

Sight and Sound: New Approaches to the Artistic Connections between England and Portugal in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries.

Jessica Barker

Henry Moore Foundation Post-Doctoral Research Fellow

The Courtauld Institute of Art (Londres)

<https://courtauld.academia.edu/JessicaBarker>

This paper examines three monuments, one in Portugal and two in England: the tomb of João I and Philippa of Lancaster in Batalha, the monument to Richard II and Anne of Bohemia in Westminster Abbey, and the tomb of Beatrice of Portugal and Thomas Fitzalan at Arundel Castle. All commemorate men and women of royal status, linked through ties of blood and marriage. I wish to consider whether it is also possible to connect these monuments through the appeals they make on our senses. First, I explore the implications of the restricted or partial visibility of monuments. The memorials at Batalha and Westminster are much-lauded by art historians for the quality and the intricate detailing of the effigies. Yet such features are near-impossible to see in situ: the effigies of João I and Philippa are placed on a tomb chest of exceptional height, while those of Richard II and Anne are raised far above the south ambulatory. Placing these memorials within their broader architectural and liturgical context, I will argue that such concealed opulence was part of the agency of these objects. By prompting the viewer to strain to see the sculpted bodies of the king and queen, the monuments at Westminster and Batalha encourage them to acknowledge the majesty and other-ness of the royal couples. Second, I turn my attention to the monument of Thomas Fitzalan and Beatrice of Portugal, a tomb which was separated and concealed from the viewer by a high ironwork screen. However, where sight failed, sound could still triumph, as the prayers for Beatrice and Thomas, sung by priests and choristers, seeped through this divide and into the main body of the church.