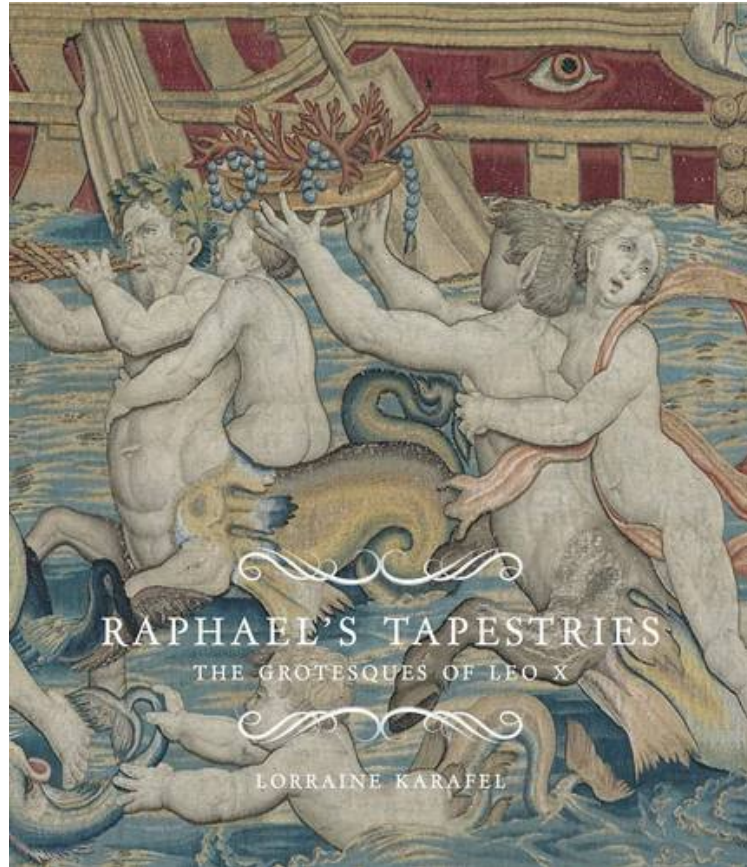


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Raphael's Tapestries: The Grotesques of Leo X

Lorraine Karafel

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Lorraine Karafel : Raphael's Tapestries: The Grotesques of Leo X before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Raphael's Tapestries: The Grotesques of Leo X:

Around 1515, Raphael (1483-1520) designed a set of tapestries for Leo X, the first Medici pope. Each was sumptuously woven in gold, silver, and silk, and depicted scenes from classical mythology with inventive grotesques. Now lost, these spectacular, grand-scale textiles are reconstructed in Raphael's Tapestries and set among a series of unprecedented decorative projects that Pope Leo commissioned from the artist. Likely produced by the Brussels weaver Pieter van Aelst, the tapestries pioneered a new all'antica style analogous with contemporary painted and sculpted interior programs. Tapestries played a central role at Leo's court, as spectacle and as propaganda, and the Grotesques of Leo X would inform tapestry design for the next three centuries. Their beauty and complexity rivaled those of contemporary painting, and their luxurious materials made them highly prized. With this new study, the Grotesques take their rightful place as Renaissance masterworks and as documents of the fervent humanist culture of early 16th-century Rome.

“Writing about lost works is difficult, and Karafel handles the task with eloquence, offering a logical presentation, clearly written text, and outstanding illustrations . . . Scholarly yet accessible, this book contributes nicely to discussion of understudied aspects of Renaissance art.”—Choice