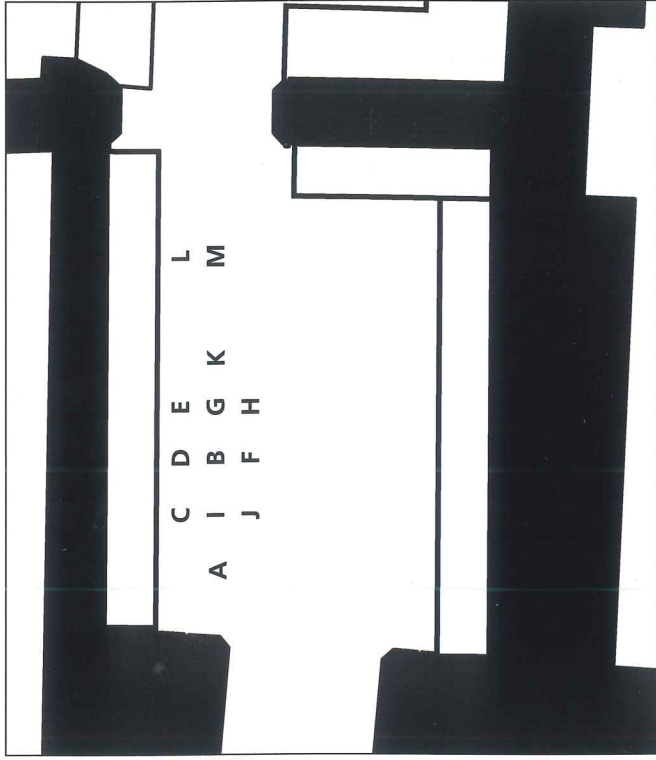




Room 17 English

Stained-glass windows in the kingdom of France (14th-15th centuries)

In the final part of the 13th century, glass painters in France began using white glass to achieve greater luminescence. However, from 1400, there was increased use of coloured glass as preferred in the Germanic countries. Coloured damasks served to outline human figures, even though, from the 1500's, motifs inspired by nature began to appear.

A small grisaille from Île-de-France

The white grisaille panel with roses, fleur-de-lys and a central grotesque mask (A. Cl. 11473) is thought to originate from the abbey of Saint-Denis, perhaps more specifically the Saint-Louis chapel, added to the north side of the nave around 1324. It reflects the new focus in painted glass, where a more delicate, transparent painting style is combined with highly sophisticated decoration. This is similar to the style of the manuscript painter Jean Pucelle, who worked for the Queen Jeanne d'Evreux in the same period. At the start of the 14th century, glass painters discovered the use of silver stain, a silver oxide powder that turned golden yellow when the glass was fired. This had the enormous advantage of allowing surface colouring of white glass, thus avoiding the addition of lead to each separate piece of coloured glass.

Stained-glass windows in Brittany during the first third of the 15th century

Various scenes from the Passion are depicted against a backdrop of coloured damasks: *Judas's kiss* (B. Cl. 9548), *Flagellation* (C. Cl. 9549), *Cabary* (D. Cl. 9551) and the *Resurrection* (E. Cl. 9552), as well as a *Charity of Saint Martin* (F. Cl. 9553) and a series of donor figures. These two panels adorned the central windows at the axis of the choir and of the seigniorial chapel of the small church in Betton, near Rennes, now destroyed. The donor's coat of arms (*azure sown with silver fleurs-de-lys*) in this window (G. Cl. 9545) identifies the family of Saint-Gilles whose most famous member was Jehan de Saint-Gilles (died 1435), chamberlain to Duke Jean V of Brittany. He is shown alongside his wife Jeanne de Tilly, in a gold robe with a red fleur-de-lys pattern, flanked by pairs of his ancestors (H. Cl. 9542, I. Cl. 9544, J. Cl. 9541). The deep colours of the robes and armoured tabards, heraldic borders and damask backgrounds contrast with the delicate grisaille and silver stain applied to the "white" glass of religious scenes and their architectural framings. The models used by the artist together with the lack of modelling of the figures and the weak spatial constructions suggest that these panels belong to an artistic universe which was somewhat outmoded for the period of 1425-1430.

Île-de-France and Normandy in the 15th century

From the second half of the 15th century, the use of colour made a definitive return in religious stained-glass, taking on subtle yet stunning nuances, while white glass was favoured for private interiors. The former townhouse of Cluny housed this beautifully crafted *Christ bearing the cross* (K. Cl. 22391). Clad in a violet gown, Christ carries the cross, flanked by his executioners and followed by a procession of witnesses. As in the *Great Passion* (fig. 1) (in the Bibliothèque nationale de France), engraved around 1500 after a model by the Master of the Hours of Anne of Brittany, probably John of Ypres, the composition is condensed and dynamic.

The glass painter's considerable virtuosity is demonstrated by the bold cut of the pieces, by the engraving work which, in respect of the red pourpoint, reveals the lower layer of white, by the varied use of silver stain and by the finesse with which material has been carefully scraped away to achieve the impression of light reflecting off the soldier's hair or leg guard. Similar technical perfection can be observed in the *Flagellator of Christ* (L. Cl. 14476), a panel taken from a window of the



fig. 1



K. Cl. 22391



A. Cl. 11473



D. Cl. 9551



F. Cl. 9553



G. Cl. 9545



L. Cl. 14476

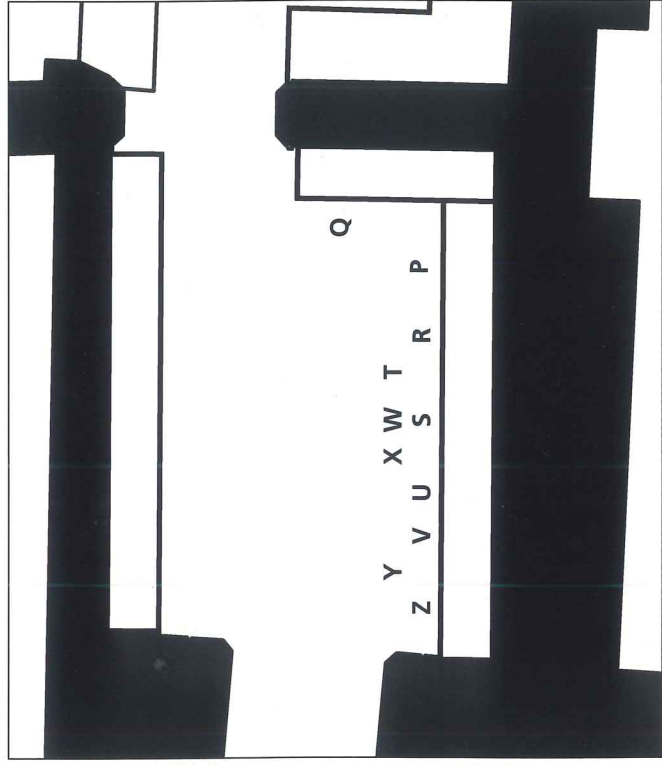


M. Cl. 1050

of the glass (as highlighted by the contours at the right angle of the arm), the same use of engraving in the studded belt, the same technique of removing paint to represent the whip or hair and finally the application of wash using a hard brush to highlight the relief. The small stained-glass window of *Four partridges* (M. Cl. 1050) is a fragment from a larger scene which has not survived. The technical expertise of using hog's hair brushes (termed "Jean Cousin" in French) is supplemented by that of "masterpiece" creations where small pieces of glass, in this case blue flowers, have been inlaid inside others. This is an illustration of an art form at the pinnacle of its development.

On the back of the wall, we can see two stained-glass windows from the parish church of Saint-Vivien in Rouen, a small

1337	1399-1442	1415	1453	1485	1500
Outbreak of hostilities of the Hundred Years' War	Jean V, Duke of Brittany	French defeat at Azincourt	French victory of Castillon, the English are chased out of France	Repairs to the Sainte-Chapelle ordered by Charles VIII	Construction of the Cluny abbots house. Decoration of its chapel



Engravings as models

The precise origin of the windows marked **Q** to **Y** on the wall (two *Annunciations*, saints in niches, heraldic stained-glass windows) is unknown but their style suggests some connection with the Rhine Valley. The figures in the first series stand out – with the exception of one Annunciation scene – against a background of coloured damask illustrated with feather plumes called *Federranken*. Both Annunciation panels date from the mid-15th century. One (**R**. Cl. 3282-3283 bis) derives from a model by Jan van Eyck, the other (**S**. Cl. 3271-3272) from the art of Rogier van der Weyden, two great Flemish painters whose compositions influenced the glass painters of the Upper Rhine through the work of painters such as Joost



O. Cl. 22760



fig. 2



Q. Cl. 13747

picture of the *Risen* (**N**. Cl. 23637), the only figure surviving from a last Judgement, circa 1470, and an *Adoration of the Three Kings* (**O**. Cl. 22760), circa 1400. The visit of the three kings to the infant Christ takes place against a broad panoramic background of hills which both echo Sienese art and reflect the work of manuscript painters in Paris of this date. In accordance with the art of the time and in a typically French treatment, the glass painter has incorporated certain picturesque details such as the small windmill or the oversized goblets. Transparency and brightness were favoured by a certain urban clientele. Also, in this piece, the grisaille and silver stain achieve a harmony of soft colours on large-scale fine glass.

Stained-glass window of Saint Christopher (**P**. Cl. 22759)

Beneath a recess hung with brocade, the monumental figure of Saint Christopher (circa 1430) creates an imposing presence with his feet in the river. He carries on his shoulders the infant Christ, symbol of the weight of the world. It was thought St Christopher could protect people from sudden death and thus, the saint enjoyed considerable popularity in the late Middle Ages.

The stained-glass windows of the Rhine Valley (14th and 15th centuries)

Stained-glass tapestries

Although Paris and Normandy launched the fashion for “white” glass in the early 14th century, the Holy Roman Empire as a whole continued to prefer coloured glass. In the Rhine Valley, grisaille windows incorporating plants in a rich carpet of greenery were displayed in high, narrow lancet windows (**Q**. Cl. 13747). The maple leaf motif set out in star shapes repeated against a green and red background forms comprises a superb “stained-glass” tapestry. In the lower part of the central lancet window, a small *Crucifixion* scene similar to that from Mutzig (in the Lower Rhine) allows the whole windows to be dated to circa 1330.

Unfortunately, in the scene, the small donor figure whose middle has been partially restored does not help solve the mystery of the panel's provenance. This means that we cannot state with any certainty whether these stained-glass windows were designed for the former Franciscan church in Colmar.



S. Cl. 3271-3272



X. Cl. 3280



Y. Cl. 1924



Z. Cl. 1925

3273), Saint Dorothy with her basket of roses (**V**. Cl. 3274), Saint Quirin in armour, holding a shield with nine bezants – or circles (**W**. Cl. 3278), and Saint Lambert, the bishop clad in a crenellated vestment (**X**. Cl. 3280). These three last figures were the subject of particular veneration in Alsace.

Paintings on glass

A monumental knight clad in armour is shown kneeling against a background of dense blue damasks (**Y**. Cl. 1924). His prayer is captured in a scroll: “Oh flowering rod of Aaron, make us yours”. In the Middle Ages, Aaron's rod, a dead stick which burst into flower, symbolised Mary's virginity. This donor figure was therefore originally positioned at the bottom of a window dedicated to the Virgin Mary. The shield with *green* and *silver horizontal stripes* and the crest in the form of a clothed female bust with golden hair belonged to Jakob or Jacques de Fleckenstein, an *écouète* (officer of justice) and resident of Hagenau, town of the Lower Rhine, commissioned a chantry chapel and a stained-glass window in Hagenau church between 1496 and 1514. The shield of the Mullenheim family (**Z**. Cl. 1925), *Gules, a rose argent seeded gold within a bordure of the last* is stamped with a man without arms who forms the crest. It could be that of Nicolas de Mullenheim, “stattmeister” of Strasbourg in 1441. From considerable technical expertise (with generously cut pieces, powerfully represented foliage contrasting with a grassy ground, and the face painted with a hard brush), this stained-glass windows has been attributed to the famous association in Strasbourg centred around the painter Peter Hemmel, who worked either side of the Rhine River. It also has similarities with a commission for windows from Burckard de Mullenheim for the Abbey of Walbourg, around 1460, at a time when stained-glass windows were evolving into fully-fledged paintings on glass.

Sophie Lagabriele, head curator

1441	1450	1452-1493	1464	1493-1519
Death of Jan van Eyck (born around 1390)	Creation of Gutenberg's workshop in Mayence	Reign of Frederick III, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire	Death of Rogier van der Weyden (born in 1399 or 1400)	Reign of Maximilian of Austria, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire

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