From the late eighteenth century, Edinburgh was positioning itself as a cultural capital - a move designed to ensure that the 1707 Act of Union did not render Scotland's capital little better than a provincial town. This paper will consider how guidebooks and topographical descriptions of the city invited tourists and visitors to view and read the city, focusing in particular on the significance of Calton Hill, a vantage point that offered the observer sweeping views across the city, Leith harbour, and the surrounding countryside, and which, from the 1810s, became home to a series of monuments. It will end with a discussion of the site's location for the never completed National Monument to Scottish military participation in the Napoleonic Wars.

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