

desk that was just too small to hold everything as we scrambled for our notes – and see how we would handle the inevitable chaos (p 10).

These duties highlighted his success as a communicator, also ably demonstrated in his work on the two Roman building reconstruction projects at Butser and Wroxeter, and the work on the Pillar of Eliseg project as well as his teaching commitments at Chester.

I was also personally grateful for his challenge and generosity when I joined English Heritage (as it was then) in 1987. Dai was my appointed mentor and introduced me to the ways of the Inspectorate, and of the office – the formal duties of the former and the coffee-buying rota and other key issues for the latter. He introduced me to my in-tray, stacked high with files thoughtfully ordered in from registry as suitable for my early learning; after a couple of days he relented and explained that I did not need to read each file from cover to cover. I then spent the next 30 years, as pupil, colleague and friend, continuing to learn from Dai and enjoying almost every moment.

Although I was very fortunate to have Dai as a mentor and colleague, he also became a very good friend and was always excellent company in EH days, a welcoming host at Burlington House and a fine companion over many lunches and dinners over the following years. Unfortunately, we never got around to writing the books that we spent some long evenings planning together over dinner (and perhaps too much wine to clearly remember the plans the next day), but the best parts were the conversations and the good company itself rather than anything else.

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Early Colour Printing: German Renaissance woodcuts at the British Museum. By Elizabeth Savage. 260mm. Pp 240, many col pls. Paul Holberton Publishing, London, 2021. ISBN 9781911300755. £50 (hbk).

Elizabeth Savage's visually arresting book uses eighty-two works from the British Museum's collection to trace the history of colour print-making in early German-speaking lands. The exhibition-format style is a nod to its partial derivation, the display 'German Renaissance Colour Woodcuts' (British Museum, Room 90a, 2015–16). In the first paragraph of the

acknowledgements, the author describes the book as a 'collections guide', since it reproduces exhaustively every colour impression of every fifteenth- and sixteenth-century single-sheet print held at the British Museum. However, the book is also extensive subject overview: as repeated in the foreword, the British Museum has one of the finest collections of early German prints and is one of the few institutions in the world that can offer a survey of 150 years of the production of colour prints.

The introduction contains a brief history of colour printing up to the 1870s, which for Savage, as an author and co-editor of *Printing Colour 1400–1700: histories, techniques, functions and receptions* (Stijnman and Savage 2015), must have been a challenge to distil. It includes an explanation of 'Chiaroscuro', the relationship to colour woodcuts produced in Italy, what 'German' means in this context and specialist terms, 'matrix/matrices', 'impression,' 'interdependent' and 'designer'. There is an important proviso to give a sense of scope: what is presented is a fraction of what is known to have been made but has not survived.

The eighty-two entries are divided into nine chapters, rather than populating illustrative essays. Savage departs from an earlier style of treating artistic centres and artists who worked there for a combined chronological and thematic approach. Chapters 1–4 look at the impulses for and approach to printing in colour, with a focus on the two centres in Augsburg and Strasbourg and Emperor Maximilian's influence. Chapters 5–7 look at the 'range of applications of colour printing', continuing from the late 1510s for wider audiences and domestic applications; Chapters 8–9 address revivals in the second half of the sixteenth century, and later styles imitated for diverse audiences up to the first third of the nineteenth century. Each entry examines three perspectives, combining materiality and content: information on the colour-printing technique, historical significance and iconography.

The revelation of Elizabeth Savage's selection is to integrate the traditions of single-sheet prints and book publishing, which have traditionally been separated in scholarly treatment, that is, objects that have been overlooked because they are too far within the book-historians' field, and not as visually impressive as the dynamic single-sheet prints. The breadth of treatment is impressive: broadsides, liturgical calendars, ephemera and decorative art objects. There are telling phrases: 'this approach to colour printing is rarely recorded' (p 150); 'not been previously identified as a colour print' (p

164), and glancing at an entry's key reference notes often reveals a substantial gap since previous treatment in literature. This is not only a refreshing approach, but makes perfect sense: colour printing of single-sheet images must have emerged from book printing, and the makers involved would have continued to work across the disciplines. For the reviewer, Chapters 2–4 contain the most familiar images, including the renowned rivalry between Cranach and Burgkmair, court artists at Wittenberg and Augsburg, but Savage's treatment of them breaks with tradition in describing their 'invention' within a wider context. The well-known is combined and contextualised with the much less familiar.

The choice of Paul Holberton as publisher was astute for their characteristic exceptional image quality. Sumptuous raking light details face the start of each chapter, including photomicrographs or details under magnification. The reader can see clearly, for example, mica and quartz crystal in a 'tinsel' print (p 22), and orders of printing, with raised edges to printed colours (p 70). This stress on the visual is mirrored in Savage's close examination in the text: a description of frisket sheets (p 68), and how they were used (p 150); the optical effects of coarsely ground inks (p 168). Savage highlights the significance of a stunning coat of arms that served as a frontispiece (1520), printed from seven blocks in seven colours, constituting the most complex colour print for centuries (p 82), and makes us look again at the deceptively simple, in the mysteries of printing in a 1518 *Graduale* (p 138). It would have been nice to have had the 'bright first state' of Albrecht Altdorfer's only colour woodcut (NGA, Washington DC), but these things are findable online, and everywhere else in the book the reader is given bountiful visual aid.

In taking a cross-disciplinary overview, Savage helps shed light on how and why these printed objects came into being. Book printers were technically highly skilled, and it is from them that chiaroscuro printing developed. The well-known colour woodcuts did not materialise in isolation but were created in printing houses that were already producing multi-coloured printed images; these establishments were the driving force. Savage's book is an essential contribution to fields of book history and art history, and wonderful to use in tandem with Giulia Bartrum's excellent *German Renaissance Prints* (Bartrum 1995).

Bartrum, G 1995. *German Renaissance Prints*, British Museum Press, London

Stijnman, A and Savage, E (eds) 2015. *Printing Colour 1400–1700: histories, techniques, functions and receptions*, Brill, Leiden

ELENOR LING

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In Search of Mary Seacole: the making of a cultural icon. By Helen Rappaport. 240mm. Pp 405, figs and pls (some col). Simon and Schuster, London, 2022. ISBN 9781398504431. £20 (hbk).

Helen Rappaport has been researching Mary Seacole for over two decades. The length of the project – delayed publication due to rapid publications in the early noughties of speedily compiled, often inaccurate, accounts of Seacole – is to be warmly welcomed. The resulting work is a much more complete biographical account and evaluation of this complex and exceptional woman. Of her many books, this has been a special project for the author, sparked by her identification of Mary as the sitter in a portrait in oils that emerged in 2003, apparently hidden behind a Victorian print, following a car boot sale in Burford, west Oxfordshire. When asked for a view on who a bemedaled woman of colour in the portrait might be, and having some three years earlier taken an interest in Seacole for an *Encyclopedia of Women Social Reformers*, Rappaport knew immediately what she was looking at. Mary Seacole (1805–81) was already known for her work as an independent operator during the Crimean War in the 1850s. Now there was a portrait showing this remarkable person, proudly wearing three medals. Much was added to the material already in print on Seacole's life, including a full-length biography in 2005. This proved a stumbling block in Rappaport's project: no one would publish a second autobiography of Seacole at that time. Rappaport turned to other projects. However, the subsequent fifteen years or so enabled Helen Rappaport to compile what is a definitive account of the life of Mary Seacole for the present.

Tracing through archives the life records of a Jamaican woman born during slavery was no easy task. The laudable persistence of the author in researching and so refuting all kinds of inaccuracies has led to many discoveries – about her place of birth, her christening, her family and her service under fire in the Crimea among many other matters. Seacole's (born Grant) family, her siblings, her daughter Sarah 'Sally' and her