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Proxy over Pilgrimage: Queen Eleanor of Castile and the Celebration of Crusade upon her Funerary Monument(s)

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Introduction

Burial in the High Middle Ages was a poignant and charged moment. This was an opportunity to affirm identity and beliefs, celebrating gendered and societal ideals, as much as a time to express grief. The upper echelons of Latin Christian society – the nobility and royalty – organized for their entombment in specific religious houses to affirm social links, as well as to take care of their funerary practicalities. A monument itself, which would mark the deceased's resting place – such as an effigy or grave slab – acted as a focus for prayers, while also enshrining an idealized image of the dead.[1] The most salient aspects of an individual's social, regional, religious, or cultural identity (as they or their peers perceived it) was

* This article is based on a portion of my PhD thesis, which benefited immensely from the insights of William 'Bill' Aird, Cordelia Beattie, Natasha Hodgson and Mike Carr – to whom I am indebted. In expanding this work, I received invaluable advice from Emma Trivett, Tamsin Prideaux and Anna Brow. I must also thank the reviewers and editors of *Peregrinations* for their pertinent remarks. Any and all mistakes that remain are my own.

[1] J. Barker, *Stone Fidelity: Marriage and Emotion in Medieval Tomb Sculpture* (Woodbridge, 2020), p. 86; R.A. Dressler, *Of Armor and Men in Medieval England, The Chivalric Rhetoric of Three English Knights' Effigies* (Aldershot, 2004), p. 60; N. Saul, *English Church Monuments in the Middle Ages: History and Representation* (Oxford, 2009), pp. 26-35; J. Burton, *Monastic and Religious Orders in Britain, 1000-1300* (Cambridge, 1994) p. 218; H.A. Tummers, *Early Secular Effigies in England* (Leiden, 1980), p. 151, n. 88.

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distilled or selectively picked when deciding on the location and design of a sepulchral memorial. In studying the language of medieval burial, we can unearth elements of contemporaries' lives and characters that were their key concerns.

Paradoxically, however, some ubiquitous aspects of western European culture were (seemingly) not typically commemorated in the art of tombs; a striking example of this, is the culture of crusade. Scholarship on the commemoration of crusade has uncovered much about the gendered and dynastic characteristics of the memory of the movement.[2] Yet, with respect to physical memorials, it is unclear if any programmatic symbols, objects, or artistic schema were routinely used to denote some connections to crusade.[3] This may be because many tombs' polychrome, inscriptions, or structure have degraded over time, often making it difficult to even confirm whom particular effigies even represented.[4] In the past, there was a belief

[2] See especially N.L. Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps: The Crusades and Family Memory in the High Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2012); A.E. Lester, "What Remains: Women, Relics, and Remembrance in the Aftermath of the Fourth Crusade," *Journal of Medieval History,* vol. 40, no. 3 (2014), pp. 311-328; M Cassidy-Welch (ed), *Remembering the Crusades and Crusading* (London, 2016); K. Hurlock, "A Transformed Life? Geoffrey of Dutton, the Fifth Crusade, and the Holy Cross of Norton," *Northern History,* vol. 54, no. 1 (2017), pp. 15-27; M. Cassidy-Welch, *War and Memory at the Time of the Fifth Crusade* (Philadelphia, 2019). See also E. Brenner, M. Cohen and M. Franklin-Brown (eds.), *Memory and Commemoration in Medieval Culture* (London, Routledge, 2013); E. Van Houts (ed.), *Medieval Memories: Men, Women and the Past, 700-1300* (Abingdon, 2001, revised 2013).
[3] Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps,* pp. 145-6. For more on artistic commemoration of crusade see, for example: M.M. Reeve, "The Painted Chamber at Westminster, Edward I and the Crusade," *Viator,* vol. 37 (2006), pp. 189-221; L.J. Whatley, "Romance, Crusade, and the Orient in King Henry III of England's Royal Chambers," *Viator,* vol. 44, no. 2 (2013), pp. 175-198; R.A. Leson, "'Partout la figure du lion': Thomas of Marle and the Enduring Legacy of the Coucy Donjon Tympanum," *Speculum,* vol. 92, no. 1 (2018), pp. 27-71; A. Luyster, "Fragmented Tile, Fragmented Text: Richard the Lionheart on Crusade and the lost Latin Texts of the Chertsey Combat Tiles (*c* 1250)," *Digital Philol,* vol. 2 (2022), pp. 86-120; G.M. Reynolds, "Battling the Lion: Visual Commemorations of Crusade in Twelfth- and Thirteenth-Century Seals from the British Isles," *The Antiquaries Journal,* vol. 103 (2023), pp. 1-23.
[4] B. Gittos and M. Gittos (eds.), *Interpreting Medieval Effigies: A Regional Study in Archaeology and Potential, the Evidence from Yorkshire to 1400* (Oxford, 2019), pp. 7-21.

amongst antiquarians (which occasionally rears its head) that effigies depicting the deceased with crossed-legs held some allusion to crusade. This has, however, been routinely debunked – the stance depicted is instead thought to be a representation of motion, with the individual stepping forward.[5] Indeed, physical memorials that clearly speak to individuals' past crusades or crusading identity are remarkably rare, despite the continued popularity of crusading well into the 14th century, when effigial commemoration grew to full popularity.[6]

It seems that commemorations of crusade upon medieval tomb memorials was uncommon – why then did crusading overtones appear on some specific sepulchral monuments and not others? What messages were they intended to convey about the identity/society of the entombed? There are notable examples. The 13th-century French crusader, Jean de Joinville, commemorated his great-grandfather's crusading links in an epitaph – revelling in a long line of crusaders.[7] Other tombs had no specific crusading schema in their design, but they were fawned over and remade by later generations, specifically because they were dedicated to famous crusaders – Robert Curthose's (d. 1134) 13th-century tomb in Gloucester

[5] O.D. Harris, "Antiquarian Attitudes: Crossed Legs, Crusaders and the Evolution of an Idea," *Antiquaries Journal*, vol. 90 (2010), pp. 401-440.
[6] On this period of crusading respecting England, see: T. Guard, *Chivalry, Kingship and Crusade: The English Experience in the Fourteenth Century* (Woodbridge, 2013), pp. 21-50; A. Luttrell, "English Levantine Crusaders, 1363-1367," *Renaissance Studies,* vol. 2, no. 1 (1988), pp. 143-153, at 144; C. Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, 1095-1588* (Chicago, 1988), pp. 84-86.
[7] N. Kenaan-Kedar, "Pictorial and Sculptural Commemoration of Returning or Departing Crusaders," in E Lapina, A J Morris, S A Throop, and L J Whately (eds.), *The Crusades and Visual Culture* (Farnham 2015), pp. 91-104, at 97; Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps,* pp. 148-149.

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Cathedral is a prime example of this.[8] Similarly, James Douglas's (d.1330) remains were brought back from crusade in Spain, and his family had them interred in an elaborate tomb with a knightly effigy in St Bride's Kirk in Lanarkshire, Scotland.[9]

Although medieval memorials that referenced crusade were rare, noblewomen commissioned a significant number of the known examples. Countess Aigeline of Burgundy (probably) commissioned a statue that once stood in Belval Priory (Lorraine), depicting herself embracing her husband, Hugh of Vaudémont, as he returned from the Second Crusade (1147-1150).[10] Countess Blanche of Navarre commissioned an effigy of her husband Theobald III of Champagne (d.1201), that depicted him as a pilgrim surrounded by figures of his kinsmen who had also taken crusade vows.[11] Also, in Täby (Sweden), a late 11th-century rune stone was commissioned by a woman named Astrid in memory of her husband, Eysteinn, who died while on his way to Jerusalem.[12] The latter may pre-date the First Crusade (1095-1099), but it nevertheless represents a desire to commemorate Holy Land

[8] W.M. Aird, *Robert Curthose, Duke of Normandy, c. 1050-1134* (Woodbridge, 2008), pp. 191-244. See also J. Doherty, "Count Hugh of Troyes and the Prestige of Jerusalem," *History,* vol. 102, no. 353 (2017), pp. 874-888, at 874-875; Paul, *To Follow in their Footsteps*, p. 146; R. Gilyard-Beer, R., "Byland Abbey and the Grave of Roger de Mowbray," *The Yorkshire Archaeological Journal,* vol. 55 (1983), pp. 61-66.
[9] M. Markus, "St Bride's, Douglas – A Family Mausoleum," *Proc Soc Antiq Scot,* vol. 134 (2004), pp. 403-421, at 404-405.
[10] N. Kenaan-Kedar and B.Z. Kedar, "The Significance of a Twelfth-Century Sculptural Group: *Le Retour de Croisé,*" in M. Balard, B.Z. Kedar, and J. Riley-Smith (eds.), *Dei Gesta per Francos: Etudes sur les croisades dédiées à Jean Richard, Crusade Studies in Honour of Jean Richard* (Aldershot, 2001), pp. 29-44, at 44.
[11] Theobald had died before leaving to lead the Fourth Crusade, see Doherty, "Count Hugh of Troyes and the Prestige of Jerusalem," pp. 874-875.
[12] Another rune stone from Sweden (U 605), from the same period, was raised by a woman in advance of her own pilgrimage to Jerusalem, see C. Krötzl, "Pilgrimage," in J. Glauser, P. Hermann and S.A. Mitchell (eds.), *Handbook of Pre-Modern Nordic Memory Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches* (Berlin, 2018), pp. 594-600, at 595.

pilgrimage. These women wished to celebrate crusading achievements and, indeed, ensure that they were personally associated and linked with that prestige. However, these are nebulous concepts in abstract. What did it mean for these élite women to highlight their connection with holy war?

To explore these questions, this paper will examine a rare survival of a celebration of crusade upon a woman's tomb: the Westminster Abbey funerary monument of Queen Eleanor of Castile (d. Nov 1290), consort of King Edward I of England (d. 1307).[13] I will argue that the memorial emphasized idealized queenship by creating parallels between the deceased and the Virgin Mary, while celebrating clerical models for women's involvement within the crusade movement. Considering this monument and its context will help to unpack some the gendered ideals that circulated in the High Middle Ages, and their impact on the commemoration of crusade.

Eleanor of Castile and Crusade

Eleanor's background was rooted in the crusade movement – her father Ferdinand III of Castile (d.1252) had been an uncompromising force in the *Reconquista*, while her uncle John of Brienne (d. 1237) was King of Jerusalem and later became Latin Emperor of Constantinople.[14] While a young teenager, Eleanor

[13] J.C. Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile: Queen and Society in Thirteenth-Century England* (New York, 1995), p. 58.
[14] B. Hamilton, "Eleanor of Castile and the Crusading Movement," *Mediterranean Historical Review,* vol. 10, nos. 1-2 (1995), pp. 92-103.

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married then-Prince Edward, the son of King Henry III of England, in 1254. She remained in England, steadfastly supporting her husband, when the kingdom was wracked by the Second Barons' War (1264-1267). The conflict had barely ended when Edward and Eleanor formally took crusade vows together in 1267, following the lead of King Louis IX of France.[15]

The Eighth Crusade, as it is sometimes referred to, was directed against the city of Tunis in North Africa.[16] Eleanor accompanied the English contingent that left in 1270 to join Louis IX's army. The assault against Tunis was a failure, however, and the crusading forces crumbled as disease took many of the participants, including Louis IX himself. Reluctant to return to England, Prince Edward led the English crusaders to the Levant where they helped rebuild the defences at Acre.[17] Eleanor's activity in the Holy Land at this time is not wholly certain, but she may have gone on pilgrimages to various shrines. The papacy had determined that Jerusalem should remain barred to Christian pilgrims, on pain of excommunication, while the city was in Muslim hands. We can be fairly certain that Eleanor would not have been afforded the opportunity to view the Holy Sepulcher, however sites such as

[15] Hamilton, "Eleanor of Castile and the Crusading Movement," p. 94; Jean de Joinville, "Livre des Saintes Paroles et des Bons Faiz Nostre Saint Roy Looÿs," in J. Monfrin (ed.), *Vie de Saint Louis* (Paris, 1995), pp. 1-379, at 55, vv. 106-108.
[16] For a discussion of this crusade, see: M. Lower, *The Tunis Crusade of 1270: A Mediterranean History* (Oxford, 2018); M.C. Gaposchkin, *The Making of Saint Louis: Kingship, Sanctity, and Crusade in the Later Middle Ages* (Ithaca, 2008), pp. 21-47.
[17] S. Lloyd, *English Society and the Crusade, 1216-1307* (Oxford, 1988), pp. 113-153; S. Lloyd, "The Lord Edward's Crusade, 1270-2: its setting and significance," in J. Gillingham and J.C. Holt (eds.), *War and Government in the Middle Ages* (Woodbridge, 1984), pp. 120-133; B. Beebe, "The English Baronage and the Crusade of 1270," *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research,* vol. 48, no. 118 (1975), pp. 127-148.

Nazareth would have been within reach. Back in Acre, Eleanor gave birth to her second daughter, Joan, in 1272.[18] She also commissioned the first French translation of the Roman author Vegetius' *De re militari*, adorned with miniatures painted by local artists, which she gifted to Edward.[19]

The couple returned to England in 1274, and Edward was duly crowned king that same year. Although they had both completed their crusade vows, they seem to have been enamoured by holy war. Edward I took a second crusade vow in 1287, and it has been suggested that Eleanor likewise made another vow at this time – though there is no direct evidence of this.[20] Nevertheless, neither Edward nor Eleanor made good on any promise to return to the Holy Land. Edward became embroiled in wars with Llwelyn ap Gruffydd and the conquest of Wales (1276-1295), followed by his involvement in the First War of Scottish Independence (1296-1328), and so never had the opportunity.[21]

Though Eleanor did not go on crusade again, her tomb gives us key insights into her attitudes (or those of her executors) toward crusading culture and gendered ideals in the Middle Ages. She died in 1290, just prior to the fall of Acre, the last

[18] N.R. Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative* (Woodbridge, 2007), p. 169.
[19] Hamilton, "Eleanor of Castile and the Crusading Movement," p. 101.
[20] C. Tyerman, *England and the Crusades, 1095-1588* (Chicago, 1988), pp. 237-238. Cf Hamilton, "Eleanor of Castile and the Crusading Movement," p. 102. For more on Edward's consistent interest in crusade, see P.B. Baldwin, *Pope Gregory X and the Crusades* (Woodbridge, 2014), pp. 187-192.
[21] See: M. Prestwich, *Edward I* (New Haven, 1988) (reprinted: 1997); Tyerman, *England and the Crusades*, p. 231. K. Hurlock, "Power, Preaching and the Crusades in Pura Wallia *c*.1180-*c*.1280," in B. Weiler, J. Burton, P. Schofield, and K. Stöber (eds.) *Thirteenth Century England XI: Proceedings of the Gregynog Conference 2005* (Woodbridge, 2007), pp. 95-108, at 102-108; K. Hurlock, *Wales and the Crusades, c.1095-1291* (Cardiff, 2011), p. 178; K. Hurlock, *Britain, Ireland and the Crusades, c. 1000-1300* (Basingstoke, 2013), p. 48.

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crusader outpost on the mainland of the Levant. Before she died, however, Eleanor may have partly sponsored a Savoyard knight, Otto I de Grandson (d. 1328), to go on crusade in her stead – he traveled to the East in 1290, fought at Acre, and returned in 1294. Otto's pilgrimage appears to occupy a central place on Eleanor's funerary monument in Westminster Abbey; a palimpsest of imagery rejoices in Otto's expedition, the culture of crusade, and queenship.

The Westminster Tomb

Eleanor's skeleton (her other remains were buried elsewhere) was buried within Westminster Abbey – placed in an ornate marble tomb chest, topped with a remarkable gilt bronze effigy. A panel on the north-facing base of the monument was decorated over the winter of 1292 to 1293 by the "King's painter," Walter of Durham.[22] This painted frieze depicts a tomb in the center and an armed knight to the right of it, kneeling before the Virgin Mary and infant Christ, the knight's hands clasped in prayer. To the left of the depiction of the tomb, there is a group of four hooded figures; three wear grey robes, possibly faded from black, and one wears red.[23] The current condition of the painting is poor – damaged by attempts at cleaning and restoration in the mid-20th century – only the outlines of the figures are

[22] N. Coldsteam, "The Tomb of Queen Eleanor in Westminster Abbey: An Evaluation of the Documentary Evidence," in H. Beck and K. Hengevoss-Dürkop (eds.), *Studien zur Geschichte der europäischen Skulptur im 12./13. Jarhundert* (Frankfurt, 1994), pp. 101-108, at 102.
[23] E.W. Tristram and M. Bardswell, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century, Text* (Oxford, 1950), p. 152; E.W. Tristram and M. Bardswell, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century, Plates* (Oxford, 1950), Supplementary Plate 7a.

now discernible. Luckily, a reconstruction of their schema was made by Ernest Tristram when the imagery was clearer, following the initial cleaning that later led to the painting's deterioration.[24] **(Fig. 1)**

Figure 1 Ernest Tristram's reconstruction of the painted scene on the north base of Eleanor of Castile's tomb in Westminster Abbey. London, Westminster Abbey Library, WA 3682. Photo: Reproduced here by kind permission of the Dean and Chapter, © Dean and Chapter of Westminster.

Esther Clifford confirmed that the kneeling individual, whose coat of arms was visible on the figure's surcoat, was Otto I de Grandson.[25] This detail is not visible on the painting as it survives; however, in the 1760s, Reverend Thomas Kerrich made a detailed watercolor of the knight, which Tristram used as a basis for

[24] Tristram and Bardswell, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century, Text*, p. 152.
[25] E.R. Clifford, *A Knight of Great Renown: The Life and Times of Othon de Grandson* (Chicago, 1961), p. 126.

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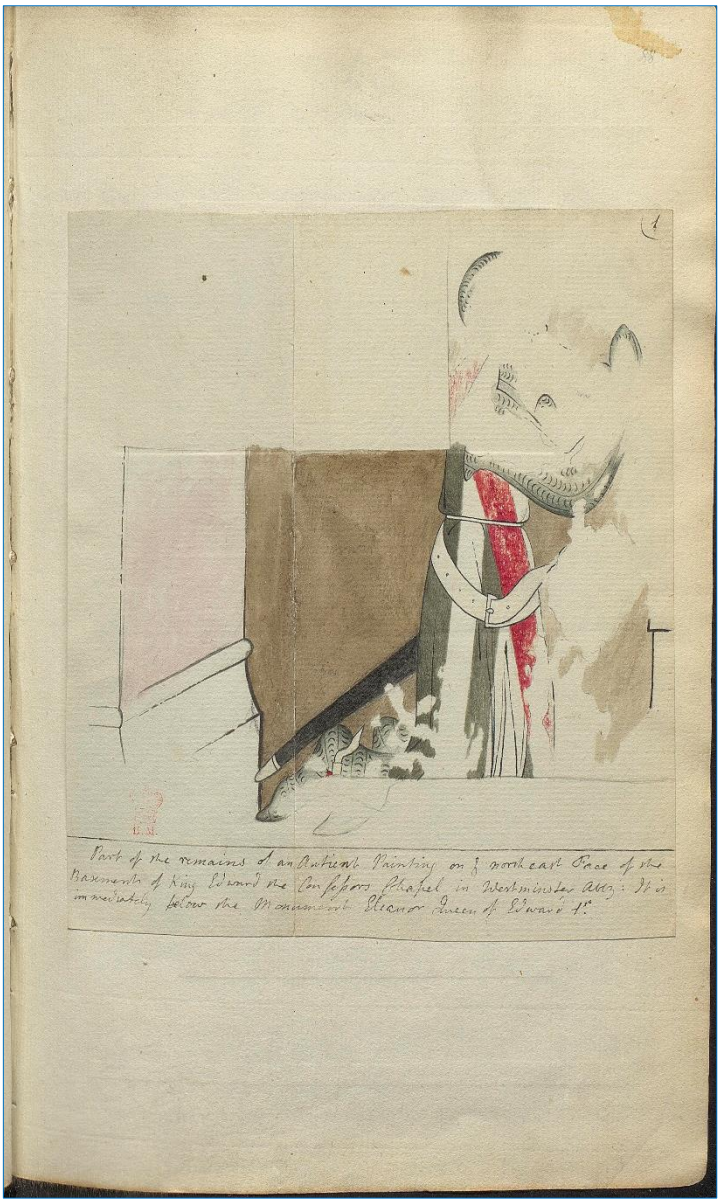

Figure 2 Thomas Kerrich's watercolor of Otto de Grandson on Eleanor of Castile's tomb. Otto's coat of arms is clearly visible on his surcoat. London, BL, Additional MS 6726, f. 88. Photo: Reproduced here by kind permission of the British Library, © British Library Board.

his reconstruction.[26] This watercolor is contained in one of Kerrich's sketchbooks, now held by the British Library.[27] **(Fig. 2)**

If there was any doubt that the knight is Otto, reservations may be assuaged by a second, uncannily similar depiction of him. Otto is also rendered kneeling before the Virgin Mary on the "Grandson antependium," an altar cloth made in Cyprus sometime between 1290-1300. **(Fig. 3)** This item was certainly brought to

[26] Tristram and Bardswell, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century, Text*, p. 152.
[27] London, BL, Additional MS 6726, f. 88.

Figure 3 The so-called "Grandison Antependium", *c*. 1290s, Lausanne Cathedral – now in Bernisches Historisches Museum. Photo: © A.J. Marshall, Wikicommons

England, as local craftspeople finished the borders – again highlighting a close connection with Otto's career. This well-traveled piece eventually sat in Lausanne Cathedral (Switzerland) – Otto's burial place – where it lay for centuries before being moved to the Bernisches Historicsches Museum. Despite the antependium's

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association with England and its similar subject matter to the Westminster painting, the latter was made independently of the former, given the dating of Otto's return.[28]

The Westminster image has been interpreted as a depiction of Otto praying at Christ's tomb in the Holy Sepulcher, accompanied by pilgrims (the hooded figures in the lefthand portion of the frieze), having fulfilled Eleanor's crusade vow as her proxy.[29] Crusade-proxies were typically employed by individuals who had taken crusade vows, but had since become sick or had domestic problems that prevented their departure. The sponsor would pay the expenses of the proxy, and both were thought to gain the spiritual reward of crusade through the arrangement.[30] The papacy and crusade-preachers of the 12th and 13th centuries particularly encouraged women to support crusade by funding proxies, or generally donating money or offering prayer.[31] Women continuously went on crusades and became involved in a variety of ways.[32] However, within clerical circles, a model crystalized during the

[28] For more on the antependium, see D. Jacoby, "Cypriot Gold Thread in Late Medieval Silk Weaving and Embroidery," in S.B. Edgington and H.J. Nicholson (eds.), *Deeds Done Beyond the Sea: Essays on William of Tyre, Cyprus and the Military Orders Presented to Peter Edbury* (Farnham, 2014), pp. 101-114, at 106-107; S. Marti, "Entre Orient et Occident – L'antependium d'Othon de Grandson. Ebauche sur l'etat et les perspectives de la recherche," in B. Andenmatten (ed.), *Othon Ier de Grandson (vers 1228-1328), Le parcours exceptionnel d'un grand seigneur vaudois* (Lausanne, 2020), pp. 37-54.
[29] Clifford, *A Knight of Great Renown*, p. 126; Tyerman, *England and the Crusades,* pp. 237-238.
[30] G. Fort, "Suffering Another's Sin: Proxy Penance in the Thirteenth Century," *Journal of Medieval History*, vol. 44, no. 2 (2018), pp. 202-230; Evans, M.R., "Commutation of Crusade Vows, Some Examples for the English Midlands," in A.V. Murray (ed.), *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader Societies, 1095-1500* (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 219-228; C. Tyerman, *God's War: A New History of the Crusades* (Cambridge, 2006), pp. 613-614. See also Kathryn Hurlock's discussion of individuals performing the vows of *crucesignati* who died intestate: Hurlock, "A Transformed Life?", p. 16; Hurlock, *Britain, Ireland and the Crusades*, p. 88.
[31] For more on the funding of crusade through donations, see especially: T. Guard, "*Opus Caritativum*: Crowdfunding the Later Crusades, The English Evidence," in G.E.M. Lippiatt and J.L. Bird (eds.), *Crusading Europe: Essays in Honour of Christopher Tyerman* (Turnhout, 2019), pp. 211-233.
[32] R. Mazeika, "'Nowhere was the Fragility of their Sex Apparent' Women Warriors in the Baltic Crusade Chronicles," in A.V. Murray (ed.), *From Clermont to Jerusalem: The Crusades and Crusader*

1180s, in which it was envisioned that laywomen should ideally patronize and sponsor crusade, rather than physically take part in it.[33] This seems to have become standard preaching rhetoric directed toward women by the 1220s.[34]

Scholars once thought the image on Eleanor's Westminster tomb represented Otto praying at one of the three burial places of Eleanor's remains: that of her skeleton in Westminster, her heart in Blackfriars' Priory (London), or her viscera in Lincoln Cathedral.[35] This interpretation is less plausible than the idea that it refers to a crusading context for two reasons. First, Otto left England for the East in July 1290, roughly four months before Eleanor's death, and so the depiction probably does not show him praying at her tomb before departure.[36] Second, the painting was completed in 1293, yet Otto did not return to the West until late 1294 – ergo, it would

Societies 1095-1500 (Turnhout, 1998), pp. 229-248; C.T. Maier, "The Roles of Women in the Crusade Movement: a Survey," *Journal of Medieval History,* vol. 30, no. 1 (2004), pp. 61-82; Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*; S.G. Heller, "Surprisingly Historical Women in the Old French Crusade Cycle," in S.S. Poor and J.K. Schulman (eds.), *Women and Medieval Epic: Gender, Genre, and the Limits of Epic Masculinity* (Basingstoke, 2007), pp. 41- 66; N. Christie, "Fighting Women in the Crusading Period through Muslim Eyes," in N.R. Hodgson, K.J. Lewis, and M.M. Mesley (eds.), *Crusading and Masculinities* (London, 2019), pp. 183-195.

[33] C.M. Rousseau, "Home Front and Battlefield: The Gendering of Papal Crusading Policy (1095-1221)," in S. Edgington and S. Lambert (eds.), *Gendering the Crusades* (Cardiff, 2001), pp. 31-44; C.T. Maier, "Propaganda and Masculinity: Gendering the Crusades in Thirteenth-Century Sermons," in Hodgson, Lewis, and Mesley, *Crusading and Masculinities*, pp. 21-35; G.M. Reynolds, "A Paragon of Support? Ela of Salisbury, Martyrdom, and the Ideals of Sponsoring Crusade," *Crusades,* vol. 20 (2021), pp. 247-266.

[34] G.M. Reynolds, "Elite Laywomen and the Ideals of Crusade Support in England, *c*.1187-1291" (Unpublished PhD Thesis, University of Edinburgh, 2021), pp. 39-79.

[35] Tristram and Bardswell, *English Medieval Wall Painting: The Thirteenth Century, Text,* pp. 152-153.

[36] For Otto's departure date, see A. Forey, "Otto of Grandson and the Holy Land, Cyprus and Armenia," *Crusades,* vol. 16 (2017), pp. 79-93, at 83; Lloyd, *English Society and the Crusade,* p. 59.

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be strange to depict him praying at a tomb in England, when it may have been uncertain that he would return at all.[37]

The interpretation that the image shows Otto fulfilling Eleanor's crusade vow rests on the fact that Eleanor and Otto were close friends and had a shared a crusading past.[38] They had both accompanied the then-Prince Edward on the expedition of 1270 to 1272.[39] As we have seen, there has been speculation that Eleanor took a second crusade vow in 1287, perhaps Otto did the same. However, Otto never actually made it to Jerusalem. Instead, he fought in the Siege of Acre (1291) and was then forced to flee to Cyprus with the Latin Christians – where he acquired the Grandson antependium – and then (possibly) Armenia before returning.[40] Eleanor's sojourn on Lord Edward's expedition in the 1270s never reached Jerusalem either. It seems, then, that the painting presumed and anticipated Otto's arrival at Jerusalem (as he had not returned to confirm otherwise), or perhaps allegorized his crusade by showing him within the Holy Sepulcher.

It is plausible that Eleanor employed Otto as her crusade proxy. This theory has been argued in the past, chiefly because Otto is depicted on Eleanor's tomb and Eleanor left two manors to him in her will.[41] Between 1289 and 1290, Eleanor also

[37] For the dating of the painting, see H.M. Colvin (ed.), *The History of the King's Work,* 6 vols. (London, 1963-82), at vol. 1, p. 481; W.R. Lethaby, "Master Walter of Durham, King's Painter *c*. 1230-1305," *Burlington Magazine,* vol. 33, no. 184 (1918), pp. 3-8, at 7-8. For the dating of Otto's return, see Forey, "Otto of Grandson and the Holy Land," pp. 85-86 and 90; Tyerman, *England and the Crusades*, p. 237.
[38] Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile*, p. 34.
[39] Lloyd, *English Society and the Crusade*, p. 124.
[40] Forey, "Otto of Grandson and the Holy Land, Cyprus and Armenia," pp. 85-86 and 90; Lloyd, *English Society and the Crusade*, p. 59; Prestwich, *Edward I*, p. 75.
[41] Clifford, *A Knight of Great Renown,* p. 126.

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gifted Otto a thousand marks.[42] I suspect that these *gifts* represented payment for crusading on Eleanor's behalf. Clifford suggested that Otto was acting as an emissary for King Edward when he left in 1290.[43] Ian Forey has challenged this idea, noting that chancery records give no indication that Otto was being sent East by Edward.[44] This situation lends credence to the idea that Otto was, in fact, acting independently and as a private proxy for Eleanor.

The circumstantial evidence of Eleanor's activity adds further weight to this interpretation. She purchased a series of luxury goods imported from Acre in January 1290.[45] Eleanor obviously had an interest in the East, but perhaps considered it unlikely that she would personally go there any time soon. It is equally relevant to note that, while Eleanor was transferring a thousand marks to Otto, she also gifted two hundred pounds to Robert Tibetot – another veteran of the 1270 crusade – and loaned him a further hundred.[46] Robert's wife, Eva, may have taken a crusade vow at the time that Eleanor transferred them money – only a year later, in 1291, Pope Nicholas IV advised that Eva should not personally go on crusade, but instead pay the costs of a warrior (a crusade proxy) to go in her stead.[47] Eleanor of Castile's transfers to Eva's husband might represent some sponsorship of the couple's, or just

[42] Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile,* p. 85.
[43] Clifford, *A Knight of Great Renown*, p. 109.
[44] Forey, "Otto of Grandson and the Holy Land," p. 81.
[45] Hamilton, "Eleanor of Castile and the Crusading Movement," p. 103.
[46] Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile,* p. 85. For Robert Tibetot's contract to go on crusade in 1270, see: London, British Library, Additional Charter 19829.
[47] E. Langlois (ed.), *Les Registres de Nicholas IV*, 2 vols. (Paris, 1886-91), at vol. 1, p. 650, no. 4490.

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Eva's, proposed journey to the East. This may indicate a pattern in Eleanor's patronage of crusaders in her later years.

If the painting on Eleanor's tomb chest represents Otto as her crusade proxy, it is highly significant because it emphasizes that sponsoring a warrior partly ensured her salvation – a contemporary ideal for women intent on engaging with crusade. Strikingly, Eleanor's personal experiences in the Holy Land were not commemorated but, instead, her association with, and redemption via, Otto's pilgrimage. John Carmi-Parsons felt that the paintings on Eleanor's tomb were intended to invite the viewer to pray for Eleanor, as Otto was depicted doing.[48] This is certainly true, yet, it seems the imagery suggests more: it was a celebration of women's patronage of crusade, and it associated this model with notions of ideal queenship. Indeed, these crusading themes are interwoven with quite a conventional portrayal of queenship – Eleanor is not the humble supplicant, but rather an absent, powerful sponsor.[49]

The figure of the Virgin Mary and the infant Christ on the panel reveal important aspects of gendered ideals in the Middle Ages. The rise of the cult of the Virgin Mary across this period was profound. Although crusaders had a deep reverence for the Virgin, the cult that grew around her developed, largely,

[48] Parsons, *Eleanor of Castile,* p. 207.

[49] For idealisms of queenship and patronage in contemporary art, see: T.C. Hamilton, "Queenship and Kinship in *French Bible* Moralisée: The Example of Blanche of Castile and Vienna ÖNB 2554," in K. Nolan, *Capetian Women* (New York, 2003), pp. 177-208; J.H. Clements, "The Construction of Queenship in the Illustrated *Estoire de Seint Aedward le Rei*," *Gesta,* vol. 52, no. 1 (2013), pp. 21-42. See also: M. Keane, *Material Culture and queenship in 14th-Century France: The Testament of Blanche of Navarre (1331-1398)* (Leiden & Boston, 2016).

irrespective of the phenomenon of the crusades.[50] Royalty and nobility were keen to celebrate the Blessed Virgin, and dozens of religious houses were founded in this period in the British Isles and dedicated to her.[51] The Virgin was held up as an idealized image of Christian queenship for then-contemporary rulers to emulate.[52] The appearance of the Virgin on Eleanor's tomb again highlights the wider attention to *model* Christian rulership. Crusade, or more specifically, the patronage of it, appears to have been intertwined with these concepts on Eleanor's Westminster tomb.

Furthermore, Eleanor's monument occupied a space that was a focal point for royal ideals; it was the main pilgrimage site for the cult of St Edward the Confessor – an 11th-century Anglo-Saxon king, canonized in 1161. Edward I's father, Henry III, doggedly promoted the cult of St Edward, and even had the saint's relics translated to Westminster and a shrine built in 1269.[53] St Edward's cult has been characterized as being mostly popular amongst England's (and specifically Westminster's)

[50] Hodgson, *Women, Crusading and the Holy Land in Historical Narrative*, pp. 163-167.
[51] M.H. Hammond, "Royal and Aristocratic Attitudes to Saints and the Virgin Mary in Twelfth and Thirteenth Century Scotland," in S. Boardman and E. Williamson (eds.), *The Cult of Saints and the Virgin Mary in Medieval Scotland* (Woodbridge, 2010), pp. 61-85, at 73; M. Rubin, *Mother of God: A History of the Virgin Mary* (London, 2009); J. Pelikan, *Mary Through the Centuries: Her Place in the History of* Culture (New Haven, 1996); M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and the Cult of the Virgin Mary* (Oxford 1976).
[52] M. Gaude-Ferragu, *Queenship in Medieval France, 1300-1500*, A. Krieger (trans) (New York, 2016), pp. 73-75.
[53] D. Carpenter, *Henry III: The Rise to Power and Personal Rule 1207-1258* (New Haven & London, 2021), 322-331; M. Payne and W. Rodwell, "Edward the Confessor's Shrine in Westminster Abbey: Its Date of Construction Reconsidered," *Antiquaries Journal,* vol. 97 (2017), pp. 187-204; P. Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets: Kingship and the Representation of Power 1200-1400* (New Haven & London, 1995), pp. 52-89. See also: K.J. Lewis, "Becoming a Virgin King: Richard II and Edward the Confessor," in S. Riches and S. Salih (eds.), *Gender and Holiness: Men, Women and Saints in Late Medieval Europe* (London, 2002), pp. 86-100.

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political élite, rather than a broad corpus of the population – perhaps because St Edward was an unusual saint, having been a king, rather than a churchman or martyr.[54] The pilgrims who traveled to see St Edward's shrine would presumably have also viewed the artistry on Eleanor's tomb among the other monuments. Again, a celebration of crusading ideals – mostly relevant to the upper tier of society – may have appealed to the noble visitors of St Edward's shrine.

Eleanor's Other Memorials

It is possible that Eleanor's other memorials emphasized her association with crusade, too. When Eleanor died, her remains were divided and buried in three separate places. Nothing survives of the tombs for her viscera at Lincoln Cathedral or her heart at Blackfriars Priory (London). However, Walter of Durham – the painter of the scene on her Westminster tomb – was also employed to provide paintings for the monument at Blackfriars.[55] Alexander of Abingdon may have continued this work, as he produced a *pictura* for the Blackfriars tomb, and he then went on to work on images at the Lincoln counterpart.[56] It is unclear what these other paintings were, but the links in the craftsmen employed may hint that the subject matter was similar, too.

[54] Binski, *Westminster Abbey and the Plantagenets,* pp. 53-44. See also: D.A. Carpenter, "King Henry III and Saint Edward the Confessor: The Origins of the Cult," *English Historical Review,* vol. 122, no. 498 (2007), pp. 865-891.
[55] Coldsteam, "The Tomb of Queen Eleanor in Westminster Abbey," p. 102.
[56] Coldsteam, "The Tomb of Queen Eleanor in Westminster Abbey," pp. 104-105; Colvin, *The History of the King's Work,* vol. 1, p. 482, n. 4.

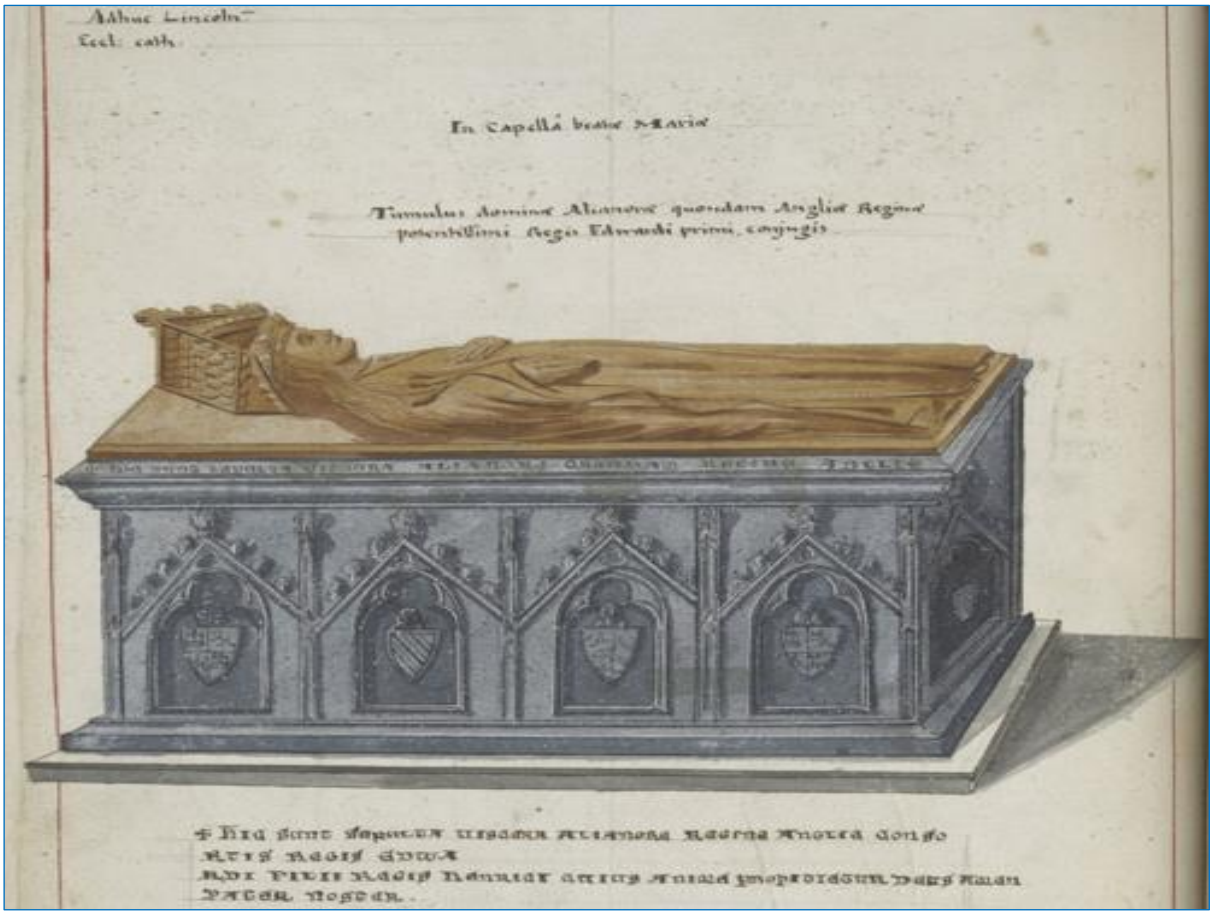

Figure 4 A depiction of the tomb of Eleanor of Castile's Viscera in Lincoln Cathedral, from *Dugdale's Book of Monuments 1640-1,* British Library Add MS, 71474, f. 98v. Photo: reproduced here by kind permission of the British Library, © British Library Board.

The construction of the gilt effigy and marble tomb at Lincoln are known from a 17th-century drawing and appear to have been very similar to that of the Westminster tomb.[57] **(Fig. 4)** What exactly was painted on or around the Lincoln monument is unknown, but it seems that there was a linked plan for Eleanor's memorials; similar scenes to those painted at Westminster may have been repeated. There was certainly a uniform plan (with minor stylistic differences) in the design of

[57] Coldsteam, "The Tomb of Queen Eleanor in Westminster Abbey," p. 101.

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Figure 5 The 'Eleanor Cross' in Hardingstone (Northamptonshire), one of three surviving examples. Photo: © Gordon M. Reynolds.

the so-called Eleanor Crosses – a series of twelve stone crosses erected at the points where the queen's funeral bier rested *en route* to Westminster. **(Fig. 5)** These too were constructed by craftsmen who were related to one another or worked together on

other aspects of Eleanor's memorials.[58] Creating a sense of continuity was singularly important in the idiom of Eleanor's memorials.

The burial of Eleanor's heart at Blackfriars, again, had added associations with crusade. This religious house belonged to the Dominican friars – a mendicant order who provided the bulk of crusade preachers in the 13th century.[59] Eleanor's heart itself was interred together with the heart of John de Vescy (d. 1289), a nobleman who had also participated in the 1270-1272 crusade.[60] Contemporaries placed great importance on locating crusaders' burials and cementing lasting associations with them.[61] For example, some noblewomen in England (or their executors) chose for their remains to be buried in shared spaces of commemoration with crusaders, to emphasize their personal or dynastic links with holy war.[62] The decision to inter Eleanor's heart with that of a former crusader is unlikely to have been incidental, or at least trivial.

[58] Coldsteam, "The Tomb of Queen Eleanor in Westminster Abbey," pp. 102-103; M. Duffy, *Royal Tombs of Medieval England* (Stroud, 2003), p. 87; E. Hallam, "The Eleanor Crosses and Royal Burial Customs," in D. Parons (ed.), *Eleanor of Castile 1290-1990: Essays to Commemorate the 700th Anniversary of her Death: 28th November 1290* (Leicester, 1991), pp. 9-22.
[59] C.T. Maier, *Preaching the Crusades: Mendicant Friars and the Cross in the thirteenth Century* (Cambridge, 1994), pp. 111-122; J. Sarnowsky, "Regional Problems in the History of the Mendicant and Military Orders," in J. Sarnowsky (ed.), *Mendicants, Military Orders, and Regionalism in Medieval Europe* (Aldershot, 1999), pp. 1-15, at 2-3; C.H. Lawrence, *The Friars: The Impact of the Early Mendicant Movement on Western Society,* 2nd edn (London & New York, 2013), pp. 185-188.
[60] Duffy, *Royal Tombs of Medieval England*, p. 85. For John de Vescy's preparations for The Lord Edward's Crusade, see: *Calendar of Patent Rolls, Henry III, 1266-72*, pp. 37, and 439.
[61] Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps*, pp. 74-77, 118, and 139.
[62] Paul, *To Follow in Their Footsteps,* p. 121; Tyerman, *England and the Crusades,* p. 216. See also: K.A. Smith, "Monastic Memories of the Early Crusading Movement," in Cassidy-Welch, *Remembering the Crusades and Crusading,* pp. 131-144.

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Conclusion

The perspectives that lay behind the depictions upon Queen Eleanor's Westminster monument were representative of wider clerical attitudes and ideals regarding feminine gender roles within the crusade movement. Unfortunately, painted medieval schemes are relatively rare within England – so, it is hard to determine whether the tributes to crusade represented on Eleanor's tomb were unique, or if similar schema adorned other contemporary tombs. Nevertheless, Eleanor's tomb celebrated women's patronage of crusade, and, in this attitude, it was not isolated. As Nurith Keenan-Kedar and Benjamin Kedar noted regarding the Belval sculpture of Aigeline of Burgundy and her crusading husband – the design was a means of "exemplifying the ideal virtues of Christian nobility."[63] It is clear that Queen Eleanor's Westminster tomb was a celebration of a contemporary Christian ideal, too, like many other effigy sculptures – yet, the place of crusade within that personal and royal model appears to have been far more integral than has generally been acknowledged.

Finally, we cannot ignore the context in which the painting was made. News of the Fall of Acre in 1291 would have reached England before the production of the painting. Questions would have abounded, especially amongst royal circles, regarding the direction of the crusading movement and the means of regaining a Latin Christian foothold in the Levant. We cannot know whether Eleanor left

[63] Kenaan-Kedar and Kedar, "The Significance of a Twelfth-Century Sculptural Group," p. 44.

instruction for the exact design of the painting on her tomb, or whether it was envisioned by her husband Edward or her executors. Nonetheless, the schema served to highlight King Edward's connections to those who had fulfilled idealized crusading roles at a time when his dedication to the enterprise (amongst the rest of Christendom's rulers) would have been topic of debate. A painting on a blank face of a stone tomb would perhaps have been the most easily altered (or improvised) aspect of the design of Eleanor's monument. It may, therefore, be a remnant of the artistic celebrations of crusade, commissioned in reaction to the news from the Holy Land.[64] Regardless of who designed it, the message was the same: ideal 13th-century queenship involved sponsorship of crusade. ❧

[64] The *c*.1180s, painted Holy Sepulcher chapel in Winchester Cathedral may similarly have been made ahead of the Third Crusade, and royal residences were painted with crusading themes in Henry III and Edward I's reigns ahead of proposed crusades: D. Park, "The Wall Paintings of the Holy Sepulchre Chapel," in T.A. Heslop and V.A. Sekules (eds.), *Medieval Art and Architecture at Winchester Cathedral* (Leeds, 1983), pp. 38-62, at 51. See also: Whatley, "Romance, Crusade, and the Orient," pp. 175-198; Reeve, "The Painted Chamber at Westminster," pp. 189-221.

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