

THE NATIONAL COLLEGE OF ART AND DESIGN

THE MADONNA WITH CHANCELLOR ROLIN AND THE ART OF JAN VAN EYCK  
The Role of the Formal Structure

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## FOREWORD

A brief note on the structure of this paper is necessary.

Any study of a single painting must to some extent take account of the artist's work as a whole and his place within a tradition. For this reason I have broken the following discussion into two parts. In Part I, I discuss the significance of Van Eyck's symmetry, which is evident in almost all of the surviving works of his maturity, with reference to contemporary Franco-Flemish art, but also to the wider historical context. Part one then functions as an introductory chapter, but because it does not specifically introduce the subsequent discussion, I have placed it within a separate section.

Part II begins with a short introduction to the Madonna of Chancellor Rolin, giving some basic information concerning the donor, the commission and the proposed content of the chapters to follow.



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## PART I

### THE SYMMETRIC ARRANGEMENT:

#### Its Traditional Use and Significance

In the early fifteenth century the art of Jan van Eyck was one of the most developed in its naturalism but also one of the most emphatically formal. Symmetry is fundamental; it is used in all but one<sup>1</sup> of the surviving figure compositions of his maturity, after and including the Ghent Altarpiece<sup>2</sup>.

Notably all of these are religious paintings. Symmetry is used as a suitable device by which to express the monotheism of Christianity. It posits a single centralised order in which all things have a place. This is most conspicuously the case in those works which depict a divine figure or figures in majesty, enthroned or standing before a cloth of honour. For in depicting the divine figure in majesty, Van Eyck is expressing the ultimate order as conceived by Christianity, whereby the universe is the creation and dominion of God.



From the fourth century Christian image makers expressed the supreme and universal power of God by the symbolic placement of his person in majesty at the centre of a symmetric arrangement<sup>3</sup>. This motif, Andre Grabar tells us, was borrowed from Roman Imperial models for figurations of power<sup>4</sup> (fig.5 4-7)<sup>5</sup>. In both the imperial and Christian versions the symmetry is emphatic and those figures assembled either side of the central figure are firmly integrated within the structure, often by means of an architectural device. At first the assembly presided over by Christ was either an assembly of apostles or simply St. Paul and St. Peter to whom Christ confided the scroll of law. Thus Christ was characterised as earthly and heavenly sovereign, and thus universal sovereign. This was often referred to by his enthronement above the sphere of the world, a motif which itself was borrowed from imperial models.

When van Eyck chose to depict Christ in majesty, he did so in a format that was still remarkably close to those early models. The three finished donor panels - the Madonna with Chancellor Rolin(Fig.1), the Madonna with Canon van der Paele (Fig.8), and the Dresden Madonna (Fig.9), along with The Ghent Altarpiece (Fig.2) and the Lucca Madonna (Fig.10) exemplify this. We still see the emphatic



central placement<sup>6</sup>, the tight integration of figures within a symmetric structure and the use of architecture to establish that structure.

There has, however, been some obvious developments in the iconography. Most noticeably, with the exception of The Ghent Altarpiece (Fig.2), the majesty of Christ is now expressed by the enthronment of the Christ child on the Virgin's lap who herself is enthroned. This image first appeared in the sixth century, side by side with the image of Christ alone in majesty, and on an equal footing<sup>7</sup>. From the thirteenth century it largely superseded the earlier image in Italian antependia, altarpieces and retables<sup>8</sup> (fig.12-14)<sup>9</sup>, becoming widely disseminated throughout Europe during the time of "International style". Van Eyck, reflecting tradition and personal preference, employed this motif to express the sovereignty of God on earth through the church as symbolised by the Virgin Mary<sup>10</sup>.

Grabar further points out two aspects of the iconography of the early imperial and christian images of power which are concomitant with the symmetric organisation of space and with it amplify the theme; both have echoes in the art of Van Eyck. Firstly the relationship between the majestic figure and the assembly is symbolically expressed



through the ceremony of the court<sup>11</sup>. Secondly the figures are rendered immobile in order to express the Divine presence but also to emphasize the relationship to the sovereign as ultimately rather than incidentally defined<sup>12</sup>.

In depicting the donor in the presence of the Divine Child and his mother, Van Eyck combines the ceremony of the court with the forms and rituals of the church. This is most noticeable in the presentation of the enthronement in an ecclesiastical setting. For example in the Madonna with Canon van der Paele (fig.8), the Madonna and child are enthroned in the manner of the Court and receive the Canon through the sponsorial offices of St. George and St. Donatian, patrons saints of the Canon and his church respectively. The scene is set in a Romanesque Basilica. St. George, like St. Michael in the Dresden Triptych (fig. 9), is dressed as a mediaeval knight in full armour. He introduces the Canon with a gesture of his left hand. With his right he doffs his helmet in greeting to the enthroned couple.

The Canon and St. Donatian do not appear in the garb of the Court, but in the costume of the church, the Canon in his vestments and the saint as a bishop dressed in a richly jewelled conical hat and brocaded and jewelled



mantle. The Canon kneels at prayer, his fingers keeping place in his open prayer book. The ritual act of kneeling at prayer is itself related to the courtly gesture of homage given to the sovereign by the subject.

The static disposition of figures in van Eyck contrasts noticeably with the movement of figures in the art of his contemporaries, particularly the rhythmic movement of Rogier van der Weyden. "The principal characters", says Panofsky, "are nearly motionless communicating with each other by virtue of spiritual consubstantiality"<sup>13</sup>.

A similar static treatment of figure is discernable in much Western religious art, up to the late fourteenth century, particularly in representations of the Deity in Majesty. We see it in the work of Giotto (Fig. 12), but especially in the art of Trecento Siena (Figs <sup>12</sup> 13 and <sup>13</sup> 14). Grabar identifies this treatment in the early christian images and their imperial models. His interpretation is relevant to its original as well as subsequent use and strikes a chord when we consider the art of van Eyck. He points out that the immobility of the figures was not due to a lack of artistic skill, nor to an oriental influence, but to a conscious intention to make the divine presence felt<sup>14</sup>. He continues "For in the fourth century according to the testimony of Ammianus Marcellinius,



rigidity, fixity and stone like inflexibility of mien were indispensable for representations of the Emperor, who thus expressed the superhuman impassibility of man filled with divine grace. The symbolic rigidity of the sovereign was echoed in the immobility of the guards and dignitaries and the calculated cadence of movements during the orchestrated ceremonies and it is this that was imitated by the image makers"<sup>15</sup>.

Similarly the figures are immobile in Van Eyck because their relationship is conceived symbolically. The position of the donor in the pictorial space has to represent not the chance relation of a body within an interior, but the precise, clearly defined and therefore static relation of the mortal donor to God.

One of the most direct sources on which van Eyck drew was the miniatures of the "Boucicault Master"<sup>16</sup>. Book illumination was the major pictorial art in Northern Europe throughout the fourteenth and up to the early fifteenth century. In fact Jan van Eyck himself most probably started his career as a miniaturist<sup>17</sup>. It is therefore not surprising that we find links between his art and indeed Franco-Flemish art in general and the miniature tradition.



Panofsky has shown how van Eyck not only used Boucicault motifs, but even adapted whole compositions<sup>18</sup>. The Rolin Madonna is here a case in point and this source will be discussed in the part two.

We see in Boucicault an interest in the motif of the symmetrically enthroned Madonna and child. We see also the employment of the court ceremonial with this motif in his Adoration of the Magi<sup>19</sup> (fig.14). This is emphasised by comparison with his Coronation of Hannibal<sup>20</sup> (Fig.15), which depicts an earthly monarch in majesty. In both we see a central figure or figures on a throne over which hangs a cloth of honour. In both also, the courtly form of homage is expressed in the kneeling figures and the whole is arranged in a conspicuous symmetry.

We can feel the influences of these ideas in van Eyck's art, but they are realised in a more rigidly formal manner in the latter artist. Though conspicuous, the symmetry of the Boucicault Master is casual compared to the extremely precise and thorough treatment of symmetry in van Eyck. Also Van Eyck's figures are defined more clearly and are static. They are thus more tightly contained within the symmetry and form, with it an integral whole. In consequence of these formal attentions, the formal relationship between the figures in Van Eyck is ceremoniously orchestrated, and thus the design itself is more emphatically cosmic in character.



Van Eyck's consistent use of a dominant all pervading symmetry distinguishes him from his great contemporaries, the "Master of Flemalle"<sup>21</sup> and Rogier van der Weyden. Though they did use symmetry, it was not used as a general principle throughout their work and never with the same rigid formalism. It is curious then that Van Eyck's art is also more naturalistic. When Rogier van der Weyden and the Master of FLEMalle make reference to the material world, it seems summary and stylized compared to Van Eyck's which seems to be taken "straight from Nature"<sup>22</sup>. He makes a direct appeal to our optical experience of the world by conceiving everything, even the most minute detail, as it would be seen in terms of light (diffracted, reflected and diffused) and as it would appear within a three-dimensional space. However, the realism of the rendition belies the thoroughly imaginary nature of his images. "It is only in exceptional cases that we can identify one of his architectural details with an actual monument and even then his rendering is a free translation rather than a literal record, and never can a whole scenery or setting be shown to portray a particular place"<sup>23</sup>. Though Van Eyck refers directly to Nature, he reorganizes the references to conceptual ends. He wished not simply to show the world as it is with regard to our optical experience, but more importantly to show how it functions within the universal order.



to this end the symmetric organisation of his images is essential. It represents the universal order in which all things have a place and it traditionally represented this. What is significant in the combination of archaic structure and modern, even revolutionnary techniques<sup>24</sup> is that the latter served to enrich and articulate the former. Mediaeval Christianity was given a modern and vital but nonetheless faithful expression.

4. Ibid., Fig. 103-114.
5. Fig. 5. The Emperor Theodosius, enthroned in Majesty.
6. Fig. 6. Christ as Universal Sovereign.
7. Fig. 7. Christ enthroned as Universal Sovereign.
8. Fig. 8. The Emperor Theodosius as Universal Sovereign.
9. The placement of the Divine figures to the right of the central figure, which is the centre, will be discussed later in the text.
10. See G. Schiller, *Iconography of Christian Art*, London, 1972, Vol. 1, p. 38.
11. Ibid., p. 30.
12. Fig. 10. Christ, Enthroned, Florence, 1418.
13. Fig. 11. Christ, Enthroned, with Virgin and Child, 1418.
14. Fig. 12. Christ, Enthroned, with Virgin and Child, 1418.
15. The notes of the author are to be found in the appendix of the book. See C.J. Partis, *The Nation Paintings of Jan van Eyck*, p. 11; for Mary 22



# FOOTNOTES

1. The exception is a debatable St. Jerome in the Detroit Institute of Arts. It seems likely that it was begun but not completed before Van Eyck's death on the ninth of July, 1441. Its completion is generally attributed to Petrus Christus.
2. Although both Hubert and Jan van Eyck were involved in the production of the Ghent Altarpiece, it remains an important work in the development of the surviving brother and will be treated as such in this paper.
3. Andre Grabar, Christian Iconography, a study of its origins, London, 1980. pp. 42-44.
4. Ibid., Figs 103-116.
5. Fig. 5, The Emperor Theodosius, enthroned in Majesty.  
Fig. 6, Christ as Universal Sovereign.  
Fig. 7, Christ enthroned as Universal Sovereign.  
Fig. 8, Two Emperors enthroned as Universal Sovereigns.
6. The placement of the Divine figures to the right in the Rolin Madonna, and not in the centre, will be discussed later in the text.
7. See Gertrude Schiller, Iconography of Christian Art, London, 1972, Vol I, p.28.
8. Ibid., p. 30.
9. Fig 10, Giotto, Ognissanti Madonna, Florence, Uffizi.  
Fig. 11, Duccio, Maesta: Virgin enthroned with Saints and Apostles, Sienna, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo.  
Fig. 12, Pietro Lorenzetti, Carmelite Altarpiece, Siena, Pinacoteca Nazionale.
10. The motif of the enthroned Madonna is a complex of meanings. See C.J. Purtle, The Marian Paintings of Jan van Eyck, p.3 ff; For Mary as



symbol of the Church and other aspects of her symbolism in the Middle Ages, with particular reference to its employment in the art of Van Eyck. See also Schiller, op. cit., Vol I, pp. 23-24, for discussion on the enthronment of the Madonna and Child as symbol of the seat of Wisdom (sedes sapientiae, throne of Solomon), and the mystical marriage of Christ and Mary.

11. Grabar, op. cit., pp. 42,43.
12. Ibid., p. 43.
13. Erwin Panofsky, Early Netherlandish Painting, New York, 1971, p.182.
14. Grabar, op. cit., p. 43
15. Ibid.
16. The Master of the Hours of the Marechal de Boucicault, this book of Hours is dated ca. 1400-1411 by Panofsky, op. cit., p.55.
17. There are several Eyckian miniatures in the Turin-Milan hours (some of which were destroyed by fire), which is divided between the Biblioteca Nazionale, Turin, and the Museo Civico, Turin. Friedlander (Altniederlandische Malerei, Berlin und Leiden 1924-37, Vol.I,p.68) proposed Jan van Eyck as the author of the hand G miniatures and was followed by Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 232-246 and others. This attribution has been questioned, some scholars give them to Hubert, others to an independant master. See G. Faggin, The Complete Paintings of the Van Eycks, N.Y., 1968, pp. 85-86.
18. Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 61, 183, 184, 192, 204, 224.
19. For Panofsky, op. cit., p. 61, the combination of regal enthronment and non regal environment in this miniature was revived by Van Eyck in the Lucca Madonna and the Ince Hall Madonna; the latter painting is no longer considered an original, see Purtle, op. cit., p. 98, note 1.
20. Panofsky saw the Van Eycks' Dresden Madonna as expanding the idea in this miniature of a deep carpeted tripartite throne room.



21. The Master of Flemalle is most probably identical with Robert Campin, painter of Tournai. See Panofsky op. cit., pp. 154-158 for the argument on which this hypothesis is based, and page 154, notes 4 and 5 for details of further publications which have dealt with the question. The title "the Master of Flemalle", however, will be retained throughout this paper.
22. L. Baldass, Jan van Eyck London, 1952, p.47
23. Panofsky, op. cit, p. 137.
24. For discussions on Van Eyck's "new oil technique", see Max Doener, The Materials of the Artist, p. 327 ff.; R.D. Turnbull and V.Vytacil, Egg Tempera Painting, pp. 61-66; citing J. Maroger, papers read to the French academy of Sciences on the 26th October 1931 and the 9th October 1933. See also G. Maroger, The Secret Formulas and Techniques of the Old Masters.



## PART II

### THE MADONNA WITH CHANCELLOR ROLIN

#### Introduction

The oldest surviving record of the Madonna with Chancellor Rolin is that left to us by a visitor to the Collegiate church of Notre Dame du Chastel, at Autun, in 1705<sup>1</sup>. From his description of the painting, we learn that the painting hung in the sacristy of that church, is painted by Jan of Bruges and that the Chancellor Rolin is the donor depicted at prayer. Jan of Bruges is of course Jan van Eyck. The identification of the donor is supported by another portrait of Rolin (Fig. 16), on the exterior of Roger van der Weyden's Last Judgement at the Beaune hospital.

The church of Notre Dame du Chastel at Autun was, along with the hospital at Beaune, lavishly patronized by the Chancellor throughout his life<sup>2</sup>. In the case of the



church his patronage was "inherited". His maternal ancestors had endowed it with a small chapel dedicated to St. Sebastian and St. Andrew, his father was buried in the choir and he himself was baptised there<sup>3</sup>. The sacristy where the visitor of 1705 saw the painting was previously the Rolin family chapel<sup>4</sup>. It seems likely that the painting was commissioned as a dedication panel<sup>5</sup> for the chapel which was refurbished by the chancellor between 1430 and 1436<sup>6</sup>. The painting is generally dated around the mid 1430's<sup>7</sup>.

The purpose of the painting would have been to celebrate the chancellor's worship within the chapel<sup>8</sup>. The theme then was one of ultimate significance: the chancellor's relationship with God and concern for his eternal soul. Van Eyck's treatment of the chancellor's worship as an act of ultimate and universal significance will be explored in the following discussion, with special emphasis on the role of the pictorial order in its exposition.

Each of the following chapters focusses on the role of one of the three principal elements of the composition: the architecture, the figures, and the landscape visible through the arches.

The architecture, in containing the figures and framing



the landscape, gives an all pervading symmetric stability to the image. This stability is vitalised by the tension between movement across the picture plane, inaugurated by the placement of the figures left and right, and movement into deep space which results from the juxtaposition of the landscape in the centre between the two figures. Our interest in the relationship of the two figures oscillates with our interest in the comings and goings in the distance, while all the time we perceive everything as belonging to an ultimate order.

The following chapter discusses how specifically the symmetric order is characterised as the universal and divine order through the symbolism of the architecture. Chapter two discusses how the symmetric counterbalancing of the figure of the Chancellor Rolin on the left and the Divine Couple on the right becomes the basis for the comprehensive differentiation of the left side as the earthly side and the right side as the heavenly. The chancellor's prayer, which will be identified, will be discussed as the medium for communication between Man and God. Chapter three then considers the symbolism of the landscape, concentrating on the importance of its central juxtaposition with the interior and Van Eyck's attitude to nature.



# FOOTNOTES

- 1 E. Dhanens, Van Eyck, New York, (undated), p.266; quoting A. de Charmasse, Memoires de la société Eduenne, 1906, p.193 ff.
- 2 See A.H. Van Buren, "The Canonical Office in Renaissance Paintings, part II: More about the Rolin Madonna", Art Bulletin, LX, 1978, p.632; and from p.630 for a full discussion of Rolin's involvement with the church of Notre Dame du Chastel, Autun.
- 3 Van Buren, op. cit., p.630.
- 4 See Dhanens, op. cit., p.268; and Van Buren, op. cit., p.631.
- 5 See Purtle, op. cit., p.61, note 10.
- 6 Ibid., p. 61, note 6 and Van Buren, op. cit., p. 631.
- 7 See Ibid., p.61, note; and Van Buren, op. cit., pp.55 ff; Panofsky, op. cit. pp. 192 ff.
- 8 See Purtle, op. cit., p.62



## Chapter 1

### THE ETERNAL EDIFICE:

#### The Symbolism of the Architecture

We have already seen how the emphatic symmetry in Van Eyck's art represents the universal order, especially when used with a figuration of divine majesty. We will now examine how precisely the symmetry in the Rolin Madonna is characterised as the universal and eternal order through the specific symbolism of the architecture.

In the painting, the romanesque architecture is conspicuously dominated by an allusion to the Trinity, through the central placement of the triple arcade. From there, the solid symmetric order is extended to every sumptuous detail; the grid patterned marble tiled floor, the columns of jasper and porphyry mounted by carved capital reliefs showing scenes from Genesis<sup>1</sup>, the lateral arcades, the stain glass windows above the central arcade and the bullseye windows either side of it. Continuing this close inspection, we notice that the tracery on the bases of the columns and on the spandrels



of the arches is not Romanesque but Gothic. The Gothic style was current during van Eyck's life time, the romanesque archaic. The fullest and most convincing interpretation of this curious combination has been offered by Panofsky<sup>2</sup> and is one which further establishes van Eyck's intention to represent the Divine order.

Panofsky saw the combination of Romanesque and Gothic elements in the Rolin, Paele, and Dresden panels as an adaptation of the antithetical use of Gothic and oriental architecture which began with Melchior Broederlam's Annunciation (fig.17) and which expressed the transition from the Old Judaic Dispensation to the New Christianity. The Annunciation was seen as the mark of that transition. We see in Broederlam's painting that the Annunciate is placed in a Gothic hall in clear contrast to the Orientalistic temple behind. The Christian Gothic thus symbolises christianity and the oriental temple representing the architecture of the Holy Land symbolises Judaism.

This architectural symbolism can be seen subsequent to Broederlam's Annunciation in a miniature from the workshop of the Boucicault Master, again depicting the Annunciation (fig.18), and in the Betrothal of the Virgin (Fig.19), by



the Master of Flemalle. With the early Eyckian Friesdam Annunciation (Fig.20), the orientalist architecture has been replaced by romanesque. This development came about, according to Panofsky, because, with the new naturalism reaching the proportions of a basic postulate, "the vague orientalism of Broederlam's or the Boucicault Master's circular towers, cupolas and bulbous domes no longer satisfied the hunger for reality"<sup>3</sup>. He continues "And it was looking around in their actual environment that the fathers of Flemish fifteenth century painting made the surprising discovery that the required contrast to the Gothic style could be found right at hand in the accurately observable monuments of the indigenous past, instead of in dubious records of distant Asia"<sup>4</sup>. Jan van Eyck further adapted this symbolism in that he did not align one style against the other, but rather established a complementary relationship between them. Thus he stressed Judaism not as enemy, but ancestor to Christianity and so their relationship as continuous and harmonic. We see this in the Annunciation of the Ghent Altarpiece where Gothic elements are added to an essentially romanesque interior.

In accounting for this symbolic combination of architecture in the Donor panels, Panofsky proposed that it was used to characterise the setting as "Heaven". For



the romanesque was appropriate not only to the old terrestrial Jerusalem and so Judaism , but was also appropriate for "the new or "Heavenly" Jerusalem and thus by implication to life in Heaven as opposed to life on earth"<sup>5</sup>. Consequently he believed that Jan van Eyck wished to portray the Cancellor Rolin "as having gained admission by way of anticipation, to the state of ultimate bliss"<sup>6</sup>.

Commentators however have questioned the view that Rolin is depicted as having gained admittance to Heaven. There are two details in the painting, which Panofsky passed over and which throw a different light on Rolin's encounter with the Divine Couple. The first of these is that the Chancellor's gaze is not directed at the Virgin and Child, but to their right, and off the picture plane. He is apparently unaware of the divine presence<sup>7</sup>. The second is that the inscription on the Virgin's robe has been identified as coming from the hour of Matins in The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary<sup>8</sup>. The relevance of the imagery of this text will be discussed more fully in the following chapter but for the moment these details suggest that Rolin is not represented as having yet attained the "state of ultimate bliss" and so pre-empting the Last Judgement, but as a suppliant worshipper seeking salvation in this life.



The painting then visualises the ever present but unseen divine forces with which the Christian believes are communicated through prayer. Van Eyck allows us to see those forces just as a modern film director visualises a 'ghost' for his audience, which his characters though existing in the same space cannot see. Van Eyck uses the pretext of prayer to produce a portrait of the Chancellor in a cosmic context.

The Romanesque structure therefore represents not the Heavenly future but the eternal heavenly presence. For in representing the architecture of terrestrial Jerusalem and thus evoking the "Heavenly" Jerusalem, the Romanesque not only evokes its future existence but also its eternal existence. "As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end". In containing the Genesis scenes, on the capitals and the Gothic tracery within the Romanesque structure, Van Eyck wished to express not so much "the total absorption of the whole of the past and the whole of the present in the fulfillment of the last days"<sup>9</sup> as their ultimate containment within the eternal and perfect order characterised as eternal and perfect edifice.



# FOOTNOTES

- 1 These scenes are described and discussed below p.p.32,34.
- 2 Schiller, (op.cit., p.49 n.52) recognizes Panofsky's authority concerning the interpretation of spatial and architectural motifs in 15th century images of the annunciation, which as we shall see, were the source of the symbolically mixed architecture in the Rolin Madonna. The following two paragraphs paraphrase briefly Panofsky's interpretation of the symbolism. Op. cit., pp.132-139. Direct quotations shall be given further footnotes.
- 3 Panofsky, op. cit. p.135.
- 4 Ibid.
- 5 Ibid., p.139
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 This is true also of the donors in the Paele Madonna (Fig.8) and the Dresden Madonna (Fig.9). Van Buren (op. cit. p.832) suggests that Rolin's gaze is in fact directed toward the altar in the Rolin family chapel where the painting originally hung. See page 19 above.
- 8 see page 35 note 12 below.
- 9 Panofsky, op. cit., p.139.



## PART II

### Chapter 2

#### THE RELATIONSHIP OF MAN AND GOD:

##### The Formal Pictorial Antithesis of Left and Right

The Chancellor Rolin with the Madonna and Child differs from all of the other finished works of Van Eyck's maturity, which depict the Madonna and Christ in majesty, in that the divine figures are not placed in the centre of the symmetry but to the right. The Chancellor kneels in prayer on the left.

Many commentators have sensed, in this arrangement, the influence of the miniature tradition. A dedication page in a book of hours, from the workshop of the Boucicault master, showing a donatrix venerating the Virgin<sup>1</sup> (Fig. 22), and another dedication page, this time from the Brussels hours, showing the Duke of Berry at prayer<sup>2</sup> (Fig. 22), are the most notable of those miniatures cited. Other miniatures have been referred to in indication of the widespread and traditional employment of the design<sup>3</sup> (Figs 23 and 24). However, though related in its basic



arrangement of the Donor and Madonna, and even sharing some iconographic details, the Rolin Madonna differs on one important point, concerning the precise conception of space, with respect to all of the examples advanced. The space that the Chancellor occupies on the left, directly counterbalances that of the Virgin and child on the right, to the extent that the heads of both the Madonna and Rolin reach exactly the same height. In the miniatures the donor is invariably depicted lower than the divine couple. The effect of this (leaving aside, for the moment, considerations of what it might mean concerning Rolin's status before the divine presence) is that the symmetry initiated by the architecture extends to and is thereby emphasised by the figures.

While borrowing from the miniature tradition, Van Eyck adapts it to his own compositional purposes. For though the Rolin Madonna differs from the Paele and Dresden donor panels, by its positioning of the Virgin to the right, it shares their symmetric conception of space. All figures relate to the centre. With the inclusion of the sponsorial saints in the last two paintings, van Eyck could maintain the symmetry and still have the donor kneeling below the Virgin and child. In the Rolin panel, however, with the donor appearing alone, it was necessary to place him on the same level as the Virgin to achieve the symmetry.



Furthermore, this symmetric arrangement of two figures within an interior was a current concern of van Eyck in the early fourteen thirties . We see it in both the Arnolfini Wedding Portrait (Fig.25) and the Annunciation in the Ghent Altarpiece (Fig. 26). The latter further emphasises Jan van Eyck's penchant for symmetry, for again he has adapted a traditional design. Traditionally the Angel is depicted either in genuflection below the Annunciate, thus emphasising her exaltation, or above the Annunciate who sits almost on the ground, thus emphasising her humility<sup>4</sup>. Here, although Gabriel is a little higher than the Virgin herself, he is exactly the same height as the Virgin with the Dove, representing the Holy Spirit, perched atop her head<sup>5</sup>.

Van Eyck's placement of the figures left and right becomes comprehensively developed into a formal division of earthly and heavenly references. Those which concern the Chancellor's suppliant position appear on the left and those concerning the exalted position appear on the right.

The capitals above the head of the kneeling Chancellor show scenes from Genesis: the expulsion of Adam and Eve, the sacrifices of Cain and Abel and the ensuing fratricide, the saving of Noah from the Flood, his subsequent drunkenness and the covering of his nakedness by



his sons (Fig. 27, detail). These are early episodes in the relationship of man and God, beginning naturally with the Fall which brought sin, mortality and the need to labour into the world and continuing with examples of both sin and sacrifice: acts of men which found both favour and disfavour with God. Rolin's worship, his personal seeking of salvation during his own lifetime is thus given an "historical" context.

The Chancellor's joined hands are set against the landscape on the left of the broad river (Figs 28 and 29, details). This section of the town differs conspicuously from that on the right hand side because it is considerably less extensive but also because its architecture is more secular in nature. Its single monastic building with adjoining chapel contrasts with the unnaturally church filled city opposite. Carol Purtle interpreted this contrast as a reference to St. Augustine's conception of "the city of Man" and "the city of God"<sup>6</sup>: the one which gains citizens by nature and the other only through grace. The juxtaposition of Rolin's hands with the secular, earthly city clearly associates his prayer with the daily life of man in this world.

The body of the Christ Child is silhouetted against the ecclesiastical architecture in the right hand section of



the town (Fig. 30, detail). It is perhaps significant, as James Snyder has pointed out, that as he raises "his fingers in benediction they just touch the spring of the great bridge that joins the two sides of the landscape"<sup>7</sup>. The cross mounted orb in his left hand characterises him as universal sovereign, creator and saviour of the world<sup>8</sup>. His attitude in contrast to any other Eyckian Christ child, and in contrast to the obvious kneeling figure before him, is conscious, solemn, officious and imperious. He is enthroned on the attentive Madonna (Fig.31, detail) who is thus characterised as the Seat of wisdom (sedes sapientiae)<sup>9</sup> and who is further denoted as Queen of Heaven by the crown which is held above her head by the hovering angel.

The capital relief which is partially obscured by the crown has been variously interpreted but its identification as the meeting of Abraham and Melchizedech seems the most satisfactory and is now generally accepted<sup>10</sup>. Abraham fresh from a victorious military campaign was met and blessed by Melchizedech who then made the first bloodless sacrifice of bread and wine. This episode, Snyder tells us, was seen since the days of St. Augustine and Ambrose "as the type per excellence of the institution of the Eucharist"<sup>11</sup>. It was thus considered as a prefigurement of the new covenant and priesthood



instigated at the last supper by Christ. This scene then provides, as those on the left hand capital did for Rolin, a suitable biblical-historical context for the presence of the Christ Child.

The figures then, though directly counterbalanced within the symmetry, are richly differentiated. The distinctions become all the more marked because of the direct confrontation. The Chancellor's apparent closeness to the Madonna and Child is not physical. The supernatural presence is invisible to him, for they share two different modes of being. The communication is spiritual. The Chancellor's prayer is the means of that communication.

Heinz Roosen-Runge discovered that the inscription rendered in the gold embroidery around the hem of the Virgin's robe comes from a text of the hours of Matins from The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary<sup>12</sup>. Since then commentators have seen this as a precise indication by Van Eyck of the Chancellor's prayer. The letters of the inscription refer to each of the three lessons of Matins taken from Ecclesiasticus XXIV, to Psalm 8 which precedes the lessons and to a response after the lessons near the end of Matins. The initial D, visible on the page of the Chancellor's open prayer book, would, it has been suggested, refer to the "Domine, labia mea aperies" (O Lord open my lips), which opens Matins.



The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary comprised the main text in a book of hours. It was a shorter unvarying version of the long Canonical Office used in religious orders and was often practised by the laity. It consisted of eight Hours which were said at fixed times of the day, beginning with Matins at sunrise<sup>13</sup>.

The imagery of the Matins text relates quite clearly to that of the painting.<sup>14</sup> The dramatis personae, as it were, of both is the same. In the opening Psalm the suppliant worshipper kneels before God.

Come let us bow down in worship, let us kneel  
before the Lord who made us<sup>15</sup>.

Mary is exalted throughout the text as the Virgin Mother of God:

O, Holy and Immaculate Virginitie I know not with  
what praises to extol you. For him whom heaven  
could not hold you carried at your bosom<sup>16</sup>.

and as intercessor, mediator between man and God:

Through the Virgin Mother may the Lord grant us  
peace and salvation<sup>17</sup>.



God is worshipped as universal sovereign:

For the Lord is a great God and a  
great King above all Gods<sup>18</sup>,

as creator:

The Heavens declare the glory of God and the  
firmament proclaims his handiwork<sup>19</sup>.

and as a saviour:

O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.<sup>20</sup>

Purtle has pointed out that specific details of the  
relationship of the figures in the painting have a textual  
basis in Matins<sup>21</sup>. In the painting the Christ Child  
extends a blessing to Rolin. In Psalm 23, the fourth Psalm  
of Matins, we are told that

"he who ascends the mountain of the Lord or stands  
in his holy place ... whose hands are sinless and  
whose heart is clean ... he shall receive a  
blessing from the Lord, a reward from God his  
Saviour".



The orb in the Child's hand as symbol of the world finds an echo in the hymn preceding nocturn I:

"the great Artificer divine whose hand contains the earth and sky".

In the antiphons following Psalms 18 and 23, reference is made to the worshippers' position before the seated Virgin.

"Before the couch of this Virgin, sing for as again and again the tender ballads of the drama".

Furthermore, the language of Matins says Purtle, "requires that Rolin's visualised prayer appear elevated above the earth"<sup>22</sup> for "references to the dwelling of the Madonna in Sion and Jerusalem situate the architectural space within the context of 'the ancient portal', 'the mountain of the Lord' and the 'Kingdom of Heaven' "<sup>23</sup>.

Apart from corresponding on certain details there is a very fundamental correspondence between image and text: both are thoroughly formal.

The text of course belongs to the liturgy. The language is not vernacular French or Dutch, but the ceremonial



Latin. Even then, the language is formal in its expression and arrangement and also in the fact that the text is not varied from day to day. It gives a ritual formal order to the day of the worshipper. These formalities at once distinguish the prayer from, and elevate it above the secular activity of man in a manner befitting it as the means of communication between man and his ultimate sovereign, God.

In aligning lithurgical and pictorial form van Eyck makes composition a ritual act. The ceremonial attitudes of the figures are ritually integrated within the symbolic structure. The formal pictorial antithesis of left and right is inseparably the formal antithetical relationship of the kneeling figure of the Chancellor at prayer and the regal Madonna and Child, of Man and God, of the Earthly and Heavenly.



# FOOTNOTES

- 1 Paris, Bibl. Nat., MS lat 1161.
- 2 Brussels, Bibl. Royale, Ms 11060-1, pp.20 and 11.
- 3 Lisbon, Gulberkian Foundation; MS L.A. 148 Fol. 19V; and Paris, Bibl. Nationale, Ms 24541, fol.235V. Both are published by Purtle, op.cit., figs 34 and 38. On the miniatures of Jean Pucelle as the origin of this format, see Van Buren, op. cit. pp.625-626.
- 4 For notes on the development of these motifs, see Schiller op.cit., pp.47-48.
- 5 The relationship between the Ghent Annunciation and that of the Master of Flemalle Mérode Altarpiece (Fig.34) has often been stressed (see Panofsky p.165) and clearly, Van Eyck has borrowed from that painting the motif of the Madonna of Humility. In doing so, however, he incorporates it within the symmetric counterbalancing of the figures which makes for a conspicuous contrast between the two paintings.
- 6 Purtle, op.cit., pp. 81 ff.
- 7 James Snyder, "Jan van Eyck and the Madonna of Chancellor Nicolas Rolin", Oud Holland, LLXXXII, part 4, 1967, p.166.
- 8 See Schiller, op.cit., vol 2, index: orb.p. 683.
- 9 Van Buren, op.cit., pp.622-625, sees the mother and child group as possibly based on a Mosan sedes sapientiae statue Ca.1200 and she remarks that "such a model would explain the psychological distance all writers have sensed between the Virgin and her adorer", p.624.
- 10 This interpretation was proposed by J. Philippe, Van Eyck et la genèse mosane de la peinture des anciens Pays-Bas, Liege, 1960, p.136; followed and cited by Snyder, op.cit. p.170; Purtle, op. cit. p.77; and Van Buren, op. cit., p.621.
- 11 Snyder, op. cit., p.171.



- 12 Van Buren, op. cit., pp. 617 ff, citing Heinz Roosen-Runge, Die Rolin Madonna des Jan van Eycks, Form und Inhalt, pp.26-32, 49 ff.

The inscription begins at the Virgin's right shoulder, continues over her left arm, and follows her mantle around to the seat of her low throne. As recorded by Roosen-Runge and supplemented by Nicole Reynaud of the Louvre, it reads:

... LEVATA ...	from Nocturn 1 (Ps. 8: 2)
... MORABOR TVNC PRE ...	from Lesson 1 (Ecclus. 24: 11-13)
... SYON FIRMATA SVM ET IN CIVITATES AN ... ET RADI ... + IN PLENITVDIN ...	from Lesson 2 (Ecclus. 24: 15, 16)
... EXALTATA SVM IN LIBANO ET QVAS ... IN IERICO QUASI OLIVA SP ... PLATANVS EXALTATA SVM IUXTA AQ ...	from Lesson 3 (Ecclus. 24: 17-20)
... S SAC ...	from the last response: <i>Felix namque es, sacra Virgo Maria</i>

The full text of Matins is provided below in the appendix, after Purtle, op. cit.p.177, Appendix A.

- 13 For this information, see Van Buren, op. cit., p. 616. In the Modern Office, there are only seven Hours, Matins, Lauds, Vespers, terce, sext nones and compline, prime having been suppressed in 1964.
- 14 Purtle (op. cit., pp.67 ff) discusses the relevance of the imagery of the Matins text to that of the painting.



Roosen-Runge, as in note 12 and Van Buren, op. cit., op. cit., pp. 617-622 considers the exegetical writings of Honorius of Autun concerning the Long Canonical Office as a possible source for Van Eyck in his treatment of the theme of the Little Office.

- 16 From Psalm 94, see appendix A.
- 17 From the responses after Lesson 1.
- 17 From the BLESSING before Lesson three.
- 18 From Psalm 94.
- 19 From the first line of Psalm 18.
- 20 This is the last line of Psalm 18.
- 21 Purtle, op. cit., pp. 68-72.
- 22 Ibid., p.72.
- 23 Ibid, p. 71.



## PART II

### Chapter 3

#### THE UNIVERSAL LANDSCAPE

Although the landscape in the Rolin Madonna is treated in an extremely naturalistic manner, it is in fact imaginary. Attempts to identify the city have been numerous and various but never satisfactory. Among the suggestions put forward are Maastricht, Liege, Utrecht, Autun, Geneva and even Prague<sup>1</sup>. The river and landscape recall the Meuse valley but are not a topographical record. The symbolic character of the divided city has already been mentioned. We will now examine the symbolism of the whole of the landscape, focussing on van Eyck's attitude to nature and the importance of the central juxtaposition of the landscape within the interior.

The motif of a view through a window over a town is first seen in Flemish art in the work of the Master of Flemalle<sup>2</sup>. It combined, says Baldass, two motifs created by miniaturists of the second decade of the fifteenth century<sup>3</sup>: the Boucicault Master's open window (Fig.32.)



in an interior and Paul de Limbourg's view over a town (Fig.33). We first see this motif in van Eyck's art in the Annunciation of The Ghent Altarpiece (Fig.26), which is also related in other respects to the Master of Flemalle's Merode Altarpiece<sup>4</sup> (Fig.34)

The Master of Flemalle used the view over a town through a window not as a major element in his compositions but in a secondary informative role in the way he would use an open prayer book, a hanging laver in a niche or a vase with a bunch of lilies. It functions to situate the bourgeois interiors within a bourgeois town. There is one painting however that is attributed to the Master of Flemalle in which landscape is given a central role: The Madonna in a Glory (Fig.35). Compositionally and conceptually this painting is closer to van Eyck's Rolin Madonna than any other by the Master of Flemalle. The composition is symmetrical. The Madonna is enthroned on a long bench which hovers in the sky in the centre of a radiating glory, St. Peter and St. Paul are seated underneath to the right and left. Their conical hats overlap with the Virgin's throne and thereby the figures enframe a landscape in the middle ground of which we see a town. The donor kneels in the centre between the two saints. The image as a whole, in conspicuous contrast to the Madonnas in bourgeois settings, is distinctly cosmic in character,



not only by virtue of the clearly supernatural elevation of the Madonna, but also because of the pervasive symmetry. In placing the landscape in the centre, the Master of Flemalle preserves the cosmic character of the whole.

Van Eyck's placement of the landscape emphatically in the centre between the Earthly and Heavenly figures is also, clearly, a symbolic compositional act. And just as there is a centrally placed glory visible beyond the tripartite opening in the compositionally related Boucicault miniature (Fig.21), the landscape beyond the arches in the Rolin Madonna glorifies the creator. "Jan's stupendous rendering of Nature", says Baldass, "proclaims a strong desire to sing the praises of creation to the glory of the creator"<sup>5</sup>. "The intensive representation of Nature in Jan van Eyck's work can only be described as cosmic. Even in rendering details he strove to do justice to the whole of creation. Every component part, whether direct, i.e. something provided by Nature herself, or indirect, i.e. something fashioned by the hand of man, must be conceived in its very essence. At one and at the same time, the artist shows us how the part in itself forms an entity and how, in the place where it belongs it is subordinated to a higher entity"<sup>6</sup>.



The landscape in the Rolin Madonna is vast and staggering in its detail. A pale moon<sup>7</sup> rises on the left above the sloping vineyards, while the whole of the landscape is illuminated from the right by the rays of the setting sun. The mottled blueness of the sky is reflected in the river which flows under the great bridge in the foreground around a castle-inhabited island and winds its way through miles of countryside to the blue foothills of the distant snow-capped mountains (Fig.36, detail). The spire of a tiny church breaks the skyline over the rambling plains to the far right. On the left above the town, a road, quite literally "dotted" with travellers, makes its way up a hill and through a richly foliated thicket. In the city on both sides of the river, people who come and go, "are scarcely discernible and yet are fashioned to perform all those necessities that life requires"<sup>8</sup>. Among the people standing on the bridge we can see approximately ten mounted horsemen who are little more than two millimetres tall (Fig.37, detail).

God is glorified by reference to his own creation throughout the psalms of Matins, which are referred to by the inscription on the Virgin's robe. Indeed these have been described as "the great biblical hymns in praise of



Nature"<sup>9</sup>, they provide an interesting accompanying text to the image Psalm 8 which is directly referred to in the inscription begins and ends with the words "O Lord our Lord how glorious is your name over all the earth". With this as its theme then it, like the painting, makes diverse reference to the natural world and in doing so it significantly articulates the cosmic order presided over by God and in which man has a special place beneath the heavens, the moon and the stars, and above "the beasts of the field", "the birds of the air", and the "fishes of the sea".

Furthermore not only is van Eyck's imitation of God's creation a symbolic act of praise, but so also does his creativity imitate the divine Creativity of God. Again in the Matins psalms, God is characterised as "the great Artificer Divine"<sup>10</sup>.

"His is the sea, for he has made it, and the dry land which his hands have formed"<sup>11</sup>.

"When I behold your heavens the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you set in place,"<sup>12</sup>



"The firmament proclaims his handiwork"<sup>13</sup>.

In the painting it is van Eyck's handiwork that is proclaimed. It is his fingers that set the moon in place, his hands which have formed the dry land. He is the earthly artificer after the divine model.

Fundamental to the cosmic character of the whole of the image is the juxtaposition of "telescopic" and "microscopic"<sup>14</sup> detail by means of the juxtaposition of landscape and interior. Panofsky has described this as "the great secret of Eyckian art: the simultaneous realisation and in a sense reconciliation of the "two infinities", the infinitesimally small and the infinitely large"<sup>15</sup>. Through this, Van Eyck evokes the vastness of the universe.

This evocation is very carefully "engineered" by means of the spatial arrangement.

The landscape, placed in the centre, is clearly symbolic, but this is so only by the very precise manner in which it is integrated within the symbolic symmetry of architecture and figures. This is clear when we look at Rogier van der Weyden's St Luke drawing the portrait of the Virgin (Fig.38), the composition of which, though owing much to Van Eyck's Rolin Madonna, is significantly different in its conception.



The symmetry in Rogier van der Weyden's painting is considerably less emphatic, and in fact the left and right sides of the architecture are not mirror images of each other. On the left, the Virgin's throne is set against the wall and overhung by a canopy, while on the right side we see into St. Luke's private chamber, where his symbol, the ox, and an open book representing his gospel are visible. The relationship of the figures themselves is not symmetrically conceived. The Virgin, nursing the Child, is lower than St. Luke. She sits in the manner of the Virgin of Humility while he seems to genuflect as he makes his drawing. Most significant however is that the landscape is not tightly integrated with the interior.

The figures of St. Luke and the Virgin are not set against the landscape, but against the walled garden in the middle distance and the lateral buildings, which are not present in Van Eyck's painting, encroach on either side so that at every point, a direct contrast between near and far has been avoided. Rogier van der Weyden has substituted the direct contrast of near and far with "a step by step and more limited progression"<sup>16</sup>. However, not only is the landscape less vast because of the narrower view we are allowed, but also because we view it from a lower vantage point, which brings it closer. Even then, it is more summary and stylised in its treatment.



In the Rolin Madonna, the landscape stretches unimpeded across the whole of the opening. The little walled garden, which has proved somewhat of an enigma iconographically<sup>17</sup>, is set low so as not to obstruct our view. The tops of the mountains reach no higher than the foreheads of the interior figures. Thus the whole of the landscape is contained within the space that directly separates the earthly figure of Rolin and the Heavenly figures of the Madonna and Child (Fig.39). In shifting our eye from Rolin to the Madonna and Child, we cannot avoid passing through the panorama. Thus, unlike the landscape in Rogier van der Weyden's painting, the landscape in Van Eyck is essential rather than incidental to the relationship of the principal figures. The totality of the landscape is bound up with the totality of Man's relationship with God and thus also the universal order as represented by the architecture.



# FOOTNOTES

- 1 See Panofsky, op. cit. p.137, note 3 and p.193 note 1; and Faggin, op. cit., p. 94.
- 2 Baldass, op. cit., p.19.
- 3 Ibid, p.44.
- 4 For the relationship of these paintings, see Chapter 2, note 4, below.
- 5 Baldass, op. cit., p.47.
- 6 Ibid., p.42.
- 7 The moon is visible in the original but it is formally so close to the sky that it is rarely apparent in reproductions.
- 8 H. Focillon, The Art of the West in the Middle Ages, Vol II, p.170.
- 9 Van Buren, op. cit., p.622.
- 10 From verse 3 of the Hymn preceding Nocturn 1.
- 11 From Psalm 94.
- 12 From Psalm 8.
- 13 From Psalm 18.
- 14 The terms "microscopic" and "telescopic" are Panofsky's, op. cit., pp.3 and 111.
- 15 Panofsky, op. cit., p.3.
- 16 Ibid, p.253.
- 17 Almost all commentators agree that the garden with its mariological flowers (roses, irises, lilies) is a reference to the Hortus Conclusus of the Virgin, a motif popular during the International Style (Baldass, op. cit., p.56). However on this point there is a note of dissent from Mssrs Felheim and Browlow, "Jan van Eyck's Chancellor Rolin and the Blessed Virgin", Art Journal XXVIII-I, 1968, p.22: "But those figures - "funny little men" as Panofsky called them, can have no place in such a garden".



Indeed those "funny little men" have proved difficult to interpret, see Van Buren, op. cit., p.621, who believes that they are graphic references to the nature of the daily office as eternal "vigil" and eternal "watch" as expanded by Honorius of Autun, see ch.2 n.14 above. Snyder, op. cit., p.166-169 (citing J. Lejeune, Les Van Eyck - peintres de Liège et de sa cathédrale, Liège, 1956, p.203) suggests that they might be none other than the Van Eyck brothers themselves.

Snyder, op. cit., interprets the peacocks as signifying the role of the Madonna as the eternal Queen of Heaven. H.T. Musper (Netherlandish Painting from Van Eyck to Bosch, New York, 1981, p.88) on the other hand, writes that the "peacocks strut about to symbolise pride and vanity, and magpies are tokens of those who doubt salvation".

Carol Purtle, op. cit., note 67, remarks that "the patterning of profile image with the full front or rear view in the motifs of the peacocks magpies and men (...) hardly seem(s) accidental and seem(s) to relate the three groups in a formal manner that has yet to be explained".



## CONCLUSION

The symmetric construction of space is fundamental to Van Eyck's Rolin Madonna. It is a formal representation of the divine and universal order. In particular, the symmetry is embodied in the clearly symbolic Romanesque edifice which, in containing the Gothic tracery and the scenes from Genesis, is characterised specifically as the divine and eternal edifice.

The tight integration of figures and landscape within the structure represents their ultimate position within the eternal order. In fact both figures and landscape which, along with the architecture, are the fundamental components of the composition, are used to articulate man's place within the universe in relation to God. Through their careful disposition, Van Eyck has inaugurated two cross referencing antithesis which are at once pictorial and thematic, embodying and directing the discourse.

The placement of the figure of Chancellor Rolin on the left and the Madonna and Child on the right becomes an elaborate and comprehensive exposition of the Chancellor's relationship to God. Conceived initially as a pictorial antithesis, it is inseparately also conceptual.



The antithesis of the "two infinities" embodied in the central juxtaposition of the landscape with the earthly and heavenly figures evokes the vastness of the materially perceivable universe and thus gives the Chancellor's prayer an explicitly universal context.

Thus Van Eyck makes a full and involved use of the pictorial form in a way that is totally sympathetic with the meanings he wished to express and this is so because for Van Eyck, the very act of creation was spiritualised and metaphoric. His creativity is a metaphor of the creativity of God. His painting represents the whole of the universe and very directly does so by means of his thorough sensual reference to the natural world. He does not, however, represent merely what our eye perceives, but represents the world as it functions within the universal order, according to the contemporary christian conception of that order.

It is for this reason that his image is so utterly formal to the extent that he makes direct reference not only to the formal pictorial religious tradition, but also to the



forms of the liturgy itself. All are reconciled within the structured harmony of the painting because all are conceptually part of one ultimate form. The ritual act of prayer is given a ritual expression. The daily practice of the Little Office is depicted as a vital means through which the Chancellor communicates with his God and thus affirms his place within the universe. Van Eyck's image is the affirmation.

# Late Office of the Blessed Virgin Mary

## MATINS

V. Domine labia mea aperies.

R. Et os meum annuntiabit laudem tuam.

V. Deus in adiutorium meum intende.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui  
Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et  
nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Invitatory:

Ave Maria, gratia plena. Domine  
deus.

Psalm 94.

Domine exaudi vocem meam.  
Quia vocatus sum in conspectu  
domini. Et exaudivit me.  
Et exalta est vox mea in conspectu  
domini.

Ave Maria, gratia plena. Domine  
deus.

Quoniam Deus magnus Dominus et  
super omnia saecula saeculorum.

V. O Lord, open my lips.

R. And my mouth shall proclaim your  
praise.

V. O God, come to my assistance.

Gloria be to the Father and to the  
Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it  
was in the beginning, is now and  
ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.

Invitatory:

Hail, Mary, full of grace.  
The Lord is with thee.

Psalm 94.

Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord.  
Let us exult in the Lord of our salva-  
tion. Let us give him with thanksgiv-  
ing, let us joyfully sing praise to him.

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is  
with thee.

For the Lord is a great God, and a  
great King above all gods, in his hands



APPENDIX

*Officium Parvum*

Little Office of the  
Blessed Virgin Mary

MATINS

V. Domine, labia mea aperies.

V. O Lord, open my lips.

R. Et os meum annuntiabit laudem  
tuam.

R. And my mouth shall proclaim your  
praise.

V. Deus in adjutorium meum intende.

V. O God, come to my assistance.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui  
Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et  
nunc, et semper, et in saecula sae-  
culorum. Amen.

Glory be to the Father, and to the  
Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it  
was in the beginning, is now and  
ever shall be, world without end.  
Amen.

*Invitatory:*

Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus  
tecum.

*Invitatory:*

Hail, Mary, full of grace;  
The Lord is with thee.

*Psalm 94:*

Venite, exultemus Domino: jubile-  
mus Deo salutari nostro: praeoccupe-  
mus faciem ejus in confessione, et in  
psalmis jubilemus ei.

*Psalm 94:*

Come, let us sing joyfully to the Lord;  
let us acclaim the Rock of our salva-  
tion. Let us greet him with thanksgiv-  
ing: let us joyfully sing psalms to him.

Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus  
tecum.

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is  
with thee.

Quoniam Deus magnus Dominus, et  
Rex magnus super omnes deos: quo-

For the Lord is a great God, and a  
great king above all gods; In his hands



niarū non repellat Dominus plebem suam, quia in manu ejus sunt omnes fines terrae, et altitudines montium ipse conspiciat.

Dominus tecum.

Quoniam ipsius est mare, et ipse fecit illud, et aridam fundaverunt manus ejus: venite adoremus et procidamus ante Deum: ploremus coram Domino qui fecit nos, quia ipse est Dominus Deus noster: nos autem populus ejus, et oves pascuae ejus.

Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus tecum.

Hodie si vocem ejus audieritis, nolite obdurare corda vestra, sicut in exacerbatione secundum diem tentationis in deserto: ubi tentaverunt me patres vestri, probaverunt et viderunt opera mea.

Dominus tecum.

Quadraginta annis proximus fui generationi huic, et dixi: Semper hi errant corde; ipsi vero non cognoverunt vias meas, quibus juravi in ira mea, si introibunt in requiem meam.

Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus tecum.

Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto. Sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum. Amen.

Dominus tecum.

Ave Maria, gratia plena: Dominus tecum.

are the depths of the earth, and the tops of the mountains are his.

The Lord is with thee.

His is the sea, for he has made it, and the dry land, which his hands have formed. Come, let us bow down in worship; let us kneel before the Lord who made us. For he is our God, and we are the people he shepherds, the flocks he guides.

Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee.

Oh, that today you would hear his voice: "Harden not your hearts as at Meriba, as in the day of Massa in the desert, where your fathers tempted me; they tested me though they had seen my works."

The Lord is with thee.

Forty years I loathed that generation, and I said: "They are a people of erring heart, and they know not my ways. Therefore I swore in my anger; they shall not enter into my rest."

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit. As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be, world without end. Amen.

The Lord is with thee.

Hail Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with thee.



*Hymnus:*

Quem terra, pontus, sidera,  
Colunt, adorant, praedicant,  
Trinam regentem machinam  
Clastrum Mariae bajulat.

Cui luna, sol, et omnia  
Deserviunt per tempora,  
Perfusa coeli gratia  
Gestant puellae viscera.

Beata Mater, munere  
Cujus supernus artifex  
Mundum pugillo continens,  
Ventris sub arca clausus est.

Beata coeli nuntio,  
Foecunda Sancto Spiritu,  
Desideratus Gentibus  
Cujus per alvum fusus est.

Jesu, tibi sit gloria,  
Qui natus es de Virgine,  
Cum Patre et almo Spiritu,  
In sempiterna saecula. Amen.

*Hymn:*

The God whom earth, and sea, and sky  
Adore, and laud, and magnify,  
Who o'er their threefold fabric reigns,  
The Virgin's spotless womb contains.

The God, whose will by moon and sun  
And all things in due course is done,  
Is borne upon a Maiden's breast,  
By fullest heavenly grace possessed.

How blest that Mother, in whose shrine  
The great Artificer divine,  
Whose hand contains the earth and sky,  
Vouchsafed, as in his ark, to lie.

Blest, in the message Gabriel brought;  
Blest, by the work the Spirit wrought;  
From whom the great Desire of earth  
Took human flesh and human birth.

All honor, laud, and glory be,  
O Jesu, Virgin-born to thee;  
All glory, as is ever meet,  
To Father and to Paraclete. Amen.

I NOCTURN

*Antiphon:*

Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui.

*Psalm 8:*

Domine Dominus noster, quam admirabile est nomen tuum in universa terra!

Quoniam elevata est magnificentia tua, super coelos

Ex ore infantium et lactentium per-

*Antiphon:*

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

*Psalm 8:*

O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

You have exalted your majesty above the heavens.

Out of the mouths of babes and



fecisti laudem propter inimicos tuos, ut destruas inimicum et ultorem.

Quoniam videbo coelos tuos, opera digitorum tuorum: lunam et stellas, quae tu fundasti.

Quid est homo, quod memor es ejus? aut filius hominis, quoniam visitas eum?

Minuisti eum paulo minus ab Angelis, gloria et honore coronasti eum, et constituisti eum super opera manuum tuarum.

Omnia subiecisti sub pedibus ejus, oves et boves universas: insuper et pecora campi.

Volucres coeli et pisces maris, qui perambulant semitas maris.

Domine Dominus noster, quam Admirabile est nomen tuum in universa terra!

Gloria Patri.

*Antiphon:*

Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui.

Sicut myrrha electa odorem dedisti suavitatis, sancta Dei Genitrix.

*Psalm 18:*

Coeli enarrant gloriam Dei, et opera manuum ejus annuntiat firmamentum.

Dies diei eructat verbum, et nox nocti indicat scientiam.

sucklings you have fashioned praise because of your foes, to silence the hostile and the vengeful.

When I behold your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you set in place —

What is man that you should be mindful of him, or the son of man that you should care for him?

You have made him little less than the angels, and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him rule over the works of your hands,

putting all things under his feet:

All sheep and oxen, yes, and the beasts of the field,

The birds of the air, the fishes of the sea, and whatever swims the paths of the seas.

O Lord, our Lord, how glorious is your name over all the earth!

Glory be to the Father.

*Antiphon:*

Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

Like the best myrrh you have yielded an odor of sweetness, O holy Mother of God.

*Psalm 18:*

The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Day pours out the word to day, and night to night imparts knowledge;



Non sunt loquelaē neque sermones,  
quorum non audiantur voces eorum.

In omnem terram exivit sonus eorum:  
et in fines orbis terrae verba eorum.

In sole posuit tabernaculum suum: et  
ipse tamquam sponsus procedens de  
thalamo suo:

Exultavit ut gigas ad currendam viam,  
a summo coelo egressio ejus.

Et occursum ejus usque ad summum  
ejus: nec est qui se abscondat a calore  
ejus.

Lex Domini immaculata, convertens  
animas: testimonium Domini fidele,  
sapientiam praestans parvulis.

Justitiae Domini rectae, laetificantes  
corda: praeceptum Domini lucidum,  
illuminans oculos.

Timor Domini sanctus, permanens  
in saeculum saeculi: judicia Domini vera,  
justificata in semetipsa.

Desiderabilia super aurum et lapi-  
dem pretiosum multum: et dulciora  
super mel et favum.

Etenim servus tuus custodit ea, in  
custodiendis illis retributio multa.

Delicta quis intelligit? ab occultis meis  
munda me: et ab alienis parce servo tuo.

Si mei non fuerint dominati, tunc  
immaculatus ero: et emundabor a de-  
licto maximo.

Not a word nor a discourse whose  
voice is not heard;

Through all the earth their voice re-  
sounds, and to the ends of the world,  
their message.

He has pitched a tent there for the  
sun, which comes forth like the groom  
from his bridal chamber

and, like a giant, joyfully runs its course.

At one end of the heavens it comes  
forth,

and its course is to their other end;  
nothing escapes its heat.

The law of the Lord is perfect, re-  
freshing the soul; the decree of the Lord  
is trustworthy, giving wisdom to the  
simple.

The precepts of the Lord are right,  
rejoicing the heart; the command of the  
Lord is clear, enlightening the eye;

The fear of the Lord is pure, endur-  
ing forever; the ordinances of the Lord  
are true, all of them just;

They are more precious than gold,  
than a heap of purest gold; sweeter also  
than syrup or honey from the comb.

Though your servant is careful of  
them, very diligent in keeping them,

Yet who can detect failings? Cleanse  
me from my unknown faults! From  
wanton sin especially, restrain your  
servant;

Let it not rule over me. Then shall I  
be blameless and innocent of serious sin.



Et erunt ut complaceant eloquia oris  
mei: et meditatio cordis mei in con-  
spectu tuo semper.

Domine, adjutor meus, et redemptor  
meus.

Gloria Patri.

*Antiphon:*

Sicut myrrha electa odorem dedisti  
suavitatis, sancta Dei Genitrix.

Ante torum hujus Virginis frequen-  
tate nobis dulcia cantica dramatis.

*Psalm 23:*

Domini est terra et plenitudo ejus:  
orbis terrarum et universi qui habitant  
in eo.

Quia ipse super maria fundavit eum:  
et super flumina praeparavit eum.

Quis ascendet in montem Domini?  
aut quis stabit in loco sancto ejus?

Innocens manibus, et mundo corde,  
qui non accepit in vano animam suam,  
nec juravit in dolo proximo suo.

Hic accipiet benedictionem a Do-  
mino: et misericordiam a Deo salutari  
suo.

Haec est generatio quaerentium eum,  
quaerentium faciem Dei Jacob.

Attollite portas, principes, vestras, et  
elevamini, portae aeternales: et introi-  
bit Rex gloriae.

Let the words of my mouth and the  
thought of my heart find favor before  
you,

O Lord, my rock and my redeemer.

Glory be to the Father.

*Antiphon:*

Like the best myrrh you have yielded  
an odor of sweetness, O holy Mother  
of God.

Before the couch of this Virgin, sing  
for us again and again the tender bal-  
lads of the drama.

*Psalm 23:*

The Lord's are the earth and its full-  
ness; the world and those who dwell in  
it.

For he founded it upon the seas and  
established it upon the rivers.

Who can ascend the mountain of the  
Lord? or who may stand in his holy  
place?

He whose hands are sinless, whose  
heart is clean, who desires not what is  
vain, nor swears deceitfully to his  
neighbor.

He shall receive a blessing from the  
Lord, a reward from God his savior.

Such is the race that seeks for him,  
that seeks the face of the God of Jacob.

Lift up, O gates, your lintels; reach  
up, you ancient portals, that the king  
of glory may come in!



Quis est iste Rex gloriae? Dominus fortis et potens, Dominus potens in praelio.

Attollite portas, principes, vestras, et elevamini, portae aeternales: et introibit Rex gloriae.

Quis est iste Rex gloriae? Dominus virtutum ipse est Rex gloriae.

Gloria Patri.

*Antiphon:*

Ante torum hujus Virginis frequentate nobis dulcia cantica dramatis.

V. Diffusa est gratia in labiis tuis.

R. Propterea benedixit te Deus in aeternum.

Pater noster . . .

V. Et ne nos inducas in tentationem.

R. Sed libera nos a malo.

*Absolution*

Precibus et meritis Beatae Mariae semper Virginis, et omnium Sanctorum, perducatur nos Dominus ad regna coelorum. R. Amen.

V. Jube, domne benedicere.

*Benediction*

Nos cum prole pia benedicat Virgo Maria.

R. Amen.

*Lectio i (Ecclesiasticus 24, 11-13)*

In omnibus requiem quaesivi, et in

Who is this king of glory? The Lord, strong and mighty, the Lord, mighty in battle.

Lift up, O gates, your lintels; reach up, you ancient portals, that the king of glory may come in!

Who is this king of glory? The Lord of hosts; he is the king of glory.

Glory be to the Father.

*Antiphon:*

Before the couch of this Virgin, sing for us again and again the tender ballads of the drama.

V. Grace is poured out upon your lips.

R. Therefore has God blessed you forever.

Our Father . . .

V. And lead us not into temptation.

R. But deliver us from evil.

*Absolution*

Through the prayers and merits of blessed Mary, ever a Virgin, and of all the saints, may the Lord bring us to the kingdom of heaven. R. Amen.

V. Pray, O Lord, a blessing.

*Blessing*

May the Virgin Mary with her loving Child bless us.

R. Amen.

*Lesson i (Ecclesiasticus 24, 11-13)*

Among all these I sought a resting



haereditate Domini morabor. Tunc praecepit, et dixit mihi Creator omnium: et qui creavit me, requievit in tabernaculo meo, et dixit mihi: In Jacob inhabita, et in Israel haereditare, et in electis meis mitte radices. Tu autem Domine, miserere nobis.

R. Deo gratias.

R. Sancta et immaculata virginitas, quibus te laudibus efferam nescio: Quia quem coeli capere non poterant, tuo gremio contulisti.

V. Benedicta tu in mulieribus, et benedictus fructus ventris tui.

R. Quia quem coeli capere non poterant, tuo gremio contulisti.

V. Jube, domine, benedicere.

#### *Benediction*

Ipsa Virgo virginum intercedat pro nobis ad Dominum. R. Amen.

#### *Lectio ii (Ecclesiasticus 24, 15-20)*

Et sic in Sion firmata sum, et in civitate sanctificata similiter requievi, et in Jerusalem potestas mea. Et radicavi in populo honorificato, et in parte Dei mei haereditas illius, et in plenitudine Sanctorum detentio mea. Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis.

R. Deo Gratias.

R. Beata es. Virgo Maria, quae Dominum portasti Creatorem mundi: Genuisti qui te fecit, et in aeternum permanes virgo.

place; in whose inheritance should I abide? Then the Creator of all gave me his command, and he who formed me chose the spot for my tent, saying, "In Jacob make your dwelling, in Israel your inheritance." Do you, Lord, have mercy on us.

R. Thanks be to God.

R. O holy and immaculate virginity, I know not with what praises to extol you. For him whom heaven could not hold you carried at your bosom.

V. Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.

R. For him whom heaven could not contain you carried at your bosom.

V. Pray, O Lord, a blessing.

#### *Blessing*

May the Virgin of virgins herself plead for us before the Lord. R. Amen.

#### *Lesson ii (Ecclesiasticus 24, 15-20)*

And in Sion I fixed my abode. Thus in the chosen city he has given me rest, in Jerusalem is my domain. I have struck root among the glorious people, in the portion of the Lord, his heritage. Do you, Lord, have mercy on us.

R. Thanks be to God.

R. Blessed are you, O Virgin Mary, who did bear the Lord, the Creator of the world. You brought forth him who made you and remained a virgin forever.



V. Ave Maria, gratia plena; Dominus tecum.

R. Genuisti qui te fecit, et in aeternum permanes virgo.

V. Jube, domne, benedicere.

*Benediction*

Per Virginem Matrem concedat nobis Dominus salutem et pacem.

R. Amen.

*Lectio iii*

Quasi cedrus exaltata sum in Libano, et quasi cypressus in monte Sion: quasi palma exaltata sum in Cades, et quasi plantatio rosae in Jericho: quasi oliva speciosa in campis, et quasi platanus exaltata sum juxta aquam in plateis. Sicus cinnamoni et balsamum aromatizans odorem dedi: quasi myrrha electa dedi suavitatem odoris. Tu autem, Domine, miserere nobis.

R. Deo Gratias.

R. Felix namque es, sacra Virgo Maria, et omni laude dignissima: Quia ex te ortus est Sol justitiae, Christus Deus noster.

V. Ora pro populo, interveni pro clero, intercede pro devoto femineo sexu: sentiant omnes tuum juvamen, quicumque celebrant tuam sanctam commemorationem.

R. Quia ex te ortus est Sol justitiae, Christus Deus noster.

V. Gloria Patri, et Filio, et Spiritui Sancto.

R. Christus Deus noster.

V. Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with thee.

R. You brought forth him who made you and remained a virgin forever.

V. Pray, O Lord, a blessing.

*Blessing*

Through the Virgin Mother may the Lord grant us salvation and peace.

R. Amen.

*Lesson iii*

Like a cedar on Lebanon I am raised aloft, like a cypress on Mount Hermon, like a palm tree in En-gaddi, like a rose bush in Jericho, like a fair olive tree in the field, like a plane tree growing beside the water. Like cinnamon, or fragrant balm, or precious myrrh, I give forth perfume. Do you, Lord, have mercy on us.

R. Thanks be to God.

R. Truly happy are you, O holy Virgin Mary, and worthy of all praise. For from you has dawned the sun of justice, Christ, our God.

V. Pray for the people, mediate for the clergy, intercede for all devout women: may all experience your help who keep your holy commemoration.

R. For from you has dawned the sun of justice, Christ, our God.

V. Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit.

R. Christ our God.



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Fig. 1: Jan van Eyck, The Madonna with Chancellor Rolin





Fig. 2: Jan van Eyck, The Ghent Altarpiece, Exterior  
Ghent, St. Bavo's





Fig. 3: Jan van Eyck, The Ghent Altarpiece, Interior,  
Ghent, St. Bavos





Fig. 4: The Emperor Theodosius I enthroned in Majesty,  
Silver plate, Academia de la Historia, Madrid



Fig. 5: Christ as Universal Sovereign, Mosaic,  
S. Vitale, Ravenna



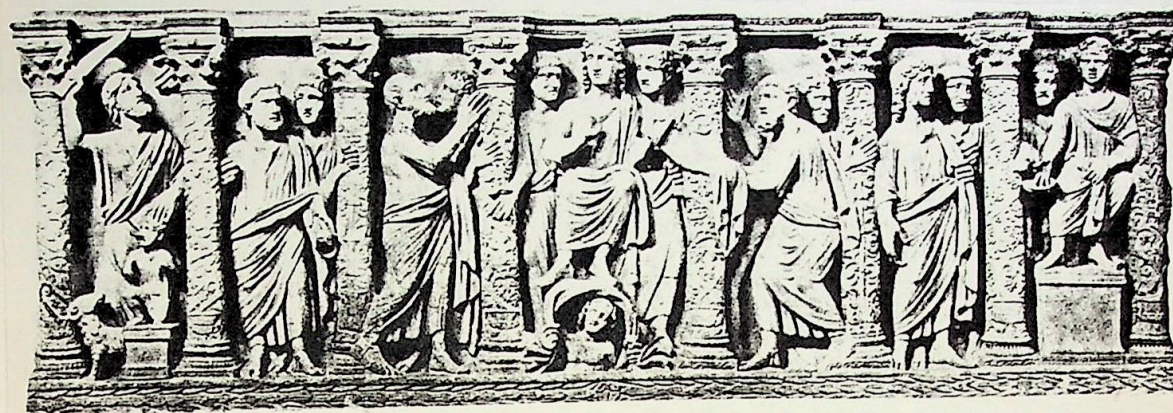


Fig. 6: Christ Enthroned as the Universal Sovereign,  
Sarcophagus, Lateran Museums, Rome

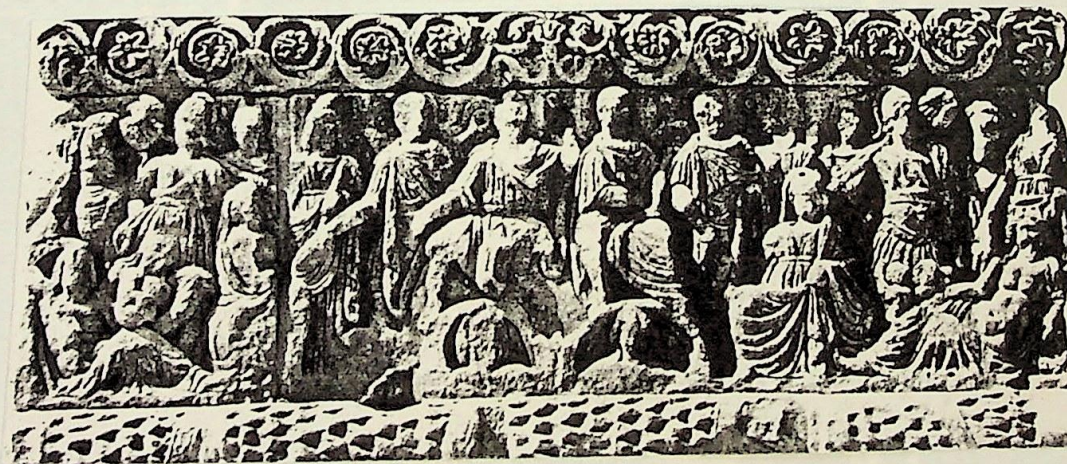


Fig. 7: Two Emperors Enthroned as Universal Sovereigns,  
Arch of Galerius (detail), Salonika



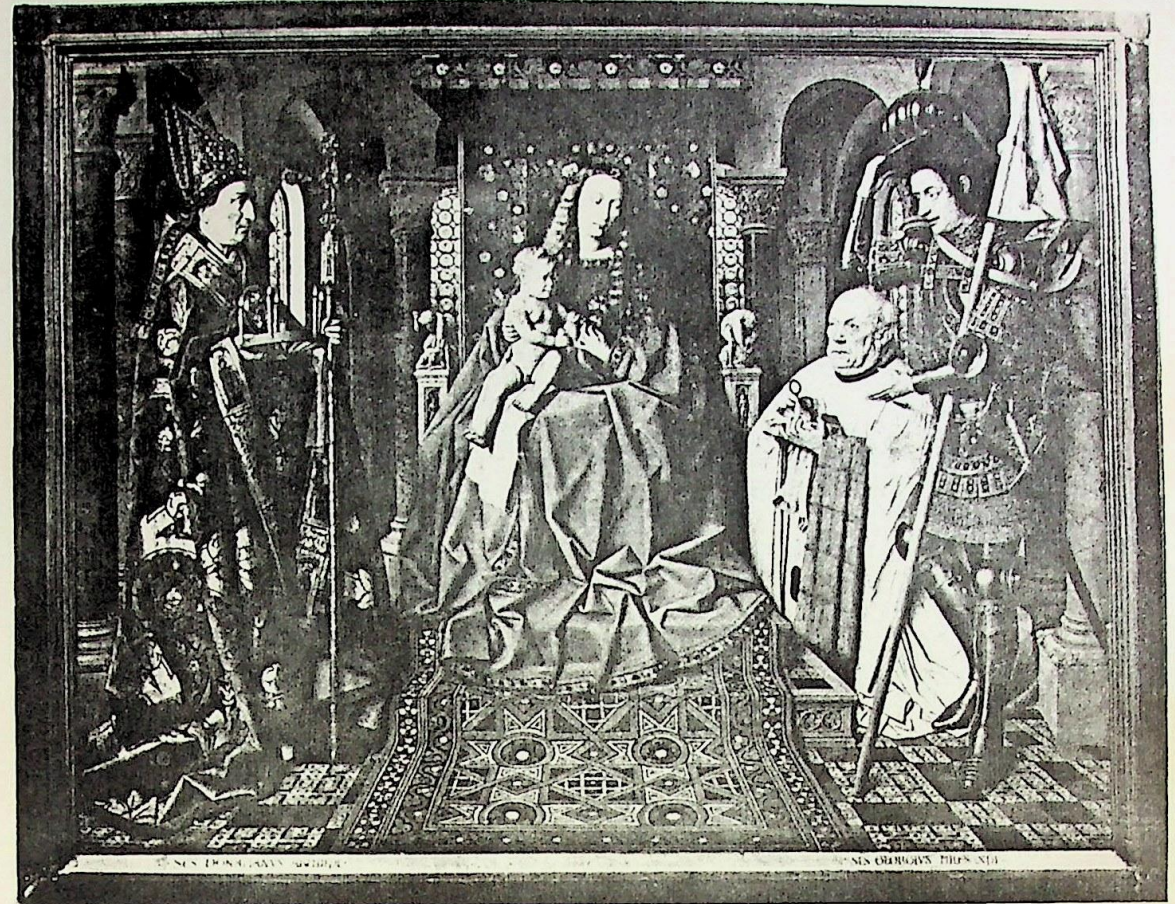


Fig.8: Jan van Eyck, The Madonna of Canon George van der Paele,  
Bruges, Musee Communal

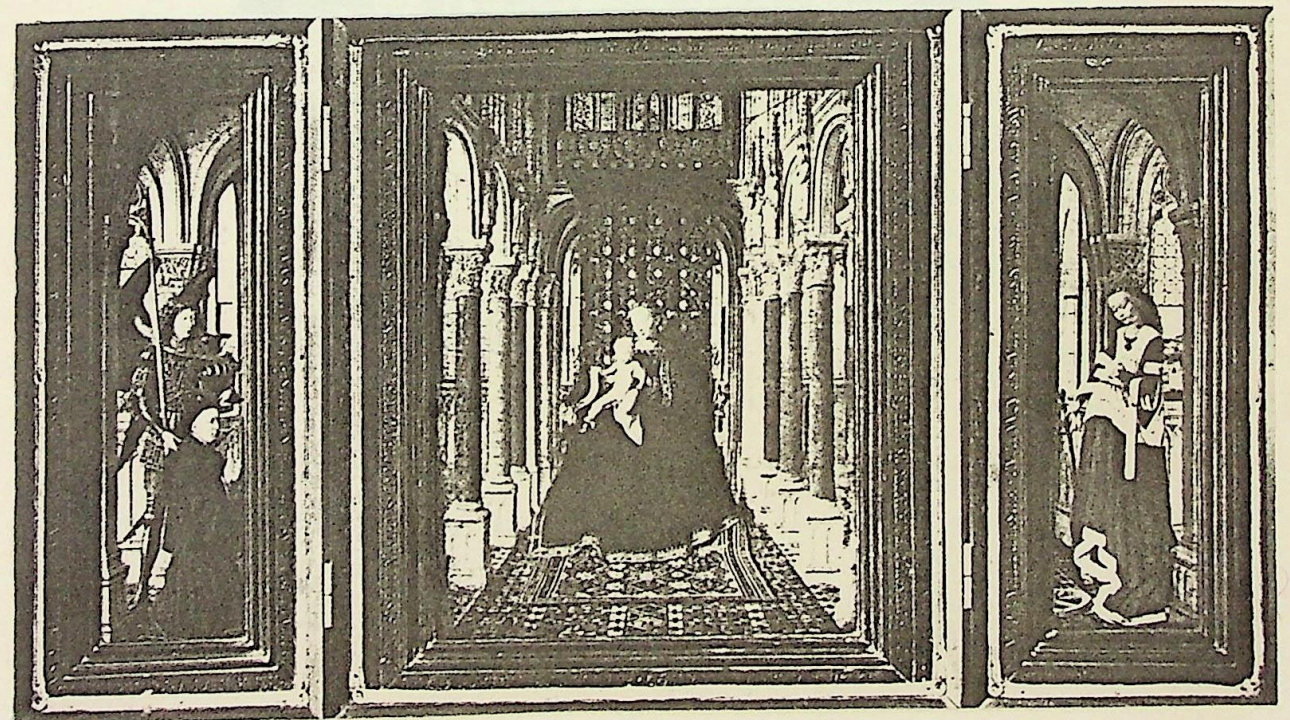


Fig.9: Jan van Eyck, Triptych; Dresden,  
Gemaldegalerie



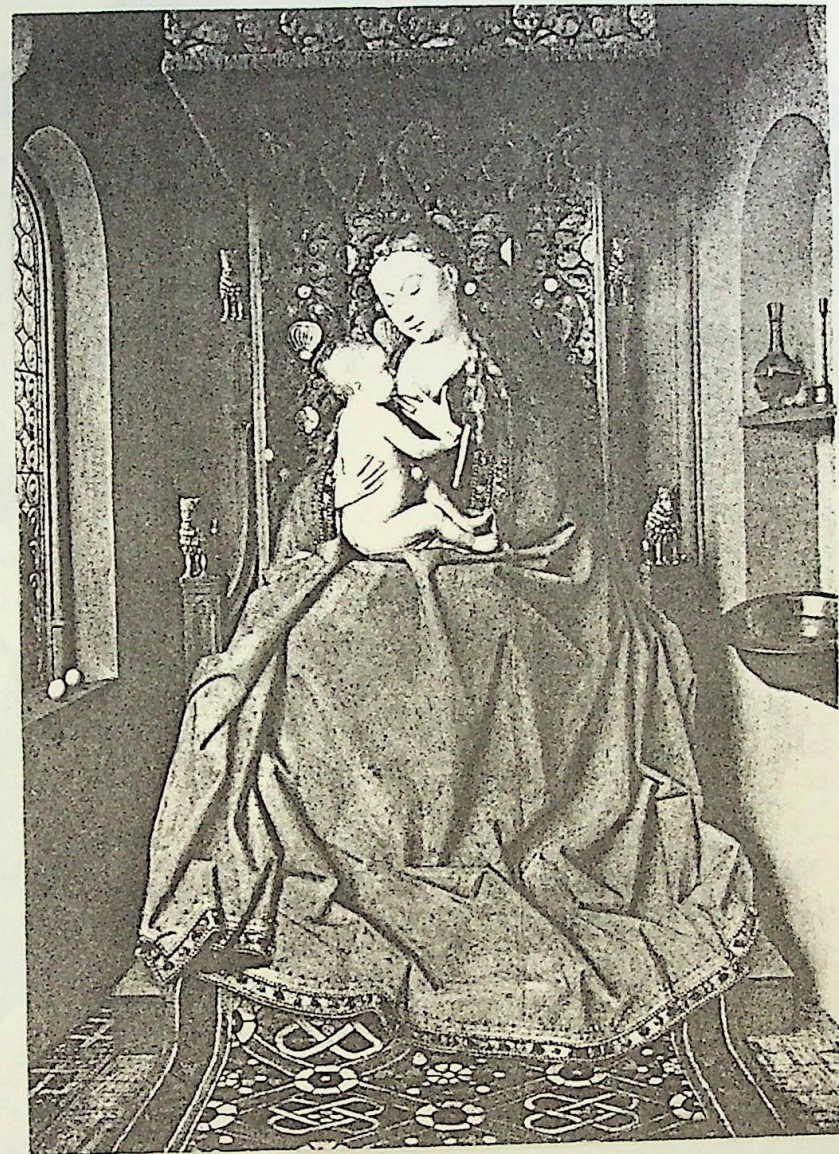


Fig. 10: Jan van Eyck, The "Lucca Madonna",  
Frankfurt, Stadelches Kunstinstitut





Fig. 11: Giotto, Ognissanti Madonna,  
Florence, Uffizi





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Fig. 12: Duccio, Front of the Maesta,  
Sienna, Museo dell'Opera del Duomo





Fig. 13: Pietro Lorenzetti, Carmelite Altarpiece,  
Sienna, Pinacoteca Nazionale





Fig. 14: Boucicault Hours, Adoration of the Magi,  
Paris, Musee Jacquemart Andre



Fig. 15: Coronation of Hannibal, Paris,  
Bibliotheque Nationale, ms. fr. 259





Fig. 16: Rogier van der Weyden, Portrait of Nicolas Rolin,  
detail from the exterior of The Last Judgement,  
Beaune, Hotel Dieu





Fig. 17: Melchior Broederlam, Altarpiece,  
Left wing, Dijon



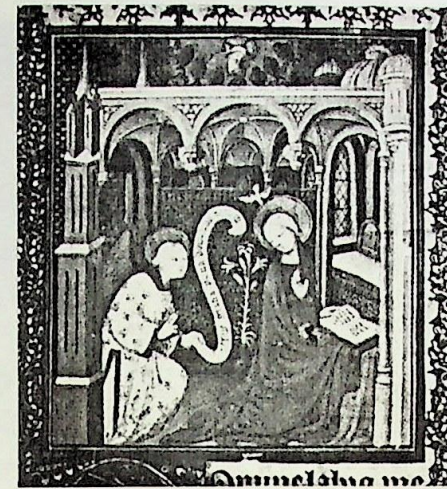


Fig. 18: Annunciation, Paris,  
Bibliothèque Nationale, Lat.1161, Fol.31



Fig. 19: The Master of Flemalle, Betrothal of the Virgin,  
Madrid Prado





Fig. 20: Hubert van Eyck (?), "The Friesdam Annunciation",  
New York, Metropolitan Museum





Fig. 21: Madonna with Donatrix, Paris,  
Bibl. Nat., Lat.1161, (Book of Hours)

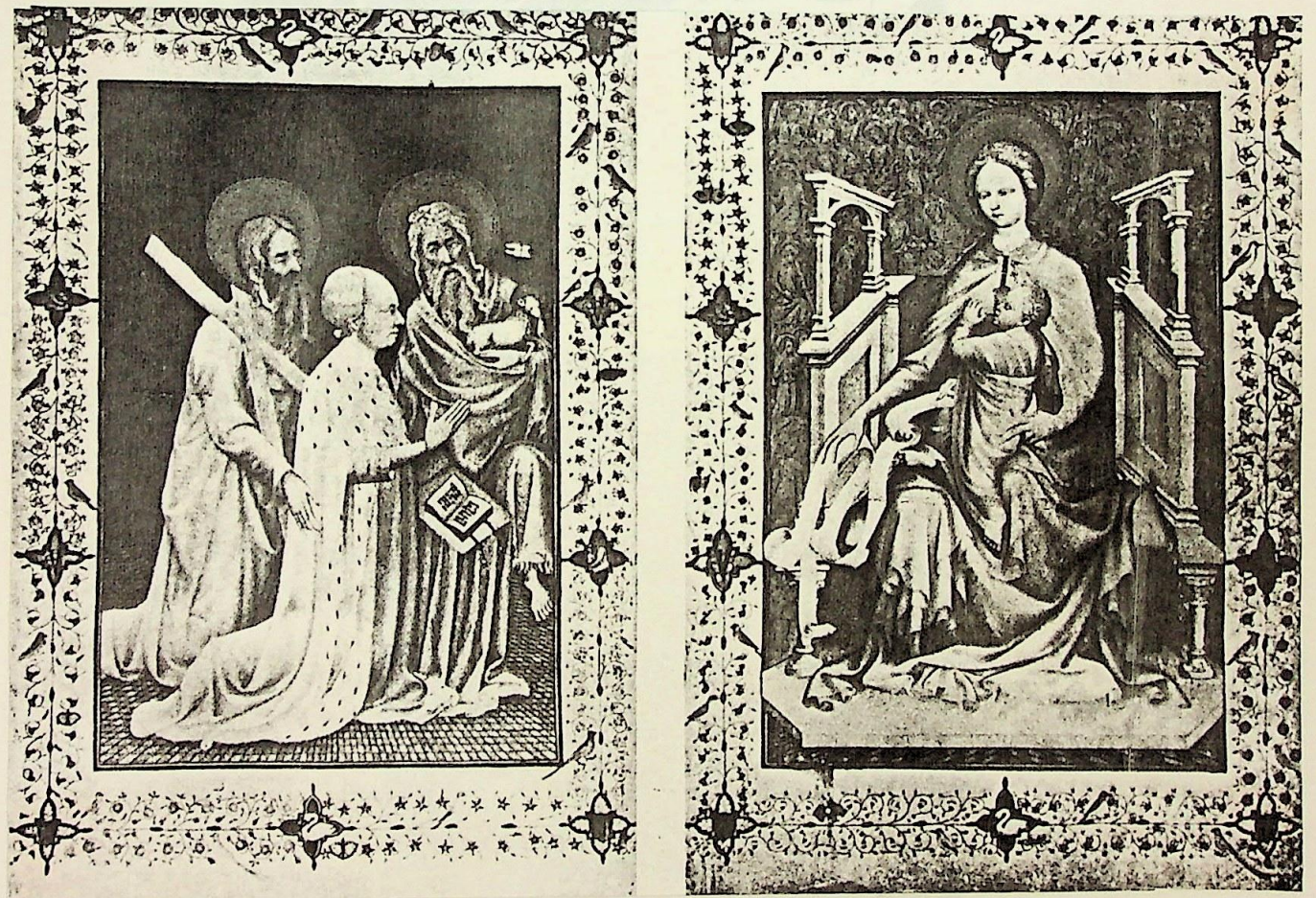


Fig. 22: Brussels Hours, First Dedication Page,  
Brussels, Bibl. Royale, Ms.11060-1





Fig. 23: Patron before the Madonna, Lisbon,  
Gubenkian Fundation, Ms. L.A. 148, Fol.19V



Fig. 24: Dominus Tecum, Paris, Bibl. Nat.,  
Ms. 24541, fol 235V



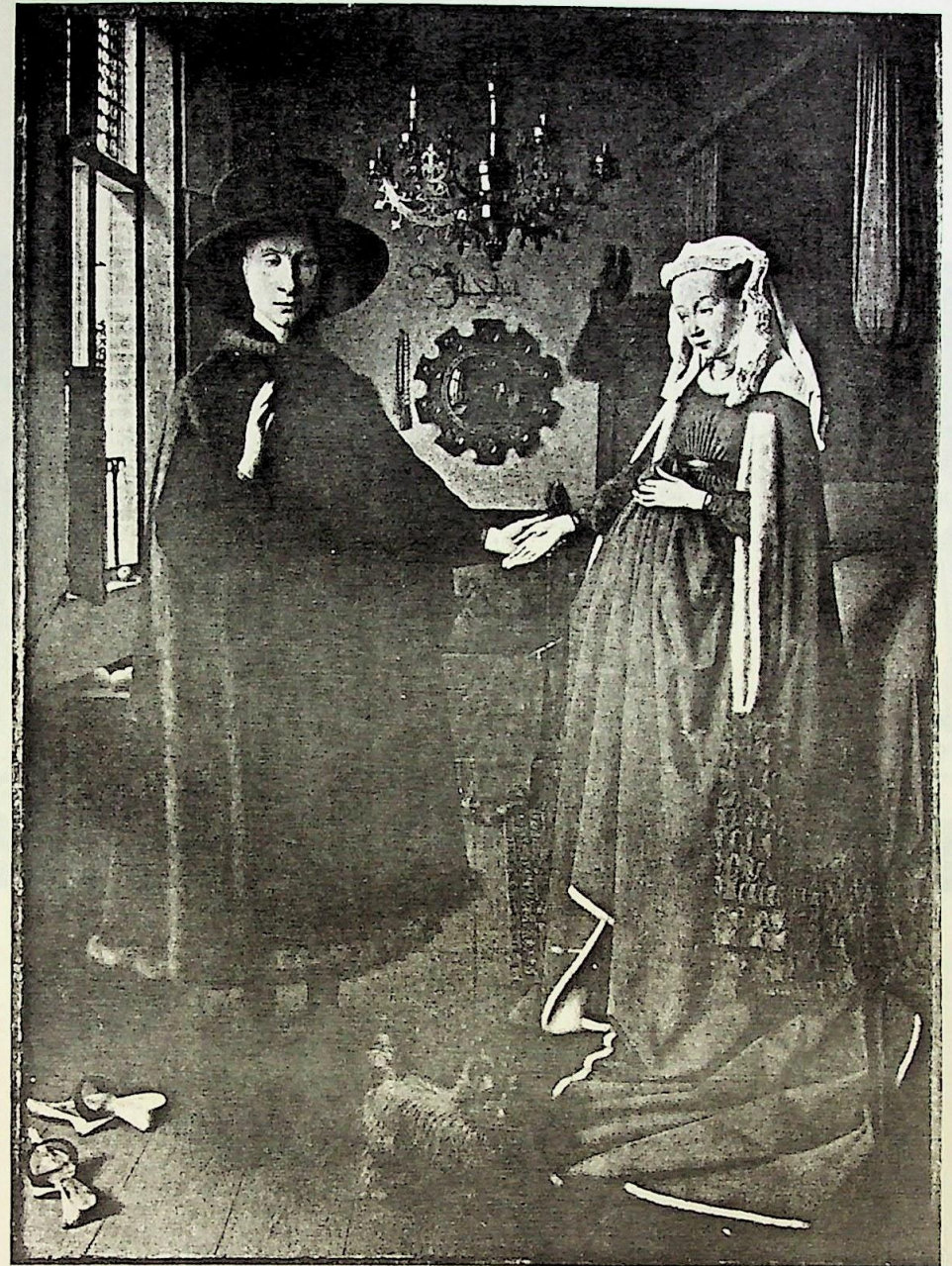


Fig. 25: Jan van Eyck, The Arnolfini Wedding Portrait,  
London, National Gallery





Fig. 26: Jan van Eyck, Annunciation,  
detail of Ghent Altarpiece, Fig.2



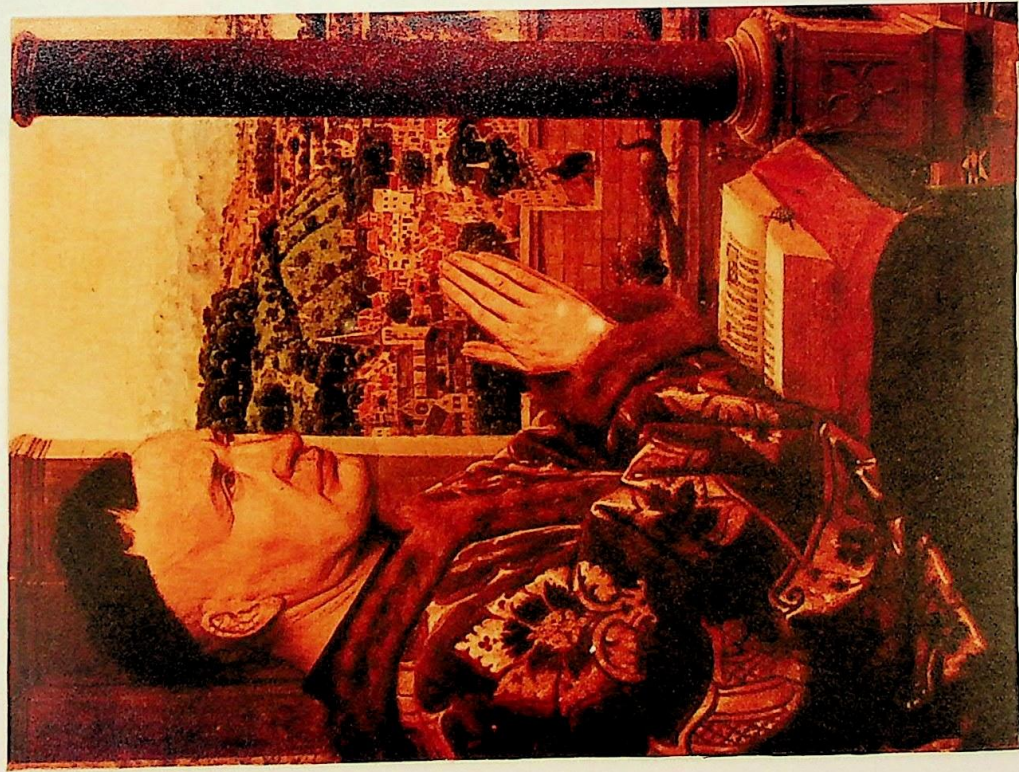


Fig. 27: Jan van Eyck, detail of Fig.1

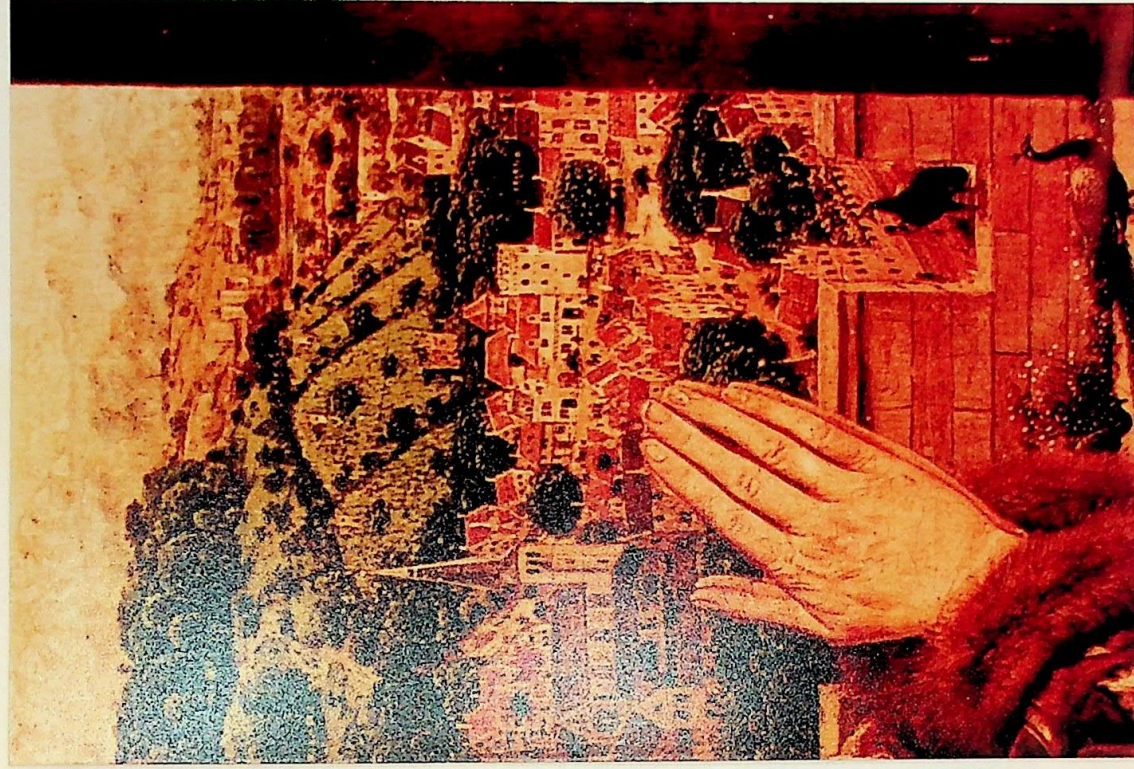


Fig. 28: Jan van Eyck, detail of Fig.1



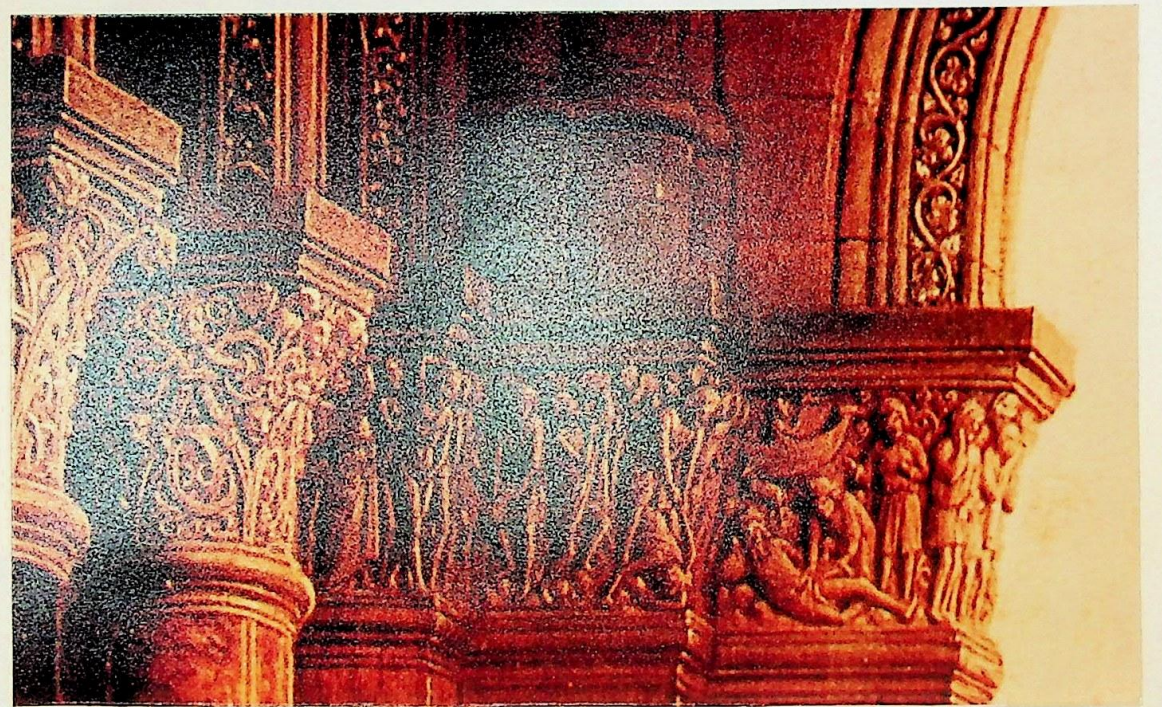


Fig. 29: Jan van Eyck, detail of Fig. 1





Fig. 30: Jan van Eyck, detail of Fig. 1



Fig. 31: Jan van Eyck, detail of Fig. 1





Fig. 32: King Charles and Pierre Salmon,  
Geneva, Bibl. publique et universitaire, ms. fr. 165

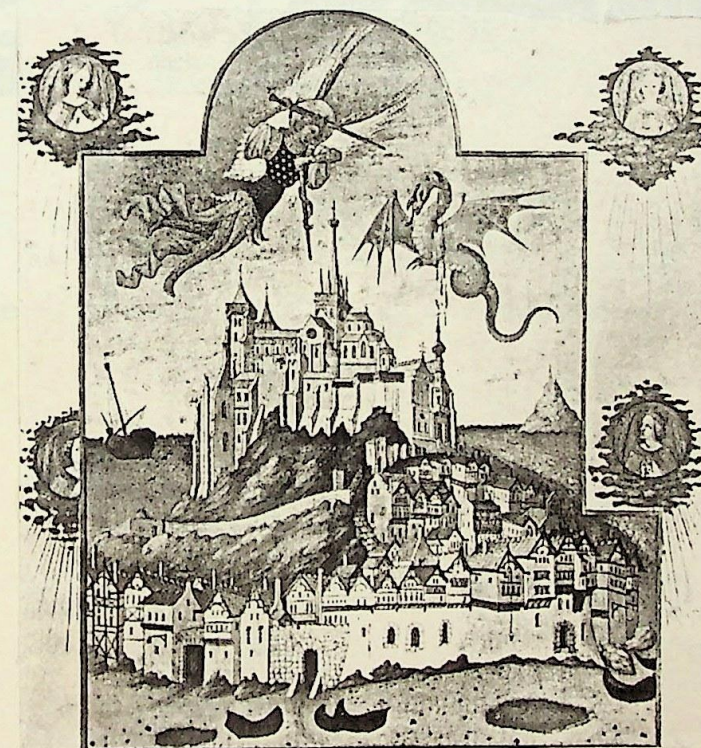


Fig. 33: Paul de Limbourg, St. Michael,  
Chantilly, Musee Conde



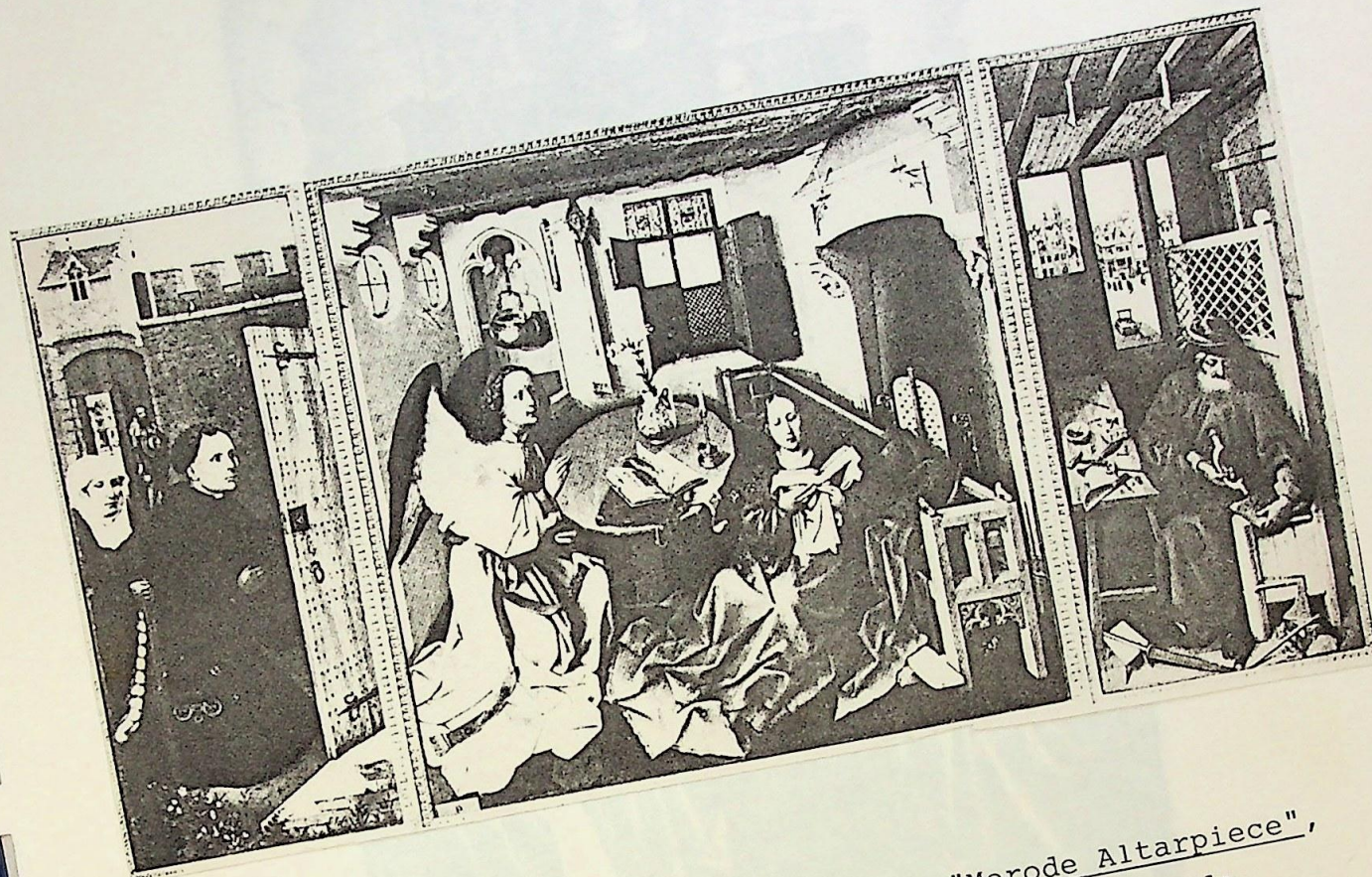


Fig. 34: The Master of Flemalle, The "Merode Altarpiece",  
formerly Westerloo-Tongerloo, Princess of Merode



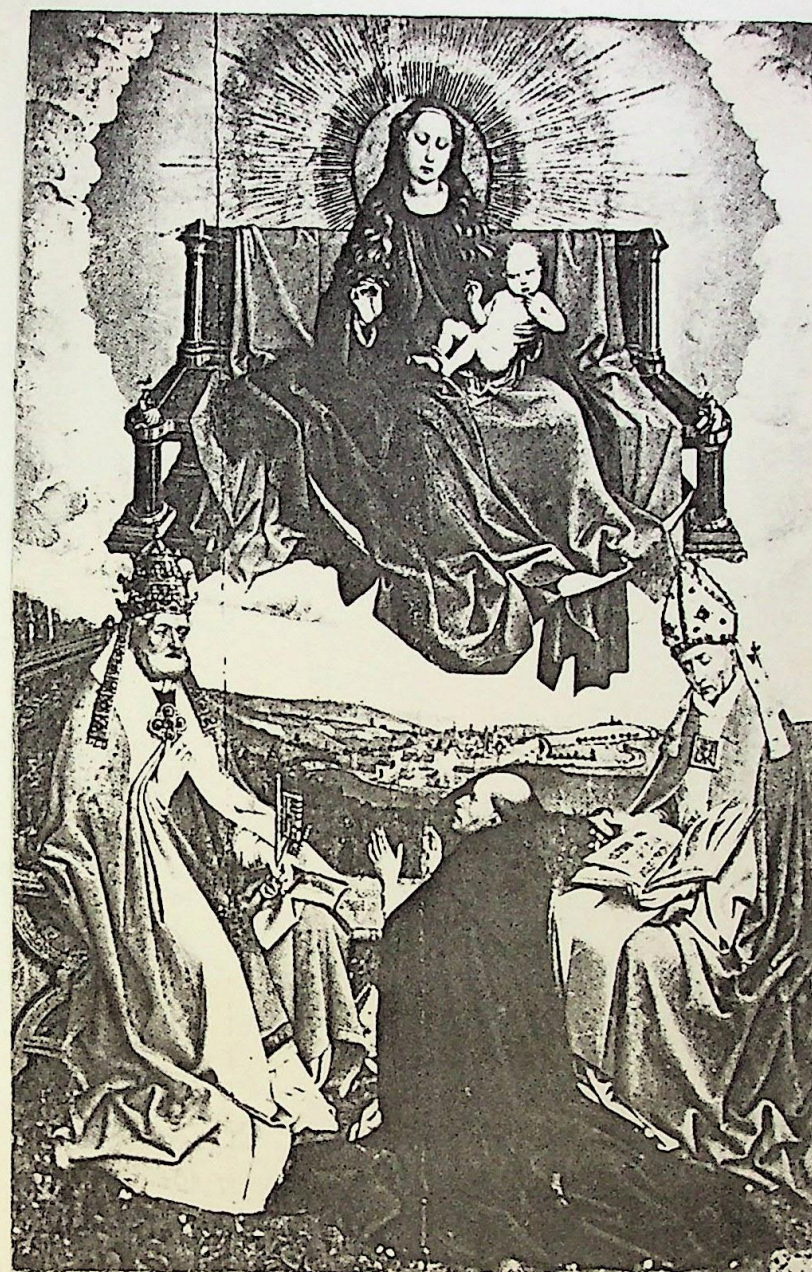


Fig. 35: Master of Flemalle, Madonna in a Glory,  
Aix en Provence, Musee Granet



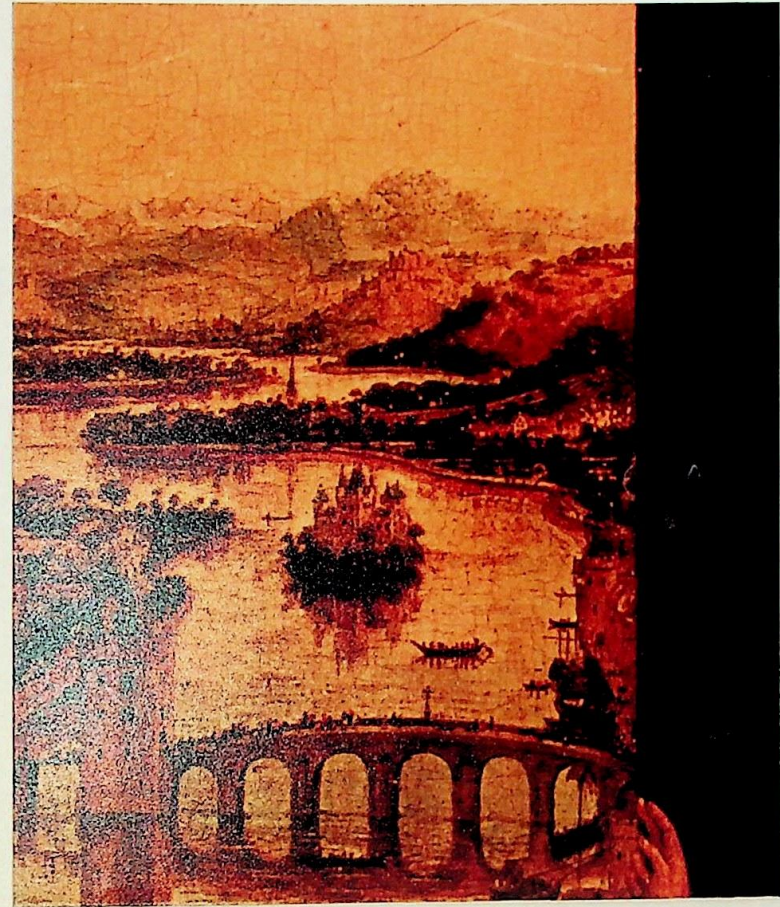


Fig. 36: Jan van Eyck, detail of Fig.1





Fig. 37: Jan van Eyck, detail of Fig. 1





Fig. 38: Rogier van der Weyden,  
St. Luke drawing the Portrait of the Virgin,  
Boston, Museum of Fine Arts





Fig. 39: Jan van Eyck, detail of Fig. 1