

40. Standing Figures from the West Window of the Nave of the Carmelite Church at Boppard-am-Rhein

Experts generally agree that the two Burrell Collection panels depicting St. Cunibert and a Bishop Saint were originally installed in the West window of the Nave of the Carmelite Church at Boppard, now often referred to as the Standing Figures Window. They formed part of a two tier, three light window, the rest of which is believed to have contained large images of Saints or Bishops.

The two panels in the Burrell Collection are important as they contain an inscription which states that the windows were begun in the year 1440 and completed in 1446. This suggests that this window was the last in the series in the Nave to be completed and installed.

Over the years there has been considerable debate over the original content of the window and positioning of panels. Researchers now agree that the two Burrell Collection Saints would have originally occupied the lower right-hand corner of the window, flanked by another saint on the left, now lost (see image below). Prof. Ruediger Becksmann (President of the Corpus Vitrearum Germany) proposed that the window may have once contained a depiction of the Assumption of the Virgin in the top centre with a figure of Saint Michael to the left and the Archangel Gabriel to the right, as shown on the next page. The Assumption of the Virgin and Archangel Gabriel are now lost, but the stained glass panels depicting St. Michael survive in the Fine Arts Museum in San Francisco.



SAINT CUNIBERT AND A BISHOP SAINT, NOW IN THE BURRELL COLLECTION



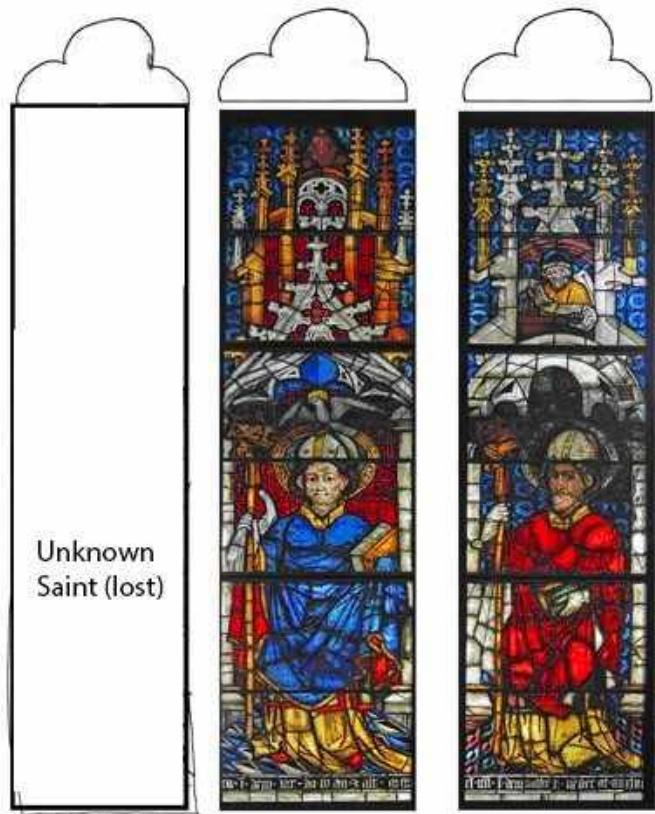
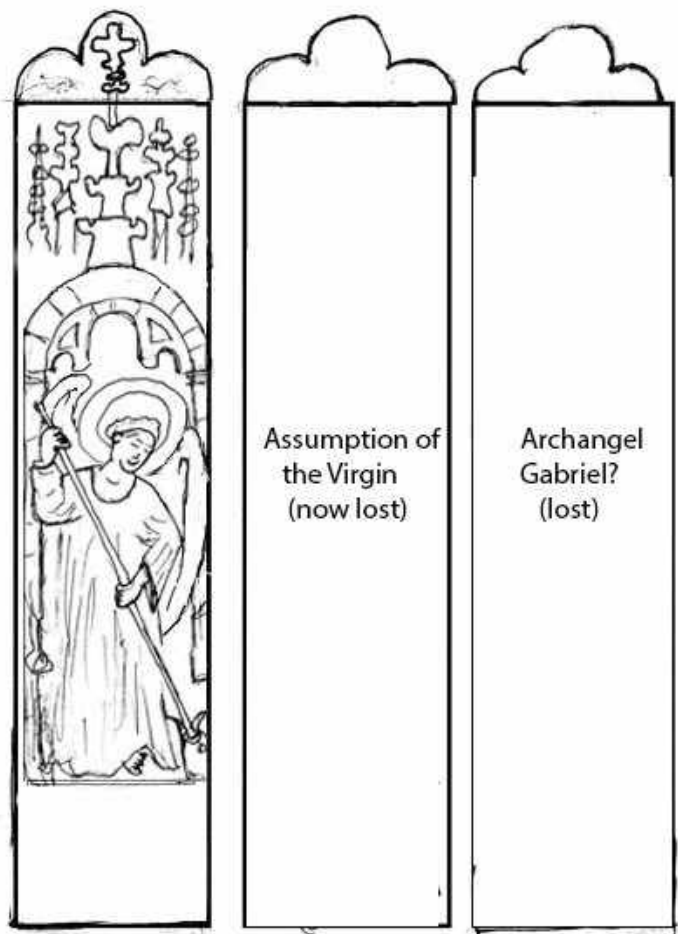
INSCRIPTION FROM THE TWO SAINTS PANELS IN THE BURRELL COLLECTION

Location of panels within the Standing Figures Window as proposed by Ruediger Becksmann (blank areas represent panels which have since been lost).



BURRELL COLLECTION'S ASSUMPTION OF THE VIRGIN FROM HAMPTON COURT, ENGLISH 14-00-1430

The Assumption of the Virgin was the bodily taking up of the Virgin Mary into Heaven at the end of her earthly life. In the Marian theology of the Carmelite church this would be a very important celebration. An example of the Assumption of the Virgin depicted in stained glass can be seen in the Burrell Collection's English panel below, from Hampton Court, made by John Thornton between 1400 and 1430 - very close to the date of the Boppard windows.



PYRMONT WINDOW AS PROPOSED BY RUEDIGER BECKSMANN



It is interesting to compare the way the face of the Virgin is painted on the Hampton Court panel compared to the Boppard panels. The first image shows a detail of the English glass, the next a detail from the Boppard Virgin and Child panel and the last from the Boppard Adoration of the Magi.

In the last detail, Mary wears a wimple, which was commonly worn in medieval times (12th to 14th centuries) to cover the hair, neck and often part of the bosom and frame the face. It became part of the habit of certain orders of nuns.



For more on the Boppard Standing Figures window, read:

Ruediger Becksmann "The Throne of Solomon Window from the Carmelite Church at Boppard and its Donation by Jakob von Sierck, Archbishop of Trier (1439-56) in 'The Four Modes of Seeing' (2009).