

Finally, the author's minute investigation of morphological correspondences between a Florentine and a French garden, as well as his insistence on the primacy of the plan and on a static interpretation of the latter at the expense of movement, so paramount at Versailles as at Pratolino, is reminiscent of a landscape historiographic tradition rooted in the first half of the twentieth century and responsible, in part, for the modernist ostracism of history and historical precedents from design education.

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Cut in Alabaster: A Material of Sculpture and Its European Traditions 1330–1530. Kim W. Woods.

Distinguished Contributions to the Study of the Arts in the Burgundian Netherlands 3. London: Harvey Miller Publishers, 2018. ii + 418 pp. €150.

Alabaster sculpture is a highly engaging topic. The sculpted white semi-transparent stone is still as attractive today as it was centuries ago. *Cut in Alabaster: A Material of Sculpture and Its European Traditions 1330–1530* focuses on the main regions where alabaster artworks were made from the fourteenth to the beginning of the sixteenth century in Western Europe. The author's original approach consists in her attention to alabaster sculpture made in England, France, the Low Countries, and Spain. In this way, she sheds a new light both on the influence of these different centers on one another and on their resemblances and differences.

The heavily illustrated book is structured in nine chapters followed by an extensive bibliography. The first chapter deals with the geological aspects and the use of alabaster as a sculptural material. It pays attention to the late medieval confusion between alabaster and white marble, arguing that there was no difference in status between the two materials and that there was an interchangeability between them. Furthermore, the chapter deals with the challenging supply of good-quality blocks in Northern Europe. Some concise attention is dedicated to sculpting and polishing techniques, followed by a more elaborate part on polychromy, stressing the fact that late Gothic alabaster sculptures were as a rule either minimally or partially painted at least until the mid-sixteenth century, with the arrival of Italian Renaissance ideas.

In the second chapter, the author deals with the sculptors working in alabaster and the coinciding trade in their works of art. The court of France was a trendsetter in the taste for lustrous white materials. As the use of alabaster rose at the end of the fourteenth century in France, its application in the Low Countries from 1440 until the first decades of the sixteenth century remained rare. Woods proves, however, by means of various cases, the undeniable pioneering role of sculptors from both the Low Countries and the extreme north of France in using alabaster as a sculpting material in Paris as well as Spain.

Keeping in line with this theme, chapter 3 has as its subject the works of two artists—namely, Gil de Siloé and the Master of Rimini. Woods suggests that the latter artist, renowned but anonymous, lived in Bruges and might be linked to Gilles De Backere. The high status of the material is discussed in chapter 4, and the fame of the lustrous stone even had Van Eyck imitating it convincingly in his paintings. Woods goes into much detail when discussing numerous works of art in alabaster, which were almost all examined firsthand. Next to historic elements she pays great attention to material technical elements, such as the type of alabaster and the presence of polychromy.

In chapters 5 through 9, the selection of examples and case studies is very balanced, devoting attention to different regions. (In fact, this can be said about the entire book.) Chapter 6 deals with conventional alabaster tombs, and the following chapter talks about bespoke tombs. The court of France influenced other parts of Western Europe in the conventions regarding the use of white lustrous altarpieces in royal tombs, as described in chapter 8. It was England that popularized the alabaster altarpiece, leading to a large spreading of the artwork. On the Continent, altarpieces remained in general elite bespoke commissions. The last chapter gives an overview of different genres of alabaster sculpture in the public and in the private environment. England was clearly most successful in the manufacturing of small-scale devotional work for private use. But different genres, such as Saint John's heads and the Virgin of Pity, were also being produced on the Continent in the fifteenth century. Throughout the book Woods succeeds in showing us the bigger picture. She reclaims the importance of alabaster in the history of sculpture in Northern Europe between 1330 and 1530. This book is to be recognized as an important new benchmark for any further study on the topic.

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Nicholas Hilliard: Life of an Artist. Elizabeth Goldring.

Paul Mellon Centre for Studies in British Art. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2019. xiv + 338 pp. \$55.

The exquisite miniatures, “little pictures to be held in the hand,” painted in watercolor on vellum by the English artist Nicholas Hilliard, are for many the quintessential images of the Elizabethan and Jacobean ages. On the four hundredth anniversary of his death, Elizabeth Goldring's excellent and beautifully illustrated monograph brings together important new research on Hilliard's life and work, adding considerably to our understanding of the challenges and opportunities that existed for painters in sixteenth-century London.

Hilliard was born in Exeter ca. 1547 into a staunchly Protestant family of goldsmiths. In 1555, during the reign of the Catholic Mary I, Hilliard and his family