

36. Depicting the Devil

Depictions of the devil were extremely popular across all forms of medieval art, and stained glass was no exception! The way in which the devil is depicted varies greatly, as there is a great variety of symbolism and characteristics associated with it. Such images were often used as a warning to churchgoers about the consequences of doing wrong. This was almost certainly the case in an interesting depiction of the devil, hovering over the heads of wrong doers, in the Eighth Commandment panel from Boppard. It has an imp-like face and goat-like hooves and seems to be encouraging the condemnations in the scene beneath him. The man in the bottom right points accusingly at the rich and prosperous man on the left. Two men behind him join in the denouncement with accusatory body language and expressions. The facial expressions are beautifully painted, with different hairstyles and clothing.



DETAIL FROM 8TH COMMANDMENT PANEL



GLASS ROUNDEL – SCENES FROM THE LIFE OF SAINT FRANCIS



Alongside the devil in the Boppard panel a number of other depictions in stained glass on display in the Burrell Collection are significant. These include two small Swiss roundels, both of a slightly later date than the Boppard glass. In the “Scenes from the Life of Saint Francis” roundel there is a complete depiction of hell, with the devil and several devilish assistants in a fiery underground scene. The roundel is only about 150mm across and has exquisitely detailed paint, stain and enamel work. It is dated 1671 and signed by the glazier Michael Muller IV of Zug, beside Lake Zug and about 25 miles south of Zurich. In this depiction the devil is shown with wings, horns and a tail against a fiery background.

