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Fifteenth-century Netherlandish devotional portrait diptychs: Origins and function

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Case Western Reserve University, 1994

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FIFTEENTH-CENTURY NETHERLANDISH DEVOTIONAL PORTRAIT

DIPTYCHS: ORIGINS AND FUNCTION

by

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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GRADUATE STUDIES

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FIFTEENTH-CENTURY NETHERLANDISH DEVOTIONAL PORTRAIT
DIPTYCHS: ORIGINS AND FUNCTION

Abstract

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LAURA DEBORAH GELFAND

Abstract

Devotional portrait diptychs, those which contain a donor in prayer on one wing and the Virgin and Child on the other, are a unique form of devotional painting. These works attained popularity in the Burgundian Netherlands between c.1430 and c.1540. Their production stopped as quickly as it had begun and their limited geographical distribution is striking. This dissertation identifies the origins of the devotional portrait diptych, traces the history of the paintings, and identifies their function.

The Book of Hours was, like the devotional diptych, an accessory to private devotions, and became popular in the years just before the devotional diptych was first created. The iconography of owner portraits found in Books of Hours and the prayers with which these portraits were associated elucidate the origins
of the devotional diptych.

The Valois Dukes played an important role in Flemish art and their impact on the commissioning of devotional portrait diptychs was no less impressive. Evidence from the Chartreuse of Champmol, as well as from the ducal inventories, shows that the dukes were the first to commission and possess devotional portrait diptychs. Philip the Good was particularly important in the inception of the form and it is in Jan van Eyck's *Virgin in a Church*, Berlin, that we find evidence of the first portable devotional portrait diptych.

Rogier van der Weyden popularized the half-length devotional diptych in his commissions for the members of the court of Philip the Good. Later artists, beginning with Memling and ending with Jan Gossart, utilized the devotional diptych form. The development and changes of the form which occurred in the decades between these artists are investigated.

Some devotional portrait diptychs were intended as tomb paintings and the implications of this are discussed in the final chapter. The *vanitas* and *memento mori* devices that appear on the backs of devotional diptychs images are evidence of this practice. Finally, the importance of donor portraits in other religious art is connected with the portraits.
found in devotional diptychs. The desires of the donors are the common link among tomb sculptures, manuscript illuminations, and public and private paintings.
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I. Introduction

There are three major types of diptychs that were popular during the Middle Ages. The first was the Man of Sorrows facing the Mater Dolorosa, which was based on ancient Byzantine prototypes. The double portrait of a married couple was developed during the fifteenth-century and is the second major type. The type upon which this study will focus exclusively is the devotional portrait diptych which shows the donor on one wing and the Virgin and Child on the other.

The Devotional Portrait Diptych

Rogier van der Weyden's Diptych of Laurent Froimert (Fig. 31, portrait in Brussels, Madonna panel in Caen), and Hans Memling's Diptych of Martin van Nieuwenhove (Figs. 32a, 32b, Bruges) are two of the best known examples of the devotional portrait diptych. These diptychs were painted with the figures in either half-length or full-length, and both types are considered here. Diptychs may show the donor in an interior or in a landscape. Frequently the donors of these diptychs are associated with the Burgundian court but examples portraying members of the clergy also
enter into this investigation.¹

Donors depicted in devotional portrait diptychs may appear on either the sinister (left) or dexter (right) wing.² While most of the diptychs discussed show the donor on the sinister wing, examples with the order reversed are numerous and include such famous diptychs as the Melun Diptych by Jean Fouquet (Figs. 11a, 11b, Madonna panel, Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts, Antwerp, and Donor panel, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin) and Jan Gossaert's Diptych of Jean Carondelet (Fig. 12, Louvre, Paris). In France the donor was usually on the dexter wing while in Flanders he usually occupied the sinister position.³ It should also be noted here that the donor's side was always closed over the Virgin's panel and thus the back of the

¹ Some of these members of the clergy may also be associated with the Burgundian Court.


³ F. J. Mather, "Three Early Flemish Tomb Pictures", Art in America, 1915, 268. This rule seems to hold up very nicely throughout most of the diptychs surveyed.
donor's wing often includes an additional painting.\textsuperscript{4}

The first known devotional portrait diptych dates from the 1430s; the last few were made during the third decade of the sixteenth century. During this full century of popularity, the devotional diptych was created by artists living primarily in the Burgundian Netherlands. The popularity of the devotional diptych outside of this area was extremely limited, with only a few examples surviving from France and none from Italy or Germany. This dissertation considers the history of the devotional portrait diptych from the earliest examples of the form to the first decades of the sixteenth century. Because the area of production and use of the devotional portrait diptych was primarily limited to the Burgundian Netherlands this area is the focus of this study.

\textbf{The Historical Significance of Devotional Portrait Diptychs}

Devotional portrait diptychs are worthy of a new study both because of their popularity for almost a

\textsuperscript{4} Hulin de Loo, 1923, 53. Usually these were heraldic in nature; however, most of them are not published or reproduced. The few which are illustrated in this thesis will prove to be quite revealing for our inquiry.
century, and for the unique light that their study sheds on important aspects of medieval piety. The devotional portrait diptych allows the contemporary viewer to examine the obscure area of private piety in the Late Middle Ages. As a recently developed accessory to private devotion the portrait diptych is remarkable because it varied only slightly during the century of its production and use. The inscriptions on the paintings and the iconography of the objects depicted within them supply clues about the their commissioners motivations.

Previous literature

Very few authors have attempted any detailed discussion of the devotional portrait diptych. One of the earliest theories was proposed by Panofsky who believed that the fusion of Mater Dolorosa/Man of Sorrows diptychs and marriage portrait diptychs resulted in the type which concerns us. Sixten Ringbom later

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5 E. Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Cambridge, Mass., 1964, 294: "The sitter praying to the Virgin takes the place of the Virgin praying to Christ, not only in that he joins his hands in supplication but also in that he occupies the right hand (dexter) panel whereas the rules of heraldry grant him a place on the left-hand (sinister) panel in matrimonial double portraits."
described our type as a fusion of the devotional half-length Virgin and Child with the traditional secular portrait.\(^6\)

Four dissertations have been written on the diptych form; however, none of these specifically treat the problem of the devotional diptych type with which we are primarily concerned. The oldest of these studies is by Charlotte Teuber-Weckersdorff; completed in 1956.\(^7\) The author traces the early development of the diptych form itself from the late Antique consular diptychs and Byzantine diptychs. The focus of Teuber-Weckersdorff's study is the origin and history of the diptych form, with all its variants, rather than focusing on one specific type as the present study does. Her dissertation is brief but its approach toward the origins of devotional diptychs is paradigmatic. She doesn't attempt to catalogue all of the extant diptychs, but is the first to examine them with a scholarly eye.

In 1967 Wolfgang Kermer completed his dissertation

\(^{6}\) Ringbom, *Icon to Narrative*, 45.

on diptychs in religious art.\textsuperscript{8} The author discusses all of the types of diptychs very thoroughly, including those with Christ and the Virgin, the apostles, Last Judgement and Crucifixion, etc. The catalogue of diptychs which the author includes divides them into schools according to their origins and includes every diptych known to the author from the earliest examples to the end of the sixteenth-century. Kermer does not approach the devotional portrait diptych as a form differing from the other types and the significance of portraits is not discussed. The author's primary concern was to gather and organize the works.

J. B. Friedman's 1977 doctoral dissertation, "An Iconological Examination of the Half-length Devotional Portrait Diptych in the Netherlands, 1460-1530," interpreted the diptych through the teachings of the Devotio Moderna.\textsuperscript{9} Much has been written about the importance of this movement and its practices. Geert


Groote, the founder of the movement, and his followers believed that the Catholic Church was both stagnant and corrupt and sought a spirituality based on mysticism and personal piety. To this end, laymen and women, called the Brethren and Sisters of the Common Life formed groups to aid in their devotions. The first monastery was formed in Windesheim in 1387 and the writings on piety and spirituality which were produced within the monastery became quite well known. The Devotio Moderna has often been viewed as a precursor to the Reformation. While the movement and its associated teachings were undoubtedly influential, I believe that both historians and art historians have used the movement as an easy catch-all explanation for the many cultural changes which occurred in the Netherlands during the Late Middle Ages. Unless one can prove that the individual patron of a devotional diptych was specifically connected with the movement, it is not possible to ascribe the motivation for their commissions to the group's teachings. Indeed, we will find no demonstrable connection to the Devotio Moderna among the commissioners of the diptychs discussed in the pages below.

Friedman, like the German scholars, also locates the origins of the diptych in ancient sources and she
does not discuss the earliest devotional diptychs found in Books of Hours. Unlike the current study, which considers only diptychs which include the Virgin and Child and a devotional donor portrait, whether in half-length or full-length, Friedman considers half-length diptychs of several types of subjects.

Most recently, a dissertation was published by Susanne Bäumler. The very complete catalogue in this dissertation obviates the need for one in the present study and the interested reader is directed to this text for further information on specific diptychs. Bäumler's approach is also related to the ways in which these diptychs were used as Andachtsbilder. After discussing the development of the Andachtsbild and the independent portrait, the author discusses the diptych as deriving from antique sources. The next major portion of the dissertation is concerned with diptychs which show the Virgin and Child. Some diptychs may include a donor or figure of Death on the attached wing. These are divided into those which are half-length and full-length. The author then discusses

diptychs which include Passion scenes, and then those with saints. While some of Bäumler's dissertation overlaps with the present study, my approach differs from hers in several respects as will be evident below.

**Thesis and Methodology**

This dissertation will associate the development of the devotional portrait diptych and its function with developments in medieval theology which affected the means by which lay people envisioned and prepared for the afterlife. Rather than examining the ultimate sources for the devotional diptych, this thesis will look at contemporary developments in the accessories used for private piety. The first five chapters of this dissertation are historical and trace the devotional diptych from its inception to its end. The final two chapters are primarily theoretical and discuss the function and funerary uses of the devotional portrait diptych, as well as the way in which those who commissioned them believed that they were an aid to salvation.

The Book of Hours, an accessory to private devotion which became popular shortly before the advent of the devotional portrait diptych, is the focus of
the first chapter. The common aspects of the devotional portrait diptych and the Book of Hours, including development, appearance, function, and use, are discussed as a new explanation for the development of the devotional portrait diptych.

Chapters two through five will examine the historical development of the devotional portrait diptych. The second chapter focusses on the possibility that devotional diptychs were developed for the Valois Dukes of Burgundy, examining evidence for ducal commissions both for the Chartreuse of Champmol and for their private devotional objects.

The Valois Dukes and their impact on the development of the devotional portrait diptychs continues in the third chapter which focuses on Philip the Good's possible commission of the Berlin Virgin in a Church by Jan van Eyck. Chapter four will survey the half-length devotional diptychs painted by Rogier for the members of the court of Philip the Good and the fifth chapter traces the devotional diptych into the sixteenth century and the work of Jan Gossart.

Following this examination of the origins of the devotional portrait diptych, I will develop the theory proposed by Mather that devotional diptychs had a funerary purpose. This is affirmed by the examination
of the reverse panels of diptychs, which often display *memento mori* devices. The final chapter discusses the doctrine of Purgatory and its development alongside the increased popularity of donor portraits in all media.
II. Origins of the Devotional Diptych

The devotional portrait diptych is an object whose basic form and content remained essentially unchanged throughout its history. In this chapter I will argue that devotional portrait diptychs developed not from Byzantine or medieval predecessors in ivory, but from manuscript illumination.

Because the devotional portrait diptych, with a Virgin and Child and donor portrait, has never been isolated and studied as a separate devotional object, its origins have always been grouped together with those of other diptych types. Teuber-Weckersdorff, Kermer, Friedman, and Bäumler have addressed the origins of all diptychs, no matter what their subject, as stemming from Byzantine, Late Antique and Early Christian sources.\(^1\) However, not all devotional portrait diptychs share similar origins, just as they also were not all intended to fulfill the same purpose. The figures depicted on the Wilton Diptych (Fig. 1, National Gallery, London), Richard II and the Virgin and Child, are those found in the diptychs upon which

\(^1\) Friedman, 7-8. The author links these sources with the desire for intercession and salvation. While the motivation she discusses is surely correct, I believe that the Book of Hours constitute a more direct source of inspiration. The other authors are briefly discussed in the introduction; see section on previous literature.
this study focusses. However, Richard II's commission has political connotations which have more in common with the motivation of a Byzantine Consul than with the concerns of the princes, courtiers, and bourgeois patrons we will discuss. Consul Anastasius's ivory diptych (Fig. 2, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris) was created in 517 to commemorate his appointment and he appears with many attributes of his office. Richard II's commission was inspired by political motives as well and the Virgin and Child appear in his diptych to support the king's assertion of divine rulership.²

Late medieval diptychs which show saints or holy scenes almost certainly originated in earlier pictorial models. One may certainly see how Jan van Eyck's Diptych of the Crucifixion and Last Judgement, (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), to name one particularly famous example, may have descended from the carved ivory diptychs so popular in France which show small scenes of the life of Christ. However, I do not know of any examples of diptychs dated before the beginning of the fifteenth century that show an isolated layman in prayer before the Virgin and Child.

The appearance and purpose of devotional portrait diptychs are distinctly different from the other paintings which share their form but have different subjects.

**Origins in the Book of Hours**

I propose that the devotional diptych evolved from the frequent depiction of the owners of Books of Hours shown in prayer before an image of the Virgin and Child and near the texts of specific prayers addressed to the Virgin herself. These texts fervently expressed a desire for the Virgin's intercession before Christ on behalf of the supplicant, and are much the same as the prayers that a donor would have said before his devotional diptych.

The Book of Hours, a deeply private work intended for personal devotions, in many respects resembles the purpose, significance, and appearance of the devotional diptych. In fact,

In Burgundy the diptych was described as a 'book-like' little altar; the name, 'tableaun fourmes d'une heures, formant' points not only to the shape of the portable worship tool, but simultaneously to its determined use for private prayer considered at stipulated hours.³

³ Friedman, 31.
The Book of Hours was of an intimate scale and could only be used and viewed by one person at a time. The prayers contained within the book followed an established tradition common to most Books of Hours, but the use and the order of the prayers as well as additional prayers and suffrages which the owner would have included varied greatly. The choice of texts to be included in the Book of Hours belonged solely to the owner of the book, although customary texts were always included. The Book of Hours was used as an accessory to private prayer to stimulate piety and devotion specifically to the Virgin.

The Book of Hours has often been described as "the medieval best-seller, number one for nearly 250 years." From its creation in the late thirteenth century to its decline in popularity in the early sixteenth century, the Book of Hours represented a phenomenon of private devotion unequalled by any other text.  

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5 Printed Books of Hours continued to be made and were popular into the late sixteenth century. The Rosary may be likened to the Book of Hours and may be compared with it. For further information see "The Rosary," *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 13, New York, 1912, pp. 184-188. An interesting discussion of the Rosary may also be found in S. Ringbom, "Maria in Sole and the Virgin of the
The core of every Book of Hours is the Hours of the Virgin. It is this series of devotions which first became freed from the breviary and was of particular interest to lay devotees, the intended audience for the Book of Hours. These and the other texts were an aid to help pious lay people emulate members of the clergy in their recitations of prayers and the daily office. While the variations among the books are limitless and the wishes of the owners not always predictable, it is possible to describe a "typical" Book of Hours. The following lists the contents of a "typical" Book of Hours:

1. Calendar
2. Sequences of the Gospels
3. The Prayer Ossero Te
4. The Prayer O Intemerata
5. The Hours of the Virgin
6. The Hours of the Cross
7. The Hours of the Holy Spirit
8. Penitential Psalms
9. Litany
10. Office of the Dead
11. Suffrages of the Saints

The Hours of the Virgin are in turn divided into

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eight Hours each made up of psalms, canticles, lessons, prayers and capitula. The order of the Hours and the prescribed times of day at which they were to be read are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Matins and Lauds:</th>
<th>Daybreak</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime:</td>
<td>6:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Terce:</td>
<td>9:00 a.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sext:</td>
<td>Noon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None:</td>
<td>3:00 p.m.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vespers:</td>
<td>Sunset</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compline:</td>
<td>Evening</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The manner in which Books of Hours were commissioned and executed gives us some insight into the way that devotional diptychs may have come into being. De Hamel gives the most interesting account of how the patron of a Book of Hours might have approached such an investment, and an investment it certainly was. Clients would have gone to a book shop and discussed what they wanted with the owner. The proprietor of the shop would have had unbound sheets of vellum in stock and the client would make decisions about the type of script, additional prayers and suffrages, and illuminations to be included in the book. Examples of all of these would probably be kept


8 For example, the scribes specimen sheet written by Hermannus Strepel of Münster in 1447, The Hague, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, 76, d.45, 4a.
in stock in order to give the commissioner a clear idea of how the finished product would look. The bookshop owner would then have scribes and artists perform the required tasks, gather the parts together, and bind the book. De Hamel admits that "this image is fanciful but there is no other way to explain the apparently enormous output of some artists and the bizarre collaboration of painters in an otherwise unified book of hours." This process may have been similar to the practices involved in commissioning a devotional diptych. As we shall see, certain artists seem to have specialized in diptychs and it is likely that these artists would have had panels with the Madonna and Child already painted on them in stock to give the prospective patron some choices about the type of composition he could choose. A patron would then choose the panel which he liked most and have a copy made. He would also sit for the portrait which would make up the other half.

It appears that lay owners really used their Books of Hours, both in the bedroom or the private chapel and

9 De Hamel, 178.

10 ibid., 178. The artists themselves would have utilized pattern books with models for standard illuminations found in most Books of Hours.
at mass in churches.\textsuperscript{11} This is evidenced by the numerous surviving images of figures engaged in pious devotions with their texts opened before them in illuminations, paintings, and sculpted epitaphs. The illustrations at the end of this dissertation provide ample evidence of how common the use of books was as a stimulus to devotion.

Literacy, although still quite limited during the Late Middle Ages, had in fact expanded from the confines of the clergy to include members of the nobility and wealthy burghers. These were the members of society who commissioned Books of Hours and diptychs.\textsuperscript{12} In fact, "to the great majority of the medieval population of Europe, the first book they knew, and often the only one, must have been the Book of Hours."\textsuperscript{13} In addition, the appeal of these manuscripts was so great that it seems as if almost every member of the upper class possessed a Book of

\textsuperscript{11} An example of the Book of Hours in use in a private chamber occurs in the portrait of Adolph of Cleves kneeling in prayer, (Obsecro te), Netherlandish, ca. 1480 (Walters 439, fol. 13v., illustrated in Wieck, 34, fig. 5.

\textsuperscript{12} Wieck, 33.

\textsuperscript{13} De Hamel, 164.
Hours.\textsuperscript{14}

Although we find male and female owners of Books of Hours depicted, it is noteworthy that women far and away outnumber men in these images. Women, more than men, had the time to follow the daily devotions and recite the prayers found in these texts.\textsuperscript{15} Also important to this study is the newly discovered idea of privacy which arose in the Late Middle ages. Without this development the Book of Hours could never have existed. Despite condemnations by conservative moralists, who viewed the desire for privacy as anti-social behavior, increased means for facilitating privacy was one of the more marked features of late medieval domestic life.\textsuperscript{16} This desire, rather than stemming from heretical motives, seems to have occurred

\textsuperscript{14} De Hamel, 185.

\textsuperscript{15} Interested readers may find out more about the spirituality of medieval women in C. W. Bynum's, \textit{Holy Feast and Holy Fast}: The religious significance of food to medieval women, Berkely and Los Angeles, 1986, and idem., \textit{Jesus as Mother}: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages, Berkeley, 1982. The author's fascinating study details the frustrations medieval women experienced in their struggle to control their own piety.

\textsuperscript{16} This is primarily visible in the change in architecture of private homes at this time. W. A. Pantin, "Instructions for a Devout and Literate Layman," \textit{Medieval Learning and Literature: essays presented to Richard William Hunt}, Oxford, 1976, 406, offers a good discussion of this problem.
as laymen became more literate and concerned with their own salvation. Privacy would afford more effective reading, meditation, and prayer. The bedroom was the only room of the medieval home where one could lock the door to the outside world and achieve the peace required for serious private devotions. As we will discuss in a later chapter, medieval beds were of singular importance as they were the location where diptychs and other icons were most frequently hung. Most upper-class bedrooms were probably outfitted with a prie-dieu or a window seat or bench upon which the devout dweller of the house could rest to recite his or her prayers.

The Owner Portrait

Like diptychs, Books of Hours were a stimulus for private devotion which lent itself to personalization. The appearance of owner portraits within many of these texts provides ample evidence of this desire. Because the Book of Hours was a new type of manuscript, no traditions existed for its

17 Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 37-8.


illustrations. Illuminators faced the challenge of creating new iconographic themes which would accompany and illustrate a text and would serve as appropriate stimuli for devotion. This challenge was met and answered primarily by illuminators working in Parisian ateliers. Many iconographic innovations began in manuscripts and moved into large scale panel paintings only later. An example of such an image is the Man of Sorrows. The two arts of manuscript illumination and panel painting paralleled each other during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and the stylistic and iconographic developments in one medium travelled quickly to the other.

The first known French portrait on panel is of Jean le Bon, (Fig. 3, Louvre, Paris) dated about 1360-64. However, the portraits which immediately followed this appeared not on panel but in the manuscripts of


\[22\] Meiss, Time of Jean de Berry, 1, 17.

Charles V. 24 After these initial experiments, portraits in both media became very popular. The depictions of owners in Books of Hours before 1360 tend to be generalized and not truly portrait-like. A good example of this is found in a fourteenth century French Book of Hours (Fig. 4, Book of Hours of Jeanne de Savoie, Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris, Ms.1, fol. 13). The owner of the book kneels in a historiated initial with her prayers directed toward the Annunciation scene which appears inside of the larger illumination above the donatrix's head. Absolutely no attempt was made by the artist to individualize the owner and we are left knowing only the essential facts: she was female and she wanted to appear devout. This is characteristic of all the earliest examples of owner portraits.

However, by 1380 we find images like that of the owner in prayer at the foot of the Virgin and Child from a Book of Hours (Fig. 5, Bibl. Nat. Paris, Donation Smith-Lesouef, Ms. 22, fol. 15). This image faces the beginning of Matins. Here the owner, whose identity we do not know, is clearly painted in a realistic manner. His face, in strict profile, his

dress, and his hairline are all indications that the figure is intended to represent a specific individual. The popularity of owner portraits in illuminated manuscripts parallels that of donor portraits in devotional diptychs. Additionally, the most common pose of the owner of a Book of Hours, in prayer before the Virgin and Child, is exactly what we find in devotional panels.

What makes the owner portrait in the Book of Hours unique is that, unlike paintings in devotional diptychs, we know precisely what prayers the owner said before the image. From the beginning of the history of the Book of Hours to the end of the fourteenth century, owner portraits were more likely to appear next to certain texts than others. In the earliest Books of Hours the owner may appear frequently throughout the book in many different locations. The prayers with which owner portraits were associated, however, become more standardized by the beginning of the fifteenth century.\textsuperscript{25} After this point very little variation appears in the placement and composition of owner portraits.

\textsuperscript{25} There are many early examples of the multiple owner portraits scattered throughout a Book of Hours. One is the Hours of Margaret de Beaujeu (N.Y., Pierpont Morgan Lib., Ms. M. 745) in which the patroness appears kneeling in prayer 26 different times beginning with the first folio and continuing throughout the text.
portraits.

**Associated Texts**

Around the beginning of the fifteenth century the locations of owner portraits became fairly consistent. In Roger Wieck's invaluable catalogue for the exhibition, *Time Sanctified: The Book of Hours in Medieval Art and Life*, held at the Walters Art Gallery in 1988, of the 119 Books of Hours included, 39 contained owner portraits. Of these, 24 were women and nine were men. Six portraits included both a female and a male donor.

The most common location for an owner portrait is at Matins, the beginning of the Hours of the Virgin.\(^{26}\) It is also important to note here that Matins is the most common location to find an illumination excised by a later owner. Nine of the books in the exhibition had suffered this loss. The Annunciation is the illumination which illustrates Matins if an owner portrait is not present. It is difficult to supply any rationale for later owners wishing to remove an illumination of the Annunciation. It is probable that

\(^{26}\) Twelve owner portraits were found placed before Matins in the Books of Hours included in the *Time Sanctified* exhibition.
these nine manuscripts originally included portraits of the original owner.

The Annunciation is a logical scene to place at the beginning of the Hours of the Virgin. The remainder of the traditional illumination cycle accompanying the Hours of the Virgin included the joyous events of the Virgin's life which centered around Christ's infancy. These scenes stress the Virgin's role in the humanity of Christ and the possibility of redemption through his sacrifice on the cross.\textsuperscript{27}

The Virgin Annunci(ate) is frequently shown reading a Book of Hours as Gabriel appears. In performing this activity the Virgin clearly acts as a paradigm of piety for the reader of the text. When an image of the donor before the Virgin and Child is substituted for the Annunciation, the owner is almost always shown with a Book of Hours. Thus, in this instance, donors may contemplate themselves as a self-referential aid to their own devotions. The same principle applies to devotional diptychs as well.

Matins begins with the words, "Domine labia mea aperies" or "O Lord, open thou my lips," and continues

\textsuperscript{27} G. Schiller, \textit{Iconography of Christian Art}, vol. 1, 40.
with a series of psalms, responses, and versicles which praise the Virgin Mary and Christ. The final responsitory of Matins reads, "Truly happy are you, O Holy Virgin Mary, and worthy of all praise. For from you has dawned the sun of justice, Christ our God."\textsuperscript{28} This passage in particular truly conveys the temporal connection between the prayer and the time of day. One can well imagine the devout lay person opening his or her book to Matins and reciting this at daybreak while looking at an image of him or herself in prayer before the Virgin. Although the contents of the texts vary as widely as the illuminations which accompany them, the emphasis in the Hours of the Virgin is on the contemplation of the infancy and suffering of Christ. Through this pious meditation one would reap the benefits of Christ's sacrifice, redemption, and eternal salvation. It is important to note that later donor portraits on panel frequently show the donor with a Book of Hours. When the text is legible, as is the case with Jan van Eyck's \textit{Rolin Madonna} (Fig. 6, Louvre, Paris), the book is opened to the beginning phrase of Matins.

The second most common place in which owners had

themselves depicted was before the Obsecro Te.²⁹ It is interesting to note that more men than women chose to have themselves connected with this prayer. This is quite different from the vast majority of female owners who were usually placed near Matins. The Obsecro Te and the O Intemerata were the two most popular prayers included in Books of Hours.³⁰ These texts can appear anywhere within the Book of Hours and are illuminated in about two-thirds of all examples. The illumination of these prayers almost always shows the Virgin and Child. Which is appropriate since the text of the Obsecro Te focusses on the Virgin as intercessor.

The Obsecro Te is written in the first person and beseeches the Virgin to intercede for Christ's mercy by praising her at length, reminding her of her joys during motherhood and her efficacious prayers as co-redemptrix. The stress of the prayer is on salvation and its requests culminate with, "and at the end of my

²⁹ Translations of the Obsecro Te and the O Intemerata are found in Appendix A.

³⁰ Wieck 95. Leroquais believed that the popularity of the Obsecro Te was due to the superstitious belief which developed about the prayer's efficacy and which was aided by the indulgences later attached to it. Leroquais, Livres d'Heures Manuscrits de la Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, 1927, vol. I, XXIV, However, this is the only reference I have found to the Obsecro Te as an indulgenced prayer. It would be helpful to know more about this.
life show me your face, and reveal to me the day and hour of my death. Please hear and receive this humble prayer and grant me eternal life. Listen and hear me, Mary, sweetest virgin, mother of God and of mercy, Amen."^31 An illumination which illustrates this prayer from the Book of Hours of Margaret of Cleves, ca. 1345-1400, shows the donor kneeling before a enthroned Virgin and Child (Fig. 7).

Similar in its salvational emphasis is the section in the Book of Hours devoted to the Joys of the Virgin. Of the books catalogued in the Time Sanctified exhibition, six of them, half the number including an owner portrait at Matins, show the owner before the Joys of the Virgin. This was the most popular of the many different accessory texts in fifteenth-century France.^32 The Joys of the Virgin celebrate the joyous moments of the Virgin's life such as the Annunciation, Visitation, Nativity, and Assumption of the Virgin. Nearly all miniatures for the Joys have the Virgin and Child as their subject, emphasizing the joys of motherhood in a manner similar to the Obsecro Te.^33

^31 Wieck, 164.

^32 Wieck, 103.

^33 ibid.
These central themes, the Virgin and her Joys, were the most common aspects of Marian devotion.

Illuminated diptychs in Books of Hours

So far we have examined the popularity and significance of having oneself included in one's Book of Hours during the Late Middle Ages. By the fifteenth century this portrait illumination usually depicted the donor and the Virgin and Child in the same space. There was another format, in which the donor and the Virgin and Child occupied fields facing each other, which anticipates the devotional diptych by many decades.

The earliest example known to me of a Book of Hours with the donor and Virgin and Child on facing pages is from the Book of Hours of Catherine of Valois dated before 1346 (Fig. 8).34 Meiss writes that this is an early example of the donor depicted on the same scale as the holy figures, thereby correcting Panofsky's assertion that this had first occurred only some years later in the initial diptych of the Jean of

34 Meiss, Time of Jean de Berry, vol. 1, 205, ill. 656-7. The current whereabouts of this manuscript are unknown but it was sold at Sotheby's, London, June 7, 1932, Lot 2 to Maggs Bros.
Berry from the *Brussels Hours* (Fig. 9).  

The two facing full-page illuminations from the Hours of Catherine of Valois show the owner on the left-hand side accompanied by St. Catherine and John the Baptist. Catherine kneels in prayer as her intercessory saints present her to the Virgin and Child. St. Catherine looks across to the image of the Christ Child and his mother on the opposite folio while the Baptist looks beseechingly toward Heaven. On the right-hand page the enthroned Madonna and Child are accompanied by two angels resting atop the throne. The Virgin lovingly holds her Child who reaches his hand toward the figures on the adjacent page. The two pages were obviously conceived of as a single composition and the protagonists are meant to give the impression that they are interrelating. In this, the earliest known "devotional diptych," the format of all the paintings which were to follow has already been established. Unfortunately, it is not possible to discover which prayer these illuminations were to illustrate.

The next illuminated diptych known to me is the First Dedication page from the *Brussels Hours* of the

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35 Panofsky discussed this in *E.N.P.*, vol. 1, 47. Meiss's argument is found in *Time of Jean de Berry*, vol. 1, 205, n. 31.
Jean Duke of Berry. The attribution of this diptych is contested; however, for the purposes of this argument it will be attributed to Jacquemart de Hesdin as this is the artist to whom it is attributed in the 1402 inventory of the Duke of Berry. The most generally accepted dating of the page is around 1390.

This illuminated diptych follows very closely the model established in the Hours of Catherine of Valois. When Milliard Meiss wrote that the First Dedication page of the Brussels Hours, "...strikes us as the first of a series of Northern accomplishments that ultimately made Jan van Eyck's portraits possible," he may have had little idea how close he was to the truth in this statement.

It has been suggested by several scholars that the First Dedication page was cut down in order to fit into the illuminated text. Panofsky and Dehaisnes both suggested that the work was initially created as an independent image to be hung on a wall like any panel

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36 The provenance of this work will be discussed in the later chapter on the Valois family.

37 For a complete discussion of the varied attributions and dates of this page see Meiss, Time of Jean de Berry, vol. 1, 199-201. Panofsky attributes it to Jacquemart de Hesdin, E.N.P., vol. 1, 43.

38 Meiss, Time of Jean de Berry, vol. 1, 205.
painting. Meiss contended that if this was indeed true, the diptych and book were created within such a short time of one another that the diptych could only have served as an independent image for a very limited time, since it was sewn into the book at the beginning of the campaign of decoration. In either case it is clear that the artist and the patron understood both the diptych and the text as interdependent at an early point in the book's history.

Like Catherine of Valois, Jean of Berry kneels in prayer before the enthroned Virgin and Child. He is accompanied by his patron saints, Anthony and John the Baptist, and has an opened book on the prie-dieu before him. This book is not merely open, but it is open to the beginning of Matins as the easily legible "D" on the page attests. Although the diptych itself is located at the beginning of the Brussels Hours, and not

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39 Panofsky, E.N.P., vol. 1, 47 and n. 1 where the author supplies several examples of images in panel painting which include paintings on vellum hung on walls behind their owners. Delaissé, in the Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Medieval Illuminations: From the Library of Burgundy to the Department of Manuscripts of the Royal Library of Belgium, Brussels, 1958, 42 also proposed this theory. Meiss, Time of Jean de Berry, vol. 1, 203, n. 28 added to Panofsky's list of depicted vellum icons.

40 Meiss, Time of Jean de Berry, vol. 1, 203. This would seem to be a strong argument in favor of the creation of the diptych and book at the same time.
near Matins, the prayer before which the Duke is shown at his devotions is the opening phrase of Matins.

The last Book of Hours to be discussed is the *Hours of Etienne Chevalier* illuminated by Jean Fouquet around 1453 (Fig. 10).\(^{41}\) This manuscript and Fouquet's *Melun Diptych* (Figs. 11a, 11b), both commissioned by Chevalier, best show the translation of the diptych format from manuscript illumination to panel painting. All three of these manuscripts discussed are French and show the owners on the left-hand side. The *Melun Diptych* and Gossart's *Carondelet Diptych* (Fig. 12), made for a French patron, retain this order. Netherlandish diptychs almost always depicted their donors on the right-hand side. This difference must reflect regional tastes. The French seem to have had a predilection for panels which were more closely related to the manuscript origins of the composition.

Etienne Chevalier commissioned his Book of Hours from Fouquet shortly after the accidental death of his wife, Catherine Bude, in 1452.\(^{42}\) Although the Hours


\(^{42}\) Sterling, 8. The author believes that this is the case because neither Chevalier's wife nor her coat of arms are found anywhere in the text.
of Chevalier have been cut apart and the miniatures poorly trimmed and mounted at an unknown date, it has been possible to reconstruct part of the original sequence of the illuminations and the accompanying texts. It is believed that the double-page illumination of Chevalier with the Virgin and Child preceded the *Obsecro Te.*\(^3\) While we have already seen that this was a favorite location for portraits of male owners, the significance of the *Obsecro Te* may have been particularly resonant in Chevalier's circumstances. We recall that the prayer specifically asks the Virgin to reveal the hour of the devotee's death so that he may be prepared for the event. The death of Catherine Bude through an accident would undoubtedly have occupied Chevalier's thoughts as he chose the prayers and illuminations for this text.\(^4\)

The dangers of sudden death and fear of such a catastrophe are evidenced by the popularity of the "*Ars


\(^4\) A similar reaction may be seen in the case of Margaret of Bavaria whose husband was assassinated. She developed a strong devotion toward the cult of St. Veronica and had images of the vera icon added to her manuscripts. The prayer to the vera icon also asks specifically to be forewarned of coming death in order to prepare. Meiss, *Time of Jean de Berry,* vol. 1, 201.
moriendi" and the emphasis placed on "a good death" during the Late Middle Ages.

Chevalier, his patron saint, Stephen, and the angelic musicians and choir all direct their attention to the Madonna who suckles the Christ child. Only the infant looks out and engages the viewer's gaze. The opulence of the illumination is equalled in the Melun Diptych but here the double page illumination of Chevalier with St. Stephen in prayer before the Virgin and Child is the last great example of this composition in a Book of Hours.

I have attempted to stress the great variety of both texts and illuminations in the vast corpus of Books of Hours. Despite this range, conclusions are possible. Owner "portraits," i.e., generalized images of a figure in prayer, appear in Books of Hours from the earliest examples. After the advent of "true" portraiture, veristic depictions of book owners frequently appeared in Books of Hours. From the fourteenth century to the later part of the fifteenth century, owner portraits were most common near Matins, secondly near the Obsecro Te; and finally next to the Joys of the Virgin. These portraits usually depict the owner in prayer before the Virgin and Child. In the early works the owner was isolated from the divine by
placement within an historiated initial in the early works. However, the intimacy between the donor and holy figures dramatically increased and they were depicted in the same space by the fourteenth century. What has not been previously noted, however, is that owner portraits almost completely disappeared from manuscripts by the last few decades of the fifteenth century. It is at this time that donor portraits were most popular in panel painting. This phenomenon is worthy of further study and it should be noted that owner portraits go out of fashion in France first. As this is the place where they originated it is an interesting development.

Owner portraits in Books of Hours promote a self-conscious type of meditation. The owner of the book not only meditated on the image of the Madonna and Child but also on the image himself or herself in devotion before the Virgin. The kind of self-reflective devotion which this inspired may have been viewed as particularly efficacious or the image would probably not have attained the level of popularity which it did. This type of multivalent meditation is exactly like that which was inspired by devotional portrait diptychs and it is to these paintings that we now turn our attention.
III. The Development of the Devotional Diptych.

a. The Valois Dukes and their Role

The Burgundian Dukes of Valois were the greatest patrons of the art of the North during the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.¹ Beginning with Jean le Bon and his four sons, Charles V (1338-1380), Louis of Anjou (1339-1384), Jean of Berry (1340-1410), and Philip the Bold (1342-1404), the Valois family is still renowned for its opulent tastes and its patronage of the greatest living French and Netherlandish artists of the time.

The importance of ducal patronage cannot be underestimated. In particular, this chapter will focus on some early commissions of the dukes and how these commissions may have led to the popularity of devotional diptychs in the Burgundian territories. In order to understand this line of inquiry it is important to note that devotional diptychs achieved popularity specifically in the County of Flanders and Burgundy, i.e., in areas controlled by the Valois

Dukes. Some short-lived, early experimentation with the form occurred in France with Jean Fouquet's Melun Diptych (Fig. 11) as the most famous French example. Other than a single devotional portrait by Bernard Strigel (Fig. 13, Devotional Diptych of Hans Funk, 1500, Munich) and a type which includes a donor portrait adjoining an image of Death, the devotional diptych is nearly unknown in fifteenth century Germany. The devotional portrait diptych is also a stranger to Italy and Spain as well as Eastern Europe. That this diptych form originated in the duchy of Burgundy while it was under the rule of the Valois Dukes and remained popular only in this region has not

2 In her dissertation Friedman discusses the popularity of devotional portrait diptychs as limited to the Netherlands.

3 The Master of Moulins is responsible for a few diptychs painted in France during the last few decades of the fifteenth century. See G. Ring, A Century of French Painting, 1400-1500, London, fig. 170, Portrait of Cardinal Charles II of Bourbon, Munich, Alte Pinakothek, for an illustration.

been previously noted nor explained.

This chapter will focus on the Valois Dukes and the works which they commissioned or owned which may have prompted the development of the devotional diptych in Burgundy. One of the most famous images of an intercessional diptych, a type with the Virgin on one wing and Christ on the other, is known from a commemorative picture. The miniature shows an opened diptych being presented to Pope Clement VI by Eudes IV, Duke of Burgundy. The original image is dated about 1350.\(^5\) This is the first visual evidence we have for association of a Duke of Burgundy with a diptych.\(^6\) Perhaps the Valois Dukes were influenced by this early example.

The earliest major monument of Valois patronage, the Chartreuse of Champmol, indicates that salvation of the ducal souls was a motivating factor for such commissions.\(^7\) The founding charter of the Chartreuse states that,

\[...Pour\les\ Frères\ de\ l'ordre\ de\ Chartreuse qui, de\ jour\ et\ nuit,\ ne\ cessant\ de\ Dieu prier\ pour\ le\ salut\ des\ âmes,\ pour\ la\]

\(^5\) This is reproduced in Michel, *Histoire de l'art*, vol. 3, I, p. 109, fig. 59.

\(^6\) Panofsky, *E.P.N.*., vol. 1, 174, n. 3.

\(^7\) See the last chapter for a discussion of this.
prospérité et bon estat de bien publique, et des princes qui en ont le gouvernement, sous Dieu par qui les Roys règnent...²

The dedication of the Dukes to the Carthusian order was to continue throughout the Valois reign and may in part be responsible for the disproportionately high percentage of Carthusians found among the ecclesiastics portrayed in diptychs and single devotional panels. Philip the Bold felt so strongly about the order that he requested burial in the robes of a Carthusian.⁹

The earliest surviving image which may have once formed half of a portrait diptych is the Madonna and Angels (Fig. 14, ca.1400, Gemäldegalerie, SMPK, Berlin). The work has been tentatively attributed to Jean Malouel and dated to around the first decade of the fifteenth century.¹⁰ The painting is very large, 107 x 81 cm, and painted with tempera on cloth. The

² "For the Brothers of the Carthusian Order who, day and night, pray unceasingly for the health of souls, for the prosperity and well-being of the public, and the princes who govern under God, for whom the kings rule." C. Monget, La Chartreuse de Dijon, Montreuil-sur-mer, 1901, vol. 1, pt. 1, xxii.

⁹ Monget, xiii. It was not uncommon for laymen to be buried in the robes of a religious order. It is the Duke's choice of the Carthusians which is to be noted here.

scale and the delicate tempera medium suggest that this work was not intended to be portable. The Virgin holds her active child as he reaches toward the viewer's left. Behind the three-quarter length figure of the Madonna are several rows of small angels who gaze in adoration at the Christ Child. The row furthest behind the Virgin consists of monochromatic red angels.

Red is an appropriate color for the angels which surround the Holy Mother and Child as it is the color of seraphim, the angels of the highest order who were thought to surround God in perpetual adoration. The artist appears familiar with the tradition of the "angels tapestry" in manuscript illumination,¹¹ which Panofsky believed originated in Jean Pucelle's Paris workshop around 1320.¹² Two of the best-known examples of the "angels tapestry" are found in the Brussels Hours of Jean of Berry. Both the dedicatory

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¹¹ This "tapestry" style also occurs in the Hours of Jeanne de Navarre, fols. 65v and 150 (Yates Thompson, Pls. XIX, XXX). Similar to this are the backgrounds found in several illuminations in the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux. Panofsky discusses this in E.N.P., vol. 1, 47, and n. 3.

¹² Ibid., n. 3, Panofsky gives several examples, the first being in the Hours of Jeanne de Navarre, fols. 65v. and 150. Bondol's workshop used the background in the second volume of the Belleville Breviary and it is also found in the Hours of Jeanne d'Evreux.
diptych (Fig. 9, ca. 1390) and the First Dedication Page by Jacquemart de Hesdin (Fig. 15, ca. 1400) make use of a dense interwoven pattern of red seraphim. The significance of these contemporary images to the Berlin Madonna will be discussed below.

Several aspects of the Berlin painting suggest that it was originally housed in the Chartreuse of Champmol. First, the size of the work and its fragility implies that it was intended to be installed in a permanent location. Secondly, the attribution to Jean Malouel, the court painter of Philip the Bold and John the Fearless in Dijon, and the uncle of the Limbourg brothers, links the painting both to the Chartreuse of Champmol and to manuscript illumination. It has been suggested that Philip the Bold, through his commissions from Malouel, was the initiator of "the tradition of realistic portraiture which was to flower in the Burgundian states in the fifteenth century." 13

De Winter proposed that a portrait of Duke Philip was

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13 De Winter, diss., 775. As examples of Philip's penchant for portraiture the author cites the sculpture of Philip the Bold over the portal of the Chartreuse of Champmol by Claus Sluter and the miniatures of the Très Riches Heures by the Limbourg Brothers.

C. Sterling, "La Peinture de Portrait à la Cour de Bourgogne au Début du XVme siècle," Critica d'Arte, VI, 1959, 304, proposed that Jean Malouel was responsible for the flourishing of portraiture which occurred at the beginning of the fifteenth century.
painted during the Duke's lifetime by Jean Malouel, his court painter.\textsuperscript{14} A portrait of the Duke painted on canvas which measured "4 pieds 6 pouces de large sur 5 pieds 6 pouces de haut," was found at the Chartreuse of Champmol by the German Carthusian Dom Etienne in 1791.\textsuperscript{15} The monk promptly rolled the painting up, took it away, and it has never been seen since. I believe that the size of this painting and its canvas surface suggest that perhaps it was the portrait which originally accompanied the Berlin Madonna.

Another possibility is Meiss and Eisler's reconstruction of the diptych which associates the Berlin Madonna with a portrait of John the Fearless known from an eighteenth-century copy (Fig. 16).\textsuperscript{16} The three-quarter length of the ducal portrait and the Duke's pose, in strict profile, with his hands pressed together in prayer, as well as the curved border along the bottom of the drawing as in the Berlin panel, suggest that the lost portrait and the Berlin panel

\textsuperscript{14} De Winter, 773.

\textsuperscript{15} "Pieds" and "Pouces" today translate to feet and inches but it is impossible to ascertain the accuracy of these measurements. De Winter, 826-7.

\textsuperscript{16} Meiss and Eisler, 238, ill. 7, 8. The drawing is in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris, Coll. Bourgogne, XX, fol. 308.
were once part of a single composition. Although portraits of the Valois dukes were known in several locations throughout the Chartreuse, nothing indicates whether the pendant portrait to the Berlin Madonna depicted Philip the Bold or his son John the Fearless.\textsuperscript{17}

The possibility that a large diptych existed and was found in no less important a dynastic site than the ducal mausoleum is central to this argument. That nearly all known devotional portrait diptychs were commissioned in Flanders and the first of these by the Dukes themselves highlights the importance of this early painting.

It is necessary to consider the Brussels Hours of the Duke of Berry at this point.\textsuperscript{18} Here we focus on the provenance on the manuscript. The Brussels Hours were given by Jean of Berry either to his brother, Philip the Bold, or his nephew, John the Fearless, in what was an unusual example of Jean presenting one of

\textsuperscript{17} For evidence of several portraits placed in the monks' choir in the Chartreuse see J. C. Smith, "The Chartreuse de Champmol in 1486: The earliest visitor's account," Gazette des Beaux-Arts, 106, 1985, 1-6.

\textsuperscript{18} The diptych from the First Dedication page of the Brussels Hours was discussed in Chapter II.
his beloved manuscripts as a gift.\textsuperscript{19} The \textit{Brussels Hours} first appeared in the 1402 inventory of Jean of Berry’s collection and next in the 1420 inventory of Margaret of Bavaria, after the death of her husband, John the Fearless, who was brutally assassinated in 1419.\textsuperscript{20} This devotional volume with its unique dedication page was still in the hands of Margaret of Bavaria when it is listed in an inventory of 1424. Further evidence for her possession of the book is found in the painting of the \textit{vera icon} that the widowed Duchess added to the text at this time. The Holy Face icon was not only an indulgenced image but was one associated with protection from sudden death, a fate which would have been particularly poignant for Margaret.\textsuperscript{21} Philip the Good, Margaret’s oldest son, inherited the book but was probably familiar with it well before it passed into his hands. The similarities between the dedicatory diptych page of the \textit{Brussels Hours} and the diptych which included the \textit{Berlin Madonna} are notable. Although it is not possible to determine with certainty which of these

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Meiss, \textit{Time of Jean de Berry}, vol. 1, 189.
\item ibid.
\item Meiss, \textit{Time of Jean de Berry}, vol. 1, 201.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
works was created first, their strong resemblance to one another and the fact that both works were created for members of the Valois family and remained in their possession is important. As is common in early manuscript illumination, the figures in the Brussels Hours are depicted in full-length whereas the Berlin Madonna and the portrait that supposedly accompanied it are shown in three-quarter length format. Most important are two similarities between the two works; first is the use of the red "angels tapestry" in both, and the second is the odd attempt at foreshortening seen in the twisted foot of the Christ Child in both images. This surely would indicate either a dependance of one image on the other or on some common source.

Among other diptychs associated with Jean of Berry, is one known today only through documents. An embroidered diptych with the Virgin on one side and Jean of Berry with St. Andrew and John the Baptist is listed in the 1483 inventory of the Duke of Savoy. This unique object most likely passed into the Savoy collection upon the marriage of Jean of Berry's daughter, Bonne, to the Count of Savoy in 1379.\(^{22}\) Meiss suggests that this diptych may have been the one

\(^{22}\) Meiss, Time of Jean de Berry, vol. 1, 207. The Count of Savoy died in 1391.
from which the Brussels Hours' diptych was copied.\footnote{23}

Another unfortunate loss is the devotional diptych which is listed in both the 1404 and 1420 inventories of the Dukes of Burgundy. This diptych included the Virgin and Child on one wing and both Philip the Bold and John the Fearless in prayer on the other wing.\footnote{24}

The evidence of this last mentioned painting, together with the Brussels Hours diptych, is an important indicator of the ducal family's familiarity with the devotional portrait diptych at an early date. It is also an unusual example of a devotional diptych which shows a father and son in devotion together and suggests the possible early significance that the diptych may have had for demonstrating royal lineage. The importance of representing dynastic succession for the Valois Dukes is well illustrated by the series of portraits of the Dukes which decorated the interior of

\footnote{23} Meiss, *Time of Jean de Berry*, vol. 1, 203.

\footnote{24} C. Dehaisnes, *Documents et Extraits Divers concernant l'histoire de l'art dans la Flandre, l'Artois et le Hainaut avant le XVe. siècle*, Lille, 1886, 850. Campbell wrongly discusses this as a half-length diptych since there is no indication from the catalogue entries that this was so. L. Campbell, *Rogier van der Weyden=Rogier de la Pasture: Official Painter to the city of Brussels*, *Portrait Painter of the Burgundian Court*, exh. cat., Brussels, 1979, 64.
the family's funerary chapel at the Chartreuse of Champmol. 25

A continuation of this tradition within the Valois family may be seen in the extraordinary Prayerbook of Philip the Good, (Fig. 17, Vienna, Codex 1800 fol lv.) in which Philip the Good is shown in prayer with his son Charles the Bold before a devotional diptych. The text of the prayerbook is inserted into a long wooden binding and fills the bottom two thirds of this binding. The top third is left exposed and has small recesses carved into its gilded top. Within the spaces of these recesses, which act as a frame, are glued two illuminations on vellum. The illumination on the sinister wing depicts the Coronation of the Virgin while that on the dexter side is of the Holy Trinity with the Three Persons depicted as identical. The work is dated about 1450 and folio 1, verso depicts Philip the Good and Charles the Bold in prayer in a private chapel before a Book of Hours and a devotional diptych. The right wing of this tiny diptych shows the Crucifixion, the haloed figure in the left wing has been identified as a female saint, but this is

uncertain;\textsuperscript{26} she may be the Virgin.

The early date generally assigned to the prayerbook, 1450, places it well before Rogier's diptychs and displays Philip's familiarity with the diptych form. Philip's use of the devotional diptych may have come from a long-standing interest in diptychs shared by his father, grandfather, and his uncle. Philip and the other Valois dukes are surely responsible in part for the popularization of the diptych after 1460.

Sometime between the mid-1440s and 1462, Philip the Good presented a diptych to the Hôtel Dieu in Beaune.\textsuperscript{27} This work, according to the 1501 inventory, was:

\begin{quote}
Ung autre ou est Notre-Dame de Saint Bernard d'un coste, et de l'autre coste la portaiture de feu Monseigneur le duc Philippe.\textsuperscript{28}
\end{quote}

The diptych depicted an image of the lactation of

\textsuperscript{26} Ringbom, \textit{Icon to Narrative}, 33.

\textsuperscript{27} J. C. Smith, \textit{The Artistic Patronage of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy (1419-1467)}, Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1979, 301.

\textsuperscript{28} "Another one has Our Lady and St. Bernard on one side, and on the other side the portrait of Our Lord the Duke Philip." Abbe J. B. C. Boudrot, "Inventaire de l'Hôtel Dieu de Beaune (1501)," \textit{Memoires de la Societe d'Histoire, d'Archeologie et de Litterature de l'Arrondissement de Beaune}, 1874, pp. 117-204, 123.
St. Bernard on the dexter wing and a portrait of Philip the Good kneeling in prayer on the sinister wing. J. C. Smith suggests that this diptych may actually have been painted by Rogier van der Weyden. Smith notes that although none of the works in the chapel of the Hôtel Dieu are given attributions in the inventories, two of them, *The Last Judgement Altarpiece* (Fig. 18, Beaune) and *St. Ivo* (National Gallery, London), were painted by Rogier. It is unfortunate that neither the date nor the artist of Philip's diptych are known. Were it possible to prove that this diptych was painted for the Duke by Rogier before 1460, this would predate the devotional diptychs which Rogier painted for Philip's court members, all of which date from the last four years of the artist's life.

Evidence of the impact that ducal patronage of diptychs had on those around them is found in the *oeuvre* of Rogier van der Weyden. Of the five known devotional diptychs painted by Rogier, three of their commissioners, the only ones about whom we have biographical information, were intimately connected with the court of Philip the Good. While each of these diptychs will be discussed at some length in a later

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chapter, it is pertinent to note here the patrons for whom these diptychs were painted and their relationships to the Valois court. Jean Gros was a wealthy administrator at the court and one of its most important officials. Philippe de Croy came from an aristocratic family that was much favored by Philip the Good. And the Duke of Cleves was Philip's dearest nephew and was raised in the Duke's court. The closeness of these relationships and the influence which the Duke's own taste most probably exerted on his courtiers commissions must be acknowledged.

Another bit of evidence is the now lost diptych which passed through the hands of Charles V to his son Philip II of Spain. This diptych showed portraits of both Philip the Good and Charles the Bold with their patron saints painted on parchment and glued to ebony wings held together with gilded iron hinges. Philip was clad in black with the chain of the Toison d'or, accompanied by John the Baptist. Charles was accompanied by St. George and his dragon. Both the

30 Smith, Artistic Patronage, 304.

31 J. C. Smith illustrates a rare example of Philip the Good wearing the robes of the Toison d'or, Cinncinati Portraits, 6, fig. 3. Usually Philip was depicted wearing luxurious black clothing as he wore in everyday life.
Duke and his son knelt in prayer on their separate wings and the iron hinges would seem to indicate that there was never a central panel.\textsuperscript{32}

Another piece of evidence can be found in the \textit{Traité sur l'oraison dominicale} (Fig. 19, Bib. Royale, Brussels., ms. 9092, f. 9) which was translated into the vernacular in 1457 by Jean Mièlot, and illuminated by Jean le Tavernier, thus dating its completion to several years before Rogier's diptychs.\textsuperscript{33} An illumination included in the text depicts Philip in Prayer before a devotional portrait diptych with a half-length Virgin and Child and a half-length portrait of the duke himself.\textsuperscript{34} Thus it seems that we have certain proof of the duke's possession of at least one devotional portrait diptych three years or more before Rogier painted his first example of such a type for members of Philip's court.

Sixten Ringbom discussed the half-length image as a form that originated with the nobility and gradually

\textsuperscript{32} Smith, ibid.. The absence of the Virgin in this diptych is curious. Perhaps it was reassembled by Charles V or Philip II.


\textsuperscript{34} Ringbom, \textit{Icon to Narrative}, 32.
descended into the lower economic spheres of the society through the bourgeoisie's desire to emulate the aristocracy.\textsuperscript{35} Although Ringbom's argument focuses on the half-length in narrative painting, the same may also clearly be said of devotional portrait diptychs. It seems certain that the form was used first by the Valois dukes and moved into the sphere of their immediate followers around 1460 in the work of Rogier van der Weyden. Why the diptych format was so popular with the ducal family may never be known but I believe that the Valois dukes ought to be credited as the first to exploit this form of devotional image.

\textsuperscript{35} Ringbom, \textit{Icon to Narrative}, 33.
The Development of the Devotional Diptych

b. Philip the Good and the development of the full-length devotional portrait diptych

Philip the Good

Philip the Good became Duke of Burgundy at the age of twenty three. As the son of John the Fearless and a member of the noble Valois family, Philip was one of a line of great rulers and patrons. His reign (1419-1467) was long, prosperous, and relatively peaceful.¹

Although the commissions of Jean, the Duke of Berry, are more famous today than those of his nephew, it was Philip whose patronage was paradigmatic for succeeding rulers.² Philip is responsible for bringing such artists to his court as Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, Dreux Jehan, and Jean le Tavernier, though he lacked the refined taste of his uncle.³ Philip masterfully manipulated the

¹ R. Vaughan subtitled his book, Philip the Good, New York, 1970, the “apogee of Burgundy” in honor of the great period enjoyed by the Burgundian territories under Philip’s rule. This text is basic to any study of Philip and his politics.

² These followers include Charles the Bold, Philip’s son and successor, and the Hapsburg heirs, Maximilian I, Philip the Fair and Charles V. J. C. Smith, Artistic Patronage, 6.

³ Jan was Philip’s court painter from 1425 through 1441 when Jan died. Smith, Artistic Patronage, ii.
iconographic content of his courtly art and publicly stated his wish to emulate the kingdom of Lorraine where the arts had flourished during a period of prosperity that also witnessed the rebirth of classical learning and chivalry. During Philip's 47-year reign the duchy of Burgundy underwent both a consolidation of power and an artistic renaissance. The fame of Burgundian tapestries, goldsmithing, manuscript illumination and other media is well known, but Philip did not favor these arts to the exclusion of painting as has sometimes been thought by art historians. The presence of a veritable army of painters at Philip's court and the overlapping of his reign with the acme of Flemish painting is not a coincidence. Despite the fact that most of the paintings commissioned by Philip are no longer extant, evidence testifies to the importance of his patronage on the art of painting during the second half of the fifteenth century.


5 Most recently it has been suggested by C. Harbison that Jan did not paint any small images for the Duke and that these paintings were commissioned by members of the court who could not afford the luxurious objects depicted by Jan as the Duke certainly could. C. Harbison, Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism, London, 1991. See chapter 3, "The Artist's Place at the Burgundian Court," 19-32.

6 Smith, Artistic Patronage, 11.
As J. C. Smith elucidated in his dissertation on
the patronage of Philip the Good, the art sponsored by
Philip had three objectives: his own aggrandizement,
the perpetuation of the honor of his family, and the
creation of flattering comparisons between his reign
and that of Philip's forefathers as well as illustrious
ancient rulers.\(^7\) If we include the desire for eternal
salvation to the goal of earthly recognition, we are
more fully able to understand the motivation for
Philip's commissions.

One of the policies established by Philip the Bold
and followed by later rulers, like Philip the Good, had
been the placement of his portraits in politically
advantageous sites.\(^8\) When a portrait of Philip the
Good appeared in the stained glass in the apse or a
chapel of a church, those who viewed it saw the
presence of the Duke both as earthly ruler and as
spiritual participant in the mass.\(^9\) Philip the Good

\(^7\) Smith, *Artistic Patronage*, 27.

\(^8\) An example of this are the sculpted portraits of
Philip the Bold and his wife on the facade of the
Chartreuse of Champmol. Philip knew of and used these
portraits as a model for his own commissions.

\(^9\) Inspired by this ducal iconography many later
rulers used portraiture for similar reasons, these
include Maximilian I, Philip the Fair and Charles V.
Smith states that "...An astounding number of ruler
portraits appeared in Netherlandish churches during the
had his portrait installed in stained glass in the chevet over the high altar in a number of churches, including those at Louvain, Malines, Rotterdam, Brussels, Courtrai and Lille.\(^{10}\) As the first Burgundian duke fully to realize and use this type of ducal iconography, Philip the Good was also one of the most frequently portrayed Valois dukes. Including illustrations in manuscripts, over one hundred fifteenth century portraits of Philip are known from records or have survived to the present day.\(^{11}\)

The itinerant lifestyle of the court of Philip the Good may explain the tiny size of many fifteenth century devotional paintings. The dimensions of many of Jan van Eyck's works, including the Berlin *Virgin in a Church* (Fig. 20), reflect the need for portable devotional works in a court that was constantly on the

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\(^{10}\) A few of the specific sites and churches are: in stained glass over the main doorway at O.L.V., Rotterdam, St. Jacques de Coudenberg in Brussels and the Augustinian Church in Louvain. Philip had an image of himself placed in the main chapel in the churches of Notre-Dame du Sablon and St. Gudule in Brussels and O.L.V. at Courtrai and St. Pierre in Lille. These portraits and their precise locations are discussed by Smith, *Artistic Patronage*, 197.

\(^{11}\) Smith, *Artistic Patronage*, 286-7.
move.\textsuperscript{12} We know that Philip himself possessed a leather box which housed a small, prized painting that he carried with him when he traveled.\textsuperscript{13} Evidence supplied by the images discussed in the previous chapter, which conclusively link the Duke with small devotional diptychs on two occasions, suggests that Philip's leather box may have housed a devotional diptych, perhaps one that included Jan van Eyck's Virgin in a Church.

Jean Le Tavernier's illumination from the \textit{Traité sur l'oraison dominicale} (Fig. 19), shows the duke before a diptych that includes an image of the Virgin and a donor portrait. This strongly suggests that Philip the Good was not only familiar with such a format and subject but must have owned at least one such image. The devotional diptych may have been a particularly powerful image for the duke as it was one with which he chose to have himself represented in prayer more than once. Extant illuminations also suggest that the duke owned more than one devotional diptych. Tavernier's illumination shows Philip with a half-length diptych, while the diptych before which

\textsuperscript{12} Smith, \textit{Artistic Patronage}, 223.  

\textsuperscript{13} ibid.
Philip and Charles perform their devotions in Vienna Cod. 1800 includes full-length narrative scenes.

Margaret of Austria bequeathed several diptychs that Philip may originally have owned. Margaret, the Regent of Austria, had inherited the majority of Philip's painting collection through her mother, Mary of Burgundy. The 1533 inventory of paintings sent to Brou from Margaret's collection lists three diptychs: "A small double picture of cypress (wood): one the Ascension of our Savior, and the other of Our Lady." The second is a "rich double picture of Our Lady, lined outside with satin brocade," and the third, "Another double picture. On one side is Our Savior hanging on the cross, and Our Lady embracing the divine cross; on the other the History of St. Gregory." It is tempting to suppose that the second entry describes, in generalizing terms, a painting by Jan van Eyck with its explicit mention of the richness of the painting.

Lastly it is important to mention Philip's

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14 Smith, Artistic Patronage, 134.

15 A complete list of all the paintings sent to Brou as well as the earlier inventories of Margaret's collection may be found in E. E. Tremayne, The First Governess of the Netherlands, Margaret of Austria, London, 1908, 328–9.
lifelong veneration for the Virgin and the influence that this veneration seems to have had on his commissions for stained glass images of himself. The best known examples of this are Philip's gifts to the chapel of Notre Dame de la Treill in St. Pierre in Lille, which had long been a local pilgrimage site.\textsuperscript{16} By the first half of the fifteenth century the church had fallen into disrepair and Philip invested a sizable sum in restoring the chapel. The Duke's intentions seem to have been to forge an association between himself as the Count of Flanders and this venerated site. Included among the restorations was Philip's commission for several stained glass windows, at least one of which could have included his own likeness, and a large altarpiece dedicated to the Virgin.

\textbf{Jan van Eyck as Court Painter}

Jan van Eyck was hired in Bruges on May 19, 1425 as court painter to Philip the Good and retained this post until his death in 1441.\textsuperscript{17} Jan's salary was more

\textsuperscript{16} Smith, \textit{Artistic Patronage}, 75, discusses this commission in depth and furnishes primary sources for further investigation of this commission.

\textsuperscript{17} J. Duverger,"Jan van Eyck as Court Painter, \textit{Connoisseur}, 194, 1977, 175.
than that of other artists employed by Philip, and the Duke utilized Jan for activities extending outside the realm of art, including the now famous secret missions.\textsuperscript{18} Descriptions of Jan van Eyck's work for his patron include few mentions of paintings and none of the artist's extant paintings are known to have been commissioned by Philip. Contemporary records list two portraits of Isabel of Portugal, Philip's third wife, but not a single one of Philip.\textsuperscript{19} Evidence suggests that Philip had a collection of portraits which eventually became part of Margaret of Austria's large collection.\textsuperscript{20} Jan's portraits of his contemporaries are justly famous and it seems certain that Philip with his predilection for portraiture would have had his

\textsuperscript{18} ibid., 175. Jan's annual salary was one hundred pounds until this was raised to 360 pounds for life. Philip's accountants balked at his request to raise Jan's salary and this prompted a famous letter from Philip on March 12, 1435, defending the raise and defining for later art historians the value placed by patrons on their favorite artists. For a translation of this document see W. Stechow, \textit{Northern Renaissance Art 1400-1600: Sources and Documents}, Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1966, 4.

\textsuperscript{19} It has recently been suggested that the portraits of Isabella were among those passed on to Margaret of Austria. For this and a reproduction of the portrait of Isabella thought to be a copy of an Eyckian original see the recent catalogue by C. Lemaire and M. Henry, \textit{Isabelle de Portugal: Duchesse de Bourgogne, 1397-1471}, Brussels, 1991, cat. no. 37, 146-7, and Duverger, 1977, 177.

\textsuperscript{20} Smith, \textit{Artistic Patronage}, 282.
court artist paint at least one image of his own visage. One such portrait may have been the now-lost right panel of the diptych with the Virgin in a Church on the left hand panel.

The Berlin Virgin in a Church

Despite the absence of any documented connection with a pendant, the Virgin in a Church in the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin has been thought by many writers to be the dexter wing of a small devotional diptych. Several factors suggest that the panel as we see it today is incomplete. The attitude of the Virgin as she focuses to her left toward some object or person outside the space of her panel, and the tiny size of the work, which also indicates that it was created for private devotion, indicate that it is part of a devotional diptych. Further, all early copies of the work include a donor panel.

21 C. J. Purtle, The Marian Paintings of Jan van Eyck, Ph.D. diss., Washington University, 1976, vol. 1, 315. Literature on the painting just after its acquisition by the Berlin Museum consistently refers to it as diptych. Later art historians failed to follow up on these discussions and it was E. Herzog, "Zur Kirchenmadonna van Eycks," Berliner Museen, VI, 1, 1956, 14, who brought these earlier writings to the attention of later scholars.
The Berlin panel has been variously dated from 1425 to 1437 but the latest date seems most probable according to the convincing arguments advanced by Snyder.\textsuperscript{22} Among the reasons that Snyder suggests for a later dating are the use of a complex Marian symbolism, the rich nature of the Virgin's dress, and the delicacy and observation of the architecture, factors that situate the completion of the painting to Jan's mature period. Snyder also believes that the drapery "...displays the same refined and graceful curvilinearism," that can be observed in panels dated between 1437 and 1439.\textsuperscript{23} In fact, the similarities between this work and the devotional panels of Jan's later career (St. Barbara, Antwerp, 1437; Dresden Triptych, Dresden, 1437; Virgin by the Fountain, Antwerp, 1439; St. Francis, Philadelphia, 1439) strongly suggest that this work was painted after 1437.\textsuperscript{24} At this time the painter had been employed by Philip the Good for some years and was living and working in Bruges, painting for members of Philip's


\textsuperscript{23} Snyder, 295.

\textsuperscript{24} Purtle, 335.
court as well as for the duke himself.

Purtle argues that the putative donor's connection to the image of the Virgin within the context of the Church and the iconographic significance of this placement suggests that the original owner was a member of the clergy. However, Philip frequently placed his own portraits within churches and, indeed, the missing panel may have had a composition similar to the many stained glass chevet windows with the image of Philip the Good found throughout the duchy of Burgundy. Jan's extensive treatment of glass throughout the church in which the Virgin stands might indicate a correlation with this type of iconography. On the other hand, the missing panel may have resembled the Master of 1499's Diptych of Christiaan De Hondt (Figs. 21a, 21b, Antwerp) donor panel in which the donor is placed in a luxurious interior or the donor panel of Jan Gossart's Doria Diptych (Figs. 22a, 22b, Galleria Doria-Pamphili, Rome) which features an extensive landscape setting. Both of these include copies of Jan's Berlin panel.

The tiny infant in Jan's painting grasps the jeweled collar of the Virgin's garment with his left hand and clutches his left wrist with his right hand. Barasche discusses the gesture of one hand clutching the other wrist as one indicative of incapacity or
submission to fate. This particular gesture originates in Roman art and Italian artists, like Giotto, understood and used it to signify resignation. In the context of Jan van Eyck's painting it could signify the Christ Child's understanding of his eventual sacrifice and remind the viewer of the Passion. This would give the gesture a salvatory significance, as a reminder that Christ's sacrifice led to salvation for the faithful of the church.

Herzog and Purtle both discuss this gesture as one of respect or mourning for the donor who appears in the now lost right panel and cite this as evidence that a powerful cleric, possibly an abbot or bishop, was originally represented on the attached wing. This gesture might also show a sign of respect to a powerful earthly ruler. The significance of the gesture as a sign of mourning will be discussed below.

The work was displayed with its original frame


26 For additional literature on the infant Christ's foreknowledge of His passion see W. S. Gibson, "Bosch's Boy with a Whirligig," Simiolus, 8, 1975/76, 9-15.

27 E. Herzog, 2, and Purtle, 332.

28 Purtle, 324, discusses the gesture but does not include any evidence for this.
until the painting was stolen in 1877 and recovered without the frame. This original frame had an inscription along the edges, known today through early descriptions, which came from a medieval nativity hymn; in addition the words "FELOS FLORIOLOREUM APPELLARIS" were painted across the bottom.  

Jan painted the back of the panel with simulated porphyry. This is an indication of the painting's possible function as a funerary monument. Porphyry was understood both in Italy and the North as a stone which symbolized death. Several very early portable altars survive which include porphyry and are symbolic of the Passion and blood of Christ, and the stone ofunction.  

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29 M. Meiss was the first to publish and translate this phrase while identifying its source and the significance it had for Jan's theories on light in spiritual representations. The original inscription and its translation are in his classic study, "Light as Form and Symbol in some Fifteenth century Paintings," Art Bulletin, 27, 1945, 179. Panofsky elaborated the arguments of Meiss' article. Panofsky also deciphered and translated the lines which appear on the bottom of the Virgin's robe and come from the Little Chapter for Lauds on the Feast of the Assumption. This prayer was in use in the breviary of St. Donation in Bruges. For the original Latin text and its translation see Panofsky, E.N.P., vol. 1, 148.

30 See, for example, the portable altar with the porphyry top in the Musée Cluny, A. Erlande-Brandenburg, Musée de Cluny Guide, Paris, 1989, 93, fig. 11. In addition, the Gertrudis Altar in the Cleveland Museum of Art shows the use of porphyry in this context.
sculpted from porphyry, and Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea
del Castagno, and Jan van Eyck are only a few of the
artists who introduced this stone into their paintings
for symbolic purposes. The funereal aspect of the
inclusion of this type of stone on a devotional panel
alludes both to the transience of life and the possible
use of the panel as a tomb monument after the death of
the original owner. Jan included simulated stone on
several of his smaller devotional panels including the
St. Francis (Turin, Galerie Sabauda) and The Three
Maries at the Tomb (Rotterdam, Boymans-van Beuningen
Museum).

More than one observer has noted the Gothic nature

31 The question of the use of porphyry on the backs
of Northern and Italian Renaissance paintings is
insightfully addressed by J. Mundy, "Porphyry and the
Posthumous Fifteenth century Portrait," Pantheon, XLVI,
1988, 37-43.

32 The two St. Francis panels, Philadelphia and
Turin, are associated with a will dated 1470 in which the
mayor of Bruges, Anselm Adornes, left both panels to his
daughters, both nuns, with instructions that protective
wings with portraits of the mayor and his wife were to be
added to the works. Panofsky, E.N.P., vol. 1, 192, n. 1.

33 The attribution of the Rotterdam painting is
disputed but it is usually given to Jan or a close
follower. The use of porphyry her is found on the tomb
on which the angel is seated as he greets the women.

See F. J. Mather, "Three Early Flemish Tomb
Pictures," Art in America, III, 1915, 261-272, for
discussion of the use of diptychs as tomb paintings. See
the first part of Chapter IV for further discussion of
this.
of the S-shaped sway of the Virgin's pose. This resembles many sculpted Virgins that predate Jan's panel. One of the sculptures that this most clearly resembles is Claus Sluter's Virgin placed over the portal of the Chartreuse of Champmol in Dijon (Fig. 23). In a document dated November 20, 1433, Philip the Good announced his intention to be interred after his death in the Chartreuse of Champmol.\textsuperscript{34} Sluter's sculpture shows the Virgin standing on a socle in the center of the portal with Philip the Bold and his wife in prayer with the patron saints of Burgundy on either side of the Virgin. These were the images that greeted visitors to the Chartreuse immediately before entering. Jan van Eyck's Virgin might well have reminded Philip of the Virgin of the Chartreuse. The gesture of the Christ Child, one of mourning and respect, may therefore be associated with the funereal purpose of the diptych, if it was indeed intended to be placed over Philip's tomb. This intention is strengthened by the simulated porphyry on the back of the panel. In addition, when Philip used the diptych in his private devotions it would have served as a \textit{memento mori}, reminding him not just of the eventuality of death but

\textsuperscript{34} Smith, \textit{Artistic Patronage}, 29.
the precise location in which he was to be buried.

The **Diptych of Christiaan de Hondt**

The simplest way to understand the original appearance of Jan's *Virgin in a Church* diptych when it was complete with its adjoining panel is by examining the closest known copy of the Berlin panel, the **Diptych of Christiaan de Hondt** by the Master of 1499, now in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp.\(^{35}\) The left wing of Abbot de Hondt's diptych

\(^{35}\) A drawing in pen and bistre which copies Jan's original composition of the Berlin panel was in the Robinson Collection, London, and published by L. J. K. Kämmerer, *Hubert und Jan van Eyck*, Bielefeld, Leipzig, 1898, fig. 60. A second pen drawing in the collection of the Uffizi is illustrated in W. H. J. Weale, *Hubert and John van Eyck*, London, New York, 1908, 34-5. These drawings appear to be early but no attempts are made by these authors to date them.

In addition to the two early copies discussed in the body of this essay, a lost copy of van Eyck's painting was formerly in the possession of F. Caucalt, the representative of France in Naples, Florence and Rome. After his death the painting was sold for 17 francs to an architect named Nau in Nantes. These copies and their dimensions are given by W. H. J. Weale, *The Van Eycks and their Art*, London, 1912, 169.

A variation of the Berlin panel from the late sixteenth or early seventeenth century is in the collection of Rodriguez Bauza, Madrid. The work was painted for Chrétien Druvaeus, Druve, or Dryve, ca. 1623. The donor who is depicted on the right hand side of the panel was the abbot of St. Nicolas in Veurne, who died at the age of 63 in 1636. For further information and an illustration of this image see J. Lavalleye, *Collections d'Espagne, Les Primitifs Flamands*, Antwerp, 1953, No. 30,
is a close copy of the Berlin panel. It has been suggested that the right wing, with its donor portrait of the Abbot de Hondt in prayer, is based upon Jan's original donor panel.  

Christiaan de Hondt was abbot of the Abbey of the Dunes from 1496 to 1509. The abbey was located outside Bruges, the city with which the artistic origins of the Master of 1499 have been identified. In the de Hondt diptych, the Abbot kneels in prayer in a private chamber with a devotional diptych showing a Crucifixion and a full-length donor on the wall behind his bed, a Book of Hours on the prie-dieu before him, and a cushion beneath his knees. The faithful dog sleeping peacefully beside him furnishes a pun on the donor's surname. This private chamber is immediately

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26-27 and fig. 30.


37 M. J. Friedländer, Early Netherlandish Painting, New York, 1967-1975, vol. 4, 43. ill. 37, pl. 44.
reminiscent of the interiors painted by Jan van Eyck (Arnolfini Wedding Portrait, National Gallery, London), and Robert Campin (Werl Altarpiece, Madrid, the Prado; Merode Altarpiece, Cloisters Museum, New York) and seems to reflect mid-century interiors rather than contemporary furnishings of the end of the fifteenth century. The fact that the abbot had himself depicted in full-length in a small devotional panel at this late date suggests that the artist utilized an older style of representation. All of the private devotional diptychs by Rogier van der Weyden, painted around 1460, show the donor in half-length as do the majority of those painted in the last decades of the century by Hans Memling.

The Diptych of Margaret of Austria and Margaret's Court in Malines

The Master of 1499, painted three extant diptychs. Besides the Diptych of Christiaan de Hondt discussed above, the Diptych of Margaret of Austria (Fig. 24, Ghent, Museum voor Schone Kunsten), a tiny,

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38 E. Herzog, 14-15, cites several examples of earlier interiors such as the Werl Altarpiece, The Merode Altarpiece (New York, Cloisters), and the miniature of the Birth of St. John in the Turin-Milan Hours (Turin, Museo Civico, fol. 93v.).
infrequently reproduced work, is also of interest to this argument. The left wing depicts the Virgin and Child in a dark interior space. They sit on an elaborate throne under a Gothic baldachin while two tiny angels hover over the Virgin's head holding a crown. The Christ Child turns in his seat to reach out to the Regent of the Netherlands on the adjoining panel.

Margaret of Austria is placed in an interior identical with that painted by the Master of 1499 for the Abbot de Hondt. Like de Hondt, the regent kneels in prayer in a mid-fifteenth century interior with her prie-dieu and Book of Hours before her. Her tiny dog looks attentively at the Holy Mother and Child while a pet monkey seems more interested in testing the limits of his leash. A diptych hangs on the wall of Margaret's chamber as in the Abbot de Hondt's panel. The panel is too small and the details too obscure to allow for an identification of the subject of this diptych. Again we find the Master of 1499 using the older tradition of full-length depictions. This is most clearly illustrated by examining another devotional diptych

39 The third diptych by the Master of 1499 is an Annunciation Diptych with the archangel on the dexter panel and the Virgin on the sinister wing. (Berlin, Staatliche Museum).
owned by Margaret. An anonymous Netherlandish artist depicted the regent in half-length, sharing a table with the Virgin and Child (Fig. 25). Here we see the sixteenth century approach to diptych composition. The similarity between the donor wings of the Ghent and Antwerp diptychs also strongly suggests a common source, the original donor panel by Jan van Eyck.

The presence of the arms of Savoy and the black headdress which Margaret wears dates the work to after 1504. When Margaret was widowed by the death of her third husband, Philibert of Savoy.40 Margaret's court was centered at Malines, then a flourishing commercial city with international connections. Her palace was an artistic and intellectual center for the elite of the Burgundian Netherlands and served as the meeting place of the most celebrated artists and great minds of her time. Famous men including Erasmus, Cornelius Agrippa, Jean Lemaire, and Jean Second, came from every part of Europe to visit her court and pay tribute to the regent.41 Margaret was also a great collector of precious and beautiful objects. One of the most famous


41 Tremayne, 110-11.
rooms in her palace was the one that housed her picture collection, which included over one hundred portraits, many of which been owned by Philip the Good.\textsuperscript{42}

**The Doria Diptych with Antonio Siciliano**

Among the artists who visited the court of Margaret was Jan Gossart.\textsuperscript{43} This fact is of great interest when we consider that a second extant copy of the Berlin *Virgin in a Church* was painted by this prolific master. The *Diptych with Antonio Siciliano and St. Anthony* (Figs. 22a, 22b, Rome, Galeria Doria-Pamphili) is quite well documented. The work was commissioned in Malines in 1513 from Gossart while Siciliano was visiting the Netherlands on business.\textsuperscript{44} The Doria diptych is, like the others discussed here, a small private devotional work. The left wing is a copy of the *Virgin in a Church* but without much of the "disguised symbolism" which so fascinated earlier artists. Gossart simplified the image and created a

\textsuperscript{42} Smith, *Artistic Patronage*, 134.

\textsuperscript{43} Tremayne, 110-11.

\textsuperscript{44} S. H. Herzog, *Jan Gossart called Mabuse (ca.1478-1532)*: a study of his chronology with a catalogue of his works, Ph.D., diss., Bryn Mawr College, 1974, cat. no. 8, 226.
somewhat lifeless copy.

The donor panel shows Antonio Siciliano in a landscape, with his patron St. Anthony kneeling in prayer. It seems clear from the image which Gossart produced that Siciliano wanted a sample of several Northern artistic specialties to take back to Italy with him. The work of Jan van Eyck was well known in Italy and the Flemish art of landscape, as typified by the background of the donor panel, was something which even the critical Michelangelo had to acknowledge.

Both Gossart and Siciliano visited the court in Malines, where Margaret's collection of pictures was housed, suggesting that both artist and patron saw the Virgin in a Church in the collection of the Regent who probably had obtained it by inheritance ultimately from her great-grandfather Philip the Good. That Margaret

\[45\] In 1456 Bartolommeo Facio praised the paintings of Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden in his De viris illustribus. See R. J. Clements, Michelangelo's Theories of Art, New York, 1961, 269.

\[46\] From the famous and often quoted passage on Flemish paintings, "Their painting is of patches, masonries, plants in the fields, shadows of river, and bridges, all of which they call landscapes, with many figures here and many there." From Francisco de Hollanda's De Pintura Antigua, Porto, 1930, 189. For further references to the Italian esteem for Flemish landscapes see W. Gibson, Mirror of the Earth, Princeton, 37-47.
herself had a painting commissioned which copied the donor panel from the original Eyckian panel also suggests her familiarity with the image and her fondness for it as well as her wish to emulate the success and spirituality of her ancestor.

Philip the Good owned and donated several diptychs and was depicted in prayer before a devotional diptych on two occasions. Philip, more than any of his contemporaries, utilized portraiture in ducal propaganda and for private devotional objects. His concern with the iconography of his portraiture and the location of his likenesses suggests that in an image like the Berlin Virgin in a Church the placement of the Virgin in the church nave with the duke kneeling in an adjacent presumably domestic interior would have been particularly significant for its commissioner. The diptych did not become a truly popular type until this time and Philip may have been the the earliest utilizor of the form for devotional purposes.
III. The Development of the Devotional Diptych

c. Rogier van der Weyden and the half-length devotional diptych

Full-length donor portraits were commonly included in altarpieces like those commissioned from Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden by Canon van der Paele and Pieter Bladelin. However, most fifteenth-century portraits were in half-length and the development of the half-length devotional diptych seems a natural extension of this trend. Rogier van der Weyden has been widely accepted as the inventor of the half-length devotional diptych.¹ However, as Lorne Campbell has pointed out, Rogier,  …certainly cannot be credited with the invention of any new type of portrait. The half-length diptych, often said to have been a type evolved by him, was undoubtedly known at the beginning of the century though all early examples have been lost. It may, however, have been Rogier who popularized the form.²

Campbell discusses evidence that a half-length diptych with the Virgin and Child adored by Philip the

¹ Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 94, and S. N. Blum, "Symbolic Invention in the art of Rogier van der Weyden," Konsthistorisk Tidskrift, XLVI, 1, 1977, 118. Both authors describe Rogier as the inventor of the half-length diptych without qualifications or evidence.

² Campbell, 64.
Bold and John the Fearless is described in the inventories of the Burgundian dukes of 1404 and 1420.³

The description in the 1404 inventory of the possessions of Philip the Bold states,

Item, ung petit tableau de bois carré, ouvrant a deux feilles, dont a l'un costes a ung ymage de Nostre Dame et de l'autre coste feu mondit seigneur et monseigneur de Flandres.⁴

Although I am unable to find any evidence from this description that this diptych featured half-length depictions, Ringbom has noted evidence for several single panels and polyptychs which included half-length portraits in the inventories of the Dukes of Burgundy.⁵ The words, "demy-ymage" appear in the inventories of Charles V and Jean de Berry.⁶ However, none of these early entries refer to a half-length devotional portrait diptych. Half-length devotional images were obviously owned by the dukes, but Rogier may indeed have been the first to paint a half-length devotional portrait diptych.

³ ibid.

⁴ Dehaines, 2, 850. Entry F. XXXIII, Inventory June 7, 1404.

⁵ Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 36-7.

⁶ Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 40, n. 7.
Rogier van der Weyden and the half-length devotional diptych.

Whether Rogier invented the devotional half-length diptych or not, he is certainly responsible for popularizing the form, a process which began among the members of the court of Philip the Good. Rogier was never officially attached to the court, but was painter to the city of Brussels and the most influential artist in the Burgundian capital. His commissions for members of the court were also numerous.  

Rogier was probably born in Tournai in 1399 or 1400. He had moved to Brussels and joined the painters guild by about 1435 and he died in Brussels in 1464. Rogier's importance in the Burgundian court of Philip is evidenced by the official state portrait of the duke which he originated. Of the many copies of this work which existed in order to circulate the duke's features widely, two are extant in Bruges and Antwerp. It was this work which probably most reflected the actual appearance of the duke and with which the duke wished to familiarize the public with his physiognomy. Clearly, the style of Rogier van der Weyden and his

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7 M. Davies, Rogier van der Weyden, New York, 1972, 3.

8 ibid.
workshop had a particular appeal for the Duke and his court as may be seen in the major commissions which members of the court awarded Rogier including Pierre Bladelin's Nativity Altarpiece (Fig. 26, Gemäldegalerie, SMPK, Berlin), and the Last Judgement Altarpiece for Nicolas Rolin (fig. 18, Musée de l'Hôtel-Dieu, Beaune).

All five of the extant devotional diptychs by Rogier include half-length portraits and were painted between c.1450 and 1464.9 Campbell believes that the earliest of Rogier's diptychs was the Diptych of Jean Gros now divided between the Art Institute in Chicago and Tournai (fig. 27).10 The second painted was the Diptych of Philippe of Croy (Fig. 28, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California, and Musée Royal des Beaux-Arts,

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9 For the purposes of this discussion the subject of exact dates for the paintings is not terribly important. The portraits will be treated as a group in the order in which Campbell placed them. Campbell discusses four of the five extant examples and places them in chronological order.

10 Campbell, 60, dates this as the first of the diptychs because of Gros's hairstyle and the size of the panels. The later works are longer in order to accommodate the donor more gracefully, this panel is shorter.
Antwerp). This is close to the execution of the sinister wing portrait of Duke Jean I of Cleves (Fig. 29, Louvre, Paris). The fourth is the Portrait of a Man (Fig. 30, Upton House, Viscount Bearsted Collection, National Trust, Banbury) with an unknown sitter. Oddly, Campbell omits the Diptych of Laurent Froiment (Fig. 31, portrait in Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels, Madonna panel in Mansel Collection of the Musée des Beaux-Arts, Caen) which Friedländer dates to 1460. The Froiment diptych was probably painted around the same time as that of Philippe of Croy, as is suggested by stylistic and compositional similarities. Three of the four identified sitters were closely connected to Duke Philip the Good. Jean Gros was a wealthy and powerful administrator; Philippe of Croy

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11 Philippe's panel may be dated before 1461 when he resigned the title "Seigneur de Sempy," that is inscribed on the reverse. Campbell, 58.

12 Campbell's dating of these works is sketchy. Philippe of Croy changed the title, "Seigneur de Sempy," which appears on his panel, when he resigned the title in 1461. John I, Duke of Cleves, is shown wearing the collar of the Toison d'or, he joined the order in 1451. Campbell believes that the fashion of the haircut of the unknown man in the Upton House picture is later than those of the other commissioners of diptychs. Campbell, 58.

was a member of an aristocratic family which was very close to the Duke; and John, the Duke of Cleves, was one of Philip's dearest and closest nephews.\textsuperscript{14} Unfortunately the only thing known about Laurent Froiment is his name; we do not know whether he was connected with the court of Philip the Good or not.\textsuperscript{15} All five of Rogier's diptychs show the donor with hands elevated in prayer opposite the virgin in half-length.

Each donor panel shows the portrayed person against a dark background and those in which the donor is identifiable carry his mark in some form, such as his initials or coat of arms. Two of the donor panels include paintings on the reverse. Rogier always represents the Virgin and Child against a dark backdrop or a gold ground. Unlike the devotional portrait diptychs which were to follow, in Rogier's diptychs the setting behind the figures is abstract. Understanding Rogier's half-length diptychs is essential before we trace the development of the diptych form after Rogier and the changes which the diptych underwent during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

\textsuperscript{14} ibid.

\textsuperscript{15} Laurent Froiment is not listed in the \textit{Biographie Nationale de Belgique}. 
The validity of the pairing of the Caen Virgin and Child with the Chicago donor panel is confirmed by the heraldic devices of the Gros family which are included on the back of both panels (Fig. 27).\textsuperscript{16} Friedländer and others have correctly pointed out that the composition of the Virgin's panel of the Diptych of Jean Gros is a translation of the composition invented by Rogier in his 1434-35 painting of the Madonna and St. Luke (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston).\textsuperscript{17} This altarpiece was painted for the chapel of the Brussels painters guild and the composition was widely seen and copied by Rogier's contemporaries. Rogier adapted his original composition to the devotional diptych format by removing the Virgin from a narrative scene, cropping the figures at half-length, and replacing the figure of Saint Luke with a donor in prayer. The Madonna proffers her right breast to both the Child and the viewer, but rather than looking towards her smiling infant, she looks to her left to acknowledge the devotion of the donor on the sinister panel. All

\textsuperscript{16} Hulin de Loo, 1924, 185.

\textsuperscript{17} Panofsky, \textit{E.N.P.}, vol. 1, 353. Panofsky and Friedländer agree about the date of this diptych which only survives now in copies, the best of which are in the Museum of Fine Arts in Boston and the Prado, Madrid.
background details are suppressed in favor of the simple, flat, dark background that is common to most of these works. This simple background helps make the figures more monumental but also emphasizes their forms as an abstract pattern. Because of its resemblance to the Madonna and St. Luke, the Diptych of Jean Gros is probably the first of Rogier's devotional diptychs.

The simplest way to identify the dexter wing of a devotional diptych is to examine the focus of the Virgin or Child; inevitably they will be shown gazing at some object which lies outside the space of their panel. For the sinister donor panel the patron is always shown in an attitude of devout prayer; the hands joined in a gesture of prayer are always included; and the donor looks to his right toward an object which lies outside his space. This formula is already established in the first diptych by Rogier and is one which remains constant throughout the subsequent history of the devotional diptych.

The Diptych of Philippe of Croy is likely the next diptych completed by Rogier (Fig. 28). Hulin de Loo believed that the portrait of Croy ought to be associated with the Virgin panel due both to their comparable size and to the unique inclusion of a
prayerbook on the dexter wing. Philippe of Croy was a great patron of beautiful illuminated manuscripts like the one with which the Christ Child plays. The Virgin and Child panel is quite different from the Gros dexter panel. In the Croy *Madonna* panel, the Virgin and Child are placed against a gold ground. The Virgin does not proffer her breast but looks toward the adjacent panel while holding her Child. The Child is completely absorbed in fingerling the clasp of the precious book which one imagines the donor has just presented to Him. Philippe of Croy is shown in prayer devoutly facing the dexter panel with a rosary caught between his thumbs and index fingers. The background of the sinister panel is not gold but simply dark like that of the Gros diptych. The mysterious device of Croy's, "L.P." appears in the upper left hand corner of the donor panel and reinforces the flatness of the background.

The *Diptych of Laurent Froiment* is one of the few examples in which the identity of the donor is certain

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but no biographical information has survived (Fig. 31). Hulin de Loo discusses the absence of any clues as to Froiment's biography and states:

His looks suggest a distinguished social position. The possession of a motto (Raison l'engagne) implies both a certain rank and intellectual cultivation. Besides, a young man ordering such a diptych by the most celebrated artist of the time must have been in possession of ample pecuniary means.

Both panels of the work have dark, unpattered backgrounds and inscriptions which emphasize the flatness of the surface. In the dexter panel Rogier has shown the Virgin with her breast exposed, joining the donor in prayer. The Virgin is actively interceding with the Christ Child on behalf of Froiment. She faces forward in an iconic, more formal fashion than that seen in the previous diptychs, but glances down to her child who is depicted making His gesture of benediction with a slight smile on His face. The Child looks at the donor and is engaged with him more actively than is the case of his counterparts in

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19 Panofsky, E.N.P., vol. 1, 296; and Hulin de Loo, 1924, 180. Hulin de Loo assigns the place of this diptych to the earliest of Rogier's devotional diptychs. He does this in part because of the stylistic similarities between the Virgin's face and face of the Madonna in the *Columba Altarpiece* in Munich which is dated 1459.

20 Hulin de Loo, 1924, 179-180.
the previous diptychs. His gesture of benediction would seem to indicate that he has granted the Virgin's request. The sinister wing shows the donor in prayer looking out of the frame without any accoutrements. The back of the donor's wing includes a grisaille painting of St. Lawrence, the donor's patron saint, and a banderole on which the patron's family name, "Froimont" is inscribed. Unfortunately the coat of arms of the donor have been effaced, thus destroying a possible aid in finding more information on the donor and his family.

The original dexter panel which once joined the donor Portrait of John I, (Fig. 29), Duke of Cleves and Count de la Marck, has not been located and the donor panel itself is now known only in a copy. In his article identifying the work as a copy after Rogier, Conway discusses the work in terms of its original position as the sinister wing of a devotional diptych. John I was the nephew of Philip the Good and was brought up at his uncle's court. This is the

[21 M. Conway, "A copy of a lost portrait by van dew Weyden," The Burlington Magazine, 40, 1922, 213. This short notice includes the first reproduction of the work and a brief discussion of its place in Rogier's œuvre.

[22 ibid.]
only surviving devotional diptych portrait wing by Rogier in which the donor wears the collar of the Golden Fleece, the order of knights founded by Philip the Good at the time of his marriage to Isabella of Portugal. 23 Conway contrasts the Portrait of John I with Rogier's portrait of Philippe of Croy and this comparison proves revealing. 24 The dark, abstract background is the same in both works but the inclusion of the collar of the Toison d'or and the rich fur sleeves and fur accents on John's clothing indicate the higher status enjoyed by the duke's nephew in comparison to the sitters depicted in the other donor portraits which we have examined.

Lastly, we come to the Portrait of a Man (Fig. 30). 25 This work is considerably smaller in size than the others discussed in this chapter. Part of this is due to the cutting off of the bottom of the panel which occurred at an unknown date. Thus a small portion of the hands in prayer and the lower part of the sitter's arms are lost. Again this work displays all of the

23 For further information on the Toison d'or see Vaughan, Philip the Good, 160-2.

24 Conway, 213-4.

25 Friedländer, vol. 3, pl. 65, cat. no. 45.
stylistic characteristics of a sinister donor panel. The simple, dark background, the prayerful sitter, and the direction of his attention outside the frame are present in this work as well. The man in the Upton House portrait, unlike the others discussed, wears very simple black garments and plain jewelry and has no heraldic device or other motif to aid in his identification. The style of his fuller hairstyle indicates that the work was completed toward the end of Rogier's life in the 1460's. This would probably place it among the last portraits painted by Rogier as well as the last of his devotional diptychs.

Because of the importance of the patrons of Rogier's first diptychs and each of their intimate connections with the court of Philip the Good, one should not be surprised to discover that the popularity of devotional diptychs, both half-length and full-length, is a phenomenon limited primarily to the Burgundian Netherlands from the early fifteenth century down to the end of the sixteenth. After Rogier popularized the form, it spread quickly from his workshop to his imitators and even more major masters.

26 Hulin de Loo, 1923, 54.
Interpretations of the Half-length Devotional Diptych

Various theories have been proposed to explain the significance of the half-length format of Rogier's diptychs and those of later artists. Most interpretations have focused on kingship or royalty. Goffen's belief that:

This innate connection alone makes the [half-length] form appropriate for the Virgin, herself a Queen, Regina Coeli, whose depiction in so many ways absorbed the patterns of pagan royal portraiture.

Ringbom correctly described the half-length format, when seen in images of the Virgin, as significant of both "divine majesty and secular power alike." S. N. Blum ascribed Rogier's impetus for utilizing the diptych form to a strong wish to place the donor in close proximity to the Virgin and Child. Rogier certainly understood the implications of this sort of

27 Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 94.


29 Goffen, 496.

30 Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 45.

31 S. N. Blum, Early Netherlandish Triptychs, Berkely and Los Angeles, 1969, 118.
closeness; however, I believe that in his diptychs the donor is not truly meant to be read as in the same space as the Virgin and Child before which they appear. Rather the donor wished to join two images that would have been very familiar, the iconic eleousa-inspired close-up of the Virgin and the half-length portrait. In the eleousa type the Virgin and Child are shown in half-length and the Child is held with both hands as he plays with a strand of the Virgin's hair. The type is first seen in Rogier's Virgin and Child in the Donaueschingen Galerie.32

The rationale for the Virgin's depiction in half-length is readily apparent. The donor's desire for such a form for his own portrait has been explained in a similar fashion,

The devotional diptych, just as religious diptychs in general, originally served the needs of a noble laity, but during the fifteenth century a new type of commissioner emerged: the wealthy burghers of the towns. By adopting the en buste composition, a form of portrait which traditionally had been reserved for the nobility, the burghers emulated the aristocracy in the domain of portrait art.33

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32 Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 94, cites L. Baldass for identifying the Eleousa prototype in Rogier's work. Ringbom believes that Rogier may have come into contact with the form when he was in Italy in 1450. L. Baldass, Hans Memling, Vienna, 1942, 22.

33 Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 47.
However, Eisler emphasized that while Ringbom is correct in this thesis, "there may also have been a factor of economy in the half-length composition."\textsuperscript{34} This explanation, perhaps due to its very simplicity, has been too often ignored in the search for contextual explanations of developments in Renaissance art. Often artists were paid according to the number and size of the figures which they painted. A half-length composition with only two figures may have cost less than a full-length diptych.

Friedman strongly emphasized the importance of the half-length format in her dissertation. She believed that this type of format intensified the intimacy between the figures depicted and concentrated the viewer's attention on the faces and hands of the figures.\textsuperscript{35} Thus the viewer was more intimately connected with figures in the paintings. Friedman associated the diptych format and her belief that Rogier developed it with the teachings of the \textit{Devotio Moderna}.\textsuperscript{36} While the use of the half-length format does mark a significant change in the conception of

\textsuperscript{34} C. Eisler, Review of Sixten Ringbom's \textit{Icon to Narrative}, \textit{Art Bulletin}, 51, 1969, 187.

\textsuperscript{35} Friedman, diss., 82.

\textsuperscript{36} Friedman, diss., 84.
devotional imagery in the fifteenth century, I believe that earlier explanations have overemphasized the importance of peripheral devotional movements and have not sufficiently considered shifting fashions or the tastes of individual artists or patrons. There is no evidence that the Burgundian Court circle was associated with the Devotio Moderna and it is therefore not plausible to use their teachings as the rationale for the commissioning of devotional diptychs.\textsuperscript{37}

Most later full-length diptychs show the donor in a continuous landscape together with the Virgin and Child and other attendants.\textsuperscript{38} The inclusion of a landscape enabled the artist to include symbolic elements such as rose gardens or additional figures like patron saints. Ecclesiastics utilized the full-length type more frequently than lay patrons, although this preference is not consistent enough to allow any sort of speculation on the reasons for this choice. Goffen has explained the significance of landscapes in devotional images as:

\textsuperscript{37} Post's authoritative text makes no mention of any member of the Burgundian court and there were no monasteries or convents associated with the movement in either Bruges or Dijon.

\textsuperscript{38} Examples of this type include two works by Memling which will be discussed in a later chapter.
signifying the Paradise to which man's return is made possible through the birth and sacrifice of Christ, the second Adam. Because the funerary theme of Resurrection belongs a priori to the iconography of the relic, in this case Christ Himself, the themes of His Resurrection, the resurrection of the dead, and of the paradise landscape are complementary. The harmonious landscape represents at once the beauties of this world, the memory of the garden of Eden, and the promise of the kingdom of Heaven. 39

Although the importance of the development and popularity of the half-length format in devotional images is undeniable, I believe that in the case of devotional portrait diptychs this has been overemphasized to the exclusion of other types. In addition, explanations of the significance of the format have relied too heavily on theological motivations without enough attention paid to the personal motivations and desires of artists and patrons. One powerful motivation for these commissions was the promise of salvation offered by the doctrine of Purgatory; this will be the subject of the last chapter.

39 Goffen, 503.
III. The Development of the Devotional Diptych

d. The Culmination of the Devotional Diptych

This chapter follows the evolution of the devotional diptych after the rise of the half-length form in the art of Rogier van der Weyden. With Rogier the devotional diptych had become popular among members of the court of Philip the Good. We will find that the artists who followed Rogier were working for a predominantly bourgeois clientele and the works these patrons commissioned reflect their status in society.

Hans Memling and the Half-Length Devotional Diptych

The artist who utilized the diptych format most often after Rogier van der Weyden was Hans Memling. After possible training in Rogier's workshop in Brussels, Memling moved to Bruges where he quickly became the premier portraitist of the bourgeoisie.¹ In fact, after the death of Petrus Christus, Memling was the unrivalled portraitist of the city and one of its hundred wealthiest citizens. Memling's oeuvre contains over 25 portraits and he has been called the

¹ Panofsky, E.N.P., 347. Memling became a citizen of Bruges January 30, 1465 and died in Bruges August 11, 1494.
first "society" portrait painter.\textsuperscript{2} Thus, it is no wonder he utilized the devotional portrait diptych and was instrumental in popularizing the form among members of the middle class. Memling is responsible for three major innovations in devotional diptychs. First, he was the first artist to place the donor and the holy figures within a unified interior, an innovation best typified by the \textit{Diptych of Martin van Nieuwenhove} (Figs. 32a, 32b) discussed below. Memling also explored two different types of devotional diptychs. One is the half-length format with which we are already familiar. A new type, however, which we have not previously encountered was the full-length depiction of the donor and Virgin and Child in a unified landscape. Memling may not have invented this new form, which was to attain a fair level of popularity during the last quarter of the fifteenth century, but he was one of the first to utilize it. Lastly, Memling, with his extensive workshop, may have pioneered the practice of having pre-painted panels available for his client's perusal which the donor could have copied and to which the devotional portrait could be added later.

To trace Memling's diptychs, it is logical to

\textsuperscript{2} G. Bazin, \textit{Memling}, New York, 1939, 14.
begin with a work which seems most like earlier forms. The Portrait of Gilles Joye, dated 1472 (Fig. 33, Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass), has been separated from its original Madonna panel which is not known today. The similarities between this portrait and those painted by Rogier are notable. This is the only one of Memling's surviving diptych panels in which the sitter is placed against a simple blue-green background without any accoutrements. Gilles Joye is shown in a very narrow space, creating a bust-length portrait. Very little of the sitter is seen below his shoulders, and his hands, clasped in prayer, are actually cut off by the original frame.

Happily, we know a great deal about the sitter due to the exhaustive research of Frans van Molle.\(^3\) Like Rogier's commissioners of devotional diptychs, Canon Gilles Joye was attached to the Burgundian court.\(^4\) Between 1460 and 1463 Canon Joye was appointed cleric of Philip the Good's famous chapelle musicale where he


\(^4\) See Molle for complete documents, ibid.
acquired a reputation as a composer.\textsuperscript{5} In 1464 he
tained the rank of chaplain of the \textit{chapelle musicale}
in Bruges but following an illness he retired in
1468.\textsuperscript{6} Joye was the Canon of the chapter of St.
Donation in Bruges from March 2, 1963 until his death
in Bruges on December 31, 1483. Joye was interred in
St. Donation and this diptych, as its simulated marble
frame may indicate, might have been placed in the
church along with the Canon's funerary slab to mark his
tomb.\textsuperscript{7} The use of simulated marble is an Eyckian
element which Memling adopted for funerary diptychs and
it was to be utilized by other artists who were to
follow as well.

The portrait of Gilles Joye strongly resembles the
half-length portraits painted by Rogier van der Weyden
for other prominent members of the Burgundian court,
more so than any of the other diptych portrait panels
in Memling's \textit{oeuvre}. Of the many Madonna and Child
panels attributed to Memling and his workshop or
followers, there is only one which shows the Virgin in

\textsuperscript{5} C. T. Eisler, \textit{Les Primitifs Flamands: New England
Museums}, Brussels, 1961, 64.

\textsuperscript{6} ibid.

\textsuperscript{7} Molle publishes an illustration of the funerary
slab, pl. IV.
an equally simple setting. This is the Virgin and Child in the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 34). The measurements of the two panels are nearly identical, the Williamstown panel is 30.5 x 22 cm and the C.M.A. panel is 31.5 x 22. This difference is less than that in many of the reconstructed diptychs discussed in this dissertation.

The Virgin and Child of the Cleveland panel is derived from an earlier composition by Rogier and of all of Memling's Virgin's this is the most Rogerian. The back of the Cleveland panel is marbleized like the back of Memling's Chicago diptych, which will be discussed below, and the frame of the Williamstown panel is also marbleized. The background behind the Cleveland Virgin is in very poor condition today but it is a gold ground with the poorly painted grey clouds in the corners probably added at a later date. Some early hallmarks of Memling's half-length Virgins may already be seen in the Cleveland panel. The drapery of the Christ Child would probably have been continued illusionistically onto the original frame, now lost, as in the Nieuwenhove and Chicago diptychs. This may be

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8 The measurements for the Cleveland panel are for the entire painted surface, not only the painted portion, and differ from Friedländer's measurements of 33 cm. by 23.5.
seen by the abrupt ending of the drapery at the lower edge of the painting. The jeweled v-shaped collar, parted to expose the Virgin's breast, is like that seen in several of Memling's diptychs as is the diadem worn on her head.

There are several problems involved in associating these two panels with each other. A primary problem is the lack of agreement by scholars about the attribution of the Cleveland panel to Memling. It certainly shows workshop assistance, and may have been completely painted by a member of Memling's atelier. This raises the interesting question of workshop practices and Memling's oeuvre. Perhaps Memling allowed his workshop assistants to paint images, like the Virgin and Child, which were very popular, on speculation. The great number of unmatched dexter devotional diptych wings attributed to Memling indicate that devotional diptychs were one of the most popular objects he created.

The differing scale of the donor and the Virgin and Child is also problematic. Gilles Joye is significantly larger than the Virgin and Child. Perhaps the Virgin panel was painted before the donor

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9 Suggested tentatively in a letter from Dr. Vida Hull, dated October 6, 1993.
panel and the two were joined at a later date. It is also important to note that this disparity in scale was not unknown among Memling's contemporaries. The Master of the Legend of St. Ursula shows the same sort of differences in scale in his works, particularly in the diptych now divided between Philadelphia and Cambridge, Mass., (Fig. 35) which will be discussed below. It seems as if Memling was never comfortable painting portraits of donors in front of abstract settings; Rogier preferred this approach, to enhance the dignity of his sitters. I believe that the cropped portrait of Canon Joye was Memling's attempt to create a greater sense of immediacy for the viewer. However, if the Virgin had been depicted in the same scale it would not have been possible to include the Christ Child. As far as we know, Memling never attempted to paint a diptych in this way again.

Throughout his career Memling favored placing his figures in landscapes or in interiors with windows which afforded glimpses of a verdant landscape. It is possible that the diptych of Canon Gilles Joye was Memling's first attempt at a devotional portrait diptych. This would explain the strong influence of

10 Problems with the attribution of this panel may be due to contributions from Memling's workshop.
Rogier's earlier works. It is also significant that Joye was connected to the court of Philip the Good, whose members commissioned almost every one of the diptychs Rogier painted. I have utilized the possibility that the Portrait of Canon Gilles Joye was the sinister wing of a diptych which included the Cleveland Virgin and Child panel as a starting point for discussion of the remainder of Memling's extant devotional diptychs. In light of the diptych of Gilles Joye, the diptychs that Memling was to paint in the last decade of his life are all the more startlingly innovative.

The first devotional portrait diptych by Memling which has come down to us intact is the Diptych of

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11 In a letter to B. Lane, dated July 9, 1993, the author of a forthcoming monograph on Memling expressed her belief that Memling had never studied under Rogier. Whether this was true or not, I don't believe that the younger master could have worked in the proximity of Rogier without being influenced by him.

12 The Diptych of Laurent Froimont is an exception as nothing is known about the sitter.

13 Friedländer, E.N.P., illustrates two other Memling portraits showing men in prayer which were probably diptych wings. These are the Portrait of a Mature Man, The Hague, Mauritshuis, vol. 6, cat. no. 79, pl. 118., and Portrait of a Young Man, Banbury, Upton House, National Trust, vol. 6, cat. no., 87, pl. 120.

The Madonna panels by Memling which may or may not have been intended as half of a diptych are too numerous to name.
Martin van Nieuwenhove (Figs. 32a, 32b), today in the Memlingmuseum in Bruges. This diptych actually remained in the Nieuwenhove family until 1640 when it entered the collection of St. Julian's hospital.\(^{14}\)

The diptych was painted in 1487, as is known from the date on the frame, when the sitter was 23 years old. This work shows Memling turning away from Rogier's models to create a new type of diptych. The subtlest change, yet one of the most telling, is in the proportions of the panels. Rather than using Rogier's long and narrow panels which highlighted the elegance of the sitter, Memling's panel is wider to show more of the sitter's surroundings. In addition, the lively portrait of Martin shares none of the elongated grace of his Rogerian predecessors.

The most obvious difference is the setting in which the figures are painted. Rather than placing his figures against an abstract background, Memling painted a large, elegant interior which the Virgin and the donor inhabit. Open windows on both panels offer views

\(^{14}\) In 1815 it became part of the collection of St. John's Hospital where it remains today. A. Lobelle-Calvuwe, *Memlingmuseum*, Bruges, 1985, 83.
of the world outside, in this case, Bruges.15 A ledge which abuts the front of the picture plane acts as an extension of the frame. This is used as a seat for the Christ Child and as a prie-dieu by Nieuwenhove. Drapery is painted illusionistically overlapping the frame in an attempt to bridge the boundary of the picture plane which separates the viewer from the figures who are viewed.

The donor himself is presented in a more earthy manner than Rogier's noblemen. Although his clothing is made of rich velvet and fur, it has none of the subtle elegance of the black robes worn by Rogier's donors. Martin's fleshy, full lips are parted, as if he is about to speak; his arms are at a less static and formal angle than previous examples. He has always appealed to this viewer because he looks as if he could be found walking into a twentieth-century college classroom as easily as a fifteenth-century one, something which could hardly be said for any of Rogier's donors. In fact, this portrait is so casual that one author has called it, the most perfect expression of an ideal of bourgeois hedonism in which intellectual and

15 Petrus Christus and Dirck Bouts pioneered the depiction of the sitter in an interior near an open window.
spiritual life have little place.\textsuperscript{16}

The Nieuwenhove Virgin seems appropriately to be of a different world from the donor. She offers an apple to the seated Christ Child. This obvious reference to Original Sin allows Memling to devise a composition which leads the viewer's eyes back and forth across the two panels. As the Child reaches toward the apple, his eyes focus on Martin in prayer. The Virgin demurely lowers her gaze and her mournful expression alludes to her foreknowledge of the death of her son. Her clothing is rich yet subdued and she is one of the loveliest of Memling's Virgins.

The room in which the figures are depicted and the way in which the room is shown differ from any painting discussed thus far. The Virgin is centered before a wall with two windows, one on either side of her. The reflections in the convex mirror behind her indicate that she is several feet in front of the back wall. The donor, in contrast, is shown before a wall which angles toward the rear of the room in one-point perspective. His face is silhouetted against opened wooden shutters and his patron saint, Martin, is shown on horseback dividing his cloak with a beggar in the

\textsuperscript{16} Bazin, 14.
stained glass over his left shoulder. We know that this wall must connect behind the frame to the wall behind the Virgin because the reflection in the convex mirror shows the backs of both figures in the same space and "...what is separate on the two wings of the diptych is unified in the mirror."\(^{17}\)

In the *Diptych of Martin van Nieuwenhove*, Hans Memling developed a new type of devotional diptych, one that was to appeal to bourgeois patrons for the next thirty years. Perhaps it was the relative informality of the setting or the intimacy which this suggested but it seems certain that with this diptych Memling secured the popularity of the devotional diptych with a new class of patrons. Bourgeois patrons were to establish a monopoly on the commissioning of devotional diptychs until 1540 with only a few exceptions.

Roughly contemporary with the Nieuwenhove diptych is the diptych by Hans Memling now in Chicago (Fig. 36).\(^{18}\) The two halves of this diptych were


\(^{18}\) Madonna and Child panel, Mr. and Mrs. Martin A Ryerson Coll., 33.1050., Donor panel, gift of Arthur Sachs, 53.467.
identified and reconstructed by Julius Held in 1936.\textsuperscript{19} At that time Held dated the work to the middle of the 1480's and the Art Institute of Chicago continues to use the vague "circa 1485." Whether this diptych was painted before or after the Nieuwenhove diptych is difficult to decide. I discuss it after the Nieuwenhove diptych because I believe that Memling's innovations in the Chicago diptych are less outstanding. The Chicago diptych should perhaps be dated after the Bruges diptych for a number of reasons including the less hieratic appearance of the Virgin and the more successful pose of the Christ Child in the Chicago diptych. The room in the Chicago diptych is less ambitious in its use of perspective but it still utilizes the device of placement of the figures together in a single room.

The somewhat Germanic character of the donor's clothing is notable. The Chicago sitter wears an elaborate costume which resembles that worn by Albrecht Dürer in his 1493 \textit{Self-Portrait with Eryngium Flower} in the Louvre. Dürer's costume is looser and the neckline is lower but the bands of ribbon which criss-cross the front are quite similar and differ slightly from the

clothing seen in Flemish paintings at the time.²⁰

The Chicago diptych shares several of the innovations that Memling introduced into the Nieuwenhove diptych. The donor and Virgin and Child share a common ledge which again is used as a seat for the Child and as a prie-dieu by the donor. As in the Bruges diptych, Memling carried parts of the sleeves, robes, and other objects over onto the frame to continue the illusion into the viewer's space. The figures are again placed in a bourgeois interior which in this case has a large central window with a view of a landscape. Held pointed out when discussing this painting that:

> the motif of the open window cut into the empty space beside the head was first introduced by Dirck Bouts in his portrait of 1462 (London), in carrying out Eyckian principles.²¹

In this diptych Memling conforms more to the Boutsian model than Nieuwenhove's diptych with its diving perspective and complex spatial arrangement of an interior.

The mirror which appears on the Virgin's panel is

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²⁰ Because both panels came to U.S. collections from Spain it has also been proposed that the painting was done for a Spanish patron. Friedman, 113, n. 33.

²¹ Held, 179.
placed on the side wall to the left of the Virgin. In the reflection we see the complete window behind the figures with its crossbar and bulls-eye windows at the top.\textsuperscript{22} Reflected in the mirror we also see two boys. These boys do not appear in either of the panels but the placement of their reflections in the mirror indicates that they are between the Virgin and the donor, standing closer to the window. Held and others after him have suggested that the boys must be the sons of the donor.\textsuperscript{23} It is unknown for the donors of devotional diptychs to include spouses or offspring, with one odd exception which will be discussed below.\textsuperscript{24} The half-length devotional portrait diptych operates through the close interaction of three figures, the Virgin, Christ Child, and donor, without any supplementary figures. The presence of the two boys, together with the grisaille painting of St. Anthony on the reverse of the donor's panel are the only indications we have of the sitter's possible

\textsuperscript{22} For an analysis of the symbolism of the crossbar and window reflections see C. Gottlieb, "The Mystical Window in Paintings of the Salvator Mundi," \textit{Gazette des Beaux-Arts}, 56, 1960, 313-332.

\textsuperscript{23} Held, 179.

\textsuperscript{24} The diptych by the Master of the St. Ursula Legend with three donors in Antwerp.
identity.

The survival of two other devotional donor portraits, together with numerous Madonna panels which may once have made up one half of a diptych, indicate that Memling and his workshop probably painted many devotional diptychs. Many of these were workshop productions and I believe it was Memling's large workshop that pioneered the practice of pre-fabricated devotional diptychs. In large part because of the innovations that Memling explored in the Chicago and Bruges diptychs, the devotional diptych became popular with the upper-middle class. This is the very class which favored Memling. Memling seems to have had a variety of painted Madonna and Child panels in his studio from which prospective buyers could choose the image which most appealed to their particular taste. The panel with the donor's portrait would then be painted at the donor's request and joined to the selected Madonna wing with hinges. Certain artists may have specialized in the production of devotional diptychs while others, who enjoyed equal popularity, seem never to have painted a single diptych.

Hans Memling and the Full-length Devotional Diptych
Two diptychs of a very different type by Memling, with possible workshop assistance, still survive. The Diptych with the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine and the Donor Jan du Celier is in the Louvre today (Fig. 37), and a Diptych with the Virgin in a Rose Garden and a Donor with St. George is preserved in the Alte Pinakothek in Munich (Fig. 38). Friedländer believed that the Munich diptych was a workshop piece while the museum today maintains that the work was painted by the master. The authorship of the painting is not essential to this discussion and for simplicity's sake the work will be treated as a Memling.

The Louvre diptych is not dated and the dates which have been assigned to it have varied from Weale's 1475 to Friedländer's 1490. This seems to be the first of Memling's diptychs to utilize the full-length

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25 Friedländer, E.N.P., vol. 6, cat. no. 15.

26 Friedländer, E.N.P., vol. 6, cat. no. 104.

27 In a letter of October 6, 1990, Dr. Vida Hull expressed her opinion that the donor panel of the Munich Diptych was painted by Memling but that the dexter wing was by his workshop. Professor Hull based this both on visual evidence and the unpublished underdrawings at the Alte Pinakothek.

format and shows his reliance on Jan van Eyck's *Virgin in a Church* diptych. In Jan's diptych the donor may have been in an interior, as would seem evident from the diptych of Chistiaan de Hondt, or he may have been in a landscape as indicated by Gossart's copy now in the Galeria Doria-Pamphili. We have already noted Memling's preference for depicting landscapes and this particular type of diptych, whether his invention or not, certainly reflects this interest. Unlike any of the diptychs examined thus far, the holy figures and the donor are depicted out-of-doors in a lovely, continuous landscape. The figures are shown in full-length and the Virgin and Child and donor are accompanied by saints. The tiny Louvre diptych is full of active figures. The Virgin's panel includes a somewhat awkward mystic marriage of St. Catherine. Memling's difficulties with this composition are evidenced by the extremely elongated arm of Catherine as she reaches toward the Christ Child and he places a ring on her finger. Also seated in the garden are saints Barbara, Agnes, Cecelia, Margaret, and Lucy. Above the group angels hover in the sky. On the sinister wing we find the donor, Jan du Celier, a member of the guild of merchant grocers in Bruges, in prayer with his patron Saint George. In the distant
landscape we see John the Evangelist on Patmos and St. George slaying the dragon. The Virgin and saints are seated in a rose garden. The rose is a well-known symbol of the purity of the Virgin, the "rose without thorns." I do not believe that in this instance the presence of the rose arbor is connected with rosary devotions, however, in our discussion of the Munich panel we will discuss the rosary extensively.

The smallest of Memling's diptychs, a mere 25x15cm, the Louvre diptych nevertheless represents the third contribution which Memling made to the development of the devotional diptych. Although the donor panel may reflect an Eyckian prototype, I know of no earlier examples of a diptych of this type. However, there are several later examples of diptychs which utilize the full-length format with a continuous landscape, some of which will be discussed below.

Memling's Munich diptych differs from the Louvre diptych in several important ways. It is a much larger work, 43.3 x 31cm, and it is squared at the top rather than rounded. The number of figures and the activities depicted are greatly reduced and the compositional elements which link the two panels are more numerous. The rose arbor, which has more prominence in the Munich panel, continues from behind the seated Virgin and
angels onto the left side of the sinister panel. The castle in the distance is begun on one wing and continued on the other. Most Memlingsque of all are the colored reflections of the Virgin's red robe and the yellow and blue of the angel's robes on the shiny breastplate of St. George's armor. The clouds which begin to gather in the upper right side of the dexter wing, collect and darken into thunder clouds on the donor's panel. I am unsure of the significance of this meteorological phenomenon. I assume that it must relate to the donor in some way as it is not an attribute of St. George. Perhaps the donor, whose identity is not known, was the survivor of some sort of storm.

The rose arbor behind the Virgin includes three purple irises along the hedgerow. These flowers symbolize the Virgin's sorrow at the time of Christ's sacrifice and its name, *gladiolus* in Latin, translates as "sword-lily." Like all Madonna's in Memling's diptychs, the Munich Madonna looks down with a dolorous expression alluding to Christ's sacrifice. The red roses in the arbor symbolize the Passion of Christ

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29 "The iris...stands for the 'sword that shall pierce through' the Virgin's soul." E. Panofsky, *Albrecht Dürer*, Princeton, 1945, 94.
while the white ones represent the Virgin's purity. In this work, however, the roses are also associated with the rosary devotions with which the donor is shown engaged. The donor carries a string of rosary beads folded over his praying hands.

Devotion to the rosary was primarily a Dominican practice. Alan de Rupe created the brotherhood of the Rosary in Drouais in 1470. Jacob Sprenger formed an order in Cologne in 1474 which began with 5000 devotees increasing to 100,000 by 1481. The first indulgence was granted for rosary brotherhood members by Pope Sixtus IV in 1478 and the years of indulgence which it was possible to earn through rosary devotions steadily increased throughout the sixteenth century. Prayers said with the aid of a rosary were intended to stimulate piety and devotion to the joyful, sorrowful, and glorious events of the Virgin's life. The Madonna was in turn to reciprocate with mercy and protection. By the last fifteen years of the fifteenth century rosary use had spread into the Netherlands and the

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commissioner of the Munich diptych was very likely a devoted member of a rosary confraternity.

Of all of Memling's diptychs, the Munich panels are the most Eyckian. The jewelled collar which decorates the front of the Virgin's robe is similar to that of the Nieuwenhove Madonna and the Cleveland Madonna. The details, the reflections, the open landscape with castles and deep blue vistas, the calmly posed figures, all seem as if they may have originated in a lost work by Jan van Eyck. However, the influence which Memling's two full-length diptychs were to have on his contemporaries and the artists who followed him is certain.

The Master of the St. Ursula Legend

Among the many contemporaries of Memling who painted devotional diptychs, one of the most prolific was the Master of the St. Ursula Legend.32 The only dated work by the Master is the diptych with three donors in the Koninklijke Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp (Fig. 39). The date, 1486, is painted above

32 For a thorough catalogue raisonné and analysis of the Master's works see the recent dissertation by D. M. Levine, The Bruges Master of the St. Ursula Legend Reconsidered, Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1989.
the donors' heads together with their ages.\textsuperscript{33} The Master's oeuvre has been established and dated around the Antwerp diptych by Friedländer, Marlier, and most recently Levine.\textsuperscript{34} However, a date of sometime before 1479 seems quite certain for the diptych of Ludovico Portinari (Fig. 35) and we will begin our discussion of the Ursula Master's diptychs with this work.

Despite the discrepancy in scale between the portrait panel in John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia and the Virgin and Child panel in the Busch-Reisinger Museum, Cambridge, Mass., the panels have been convincingly linked by both Eisler and Levine.\textsuperscript{35} The measurements of both panels are quite close and the painting on the back of both is also very similar. The identification of the donor in the Philadelphia panel as Ludovico Portinari was established by the coat of arms of the Portinari family on the back of the painting along with the initials "L"


\textsuperscript{34} Friedländer, E.N.P., vol. 6, pt.1, 38-41, Marlier, 13, and Levine, 172.

\textsuperscript{35} Eisler, New England, 103-4, and Levine, cat. no. 7a and b, 176-182. This discrepancy was also found in my possible reconstruction of the diptych of Canon Gilles Jove and is even more marked in the Ursula Master's Antwerp diptych.
and "P". Ludovico, who acted as an agent of the Bruges branch of the Medici bank, returned to Florence in 1479 as heir to his uncle Accerito. The Portinari family is now justly famous as collectors of Flemish paintings and this diptych may have been placed in the family chapel of S. Digidio in S. Maria Novella along with Hugo van der Goes' famous Portinari Altarpiece (Uffizi, Florence) and Memling's Benedetto Portinari Triptych (Fig. 40, Uffizi, Florence). The Cambridge Madonna panel shows the Virgin and Child against a gold ground and surrounded by eight angels, two of whom support an embroidered cloth of honor. Although the frame is not original and probably dates from the sixteenth century, it has hinge marks on the right side. The portrait of Ludovico has a far more complex background. The Ursula Master displays a knowledge of Dirck Bouts in situating the figure against the corner of a room with windows offering views on either side. The view behind the back of Ludovico's head is of a simple landscape. The view to the left of

36 Levine, 181.
37 Eisler, New England, 103.
38 ibid.
the panel shows the distinctive towers of Bruges in the distance. In the foreground of the landscape we find the Virgin and Child enthroned in a garden and serenaded by two angels, one with a harp and the other a lute. Joseph is seen in the foreground retrieving water from a well. The inclusion of Joseph suggests a Rest on the Flight into Egypt.

The use of two different backgrounds would seem to reflect the Ursula Master's knowledge of Rogier's diptychs. The fact that the two panels are not united through a common interior or landscape would also seem to confirm an early date of the work, that is, before Memling's Nieuwenhove diptych.

The Master of the Legend of St. Ursula specialized in images of the Madonna and Child, many of which may have been diptych wings. The Master paints a very specific Virgin type and most of his Virgins look like sisters of the Cambridge Madonna.

A later work which is different from any of the diptychs we have examined thus far is the Antwerp diptych of 1486 in the Koninklijke Museum voor Schone Kunsten (Fig. 39). This unusual diptych includes not one but three figures in prayer on the sinister wing. As in the Nieuwenhove and Joye diptychs, the ages of the sitters are painted on the frame which is original.
The older woman, the man, and the younger woman are 60, 30, and 23 respectively. Like Memling's Louvre diptych, the Antwerp panels are tiny, 28 x 21 cm., and feature rounded tops. The grisaille paintings on the reverse sides of the crucifix and chalice with a host are later additions.\textsuperscript{40}

The dexter wing shows the Virgin and Child seated in a semi-circular throne which echoes the shape of the rounded panel top. Two angels draw aside curtains to either side of the throne and the background is painted a simple dark green. The Virgin supports the Child who is awkwardly propped up on her lap, placing his left hand on a book (a Book of Hours?) and holding a carnation in his right hand. The carnation traditionally symbolizes Christ's Passion.\textsuperscript{41} The donors are also set against a dark green background. All three press their hands together in prayer and look attentively toward the dexter panel. The intensely portrait-like quality of the donor's depictions has been singled out for comment by several authors.\textsuperscript{42}

Family resemblance between all three of the figures has

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\textsuperscript{40} Friedman, 122.


\textsuperscript{42} Levine, 173-4, Friedman, 123, and Marlier, 31-32.
been seen by Friedman and others in the cheekbones of the older woman and the man and in the noses of the older woman and younger woman.\textsuperscript{43} This is the only diptych known to me with this grouping of donors and Friedman has suggested that, this diptych was ordered by the two women to commemorate the entrance of the thirty-year-old male devotee into some religious establishment, possibly as a lay brother.\textsuperscript{44} While this explanation is plausible, I question why the women would be credited with the commission when almost every diptych known to me was commissioned by and painted for a man. The only exception is the Diptych of Margaret of Austria in Ghent and the anonymous diptych painted for the same Margaret known today in a copy (Figs. 24, 25).\textsuperscript{45} I would suggest instead that the male in the center commissioned the diptych to celebrate the entire family joining some lay confraternity which practiced devotions from which indulgences could be earned. The family was the primary group for whom one prayed and those to whom indulgences, once obtained, were applied.

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item Friedman, 123–4.
\item ibid.
\item These diptychs are discussed above in regard to Philip the Good's commissioning of devotional portrait diptychs. See second part of chapter III.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
Unfortunately proof for either of these theories is sadly lacking.

Discrepancies in the scale of the figures on the two wings in the Antwerp and American diptychs have been noted. Levine attributes difference in scale to possible workshop assistance in both cases. He points out that the Madonna panels could have been painted many years before the adjoining portrait panels and with the help of one or more different hands.\textsuperscript{46} Thus with the Master of St. Ursula we find an artist working in Bruges at the same time as Memling mass-producing devotional diptychs. However, both the examples discussed show great variations, suggesting that the works remained deeply personal commissions and possessions.

The Master of the Brunswick Diptych

The \textit{Brunswick Diptych}, the namepiece of the artist who painted it (Figs. 41a, 41b), is in the Herzog Anton Ulrich-Museum in Brunswick. The Master of the Brunswick Diptych was clearly under the influence of Geertgen tot

\textsuperscript{46} Levine, 175.
Sint Jans. A date of around 1490 seems most appropriate given the history of the painting uncovered by the research of R. van Luttervelt. This work differs from those discussed so far in several ways. It is not by an artist working in Bruges but is Dutch and was painted in Haarlem. The donor is not a layman but is a Carthusian monk. In format the work follows Memling's earlier Louvre and Munich diptychs which depict the donor, Virgin and Child, and attendant saints in full-length in a landscape. The Virgin and Child on the dexter panel are accompanied by St. Anne who has a book on her lap. The sinister panel includes the Carthusian donor, Hendrick from Haarlem, with St. Barbara. The figures kneel in the foreground in a garden. Behind a short wall we see a paved courtyard surrounded by a cloister. Behind the high wall into the cloister we see a landscape which stretches into the distance. On the reverse of the donor's panel in a niche is St. Bavo; the patron saint of Ghent and Haarlem.

The inclusion of St. Bavo corroborates the

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47 R. van Luttervelt, "Schilderijen met Karthuizers uit de late 15de en de vroege 16de eeuw, Oud Holland, 66, 1951, 75-92.

48 Luttervelt, 1951, 75-92.
identification of the Carthusian monk as Hendrick of Haarlem by Luttervelt based on his analysis of historical data. When Hendrick became prior of the Carthusian monastery near Geertruidenberg in 1490 he brought this diptych with him.\textsuperscript{49} We have discussed the Carthusian order briefly in connection with Philip the Bold's foundation of the Chartreuse of Champmol. In addition to the constant prayer in which the monks were engaged, the rules of the order stipulated a number of unique features which are important to our discussion of this painting.

The white cowl which Hendrick wears, with its distinctive bands at the sides, was worn only by a deacon at mass.\textsuperscript{50} This adds to the significance of the iconography of all paintings with Carthusians in them. For a viewer familiar with the rules of the Carthusians, this particular article of ecclesiastic clothing would have reminded them of the celebration of the mass.

One of the strictest orders, the Carthusians created a type of architecture which suited their distinctive needs. Carthusian monasteries were divided

\textsuperscript{49} Luttervelt, 1951, 77.

into three areas which reflect the lifestyles of the monks housed within. The monk's cloister consisted of twelve individual cells. Each monk emerged from his cell three times a day for communal prayers but remained within his cell, engaged in constant prayer, for the remainder of the time. On Sundays and feast days meals, lessons and meetings were held in communal locations like the refectory, the chapterhouse, the library, the church, and the prior's cell.\textsuperscript{51} Lastly, there was the area which housed the \textit{conversi} and \textit{donati} who aided the monks and saw to their needs with the outside world.\textsuperscript{52} The setting of the figures pictured in the Brunswick diptych is a Carthusian cloister and that the prior and the holy figures are depicted in one of the many garden plots which were planted inside of the cloister complex. The large courtyard behind the figures is probably the large cloister (\textit{claustrum maius}) with the distant landscape seen behind them. Perhaps this is a depiction of the cloister in Amsterdam where Hendrick was prior when the work was commissioned.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{51} W. Braunfels, \textit{Monasteries of Western Europe}, London, 1972, 11.

\textsuperscript{52} Braunfels, 111-124.

\textsuperscript{53} Luttervelt, 1951, 92.
As discussed in an earlier chapter, Carthusian prayers were thought to be efficacious for the soul's salvation by the dukes of Burgundy as well as many others.\footnote{See Braunfels, 117-8 for a list of other royal and urban patronages of Carthusian monasteries.} An interesting paradox is how the Carthusians, with their strict rules of poverty and sanctions against property owning reconciled this with the possession of luxurious images which included their own portraits. We know that Philip the Bold commissioned small devotional panels for each cell in the Chartreuse of Champmol, two of which survive today.\footnote{See Circle of Beaumetz, \textit{Calvary with a Carthusian}, Cleveland Museum of Art, and Jean de Beaumetz, \textit{Calvary with a Carthusian}, Paris, Musée de Louvre.} The Brunswick diptych was another such image that may have been given to Hendrick by the family that sponsored him as an aid to his prayers, in the hope that the work might direct those prayers more efficaciously to the aid of their souls.

The \textit{Anna Selbdritt} image on the dexter panel is one which we do not encounter elsewhere in this study but it is worthy of some discussion here. The three-figured group was very popular in Italy and Spain, and in sculpture in the North during the fourteenth and
fifteenth century. The image symbolizes the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin, a hotly debated concept which attained great popularity during this period. The garden in which the figures are placed may act as a reference to Mary, "Spotless, enclosed garden full of flowers," a description derived from immaculist writings. The Carthusians adopted the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception in 1333.

In the Brunswick diptych we find an example of a diptych created for a member of the clergy. Hendrick may have commissioned this work for himself, but one finds this difficult to believe due to the strict vows of poverty observed by the Carthusian order. The purpose of the work may have been to inspire his devotions and to remind him of his responsibilities to pray for the souls of those who supplied him with the painting. This was surely Philip the Bold's intention in the Calvary paintings he supplied to the Chartreuse of Champmol. Several devotional diptychs survive which

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57 Levi D'Anconna, 7 for full reference. This quote is attributed to Ambrosius Autpert, Bishop of St. Vincenzo of Benvenuto, (d. 778).

58 Levi D'Ancona, 10.
show Carthusian and Cistercian monks; however, these lie outside the scope of this dissertation. A study focussing only on these diptychs would be a welcome addition to the literature on both devotional diptychs and monastic practices during the late Middle Ages.

The diptychs discussed thus far are representative of the majority of devotional portrait diptychs. In the last decade of the fifteenth century and the first two decades of the sixteenth century, devotional diptychs conformed to either the full-length or half-length models with which this chapter has dealt.\textsuperscript{59}

\textbf{Jan Gossart and the Reformation}

The final portion of this history of the devotional portrait diptych will discuss the diptychs of Jan Gossart. Gossart's diptychs are fascinating as they represent both the culmination and the end of the devotional diptych in the history of art. Gossart perfected the form shortly before it fell completely out of favor and disappeared forever. It is within Gossart's \textit{oeuvre} that we find a summation of all the

\textsuperscript{59} E. Heller, \textit{Das altniederländische Stifterbild}, Ph.D., diss., University of Munich, 1976, provides a catalogue of all of the Early Netherlandish works which include donor portraits.
innovations in devotional portrait diptychs from Jan van Eyck through the end of the fifteenth century.

Gossart's *Doria Diptych* (Figs. 22a, 22b) was discussed above in our discussion of the *Virgin in a Church* of Jan van Eyck, as it contains one of the copies of that painting. The *Carondelet Diptych* (Fig. 12) in the Louvre has been mentioned as one of the exceptional diptychs that show the donor on the dexter wing. This discussion ends with a panel which is the dexter wing of the last diptych Gossart painted and marks the end of the history of the devotional portrait diptych.

Gossart most closely resembles the earliest painter of a devotional diptych, Jan van Eyck. Like van Eyck, Gossart worked for a courtly patron, Philip of Burgundy, until the latter's death in 1524. One of Philip the Good's many illegitimate offspring, Philip of Burgundy kept close ties with the ruling family who were kin. Philip of Burgundy also held important government offices in the Netherlands and eventually became the bishop of Utrecht. Such connections gave Gossart access not only to humanist thinkers but also to the art collections housed in

60 Friedländer, *E.N.P.*, vol. 8, 11.
Malines, Brussels, Bruges, Utrecht, and Middleburg, all of which affected his painting style.⁶¹ Both of Gossart's earliest diptychs were commissioned by wealthy patrons with court connections, much like Rogier's patrons.

The Diptych with Antonio Siciliano and St. Anthony in the Galleria Doria-Pamphili in Rome is one of the best documented diptychs we have. Antonio Siciliano was Chamberlain and equerry in the service of Maximilian Sforza of Milan. Siciliano visited Malines on business in 1513.⁶² At this time he could have met Gossart and commissioned this work; Gossart was probably in Malines at the time engaged in work on the St. Luke now in Prague.⁶³ As I speculated earlier, I believe that Jan van Eyck's Berlin Virgin in a Church was in the collection of Margaret of Austria in Malines at this time,⁶⁴ and would have provided the inspiration for Siciliano's commission.

The Doria diptych suggests one of two possible ways Jan van Eyck's original diptych might have looked.

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⁶² S. Herzog, 226.
⁶³ ibid.
⁶⁴ See second part of chapter 3.
In this case the donor is in a landscape, the other possibility is found in the Master of 1499's Antwerp and Ghent diptychs with the donor depicted in prayer in a bedroom (Figs. 21a, 21b, 24). Although it is impossible to know for certain, I believe that Jan van Eyck would have favored placing his donor in an interior and that Gossart's solution is his own invention. The depiction of the donor in a landscape probably reflects Siciliano's desire to possess a work that included several specialties of Northern painting that were well known in Italy. The verdant landscape which Siciliano and St. Anthony occupy, with its dramatic rocky background, is distinctly Northern in appearance. Jan van Eyck's fame in Italy is attested to by the writings of Vasari and the possession of a faithful copy of one of the Northern master's works would surely have been attractive to an Italian patron. The devotional portrait diptych is unknown in Italian art and this

65 Jan van Eyck never placed a donor in a landscape and I think he would have felt more comfortable placing two interior scenes next to one another. In addition, if the commissioner of Jan's original diptych was a member of the nobility, an interior setting would probably have been deemed more suitable to the individual's rank.

work would have been unique to Siciliano upon his return home. It is impossible to speculate on how Siciliano might have used the work but one suspects that it could not have differed too much from the way that Northern owners used their diptychs. Gossart was again in Malines in 1517 when he executed the Diptych of Jean Carondelet in the Louvre. The Carondelet diptych, like the Doria Diptych, was created for a foreign patron; a Frenchman. Carondelet was a native of Besançon, France. The painting was completed before Carondelet's departure with Charles V in June of 1517. As a member of the Grand Council of Philip of Burgundy, Carondelet was a powerful and wealthy participant in court activities. After Carondelet's return from Spain he became a member of Margaret of Austria's court in Malines. Among the many offices which Carondelet filled were those of provost of both St. Walburge in Furnes and St. Donation's in Bruges. Following the French tradition, Carondelet, is depicted on the dexter wing with the Virgin and Child on the sinister wing. Another very famous diptych, the Melun Diptych (Figs. 11a, 11b) painted by Jean Fouquet for

67 S. Herzog, diss., 8.

68 L. Gachard, "Jean Carondelet," Biographie Nationale de Belgique, III, 1866, 349.
Etienne Chevalier, also a Frenchman, shows the donor on the dexter wing. The Carondelet diptych provides another example of the French preference for the devotional portrait diptych form that appeared first in illuminated manuscripts.

Gossart's bust-length depictions of the subjects place the figures before a dark, simulated marble background while strong light from the right illuminates their features and throws them into sharp relief. Carondelet looks soberly to the right of the viewer with his hands pressed together in prayer and a serious yet vacant look on his face. The Virgin on the sinister wing has a similarly vacant look and vapid smile as she grasps her Child. The Christ Child, in contrast, violently turns away from his mother and gazes fixedly at Carondelet. The dynamism of the Child's pose is the only such element of the work.

The fact that Carondelet had this work completed before his departure on a long and possibly dangerous mission is significant. It is a small work and most likely was taken with the archdeacon on his voyage to Spain. The warnings against earthly vanity which decorate the frame and reverse were intended to stimulate his own devotions. The painting could even have been intended to act as a tomb monument in the
event of Carondelet's untimely demise. The possibility that this work did indeed accompany Carondelet is suggested by its small size and the fact that it is a diptych, a type specifically designed for portability. This work may also have been intended for a tomb in St. Donation in Bruges. Several of the diptychs we have examined were placed in this church and it seems to have been a very popular location for devotional portrait diptychs after the death of their owners who were either natives of Bruges or had strong connections to the town. One wishes that the church was still standing and that our records of its original appearance and contents were more complete.

The Louvre Carondelet diptych may have been Gossart's first experiment with the half-length diptych. After Philip of Burgundy's death in 1524, Gossart seems to have become the head of a large workshop which produced great numbers of Madonna panels. A number of these were probably joined to

69 Friedman, 133.

70 S. Herzog, 135 and 155f. Herzog finds evidence for an atelier run by Gossart in the marked increase in the numbers of portraits created by Gossart after Philip's death in 1525. Several hands have been detected but the identification of specific personalities among workshop members is very difficult as documents are scarce.
portrait panels at a later date to create devotional diptychs. The number of surviving images suggest that the market for them must have been very strong.\footnote{Friedländer, E.N.P., vol. 8, Plates 31-34. A brief glance through these plentiful images will show how popular they must have been.} The sheer number of these images and their repetitive quality eliminates the need for discussion of each here. An examination of the Madonna wing of what was probably Gossart's last diptych is representative of them all and we end this chapter with the \textit{Virgin and Child in a Landscape} from the Cleveland Museum of Art (Fig. 43).\footnote{Cleveland Museum of Art 72.47.}

The Cleveland panel was painted in 1531, the year before Gossart's death. This date appears on the armrest in the lower left hand corner along with the artist's signature.\footnote{W. S. Gibson, "Jan Gossart de Mabuse: Madonna and Child in a Landscape," \textit{Bulletin of the Cleveland Museum of Art}, 61, 1974, 287.} Although the landscape behind the figures was probably painted by the Master of the Female Half-Lengths,\footnote{Gibson, "Jan Gossart," 295.} the monumental Virgin and the robust Christ Child were surely painted by Gossart himself. That this work was once the dexter wing of a
devotional diptych is clear from the composition of the Virgin who tilts her head to the viewer's left as a counter balance to the Child who leans to the viewer's right. Together they form an arrow which strongly directs the viewer's gaze to the now missing sinister wing. The Child twists in a contrapposto reminiscent of Michelangelo's Bruges Madonna infant as he offers a branch of red currants to the absent donor. The state of preservation of the panel is excellent and happily the work still has its original frame with its important inscriptions.

The inscription, TUA MATER CONTEMPLATIO NOSTRI SIT RECONCILIATIO, has been translated as "Mother, may your contemplation be our reconciliation." Gibson has interpreted this as "...a prayer to the Virgin asking her to intercede with Christ so that we may achieve salvation through His sacrifice." The Virgin's unusual pose, with her head resting on her hand, was clearly intended to signify the Virgin's contemplation of the coming sacrifice of her son in a more explicit

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76 Gibson, "Jan Gossart," 292.

77 Gibson, "Jan Gossart," 294.
manner than the dolorous expressions of Rogier's or Memling's Madonnas. This prayer and the desire for salvation was the rationale for the commissioning of all the devotional portrait diptychs this study has included, but here we fortunately find these wishes spelled out on the frame of the painting itself. This desire and the theological basis upon which the commissioners of these works may have formed their belief will be discussed in the final chapter of this thesis.

After the innovations of Memling, the devotional diptych changed very little until the third decade of the sixteenth century when the diptych's popularity waned, until this point, however, its popularity was remarkable. With Gossart we find the wealthy bourgeoisie commissioning the final examples of devotional portrait diptychs. After Gossart's death the times and the temper of politics and devotion underwent a change. The devotional portrait diptych was one of the accoutrements of an earlier time that did not make the transition and was swept away as a superfluous aid to devotion.
IV. Purpose and Meaning of the Devotional Portrait Diptych

a. Funerary Functions of the Devotional Diptych

In 1915 Frank Jewett Mather wrote that he believed,

that nearly all of the familiar class of paintings which represent a donor, in bust or half length, with a patron saint, both invariably of portrait type, were originally tomb pictures. Generally these were diptychs, the panel with the donor folding over a half-length Madonna and Child.¹

In closing his seminal paper Mather stressed that, "Doubtless further study, especially inspection of the backs of half-length portrait panels, would reveal many more of this mortuary class."² Throughout our discussion of the history of the devotional portrait diptych I have made scattered references to the use of particular devotional diptychs as funerary objects. In the first part of this chapter I will investigate the idea that these objects were intended by their original owners as objects to stimulate private devotion during their lifetime and as tomb decorations that would stimulate the prayers of those who would view the paintings after the owner's death.

Mather's article, in which he identified three

¹ Mather, 261.
² Mather, 272.
diptychs in American collections which were originally intended as tomb paintings, remained largely ignored until a recent article by J. Mundy. Mundy begins with a lengthy quote from the last paragraph of Mather's article and commences the difficult task of finding, reproducing, and discussing the reverses of fifteenth-century Renaissance portraits. Mundy links the use of porphyry with funerary purposes from the time of Antiquity through the Renaissance. Romans had used the red stone frequently for mortuary purposes and this tradition passed to Renaissance painters and sculptors. The stone's iconography seems to have become more complex after its adoption by Christian artists. Its red color soon came to symbolize the salvatory blood of Christ and thus stood not only for Christ's death and the death of the faithful, but more significantly the promise of resurrection and salvation.

The first part of this chapter will focus on the identification of diptychs that were probably intended as funerary monuments and the connection between this function and the doctrine of Purgatory. This

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3 Mundy, 37-43.

4 Mundy, 37.
discussion will deepen our understanding of the motivation of the Renaissance patrons of these images and how their desires were affected by their belief in the system of afterlife promoted by the Church.

Although Mundy discusses several Renaissance portraits, both Northern and Southern, which utilize simulated porphyry for mortuary symbolism on the reverses of the panels, the only devotional diptych that he includes is the Master of 1499’s Antwerp Diptych of Christiaan de Hondt (Fig. 21). The reverse of the panel with the portrait of the Abbot de Hondt was, like the front, painted by the Master of 1499.\(^5\) When the 33rd Abbot of Furnes, Robert Leclercq, had the back of this diptych repainted for his own use in 1509 he chose to have the later artist paint his portrait over the simulated porphyry, using it as an abstract backdrop (Fig. 44). That the Abbot wished to retain the simulated porphyry on his devotional painting is an indication that this was significant for the patron.

Jan van Eyck’s knowledge of the symbolic quality of porphyry is shown by his use of it on the reverses of not only the Berlin Virgin in a Church but also his

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\(^5\) Mundy mistakenly states that the portrait of Leclercq is on the back of the Virgin’s panel, rather than the reverse of De Hondt’s panel as is the case. Mundy, 41.
Tymotheos (London, National Gallery) and the Portrait of Margaret van Eyck (Bruges, Groeningemuseum). Both portrait panels include simulated porphyry in a conscious emulation of the antique and as a memento mori device. Jan's depiction of simulated porphyry on the back of the Berlin Virgin in a Church panel must have been intended to serve a similar function: reminding the painting's original owner of the inevitability of death and the importance of leading a sinless life. If Philip the Good was indeed the owner, as I have proposed, then the connection between devotional portrait diptychs and funerary markers would have been inherent in the form from its painted inception. This symbolism would also have been familiar to the majority of the second generation of patrons who ordered devotional diptychs, the members of the Burgundian court who commissioned paintings from Rogier van der Weyden.

The significance of porphyry may be akin to the symbolism found in the simulated stone parapets and

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6 Mundy, 40, notes Bartolommeo Fazio's 1456 assertion that Jan van Eyck had learned a great deal about painting from Pliny's writings. Pliny discusses the symbolic significance of porphyry just before his discussion of the art of portraiture. Whether Jan had actually read Pliny is another matter. Surely members of the court of Philip the Good were familiar with these writings.
frames used by both Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden. Colin Eisler wisely wrote that,

The Eyckian frame has a reliquary quality, and...the physical enclosure of the work of art was in part deliberately analogous to the sacred container. This factor...affected the 'anti-narrative' isolation of the image throughout the fifteenth-century since the painting becomes a relic and its frame the reliquary."

Similarly the parapet motif used by Jan and his Italian contemporaries have been seen as a device which de-emphasizes the picture plane.

The ledge establishes the...viewer's relation to the Madonna and Child, permitting the intimacy between the sacred beings and the worshipper that is basic to the conception of the image of devotion. The parapet is the meeting place of the two realms, sacred and worldly.\(^7\)

The diptych by Hans Memling in Chicago provides an interesting example because it retains its original frame (Fig. 36). Unfortunately, the frame around the Virgin and Child's panel has been stripped but the donor's panel still has its original layer of paint. Here we find that the frame of the sinister wing "literally imitates the watershed window frame used in Late Gothic architecture in central and Northern

\(^7\) Eisler, Review, 187.

\(^8\) Goffen, 499.
Europe."⁹ Memling painted the donor's sleeve and prayerbook as if it stretched onto the frame/window ledge thus creating a trompe l'oeil effect. In so doing, the separation between the viewer and the donor by the picture plane is broken down.

With the role of the parapet and frame defined, we find that these elements of Renaissance paintings were important and, like the enclosed panels themselves, resonant with religious symbolism. It is unfortunate that so few paintings have come down to us with their original frames, as many of these frames surely included inscriptions which emphasized the donor's concern with the placement of the work and the salvation of his soul.

Although later devotional portrait diptychs include framing devices or parapets, the earliest diptychs by Rogier van der Weyden today contain no such devices. Ringbom has proposed that these works may originally have had elaborate frames which have not come down to us.¹⁰ The Portrait of a Man from Upton

⁹ R. R. Brettell and Starling, S., The Art of the Edge: European Frames 1300-1900, Chicago, 1986, 36. The authors believe that before the dexter frame was stripped, the drapery from the sleeve of the Christ Child, like that of the donor, would have been continued illusionistically over the frame.

¹⁰ Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 46.
House still has a very elaborate frame (Fig. 30).\textsuperscript{11} Another image which retains its early, elaborate frame, is the South Netherlandish Portrait of a Canon Regular which is today in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten in Antwerp (Fig. 45).\textsuperscript{12} This image is unusual for retaining its extremely ornate frame but also because it is one of the few examples of a devotional diptych in which the donor occupies the dexter wing; the Virgin and Child might have been placed on the sinister wing.\textsuperscript{13} The simplicity of the painted composition of this diptych may reflect the monastic surroundings for which it was presumably intended. Both of these works provide a good indication of the elaborate frames with which Rogier's patrons probably displayed and used their images.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, Goffen explained the use of the half-length format as "the

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{11} The frame is discussed as dating from the fifteenth century by M. C. Bearsted, Catalogue of Pictures and Porcelain at Upton House, Banbury, London, 1950.
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\textsuperscript{12} Ringbom, Icon to Narrative, 46, n. 34.
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\textsuperscript{13} Perhaps this monk was French and accustomed to diptychs with this arrangement. It is also possible that another image appeared on the sinister wing and that is why this image was not included among the diptychs discussed in the chapter on the development of the diptych.
\end{flushright}
commemoration of the individual, combined at its most basic level with the hope for eternal life."\textsuperscript{14} This is a critically important aspect of devotional diptychs. An aspect which is especially emphatic in diptychs which include symbolic framing devices, memento mori images, and funerary inscriptions which underscore the painting's intended function as a funerary monument.

Of the three paintings Mather identified as tomb paintings one is a devotional portrait diptych.\textsuperscript{15} This is the Diptych of Josse van der Burch in the Fogg Art Museum. (Fig. 42). The artists who painted this relatively large diptych included several inscriptions which today aid us in establishing the original mortuary intentions of the patron. A banderole twists out of the donor's praying hands and reads, "ME CULPIS SOLUTUM MITEM FAC ET CA[STUM]". Eisler identified this as an excerpt from a prayer in the vespers of the

\textsuperscript{14} Goffen, 494.

\textsuperscript{15} Mather, 262. Of the two other works discussed one is identified by Mather as a diptych but I doubt this reconstruction. This is the portrait of a prelate with St. Jerome in the Johnson Collection in Philadelphia. The donor's placement on the dexter wing makes it very unlikely that this was once a diptych. Possibly it was the left wing of a triptych. The other painting was originally the wing of a funerary triptych.
Commune Festorum Beatae Mariae Virginis. The entire verse reads:

Virgo singulâris,  
Inter omnes mitis  
Nos, culpis solutos,  
Mites fac et castos.  

On the back of the donor's panel is an extensive inscription, added by his son after Josse's death which reads:

Before this lie buried Josse van der Burch, formerly counsellor of the Roman King and his son Philip, archduke of Austria, duke of Burgundy, count of Flanders, etc., and commissioned as receiver of the Veurnambacht (Furnes district) for twenty nine years, who died on the fourth February 1496, and Miss Catherine van der Mersch, his first wife, who died the twentieth of May in the year 1476. Pray for their souls.

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16 Eisler, New England, 18.

17 Ibid. "Unique Virgin, Pure among all, Make us who are soiled with sin, chaste and pure." Thanks to Stephen Campbell for this translation.

18 This is translated and published in full by Eisler in his entry on this painting, New England, 19. The original inscription reads:

Hier voren liggehen begraven Joos van der Burch, wilen raed konijncx vanden rommschen Rijcke ende zijns zoons Philippus, erdshertogh van Oostrijcke, hertoghen van Bourgognen, graven van Vlanderen, etc., ende ghecommiteerd ontfanghere van Veurnambocht XXIX jaren, die starf den vierden dach van Sporkele int jare MCCCC zesendetnoghentich

JK (sheild) JK

ende joncvrouwe Katheline vander
Eisler proposes that this diptych, the original state of which is complicated due to later additions and overpainting, was originally used as a private devotional painting.\textsuperscript{19} The later addition of the epitaph and coats of arms made the work suitable as a tomb marker. The fact that the work was owned by the son of Josse van der Burch after his father's death and that he understood the work's possible mortuary use is important. Such possibilities may long have been inherent in the form.

An isolated image of a human skull in a niche is unknown before the fifteenth century and some of the earliest examples of this motif, which would become so popular in the sixteenth century, are found on the backs of devotional diptychs.\textsuperscript{20} The earliest example known to me of a diptych that includes a skull on its reverse is by the Bruges master of 1480. The Portrait of a Man (Fig. 46, Mint Museum of Art, North Carolina) was the sinister wing of a devotional diptych. The

\begin{quote}
Mersch, zijn eerst wijf, die starf den XX dach van maye int jaer MCCCC zesendetseventich. Bid over de zeilen
\end{quote}

\textsuperscript{19} Eisler, \textit{New England}, 20.

donor panel closely follows the format established by Hans Memling in the Diptych of Martin van Nieuwenhove and followed by other Bruges artists. In this format the bourgeois patron appears in a domestic interior with the Virgin and Child placed in another part of the same chamber on the adjoining panel. The resemblance of the Master of 1480's donor panel to these other diptychs is evidence that it was once half of a devotional diptych which included the Virgin and Child.

The window behind the young man is opened to reveal a city-scape, possibly a view of Bruges. The window itself includes a coat of arms in the stained glass. This coat of arms seems to belong to the Van der Bogaerde family and the faintly inscribed "Pieter" on the reverse of the panel may be the name of the depicted member of this family.²¹

The reverse is painted in grisaille and depicts a skull in a brickwork niche. The Latin inscription beneath the skull reads: "Why do you, mortal being, raise your head? You will die, too and you will be as

²¹ Mint Museum of Art: Guide to the Collection, Charlotte, North Carolina, 1985, 21. The museum's other suggestion is that this may be a man named Petrus Toen who resided in Bruges at this time and served as a member of the Bourg court. The museum seems more certain of the first identification.
bald as this skull, 1480." This inscription is typical for an image intended as a vanitas. The viewer is urged to shun the trappings of earthly life and to concentrate on the inevitability of death and to work toward eternal salvation. An inscription of this sort would seem to indicate that this diptych was intended as a funerary marker. Additionally, it should be emphasized that the inscription seems to address not only the owner but the viewer. It is clear that the donor knew that this work would be displayed publicly and had the inscription painted accordingly.

A second, far more famous example of this type of diptych is Jan Gossart's 1517 Diptych of Jean Carondelet in the Louvre. Around the portrait of Carondelet is an inscription which reads:


22 ibid. The original Latin is "CVR HOMO MORTALIS CAPVT EXTRVIS AT MORIERIS EN VERTEX TALIS-SIT MODO CALVUSERIS." The underlined letters are painted in red and the rest are black. The underlined text probably formed an additional message when properly deciphered but this has not been established. Additional information on the painting was furnished by the museum and interested readers should consult a "Report to the Martin Cannon Family Foundation, Inc.," by C. M. Michalove, in the curatorial files of the Mint Museum, for a detailed discussion of the painting.

de.Besançon.en.son.eage.de.48a.". Along the bottom it continues, "Fait l'an 1517.". The inscription on the frame of the sinister wing reads, "Mediatrix.Nostra.que.es.post.Deum.Spere.sola.tuo.Filio.me.representa," or, "You, who are our mediatrix and only hope before God, present me to your son.".

Gossart's signature, "Johannes.Melbodie.Pingebat" runs along the bottom of the frame.

The reverse of the donor's panel shows Carondelet's coat of arms suspended from a hook by a leather strap within an illusionistic niche (Fig. 47). His initials are interlaced behind the coat of arms and his motto "MATURA" is painted to look as if it is carved into the base of the niche. Far more interesting is the reverse of the Virgin's panel which shows a human skull in a niche. A banderole is suspended in the niche which quotes St. Jerome, "He easily disdains everything, who knows at all times that he is about to die."²⁴ Again Carondelet's interlaced initials appear and his motto is illusionistically depicted below.

The significance of the vanitas motif is spelled

²⁴ "Facile Contemnit omni qui se semper cogitat morturum. Hieronymus, 1517." Thanks to Stephen Campbell for this translation.
out with particular care in this example. In addition, the role of the devotional diptych in aiding the owner in attaining eternal salvation is reinforced by the inscription which surrounds the frame of the Virgin and her Son. The use of the devotional diptych as an object toward which pleas for intercession were directed is not merely evident in the format of the work but also in the words inscribed on it. One wonders how many other diptychs originally carried such inscriptions and how necessary these inscriptions were deemed in furthering the viewer's understanding of the work's purpose.

The above discussion highlights one of the more fascinating elements of the later devotional portrait diptych. The dual purpose of such a devotional object makes it unique. The donor would commission the work and use it for his daily devotions both at home and when traveling. When the diptych was open and in use, the donor would be faced with a self-refential aid, stimulating his devotions. When the diptych was closed, the memento mori device would be exposed to remind the viewer not only of his own mortality by unsubtle inference but also displaying the image which was to hang over his tomb after his passing. I believe that a significant number of devotional diptychs were
intended as tomb monuments. The thought of praying for one's salvation before the object which was to mark one's tomb is astoundingly powerful. In the final part of this thesis we will discuss the means by which salvation was achieved and the role of donor portraits in this pursuit.
IV. Purpose and Meaning

b. Donor Portraits and the Doctrine of Purgatory

The function of the portraits in the devotional diptychs can be properly understood only after we have considered donor portraits in general. Objects from Early Christianity through the Renaissance have included portraits of individuals who have offered these gifts to the Church or wished to have the objects placed near their graves. These portraits have been referred to as "donor portraits" or "devotional figures." The presence of the individual may imply that he has donated the object in which he is represented.¹

The fact that numerous late medieval and Renaissance patrons had themselves included both in works of art intended for their own devotion and in works for public display is a significant and vexing problem. This chapter will examine one of the most important concerns of these patrons, personal salvation, and the means by which this was achieved.

History of the Donor Portrait

¹ B. G. Lane, The Development of the Medieval Devotional Figure, Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1970, 2-3.
From the beginning of Christianity the faithful had themselves depicted on objects intended for use at Votive Masses.\(^2\) In so doing the worshipper displayed his participation in the eucharistic sacrifice. By having himself shown actively bestowing a gift on a sacred personage the donor "could be assured of the recognition of his even more personal participation in the sacrifice."\(^3\) Often-cited examples of some of the earliest public donor portraits are those of the Emperor Justinian and Empress Theodora in San Vitale in Ravenna. Representation of the Emperor and Empress in the apse of the church is appropriate both politically and legally, but they are also intended as perpetual participants in the offertory procession of the Byzantine liturgy.\(^4\) Thus we find that establishing their presence at an important religious moment was one of the donors' concerns during the Early Christian and Early Byzantine period.

A different and well established kind of significance is seen in Early Christian catacomb paintings. The deceased are shown presenting gifts to

\(^2\) Lane, 24.

\(^3\) ibid.

the Virgin in an effort to insure their salvation.
While it is not possible to ascertain if the deceased
requested the creation of these images or if faithful
relatives had them painted as commemoration for the
dead, their function as a salvatory image is certain.\(^5\)
Panofsky described these early tomb monuments as
"prospective" in nature, anticipating the eventual
salvation of the soul of the deceased.\(^6\) This is the
second common explanation for the appearance of donor
portraits. Later examples of this are the multiple
sculpted and stained glass portraits of Abbot Suger
throughout the church of St. Denis. Suger's offering
is the church itself and these portraits are often
accompanied by inscriptions pleading for his
salvation.\(^7\) Thus we find that until the twelfth
century the two most common motivations for the

\(^5\) Lane, 38-39 gives several examples of these. See
Orans with Virgin and Child, Catacomb of St. Priscilla,
end of third century; W. F. Volbach, Early Christian Art,
New York, 1961, Pl. 8.; Veneranda with St. Petronilla,
Catacomb of Domitilla, after 356; G. Wilpert, Roma
Sotteranea: Le Piture Delle Catacombe Romane, Rome, III,
1903, Pl. 213; and Turtura in the Catacomb of Commodilla,
Wilpert, IV, Pl. 136.


\(^7\) An example of one such inscriptions is, "Good
King, Deign to have mercy on dutiful Suger. From the
cross protect me, Toward the cross direct me." This and
others are reproduced and translated by Lane, 84, and n.
2.
appearance of the donor portrait were first, participation in the offertory Mass and second, insurance for salvation of the soul after death.

In nearly all works of art which include a donor portrait the patron is shown as a priant. This is the pose in which the donor is represented kneeling with both palms pressed together in a gesture of prayer. This pose is typical of the vast majority of donor portraits and is symbolic of hope for salvation when seen together with intercessory figures. The motif of the kneeling supplicant soul has its origins in images of the Last Judgment where the risen souls kneel before Christ and the saints.\(^8\) The universality of this pose would have enabled the illiterate and the ignorant to understand its significance since it was the position which they themselves adopted each time they prayed.

The history of the priant pose was still recognized during the late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. During the eleventh century the priant commonly represented a supplicant soul at the feet of

\(^8\) H. s'Jacob, \textit{Idealism and Realism: A study of sepulchral symbolism}, Leiden, 1954, 132-33, In the Early Christian period the soul was often depicted with two intercessory saints. Theodosia in her tomb in Antinoe is presented to Christ by both the Virgin and St. Collythus. The priant pose survived in art up to the Renaissance by its regular appearance in various media throughout the centuries.
Christ awaiting the initial judgment immediately after death and was usually escorted by one or more holy intercessors. Before the tenth century figures are seen kneeling but with their arms outstretched in an orant pose. From 1200 on, the image was gradually changed from the priant kneeling before Christ to supplication before the Virgin as popularity of the Marian Cult increased. Humility of the soul was originally stressed by diminutive size and by isolation from the divine by architectural motifs. Eventually a greater intimacy developed and priants were depicted in the same scale as the other figures and placed before scenes from the lives of Christ or the Virgin.

Beginning in the early thirteenth century, donor portraits occurred with greater frequency and in places where they had not been depicted previously. However, until the fourteenth century, depictions of individuals while they were still living remained exceptional. The popularity of donor portraits

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9 s'Jacob, 133.

10 s'Jacob, 144. The direct descendent of this image can be seen in the common motif of one or more of the Magi genuflecting before the Christ Child in scenes of the Nativity.

11 ibid.

12 De Winter, diss., 749.
steadily increased throughout Europe during the Middle Ages and continued into the Renaissance. Patronage was initially a privilege of the nobility and the clergy; however, burgerers and some members of the lower social classes, as their numbers and wealth grew, also began to commission paintings and sculptures which included their own likenesses. Three common explanations have been offered for the appearance of donor portraits during the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance. First, the patrons desired social prestige and including their own likeness furthered this concern; secondly, they wanted to display their piety to the public; and lastly, they wanted to legitimize their public office. It has also been proposed by Craig Harbison that the donors are depicted in such a way as to convince the viewer that the donors are having visions of the scenes beside which they are represented. He associates the ways in which donors are depicted with the vision of Emperor Augustine as well as with the teachings of the Devotio Moderna and their increased emphasis on emotional devotions. A

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13 W. Prevenier and Blockmans, W., The Burgundian Netherlands, Antwerp, 1985, 331.

recent article by Botvinick elaborates on Harbison's "vision" theory by claiming that the donors are represented with the visions which they had while they were on a pilgrimage to a holy site.\(^\text{15}\) The author believes that this type of depiction places the viewer in the position of competing with the donor for access to his vision and that the donor's supremacy is indicated by the presence of a patron saint or additional figures with whom the donor/pilgrim appears.

Many factors may have motivated the practice. However, one of the most important factors was the ever present concern of medieval patrons; the salvation of their souls, and the attainment of an eternal life in Heaven; this was, in fact, a major impetus for the inclusion of donor's portraits. The development of Purgatory, moreover, was an important factor in the sudden increase and the changes which we find in medieval and Renaissance donor portraits.

**The Doctrine of Purgatory**

A correlation exists between the popularization of

Purgatory, a theological conception which flowered during the last third of the twelfth century, and the increased popularity of donor portraits during the late Middle Ages. It is possible to determine the stimulus which the doctrine of Purgatory offered for the creation of these works. Purgatory is best defined as, a place or condition of temporal punishment for those who, departing this life in God's grace, are not entirely free from venial faults, or have not fully paid the satisfaction due to their transgressions.¹⁶

This modern Catholic conception does not differ from the medieval conception of Purgatory. With the acceptance of a place or condition known as Purgatory where souls would suffer as in Hell, yet had the hope of release to join the Heavenly Elect, the earlier binary system of an afterlife of Heaven and Hell became ternary. Possible salvation existed for those who died repentant, yet were not free of sin. Most Christians included themselves among the members of this group and the doctrine rapidly became tremendously popular.

According to Jaques Le Goff, the concept of Purgatory as a specific site with specific physical and spiritual parameters, and, most important to his argument, a specific name by which it was referred to, ¹⁶

did not exist before about 1170. The invention of Purgatory had a drastic impact on medieval ideas about life and death. Lay people who had committed sins could now affect their own destiny. The establishment of an intermediate area between Heaven and Hell where souls could perform penance which they had not completed on earth gave entirely new connotations to the afterlife. As Le Goff writes,

This belief and its associated practices, which required the intervention of the church, in particular for the Eucharistic sacrifice, and which afforded the church the benefits of alms and other gifts, helped to tighten its control over the living, who wished to avail themselves of its supposed power to intervene on behalf of the dead.

17 J. Le Goff, *The Birth of Purgatory*, trans. A. Goldhammer, Chicago, 1984, 135. A. E. Bernstein argues that Le Goff's approach "seems unnecessarily strict" and that beginning with the writings of Augustine a less cohesive yet distinct conception of a "third place" had existed. Le Goff examines the origins of Purgatory, yet does not declare Purgatory formally "born" until the word "purgatorium" itself is used as a noun. For the purposes of this study our consideration of Purgatory begins at the time when these ideas coalesce between 1170 and 1200; see Bernstein's review of Le Goff's "La Naissance du Purgatoire," in *Speculum*, 59, 1984, 179-183. B. P. McGuire argues, I believe correctly, that Purgatory "existed in one form or another virtually from the beginnings of Christianity"; however, my purpose here is to define Purgatory and its effect on works of art rather than distinguishing the finer points of the doctrine, a pursuit which seems better left to historians of religion. See McGuire's "Purgatory, the Communion of Saints, and Medieval Change," *Viator*, 20, 1989, 61-84.

18 Le Goff, 135.
Thus not only was Purgatory beneficial to the spiritual well-being of the laity but it was readily supported by the clergy. The popularity of Purgatory grew and spread rapidly, and images of Purgatory began to appear in thirteenth century Books of Hours and paintings. The doctrine of Purgatory was preached to the laity from the pulpit in sermons through exempla. These lessons about Purgatory frequently included references to the efficacy of prayers and masses to free those suffering purgatorial punishments. According to Thomas of Chobham in his instruction book for confessors, written before 1215:

Mass is celebrated for the living and for the dead, but for the dead doubly, because the sacraments of the altar are petitions for the living, thanksgivings for the saints, and propitiations for those in Purgatory and result in the remission of their punishment.  

Many of these exempla extolled the intercessory power of the Virgin. One such exemplum by Peter Damian of Ravenna, written about 1170, tells of a woman who sees her very devout godmother praying at their parish church on the feast of the Assumption of Mary. The woman approaches her godmother, who has been dead

19 Le Goff, 175.
20 Le Goff, 178.
for a year, and the defunct reveals that she has been tortured since her death for a sin committed in her youth which she failed to recall and for which she failed to do penance. Thanks to the intercession of the Virgin, she has just been freed and has stopped to give praise to Mary before moving to her new eternal abode in Heaven. Such exempla reinforced the growing belief that almost everyone, including members of the clergy, would have to spend some time in Purgatory having their sins purged by fire.

Purgatory was the span of time after death and before the eternal reward in Heaven. Once a soul's entrance into Purgatory was established, following an initial judgment immediately after death, admission to Heaven became simply a matter of time and the amount of sin to be expiated. Medieval depictions of death often show good and bad angels battling for possession of the soul. Those seen in the company of the good angels are the elect souls, as are those in Purgatory, and they are ultimately to be saved. It should be pointed out that even those souls rescued at death by a good angel might have to serve some time in Purgatory.

21 ibid.

22 Le Goff, 211.
This is clearly illustrated in the Death Scene illumination from the *Rohan Hours* dated between 1418 and 1425, (Fig. 48, Paris, Bibliothèque National, lat. 9471). In this illumination, which precedes the Office of the Dead, the defunct is laying on the ground of a graveyard. God the Father, and Son, as evidenced by his cruciform halo inscribed with the words, JESUS NAZARENUS REX JUDEORUM, assumes the role of the Judge. This enormous figure looks on as the Archangel Gabriel and the Devil wrestle over the helpless soul of the deceased. From the mouth of the dead man emerges a scroll which reads, "Into thy hands I commend my spirit: Thou has redeemed me, O Lord, the God of truth." God the Father answers in his own scroll which reads, "Do penitence for thy sins; on the Judgment Day thou shalt be with me."

Enguerrand Charonton's painting, *The Coronation of the Virgin* (Fig. 49, Villeneuve-lez-Avignon, Musée Municipal de l'Hospice, 1453) shows how the system of Purgatory was envisioned. In this image a tiny clerical donor appears before the Crucifixion and the

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24 Translated by Porcher, 30.
seven pilgrimage churches of Rome, whose importance for the attaining of indulgences has been described by other authors, appear in the distance. One saved soul is shown departing from a fiery Purgatory, thus demonstrating the efficaciousness of prayer for souls in Purgatory while the unfortunate consigned to Hell remain eternally in their own fiery realm.

**Indulgences**

A brief explanation of indulgences is necessary at this point. The punishment which the soul must endure in Purgatory is remitted or shortened by the application of an indulgence. Guilt for the sin must already have been forgiven by God for an indulgence to be effective. Indulgences are derived from the superabundant merits of Christ and the saints which make up the Treasury of the Church. From this treasury indulgences are drawn and applied to the living and to the souls in Purgatory who may no longer attain them

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25 H. Miedema, "Die 'Mirabilia urbis Romae' in den Niederlanden" Quaerendo, 18, 1988, 278-285 is one of the best discussions of the popularity of these indulgences.

26 Le Goff 133-53, discusses the torments of Purgatory as it develops and its eventual definition as a realm of tortures like those of Hell.
themselves. Because the Church has no jurisdiction over the souls in Purgatory, indulgences are made available to them through suffrages, petitions to God to consider indulgenced works and mitigate or shorten Purgatorial sufferings.\(^\text{27}\)

Rosary prayers, which became popular during the late Middle Ages, were connected to a strictly organized system of indulgences.\(^\text{28}\) Rosary guilds posthumously enrolled the deceased family members of guild members so the indulgences earned by guild members could be applied to those who suffered in Purgatory.\(^\text{29}\) Other guilds and confraternities showed concern for the afterlife and commissioned works, such as stained glass windows, in hopes of attaining God's mercy.\(^\text{30}\) Typically the commissions given by

\(^{27}\) *The Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, 783-789.


\(^{29}\) J. D. Bangs, *Cornelis Engebrechtsz.'s Leiden*, Assen, 1979, 58.

\(^{30}\) E. Mâle, *L'art religieux de la fin du Moyen Age*, Paris, 1922, p. 162, gives the example of a stained glass window given to the church of the Madelienne in 1506 by the goldsmiths of Troyes. The inscription on the window reads, "The goldsmiths, out of devotion to St. Eligius, gave this window in the hope of gaining remission of their sins and complete pardon...may they receive the peace of God in Paradise for this good work."
institutions involved the glorification of their patron saint. In appealing to their saint they were pleading with their most immediate intercessor with Christ.

Prayers for the Dead and Wills

Church doctrine established that once the soul's sins were purged it would assume its rightful position among the Blessed without having to await the Last Judgment.\(^{31}\) Accordingly a system developed which allowed the living to help the dead with their penance and thus shorten their Purgatorial time. The practice of prayers for the dead was based on a belief that the sufferings of a soul in Purgatory could be shortened by Masses and by the prayers of those on Earth.\(^{32}\) In the Middle Ages the role of the individual in achieving his own salvation was realized and taken advantage of as never before.\(^{33}\)

New awareness of the importance of the moment of

\(^{31}\) Le Goff, 292.

\(^{32}\) K. Cohen, *Metamorphosis of a Death Symbol*, Los Angeles, 1973, 62. Mc Guire, 62, explains that this belief also helped to institutionalize the long established belief that it is good to pray for the souls of the dead.

death arose because it was imperative to have confessed and taken the sacrament before dying, as seen in the elaborate preparations for death taken by medieval laymen.\textsuperscript{34} To die without confession and repentance and with a mortal sin on one's conscience would inevitably lead to condemnation to an eternity in Hell.\textsuperscript{35}

Only after the forgiveness of sin could the punishment due to it be remitted. Thus it was not the alms nor indeed any external work that here determined whether or not anyone was worthy of an indulgence, but the contrite disposition, the earnest turning away from sin.\textsuperscript{36}

Bonds between the living and the dead were implicit in the idea of Purgatory as well as in the way these bonds could be used in suffrages, the pious gestures of the faithful on behalf of souls in

\textsuperscript{34} Le Goff, 230.

\textsuperscript{35} J. Sumption, \textit{Pilgrimage}, Totowa, New Jersey, 1975, 144, describes how one could not receive an indulgence without contrite confession first. A fourteenth century book of miracles tells of a pilgrim who was struck to the ground when he attempted to kiss the sarcophagus of a saint. He had travelled to acquire the indulgence given for the visit and suffered this punishment because he had not first confessed.

\textsuperscript{36} N. Paulus, \textit{Indulgences as a Social Factor in the Middle Ages}, New York, 1922, p. 15.
Purgatory.\textsuperscript{37} Four types of suffrages were thought most effective for freeing souls from the Purgatorial fires; these were the prayers of relatives and friends, alms, Masses, and fasting.\textsuperscript{38} Souls in Purgatory had several places among the living to turn to for help as is revealed in the exempla of those souls who did so. First in importance were their blood relatives. Secondly, they appealed to their spouses and lastly to their former employers.\textsuperscript{39} Genealogy became popular as people searched for their relatives in order to pray for their salvation. The souls of those freed from Purgatory would intercede on behalf of the living who had helped them attain blessedness. "It is advantageous to pray for souls in Purgatory, because, once they reach Paradise, they will pray for those who have helped them out."\textsuperscript{40} The reciprocal nature of the bond between the living and the dead was an integral

\textsuperscript{37} Le Goff, 292, and Sumption, 297, discuss pilgrimages made vicariously, after the death of an individual. People often left money in their wills for a pilgrimage to be taken on their behalf by family members.

\textsuperscript{38} Le Goff, 293.

\textsuperscript{39} ibid.

\textsuperscript{40} Le Goff, 319. This is in reference to the Beguines who were exhorted by their preachers to pray for the souls in Purgatory.
part of Purgatory's popularity.

In earlier centuries churches had kept Death Rolls with names of the deceased. Wills also began to reflect the new theological concepts.\footnote{Le Goff, 326.} In thirteenth century wills Purgatory appears very rarely, but during the fourteenth century it is mentioned quite frequently.\footnote{ibid.} During the later Middle Ages the stipulations which people left in their wills for their funerals and for the Masses to be said for them after their death became intricate and detailed as the obsession with Masses for the dead increased. For example, the will of Cardinal Henry Beaufort (d. 1477) requested that 10,000 masses be said as soon as possible after his death for the repose of his soul.\footnote{Cohen, 323.}

**Suffrages and Epitaphs**

The giving of alms and other good works entitled a donor to grace in God's eyes and if these good works also included stipulations by the donor for prayers for his or her soul, as in the establishment of poor houses
or chantries, or for Masses to be said, then they benefited doubly. The endowment of a charitable institution was frequently accompanied by a stipulation that those who were served by the charity were to pray for the soul of their benefactor. The donor believed that his charitable acts would gain him both the Lord's favor and the prayers of those he aided, which would shorten the time required to purge his sins.\footnote{Blum, 2.} The sole purpose of the chantry chapel was to assure prayers and masses for the soul of the donor by the priest who was paid to perform these suffrages.\footnote{Cohen, 69.}

In order to promote prayer, portraits of the patron show him as pious and worthy of the prayers of passers by. The depiction of the deceased as a devout soul pleading for salvation, as if still alive, may have proven an effective way to induce people to pray if the popularity of such images in the Middle Ages is taken as an indicator.

Many sepulchral and votive monuments were placed at pilgrimage sites so that those travelling to attain indulgences themselves would offer prayers for those who had endowed the holy sites. A bronze plaque from
1446 shows Isabella of Portugal and Philip the Good with their children, and other members of Isabella's family, as priants venerating an image of the Pietà (Fig. 50). The plaque commemorates a donation given by the family to the Chartreuse in return for daily Masses which were to be said by the monks of the Chartreuse of St. Margaret in Basel and was placed in the church of the monastery. These prayers were for the "health of the souls" of the ducal family and the parents of the Duchess. Here the text beneath the image clearly explicates the plaque's purpose.

In sepulchral sculpture donors frequently presented themselves as priants and were most often shown kneeling before an image of the Virgin and Child. The belief that prayers by the living aided the salvation of the deceased's soul elucidates the

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46 Lemaire and Henry, 151-2.

47 Bernisches Historisches Museum, Die Burgunderbeute und Werke Burgundischer Hofkunst, Bern, 1969, 321-322. Many thanks to Professor Gibson for bringing this image to my attention and for providing me with a summary of the text.

48 Several examples are found in the cathedral of Tournai. The gravestone of the Seclin Family, the d'Avesnes Family, and the tomb of Simon Leval are illustrated by G. Ring in "Beiträge zur Plastik von Tournai im 15. Jahrhundert," Belgische Kunstdenkmäler, ed. P. Clemen, Munich, 1923, vol. 1, 271-273, figs. 285, 286 and Plate on 273.
rationale behind the attempts in tomb monuments to elicit prayers for the deceased in any way thought to be effective. Hans Holbein the Elder's *Epitaph of Ulrich Schwartz and his Family* (Fig. 51, Augsburg, Staatsgalerie) illustrates explicitly in banderoles the hierarchical relationship among the Virgin, Christ, and God in appealing for souls in Purgatory. Both Christ and the Virgin are depicted above Ulrich Schwarz and his large family. Christ points to the wound on his side and asks "Father, here is my red wound, help the people out of danger through my bitter death.". The Virgin pleads, "Put away your raised sword and think on the breast which nursed your son.". God, moved by these pleas replies, "I will show mercy to all who repent and protect them from danger.". ⁶⁹

Many epitaphs appeal to the viewer's self-interest. John of Warenne, the Earl of Surry who died in 1304, promised 3000 days of pardon in Purgatory for

prayers said on his behalf. His epitaph reads,

You who pass with closed mouth/ Pray for him who lies here/ once in life I was like you/ see, you will be what I am/ Sir John, Count of Gareyn, lies here, God have mercy on his soul/ Whoever will pray for his soul/ shall have 3,000 days pardon.\(^{50}\)

The number of epitaphs that requested prayer for the souls of the interred increased dramatically during the late Middle Ages.\(^{51}\) The epitaph of the reverend Cardinal Pierre d'Ailly reads in part, "You, whoever are at hand, bring help by means of prayer...".\(^{52}\).

Kathleen Cohen convincingly argues that inscriptions on tombs were not meant only as \textit{memento mori} but were also related to the salvation of the souls of the dead. The \textbf{Epitaph of Conrad Von Busnang} (Fig. 52, Cathedral, Strasbourg) by Nicolaus Gerhaerts van Leyden from 1464 shows the deceased with the Virgin and her active Child who reaches out toward Busnang. Over the head of the donor winds a banderole which reads "Pray for us with

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\(^{50}\) Translated in Cohen, 69 and n. 80, "Vous que passez ou bouche close/ Pries pur cely ke cy repose: En vie come vous estis jadis fu/ et voir tiel serietz come je su/ Sir Johan Cout de Careyn Gyst icy: Dieu da sa alme est mercy. Ky pur sa alme priera/ troiz mille jours de pardon avera." This is probably a spurious indulgence as the deceased was a layman and would seemingly have had no authority to grant such an indulgence.

\(^{51}\) ibid.

\(^{52}\) Cohen, 15 and n. 8.
pious invocation, O Virgin Mary," thus emphasizing his concern for an expedient release of his soul from Purgatory and his belief in the Virgin's power as intercessor.

Books of Hours and Prayer

As discussed in the last part of the second chapter, devotional diptychs seem to have been an outgrowth of the popular Book of Hours. Scant attention has been paid to the texts next to which donor portraits appear in Book of Hours. As discussed earlier, the most common are Matins at the beginning of the Hours of the Virgin and before the Obsecro Te and the O intemerata. Having oneself represented near prayers which are pleas for salvation, as these most clearly were, was an important aspect of Books of Hours.

The disposal of Horae was often a matter for the wills of the owners. Frequently careful

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53 Panofsky, Tomb Sculpture, 59.

54 Exemplary is the will of Blanche of Navarre who died in 1398. The Queen, wife of Philip VI of France, possessed a sizable library which her will "carefully divided among her relatives, friends, and servants. Her mother's finest Book of Hours went to her 'very dear son' the Duke of Berry.... To her sister Jeanne de Navarre,
instructions were left for the eventual bequeathing of these objects. Most often the books were distributed first among relatives, then friends, and lastly servants. This order of preference in the dispensing of books is identical to the order in which people appealed to the living for prayers after their death. The portraits inside the books functioned as reminders to later owners to pray for the release of the soul of the person responsible for the object that they now held in their hands.

Painted commissions and prayer

The same concern for salvation which we have seen in both tomb sculpture and Books of Hours and the corresponding presence of the donor's portrait may also be seen in the last medium we will examine, that of painting. At the same time that Purgatory was popularized and we find the emergence of donor portraits in funerary art and manuscript illumination, these portraits also begin to appear in greater numbers in painting.

Queen Blanche left her mother's second-best Hours, those which she herself used every day." Harthan, 33.

55 Harthan, 33.
Clearly, the patron had always believed that the performance of good works would be seen favorably by God. Beginning in the thirteenth century the donor had an image of himself included in the work so that he was directly associated with his donation, not only before God but also to the viewer praying before the painting. The donor was almost always portrayed as a priant and wished to be seen as an individual worthy both of the grace of God and of the prayers of the viewer. The paintings examined here were intended for specific public sites. The inclusion of a portrait of the donor should not be seen simply as an act of vanity nor purely of disinterested piety but as a response to a more powerful impetus, that of personal salvation.

Emile Mâle wrote that "a Christian would never address an abstraction."\(^{56}\) Pious Christians always directed their prayers to images, whether these were concrete or in the mind's eye. The donation of a devotional image to a public site was an act of charity extended to every Christian who used it as a stimulus for prayer. The very act of donating the painting rendered the donor worthy of the thanks and prayers of other worshipers.

\(^{56}\) Mâle, 155.
Jan van Eyck's Ghent Altarpiece (Fig. 53, Ghent, St. Bavo's Cathedral) clearly demonstrates the influence of the doctrine of Purgatory on the commissioning of works of art. Joos Vijd and Elisabeth Borluut, the commissioners of the altarpiece, appear on the exterior of the work. They are both depicted as priants. Joos Vijd looks upward toward the Annunciation panels on the second level of the exterior wings while his wife looks at the grisaille paintings of the John the Baptist and John the Evangelist. The chapel for which the altarpiece was intended was built by Joos Vijd at the western end of the choir of St. Bavo's (originally St. John's) church.57 The founding charter of the chapel, dated May 13, 1435, states that Joos Vijd and his wife, Elisabeth Borluut:

Do, to the glory of God, His Blessed Mother and all His Saints, establish in perpetuity the Office of a daily mass for the salvation of their souls and those of their forebears, in the chapel and at the altar that they have caused to be erected at their own cost on the south side of the church.58

This chantry's foundation was funded and


58 Dhanens, 24.
maintained by the rents of lands specified in the will.\textsuperscript{59} Because the Vijds were childless, and because they could afford it, they were concerned to leave no aspect of their salvation to chance, and spared no expense to achieve this. Complete instructions as well as the endowment were established and guaranteed (to the best of Vijd's ability and knowledge) in the founding charter. Lifelong salaries for two priests, both poor, one of whom is specified by name, are detailed in the foundation. Thus Joos Vijd had bestowed a livelihood on two poor priests while assuring himself of a devoutly performed service.\textsuperscript{60}

The uncertainty about when diptychs were opened and closed is similar to the vague knowledge we have about the display of larger altarpieces. The deed of registration, dated 1435, makes the opening and closing of the chapel the responsibility of one of the minor clergy. However, the opening and closing of the altarpiece, whether this was performed daily, or corresponded with the liturgical calendar, is


\textsuperscript{60} Goodgal, 113.
unknown. We also do not know where Joos Vijd was buried after his death in 1439. It may have been in the crypt below the chapel or with his father in Rooigem. Elisabeth Borluut died on May 3, 1443 and was buried with her family in the church of the Augustinian monastery. Similar motivation may be seen in the Last Judgment Altarpiece at Beaune (Fig. 18, Musée de l'Hôtel Dieu, Beaune), commissioned by Nicolas Rolin from Rogier van der Weyden. In this work the patron and his wife, Guigone de Salins, appear on the exterior of the wings which part to reveal Rogier's Last Judgment. Nicolas and Guigone kneel in prayer before prie-dieus on which sit opened Books of Hours. Donor and donatrix soberly look toward the grisaille paintings of St.s' Anthony and Sebastian. Nicolas Rolin appears on the outside of the altarpiece in the clothing in which he was buried. The altarpiece itself is only a tiny portion of a much grander commission; the foundation of the Hôtel Dieu at Beaune. This hospital was dedicated to treating the poor men and

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61 Dhanens, 49.

62 ibid. Women frequently outlived their spouses and chose burial with their own families.
women of Beaune. Six Beguines were employed as nurses at the hospital with one "mistress" as a supervisor. They were specially instructed to recommend the founder, Nicolas Rolin, and his wife to God. 

The panel paintings which flanked Rogier's Last Judgment Altarpiece on the side walls of the chapel of the Hôtel Dieu showed scenes of Resurrection, one of Christ and the other of Lazarus. The patients who occupied the 30 beds lining the corridor which led to the chapel would have spent their days, probably their final days, contemplating the images their benefactor had supplied for them. The iconographic theme of the chapel is salvation through the sacrifice of Christ. Surely Rolin believed that furnishing the poor with both physical care and spiritual aids would not go unrewarded. The reward which Rolin most fervently desired was the salvation of his soul aided by the prayers of those who had benefitted from his generosity. It is a testament to the supposed efficacy

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63 T. H. Feder, Rogier van der Weyden, and the Altarpiece of the Last Judgement at Beaune, Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, 1975, 96, for transcription of this document.

64 Feder, 102.

65 Feder, 106.
of the establishment that Guigone de Salins chose to be buried in the floor of the chapel at Beaune. She favored this location over that of the Rolin chapel in Autun Cathedral, where Nicolas Rolin was buried near Jan van Eyck's Rolin Madonna (Fig. 6, Louvre, Paris), and where he had installed a gravestone intended to cover both of them. The epitaph on the stone listed all Rolin's acts of benificence and ended with the hopeful phase, "Pray for them."66

Donor portraits in painted works of art, whether private or public, and the donor's reactions to narrative scenes, are indistinguishable from the depictions of donors we have examined in tomb sculptures and Horae. The lack of emotion found on the donor's faces and the prieur pose are common to every example. This is also found in the Nativity Altarpiece of Pieter Bladelin (Fig. 26, Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Museen, Berlin) by Rogier van der Weyden. In the work, Pieter Bladelin kneels before the scene of the Nativity. However, he does not look at any of the sacred figures in the scene or participate in any way. His face does not display any emotional reaction to the event and he is separated from the scene by physical

66 "Priez pour eux." This chapel is where the Rolin Madonna (Louvre, Paris) was hung. Purtle, diss., 60-1.
distance outside the stable and a fissure in the earth in front of the manger. Donors are depicted in this way in order to facilitate their easy identification by the viewer and to emphasize the devout and pious nature of the individual. Donor portraits are always distinctly separated from holy scenes, if not through physical elements then always by the passive expressions of the donors. A formula exists for the depiction of donors but it depends on something more than a tradition. Pieter Bladelin and other donors are depicted in this manner in order to permit the viewer to identify the donors and to display the donors' piety.

The impassive expressions seen on the faces of donor portraits prompts a brief discussion of the theory that donors were depicted near holy scenes in order to emulate famous visionaries or to "relive visions from the past," as suggested by Harbison.67 This purported desire to be depicted as the recipient of a vision is attributed to the increased emphasis on emotional devotions in the teachings of the Devotio Moderna. However, the notably impassive expressions found on the faces of donors would invalidate this

67 Harbison, "Visions and Meditations," 94.
theory on strictly visual evidence. Further undermining the "vision" theory is the lack of any concrete links between the patrons depicted and the teachings of the *Devotio Moderna*. Pieter Bladelin, for example, was a member of the Burgundian court and would have had only limited knowledge of, or exposure to, the teachings of Groote or other members of the movement. Lastly, the viewer is left puzzled about the motivation of the donors if they indeed intended to appear as visionaries. How might they have hoped to benefit from depiction in this manner?

By their very act of charity the donors have attempted to show themselves worthy of the intercession of the Virgin, who is included in almost all of these images. But beyond that, they desire the prayers of those who would benefit from the devotional stimulus provided by these works. The donation itself warranted the thankful prayers of the recipient and, through this, salvation for the donor. The wish to be perpetually associated with the act of donation seems only natural. And the benefit which the donor believed he would receive, expeditious completion of purgatorial time, accounts for the phenomenon of donor portraits.

**Conclusion**
The dichotomy between actual piety and material display with which historians have struggled to determine the cause of donor's appearances in their commissions ought to be merged into a large but unified cause: the expedient release of the donor's soul from Purgatory and thus salvation through the prayers of the viewer. A donor was not depicted as the recipient of a vision or as located in the same space as the sacred figures. If this were indeed the case, as it appears upon initial examination, the depicted figure would seem to have very little to gain by having himself or herself depicted for posterity in such a manner. In contrast, the salvatory benefits that the piously portrayed individual might gain by his appearance in an image seen by his descendants or by the public are a convincing motivational force. The goal of these images is to attract prayers for the souls of the donors and speed their release from Purgatory. The systems of indulgences based on prayers for the dead made the relationship mutually beneficial for both the patron and the person who prayed for him or her. These portraits occur in all media and experience a dramatic increase in popularity concurrent with that of Purgatory. The similar depiction of all donors and the fact that they occur in many different media:
sculpture, manuscript illumination, and painting, suggest that they have a common purpose. This was the rescue of souls from Purgatory, a motive which played an important role throughout later medieval spirituality. This was also the function of the donor portrait in the devotional diptych.
APPENDIX

1. "OBSECRO TE"

I beseech you, Mary, holy lady, mother of God, most full of piety, daughter of the greatest king, most glorious mother, mother of orphans, consolation of the desolate, the way for those who stray, salvation for those who hope in you, virgin before birth, virgin while giving birth, virgin after birth, fountain of pity, fountain of salvation and grace, fountain of piety and joy, fountain of consolation and kindness, through that holy, unutterable joy with which you your spirit rejoiced in that hour when the Son of God was announced to you by the archangel Gabriel and was conceived, and through that divine mystery that was then worked by the Holy Spirit; and through that unutterable piety, grace, mercy, love, and humility through which your Son descended to accept human flesh in your most venerable womb and which he saw in you when he commended you to St. John the Apostle and Evangelist and when he exalted you over the angels and the archangels; and through that holy inestimable humility in which you responded to the archangel Gabriel, 'Behold the handmaiden of the Lord, be it done unto me according to thy word'; and through those most
holy joys that you had in your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ; and through that holy, great compassion and that most bitter sorrow in your heart that you had when you saw your Son, Our Lord Jesus Christ, nude and lifted up on the cross, hanging crucified, wounded, thirsty, but served gall and vinegar, and you heard him cry, 'Eli' and you saw him dying; and through the five wounds of your Son and through the collapse of his flesh because of the great pain of his wounds; and through the sorrow that you had when you saw him wounded; and through the fountains of his blood and through all his suffering; and through all the sorrow of you heart and through the fountains your tears; with all the saints and elect of God. Come and hasten to my aid and counsel, in all my prayers and requests, in all my difficulties and needs, and in all those things that I will do, that I will say, that I will think, in every day, night, hour, and moment of my life. And secure for me, your servant, from your esteemed Son the fullness of all mercy and consolation, all counsel and aid, all help, all blessings and sanctification, all salvation, peace, and prosperity, all joy and gladness, and an abundance of everything good for the spirit and the body, and the grace of the Holy Spirit so that he might set all things in good order for me, guard my
soul, rule and protect my body, lift up my mind, direct my course, preserve my senses, control my ways, approve my actions, fulfill my wishes and desires, instill holy thoughts, forgive the evils I have done in the past, correct those of the present, and temper those of the future, grant me an honest and honorable life, and grant me victory over all the adversities of this world, and true peace for my spirit and body, good hope, charity, and faith, chastity, humility, and patience, rule and protect my five bodily senses, make me fulfill the sever works of mercy, make me firmly believe in and hold to the twelve articles of faith and the Ten Commandments of the law, and from the deadly sins keep me free and defend me until my end. And at the end of my life show me your face, and reveal to me the day and hour of my death. Please hear and receive this humble prayer and grant me eternal life. Listen and hear me, Mary, sweetest virgin, Mother of God and of mercy. Amen.

This text is taken from the Book of Hours, Walters 224 and translated by Weick, *Time Sanctified*, pp. 163-4.
2. "O INTEMERATA"

O immaculate virgin, blessed for eternity, unique an without equal, virgin Mother of God, Mary, temple of God, most full of grace, gate to the kingdom of heaven, sanctuary of the Holy Spirit, you through whom, after God himself, the whole world lives, turn the ears of your piety towards my unworthy prayers and be kind to me, a sinner and be a helper in all things. O most blessed John, beloved friend of Christ, who was chosen by Our Lord Jesus Christ to remain a virgin, and, among all the others, was more esteemed and was imbued, before all the others, with the heavenly mysteries, apostle of Christ and most glorious evangelist, I beseech you, with the mother of our Savior, to consider, with her, me worthy of your help. O jewels of the heavens, Mary and John, two divine lamps shining before God, dispel of the gloom of my faults with your radiance. Be the two upon whom God the Father, through his own Son, specially built his own house, and be the two in whom the only Son of God the Father, as the reward of your most sincere virginity, confirmed this as his special privilege, thus saying to you as he was hanging on the cross, 'Woman behold thy son,' and then saying to the other, 'Behold thy mother.' By the
sweetness of this most sacred love may you be joined by the words of Our Lord as mother and son, you two to whom I, the sinner, commend my body and soul today and every day, so that you might be, at every hour and every moment of my life, inside and outside me, my steadfast guardians and pious intercessors before God. I indeed believe firmly and accept without any doubt that he who wants to be yours will belong to God, and he who does not want to be yours will not belong to God, for you can obtain whatever you ask from God without delay. By virtue of your most powerful worthiness, beg, for me, for the deliverance of my body and soul. I beseech you to offer your glorious prayers so that my heart would be made worthy of being captured, entered, and inhabited by the Holy Spirit who would purify me of all sordid vices and embellish me with sacred virtues, who would help me stand, almost perfectly, in God's favor and make me persevere, and, after the course of my life is over, lead me to the joy of his elect, this most benevolent Paraclete, great bestower of grace, who, consubstantial with the Father and Son and co-eternal with them, lives and reigns as God forever and ever, Amen.

Translated from the "O intemerata" in the Book of Hours, Walters 213 by Weick, Time Sanctified, p. 164.
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