

# INTRODUCTION

At its heart, the act of contemplating medieval effigies is an exercise in seeing the dead. This point was first made clear to me in the summer of 2000, when an internship at The Cloisters of the Metropolitan Museum of Art presented the opportunity to lead a group of New York City school children to the thirteenth-century tomb effigy of a French knight identified as Jean d'Aluye.<sup>1</sup> It was not unusual, I told them, for such effigies to depict people who were suffering when they died: who had been sick or ravaged by violence, or who had simply grown old. Yet northern European effigies from the twelfth and thirteenth centuries chose not to betray this harsh truth. Such tomb sculptures, at least in this period, were made not only to show the dead to the living but also to conceal damaged, fragile, ephemeral corpses behind idealized bodies and smooth, young faces. My goal was to make clear to a sixth-grade audience that the effigy before us showed the dead man not as he went to the grave but rather as his original viewers had expected him to rise at the end of time, recast and revived in a state of grace and perfection. As I paused in my clumsy attempt to translate these concepts into what I imagined to be age-appropriate terms, one boy turned to me and smiled. "That's just like when my mom died," he explained serenely. "She had been sick with cancer for a long time, and she had lost all her hair, but for the wake they dressed her up with a wig and make-up, so we could remember the real her."

I have no recollection of what I said in response; I only remember feeling struck by the untroubled way in which the boy related his memory. Perhaps, as I hoped in that moment, he found something genuinely useful in the unexpected comparison between his mother and the handsome knight at The Cloisters. Clearly there had been some value in the experience of *seeing* his mother again, seemingly healthy after her illness, and her final appearance had taken hold as a reassuring image, even if the act of saying goodbye was painful. Part of this catharsis lay in the restoration of the body to

its prior state, in the image of itself as it once was and as it should have been, or could have been, if met with another fate.

This book is in many ways a meditation on the insight of that young boy, centered on the tensions between representing the dead *as they were* and *as they once could have been*. His removal of “the real her” from the other realities of illness, death, and time is much like the abstraction of the medieval effigy, which offers an ersatz body that invokes and yet hides the grim truths of the ever-present corpse within the tomb. The resulting paradox of simultaneous confrontation and alienation is strangely akin to Michel de Certeau’s description of engaging with mystic texts without participating in the deep sense of religious conviction that produced them:

What these authors bring into play is therefore not reducible to an interest in the past, nor even to a voyage into the recesses of our memory. They are like statues erected to mark the boundaries of an “elsewhere” that is not remote, a place they both produce and guard. They form, with their bodies and their texts, a frontier that divides space and transforms their reader into an inhabitant of the country, or the suburbs, far from the nowhere where they house the essential. They articulate in this way the foreignness of our own place, and therefore a desire to return to our native land.<sup>2</sup>

In describing the chasms that separate believers from atheists, medieval authors from modern readers, and the living from the dead, de Certeau formulates the haunting notion of “an ‘elsewhere’ that is not remote,” which applies with uncanny power to the spaces lurking beyond the medieval effigy. By representing the bodies of the dead in the durable, tactile, and effectively public medium of monumental sculpture, effigies articulate the unknowable passage from the present world into the afterlife. There is no reason to imagine that the tension this creates would have been less vividly apparent to medieval eyes than it is today. To the contrary, the invitation of these sculptures to consider the corpses in their past, present, and future states would have been all the more compelling for an audience that believed, almost as a matter of course, in bodily resurrection.<sup>3</sup>

While Gothic tombs like the knight in New York have received comparatively rich scholarly attention in recent decades, this book looks instead to the less frequently studied Romanesque effigies that first emerged at the end of the eleventh century and began to proliferate widely by the end of the twelfth. The swift rise of the medieval tomb effigy within a relatively short span of time has made it all too easy to overlook the ways in which such monuments must have been provocative, even shocking, when they first appeared. By presenting the first generation of European effigies squarely within their Romanesque contexts, this study explores the available evidence with an emphasis on the novelty of the format in its earliest incarnations. Rigorous attention to this material, which carefully situates the known examples from circa 1080 to 1160 in the broad timeframe of circa 1000 to 1200, demonstrates two crucial points that

have yet to be fully established: none of the known Romanesque effigies were commissioned by the people they represent, and the identifiable examples unfailingly focus on individuals whose legacies had been tarnished and whose lives were marked by measures of failure rather than triumph. By the thirteenth century, when the knight at The Cloisters was carved, it had become almost commonplace for aristocratic men and women to plan their own effigies, a trend that only intensified in the later Middle Ages. Such objects were commodities that solicited remembrance and prayers for departed patrons. As shown in this book, however, earlier effigies operated differently. Representing fallen warlords and failed dynasties, Romanesque effigies possessed an urgency that was rooted in the need not only to remember the dead but also to rescue them—and their successors—from public humiliation. It is this desire to fix the past, this attempted amelioration of memory, that distinguished Romanesque effigies from their later counterparts. Each surviving example is unique in its details and grapples with this purpose in a singular manner, but when brought together, they provide clear evidence for a poignant and unexpected conclusion: the twelfth-century effigy experienced a sharp rise in popularity not because it offered a novel means of celebrating the successful but rather because it opened compelling new pathways for memorializing the defeated.

Examining the earliest known effigies of northern Europe—the case studies that mark the creation and codification of the genre—heightens the myriad issues raised by the strained relationship between the paired bodies, the organic corpse and the artistic representation, of the funerary monument. Romanesque effigies emerged in a time that witnessed dramatic increases in the making of large-scale sculpture across a broad geographic expanse. Situating the genesis of the effigy in relation to this apparent explosion in the visual arts, and particularly in relation to a renewed interest in sculpture embedded in an architectural context, raises two essential points that inform this study. First, Romanesque effigies should not be segregated from the broader implications of inhabiting ecclesiastical space with the startling presence of the human body in a tactile format, both in the form of friezes and other fixed reliefs and in the portable, three-dimensional form of reliquaries and related movable sculptures. Effigies constitute a distinctive artistic genre, but they also existed in dialogue with other visual programs and with other works of art, which enlivened their immediate vicinity. Second, the representation of the human figure was undergoing a remarkable expansion in use and meaning at this time. Romanesque artists, patrons, and audiences were pushing the applications of sculpture beyond the previous limitations of its existing forms. The rising popularity of monumental sculptures of the crucified Christ and the enthroned Madonna, the startling impact of figural or “speaking” reliquaries, and the newfound sophistication of historiated capitals and narrative friezes: these ambitious artworks come from the same context that produced Romanesque effigies, which are distinct from these forms and yet ever in dialogue with them. Thus the sepulchral function and enlivened form of the effigy, its relative rarity, and its focus on individual bodies from the recent, local past in northern Europe (rather than saintly

personalities from the distant Mediterranean origins of early Christianity) endowed its first examples with a unique, evocative charge. Effigies mediated encounters with the essential mysteries of death and resurrection, articulating thresholds between this world and the afterlife or between the time of the present and the end of days. The Romanesque examples were among the most striking invitations to contemplate the afterlife and its eschatological promises in European art—and the first to do so via the audacious format of monumental sculpture that visualized the dead.

## Historiography

Given the wealth of surviving evidence and the provocation of its types, it is no surprise that the genre of the tomb effigy has become a focal point for the study of Gothic and Renaissance sculpture. What is more difficult to explain is the relative lack of scholarly interest in the rise of these effigies in the Romanesque period as a broad-based phenomenon. There has been no shortage of articles that address individual early effigies in specific case studies, but this book is the first to bring the key surviving monuments together as aspects of a phenomenon whose sum is greater than its separate parts.<sup>4</sup> Several points could be advanced to explain why this work has yet to be undertaken: the first known medieval effigies are geographically scattered; they are diverse in style and materials; there is no unifying presence of a single workshop or known patron; and most are poorly preserved, removed from their original sites of installation, and notoriously difficult to date. Despite these problems, however, the shared goal of representing the bodies of the local dead in full-figure relief amply justifies the examination of these sculptures as a group. Further, there is a concentration of a large proportion of the surviving tombs in Saxony (in the modern German states of Lower Saxony and Saxony-Anhalt), which is to say, the broad swath of land that constituted the heart of the twelfth-century Holy Roman Empire. A few more early effigies are found in regions that are now Switzerland, France, and England; on the whole these objects seem to appear at sites that were investing heavily in monumental sculpture, though notable exceptions do exist. Finally, while the subjects of Romanesque effigies are surprisingly diverse—male and female, lay and religious, stemming from the great imperial houses and from the petty aristocracy—one common theme emerges from their lives. Each case seems centered in some way on frustrated ambitions and a legacy that was marred by the failure to meet certain expectations, great or small. It was the need to correct these fraught histories, to replace negative memories with positive interpretations, that spurred the formulation and rising popularity of tomb effigies in twelfth-century Europe.

Romanesque effigies compensate for these frustrations by pushing against the grain of history to reinvent the past rather than simply echoing it. This point can only be clarified by gathering all well-documented examples in a single study that combines detailed assessments of individual tombs with a conception broad enough to recognize

the points of resonance that unify the scattered monuments as a coherent group. Tomb sculpture has not previously received such treatment in the manner of the foundational monographs on emergent Romanesque genres, such as Ilene Forsyth's magisterial work on wood statues of the enthroned Madonna (1972), Walter Cahn's tome on illuminated Bibles (1982), Ursula Mende's focused study of cast bronze doors (1994), or the corpus of Beatus manuscripts by John Williams (1994–2003, with the fourth volume on eleventh- and twelfth-century examples appearing in 2002).<sup>5</sup> This fact points to a tendency to overlook these monuments or else to accept their abrupt appearance as a matter of survival rather than formation. Effigies are also generally absent from monographs addressing Romanesque sculpture in an architectural context, including Arthur Kingsley Porter's early work on the pilgrimage roads (1923) and Meyer Schapiro's posthumously published lectures (delivered 1967; edited by Linda Seidel, 2006), presumably because they are not, strictly speaking, "architectural" monuments.<sup>6</sup> Ambitious overviews of Romanesque sculpture, such as Hanns Swarzenski's landmark volume on the art of church treasuries (1954) and M. F. Hearn's examination of the rebirth of monumental sculpture (1982), also generally exclude tomb sculpture as neither "free-standing" nor "architectural," while studies of iconography, such as Seidel's own book on church façades in Aquitaine (1981), have focused instead on narrative, again at the expense of the effigy.<sup>7</sup> Given the abundance and complexity of the surviving evidence, it is also unsurprising that these studies have not aimed to be comprehensive in the manner of Otto Demus's (1970) and Marcia Kupfer's (1993) books on wall painting or Louis Grodecki's work on stained glass (1977).<sup>8</sup> The detachment of almost all surviving Romanesque effigies from their original installations has also removed them from any semblance of "visual programs" and further pushed them to the periphery of medieval art history. A certain postwar focus on areas west of the Rhine has also relegated Saxony-Anhalt, the region where the largest group of early effigies has survived, to a distant frontier. This marginalization persists, even though this area was quite central to the European Middle Ages and its effigies occupied highly visible spaces within institutions that once held great power. Thus while the best-known examples of Romanesque tomb sculpture have been the subject of important articles, few have been fully integrated into broader accounts of medieval art since the publication of Erwin Panofsky's *Die deutsche Plastik des elften bis dreizehnten Jahrhunderts* in 1924.

While the medieval effigy itself is not understudied—far from it—the shape of the field has privileged Gothic and later tombs, and Romanesque monuments have routinely been sidelined in their favor.<sup>9</sup> The early examples appear briefly in studies that approach a given geographic region across broad expanses of time, such as Nigel Saul's volume on English tombs (2009) or Gabriele Böhm's dissertation on Westphalian effigies (1993), or studies that scrutinize a single site exhaustively, as Alain Erlande-Brandenburg has done for the French necropolis at St-Denis (1975).<sup>10</sup> A few influential books have endeavored to examine the changing tradition of tomb sculpture over the course of the Middle Ages and to encompass monuments from across Europe; these include most notably Panofsky's landmark lectures on *Tomb Sculpture* (1964), Kurt

Bauch's richly illustrated *Das mittelalterliche Grabbild* (1976), and Hans Körner's ambitious *Grabmonumente des Mittelalters* (1997).<sup>11</sup> Though all three are notable contributions to the field of tomb sculpture, they do not highlight Romanesque effigies, and indeed they even seem to share a certain antipathy toward them. Each study presents a unique thesis that explains the formation of the effigy using ancient sources, relegating the work of the late eleventh and early twelfth centuries to a merely transitional status. Panofsky suggests that the first northern European effigies were translations of the mosaic tombs of North Africa and Spain into sculpture; Bauch emphasizes the influence of recumbent figures from the classical world; Körner looks to pre-Christian Saxony for possible prototypes among pagan stele.<sup>12</sup> Each historian placed emphasis on the survival or revival of past forms, reflecting a common inclination to historicize the effigy as part of an evolutionary arc from ancient to Renaissance art. The resulting arguments fostered teleological models in which the products of the Romanesque period were suppressed, only finding value as the awkward early stages of something that would truly take root in the thirteenth century and achieve maturity sometime in the late fifteenth.

The groundbreaking effigies of the eleventh and twelfth centuries have thus been measured primarily against the misleading rubrics of other points in time, which rendered their place within the visual and material culture of their own generation invisible. Tied to a broad propensity to value continuity over change, the approaches modeled by Panofsky, Bauch, and Körner share a tendency to overemphasize relationships between ancient and medieval tombs. The centuries-long gap between the last figural tombs of the late antique world and the rise of their medieval analogues has too often been overlooked, along with the impact of medieval Christian theology on visualizations of the dead. Despite the self-consciously classicizing efforts of Carolingian and Ottonian artists to promote the "new Rome" in the North, evidence for the notion that the early Saxon effigies were directly inspired by Roman tomb sculpture is thin at best. Unlike the late antique gemstones that were proudly displayed in medieval treasuries or the Roman columns and capitals that were carefully reintegrated in Romanesque architecture, ancient funerary statuary was neither brought into medieval churches nor adapted as a form of *spolia* for new monuments. Roman sarcophagi were occasionally reused in rare Carolingian and Ottonian burials, as seen most famously among the elite imperial tombs of the ninth and tenth centuries, but these impressive imports have little in common with the various figures from the ancient Mediterranean that Panofsky and Bauch suggest as potential models for medieval effigies.<sup>13</sup> The latter may well have been known in the high Middle Ages, but there are no sources to suggest that they were given much attention. Reused ancient sarcophagi arguably had greater visibility, but the format itself—which featured sculpture on the side of the sarcophagus and not on the lid—differs dramatically from the rectangular slabs that carry Romanesque effigies. The few known sculpted sarcophagi of the eleventh and twelfth centuries are much closer to these ancient antecedents in many ways, but none

survive in close relationship to a figural effigy, and conversely none of the surviving effigies of this period exist in dialogue with a classicizing sarcophagus.<sup>14</sup>

Wresting the analysis of Romanesque effigies away from narratives about the revival or rediscovery of Mediterranean antiquity is thus an essential goal of this book, as it allows the monuments to be situated more clearly within the context of their time, in relation to the contemporary developments in sculpture that had a far greater impact on their formation. The result is a critical reassessment of Romanesque effigies through the lens of the visual culture that produced them and a rejection of the older model in which these sculptures represent little more than transitional stages that laid groundwork for later achievements. Once the break between the ancient and the medieval monuments is fully acknowledged and attention drawn to the fact that the continuous production of the northern European effigies began at the end of the eleventh century, these early sculptures take on new force as the objects that first established a pattern that would endure for centuries to come. Indeed, as shown in the chapters below, there is little or nothing that appears “transitional” about Romanesque effigies at all. To the contrary, they stake their claims and inhabit medieval spaces with a sense of completion and self-assurance that is breathtaking in its audacity.

## Methods

A focus on the Romanesque effigy—and an insistence on examining these monuments without attempts to claim morphological relationships either to earlier or to later tombs—prompts a larger shift in methodology. From the outset this project has looked primarily to the surviving monuments and their relationships to the known artistic production of their time. I have therefore avoided relying upon the lost monuments that sometimes appear in medieval texts, except in rare cases where those texts also relate to effigies that survive and offer concrete visual evidence. Thus, for example, the discussion of early effigies in Paris addresses only briefly the missing monuments that appear in antiquarian drawings, prioritizing the few that remain over many more of uncertain date and appearance that were lost. The difficulty of assessing written sources concerning potentially vanished Romanesque effigies is demonstrated in the case of the tenth-century bishop Gebhard of Constance (d. 995), whose tomb was described by a mid-twelfth-century chronicler as bearing a *iacentes imago* (recumbent image).<sup>15</sup> Gebhard's bones, however, were recognized as saintly relics by 1134, and the veneration associated with his memory in the decades after this event would undoubtedly have had a profound effect on the format of the monument associated with his body. As noted by Körner, the medieval source makes no indication of the date when the *imago* was made or of its materials, or whether it was a full-body portrait, a roundel, or another image type altogether. The textual source postdates the effigies of the Nellenburg counts of Schaffhausen, meaning that the Constance image could well

have been made after those monuments and echoed their appearance—or perhaps not. There is simply no way to know for certain. Rather than speculating further about the date and appearance of Gebhard's lost tomb or about the use of vague terms like *imago* in this and other contexts, this book focuses instead on the examples that survive.

The Nellenburg effigies present a related but separate problem: only half of the effigies from this group are extant. In this case the evidence of the surviving effigies is brought to bear on the lost examples from the set, but only cautiously.<sup>16</sup> Where texts do come into play, the goal is not to provide a basis for reconstruction but rather to consider the discourses that were current among medieval audiences. Charters and chronicles are thus cited with some regularity, but the most significant primary sources for this study are the texts that were sometimes inscribed on the effigies themselves. Though often overlooked by art historians, the brief testimonials offered in these inscriptions were clearly composed with great care and intended to shape how viewers perceived the dead. The evidence they present is central to this book, and particular care has been taken to consider them from a range of perspectives, examining not only the core information they provide but also their visual and literary nuances.

By centering surviving examples rather than interpolating indirect evidence, this book makes one more methodological intervention: its arguments focus on close observations of early effigies from a three-dimensional point of view, in the physical spaces that they inhabit. By invoking “physical spaces” I do not mean to make arguments aimed at reconstructing original installation sites, as these are largely lost, and the surviving evidence has already been discussed by others.<sup>17</sup> I refer instead to the physical, plastic qualities of the objects themselves: their materials, scale, contours, and modeling, all of which offer essential evidence for discussions of how the sculptures were encountered. Compositional choices offer hints regarding intended experience: for example, inscriptions could be oriented to encourage a single ideal vantage point from which to see the effigy or positioned to nudge the reader to walk around and consider it from multiple angles. Architectural framing devices likewise provide more than stylistic clues about dates or workshop influences; they give useful indications of the integration of sculptures into larger contexts. The style of the figures, their plasticity, and their approaches to the tactile presence of the body are also more than mere reflections of the trajectory of the historical development of sculpture; they actively position individual tomb effigies in relation to the physical space of the viewer. I do not use any of the arguments drawn from such formal observations to contend that the original locations of the sculptures can be identified with great specificity; indeed, I avoid too much conjecture about whether early effigies were in fact placed in relation to particular altars, whether they were set in direct proximity to burial sites, or whether they could act as cenotaphs at some distance, great or small, from the dead bodies that they represent. These questions are difficult, if not impossible, to answer with confidence. Surely the existence of a body is central to conceptualizations of the effigy, but to claim that the two bodies of the dead, the sculptural and the biological, were in constant tension is not the same as insisting that they were necessarily placed together.



The former seems clear; the latter, an open question. I have noted cases where such positioning has been demonstrated, but I do not extend such arguments to cases where the archeological record is unclear. No claims about potential sacramental functions of tomb sculpture are advanced in this book; the ritual commemoration of the dead has been taken up by others elsewhere, and it remains difficult to determine whether the figures were conceived for specifically liturgical or broadly memorial purposes.<sup>18</sup>

In other words, I pay close attention to the physical properties of the objects as they exist in space and as they invoke the visual traditions from which they emerged. Within each chapter, my guiding principle is always to approach Romanesque effigies first and foremost as sculptures that used current visual strategies to convey meaning to local audiences, often drawing upon the associations carried by materials. While I then balance the resulting observations against information concerning the sites and individuals in question, the two approaches—material and social—always go hand in hand. It is no real surprise that metalwork would be linked with royal bodies, an association that seems tethered to the spiritual associations of gold and enamel beyond mere opulence. More intriguing is the link between patrons and the use of stone, which links monuments to architecture—but this is, as of yet, a provisional tie, as is the suggestion that some plaster effigies seem better suited for walls than floors. Above all, my interest throughout this book is not aimed at uncovering an “iconography” of materials, which cannot be sustained from the evidence found in Romanesque effigies, but rather at a broad exploration of the connotations of materials in relation to the art of the time—in other words, how materials carried meaning within the specific contexts at hand.

It is not possible, at least not at present, to claim with certainty that the selection of materials for Romanesque funerary monuments was consistently linked to the specific identities of the individuals in question. Still a certain resonance between materials and social class remains, and I have organized the chapters of this book accordingly. The monuments have also been treated in chronological order within each chapter, but given that their dates remain somewhat uncertain, I have avoided staking too much on exactly when a given monument may have been made in relation to comparative works, political changes, or the biographies of potential patrons. The exception, of course, is when a date offers a clear *terminus ante (or post) quem* for a sculpture: in a case like that of Rudolf of Swabia, in which the monument responds quite specifically not only to the legacy of the dead person but also to the manner in which he died, the monument could hardly have been planned during his life. In each effigy discussed in this book, there already exists a consensus on dating, usually giving a range of fifteen or twenty years; in a few instances the unveiling of the sculpture might reasonably be related to an inscription (as with Durand of Moissac) or a consecration date (as with the abess effigies at Quedlinburg). Oftentimes, however, the date has been determined via style. In these cases, I avoid repeating the stylistic analysis done by others. In almost all of the effigies discussed in this book (with a few notable exceptions), the early scholarship has prioritized style and date more than political, cultural, or theological questions;

this book leans heavily in the latter direction in hopes of breaking new ground. I also confess here to a certain reluctance to subscribe too closely to those dates determined primarily by style. As art historians have long been aware, any artist may well have been “avant-garde” or “old-fashioned” in the eyes of their first audiences; after a lapse of many centuries, it is difficult to recover if a given style or motif was perceived as a novelty or an echo in its own time. I have also avoided arguments that rely heavily on geographic proximities, mainly because the thin rates of survival make arguments for regional trends difficult to sustain. The majority of stone and plaster effigies known from before 1180 were found in the course of modern excavations, meaning that many were lost, and more might well be uncovered in future digs. Metalwork effigies, on the other hand, probably existed in greater numbers but were simply melted down, and their materials repurposed—thus their presence speaks to the later economic conditions of specific sites but offers at best limited insight regarding the original geographic distribution of such monuments. It is likewise unclear if the apparent concentration of Romanesque effigies in Germany, with only a handful of monuments in France and England, is related to medieval regionalisms or merely the result of losses that occurred during the English Dissolution of the Monasteries, the French Revolution, and the Reformation across Europe. The suggestion that effigies suffered the least in Germany amid these upheavals would be an intuitive assertion at best, given the lack of clear documentation.

In some examples the visual and historical contexts of the effigies can be reconstructed with considerable clarity; in others the sources permit only a sketchy glimpse into the past. The greater goal is to outline all of the evidence, pictorial and textual, that informs each individual monument and ultimately to bring these studies together as evidence toward understanding the Romanesque effigy. This assemblage of information from as many case studies as possible is essential because the effigies vary tremendously in their subjects, materials, and stylistic qualities, and yet their very multiplicity is countered by a surprisingly consistent pattern that distinguishes these monuments from their earlier and later counterparts. Despite their obvious points of difference, Romanesque effigies can be seen as united in their function as public monuments to the local past and as attempts to reshape living memory at points of crisis. No effigy from this period can be characterized as a personal commission seeking prayers for a patron’s own salvation; the plaintive *ora pro nobis* of the later Gothic tomb effigy is nowhere present in these examples. The first monuments were made, with striking regularity, for individuals whose deaths were pivotal events in eras of upheaval—of military catastrophe, dynastic failure, or other similar structural trauma. Even as the sculptures were reminders of the past life of the individual or signs of their expected eschatological future, they were also aimed to ameliorate the present by linking current events to that greater arc of time.

This characteristic raises one more distinction that is fundamental to this book: the contention that Romanesque effigies were not made to memorialize individual lives but rather to harness those personal legacies as vehicles for addressing communal

concerns. This claim, too, can only be made clear once Romanesque effigies are treated separately from the Gothic, given that later medieval effigies have often been framed as personal appeals on behalf of the dead to address their fears of the afterlife.<sup>19</sup> In this respect, my study is indebted to the long-running debates about the emergence of the individual in the twelfth century that have played out over the past several decades of scholarship.<sup>20</sup> To the extent that individual biographies gained newfound prominence in this period, it can also be argued that these people were represented not in the modern sense of “individual” personhood but rather raised as exemplars of the social groups that they embodied. This point is pivotal in understanding that Romanesque effigies were not made to promote the survival of a patron’s own individual memory but rather as monuments that shaped local responses to broadly shared concerns. It also complicates our understanding of the relationships between medieval memorial culture and the function of funerary sculpture. Following the work of Karl Schmid and Otto Gerhard Oexle, several recent scholars have examined the measures taken by medieval people, particularly through the structure of monastic institutions, to ensure that their names would not be forgotten and that prayers for their salvation would continue until the end of time. Much of the evidence presented in these studies, along with the evidence used by Mary Carruthers to trace medieval memory systems, emerges from texts found in manuscripts and charters.<sup>21</sup>

Compelling as the data from codices may be—including the many illustrated *Lives* of saints that feature extraordinary commemorative images—I wish to avoid facile conflations of the memory systems developed in books with the memories embedded in tomb sculpture. As a visible monument in a quasi-public space, the Romanesque effigy far exceeds the simple record of a name and date of death that would be contained in a *Liber memorialis*. The attitudes that the effigies project resonate more closely with the concept of “cultural memory,” as described by Jan Assmann and others, than the very particular mechanisms of *memoria* that have occasionally been tied to them. Assmann’s notion of crisis points as triggers for the production, preservation, and promotion of communal memory resonates remarkably well with the first generation of European tomb effigies.<sup>22</sup> The appearance of Romanesque effigies not only as texts or illustrations but also as sculptural presences that approximate the size and shape of the dead bodies they accompany also seems to echo concepts traced in Caroline Walker Bynum’s rich study of bodily resurrection.<sup>23</sup> As she has shown, both body and soul were considered integral components of the medieval self. The same anxieties about the body that inspired theological discourse from the Church Fathers through the early fourteenth century added particular pressure on effigies, I think, to be three-dimensional. They were tactile not in the sense that they necessarily *were* touched by early viewers (though this certainly seems likely) but that they *could be* touched: sculptural bodies, by nature, inhabit space in a way that flat pictures do not. This inherent characteristic makes effigies curiously literal in their direct projection of the body into the space of the viewer. Assmann and Bynum describe social and theological needs that could be met by effigies, which presented the body not only as an icon of individual salvation

but also as a site for the promised redemption of communities experiencing trauma, defeat, and loss.

The evidence to support this model lies not only in the theoretical synthesis of ideas but also in the specific monuments discussed below. As noted above, though the arc of the book is loosely chronological, the effigies are divided into thematic chapters. In the first I examine three eleventh-century epitaphs that carry rich images and inscriptions, reflecting the sophisticated tradition of funerary monuments that gave rise to the medieval effigy. The second, third, and fourth chapters turn to effigies representing rulers, patrons, and canonesses, with a focus on the earliest examples from the period circa 1080 to 1160. The fifth and final chapter offers a glimpse of the rapid proliferation of the effigy type that took place in the final third of the twelfth century, as the use of sculpture expanded to become a popular commodity available to an ever-widening circle of wealthy elites. Rather than attempting to catalogue every known effigy, which would be beyond the scope of this book, I have brought together case studies that offer a coherent history of the rise of a genre. With striking regularity, effigies are linked to accounts of crisis and disruption, from the Great Saxon Revolt in Germany to the Anarchy in England—situations in which individual bodies could be displayed, framed, and controlled to reshape personal defeats into larger spiritual triumphs. Thus, the most ambitious monument to sacred kingship of the entire eleventh century, the gilded-bronze effigy of Rudolf of Swabia, was made for a rebel who failed rather than a conqueror who actually reigned. Some subsequent effigies—including the counts of Nellenburg and Diepholz, along with the ill-fated Saxon warlord Widukind—were likewise tied to catastrophic military outcomes, but many more were linked to the vicissitudes of fortune in a more abstract sense: dynastic anxieties, institutional memories, and eschatological hopes are projected sharply at sites like Quedlinburg, where imperial pride was met with appeals to humility and sacred detachment from a transient world.

Romanesque effigies are strikingly diverse in their materials and geographies as well as, above all, in the individuals they represent; my arguments in this book have tried to take these differences into close account. The unifying thread, however, is clear: the monuments were created at junctures when the legacies of the individuals in question, as well as the institutions that held their bodies, were experiencing calamity and change. Effigies developed to address deeply felt needs, bridging the worlds of the living and dead so that the complex legacies of the past could be reshaped in light of the concerns of the present. It was only at the end of the twelfth century that this purpose would shift as the effigy format rapidly gained widespread popularity and shed its original rarified meaning, its associations with communal crises gradually dissipating into more generalized pleas for individual salvation.