Edited Volume: English Alabaster Sculptures in Context

Deadline: Apr 1, 2017

Zuleika Murat

Call for Contributions: edited volume «English Alabaster Sculptures in Context: Art, History and Historiography»
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The book aims at challenging the current limits within the field of research related to English alabasters, in order to establish a new model of study. Over the last century many studies on English alabasters have been published, including exhibition catalogues, list of documents and archival sources, catalogues raisonnés of the most important collections. All these studies have marked key points in the scholarly approach to English alabaster carvings, but they have also imposed a stubbornly curt historiographical perspective. Indeed, these publications have mainly been focused on specific collections -e.g. Frances Cheetham's «Medieval English alabaster carvings in the Castle Museum of Nottingham» (Nottingham, 1973)-, and have thus provided only a partial view on that artistic phenomenon. They ended up isolating English alabasters from their historical and cultural context. In addition, as Susan Ward has pointed out in her review to Frances Cheetham's Alabaster Images of Medieval England (Speculum, 2006), these publications' main focus was often traditional: their bulks describe the standard subject matters found in the alabasters (e.g. the Passion of Christ, the Life of the Virgin and the saints) and explain the literary sources of that subject matter in a sometime too basic way. The authors tend to isolate the pieces from their wider historical framework, lacking to consider the character of piety in late-medieval England, and failing to consider the sculptures from a comprehensive historiographical point of view.
The book aims at setting the study of English alabasters on a new footing, which results from the influence of previous scholarship but, at the same time, reacts against it and is finally capable to establish a different approach.

Possible themes and subjects could address, but are not limited to one of the following topics
- Alabaster altarpieces: function and design;
- Alabasters in pre/post Reformation England;
- Centres of productions, Trade routes;
- Workshop practices (Collaborations and Co-creations; Process and Method; Marks and Inscriptions; Archival records);
- Reception of alabasters abroad; Possible adaption to local practices/taste;
- Patronage;
- Paraliturgical Dramas;
- Distinctions between rural/urban churches;

- Alabaster tombs.

Papers will be collected in a volume to be published by the end of next year (2018), entitled «English Alabaster Sculptures in Context: Art, History and Historiography».

Submission: Please send an abstract of your proposed contribution (ca. 300 words) and a short CV to the editor: zuleika.murat@unipd.it
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Reference:

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