

relevant figure. Most of the illustrations are in colour, those illustrating lost slabs from the collections made by Gaignières are of line drawings on light-coloured backgrounds and those of the extant slabs themselves are generally equally monochromatic, with detail sometimes difficult to make out on particularly worn examples.

In examining the earliest slabs, the author comments on the relatively rapid transition from those comparatively crude examples commemorating abbots at Asnières to those probably produced at centres such as Le Mans and Nantes at the end of the first quarter of the fourteenth century that were more refined and better designed. The effects of the Black Death and of the incursions into the Loire valley by both English and French armies in the following period meant that there are fewer slabs than might otherwise have been expected, with few potential clients motivated to buy them between 1340 and 1400. For the laity a mortuary chapel already in existence for a family may well have sufficed during this period of unrest. This apparent lack of demand continued into the following century, but there was a rapid increase in the number of mural epitaphs erected as an alternative or additional method of commemoration. One innovation on effigial slabs was the speech-scroll, enabling the deceased themselves to plead for intercession. Some evidence for a Le Mans workshop in the final quarter of the century is discussed. By the end of the century abbatial slabs depicting richly attired figures were projecting their subjects more as individuals than as heads of their communities.

Table 2, a list of twenty-nine slabs in the 'Duval' style, precedes the description of a new style of slab identified, albeit 'hesitantly' as products of a particular *atelier* thought to be the products of the Duval family, lasting through the first half of the sixteenth century and perhaps beyond. Figures are depicted standing on tiled floors beneath a canopy with a scallop shell head; the influence of the Renaissance also shows in the decoration of the pilasters and their capitals that support the canopy. The extensive use of *taille d'épargne* to cut away areas of the slabs so that colour could be added, together with the use of inlays of white marble and other material for faces, hands, etc and brass (often now lost) for fillet inscriptions and evangelical symbols, are encountered on these slabs. Two contracts, one of 1509 for a monumental brass to be engraved by Gervais Duval and another of 1523 with Nicolas Duval to engrave an effigy of a canon under a shell-headed canopy on stone with heraldic shields of copper at the corners, are cited in support. Gervais was a native of Le Mans but

both contracts are with inhabitants of Tours, a little outside the area of the study. Tours is suggestive of contact with Michel Colombe, the innovative sculptor active there until his death in 1513. Although many of them lack their brass and other inlaid components, those in good condition are still very striking-looking, as the pair at La Chapelle-Rainsouin (figs 130–1) demonstrate, and must have been still more so when newly laid down. Gervais Duval's signature can be found on a sculpted figure in the seigneurial at La Chapelle-Rainsouin, strengthening the claim that he was responsible for slabs in this style.

The records made in Angers by Bruneau de Tartifume provide evidence of a rapid upswing in commemorative inscriptions in the last quarter of the fifteenth century, increasing to a peak approaching the middle of the sixteenth and continuing at a good but lower level through to the end of the first quarter of the seventeenth. There is some suggestion that the more recent and thus less worn the slab, the easier he found it to read, but the increase in commissions does seem real and not just confined to Angers. Not all those of the period covered of increased production can be associated with Le Mans workshops and there is considerable variation in quality between these other slabs.

In his 'Conclusions and final thoughts' the author poses many questions that occurred to him in the course of his work on these slabs, some particular to commemorative practices in the Loire valley, some with a wider application, some dealing with workshops, others with destruction. To some he suggests answers, but others will only be answered by more wide-ranging research. Despite the seemingly narrow range of interest implied by the title, this impressive study is far-reaching in its scope.

Greenhill, F A 1976. *Incised Effigial Slabs*, Faber and Faber, London

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doi:[10.1017/S000358152300029X](https://doi.org/10.1017/S000358152300029X)

Painting for a Living in Tudor and Early Stuart England. By ROBERT TITTLER. 235mm. Pp 306, 15 b/w ills. The Boydell Press, Woodbridge, 2022. ISBN 9781783276639. £70 (hbk).

It may seem unlikely that there is space in the literature for another study of Tudor and Stuart

painting. However, Robert Tittler's appraisal brings clarity and new understanding to the practicalities of the artists' trade. Rather than repeating the 'otherness' of the characters who were not Holbein, Rubens or Van Dyck, Tittler presents the identities of individuals, and the complexities of their age, with sensitivity. He pulls together the (considerable) scholarship to date and provides thoroughly documented definitions of the limitations and conditions within which these artists – both male and female – operated. As a study, it will doubtless prove instrumental for students as it signposts the most significant discoveries from the work of Roy Strong through to recent research by, among many others, Karen Hearn, Edward Town, Charlotte Bolland and the author himself.

The well-defined sections and unpretentious prose take the reader from a comprehensive historical introduction to the place of foreigners working in England. Tittler shines a light on the marked differences in practice across the country, from East Anglia to Dorset. Part II presents a detailed and fresh account of the Painter-Stainers' Company. Tittler makes clear the lack of speed engendered by the function of this guild, leading to the 'decorative rather than figurative expertise; more with craft than with art'. The following chapter of Part II turns to provincial artists and assesses their relationship with London. Some painters travelled around while maintaining workshops in London, some settled in the provinces and others stayed in the capital city. Ideas and methods thereby permeated the country. In Part III, Tittler focuses on the specifics of arms and glass painters, unearthing key sources and revealing the surprising prevalence of false heraldry in the regions.

In Part IV, Tittler gives attention to the workshop personnel, and specifically the role of women. He identifies the close interplay between home life and workshop, with key examples – such as Alice Paynter – where the wife of a deceased artist was intended to complete a commission (a job which, intriguingly, she did not finish). This practice indicates an interchangeability between husband and wife, with the painters' trade placed more equally within households than has hitherto been acknowledged. The status of women is not overplayed by Tittler. He rebalances previous attempts to over-correct the role of female artists and presents a calm progress, with leading lights such as Anguissola and Gentileschi paving the way for 'native English women painters' such as Mary Beale (1633–99) to 'find their feet in

courtly circles in the mid-century and beyond'. This chapter concludes with invaluable tables listing the names of apprentices, journeymen and masters based at the Chester Company of Painters, Glaziers, Embroiderers and Stationers, c 1560–1640.

The following chapter employs archaeological and archival evidence to assert the practicalities and limitations of the workshop space. Tittler highlights the difficulties of finding suitable space for making art amidst urban expansion. It is at this point in the publication that the lack of colour plates becomes most apparent. The text would benefit from colour illustrations of paintings and depictions of the relevant towns and cities to open up the topic to a broader audience.

Could these artists make a good living through their trade? Tittler's penultimate chapter presents a sobering view of the drudgery of a craftsman's existence in the business of painting. The artists he describes were not flamboyant stars. Instead, these 'picture makers' knew their trade and deployed it proficiently. In an environment where foreign painters were favoured at court, and even Holbein died in debt, there was little hope for more modest provincial painters to carve out a luxurious existence. Tittler suggests, compellingly, that the slow adoption of the continental habit of signing paintings held back the identifiability and potential fame of English artists. It was the popularity of portraiture that provided the most stable income, with Van Dyck setting up what Tittler beguilingly describes as 'a virtual assembly line' for their production.

Tittler's conclusion makes the distinction between the thriving, ambitious Dutch workshop tradition and the more humble English artistic scene. The tendency for English artists to become set in their ways hindered their progression and is reflective not only of the artistic profession but also of the state of the nation. This thought-provoking study cements Tudor and early Stuart painting for a living as a product of its time: disciplined, professional and serving a purpose. With hindsight, these painters created a preparatory layer for – or a foil to – the spectacular, but still predominantly portrait-based proficiency that was to come with Reynolds, Gainsborough and Lawrence, once the English market shed its perfunctory nature and took a leading role in the artistic world.

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