive to the preservation of memory. Not only did prayers, psalms, and bells echo through the church as the body was “placed on a bier and carried to the door of the choir”, but the entire processional [FIG 2.13] also wound through every section of the church thus fusing place and body in a sensorial performance that fully occupied the performance space.²⁵⁹ Even after the body was buried, in the case of a fellow monk, the “bells, which had begun to ring as the body was ... brought out to the grave, continued to ring until the priest had left the gravesite” and the said priest would have been following a parade of monks “singing the seven penitential psalms” all the way to the choir.²⁶⁰

These aural extensions of the burial ritual were paralleled materially in the commemorative tradition. A monk’s daily food allotment and clothes were given as alms or to

²⁸ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 54; 97.

²⁹ “...so that God might ‘*through the merits and prayers of your blessed martyr Pancras, cleanse us of our sins*’” (author’s emphasis) (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 114; Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 117-18). Regarding perjury, a miracle chronicled by Gregory of Tours (6th c.) in which any perjurer who approached Pancras’ tomb either “is seized by a demon or he falls to the pavement and breathes out his spirit” gave way to using Pancras’ relics for the swearing of oaths. Allegedly Harold Hardrada himself swore false fealty to William I of Normandy on a phylactery (“the bull’s eye”) that may well have been held at Lewes, according to the Hyde Chronicle.

³⁰ *Agnus Dei, Kyrie Eleison, Deus in adiutorium*, etc. (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 112).

³¹ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 113.

brothers in need who were “Instructed by the prior to remember the dead man” through, of course, “the singing of extra psalms”.²⁶¹ Finally, the deceased were commemorated textually through inclusion in the monastery’s necrology, or death record. The announcement of a death was propelled across the Cluniac community so that masses could be said on his behalf and “his name and day of death” was written into other necrologies within that network.²⁶² The entire monastic complex was involved in the rituals surrounding the dead with multiple processions moving through the priory space. Before, during, and after death an individual’s body was carried between the infirmary, chapterhouse, choir, and churchyard accompanied by sung prayers, psalms, incense, and holy water at various points.²⁶³ This localized mobile commemorative network expanded, installing itself in the daily lives of other communities obliged to celebrate and remember the dead. Processional movement through set symbolic spaces, as in a gallery, inscribes particular experiences into more generally meaningful places with the enactment of specific commemoration through replicable interaction. The initial multisensory funerary procession can be recreated indefinitely, on yearly anniversaries or saint’s days for example, temporarily reclaiming shared space for individualized commemoration. As seen in greater detail shortly, constructing symbolic monuments around which a procession can be mapped amounts to the curation of a commemorative landscape upon which commemorative narratives are set.

At St Pancras, elaborate funerals are recorded for some de Warenne family members in addition to the expected ritual, but numerous less-prestigious benefactors in all parts of England

³² Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 113.

³³ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 114.

³⁴ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 110.

also left grants to St Pancras in return for prayers. One Thomas, son of Hugh de Sandale granted the priory use of a chapel “for his soul and his wife’s, for the souls of his father and mother, and for the souls of his lord, William son of Godric, and for the souls of all his ancestors”, proving just how wide a net of influence the priory’s commemorative acts cast in English society.²⁶⁴ The mobile commemorative network created by the exchange of land use for prayers was central to both the financial success of the priory and to its social capital as a house worthy of endowment. St Pancras’ reputation as a premier monastery was further bolstered by the tombs of illustrious family members and burial rights could also be leveraged in return for political and, as in 1264, military protection.²⁶⁵

Epitaphs for the Family

Of the two founders’ monuments, only Gundrada’s tomb slab survives today, although damaged.²⁶⁶ Her husband’s tomb was destroyed during the French Revolution, but the epitaph and sculpture survive in medieval and modern artistic representations.²⁶⁷ Both tombs were

³⁵ C. T. Clay, *The Yorkshire portion of the Lewes chartulary* (Leeds: St. Pancras Priory, 1933), 307 (f. 298).

³⁶ “Patrons were also expected to protect their monastery’s interests should any external threat to its property or other rights arise. In return they became honorary members of the monastic community” (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 218); the priory served as Henry III’s battle headquarters with Henry Knighton’s Chronicle noting how “missiles lit up the church” as Simon de Montfort’s forces advanced. (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 241)

³⁷ Incidentally, Gundrada’s tomb slab was originally “found in the eighteenth century, face down in nearby Isfield Church” where it had been used as “a table tombstone” for the sixteenth century “tomb of Edward Shirley” (Van Houts, Elizabeth, “The epitaph of Gundrada of Warenne”, 2004). Possibly related to cutting down of the slab to fit the Shirley monument, the tomb slab is missing large chunks of marble from the end of the epitaph and the entire narrow end of the slab has been lost, cutting into the first and second lines of the inscription (Anderson, “Uxor mea”, 111).

³⁸ Thomas Benolte, *The visitations of the county of Sussex, made and taken in the years 1530 by Thomas Benolte, Clarenceux king of arms; and 1633-4 by John Philipot, Somerset herald, and*

carved of marble, but Gundrada more or less set the bar for the de Warenne monuments with her tomb slab carved of jet black Tournai marble [FIG 2.14].²⁶⁸ Gundrada's tomb currently resides in nearby Southover Parish Church [FIG 2.15], but evidence from the 1854 archaeological survey indicates that Gundrada's original resting spot, along with those of twelve other individuals, was in the priory's chapter house, cloister, or church.²⁶⁹ Both her and her husband's bodies were reinterred in leaden cists [FIG 2.16 & 2.17] in front of the high altar in the 12th century, probably concurrent with the priory's re-dedication c. 1147, with new monuments likely commissioned for both founders.²⁷⁰

In addition to William and Gundrada's burials, there is documentation proving the location of other family members in the chapterhouse and near the high altar, including laments for their death and transcriptions of epitaphs. William 2nd earl of Surrey is commemorated by the Lewes annalist, who contrasts the joy of his son's birth with the sorrow of William's passing soon after. All the earls of Warenne save the 3rd and 4th were buried at St Pancras, alongside their wives and parents.²⁷¹ Richard 1st earl of Arundel and his wife, Eleanor, were also interred at

George Owen, York herald, for Sir Jon Burroughs, Garter, and Sir Richard St. George, Clarenceux (London: Mitchell, Hughes and Clarke, printers, 1905), (https://archive.org/stream/visitationscoun00banngoog/visitationscoun00banngoog_djvu.txt).

³⁹ Freda Anderson, "'Uxor Mea': the first wife of the first William of Warenne," *Sussex Archaeological Collections* 130 (1992), 110.

⁴⁰ St John Hope, "Architectural History," 19; Anderson, "'Uxor mea'," 109.

²⁷⁰ Dempsey, Karen, E. Bérat, R. Hardie, and I. Dumitrescu. "Herstory: exploring the material life of Gundrada de Warenne," in *Relations of Power: Women's networks in the Middle Ages* (2021), 180.

⁴¹ William de Warenne II was buried at his parents' feet in 1138. The third earl Warenne died on crusade and the fourth in Toulouse. The fifth earl, Hamelin, and his wife Isabella were buried near the second earl in 1202 and 1203, respectively. The sixth earl's first wife, Maud, was "the last de Warenne to be buried in the chapter house" in 1215 and his second wife, also Maud, was

Lewes in the late 13th century.²⁷² Accounts of some of these burials can be found in the chartulary and recorded wills. For example, the will of John 8th earl of Surrey was written in French; he requested burial at St Pancras, “in an arch by the high altar on the left side which I have had made”, thus assuring the quality of his body’s treatment and of his legacy, while Richard 1st earl of Arundel left instructions for his tomb not to exceed the size or cost of his wife’s, Philippa of Lancaster.²⁷³

In terms of epitaphs, John 7th earl of Surrey’s is also recorded in the chartulary. A highly traditional example of a medieval epitaph, it is useful in this context as a point of comparison for the more personalized epitaphs written for William and Gundrada:

*« Vous qui passez ou bouche close / Priez pour cely ke cy repose / En vie cum vous estis jadis fu / E vous tiel serretz cum le su / Sire Johan Count de Gareyn gyst ycy / Deu de sa alme eit mercy ».*²⁷⁴

John’s epitaph employs a number of epitaph conventions. First, the opening line calls out to the passerby in the style of Roman ‘Viator’ tombs, with the second line exhorting prayer for the

interred in the Great Church near the high altar in 1236. William, the sixth earl Warenne who died May 28, 1239, was buried “in the middle of the pavement before the high altar”. His son John, seventh earl Warenne, was likewise buried “before the high altar... under a flat tombstone on the flat pavement” in 1304. John’s son William, seventh earl Warenne, died in 1286 and was buried in front of the high altar. John de Warenne’s wife, the seventh countess of Surrey, died in early 1290 and was buried “under a marble stone carved in the fashion of a dragon with branches coming out of its mouth”. In 1293 Lady Joan de Vere, wife of William the eighth earl Warenne, was buried in front of the high altar “in a lofty tomb”. The last earl Warenne of Sussex, John, died in 1347 and was also buried “in a lofty tomb” next to the high altar. The last family burial was that of Elizabeth, second countess of Arundel and Surrey, who died in 1385 and was buried separately at Lewes on the south side of the high altar (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 222).

⁴² Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 222-23.

⁴³ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 222-23.

⁴⁴ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 222: “You who pass by unspeaking / Pray for he who rests here / Alive as you are he once was / And you will be as he is now / Sir John Count of [Warenne] lies here / May God have mercy on his soul” [my translation].

deceased.²⁷⁵ The following two lines draw from the tradition of the “Three Living and Three Dead”, wherein the living reader is more or less admonished to remember their own mortality and to reflect on the cycle of mortality that touches all living beings.²⁷⁶ In the final two lines the ‘cy gist’ (in this case, ‘gyst ycy’) structure is used to introduce the deceased’s individual identity before God is called upon to have mercy on John’s soul.

While the order of the tropes is certainly variable, the 7th earl’s epitaph achieves the desired encounter with its reader by invoking intercession for the soul of the departed.²⁷⁷ By addressing the warning or reminder of mortality to ‘*vous qui passez*’, the epitaph defines the reader and itself in relation to each other. For John de Warenne, the goal of securing a posthumous reputation as an individual whose name deserves to be recorded for posterity and whose death and burial signal his membership to the broader communities of family and Christianity is achieved. As a commemorative text, John’s epitaph uses conventional language and creates space within its message for the subjective meaning that arises from interactions of individual readers while also binding them together based on the shared act of reading and their cultural familiarity with epitaphic text.

⁴⁵ Cf. Carroll (*Spirits of the Dead*, 53) on ‘Viator’ tombstones.

⁴⁶ The legend in England is largely influenced by Baudouin de Conde’s 13th century composition: “Li trois vif et li trois mors”. In Conde’s version, three carefree young men are confronted by three dead men. The first young man flees in terror, the second attributes the walking corpses to God, and the third is left to contemplate the reality of human death. The three dead famously remind the living that, “Tel seres vous et tel comme ore / Estes, fumes, ja fu li ores,” E. Carleton Williams, “Mural Paintings of the Three Living and the Three Dead in England,” *Journal of the British Archaeological Association* 7, no. 1 (1942), 31.

⁴⁷ It is worth noting that John’s name only appears at the end of the epitaph so that the intercessory appeal is made on behalf of an unnamed individual, hearkening to death’s indiscriminate pall over all humans.

William (d. 1088)

In the case of William and Gundrada's epitaphs, the origins of a dynastic rebranding are visible in the pains taken to express the status and piety of each spouse as powerful patrons of an honorable institution that nevertheless needed continued justification to survive changes in government.²⁷⁸ The tomb of William de Warenne 1st Earl of Surrey, as mentioned above, is no longer in existence, but a transcription of his epitaph survives in Orderic Vitalis' *Ecclesiastical History* written about half a century after William's death.²⁷⁹ William de Warenne died from injuries sustained during the siege of Pevensey in 1088 shortly after being made earl of Surrey. By all accounts he was given a monk's burial (*ad succurendam*) before being interred in the St Pancras chapterhouse.²⁸⁰ He was preceded in death by his first wife, Gundrada, who reportedly died in childbirth in 1085. He was survived by a second wife and children from his first marriage including his heir, William de Warenne 2nd earl of Surrey.²⁸¹ The element of narrative license, seen especially in Gundrada de Warenne's epitaph, matches that of the legal charters that promoted a wholly virtuous legacy of St Pancras' founding family. But while William de Warenne's epitaph is unmistakably panegyric, its heavy-handed use of commemorative clichés stands in sharp contrast with Gundrada's intimate elegy. William's epitaph is as follows:

*'Hic Villelme Comes locus est laudis tibi fames
Huius fundator et largus sedis amator*

⁴⁸ Later, St Pancras' Priory experienced particular discrimination (added taxation, lack of military protection) as an "alien house" whose Burgundian motherhouse was "regarded by the [English] Crown as a French possession" (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 224).

⁴⁹ Marjorie Chibnall, ed. and trans., *The Ecclesiastical History of Orderic Vitalis Volume 4, Bks II and III* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 181.

⁵⁰ McCall, *EYC*, 4; Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 218

⁵¹ McCall, *EYC* 6; according to the Lewes Chartulary and to the necrology at Longpont, Normandy Gundrada died in 1085 during childbirth at the family estate of Castle Acre (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 221).

*Iste tuum funus decorate placuit quia munu
Pauperibus Christi quod prompta mente dedisti
Ille tuos cineres servat Pancratus haeres
Sanctorum castris qui sociabit in astris
Optime Pancrati fer opemte glorificanti
Daque poli sedem talem tibi qui dedit aedem.²⁸²*

[“Earl William in this place your fame is kindled/You built this house and were its generous friend/This was a gift freely and gladly given/To the poor of Christ; it honours now your urn/The saint himself Pancras, who guards your ashes/Will raise you to the mansions of the blessed/Saint Pancras, give, we pray, a seat in heaven/To him who for your glory gave this house.”]

William de Warenne, first earl of Surrey, was commemorated with an epitaph chock-full of stock phrases. The epitaph starts with a version of the ubiquitous « *Cy gist* » of medieval continental tombs, but rather than use William’s earthly corpse as a point of departure to exalt his many good works and spiritual virtue, the epitaph refuses to move beyond here (“*hic*”), the church building. The praise in this epitaph revolves entirely around the foundation of the priory complex, with no direct mention of William’s life apart from building the monastery. This is an interesting omission, given his active military and political career. Very likely the references to William’s patronage and his burial *ad succurendam* were meant to balance out a lifetime of warfare. That William is repeatedly associated with the physical structure of St Pancras’ and never to its intangible devotional labor, may be an attempt to curate William’s real actions in a more morally favorable light.

He is addressed formally as “*Comes*”, as in his charters, further implying a superficial and purely contractual motivation for the elegy. Among other generic language, the word ‘*dedisti*’ is used to describe William’s gift of priory funds. Worth noting is the range of potential translations

⁵² Saul, *English church monuments*, 338.

including both “favor” and “obligation” which, coupled with the legal-sounding assertion that this “was a gift free and gladly given” makes William’s utilitarian value to the priory very clear. William’s success in war and conquest further binds him to the physical locations of his life. ‘*Castris*’ can be translated as “castle”, “fortress”, or “camp” among other definitions, hinting- again obliquely- at William’s success on the field of battle. The epitaph communicates a total binding of William to the physical land and, as a tenant of an unstable government, William de Warenne’s identity was indeed tied to the land that he seized, lost, regained, developed, and left to his heirs.²⁸³ William de Warenne is memorialized as a strictly mortal being with his ashes and urn still interacting with the church and with no posthumous aspirations beyond a comfortable seat in heaven. Even *this* ascension is only achieved by supplicating St Pancras to assist [*fer ope*nte] William from his terrestrial house of worship to his new celestial abode [*Sanctorum castris... in astris*].

Associating the first earl with the material construction of sacred spaces sends de Warenne to a commemorative purgatory of sorts: he is neither evil, nor particularly holy. William’s lifetime achievement is tangible, and his urn and tomb remain as the physical monuments of the church’s structural identity, jointly watched over by the saint and his devotees. Indeed, the use of second person in William’s epitaph forces a reader to represent both the medieval reader addressing William directly and the contemporary reader whose vocalization resurrects the earl not as in life, but as the representation of abstract qualities

⁵³ William had bad luck with monks in general, it seems. The chronicle of Ely Cathedral includes a story in which Warenne’s second wife begged the monks to pray for William’s soul in exchange for silver, but was refused not only for her bribe, but specifically because William de Warenne had previously stolen relics from Ely and his money was considered tarnished.

enshrined by the epitaph text. Earth to earth is certainly the theme of William de Warenne's epitaph, which only survives today thanks to Orderic de Vitalis' participation in the physical historicizing process. His record of a large white tomb and epitaph has allowed William's memory to outlast its own monument.²⁸⁴ As an installation, the mobile, written component of this monument was activated by the reader, who then carried the narrative away as a personal experience to be shared and circulated long after leaving the monument.

Gundrada (d. 1085)

This highly localized example of installation narrativity is taken to new heights in

Gundrada's case. Gundrada's epitaph reads, in its current state:

*Stirps Gundrada ducum decus evi[...] nobile germen
Intulit ecclesiis Anglorum balsama morum
Martir[...]
Fuit miseris fuit ex pietate Maria
Pars obiit Marthe superest pas Magne Marie
O pie Pancrati tes[...] is et equi
Te facit herede tu Clemens suscipf [sic] matrem
Sexta Kalendarum Junii lux obvia carni
Iffregit alabastr[...] (Saul 2009, 339)*

"Gundrada, distinguished offspring of dukes and noble youth in her own time, brought to the churches of England the balms of the martyr's (?) [sic] traditions [...] to those in misery she was in her piety a Mary. The part of Martha [in her] died, the greater part of Mary survives. O, pious Pancras, witness of piety and justice, she makes you her heir; may you in your clemency accept the mother. Her light faded on the 27th of May, when she broke the alabaster [vase...]."²⁸⁵

As examples of installation art, the inscribed tombs permit a more flexible textual embodiment of their subject. In the case of Gundrada countess of Surrey, her epitaph uses a series of paired

⁵⁴ Completed c. 1141.

⁵⁵ Elisabeth M. C., Van Houts and Rosalind C. Love. *The Warenne (Hyde) Chronicle* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013).

terms to expand the repertoire of symbols that represent Gundrada's life and death. The first dichotomy is found in line one when Gundrada is referred to using the words "stirps" and "germen", which can be translated as "stem" and "sprout".²⁸⁶ Gundrada is the 'stem' of a noble line, possibly referring to her position as the 1st countess de Warenne, and she is also the 'sprout' or product of an aristocratic Flemish family. From the very start, she is depicted as simultaneously beginning and end, her virtues acknowledged as representative or part of a group and of her as an individual.

The epitaph distinguishes Gundrada as central to the introduction of Cluniac monasticism to England, with which her family was already associated.²⁸⁷ Gundrada fulfilled her secular duties as a wife and mother, but she also succeeded as a countess and Christian by adding to the spiritual richness of her new homeland. Mention of this contribution addresses the matter of her foreign birth and of the challenges faced by 'foreign' monastic houses such as St Pancras.²⁸⁸ While she is clearly an outsider, the epitaph casts Gundrada as a beneficent newcomer committed to her adopted country.

This retroactive sanctification goes even further in the following lines when she is compared to both Martha and Mary ("*Fuit... Marie*"). The analogy to Mary comes first (*Fuit miseris fuit ex pietate Maria*), followed by Martha [*Pars obiit Marthe superest pas Magne Marie*]. In the phrase translated by Van Houts as "The part of Martha [in her] died, the greater part of

⁵⁶ "stirps," *Online Latin Dictionary*, (<https://www.online-latin-dictionary.com/latin-english-dictionary.php?parola=stirps>); "germen," *OLD*, (<https://www.online-latin-dictionary.com/latin-english-dictionary.php?parola=germen>).

⁵⁷ Gundrada's brother, Gerbod, was a Cluniac monk after 1071 (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 12).

⁵⁸ On so-called 'alien' monasteries, see Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 249.

Mary survives”, Martha is the mortal counterpart to Mary’s divinity. Three things are happening here. First, Gundrada benefits from comparison to both holy women. As a Martha, symbol of the “active apostolate of charity and social action”, Gundrada is praised for work she would have done such as caring for the poor and supporting the monastery and its dependencies.²⁸⁹ Gundrada’s earthly life fulfilled one half of a religious vocation, which ideally comprised both “the apostolic ministry and the contemplative life”.²⁹⁰ While the lay countess of Surrey may not have been in a position to devote her time on earth to fulltime contemplation, the epitaph argues that she intends to do just that in her celestial afterlife. The Martha that “died”, notably in the past tense, is replaced by a spiritual Mary who “survives” in the perpetual present. Having already established her predilection for devotion (“fuit ex pietate Maria”), Gundrada’s epitaph connects living and dead through the continuation and improvement of a virtue demonstrated in life, further inscribing Gundrada in a biblical female genealogy that both precedes and outlasts her individual experience.

The next thematic pairing is of “herede” and “matrem”, referring to St Pancras and Gundrada, respectively. St Pancras is invoked just prior and named as the “witness of piety and justice”.²⁹¹ Then the epitaph informs us, and apparently St Pancras too, that “she [Gundrada] has made you her heir; may you in your clemency accept the mother”.²⁹² Here the theme of lineage

⁵⁹ Claire Walker, “Combining Martha and Mary: Gender and Work in Seventeenth-Century English Cloisters” in *Sixteenth Century Journal* XXX, no.2 (1999), 398.

⁶⁰ Walker, “Martha and Mary,” 398.

⁶¹ This portion of the tomb slab is damaged, but both Mayhew and Van Houts supply this translation.

⁶² Van Houts and Love, eds., *Warene (Hyde) Chronicle*, 91; Mayhew proposes: “do you of your kindness, take her as your mother” (*Saint Pancras*, 13)

is picked back up as the inheritance left by Gundrada to the memory and honor of St Pancras. This is both a physical and spiritual legacy, since in addition to the bequest of a monastic lineage Gundrada is also commending her soul to St Pancras' care. The epitaph thus takes on a new function as a testament or charter that confirms the dedication of the priory to St Pancras as being the final wish of one of its founders.

Gundrada also fills a double role for the monastery as its benefactor and "mother". The emphasis on her personal connection to the priory is particularly poignant given the previous praise of her success in producing offspring and because of the context of her death during childbirth. Gundrada is thus extolled for her holy life and re-embodied as the priory's source of life. This reputation seems to be sustained by the material record associated with Gundrada, including the *Crowland Psalter* (Bodleian, MS Douce 269), which was in the priory's possession by 1109 and which Rebecca Rushforth argues convincingly was for some time in Gundrada's personal use.²⁹³

The epitaphs discussed above, as with all the documents associated with the de Warenne family, draw on their monumental setting for contextualization and find authority through engraved and inscribed text that reifies the dead and is the only part of the monument that can

⁶³ Rebecca Rushforth, "The Crowland Psalter and Gundrada de Warenne," *Bodleian Library Record* 21, no. 2 (2008): 156-168. Rushworth cites Gundrada's epitaph at Lewes along with the priory's funding charter as proof that "she was remembered for her generosity; if she had owned the Crowland Psalter it could easily have ended up there either as a gift during her lifetime or as a pious remembrance on her death" (Rushworth, "Crowland Psalter," 162). Furthermore, Gundrada's hereditary landholdings included Fenland estate in Norfolk "situated less than fifteen miles from Crowland... its local monastic house". Finally, Gundrada's profile as "aristocratic, wealthy, pious, and religiously literate woman" with Flemish origins aligns with "both the addition of saints and the added Hours" (Rushworth, "Crowland Psalter," 163).

be (lawfully) taken from the monument site.²⁹⁴ As examples of the process of narrativization at different points in its trajectory, William's dispassionate commendation to heaven betrays its intention by insisting on his connection to the terrestrial realm and of his body as a literal fixture of the church building. The destruction of that physical monument has ended William's active presence in this world, but his monument was nevertheless successful, having transmitted its official message to a medieval chronicler and through the index of archaeological evidence, in particular the lead burial caskets. So, although William's tomb is no longer active as an integrated installation, there is archival evidence to demonstrate that it did, at one time, function as an installation.

Gundrada's tomb is notably different in that it has yet to finish broadcasting its transmission. Now housed in a small Romanesque Revival south chapel (est. 1847) at St John the Baptist's Church, Southover, the monument's nearly intact survival to the present-day means we can still visit this installation, albeit in a different setting.²⁹⁵ Although the Latin text of both manuscripts and on Gundrada's tomb slab may be inaccessible to many viewers/readers and indeed simply gone in some sections, the colorful gilded initials of the texts and the spiraling progression of large capitals on the tomb demand attention. In Southover Chapel, The "Gundrada" or south chapel [FIG 2.18] was built in 1847 after the Warenne remains had been found in two leaden caskets "containing the bones, and inscribed with the names of the

⁶⁴ Cf. Jessica Barker, "The Speaking Tomb: Ventriloquizing the Voices of the Dead". In *Picturing Death, 1200-1600*. Perkinson, Stephen and Noa Turel, eds. (Brill, 2021).

⁶⁵ Interestingly, St John the Baptist, Southover was built with Caen stone that was possibly "re-used material from the Priory itself," Lewes Priory Trust, *Southover Church: An historic guide to the buildings*, n.d.

founders".²⁹⁶ The pair had originally been buried before the high altar of the church but were re-interred in the rebuilt thirteenth-century chapterhouse in those cists.²⁹⁷ The remains are now separately interred in the Gundrada Chapel in Southover Church under Gundrada's original grave slab.

An epitaph in relief runs along the outer edge of the top panel [FIG 2.19 & 2.20] culminating in a crossbar of text running lengthwise down the middle. In addition to this formal tomb, both Gundrada's and William's 12th century lead burial caskets survive with their names visible on the lids.²⁹⁸ Decorations of "two bands of palmette-like plant motifs, springing from carved feline heads" are accompanied by the epitaph that "runs along the four sides of the tombstone, as well as lengthways through the middle".²⁹⁹ Viewers must complete a full circuit around the rectangular marble slab and stand for several moments to decipher the capital letters running lengthwise. The path dictated by both monument and text forces a reanimation of the medieval liturgical procession that symbolically reinstalls Gundrada's tomb and identity into its original context with the viewer as unwitting ghostly monk. This procession recalls the ritualized

⁶⁶ W. H. Blaauw, "XXXII. Account of Two Leaden Chests, Containing the Bones, and Inscribed with the Names, of William De Warren and His Wife Gundrada, Founders of Lewes Priory in Sussex, Discovered in October, 1845, within the Priory Precinct." *Archaeologia: Or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity, 1770-1992* 31 (1846): 438-442.

<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/xxxii-account-two-leaden-chests-containing-bones/docview/6572927/se-2>.

⁶⁷ A. M. G, "XXXI. A Few Remarks on the Discovery of the Remains of William De Warren, and His Wife Gundrad, among the Ruins of the Priory of Saint Pancras, at Southover, Near Lewes, in Sussex." *Archaeologia : Or Miscellaneous Tracts Relating to Antiquity, 1770-1992* 31 (1846): 430-437. <http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/scholarly-journals/xxxi-few-remarks-on-discovery-remains-william-de/docview/6999128/se-2>.

⁶⁸ The two lead cists were found during railroad construction in 1845 and bear epigraphic evidence of being contemporary with the Tournai tomb slab (Dempsey, et al., "Herstory...", 180).

⁶⁹ Dempsey, et al., "Herstory...", 178-79.

routes through the priory associated with death and burial ceremonies, repeating the 12th century reenactment of Gundrada's burial. For William, his epitaph's textual reproduction allows future readers to participate in medieval ritual. The necessity of the participant audience and the ability to communicate meaning to distinct viewers in varying locations define both William's and Gundrada's tombs as narrative installations.

As mobile commemorative narratives, the epitaphs of both Gundrada and William de Warenne are joined by the aforementioned Crowland Psalter and Lewes Breviary. While the connection may not be indisputable, the example of the Crowland Psalter warrants a few words because of what its construction and content reveal about the way Gundrada or someone like her experienced the written word and therefore how her own textual commemoration may have evolved. That the manuscript is a psalter rather than a gospel-book, its appended Book of Hours, and the use of feminine-gendered Latin attest to a process of personalization through physical interaction with both manuscript and text.³⁰⁰ MS Douce 296 was made in East Anglia, likely at Crowland Abbey, during the first half of the 11th century. It is only after 1060 that *obits* of St Pancras priors and feast days for local English saints signal a change in ownership.³⁰¹ As a reader, Gundrada must thus be imagined using a richly decorated but previously owned manuscript that was then modified to fit her use pattern.

It is this evidence of intervention that allows contemporary scholars to resurrect cultural and devotional networks key to interpreting historical and commemorative text. Such an example highlights the transformative process that text-objects underwent with each transmission:

⁷⁰ Rushworth, "Crowland Psalter," 2008.

⁷¹ Dempsey, et al., "Herstory...", 185.

original pages left blank with the expectation of future text or wholly new sheets of parchment are filled by new scribal hands that physically mark the passage of time and space through the inscription of new content. This same phenomenon occurs in the case of Gundrada's tomb slab, which was a 12th century replacement for what was likely a Caen limestone monument made in the 11th century. Commissioned by Gundrada's grandson, William de Warenne III, the new tomb slab reasserted dynastic power by providing a point of union between past and present family members. If, as Karen Dempsey suggests, the Tournai marble slab re-inscribed the existing epitaph, then the particular potency of inherited text even more clearly models the practice of inheriting manuscripts.³⁰²

It is undeniable that the inclusion of locally and personally meaningful dates in the *kalens* would have helped "create a tie between Gundrada, her new lands [in Sussex] and the people who lived there" and "linked her to the former owner [or owners] of the book as well as the older literary traditions of East Anglia", as Dempsey states.³⁰³ Moveable objects like books manifested personal ties to individuals and institutions and functioned as sites of experience within a mobile commemorative network. Gundrada, a daughter of Flemish nobility, would have been aware of how her peers used personal effects to transfer their presence across time and space.³⁰⁴ The forging of her own historical legacy, like the manuscript, combined text with

⁷² Dempsey, et al., "Herstory...", 180.

⁷³ Dempsey, et al., "Herstory...", 188.

⁷⁴ Dempsey, et al., "Herstory...", 172-73: Dempsey also hypothesizes as to whether a manor in the possession of St Bertin abbey was a gift from Gundrada in memory of her brother, Frederick, who had previously owned the estate. "If so", Dempsey continues, "it could be considered an early indication of her desire to curate the memory of her family. At the same time, it would reaffirm a connection with Flanders."

precious materials to create a narrative monument that was a nexus of historical interaction.³⁰⁵

The acts of manuscript modification “embedded [Gundrada] within a much broader European network” of literate women, but also physically and narratively inscribed St Pancras and its benefactors into the historical record of the book object.

Conclusion

Through monument, text, and performance Gundrada and William de Warenne’s commemorative monuments do the work of installations by representing, perpetuating, and adapting the narratives of both patrons’ lives and afterlives. As active participants in the circulation of these narratives beyond the monument site, the spectator of such commemoration straddles the exterior and interior of the symbolic space. Interaction with spectators is key to the monument’s relevance, simultaneously reenacting and reembodying history as it is represented externally by the “tegmen, the ‘between’ that connects what is true and lasting under the skin that changes and lies above”, and which is the main interface between monument and public.³⁰⁶ The charter also acts as a narrative experience, like the epitaph, in which the reader, whether out loud or to themselves, reembodies the original speaker in the speech act. This palimpsest, the layered evocation of asynchronous historical events in the shared place of their original occurrences, establishes “a place to experience experience” in which “the here and now of direct speech and the ‘there and then’ of the narrative do not exclude each other” but rather cohabit the performance of a highly narrative text.³⁰⁷

⁷⁵ On the creation of “heirloom”, see Roberta Gilchrist, “The Materiality of Medieval Heirlooms”, in *Mobility, Meaning and the Transformation of Things* (2013), 170-182.

⁷⁶ Alexandru, Matei, “Michel Serres’s Integumentum, or Why Ecology Lies (Also) Beyond Arguments,” *Metacritic Journal for Comparative Studies and Theory* 7, no. 1 (2021), 75.

⁷⁷ Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 95-96.

Such simultaneity is found in the recreation of liturgical paths around Gundrada's tomb and in the recitation of Orderic's transcription. Largely achieved through commemorative art, the priory ruins also evoke the daily lives of its residents over an extended period of time visible in the archaeological remains. In installation this phenomenon of trans-temporality is useful for dispelling the notion that presentation and representation are mutually exclusive in a work of art. By this I mean that the monument installation can occupy, like enunciated texts, two roles simultaneously; one literal and anchored in physical presence, and the other imaginary and dependent on viewer activation. A more recent addition to the priory landscape exemplifies the simultaneously general and specific nature of commemoration and relies on viewer's physical motion to connect chronologically distant presences.

Seven hundred years after the battle of Lewes, in 1964, artist Enzo Plazzotta unveiled his memorial sculpture [FIG 2.21] complete with battle scenes in relief, and a short excerpt from the medieval *Song of Lewes*.³⁰⁸ The monumental, crowned helmet is not particularly interactive, but the large cross-shaped cavity allows visitors to peer through and see the battleground through the same limited view as the medieval soldiers, while the poem's incised words magnify the national and religious pride of the occasion so that one might imagine looking over the enemy camp with epic words ringing over the hill. Only through individual engagement and manipulation of the commemorative installation *as a whole* can "events or texts from the past

⁷⁸ The inscription reads: "NOW ENGLISHMEN, READ ON ABOUT THIS BATTLE FOUGHT AT LEWES' WALLS. BECAUSE OF THIS YOU ARE ALIVE AND SAFE. REJOICE THEN IN GOD. LAW IS LIKE FIRE, FOR IT LIGHTS AS TRUTH, WARMS AS CHARITY, BURNS AS ZEAL. WITH THESE VIRTUES AS HIS GUIDES, THE KING WILL RULE WELL." "Battle Memorial," Lewes Priory Trust, <http://www.lewespriory.org.uk/the-memorial>.

give birth to possible readings that the present alone is not prepared to produce” and of which the past could not conceive.³⁰⁹ Transtemporal repetition and interpretation that are dependent on the experience of a physical place allow visitors to renew the provided narrative, resurrecting the dead in intelligible and useful terms that will eventually be reinterpreted by the next performer. The creative depiction of battle scenes in full view of the actual battlefield lends itself to a recreation of events in the viewer’s imagination, while the crowned helmet form of the monument impressively represents the belligerent context of Anglo-Norman England more generally.

At St Pancras’, the priory’s own long-term practice of self-documentation established a tradition of historical reinvention that started with the designation of monastic space and creation of a commemorative place through monumental construction and writing, particularly of charters, that reaffirmed the priory’s right to exist. The narrative nexus of tomb and epitaph remained active in establishing the identity and legitimacy of the Warenne family and Lewes’ monks thanks to the recapitulative 15th century charter. This supplementary text placed William and Gundrada at the center of events occurring far after their deaths, rendering the Warennes essential and their memories sacred to the priory’s and town’s survival. Continuation of the superimposition of historical narratives upon a common topography, such as with the Lewes memorial, renews locational capacity for multiple temporalities to co-exist when engaged with by audiences. In the following case study, the same tactics are discernible in the 14th century

⁷⁹ Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 95-96.

commemoration of Sir Brian FitzAlan, his first wife Muriel, and his second wife Maud in the Yorkshire village of Bedale.

Bedale

Three hundred miles north of Lewes, the effigies of Brian, Muriel, and Matilda FitzAlan sit alongside those of an unnamed knight and a priest in the parish church of St Gregory (second ½ 12th c.).³¹⁰ Located in North Yorkshire, Bedale has been settled since at least the 5th century BCE, possibly by the pre-Roman Brigantes tribe.³¹¹ Recorded in the 1086 Domesday Book as having its own church, the village became a chartered market town in 1251 [FIG 2.22] and went on to enjoy a boom period in the 18th century and success in 19th century industrialization.³¹²

Descended from Eudes count of Penthièvre (d. 1079), Brian FitzAlan (d. 1306), the fourth lord of Bedale, inherited this and other extensive properties from his father, Alan fitz Brian, whose great-grandfather, Brian fitz Alan, was the second son of Alan earl of Richmond.³¹³ Brian fitz Alan became the 1st lord of Bedale in 1201/2 through a charter for free warren everywhere apart from the king's forest.³¹⁴ His long career as a sheriff for kings John and Henry III was crowned by the

⁸⁰ Bedale, Yorkshire has evidence of human habitation as far back as the Romans but has existed as a market town since 1251. (McCall, *Early History of Bedale*, 4.

⁸¹ John Shepherd, James Gerrard, Sally Gerrard, Jennifer Proctor, Kevin Reilly, and Berni Sudds, *Before Bedale: Archaeological excavation along the route of the Bedale, Aiskew and Leeming Bar Bypass* ((Pre-Construct Archaeology Limited, 2021), 14; *Before Bedale.*, 16.

⁸² *Secret Bedale*, Bedale, North Yorkshire: Bedale Museum, 4.

⁸³ McCall, *Early History of Bedale*, 56.

⁸⁴ William Dugdale, "Fitz Alayn of Bedall," in *The Baronage of England, or, An historical account of the lives and most memorable actions of our English nobility in the Saxons time to the Norman conquest, and from thence, of those who had their rise before the end of King Henry the Third's reign deduced from public records, antient historians, and other authorities* (London: Tho. Newcomb, for Abel Roper, John Martin, and Henry Herringman, 1675-1676), 53-54.

survival of the Alan-Brian dynasty until the fourth earl, who is depicted at Bedale's St Gregory's Church by a limestone tomb effigy [FIG 2.23].

Brian proved even more distinguished than his father, serving as a highly trusted delegate of Edward I for more than two decades and attending several parliaments, the last one in 1305. Brian's career spanned from 1276/7 to his death in 1306, placing him at the center of English colonization of Wales and Scotland where he served in 1292 as Governor.³¹⁵ As Lord of Bedale, Brian commissioned an effigy for himself and for his first wife, Muriel, who predeceased him by sixteen years. The pair lie near each other in the company of two other effigies: Thomas Sheffield [FIG 2.24] and a priest, likely a family member.³¹⁶ What is striking about these effigies is that none of them feature any formal text in the form of inscriptions, having been originally carved in detail and then painted, but all of them nevertheless imply narrativity and textuality through their figural elements, including heraldry, animals, and text-related objects. The effigies' ability to elicit narrativizing acts from their visiting public, that is, to successfully prompt viewers to supply spoken or imagined language that can describe and even recreate the monument, takes narrativity beyond the limits of (in)scripted lines such as those carved into Gundrada de Warenne's casket.

By providing a space for each spectator to project temporary text representative of their subjective and affectively meaningful connection with the artwork, the Bedale monuments allow

⁸⁵ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies* 166

⁸⁶ Mary Markus identifies this as the effigy of Brian de Thornhill (d. 1344), who was parson of St Gregory and almost certainly Brian FitzAlan's nephew by his sister, Maud, and her husband Sir Richard de Thornhill, in Mary Markus, *Tomb Recesses in the Province of York, c. 1250-1400: Their Social and Architectural Context* (Glasgow: Univ. of Glasgow Press, 1994), 330.

a level of creative collaboration from the audience's imagination. This collaborative encounter, which reaches new levels in Joyce Burstein's work discussed in Part I, does three things. First, the temporal distance between work and participant is collapsed when the work's existence requires intervention in the present. Second, collaboration allows monuments to evolve structurally and thus acquire contemporary meanings to stay active in the present. Finally, the commemorative installation forges a bond, both physical and affective, between art and participant that makes for more memorable experiences. Contemporary installation such as *the epitaph project* fully embraces the public nature of commemoration by leaving gaps in the work and turning creative control over so that the encounter with the monument installation is at once open-ended and curated.

Effigial Representation

The Bedale effigies demonstrate the potential narrativity of monuments which comes not just from inscribed text, but from the legibility of its visual or otherwise perceptible symbolism that activates the reader's instinct for supplying topical language and linking the individual elements of the effigy to form a cohesive narrative that will be carried out of the exhibition space in visitors' memories and replicated anecdotally. The absence of physical text on the monuments is not equivalent to a loss of historical context, and the present monuments remain suffused with tangible symbolic elements that can be read as a sort of shorthand account of the deceased.³¹⁷ A

⁸⁷ From the Saxon altar and 14th century fortified tower to the ancient portcullis revealed by a lightning strike in 1830, restored 16th century wall painting and 20th century war memorial, the effigies are read in the context of a transtemporal church whose patchwork of 9th to 20th century features tell the very specific story of construction and restoration (Bedale Tourism Centre, "St Gregory's Church, Bedale"). "When death forces beings into representation, their tombs become complex signs that condense and solidify biography, but also address those left behind, linking past to present life," (Velte and Ott, "Stillness and Movement", 23).

dragon, for instance, bites the edge of Brian FitzAlan's shield [FIG 2.25-26], whose bands are carved and distinct despite their disappeared paint. Matilda FitzAlan's effigy, though it resides in a different town, is rendered legible as part of the Bedale family's network by "two small cloak mount shields... which display the barry of eight coat" of the FitzAlan's.³¹⁸ Brian's effigy, with its heraldic representation and use of allegorical figures, guides the viewer's narrativizing but does not dictate it, as will be discussed in greater depth.

In addition to the pronounced reassertion of his family's arms, Brian FitzAlan's effigy features "on either side of his effigy's feet...two seated figures holding books" [FIG 2.27 & 2.28].³¹⁹ I will comment upon the arms later in this chapter, but the monastic figures are popular Christianized versions of philosopher or author's portraits that help to recreate the real vigil held over the deceased, their voices now represented in perpetuity. The open books could prompt visitors to offer their own words of intercession, thus continuing the monument's original purpose.³²⁰ Gittos reasons that "as they are dressed as monks, they will be reading from holy texts rather than a romance however allegorical its character", and that the symbolism of reading "reflects contemporary inscriptions asking for prayers on behalf of the deceased... a visual reminder of what the patron of the monument wished those who passed by to do and, cut in

⁸⁸ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 15.

⁸⁹ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 173.

⁹⁰ These figures are related to the practice of sculpting 'weepers' or *pleurants* who attended the tomb and had intercessory value along with carved angels or saints who symbolized "the heavenly powers and saintly virtues surrounding and assisting the deceased on his or her journey to the afterlife" (Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 168).

stone, also creates an image of eternal commemoration.”³²¹ The recognizable space of a blank page frames and therefore legitimates intercessory contribution to the monument.³²²

Next to her husband, Muriel FitzAlan’s effigy holds a long, blank scroll, while in the northern St George’s chapel a priest’s effigial representation oddly holds a crucifixion tablet with both hands from underneath, like an offering to the viewer.³²³ Both effigies illustrate how images could be used rhetorically, creating an impulse for narrative that exists only in the imagination of the viewer yet depends upon the external monument as a prompt. The ‘iconotext’ is that narrative prompted by the viewer’s encounter with the monument’s representational or evocative images and casts viewers as narrators in charge of producing their own ekphrastic language in lieu of sculpturally pre-inscribed text.³²⁴ By ekphrastic I refer to any language that “verbalizes a real or fictive viewer’s perceptions of, or reactions to, characteristic features of configurations”, real or fictive, thereby producing a mental image.³²⁵ The linguistic reaction to an individual’s encounter with a monument “implies a viewer’s gaze at these objects: if they are the

⁹¹ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 173.

⁹² Instead of relying entirely on the paint for its identifying symbolism to survive, Brian’s shield is carved with “back-to-back concave hollows” and a realistic “central ridge” and not just “plain bands of simple rectangular cross-section” in two dimensions (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 127).

⁹³ *Early History of Bedale*, 98.

⁹⁴ “Ekphrasis, then, has a Janus face: as a form of mimesis, it stages a paradoxical performance, promising to give voice to the allegedly silent image even while attempting to overcome the power of the image by transforming and inscribing it,” Peter Wagner, “Ekphrasis, Iconotexts, and Intermediality – the State(s) of the Art(s),” in *Icons -Texts -Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, 13.

⁹⁵ Clüver, Claus, ed., “On gazers’ encounters with visual art: ekphrasis, readers, iconotexts,” in *Ekphrastic encounters: New interdisciplinary essays on literature and the visual arts*, eds., David Kennedy, and Richard Meek (Manchester, 2019; online edn, Manchester Scholarship Online, May 23, 2019),

<https://doi.org/10.7228/manchester/9781526125798.003.0013>, accessed 17 Aug. 2023.

product of an encounter with the phenomenal world, it suggests the producer's way of representing that world according to the semiotic and cultural conventions of the age."³²⁶

The resulting narrative thus contains stable plot points based on the elements visible on the monument that are ekphrastically presented to the viewer, remaining unique and *memorable* due to the irreplicable subjectivity of each viewer's assembly of those "anchor points" to "as yet untold stories".³²⁷ If the supplemental *paratexte* is "the screen which is a permeable membrane connecting inside and outside" of a text, or in this case monument, then the iconotext is the product of that permeation by the engaged viewer, the narrative account.³²⁸ In Derridean terms, the "membrane connecting inside and outside" is the *parergon*- the unclaimed space distinguishing text or work from context whose meaning is in this case supplied by the viewer instead of the artist. This collaborative capacity of monuments in a state of disrepair is engaged with epigraphically in Muriel's tomb, much like Burstein's blank slate. Writing, or at least imagined writing, is again used as the mediating medium between past and present.

Muriel (c. 1290)

As Brian's effigy provides the basis for an ekphrastic description, Muriel FitzAlan's effigy includes physical space for the viewer to mentally contribute to the monument, as we will shortly see in more detail. The sculpture shows Muriel in a dress and cote that Brian and Moira Gittos

⁹⁶ Clüver, ed., "'On gazers'," 240.

⁹⁷ Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 226

⁹⁸ J. Hillis Miller, "The Critic as Host," *Critical Inquiry* (Spring 1977), 439-447. Hillis Miller goes on to offer what Genette himself saw as "une assez belle description de l'activité du paratexte" (Genette, *Seuils*, 7): "A thing in "para" is, moreover, not only simultaneously on both sides of the boundary line between inside and outside. It is also the boundary itself...confusing them [inside and outside] with one another, allowing the outside in, making the inside out, dividing them but also forming an ambiguous transition between one and the other" (Genette, *Seuils*, 441).

describe as being “carved with great sensitivity” by the same artist as her husband’s effigy, albeit at a less mature stage of his artistic development.³²⁹ Muriel’s *gisant* is notable for the visible original repair work on her veil, for the “unconventional” way her knees bend “slightly to her right, making a willowy curve” under her gown [FIG 2.29], and for the long blank scroll [FIG 2.30] she carries that trails down her left side becoming almost indistinguishable from her outer garment whose “painted text has not survived but would once have been clear for all to see and a few to read.”³³⁰ It is worth a moment to consider the tenor and context of this original text before looking at the symbolism conveyed by the effigy with a blank scroll.

Commissioned by her husband, Brian, Muriel’s effigy was initially installed in the Lady Chapel [FIG 2.31] which had itself been recently constructed as part of the purpose-built chantry Brian endowed in 1290. FitzAlan also “arranged for Sinningthwaite Priory to hold an annual commemoration for his mother [Agnes] and his first wife”, Muriel.³³¹ The FitzAlans had suffered the loss of three sons and aside from the dynastic complications this implicated down the line, it is very possible that her scroll was painted with text similar to that on the effigy of a lady holding a child and unraveling a scroll in Scarcliffe, Derbyshire that includes the lines: “Here lies a woman

⁹⁹ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 118

¹⁰⁰ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies* 13; “She has a long scroll, one end of which reaches to her ankles and holds it so as to present the words to her audience” (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 127. Thomas Sheffield’s effigy is also noted for its “swayed or hip-shot posture”, a rarity among Yorkshire effigies. (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 113) Muriel’s face also bears the marks of a later attempt at conservation.

¹⁰¹ “The Bedale Chantry of 1290 was administered by Jervaulx Abbey to remember his parents, his first wife, his three dead sons, his overlord, himself ‘and his special friends’ during his life... At the Suppression it was said to have three chaplains,” Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 167.

buried flat under the earth, / Constantia, rightly named so being constant and pleasing. / The child she was given rests buried with its mother; / May their sins be buried".³³²

If this is even remotely close to Muriel's epitaph then the gently swaying posture and demure downward gaze read as the effigy of a woman whose legs, her children, have been cut out from under her. For a modern viewer, the scroll has the potential to be filled with any language. Muriel's bent knees work to bring her life-size three-dimensional effigy closer to the viewer so that although her original statement (which she may or may not have helped compose) is gone, the effigy captures Muriel in motion and thus in flux. Her blank scroll has not become obsolete as much as it has transformed to create a site of transition, of transtemporal interaction between living and dead.

Installation art notably occupies and even exceeds its exhibition space, incorporating the once-marginal frame as part of the meaningful whole and rupturing the boundary between work (*ergon*) and frame (*parergon*).³³³ Likewise, "the way the viewers read their way through the work is more erratic and disconnected and certainly not unidirectional" given the art's intentional ambiguity. It must be stressed that the (re)shaping of space implicit in the act of installation is not random.³³⁴ Instead, an installation requires "the shaping and activation of the space in a way that is intended to involve the surroundings and the audience more intensely than sculpture or painting", transgressing typical boundaries between work and spectator.³³⁵

¹⁰² Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 174.

¹⁰³ The boundary between art and audience, or even living and dead can be thought of as simultaneous rupture.

¹⁰⁴ Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 227.

¹⁰⁵ Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 101 ; 149.

Muriel FitzAlan's monument contains empty spaces in which text or color [FIG 2.32] must be supplemented by historical description or archeological hypothesis, but this is also what leaves room for visitors' imaginations. Not only her props, but also the motion implied by Muriel's bent knees inspires conjecture about what she is meant to be doing. The effigy's repair work [FIG 2.33] is evidence not only of change but of a series of interactions through which someone attempted to supplement the symbolic lacuna left by structural damage by carefully replacing the stone. Finally, Muriel's blank scroll hearkens to an absent iconographic community that would have appreciated the original monument. However, it also signals the potential for rewriting either new or old text as a means of reasserting the effigy's presence and substance. It is this merging of *ergon*, *parergon*, and spectator that medieval tomb monuments like the FitzAlan effigies accomplish through the use of culturally relevant visual symbolism. As Daniel Poirion writes,

Si le cadre a un rôle ornemental, il n'en reste pas moins une donnée technique de l'inscription. Il permet de délimiter l'espace, de ménager un champ épigraphique et de faciliter l'*ordinatio* du texte. Il participe, au même titre que les réglures, les lignes ou les marges, à la mise en page de l'inscription et à son organisation spatiale. Ces aménagements techniques peuvent eux aussi participer à l'ornementation du texte.³³⁶

The sculptural representation of the tools associated with text (books, scrolls, tablets) is thus functional as the organizing force of any potential text. The delimitations of forms force viewers unable to view the faded text to replicate, if not the language of the medieval text, then at least its likeness.

¹⁰⁶ Poirion, *Messages de pierre*, 136.

Brian de Thornhill (r. 1308-1343)

The effigy of Brian de Thornhill [FIG 2.34], which deserves a lengthier treatment than is possible in this chapter, is included here primarily in relation to a figure in relief on the top end panel of Thornhill's tomb slab. Gittos describes the primary effigy holding a "tablet displaying the crucifixion" (what McCall identified as a priest holding "a book with a crucifix carved upon its cover").³³⁷ Like Muriel, Brian's gesture of presentation invites the viewer to 'read' the inscribed symbol and generate their own descriptive language. The effigy's motion is mirrored by (or mirrors) that of the seated Christ on the head end panel who also holds a book [FIG 2.35]. The pairing suggests Brian was a virtuous rector who was exceptionally well-versed in scripture and exegesis. Although these characteristics are left unmentioned among the rector's documents, it merits notice as the identity Brian wished to have in perpetuity. De Thornhill's monument is also important because the realism and individuality of the mourning figures on the sides of the tomb base have led to speculation that these are depictions of historical people.³³⁸ De Thornhill's monument is interesting to read as an installation because his tomb slab and effigy are supported by "parts of unrelated tomb chests under a later canopy arch", including Brian FitzAlan's decontextualized chest [FIG 2.36].³³⁹

De Thornhill shares this feature of monumental repurposing with the much later Sheffield knight, whose base slab is pointed "even though he is known to have rested on a rectangular

¹⁰⁷ McCall, *The Early History of Bedale*, 98. Brian's pose is mirrored within "a lozenge-shaped, cusped panel enclosing a seated figure holding a book and giving a blessing, which is almost certainly another manifestation of Christ" (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 170).

¹⁰⁸ The mismatch between the priest's tomb slab and the tomb base may indicate that the base was originally part of Brian FitzAlan's monument, but more research must be done on site.

¹⁰⁹ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 11.

tomb chest” originally.³⁴⁰ Not even the lord and lady FitzAlan are to be found in their original location in the south aisle [FIG 2.37], having been moved sometime in the 17th century.³⁴¹ The rupture of temporal and aesthetic continuation that has occurred due to the intentional repurposing of monument elements ironically serves to highlight the interconnectivity that continues to exist between the individuals commemorated at St Gregory’s. Like a true installation, the FitzAlan tomb program at Bedale actively defines its exhibition space as a framing device to be respected or subverted depending on the narrative intent of the day. Narratives are interposed outside the church walls, too, as with the heraldry on Maud FitzAlan’s cloak [FIG 2.38] ten miles away in Danby Wiske Parish Church and the double colophon of the FitzAlan *Perlesvaus*, further expanding the commemorative community. The enveloping of a personal experience of art interpretation within the more general experience of viewing art is the ultimate fusion of center and margin. It is this fusion of shared and private memories that secures a monument’s place within personal memory and historical narrative.

¹¹⁰ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 45: the style of “tied thongs” on belts postdates 1300; Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies* 32. The dating of the Sheffield knight and one other 15th-century knight is of note due to the highly realistic and historically accurate detail of the armor sculpted into the limestone effigies: “One knight wears a surcoat of double-link armour and plate-armoured gauntlets, suggesting a date of around 1410. The other knight wears plate armour that was in common use around 1480,” David Ross, “Bedale, St Gregory’s Church,” Yorkshire, Historic Churches, Britain Express, <https://www.britainexpress.com/counties/yorkshire/churches/bedale.htm>. The same level of precision is found on Brian FitzAlan’s effigy, notably his swordbelt, which “even represents the tiny rivets as fabricated from rolled-up sheet.” (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies* 125).

¹¹¹ Stained glass showing Brian FitzAlan’s heraldry is found in south Lady Chapel (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 79).

Chapter 6: Documentation as commemoration

While the monument installations certainly still contain enough imagery around which to construct such a narrative, we must also consider that the tombs would have originally existed in a time when the FitzAlan family was extremely societally relevant.³⁴² For a full understanding of how the narrative drawn from the effigies might have been wielded in 14th century England, it is necessary to expand the monuments' *parergon* to include written documentation of the family, as in the case of the Warenes, of both political and literary importance. The first of these paratexts is the Poem (or Roll) of Caerlaverock, written after the eponymous battle to record the event and the arms of those who fought for Edward I.³⁴³ The second paratext is the 1301 Barons' Letter to Pope Boniface VIII [FIG 2.39 & 2.40], on which is found a strikingly unique seal belonging to Brian FitzAlan that features a strange assortment of animals and a potentially ironic motto. The third and final paratext that I will discuss is Hatton 82, a manuscript bearing Brian FitzAlan's name and arms that contains, among other texts, the romance of *Perlesvaus*.

My discussion will focus on the general plot of the manuscript text, in which the visual perception and internal interpretation of courtly symbolism by the fictive viewer (almost always a knight) is the source for the ekphrastic language related by the narrator, and on how the physical

¹ Speaking about John of Gaunt visiting his and Blanche's tombs at Old St Paul, Jessica Barker draws our attention to the fact that these visits reveal: "an ongoing relationship between patron and sculpture. Gaunt was able to contemplate both his own effigy and the site where his body would eventually be laid to rest, an act of viewing which collapsed the boundaries between the Duke's life, death and afterlife" (Adams and Barker, eds., *Revisiting the Monument*, 121).

² The salient distinction between para- and peri- text here is one of physical connection. While the paratext "necessarily has a *location* that can be situated in relation to the location of the text itself" (Genette, *Seuils*, 4), the peritext can be any of those "distanced elements... located outside the book" both spatially and/or temporally (Genette, *Seuils*, 5).

reading experience of a manuscript contributed to the interpretation of both content and owner/creator. The relationship between a monument's private and public situations is of particular importance with figural tombs representing the human body because while all images "help us remember the past by freezing its representation at a powerful moment already known to us", the moment of death depicted by effigies is both universal and individual; known and unknown; real and imagined.³⁴⁴ To that end, a brief summary of the FitzAlan family's public life is in order before discussing their posthumous legacy.³⁴⁵

The most recognizable symbol left by Brian FitzAlan fourth Lord of Bedale is easily his coats of arms, recorded in the Poem of Caerlaverock as: «*I vi o baniere barree / De or e de goules bien paree* ». ³⁴⁶ The striped shield [FIG 2.41] can still be seen in stained glass as St Gregory's, illuminated at the front of Hatton MS 82, and on both Brian and Maud's effigies. Crucially, this heraldry was meant as a distinguishing marker in battle when armor imposed anonymity on the combatants: a set of heraldic cosmology for one's familial and individual identity. But this distinction was not always easily maintained. The Caerlaverock account continues, pointing out that: «*Dont de chalenge estoit li poinz / Par entre lui e Hue Poinz / Ki portoit tel ne plus ne meins*

³ Barbie Zelizer, "The Voice of the Visual in Memory", in *Framing Public Memory*, ed., Kendall R. Phillips (Tuscaloosa, Ala.: Univ. of Alabama Press, 2004), 158.

⁴ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 166

⁵ "The handsome Brian Fitz Alan, Full of courtesy and honour, *I saw there with his well-adored banner, Barry of gold and red; Which was the subject of dispute Between him and Hugh Pointz, Who bore the same neither more nor less, At which marvelled, man and woman* (my emphasis)," Thomas Wright, ed. And trans., *The Roll of Arms, of the Princes, Barons, and Knights who Attended King Edward I to the Siege of Caerlaverock, in 1300* (London: John Camden Hotten, 1864; online ed., June 20, 2013), 5-6; "Blazon given (K [Caerlaverock Roll, 1300], vv. 355-6)," Michael Case, "55. 'Brian le FilzAleyne,'" in *A Caerlaverock Roll of Arms -Part II 2001*, <http://caerlaverockroll.com/a-caerlaverock-roll-of-arms-part-ii/>; this eyewitness account of the Battle of Caerlaverock (1300) was written by one of Edward I's heralds in Anglo-Norman shortly after the event.

*/ Dont merveille avoit meinte e meins.»*³⁴⁷ Sir Hugh Poyntz, baron of Corry Malet, is also associated with the Barry of eight Or and gules [FIG 2.42] in the same document as the above quotation.³⁴⁸ For Brian FitzAlan, this infringement upon his political identity threatened his family's long-term legitimacy.³⁴⁹

Such concern is underlined by the notion that Brian was “well aware that the male line would die with him”, having been predeceased by his three sons.³⁵⁰ The memorialization of his family line took on increased significance and the risk of being misidentified in death was very real. Interestingly, the bottom point of Brian's shield is being bitten by a spiny dragon which “could mean that the knight's protection from evil is encapsulated in his shield”, that is in his heraldry, in this case also places an emphasis on the end (AN, ‘point’) of Brian's shield, legible as a rebus.³⁵¹ The threat represented by the dragon potentially alludes to his rival Hugh and to the personal injury Brian suffered by the figurative point of Hugh's arms as used by the Caerlaverock author (*li poinz... Hue Poinz*) to describe the dispute (*challenge*). Brian's effigy displays his life-sized shield prominently and as stated above it is found on the cloak clasps of Maud FitzAlan's effigy in Danby Wiske and in the glazed windows of Bedale's Lady Chapel, where the monuments

⁶ “Blazon given (K, vv. 357-9),” (Case, *Caerlaverock Roll Part II*, <https://caerlaverockroll.com/a-caerlaverock-roll-of-arms-part-ii/>).

⁷ The two men fought together on more than one occasion, including the Battle of Falkirk (1298) in whose Roll of Arms the same shield is also listed among the second and fourth battalions for ‘Brian le fiz Aleyn’ and ‘Hugh Poyns’, respectively Henry Gough, “Falkirk Roll of Arms,” in *Scotland in 1298. Documents Relating to the Campaign of King Edward the First* (London: Alexander Gardner, 1888), 131–157.

⁸ The multiple families using a variation of the name Fitzalan, including the well-documented earls of Arundel, made the recognizability of Brian's heraldry of even greater necessity.

⁹ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 167.

¹⁰ Brian's effigy shares this biting dragon element with effigies of knights found in nearby Bainton and Nunnington (Markus, *Tomb Recesses*, 135).

originally stood.³⁵² But in both the Caerlaverock and Falkirk Rolls of Arms he and Hugh are shown bearing the same shield. This contentious issue was confusing for everyone (*merveille avoit meinte e meins*) and explains the choice of both men to use distinctive seals only a year after Caerlaverock when signing the 1301 Barons' Letter to the Pope.

The 1301 letter was composed by numerous barons in protestation of Boniface VIII's governance of Scotland after the Battle of Falkirk. Hugh Poyntz' seal (TNA E26, Cord XXII, 79) is not the same as the arms described in the Rolls. Instead, Hugh used his son, Nicholas', seal: "Barry, a label of five points. Over the shield a helm with fan plum; on either side a scroll" and bearing the legend "S' NICHOLAI : POINZ".³⁵³ FitzAlan's seal [FIG 2.43] deviated much further from the heraldic arms seen elsewhere. Brian's device is a square on which "are engraved, two birds, a rabbit, a stag, and a pig or boar: all these animals are looking to the dexter excepting the boar, which is regarding the chief", and which bears "the most curious part of this signet", the legend, a variation on Terence: ✠ TOT : CAPITA : TOT : SENTENCIE :, which "seems to represent a Nimrod facing all ways, enclosing various animals of the chase, kaleidoscopically arranged; in the centre are indications of a monogram."³⁵⁴

¹¹ "The masonry around the window is undisturbed and... it once contained relevant heraldry. Perhaps a particularly large window was incorporated to accommodate a specific and impressive display of glass and this seems to be another case where the glazing was an important element of the commemorative scheme. FitzAlan's involvement with glazing is attested by the presence of his arms in glass at York Minster, in both the chapter house and its vestibule, so he was well aware of the possibilities." (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 79)

¹² Howard de Walden, T. Evelyn Scott-Ellis, *Some Feudal Lords and their seals: MCCCJ, with an introduction* (London: De Walden Library, 1904), 154.

¹³ "From three sides of the device as many exquisitely engraved human faces in profile are easily seen, and it is not absolutely impossible to imagine a fourth. Over the head of the first is a rabbit, one of its hind quarters forming a helmet; turn the seal reversely and the head of the rabbit

The legend is a variation of a citation from Terence, “Quot homines, tot sententiae” (*Phormio*), which Joanne Kramer connects to the Anglo-Saxon *Exeter Book*, saying about the translated line, “he [the Anglo-Saxon poet] is not interested in adapting a well-known proverb to the poem, but he aims at preserving a specific sentence and particular syntax and wording.”³⁵⁵ In the case of Brian FitzAlan, a similar formal reproduction is apparent in his version, but the grammatical discrepancies could suggest a further meaning known only to himself or a select few. Regarding the animals depicted, Ian Wood connects the stag head motif to the concept of ‘Timete Deum’ (*Rev.* 14:7 = “Timete Deum, et date illi honorem”) and bestiary descriptions telling how stags seek water to revive themselves are often connected to the succor of faith, while their victory over serpents casts the stag as a Christ-figure.³⁵⁶ Robinson highlights the rhetorical impact of this choice “to provide validation of the contents, just as the seal appended to a document provided authentication”.³⁵⁷

suggests a mouse; under the man’s chin a pig suggests itself. In the centre, letters perhaps forming part of a monogram, may be detected and also a stag or boar’s head with horns, &c., &c., The canting legend is considered to be the more curious part of this signet (see “Gentlemen’s Magazine,” April 1812),” Nicolas, Nicholas Harris. “XXIII. Remarks on the Seals affixed to two Documents preserved in the Treasury of the Receipt of the Exchequer, being Duplicates of the Letter from the Barons of England to Pope Boniface the Eighth, in the year 1301, respecting the Sovereignty of Scotland: By Nicholas Harris Nicolas, Esq. FSA in a Letter to Henry Ellis, Esq. FRS Secretary.” *Archaeologia* 21 (1827), 213.

¹⁴ Joanne Kramer, “Mapping the Anglo-Saxon Intellectual Landscape: The Old English Maxims I and Trencse’s Proverb “Quot homines, tot sententiae”,” *Anglia* 128, no. 1 (2010), 56.

¹⁵ Ian Wood, *Church and Chronicle in the Middle Ages* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 1990), 122; “As the stag longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, O God” [Ps. 42:1], Michael Curley, *Physiologus: a medieval book of nature lore* (Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2009), 58.

¹⁶ James Robinson, “Medieval Seals: Image and Truth”, in *Medieval coins and seals, constructing identity, signifying power*, ed. Susan Solway (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2015), 393.

The distinction between devotional texts and romance was, by Brian's time, becoming ever more porous with the popularity of the chivalric tropes seized upon propagandistically by Edward I to justify his continued control of Wales, his attempted conquest of Scotland, and to inscribe his reign through a constructed metonymy with king Arthur. A new valuation of text-objects as tools for self-historicization sheds new light on *BL MS Hatton 82*: "an unassuming volume in the Bodleian Library" containing Branch I of the Old French *Perlesvaus*, that "once belonged to Brian FitzAlan".³⁵⁸

A 15th century charter for an 11th century priory

A final component of the Warenne legacy, its founding charter, concludes this case study. The Cluniac priory of Lewes was born, according to the anachronous 15th-century 'First Charter of William de Warenne' [FIG 2.44-2.46], out of William and Gundrada's unplanned stay at the Cluny mother house in Burgundy while on pilgrimage in the decade following the Battle of Hastings. The couple were received by the monks at Cluny when their pilgrimage to Rome was derailed by ongoing war between Henry IV and pope Gregory VII following the Great Saxon Revolt.³⁵⁹ The pair was met with "holiness and religion and charity so great", according to this charter, that they immediately decided to establish the Cluniac order in England.³⁶⁰ This text,

¹⁷ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 173

¹⁸ Heather, P. John, Schleunes, Karl A., Hamerow, Theodore S., Wallace-Hadrill, John Michael, Duggan, Lawrence G., Leyser, K.J., Berentsen, William H., Geary, Patrick J., Bayley, Charles Calvert, Strauss, Gerald, Kirby, George Hall, Barkin, Kenneth, Turner, Henry Ashby, Elkins, Thomas Henry and Sheehan, James J., "The civil war against Henry IV," in *Encyclopedia Britannica*, February 13, 2024, <https://www.britannica.com/place/Germany/The-civil-war-against-Henry-IV>.

¹⁹ The charter specifies that William and Gundrada "began to have love and devotion towards that order and that house above all other houses that we had seen," (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 11). St. Pancras carried particular meaning for the Normans, his relics having been used by Harold Godwinson to swear fealty to Duke William; cf. "A Brief Historical Summary," Lewes

appended to the 1444 Lewes Chartulary, goes on to tell of the Warennes' persistence in requesting monks from Cluny to start his priory three times before the Burgundian abbot Hugh relented.³⁶¹ As attested to by genuine 11th-century documents, four monks, including St Pancras' first prior Lanzo (d. 1107), were finally sent to Lewes and were evidently successful as the institution grew to house at least sixty monks at its height in the early 14th century.³⁶²

It is worth lingering on St Pancras Priory's participation in the tradition of foundation narratives given the bold choice to include the initial reticence of Cluny to supply monks to England. Although the charters speak of William and Gundrada as co-founders, this parity does not extend into the couple's much more personal epitaphs that attest to both individual and joint legacies within the local community. These representations are further complicated by the foundation narrative that seems like a celebration of the couple's true perseverance and faith but is instead a red herring. What the charter carefully elides are the personal interests that the story belies, namely, Gundrada's Flemish origins and the connection to Gundrada's brother Gerbod "who accidentally killed his lord, young Count Arduf" and who, seeking sanctuary, joined Cluny as a monk shortly after, in February, 1071.³⁶³ Along with a more providential inspiration for the

Priory Trust, <https://www.lewespriory.org.uk/history-overview>; William Page, ed., "House of Cluniac Monks: Priory of Lewes," in *The Victoria History of the County of Sussex, vol. II* (London: Archibald Constable and Co. Ltd., 1907): 64-71, <https://archive.org/details/victoriasussex02pageuoft/page/64/mode/2up?view=theater>.

²⁰ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 12.

²¹ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 73; Page, ed., "Houses of Cluniac monks," 66.

²² C. P. Lewis, "Warenne, Gundrada de (d. 1085), noblewoman" in *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*. 23 Sep. 2004; Accessed 21 Feb. 2022.

<https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-11736>; Elizabeth van Houts proposes 1073-4 as Gerbod's entry to Cluny (Van Houts/Love, *Warren (Hyde) Chronicle*, 99).

priory, the charter exaggerates Gundrada's Normanness through her supposed close relationship to "Queen Maud the mother of my [William de Warenne's] wife" in the priory's foundation charter.³⁶⁴ While considerable doubt has been cast over the historical reliability of the Lewes founding documents and the subsequent need to re-evaluate archaeological understanding of the now-ruinous site [FIG 2.47], the existence of a slightly mythologized foundation narrative is exciting when considering St Pancras in its capacity as a site of memory craft and symbolic installation.³⁶⁵

The documentation of events in the Middle Ages was part of a "changing construction of a dynastic or institutional past, of genealogy and prosopography" that relied on the deft and strategic manipulation of historical memory to legitimize and defend political hegemony.³⁶⁶ These "forged" charters are indicative of a well-organized campaign to establish Lewes and the family of de Warenne as devout, divinely motivated founders. They were among the earliest families whose ownership of English land after the Conquest formed the basis of what by the 14th

²³ The Lewes charters are in fact found in a 15th century manuscript commissioned by then-prior Robert Auncell. Rather than suggest inauthenticity, the 1444 Chartulary is a testament to monumental memory in its choice to "embody the collective memory of the monastic community" (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 12) from a previous era in which the priory had found itself in desperate need of legitimacy. In the 12th and 13th centuries, Lewes had a string of irresponsible French priors and was eventually targeted as "an alien monastery" (Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 249) given its status as a daughter-house of Cluny. This among other crises caused financial, administrative, and political chaos from which St Pancras would never fully recover before its suppression in 1537.

²⁴ Notably Richard Gem's review of the posthumous publication of Richard Lewis' mid-century excavations, cf. Richard Gem, "Lewes Priory, Excavations by Richard Lewis 1969–82. By Malcolm Lyne," *Archaeological Journal* 155, no. 1 (1998): 411–412, <https://doi.org/10.1080/00665983.1998.11078888>.

²⁵ Bernd Schneidmuller, "Constructing the Past by Means of the Present" in *Medieval Concepts of the Past: ritual, memory, historiography* (Washington, D. C.: German Historical Institute; Cambridge, UK: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 176.

century was considered an “established aristocratic lineage” carried on by the earls of Arundel.³⁶⁷ If, as Eva von Contzen shows, there is “a strong case for the significance of reception in determining the fictional status of medieval texts by factoring in the notion of experientiality and the immersive potential of the artwork”, then even the content of legal documents-as intentional instruments of narrative creation- must be considered as part of the context in which the priory and its burials existed.³⁶⁸ Sources from the 19th, 20th, and even 21st centuries continue to repeat this false genealogy, with one historian writing in 1949 that such a claim “doubtless reflects the tradition current in the priory in the fifteenth century” of monks at St Pancras claiming royal descent for their patroness.³⁶⁹ For the purposes of this study, however, the, paratextual documents’ capacity to define and redefine contemporary readers’ conception of the medieval site proves the narrative potential of purportedly non-fiction documents.

These charters matter, first, because they echo the foundation story that was most likely believed or at least promoted by the priory. The tidy anecdote of a chance meeting that inspired immediate devotion to the Cluniac order smoothed over the actual lead up to the priory’s foundation, which seems only to have occurred due to William and Gundrada’s diplomatic efforts after a frustrated King William I made the faux pas of offering abbot Hugh of £100 in exchange

²⁶ See the chapter “Chronologies of Identity”, in Hugh Thomas, *The English and the Normans: ethnic hostility, assimilation, and identity, 1066-c. 1220* (Oxford; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2003), 70-82; Matt Raven, “The earls of Edward III and the polity: the earls of Arundel and Northampton in the localities, 1330–60,” *Historical Research* 92, no. 258 (2019), 684 and 695.

²⁷ Eva von Contzen, “Diachrony: The Factual in the Middle Ages,” in *Narrative Factuality: A Handbook* (Berlin; Boston: Gruyter, 2020), 626, <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110486278-045>.

²⁸ *Early Yorkshire Charters, Vol. 8 The Honour of Warenne*, eds. William Farrer and Charles T. Clay (Cambridge University Press, 2013), viii.

for some monks.³⁷⁰ This strained beginning is absent in the chartulary narrative, replaced instead by a serendipitous detour, that was itself framed by a laudatory pilgrimage narrative. Only the whisper of these difficulties remains, since abbot Hugh's initial skepticism of an English daughter house is attributed vaguely to "the distance of this foreign land and especially because of the sea", rather than specifically to fears of simony.³⁷¹

As Mayhew rightly points out, these "forgeries" were "essential to the monasteries' legal defence of properties and privileges" that had likely been granted "in person by donors in front of witnesses but not recorded in detail in writing."³⁷² While documents like the 1444 chartulary may have been considered to be as legally valid as the initial oral contract or as an earlier redaction in their own time, the scholarship around Lewes has seen the 15th century chartulary as an obstacle to historical truth. From an installation perspective, however, the chartulary operates on the same notion of the narrative that Petersen, citing Ricoeur, explains "originates from a world of experience and acts transformatively back on that world of experience as the reader experiences it".³⁷³ In this case it is the world of the historian, whose legitimization of certain experiences when canonizing the account of human existence pits individual memories against each other to occupy the apparently finite capacity of historical narrative. As commemorative documents, the use of anachronous charters epitomizes the form-content relationship of documents that constitute representations of an abstract act like foundation and

²⁹ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 12.

³⁰ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 12.

³¹ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 12; cf. M. T. Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record, England 1066-1301* (Oxford; Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell, 1993), 146-9.

³² Ring Petersen, *Installation Art*, 236

whose materiality is the only limit to narrative development. Although such objects are necessary to the transmission of history, the well of memory is infinite and its representation likewise.

The Lewes charters, regardless of historical factitiousness, form part of the collective reception of St Pancras and by extension of the bodies residing within its walls. The charters are also of commemorative value because, along with legitimizing the grant of resources, there is a lot of work done in the charters to cement a much more illustrious lineage for the founders than they really had. These aspirational identities are given rhetorical credence by their first-person narration. “I William de Warenne and Gundrada my wife”, the first charter begins, signaling in no uncertain terms that what follows was and continues to be the express wish of both individuals. Using syntax that by the 13th century was standard in such documents, the charter preserves the donor’s active voice in a perpetually present act of declaration, functioning in this way like an epitaphic text *à la* Helen Swift, as “a statement of identity from a posthumous perspective”.³⁷⁴ This unlimited reenactment of the original legal ceremony certainly served its purpose of legitimizing St Pancras’ assets for posterity, as is evident from its continued use.

This duality of timelines blurs the distinction between the art object and its viewer, and thus between living and dead. This same superimposition of chronologies explains how the question of authenticity remained secondary to the inherent narrative power of the charter to craft the version of history that, until the mid-20th century, was taken to be a direct quotation of

³² Clanchy gives the template of “Let all persons, present and future, know that I, A of B, have given X with its appurtenances to C of D.” (Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 254); Swift, *Representing the Dead*, 10.

the earl's.³⁷⁵ The attribution of the "I" to both historical and present speakers in the sense of installation also connects the chartulary to that plethora of medieval writing in which the authorial voice is anchored only to the enunciation of text and not to a distinct, irreplaceable, individual.³⁷⁶ The proclamatory nature of legal documents provides set speech acts to be repeated on behalf of the original speaker and thus only accrues power through direct physical interaction. The charter thus presents a curated textual representation of the Warenne family and Lewes Priory, but its ahistoricity belies any questions of historical 'accuracy' and secures the cultural predominance of the more favorable narrative.

Gundrada de Warenne (née Oosterzele-Scheldewindeke) is herself supplied with a now largely disproved origin story. "Queen Maud the mother of my wife" is listed in the chartulary as one of the souls meant to benefit by the foundation of the priory.³⁷⁷ The later contention that Gundrada was also the daughter of William the Conqueror was recorded as fact in the 16th century report of the Warenne funeral monuments by Thomas Benolte, by Sandford, Watson,

³³ C. T. Clay is the first to include the suspicions of forgery in his publication of the 1444 Chartulary. The extent to which this was believed is apparent in W. H. St John Hope's gleeful assertion that "[n]o better account of the foundation can be written than an English version of earl Warenne's own words," (Hope, *Architectural History*, 1).

³⁴ Chimène Bateman, « Irrepressible Malebouche », *Cahiers de recherches médiévales et humanistes* 22 (2011) : 9-23. Douglas Kelly uses the term « moi multiple » in reference to the conscious depiction of oneself through multiple narrative personifications. (Douglas Kelly, "The Medieval *Moi Multiple*: Names, Surnames, and Personifications," in *Shaping Identity in Medieval French Literature: The Other Within*, eds. Tudor, Adrian and Kristin L. Burr (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2019): 15-29.

³⁵ Along with Maud's soul are those of William I, William II, William de Warenne, Gundrada de Warenne and "[f. 10r] all my heirs [f. 10v] and all of the faithful of Christ living and dead" (Salzman, *Lewes Chartulary*, 2); "pro salute domine mee Matildis Regine matris uxoris mee" (Hope, *Architectural History*, 29).

Brydges, and Ellis in the 17th and 18th and even by Blaauw and Duckett in the 19th.³⁷⁸ The endurance of this fictional genealogy is a testament to the effort taken by the family and their allies to promote this version of history that enshrined Gundrada's importance as co-founder and even as "the driving force behind the establishment of Lewes Priory and, subsequently, its principal cell at Castle Acre."³⁷⁹ To be sure, while William de Warenne had been generously rewarded with land after Hastings, Gundrada brought further holdings inherited from her brother, Frederick, to the match that she then donated to Lewes priory.³⁸⁰

Gundrada's depiction in the Lewes charter carefully elides her purely Flemish origins, replacing them with part-Flemish, part-Norman royal blood. This may have been particularly convenient given the accounts of that the new priory was payment in kind for the favor of taking her brother Gerbod as a monk. Yet her other brother, Frederick, is named as William de Warenne's '*frater*' in the Domesday Book and Gundrada inherited property upon Frederick's death, indicating that the association between the families was carefully curated to highlight the

³⁶ Cf. W. H. Blaauw, "XIII. -Remarks on Matilda, Queen of William the Conqueror, and her Daughter Gundrada", *Archaeologia* 32, no. 1 (1847): 108-125; Francis Sandford, *A genealogical history of the Kings and Queens of England, and monarchs of Great Britain, &c. From the conquest, Anno 1066, to the year 1707*, (London: M. Jenour for John Nicholson and Robert Knaplock, 1707); John Watson, *Memoirs of the ancient earls of Warren and Surrey*, (Warrington, UK: William Eyres, 1782); Arthur Collins and Egerton Brydges (ed.), *Collins's Peerage of England; genealogical, biographical, and historical* (London: F. C. and J. Rivington, Otridge and son, 1812); Henry Ellis and Great Britain. Record Commission. *A General Introduction to Domesday Book: Accompanied by Indexes of the Tenants in Chief, and Under Tenants, at the Time of the Survey: As Well as of the Holders of Lands Mentioned in Domesday Anterior to the Formation of That Record : With an Abstract of the Population of England at the Close of the Reign of William the Conqueror, so Far as the Same Is Actually Entered : Illustrated by Numerous Notes and Comments*. [London]: Printed by command of His Majesty King William IV, under the direction of the Commissioners on the Public Records of the Kingdom, 1833; and Clay, *EYC* 1949, 40-41.

³⁷ Mayhew, *Saint Pancras*, 16.

³⁸ Van Houts/Love, *The Warren (Hyde) Chronicle*, 103. This bequest included Carlton manor, Cambridgeshire (Dempsey, et al., "Herstory," 171).

transmission of property and minimize any hint of scandal that might have been dredged up by William and Gundrada's close relationship with the Cluniac order.³⁸¹ This management of one's own history through the initiation of historical events that necessitated documentation, the content of which would then pass into the written record, is again reminiscent of epitaphic writing in its response to a semantic caesura that threatens the posthumous (and in this case, living) reputation of a name. The extent to which one could be "textualized" is borne out in the literary epitaphs of Part III.

The Lewes chartulary preserves Gundrada and William in an example of Poirion's "écriture à la fois monumentale et littéraire, présentée comme une inscription" whose textual narrative is allowed to exceed two-dimensionality in the architectural manifestation of its account.³⁸² According to Poirion, the "désir d'éternité, que cache dans son élan vers l'impossible le désir amoureux, s'accroche aux lignes architecturales... tandis que l'espace compartimenté par l'art recueille les éléments épars de l'être humain".³⁸³ As part of the textual immortalization of the commemorated space, the chartulary provides the historical apparatus to the symbolic content of the priory's form. The Lewes chartulary reinforces the legal status of the priory, but also re-performs the priory's nascence and in doing so re-presences the founding figures. The chartulary might therefore be thought of as a secondary epitaph that, like the work of Sophie Calle in Chapter 1 and other installation artists, capitalizes on text's ability to resurrect the memory of the

³⁹ "The patronage of Lewes Priory as a form of penance by Gundrada on behalf of her brother is not too surprising as medieval women often completed these tasks, acting as intercessors or "bridges";" (Dempsey, et al., "Herstory," 173).

⁴⁰ Poirion, "Tombeaux Allégoriques", 321-22.

⁴¹ Poirion, "Tombeaux Allégoriques", 333.

dead in a palatable way that avoids the uncanniness of bodily resurrection but still carries emotional, legal, and historical authority in its citation of the dead.

Lewes Breviary (Fitzwilliam MS 369)

Also found within the textual milieu of St Pancras is the precious Lewes Breviary now kept at Cambridge's Fitzwilliam Museum (Fitzwilliam, MS 369), which dates to the 13th century [FIG 2.48]. This missal, commissioned for St Pancras although possibly copied elsewhere, is a treasure for its full-page miniatures, its highly specific calendar of English saints including Pancras [FIG 2.49] and Thomas of Canterbury, and the comprehensiveness of its annotated litany.³⁸⁴ As with MS Douce 269, the compilation of particular prayers and hymns within a single volume localizes the breviary, but also illustrates the intentionality behind the creation of each manuscript of curating the reader's experience of the text in order to, like the epitaph, make itself more memorable and increasing the likelihood of its content spreading to new audiences. Furthermore, the Lewes Breviary's exceptional organization and meticulous annotation of both alphabetic and musical notation enables us to recreate the sonic environment of the monastery via its textual representation. A full year of song and prayer might be reenacted through the performance of the breviary text which, coupled with the priory ruins, creates a unique opportunity for the land's (re-)activation as a working site of merged medieval and contemporary commemoration.

Perlesvaus (MS Hatton 82)

The words "Le seint Graal; Le liuer Sire Brian fiz Alayn;" are "at the head of the first page of what must have been a popular, relatively inexpensive copy" dated to the mid-13th century
⁴² Victor Leroquais, *Le bréviaire-missel du prieuré clunisien de Lewes (collection Georges Moreau)* (Paris : G. Andrieux, 1935), 4-6.

[FIG 2.50].³⁸⁵ This inexpensive manuscript is nevertheless a touchstone for our understanding of how Brian FitzAlan might have originally conceived of his effigy and that of his first wife. The first level of context for the text is Edward I's connection to King Arthur. A pilgrimage with Eleanor of Castile to the Lady Chapel at Glastonbury Abbey in 1278 to view the opening of Arthur and Guinevere's purported tombs, the construction of a real Round Table at Winchester, and the conscious emulation of King Arthur in the tournament circuit mark Edward I as the "Arthurian enthusiast" christened by Roger S. Loomis in 1953.³⁸⁶ But however much Edward enjoyed the literature, he was equally shrewd in crafting the long-term inextricability of his own biography with that of King Arthur, paragon of chivalry.

One very representative example of this identity merge is the description of Edward and Eleanor of Castile's marriage celebration by Flemish chronicler Lodewijk van Velthem. According to his continuation of Jacob van Maerlant's *Spiegel Historiae*, "some of his [Edward's] knights were installed as members of the Round Table and took the names of Arthurian characters" in a performance of scenes from legend.³⁸⁷ Regardless of whether or not this anecdote can be substantiated, it has been treated as at least possibly true well into 20th century scholarship (the

⁴³ Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 173; Bodleian Library, "MS Hatton 82," *Summary Catalogue*, vol. 2, part 2, 838, https://medieval.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/catalog/manuscript_6098; Fol. 3v also has a title in a later hand at its head reading: "The Seint graall"

⁴⁴ Roger Sherman Loomis, "Edward I, Arthurian Enthusiast", *Speculum* (28:1, Jan. 1953), pp. 114-17.

⁴⁵ Richard Trachsler, "Orality, Literacy and Performativity of Arthurian Texts". In *Handbook of Arthurian Romance*, eds. Leah Tether and Johnny McFadyen (Berlin; Boston: Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2017), 277.

esteemed R. S. Loomis included).³⁸⁸ As a contemporary of Edward's, Velthem's purportedly eyewitness report "makes clever use of interlace to link episodes, and constructs meaning by layering associations and borrowings: between past present, home and abroad, fact and fiction, *historiography and romance* [emphasis added]."³⁸⁹ Velthem, among others, held Edward as the once and future king whose own triumphs had been presaged by the "history" recorded in Arthurian literature.

Thea Summerfield highlights the particular relevance of the Welsh episodes, in which Edward and his men encounter and ultimately defeat an old foe of both Edward and his mother, Eleanor of Provence. Velthem in the *Continuation* "aims at veracity: as his readers may well have known, Edward spent a number of years campaigning in North Wales, and had, before that, fought Simon de Montfort... one of whom turns up".³⁹⁰ The semi-historical status of the *Continuation* mirrors the English king's own narrative performance, such as citing king Arthur's united kingdom of Britain as justification for "Edward I's control of Wales as well as the claim of Edward and later kings to sovereignty over Scotland."³⁹¹ Like the genre of these texts, its performers, including kings, had learned to "move from one milieu to another, and their

⁴⁶ There is evidence of the "*pas d'armes* [passage of arms and the tournament, where knights and ladies, but also entire towns, would enact and perform Arthurian characters and episodes" (Trachsler, "Orality, Literacy and Performativity", 276).

⁴⁷ Thea Summerfield, "Edward I, a Magic Spring, and a Merciless Forest: Sources and Resonances in Velthem's *Continuation*", *Li premerains vers: Essays in Honor of Keith Busby*, (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2011), 465.

⁴⁸ It is incumbent to point out that Edward was captured by Simon de Montfort in 1264, at the Battle of Lewes. (Summerfield, "Edward I", 476). Richard Trachsler seconds the opinion that the marriage story "could more accurately be described as a "'reportage en vers' qui a la valeur d'un document historique'" (Trachsler, "Orality, Literacy and Performativity", 278).

⁴⁹ On Arthur's evolution, cf. Barbara N. Sargent-Baur, "Dux bellorum/rexmilitum/roi fainéant: the transformation of Arthur in the 12th century," in *King Arthur: A Casebook*, ed. E. Donald Kennedy (New York; London: Garland Publishing, Inc., 1996): 29-43; Kennedy, ed. *King Arthur*, xx.

repertoire can be adapted, or not” to suit the context of its presentation.³⁹² To suit, in other words, its frame.

That Brian FitzAlan was cognizant of and attuned to this cultural shift toward chivalric self-mythologizing is indisputable thanks to the Bodleian Library’s Hatton MS 82 containing the most complete version of the romance *Perlesvaus* along with a ballad appended to the last folio in a later hand. The first inhabited folio (f. 5r) is headed by a large, bold colophon: ‘Le seint Graal; le liuer sire Brian fiz Alayn:’. This text is in turn superscribed in a later hand, who writes ‘Le Seint Genert Le Livre Sire---- Alayn’.³⁹³ The original ex libris bears some of the only decoration in the entire manuscript, with later folia not displaying more than bolded capitals to break up the monotony of columns and signal plot points to the reader. Plain though it appears, Hatton 82 is valuable not only for its complete narrative content, but also for the traces of interaction that make the manuscript a commemorative object in itself. I refer here to the marginal notes, interlinear editing, manuscript repairs, evidence of decay, and multiple scribal hands visible throughout the composition.

In the Introduction to her seminal 2017 book, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self*, Sarah Kay asks us to imagine “how it would feel to become absorbed in the contents of a page that can be perceived as an extension of the reader’s own skin”, with the blemishes, scars, and orifices paralleling the impact of life events on human skin.³⁹⁴ In doing so, the “uncanny suture between represented content, page, and reader” [FIG 2.51] imitates the encounter between living and

⁵⁰ Trachsler, “Orality, Literacy and Performativity”, 274.

⁵¹ William Nitze, *The Old French Grail romance Perlesvaus: a study of its principal sources* (Baltimore: J. Murphy Company, 1902).

⁵² Sarah Kay, *Animal Skins and the Reading Self in medieval Latin and French bestiaries* (Chicago; London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2017), 3.

dead with the commemorative monument acting as interface.³⁹⁵ The confrontation with mortality at another's tomb is set in motion by the reading of epitaphic text, frustrating a living reader's attempt to remain distinct from the dead. Such boundary blurring between diegetic voices only intensified with the rise of figural tomb representations in Normandy and Norman England that portrayed the dead in an idealized *peri-mortem* state that a viewer could easily relate to their own human form. That the recited text is inscribed into the stone surface is crucial: practically because of its durability, and symbolically because the act of inscription maintains the distinction between self and other even as the textual content creates a rapprochement between living and non-living.

In the context of a mobile commemorative network, the inscribed tomb is joined by other textual artifacts, notably manuscripts. For Brian FitzAlan, MS Hatton 82 retains and transmits traces of human interaction that form a chronicle of experiences with and within the book object. After Brian, the manuscript eventually fell into the hands of the Arundel Fitzalan's, as the name 'Thomas Arundell' [FIG 2.52] is visible in a 15th century hand (f. 92v).³⁹⁶ The marginalia in Hatton 82, in addition to aiding in the comprehension and retention of the text, provides expectant space in which readers are able to carve their individual identities into the body and narrative of the manuscript, thus commemorating their connection to the book through the supplement of differentiating text. In addition to distinguishing different readers, marginal [FIG 2.53] and interlinear notes [FIG 2.54] indicate moments of subjective interaction between reader, scribe, and manuscript with their roles interchangeable given the passage of time.

Indeed,

⁵³ Kay, *Animal Skins*, 5.

⁵⁴ The full note reads "Thomas Arundell est bonus puer". (PDF p. 2 in Box 5, folder 19, "The William A. Nitze Papers", The University of Chicago).

Hatton 82 displays up to eight scribal hands [FIG 2.55] that were also responsible for much, though not all, of the aforementioned annotation.

Creation of manuscripts like Hatton 82 occurred in a workshop setting that largely prioritized uniformity. But the anonymity of the scribes in this case is betrayed by the inevitable quirks of handwritten text that are now useful in establishing manuscript provenance. In effect, the orthographic differences contextualizing the individual scribes memorialize interaction between human and parchment. While the interlinear gloss certainly seems to have been exclusively incorporated during the editing process, the marginalia is more diverse in both content and date. The very availability of marginal space, similar to the current experience of Muriel FitzAlan's tomb as will be seen, invites the reader to fill in their own thoughts in what Stephen Nichols refers to as "a space of production" within the context of the 'manuscript matrix' "where the object itself partners with human agents to produce unique version of the literary artifact".³⁹⁷

Such an intentional call to physically and narratively alter a folio means that the passage of time becomes tangible and the manuscript becomes a monument to and trace of the communal reading experience and the subjective experience of each lector. This cumulative evidence of interactive reading practices and, as with the scribes, diegetic voices that interpolate and, in effect, converse with each successive reader as their eyes travel across the page. Of course, the prolixity of public readings and the geographic transmission discussed above meant that manuscripts were convenient tools in the creation of mobile commemorative networks,

⁵⁵ Stephen G. Nichols, "*Mind, Materiality, & the Medieval Manuscript Matrix*" (unpublished manuscript, November 2017), PDF, 2.

lending themselves easily to the new desire to leave a more dynamic and far-reaching legacy. The chivalric idealization of both military and courtly mastery redefined aristocratic identities like Brian FitzAlan's, but it also changed how those identities were expressed. For FitzAlan and his family, one's tomb no longer functioned simply to mark the site of burial. It had itself become a site of monumental narrativity and a performance of self that incorporated the historical milieu of its occupant to produce an installation fit for ekphrastic description.³⁹⁸

As a paratext to the FitzAlans' effigies, Hatton 82 shows how important it was for the Angevin elite to be familiar with even non-canonical Arthurian material like *Perlesvaus* through rereading of a workaday manuscript that still displays the marks of intergenerational use. Marginalia in different hands attests to different reading experiences inspiring new thoughts. As a text-bearing artifact, Hatton 82 provides a tangible portal through time, and provides a richer sociological portrait because of its traces, its scars. Like his idiosyncratic seal, Brian FitzAlan's manuscript retains its narrativity by existing in that space of *différence* where only disruption influences the object's narrative. Whether inscribed or penned, text embodies both its subject and creator with its simultaneous discursiveness and materiality. For epitaphic installations, the inclusion of epigraphy adds an opportunity for spectators to participate privately or publicly in the continued existence of memory.

⁵⁶ Susan Crane defends the study of such ephemeral performances given that within the medieval "externally oriented honor ethic, secular elites understand themselves to be constantly on display, subject to the judgment of others, and continually reinvented in performance." She goes on to argue that "in several medieval contexts, public appearance and behavior are thought not to falsify personal identity but, on the contrary, to establish and maintain it," Susan Crane, *The Performance of Self: Ritual, Clothing, and Identity During the Hundred Years War* (Philadelphia: Univ. of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 16.

Conclusion

In the case of the Bedale effigies, the absence of text known to have existed historically invokes the annotative praxis of adding text to a receptive space such as occurs with musical incipits, extra folia, empty indentations, and other spatially distinct areas of blank parchment. Culturally ingrained symbols such as angels and clothing and site-specific references like heraldry are coupled with blank spaces that imply writing but do not provide it. Hatton 82 and all the documents associated with the FitzAlan and de Warenne families contextualize the monumental commemoration of individuals immersed within a far-reaching network of relationships and identities that connected such baronial families across a new social and political order and in spite of the strategic dispersal of lands granted by the king. But where the Lewes effigies guide their viewer through the monument's different features, the Bedale effigies are of unfixed context and offer the spectator a chance not only to relate to the narrative presented by the monuments, but to act as a co-writer of the communicated message. It is the persistent de- and re-contextualization of the FitzAlan monuments within the defined space of the parish church that renders them dynamic and, most importantly, engaging.

This second part has provided two examples of Anglo-Norman family tomb programs that, while certainly not comprehensive, do span the early to late period of Norman England as well as representing funerary customs from both northern and southern parts of the country. The historical period covered, between the battle of Hastings and the first wave of bubonic plague, saw other developments that affected people's concept of death, namely, the institutionalization of Purgatory and concern for the individual soul, standardized liturgy and iconography, and new privileges for secular patrons of religious houses like intramural burial. In

this new culture the relationship between structure, site, and public produced commemorative environments that constructed highly memorable multisensory experiences of and with the dead [FIG 2.56]. Use of techniques now applied to installation art-theatricality, intermediality, and site-specificity- are detectable in the carefully curated chapels and tombs that comprised immersive encounters with the deceased and represented a typically intentional personal narrative. Textual components and written documentation supplement the monument with a mobile commemorative network that carried the crafted narrative to new encounter sites as memory.

Memorability was the ultimate goal in self-historicization, and commemorative monuments, with their accompanying rituals, were meant to rupture the existing historical narrative with accounts of a new Norman aristocracy. But instead of static vignettes, monuments like those at St Pancras' Priory and St Gregory's Church aimed at an adaptable legacy narrative that would survive inevitable future rewritings of the historical record. To this end, monuments that encouraged visitor interaction beyond visual observation actively reinserted themselves into the present moment. Physical experiences that were equally personal and relatable could leave a deeper impression upon their audience than more generic events, and they also kept the dead active in daily life. Those living with the monuments that had already inspired the florid verse of *fin'amor* soon shared their experiences and led Anglo-Norman Arthurian literature to embrace a golden age of description. As opposed to the literary encounters found in the next chapter, the encounter with the monument in real life affords an opportunity for each spectator to experience the experience and temporarily revive the monument's subject and creators in situ.

In Part III, readers of romance literature exploit the plane of imagination aided by energetic language to encounter the literary monument in the form of a 'narrated installation'.

Now primarily through textual representation these narratives bridged the gap between reader and fictional space by creating a network of signifying language. Focusing on two key storylines within the pivotal anonymous work known as the *Non-cyclic Prose Lancelot*, the final chapter of this dissertation studies the ekphrastic, symbolic, and mnemonic literature popular in the Middle Ages as an exemplum for creating contemporary narratives that are adaptable, immersive, and memorable. Readers interact with these textual bodies and experience the fictional space through narrated synesthesia and names, Lancelot's in particular, are associated with monuments imbued with the affective energy of an extended commemorative community that operate as metonyms for dead or absent characters. As with Calle's and Burstein's installations, the transhistorical chapel housing Gundrada de Warenne's tomb, or the rearranged effigies and tomb bases in Bedale, the epitaphic installations in the *NCPL* require reader-witnesses to interpret the entire context of the tombs and epitaphs in order to understand the site's narrative importance.

Part III

« La lecture est un rêve libre. »
-J.-P. Sartre, *Qu'est-ce que la littérature*, 64

Chapter 7: Building mental environments

In my final chapter I wish to take up the installation qualities of site-specificity, intermediality, and theatricality in the context of literary monuments that go beyond a formal description and become narrated installations. I define these as commemorative sites that exist originally or exclusively within a written text, where language becomes the tool for constructing interpretable and affecting installations in readers' imaginations.³⁹⁹ Like Calle's embodiment of her mother through disassociated speech ('*souci*', 'Mother', 'Monique'), the utterance or performance of curated text activates the commemorative potential of vernacular expression by manifesting written language into the present. The textual monuments of courtly literature thus move from "narrative installations" to become "narrated installations" whose embodied textuality offers a site of encounter between work and public that muddies the distinction between *ergon* and *parergon* and letting narrative seep into reality and immerse the reader cognitively and affectively.

These affected readers then produced their own written or spoken responses, creating an international network of literary criticism and interpretation that memorialized and perpetuated the original text into a mobile commemorative network. Narrated installations disrupt the concept of reality in writing, and use of prose to document and preserve oral histories incorporating the supernatural makes courtly literature a site of ambiguity in which the content

¹ Isidore of Seville explains how the term fable was derived from the verb to speak and signaled that these narratives were not real, but rather narrated into existence [*Fabulas poetae a fando nominaverunt, quia non sunt res factae, sed tantum loquendo fictae*], Isidore, of Seville, José Oroz Reta. Manuel-Antonio Marcos Casquero. and Manuel C. Díaz y Díaz. *Etimologías: Edición Bilingüe*. 2. ed. (Madrid: Biblioteca de Autores Cristianos, 1993), 356.

has dual forms as speech and writing and as fact and fiction. These vividly imagined textual environments and bodies that I refer to as narrated installations speak not only to the dense *energeic* (Gr. ἐνέργεια, “activity”) language of medieval *romans*, but also to the medieval practice of meditative reading.⁴⁰⁰ This process prioritized the slow, close reading characteristic of monastic study to discover as many layers of truth or meaning as possible in the text, often aided by the *accessus*- an introduction to the author that “raised and answered a set of standard questions... in the form of headings” and which “evolved into an independent form of critical discourse” by the 12th century.⁴⁰¹

As with the previous chapter’s epitaphic installations, literary representations of tombs and epitaphs guide readers through the construction and understanding of imagined environments that go on to become culturally meaningful touchstones in the curated commemorative narration of non-fictional individuals. In medieval Arthurian romance, real concerns about inheritance and dynastic perpetuation are reflected in the text-based communities that grew around the most popular narratives. These installations also unite disparate destinies by virtue of shared experience. Repeated iterations of cemeteries and tombs in the *NCPL* reinforce a long-lasting and dense memory of narrated environments. As with MS Hatton 82, the manuscript object of often became another mediating parergon whose illuminations, marginalia, and wear patterns framed individual reading experiences within a

² “ἐνέργεια,” in Liddell, Scott, Jones *Ancient Greek Lexicon*, <https://lsj.gr/wiki/%E1%BC%90%CE%BD%CE%AD%CF%81%CE%B3%CE%B5%CE%B9%CE%B1>, accessed 11/30/23.

³ Stephen Michael Wheeler, *Accessus ad Auctores: Medieval Introductions to the Author (Codex latinus monacensis 19475)* (Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan Univ., 2014), 2-3.

genealogy of readers. Like the nodes of encounter within an art installation, gifted manuscripts additionally “functioned”, as Elizabeth Van Houts puts it, “as pegs for collective memory as well as being symbols for the transmission and memory of rights” that could be circulated as needed.⁴⁰²

While the tomb monument may be “locostatic” within the narrative landscape, synecdochic documents like epitaphs are “locomobile,” and the mobile textual object embodies the dead for intra- and extra-textual interlocutors.⁴⁰³ This actualization of the narrative both in readers’ minds and as written text is vividly on display in the legacy of the *Lancelot-Grail Cycle* that began with importing Chrétien de Troyes’ French courtly poems to Britain in the 13th century. Among the earliest surviving Anglo-Norman adaptations is the anonymous *Non Cyclic Prose Lancelot (NCPL)*, currently extant in England at the British Library in MS Royal 20 D III [FIG 3.1] and in Additional MS 10293/4 at the Bodleian Library. As a prototext for prose romance, the *NCPL* provides an inexhaustible case study for this chapter. In the story, funerary rituals and spaces are narrated providing revelation and confusion for characters and readers alike. Heroic and deceptive epitaphic installations alike disrupt individual storylines and challenge both intra- and extra-textual readerships to discern truth from lie, right from wrong, in order to progress in their narrative journey.

The sprawling Anglo-Norman romance recounts the knight Lancelot du Lac’s life and quest for the holy grail, but about three-fourths of the way through the 13th century *Non Cyclic Prose Lancelot* (BN MS fr. 768, f.144b)-- comes an account of a certain *monseigneur Matraliez’s*

⁴ E. Van Houts, *Memory and Gender*, 93.

⁵ Velte, “Sepulchral Representation”, 255; Schultz, “Inscriptions on Stone”, 184.

funeral that is representative of how the romance employs funerals and corpses as narrative tools overall. Wrongfully killed in a skirmish by king Arthur's knight Hector, Matraliez's courtly funeral services provide insight into the highly ritualized and symbolic *mort chevalresque* that became the ultimate marker of virtue and heroism within medieval romance literature. To die honorably was to achieve both heavenly ascension and terrestrial memorability, as modeled by the epitaphic installations in Chapter 2. So pervasive was this new vernacular literature in the formation of English court culture that historical individuals sought to emulate their literary heroes and hopefully be remembered as their equal in death if not in life. Matraliez's funeral scene in *NCPL* usefully depicts the conventional occidental Christian funeral event familiar to medieval readers before introducing the romance's supernatural themes.

Matraliez is laid to rest (f. 145c) in a ceremony featuring a series of processions bringing the body to and from specifically chosen sites of ritual. Within these spaces the text describes the sights and sounds of commemoration that symbolically connect living and dead, but also create interaction among the living:

« Atant est descendue la biere an la cort, si recommence li diaus trop granz. Et fu aportez li cors anmi la sale, si furent mandé li cleric et li prevoire por faire son servise si com an doit faire a cors, car li sires l'avoit fait apporter de deus jornees loig, por ce que il voloit que il fust anterrez s'an ce chastel non. (...) Et l'andemain metent Mataliz an terre. Si ne porroit nus si grant duel deviser de tant de gent com il ont fait de lui. Et Hestors meesmes en a ploré. Or est Mataliz an terre. »

« Là-dessus, on décharge la bière dans la cour, et le deuil recommence, très fort. Le corps fut apporté au milieu de la salle, on fit venir les clercs et le prêtre pour le service funèbre, comme on doit le faire pour une dépouille mortelle : le seigneur l'avait fait chercher à deux jours de voyage, car il ne voulait que ce château comme lieu de sépulture. (...) Le lendemain on enterre Matralis. Personne ne saurait décrire le grand deuil que menèrent pour lui tant de gens. Hector lui-même pleura. Voilà donc Matralis en terre. »

Seams between fictional and historical worlds are obscured by realistic details that guide the reader through the scene using recognizable 11th and 12th century funeral elements all the while

blurring the boundary between the fictional death and real acts of commemoration within the reader's imagination.

Both Matraliez's placement in the center of the castle's great hall and the beckoning of clerics to perform the appropriate liturgy were recognizable to medieval readers. Both actions reflect the continued Anglo-Norman funeral customs of the 13th century, providing a reference for the rest of the scene that presumes readers' familiarity with such practices. In his *Commentary on Lamentations*, William of Malmesbury considers grief (*dolor*) to be characterized by a boundlessness of expression that elicits yet still exceeds endless representations.⁴⁰⁴ Just so, the grief for Matraliez is deemed indescribable (« Si ne porroit nus si grant duel deviser »), leaving room for reader interpretation in which personal experience is applied to the understanding of a fictional other. Each reader imagines a unique encounter with the narrated funeral based on their lived experience.

Another realistic element of this scene is the two day journey to bring Matraliez's body to his chosen place of rest. The Norman conquests further and further afield meant that the dead now might have to travel great distances in order to be properly buried.⁴⁰⁵ This increased mobility of bodies necessitated new commemorative practices that allowed for flexibility in the curation of tombs and memorials whose geographic expansion went hand in hand with new

⁶ Emily A. Winkler, "Grief, grieving, and loss in high medieval historical thought". In *Traditio* 77 (2002), 136.

⁷ See Christopher Daniell, *Death and Burial*, 79-105. Henry I's body, for example, was escorted in stages across the Channel to Reading from Normandy by way of Rouen in 1135. The body rested at the church of St-Etienne in Rouen for a month before being buried in early 1136 at Westminster. What is more, while Henry's body went to England, his "entrails were extracted and the urn with these perishables was taken for burial at Notre-Dame du Pr, one of Henry's favorite monastic churches," C. Warren Hollister and Amanda Frost Clark, *Henry I* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 2001), 474.

Anglo-Norman ties across Europe. Overall, Matraliez's death demonstrates the amount of movement-of recontextualization- associated with even the most conventional funeral rites in Anglo-Norman romance. Where the romance diverges from normal practice, and where room is made for subjective reader interaction, is in its representation of supernatural or impossible tombs that rupture the limits of standardized activity around commemorative objects.

Chivalric literature took full advantage of its fictionality to infuse every aspect of represented life with supernatural potential.⁴⁰⁶ The *merveilleux* comes in the forms of magic, monsters, metamorphosis, and immortality among other phenomena played out in the narration of a parallel universe.⁴⁰⁷ What might be relegated to the margins or feared in the real world could be confronted and experienced through written literature, both communally and individually. As far as distinguishing between reality and fiction, these texts rupture the hard borders between the two states through the mental and affective effects that meditative reading can elicit from readers. Rather than a dialectic between historical and fictional, readers' experiences fall within a spectrum of truth in which something may be fictional but nevertheless constitute a real experience for the reader: narrative reality.

⁸ Historiographers of post-Conquest Britain had also been swift to use fictional or fictionalized information to mend holes in the fabric of a panegyric Norman historical narrative. Emblematic among these sources is Geoffrey of Monmouth's prose *Historia Regium Britannie*, written in Latin circa 1136 (cf. Geoffrey of Monmouth, Michael D. Reeve, and Neil Wright, *Geoffrey of Monmouth: The History of the Kings of Britain : an edition and translation of De gestis Britonum (Historia regum Britanniae)* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK; Rochester, NY: Boydell Press, 2009).

⁹ On the supernatural in medieval literature see Daniel Poirion, *Le merveilleux dans la littérature médiévale* (Presses universitaires de France, 1982); Laurence Harf-Lancner, *La monde des fees dans l'occident médiéval* (Hachette Littératures, 2003); Corinne J. Saunders, *Magic and the Supernatural in medieval English romance* (Boydell & Brewer, 2010); Aisling Nora Byrne, *Otherworlds: fantasy and history in medieval literature* (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2016).

Similarly, readers also encounter that which is false or unreal within the narrative world as a kind of meta-fictionality whose encounter is nevertheless actualized and stored within readers' imaginations: narrative fiction. Each individual's reading experience is real to them as imagined reality. Like the immersive environments constructed by the installation artist in Chapter 1, the diegetic space of the romance offers a safe yet authentic setting in which readers may practice engaging with the intangible. Time, emotion, virtues, vices, even death are given form in the romance but only temporarily, as if to limit traumatic exposure and prevent readers from losing themselves completely in the fiction. The *NCPL's* application of energetic terms for both realistic and supernatural description was ideal for patching together a legitimizing genealogy for the English crown.

By attributing real names and practices to the events of mythologized history, medieval romance's nonlinearity additionally allowed a disrupting of the historical record by juxtaposition of past, present, and future. This temporal flexibility translated into a comparative, compressed account of legendary sacred and secular events. The new vernacular genre and its expanded readership became key in the solidification of political and culture Anglo-Norman supremacy in England, much in the same way that the epitaphic installations of Chapters 1 and 2 were used to recontextualize a subject and thus alter its significance. Practices of reading in the 12th and 13th centuries that had previously been honed for the study of sacred texts were now applied by secular audiences. The transfer of an architecturally conceived process of remembering and learning to secular, vulgate literature proves to be key in medieval readers' tradition of visualizing and reenacting literary works.

Matraliez's death and funeral scene uses the supernatural in just this way to confront issues of justice and guilt. On the stage of the great hall, none other than Matraliez's killer, Hector, witnesses the funeral scene and must decide between approaching the body and staying safely away from his victim's mourners. His decision to approach the body causes Matraliez's body to spontaneously bleed in the presence of his killer, publicly indicating Hector's guilt. The *tombe sanglante* motif uses the superhuman authority of the fictional dead to determine events for the fictional living, but it also impresses upon the reader the futility of denying wrongdoing through a visceral and horrific event that pushes against boundaries of reality enough to provoke the reader into a new state of affect but without causing actual trauma. In the scenes discussed later in this chapter, the imagining of horrors and marvels is even more invasive of reader's reality due to the narrator's claim to have reproduced inscriptions witnessed by characters in the fictional world verbatim in the manuscript text and external readers practice managing extreme emotion like grief alongside characters.

The realized fictional inscriptions seize upon the manuscript's materiality to become a place where fiction is not only imagined, but experienced. Inherently subjective and arguably indefinable, narrative provided an ideal tool for unifying disparate elements within a curated relational context like the parergon of the chivalric romance.⁴⁰⁸ These experiences, like a visit to the tombs in Chapter 2, were in turn embedded into readers' memories, where fictional and non-fictional are remembered in conjunction. As Alistair Minnis puts it, medieval writers were

¹⁰ This comparative reception of literature relies heavily on Derrida's idea of *différance*, according to which context fills the semiotic gap to enable interpretation of the parergon as distinct from its surrounding. In medieval literature, the seepage between historical and narrative realities is purposeful and functions to historicize the fictional and mythologize the historical.

“interested in the psychology of audience-response” and, crucially, conceived of their creations “having a life beyond the psyches of their creators”-that is to say, in the reader’s psyche. It is here, in the Augustinian *imagination*, that the *acies animi* (“eye of the mind”) reviews what has been physically sensed and establishes connections. Individual memories interact in the mind to construct immersive scenes in the imagination that were based on reality, but not bound to it. However, like the art installation, the imagination interpolates and even interferes with its audience’s life. Still, the prospective reader or viewer must choose to participate in the encounter and for medieval readers this implied a technical mastery of reading and remembering that offers insight into the potential applications of medieval literature today, as discussed in the following section. Literacy determined someone’s ability to participate in the new English empire for practical reasons such as reading legal documents, but medieval reading also implied a repository of retained knowledge informed a reader and provided clarity in the face of an obscure sacred, or secular, text.

Commemoration in Anglo-Norman *romanz*: medieval reading practice

Aside from a medieval reader-participant’s physical ability to imagine and mentally engage with a narrative, the quality of such an immersive reading experience depended largely on one’s mnemonic proficiency. Lay reading quickly gained traction among the post-Conquest English baronial class that Arthurian literature so often depicted, encouraged by the royal patronage of writers under Henry II and Eleanor of Aquitaine.⁴⁰⁹ The fictional or fictionalized courts of courtly literature became a handbook for behavior at the historically real English court

¹¹ Cf. Richard Barber’s chapter, “Chivalry, Cistercianism and the Grail” in *A Companion to the Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, ed. Carol Dover (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 3-12.

and additionally functioned as a political mediator, what Geraldine Heng calls “a ready and-
equally important- *safe* language of cultural discussion, and cultural transformation, in the
service of crisis and urgent contingency”.⁴¹⁰ Grappling Norman authorities curated their invasion
and mythologized their acts of conquest in literature as a means of biopolitical damage control.
Manuscripts became repositories of oral histories and genealogical information, which were
bequeathed to family or religious institutions as the seat of memory for the donor.

Understanding religious and hermeneutic texts was key to understanding God and the
divine truth of creation. Technically, according to Mary Carruthers, all medieval reading was
based on religious praxis that invoked a Pauline “architecture mnemonic” used in monastic
reading, which encoded the metaphor of memories as “building blocks” for the reader’s well-
trained “*machina memorialis*” to construct the foundations of “a library built up during one’s
lifetime”, located in the imagination.⁴¹¹ The architectural qualities of monuments in particular
could be memorized as symbolic nodes but required a more ekphrastic language to convey static
visual into arrangeable memories. For medieval authors, James H. Brown explains, this inventory
of memory was then plumbed for material when creating their own “literary invention”, which
created an intertextual network of allusions for readers to think with. These allusions cued
mental images (*phantasiai*) in the reader’s mind that comprise their subjective memory of the
reading experience. The architectural conceptualization of memory was expressed with highly
evocative, descriptive language that activated the mind’s eye. In conjunction with a

¹² Geraldine Heng, *Empire of Magic: Medieval Romance and the Politics of Cultural Fantasy* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 2003), 18.

¹³ Mary Carruthers, *The Craft of Thought: Meditation, Rhetoric, and the Making of IMGES, 400-1200* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1998), 4.

representational “tendency away from pictorial sequences and toward a decidedly more pronounced emphasis on surface, structure and materiality” in the 13th century, Aristotelian *energeia*, in reference to the actuality of a thing or utterance, has also been postulated as a term for the active state of being or doing, and the architectural approach to memory codified the literary world using ekphrastic and, more specifically, *energeic* rhetoric to render a more “visibly ‘readable’” narrative.⁴¹²

Bound only by imagination and rhetorical mastery, writers at the time describe monuments that “stretch the imagination to even conceive of such a structure, much less [how to] build one or represent it in a tangible visual medium.”⁴¹³ In the intermedial space of readers’ imagination the marvelous constructions of courtly literature could exist cohesively and simultaneously. Although reading in the medieval world was already highly interactive and even immersive through oral recitation, spiritual contemplation, physical and emotional responses to devotional texts, these new textual descriptions incorporated multisensorial details to construct mental environments, providing the site for activated imaginations to produce what I call “narrated installation”. The “architecture mnemonic” in medieval romance is thus applied to the construction of imaginable spaces, not only to furnish an existing mental repository with

¹⁴ In his dissertation, Timothy Ryan Steffensmeier embraces George Blair’s etymological connection between *energeia* and *ergon*. The former thus shifts to refer to that which is “internally active”, such as the *phantasmata* or mental images derived from a given text. Timothy Steffensmeier, “Rhetorical invention and becoming local” (PhD diss., University of Texas, Austin, 2005), 82-84.
<http://proxy.uchicago.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/dissertations-theses/rhetorical-invention-becoming-local/docview/305384723/se-2>; James H. Brown, *Imagining the Text: Ekphrasis and Envisioning Courtly Identity in Wirnt Von Gravenberg’s Wigalois* (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2016), 93.

¹⁵ Brown, *Imagining the Text*, 116.

memorized content but also to provide the building blocks for new environments created by the reader's imagination.

In the imagination, the narrative's content is thus actualized for the reader who 'witnesses' the scenes with their mind's eye as a virtual reality. In doing so, readers become immersed in narrative reality. In this immersed state readers are more susceptible to the affective and energetic language present through the *NCPL*, especially at the most martial or violent moments. By actualizing what the text expresses within the non-linear temporality of imagination, readers could archive these fictional environments as real experiences leaving real memories of imaginary places. The membrane between memory and imagination, as was well understood by Anglo-Norman writers, created "an interstitial space between past and future in which cross-temporal transactions are made", through which "lived experience in the present becomes transformed into assimilated experience in a changed present".⁴¹⁴ In this way, characters demonstrating well-managed and appropriate emotion helped reclaim the affecting lamentations of Classical heroes as a symbol of courtly Anglo-Norman society.⁴¹⁵

¹⁶ Emily Keightley and Michael Pickering, *The Mnemonic Imagination: remembering as creative practice* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire; New York: Palgrave, 2012), 43.

¹⁷ As part of the much wider cultural reconstruction that cherry-picked from insular and Continental practices, Anglo-Norman rulers sought to appear both strong and unassailability devout by forging links to ancient heroes, like the Greeks, Romans, and Franks. What Lessing calls the "heroism of the barbarian" was a useful category for Anglo-Normans to exalt new chivalric heroes for the same ability to "weep and still be valiant," Gotthold E. Lessing, *Laocoon* (London: Macmillan, 1874), 7. The simultaneous capacity of the medieval hero for mercy and prowess was key to mythologizing recent history and combined the qualities of heroes throughout time to create the unbelievably fierce yet deeply pious understanding of warfare as a Christological performance deserving of sympathy but short of becoming caricature (Lessing, *Laocoon*, 15).

The new chivalric romances sought to connect mythical and historical worlds on a larger scale, making use of specific and vivid prose to describe both the *merveilleux* and the increasingly realistic scenes encountered in the text.⁴¹⁶ With the proliferation of supernatural elements in courtly literature, narrated installations also afforded more flexibility of representation than text or image since readers could imagine (and reimagine) in four dimensions. Broad, even holistic descriptions of monument sites included details about the monument, certainly, but also of the space surrounding it. These environments are laden with sensational ekphrasis that “incants rather than describes”, relying on readers to fill in the specifics of the conjured space with existing memories.⁴¹⁷ What is more, like the nonlinear romance itself, the narrated installations’ energetic text “constitutes the reality” of its subject and can be rewritten, re-read, remembered, and reinterpreted like any real experience.⁴¹⁸

Commemoration and “Narrated installation”

Unsurprisingly, given the culturally ingrained symbolism of tombs, sepulchral representations are a primary site of narrated installation in medieval romance. In the previous chapter we observed the painstaking process the Anglo-Norman elite went through of commissioning, actualizing, installing, and preserving funerary monuments. This same aristocracy

¹⁸ Hilary Powell and Corinne J. Saunders, eds., *Visions and Voice-Hearing in Medieval and Early Modern Contexts* (Cham: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021), 6.

¹⁹ Valerie Allen, “Ekphrasis and the Object,” *The Art of Vision: ekphrasis in medieval literature and culture* 1 (2015), 28.

²⁰ Artistically, vernacular prose authors used rewriting “to extoll the virtues of a romance text that has the audacity to deform fixed Truth and seduce the reader with the “delicious sweetness” of fiction” that embraced “redundance, ellipsis, and self-contradiction” to create “a wholly vernacular version of ‘authority’ derived from the citation of fictional texts and fabricated authors”, finding the courtly imagination to be a natural stage for literary experimentation. (Burns, *Arthurian Fictions*, 34)

could hardly do otherwise when it came to their textual compositions. A general Anglo-Norman obsession with record-keeping included transcribed epitaphs and tomb descriptions in prosimetrical chronicles and grave poetry. This set a precedent of a “scribal tradition” that could “contribute to the sensory experience of remembrance” and whose sphere of influence extended even to “those recipients that are spatially and temporally separated from the (initial) *memoria* of the dead.”⁴¹⁹ The supernatural, nonlinear, and *energetic* qualities of courtly literature seem tailor-made for representing death and reiterating the dead in the fictional world.

In order to convey specific meanings, fictional tombs had to be contextualized with a commemorative place in which visitors to the tomb could perform a “communal walk-about”, this time in their imaginations, “among a set of ‘places’ made literally ‘common’” during the shared experience of reading and visualizing a narrative.⁴²⁰ Such sites may be identified as a *lieu de mémoire*, but the monuments, churches, and cemeteries rebuilt in the reader’s mind drew on the imagination’s “capacity to confuse the boundaries between what lies within the soul and what lies outside it” to conjure traversable, three-dimensional environments more akin to *milieux* (‘environments’) *de mémoire* in which the reader ‘witnesses’ their version of narrative events.⁴²¹ This immersive literature can be said to constitute a “narrated installation” inasmuch as it

²¹ Velte, “Sepulchral Representations”, 258.

²² Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 44.

²³ Michelle Karnes, *Medieval Marvels and Fictions in the Latin West and Islamic World* (Chicago; London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 2022), 30.

As in the next chapter, contemporary installation predicated itself on establishing a discrete “locale” in space that acts as a “starting point for a discussion of the meaning of the work by those who experience it” (Rosenthal, *Understanding Installation Art*, 27.); Nora, “Between Memory and History”, 7-8.

provided a commemorative environment that, one internalized by the reader, was mobile, replicable, and adaptable-everything necessary to perpetuate memory.

These narrated installations inspired their own enshrinement in manuscript production. Marginalia and illuminations added to the visual context of reading while bindings, repair work, and the physical vellum page produced new multimodal interactions between the literal body of text and readers. As material embodiments of human imagination, medieval manuscripts function as text-based monuments that were endlessly rebound, reorganized, and reinterpreted. Likewise, the episodic structure that offered multiple opportunities for readers to orientate themselves within the vast narrative landscape” duly emphasized readers’ collaborative role as recipients of the text whose analysis of the work is “integral” to its completion.⁴²² Like sepulchral art, textual tombs also “had to be distinctive ...to be remembered”, actively drawing participants into the “dynamic interplay between burial site, visual cues, and liturgical ritual” to create a “synaesthetic experience” imprinted on an individual’s memory.⁴²³ Both Anglo-Norman literature and manuscript culture thus reinforced commemorative narratives across “mobile commemorative networks” that reached a global and perpetual audience.

The next chapter will focus on how commemorative narrated installation is employed in the anonymous non-Cyclic Prose *Lancelot*, which seizes on a wealth of classical, folkloric, and courtly material to fully exploit readers’ imaginations. The resulting *NCPL*, meant to be socially instructive but also entertaining, reconfigured the fictive environment already familiar to audiences. As an original point of transmission of French romance to Britain, the transitional

²⁴ Carol Dover, “The Book of Lancelot,” *Arthurian Studies* 54 (2003), 91; Bishop, *Installation Art*,

²⁵ Valdez and Pendergast, *Memory and the Medieval Tomb*, 2.

NCPL serves as a paradigmatic example of Anglo-Norman literary tombs. In the story, prophetic tombs act preemptively and, like monuments built during their subject's lifetime as in Chapter 1, provide a coherent explanation of confusing or unclear events as well as constituting a dedicated space in which to contemplate and react to death. I offer close readings of two types of commemorative monuments found in the *NCPL* that are only feasible in the pseudo-historical world of courtly literature: "legendary tombs" and "empty tombs", both of which mediate the existence of the dead via fictional commemorative monuments. My categories of legendary tombs and empty tombs are necessarily broad and address the assumption of tombs as the permanent site of a buried body, limited in scope by the materiality of monument.

Both commemorative sites addressed in this chapter, the *Moutier-Royal* and the *Douloureuse Garde*, become sites of pilgrimage for the lay aristocracy that connect interlacing plotlines across the romance. Commemoratively, these two narrated installations allowed existing story lines to be personalized, imposing newly created Anglo-Norman dynasties onto a pre-Christian literary lineage. Without the onus of factuality, increasingly fantastic representations of familiar tropes, particularly related to the dead, engaged participants' imaginations in order to amplify the memory of lost people, places, and deeds. The suffusion of actual death with the symbolism of death brings readers and characters face to face with the prospect of their own cadavers and of how they imagine having a posthumous impact on others. Such uncanniness recalls the kind of interactive, intimate, and frankly graphic depictions of death found in Chapter 1's installations.

The first known continuation of Chrétien de Troye's *Le chevalier de la charrette*, the anonymous non-cyclic Prose *Lancelot* (also: *Lancelot du Lac*) (c. 1215-1230) originally extends from the death of Lancelot's father to the death of Galehaut, establishing key plot points

regarding the grail, the civil war that initiates the Grail quest, and the divine genealogy connecting self-proclaimed Norman descendants to the glorious Romans via the mythical king Arthur. Yet, beyond the establishment of landmarks and heroes, *NCPL*'s narrator spends an enormous amount of time at the most quotidian level of world-building. Specifics about geography, transportation, accommodation, and descriptions of travel conditions enhance the first-person perspective of the reader's imagination. These details reinforce the audience's status as 'witnesses' of the narrative, but also introduce descriptive nuance by including emotional and physical states of being that further converge reader and character.

Among the hospitable castles and dangerous forests, cemeteries occupy a large part of this « univers légendaire » that, as Ferlampin-Archer and Hue describe, constitutes « une sorte de territoire commun de l'imaginaire » based on a mythological and therefore unassailable « *autrefois* » represented by the dead and their monuments and thereby bridging the temporal gap between generations of knights and establishing a chivalric model for living and dying.⁴²⁴ Tombs in this romance use the textual depictions of emotion and remembrance to create *milieux de memoire* in which outsiders may participate in commemorative behavior, ultimately defining and expanding a "mobile commemorative network" by means of both fixed architectural bodies and transient human and/or textual ones. It is the flexibility of these sites and not, as has been long presumed, their fixity that enables commemorative amplification. This principle extends to representations of bodies and identities, both of which are ephemeral and unstable throughout the romance.

²⁶ Christine Ferlampin-Acher, Denis Huë. *Lignes Et Lignages Dans La Littérature Arthurienne* (Presses Universitaires de Rennes), 9-12.

Chapter 8: Fake tombs, real memories in the Non-Cyclic Prose *Lancelot (NCPL)*

Legendary Tombs

Legendary tombs provide designated spaces for appropriate public mourning expressed as collective grief, while also supplying a useful pretext for personal grief that lacked an acceptable outlet.⁴²⁵ These spaces were modeled on existing funerary customs such as processions, reinterment, and translation of remains that entailed movement of the dead across real landscapes. Places associated with holy or royal bodies became nodes of memory, with the dead forging commemorative pathways and expanding networks of memory to bring otherwise disparate locations into contact. In the *romans*, toponyms, environmental features, and relative positions of surrounding places construct a local landscape around which the story occurs. Genealogies, key to maintaining commemorative networks, were forged in ink and prophetic inscriptions explained the new Anglo-Norman era as the product of divine providence, thereby justifying political actions. Names, in particular, are imbued with all the affective energy of the commemorative community through repeated acts of reading and writing.

These mobile tombs unite people across space and time, propelling both reader and character forward in the plotline and providing multiple entry points for readers to ‘experience’ the fictional world in their mind’s eye.⁴²⁶ In addition to creating *milieux de mémoire*, legendary

¹ Such as Lancelot’s dissimulation at Guenièvre’s tomb: « Lancelot a le cœur et la gorge si serrés qu’il n’arriva pas à prononcer un mot, mais il n’osait pas manifester autrement sa douleur, de peur de se découvrir, » Armand Strubel, *Le Haut Livre Du Graal*. (Paris: Livre de poche, 2007), 825.

² John Hendrix distills Robert Grosseteste’s ocular theory thus: “Visual perception is both passive and active, because what is seen is the *species* of an object, as it is imprinted in the *oculus interior*, the mind’s eye... As impressions are printed by the rays of light upon the *oculus mentis* in the *phantasia*, or imagination, in the *anima rationalis*, or rational soul, the passive part

tombs also contextualize narrative events displayed in a meticulously constructed commemorative universe that exceeds the limits of fiction to include the imagined reader.⁴²⁷ While still perpetuating ritually designated spaces for the dead, the surprising mobility of dead bodies (physically and textually) makes the dead more active narrative participants that one might expect and allows for a degree of unpredictability at the tomb site.

The *NCPL* is notable for its use of emotional vocabulary and of affect as a dually subjective and objective experience. Here feelings are superlative, unruly experiences that test the integrity of social order.⁴²⁸ Lancelot is the obvious example of one whose affective

of vision in intromission, they are discerned by reason, subject to the *vis aestimativa*, which is the active part of vision,” John Shannon Hendrix, “The Philosophy of Vision of Robert Grosseteste,” (Bristol, R. I.: Roger Williams University, 2009), 2.

³ Sarah Blick, and Laura Gelfand, *Push Me, Pull You: Imaginative, Emotional, Physical, and Spatial Interaction in Late Medieval and Renaissance Art* (Leiden: BRILL, 2011): a “multivalent viewer” who “should not be seen as a single individual, but rather as a composite of imagined, intended, explicit, implicit, ideal, actual, and archerecipient viewers.” (p. xxxviii)

⁴ In reference to medieval literature, Jane Gilbert distinguishes between “emotion”, an “ordered system for classifying and analy[z]ing”, and “affect”, “phenomena that overwhelm and overspill the familiar categories,” Jane Gilbert, “Being-in-the-Arthurian-World: Emotion, Affect and Magic in the Prose Lancelot, Sarte and Jay,” in *Emotions in Medieval Arthurian Literature: Body, Mind, Voice*, eds. Frank Brandsma, Carolyne Larrington, Corinne J. Saunders (Boydell & Brewer, 2015), 19. In their opening chapter, Seigworth and Gregg provide a similar but more broadly applicable anthropomorphic definition, describing “affect” as “the name we give to those forces -visceral forces beneath, alongside, or generally *other than* conscious knowing, vital forces insisting beyond emotion –that can serve to drive us toward movement, toward thought and extension, that can likewise suspend us (as if in neutral) across a barely registering accretion of force-relations, or that can even leave us overwhelmed by the world’s apparent intractability,” Melissa Gregg and Gregory J. Seigworth, eds., *The Affect Theory Reader* (Durham, N. C.; London: Duke Univ. Press, 2010), 1. Brian Massumi refers to the affective term *excess* (or *remainder*) as that “reserve of potential or newness or creativity” that marks “the certainty that a line of experiential self-activity or impersonal subjectivity that has made ingress into the situation will overspill it, going on to enter other situations, across other thresholds of indeterminacy,” Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, N. C.; London: Duke Univ. Press, 2021); Massumi, *Parables*, 36. Excess is that which makes the parergonic boundary

experiences (love, grief, honor, loyalty) give him the superhuman strength to become the greatest knight in the world. As Jane Gilbert so rightly points out, “No one in or out of the text is indifferent to Lancelot”.⁴²⁹ He is the bridge between past and present, old and new, whose energetic affect is meant to be imagined and remembered as something equally supernatural and sacred in their excess. Yet, this emotional exceptionalism is couched in a purposefully woven family mythology in which affect is portrayed as an inherited ability bolstering ancestral claims to descent from king David and Joseph of Arimathea.

Rather than specifically named source material, this incredible history draws its authority from the lack of concern for attribution. Referring only to “li contes”, *NCPL*’s narrator presents themselves not as a mere regurgitator of existing stories, but “comme source, garant et organisateur du récit, comme analyste et commentateur” who guides the reader through the mammoth tale, providing structural signposts that break the tome into digestible, memorable segments.⁴³⁰ *NCPL*’s deft narrator upends familiar narratives by glossing already potent scriptural history with anecdotes of secular, chivalric material. *NCPL* integrates instances of miracles and blessings with courtly *merveilles* and prophecy in order to create a continuous legacy possessing the authority needed to ensure its broad dissemination, and the synesthetic stimuli to impress and engage readers’ imaginations.

Ban de Bénoïc

Lancelot’s own legend as a knight torn between spiritual and amorous triumph begins with the death of his father, Ban de Bénoïc, whose funeral and burial are described as the *NCPL*’s

of reality detectable and, as Gilbert describes, may force the reevaluation of what reality includes.

⁵ Gilbert, “Being-in-the-Arthurian-World”, 19.

⁶ Genette, *Figures III*, 188.

first legendary tomb (*fol.* 7b, « les Funérailles du roi Ban »).⁴³¹ Tropes of resurrection and affective rapture frame Ban and his family as a secular holy family, whose return to power will bring with it the second coming of chivalric peace. Dynastically speaking, Ban's position is precarious despite a recent win over Roman interlopers and their treacherous consul. Specific formulations that foretold an action generally come to fruition in the NCPL, and any deviation from this chain of narrative events demands new forms of expression that can prove destabilizing. Subversion of formal linguistic acts like prayer to express the inexpressible prefigures the extreme affective response (*pitié; si granz dolors; diaus*) that will cause Ban's death and change his family's life.⁴³²

Our narrator makes sure to describe Ban's intensifying emotions in relation to previous emotions that were possible to express using socially acceptable outlets. When the Roman consul Ponce-Antoine corners Ban, the king is able to manifest his desperation as superlative bravery (« il meesmes avoit estez renomez de proesce merveilleuse »).⁴³³ After killing many of the consul Ponce Antoine's soldiers in close combat, Ban finds a further outlet of honorable

⁷ Born Galaad, the hero's toponymic sobriquet only occurs after being taken by the fairy Ninienne to be raised in the magical world beneath the Lac de Diane (LdP, 81 and 161).

⁸ Mosès, François, Elspeth Kennedy, Michel Zink, Marie-Luce Chénerie, Laetitia Le Guay, and Yvan G. Lepage. *Lancelot Du Lac: Roman Français Du XIIIe Siècle* (Paris: Librairie générale française, 1991), 73; the connection between intense emotional states and the direction of narrative events is common, with Micheline De Combarieu du Grès and Cristina Noacco's note on the Prose Lancelot that « On le voit: instabilité du royaume et instabilité de la joie vont de pair, » [M. De Combarieu du Grès and C. Noacco, « Utopie et désenchantement »: la joie de la cour arthurienne dans le *Lancelot en prose*,” *Littératures* 53, no. 1 (2005), 46] following through with Jane Gilbert's more general comment on Arthurian affect that “ethical quality manifests itself as and through affect. Chivalry and love, *courtoisie* and kingship, loyalty, enmity and betrayal, are presented as densely replete wholes that exceed rational or instrumental analysis” (Gilbert, “Being-in-the-Arthurian-World”, 28).

⁹ Mosès, *NCPL*, 44.

expression when « se vancha li rois Bans qu'il lor ocist Poinçon Anthoine ». ⁴³⁴ But Ban still has excess feelings that make themselves heard in a plea to Heaven that « ançois muire ge avoc lui, biax Sire Dex, qu'il en aut vis. Car lors seroient totes mes dolours asoagiees [emphase d'auteur] ». ⁴³⁵ Unfortunately, despite attacking Claudas to the point where « totes les genz cuidirent bien que il fust morz », Claudas survives and Ban receives an unexpected shock at this news. ⁴³⁶

Again, the progression of Ban's affective state is spelled out for us in recognizable terms, this time making use of the « fréquente association de la joie et de la douleur » in medieval romance such that « la *muance* de l'une en l'autre en représentent les principales manifestations » of each extreme. ⁴³⁷ Ban heads home from battle « mout liez, car bien cuidoit que sa proiere fust aconplie », but the king is quickly ripped from this alternate reality and experiences a physiological transformation (AN, *mouance*). ⁴³⁸ Learning that Claudas still lives, Ban suffers « si grant duel an son cuer qe onques puis fors n'en issi », and the narrator's intimation « et bien fu puis aparissant » draws a direct line between the intense emotional event and later physical consequences. ⁴³⁹ Having exhausted all other outlets Ban meets with his mortal

¹⁰ Mosès, *NCPL*, 44.

¹¹ Mosès, *NCPL*, 44. « Seigneur Dieu... accordez-moi de le tuer. Et que je meure avec lui, beau doux Seigneur, plutt que de le laisser échapper vif, car toutes mes douleurs en seraient soulagées. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 45) « le roi Ban abattit Claudas si durement que tout le monde crut qu'il était mort ».

¹² « Seigneur Dieu... accordez-moi de le tuer. Et que je meure avec lui, beau doux Seigneur, plutt que de le laisser échapper vif, car toutes mes douleurs en seraient soulagées. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 45)

¹³ De Combarieu du Grès and Noacco, "« Utopie et désenchantement »", 46.

¹⁴ Mosès, *NCPL*, 46; "muance," in *Anglo-Norman Dictionary (AND² Online Edition)*, <https://anglo-norman.net/entry/muance>.

¹⁵ « si profond lui pénétra le cœur qu'il ne put jamais en guérir, comme on le vit ensuite. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 47)

enemy to negotiate and is convinced to appeal to Arthur for aid one last time.⁴⁴⁰ Panicked now to keep his family and remaining castle safe Ban and his household leave and are immediately betrayed by their seneschal. If this begins to feel like more than one person might bear it is precisely because the narrative must push character and reader to the limits of their experience before asking them to step beyond the known.

After the Romans stage a renewed siege of Ban's last and most treasured fortress in Trèbe, the beleaguered king decides to escape with his family. Still, even as the path to safety lies before him Ban's movement through the topography is commanded by overwhelming desire to look at his favorite castle (« car il a talant de monter el tertre an haut por son chastel esgarder que il amoit sort toz les chastiax do monde ») and the only remaining monument to his days of power.⁴⁴¹ Having interrupted their escape to satisfy this desire, Ban's gaze over his beloved castle [FIG 3.3] is a deviation from the explicitly right path whose consequences are immediately indicated by the smoke and « flambe hideuse et espoentable » marring Ban's view of the burning fortress. The dramatic dissonance between Ban's mental image of his kingdom and the wild blaze he witnesses turning the air « roges et anbrassez qui envers lo ciel se lance » overcomes the king with sorrow to the point of unconsciousness.⁴⁴² Ban's horrified response to what he

¹⁶ To further hammer home the precarity of the men's situation, it is detailed that « fu li parlemenz tres devant la porte do chastel » at the last threshold between them (Mosès, *NCPL*, 46).

¹⁷ Mosès, *NCPL*, 54.

¹⁸ « des flammes affreuses et qui sèment l'épouvante s'élançant vers le ciel. » ; « rouge et embrasé, la terre alentour en est illumine » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 70-71). These sentiments are reprised in the same folio: « Li rois apuie le tertre; car mout viaut lo chastel veoir aue tant amoit » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 54-56).

sees reveals the close relationship between sensory stimulus and strong affect that permeates courtly literature, including *NCPL*.⁴⁴³

Overwhelmed by grief at the hellish sight, Ban falls unconscious from his horse and lies, bleeding, on the hillside. This « pasmoisons » (*évanouissement*) is the first of many such psychosomatic reactions caused by affect as defined above by Jane Gilbert. Ban's physical inability to cope with his material losses plus « le deuil qu'il a de sa femme et de son fils » exceeds the limits of his emotional range to the point of paralysis because there is no standardized action for Ban to take in response. It is in the description of such affect that energetic language is used to materialize abstract experiences for the reader to imagine and experience them more tangibly.⁴⁴⁴ Ban's external wounds are to his sensory organs (« Si li saut parmi la boiche et parmi lo nes li sans vermauz et parmi les oroilles amedeus ») and render him literally insensible to the outside world.⁴⁴⁵

But it is his internal injury obtained during the radical shift between joy and suffering that proves fatal in its excess: « et li oil li troblent chief, et il s'estant si durement que les vaines del cuer li rompent, et li cuers li est partiz dedanz lo ventre, et il jut morz a terre, ses mains estandues en croiz et lo vis encontre lo ciel et lo chief a droiture torné vers orient ».⁴⁴⁶ He dies, in short, of a broken heart when he is unable to either externalize his intense emotion ritualistically

¹⁹ Cf. Louise D'Arcens, "Emotions in Fiction". In *Sources for the History of Emotions: A Guide*, eds. Katie Barclay, Sharon Crozier-De Rosa, and Peter N. Stearns (Abingdon, Oxon.; New York: Routledge, 2021): 114-126.

²⁰ Energetic language conjures up "visualizable places, in which mental images were formed and arranged, like a wax tablet". (Blick/Gelfand, eds., *Push Me, Pull You*, xliii).

²¹ « Le sang vermeil jaillit de la bouche, du nez et des deux oreilles » ; « ses yeux se troublent dans sa tête ; et il s'abat si durement que les veines de son cœur se rompent et que le cœur se brise dans la poitrine » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 73)

²² Mosès, *NCPL*, 73

or internalize it without incurring physiological injury. Considered the biological seat of emotion, the chivalric heart *d'après* Chrétien de Troyes was “represented as a feeling organ responsible for the generation and regulation of the affective states of the characters.”⁴⁴⁷ In Ban’s example, the narrator’s physiologically energetic description of heart failure draws on readers’ own bodily experiences to corporealize the character’s reality for the reader who either imagines their own body suffering or, more immersive still, imagines the scene as if it were taking place before their eyes. Ban’s affect (*affectus*) so exceeds the character’s capacity that it not only kills him, but also permeates the reader’s physical world through their imagination.

The emphasis on emotional or psychological pain as the cause of physical pain brings readers into an “engagement with human being... via the other’s psyche” during which fictional emotion was vividly imagined and thus transferred into the real world of the meditative reader. This increased conceivability of abstract emotion coupled with the energetic description of fictional affective experiences introduces “a degree of detail which would involve the audience both imaginatively and emotionally”.⁴⁴⁸ Ban’s speechlessness at this moment additionally leaves sonic space for readers’ own thoughts as they imagine such suffering for themselves, much like

²³ Katie Barclay and Bronwyn Reddan, eds., *The Feeling Heart in medieval and early modern Europe: meaning, embodiment, and making* (Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter; Kalamazoo, Mich.: Medieval Institute Publications, 2019), 6.

²⁴ Ruth Webb, “*Ekphrasis* ancient and modern,” *Word & Image* 15, no. 1 (January-March, 1999), 14. This phenomenon might be linked to the idea in affect theory of proprioception that Massumi categorizes as an “interoceptive” sense, which refers to a state of immanent kinesthetic awareness that “folds tactility into the body, enveloping the skin’s contact with the external world in a dimension of medium depth: between epidermis and viscera” (Massumi, *Parables*, 58). Our proprioceptive memory, “where the infolded limits of the body meet the mind’s externalized responses”, determines how the description of Ban’s death affects us, but is capable “as a corporeal transformer” to transform affective potential from “tactility to quasi corporeality” (Massumi, *Parables*, 59).

Muriel FitzAlan's effaced scroll in Chapter 2.⁴⁴⁹ However, Ban's silence is only temporary and in his brief lucidity before actually dying he is able to iterate and therefore (con)textualize himself for posterity in relation to the epic hero Roland.

In imitating dying speeches of the epic past, Ban's dramatic dying monologue initiates the potential martyrdom narrative that will rehabilitate Ban's posthumous reputation. In a state of quasi-resurrection, Ban beseeches God to forgive his sins and have mercy on his family signaling to the reader first, that Ban is essentially good and the victim of others' evil and secondly, their marriage grafts Ban's legacy onto Hélène's claim « au très haut lignage élu de Dieu, dont sont issus le roi David et le « chevalier » Joseph d'Arimathie ». ⁴⁵⁰ This sacramental fusion of the two individuals means shared prestige but also shared spiritual culpability. ⁴⁵¹ Her own soul having been jeopardized by her husband's despair Hélène is obligated to intercede on behalf of both their souls -a task further unpacked in the next section. For his part, Ban's dying performance provides his wife's illustrious backstory with the symbolism and site upon which to build a

²⁵ Along with visible signs of contemporary and modern repair to her stone effigy in Bedale, Muriel FitzAlan's *gisant* holds a carved unfurled scroll "so as to present the words to her audience" (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 127). The 13th century work, which also bears evidence of a hearse structure (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 83), would likely have had painted text, evidence of which still existed in 2016 (Gittos and Gittos, *Interpreting Medieval Effigies*, 106).

²⁶ Mosès, *NCPL*, 73n1.

²⁷ Referencing Peter of Tarentaise, Philip L. Reynolds explains how, according to 1 Cor. 7:4, "The conveyance of power over the other's body [*potestatis corporis translatio*] is made complete and effective through consummation", Philip L. Reynolds, *How Marriage Became One of the Sacraments* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2016). In the 1220s, that is to say contemporary with *NCPL*, Peter Lombard set the standard in Book 4 of his *Sentences* that marriage is one of the holy sacraments (Reynolds, 573). As of the 1220s there also existed a "consensus... that marriage conferred sanctifying *grace ex opere operato*," (Reynolds, 590).

commemorative mythology.⁴⁵² Initially recalling Roland's death in the *Chanson de Roland*, Ban's prayer and confession verbalizes his acute awareness of imminent death and the troubled state of his soul.⁴⁵³

« Sire, por ce que ge ne puis avoir demoree el siegle sanz pechier, vos en cri ge merci, car ge voi bien et sai que ge sui a ma fin venuz. ...Et si li cors a mesfait en terre o nus ne peut estre sanz pechié, biaux Sire, prenez en l vostre venjance en tel manière que, coment que l'ame soit tormentee après lo cors, qu'ele soit en aucun tens acompaignee a cels qui avront an la pardurable clarté de ta joieuse maison part et compaignie sanz fin. »⁴⁵⁴

« Car je vois bien et je sais que je suis venu à ma fin... Et si mon corps a fait mal sur la terre, où nul ne peut être sans péché, doux Seigneur, prenez-en votre vengeance de telle manière que, quel que soit le tourment que l'âme doit souffrir après le corps, elle rejoigne un jour ceux qui auront, à l'éternelle clarté de votre joyeuse Maison, part et compaignie sans fin. »

Although the ritualized language is more or less the same, while Roland's intercession ends with himself, Ban goes on to include his wife and son.⁴⁵⁵ In doing so, Ban displays his collective understanding of memory in which his son and wife will perpetuate his legacy and recuperate his dominion.

²⁸ See Mosès, *NCPL*, 73, n. 1 : « Lancelot appartient, par sa mère, au très haut lignage élu de Dieu, dont sont issus le roi David et le « chevalier » Joseph d'Arimathie. »

²⁹ Compare to Roland : « Il ne peut s'empêcher d'en pleurer et de soupirer. Mais il ne veut pas se mettre lui-même en oubli... « O notre vrai Père, dit-il, qui jamais ne mentis, Qui ressuscitas saint Lazare d'entre les morts Et défendis Daniel contre les lions, Sauve, sauve mon âme et défends-la contre tous périls / A cause des péchés que j'ai fait en ma vie. » »

³⁰ Mosès, *NCPL*, 72.

³¹ « Doux père miséricordieux, ayez pitié de ma femme Helene, ...pour exalter votre nom et la hauteur de votre foi et pour voir vos grands mystères, vous qui sur les nations étrangères leur avez donner la victoire... Et qu'il vous souviene, Seigneur, de mon malheureux fils, qui si jeune est orphelin ; car les pauvres sont dans votre main, et c'est pourquoi vous secourez les orphelins (Ao). » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 73)

To this end, Ban choreographs his physical death, again evoking Roland ⁴⁵⁶: « Il jut morz a terre, ses mains estandues en croiz, et lo vis encontre lo ciel et lo chief a droiture torné vers orient »⁴⁵⁷ As with Roland, this bodily position underscores Ban's piety, likening him to the greatest Christian knight and attributing to Ban's cruciform body the capacity to sanctify the ground beneath him. Indeed, Ban's connection to the hillside is consecrated as « li rois ot dites ces paroles, il esgarda vers lo ciel et bati sa corpe et plora se pechiez devant l'esgart de Nostre Seignor, puis arracha trois pols d'erbe el non de la Sainte Trinité et les usa en non de Sainte Creance », marking Ban's bodily death as foundational in the overall Christianization of the chivalric landscape.⁴⁵⁸ The instantiation of a sacred place at the site of his death reframes the sudden death as a chivalric martyrdom. Conveniently for the larger romance, Ban's soul demands vengeance for the dishonorable acts against his mortal person as well as formal commemoration in aid of his immortal soul.

The hill he literally dies on bears witness to Ban's grief but also provides the topographic focal point for a broader commemorative community to grow around.⁴⁵⁹ The instantiation of a

³² « Roland sent que la mort l'entrepren / Et qu'elle lui descend de la tête sur le cœur. / Il court se jeter sous un pin ; / Sur l'herbe verte il se couche face contre terre : il met sous lui son olifant et son épée, / Et se tourne la tte du cté des paens, » Léon Gautier, ed., *La Chanson de Roland*, Tours : Alfred Mame et Fils, éditeurs, 1872): CCI.217.

³³ « Il gît mort, à la terre, les mains étendues en croix, le visage face au ciel, et la tête comme il est juste, tournée vers l'Orient. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 74-75)

³⁴ « Quand le roi eut dit ces mots, il leva le syeux vers le ciel, battit sa coulpe et plkeura ses péchés sous le regard de Notre Seigneur. Puis il arrache trois prins d'herbe au nom de la Sainte Trinité, et les avale au nom de la Sainte Croyance » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 72)

³⁵ See Ada Kwiatkowska, "Following the Trace-Spirits in the Landscape," in *Transportable Environments: Theory, Context, Design, and Technology: Papers from the International Conference on Portable Architecture*, ed. Robert Kronenburg (London: E. & Fn. Spon, 1998): 19-30; the three blades of grass Ban plucks from the hill and the blood he spills mark an interaction between human and environment that evokes "[t]he idea of trace-spirit", which "reflects the

milieu de mémoire for Ban begins with the declaration of the dying man, a final vocal expression subsequently concretized in his wife's commemoration. However, it is the narrator's recounting of the whole ordeal through textual representation whose reproducibility and adaptability facilitates transmission of Ban's memory, transcending time and space beyond the book itself by epigraphically installing his story into the Arthurian corpus. Before developing Ban's extra- and intra-textual legacy, his intratextual memorialization must be understood.

On the whole, Ban's funeral is conventional and appropriate, as shown by the narrator's assurances that things were done properly and with the grandeur befitting Ban's status:

« Après ont pris lo cors lo roi, si lo porterent a l'abaïe qui gaires n'estoit loig d'iluec, et si font lo servise tel com en lo doit faire a cors de roi, (*f. 7b*) et fu hautement enterrez et anseveliz en l'abaïe meïsmes jusque tant que el leu o il avoi testé morz fu faiz un mostiers. »⁴⁶⁰

Two details stand out in the description of Ban's funeral rites, however, that hint at the regrettable circumstances of his death. First, although he receives a prestigious intramural burial « en l'abaïe meïsmes », ⁴⁶¹ Ban's body is initially interred in an existing abbey founded by his ancestors. Despite familial connections, this monument is not specific to Ban and, furthermore, does nothing to reinforce his connections with Hélène's much loftier lineage.⁴⁶² In terms of

real and symbolic dimensions of man's concept of 'being on the Earth'... Man, culturally defined, aspires to exceed the limit of individual experience and to trace his own route on the symbolic map of community, memory and heritage," (Kwiatkowska, "Following the Trace-Spirit", 19).

³⁶ « Alors on prit le corps du roi, on le porta dans l'abbaye, qui n'était guère éloigné, et on en fit le service, comme on le doit faire du corps d'un roi. Il fut enterré noblement et enseveli dans l'abbaye même, jusqu' ce qu'une église et été btie, l'endroit o il était mort. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 81)

³⁷ « Dans l'abbaye même »: the locational description uses the legal language found in historical wills, such as in the Lewes chartulary (Salzman, *Lewes Chartulary*, 136).

³⁸ Indeed, nothing more is said about Ban's ancestors as the narrator appears keener to emphasize Ban's generational relationships with other great warlords such as Arthur's father, Uter Pandragons.

memorialization, Ban's first burial is pragmatic and traditional, placing him among other unnamed kings but without the specificity needed to project Ban's memory into the future.

This brings us to the second point of interest, which is the rush to build a dedicated chapel. On one hand, the lack of any personalized monument belies the suddenness of Ban's demise and perhaps an intention of communal burial.⁴⁶³ Either way, the quick turnaround (« et fu toz faiz dedanz cel an »⁴⁶⁴) is presented as a miracle that bolsters Ban's fabled status and perhaps nods at the astonishing pace of monumental construction in post-Conquest England.⁴⁶⁵ Ban's reinterment is thus described:

« Qant li cors fu enterrez, la reine demora en l'abaïe, et l'abesse fist faire un mostier mout bel, la ou li roi avoit esté morz, et mout beles officines, et fu toz faiz dedanz cel an. Et qant il fu dediez, si i fu li rois portez. »⁴⁶⁶

This passage is, in many ways, not about Ban. It is about his posthumous existence and the commemorative practices that rely on his physical presence and on the spatialization of memory.

³⁹ Cf. Mosès, *NCPL*, 165, n.1: « la mort subite, sous toutes ses formes, était considérée comme la marque de la vengeance divine et le présage de « l'éternelle mort »; « ce sont les ancres de monseigneur le roi qui ont fondé cette maison et l'ont instituée » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 81)

Given the constant civil war described in the opening chapters, it is highly possible that Ban simply didn't have the time or means to focus on his afterlife when his daily survival demanded full attention. Historically, it is not until the 1070s that the great churches emerged in the relative stability and prosperity of the new English aristocracy fifty years post-Conquest. (Grant, *Architecture and Society*, 55).

⁴⁰ « et tout achevé dans l'année », (Mosès, *NCPL*, 81)

⁴¹ "Until 1135, post-Conquest English architecture was the most exciting in Northern Europe -the product of what was widely perceived to be the richest and most successful of kingdoms." (Grant, *Architecture and Society*, 56). For comparison, the great church at Lewes Priory took roughly twenty years to build. Interestingly, the Sainte-Chapelle, which also took seven years to construct in the 1240s, was modeled after Charlemagne's Aachen chapel in a similar effort to Ban's, seeking to transplant Charlemagne's power to the French crown via architectural parallel.

⁴² « Quand le corps fut enterré, la reine demeura dans l'abbaye et l'abbesse fit faire une église très belle, lo le roi avoit trouvé la mort, ainsi que de très belles dépendances ; et tout fut achevé dans l'année. Quand l'église fut dédiée, on y porta le roi. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 81)

To begin, it bears noting that references to Ban distinguish between the living king of the past (*li roi*) and the dead body of the present (*li cors*). As well as representing the separation of body and soul after death, this new nomenclature indicates how Ban's human identity has gone, leaving only his objective body as a relic.⁴⁶⁷

His body on the hill is the keystone upon which a self-perpetuating commemorative mythology is constructed, freeing his memory from the confines of his bones. The development of a panegyric narrative, as was common for widows, falls on Hélène who becomes the caretaker of Ban's (and Lancelot's) memory.⁴⁶⁸ Beyond the performance of mourning, which was itself subject to criticism as we will see, scripture dictated that a widow "'raise the dirge' for her husband'" and "act as a living memorial" to him.⁴⁶⁹ Hélène could also reasonably be expected to take the veil and live in relative obscurity since without her husband and son she has no stable position in society. Instead, Hélène takes the role of living memorial to its extreme, rupturing the typical dichotomy of widows as either virtuous or "easily consoled" that left no room for divergent embodiments of widowhood by constructing her own commemorative environment.⁴⁷⁰

⁴³ Ban's body is also the only possession he has left to bequeath.

⁴⁴ « prenez le grand trésor qui est ici, d'or, d'orfèverie et de joyaux. Vous en ferez faire une petite église, où l'on chantera tous les jours pour l'âme de mon seigneur. », Mosès, *NCPL*, 79.

⁴⁵ Margaret Hallissey, *Clean Maids, True Wives, Steadfast Widows* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1993), 136.

⁴⁶ Leslie Abend Callahan discusses the figures of Judith and the Widow of Ephesus as totems of this duality. The two examples of female grief provided a rubric with which to judge real widows' physical performance of grief. For example, Callahan writes about tears: "weeping is not a transgression; it is the cessation of the tears that is a problem" and her sincerity might be "called into question because her demonstration of mourning is too restrained," Leslie Callahan, "The Widow's Tears: The Pedagogy of Grief in Medieval France and the Image of the Grieving Widow," *Constructions of widowhood and virginity in the Middle Ages*, eds. Cindy L. Carlson and Angela Jane West (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), 146. She adds, however, the same manifestation of intense emotion could be considered excessive since "tears are... outward markers of a

Already site-specific, medieval Christian commemorative rituals impart familiarity to Héléne's memorial chapel and also tangibly mark where she exceeds these existing spaces. Héléne reformulates the space to tell a hagiographic narrative, incorporating Ban's memory into her own holy ancestry in a new commemorative narrative anchored to personally meaningful sites. The restoration of obscure saints was well-established in Norman England as a strategic use for existing pre-Norman infrastructure and belief.⁴⁷¹ The Norman religious houses that were often grafted on to Anglo-Saxon institutions benefitted too, by providing the textual evidence "to repair a defective record" of local saints, something Héléne would presumably wish to do for her husband and son given the ignominy surrounding their fates and the family's ruin.⁴⁷² For Ban to bear resemblance to existing royal martyr-saints familiar to readers, Héléne builds his royal chapel at the site of his martyrdom (« la ou li rois avoit esté morz ») on the hilltop.⁴⁷³ Pragmatically, by rewriting the commemorative record, Héléne is eventually able to establish related sites as potentially very lucrative sites of pilgrimage.⁴⁷⁴

The goal of attaining physical, and thus spiritual, proximity to a saint is inherent in pilgrimage. The sacred "*genius loci*" had to be tangibly manifested in order to create a site of interaction between living and dead. In Ban's case, his death at the top of a hill overlooking the ruins of his fortress suggests the "defiance of the mundane" and the "Jacob's ladder", bridging

change of status of a woman, and an indication that she is 'available'" and puts at risk her reputation for loyal chastity (Callahan, "The Widow's Tears", 254).

⁴⁷ For example, St Pancras at Lewes Priory.

⁴⁸ Diana Webb, *Pilgrimage in Medieval England* (London; New York: Hambledon and London, 2000), 16: "Here it was not the saint that was open to criticism but rather the treatment which, it was claimed, he or she had latterly received."

⁴⁹ « là, où le roi avait trouvé la mort » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 81)

⁵⁰ One could take the *NCPL* itself as such a record.

heaven and earth” associated with church towers, those “beacons of faith”.⁴⁷⁵ The location’s visibility is both practical and emotional. Easy to see for pilgrims and passersby, Ban’s chapel preserves the traces of his final moments with its physical connection to his death and his fateful view of Trèbe. Pilgrims, wittingly or not, would embody Ban’s past action by simply looking out over the plain. This residual haunting also brings visitors face-to-face with death by reenacting Ban’s ill-fated climb through a kind of doubling that captures his last moments in an infinitely replicable act.⁴⁷⁶

Hélène: paragon of feminine grief

Hélène’s manipulation of Ban’s death is not immediate, and her husband’s death seems, at first, almost too much for the young woman to bear. This section and the next extemporize on Hélène’s literal, figurative, and textual movement along the spectrum of grief. Her mobility between ‘structured’ and ‘unstructured’ mourning makes Hélène’s grief an adaptable one that can be controlled or unleashed according to her activity or environment. As opposed to Ban who removes himself from overwhelming traumatic experience, Hélène flirts with annihilation but ends up subsuming the pain to become a new woman: « la Reine as Granz Dolors ». ⁴⁷⁷ Her embodiment of the emotion labeled ‘grief’, as will be shown presently, provides Hélène with an organized way of living in grief that culminates in the establishment of the « Moutier-Royal » as a place of specifically female pilgrimage.

⁵¹ Martin Locker, *Landscapes of Pilgrimage in Medieval Britain* (Oxford: Archaeopress, 2015), 168.: Towers were “typically higher than any built aspect of the surrounding parish environment” and in this case higher than any natural feature as well.

⁵² In which the second ‘version’ “enhances the original’s affect” (Gilbert, *Being-in-the-Arthurian-World*, 29); like the video loop of *Pas pu saisir la mort* in Calle.

⁵³ « la reine des grandes douleurs » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 79).

The emotional intensity of the hill site echoes Gilbert's "'magical' affect", whose instrumentalization here by female hands "creates a new *merveilleux* around strong, unfamiliar emotional experiences which impel characters into... new *chemins*" that provide the subject-matter for new interpretations of the past. Expanding genealogical networks is clearly at the heart of the *NCPL's raison d'être* and it is through the advantageous recontextualization of grief, in particular, that Anglo-Norman prose reaching new secular audiences filled the imaginations of its aristocratic public with highly relevant dilemmas like generational wealth management. Part of Hélène's fictional and narrative success comes from the acknowledgement of her grief being vaster than what might be expressed through codified outlets. Hélène's pluri-identity as queen, widow, mother, and nun obliges her to exercise her grief strategically and symbolically according to her role but makes room for the full intensity of her human suffering.

Indeed, this authenticity, coupled with the monumental commemoration milieu, is what makes Hélène both compelling and righteous as matriarch. Her commitment to living in grief and to monumentalizing the men she mourns places Hélène at the symbolic intersection of Marian *pietà* and Norman political acumen. Hélène is soft and hard; emotional and strategic; the link between her family's end and its resurrection as the heirs of Joseph of Arimathea and thus rightful protectors of the Holy Grail. The *conte* describes Hélène's reaction to the death of Ban as follows:

« si en est tant esbaïe qu'ele laïse son fil a terre devant les piez as chevax. Puis s'est escorciee, si cort tot a pié tot a contramont lo tertre ettrueve lo vallet gisant sor lo roi et faisoit tel duel que plus ne pooit... si se demante et plaint ses granz dolors, dont ele a trop. Si tire ses chevox... et deront ses dras et giete en voie, et esgratine son tendre vis, si que li sans vemaiz li cole tot contraval lles joes a fil... et cri[e] si haut que li tertres et li vaus et li lais qui granz ert dejuste en

retentissent. Tant a crié que plus ne peut, si est lasse et roe, et la parole li faut por lou grant duel dont li cuers li est serrez ». ⁴⁷⁸

« Elle en est si bouleversée qu'elle laisse son fils à terre devant les pieds de chevaux : elle relève sa robe, s'élançe en courant vers le sommet du tertre, trouve le jeune homme penché sur le roi et donnant libre cours à sa douleur... elle pleure et gémit des grandes douleurs qui l'accablent ; elle défait ses cheveux... elle déchire les vêtements... elle égratigne son tendre visage si fort que le sang vermeil ruisselle sur ses joues... Elle crie si fort que le tertre et la vallée et le lac, qui est grand, en retentissent. Elle a crié tant qu'elle l'a pu ; et voici qu'elle est lasse et tout enrournée, et la parole lui manque par le grand deuil dont son cœur est serré. »

Far from restraint, Hélène's violent grief is raw and all-consuming. And when, teetering on the precipice of death herself, Hélène watches as « deiables en guise de damoisele » ⁴⁷⁹ plunges into the nearby lake with Lancelot in her arms, Hélène achieves a superlative state of grief which « [d]e duel que la reine fait, ne vos porroit nus dire la some », and implicates readers as emotional proxies of the queen as she performs her grief. ⁴⁸⁰ The pall of self-destruction over the whole scene even prompts Ban's squire to « reconforter por la grant paor qu'il avoit que ele ne se desesperat » like her husband. ⁴⁸¹ Hélène's lamentation is thus commensurate with Ban's in terms of its intensity, and almost had the same tragic end. But where Ban's male tears precede the collapse of his sovereign identity, Hélène's sorrow is not for herself, and while it consumes her physically, it does not negate her identities as wife, mother, and queen. ⁴⁸²

⁵⁴ Mosès, *NCPL*, 75 [« se demante et plaint se granz dolors, dont ele a trop. Si tire ses chevox... deront ses dras...et esgratine son tendre vis, si que li sans vermauz li cole tot contraval les joes a fil ».]

⁵⁵ « un diable incarné en forme de demoiselle » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 78-79).

⁵⁶ Mosès, *NCPL*, 77-79.

⁵⁷ « [p]ersonne ne pourrait vous dire toute la douleur de la reine » ; « laissé le roi sur la colline et il était venu la reconforter, tant il avait peur qu'elle ne se lassât aller à la désespérance » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 77)

⁵⁸ His dependence upon external representations of chivalry proves fatal since the absence of his kingdom leaves Ban "without a marker, a supplement, of his masculinity" and thus without a

Hélène's performance of tearing at her clothes, hair, and skin plays into Classical representations of female lamentation as "a special state of consciousness" that "in its intensity 'risks crossing over into the non-human'", but her tears also invoke "the intercessional power of the female suppliant's tears" and "the mourning Mother of God" whose "power emanates from her wails, not her silence."⁴⁸³ While Ban's ultimate despair hinders Hélène's commemoration of him, the reverse is true of the sanctity and veneration generated by the queen's penitent grief. Both men's souls (Lancelot presumed dead) will ultimately be redeemed by Hélène's visceral and violent lamentation that links her grief to Classical and biblical models of "women in the scheme of salvation as witnesses and intercessors" that "implicitly identify women with a form of spiritual agency and authority" attributed to the active shedding of tears.⁴⁸⁴ As primary intercessor for Ban and her son, Hélène must not only effect change on the landscape, she also must personally interact with the constructed site in order to activate her commemorative work.

Hélène's expression of grief thus begins non-verbally as the wild and threatening emotion that "early Church fathers sought to suppress" but "the cult of women's tears" perpetuated by literary traditions, including prose romance, offered a socially acceptable version of female

reason for being, cf. Lee Templeton, *Unmanned Countenances: Representations of masculine grief in Middle English literature* (PhD, Greensboro, N. C.: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 2006), 78.

⁵⁹ Katharine Goodland, *Female Mourning in Medieval and Renaissance English Drama* (Routledge, 2017), 56.

⁶⁰ Nancy A. Jones, "By Women's Tears Redeemed", in *Sex and Gender in Medieval and Renaissance Texts*, ed. Barbara K. Gold, Paul A. Miller, Charles Platter (SUNY Press: 1997), 17. Both Hélène's intercessory prayers and her movement through the Moutier-Royal mirror another archetypal figure of maternal grief Rachel's "funerary rite of circumambulation" in Jer. 31 associated with the Babylonian exile, cf. Ekaterina E. Kozlova, *Maternal Grief in the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford; New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 2017), 164.

grieving structured by liturgical texts and rituals associated with the Virgin Mary's Compassion.⁴⁸⁵ Bereft of husband, son, and home, Hélène restructures her affective expression to fit within the parameters of formalized spousal grief and redefines the space around lake and hill as a *milieu de mémoire féminine* to which noble female pilgrims are attracted by her superlative commemoration.⁴⁸⁶

Having lamented beyond words, Hélène's grief is subsequently verbalized and inscribed in dialogue with a passing abbess who identifies Hélène as « madame la reine ».⁴⁸⁷ The passing holy woman is the first outsider to ask for Hélène's story, prompting the bereaved woman to revise her public identity by declaring « « M'aïst Dex, dame, voirement suis ge la Reine as Granz Dolors. » » before relaying « de chief en chief » the death of Ban and kidnapping of Lancelot.⁴⁸⁸ Both the narrator and Hélène herself give voice to the story, recounting it for the benefit of memorization. Her eye-witness account established, Hélène hints at her future role, amplifying her family's story, when she pleads: « Mais por Deu, madame, velez moi et faites prandre grant avoir qui ci est d'or et de vaisselemente et de joiaus, si an ferez ci faire un petit mostier, ou an chantera por

⁶¹ Goodland, *Female Mourning*, 2.

⁶² Nancy A. Jones defines "ritual lamentation" as "a mixture of stylized weeping, singing, and ritual speech and gesture performed by women at death and wedding societies" (Jones, "By Women's Tears Redeemed," 15).

⁶³ Mosès, *NCPL*, 79.

⁶⁴ « Mon Dieu ! dame, en vérité je suis la reine des Grandes Douleurs » (Mosès, *NCPL* 79) ; « sans rien omettre ». Her husband's squire finds Ban's body and it is his cry that alerts Hélène. Only abbess's authoritative female voice creates the formal dialectical space for Hélène to recount Lancelot's sequestration and Ban's death. It is also the abbess who informs Hélène of the city's destruction, which she immediately blames for Ban's death ("je ne le savais pas, mais je sais qu'aucune autre douleur ne lui a donné la mort", Mosès, *NCPL*, 79).

l'ame de mon seignor ». ⁴⁸⁹ This is Hélène's great moment of self-invention, and she uses it to ally herself with both spousal and maternal tropes of mourning.

Hélène's ability to marshal material and figurative resources allows her to supplant Ban as the center of the episode. Following Hélène's affective ennoblement, the narrator adds: « Par cest non qu'ele se mist est apelez cist contes el commencement: li contes de la Reine as Granz Dolors. ». ⁴⁹⁰ Now the sole hope for her family's resurgence, Hélène takes control of both the fictive landscape and the narrative direction of the story by acquitting herself as a penitent widow. As well as ensuring her husband's memory, the establishment of a church and Hélène's consecration as a nun integrates the highly personal sites of loss to the collective monastic space. Merging individual with communal spaces facilitates a paradigmatic performance of widowhood within existing rituals, but also accommodates the authentic expression of grief in new spaces given Hélène's status as benefactress. ⁴⁹¹ Hélène's cloistered life as a nun protects her physically and spiritually in her commemoration of virtuous men and offers one of the few ways for women to amass wealth by expanding the original abbey and, with it, her family's narrative footprint.

⁶⁵ « Pour l'amour de Dieu, dame, donnez-moi le voile ; et prenez le grand trésor qui est ici, d'or, d'orfèvrerie et de joyaux. Vous en ferez faire une petite église, o l'on chantera tous les jours pour l'me de mon seigneur. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 79). So in fear is Hélène of her mortal soul that she rejects the abbess's offer to serve as "la dame" of the monastery, replying: « car je ne me soucie plus du siècle et le siècle n'a plus besoin de moi. Si vous me faites défaut en ce point, je m'en irai parmi ces forets sauvages, comme une malheureuse abandonnée, et j'y pourrai bientt perdre le corps et l'âme. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 81).

⁶⁶ Mosès, *NCPL*, 79.

⁶⁷ Hélène's command of this powerful role is comparable to Gundrada and Isabella de Warenne's documented involvement in the creation and ratification of charters and bequests for Lewes Priory.

Le Moutier-Royal: expanding the commemorative network

As a dispossessed ruler, Hélène follows a long tradition of aristocratic women using commemoration to maintain their family's presence in the world despite her cloistered status.⁴⁹² Her commemorative realm is maintained through vocal acts of chanting, reading, speaking, and weeping whose escalating intimacy marks each subsequent stop on Hélène's daily journey from cloister to lake; communal to private. To activate the location's specific commemorative meaning Hélène imbues it with symbolism through rituals of movement and language that anchor her affect to the tangible world:

« Et lors i vont la reine soi tierce de nonains, et si i ot deus chapelains et trois renduz. Toz les jorz qui ajornoient avoit la dame une costume que si tost com ele avoit oïe la messe que l'an chantoit por le roi, si venoit sor lo lac, et illuec endroit o ele avoit son fil perdu, si lisoit son sautier tex hore estoit, et ce disoit qu'ele savoit de bien et ploroit mour durement. Et la chose fut seüe par lo païs que la reine Helene de Benoyc estoit none, et cil leus fu apelez Mostiers Reiaus. »⁴⁹³

« La reine y vint, avec deux religieuses, et il y eut aussi deux chapelains et trois moines. Tous les jours, dès l'aube, la dame avait l'habitude, aussitôt qu'elle avait entendu la messe que l'on chantait pour le roi, de venir au bord du lac, à l'endroit même où elle avait perdu son fils. Elle lisait son psautier parfois, disait ce qu'elle savait de bonnes paroles et pleurait profondément. On sut bientôt dans le pays que la reine de Benoïc était nonne, et le lieu fut appelé « Moutier-Royal ». »

The localization of this routine, far from circumscribing commemoration, delineates the route between buildings that Hélène is said to walk daily from abbey to chapel to lake and, presumably, back to the abbey.⁴⁹⁴ The practice is polysemous since it represents the funeral procession (itself a retracing of Ban and Lancelot's final movements), Hélène's role as feudal lord surveying the posthumous kingdom of the *Mostiers Reiaus*, and also the circuitous passage of visitors from one thematic section to the next, as in a gallery.

⁶⁸ See "Ancestors, Family Reputation and Female Traditions" in *Memory and Gender in Medieval Europe, 900-1200*, ed. E. Van Houts (Toronto, Buffalo: Univ. of Toronto Press, 1999) : 65-92.

⁶⁹ Mosès, *NCPL*, 81.

⁷⁰ « qui n'était guère éloigné ».

Rather than remarry another man, as one might expect from a young and beautiful widowed noblewoman, Héléne marries herself to Christ. Bereft of land, husband, and son Héléne has no practical reason to remarry. Instead, she takes what liquid capital she has and gives up the secular world in exchange for a place to “live within memory”.⁴⁹⁵ In doing so, Héléne avoids having to forget her previous life in order to establish a future. The monastery’s abbess acts as Héléne’s protector, managing the construction of Ban’s chapel on sacred ground and endowing the chapel with properties held by the monastery.⁴⁹⁶ Héléne begins to amass lucrative territory in her husband’s memory that was granted by a church official and historically linked to Ban’s family.

These commemorative assets serve as a dynastic commemoration as much as a testament to Héléne’s virtuous widowhood, and it is in this context that Héléne’s grief becomes the cornerstone for a new kingdom ruled by memory and populated by ghosts. By trading worldly lands for spiritual ones, Héléne also mirrors Ban’s and Lancelot’s fates. Yet Héléne’s choice of a penitent and monastic commemoration renders Ban’s physical monument less haunted and more sacred based on Ban’s martyrdom at the hands of traitors that underpins the rest of the text. The *NCPL* emphasizes the expansion, movement, and use of the commemorative environment more than Héléne’s instability as a widow. *NCPL*’s deliberate construction of female aristocratic grief reflects a clerical ideal of courtly behavior with Héléne immediately offering her worldly goods to a passing abbess in return for the commission of a monument to her husband and taking full monastic vows in return for refuge.

⁷¹ Nora, “Between Memory and History,” 8.

⁷² Mosès, *NCPL*, 81.

The regulation rather than the abnegation of strong emotions was central to courtliness, which demanded the appropriate context and form of expression. As Héléne is later reminded « il n'est pas honeste chose de faire duel en chascun leu, car vos devez plorer et les voz pechiez et les autrui, non mie veiant lo pueple, lais en vostre cloistre et au plus an repost que vos porroiz. »⁴⁹⁷ In response, Héléne transforms a site of physical entombment-Ban's tomb and the cloister walls- into a haven for female emotion. The text explains how « Durement crut li leus et essauça, et les gentis fames do país s'l rendirent espressement, et por Deu, et por amor de l[a] roine »⁴⁹⁸, thereby providing an official place for women specifically to mourn collectively and privately.

All the while, the monastery site contributes to the lore of "Moutier-Royal", amplifying Héléne's story across even greater networks of communication.⁴⁹⁹ Starting with her own sister, the queen of Gaunes, Héléne again emphasizes the matrilineal shift in her family's legacy and begins to build her commemorative network. She lives such a virtuous life that the monastery « mout amanda li leus et crut, tant que dedanz les set anz que la reine s'l fus randue, l ot bien trante nonains, totes gentis fames des país. »⁵⁰⁰ The royal patronesses of the monastery are thus personally identified as the reason for its iconic status. Their commemorative success translates

⁷³ « ce n'est pas chose convenable de faire deuil en tout lieu ; car vous devez pleurer et vos péchés et ceux des autres, non devant le peuple, mais dans votre clotre et le plus secrètement que vous pourrez. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 167).

⁷⁴ « Il grandit en importance et en renommée, et les nobles dames du pays s'y rendirent en foule; pour l'amour de Dieu et de la reine » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 81).

⁷⁵ « On sut bientôt dans le pays »: word spreads that Héléne has taken the veil, implicating a ready news network that is used here to expand knowledge of ongoing grief. This movement of narrative leads queen Evaine to join her own sorrows with her sister's (Mosès, *NCPL*, 89).

⁷⁶ « ...se développa et s'agrandit de telle sorte que, dans les sept ans que la reine y fut entrée, il y eut bien trente nonnes, toutes gentilles femmes du pays. Ensuite elle fit tant qu'en cet endroit s'établit le chef-lieu de l'abbaye. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 161).

into ecclesiastical advancement, « puis fist ele tant que a celui leu vint li chiés de l'abaïe », and both women continue to consolidate real power in the names of their dead.⁵⁰¹

Upon losing her own husband and sons to the perennial evil of Claudas, queen Evaine escapes to her sister's monastery.⁵⁰² While neither sister is miraculously rid of their grief, the ability to share its weight with another woman is evidently therapeutic: « Granz fu li diaus as deus serors de la grant perte que faite avoient; et s'eles ne fussient ansemble, ancores fust graindre lor angoisse. Mais de ce qe eles estoient ensemble estoient maindres lor dolors. »⁵⁰³ Together the women live « mout bele vie et mout sainte at the Moutier-Royal. »⁵⁰⁴ The ladies who, we are told, flock near Hélène and whose experiences were subsequently remembered and retold constitute a secular analog to the abbey nuns and to the real-life consumers of Arthurian romance. Hélène- a queen turned nun- is installed at the intersection of these communities.

Much like Hélène's role as the medium whose bouts of unconsciousness maintain "continued communication with the dead", Hélène's duality mediates the psychic fusion of presently living women readers with the eternal female inhabitants of the fictive world. After all,

⁷⁷ « Ensuite elle fit tant qu'en cet endroit s'établit le chef-lieu de l'abbaye. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 161).

⁷⁸ Evaine was the wife of Bohort de Gaunes, whose defeat by Claudas and grief at the news of Ban's death is too much to bear. Bohort, who like Ban is betrayed by a former partisan, « ne vécut que deux jours et l'on pense qu'il est mort plus encore du deuil de son frère que de sa propre maladie. » Under siege and without the protection of her husband, Evaine flees the marauding army with her two sons, Lionel and Bohort, traversing river and forest to reach her sister. As luck would have it, Claudas finds the trio while out hunting in the same forest and it is only through the magical intervention of the *Dame du Lac*, Ninienne, whose enchantment "rend les deux enfants semblables aux deux levriers et les deux levriers prennent l'aspect des deux enfants, trompant ainsi tous ceux qui les voient." (Mosès, *NCPL*, 209-11)

⁷⁹ « Grand fut le deuil des deux sœurs pour la grande perte qu'elles avaient faite. Si elles n'avaient pas été ensemble, plus terrible encore eut été leur angoisse ; *mais parce qu'elles étaient réunies*, leurs douleurs étaient plus légères. » Mosès, *NCPL*, 89 (my emphasis).

⁸⁰ « une très belle vie et très sainte » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 161).

the growing female audience reading and enjoying prose romances would have been the very demographic to visit holy women like H  l  ne. H  l  ne’s name becomes a byword for the generically named “Moutier-Royal”, transforming her body into a truly active ‘site’ of veneration. An aristocratic audience envisioning Moutier-Royal could splice together vignettes of real monasteries, mausoleums, or chapels they had experienced, but the unique conjurings of individual imaginations are united by H  l  ne’s presence to both fellow readers and to the textual noblewomen whose memories of the fictive place make the narrative that cites them possible.

H  l  ne continues to participate in the daily reactivation of intra- and extra-textual memory through various reading and speech acts that intensify from regulated emotion to unregulated affect. The verbs describing her activity move from fully ritualized communication to nonlinguistic expressions: *entendu*, *chantait*, *lisait*, *disait*, and finally *pleurait*; words which also indicate to the reader a series of sonic and kinesthetic stimuli. H  l  ne begins her day as a spectator and auditor, listening to monks singing mass before walking outside to Ban’s tomb. At Ban’s grave H  l  ne takes on the role of performer, reading (aloud) set text from a psalter whose manuscript materiality and celestial images serve as proxies for the ephemeral *au-del  *.⁵⁰⁵ She

⁸¹ Cf. Joni M. Hand, *Women, Manuscripts and Identity in Northern Europe, 1350-1550* (Farnham, Surrey, UK; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2013); Helene’s interaction with the psalter recalls Gundrada’s connection to devotional text and specifically to her proposed ownership of the Crowland Psalter; “growth of the iconography of St Anne teaching the Virgin to read in Psalters and monumental painting and the fact that it was often the duty of well-born mothers to see to the education of their children,” Michael Camille, “Seeing and Reading: Some visual implications of medieval literacy and illiteracy,” *Art History* 8, no. 1 (March 1985), 41. The point of the Moutier-Royal is to amend the narrative of the royal family but, in the event that Lancelot survives, it is also meant to teach him (and the reader) about his ancestors, his origins, and his filial duties.

then speaks without a written script, relying on memory to recite « ce qu'elle savait de bonnes paroles ». ⁵⁰⁶

To this point all of her commemorative expressions have been regulated either by cultural or religious custom and Hélène's first tears at Ban's grave toe the line between ritual lament and the kind of unbalancing grief that brought about madness and memory loss. ⁵⁰⁷ On the hilltop, physically elevated away from the ground, « si plora et plaint mout longuement », but Hélène is depicted as being in control of when and where she allows an emotional release for her husband to take place, and the specification of *plainte* keeps the her tears within the boundaries of licit grief. ⁵⁰⁸ Although perhaps a particularly lengthy plaint, Hélène nevertheless expresses just enough to project authenticity and to inspire divine mercy.

Le Lac de Diane: missing, presumed dead

The « lac de Diane », the site of major trauma for mother and son, is reframed as part of a wider *milieu de mémoire* that is the Moutier-Royal. But Hélène's sorrow as *mater dolorosa* is more than can be expressed officially. At the edge of the enchanted lake « ou ele avoit son fil perdu », Hélène « si ploroit mout longuement, tant que ele n'antandoit a autre chose » indicating a lack of measure that exceeds expectations for female lament and puts Hélène in a

⁸² Mosès, *NCPL*, 81.

⁸³ On "grief-madness", see Drew Maxwell, " 'Sorow wil meng a mans blode and make him for-to wax wode,' Representations of Male and Female Grief-Madness in Middle English Arthurian Romance". In *Grief, Gender, and Identity: Knowing sorrow*. ed. Lee Templeton (Leiden; Boston: Brill, 2021): 190-209: "[Perceval's mother] Acheflour's madness is caused by intense grief over thinking that her son has been killed. As [Wendy J.] Turner asserts, mental stability in the Middle Ages was judged through memory, so the emphasis on the character's loss of memory of themselves and their friends and family while mad reflects some of the ideas surrounding how a loss of memory could be an indicator that a person was suffering from some form of mental illness" (Maxwell, "Sorow wil meng...", 209).

⁸⁴ « Sitot qu'elle est en haut... ella donna libre cours a ses pleurs et a sa plainte tres longuement »

vulnerable position, signaled by her physical proximity to the lake.⁵⁰⁹ Anne Berthelot points out how:

« un motif celtique, celui de la fée au bord de l'eau et de l'Autre Monde... dans le cadre nettement moins poétique d'une guerre de succession féodale... ne peut donc être une véritable porte sur un univers surnaturel... il est alors réduit à un *mirage* [author's emphasis]... c'est la signification nouvelle qu'acquiert le mot d' « encantement »... un art de modifier les apparences, sans que la réalité soit réellement modifiée ». ⁵¹⁰

Lancelot's disappearance into the lake is intentionally unclear to Hélène, although the narrator divulges Lancelot's survival beneath the illusory water to the reader. Unsure of her son's death, but also distraught by his abduction, Hélène mourns her child as if he were dead. Hélène practices grief in the sense of both performance and rehearsal, leaving her open to societal criticism when her expression threatens to flood uncensored into the world outside the Moutier-Royal.

Confronted by a travelling *prud'homme* who asks what has led a nun to such grief and despair, Hélène defends her excessive expression first in terms of her real circumstances, including her husband's imperiled soul. Eventually, however, the passing man and reader learn that it is her noble son's ignominious death by drowning that has driven Hélène to cry « por la

⁸⁵ « où elle avait perdu son fils ... pleurait si fort qu'elle ne faisait plus attention à rien d'autre (Mosès, *NCPL*, 161-165, « Un moine porte plainte devant le roi Arthur »)

It is while she weeps that an old knight-turned-monk is able to approach unnoticed because "elle est tellement absorbée dans son deuil qu'elle ne le voit ni ne perçoit sa présence, jusqu'à ce qu'il soit arrivé en face d'elle." The man lingers, noting her beauty. Then, she turns to greet him and is "confuse de ne l'avoir pas aperçu, avant qu'il ne l'ait abordée d'aussi près." The implication of Helene's mental instability is clear.

⁸⁶ Anne Berthelot, "La « Merveille » dans les Enfances Lancelot" *Médiévales*, no. 8 (1985): 87–102. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/43027705>, 90.

paor de Nostre Seignor » and « por la paor de l'ame mon seignor ». ⁵¹¹ This state of anguish is validated (« il a assez raison en vostre duel ») but ultimately chastised (« Et neporquant, trop en porriez vos faire ») as transgressive due to its excess (« car l'an doit en totes choses esgarder raison et mesure »). ⁵¹²

Hélène's emotions are necessarily confined to the realm of women, but her affective intensity threatens to annex a greater foothold in society through exceptional displays of grief. This same grief that so appeals to other women evokes male censure when its existence becomes too noticeable outside the designated affective site. But these interactions require outsiders to enter into the Moutier-Royal's epitaphic installation in order to express their subjective interpretation of her grief. Similar to devotional art "designed for some type of interaction with devotees... physical, intellectual, and/or emotional", Hélène's spectacular state of mourning draws attention to her and to her plight through the multisensory spread of voice and movement. Like Ban's squire (or, more ominously, like a siren) Hélène's wails are what draw the cleric to the lakeside. But it is Hélène's sincerity that keeps her from being written off as simply mad: « si vous ne voulez pas garder le secret de votre deuil, ce n'est pas par une vaine gloire, mais pour saouler votre cœur ». And so, Hélène's display of grief is ritualized not just within the established tradition of royal commemoration, but also as part of the feminized context of the Moutier-Royal.

⁸⁷ « par peur de Notre Seigneur »... « par angoisse de la laide mort de mon fils » ... « il est vrai qu'il y a beaucoup de raison dans votre deuil » ... « Et cependant, vous pourriez en faire trop » ... « car on doit en toutes choses garder raison et mesure » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 167).

⁸⁸ « Et cependant, vous pourriez en faire trop... car on doit en toutes choses garder raison et mesure » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 167).

Unlike Ban, whose physical body lends itself to re-embodiment in monument, Lancelot only approximates death with his absence. Hélène cannot erect a monument for her son who, similar to his father, lingers in limbo, his body unrecovered.⁵¹³ It is the lake itself that functions as a temporary monument at which Hélène can grieve without tomb-side formality. Were Lancelot to be declared dead, Hélène would be obliged to enact her grief within the usual limitations on female expression. While Lancelot remains in a more ambiguous state of absence, however, the rules governing aristocratic female bereavement are less stringently applicable with no body to direct them toward. Moreover, to fully commemorate her son would be to concede the hope of his survival.

Through wise management of her unexpected affective state, establishment of a known narrative anchored to the narrated epitaphic installation at the Moutier-Royal, and a poignant use of the protected status of proper female mourners, Hélène maintains her-and her family's-foothold in the world by linking them literally and symbolically to sacred ancestral lands. This powerful network of commemorative locations relies on active engagement between people and space: translation of Ban's corpse gives way to daily masses and pilgrims spreading of their story to both intra- and extra-textual publics. Alongside her abbess, Hélène utilizes Ban's commemoration as a chance to reestablish her domain in the hopes of somehow avenging his death and betrayal. While paltry compared to his former domain, Ban's commemorative *milieu* is rich in metaphor and seeks to rectify the unstable circumstances of individual death that, as seen

⁸⁹ Hélène's lament addresses both the importance of witnessing the dead body and of death as a universal experience that need not be tragic: « S'il était mort devant mes yeux, je l'aurais plus vite oublié que je ne ferai ; car je sais qu'il nous faudra tous mourir » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 165).

in Chapter 1, threatens a legendary dynasty.⁵¹⁴ In truth, while Ban' death is the impetus for commemoration, it is Hélène's action after the fact that transforms a tale of dynastic ruin and despair into one of martyrdom and dispossession and asserts Lancelot's divine purpose and holds the key to his mysterious identity at the *Douloureuse garde*.⁵¹⁵

Empty Tombs

The 'empty' tombs of the NCPL are devoid of bodies, but not of meaning. While the legendary tombs capitalize on the expansion of the body into a recognizable monument and site, empty tombs illustrate how the concept of the dead body extends beyond any one physical embodiment. The tomb, and by extension the human body, is no longer held as the sole representational form of the commemorated subject. In fact, the introduction of empty tombs and false epitaphs in the NCPL calls any assumptions about monumental authority into serious question: what purpose might tombs and epitaphs serve if they are not "reliable stores of memory"?⁵¹⁶ While not diametric opposites, legendary and empty tombs in the NCPL are both variations on standard religious burial practices used here to commemorate bodies of secular prestige. As was the case historically (Chapter 2), the nature of questing and crusade in chivalric literature meant that not all bodies made it home for burial, which necessitated a new commemorative representation in which words did not only indicate the body they replaced it.

⁹⁰ « mon seigneur est mort en deuil, j'ai grand'peur pour son âme et je dois en prendre aussi grand soin que de la mienne ». (Moses, *NCPL*, 165)

⁹¹ The unjust seizure of land is recurrent in the *NCPL* and the struggle to protect borderlands from invasion determines both Arthur's and Lancelot's narrative trajectories. Hélène's description as "juesne et bele trop" compared to her husband being "viauz hom" hints, from the opening, at Hélène's inevitable survival while Ban is relegated to a mythologized past.

⁹² Cf. L. Velte, "Inscribed Tombs and Narrated Epitaphs in the High Middle Ages," in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment*, eds. Lieb, Neufeld and Wagner (de Gruyter, 2019), 270.

Instead, writing serves to reembody the absent bodies of intratextual characters, sometimes in addition to their still-living but imperceptible bodies.

The empty tomb is no longer merely waiting for a body to house, but itself becomes a temporary body, as in *the epitaph project*. The absence of a human body turns the tomb into a conceptual framing device that makes any text epitaphic by association. Empty tombs and false epitaphs push sepulchral traditions to a new limit by questioning the stability of monuments and, consequently, the truth they purport to impart. Destabilizing the authority of monument also allows a reconsideration of the commemorative monument as a permanent, fixed structure. Reading these commemorative texts initiates the reevaluation of the cemetery and tombs in the *DG* as a narrativization of the past, personal experiences of which affirm trust in the text.

While retaining the inherent authority of filled tombs, empty tombs introduce an element of narrative flexibility that comes with the uncertainty of an absent corpse. With no body of proof, an inscribed epitaph drawn from oral sources became a textual body that stands in and speaks for the missing body. As catalysts of memory, not only human bodies, but also monuments are subject to change in NCPL. The appearance of empty tombs and the strategic creation of falsified epitaphs in the NCPL illustrates how the authority of funerary inscriptions in particular could be manipulated to expand a commemorative network. This growing pool of characters with textually derived ties to the dead could be mobilized on behalf of the deceased to avenge or protect their honorable memory. Like the family necropolis or dedicated chapel, Anglo-Norman romances evoked *lieux courtois* in the constructed universe of the English court-real or realistic places that would be highly familiar to an informed “network of like-minded

readers” who internalized these scenes within “a socially coherent background” that framed their interpretation.⁵¹⁷

The shared cultural schema of Angevin England further facilitated transitions between historical and fictional material, seamlessly integrating new marvelous, miraculous, and panegyric content into documents whose historical authority was used to bolster Norman claims to English and French lands.⁵¹⁸ The *NCPL* was fundamental to the reconfiguration of cultural memory post-Conquest, and the empty or false tombs of the enchanted Douloureuse Garde demonstrate the phenomena of meditative reading, the transmission of internalized texts, and the mobilization of affective reader responses to rewrite history. In the supernatural world of the romance, deviations from recognizable commemorative custom prompt characters and readers alike to reassess what they have ‘seen’ and what they believe to be ‘true’. The transposition of historically based fictional events from orality to written word marks an initial step towards the full textualization of ideal chivalric living. Concurrent with the proliferation of personalized funerary monuments seen in Chapter 1, the Anglo-Norman aristocracy fully embraced the ideology of *courtoisie* based on the creation and transmission of manuscripts across an international network of readers and collectors. Each manuscript, in its literary representation of epitaphic sites, is itself a site of encounter between characters and readers, past and present.

Like effigies and epitaphs, Anglo-Norman romance was both “nostalgic and prescriptive”, nonlinear texts merging past, present, and future to root Anglo-Norman rule within the historical

⁹³ Rosalind Field, “Children of Anarchy: Anglo-Norman romance in the twelfth century,” in *Writers of the reign of Henry II: twelve essays* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 250.

⁹⁴ D. H. Green, *The beginnings of medieval romance: fact and fiction, 1150-1220* (New York: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2002), 138.

and cultural record and project it into a desired future.⁵¹⁹ The Norman and later Angevin approach to conquest that included repurposing existing structures like churches and castles also involved reappropriating the vibrant oral tradition of the conquered people. In fulfillment of Norman invaders' expectation "to assert Latin uniformity over the whole of the British Isles" meant that existing oral *récits* were reinterpreted with propagandistic symbolism and connected to more prestigious literary traditions when written down in Latin or French.⁵²⁰ When transcribing oral narratives, scribes could fill in gaps with Anglo-Norman foundational myth, inscribing it into a dominant literature under the guise of commemorating English history.⁵²¹

The recording of miraculous events, originally hagiographic in nature, grew in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries to include eyewitness accounts of secular marvels like those found at the Douloreuse Garde in the NCPL.⁵²² Like witnesses to a miracle, NCPL's readers who recount the narrative event of supernatural phenomena in the DG participate in the commemorative transmission of fictional events by remembering what they read and applying that knowledge to

⁹⁵ Field, "Children of Anarchy", 250.

⁹⁶ Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 17; Green, *Beginnings of Medieval Romance*, 172.

⁹⁷ The NCPL itself was created in the early years of Henry III's reign (r. 1216-1272), which saw repeated military intervention as Henry attempted to maintain what was left of the Angevin empire established two generations earlier but largely lost by Henry's predecessor, John. Cf. Ifor W. Rowlands and Bjorn K. U. Weiler, *England and Europe in the Reign of Henry III (1216-1272)* (London; New York: Routledge, 2016), 183.

⁹⁸ Secular marvels were one result of the French vernacularization of conquered lands, during which "clerical habits and values were absorbed into lay households", often through "ladies acquiring prayer books for their private use" (Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 19); in the case of hagiography, for example, "[h]earing the martyrs' accounts was parallel to actually witnessing the events of sacred history," Anne Marie Yasin, *Commemorating the Dead, Constructing the Community: Church Space, Funerary Monuments and Saints' Cults in Late Antiquity* (2002), 201.

future scenes.⁵²³ Moreover, a recursive progression of events promotes a kind of cinematic visualization in the readers' imaginations that, while derived from the same text, is uniquely represented in each reader's mind. The interlaced adventures of Lancelot, Gauvain, Arthur, and Guenièvre at the DG take advantage of this virtual space, supplying a chronological cross-section of storylines that layers different intratextual experiences of a simultaneous present in the reader's all-seeing imagination.

Within the mediating interface of the manuscript, narrative tactics manifest in the composition of the manuscript matrix to aid access to the virtual world. The reader's multiple encounters with the same textual bodies through different perspectives create depth of experience in the reader's imagination that enhances immersion through a built-in meditation on the text. Reprised encounters in and around the Douloureuse Garde are supplemented paratextually by go-between characters present at multiple reprisals who point out changes in the otherwise familiar environment, making each encounter unique in its site-specificity and prompting reinterpretation of site for characters and readers alike.⁵²⁴ The care taken to accurately impart inscriptions on the manuscript page in addition to energetic descriptions of monuments ensures that regardless of readers' ability to recreate a visual replica of the scene, the inscribed text remains a collective point of reference for interpreting the scene - "mnemonic places" in a medieval "locational memory" that used the book object as a mobile means of

⁹⁹ As Ann Marie Yasin notes, "It was the reading and rereading of the miracle stories which, Augustine claimed, was essential to making the works of God not only recognized in the past, but felt in the present," (Yasin, *Commemorating the Dead*, 202).

¹⁰⁰ Here it is the keep and then more specifically the cemetery that is singled out as the place where answers are to be found and thus what will be considered here as the "work"/*ergon*/text.

transmission.⁵²⁵ The forced rereading of the epitaph and revisualization of specific spaces within the Douloreuse Garde simulates meditative reading and enables the contemplational reading in spite of an individual reader's powers of meditation. Similar in function to the directionality of an installation that funnels visitors through but also toward the work, episodic recurrence shows the reader what to prioritize in the unpredictable environment and thus what is worth remembering.

La Douloreuse Garde

Situated between the Humber river estuary on the northeast coast of England and a large waterfall, the massive castle known as the Douloreuse Garde serves in the *NCPL* as a nexus of funerary tropes repurposed intra-textually by characters wanting to affect narrative events. Ruled by the tyrannical de Iles, the dangerous keep is famously avoided as the place « nus chevaliers erranz n'l venist qui ni morist o qui n'i fust enprisonnez au mains ». ⁵²⁶ Cursed by devils locked in a magical chest, Brian des Iles' citizens turned prisoners can only be freed by a prophesied knight who is revealed as Lancelot. Besides Lancelot's self-discovery, the *DG* is replete with supernatural elements such that the story, as Anne Berthelot comments, « ne peut être plus explicitement au confluent du roman réaliste et du roman de la merveille ». ⁵²⁷ While the use of specific geographic locations like the Humber, *Grande Bretagne*, and *Gaule* implies a real-life setting in the medieval reader's world, the castle on a cliff exists between reality and fantasy, similar to the genre-crossing composition overall. ⁵²⁸

¹⁰¹ Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 13.

¹⁰² « ...parce qu'aucun chevalier errant n'y venait qui n'y mourût ou n'y fût tout au moins emprisonné » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 502/503).

¹⁰³ Berthelot, "La « Merveille » dans les *Enfances Lancelot* », 96.

¹⁰⁴ "The move into prose is generally held to signify a greater and different truth-value from that od verse romances: prose was previously associated with historiography, wills, contracts,

Half-knighted and eager to build a glorious reputation as Arther's knight, the so-called *Chevalier Blanc* (Lancelot) jumps at the most difficult quest of liberating the *Douloureuse Garde*.⁵²⁹ When he arrives to undertake the quest, Lancelot learns he must complete various merveilles to gain entry at each of the keep's two gates. After winning two melees of ten rotating combatants and defeating a bronze automaton knight wielding a giant axe with a single look, Lancelot makes it through the outer gates and is taken to the *Cimetière merveilleux* where he encounters the sealed tomb containing his identity. This first empty tomb is Lancelot's future tomb, which no knight has ever succeeded in opening before this mysterious *Chevalier blanc* does. The stone slab's outer and inner inscriptions respectively name the ultimate champion of the Douloureuse Garde and establish Lancelot's paternal link « au roi mort de duel », Ban de Bénéïc.⁵³⁰

However, Lancelot curiously chooses to keep his newly discovered name hidden and remains at the castle to convalesce. But even after Lancelot opens the tomb, the narrator relates that the townspeople remain « dolant del seignor qui eschapez est »:

« car s'il fust pris, si fust discoverez par lui tot li covines de laianz. Or ne sera ja mais seü, ce dotent, car il ont paor qu'il ne puissant mie rentenir ce chevalier quarante jorz; car s'il l demorast, lors chaissent tuit li anchantement et les merveilles qui par jor et par nuit venoient, car nus n'i bevoir, ne ne menjoit asseür, ne n'i couchoit, ne ne levoit. »⁵³¹

sermons and Bible translation". As Jane Gilbert further explains, the « illusion mimétique » of prose allows the *NCPL* (as opposed to its verse precursor, *Le chevalier de la charrette*) to "aspire at once to a greater realism... and to a higher truthfulness" (Gilbert, "Being-in-the-Arthurian-World", 25).

¹⁰⁵ Although Sir Yvain takes Lancelot on as valet and provides him with armor, Lancelot's knighting is incomplete until the king himself girds (*ceindre*) him with a sword (Mosès, *NCPL*, 459).

¹⁰⁶ Mosès, *NCPL*, 528 and 534.

¹⁰⁷ « S'il avait été pris, on aurait su par lui tout le mystère de ces lieux ; et maintenant on ne le saura jamais, sans doute. En effet ils craignent fort de ne pouvoir retenir le chevalier pendant

Lancelot seems well on his way to completing this requirement when he hears of Gauvain and Yvain's imprisonment and leaves the Douleuse Garde to rescue his comrades.⁵³² Lancelot's experience at his own future tomb (*la Dalle Merveilleuse*) exemplifies the creation of textual bodies in lieu of missing or complete cadavers. For Lancelot, the re-introduction of his lost identity sets prophesied events into motion. His transformation from epithet to proper noun (*Lancelot*) shows how Lancelot's full identity is literally wrought by the representation and activation of embodying words.

The layers of the challenge correspond to concentric spaces with the *Cimetière merveilleux* at the castle's heart, home to prophetic tombs, false tombs, and pseudo-tombs that raise questions about the relationship between body and representative text. Certain elements remain stable across the three reprisals (Lancelot, Gauvain, Arthur and Guenièvre) of the *DG*. For example, the general structure of the fortress – outer wall, cemetery, inner wall, castle – remains the same despite its changing interior. As a setting, succession of concentric spaces surrounding the graveyard mimics the process of entombment and suggests a progression toward death.⁵³³

quarante jours ; car au terme de ce délai cesseraient tous les enchantements et toutes les merveilles, qui ne surviennent de jour et de nuit dans ce château, nul ne pouvant ni boire ni manger, ni se coucher ni se lever, en sécurité » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 530/531).

¹⁰⁸ Lancelot's declaration of purpose at this point -« Assez ot ci haut tesmoign, ne ja Dex ne m'aïst se ge ja mais suis a eise devant que ge savrai o vos iestes. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 554)- echoes his statement ahead of attempting the quest of the *DG*: o ge savrai lo covine de laianz, ou ge serai mis avoc les autres prodhomes qui laianz ont esté mort, car ge porrai bien faillir a plus honoree vie avoir » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 506).

¹⁰⁹ On the richness of the prison-tomb metaphor, see E. Jane Burns, *Arthurian Fictions: Rereading the Vulgate Cycle* (1985). In particular chapter four, "Fictions of Representation," 79-150. Burns views physical symbols in the Arthurian landscape as "allomorphs," or "a series of analogous variants" that obligate the rereading and reconsideration of a text.

The second set of empty tombs is that of the forged epitaphs that Gauvain and later Arthur encounter and which bear the names of imprisoned knights from Arthur's court.

When a young valet, brother to the knight Aiglain, brings news of the *Chevalier Blanc* opening the *Dalle merveilleuse*, Arthur sends Gauvain and a coterie of knights to find out who the mysterious white knight is. After assuring the sentinel that at least one among their party can read the men are taken to the *Cimetiere merveilleux* where they are horrified to see tombs bearing the names of several members of the Round Table. Inscribed overnight by the *DG's* desperate citizenry hoping to end their curse by luring Arthur to their aid, the false epitaphs mark real tombs with the wrong name. Both Gauvain and Arthur react to the visible text, taking it at face value and grieving accordingly. Gauvain's encounter with false epitaphs brings to light the function of *nouvelles* (news) and textual transmission and his unquestioning faith in the inscriptions read to him is critical given his narrative function transmitting information back to Arthur.

However, Brandis des Iles takes advantage of the knights' emotional vulnerability, offering answers and hospitality but employing a romance trope of ambiguous language to trap them in his prison, the *Doloureuse Chartre*, without technically breaking his word in a perversion of courtly language and custom. This is one of the two imprisonments that catapult Lancelot into action (the second is the false capture of Guenièvre) and Gauvain's credulity, while dangerous, is calculated to press Lancelot into rescuing both Arthur's men and the *DG*. Brandis' words, like an enchantment, illustrate how the reception of language can leave a gap of understanding when the words' intent is misconstrued. Once spoken or written, words in the *NCPL* can still be

manipulated since their interpretation may transform supposedly set language by attributing a new or different meaning.

Finally, Arthur's own visit to the *DG* upon receiving news from Aiglain's brother that more of his men are dead shows the power of affective intercession spurred by grief and the honorable desire to avenge his men's inexplicable deaths. After reaching the castle, Arthur and his entourage are forced to set up a battlefield camp and divert the emotional momentum of their attack to following a multi-day ritualistic representation of siege warfare.⁵³⁴ Demanding that the porter let them in, Arthur's entreaties are met not with obsequious compliance, but with instructions to stay the night. Arthur is obliged to send a squire to the gate at every liturgical hour until the door opens. The trapped citizens intend to demand sentries long enough to solve the practical issue of keeping Lancelot at the *DG* for forty days in order to automatically break the enchantments.⁵³⁵ In their efforts to free themselves, the inhabitants of the *DG* catalyze other characters with highly affecting textual encounters, forcing Lancelot to complete his quest through indirect, invisible intervention.

¹¹⁰ The table itself, ironically, was part of Guenièvre's wedding dowry.

¹¹¹ In reference to Lancelot's own repeated obstacles, Christine Ferlampin-Archer's definition of obstacles as both signs of the hero's merit, and intentional *ralentissements*, which « crée aussi chez le lecteur une attente prolongée qui laisse espérer un dénouement à la hauteur de la tension créée » is applicable to Arthur's painfully delayed entrance to the Douleuse Garde's first gate, Christine Ferlampin-Archer, « La Douleuse Garde du *Lancelot en prose : les clefs du désenchantement*, » in *Les clefs des textes médiévaux : pouvoir, savoir et interprétation* (Rennes : Presses universitaires de Rennes, 2006), 159. Given that the entire romance's plot is driven by Arthur's inability to keep up with demands on his aid, Arthur's frustrated attempt to finally come to his subjects' aid can be read as a moment of reckoning in which Arthur must confront his failures –and the dead that haunt him– before being allowed to proceed further in the quest.

Hagiographic narrative construction is detectable throughout Arthur's visit that recalls the Moutier-Royal in the interaction between narrated installations and both fictional and historical audiences by way of curated acts of commemoration. Arthur, mythologized by the 13th century as a chivalric patron saint of sorts, is cast in the role of intercessor on behalf of Brandis des Iles' accursed vassals. Possibly inspired by accounts of cursing and vengeance in both continental and insular *vitae*, Brandis' vengeful curse on his own people in response to a perceived wrong by Arthur presents a rupture in the chivalric status quo that must be repaired by a higher power. While Arthur should conceivably possess the degree of intercessory power needed to lift Brandis' curse and save the *DG* and his own knights, I suggest that the once and future king fails in his reading of the scene to understand his narrative role and perform the necessary miracle when confronted with evidence of a personal injustice.⁵³⁶

Divine punishment in hagiographic accounts is often directly linked to an offense toward the saint or those under the saint's protection and a similar relationship exists between Arthur and the people of the *DG* whose safety ultimately falls under Arthur's purview.⁵³⁷ By attacking Arthur's knights and punishing his own people for his defeat Brandis' curse counts as both kinds of offense and unambiguously demands rectification. "Formal and ad-hoc ritual practices

¹¹² As a genre of medieval writing, hagiography shares several narrative goals with romance, cf. Jesse Harrington, "Vengeance and saintly cursing in the saints' Lives of England and Ireland, c. 1060-1215," (PhD dissertation, Corpus Christi College, University of Cambridge, 2017), 21-23 ("Finally, the Anglo-Norman conquest of 1169 initiated a new phase of Latin hagiography, concerned with communicating the traditions of native saints to a non-native audience, impressing new patrons, and defensively arguing for clerical autonomy or property in potential dispute with the agents of conquest." [Harrington, "Vengeance and saintly cursing," 23])

¹¹³ Robert Bartlett, *Why Can the Dead Do Such Great Things?* (Princeton; Oxford: Princeton Univ. Press, 2013), 407.

deigned to elicit the saint or the Divinity's miraculous support" were meant to "'coerce' saints into acting on behalf of their communities" in times of peril, just as Arthur and by extension Lancelot are obliged to help the *DG* to maintain or restore their courtly reputations.⁵³⁸ Like non-violent religious communities for whom saints functioned as a primary means of defense against evil, the cursed citizens manipulate Arthur in the hope that he will step up as their patron and force Lancelot to complete his *aventure* and end the curse.⁵³⁹

Almost twenty folia after his first arrival at the *Douloureuse Garde*, Lancelot does finally achieve his quest, but only after being lured back under the false impression that his love Guenièvre is being held captive. Obligated to finish what he started Lancelot chooses the alternative solution to the curse of entering a subterranean cave to find « la cle des enchantemens » that will lock a chest containing thirty copper tubes, each amplifying « une voix assez hideuse... De cels voix venoient li anchantement et les mervoilles de laianz ». ⁵⁴⁰ After withstanding a screaming tornado containing « tuit li deiable d'anfer », the enchantments cease and all evidence of them disappears from the newly christened « Joieuse Garde ». ⁵⁴¹

For Lancelot, the truth of his identity leads him to take even greater pains to protect himself while seeking to live up to his destiny by taking on new adventures. In Gauvain's and

¹¹⁴ Harrington, "Vengeance and saintly cursing," 24.

¹¹⁵ Harrington, "Vengeance and saintly cursing," 25. In the same chapter, Harrington postulates how, given Barbara Abou-El-Haj's interpretation of punitive miracles as "the fantasies the monks visualised [*sic*] for themselves as what ought to be" while also seeking legal or monetary restitution, the hagiographical "episodes of past vindications might thus principally operate as private or communal meditations to instil [*sic*] faith and resilience in the face of oppression." (Harrington, "Vengeance and saintly cursing," 27).

¹¹⁶ Mosès, *NCPL*, 663.

¹¹⁷ Mosès, *NCPL*, 666.

Arthur's cases, the trapped inhabitants use the knights' desire to avenge their fallen comrades to lure Arthur and Brandis back to the castle. Brandis himself is not immune to overwhelming emotion, as evidenced when he imprisons Gauvain and his men and later when he nearly attempts to assassinate Arthur, « por ce que par lui cuidoit avoir perdu son chastel qui soloit justisier et destrandre tote sa terre ». ⁵⁴² Each retelling, meanwhile, builds up the mobile commemorative network whose borders define the physical existence of the commemorated subject in the present. The narrated event is subsequently disseminated anecdotally by both characters and readers, expanding the reach of the inscription's message in both worlds.

A great capacity for repetition, representation, and recontextualization of embodying written text also makes for more interpretive encounters to stimulate internalization and memorability. Through repeated encounters with the *DG*, audiences begin to build up their visualization of the unbelievable scene and become eyewitnesses to their personal manifestation and collation of the *DG*. The reader who encounters epitaphs and other inscriptions on the manuscript page internalizes the form as well as the content of these texts when creating their real memories of an imagined environment. What the reader remembers, therefore, is based on the experience of reading a real text (the manuscript) representing a fictional text (the epitaph) and then imagining the entire series of events. The precarious distinction between individual perceptions of the same site or text parallels the intra-textual experiences of the romance's characters, whose judgment of the locations and people encountered on the road determines their success.

¹¹⁸ The text informs us that Brandis « ressentait une telle douleur d'avoir perdu son château qu'il ne se souciait plus ce qu'il allait devenir et qu'il avait conçu l'idée de tuer le roi Arthur. En effet, il le croyait responsable de la perte de son château. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 544/545).

A spatial distinction is created between each visit to the *DG* based on how far into the heart of the castle characters make it, that manifests the consequences of being unable to tell truth from lie. As props in an elaborate scheme created by the castle's inhabitants, to cast off the *DG*'s enchantments, it is essential that the epitaphs be read, and the distance between the individual and the reading act denotes how far their interpretation is from the supernatural truth. Unlike Ban's tomb which is used to expand commemorative sites linked by his bodily presence, Lancelot's empty tomb and the false epitaphs in the *CM* apply the presumed symbolic and authoritative power of the monument to support the locomobile inscribed text.⁵⁴³ A reification of the "dead" as flexible memories frees the referent monument from its fixed existence and parses the assumed correlation between permanence and immutability. The use of tombs and books as sites of memory storage and creation gives way to the textual transgression of reality by words that, although derived from fictive events, are realized in their re-installation on the manuscript page. Like the intercessory action surrounding historical tombs and effigies, the textualized dead are given room to continue participating in the present world as a textual body. In all three cases, the affective responses evoked by these nominative encounters successfully compel different actors to intercede on their own or someone else's behalf, thus propelling the narrative forward.

Lancelot: La Dalle merueilleux

Upon stepping foot into the cemetery [FIG 3.4], the monument bearing Lancelot's epitaph is placed centerstage in the reader's imagination as well as in the cemetery: « Et el milieu del cimetire si avoit une grant lame de metal trop merueilleusement ovree a or et a pierres et a

¹¹⁹ Sascha A. Schultz, "Inscriptions on stone," in *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment: Inscribed Objects in Medieval European Literature*, eds., Lieb, Neufeld, and Wagner, 184.

esmaus. »⁵⁴⁴ Interestingly, the reader encounters Lancelot's tomb via the narrator just before Lancelot does in the narrative, offering an unmediated encounter with the epitaph and the chance to form individualized interpretations of a repeated literary experience. Directional language anchors the reader's imagination within a matrix of spatially relative landmarks. At once, the reader's gaze, like Lancelot's, is riveted to the great metal slab « el milieu del cimetire » whose energetic description helps readers construct a mental image of the scene as if it were before them, by evoking comparison to the grandeur of 'real,' historical tombs as opposed to the "unprecedented fantastical tombs" found in romance literature.⁵⁴⁵ The repeated self-references via demonstrative adjectives (*ceste lame, celui non, cest dolorous chastel*) or pronominal adverbs (*i avoit letres*) participate in the amplification of the epitaph in the readers' perpetual present by "shift[ing] our attention between its many competing subtexts, its plural and collective authors, and interpretive narrative segments" through tireless self-reiteration.⁵⁴⁶

The marvelous golden monument literally and symbolically supports the epitaph with a site-specific body that enables textual encounters in the narrative world and in the readers' imaginations. For Lancelot, the only mediating body between himself and the hidden truth of his birth is the inscribed monument, and his superior reading abilities provide him with a full

¹²⁰ Mosès, *NCPL*, 528. [« Au milieu du cimetière était une grande dalle de métal, merveilleusement ouvragée d'or, de pierres et d'émaux »]. The tomb object seems to also be a moveable prop, as it is described as being « el chief » of the cemetery from Gauvain's perspective despite being in the center of the cemetery that Lancelot sees.

¹²¹ Naomi Howell. "Literary Tombs and Archaeological Knowledge in the Twelfth-Century 'Romances Antiquity'," in *Interdisciplinary Explorations of Postmortem Interaction: Dead Bodies, Funerary Objects, and Burial Spaces Through Texts and Time* (Cham: Springer International Publishing, 2022), 72. During the reign of Edward I, such descriptions may well have conjured images of the newly discovered tombs at Glastonbury, hailed as those of Arthur and Guinevere.

¹²² Burns, *Arthurian Fictions*, 79.

understanding of the inscription's implications. Destined to hold Lancelot's body after death, the epitaph also dictates what that body is destined to do before it can be put to rest, namely, liberating the Douleureuse Garde. Aided by the narrator, the privileged reader is able to predict complications and solutions before they materialize in the text. In doing so, the author sets up expectations for certain events or reactions in the narrative that are then subverted by the characters when they are eventually faced with obstacles. These ruptures in the assumed course of the narrative based on reader's cultural schema force a reevaluation of how they read the text going forward.

The inscribed text on Lancelot's future tomb is treated as prophetic truth within the narrative, but the manipulable tombs elsewhere in the *CM* undermines these apparent truths. The authority of Lancelot's epitaph is attested to by its full transcription in the manuscript: « Et si i avoit letres qui disoient : « Ceste lame n'iert ja levee par la main d'ome ne par efforz, se par celui non qui conquerra cest doloreus chastel, et de celui est li nons escriz ci desouz ». ⁵⁴⁷ Then, the narrator contrasts Lancelot to the community of pretenders that has gone to great lengths to discover the tomb's secret and failed:

« A cele tombe lever avoient maintes genz essaié, et par fore et par engin, por lo non del bon chevalier conoistre. Et li sires del chastel i avoit maintes foiz grant poine mise por lo chevalier conoistre, car il lo feïst ocirre s'il poïst ». ⁵⁴⁸

¹²³ [« avec cette inscription : « Cette dalle ne sera jamais soulevée par la main ni l'effort d'aucun homme, sauf par celui qui conquerra ce douloureux château, et le nom de cet homme est écrit dessous ».] The visible portion of the inscription tells how only the knight destined to liberate the enchanted *DG* will be able to open this tomb. Concealed on the inside of the stone slab, the prophecy continues, naming Lancelot du Lac as its future occupant and inscribing him within the world of the romance as the son of Ban de Benoit.

¹²⁴ Mosès, *NCPL*, 528.

[« Bien des gens avaient tenté d'ouvrir cette tombe, par force ou par adresse, pour apprendre le nom du bon chevalier, et le seigneur du château s'y était essayé à maintes reprises, pour réussir à le connaître ; car il l'aurait fait tuer, s'il l'avait pu ».]

The narrator specifies how other men have applied both physical strength and cunning (« par forz et par engin pour apprendre »), perhaps even magic, to learn Lancelot's name.⁵⁴⁹ None of them were destined to free the DG and the futility of their efforts is underscored when Lancelot eventually lifts the tomb lid with ease after judging it to be the work of four men. While others must struggle through the learning process (« grant poine mise por lo chevalier conoistre »), Lancelot has destiny on his side: he is *lo chevalier, la merveille*, who embodies the truth without knowing it. Regardless of the « maintes genz » who have come before, Lancelot alone is able to intercede at the tomb and break the pattern of failure. His singularity is maintained by the demonstrative pronoun (« cele tombe ») that keeps the specific monument "present" in the reader's mind.

The narrator also sets a precedent for future visits to the DG and CM by referencing historical reprisals of the encounter (« avoit maintes foiz »). Finally, the peril associated with Lancelot's chosen status is revealed. Whoever claims this identity also accepts its finite existence as both character (« car il lo feïst ocirre s'il poïst ») and text-object.⁵⁵⁰ Discussing the narrated inscriptions found in Marco Polo's vivid travel accounts, Iris Roebing-Grau and Sascha A. Schultz identify a kind of textual reanimation reminiscent of the embodied words of *Rachel, Monique...*, in which "the information becomes independent of the [dead or missing subject]'s presence. On

¹²⁵ The AND supplies "ingenuity", "machine", and "magic power" as synonyms for the noun *engin*, cf. "engin," in *Anglo-Norman Dictionary (AND² Online Edition)*, <https://anglo-norman.net/entry/engin>.

¹²⁶ Think, for example, of the FitzAlan effigies whose inscriptions have left tantalizing traces but do not exist robustly enough to impart their messages.

some level, every inscription performs this absence presence [of the subject] and thereby sustains the power of writing itself”, but the embodied words only exist for as long as they are performed, in this case by readers inside and outside the romance.⁵⁵¹ The manuscript page acts as the stage for these reading experiences, further amplifying the text with each rereading.

In addition to voicing and understanding the text, whether by themselves or as part of a theatrical reading, participants must also analyze the tomb’s physical context, which Lancelot demonstrates:

« Lors ont mené lo chevalier jusqu’à la lame, si armez com il fu de totes ses armes, et li monstrent les letres, qu’il sot bien lire, car maint jor avoit apris. Et qant il les ot leües, si esgarde la lame et amont et aval, et vit que se ele estoit tote delivre enmi une voie, si avroit il assez a lever a quatre des plus forz chevaliers do monde atot lo plus menu des deus chiés ».

[« Alors ils amenèrent le chevalier devant la tombe et lui montrèrent les lettres, qu’il sut bien lire, car il avait longtemps étudié. Après les avoir lues, il regarde la dalle de tous côtés et voit que, même si elle était entièrement descellée au milieu d’un chemin, il ne faudrait pas moins de quatre des plus forts chevaliers du monde pour la soulever par le plus mince des deux bouts. »]⁵⁵²

Lancelot first visually takes in the full monument before visualizing it on a hypothetical road, which he seems to see clearly enough in his mind’s eye to concoct an entire scene of four men interacting with the imagined monument. Lancelot’s ability to play with the monument in his mind indicates a level of comprehension that goes beyond the act of viewing to one of ownership. Demystified under his readership, Lancelot understands the monument as much as he does the text, and Lancelot’s mental recontextualization of the monument is a reminder of the flexibility inherent to fictional objects.

¹²⁷ Lieb, Neufeld, and Wagner, eds., *Writing Beyond Pen and Parchment*, 94.

¹²⁸ Mosès, *NCPL*, 529.

The character's prolonged meditation on the tomb and epitaph invites readers to imagine Lancelot imagining, but also potentially to visualize their own alternate versions of the scene. Before even activating the text, Lancelot's close reading of the tomb indicates a habit of careful study that carries over to his interpretation of the epitaph. Interpretation is an attempt at mastery, and in the *CM*, enlightenment manifests as strength. Despite reasoning that it would take four strong men to lift the Dalle Merveilleux, Lancelot single-handedly opens the tomb, fulfilling the prophecy and seeing the text that completes the epitaph⁵⁵³: « Lors la saisist a deus mains par devers lo plus gros, si l'a tant levee que ele est plus haute que sa teste bien un pié ... Et lors voit les letres qui dient : « Ci gerra Lanceloz del Lac, li filz au roi Ban de Benoyc ». »⁵⁵⁴

Lancelot thus fulfills the prophecy literally and, although the tomb remains physically empty for the time being, it is now spoken for by a known body. That Lancelot's name is found on the underside of the sealed tomb slab leaves no doubt in the narrative world that Lancelot's epitaph is not only true, but God-given.⁵⁵⁵ Lancelot also fills in a narrative gap since his future corpse is represented in the inscription by his textualized body ("Lanceloz del Lac, li filz au roi Ban de Benoyc") that is reunited with his anonymous living body to create a whole identity. As with

¹²⁹ Not only that, but the orality of medieval reading also implies the iterated, sonic form of the epitaphs that reinforced the words for those readers able to visualize the text and expanded sensory accessibility to the commemorative network for those who might not. Cf. Erich Auerbach, "Figura," in *Scenes from the Drama of European Literature*, Erich Auerbach and Paolo Falesio (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1984), 13.

¹³⁰ « Il la saisit à deux mains par le plus gros bout et la lève jusqu'à ce qu'elle soit plus haute que lui d'un pied. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 538/39) ; « Alors il voit qu'il est écrit dessous : « *Ici reposera Lancelot du Lac, le fils du roi Ban de Bénoïc* » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 528/529).

¹³¹ For readers both with and without visual access to the manuscript page, the decision to produce a full transcription indicates that this epitaph is worth experiencing and remembering in full, emphasizing its veracity in comparison with the marvelous yet truncated epitaphs decorating the cemetery wall.

the cemetery wall, the written epitaph connects individual reader imaginings and can survive separated from the tomb itself in the reader's memory to be re-instantiated in each act of reading or recitation.⁵⁵⁶ Lancelot cannot un-know the truth about himself and this knowledge stays with him, overpowering his best efforts at sustained anonymity.⁵⁵⁷ This reunion of name and body completes Lancelot's character and, unable to live under a rock any longer, propels Lancelot forward in his adventures.

As a perceptive reader, Lancelot even appears to have an epiphany where he fully understands the power of the concealed text to inspire action without understanding and attempts to guard his secret by reversing his actions: « Et lors remet la lame jus, et bien sot que c'est ses nons qu'il a veü. Lors regarde so voit la damoisele qui estoit a sa dame, qui avoit autresin bien veü lo non com il avoit ». ⁵⁵⁸ But it is too late, the reading act cannot be undone and the lady-in-waiting possesses the memory of what she has read regardless of Lancelot closing the tomb. Lancelot is overwhelmed by meaning and the epitaphic text preserved by the manuscript and, despite re-embodying a lost truth, he refuses to completely resurrect himself or his family. At this moment of realization, however, Lancelot defies expectations as reader and knight.

¹³² As in the seminal epitaphic work *Spoon River*, in which epitaphs are told in series, "Al anuciar al siguiente, cada epitafio produce una temporalidad muy particular que en principio avanza hacia adelante, como si en la espacialización del tiempo, la Muerte encontrara un futuro," Gusmán, *Epitafios*, 84.

¹³³ As a child under the care of the fairy Ninienne, Lancelot has brushes with his truth that are consistently dismissed by Ninienne as presumptuous folly. For example, upon a child Lancelot's assertion that he can only learn so much from a tutor before needing to assert himself independently, Ninienne chastises him, saying: « Comment... Croyez-vous que vous êtes un fils de roi, parce que je vous appelle ainsi ? ...qu'il vous connaissait mal, celui qui vous a pris pour le fils d'un roi. Car vous ne l'êtes pas » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 159).

¹³⁴ Ensuite il remet la dalle en place. Il sait bien que c'est son propre nombre qu'il a vu. Puis il regarde autour de lui. Il aperçoit la demoiselle qui était au service de sa dame et avait vu le nom aussi bien que lui. (Mosès, *NCPL*, 529).

Yet there is no self-fulfillment for Lancelot, only further fragmenting of his identity as an unstable character born into chaos and raised to become the greatest knight in the world. Constantly seeking to make and remake his name in search of chivalric glory, however, he is often too good at battle, leaving him peerless. Ambitious, Lancelot fully internalizes his prophetic epitaph and still hungers for a greater challenge. Upon conquering the *Dalle Merveilleux*, Lancelot follows the Dame du Lac's advice and only remains at the new *Joyeuse Garde* until a new adventure arises to tempt him away.⁵⁵⁹ Famously prone to the physical trappings of the flesh, Lancelot risks leaving one adventure only partially accomplished before embarking on the next.

It is, on one hand, Lancelot's carnal and adulterous love for Guenièvre and on the other hand, his impatience for new glory that keeps him from following through at the *DG* but also tethers him to the castle for so long. His affective state is inexpressible within the confines of courtoisie lest Lancelot betray his liege and lose his good reputation. Much to the dismay of the *Douloureuse Garde's* populace, Lancelot's elusiveness requires that new epitaphic texts are forged (in every sense) to lure him back. Further discussed in the next section, Gauvain (and subsequently Arthur) is faced with ascertaining the truth from cemetery, but his reliance on other people's interpretations of inscribed text result in the calculated spread of provocative false news. Thus, Lancelot is left in limbo, waiting for a new outlet for his frustrations.

¹³⁵ « Mais prenez garde de ne pas demeurer auprès du roi Arthur ni d'un autre prince, avant de vous être fait connaître par vos prouesses dans plusieurs pays... pour que vous vous éleviez en gloire et en valeur. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 515)

(Para)Textual bodies

In the Douleuse Garde, epitaphs fill in the architectural and narrative space left by missing or incomplete cadavers. In so doing, literacy is presented as the means through which readers within and without the manuscript can attain complete understanding of the *DG's* enchantment.⁵⁶⁰ In a transition from corporeal to textual architectural monuments, the tomb is framed as only one of the many embodying substrates that the epitaphic text might use. These “empty” tombs allow the conceptualized body to exist wherever its inscription can be visualized, be it in a manuscript miniature or in the minds of other characters and readers. But the emptiness of a commemorative monument extends beyond literal instantiations. The metaphor of the empty tomb refers to physical bodies, but also to monuments devoid of meaning, truth, credibility, or purpose, like those repurposed by the *DG's* citizens. The establishment of a common setting unites the three distinct experiences of the supernatural space, securing them within a stable frame despite its unstable contents. By installing the narrative as a memory formed by the reader's own imagination, the original physical structure takes on a new extratextual purpose as the site of encounter: a symbolic point of reference that, conveniently, also binds together individual reading experiences.

Even before entering the *Cimetière Merveilleux*, the direct connection between textual body and reading body is energetically demonstrated by the wall of decapitated heads that greets visitors to the *CM*:

¹³⁶ According to which, « quand celui qui devait conquérir ce château serait entré dans la première porte et qu'il pourrait voir le chevalier de cuivre, celui-ci s'effondrerait aussitôt. Alors se dissiperaient tous les enchantements, dont le château est rempli, de telle manière qu'ils apparaîtraient clairement. Mais ils ne cesseraient pas entièrement, avant que celui qui devait conquérir le château n'y fût demeuré quarante jours, sans coucher au dehors une seule nuit. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 505)

« Si s'en merveilla mout qant il [Lancelot] lo vit, car il estoit de totes les parz clox de murs bateilleiz menuement, et dessus mains des creniax si avoit testes de chevaliers atoz les hiaumes, et androit chascun crenel a tombel ou il a letres qui dient : « Ci gist cil, et veez la sa teste ». Mais endroit les creniaus ou il n'a nules tests n'avoit il mie issi escrit, ainz disoient les letres : « Ci gerra cil ». Si avoit nons de mainz bon chevaliers de la terre lo roi Artu et d'aillors de toz les meillors q'en savoit ».

[« Le chevalier fut très étonné, quand il le vit ; car il était clos de toutes parts de mur entièrement crénelés. Sur un grand nombre de ces créneaux, il y avait des têtes de chevaliers avec leurs heaumes, et sous chacune une tombe portait l'inscription suivante : « Ici repose un tel et voilà sa tête ». Quand les créneaux n'étaient surmontés d'aucune tête, l'inscription n'était la même. On y lisait : « Ici reposera un tel » avec les noms de beaucoup de bons chevaliers, de la terre du roi Arthur et d'ailleurs, les meilleurs qu'on connaissait ».]⁵⁶¹

Reading this scene as a Norman reconfiguration of the underworld archetype found in Classical and early Irish literature, in which “the idea of regeneration is implicit”, the wall of severed heads appropriately signals the threshold between the living world and the cemetery.⁵⁶² The heads also act as trophies of war between the Christian knighthood and the *DG*'s euphemistic « males costumes ».

Beyond this, however, the epitaph picks up where the head leaves off and provides a textualized “body” for the dead. The dismembered heads are re-membered by the act of publicly reading epitaphs. The stones of the cemetery wall acting as monumental bones for the dead who

¹³⁷ Mosès, *NCPL*, 526-28.

¹³⁸ Robert Liddiard, ed., *Late Medieval Castles* (Woodbridge, Suffolk, UK: Boydell Press, 2016), 393; Amy Jervis, “Talking Heads: The iconography of mutilation in the Romance Republic,” (PhD dissertation, Stanford University, 2001), 55-56; Mosès, *NCPL*, 538-39. Knights must fight “ten opponents at each of two gates” who “form a relay” and thus “offend both the code of hospitality and that of fighting practice,” Lisa Jefferson, “The Keys to the Enchantments of Dolorous Guard,” *Medium Aevum* 58, no. 1 (1989), 59-60; Muriel Whitaker, “Otherworld Castles in Middle English Arthurian Romance,” in *The Medieval Castle: Romance and Reality*, ed. Kathryn Ryerson and Faye Powe (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1991), 29. That Lancelot has also been led to the *DG* by the fairy Ninienne for the purpose of lifting a curse, and the fact that he must battle a “supernatural challenger” (*le chevalier en cuivre*) only strengthens the parallel to Irish fiction as characterized by Muriel A. Whitaker. The scene also recalls the *Château aux barbes* earlier in the story.

are inextricable from the building while the epitaphs' words are free to be repeated and spread by internal and external readers. Worth noting is that the narrator abridges the plaque inscriptions in the NCPL text (« Ci gist cil, et veez la sa teste »), and does not include the proper nouns that are implied as present on the intratextual fictional inscriptions, so that only the plaques chosen by the narrator are fully legible to the extratextual audience. Capitalizing on the redundancy of these redacted epitaphs, the narrator makes room for readers of the manuscript to complete the text (« un tel ») and customize their experience of the memorial wall. The narrator provides basic descriptions but leaves room for subjectivity in the details, resulting in the construction of a narrated installation co-curated by the individual.

Intra- or extratextual readers of the plaques on the cemetery wall initiate the regenerative power of epitaphic texts that embody their subjects and place them in direct encounter with the present. The legible representations of the dead and future-dead provide a temporary, curated site in defiance of linear time “meant to bind the living and the dead, and ‘preserve a material presence in the face of an embodied absence.’”⁵⁶³ In this way the heads are precursors to Lancelot’s future tomb and the rebirth of his, and the Normans’, holy lineage. The textual body, while important for the intelligible representation of complex content, also presents a barrier (*integumentum*) between reader and meaning that establishes a hierarchy of hermeneutic process used, in the case of the *NCPL*, to index chivalric valor. Only the knight who is destined to conquer the Douloureuse Garde will glean the inscription’s full meaning. A text, like a body, is only the vessel for meaning-its soul. The human bodies missing from the *NCPL*’s empty tombs are replaced by bodies of text in a transformation with ties to scriptural exegesis.

¹³⁹ Doss, *The Emotional Life of Contemporary Public Memorials*, 16.

As it pertains to the *NCPL*, the body-text metaphor presents the reading act as one of resurrection of the absent corpse in the way that scripture or law embodied its absent authors and their authority.⁵⁶⁴ Speaking on the practice of placing author portraits “before, alongside, and within the titles and incipits of New Testament texts in ancient manuscripts”, Isaac Soon identifies the text as “a fragmented and textualized extension of [the author’s] body as represented on the page”, while the images “facilitate encounters with ‘specters’ of the authors, invoking their bodily presence in the absence of their physical body”.⁵⁶⁵ Likewise in the *NCPL*, acknowledging the physical absence of the future dead, a space emerges to be filled by a new generation of heroes, like Lancelot, who could be mapped onto the Normans and identified them as those who would successfully conquer where Rome, that great symbol of the past, had failed.

So physically connected are knight and tomb that the monument somehow knows when the wrong body approaches. Only Lancelot can lift the DG’s curse and, as the Normans wished to do for themselves, revive an illustrious ancient genealogy in a new body that holds the key to the narrative and historical development of Britain. With his name inscribed into his future tomb, Lancelot becomes a walking textual body. He transcends generic knighthood once he steps inside the *Cimetière Merveilleux*, where the revelation of his true identity links him through epitaphic authority to the descendants of Joseph of Arimathea.

In addition to contextualizing the DG within a timeless Arthurian universe, the commemoration of the dead or captured knights also depends on characters and readers to

¹⁴⁰ Cf. Isaac Soon, “Absent in Body, Present in Spirit: Apostolic iconography in Greek Byzantine New Testament manuscripts” *Religions* 13, no. 7:574 (June 2022), <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel13070574>

¹⁴¹ Soon, “Absent in Body,” 2.

voice the text and activate its memory. As such, Lancelot's ability to read words thus far hidden from all view bestows a profound understanding of the epitaphic text that is both dependent upon and representative of Lancelot's sacred destiny. Like the plane of imagination, the DG is a space in which the past, present, and future coexist and the prophetic tombs of the *Cimetière merveilleux* especially convey this temporal telescoping by telling of the future while indicating the past. Despite their failure to free the DG, the knights whose heads line the battlements are commemorated with respect, their heads still clad in helmets, and they form a chivalric community of warriors unable to accomplish their quest not for lack of trying or valor but due to the nature of the task. If the predestined hero does not present himself, the *Douloureuse Garde* will remain the pitiful site of misguided martyrdom.

Participants inside and outside of the narrative world are compelled to 'read' the scene in addition to the epitaph, becoming reader-witnesses to the narrative event in the historical context represented by the severed heads.⁵⁶⁶ The DG sets the standard for inscriptions throughout the *NCPL*, just as Lancelot embodies the chivalric ideal. Through meditative reading, Lancelot's tomb and epitaph parallel the resolution of the DG quest as key to completing the narrative so that it may be internalized in its totality, conveying its full truth. Among the many inscriptions in the DG alone, the one on either side of Lancelot's future tomb slab underpins

¹⁴² The dead whose names are unrecorded become part of the mythical past before 1066 that was symbolically foundational for the new kings of the Britons. Grotesque as they may be, these severed heads are not merely the impaled horrors of Chrétien's *Erec et Enide* or terrifying gatekeepers to the Underworld meant to inspire fear in the would-be hero. The displayed of these heads reminds the world that the conquest of the DG -of England- was worthy of sacrifice to establish a righteous world under a divinely sent individual, be it Lancelot or Henry III. Politically, the ability to fill the missing names with those of current rivals gives the epitaphs long-term practicality as real-world propaganda, as in the « Joie de la Cort » scene from *Eric et Enide*.

Lancelot's destiny and that of the entire Arthurian universe. Despite the necessity of a physical substratum into which the inscription can be made the marvel here is not the tomb, but the text it bears. In the following section, Gauvain's experience of the *Douloureuse Garde* and *Cimetière Merveilleux* showcases the epitaphic text as an affective narrative power of its own.

Gauvain: Des fausses inscriptions

Gauvain's repeated expeditions in and around the *Douloureuse Garde* contextualize Lancelot and Arthur's experience within a wider commemorative network. This network extends spatially by bringing the narrative to ancillary locations such as the prison, neighboring village, and forest around the castle. These sites actively connect plotlines and the announcement of Gauvain's imminent arrival at the *DG* prompts castle residents to put the next phase of their plan to emancipate the *DG* into motion:

« [C]il del chastel, qui bien vousisent que li rois Artus i venist atot son pooir por les males costumes abatre, viennent el cimetire et font letres sor une partie des tonbes o il n'avoit onques mais letre eüe, et a chascun crenel qui estoit encontre metent un hiaume ».

[« les habitants du château, qui voudraient bien que le roi Arthus vienne, avec toutes ses forces pour abattre les mauvaises coutumes, se rendent au cimetière. Ils gravent de fausses inscriptions sur un nombre de tombes, où il n'y avait aucun nom ; et sur chaque créneau, qui surplombait les tombes, ils mettent un heaume ».]

Those false epitaphs, as the narrator goes on to explain, actually refer to a group of twelve knights who, it is later revealed, are imprisoned in the *Douloureuse Chartre* and effectively dead to the world. It is not unreasonable to assume that, just as the citizens know how to end their curse, so too they knew that the detained knights could be presented as dead due to their physical absence.⁵⁶⁷ Recalling the wall of heads that Lancelot encountered, the narrator reaffirms

¹⁴³ That they are Arthur's knights only adds affective power to Gauvain's message back to court, to which I will return.

readers' memories of their previous visit to the *DG* (« sur chaque créneau, qui surplombait les tombes, ils mettent un heaume ») and the falsified tombstones capitalize on the veracity of previous narrated and real-world epitaphs for credibility. The inscription becomes a testament not to the knights, but to the power vested in epitaphs as faithful recorders of history.

The potency of such a narrated installation on the real-world reader is clearly taken seriously by the narrator who inserts a slightly awkward reexplanation of the forged epitaphs right at the affective climax (« Et si estoit il de tex i avoit, et so estoit mençonge de toz cels dont les letres avoient esté faites la nuit devant »).⁵⁶⁸ As Lieb and Wagner specify in their chapter on inscriptions in German romance, “The inscription on the tomb slab is designed to affect bodies, to influence their movements and to incite them to read” the muted words.⁵⁶⁹ The citizens' epigraphic intervention at the cemetery site opens new interpretative possibilities whose basis in truth is ambiguous. Carving out new epitaphs on existing tombs exposes both the fragility of monument and the malleability of historical fact. However, the narrator makes the case that the knights had to be fooled and the desperation of the *DG*'s inhabitants justifies this particular manipulation of truth. In the face of powerful magic, their only recourse is to make the castle's deadly reputation work in their favor.

A medieval association of writing with falsification and the practice of forging documents (as in Lewes) coupled with the authority and historicity of stone make writing on tombstones an

¹⁴⁴ « Et c'était vrai pour quelques-uns [tombes], mais mensonger pour tous ceux dont les inscriptions avaient été faites la nuit précédente ». (Mosès, *NCPL*, 538-39)

¹⁴⁵ Ludger Lieb and Ricarda Wagner, “Dead Writing Matters? Materiality and Presence in Medieval German Narration of Epitaphs,” in *Writing Matters: Presenting and Perceiving Monumental Inscriptions in Antiquity and the Middle Ages.*, eds. Irene Berti, Katharina Bolle, Fanny Opendhoff, and Fabian Stroth (Berlin ; Boston: De Gruyter, 2017), 24.

ideal tool for crafting an effective, if not authentic, narrated installation.⁵⁷⁰ Blank tombstones (« où il n’y avait aucun nom ») are easily repurposed and given new names to replace the one effaced over time.⁵⁷¹ Like the heads on the cemetery wall, these stones become commemorative effigies that “[oscillate] between the necessary absence and suggestive visualisation [sic] of the dead”, “aiming to make the deceased appear spatially present” in the reader’s imagination.⁵⁷² The empty helmets placed atop the tombstones reference the installation of helmets as placeholders on the cemetery’s outer wall and are strategically filled with the textual evocation of absent bodies -with revenants.

A medieval understanding of writing as a “technical skill of an artist” and not necessarily as an intellectual act “automatically coupled” with reading acknowledges the element of creativity within the authoritative tomb inscriptions. There is room for interpretation and subjectivity in the very structure of writing and, in contrast to Lancelot’s meditative reading, the formulaic language of epitaphs does receive the same degree of contemplation by Gauvain’s *clerc*, who trusts the words without question.⁵⁷³ Like the external reader who relies on the narrator to explain that

¹⁴⁶ Michael Clanchy talks about writing’s “capacity to mislead, either unintentionally (when the reader misunderstands it) or by the author’s design”, as is the case here (Clanchy, *From Memory to Written Record*, 288).

¹⁴⁷ That the tombs are standing but blank also connotes their incredible age, either because of their weathered surface or because of the profusion of uninscribed tombstones in earlier centuries (Velte, “Sepulchral Representation”, 255). This material context adds another layer of credibility to the fresh inscriptions. The incomplete, generalizable transcription (« Ci gist cil, et veez la sa teste ») translates the experience of superficial reading to the external reader and, similar to Joyce Burstein’s 21st-century tombstone installation discussed in Chapter 1, the blank surface of the headstone invites scribal interaction.

¹⁴⁸ Velte, “Sepulchral Representation”, 255.

¹⁴⁹ Lancelot’s exceptional intellect is attested to early on in the description of his childhood under the Lac de Diane: « ...oultre qu’il était grand pour son âge, il était habile, intelligent, vif, éveillé, plus qu’un enfant de son âge ne devait être. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 139).

many of the tombs bore the names of knights « de la maison lo roi Artu et de sa terre », provoking an appropriate *chagrin*, so too does Gauvain display a psychosomatic response directly linked to the internalization of what he hears read. As intended by the castle's populace, the combination of real tombs and forged inscriptions is credible enough to provoke a sorrowful response that testifies to the overwhelming effect of the cemetery site/sight: « Et qant messires Gauvain sot qu'il sont ensin mort, si am plore mout durement, car il cuide bien et tuit li autre que ce soit voirs. »⁵⁷⁴ Like Hélène's intercessory lakeside tears, the knights' lament over other warriors "garner[s] sociocultural approval, especially when those dismembered men are remembered as models of manhood," like Lancelot.⁵⁷⁵

The superficial interaction between text and audience becomes meaningful because the reading is contextualized by the *clerc's* notably emotional reaction to what the external reader knows are fake epitaphs. The men's grief grows exponentially when the clerk suddenly cries out upon silently reading the final epitaph : « Quant il ont tuit longuement ploré, si vient li clers a une autre tombe qui estoit el chief et trueve les letres: puis commence a plorer mour durement si tost com il les leües. Et messires Gauvains li demande que il voit ».⁵⁷⁶ The answer implies that although the *clerc* does not want to believe the inscription, he accepts it as the horrible truth:

« « Quoi? fait il; trop grant dolor. »
 « Et qel dolor ? fait il ; dites lo nos. »
 « Ci gist, fait il, la mervoille. »

¹⁵⁰ « Quand monseigneur Gauvain apprend qu'ils sont morts, il fond en larmes ; car lui-même et tous les autres' sont convaincus que c'est vrai. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 538/39).

¹⁵¹ Jim Casey, "Feeling It Like a Man : Masculine Grief in Medieval and Early Modern Texts," in *Grief, Gender, and Identity in the Middle Ages*, ed. Lee Templeton (Leiden ; Boston : Brill, 2021), 237.

¹⁵² « Quand ils ont tous longuement pleuré, le clerc arrive devant une autre tombe, qui était au bout du cimetière. Il y trouve une inscription, puis éclate en sanglots, dès qu'il l'a lue. Monseigneur Gauvain lui demande ce qu'il a vu » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 538/539).

« Qui ? font il. Li miaudres des bons, fait il, ceste garde avoit conquise. »⁵⁷⁷

Without a specific name, the group assumes it is the *Chevalier Blanc* who has died, but his identity as Lancelot has yet to reach Arthur's court:

« Et qant lo chevalier l'oent, si batent lor paumes et font trop grant duel. Et dist li uns a l'autre : "Biaus sire Dex, qui puet cist ester ? » Et chascuns dit qu'il ne set qui, se ce n'est li chevaliers noviaus que li rois fist lo jor de la feste Saint Jehan. ».⁵⁷⁸

The eyewitness testimony of Aiglain's brother (« cist vallez... lo vit ceianz [Lancelot/Chevalier Blanc] antrer ») and the men's previous experience of the white knight's superior abilities pre-disposes them to believe that the newest knight is the epitaph's referent. As a result of this assumption, Gauvain's entire entourage grieves openly and deeply over what the romance's reader knows to be falsified tombstones. However, the knights' limbic reactions are both appropriate given the provocation and correct in terms of the citizens' ruse.

Gauvain and Yvain lead their coterie in a heartfelt (*doucement*) plaint that mourns Lancelot's lived life in secular terms of lost heroic potential. The men's extreme grief appropriately elegizes Lancelot's superlative status, which is then inscribed into the reality of the manuscript.

« « Or si poez veoir qui il l'ont mort ». Mout en font grant duel, mais messire Gauvains et messire Yvain en font greignor duel que tuit li autre, si lo regretent mout doucement, et dient que onques mais ne virent home qui si bon commencement eüst com il avoit, et s'il vesquist, mervoilles fust de la proesce ».

¹⁵³ « Ce que j'ai vu ? Un affreux malheur.-Quel malheur ? Dites-le-nous.-Ci-gît, fait-il, la merveille. -Quelle merveille ?-Le meilleur des bons, qui avait conquis cette garde. » » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 538).

¹⁵⁴ « A ces mots, les chevaliers se frappent les mains et font un deuil extrême. Ils se demandent les uns aux autres : « Beau Seigneur Dieu, qui est-ce ? » Et chacun dit qu'il ne voit pas qui ce peut être, si ce n'est le chevalier nouveau que le roi fit le jour de la Saint-Jean. « Car notre valet, qui est avec nous, l'a vu entrer ici. Et maintenant il est clair qu'ils l'ont tué. » Ils en font un très grand deuil, et, plus que tous les autres, monseigneur Gauvain et monseigneur Yvain. Ils pleurent sa mort très tendrement, ils disent n'avoir jamais vu personne qui eût un aussi bon commencement, et que, s'il eût vécu, sa prouesse eût fait merveille. »

[« Et maintenant il est clair qu'ils l'ont tué ». Ils en font un très grand deuil, et, plus que tous les autres, monseigneur Gauvain et monseigneur Yvain. Ils pleurent sa mort très tendrement, ils disent n'avoir jamais vu personne qui eût un aussi bon commencement, et que, s'il eût vécu, sa prouesse eût fait merveille ».]

After devoting a significant amount of time to his grief Gauvain exits the cemetery, further expanding the knights' commemorative network by reiterating their emotion publicly in new spaces:

« Quant il ont grant piece illuec esté, si s'en issent hors del cimetire et revienent par devant la porte qui estoit fermé, si truevent oert l'uis d'un jardin. Il entrent anz et vienent as loges d'une mout bele sale et i voient une mout bele damoisele qui plore mout durement... Et lors recommencent tuit lor duel, et dient que ja mais ne s'an iront tant qu'il sachent del covine de laianz aucune chose ». ⁵⁷⁹

[« Après être demeuré là un long moment, ils sortent du cimetière, repasse devant la porte, qui était fermée, et trouvent ouverte la barrière d'un jardin. Ils y entrent, arrivent devant le balcon d'une salle splendide et y voient une belle demoiselle, pleurant à chaudes larmes... Alors tous recommencent leur deuil et disent que jamais ils ne s'en iront, avant qu'ils ne sachent quelque chose du mystère de ces lieux ».]

Regardless of who the lady is mourning, her tearful display in the public space of a formal hall (une mout bele sale) elicits a sympathetic response from the knights. United in grief, the two parties amplify each other's intercessory representation in a repetition of the grieving women who first warn Lancelot of the DG's fatal reputation.⁵⁸⁰ Echoing Lancelot's commitment, Gauvain and the other grieving men publicly and verbally bind themselves to the DG as a result of their need for emotional resolution. In her chapter comparing verse and prose Lancelot's, Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner speaks of the character's mediating role for the external reader as "magical realism *avant la lettre* where fiction and the marvelous allow both distance and confrontation

¹⁵⁵ Mosès, *NCPL*, 540/541.

¹⁵⁶ The communal mourning also recalls Helene and Evaine's prototype of female grief.

with the co-text of history”, where word are reinfused with meaning in “a space for experimentation and rethinking, which may ultimately reshape reality”.⁵⁸¹ For Gauvain and his companions, the actual magic in their fictional universe makes them insensible to those marvels which are actually human deceptions.

The conscious reassertion of real and marvelous as equal possibilities in the Arthurian world raises the stakes of the reading event, and further enmeshes the superimposed realities of the characters, narrator, and readers. Furthermore, the mixture of chivalric adventure and biblical allegory in romance applied readers’ belief in religious miracles to the world of secular marvels to produce “not faith or conviction but a willingness to accept that creation has its surprises” and that nothing is impossible under God’s auspice.⁵⁸² This willingness to believe makes Gauvain and his companions vulnerable to further misinformation. Gauvain is first tricked by false epitaphs and the state of grief makes him vulnerable to false promises and imprisonment by a fully apprised Brandis, who finds the distraught knights and promises that « li plus de ce que vos avez veü laissus n’est se mençonge non et anchantemenz. Mais ge vos mosterrai verité, car g evos ferai veoir des compagnons lou roi une partie toz sains et toz vis de cex que les letres laissus tesmoignent a mort. »⁵⁸³ In contrast to Hélène’s conscientious owning of her right to mourn, the

¹⁵⁷ Matilda Tomaryn Bruckner, “Redefining the Center: Verse and Prose *Charrette*,” in *A Companion to the Lancelot-Grail Cycle*, ed. Carol Dover (Cambridge: D. S. Brewer, 2003), 105.

¹⁵⁸ Michelle Karnes, *Medieval Marvels*, 214.

¹⁵⁹ « la plus grande partie de ce que vous avez vu là-haut n’est que mensonge et enchantement. Mais moi, je vous montrerai bien la vérité : je vous ferai voir, bien portants et bien vivants, bon nombre des compagnons du roi, dont les inscriptions de là-haut attestaient la mort » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 548/549).

state of grief leaves Gauvain seeking answers and Brandis' promise of visible proof appears to fill this need.

Surface reading

Once more, reading is put forth as the critical act that allows internal and external readers to glean hidden information from the tombs, and literacy is held up as a marker of proximity to the mystical truth of the Holy Grail. Likewise, readers are also tasked with discerning truth from lies in the case of the fake epitaphs presented to Gauvain and his men, whose interpretation of their eyewitness encounter with the *DG's* epitaphs exposes truth as a matter of trust in textual authority. The interpretative leeway of the narrator's description of architectural or sculptural features is absent from the curated presentation of inscriptions. Gauvain's inability to distinguish true from false epitaphs is productive both for the enchanted citizens and for the prisoners of the *Douloureuse Chartre*.

As scouts, Gauvain and his men must be very careful readers, who get to the truth of the matter and effectively convey that truth. A secondhand recipient of the *Douloureuse Garde's* story himself, Gauvain first learns of the tomb's opening from a young squire to Lancelot.⁵⁸⁴ In order to confirm these « nouvelles les plus estranges qui onques entrassent en ton ostel »⁵⁸⁵,

¹⁶⁰ « -C'est la pure vérité, fait le valet. Je l'ai vu de mes yeux celui qui a franchi les deux portes et vaincu tous les chevaliers. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 533)

¹⁶¹ « Roi Arthur... Je t'apporte les nouvelles les plus extraordinaires qui aient jamais franchi la porte de ton hôtel. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 532/33) That the unnamed youth's claims are taken seriously enough to warrant further investigation is due as much to his court connections as to his proximity to Lancelot. He is the younger brother of Arthur's knight « Aiglyns des Vaus », ensuring that although his tale is unbelievable Arthur considers him « bien creables,... car il n'en mentiroit mie. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 534)

there must be physical corroboration.⁵⁸⁶ And so, having piqued the court's interest, the moving testimony prompts Gauvain to take over for the junior noble as Arthur's official envoy to the Douleuse Garde. In doing so Arthur legitimizes Aiglain's brother's news and resolves the « quasi-fixité » of the oral communication.⁵⁸⁷ Unfortunately, Gauvain is not the meditative reader Lancelot is, and his understanding of texts at the *DG* is incomplete.

While Lancelot's ability to read is never questioned, subsequent visitors to the *DG* are explicitly asked for proof of literacy as the condition for entering the cemetery. Each reprisal includes a variant of the question first posed to Gauvain: « « Nenil, sire, fait il [the castle lookout], mais se vos [Gauvain] avez nelui en vostre compaignie qi sache letres, dites lo moi ». Et il dient que oïl. « Or m'atandez dons », fait il ».⁵⁸⁸ Although Gauvain answers for everyone that there is one among his group who can read, it is not himself but a *clerc* who directly interacts with the text: « Li clers commence a lire sor les tombes, et trueve sor une des tombes escrit : « Ci gist cil, et veez la sa teste ». Et an pluseurs des tombes dit ensin et nome chevaliers assez de la maison lo roi Artu et de sa terre. »⁵⁸⁹ It bears mentioning that at a time when increased literacy inspired new ways of gatekeeping texts based on interpretative and technical mastery, the category of

¹⁶² Before even reaching the *DG*'s first gate, a hermit outlines Lancelot's prophecy. « Bien sachiez », he says, « que se toz li monz i venoit, n'en i anteroit il nus tant que uns i sera antrez et cil sera filz au roi mort de duel, ce dient li encien home ».

¹⁶³ Ferlampin-Archer, « Les clefs... », 157.

¹⁶⁴ « -Non, seigneur, répond le guetteur. Mais dite-moi si vous avez parmi vos compagnons quelqu'un qui sache lire » (my emphasis). (Mosès, *NCPL*, 538).

¹⁶⁵ « Le clerc commence à lire sur les tombes, et sur une des tombes il trouve écrit : « Ci-gît un tel et voilà sa tête ». Sur plusieurs tombes, il déchiffre la même phrase et lit les noms de nombreux chevaliers de la maison du roi Arthur et de sa terre. »

clers (clerici) may be interpreted here as referring not to a scholastically trained cleric, but simply to someone who was literate enough to read but not necessarily interpret text.⁵⁹⁰

The imperative demand that visitors verbally attest to their literacy or confess its lack poses an obstacle to conquering the *Douloureuse Garde* than that posed by armed guards.⁵⁹¹ This demand is pragmatic. On one hand, the ruse of fake tomb inscriptions set up by the DG's citizens is useless if no one can read them. On the other hand, the doubt of literacy determines their level of involvement with the Grail. While Lancelot is able to read inscriptions for himself, on their subsequent visits to the DG Gauvain and his men rely on a cleric to read out the text, while Arthur employs multiple clerks to read aloud for him.⁵⁹² Each degree of separation from the inscription adds layers of performative interpretation that may skew its reception.

Echoing the admonition against Hélène's unchecked grief, Brandis des Iles tells Gauvain « ne vos dolosez mie tnt, tant que vos sachiez por quoi, car vos iestes si preuzdom que vos ne vos devez mie si tost esmaier », and offers a new, happier, truth that directly contradicts the traditional authority of epitaphic inscriptions.⁵⁹³ However, Gauvain's belief in and purveyance of incorrect information known by the reader to be false is not presented pejoratively. Instead, the

¹⁶⁶ Clanchy refers to both *clericus* and *litteratus* as “relative” terms (Clanchy, *Memory to Written Record*, 229).

¹⁶⁷ To even approach the cemetery Lancelot must defeat twenty enchanted knights and the unearthly « chevalier de cuivre » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 526) before nightfall to avoid restarting the next day.

¹⁶⁸ A distinction can be made between the literacy of cleric versus clerk to attribute the ecclesiastical reader with greater depth of understanding. In any case, neither practitioner can decode the *DG* as Lancelot does, reinforcing the supremacy of birthright supporting the very idea of Anglo-Norman rule in the century after 1066.

¹⁶⁹ « Seigneur... ne vous affligez pas, avant de savoir s'il y a lieu de le faire. Un homme de votre valuer ne doit pas s'inquiéter si vite » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 548/549).

narrator defends Gauvain and his coterie display of misdirected grief. The knights are reacting to what they believe to be true and therefore their expressivity is an authentic performance to them. What is more, they are the victims of emotional manipulation, with the authentic seeming epitaphs curated to elicit predictable affective responses from Gauvain, Yvain, and their men.

Despite failures of judgment regarding Brandis' appearance and his words, Gauvain's decisions are motivated by a sincere reaction to death. His response to affect opens an alternative route to knowledge when Gauvain learns, upon his own imprisonment, that the knights named in the false epitaphs are in fact alive, but captive. Here the knights « refurent lié et dolant... lié de ce que jamais nes cuidoient veoir, et dolant de ce qu'il venoient en male prison. »⁵⁹⁴ Shackled by his credulity, Gauvain needs Lancelot to intervene and free him from both the *Douloureuse Chartre* and from his troubled emotional state. Until then, the imprisoned men are effectively dead to the world and unable to communicate their most recent revelations, including Brandis' whereabouts.⁵⁹⁵ The relationship between unmanageable affect and speechlessness has already been established with Ban's and Hélène's griefs, but in this case the captive knights are grieving for themselves.

The description of their subterranean dungeon emphasizes the prison's seclusion and its material divide from the living world by specifying its structural fortification. The knights' angry clamor above ground is muted as they descend into « un souzterrinn mout fort, don't li huis

¹⁷⁰ « Mais eux-mêmes furent à la fois heureux et malheureux de voir arriver leurs compagnons : heureux, parce qu'ils pensaient ne jamais les revoir ; malheureux, parce qu'ils les voyaient entrer dans une dure prison. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 552/53).

¹⁷¹ "Whether a character is imprisoned, wounded, or spellbound, he is rendered immobile, relegated to the inactivity of the dead who lie helplessly in their tombs" (Burns, *Arthurian Fictions*, 137).

estoint d fer, et li mur espés de carriaus, joinz a fer et a plon ». ⁵⁹⁶ This marginal space of simultaneous presence and absence not only emulates posthumousness, but also facilitates interaction between characters who exist and do not exist from different narrative perspectives. For example, while the captives knights' absence is falsely understood by Arthur and Gauvain, Lancelot understands them to be alive and in need of rescue. For Lancelot, and for the external reader, those men are still present in his version of the world and continue to interact in one narrative deviation while being dead in another. Such existential tension additionally points to the joy-pain dichotomy that killed Lancelot's father. A sign that an individual cannot reconcile their affect with their social identity, the precipice between joy and pain sets the stakes for the entire transition from *Douloureuse Garde* to *Joyeuse Garde*.

Equally personal and public, the *CM*'s tombs are not only memorable, but re-memorable as frames to be filled with unlimited personal experience. In each manifestation, the false or empty commemorative monuments of the Marvelous Cemetery disrupt the individual's state of being in order to galvanize the community mourning these imagined dead to act in the name of vengeance. Curated environments allow both the character and reader to interact with the narrative individually and communally, which in turn reasserts the dead by augmenting the narrative surrounding them. In these enchanted settings inscribed words are offered as mooring points for decoding the marvelous. But they are also fodder for memorable anecdotes, and their transmission enables expanding commemorative networks, and the adaptability of narrated

¹⁷² « un souterrain très fortifié, dont les portes étaient de fer, et les murs, bien épais, de pierres jointes à fer et à plomb » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 552/553).

installation in turn generates endless reinterpretations – an emptying of the tomb through the resurrection of silent text.⁵⁹⁷

Importantly, the affecting event is subsequently disseminated anecdotally, expanding the reach of the inscription's message. During his two visits to and from the *DG*, Gauvain performs the role of messenger between Arthur and separated members of his court, and between errant knights and the strangers to whom they recount their adventures. Within a mobile commemorative network, the living voice is another medium for mobilizing written text, connecting *milieux* through the news (*nouvelles*).⁵⁹⁸ When Brandiz silences Gauvain in his prison, his prolonged absence without news causes Lancelot concern: « Après ce que messires Gauvains et si compaignons furent pris, demora grant piece que li chevaliers qui la Doloreuse Garde avoit conquise n'an sot mot », and when news does arrive the messenger « ploroit que mout durement » and the narrator declares that « si an fu tant dolanz que plus ne pos estre ».⁵⁹⁹

In general, Gauvain's work as messenger, connecting distant locations within a commemorative network, entails both privileged access to information and a transitory existence that restricts Gauvain's ability to intervene in each situation. His skill lies in acquiring, retaining, and repeating supposedly vetted information that Arthur will then transform into actionable plans. Simply put, Gauvain is a representative of another living person and does not embody the

¹⁷³ Part of what Burns describes as a medieval “interest in *dilatatio*, expansion of the narrative through the addition of variants.” (Burns, *Arthurian Fictions*, 81).

¹⁷⁴ Gauvain is himself ‘news’ for Lancelot: « Et les nouvelles viennent au Chevalier Blanc, et li dient que messire Gauvains a esté a la porte, soi disoimes de compaignons » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 683/684). [« Cependant la nouvelle parvient au chevalier blanc. On lui dit que monseigneur Gauvain s'est présenté à la porte avec neuf de ses compaignons »].

¹⁷⁵ Mosès, *NCPL*, 554.

text so much as he transports it. His representations of the outside world are, in turn, the basis for Arthur's political and military decisions. As Arthur's ontological proxy, Gauvain is not destined to liberate the *DG*, so his intercessory value lies in his eyewitness account of surrounding locations like the hermit's hut and *Doloreuse Chartre* prison.

Like the people of the *DG* who curate commemorative sites in order to elicit an appropriate reaction that will lead to helpful intervention, it is imperative that the reader's encounter with emotional content be curated by the narrator, lest they become overwhelmed by their own affective reaction and are unable to remain logical readers. The narrator must manage readers' understanding of the merveilleux by explicitly distinguishing what is 'real' and 'false' in the narrative world. One clear example of this is the narrator's addition of a disclaimer that « si estoit il de tex i avoit, et si estoit mençonge de toz cels dont les letres avoient esté faites la nuit devant. »)⁶⁰⁰ immediately after Gauvain's *clerc* announces the interment of knights from Arthur's court. Later on, Brandis himself advises Gauvain about the « mensonge et enchantement » of the *Douloureuse Garde*.⁶⁰¹ Writing for an educated but still lay audience, the narrator's mediation of narrative truth keeps readers at all levels privy to the same information that signals Lancelot's divine heroism and, although the *NCPL's* narrator provides a fundamental description of the monument and site, much of the narrative action follows the individual character's affective response.⁶⁰²

¹⁷⁶ « Et c'était vrai pour quelques-uns, mais mensonger pour tous ceux dont les inscriptions avaient été faites la nuit précédente. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 538/39)

¹⁷⁷ Mosès, *NCPL*, 549.

¹⁷⁸ More than a monument, the marvelous object is a tomb meant to contain a body. In this case, the imagined tomb functions mnemonically as a literal container for the reader's imagined

In the next section, Arthur arrives at the cursed castle to see the tombs of his men for himself. Working based solely on second-hand oral communication, the king's encounter with the DG and with the forged epitaphs is equally aural and ephemeral. While Aiglain's younger brother is certainly an eyewitness to Lancelot's tomb encounter, he does not know the knight's full identity and his account of the anonymous *chevalier blanc* muddles Arthur's initial understanding of the tomb text by separating Lancelot's body and acts between two names. Arthur's reading experience involves using multiple *clers* to read aloud which, despite being appropriate to his status as king, estranges him from the epitaph and makes determining truth and lies all the more difficult.⁶⁰³ Furthermore, Arthur's pre-established penchant for reverie over action prevents him from achieving any understanding of the DG's enchantments. His whole-hearted belief in the death of his men and his repeated vocalization of confusion confirm the shallowness of his

details. By giving the reader a place to put these visions, the author facilitates their memorization. (Cf. Carruthers, *Craft of Thought*, 14-15)

¹⁷⁹ It is something like only relying on battlefield reports and not first-hand observation of the troops/action before making tactical decisions. Again, very much like Henry III in the physical disconnect between idea and implementation (cf. Weiler's chapter on foreign depictions of Henry III in Rowlands and Weiler, eds., *Reign of Henry III*, 2016).

knowledge.⁶⁰⁴ Arthur is useful for keeping the peace but he himself is highly subject to enchantment and therefore unable to make good judgements.⁶⁰⁵

Arthur: Entre roi et soi

Throughout the *NCPL* strong emotional reactions to epitaphic inscriptions are used as catalysts for directed action. It is through the eyewitness accounts of those characters directly affected by the cemetery that word spreads to higher powers and with it the call to action.

Arthur's knowledge of the *Douloureuse Garde* adventure comes when « si renveia Ayglins des Vaux son frere au roi Artu por ces noveles dire ». ⁶⁰⁶ Leaving no room for doubt, the young messenger states that Gauvain's party « troverent un cimetire o il gist mainz ded bons chevaliers de ta [Arthur] terre morz... Et li noviaus chevaliers meesmes qui fist lo secors a Nohaut et qui l'angarde avoit conquise, icil i gist morz ». ⁶⁰⁷ Arthur and his court's grief is given time to foment while he and Guenièvre travel three days to see the *Cimetière merveilleux* for themselves.

Throughout the *NCPL* Arthur's struggle to maintain his good reputation manifests in the loss of territory and as impulsive behavior when Arthur gets lost in pensiveness, imagining the

¹⁸⁰ Like Henry III, Arthur's personal weaknesses keep him from reasserting his dominion. In the radically humanized portrayal of chivalry found in the prose tradition, betrayal, misunderstanding, bad judgment, and emotional instability pick up on the changing landscape of Angevin England where the hierarchical relationship between barons and their king was transformed by Magna Carta and its subsequent reaffirmations. Even Brandiz des Isles, lord of the *DG*, blames Arthur for the loss of his castle (the *DG*) mirroring the highly unpopular redistribution of baronial land and assets to French families that occurred under Henry III (i.e. Lusignans, Savoyards, even de Montfort), cf. Ben Hubbard, *The Plantagenets* (London: Amber Books, Ltd.), 2019; Rowlands and Weiler, *Henry III*, 2016.

¹⁸¹ This is affirmed by Arthur's easy beguilement by the fairy, Camille; Alistair Minnis, "Medieval Imagination and Memory," in *The Cambridge History Of Literary Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 2005), 244.

¹⁸² Mosès, *NCPL*, 542.

¹⁸³ Mosès, *NCPL*, 542.

world through the lens of emotion rather than seeing the reality before his eyes. His raw emotion requires mediation and the first example of curatorial intervention in the king's experience of the *DG* occurs *en route*. As Arthur cools his feet in a river, « il commença a penser » when none other than Brandis des Isles approaches, « toz armez et se mist en l'eive». ⁶⁰⁸ When Brandis charges at the king with his lance, Arthur rouses just in time to save his attacker from being drowned by his guards. Arthur's mercy is authenticated by his men's steadfast belief that « ja li rois Artus ne seroit par home deseritez ne mauvassement ne morroit, tant avoit anors et biens faites en sa vie » is so affecting that Brandis « se tint por fox » for trying to kill him and simply rides away. ⁶⁰⁹ In this case, the strong affect that surrounds Arthur deflects serious physical threats, but the castle's front gate proves a greater challenge.

The castle's sentinel stymies Arthur's progression, instructing him that « « demain, endroit prime, si m'envoiez un chevalier » ». ⁶¹⁰ Arthur is to continue this ritual at each liturgical hour « « tant que cil veigne cui ge lo porrai ovrir » ». ⁶¹¹ From Arthur's perspective, the tedious repetition and helpless waiting turns into a battle of emotional attrition. Despite Arthur's strong emotionality being advantageous at eliciting intercession or peace, it is also a liability for the cursed citizens who must wonder whether Arthur will have the fortitude to send sentries to the gate for over a month. As it turns out, they are right to worry. After three days and yet another knight refused entry, Arthur is described as becoming « mout correciez » before « s'est assis sor

¹⁸⁴ Mosès, *NCPL*, 542.

¹⁸⁵ Mosès, *NCPL*, 544.

¹⁸⁶ Mosès, *NCPL*, 546.

¹⁸⁷ « Et se ge li puis la porte ovrir, ge li overrai ; et se ge ne puis, si m'enveiez un autre endroit tierce ; et se lors n'est overte, si m'enveiez un autre endroit midi, et puis un autre endroit none, et puis un autre endroit vespres » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 546) :

lo ru d'une fontaine et commança a penser mout durement tant qe tierce commence a passer.

»⁶¹² Proximate bodies of water, symbolic of turbulence and referential of the bodily humors, indicate how Arthur's sensibility makes him both magnanimous and susceptible.⁶¹³ When evoked, Arthur's affect is so powerful an influence in the narrative world that he must carefully manage his emotions to avoid tragedy.⁶¹⁴ Unfortunately, countenance is not one of Arthur's strengths, and as Arthur sits in trance, the onus falls on Lancelot to present himself. Lancelot takes advantage of Arthur's daze, disguising himself before approaching Arthur at the gate. Identified as act as mediator between the king and reality.

Despite being physically proximate to the "truth", that is to say to Lancelot, Arthur « son penser ne laisse » and fails to recognize his own knight.⁶¹⁵ Finally able to enter the first gate, Arthur tries the second gate but « ils trouvent la porte fermée » :

« Ils se rendent alors au cimetière et le roi ordonne à ses clercs de lire les épitaphes. Ceux-ci commencent à citer beaucoup de chevaliers de la maison du roi Arthur et d'autres terres. Ils arrivent ensuite à une tombe où était écrit le nom de monseigneur Gauvain et où on pouvait lire : « Ci-gît monseigneur Gauvain et vous voyez là sa tête. » Sur une autre tombe ils lisent : « Ici repose monseigneur Yvain, fils du roi Urien, et vous voyez là sa tête. » Sur une autre : « Ci-gît Yvain le Bâtard et voilà sa tête. » Et de même de tous les compagnons (565) que monseigneur

¹⁸⁸ « Le messenger revint auprès du roi et lui dit ce qu'il en était. Le roi fut très mécontent. Il s'assit au bord d'un torrent qui jaillissait d'une source et entra dans une longue rêverie jusqu'à l'heure de tierce. » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 559).

¹⁸⁹ Earlier, *en route* to the *DG*, Arthur is nearly killed when an armed knight charges at him while he cools his feet in a river. Funnily enough, according to Laȝamon's *Brut*, the Dolorous Guard is located in the Humber river estuary, so named for a 12th-century invader (Humber) who drowned in its waters, cf. J. P. Brennan, "Myth, Marriage, and Dynastic Crisis" *Arthuriana* 26, no. 1 (2016), 45.

¹⁹⁰ This is something he and Lancelot share and Arthur's reveries are similar to Lancelot's haze when Guenièvre is nearby. His overwhelming love clouds Lancelot's thoughts and impairs his behavior, such as letting the castle gate close in Guenièvre's face after inviting her in (Mosès, *NCPL* ; 560-61).

¹⁹¹ « le roi este perdu dans ses pensées » (Mosès, *NCPL*, 560-61).

Gauvain avait emmenés avec lui. Quand le roi entend tout cela, peu s'en faut qu'il ne perde la raison, tant sa douleur est grande, ainsi que celle de la reine et de tous les autres. »⁶¹⁶

His turn at the *CM* cements Arthur's status as a detached reader who does not approach the text personally, but always through a mediator. As king, Arthur has the privilege of multiple *clers* reading aloud to him (« le roi ordonne à ses clercs de lire les épitaphes »), but these performances give voice to the malignant magic of the castle and are counterproductive to Arthur's understanding (« Ceux-ci commencent à citer beaucoup de chevaliers »). In light of Gauvain's difficulty in gleaning the truth of a text read by one other person, the overlapping voices of Arthur's proxy readers creates a sonic and interpretative polyphony in which none of epitaphs are given a close, individualized analysis.

Instead, the quick succession of transcriptions (« Sur une autre tombe... Sur une autre... Et de même de tous ») and a focus on the inscription's content over a sculptural description of monuments hints at the overwhelming experience of learning about multiple deaths at once. What is more, these deaths are represented in the present (*Ci-gît*) that refers to the tomb and to the *Douloureuse Chartre*. The people's desperate manipulation of the knights' captivity is in fact only possible in the present and only for as long as Brandis keeps those specific men out of sight. The ruse also connotes complicity on the people's part in the demonic enchantments of the *DG* through the strategic use of particular dark forces for their sympathetic cause. This re-interpretation is in turn performed by the *clers* and their literal reading of the inscriptions forms the basis of Arthur's and the court's understanding.

¹⁹² Mosès, *NCPL*, 563-65.

The cemetery installation created by Brandis des Iles' captive populace has been erected with the very specific purpose of advancing their liberation through Arthur and then Lancelot's interventions. In addition to the false epitaphs, the heads of knights who are not really dead inexplicably appear at each tomb (« Ci-gît monseigneur Gauvain et vous voyez sa tête ») as supernatural and incontrovertible proof for witnesses that they are not alive. Unable to focus on any one death, Arthur reacts primarily to the mediated speech acts that themselves take the epitaphs to be true. Each pronounced epitaph affects Arthur and compounds the onus on him to avenge all the buried knights from his court and beyond (« chevaliers de la maison du roi Arthur et d'autres terres »). This sudden and augmenting state of grief achieved through the repeated polyphonic performance of inscribed epitaphic text is exactly the reaction the *DG's* citizens want.

Once again emphasizing his vulnerability to enchantment, « Quand le roi entend tout cela, peu s'en faut qu'il ne perde la raison, tant sa douleur est grande. »⁶¹⁷ Playing into the trope of grief-induced madness, the castle's people count on what they know will be an intense emotional reaction to an unnatural milieu and they curate the pace and navigation of the sepulchral exhibition accordingly.⁶¹⁸ Each reading act catalyzes a new affective response of which the citizens of the *DG* seek to take advantage by offering the conquest of their castle as a means of channeling those strong feelings. This directed participation is stymied by Arthur's overreactions, which are in turn the product of a corrupted reading of the epitaphs. As a reader,

¹⁹³ Mosès, *NCPL*, 565.

¹⁹⁴ "Grief-madness" is visible in early Irish, cf. Danielle Marie Cudmore "'...agus ag ól a fóla': Ingesting Blood and Engendering Lament in Medieval Irish Literature," In *Grief, Gender, and Identity*. ed. Lee Templeton (Brill, 2021): 165-189; classical, cf. Minnis, "Medieval Imagination and Memory," 2006), and Old French literature, cf. Rebekah Fowler, "Mourning, Melancholia, and Masculinity in Medieval Literature" (PhD dissertation, Southern Illinois University, 2011).

Arthur is juxtaposed with more logical (meditative) readers like Héléne, Lancelot, even Gauvain as an entirely emotional reader whose polyphonic experience of the performed text in a supernatural context hampers any logical interpretation. Rather than be immersed in the text as the informed reader is, Arthur is trapped in his emotions and cannot discern the voice of truth as the narrator aids external readers in doing.

What he and his companions receive is a performance of the text, an illusion and not the inscription itself. As with any artistic interpretation, the audience must parse the artist or performer's reiteration of the original concept, and the false tombs that frame the knights' imprisonment as a kind of death for « tous les compagnons que monseigneur Gauvain avait emmenés avec lui » likewise represent a curated narrated installation, not objective fact.⁶¹⁹ Arthur has no reason to contradict the multiple voices that affirm his men's deaths as truth. He does not question the accuracy of the texts that purport to speak on behalf of the absent knights that fill the cemetery space with trusted voices repeating the false reports. Arthur relies on less apprised interpreters of the unfamiliar landscape unlike external readers guided by the narrator.

Reader's face a different mental challenge, since previous knowledge of the tombs' manipulation and of the knights actual imprisonment contradicts what the trusted narrator goes on to describe. The mention of heads atop the tombs (« vous voyez là sa tête ») is particularly confusing and difficult for readers to integrate into their current imagined landscape. The malleability of imagined places and the rereading that is possible with written text means readers

¹⁹⁵ Mosès, *NCPL*, 565; The prison-tomb comparison also lends an autobiographical tone to the epitaphs for the attentive reader who understands the oblique reference to the *DG*'s own debilitating captivity and the reason for forging the epitaphs in the first place.

can go between perspectives, “seeing” the scene in multiple contexts at once like the artist’s book that juxtaposes images from different versions of the installation on a single page. In effect, those men named on the false tombs are doubly present in the reader’s mind, a kind of commemoration of the imagined dead that also helps the reader keep track of interlacing narrative strands. For Arthur, however, the tombs truly contain his men’s corpses.

Instead of freeing the knights and avoiding further emotional harm, the people of the DG take advantage of their assured physical absence to usurp the men’s identities and replace their bodies with stone and text (« Ils gravent de fausses inscriptions sur un nombre de tombes »). The epitaphs function, first, as forged bodies of proof for Arthur and his co-readers that plays into the castle’s magic setting: we do not know if those heads are an illusion or if there are perhaps real heads whose state of decay makes them impossible to identify without the epitaph’s. A second mnemonic role of the false epitaphs targets the romance reader who knows the truth about Gauvain and the others can still imagine duplicate heads on the tombs, which through its commemoration paradoxically recalls the living but imprisoned knights to the reader, allowing them to participate narratively in spite of their bodily incapacitation. Because it takes place in a magical, fictitious, imagined context the entire *DG* exists in the instability of human imagination and the interpellative speech of the epitaphs connects readers across time in the atemporal fiction of the *DG*. The multiplicity of the knights’ bodies, regardless of the means, counteracts their physical suppression by Brandis and keeps them at the forefront of the reader’s memory. This spectral duplication helps engage readers as they review and reassess what they have witnessed in the narrated installation.

Despite appealing to the legal and affective relationship between a knight and his lord, the people of the *DG* are dealing with tropes and they fail to account for individual deviations from these roles. The plan for Arthur to keep Lancelot at the *DG* does not work because of Arthur's illiterate interpretation of his surrounding, but also because Lancelot's presumed love for his king is undermined by his secret romantic love for Guenièvre. While Lancelot certainly has more control over his reader response than Arthur or Gauvain, it is not enough and his pious son Galahad must be introduced later in the *NCPL* as the actual Grail champion. Much to their credit, the *DG's* inhabitants switch tactics and spread false rumors of Guenièvre's imprisonment. Lancelot's untamed love for Guenièvre leads even as perceptive a reader as he to rush back to the *DG* where he is obliged to put an end to its enchantments once and for all. In the end, the reader aided by the narrator comes out as the best reader. While the reader is privy to verity of each rumor or ruse, Lancelot does not have that perspective. Emotion enables interpretation, which keeps the text alive and relevant, but also leaves the door open for unexpected or even unwanted understandings of texts.

Affective Intercession

The third chivalric pilgrim to the *DG*, Arthur himself, presents a different reading experience to Lancelot's and Gauvain's in which the limits of curatorial control are put to the test by an acutely receptive audience. The extreme affect displayed by Arthur and his travelling courtiers exceeds the expectations of the *DG's* citizens, who must adapt their commemorative installation in order to manage their visitors' response. Like the romance reader who must be tethered to reality by the narrator, Arthur in particular relies on the mediation of others to survive the enchanted site safe and sane. Despite the castle inhabitants' attempts at channeling

Arthur's affect as they did successfully for Lancelot and Gauvain, Arthur internalizes his experience at the *DG* and loses sight of the boundary between his reality and the enchantments. Instead of simply following protocol as expected, Arthur is paralyzed by his immersion into the *merveilleux*.

That Arthur's excessive emotions would render him dangerously unresponsive is no surprise given his role as the paragon of courtliness and chivalry in the universe bearing his name. Throughout the *NCPL* and beyond, Arthur focuses on establishing and maintaining norms and morality, and much of Arthur's relevance comes from the Round Table that prevails as "the center of chivalry throughout all Christendom and even beyond" but nevertheless relies upon individual knights to survive.⁶²⁰ Arthur relies heavily on his knights (and wife) to carry his intentions to fruition and even to save him from his own misguided efforts and inability to see the truth.⁶²¹ At the *Douloureuse Garde* Arthur's role becomes largely ceremonial and the king's affect serves more to catalyze others into action than as the direct source of intervention. Much of Arthur's difficulty in discerning fact from lies in the cemetery relates to its status as a polyphonic borderland, « un de ces lieux exceptionnels qui permettent le passage vers le monde des morts » and where human and nonhuman voices engage in dialogue.⁶²²

¹⁹⁶ Elspeth Kennedy, "King Arthur in the Prose *Lancelot*," in *King Arthur: A Casebook*, ed. E. Donald Kennedy (Routledge, 1996), 73.

¹⁹⁷ This blindness occurs again with the False Guenièvre episode when a love potion leads Arthur to order the brutal execution of his wife for supposed treachery.

¹⁹⁸ « un lieu frontiere 'polyphonique', » cf. Jean-Dominique Poli, Pierre Ronzeaud, and Jean-Jacques Vincensini, eds., *Dictionnaire des Lieux et Pays Mythologiques* (Laffont, 2011), 301; *ibid.* 304).

While the heroic Lancelot is able to mediate his own experience of the thirty bronze pipes blaring a cacophony of demonic voices in the underground cave, Arthur is overwhelmed by even a single voice if its message is sufficiently affecting.⁶²³ Ideally, this embodiment of chivalry and courtly love should be capable of perceiving the one truth amid the chaos of humanity. Unfortunately, this is not the case and Arthur's grief for his knights leads him toward madness rather than enlightenment. The oral recitation of false epitaphs in the *Cimetière Merveilleux* echoes the association between polyphony and demons in medieval music and the plurality of voices reading to the king foreshadows the demonic voices that Lancelot encounters in the subterranean cave during his search for the magic keys.⁶²⁴ When the challenge is one of literary interpretation, Arthur defers his direct interaction with texts to multiple *clers*, and although Arthur's magnanimous acts of largesse and historical reputation as a fierce warlord consistently counterbalance his susceptible sensibilities, here he is too trusting.

These literate men were not necessarily scholars, as mentioned regarding Gauvain's readers, and were employed to decode writing that Arthur would presumably interpret in all his kingly sagacity. The problem in this case is that Arthur's physical remove from the text deprives him of directly interacting with an installation curated specifically for him. That Arthur does not interact personally with the inscribed tombs leads to a mediated reading experience that further obscures the truth from Arthur with each layered voice. Whether it is the ritual of sending envoys

¹⁹⁹ That said, even Lancelot's countenance is limited, as seen when he rushes impulsively back to the *DG* after a single report of Guenièvre's imprisonment. His love for her is his vulnerability, hence why we must wait another generation for Galaad to be the Grail Knight.

²⁰⁰ cf. Karl Kügle, "Conceptualizing and Experiencing Music in the Middle Ages (ca. 500-1500)," in *Handbook of Medieval Culture Vol. 3*, ed. Albrecht Classen (Walter de Gruyter, 2015): 358-71.

at each liturgical hour or the report of a squire, Arthur never engages with the inscribed texts of the *DG* and never has a chance to do his own meditative reading and interpretation.

Known as a paragon of *courtoisie*, the *DG* citizens expect Arthur to revive the courtly customs that Brandis has destroyed, and the epitaphic installation of the fake tombs succeeds in eliciting his action by pushing him emotionally. Although Arthur retains the ability to mobilize his and his allies' forces to battle against Brandis, it is the potency of the king's official affect -an energetic affect even- that motivates Lancelot to intervene on his behalf and undo the enchantment. It is on this power which the *DG* stakes its freedom and Arthur's combination of authority and impulsivity is used to advantage in this case. The king's extreme grief gives rise to a level of affective energy that, left unchanneled, is self-destructive. Rather than harm himself in his grief Arthur, like Gauvain, is presented with defeating the *DG*'s enchantments as a nobler channel for their grief that in turn benefits the castle inhabitants.⁶²⁵ As the highest earthly authority of the Arthurian world, King Arthur has the potential to be a courtly savior, what could be thought of as a secular patron saint of chivalry for the people of the *DG*.⁶²⁶

But although Arthur's affect is inspiring it is beyond his control and Arthur cedes the role of hero to Lancelot. Instead of remaining unchanged to preserve a body, the empty commemorative monuments seen in the NCPL act more as placeholders providing consistently memorable experiences to a shifting audience, just as Lancelot's disappearance at the Lac de

²⁰¹ R. Hyatte, "Reading Affective Companionship in the Prose *Lancelot*", *Neophilologus* 83, no. 1 (1999), 21. Hyatte outlines a thematic lineage for grief-madness from *Le roman de Thbes*, in which Polynices is persuaded to avenge Tydeus rather than destroy himself.

²⁰² D. H. Green notes that Arthur's appearance in multiple Celtic *vitae* "imbues him with the credibility... the same aura of historicity" afforded to hagiographies, (Green, *Beginnings of Medieval romance*, 169).

Diane gives H  l  ne an evergreen excuse for her prolonged bereavement. As an active point of reference, the empty tomb also keeps the dead active in living memory by recalling previous episodes in the *NCPL*, as well as from its hypotext, *Le chevalier de charrette*.⁶²⁷ In doing so, the *CM* becomes, as Patricia Victorin points out, « un haut-lieu de fabrication du r  cit et des r  cits », where storylines converge, and new meanings emerge for both character and reader. In the Dolorous Guard, tombs fulfill an alternate purpose to... by instantiating memories of the supposed dead as text whose content is replicable and portable in a way that the monument is not. In an instance of cognitive *translatio*, the harvested memory goes on to live in the mind, freeing the monument from its static existence as a receptacle.

Conclusion

Although the individual and communal experiences of reading are often treated as distinct phenomena, the nature of medieval literacy is one of simultaneity in that individual and community are not wholly separable in readers' minds. Medieval reading entailed a level of internalization achieved through the re-reading (*meditatio*) of texts in search of "new and authentic knowledge" in primarily Classical texts that would make the pagan philosophers compatible with Christianity.⁶²⁸ Stemming from monastic praxis, the close re-reading of complex texts to uncover new layers of meaning and, in the case of sacred texts, spiritual enlightenment affected how readers approached courtly literature. Neoplatonists in Chartres likened the relationship between reading text and uncovering its full meaning to that between body and

²⁰³ The *CM* is itself a rewriting of Chr  tien's *Cimet  re futur* where Galaad encounters Lancelot's uncorrupted body in its tomb.

²⁰⁴ Winthrop Wetherbee, "Philosophy, Commentary, and Mythic Narrative in Twelfth-Century France" *the Journal of Medieval Latin* 21 (2011), 211.

soul, arguing in favor of the kind of allegorical reading that was picked back up by scholastic readers in the 12th and 13th centuries.⁶²⁹ To know one's soul was to know truth, and the process of introspection could be practiced by reading the words of the ancients.

As an embodying form of writing, the epitaph and the tomb by association is perfectly positioned to convey hidden truths to those who meditated on the text.⁶³⁰ Inscriptions and manuscripts function as “loci of presence, identity, memory, and authority” that could be filled and re-filled with contemporary symbolism.⁶³¹ These interpretative encounters generate multiple narrative reprisals that expose previously hidden elements of the text to different characters and address different intradiegetic audiences. Reminiscent of the setbacks that Lancelot, Gauvain, and Arthur face in breaching the city walls, readers must be patient in their pursuit of answers. This culture of meditative reading and re-reading embodied by the narrative flexibility of Anglo-Norman romance uses the same mnemonic strategies as the contemporary installations in Chapter 1, namely repetition, energetic description, and layered perspective to build up a commemorative *milieu* in readers' imaginations.⁶³² The particular truth of each encounter, then, exists infinitely in the mind of its beholder as a narrated installation.

²⁰⁵ David Dawson, “Plato's Soul and the Body of the Text in Philo and Origen,” in *Interpretation and Allegory*, ed. Jon Whitman (Leiden: Brill, 2022), 93.

²⁰⁶ Traces of Lacan's *corps morcé*, which theorizes the self as both physical and ideological, embodied and imagined, cf. Sarah Kay and Miri Rubin, eds. *Framing medieval bodies* (Manchester University Press, 1996), 2.

²⁰⁷ Soon, “Absent in Body,” 2.

²⁰⁸ Victorin also points out the frustrated linearity of the DG episode, in which even Lancelot is repeatedly prevented from advancing further into the keep. (Patricia Victorin, « Tombeau pour autre histoire, » in *Motifs merveilleux et potique des genres au Moyen Age*, ed. Francis Gingras (Paris : Classiques Garnier, 2015), 162; Ferlampin-Archer also describes how « L'insistence sur la fermeture (« close et moult bien fermee, ne cele porte n'estoit nule fois overte ») accentue l'effet de piétinement ». Ferlampin-Archer, « Les clefs... », 159)

The episodic nature of the *NCPL* allows for comparative representations of characters encountering the same obstacle. Split as the narrative is between three distinct encounters with the *DG*, my analysis builds upon this structure to showcase how, in the narrative and manuscript, representations of text allow fictional objects and people to be perceived by participants in changing contexts, physically existing as written or spoken language in the reader's perpetual present. From one encounter to another, variations in the retelling of events demand that each new visitor decide for themselves what is true and what is enchantment.⁶³³ Accessibility to the monument thus becomes key to successful memorialization of the dead and presumed dead in the *NCPL*. Both fictional and real encounters within the *DG* and particularly at the *Cimetière Merveilleux*, advance the commemorative aspect of the cemetery by bridging the existential gap between the fictive world and the reader's world to create a transcendent community of individuals able to live with memory.⁶³⁴ As independent embodiments linking a commemorative landscape, the equally personal and shared memory of these reading experiences perpetuates politically motivated commemoration and demonstrates how the monument can be adapted to engage a dynamic public to symbolic and practical ends as the people of the *Douloureuse Garde* do.

In lieu of firsthand experience at the *Douloureuse Garde*, readers encounter the marvelous via the narrator and transcribed inscriptions reproduced on manuscript folia. Consciously or not, the narrator's guiding hand replicates scholastic reading in which students were introduced to significant texts through the *accessus*. These glossed environments, voiced in

²⁰⁹ Ferlampin-Archer, « Les clefs... », 158.

²¹⁰ Nora, "Between Memory and History," 8.

real life by a performing reader, allow the reader to practice interacting with the narrative without the risk of misunderstanding it. Informed readers are contrasted to characters like Gauvain and Arthur, non-readers whose literal distance from inscribed texts translates into their superficial understanding and mistaken grief. In the context of medieval fictionality, “the pleasant shell” of allegorical literature was thought to be “concealing a kernel of instruction or truth” that was only accessible to the meditative reader, and the absent but represented bodies that Gauvain encounters invert this formula with their unpleasing literal message and relieving hidden truth.⁶³⁵

Using reproducible writing, reinscriptions or reiterations like Lancelot’s epitaph “augment the cognitive dimension of the text”, transforming textual substrates in the real world into interactive commemorative sites. The literal re-writing of the epitaph as ink on parchment uses the formal versatility of text to transpose fiction into reality. In other words, regardless of a body’s physical presence within a tomb, the text embodying the dead exists in place of the missing corpse and the epitaphic components of a monument can be utilized to construct encounters with the dead in real and imaginary planes, giving readers the chance to encounter the commemorative text with their own senses and react according to their own emotions. Like the reinstallation of family tombs or the reinstallation of commemorative assemblages, the literary site of the *CM* offers a stable symbolic frame for the manipulation of meaningful objects meant to elicit emotionally charged responses. Through repeated acts of reading and remembering, nominal inscriptions on monuments coded for commemoration reintegrate the

²¹¹ Vincent Gillespie, “From the twelfth century to c. 1450”. In *Cambridge Companion to the History of Literary Criticism*,

dead or presumed dead into the living narratives of medieval romance. Like Ban's tomb or Lancelot's lake in the Moutier-Royal, the burial sites in the *DG* incorporate visual cues and liturgical rituals to evoke physical and emotional states of being that transcend characters to affect the reader.

By only resolving the problem of the *DG* once all three protagonists' experiences have been recounted in full, the romance's reader is forced into a recursive encounter with the *DG* that ultimately gives readers a multi-perspectival, immersive understanding of events. The narrated installation, that repeatedly shifting mental representation in readers' minds, does not cohere into a single linear experience. Instead, its instability demands parergonic intervention and calls for a higher level of imaginative interaction from its audience. In return, intratextual and extratextual participants of the narrated installation are rewarded with an understanding of the work that is commensurate with their meditative efforts.

Coda

I will conclude these three chapters with a brief discussion of what is to be done with these narrative and narrated epitaphic installations. As developed in Part I, the core elements of theatricality, intermediality, and site-specificity associated with contemporary installation art theory intentionally engage with the margin that necessarily exists between a work and its context. Whether it is a distinction between reality and fiction, truth and lies, Sophie Calle and Joyce Burstein's 21st century installations use this semantic instability to address the murkiest of borders between life and death by materializing it as immersive art. Seizing upon the subjectivity of art, both artists use installation to make room for audiences to experience being in the margin. Beyond this, the inherent instability of installation results in a flexible space that can even withstand audience participation and interaction. Each node of meaning within the installation acts like the episodic chapters of medieval *romans* as a building block of narrative whose value lies in its autonomy. Throughout the works studied here, language in the form of textual bodies is employed to create these symbolic nodes in real and imaginary environments.

For Calle, her mother's diary and personal communications are distilled to repeating single words that at once refer to the artist's experience and offer the replicable body of text as a shared locus of memory for artist and audience. In Burstein's case, the blank slate tombstone and supplied writing materials explicitly implicate the audience in the work's existence by prompting public writing. Playing off of our semiotic perception of any flat blank space as a potential writing surface, Burstein's blank slate and erasable chalk provide the right combination of manifestation and ephemerality that encourages narrative innovation by the epitaph writer. In both cases, the multiplicity of identities (both the artist's and audience's) is made tangible and thus, subject to

redefinition. By facilitating regulated encounters with alterity in the installation space, epitaphic installations provide a place to practice living with death and with the dead that is sorely needed in the face of contemporary cases of excessive death, such as the 2020 pandemic.

This work of making and re-making within a single symbolic space is not, crucially, a wholly modern invention and installation art shares much of its theoretical and aesthetic identity with the densely symbolic spaces of medieval funerary art and architecture. Additional concepts of immersion, simultaneity, rupture, and adaptability applied to installation art supply a useful lexicon with which to discuss the interactive work of medieval monuments in a contemporary context. Despite existing knowledge of the original intentions behind medieval artifacts, such monuments have endured to exist in a modern context and have acquired new layers of signification with the passage of time. Reframed as art installations, the Anglo-Norman monuments examined in this dissertation can be understood as actively meaningful bodies for modern audiences. Where scholarship has previously identified anachronism, installation theory sees a heterogeneous tapestry of past and present that continues to produce relevant dialogue to its public. The advantages of installation's autonomy and instability are that multiple times, narratives, and experiences can coexist and be brought into conversation to create new meaning. I propose that this potential for innovation is crucial to the specific issue of contemporary commemoration by orienting it toward the future, not the past.

In Part II, the commemorative art in honor of William de Warenne and his family in Lewes immediately following the Norman invasion of England opens a window onto the dynastic and territorial instability that still troubled post-Conquest Norman England. The later commemoration at Bedale of Sir Brian FitzAlan and his family under Angevin rule speaks to the rapid expansion of

the Norman baronial class and the struggle for political and physical survival in a deathly competitive world. The ability to refashion one's history in addition to the present narrative was key in the baronial navigation of an unstable political landscape. Despite the large-scale building program that established initial conquest, cross-Channel alliances were short-lived and quickly led to civil war. Families like the Warenne's and FitzAlan's used their genealogical history to ensure they were always on the right side of conflicts, even if it was only so after the fact. Dynastic narratives provided patent evidence of one's rights when they were repeated in historiographical and legal documentation of individual family members.

One such context for retelling narratives of the past was as epitaphic inscriptions and figural sculpture on funerary monuments. Tombs, effigies, brasses, floor slabs, headstones, even stained glass are emblazoned with symbolic text and image that embed a curated memory of the dead into the already-symbolic building. These medieval installations are contextualized by peritexts in the form of inscriptions (and their later transcriptions) that create a mobile commemorative network of documents, text-bearing artifacts, around the dead. The replicability and malleability of epitaphic text in particular was as useful for refurbishing the violent history of Norman England as it was for generating intercessory action for an individual's immortal soul. Beyond language, the baronial tomb installations communicate intent and meaning through visually legible details that enable a further degree of narrative production, increasing the installation's narrativity. This dynamic environment continues to inspire an emotional reaction that, in the Middle Ages, would have been contextualized by a synaesthetic series of rites that integrated grief and mourning through ritualized representation.

The affective potential of commemorative texts was reproduced within historiography and hagiography, eventually contriving a literary tradition that wove fact and folklore into curated and memorable narratives centered around the dead. The popular form of chivalric *romans* went further than changing existing narratives by inventing entirely new places and situations for their readers to experience emotion. The sepulchral setting is seized upon as an ideal context in courtly literature for extreme emotional manifestation given its liminal reputation. The tomb becomes the appropriate setting for expressing affect that overflows societal categories. Grief and lament are allowed and even expected tomb-side and, while both male and female characters exhibit affective behavior in the *NCPL*, commemoration becomes a novel context for increased female presence within the narrative world.

The *Non-cyclic Prose Lancelot*, to which I dedicate Part III, hails from the same historical period as the family tombs above and exhibits a literary interpretation of interaction between living and dead; real and unreal. What the author cannot show the narrator describes using energetic language to conjure up a virtual reality in readers' imagination. When the story's characters express incredulity, awe, and incomparable pain the narrator's vivid relation of events is meant to elicit sincere emotional reactions from the reader. These internalized scenes, which I call narrated installations, identify written language as a viable representation and site of interaction. Readers essentially act as corporeal hosts for the emotions, the spirit, of fictional bodies. Chivalric motifs including miracles, monsters, and mirage allowed these narrated installations to go beyond what could be witnessed in ordinary life and use supernatural experiences to give a scene greater affective impact.

Readers now had to imagine the imaginary or unimaginable, and it is in this interpretive process that the extratextual audience may participate in narrative creation. Readers' translation of narrative content from text to memory is, then as now, anchored in the production of books. As in the epitaphic installations by Calle and Burstein, and like the proliferation of official documents by the Anglo-Normans, the imagined bodies in the Arthurian universe depended upon epigraphic representation to be real. Text-bearing artifacts, including manuscripts such as the FitzAlan *Perlesvaus* or the Non-cyclic Prose *Lancelot* in MS Royal 20 D III and Additional MS 10293/4, are portable versions of the narrated installations that come alive with each rereading. A specifically medieval understanding of reading as an act of vision, memorization, interpretation, and eventually reinvention that required a trained *memoria machinalis* assumed an immersive experience with text. As with the artist's books for contemporary epitaphic installations, medieval texts provide as close to an authentic experience of the work as possible. Manuscripts occupy the *parergonic* world of the reader as portals to installations that exceed the lifespan of any single iteration of the work.

Readers witness characters' epigraphic interventions in the narrative and as the narrative on the manuscript page. Both book object and imagined setting serve as sites of interaction and collaboration across time as well as space. My analysis of legendary tombs and empty tombs highlights the use of text to embody the dead or absent. Whether at the Moutier-Royal or the Douloureuse Garde, monuments in the *NCPL* are both authoritative and deceptive, these depictions illustrate how medieval readers were aware of and exploited this epigraphic instability. The practice of meditative reading used for sacred texts that lay readers transferred to vernacular literature involved the slow and repetitive study of a text mining for the deepest layer of meaning

that parallels the experience of the contemporary installation. Each walk-through or rereading is unique and produces new observations and interpretations. Intra-textually, characters display distinct levels of reading prowess, resulting in a proliferation of understandings for a single location or event. Readers must juggle multiple versions of scenes in their minds and apply their own meditative skills to find the “true” meaning.

Throughout these eight chapters language and text are used to embody individuals in lieu of their active body. It is this capacity for holistic representation of the dead that makes both medieval and modern epitaphic installations such powerful environments. Like the roadside shrine or giant floating banner, epitaphic installations perpetuate memory by adapting and not resisting the passage of time or change of context. Because audience participation is built into the existence of installations, their meaning and purpose is flexible, able to meet the particular needs of its new public. It is to these qualities of flexibility and even temporariness that I point to as key to creating perpetually meaningful commemorative art in the current day. No human identity is monolithic in life, and to presume that it could be commemorated with a single, static monument makes less sense when presented with the epitaphic installation.

What installation allows for is a perpetual performance of memory that represents multiple facets of the dead to new audiences without losing its integrity. The epitaphic installation, like the paper signs baring Breonna Taylor’s name, is not meant to last forever in its current state. Instead, its creator depends upon the installation’s mobility and site-specific influence to impress witnesses with a meaningful memory of the installation experience. “It is one of the great paradoxes of human existence”, Panofsky finds, “that we desire repose after death yet balk somehow at the idea of a repose so complete that it amounts to an extinction of

consciousness and thereby to a loss of identity".⁶³⁶ We want to both be and not be: be remembered but not be disturbed. The itinerancy of epitaphic installations provides the dead with new bodies that can move through the world and make themselves known independently of a corpse's location.

Beyond this, installations avoid the uncanniness of a haunting because they are not permitted to collect dust. Never in one place forever, the epitaphic installation transmits its commemorative message but does not linger long enough to be absorbed into its environment. The installation is always a disruption to its chosen site, and therein lies the work's renewable potential to affect audiences. The installation's interpolation into an existing space also attempts to elicit the iteration or performance of its content. A viewer might read a sculpted word aloud or stand where the artist stood near a symbolic object. In a literary context, readers perform the text externally or internally just by reading it, and the virtual space of imagination lets readers visualize and even imitate characters' behavior.

Epitaphic texts are predicated upon the text's ability to call out and engage passersby as readers and interlocutors. An epitaph is any epigraphic representation that exists via a material substrate to claim physical space in the world for the deceased, giving voice to the voiceless. Reading acts are capable of perpetuating epitaphic narratives indefinitely and, if truly successful, eventually transition from a read text to a remembered text that exists in public memory autonomously. In fiction, bodies and their identities can exist separately from each other but united in the reader's mind. It is this collation of references and referents that makes the reader a

¹ E. Panofsky, *Tomb Sculpture*, 26.

necessary participant whose interpretation of narrative environments shapes a work's posthumous legacy in history. In contrast to monolithic structures made to withstand time, by constructing a work with its dissolution in mind, installations look toward the future as a continuation in which the curated environment evolves with time to continue signifying and claiming space.

The epitaphic representations of the dead or absent that I have examined in modern and medieval contexts prove that memories of the dead are posthumously constructed and remain subject to change at the hands of the living. Rather than signal a flaw in these commemorations, however, I wish to shed light on how this posthumous metamorphosis perpetuates memory through repetition and variation. Each recounting (*raconter* meaning both to *relate* and to *narrate*) summons one version of the dead, whose absence-presence triggers more memories from the audience that each privilege a unique perception of the dead. The narratives built out of these assembled memories are those that epitaphic installations evoke in the environments they disrupt. What is more, these *milieux de mémoire* are true environments in that the installation format permits a multisensory experience.

Sacred music or recorded voiceover, video, photography, light, darkness, aboveground, underground- the installations in this dissertation demonstrate how multisensory stimulus is facilitated by the immersive nature of installation. Textual elements are particularly versatile, able to shift between modes of expression and even taking up physical space in the present world. As an extension of personhood, posthumous memory must be capable of new interactions and dialogues, and not restricted to repeating a representation whose static features gradually lose relevance. What the medieval conception of memorialization imparts onto the problem of

modern commemoration is that spaces of remembering should involve subject and spectator in equal part. These built environments, curated to prompt reaction and inspire narrative, offer an accessible way to reconcile the past with an envisioned future, living with memory.

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Figures

Introduction:

FIG 0.1 Over 300 people participated in the 2020 "Say Her Name" rally in Daley Plaza, Chicago.



FIG 0.2 A sit-in participant holds a homemade sign bearing Breonna Taylor's name in black marker, 2020



CHAPTER 1:

FIG 1.1 Firstenberg's installation in Washington, D. C., 2020 (<https://abc7ny.com/covid-deaths-coronavirus-covid-19-covid19/7393356/>)



FIG 1.2 Arlington National Cemetery (Mar. 31, 2021, <https://www.flickr.com/photos/arlingtonnatl/50999276264/>)



Fig. 1.3 Palais de Tokyo basement level staircase (<https://www.paperblog.fr/3890996/paris-sophie-calle-au-palais-de-tokyo-rachel-monique/>)



Fig. 1.4 Opening text for Paris installation, 2010 (<http://www.unlockparis.com/2010/11/sophie-calle-rachel-monique-palais-de.html>)



Fig 1.5 Wax effigy of Monique Sindler with feather boa 'SOUCI', Avignon, 2012 (<http://festivals.overblog.com/article-sophie-calle-108200931.html>)



Fig. 1.6 Collage of 'SOUCI' in the Eglise des Celestins, Avignon (https://www.perrotin.com/artists/Sophie_Calle/1/view-of-the-exhibition-rachel-monique-eglise-des-celestins-avignon-france-2012/1000004374)



Fig. 1.7 Neon sandblasted 'SOUCI' in the Eglise des Célestins, Avignon, 2012
(https://www.perrotin.com/artists/Sophie_Calle/1/view-of-the-exhibition-rachel-monique-eglise-des-celestins-avignon-france-2012/1000004374)



Fig. 1.8 Pinned butterfly 'SOUCI' in the Episcopal Church of Heavenly Rest, New York, 2014
(<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/16/arts/design/in-rachel-monique-sophie-calle-eulogizes-her-mother.html>)



Fig. 1.9 'SOUCI' in lace at the Episcopal Church of Heavenly Rest, New York, 2014 (Emily Heinz, <http://artobserved.com/2014/06/new-york-sophie-calle-rachel-monique-at-the-church-of-the-heavenly-rest-through-june-25th-2014/>)



Fig. 1.10 « Pas pu saisir la mort » in the Chhurch of Heavenly Rest, NY, 2014 (<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/16/arts/design/in-rachel-monique-sophie-calle-eulogizes-her-mother.html>)



Figs 1.11 & 1.12 Sophie Calle's artist's book in French (2012) and English (2014), Editions Xavier Barral (<https://storeny.perrotin.com/products/sophie-calle-rachel-monique-version-standard-anglais>)



FIG 1.13 « Pas pu saisir la mort » at the Venice Biennale, 2007 (https://www.berkshirefinearts.com/11-17-2007_venice-bienalle-2007-tracey-emin-and-sophie-calle.htm)



FIG 1.14 « Pas pu saisir la mort » installed in Paris, 2010 (https://www.perrotin.com/artists/Sophie_Calle/1/view-of-the-exhibition-rachel-monique-2010-friche-du-palais-de-tokyo-paris-france-2010/1000003005)

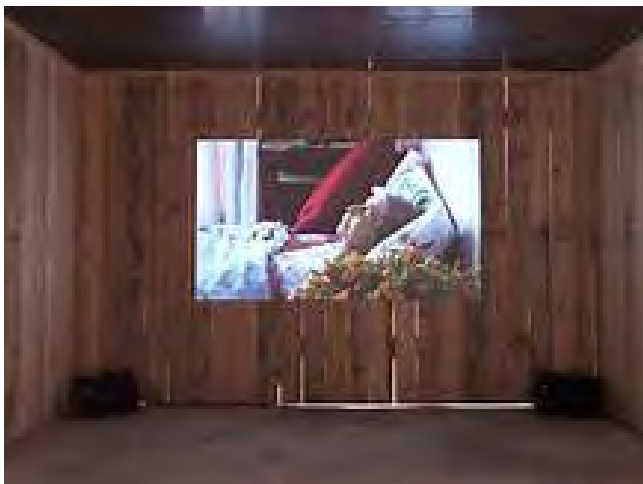


FIG 1.15 Monique the taxidermied giraffe in Paris, 2010

(https://www.perrotin.com/artists/Sophie_Calle/1/view-of-the-exhibition-rachel-monique-2010-friche-du-palais-de-tokyo-paris-france-2010/1000003005)



FIG 1.16 Lightbox 'SOUCI' in New York, 2014 (<http://artobserved.com/2014/06/new-york-sophie-calle-rachel-monique-at-the-church-of-the-heavenly-rest-through-june-25th-2014/>)



FIG 1.17 Sandblasted 'SOUCI' in Paris, 2010 (ht p://www.unlockparis.com/2010/11/sophie-calle-rachel-monique-palais-de.html)



FIG 1.18 Photograph of Monique Sinder's tombstone in New York, 2014 (ht ps://www.perrotin.com/exhibitions/sophie_calle-rachel-monique/1656)



FIG 1.19 Tomb photographs in Paris, 2010 (https://www.perrotin.com/fr/exhibitions/sophie_calle-rachel-monique-2010/753)

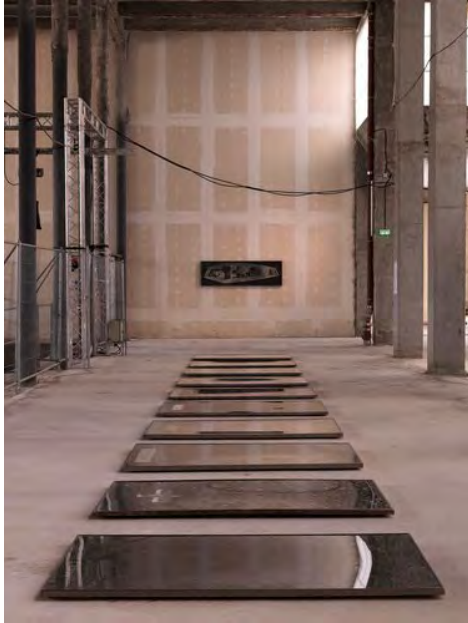


FIG 1.20 A 'Mother' tomb from *Les tombes*, 1990 (<https://www.mutualart.com/Artwork/3-Works--Father-Mother-Son--The-Graves--/6264B0C807231C7A>)



FIG 1.21 The Episcopal Church of the Heavenly Rest, 2014 (<https://actuphoto.com/28005-sophie-calle-rachel-monique-at-the-episcopal-church-of-the-heavenly-rest.html>)



FIG 1.22 From *North Pole*, 2009 (http://www.perrotin.com/fr/artists/Sophie_Calle/1#images)

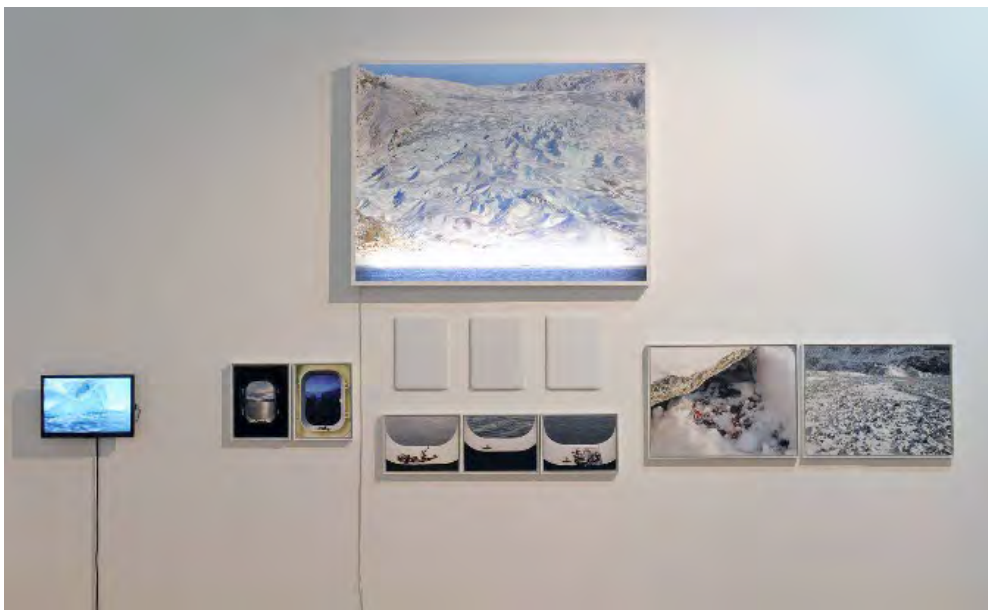


FIG 1.23 From *North Pole*, 2009, altar detail
(https://www.perrotin.com/fr/artists/Sophie_Calle/1#images)



FIG 1.24 From *North Pole*, 2009, porthole detail
(https://www.perrotin.com/fr/artists/Sophie_Calle/1#images)



FIG 1.25 Burstein's installation in Socrates Park, NY (<https://socratessculpturepark.org/artist/joyce-burstein/>)



FIG 1.26 Mobile version of *the epitaph project* in 2016 (Hypoallergic, "Posthumous Portraiture", <https://hyperallergic.com/331993/posthumous-portraiture-american-folk-art-museum/>)



FIG 1.27 Promotional photo for Burstein lecture at SFAI, 2019 (<https://sfai.edu/events-calendar/detail/graduate-lecture-series-joyce-burstein-the-epitaph-project-sfai>)



FIG 1.28 Photo of Hollywood Forever Cemetery installation, 2016 (<https://folkartmuseum.org/exhibitions/the-epitaph-project/>)



FIG 1.29 Still from Burstein’s 2016 “the epitaph project: tour” (0:06) (<https://vimeo.com/179706371>)



PART 2:

FIG 2.1 Nave of Abbaye aux Hommes, Caen, 2021



FIG 2.2 Rollo's tomb, Notre Dame



FIG 2.3 Henry's tomb, Notre Dame de Bayeux



FIG 2.4 Richard I's tomb, Notre Dame



FIG 2.5 William Longsword's tomb, Notre Dame de Rouen



FIG 2.6 Nave of Notre Dame de Rouen Caen, 2021



FIG 2.7 La Trinité, Fécamp (<https://www.normandy-abbey.com/abbaye/abbatiale-de-la-sainte-trinite-de-fecamp/>)



Fig 2.8 Illustrated recreation of 11th century priory, “As it might have been – view from the southwest” by Andy Gammon (<https://lewespriory.org.uk/history-overview>)



FIG 2.9 The Bedale hoard, York Museum Trust (<https://www.yorkshiremuseum.org.uk/news-media/latest-news/the-beauty-of-the-bedale-hoard-revealed/>)



FIG 2.10 MS Hat on 82, fol. 5r, Bodleian Library



FIG 2.11 Aerial photo of priory ruins, Lewes Priory Trust (<https://lewespriory.org.uk/Aerial-1>)



FIG 2.12 1904 excavation plan by Harold Brakspear, Lewes Priory Trust (<https://www.lewespriory.org.uk/1904-brakspear-plan>)

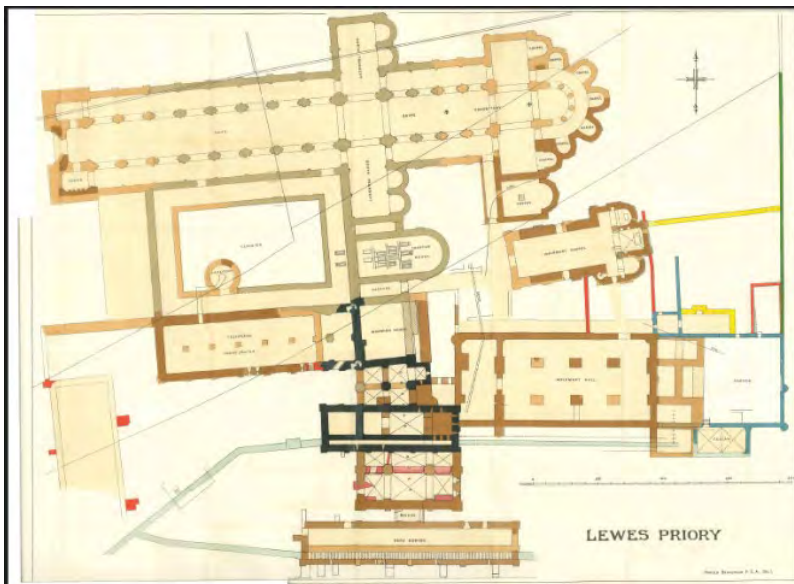


FIG 2.13 Cluniac funeral procession in Lewes Priory (Mayhew, 110)

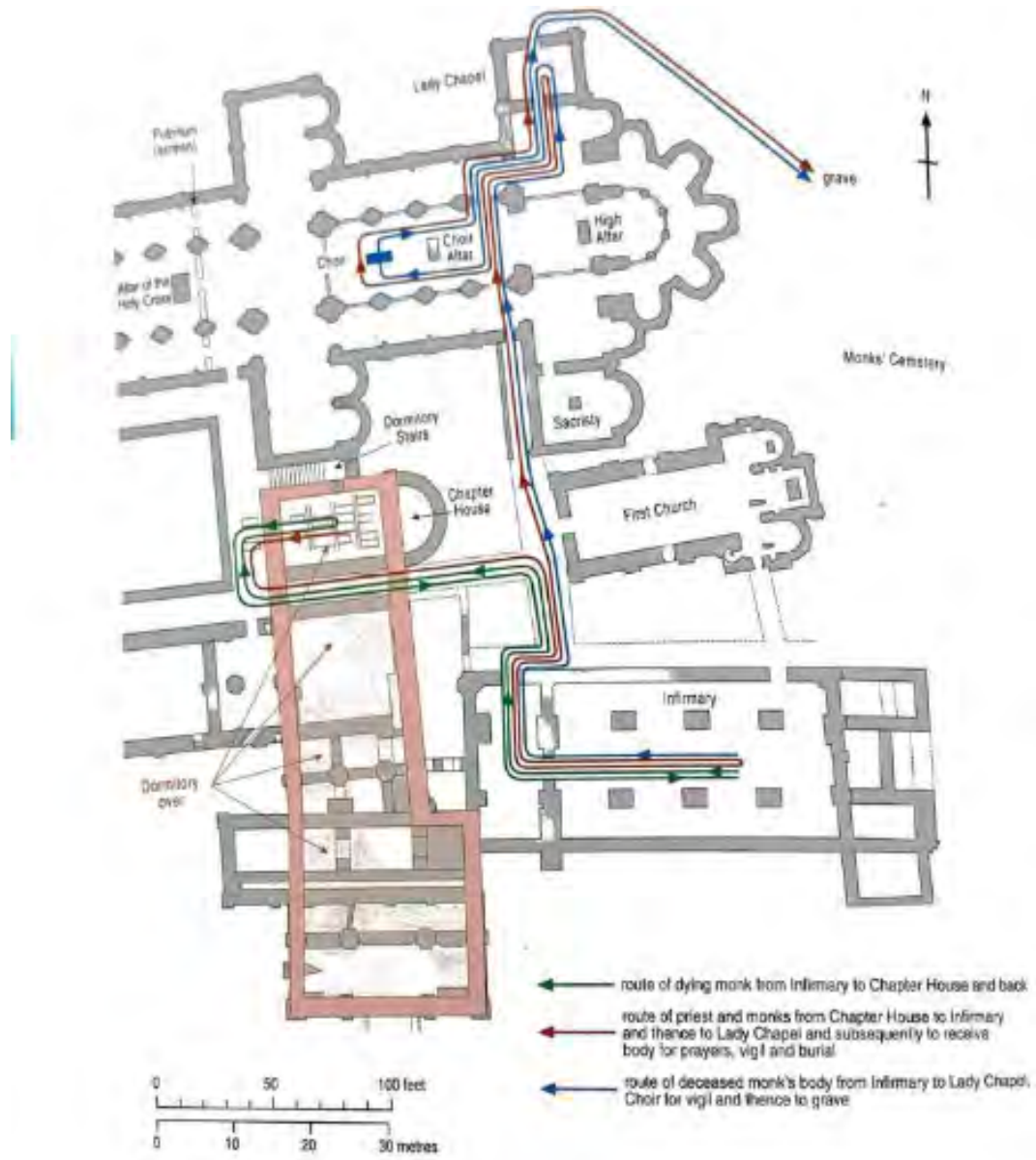


Figure 6. Death and Burial processional routes

FIG 2.14 Gundrada de Warenne's tomb in Southover Church, Lewes



FIG 2.15 Southover Church, Lewes (<https://sussexparishchurches.org/church/lewes-st-john-the-baptist-southover-high-street/>)



FIG 2.16 Gundrada's cist in Southover Church



FIG 2.17 William's burial cist in Southover Church, Lewes



FIG 2.18 Gundrada chapel in Southover Church, Lewes



FIG 2.19 Gundrada de Warenne tomb decoration in Gundrada Chapel, Southover Church



FIG 2.20 Gundrada de Warenne tomb, damage detail



FIG 2.21 Lewes Batle Memorial



FIG 2.22 Bedale market charter (1251) in Bedale Hall



FIG 2.23 Brian FitzAlan's Muriel FitzAlan's effigies in St Gregory's Church



FIG 2.24 Thomas Sheffield and Unknown Knight effigy in St Gregory's Church



FIG 2.25 Brian FitzAlan's shield



FIG 2.26 Brian FitzAlan's shield, dragon detail



FIG 2.27 Brian FitzAlan's effigy, sitting figure detail



FIG 2.28 Brian FitzAlan's effigy, sitting figure detail



FIG 2.29 Muriel FitzAlan's scroll



FIG 2.30 Muriel FitzAlan's effigy, scroll and leg detail



FIG 2.31 St Gregory's Lady Chapel



FIG 2.32 Muriel FitzAlan's effigy, cloak and polychromy detail



FIG 2.33 Muriel's effigy, repair detail



FIG 2.34 Brian de Thornhill's effigy in St Gregory's Church, Bedale



FIG 2.35 Brian de Thornhill's effigy, tablet detail



FIG 2.36 Brian de Thornhill's effigy, base detail



FIG 2.37 View toward south aisle of St Gregory's Church



FIG 2.38 Matilda FitzAlan's effigy in Danby Wiske Parish Church, Yorkshire



FIG 2.39 1301 Barons' Letter (Archival photos of E26: 1301 Baron's Letter. The National Archives, Kew)



FIG 2.40 Seals appended to 1301 Barons' Letter A (E26), National Archives, Kew (Source: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Barons%27Letter1301SealsSeriesA.jpg>)



FIG 2.41 FitzAlan shield rendering from Caerlaverock Roll (Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arms_of_Bryan_FitzAlan_\(d.1306\)_as_shown_in_The_Roll_of_Caerlaverock_\(1300\).svg#filelinks](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:Arms_of_Bryan_FitzAlan_(d.1306)_as_shown_in_The_Roll_of_Caerlaverock_(1300).svg#filelinks))

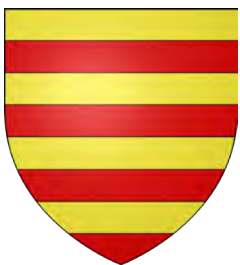


FIG 2.42 Hugh Poyntz' 1301 seal, The National Archives Kew



FIG 2.43 Brian FitzAlan's 1301 seal (A28), The National Archives Kew



FIG 2.44 Lewes Charter

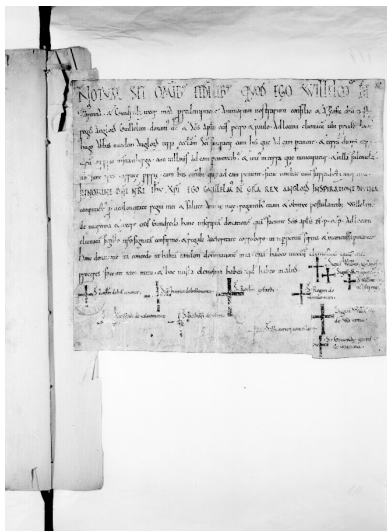


FIG 2.45 William de Warenne's signature on the first charter

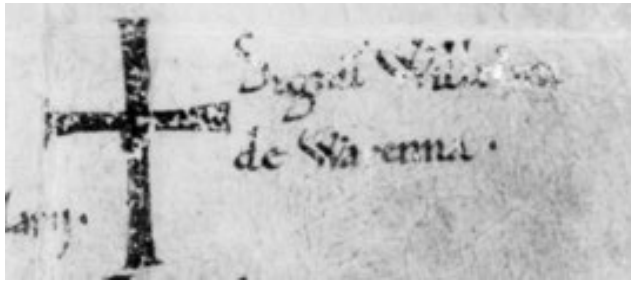


FIG 2.46 Gundrada de Warenne's signature on the first charter

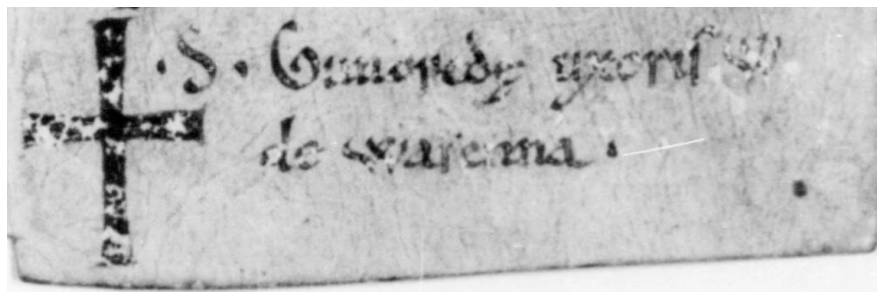


FIG 2.47 Lewes ruins, 2021



FIG 2.50 Haton 82 fol. 4v-5r, Bodleian Library, Oxford. Author's image.



FIG 2.51 stitching detail



FIG 2.52 Thomas Arundell marginalia (f. 92v)

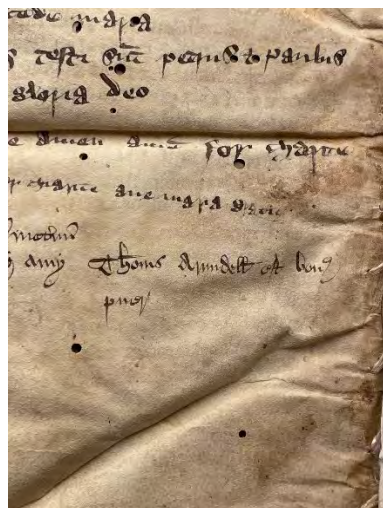


FIG 2.53 margin notes

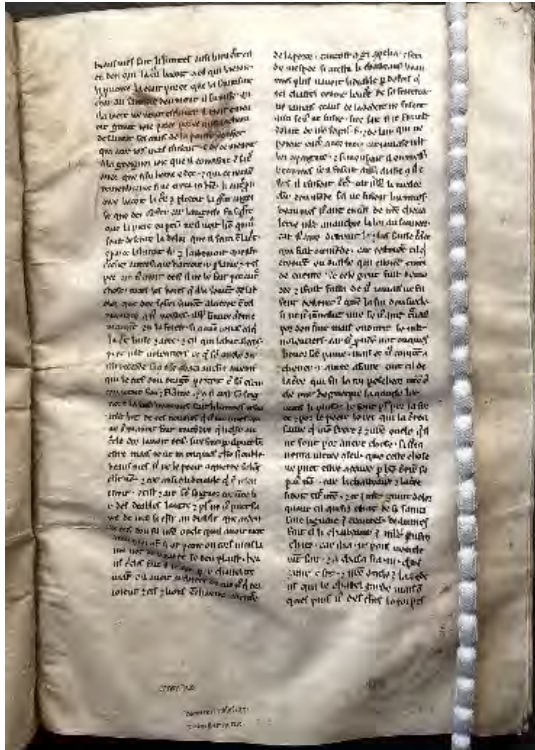


FIG 2.54 interlinear notes (fol 34v)

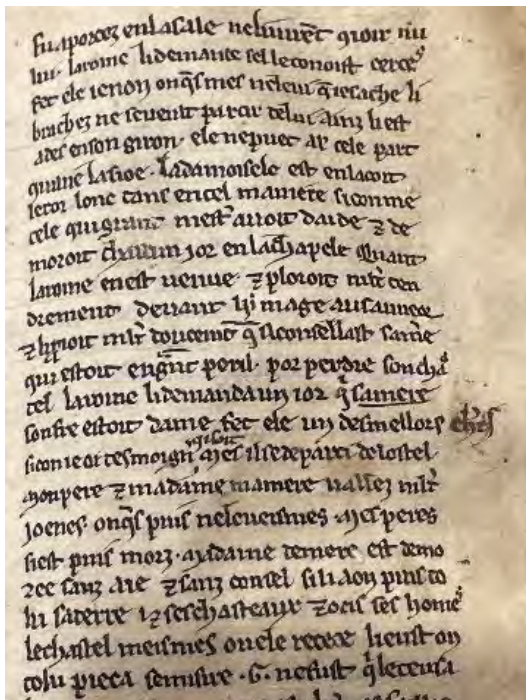


FIG 2.55 "Quand j'estoie marier... detail

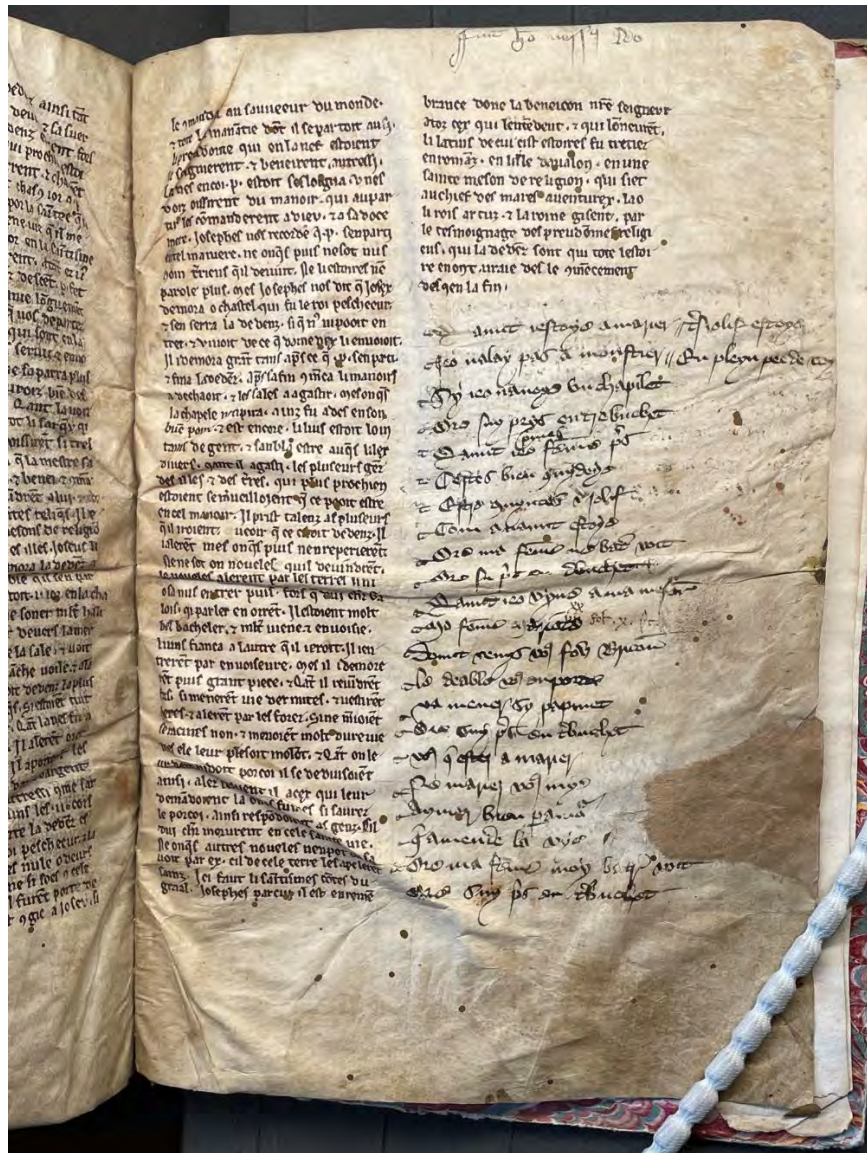


FIG 2.56 Lewes Batle Memorial, cross detail



CHAPTER 3

FIG 3.1 MS Royal 20 D III, flyleaf detail



FIG 3.2 Siege of Trèbe, fol. 2v-3r

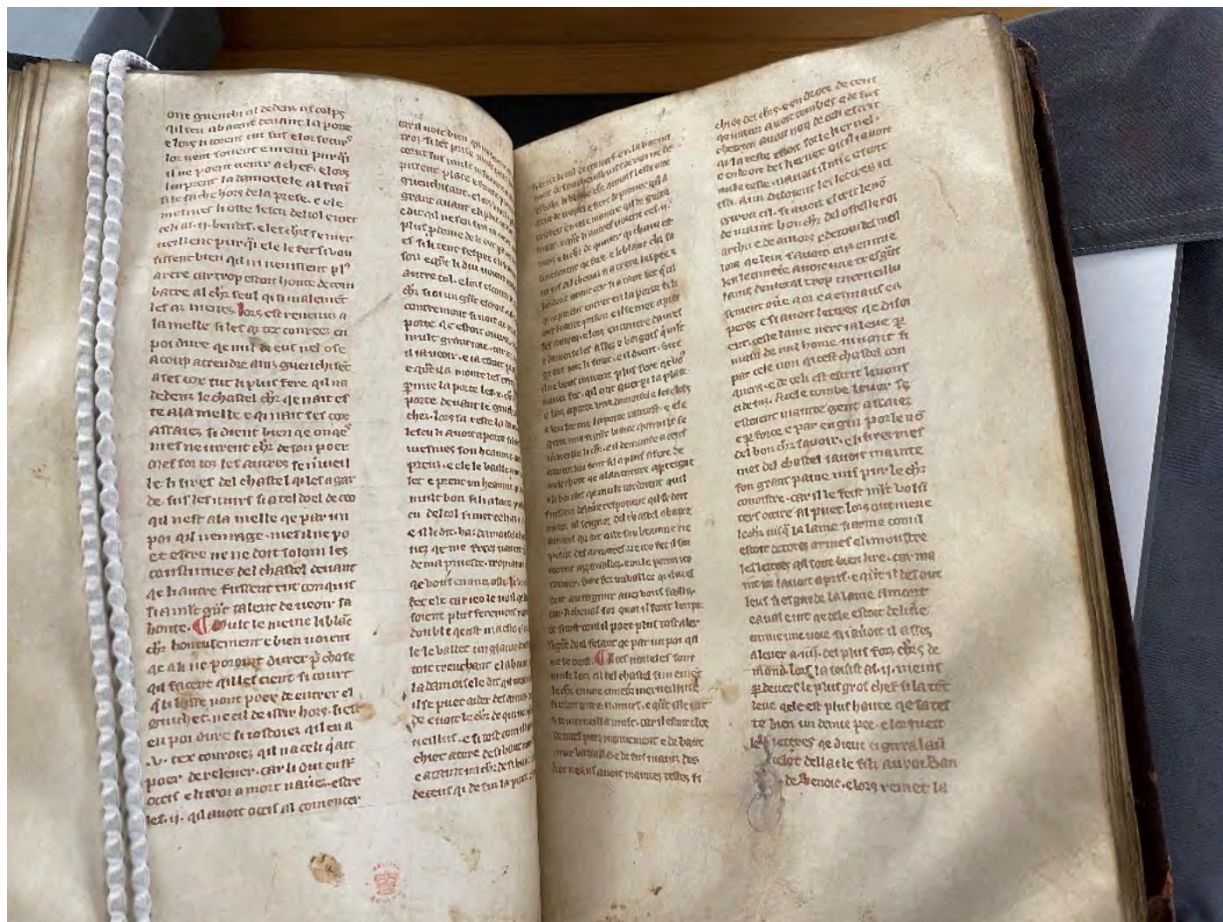


FIG 3.3 Lancelot's future tomb and prophecy, fol. 64v-65r

