

Monumental Brass Society

2020



TRANSACTIONS

Monumental Brass Society

Volume XXI, 2020, ISSN 0143-1250

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The Society would like to thank the A.V.B. Norman Research Trust and the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society for grant assistance towards the production of this issue.

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Obituary

Jerome Bertram (1950–2019)



*Jerome in his element rubbing the brass of Sir Robert Bardolf (d. 1395) at Mapledurham, Oxfordshire, 27 June 2013.
(photo © Martin Stuchfield)*

With the passing of Jerome Bertram, the Society has lost its senior vice-president, one of its longest standing members, a scholar of considerable intellect, a gifted writer and an innovator whose legacy will long endure especially in the antiquarian field so beloved by him from an early age.

Jerome Francis Antoninus Bertram was born on 10 May 1950 in Sussex, the youngest child of Anthony Bertram (1897–1978) and Barbara Randolph (1906–2004). After a short period of schooling in the United States, he was

educated at Worth School. In 1969 he went up to St John's College, Oxford with a scholarship to read Classics but a year later decided to study Theology. Whilst at Oxford his interest in archaeology was fostered by participation in digs at a number of important sites. His life-long passion for monumental brasses was already well-established, having joined the Monumental Brass Society at the age of 11 whilst living near Pulborough, Sussex. Before graduating he published his first book *Brasses and Brass Rubbing in England* during the heady days of the 1970s when the subject caught

the public imagination. In this endeavour he was assisted by his mother who typed the text. Jerome proudly proclaims that the book was written as a complete introduction to monumental brasses for the serious student with no previous knowledge. The copious illustrations, mainly from Jerome's own rubbings (an innovation for the period), and the inclusion of a useful county gazetteer resulted in the book becoming a best seller for the publishers, David & Charles.

His next publication, *Brass Rubbing in Sussex*, a modest affair, appeared in 1973 and was sold in aid of the Chichester Cathedral Restoration Fund. It focused on his home county and constituted a practical guide containing advice for the brass rubber and a useful list of Sussex brasses. Its hard-hitting introduction predicts that 'brass rubbing will very shortly cease to be an amateur hobby or interest at all. Only dedicated students with some serious interest in brasses will be able or willing to pay the fees which have been forced on the caretakers of brasses by unscrupulous brass-rubbers in the past'. David & Charles, flushed with the success of his first book, published *Lost Brasses* in 1976. In this innovative study, Jerome focused on an aspect of brasses neglected in an era when the craze was for extant brasses. The book is adorned with Jerome's skillful scaled drawings of indents.

While at university, through his membership of the Oxford Archeological Society, he was instrumental in compiling the first systematic catalogue of lost brasses for a 'whole' city – Oxford. Publication of this comprehensive study began in the Society's *Transactions* in 1972–3 and continued with *Rare Brass Rubbings from the Ashmolean Collection* in 1977, which featured rubbings compiled by the Oxford Architectural Society between 1839 and 1848. Jerome recognized that the great value of this

collection lay in those rubbings which showed how brasses had been 'lost, mutilated, covered, re-laid, restored or alienated through church restoration, vandalism or theft'.

By 1975 Jerome had decided to train for the priesthood. He studied at the Venerable English College in Rome and the Pontifical Gregorian University and was ordained in Arundel Cathedral (where he was baptized) on 14 July 1979. His ministry began with curacies at Frimley, Surrey, and Eastbourne after which he moved to chaplaincies in the University of London, first at Gower Street and subsequently at the Royal Holloway and Bedford New College campus at Egham. After three years as parish priest of Sutton Park near Guildford, he moved to Oxford in 1991 to join the Congregation of the Oratory of St Philip Neri, which remained his spiritual and physical home for the rest of his life. A much-loved parish priest there for almost thirty years, he gave notable service as treasurer, novice master, librarian and prefect of buildings. Jerome was largely responsible for overseeing the construction of two major new buildings namely the Porter's Lodge and the new accommodation including the library.

A member for more than fifty years, Jerome made many contributions to the Society, especially its publications. His first article, relating to 'An Unrecorded Royal Brass at Peterborough', was published in 1970. Important papers followed on the brasses and monuments at Burton, Sussex, and Wrocław, Poland, and incised slabs in the English College at Rome and in Sussex. Perhaps his most important contribution was his editorship of the *Transactions* from 1991 to 1996. He took over at a time of crisis. By the late 1980s publication of the *Transactions* had become hopelessly in arrears and the accumulated liability of producing past issues at a time of rapidly escalating costs and high inflationary

pressure was having a detrimental effect on membership retention. Within six years he successfully accomplished the challenging task of ensuring that publication was up-to-date. For this outstanding service he was elected as a vice-president of the Society.

The Society's other publications were also generously supported by Jerome. He took up the challenge of bringing to completion a much-delayed modern replacement for Herbert Macklin's highly acclaimed scholarly introductory volume *Monumental Brasses* (1890). A worthy successor, *Monumental Brasses as Art and History* finally appeared under his editorship in 1996, but, as Jerome laconically noted, it had been 'long in preparation, so long that not all of those who have worked on it are still with us'. Jerome was hugely supportive of and saw the importance and potential of *The County Series*, established in 1992 to publish fully illustrated county volumes based on an extensive revision of Stephenson's *List*. He made a very significant contribution: supplying invaluable drawings of worn indents, giving freely of his knowledge, translating numerous Latin inscriptions and visiting innumerable churches to record brasses. His work on lost brasses and catalogue of the Ashmolean rubbings continue to be invaluable as each new *County Series* volume is produced. In recognition of his enormous contribution, the Gloucestershire volume was jointly dedicated to him.

Jerome regretted the Society's decision to discontinue publication of the *Portfolio* in 1981 and greatly encouraged the introduction of the new *Portfolio* in 2000 under independent editorship. A frequent contributor, he delighted in the opportunity to add scholarly text to the plates. His contributions were characteristically wide-ranging: a mid-13th century incised slab only known from an impression in the Ord-Douce Collection in the British Library;

a medieval brass from Erfurt, Germany; a Victorian brass from Balliol College, Oxford; and, not unsurprisingly, numerous Oxfordshire brasses. Jerome's editorial skills were to the fore again in 2006 when *The Catesby Family and their Brasses at Ashby St Ledgers* was published as the third in a series of occasional publications.

Jerome was one of the first to embrace and realise the potential of digital technology. In his first editorial he noted, in characteristically wry style, that there were alternative ways of recording brasses, 'we all came to the subject first through the fascination of the brass-rubbing process, and it does seem to remain the criterion that if you can rub it, the M.B.S. will study it, but as we get older there is a certain attraction in forgoing the five hours on the knees in favour of a quick photograph'. His discovery of *lulu*, the online self-publishing company, opened up new horizons. For the first time it became possible to publish at an affordable cost the material that had been garnered from overseas expeditions often to the most inaccessible and infrequently visited places.

The breadth and industry of Jerome's scholarship was remarkable. He was extraordinarily prolific. The bibliography in his Festschrift, *The Monuments Man*, runs to nine pages and much of it, including accounts of his intrepid travels behind the Iron Curtain in search of brasses, is readily available via the *lulu* website. In recognition of his achievements, Jerome was elected a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London in 1988.

Jerome's diagnosis of cancer in the autumn of 2016 was a heavy blow courageously borne. The treatment took its toll but respite enabled a walking pilgrimage from Oxford to Arundel in September 2017 and a last overseas trip to France. His final years were something of

an ‘Indian summer’ with an intensification in his writing to ensure that as much material appeared in print as possible including his invaluable records of Oxfordshire and Sussex brasses. His close friends were privileged to be able to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of his ordination at The Oratory on 15 July 2019. Throughout adversity he maintained his wonderful sense of humour. He was delighted and humbled that a Festschrift was to be published in his honour and he was able to see the proofs before he passed away at Sobell House on 19 October 2019. Fittingly, there

was standing room only at his Requiem Mass held at The Oratory, Oxford on 5 November 2019 at which many Society members were present to say farewell to a good friend, an antiquary and above all the ‘Monuments Man’ – *Requiescat in pace*.

Martin Stuchfield

Two of the fruits of Jerome’s Indian summer of scholarship appear in this year’s *Transactions* and four are reviewed in it. Others will appear next year.



*The elevation of the soul flanked by angels from the brass of William de Kestevne (d. 1361), North Mymms, Hertfordshire.
(rubbing © Jerome Bertram)*

The Tournai Trade: Flemish Brasses and Slabs for British Clergy

Jerome Bertram

Flemish clerical brasses have been comparatively neglected compared with their mercantile counterparts and merit further study. Furthermore, despite being produced in the same workshops, brasses and slabs have rarely been considered together. This article examines the surviving and recorded brasses and slabs according to their type: the 'great rectangulars', the separate-inlay brasses, and the inlaid incised slabs. It then goes on to consider questions of dating, and why clients chose Flemish brasses and slabs rather than English ones and concludes that the choice of a Flemish brass or tombstone was not always dictated by economic or practical reasons, but was an aesthetic choice.

Ever since brasses were first seriously studied, it has been recognised that certain brasses in England were imported from the Low Countries. Apart from Macklin's unsuccessful attempt to attribute them to a Lübeck workshop, they have always been called 'Flemish', or sometimes 'Franco-Flemish'. A few commentators imagined they might have been engraved in England by travelling craftsmen, but it was the meticulous work of F.A. Greenhill and H.K. Cameron that established that they were made in Tournai, set in slabs of the black limestone known as Tournai marble, and were imported to Scotland and England through Bruges or Antwerp by the traders of the Hanseatic League.¹ More recent research

by Ronald van Belle has enabled us to see these brasses in their native context.²

Because it was the mercantile community that imported the Tournai brasses, not to England alone but to all the lands bordering the Baltic, the North Sea, and the Atlantic, it has been the merchant brasses that have attracted most attention – the huge brasses at King's Lynn, Norfolk, Newark, Nottinghamshire, and Newcastle upon Tyne, Northumberland, at Stralsund, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern, and Toruń, Poland. There are few military examples anywhere, though indents in Dundrennan, Kirkcudbright, and Winchelsea, Sussex, survive. A weakness of many studies heretofore has been concentration either on brasses, or on incised slabs, but not on both: they do belong together, and the same workshops produced monuments of the same design in both metal and stone.

It is the clerical monuments, to bishops, abbots and parish priests, that deserve another examination. It has long been noticed that there are two major brasses, and one minor one, of the Flemish style, commemorating English clergy. Cameron did publish one article specifically on these three, but he did not discuss the indents for lost brasses to English and

1. F.A. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes I–VI', *MBS Trans*, 8:5 (1947), 165–70; 8:6 (1949), 234–44; 9:2 (1952), 92–5; 10:4 (1966), 318–21; 10:5 (1967), 405–25; 11:2 (1970), 123–4; F.A. Greenhill, 'The Ledger of Andrew Halyburton', *MBS Trans*, 9:4 (1954), 184–90; H.K. Cameron, 'The 14th-Century School of Flemish Brasses', *MBS Trans*, 11:2 (1970), 50–81; H.K. Cameron, 'The 14th-Century School of Flemish Brasses: Evidence for a Tournai Workshop', *MBS Trans*, 12:3 (1977), 199–209; H.K. Cameron, '14th-Century Flemish Brasses to Ecclesiastics in

English Churches', *MBS Trans*, 13:1 (1980), 3–24; H.K. Cameron, 'Four Civilian Brasses of the Flemish School', *MBS Trans*, 14:2 (1987), 101–114; see also L. Dennison, 'The Artistic Context of Fourteenth Century Flemish Brasses', *MBS Trans*, 14:1 (1986), 1–38.

2. R. van Belle, *Vlakke grafmonumenten en memorietaferelen met persoonsafbeeldingen in West-Vlaanderen* (Brugge, 2006); *Corpus Laminarum: Belgische Koperen Graf-en Gedenkplaten*, 2 vols (Bruges, 2017).

Scots clergy in Tournai marble, apart from the obvious case of Abbot Mentmore in St Albans Abbey, nor did he refer to the considerable number of Flemish incised slabs (and a couple of local imitations), most of which had parts inlaid, though whether in brass, white marble or 'composition' is not always clear. There are eight known indents for rectangular plates, and four or five for separate-inlay brasses, as well as eleven or twelve incised slabs which have had inlays. They are distributed along the coasts of Scotland and England, with some significant, and puzzling, inland ones at Wensley and Topcliffe, Yorkshire, Waltham on the Wolds, Leicestershire, Ashby Puerorum, Lincolnshire and Salisbury.

Brass inlays survive only on one slab, the very curious example at All Hallows Barking, London. Some sort of composition was certainly used, there are remains of such inlays in Middleton, Essex, and Salisbury and possibly on one of those at Boston, Lincolnshire. Decayed composition can be mistaken for modern cement filling. The composition used at Tournai appears to consist of calcium carbonate with a little silicate, possibly made of powdered marble mixed with a little burnt limestone to set it.³ Greenhill considers that if there are no rivets, the inlays must have been composition, though before 1350 very few brasses anywhere had rivets, and the Flemish engravers always used them very sparingly. Where there are deepening for solder bars there must surely have been brass inlays. The possibility of late medieval repairs using rivets to fix loose plates should not be ignored. None of these clerical slabs have indents deep enough for white marble inlays, which were rare among Flemish slabs though not unknown: the military indent at Dundrennan, Kirkcudbright, clearly

had marble faces set into brass figures, like the royal brass of Ringsted, Denmark.

Most of the incised slabs, and the separate-inlay brasses, seem to belong in the second and third quarters of the fourteenth century, though there is only one exact date given on inscriptions, significantly 1349, at Middleton and Bradwell, Essex. Indents for quadrangular brasses are impossible to date, apart from the two known ones at St Albans. Greenhill discovered seventeen such indents in Scotland, of which one at St Andrews, Fife, and a lost one at Kirkwall, Orkney, are fifteenth-century, another at St Andrews, and those at Dunkeld, Perthshire, and King's College, Aberdeen, sixteenth-century, all probably to bishops. The other twelve could have been of any date, and clerical or lay: Cruden, Aberdeenshire, Dunblane, Perthshire, (five), Dunfermline, Fife, Elgin, Moray, (two), Inverness, and Whithorn, Wigtownshire. Those at Elgin and Whithorn were probably bishops.⁴ It is frustrating that there is no exact date of engraving for the great brasses at St Albans and Wensley, although the little brass at North Myms, Hertfordshire, commemorates a priest who died in 1361, a date of death which is compatible with the style of engraving. The questions of dating, and why clients chose Flemish brasses and slabs rather than English, will be best considered once we have looked at the surviving and recorded examples, the 'great rectangulars', the separate-inlay brasses, and the inlaid incised slabs.

'Great rectangular' brasses

It is not irrelevant that the abbot of St Albans, Michael Mentmore (1336–49), succumbed in the plague year. The new abbot, Thomas de la Mare, had formerly been prior of the dependent house of St Oswyn at Tynemouth.

3. F.A. Greenhill, *Monumental Incised Slabs from the County of Lincoln* (Newport Pagnell, 1986), 23.

4. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes V', 424.

Among his many new responsibilities was that of providing a fitting monument to his predecessor to match the existing line of brasses in the sanctuary of the abbey church, those to John de Berkhamstede (1290–1301), Hugh de Eversden (1308–26), and Richard Wallingford (1326–36).⁵ All these were large brasses with canopied figures, of London make. Yet if Abbot Thomas thought of contacting the London brass engravers, he would have been told they were no longer capable of producing such large brasses, and that the best he could hope for was a small half-effigy with a two-line inscription. That was not only due to the Black Death: the masters Adam of Corfe and Richard de Sonyngdon, responsible for the ‘Camoys’ and ‘Seymour’ styles, had died in 1333 and 1346 respectively, and it appears that no one was really capable of replacing them to produce brasses of the same size and elaboration. Some brasses were made during the plague years but they were only small and simple. It was not until after 1360 that the London schools once again began to produce large brasses, starting with that to Bishop Trillek in Hereford Cathedral and the series to the Cobham family in Cobham, Kent.⁶

It was, therefore, not unreasonable for Abbot Thomas to turn to the one workshop that had somehow survived the Black Death and was still producing large and spectacular brasses, the great atelier at Tournai. The abbey chronicles record as much, though annoyingly do not date the statement that ‘he bought marble slabs to place over his tomb, and that of his predecessor Michael, Lord Abbot of happy

memory, which were almost covered with brass plates, engraved all over with imagery in exquisite workmanship; and he paid fourteen pounds for these’.⁷

The inscription of the brass to Abbot Mentmore was recorded by John Philpot in 1643, who did not even attempt to draw the figure and canopy.⁸ It read:

HIC IACET DOMINUS MICHAEL QVONDAM ABBAS HVIVS MONASTERII BACCELLAURIVS IN THEOLOGIA Q[VI] OBIIT PRIDIE IDUS APRILIUS ANNO D(OMI)NI MILLESSIMO TRICENTESSIMO QUADRAGESIMO NONO EIVS ANIMA PROPICIETUR CAELIS SALVATORI (Here lies Lord Michael, onetime abbot of this monastery, Bachelor of Theology, who died 12 April 1349, may his soul find mercy from the Saviour in heaven).

Philpot has rather garbled the concluding prayer, but it is again one of European, not English, convention.

The companion brass for Abbot de la Mare himself is, of course, still extant, and very well-known (Fig. 1). Of the inscription all that was completed was: *HIC IACET DOMINVS THOMAS QVONDAM ABBAS HVIVS MONASTERII* (Here lies Lord Thomas, onetime abbot of this monastery). That is enough to make it obvious that the brass was purchased in his lifetime, trusting in vain that someone could be found in England capable of engraving the conclusion of the inscription when he died. In the event he lived until 1396.

5. W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Hertfordshire* (Stratford St Mary, 2009), 486–91.

6. S. Badham, ‘Monumental Brasses and the Black Death’, *Antiquaries Journal*, 80 (2000), 207–47.

7. *Gesta Abbatum Monasterii Sancti Albani*, 3 vols, ed. H.T. Riley, Rolls Series 28:4 (1867–9), III, 389.

8. The College of Arms MS Philpot drawing is reproduced in Cameron, ‘14th-Century Flemish Brasses to Ecclesiastics’, 12.



Fig. 1. Brass of Abbot Thomas de la Mare, after 1349, St Albans Abbey.
(rubbing © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Hertfordshire)

The slab of the Mentmore brass survives, it is of Tournai marble (black limestone) and measures 2950×1530 mm, and the brass itself 2775×1265 mm and was subtly smaller than that of Abbot de la Mare, a slab 3040×1555 mm holding a brass 2825×1323 mm; both slabs remain in the sanctuary floor. The brass of de la Mare was removed from its slab and mounted on a board between 1815 and 1824 after which it wandered around the church until finding its present position in the north choir aisle.⁹ It could still do with some conservation, especially to consolidate that major crack. Most of the other brasses in St Albans, including the three early abbots, were reaved at some date, although a considerable amount of metal does survive from the many indents in the choir and aisles. The idea that the de la Mare brass was preserved during the Civil War by being turned upside down is of course absurd: they were after scrap metal, and a blank plate would have been easy prey. It may have been under seating, which could explain the serious cracks, and the comparatively small amount of surface wear, an idea mooted by Robert Clutterbuck, the Hertfordshire historian, and thoughtlessly copied many times since.

Nineteen ‘great rectangular’ brasses of Flemish workmanship survive in Europe from the fourteenth century, and a further six are known from rubbings or accurate drawings. That is not an enormous number for a whole century, even allowing for as many more to have been lost. It must have taken a considerable time to commission, design, execute and transport these enormous monuments, so that Cameron’s estimate of *c.* 1355 for the two St Albans brasses is very reasonable. The de la Mare brass can certainly not be much later than 1360, for after

that date a groined vault began to be shown under the arch of a canopy, and the diapered back-cloth no longer extended to the edge of the plates. It is customary to speak of these great brasses as ‘rectangular plates’, although no single sheet of brass that size could ever be produced: they are made up of a number of plates, nineteen in the case of the de la Mare brass, joined on the back by strips of brass riveted or soldered on. The largest of the plates used measures 580×520 mm. The indents therefore have deepenings to accommodate these backing strips. There was very little fixing other than pitch and weight, although a bolt or dowel at each corner seems to have been used.

Cameron described these Tournai brasses very carefully, and identified characteristic details such as the patterns used for the borders of vestments and of the entire composition, and the designs for the fabric which lies below the figures. Before 1360 there was, as it were, a funeral pall extending across the entire composition, and the diaper pattern behind the figure shows behind the pinnacles and turrets of the canopy (Fig. 2). After that the diaper is confined to the area within the arch of the canopy, until around 1445 when we begin to see the fabric reduced to a fringed curtain hanging behind the figure, which now stands on a tiled floor. This pattern was very influential on the Nuremberg workshops which provided the prestige brasses of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries.¹⁰

Abbot Thomas is unusual in that his eyes are shown closed, and his hands are folded down one over the other, with the crosier tucked under his left arm (Fig. 3). The only other

9. Personal communication Derrick Chivers.

10. S. Hauschke, *Die Grabdenkmäler der Nürnberger Vischer Werkstatt 1453–1544* (Berlin, 2006).



Fig. 2. Canopy pinnacles, from the brass of Thomas de la Mare.
(rubbing © author)

figures in this posture are the two bishops on the second Schwerin brass of 1375, and the lost bishop from Roskilde: most bishops are shown blessing.¹¹ He tramples on a lion and a dragon (Fig. 4), as do many other thirteenth and fourteenth-century episcopal effigies, with reference to the text 'thou shalt trample underfoot the lion and the dragon' (Psalm 90/91:13). More unusual are the two large figures in the canopy shafts, of St Alban, and St Oswyn (Figs 5 and 6). Most canopies have pairs of figures in gabled niches on either side, usually apostles and prophets. Here the two large figures have left room for only three such pairs, while Saints Peter and Paul are perched



Fig. 3. Head and hands, from the brass of Thomas de la Mare.
(rubbing © author)

at the top of the shafts flanking the usual arrangement of Abraham receiving the soul accompanied by angels (Fig. 7). The two English saints were obviously specially commissioned.

11. Van Belle, *Corpus Laminae*, I, Figs 73 and 74.



*Fig. 4. Lion and dragon, from the brass of Thomas de la Mare.
(rubbing © author)*

Saint Alban is of course the abbey's patron, St Oswyn that of the dependent priory whence Thomas de la Mare had formerly been prior. The remaining available niches were filled with the better-known Apostles, James and John, Andrew, Thomas, Bartholomew, and Philip, all shown as on several other of the Tournai brasses. The prophets are never differentiated on these brasses.

A real peculiarity of this brass is the metal composition: two separate analyses were made, producing the same result that the alloy is 83 per cent copper, 13.6–13.8 per cent zinc, and mere traces of lead and tin, which normally form a considerable element in this 'latten' or brass-engraving alloy. For comparison, the Wensley brass is 70–72 per cent copper, 11.5–13 per cent zinc, 4.1–6.2 per cent tin and



Fig. 5. Figure of *St Alban*, from the brass of *Thomas de la Mare*.
(rubbing © author)



Fig. 6. Figure of *St Osweyn*, from the brass of *Thomas de la Mare*.
(rubbing © author)

8.1–9.0 per cent lead. The difference between the two plates at Wensley is noticeable, but both are within the normal range of ‘latten’.¹² Also deserving attention is the question of the

extent to which these brasses were painted or coloured in other ways. It seems probable that the engraved lines were filled with different coloured mastics, as can still be seen on the

12. P.T. Craddock, ‘Some Analyses of Medieval Monumental Brasses’, *MBS Trans*, 16:4 (2000–1), 313–26. Another analysis of the St Alban’s brass by

Dr John Davis in 2017 produced the same results (personal communication Derrick Chivers).



*Fig. 7. Abraham receiving the soul, from the brass of Thomas de la Mare.
(rubbing © author)*

brass at Ávila, Spain, and the surfaces may have been gilt or painted, so that for instance the blank labels above Saints Alban and Oswyn might have borne their names, and the scrolls held by the prophets might have held text.

In addition to these two ‘great rectangular’ brasses in St Albans, there were a few more in Britain that can be attributed to clergy, among the many Flemish indents for brasses in Scotland, all carefully recorded by F.A.

Greenhill.¹³ Rectangular indents give away few clues, but nine of them can reasonably be attributed to bishops, if you include the lost one – there was no sign of it when I visited the cathedral in 1980 – recorded from St Magnus’ Cathedral, Kirkwall, for Bishop Thomas Tulloch (1420–61). The one in Whithorn Cathedral is still visible; although broken into two with a section missing, it held a quadrangular composition about 1250 mm wide and long in proportion. It was probably

13. Greenhill, ‘Scottish Notes V’, 424–9.

for a bishop of Galloway, but the date could be anything between 1350 and 1550.¹⁴ Two colossal slabs in St Andrews Cathedral are attributed to archbishops (Fig. 8). One is possibly for Archbishop William Scheves (d. 1497) and was made in his lifetime. The slab, which is broken into five pieces, lies near the east end of the presbytery; it measures 3010×1650 mm, the brass was 2800×1470 mm. The other is probably for Archbishop James Stewart, duke of Ross, brother of James IV. It is recorded that it was made in 1499, in advance of his death in 1504. The slab measures 3480×2360 mm, the brass a colossal 3208×2140 mm and it now lies at the west end of the presbytery, propped up on some stone coffins. Both have some dowel holes visible. A fragment of a third such slab was preserved in the museum.¹⁵

At Dunkeld Cathedral is a rather smaller indent for a rectangular composition, possibly Bishop George Crichton (1526–44). The slab measures 1800×920 mm, the brass 1640×540 mm. For this there survives a contract, made in Antwerp on 15 April 1537, with Robert Moreau, burgess, for six pieces of black marble, on which to lay a copper plate to be ready by next mid-Lent, for which he was paid £24 5s. Another was made on 17 April with Jan Mandijns, painter, who agreed to paint and portray the copper plate for 38 guilders.¹⁶ The six pieces of stone imply a chest tomb, and indeed the surviving slab has a chamfered edge.

In Elgin Cathedral are two more large slabs, one of 3000×1570 mm, the other about 1980×1200 mm, both with indents for rectangular compositions, presumably for bishops of Moray.¹⁷ Another very large



Fig. 8. Tournai marble indents of Archbishops Scheves (d. 1497) and Stewart (d. 1504), St Andrews Cathedral. (photo © author)

quadrangular indent is in King's College Chapel, Aberdeen, for Hector Boece, first principal of the university, 1536. The slab measures 2740×1800 mm, the brass 2440×1650 mm; fifteen or so rivets survive.¹⁸ Greenhill found nine more such rectangular indents in Scotland, but none of the others are likely to be clerical. The reason why these indents, and indeed all medieval indents in Scotland, are imported from Tournai is not

14. The fragments measure 900×1405 mm and 1080×1450 mm (Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes II', 238).

15. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes V', 422–3. For details of the cost see Greenhill, 'The Ledger of Andrew Halyburton', 187–9.

16. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes V', 412–19.

17. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes VI', 123–4.

18. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes III', 93–4.

far to seek. Relationships with England were somewhat strained, and since any brass would have to be imported by sea, it was as easy and cheap to bring it across the North Sea as all along the coast of England from London. Still, to bring these huge slabs to the coast of Galloway, to Whithorn and Dundrennan, involved a voyage all the round the north, through the Pentland Firth, the stormiest water in Europe. Not a single medieval Scots brass survives in position, there are only tiny fragments at Cambuskenneth Abbey, Stirling, and part of a Flemish brass with an inscription in Scots, recycled for a post-medieval inscription in Edinburgh. The destruction of all Catholic Christian culture in Scotland in the sixteenth century was more thorough than anywhere else in Europe.

Separate-inlay brasses

The 'great rectangulars' have always attracted attention, and it is commonly said that this was the Continental preference, in stark contrast to the English habit of cutting out the elements of a brass and inlaying them separately into the stone. It is true that there were few rectangular brasses made in England before the sixteenth century, and none of them of a size remotely comparable to the Flemish ones, and it may be true that the metal was proportionately more expensive in England, having been imported from the Low Countries, but the fact remains that the majority of Flemish brasses were actually of the separate-inlay type, as we see in van Belle's catalogues. Only, virtually none of them survive, probably because their fixing technique was greatly inferior to that used by the English marblers.

The finest of all surviving Flemish separate-inlay brasses is the one at Wensley (Fig. 9).

The inscription is lost, but the name was preserved for us by Oswald Dykes, the parson in 1607 who calmly appropriated the brass, requesting in his will 'to be buried under the stone where Sir Symond Wenslow was buried'.¹⁹ It might have been Dykes or his executors who removed the original inscription. Simon de Wensley was presented to the rectory of Wensley by Richard, Lord Scrope of Bolton, between 1352 and 1361 and held the parish until about 1393–4. That means his brass could have been commissioned at any date during that long period. There are no securely dated brasses for comparison, though Cameron suggested around 1370. It might seem unlikely for a young rector to have arranged his own monument on first appointment, unless his patron, Lord Scrope, offered to pay for it. But Scrope was younger than Wensley – he lived on until 1403 – and is unlikely to have been thinking about tombs and brasses at the time this brass was likely to have been engraved. Wensley gave evidence in the famous lawsuit over the right to the coat of arms, *Azure, a bend or*, which lasted from 1385 to 1390.²⁰ That date is probably rather too late for this brass. Lynda Dennison draws a comparison between the hooded grotesques shown on his vestments and the Lübeck brass of 1350, copied from Flemish manuscripts of c. 1340.²¹

By 1370 the London brass engravers were once again capable of producing large and good quality brasses. The York workshop took a little longer, but the brass of the 1380s at Aldborough, Yorkshire, bears comparison with any London work. One motive for importing one from Flanders had passed. One can only suggest that Simon de Wensley (or Lord Scrope) had seen an impressive Flemish brass and made a conscious decision to import one.

19. Cameron, '14th-Century Flemish Brasses to Ecclesiastics', 18.

20. Ibid.

21. Dennison, 'Artistic Context of Fourteenth-Century Flemish Brasses', 12.



*Fig. 9. Brass of Simon de Wensley, rector of Wensley, around 1385–90, Wensley, Yorkshire.
(photo © author)*

The most difficult stage of the transport, up the Dales from York, would have been equally expensive for a brass of any origin. The brass at Topcliffe for Thomas de Topcliffe, 1361, and his wife Mabel, 1391, is not far from Wensley, still in the North Riding. The hands are held flat against the chest, which is a late fourteenth-century posture, though the canopy is not vaulted. There is no reason to think the wife's date has been added, so it probably does date from the 1390s, and van Belle is happy to date Wensley to his date of death too, 1394.²²

At Wensley the indent for the inscription shows that, like all these Flemish brasses, it was inadequately fixed, relying merely on its weight and some pitch, and one rivet in each of the corner quatrefoils. When Cameron conserved the figure brass in 1980 he found that a previous restorer had backed it with a sheet of rolled brass, cemented into the indent which must have been deepened for the purpose: originally the figure, too, was only held by weight and pitch.²³ The figure has the eyes nearly closed, and the hands folded down over the body (Fig. 10). Two angels support the cushion behind his head, two dogs crouch at his feet (Fig. 11). On his breast, above his hands, lies a chalice, with the paten seen edge on above it. The figure in effect represents the body clad in Mass vestments, with chalice and paten, exactly as it would have been laid out for burial, (with the possible exception of the dogs). It is large, 1630 mm long, on a slab 2180×1140 mm. Burial of a chalice and paten was a normal practice for priests, though usually simple pewter or lead substitutes were used instead of real ones. On later English brasses the paten is shown fully, as a disc above the chalice, which very soon becomes confused with the Host, shown as if suspended above



Fig. 10. Head and hands, from the brass of Simon de Wensley.
(rubbing © author)

the bowl of the chalice. The closest parallel to the Wensley brass is a mutilated figure in St Severin, Cologne, anonymous and undated: it too has closed eyes, but here the left hand supports the chalice foot while the right hand rests on top of the paten. This posture of the hands survives on some of the almost effaced incised slabs to be considered below.

The third surviving Flemish brass to an English priest is the curious little one at North Mymms, Hertfordshire (Fig. 12). North Mymms is not much more than an hour's walk from St

22. Van Belle, *Corpus Laminarum*, I, Figs 68 and 137.

23. Cameron, '14th-Century Flemish Brasses to Ecclesiastics', 15–16.



*Fig. 11. Dogs, from the brass of Simon de Wensley.
(rubbing © author)*

Albans, so we can be confident that the priest in question had seen the two great new brasses there, and was inspired to contact the workshop for something a little cheaper. William de Kestevane, identified by his coat of arms, was rector of North Mymms from June 1344 until his death in October 1361.²⁴ That means whether he commissioned his brass in his lifetime, or whether it was made after his death, the only source for good quality brasses was Tournai. Although small, it is very elaborate: the figure is shown awake, with the eyes open, the hands joined in prayer, apparently standing except that the chalice rests on his body under his arms (Fig. 13). A miniature stag crouches between his feet. The canopy is of typically

Flemish design, two broad side-shafts rising to little turrets, with niches full of saints, and a central squat tower supported on the main arch, containing the Elevation of the Soul flanked by angels (see p. 4). There is only room for six Apostles, and no prophets, but they are very similar to those on other Flemish brasses of the period. Peter and Paul are here, as always, with James and John, Bartholomew and Andrew, the ones most easily recognised by their emblems. The unusual feature is the console below the composition, with the shield between two lions (Fig. 14). It has been suggested that this is the top of a long-stemmed 'bracket' such as is found on some English brasses, but the inverted fleur-de-lys below

24. Cameron, '14th-Century Flemish Brasses to Ecclesiastics', 21.



*Fig. 12. Brass of William de Kestevne, 1361, North Mymms, Hertfordshire.
(photo © Martin Stuchfield)*



Fig. 13. Head and hands, from the brass of William de Kesteven.
(rubbing © author)

the shield does not invite a continuation, and the 'bracket' form is not part of the Tournai repertory. Cameron cited evidence that another plate had been joined on the bottom, but that is far more likely to have been the inscription. Unfortunately, the slab was buried or destroyed long ago, and no one seems to have taken any note of what other indents there might have been.

There are four or five more indents for Flemish separate-inlay brasses to British clergy. A small one in the north transept of St Alban's Abbey

was obviously influenced by the arrival of the two great brasses of abbots.²⁵ There are clear indents for the half-effigy of a monk, 750×470 mm, and although the edges of the slab are obscured by cement, there is visible one cusp of a possible canopy; the slab has been cut down to about 1360×1020 mm. It presumably represents an official of the monastery. The account of tombs in St Albans by John Amundesham suggests two names for this area, Master Nicholas Newerke, with a marble stone (that usually means Purbeck), with an inscription, and Dom William Nedertone, former sacristan, 'under a simple marble (*sub marmore simplici*)' which is perhaps the most likely.²⁶

A more impressive brass was in the nave of Chichester Cathedral, the black Belgian marble standing out clearly in a sea of Purbeck (Fig. 15). The indent is for a figure in vestments, 1680 mm tall, under a canopy. There were two small figures above the canopy 300 mm tall, and a marginal inscription 50 mm broad with corner quatrefoils 80 mm across. The brass overall measured 2235×1030 mm, the slab 2335×1115 mm. It must represent a dean or other dignitary of the cathedral, but it is difficult to suggest a date other than early to mid fourteenth century. Henry de Garland was dean from 1332 to 1342, after being chancellor, and founded a chantry, though in 1342 he had no reason not to go to London for a brass, given that he must have been involved in commissioning a stupendous London-made brass in about 1340 to cover the original grave of St Richard. The next dean was Walter de Segrave, who died in 1356, by which time the London workshops were incapable of producing a decent-sized brass, so that is a possible attribution. However,

25. Illustrated in J. Bertram, 'An Unnoticed Flemish Indent in St Albans Abbey', *MBS Trans*, 13:6 (1985), 536–7.

26. *Annales Monasterii Sancti Albani a Johanno Amundesham Monacho*, ed. H.T. Riley, 2 vols, Rolls Series 28:5 (1870–1), I, 440.



*Fig. 14. Lions, from the brass of William de Kestevane.
(photo © Martin Stuchfield)*

there seem to have been no rivets at all, which may suggest an earlier date. Chichester is close enough to the sea for the importation of a Flemish brass to be no more expensive than one shipped from London, so the plague decade need not have been a determining factor.

The most significant episcopal separate-inlay brass was in Whithorn Cathedral, Wigtownshire, where two large fragments of the slab, 1520×1120 mm and 1740×1450 mm, are displayed in the ruins. The upper part,

with the canopy and tip of the mitre, was partly buried when Greenhill rubbed it, but is now exposed.²⁷ It is easy to fill in the missing portions: there is a bishop, under a canopy with the usual profile of broad side-shafts topped by turrets, and a central tower over the arch, surrounded by a marginal inscription (Fig. 16). Greenhill suggests it is either Bishop Simon of Galloway (1327–55) or Michael de Malconhalgh or Mackenlagh, prior of Whithorn and afterwards bishop 1355–9. There are deepenings for the connecting plates, and a few rivets. The effigy must

27. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes II', 238.

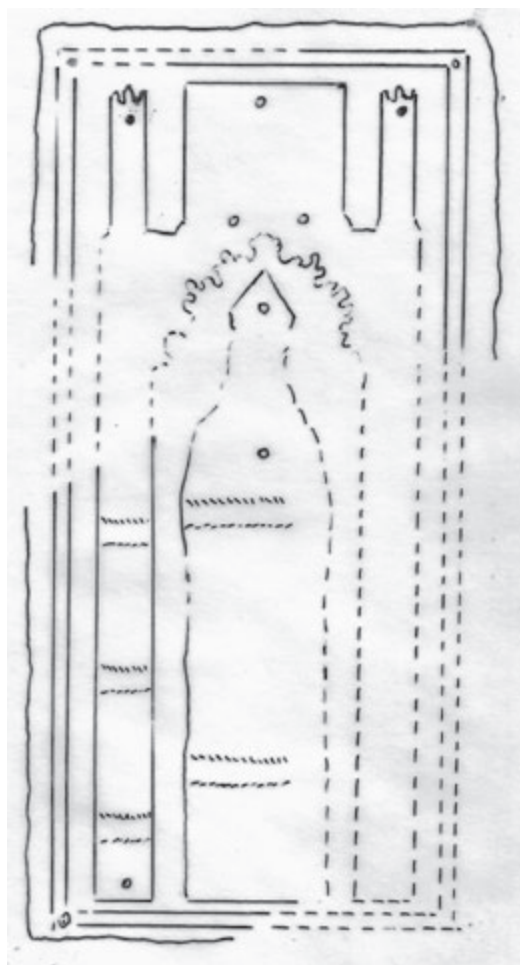


*Fig. 15. Indent of a dean, possibly Walter de Segrave
(d. 1356), Chichester Cathedral.
(photo © author)*

have been about 1940 mm high, the slab 2690 mm long. An indent that might have been clerical was in North Berwick.²⁸ It was very eroded, but there was a figure and marginal inscription with corner quadrilobes, and some lead plugs. It might have been a nun, from the local abbey of Cistercian nuns. The slab measures 2080×1180 mm. Considerably later than the others was a slab in St Machar's Cathedral, Aberdeen. It was briefly uncovered and drawn by James S. Richardson before being covered up again, so Greenhill never saw it.²⁹ Only the lower half was preserved, with indents for two priests, with an incised marginal inscription. What is legible includes the date, 145-.³⁰

28. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes IV', 318–9.

29. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes V', 405.



*Fig. 16. Indent of a bishop, Whithorn Cathedral, Wigtonshire.
(drawing © author)*

Incised slabs with brass inlays

The Aberdeen slab makes a link between indents for real brasses and the incised slabs in which certain parts were inlaid, whether in brass, white marble, or cement 'composition'. Which brings us to the only two securely dated examples, at Middleton and Bradwell-Juxta-Coggeshall, both Essex. There are many such

30. Illustrated in Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes V', 405.

slabs in England, nearly all near the coast, and therefore readily accessible from the Flemish ports. Sadly, on nearly all of them the incised work is eroded to the point of illegibility, and no inlays survive. Most are to the merchant class, men in civil dress with their wives. The major collections are at Barton upon Humber and Boston, Lincolnshire; only six can be confidently attributed to clergy.

Of the two Essex slabs, that of James Samson, rector of Middleton, was carefully reconstructed by Miller Christy and E. Bertram Smith, although they admit it was already in ‘exceedingly worn and battered condition’, and was still deteriorating.³¹ It depicted the figure of a priest, canopied, with a marginal inscription in Lombardic lettering. The head, hands and chalice were once inlaid, and some white composition survived at least in the face. It measured 2240×1140 mm (Fig. 17). The inscription, in round Lombardic lettering, reads:

+ HIC . IACET . DOMINVS . IACOBVS
. / SAMSON . QVONDAM . RECTOR .
ECCLESIE . DE . MIDDELTON . QVI . OBIIT
. / OCTAVO . DIE . MENSIS . MAY . / ANNO .
DOMINI . M . CCC . XLIX (Here lies Sir
James Samson, once rector of the church of
Middleton, who died 8 May 1349).

The concluding prayer was entirely effaced, whether deliberately or not is not known. The other is a simpler slab, tapering, with the lower

half of the figure of a priest, and an inscription, of which there survives only: [MEN] SIS . / AVGVSTI . ANNO [. DOMINI / . M .] CCC . XLIX . A(N)I(M)A EIVS PER MI(SERICORDI)AM [DEI REQVIESCAT IN PACE] (... of the month of August, AD 1349, may his soul, through the mercy of God, rest in peace). The concluding formula is one that is common in continental Europe, unknown on monuments of English manufacture. Christy and Smith estimated the original size of the slab as 1980 mm long, 920 mm wide tapering to 700 mm. They were concerned that the figure appears not to be quite central, though this may be no more than a typical fourteenth-century *déhanchement*. The date is of course significant – it is that of the most virulent outbreak of plague, commonly called the Black Death. This affected the clergy in greater proportion than the laity, especially those who lived among their people and tended them, or those who lived in communities such as monasteries.³²

Another slab is at Ashby Puerorum in central Lincolnshire, not on the coast. It was in very good condition when drawn for Haines in 1848 (Fig. 18), very much less so when rubbed by Greenhill in 1929. There was the figure of a priest, incised, with the head, hands, chalice, and foot apparel inlaid, three small figures in the canopy, and a marginal inscription. Greenhill reported no trace of any dowel holes or pins, which could indicate an early date,

31. M. Christy and E. B. Smith, ‘Two Essex Incised Slabs’, *Transactions of the Essex Archaeological Society*, new series 8 (1903), 1–7. Stephen Freeth writes: ‘Christy and Smith exaggerated the damage. Although worn, a little bashed and with one edge damaged, it is in remarkably good condition as the photo taken in 2016 shows (Fig. 17). Some of the detail of their reconstruction is inaccurate, in particular the chalice. The image of the priest’s face, as a rubbing in the Society of Antiquaries of London confirms, is largely accurate. Their comments about the slab being exposed to a great deal of wear in the years leading up

to 1903 are also somewhat bizarre in the context of a small and remote village church, even allowing for a late nineteenth-century incumbent who attracted large congregations. There is no suggestion that the slab has been recut.’

32. C. Harper-Bill, ‘The English Church and English Religion after the Black Death’, in M. Ormrod and P. Lindley, eds, *The Black Death in England* (Donington, 2003), 79–123. See also P. Lindley, ‘The Black Death and English Art: A Debate and Some Assumptions’, in Ormrod and Lindley, *The Black Death*, 125–146.



*Fig. 17. Incised slab of Sir James Samson, priest, 1349, Middleton, Essex.
(photo © Stephen Freeth)*



Fig. 18. Incised slab of priest, Ashby Puerorum, Lincolnshire. (engraving from H. Haines, *Manual of Monumental Brasses*, 1848)

and suggested it dates from around 1330.³³ It is now very difficult to see, but the indents for the small figures and the inscription look as if

they could have held brass, although without rivets. They are certainly not deep enough for white marble, and there are no remnants of composition.

Also in Lincolnshire, but on the coast, and a major Hanseatic trading port, is Boston. There are four of these Flemish incised slabs to clergy here, among the huge number of monuments comprehensively written up and illustrated by Sally Badham and Paul Cockerham.³⁴ The first is lost or covered: it was rubbed by Greenhill in 1929 when it was in the chancel, and by Edleston in 1933 at the east end of the nave on the north side. Greenhill's rubbing shows that it was virtually effaced, and that the head, chalice, alb apparel and most of the marginal inscription were still filled with plaster, the hands and the dexter side of the inscription empty. Edleston's illustration, on the other hand, shows all the inlays missing, but a substantial amount of incised lines remaining for the figure, in Mass vestments, and the canopy (Fig. 19). Edleston was gifted with imagination. It is open to question whether the plaster shown on Greenhill's rubbing was the original fill, or a later patching. Certainly, there was no visible engraving on it. Badham and Cockerham date this slab to 1330–40, by analogy with the Ashby Puerorum slab and one in St Salvator, Bruges, dated c. 1340.³⁵

The second Boston incised slab is again for a priest, now partly covered, which had brass inlays for head, hands, chalice, and foot apparel. There is still one rivet in the head indent. It is dated c. 1325–40, again by analogy with Ashby Puerorum and St Salvator,

33. Greenhill, *Incised Slabs Lincoln*, 4, pl. 21.

34. S. Badham and P. Cockerham, eds, *'The Beste and Fayrest of al Lincolnshire': The Church of St Botolph, Boston, Lincolnshire, and its Medieval Monuments*, BAR British Series 554, 2012.

35. Greenhill, *Incised Slabs Lincoln*, 8; S. Badham and P. Cockerham, 'Catalogue of the Pre-Reformation Monuments of St Botolph's, Boston', in Badham and Cockerham, *Beste and Fayrest*, 205.



Fig. 19. Incised slab of priest 1, Boston, Lincolnshire.
(reconstructed rubbing by R.H. Edleston)

Bruges.³⁶ The third incised slab at Boston to a priest is more elaborate: there were inlays not only for the head, hands, and foot apparel, but also for a Y-shaped orphrey, possibly in



Fig. 20. Incised slab of priest 3, Boston, Lincolnshire.
(photo © Tim Sutton)

‘composition’, though there were certainly brass inlays for the marginal inscription and evangelistic symbols, with deepenings for joining bars and rivets (Fig. 20). Again, it is dated *c.* 1325–40, citing also an unknown priest at Sint-Jacobskapelle, West Flanders.³⁷

36. Greenhill, *Incised Slabs Lincoln*, 10; Badham and Cockerham, ‘Catalogue’, 207.

37. Greenhill, *Incised Slabs Lincoln*, 16; Badham and Cockerham, ‘Catalogue’, 211–12, van Belle, *Vlakke Grafmonumenten*, 403.

Yet more elaborate is the fourth incised slab to a priest, which had inlays for the head, hands, Y-shaped orphrey, maniple, stole-ends, and the foot apparel, in 'composition', and brass inlays for marginal inscription and evangelistic symbols, with deepenings and rivets (Fig. 21). This one is dated *c.* 1360–70, still citing slabs in Belgium and France with approximate datings.³⁸

One more incised slab of undoubtedly Flemish origin was seen and rubbed by Greenhill in 1935, when it was visible on the south side of the choir at the eastern end of St Andrews Cathedral, Fife. His rubbing, now in the Antiquaries' library, shows there were inlays for the head, hands, chalice, and marginal inscription, and he noted that several rivets remained. Unlike most of the others, it still retained the incised detail in good condition. Greenhill dates it, like most of the others, *c.* 1330.³⁹ The slab is of a whitish limestone sometimes used in Tournai for incised slabs and occasionally brasses, it measures 2060×1017 mm, the inscription was 120 mm wide, with six dowels, the head inlay 230×160 mm with two dowels, the hands 180×90 mm, the chalice 130×185 mm with one dowel each.⁴⁰

This assemblage of incised slabs highlights the difficulty of dating these monuments. Each of the above six is given an approximate date by reference to the others. Only the two in Essex have clear dates, both 1349. We must of course remember that it would take a little time for brasses or slabs to be commissioned and delivered, so that the date of manufacture is likely to be at least a year after the date of death. The 'great rectangular' brasses



Fig. 21. *Incised slab of priest 4, Boston, Lincolnshire.*
(photo © Tim Sutton)

must have taken rather longer. There are so many securely dated English brasses that it is possible to construct a date sequence for

38. Greenhill, *Incised Slabs Lincoln*, 21; Badham and Cockerham, 'Catalogue', 216; van Belle, *Vlakke Grafmonumenten*, 403.

39. Greenhill, 'Scottish Notes V', 423.

40. I am grateful to Julian Luxford who searched for this slab in October 2018 but could not find it: it must be lost or buried.

those without dates, and to correct dates that are obviously wrong, usually to within five years. Flemish brasses and slabs, on the other hand, are fewer, and even fewer have secure dates. There is some evidence for dating the slab in Bruges, now outside the cathedral of St Salvator: enough of the inscription is legible to give the name, Niclais Blankard, who was named as chaplain between 1330 and 1335, and not on the list in 1344. It has rivets, so the inlays were certainly brass, and it is sufficiently close in design to the Ashby and Boston slabs to be useful: on all three, the hands are joined, above the chalice.⁴¹ Two more slabs in Belgium have had brass inlays for the orphreys and apparels of the vestments, like the third and fourth at Boston – both are securely dated. One in the Grand Curtius, Liège, is for a priest who died in the plague year, 1349, shown with his mother who died in 1336, on this the face, chalice and Manus Dei seem to be in white marble. The other is in Tongeren, Limberg, for Canon Johannes van Fleron, who died in 1407. On this, the head, hands, chalice, and orphreys have indents with rivets, two shield indents did not have rivets.⁴²

Curiosities and imitations

There remain a number of slabs which might be Flemish work, or might be local imitations, and some which are certainly imitations. The oddest of all is in the City of London, at All Hallows Barking (Figs 22 and 23). It is now largely effaced, but enough remained when Greenhill rubbed it in the 1930s to give an impression of what was there then. It certainly appears to be black Belgium limestone, measures 2060×900 mm, and had the remains of an incised design for a priest, with his feet on a dog, under a crocketed ogival canopy. The

lower part, with the dog, is now obscured with cement. The head and hands are still inlaid in brass, the hands high enough to overlap the



Fig. 22. Incised slab of a priest, All Hallows Barking, London.

(drawing after rubbing by Greenhill © author)

41. Van Belle, *Vlakke grafmonumenten*, 133, no. Bru 9.

42. Van Belle, *Corpus Laminæ*, I, 152, Fig. 204 and 260, Fig. 345.



Fig. 23. Inlays on the incised slab of a priest, All Hallows
Barking, London.
(photo © Christian Steer)

neck, as are two small angels above the canopy. There are also two circular hollows, 5 mm deep at the point of the cusps on each side, which must have held brass or composition roundels. The existing brass fragments have very unlikely engraving: the head and hands no more than a scalloping around the edge, the two angels only stylized feathers. These last are distinctly odd, but equally odd shapes

were inlaid above the figures on some of the Barton upon Humber merchant slabs. It is just possible that the face was painted on the metal. Otherwise we must assume either that the brass plates were clumsily retouched at some later date, or even that they are comparatively modern fillings for the indents (they were formerly fixed with screws, though recently riveted), though why anyone should go to the trouble of doing that without adding at least the facial features, or retouching the incised lines, is inexplicable. The canopy is also peculiar, lop-sided and off-centre: it is much more like an English ogival gablette than anything on a Tournai or Bruges slab, where the 'three tower' design was standard until the sixteenth century. In fact, the nearest parallel identified is the slab of 1401 at the Chartreuse de Lugny, in the Côte d'Or.⁴³

Moreover, the slab also retains a brass inscription of English workmanship, London D style indeed, commemorating Thomas Vyrly, vicar in 1454, set across the hem of the vestments, above the feet. It reads:

*Hic iacet d(omi)n(u)s Thomas Vyrly quond(a)
m vicarius istius eccl(es)ie qui obiit S(e)c(un)do die
mens(is) Decemb(is) Anno d(omi)ni Mill(esi)mo
CCCCo Liiijo [cui(us) a(n)i(m)e p(ro)picietur deus
Ame(n)]* (Here lies Thomas Vyrly, once vicar
of this church, who died 2 December 1454,
on whose soul may God have mercy).

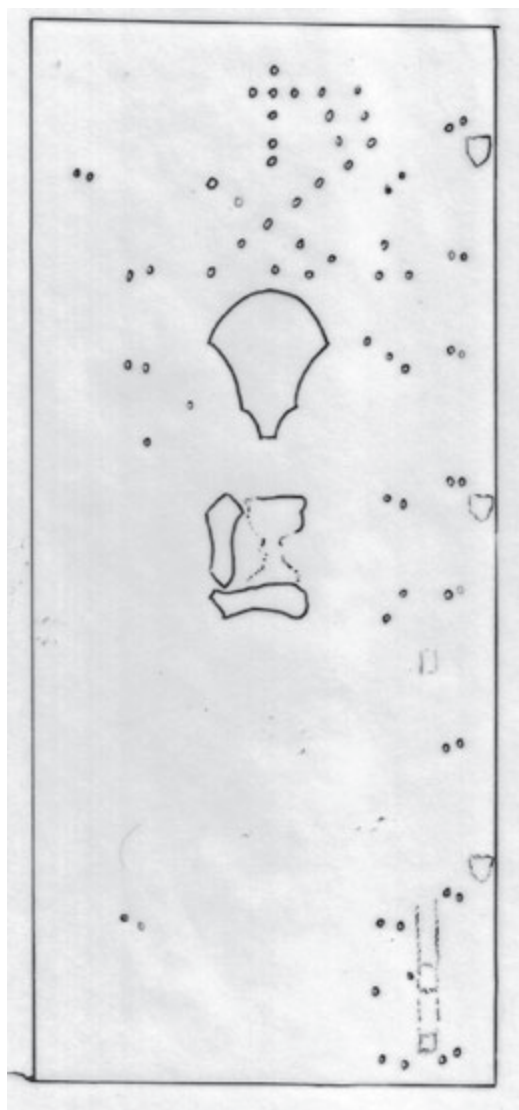
The prayer, like most of those in All Hallows church, was erased by fanatics in 1643, ironically, given that Vyrly had a reputation for being a heretic and therefore a Protestant hero. This inscription is securely riveted to the slab. There are three possibilities: it may be that Vyrly commissioned the slab from Flanders (possibly because he was out of

43. Illustrated in F.A. Greenhill, *Incised Effigial Slabs*, 2 vols, (London, 1976), II, pl. 26a.

favour in London), leaving instructions that the inscription be added after his death, from a London engraver, and the whole monument belongs together, much later than the other slabs we have been considering. In this case it is difficult to understand why the incised work is so badly eroded, whereas the inscription is not worn at all. Alternatively, Vyrly, or his executors, may have calmly appropriated an existing, and already worn, slab, ignoring the traces of the incising. In this case it is difficult to understand why the inscription is set so low, rather than two-thirds of the way up as would be normal. Alternatively, of course, the inscription may be a much later appropriation of the slab at some later restoration, but before the technique of riveting brasses had been forgotten.⁴⁴

A slab which is certainly an English production of Flemish inspiration is prominent in the south choir aisle of Salisbury Cathedral (Fig. 24). It retains faint traces of an incised figure of a priest, in which remain white composition inlays of the head, and the hands in a position to hold chalice. Above and beside it is a scatter of tiny rivet holes suggesting the figure, canopy, and marginal inscription, and there are very shallow indents for shields visible in the sinister margin. The stumps of the rivets actually look as if they could be silver, not brass: is it possible there were silvered plates attached to the stone? The slab is of Purbeck marble, measuring 2080×990 mm; there is something rather like this at Lacock Abbey, implying that a Wiltshire workshop was producing idiosyncratic slabs in the late fourteenth century.⁴⁵

A probable English imitation of a Flemish slab is at Waltham on the Wolds, Leicestershire, although Greenhill and van Belle both confidently call it Flemish. It seems to be in a



*Fig. 24. Inlaid slab, Salisbury Cathedral.
(drawing © author)*

yellow-grey limestone, probably Ancaster, and is very clumsy in comparison to fourteenth-century Flemish originals (Figs 25 and 26).

44. My thanks to Derrick Chivers for much help with investigating this slab, and with the illustration.

45. H.F.O. Evans, 'The Reputed 'Brass' of Ela, Countess of Salisbury at Lacock Abbey, Wiltshire', *MBS Trans*, 13:1 (1980), 35–40.

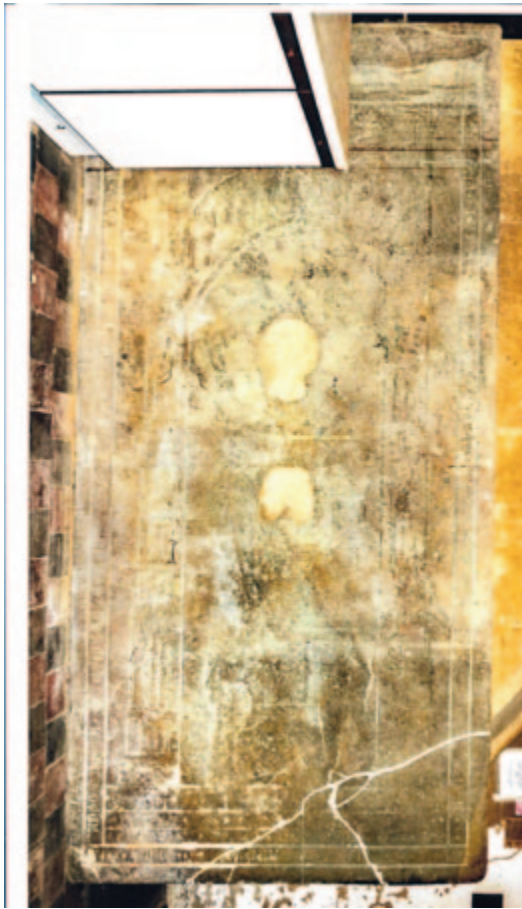


Fig. 25. Incised slab of a priest, Waltham on the Wolds, Leicestershire.

(photo © Richard Miller)

The incised figure of a priest is all but effaced, but there are hollows for inlays to the head and hands, which appear to have been held side by side, palms outwards – these indents have been cemented in, concealing whether they were originally brass or ‘composition’. A little more detail survives of the canopy, and there is a row of quatrefoils at the top and bottom, unlike anything Flemish. Around it is an inscription in an odd form of Lombardics, the E and C not closed, which has been inlaid in lead. With



Fig. 26. Incised slab of a priest, Waltham on the Wolds, Leicestershire.

(drawing © author)

the help of Nichols’ engraving, we can read this much:

*HIC IACET DOMINUS / QVONDAM
RECT’ ISTIVS ECCLES’ QVI CAPP.... /
.... APOST ... HAN ... / ANNO DOMINI
MILESIMO CIVVS ANIME
PROPICIETVR DEVS AMEN* (Here lies Sir

.... once rector of this church, who [founded a] chapel [and died on the feast of the] Apostle John, A.D. one thousand, on whose soul may God have mercy. Amen.).⁴⁶

It is frustrating that the two most important items, the name and the date, are precisely the parts that are illegible. There were two further lines of inscription under the figure, above the lower row of quatrefoils, of which nothing is legible. It is usually attributed to William de Redeburn, instituted rector on 8 May 1309, and whose successor was instituted on 12 April 1322. The chancel appears to be early fourteenth century – the sedilia have ogival canopies – so the commemorated might well be the one who built it; the slab was originally in the centre of that chancel.⁴⁷

Another Leicestershire slab, which Greenhill considered Flemish but could not find, was at Barkestone, known only from the engraving in Nichols (Fig. 27). It appeared to depict an abbot, with inlays for the head, crosier, maniple, orphrey of chasuble, textus and marginal inscription. It might have been for an abbot of Croxton or prior of Belvoir, and could of course have been genuinely Tournai work, in the absence of the stone for comparison.⁴⁸ A final horror, which must have been a Scots carver's nightmare vision of a Flemish slab, is in the museum attached to St Andrews Cathedral (Fig. 28). The hands are turned sideways, as on many late fourteenth-century Tournai brasses and slabs, the chalice and paten (or Host) lie on his body below the hands, and the canopy

is of typical Tournai three-towered form, but the workmanship is extremely crude. Of the incised inscription what remains is *Hic iacet dom[inu]s ric[ardus ...]*.

The Tournai (and Bruges) trade

Now we may ask why these clergy chose foreign brasses rather than patronising the well-

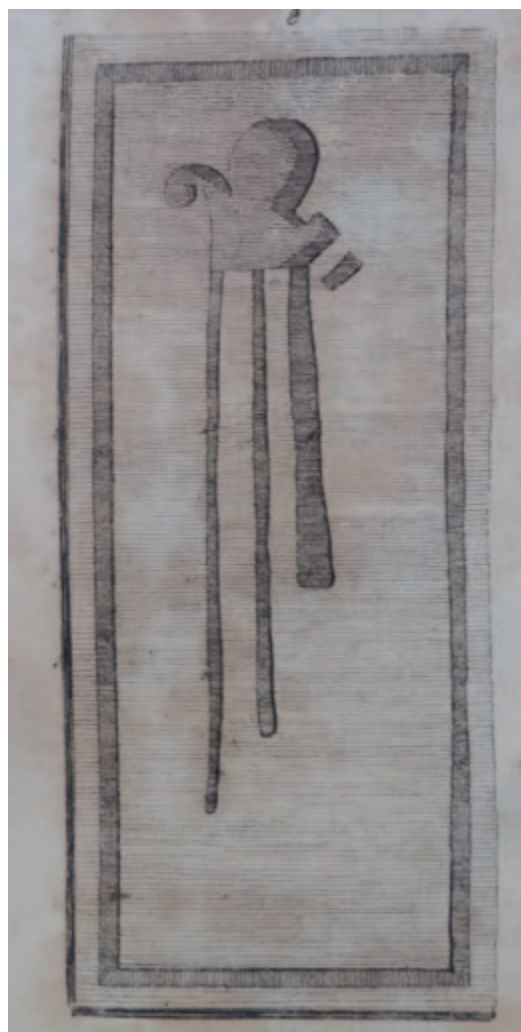


Fig. 27. Lost incised slab, Barkestone, Leicestershire.
(from J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, II, pt i, pl. IV)

46. J. Nichols, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Leicester*, 4 vols, (London, 1795–1811), II, pt 1, 385, pl. LXX Fig. 14.

47. I am grateful to Richard Miller at Waltham for help examining this curious slab and supplying a photo.

48. Nichols, *County of Leicester*, II, pt 1, 21, pl. IV Fig. 8; Greenhill searched for it in 1929 by which time it had gone (F.A. Greenhill, *Incised Slabs of Leicestershire and Rutland* (Leicester, 1958), 35).



Fig. 28. Incised slab of Flemish inspiration, St Andrews Cathedral Museum. (photo © Julian Luxford)

established English workshops? In Scotland the answer is clear: relationships with the southern neighbour were never friendly, and the cost of shipping a slab and brass from Flanders was no more than it would have been from London. Greenhill discovered and published many indents for Scots brasses, every one of which is of Tournai marble. In addition, he found a Flemish incised slab to a cleric in St Andrews, even though incised slabs were made in Scotland. In his important article on the ledger of Andrew Halyburton he gives us a glimpse of the actual process of the trade, though only for the very late period, 1493–1503.⁴⁹ This conservator of the privileges of the Scottish nation in the port of Veere recorded the importation of six tombstones ('throwchts'

or 'throwis') among all the other goods that passed between the Low Countries and Scotland. Two of these can be identified as the 'great rectangular' brasses from St Andrews. That of Archbishop William Scheves, who died in 1497, was bought for £22 in Bruges in February 1496/7, so just before his death. The other, for Archbishop James Stewart, duke of Ross, who died in 1504, again originated in Bruges, at a cost of £25, plus £1 8s. for the 'pattern'. In this case there is much more detail: it cost £1 7s. 6d. to crate it up, plus ¼d. for the stevedores, presumably for drink. It cost 3s. to put it on the barge, 8s. 4d. for the toll in Bruges, and £3 to hire the boat from Bruges to Veere. Shipping to St Andrews on the 'Tomis' came to a further £6 16s. Transport as far as St Andrews added £10 16s. to the cost of the brass, an extra 40 per cent.

It took three days to put it into the ship. Greenhill concludes that it was a chest tomb, with the great slab of Tournai marble and its brass resting upon it, and there may also have been twenty-four brass pillars or pilasters around the sides of the tomb. These weighed 592 lb, and cost a further £11 2s. and it is difficult to account for them if they were not for the tomb. We have to envisage the process therefore: firstly the 'pattern', presumably a design, sent for approval. This would have included special instructions, and the wording of the inscription. Another brass imported by Halyburton in 1496 was for a merchant, Thomas Yar, and his wife, part of which survives on the reverse of the brass of James Stewart, earl of Moray, regent of Scotland in Edinburgh. The inscription is in Scots, and other Flemish brasses have inscriptions in Spanish, Portuguese or French: the client obviously dictated the text. On the St Albans brass the two exceptionally large saints

49. Greenhill, 'The ledger of Andrew Halyburton', 184–90.

Alban and Oswyn, must have been carefully specified.

Once the pattern was agreed, the making of brass and stone, the fixing of the brass, and its colouring, all took place. Halyburton shows us that the place of manufacture had now shifted from Tournai to Bruges, but the techniques remained the same. Then they had to crate it, so that the brass was well protected and not in danger of being shaken loose from its stone, or even the colouring matter loose from the brass. The enormous weight of the cover slab, and the not inconsiderable weight of the sides of the tomb-chest, had to be lifted into the barge at Bruges, and then from barge to the ship at Veere, and from the ship to dock at St Andrews. Then it had to be transported to the cathedral somehow. The great cover-slab must have come in on its edge to get through the doors. The weighty stones had to be brought the whole length of the cathedral, somehow protecting the floor and any existing tombs in the nave as they moved eastwards, and negotiating steps or ramps as the building rose towards the sanctuary. Finally, it had to be assembled, and the cover-slab lowered precisely onto the waiting tomb-chest. All this while the main work of the cathedral proceeded, the canonical hours and the Mass. In practice nothing could be done before the end of High Mass, mid-morning, and after the beginning of Vespers in late afternoon, and there had to be breaks for the two little hours of Sext and None. The whole process could have taken weeks. And only a few years after Archbishop Scheves' tomb was constructed, the canons had to watch the arrival of Archbishop Stewart's. Small brasses and incised slabs were obviously less troublesome, but even they were heavy, and positioning them in churches must always have been disruptive. The provision of a tomb was a matter of great importance, not undertaken lightly. Shipping from York

or London would, of course, have been just as difficult and expensive, and we must admit that in Halyburton's time nowhere in England could match the quality of these late Bruges brasses, even had the Scots been on speaking terms with their southern neighbour.

It is obvious why the Scots bought Flemish brasses. But why were they bought in England? There are two answers. In the ports, especially those trading heavily with the Hansa, it was easy to bring slabs and brasses straight across from the Low Countries. It is not surprising to see Flemish brasses, indents, and slabs in Newcastle, Barton upon Humber, Boston, Ipswich, London and even Winchelsea and Chichester. If the merchants who traded with the Hansa had taken to this style of monument,



*Fig. 29. The face of Abbot de la Mare, after 1349, St Albans Abbey.
(rubbing © author)*



*Fig. 30. The face of William de Kesteven, 1361, North Mymms, Hertfordshire.
(photo © Martin Stuchfield)*

their chaplains and parish priests may have followed suit. The great collection at Boston hangs together, and the dates range throughout the fourteenth century. Indeed, the surprise is that fewer brasses and slabs were imported after the end of that century. In the fifteenth century the London and provincial workshops were at the height of their production, and customs tolls may have made a difference to the cost. There are comparatively few Flemish brasses

and slabs in England from the late medieval period, and they are mostly small.

The particular interest, however, with which we started, is those of inland clergy, the brasses at St Albans, North Mymms and Wensley, the incised slabs at Ashby Puerorum, Middleton and Bradwell. Here the dates are significant, two actually dated 1349, two commissioned soon after 1349, one of 1361. The reason for



Fig. 31. *The face of Simon de Wensley, 1394, Wensley, Yorkshire.*
(rubbing © author)

most of them is surely the decline of the London workshops in the 1350s and the entrepreneurs from Tournai seizing the opportunity. Only Wensley remains outside the sequence – as we have seen, he was a very young rector in the 1360s and did not die until 1394. There was no reason for him, or even his patron Lord Scrope, to have commissioned his brass quite so far in advance of his death. Maybe it is actually much later than the others.

If we look at their faces (Figs 29, 30 and 31), we see that Abbot de la Mare has his eyes almost closed, and his nose points to his left. Did the

companion brass to Abbot Mentmore look to the right? His hair is curly, as is that of William Kestevane, who looks to his right, with his eyes open. Simon de Wensley has his hair in a different style, waved but not curly, his nose is straight on, and his eyes are almost closed. Do any of these features bear any relevance to dating? Van Belle provides us with pages of faces for comparison and although so many of them have only approximate dates, there does seem to be a tendency for the nose to be in profile up to about 1360, and straight on after that.⁵⁰ The hair is less curly and more wavy after 1375. But the closed eyes, though rare,

50. Van Belle, *Corpus Laminae*, I, 170–5.

occur from 1350 to 1398. Simon de Wensley's face does look very similar to that of the bishop at Altenberg, 1398, set next to him by van Belle. I suspect Wensley is the odd one out: a brass commissioned on his death in the very late fourteenth century, in a deliberate choice not to use the York or London workshops, possibly influenced by the nearby merchant's brass at Topcliffe. That means that the choice of a Flemish brass or tombstone was not always

dictated by economic or practical reasons, but was an aesthetic choice – and looking again at the brass Simon de Wensley ordered, who is to say he was wrong?

Acknowledgements

The editor is most grateful to Derrick Chivers, Stephen Freeth, Christian Steer and Martin Stuchfield for their help in preparing this article for publication.



*Fig. 1. The church of St Mary the Less, Westley Waterless, Cambridgeshire, viewed from the north side.
(photo: © author)*

The Brass of Sir John de Creke and Lady Alyne at Westley Waterless, Cambridgeshire

Robert Kinsey

This article provides a study of the fourteenth-century brass of Sir John de Creke and his wife Lady Alyne in the church of St Mary the Less, Westley Waterless, Cambridgeshire. After outlining John de Creke's life and career it considers the style and iconography of the brass and makes some suggestions regarding the date of manufacture and the identity of its patron. It is suggested that the brass was commissioned by his son Sir Walter de Creke (d. 1352) in the mid 1340s as part of a wider commemorative scheme at Westley Waterless that celebrated the family's royal and noble service and marriage alliances.

Secluded in the uplands of south-east Cambridgeshire lies the 'unpretending little church' of St Mary the Less in the village of Westley Waterless.¹ At first sight, the church, consisting of a simple thirteenth-century chancel and fourteenth-century nave with a nineteenth-century bell turret at the west end, seems to have little to offer the visitor (Fig. 1). Yet this rather unimposing building contains one of the finest medieval funerary monuments in the country – the brass of Sir John de Creke (d. c. 1328) and his wife Alyne (d. before 1304) (Fig. 2). This remarkable memorial has long been marked out as of interest. The two principal Cambridgeshire antiquaries, John

Layer (d. 1641) and the Reverend William Cole (d. 1782), recorded the brass on their visits to the church in the 1630s and 1750s, and both Richard Gough, in his *Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain* (1786), and Daniel and Samuel Lysons, in their *Magna Britannia* (1806–22), reproduced full-page engravings of the monument.² Despite this interest, the brass has never received a dedicated study. John and Lionel Waller included a brief biography of Sir John and a description of the brass in their *A Series of Monumental Brasses* (1840–5) but since then the brass has been mentioned only in passing, usually in reference to the development of medieval armour and the debate surrounding the dating of the early knightly effigies.³ The purpose of this article therefore is to provide a detailed examination of the brass, placing it in its historical context and making some suggestions as to its date and patron.

The Creke family

The origins of the Creke family are relatively obscure. They first came to Westley in the mid thirteenth century when John de Burgh, son of the justiciar Hubert de Burgh, sold the manor to Walter de Creke, John de Creke's father

- 1 A. Mee, *The King's England: Cambridgeshire*, rev. C.L.S. Linnell and E.T. Long (Rev. edn, London, 1965), 203.
- 2 John Layer: Oxford, Bod Lib, MS Rawlinson B. 275, f. 158v; William Cole: London, BL, Add. MS 5819, ff. 110v–111r; R. Gough, *The Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain*, 3 vols, (London, 1786–99), I pt 2, 142, pl. LVII; D. and S. Lysons, *Magna Britannia: Cambridgeshire* (London, 1808), 65. For biographies of Layer and Cole, see P. Sherlock, 'Layer, John (d. 1641)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref: odnb/16222 accessed December 2018; J.D. Pickles, 'Cole, William (1714–82)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref: odnb/5863 accessed December 2018.
- 3 J.G. and L.A.B. Waller, *A Series of Monumental Brasses from the Thirteenth to the Sixteenth Century* (London,

1864; reprinted 1975 with corrections and additions by J.A. Goodall), no. 8; H.W. Macklin, *The Brasses of England* (London, 1907), 23–5; M.W. Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Memorials*, 2 vols, (London, 1977), I, 17; *MBS Bulletin*, 18 (June, 1978), 5–6 reports such a discussion; P.J. Heseltine, *The Figure Brasses of Cambridgeshire* (St Neots, 1981), 5, 38; L. Southwick, 'The Armoured Effigy of Prince John of Eltham in Westminster Abbey and some Closely Related Military Monuments', *Church Monuments*, 2 (1987), 9–21; P. Binski, 'The Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses', in *The Earliest English Brasses: Patronage, Style and Workshops, 1270–1350*, ed. J. Coales (London, 1987), 103–16.



*Fig. 2. Brass of Sir John de Creke and Lady Alynne, Westley Waterless, Cambridgeshire (LSW. I).
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)*

(Fig. 3).⁴ In all likelihood the family hailed from North Creak, Norfolk, where the Burgh family held estates, and it can be supposed that the Crekes were originally freeholding tenants of the Burghs.⁵ The Creke coat of arms displayed on John de Creke's brass *or, on a fess gules, three lozenges vair* were evidently derived from those of the Burgh family *lozengy vair and gules* and it was common for lesser landowners to adopt the same heraldic devices as their superior lords in the practice of heraldic dissemination.⁶ Similarly the gold field of the de Creke arms may have referenced the arms of the Fitzwalter family *or, a fess gules between two chevrons gules* from whom the Burghs had acquired Westley and remained the Crekes' overlords into the fourteenth century.⁷

By 1273 Walter de Creke was dead and the manor of Westley Waterless had passed to his son John.⁸ In the *Quo Warranto* proceedings of 1299 John de Creke claimed to be lord of Westley with the accompanying manorial rights of view of frankpledge, infangthief, tumbrel and waif.⁹ As well as the family seat at Westley, John also held a number of landholdings elsewhere in Cambridgeshire and in Essex. From at least 1273 he held a property in Hatfield Peverel, Essex, which he

had probably inherited from his father, being another part of the Burgh estate, and in the 1280s he was holding land in Chigwell and Thaxted, Essex.¹⁰ John was twice married. He had married his first wife Alyne by 1285.¹¹ She was alive in 1295 but was dead by 1304 when John is recorded as being married to Joan le Breton née Scherewind, widow of Richard le Breton.¹² John's marriage to Joan brought with it the manor of Pampisford, Cambridgeshire, which Joan held a life interest in, until the couple sold it in 1321.¹³

Until the early years of the fourteenth century John appears in the records solely as a landowner. This was to change in July 1306 when John, probably then in his fifties, received his first public office as a tax collector in Cambridgeshire.¹⁴ This appointment marked the beginning of a meteoric career in local administration that was to pervade the last twenty years of his life. Just over a year later in November 1307 John was made sheriff of the joint counties of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, a position he held for three and half years.¹⁵ During these years, Creke was engaged in all manner of duties. A few months into his term of office in January 1308 he was responsible for the arrest of the Knights

4 *Placita de Quo Warranto*, ed. W. Illingworth (London, 1818), 106, VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, VI (London, 1978), 177–8.

5 C. Ellis, *Hubert de Burgh: A Study in Constancy* (London, 1952), 217.

6 For discussion of heraldic dissemination see P. Coss, *The Knight in Medieval England* (Stroud, 1993), 79–81; D. Simpkin, *The English Aristocracy at War: From the Welsh Wars of Edward I to the Battle of Bannockburn* (Woodbridge, 2008), 27–30.

7 Christine daughter of Robert Fitzwalter married Raymond de Burgh (d. 1230). The couple died childless and presumably bequeathed the manor of Westley to John de Burgh who subsequently sold it to Walter de Creke (VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, VI, 177; *CIPM*, VII, no. 160).

8 *Feet of Fines for Essex, Volume II (A.D. 1272–A.D. 1326)*, ed. R.E. Kirk and E.F. Kirk (Colchester, 1913–28), 2.

9 *Placita de Quo Warranto*, ed. Illingworth, 106.

10 *Feet of Fines Essex, II*, ed. Kirk and Kirk, 2, 47, 52, 69, 81; Ellis, *Hubert de Burgh*, 210; T.M. Hope, *The Township of Hatfield Peverel: Its History, Natural History and Inhabitants* (Chelmsford, 1930), 149–50, 180–2.

11 *Feet of Fines Essex, II*, ed. Kirk and Kirk, 47.

12 *Feet of Fines Essex, II*, ed. Kirk and Kirk, 81, 97; Waller and Waller, *Series of Monumental Brasses*, no. 8; Cambridge, Corpus Christi College Archives, CCCC09/11/1(1), CCCC09/11/27; BL, Add. 5813, f. 162r.

13 VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, VI, 107.

14 *CPR*, 1301–7, 457.

15 *List of Sheriffs for England and Wales, from the Earliest Times to A.D. 1831* (London, 1898), 12.

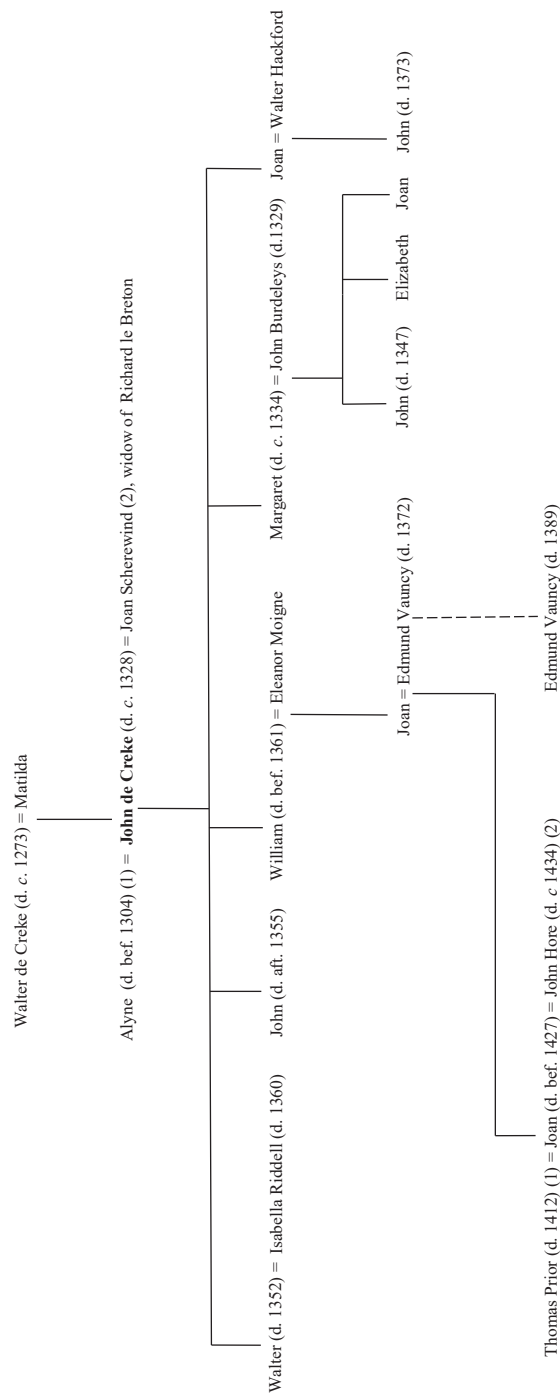


Fig. 3. Genealogy of the Creke family.

Templar in Cambridgeshire, following their dramatic fall from grace, and later that year he was purveying victuals and carts for the war with Scotland.¹⁶ In 1309 he was ordered to convey money from Huntingdon to York; in 1310 he was tasked with overseeing repairs to Cambridge Castle and to arrest participants in an illegal tournament at Newmarket; and in 1311 he was again ordered to purchase victuals and transport them to Berwick-upon-Tweed.¹⁷ Whilst holding the onerous office of sheriff, John also apparently found time to perform military service, as in August 1310 he received a protection whilst serving in the retinue of Gilbert de Clare, earl of Gloucester, in the forthcoming campaign to Scotland.¹⁸ In April 1311 John was finally replaced as sheriff but his respite was short-lived.¹⁹ In October that year he was appointed keeper of the confiscated lands of both the Templars and the disgraced former treasurer Bishop Walter Langton in the counties of Norfolk, Suffolk, Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire. A month later he was reappointed as sheriff of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.²⁰

John de Creke's second term as sheriff lasted a further three years until October 1314 but he continued to serve on local commissions thereafter.²¹ In November 1314 he was commissioned to make inquiries into knights' fees in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire and in 1316–17 he served on numerous gaol delivery and oyer and terminer commissions

in the two counties as a keeper of the peace.²² In October 1319 John was appointed sheriff for a third time, serving until November 1320.²³ Towards the end of his third term, he was also elected as one of the knights of the shire representing Cambridgeshire in the parliament of October 1320 at Westminster.²⁴ John was again returned as a knight of the shire to the parliament held at Westminster from July to August 1321 and in the same year he was appointed to a commission of oyer and terminer to investigate those who had broken into the bishop of Ely's park at Doddington, Cambridgeshire.²⁵

The following year John de Creke's career took a turn for the worse, however, when he found himself on the other side of the law. In May 1322 he was brought before a commission of oyer and terminer accused, with several others, including his son Walter, of assaulting the manor of Hugh Despenser, earl of Winchester, at Soham, Cambridgeshire, breaking into houses and carrying away horses, livestock and other property belonging to the earl.²⁶ John de Creke's involvement in the raid on Despenser's manor suggests that he had sympathies with the Lancastrian cause during the civil war of 1321–2 and indeed John de Creke appears to have been closely linked with the courtier-turned-rebel Sir Bartholomew Badlesmere (d. 1322).²⁷ In 1313 he was acting as Badlesmere's attorney and in 1315 he served in his retinue during a campaign against

16 *CCR, 1307–13*, 13–14, 39–40, 124.

17 *CPR, 1307–13*, 191, *CCR, 1307–13*, 198, 257, 298–9.

18 *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, V, ed. G.G. Simpson and J.D. Galbraith (Edinburgh, 1987), 450.

19 *List of Sheriffs*, 12.

20 *CFR, 1307–19*, 105, *List of Sheriffs*, 12.

21 *List of Sheriffs*, 12; *CFR, 1307–19*, 220.

22 *CFR, 1307–19*, 219; *CPR, 1313–17*, 483, 699; *CPR, 1317–21*, 95; TNA, C 66/146, mm. 21d, 32d, 36d.

23 *List of Sheriffs*, 12; *CFR, 1319–27*, 6, 37.

24 *Return of the Name of every member of the Lower House of Parliaments of England, Scotland and Ireland...1213–1874*, 2 vols, (London, 1878), I, 59; *Parliamentary Writs and Writs of Military Summons*, ed. F. Palgrave, 2 vols, (London, 1827–34), II pt 1, 221, 229.

25 *CPR, 1317–21*, 602; *Return*, I, 62; *Parliamentary Writs*, ed. Palgrave, II, pt 1, 237, 243.

26 *CPR, 1321–24*, 166; *Parliamentary Writs*, ed. Palgrave, II pt 2, 188, 191.

27 G.T. Lapsley, 'Knights of the Shire in the Parliaments of Edward II', *English Historical Review*, 34 (1919), 162.

the Scots.²⁸ One of Badlesmere's numerous properties was the manor of Thaxted, Essex, where John also held land, and it is likely that it was tenurial ties that brought about this association.²⁹

The outcome of the 1322 trial is unrecorded but John de Creke's career does not seem to have permanently suffered, although he never held the office of sheriff again. In June 1322, he was summoned to be at Newcastle upon Tyne to take part in the king's campaign against the Scots but responded that he was too old and infirm.³⁰ Yet despite his advancing years, John continued to be appointed on local commissions, as a tax collector, purveyor and justice, and represented Cambridgeshire at the Westminster parliament of February-March 1324.³¹ With tensions rising between England and France, John was amongst the county knights from across England summoned to be at Westminster in May 1324 in preparation for war and in September that year he received one of his last appointments of Edward II's reign to act as custodian of Queen Isabella's lands and properties in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire, which had been taken into the king's hands for safe keeping.³² There is no record of John's activity during the deposition of Edward II nor what he did when Queen Isabella's invasion force marched from the Essex coast to Cambridge in September 1326 but, like many of the East Anglian gentry,

he probably did nothing to impede her progress.³³

By 1327, at the beginning of Edward III's reign, John de Creke was reaching the end of his life but he still managed to be elected one last time as a knight of the shire, representing Cambridgeshire at the parliament at York in February-March 1328.³⁴ John appears in the records again in August of the same year when he is listed as holding half a knight's fee at Westley Waterless from Robert Fitzwalter but he was dead by February 1332, when Joan de Creke is styled as his widow.³⁵ Given that John de Creke does not appear in the 1327 lay subsidy rolls it can be surmised that he died sometime between August 1328 and June 1329, when the Cambridgeshire lay subsidy roll was returned to the exchequer.³⁶ John was survived by his second wife Joan and at least five children – three sons, Sir Walter (d. 1352), Master John (d. after 1355), and Sir William (d. before 1361), and two daughters, Margaret (d. c. 1334) and Joan.³⁷

Based on the written evidence the account of John de Creke's life ends here. However, it would be remiss not to mention the local legend that gives a rather more dramatic narrative of his death. This colourful tradition tells the story of how John de Creke fought and died in a trial by combat with Sir John de Burgh, whose family owned the manor in the neighbouring village

28 *CFR*, 1307–19, 169; *CPR*, 1307–13, 567; TNA, C 71/7, m. 3, I am grateful to Nigel Saul for providing this reference; *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, V, ed. Simpson and Galbraith, 467.

29 *CIPM*, VII, no. 104, 92.

30 *Parliamentary Writs*, ed. Palgrave, II pt 1, 587.

31 *CPR*, 1321–4, 225, 242, 370; *Return*, I, 69; *Parliamentary Writs*, ed. Palgrave, II pt 1, 299, 312, 314.

32 *Parliamentary Writs*, ed. Palgrave, II pt 1, 638; *CFR*, 1319–27, 300–1.

33 N. Saul, 'The Despensers and the Downfall of Edward II', *English Historical Review*, 99 (1984), 20–1; R.M. Haines, *Edward II* (London, 2003), 175–6.

34 *Return*, I, 80.

35 *CIPM*, VII, no. 160; Corpus Christi College Archives, CCCC09/11/27.

36 TNA, E 179/81/6; *Cambridgeshire and the Isle of Ely. Lay Subsidy for the Year 1327: Names of the Taxpayers in Every Parish*, ed. C.H. Evelyn-White (n.d.), 17–18.

37 Corpus Christi College Archives, CCCC09/11/27; *CIPM*, XVI, no. 866; *Feet of Fines Essex, II*, ed. Kirk and Kirk, 196; *The Percy Charters*, ed. M.T. Martin, Surtees Society, 97 (1911), 211.

of Burrough Green.³⁸ The tale goes that in a dispute over the ownership of common land lying between Westley Waterless and Burrough Green, Thomas de Burgh, lord of the manor of Burrough Green, challenged John de Creke to a trial by single combat to settle once and for all whether the land belonged to Westley or Burrough Green. John de Creke accepted the challenge but the extravagant and cowardly Thomas de Burgh, evidently the villain of the piece, had second thoughts and asked his elder brother John de Burgh to fight in his place. John de Burgh, having recently retired to a monastery, as a novice and an old friend of Creke, was initially reluctant to do so but finally agreed following the pleas of Thomas's beautiful wife. The tournament lists were drawn up and the two knights prepared for battle. In the ensuing combat, overseen by Burgh's lord, the earl of Richmond, John de Burgh mortally wounded John de Creke. Yet Creke in one last dying blow struck Burgh dead at his feet thereby winning the combat and the land for Westley before breathing his last.³⁹ Had the duel occurred, it would have been a fittingly chivalric end for a knight so splendidly portrayed in armour at Westley but sadly no documentary evidence has been found to validate the story.

The brass

However John de Creke met his end, what is known is that he was buried beneath a

magnificent brass alongside his first wife Alyne in Westley Waterless parish church, at the east end of the south aisle (Fig. 4). In August 1752 William Cole recorded the brass as being 'Under the upper South Window of the South Isle...covered in great measure by a Pew', which indicates that it had been there for some time and there is no evidence to suggest that the monument was originally located elsewhere in the church.⁴⁰ What can be seen today are the slender effigies of Alyne and John positioned facing east on a Purbeck marble slab (2760×1020 mm). Alyne (1645×336 mm), positioned on the dexter side with her hands folded in prayer, wears long and ample robes (Fig. 5). A long gown with narrow sleeves forms



Fig. 4. The south aisle of Westley Church.
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

38 For the Burghs of Burrough Green, see J.W. Walker, 'The Burghs of Cambridgeshire and Yorkshire and the Watertons of Lincolnshire and Yorkshire', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 30 (1930–1), 311–48; W.M. Palmer, *A History of the Parish of Borough Green, Cambridgeshire*, Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Octavo Series, 54 (1939), 3–16.

39 The legend was written down by Robert Way of Burrough Green (R.E. Way, 'A Cambridgeshire Legend [Trial by Combat for Land at Burrough Green]', Cambridge, Cambridgeshire Record Office, R59/29/2/2/3). See also P. Jeffery, *East Anglian Ghosts, Legends and Lore* (Gillingham, 1988), 30.

40 BL, Add. MS 5819, f. 111r.



*Fig. 5. Brass of Sir John de Creke and Lady Alynne (detail).
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)*

the undergarment over which is worn another gown open at the sides from the shoulder to the waist. Over these two garments she wears a mantle tied across the chest by a cordon. Both the mantle and the gown below it have an scalloped border. Her headdress consists of a coverchief, which descends to the shoulders, her hair appearing beneath in plaited bands. Her neck and throat are covered by a gorget. At her feet looking up at her is a small dog.

Sir John (1643×353 mm) on the sinister side wears layered armour (Figs 5, 6 and 7). He is dressed in a quilted aketon (a padded jacket)

over which is placed a hauberk (coat of mail), followed by a coat of plates, with floriated rivet heads, and finally a cyclas (a surcoat shortened at the front). His legs and knees are protected by mail chausses, over which are placed plate armour and decorated poleyns. Plate sabatons also cover the mail of the feet, which bear rowel spurs. The forearms are protected by hinged tubular plate defences, which emerge from the shortened mail sleeve, whilst the upper arms have gutter-shaped plates. The right elbow and shoulders are further protected by a rondel and shoulder-caps bearing the striking lion-leopard head design.⁴¹ The head, neck and shoulders are

⁴¹ In medieval heraldry the lion and the leopard were one and the same. A lion was called a lion if it was rampant but a leopard if it was gardant or passant

gardant as in the royal arms of England (M.P. Siddons, *Heraldic Badges in England and Wales*, 4 vols, (London, 2009), II pt 1, 157.



Fig. 6. Brass of Sir John de Creke and Lady Alyne (detail).
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

covered by a mail aventail, which is fastened to the bascinet by a lace drawn through staples, below which hangs a fringe (mantelet) of tasselled pendants. Across the forehead are three lozenges separated by studs, which may represent jewels. The bascinet is fluted and at its apex is a finial. Sir John carries a heater-shaped shield bearing the arms of the Creke family and a sword girt in front by a belt decorated with flower heads and studs. The scabbard is also decorated with lozenges and studs. At his feet is a lion (Fig. 7).



Fig. 7. Brass of Sir John de Creke and Lady Alyne (detail).
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

In their own right the two figures of Sir John and Alyne are a fine example of medieval craftsmanship but the brass was once much more substantial. Drawings by William Cole in 1752 and the Lysons brothers in 1808 show that the couple were originally displayed below an elaborate two-dimensional crocketed double canopy.⁴² Although the canopy has since been lost, a rubbing of a section of it survives amongst the Lysons manuscripts held at the British Library (Fig. 8).⁴³ Surrounding the canopy was a brass inscription written in French, the language of the chivalric classes. The inscription was in a fragmentary state when Cole recorded the brass but it was still complete when John Layer visited the church in the 1630s.⁴⁴ In his notes Layer recorded it as:

*ICI : REPOSUNT : LES : CORPS : SIR :
JOHAN : DE : CREKE : ET : ALYNE : SA
FEMME : DE QI : ALMES : DIEU : EYE :
MERCY* (Here lie the bodies of Sir John de Creke and Alyne his wife, on whose souls may God have mercy).

⁴² BL, Add. MS 5819, f. 110v; BL, Add. MS 9461, f. 72v.

⁴³ BL, Add. MS 9461, f. 70v; J. Blair, 'Westley Waterless (Cambs.): Rubbing of Lost Canopy Fragment', *MBS Bulletin*, 28 (October, 1981), 9.

⁴⁴ BL, Add. MS 5819, ff. 110v, 111r; Bod Lib, MS Rawlinson B. 275, f. 158.



Fig. 8. Rubbing of part of the lost canopy of the brass to Sir John de Creke and Lady Alyne.
(© The British Library Board, Add. MS 9461, f. 70v)

What is more, Layer recorded that between the canopy and the surrounding inscription were six small shields, three above the heads of Alyne and John and three below their feet. These escutcheons had presumably been removed from the brass when Cole came to draw it but the earliest known depiction of the brass, a thumbnail sketch by the herald Sir William Dethick (d. 1612), clearly shows the



Fig. 9. Rough sketch of the brass of Sir John de Creke and Lady Alyne showing the now lost six shields.
(© The British Library Board, Harley MS 1393, f. 104r)

shields in place (Fig. 9).⁴⁵ Although the Purbeck marble slab is now very worn, the indents of the canopy, surrounding inscription, and six shields are just visible enough to allow us to reconstruct how the brass may have originally appeared (Fig. 10).⁴⁶

The suggested date for the manufacture of the brass has been revised several times. Writing in the 1840s the Waller brothers dated the brass to c. 1325, the year that they assumed that John had died based on the limited records available to them.⁴⁷ In the 1950s Lawrence Stone extended the date to c. 1325–30.⁴⁸ However, Malcolm Norris, following a reassessment of the chronology of the early military brasses in the 1970s, revised the date of the Westley brass to no earlier than c. 1335.⁴⁹ This date was again modified in 1987 when Paul Binski on stylistic

45 BL, Harley MS 1393, f. 104r; *A Catalogue of the Harleian Manuscripts in the British Museum*, 4 vols, (London, 1808–12), II, 22–5. I am grateful to Nigel Ramsay for viewing this manuscript and confirming William Dethick as its author.

46 See below for a full discussion of the heraldry.

47 Waller and Waller, *Series of Monumental Brasses*, no. 8.

48 L. Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: The Middle Ages* (Harmondsworth, 1955), 163–4.

49 Norris, *Monumental Brasses: The Memorials*, 9–13, 17; M.W. Norris, 'Views of the Early Knights, 1786–1970', in *Earliest English Brasses*, ed. Coales, 1–7.



Fig. 10. Partial reconstruction of the brass, showing the canopy, surrounding inscription and the six shields in between. Illustration after reconstruction by John Blair and Paul Binski.

evidence dated the brass to ‘c. 1340 or even well into the 1340s’, linking it to the newly identified ‘Seymour style’, a group of brasses that were produced by a London-based workshop operating from the early 1330s until the late 1340s.⁵⁰ This link is reinforced by a plater’s mark still visible on the ground by Alyne’s right foot. The mark consisting of a capital N below a hammer and flanked by two stars is identical to one on the brass of Laurence Seymour (c. 1337) at Higham Ferrers, Northamptonshire, suggesting that both were products of the same workshop (Fig. 11).⁵¹ The c. 1340–45 date for the Westley brass has largely been accepted but this in turn raises further questions as it follows that the brass was produced many years after the deaths of John and Alyne.⁵² Indeed in the case of Alyne the gap between her death and the commissioning of the monument runs into several decades.

Patronage and context

Why then was there such a long delay between the death of Sir John and the commissioning of the brass? One possible reason is the negligence of the heirs. Descendants sometimes took many years to erect a monument to a family member due to a lack of resolve or money.⁵³ A more likely explanation for the delay at Westley though seems to have been the need to construct a suitable place for the monument to be housed first. The architectural evidence shows that the church was extensively rebuilt sometime in the



Fig. 11. Brass plater’s mark on the brass of Sir John de Creke and Lady Alyne.

(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

first half of the fourteenth century. The three-bay nave and the side aisles all date from this period and drawings of the exterior by Cole and Lysons suggest that the (now lost) round bell tower was heightened at the same time (Fig. 12).⁵⁴ The presence of piscinae in the walls of both the south and north aisles indicates that each at one time contained an altar, which

50 Binski, ‘Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses’, 108–110. See also, P. Binski, ‘An Analysis of the Length of Plates used for English Monumental Brasses before 1350’, *MBS Trans.*, 16:3 (1999), 234, where Binski suggests a date of c. 1345 for the brass based on the length of its component plates.

51 *MBS Bulletin*, 24 (June, 1980), 7–8; Binski, ‘Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses’, 110; N. Rogers, ‘Cambridgeshire Brasses’, in *Cambridgeshire Churches*, ed. C. Hicks (Stamford, 1997), 305; *MBS Bulletin*, 86 (January, 2001), 530.

52 W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Cambridgeshire* (London, 1995),

240. See for example comments by J.A. Goodall in Waller and Waller, *Series of Monumental Brasses*, xii–xiii; Binski, ‘Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses’, 130, n. 69.

53 S. Badham and M. Stuchfield, *Monumental Brasses* (Oxford, 2009), 30.

54 S. Bradley and N. Pevsner, *The Buildings of England: Cambridgeshire* (New Haven, 2014), 672; R.K.M. Davies, *The Parish Church of Westley Waterless: Description and Historical Survey* (Haverhill, 1970), 2, 5–6. The two-light cinquefoiled cusped Y-tracery windows of the side aisles is a typical architectural feature of this era (S. Hart, *Medieval Church Window Tracery in*



Fig. 12. William Cole's drawing of Westley Church. Note the later style of the window in the top storey of the bell tower, indicating that it had been heightened.

(© The British Library Board, Add. MS 5819, f. 109v)

suggests that the intention was that they would house chantries for the benefit of the Creke family. Such a large-scale building project would probably have taken a number of years to complete and if we assume that the windows of the side aisles were glazed immediately after building work was finished, then construction cannot have been completed before 1340 as one window contained the quartered arms of France and England, which Edward III first adopted in January 1340 (Fig. 13).

Yet even allowing for the rebuilding of the nave and construction of the side aisles the gap between the death of Sir John in *c.* 1328 and the commissioning of his brass in the 1340s is still fairly lengthy. Why did the patrons of the brass take so long? Following a close analysis of the stylistic elements of the brass and the church's glazing scheme it will be suggested that the brass and rebuilding of the church were commissioned in the mid-1340s with a particular purpose in mind.

England (Woodbridge, 2010), 71–2; see pl. 36d for a similar example of the window tracery at Billington, Norfolk).



Fig. 13. Stained glass in the south aisle of Westley Church showing the quartered royal arms of France and England. (photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

A useful starting point is the style of Sir John's armour. The armour is clearly of the late 1330s and 1340s rather than the 1320s and cannot have been based on anything that Sir John would have actually worn. The armour does appear however to have been based on that depicted on the alabaster effigy of Prince John of Eltham (d. 1336), the younger brother of

Edward III, which was erected at Westminster Abbey sometime after August 1339 (Fig. 14).⁵⁵ Leslie Southwick in an important article drew attention to a group of knightly effigies dating from the 1340s that bore a striking resemblance to the Eltham effigy at Westminster.⁵⁶ Amongst this analogous group, labelled the 'Eltham group', Southwick included the brass of John de Creke pointing to similarities between the armour of Eltham and Creke. As well as the likeness in the overall style of their armour, one of the most interesting parallels between the two effigies are their bascinets, both of which have hanging pendants decorated with tassels. The diamond shapes on Eltham's coronet are also alluded to in the horizontal fillet running across Creke's forehead (Fig. 5). A further resemblance between the Eltham tomb and the Westley brass are the knee defences which on both effigies are decorated with trefoils (Fig. 6). Parallels can also be drawn between the canopies of Eltham's tomb and the Creke brass. Although both have been lost, engravings of the Eltham tomb and Samuel Lysons' rubbing of the canopy fragment at Westley reveal that both included elaborately cusped cinquefoiled arches.⁵⁷

What can be made of these similarities? One explanation is that the London-based workshop took inspiration from the newly erected tomb to Eltham at Westminster Abbey and incorporated some of its features in the brass of John de Creke. The brass to Sir John d'Abernoun III (d. c. 1339–50) at Stoke D'Abernoun, Surrey, a product of the same workshop as the Westley brass, also has

55 Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: The Middle Ages*, 162; M. Duffy, *Royal Tombs of Medieval England* (Stroud, 2003), 124–8; W.M. Ormrod, *Edward III* (London, 2011), 126; W.M. Ormrod, 'The Personal Religion of Edward III', *Speculum*, 64 (1989), 868. Sally Badham has recently suggested that the construction of Eltham's monument could have been as late as 1344 (S. Badham, 'The Rise to Popularity of Alabaster for

Memorialisation in England', *Church Monuments*, 31 (2016), 24–5).

56 Southwick, 'Armoured Effigy of Prince John of Eltham', 9–21.

57 BL, Add. MS 9461, f. 70v; J. Dart, *Westminster Abbey or The History and Antiquities of Westminster Abbey*, 2 vols, (London, 1723), I, 106; Southwick, 'Armoured Effigy of Prince John of Eltham', 10, Fig. 1.



Fig. 14. Effigy of Prince John of Eltham at Westminster Abbey, from C.A. Stothard, *The Monumental Effigies of Great Britain* (London, 1876).

(© Artokoloro/Alamy Stock Photo)



Fig. 15. Detail of the brass of Sir John de Creke, showing lion-leopard head rondel and shoulder-caps.
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

elements that mimic Eltham's effigy.⁵⁸ Yet it may be possible to go further and speculate that the referencing of the Eltham tomb was a deliberate request by the patrons of the brass to emulate the styles that were fashionable in the royal court in the 1340s. Evidence from surviving wills and elsewhere demonstrate that it was not uncommon for patrons to specify that a monument be modelled on an existing one.⁵⁹

One element on Sir John's armour that suggests a conscious effort to imitate the tomb of John of Eltham and the fashions

of the royal court is the use of lion-leopard head iconography (Fig. 15). The lion-leopard head emblems on the rondels and shoulder-caps on the brass of John de Creke can also be seen on three monuments belonging to the Eltham Group: those of John de Ifield, John, second Lord Willoughby (d. 1349) and Robert Fitz-Elys (Fig. 16).⁶⁰ Further examples can be found on the effigy of William Bruce (d. 1345) at Pickering, Yorkshire, which dates from the mid 1340s, and on the effigy of John de Lyons at Warkworth, Northumberland, which dates from the 1350s.⁶¹ Whilst the

58 Binski, 'Stylistic Sequence of London Figure Brasses', 108–10; Southwick, 'Armoured Effigy of Prince John of Eltham', 13–20.

59 N. Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2009), 104.

60 Southwick, 'Armoured Effigy of Prince John of Eltham', 14–16, 18.

61 Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: Middle Ages*, 182, 142.



Fig. 16. Effigy of John Willoughby, second Lord Willoughby (d. 1349), Spilsby, Lincolnshire.
(photo: © C.B. Newham/Alamy Stock Photo)

lion-leopard head emblem does not appear on John of Eltham's armour it can clearly be seen on the pommel and guard of his sword, a feature which is replicated on both

the effigies of Ifield and Willoughby (Figs 14 and 16).⁶²

The leopard had a long association with royalty going back to the first Plantagenet kings and by the early fourteenth century the symbol of three golden leopards on a red background had been established as the royal arms of England for well over a century. However, as Caroline Shenton has shown, the image of the leopard became a particularly fashionable emblem in the court of Edward III during the 1330s and 1340s.⁶³ From around 1333, Edward III adopted the leopard image as his own personal badge, using it on the great seal in 1338, on his banners and battle clothes, and on coins such as the half-florin first issued in 1344.⁶⁴ In January 1334, the king took part in the Dunstable tournament in the guise of 'Sir Lionel' directly associating the person of the king with the leopard in the minds of courtiers and indeed the epitaph on Edward III's tomb erected in the 1380s described him as 'the unconquered leopard'.⁶⁵ As dedicated followers of court fashion, the Crekes embraced this iconography with enthusiasm in the church at Westley. The leopard's head emblem not only appears three times on John de Creke's armour but also on the decorated niche in the chancel, which may have been used to display a gold chalice that John de Creke gave to the church, and on the two capitals of the chancel arch (Fig. 17).⁶⁶

A further desire to demonstrate royal and noble connections, and a clue to the identity of the brass' patron, can be found in the heraldic glazing scheme of the church's side aisles. Sadly only a few fragments of the fourteenth-century

62 Stone, *Sculpture in Britain: Middle Ages*, 162.

63 C. Shenton, 'Edward III and the Symbol of the Leopard', in *Heraldry, Pageantry and Social Display in Medieval England*, ed. P. Coss and M. Keen (Woodbridge, 2002), 69–81.

64 Ormrod, *Edward III*, 99.

65 Ormrod, *Edward III*, 99, 583.

66 Davies, *Parish Church of Westley Waterless*, 2; *Vetus Liber Archidiaconi Eliensis*, ed. C.L. Feltoe and E.H. Minns, Cambridge Antiquarian Society, Octavo Series, 48 (1917), 52–3.



Fig. 17. Fourteenth-century niche in the chancel of Westley Church, depicting the lion-leopard head emblem.
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)

stained glass windows remain, largely due to the destruction carried out by the Parliamentary iconoclast William Dowsing, who visited the church on 22 March 1644 and noted in his journal that he and his men broke down 'eight Superstitious Pictures' (i.e. the windows). This vandalism was compounded by the subsequent re-glazing of the church in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁶⁷ Fortunately, the heraldry in the windows was recorded by Layer in the 1630s and at least some fragments of the scheme were still visible to Cole when he visited the church in 1752.⁶⁸ From Layer's and Cole's notes we know that the windows of the side aisles contained shields bearing the arms

of Lancaster, Percy, Neville, Ufford, Fitzwalter, Charlton and the royal arms of England and France quartered (Fig. 18).

The quartered arms of France and England fixes the date of the glazing of the side aisles as no earlier than January 1340, when Edward III first adopted these arms. Considering the 1340s date it is possible to identify the other coats of arms that were once on display. The arms of Lancaster recorded by Layer as *gules 3 lions passant guardant or; overall a bendlet azure* must have represented Henry of Grosmont (d. 1361), earl of Derby and later duke of Lancaster, who bore these arms from 1326 until at least

67 *The Journal of William Dowsing: Iconoclasm in East Anglia during the English Civil War*, ed. T. Cooper (Woodbridge, 2001), 280; Davies, *Parish Church of Westley Waterless*, 7.

68 Bod Lib, MS Rawlinson B. 275, ff. 157r-158r; BL, Add. MS 5819, ff. 73r, 110r-111r.



Fig. 18. William Cole's drawings of some of the shields of arms displayed in the windows of Westley Church, including the arms of the Lancaster, Percy, Neville, Ufford, Charlton families and the royal arms of France and England. A number of the arms shown here have been misidentified by Cole.

(© The British Library Board, Add. MS 5819, f. 73r)

September 1345.⁶⁹ The arms of Ufford *sable, a cross engrailed or* denoted Robert Ufford, earl of Suffolk (d. 1369), the Fitzwalter arms *or, a fess gules between two chevrons gules* represented John Fitzwalter, second Lord Fitzwalter (d. 1361), the Charlton arms *or, a lion rampant gules* probably stood for John, first Lord Chalton of Powys (d. 1353), whilst those of Neville *gules, a saltire argent* and Percy *or, a lion rampant azure* signified Ralph Neville, fourth Lord Neville of Raby (d. 1367) and Henry Percy, second Lord Percy (d. 1352).

Apart from the Fitzwalters, who were the Creke family's overlords, none of the noble families displayed in the windows of the church had a tenurial link to Westley. What does connect all of these individuals and the Crekes though is conspicuous military service in the king's wars with Scotland and France, and in particular Edward III's campaigns in the 1330s and 1340s. Henry of Grosmont served on campaign in Scotland from 1333 until 1336, holding the post of king's lieutenant in Scotland in the final year. Following the outbreak of war with France, he subsequently served on the Continent, seeing action in the Low Countries and at the naval battle of Sluys in 1340. Crucially in 1345–7, as the king's lieutenant in Aquitaine, he commanded the

English forces in the south-west of France, launching a *chevauchée* as part of Edward III's three-pronged campaign, and in June 1347 he joined the king to take part in the final two months of the siege of Calais, which ended in the town's surrender in August 1347.⁷⁰ Robert Ufford, likewise, saw active service in the war with Scotland in the mid 1330s taking part in the expedition of 1335. Following this he served in the Low Countries in 1338–40, in Brittany in 1342, and most notably fought with distinction in the Black Prince's division at the battle of Crécy, on 26 August 1346, which saw a spectacular victory for Edward III over the French king Philip VI.⁷¹ John Fitzwalter, as well as overlord of Westley, was a capable soldier and also fought in the Black Prince's division at Crécy.⁷² John, Lord Charlton of Powys served in Scotland from the 1300s onwards and three of his sons took part in the Crécy-Calais campaign.⁷³ Henry Percy, second Lord Percy, was a major northern magnate and spent the 1330s and 1340s serving in Edward III's campaigns against the Scots and defending northern England. Whilst the king was campaigning in France, Percy was made a custodian of the kingdom and played a key role as one of the commanders of the army that repelled the Scottish invasion of England at the battle of Neville's Cross, near Durham,

69 Layer and Cole mistakenly identify these arms as those of Henry Bolingbroke. From September 1345 Henry of Grosmont adopted the arms *gules 3 lions passant guardant or, a label azure each point charged with three fleurs-de-lis* (C.R. Humphrey-Smith and M.G. Heenan, 'The Royal Heraldry of England', *The Coat of Arms*, 7 (1962), 83; J. Peltzer, 'Making an Impression: Seals as Signifiers of Individual and Collective Rank in the Upper Aristocracy in England and the Empire in the Thirteenth and Fourteenth Centuries', in *Seals and their Context in the Middle Ages*, ed. P.R. Schofield (Oxford, 2015), 69; *William Jenyns' Ordinary: An ordinary of arms collated during the reign of Edward III*, ed. S. Clemmensen (2008), http://www.armorial.dk/english/WJO_PreEd.pdf, p. 12, accessed December 2018).

70 W.M. Ormrod, 'Henry of Lancaster [Henry of Grosmont], first duke of Lancaster (c. 1310–1361)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref: odnb/12960 accessed December 2018.

71 W.M. Ormrod, 'Ufford, Robert, first earl of Suffolk (1298–1369)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref: odnb/27977 accessed December 2018.

72 *Crécy and Calais*, ed. G. Wrottesley (London, 1898), 6, 33; C. Starr, 'Fitzwalter family', *ODNB*, online edn, ref: odnb/54522 accessed December 2018.

73 J.F.A. Mason, 'Charlton, John, first Lord Charlton of Powys (d. 1353)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref: odnb/5165 accessed December 2018; *Crécy and Calais*, ed. Wrottesley, 143, 167.

on 17 October 1346, which ended with the miraculous capture of the Scottish king, David II.⁷⁴ Ralph Neville, fourth Lord Neville, was a member of another important northern family. Like Henry Percy he spent much of his career fighting in Edward III's wars with the Scots. In August 1334, Neville was appointed with Percy as a warden of the marches and of the king's lands in Scotland and on 29 August 1335 he was granted the custody of the royal stronghold of Bamburgh Castle, Northumberland, for life. As with Henry Percy, the high point of Neville's military career was his participation in the decisive victory at Neville's Cross.⁷⁵

The rather unusual appearance of the coats of arms of two prominent northern magnates, Percy and Neville, in a Cambridgeshire church links the glazing scheme to one member of the Creke family in particular – John's son, Sir Walter de Creke (d. 1352). Like his father, Walter had originally been connected to Bartholomew Badlesmere, serving in his retinue in a campaign against the Scots in October 1318.⁷⁶ However following Badlesmere's execution for treason and Walter's implication in the attack on Hugh Despenser's manor at Soham in 1322, Walter quickly worked to reingratiate himself with the crown and in January 1323 he was staying in the king's service at Alnwick Castle, the Northumberland seat of the Percy family.⁷⁷

From this point onwards, Walter became increasingly associated with the Percies and northern England in the service of the crown. In 1329 he was described as a king's yeoman and in January 1331 he accompanied Henry Percy on a diplomatic mission to France on behalf of Edward III.⁷⁸ In May 1333 Walter was again recorded as serving in Henry Percy's retinue and it is likely that he took part in the notable victory over the Scots at Halidon Hill a few months later on 19 July 1333.⁷⁹ Walter certainly played an active role in helping to defend and administer the north in the years following the battle. In January 1334 he took part in the king's tournament at Dunstable, Bedfordshire, but by September 1334 he had returned to the north where he was appointed constable of Bamburgh Castle.⁸⁰ After holding the constabship of the castle for a year, Walter took part in the campaign against the Scots in the summer of 1335, an expedition which also included John of Eltham, Henry of Grosmont, Robert Ufford, Henry Percy and Ralph Neville.⁸¹ By 1336 he had become established in Northumberland polity when he served as both a knight of the shire for the county and as sheriff of Berwick-upon-Tweed.⁸² In February 1340 he was appointed custodian of Berwick and a few months later he came before the Westminster Parliament, along with the bishops of Durham and Carlisle, Henry Percy, Ralph Neville and several other northern

74 J.M.W. Bean, 'Percy, Henry, second Lord Percy (1301–1352)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref: odnb/21929 accessed December 2018.

75 A. Tuck, 'Neville, Ralph, fourth Lord Neville (c. 1291–1367)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref: odnb/19950 accessed December 2018.

76 *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, V, ed. Simpson and Galbraith, 480.

77 *CPR*, 1321–4, 166, 232.

78 *CFR*, 1327–37, 145–6; *CPR*, 1331–4, 42; A. Rose, *Kings in the North: The House of Percy in British History* (London, 2002), 206.

79 *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, V, ed. Simpson and Galbraith, 492, 494; Rose, *Kings in the North*, 217–

18; *Foedera, Conventiones, Litterae et Cujuscunque Generis Acta Publica*, ed. T. Rymer, 3 vols, (London, 1816–30), II pt 2, 805–6.

80 'Roll of the Arms of the Knights at the Tournament at Dunstable, in 7 Edw. III', ed. C.E. Long, *Collectanea, Topographica et Genealogica*, 4 (1837), 392; *CFR*, 1327–37, 417.

81 *Calendar of Documents Relating to Scotland*, V, ed. Simpson and Galbraith, 502; R. Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots: The Formative Years of a Military Career, 1327–1335* (Oxford, 1965), 248–9.

82 *Return*, I, 109.

magnates, as a special adviser to report on the safekeeping of the Scottish Marches.⁸³ The climax of Walter de Creke's career though was undoubtedly in October 1346 when he fought in Henry Percy's division at the battle of Neville's Cross.⁸⁴

Clearly by the early to mid 1340s Walter was on the ascendant, having made something of a name for himself as a prominent royal and noble servant with connections to the court. It can be postulated therefore that it was Walter de Creke who was the guiding hand behind the rebuilding of the church, the heraldic glazing scheme and his parent's brass, which he used as a means of marking his own rise in status. It can hardly be a coincidence that John of Eltham, Henry of Grosmont, Henry Percy, Ralph Neville, Robert Ufford, and Walter de Creke all served together in Scotland and were all referenced at Westley, either in the style of the brass or in the heraldic arms in the windows.⁸⁵ Furthermore, Walter's participation in the Dunstable tournament in 1334 directly links him with these men, all of whom except Henry Percy took part, and with the royal symbol of the leopard, which is so prominently displayed at Westley. Having served under Eltham in the king's campaigns against the Scots and in the defence of the north in the 1330s, Walter would have been predisposed to modelling the brass commemorating his father at Westley on the tomb of his former commander and comrade in arms. Examples of other tombs elsewhere show that it was by no means uncommon for members of the medieval military community

to style their monuments on those of their fellow companions in war.⁸⁶

Whilst Walter is the strongest candidate to be patron of the brass and building works at Westley, he was not the only member of the family to have connections to the Percy family or royal service. Walter's brother Master John was also a loyal servant of Henry Percy. From as early as 1327, Master John was rector of the church of Spofforth adjacent to the Percy's chief residence in Yorkshire and was heavily involved in Henry Percy's land transactions across northern England throughout the 1320s, 1330s and 1340s.⁸⁷ Evidently Henry Percy put a great deal of trust in Master John as in 1334 he made him the trustee of his entire estate and ultimately nominated him as one of the executors of his will.⁸⁸ Meanwhile Walter's other brother Sir William de Creke (d. before 1361) found service under Edward III, serving in the king's division during the Crécy-Calais campaign.⁸⁹ The presence of the arms of Percy, Grosmont and Ufford in the windows at Westley may then have also referenced John's and William's connections.

All three of John's sons therefore could potentially have had an influence over the commemorative scheme at Westley Waterless; whether they were acting jointly or one son was acting alone is unclear. Whichever the case, it does seem that the impetus behind the rebuilding of the church with its heraldic glazing scheme and the commissioning of the brass to John de Creke was the remarkable set

83 *Parliament Rolls of Medieval England, IV Edward III 1327–48*, eds S. Phillips and W.M. Ormrod (London, 2005), 258, 269.

84 *CCR, 1349–54*, 194.

85 Nicholson, *Edward III and the Scots*, 248–9.

86 Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 225.

87 *Percy Charters*, ed. Martin, 190–1, 194, 198–9, 202–3, 206–7, 211; D. Robinson, *Beneficed Clergy in Cleveland*

and the East Riding, 1306–1340, Borthwick Papers, 37 (1969), 29.

88 *Percy Charters*, ed. Martin, 171–3, 188–90, 299–303; *Testamenta Eboracensia, I*, ed. J. Raine, Surtees Society, 4 (1836), 61.

89 *Crécy and Calais*, ed. Wrotesley, 37, 89, 95, 213.

of English victories in the 1330s and 1340s, culminating in the *annus mirabilis* of 1346–7, and the desire on the part of the Creke family to commemorate the part they had played in these glorious events. The retrospective brass to John de Creke and Alyne was thus part of a larger programme by his descendants to mark their arrival and establish a grand mausoleum in honour of the family.

The Crekes were by no means unique in seizing this moment of triumph as an opportunity to commemorate and celebrate their family's achievements. Edward III's military victories generated an outburst of chivalric pride amongst the nobility and gentry that was expressed in ambitious building works, heraldic displays in church windows and on funerary monuments from the 1340s onwards.⁹⁰ At Gloucester Abbey, for example, Thomas, Lord Bradeston (d. 1360), who had fought at Crécy and Calais, commissioned a huge east window (later known as the Crécy Window), which included the arms of Bradeston along with those of the king, the Black Prince, Henry of Grosmont, and the earls of Warwick, Arundel and Northampton, all of whom had been leading commanders during the campaign.⁹¹ At Elsing, Norfolk, the executors of Sir Hugh Hastings (d. 1347) commissioned a magnificent monumental brass that commemorated the important role he had played in the Crécy-Calais campaign, through the display of figures in the side-shafts representing his companions in arms, including Edward III,

Henry of Grosmont and the earl of Warwick.⁹² At Bothal, Northumberland, Robert Bertram, a veteran of Neville's Cross, embarked on an extensive programme of building works, enlarging the nave and inserting new windows; similarly Sir John de Sutton, who also fought at Neville's Cross and later served at Calais, rebuilt the parish church of Sutton-by-Hull, Yorkshire, in the late 1340s and on his death in 1356 was buried beneath a military effigy surrounded by the arms of his companions-in-arms, including those of Percy and Neville.⁹³ Closer to home, the Crekes' neighbour Sir Warin de Bassingbourn, a veteran of the Crécy campaign, commissioned an elaborate glazing scheme at St Andrew's Church, Wimpole, Cambridgeshire, which included the arms of Bassingbourn along with those of the leading commanders of the campaign, including Henry of Grosmont and the earls of Northampton and Suffolk.⁹⁴

The brass of John de Creke was more than just an instrument to celebrate the family's military achievements and connections to royal service though. There was also a strong dynastic element to the commemorative scheme. The most apparent family connection displayed on the brass is John de Creke's marriage to Alyne. The presence of Alyne makes the brass one of the earliest surviving English brasses to show a husband and wife together, although earlier depictions of married couples are known to exist on incised slabs and sculptural monuments dating from the late thirteenth

90 Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 224–5; N. Saul, *For Honour and Fame: Chivalry in England, 1066–1500* (London, 2011), 287–8; see also A.M. Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship in France, the Low Countries, and England* (University Park, PA, 2000), 103–5; Badham, 'Rise to Popularity of Alabaster for Memorialisation in England', 57–60.

91 Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 223–4.

92 Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 216–18.

93 N. Saul, *Lordship and Faith: The English Gentry and the Parish Church in the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 2016), 272–3; Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 224; A.S. Harvey, 'Notes on Two Heraldic Tombs', *Yorkshire Archaeological Journal*, 159 (1961), 462–72.

94 BL, Add. MS, 5819, f. 91r; *Monumental Inscriptions and Coats of Arms from Cambridgeshire*, ed. W.M. Palmer (Cambridge, 1932), 245–6, pl. XLIII; *Crécy and Calais*, ed. Wrottesley, 81.

century onwards.⁹⁵ Part of the reason for the introduction of joint monuments at this time was the rise of chantries, which in most cases sought intercessory prayers not only for the founder but also their spouse and kin.⁹⁶ Yet as well as encouraging prayers, double monuments also afforded an opportunity to display social status through the celebration of marriage alliances. Marriage was one of the few ways that families could enhance their wealth and social status in the middle ages. Marriage to an heiress or a member of an esteemed family could be a significant fillip to a man's fortunes.

A prestigious match was naturally something families would have wished to show off and Jessica Barker and Peter Coss have suggested that an underlying motivation behind a number of double monuments was a desire to evidence a marriage and the property acquired from the relationship or held jointly by the couple.⁹⁷ Given that the Crekes do not appear to have descended from an especially distinguished family, it is possible therefore that the presence of Alyne on the brass at Westley Waterless was intended to bolster their respectability or strengthen a claim to property acquired through the marriage. This suggestion is perhaps reinforced by the fact

that Alyne appears on the dexter side of the brass (i.e. on the right side of the monument or the viewer's left-hand side). Traditionally, the dexter side was regarded as the most important and on most joint monuments, as in heraldry, it is the husband who occupies the dexter side. Where the norm is reversed, as in the case of Alyne and John, it has been suggested that the woman was of higher social standing than her husband and women who are displayed on the dexter side of tombs are sometimes found to be heiresses.⁹⁸ Unfortunately the identity of Alyne's paternal family is unknown so it is not possible to confirm that this was the case with the Westley brass but perhaps tellingly John and Alyne are recorded as holding at least some of their property in Essex in joint ownership.⁹⁹

The Creke family's awareness of the importance of family connections is further demonstrated by the shields of arms that once existed above and below the brass. Although the shields have long since been removed, they were recorded by John Layer, albeit in a partial state – the blanks in his notes indicating that the top row shields had already lost their tinctures by the early seventeenth century. Despite the loss of some of the tinctures the shields can be identified as set out in Table 1.

95 P. Binski, 'Monumental Brasses', in *Age of Chivalry: Art in Plantagenet England 1200–1400*, eds J. Alexander and P. Binski (London, 1987), 172; Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 145–7. For two early fourteenth-century brasses commemorating married couples, see the memorials to Thomas and Eleanor de Luda (c. 1310), Abbotsbury Abbey (Dorset), and John de Leukenore and his wife (c. 1335–50), Dorchester Abbey (Oxfordshire), discussed in J. Barker, *Stone Fidelity: Marriage and Emotion in Medieval Tomb Sculpture* (Woodbridge, 2020), 41–3.

96 Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 147. For a recent multifactorial explanation for the emergence of double monuments see, Barker, *Stone Fidelity*, 28–49.

97 P. Coss, *The Lady in Medieval England, 1000–1500* (Stroud, 1998), 85–6; J. Barker, 'Legal Crisis and Artistic Innovation in Thirteenth-Century Scotland', *British Art Studies*, 6 (2017) <https://doi.org/10.17658/issn.2058-5462/issue-06/jbarker> accessed December 2018; Barker, *Stone Fidelity*, 258–60.

98 Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 147; C. Schleif, 'Men on the Right – Women on the Left: (A)symmetrical Spaces and Gendered Places', in *Women's Space: Patronage, Place and Gender in the Medieval Church*, eds V.C. Raguin and S. Stanbury (New York, 2005), 207–47.

99 Waller and Waller claimed that Alyne was a member of either the Clopton or Chamberlain families but this cannot be proven (Waller and Waller, *Series of Monumental Brasses*, no. 8); *Feet of Fines Essex, II*, ed. Kirk and Kirk, 69, 81.

Position	John Layer's Notes	Identification
Top row, first shield	[...] a bend inter 2 cottizes indented [...]	Unidentified (... <i>a bend between 2 cottises indented</i> ...)
Top row, second shield	Ermine on a cheife a lion passant [...]	Burdeleys (<i>Ermine, on a chief gules a lion passant or</i>)
Top row, third shield	[...] on a fesse [...] 3 lozengies	Creke (<i>Or, on a fess gules 3 lozenges vair</i>)
Bottom row, first shield	Ar. 2 barres & 3 molletts in cheife sa.	Moigne (<i>Argent, 2 bars and 3 mullets in chief sable</i>)
Bottom row, second shield	Ar. on a bend g. inter 2 cottises indented sa a rose or	Creke (<i>Argent, on a bend gules between 2 cottises indented sable a rose or</i>)
Bottom row, third shield	B. a bend or inter 2 cottises indented Ar.	Poyer/Power (<i>Azure, a bend or between 2 cottises indented argent</i>)

Table 1. Identification of the six shields of arms from John Layer's notes

The first shield on the top row *a bend between 2 cottises indented* had lost all of its tincture when John Layer recorded the brass and could belong to any number of knightly families. Waller and Waller, drawing upon William Cole's antiquarian notes, suggested that these arms belonged either to the Cloptons of Suffolk or the Chamberlains of Cambridgeshire and represented Alyne's paternal family, given that this shield appeared directly above the figure of Alyne.¹⁰⁰ However this appears to be merely conjecture based only on the fact that both the Clopton and Chamberlain arms featured a *bend cottised indented*. Nor can it be presumed that these arms belonged to Alyne. The second shield *Ermine, on a chief gules a lion passant or* is easier to determine and can be identified as belonging to the Burdeleys family.¹⁰¹ The

Burdeleys were an established middle-ranking East Anglian gentry family.¹⁰² The core of the family's estates were in Cambridgeshire, centring around their three manors of Comberton, Cottenham and Madingley to the east and north of Cambridge, but they also held the manors of Scoulton, Norfolk, and Stagsden, Bedfordshire.¹⁰³ The head of the family in the early fourteenth century was Geoffrey de Burdeleys (d. 1324), who, like John de Creke, was active in local administration, serving on a number of judicial and tax collecting commissions in Cambridgeshire, and represented the county twice in parliament as a knight of the shire.¹⁰⁴ Indeed Creke and Burdeleys on occasion found themselves serving together on the same commission.¹⁰⁵ The third shield *or on a fess gules, three lozenges vair* above the

100 Waller and Waller, *Series of Monumental Brasses*, no. 8.

101 Waller and Waller mistakenly identify this coat of arms as Ermyn of Northamptonshire (Waller and Waller, *Series of Monumental Brasses*, no. 8).

102 E. Miller, *The Abbey and Bishopric of Ely* (Cambridge, 1951), 182–3.

103 VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, V (London, 1973), 179–80; VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, IX (London, 1989), 56, 167; F. Blomefield, *An Essay Towards A Topographical History of the County of Norfolk*, 11 vols, (London, 1805), II, 347; VCH, *Bedfordshire*, III (London, 1912), 97–8.

104 Miller, *Abbey and Bishopric of Ely*, 182–3.

105 CPR, 1313–17, 49; CFR, 1307–19, 219; CFR, 1319–27, 59.

head of Sir John are the Creke arms. The arms may have been intended to represent John de Creke himself but could also have represented another member of the family.

On the bottom row, the first shield *Argent 2 bars and 3 mullets in chief sable* represented the Moignes of Great Raveley and Sawtry, Huntingdonshire. The Moignes were one of the leading gentry families in Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire.¹⁰⁶ Members of this family were regularly appointed sheriffs of the two counties during the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries and frequently represented Huntingdonshire in parliament.¹⁰⁷ The shield in the centre of the bottom row, despite being completely different from the arms of Sir John de Creke represented another member of the Creke family, most probably one of his sons, Walter or William. The same arms, minus the gold rose, are labelled as ‘Sir Walter Krake’ in William Jenyns’ Ordinary, which has been dated to the 1360s or before and linked to Henry of Grosmont.¹⁰⁸

The difference between the arms of Sir Walter and his father John naturally raises questions. It should be noted, however, that coats of arms in the thirteenth and early fourteenth centuries

were by no means fixed and it was not unknown for members of a family to completely change their arms to reflect a change in feudal overlord, a new inheritance, or simply a change in fashion.¹⁰⁹ Nor was it unusual for two branches of the same family to have entirely different coats of arms; the de la Poles of Wingfield, for example, bore arms that were utterly dissimilar from the de la Poles of Castle Ashby, even though they were originally descended from the same Hull family.¹¹⁰ Indeed it appears that the Creke family adopted a number of alternative coats of arms during the fourteenth century. In the early 1330s Walter bore the arms *argent, a bend azure between three wyverns* and his brother William de Creke’s seal depicted *a wyvern salient*, which was perhaps a reference to an association with Henry of Grosmont, whose family crest was a wyvern.¹¹¹ The commissioning of the monument at Westley in the 1340s may have therefore afforded an opportunity for the Creke family to establish their coat of arms once and for all, setting it in brass.

The sixth and final shield can be identified as those belonging to the Poyer (or Power) family. Precisely who this family was is unclear. The coat of arms appears twice in Powell’s roll of arms,

106 *History of Parliament: The House of Commons 1386–1421*, eds J.S. Roskell, L. Clark and C. Rawcliffe, 4 vols, (Stroud, 1992), III, 750–1.

107 Elizabeth Stazicker, *The Sheriffs of Cambridgeshire and Huntingdonshire: A Brief History* (Cambridge, 2007), 124–5.

108 London, College of Arms, William Jenyns’ Ordinary, f. 47r. The legend naming the bearer of the arms is very worn in the original but the arms are clearly identified as those of ‘Sir Walter Krake’ in a sixteenth-century copy of the ordinary in Cambridge, Gonville and Caius College, MS 557/324, f. 9v. For discussion of William Jenyns’ Ordinary, see P.A. Fox, ‘Fourteenth-Century Ordinaries of Arms. Part 2: William Jenyns’ Ordinary’, *The Coat of Arms*, Third Series, 5 (2009), 55–64.

109 I am grateful to Bridget Wells-Furby for advice on this matter. See B. Wells-Furby, ‘The Custom

of England: The Relationship between Arms and Landed Patrimonies in the Fourteenth Century’, in *Heralds and Heraldry in Medieval England*, ed. N. Ramsay (forthcoming).

110 R. Horrox, *The De La Poles of Hull*, East Yorkshire Local History Series, 38 (1983), 4.

111 Walter de Creke at the Dunstable Tournament in 1334 bore ‘*d’argent ove un bend d’asure ove trois wyfres*’ (‘Roll of the Arms of the Knights at the Tournament at Dunstable’, ed. Long, 392; C.H. Hunter Blair, ‘Appendix II: Baronies which owed Castle-Guard or Castle-Guard Rent to the Castle of Newcastle upon Tyne and which maintained houses within it’, *Archaeologia Aeliana*, Fourth Series, 18 (1940), 158; BL, Add. MS 5819, f. 74v). For the Lancaster crest see, H. de Walden, *Some Feudal Lords and their Seals MCCCJ* (Bristol, 1984), 5, 29; J.H. & R.V. Pinches, *The Royal Heraldry of England* (London, 1974), 32–3.

which dates from the 1340s and was probably commissioned by the Ufford family.¹¹² The Ufford connection suggests an East Anglian origin for the family but they remain difficult to trace. One possible candidate though is the Powers of Essex, a minor gentry family who held manors in the parishes of Witham, Little Fordham and Aldham, Essex.¹¹³

Despite the fact that we do not know all the families represented by these shields it seems that they were intended to represent members of the Creke family and those families connected to them by ties of kinship. The Burdeleys shield of arms on the top row was undoubtedly a reference to the marriage of John de Creke's daughter, Margaret, to John de Burdeleys (d. 1329), son of Geoffrey de Burdeleys, sometime before 1321.¹¹⁴ Meanwhile the Moigne shield commemorated the marriage of William de Creke to Eleanor, a member of the Moigne family.¹¹⁵ The connection between the Creke and the Power families is obscure but they may have also been related. What is known is that the Power's manor house at Witham, Powers Hall, lay just across the fields from Crix, the Creke's property at Hatfield Peverel.¹¹⁶

Once again, the appearance of these shields can be partly explained by the rise in popularity

of chantries, which were often established to ensure that prayers were said not just for the souls of the deceased but for other members of the family, both living and dead. The shields of arms on the tomb acted as mnemonic devices to remind the celebrant performing the mass to pray not only for those represented by effigies on the monument but also for their wider family.¹¹⁷ This familial or kinship style of tomb first appeared in England from the late thirteenth century to commemorate members of the royal family and became increasingly popular amongst aristocratic families in the fourteenth century.¹¹⁸ By the 1340s, as the Creke brass clearly demonstrates, kinship tombs had become fashionable amongst the knightly classes, particularly those knights who had close connections to the royal court and had served in the king's wars with Scotland and France.¹¹⁹ Indeed, Anne McGee Morganstern has suggested a direct relationship between conspicuous military service to the Crown and the knight's tomb of kinship in the fourteenth century England, which would certainly fit with what we know about the career of John de Creke's son Walter.¹²⁰ Once again, the Crekes' inspiration may well have come from John of Eltham's monument in Westminster Abbey, the tomb chest of which displayed twenty-four shields with accompanying figures representing members of the royal family.¹²¹

112 Bod Lib, MS Ashmole 804, IV, f. 7r-v; N. Denholm-Young, *The Country Gentry in the Fourteenth Century with Special Reference to the Heraldic Rolls of Arms* (Oxford, 1969), 118–20.

113 P. Morant, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Essex*, 2 vols (London, 1763–68), II pt 1, 107–8, 199. One antiquarian source suggests a Devonshire origin for the family (BL, Add. MS 28834, f. 144v).

114 TNA, C 143/143/6; *CIPM*, VII, no. 261.

115 BL, Add. MS 5819, f. 151r; *CIPM*, XIV, no. 214; William de Creke's granddaughter, Joan Vauncy, was in 1404 one of the co-heirs of the estates of Sir William Moigne, who is described as her kinsman (*House of Commons 1386–1421*, eds Roskell, Clark and Rawcliffe, III, 416–17; IV, 143).

116 Morant, *History and Antiquities of Essex*, II pt 1, 107; P.H. Reaney, *The Place-names of Essex*, English Place-Name Society, 12 (1935), 289, 301; Hope, *Township of Hatfield Peverel*, 149–50, 180–2.

117 Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 125; Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship*, 3–6, 107–16.

118 Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship*, 103–16; A.M. Morganstern, 'The Tomb as Prompter for the Chantry: Four Examples from Late Medieval England', in *Memory and the Medieval Tomb*, eds E. Valdez de Alamo and C.S. Prendergast (Aldershot, 2000), 81–97.

119 Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship*, 103–5.

120 Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship*, 105.

121 Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship*, 91–4.

Yet, as well as prompting prayers for John de Creke's descendants, the display of heraldry was also tied up with the secular concern of demonstrating the family's power and connections. The Crekes, despite coming to prominence through royal service under Edward II and Edward III, were still parvenues and may well have been keen to reinforce their connections with the Cambridgeshire gentry. The display of the coat of arms of the Moigne family, an important knightly family from at least the twelfth century, would undoubtedly have helped to establish the Creke family amongst the East Anglian elite for instance. In this context the positioning of the Burdeleys coat of arms in the centre of the top row of shields, the pre-eminent position, is worth noting. This is likely to have been a deliberate choice, as we know from wills that patrons took great care in the selection and positioning of coats of arms on their tombs.¹²² Why should this be the case? Given that John de Burdeleys and Margaret were both dead by 1334, one possible explanation for the shield's prominent place might be out of a genuine sense of loss for the deceased couple.¹²³ However, if it is assumed that Walter was responsible for commissioning the brass, there may have been a more prosaic factor at work here. After the death of John de Burdeleys in 1329, Walter was granted the wardship of the lands of Burdeleys' son John, Walter's nephew, until he came of age.¹²⁴ This wardship included the Burdeleys family's substantial collection of properties in Norfolk, Cambridgeshire and

Bedfordshire, valued in excess of £25 a year and probably worth much more.¹²⁵ However, Walter's rights over some of the manors were not altogether secure. In 1335 John Fraunceys of Wimpole brought a suit against Walter in Chancery, claiming to have been granted a life interest in the manors of Comberton and Cottenham by John de Burdeleys before he died.¹²⁶ After some litigation, the difficulty was ultimately resolved by Fraunceys' own death in 1337 but Walter must have been anxious to assert his claim to this valuable wardship, especially after the king allowed him to hold the manors of Comberton, Cottenham and Madingley from the crown rent free for the duration of the wardship in consideration for his good service in Scotland.¹²⁷ The positioning of the Burdeleys arms, therefore, as well as commemorating the departed members of that family, may have also been an attempt by Walter to reinforce his entitlement to the wardship of the Burdeleys estates against any further property disputes. Julian Luxford and Jessica Barker have shown that funerary monuments could be used to assert claims over landed estates and that members of the gentry were aware of the potential of tombs to act as legal evidence in disputes.¹²⁸ In the end though, John died before reaching his majority and the Burdeleys lands were divided between John's two sisters in August 1347.¹²⁹ If this reasoning for the placement of the Burdeleys arms is correct then it can be posited that the *terminus ad quem* for the production of the brass is mid 1347.

122 Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 165; S. Badham, *Seeking Salvation: Commemorating the Dead in the Late-Medieval Parish* (Donington, 2015), 219–20.

123 *CFR*, 1327–37, 145–6, 405.

124 *CFR*, 1327–37, 145–6, 405.

125 Madingley, Cambridgeshire (*CFR*, 1327–37, 474); Comberton and Cottenham, Cambridgeshire (*CFR*, 1337–47, 15); Stagsden, Bedfordshire (*CFR*, 1337–47, 452); Scoulton, Norfolk (*CCR*, 1337–39, 545–6).

126 *CCR*, 1333–37, 522–3; VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, V, 266.

127 *CIPM*, VIII, no. 103; *CPR*, 1334–8, 470; *CCR*, 1337–9, 139.

128 J.M. Luxford, 'Tombs as forensic evidence in medieval England', *Church Monuments* 24 (2009), 7–25; Barker, 'Legal Crisis and Artistic Innovation in Thirteenth-Century Scotland'; Barker, *Stone Fidelity*, 254–60. See also, Morganstern, *Gothic Tombs of Kinship*, 107.

129 *CIPM*, IX, no. 41; VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, V, 180; VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, IX, 56, 167; VCH, *Bedfordshire*, III, 98–9.



*Fig. 19. Civilian effigy in the south aisle of Westley Church.
(photo: © Martin Stuchfield)*

Conclusion

The brass of John de Creke and Alyne looked as much to the present and future as it did to the past. Indeed, it can be argued that the brass at Westley is less of a memorial to John and his first wife and more of a statement of his sons' aspirations in the 1340s. The monument was used as an opportunity by their children to celebrate their success in serving the crown, their involvement in the great military campaigns of the 1330s and 1340s and their dynastic achievements. Ultimately though, the Crekes' grand aspirations, represented by the rebuilding of the church and the commissioning of an ornate monumental

brass, were to be somewhat dashed. Walter's wardship over the Burdeleys estates was lost with the death of his nephew John in 1347 and a year later the country was ravaged by the Black Death. Walter, Master John and William all survived the pestilence but the rest of the family may not have gone unscathed as both Walter and William did not leave any male heirs. Instead the bulk of the Crekes' estates were inherited by William's surviving daughter, Joan, who married Sir Edmund Vauncy of Westley Waterless (d. 1372).¹³⁰

Yet despite the failure of the male line it is perhaps surprising that there is no evidence of

¹³⁰ VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, VI, 178. For the descent of the Creke family, see *CIPM*, XIV, no. 214; *CIPM*, XVI, no. 866; *CCR*, 1389–92, 407; *CCR*, 1392–6, 212–13.

any other monuments to the Crekes at Westley. There is nothing to suggest that either Walter, John or William were buried in the church. The large grey marble slab in the south aisle alongside the brass, containing an indent for a simple inscription brass, is later and probably commemorated a member of the Alington family, who were lords of the manor in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.¹³¹ There are three stone cross slabs mounted to the west wall of church but these predate the Creke brass and probably belong to the thirteenth or early fourteenth century.¹³² The only other fourteenth century monument in the church is an effigy to a young man, tentatively dated to c. 1380, which was originally positioned parallel to the Creke brass under the eastern most archway of the nave (Fig. 19).¹³³ Whilst it is possible that the man may have represented another member of the Creke family, given that he is shown in civilian attire he cannot have represented either of John de Creke's sons and the monument most probably commemorated Edmund Vauncy the younger (d. 1389), who

inherited Westley Waterless from his father Edmund and died in his minority.¹³⁴ The two slender brass figures of Sir John de Creke and Lady Alyne in the corner of a quiet country church thus remain as the sole reminder of this remarkable family and their achievements.

Acknowledgements

This article has been a long time in gestation and I have incurred numerous debts in the course of researching and writing it. I am grateful to everyone who has generously given their thoughts and suggestions, particularly for information provided by Tobias Capwell, Nigel Ramsay, Nigel Saul and Bridget Wells-Furby. I would also like to express my thanks to Nicholas Rogers for his assistance in accessing some of the heraldic material, to Martin Stuchfield for providing images of the brass and church, and to Christian Steer for commenting on an earlier draft of this article and for his advice and encouragement over the years. All opinions are my own. Publication of this article has been supported by the A.B.V. Norman Trust.

131 There were a number of inscription brasses to the Alington family in the church, two of which are now on the wall of the north aisle (Lack, Stuchfield, Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Cambridgeshire*, 242; *Monumental Inscriptions and Coats of Arms from Cambridgeshire*, ed. Palmer, 180–1, 243; VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, VI, 178).

132 Davies, *Parish Church of Westley Waterless*, 3.

133 Saul, *English Church Monuments*, 377; BL, Add. MS 5819, f. 111.

134 P. Tudor-Craig, 'Fourteenth-Century Churches', in *Cambridgeshire Churches*, ed. Hicks, 92; VCH, *Cambridgeshire*, VI, 178.

The Brass of Bishop John Waltham (d. 1395)

Jerome Bertram

Boarded over for a hundred years, the brass of Bishop John Waltham has received little scholarly attention since the eighteenth century. Yet, though much damaged, it is one of relatively few medieval episcopal brasses to have survived. This article shows that it amply repays close inspection. It was a large and splendid brass, a worthy commemoration of a bishop who combined high office under Richard II with his pastoral duties in his diocese.

The oldest figure brass in Westminster Abbey (M.S.III), commemorating John Waltham, bishop of Salisbury (d. 1395), lies in the north-west corner of the Confessor Chapel, and was covered by a boarded floor for a hundred years, so it was never seen by Norris or any of the other great scholars of the twentieth century. Battered, worn and defaced, it is still of considerable interest, one of the small number of brasses that survive to medieval bishops (Fig. 1). Yet once there so many: dozens of indents remain in our great cathedrals. Bishops were among the first patrons of the engraver's art, and among their monuments were the largest and most splendid brasses ever made.

John Waltham's brass was once one of the larger and more splendid of these.¹ The tale of its gradual dismemberment can be told from published references and illustrations. In

1631 John Weever described it as 'now defaced and almost quite perished'.² In 1742 it was illustrated by Dart: despite Weever's comment, Dart shows it whole and undamaged, save only for the inscription (Fig. 2). The engraving shows all eight saints, though not clearly enough to read their names.³ Richard Gough in 1796 says it is 'now too much worn to be rubbed off' or 'drawn', though he could still read some of the names of the saints in the niches, which were labelled on their haloes, a device common in painting but otherwise unknown on brasses. 'His epitaph remained imperfect in Godwin's time, setting forth this mark of royal favour in his interment, but neither he nor Weever have given us the little that remained'.⁴

In 1825, already severely mutilated, it was illustrated by Harding and Moule. They show the entire dexter side missing, but on the sinister side are two gablettes of the canopy, and all four niches, the top figure complete and the feet of the second. The bishop's figure is also complete, with the crosier head, and a supporting base.⁵ A more accurate drawing by Lionel Waller, dated 11 June 1838, shows exactly the same amount of damage.⁶ More had gone when Kite illustrated it in 1860: the second niche on the sinister side and what was left of the small figures, the sinister gablette, the

1 Its dimensions are: figure now 1190×470 mm, originally about 1500 mm long; shields 100×130 mm, canopy originally 2280×970 mm, marginal inscription 2390×1150 mm, slab 2450×1220 mm. Rubbed on 11 July 2019.

2 J. Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments* (London, 1631), 482.

3 J. Dart, *Westmonasterium, or the History and Antiquities of Westminster Abbey*, 2 vols (London, 1742), II, 46, pl. 92.

4 R. Gough, *Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain*, 2 vols in 5 (London, 1786–96), I, 154.

5 G.P. Harding and T. Moule, *Antiquities in Westminster Abbey, Ancient Oil Paintings and Sepulchral Brass in the Abbey Church of St Peter, Westminster* (London, 1825), 15, pl. 4. Reproduced in N. Saul, 'Restored to View: The Brass of John Waltham, Bishop of Salisbury, Westminster Abbey', *MBS Bulletin*, 74 (February 1997), 283–4.

6 Reproduced in *Drawings of Monumental Brass and Incised Slabs by the Waller Brothers 1837–44*, ed. R. Hutchinson, *MBS Occasional Paper 2* (London, 2001), pl. 28.

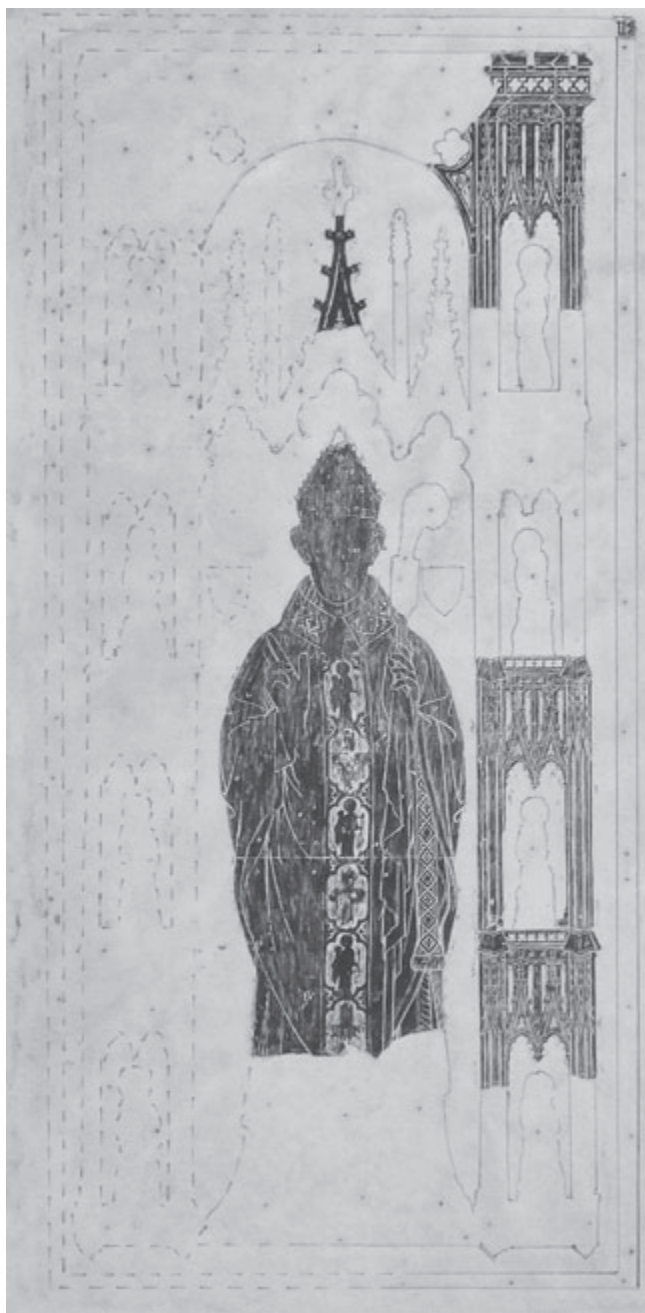


Fig. 1. The brass and slab of Bishop John Waltham (d. 1395), Confessor Chapel, Westminster Abbey with the missing sections drawn in.

(rubbing and dabbing © Jerome Bertram)



Fig. 2. Dart's engraving of the brass of Bishop Waltham.
(*J. Dart, Westmonasterium* (London, 1742), II, pl. 92),
photograph by Paul Cockerham.

crozier head, and the lower part of the main figure with its base.⁷ The first illustration from a rubbing was in 1898, by Beloe, showing the

same amount of surviving metal as in Kite's engraving, and adding in the portions shown on Harding's engraving.⁸ As it was covered for so long, no metal has gone since Beloe's time. It now has a soft protective carpet, which preserves it from wear, but not from pressure, which is what loosens plates. Yet few visitors now enter the Confessor Chapel, so it is as safe as can be hoped for.

Set in Purbeck marble, the brass is from the London B workshop, much favoured by court circles. The figure of the bishop is in the usual pontifical vestments (Fig. 3). The lower part and the crozier head are missing but known from the illustrations by Harding and Waller. The amice and maniple are diapered with alternating fleurs-de-lys and lion masks in lozenges, the dalmatic is fringed, and completely conceals



Fig. 3. Figure of Bishop Waltham.
(rubbing © Jerome Bertram)

7 E. Kite, *The Monumental Brasses of Wiltshire* (London, 1860, repr. Bath, 1969), pl. 31.

8 E.M. Beloe, *Photolithographs of Brasses in Westminster Abbey* (London, 1898); reproduced in J.S.N. Wright, *The Brasses of Westminster Abbey*, (London, 1969), 10.

the tunic, the chasuble is of plain material, but with a pillar orphrey. This comprises a series of elongated quatrefoils or cartouches, alternating the Virgin and Child with crosses. The figures of Virgin and Child represent the arms of the see of Salisbury, *Azure, the Blessed Virgin Mary with the Child* or (Fig. 4). If the alternating cartouches are to be considered heraldic, they seem to be *Sable, a cross or* (Fig. 5). There is enough black matter surviving in the hatched field to show that it was sable, the cross is bare metal, presumably gold, although there is some rough hatching over the sides and ends of the crosses. The *Medieval Ordinary* does not suggest any plausible attribution for these arms. They certainly cannot be intended for the arms of the Order of the Garter (*argent a cross gules*)



Fig. 4. *Virgin and Child* from the orphrey of Bishop Waltham's chasuble.

(photo © Warwick Rodwell, reproduced by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster)



Fig. 5. *Cross* from the orphrey of Bishop Waltham's chasuble.
(photo © Warwick Rodwell, reproduced by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster)

nor was there ever a Garter-encircled shield, although as bishop of Salisbury, Waltham was chancellor of the order. His predecessor Bishop Wyville (d. 1375) does not display the Garter; his successor Bishop Hallum (d. 1416) does. In fact, they may not be heraldic at all, just crosses.

The mitre is crocketed, with a decorative band, and some other features effaced. It is possible that the surface was recessed to leave raised details, as on the brass of Bishop Hallum. The hands are gloved, the right hand raised in blessing, with the gem of his ring visible beside the middle finger (Fig. 6), the left holding the crosier with its vexillum. The ring is clearly shown on the engravings by Harding and Kite, but omitted by Dart and Waller. Two



Fig. 6. Detail of right hand of Bishop Waltham, showing the glove and ring.

(photo © Warwick Rodwell, reproduced by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster)

small shields have been lost from beside the head; they do not seem to have been noticed before, and could have been his personal arms. None of the published illustrations show them, though the dexter one is clear enough in the dabbing.

Above the main figure was a triple ogival canopy, arched over by an embattled super-canopy. The canopy had double shafts, containing four niches for figures of saints on each side with double canopies on each. Such double shafts with saints were not uncommon on the more lavish episcopal brasses, such as that attributed to St Richard in Chichester

(engraved in the 1340s), though on no other does even as much metal survive as on Bishop Waltham's brass. It is odd, however, to have double gablettes over each single figure. Of these, all is lost except parts of three of the niches on the sinister side. Harding and Waller show all four niches complete, including the figure in the topmost niche. Dart shows all the figures, but very roughly sketched: many are just in flowing robes, some certainly appear to be female. But we cannot rely on him too much: the three identical figures of the Virgin and Child on the chasuble are drawn as three quite different male figures, one with a lance.

Gough noted what he could read: 'On the North side St John the Evangelist, with the chalice and dragon, *Johes Evan* ... St. John of Beverley, pontifically habited, his right hand blessing, his left holds a cross, *S' Johes Bevlaic*. St John Almoner, habited as a pilgrim, with a nimbus, a loaf in right hand, pilgrim's staff in left, and a large rosary, *S'c Johes Elemosiner*. One defaced, seeming by the sword St. Peter, is all that remain on the South side'.⁹

Waller's drawing clearly shows that the top dexter figure is indeed St John the Evangelist, for he holds a cup with a dragon therein. Only the feet of the second figure survived, but being bare were obviously St John the Baptist, though Gough omitted that one. Gough saw the identifying label for St John of Beverley, and Dart shows the appropriate figure of a bishop, and likewise the fourth figure, identified as St John the Almoner, is shown by Dart in pilgrim guise with a staff. The identities of the dexter saints are therefore certain. On the sinister side, Gough saw one figure with a sword and implausibly identifies it as St Peter, though St Paul is much more likely. Dart's drawing shows a nondescript male figure with no attribute at

9 Gough, *Sepulchral Monuments*, I, 154.

the top. The second one could be interpreted as St Peter, though it would be odd to put St Paul above St Peter, especially in St Peter's own abbey. Dart's third figure is a bishop, and his fourth another male in flowing garments.

There was a marginal inscription in raised Gothic textualis, all of which is lost except two minims and a colon to mark the end of the first line. The two minims could be *u* or *n*, but most likely to be two thirds of an *m*, concluding a line of verse, possibly even the name *Waltham*, which would make a strong spondee to finish a hexameter line. None of the early engravings show this scrap of inscription.

Both brass and slab are very eroded, especially on the dexter side, in the path of visitors to the chapel, but a considerable amount of gilding remains in the top sinister part of the canopy (Fig. 7). Black filling, probably bone-black, survives in places, especially in the background of the crosses of the orphrey, and around the lower end of the maniple. The wear is consonant with visitors entering the Confessor Chapel from the sanctuary (the only way in before the wooden stair from the north ambulatory was installed). The door, when open, would protect the top sinister part of the canopy, but visitors, walking across the figure, and the delicate canopy-work on the dexter side, loosened the plates, and eroded the slab so that no indents remain on that side. Only the pattern of rivets bears witness to the entirety of the design (Fig. 8).

The whole concept and design is very similar indeed to the brass of his successor, Bishop Hallum (d. 1416), in Konstanz Cathedral, although that is London style D.¹⁰ It is in very much better condition, although slightly



Fig. 7. Detail of top sinister corner of the canopy, showing the extent of gilding

(photo © Warwick Rodwell, reproduced by courtesy of the Dean and Chapter of Westminster)

restored. Hallum's figure is almost exactly like Waltham's, the ring shown in the same way, and the dalmatic concealing the tunic, although the chasuble has no orphrey. The canopy shafts are double, each niche sheltering an angel, not a saint, under a single gablette. There is only a single gablette over the main figure too, flanked by the shields, of which one is encircled by the Garter, as bishops of Salisbury are chancellors of that order; the other by a scroll of similar shape. Around the border is a hexameter verse inscription, engraved, not raised. The designer must have seen the Waltham brass, or at least a drawing or rubbing of it.

10 N. Rogers, 'Bishop Hallum's Brass in Konstanz Minster', *MBS Trans*, 20 (2019), 46–63.



Fig. 8. The brass and slab, showing the extent of damage.
(photo © Warwick Rodwell, reproduced by courtesy of the
Dean and Chapter of Westminster)

The life of Bishop Waltham has been written by R.G. Davies.¹¹ He was born at Waltham in Lincolnshire, and served in the royal chancery from boyhood, gaining preferment in 1371, and named as a ‘cleric’ in 1375. That probably means he was in his early twenties, so he was born in or around 1350. In 1381 he was appointed keeper of the rolls of chancery, went on to hold many offices and commissions, and was promoted to be keeper of the privy seal

in 1386. This was part of an assault on King Richard II, during the complicated political events involving the Lords Appellant. When the King resumed his authority in May 1389, Waltham left office as keeper of the privy seal, but he had already been enthroned as bishop of Salisbury in the previous December. In the event, Richard II rather took to Waltham, and made him treasurer in 1391.

So far, we might imagine him as a career civil servant and politician, not a churchman, but he turned out to be a conscientious pastoral bishop. All summer he was in his diocese, travelling around it, and conducting triennial visitations in 1391 and 1394. He successfully concluded a previous bishop’s dispute with his chapter on the question of visitation rights, but was magnanimous in victory and so maintained amicable relations with them. He urged priests and people to conduct processions twice a week in thanksgiving for the recent peace agreements, and to pray for good weather, a better harvest, an end to internal dissension and the reconciliation of heretics and schismatics. He was strict on priests who neglected their liturgical duties, or offended in other ways. His long, detailed, but rambling will was drawn up on 2 September 1395 at Sonning manor, Berkshire, then in Salisbury diocese, and he died there on 18 September.¹²

In the will, he requested a brass for his parents, John and Margaret, with the curious note, ‘If my father’s bones can be found, they are to be taken to join my mother’s bones, with a marble stone’. They evidently were found, for the brass survives in Waltham, Lincolnshire, even though

11 R.G. Davies, ‘Waltham, John (d. 1395)’, *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/28645, accessed 21 July 2019.

12 *The Register of John Waltham, bishop of Salisbury 1388–1395*, ed. T.C.B. Timmins, Canterbury and York Society, 80 (1994), 214–17.

it has lost its marble stone (M.S.I). There is also a brass for his sister Joan, mentioned in the will as still living in Waltham. He left vestments and plate to Salisbury cathedral, established an obit and an antiphon, and, ten years later, a perpetual chantry was endowed by his executors. He particularly requested to be buried in the cathedral, in a place of the dean's choosing. The king, who also received a substantial legacy, overruled this, and insisted he be buried in the Confessor Chapel among kings. The monks of Westminster were furious (*multis murmurantibus*), as his brass spoils their splendid Cosmatesque pavement. Here too there was an elaborate annual Requiem Mass. Possibly because of the monks' opposition, it was as late as 10 November before the funeral could take place.

Waltham's was only the first of a number of London style B brasses to members of King Richard's court in Westminster Abbey: Sir Bernard Brocas (d. 1395), Sir John Golafre (d. 1396), and Archbishop Waldeby (d. 1398), though the only other brass to break into the Cosmatesque pavement was that to the king's uncle, Thomas of Woodstock.¹³

Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the Dean and Chapter of Westminster, for exceptional permission to study, rub, and publish this brass, to Warwick Rodwell for facilitating my visit, and providing the detailed photographs, and to Richard Pickett of the Abbey staff and Fr Alexander Master of Westminster Cathedral for their assistance.

13 N. Saul, 'The Fragments of the Golafre Brass in Westminster Abbey', *MBS Trans*, 15:1 (1992), 19–32.

Schoolmasters and Pupils on Brasses before the Reformation

Nicholas Orme

It is rare to find teachers or pupils depicted or discussed in medieval art, literature, legislation, or social comment. This low profile also applies in the field of late-medieval brasses. Few survive that make any mention of the matter in their imagery or their inscriptions. This article discusses the handful of brasses that can be related to education – eighteen have been identified so far. They commemorate founders of schools, school teachers, individual schoolboys and noble youths. Yet the rarity of references to education is probably a sign of its ubiquity. It seems likely that most of those who commissioned brasses failed to mention schooling because it was such a common, everyday experience.

At any one time in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries there were tens of thousands of children and adolescents undergoing school education in England. So it is remarkable how little of this impinged on public awareness. It is rare to find teachers or pupils depicted or discussed in art, literature, legislation, or social comment: a fact that has encouraged a belief that there was little or no education until the Renaissance and Reformation. This low profile also applies in the field of late-medieval brasses. Few survive that make any mention of the matter in their imagery or their inscriptions. The fact partly stems from the nature of the brass-making trade. Those who supplied them to the public would be more likely to have ready-made images of knights, ladies, merchants, and clergy than of schoolmasters or pupils. This would incline a schoolmaster or his executors to choose a representation of a priest or a prosperous layman, with the

exception, shortly to be discussed, of one depicted with a shield charged with a teacher's emblems. A wish to commemorate a pupil too could be satisfied with the figure of a young unbearded cleric or layman, although we shall encounter one for whom an off-the-peg image was modified and another for whom a special image was made.

Founders of Schools

Schools in England, in the modern sense of free-standing institutions open to the public, are first clearly recorded in the early twelfth century.¹ Roughly speaking they were of two kinds.² Reading or song schools taught the alphabet, how to pronounce Latin, and sometimes how to sing it to plainsong. These schools were low in status and had little or no impact on funeral monuments such as brasses. Grammar schools taught a full understanding of Latin and how to compose, write, and speak it. At first the masters of grammar schools all charged fees for their services, but in the 1380s wealthy founders began to endow schools to teach for nothing, and after the 1440s institutions of this kind gradually became common. There are a few surviving brasses of the people who founded them. One is that of Joan Greyndour (d. 1485) at Newland, Gloucestershire, who endowed a grammar school there in 1446.³ Another celebrates John Cooke (d. 1528) and his wife Joan (d. 1545–6), creators of the Crypt School, Gloucester, who are buried in the church of St Mary Crypt in that city.⁴ Roger Lupton (d. 1540), lawyer and

1 N. Orme, *Medieval Schools* (New Haven and London, 2006), 46–50.

2 *Ibid.*, 53–68, 86–127.

3 W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield, and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Gloucestershire* (London, 2005),

308–11; N. Orme, *Education in the West of England, 1066–1548* (Exeter, 1976), 153–63.

4 Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Gloucestershire*, 224, 227; Orme, *Education in the West of England*, 137–41.

ecclesiastic, who founded Sedbergh School, Yorkshire, in *c.* 1527, is commemorated with a brass in his chapel at Eton College.⁵ Thomas Magnus (d. 1550), privy councillor of Henry VIII and archdeacon of the East Riding, has one at Sessay, Yorkshire; he was responsible for the endowment of Newark school in 1532.⁶ None of these founders' brasses has a surviving inscription that mentions their educational benefactions, however, and contemporaries would probably not have rated such charity as highly as the lineage and offices held by them. The brasses are of interest to those studying them and their schools, but throw no light on the history of education.

Schoolteachers

A handful of brasses survive relating to school teachers, all probably from the more prestigious grammar schools. At least eight survive or have left a record of their existence. The earliest is said to be a palimpsest in Denham church, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 1). In 1894 it was dated as *c.* 1440 and this date has been repeated by every writer since. It consists of three separate pieces. First, a figure of an ecclesiastic, said to be a friar, which may not be relevant. Then two items that are certainly linked: four lines of Latin verse identifying John Pyke born in 'Langport' (there are several such places), and a shield containing a rebus. The rebus consists of a birch crossed saltire-wise with a turned tubular baton knobbled at the end, conjectured to be a ferule or palmer for beating the hand although these were usually flat. In the interstices of the saltire are the letters M I P S, standing for Johannes Pyke, *Magister Scolarum*



Fig. 1. John Pyke *c.* 1440, Denham, Buckinghamshire (M.S.IV).

(rubbing © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Buckinghamshire)

(meaning schoolmaster). Where Pyke taught has not been found.⁷

5 W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield, and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire* (London, 1994), 83–4.

6 M. Stephenson, *A List of the Monumental Brasses in the British Isles*, 2nd ed. (London, 1964), 557.

7 R.H. Lathbury, 'Proceedings, 21 June 1894', *Proceedings of the Society of Antiquaries*, 2nd series 15 (1893–5),

231–2; M. Stephenson, 'A List of Palimpsest Brasses, Part I', *MBS Trans* 4 (1900), 1–31 at 10–13; Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 55, 58.

The next schoolmaster brass to have left a record belonged to Robert Londe of Bristol, who died in 1462 (Fig. 2). It was in St Peter's church in the city until that was bombed in 1940: fortunately it had been photographed by then. Londe was an Irish priest who emigrated to Bristol and became a leading schoolmaster in the town from about 1425, his school being a private fee-paying establishment held over Newgate, one of the city gates. One of his pupils was probably the Bristol-born antiquary William Worcester, who mentions him appreciatively in the survey of Bristol which Worcester began to make in 1480.⁸ Another member of his school, apparently as a young assistant master, was a certain Thomas Schort who compiled a grammatical miscellany at the school in the late 1420s which gives a good idea of the studies pursued there.⁹ Londe came to be known in Bristol as 'Master Londe' – it is not certain whether he was a graduate or was given the title out of deference – and when he died in 1462, a brass of good quality was placed above his grave in the church. However, it makes no mention of his work as a teacher, being a typical priest's brass depicting a vested figure with a tonsure and describing the owner as 'Master Robert Lond, chaplain'.¹⁰ The only other known brass of someone before the early sixteenth century whose main career was that of a schoolmaster is that of Richard Burgehyll (d. 1492). The inscription of the brass survives in Hereford Cathedral, where it describes him as 'formerly instructor of grammar of this city': very likely as master of the cathedral school (Fig. 3a).¹¹ There was formerly an image



Fig. 2. Robert Londe (d. 1462), St Peter's, Bristol (formerly M.S.1).

(rubbing © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Buckinghamshire)

as well, now lost or in private hands, preserved in a seventeenth-century drawing: that of a prosperous layman, bare-headed, wearing an ankle-length gown, trimmed with fur on the

8 William Worcester, *The Topography of Medieval Bristol*, ed. F. Neale, Bristol Record Society, 51 (2000), 28–9, 136–7, 286.

9 N. Orme, 'A Grammatical Miscellany of 1427–65 from Bristol and Wiltshire', *Traditio* 38 (1982), 301–26, reprinted in N. Orme, *Education and Society in Medieval and Renaissance England* (London and Ronceverte, 1989), 87–112.

10 C.E. Boucher, 'The Lond or Loud Brass in St Peter's Church, Bristol', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 30 (1907), 265–72.

11 J. Duncumb, *Collections towards the History and Antiquities of the County of Hereford*, 2 vols, (Hereford, 1804–12), I, 545.

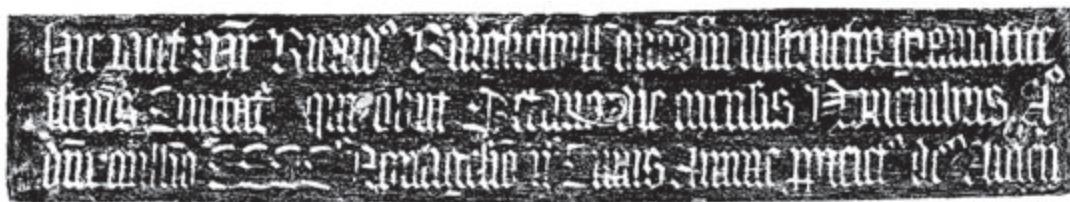


Fig. 3a. Inscription of Richard Burgehylle (d. 1492), Hereford Cathedral (LSW.XXIV).
(rubbing © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Herefordshire)

cuffs and down the front, with a large purse hanging from the belt (Fig. 3b). This too was a common representation and contains nothing to identify Burgehylle as a schoolmaster.¹²

There were at least four brasses of teachers in Eton College chapel, Buckinghamshire, only one of which, William Horman's, now survives. Three of these were different in belonging to ex-masters who went on to higher posts in the Church. This was a feature of the Renaissance when school teaching came to have greater status and became a means of building a career. William Westbury (d. 1477) ended as provost of Eton, but his brass inscription told correctly that he was born at Alresford, Hampshire, studied grammar at Winchester College, proceeded to New College, Oxford, graduated there as MA, and then taught grammar at Eton from about 1443 to 1447.¹³ Richard Hopton (d. 1496) was another Oxford MA and a former fellow of Oriel College, Oxford. He was appointed headmaster of Eton in 1447 as a layman or clerk in minor orders, taking major holy orders in 1452 and leaving his post in the following year. He then became



Fig. 3b. Richard Burgehylle (d. 1492), Hereford Cathedral
from Dingley's *History from Marble* (London, 1867–8).

12 T. Dingley, *History from Marble*, ed J.G. Nichols, 2 vols, Camden Society old ser. 94 and 97 (1867–8), I, 184.

13 T.E. Harwood, 'The Monumental Brasses, Past and Present, in Eton College Chapel', *Oxford Journal of Monumental Brasses*, 2 (1900), 11–28, 68–95, at 14; Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 94; biography in A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford to A.D.1500 [BRUO]*, 3 vols (Oxford, 1957–9), III, 2020–1.

a fellow of Eton, precentor, bursar, and finally vice-provost. The vast majority of his stay at the college was therefore spent outside the school, but his brass inscription referred to his time there and charmingly described how 'he sweated to weave the solid stuff of his children with grammatical threads'.¹⁴

William Horman (d. 1535) was also a vice-provost. He had been a Winchester scholar like Westbury, went to New College, Oxford, graduated, returned to Winchester as headmaster and then moved to the corresponding post at Eton. He was an author of grammatical works, notably his famous *Vulgaria* which is a kind of encyclopaedia of early Tudor life. His brass, however, does not mention his teaching career and shows him in standard clerical dress.¹⁵ The fourth brass was that of Robert Cater in 1546. He was also a scholar of Winchester College and fellow of New College who graduated as an MA. He became headmaster of Eton in 1545 but died a year later. His epitaph briefly mentioned his grammatical vocation.¹⁶ We may add to this group the brass of another master with Winchester connections which survives in New College chapel. It honours John Rede, scholar of Winchester, fellow of New College, headmaster of Winchester from 1484 to 1490, and afterwards chaplain and tutor of Prince Arthur, the eldest son of Henry VII, until about 1496. At the end of his life, in 1520, he

returned to New College as warden but died in the following spring.¹⁷ His brass depicts him as a priest in a cope but its inscription confines itself to his academic degree, his office as warden, and the date of his death. There is no mention of his work as a teacher.

Pupils

There are hundreds of children on brasses, usually in family groups.¹⁸ All could be described as pupils because they came from wealthy gentry or urban families, whose boys would be sent to school and the girls be taught informally how to read along with other accomplishments. The images only refer to this indirectly. Scrolls containing Latin prayers sometimes issue from the mouths of brass figures, as in the case of the four sons of Sir John and Lady Joan Salesbury (c. 1388) at Great Marlow, Buckinghamshire.¹⁹ These might be meant to suggest personal reading of prayer-books but equally well may simply be pious rogations appropriate to a memorial. A little more obvious is the design of the brass of William Este (d. 1534) at Radnage, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 4). This includes a group of eight sons and five (rather indistinct) daughters who are shown standing up but as if ready for prayer. Four of the boys and possibly one or two of the girls carry books, presumably prayer books, and the rest have rosaries.²⁰ There are also some images of individual children, beginning with Rawlin and Margaret Brocas in the second half of the fourteenth

14 Harwood, 'Monumental Brasses', 17; Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 94–5; biography in Emden, *BRUO*, II, 960–1.

15 Harwood, 'Monumental Brasses', pp. 26–7; Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 83–4; biography in Emden, *BRUO*, II, 963–4.

16 Harwood, 'Monumental Brasses', 70; Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 95; biography in A.B. Emden, *A Biographical Register of the University of Oxford A.D. 1501 to 1540* (Oxford, 1974), 106–7.

17 *The Oxford Society for Promoting the Study of Gothic Architecture* (Oxford, 1844), 42; biography in Emden, *BRUO*, III, 1555–6.

18 On this subject, see J. Page-Phillips, *Children on Brasses* (London, 1970).

19 G. Lipscomb, *The History and Antiquities of the County of Buckingham*, 4 vols (London, 1831–47), IV, 604; Page-Phillips, *Children on Brasses*, 9, fig. 2; Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 149–50.

20 Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 180–1.

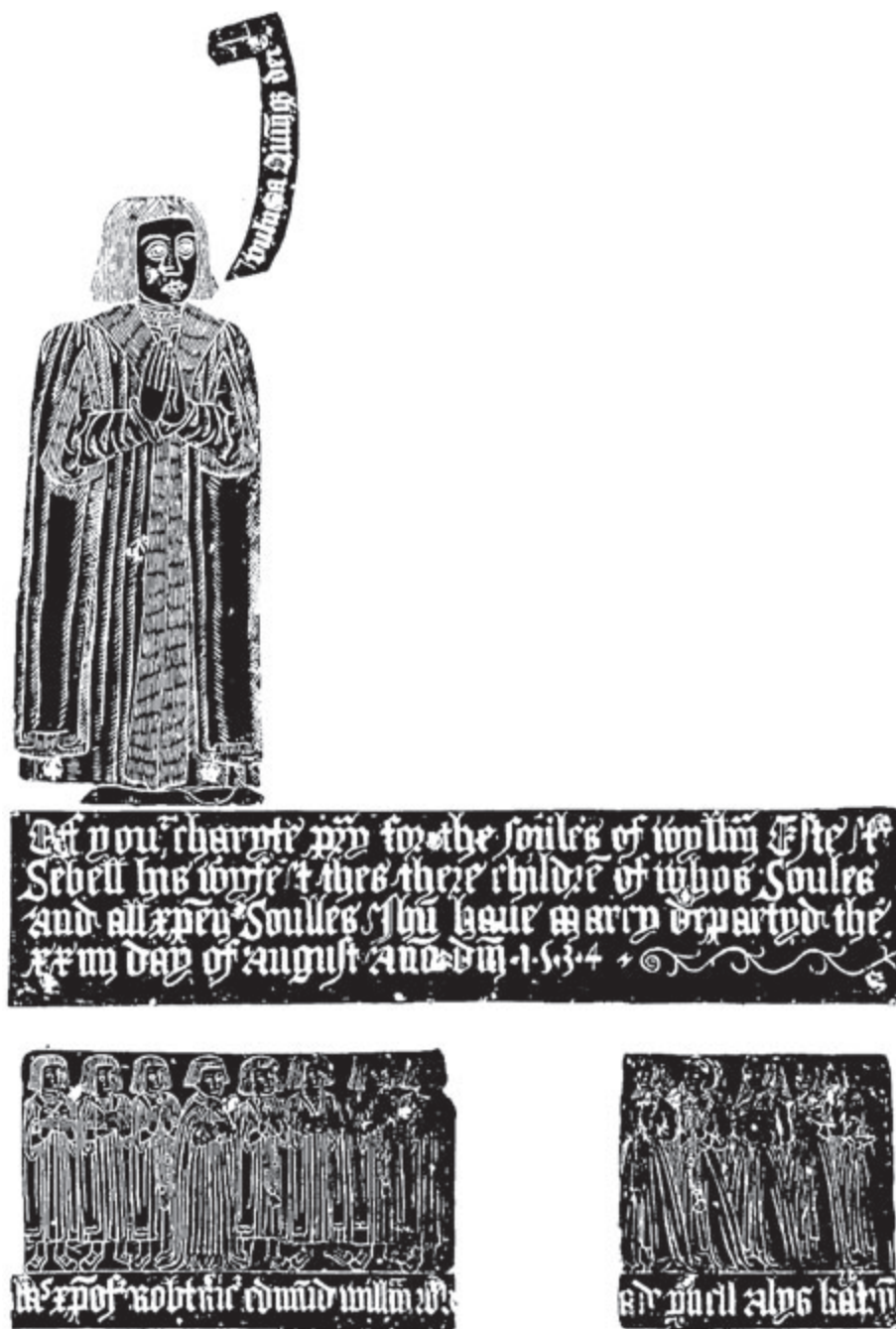


Fig. 4. William Este (d. 1534) and his eight sons and four daughters, Radnage, Buckinghamshire (M.S.I).
(rubbing © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Buckinghamshire)

century.²¹ Most of these too lack educational references, with the exception of three memorials to individual schoolboys, past or present. The earliest is to a scholar of Winchester College, John Kent, son of Simon Kent of Reading, in Headbourne Worthy church, Hampshire (Fig. 5). He entered the college in 1431 and died on 31 August 1435, probably aged about 14–15, having perhaps been isolated or cared for at Headbourne during an illness.²² He is depicted with his hair in the short ‘clubbed’ fashion of the day, wearing a long unbelted robe with a high collar. A text issuing from his mouth reads *Misericordias domini in eternum cantabo* (‘I will sing for ever of the

mercies of the Lord’) from Psalm 88 (Vulgate). Oddly, the brass inscription does not record the date of his death, which is known only from college records, but it identifies Kent as a ‘Scholar of the New College of Winchester’, and is therefore perhaps the earliest reference to school education on any monument.²³

The second brass is to another Winchester scholar, John Bedell, who entered in 1440 but lived until 1498 when he must have been in his late sixties (Fig. 6). He became steward of the college and mayor of Winchester, but his replica brass in the college chapel records him too as having been ‘*quondam scholaris huius collegii*



Fig. 5. Simon Kent (d. 1435), Headbourne Worthy, Hampshire (M.S.I).
(rubbing © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Hampshire)



Fig. 6. John Bedell (d. 1498), Winchester College, Winchester (M.S.IX).
(photo © Martin Stuchfield)

21 Page-Phillips, *Children on Brasses*, 9, fig. 1.

22 T.F. Kirby, *Winchester Scholars* (London and Winchester, 1888), 54. The death date is only recorded in

the original college register and is inaccurately summarised in Kirby's edition.

23 Illustrated in *ibid.*, frontispiece.

(sometime scholar of this college).²⁴ The third example is that of Thomas Heron, son of Sir John Heron, treasurer of the royal household, at Little Ilford, Essex (Fig. 7). He died at the age of fourteen in 1517, and is the only boy on a brass who is clearly depicted as a pupil. His image is simply that of a robed man, but it has been modified so that the belt of the gown carries a pen case and an ink pot which were, by that date, essential equipment in a classroom.²⁵ There is one other relevant child brass: that of John Stonor who died in 1512, at Wraysbury, Buckinghamshire (Fig. 8).²⁶ As he was probably the son of Sir Walter Stonor of Stonor in Oxfordshire, he must have been a schoolboy but he is not identified as such in the inscription.²⁷ His image shows him in a gown with bands of trimming going down the front and along the skirts, and it was specially commissioned because it gives him a curious and unusual kind of headdress. On the top of his head is a Tudor cap with a shallow point, not unlike those worn by contemporary schoolboys and perhaps meant to imply his schooling. Underneath the cap he wears a kind of hood, embroidered and fastened under the chin, with two swirling tails. The reason for this depiction is unknown: normally boys of this period wore their hair flowing down to their shoulders. One explanation might be that John had his hair shaved during an illness, but it seems odd to have illness commemorated in this way. Another possibility is that the hood represents some special kind of status, either within a school or in the outside world.

24 Stephenson, *Monumental Brasses*, 168; Kirby, *Winchester Scholars*, 60.

25 W. Lack, H.M. Stuchfield, and P. Whittemore, *The Monumental Brasses of Essex*, 2 vols (London, 2003), I, 410.

26 Lipscomb, *History of Buckingham*, IV, 490; Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 251–2.

27 *Kingsford's Stonor Letters and Papers 1290–1483*, ed. C. Carpenter (Cambridge, 1996), xxxvi.



Fig. 7. Thomas Heron (d. 1517), Little Ilford, Essex (M.S.I).

(rubbing © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Essex)



Fig. 8. John Stonor (d. 1512), Wraysbury, Buckinghamshire (M.S.II).

(rubbing © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Buckinghamshire)

Noble youths.

A final category of pupils on brasses is that of noble youths, who would have had some schooling in Latin grammar before going on to an aristocratic training in a great household, where they learnt athletic, military, and cultural accomplishments. I have written recently about one of these young men, Edward Courtenay, who died in his teens in the 1430s. He was the nephew of an earl of Devon and his brass inscription only draws attention to that fact, not to his education. He is shown as one of the aristocracy in a belted gown from which hangs a weapon, while his feet rest on a hunting dog. The reason for linking him with education is the location of his brass in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford, formerly St Frideswide's Priory. He may have happened to die while passing through Oxford, but we know of other boys of his rank who spent time in universities during the fifteenth century, studying grammar or logic as a prelude to a lay career. It is possible that Edward did so too, and that this explains his burial in the priory.²⁸

Two other noble youths have stronger links to education, and the brasses of both were once in Eton Chapel. The earlier of the two is Edward Audley, eldest son of John, Lord Audley, who died on 15 August 1478 as a young man, probably at about the age of eighteen. His brass, no longer extant, showed him bare-headed with the shoulder-length hair of the period, wearing plate armour, and with his family coats of arms around him. The accompanying inscription in fifteen lines of Latin verse was an example of the biographical texts that became common in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. It told how Edward IV

was his godfather (and presumably gave him his forename), that he learnt grammar 'here', meaning Eton, that he was a sword bearer to Edward, prince of Wales (later Edward V) and was a *cyronomon*: very likely a henchman or noble servitor of the prince. However, the inscription also describes Edward as a *miles*, a knight, and his younger brother James was certainly made a knight of the Bath when Prince Edward was created prince of Wales in 1475. This makes it likely that Edward Audley received that rank then or earlier. In that case 'sword bearer' may be a synonym for 'knight' and Edward may have been merely a henchman to Prince Edward, a term to be explained shortly.²⁹

The other brass of a noble youth in the chapel (still extant) is that of Richard, Lord Grey of Codnor, Wilton, and Ruthyn – or so he is styled on the brass. He died in 1521, again in his teens. His image shows him like Audley, bare-headed with long hair in plate-armour, but his inscription (in English) dwelt more on his family links. It did, however, credit him with being 'henchman to our sovereign lord king Henry the Eighth'.³⁰ The word henchman, etymologically meaning horseman, emerged in the fourteenth century to describe noble adolescent servitors, at first in the royal household and later also in those of the high aristocracy. In Edward IV's household, round about 1470, there were six of them, or more if the king so wished, and they had a master to teach them noble skills and good manners. The master was to train them to ride, joust, wear armour, observe courtesy particularly rules of precedence, and learn 'sundry languages'. These must have been French and Latin: French from the henchmen's master and

28 N. Orme, 'Edward Courtenay and his Brass in Christ Church Cathedral, Oxford', *MBS Trans* 19:4 (2017), 328–32.

29 Bod Lib, MS Ashmole 1137, f. 152v; Harwood, 'Monumental Brasses', 15, 68; Lack, Stuchfield and

Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 94.

30 MS Ashmole 1137, f. 195v; Harwood, 'Monumental Brasses', 22–3; Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, *Monumental Brasses of Buckinghamshire*, 81–2.

Latin from the royal household's professional schoolmaster who is mentioned as teaching Latin to the henchmen. The young men also learnt to harp, pipe, sing, and dance. Their master was to sit with them at meals and see that their table manners and their conversation observed the rules of courtesy. The inscriptions to Audley and Grey show they were under this system of training and instruction, which readers of the texts would have understood.³¹

This study has referred to eighteen brasses. Others may remain to be collected, but most of these are likely to relate to ex-schoolmasters and to make no visual or textual allusion to their classroom careers. References to education, then, are rare, but one might ask why there are any at all. Sometimes schooling may have

seemed to confer or confirm someone's status. John Kent's family must have been proud that he was a scholar of Winchester, a feeling shared by Thomas Bedell or his family. Audley had cachet from having studied at Eton and he and Grey from being young learners in the royal household. Eton was self-conscious enough of its importance to record three men as having taught in its school. Yet even here, so famous a master as William Horman could be given a brass that said nothing about the activity that made him famous. It seems likely that most of those who commissioned brasses failed to mention schooling because it was such a common, everyday experience for people of their rank. In short, what at first seems to indicate a lack of education is more probably a sign of its ubiquity.

31 A.R. Myers, *The Household of Edward IV* (Manchester, 1959), 126–7.

Antiquarian Records of Brasses in Norfolk 1840–99: A Quantitative Approach

Matthew J. Sillence

The nineteenth century witnessed the formation of many local and national antiquarian and archaeological societies, which predate the creation of the Monumental Brass Society (MBS). For Norfolk – a county with a considerable number of extant and lost brasses – these scholarly communities played a major role in continuing the earlier antiquarian mission of an accurate record of such monuments. This article focuses on those who contributed to the study of brasses in Norfolk in two ways. First, by analysing the frequency of references to brasses in a local archaeological journal, it identifies an increasing interest in such monuments as a whole over a fifty-year period. Second, through an analysis of the correspondence between several key figures, it demonstrates how knowledge of local brasses evolved geographically over time. The findings of this study suggest that the discourse on brasses was highly developed by the time that the MBS was established. An understanding of the context of antiquarian scholarship can be useful in identifying clusters of brasses that have been under-researched historically, and as a method could be refined and applied to our present research practices.

Introduction

The emergence of the study of monumental brasses as a national, and arguably international, endeavour has a long history. With the imminent publication of the Norfolk volume of the *County Series*, renewed attention will be paid to this particularly brass-rich area of the country. The aim of such surveys, and the many interpretative essays and contributions to the *Transactions of the Monumental Brass Society*, is to better understand the historical practices of commemoration, how brasses were commissioned and have been conserved for the future. Research on brasses

is a dynamic practice, encompassing many spheres of human activity: history, literature, archaeology, materials conservation, theology and art history, to name but a few. However, there are relatively few studies that have taken these scholarly practices as a subject in their own right. Where the historiography in this field has received significant contributions, such as those of Richard Busby and Sally Badham, it is possible to pay much closer attention to the lives and activities of individuals who described and recorded brasses *in situ* and from copies, in the form of drawings, rubbings and photographs.¹ The interrelated activities of this community, that were becoming formalised in the latter part of the nineteenth century, are still difficult to discern. As many members of that community were clergy, or their professions lay outside universities and museums, the contributions they made were not manifested through institutions, but through personal connections, and we are highly reliant on records of their communication.

This article begins by outlining key works concerning monumental brasses in Norfolk published from 1600 to the mid nineteenth century to explore the antiquarian preoccupation with the destruction of brasses. Although loss of monuments, and in particular their inscriptions, was a national issue because a common cultural heritage was at stake, in a brass-rich county such as Norfolk, with its web of rural churches, their disappearance from the historical fabric was an emotive issue. Henry Spelman (1563/4–1641), John Weever (1575/6–1632), and Sir Thomas Browne

1 R.J. Busby, *A Companion Guide to Brasses and Brass Rubbing* (London, 1973); R.J. Busby, *The Monumental*

Brass Society 1887–2012: A Short History (London, 2012).

(1605–82) were among the earliest to draw attention to the loss of church property in their own time. Modern scholarship is deeply indebted to these earlier scholars for their lists and subsequent county historical surveys, such as that by Anthony Norris (1711–86), Thomas Martin (1697–1771) and Francis Blomefield (1705–52), which inform our current knowledge of extant and lost memorials.

The second part of this study focuses on the nineteenth century, for it was in this period that the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society (NNAS), the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors (CUABC), and its successor the Monumental Brass Society (MBS) emerged. As Philippa Levine noted in her work on learned societies, the decade from 1840 and 1849 was especially important because the majority of county or local and specialist societies in Britain were founded at this time.² As these new societies formed, they began to publish their own lists of extant and lost memorials, which relied on the work of the earlier generations of antiquarians. However, as new iterations of scholarship emerged, errors and omissions also appeared if antiquarian sources were used uncritically. Members of these later scholarly communities, such as Revd Charles Robertson Manning (1825–99), sought to tackle these by verifying accounts of monuments and inscriptions and establishing new lists and surveys.

As the networks of antiquaries, archaeologists and historians grew, it led to a rise in the exchange, discussion and publication of brasses in the form of lists, rubbings and

prints. In examining a small part of that community, which contributed locally to the understanding of brasses in the county of Norfolk, this study demonstrates that with quantitative analysis of references to brasses in publications, the minutes of learned societies and correspondence between individuals, it is possible to view, at scale, the discussions which took place on brasses over time. Where locations are mentioned, it is also possible to track discursive patterns. These indicate how the research of individuals, such as Charles George Roberts Birch (1839–1903), and their associates progressed across the county, often in relation to emerging and recent publications on brasses.

The methodology of this study is by no means new. Quantitative text analysis belongs to a cluster of disciplinary practices that encompass statistical analysis, computational linguistics, and more recently computational literary studies. Common to these practices is the treatment of texts as datasets, through which language can be mined at the levels of paragraphs, sentences, words and even letters. Unlike computational linguistics and computational literary studies that consider any part of language use to be potentially significant – and therefore rely on tokenised and marked-up semantic unit, such as verbs, nouns and adjectives – the approach in this paper is focused on word classes that are directly relevant to this scholarly community: names, objects and places.³ Analysing nineteenth-century discourse in this way may allow for a more critical approach to antiquarian records of brasses, which were not necessarily

2 P. Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional: Antiquarians, Historians and Archaeologists in Victorian England, 1838–86* (Cambridge, 1986), 67.

3 For an introduction to quantitative methods for texts, see P. Hudson, 'Numbers and Words: Quantitative Methods for Scholars of Texts', in *Research Methods for*

English Studies, ed. G. Griffin, 2nd edition (Edinburgh, 2013), 133–59; D. Archer, 'Data Mining and Word Frequency Analysis', in *Research Methods for Reading Digital Data in the Digital Humanities*, eds G. Griffin and M. Hayler (Edinburgh, 2016), 72–92.

assembled and revised comprehensively, or systematically, but often opportunistically, through personal networks, and in the wake of new publications.

Antiquarian records of Norfolk brasses 1600–1839

Antiquarian records of brasses in Norfolk were part of much wider historical and topographical studies on the hundreds of Norfolk. The rise of antiquarianism has been explored in depth by Graham Parry and Rosemary Sweet, and their observations are therefore very useful in understanding three emerging factors in the seventeenth century.⁴ The first was the fragmented nature of England's faith. The loss of the monasteries was a considerable problem because these religious institutions spanned the Anglo-Saxon and Medieval worlds, and were therefore important in creating a more unified narrative of English Christianity. Despite several decades of depredation, monastic remains were still present and visible.⁵ The second factor, which may have been fuelled by a growing interest in the history of funerary customs, was the loss of epitaphs, which were used not simply to remember those of the past, but to support claims to family descent in the present.⁶ The third factor was the desire to develop methods for representing physical remains visually rather than describing them textually. Illustration was not common, but was to be influential.⁷

One antiquary of this early generation was Henry Spelman (1563/4–1641). Spelman was born in Congham, Norfolk, and one of the founding members of the early Society of Antiquaries.⁸ He was well-connected by marriage to the L'Estrange family, who held property in West Norfolk. Over time, Spelman gained considerable knowledge of the history of the county through deeds and charters, but he was also concerned and increasingly vocal about the uses of church property since the Dissolution.⁹ The fragmentation and redistribution of church lands, tithes and buildings into private hands was a deeply moral issue for Spelman because it undermined the status of the church in his own time. Although Spelman was not concerned about monuments *per se*, his argument had repercussions for other projects in that period.

One of the earliest antiquarians to focus specifically on monuments across the country was John Weever. His *Funerall Monuments* lists the diocese of Norwich and the county of Norfolk.¹⁰ Weever's work was published in 1631 and exemplifies Parry's observation that one of the aims of antiquarianism at this time was to record the names and titles of individuals. Weever laments to loss of 'brassen Inscriptions' in England, in a time before further damage was inflicted during the period of the English Civil War.¹¹ As Phillip Lindley has noted, Weever's interest in recording objects that

4 G. Parry, *The Trophies of Time: English Antiquarians of the Seventeenth Century* (Oxford, 2007); R. Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 2003).

5 Parry, *Trophies of Time*, 10–11.

6 *Ibid.*, 13.

7 *Ibid.*, 361.

8 J. Evans, *A History of the Society of Antiquaries* (Oxford, 1956), 8–9.

9 S. Handley, 'Spelman, Sir Henry (1563/4–1641)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/26104 accessed 2 July 2019 and Parry, *Trophies of Time*, 159.

10 Norwich begins on page 717 (which starts with Suffolk). Norfolk begins on page 785 and runs to page 871, the end of the text.

11 J. Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments within the United Monarchie of Great Britain, Ireland and the Islands adjacent* (London, 1631).

were not present, such as an indent at Stoke-by-Nayland, Suffolk, as well as those that were, makes him particularly important when discussing brasses.¹²

Weever was not the only antiquarian to have recorded the monuments of Norfolk. The physician and polymath, Sir Thomas Browne, was concerned about the damage to monuments inflicted during the Civil War.¹³ His *Repertorium, or, some account of the tombs and monuments in the cathedral church of Norwich in 1680*, published posthumously in 1712, but based on a work of 1680, gives an indication of the extent of that damage:

In the Time of the late Civil Wars, there were about an hundred Brass Inscriptions stol'n and taken away from Grave-Stone, and Tombs, in the Cathedral Church of Norwich; as I was inform'd by John Wright, one of the Clerks, above Eighty Years old, and Mr: John Sandlin, one of the Choir, who lived Eighty nine Years...¹⁴

What is interesting in both Weever and Browne is the interest in inscriptions. Although whole monuments, including free-standing tombs, were the subject of Weever's and Browne's accounts, the concern surrounding the loss of the names and titles of those interred in the county's churches was probably of even greater importance. As Browne noted:

...the distinct Places of the Burials of many noble and considerable Persons become unknown; and, lest they should be quite buried in Oblivion, I shall, of so many, set

down only these following that are most noted to Passengers, with some that have been erected since those unhappy Times.¹⁵

Another of those born in the county who researched the lives and material culture of the area was Antony Norris, educated at Norwich Grammar School and Cambridge, at Gonville and Caius College, who became a lawyer and served as deputy lieutenant of Norfolk. In the early 1730s he collected six volumes of material relating to Norfolk, which were to form part of the most influential text on the county.¹⁶ This text was compiled initially by Francis Blomefield, from the collections and interventions of several other antiquaries. He was educated at Thetford Grammar School and, like Norris, attended Cambridge at Gonville and Caius College. David Stoker has noted that Blomefield as well as recording monumental inscriptions from churches in Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, also amassed substantial notes from his contemporaries.¹⁷

In 1732, through his friend, Thomas Martin (1697–1771), Blomefield gained access to the vast collection of historical source material that had once belonged to Peter Le Neve (1666–1729). This had passed to Martin as executor, although Le Neve's collection was never distributed as intended. In 1733 Blomefield, with Martin's assistance, proposed to publish *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of Norfolk*, beginning the following year and issued in monthly parts over a two-year period.¹⁸ Peter Le Neve was one of the original members of the forerunner of the Society of Antiquaries,

12 P. Lindley, *Tomb Destruction and Scholarship: Medieval Monuments in Early Modern England* (Donington, 2007), 102; Weever, *Ancient Funerall Monuments*, 773.

13 T. Browne, *Repertorium, or, some account of the tombs and monuments in the cathedral church of Norwich in 1680* (London, 1712).

14 Browne, *Repertorium*, 2.

15 *Ibid.*, 3; Parry, *Trophies of Time*, 259.

16 D. Stoker, 'Norris, Antony (1711–86)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/20263 accessed 7 August 2015.

17 D. Stoker, 'Blomefield, Francis (1705–52)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/2663 accessed 31 August 2015.

18 *Ibid.*

and served as its president until 1724. After his death in 1729, his extensive collections of books and manuscripts were sold. His executor was Thomas Martin, who had known Le Neve for many years through their mutual interest in Norfolk antiquities.¹⁹ Martin was also a member of the Society of Antiquaries, recommended by Le Neve. He was particularly keen on cataloguing and in reproducing extant texts and arms. It was through his marriage to Le Neve's widow, Frances, that the remainder of Le Neve's collections came into his possession. Martin outlived Francis Blomefield, and was instrumental in progressing the completion of the *History of Norfolk*, which was undertaken largely by Charles Parkin.²⁰

Charles Parkin (1690–1765) had also attended Cambridge, graduating in 1712, and in 1730 he began to assist Blomefield on his *History of Norfolk*. He continued between 1755 and 1762, completing the series, which was eventually published between 1767 and 1775.²¹ Blomefield's *Topographical History* remains one of the most significant contributions to our understanding of the county, but it was not without errors, which were subsequently criticised by later historians.²² Although Blomefield supplied inscriptions from monumental brasses that had survived in the eighteenth century, there were evidently many omissions, which are discussed later in this paper.²³

The antiquarianism of seventeenth and eighteenth centuries made two significant contributions. The first was in establishing a collective enterprise for historical studies in which historical documents as well as objects were valued as part of the fragmented past. Individuals shared their collections and knowledge in the creation of national and local surveys. There was still a desire to create a national narrative in the eighteenth century, but through publications like the *Gentleman's Magazine*, there was also an understanding that this was a common endeavour, even if scholarly authority on the past lay with a small minority.²⁴ The second major contribution, principally of the later period, was the formation of empirical conventions, which emphasised accuracy and observation of physical remains *in situ*, where possible.²⁵

The next generation of Norfolk antiquaries rose to prominence at the beginning of the nineteenth century around the figure of Dawson Turner (1775–1858). Turner (Fig. 1) was born and based in Great Yarmouth, and admitted to Cambridge in 1792. He left university and began work in banking in 1796, following his father's death. Dividing his time between his profession and education, he had wide interests spanning natural history and antiquity.²⁶ He was one of Norfolk's most active antiquaries, even creating an expanded bespoke version of Blomefield's *Topographical History* that included

19 T. Woodcock, 'Le Neve, Peter (1661–1729)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/16440 accessed 24 August 2015; Stoker, 'Martin, Thomas (1697–1771)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/18212 accessed 31 August 2015.

20 Stoker, 'Le Neve', (*ODNB*).

21 D. Stoker, 'Parkin, Charles (1690–1765)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/21367 accessed 24 August 2015.

22 F. Blomefield, *An Essay Towards a Topographical History of the County of Norfolk: containing a description of the towns, villages, and hamlets, with the foundations of monasteries, churches, chapels, chantries, and other religious buildings* (Fersfield, 1739–75); Stoker, 'Blomefield', (*ODNB*).

23 An expanded discussion of lost brasses in Norfolk can be found in E.M. Beloe, 'Some Lost Brasses of Norfolk', in *A Supplement to Blomefield's Norfolk*, ed. C. Ingleby (London, 1929), 99–121.

24 Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past*, 349.

25 *Ibid.* 13.

26 This reflects, in many respects, Rosemary Sweet's understanding of eighteenth-century antiquarianism, which appears to have used a broad epistemology, in which treatment of the natural world and history were bound together (Sweet, *Antiquaries: The Discovery of the Past*, 12).



Fig. 1. Dawson Turner. Stipple engraving by A. Fox after M.W. Sharp.

Wellcome Collection. Attribution 4.0 International (CC BY 4.0).

several thousand engravings, lithographs and drawings,²⁷ which may have been included in part to make up for the limited number of illustrations that accompanied the original series.

Turner's earlier connections were with the painter, John Sell Cotman (1782–1842), who was employed as a drawing master, teaching Turner's children.²⁸ Cotman was a local man, born in Norwich, and produced etchings of brasses from across Norfolk and Suffolk, although fewer in the latter case.²⁹ This was probably the most significant collection of illustrations dedicated to brasses, and was part of a wider campaign to create a visual record of the antiquities of the county. These illustrations remain important for scholarship today. For example, Sally Badham and Ron Fiske have noted the importance of Cotman's work in recording what was left of the brasses in the county. There are several lost brasses recorded in his etchings, such as that at Ingham to Sir Miles and Lady Joan Stapleton (Fig. 2), and Amfelice Tendall at Hockwold (Fig. 3). Many of Cotman's compositions were copied from rubbings he obtained from Revd Thomas Talbot (1778–1832). Talbot had a keen interest in brasses, as evidenced by a series of drawings he produced in 1793–4.³⁰

The late eighteenth and early nineteenth-century interest in brasses in Norfolk was therefore characterised by a strong visual turn. Not only was it vital to record names, titles, dates and locations of monuments and their inscriptions, but it was also crucial that accurate illustrations were available for consultation. Cotman's *Engravings of the Most Remarkable of the Sepulchral Brasses in Norfolk and*

27 A. Fraser, 'Turner, Dawson (1775–1858)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/27846 accessed 4 September 2015.

28 A.W. Moore, 'Cotman, John Sell', *Grove Art Online*, online edn, ref:T019825 accessed 20 July 2015; A.W. Moore, 'Dawson Turner: Art Patron, Connoisseur and Collector', in *Dawson Turner: A Norfolk Antiquary and his Remarkable Family*, ed., N. Goodman (Chichester, 2007), 21.

29 S. Badham and R. Fiske, 'John Sell Cotman's Sepulchral Brasses of Norfolk and Suffolk', *MBS Trans*, 16:5 (2002), 500–45.

30 H.O. Clark, 'An Eighteenth-century Record of Norfolk Sepulchral Brasses', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 26 (1938), 85–102; Busby, *Companion Guide to Brasses*, 234; S. Badham '“Beautiful Remains of antiquity”: The medieval monuments in the former Trinitarian priory church at Ingham, Norfolk. Part 1: The lost brasses', *Church Monuments* 21 (2006), 7–33, at 9–10.

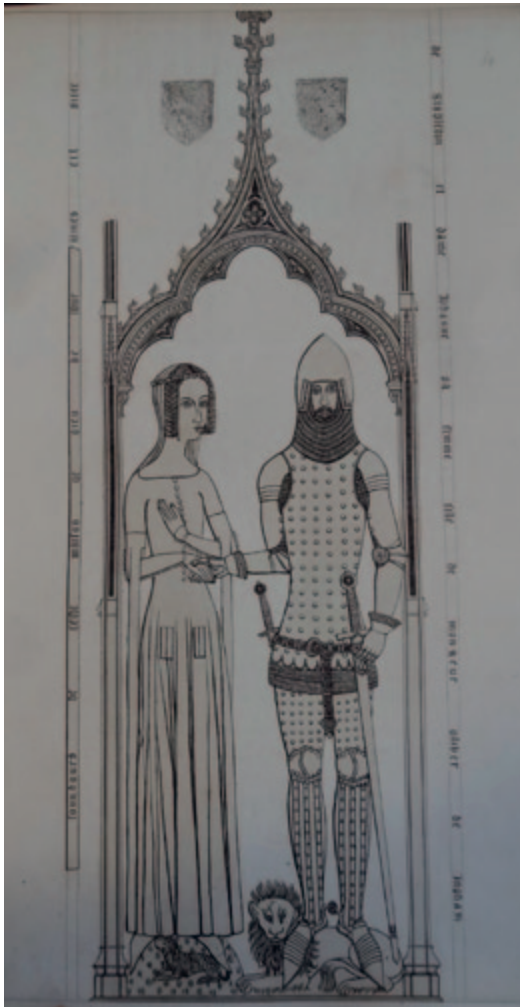


Fig. 2. Etching by John Sell Cotman of the brass of Sir Miles Stapleton (d. 1364) and his wife Lady Joan, Ingham, Norfolk.
(from Cotman, *Engravings of the Most Remarkable of the Sepulchral Brasses of Norfolk*, 3rd edn (with Suffolk) London, 1839).

Suffolk was issued in parts between 1814 and 1819, but following the sale of his drawings and plates to Henry Bohn, revised editions of the Norfolk and Suffolk volumes appeared in



Fig. 3. Etching by John Sell Cotman of the brass of Amfelice Tendall (d. 1532), Hockwold, Norfolk.
(from Cotman, *Engravings of the Most Remarkable of the Sepulchral Brasses of Norfolk*, 3rd edn (with Suffolk) London, 1839).

1838.³¹ Cotman's etchings had a strong effect on the local antiquarian community long after they had been produced because, within a decade of Bohn's revised editions of Cotman's illustrations, brasses were firmly on the agenda of the newly formed Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society (NNAS).

Interest in Norfolk brasses 1840–99

There was clearly an appetite for antiquities in Norfolk by the 1840s. Between 29 July and

31 Badham and Fiske, 'John Sell Cotman's Sepulchral Brasses', 530–1.

5 August 1847, the Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland visited Norwich and the local area, noting that there was ‘gratifying evidence of a lively taste for archaeology in East Anglia’ and attributed this, in part, to the formation of the NNAS in 1846.³² Dawson Turner was an early and influential member of the Society. At its meeting on 4 January 1846, the Norfolk-born Revd Charles Boutell (1812–77) was elected a member. He was, at that time, the secretary to the St Albans Architectural Society.³³ Boutell went on to publish widely on heraldry and brasses, and was well-connected with other local historical communities, but his reputation suffered from a scandal over the misappropriation of funds from the London and Middlesex Archaeological Society.³⁴ One year later, on 7 January 1847, Boutell was elected as a member of the NNAS committee. The following month he wrote from his new living at Downham Market to offer the NNAS 400 copies of an engraving of a brass at Felbrigg, possibly that of Sir Simon Felbrigge.³⁵

In May 1847 Boutell presented a copy of his newly published book on *Monumental Brasses and Slabs*.³⁶ Over the following three years, Boutell continued to send rubbings to the Society and published plates, including those that he planned to feature in his own articles in the Society’s publication, *Norfolk Archaeology*. Boutell was not the only member of the clergy who had joined the Society. At the same meeting at which Boutell was elected a member of the

committee, Revd Charles Robertson Manning was elected a member of the Society.³⁷ Revd Manning, who was also born in Norfolk and later based at Diss Rectory (Fig. 4), went on to become an important member of the Norfolk antiquarian community, publishing numerous papers with the Society, many of which were on brasses. His own book, which was a national survey of brasses, was published in 1846, just before Boutell’s more elaborate work on the



Fig. 4. Bookplate of Revd Charles Robertson Manning M.A. by Cornelius Jansson Walter Winter (1817–91). (courtesy of Richard Busby)

32 Archaeological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland, *Memoirs Illustrative of the History and Antiquities of Norfolk and the City of Norwich* (London, 1851), xviii.

33 Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society [NNAS], The Minute Book 0000/3655 3/B/7, 7–8; C. Lee, ‘Boutell, Charles (1812–77)’, *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/3014 accessed 5 August 2015.

34 Levine, *Amateur and the Professional*, 54; R. Busby, ‘Rev. Charles Boutell’, *MBS Bulletin*, 71 (February, 1996),

223–6; R. Busby, ‘Rev Charles Boutell 1812–77: a short presentation’ (2001), unpublished manuscript.

35 NNAS, The Minute Book 0000/3668 3/B/7, 79, 83.

36 NNAS, The Minute Book 0000/3668 3/B/7, 96; C. Boutell, *Monumental Brasses and Slabs: An Historical and Descriptive Notice of the Incised Monumental Memorials of the Middle Ages* (Oxford, 1847).

37 NNAS, The Minute Book 0000/3668 3/B/7, 8.

same subject.³⁸ Manning's obituary in the *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology and History* of 1899, gives an indication of his importance in the second half of the nineteenth century. Unlike his contemporary Boutell, Manning received an impressive eulogy delivered by the bishop of Norwich, who described him as a man 'of excellent intellectual capacity, admirable training, and of deep learning, and one of the foremost archaeologists and antiquarians in this part of England'.³⁹

After the publication of Manning's *List* in 1846, the author received a number of letters of gratitude, with many containing corrections or additions to his ambitious survey. One of those correspondents was Charles Boutell, who, writing on 14 October 1847, alludes to Manning's recent book, and goes on to note his own plans for a series of woodcuts of brasses.⁴⁰ Boutell wrote to Manning on at least two other occasions: once on 15 January 1848, and ten days later on 25 January. This more informal exchange, beyond the minutes of the NNAS, provides a glimpse of Boutell's keen interest in rubbings and prints of brasses. Manning's contribution to the study of brasses nationally, and in Norfolk in particular, is significant when one examines his work with the NNAS in more detail. He was the author of specific papers on individual brasses in the county, and in 1888 published the first part of a list of monumental brass inscriptions in Norfolk omitted in Blomefield's history in *Norfolk Archaeology*.⁴¹ The

amendments to Blomefield was a long project, some forty years in the making, for at a meeting of the Society held on 11 May 1848, Revd William Stracey had written to the committee 'proposing that a series of the Monumental Inscriptions of Norfolk should be formed by the Society'.⁴² As Sir Thomas Browne had noted almost two centuries earlier, the need for a record of inscriptions was still strong in Norfolk.

Manning's 1888 publication was partly the work of Revd Edmund Farrer (1847–1935), who provided rubbings and descriptions for Manning to check against Blomefield's *Topographical History*. Farrer later published his own exhaustive list of brasses in Norfolk in 1890.⁴³ Tabulating Manning's results (Fig. 5), it is possible to see that there were more additions (123) than corrections (29) to Blomefield (152 changes in total), which suggests that considerable work had been undertaken in the nineteenth century to complete the eighteenth-century records. Manning in this publication and elsewhere repeatedly expressed his concerns about future losses of brasses from Norfolk's churches, and thus the urgency of an accurate inventory:

The practice of covering up monumental slabs by new seats or organs is still, it is to be feared, not infrequent, and is one that ought to be stringently resisted by the official custodians. Still worse is the banishment of interesting old stones, to make way for

38 C.G.R. Manning, *A List of Monumental Brasses Remaining in England. Arranged according to counties. With a chronological index as far as the end of the fourteenth century* (London, 1846).

39 J.J. Raven, 'Obituary Notice of the Late Canon C.R. Manning, FSA', *Proceedings of the Suffolk Institute for Archaeology and History*, 10:2 (1899), 144–9.

40 Norfolk Record Office [NRO], MC 2576/11/4.

41 See C.R. Manning, 'Lost brasses', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 6 (1864), 3–26; 'Elsing church', *Norfolk Archaeology*,

6 (1864), 200–12; 'Notice of a monumental brass, discovered under the pews in St. Stephen's church, Norwich', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 6 (1864), 295–9; and 'A List of Monumental Brass Inscriptions in Norfolk omitted in Blomefield's History of the County', *Norfolk Archaeology*, 10 (1888), 192–224.

42 NNAS, The Minute Book 0000/3655 3/B/7.

43 E. Farrer, *A List of Monumental Brasses Remaining in the County of Norfolk* (Norwich, 1890).

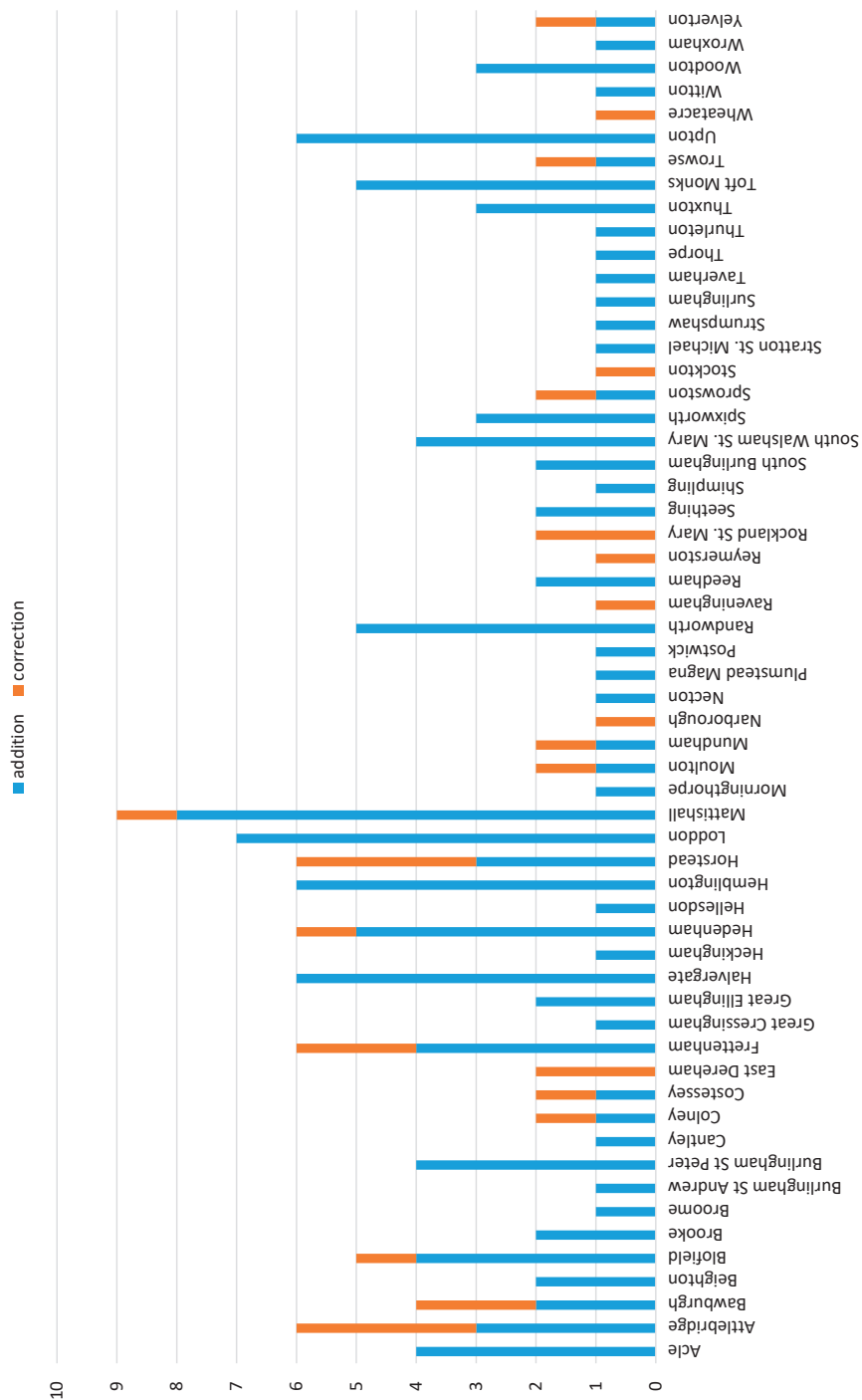


Fig. 5. Additions and corrections to Blomefield by C.R. Manning.

so many yards of monotonous modern tiles.⁴⁴

Although it is impossible to know precisely why so many inscriptions were missed by Blomefield, it is clear that the movement of furnishings within churches probably prevented access to many brasses. One case in point, related by Manning, is of the brass to William Curteys (d. 1499) at Necton (Fig. 6) (incorrectly assigned to Holm Hale by Cotman). Although the effigy was no longer visible later in the nineteenth century, it is likely the very same figure brass and inscription that Blomefield was unable to see, obscured as it was in the eighteenth century by a 'reading desk', and even today is obscured by a raised platform.⁴⁵

Manning was also responsible for the first index of the NNAS.⁴⁶ Although it is possible to use the references to brasses in Norfolk across the first ten volumes of *Norfolk Archaeology* (1847–88) to give some indication of the extent to which they were treated as a subject by the Society, indexing is a selective practice, so omissions were very likely. A manual transcription (Fig. 7), would be one way of representing this, but it is clear that the total number of references is low, numbering five references at the most per year. This is where quantitative analysis of antiquarian publications can be more productive. Generated through digital photography and optical character recognition (OCR), large quantities of printed material out



Fig. 6. Etching by John Sell Cotman of the brass of William Curteys (d. 1499), Necton, Norfolk.

(from Cotman, *Engravings of the Most Remarkable of the Sepulchral Brasses of Norfolk*, 3rd edn (with Suffolk) London, 1839).

of copyright, including the journals of historical societies, are now available to analyse.⁴⁷

It is possible to analyse the same time period for *Norfolk Archaeology* using word frequencies (but with two further volumes for 1892 and

44 Manning, 'List of Monumental Brass Inscriptions', 192.

45 *Ibid.*, 203–4.

46 C.R. Manning, *General Index to the First Ten Volumes of Norfolk Archaeology with an Index to the Illustrations and a List of the Excursions Taken by the Society and the Principal Places Visited 1846–90* (Norwich, 1891).

47 Optical character recognition (OCR) is automated through software, but many older typefaces are not easily recognised, resulting in non-standard characters

or errors, therefore there is always a margin of error. Texts are now available to the researcher through sites like archive.org (<https://archive.org/>) or the HathiTrust (<https://www.hathitrust.org/>). For a discussion of digitisation methods, see S. Tanner et al., 'Choices in Digitisation for the Digital Humanities', in *Research Methods for Creating and Curating Data*, ed. M. Hayler and G. Griffin (Edinburgh, 2016), 14–43.

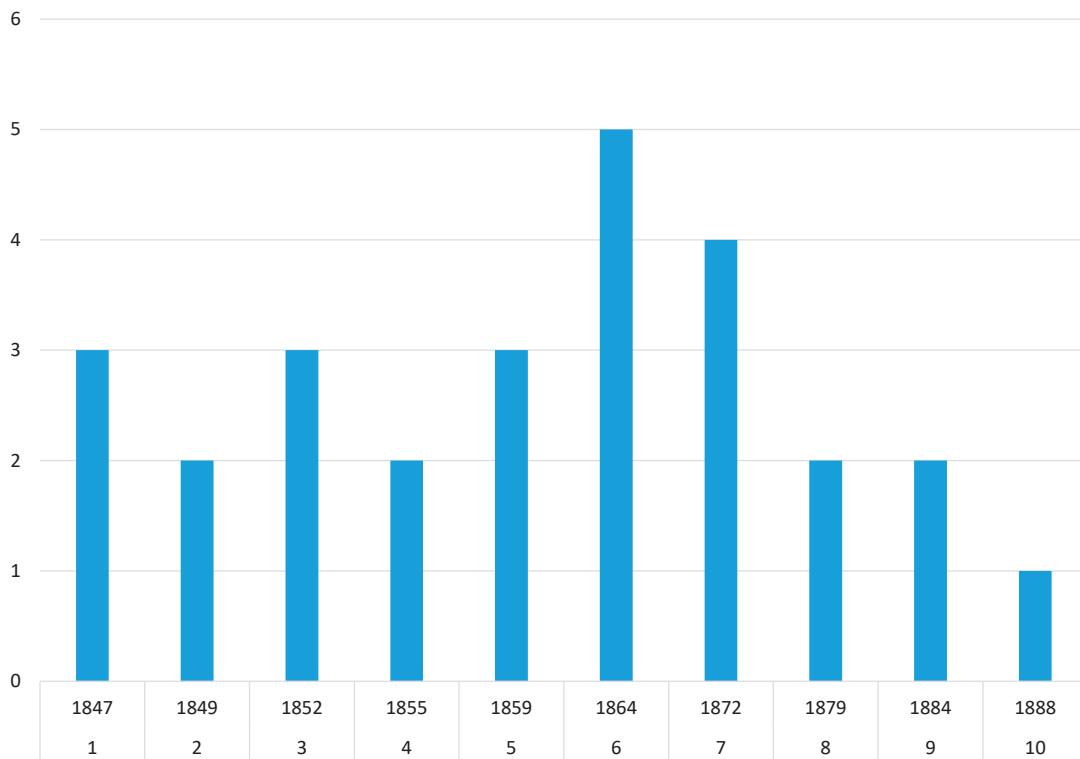


Fig. 7. References to monumental brasses in *Norfolk Archaeology*, vols I–X (1847–88) by C.R. Manning.

1895 included by way of comparison). This was done using a wildcard keyword ‘brass*’, which generated a list that could be checked manually for false positives (for example, where ‘brass’ is used adjectivally to describe another object, such as a dish or lectern).⁴⁸ After the removal of false positives, each volume was tabulated and the results are shown in Fig. 8. The number of references identified is considerably higher than those selected for the index by Manning. In the case of volume VI (1864), there were almost thirty-seven times the number of brass references than

Manning suggested through his index. One of the reasons for this is likely to be the reference to brasses elsewhere in Britain as comparisons of visual features and inscriptions and also the bibliographical references that underpin the scholarship. These contextualised instances reveal more about the way that brasses were treated by the antiquarian community at the time. For example, volume VI (1864) mentions a brass in St Peter Parmentergate, Norwich, and another at Coslany, but these examples, often drawn from earlier antiquarian records, were omitted from Manning’s index.⁴⁹

⁴⁸ For this analysis, the web-based platform, Voyant Tools (<https://voyant-tools.org/>) was used to locate and summarise the instances of the wildcard keyword. The results were then exported in tab-separated value (.tsv) format and checked in a spreadsheet package manually. Most digitised journals of this form have

not yet been subject to text encoding to mark-up entities, such as nouns and adjectives.

⁴⁹ For a full list of the contextualised keywords, see: https://github.com/matthewsillence/antiquarian_networks/blob/master/Norfolk_Archaeology_Brasses.xlsx

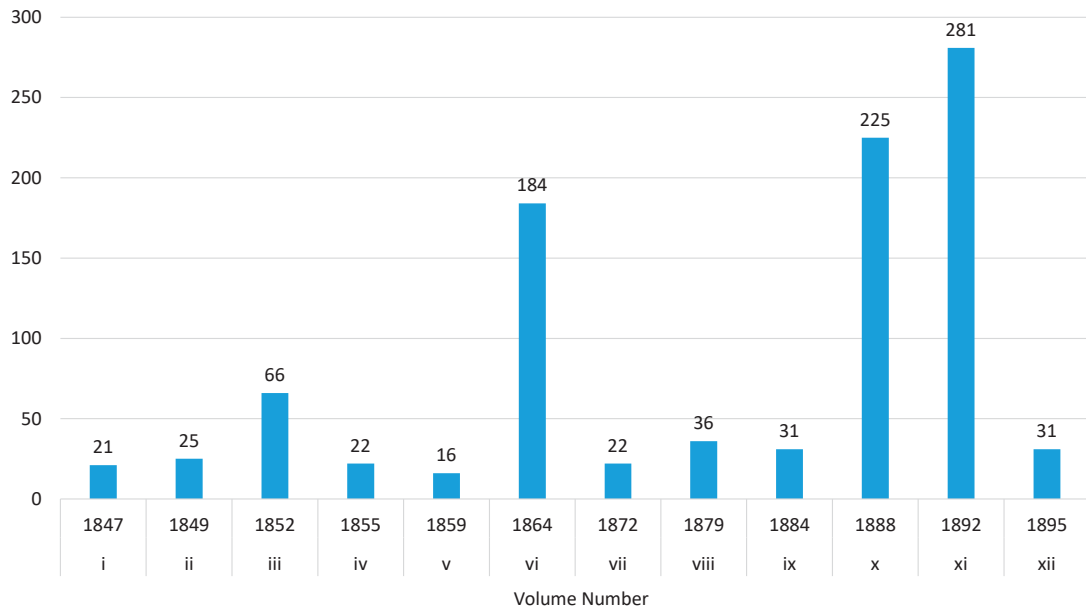


Fig. 8. References to brasses in *Norfolk Archaeology*, vols I–XII (1847–95).

A further observation is that brasses were not consistently featured in *Norfolk Archaeology*; there are four volumes in which brasses are mentioned more than in most volumes in a fifty-year period: 1852 (volume III), 1864 (volume VI), 1888 (volume X) and 1892 (volume XI). In each case, the number increased, suggesting an upward trend, but for most years, the journal only mentioned brasses between sixteen and thirty-six times. In total, brasses were mentioned 960 times. These figures suggest that interest in brasses was growing in the course of the nineteenth century. Closer analysis of the articles in each volume is required to identify those with a specific Norfolk focus, and it would be productive to examine the 1860s and early 1870s more closely, and across other antiquarian societies, to see if there was an increase in brass-related publications nationally at this time. Word frequency analysis of digitised antiquarian publications now makes it possible to aggregate these data

efficiently to identify the relative treatment of specialised historical subjects.

Why did these particular years of *Norfolk Archaeology* have such high instances of references to brasses? One reason could be simply the cumulative nature of scholarship: in short, more articles would be produced as the timespan between publications increased. The journal was not published annually; instead, it varied from two to eight years between each volume. However, volumes III, VI, X and XI were not published after particularly long gaps (three, five, four and four years respectively) from the previous volume in the series. In fact, the longest gap (between volumes VI and VII), which was eight years, had one of the lowest numbers of references to brasses.

A more likely scenario is that the significant years for brasses in *Norfolk Archaeology* follow national developments in the field. For example,

as noted above, in 1846 and 1847 Manning and Boutell had published significant works on brasses, and it was in 1848 that Revd Herbert Haines published his first *Oxford Manual*.⁵⁰ This may account for the rise in interest by 1852. By 1864 (volume VI of *Norfolk Archaeology*), Haines had published his second edition, which seems to have had considerable influence on the brass community.⁵¹ The last two volumes with the highest number of references to brasses were X and XI (1888 and 1892 respectively). It was around this time that Revd Edmund Farrer was preparing his own list of brasses for Norfolk.⁵² An examination of the extracted brass references for volume XI reveal frequent citation of Farrer's new *List*.⁵³

Probably the most significant impetus for increased references to brasses came from the establishment of the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors (CUABC) and its *Transactions*. Although the most specialised of publications, it was relatively late on the scene, with its first part issued in November 1887. Volume I (1887–90) contained a small number of publications dedicated to Norfolk locations, namely 'Southacre and Narborough Churches, Norfolk' by Revd J.H. Bloom, 'Note on a Brass formerly in Ingham Church, Norfolk, engraved c. 1400' by E.M. Beloe, Junior and 'Corrections to Revd E. Farrer's List of Norfolk Brasses' by T. Wareing.⁵⁴ Overall, though, the Association seemed more interested in a thematic focus, often foregrounding vestments and merchants' marks in its early articles, rather brasses from specific churches.

In February 1890 Manning joined the CUABC, and also offered two parts of a work on Norfolk brasses. The meeting report concluded that 'it is a model of a publication of the kind in many ways, but might perhaps be of more value if some attention had been given to matrices and lost brasses'.⁵⁵ In the following issue, the CUABC *Transactions* reprinted a letter from Manning, who corrected his contribution of Norfolk papers: 'I am sorry that you may have misapprehended the intention of them. They *are* not separate publications, but the author's copies, reprinted from the publications of the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society.'⁵⁶ He went on to set the record straight on missing brasses:

If you will read the preface in the first number you will see that it would also have been quite beside my purpose to mention matrices and lost brasses. It is a list of brasses *now existing*, as were *not* mentioned by Blomefield field in his History of Norfolk. Consequently, none of the well-known ones that he has recorded are entered in my papers.⁵⁷

These errata could simply be dismissed as the enthusiasm of a young society, keen to learn of new studies, but they also hint at the direction of scholarship: namely that the CUABC was initially influenced by monographs and by the regional antiquarian societies, but it was not necessarily aware of the extent of networks that embodied local knowledge. Another aspect of the first volume of the CUABC *Transactions* which supports this is its 'exchange notes',

50 H. Haines, *A Manual for the Study of Monumental Brasses* (Oxford, 1848).

51 H. Haines, *A Manual of Monumental Brasses: Comprising an Introduction to the Study of These Memorials* (Oxford, 1861).

52 E. Farrer, *List of Monumental Brasses*.

53 See the extracted text from Norfolk Archaeology provided at GitHub: <https://github.com/matthew>

[sillence/antiquarian_networks/blob/master/Norfolk_Archaeology_Brasses.xlsx](https://github.com/matthewsillence/antiquarian_networks/blob/master/Norfolk_Archaeology_Brasses.xlsx)

54 *Transactions of the Cambridge University Association of Brass Collectors*, I (1887–91), pt II, 1–5, pt IX, 5–8 and 14.

55 *Transactions*, I, pt VII, 18.

56 *Transactions*, I, pt VIII, 26.

57 *Ibid.*

which were lists of rubbings and reproductions of brasses. Remarkably, the first few years of the *Transactions* do not record very high numbers of rubbings for Norfolk. Instead, the issues mentioned a 'List of Localities about which Members are willing to give information', which included the following people in part VII (1890): Revd C.G.R. Birch, Revd R. Copeman, Revd B. Hale-Wortham, Revd J.R. Hawkes-Mason, and Walter Cole Plowright. Manning was accidentally missed off the list. According to *Crockford's Clerical Directory* for that same year, Birch was the only Norfolk-based cleric at that time.⁵⁸

Excursions in Norfolk: evidence from correspondence

Quantitative analysis on publications in the nineteenth century is one way of setting in context the scholarly and amateur interest in monumental brasses. It is useful to know the total number of references to brasses, not only because it suggests that the readership of *Norfolk Archaeology* believed that they were important but also how inherent interest was in the nineteenth century, leading to Revd Herbert Macklin's founding of the CUABC in 1886 at Cambridge and its continuation as the MBS in 1894.⁵⁹ However, discussing brasses does not necessarily mean that individuals were always viewing brasses *in situ*. It is important, therefore, to compare the publications of the period with

other forms of communication. One of the most revealing is personal correspondence. The next two sections of this paper concentrate on the fieldwork undertaken by several national figures in the study of brasses, who either visited or were based in Norfolk during this period and wrote about their experiences.⁶⁰

One of Charles Robertson Manning's earliest correspondents was Augustus Wollaston Franks (1826–97), who was still a young man when he made the acquaintance of Boutell and Manning in the 1840s. He was, at the time, at Trinity College Cambridge, and as an undergraduate he published an account of a palimpsest brass at Burwell with the Cambridge Antiquarian Society, one of the emerging historical societies in East Anglia.⁶¹ Franks went on to become one of the most influential figures in nineteenth-century antiquarian circles, and arguably one of Britain's most important museum professionals having taken up the position of assistant in the Department of Antiquities at the British Museum in 1850. In 1866, he became the first Keeper of British and Medieval Antiquities and Ethnography, a position he held for some thirty years.⁶² Charles Boutell recalled how he and Franks had spent time in the British Museum examining Richard Gough's 'impression' from the legs of the effigy of Sir Hugh Hastings (d. 1347) from Elsing, Norfolk.⁶³ In an undated letter from Franks

58 *Crockford's Clerical Directory for 1890* (London, 1890), 114, 283, 1428. Hawkes-Mason was not listed that year.

59 Busby, *Monumental Brass Society*, 2–3.

60 Determining the empirical knowledge of individual antiquaries can be challenging where limited publications are available. Richard Busby has noted the case of Alexander Nesbitt (1817–86), a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries who travelled widely in Europe to examine brasses but did not publish extensively on the subject. His activities and knowledge have to be gleaned from reports made to the Royal Archaeological Institute in London and the

views of his contemporaries. This may be one reason why he has received comparatively little attention in work on brasses generally. See, R. Busby, 'Alexander Nesbitt F.S.A. (1817–86): A pioneer in the Study of European Brasses and Incised Slabs', in *The Monuments Man: Essays in Honour of Jerome Bertram, F.S.A.*, ed. C. Steer (Donington, 2020).

61 D.M. Wilson, 'Franks, Sir (Augustus) Wollaston (1826–1897)', *ODNB*, online edn, ref:odnb/10093 accessed 10 August 2015.

62 Wilson, 'Franks', (*ODNB*).

63 NRO, MC 2576/11/6.

to Manning, he notes that he planned to visit Boutell, but had to abandon plans to go on to Lincolnshire with Manning, presumably on an expedition to see more brasses.⁶⁴

On 30 December 1846, Franks wrote from Swaffham. He recalled his journey from Diss around the county by train and on foot, to Harling, Dereham, a stay overnight, then on to Elsing via Swanton, Ling, Reephams, and finally back to Dereham. The following day he moved on to Fransham, Holme Hale, Necton, and Swaffham. This was likely the first time he had been able to view Norfolk brasses on site, taking the opportunity to purchase rolls and oilskin for rubbing them. At Fransham, Franks noted his frustration at getting the stiff cobbler's wax used for rubbing to actually adhere to the sheets: 'I got the keys & rubbed the brass, which I should be very sorry to do again it took me an immense [*sic*] while as the heelball would not come off'.⁶⁵ Franks' difficulties were likely due to the harsh winter that year.⁶⁶ Soaking wet, freezing cold, almost 'decapitated' by a woman's umbrella on a coach, and on top of everything, being held up from accessing the church at Necton by the rector's wife and, from Frank's point of view, an inconvenient funeral.⁶⁷

After returning to Swaffham, Franks recounted another amusing anecdote involving the waiter at the Brown Inn, who comments on some of

the rubbings that Franks was inspecting. He writes: 'He [the waiter] calls it a brass statue & told me there was a splendid one of Leo & his 2 sons being killed by serpents at Houghton hall ?Laocoon'.⁶⁸ The object referred to was François Girardon's bronze Laocoön (c. 1690), based on a cast taken from the Vatican. The sculpture stood in William Kent's Stone Hall at Houghton.⁶⁹ One wonders if Franks was flattered that his rubbings of Norfolk brasses were compared to the Houghton Hall's star attraction, or was simply amused by local ignorance.

Since Boutell's 1847 publication, there had clearly been a sustained interest in brasses, as the NNAS's references to brasses show, but in 1864 this increased dramatically. Although there was a five-year gap between volumes V and VI, in 1861, Herbert Haines (1826–72) published the second edition of his *Manual of Monumental Brasses*. It was probably one of the most influential publications on brasses in the century. An examination of the 1861 list of subscribers, however, reveals a striking trend. Firstly, there are substantially more subscribers based in Oxford and London than any other location. Of the sixty-five locations that featured in the list, there were few in Norfolk.⁷⁰ This is probably not surprising due to Haines's backing by the Oxford Architectural Society, for his first edition, which also features a substantial subscribers' list, had few references to Norfolk,

64 NRO, MC 2576/11/13.

65 NRO, MC 2576/11/15.

66 D.E. Parker, T.P. Legg, and C.K. Folland, 'A New Daily Central England Temperature Series, 1772–1991', *International Journal of Climatology*, 12 (1992), 317–42.

67 NRO, MC 2576/11/15.

68 NRO, MC 2576/11/15.

69 The sculpture was purchased by Robert Walpole in Paris in 1722–3 (J. Coutu, *Then and Now: Collecting and Classicism in Eighteenth-Century England*, (Montreal, 2015), 32).

70 The analysis of the subscribers' lists in Haines (1861) was conducted using an OCR file, from which the list was extracted and tabulated using the data cleaning application, Open Refine (<http://openrefine.org/>). The general regular expression language (GREL) used to identify and separate the names and locations of subscribers can be found at: https://github.com/matthewsillence/antiquarian_networks/blob/master/open_refine_history_Haines

Dawson Turner, in Great Yarmouth, was the most prominent exception.⁷¹ One name that did not appear on the subscribers' list, but who was mentioned in the introduction, and who certainly mentioned in the second edition of Haines's *Manual*, was Charles George Roberts Birch, rector of Sawtry All Saints in Huntingdonshire.

Birch's letters to Revd Harry Eardley Field (1858–1955) survive in the Society of Antiquaries Library, some 162 in total. They span the period 1861 to 1894, but the sequence is not continuous.⁷² The 1870s, for example, are not represented in the collection. Although the correspondence is one-sided, representing mostly Birch's interests, the collection is useful for our understanding of Norfolk antiquarian interests in two ways. Firstly, because for several years of his life, Birch was based in Brancaster in north-west Norfolk, he mentioned the locations he had visited in the county (and in other counties), and brasses that he had been able to rub. He also notes excursions that he had made with the British Archaeological Association (founded 1843), and reproductions of brasses from others who shared his interests. Secondly, like Boutell and others before him, he was keen to update his and others' knowledge of brasses in Norfolk with reference to current publications (for example, the Haines *Manual*) and note where brasses had been removed or lost. As Richard Busby has observed, Birch was influential in helping to

prepare Farrer's *List of Norfolk brasses* (1890), and he mentioned providing illustrations in the correspondence.⁷³

The evidence for Birch's knowledge of brasses in Norfolk emerges from quantitative analysis and the mention of either brass locations, or rubbings of known brasses, from Norfolk sites. In total, there are 340 references to Norfolk brasses and locations in the Birch-Field correspondence, which demonstrates topographically the extensive knowledge on the county that he had amassed over his lifetime.⁷⁴ Analysing the references that Birch made through his letters, it is possible to see how, over the years, his knowledge of Norfolk brasses manifested spatially (Fig. 9). In 1861 the locations of most brasses mentioned by Birch are concentrated along the corridor between Norwich and Great Yarmouth, that was one of the earliest railway lines in Norfolk, opening as early as 1844, which likely facilitated access to the local villages (Figs 10 and 11).⁷⁵

In 1884 (Fig. 12), Birch's attention moved primarily to the north of the county, concentrating on locations along the Fakenham-Sheringham axis and accessible from Burnham Market on the West Norfolk Junction Railway further west.⁷⁶ This was an important shift for Birch had moved from Sawtry to Brancaster in Norfolk in 1868, and was now based locally.⁷⁷ In 1887 (Fig. 13), Birch's attention is once again focused on the east of the county, only this time

71 Haines, *Manual* (1848).

72 London, Society of Antiquaries of London [SAL], Birch-Field correspondence. This uncatalogued collection will be referred to by the date of the letter.

73 Busby, *Companion Guide to Brasses*, 178, 198–9; Farrer, *List of Monumental Brasses*; SAL, Birch-Field, 1891.01.03.

74 The maps produced in this section were sourced from the EDINA geographic information systems (GIS) data repository: <https://digimap.edina.ac.uk/historic>. The final county map produced for this study

is a composite of 5 km national grid tiles drawn from County Series Survey data for the period 1846–1899. Each tile sheet may contain parts of up to 6 original County Series map sheets. The historic and modern railway lines were traced from the nineteenth-century data.

75 C.J. Allen, *The Great Eastern Railway* (London, 1955), 22.

76 R.S. Joby, *Railways of North-Western Norfolk* (Norwich, 1976), 10.

77 Busby, *Companion Guide to Brasses*, 178.



Fig. 9. Brass locations referenced by Revd C.G.R. Birch in correspondence between 1861 and 1893. Scale: 1:500,000.
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further north of Norwich and Yarmouth, to the coastal fringes. By 1889 (Fig. 14), references to brasses are more widely distributed, centring on the Dereham-Norwich axis, but with a few brasses noted from the extremities of the county in all directions. By 1890 (Fig. 15), the year of Farrer's publication, we see the highest number of references in the letters, distributed across the county from the south east, across the centre and along the eastern coast.

Over almost three decades, Birch's knowledge of brasses inevitably increased, and this is likely in tandem with the work he conducted for Farrer, and in the wake of the latter's publication. What is particularly vital – and

can be traced in the distribution patterns of Birch's references to brass locations – is his use of the railway infrastructure. Compared with Franks's eventful foray in rural Norfolk in 1846, Birch's Norfolk had become considerably more accessible to individuals making day excursions. Birch referenced the connections by rail that Field could make to access key destinations; he also wrote about the opening of new stations, principally for the ease of access to brasses. Writing on 11 September 1884, he reported '[y]ou probably know that a line Melton Constable (Eastern Midlands RY) to Holt is m[ade].'⁷⁸ Some days later, after receiving confirmation of Field's intention to visit Norfolk, he replied:

78 Allen, *Great Eastern Railway*, 65; SAL, Birch-Field, 1884.09.11.

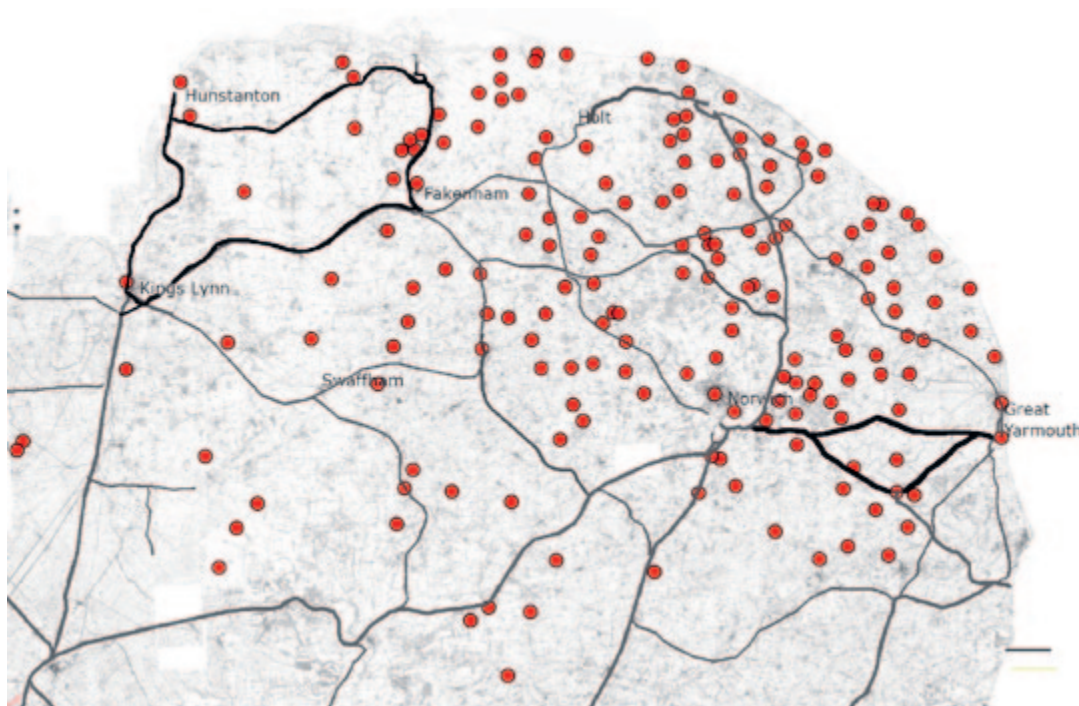


Fig. 10. Brass locations referenced by Revd C.G.R. Birch in correspondence between 1861 and 1893 showing local railway lines in grey. Black lines indicate the Lynn and Hunstanton and West Norfolk Junction Railway and the route between Norwich and Great Yarmouth. Scale: 1:500,000.

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I am glad it is now all settled about your coming to Holt, and that we shall get some excursions together. It is a pity there is no railway communication at or near Holt at present, but I suppose you will have some means at your disposal for setting about. Have you done Salthouse n[ea]r Cley and Weybourne? I have never done the Church though I have several times been within sight of it, but am informed on good authority that there is a chalice and wafer there w[hic]h appears to be annotated. I have been waiting till Holt line is opened. I want very much to get to Wood Dalling (where s[houl]d be a lot of things) and Hindolveston, where Kelly's

Directory (1879) notes brass to Edmund Hunt, 1568, w. Marg[are]t. 1568... You sh[oul]d try to get to Sall[e] for the church...⁷⁹

Birch's empirical work, which clearly involved travelling, viewing and rubbing brasses *in situ*, was only part of his approach to scholarship. He was, of course, highly reliant on his network of contacts, many of whom went on to become members and officers of the key societies, such as Revd William Frederick Creeny (1825–97). Creeny was vicar of St Michael-at-Thorn in Norwich from 1873 to 1897 and was commemorated by a brass in the same church (Fig. 16). He was most significantly a member

79 SAL, Birch-Field, 1884.09.17.

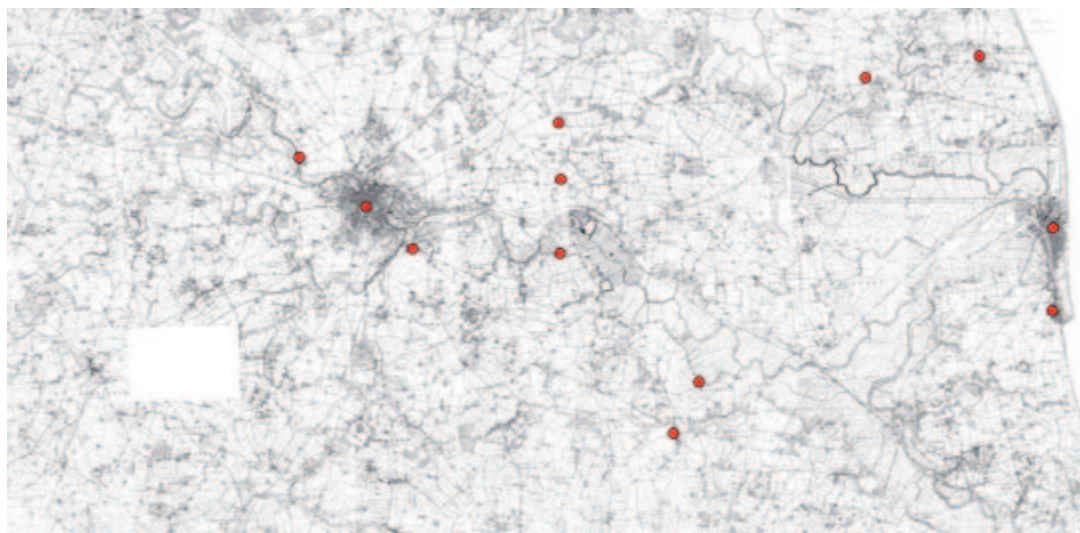


Fig. 11. Brass locations referenced by Revd C.G.R. Birch in correspondence during 1861. Scale: 1:250,000.
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of the NNAS, and President of the CUABC, 1887–94, and the MBS from 1894 to 1897.⁸⁰ Birch mentions him in passing on 3 November 1883, and again on 20 November that year, when referring to his upcoming publication, which was most likely Creeny's *Book of Facsimiles of Monumental Brasses on the Continent of Europe* (1884).⁸¹

I will take care to secure a copy of Mr. Creeny's book for you, and shall be very glad to turn it over to you when it appears. When that may be, I cannot tell, but these things generally take a long time to bring out. He is an energetic person however, and is working away very hard at his part of the revisions, the

preparation of his rubbings, w[hic]h he makes up with printers' ink, for reproduction.⁸²

Field seems to have received a copy of Creeny's book from Birch in 1885, and the latter recorded meeting him during visits to Norwich churches in 1891.⁸³ Birch clearly made visits with groups several times during his time in Norfolk, in particular after he had become a member of the British Archaeological Association in 1879.⁸⁴ Writing to Field on 9 March 1880, he included a list of ten brass inscriptions at Ludham that he saw with the group on 12 August 1879.⁸⁵ In 1889, he noted a planned 'walk' of the churches of Norwich by the NNAS.⁸⁶ As well as his excursions across

⁸⁰ Busby, *Companion Guide to Brasses*, 182, 187–8.

⁸¹ F. Creeny, *Book of Facsimiles of Monumental Brasses on the Continent of Europe* (Norwich, 1884); SAL, Birch-Field, 1883.11.03.

⁸² SAL, Birch-Field, 1883.11.20.

⁸³ SAL, Birch-Field, 1891.09.24.

⁸⁴ Busby, *Companion Guide to Brasses*, 178.

⁸⁵ These were inscriptions to John Colman (c. 1450), John Philippe (1466), John Salmon (1486), Cicile Salmon

(1487), Thomas de Honygg (c. 1500), Simon Bakton and his wife (c. 1500), Robert Ryches (1534), Thomas Goodlad (1593), Richard Barker (1565), Christopher White (1659). SAL, Birch-Field correspondence, 1880.03.09.

⁸⁶ SAL, Birch-Field, 1889.05.28

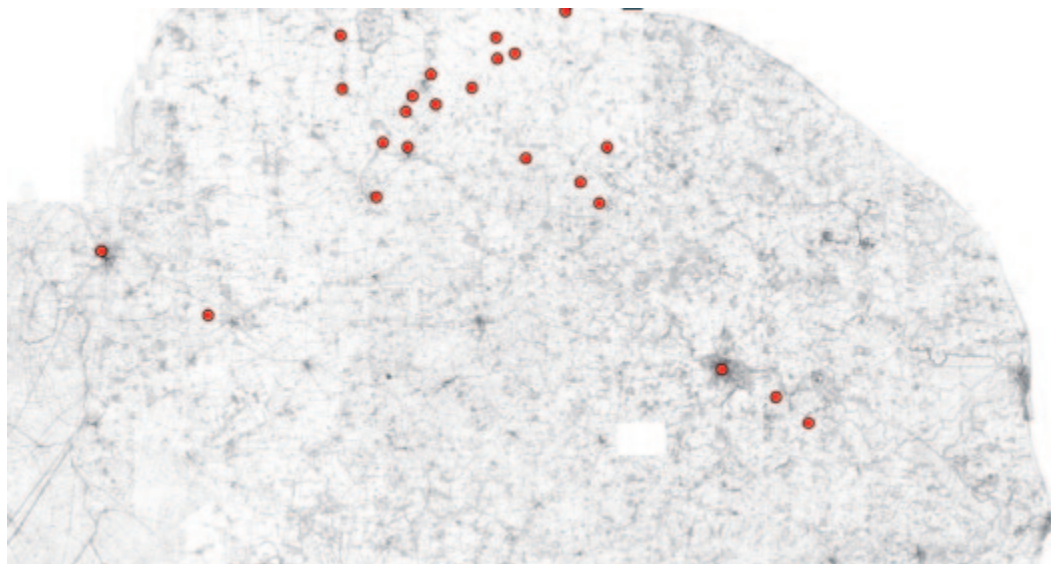


Fig. 12. Brass locations referenced by Revd C.G.R. Birch in correspondence during 1884. Scale: 1:300,000.
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the county, Birch was evidently returning to Norwich and in the process meeting others with like-minded interests.⁸⁷

The contributions and limitations of a quantitative approach

Antiquarian records of brasses were, and still are, important source material. The county history and topography assembled by Peter Le Neve, Anthony Norris, Thomas Martin and published by Francis Blomefield and Charles Parkin, were repeatedly referenced in the course of the nineteenth century. One of the reasons for this was, of course, the need for historical accuracy and for revision of these earlier sources to ensure their reliability for future scholars. This motivated discussions at the NNAS, and preoccupied individuals such as Charles Robertson Manning for several

years. Underlying this mission was also the fear of losing many brasses across the region, partly through neglect at each site, but principally because of unreliable documentation in the first place. For the Norfolk clergy – many of whom formed the backbone of the emerging historical societies – the widely scattered parish churches of this large county were a great concern, as the locations and physical state of brasses were difficult to monitor, much less preserve.

Historiographically, illustrations of brasses became a project in itself. The publication of John Sell Cotman's etchings of brasses in Norfolk and Suffolk, under the auspices of Dawson Turner, seems to have provided much impetus locally for putting brasses on the agenda of the burgeoning antiquarian societies

⁸⁷ Birch also mentions Edward Milligen Beloe (1871–1932), a solicitor and antiquary, who lived not far from Birch, in King's Lynn (SAL, Birch-Field, 1889.05.06); Busby, *Companion Guide to Brasses*, 177–8.

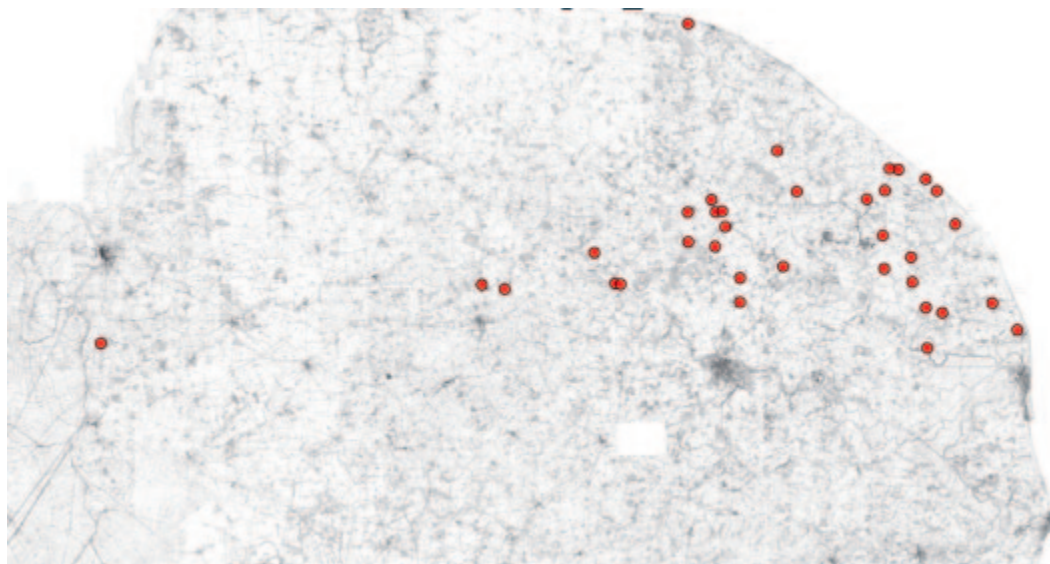


Fig. 13. Brass locations referenced by Revd C.G.R. Birch in correspondence during 1887. Scale: 1:300,000.
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in East Anglia.⁸⁸ By the time of the NNAS's inception in 1846, clergy from Norfolk, such as Boutell and Manning were already exchanging information on extant brasses in the county. What is significant is that many of these exchanges related to the ways in which brasses were illustrated, not the historical sources that are used to make sense of them, a phenomenon identified by Sam Smiles, who has discussed well-known nineteenth-century artists employed on antiquarian projects, such as Cotman and, later, Frederick Sandys (1829–1904).⁸⁹

Quantitative analysis offers another dimension to the activities of this community. It shows, firstly, how embedded within regional societies the study of brasses had become. The difference between the number of references indexed by Manning in *Norfolk Archaeology*, and

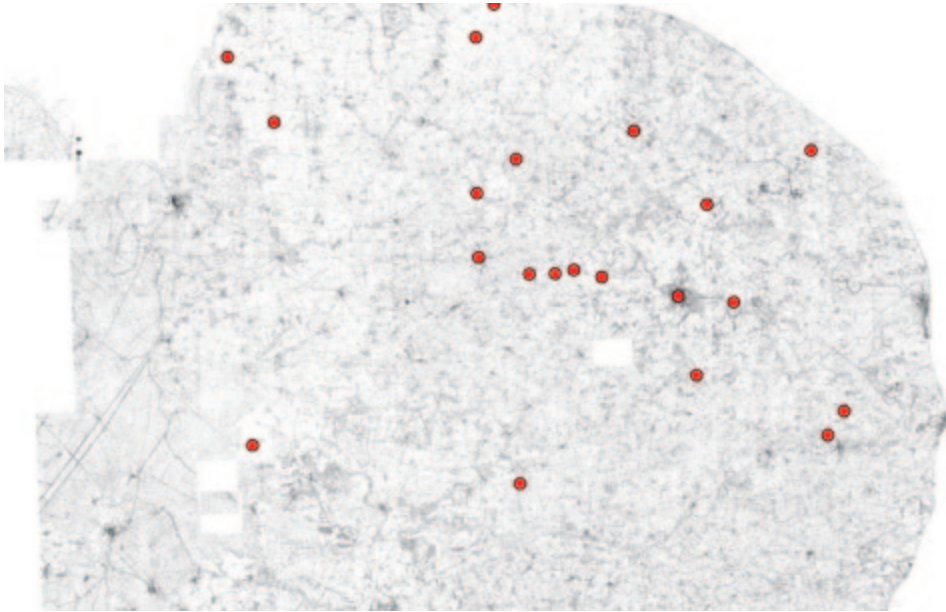
those which can be identified digitally through word frequency analysis over the same period suggests that members of such societies were regularly updated with information on brasses, and that references increase significantly around the time that new publications emerged such as Haines's *Manual* in 1861 and Farrer's *List* in 1890. Although a correlation (and direction of causation) between these events may be difficult to prove from the pages of *Norfolk Archaeology* without citation analysis, the revisionist tendency in the letters between Birch and Field seem to be related to the former's working relationship with Farrer.

Word frequency analysis of the brass locations mentioned in the Birch-Field correspondence also reveals very interesting patterns, particularly in the year that Farrer's *List* was published, 1890. At this point Birch referred to

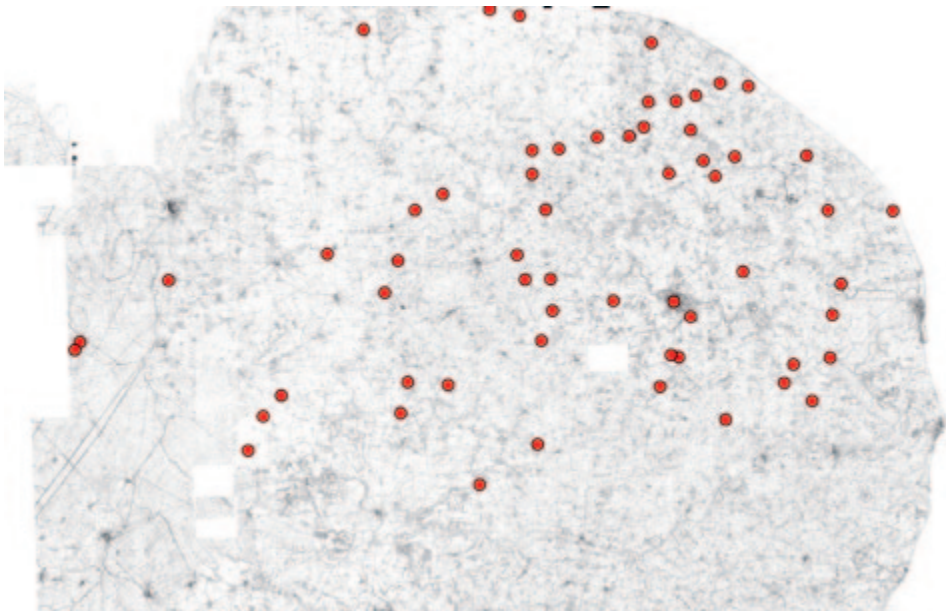
⁸⁸ Levine, *The Amateur and the Professional*, 47, 181–2.

⁸⁹ S. Smiles, 'Art and Antiquity in the Long Nineteenth Century', in *Visions of Antiquity: The Society of Antiquaries*

of London 1707–2007, ed. S. Pearce (London, 2007), 123–45, at 129–31.



*Fig. 14. Brass locations referenced by Revd C.G.R. Birch in correspondence during 1889. Scale: 1:400,000.
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*Fig. 15. Brass locations referenced by Revd C.G.R. Birch in correspondence during 1890. Scale: 1:400,000.
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Fig. 16. Monumental brass for Revd W.F. Creeny designed by W.R. Weyer.
(rubbing © Lack, Stuchfield and Whittemore, Norfolk (forthcoming))

brasses across the whole county, suggestive of comprehensive checking of references, rather than the more area-focused lists that he had communicated to Field at earlier periods. The geographical visualisations of references may give some indication of the patterns of interest of those who studied brasses in the nineteenth century. Facilitated by the concurrent expansion of the railway infrastructure and the excursions organised by regional and national

associations, Birch and Farrer were evidently building on Haines, who in turn had built on the works of earlier antiquaries.

There are, of course, several limitations to the quantitative methods employed in this study. Firstly, the digitised full texts of publications, such as *Norfolk Archaeology*, do not provide bibliometrics in the way that modern, ‘born-digital’ journals can.⁹⁰ A tailored, citation analysis method would be necessary to determine precisely how the articles and features in this publication referenced the works of others, including the antiquarian source materials that were so in need of revision. Secondly, from the Birch-Field correspondence, we lack nuance in the discussion of brasses in Norfolk. Full transcription of the manuscript correspondence would be necessary to indicate, for example, the number of times brasses are cited from rubbings or notes only. It would also be necessary to compare the number of brass locations in other counties, notably Suffolk, which Birch also mentions, to see whether or not most of the author’s time was spent focusing on Norfolk.

Although this present study provides a relatively small section of the community that was interested in brasses in the nineteenth century, the methods employed here can be adapted for other counties, or even at a national level. A more systematic approach to bibliometrics and word frequency analysis of brass locations across digitised publications would be the most accessible form. The results of such analyses may provide patterns or trends that closer, case-based studies of individuals or brasses, cannot readily identify. Through such patterns it may be possible to pinpoint more confidently the omissions or preoccupations of earlier research

⁹⁰ For an introduction to these methods, see R. Ball, *An Introduction to Bibliometrics: New Development and Trends* (Kidlington, 2018).

on brasses, to determine how our present knowledge has been shaped and inflected.

Acknowledgements

I am very grateful to colleagues at the Norwich and Norfolk Archaeological Society Library, the Norfolk Record Office and Norfolk Museums Service for their information. I am also indebted to Richard Busby for pointing out the network

of Farrer, Birch and Field, for kindly sharing his own findings with me and supplying the image of C.R. Manning's bookplate; the staff of the Society of Antiquaries of London Library for allowing access to the rich correspondence; and Dr Christian Steer for his invaluable comments and suggestions. This project was supported by funding from the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society.

Reviews

Jerome Bertram, *Kingdom of Sussex. Monumental Brasses, Incised Slabs, and other Sepulchral Monuments of the Middle Ages*, 2 vols (s.l., lulu, 2019); I. *Western Division: The Rapes of Chichester, Arundel, and Bramber*, 221 pp., many b/w illustrations; appendix; £12.00 (paperback); ISBN 978-0-244-78966-4; and II. *Eastern Division: The Rapes of Lewes, Pevensey, and Hastings*, 180 pp., many b/w illustrations; appendix; £12.00 (paperback); ISBN 978-0-244-50472-4.

It was over a splendid dinner in Fontevraud in April 2019 that the idea for these two volumes first emerged. Paul Cockerham and I were generously – and liberally – toasting our friend Fr Jerome Bertram on the publication of a set of volumes devoted to the monumental brasses and incised slabs of Oxford and Oxfordshire (reviewed below). We were delighted that thanks to the online publishing services of ‘lulu’ (www.lulu.com) friends, enthusiasts, students and the casual admirer could learn all that there is to learn on the brasses of Oxfordshire. ‘But what’ we exclaimed ‘about Sussex?’ Fr Jerome may have lived in the Oratory in Oxford for almost thirty years, but he was a son of Sussex and one of many schoolchildren to cycle around the county rubbing brasses during the 1960s. There was a gentle murmur of protest, but over the next few days a sparkle appeared in his eye and by the time he returned to Oxford, he had formed a plan and was resolved to bring all of his rubbings and notes together.

Fr Jerome was the first to admit that he was unable to return to these churches and to make new rubbings or take better photographs and that what was presented would have to do. It was, to paraphrase his introductory remarks, for posterity to improve the record in due course. In the meantime, almost sixty years of reflections, observations and study have been brought together in this catalogue which has been divided, for practical reasons,

between east and west Sussex. Each volume is organised alphabetically by place followed by the dedication of the church. The entries contain a record of all extant brasses up until 1850 including inscriptions and with – where applicable – translations from the French or Latin into English. Each entry also contains illustrations of any indents, incised slabs or cross-slabs identified during his surveys together with Fr Jerome’s notes on other monuments, particularly those from the ‘Chichester school’ of Caen-stone monuments. The appendices to each volume are invaluable research tools: they contain a list of the type of monument, an index of surnames, the form of lettering, language and common texts of the inscriptions, and the titles, forms of address, verses, prayers and mottoes of those discussed. The volumes represent a lifetime of study and a permanent record of all that Fr Jerome found in his perambulations around his native county.

Different readers will find different things to interest them and what follows is something of a taster. One theme that quickly emerges is the number of churches which served as mausolea for particular families and in almost all cases it was just the one family which dominated the townscape: the Culpepers at Ardingly, the Gages at Firle and the Shurleys at Isfield (all E.S.); elsewhere the Gorings at Burton, the Shelleys at Clapham and the Barttelots at Stopham (all W.S.). Families such as the Culpepers and the Gorings employed brasses as their memorials for almost 200 years whereas others, like the Gages, only had them for three generations or so. The clustering of family brasses is most striking at North Mundham (W.S.) where a tomb chest incorporates a five-line inscription, written in English, for a London grocer, Thomas Bowyer, who died in 1558, and his wife Joan (who died fourteen years later). The text is brief and to the point.

Nearby, however, is a much longer epitaph of twenty-one lines, in Latin, which refers to Bowyer's great piety, his widow's bereavement and remarriage to Alexander Nowell, and a desire for Nowell to live a long life. He was evidently still alive when Bowyer's grandson Robert Cassy composed the text in 1580. It is a curious example and one of the many complex post-Reformation Latin inscriptions which are made more comprehensible in the pages of these volumes.

Other inscriptions in the catalogue reveal different things. The theme of *memento mori*, and variations thereof, emerge in many examples such as on the brass of John Lowe, who died in 1426, at Battle (E.S.). Here the reader is reminded not to forget to pray for him and further, to weep as they stood by the tomb and to be mindful that their own doom approached. This sobering text is also notable for another reason: it reveals Lowe's death during the morning of 15 November. It is rare for the time of death to be included on an inscription but as well as this example, at Battle we find that Sir William de Etchingham, at Etchingham (E.S.) died at about midnight on 18 January 1388. Meanwhile, at Herstmonceux (E.S.) we learn that whoever prayed a *Pater Noster* and an *Ave* for the soul of another county knight, Sir William Fiennes (d. 1402), would receive 120 days indulgence. Examples of Sussex inscriptions also reveal the extent of service to noble houses or, in some cases, the crown: at Broadwater (W.S.), for example, we learn that the parish rector, John Mapilton, who died in 1432, was chancellor to Queen Joan, widow of Henry IV; elsewhere, in the Fitzalan Chapel at Arundel (W.S.) is the brass of John Threel (d. 1465) and his wife Joan. The inscription notes his service to William, earl of Arundel, and that of Threel's wife Joan, who had died six years before, as maid to two countesses of Arundel. The entry for the Fitzalan Chapel

also includes mention of the lost inscription of Richard Lamplough, carver unto countess Joan, who died in 1463.

Inevitably there are several examples of 'celebrity' brasses within these pages such as those of the Etchinghams of Etchingham. It is also here where two alleged lesbians of the fifteenth century – that is, if we are to believe the conclusions of a noted American scholar – were commemorated by figure brasses of the London B workshop. Other iconic brasses survive at Trotton (W.S.) for Margaret Camoys, who was dead by 1319, and Thomas, Lord Camoys, K.G., who died in 1421, and who is shown holding the hand of his wife Elizabeth. Fr Jerome could not help but comment that the brass is 'foolishly covered with plastic' which will no doubt raise a wry smile from all who knew him. Whether or not symbols of trade are considered as 'iconic' may be a moot point but nevertheless we find instances of the occupation of the dead – more widely seen on cross-slabs – in the pages of these volumes: the glover at Fletching and the brewer at Playden (both E.S.). There is poignancy too, for at St Bartholomew's church in Burwash (E.S.) a circular brass plaque commemorates John Kipling killed in action in 1915 whose grave remained unknown to his grieving parents.

Jerome Bertram was a giant amongst scholars of monumental brasses and we are grateful to him not only for all that he has done to promote their study but also for bringing together his remarkable knowledge into an accessible text. These volumes are not academic and nor were they meant to be. But they will be of use for all readers in their understanding and study of these remarkable forms of commemoration. The closing lines of one last example, taken from the 1634 brass of John Biggs at North Mundham (W.S.), is worth quoting in full as an example of the richness of these volumes:

AS I WAS SO ARE YEE / AS I AM SO SHALL YE BE.
 MY RIPENESSE WHICH WITH RIPER YEARES MIGHT
 SVTE
 MADE DEATH SEAZE ON MEE AS A SVMMER FRVITE
 BVT BETTER TIMELY RIPE & EARLY TAKEN
 THAN AS YE FRVITLESSE FIGTREE QVITE
 FORSAKEN.
 THEN IN THY YOVTH THY MAKER LEARNE TO
 KNOW
 THAT WHEN HEE CALLES THOV MAYEST BE FIT TO
 GOE

Christian Steer

Jerome Bertram, *Oxford Brasses, Being an Account of all Monumental Brasses and Incised Slabs Extant or Formerly Extant in the University and City of Oxford* (s.l., lulu, 2019); 239 pp., many b/w illustrations; £15.50 (paperback); ISBN 978-0-244-74633-9; and Jerome Bertram, *Oxfordshire Brasses, Being an Account of all Monumental Brasses and Incised Slabs Extant or Formerly Extant in the County of Oxford* (s.l., lulu, 2019); 354 pp., many b/w illustrations; £19.50 (paperback); ISBN 978-0-244-77630-5.

Readers of the previous review will not be surprised to learn that these two volumes are also, like their Sussex counterparts, an important addition to the literature on brasses. The fruits of a lifetime's study and close observation, they list and describe all the known brasses and slabs of Oxford and Oxfordshire. Although the emphasis is on medieval and early modern monuments, nineteenth-, twentieth- and a few twenty-first-century brasses are listed as well.

Fr Jerome's hallmark precision and accuracy underpin the entries which record the size and location of each monument (including any changes), a description, the names and dates of those commemorated, their dress, any heraldry and a transcription (and where necessary a translation) of the inscriptions as

well as their style of lettering. The inscriptions are invaluable, especially the translations from Latin of the many elaborate verses composed to commemorate the medieval scholars of Oxford. The inscription of John Perch (d. 1480), a bachelor of medicine and fellow of Magdalen College, written in the first person (perhaps by him), laments that 'The arts of Minerva were of no avail to me, although I was once a master of them at Oxford'. It is to be hoped that these underrated epitaphs will, thanks to *Oxford Brasses*, attract more interest and further study, Fr Jerome's *Icon and Epigraphy* (also available via the lulu website) being an essential primer for such an enterprise. The description of the heraldry found on monuments is particularly welcome. Readers will also be glad of the authoritative accounts of ecclesiastical and academic dress, both rapidly becoming arcane knowledge. Each entry has a brief bibliography of printed and manuscript sources, some discussion of the person commemorated, and many are illustrated.

Neither volume seeks to offer a broad survey or wider analysis of the monuments it describes. Rather, the author's intention is to present as full a description as possible of the monuments. The result is an enormously valuable resource. PhD students will scour the two volumes for material and church crawlers will delight in browsing through them. Neither will be disappointed. In short, *Oxford Brasses* and *Oxfordshire Brasses* are an essential vade mecum, Pevsners for the brass-minded.

David Lepine

The Monuments Man: Essays in Honour of Jerome Bertram, ed. Christian Steer (Donington, Shaun Tyas, 2020), xxiii + 540 pp., many b/w and colour plates; bibliography of published works of Jerome Bertram, index and Tabula

in *Memoriam*; £49.50 (hardback); ISBN 978-1-907730-84-9.

This sumptuous volume is a tribute to our vice-president, Fr Jerome Bertram, one of the most original minds to have written about monumental brasses and church monuments in recent years. He also wrote about church history and religion, and always in a lucid, engaging yet utterly precise and accurate style which made every topic enjoyable. Sadly, he died aged just 69 shortly before the volume was published, though he was delighted to see all of it in proof.

No fewer than twenty-four essays by Fr Jerome's friends do full justice to the breadth and depth of his interests. A biographical Introduction by Christian Steer, complete with photographs of Jerome rubbing the brasses at Arundel, Sussex, at the age of twelve, is followed appropriately by the first essay, by Julian Luxford, on Christ's Tomb, 'The Greatest Tomb of All'. This focuses on diagrams in the margins of medieval manuscripts giving the dimensions of the rock-cut grave. The remaining essays are grouped under broad themes: Monuments (Ancient and Medieval, and Post-Medieval), Regional Studies, Workshops and Production, the Continent, Commemoration, Lost Brasses and Antiquarianism, and Pilgrimage.

With limited space, it is impossible to describe each essay individually, but those of particular interest to members of the M.B.S. include Philip Lankester and John Blair's 'The Medieval Purbeck Marble Industry at London and Corfe'. This presents the latest thinking about the marblers who produced both the slabs in which brasses were set and the brasses themselves. Using detailed local information and discoveries (some of them dug up in back gardens in Corfe village), Lankester and Blair show how some carving must have taken place

in Dorset, either at the quarries or in Corfe village, or both. This carving comprised the entire range of products, including recumbent effigies. Also, the 'marblers' based in St Paul's Churchyard (who worked in Purbeck marble) and the 'masons' (who worked in stone) were sometimes the same people, at least in 1305. A dispute in the exchequer court in that year about the estate of Master Ralph the Mason of London, deceased, includes among his stock in trade 'a knight carved in marble', 'an image of a bishop in latten', 'small marble columns' and 'carved and uncarved stones', some of which was thrown into the road by an angry son-in-law. Master Ralph seems to have worked in brass and marble as well as stone, despite being referred to as 'mason', not 'marbler'.

In 'New Thoughts on 'A Sixteenth-Century Workshop'', Jon Bayliss revisits the 'Fermour', 'Lytkott' and 'Nayle' series of brasses, identified originally by John Page-Phillips, and three men who probably made them, William Raynton, Alan Gamman and Christopher Grigge. Despite much documentary research and a close study of the brasses, it is still not clear how their workshops were organised. The workshops were scattered across the city, not concentrated in one place, yet there is no clear correspondence between lettering style and figure style. More research is needed.

Fr Jerome was also interested in lost brasses, and in 'The Parishioners of St Nicholas Shambles, London, and their Monuments, c. 1350–c. 1550', Christian Steer investigates the long-destroyed church of St Nicholas Shambles, north of St Paul's Cathedral. The medieval city of London contained many churches filled with fine monuments and brasses. Today very few of the churches survive, let alone their contents. St Nicholas Shambles was demolished in 1551 but was excavated by archaeologists in the 1970s. It also still has an almost complete run

of churchwardens' accounts from 1452 to 1548 in the archives of St Bartholomew's Hospital. These record burials (and their fees) and twenty-one memorials. Wills of parishioners mention another twenty-two monuments or brasses, either existing or requested; the St Bartholomew's accounts record one more monument (sold in 1551, probably for reuse elsewhere); and the archaeologists found a large piece of another. Steer gives a table of all forty-five known monuments formerly in the church, churchyard or cloister, with full references.

Two regional studies are especially notable. Nigel Saul's 'Why are there so few pre-Reformation Monuments in Cornwall?' is a model of careful analysis; while Sally Badham's survey of semi-effigial monuments in Lincolnshire, with its excellent photographs, is a welcome contribution about a county which always seems to be off the beaten track, despite its wonderful extant medieval heritage. Under 'Commemoration', David Lepine explains in detail the tomb and elaborate chantry chapel in Hereford Cathedral of Bishop John Stanbury (d. 1474), a distinguished Carmelite scholar. This 'highly personal scheme' commemorates many aspects of the bishop's life. Its carving, heraldry and iconography allude to the origins of the Carmelite order and even manage to hint at the bishop's faithful service to the deposed Henry VI. Once again, the text is accompanied by excellent photographs.

Fr Jerome was also interested in Victorian brasses. David Meara discusses and illustrates (from a rubbing by Fr Jerome) the Pugin-designed brass to John Billingsley Seymour (d. 1843) at Balliol College, Oxford. Seymour died aged only 21, probably of consumption, and his brass was commissioned by his friend J.D. Coleridge, later lord chief justice. This was at the height of religious controversy in Oxford, and the master of Balliol had already

refused to accept Pugin's designs for new college buildings. Coleridge was somehow able to persuade the master to tolerate this brass designed by Pugin.

Fr Jerome made many discoveries on the Continent, and several essays reflect this. Richard Busby highlights the significant achievements of the landowner and businessman Alexander Nesbitt FSA (1817–86), now largely forgotten. His pioneering journeys between France in the west and Poland in the east in the 1850s and 1860s recorded several important brasses and incised slabs, not all of which survive.

In 'Contrasting Commemorative Patterns in Late Medieval Lübeck', Paul Cockerham discusses the memorials in the former friary church of St Katharine's. This ceased to be religious in 1530 and its floor remains virtually undisturbed. He contrasts the memorials in the public spaces of the nave and underchoir with those in the private chapels and friary cloisters. In the nave and underchoir, over 100 pre-1600 floor slabs of members of the Hansa display the same simple design of marginal inscription in bold *textura* script enclosing a merchant's mark or simple heraldry. The inscriptions are brief and formulaic, minimising differences in status. Slabs were frequently reused, to the same design and with the same lettering, but leaving the earlier elements intact. The overall effect is of a continually lengthening obit roll. By contrast, the elite in the private chapels and cloisters are portrayed richly dressed within impressive architectural settings and with more extensive heraldry, though the stone, lettering and formulaic inscriptions are the same. Curiously, the elite are all women or churchmen; there are no male lay figures. Lay men seem to have preferred either the commemorative norm in the nave, or more elaborate memorials in another church,

St Mary's. This pattern was broken in 1461 by the huge and expensive brass in the underchoir for Johann Luneberg, mayor of Lübeck, showing him in fine clothes. Any slabs already there were ruthlessly cleared away.

In another essay on Continental tombs, Sophie Oosterwijk discusses the medieval enthusiasm for brass memorials in *cuivre jaune* which shone like gold. Two extraordinary survivals, the cast copper-alloy effigies in Amiens Cathedral to bishops Evrard de Fouilloy (d. 1222) and Geoffroi d'Eu (d. 1236) are now a dull grey-green, the result of nineteenth-century chemicals. They were probably much brighter to begin with, and possibly gilt. By the sixteenth century tastes had changed, and the *schwarze mander* (black men) of the cenotaph of the Emperor Maximilian (d. 1519) in the Hofkirche at Innsbruck, Austria, have been black since the late sixteenth century. Gilding had been abandoned as too expensive.

One further important 'brass' essay must be mentioned. In 'Why St Jerome?', Nicholas Rogers discusses the imagery of St Jerome on the Great Berkhamsted palimpsest of c. 1530. This is engraved next to a Last Judgement, and Rogers explains how a fifteenth-century *Life of St Jerome* by Simon Wynter devotes several chapters to the saint's role as a guide to dying well. The 'Psalter of St Jerome' was also a popular collection of psalm verses to help men and women save their souls.

There is much to delight in this book. Shaun Tyas has produced a handsome volume, beautifully laid out, at a very reasonable price. There are occasional problems with Latin quotations, but the diagrams are clear, the colour photographs are often lovely, and the varied contributions well reflect Fr Jerome's wide interests and enquiring mind (not easy for a reviewer!). The extensive footnotes also allow

each essay to be a springboard to further work. In short, we have a magnificent tribute to a scholar whom we shall sorely miss.

Stephen Freeth

Commemoration in Medieval Cambridge, ed. John S. Lee and Christian Steer (The History of the University of Cambridge, Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2018); xiv + 193 pp., 14 colour plates, 24 b/w images; bibliography and index; £60.00 (hardback); ISBN 978-1-78327-334-8.

This collection of essays appears under the aegis of a distinguished series devoted to the history of Cambridge University, though it readily, and inevitably, recognizes the close relationship between the medieval university and the city. It grew out of an M.B.S. conference held at Trinity Hall in 2013, and is a welcome sign of the energy and commitment to scholarship of that society, which itself originated largely in Cambridge. It is, of course, a book about more than brasses, though they figure largely in the historical record of commemoration. Its authoritative and well-supported essays trace the wider interrelationships of tomb, person and place.

Think of Cambridge, and we do not at first bring to mind commemoration in the city so much as in the surrounding county within the diocese of Ely: the names of Trumpington, Westley Waterless, Balsham and Hildersham instantly conjure brasses of canonical importance and beauty. The county churches in the environs of the city, such as Bottisham, are as buildings on balance more significant than those in the city itself, with the exception of Little St Mary's, a joint college and parish church reflecting the influence of the bishops of Ely at Peterhouse. All scholars of the city and university know that in comparison with Oxford and Norwich, Cambridge's city and

collegiate foundations were less wealthy, grand and indeed numerous, and while it would be unfair simply to call Cambridge a 'poor relation', the focus of interest there inevitably lies later in the Middle Ages. Also, Cambridge was a hotbed of East Anglian Protestantism with inevitable consequences. These factors are all weighed up in the concluding (but also in its way introductory) essay by Nicholas Rogers on the reasons for the presence and absence of brasses in Cambridge. Rogers considers the nature of commemoration of academic communities that were, by modern standards of professional stability, relatively transient.

But the emphasis of the essays, quite rightly, is on commemoration at large, introduced by a graceful essay by Christian Steer, and followed up immediately by a very useful contribution by J.S. Lee which examines commemoration and institutional life in Cambridge as a whole. Michael Robson follows on with an essay on the Franciscans and their burial practices within their house. He discusses the changing early locations of the house and its church, eventually on the site of Sidney Sussex College. Together with the Dominicans the city's mendicant churches were physically large, surpassing almost all the parish churches; and of course, as later anti-fraternal critiques tell us, they attracted envy as magnets of lay commemoration in a city without a large Benedictine foundation, unlike Norwich or Bury. This was of course an issue common to cities with strong mendicant presences throughout Europe. Indeed, the colleges sprang up in their modest ways to give benefits to unbeneficed scholars which might match those accorded to the friars.

The city presence raises the matter of guilds and devotions. Richard Barber provides a valuable essay on the foundation in 1352 of Corpus Christi College and the Guild

of Corpus Christi – a college then without a chapel and with a court erected in a time when in Cambridge domestic planning called the shots. Here again the interest is as much in people and their networks as in material culture, an emphasis continued in the essay on the masters of Trinity Hall by Claire Gobbi Daunton and Elizabeth New. This takes us systematically through the foundation and early masters and is the first closely to address the material culture of their brasses in their institutional context, notably that of Walter Hewke (d. 1518). In a splendid contribution on the confusions of academical dress which (while it continues in use) still vex college tutors and proctors to say nothing of students, John Baker compares academical and legal dress in order to iron things out, using brasses in both Cambridge and Oxford.

Of course, the *pièce de resistance* of Cambridge is King's College Chapel begun by Henry VI in the 1440s, the only really ambitious college building of the period and conforming in disposition to the royal chapels, and not to the Merton College transeptal model which had prevailed in Oxford (though copied at Little St Mary's). King's and its commemorations form the centrepiece of the book in an essay by Peter Murray Jones, taking us through the foundations of the chapel of the Blessed Virgin Mary and St Nicholas, then prayers, masses and anniversaries, benefactions, inventories and chantries. As with so many essays in the volume this will be the obvious starting-point for future study. Taking us into the later Middle Ages, Susan Powell then provides a fine and far-reaching paper on Lady Margaret Beaufort and her Cambridge commemorations including those of members of her household such as that often attributed to Henry Hornby (d. 1518), sometime master of Peterhouse and later her chancellor. So Kings, St John's, Christ's, Corpus Christi and Trinity Hall are

all integrated. Finally, Nicholas Rogers closes with his essay on the distribution and fate of the brasses already noted.

This volume will be a standard reference for those interested in Cambridge and its medieval history. It is well if not copiously illustrated, the map on p. xv being an obvious boon to those not familiar with the city, and there is a block of eleven colour plates. But it is nicely produced. One can see from it how more has yet to be said about other colleges as well as the Dominicans. And to what extent, if at all, did the bodies of scholars in Cambridge, their studies and their tastes, influence the surrounding parishes? It will be interesting to read this volume along with the collected papers of the British Archaeological Association Conference held in Cambridge in 2018. And how delightful it is to see the elegant little brass of Richard Billingford (d. 1432) back in place in St Benet's after its theft.

Paul Binski

David Harry, *Constructing a Civic Community in Late Medieval London: The Common Profit, Charity and Commemoration* (Woodbridge, The Boydell Press, 2019), xii + 216 pp., 1 illustration; bibliography and index; £75.00 (hardback); ISBN 978-1-78744-475-1.

In *Constructing a Civic Community*, David Harry evaluates the media and means by which London's governors consolidated their authority in the wake of the political turbulence that characterised the last decades of the fourteenth century. Harry argues that London's leaders were compelled to appease the capital's lower orders while concurrently refashioning themselves as the divinely ordained rulers of a holy city, compensating for extensive constitutional changes that threatened the civic hierarchy in the late fourteenth century. Integral

to this process was the use of the language of 'common profit' by London's governors, a fluid concept that evoked the shared values necessary for the function of Christian society, conflating notions of religious ethics, transactional piety, good government, peace and love. Exploring these themes, Harry goes beyond the archival sources to include civic ceremonies, epitaphs, tombs, testamentary evidence and 'common-profit' books. Central to this phenomenon were charity and memorialisation, expressed through participation in communal rituals that framed salvation while articulating individual identity, status and political affiliation.

The crucial chapter for those interested in brasses is the fourth, 'The Exemplary Dead', which demonstrates the importance that this London elite accorded to the inscription of their deeds through enduring and public media, with epitaphs integral to disseminating ideas of the common profit. This approach is not without its methodological challenges. Given the rare survival of late medieval London monuments, Harry concedes that he is reliant upon the invaluable but nevertheless challenging descriptions of London churches produced by early modern antiquarians. These scholars were often selective in their record, noting the epitaphs that they considered exceptional and at times translating or censoring material.

Using these sources, Harry argues that London monuments and epitaphs represented sites that shaped communal religious attitudes while bearing witness to the 'manufacturing of a shared identity by the community of worshippers in late medieval London' (p. 100). These epitaphs are examined as an integral part of London's textual culture and identified as an essential medium for the communication of values consonant with the governors' understanding of common profit. Epitaphs such as those of the tailor Thomas Knolles (d. 1445)

and his father, the mayor Sir Thomas Knolles (d. 1435) in St Antholin, Budge Row, speak to the commemorative strategies employed by these leading Londoners to remind the living of their good works and their contribution to the city's spiritual and common profit (pp. 103–4). Despite the limited sample size of recorded epitaphs for London mayors, Harry concludes that these functioned to remind readers of the contributions that the deceased had made to the city, while encouraging prayers in an act of mercy that 'blurred the lines between secular and sacred charity' (p. 109). Specific examples are contextualised through the comparative examination of epitaphs from a wide variety of churches, culminating in a detailed analysis of the post-mortem charity of the mayor Sir Richard Whittington (d. 1423). This

includes Whittington's tomb and epitaphs, but also the foundation of the Whittington almshouse and the chantry at St. Michael Paternoster (pp. 110–16). As such, Harry persuasively signals how the administrative tools developed by leading Londoners, such as John Carpenter, were subsequently adapted to spiritual circumstances that communicated the importance the aldermanic class placed on the common profit, distinguishing them from other Londoners while binding them to this community upon whose prayers they depended for salvation. *Constructing a Civic Community* is an exemplary demonstration of the importance and potential of inscriptions on brasses and a reminder to pay more attention to them.

Luke Giraudet

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Cover: Detail from the brass to a man in armour of the Culpeper family, engraved c.1520, Goudhurst, Kent (M.S.III). This was the first brass that Fr Jerome Bertram rubbed at the age of 11 in 1961. (*photo: © Martin Stuchfield*)

Monumental Brass Society

Volume XXI, 2020, ISSN 0143-1250

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The Society would like to thank the A.V.B. Norman Research Trust and the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society for grant assistance towards the production of this issue.

Contributors are solely responsible for all the views and opinions contained in the *Transactions*, which do not necessarily represent those of the Society.

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