

Extract from "Ville de Paris" (Supplement to the "Bulletin municipal officiel de la Ville de Paris"). No.52 Tuesday 4th. July 1995.

SOUTHWELL

The history of the four ancient windows installed in the collegiate church of Southwell is better known. Closely related by their scale and manufacture to the three works already cited, they are the only ones of a series which an ancient tradition links with the Temple Church. (3) Each of four episodes from the New Testament occupies one lancet: *The Baptism of Christ*; *The Raising of Lazarus*; *The Entry into Jerusalem* and *The Mocking of Christ* (fig. 12-1.3 and 16-17). They are made up of five panels 85 cm. wide by 70 cm. high and showing traces of intervention - albeit very skillful - by the painter-glassmaker who has adapted them to their new destination. Like the *Bristol Kiss of Judas*, they have lost a few centimetres of width, the lower panels have been lengthened and, most importantly, the upper ones have been modified to adapt to the pointed bays of Southwell. In two of the windows, *The Raising of Lazarus* and *The Entry Into Jerusalem*, the dulling in the original upper part of the arch shows up very clearly. (4)

There can be no doubt in attributing these works to Jean Chastellain except in the case of the three windows of Bristol and Antwerp: the cartoon of *The Baptism of Christ* has twice been re-used in the workshop, at Saint-Etienne-du Mont, in the window of the *Sacred Name of Jesus* in 1541 and at Nemours, probably towards 1550, after the master's death. (fig. 9 & 10) *The Entry Into Jerusalem* and *The Mocking of Christ* draw their inspiration from the corresponding engravings in Dürer's *Petite Passion* (fig. 26 & 27) but, as in the case of the Bristol windows, the interpretation is fairly free, and one can guess that other models have been used in conjunction. Since the two scenes are not treated in Dürer's other Passions, and since it has proved impossible to identify any existing designs, it is in Chastellain's work that we must look for any trace. Indeed, the figures which differ most noticeably from the carved model are precisely the ones we find again in the corresponding scenes in the Triel windows: Zacchaeus in *The Entry into Jerusalem*, the attitude of Jesus and two of his tormentors in *The Mocking of Christ* (fig. 14 & 15). The difference of scale between the two scenes - at Triel it occupies only one aperture in the tympanum - forbids us to proceed further with this comparison, but, on the other hand, one can easily find similarities between the face of one of the figures in Southwell's *The Mocking of Christ* and that of the messenger in *The Judgement of Solomon* at Saint-Gervais (1531), whilst one of those present at *The Raising of Lazarus* already appeared in *The Meal of Simon* of Triel. As in the case of the Saint-Gervais window it is equally clear that recourse has been had to other engravings by Dürer where decorative elements are concerned: for instance. In *The Mocking of Christ*, the lustre and the medallion carved in the upper panel come from two woods from the series of the *Life of the Virgin*, *Joachim's Offering* and *The Annunciation*.

Thus, the examination of the Southwell windows confirms the observations made with reference to those of Bristol and Antwerp and leads us to date them all from the end of the fifteen-twenties, later than the Triel windows and a little earlier than *The Wisdom of Solomon*.

The tradition attributing these four scenes of the life of Christ to the Church of the Temple in Paris is based on a precise document, dated 1837 and preserved in the church archives; in reply to a letter from the Provost of Southwell, the archaeologist who had offered these windows to the church in 1818, Henry Gally Knight, states precisely the circumstances of their acquisition: he found them, so he says, in 1815, consigned to an obscure corner of the shop of a Parisian pawnbroker who declared to him that these windows came from the Temple Church. So, we are dealing with direct evidence, coming from a man who had no reason whatsoever to lie about the origins of his merchandise, if he knew it, at a time when the trade in ancient windows scarcely existed in France. However, one cannot exclude the possibility that the dealer, being unaware of the real origin, invented one in order to please an eventual purchaser. In this case, since he was not an officially certificated archaeologist, the confrontation between the ancient description of the Temple windows and the four windows bought by Gally Knight could be responsible for causing him to be confused.

Notes from the text submitted for translation

Note (3)

Jean Lafond recalls this tradition in the chapter which he devotes to the Renaissance in the "Vitrail français" Paris, 1958 p.253 while stressing that it raises "more than one difficulty". It will be seen later that a careful reading of the writings of Alexandre Lenoir enables us to pick out the main one, that is to say the date of purchase of these windows, before the dispersal of the collections of the Museum of French Monuments*. On the other hand, J. Booth "Riddle of a Church's Window" in *Country Life* dated 27th March 1953 pp. 896-898. concluded strongly in favour of the probability of this origin.

(*I have left the word 'monuments' untranslated since I know of no single word in English containing all the various meanings of the French – i.e. anything of national interest/importance, past or present.)

Note (4)

In *The Baptism of Christ*, the upper part has been more widely modified and *The Mocking of Christ* the restorer has skilfully added a strip of architecture in the lower section of the uppermost panel so as to preserve only ancient glass in the upper section.

(Notes 1 & 2 of the text for translation do not apply to this section on Southwell.)

Own notes

"painter-glassmaker" - could refer to painted, coloured, stained glass etc.

Petite Passion: ('Little Passion'). I have been unable to find the accepted English title for this particular work.

Triel. Although the text reads simply 'Triel', I suspect that the reference is to 'Triel-sur-Seine' which possesses a gothic church with windows dating back to the 16th century.

St. Gervais. I know of three 'St. Gervais' in France:-

- (a) Saint-Gervais-d'Auvergne in the Puy de Dôme.
- (b) Saint-Gervais-les-Bains in the Haute Savoie.
- (c) Saint-Gervais-les-trois-Clochers in Vienne.

I have not yet been able to identify which, if any, of these three is the one to which the French text refers. Any relevant information would be most welcome.

Joachim's Offering. Again, I have been unable to find the reference. Is it, perhaps possible that Joachim made some offering at the Temple as a thanksgiving for the birth of his daughter the Virgin Mary?

- any information on any of the above points would be gratefully received!

A.Y.