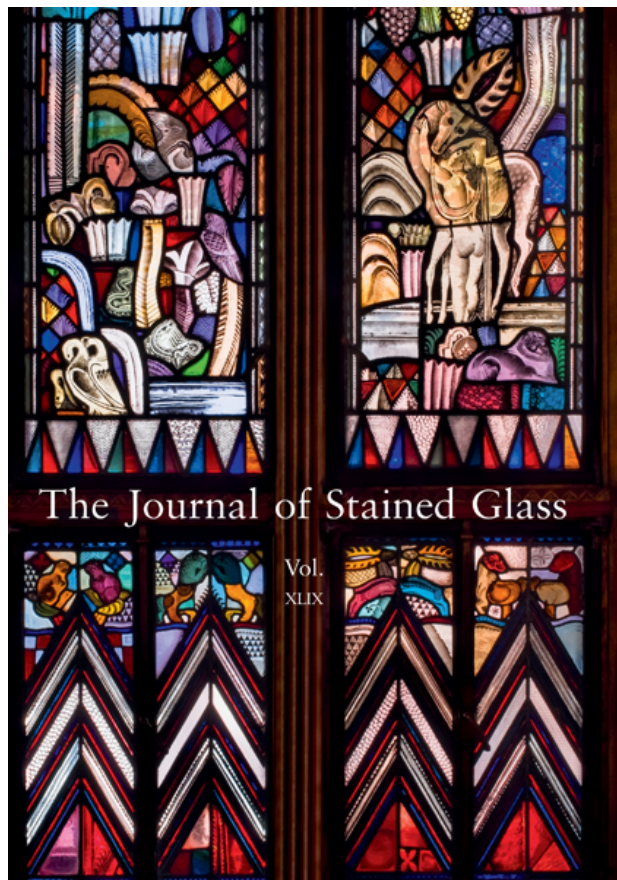


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288 pages, 280 illustrations, most in colour, many large-scale



account of the restoration of 1997-2007, from the foundation of the York Glaziers Trust through the installation of Environmental Protective Glazing to the rationale behind the reordering of the narrative cycle. The final chapter entitled 'The Creative Genius of John Thornton' examines the window's creation including its use of source material, the design and composition of the panels and the glaziers' working practices.

The catalogue allots each main-light panel a full page comprising a large post-conservation colour image accompanied by a few lines of description. Each of the four sections of panels is prefaced by a single-page introduction outlining the subject matter followed by a summary of the frame and canopy types used. The images of the tracery lights are on a smaller scale with four per page. There are three appendices. The first transcribes Torre's description of the window accompanied by the current position of each panel. The second discusses the Latin texts relating to St William and cites the source reference for each scene depicted. The third provides a concordance of panel numbers before and after the last restoration, which is useful for readers who have Tom French's 1999 CVMA catalogue of the St William Window.

The volume is well-illustrated with plenty of images of other Minster windows, manuscripts and drawings, and three diagrams showing the positions of the panels. These are colour-coded although no key to the colours is provided for two of them: Figs 6.18 and 6.20. Like its companion volume on the Great East Window, this work contains relatively few images of the glass prior to the last restoration scattered throughout the introduction. More of these would have allowed readers to appreciate better the huge task of returning the window to something resembling its original appearance. Nevertheless this book succeeds in its aim of celebrating two impressive achievements 600 years apart: the creation of the St William Window and its comprehensive restoration.

Penny Hebgin-Barnes

Beer, Manuela and Hagnau, Carola, *Light in Dark Times – Medieval Stained Glass from the Khanenko Museum in Kyiv*, published on the occasion of the exhibition at the Museum Schnütgen, Cologne, 2 April 2025–12 April 2026, extended to 11 October 2026.

Cologne: The Museum Schnütgen, 2025. Digital, 107 pp., numerous col. ills. ISBN- (German) 3-932800-13-3, (English) 3-932800-14-1, (Ukrainian) 3-932800-16-8, free (available from https://schnuetgen-digital.de/ukraine/Light-in-Dark-Times_EN/46-47/).

At first glance, *Light in Dark Times* presents a conventional exhibition catalogue – scholarly, structured and visually anchored in the delicate beauty of medieval stained glass. However, to approach the book merely as an 'album' of artworks is to miss its deeper resonance. This is not simply the most significant collection of stained glass in Ukraine, but a document of survival, displacement and cultural defiance, shaped by the ongoing war in

Ukraine. The publication emerges directly from conditions of warfare, prompted by the damage inflicted on Kyiv's Khanenko National Museum of Arts during the Russian invasion beginning in 2022. Although the book doesn't trace the emergency relocation of fragile stained glass works to Cologne (as the exhibition itself does extensively), this publication is a historic milestone for medieval stained glass.

The volume opens with the intertwined genesis of two collections, assembled in parallel by an art-loving couple Varvara and Bohdan Khanenko in Kyiv and Aleksander Schnütgen in Cologne during the second half of the nineteenth century. The similarities between these stories are striking as they unfold almost in tandem, reflecting shared intellectual currents and collecting impulses of the period. This parallelism continues in the organisation of the book itself, where the artefacts are presented in deliberate juxtaposition, bringing into dialogue the medieval stained glass holdings of two museums. The exhibition strategy deepens the comparative dimension of the project and emphasises the historical interconnectedness of European collecting traditions.

This curatorial approach creates a cross-cultural and historical conversation. The pairing is far from arbitrary as both collections originated as 'living museums', assembled in the spirit of the *fin de siècle*, when collectors sought to revive and recontextualise medieval art within modern life. Both collections were bequeathed by their collectors to their nations: to the city of Cologne by Schnütgen; and to the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences by the Khanenkos. Their convergence underscores shared European collecting practices and reveals how these once-fashionable visions continue to shape museum narratives today. However, the book title does not fully reflect the scope of the project, as it makes no explicit reference to the inclusion of the stained glass collection from the Schnütgen Museum. This omission slightly obscures the fundamentally dialectic nature of the catalogue.

What elevates this volume to the level of a historic milestone is the unprecedented scope of the Khanenko's collecting – and that this is the first time the Khanenko Museum's stained glass has been published in its entirety. Comprising just twelve stained glass panels originating from Austria, France, Germany and the Netherlands, the jewel-like collection dates from the thirteenth to the sixteenth centuries. With remarkable care, Dr Elena Kosina, a scholar from the German Academy of Sciences and Literature in Mainz, draws on sources in five languages to reveal every artefact's history. Two composite busts of the *Prophet Ezekiel* and the *Apostle Paul* (first quarter of the thirteenth century) from Soissons Cathedral of Saint Gervais and Saint Protais, France, feature bold medieval iconography with magnetic, deep-set gazing eyes. Although the inserted/alien sections may appear somewhat chaotic, the overall composition, with its distinctive brushwork and flaming streaky ruby glass, creates a powerful effect that is brilliantly captured in the catalogue. Two panels from the Maria Straßengel pilgrimage church in Styria, Austria: *Christ on the Mount of Olives* and *Christ Appearing to Mary Magdalene (Noli me tangere)* (1350-1355), are extraordinary iconographical examples with lively emotions and striking colour schemes, rightfully belonging to the finest examples of medieval stained glass cycles in Austria. Underscoring the high standards of the Khanenkos' collecting practice,

another pair from the same series, the *Presentation of Mary in the Temple* and the *Annunciation to St Anne*, can be found in the Victoria and Albert Museum in London.

Equally significant is that these works have now been exhibited in full for the first time, something that did not occur either during the Soviet period or in the decades of independent Ukraine. This dual 'first' – complete publication and complete exhibition – marks a rare and profound moment in the life of this Kyiv collection, long consigned in part to storage. The volume not only functions as documentation, but as a corrective to historical omission.

Visually, the book excels. High-quality reproductions capture the luminosity and intricate detail of the glass, allowing readers to appreciate both craftsmanship and iconographic nuance. Yet even these images carry a sense of poignancy; they preserve works that, under slightly different circumstances, might have been lost. The aesthetic experience is inseparable from an awareness of contingency.

Importantly, *Light in Dark Times* also embraces accessibility. The publication is available online, free of charge, in English, German and Ukrainian, ensuring that this once-hidden collection can reach a truly global audience. This open-access approach reinforces the book's broader mission – not only to preserve cultural heritage, but to share it widely – even amid disruption. It will undoubtedly become an invaluable resource for medievalists and other scholars, offering new insights into stained glass, collecting practices and the movement of artworks across borders. In a particularly moving extension of this ethos, hard copies in Ukrainian (although presented in an abridged version) are distributed free of charge in the museum. This gesture transforms the book into more than a scholarly resource – it becomes an act of cultural and educational support for displaced communities, ensuring access to heritage even under conditions of loss and upheaval.

Ultimately, *Light in Dark Times* succeeds as both a valuable history of art resource and a cultural statement. It captures a once-inaccessible collection at a decisive historical moment and situates it within a broader European context, affirming the urgency of preservation. More importantly, it reframes the role of art in times of war, not as escape, but as continuity. In that sense, the book does what stained glass has always done – it captures light, holds it and allows it to speak across centuries, even in the darkest of times.

Oksana Kondratyeva