



Barnes, Bernardine. Michelangelo and the Viewer in His Time

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Volume 41, Number 2, Spring 2018

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1085970ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v41i2.29847>

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Publisher(s)

Iter Press

ISSN

0034-429X (print)

2293-7374 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Prodan, S. (2018). Review of [Barnes, Bernardine. Michelangelo and the Viewer in His Time]. *Renaissance and Reformation / Renaissance et Réforme*, 41(2), 149–151. <https://doi.org/10.33137/rr.v41i2.29847>

un apôtre de la misogynie, Luther se montre doux, prévenant avec son épouse et ne limite pas sa correspondance avec elle aux thèmes domestiques, mais lui rend l'écho des événements politico-religieux auxquels il est mêlé. Il fait d'elle sa légataire universelle et « ne voudrait pas l'échanger contre une reine » (76). Le chapitre suivant s'intéresse aux promotrices de la réformation, c'est-à-dire aux souveraines et aux filles de la noblesse, telles que la reine Marie de Hongrie ou la princesse Marguerite d'Angoulême, avec lesquelles Luther correspond à la fin des années 1530 et 1540. Avec elles, les développements théologiques sont limités et le plus souvent réservés à une pastorale du réconfort. Pour les femmes en situation de précarité, les nonnes défroquées et les veuves, auxquelles un chapitre est consacré, il est à noter que le réformateur se comporte de manière essentiellement passive, se limitant à transmettre des requêtes. Il donne sa caution aux suppliques en faveur des veuves, mais ses lettres ne proposent pas de réflexion globale sur la manière d'assurer la situation matérielle de ces femmes. Enfin, l'avant-dernier chapitre du volume accorde une place particulière aux figures féminines marginales, les possédées, les sorcières et les prostituées, et dévoile l'attitude complexe et différenciée de Luther face à elles. Flanqué d'un double index (des noms et des lieux), d'une bibliographie sélective et d'annexes précieuses sur les lettres de Luther, ce beau volume offre une approche fine et tout en nuances des relations de Luther avec les femmes de son temps et invite à s'intéresser davantage à la condition féminine au XVI^e siècle.

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Barnes, Bernardine.

Michelangelo and the Viewer in His Time.

London: Reaktion Books, 2017. Pp. 264 + 70 ill. ISBN 978-1-78023-740-4 (hardcover) US\$22.50.

With this illuminating monograph, Bernardine Barnes offers at once a full professional biography of Michelangelo Buonarroti, a survey and history of his works from commission through creation to reception, a study of the artist's understanding of vision and his use of perspective, and a profound sense of the viewer in his day. Michelangelo emerges from the pages of this rich volume as an

artist with palpably deep and wide-ranging concerns about the reception of his creative production, from installation and physical viewing through interpretation and afterlife. Barnes addresses them all in this comprehensive study.

Michelangelo and the Viewer in His Time is judiciously divided into eight chapters of varying length and structured according to either a period in the artist's life or a major patron: Michelangelo's beginnings from apprenticeship to first public acclaim with the *Pietà* (chapter 1); Florentine works from the *David* to the *Doni Tondo* (chapter 2); commissions for Pope Julius II (chapter 3) and for the Medici family (chapter 4); private works for individuals (chapter 5); projects for Pope Paul III (chapter 6); Roman architecture (chapter 7); and, late non-commissioned sculptures (chapter 8). Within each chapter, Barnes provides a systematic and thorough treatment of Michelangelo's creations and their respective fates, including a description of the painting, sculpture, drawing, or architectural work in question, and an analysis of the artist's approach, techniques, and other influences in crafting it given his understanding of the intended location and audience.

To situate Michelangelo's works in their original viewing contexts, the author draws from an impressively rich array of primary sources, such as Michelangelo's contracts and records, his direct and indirect correspondence, contemporary biographies of the artist by Ascanio Condivi (1553) and Giorgio Vasari (1568), and the display sites themselves. The result is a rather breathtaking panorama of viewership in Michelangelo's time that includes a description of the full spectrum of viewer types (individuals and groups; religious and lay; common and cultured; expert and non-professional; male and female; Christian and non-Christian) as well as viewing circumstances (public and private; domestic, civic, and ecclesiastical).

The author shines her brightest when taking readers on detailed tours of display locations. Barnes's nuanced site analyses consistently establish connections between artist, location, and observer that reveal how context conditioned both artistic approach and viewer response. In her descriptions of physical location and installation, Barnes evaluates both the space itself and its surrounding objects. In considering an object's appearance, she is consistently attentive to details of size and material, real and perceived dimension (height, width, and depth), and colour. The author's discussion of light—its presence or absence and expected behaviour, both natural (windows) and artificial (candles and torches)—is always insightful. Barnes is sure to address the matter of an

object's function (decoration, devotion) and its relation to cultural practices (ritual, liturgy).

From Barnes, readers learn not only how the artist selected and shaped materials to influence the visual impact of his creations, but also how Michelangelo's viewers brought different expectations to their engagement with his work depending on how they encountered it—at a distance or up close; with a cursory gaze or a long stare; from one or multiple angles; from a fixed or mobile position. Barnes takes care to explain the various intentions viewers likely brought to his works: to stimulate affect, intellect, or imagination; to simulate presence; to copy for learning or dissemination; to study the master's form and technique.

Barnes's presentation of Michelangelo and his works provides abundant and fascinating information about viewers of art in fourteenth- and fifteenth-century Italy, and the author's handling of the particular (Michelangelo) greatly enhances our understanding of the general (Renaissance art, artists, and their viewers). If one were to offer a criticism, it would be that the reverse is not necessarily true—that Michelangelo and his works are the exclusive focus of the volume. One wonders if this study might not have benefitted from a more explicitly comparative dimension, in some form, so that readers could appreciate how Michelangelo's viewers and the strategies and techniques he adopted to address them resembled or differed from those of contemporary artists. While the author's knowledge of such things evidently informed her approach to Michelangelo's works and their viewers, it would have been interesting for readers to understand how this was the case. In short, the occasional inclusion of primary sources related to other artists, works, and viewers in Michelangelo's time might have further enriched the text.

This final observation notwithstanding, it is a distinct pleasure—here as elsewhere—to see Michelangelo's works through Barnes's uniquely sensitive and well-trained eyes. *Michelangelo and the Viewer in His Time* is a scintillating and welcome addition to the field. Students and scholars of Michelangelo studies, Renaissance studies, and art history alike will find many a reason to treasure this book for a long time to come.

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