



English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation

Nigel Saul

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English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages offers a comprehensive survey of English church monuments from the pre-Conquest period to the early sixteenth century. Ground-breaking in its treatment of the subject in an historical context, it explores medieval monuments both in terms of their social meaning and the role that they played in the religious strategies of the commemorated. Attention is given to the production of monuments, the pattern of their geographical distribution, the evolution of monument types, and the role of design in communicating the monument's message. A major theme is the self-representation of the commemorated as reflected in the main classes of effigy—those of the clergy, the knights and esquires, and the lesser landowner or burgess class, while the effigial monuments of women are examined from the perspective of the construction of gender. While seeking to use monuments as windows onto the experiences and lives of the commemorated, it also exploits documentary sources to show what they can tell us about the influences that helped shape the monuments. An innovative chapter looks at the construction of identity in inscriptions, showing how the liturgical role of the monument limited the opportunities for expressions of self. Nigel Saul seeks to place monuments at the very centre of medieval studies, highlighting their importance not only for the history of sculpture and design, but also for social and religious history more generally.

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