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THE FRIEDSAM ANNUNCIATION AND THE PROBLEM OF THE GHENT ALTARPIECE

By ERWIN PANOFSKY

IN 1932 the collection of Early Flemish paintings in the Metropolitan Museum of New York was enriched by a fine and rather enigmatical Annunciation acquired and formerly owned by Col. Michael Friedsam (Fig. 1). It has been tentatively attributed to Petrus Cristus, with the reservation, however, that it is "almost a van Eyck."¹

To the attribution to Petrus Cristus there are several objections. The Friedsam painting does not show the technical characteristics of the other works by this master (the handling of the medium being "more archaic," as I learn from an eminent American X-ray expert,² nor does it fit into his artistic development. Those who support the attribution to him, consider the Friedsam picture as a comparatively early work, which would account for its unusual "delicacy and translucency." But the earliest known pictures by Petrus Cristus, who was born at Baerle near the border of Holland and can be traced at Bruges as late as 1444, are, as a matter of fact, less akin to those of Jan van Eyck than are his late pictures. He begins with a comparatively soft and generalized manner, no less Dutch than Flemish (portrait of Sir Edward Grymestone in the London National Gallery, portrait of a Carthusian in the Bache collection in New York), and then gradually acquires both a deeper understanding of the van Eyck style and a thorough knowledge of the compositional types evolved in the School of Tournai, while his technique clarifies as well as hardens (the two Lamentations in the Metropolitan Museum and in the Brussels gallery, the St. Eligius, dated 1449, in the Philip Lehman collection in New York, the Berlin diptych of 1452). Not until as late as in the second half of the sixth decade does he become an orthodox imitator of Jan van Eyck, taking, however, the *later* style of the great master as his model (Frankfort Madonna with the Carthusian, dated 1457, "Onze Lieve Vrouw ten drooghen Boome," datable around 1462).³

1. Bryson Burroughs and Harry B. Wehle, *The Michael Friedsam Collection*, Section II of the *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, XXVII, 11 (November, 1932—also printed separately), pp. 14 ff., with illustration. The picture, allegedly coming from the collections of the Prince of Charleroi and the Duke of Burgundy, was in the collections of M. Parent and the Countess O' Gorman (both Paris), before it was purchased by Col. Friedsam, and was published for the first time in the Catalogue of a Loan Exhibition of Flemish Primitives in aid of the Free Milk Fund for Babies at Kleinberger's (Catalogue by H. G. Sperling, with a preface by M. J. Friedländer, pp. 28-29). Friedländer also considered it to be "particularly close to Jan van Eyck." Otherwise, it was but incidentally

mentioned by M. J. Friedländer, *Von Eyck bis Bruegel*, 2nd edition, 1921, p. 21, and *Die Altniederländische Malerei*, I, 1924, p. 158. The theory expounded in this article has been laid before the members and guests of the College Art Association in an address briefly summarized in *The New York Times* of March, 1934. I wish, however, to state once more that the attribution to Hubert van Eyck was suggested to me by my friend Dr. Hanns Swarzenski.

2. Mr. Alan Burroughs, who was kind enough to show me his shadowgraphs of other pictures by Petrus Cristus and the brothers van Eyck.

3. As to the chronology of Petrus Cristus cf. Otto Pächt in *Belvedere*, 1926, p. 155. Pächt's statements strike me as conclusive in that the Brussels Lamentation



FIG. 1—*New York, Metropolitan Museum: Annunciation, here Ascribed to Hubert van Eyck*

Thus, the Friedsam Annunciation is, on the one hand, too "Eyckian" to be considered as an early work of Petrus Cristus, and, on the other hand, too "archaic" in its composition, its coloring, and its perspective to be placed among his mature or late paintings. This purely chronological argument is corroborated by two essential factors: *quality* and *iconography*. Although the heads and some other parts are badly rubbed, and the beautiful blue of the Virgin's mantle has gone "sick," the Friedsam picture is definitely beyond the capabilities of Petrus Cristus, who, with all his skill and soundness, never achieved that peculiar richness and, if I may say so, that homogeneous density which distinguishes the works of the brothers van Eyck, and which is also discernible in the Friedsam Annunciation. Even when Petrus Cristus actually copied an Eyckian picture, the result is characterized by a certain emptiness and bareness, observable both in the two-dimensional pattern and in the visualization of space, which strikes us as a vacuum instead of as being filled with a dense chiaroscuro atmosphere, in spite of, or perhaps because of, the fact that Cristus had a fuller command of linear perspective than even Jan van Eyck had. Cristus' neat and orderly mind trusted geometrical accuracy rather than pictorial intuition,⁴ and in a jocular way one might say that if you take an Eyckian picture and deflate it by means of an air pump, the result is a Petrus Cristus. Thus, for example, the Last Judgment recently purchased by the Metropolitan Museum was copied by Petrus Cristus in his Berlin diptych of 1452. But while the Last Judgment in the Metropolitan Museum—certainly Eyckian in style, whoever its actual author may be⁵—shows a dense entangled crowd of figures, an amazing richness in chiaroscuro values, and what I may call a cosmic uproar, even in the earthly scenery where earth and sea give forth their dead, Petrus Cristus reduces and clarifies the composition by isolating a limited number of clean-cut groups and figures in a bare and empty space (Figs. 3 and 4). Moreover, he eliminates that mysterious lettering to convey theological ideas and even cabalistic notions in which so many Eyckian pictures abound.⁶

On the other hand, there is a close similarity between the Friedsam Annunciation

and kindred specimens are certainly comparatively early works, while the actual imitation of the van Eyck style sets in at a much later period and reaches its culminating point in such pictures as the Madonna "ten drooghen Boome" (published by G. Ring in *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, N. F. XXX (1919), pp. 75 ff.). It seems to me, however, that the previous view of Petrus Cristus' development, according to which an orthodox Eyckian style was superseded by the influence of the Tournai school, should not be simply reversed. The phase characterized by the emphatic influence of the Tournai school appears rather as an intermezzo lasting from about 1449 (St. Eligius) until the middle of the sixth decade. As to the actual existence of the Tournai school, contested by Renders in his well-known book, *La solution du problème van der Weyden-Flémalle-Campin*, I may refer my readers to K. Tolnai, *Der Ursprung des Stils des Jan van Eyck*, in *Münchener Jahrbuch d. bild. Kunst*, N. F., 1932, pp. 320 ff.; A. Burroughs in *Metropolitan Museum Studies*, 1932-1933, pp. 131 ff.; and L. Scheewe in *Zeitschrift f. Kunstgeschichte*, III (1934) pp. 208 ff.

4. Cf. G. I. Kern, *Grundzüge der linearperspektivischen Darstellung bei Jan van Eyck*, 1904, and in *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft*, 1912, pp. 27 ff. and 268 ff.; furthermore, E. Panofsky, *Die Perspektive, als symbolische Form in Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg*, 1924-1925, pp. 256 ff. I think that the Madonna with St. Barbara, St. Elizabeth of Hungary, and a Carthusian Monk, in the Rothschild collection, which with its rather stiff and sweetish figures and its unimaginative landscape (the most attractive elements are copied from the Rolin Virgin in the Louvre), should never have been attributed to Jan van Eyck, is also a work by Petrus Cristus; all the more so as the latter apparently maintained particularly close relations with the Carthusian order (Madonnas in Berlin and Frankfurt, Portrait of a Carthusian Monk in the Bache Collection in New York).

5. Cf. below, p. 471.

6. Cf. W. H. James Weale and M. W. Brockwell, *The Van Eycks and their Art*, 1912, pp. 44 and 153 ff.; and P. Durrieu, in *Gazette des beaux arts*, 1920, I, pp. 77 ff.



FIG. 2.—Richmond, Cook Collection: *The Three Maries at the Tomb*, by Hubert van Eyck (*Replica?*)

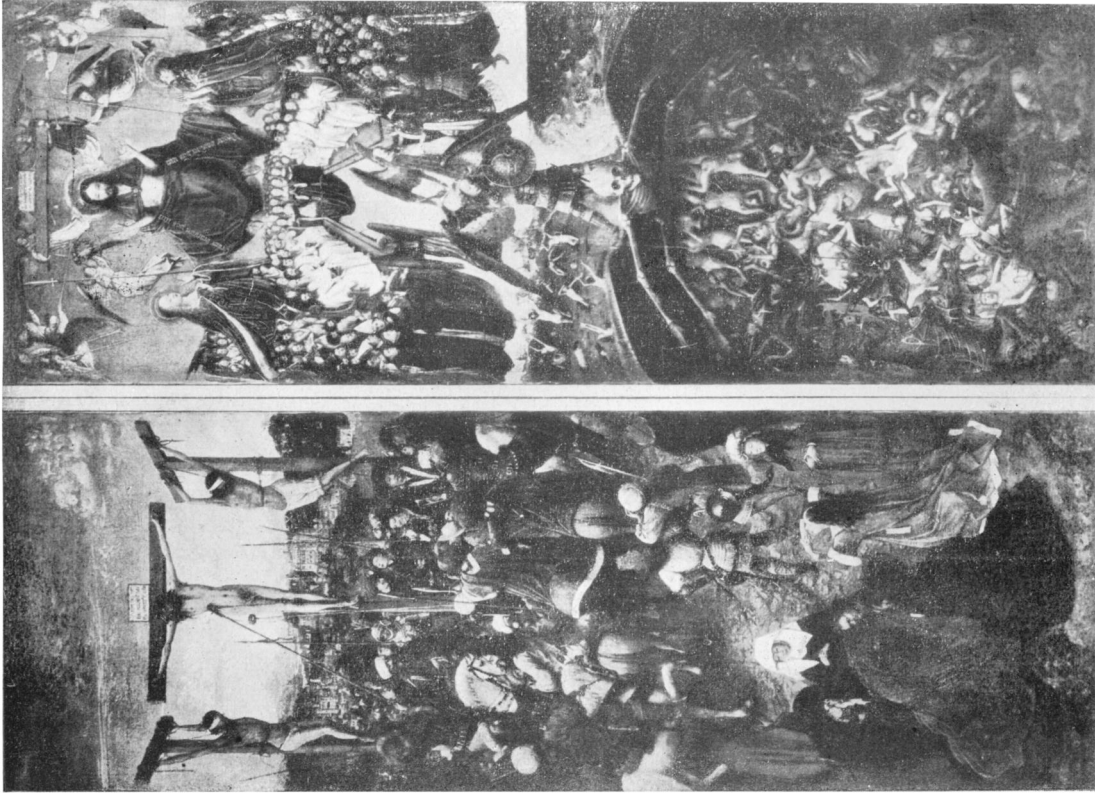


FIG. 3—New York, Metropolitan Museum: *Crucifixion and Last Judgment*, by Jan van Eyck, or Follower

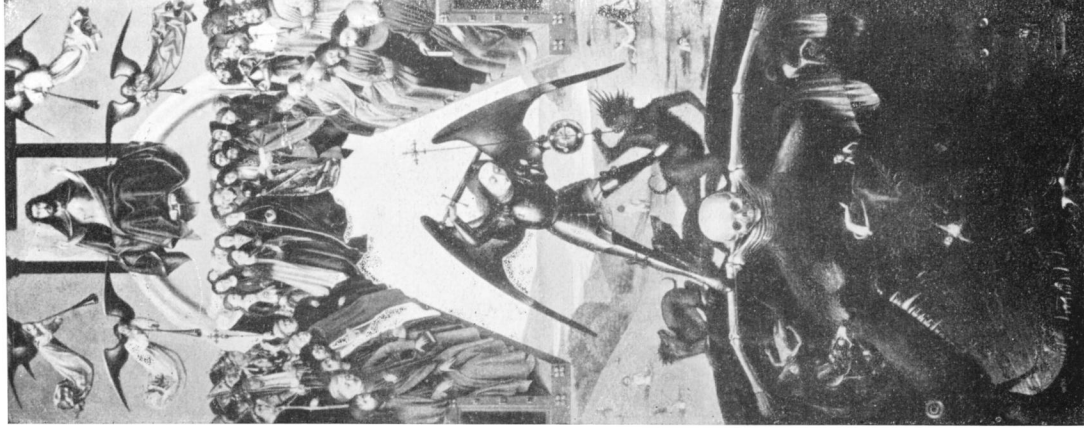


FIG. 4—Berlin, Deutsches Museum: *Last Judgment, Annunciation, and Nativity*, by Petrus Christus



and the Three Maries at the Tomb in the Cook collection (Fig. 2), which is either an Eyckian original earlier than anything in the Ghent Altarpiece, that is to say prior to 1425 or 1430, or a replica of such an original.⁷ But even in the latter case this replica—executed well before 1472 because it was subsequently provided with the escutcheon of Philippe de Commynes whose estates were confiscated in that year—would reflect the stylistic characteristics of its original to the same extent as does, for instance, the Miraflores altarpiece. The picture, full as it is of that “disguised symbolism” which is so characteristic of Eyckian art⁸ (apart from the Hebrew inscriptions in the garments I should like to mention the red marble lid of the gray sarcophagus, which obviously alludes to the “red stone” worshipped in the Pantocrator Church at Constantinople because the dead Christ was believed to have been embalmed on it, and the sun which rises in the left upper corner of the picture to symbolize the Resurrection, while the general light comes from the right,⁹ this Cook picture is the closest stylistic comparison I know of the Friedsam Annunciation. The form and modeling of the hands, especially that of the angel in the Cook picture compared to that of the Gabriel in the Friedsam Annunciation, the shape and proportion of the ears (as far as discernible in the New York panel),¹⁰ the type of the profile heads (cf. the Magdalen in the Cook picture with the Gabriel in the Friedsam Annunciation) are very similar in both paintings, although the Cook picture is somewhat less compact—fluffier, so to speak—than the Friedsam panel. This is true even of the plants, which in the Friedsam picture are portrayed with so much precision that they can easily be identified by botanists, whereas they are more generalized in the Three Maries; but they show a similar taste and feeling in both instances (cf. the sweet woodruff seen behind the right wing of the Gabriel (Fig. 8) with the fig-treelike plant growing behind the sarcophagus).¹¹ In both pictures South European pottery occurs in unusual places, namely the flower vase in the Annunciation and one of the ointment jars, a regular “alborello,” in the Cook picture. It is a significant fact that in a fifteenth century variation on the latter that “alborello” is replaced by the usual golden box: it was a motif too personally Eyckian to be taken over in a more conventional replica.¹² The same taste for exotic pottery shows also in the

7. Cf. Weale and Brockwell, *op. cit.*, pp. 67 ff., and M. W. Brockwell, *Abridged Catalogue of the Pictures at Doughty House*...., 1932, pp. 67 ff. The Cook picture was first ascribed to Hubert van Eyck by G. Hulin de Loo in the *Catalogue of the Bruges Exhibition of 1902* (no. 7). His attribution was, and is still, a matter of controversy, and a decision is difficult because of the unsatisfactory condition of the panel (note particularly the head and hair of the angel). Personally, I feel that it is an excellent replica rather than an original, but that it reveals, even so, the “sovereign power of genius,” as M. J. Friedländer puts it, and that this genius is that of Hubert van Eyck.

8. Cf. E. Panofsky, *Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini Portrait* in *Burlington Magazine*, LXIV, pp. 117 ff., and Tolnai, *loc. cit.* Some suggestions pointing in the same direction are also to be found in K. Smits, *Iconographie van de Nederlandsche Primitieven*, 1933.

9. Cf. Weale and Brockwell, *loc. cit.* As for the “red stone” (λίθος ἐρυθρός), cf. G. Millet, *Recher-*

ches sur l'iconographie de l'Évangile, 1916, pp. 498 ff. The symbol of a rising sun in connection with the Resurrection of Christ is also used in Dürer's woodcut B. 45.

10. The ears in Petrus Cristus' paintings are generally characterized by narrow proportions and by the fact that they are separated from the cheek by a marked vertical groove.

11. I am indebted to Mrs. Eleanor Marquand for her expert help in matters botanical.

12. Illustrated, e. g., in Weale and Brockwell, *op. cit.*, pl. XII. It is also remarkable that the author of this picture shrank from taking over the picturesque figures of the three soldiers, apparently echoing the fanciful types evolved in French and Italo-French book illumination (note particularly the pseudo-classic armor of the soldier crouching in front of the sarcophagus and the fantastic headgear of the others), and replaced them by one rather commonplace figure. On the other hand, he felt obliged to insert the figure

beautiful Spanish tiles, partly ornamental and partly inscribed with the opening words of the Eastertide anthem of the Blessed Virgin, REGINA CELI LET (ARE), which are seen in the building of the Friedsam Annunciation.¹³

The linear perspective, too, shows in both pictures what I should like to call archaic overcomplication and audacity, fundamentally different from the self-assured moderation and soberness characteristic of the perspective in the paintings by Petrus Cristus.¹⁴ The building in the Friedsam Annunciation is presented in that bold oblique view which is much more frequent in late fourteenth and early fifteenth century painting (both in Italy and in the North as far as it was influenced by the Italian Trecento) than in the "classic" style of both Italian and Flemish art as formulated around 1430. The vanishing lines of the front and the porch converge already at one single point, but the vanishing lines of the tiled floor do not yet conform; the windows seen in the interior of the building form a perspective unit by themselves, and the top of the big pointed arch bridging the entrance does not lie on the same vertical axis as does the top of the crocketed molding with which the arch is encircled. A similar contradiction between daring purpose and insufficiency of technical means is to be found in the Cook picture, where the right front of the sarcophagus is also "correctly" foreshortened, while the vanishing lines of the upper surface scarcely converge at all, and the lid, placed at an irregular angle, appears incredibly long.

Next to the Cook picture, the closest stylistic analogies to the Friedsam Annunciation can be observed in the lower part of the Adoration of the Lamb in the Ghent altarpiece (Figs. 7, 24), in comparison with which the style of the Friedsam picture is a little more archaic while it is advanced in comparison with the Three Maries at the Tomb. The head of the Magdalen, which seemed to be somewhat similar to that of the Gabriel in the Friedsam Annunciation, recurs almost literally in the left group of worshippers in the Adoration of the Lamb (Fig. 7, back row, third from the left; cf. also the fantastic headgears with those found in the Cook picture). The vegetation in the middle foreground of the Adoration shows the same characteristic qualities as in both the Cook Three Maries and the Friedsam Annunciation, namely a peculiar luxuriance and richness in detail, yet a lack of the sparkling substantiality and, at the same time, atmospheric softness that strike the

of Christ, the substitution of the scene of the Three Maries for the actual Resurrection having become obsolete in the fifteenth century. A similar combination can be found, for instance, in the Munich Resurrection ascribed to Dirk Bouts (M. J. Friedländer, *Die Altniederländische Malerei*, III, 1925, pl. XXIX) or in the Cologne Resurrection by the Master of the Lyversberg Passion (particularly reminiscent of both the Cook picture and its altered copy); the more usual thing was, however, to show the Three Maries only as small figures approaching from the background.

13. A similar glorification is to be found in the Ghent altarpiece, where the panel with the Maria Annunciata is surmounted by a lunette with the prophet Zacharias, whose scroll bears the inscription *Exulta filia Syo iubila, Ecce, rex tuus venit* (Zach. ix: 9).

14. It is not by accident that Petrus Cristus was

the first Northern painter who made all the vanishing lines of a three-dimensional unit meet in one mathematical point (cf. Kern, *loc. cit.*), and that one of his few real innovations consists of the invention of the "Raum-Eck Portrait," showing the person in a perspective space determined by the rear wall, one lateral wall, and a section of the ceiling, with its foreshortened beams (Grymestone Portrait, Drawing of a Falconer in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut at Frankfurt, attributed to Petrus Cristus by Panofsky, *Die Perspektive als symbolische Form*), for Cristus handles perspective with unfaltering skill and is in this respect superior to Jan van Eyck. It is, however, significant that he applies it exclusively to a "normal view," that is, to buildings and rooms defined by frontal and orthogonal planes, and refrains from such oblique views as can be seen in the Friedsam picture.



FIG. 5—*Gabriel. Detail of the Annunciation Shown in Fig. 1*



FIG. 6—*The Virgin and St. John the Baptist*, by Hubert van Eyck,
from the Ghent Altarpiece Shown in Fig. 24



FIG. 7—*Detail of the Adoration of the Lamb*, by Hubert van Eyck,
from the Ghent Altarpiece Shown in Fig. 24

beholder in the scenery appearing in the further background of the Adoration of the Lamb (and its four wings), or in the landscape prospect of such pictures as the Rollin Virgin in the Louvre. The figure of the Virgin Mary in the Friedsam picture, characterized as it is by its thickset proportions, combined with a certain flatness and somewhat lethargic simplicity of outline (similar qualities to those observed in Belgian and Lower Rhenish sculptures of about 1410 to 1430),¹⁵ resembles the standing figures in the foreground of the Adoration of the Lamb, while the draperies of the Gabriel are similar to those of the kneeling prophets in this picture, as well as to those of the enthroned Virgin in the upper zone of the Ghent altarpiece (Figs. 5, 6, 7). The Fountain of Life in the Adoration of the Lamb, finally, shows a perspective construction characterized by the same mixture of bold intensity and downright faultiness that struck us in both the sarcophagus in the Cook picture and the building in the Friedsam Annunciation.

Thus, we are led to the conjecture that the Friedsam Annunciation, far from being a work by Petrus Cristus, was executed by one of the brothers van Eyck, presumably by him who was responsible for the Three Maries at the Tomb and the lower part of the Adoration of the Lamb, and is certainly prior to the Annunciation in the Ghent altarpiece, which is unanimously acknowledged to be one of the latest items in this gigantic composition, or rather conglomeration of pictures. This much now can be proved, apart from other considerations, by purely iconographical means.

In the Mérode altarpiece by the Master of Flémalle (Fig. 27, around 1425) a new "realistic" interpretation of the Annunciation is manifested. The meeting between Gabriel and the Virgin takes place in a unified Flemish interior, the "thalamus Virginis" of which I have spoken in a previous article;¹⁶ and Jan van Eyck was zealous to take over this new conception in the Annunciation in the Ghent altarpiece, directly influenced by the Mérode altarpiece, as has been conclusively proved by Tolnai.¹⁷ Petrus Cristus, of course, retained this modern arrangement in his Berlin Annunciation of 1452, while emptying and systematizing the spatial environment in his usual way (Fig. 4).

The Friedsam Annunciation, however, shows a totally different arrangement. The Virgin is portrayed standing in the porch of an ecclesiastical building symbolizing the Temple, to the staff of which she was attached as a kind of Jewish vestal, and the angel approaches her from the exterior.

This type of composition originated in Byzantine art¹⁸ and was therefore particularly frequent in Italian Dugento and Trecento painting, where we find numerous Annunciations showing the Virgin in a more or less elaborate architectonic structure or shrine, while Gabriel approaches her from the open (Figs. 9 and 10). The shrine of the Virgin, originally framing or foiling rather than actually enclosing

15. Illustrated in A. Goldschmidt, *Gotische Madonnenstatuen*, 1923, figs. 21 and 26.

16. *Burlington Magazine*, 1933, *loc. cit.*

17. Tolnai, in *Münchener Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst*, *loc. cit.*; while Smits, *loc. cit.*, erroneously ascribes the invention of the bourgeois interior scheme to Jan van Eyck.

The iconography of the Annunciation in the

fourteenth and fifteenth centuries will be exhaustively discussed by Mr. David Robb in an article to be published in this periodical, and to which I should like to refer my readers for further information. In the meantime, I wish to thank Mr. Robb for his generous coöperation in the present article.

18. Cf. G. Millet, *loc. cit.*, pp. 67 ff.

the figure, developed gradually into a full-sized, emphatically three-dimensional, and richly ornamented building. It often shows in that oblique view of which I have spoken before and which entails daring foreshortenings, and the two figures are accordingly placed on a receding diagonal (Fig. 12).¹⁹

In the Northern countries this exterior type was adopted, significantly enough, by those artists who were the exponents of a definitely Italianizing tendency, and was to become a telltale feature of that second wave of Italian influences on French and Franco-Flemish art which can be observed in the last quarter of the fourteenth century. It occurs, for instance, in the Dijon altarpiece by Melchior Broederlam (Fig. 14) and in the Très Riches Heures de Chantilly by the brothers Limburg (Fig. 13).

The Northern artists working on more indigenous or national lines endeavored instead to unite the Virgin with the angel Gabriel in one coherent interior. Hereby a difference can be observed between the non-Italianate *French* masters, on the one hand, and Flemish (and, to some extent, German) masters, on the other. The French masters show an increasing tendency to invest the setting of the Annunciation with an ecclesiastical character, and when the unified interior finally appeared—which achievement was due to the ingenious Master of the Heures du Maréchal de Boucicaut²⁰—it assumed the form of a regular Gothic church, and the Virgin was often shown engaged in the performance of a ritual before the altar (Figs. 17 and 18).

Outside of France, however, and most particularly in Flanders, the more progressive artists gradually elaborated the scenery into a “realistic” bourgeois interior, thus paving the way to the conception ultimately achieved by the Master of Flémalle (Fig. 27).

The iconography of the Friedsam Annunciation is indubitably based on the exterior scheme, enriched and remodeled as it was in the outstanding specimens of Franco-Flemish Italianism around 1400. Both the Dijon altarpiece by Melchior Broederlam and the Annunciation in the Très Riches Heures de Chantilly are to be counted among the ancestors of the Friedsam picture as far as iconography, perspective, and general arrangement are concerned; and while the Chantilly miniature (Fig. 13) resembles the Friedsam Annunciation in that the Virgin is shown as a standing figure and is placed in the entrance of a foreshortened church or oratorio, the Broederlam panel (Fig. 14) foreshadows it with respect to such architectonic features as the recessed porch with its tiled floor and bench, and above all with respect to such astounding chiaroscuro as appears in the interior.

The comparative kinship between the Broederlam Annunciation and the Friedsam picture is interesting in two respects. From the point of view of general historical evolution we may infer that the regional Belgian roots of the “modern” Flemish style should not be overlooked in favor of the French ones, although this regional

19. Clm. 23215, fol. 65v, prior to 1378. Cf. P. Toesca, *La Pittura e la miniatura nella Lombardia*, 1912, fig. 214.

20. Cf. P. Toesca in *Rassegna d'arte*, 1917, pp. 120 ff., figs. 3 and 5. The Morgan manuscript M. 173 (we reproduce a part of fol. 16r in Fig. 18),

though rather provincial in style, shows the influence of the Master of the Heures du Maréchal Boucicaut in many other instances as well; its author shares even the master's peculiar predilection for swans, because of which he was formerly called the *Maitre aux cygnes*.

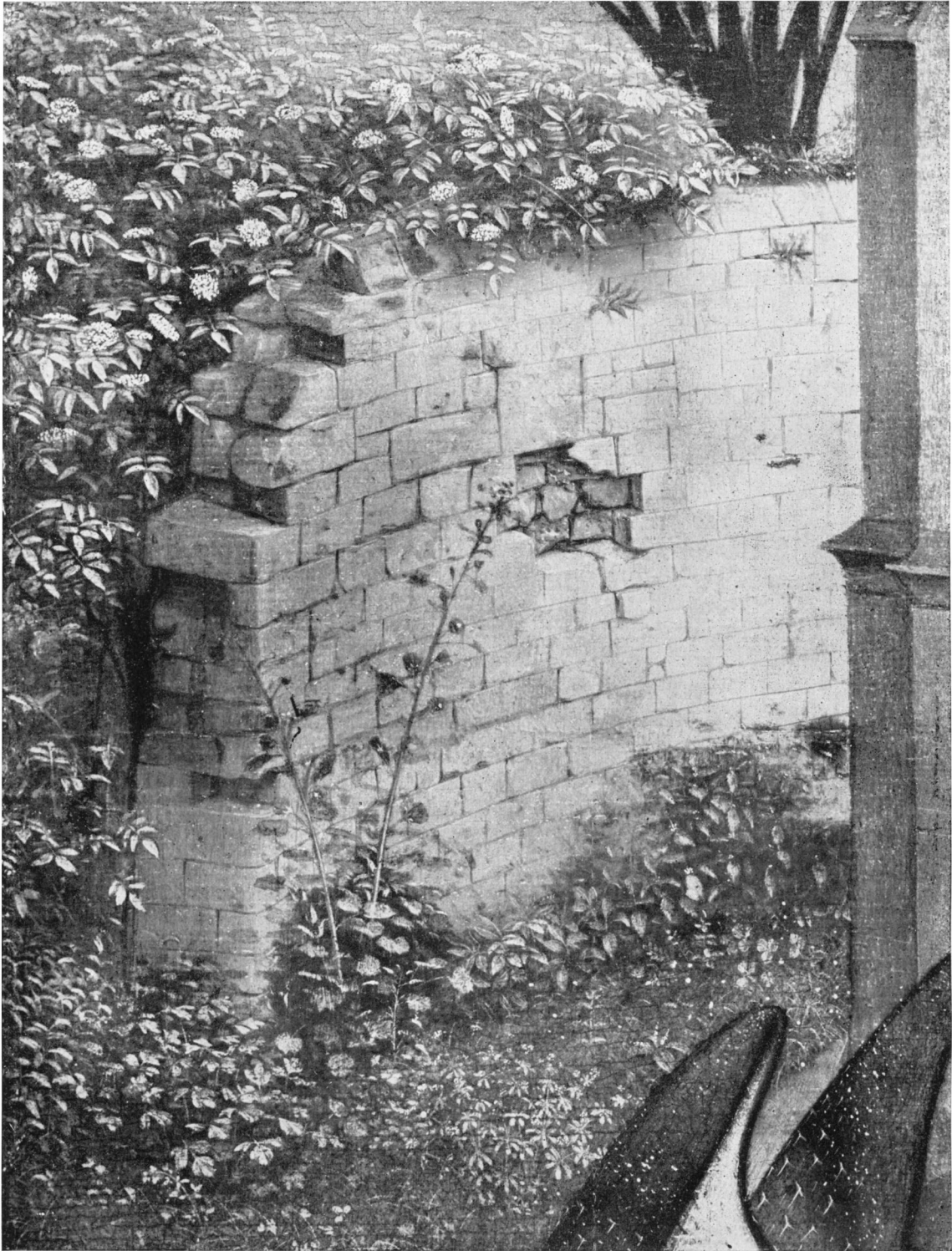


FIG. 8—*Detail of Background of the Annunciation Shown in Fig. 1*



FIG. 9—*New York, Metropolitan Museum: Annunciation. Detail of Painting by the School of Segna di Buonaventura*



FIG. 10—*Private Ownership: Annunciation, by Follower of Duccio*



FIG. 11—*Volterra, Pinacoteca: Annunciation, by Luca Signorelli*



FIG. 12—*Munich, Staatsbibliothek: Annunciation, by Giovanni di Benedetto da Como*

tradition can be substantiated more easily in sculpture than in painting.²¹ The very fact that the Duke of Burgundy thought so much of a local Belgian painter that he sent the wings of the Dijon altarpiece to Ypres to be painted is sufficient proof of the high standard of the pre-Eyckian Belgian school, and though we do not know much of Broederlam's successors (owing to conditions so unfavorable that even Broederlam's altarpiece itself would have scarcely survived, had it not been exported to Dijon), their art may be the missing link between the style both of the brothers van Eyck and of the Master of Flémalle, and that of those French panels and miniatures which after all are not quite a sufficient foundation for the style of Flemish fifteenth century painting.²²

From the point of view of our particular problem, the comparison between the Broederlam Annunciation and the Friedsam picture corroborates the conjecture that the latter is certainly prior to the Annunciation in the Ghent altarpiece and hardly much later than the Mérode altarpiece.

In Italy the fourteenth century exterior type persisted even in High Renaissance art.²³ Signorelli's Volterra Annunciation of 1491, e. g., is nothing but a "modernized" variation of the compositional type represented by many Dugento and Trecento paintings (cf. Fig. 10 with Fig. 11), and the French fifteenth century painters were extremely reluctant to adopt the bourgeois interior type, which they did not accept before they had completely surrendered to the irresistible power of the "modern" Flemish realism.²⁴ A Flemish panel painter, however, and particularly a panel painter as skilful and advanced as the author of the Friedsam picture, could not have

21. Cf. especially P. Rolland, *La double école de Tournai* in *Mélanges Hulin de Loo*, 1931, pp. 296 ff. The connection between painting and sculpture, as ascertained by Rolland in regard to the Master of Flémalle and Roger van der Weyden, can be verified also in the Eyckian style, not only with respect to the school of Dijon (cf. R. Josefson in *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, VIII (1905), pp. 198 ff.), but also with respect to the regional Belgian schools. The unpretentiously elaborate and convincingly individualized portraits on the tombstone of the goldsmith Isaacs and his wife in the Cathedral of Tournai (both died in 1401) are certainly as close to the donors' portraits in the Ghent altarpiece as (or even closer than) Claus Sluter's much-quoted jamb figures of Philippe le Hardi and his wife at the Chartreuse de Champmol.

22. Though Tolnai (*loc. cit.*) may be right in assuming a connection between the paintings by the Master of Flémalle and the miniatures by Jacquemart de Hesdin, it must be said that the stylistic gap between these two phenomena is no less wide than that between Jan van Eyck and the Master of the Heures du Maréchal de Boucicaut. It is possible, or even probable, that this gap was bridged by a tradition deriving from such masters as Broederlam (however much these masters were in turn indebted to their French forerunners)—a tradition carried on by those innumerable Belgian painters mentioned in treasury accounts and guilds' lists, to whom no picture can be

attributed, and finally leading to both the school of Tournai and the school of Ghent and Bruges.

23. This was also pointed out by Smits, *loc. cit.*, though his explanation of the exterior type, allegedly resulting from the fact that the Italian "buuten leeft," is hardly satisfactory.

24. Before this happened, the French illuminators and painters retained (and often intermixed) their traditional iconographical schemes, namely: 1—the church interior types as shown in our Figs. 17 and 18 (this is even true of the Hours of Étienne Chevalier by Jean Fouquet, our Fig. 19, although the figures show an unmistakable influence of the tradition based on the Mérode altarpiece); 2—the Italianate exterior type (cf. for instance the Heures de Louis Duc de Savoie, illustrated in H. Martin, *Les Joyaux de l'Enluminure à la Bibliothèque Nationale*, 1928, pl. 65, or the Morgan manuscript M. 157, our Fig. 15 (fol. 57r), where the conspicuous altar reveals, however, the influence of the Boucicaut tradition); 3—a scheme which may be called the anteroom type, because the angel Gabriel enters the apartment of the Virgin from an antechamber. This last scheme is due to the fact that Jean Pucelle appropriated Duccio's Annunciation of the Death of the Virgin for the Annunciation proper (cf. Bella Martens, *Meister Francke*, 1929, p. 85 and figs. 25 and 26); and it persisted with many interesting changes, though essentially unaltered, throughout the fourteenth century and even farther. The well-known Annunciation in Aix-en-Provence is a crossbreed of this anteroom type with the church interior type.

avoided adopting the bourgeois interior type, had he been in a position to make himself familiar with it.

After around 1430 there is, so far as I know, not a single Annunciation of comparatively high quality in Flemish panel painting in which this bourgeois interior type is not adopted, excepting, of course, those altarpiece shutters in which the angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary are shown as isolated figures in grisaille so as to convey the impression of statues or high reliefs. Apart from these, the pre-Flémallesque types linger only in works of a definitely provincial or downright *rétardataire* character, as is the case with some embroideries, tapestries, engravings, and miniatures (Fig. 16).²⁵

In one respect, however, the Friedsam Annunciation emphatically differs from its forerunners, especially the Broederlam panel, and this is, in my opinion, another point in favor of its attribution to one of the brothers van Eyck. On the corner of the building to the Virgin's left, the Broederlam picture shows a statue of Moses characterized by his horns, while on her right is the statue of another prophet whom we can safely identify with Isaiah, intrinsically connected as he was with the miraculous birth of the Saviour (this tradition, based on Is. vii: 14, as appearing on the scroll in our Fig. 29, can be traced back to the very beginning of Christian art). It is needless to say that this antithesis signifies the contrast between the Old Testament and the New Testament, all the more so as behind the statue of Isaiah there emerges a Gothic gable crowned by the sculpture of a winged angel. In other instances the contrast between the Old Testament and the New Testament is indicated by other antitheses of a similar kind (in the Chantilly miniature, e. g., Isaiah is contrasted with a definitely Jewish prophet characterized by his curiously pointed headgear, and in the well-known Aix altarpiece with Jeremiah,²⁶ or is even directly visualized by the figure of the Church and the Synagogue flanking the Annunciation scene on either side, as is the case with the Basle altarpiece by Konrad Witz executed about 1435 (Fig. 23). But whatever symbol may be chosen: the figure representing the Old Testament is always placed to the Virgin's left, for the contrast between the two Testaments implies, of course, an opposition between two values, one superior to the other; and it is a fundamental rule in almost every kind of symbolism that the left side ("sinister" in Latin) bears unfavorable implications.²⁷

Now we can fully understand the Friedsam Annunciation. For what was an obvious symbolism in the Broederlam wing, the Chantilly miniature, and the Aix altarpiece,

25. Cf. the forthcoming article by Robb. A typical instance is the Annunciation in the so-called da Costa Hours, illustrated in Fig. 16 (Fol. 129v); this manuscript (Morgan Library, M. 399) was executed for Manuel I, possibly in Portugal or Spain, by a Flemish master who was familiar with both the formula of Gerard David (Metropolitan Museum Annunciation) and the tradition illustrated in Fig. 14, and so much adhered to the latter that he combined the bourgeois interior (including the Nuptial Bed) with a flamboyant shrine for the Virgin alone. The Prado Annunciation, often ascribed to the Master of Flémalle and, if this is correct, antedating the Mérode altarpiece (M. J. Friedländer, *Die Altniederländische Malerei*, II, 1924, pl. XLV) is, in my opinion, rather to be ascribed to a provincial (French or Savoyard) imitator, who retrans-

formed the composition of the Mérode altarpiece according to the exterior type, while almost literally copying the figures. The case would then be comparable to that of the Fouquet miniature in which Flémallesque figures are placed in a church interior à la Boucicaut.

26. Cf. the wings of the Aix Annunciation, now preserved in the Cook Collection (Brockwell, *loc. cit.*, pp. 15 ff.

27. Instances are too numerous and well known to be enumerated. Suffice it to recall the iconography of the Last Judgment, the Crucifixion (the two thieves), Church and Synagogue, the Wise and Foolish Virgins, and the stage setting of the frequent disputations between Vices and Virtues.

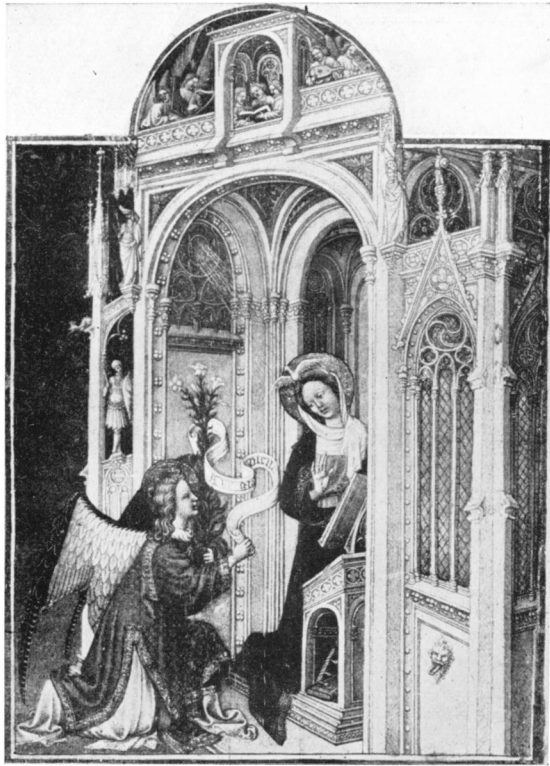


FIG. 13—*Chantilly, Musée Condé:*
Annunciation from Très Riches
Heures, by the Limburg Brothers



FIG. 14—*Dijon, Musée Municipal:*
Annunciation, by Melchior
Broederlam



FIG. 15—*New York, Morgan Library:*
Annunciation, by a French Illuminator



FIG. 16—*New York, Morgan Library:*
Annunciation by a Flemish (?) Illuminator



FIG. 17—*Florence, Corsini Library: Annunciation, by the Master of the Heures du Maréchal de Boucicaut*



FIG. 18—*New York, Morgan Library: Annunciation, by the Master of the Heures du Maréchal de Boucicaut*



FIG. 19—*Chantilly, Musée Condé: Annunciation from the Book of Hours of Étienne Chevalier, by Jean Fouquet*

let alone the altarpiece by Konrad Witz, here gives way to that "disguised symbolism" which strikes us in the Eyckian works. Upon examining the Friedsam picture more closely we are surprised by the fact that the architecture is deliberately asymmetrical. One side, to the Virgin's right, is Gothic, the other side is Romanesque, that is to say, an outmoded style is contrasted with a more recent one, in order to express the difference between the two dispensations (even today Synagogues are usually "Romanesque," while most Christian churches are "Gothic").²⁸ The motive

28. In W. Körte's interesting pamphlet, *Die Wiederaufnahme romanischer Bauformen in der niederländischen und deutschen Malerei des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, Diss. Leipzig, 1930, perhaps too little emphasis is placed on the iconographical aspects of the "revival of Romanesque architecture" in Flemish fifteenth century painting and its historical antecedents in French and Franco-Flemish fourteenth century art. It is to be hoped that Mr. Alexander C. Soper, to whom I am indebted for his coöperation, will publish an article on the subject. During the fourteenth century, the assimilation of Italian Trecento art, setting in as early as the third decade (Jean Pucelle), had led, among other things, to an invasion of those Romanesque motives in which Trecento art abounds (such as round-arched windows and arcades, recessed portals, and arched corbel tables; the well-known *Térence des Ducs*, Bibl. de l'Arsenal ms. 664, is particularly rich in such features). Thus, Northern art had now a choice between the indigenous Gothic style and the imported Romanesque forms. During a transitional period (*Très Riches Heures de Chantilly*, for example), these two elements were often fused into a fantastic or imaginary unity; but with the development of fifteenth century "realism" the essential difference between them was realized, and the Romanesque style came to be recognized as something "different" from ordinary contemporary architecture. The Romanesque forms were gradually extricated from the fantastic structures appearing in the more or less Italianate pictures and book illuminations, and rediscovered, so to speak, in two concrete phenomena equally remote from the contemporary flamboyant Gothic: first, in Oriental architecture, especially in that of the Holy Land; secondly, in the indigenous architecture of the past. In fact, the Romanesque style contains infinitely more Oriental elements than the purely Western Gothic—so much so, that for a fifteenth century mind there was but little difference between such buildings as the Mosque of Omar and, for example, Neuvy-St. Sépulcre. (Even in modern art history, the expression Romanesque is of very recent origin; until the middle of the nineteenth century, all pre-Gothic architecture was called Byzantine). Thus, the Romanesque style came to be conceived as something unusual and distant, either in space or in time, surrounded with a halo either of a far-off sacredness, or of old age. It seems undeniable that Jan van Eyck, who was chiefly responsible for the "Romanesque Revival," was attracted to the Romanesque style from a purely artistic point of view, the style of the heavy plastic figures in his mature works being congenial to a Romanesque feeling rather than to a Gothic one; and we can observe how he gradually felt his way to an

almost archaeologically correct Romanesque style through the intermediary stages of thirteenth century Gothic (Berlin, *Virgin in a Church*), a hybrid transitional style (Mellon *Annunciation*), and a style Romanesque in intention but not yet "in the flesh," (discernible in the *Rolin Virgin*). Yet it would seem that in his pictures, Romanesque forms are invested with a well-defined iconographical meaning. They appear, on the one hand, in representations of the actual Jerusalem, as in the *Crucifixion* discussed in note 76 (this applies also to the *Three Maries at the Tomb* in the Cook Collection and accounts for the use of Romanesque forms as symbols of the Old Testament in the Friedsam picture); on the other hand, they appear in those cases in which the conception of a far-off, quasi-unreal environment, yet glamorous and connected with the idea of Holy Places, took a mystical turn—the Heavenly Jerusalem as described in Rev. xxi and Isaiah liv: 13 being substituted for the Earthly Jerusalem, so to speak. This accounts for the curious fact that Jan van Eyck consistently and exclusively used Romanesque architecture, of a peculiarly gorgeous character, with carved capitals, marble or jasper columns, and exotic-looking floor tiles, for the visualization of a place where mortals are admitted to the presence of the Deity: *Madonna van der Paele*, *Rollin Madonna*, *Dresden Madonna with an Unknown Donor*, *Ghent and Mellon Annunciations* (since before the *Annunciation*, the *Virgin Mary* is not yet the receptacle of the Holy Spirit). The *Rothschild Madonna with a Carthusian*, here attributed to *Petrus Cristus* (cf. note 4) conforms also to this Eyckian principle. *Virgins with the Infant Jesus* but without donors, however, live in a Gothic or nondescript bourgeois environment. *Roger van der Weyden*, on the contrary, had obviously no particular aesthetic sympathy for the Romanesque style, as is quite natural in view of his general tendency towards "Neo-Gothic" slenderness, linearism, and two-dimensionality; and he used it only in the *Presentation in the Columba altarpiece*, where the scene had to be staged in the Temple of Jerusalem, and in two representations connected with the *Nativity*, namely the *Adoration of the Magi* in the same *Columba altarpiece*, and the *Adoration of the Infant Jesus* in the *Bladelin altarpiece*. In these two scenes, the Romanesque buildings are obviously used in a sense similar to that in the Friedsam picture, that is, as symbols of the Old Law, now conquered by the Birth of the Saviour; and this symbolical significance is emphasized by the fact that they appear as ruins—an iconographic innovation which was imitated in *Nativities* and *Adorations of the Magi* all over the Continent. It is quite logical that in Italian Renaissance representations of these scenes, the Romanesque—

correlative to the flowers growing out of the Gothic buttress is a stone-carved monkey, a well-known symbol of the Synagogue in opposition to the Church (cf., e. g., the Tiefenbronn altarpiece by Lucas Moser);²⁹ and the Gothic window corresponds to two columns markedly emphasized by their conspicuous colors. Now the window "that transformed the light of day into the Light Divine" (to quote a magnificent formula of C. R. Morey's) was recognized as one of the most expressive symbols of the Christian revelation, not only in such popular legends as that of St. Barbara, cleverly alluded to in Jan van Eyck's Antwerp picture of 1437,³⁰ but also in such subtle and almost sophisticated religious poems as Abbot Suger's distichs glorifying the "New Light" which streamed through the new, bright deambulatory of St.-Denis.³¹ The two columns, on the other hand, cannot be anything but the two famous columns of the Old Temple of Jerusalem—so famous, in fact, that the Bible even transmits what may be called their Christian names, Jachin and Boaz. The empty niche, finally, which crowns the entrance to the innermost shrine is, of course, "waiting" for the unborn Christ, the "Key-stone" or "Lapis in caput anguli," to speak in the terms of mediaeval literature and numerous symbolistic representations³² (cf. Figs. 20 and 21).

"Jewish"—ruins are replaced by classical—"pagan"—ones (cf. A. Warburg's analysis of Ghirlandaio's Sassetti Nativity of 1485 in *Gesammelte Schriften*, I, 1932, pp. 127 ff.).

29. In Lucas Moser's altarpiece, the statue of a virgin is made to stand on a column, to the shaft of which is attached the stone-carved figure of a fettered monkey (cf. also Dürer's engraving B. 42, possibly echoing the same symbolism). Moser, however, replaced the symbolism of right and left with the equally widespread symbolism of above and below, and the same is true of the monkey in the Aix Annunciation, grudgingly staring at the supernatural rays on which the Divine Child is sent down to earth (curiously enough, this motif has given rise to the misconception that the Aix Annunciation was painted by a Satanist: cf. a discussion in *The Times*, 1931, referred to by Brockwell, *loc. cit.*, p. 16). The connection between the monkey motif and the idea of the Old Law or Synagogue can be accounted for by the fact that in several mediaeval moralistic treatises—for example the famous *Liber Floridus*—the Tree of Vices (Arbor Vitiorum in contrast to Arbor Virtutum, Arbor Mala in contrast to Arbor Bona, Arbor Sinistra in contrast to Arbor Dextra) was also called Synagoga in contradistinction to Ecclesia, and was originally held to be rooted in the vice of Cupiditas (cf. A. Katzenellenbogen, *Tugenden- und Lasterdarstellungen des Mittelalters*, Diss. Hamburg, 1933, in print). The vice of Cupiditas (later on mostly replaced by Superbia), is often personified by a monkey, that can also stand for Avaritia (cf. E. Mâle, *L'Art religieux en France à la fin du moyen-âge*, 1925, pp. 334 ff.).

30. Cf. Panofsky, in *Burlington Magazine*, *loc. cit.* St. Barbara aroused the wrath of her pagan father because she had instructed his workmen to provide a new building with three windows instead of with two, in order to symbolize the Holy Trinity (cf., for instance, *Le Beffroi*, 1872/73, pp. 1 ff., and Bella Martens, *loc. cit.*, pp. 44 ff. and pl. II).

31. Sugerius, *De rebus in administratione sua gestis*, cap. 28; reprinted in J. von Schlosser, *Quel-*

lenbuch der Kunstgeschichte des abendländischen Mittelalters, 1896, pp. 268 ff.:

"Pars nova posterior dum iungitur anteriori,
Aula micat medio clarificata suo.
Claret enim claris quod clare concopulatur,
Et quod perfundit lux nova, claret opus."

C. R. Morey's formula, quoted above, is to be found in his Introduction to the Catalogue of the Pierpont Morgan Library Exhibition of Illuminated Manuscripts, held at the New York Public Library, 1933-1934, p. XXII.

32. Cf. *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, cap. 32 (Lutz and Perdrizet, *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, 1907, I, p. 67 and II, pl. 64) (our Fig. 20—fol. 35r of clm. 146). This interpretation is corroborated: 1—by an early fifteenth century panel in Vienna (formerly Heiligenkreuz) ascribed to either the French or the Austrian school (our Fig. 21—c. 1410/15. Cf. B. Kurth in *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst*, LVII (1922), p. 15; F. Buchner, *Beiträge zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte*, 1924, I, pp. 1 ff.; Baldass and Buschbeck in *Jahrbuch der Wiener Kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, N. F. V (1931), p. 25), where the statue of Moses placed beneath the musical angel should be noted also; 2—by a French tapestry of about 1450 formerly in the possession of Mr. and Mrs. Harold I. Pratt, illustrated in the Catalogue of a loan Exhibition of Religious Art, New York, Jacques Seligmann & Co., 1927, pl. VII (Fig. 25), which was brought to my attention by Dr. Julius Held. In both cases, the "Lapis in caput anguli" is actually put in by a seraph and a cherub, though in the case of the tapestry it seems somewhat doubtful whether the weaver understood the real nature of the "Keystone," which in his interpretation looks rather like an embroidered cushion. Note also that in Jan van Eyck's Mellon Annunciation (Fig. 22) a stained glass window with the figure of Christ in Majesty occupies, compositionally speaking, a place similar to that of the empty niche in the Friedsam picture. Another interesting instance of such an anticipation or prolepsis, here combined with the right-left symbolism discussed

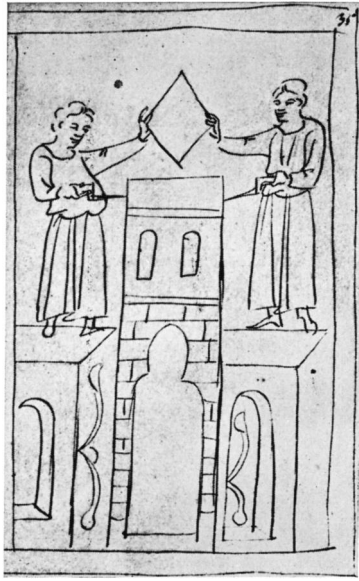


FIG. 20—Munich, Staatsbibliothek:
The “*Lapis in caput anguli*” from
Speculum Humanae Salvationis



FIG. 21—Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum:
Annunciation from Heiligenkreuz, by
an Austrian (?) Master



FIG. 22—Washington, D. C., Mellon Collection:
Annunciation, by Jan van Eyck

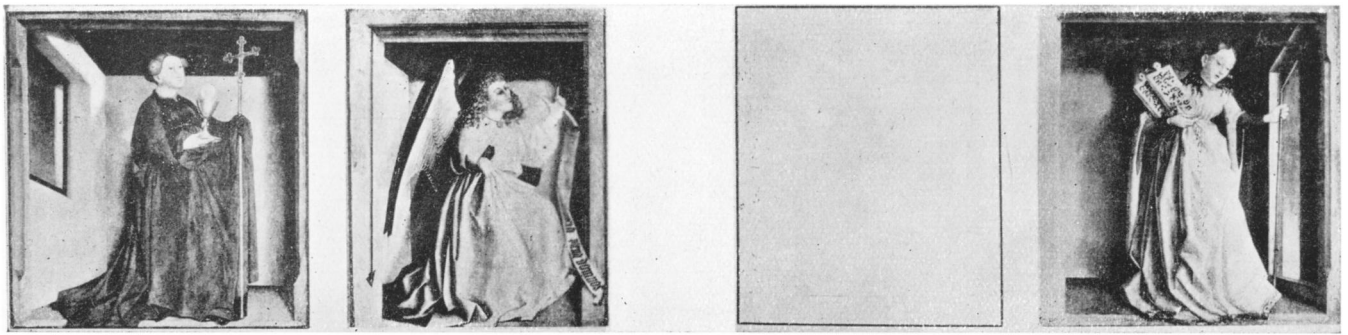


FIG. 23—*Basle, Städtische Kunstsammlung: Annunciation Flanked by Church and Synagogue from Heilsspiegel Altar, by Konrad Witz (after Wendland)*

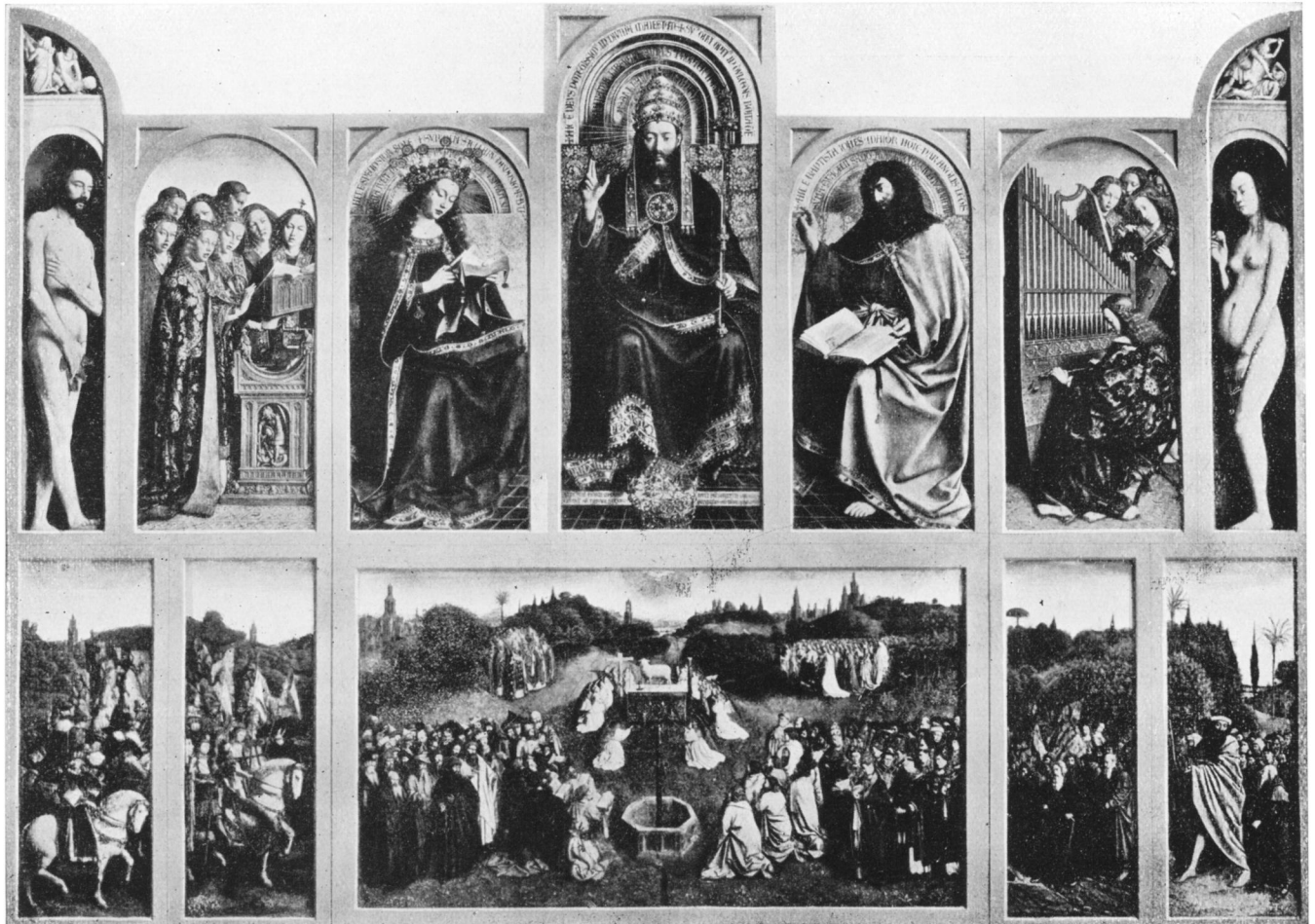


FIG. 24—*Ghent, St. Bavo: Interior of Ghent Altarpiece, by Hubert and Jan van Eyck*

Thus, the idea formerly expressed by the statues of Moses and Isaiah, or else by the figures of Church and Synagogue, namely the contrast between the era under the Law and the era under Grace, is now conveyed by such motifs as seem to be nothing but fanciful realistic details, but in reality are symbols, cleverly disguised and fusing with each other into what appears as a homogeneous picture from life.

We can even venture further. If the building with its two different halves symbolizes the Old and New Testament, the eras "sub lege" and "sub gratia," then the natural surroundings may symbolize the era "ante legem," before the Mosaic dispensation, subject as it was to the mere natural forces of "generatio et corruptio," unending growth and unending decay. It is not by accident that every work of human art outside the Temple has suffered from the destructive powers of time (consider the decay of the curving wall and of the exterior threshold which bears the undecipherable traces of an incised inscription), while, on the other hand, the luxuriant vegetation overgrows the moldering masonry (Fig. 8). The realm of religion, though in itself divided between preparation and ultimate perfection, is a complete, unbroken, and unbreakable structure as compared to the realm of mere nature before the Mosaic dispensation.

*
* *

Thus, the Friedsam Annunciation proves to be Eyckian in every respect; and as it seems to be of the early phase of Eyckian art, akin as it is to the Three Maries in the Cook collection and the lower part of the Adoration of the Lamb (witness the style), and prior to the Annunciation in the Ghent altarpiece (witness the iconography), we are confronted with the nightmarelike question: Hubert or Jan?

Although Hubert van Eyck has not escaped the misfortune of having been "wiped out" of the history of art by the same author who, two years before, had done away with the Master of Flémalle,³³ there is some reason to believe that he will survive—or revive, as the case may be—no less emphatically than the great Master of Tournai.³⁴

above, is to be found in an Annunciation by Joos van Cleve, also bequeathed to the Metropolitan Museum by Col. Friedsam (*Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum*, *loc. cit.*, p. 24, and our Fig. 28). In it can be seen a small altarpiece with the Adoration of the Magi, more than half hidden—in order to make the prolepsis even more explicit by the painted shutters which show the meeting of Abraham and Melchisedek, commonly known as a prefiguration of the Last Supper (*Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, cap. 16). At the pictorial left of this altarpiece, separated from it by a magnificent chandelier, the symbol of the Virgin (cf. Panofsky in *Burlington Magazine*, *loc. cit.*, and *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*, cap. 10), there can be seen a plain woodcut with the half-length figure of Moses, so that the contrast between the two Testaments is again expressed within the limits of what seems to be sheer realism. In addition, the shelf of the cupboard beneath the altarpiece shows a washbasin with a water jug and a clean towel (all symbols of virginity), while in the corner can be seen the Nuptial Bed; and behind the angel Gabriel, on top of the door through which

he has entered the room, there appears a burning candle, obviously not serving for the practical purpose of lighting, since the room is flooded with daylight, but indicating the presence of the deity, and thereby bearing out the analogous interpretation of the one burning candle in Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini portrait in London (cf. Panofsky in *Burlington Magazine*, *loc. cit.*). Thus, this picture almost teems with intricately symbolical details, so that the overdevelopment of fifteenth century tendencies which characterizes the "mannerism" of Joos van Cleve and his Antwerp contemporaries can be observed not only in style, but also in iconography. On the other hand, the new secular tendencies of the same period are discernible in an Annunciation in the Fitzwilliam Museum at Cambridge (Herri met de Bles), in which the place above the angel Gabriel is occupied by a statue of Mercury, the pagan Messenger Divine.

33. E. Renders, *Hubert van Eyck, personnage de légende*, 1933.

34. Cf. above, note 3.

For not only are the negative conclusions from the literary sources,³⁵ especially from the notorious inscription of the Ghent altarpiece, far from being convincing,³⁶ but also the material evidence of the altarpiece itself suggests a coöperation or rather succession of two different masters. The exterior (Fig. 26) displays a well-balanced compositional unity—the lower zone with its heavier framework and shallow niches filled with statuesque figures being conceived as the powerful socle of the whole structure—and shows an almost perfect homogeneity in perspective, style,³⁷ and iconography; the only unharmonious feature is the difference in width between the four lower pictures and the four upper ones; this difference causes a somewhat disagreeable break in the vertical framework, and the two middle panels of the upper story are too narrow to have room for figures. The interior of the altarpiece, however, actually amazes the beholder by its discordant inconsistency (Fig. 24). The five pictures of the lower zone display a thronged crowd of smallish figures (the very tallest one, the giant Christopher, is only about 80 centimeters high), in a unified landscape, and are thus entirely out of scale as compared to the seven pictures of the upper zone, with their approximately life-sized, mostly isolated groups and figures, which are set out against a flat background or emerge from darkness. In addition to this main contrast between the two zones, there can be felt a stylistic discrepancy partly between, partly within, the various pictures.

In the Adoration of the Lamb a marked difference in pictorial technique, figural types and spatial feeling is recognizable between the lower two thirds and the upper third of the picture, roughly speaking: the meadow in the foreground, including the two groups of worshippers, the kneeling prophets and apostles and the Fountain of Life, is seen in a sort of bird's-eye view and is characterized by a flatter and less

35. Cf. L. Scheewe, *Hubert und Jan van Eyck, ihre literarische Würdigung bis ins 18. Jahrhundert*, 1933, and the same author's *Sammelbericht* on recent books and articles concerning the van Eycks, in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, III (1934), pp. 139 ff.

36. While such eminent scholars as M. J. Friedländer (in *Berliner Tageblatt* of June 18, 1933, and in *Pantheon*, 1933, p. 254) and M. Brockwell (in *The Connoisseur*, XCII (1933), pp. 109 ff.) more or less wholeheartedly agree with Renders, I cannot help feeling convinced by the criticisms offered by Eric Maclagan (in *Burlington Magazine*, LXIII (1934), pp. 64 ff.), L. Scheewe (in *Deutsche Literaturzeitung*, October 15, 1933), H. Beenken (in *Kritische Berichte zur kunstgeschichtlichen Literatur*, 1931/32, pp. 225 ff.), P. Faider (*Revue Belge de Philologie et d'Histoire*, 1933, pp. 1273 ff.), and recently F. Winkler (in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte*, III (1934), pp. 283 ff.). Maclagan, with all his justified skepticism against Renders' theory, indirectly supports it by quoting a statement of James Hilton to the effect that chronograms in inscriptions prior to 1450 were "*ipso facto* suspect." But even this argument can be refuted not only by the chronogram on the Council of Lausanne of 1449 (adduced by Faider, *loc. cit.*), but also by the two chronograms on the frame of Jan van Eyck's portrait of Jan de Leeuw in the Vienna Gallery (Weale and Brockwell, pp. 127 ff.). Furthermore, the critics of Renders' book have failed to point out a

seemingly small but rather significant error: on p. 58, Renders accounts for the exactitude of the date indicated in the inscription of the Ghent altarpiece, by surmising that the alleged forger or forgers of the inscription had chosen the 6th of May because this was the Feast of St. John "*ante portam Latinam*," and therefore also the Feast of the St. Bavon Church "*autrefois consacrée à St. Jean*." But even if the date is really the 6th and not the 16th of May (for A. Hirsch's interpretation in *Repertorium für Kunstwiss.*, XLII (1920), pp. 77 ff., is perhaps not as negligible as assumed by Faider and Maclagan), Renders' explanation is nullified by the fact that the St. John unsuccessfully tortured "*ante portam Latinam*" was St. John the Evangelist, while the original patron of St. Bavon was St. John the Baptist.

37. It is true that the two center panels of the Annunciation look somewhat "fuzzier" than those with the angel Gabriel and the Virgin Mary. But this can easily be accounted for by the fact that they were preserved in the Brussels Museum, where they were not so emphatically cleaned as the two others, which were in the Berlin Museum. The visitors to the Burlington Exhibition of Italian Art were amazed by the apparent lack of homogeneity of the predella panels originally belonging to the Uffizi *Sacra Conversazione* by Domenico Veneziano—a lack of homogeneity caused by nothing but the different treatment accorded them in the various museums and collections.



FIG. 25—New York, H. I. Pratt Collection (formerly):
Annunciation. French Tapestry

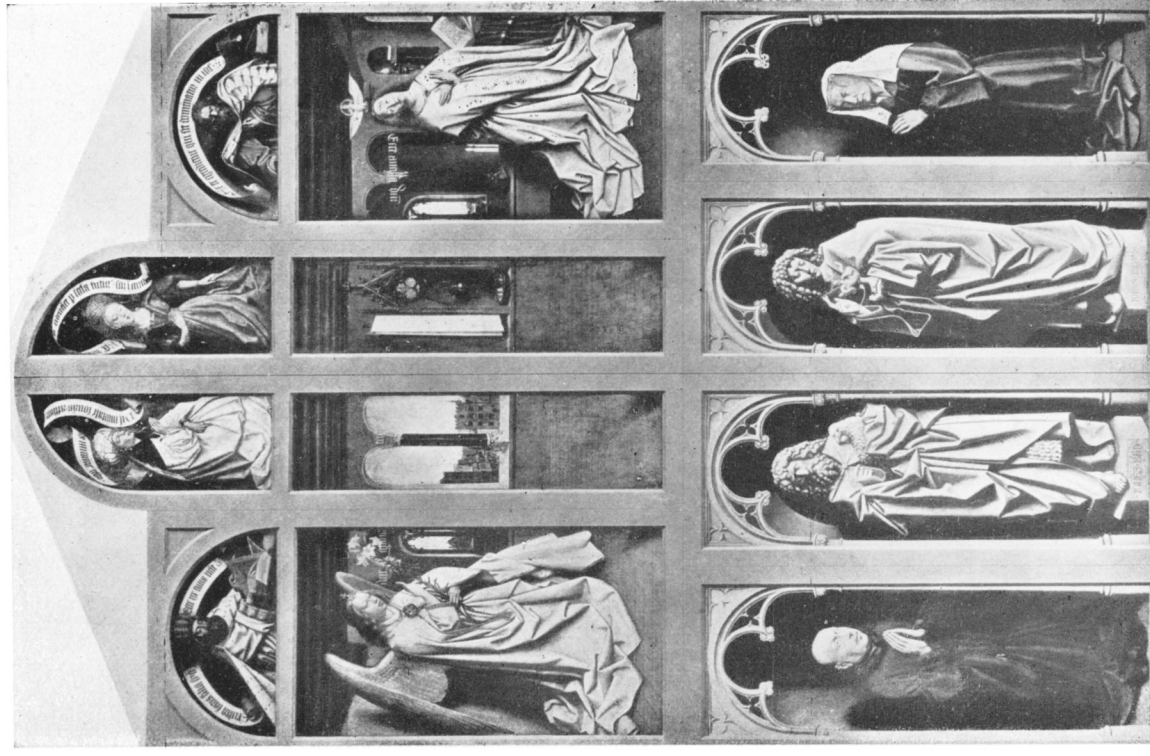


FIG. 26—Ghent, St. Bavo: *Exterior of Ghent Altarpiece, by Jan van Eyck*

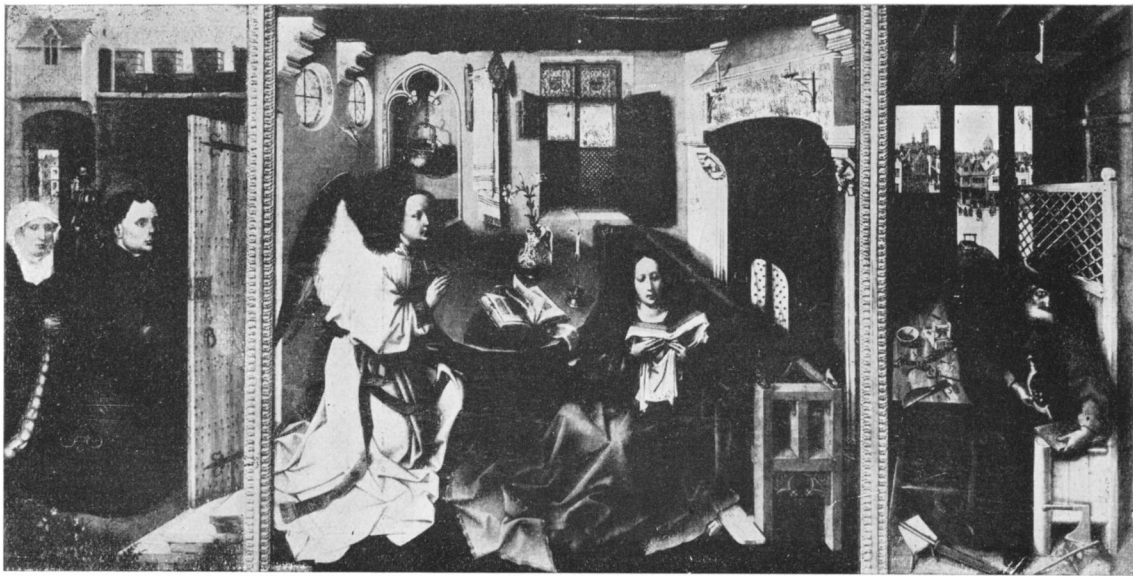


FIG. 27—*Brussels, Mérode Collection: Annunciation, with Donors and St. Joseph by the Master of Flémalle*



FIG. 28—*New York, Metropolitan Museum: Annunciation, by Joos van Cleef*

unifying treatment (the groups, with all their crowdedness, falling apart into comparatively disconnected units); while the landscape in the background, showing a softer yet more vigorous technique, easily recedes toward a low horizon, and the processions of martyrs and virgins are conceived as coherent masses, instead of resulting from an additive process.³⁸ The four wings of the lower zone show only faint traces of this discrepancy between the background and the foremost planes: in them the stylistic and compositional contrasts have been almost entirely smoothed away by a subsequent unification, though still discernible, I think, in the wing with the holy hermits.

While the Adoration of the Lamb can be divided, stylistically speaking, into two sections, separated from each other by one horizontal, the upper zone can be distributed into three stylistic groups, separated from each other by four verticals, as follows:

1—The three figures of the Lord, St. John the Baptist, and the Virgin Mary, which strike us as solemn hieratic images, are not only exceedingly large but also very broad in relation to their depth, less plastic and structural than other figures in the altarpiece excepting the kneeling prophets before the Fountain of Life, and, like these, distinctly Italianistic in treatment and type (note particularly the St. John, whose awkwardly foreshortened, Trecento features are almost literally repeated in some of the apostles).³⁹ They are foiled by the arched, nichelike backs of heavy, gilded thrones hung with brocaded clothes of honor, while the tiled floor is elaborated into a unified perspective.

2—The musical angels are much more slender in proportion (though not particularly plastic either) and only two thirds as large as the three figures in the center (their panels, too, are smaller than those with the St. John and the Virgin Mary, only 1.61 m. by 0.70 m. as against 1.65 m. by 0.755 m.); they are set out against a blueish sky, and the vanishing lines of the floor, which is paved with tiles of a more elaborate and exotic-looking kind, diverge from those in the neighboring pictures; the angel pictures differ from the others also in that the panels bear no inscriptions indicating the subjects.

3—The outermost pictures with Adam and Eve, finally, excel by powerful chiaroscuro and a much-admired naturalism. The overplastic figures are obviously based on careful observation of the nude (the hands of the Adam, e. g., are darker than the rest of his body, normally protected as it is by clothes), and emerge from dark, shadowy niches, so as almost to protrude from the frontal plane; their faces are highly individualized and masterfully foreshortened;⁴⁰ and they are seen in what

38. This contrast was rightly emphasized by M. Dvořák, *Das Rätsel der Kunst der Brüder van Eyck in Jahrbuch d. Kunstsgn. d. allerhöchsten Kaiserhauses*, XXIV (1903), pp. 181 ff., reprinted as a book in 1925. As to the dove, etc., see H. Beenken, *Zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Genter Altars*, in *Walraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, pp. 186 ff. (this article was preceded by another in *Burlington Magazine*, LXIII (1933), pp. 64 ff.).

39. Similar types appear only in the wing with the holy hermits, which is, in my opinion, also partly due to Hubert, especially in their leader. He is

generally identified as St. Paul (cf. Weale and Brockwell, p. 48), but seems rather to be St. John the Baptist (cf. note 43). The exceptional style of the three large figures here grouped, and their relationship with those in the lower part of the Adoration of the Lamb, was first observed by Dvořák, who thus established the artistic personality of Hubert van Eyck "by elimination."

40. Cf. the suggestive juxtaposition of the head of the Adam with that of the St. John in Dvořák (*Jahrb. d. Kunstsgn.*..., *loc. cit.*, pp. 194-5).

may be called a frog's-eye perspective calculated for the actual viewpoint of the beholder, so that even such details as the left leg of the Adam and the breast of the Eve appear *di sotto in su*, and the standing plane of both figures becomes invisible.

Iconographically speaking, the program of the interior is mainly based on some chapters of the Apocalypse,⁴¹ and the texts connected with the feast of All Saints, the liturgical office for this feast as well as more popular descriptions such as those found in the Golden Legend. Both sources had been combined or even fused with each other for many centuries,⁴² but neither of them explains the Eyckian program as a whole. They account for the lower zone, but not for the upper, especially not for the fact that the three middle panels show the combination of figures known as the Deësis differing, however, from the Deësis in the strict sense of the term in that the Virgin and St. John do not act as intercessors but are interpreted as purely existential images, the St. John pointing at the Lord with the traditional *προδρόμος* gesture, the Virgin reading a prayer book. In Revelations the Rex Regum is the only occupant of the heavenly throne, and at the feast of All Saints He shares it, if with anybody, with the Virgin only, while St. John merely leads the "great number of ancient and honorable fathers."⁴³

Furthermore, the two sources do not account for the extraordinary prominence of the musical angels, who even in Italian polyptychs (which naturally tend towards a division of the entire composition into separate units) are never allowed to fill two full-sized panels quite by themselves,⁴⁴ nor do they imply the presence of Adam and Eve, who could be included, of course, into any scheme centered around the idea of salvation but have no specific *raison d'être* in this particular program.

E. Renders, who considers Jan van Eyck as the only author of the altarpiece, cannot account for all these discrepancies but by the rather hazardous assumption that Jodocus Vydt bought various pictures from Jan van Eyck, by the dozen, so to speak, and had them put together more or less at random.⁴⁵ Those, however, who believe

41. Chiefly Rev. vii: 6 ff. and xxi-xxii, with the description of the Fountain of Life and the Heavenly Jerusalem; in addition xix: 11 ff., accounting for the name and appearance of the Rex Regum and Dominans Dominantium. The tradition that the pictures of the lower zone represent the septem beatitudines is obviously due to the misinterpretation of an inscription on the lost frame of the middle panel, referring to the Chorus Beatorum (cf. Beenken, *Walraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, p. 212, and *Kritische Berichte*, loc. cit.).

42. Cf. Weale and Brockwell, pp. 38 ff., and more explicitly, R. Günther, *Die Bilder des Genter Altars (Studien über christliche Denkmäler*, 15, 1923). On pp. 10 f., Günther abundantly illustrates the fusion between the Apocalypse and the office for the feast of All Saints, thereby corroborating the iconographical consistency of the lower zone of the interior; but his attempt to establish an intrinsic connection between this program and that of the upper zone (pp. 22 ff.) is scarcely convincing. Cf. also the iconographical articles listed in Scheewe's *Sammelbericht*, cited in note 35.

43. This is the reason for the above conjecture (note 39), that the leader of the hermits is St. John

rather than St. Paul. This conjecture is corroborated by the fact that the third figure in the front row of the hermits' procession conforms to the well-known type of St. Paul, with a bald head and a long pointed beard.

44. Even in the so-called Orcagna polyptych in the London National Gallery, now ascribed to Jacopo di Cione (R. van Marle, *The Development of the Italian Schools of Painting*, Vol. III, fig. 278; our Fig. 33), one of the few specimens in which the usual groups of angels are detached from the main subject so as to appear on separate panels, these groups consist not only of musical angels, but also include angels praying and handling incense burners. This is also true of two interesting altar wings in the possession of Mr. Seligmann, New York, probably executed about 1430 by a French artist who, according to Dr. Millard Meiss, was strongly influenced by such Italian masters as Lorenzo Monaco. Each panel is composed of a group of four angels, but only the lower pair carry musical instruments, while the upper pair are seen in attitudes of prayer.

45. Renders, *Hubert van Eyck*..., pp. 135 ff., and especially p. 137 (cf. Beenken, *Kritische Berichte*, pp. 226 f.). Beenken, on the other hand, overestimates

in the participation of Hubert but are mainly impressed by the general contrast between the upper and the lower zone—which contrast, curiously enough, was realized much later than the less conspicuous stylistic differences between or within the individual pictures⁴⁶—were of necessity led to the conclusion that the lower zone was originally an independent altarpiece executed or at least begun by Hubert, and that the whole upper zone was added by Jan. This revolutionary theory was simultaneously put forward by E. de Bruyn,⁴⁷ M. E. Coosemans,⁴⁸ and H. Beenken.⁴⁹ Beenken, however, disagrees with the two other scholars in that he ascribes to Hubert not the lower zone as a whole, but merely the landscape in the background, including the procession of martyrs and virgins approaching the altar of the Lamb. He bases his opinion not only on stylistic analysis⁵⁰ but also on some technical observations. These he believes to be an irrefutable proof of his theory which, as far as the Adoration of the Lamb is concerned, means an inversion of that of Dvořák.⁵¹

Beenken's technical observations can be summarized as follows:

1—The height of the Adoration of the Lamb panel, as compared to that of the four wings, is only 1.365 m. against 1.47 m.

2—The background scenery, though morphologically forming a continuous whole throughout the five pictures of the lower zone, shows a formal break in that the sky line in the Adoration of the Lamb is noticeably higher than in the two neighboring wings, the difference amounting to approximately four centimeters.

3—The figure groups in these wings, however, are perfectly in harmony with those in the Adoration of the Lamb, so as to constitute one uninterrupted concatenation of figures.

Beenken draws the following conclusions:

1—The five panels of the lower zone were originally planned, and partly carried out, as an independent pentaptych or rather triptych (it is, in point of fact, quite probable that the two halves of either wing were originally separated only by a painted strip or shaft and actually sawed asunder in connection with the general rearrangement of the whole altarpiece).⁵²

the homogeneity of the present arrangement when he says: "Keine Gedanken macht sich Renders darüber... wie die einzelnen Teile ikonographisch und formal aus dem heutigen Ganzen herausgenommen gedacht werden können."

46. The first author who strongly emphasized this discrepancy was M. J. Friedländer. It is perhaps characteristic of an attitude of the late nineteenth century, observable in medicine, psychology, and philology, as well as in the history of art, that the observation of details preceded or even eclipsed the observation of wholes.

47. *Mélanges Hulin de Loo*, 1931, pp. 89 ff.

48. Not published, but quoted by Beenken, *Wallraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, p. 182, note 7, after a critical report by Hulin de Loo. The writer of this article, too, may be counted among this group of scholars, as he has championed this theory in his lectures since 1929.

49. Cf. Beenken's two articles, cited in note 38.

50. In this respect the juxtaposition of such details

as rocks and orange shrubs, partly taken from the distant background, partly from the nearer parts (Beenken, *Wallraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, figs. 166, 168, 169) is hardly convincing, because in a comparatively naturalistic picture identical objects automatically appear more palpable and precise when seen at close range. In point of fact, the shrubs seen at the left of the procession of martyrs are an actual intermediary between those illustrated in Beenken's figs. 168 and 169.

51. Cf. above, note 38.

52. Cf. below, p. 466. The further assumption that on this occasion (certainly not later, because the portrait of Elizabeth Burluut was painted on the back of the hermits' wing, and the grisaille of St. John the Evangelist on that of the pilgrims' wing, as pointed out by F. Winkler in a discussion quoted by Beenken, p. 210, note 34) the two panels with the pilgrims and the hermits changed their places, as is seemingly indicated by a sixteenth century copy in the Antwerp Museum, can neither be proved nor disproved.

2—The upper part of the Adoration of the Lamb was curtailed by a strip of about eleven centimeters (and, in the center, was deprived of a rectangular projection or toppiece on which would have been painted the celestial apparition of God the Father).

3—The panel thus obtained was lifted by four centimeters, which would account for the break in the sky line.

4—Since a similar break is not to be found in the foreground and middle distance of the five pictures, especially not in the figure groups, the lower part of the Adoration of the Lamb was executed after the curtailment of the panel, while the landscape in the background, including the holy martyrs and virgins, was already in existence before the rearrangement had been planned. In other words, the background of the five pictures now forming the lower zone of the interior, and nothing else, was executed by Hubert, and the rest by Jan.

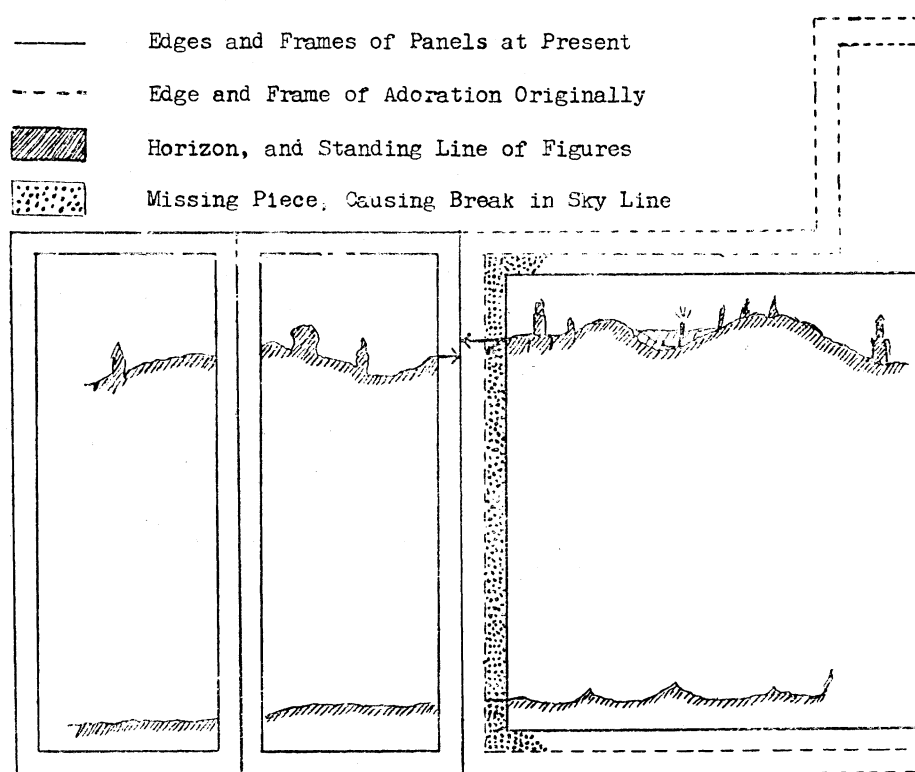


Diagram Showing the Curtailment of the Adoration of the Lamb

The conjecture that the Adoration of the Lamb was cut down in some way or other and on this occasion was deprived of its toppiece, is entirely convincing and, in my opinion, almost unavoidable. The existence of such a toppiece is probable for both formal and iconographical reasons and is corroborated by J. Lany's⁵³ observation that two of the rays emanating from the original apparition in the sky are still recognizable beneath the present surface and converge at a point considerably higher

53. Quoted by Beenken, *Wallraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, p. 180.

than the upper margin of the present picture.⁵⁴ Beenken's further conclusions, however, are based on a fundamental error. In his opinion the middle panel was cut down in order to widen its frame, which thus would appear as a more powerful support (aesthetically speaking) of the upper zone. Now, when considering Beenken's reconstruction of the original composition (Beenken's fig. 83), we are struck by his silent assumption that the frame of the Adoration of the Lamb was originally much narrower at the top and the bottom than at the sides. If this assumption, entirely unfounded and even unnatural as it is, is eliminated, nothing bears out the theory that the curtailment was achieved by merely cutting down the top of the panel by eleven centimeters, instead of cutting off five and a half centimeters from every margin. If this was the case (and there are several indications that it was),⁵⁵ the panel, curtailed all around by a strip of five and a half centimeters, was not lifted at all, but its relative position in the whole structure remained unaltered; and then the break in the sky line can be accounted for by the simple fact that these five and a half centimeters are missing on either side of the picture. The terrain being hilly and showing a slight downward slope in the middle panel, as well as a slight upward grade in the wings, this missing piece was entirely sufficient to cause the horizon to break in the background (all the more so as in such triptychs or polyptychs in which a continuous scenery is viewed through the framework as through a set of windows, a certain allowance must be made for the section seemingly obliterated by the dividing frame),⁵⁶ whereas the sequence of the figures in the foreground, aligned as they are on one horizontal standing plane, was not affected (cf. the diagram in text). Thus, the foundations of what Beenken claims to be the ultimate solution of the problem of Jan and Hubert fall to the ground. He has proved that the Ghent altarpiece was subject to a fundamental rearrangement (and in this respect J. Lany's observation of the two rays discernible beneath the present coat of colors is particularly valuable), and it is highly probable that this rearrangement is not due to one painter's having changed his mind but to the fact that the plans of the first master, presumably Hubert, were overthrown by the supervention of a second one, presumably Jan. But we are still entirely ignorant of either brother's share in their collective work. Now those who believe that the hand of Hubert can be recognized only in the pictures of the lower zone, and that the whole upper series was added by Jan, have evaded the problem of the differences and even inconsistencies that are also discernible within the upper zone;⁵⁷ and, what is more important, they have avoided the crucial question: what

54. This observation is all the more valuable, as it eliminates the possibility that the curtailment of the Adoration of the Lamb might be due to a post-Eyckian restorer (active, however, before 1558, when Michael Cocxie copied the picture in its present state), for instance to Blondeel and Scorel who rejuvenated the whole altarpiece in 1550.

55. Apart from the fact that an equal width of the frame is the only natural thing, we can observe: 1—that the two processions are rather arbitrarily cut off by the lateral margins (note, for example, the crozier of the bishop on the right); 2—that the Fountain of Life and the Altar of the Lamb are not placed on the same vertical axis; while the former is shifted a little too much to the right, the latter is

shifted too much to the left. This seems to show that the half-finished picture has been tampered with, in that either on the right or on the left (in my opinion, on the right), a little too much has been cut off, and that the second painter (in my opinion, he who painted the Altar of the Lamb) tried to reinstate the equilibrium to some extent.

56. Cf., for instance, Roger van der Weyden's Crucifixion Triptych in the Vienna Museum or, even more apropos, the Annunciation in the Ghent altarpiece, where the frames obliterate a considerable section of the pictorial space.

57. It is true that Beenken, *Wallraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, pp. 228 ff., acknowledges the fact so strongly emphasized by Dvořák, that the Deësis

could induce a great master like Jan van Eyck deliberately to destroy the well-balanced equilibrium of a given altarpiece, unfinished, yet clearly indicating the intentions of its master (or even finished, according to de Bruyn and Coosemans) by superimposing those seven heavy pictures which so little agree with the lower part of the whole structure that de Bruyn felt entitled to the statement that the most admired masterpiece of modern painting was "*raté*"?

The only hypothesis accounting for both the technical and stylistic discrepancies within the upper zone and its incompatibility with the lower one is the assumption that the interior of the Ghent altarpiece resulted not from Jan van Eyck's putting some new panels all of his own creation on top of a triptych commenced by Hubert, but from his assembling several panels begun by Hubert for different purposes. In other words: the interior of the Ghent altarpiece is an adaptation of various more or less unfinished works of Hubert, put together by his brother and heir under instructions and at the expense of Jodocus Vydt who, rich and influential as he was, could easily have persuaded the original donors—among others probably the magistrates of Ghent—to cede their rights to him, all the more so because these rights were fraught with heavy obligations. In my opinion, which I offer only as a working hypothesis, the items thus united were the following three:

1—The pentaptych (originally triptych) now forming the lower zone of the interior. Iconographically it was based on the traditional synthesis between the Apocalypse and the texts connected with the feast of All Saints, and its original form may be imagined as reconstructed by Beenken. Contrary to him, however, I am of the opinion that the Fountain of Life, mentioned as it is in Rev. xxii, was included in the program from the outset,⁵⁸ and that the lower section of the Adoration of the Lamb, and not the landscape in the background, was executed by Hubert, as was already conjectured by Dvořák. In addition Hubert may be responsible for the basic composition of the wings and seems to have done some of the actual work in the group of hermits, which shows, in types and composition, some of the archaic qualities characteristic of the kneeling figures before the Fountain of Life (particularly noticeable in the contrast with the two Maries), and thereby differs from the corresponding groups in the other three wings. On the other hand, Jan's work may have encroached upon the groups of standing worshippers seen in the lower corners of the Adoration of the Lamb.

group shows a style downright incompatible with that of the authenticated works by Jan van Eyck; but he tries to explain this phenomenon by the assumption that Jan deliberately differentiated the "Seinscharakter" of the various figures. Similarly, he observes the perspective discrepancy between the musical angels and the Deësis triad (p. 183, note 10), and even considers the possibility that these two panels had originally been rectangular (cf. below, p. 466) and were destined for "some other altarpiece," but he does not doubt that this other altarpiece—absolutely anomalous from an iconographical point of view—was planned by Jan van Eyck. The conjecture that the present form of the two panels is not the original one may account for the fact that their top

curve is not an exact semicircle but shows a somewhat irregular shape.

58. The perspective of the Fountain, too, is not only incompatible with that of the Altar, but is also so faulty in itself that no analogous instance can be found in the comparatively mature works of Jan, not even in the Mellon Annunciation, let alone in the exterior of the Ghent altarpiece. In the latter, the only pictures characterized by an equally faulty perspective are the three Deësis panels, the tiled floor of which shows the phenomenon known as divergence of the lateral orthogonals (cf. Panofsky in *Vorträge der Bibliothek Warburg, loc. cit.*), particularly in the picture of St. John the Baptist (Fig. 6).



FIG. 29—*London, National Gallery: The Almighty between the Virgin and Isaiah, by Giovanni da Milano*



FIG. 30—*London, National Gallery: Detail of Mass of St. Hubert, by the Master of Werden*



FIG. 31—*New York, Metropolitan Museum: Mass of St. Gregory, by a Flemish Master*

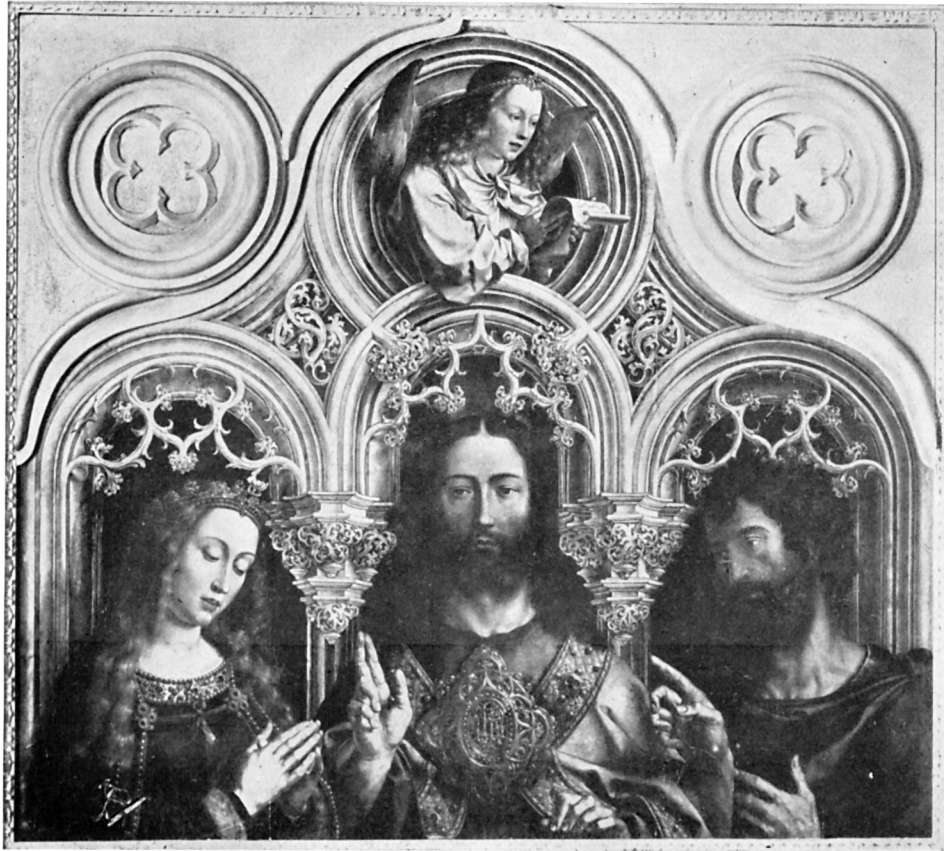


FIG. 32—*Madrid, Prado: The Almighty between the Virgin and St. John. Free Copy by Jan Gossaert of Detail of Ghent Altarpiece*

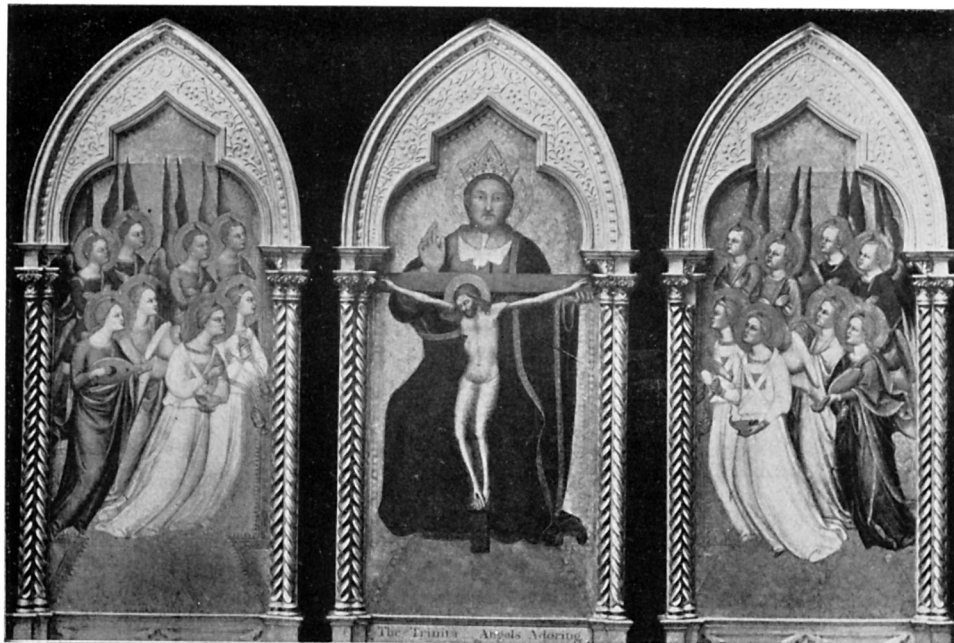


FIG. 33—*London, National Gallery: The Trinity Worshipped by Angels, by Jacopo di Cione*

2—A retable consisting only of the three center figures in the upper zone, almost entirely completed by Hubert though, of course, touched up by Jan in order to make the whole as homogeneous as possible.⁵⁹ Altarpieces of this very type, that is to say shutterless retables showing God the Father and two Saints as single figures in three separate compartments, that in the center considerably taller than the two wings, are by no means unusual in Northern fifteenth century art.⁶⁰ A well-known instance is the retable in Stephen Lochner's Darmstadt Presentation of 1447; and the retables seen in the Mass of St. Hubert in the London National Gallery (Fig. 30) or in the Mass of St. Gregory in the Metropolitan Museum (Fig. 31) are almost retranslations of what I should like to call the "upper triptych" of the Ghent altarpiece into sculpture. I say retranslations, because this type of retables occurs in sculpture—both woodcarving and metalwork—more often than in painting. This accounts for some of the stylistic peculiarities of those three statuesque or rather relieflike images in the Ghent altarpiece, confined as they are to the shallow space of separate compartments and set out against the heavy gilded thrones the very lettering of which seems to suggest the sculptor's technique. These three panels imitate, indeed, a sculptured triptych, partly gilded, partly coated with colors, and their relation to a work such as the retable in the London Mass of St. Hubert might well be compared to the relation of Roger van der Weyden's famous Deposition in the Escorial to a wood-carved retable of what we may call the scenic type. Only, while the retable in the Mass of St. Hubert, conforming to the idea of the Church in general, shows the Eternal Father accompanied by Sts. Peter and Paul (the saints in the New York Mass of St. Gregory are not recognizable) the three Ghent panels, which, of course, were also meant to be set in an elaborate architectural framework,⁶¹ display a pseudo-Deësis, from which we may conclude that the upper triptych of the Ghent altarpiece was originally destined for the church in which it is now, though now deprived of its original significance.⁶² For the cathedral of Ghent was formerly dedicated to St. John the Baptist and was not dedicated to St. Bavo until 1540.

3—Two isolated panels showing the musical angels, slightly different in size and scale from the panels with St. John and the Virgin Mary, though, after all, combinable with the same. They were probably very little advanced in execution and are, it seems, more heavily painted over than the other pictures, so that the style of Hubert

59. Needless to say, a painter who has to complete the unfinished work of another will do his best to smooth away the differences. Thus, it is hardly possible to define the contributions of the two brothers with mathematical precision, and he who in the main agrees with Dvůřák's theory is not obliged to accept his notorious dividing line, as illustrated in figs. 21-22 of his article in the *Jahrb. d. Kunstsgn.*

60. As for Italian instances, three panels by Giovanni da Milano (brought to my attention by Dr. Millard Meiss) would be iconographically identical with what I would call the upper triptych of the Ghent Altarpiece, if van Marle (*loc. cit.*, vol. IV, fig. 116) were right in assuming that the figure at the right of God the Father is St. John the Baptist. It is, however, the prophet Isaiah (Fig. 29).

61. This accounts not only for the fact (not sufficiently explained by Beenken, *Wallraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, p. 209) that the three figures are painted on separate panels, but also for the anomaly that the long inscriptions are seemingly incised into the backs of the thrones instead of being painted on the frames, as is usual with other Eyckian pictures.

62. From this point of view, it may be said that Jan Gossaert in his free copy in the Prado (Fig. 32) reinstated to some extent the original significance and even appearance of this upper triptych, in that he intuitively isolated the Deësis group and surrounded it by a richly ornamented architectural frame, reducing it, however, to a closely knit, half-length composition, and changing the gestures of the Virgin and St. John in accordance with the canonical Deësis scheme.

can only be sensed in the tight, though rather flattened, composition and in the facial types (which in some cases strikingly resemble that of the Virgin in the Deësis, and differ throughout from that of the Eve and the Virgin in the Annunciation). The unique iconography of the two pictures, which possibly had been rectangular, and were cut round at the top so as to conform to the neighboring panels,⁶³ is difficult to explain. As wings showing nothing but musical angels do not occur in altarpieces,⁶⁴ it seems quite probable (though by no means provable) that the two panels were originally destined to be organ shutters⁶⁵—a Northern parallel to the famous singing angels by Luca della Robbia originally adorning the cantoria of the cathedral of Florence.

The desire to unite these three items, all left by Hubert in a more or less unfinished state, into one overwhelming structure is, in my opinion, the only imaginable motive for destroying the harmony of an independent retable, which was debased to the mere lower story of a rather ostentatious superaltarpiece, so to speak. Its wings were bisected and its middle panel was cut down as described before, so that the Eternal Father in the upper triptych had to act as a substitute for the celestial apparition originally seen in the toppiece of the Adoration of the Lamb;⁶⁶ and the two panels with the musical angels were placed beside the panels with the Virgin and St. John, from which resulted, however, the break in the vertical framework. The preëxistence of the angel panels is, in point of fact, the only explanation of this break, and also accounts for the hypothetical bisection of the lower wings, for the discrepancy would have been even more conspicuous if each of the lower wings had formed an undivided unit while the corresponding part of the upper zone consisted of two individual panels.

The only panels which Jan van Eyck had really to add to the ones inherited from his brother were those with Adam and Eve. Technically, this addition was necessary to make up for the difference between the width of the lower zone and that of the upper triptych plus musical angels, and this accounts for the unusual narrowness of the additional panels. Aesthetically, it was necessary to unify, to some extent, the two zones in general, and the pictures of the upper zone in particular. This reconciliatory purpose, now, was admirably fulfilled by the unheard-of device of the frog's-eye perspective. For not only does this device suggest to the beholder a subjective psychological attitude which virtually compels him to take the horizontal

63. The present frame overlaps the organ and two of the angels' heads in the so-called St. Cecily panel.

64. Cf. above, p. 458.

65. As to the size and shape of early organs, cf. A. G. Hill, *The Organ Cases and Organs of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance*, 1883 and 1891, I, plates facing pp. 45 and 51, and, more particularly, a drawing in the St. Annen Museum at Lübeck, reproduced in W. Kraft and M. Heise, *Das Lübecker Orgelbuch*, p. 14. As to the iconography—a musical performance as the only subject of two monumental panels—cf. the famous shutters of the smaller organ in the St. Ulrich's Church at Augsburg by Jörg Breu, illustrated, for instance, in Curt Glaser, *Die altdeutsche Malerei*, 1924, p. 377.

66. This, by the way, accounts for another anomaly which has much puzzled the theologians: if the central figure of the upper triptych is interpreted as God the Father (cf. Peeters in *Revue Belge de Liturgie*, 1933, pp. 144 ff.), its meaning is consistent with the content of the Adoration of the Lamb, in which Christ is already represented by the Lamb, but not with its youthful appearance and its combination with the figures of the Virgin and St. John. If, however, the central figure is interpreted as Christ (cf. L. Aerts, *Verslagen en Mededelingen d. Kkl. Vlaamsche Acad. voor Taal- en Letterkunde*, 1920, pp. 1051 ff., and *Tijdschrift voor Liturgie*, 1926, pp. 214 ff.), there would be no God the Father in the whole altarpiece, while Christ would be represented twice.

alignment and high position of the upper pictures for granted, while, in reality, they were destined to be seen from different and lower points of view, but also smooths out the differences in scale between the musical angels and the Deësis group. I have already mentioned that the angels are only two-thirds as high as the three middle figures. Now the frog's-eye perspective enables the artist to introduce an intermediary size for the figures of Adam and Eve (they are about five-sixtes as large as the figures of the Deësis group, and therefore about five-fourths as large as the musical angels), without the beholders becoming aware of this difference. Impressed as he is by the fact that the figures of Adam and Eve are so much pushed into the foreground that they can partly be seen from below, he is involuntarily led to the assumption that their larger size is merely due to their being so much nearer to him than the angels are. Consequently, he interprets the smaller size of the angels as a result of their being in the background, comparatively speaking, and this effect of the outermost figures, greatly strengthened by their overplastic modeling, prevents him also from being disturbed by, or even becoming aware of, the discrepancy between the size of the angels and that of the Deësis group; for the Deësis group seems to project from the plane determined by the musical angels in the same way that the musical angels seem to recede from the plane determined by the figures of Adam and Eve. Thus, the addition of the two panels with Adam and Eve made possible, aesthetically speaking, the insertion of the two panels with the musical angels.⁶⁷ It is an instructive experiment to look at a reproduction of the upper zone of the Ghent altarpiece while covering the figures of Adam and Eve with a piece of paper: the contrast in size between the Deësis group and the musical angels, scarcely noticeable under present conditions, becomes almost unbearable.

On the exterior (Fig. 26), the greater part of all these difficulties could be avoided. The lower zone could be treated as a powerful socle adorned with the large-sized figures of the donors and the painted statues of the two St. Johns, not by accident of course, was the patron of the church, figuring also in the upper triptych of the interior, juxtaposed with the author of the Apocalypse, which was the main foundation of the altarpiece below incorporated with it). The upper zone of the exterior could be elaborated into a unified *intérieur* viewed through a rectangular framework as through a set of windows.⁶⁸ Still, even here the disadvantages of Hubert's legacy made themselves felt. For the upper zone of the exterior was composed of four separate panels, namely the backs of the panels with the musical angels and Adam and Eve, the two middle ones being only half as wide as the two others (0.38 m. against 0.70 m.). This quadripartite space was almost as obstructive to a composition consisting of two figures only as to a composition of more than two. The first possibility was held to be the lesser evil, all the more so as the Annunciation was a peculiarly suitable subject for the exterior of an altarpiece, but led, of course, to the anomaly that this Annunciation had to be painted on four separate panels,

67. This answers Beenken's objection (*Wallraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, p. 209) to Martin Conway's basically sound, though much exaggerated, statement that the figures of Adam and Eve were Jan's only contribution to the interior of the Ghent altarpiece (*The van Eycks and their Followers*, 1921, p. 58).

68. In the Annunciation this fiction is carried so far that the frames cast shadows on the floor of the painted room, as though they belonged to the pictorial space, instead of to the realm of real objects.

two of which were necessarily devoid of figures. Jan van Eyck certainly made the best of this situation by filling one of the two empty spaces with a most admirable cityscape and the other with an equally admirable symbolical still life;⁶⁹ but he would have avoided the whole difficulty if he had been free to organize the upper zone of his own accord.

*
* *

To sum up, more can be said for Dvořák's attribution of the foreground section of the Adoration of the Lamb to Hubert than for the opposite theory. Confirmation of this is supplied by the Berlin Virgin in a Church, unquestionably a work of Jan van Eyck,⁷⁰ which shows an unmistakable stylistic similarity with the holy Virgins in the Adoration of the Lamb, so that it can be considered as a connecting link between the upper section of this picture and such figures as the Jeanne de Cenami in the London Arnolfini portrait of 1434.

If this is the case, the attribution of those works in Eyckian style which are considered to be prior to the Ghent altarpiece remains as problematic as ever. Since I do not know the surviving part of the Heures de Turin-Milan in the original, I dare not decide whether the miniatures lined up by Hulin de Loo under the heading of "Main G" and ascribed by him to Hubert are really Eyckian works datable as early as between 1414 and 1417, or were executed by a Dutch artist, closely following the Eyckian style, in the fourth decade of the century;⁷¹ but their style—whoever their actual author may be—links up much better with such paintings as are authentic works by Jan van Eyck (compare the Milan Office of the Dead with the Berlin Virgin in a Church, and the Turin Prayer of William IV with the knights and judges in the Ghent altarpiece). Thus, if these miniatures are Eyckian, they are to be considered as early works of Jan rather than of Hubert, all the more so because we know that Jan was employed by the princes of Holland, while Hubert, as far as we learn from the documents, worked only for the wealthy bourgeoisie of Ghent.⁷² And if they were executed by an ingenious follower of the van Eycks, this follower took Jan, not Hubert, as his model.

69. Cf. Tolnai, *loc. cit.* and Smits, *loc. cit.* p. 46.

70. Cf. even Beenken, *Wallraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, p. 228.

71. Cf. M. Dvořák, *Die Anfänge der holländischen Malerei in Jahrbuch d. preuss. Kunstsln.*, XXXIX, 1918, pp. 51 ff., reprinted in *Das Rätsel der Kunst...*, 1925, pp. 245 ff.; also cf. Tolnai, *loc. cit.*

72. Cf. M. J. Friedländer, *Die altniederländische Malerei*, I, 1924, pp. 68 f., and in *Pantheon*, *loc. cit.* As to the recent development of the controversy about the authenticity of the "Main G" miniatures, see Beenken, *Wallraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, p. 201, note 19. If the possibility of dating these miniatures as early as 1415 to 1420 seems admissible from the point of view of the general evolution of Flemish and Franco-Flemish art, I should see no difficulty in reconciling them with the individual development of Jan van Eyck. It is entirely possible that a master originally interested in the richness of the world as a whole, and therefore subordinating

even the human figure to the spatial surroundings, should endeavor, later on, to develop the plastic self-sufficiency and dignified monumentality of the figure as well. If Jan van Eyck is the author of the "Main G" miniatures, his evolution would be comparable to that of Dürer as described by himself to Philipp Melanchthon. The way which would lead from the Nativity of St. John or the Office of the Dead in the Heures de Turin-Milan, to the London Arnolfini portrait or the Dresden triptych, in which luminous space and statuesque figures are fused into a classic unity, would be, to speak in the terms of Melanchthon, a way from "floridæ et maxime variae picturae" to "naturae nativa facies" and "simplicitas." As far as the relationship of scale between the figures and the architectural setting is concerned, the Mellon Annunciation (around 1425/6) would be a logical intermediary between the Office of the Dead and the Berlin Virgin in a Church (about 1430), which in turn would lead up to the classic equilibrium

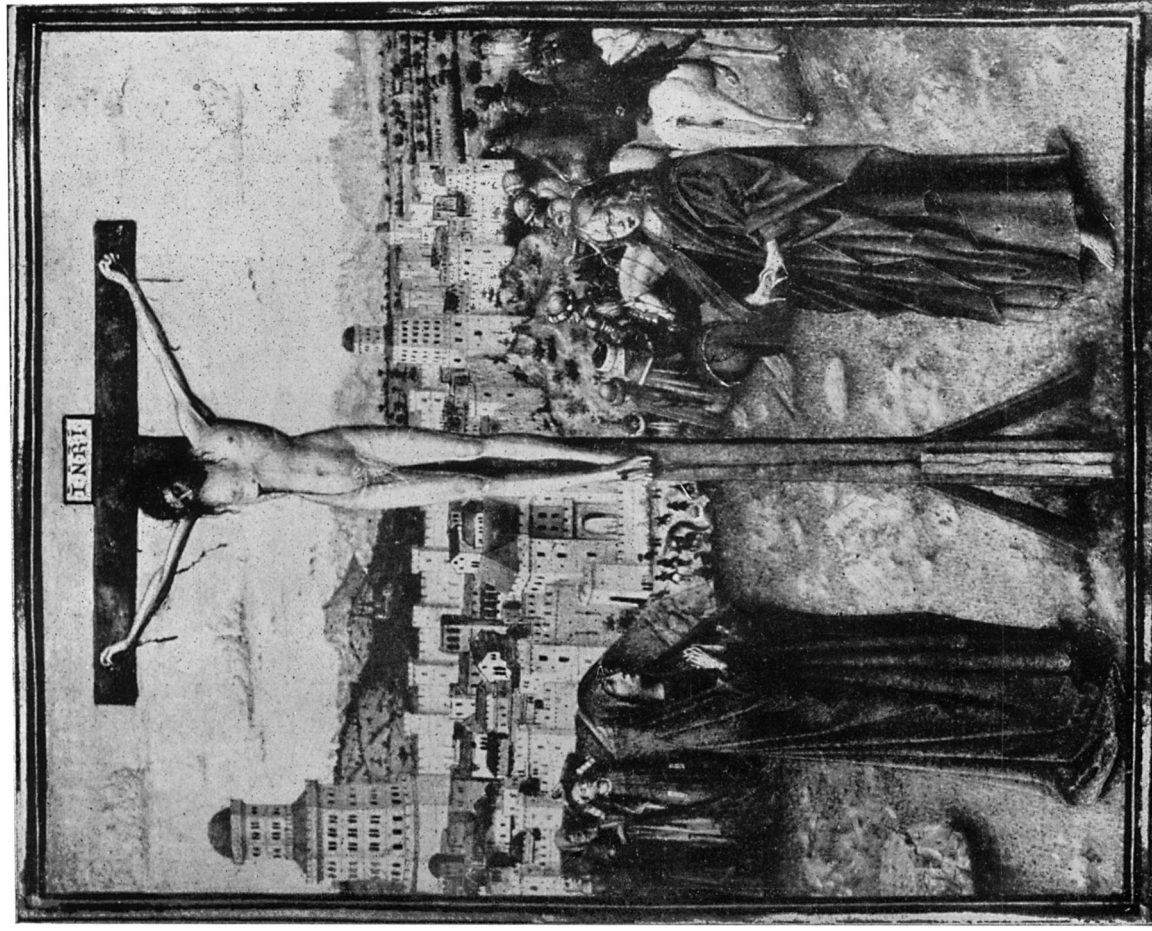


FIG. 34—Milan, Trivulzio Collection: *Crucifixion*. Copy by a Flemish Illuminator ("Main H") after Jan van Eyck

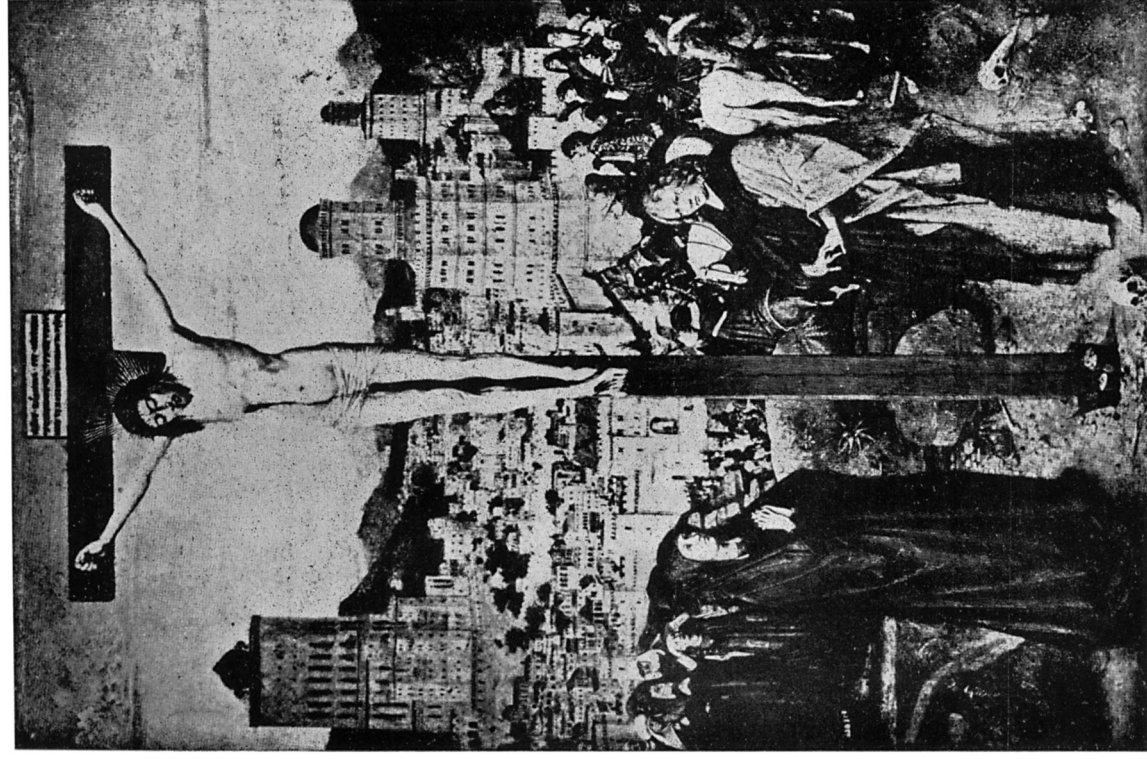


FIG. 35—Venice, Cà d'Oro: *Crucifixion*. Copy by a Flemish Master after Jan van Eyck

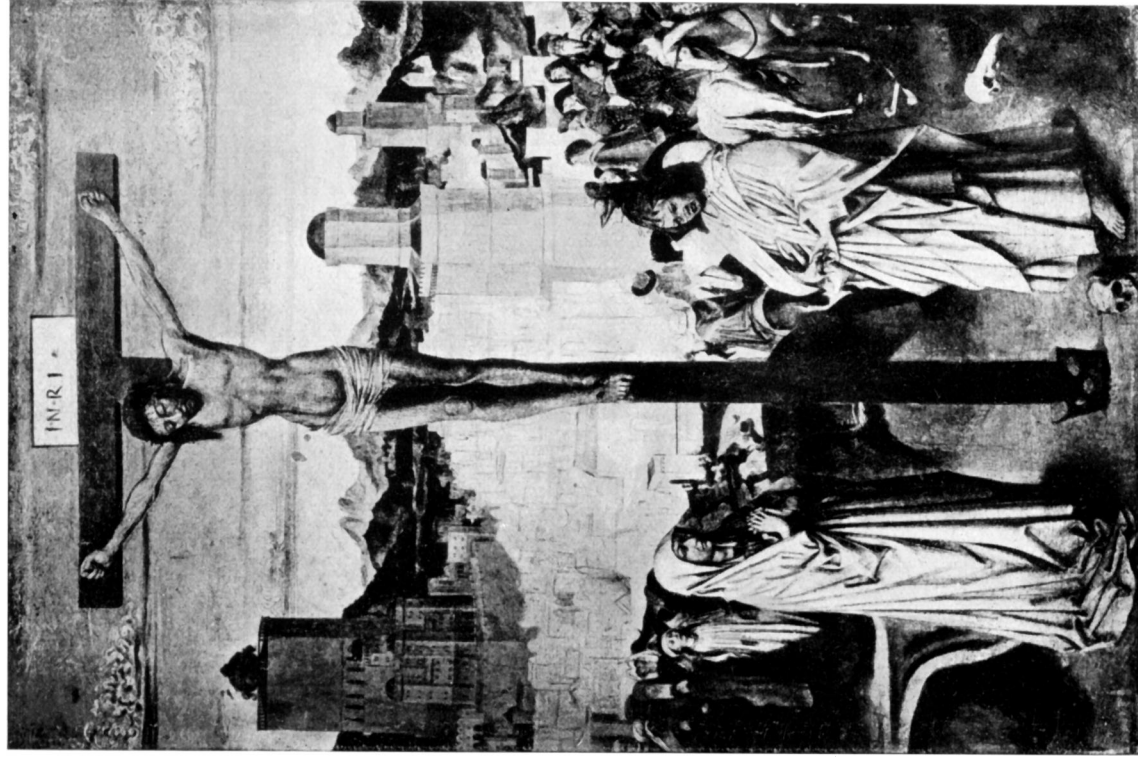


FIG. 36—Padua, Museo Civico: *Crucifixion*. Copy by
an Italian Master after Jan van Eyck

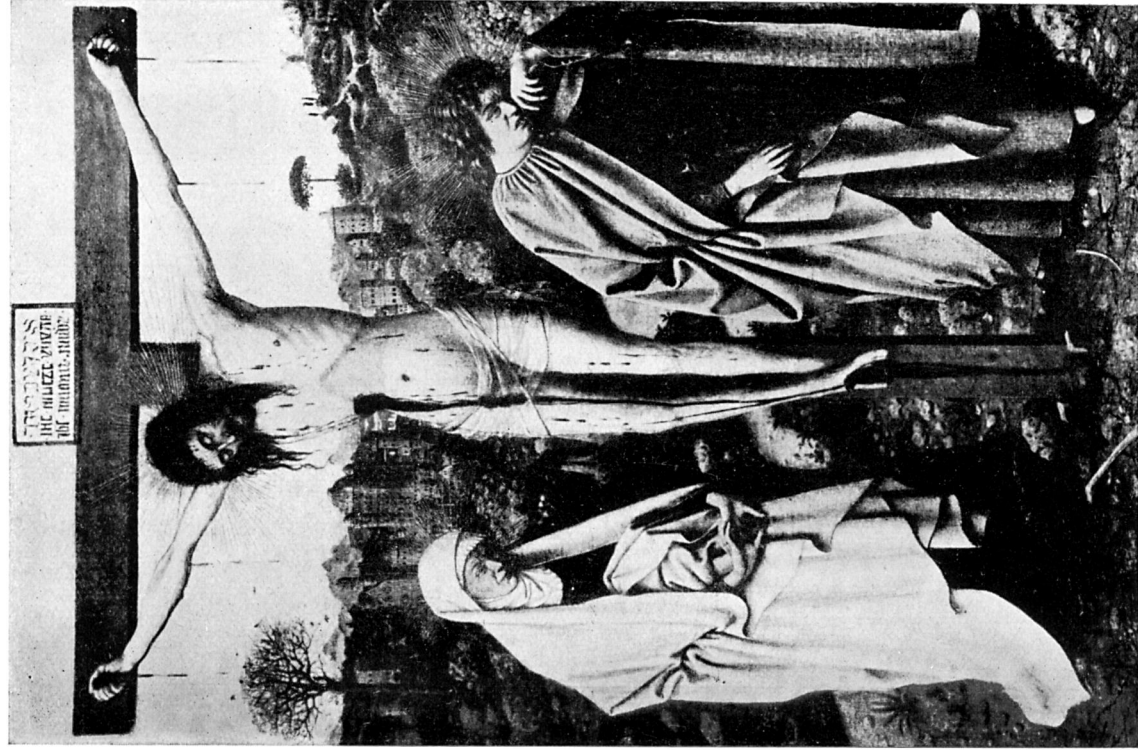


FIG. 37—Berlin, Deutsches Museum: *Crucifixion*, by
an Eclectic Imitator of Jan van Eyck

This applies also to the Metropolitan Museum diptych with the Crucifixion and the Last Judgment (Fig. 3). Those who believe it to be Eyckian attribute it almost unanimously to Hubert,⁷³ and it is certainly due to Hulin's "Main G" (at least in the main, though some parts, especially in the Last Judgment, seem to be executed by a collaborator). But here, too, the stylistic peculiarities are more compatible with those discernible in Jan's contributions to the Ghent altarpiece (cf. again the knights, judges, and virgins) and in the "Main H" miniatures in the Heures de Turin-Milan which obviously reflect the style of Jan⁷⁴ though they are certainly not his own work;⁷⁵ the grimaces of various individual figures of the diptych, too, foreshadow—or echo?—the strained expression of the singing angels, and, more especially, the frozen smiles characteristic of the Gabriel in the Mellon Annunciation (Fig. 22), the foremost rider in the Ghent altarpiece, and the St. George in the Madonna van der Paele, all three undoubtedly executed by Jan van Eyck.⁷⁶

of the still later pictures. Incidentally, in the picture of the Virgin in a Church, the apparent contradiction in scale between the size of the figure and that of the architecture is not due to a lack of perspective skill, but rather to the intention of conveying the impression of a quasi-visionary apparition of super-human grandeur. This intention would be consistent with the very subjective interpretation of space in this picture (cf. Panofsky in *Vorträge der Bibl. Warburg, loc. cit.*, p. 317, where, however, the picture is dated somewhat too late), and it can be corroborated by Roger van der Weyden's Chevrot triptych (the Seven Sacraments) at Antwerp, the architectural setting of which is known to be borrowed from Jean van Eyck's Virgin in a Church. For in this triptych, the Crucifix with St. John and the Virgin Mary is certainly introduced into what seems to be a perfectly real scenery, as a wholly visionary feature, and is again out of scale with the building, whereas the ordinary human figures engaged in the performance of the various rites are absolutely "correct" in size.

73. Cf. B. Burroughs in *Art News*, November 4, 1933; F. J. Mather in *Art in America*, XXII (1934), pp. 48 ff.; and Beenken, *Wallraff-Richartz Jahrbuch*, 1933/34, pp. 190 ff.

74. In this respect, I fully agree with M. J. Friedländer, *loc. cit.*

75. As is assumed by Hulin de Loo, F. Winkler and H. Beenken. The attribution of the "Main H" miniatures to Jan van Eyck instead of to a copyist (which attribution would of course altogether exclude the hypothesis that Jan might be the author of the "Main G" miniatures) is hardly tenable. The composition of the "Main H" Crucifixion (Fig. 34) is also transmitted to posterity in a Flemish version in the Ca' d'Oro in Venice (Fig. 35: cf. E. v. Bodenhäusen, in *Jahrbuch d. kgl. preuss. Kunstsln.*, XXVI (1905), pp. 111 ff. and Georg Graf Vitzthum, *Festschrift zum 60. Geburtstage von Paul Clemen*, 1926, pp. 401 ff.), and in an Italian version in the Museo Civico at Padua (Fig. 36: cf. F. Schottmüller, in *Jahrbuch d. kgl. preuss. Kunstsln.*, XXIII, pp. 33 ff., and Vitzthum, *loc. cit.*); in addition, the Eyckian composition has been used, as I learn from Dr. Millard Meiss, in an otherwise Mantegnesque Crucifixion of

about 1470 in the Palazzo Correr at Venice. Now, it is hardly possible that the Italian author of the Padua picture could have had access to the Heures de Turin-Milan, which did not leave the Netherlands until a much later date. The Italian artist obviously used a panel as his model, either a lost original, or the Ca' d'Oro picture. Even assuming that the latter were the case, we should hardly believe that the Ca' d'Oro picture could be a copy of the Milan miniature, because it is much richer and imaginative both in the figures and in the scenery, especially the view of Jerusalem. Thus, the assumption that the miniature was done by Jan himself would lead, in any case, to the conclusion that Jan van Eyck would have executed, *propria manu*, two almost entirely identical specimens of the same composition, one a panel, the other a miniature. This is extremely, unlikely, and it is far more natural to assume that the Italian copy in Padua, as well as the Flemish copy in the Ca' d'Oro and the Milan miniature, are derived from one original panel by Jan van Eyck. This situation would be entirely analogous to the well-known case of Jan van Eyck's St. Jerome panel (cf. F. Winkler in *Festschrift für Max J. Friedländer zum 60. Geburtstage*, 1927, pp. 91 ff.), which was in the possession of Cosimo Medici and was used by an Italian master (Ghirlandaio, St. Jerome, Florence, Ognissanti), by a Flemish panel painter (Petrus Cristus, St. Jerome, Detroit), and by several Flemish illuminators, e. g. for the St. Thomas Aquinas in the Heures de Turin-Milan.

76. As to the physiognomical problem, cf. also M. Dvořák, *Das Rätsel der Kunst...*, 1925, pp. 118 ff. The Berlin Crucifixion (Fig. 37) which shows facial expressions even more strained than the pictures mentioned above as executed by or connected with Jan van Eyck, while it conspicuously lacks their glowing, gemlike quality, is, in my opinion, the work of an eclectic follower, who, on the one hand, endeavors to imitate the style of Jan, not Hubert, van Eyck and, on the other, assimilates some Tournai elements. The head of the St. John in the Berlin picture is very similar to that of the St. John in the Milan miniature of the Agony in the Garden ("Main H"); and it is a remarkable fact that Hulin de Loo, who for twenty years had championed the attribution of the Berlin Crucifixion to Hubert, now ascribes it

The picture of the Three Maries at the Tomb in the Cook collection (Fig. 2), however, emphatically differs from this group. It is less miniaturelike than the Metropolitan Museum diptych, with which it has practically nothing in common but such general qualities as are characteristic of the whole class of early Eyckian works. Within this class the Cook picture—or its original—must be distinguished from the “Main G” group of the miniatures and the Metropolitan Museum diptych, and must be linked up with the lower part of the Adoration of the Lamb and with the Friedsam Annunciation. The inference is that both the Cook picture—or its original—and the Friedsam Annunciation are to be ascribed to the master who painted the lower part of the Adoration of the Lamb, that is to Hubert van Eyck, thus being the only works which can be connected with him besides his contribution to the Ghent altarpiece. The Cook Three Maries at the Tomb—or its original—may be dated around 1420, the Friedsam Annunciation, I should say, towards the very end of his career.

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Apart from what has already been pointed out, the compositions here ascribed to Hubert van Eyck are connected with each other by one quality which distinguishes them from those by Jan: they all reveal not only a certain conservatism but also a certain persistence of that Italianizing tendency which had been so important an undercurrent in French and Franco-Flemish fourteenth century painting, but is entirely neutralized in the style of Jan van Eyck.

The Italianate types found in the Hubert sections of the Ghent altarpiece have already been mentioned. As far as the Cook picture is concerned, not only the iconographic conception as such (the use of the Three Maries at the Tomb as a substitute for, not as a mere corollary of, the Resurrection) betrays, in a work of this period, a certain attachment to a belated and basically Italo-Byzantine tradition,⁷⁷ but also the curious inclining rocks, somewhat resembling a Phrygian cap, which are seen in the left upper corner of the Cook picture are a characteristic feature of the Italianate style in fourteenth and early fifteenth century art.⁷⁸ The Italianizing

to Jan, as somewhat gloatingly emphasized by Renders, *Hubert van Eyck...*, pp. 127-128 and 164. On the other hand, the bare tree, which never appears in Eyckian works, is a favorite motif in the milieu out of which emerged the Master of Flémalle (Dijon Nativity), as well as such “Bodensee” masters as Lucas Moser: it is already to be found in the Jacquemart de Hesdin miniatures in the Brussels Book of Hours, ms. 11060/61 (cf. Tolnai, *loc. cit.*). The distorted face of the aged Mater Dolorosa resembles that of the weeping woman in the left upper corner of Roger’s Deposition in the Escorial, and the *contrapposto* attitude, as well as the costume of the St. John, is equally Rogeresque. The authenticity of the picture is also incompatible with the fact that the Mater Dolorosa wrings her hands in exactly the same unusual way as does the St. John in the Crucifixions discussed in the preceding footnote (Figs. 34, 35, 36). It is scarcely possible that either Jan or Hubert van Eyck so literally and thoughtlessly took over a detail such as this pair of hands from a

picture by his brother, and still less probable that Jan van Eyck so literally and thoughtlessly repeated himself.

77. Even in ivories where the scheme of the Three Maries was retained longer than elsewhere, the later specimens add the figure of Christ (e. g., R. Koechlin, *Les Ivoires Gothiques*, 1924, pl. CLXVII, no. 955), and the same thing is true of the Heures de Turin-Milan (ed. Hulin de Loo, pl. XVIII), while a miniature in the Petites Heures du Duc de Berry (Jacquemart de Hesdin workshop) shows God the Father instead of the traditional angel (*Monuments Piot*, III, 1896, pl. XI). The fact that the very copyists of the Cook picture felt obliged to insert the figure of Christ has already been mentioned in note 12.

78. Tolnai, *loc. cit.*, has already adduced the specific form of these rocks (ultimately deriving from such Byzantine miniatures as may be found, for example, in the Vatican Menologium of Basil II), to show a connection between the Dijon Nativity by the Master of Flémalle and such Italianizing miniatures

iconography of the Friedsam picture has been sufficiently expounded in the first section of this article; in its case, however, we have the advantage of convincing reciprocal evidence. Some years before Jan van Eyck fell under the spell of the Mérode altarpiece, from which he took over, around 1426/27, the bourgeois interior arrangement of his Annunciation in the Ghent altarpiece, he had executed that other Annunciation now preserved in the Mellon collection (Fig. 22). In it he had not adopted the Italianate exterior type, as had done the author of the Friedsam picture, but the church interior type as championed by the Master of the Heures du Maréchal de Boucicaut, to whom he is also so much indebted from a purely stylistic point of view.⁷⁹ The scene takes place in the interior of a church somewhat resembling Notre-Dame-de-Dijon as well as the cathedral of Tournai (note the straight horizontal epistyle in the triforium), though it is enriched by many unobtrusively symbolical features, and, on the other hand, invested with a feeling of intimacy by the elimination of the altar and the addition of a stool with a red silk damask cushion on it.

Thus, those works which permit us to form an opinion of the artistic personality of Hubert van Eyck seem to be produced by a master whose style is not only more archaic than that of Jan but is also rooted in a different, and, on the whole, more Italianizing tradition. The main foundation of Jan's style, as well as that of Hubert and the Master of Flémalle, is indubitably a regional tradition of which not much more has been left than the works of Melchior Broederlam and a wilderness of written documents. But while Jan van Eyck developed this tradition on the lines marked out by the Boucicaut master, that is to say on the basis of an intrinsically Northern and refinedly pictorial miniature style,⁸⁰ and while again the Master of Flémalle developed it on the lines marked out by such artists as Jacquemart de Hesdin,⁸¹ Jean Malouel and Henry Bellechose,⁸² that is to say on the basis of an intrinsically Italianate and vigorously monumental panel style (in addition to which he assimilated, as it seems, a certain amount of German elements),⁸³ Hubert van Eyck would occupy an intermediary position between these two.

as those in the Brussels Book of Hours, ms. 11060/61 (Jacquemart de Hesdin). They appear also in the Broederlam altarpiece and in the Tiefenbronn altarpiece by Lucas Moser, whose style is obviously rooted in a tradition similar to that of the Master of Flémalle; but they do not occur in the works of Jan van Eyck.

79. Cf. Bella Martens, *loc. cit.*, pp. 84, 103, 195, and *passim*.

80. It must be said, however, that the mature style of the Boucicaut master presupposes, in turn, the assimilation of Jacquemart de Hesdin. The astounding difference between his early works, such as the Book of Hours in the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett (no. 75), the style of which can be derived from the national French style of around 1400 (Paris, Bib. nat. ms. fr. 12420; ms. fr. 598, etc.), and his mature works such as the Heures du Maréchal de Boucicaut in the Musée Jacquemart-André, the Dialogues de Pierre Salmon (Paris, Bib. nat. ms. fr. 23279 and Geneva, ms. fr. 165), the Livre des Merveilles du Monde (Paris, Bib. nat. ms. fr. 2810), and many others, can be accounted for only on the assumption that the master worked out a synthesis of the definitely non-Italianate style of around 1400 with that of Jacquemart's full-page

miniatures in the Brussels Book of Hours, ms. 11060/61, in which the first serious attempt had been made at transferring the fundamental aesthetic structure of Trecento panel paintings to book illumination; whereas the earlier French Italianists, such as Jean Pucelle and his followers, had limited themselves to appropriating mere Trecento motifs. It seems, in point of fact, that Jacquemart de Hesdin no longer approached his Italian models from the viewpoint of a mere book illuminator but "à travers le tempérament d'un peintre monumental," which is in keeping with the fact that his style seems to be rooted in the tradition represented by the Parement de Narbonne. Thus, Durrieu's error in ascribing Jacquemart de Hesdin's illumination in the Brussels Book of Hours to the Boucicaut master is intrinsically justifiable, in so far as the mature style of the latter had indeed absorbed the essential qualities of the former, who, it seems, was his senior by about twenty years.

81. Cf. Tolnai, *loc. cit.*

82. F. Winkler, *Der Meister von Flémalle und Roger van der Weyden*, 1913.

83. This will be expounded by Mr. David Robb.