



HENRY VIII'S FINAL RESTING PLACE

Henry VIII is buried in St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle. This lesson uses visual and written documentary evidence held at St George's Chapel Archives and Chapter Library and the National Archives to investigate one of England's most memorable Kings.

The evidence will help you to explore how Henry VIII presented himself when he was alive, how he wanted to be buried and remembered, and what happened following his death.

Why not visit St George's Chapel to view Henry VIII's final resting place?

Details of opening times and access arrangements are available on the College of St George's website (www.stgeorges-windsor.org). Guided school visits to the Chapel, including a Tudor themed tour entitled 'Henry VIII's final resting place', may be arranged through the Windsor Castle Education Centre (www.royalcollection.org.uk)



Illustration of Henry VIII and the Knights of the Garter in the *Register of the Order of the Garter* c.1534-1552 (SGC G.1).

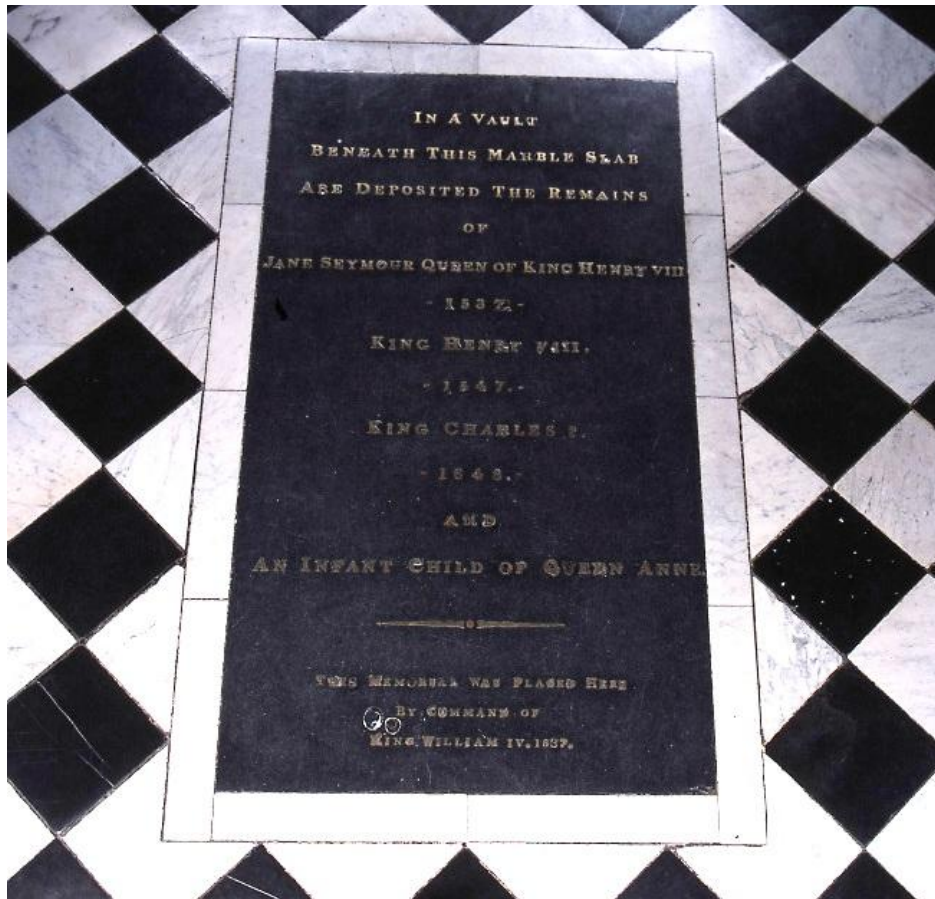
Register of the Order of the Garter. c.1534-1552

This Register of the Order of the Garter, known as the 'Black Book' because of its black velvet cover, was compiled by Canon Robert Aldridge, Register of the Order, around 1534, and continues until the reign of Edward VI. It names each monarch, starting with Edward III, and lists the Knights of the Garter installed by them. Edward III founded the Order about 1348, to reward and unite his loyal friends and soldiers.

The 'Black Book' is beautifully decorated, probably by Lucas Honebolter (who was appointed King's Painter in 1534), with portraits of monarchs from Edward III to Henry VIII, representations of Garter ceremonies, and colourful borders. This illustration shows members of the Order of the Garter from the twenty-sixth year of Henry VIII's reign (1534-35) grouped round the famous king.

Questions

1. Using the image as a guide, what does Henry VIII want people to think about him?
2. What symbols does Henry VIII use to show that he is a king?
3. Who are the people crowding around Henry VIII in the picture and why do some of them also have symbols of kingship?



Photograph of the memorial slab commemorating the burial of Henry VIII in the Quire of St George's Chapel (SGC PH.312).

The writing on the slab reads:

IN A VAULT
 BENEATH THIS MARBLE SLAB
 ARE DEPOSITED THE REMAINS
 OF
 JANE SEYMOUR QUEEN OF KING HENRY VIII
 1537
 KING HENRY VIII
 1547
 KING CHARLES I
 1648
 AND
 AN INFANT CHILD OF QUEEN ANNE.
 THIS MEMORIAL WAS PLACED HERE
 BY COMMAND OF
 KING WILLIAM IV. 1837.

Questions

1. Is this how you would expect Henry VIII's resting place to look?
2. Why?
3. Which of his six wives is he buried with?
4. Why did he choose to be buried with her?
5. Who else lies in the vault?

Source 3



Watercolour by A.Y. Nutt of the vault containing Henry VIII's remains, 1888 (SGC RBK H.386).

Watercolour by A.Y. Nutt of the vault containing Henry VIII's remains

A.Y. Nutt was Surveyor to the Dean and Canons of Windsor and made this watercolour drawing of the tomb when it was opened in 1888 to replace the relics of Charles I which had been removed in 1813 (a piece of neck bone, a portion of beard and a tooth). The coffin on the left is that of Charles I, on which are resting the box of relics and a small coffin containing the remains of an infant child of Queen Anne. The coffin on the right is that of Jane Seymour, Henry VIII's third wife. The coffin in the centre is Henry VIII's.

Questions

1. Why do you think the vault is so small and cramped?
2. How do you think the damage to Henry VIII's coffin (in the centre) happened?

Source 4

Testament to will and order that our body be buried
 and interred in the Church of our college of Windsor
 midway betwixt the chancel and the high altar
 and here to be made and set appoynted conveniently
 may be done after our deceasse by our Executors at
 our coste and charge if it be not done by us in our
 last tyme in honorable tombe for our bones to rest in
 rest and well outward and almost made by us
 already in a fairer grave about it. in rest you
 will also have for bones and body of our true and
 loving wife Anne Jane be put also And have
 here be provided ordered made and set at the
 coste and charge of us or of our Executors if it be
 not done more by a tombent aulter honorable
 prepared and appoynted to all manner of things
 requisite and necessary for daily masses here
 to be said perpetually for the world soul
 redemption. Also you will have for Tombs

Extract from Henry VIII's will detailing his wishes regarding burial and tomb, 1546
 (The National Archives, E23/4).

Henry VIII's will

Henry VIII's will describes how he wishes for his personal wealth to be divided. It also details Henry VIII's plans for his burial and the completion of his tomb.

A transcript and a simplified transcript of the above extract can be found on the following page.

Transcript of extract from Henry VIII's will regarding his burial and tomb 1546

... [we] do will and ordeyn that oure bodie be burye[d] and entered in the Quire of oure College of Windesor midway betwe[en] the stalles and the high Aultar and there to be made and sett assoneas conveniently may be doon after our deceasse by our Executours at our costes and charges if it be not done by us in our lief tyme an honorable tombe for our bones to rest in which is well onward and almoost made therefor alredeye w[ith] a fayre grate about it in which we will also that the bones and body of our true and loving wief Quene Jane be putt also And that there be provided ordeyned made and sett at the costes and charges of us or of our executours if it be not done in our lyf a convenient aulter honorably prepared and apparailled w[ith] all maner of thinges requisite and necessary for dayly masses there to be sayd perpetuely while the woorld shall endure.

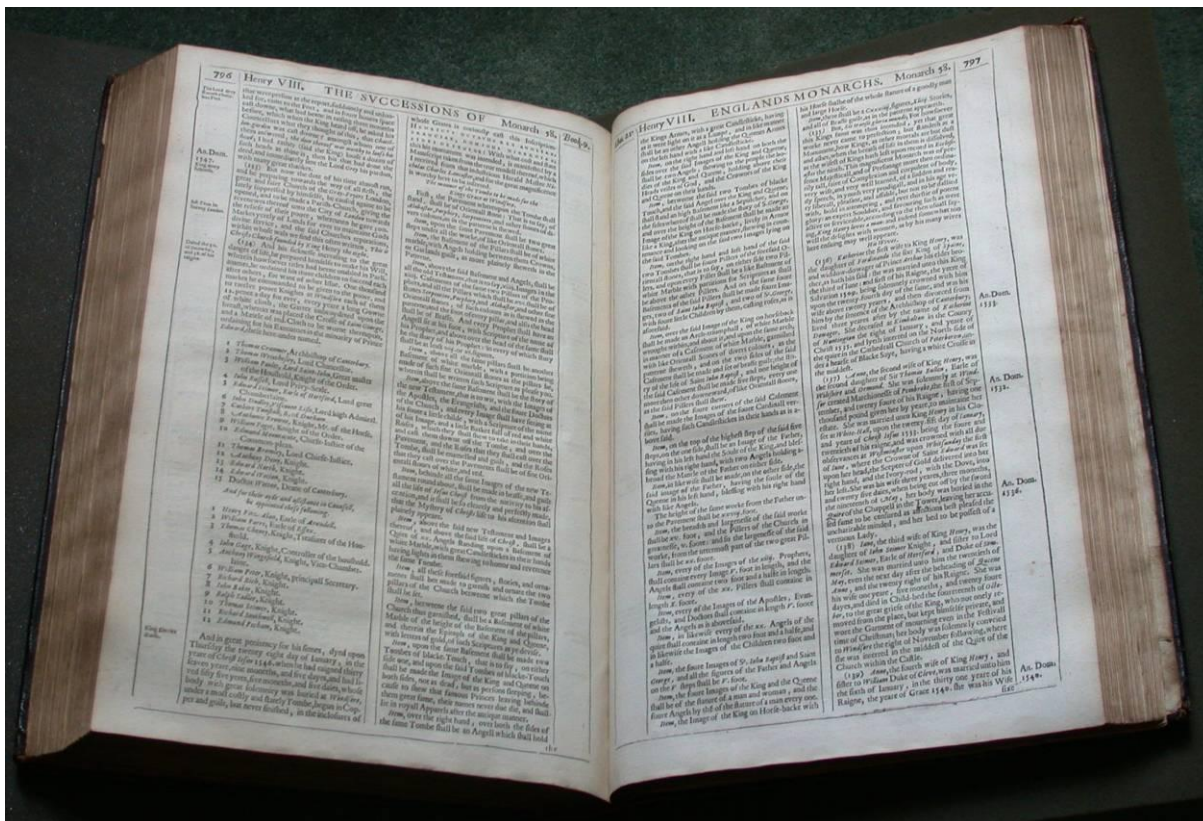
Simplified transcript

...[we] do will and ordain that our body be buried and interred in the Quire of our College of Windsor, midway between the stalls and the high Altar, and there to be made and set as soon as conveniently may be done after our decease, by our Executors at our costs and charges if it be not done by us in our lifetime, an honourable tomb for our bones to rest in, which is well onward and almost made therefore already with a fair grate about it in which we will also that the bones and body of our true and loving wife Queen Jane be put also. And that there be provided, ordained, made and set at the charges of us, or of our executors if it be not done by us in our life, a convenient altar honourably prepared and apparelled with all manner of things requisite and necessary for daily masses there to be said perpetually while the world shall endure.

Questions

1. Where does Henry VIII want to be buried while the building work on his tomb is completed?
2. What does Henry VIII say about how far the building work has progressed?
3. What else does Henry VIII want to be made for his tomb and what is it to be used for?

Source 5



Photograph of John Speed's *The history of Great Britaine*, 1627 (SGC RBK S.479).

John Speed's description of Henry VIII's proposed tomb

John Speed was a famous 17th century mapmaker and antiquarian. While compiling a history of Great Britain he was shown a manuscript owned by Nicholas Charles, the Lancaster Herald from 1608-1613. It is believed that this was a manuscript showed or described the plans for the construction of the tomb designed for Henry VIII by Jacopo Sansovino in 1527 (when Henry VIII was still married to Katherine of Aragon). While the original manuscript's location is unknown its description can be studied in Speed's completed work *The history of great Britaine...* (London, 1627).

On the following pages you will find a transcript of Speed's description of Henry VIII's proposed tomb, and two extracts from it labelled **Section A** and **Section B** (the extracts are highlighted in the full transcript).

The history of Great Britaine under the conquests of ye Romans, Saxons, Danes and Normans. Their original manners, habits, warres, coines, and seales, with the successions, lines, acts, and issues of the English monarchs, from Iulius Caesar, to our most, gracious soueraigne King Iames. The second edition. Reuised, & enlarged w[i]th sundry descents of ye Saxons kings, their mariages and armes.

John Speed (London, 1627)

Description of Henry VIII's proposed tomb pp. 796-797

And in great penitency for his sinnes, [Henry VIII] dyed upon Thursday the twenty eight day of Ianuary, in the yeare of *Christ Iesus* 1546. when he had raigned thirty seaven yeare, nine moneths, and five dayes, and had lived fifty five yeres, five moneths, and five daies, whose body with great solemnity was buried at *Windsore*, under a most costly and stately Tombe, begun in Copper and guilt, but never finished, in the inclosures of whose Grates is curiously cast this Inscription. HENRICVS OCTAVUS REX ANGLIAE, FRANCLIAE, DOMINUS HIBERNIAE, FIDEI DEFENSOR: With what cost and state this his monument was intended, is manifested by a Manuscript taken from the true model thereof, which I received from that industrious Harald Master *Nicholas Charles Lancaster*, and for the great magnificence is worthy here to be inserted.

The manner of the Tombe to be made for the Kings Grace at Windsore.

First the Pavement whereupon the Tombe shall stand shall be of Orientall stone: That is to say, of *Alabastar*, *Porphyry*, *Serpentines*, and other stones of divers colours, as in the patterne is shewed.

Item, Upon the same Pavement shall be two great steps under all the worke, of like Orientall stones.

Item, the Basement of the Pillars shall be of white marble, with Angels holding between them Crowns, or Garlands guilt, as more plainely sheweth in the Patterne.

Item, Above the said Basement and Angels, shall be all the old Testament, that is to say, xiiij. Images in the xiiij. Casements of the same two Pillars of the Prophets, and all the Pillars which shall be xvj. shall be of stones *Serpentine*, *Porphyry*, and *Alabastar*, and other fine Orientall Stones, of such colours as is shewed in the patterne; and the foot of every pillar, and also the head shall be of Brasse. And every Prophet shall have an Angell sit at his foot, with Scripture of the name of his Prophet, and above over the head of the same shall be the story of his Prophet: in every of which story shall be at least viij or ix figures.

Item, above all the same pillars shall be another Basement of white marble, with a partition being made of such fine Orientall stones as the Pillars be, wherein shall be written such Scripture as please you.

Item, above the same Basement shall be the story of the new Testament, that is to wit, with the Images of the Apostles, the Evangelists, and the foure Doctors of the Church, and every Image shall have sitting at his foote a little childe, with a Scripture of the name of his Image, and a like Basket full of red and white Roses, which they shall shew to take in their hands, and cast them downe off the Tombe, and over the Pavement, and the Roses that they shall cast over the Tombe, shall be enamelled and guilt, and the Roses that they cast over the Pavements shall be of fine Orientall stones of white, and red.

Item, behind all the same Images of the new Testament round about, shall be made in brasse, and guilt all the life of *Jesus Christ* from the nativity to his ascension, and it shall be so clearely and perfectly made, that the Mystery of *Christs* life to his ascension shall plainly appeare.

Item, above the said new Testament and Images thereof, and above the said life of *Christ*, shall be a Quire of xx. Angels standing upon a Basement of white Marble, with great Candlestickes in their hands having lights in them shewing to honor and reverence the same Tombe.

Item, all these foresaid figures, stories, and ornaments shall bee made to garnish and ornate the two pillars of the Church betweene which the Tombe shall be set.

Item, betweene the said two great pillars of the Church thus garnished, shall be a Basement of white Marble of the height of the Basement of the pillars, and therein the Epitaph of the King and Queene, with letters of gold, of such Scriptures as ye devise.

Item, upon the same Basement shall be made two Tombes of blacke-Touch, that is to say, on either side one, and upon the said Tombes of blacke-Touch shall be made the Image of the King and Queene on both sides, not as dead, but as persons sleeping, because to shew that famous Princes leaving behinde them great fame, their names never doe die, and shall lie in royall Apparels after the Antique manner.

Item, over the right hand, over both the sides of the same Tombe shall be an Angell which shall hold the Kings Armes, with a great Candlesticke, having as it were light on it as a Lampe, and in like manner shall be another Angell holding the Queenes Armes on the left hand with a like Candlesticke.

Item, on the right hand and left hand on both sides over the said Images of the King and Queene, shall be two Angels, shewing to the people the bodies of the King and Queene, holding above their Heads veiles of God, and the Crownes of the King and Queene on their hands.

Item, betweene the said two Tombes of blacke Touch, and the said Angel over the King and Queene, shall stand an high Basement like a Sepulchre, and on the sides whereof shall be made the story of *S. George*, and over the height of the Basement shall be made an Image of the King on Horse-backe, lively in Armor like a King, after the antique manner, shewing in countenance and looking on the said two Images lying on the said Tombes.

Item on the right hand and left hand of the said two Tombes shall be foure Pillers of the foresaid Orientall stones, that is to say, on either side two Pillers, and upon every Piller shall be a like Basement of white Marble with partitions for Scriptures as shall be above the other Pillers. And on the same foure Basements of the said Pillers shall be made four Images, two of *Saint Iohn Baptist*, and two of *St. George*, with foure little Children by them, casting roses, as is aforesaid.

Item, over the said Image of the King on horseback shall be made an Arch-triumphall, of white Marble wrought within, and about it, and upon the same arch, in manner of a Casement of white Marble, garnished with like Orientall Stones of divers colours, as the patterne sheweth, and on the two sides of the said Casement shall be made and set of brasse guilt, the story of the life of *Saint Iohn Baptist*, and one height of the said Casement shall be made five steps, every one more then other downward, of like Orientall stones as the said Pillers shall shew.

Item, on the foure corners of the said Casement shall be made the Images of the foure Cardinall vertues, having such Candlestickes in their hands as is above said.

Item, on top of the highest step of the said five steps, on the one side, shall be an Image of the Father, having in his left hand the Soule of the King, and blessing with his right hand, with two Angels holding abroad the Mantle of the Father on either side.

Item, in likewise shall be made, on the other side, the said image of the Father, having the soule of the Queene in his left hand, blessing with his right hand with like Angels.

The Height of the same worke from the Father unto the Pavement shall be *xxviiij* foote.

Item, the breadth and largenesse of the said worke shall be *xv*. Foot, and the Pillers of the Church in greatnesse, *v*. foote: and so the largenesse of the said worke, from the uttermost part of the two great Pillers shall be *xx* foote.

Item, every of the Images of the *xiiij*. Prophets, shall containe every Image *V*. foot in length, and the Angels shall containe two foot and a halfe in length.

Item, every of the *xx* Pillers shall containe in length *X* foote.

Item, every of the Images of the Apostles, Evangelists, and Doctors shall containe in length *V*. foote and the Angels as is aforesaid.

Item, in likewise every of the *xx* Angels of the quire shall containe in length two foot and a halfe, and in likewise the Images of the Children two foot and a halfe.

Item, the foure Images of *St. Iohn Baptist* and *Saint George*, and all the figures of the Father and Angels on the *V* steps shall be *V*. foot.

Item, the foure Images of the King and Queene shall be of the stature of a man and woman, and the foure Angels by them of the stature of a man every one.

Item, the Image of the King on Horse-backe with his horse shall be of the whole stature of a goodly man and large Horse.

Item, there shall be *Cxxxiiij*, figures, *xliiiij* Stories, and all of Brasse gilt, as in the patterne appeareth.

Source 5 Section A

Item, upon the same Basement shall be made two Tombes of blacke-Touch, that is to say, on either side one, and upon the said Tombes of blacke-Touch shall be made the Image of the King and Queene on both sides, not as dead, but as persons sleeping, because to shew that famous Princes leaving behinde them great fame, their names never doe die, and shall lie in royall Apparels after the Antique manner.

Source 5 Section B

Item, on the right hand and left hand on both sides over the said Images of the King and Queene, shall be two Angels, shewing to the people the bodies of the King and Queene, holding above their Heads veiles of God, and the Crownes of the King and Queene on their hands.

Item, betweene the said two Tombes of blacke Touch, and the said Angel over the King and Queene, shall stand an high Basement like a Sepulchre, and on the sides whereof shall be made the story of S. *George*, and over the height of the Basement shall be made an Image of the King on Horse-backe, lively in Armor like a King, after the antique manner...

Item, over the said Image of the King on horseback shall be made an Arch-triumphall, of white Marble wrought within, and about it, and upon the same arch, in manner of a Casement of white Marble, garnished with like Orientall Stones of divers colours

Questions

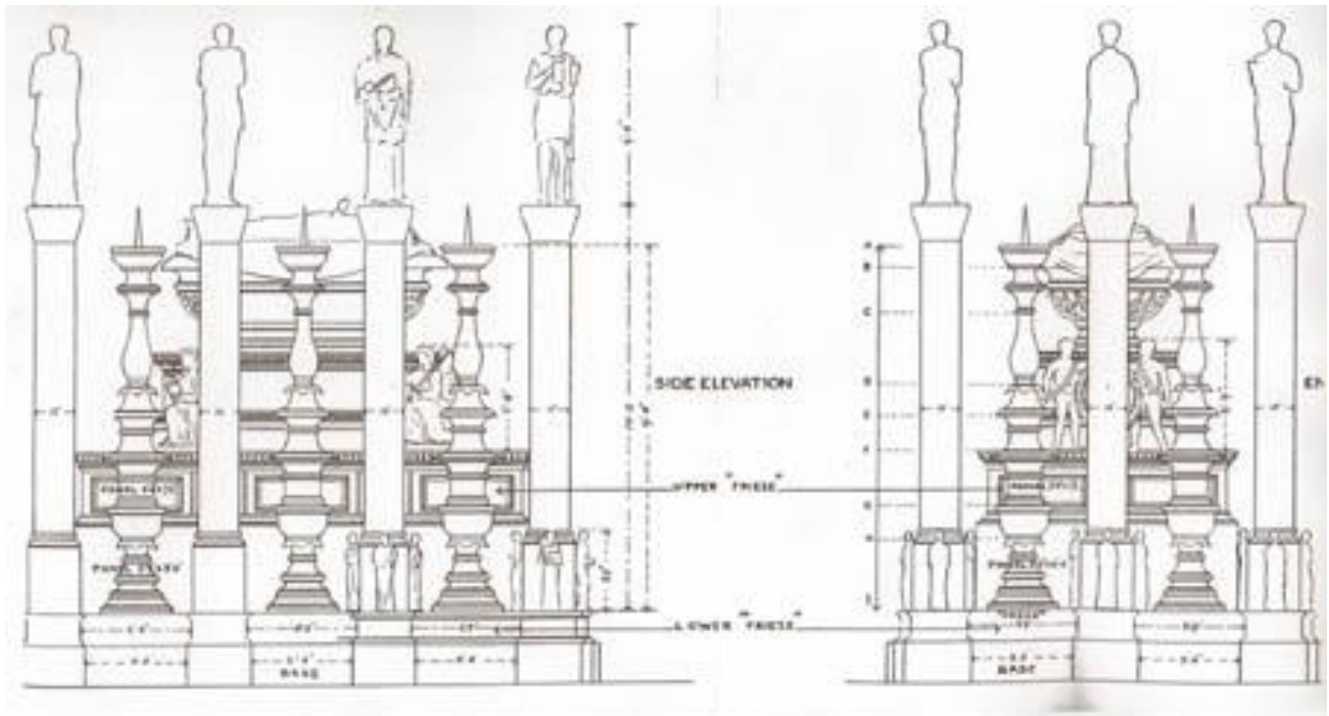
Read section A carefully (also highlighted in the full transcript).

1. How does Henry VIII want himself and his queen to appear in their statues?
2. What does this tell you about Henry VIII's character and his ideas about the role of the monarch?

Now read section B (also highlighted in the full transcript).

1. Name two of the expensive materials that the tomb was going to be made of.
2. Why do you think Henry VIII wanted the story of St George included in the decorations for his tomb?
3. What do you think is meant by 'antique manner' and why would Henry VIII want to appear on horseback?

Source 6



Conjectured drawing of Henry VIII's tomb by Alfred Higgins, 1894 (SGC M.871).

Conjectured drawing of Henry VIII's tomb

Benedetto da Rovezzano, a talented Italian sculptor, was commissioned by Cardinal Wolsey, Henry VIII's most important political advisor, to design and work on a grand tomb for him. When Wolsey fell out of favour with the King in 1529 the tomb was taken over by Henry VIII for himself. Benedetto da Rovezzano made a note of the statues and ornamentation already made for Wolsey's tomb and also a list of the changes to be made for the King. These detailed lists allowed Alfred Higgins to make drawings of what the tomb could have looked like if it had been completed.

Questions

1. What differences do you notice when you compare Speed's description of the planned tomb with Higgins' conjectured drawings?
2. Why do you think the design for the tomb was changed?
3. Why wasn't it built?
4. Do you think that there is anything that Henry VIII could have done to make sure that his body ended up in a completed tomb?