

ANTIQUARIAN ATTITUDES: CROSSED LEGS, CRUSADERS AND THE EVOLUTION OF AN IDEA

Oliver D Harris

Oliver D Harris, 27 The Cloisters, 145 Commercial Street, London E1 6EB, UK. E-mail: OliverDHarris@netscape.net

Since the sixteenth century, both scholarly and popular readings of tomb monuments have assigned a series of interpretations to medieval effigies with crossed legs. These have included the beliefs that the effigies dated from before the Norman Conquest; that they commemorated crusaders, or those who had taken crusading vows; and that they commemorated Knights Templar. The ‘crusader’ theory has proved particularly tenacious, and, although largely discredited by scholars, continues to flourish in folk wisdom. This paper charts the emergence and dissemination of these several ideas and the debates they engendered. It argues that the early modern identification of the cross-legged attitude as a noteworthy feature was, despite its mistaken associations, a landmark in the story of the formulation of techniques for the typological diagnosis of antiquities.

‘It is no new thing to see how current a vulgar report, though erroneous, passeth in the world.’¹

Sir William Dugdale (1684)

In a recent review article, Sally Badham and Philip Lankester referred to the traditional association between medieval cross-legged effigies and crusading as ‘an idea to be found in many a church guide and quite impossible, it seems, to kill off’.² The present essay does not pretend to contribute directly to what Enoch Powell called the ‘continuing pother’ over the iconographic, aesthetic or structural origins of the crossed-legged pose.³ It does, however, aim to add a fresh dimension to the debate by taking a long view of its intellectual, historiographical and folkloric background.⁴ At the same time, it sets out to chronicle a minor but significant chapter in the wider story of antiquarianism, archaeology and art history.

We may begin by reprising a few basic facts. The recumbent cross-legged attitude was a widespread artistic fashion on tomb monuments in the British Isles from the mid-thirteenth to the mid-fourteenth centuries.⁵ Throughout this period, the great majority of military effigies erected in England, Wales and Anglo-Norman Ireland appeared in the pose. It was given both to three-dimensional effigies in stone and wood and to two-dimensional representations in incised stone and brass. Latterly, but less commonly, the convention was extended to figures of women and male civilians.

1. Hamper 1827, 437.

2. Badham and Lankester 2004, 135.

3. Powell 1979, 3.

4. Brief reviews of theories of cross-legged effigies since the 18th century, to which the present account is indebted, appear in Tummers 1980, 117–26, and Norris 1987.

5. The fullest discussions are in Hurtig 1979, esp 117–37, and Tummers 1980, 103–26.

No direct references to cross-legged effigies, either descriptive or interpretive, are known from medieval texts. To sit cross-legged, however, was sometimes regarded as an attribute of kings. A fourteenth-century poem, 'Somer Soneday', includes a description of the kingly figure at the top of Fortune's wheel as 'Caste kne over kne as a kyng kete'; and the idea that it had formerly been 'customary for kings to sit with the right foot resting on the left thigh' was still familiar to Erasmus in the early sixteenth century.⁶ Images of kings and other figures of authority, from the mid-eleventh century to the early fifteenth, do indeed depict them, on occasion at least, sitting cross-legged.⁷ The attitude is also found in sculptural representations, and may arguably have passed by such a route to tomb effigies.⁸ But the question is far from straightforward, and it remains difficult to draw any direct line between the 'kingly' seated pose and the sepulchral recumbent pose.

Our investigations into perceptions of the attitude on tombs therefore begin in earnest with the rise of antiquarian activity in the sixteenth century. The earliest explicit report of one of the effigies is by John Leland, writing probably in 1542. At Dorchester Abbey (Oxfordshire), he recorded the tomb of 'a knight ... with an image crosse leggid, whos name is there oute of remembrance'.⁹ The Dorchester figure is by any standards a striking piece of sculpture, and it is not surprising that Leland should have used its dynamic and contorted posture as the principal means of distinguishing it from a second military effigy of later date, stiff and straight-legged, in the abbey church. It is also worth remarking, therefore, that this was the only occasion (at least as far as his surviving notes are concerned) on which Leland saw fit to report the pose. His notices of no fewer than ten cross-legged effigies elsewhere fail to mention their attitude; he overlooked entirely several examples in churches where he did record other monuments; and he even ignored the figure at Great Haseley (Oxfordshire), the church of which he himself was rector.¹⁰ His note at Dorchester may suggest that there existed some dim perception, perhaps more popular than scholarly, of the pose as a distinguishing feature of certain effigies, but it seems unlikely that Leland attached any particular significance to it.

RISING INTEREST AND THEORIES OF ANTIQUITY

A consciousness of crossed legs becomes more widely evident in antiquarian texts from the beginning of the reign of Elizabeth I. It must be appreciated that, despite a burgeoning interest in monumental commemoration in this period, antiquaries only rarely and exceptionally paid attention to the sculptural or architectonic characteristics of tombs.¹¹

6. Turville-Petre 1989, 145 (line 89); Erasmus 1985, 278. 'Kete' = 'bold'.

7. Martin 1913, 173–88; Brieger 1957, 149–50. Cf Garnier 1982–9, I, 229. For some early and late examples, see Dodwell and Clemons 1974, fols 10r, 11r, 31v, 34r, 36v, 45v, 155v, and Rouse 1943, pl 11.

8. Cf Tummers 1980, 121–3. The best-known cross-legged sculptures are the mid-14th-century examples on the west front of Exeter Cathedral, though they are too late to have influenced the sepulchral convention directly.

9. Toulmin Smith 1906–10, I, 117.

10. Ibid, I, 52, 63, 69, 72, 83, 157, 224–5, 227, 245, 264; II, 60; IV, 99; V, 79, 88. The living of Great Haseley was a sinecure, and Leland non-resident, but he appears to have used the parish as a temporary base in 1542, and recorded armorial glass in the church: *ibid*, I, 113–14.

11. For the early antiquarian recording of church monuments, see Bertram 1976, 79–111; Lankester 1993, 25–7; Lindley 2007, 53–137; Harris 2008, 234–40.

Their interest and their records instead fell into three largely distinct spheres: simple catalogues of noteworthy burials, descriptions or sketches of heraldry (the genre of record known as ‘church notes’) and transcripts of monumental inscriptions (a class of record rare before the 1590s, and one that was only occasionally combined with heraldic recording until well into the seventeenth century). Only in church notes do we find any attention paid to the design of monuments, and even here it remains highly unusual, and incidental to the heraldic and genealogical rationale of the genre. Drawings of effigies or monuments are largely unknown before the 1590s, and remain rare for the next half century: when they do appear, they tend to serve primarily as schematic vehicles for the heraldry. Yet it is in these church notes that we begin to find references to crossed legs; and, indeed, the pose rapidly establishes itself as the *only* stylistic or formal feature of tombs to be recorded with any degree of regularity or consistency. The antiquaries’ primary concern, of course, remained the identities of the individuals commemorated, and, throughout what follows, it should be understood that the identities assigned in the past to particular monuments do not necessarily reach the standards of modern scholarship.

The earliest relevant record known was made in 1560–1 by William Hervy, Clarenceux King of Arms: he noted the brass to Sir Robert de Bures (d 1331) at Acton (Suffolk) as ‘crosse leged’ (fig 1).¹² Given that the disposition of the legs is, in this case, fairly unobtrusive, being partially obscured by the figure’s gown, it seems likely that the attitude was now more generally recognized as a feature to be looked for. Interest was by no means universal, but it grew, and by the turn of the seventeenth century it was commonplace for crossed legs to be mentioned in church notes. William Wyrley and William Burton between them, for example, identified twenty-three effigies of the type, in Staffordshire, Leicestershire, Warwickshire and Berkshire (fig 2),¹³ while an anonymous antiquary, working in about 1602–5, discovered seventeen cases in Lincolnshire.¹⁴ It is true that instances can still be found of the same antiquaries noting examples without mentioning their pose, or missing the figures entirely, but such oversights increasingly tend to be the exception. In general, if an antiquary visited a church containing an effigy with crossed legs, he was likely to record the fact; and commonly, with the exception of the heraldry, it was the only detail he did record.

A feature of many of the early reports is the appearance of such adjectives as ‘ould’, ‘auntient’, ‘antiquus’, ‘venerable’, or similar suggestions of age. Qualifications of this sort are far less often found applied to straight-legged effigies. These observations may often have been impressionistic, prompted by evident signs of decay, but they also contain the germ of a stylistic judgement: it was recognized that cross-legged figures were older than most of the effigies the antiquaries came across, and that the pose itself could be equated with an early date. In 1587, the poet Thomas Churchyard made an explicit statement of this perception, describing a wooden effigy at Brecon, attributed to Reginald de Briouze (d 1227/8), as ‘Crosse legg’d ... as was the ancient trade’.¹⁵

12. BL, Add MS 4969, fol 12v; published (in edited form) in Weever 1631, 778.

13. SAL, MS 99, fols 87, 93, 94v–95v, 105v; CA, MS Vincent 197, fols 3, 9v, 40, 42, 43, 90v, 94v, 97v; BL, Egerton MS 3510, fols 10, 15v, 22, 24v, 32v, 40, 43, 47v, 48, 67v, 68, 71v, 72v, 73, 74, 74v, 110; Burton 1622, 75, 93, 110, 218 (*recte* 228), 292, 311. Burton drew on Wyrley’s notes, and it is not always possible to determine who first recorded a monument.

14. BL, Add MS 36295, fols 8, 20, 21v, 22, 27, 27v, 32v, 41v, 46, 49v, 52, 59v, 64v, 66v, 76v, 78v. Gervase Holles afterwards incorporated most of these reports into his own church notes, and added further examples: Cole 1911, 68, 89–90, 118, 129, 146, 160, 162, 164, 173, 179, 190, 197, 201, 205, 217, 226–7, 231, 246, 248.

15. Churchyard 1587, sig H3r.



Fig 1. Brass commemorating Sir Robert de Bures (d 1331), Acton (Suffolk), from Waller and Waller (1864). *Photograph: Society of Antiquaries of London*

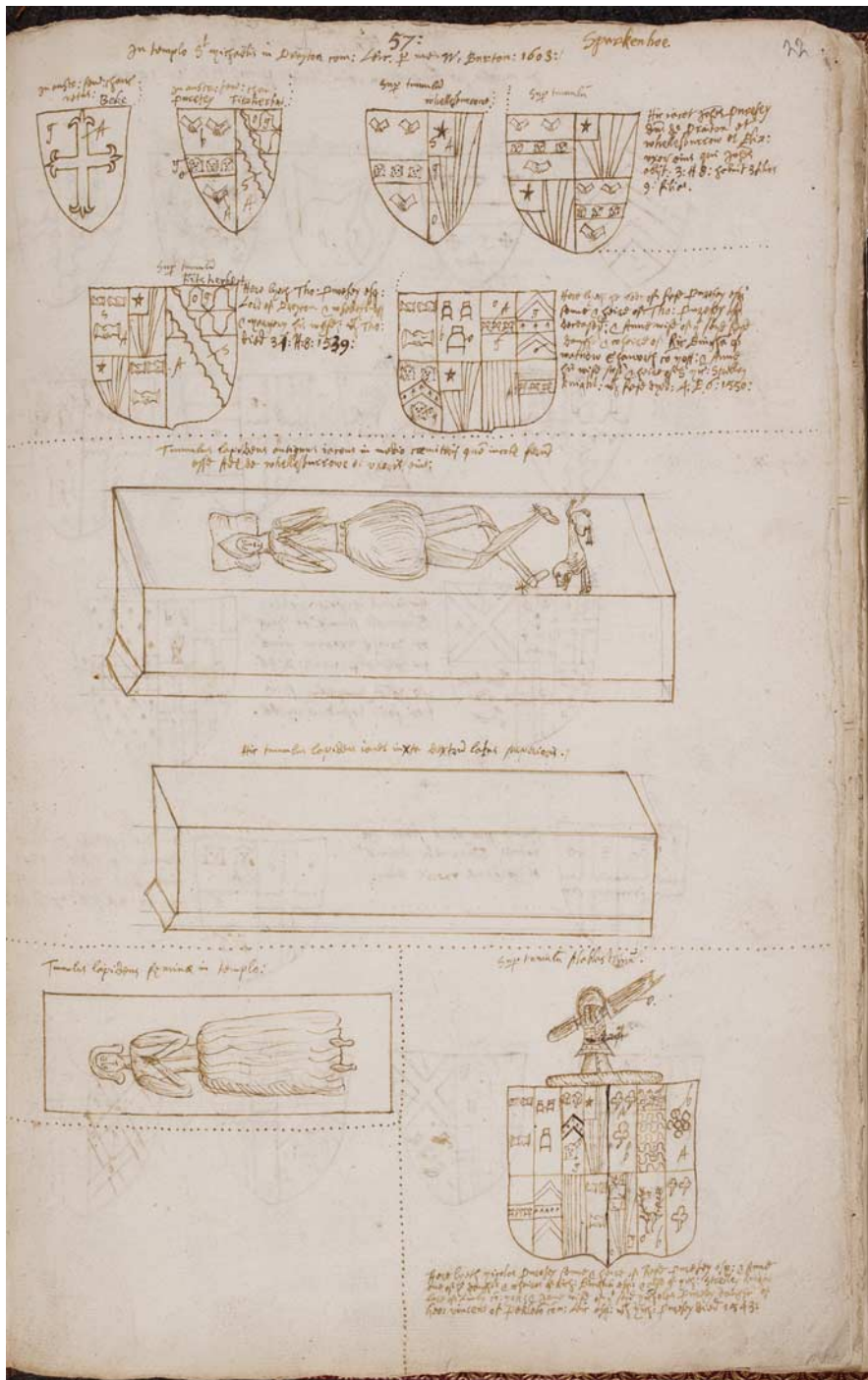


Fig 2. Drawing made by William Burton in 1603 of an effigy in the churchyard of Fenny Drayton (Leicestershire), said to represent Adam de Whellesburgh, from BL, Egerton MS 3510, fol 22. Photograph: © The British Library Board

The consequence of this association was that cross-legged effigies became prime candidates for identification – frequently spurious – as founders or progenitors. Robert Kemp considered that the effigy at Mautby (Norfolk), which bore the Mautby arms, was ‘I suppose the firste of that name’; and an unidentified Dorset antiquary in *c* 1579 believed that a figure at Milton Abbey commemorated a baron who had been instrumental in the house’s re-foundation by William the Conqueror.¹⁶ Either Robert Glover, Somerset Herald, or his nephew, Thomas Milles, reported that two effigies in Shrewsbury Abbey, in cross-legged pose ‘as in old times was used’, portrayed the founder, Roger de Montgomery, earl of Shrewsbury (d 1094), and his son and heir, Hugh (d 1098); and that a third at Hatfield Broad Oak Priory (Essex) represented that house’s founder, Robert de Vere, earl of Oxford (d 1221).¹⁷ Sampson Erdeswick was drawn to investigate an effigy at Dudley Priory (Staffordshire; now West Midlands) by the fact that it was ‘cross-legged and a very old one’: after close inspection, he concluded that it was, ‘as I take it, the first founder of the said priory’.¹⁸ In 1570 a fourteenth-century cross-legged effigy, apparently brought some twenty-five miles from Drogheda, was installed by Sir Henry Sidney in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, to represent Richard ‘Strongbow’, earl of Pembroke (d 1176), traditionally identified as the cathedral’s builder.¹⁹ John, Lord Lumley, assembling an ersatz family mausoleum at Chester-le-Street (County Durham) in the 1590s, appropriated a fourteenth-century cross-legged effigy to become the late twelfth-century William de Lumley, the first to bear the family name; and he commissioned a new cross-legged figure to represent the next generation of the family, Sir William Lumley (figs 3 and 4).²⁰ On the tomb of Sir Gawen Carew (d 1583×5) and his wife, Mary, in Exeter Cathedral, a cross-legged figure (wearing archaized armour and an Elizabethan ruff), set in a recess beneath the two principal effigies, is most probably meant for Adam de Montgomery de Carew, the reputed Norman founder of the family.²¹

Associations between crossed legs and antiquity survived in the popular mind well into the seventeenth century. It seems likely that the persistent tradition, first recorded by Lieutenant Hammond in 1635, that five effigies at Winchelsea (Sussex) – including three cross-legged ‘knights’ – had been salvaged from the drowned church of Old Winchelsea, stemmed in part from an assumption that their attitudes were indicative of extreme age.²²

16. BL, Harleian MS 901, fol 82; BL, Cotton Jul F.vi, fol 381.

17. Milles 1610, pt 2, 633, 635, 678, 737, 739. Glover died in 1588: this work was edited by Milles from his materials. The effigy at Shrewsbury currently identified as Roger (and so identified since 1623) is in fact straight-legged.

18. Erdeswick 1844, 340–1.

19. Hunt 1974, I, 136; Stalley 2000, 231; Bodleian, Rawl B. 484, fol 33 (where the installation is dated to 1572); BL, Add MS 4813, fol 88v.

20. There are now 14 Lumley effigies at Chester-le-Street, but there were originally some 22: Milner 1904, 75–6. The first 2 in the extant series (retrospective commissions by Lord Lumley), and the 10 representing later generations (8 retrospective; 2 authentically medieval but reassigned) are all straight-legged.

21. The cross-legged figure is conventionally identified (from a 17th-century inscription) as Sir Peter Carew (d 1580), Sir Gawen’s nephew: Pole 1791, 110; Wickham Legg 1936, 75; Symonds 1859, 91; Polwhele 1793–1806, II, 19–20; and cf Wagner 1998, 374n. On iconographic grounds, however, it is far more likely to represent an ancestor; while the evidence of the Carew pedigree at BL, Harleian Roll P.9, the heraldry of which bears an intimate relationship to that on the tomb, points strongly towards Adam de Montgomery as the intended subject. I am grateful to Jean Wilson for further comment.

22. Wickham Legg 1936, 28–9.



Fig 3. Early fourteenth-century effigy at Chester-le-Street (County Durham), appropriated by John, Lord Lumley, in the 1590s to serve as William de Lumley.

Photograph: author

In the 1640s, Richard Symonds reported of the wooden effigy at Abergavenny Priory that '[t]hey call him the builder of the church'; and of the diminutive figure at Bottesford (Leicestershire) that '[t]hey say it was for him that built Belvoir Castle'.²³ A few years later, another visitor recorded the same Abergavenny effigy as 'supposed to be Hamelen de Batadini or Bauloon cross legged the Founder of the said Church'; and the stone example in the church's south aisle chapel as 'Hastinges Earle of Pembrok cross leggedd the founder as m^r Miles saith of that chapell'.²⁴ Even in the eighteenth century, figures at St Peter's, Dorchester (Dorset), and Stansted Mountfitchet (Essex) were still identified locally as founders of their respective churches.²⁵

It is in fact likely that popular beliefs about the antiquity of the pose may have existed at a rather earlier date than their appearance in the better-documented antiquarian

23. Symonds 1859, 229, 234.

24. Bodleian, Rawl D. 1481, fol 347; published (with minor transcription errors) in Lindley 2007, 231–2. Lindley dates this document to c 1650–60?, but internal evidence places it after 1662. Abergavenny Priory was founded in the 11th century by Hamelin de Ballon (or Baladon), lord of Over Gwent. 'Mr Miles' is Thomas Milles (1610, pt 2, 1098).

25. Cox 1720–31, 1, 583; Gough 1786–96, I/1, 211.



Fig 4. Effigy at Chester-le-Street (County Durham) representing Sir William Lumley, commissioned by John, Lord Lumley, in the 1590s. *Photograph*: author

record. Two examples of retrospective and consciously archaized cross-legged figures are of particular interest here, as they are thought to date from the early decades of the sixteenth century. At the Augustinian nunnery of Minster-in-Sheppey (Kent), a fourteenth-century military brass of French workmanship to a member of the Northwood family, doubtless originally straight-legged, was given a new pair of crossed legs, probably in *c* 1515, and relaid alongside an originally separate lady (fig 5). Subsequently – probably in *c* 1581–2 – an inscription was added identifying the couple as Sir Roger Northwood and his wife Bona, honoured as the priory's thirteenth-century re-founders.²⁶ A cross-legged alabaster effigy at Burton Abbey (Staffordshire), commemorating its founder, Wulfric Spot (d 1002×4), is likewise believed to have been executed early in the sixteenth century.²⁷

Not so early, but also suggestive of the link arising more from folk belief than from scholarly inference, is a passing allusion made in 1572 in the context of a land dispute in

26. For three variant assessments of the brasses, see Norris 1977, 1, 278–9; Page-Phillips 1980, 1, 89; and Whittemore 1999. Norris inclines towards a single restoration in *c* 1581; Page-Phillips towards two restorations, in *c* 1500 and *c* 1581; and Whittemore towards a single restoration in *c* 1515. In the early 17th century, both Weever (1631, 283) and another antiquary (BL, Harleian MS 1106, fol 42b) independently emphasized the inscription's modern appearance, suggesting that it was a late addition. For the tradition of the priory's re-foundation, see Larking 1859, 11–12.

27. Chatwin 1928; Jeavons 1954, 21; Lankester 1993, 40–1, n 22. Jeavons proposes a late 16th-century date for the monument, but Chatwin and Lankester both argue it was earlier. I am grateful to Philip Lankester for further discussion.



Fig 5. Brasses at Minster-in-Sheppey (Kent), from Neale 1846, 204. The male figure was restored by the Waller brothers in 1881, when they replaced a lost strip at its hips, so correcting both its proportions and the corrupted heraldry of the shield.

Photograph: Society of Antiquaries of London

the Court of Exchequer.²⁸ Thomas Digges, an ambitious young scholar, had identified three tracts of land at Lydd (Kent), on Romney Marsh, to be the subject of a test case, by which he hoped to establish the Crown's title to reclaimed marshland. John Heblethwayte, the town clerk, defending Lydd's customary rights, argued that the town's site, actually on one of the contested parcels, proved that Digges's presumption was false, and that the land was not newly reclaimed. He drew on an eclectic catalogue of documentary and physical evidence to demonstrate the settlement's long history, including the presence of cross-legged effigies in the church: 'For the Antiquity of the Towne & plott, Not to be lately won from the Sea, it appeareth by the face & Vieu of the Antienty of the Towne & Church & buryall of men Cross Legged and such like Monuments'.²⁹ Digges eventually withdrew his suit; but we may gather from this unexpected appearance of the belief in the hard-nosed arena of the law that assumptions about the antiquity of the cross-legged attitude must have been fairly widespread.

Somewhere along the way, the tradition crystallized into a more precise belief that cross-legged effigies pre-dated the Norman Conquest. The inscription added to the Minster-in-Sheppey brasses identified Sir Roger and Bona as 'sepulti ante Conquestum', despite the fact that they were known to have lived in the reign of Henry III.³⁰ William Wyrley, in his heraldic textbook, *The True Use of Armorie* (1592), disparaged the pretensions of those who 'make small account of anie ancestour except before the Conquest, weening that all that lie crosse-legged so were'.³¹ Paul Hentzner, a Silesian tourist, was informed in 1598 that the effigies in the Temple Church, London, commemorated the Danish kings of England; and Arthur Agarde in 1600 described the Burton Abbey effigy as depicting Wulfric Spot, 'who was founder of that abbeye before the Conquest'.³²

Almost as soon as it had surfaced in the written record, however, the theory of pre-Conquest origins was already beginning to fall from favour among critical antiquaries. Wyrley argued that, far from being assignable to such an early date, the convention was actually 'not had in use until after the Palestine wars'.³³ The *True Use* was a respected work, and either his point was taken, or his views are a reflection of a wider scholarly consensus. From the beginning of the seventeenth century we hear little more in informed antiquarian contexts of ideas of extreme age. The notion none the less survived for a time in the wider community. The poet Richard Brathwayte still believed in 1618 that an effigy's cross-legged pose 'inferreth his being before the *Conquest*'.³⁴ Richard Symonds in the 1640s recorded examples at Chilton Foliat (Wiltshire) and Chetwynd (Shropshire) which local tradition assigned to pre-Conquest dates; while a figure at Orton Longueville (Huntingdonshire; now Peterborough) was, in the same period, 'reported to be one of y^e Longviles killed by y^e Danes'.³⁵ Symonds clearly lacked

28. For a fuller account, see Harris 2006.

29. East Kent Archives Centre, Ly/7/2/3, fol 6r-v; abstracted in Historical Manuscripts Commission 1876, 532-3. A single cross-legged effigy survives in Lydd church. 'Monuments' here means 'evidences'.

30. Weever 1631, 283; BL, Harleian MS 1106, fol 42b.

31. Wyrley 1592, 26. For the possibility of Sampson Erdeswick's authorship of this work, see Greenslade 1982, 26.

32. Hentzner 1612, 133; Hearne and Ayloffe 1771, I, 247-8.

33. Wyrley 1592, 26.

34. Brathwayte 1618, sig Hv.

35. Symonds 1859, 153, 174. See also Symonds's reports of the identities assigned to other examples, all implying great age: *ibid*, 187-8, 273. BL, Lansdowne 921, fol 42v; and cf Peck 1732-5, I, bk 6, 29.

confidence in such claims, and Thomas Gerard in 1633 was openly sceptical, describing an example at Pendomer (Somerset) as 'crosse legged and yet I assure myselfe long since the Conquest'.³⁶ By the end of the seventeenth century, even as folklore, the pre-Conquest theory seems largely to have faded away.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE CRUSADER THEORY

Wyrley's almost incidental allusion to the 'Palestine wars', while contributing to the demise of one fallacy, may unwittingly have helped spark another. Although his argument was that cross-legged effigies were not merely post-Conquest, but also post-crusades, his point had been turned on its head within less than a decade. Crossed legs and the crusades became inextricably linked in the antiquarian mind, the pose being defined as the mark of a crusader, or one who had taken crusading vows. One contributory factor may have been a simple misreading of Wyrley's comments; another, knowledge of the retrospective cross-legged effigy of the eminent crusader, Robert of Normandy (d 1134), at Gloucester. The principal catalyst, however, seems to have been a growing interest in the Temple Church effigies, and the crusading associations evoked by their location, the leading preceptory of the Knights Templar in the British Isles. It is not surprising that these particular figures should have prompted speculation, as the Inns of Court served as a crucible of antiquarian ideas and practice, and the church must have been familiar to many active antiquaries.³⁷

The belief first surfaced in print in 1594, in the account of the Temple Church effigies given by William Camden in the fourth edition of his *Britannia*:

Plurimique nobiles apud eos tumulati fuerunt, quorum imagines visuntur in hoc Templo tibijs in crucem transversis: sic enim sepulti fuerunt, ut accepi, quotquot illo saeculo, nomina bello sacro dedissent, vel qui (ut tunc temporis sunt locuti) Crucem suscepissent.

Many noblemen were buried among them, whose images are to be seen in this Temple with their legs transverse in a cross: for, as I have heard, so all were buried, in that age, who had pledged themselves to the Holy War, or who (as was then said) had *taken the Cross*.³⁸

He added the supposed identities of some of the individuals commemorated, and may have been swayed in his view by the knowledge that one of them – Gilbert Marshal, earl of Pembroke (d 1241) – had indeed taken crusading vows, though he did not live to fulfil them. However, Camden did not identify the source of his information, and his circumspect 'as I have heard' ('ut accepi') suggests that the crusader theory was still somewhat tentative.

Four years later, in his *Survey of London*, John Stow evinced no such ambivalence. Describing the same Temple Church effigies, he observed that 'eight of them are Images of armed knights, five lying crosse legged as men vowed to the holy land, against the infidels and unbelieving Jewes'; and in St Paul's Cathedral, he recorded in similar terms

36. Gerard 1900, 74–5. Gerard identified another example as Sir Thomas d'Evercy (d 1324–5): *ibid*, 106.

37. Schoeck 1954, 417–21; Prest 1986, 195–8.

38. Camden 1594, 321 (my translation).

the figure of Henry de Lacy, earl of Lincoln (d 1311), 'crosse legged, as one professed for defence of the holy land against the infidels'.³⁹ In 1600, a contributor to a Society of Antiquaries meeting elaborated with confidence on the cruciform iconography:

such noblemen and gentlemen, as did take upon them the crosse to serve against the enemyes of the crosse in the Holy Land, which were then called *Cruce Signati*, or croised, were buried for the most parte with their legges acrossed. And whereas that taking of the crosse ceased about the tyme of king Edward the second, you shall find none afterward buried in that manner with their legges acrossed.⁴⁰

The issue was also raised in the course of the scholarly feud between Camden and the vituperative Ralph Brooke, York Herald, in relation to an effigy in St Edmund's Chapel, Westminster Abbey (fig 6). Camden accepted the tomb's conventional (and correct) attribution to John of Eltham, earl of Cornwall (d 1336); but Brooke insisted that it commemorated Henry Holland, duke of Exeter (d 1475).⁴¹ In addition to much disputation focused on the tomb's heraldic elements, Camden contended that 'the fashion of buryall, with the legges a crosse ... was growen out of use a good while before' the reign of Edward IV, Brooke's favoured date.⁴² Brooke retorted that a cross-legged attitude might in fact be quite recent. He used two arguments: the first theoretical, that as the order of Hospitallers had survived in England until 1540, so too had crusading vows and, by implication, their iconographic representation; the second empirical, that he knew of modern examples of the type:

Which severall Tombes and pictures (with manie others in like manner) I trust wilbe sufficient prooffe for me against this learned man, to prove that the use and fashion of burieng men with their legges a crosse, was not oute of use (as hee affirmeth it was) before the death of Henry Holland in king .E4. tyme.⁴³

Brooke cited two modern instances, both of which appear to survive. The first, at Chew Magna (Somerset), was 'one Hawkewood with his legges a crosse, hee beinge knowne to live in the memorie of dyvers of that parishe yet lyvinge': this must be the wooden reclining figure identified by later tradition as Sir John Hauteville (sometimes rendered Hawkfield), who, though unknown to history, was supposed to have participated in the Lord Edward's crusade of 1270–2 (fig 7). Although the effigy's dating remains problematical (it has been identified both as over-restored fourteenth-century work, and as a late sixteenth-century archaized creation), it was later said to have been

39. Stow 1908, I, 333; II, 50–I.

40. Hearne and Ayloffe 1771, I, 223. Despite using the word 'buried', the speaker was referring explicitly to monuments. However, it may be noted that Joseph Holland, addressing the Society a few weeks earlier (*ibid.* I, 209), had stated that dead crusaders were actually interred cross-legged, an idea echoed by several later writers. For some reports (largely unconvincing) of cross-legged skeletons, see Maitland 1753, 176; Brougham and Way 1847; Waller and Waller 1864, viii; Bloxam 1876, 236; Vicars 1888, 6; Storrs 1926; and, for sceptical remarks by Richard Gough, Gough 1786–96, I/I, xciv n; II/I, cix; P Q 1789, 496.

41. Camden noted Eltham's burial in the Abbey in Camden 1594, 323; but his specific identification of the tomb must have been made less formally. Brooke's refutation appeared in Brooke c 1599, 10–11. Camden confirmed his identification in Camden 1600a, sig [F3]r; and responded to Brooke in Camden 1600b, 'Ad lectorem', 12–13. Brooke's counter-arguments (unpublished at the time) appear in Brooke 1723–4, 'A second discoverie of errors', 114–27.

42. Camden 1600b, 'Ad lectorem', 13; translated in Brooke 1723–4, 'Second discoverie', 122.

43. Brooke 1723–4, 'Second discoverie', 122–3.

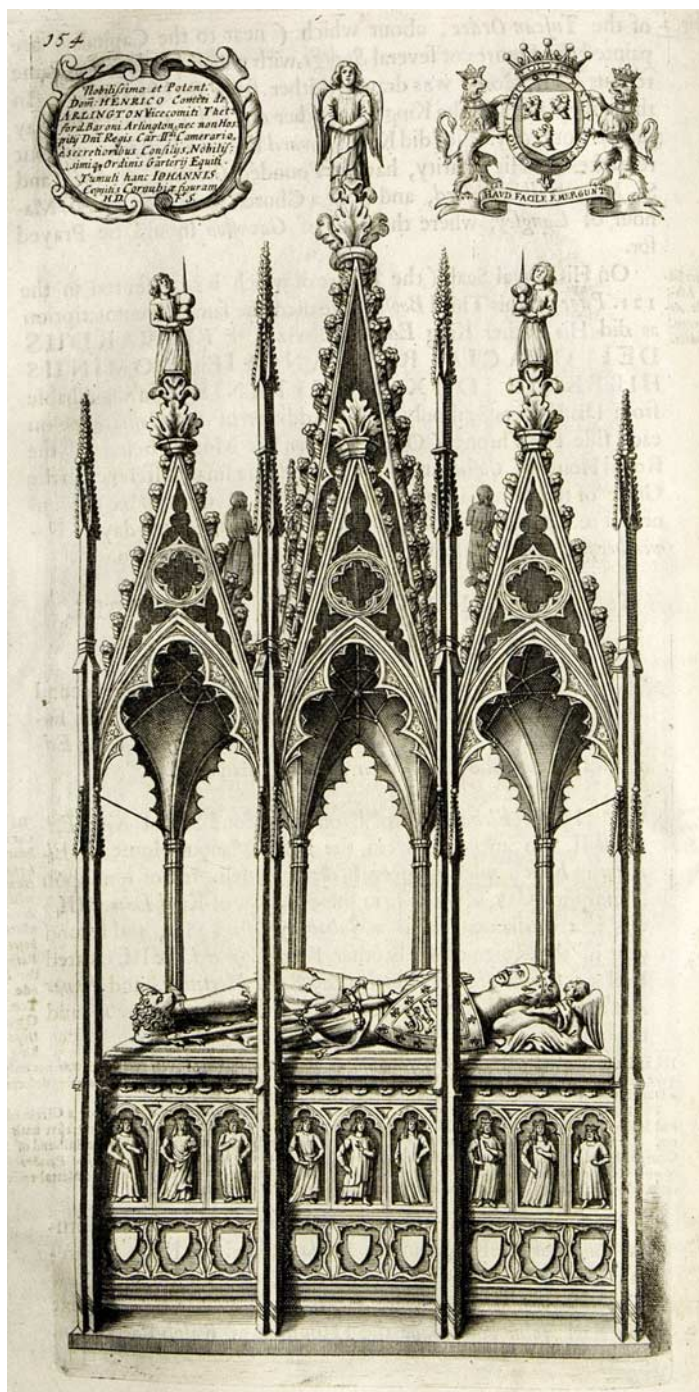


Fig 6. Engraving of the monument of John of Eltham, earl of Cornwall (d 1336), in St Edmund's Chapel, Westminster Abbey, from Sandford 1677, 154. Photograph: Society of Antiquaries of London



Fig 7. Effigy traditionally identified as Sir John Hauteville, Chew Magna (Somerset). *Photograph: author*

brought to Chew church at the Reformation from the nearby suppressed chapel of Norton Hawkfield.⁴⁴ Brooke had been on visitation to Somerset in 1591, and his understanding that ‘Hawkewood’ had died within living memory could reflect a report of its relatively recent installation. His second example, ‘with his legges a crosse uppon a faire Tombe of Aliblastar’, was Sir Thomas Hoby (d 1566), figured alongside his half-brother, Sir Philip Hoby (d 1558), on a strikingly innovative and possibly French-influenced monument at Bisham (Berkshire), commissioned by Sir Thomas’s widow, Elizabeth (fig 8).⁴⁵ Despite his claim of ‘manie others in like manner’, Brooke actually seems to have lighted on two rather exceptional cases.

Brooke’s comments were unpublished, and his attempt to extend the chronological range of cross-legged figures failed to dent the association with the crusades, which had now received the sanction in print of both Camden and Stow. Camden himself grew more confident: his cautious ‘ut accepi’ of 1594, repeated in 1600, was dropped from the 1607 edition of *Britannia* and the 1610 English translation. Indeed, in 1600 he made another unqualified assertion of the claim, in reporting an effigy in Hexham Abbey (Northumberland): ‘After which fashion in those daies were they onely enterred ... who tooke upon them the crosse, and were marked with the badge of the crosse for sacred warfare, to recover the *Holy land* from the Mahometanes and Turkes’.⁴⁶ Stow’s remarks on Henry de Lacy were echoed by Henry Holland in 1614 and John Weever in 1631.⁴⁷ The Devon

44. Collinson 1791, II, 92 (*recte* 100), 107–8.

45. Gladstone 1989, 252–65; White 1992, 35–6; White 1999, 37–8, 41 n 33; Davidson and Stevenson 2007, 211–12.

46. Camden 1600b, 722; translated in Camden 1610, 808.

47. Holland 1614, sig E2r; Weever 1631, 365.



Fig 8. A 1905 photograph of the monument at Bisham (Berkshire) commemorating Sir Thomas Hoby (d 1566), in front, and his half-brother, Sir Philip Hoby (d 1558), behind. Photograph: © Country Life

antiquary Tristram Risdon regarded crossed legs as ‘the manner of such, as in elder ages went to war in the holy land’.⁴⁸

The conceit also surfaced in France, despite the complete absence there of concrete examples of the type. André Favyn, in his *Théâtre d’honneur et de chevalerie* (1620), reported that those who had taken crusading vows were buried cross-legged. ‘In this fashion, and no otherwise were they figured on Tables, Tombes, flatte Grave Stones, or raised by Carving; as yet is to be seene in the Cloysters of Ancient Monasteries of *France*, *Flanders*, and in divers other places else.’⁴⁹ The theory then re-crossed the Channel, appearing in 1623 in the English translation quoted here. One reader was Thomas Habington, who identified fourteen cross-legged effigies in Worcestershire.⁵⁰ He termed them ‘knight[s] of the holy voyage’, an evocative phrase, drawn from Favyn, which resonated with his own Catholicism and sympathy for the crusading ideal; their pose was ‘the ensigne of [their] order’. Conversely, he argued that an effigy at Wolverley, being

48. Risdon 1811, 262, 317–18, 327–8. Risdon wrote c 1605–30.

49. Favyn 1620, II, 1554; translated in Favine 1623, pt 2, 354.

50. Habington 1893–9, I, 145, 150, 161–3, 236, 417–18, 443; II, II, 167, 192–3, 208–9, 242–3, 449, 452. Habington worked 1606–47.

straight-legged, could not be a crusader.⁵¹ He further suggested that crossed legs could be used as dating evidence since knights 'could not be thus buried befor An. Do. 1095 for then began thys war agaynst the Infydells nor after the yeere 1310 for then it ended' (the latter date representing the suppression of the Templars).⁵²

Further assertions of the crusader theory were published by William Gray in 1649, Thomas Philipot in 1659 and Sir William Dugdale in 1656 and 1682.⁵³ The attitude, Dugdale affirmed, had been 'onely used by those that had taken upon them the *Cross*, to serve in the *Holy-land*'. The belief was now firmly entrenched among antiquaries, and in 1663 it emerged in a non-specialist context: Samuel Butler, in his satire *Hudibras*, referred to

... cross-legg'd Knights,
Fam'd for their faith and warlike fights
Against the bloody Caniball.⁵⁴

The idea of the cross-legged crusader had by now permeated the popular imagination and common parlance, and would not be readily expunged.

THE RISE AND FALL OF THE TEMPLAR THEORY

Many antiquaries, rather than identifying the effigies as generic crusaders, preferred to make a more specific association with the Knights Templar (though it must be added that a clear distinction between the two categories was not always made). Undoubtedly, this variant theory was again prompted by knowledge of the Temple Church monuments. In particular, the most prominent individual believed to be represented cross-legged – William I Marshal, earl of Pembroke (d 1219) – was known to have been received into the order on his deathbed; and the same was understood of Robert de Ros (d 1226/7), identified with one of the other figures in the group.⁵⁵

The Templar theory surfaced a decade or two later than the crusader theory. In 1613, John Philipot identified two cross-legged effigies at Ash-next-Sandwich (Kent) as 'knight[s] of the temple' (fig 9); and Weever, drawing on Philipot's notes, described the same two figures in 1631 as 'crosse-legged, as knights of Ierusalem'.⁵⁶ Anthony Munday, revising Stow's *Survey of London* in 1617, glossed Stow's notice of Henry de Lacy's effigy by stating that it was posed 'like a Knight Templar'.⁵⁷ William Burton referred in his

51. Habington 1893–9, II, 321.

52. Ibid, I, 145. In similar remarks elsewhere, Habington placed the beginning of the crusades 'with us' at 1119–20, and the terminal date for cross-legged monuments at 1311: ibid, I, 443; II, 193, 239.

53. Gray 1649, 10–11 (Gray's phraseology borrowed from Camden 1610, 808); Philipot 1659, 120; Dugdale 1656, 729 (*recte* 739); Dugdale 1682, 43n.

54. Butler 1967, 15 (pt 1, canto 1, lines 465–7).

55. Camden, Stow, Weever and others identified William I Marshal with one of the cross-legged figures, although he is now commonly identified with a straight-legged effigy: cf Richardson 1843, 24; Crouch 2002, 141. Ros, a benefactor of the Templars, was buried in the Temple Church, and early modern sources claimed that he entered the order (Toulmin Smith 1906–10, I, 91; BL, Cotton Jul D.i, fol 4), a tradition known to Stow (1908, II, 51) and Weever (1631, 433). He has been identified at different times with different effigies.

56. BL, Egerton MS 3310 A, fol 3; published as Cuncer 1960, 71; Weever 1631, 265.

57. Stow 1618, 640.

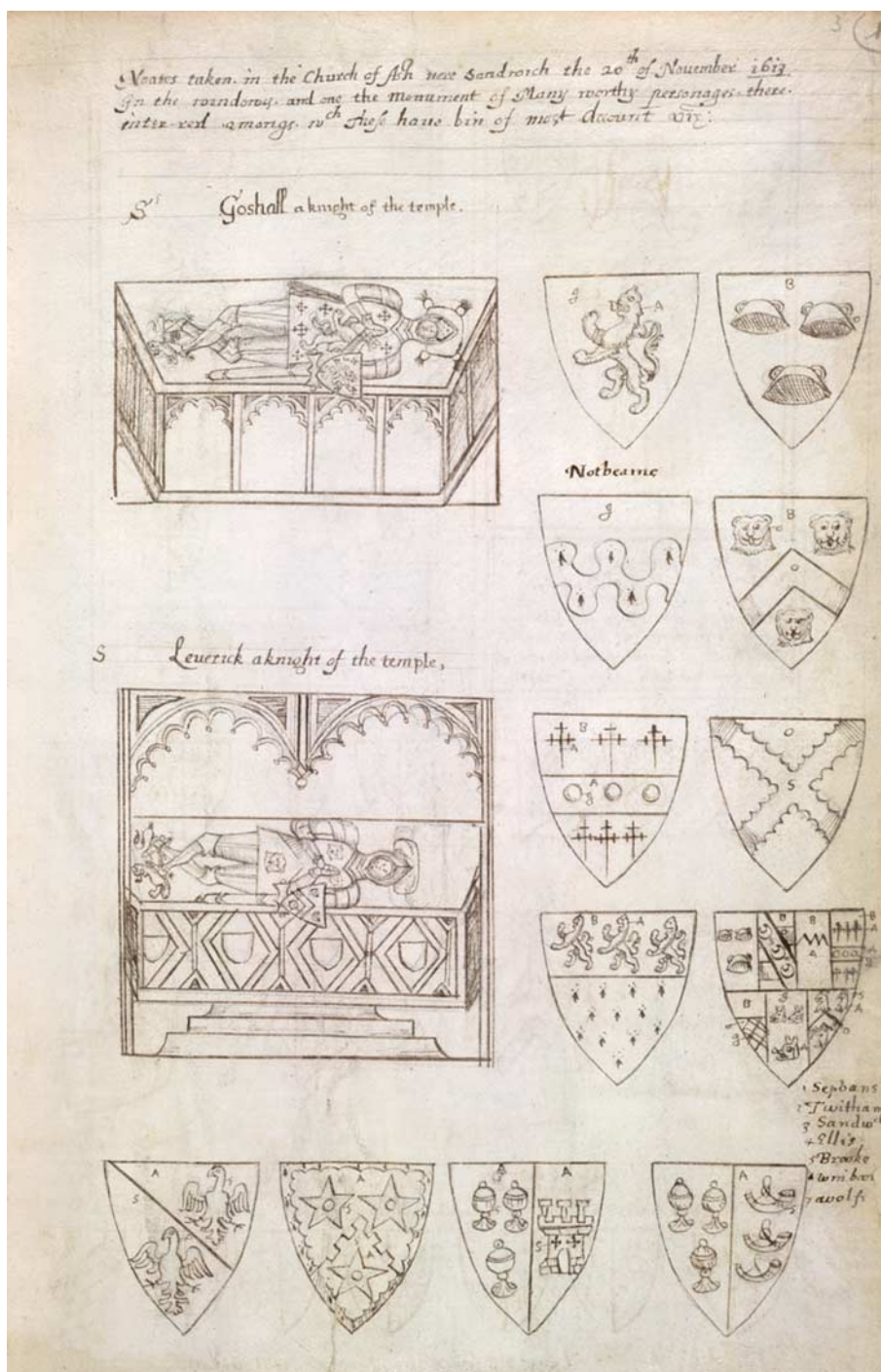


Fig 9. Church notes by John Philipot, 1613, of arms and monuments at Ash-next-Sandwich (Kent), including two 'knight[s] of the temple', from BL, Egerton ms 3310 A, fol 3. Photograph: © The British Library Board

Description of Leicester Shire (1622) to the Temple Church figures as ‘many of the Order ly[ing] buried, their proportions cut in Stone, some of them crosse legged’: his description did not make the connection between order and pose explicit, but it can only have helped to consolidate the belief.⁵⁸ Lieutenant Hammond, in 1635, William Somner, in 1640, and Richard Symonds, in 1644, all identified effigies from their attitude alone as Templars.⁵⁹ Sylvanus Morgan, in 1661, commented that whereas ‘this order is extinct, yet their Monuments remain buried cross-legged’ (fig 10); Thomas Dineley, in the 1680s, observed that Templars bore a red cross, ‘in token that they should shed blood for Xst sake & defence and were buried Cross legg’d’; and John Aubrey, in 1691–2, described the wooden example at Southwark as posed ‘just as the Knights Templars’.⁶⁰ Indeed, in antiquarian writings from the 1650s onwards, the term ‘Knight Templar’ became a common shorthand designation for cross-legged effigies, with little or no comment deemed necessary. In the 1730s or 1740s, the Norfolk antiquary Charles Parkin penned a detailed elaboration of Templar monuments and their iconography, claiming that, ‘to show that they were not ashamed of the Cross, they are pourtray’d and carv’d, with their Legs forming a *Saltire-Cross* in Armour’.⁶¹ A blurring of the distinctions between the military orders led to the attitude also being occasionally assigned to Hospitallers: Hammond described two of his discoveries in Winchester and Exeter Cathedrals as ‘Knight[s] of the Rhodes’, while William Stukeley, in the 1720s, referred to ‘Jerusalem knight[s]’, or knights ‘of St John of Jerusalem’.⁶²

In 1761, the cross-legged pose and its Templar associations were used to justify the prospective removal of a medieval tomb from Westminster Abbey. A proposal had been aired that the monument to Aymer de Valence, earl of Pembroke (d 1324), should be sacrificed to make way for one to General Wolfe, hero of Quebec. The Dean, Zachary Pearce, was hesitant, but his initial misgivings were assuaged by his understanding that the effigy ‘had the appearance of being designed for a Knight Templar’ – ‘a very wicked set of people as his Lordship had heard’. In the event, assured of the true identity of the tomb’s occupant, Pearce vetoed the suggestion, and Wolfe’s monument went elsewhere.⁶³

By this date, however, the first reservations about the Templar theory were beginning to be voiced. Nathaniel Salmon in 1728 had identified three cross-legged effigies in Hertfordshire as Templars, but was reluctant to acknowledge a fourth, at Benington.⁶⁴ His reasoning was, first, that it was ‘not to be supposed a Knight Templar from the Posture for he has no Shield’, and, second, that the knight lay alongside a lady, a clear impediment to his membership of a celibate order. There were, Salmon affirmed, other instances of ‘cross-legg’d Figures, which are known to have been neither Templars nor Hospitallers’: he exemplified the diminutive effigy at Tenbury Wells (Worcestershire), which he took to represent a child, and so, again, an improbable candidate for religious knighthood.

58. Burton 1622, 234–5.

59. Wickham Legg 1936, 48, 63, 70; Somner 1640, 182; Symonds 1859, 31.

60. Morgan 1661–3, bk 3, 84; Dingley 1867–8, II, cccxxiv (and see also *ibid.*, I, lxiii; II, cclxx, cccxcv); Bodleian, Aubrey 4, fol 18; published as Aubrey 1718–19, v, 206. In an annotation (Bodleian, Aubrey 4, fol 17v; unpublished), Aubrey adds: ‘The tradition is that he was a great Traveller that is (I presume) he had been in y^e Holy Land, at the holy Sepulchre’.

61. Blomefield 1739–75, III, 416. For this work’s authorship, see Stoker 1992, 24–33.

62. Wickham Legg 1936, 48, 74; Stukeley 1776, I, 67, 102; II, 21. More puzzlingly, Hammond reports a kneeling ‘knight of the Rhodes’ in glass at Romsey (Hampshire): Wickham Legg 1936, 59.

63. Lewis 1937–83, XXXVIII, 110–11; XL, 200–2. Cf Coutu 2006, 116–17.

64. Salmon 1728, 164, 193, 196, 255.



Fig 10. Engraving of an effigy traditionally identified as that of Sir Gilbert Waterhouse, at Kirton-in-Lindsey (Lincolnshire), from Morgan 1661–3, bk 3, 84 recte 82. Photograph: Society of Antiquaries of London

A decade or so later, Smart Lethieullier considered the topic in greater depth.⁶⁵ His thoughts were expressed in letters to three friends: James West, Treasurer of the Royal Society, Francis Wise, keeper of the Oxford University archives, and Charles Lyttelton, rector of Alvechurch (Worcestershire) as well as future Bishop of Carlisle and President of the Society of Antiquaries.⁶⁶ In his letter to West, written probably at the beginning of the 1740s, Lethieullier accepted a Templar origin for the pose, but doubted that the link had remained inviolate: 'though all [monuments] which we me[e]t with in that shape are vulgarly called so, yet I am certain many are not; and indeed I have rarely found any which I could be certain were for persons who had been of that Order'. Nevertheless, he continued to believe that the abandonment of the convention had broadly coincided with the suppression of the Templars in 1312, when 'their fashions of all kinds seem to have been totally abolished'.⁶⁷ By the time he wrote to Lyttelton in 1744, his scepticism had hardened. Cross-legged effigies were 'even by Writers as well as Vulgar Tradition call'd in general Knights Templars, & yett I am fully convinced I never yett see or read of one of them w^{ch} was made in memory of a Person who had been of that Order'.⁶⁸ This was, he acknowledged, 'a bold Assertion against so Current an Opinion'. His arguments now were that the monuments were found from dates both before and after the presence of the Templars in England; that almost all of the men commemorated, where they could be identified, had been married; that the attitude was unknown on the continent, although the order had been pan-European; and that none of the effigies wore the Templar mantle or other distinguishing badge.⁶⁹ Instead, he concluded:

The truth I make no doubt is that they were intended to preserve the Memory of such Persons as had either actually been in Palastine, during the Rage of what was call'd the Holy War, or of such who had vow'd to go thither tho' perhaps by Death or Dispensation prevented from it – & some perhaps for Persons who had made pilgrimages thither meerly out of private Devotion.

Lyttelton echoed these opinions in his own review of the matter, included in his manuscript history, completed in 1756, of the manor and parish of Alvechurch, where the church contained a cross-legged effigy.⁷⁰ He too was reluctant to concede a direct link with the Templars, but believed that the figures 'had some Relation to them, being y^e Memorials of those Zealous Devotees who had either been in *Palestine* personally engaged in what was call'd y^e Holy War, or had laid themselves under a Vow to go thither'. Continuing to associate the motif with the 'Religious Madness' of the crusades, he suggested that the effigies could be dated broadly to a period between the reign of Stephen and the beginning of that of Edward III.

A third antiquary whose opinions shifted at this time – probably under Lyttelton's influence – was John Hutchins. In 1743, drafting his county history of Dorset, Hutchins wrote of the Milton Abbey effigy that 'by y^e Position of his Leggs, he must have been a Crusader or Knight Templar'. However, he subsequently deleted the Templar reference,

65. Lethieullier's interest can perhaps be traced back to 1737, when he had drawings made of the Temple Church monuments. SAL, Minutes, II, 269, 10 Feb 1736/7.

66. For Lethieullier's letter to Wise (undated), see Nichols 1817–58, III, 633–7.

67. Lethieullier 1773, 294–6. Cf synopsis in SAL, Minutes, XII, 284–8, 295–300, 16 and 23 Jan 1772.

68. BL, Stowe 752, fols 5–8, Lethieullier to Lyttelton, 1744 (dated in Lyttelton's hand).

69. Lethieullier's earliest examples were the effigies assigned to Robert of Normandy (d 1134) and Roger de Montgomery (d 1094) (the latter actually straight-legged). His latest example was John of Eltham (d 1336).

70. SAL, MS 143, I, fols 60v–61v; SAL, MS 152, fols 43–5; published in Nash 1781–2, I, 31–2.

and in its place explained: 'Statues cross legged were not allways K^{ts} Templars but Persons who had made a Crusade to y^e H[oly] Land or vowed to do so'.⁷¹

In the second half of the century, these views were brought before a wider public. Lethieullier's letter to West was read to the Antiquaries in 1772 and published in *Archaeologia* in 1773; Hutchins's *Dorset* was published posthumously in 1774; and Lyttelton's account of Alvechurch was incorporated into Thomas Nash's *History of Worcestershire*, published in 1781. Refutations also surfaced in more popular publications. Michael Tyson, in a contribution to the *Antiquarian Repertory* in 1779, argued that the figures 'commonly stiled' Knights Templar were not necessarily so, and might encompass a much wider range of persons with crusading links.⁷² Francis Grose, in his serial work *The Antiquities of England and Wales*, was still content in 1774 to describe an effigy as having a pose 'like that of a Knight Templar', but revised his views on reading Lyttelton. By 1784 he was acknowledging that such effigies were 'commonly, though falsely, stiled knights templers, although scarce one of them ever belonged to that order'; and by 1787 was suggesting that the 'absurdity' of the Templar attribution 'must be immediately recognized'.⁷³ 'The true appellation for these figures,' he now believed, 'seems to be Crusaders, or the knights of the crusade'; and even this term, he argued, should be understood to embrace those who had merely taken crusading vows, or given financial support. Sir John Cullum included a similar rebuttal in his *History and Antiquities of Hawsted* (1784).⁷⁴

In 1786, Richard Gough (who, among his many antiquarian endeavours, had helped see Hutchins's *Dorset* through the press) found the question 'curious and interesting', and addressed it in detail in the first volume of his *Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain*. He was, again, sceptical of the 'vulgar error' of the Templar theory, as he knew of many examples of the type dating from after the order's suppression; but he also knew of an authentic cross-legged crusader, Edmund 'Crouchback', earl of Lancaster (d 1296), in Westminster Abbey, and was confident that at least two of the earls of Pembroke in the Temple Church had taken crusading vows. He therefore concurred with 'what I take to be the most probable hypothesis, that the crossing of the legs was a badge of a *croisader*, and not of either of the military orders'.⁷⁵ The Templar theory was now effectively doomed among informed antiquaries, and further refutations are found in local and county histories, including Valentine Green's *Worcester* (1796), Stebbing Shaw's *Staffordshire* (1801) and John Nichols's *Leicestershire* (1804).⁷⁶ In Charles Mills's *History of the Crusades* (1820) it is termed 'a notion long since exploded'.⁷⁷

Elsewhere, however, the theory continued to be entertained well into the nineteenth century. In 1814, Henry Hatcher described the pose as 'the manner [in which] the knights

71. Bodleian, Gough *Dorset* 5, 74–5; published in Hutchins 1774, II, 446. In a rough draft of the annotation, Hutchins refers to the effigies as 'not always K^{ts} Templers or Hospitallers': Bodleian, Gough *Dorset* 33, 103. A similar correction appears at Bodleian, Gough *Dorset* I, fol 176v; Hutchins 1774, I, 389.

72. Tyson 1779, 226.

73. Grose 1773–87, II, entry for 'The monastery of Minster, in the Isle of Shepey, Kent'; Supplement I, entry for 'The New Temple, London'; Supplement II, 'Addenda to the preface', 31–2.

74. Cullum 1784, 49–50.

75. Gough 1786–96, I/I, xciv–xcvi, 51; with further discussion and examples in II/I, cv–cx.

76. Green 1796, I, 149–50n, 154n; Shaw 1798–1801, II, 261; Nichols 1795–1811, III/II, 945n; however, see a proposed exception at *ibid*, III/II, 962.

77. Mills 1820, II, 8n.

templars have been generally represented'; and in 1819 Charles Stothard reiterated that it 'was certainly allusive to Templars, or Knights of the Holy Voyage' (that is, generic crusaders).⁷⁸ Samuel Lewis included mention of about ten 'Knights Templar' in the 1831 edition of his *Topographical Dictionary of England*, and by 1848 was reporting over sixty.⁷⁹ The ecclesiologists of the Cambridge Camden Society, in one of their widely circulated tracts, were still referring to 'Knights Templars' in 1843.⁸⁰ In an exotic display of invented tradition, members of the Templar Masonic lodge at Douglas (Lanarkshire) customarily drank toasts with their legs crossed, in deference to their medieval forebears.⁸¹

A renewed flurry of discussion was sparked in part by Edward Richardson's restoration of the Temple Church effigies in 1842. Richardson himself regarded it as 'doubtful' that any of the effigies in the church represented Templars, though he remained receptive to the idea of crossed legs as signifying a crusading vow.⁸² George Ayliffe Poole refuted the Templar theory; while C G Addison and W S Walford both argued independently that cross-legged effigies did not commemorate full knights of the order, but might represent lay associates.⁸³ The ecclesiologists wavered: a correspondent in 1846 contended that the presence of three examples at Winchelsea proved 'how fallacious the usual theory is, that this attitude was the badge of a Knight Templar'.⁸⁴ As Walford admitted, however, the type was still 'commonly miscalled a Templar'.⁸⁵ T W Weare clung to the association precisely because he knew that the cross-legged pose often post-dated the crusading era, and so could not be the mark of an active crusader. He argued that, 'having been originated during the wars against the infidels, it still prevailed as a custom, after those expeditions to the Holy Land had ceased, in connection especially with the several members (whether knights or associates) of that order of knighthood, which had its birth beneath the temple of Jerusalem'.⁸⁶ Other writers, perhaps oblivious to the shifting consensus, continued to refer to the effigies as 'Templars' for several decades more.⁸⁷

It is evident none the less that the theory was on the wane; by the end of the nineteenth century it had largely died out. There were, of course, a few sites of stubborn resistance. Among them was the theory's birthplace, the Temple Church: T H Baylis in 1893, while allowing that a Templar identity could not be assigned to all cross-legged effigies, believed that the figures here were likely exceptions.⁸⁸ The effigy at Minster-in-Sheppey was still 'commonly called "The Templar"' in 1897.⁸⁹ Faint echoes of the theory survive as a folkloric undercurrent to the present day: thus, a claim initially made by James Hill at the beginning of the eighteenth century, that the cross-legged figure at

78. Dodsworth and Hatcher 1814, 192; Stothard 1823, 334. Cf Stothard 1817–32, 12 (Introduction), 58 (main text). Stothard took the latter term indirectly from Habington by way of Lyttelton.

79. Lewis 1831, II, 449; III, 284, 537, 614; IV, 367, 389, 447, 493; Lewis 1833, I, sigs [2D3]r, [2E4]r, 2Ir; II, sig [3B3]r; Lewis 1848. Several of Lewis's examples were in fact straight-legged.

80. Neale and Russell 1843, 36.

81. Irving 1865.

82. Richardson 1843, 13, 16.

83. Poole 1842, 164n; Addison 1842, 308–10, 316; Walford 1845.

84. Anon 1846, 148.

85. Walford 1846, 234.

86. Weare 1840, 36–8, and 1848, 124–5.

87. J B 1853, 19; Symonds 1859, 153, 188, 211–12, 229, 265, 273 (editorial interventions); Benson 1862, 36; Watkins 1867, 56.

88. Baylis 1893, 88–9.

89. Cave-Browne 1897, 156n.

Bishop's Frome (Herefordshire) commemorated 'a Knight Templar, as appears from the habit [*sic*] agreeable with that order', has been carried through in paraphrase to the current church guide.⁹⁰ The belief also occasionally surfaces on the fringes of 'alternative' historiography: in a work published in 2007, Robert Lomas asserts that the 'distinctive feature of Templar grave images' is that 'the knights are shown with legs crossed in a particular way'.⁹¹

THE RELUCTANT DECLINE OF THE CRUSADER THEORY

While the Templar theory was in debate from the 1720s onwards, the broader associations of the attitude with crusading were not. When William Stukeley, in 1749, referred to certain Roman carvings as 'cross-legg'd, like our Effigies of Croisaders in Churches', it was an allusion which he and his readership took for granted.⁹²

Nevertheless, by the end of the eighteenth century the convention of crossed legs on tomb monuments was increasingly being perceived as symbolic of a crusading vow, of crusading ideals, or of the financial support of crusading, and not necessarily of active military experience. This range of associations had been present from the beginning, but it was raised to a new prominence by a growing awareness that the pose had occasionally been given both to effigies of women and to diminutive figures assumed to represent children, none of whom seemed likely, in the normal course of events, to have been active warriors.⁹³ The point was emphasized by Tyson and Grose, and became a keynote in Gough's 1786 discussion: 'To have taken the vow of croisading was enough to be so commemorated, whether they actually went or not'.⁹⁴ In 1809, Theophilus Jones explained that whereas

many writers and some antiquaries of the last century were in the habit of concluding that these were the monuments of knights templars, or at least of crusaders, the public opinion is since very properly changed upon this subject. ... [E]ven a vow to make a pilgrimage to the holy land, especially if commuted for by a benefaction to the church, was sufficient to intitle the donors to this memorial of their faith and *intention* ... so that we are not from hence to infer that this knight ever was actually at Jerusalem, but merely to consider it as the fashion of the day.⁹⁵

'On contemplating the cross-legged figures in the aisles of our venerable cathedrals', wrote Charles Mills in 1820, 'the days of chivalry rise before us in awful and splendid recollection': again, however, he contended that the monuments were 'not only of people

90. HRO, CF 50/116, 342; Watkins 1902, 25; Williams 1975; Anon 1994.

91. Lomas 2007, 129. Cf Ward 1921, 258; Knight and Lomas 1997, 94–5. 'Alternative' historians have further elaborated the idea of cross-legged burial into the grotesque fantasy that the legs of dead Templars were removed, and crossed under the skull in imitation of a skull-and-crossbones device: see Sinclair 1993, 3; Laidler 1998, 178–9; Jacobovici and Pellegrino 2007, 187.

92. Stukeley 1749, 215.

93. Gerard 1900, 106; Habington 1893–9, I, 417–18; Dugdale 1682, 43n; BL, Stowe 752, fol 8; SAL, MS 143, I, fol 61v; Nash 1781–2, I, 31–2.

94. Tyson 1779, 226; Grose 1773–87, Supplement II, 'Addenda to the preface', 31–2; Gough 1786–96, I/I, xciv. See also Pennant 1790, 151–2, 335.

95. Jones 1805–9, II/II, 428. Jones may have been influenced by Anon 1807–9.

who went to Palestine as soldiers or pilgrims; but of those who vowed to go, or who contributed to the expence of the Crusades'.⁹⁶ Alfred Suckling alluded airily to 'the well-known fact, that at least one half of those knights ... were never engaged in the crusades; the mere circumstance of having taken the vow of fighting for the Holy Land, entitling them to this honourable mode of sepulture'.⁹⁷

This modest repositioning aside, however, the crusading association survived largely intact through the first third of the nineteenth century. It continued to feature without reservation or qualification in such landmarks of antiquarian industry as the Lysons brothers' *Magna Britannia* (1806–22) and Charles Stothard's *Monumental Effigies of Great Britain* (1817–32), as well as numerous local publications.⁹⁸ Philip Bliss, in his 1824 account of the monument at Douglas (Lanarkshire) attributed to Sir James Douglas (d 1330, killed by the Moors in Spain while escorting the heart of Robert Bruce to the Holy Land), proposed

as a reason for the figure being crossed-legged, after that custom had been nearly abolished in this country, that Sir James died when engaged on a pilgrimage, and in battle against the infidels, – circumstances which would doubtless induce the sculptor to adopt such a mode of representation as had been previously usual under similar circumstances.⁹⁹

The first serious doubts to reach print were advanced by the twenty-nine-year-old architectural historian, Matthew Holbeche Bloxam, in 1834. Bloxam observed that the crusading link was 'but conjectural, and can be traced to no sufficient authority; and besides this, the cross-legged attitude was retained for more than half a century after the cessation of the last crusade'.¹⁰⁰ He was followed in 1840 by Charles Hartshorne, who dismissed the crusader attribution as a 'fanciful idea' for which there was 'no actual proof', but conceded the pragmatic point that the term was convenient shorthand: 'the name is objectionable in the same degree as "Druidical" monuments has been shewn to be, yet they each serve to distinguish works that belong to a particular age'.¹⁰¹ As the debate began to warm up, a reviewer of 1845 sagely proposed that it would be 'highly satisfactory' if the mystery could be resolved by investigating 'the history of every person to whom a tomb of this character has been erected'.¹⁰² The theory was again condemned by Hartshorne in 1846 as based on 'insufficient evidence'; and in 1847 by Charles Boutell, who refuted what he termed 'the generally received opinion'.¹⁰³ A bemused correspondent to *Notes and Queries* in 1851 plaintively inquired: 'What is the date of the *latest* cross-legged effigy known, and is the person commemorated known to have been connected with the Crusades?'¹⁰⁴

Some clung to received orthodoxy. In 1849, J C Dansey published a nominal roll of English crusaders, including mention of some sixty cross-legged effigies, virtually all assigned

96. Mills 1820, I, v–vi; II, 8n.

97. Suckling 1843–5, III, 90. Suckling's text was written some years before its publication.

98. Lysons and Lysons 1806–22; Stothard 1817–32, 18, 25, 26, 29, 36.

99. Blore 1826, article 5, 'Sir James Douglas', 6–7 (text by P Bliss).

100. Bloxam 1834, 137–8.

101. Hartshorne 1840, 17–18.

102. Anon 1845, 446–7.

103. Hartshorne 1846, 67; Boutell 1847, 30, 32. Both authors acknowledged the brass at Trumpington (Cambs) as a possible exception, in the belief that it commemorated Sir Roger 1 de Trumpington (d 1289).

104. W H K 1851.

(through a credulous reliance on tradition and speculation) to named individuals: the majority, he was convinced, had not merely taken crusading vows, but had actually journeyed to the Holy Land (fig 11).¹⁰⁵ J H Shorthouse, in the mid-1850s, knew that the theory had been challenged, but confessed that 'I hardly like to believe this'.¹⁰⁶ Vincent Wing restated the crusading-vow theory in 1865, on the authority of 'a learned and able writer'.¹⁰⁷ From the mid-1840s onwards, however, most serious antiquaries were beginning to acknowledge the improbability of any link with the crusades. Sir Stephen Glynne, who generally strove to be punctilious in his terminology, occasionally used the 'Crusader' label in notes made before 1840, but subsequently abandoned it.¹⁰⁸ The brothers J G and L A B Waller, still inclined in 1842 to accept the theory, were persuaded by 1864 that it was baseless: 'of all traditions there are none so little worthy of respect as those of antiquaries'.¹⁰⁹

Among the wider public, the connection remained a commonplace, reflected not least in its literary appearances: passing allusions to it were made by Wordsworth, in 1822, Dickens, in 1861, and Tennyson, in 1886.¹¹⁰ The popular author (and FSA) John Timbs informed his readers in 1861 that '[t]he devices which we see on old tombs distinguish, by their emblematic differences, the dead which they inclose. The legs of crusaders were crossed'.¹¹¹ A refinement of the theory, established by the 1880s, held that the point at which an effigy's legs crossed – at ankles, knees or thighs, or in other accounts at ankles, shins or knees – signified the number of crusades in which the knight had participated.¹¹² Dr E C Brewer, in 1895, in his successful *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, reported that 'the person so represented died in the Christian faith. As crusaders were supposed so to do, they were generally represented on their tombs with crossed legs'.¹¹³ Up to the end of the century, unqualified references to 'crusaders' could still occasionally appear even within the pages of respectable archaeological journals.¹¹⁴

Reports of the death of the crusader theory were issued, but were clearly premature. J R Planché remarked, in 1857, that it had 'for some time been abandoned'; in the following year he recorded that revisionist opinion was 'fast gaining ground'.¹¹⁵ George Vere Irving in 1864 called it 'entirely exploded', although he later added that '[n]o one denies' that many of the commemorated had been crusaders: he merely disputed a direct link.¹¹⁶ Albert Hartshorne, in 1876, echoing his father's scepticism of three decades earlier, dismissed the Templar attribution as a 'popular fiction', and the crusader attribution as a 'fancy' (with the qualification that the pose might none the less signify a crusading intent).¹¹⁷ In the view of Arthur

105. Dansey 1849 (esp entry for Hugh Travers and William de Staunton).

106. Shorthouse 1905, 13–14.

107. Wing 1865–6, 183.

108. Glynne 1877, 315; Cann Hughes 1934, 169; Leonard 2006, 6. Glynne worked 1824–74: these undated references to 'Crusaders' were all seemingly made before 1840.

109. Waller and Waller 1864, viii and entry for 'Sir Robert de Bures'. For the publication history of this work, see Griffin 1907, 185–91; Whittemore 2001, 94–7.

110. Wordsworth 1822, 47 (pt 2, sonnet V: the collection was later retitled *Ecclesiastical Sonnets*, and this poem renumbered as pt 2, sonnet VIII); Dickens 1861, 1, 43 (ch 4); Tennyson 1886, 6–7.

111. Welby 1861, 167.

112. Belcher 1888–1905, 1, fol 27v; Ditchfield 1889, 67.

113. Brewer 1895, 310. See also note 146 below.

114. Anon 1888, 395; Cave-Browne 1897, 156.

115. Planché 1857, 27, and 1859, 125–6.

116. Irving and Murray 1864, II, 70; Irving 1868b.

117. Hartshorne 1876, 11, 119, and 1877, 283.

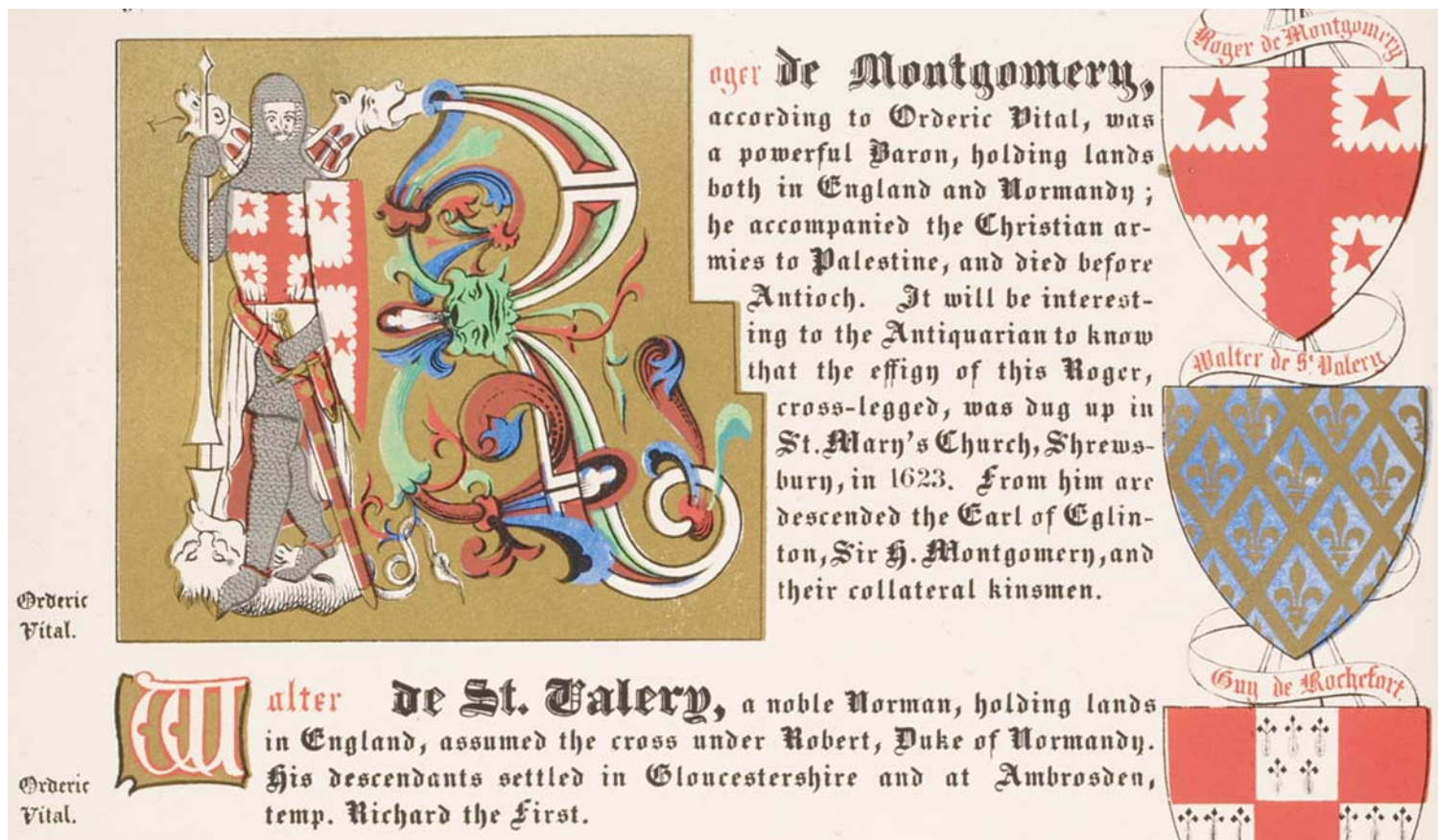


Fig 11. Lithograph representing Roger de Montgomery (d 1094), from Dansey's *faux-medieval* roll of *The English Crusaders* (1849). Dansey has confused the cross-legged effigy in St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury, with the straight-legged effigy traditionally identified as Montgomery in Shrewsbury Abbey. Photograph: © The British Library Board (shelfmark 1321.1.5)

Vicars in 1888, '[e]veryone knows now' that the theory was disproved; and of J Latimer in 1894, '[f]or the last forty years, to say the least, no one claiming to possess even an inkling of antiquarian knowledge has believed in the old fancy'.¹¹⁸ However, J C Cox, addressing the Congress of Archaeological Societies in the latter year, still found it necessary to attack the 'imaginary connection', observing 'how rampant is that fiction in certain places, and how constantly it has to be contradicted'.¹¹⁹ Albert Hartshorne returned to the fray in 1899, and further refutations included one published in French by Camille Enlart in 1906.¹²⁰ In 1923, the theory achieved the dubious distinction of being condemned in A S E Ackermann's handbook of *Popular Fallacies*.¹²¹

Its tenaciousness could be explained in part by the lack of any satisfactory alternative. 'That this posture denoted the crusader has long been the received opinion', the Waller brothers had argued in 1842, 'and may still be retained with propriety until a better theory is advanced.'¹²² A correspondent to *Notes and Queries* in 1868 challenged sceptics to explain 'the almost simultaneous disappearance of the custom with the decline of the Crusades, and the extinction of the Templars; and how it comes to pass that so few of such persons of distinction are thus commemorated ... except such as had taken the vow to go to Palestine'.¹²³ One commentator in 1880 characterized the problem as 'an archaeological nut'.¹²⁴ Canon William Thompson in 1904 dismissed the doubters as '[u]nimaginative people', deferring instead to the 'important authority' of Tennyson.¹²⁵ 'If these effigies do not denote a connexion with crusading', demanded John Page two years later, 'what was the particular reason why the legs were crossed?'¹²⁶ The only alternative iconographic theory to have emerged – promoted particularly by Planché and Irving in the 1850s and 1860s – was the idea noted at the beginning of this paper of a connection with the seated 'kingly' or authoritarian pose.¹²⁷ Although occasionally revived since by continental scholars, the interpretation has never gained widespread support.¹²⁸

Among those who rejected the pose's specific crusading associations, many were still unwilling to abandon the idea of cruciform and Christian symbolism. As early as 1782, Thomas Pennant had noted the seventeenth-century cross-legged effigies at Mitton (Yorkshire; now Lancashire) to members of the Catholic Shireburn family (fig 12), and argued that the attitude had 'sometimes been considered merely as a reverential sign of our SAVIOUR's suffering'.¹²⁹ Charles Boutell in 1847 saw in the convention an 'expressive

118. Vicars 1888, 6; Latimer 1894.

119. Cox 1894, 49.

120. Hartshorne 1899, 8–11; Rushforth 1902, 337–8; Heath 1906, 5–6; Enlart 1905–29, 210; Barnard 1910, 372.

121. Ackermann 1923, 716–17.

122. Waller and Waller 1864, 'Sir Robert de Bures'.

123. 'Anglo-Scotus' 1868 and 1869.

124. Anon 1880.

125. Thompson 1904, III.

126. Page 1906.

127. King 1850; Planché 1857, 26–7, and 1859, 125–6; Macduff 1863; Irving 1865, 1868a, 1868b and 1869.

128. Enlart 1905–29, 210; Frey 1942, 452 n 32; s'Jacob 1954, 20–2, 230.

129. Pennant 1782, 131, and 1790, 151–2. Pennant's views were later echoed by Katharine Esdaile (1930, 160–1). Cf Davidson and Stevenson 2007, 225–6. As the Mitton tombs are consciously archaic in design, and date from a time when iconographic theories of the attitude were in full vigour, it is possible that a symbolic meaning actually was intended here. Another possible case



Fig 12. Monuments commemorating three generations of the Shireburn family at Mitton (Yorkshire), by William Stanton, erected *c* 1699. The effigies represent Richard III Shireburn (d 1668), in the foreground, his son, Richard IV Shireburn (d 1689), with his wife Isabel (d 1693), at centre left, and their son, Richard V Shireburn (d 1690), obscured in the background. All three men are cross-legged. *Photograph: author*

token' that the warrior had 'died professing the Christian faith': unconsciously reverting to one of the sixteenth-century theories, he hypothesized that it might indicate church founders and benefactors.¹³⁰ James Graves in 1853 considered that the interpretation 'least open to objection' was that the pose was 'designed to be symbolical of the Christian faith of the deceased'.¹³¹ M H Bloxam, in the 1830s the first to question the crusader attribution, viewed the issue in the 1860s and 1870s as still unresolved: he now contended that crossed legs did denote a 'cruce signatus', but argued that this term did not necessarily imply a crusader, but rather a member of the 'fratres crucis', a fraternity also embracing pilgrims and patrons.¹³² Edward Blore in 1872 saw in the attitude 'merely ... an emblem of the Cross'; and Herbert Macklin in 1907 suggested that the knight had been 'a benefactor of the church'.¹³³ Others, however, found the notion of cruciform symbolism untenable. In the words of the Waller brothers in 1864, 'it would be strange, if there were no more positive way of indicating a crusader than by crossing the legs'; and of George Vere Irving four years later: 'it certainly never to my mind conveyed any idea of the Holy Cross, which might be so much more reverently indicated in many ways'.¹³⁴

More generally, the twentieth century saw the scholarly debate move on from iconographic to technical and stylistic explanations of the pose – matters which fall outside the scope of the present essay.¹³⁵ Yet, despite being abandoned by the great majority of informed critics, the crusader theory has resurfaced periodically in reputable scholarly discourse and has never been entirely banished. E S Prior and Arthur Gardner in 1912, while rejecting a universal identification with crusaders, argued that the conception behind some cross-legged figures 'may derive from the Crusades, and might well be first applied to the Knights of the Cross, especially to the Knights Templar, to give them, we may say, the posture of their devotion'.¹³⁶ The folklorist Eliza Gutch, who confessed herself to being 'behindhand in not having yet wholly freed myself of the Crusading theory', claimed in 1913 that she had even 'met with an FSA clinging to the old belief ... and the fiction is dear to many less learned than he'.¹³⁷ Erwin Panofsky reverted to the theory in 1964, observing that '[t]here may be, after all, some truth in the traditional assumption that the motif of the crossed legs initially designated a Crusader'.¹³⁸ Richard Morris, writing in 1998, suggests a connection with the idea of knights on quest, and particularly with the quest for the Holy Grail.¹³⁹ And, most recently, Rachel Dressler in 2004, while allowing that the effigies do not necessarily represent active crusaders, firmly identifies the deceased with the crusading ideals of the 'miles Christi': 'For those who had

of intentional symbolism is the cross-legged skeleton on a painted memorial panel of 1598 at Bishop's Frome (Herefs), with inscriptions suggestive of Catholic sympathies: cf Badham 2005/6.

130. Boutell 1847, 30.

131. Graves 1853, 124–5.

132. Bloxam 1865–6, 316, and 1876, 235–7.

133. BL, Add MS 42009, fol 26v; published in Lindley 2007, 235; Macklin 1907, 22–3.

134. Waller and Waller 1864, viii; Irving 1868b, 588.

135. For overviews of the modern debate, see Tummers 1980, 124–6; Badham and Lankester 2004, 135–6; Lindley and Galvin 2006, 66–7. Modern rebuttals of the crusader theory are legion.

136. Prior and Gardner 1912, 593–4.

137. 'St Swithin' 1906 and 1913. See also 'St Swithin' 1911.

138. Panofsky 1964, 56.

139. Morris 1998, 69–71.

not participated in the Holy War, the tomb effigy might have in some way performed as a surrogate'.¹⁴⁰

Even those who have been sceptical of conscious symbolism have been prepared to read a bewildering range of subconscious and subliminal meanings into crossed legs. J R Planché regarded the attitude as 'ungraceful'; yet W H Tregellas, in 1875, thought it 'a not uncommon posture of repose', and F P Barnard, in 1910, 'an easy and a natural pose'.¹⁴¹ Harry Quilter, in 1913, argued that the intended 'psychological suggestion' was to show 'the militant knight ... now resting in peace', and Paul Binski sees 'a certain aristocratic nonchalance' in the attitude; but most modern scholars have interpreted it rather in terms of alertness, activity and energy.¹⁴² Dressler – in unwitting but dramatic contrast to a rumoured nineteenth-century theory that the effigies represent castrated crusader prisoners – discerns in the pose a 'foregrounding of male physicality': the legs 'block the approach to the genitals but also call attention to those organs upon which the discourse of sexual difference focused its assertions', and so 'signify phallic potency'.¹⁴³

At a popular level, the crusader theory continues to flourish, disseminated above all orally, but also through church guides and similar well-intentioned but ill-informed heritage publications and media.¹⁴⁴ It is probably true to say that it is less prevalent than it was a century ago and that, in print at least, it now appears as a myth to be rebutted almost as often as it does as a statement of fact; but it has been reinvigorated in recent years by the mushrooming of the heritage industry – including church tourism – and by the rise of the internet as a medium of misinformation. In Candace Robb's *The Cross-Legged Knight* (2002), a mystery novel set in fourteenth-century York, the attitude is described as 'the style of many crusaders' tombs' (a claim only lightly qualified in an authorial postscript).¹⁴⁵ *Brewer's Dictionary of Phrase and Fable* continues to assert in its eighteenth edition, published in 2009, that crusaders were 'generally represented on their tombs with crossed legs'.¹⁴⁶

CONCLUSIONS

The crusader theory of crossed legs has now survived, battered but unbroken, for over four centuries. Other examples can be cited of misinterpreted details of commemorative monuments prompting or shaping popular beliefs. These range from legends of giants and heroes, by way of tales of extraordinary deaths and bizarre burials, to the modern American conceit that the number of hooves raised by the horse of an equestrian statue denotes the manner of the rider's demise.¹⁴⁷ No other instance of what has been dubbed 'monument lore', however, has achieved the ubiquity, the longevity or the resilience of the

140. Dressler 2004, 80–94.

141. Planché 1857, 27; Anon 1875, 326; Barnard 1910, 372.

142. Quilter 1913; Binski 1996, 100; Brieger 1972, 39; Lindley and Galvin 2006, 66.

143. Dressler 2000, 98, 102; Dressler 2004, 108, 113. For the castration theory, attributed to unidentified 'Victorian antiquaries', see Friar 1996, 176.

144. For just three recent examples in print, see Cook 2001, 15; Stanford 2005, 37; Brighton 2006, 172.

145. Robb 2002, 39, 326.

146. Rockwood 2009, 322. A qualification that the effigies did not invariably represent crusaders was added to the 5th edition (1959), but excised from the 12th (1970).

147. Westwood 1985, 41–3, 53–4, 83–5, 94–5, 97–9, 106–8, 128–31, 139–40, 164–6, 171–2, 213, 220–3; Smith 2006; Oosterwijk 2006/7; Mikkelsen 2007; Nugent 2007.

myth of the cross-legged crusader, in which the weight of tradition and the appeal of romantic legend continue to defy the challenges of scholarship. The one arena which the notion has never penetrated to any significant degree is, perhaps surprisingly, the broader historiography of the crusades themselves. The explanation can only lie in the gulf throughout much of the period under review between the disciplines of antiquarianism and history.¹⁴⁸

The presumption throughout this paper has been that the crusader theory and its analogues are erroneous and have little to tell us about medieval effigies. But what do they have to tell us about the antiquaries and commentators who were viewing and judging the monuments? From John Stow's declaration that 'a heape of old monumentes, wytnesses of tymes, & bright beames of the truth, can testifie, that I have not swarved one whyt from the truthe', to Sir Richard Colt Hoare's 'We speak from facts not theory', antiquaries prided themselves on their objective dependence on primary evidence.¹⁴⁹ What we have instead seen in these pages has been a recurrent willingness to allow judgement to be swayed by preconception and prejudice. Phillip Lindley has suggested that Dressler, in her studies of cross-legged effigies, is guilty of 'reading into her subject twenty-first century American concerns': equivalent charges of presentism could be levelled at several of the seventeenth-century religious nostalgists, the eighteenth-century virtuosi and rationalists, the nineteenth-century chivalric romantics and the modern conspiracy theorists that we have met in the course of this story.¹⁵⁰ It is clear, none the less, that the roots of the iconographic interpretation of the pose lie in the Elizabethan and Jacobean passion for imagery, allegory and symbolism. The contemporary arts were steeped in iconographic allusions, and equivalent ideas were applied retrospectively and anachronistically to work of earlier eras. Heraldic writers, for example, began to assign to charges and tinctures a range of fantastically recondite meanings, unknown to medieval armory.¹⁵¹ The crusader and Templar theories of crossed legs are manifestations of this same tendency. But if they are primarily the offspring of an early modern mindset, they hold lessons, too, for our own age of post-modern, hyper-relativist and hermeneutic scholarship. A laudable desire to delve beneath the surface is ever in danger of being taken to unreasonable and over-imaginative extremes and the cultural productions of the past of being read in ways that pass far beyond what their original creators and audiences may have intended or understood. Patterns and meanings are sought and found in places where, sometimes at least, none exist. As Sir Geoffrey Elton observed, '[h]ermeneutics is the science which invents meaning; historical study depends on discovering meaning without inventing it'.¹⁵²

We should not, however, rush to pass too harsh a judgement on the early antiquaries. The investigative disciplines of typological and stylistic diagnosis, which underpin so much modern archaeology and art history, were barely capable of conception, let alone articulation, in the sixteenth century. The study of the past was still predominantly text-based, and, where antiquaries were beginning to take an interest in material remains, their attentions were largely focused on the semi-textual and quasi-textual media of lapidary

148. The only references that have been located in crusades literature of any date are those in Mills 1820, I, v–vi; II, 8n, and Dansey 1849.

149. Stow 1566, sig a2v (unique to copy in Guildhall Library, London); Hoare 1812–21, I, 7.

150. Lindley 2005, 797.

151. Maclagan 1956, 42–3; Carlson 1989, 217–20.

152. Elton 1991, 30.

inscriptions, coins, seals and heraldry. There was little attempt to read beyond the surface, the 'witting' testimony of such relics, and only the crudest understanding of formal or stylistic changes across time.¹⁵³ Observers occasionally hazarded a guess at the approximate date of an enigmatic document, building or monument, but could rely on little more than intuition and they rarely progressed beyond such broad assessments as that of Thomas Hawley, in 1530, that the brass to Sir Alan Buxhull (d 1381) might, from its 'old and anschant lying', date from the time of Henry v; or of Leland a few years later that Robert of Normandy's effigy was made 'longe since his death'.¹⁵⁴ More substantive were Erdeswick's analysis of Wulfric Spot's effigy as 'fashioned ... something like to our new monuments', so that it could date from no earlier than the time of Edward III and, more probably, from the reigns of Edward IV or Henry VII; or Symonds's appraisal of several late fourteenth- and fifteenth-century effigies as made 'in the forme of the Black Prince'; such insights as these remained exceptional, however.¹⁵⁵

A firmer sense of the problem and its resolution emerged in the second half of the seventeenth century, with the adoption from the natural sciences of Baconian principles of induction from empirical evidence: John Aubrey termed the application of such techniques to antiquarian material 'comparative antiquitie'.¹⁵⁶ Stylistic chronologies began to be constructed, particularly in relation to palaeography and medieval architecture. By the 1740s, Smart Lethieullier could appreciate that the same diagnostic methodology, of identifying the distinctive characteristics of securely dated examples and testing undated examples against them, was applicable to tomb design.¹⁵⁷ The fruits of this approach materialized a generation later in Richard Gough's *Sepulchral Monuments in Great Britain* (1786–99), which laid the foundations for the modern critical study of tomb monuments.¹⁵⁸

Against this background, then, antiquarian interest in crossed legs from the mid-sixteenth century onwards appears less a tale of ill-informed and misjudged speculation and more a case of the early and successful isolation of a characteristic typological feature. A parallel may be drawn with the rather later recognition of the pointed arch as a defining feature of late medieval architecture: the speculative and outlandish theories of origins which accompanied this insight were eventually abandoned, but the consideration and discussion of them fostered a more mature understanding of the Gothic form.¹⁵⁹ An incipient sense that the cross-legged attitude might be linked to a chronological period appears in the earliest fumbling suggestions, shaped by popular tradition, that it was 'very ould' or 'the ancient trade'; was refined in the belief that it dated from 'before the Conquest'; and was then challenged by Wyrley on a sounder evidential basis with his assertion that it emerged 'after the Palestine wars'.¹⁶⁰ Subsequent attempts to delimit the dating, however, such as the views of the anonymous antiquary in 1600 and Gervase Holles in the 1650s that the effigies were not found after the time of Edward II, Thomas Habington's proposed date range of 1095–1310, and even

153. For witting/unwitting testimony, see Marwick 2001, 172–9.

154. Wagner 1956, 140; Toulmin Smith 1906–10, II, 60.

155. Erdeswick 1844, 474–5; Symonds 1859, 16, 26, 33, 76, 88, 96, 112, 130, 189, 201, 209, 221–2, 228.

156. Hunter 1975, 156–7, 162–6, 181; Colvin 1968; Schnapp 1996, 188–96; Haycock 2002, 126–32.

157. Lethieullier 1773; BL, Stowe 752, fols 3–12.

158. Sweet 2004, 273–5; Badham 1987 and 1991; Sweet 2001. However, cf the more critical remarks of Roberts 1993, 62–3.

159. Frankl 1960, 273–6, 363–6, 376–7, 389–92, 403, 411, 444–6, 481–3, 866–9; Cocke 1987, 184.

160. Wyrley 1592, 26.

Lethieullier's of 1224–1313, were hamstrung by an underlying conviction that the primary meaning of the motif must be symbolic, and associated with either the crusades or the Templars.¹⁶¹ An opportunity to formulate a valuable diagnostic principle was effectively delayed for over a century, a failure as regrettable in hindsight as the perpetuation of the fallacious iconographic readings of the pose. Such shortcomings should not blind us, however, to the more fundamental achievement of the Elizabethan antiquaries: the perspicacious identification by a discriminating intellectual community of a distinctive and important class of antiquity, on typological grounds, at a precociously early date.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Abbreviations

BL	British Library, London
Bodleian	Bodleian Library, Oxford
CA	College of Arms, London
HRO	Herefordshire Record Office
<i>N&Q</i>	<i>Notes and Queries</i>
SAL	Society of Antiquaries of London

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RÉSUMÉ

Depuis le seizième siècle, et les explications érudites et les explications populaires des monuments funéraires ont attribué toutes sortes d'interprétations aux effigies médiévales à jambes croisées. Entre autres, on pensait que les effigies dataient d'avant la conquête normande; qu'elles commémoraient des croisés, ou bien ceux qui avaient fait vœu d'aller en croisade; et qu'elles commémoraient des Templiers. La théorie des 'croisés' s'est révélée être particulièrement tenace et, bien que largement discréditée par les érudits, elle a continué à prospérer dans la pensée populaire. Cette communication trace l'apparition et la dissémination de ces diverses idées, ainsi que les discussions qu'elles ont engendrées. Cette communication soutient que l'identification de la position à jambes croisées comme caractéristique notable, identification qui remonte au début des temps modernes, fit date dans l'histoire de la formulation de techniques pour le bilan typologique des antiquités, et ce, malgré ses associations erronées.

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Seit dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert gab es verschiedene Interpretationen in wissenschaftlichen und volkstümlichen Schriften über mittelalterliche Bildnisse von überkreuzten Beinen. Diese umfassen den Glauben, daß diese Bildnisse aus der Zeit vor der normannischen Invasion stammen; daß sie ein Gedenken an Kreuzfahrer sind, oder solchen die ihr Gelübde abgelegt hatten; oder ein Gedenken sind an die Freimaurerorganisation der Knights Templar. Die Kreuzfahrt Theorie hat sich als besonders hartnäckig herausgestellt, und obwohl sie von Forschern bestritten wird, ist sie in der Volksweiseit weit verbreitet. Diese Abhandlung beschäftigt sich mit der Entstehung und Verbreitung dieser Vorstellungen und den Diskussionen, die sich daraus ergeben haben. Es wird argumentiert, daß die Interpretation der überkreuzten Beine aus der frühen Moderne ein nennenswerte Erscheinung war, und trotz ihrer irrümlichen Assoziationen ein Orientierungspunkt in der Geschichte der Erarbeitung von Verfahren der typologischen Diagnose des Alterums sind.

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