

From Paper to Glass: Prints and Stained Glass Roundels in the Sixteenth-Century Low Countries

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Abstract

Stained glass roundels, which flourished in Northern Europe in the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries, were closely linked to the graphic arts. Prints, as an abundant and easily accessible iconographic repertoire, naturally served as privileged models for glass painters, who tried to reproduce their composition on glass with the greatest fidelity. Woodcuts and engravings by Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostanen, Lucas van Leyden, and even more so those executed after Maarten van Heemskerck's drawings, thus enjoyed tremendous popularity. From a methodological point of view, prints often represent essential data that make possible, for instance, the relative dating of the glass medallions.

The transfer from one medium to another was not without certain technical constraints; the glass painters had to adapt the composition to the circular format of the roundels then produced, make use of their imagination to fill in the gaps, etc. The intermediality between print and painting on glass also raises the question of the status to be accorded to glass painters, between artists and craftsmen.

Key words

Stained glass roundel, sixteenth-century Netherlandish prints, creative process, intermediality

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