

## Stained Glass and the Discovery of the Baroque in the Late Nineteenth Century

### I.

Art historiography has long dealt with the problem of the late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century notion of the Baroque in art history. Numerous studies have been devoted to transformations in the understanding and assessment of the term 'Baroque.'<sup>1</sup> Scholars have analysed the works of the first art historians to engage the term – Heinrich Wölfflin, August Schmarsow and Alois Riegl<sup>2</sup> – and have paid attention to the distinct categories such as the 'painterly style' that have been used to capture the essence of the Baroque.<sup>3</sup> Others have emphasised the political connotations of the style in German language art history, from Jacob Burckhardt to Hans Sedlmayr.<sup>4</sup> More recently, Ute Engel has presented the study of the Baroque in German art historiography in her impressive, comprehensive treatment of the subject.<sup>5</sup>

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For the most part, these works have dealt with architecture and, to a lesser extent, sculpture and painting. None has paid attention to the problem of the relationship between those earlier studies of the Baroque and stained glass. This is in part due to the fact that neither contemporary theoretical treatments of the history of style nor art history text books have addressed seventeenth-century stained glass. Even now, stained glass has been discussed almost exclusively in publications and presentations dealing with medieval or contemporary art, either understood as a distinctively Gothic phenomenon or considered in the context of the nineteenth-century revival of interest in medieval art. Far less frequently has any mention been made of the often outstanding stained-glass artists of the Renaissance, and

the monumental seventeenth-century glazing schemes decorating the churches of Brussels, Antwerp, Paris and Cambridge are virtually absent from comprehensive art-historical treatments, remaining the subjects of rare specialist studies.<sup>6</sup> Slightly more attention has been devoted only to the so-called *Schweizerscheiben* and the Netherlandish roundels, which are considered early-modern phenomena.<sup>7</sup> Even in comprehensive studies dealing exclusively with the history of stained glass, very little space is devoted to the seventeenth century, which still tends to be included within the scope of Renaissance topics.<sup>8</sup>

At the end of the nineteenth and the beginning of the twentieth century, seventeenth-century figurative stained glass, intended mainly for churches, as well as the glaziers active in the following century, appear only in specialist literature. This scholarship has included studies of the history of this art, theoretical treatises on the subject, and handbooks or workshop practices (often supplemented with short historical outlines). All these publications approached the

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