

eliminated the creative role of the artist from production process. While the artistic means of expression were already severely curtailed by ecclesiastical directives, now less than ever did originality, uniqueness or peculiarity characterize the glass paintings, which became more defined by terms like reproducibility and standardization. The stained glass thus became a popularization medium with a primarily piety-promoting function, which in its artistic values can be compared to other pictorial mass products of techniques such as oil-pressure and gypsum-casting.

Under these conditions, glass painting ought not only be evaluated from a purely artistic point of view. According to Henning Pahl, who wrote a contribution to the image as a medium of popularization in the service of religion, the aesthetic quality of the nineteenth century mass image recedes behind the functional image value.<sup>29</sup> Popular art does not work only by its aesthetic quality, but by the quantity of the comprehensible elements contained in it. This applies especially to the religious image. Qualitative and stylistic criteria play a role insofar as the used sign system must not exceed the viewer's repertoire of signs in order to be understood. Only a simple – and I would like to add recognizable – system of imagery can ensure the success of the communication.

If, however, the artistic individuality of the majority of stained-glass windows was increasingly restricted to craftsmanship, in order to design the pictorial compositions according to the numerous circulating templates, or to fit the picture into a given frame shape and provide it with a framing appropriate to the style of the building, then the question arises whether these works will be overrated in their artistic quality, if we handle them according to the same strict CVMA standards that apply to medieval stained glass. Perhaps the scientific value of a very detailed cataloging would be rather low and cannot easily be justified. In light of this, more appropriate criteria must be developed to manage this phenomenon of mass art.

<sup>29</sup> H. PAHL, "Der Holzschnitt redet die Sprache des Volkes" – Das Bild als Popularisierungsmedium im Dienste der Religion, in *Wissenspopularisierung. Konzepte der Wissensverbreitung im Wandel (Wissenskultur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel. Sonderforschungsbereich/Forschungskolleg 435 der Deutschen Forschungsgemeinschaft „Wissenskultur und gesellschaftlicher Wandel“, 4)*, ed. by C. Kretschmann, Berlin, 2003, pp. 257–279.

## SUMMARY

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'FROM THE PERIOD OF THE DEEPEST DECLINE OF GERMAN ECCLESIASTICAL ART' – SHOULD ARTISTIC QUALITY BECOME A CRITERION FOR AN INVENTORY OF STAINED GLASS?

Keywords: 19<sup>th</sup>-century stained glass, catholic restoration, art politics, industrialization, mass production

After the middle of the nineteenth century, the production of glass paintings took on enormous dimensions. The many newly founded workshops became increasingly subject to rational production methods. These products can be compared with the articles produced by countless picture factories which contributed to an enormous popularization of the religious image. On the market for ecclesiastical mass production, glass paintings were traded in the same way as plaster figures, oil prints and devotional pictures, as well as goldsmith's and carpenter's work. Ecclesiastical stained glass developed a standardized style and a simple, recognizable pictorial language. From an artistic point of view these catalogue products were fundamentally different from the workshops' considerable achievements at the beginning of the nineteenth century. The article traces the development from stained-glass artwork to the mass product and casts doubt on the sense of a stained-glass inventory in accordance with the standards of the *Corpus Vitrearum*. Rather, it is necessary to develop appropriate evaluation criteria that take into account the specific quality of these mass produced articles.