

11. The Life of Christ and the Virgin panels

Jane Hayward, Associate Curator at The Cloisters, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York (1967 – 1994), undertook the first thorough study of the Boppard windows in her “Stained-Glass Windows from the Carmelite Church at Boppard-am-Rhein; A Reconstruction of the Glazing Program of the North Nave”. In it, she places the Burrell Collection’s “Life of Christ and the Virgin” panels as part of a Tree of Jesse in the western window of the north wall.

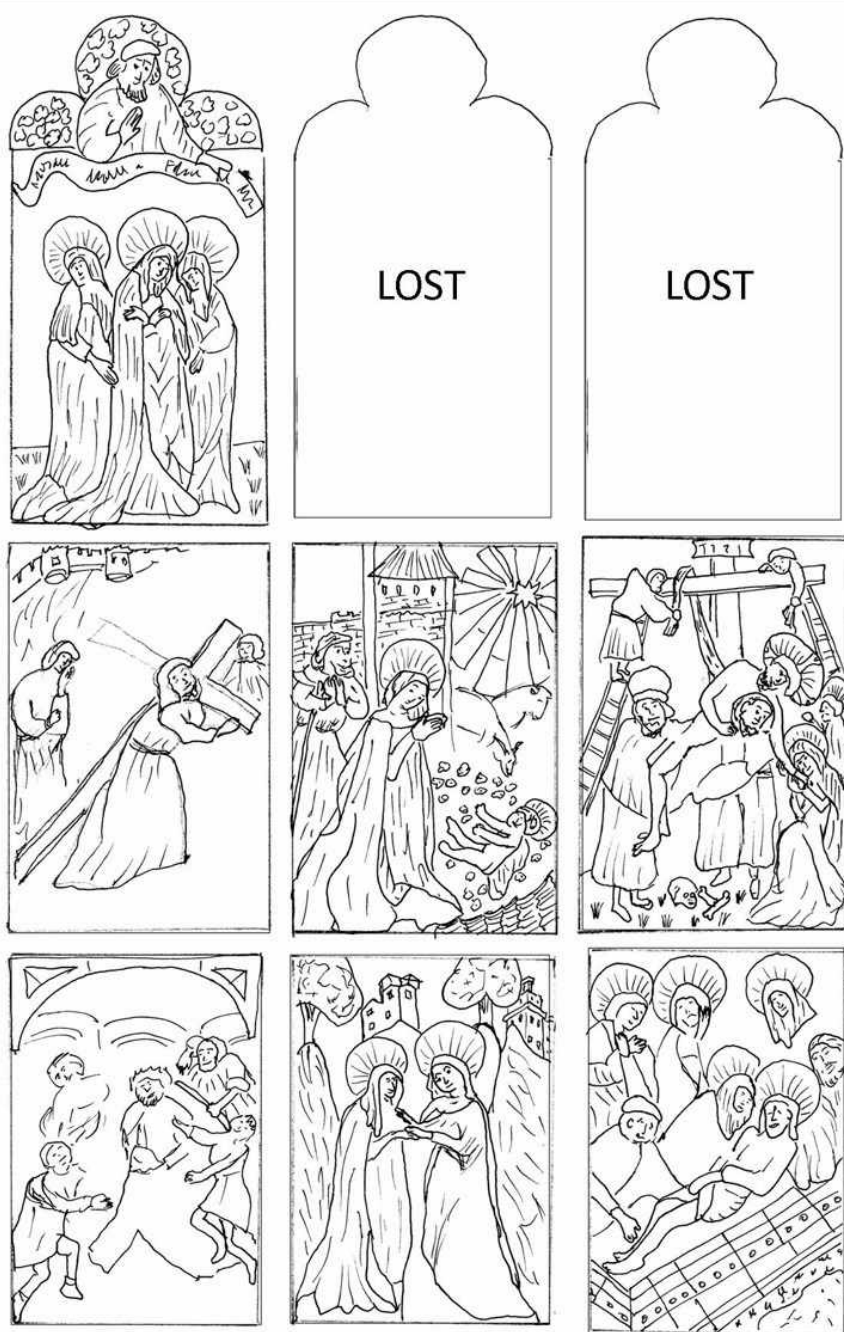
The most common form of the Tree of Jesse is a family tree for Jesus, originating with Jesse, the father of David, and showing the trunk of the tree growing from the torso of a recumbent Jesse, with branches leading to other members of the family. The gospel of Luke suggests up to 43 generations between Jesse and Jesus, so most Tree of Jesse representations contain a selected number of family members, typically including Solomon and David, with Jesus at the top and the Virgin Mary directly beneath him.

The Burrell Collection has a part of one of these Tree of Jesse representations, sadly with the figures of Jesse, Jesus, Mary and others now missing. This window was bought by Sir William Burrell from the Costessey Hall collection of Sir George Jerningham. Only the figure of King David playing a harp in the bottom left can be identified with certainty. This window came from a church in Rouen, France, and dates to the early 16 century.



TREE OF JESSE IN THE BURRELL COLLECTION

The Tree of Jesse at Boppard is very different. The Carmelites, or Order of the Brothers of Our Lady of Mount Carmel, are considered by the Church to be under the special protection of and therefore give special veneration to the Blessed Virgin. In addition, the Carmelites, just a few years before the creation of the windows at Boppard, had successfully defended the idea of the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin Mary at the Council of Basel. The Virgin Mary, therefore, has a very special place in their worship.



In the Tree of Jesse window at Boppard, the ancestors of Jesus placed on each branch are replaced with scenes from the lives of the Virgin Mary and Jesus. Jane Hayward suggested the following design of the window:

At the bottom row there are two missing panels with the Burrell Collection donor panel showing Siegfried von Gelnhausen and his wife. Above that is the figure of Jesse followed by the Burrell panels showing three scenes; Agony in the Garden (or The Mount of Olives), Birth of the Virgin and Christ Appearing to Peter. Above that, three more Burrell panels; Christ before Pilate, The Annunciation and The Resurrection.

The upper section consists of panels that either exists in other collections, or are now in an unknown location. The first row shows; The Crowning with Thorns, The Visitation (Metropolitan Museum, New York) and The Entombment. The next row shows; Carrying of the Cross, The Nativity and Descent from the Cross (all in the Metropolitan Museum, New York). The topmost panel shows; The Three Mourning Women (Institute of Art, Detroit) and two lost panels that Hayward suggests could have been Christ on the Cross and St John the Evangelist and St Nicodemus.



Here are links to Jane Hayward's full article and panels in the Metropolitan Museum and the Detroit Institute of Art:

Metropolitan Museum – Jane Hayward's article:

<http://www.metmuseum.org/pubs/journals/1/pdf/1512587.pdf.bannered.pdf>

Metropolitan Museum – Visitation:

<http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/works-of-art/13.64.3ab>

Detroit Institute of Art –Three Mourning Women (The Three Marys):

<http://www.dia.org/object-info/c7d0b768-9249-42cc-b461-cab856ab6e81.aspx?position=2>

LOWER SECTION OF THE BOPPARD WINDOW DRAWN FROM PHOTOGRAPHS BY JOHN RATTENBURY