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[Aller au sommaire du numéro](#)

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## Book Reviews / Comptes Rendus

**Ainsworth, Maryan W. and Joshua P. Waterman.**

***German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350–1600.***

New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art / New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2013. Pp. viii, 376 + 315 ill. ISBN 978-0-300-14897-8 (hardcover) \$75.

This substantial volume is the most comprehensive publication on early German paintings in a North American collection. The paintings documented in *German Paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, 1350–1600* originate in the German-speaking lands, including Austria and Switzerland, primarily during the rich period around the first half of the sixteenth century. Works by German painters were highly regarded and vigorously collected by the most discerning art patrons in Renaissance Europe. However, as recently as the mid-twentieth century, northern art of this era was mostly neglected by collectors and influential scholars, such as E. R. Curtius, who denied the existence of a renaissance in Britain, France, Germany, or elsewhere in northern Europe. Although the achievements of German printmakers and sculptors such as Tilman Riemenschneider are better known, German painting has been especially under-represented in collections outside of Europe, compared with Italian painting and even the work of early Netherlandish painters.

The collection of German paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York is the largest and most prestigious in North America. Introductory remarks by Maryan W. Ainsworth situate this collection within the history of American art connoisseurship. Strong choices made by astute curators and collectors from the early days of the museum up to now account for the presence of superb paintings by celebrated masters such as Lucas Cranach the Elder, which have since increased substantially in value. Despite the absence of works by fifteenth-century Cologne painters like Stephan Lochner or independent landscapes associated with the so-called Danube School of painters such as Albrecht Altdorfer, this collection houses works by renowned German painters, including Albrecht Dürer, Hans Holbein the Younger, Hans Baldung (Grien), and the most recent acquisition, a monumental panel from an altarpiece painted by Dürer's pupil, Hans Schäufelein, showing the *Dormition of the Virgin* on one side and *Christ Carrying the Cross* on the reverse (cat.

no. 50). Among three paintings by Dürer, two are important works: the *Salvator Mundi* (Saviour of the World) and the *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* (cat. nos. 23, 25). There are eleven paintings associated with Holbein and his workshop, of which four can be attributed to him directly. Eighteen panel paintings represent a diverse selection from the Cranach group, including three outstanding works by Lucas Cranach the Elder: the *Martyrdom of St. Barbara*, the *Judgment of Paris*, and *Judith with the Head of Holofernes* (cat. nos. 9, 11, 13). Other notable paintings in this collection are by Barthel Beham, Bernhard Strigel, Hans Süss von Kulmbach, and the Swabian master of the Burg Weiler altarpiece, as well as remarkable works by lesser-known painters. Ranging in size from grand altarpiece panels to palm-sized roundels, the majority are modestly scaled works suitable for domestic interiors. Thematically, in addition to religious paintings, they represent the courtly taste for mythological subjects and the expansion of portraiture to meet the personal and professional needs of early modern patrons. The latter clearly also appealed to American collectors, judging by the significant number of portraits among the seventy-two paintings in this collection.

The paintings are catalogued with high-quality reproductions, technical photographs, and related images such as preparation sketches and works by the painters' contemporaries. Erudite discussions presented by Ainsworth and Joshua P. Waterman, with contributions by Karen E. Thomas, Timothy Husband, and others, will interest art historians yet are accessible enough for non-specialists. The authors deftly review the scholarly debates, contextualizing each painting with lucid arguments and employing sensitive attention to detail as well as advances in technical photography to reinforce their interpretations and resolve questions about attribution, provenance, or artistic practices. For example, the infrared reflectograms that expose the completeness of Dürer's underdrawing beneath his *Salvator Mundi* (fig. 86) not only demonstrate the artist's working process but may also shed light on his intentions for this painting to be held in the studio as an enticing promotional image to attract prospective clients. The tonal painting that replaced underdrawing in later works allowed busy workshops such as Cranach's to meet the increased demand for their work. Beyond these revealing glimpses into the methods of late medieval and early modern painters, readers are treated to fresh observations that take into account the differing social and historical conditions that impacted them artistically, including religious tensions, humanist philosophies, and the sophisticated

tastes in the courts of the many politically diverse German-speaking lands. This magnificently illustrated and thoroughly researched publication holds an important place in art scholarship, adding to the knowledge and appreciation of a preeminent group of European paintings within an American collection that has too long been unrecognized.

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**Austen, Katherine.**

***Book M: A London Widow's Life Writings.* Ed. Pamela S. Hammons.**

The Other Voice in Early Modern Europe: The Toronto Series 26.

Toronto: Iter Inc. / Centre for Reformation and Renaissance Studies, 2013. Pp. xiii, 216. ISBN 978-0-7727-2150-1 (paperback) \$21.50.

This superlative and highly accessible edition of *Book M: A London Widow's Life Writings* will be a welcome addition to libraries and classrooms wherever early modern subjects are studied. Katherine Austen's eclectic manuscript has long interested researchers from many fields, particularly literary, gender, and religious studies. This seventeenth-century compilation, housed in the British Library, includes dozens of poems inspired by Austen's life and spiritual interests, as well as entries that reflect her readings, her family life, and her frequent frustrations at managing properties left her after her widowhood in 1658 until close to her death in 1683. The bulk of the manuscript was composed between 1664 and 1666 with revisions evident from as late as 1682. Pamela S. Hammons's edition makes it possible for many more readers to encounter and appreciate Austen's manuscript, sympathetically modernized and illustrated with eight images from the manuscript.

The text of *Book M* is particularly well-rendered. The modernization is sympathetic and well-explained in Hammons's "Note to the Text" as well as in unobtrusive yet highly informative notes to the main text itself. Hammons defines obscure words and identifies persons or events in these notes, as well as unpacking the intriguing revisions that would otherwise be invisible in a straightforward reading. For instance, the second poem's musings on the survival of Austen's son Robert and the death of another's boy due to smallpox