

# Picturing soldiers in popular devotional art of the 19th century



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**Interview - Lecture - Debate**

**Hybrid Seminar sponsored by  
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**TBB T6 & Teams**

**Anmeldung via [patock@uni-mainz.de](mailto:patock@uni-mainz.de)**

Religious woodcuts and lithographs have been very popular in Europe at least up to the I. World War, in many cases, far beyond the II. World War. The research investigates French, Swiss, and German prints from the 19th century with a precise look into the representation of soldiers, based on the iconological method of Erwin Panofsky. The astonishing result is that, regardless of its different denominational, geographical and political contexts, the prints not only criticize war, but always their own soldiers, for whom they predict a catastrophic fate, if not even affirm, that the task of a soldier is incompatible with Christian life. By this, the results of this study of religious visual culture contribute an additional angle on movements like Pietism, generally more seen as mainly conform to its cultural setting, including its warfare. In a wider perspective the study proves the necessity to revisit material and visual culture, too often used as mere illustrations of established conclusions, and not sufficiently recognized as languages of their own, capable to supply new insights.

Helmut Renders, Ph.D, is Professor of the Graduate Department of Religion and Faculty of the School of Theology at the Methodist University of São Paulo, Brazil. In his research and teaching he focusses on the epistemology and language of religion, with special attention to its ethical, ritual, material, and visual aspects and expressions.



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