

PETRUS CHRISTUS

Renaissance Master of Bruges



THE METROPOLITAN MUSEUM OF ART

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MARYAN W. AINSWORTH
with contributions by
MAXIMILIAAN P. J. MARTENS

The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

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Director's Foreword

It is a great privilege to present the work of a major early Netherlandish painter. Comprising nearly three-quarters of the oeuvre of Petrus Christus, this is the first monographic exhibition devoted to the artist and indeed the only significant presentation of Northern Renaissance art in this country since the landmark show at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1960.

Far from a simple exercise in bringing together works of art, the mounting of such an exhibition is a valuable learning experience. In the case of Petrus Christus, it has allowed us to look at him differently, not just as a follower of Jan van Eyck but as an artist with his own distinct sensibilities. Unlike van Eyck, who served the dukes of Burgundy, Christus found his clientele among the bourgeoisie and wealthy foreign merchants who had settled in Bruges. Therefore, in many ways his oeuvre reflects the artistic standards of his time more broadly than does van Eyck's, making the study of his life and work of particular importance for our understanding of early Netherlandish art.

In addition to providing an opportunity for a comprehensive study of Christus's works, this exhibition has prompted us to reconsider the major paintings by him in the Metropolitan Museum. The reexamination of the *Portrait of a Carthusian* and the *Saint Eligius*, in particular, has confirmed that the halos on the figures were added by a later hand. Their recent removal by Hubert von Sonnenburg, Sherman Fairchild Chairman, Department of Paintings Conservation, brings these remarkable paintings closer to the artist's original intention.

We are especially grateful to the National Endowment for the Arts, the David H. Koch Charitable Foundation, the William Randolph Hearst Foundation, and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for sponsoring this exhibition. It is with equal gratitude that we thank the government of Flanders and the Belgian American Educational Foundation for their added support. Finally, we extend our appreciation to the National Endowment for the Humanities, The Christian Humann

Foundation, and the Samuel H. Kress Foundation for their contributions toward the exhibition. We are also indebted to the Robert Lehman Foundation for making the Lehman galleries available for the show.

We extend warm thanks to the institutions that have made it possible for us to assemble twenty-one paintings, nearly three-quarters of Christus's known oeuvre. Also included in this exhibition are the five drawings attributed to Christus and the only illuminated manuscript with which he is associated. We are grateful to Maryan W. Ainsworth, Senior Research Fellow at the Metropolitan Museum, for organizing the exhibition. She selected the works, developed a new methodological approach to the material discussed in her essay, and wrote the catalogue entries. Certain key works—the Berlin wings, the London *Portrait of a Young Man* and *Portrait of Edward Grymeston*, the Brussels *Lamentation*, and the Bentinck-Thyssen *Madonna and Child in Half-length*—were deemed too fragile to travel and are represented by new technical information about them.

The catalogue and exhibition have been enriched by other contributors. Maximiliaan P. J. Martens, Associate Professor at the University of Groningen, shared his archival research on patronage in fifteenth-century Bruges and assembled the extant documents relating to the artist's life, which are published here together for the first time. The results of the dendrochronological examinations of nineteen panel paintings attributed to Christus are a valuable addition by Peter Klein, Lecturer in Wood Biology at the University of Hamburg.

We anticipate that this exhibition, unique in its scope and approach, will stimulate new discussions about early Netherlandish painting. At the very least, our visitors will undoubtedly be rewarded by a deeper acquaintance with the art of Petrus Christus.

Philippe de Montebello, Director
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

Acknowledgments

This exhibition takes a fresh look at the life and art of Petrus Christus through archival research and the technical examination of his works. Maximiliaan Martens's recently completed study of patronage in Bruges during Christus's lifetime uncovered new findings, which are included here. He has also assembled for the first time all of the known documents related to Petrus Christus, allowing for a richer understanding of the artist's biography in its historical context.

Rather than following the trend of regarding Christus as an eclectic, derivative artist, we have concentrated on the painter's inventive approach to accommodating the wishes of his patrons in Bruges. We have reconsidered the artist's working method as a means to understanding his aims. This strategy involved the firsthand study of Christus's works through various techniques, including infrared reflectography, X-radiography, microscopic analysis, and, occasionally, pigment and cross-section analysis. The infrared reflectography of the paintings was done in various museums using the Metropolitan's equipment. The study of these paintings was greatly facilitated by the remarkable hospitality of the institutions we visited as well as by a succession of art-historian interns who joined me in this endeavor. The energy, eagerness, and keen intellectual curiosity of these interns sustained this effort, and it is to them that I owe the successful completion of the project. I therefore dedicate this exhibition and catalogue to art-historian interns Chiyo Ishikawa, Catherine Crawford Luber, Ronda Kasl, Jeffrey Jennings, Yvette Bruijnen, Jacob Wisse, and Stephanie Buck and summer interns Sarah Ganz, Jennifer Milam, and Cynthia Anderson. The improved computer documentation of the underdrawings in the paintings was achieved by Teresa Russo, to whom we are greatly indebted. Diana Church expertly printed hundreds of infrared reflectograms of Christus's paintings.

Our interdisciplinary approach—joining art-historical studies with technical investigations—would not have been possible without the unstinting support of Hubert von Sonnenburg, Sherman Fairchild Chairman, Department of Paintings Conservation, and the collegial environment of that department, which includes art historians, paintings conservators, and scientists. We have been fortunate to have the continued endorsement of the Rowland Foundation, whose contributions and sustained interest have fostered these investigations.

Many individuals assisted with numerous aspects of our research, and we owe them sincere thanks. I am especially grateful to Kirk Alexander, Christiane Andersson, J. R. J. van Asperen de Boer, Alison Baber, Forrest Bailey, Baroness Adolphe Bentinck, Giovanna Bernard, Christiane Berns, Rachel Billinge, Henrik Bjerre, Lone Bøgh, David Bomford, Emil Bosshard, John Brealey, Lorne Campbell, Gabriella Befani Canfield, Patrick Le Chanu, Alan Chong, Richard Clarke, Pierre Cockshaw, Micheline Comblen-Sonkes, Philip Conisbee, Bernice Davidson, Mia Derom, Elisabeth Dhanens, Alphonse Dierick, Vincent Ducourau, Everett Fahy, Molly Faries, Jane Farrington, Christina Ferreyros, Susan Foister, A. Fournier, Burton Frederickson, Maria del Carmen Garrido, L. M. Goegebuer, Beatrix Graf, Rainald Grosshans, Henri Guy, John Hand, Scott Hefley, Barbara Heller, Peter Hohenstatt, Leopold Kockaert, Jean Luc Koltz, Eberhard König, Fritz Koreny, Thomas Kren, Clifford LaFontaine, Willy Laureyssens, E. E. M. Lemberger, Iva Lisikewycz, Tomás Llorens Serra, Hilde Lobelle-Caluwe, Philippe Lorentz, Patrice Marandel, A. W. F. M. Meij, Wolfgang Milde, Gay Nay, Myra Orth, Michael Pächt, Nancy Ames Petersen, Silvana Pettinati, Wolfgang Prohaska, Nicole Reynaud, Françoise Roberts-Jones, Maria Teresa Rodriguez, Charles Ryskamp, Jochen Sander, David Saunders, Christoph

Schmidt, Gerald Schulz, Manfred Sellink, Veronique Sintobin, Marcia Steele, Leon Stodulski, Margret Stuffmann, Elizabeth Teviotdale, Dominique Thiébaud, Mark Trowbridge, Joel Upton, Susan Urbach, Gillian Varley, Françoise Viatte, Markus Völkel, Dirk De Vos, Peter Waldeis, Roger Ward, Roger Wieck, Eliane De Wilde, Martha Wolff, and Martin Wyld.

The close visual scrutiny of a work of art inevitably raises questions about its state and condition. In the course of this study, the *Death of the Virgin*, the *Washington Nativity*, the *Los Angeles Portrait of a Man*, and the Metropolitan Museum's *Friedsam Annunciation* and *Head of Christ* were restored, allowing for a fresh, unencumbered view of these important paintings. Their skillful restoration was carried out by David Bull, Teresa Longyear, Catherine Metzger, Joseph Fronek, and Hubert von Sonnenburg. It has long been recognized that both the *Portrait of a Carthusian* and the *Saint Eligius* had halos that were added by a later hand. Hubert von Sonnenburg removed these halos and restored the paintings to their rightful appearance, greatly enhancing the spatial clarity that was originally intended by Christus.

From the outset, Laurence B. Kanter, Curator of the Robert Lehman Collection, graciously offered the Lehman galleries for the exhibition as well as the help of his staff to take care of the necessary clerical duties for the loans. Special thanks are due to Larry and to Monique van Dorp for her efforts on our behalf. Nina Maruca, in the Registrar's Office, served as the liaison for all the loans. Kathy Miller, in the Department of

Paintings Conservation, assisted with many administrative details. Katria Czerwoniak helped with our numerous requests for interlibrary loans. George Bisacca handled the special requirements of the climate-control boxes and careful transportation of the panels; Charlotte Hale and Stefan Dedeček made X-radiographs of our Christus paintings. Bruce Schwarz took new photographs.

I was privileged to work with Pamela Barr, who edited the catalogue, and with Bruce Campbell, who designed it. Jayne Kuchna coordinated and checked the bibliography. The careful supervision of John P. O'Neill was indispensable, as was the attention given to details of the production of the book by Barbara Burn, Gwen Roginsky, Jay Reingold, Teresa Egan, Kathleen Howard, Connie Harper, and Mary Smith.

I am especially grateful to Philippe de Montebello, Director, for his enthusiasm for this project. Without the efforts of Mahrukh Tarapor, Kent Lydecker, Emily Rafferty with Lynne Winter and Terri Constant, Richard Morsches, Linda Sylling, Daniel Kershaw, and Barbara Weiss, this show could not have been mounted in its present form.

Last, but not least, my profound gratitude to Charles and Clark Ainsworth for their patience and constant support.

Maryan W. Ainsworth
Senior Research Fellow
Department of Paintings Conservation
The Metropolitan Museum of Art

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Fig. 1. School of Rogier van der Weyden, *Portrait of Philip the Good*. Oil on oak, 12 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (32.5 x 22.4 cm).
Groeningemuseum, Bruges

Bruges During Petrus Christus's Lifetime

POLITICAL HISTORY

The policy of territorial expansion of Duke Philip the Good of Burgundy (r. 1419–67; fig. 1) reached a summit about 1435, the year the treaty of Arras brought an end to the hostilities between the Burgundians and the French.¹ In exchange for ceasing his alliance with the English crown, Philip was exempted from his feudal responsibilities toward Charles VII of France and given the counties of Picardy, Ponthieu, and Boulogne as well as several cities along the Somme River.

From then on, Philip radically altered his policy and concentrated on the development of a strong central government. This process implied a steady limitation of the power of the large cities in the Burgundian territories, including Ghent and Bruges. Philip's son and heir, Charles the Bold (r. 1467–77), continued this process of Burgundization,² which culminated in the institution of the Parliament of Mechlin (the central court) and the Chamber of Finances (the central financial administration) in 1473.

The gradual erosion of age-old privileges often incited revolts in the traditionally independent cities of the Burgundian Netherlands. The dukes repeatedly resorted to bloody repression to put down conflicts in Bruges (1436–38), Ghent (1447–53 and 1467), Utrecht (1455–56), Dinant (1466), and Liège (1465–68).

In June and July 1436, Philip besieged Calais, which was in English hands. Bruges and other Flemish cities delegated troops and made considerable financial contributions toward the operation. Meanwhile, in Sluis, the port closest to Bruges, several Hanseatic merchants (also called Easterlings) suspected of sympathy for the English were killed. As a result, the Hanseatic League left Bruges, an action that had serious consequences, since the Hanseatics were the most important trade partners of the Netherlands.³ They supplied English wool to the Flemish textile industry and imported indispensable grain provisions from the Baltic region to

Flanders. The alliance against England and the departure of the Hanseatics from Bruges immediately led to unemployment and grain shortages.

Growing dissatisfaction and frustration over the failure of the Calais expedition provoked Bruges to assume aggressive domination over its subject cities. The armed forces that had just returned from Calais threatened Sluis and other places in the surrounding countryside with military action if they would not recognize the city's authority.

On May 22, 1437, Philip the Good arrived in Bruges with an army, hoping to call the city to order. Furious Bruges citizens surrounded the duke, threatening to kill him. Jean de Villers, lord of l'Île-Adam, the officer who covered the duke's desperate flight through the Boeveriepoort, was killed in action.⁴ Enraged by such insubordination, Philip besieged the city. The massive failure of the grain harvests throughout Europe that summer had led to a dramatic famine within the walls of the isolated town. Utter despair struck the rebellious citizens when plague broke out between June 1 and November 11, 1437. About one fifth of Bruges's population perished.⁵

Totally weakened, the city surrendered in March 1438 and was severely punished by the duke, who hoped to set an example for future rebels. Bruges's control over its subordinate cities was restricted; the privileges of the guilds were revised; huge fines were imposed; the Boeveriepoort was closed off; and the city was forced to fund an annual mass for the lord of l'Île-Adam.⁶ On December 11, 1440, the duke publicly forgave the city, and with much splendor Bruges pledged its allegiance to Philip the Good. After these dramatic events, Bruges remained loyal to its sovereign for the next forty years, the period of Petrus Christus's activity there.

The comprehensive centralization of ducal power, sustained by fierce repression of local revolts, was obvi-



Fig. 2. Workshop of Rogier van der Weyden, *Portrait of Charles the Bold*. Oil on oak, 19¼ x 12¾ in. (49 x 32 cm). Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

ously unacceptable to the large Flemish cities. However, the times changed. Charles the Bold engaged in a series of wars that drastically drained his financial resources (fig. 2). In 1473, the duke had to make important concessions to the cities in exchange for money, which was collected through special taxes.⁷ Eventually, Charles became a victim of the successive wars he had to fight, dying in the battle of Nancy on January 5, 1477. Burgundy and Franche-Comté were immediately occupied by the troops of the French king Louis XI. On January 24, news of the duke's death was confirmed in the Netherlands. Only eighteen days later, on February 11, 1477, the Flemish cities extorted the Great Privilege from Mary of Burgundy (r. 1477–82), the young and inexperienced daughter of Charles,⁸ and all the civil privileges they enjoyed before 1438 were restored.

By the middle of the twelfth century, Bruges had evolved into one of the most important commercial centers north of the Alps.⁹ During Petrus Christus's lifetime, the city was thriving economically, yet its international commercial importance was slowly on the wane, and Antwerp was soon to take over as the most prominent harbor and center of commerce and finance in the North.¹⁰ The gradual silting of the Zwin—the connection between Bruges and the North Sea—played a serious role in this development. Repeatedly, grand but ineffective waterworks were undertaken to remedy this dramatic geographical evolution.¹¹

Another factor in the increasing vulnerability of the city's economy was the lack of industrial and economic diversification. International trade, financing, and the production of luxury goods such as fine cloth were lucrative activities but highly interdependent. Unlike Antwerp, Bruges was apparently not flexible enough to convert its market to the trade of colonial commodities, which gradually became more important.

Undoubtedly, this evolution went largely unnoticed by the contemporary Bruges population, as the general standard of living was much higher between 1440 and 1470 than it had been.¹² Large sections of the population were able to afford meat, dairy products, and grain on a regular basis, even though the price of grain was always subject to fluctuation due to variations in the harvest.¹³ Nevertheless, from 1439 to 1477, only once, in the winter of 1456–57, were the prices of food unusually high. This was the one time in the Burgundian era that the lower social classes were able to recuperate from periods of shortage.¹⁴ Between 1478 and 1492, food prices inflated to an unprecedented high, while wages did not follow.

The period's favorable economic climate was sustained by a strong currency and mild taxation. The former was a result of the unification of the monetary system in the Burgundian Netherlands by Philip the Good in 1433.¹⁵ Between 1416 and 1433, prior to the reform, the currency was repeatedly devalued. Due to mounting external conflicts and a deterioration of the general economic climate, the currency was again subject to frequent devaluation between 1474 and 1496.

The tax load followed a similar pattern.¹⁶ Between 1456 and 1471, taxes increased about 30 percent more than they did between 1439 and 1455. Between 1472 and

1494, however, the tax burden went up 300 percent. Evidently, this increase was related to the huge costs involved in the ongoing military campaigns and the formation of a permanent professional standing army under Charles the Bold.

The thriving economy between about 1440 and 1473 created a favorable climate for the production and consumption of luxury goods and art in Flanders. The trade volume in the Netherlands was double what it had been at the beginning of the century.¹⁷ Evidently, since a considerable amount of money was in circulation, the demand for new investment possibilities emerged.

BRUGES AS A DUCAL RESIDENCE

The Burgundian dukes liked to travel from one residence to another, and in the early 1430s Bruges became one of their favorites.¹⁸ The dukes, sometimes accompanied by distinguished guests, often made triumphal entries into the city. In 1457, for instance, Philip the Good brought the French dauphin, the future Louis XI, to Bruges, and in 1463 he escorted the fugitive queen of England. Philip continuously expanded and remodeled the Prinsenhof, his castle in Bruges (fig. 3).

The dukes often chose Bruges as the site for important weddings and chapter meetings of the Order of the Golden Fleece.¹⁹ On these occasions, both the court and the city magistrature outdid themselves organizing the most splendid celebrations. On January 7, 1430, when Philip the Good married his third wife, Isabella of Portugal, in Bruges, he also founded the famous Order of the Golden Fleece. Several solemn chapter meetings of the order were held in the city (1432, church of Sint Donaas; 1468, Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk; 1478, Sint Salvatorskerk). Charles the Bold married Margaret of York, the sister of the English king Edward IV, in Bruges on July 3, 1468. The festivities for this wedding, which lasted ten days, were the most lavish staged in the city during the fifteenth century.

Evidently, Bruges artists profited from the regular presence of the Burgundian dukes and their following of courtiers and high officials, which likewise stimulated the immigration of many foreign artists who were attracted by the possibility of finding patrons. Moreover, the activity of court artists, such as Jan van Eyck and Pierre Coustain, created an opportunity for intellectual exchange.

LOCAL BOURGEOISIE AND FOREIGN MERCHANTS

The regular presence of the ducal court was not the only factor that attracted artists and artisans to Bruges—the luxury-loving local businessmen also constituted a major source of artistic patronage. Belonging to the most prominent families in town, they were the city's financial elite. They governed the political institutions, managed the hospitals, and were members of the important confraternities and guilds. Both individually and as members of these social associations, they funded endowments and donated works of art to religious and charitable institutions.

Typical for an international commercial center such as Bruges was the presence of many foreign merchants. Grouped in districts according to their nationality or city of origin, these foreign nations all had their offices, or *logge*, which often served as their consulate, in the city.²⁰ One of the four headquarters of the Hanseatic League was located in Bruges.²¹ The League imported mainly organic products, such as grain, charcoal, wood, tar, and fur, and shipped luxury textiles to Prussia, the Baltic region, and the western part of Russia. The English merchants were assembled in the Merchant Adventurers.²² They traded mainly in wool, which they first stocked in Calais. From there, large amounts of English wool were shipped to Bruges.

The commercial contacts with the Mediterranean markets were also extensive.²³ The Catalan nation was already established in Bruges by 1330. Castilians received business privileges in 1348, and about forty years later the Portuguese were officially established in the city. The Spanish nations mainly traded in fruit and Spanish wool. The Italian nations played a most prominent role in Bruges. Four of their *logge* were located in the Vlamingstraat: that of the Genoese, which still exists, and those of the Florentines, the Venetians, and the Lucchese (fig. 4). They imported silk, Oriental spices, and sugarcane.²⁴ The Italians were known primarily as specialists in finance and monetary trade.²⁵ The Florentine Medici bank had its most important foreign branch in Bruges between 1439 and 1490.²⁶ Until 1464, it was headed by Agnolo Tani; later, Tommaso Portinari took over his position. The presence of this bank in Bruges provided the Burgundian dukes with significant financial clout.

By the end of the thirteenth century, northern

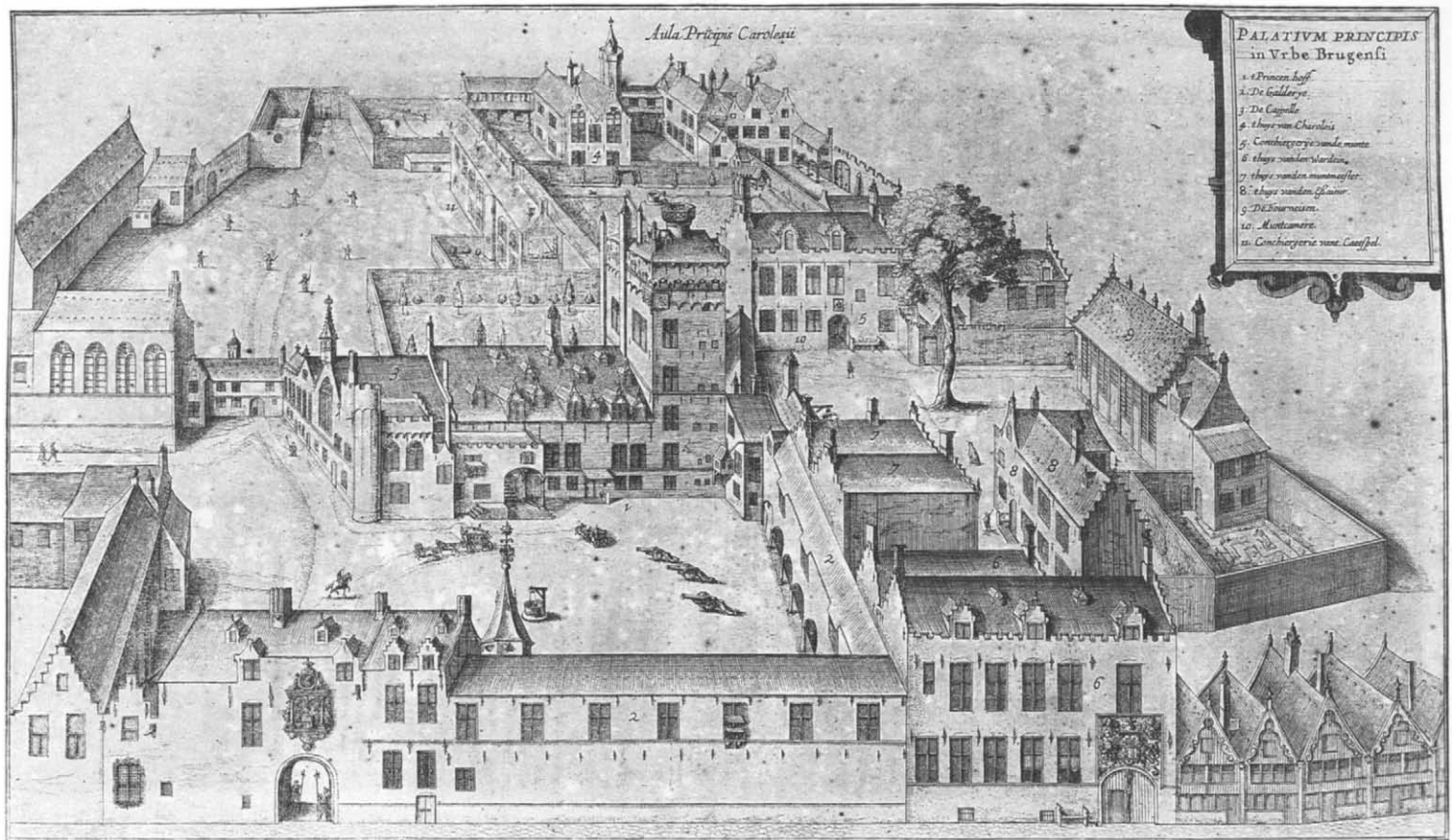


Fig. 3. *Palatium Principis in Urbe Brugensi*. Engraving, in Antonius Sanderus, *Flandria Illustrata* (Cologne, 1641)

Italians had already contributed to the development of a preeminent European money market in Bruges, where many financial techniques of credit and exchange were introduced.²⁷ The first stock exchange in Europe was established in the house of the de Beurze family on the Vlamingstraat, next to the Genoese *loggia*. The amount of money involved in financial trade greatly exceeded that in the exchange of commodities.

The Italians residing in Bruges assumed an especially prominent position as patrons of Flemish pictures, which they often commissioned for display back home. Tommaso Portinari is undoubtedly the most famous of these patrons. He commissioned the *Adoration of the Shepherds*, better known as the *Portinari Altarpiece* (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), from Hugo van der Goes and shipped it to Florence to be installed in the hospital church of Santa Maria Nuova. Hans Memling painted the *Passion of Christ* (Galleria Sabauda, Turin) for Tommaso, as well as portraits of him and his wife, Maria Baroncelli (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).²⁸

ARTISTIC PRODUCTION

During the fifteenth century, about 31 percent of the members of the corporation of image-makers were immigrants from the Burgundian realm and beyond who had established their workshops in Bruges, having been attracted by the diversity of opportunities the city's institutions and residents had to offer.²⁹ Jan van Eyck opened his workshop there, most likely after finishing the *Ghent Altarpiece* in 1432. Petrus Christus, probably from the Brabantine village of Baerle, acquired Bruges citizenship in 1444. Hans Memling, originally from Seligenstadt, Germany, became active in Bruges in 1465. Gerard David emigrated twenty years later from Oudewater, in Holland. The French painters Jan Fabiaen, Didier de la Rivière, Pierre Coustain, and Jan de Hervy settled in Bruges, where they received commissions from the magistrature and other local institutions.

In 1454, the miniaturist Willem Vrelant moved his workshop from Utrecht to Bruges. In 1467 and 1469,

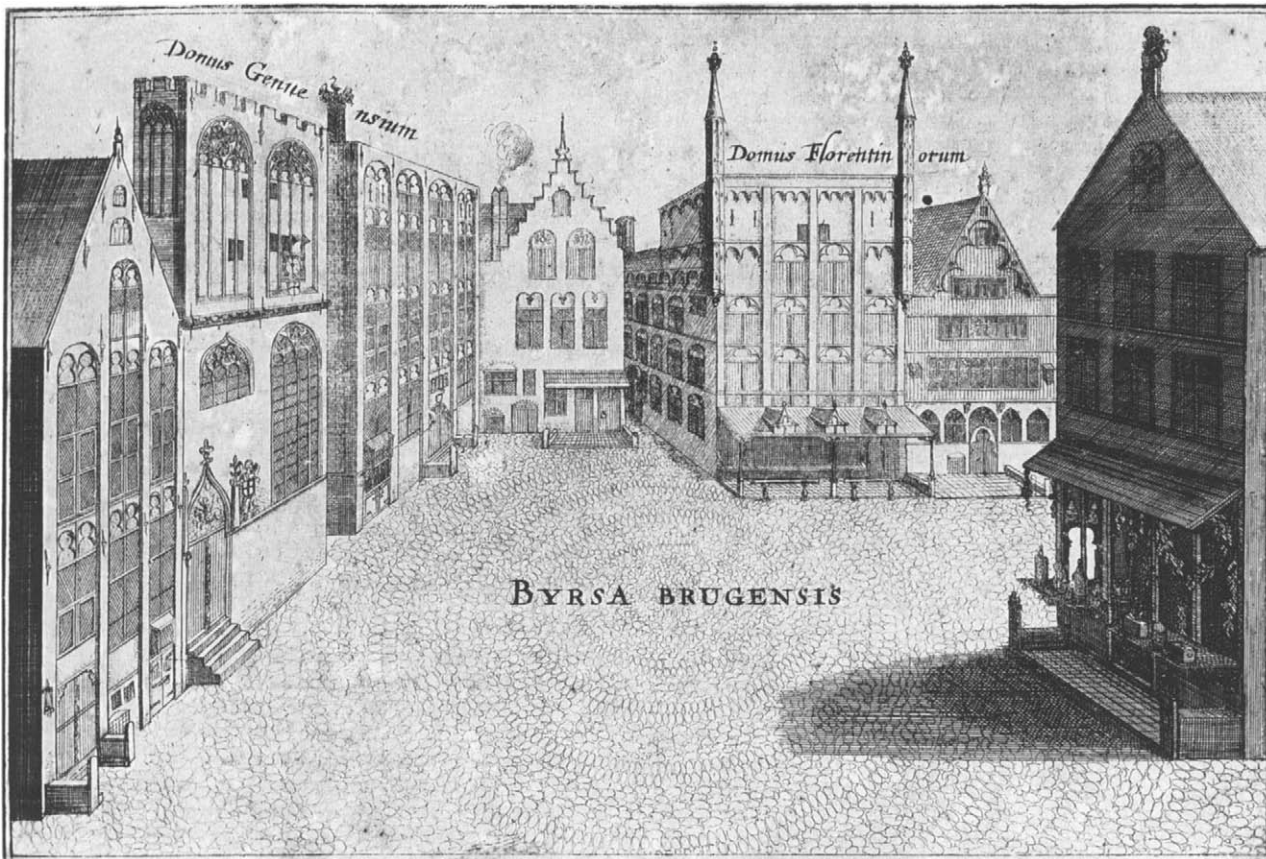


Fig. 4. *Byrsa Brugensis*. Engraving, in Antonius Sanderus, *Flandria Illustrata* (Cologne, 1641)

respectively, Philippe de Mazerolles and Loyset Liédet (fig. 5), famous book illuminators from northern France, followed Vrelant's example. A number of illuminators working in Bruges during the second half of the fifteenth century remained anonymous, such as the Master of Margaret of York and the Master of the Dresden Prayerbook.³⁰

Bruges also attracted a rich variety of highly specialized craftsmen, including furriers, hatters, jewelers, and goldsmiths.³¹ The city provided them with a large market, and through its harbor their products were exported to all parts of the known world, where Flemish luxury goods were wanted and praised for their high quality.

Bruges artistic production in the fifteenth century was certainly not restricted to the celebrated works of such painters as van Eyck, Christus, Memling, and David. The city's artists did paint large altarpieces, objects for individual devotion, and portraits, but they also designed models for tapestries and goldsmiths' work.³² Retables and freestanding sculpture were

carved and tapestries woven.³³ The production of figurative brass tomb plates was another traditional activity of local artists.³⁴

By the thirteenth century, Bruges had become a major center for the production of illuminated psalters.³⁵ During the first half of the fifteenth century, the city produced large quantities of books of hours, for both the local market and export.³⁶ Flemish manuscript production benefited a great deal from the patronage of Philip the Good, who actively began collecting illuminated manuscripts, beginning about 1445 (fig. 6).³⁷ Ducal patronage stimulated an unprecedented flowering of manuscript production in Bruges, Brussels, Ghent, Oudenaarde, Mons, Valenciennes, Hesdin, and Lille.³⁸ The contribution of Bruges artists to the production of ducal manuscripts was substantial. Of all the centers in the Netherlands, Bruges produced the greatest number of illuminated codices during the fifteenth century.³⁹ It was also the only city where all the craftsmen involved in the book trade were assembled in a guild, called the librarians, founded at least by 1454.⁴⁰



Fig. 5. Loyset Liédet, *Queen Elizabeth of England Entering Paris*, in Jean Froissart, *Chroniques*, vol. 1, MS fr. 2643, fol. 1r. Tempera on vellum. Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris



Fig. 6. Willem Vrelant, *Philip the Good Kneeling in Front of an Annunciation*, in Jean Miélot, *Traité sur la Salutation Angélique*, MS 9270, fol. 2v. Tempera on vellum. Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, Brussels

The bibliophile interests of the dukes were widely emulated by other members of the court. Duchess Margaret of York, for instance, played a prominent role in the evolution of the production of deluxe manuscripts in Flanders during the last quarter of the century (fig. 7).⁴¹ Other courtiers followed this example. After the dukes, Louis of Bruges, lord of Gruuthuse, was undoubtedly the greatest bibliophile in Flanders; 145 codices from his collection have been preserved.⁴²

Most members of the Bruges guild of image-makers were not involved in the creation of “high art”; the majority produced decorative work, often in the service of local institutions.⁴³ Throughout the city, artists decorated public buildings, polychromed and gilded statues and fountains, and embellished them with the city’s coats of arms and other heraldic motifs. Banners, flags, and pennons—and in times of war, tents and artillery—

all featured the Bruges lion (barry of eight gules and silver, a lion rampant azure).

The court as well as the municipal authorities spent vast sums on the decorations for festivities and official ceremonies, such as triumphal entries of the duke, funerals of courtiers and high officials, chapter meetings of the Order of the Golden Fleece, and processions, jousts, tournaments, and banquets offered by the magistrate to visiting dignitaries and diplomatic emissaries. The splendor of the decorations unfolded on these occasions has profoundly contributed to the widespread reputation of Flanders’s opulence during the late Middle Ages and the Renaissance.

THE ROLE OF PATRONS

Most patrons of works of art in Bruges belonged to the

city's upper and upper-middle classes.⁴⁴ The artists who worked for them were generally of a social status comparable to that of other skilled artisans. The working conditions of the artists were to a great extent determined by local political and economic circumstances as well as by a series of corporate regulations. Only court painters were exempted from local restrictions. Other artists were allowed to have one shop and to exhibit part of their work at counters. External competition was discouraged by prohibiting the importation of

works similar to those made locally. The customer was protected by the corporation's control over the quality of the work and the materials used. When a work was commissioned from an artist, a contract was drawn up, listing the patron's wishes.⁴⁵ Even though very few contracts from Bruges have survived, other sources have revealed information about their contents.⁴⁶ They stipulated the nature of the work, its destination, and sometimes dimensions and iconographic details. Occasionally, a model was submitted, which was

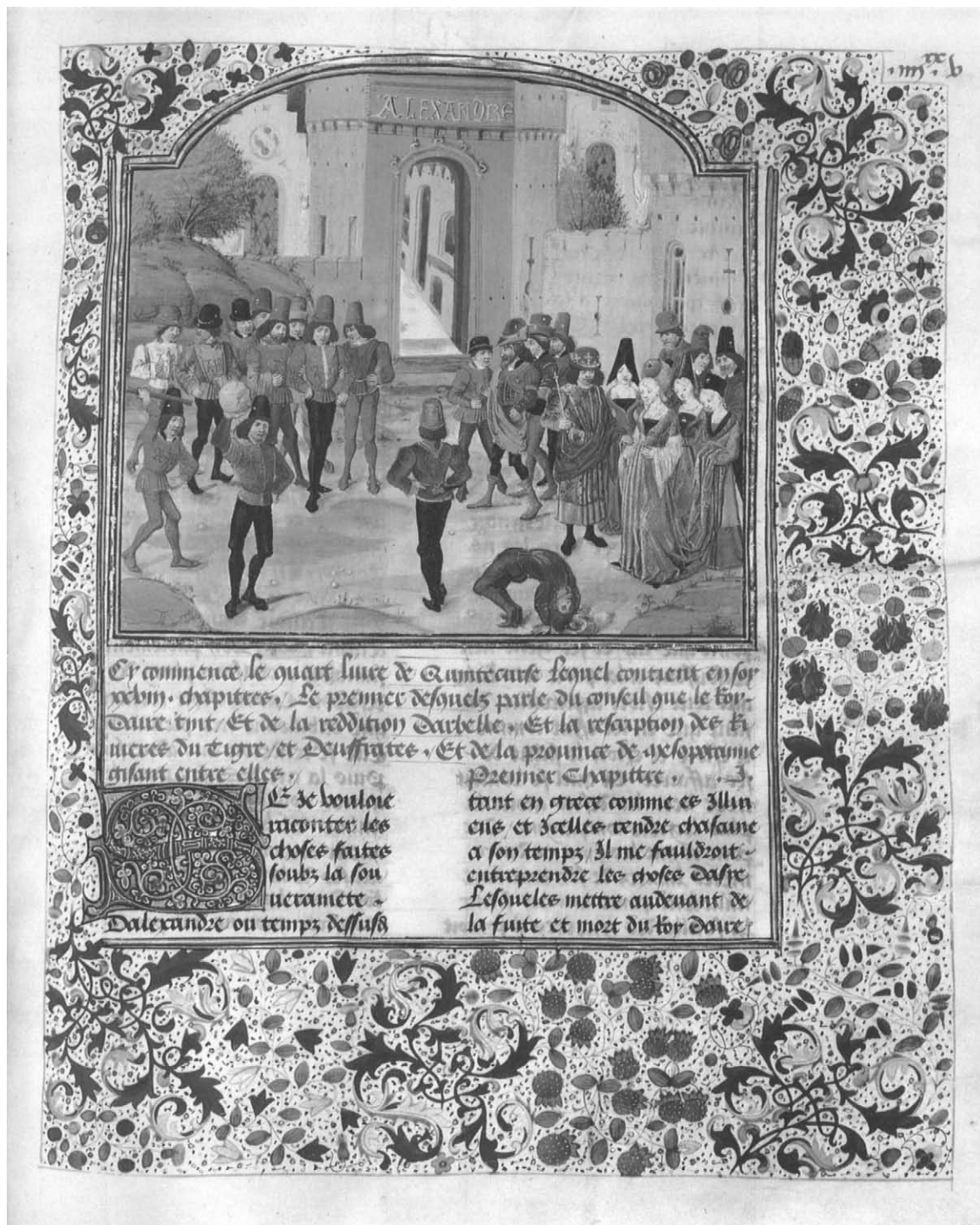


Fig. 7. Workshop of the Master of Margaret of York, *Acrobats*, in Quintus Curtius Rufus, *Les Fautes d'Alexandre le Grand*, ca. 1470–80, 83.MR.178 (MS Ludwig XV 8), fol. 99r. Tempera on vellum. J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu

referred to in the contract. At times, an existing work was mentioned as a standard of quality or even as the model after which a copy was to be made. Often the need to use materials of high quality was stressed. Each contract specified the price of the work and the terms of payment as well as the deadline for delivery and possible fines if the artist did not fulfill his obligation.

In the Netherlands in the fifteenth century, the role of patrons became less and less important, and many artists worked chiefly for the open market,⁴⁷ producing a stock from which interested clients could choose. Works of art were exhibited in artists' shops or at counters on the street near the workshop. Explicit documentary evidence of this increasing commercialization in contemporary Bruges is lacking, but statistical analysis of the available sources seems to indicate that the art market was indeed undergoing transformation, especially during the last quarter of the century.⁴⁸ A turning point may perhaps be about 1475. Clearly, the declining economy in the southern Netherlands contributed to this change.

Toward the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth, artists developed all sorts of price-cutting workshop practices. The size of an object, its utilitarian function, and the medium in which it was made played an important role in its possibilities for commercialization. Painters started to use uniform, repetitive background patterns and pricked drawings to duplicate compositions.⁴⁹ Sculptors assembled retables from standardized elements.⁵⁰ The labor force was increasingly concentrated in fewer, yet larger, workshops. This enhanced productivity eventually caused a decrease in prices, which stimulated the demand for works of art.

Even though the open art market seems to have become increasingly significant during the second half of the fifteenth century, the importance of institutional and private patronage should not be underestimated. Many works were still commissioned, especially those serving a public function. Petrus Christus and Hans Memling, for instance, must have worked mainly on commission. With the failing economy of the last quarter of the century, however, more and more artists were forced to conquer new markets.

1. This chapter is largely based on my dissertation, Martens 1992. On the Burgundian dukes, see R. Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The*

- Apogee of Burgundy* (London, 1970); R. Vaughan, *Charles the Bold: The Last Valois Duke of Burgundy* (London, 1973); R. Vaughan, *Valois Burgundy* (London, 1975); and Prevenier and Blockmans 1986. For the history of Bruges during the period under consideration, see Gilliodts-van Severen 1871–85, esp. vols. 4–6; Duclos 1910; *Algemene geschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 15 vols. (Haarlem, 1977–83), esp. vol. 4; and Houtte 1982.
2. Prevenier and Blockmans 1986, pp. 198–213.
 3. P. Dollinger, *La Hanse, XII^e–XVII^e siècles* (Paris, 1964), p. 368; and W. P. Blockmans, “Vlaanderen, 1384–1482,” in *Algemene geschiedenis*, vol. 4, pp. 217–20.
 4. On the lord of l’Ile-Adam, see A. Viaene, “Mijn Heere van Lelidam,” *Biekorf* 59 (1958), pp. 225–45.
 5. Blockmans, “Vlaanderen, 1384–1482,” p. 213. The population of Bruges was about 46,000 at the middle of the fourteenth century and may have dropped a little during the fifteenth (see Prevenier and Blockmans 1986, p. 32).
 6. Gilliodts-van Severen 1871–85, vol. 5, pp. 231–35; Blockmans, “Vlaanderen, 1384–1482,” p. 217; and J.-P. Sosson, *Les Travaux publics de la ville de Bruges, XIV^e–XV^e siècles: Les Matériaux, les hommes*, Collection Histoire Pro Civitate, series in-8°, no. 48 (Brussels, 1977), pp. 58–59, 133. From 1455 on, the eternal masses for Jean de Villers were held in the image-makers’ chapel in the Zilverstraat (see Martens 1992, p. 38).
 7. Gilliodts-van Severen 1871–85, vol. 6, pp. 51–59; and Blockmans, “Vlaanderen, 1384–1482,” p. 220.
 8. Blockmans, “Vlaanderen, 1384–1482,” pp. 221–23; and W. P. Blockmans, ed., *1477: Het algemene en de gewestelijke privilegiën van Maria van Bourgondië voor de Nederlanden*, Anciens pays et assemblées d’états, Standen en landen 80 (Kortrijk and Heule, 1985).
 9. J. A. van Houtte, “The Rise and Decline of the Market of Bruges,” *Economic History Review*, 2nd series, 19 (1966), pp. 29–47; Houtte 1982, pp. 79–105, 163–92; and W. Blockmans, “Brugge als Europees handelscentrum,” in V. Vermeersch, ed., *Brugge en Europa* (Antwerp, 1992), pp. 41–55.
 10. On this evolving position, see Gilliodts-van Severen 1871–85, vols. 5–6, passim; L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *Cartulaire de l’ancienne estaple de Bruges: Recueil de documents concernant le commerce intérieur et maritime, les relations internationales et l’histoire économique de cette ville*, 4 vols. (Bruges, 1904–6); L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *Cartulaire de l’ancien Grand Tonlieu de Bruges*, 2 vols. (Bruges, 1908–9); H. van Werveke, *Brugge en Antwerpen: Acht eeuwen Vlaamsche handel* (Ghent, 1941); H. van der Wee, *The Growth of the Antwerp Market and the European Economy*, 3 vols. (The Hague, 1963), vol. 2, pp. 3–282; Houtte, “Rise and Decline,” pp. 29–47; W. Brulez, “Bruges and Antwerp in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries: An Antithesis?” *Acta Historiae Neerlandicae* 6 (1973), pp. 1–26; J. A. van Houtte and R. van Uytven, “Nijverheid en handel,” in *Algemene geschiedenis*, vol. 4, pp. 87–111; and Houtte 1982, pp. 163–92.
 11. M. Ryckaert and A. Vandewalle, “De strijd voor het behoud van het Zwin,” in V. Vermeersch, *Brugge en de zee: Van Bryggia tot Zeebrugge* (Antwerp, 1982), pp. 51–70; and Prevenier and Blockmans 1986, pp. 18–20.
 12. For a detailed discussion of the standard of living between the

- 1440s and 1480s, see W. P. Blockmans et al., "Tussen crisis en welvaart: Sociale veranderingen, 1300–1500," in *Algemene geschiedenis*, vol. 4, pp. 56–86; and Prevenier and Blockmans 1986, pp. 191–96.
13. On agriculture in Flanders during this period and the evolution of food prices, see A. E. Verhulst, "Prijzen van granen, boter en kaas te Brugge volgens de 'slag' van het Sint-Donatianskapittel (1348–1801)," in *Dokumenten voor de geschiedenis van prijzen en lonen in Vlaanderen en Brabant*, ed. C. Verlinden, 4 vols. (Bruges, 1959–73), vol. 2, pp. 3–70; A. Verhulst, *Bronnen en problemen betreffende de Vlaamse landbouw in de late middeleeuwen (XIIIde–XVde eeuw)*, *Studia Historica Gandensia* 17 (Ghent, 1964); and M. J. Tits-Dieuaide, *La Formation des prix céréaliers en Brabant et en Flandre au XV^e siècle* (Brussels, 1975).
 14. Prevenier and Blockmans 1986, p. 196.
 15. P. Spufford, *Coinage, Taxation and the Estates General of the Burgundian Netherlands*, *Anciens pays et assemblées d'états*, *Standen en landen* 40 (Brussels, 1966), pp. 63–88; P. Spufford, *Monetary Problems and Policies in the Burgundian Netherlands, 1433–1496* (Leiden, 1970); and J. A. van Houtte and R. van Uytven, "Financiën," in *Algemene geschiedenis*, vol. 4, pp. 112–27.
 16. Prevenier and Blockmans 1986, p. 193.
 17. *Ibid.*, p. 282.
 18. A day-by-day calendar of the whereabouts of the Burgundian court is in H. vander Linden, *Itinéraires de Marie de Bourgogne et Maximilien d'Autriche (1477–1482)* (Brussels, 1934); H. vander Linden, *Itinéraires de Charles, duc de Bourgogne, Marguerite d'York et Marie de Bourgogne (1467–77)* (Brussels, 1936); and H. vander Linden, *Itinéraires de Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne (1419–1467) et de Charles, comte de Charolais (1433–1467)* (Brussels, 1940).
 19. Many of these were described by contemporary and later chroniclers. See Nicolaes Despars, *Chronijcke van den lande ende graef-scepe van Vlaenderen . . . van de jaeren 405 tot 1492*, ed. J. de Jonghe, 4 vols. (Bruges, 1837–40); *Oeuvres de Georges Chastellain*, ed. J.M.B.C. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 8 vols. (Brussels, 1863–66); *Mémoires d'Olivier de la Marche, maître d'hôtel et capitaine des gardes de Charles le Téméraire*, ed. H. Beaune and J. d'Arbaumont, 4 vols. (Paris, 1883–88); and Philippe de Commines, *Mémoires (1464–1498)*, ed. J. Calmette and G. Durville, 3 vols. (Paris, 1924–25).
 20. The activity and organization of foreign merchants in Bruges is discussed in J. Marechal, *Europese aanwezigheid te Brugge: De vreemde kolonies (XIVde–XIXde eeuw)* (Bruges, 1985); see also several contributions in Vermeersch, *Brugge en Europa*, as cited in notes below.
 21. On the Hanseatic League, see J. Marechal, "De betrekkingen tussen karmelieten en Hanzeaten te Brugge van 1347 tot 1523," *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis, gesticht onder de benaming Société d'Emulation te Brugge* 100 (1963), pp. 206–27; Dollinger, *Hanse*; Museum für Hamburgische Geschichte, *Die Hanse: Lebenswirklichkeit und Mythos*, exhib. cat., 2 vols. (Hamburg, 1989); and W. Paravicini, "Brugge en Duitsland," in Vermeersch, *Brugge en Europa*, pp. 98–127.
 22. On political and economic relations between England and the Low Countries, see M. R. Thielemans, *Bourgogne et Angleterre: Relations politiques et économiques entre les Pays-Bas bourguignons et l'Angleterre, 1435–1467* (Brussels, 1966); and J. H. Munro, *Wool, Cloth and Gold: The Struggle for Bullion in Anglo-Burgundian Trade, 1340–1478* (Brussels and Toronto, 1972). The Merchant Adventurers were studied by W. E. Lingelbach, *The Merchant Adventurers of England: Their Laws and Ordinances, with Other Documents* (1902; reprint, New York, 1971); E. M. Carus-Wilson, "The Origins and Early Development of the Merchant Adventurers' Organization in London as Shown in Their Own Mediaeval Records," *Economic History Review* 4 (1932–34), pp. 147–76; L. Lyell and F. D. Watney, *Acts of Court of the Mercers' Company, 1453–1527* (Cambridge, 1936); and P. Carson, "Brugge en de Britse eilanden," in Vermeersch, *Brugge en Europa*, pp. 128–45.
 23. On Hispano-Flemish commercial contacts, see J. Finot, "Etude historique sur les relations commerciales entre la Flandre et l'Espagne au moyen âge," *Annales du Comité Flamand de France* 24 (1898), pp. 1–360; L. Gilliodts-van Severen, *Cartulaire de l'ancien consulat d'Espagne à Bruges*, 2 vols. (Bruges, 1901–2); J. Marechal, "La Colonie espagnole de Bruges du XIV^e au XV^e siècle," *Revue du nord* 35 (1953), pp. 5–40; and A. Vandewalle, "Brugge en het Iberisch schiereiland," in Vermeersch, *Brugge en Europa*, pp. 159–81. On trade with Portugal, see E. van den Bussche, *Flandre et Portugal: Mémoires sur les relations qui existèrent autrefois entre les Flamands de Flandre particulièrement ceux de Bruges et les Portugais* (Bruges, 1874); O. Mus, "De Brugse compagnie Despars op het einde van de 15de eeuw," *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis, gesticht onder de benaming Société d'Emulation te Brugge* 101 (1964), pp. 5–118; and J. A. van Houtte, "Portugal en de Brugse handel tijdens de middeleeuwen," in J. Everaert and E. Stols, *Vlaanderen en Portugal: Op de golfslag van twee culturen* (Antwerp, 1991), pp. 32–51.
 24. On commercial relationships between Flanders and Italy in the fifteenth century, see J. Finot, "Etude historique sur les relations commerciales entre la Flandre et la république de Gênes au moyen âge," *Annales du Comité Flamand de France* 28 (1906–7), pp. 1–384; R. de Roover, "La Communauté des marchands lucquois à Bruges de 1377 à 1404," *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis, gesticht onder de benaming Société d'Emulation te Brugge* 86 (1949), pp. 23–89; W. B. Watson, "The Structure of the Florentine Galley Trade with Flanders and England in the Fifteenth Century," *Belgisch tijdschrift voor philologie en geschiedenis* 39 (1961), pp. 1073–91; 40 (1962), pp. 317–47; and A. Vandewalle and N. Geirnaert, "Brugge en Italië," in Vermeersch, *Brugge en Europa*, pp. 183–205.
 25. R. de Roover, *The Bruges Money Market Around 1400* (Brussels, 1968); and Prevenier and Blockmans 1986, pp. 100–103.
 26. A. Grünzweig, ed., *Correspondance de la filiale de Bruges des Medici*, 2 vols. (Brussels, 1931); R. de Roover, *Money, Banking and Credit in Mediaeval Bruges. Italian Merchant-Bankers, Lombards and Money-Changers: A Study in the Origins of Banking*, *Mediaeval Academy of America* 51 (Cambridge, Mass., 1948); R. de Roover, *Oprichting en liquidatie van het Brugs filiaal van het bankiershuis der Medici*, *Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, klasse der letteren* 15, no. 7 (Brussels, 1953); and R. de Roover,

- The Rise and Decline of the Medici Bank, 1397-1494*, Harvard Studies in Business History 21 (Cambridge, Mass., 1963).
27. E. Aerts, "Geld en krediet: Brugge als financieel centrum," in Vermeersch, *Brugge en Europa*, pp. 57-71.
 28. The most recent survey of Portinari's patronage is B. G. Lane, "The Patron and the Pirate: The Mystery of Memling's Gdańsk Last Judgment," *Art Bulletin* 73 (December 1991), pp. 623-40. On Portinari's role as patron of the parish Jacobskerk in Bruges, see Martens 1992, pp. 262-64.
 29. Martens 1992, p. 29. On immigration to Bruges, see Parmentier 1938.
 30. For biographies and an up-to-date bibliography on these artists, see G. Dogaer, *Flemish Miniature Painting in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries*, trans. A. E. C. Simoni et al. (Amsterdam, 1987). This reference work complements F. Winkler, *Die Flämische Buchmalerei des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts: Künstler und Werke von den Brüdern van Eyck bis zu Simon Bening* (Leipzig, 1925).
 31. Prevenier and Blockmans 1986, pp. 88-91.
 32. On Bruges tapestries, see J. Versyp, *De geschiedenis van de tapijtkunst te Brugge*, Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, klasse der schone kunsten 8 (Brussels, 1954); and G. Delmarcel and E. Duverger, *Brugge en de tapijtkunst*, exhib. cat., Gruuthusemuseum and Memlingmuseum (Bruges, 1987). On goldsmiths' work, see D. Maréchal, ed., *Meesterwerken van de Brugse edelsmeedkunst*, exhib. cat., Memlingmuseum and Brangwynmuseum (Bruges, 1993).
 33. On Bruges sculpture and decorative arts, see S. Vandenberghe, "De Brugse beeldhouwkunst en sierkunst in Europa," in Vermeersch, *Brugge en Europa*, pp. 299-317; and S. Vandenberghe et al., *Vlaamse kunst in de 15de eeuw: Tentoonstelling van sculptuur, meubilair en kunstnijverheid uit de tijd van Lodewijk van Gruuthuse (ca. 1427-1492)*, exhib. cat., Gruuthusemuseum and Museum van de Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk (Bruges, 1992).
 34. V. Vermeersch, *Grafmonumenten te Brugge voor 1578*, 3 vols. (Bruges, 1976).
 35. K. Carlvant, "De verluchte boeken van de gegoede stand in 13de-eeuws Brugge," in *Vlaamse kunst op perkament: Handschriften en miniaturen te Brugge van de 12de tot de 16de eeuw*, exhib. cat., Gruuthusemuseum (Bruges, 1981), pp. 141-75.
 36. Cultureel Centrum Romaanse Poort, *Vlaamse miniaturen voor van Eyck (ca. 1380-ca. 1420)*, exhib. cat. (Louvain, 1993); and M. Smeyers et al., *Naer natueren ghelike: Vlaamse miniaturen voor van Eyck (ca. 1350-ca. 1420)* (Louvain, 1993), pp. 80-120.
 37. For general information on the Burgundian library, see Delaissé 1959, pp. 11-20, 44-46; G. Dogaer and M. Debae, eds., *La Librairie de Philippe le Bon: Exposition organisée à l'occasion du 500^e anniversaire de la mort du duc*, exhib. cat., Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er} (Brussels, 1967), pp. 1-7; P. Cockshaw, C. Lemaire, and A. Rouzet, eds., *Charles le Téméraire: Exposition organisée à l'occasion du cinquantième centenaire de sa mort*, exhib. cat., Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er} (Brussels, 1977), pp. 3-19; and T. Kren and R. S. Wieck, *The Visions of Tondal from the Library of Margaret of York* (Malibu, 1990), pp. 8-18.
 38. Delaissé 1959, pp. 11-20, 44-46.
 39. *Ibid.*, pp. 99-134.
 40. W. H. J. Weale, "Documents inédits sur les enlumineurs de Bruges," *Beffroi* 2 (1864-65), pp. 298-319; 4 (1872-73), pp. 111-19, 238-337; and A. Vandewalle, "Het librariërs-gilde te Brugge in zijn vroege periode," in *Vlaamse kunst op perkament*, pp. 39-43.
 41. On the duchess as a collector of manuscripts, see T. Kren, ed., *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion and "The Visions of Tondal"* (Malibu, 1992).
 42. M. P. J. Martens, "De librije van Lodewijk van Gruuthuse," in M. P. J. Martens, *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse: Mecenas en Europees diplomaat, ca. 1427-1492* (Bruges, 1992), pp. 113-47.
 43. Martens 1992, pp. 86-150.
 44. *Ibid.*, pp. 27-30 and *passim*.
 45. Campbell 1976, pp. 192-94; and J. Dijkstra, "Origineel en kopie: Een onderzoek naar de navolging van de Meester van Flémalle en Rogier van der Weyden," Ph.D. diss., University of Amsterdam, 1990, pp. 7-10. While these studies are not based upon original archival research, they are valuable collections of previously published material, though caution is advised. First, there is no distinction made between types of documents or their origin. Administrative procedures were not the same everywhere in the southern Netherlands. Most of the material used in these publications to reconstruct a typical contract consists of charters passed before the Ghent aldermen of the Keure (published by E. de Busscher, *Recherches sur les peintres gantois des XIV^e et XV^e siècles* [Ghent, 1859]) and is therefore typical of specifically Ghent contracts only. Second, the publication by de Busscher bristles with transcription mistakes. Third, Campbell (p. 194) stated that "it seems highly improbable that a contract was drawn up and registered every time a commission was placed. Private arrangements were assuredly made, and in such instances the artist would sometimes have had to send in an invoice when the work was completed." Concluding a contract is a private matter. Perhaps by "private arrangements" Campbell meant oral agreements or unilateral contracts.
 46. These sources include payment records and court disputes. The lack of contracts is related to procedures of the administrative organization of the municipal government. All private contracts concluded in Ghent were legally confirmed by the aldermen of that city (see J. Decavele, ed., *Keizer tussen stropdragers: Karel V, 1500-1558* [Louvain, 1990], p. 59). In Bruges, however, this task was delegated to the clerks of the municipal courtroom, and preservation of their archives did not begin until 1484 (see A. Schouteet, *De klerken van de vierschaar te Brugge met inventaris van hun protocollen, bewaard op het Brugse Stadsarchief* [Bruges, 1973]; and A. Vandewalle, *Oud archief*, vol. 1 of *Beknopte inventaris van het Stadsarchief van Brugge* [Bruges, 1979], p. 93). The few contracts that do survive are clients' copies.
 47. J.-P. Sosson, "Une Approche des structures économiques d'un métier d'art: La Corporation des peintres et selliers de Bruges (XV^e-XVI^e siècles)," *Revue des archéologues et historiens d'art de Louvain* 3 (1970), pp. 91-100; Campbell 1976, pp. 188-98; J. C. Wilson, "Marketing Paintings in Late Medieval Flanders and

- Brabant," in *Artistes, artisans et production artistique au moyen âge*, 3 vols. (Paris, 1986–90), vol. 3, pp. 621–27; L. F. Jacobs, "The Marketing and Standardization of South Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces: Limits on the Role of the Patron," *Art Bulletin* 71 (June 1989), pp. 208–29; D. Ewing, "Marketing Art in Antwerp, 1460–1560: Our Lady's *Pand*," *Art Bulletin* 72 (December 1990), pp. 558–84; and J. M. Montias, "Socio-Economic Aspects of Netherlandish Art from the Fifteenth to the Seventeenth Century: A Survey," *Art Bulletin* 72 (September 1990), pp. 358–73.
48. For an evaluation of the specific situation in Bruges in light of preserved archival evidence, see Martens 1992, pp. 38–49.
49. S. Goddard, *The Master of Frankfurt and His Shop*, *Verhandelingen van de Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, klasse der schone kunsten* 38 (Brussels, 1984); and S. Goddard, "Brocade Patterns in the Shop of the Master of Frankfurt: An Accessory to Stylistic Analysis," *Art Bulletin* 67 (September 1985), pp. 401–17.
50. Jacobs, "Marketing and Standardization," pp. 208–29.



Fig. 8. Petrus Christus, *Saint Anthony and a Donor*, ca. 1450. Oil on oak, 23 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 12 $\frac{5}{8}$ in. (59 x 32.7 cm). Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen

Petrus Christus: A Cultural Biography

On July 6, 1444, Petrus Christus went to the Poortersloge (burghers' lodge) in Bruges to fulfill the formalities needed to acquire citizenship in this Flemish center of international commerce. A clerk noted in the so-called *Poorterboeken* (burghers' registers) that "Pieter Christus, son of Pieter, born in Baerle, purchased his citizenship on the sixth day of July through Joos vander Donc, in order to be a painter."¹ That September, Christus paid the fee of three Flemish pounds.²

Petrus, who was named after his father, probably came from Baerle, a village in the duchy of Brabant, less than nine miles north of Turnhout and ten and a half miles southeast of Breda. Although there also existed a hamlet called Baerle in the village of Drongen, near Ghent, it is more likely that the painter was from the Brabantine community.³ The unusual last name Christus is encountered more often in that region, near the present Belgian-Dutch border.⁴

It is not known how old Christus was when he settled in Bruges; nor do we know where he was trained or whether he spent all of his formative years in his hometown.⁵ When he arrived in Bruges, the city was slowly recovering from the dramatic political events it had witnessed between 1436 and 1440.⁶ As an incentive to revitalize economic life, the duke stipulated through an ordinance of January 24, 1441, that the cost of citizenship would be lowered and made the same for everyone for the next four years.⁷ As was the case with many skilled craftsmen, Christus must have been attracted by the professional opportunities triggered by this new immigration statute. His name is listed in the *Poorterboeken* among those individuals who did actually profit from this law.⁸

The protectionist regulations of the local painters' guild were very strict: in order to be allowed to practice

his profession in the city, Christus had to become a member of this organization. But first he had to acquire citizenship. There were three ways to become a *poorter*: by marrying a Bruges citizen, by living in the city for a year and a day, or by buying the right of citizenship.⁹ Obviously, Christus wanted to start working as soon as possible and therefore chose the last option and paid the considerable sum of £3 gr., approximately the total wages made by a skilled master craftsman in about three months.¹⁰

Earlier assumptions that Christus was active in Bruges—and, more specifically, in Jan van Eyck's workshop—years before he finally acquired citizenship must be rejected.¹¹ If he had been in the city for more than a year, he would have received citizenship automatically, which did not happen, as the entry in the *Poorterboeken* explicitly states that he bought it.¹² His case was certainly not exceptional: about 31 percent of all artists working in Bruges during the fifteenth century were immigrants.¹³

Christus soon received some important commissions. In 1446, he signed and dated a portrait of a lay brother who was probably from the Carthusian monastery at Genadedal, near Bruges, as well as a portrait of Edward Grymeston, an ambassador of the English king Henry VI to the court of Philip the Good. In 1449, Christus inscribed his name on a painting depicting Saint Eligius in a goldsmith's shop and on the frame of the *Madonna in Half-length*. In 1452, he apparently executed two signed wings representing the *Annunciation and Nativity* and the *Last Judgment*, now in Berlin, as well as another *Nativity* and an *Annunciation*, both recently acquired by the Groeningemuseum in Bruges.¹⁴ On April 24, 1454, the count of Etampes commissioned from Christus three copies of the miraculous *Notre-Dame de Grâce*, or *Cambrai Madonna*, none of

which survives today.¹⁵ Originally brought from Rome in 1440 and given to the chapter of the cathedral of Cambrai by Canon Fursy du Bruille, archdeacon of Valenciennes, upon his death in 1450, this painting was believed to have been painted by Saint Luke himself. The chapter of Cambrai paid Christus from its allowance and had the copies presented on its behalf by the archdeacon of Hainaut to the count of Etampes. Three years after this commission, in 1457, Christus signed the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis*, now in Frankfurt. No painting of a later date bearing his signature is extant.¹⁶

With the exception of his youth, the years 1457 to 1463 are the least documented in Christus's career. The archives do not reveal his whereabouts during this time, though it has been suggested that he was in Italy.¹⁷ All we do know is that sometime between 1444, when he arrived in Bruges, and 1463, he married a woman named Gaudicine.¹⁸ It was also precisely in these years that the artist gained social success. Not only did Christus receive an important commission from the city magistrate in 1462–63,¹⁹ but he and his wife also became members of the honorable Bruges Confraternity of Our Lady of the Dry Tree.²⁰ Their names are recorded in the lists of members who joined the organization between 1458 and 1463.²¹

The confraternity had its chapel in the north side of the choir in the church of the Bruges Franciscan monastery. It was founded before 1396, in support of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, which was defended by the Franciscan order. Its peculiar name referred to the infertility of the Virgin's mother, Saint Anne. Membership in this confraternity was indeed prestigious. All the Burgundian dukes, from Philip the Good to Philip the Fair, were honorarily inducted into this noble society. Other members of great prominence included Isabella of Portugal; Isabella of Bourbon; Anthony, the Great Bastard of Burgundy; and such notable courtiers as Adolph of Cleves, Engelbrecht of Nassau, and the court historiographer Olivier de la Marche. The regular members were men and women from Bruges's well-known aristocratic and upper-class families, such as Louis of Bruges, Pauwels van Overtvelt, the lords of Halewijn, Gistel, and Diksmuide, the Adornes, the van Nieuwenhoves, the de Baensts, and many others. The high percentage of foreign merchants, especially Florentines, is noteworthy. The

Portinari, Tani, Altoviti, Ricasoli, Villani, and Cavalcanti families were all well represented. People from Lucca, such as the famous brothers Giovanni and Michele Arnolfini, and members of the Poggi, Cenami, Reali, and Sandei families also joined the organization. The Spanish members included Martin Gonsales, Antonio Loupes, Alvaro de Castro, and Alonso and Silvestro Pardo.

Membership may have been understood as an astute entrepreneurial move. Clearly, being associated with this confraternity gave Christus an advantage as far as possible commissions were concerned. This was no doubt recognized by other artists who joined—among them the painters Arnoud de Mol and, later, Gerard David; the musicians Robert Pelé, Jean Cordier, and Adriaen Basin; and the silversmiths Jean Peutin and Gerard Loyet. Membership in the confraternity was perhaps also indicative of the unusually high social position these men had attained as artists. This was certainly the case with Christus, who seems to have been a prominent member of the board.

Perhaps another indication of Christus's elevated social status in the early 1460s is the important commission he received from the city magistrate of Bruges in 1462–63.²² On February 22, 1463, Philip the Good and his sister Agnes, wife of Charles, duke of Bourbon, made their triumphal entry into the city. The streets were decorated festively, and along the route from the city gate to the Prinsenhof, the ducal residence, *tableaux vivants* were staged on lavishly adorned scaffolds.²³ A series of *tableaux vivants* was also staged on the banks of the Reie or on floats on the river itself. Usually a rhetorician was in charge of each scene. He was paid by the city treasurers for the expenses of the installation, including the materials and the wages of the craftsmen and actors.

Having departed from Ghent, Philip the Good and his sister entered the city of Bruges in a rather dramatic and unusual fashion—namely, by boat at night. The bailiff and the sheriff, the two mayors, the aldermen and the councillors all sailed out to meet them. Their boat was decorated with pennons bearing the ducal arms, painted for the occasion by Arnoud de Mol. All the personnel on board wore red, white, and blue tunics. The sides of the boat were illuminated by sixty-six wax torches. The magistrature offered many gifts to Agnes, including two barrels of Beaune wine, a

huge quantity of wax, and two silver plates and two silver lions that the city had purchased from the silversmith Boudewijn Hendricx.

The boat entered at the northeast side of the city. In front of the hospital of Our Lady of the Potterie, on the bank of the river, a *tableau vivant* representing the *Seven Virtues* was performed. Somewhat farther on, in a castle on floats, a few young women played *Venus and Her Maids of Honor*. Near the Carmersbrug, on boats floating on the water, was a representation of the *Judgment of Paris* by Bruges's most important rhetorician of the time, Antoon de Roovere. The ducal guests disembarked near the Poortersloge and proceeded through the Academiestraat, where a scaffold was erected in front of a statue of a little bear, the symbol of the Honorable Jousting Society of the White Bear. At the Vlamingstraat they viewed a stage in front of the house of the de Beurze family, the location of the first stock exchange in Europe. From there the retinue avoided the market and took a shortcut to the ducal residence, where two more *tableaux vivants* were presented. Later, all the residents of Bruges participated at a magnificent bonfire on the Burg.

This day was the start of a series of festive events. Some two weeks later, on March 6, a tournament was organized on the Markt (market square).²⁴ On April 24, the duke, his son Charles, Agnes of Bourbon, and noble courtiers were treated to an extravagant banquet in the city hall, and one week later the annual festival of the Holy Blood began. As the duke and his retinue were still in town, the procession was even more lavish than usual. The *beelden-makers* (image-makers) received £12 gr. for repairing the props of a scene representing the *Agony in the Garden* and were given an award for staging the best performance.

On this occasion, Christus and master painter Pieter Nachtegale²⁵ were paid for supervising the construction of two gigantic props installed in the streets of Bruges²⁶ that represented a *Tree of Jesse* and a scene called *Jerusalem*.²⁷ The considerable amount of £40 8s. gr. paid to Christus and his colleague covered the materials, carpenters' wages, and food for seventy-two people. The props probably consisted of a wooden core with an armature of iron wire wrapped with canvas, which was then painted. (In 1466–67, Christus restored some of the painted elements on the *Tree of Jesse*, and the following year he received further payment for those repairs.²⁸ In

May 1468, François van den Pitte and Jacob de Jonghe were paid for repairing the same props.²⁹) The series of festivities concluded with a *pas d'armes* organized by Philip de Lalaing on the Markt, which was attended by the duke, his son, and his sister.³⁰

Along with the citizenry of Bruges, Petrus Christus witnessed in 1468 the most spectacular and extravagant event staged in the city during the Burgundian era: the wedding of Charles the Bold and Margaret of York, sister of Edward IV, king of England. By choosing the English princess as his third wife, Charles forged a firm alliance with the House of York against Louis XI of France.³¹ A grand prelude to the wedding pageantry took place on April 19, 1468, when Charles made his triumphal entry into Bruges.³² From May 8 to 10, the duke presided over his first chapter meeting as sovereign of the Order of the Golden Fleece at Onze-Lieve-Vrouwekerk, the Church of Our Lady.

Charles wanted his wedding to be the most splendid celebration ever contrived in the Burgundian lands. The festivities started on Sunday, July 3, 1468, the actual day of the wedding, and lasted until Tuesday, July 12. The court chronicler and *maître d'hôtel* Olivier de la Marche devised the plays and spectacles that were held during the banquets. Anthony, the Great Bastard of Burgundy, organized the "tournament of the Golden Tree," a fusion of jousts and symbolic performances full of pomp and splendor held on the Markt every afternoon of the festivities.³³

More than 150 artists from all over the Burgundian lands were invited to collaborate on the decorations for the dramas and tournaments. Among them were the most talented and respected artists of the time: Jacques Daret from Tournai, and Hugo van der Goes, Daneel de Rijcke, and Lieven van Lathem from Ghent. Many Bruges painters, sculptors, embroiderers, and other artists were also working on public decorations for the wedding, though they were paid by the city magistrature.³⁴ A workshop was established for them especially for this occasion in the meeting hall of the corporation of the tailors.³⁵ However, whether Christus or Hans Memling, who had settled in the city in 1465, had any part in the decorations remains unknown.

The documentary evidence seems to imply that Christus increasingly became more of an administrator in the painters' corporation and in various other social organizations. It is not clear whether he simultaneously

reduced his artistic activity. However, about the time that dozens of artists were working in Bruges on the wedding decorations, he received only payment in arrears for earlier work.³⁶ Moreover, in 1468 it was not Christus himself, but van den Pitte and de Jonghe who repaired his *Tree of Jesse*.³⁷

From 1467 on, Christus's name is encountered in a variety of instances. Records have surfaced of his annual contributions to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow, starting in 1467–68.³⁸ This important devotional organization was founded before 1450 by the tailors' corporation at the Church of Our Lady. The confraternity had its chapel in the choir, north of the tanners' chapel.³⁹ After some twenty years, it counted hundreds of members, many of whom belonged to other corporations as well. Members of the court, such as Charles the Bold and his mother, Isabella of Portugal, joined the confraternity, as did other aristocrats. Its name, *Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw*, Our Lady of the Snow, referred to the miraculous snowfall prior to the founding of Santa Maria Maggiore in Rome, whose dedication feast (August 5) was observed by the confraternity.

Little is known about this confraternity in the fifteenth century. However, its accounts for the years 1467 to 1499 include some interesting data about a number of Bruges artists, including Christus, Memling, Willem Vrelant (the famous Bruges illuminator), and Pierre Coustain, the court painter.⁴⁰ Christus must have been enrolled before 1467–68, for in that year he paid only two groats, whereas new members were obliged to pay more.⁴¹ It is impossible to establish when he joined the confraternity, since the accounts of previous years are lost. Christus's annual contributions were collected either in the church or inside the old walls.⁴² This probably means that he lived inside the area of the parish of Our Lady enclosed by the first city walls, which were built in 1127–28 after the murder of Count Charles the Good (r. 1119–27).⁴³

On July 7, 1468, Christus acted as a representative for Hannekin Coopman, a girl who won first prize in the city's lottery.⁴⁴ The magistrate organized these lotteries to pay off public debts.⁴⁵ Hannekin won £50 gr., or the revenues collected in one year by the *scrooderye*, the municipal office responsible for collecting fees for loading and unloading wine and beer in the Bruges harbor. The diminutive form of her first name, Hannekin (little Jeanne), suggests she was a minor. An adult woman

would not have needed a male representative, as collecting a prize in a lottery was not a legal act. Therefore, Petrus Christus's presence ("present Pieter Xpistus") can be explained in only one of two ways: either he acted as a witness for a minor⁴⁶ or he represented an adult who was unable to collect the prize herself.

On June 20, 1469, Christus co-signed a contract stipulating the conditions for the use by the Confraternity of the Dry Tree of the chapel in the church of the Franciscans.⁴⁷ The contract specified the types and number of religious services that were to be held in the confraternity's chapel, gave strict directions for remuneration of the brethren, and regulated the ownership of gifts to the chapel. All donations made by members of the confraternity, such as wax and candles, statues, silverware, ecclesiastical garb, and other church ornaments, remained the confraternity's property. However, everything that was sacrificed during services—"be it money, candles, wine, bread, meat, or other gifts"—would henceforth be given to the convent. Furthermore, all income issuing from sepulchral concessions in the chapel remained the property of the Franciscans. A stipulation in the contract regulating what the confraternity was allowed to take with it when it decided to leave gives some idea of how lavishly the chapel was decorated. The members of the Dry Tree were allowed to remove all

statues, paintings, chandeliers, organs, and church treasures, such as decorations, chalices, ampullae, books, curtains, altar cloths, antependia, ritual textiles, and other similar objects used in the said chapel and on the altar, as well as everything that hangs on the walls and can be taken down without great damage. . . .

The document was co-signed on behalf of the confraternity by Pauwels van Overtvelt, dean of the Dry Tree and bailiff of Bruges; Anselmus Adornes; Giovanni Arnolfini; the theologian Joos Berthilde; Jan van Nieuwenhove, sheriff of Bruges; and other board members, including Petrus Christus, Tommaso Portinari, Jan van Huerne, Colaert Dault, Anthuenis van Dammast, Jan Tsolle, and Pieter van Bochoute.⁴⁸

Christus acted as a representative of the corporation of image-makers in legal matters on more than one occasion. On January 4, 1469, he was listed as a notable member, or elder (*houderling*), among the witnesses to

the signing of a contract between the image-makers and the Austin friars regarding daily masses.⁴⁹ The same year, Christus also appeared before the Bruges aldermen, again as an elder of the corporation, to hear the reading of the testament of Willem, lord of Montbléru, who had generously bequeathed a considerable part of his assets to the chapel of the corporation.⁵⁰ On March 19, 1472, Christus was mentioned for the last time as a representative of the image-makers' guild. His name appears in a verdict of that date resolving a conflict between the guild, as plaintiff, and the court painter Pierre Coustain and his assistant, Jan de Hervy, as defendants.⁵¹ The image-makers accused de Hervy of having worked for people not affiliated with the court, which was an infringement upon the bylaws of the corporation.⁵²

Until recently, it was generally accepted that Christus died before November 1473.⁵³ However, the accounts of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow for 1472–73, 1473–74, and even 1474–75 mention the payments of his dues, just as they had been recorded in previous years. In the administrative year 1475–76, Christus's wife, Gaudicine, paid his final dues.⁵⁴ The accounts of that year record the cost of the painter's funeral mass, twenty-one shillings, which was paid by the confraternity. Christus's relatives—presumably Gaudicine—contributed five shillings toward the total. These accounts establish that Christus died between September 2, 1475, and December 19, 1476. As the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow paid the expenses, we also know that the funeral took place in the Church of Our Lady.

The date of Christus's death can perhaps be specified even further. On March 13, 1476, Bastyaen Christus,

a bastard son of Petrus, became a free master in the corporation of the image-makers.⁵⁵ He probably became an independent master after his father's death in order to take over his workshop. If so, Petrus died between September 2, 1475, and March 13, 1476. Bastyaen's own workshop, containing unsold works and painters' materials, was taken over after his death on May 5, 1500, by his son, Petrus II Christus, who was named after his grandfather.⁵⁶

Petrus Christus's fame diminished in the North soon after his death. In Italy, however, his reputation endured. A portrait of a French lady by Christus, perhaps identified by an inscription on a now-lost frame, was listed in the 1492 inventory of the collection of Lorenzo de' Medici.⁵⁷ In a letter of March 20, 1524, to Marcantonio Michiel, Pietro Summonte mentioned a painting by Christus of the image of Christ in Majesty in the Sannazaro collection in Naples.⁵⁸ Summonte knew that Petrus was a "pictor famoso in Fiandra," but thought that he belonged to an earlier generation than Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden.

Forty-three years later, in 1567, Lodovico Guicciardini listed Petrus in his *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi, altrimenti detti Germania inferiore* but erroneously referred to him as a follower of Hans Memling.⁵⁹ In 1568, Giorgio Vasari repeated this inaccurate information in the second edition of his *Vite*.⁶⁰ By the eighteenth century, the memory of Christus had dimmed. Even though the Bruges painter Pieter Le Doulx (1730–1807) mentioned Christus in his *Levens der konst-schilders* of 1795, his was only one unknown name among the many others Le Doulx copied from the obituaries of the painters' guild of fifteenth-century Bruges.⁶¹

Documents referred to in these notes are in Appendix 1.

1. See doc. 1. Nothing is known about vander Donc except that he was prepared to act as Christus's guarantor.
2. See doc. 2. The currency in Flanders in the fifteenth century was usually the Flemish pound of 240 groats. One pound (£) was worth 20 shillings (s., *scellingen*, *écus*) of 12 pence or groats (d., gr., *penningen*, *deniers*) each.
3. For a general discussion about Christus's place of birth, see Upton 1990, p. 8.
4. Scholtens 1960, pp. 59–72; and Upton 1990, p. 8.
5. Sterling (1971, pp. 1–26) speculated that Christus traveled before settling in Bruges.
6. Martens 1992, pp. 16–18.
7. Gilliodts-van Severen 1874–75, vol. 1, pp. 550–51; Parmentier 1938, vol. 1, p. xxviii; and Upton 1990, p. 9 n. 9. Upton erroneously dated the document 1440, as he neglected to convert the Easter style of the date. Throughout the Middle Ages, until 1582, the Easter style was used for dating in Flanders, which means that the beginning of the year was not January 1, but Easter. Customarily, Easter style (Old Style, O.S.) dates are converted to modern dating (New Style, N.S.). See E. I. Strubbe and L. Voet, *De chronologie van de middeleeuwen en de moderne tijden in de Nederlanden* (Antwerp and Amsterdam, 1960), pp. 55–58 (Easter style), pp. 95–141 (conversion tables).
8. Parmentier 1938, vol. 1, p. xxviii.
9. *Ibid.*, p. viii. Citizenship was also occasionally granted for special merit.
10. The nominal wages of skilled master craftsmen—such as masons, limestone workers, and thatchers—remained unchanged from 1400 to 1485, an average of about 10d. gr. per day (see J.-P. Sosson, *Les Travaux publics de la ville de Bruges, XIV^e–XV^e siècles: Les Matériaux, les hommes*, Collection Histoire Pro Civitate, series in-8°, no. 48 [Brussels, 1977], pp. 300–301). £3 gr. equals 720d. gr., or the average wages of seventy-two working days.
11. Schabacker 1974, pp. 19–22.
12. See Martens 1990–91, pp. 5–6; and Upton 1990, pp. 7–11. Upton (pp. 11–19) also discusses the ramifications of this interpretation of the archival sources.
13. See Martens 1992, p. 29.
14. On the reliability of these inscriptions, see Ainsworth, "Art of Petrus Christus," this volume. On July 30, 1451, a "maestro Piero de Fiandra" was paid for an altarpiece in the church of Santa Maria della Carità in Venice ("It. a di 30 luio ave M^o piero de fiandra per l^a pala duc. 78 e per dacio e per barche e altre spese condotta a venesia insuma monta, d. 100 L. O s. O"; Venice, Archivio di Stato, Santa Maria della Carità, *Canonici Lateranensi Busta N. 3, Quaderni di contabilità spese per fabbriche, 1441–1650, Libro fabrica della giesia et capelle—1441 ecc.*, s.v. 1451 [fol. 55v]). See Fogolari 1924, pp. 76, 103; Fogolari 1946, pp. 170–71; Upton 1972, pp. 429–30; L. Campbell, review of *Petrus Christus*, by P. H. Schabacker, *Burlington Magazine* 117 (October 1975), p. 677; and Upton 1990, pp. 44 n. 53, 73 n. 63. Contrary to what these authors assume, however, the possibility that this "maestro Piero" was Petrus Christus is very slim. First, Pieter was a very common name in Flanders, and second, it cannot be inferred from this document whether this man was a painter, a merchant, an art dealer, a broker, or a bargeman who brought the painting to Venice.
15. See docs. 3–7; Laborde 1849–52, vol. 1, p. 125 n. 1; C. Carton, "Notre-Dame de Cambrai," *Annales de la Société d'Emulation de Bruges*, 2nd series, 8 (1850), pp. 322–28; Weale 1863b, pp. 236–37; Weale 1909, p. 101; Rolland 1947–48, pp. 97–106; and Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 297 n. 4. The chapter of the cathedral of Cambrai commissioned another twelve copies from Hayne de Bruxelles, for which he was paid only £1 apiece (see Dupont 1935, pp. 363–66; Périer-d'Ieteren 1968, pp. 111–14; and M. W. Ainsworth, *Facsimile in Early Netherlandish Painting: Dieric Bouts's "Virgin and Child"* [New York, 1993], pp. 4–7).
16. Collier's (1979, p. 37) tentative deciphering of an inscription on the Kansas City *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (cat. no. 20) as A.D. 1472 is unconvincing.
17. The idea of an Italian sojourn was first elaborated in Bazin 1952, pp. 194–208. However, all efforts to connect Christus with Italian archival sources have been unsuccessful; see Upton 1990, p. 43 n. 54.
18. Her name appears in a document only once (see doc. 25). For the *terminus ante quem* of his marriage, 1463, see note 21 below and doc. 8.
19. See doc. 9.
20. See doc. 8. On this important confraternity, see Custis 1843, pp. 379–85; A. de Schodt, "Confrérie de Notre-Dame de l'Arbre Sec," *Annales de la Société d'Emulation de Bruges* 28 (1876–77), pp. 141–87; A. Houbaert, "De eredienst van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw bij de Minderbroeders in België," *Franciscana: Archief der Paters Minderbroeders* 12–13 (1958), pp. 5–12; R. Strohm, "Muzikaal en artistiek beschermheerschap in het Brugse ghilde vanden Droghen Boome," *Biekorf* 83 (1983), pp. 5–18; and R. Strohm, *Music in Late Medieval Bruges* (Oxford, 1985), pp. 70–73.
21. The membership list was drawn up in several phases between 1454 and 1495. The first phase, written by a clerk who might be called Hand A1, can be dated 1454 to 1458. Isabella of Bourbon, second wife of Charles the Bold, is mentioned in the list as "Mijn vrouwe van charloes" on fol. 1r. The year of her marriage to Charles, 1454, offers a *terminus post quem* for the first phase of the genesis of this document. This first phase was finished before September 5, 1458, as Anthonis II Bootsart, abbot of the Bruges abbey of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, commonly known as "ten Eeckhout," who died on that date, is mentioned on fol. 5r. Christus's name appears on fol. 13r, which is written (as are all the entries between the last one on fol. 12r and the one appearing after Christus in the list) in a densely spaced and spiky *littera formata* by a clerk who might be called Hand C. The entries written by Hand C appear after those that could date before September 5, 1458. Therefore, this date is a *terminus post quem* for the entries of Hand C. After the names of Petrus Christus and his colleague painter Arnoud de Mol were inscribed, the list was updated with individual entries, the earliest dated being that of Anthony, the Great Bastard of Burgundy, in May 1463. One may thus conclude that Christus and his wife

- became members of this important confraternity between September 5, 1458, and May 1463.
22. See doc. 9.
 23. See Martens 1992, pp. 138–41. Gilliodts-van Severen (1871–85, vol. 5, pp. 531–32) stated that Margaret of Anjou, the fugitive queen of England and wife of Henry VI, and her son, the Prince of Wales, were simultaneously welcomed into Bruges. However, the latter party arrived in July 1463—i.e., five months later (see T. Luykx and J. L. Broeckx, Jr., *Brugge, Steden en landschappen* 9 [Antwerp, 1943], p. 106). The magistrature offered them wax and wine (Gilliodts-van Severen 1871–85, vol. 5, pp. 531–32). Strohm (*Music*, p. 83), apparently unaware of this confusion, also assumed that it was Margaret of Anjou who made her entry at Philip’s side in February 1463.
 24. In the contemporary payment documents, the expenses for this event immediately follow those for the *tableaux vivants* (Martens 1992, pp. 469–73).
 25. Pieter Nachtegale was a *vinder* (sworn member or inspector) of the image-makers’ corporation in 1457 and its governor (or financial administrator) in 1461 and 1462. He died between August 29, 1469, and August 27, 1470 (see doc. 18). See C. Carton, “Obituaire de la Société de St.-Luc,” *Annales de la Société d’Emulation de Bruges*, 2nd series, 12 (1862–63), p. 5; D. van de Castele, “Documents divers de la Société S. Luc, à Bruges,” *Annales de la Société d’Emulation de Bruges*, 2nd series, 18 (1866), pp. 63, 68–69, 245, 343; and Martens 1992, p. 140.
 26. Misled by the confusing multitude of events mentioned in the accounts for this year, scholars considered these *tableaux vivants* part of the pageantry of the triumphal entry on February 22. I made the same error (Martens 1990–91, pp. 6, 8–12). I now believe that the revised chronology of the events, based on the sequence of the entries in the municipal accounts as they are presented here, is correct.
 27. This scene, designated in document 9 by the abbreviation *Jhlem*, was misread by most scholars as the abbreviation for “Jhesuskine,” or baby Jesus, which makes little sense (see Weale 1863b, p. 237). Only Gilliodts-van Severen (1871–85, vol. 5, p. 534) and Strohm (*Music*, p. 83) correctly read this as the abbreviation for Jerusalem. All other scholars relied upon Weale’s transcription. On the iconography of this scene, see Martens 1990–91, pp. 9–12.
 28. See docs. 10, 12.
 29. See doc. 12.
 30. In a *pas d’armes*, or passage of arms, a knight attempted to defend his position in one-on-one combat until he was defeated (R. Barber and J. Barker, *Tournaments: Jousts, Chivalry and Pageants in the Middle Ages* [Woodbridge, England, 1989], p. 8).
 31. On the political implications of this marriage and the diplomatic negotiations that preceded it, see J. Calmette, “Le Mariage de Charles le Téméraire et de Marguerite d’York,” *Annales de Bourgogne* 1 (1929), pp. 193–214; and R. Vaughan, *Charles the Bold: The Last Valois Duke of Burgundy* (London, 1973), pp. 44–53. On the wedding itself, see P. de Ram, “Détails concernant le mariage de Charles-le-Téméraire avec Marguerite d’Yorck, en 1468,” *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d’Histoire* 5 (July 1841–August 1842), pp. 168–74; T. Phillipps, “Account of the Ceremonial of the Marriage of Princess Margaret, Sister of King Edward Fourth, to Charles, Duke of Burgundy, in 1468,” *Archaeologia* 31 (1846), pp. 326–38; A. J. Enschedé, “Huwelijksplechtigheden van Karel van Bourgondië en Margaretha van York,” *Kronijk van het Historisch Genootschap, gevestigd te Utrecht*, 5th series, 2 (1866), pp. 17–71; J. M. B. C. Kervyn de Lettenhove, “Relation du mariage du duc Charles de Bourgogne et de Marguerite d’York,” *Bulletin de la Commission Royale d’Histoire*, 3rd series, 10 (1869), pp. 245–66; O. Cartellieri, “Theaterspiele am Hofe Herzog Karls des Kühnen von Burgund,” *Germanisch-romanische Monatsschrift* 9 (1921), pp. 168–79; and Martens 1992, pp. 79–85.
 32. On Charles’s triumphal entry in 1468, see A. van Zuylen van Nyevelt, “Joyeuse entrée de Charles le Téméraire à Bruges (1468),” *Annales de la Société d’Emulation de Bruges* 57 (1907), pp. 380–92.
 33. Olivier de la Marche gave the most detailed report of the event (see *Mémoires d’Olivier de la Marche, maître d’hôtel et capitaine des gardes de Charles le Téméraire*, ed. H. Beaune and J. d’Arbaumont, 4 vols. [Paris, 1883–88], esp. vol. 3, pp. 101–201; vol. 4, pp. 95–144). Other chronicles include *Cronicke van Vlaenderen* (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, MS 435, fols. 245v–250v); *Dits die excellente cronike van Vlaenderen . . .* (Antwerp: Willem Vorsterman, 1531), fols. 134r–156v; Jehan de Wavrin, *Recueil des croniques et anchiennes istories de la Grant Bretagne, a present nomme Engleterre*, ed. W. Hardy, 5 vols. (London, 1864–91), vol. 5, pp. 559–62; *Chroniques relatives à l’histoire de la Belgique sous la domination des ducs de Bourgogne*, ed. J. M. B. C. Kervyn de Lettenhove, 3 vols. (Brussels, 1870), vol. 1, pp. 489–90; and Jehan de Haynin, *Mémoires, 1465–1477*, ed. D. D. Brouwers (Liège, 1905–6), pp. 17–62. Other primary sources are the accounts of the expenses for the wedding decorations. These were recorded by Fastre Hollet, inspector of the ordinary expenditures of the ducal household, and published in Laborde 1849–52, vol. 2, pp. 293–381, nos. 4410–4899.
 34. Hence, their remarkable absence from the ducal records.
 35. “Item betaelt diverschen schilders, beildesniders ende andre ghezellen weerckende int huus vanden parmentiers, an zekere weercken dienende ter brulocht van onzen gheduchten heere, thulpe van huere costen die zy ghedaen hebben hier binnen der stede ende assise ghegholden van huere drancke van wyne, iij lb.gr.” (Item paid various painters, sculptors, and other companions working in the house of the tailors, on certain works to be used for the marriage of our redoubtable lord, in assistance of the expenditure they made here within the city and for the excises on their wine, 3 lb.gr.). See Bruges, Stadsarchief (hereafter, SAB), *Stadsrekeningen*, no. 216, 1467–68, fol. 77v; published in Martens 1992, p. 486. See also the trial between the magistrature and Charles de Hane, housekeeper of the tailors’ hall: “Lors furent faictes les preparatoires de la feste et solempnite des nopces de mondit tres redoubte seigneur en ycelle pour sur quoy besoignier et mesmement en fait des pointures, taeleries dymaiges et autres ouvraiges necessaires et servans pour ladite feste et solempnite . . .” (SAB, *Civiele sententiën vierschaar*, no. 157, reg. 1469–70, fols. 53r–53v).

36. See doc. 12.
37. Ibid.
38. See docs. 11, 14, 18–20, 22–25.
39. Strohm, *Music*, p. 47; Martens 1990–91, pp. 7–8; and Martens 1992, pp. 232–36.
40. The Memling entries have been published by A. Schouteet, “Nieuwe teksten betreffende Hans Memling,” *Revue belge d’archéologie et d’histoire de l’art* 24 (1955), pp. 81–84. I discovered the other documents in April 1986 and published them in Martens 1990–91, pp. 5–23. Independently, Schouteet also found them and included some of them, without any interpretation, in his *De Vlaamse primitieven te Brugge: Bronnen voor de schilderkunst te Brugge tot de dood van Gerard David*, Fontis Historiae Artis Neerlandicae 2, 1 vol. to date (Brussels, 1989–), pp. 161–62.
41. See doc. 11. Moreover, their contributions are inscribed in the accounts for 1467–68 under the heading “received in the collecting boxes outside” (Willem Vrelant) and “received in the collecting boxes in the church” (Petrus Christus) and not under “receipt of the new guild brethren and sisters accepted during this year.”
42. In 1473–74, Christus’s payment was inscribed twice (see doc. 23, fols. 126v, 127v). This was no doubt a simple administrative error.
43. See F. L. Ganshof, *Over stadsontwikkeling tusschen Loire en Rijn gedurende de middeleeuwen*, 2nd ed. (Antwerp and Brussels, 1944), p. 8 (with map and bibliography); J. de Smet, “De evolutie van het Brugse stadsgebied,” *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis, gesticht onder de benaming Société d’Emulation te Brugge* 100 (1963), p. 91; and E. I. Strubbe, “Van de eerste naar de tweede omwalling van Brugge,” *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis, gesticht onder de benaming Société d’Emulation te Brugge* 100 (1963), pp. 271–300.
44. See doc. 13. On the origins of public lotteries in Bruges, see L. Gilliodts-van Severen, “La Loterie à Bruges,” *Flandre* 1 (1867–68), pp. 5–26, 160.
45. I am grateful to Professor D. E. H. de Boer, Department of History, University of Groningen, for discussing this issue with me. Jan van Eyck’s widow is mentioned in the Bruges lottery of 1446 (SAB, *Lotteryen*, no. 273, lotterij 1446, fol. 3r). She won £2 gr.
46. Christus is not mentioned in the archives of the orphans’ chamber, so he could not have been her legal guardian. The Janne Coopman who is mentioned in these archives on January 8, 1529 (N.S.), as the widow of Pieter de Folentin and mother of six children, is probably a namesake and not identical with Hannekin (see SAB, *Wezengoederen*, no. 208, *St.-Nicolaaszestendeel*, bk. 7, November 9, 1514–July 7, 1567, fol. 216r: “Noel, Paukin, Hannekin, Copkin, Maikin ende Callekin Pieter de Folentins kinderen die hij hadde by Janne Coopmans, zine wive . . .”).
47. See doc. 16. It is dated “upden twinstichsten dach van Wedemaent int Jaer duust vierhondert neghen ende tsestich” (on the twentieth day of June in the year thousand four hundred sixty-nine)—not July 20, as stated by de Schodt (“Confrérie,” p. 158).
48. On the contacts between Anselmus Adornes and Christus, see Martens 1990–91, p. 17. The involvement of the other people in the cultural life of Bruges is also well documented and discussed in Martens 1992, passim.
49. See doc. 15; and Martens 1992, p. 318. The guild supervised masses endowed by the brothers Jan and Antoon Losschaert. It was common practice to entrust a guild with the supervision of private foundations and the use of altars (see Martens 1992, p. 374 and passim). This assured the rigorous execution of the legator’s wishes. The contract was not concluded in 1468, as stated in A. Keelhoff, *Histoire de l’ancien couvent des ermites de Saint Augustin à Bruges* (Bruges, 1869), pp. 173–74. The author neglected to convert the Easter style of the date (see note 7 above).
50. See doc. 17; E. Feys and A. C. de Schrevel, “Fondation de Guillaume de Montbléru en la chapelle de St. Luc et St. Eloi, dite chapelle des peintres, à Bruges,” *Annales de la Société d’Emulation de Bruges* 46 (1896), pp. 139–40; and Martens 1992, p. 38. Willem was lord of Montbléru—not Monblern, as Weale (1863a, pp. 151–52) incorrectly transcribed it. This transcription is corroborated by comparing the last letter in Monblern with the second in Overtvelt. The chapel of the image-makers was built in 1450 in the Zilverstraat and dedicated to Saint Luke (see Duclos 1910, pp. 335, 516). The erroneous date 1452 in Duclos (p. 335) was corrected in the corrigenda (p. 590). In 1466, the lord of Montbléru received fiefs and annuities from Philip the Good worth £120 of 40 gr. (i.e., £20 gr.; the usual currency in the Burgundian accounts is pounds of 40 gr., worth only one sixth of the Flemish pound). He had to endow masses with half this sum. He also had his tomb monument erected in the chapel (see V. Vermeersch, *Grafmonumenten te Brugge voor 1578*, 3 vols. [Bruges, 1976], vol. 2, pp. 249–51, pl. 117). In 1887, tomb paintings were discovered in this sepulcher, which is now entirely lost. In exchange for his generosity, Montbléru asked the corporation to erect an epitaph to commemorate him.
51. See doc. 21.
52. The only persons exempted from all municipal and corporate restrictions were court artists. The aldermen decided that because of his status as “servant and courtier of my very redoubtable lord,” Pierre Coustain and his servants could work for the duke, the aristocrats at the court, and all other courtiers without violating the corporation’s privileges. However, Jan de Hervy, who worked for people other than courtiers, had to become a member of the corporation and pay an admission fee of £6 gr.
53. Weale (1909, p. 103) placed the date of Christus’s death before November 1473 on the basis of his position in the obituary list of the corporation of image-makers (see doc. 27). His view has been generally accepted (as in Upton 1990, p. 8). I questioned this opinion on paleographic and archival grounds (Martens 1990–91, pp. 6–8).
54. See doc. 25. Since Christus was an immigrant in Bruges and no one else with this unusual last name is mentioned in the *Poorterboeken*, it would be surprising if Gaudicine were related to the painter in any way other than as his wife. It is remarkable, though, that she is mentioned in the accounts of Our Lady of the Snow only in the year Petrus died. This probably means she paid her husband’s final dues but did not become a member of the confraternity herself.

55. See doc. 26. Bastyaen is well documented (see Weale 1909, pp. 112–14).
56. On Petrus II, see Weale 1909, pp. 114–19.
57. See doc. 28. This painting is tentatively identified by some authors as the famous *Portrait of a Lady* (cat. no. 19).
58. See doc. 29. Upton (1990, p. 1 n. 4) suggested that a possible candidate for this painting is the *Head of Christ* (cat. no. 4).
59. See doc. 30.
60. See doc. 31.
61. See doc. 32; and Pieter Le Doulx, *Brugsche kunstenaars van voorheen*, ed. A. de Poorter (Bruges, 1935).



Fig. 9. Petrus Christus, *Annunciation and Nativity* and *Last Judgment*, 1452. Oil on oak, each panel 52¼ x 22 in. (134 x 56 cm). Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

The Art of Petrus Christus

SCHOLARSHIP TO DATE

The rediscovery of Petrus Christus in modern times may be credited to Gustav Waagen, the early-nineteenth-century director of the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, and to Johann David Passavant, a contemporary German painter and noted connoisseur. Lamenting the state of knowledge about early Flemish painters, Waagen wrote in January 1825 to the Société des Beaux-Arts in Ghent raising a number of questions about the relationships between the known painters and making a few general observations of his own.¹ He linked two paintings signed “Petrus Christophori” (his interpretation of *petr xpī*), *Saint Eligius* and *Portrait of a Lady* (cat. nos. 6, 19), with the “Pietro Christa” mentioned by Giorgio Vasari in his *Vite* of 1568 and identified the artist as a pupil of Jan van Eyck.² In 1833, Passavant came across the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* (cat. no. 13), noting above all the “very clear colors, but a brownish tone in the shadows like those of Jan van Eyck.”³ He subsequently acquired and restored the painting, removing the overpaint on the inscription. The *Madonna Enthroned* then joined Waagen’s discoveries along with two altarpiece wings that had surfaced in Burgos, Spain (fig. 9), to form the initial corpus of signed and dated paintings by Petrus Christus. Commenting on the group, Passavant noted a resemblance to works by van Eyck, though the colors in the *Saint Eligius* and the two wings were “drier and harsher” and Christus’s figures were “generally small.”⁴

W. H. J. Weale’s research in the Bruges archives provided references to Christus’s name and some biographical details, but no confirmation of a specific relationship to van Eyck could be found in any of the documentary sources.⁵ Nonetheless, the link between Christus and van Eyck continued to be discussed in the early art-historical literature, which clarified the nature

of Christus’s art yet also tended to obscure his achievement by relegating him to the shadow of the “founder” of Northern Renaissance painting.⁶

This rather pejorative assessment of Christus’s paintings evolved when they were first catalogued by Max J. Friedländer, who continued to see them as a less accomplished spin-off of the art of van Eyck.⁷ This was not, however, an entirely satisfactory interpretation for other art historians, including Otto Pächt, Wolfgang Schöne, and Charles de Tolnay, who attempted to demonstrate the influence of Robert Campin (the Master of Flémalle) and Rogier van der Weyden, instead of van Eyck, on Christus’s early development.⁸ Furthermore, the issue of Christus’s possible Dutch origin was raised with particular emphasis on his association with other northern Netherlandish artists, such as Dieric Bouts and Albert van Ouwater.⁹

Just as a proposed chronology for Christus’s oeuvre was being established by Friedländer, it was turned upside down by the opposing views of Pächt and others. At the center of the dispute was Christus’s imposing Brussels *Lamentation* (fig. 11) and the question of its date. Wilhelm Bode (who first attributed the painting to Christus), Georges Hulin de Loo, Martin Davies, and Friedländer favored a late date of about 1465.¹⁰ These scholars considered the dependence of Christus’s early works on van Eyck and the later influence of Rogier’s *Deposition* (fig. 10) as determining factors in dating the *Lamentation*. In opposition to this view, Pächt, Schöne, and de Tolnay saw Petrus not as a pupil of van Eyck but principally as an independent follower of Campin and Rogier who (except for his portrait paintings) only later in life fell under Jan’s influence. They thus dated the *Lamentation* early in Christus’s career, about 1447–48.

In Erwin Panofsky’s more tempered opinion, Christus was the apprentice, collaborator, and “succes-



Fig. 10. Rogier van der Weyden, *Deposition*, ca. 1435–40. Oil on panel, 86¼ x 103 in. (220 x 262 cm). Museo del Prado, Madrid

sor in business” of van Eyck.¹¹ He proposed that Christus later looked to Campin and Rogier and finally, after about 1450, merged the two prevailing influences. This view was maintained in the 1970s in the dissertations of Lola Gellman, Joel Upton, and Burkhard Richter and in the monograph by Peter Schabacker.¹² But problems of attribution and chronology have persisted, and other methods of addressing them have been sought. Judith Levenson, James Collier, and Marshall Myers each proposed a chronology based on those paintings in which a developing awareness of one-point perspective could be demonstrated.¹³ Taking a different direction, Ursula Panhans-Bühler returned to formal and iconographic issues, concentrating on Christus’s “eclecticism and originality.”¹⁴ In a somewhat similar vein, Upton stressed the differences between Christus and van Eyck. In particular, he dealt with the spiritual content of Christus’s paintings and his means of deliberately clos-

ing the gap between image and viewer, a distance that was so assiduously maintained by the precious nature of Jan’s art.¹⁵

Until now, no study has focused specifically on the physical characteristics of the works as criteria for judging attribution, dating, and the extent to which Christus was indebted to van Eyck and other artists for the development of his technique and style. This exhibition, which brings together nearly three-quarters of Christus’s known works for the first time, provides a unique opportunity to reevaluate their technique, execution, and condition. Our aim is to investigate *how* these works were made in order to solve some rather traditional questions of connoisseurship.

For an artistic career that spanned three decades in Bruges, Christus’s known oeuvre is relatively small. About thirty paintings, five drawings, and one illuminated manuscript page have been attributed to him, but

of these a relatively large number—nine paintings—are signed and dated. Although not all the inscriptions have survived intact, at least seven of the nine convey reliable information. These seven works may in turn be used in evaluating the other attributed paintings, particularly those that fall within the first half of Christus's career. However, none of the surviving works can be securely linked to any archival documents of commission, payment, or ownership, and the nine pictures that are inscribed were all made between 1446 and 1457, leaving open the matter of authenticated paintings from the last eighteen years or so of the artist's life. The attribution questions have centered around a group of Eyckian works,¹⁶ several paintings in poor condition,¹⁷ and some pictures that have disappeared from view, either because they are in private collections or were destroyed during World War II.¹⁸ Chronological distinctions have been complicated by the eclectic nature of Christus's paintings, the product of his considerable talent for assimilating not only motifs from other artists but also aspects of their technique and execution.

Because fifteenth-century Northern paintings tended to conform to traditional models, it can be difficult

to discern an individual hand or to trace the development of an artist's style. These aspects are sometimes more clearly exposed through the investigation of the spontaneous and idiosyncratic features evident in a painter's preliminary sketch on a panel. The underdrawing provides practical as well as personal clues to an artist's creative process, since it indicates exactly what was deemed necessary as a guide for the upper paint layers. Christus developed an increasingly sophisticated preliminary system for his paintings that can be seen in the stylistic evolution of his underdrawings and his progressively more advanced employment of perspective techniques.

Signed and Dated Works

Before considering the evolution of Christus's working method, it is necessary to evaluate the reliability of the signed and dated works as the defining points along a chronological continuum. Signatures on paintings of this period are not generally in the artist's handwriting, but are instead in standardized script, formed in Latin or Greek letters, constituting part of the decoration of



Fig. 11. Petrus Christus, *Lamentation*, ca. 1455. Oil on oak, 39 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 75 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (101 x 192 cm). Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels



Fig. 12. Petrus Christus, *Madonna in Half-length*, 1449. Oil on oak, 22½ x 15½ in. (57 x 39 cm). Musée National d'Histoire et d'Art, Bentinck-Thyssen Collection, Luxembourg



Fig. 13. Jan van Eyck, *Man in a Turban*, 1433. Oil on oak, 13 x 10½ in. (33 x 25.8 cm) with original frame. National Gallery, London

the painting, either on the frame or within the picture.¹⁹ The seeming permanence of such forthright statements discourages scrutiny of authenticity, but this is necessary if the inscriptions are to be considered reliable guarantees.

Two methods of verifying the information in inscriptions are microscopy and dendrochronology. The latter procedure was carried out by Peter Klein on nineteen paintings attributed to Christus. The results (see Appendix 2) do not contradict the general dates assigned to the paintings through various art-historical determinations. It is important to emphasize that the date arrived at by dendrochronological analysis presents simply the *terminus post quem* for a painting, not the exact date of creation.

Jan van Eyck's customary inscription included his name, the date the work was completed (sometimes including the day, month, and year), and his device "ALS

ICH CAN" or a prayer.²⁰ Christus generally followed this model, signing his name in Latin and Greek letters (usually *Petrvs* and *Xp̄i* for *XPICTOC*, or "Christos") and the rest of the inscription in Latin. The location and particular style of the lettering, however, vary considerably from painting to painting, raising the issue of the significance of the diversity. In every case, the manner in which Christus signed his painting alluded to the model from which it derived, sometimes overtly to a work by van Eyck. Christus's references to Jan may have been an intentional homage to Bruges's premier painter or they may have been guided by an interest in securing the niche in the art market vacated by the master upon his death.

In the *Portrait of a Carthusian* (cat. no. 5, fig. 14), Christus followed van Eyck's example in the *Man in a Turban* (fig. 13), painting the inscription • *PETRVS* • *XPI* • *ME* • *FECIT* • in square capital display script as if it were



Fig. 14. Detail of cat. no. 5 (inscription)



Fig. 15. Detail of fig. 65 (inscription)



Fig. 16. Detail of cat. no. 6 (signature)



Fig. 17. Detail of fig. 9 (inscription)



Fig. 18. Detail of cat. no. 13 (inscription)



Fig. 19. Detail of cat. no. 4 (signature)

carved into the painted frame. Christus, however, took his predecessor's illusionism one step further by placing the signature on a trompe-l'oeil frame within the actual frame. He paid close attention to the fall of light on the inscription, taking care to coordinate it with the direction of the light cast on the head. Because of this precision in the painting of the inscription, the appearance of the date, 1446, is all the more disconcerting. Not only is it squeezed in at the right seemingly as an afterthought, but it is also less refined in execution. There is no attempt to simulate the chiseled look of the letters, and, even more troubling, it is in a different color paint, which led Alan Burroughs to doubt its authenticity.²¹ The style and technique of the *Carthusian*, however, are compatible with an early dating. One possibility is that the 1446 was on the original frame and was added to the painting when that frame was removed, probably when the portrait changed hands.

The inscription on the *Portrait of Edward Grymeston* (figs. 15, 65), a heart-shaped mark followed by *PETRVS XPI.* and below that *ME. FECIT. A^o 1446*, is also rendered in square capital display script. Most unusual, however, is its placement on the reverse of the panel.²² The heart-shaped mark is crudely painted over a damaged area; the upper and lower levels of the inscription are rendered differently—*PETRVS XPI.* in red with black edging and *ME. FECIT. A^o 1446* in two shades of red with black edging, which produces a more three-dimensional effect; the flourish over the entire inscription is clumsily executed. Although the information presented in the inscription is not in doubt, the problems associated with its condition and execution indicate that it cannot have been painted by Christus but was probably copied from the original frame at a later date.²³ The heart-shaped mark could have been added by someone who knew the sign in the *Saint Eligius* inscription, as it does not appear anywhere else in Christus's oeuvre.

The inscription in display script on the *Madonna in Half-length* (fig. 12), "Petrus Christus made me in 1449," generally follows the form on the portraits, except for the curious, and for Christus unusual, abbreviation for *anno domini* (perhaps a copy of a form found on the frames of other icons of this type). The unfortunate history of the work, which was overpainted in the sixteenth century with a Crucifixion that was subsequently cleaned off, has left this important picture in an extremely damaged state.²⁴ The frame was overpainted

as well, but the hymn, signature, and date were recovered during cleaning and restoration. The inscription appears to have been reinforced, based on the remnants of the surviving original signature and date.

Saint Eligius (cat. no. 6, fig. 16) is the only Christus painting that bears what one might argue is a signature rather than an inscription. The $\overset{\circ}{m}$ • *petr xpī me • • fecit • a^o 1449* • followed by a heart-shaped mark is made in Burgundian *bâtarde* script, in the style of goldsmiths' and manuscript illuminators' signatures on guild tablets, which include individualized marks quite similar to the one after the date here.²⁵ The $\overset{\circ}{m}$ preceding the name stands for the title of master, signifying the level of training that Christus had achieved at this point. Although somewhat worn, this signature is completely original and very beautifully executed in coordination with the lighting of the painting (the signature is fainter at the left, where it is beneath the shadow of the marriage girdle, and becomes stronger toward the right).

Another exceptional inscription is found on the 1452 Berlin wings (figs. 9, 17), where the lowercase Gothic script is produced in *pastiglia* (raised gesso): • *petrus • xpī • me • fecit •* on the left wing and *anno • domini • m • cccc • lij* on the right. By inscribing the pictures this way, Christus may have indicated an association with the type of lettering common to manuscript illumination²⁶ as well as to certain Eyckian paintings. The only known use of *pastiglia* in works attributed to van Eyck is in the *Crucifixion and Last Judgment* diptych (fig. 20), panel paintings that resemble large-scale illuminations.²⁷ The *Last Judgment* was the model for Christus's Berlin wing of the same subject.

The lettering on the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* (cat. no. 13, fig. 18) returns to the model of Christus's portraits and Jan van Eyck's paintings, particularly the *Madonna with Canon George van der Paele* (fig. 141), which is most closely associated with this work. † *PETRVS • XPI • • ME • FECIT • 14[5]7* • is painted in square capital display script as if incised into the lower step leading to the Virgin's throne. Its specific placement probably refers to the manner in which contemporary Italian paintings were signed and dated,²⁸ as this work was presumably commissioned by an Italian. Otherwise entirely reliable, this inscription has one problematic feature, the date, whose third numeral is considerably damaged. Given the pivotal importance of this painting in Christus's oeuvre, the question of the



Fig. 20. Jan van Eyck, *Crucifixion and Last Judgment*, ca. 1435. Oil on canvas transferred from wood, each panel 22¼ x 7¾ in. (56.5 x 19.7 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

date has been thoroughly reviewed in the literature.²⁹ There is now general agreement that it may be read as 1457. As it is in the *Portrait of a Carthusian*, the lighting on the signature is consistent with the lighting used throughout the painting.

Somewhat less reliable as a signature is the remnant on the lower part of the trompe-l'oeil frame around the *Head of Christ* (cat. no. 4). In attempting to decipher

what remains of the cutoff letters, it is helpful to refer to the inscription on the Berlin wings. Through this comparison it is possible to reconstruct at least a *Petr* with the allowance in the space to the right for an *Xpi* (compare figs. 19 and 20). This Gothic script follows the type found in illuminated books, an apt association given the miniaturelike nature of this painting.

The most problematic of all the inscriptions are those on the *Annunciation* and the *Nativity* recently acquired by the Groeningemuseum, Bruges (figs. 21–24). Each is signed and dated *PETRVS XPI ME FECIT 1452* at the lower edge. Dirk De Vos pointed out the unfortunate condition and considerable restoration of these paintings based on his examination and information from X-radiographs.³⁰ My June 1991 investigation with infrared reflectography further clarified the question of condition. As a result of this recent study, major portions of the *Annunciation* signature are in question, and the inscription on the *Nativity* cannot be considered original. On the *Annunciation*, the *ME FECIT* is in a different color paint than the name and date, and, most curious and uncharacteristic of Christus, the *PETRVS XPI ME FECIT* is rendered as if chiseled, and the 1452 as if in *pastiglia*. Although van Eyck employed both types of illusionistic lettering on his painted frames (for example, on the *van der Paele Madonna*), he used raised lettering on one side and incised lettering on the other. Placing the two types together negates the illusionistic effect that was so carefully established in Jan's example and maintained in certain paintings by Christus (in particular, the *Carthusian* and the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis*). Furthermore, this inscription is painted over a very damaged area, making it extremely difficult to discover whether any original remnants remain beneath it. The *Nativity* inscription is added over an area where all of the original paint is lost. The restorer most likely used other works as a pattern for the signature and date, which he practiced beforehand on the bare wood beneath the current painted inscription.



Fig. 21. Petrus Christus, *Annunciation*, 1452. Oil on oak, 33 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (85.5 x 54.8 cm). Groeningemuseum, Bruges



Fig. 22. Detail of fig. 21 (inscription)

Hans Memling, like his Bruges predecessors van Eyck and Christus, signed and dated a number of his works.³¹ These paintings, however, are all generally inscribed with the same type of information and lettering in the same location on the frame, quite different from the example set by Christus. Not until the early sixteenth century do we again encounter the variety of signature types evident on Christus's paintings. This is



Fig. 23. Petrus Christus, *Nativity*, ca. 1452. Oil on oak, 33% x 21% in. (85.5 x 54.8 cm). Groeningemuseum, Bruges



Fig. 24. Detail of fig. 23 (inscription)

principally in the works of Jan Gossaert, who, like Christus, imitated and emulated van Eyck.³² The self-assertion of the artist manifested in the way he chose to sign and date his work finds an important precedent in Christus's oeuvre.

PAINTING TECHNIQUE AND CHRONOLOGY

Devotional Paintings

In his classic study *Art Criticism from a Laboratory* (1938), Alan Burroughs recorded his impressions of Christus's technique in a small group of paintings that he had studied firsthand.³³ He concluded that Christus responded to a variety of influences from the masters of Tournai, Bruges, and Brussels and was not tied solely to the art of Jan van Eyck.

Since that study, very little attention has been paid to Christus's technique and working method. Micheline Comblen-Sonkes and Catheline Périer-d'Ieteren reported the basic characteristics of the underdrawings found in the two male portraits in London (figs. 66, 67) and Los Angeles (cat. no. 16, fig. 68), the Berlin *Lady* (cat. no. 19, fig. 163), and the Brussels *Lamentation* (figs. 11, 50, 51).³⁴ J. R. J. van Asperen de Boer mentioned the underdrawing in the Brussels *Lamentation*, which he found basically unrelated to that in the *Ghent Altarpiece*.³⁵ Now that thirty-two of the attributed paintings have been studied from the point of view of their technique (using infrared reflectography, X-radiography, and, when possible, microscopy), certain generalizations may be made that help establish a framework for a reevaluation of Christus's art.

A characteristic trait of the artist's oeuvre is the discrepancy in handling and execution between small and large works. While the small paintings are rendered with the refined brushwork of a miniaturist, those on a larger scale are very broadly painted. The jewellike effect and the sense of animation that are found in the smaller pictures become less apparent in the monumen-



Fig. 25. Circle of Jan van Eyck, *Trinity*, from the *Turin-Milan Hours*. Tempera on vellum, 10½ x 6¼ in. (26.8 x 17.4 cm). Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts Graphiques, Paris, RF 2025

tal works, which led Max J. Friedländer to characterize the latter as composed of stiff, geometrically conceived figures “turned out on a lathe.”³⁶

Close study of the small-scale paintings reveals a remarkable resemblance to the technique and handling of manuscript illumination.³⁷ In the *Head of Christ* (cat. no. 4), the *Exeter Madonna* (cat. no. 7), the *Christ as the Man of Sorrows* (cat. no. 9), and the *Madonna of the Dry*

Tree (cat. no. 18), for example, the modeling of the flesh tones was achieved with extremely fine brush strokes built up in an additive way over an underpainting that is usually a flat pinkish color (fig. 29).³⁸ The miniatures of the *Trinity* (fig. 25) and the *Nativity* (fol. 4v; Museo Civico, Turin) from the *Turin-Milan Hours* show the same application of pinkish white in the flesh areas, upon which are parallel, vertical modeling strokes in

gray for the shadows and in white for the highlights. X-radiography of Christus's small paintings indicates minimal preliminary preparation in lead white for the lighting effects or the volume of forms in the flesh tones, which are achieved instead by surface applications of dark and light pigments, as they are in manuscript illumination. Perhaps because of their size, but also because of the additive way in which these works are painted, there is little or no underdrawing.

In the *Man of Sorrows* and the *Madonna of the Dry Tree* (figs. 26–28), Christus did not fully blend contrasting colors in areas of drapery to achieve the modeling of the forms (for example, the angels' robes in the first painting and the Christ Child's shirt in the second). Instead, in the manner of an illuminator, he placed contrasting unblended strokes side by side, realizing that at a certain distance the colors would appear to merge, creating the desired effect. A parallel is again found in the *Trinity* miniature, in which the draperies are rendered with a preliminary base tone, in this case blue for the Virgin's robe, covered by light blue and black modeling strokes. Black contour lines define the edges of

forms in the illuminated page as they do in Christus's small paintings.

In the tiny *Exeter Madonna* (figs. 91, 117), the precise placement of highlights achieves a convincing three-dimensional form, which would require successive applications of blended tones in a larger work. The masterful rendering of numerous details of the composition shows an artist who was practiced at execution on this scale.

Parallels with the technique of manuscript illumination are not limited to Christus's smallest paintings. For example, in the *Saint John the Baptist in a Landscape* and the *New York Lamentation* (cat. nos. 3, 8), both datable about 1445–50, a flat orange-pink base tone was applied, upon which fine, variegated strokes were placed to achieve the modeling (figs. 30, 31). The underdrawing is fully worked up, indicating the composition and the system of shading for the faces and draperies. Characteristic of Christus's relatively early works is the two-dimensional emphasis of the preliminary sketch, which is more successful at indicating the lighting of forms than their volume. The faces, for example, are

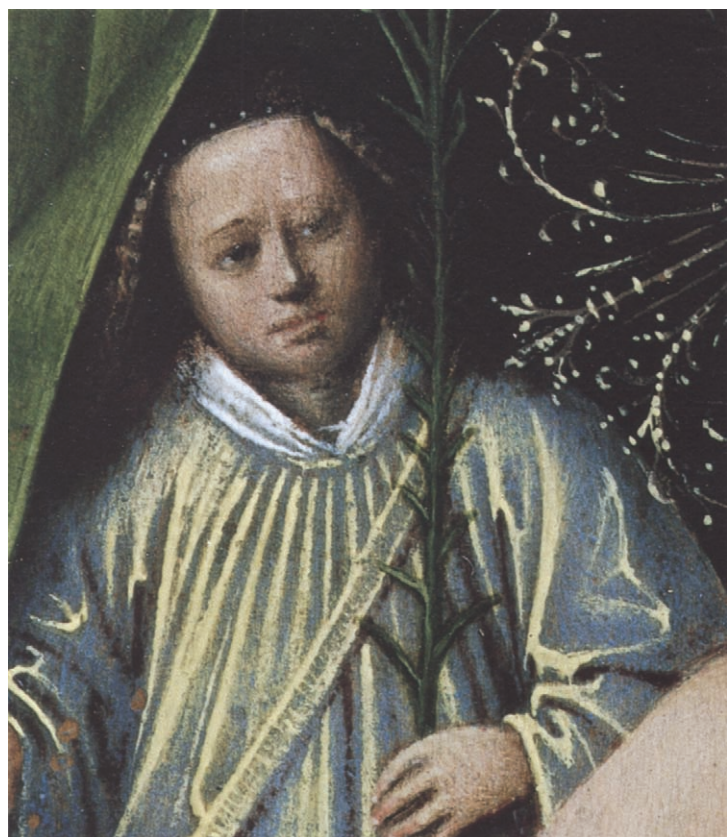


Fig. 26. Detail of cat. no. 9 (left angel)



Fig. 27. Detail of cat. no. 9 (right angel)

underdrawn with even, parallel strokes running vertically along the cheeks (figs. 33, 34). Parallel hatchings for the deepest areas of shadow in the draperies are placed so close together that they create a wash effect (figs. 99, 119).

Dating to this period, but clearly problematic in terms of attribution, is the Paris *Lamentation* (fig. 36). Infrared reflectography shows that the underdrawing is characteristic of Christus insofar as the general graphic handling is concerned (figs. 37, 38)—regular, parallel, oblique hatching for shading; diamond-shaped cross-hatching in the deepest shadows of the draperies (a specific development of the 1452 Berlin wings, figs. 46, 48, 49); and in faces (fig. 39), the same parallel hatching found in the faces of the Saint John in the Cleveland *Saint John* and in the New York *Lamentation* (figs. 33, 34). Furthermore, the running squiggly lines at the upper right and the summary description of the hills and rocks recall similar features in the underdrawing of the Cleveland *Saint John* (compare figs. 40 and 99).



Fig. 28. Detail of cat. no. 18 (Virgin and Child)



Fig. 29. Detail of cat. no. 9 (Christ's arm)

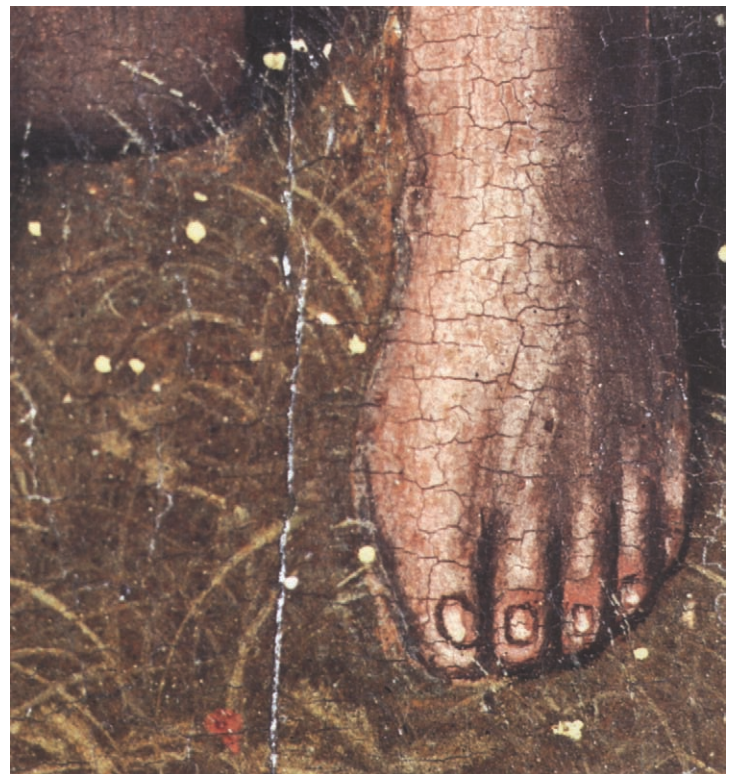


Fig. 30. Detail of cat. no. 3 (Saint John's left foot)

Unlike Christus, however, is the significant revision of the design in the underdrawing stage (particularly in the lower portion of the draperies of Mary Magdalene and of the Virgin) as well as the handling in paint. The faces of the Magdalene and especially of the female figure at the right are not at all similar to Christus's types. In addition, the robes are rendered with broad folds that do not follow the underdrawing design and are unlike Christus's sharply defined, sculptural draperies. As the composition was inspired by the *Pietà* miniature from the *Turin-Milan Hours* (fig. 35), perhaps the Paris painting is evidence of Christus's participation in a post-Eyckian workshop where these designs were available. The execution in paint, however, must have been carried out by another hand.³⁹

The chronology of Christus's paintings can be traced through subtle improvements in technique and execution leading toward a systematic description of space and a convincing placement of three-dimensional figures and objects within it. Although van Eyck was certainly interested in the rational description of space,

he arrived at his solutions empirically and not through any demonstrable system.⁴⁰ X-radiographs and infrared reflectograms of several of Jan's paintings show no trace of any perspective plan worked out in the preliminary design with underdrawing or incised lines. Quite the contrary, the underdrawings of the Washington *Annunciation*, the *Virgin of Chancellor Rolin*, the *Lucca Madonna*, and the *Madonna with Canon George van der Paele* exhibit numerous changes in contours and shifts in architectural features made in order to arrive at acceptable spatial solutions purely by eye.⁴¹

Perhaps inspired by Jan's example of a rational-looking space but having no established model of perspective to follow, Christus pursued the matter on his own.⁴² His initial attempts amounted to little more than a series of successive planes punctuated by motifs placed to connect the space of the picture with that of the viewer.⁴³ At first, these motifs were usually conventional devices that could suggest the illusion of space within and outside a painting.⁴⁴ In *Saint Eligius* (cat. no. 6), for example, Christus positioned a mirror reflecting



Fig. 31. Detail of cat. no. 8 (Saint John's head)

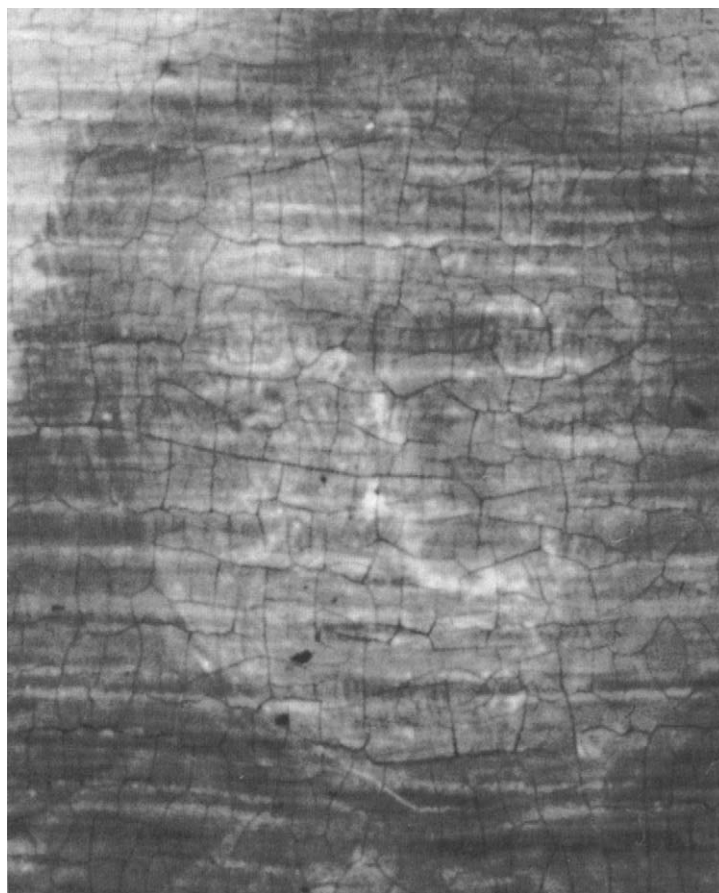


Fig. 32. X-radiograph, detail of cat. no. 8 (Saint John's head)

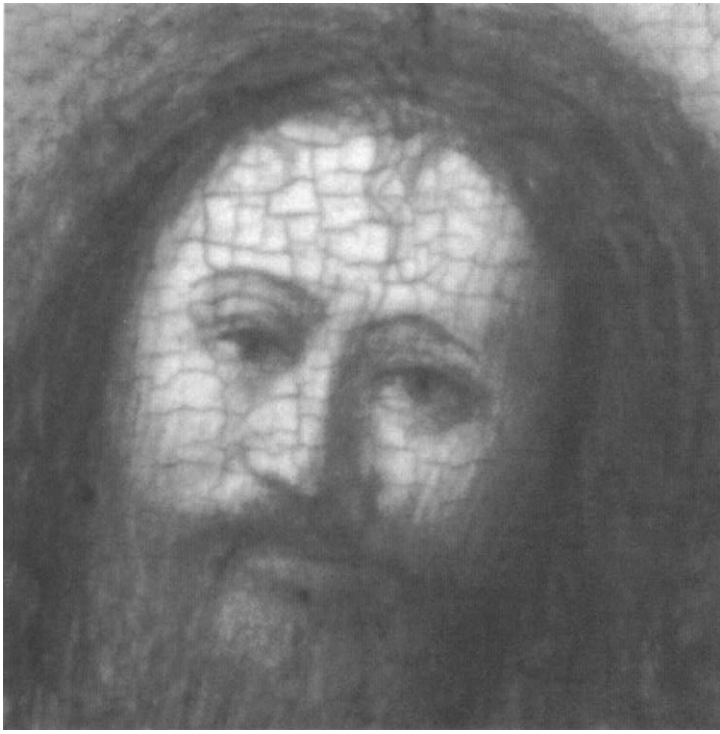


Fig. 33. IRR, detail of cat. no. 3 (underdrawing of Saint John's head)



Fig. 34. IRR, detail of cat. no. 8 (underdrawing of Saint John's head)

the world of the viewer at the lower right and decoratively arranged the marriage girdle over the edge of the saint's workbench in order to bridge the distance between pictorial and "actual" space. A series of vertical and horizontal ruled lines sufficed to define the room; most of these lines stop at, or just inside, the edges of the figures, indicating that the artist constructed the figures before he laid out the space.

Christus was simultaneously becoming increasingly adept at describing the volume of figures. This skill is especially evident in the underdrawings of the paintings, which show a progression from a flat, planar rendering produced by straight, unvariegated strokes to a more volumetric conception achieved by curved or angled lines grouped to model the forms more fully. He routinely began the figures with a broad brush outline of their basic shapes. Then, using a very fine brush, he worked out the lighting system, as in the face and hand of Saint Eligius (figs. 41, 42). In *Saint Eligius and the Madonna in Half-length*, early works dated 1449, the draperies are underdrawn in zones of closely aligned, even, parallel hatching in brush, sometimes reinforced

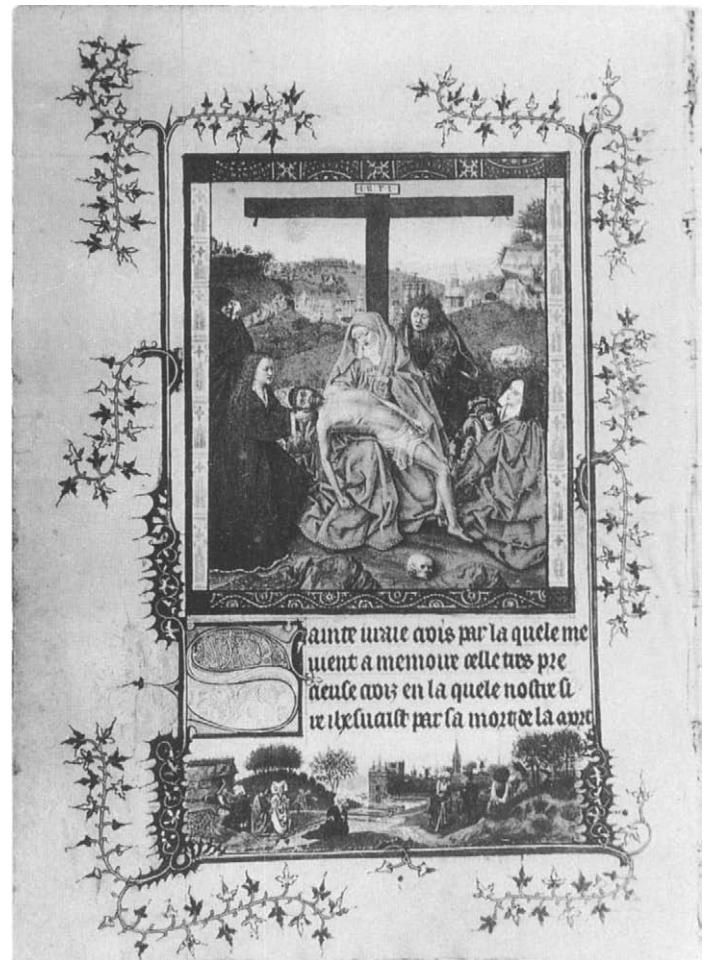


Fig. 35. Hand H, *Pietà*, from the *Turin-Milan Hours*, MS K. IV. 29, fol. 49v. Tempera on vellum. Destroyed by fire in 1904; formerly Biblioteca Universitaria, Turin

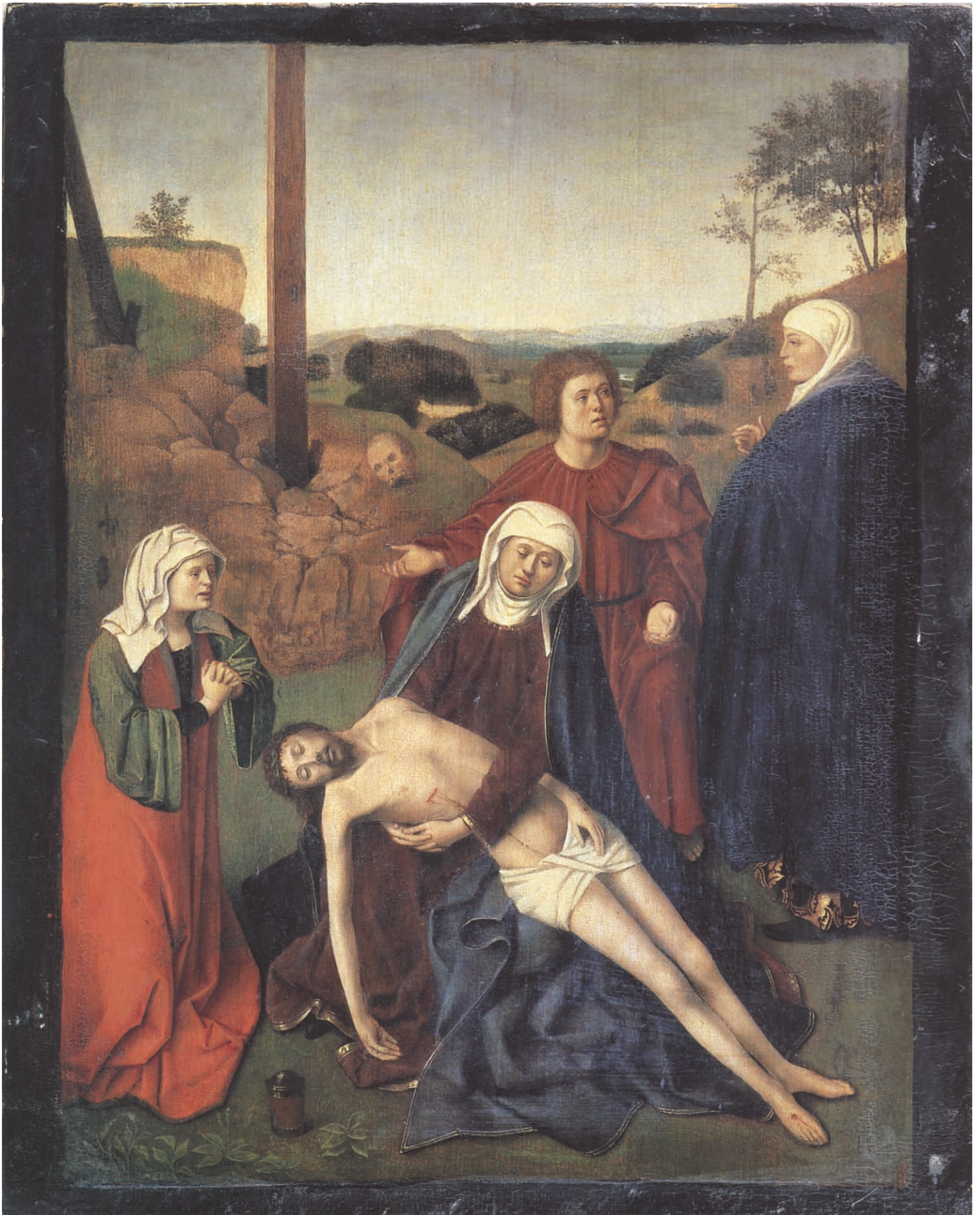


Fig. 36. Petrus Christus and follower, *Lamentation*, ca. 1445–50. Oil on panel, 15 x 12 in. (38 x 30 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris



Fig. 37. IRR computer assembly, detail of fig. 36 (underdrawing of the Magdalene)

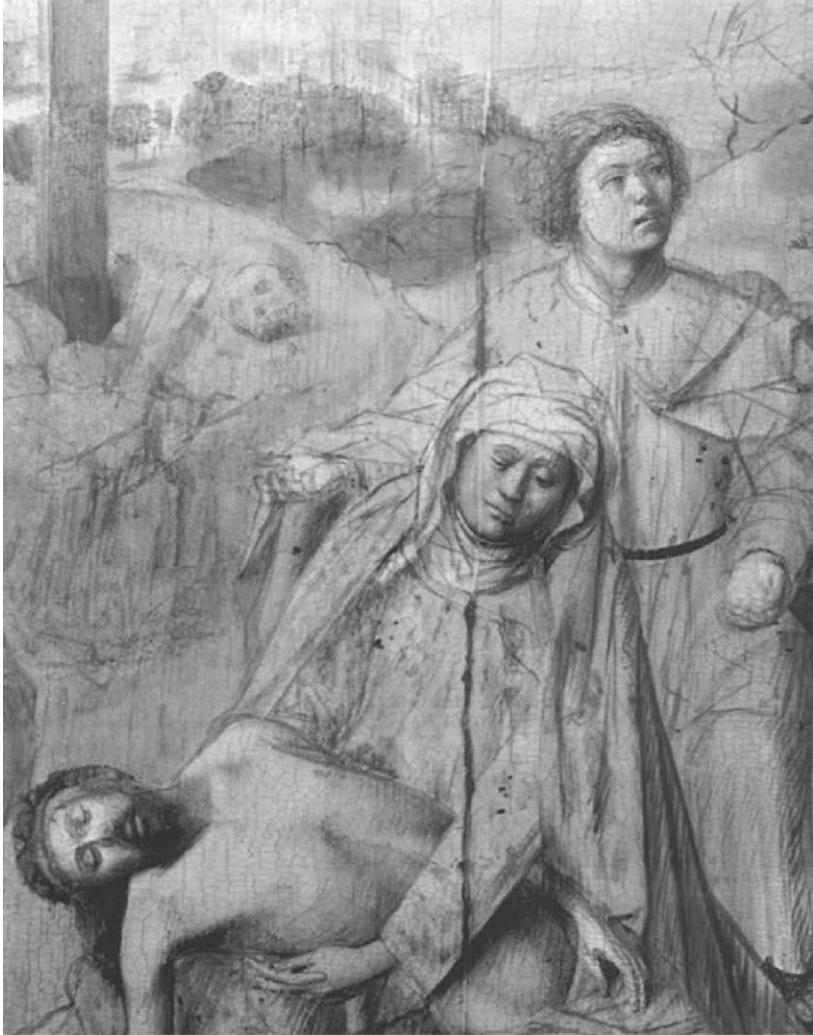


Fig. 38. IRR computer assembly, detail of fig. 36 (underdrawing of the Virgin, Saint John, and Christ)



Fig. 39. IRR, detail of fig. 36 (underdrawing of the Virgin's head)



Fig. 40. IRR computer assembly, detail of fig. 36 (underdrawing of the trees at the upper right)

with pen (as in the saint's left sleeve and the Virgin's drapery, figs. 43, 44). Individual strokes are straight, not curved, and there is little cross-hatching. Christus's manner of using lead white in the preliminary paint layers of the flesh tones and draperies is also indicative of this approach, the broad brushwork preparing the lighting more successfully than the volume of forms (fig. 45).

A comparison of the underdrawing in *Saint Eligius* with that in much smaller paintings of the same period, such as the New York *Lamentation* (compare figs. 43 and 119), shows the same straight, even, parallel strokes, though a less planar effect is evident in the smaller work. This readily indicates the extent to which Christus's handling was more assured and accomplished on a diminutive scale, further evidence of his apparent proximity to the style and technique of manuscript illumination.

With the 1452 *Annunciation* wing (fig. 9), Christus arrived at a partial solution in his effort to create a rational, perspectively correct interior space. Although Joseph Kern proposed in 1904 that this painting was the first vanishing-point construction in Northern art, it has since been recognized that the achievement is on only one plane, for not all of the orthogonals of the composition meet at the same focal point (fig. 47).⁴⁵

Developments in the execution of the underdrawing may also be observed in the Berlin wings (figs. 46–49).

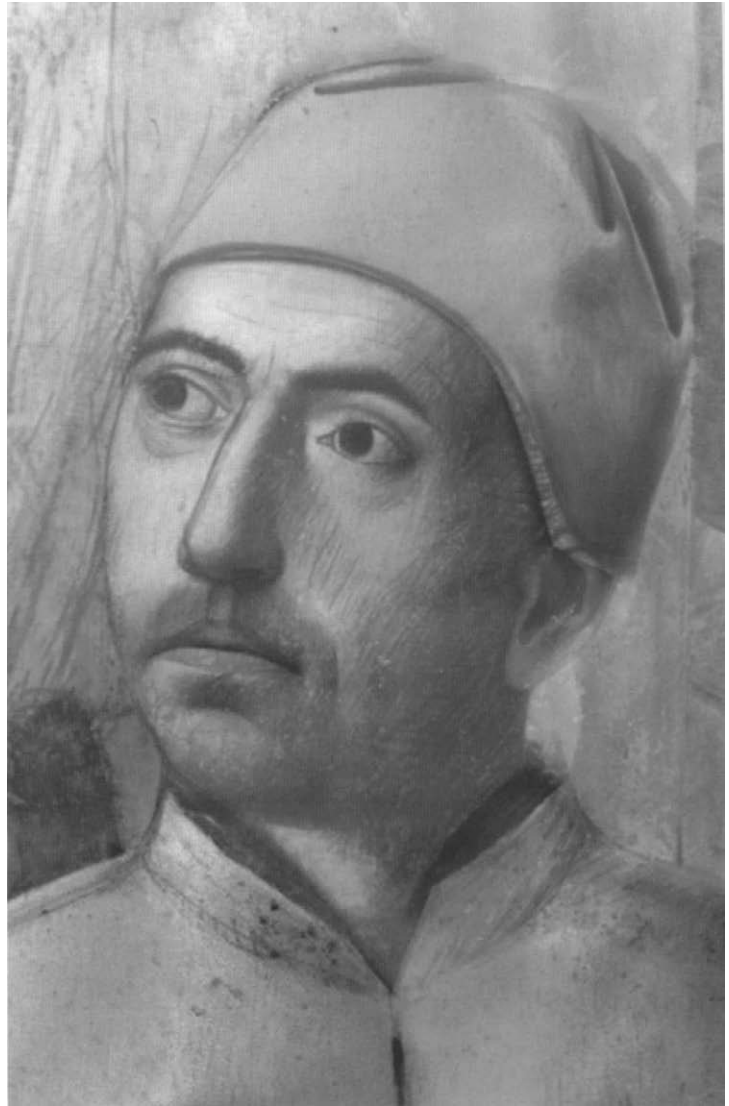


Fig. 41. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 6 (underdrawing of Saint Eligius's head)

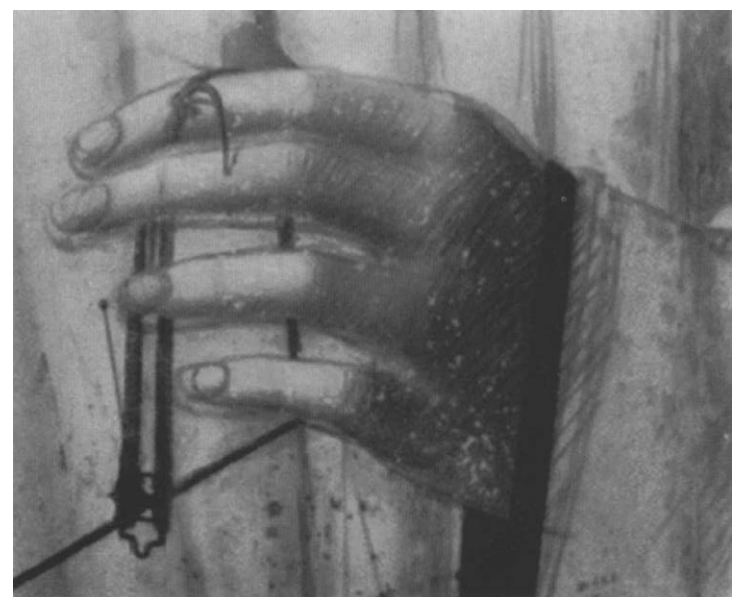


Fig. 42. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 6 (underdrawing of Saint Eligius's hand)



Fig. 43. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 6
(underdrawing of Saint Eligius's drapery)

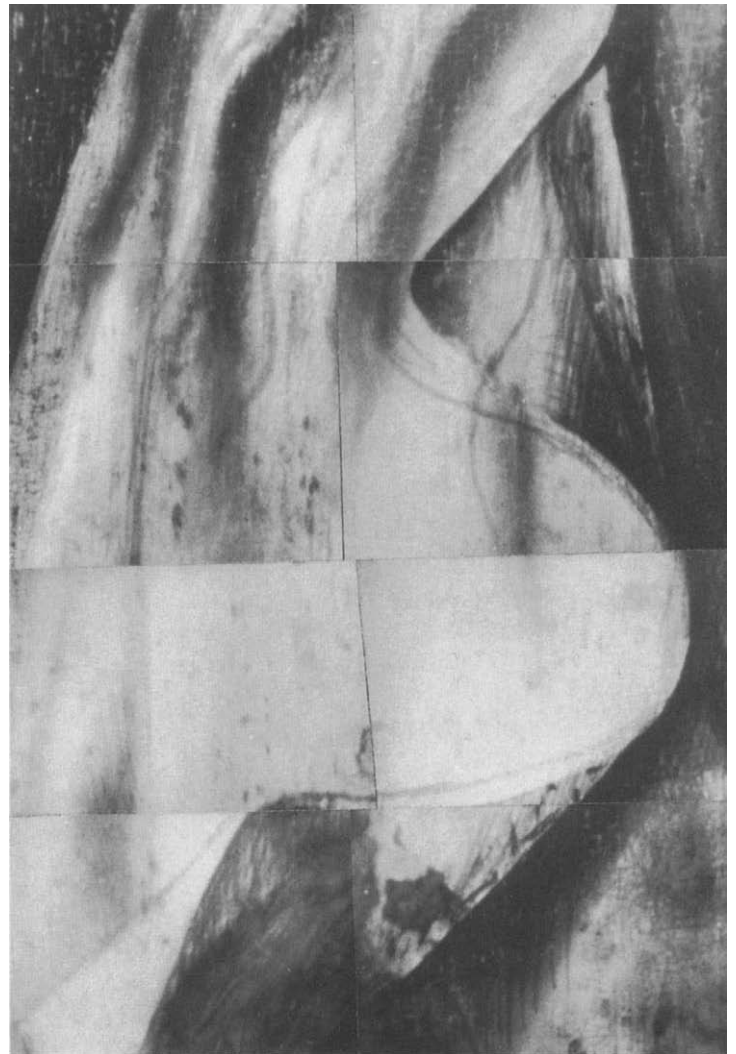


Fig. 44. IRR assembly, detail of fig. 12
(underdrawing of the Virgin's drapery)

Although the basic composition is still marked by broad brush strokes, the interior modeling of forms shows some progress toward a more three-dimensional conception. Christus increasingly used strokes angled in the direction of the raised and depressed areas of folds and consistently employed cross-hatching to suggest greater tonal variation. Again, the relatively small scale of the figures accounts for the artist's apparent facility with the brush. He provided only a summary plan for the landscape, using long, broad lines to demarcate the hills and horizon and to indicate the buildings. Here and there, he noted the placement of trees in his typical manner, with a vertical line and a long oval loop above it (fig. 48).

The Brussels *Lamentation* (fig. 11) fits within this period, the mid-1450s, as can be demonstrated by its

underdrawing. Although the figures are on a considerably larger scale than those in the paintings previously discussed (except *Saint Eligius*), their preliminary design exhibits the same characteristic traits and graphic mannerisms, particularly the zones of flat, planar underdrawing (fig. 50). Only in areas of thicker, more opaque paint, whose greater covering power would obscure the underdrawing with the first application, is the initial sketch limited in its degree of finish (fig. 51).

Extraordinary care was taken with the preliminary design of certain figures, such as the Magdalene, who is set apart from the others. The complicated drapery patterns of her dress and of the Virgin's were changed only slightly in the painted layers. Considerable attention was given to this first sketch on the panel, providing a fully conceived plan for the remarkable modulations

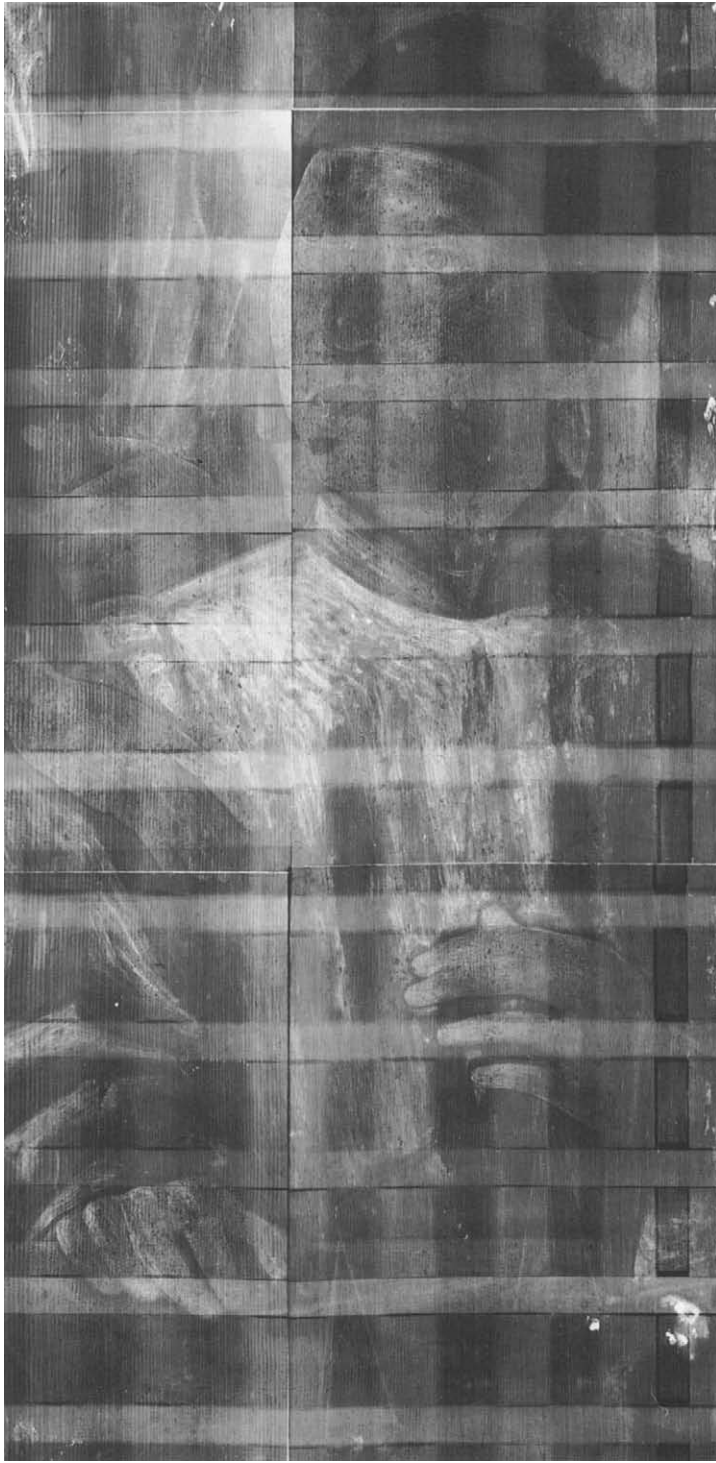


Fig. 45. X-radiograph, detail of cat. no. 6 (Saint Eligius)

of lavender and blue in the draperies, inspired by Rogier's *Deposition* (fig. 10). To our knowledge, Christus never again attempted such a tour de force of color harmonies.⁴⁶

During the 1450s, Christus continued his attempt to open the space of his paintings and to achieve perspectival unity in his compositions. The Budapest *Virgin and Child in an Archway* (cat. no. 11) is particularly interesting because it shows the artist confronting traditional modes and finding alternative solutions. In the underdrawing of the painting, he first designed an architectural framework modeled after Rogier's scheme for the *Virgin and Child in a Niche* (figs. 135, 136). Christus apparently decided this was too old-fashioned and abandoned Rogier's rectangular-shaped doorway with tracery and the Gothic niches for the statues of Adam and Eve in favor of a simple archway opening onto a landscape.⁴⁷ Using the design of the floor tiles, Christus attempted to make the orthogonals converge near the center of the composition at the base of the orb held by the Christ Child, though he did not quite succeed with those at the far right. He constructed the arch on an intuitive and uncalculated basis, unrelated to the focal area at the orb (fig. 52).

Shortly after this, presumably with new knowledge gained from Italian examples or through word of mouth, Christus demonstrated what may be the first one-point perspective construction in Northern art, in the signed and dated *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* of 1457 (cat. no. 13, fig. 53).⁴⁸ Due to the damaged state of the painting, it is somewhat difficult to reconstruct Christus's method step by step, but on the basis of the similarly devised system in his subsequent works we can be reasonably sure of his procedure. Christus employed a method developed by Filippo Brunelleschi in which a fixed vanishing point was established by inserting a stylus or another sharp instrument into the ground preparation to make a mark.⁴⁹ This point established the intersection of the vertical and horizontal axes at the proposed horizon line. After inserting a point into the ground preparation of the painting, Christus probably incised some of the orthogonals (a few of which may be seen through X-radiography) in order to place the Virgin's throne properly. He then proceeded with a detailed underdrawing of the figures, arranging them around this central point, and reconfirmed the incised orthogonals of



Fig. 46. Infrared photograph, detail of fig. 9
(underdrawing of Gabriel)

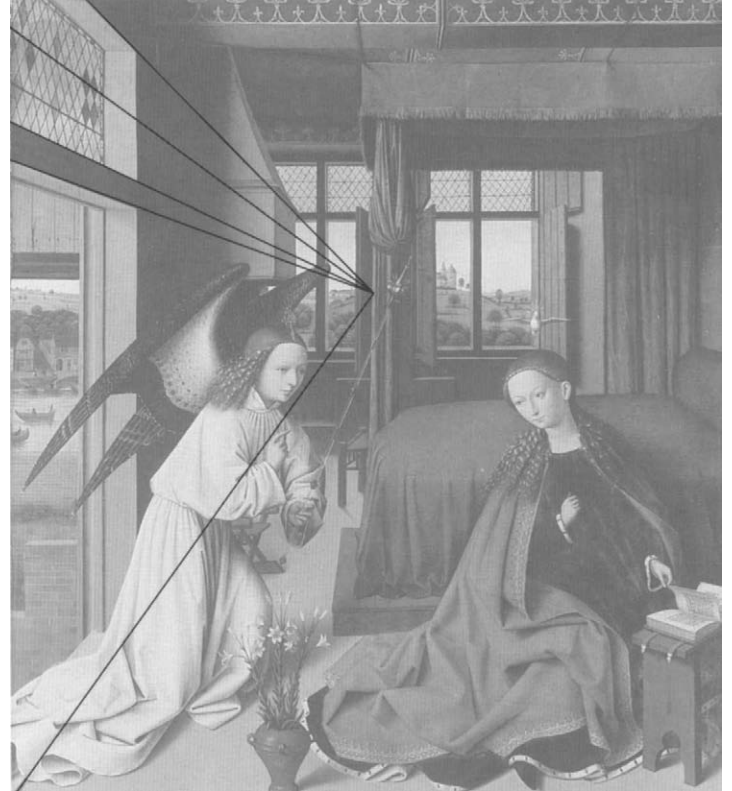


Fig. 47. Perspective diagram of fig. 9 (*Annunciation*)

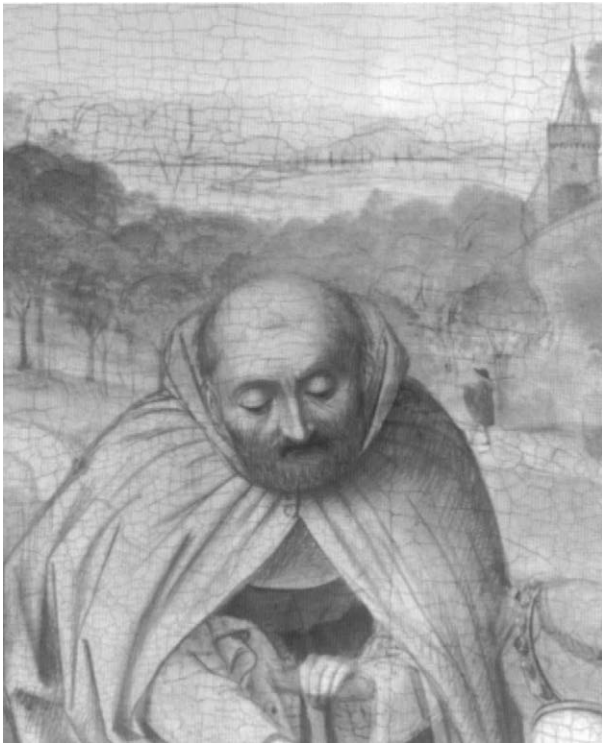


Fig. 48. IRR computer assembly, detail of fig. 9
(underdrawing of Joseph and landscape)



Fig. 49. IRR computer assembly, detail of fig. 9
(underdrawing of Salome)

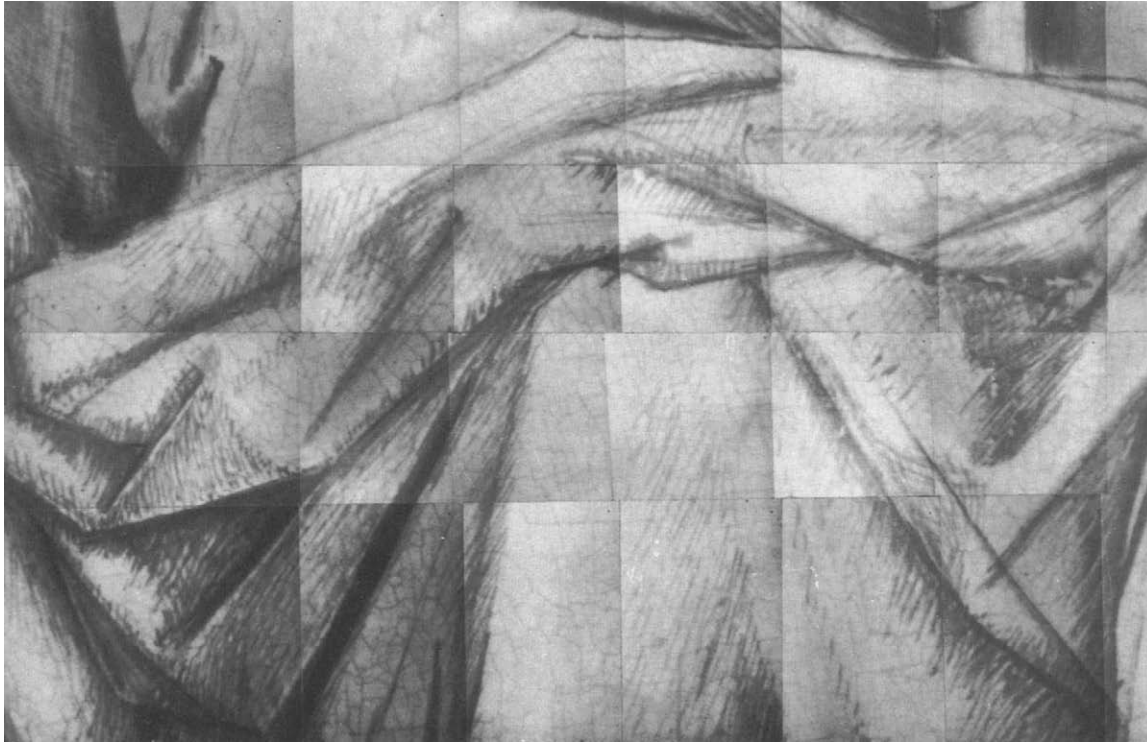


Fig. 50. IRR assembly, detail of fig. 11 (underdrawing of the Virgin's drapery)

Fig. 51. IRR assembly, detail of fig. 11 (underdrawing of the two figures standing on the right)

the floor tiles with ruled brush lines. During this process, he made some adjustments to the design, such as lengthening the carpet on the steps of the throne so it would fall over the lowest step. The system of lighting was completely worked out in the preliminary stages, with parallel hatching and cross-hatching in the architecture and figures. The increasing complexity of the underdrawing of the figures, as well as the relative freedom of handling in certain areas (such as the scribbled brush strokes loaded with pigment at the base of the Virgin's drapery), reveals a mature stage in Christus's graphic technique (figs. 142, 145).

Christus continued in the direction established by the Frankfurt *Madonna* with the Madrid *Virgin and Child Enthroned on a Porch* and the *Death of the Virgin* (cat. nos. 14, 15). In the Madrid painting, the focal point of the perspective plan is visible in the X-radiograph as a perfectly round white dot located just below the Virgin's left eye (figs. 54, 146, 147). All the orthogonals of the composition (except for those of the building in the middle ground at the left) meet at this point. As it is in the Budapest *Virgin and Child* (cat. no. 11), the arch is placed outside the system devised for the rest of the painting.

Christus's graphic style had evolved since the late 1450s to a more sophisticated handling of the underdrawing of his figures. In the Madrid *Virgin and the*



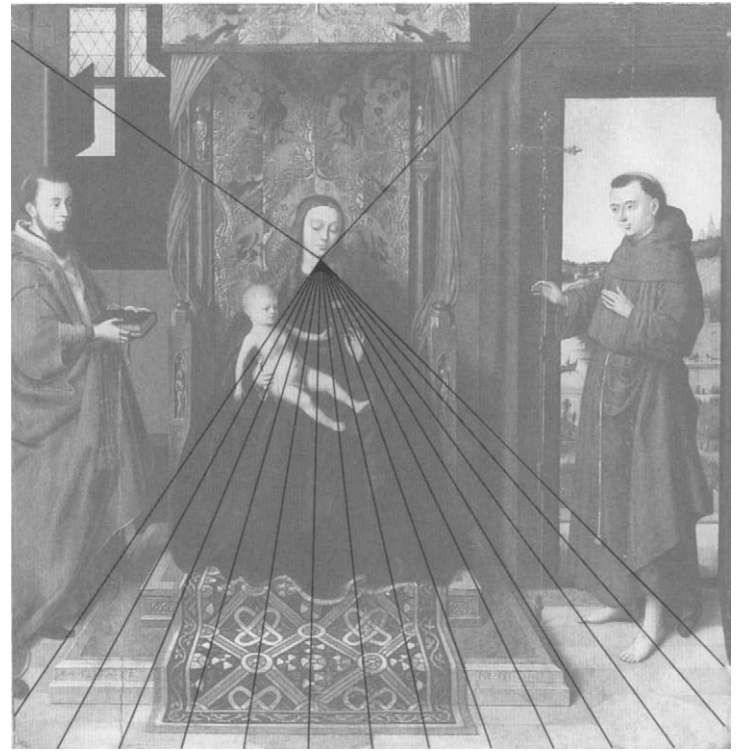


Fig. 53. Perspective diagram of cat. no. 13

Fig. 52. Perspective diagram of cat. no. 11

foreground figures of the *Death of the Virgin*, he used curved, rather than straight, strokes to model the forms (figs. 55, 57). Instead of relying on flat, planar zones of parallel lines and cross-hatching, Christus had learned how to angle and group brush strokes in order to produce increasingly successful peaks and depressions in drapery folds. He also employed extremely fine, curved, parallel hatching in the faces to model and shade at the same time (fig. 56).

An element of solemnity and monumentality entered the paintings of the 1460s, as Christus charted new territory. Perhaps as a nod to the Italian patron

who presumably commissioned the *Death of the Virgin*, the artist allowed the space of the picture to equal the subject in importance. He chose to focus the composition not on the figure of Mary but on the far wall above her bed (fig. 58). All the orthogonals of the central panel and of the wings representing Saints John and Catherine converge at this point, opening up the space and giving all aspects of the drama an equal place within it.⁵⁰ This is the only known instance in Christus's oeuvre in which all three panels are coordinated along a one-point perspective. Christus had also learned to create the appropriate diminution of figures receding into

space. Given these steps toward increasingly correct linear perspective, it is all the more baffling that the barrel vaults of the ceiling lie outside the system. Christus constructed these vaults intuitively, using a compass to produce perfect semicircular forms. (The compass point may be found in the curtain at the right.)

In the Washington *Nativity* (cat. no. 17), Christus again gave subject and space equal importance. Even though the painting has been dated early by some,⁵¹ the advanced linear perspective and the convincing placement of figures in space suggest a sophisticated stage of development.⁵² As he did with the Madrid *Virgin and Child*, Christus inserted a point in the ground preparation near the exact center of the panel at the level at which the heads of the figures would be drawn. All the major orthogonals of the shed, which at first were roughly drawn in brush (as can be seen by a diagonal

stroke extending from the lower left corner, above the heads of the angels, toward the center of the painting), converge at this point (fig. 59). The apparent precision of Christus's measurements and a series of incised lines for individual elements of the geometrically conceived shed indicate the degree to which he planned the design.

Certain aspects of the perspectival construction of the *Nativity* come from Leon Battista Alberti's *On Painting*, but not all of his precise steps were followed. A focal point was established at the intersection of the horizontal and vertical axes, near the level of the heads of Mary and Joseph, and the figures are mathematically proportioned in relation to the space. Although the figures themselves are not precisely half the height of the painting, as Alberti dictated, the threshold is divided into units one-third the height of the main figures in the panel.⁵³ Whether or not Christus read Alberti's treatise

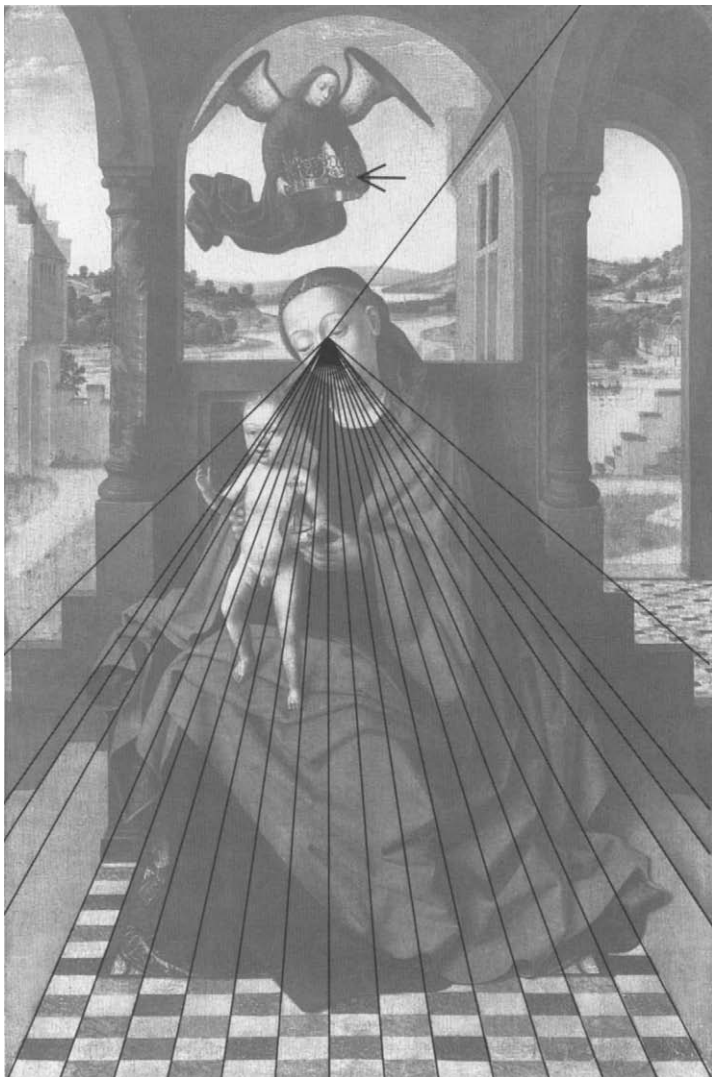


Fig. 54. Perspective diagram of cat. no. 14



Fig. 55. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 14 (underdrawing of the Virgin's drapery)

tise, this painting is proof that at least some of the theorist's ideas had been conveyed to him, perhaps by those who commissioned his works or by visiting Italian painters.

The underdrawing of the figures in the *Nativity* is less fully worked up than usual. Broad brush strokes are employed for the placement of the figures and the contours of forms, but there is little internal modeling. The figure of Joseph, however, reveals Christus's usual loose parallel hatching for broad, flat areas of drapery, a type of underdrawing that is comparable to that of the apostle at the right in the *Death of the Virgin* (compare figs. 160 and 155).

By this stage in his career, Christus had learned how to merge subject matter and geometric structure in order to ensure the accessibility of a painting's content.

The *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (cat. no. 20) is perhaps his greatest achievement in this regard. Although it is not clear from the technical evidence that Christus actually understood a two-point perspective system, he deliberately employed two points for the converging orthogonals of this composition in order to emphasize motifs that carry the underlying meaning. This is not technically a bifocal perspective system, which requires that two points be registered equidistant from the center of the picture (usually at the outside borders). It is instead simply a geometrically ordered perspectival plan that relies on a principal focal point, at the upper left of the bed, and on a subsidiary one, in the doorjamb just to the left of Joseph. Christus thus pointed out in a subliminal fashion the pivotal thematic roles played by the bed and by Joseph in this depiction of the



Fig. 56. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 15 (underdrawing of the head of the apostle at the lower left)



Fig. 57. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 15 (underdrawing of the apostle at the center)



Fig. 58. Perspective diagram of cat. no. 15

Holy Family, which is principally focused on the great pyramidal form of the Virgin and Child in the foreground (fig. 60).

The X-radiograph shows the two points inserted into the ground preparation (fig. 61).⁵⁴ As he did in the *Nativity*, Christus worked in the rough design of the composition with broad brush strokes (for example, at the left near the window, fig. 167). He subsequently rendered the figures in a very finished, fully volumetric underdrawing and drew ruled lines around them to secure the orthogonals of the perspective system. In this, his most advanced perspective rendering, Christus fully realized how to manipulate the structure of a

painting in order to convey its meaning to the viewer in a particularly dynamic way.

Portraiture

It would be difficult to argue on the basis of what survives that Petrus Christus was in great demand as a portraitist. Unlike the oeuvres of Jan van Eyck and Hans Memling, who respectively preceded and followed him in Bruges, Christus's production comprises relatively few portraits. Those that remain are consistent in their physiognomy—the *Portrait of Edward Grymeston* (fig. 65) and the *Portrait of a Carthusian* (cat. no. 5) were made

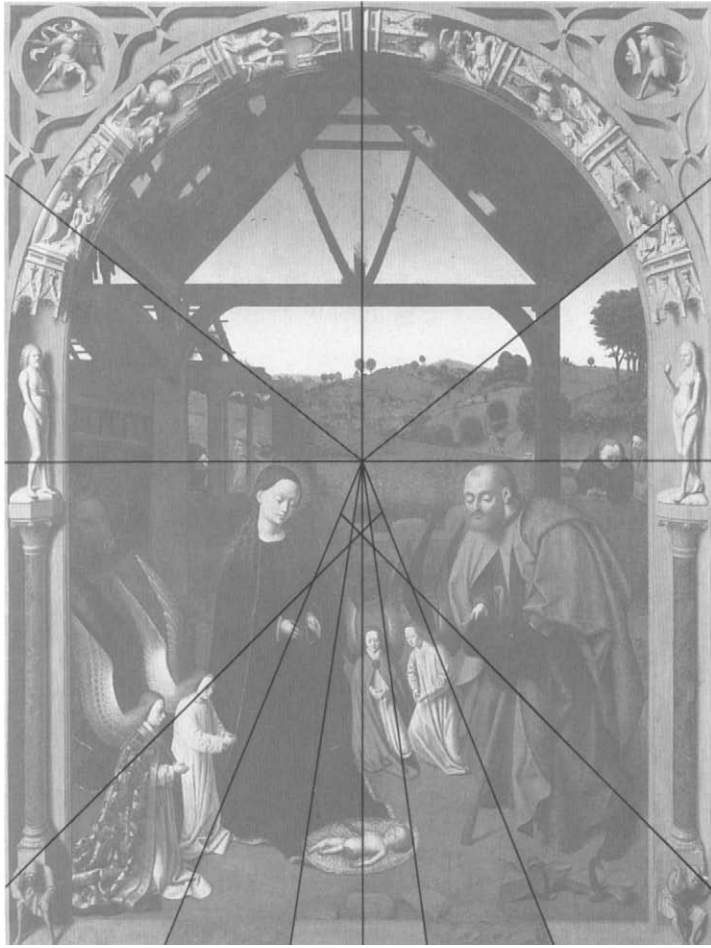


Fig. 59. Perspective diagram of cat. no. 17

from the same pattern, and the London (fig. 66) and Los Angeles (cat. no. 16) male portraits are so similar that they have been considered the same man at different stages in life—yet diverse and innovative as far as portrait conventions of setting and lighting are concerned. Although Christus relied upon a traditional three-quarter view, he experimented with the setting (closely cropped interior views, suggested interiors, combined interior-exterior views, plain black backgrounds) and employed both near- and far-side lighting. He thus markedly departed from van Eyck's invariable portrait type—a three-quarter view facing left, lit from the left, against a dark background.

Christus's technique and execution fluctuated from portrait to portrait. Although *Edward Grymeston* and the *Carthusian* originated from one pattern of head shape and size, the subsequent working procedure varied. Some of the differences between the paintings are attrib-

utable to their states of preservation—the *Carthusian* is in particularly fine condition, while *Grymeston* is quite abraded and shows significant losses in its upper glazes—but there is certainly a variation in the degree of finish. As the infrared reflectogram assembly of the *Carthusian* shows (figs. 62, 63), Christus lavished attention on the modeling of the face even at the underdrawing stage, reworking the shading around the features to produce a wash effect in preparation for the final glazes. He did not carry out the modeling of the *Grymeston* portrait to this degree (figs. 64, 65), either at the underdrawing or final stages of execution. The different *craquelure* patterns in the two portraits also indicate the varying degrees of complexity of the mixtures of paints and of the composition of the paint layers. One conclusion that might be drawn from these observations is that Christus spent more time and effort on the *Carthusian* because he knew the sitter, a local resident, perhaps from the monastery at Genadedal, while Edward Grymeston was a foreigner and only temporarily in Bruges, having been sent by Henry VI of England as an envoy to the Burgundian court. This might also explain why the *Grymeston* head shows no apparent underdrawing. Grymeston's likeness was probably recorded in a now-lost drawing on paper, which was used to work up the painting without the benefit of further sittings by a man who was occupied with official court business.

This comparison between these portraits, both signed and dated 1446, demonstrates the extent to which Christus could or would vary his approach during the same period. This case may help to clarify his working methods in other paintings. For example, the *Portrait of a Lady* (cat. no. 19) exhibits minimal preparatory underdrawing in the face (fig. 163) and only a limited amount in the costume. Since the sitter has been identified with some certainty as either Anne or Margaret Talbot, both of whom may have gone to Bruges on the occasion of the marriage of Margaret of York to Charles the Bold in 1468, her stay there may have been brief. As he probably did with Grymeston, Christus perhaps recorded her likeness in a preparatory drawing on paper.

The *Portrait of a Man with a Falcon* (cat. no. 24) demonstrates the type of preparatory drawing that Christus probably made when a subject was not available for repeated sittings. The face and the lighting system are captured in great detail, while the setting is

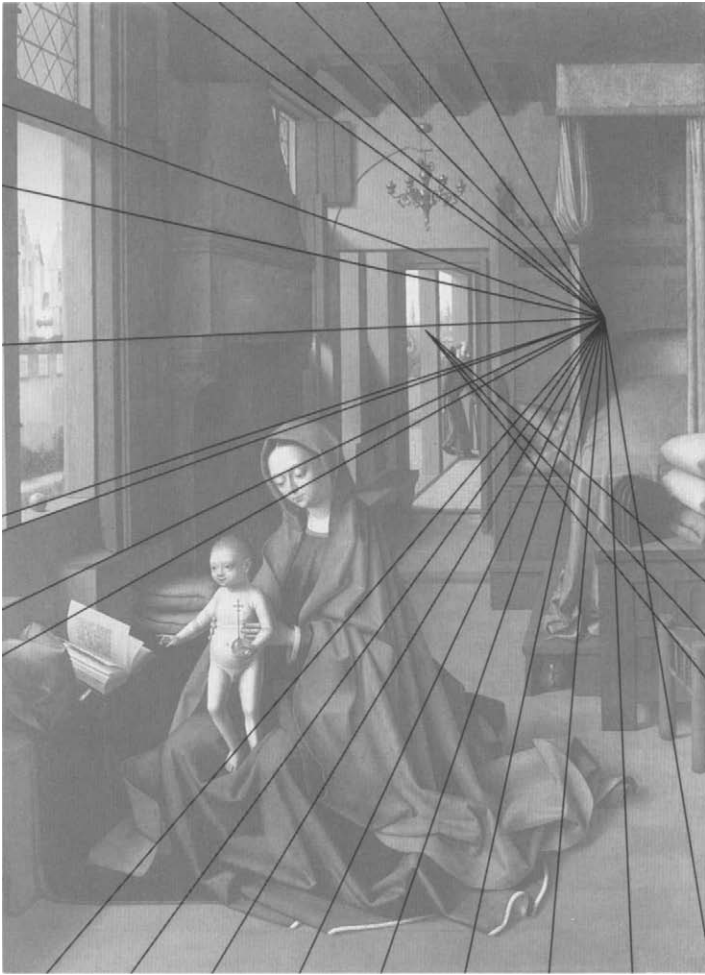


Fig. 60. Perspective diagram of cat. no. 20



Fig. 61. X-radiograph, detail of cat. no. 20 (upper right quadrant showing two stylus points)

only summarily indicated—a corner-space interior with a mere suggestion of objects on the shelves at the right. The costume and the falcon are rendered likewise, the particulars to be more fully realized only in painted form.

On a much smaller scale and, as a result, even more delicate in handling is the silverpoint *Portrait of a Young Woman* (cat. no. 23). The high degree of finish and the ingenuous manner in which the sitter addresses the viewer suggest a detailed rendering from life, recorded as an independent study or for use in a painting. The small size indicates that the sheet may have been part of a sketchbook. With such complete information in hand, Christus would have required little or no underdrawing to complete the painted portrait.

Christus's likely dependence on drawings for his painted portraits also may have been his practice for portraits of donors, such as those in the Exeter

Madonna (cat. no. 7), the Washington donor wings (cat. no. 12), and the *Saint Anthony with a Male Donor* (fig. 8), none of which shows any detailed preliminary sketch for the features of those portrayed.

The London and Los Angeles male portraits show a more fully worked-up underdrawing (figs. 67, 68), used primarily to establish the lighting scheme. The configuration of the brush strokes provides little detailed characterization of the sitters, ultimately resulting in a certain similarity between them. However, Christus's stylistic development over the previous fifteen years or so is evident in the increased refinement in the drawing of the Los Angeles portrait as well as in its more sophisticated volumetric effects.

A final category of Christus's portraiture, one that leads to pure speculation, is the question of identifiable persons within thematic representations. Here, considerable difficulties arise because of the apparent similari-



Fig. 65. Petrus Christus, *Portrait of Edward Grymeston*, 1446. Oil on oak, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (36 x 27 cm). National Gallery, London (on loan from the Earl of Verulam, Gorhambury)

ered. The finished state of the underdrawing of the saint's head compared to that of the others in *Saint Eligius* (figs. 41, 71) could well indicate it is a portrait.⁵⁵ In the Brussels *Lamentation* (fig. 51), the lack of any fully worked-up underdrawing for the man and woman at the right, who are rendered in the same generalized fashion as the others in the narrative, probably means that they are not disguised portraits, as has been suggested.⁵⁶

IMPLICATIONS OF THE TECHNICAL INVESTIGATION OF CHRISTUS'S PAINTINGS

Background and Training: Christus, van Eyck, and Manuscript Illumination

Joel Upton and Maximiliaan Martens have convincingly argued against Christus's residency in Bruges prior to

July 6, 1444, the day he bought his citizenship.⁵⁷ Thus they rejected the views of Erwin Panofsky and Max J. Friedländer, who placed Christus in Bruges as a pupil, or at least a collaborator, of Jan van Eyck before the latter's death in 1441.⁵⁸ Christus's substantial debt to the art of van Eyck is self-evident; no one has doubted this since Gustav Waagen and Johann David Passavant "rediscovered" Christus in the early nineteenth century through some of his most Eyckian paintings. What is still in question, however, is the extent of Christus's firsthand knowledge of van Eyck's paintings and technique.⁵⁹

Christus's early output represents the clearest evidence of a direct association with van Eyck's workshop. The *Head of Christ*, the *Saint John the Baptist*, the *Exeter Madonna*, and the *Portrait of a Carthusian* are Eyckian in technique and execution as well as in various motifs. In 1457, with the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis*, and even about 1470, with the *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior*, the influence of van Eyck's art was still present.

Since Christus had no hand in the completion of *Saint Jerome in His Study* or the *Frick Virgin and Child with Saints Barbara and Elizabeth and Jan Vos* (cat. nos. 1, 2), then what evidence is there to support or refute a direct connection between Christus and an Eyckian workshop? As Alan Burroughs noted, the van Eycks and Christus devoted a significant portion of their painting activity to the labor-intensive and deft application of finishing glazes. He referred to them as "flat" painters because X-radiographs of their works often show little or no manipulation of white pigment in the highlights of flesh tones to create modeling at the preliminary stages.⁶⁰ A comparison of the X-radiographs of Jan's *Lucca Madonna* and Christus's London *Portrait of a Young Man* shows this affinity in technique (figs. 72, 73). Christus's method was different from that of his contemporaries Rogier van der Weyden and Dieric Bouts, who indicated the modeling of forms by limiting the application of white to the highlights, thus establishing in the preliminary stages the system of light and shade and of the volume of forms that was to be followed in the final paint layers (fig. 74).

The infrared reflectograms revealing the underdrawing in paintings by van Eyck and Christus are similar in the use of brush, pen, and perhaps occasionally metal-point and in the complexity and extent of finish of the



Fig. 66. Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Young Man*, ca. 1450. Oil on oak, 14 x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ (35.6 x 26.4 cm). National Gallery, London



Fig. 67. IRR computer assembly, detail of fig. 66 (underdrawing of the head)



Fig. 68. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 16 (underdrawing of the head)

preliminary designs. Their graphic mannerisms vary, however, which suggests that even though Christus may have had access to workshop drawings, he did not receive direct instruction from van Eyck in such particulars as the precise execution of volumetric forms (compare figs. 41 and 75, 43 and 93).

In other details, including the painting of brocades and metal objects, Christus appears to have borrowed directly from the master. For gold brocades (figs. 76, 77), both artists began with an underlying brown paint over which they applied varied strokes and stippling in yellow to create the effect of shimmering light. Metal or gilded objects, such as armor or statues, were also achieved with an economy of means, basically two colors with a reddish line of reflection at the edge (figs. 78, 79). The degree of proficiency differed, of course, but their basic techniques are strikingly similar.

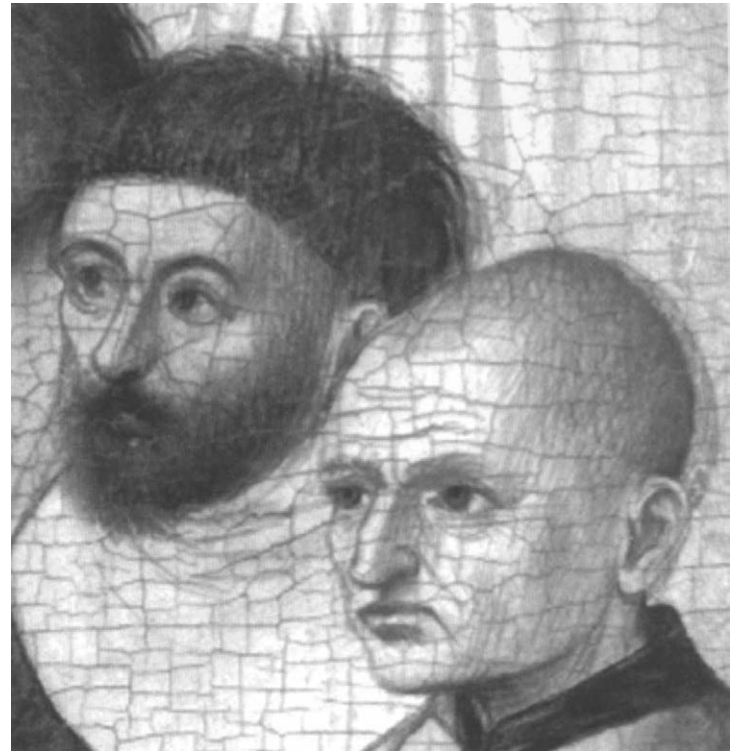
Such intimate knowledge of Jan's paintings implies

that Christus may have had access to the remainders of van Eyck's workshop after his death. There, Christus would have been able to see the tools and materials of the atelier, consult pattern drawings, and study paintings in various stages of completion. The Frick *Virgin and Child*, the *Saint Barbara*, and the *Maelbeke Triptych* are only a few of the works that were perhaps left unfinished at van Eyck's death (cat. no. 2, figs. 89, 95). The fact that Christus assimilated only certain motifs and details of execution, and not entire compositions, greatly decreases any likelihood of a direct master-pupil relationship.

It is not difficult to imagine the hypothetical circumstances of Christus's entry into a post-Eyckian workshop. If Christus came from the Baerle near Ghent rather than the Baerle in Brabant, close to the Dutch border, he certainly would have been well acquainted with Jan's art. He may have intended to study with



69.



70.



71.

Fig. 69. Detail of fig. 9 (apostles' heads)

Fig. 70. IRR computer assembly, detail of fig. 9 (underdrawing of two apostles' heads)

Fig. 71. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 6 (underdrawing of the woman's head)

Bruges's premier painter but arrived too late for personal instruction from the master. Another major factor in Christus's decision to come to Bruges, and particularly to van Eyck's atelier, could have been the local manuscript illumination activity. Although the question of whether or not Jan was himself an illuminator is much debated, there is general agreement that he and his workshop were associated with the commissions for the last phase of the *Turin-Milan Hours* and for the *Llangattock Hours*. These projects, among others, perhaps constituted part of the unfinished business in the atelier when Christus arrived in Bruges.

Based on a technical examination of Christus's paintings and his significant borrowings from manuscript illumination compositions and motifs, it is clear that he was intimate with the art form. His demonstrable interest as well in the relationship between image and viewer, particularly with regard to the development



Fig. 72. X-radiograph, detail of fig. 140 (Virgin and Child)



Fig. 74. X-radiograph of Dieric Bouts, *Virgin and Child*, ca. 1455–60. Oil on oak, 8½ x 6½ in. (21.6 x 16.5 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York



Fig. 73. X-radiograph of fig. 66

of a rational perspective in his paintings, may be traced to earlier developments in manuscript illumination.

G. J. Hoogewerff thought that Christus could be identified with Hand H of the *Turin-Milan Hours*.⁶¹ There is certainly a connection between the compositions and motifs of Christus's paintings and those of Hand H in the *Pietà* (fig. 35), *Prince near the Sea* (fol. 59v), and *Christ Enthroned* (fol. 75v).⁶² Since these are among the illuminations destroyed by fire in 1904, it is impossible to say what relationship in technique there is to Christus's work. The best example by which to judge this is *Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane* (fig. 80), also attributed to Hand H. Immediately apparent is the association between the apostle to the far right and Christus's Saint John type (including the curled forelock). In technique, however, there is a rather striking difference. Whereas Christus's paintings may appear illuminationlike, the *Gethsemane* is executed very much like a panel painting⁶³—that is, it has underdrawing for



Fig. 75. Infrared photograph, detail of fig. 94 (underdrawing of Giovanna Cenami's head)

the figures, which is essentially absent in Christus's small-scale paintings. Furthermore, instead of coloring laid on with flat tones, which in turn are modulated with strokes in dark and light tints and stippling (as Christus is known to have done in his diminutive paintings), this artist fully blended his tones with rich intermediate transitions in both the flesh areas and the draperies of the principal figures. The range of tones is extremely varied and subtle in the buildup from dark to light, in the manner of a panel painting. If the *Gethsemane* is by Hand H, then Christus is probably not his alter ego.

Perhaps of greatest inspiration to Christus was the illumination of the *Birth of Saint John* attributed to Hand G or Jan van Eyck (fig. 81), a model that continued to be influential, even in his latest work, the *Kansas City Holy Family* (cat. no. 20). The composition, the extremely sophisticated rendering of half-lights and shadows, the well-organized spatial relationships, and the advanced suggestion of depth in an interior room all had a long-lasting effect on the artist. The technique of the *Birth* is a blend of both illumination and panel painting, in its subtly modulated passages and deftly

Fig. 76. Detail of fig. 141 (Saint Donatian's drapery)



Fig. 77. Detail of cat. no. 6 (woman's dress)



placed highlights (the red stroke to indicate reflections on metal objects, the pink touches on fingertips) for the modeling of forms. The anecdotal nature of the presentation makes it familiar and accessible, precisely the aim of Christus's art. A similarly sophisticated and skillful conflation of the modes of illumination and panel painting is evident in the *Trinity* (cat. no. 21), the only miniature attributed to Christus.

Even though there is no specific document that links Christus with manuscript illumination production, there is circumstantial evidence to suggest such a tie. The illuminators' guild of Saint Luke and Saint John was not formed until about 1454. By this time, Christus's primary focus might have shifted away from the field. Had the guild existed earlier, he may well have joined. It was not uncommon for artists of this period to belong to both the painters' and the illuminators' guilds. Christus's own son Bastyaen was a member of both.⁶⁴ Peter Schabacker posited that the heart-shaped mark found in Christus's signature on *Saint Eligius* may be a miniaturist's mark, which by law had to be registered with the painters' guild (fig. 16).⁶⁵ Is another sign of Christus's association with illumination



Fig. 78. Detail of cat. no. 11 (statuette of Eve)

Fig. 79. Detail of fig. 141 (Saint George's armor)





Fig. 80. Hand H, *Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane*, from the *Turin-Milan Hours*, fol. 30v. Tempera on vellum. Museo Civico, Turin

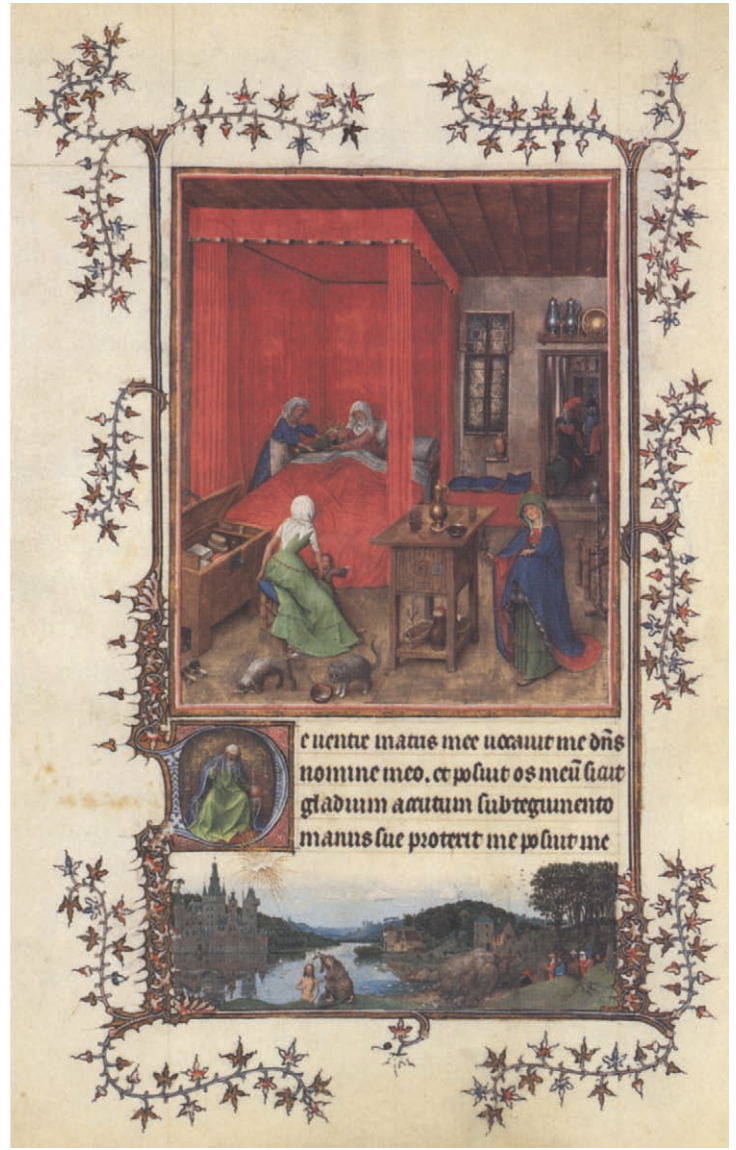


Fig. 81. Hand G, *Birth of Saint John*, from the *Turin-Milan Hours*, fol. 93v. Tempera on vellum. Museo Civico, Turin

provided by the manuscript page painted as if affixed to the back wall in the *London Portrait of a Young Man* (fig. 82), in which the word Christ in the prayer is spelled “x̄pi,” Christus’s method of signing his works?

THE QUESTION OF AN ITALIAN CONNECTION: THE MATURE WORKS

Christus’s mature works are marked by his efforts to produce fully volumetric forms in an accurately constructed space, the objective being clearer communication of the subject to the viewer. Although this may be understood as a logical progression of trends already developing in manuscript illumination, his use of focal-point perspective may have been encouraged by the

potential for commissions from the burgeoning community of Italians residing in Bruges. His assimilation of what he considered to be a standard feature of Italian art may have been an attempt to fulfill the expectations of his clients. Other accommodations were perhaps the *sacra conversazione* format, as in the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis*,⁶⁶ and the reduction and solemnity of form evident in works of the 1460s, such as the *Madrid Virgin and Child* and the *Death of the Virgin*. The *Los Angeles Portrait of a Man* might be considered a further nod to the Italian mode of portraiture, specifically that of Antonello da Messina.

Christus clearly attained the success he sought with Italian patrons. Judging by the mention of his name in the sixteenth century by the Italian connoisseur Pietro

Summone⁶⁷ and by the art chroniclers Lodovico Guicciardini and Giorgio Vasari,⁶⁸ and the absence of his name in Carel van Mander's biographical *Schilderboeck*, Christus seems to have been known better in the South than in the North. Approximately half the paintings attributed to him were probably commissioned by Italians, have an Italian or Spanish provenance, and were copied by Southern painters and sculptors.⁶⁹

Yet, the exact nature of Christus's relationship to Southern art and artists remains elusive. Partly based on an erroneous report that the *Death of the Virgin* was painted on soft wood in Italy, Germain Bazin suggested that Christus made a trip to the southern part of the country sometime between 1454 and 1462.⁷⁰ As Maximiliaan Martens points out, however, Christus was receiving important commissions during those years in Cambrai and Bruges as well as improving his social status in Bruges by joining prestigious associations such as the Confraternity of the Dry Tree.⁷¹

In search of documentary evidence of Christus's Italian connections, Bazin and Liana Castelfranchi Vegas linked him to Antonello da Messina through the Sforza accounts of 1456, which mention a "Piero di Burges" at the Milanese court along with Antonello da Sicilia (Antonello da Messina?) and a Maestro Zannino (Zanetto Bugatto).⁷² The identification of Christus with this "Piero" has been abandoned by most critics, particularly since Giuseppe Cònsoli demonstrated that the reference concerns a payment of three years earlier to "provixionati" and "balestrieri" (providers and crossbowmen) in Cerreto, not Milan, making it even less likely that this Antonello was Antonello da Messina.⁷³

Rather than having Christus go south, Joanne Wright proposed that Antonello da Messina went north in 1452 in search of the secrets of oil painting.⁷⁴ Wright argued that Antonello must have learned about Flemish painting techniques directly from a Northern artist who practiced them and not through his teacher, Colantonio.⁷⁵ However, Antonello's interest in Northern art and in Christus in particular may well have been sparked by Colantonio, who copied motifs from Christus and other Northern artists.⁷⁶

Alessandro Marabottini and Castelfranchi Vegas proposed a later date for Antonello's hypothetical visit to the North, namely 1465–71, years during which nothing about Antonello is known and his art entered a new, Northern-influenced phase in style and iconography.⁷⁷

Indeed, the visual links between certain of Antonello's late works and Northern painting are compelling. Compare, for example, Antonello's *Virgin and Child with Christus's Madonna in Half-length* (figs. 83 and 12); his *Annunciation* (Museo Regionale di Palazzo Bellomo, Syracuse, Sicily)⁷⁸ with Christus's *Annunciation* wing in Berlin (fig. 9); his *Salvator Mundi* with Hans Memling's *Salvator Mundi* (figs. 85 and 84); and his *Portrait of a Man* with Christus's Los Angeles *Portrait of a Man* (figs. 87 and 86). These are typical stylistic assimilations that result from perhaps limited, but profound, encounters.

Several of Antonello's later works clearly reflect his knowledge of Netherlandish painting techniques.⁷⁹ For example, his *Salvator Mundi* and *Portrait of a Man* have underdrawings and are painted in oil, not tempera.⁸⁰

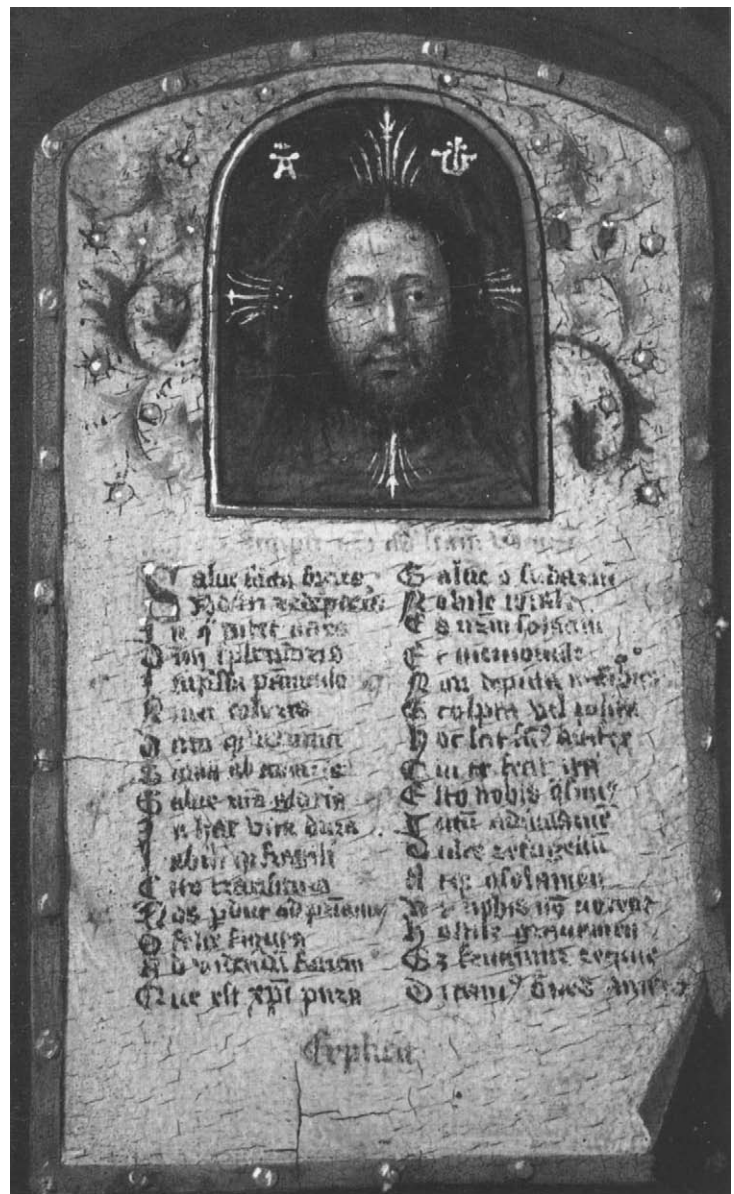


Fig. 82. Detail of fig. 66 (illumination)

The *Salvator Mundi* shows rigid contour lines in the underdrawing typical of a design transfer (perhaps from a Northern example such as Memling's painting of the same name). Antonello's *Portrait of a Man* in particular indicates close parallels in technique with Christus's Los Angeles portrait.⁸¹ Unlike Antonello's earlier portraits, which show no apparent underdrawing,⁸² this work reveals underdrawing for contours and fine internal hatching for modeling that partly shows through the flesh-colored paint. The flesh is rendered with a light pink underpaint, and the overlying layers are applied very thinly in smooth transitions. Individual brush strokes define the hairs and the collar beneath the man's jacket. These procedural steps are consistent with the way in which Christus rendered the Los Angeles portrait.

If Antonello did travel north in the late 1460s, Christus may have taught him something about Flemish painting techniques. In turn, Antonello might have influenced Christus, perhaps in the use of the dramatic close-up view of the head against a dark background in the Los Angeles portrait. Otherwise, except for the issue of perspective, Christus's response to Italian art was minimal and intermittent, mainly brought into play, it seems, when required by a particular commission. In his last works, he returned to an Eyckian-Rogierian blend of pictorial elements fully integrated with a perspectively correct spatial description. At this point, and with quite spectacular results, Petrus Christus produced his most successful late paintings, the *Washington Nativity* and the *Kansas City Holy Family*.

1. Waagen 1824, pp. 438–50, esp. 448.
2. See Appendix 1, doc. 31.
3. Passavant 1833, p. 92 (author's translation).
4. Passavant 1842, pp. 212–13 (author's translation). For further details on this early history, see Upton 1990, p. 2 n. 9.
5. Weale (1873, p. 16) emphasized that there was no demonstrable proof that Christus served as van Eyck's pupil.
6. See, for example, Hotho 1842–43, vol. 2, p. 97; Rathgeber 1844, pt. 1, p. 12; and Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1857, pp. 116–17.
7. Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pp. 81–90.
8. Pächt 1926, pp. 155–66; Schöne 1938, pp. 55–56; and Tolnay 1941, pp. 179–81.
9. Schöne 1938, p. 56; and Tolnay 1941, p. 179.
10. Bode 1887b, p. 217; Hulin de Loo, in Bruges 1902a, p. 5, no. 20; Davies 1937, p. 138; and Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 88.



Fig. 83. Antonello da Messina, *Virgin and Child*, ca. 1470–80. Oil on wood, 17 x 13½ in. (43.2 x 34.3 cm). National Gallery, London

11. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 308–13, esp. 312.
12. Gellman 1970b; Upton 1972; Richter 1974; and Schabacker 1974.
13. Levenson 1965, pp. 28–55; Collier 1975, pp. 108–39; and Myers 1978, pp. 115–64. Richter's chronology (1974, pp. 50–61, 86–89) is partially based on Christus's development of perspective.
14. Panhans-Bühler 1978.
15. Upton 1990.
16. *Saint John the Baptist in a Landscape*, *Head of Christ*, *Friedsam Annunciation*, *Saint Jerome in His Study*, *Virgin and Child with Saints Barbara and Elizabeth and Jan Vos*, and *Virgin and Child with Saints John the Baptist and Jerome* (E. E. M. Lemberger-Proehl collection, Amsterdam).
17. *Death of the Virgin*, *Saint Elizabeth and a Donor* (Groeningemuseum, Bruges), *Bruges Nativity and Annunciation*, *Portrait of a Donor* (Niedersächsische Landesgalerie, Hannover), and *Portrait of Philip the Good* (Prince de Ligne collection, Beloeil).
18. For example, the *Nativity* formerly at Wildenstein and Company, New York, the *Saint Catherine of Alexandria* formerly in a private collection in Brussels, and the *Dessau Crucifixion* and the *Saint John* and *Saint Catherine* wings destroyed during World War II.
19. Folie 1963, pp. 183–88, 204–7.
20. For more on the significance of van Eyck's inscriptions, see Scheller 1968, pp. 135–39; Dhanens [1980], pp. 176–81; Vos 1983, pp. 1–4; and Koerner 1993, pp. 106–7 nn. 81, 82.

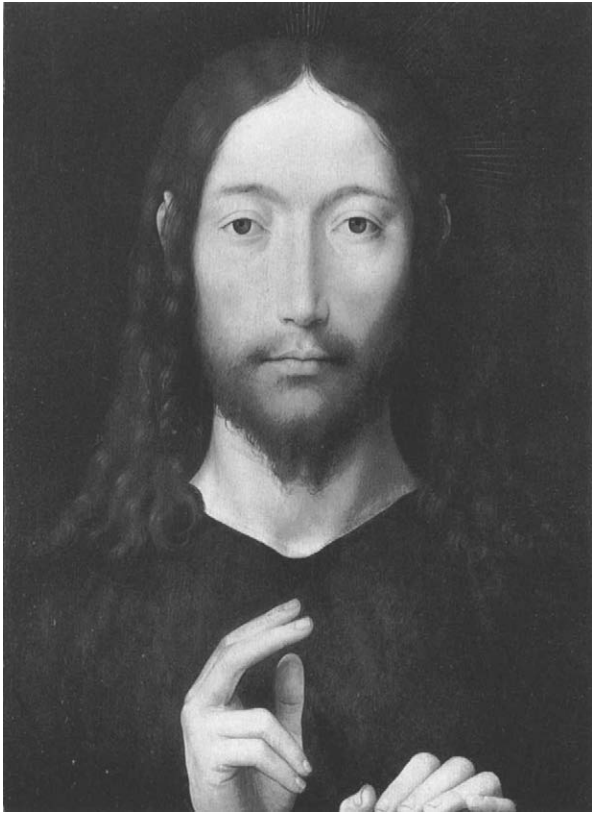


Fig. 84. Hans Memling, *Salvator Mundi*, 1478. Oil on oak, 14 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (36 x 26 cm). Norton Simon Museum, Pasadena

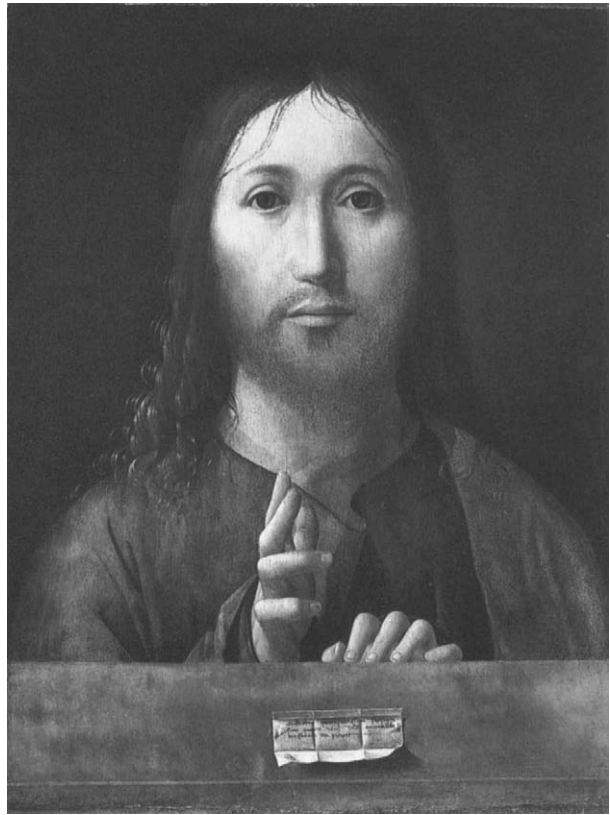


Fig. 85. Antonello da Messina, *Salvator Mundi*, 1465. Oil on wood, 15 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 11 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (38.7 x 29.8 cm). National Gallery, London



Fig. 86. Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Man*, ca. 1465–70. Oil on oak, 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (47.6 x 35.2 cm). Los Angeles County Museum of Art

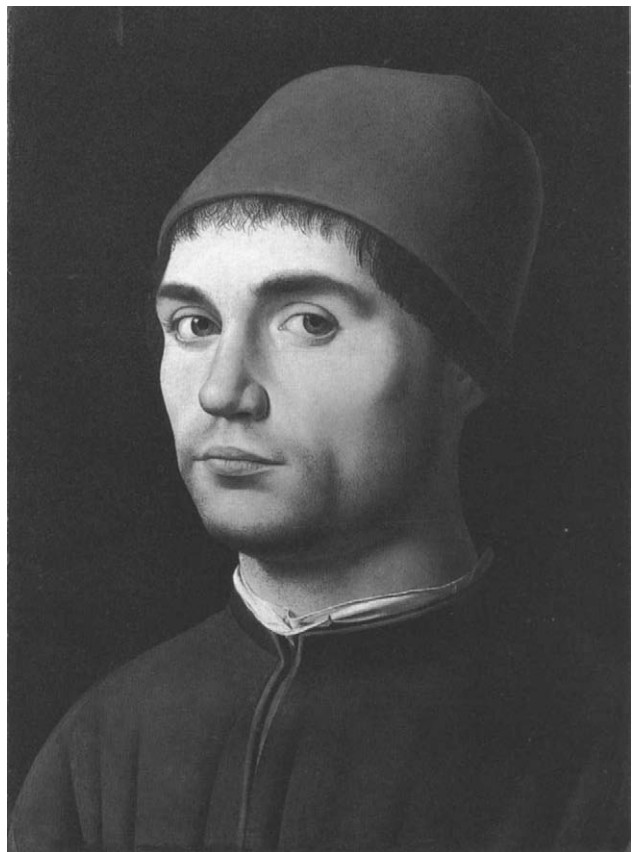


Fig. 87. Antonello da Messina, *Portrait of a Man*. Oil on poplar, 14 x 10 in. (35.6 x 25.4 cm). National Gallery, London

21. Burroughs 1938, p. 249.
22. Although mottos and coats of arms are found on the reverse of paintings of this period, artists' signatures are not (see A. Dülberg, *Privatporträts: Geschichte und Ikonologie einer Gattung im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* [Berlin, 1990]).
23. Grymeston is identified by his coat of arms on both sides of the panel. He was Henry VI's ambassador to the court of Philip the Good in the 1440s and was in Brussels in 1446, when he could have sat for Christus (A. W. Franks, "Notes on Edward Grimston, Esq., Ambassador to the Duchess of Burgundy," *Archaeologia* 40 [1866], pp. 455–70). The issue of the originality of the inscription is further complicated by its partial removal during a careless cleaning (see Scharf 1866, p. 481 n. a).
24. Cohen 1909, cols. 225–30.
25. J. Casier, *Les Orfèvres flamands et leurs poinçons, XV^e–XVIII^e siècles: Reproduction des plaques originales conservées au Musée d'Archéologie de Gand* [Ghent, 1914], pl. 1; Musée Communal, Bruges, *Orfèvrerie d'art à Bruges*, exhib. cat. (Brussels, 1950), p. 47, no. 456; Schabacker 1974, pp. 83–85; and J. M. Fritz, *Goldschmiedekunst der Gotik in Mitteleuropa* (Munich, 1982), fig. 6.
26. For examples, see C. de Hamel, *Medieval Craftsmen: Scribes and Illuminators* (London, 1992), pp. 39–43, figs. 30–34.
27. Recent examination of the frames of the diptych shows that the *pastiglia* appears to be original. This raised gesso and significant portions of the original frames were preserved and reattached to new frame members, perhaps when the paintings were transferred from panel to canvas.
28. For example, Carlo Crivelli (ca. 1430–1495), who was active in Venice and later in the Marches, signed a number of his paintings on the step leading to the Virgin's throne (see illustrations in J. Dunkerton et al., *Giotto to Dürer: Early Renaissance Painting in the National Gallery* [New Haven and London, 1991], pp. 332–34, figs. 46a, b).
29. Reviewed most recently in Sander 1993, pp. 158–61.
30. Vos 1985, pp. 30, 380.
31. Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 6a, nos. 2, 11, 14, 72.
32. For examples of signed works, see *ibid.*, vol. 8, nos. 2, 4, 12, 14, 24, 27, 32, 38, 44, 47–49, 63.
33. Burroughs 1938, pp. 248–54.
34. Comblen-Sonkes 1970, pp. 201–28; Périer-d'Ieteren 1983, p. 22; and Périer-d'Ieteren 1985, p. 24.
35. Asperen de Boer 1979, p. 212 n. 99, figs. 82a–d.
36. Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 89.
37. These parallels between manuscript illumination and panel painting are also found in the works of Simon Marmion (see Ainsworth 1992b, pp. 243–55).
38. The pinkish underpainting in these examples was detected in areas of paint loss viewed under the microscope. On the question of pinkish underpainting layers, see E. Berger, *Quellen und Technik der Fresko-, Oel- und Tempera-Malerei des Mittelalters*, no. 3 of *Beiträge zur Entwicklungs-Geschichte der Maltechnik* (Munich, 1897), pp. 250–53; H. Verougstraete-Marcq, "L'Imprimatura et la manière striée: Quelques exemples dans la peinture flamande du 15^e au 17^e siècle," in *Le Dessin sous-jacent dans la peinture: Infra-rouge et autres techniques d'examen*, ed. H. Verougstraete-Marcq and R. van Schoute (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1987), pp. 21–27; and Butler 1991, pp. 95–101, esp. 96–97.
39. Schabacker (1974, pp. 70–71, 132) attributes the painting to an anonymous Italian artist.
40. On the question of linear perspective in paintings by van Eyck, see Kern 1904; Doehleemann 1905, pp. 419–25; Kern 1905, pp. 60–61; Doehleemann 1911, pp. 392–422, 500–535; Doehleemann 1912, pp. 262–67; Kern 1912a, pp. 268–72; Kern 1912b, pp. 27–64; Collier 1975, pp. 60–63; Carleton 1982, pp. 118–24; Carleton 1983a, pp. 686–90; Carleton 1983b, p. 692; Collier 1983, p. 691; Ward 1983, pp. 680–86; Elkins 1991, pp. 53–62; and Panofsky 1991.
41. There is no indication that van Eyck used even a compass to form the arches in any of these compositions. These paintings were studied by Hand and Wolff (1986, pp. 76–86; infrared reflectography of the *Annunciation* by Molly Faries); Asperen de Boer and Faries (1990, pp. 37–49); and Sander (1993, pp. 244–63, on the *Lucca Madonna*). The *Van der Paele Madonna* was studied with infrared reflectography by the author in July 1993.
42. Systematic perspectival rendering apparently was not of interest to contemporary artists Rogier van der Weyden and Robert Campin, for there is no known evidence of any system in their paintings (see Asperen de Boer, Dijkstra, and Schoute 1990, *passim*).
43. See Levenson 1965, p. 40; Richter 1974, pp. 24–30; Collier 1975, pp. 108–39; Myers 1978, pp. 115–64; and Upton 1990, pp. 15, 21, 35–36, 41, 49, 66, 72, 77, 83, 91, 99.
44. Mirrors were used to correct a painter's work during the painting process, as they enabled weaknesses in composition to be easily detected (L. B. Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. J. R. Spencer, rev. ed. [New Haven and London, 1966], p. 83). On mirrors in art, see H. Schwarz, "The Mirror in Art," *Art Quarterly* 15 (summer 1952), pp. 97–118; and H. Schwarz, "The Mirror of the Artist and the Mirror of the Devout: Observations on Some Paintings, Drawings, and Prints of the Fifteenth Century," in *Studies in the History of Art: Dedicated to William E. Suida on His Eightieth Birthday* (London, 1959), pp. 90–105.
45. Kern 1904, pp. 16–17.
46. Upton 1990, pp. 69–70.
47. For the use of an arch in the works of other contemporary artists, see Birkmeyer 1961, pp. 1–20, 99–112.
48. Kern 1904, p. 17; Kern 1905, pp. 60–61; Doehleemann 1911, p. 503; and Sander 1993, pp. 163–70.
49. Edgerton 1975, pp. 136–37, 145.
50. The wings were destroyed during World War II. For a reconstruction of the triptych, see Gellman 1970a, pp. 147–48.
51. Schöne 1938, p. 56; Tolnay 1941, p. 179; Baldass 1952, pp. 98–99; Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 311–12; Bruyn 1957, p. 107; Birkmeyer 1961, pp. 103, 105; Cuttler 1968, p. 129; Ward 1968, p. 187; Gellman 1970a, p. 147; and B. G. Lane, "'Ecce Panis Angelorum': The Manger as Altar in Hugo's Berlin Nativity," *Art Bulletin* 57 (December 1975), p. 484.
52. Peter Klein's dendrochronological analysis of the panels provides a probable felling date of about 1448 and a likely date of use of about 1458 (see Appendix 2).
53. Alberti, *On Painting*, pp. 56, 57 n. 48, as noted in Myers 1978,

- p. 159. See also Kemp 1990, pp. 22–23, pl. 24.
54. A series of three ellipses, gradually increasing in size, are incised at the upper end of the painting. Only visible in raking light, these lines are not connected to the two focal points in any way and their function is unclear.
 55. Joel Upton, telephone conversation with the author, August 1993.
 56. Suggested in Martens 1990–91, pp. 5–23. A further indication that these are not portraits is that Colantonio copied the woman as a type in his *Deposition* (San Domenico Maggiore, Naples; see Castelfranchi Vegas 1984, figs. 44, 45).
 57. Upton 1990, pp. 7–11; and Martens, “*Petrus Christus: A Cultural Biography*,” this volume.
 58. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 312; Panofsky 1954, pp. 102–8; and Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 81.
 59. For various opinions about this issue, see Pächt 1926, pp. 155–66; Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 188–90, 310–13; Panofsky 1954, pp. 102–8; Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 81; Gellman 1970b, pp. 43–53; Upton 1972, pp. 37–41; Richter 1974, pp. 235–36; Schabacker 1974, pp. 19–22, 52–57; Collier 1975, p. 115; Myers 1978, p. 120; Panhans-Bühler 1978, p. 78; and Upton 1990, pp. 7–19.
 60. Burroughs 1938, pp. 172–203, esp. 177, 248–54. See also C. Wolters, *Die Bedeutung der Gemäldedurchleuchtung mit Röntgenstrahlen für die Kunstgeschichte*, Veröffentlichungen zur Kunstgeschichte 3 (Frankfurt am Main, 1938), pp. 25–27. For further information on the technique and execution of van Eyck’s paintings, see P. Coremans, *L’Agneau mystique au laboratoire*, Les Primitifs flamands, III: Contributions à l’étude des primitifs flamands 2 (Antwerp, 1953); Desneux 1958, pp. 13–21; Asperen de Boer 1979, pp. 141–214; Asperen de Boer and Giltaij 1987, pp. 254–76; Asperen de Boer and Faries 1990, pp. 37–49; Asperen de Boer, Ridderbos, and Zeldenrust 1991, pp. 8–35; Asperen de Boer 1992, pp. 9–18; and Bosshard 1992, pp. 4–11.
 61. Hoogewerff 1936–47, vol. 2, pp. 8–9. Durand-Gréville (1911, p. 51) thought Christus began in the atelier of Hubert van Eyck, working on the *Turin-Milan Hours*. Châtelet (1993, pp. 74–76) believed Christus was trained by Hand H of the *Turin-Milan Hours*. On the hands involved in the *Hours*, see Smeyers 1989, pp. 55–70.
 62. Illustrated in Durrieu 1902, pls. XXIX, XXXVII, XLI.
 63. M. H. Butler and J. R. J. van Asperen de Boer, “The Examination of the Milan-Turin Hours with Infrared Reflectography: A Preliminary Report,” in *Le Dessin sous-jacent dans la peinture: Géographie et chronologie du dessin sous-jacent* (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1989), pp. 71–76, esp. 74–75, pls. 35a, b.
 64. Weale 1909, pp. 112–13.
 65. *Ibid.*, pp. 84–85.
 66. First noted in Burger 1925, pp. 34–35; see also Lane 1970, pp. 390–93.
 67. See Appendix 1, doc. 29.
 68. See Appendix 1, docs. 30, 31.
 69. Those paintings apparently commissioned by Italians are the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis*, the Washington donor wings, and the *Death of the Virgin*; those with an Italian provenance are the *Death of the Virgin* and its wings of *Saint John the Baptist* and *Saint Catherine*, the *Wildenstein Nativity*, and the *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior*; those with a Spanish provenance are the *Head of Christ*, the *Portrait of a Carthusian*, the Berlin wings, the *Washington Nativity*, the *Madrid Virgin and Child*, and the *Bruges Nativity and Annunciation*; and those copied by Italian painters or sculptors are the *Death of the Virgin*, the *New York Lamentation*, and the *Washington Nativity* (or a very similar Northern example). A fine review of the Italian and Aragonese taste for Northern painting is Thiébaud 1993, pp. 29–38.
 70. Bazin 1952, pp. 194–208, esp. 202–3.
 71. See Martens, “*Petrus Christus: A Cultural Biography*,” this volume.
 72. Bazin 1952, pp. 202–3; and Castelfranchi Vegas 1984, pp. 85–86. Holmes (1925, p. 288) thought Christus went to Italy as early as 1440.
 73. G. Cònsoli, “Ancora sull’ ‘Antonello de Sicilia’: Precisazioni su alcuni documenti sforzeschi,” *Arte lombarda* 21, no. 1 (1967), pp. 109–12, esp. III, doc. 1.
 74. J. Wright, “Antonello da Messina: The Origins of His Style and Technique,” *Art History* 3 (March 1980), pp. 41–60. On the transition from tempera to oil in Italy, see Dunkerton et al., *Giotto to Dürer*, pp. 197–204.
 75. Thiébaud (1993, pp. 39–44, esp. 34) reviews this issue and disputes some of Wright’s findings.
 76. Castelfranchi Vegas 1984, figs. 37, 44, 45, 54; and Thiébaud 1993, pp. 37–38.
 77. A. Marabottini, “Antonello: La vita e le opere,” in *Antonello da Messina*, exhib. cat., Museo Regionale, Messina (Rome, 1981), p. 37; and L. Castelfranchi, “Il problema delle fonti fiamminghe di Antonello,” in *Antonello da Messina: Atti del convegno di studi tenuto a Messina dal 29 novembre al 2 dicembre 1981* (Messina, 1987), pp. 45–46.
 78. Illustrated in Castelfranchi Vegas 1984, fig. 68.
 79. I have examined the following paintings by Antonello with infrared reflectography and, when possible, X-radiography (the early works clearly do not reflect knowledge of Netherlandish painting): two male portraits (both Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin); *Portrait of a Young Man* and *Christ Crowned with Thorns* (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York); and *Madonna Enthroned with Saints* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna). The investigation of the paintings in the Louvre is discussed in Thiébaud 1993, p. 56.
 80. Information regarding the structure of the paint layers in these works comes from reports by Helmut Ruhemann (*Portrait of a Man*) and Martin Wyld (*Salvator Mundi*), dated 1939 and 1970, respectively, Paintings Conservation Department files, National Gallery, London. See also Dunkerton et al., *Giotto to Dürer*, p. 197.
 81. Information about the Los Angeles portrait was kindly provided by Joseph Fronck, Conservator, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, telephone conversation with the author, September 14, 1993.
 82. On Antonello’s portrait technique, see Thiébaud 1993, pp. 56, 102–9.

CATALOGUE

Workshop of Jan van Eyck *Saint Jerome in His Study*

1442?

Oil on paper on oak, 8 $\frac{1}{16}$ x 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (20.5 x 13.3 cm)

Inscribed: 1442 (on wall behind saint, possibly a later addition);

Reuerendissimo in Christo patri et domino, domino Ieronimo, tituli Sancte Crucis in Iherusalem presbytero cardinali (on folded paper on table)¹

Provenance: Italy?; Pierre Stevens, Antwerp?; Paul Bottenweiser, Berlin; Detroit Institute of Arts, 1925 (25.4)

This tranquil scene of Saint Jerome as a scholarly Father of the Church in his study rather than as a penitent in the desert has generated considerable controversy ever since William Valentiner acquired it for the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1925. At issue are the details of the original commission and early provenance as well as fundamental questions about attribution and even authenticity.

Several scholars² noted that *Saint Jerome* fits the description of a van Eyck painting given in the 1492 inventory of Lorenzo de' Medici's collection: "Una tavoletta di Fiandra suui uno

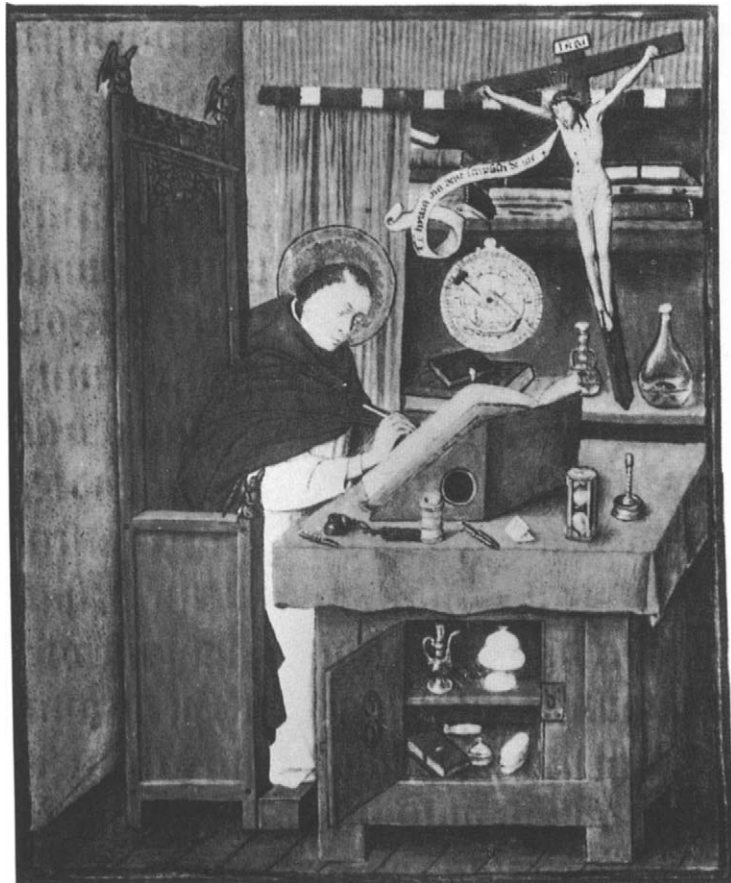


Fig. 88. Hand H, *Thomas Aquinas*, from the *Turin-Milan Hours*, MS K.IV.29, fol. 73v. Tempera on vellum. Destroyed by fire in 1904; formerly Biblioteca Universitaria, Turin

San Girolamo a studio, chon uno armarietto di piu libri di prospettiva e uno liono a' piedi, opera di maestro Giovanni di Bruggia, cholorita a olio in una guaina, f. 30."³ The presence of this panel or another like it in Italy during the fifteenth century is strengthened by the apparent influence it exerted on the frescoes *Saint Jerome in His Study* by Domenico Ghirlandaio and *Saint Augustine* by Sandro Botticelli (both 1480, Chiesa di Ognissanti, Florence).⁴

Further clues to the possible circumstances surrounding the commission lie within the painting itself, namely on the folded letter on the writing table. Translated from the Latin, it reads: "To the Most Reverend Father and Lord in Christ, Lord Jerome, Cardinal-Priest of the Holy Cross of Jerusalem."⁵ Erwin Panofsky realized that this described Niccolò Albergati, the titular cardinal of the church of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, Rome, and proposed that he commissioned the painting from Jan van Eyck. Further refining Panofsky's hypothesis, Edwin Hall suggested that the duke of Burgundy, Philip the Good, commissioned the work in 1435 at the Congress of Arras, where Albergati served as papal legate and president. He maintained that it was a gift to Albergati in gratitude for his services in achieving the Treaty of Arras. According to Hall, the letter on the table is a "cryptogram serving not only to inscribe the gift but telling us in a veiled manner that the picture is really a hidden portrait of Albergati as Jerome *redivivus*."⁶

Intriguing as they are, these theories concerning the commission of the painting did not result in unanimous agreement about van Eyck's authorship.⁷ Noting certain weaknesses in the execution, several scholars attributed the work to Christus, while others considered it a Christus copy of a lost van Eyck.⁸

The discovery of the date at the upper left led Valentiner to speculate that the painting was started by van Eyck but completed by Christus (lower left section) upon the master's death in 1441.⁹ However, cleaning and restoration of the painting by William Suhr in 1956 revealed that the very portions thought to be by another artist had been overpainted.¹⁰ When



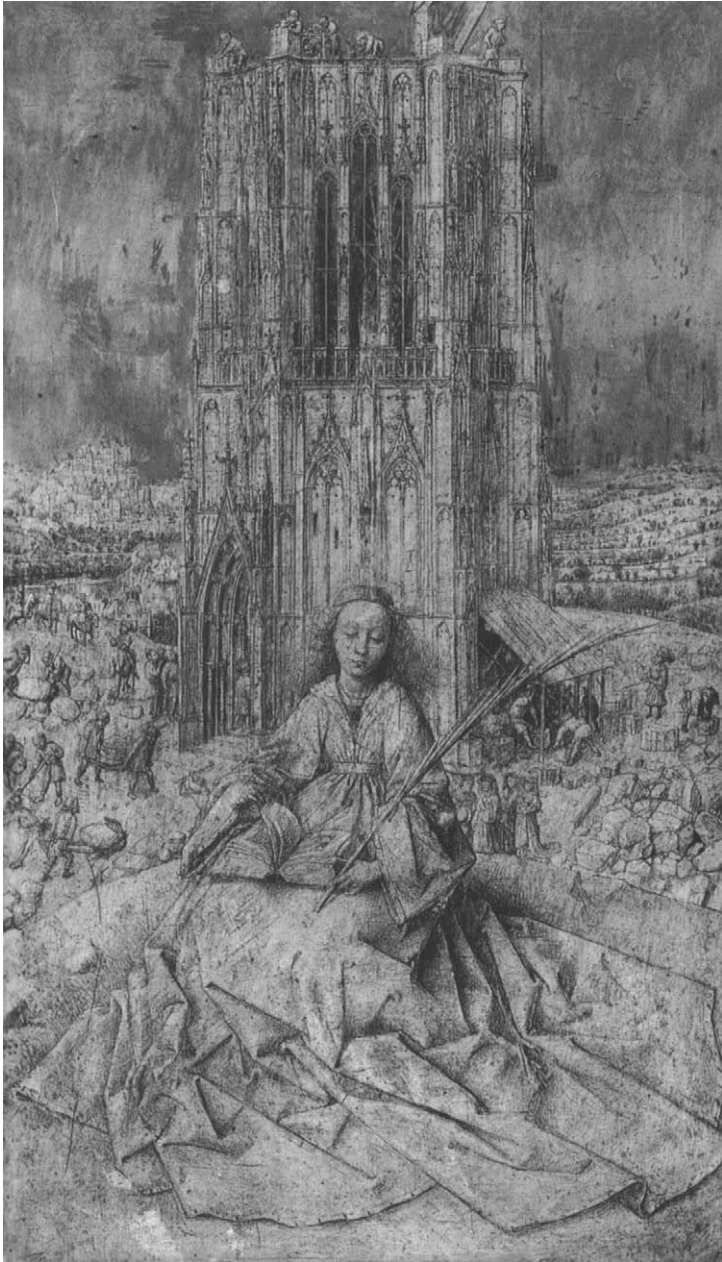


Fig. 89. Jan van Eyck, *Saint Barbara*, 1437. Oil on oak, 16¼ x 10¾ in. (41.2 x 27.6 cm) with original frame. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp

the overpaints in the cloak and hat were removed, the case for the hand of one artist—Jan van Eyck—was made with renewed vigor.¹¹ The cleaning apparently also confirmed that the 1442 date was old but perhaps not original, adding no particularly compelling evidence about the authorship. Although the more recent literature has favored an attribution to a follower of van Eyck, others have maintained that it is by Jan alone or that two hands were involved.¹² Receiving more notoriety than support is Roger Marijnissen's opinion that the painting is modern.¹³

The relationship between *Saint Jerome* and manuscript illumination opens a further route of investigation that was pursued by Anna Strümpell, Albert Châtelet, and Maurits Smeyers.¹⁴ The painting is quite small, and, as Strümpell noted, the composition is also found in a miniature of Thomas

Aquinas in his study from the *Turin-Milan Hours* (fig. 88).¹⁵ The two share the placement of the seated saint at the left behind his desk, the position of the lectern with its large book, the folded letter on the table, and the books on the shelf behind the curtain and valance with alternating colored bands of fringe on the edge.¹⁶ Strümpell reasoned that the painting and the miniature must have derived from the same source.¹⁷ Smeyers recognized that the Detroit *Saint Jerome* was imitated in Bruges school illuminations of 1440–50 (MS W. 721, fol. 277v, Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore; and MS nouv. acq. lat. 3110, fol. 163v, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris), demonstrating the interchange of motifs and entire compositions between manuscript illumination and panel painting.¹⁸

Châtelet carried the association of the Detroit painting and the *Turin-Milan Hours* further by attributing *Saint Jerome* to Hand H, one of the many illuminators involved in the book.¹⁹ He proposed that this master was probably Christus's teacher and was responsible for other small-scale Eyckian paintings, including two Crucifixions (Galleria Giorgio Franchetti, Venice; and Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) and the *Stigmatization of Saint Francis* (Philadelphia Museum of Art).²⁰ Although Châtelet's theory reminds us that some Bruges artists of this period were both panel painters and manuscript illuminators, there are no striking similarities in handling between the Detroit painting and the illuminations generally attributed to Hand H.²¹ Furthermore, the panel paintings Châtelet attributed to Hand H do not form a cohesive group.

With regard to certain general aspects of technique, the *Saint Jerome* is somewhat similar to the Eyckian *Stigmatization of Saint Francis*. Both are painted on an intermediary support rather than directly on the oak panel—parchment for the *Saint Francis*, paper for the *Saint Jerome*.²² The notion that these supports were glued to the oak panels as part of the preliminary steps is strengthened by the results of Peter Klein's dendrochronological dating of each (the earliest possible felling date of the tree for the *Saint Francis* panel is 1398; for the *Saint Jerome*, 1410, with an estimated earliest date of painting about ten years later).²³ Infrared reflectography shows no apparent underdrawing in *Saint Jerome* and very little in *Saint Francis*, perhaps owing to their small size, to the use of an imperceptible drawing medium, such as brown ink, or to routine practices associated with painting on paper and parchment.

Since other small-scale paintings by van Eyck, such as the unfinished *Saint Barbara*, the *Annunciation* diptych, and the *Virgin at the Fountain* (figs. 89, 133, 134), are fully underdrawn, the lack of any perceptible underdrawing in *Saint Jerome* is curious.²⁴ Moreover, the working procedure in paint in *Saint Jerome* is different from that in these pictures. *Saint Jerome* was painted using an additive process: the curtains are partially

painted over the books on the shelf; the sand shaker and book clasp, over the lectern; the hourglass, over the table; and the lion, over parts of the desk. While it is not uncommon for artists to adjust the edges of forms, this additive method is alien to what we know about van Eyck's execution. Furthermore, the awkward perspective of the chair (a feature corrected in the *Thomas Aquinas* of the *Turin-Milan Hours*, which is probably later) is not consistent with van Eyck's usual care in depicting a convincing, empirically conceived perspective.

There are also no particular features in *Saint Jerome* that suggest Christus's hand or, for that matter, that the painting was created by two different artists, as originally proposed. The *Exeter Madonna*, *Head of Christ*, and *Frankfurt Madonna*—all paintings that are arguably among Christus's most Eyckian works—clearly demonstrate the extent to which he was willing or able to incorporate van Eyck's style and technique. However, when Christus did assimilate certain motifs or features of handling from Jan's work, he always managed to maintain his individuality.

Saint Jerome appears to be by one of the anonymous close followers of van Eyck, someone who was equally familiar with the workshop's production of paintings and manuscript illuminations. The date on the painting, 1442, would not be inconsistent with an execution just after Jan's death. Whether this is the painting listed in the Medici inventory or simply a copy made after it remains a matter of conjecture.

1. Transcribed by Panofsky (1953, vol. 1, p. 189).
2. W. R. Valentiner, ed., and G. H. McCall, comp., *Catalogue of European Paintings and Sculpture from 1300–1800*, exhib. cat., New York World's Fair (New York, 1939), pp. 57–58, no. 114; Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 189; Richardson 1956, p. 228; and Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 104.
3. Inventory published in Müntz 1888, p. 78: "A small panel from Flanders of a Saint Jerome in his study, with a little cupboard of many books in perspective and a lion at his feet, the work of Master John of Bruges, colored in oil, in a case, 30 florins." This entry directly precedes one for "una tavoletta dipintovi di una testa di dama francese cholorita a olio, opera di Pietro Cresti da Bruggia," the painting that is usually associated with Christus's *Portrait of a Lady*, cat. no. 19 (see Appendix 1, doc. 28).
4. Noted in, for example, Friedländer 1925, p. 298; Winkler 1927, p. 94; Panofsky 1954, p. 102; Richardson 1956, p. 228; and Bergström 1957, pp. 1, 4. Both frescoes are illustrated in R. Lightbown, *Sandro Botticelli: Life and Work* (New York, 1989), pls. 28, 29.
5. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 189–90; and Panofsky 1954, pp. 107–8. Jacqueline Folie (in Detroit 1960, p. 69) also pointed out that Albergati had been prior of the Carthusian monastery of Saint Jerome near Bologna in 1406—another connection between Albergati and the saint.
6. Hall 1968, p. 14. If the Saint Jerome depicted is a portrait of Albergati, then the inscription 1442 may refer to his death date rather than the date the painting was made (*ibid.*, pp. 25–26).
7. Baldass maintained that the work was by van Eyck alone; see Baldass 1927, p. 82; L. von Baldass, "The Ghent Altarpiece of Hubert and Jan van Eyck, Part II," *Art Quarterly* 13 (summer 1950), p. 190 n. 13; and Baldass 1952, pp. 25, 276, no. 5.
8. For an attribution to Christus, see Friedländer 1925, pp. 297–98; "Petrus Christus for Detroit" 1925, p. 290; Valentiner 1925, pp. 58–59; Conway 1927, p. 9, no. 14; Fry 1927, p. 67; P. Lambotte, "The Exhibition of Flemish and Belgian Art, 1300–1900, Burlington House, Part II," *Apollo* (February 1927), pp. 51, 54; Schöne 1937, p. 158 n. 2; and Schöne 1938, p. 56, no. 7. On the painting as a copy by Christus, see Strümpell 1925–26, pp. 198–99; Winkler 1927, pp. 95–96; J. Lavalleye, *Juste de Gand, peintre de Frédéric de Montefeltre* (Brussels and Rome, 1936), p. 16 n. 4; Tolnay 1939, p. 76, no. 5; Musper [1948], p. 107; Bazin 1952, p. 204; and Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 104.
9. E. P. Richardson (1956, p. 229) reported Valentiner's opinion.
10. William Suhr, conservation report, February 24–July 20, 1956, Conservation Services Laboratory files, Detroit Institute of Arts. The painting was investigated by Paul Coremans, Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Brussels. Coremans's report (April 1961, Conservation Services Laboratory files, Detroit Institute of Arts) states that the technical findings on the painting are incompatible with what is known about van Eyck's work.
11. Neugass 1956, p. 4; Richardson 1956, pp. 230–33; Koch 1957, p. 273 n. 8; Bruges 1960, pp. 41–45, no. 3; Detroit 1960, pp. 69–72, no. 5; and Hall 1968, p. 3.
12. Van Eyck follower: Smeyers 1988, pp. 69–70; Pächt 1989, p. 54; and Smeyers 1989, p. 64. By Jan alone: Gellman 1970b, pp. 505–8; and Upton 1990, p. 11 n. 13 ("attributed to van Eyck"). Two hands: Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 312; Schabacker 1974, pp. 54–55; and Sterling 1976, p. 7 n. 5.
13. R. H. Marijnissen, *On Scholarship: Some Reflections on the Study of Early-Netherlandish Painting*, Mededelingen van de Koninklijke Academie voor Wetenschappen, Letteren en Schone Kunsten van België, klasse der schone kunsten 40, no. 4 (Brussels, 1978), pp. 1–11; and R. H. Marijnissen, *Paintings, Genuine—Fraud—Fake: Modern Methods of Examining Paintings* (Brussels, 1985), pp. 384–87.
14. Strümpell 1925–26, pp. 196–99; Châtelet 1957, pp. 161–63; Châtelet 1980, p. 58; Smeyers 1988, pp. 69–70; Smeyers 1989, p. 64; and Châtelet 1993, pp. 75–76.
15. Illustrated in Durrieu 1902, pl. XL.
16. Bergström (1957, pp. 1–20) has analyzed the iconographic significance of the objects depicted in the study. He suggests that the antidote for poisonous creatures in the jar marked "Tyriaca" refers to a general remedy against original sin, acquired sin, disease, and death, which is provided by the coming of Christ. He also notes that the symbolism presented in *Saint Jerome* is reflected in certain contemporary northern Italian examples.
17. Strümpell 1925–26, p. 197.
18. Smeyers 1988, figs. 15, 19.
19. Châtelet 1957, pp. 162–63; Châtelet 1980, p. 58; and Châtelet 1993, pp. 74–76 (where Hand H is identified as Jean Coene).
20. Illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pls. 38a, 38b, 56b.
21. For example, *God Blessing* (fol. 14r); *Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane* (fol. 30v); *Calvary* (fol. 48v); *Pietà* (fol. 49v); and *Finding of the Cross* (fol. 118r).
22. For a technical analysis of *Saint Francis*, see Butler 1991, pp. 95–101. Analysis of *Saint Jerome* is being carried out in 1993 under the supervision of Barbara Heller, Conservator of Paintings, Detroit Institute of Arts.
23. See Appendix 2.
24. On *Saint Barbara*, see Asperen de Boer 1992, pp. 9–18. See Bosshard 1992, pp. 4–11, for the diptych. Information on the underdrawing of the *Virgin at the Fountain* kindly provided by J. R. J. van Asperen de Boer (letter to the author, September 21, 1993).

Jan van Eyck and Workshop

Virgin and Child with Saints Barbara and Elizabeth and Jan Vos

About 1441–43

Oil on wood, transferred to canvas, transferred to Masonite press-wood with oak veneer and cradled

Panel: 19 x 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (48.4 x 62.3 cm); painted surface: 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.

(47.4 x 61.3 cm); original painted surface: 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 22 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (43 x 58.2 cm)

Provenance: Baron James de Rothschild, Paris (about 1850); Rothschild family, Paris; [M. Knoedler and Company]; Frick Collection, New York, 1954 (54.1.161)

H. J. J. Scholtens's reconsideration of two previously published documents in the archives of Utrecht and of Antwerp provided the identification of the saints and the donor in this painting as well as the circumstances surrounding its dedication.¹ Bishop Martinus of Mayo visited the Carthusian monastery at Genadedal (or Val-de-Grâce), outside the city walls of Bruges, on September 3, 1443, and consecrated three paintings in the church, attaching indulgences to each.² These paintings, all donated by the prior Jan Vos, included one of "the Virgin with Saints Barbara and Elizabeth." The bishop stipulated that those worshipping the saints would receive indulgences considered valid only if the paintings remained within the order.³ Some seven years later, about 1450, the painting is mentioned again and is said to be in its new location, on the altar of Saint Barbara in the Carthusian monastery at Nieuwlicht, near Utrecht.⁴ No additional confirmation of these documents can be provided by either the churches of Genadedal or Nieuwlicht, as they were destroyed in 1578 and 1579, respectively, during the religious wars.

Scholtens recognized that the description of the painting and the presence of the Carthusian monk matched the Frick panel. Further details about the life of Jan Vos provided clues for reconstructing the meaning and circumstances of the manufacture of the work.⁵ Originally a member of the Teutonic order, Vos joined the Carthusians in 1431, receiving the robe of Saint Bruno in Nieuwlicht. A decade later he moved to the monastery at Genadedal, near Bruges, replacing Gerard van Hamone as prior until 1450, when he returned to Nieuwlicht to serve as prior for another eight years. Vos relinquished his position at Nieuwlicht in 1458 and died in 1462.

Vos's early relationship with the Teutonic order (a militarily based religious foundation) may explain the presence of Saints Barbara and Elizabeth of Hungary to the left and right, respectively, of the Virgin and Child. Barbara was known as the patron saint of artillery, an identification perhaps emphasized here by the figure of Mars, the god of war, seen through the

center arch of the tower behind her.⁶ Elizabeth was particularly venerated by the German order, which maintained a special devotion to her and dedicated their church to her.⁷ It is usually argued that Vos took the painting with him to Utrecht in 1450, for the Utrecht document describes it in place on the altar of the "Blessed Barbara, Virgin and Martyr" around that time.⁸ In 1446, an altar was consecrated to Saint Barbara at Nieuwlicht, and in 1451, the Grande Chartreuse inaugurated an annual festival of Saint Barbara, thus providing additional meaning to the original significance of the saint in this context.⁹

The Frick *Virgin and Child* passed into obscurity, perhaps as a result of the religious wars of the following century, and did not become known as part of the Eyckian corpus until Joseph Archer Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle mentioned it in 1857.¹⁰ In some of the early literature, the painting is assigned to Hubert van Eyck,¹¹ Jan's older brother, and there is a certain amount of confusion about the identification of Saint Elizabeth (also called Saint Anne or simply a saint holding the Virgin's crown) and the donor. In 1900, James Weale considered Herman Steenken from Suutdorp, vicar of the Carthusian cloister of Saint Anna ter Woestine, near Bruges, as the donor, a notion that was repeated intermittently even after Scholtens's archival discoveries of 1938.¹²

Considerable debate has persisted about attribution and dating. This is partly the result of the altered condition of the painting, which has been transferred twice, thus changing its surface characteristics.¹³ Furthermore, since the work was rediscovered only in the mid-nineteenth century and was hidden in private collections until 1954, it has not received due attention. Many have favored the authorship of Jan van Eyck alone;¹⁴ a nearly equal voice is given to the idea of two hands—Jan and a follower who is periodically identified as Christus.¹⁵ The occasional attribution to Christus represents the need to attach a name to the picture, which would otherwise fall under the more anonymous designation of van Eyck follower.¹⁶

Erwin Panofsky expressed the fundamental problem that

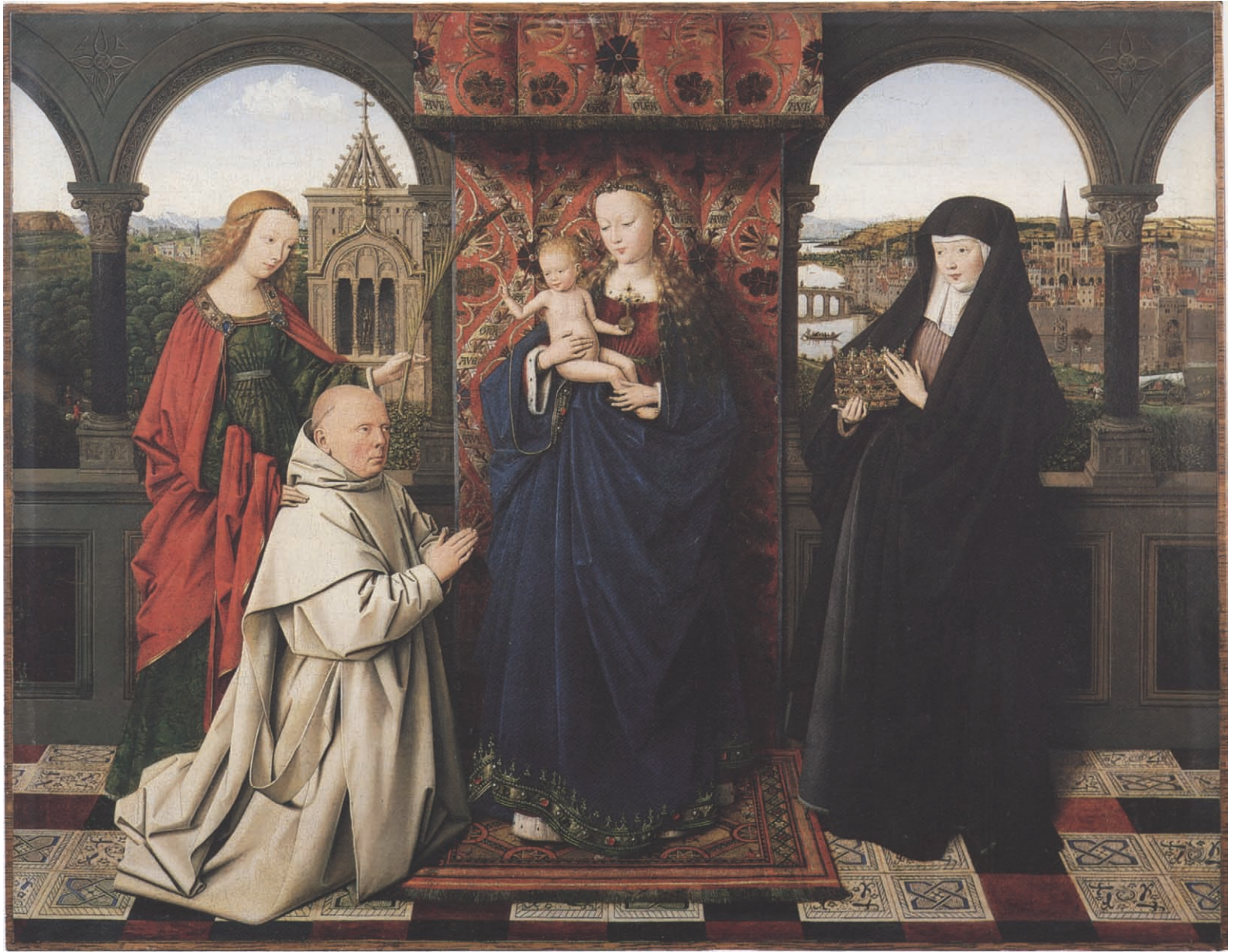




Fig. 90. Detail of cat. no. 2 (Virgin's head)

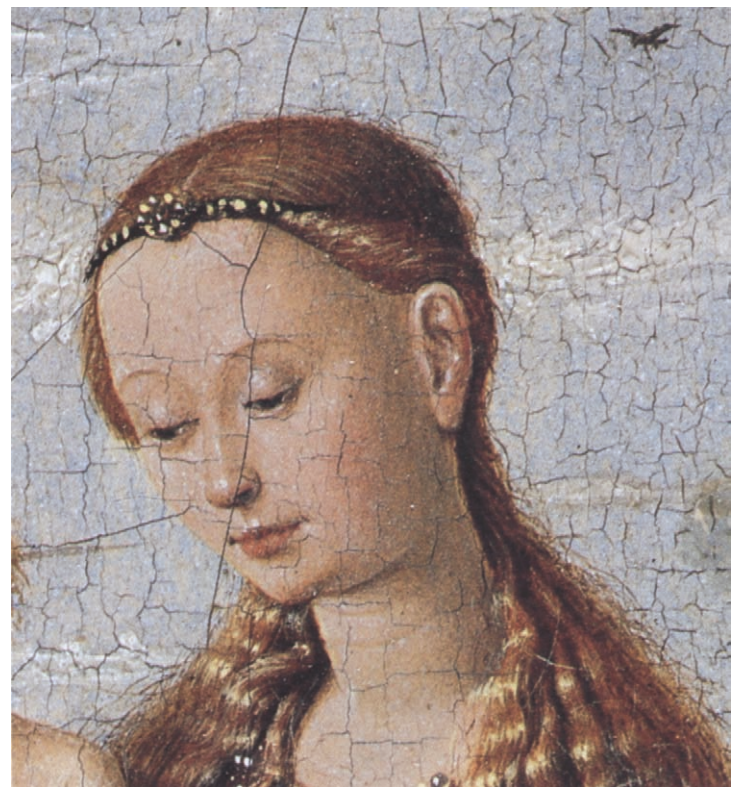


Fig. 91. Detail of cat. no. 7 (Virgin's head)

prompted disputes about the attribution, stating that the picture is “grandiosely conceived . . . yet fails to carry conviction.”¹⁷ Citing the wooden draperies, unarticulated hands, overly smooth faces, mechanical treatment of the landscape, lack of technical accomplishment in details such as Elizabeth’s crown, and infelicities in the proportions of the architecture, Panofsky suggested that another artist was principally responsible for the work. He considered this visual information in the light of Scholtens’s documentary evidence and decided that van Eyck could only have begun the painting.

Panofsky assumed the painting was commissioned when Jan Vos succeeded Gerard van Hamone as the prior of Genadedal, shortly before van Hamone’s death on March 30, 1441.¹⁸ As the Frick picture was most likely one of those consecrated by Bishop Martinus of Mayo on September 3, 1443, it must have been completed by that time. Van Eyck died on July 9, 1441, leaving just a little over three months for him to work on this commission. Therefore, Panofsky concluded that the painting must have been completed by someone in Jan’s workshop, most likely Christus. Panofsky’s theory was reiterated by other scholars—Franklin Biebel, Peter Schabacker, and James Collier among them—and became one of the principal links between Christus and van Eyck.¹⁹

While Panofsky’s theory is not without merit, it does present difficulties. Recently, both Joel Upton and Maximiliaan Martens have argued convincingly against a teacher-pupil relationship

between van Eyck and Christus, stating that the manner in which Christus purchased his citizenship in 1444 makes it unlikely that he had been in Bruges long enough to have completed the painting by 1443.²⁰

A second problem with Panofsky’s theory involves the identification of Christus’s hand in the execution of the Frick picture. While Panofsky conveniently equated the weaknesses in handling with Christus,²¹ a comparison with the painting by Christus that is most closely associated with the Frick picture, the Exeter *Madonna* (cat. no. 7), shows this conclusion to be untenable.²² The two-dimensional succession of planes relied upon for the organization of space in the Frick *Virgin and Child* appears nowhere in Christus’s oeuvre, and Christus, after all, was particularly interested from the very beginning in the treatment of perspective and of the spatial relationships between figures. The palettes of the Exeter *Madonna* and the Frick *Virgin and Child* also show startling differences, the former exhibiting a variety of strongly lit colors and the latter concentrating on a more limited range, including neutral colors with a gradual blending of lights and darks. In the rendering of details the Frick painting does not show Christus’s mannerisms (compare figs. 90 and 91)—the deft placement of impasto touches to give the illusion of reflected light on a precious object, or the pinkish daubs at fingertips and in facial features that economically but expressively model the forms. Christus’s handling, reminiscent of that of a manuscript illuminator in its

abbreviated technique, is not in evidence in the Frick painting.

Panofsky correctly saw in the Frick *Virgin and Child* elements of van Eyck's conception, but not the characteristics of his execution. New information gleaned from infrared reflectography of the painting helps confirm this theory. Although the areas of the painting that reveal underdrawing are mostly limited to a summary sketch for Jan Vos and a more complete

preliminary plan for the Virgin and Child, there is ample information to confirm the hand of van Eyck, at least at the layout stage of the design (fig. 92).²³ Typical of Jan's handling in the draperies, for example, are thin brush strokes delineating the folds;²⁴ middle-tone shadows marked by precise, even, parallel hatching generally running parallel to the main fold; deep shadows suggested by a dense network of slightly curved



Fig. 92. IRR assembly, detail of cat. no. 2 (underdrawing of the Virgin's drapery)



Fig. 93. IRR computer assembly, detail of fig. 141 (underdrawing of the Virgin's drapery)



Fig. 94. Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of Giovanni(?) Arnolfini and His Wife, Giovanna Cenami(?)*, 1434. Oil on oak, 32½ x 23½ in. (81.8 x 59.7 cm). National Gallery, London



Fig. 95. Follower of Jan van Eyck, *Maelbeke Madonna* (central panel of the *Maelbeke Triptych*). Whereabouts unknown

strokes forming cross-hatching; and light accents of shallow concave folds marked by fewer strokes that spread out like a fan. In the lower section of the Virgin's drapery, van Eyck typically reinforced the deepest areas of shadow with long continuous strokes of thicker application that approach a wash drawing. Finally, the areas of cast shadow to the right of the Virgin near her shoulder and at the hem of her dress reveal Jan's habitual dense network of vertical brush strokes that imply the volume of the form. These elements are directly comparable to those in the underdrawing of the Virgin's drapery in the *Van der Paele Madonna* (fig. 93),²⁵ an undisputed work by van Eyck, and are clearly visible in the unfinished *Saint Barbara* of 1437 (fig. 89).

Aside from the figures of the Virgin, the Christ Child, and Jan Vos, very little underdrawing could be located elsewhere in the painting. It is quite possible that van Eyck abandoned the work before the entire preliminary design was set, leaving the commission to a workshop collaborator to complete. This might explain the pastiche character of the painting, which combines elements from Jan's works of diverse periods.²⁶ As

Charles Sterling observed, the Saint Barbara figure is from works of the early 1430s, as is perhaps the model for the church in the right background.²⁷ He also suggested that Saint Elizabeth recalls the pose, facial features, and long, smooth hands of Giovanna Cenami in the *Arnolfini Portrait* of 1434 (fig. 94), while the *Rolin Madonna* of about 1435 (fig. 115) is reflected in the far view into the landscape at the right. In the Frick painting, however, this view is not as well joined to that of the gently rolling hills at the left as it is in its model. The main motif of the Virgin and Child comes from one of Jan's last works, the *Maelbeke Triptych* (fig. 95),²⁸ which he probably left unfinished at his death in 1441. Not only is the pose of the Virgin and Child (seen frontally rather than at a slight angle) from this source, but the repeating V-shaped, sculptural draperies are as well. An assistant who had access to model drawings in the workshop or knew many of van Eyck's finished paintings no doubt relied on them to complete certain passages of the design as well as the execution in paint. This assistant was less adept than his master at carrying out the specific

details of color harmonies and light effects necessary to achieve a convincing spatial arrangement of forms. This resulted in such ambiguities as the exact placement of Saint Barbara's tower and its relationship to the arch, supposedly a considerable distance in front of it.

What, then, might be the date of the Frick *Virgin and Child*? Sterling defended a date in the early 1430s, noting certain weaknesses of the young van Eyck that are identifiable in the painting.²⁹ Its pastiche nature, however, argues against an early date, particularly in view of the motif of the Virgin and Child, which is late. The underdrawing shows Jan's hand, while the execution in paint shows another, which supports the 1441–43 dating. Van Eyck probably started the work at Jan Vos's request soon after the latter arrived in Bruges to assume the post of prior at Genadedal. In his new position of prominence, Vos could afford to commission a work from the preeminent painter of Bruges, a painting whose iconography presented the prelate's credentials and membership in the Teutonic order to the Carthusian community at Genadedal. Given the personal nature of the painting, it is only reasonable to assume that Vos would have taken it with him to Utrecht in 1450 to be installed on the altar of Saint Barbara.

1. Scholtens 1938, pp. 49–62. The documents were first published by L. van Hasselt, "Het necrologium van het Karthuizer-Klooster Nieuwlicht of Bloemendaal buiten Utrecht," in *Bijdragen en mededeelingen van het Historisch Genootschap, gevestigd te Utrecht* 9 (1886), pp. 201–2.
2. Scholtens 1938, p. 51.
3. *Ibid.*, pp. 52, 57. Martens (1992, p. 336) interpreted the document differently, as "only if the painting remained on the altar in the church of Genadedal" rather than within the order. This reading fails to explain why Vos would have removed the painting from Genadedal, thereby negating its function to grant indulgences.
4. Scholtens 1938, p. 51.
5. H. J. J. Scholtens, "Het Kartuizerklooster dal van Gracien buiten Brugge," *Handelingen van het Genootschap voor Geschiedenis, gesticht onder de benaming Soci t  d'Emulation te Brugge* 83 (1940–46), pp. 175–77; and J.-P. Esther, J. de Grauwe, and V. Desmet, *Het Kartuizerklooster binnen Brugge: Verleden en toekomst* (Bruges, 1980), p. 20.
6. Suggested in Biebel 1968, p. 205.
7. Scholtens 1938, p. 58. Biebel (1968, p. 205), following Colin Eisler's suggestion, noted that Saint Elizabeth was also the patron saint of Isabella of Portugal, duchess of Burgundy, who favored the Carthusian monasteries in the Netherlands and Switzerland with donations.
8. Scholtens 1938, p. 51.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 57.
10. Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1857, p. 98.
11. O. Seeck, *Die charakteristischen Unterschiede der Br der van Eyck*, *Abhandlungen der K niglichen Gesellschaft der Wissenschaften zu G ttingen, philologisch-historische Klasse, n.s.*, 3, no. 1 (Berlin, 1899), pp. 18–22; Weale 1900b, p. 254; and Durand-Gr ville 1910, pp. 114–16 (along with Christus).
12. Weale 1900b, p. 254. J. Lejeune (*Les van Eyck: Peintres de Li ge et de sa cath drale* [Li ge, 1956], pp. 161–85) favored Weale's identification of the cleric, probably because it fit better with his own theories of an early dating (ca. 1417–22) and association of the painting with Li ge. Philippe (1960, pp. 155–68) also supported a Li ge connection but attributed the painting to Jan van Eyck.
13. For a complete description of the July 1953 restoration of the painting by William Suhr, see curatorial files, Frick Collection, New York.
14. Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1862–63, vol. 1, pp. 97–98; Tschudi 1894, pp. 65–70; Voll 1906, pp. 39–41; Dvoř k 1925, pp. 125–27; P cht 1926, p. 160; Fierens-Gevaert 1927–29, vol. 1, p. 100; Tolnay 1939, pp. 33, 69; Puyvelde 1953, p. 107; L. Fourez, "L'Ev que Chevrot de Tournai et sa Cit  de Dieu," *Revue belge d'arch ologie et d'histoire de l'art* 23 (1954), pp. 91–93; Lejeune, *Les van Eyck*, pp. 161–65; Philippe 1960, pp. 155–63; Friedl nder 1967–76, vol. 1, pp. 61–62; and Panhans-B hler 1978, pp. 76–78, 81–85.
15. Two hands: Beenken 1941, p. 76; Gellman 1970b, pp. 47–53; Sterling 1976, pp. 64–65; and Snyder 1985, pp. 150–51. With Christus: Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 187–91; Biebel 1954, pp. 423–25; Bruyn 1957, pp. 20–23, 132–34; Schabacker 1974, pp. 52–53; and Collier 1975, pp. 117–20.
16. Kaemmerer (1898, pp. 93–97) and Burger (1925, p. 35) thought the painting was by Christus alone; Dhanens ([1980], pp. 369–70), Upton (1990, pp. 11–18), and Martens (1992, pp. 337–40) attributed it to a follower of van Eyck.
17. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 137 n. 2, 187–91, 193 n. 1, 199 n. 3, 266 n. 2, 312–13.
18. *Ibid.*, pp. 187–91.
19. Biebel 1954, pp. 423–25; Schabacker 1974, pp. 52–53; and Collier 1975, pp. 117–20.
20. Upton 1990, pp. 9–11; and Martens 1992, pp. 338–41. P cht (1926, p. 160) also argued against a teacher-pupil relationship.
21. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 187–88.
22. Voll (1906, pp. 39–41, 46, 234, 261) first noted this. His arguments were subsequently augmented in Bruyn 1957, pp. 20–23, 96, 119, 132–34; Gellman 1970b, pp. 47–53, 509–14; Panhans-B hler 1978, pp. 76–78, 81–85, 88; Snyder 1985, pp. 150–51; Upton 1990, pp. 11–18, 39, 47, 71; and Martens 1992, pp. 337–40.
23. This observation argues against Upton's hypothesis (1990, pp. 17–18) that the painting dates about 1450, since van Eyck died in 1441. The darkest areas of the garments of the female saints were not penetrated by infrared reflectography. The picture was studied by the author in 1983 and again in 1993 with the assistance of Chiyo Ishikawa and Yvette Bruijnen. At this point, the comparative material for the study of van Eyck's underdrawings consists of the following: Desneux 1958, pp. 13–21; Asperen de Boer 1979, pp. 141–214; Hand and Wolff 1986, pp. 76–86; Asperen de Boer and Giltaj 1987, pp. 254–76; Asperen de Boer and Faries 1990, pp. 37–49; Asperen de Boer, Ridderbos, and Zeldenrust 1991, pp. 8–35; Asperen de Boer 1992, pp. 9–18; Bosshard 1992, pp. 4–11; and Asperen de Boer forthcoming.
24. In the underdrawing, van Eyck intended to cut off the center fold of the Virgin's robe at a higher point; the assistant who painted it simply extended this fold to the hemline. In addition, the tops and bases of the columns received additional scroll elements in the painted form, and the right sleeve of the Virgin's dress was painted as a closed cuff.
25. Asperen de Boer and Faries 1990, pp. 37–49, esp. fig. 7.
26. Dhanens ([1980], pp. 369–70) also referred to the eclectic nature of the painting.
27. Sterling 1976, pp. 64–66. Biebel (1968, p. 206), following Weale (1904, p. 30), noted that the building in the background is probably old Saint Paul's Cathedral in London, perhaps recorded in a sketch by van Eyck

in 1428–29, when he traveled to England for Philip the Good. Biebel rejected theories that the view is of another city, such as Maastricht, Prague, Lyons, Liège, or Brussels. Fourez (“Evêque Chevrot de Tournai,” pp. 91–93) associated the view with that in the frontispiece of the *Cité de Dieu* manuscript (MS 9015, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, Brussels).

28. Friedländer (1967–76, vol. 1, pp. 61–62) also made this connection, though he nonetheless gave the painting to Jan rather than to a workshop assistant.
29. Sterling 1976, pp. 64–66.

3

Attributed to Petrus Christus

Saint John the Baptist in a Landscape

About 1445

Oil on wood, 15¾ x 4¾ in. (40 x 12.5 cm)

Provenance: descendants of John Frere (1740–1807), Roydon Hall, Norfolk, England; Cleveland Museum of Art, Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Bequest, 1979 (79.80)

This remarkably well-preserved work, which first surfaced in 1979, when it was acquired by the Cleveland Museum of Art, typifies the confluence of manuscript illumination and panel painting in the Eyckian tradition. With microscopic observation and the refined execution of a miniaturist, the artist portrayed the details of cityscape and landscape alike in views that are endlessly fascinating: the bustling life at the city gate and on the road winding into the distance, the boater and swans on the river, and the encounter between the man and woman in the wooded area of the middle ground (fig. 97). Yet, no individual detail is emphasized at the expense of the overall conception, in which, as Panofsky noted of the works of van Eyck, the “eye operates as a microscope and as a telescope at the same time.”¹

In this perfect and timeless world, John is not presented as the ascetic saint in a “raiment of camel’s hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins” who inhabited a desolate wilderness, as described in Matthew 3:4. Nor are any of the notable episodes of his life portrayed, such as his preaching in the wilderness or

his baptism of Christ. Instead, the saint stands in isolation, as if he were a living sculpture, in his role as the messenger who comes before Christ preaching repentance and the recognition of God’s authority.

The isolated presentation of the figure recalls sculpture and grisaille paintings such as Claus Sluter’s *Saint John* from the portal of the Chartreuse of Champmol in Dijon or Jan van Eyck’s *Saint John the Baptist* from the left exterior wing of the *Ghent Altarpiece* (fig. 96). These saints stand like great Old Testament prophets, their feet angled to support the ample weight of their voluminous draperies.

As Ann Lurie noted, the “ascetic” saint was introduced into a lush landscape setting in late-fourteenth- and early-fifteenth-century manuscript illumination, perhaps inspired by Fra Domenico Cavalca’s *Life of Saint John the Baptist*, written between 1320 and 1342.² Cavalca’s text was translated into French, eventually influencing the great Franco-Flemish illuminators’ depictions in the *Petites Heures* of Jean, duc de



Berry, of about 1380–85, the Limbourg Brothers' work in the *Belles Heures* of the duc de Berry of about 1408–9, and the Boucicaut Master's *Grandes Heures du Maréchal de Boucicaut* of about 1405–8.³

Individual aspects of Christus's verdant landscape evoke additional meaning. Quite deliberately pointed out by Saint John's left foot is a patch of strawberries. Symbolic of perfect righteousness, since it is a fruit lacking a stone and it grows on thornless branches, the strawberry also signifies a "noble soul born in humble surroundings."⁴ To the right of the saint's left hip is blooming plantain (in German, *Wegerich*, or "right way") connoting the "well-trodden path of the multitude that seeks the path of Christ," a metaphor for the saint who prepares the way for the Lord (Matthew 3:3).⁵ The prominent tree sprouting from the peak of the rocky crags is perhaps meant to signify Isaiah's prophecy of the coming of Christ (Isaiah 53:2): "For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground." The placement of the tree directly above Saint John, the precursor of Christ, thus appears to be deliberate.

In general, the Cleveland painting's connection to the art of van Eyck is undeniable in its debt to manuscript illumination style, diminutive size, scrupulous attention to minute details, high degree of finish, and remarkable luminosity. The abundant scattered flowers recall the meadow near the female martyrs in the *Ghent Altarpiece*. Furthermore, the figure of Saint John is reminiscent of the Holy Hermits in the lower left wing of the altarpiece.⁶ However, individual features of this work belie the hand of van Eyck himself, leaving open the question of attribution.⁷

In contrast to van Eyck's highly refined and opulent paintings, which are pictorially and psychologically remote from the viewer, this rendition has a certain directness and homeyness to it, conveyed above all by the figure of Saint John. Because the structure of his body is hardly recognizable beneath his voluminous draperies, it is his steady, hypnotic gaze that convincingly draws us into the picture and creates an effective visual communication, an aim we recognize as paramount in the works of Petrus Christus.⁸ This effect is also achieved in the *Head of Christ* (cat. no. 4), which shares with the head of Saint John the broad cheekbones, long triangular nose, furrowed brow, heavily accented eyebrows, pronounced upper eyelids, bushy hair, and divided beard.⁹ Both faces are illuminated from the left, creating U-shaped pockets of light below the eyes.

The sheer mass and height of Saint John's figure, his regal stature, and his sloping shoulders are reminiscent of the Virgin in the *Friedsam Annunciation* (cat. no. 10). Draperies with deeply cut, sculptural, often lozenge-shaped folds, and robes with a sinuous edge, sometimes turned back to reveal the interior lining, are found in a number of paintings by Christus:



Fig. 96. Jan van Eyck, *Saint John the Baptist* (left exterior wing of the *Ghent Altarpiece*). Oil on oak, 57% x 20% in. (146 x 51.8 cm). Sint Bavo, Ghent

for example, the *Madonna in Half-length*, the *Exeter Madonna*, and the *Madonna of the Dry Tree* (fig. 12, cat. nos. 7, 18).

The detailed treatment of the lush landscape with its accomplished atmospheric effects, however, is not in Christus's customary mode. The more generally described landscapes in most of his paintings are considerably larger in scale and, as a result, much broader in execution. Nevertheless, the *Virgin and Child with Saint Barbara and Jan Vos* (cat. no. 7) shows that, when required, Christus could achieve the meticulous execution of a miniaturist. On a somewhat larger scale, yet equally delicate, is the diminutive scene in the right background of the *Virgin and Child Enthroned on a Porch* (cat. no. 14, fig. 98). The exquisite reflection of the boaters on the water, the minute rendering of

the figures near the shore, and the effective recession of space toward the horizon are comparable to the background of the *Saint John* panel. Likewise, the manner in which the rocks are painted and the placement of a monumental city gate in the distance recall similar effects in Christus's *Saint Anthony and a Donor* (fig. 8), a painting more than twice the size of the *Cleveland* panel.

In every way—in its diminutive size, technique, execution, and composition—the *Saint John* is reminiscent of manuscript illumination. One of the closest parallels, as Lurie has suggested, is the *Turin-Milan Hours*, specifically the group of miniatures that is ascribed to Hand H.¹⁰ Chief among these are the figures in the *Pietà* (fig. 35) and the landscapes in the *Road to*



Fig. 97. Detail of cat. no. 3 (background)



Fig. 98. Detail of cat. no. 14 (background)



Fig. 99. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 3 (underdrawing of Saint John)



Fig. 100. Circle of Jan van Eyck, *Saint John the Evangelist*. Pen and ink, 8 x 5½ in. (203 x 139 mm). Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna (detail)

Calvary (fol. 31v) and in the *bas de page* of the *Pietà*.¹¹ A large portion of the book of hours that included the miniatures most closely related to works by Christus was destroyed in a fire in 1904. All comparisons must, therefore, be based entirely on photographs of the miniatures.¹²

Beyond the formal similarities to manuscript illumination are certain technical features of the *Saint John* recently discovered

through the Cleveland museum's study of the painting.¹³ In particular, a certain gray discoloration in the saint's red robe suggests a layer of lead-oxide pigments (litharge or minium) below the lost glaze. Although these pigments occur in polychrome sculpture and panel painting, they were most frequently used in manuscript illumination. Furthermore, the green passages in the landscape do not appear to contain the

copper-resinate glaze commonly found in panel painting. This is also consistent with manuscript illumination practice, which did not use this glaze because it must be bound in oil rather than egg tempera, the medium of such illuminations.¹⁴

These connections between the *Saint John* and manuscript illumination are particularly interesting insofar as an attribution to Christus is concerned since it is out of this tradition that he seems to have come. Certain parallels in technique and execution with the artist's other paintings, in particular the New York *Lamentation* (cat. no. 8), offer further evidence of his hand in the Cleveland panel. For example, the figure of Saint John is underpainted with a reddish orange layer in the flesh tones, as are the figures in the *Lamentation*. The trees in the two paintings are also rendered similarly.¹⁵ Furthermore, there is a comparable red-lead color in some of the draperies (those of the Cleveland Saint John and of Nicodemus in the *Lamentation*).

Although on the surface the Cleveland painting is clearly the more Eyckian of the two panels, their underdrawings show a similar working method. The landscapes in both are summarily described in the underdrawing, with simple indications in brush for the rock formations and hills (figs. 101, 118). There is no detailed preliminary sketch for the architecture, only a brief notation of the general outlines of the buildings in the *Lamentation* and of the architecture, as well as the windmill at the upper left, in the *Saint John*.

The Saint John figures in both paintings, however, are fully worked up in the underdrawing, with extremely fine, obliquely angled, parallel hatching for shading in the draperies that closely approaches the effect of a tonal wash (compare figs. 99 and 119). In both saints, a relatively small reserve area was retained for the head, the hair being painted considerably outside of this preliminary form (compare figs. 33 and 34). As it does in the head of the New York Saint John, the underdrawing of the head of the Cleveland saint shows that a forelock of hair originally fell directly down the center; it was subsequently painted as two locks. Likewise, the modeling of the faces in both paintings exhibits very fine, even, parallel hatching running vertically through the cheeks into the temple in a manner that is suggestive of lighting effects rather than the volume of forms. Also similar is the artist's use of dense cross-hatching in the shadows that the figures cast on the ground by their feet.

The elegant flourish in the underdrawing at the upper right of the Cleveland *Saint John* (fig. 102) has been interpreted as "a number, a miniaturist's cadrel, a tentative indication of a landscape element, or a meaningless scribble unrelated to the final image."¹⁶ In Christus's oeuvre we find similar marks consisting of a vertical stroke with a loop on top, which are used to indicate the placement of a tree in the composition.



Fig. 101. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 3 (underdrawing of the landscape)



Fig. 102. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 3 (underdrawing of the tree)

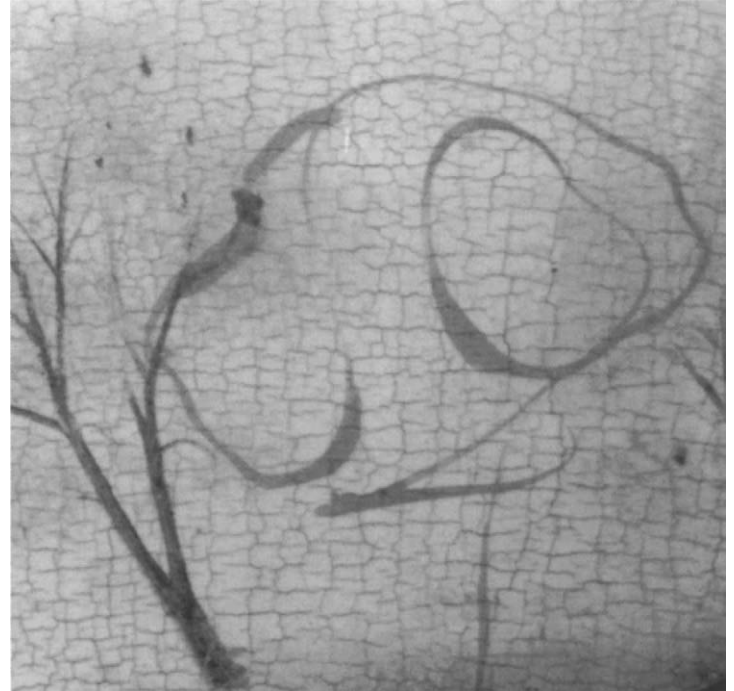


Fig. 103. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 8 (underdrawing of the landscape)

These may be found in the early paintings (for example, the Berlin *Nativity* and the New York *Lamentation*, figs. 48, 103) as well as the later pictures (for instance, the *Death of the Virgin*, fig. 154). Similar bold scribble brush marks found in the underdrawing at the upper right in the Paris *Lamentation* (fig. 40) indicate foliage, as does the fluid, meandering line to the left of Saint John's foot in the Cleveland painting (fig. 99). In the case of the *Saint John*, Christus spread the paint of his loaded brush in successive strokes for the flourish so that he could form a fine brush point to execute the delicate lines of the shading of the figure.

The similarities in technique and execution between the Cleveland *Saint John* and other paintings by Christus support an attribution of the painting to him. The direct associations between the *Saint John* and van Eyck's paintings, as well as the later illuminations of the *Turin-Milan Hours* (ca. 1440–45), suggest the Cleveland picture was executed early in Christus's career, about 1445.¹⁷

Still open to question, however, is Christus's model for this painting, which is so Eyckian in character. Among the surviving works from Jan's atelier are a number of drawings of saints and apostles scattered in various collections.¹⁸ As Lurie noted, a small-scale drawing such as *Saint John the Evangelist* (fig. 100) may have provided the model for the figure in the Cleveland

panel,¹⁹ which could account for the somewhat less convincing integration of the figure in the landscape setting. Now that the character of the underdrawing in the Cleveland painting is known and may be compared directly to these Eyckian studies, it is possible to recognize that *Saint John* is not by the same hand as any of them.²⁰ Although all share a certain general resemblance in approach and technique, the details of the handling and execution differ considerably. If Christus had a close association with the post-Eyckian workshop, as other works seem to indicate, such pattern drawings would have been readily available to him.²¹ Or, he may have simply copied the figure from a known, but now lost, work by van Eyck for use in his own composition.

The tall and very narrow shape of this small painting implies that it was one panel of a larger format, such as a triptych.²² If it was, it would have been the right interior wing, considering the cutoff detail of the windmill (which presumably would join further landscape details in the center panel), the forward placement of Saint John's left foot, and the large boulders that close off the composition at the right. It is not difficult to imagine the demand in Bruges for representations of Saint John the Baptist, who became a co-patron (along with Saint John the Evangelist) of the Sint-Janshospitaal around the time this painting was made.²³

1. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 182.
2. Lurie 1981, pp. 92–93.
3. Lurie (*ibid.*, p. 93) has noted the following examples: *Saint John the Baptist in the Desert* in the *Petites Heures* of Jean, duc de Berry (MS lat. 18.014, fol. 208r, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris; illustrated in Meiss 1967, vol. 1, fig. 167), as well as others in M. Meiss and E. H. Beatson, *The Belles Heures of Jean, Duke of Berry* (New York, 1974), fols. 158v, p. 211; and Meiss 1968, fig. 3 (MS 2, fol. 13v, Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris).
4. M. L. d'Ancona, *The Garden of the Renaissance: Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting* (Florence, 1977), p. 365.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 308–9; and L. Behling, *Die Pflanze in der mittelalterlichen Tafelmalerei* (Weimar, 1957), pp. 33, 45, 87, 145, pls. XV, CXIV.
6. Lurie 1981, p. 88.
7. *Ibid.*, pp. 96–98.
8. According to Lurie (*ibid.*, pp. 96–99), those who favored an attribution to Christus are: Albert Châtelet, Karl Birkmeyer, Seymour Slive, and Reinald Grosshans.
9. The somewhat askew placement of Saint John's facial features is not easily explained.
10. Lurie 1981, pp. 99–104.
11. Illustrated in Durrieu 1902, pls. XVIII, XXIX.
12. A new facsimile, with scholarly essays by Ann van Buren, James Marrow, and others, is in preparation. This volume, expected in 1994, will include the most up-to-date review of all the literature on the problems of the *Turin-Milan Hours*.
13. Lurie 1981, pp. 110–12; and conservation reports, Ross Merrill, November 14, 1979, and Zahira Véliz, March 25, 1981, Paintings Conservation Department files, Cleveland Museum of Art.
14. Conservation report, Merrill.
15. The green used for the foliage is fully penetrated by infrared reflectography, suggesting that in both works no copper resinate (which is not so easily penetrated by IRR) was employed.
16. Lurie 1981, p. 110.
17. This would agree with the early dating generally given to Christus's Dessau *Crucifixion* (Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pl. 92), in which the scale of the figure is diminished in relation to the grander surrounding space. Peter Klein's dendrochronological dating of the *Saint John* panel to about 1380 does not help further with a more exact determination of the date the painting was made (see Appendix 2).
18. These collections include the Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna; Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Paris; and Musée Bonnat, Bayonne. For the drawings related to the *Saint John*, see Lurie 1981, p. 106 n. 78, figs. 43–46.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 106.
20. In order to clarify this point, I studied all these Eyckian drawings in the original. A cautionary note on the comparison of drawings on paper with underdrawings is discussed in Ainsworth 1989, pp. 5–38.
21. Lurie (1981, p. 106 n. 80) and N. Reynaud ("Entourage de Jan van Eyck, *Diptyque en grisaille*," in *Polyptyques: Le Tableau multiple du moyen âge au vingtième siècle*, exhib. cat., Musée du Louvre [Paris, 1990], p. 86) have suggested that the *Saint John* is by the same hand as the Eyckian *Annunciation* diptych in the Louvre (R.F. 1938.22). Recent investigation of the underdrawing of the diptych shows that although they are similar, the two works appear to be by different artists. Whereas the *Saint John* shows even, parallel hatching at an oblique angle to the main folds of the draperies and straight vertical hatching for the shading of the face, creating a planar effect, the *Annunciation* figures exhibit delicate parallel hatching, mostly in the same direction as the drapery folds, and subtly curved strokes along the side of the face of the Virgin, which achieve a more rounded and volumetric form. I am grateful to the following individuals at the Louvre: Philippe Lorentz and Nicole Reynaud, Conservateurs, Département des Peintures, and Patrick Le Chanu, Conservateur du Patrimoine, Laboratoire de Recherche des Musées de France, for carrying out this investigation of September 27, 1993 (Le Chanu and Lorentz to the author, October 5 and October 18, 1993, respectively).
22. Lurie (1981, pp. 106–9) suggested that it may have had some relationship to the famous lost *Lomellini Triptych* of Jan van Eyck.
23. G. Maréchal, "Het Sint-Janshospitaal in de eerste eeuwen van zijn bestaan," in *Sint-Janshospitaal, Brugge, 1188/1976*, exhib. cat., 2 vols. (Bruges, 1976), vol. 1, pp. 69–70.

Head of Christ (*Ecce Homo*)

About 1445

Oil on parchment on oak (only slivers remain); transferred to mahogany (or tropical wood) and cradled; 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (14.6 x 10.4 cm)

Inscribed: *Petr...*

Provenance: private collection, Spain; [Lucas Moreno, Paris, until 1910]; [Francis Kleinberger, Paris, 1910–31]; Mr. and Mrs. William R. Timken, New York (1931–49); Mrs. William R. Timken, New York (1949–59); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Bequest of Lillian S. Timken, 1959 (60.71.1)

During the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, the Lowlands experienced a rise in devotional piety and a surge of meditative literature devoted to the Passion, due in part to the growth of mystical movements such as the *Devotio Moderna*. Among the principal proponents of this movement was Thomas à Kempis, who, in his *Imitatio Christi* of about 1425, described a devotional practice based on imitating Christ's life and Passion through daily prayer and meditation.¹ Echoing this development, paintings were produced whose specific purpose was to stimulate emotional and compassionate responses by evoking the empathy of the viewer. Salvation was promised through the worshiper's suffering in emulation of Christ's suffering. The *Head of Christ* should be understood in this context.

In general, the *Head of Christ* belongs to a group of images called *acheiropoetoi*, which were associated with devotional practice in the Eastern Church. Thought to have been miraculously created, this group includes two forerunners of the *Head of Christ*—the *vera icon*, or *sudarium* type, and the Holy Face.² Because the Metropolitan painting shows both the crown of thorns commonly associated with *sudarium* images and the portrait bust with a tripartite floriated nimbus found in Holy Face depictions, it has been considered a fusion of the two types.³

From the Eyckian *Portrait of Christ* (fig. 104), which is now known only in copies (Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, dated 1438; Groeningemuseum, Bruges, dated 1440; and formerly J. C. Swinburne collection, Newcastle upon Tyne, also dated 1440), Christus assimilated some essential features and altered others to change the meaning of the image. Departing from the two-dimensional *sudarium* prototype, van Eyck and Christus represented Christ as a volumetric portrait of a living being, isolated from the viewer by a *trompe-l'oeil* frame. The lifelike quality of the portrait is thus suggested by the implied space of the frame as well as by the consistent lighting of the head, the nimbus, and the frame, which serves to unite the holy figure and the viewer.⁴

Going beyond these attempts to produce a portraitlike rendering are the specific efforts of van Eyck, and of Christus after



Fig. 104. Copy after Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of Christ*, early 17th century. Oil on oak, 13 $\frac{1}{8}$ x 10 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (33.4 x 26.8 cm). Groeningemuseum, Bruges

him, to make the head of Christ paintings appear to be “in the here and now of our experience, unmediated by any ‘image,’”⁵ as well as perfectly constructed heads reflecting the Lentulus letter's description of Christ as the most perfect and beautiful among men.⁶ Ultimately basing their depictions upon Pythagorean and Neoplatonic ideas, through which idealization is expressed in a numerically derived order, both artists planned their portraits of Christ according to a strict canon of proportions.⁷ The composition of the head is based on the harmonious intersection of the circle and the square (fig. 105). The distance between the eyes establishes the base measurement, which



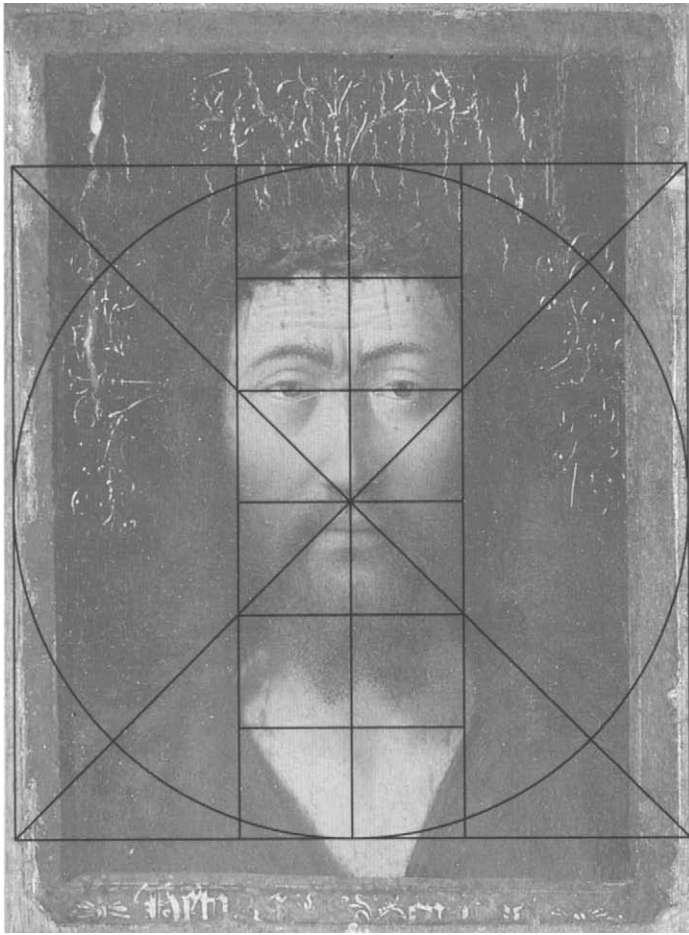


Fig. 105. Diagram showing proportions of cat. no. 4



Fig. 106. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 4 (underdrawing of the head)

is used to divide the entire head, including the neck, into six equal parts vertically and two equal parts horizontally. Infrared reflectography of the Metropolitan *Head of Christ* reveals a ruled underdrawn line down the exact center of the head, made to ensure that the features of each side of the face would be aligned accurately in order to mirror each other (fig. 106).⁸

Reflecting Nicholas of Cusa's discussion of the nature of devotional images in his 1453 *De visione Dei sive de icon liber*, van Eyck and Christus painted the head of Christ in such a way as to achieve direct eye contact between the portrait and the viewer. When the viewer moves, the eyes of the painted Christ follow him. The idea was to "see through" the depiction to the actual physical presence of the figure represented.⁹

With a particular purpose in mind, Christus appears to have developed an entirely new type, fusing the Holy Face and the *Ecce Homo*.¹⁰ The subtle ways in which the *Head of Christ* differs from the Holy Face may suggest its specific meaning and liturgical use. Instead of the red robe and regal demeanor characteristic of the Holy Face paintings,¹¹ this Christ wears a crown

of thorns and a purple robe and, with deeply furrowed brow, shows us his state of suffering. The tripartite floriated nimbus reinforces the mocking tone of the label "King of the Jews!"¹² The related text may be either Mark 15:17–18 or John 19:1–5, the only passages in which Christ's tormentors dress him in a purple robe. According to Saint John, Pilate presents Christ, in whom he has found no blame, to the people:

And the soldiers plaited a crown of thorns,
and put it on his head, and arrayed him
in a purple robe; they came up to him, saying,
"Hail, King of the Jews!"

As Panofsky pointed out, in late medieval terms the emphasis of the *Ecce Homo* was no longer simply an address to the angry mob of Jews but an invocation to the faithful to "behold the man" in all his human nature as a *materia meditationis* or at Holy Mass in the guise of the Host.¹³ In his *Vita Iesu Christi*, Ludolph of Saxony explained that the "sacrament of the altar commemorates the Passion of the Lord, and [how] Christ has

suffered according to His human nature: for according to His divine nature He is incapable of suffering: wherefore the priest, when elevating the host, might more fittingly say 'Behold the man' than 'Behold God.' True, Christ is both man and God; but in that presentation [by Pilate] the man was manifest and the God was latent."¹⁴

Furthermore, as Carla Gottlieb noted, the painted frame in a work such as Christus's *Head of Christ* is a window suggesting both a physical reality and the "means by which Jesus enters our world."¹⁵ Christus's emphasis on a face-to-face confrontation between the suffering Christ and man compels the viewer to acknowledge or witness Christ's perpetual sacrifice for man's redemption. Prayers, such as the one composed by Thomas à Kempis to the head of the suffering Christ, would have been an appropriate way for the viewer to respond during meditation.¹⁶ He devoted a chapter of the fourth and final book of the *Imitatio Christi* to meditation upon a union with Christ through the Sacrament.¹⁷ Thus the suffering Christ, or Ecce Homo, may be equated with the Host when understood in terms of the mystical transformation of the body of Christ, or transubstantiation.

Christus's representation takes on a Eucharistic significance as a portrayal of the anguished Christ through whose sacrifice, symbolized by the Host, mankind finds redemption. Because of its diminutive size and unusual parchment support,¹⁸ the painting cannot have been intended to serve a devotional purpose for a large number of worshipers but was perhaps meant for the exclusive use of the celebrant. Joel Upton posited that the small size of the panel might indicate it was "a liturgical tablet used in the mass to transmit the Kiss of Peace from the celebrant, known as *Pax*."¹⁹ The objects associated with the *Pax*, however, are usually enamels or metalwork, and the *Head of Christ* is in oil on parchment, an unlikely medium and support for this purpose.

The *Head of Christ* probably was not cut from a leaf of an illuminated manuscript, as its parchment support might suggest. Most of the heads of Christ in contemporary devotional books follow the model of the Eyckian Holy Face; thus far, the type painted by Christus has not been found. In any event, illuminations are painted in tempera rather than oil, the medium of the *Head of Christ*.

The Metropolitan painting could have been intended simply for private devotional use. In keeping with Eucharistic celebration, however, a further possibility would be that it adorned a small door of a Host reliquary. Host shrines are either portable or stationary objects built into larger altarpieces. In the case of the latter, they are usually found in the lower tier, or predella, and are customarily painted with interchangeable motifs of a figure of Christ (a *Salvator Mundi* or *Man of Sorrows*), a monstrance, or a chalice.²⁰

Whatever the original dimensions of the picture, it must have

been somewhat larger than it is at present, so that the entire painted gray marbled frame would have been visible along with the inscription on the lower edge. At that time, the parchment on panel could have been framed within a reliquary door. Subsequently, the function of the object may have changed, and the edges perhaps became ragged, necessitating attachment to a new support. The regularly spaced tack or nail holes found on the right, left, and top of the parchment²¹ ruined the effect of the delicately painted marbled borders.

The identification of the name of Petrus Christus in what remains of the inscription in the lower margin is somewhat controversial.²² However, a close look at the formation of the letters in the signature of the Berlin *Nativity* (fig. 17) provides a convincing parallel for the Gothic script of *Petr*, which is also common in manuscript illumination.²³ Further, it is worth noting that the damaged inscription is made in the same lead-tin yellow paint as the strokes of the tripartite nimbus around Christ's head and is painted on the marbled frame in the normal location for a signature of the Eyckian or Christus type rather than for a prayer or an explanatory text.

The *Head of Christ* is considerably damaged and retouched, particularly in the beard, costume, hair, left temple, and right side of the nose. Although there is general agreement about the attribution to Christus, Jacqueline Folie, Lola Gellman, and Burkhard Richter have expressed reservations.²⁴ It is difficult to reconcile the remarkable refinement of this *Head of Christ* with the rather straightforward and formulaic heads of Christ in Christus's other paintings.²⁵ However, this picture was conceived as a portrait and, therefore, should be compared with Christus's other works in the genre, such as the *Portrait of a Carthusian* (cat. no. 5), in which a similar subtle handling and detailed execution meant to produce lifelike effects are apparent.

Christus's portrait heads and certain holy types consistently show a difference in treatment. This is a matter of choice rather than ability, as may be understood by the varied handling of heads within a single painting. In the Berlin *Last Judgment*, for example, the face of the apostle seated on the right closest to the viewer is far more detailed, with distinctive individual features, and fully modeled than the faces of the other apostle types on the two benches (fig. 69).

Even given this disparity between portraits and various holy figure types, there are certain similarities in treatment. A comparison of the *Head of Christ* with the diminutive head of the Pantocrator in the Berlin *Last Judgment*, the head in *Saint John the Baptist in a Landscape*, and the face of God the Father in the *Trinity* miniature (figs. 107, 108, 109) reveals the same vertical wrinkles in the brow, similar morphological details of the facial features (heavily lidded eyes, prominent triangular-shaped nose, and full lips), and a particularly idiosyncratic modeling of the



Fig. 107. Detail of fig. 9 (Christ)



Fig. 108. Detail of cat. no. 3 (Saint John's head)



Fig. 109. Detail of cat. no. 21 (God the Father's head)

facial features (broadly lit on the left side with a single white stroke down the bridge of the nose, U-shaped pockets of light just beneath the eyes on each cheek, and sharply defined boundaries between light and dark just below the eyes).

Friedländer, Upton, and Schabacker date the painting between 1444 and 1450, the period preceding the development of the rather hard-edged geometric forms evident in Christ's later works.²⁶ This stylistic observation, as well as the painting's associations with the Eyckian Holy Face pictures of the late 1430s and 1440s, supports an early date in Christ's oeuvre.

1. J. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (Kortrijk, 1979), pp. 19–27.
2. Upton 1990, p. 59; and Hand 1992, pp. 7–18.
3. Hand 1992, pp. 7–10. Bruyn (1957, p. 115) instead pointed out that the *Christus Head of Christ* is a conflation of the Eyckian Holy Face and the *Salvator Coronatus*, making it iconographically unique. See also Panofsky 1927, pp. 261–308; and Ringbom 1984, pp. 142–47.
4. Upton 1990, pp. 57–58; and Koerner 1993, pp. 99–127.
5. Koerner 1993, pp. 80–126, esp. 104.
6. See note 11 below.
7. These exact mathematical proportions used in the Holy Face images of van Eyck were also taken over by Albrecht Dürer in his *Self-portrait*

- (Alte Pinakothek, Munich). For a thorough discussion, see F. Winzinger, "Albrecht Dürers Münchener Selbstbildnis," *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft* 8 (1954), pp. 43–64, esp. 56; and F. Winzinger, *Albrecht Dürer in Selbstzeugnissen und Bilddokumenten* (Reinbek bei Hamburg, 1971), pp. 47–49.
8. If other geometric measurement lines exist, they are not revealed by infrared reflectography, which did not penetrate the blue-green background of the painting. The only other underdrawn lines visible in the painting are those that show a smaller neck opening for the robe than was painted and some simple contour lines below the eyes.
 9. C. L. Miller, "Nicholas of Cusa's *The Vision of God*," in *An Introduction to the Medieval Mystics of Europe: Fourteen Original Essays*, ed. P. E. Szarmach (Albany, 1984), pp. 293–312.
 10. A precedent for this conflation is found in Italian representations, such as the *Christ Crowned with Thorns* of the 1430s attributed to Fra Angelico (Santa Maria del Soccorso, Livorno), a painting that was perhaps the source for a similar depiction on the reverse of the Workshop of Rogier van der Weyden *Portrait of a Woman* (National Gallery, London). Another example, found on the reverse of a *Christ Crowned with Thorns* by Albrecht Bouts (Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon), is unfinished and related to the work of Dieric Bouts. However, neither artist imbued his Christ with the compelling emotional appeal shown here. M. T. Bonocorso believes it was Christus who reintroduced the subject to Italy, influencing a series of poignant Ecce Homo images (see Museo Regionale, Messina, *Antonello da Messina*, exhib. cat. [Rome, 1981], esp. pp. 128–37). If Bonocorso is correct, it would be Christus's Ecce Homo type that is more directly translated into Antonello da Messina's representations, rather than the so-called Christ in Majesty, the "picciolo quadretto" that Pietro Summonte (letter to Marcantonio Michiel, March 20, 1524) calls a "Petrus Christi" in the Sannazaro collection (see Appendix I, doc. 29).
 11. Van Eyck's Holy Face follows the description in the famous Lentulus letter, supposedly written by Publius Lentulus to the Roman Senate but actually an apocryphal document of the Middle Ages. See E. von Dobschütz, *Christusbilder: Untersuchungen zur christlichen Legende* (Leipzig, 1899), pp. 308–30; and Hand 1992, p. 10.
 12. Ringbom (1984, p. 52 n. 67) notes this "polarity between kingship and humiliation" in a Passion play of the fourteenth century in which Pilate says: "Seht an alle und Nemendt war/Das ist doch eur König Zwar."
 13. E. Panofsky, "Jean Hey's 'Ecce Homo': Speculations about Its Author, Its Donor, and Its Iconography," *Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts bulletin* 5 (1956), pp. 95–138, esp. 110.
 14. Ludolph of Saxony, *Vita Iesu Christi redemptoris nostri* (Lyons, 1519), fol. ccxiv, as quoted in Panofsky, "Jean Hey's 'Ecce Homo,'" pp. 110–11.
 15. C. Gottlieb, "The Living Host," *Konsthistorisk tidskrift* 40 (May 1971), pp. 30–46, esp. 30.
 16. *Opera omnia*, ed. M. J. Pohl, 7 vols. (Freiburg, 1902–22), vol. 5, p. 95: "Laude et glorifico te speciali devotione compassivi cordis mei pro tua gravissima poena, quam in sacri capitis tui spinosa coronatione pro nobis vermiculis patientissime pertulisti . . ." (as quoted in Ringbom 1984, p. 143 n. 5). Thomas à Kempis also gave a chapter of his *Orationes et meditationes de vita Christi* to the "Cotumeliae, illusiones et percussiones capitis Domini Iesu" (Ringbom 1984, p. 143 n. 5).
 17. Thomas à Kempis, *The Imitation of Christ*, trans. L. Sherley-Price (Harmondsworth, England, 1952), pp. 209–10.
 18. Other examples of paintings on parchment, both small, are the *Saint Francis* (Philadelphia Museum of Art) attributed to Jan van Eyck or his workshop and Geertgen tot Sint Jans's *Virgin and Child* (Pinacoteca Ambrosiana, Milan).
 19. Upton 1990, p. 56 n. 19.
 20. J. Braun, *Der christliche Altar in seiner geschichtlichen Entwicklung*, 2 vols. (Munich, 1924), vol. 2, pp. 628–39. See also Gottlieb, "Living Host," pp. 30–46; and Lane 1984, pp. 129–30.
 21. The tacking holes at the margins have been compared to those on the *Holy Face of Christ* that is shown nailed to the background wall in Christus's *Portrait of a Young Man* in London (see Upton 1990, p. 56 n. 19; and Hand 1992, p. 7 n. 1).
 22. Folie (1963, pp. 183–256, esp. 206) pointed out that these remnants do not conform to the type of script that Christus normally used, and she doubted the painting was by him. Christus chose abbreviated Gothic script in this instance.
 23. For examples of the inscription *Petr*, see A. W. Pugin, *Glossary of Ecclesiastical Ornament and Costume, Compiled from Ancient Authorities and Examples* (London, 1868), pl. 11 for the *P* and pl. 13 for the lowercase *etr*.
 24. Folie 1963, pp. 183–256, esp. 206; Gellman 1970b, pp. 484–85; and Richter 1974, pp. 380–82.
 25. In contrast to the portraitlike treatment of the *Head of Christ* is the Birmingham *Man of Sorrows* (cat. no. 9), which shows Christus's typical Christ type.
 26. Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 95; Upton 1972, p. 371; and Schabacker 1974, pp. 42–43.



PETRVS XPI ME FECIT M 1516

Portrait of a Carthusian

1446

Oil on oak, 11½ x 8 in. (29.2 x 20.3 cm)

Inscribed (at bottom on simulated frame): *PETRVS XPI ME FECIT*

A0 1446 (date a later addition)

Provenance: Don Ramon de Oms (Don Ramon de la Cruz), viceroy of Majorca (by 1911); marqués de Dos Aguas, Valencia (by 1916–after 1924); [A. J. Sulley, London, by 1926–1927]; [M. Knoedler and Company, New York, 1927]; Jules S. Bache, New York (1927–44); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Jules Bache Collection, 1949 (49.7.19)

This portrait, arguably Christus's finest, asserts a powerful physical presence through the perfect balance of compositional design, lighting effects, and meticulous rendering of details. The remarkably naturalistic description of the sitter has often led to the conclusion that Christus knew him personally. Various theories about the man's identity have included Saint Bruno, the founder of the Carthusian order,¹ and Saint Denis or Dionysius of Louvain (1402–1471), the Carthusian theologian.² H. J. J. Scholtens convincingly refuted these proposals with the observation that the monks, by rule, were clean-shaven and had a tonsure. This man, who has no tonsure and wears a beard shaved around the mouth, must therefore be a lay brother, or converse, not one of whom is known to have been canonized.³ Furthermore, the halo, which has been suspect since Max J. Friedländer doubted its authenticity as early as 1916,⁴ was conclusively determined to be an addition and was recently removed.⁵

In certain ways, this portrait represents an homage to Jan van Eyck, who excelled in the lifelike rendering of his contemporaries in Bruges. Taking as his model works such as van Eyck's *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw* (fig. 110), Christus posed the sitter in a three-quarter bust-length view, his eyes directed toward the viewer. Not compromising any aspect of detail, down to the most minute hairs, both artists lavished attention upon the depiction of textures and of the changing quality of light on surfaces. Christus implemented van Eyck's use of a trompe-l'oeil frame as a window through which the sitter and the viewer could "communicate," extending the illusion of the space from one side to the other. Borrowing the motif of marbled framing devices from van Eyck,⁶ Christus painted a variegated marble at the top and the sides of the portrait and a sill of red stone on which is inscribed "Petrus Christus made me in the year 1446," in the manner of Christus's predecessor.

The ways in which the *Portrait of a Carthusian* differs from van Eyck's representations show the innovations Christus brought to Flemish portraiture. As Panofsky pointed out, Christus may rightly be called the inventor of corner-space

portraits: "In admitting the beholder to the intimacy of the sitter's domestic surroundings, this 'corner space portrait' placed their relationship on an entirely new psychological basis."⁷ Instead of employing the uniformly dark, anonymous setting of van Eyck's portraits, Christus set off the white-robed figure with a rich, warm, red, ambiguous background.⁸ The sitter is anchored obliquely, not parallel to the picture plane, in a narrow cell-like space defined by two sources of light: an intense raking light issuing from the right and a softer glow

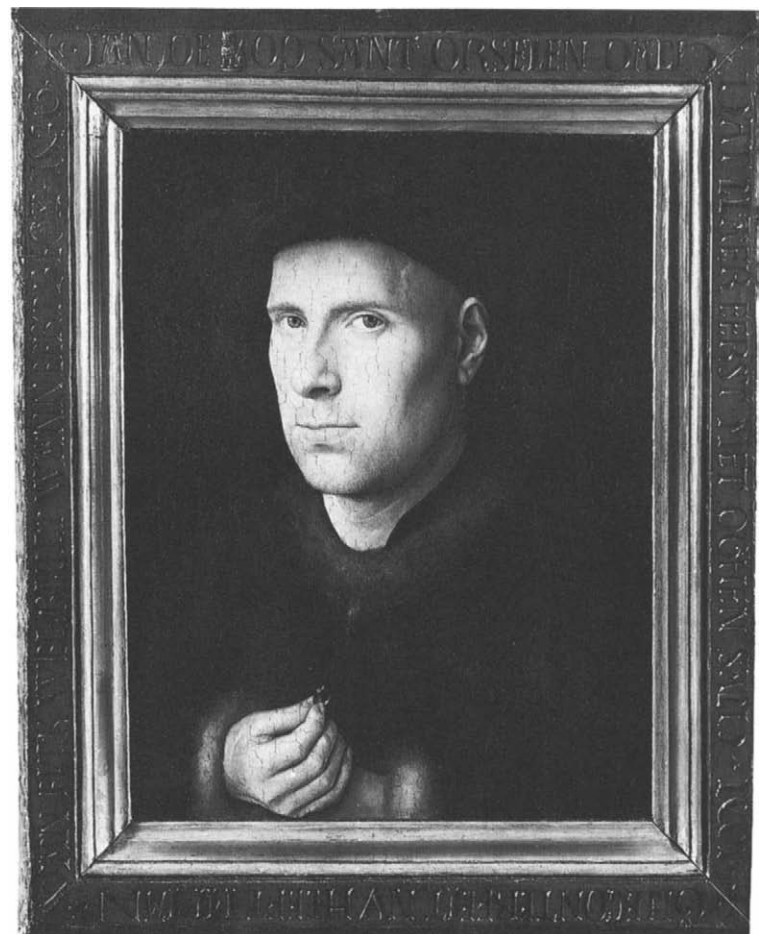


Fig. 110. Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw*, 1436. Oil on oak, 13½ x 10¾ in. (33.3 x 27.5 cm) with original frame. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna

illuminating the back left corner. Although these were new concepts for panel painting, Joel Upton suggested that Christus borrowed the notion of a diagonal point of view into an interior corner from pre-Eyckian manuscript illuminations, such as those by the Limbourg Brothers or Melchior Broederlam, in which objects were “frequently turned . . . on axis to enhance the impression of occupied space.”⁹

Preoccupied not only with questions of spatial representation but also with heightened illusionism, Christus sought to further eliminate the barrier between viewer and sitter by one additional ingenious device, the trompe-l’oeil fly momentarily perched just above the artist’s name on the windowsill. In keeping with the Renaissance interest in accounts of classical antiquity, Christus’s device evokes the second-century writings of Philostratus the Athenian, who told of a painter “enamored of verisimilitude” who portrayed a bee sitting on a flower with such accuracy that one could not tell whether “an actual bee had been deceived by the picture or a painted bee deceived the beholder.”¹⁰

Commonly understood as a symbol of death and decay, the fly may indicate the transience of life and the mortality of the sitter despite the perfection of his painted image.¹¹ On the other hand, André Pigler saw the insect as a talisman against evil.¹² Such an apotropaic function may be in line with the portrayal of the sitter’s confident demeanor, his virtue and faith overcoming the sins of the flesh.

The remarkable lifelikeness of this portrait conceals the formulaic nature of the model on which it depends. Infrared reflectography and a tracing of the *Portrait of Edward Grymeston* (fig. 65) placed over the *Carthusian* reveal that the first version of the head of the Carthusian was the same size as that of Edward Grymeston and that the two heads duplicate each other feature for feature. In the upper paint layers, Christus reduced the size of the Carthusian’s head by shifting the left contour and ear toward the right. He continued by devoting considerably more attention to the finishing details than he had in the Grymeston portrait. The degree to which Christus worked up the modeling may indicate the close relationship between sitter and artist or the extent to which Christus was attempting to mimic van Eyck’s portraiture.

The underdrawing is more finished in appearance than that in Christus’s other portraits. The artist began with a broad brush underdrawing of the sitter’s pose. Spreading out the excess dark paint or ink on his brush with broad, flat applications on the shoulder at the left, Christus then modeled the features of the face with extremely fine strokes, which are especially visible in the shading of the nose and beneath the lower lip. This created toned areas to which he could then simply add overlying glazes to accomplish the remarkable translucent effects of the skin.



Fig. 111. X-radiograph of cat. no. 5

An X-radiograph reveals that Christus conceived of the portrait first and only afterward added the painted frame (fig. 111). He delimited the inside edges of this trompe-l’oeil frame with incised lines at the sill and at the right and left sides. Infrared reflectography shows that he nevertheless continued painting the robe out to the far edges of the panel and subsequently painted the frame over these portions.

The last touches to the painting were presumably the signature and date, which Alan Burroughs noted are in two different pigments.¹³ Furthermore, the signature is centered, and the date is awkwardly added to the right, seemingly as an afterthought. Finally, the *PETRVS XPI ME FECIT* is painted as if carved into the trompe-l’oeil frame and its lighting is consistent with that of the portrait, while the date shows no attempt at either illusionistic effect. Burroughs concluded that the 1446 dating is false and that the portrait is actually considerably later because of its remarkable refinement in execution and handling. However, because the *Carthusian* is so similar in technique to Eyckian examples (which Christus certainly would have encountered at the beginning of his stay in Bruges in 1444), there are compelling reasons to date the painting 1446 rather

than much later, when, as the Los Angeles *Portrait of a Man* (cat. no. 16) shows, the influence of van Eyck had subsided. Quite possibly the 1446 reflects the inscription that was on the original frame and was added to the panel when the frame was removed. The now-lost identity of the sitter also may have been inscribed on that frame, which could well have been taken off when the picture changed hands and the man's identity was no longer meaningful.¹⁴ Perhaps the addition of the false halo occurred at this time in an attempt to make the unknown Carthusian into a saint. Bruno, who was canonized in the sixteenth century, may have provided a ready candidate.

1. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 310 n. 5. Although formally canonized in 1623, Bruno was venerated as a saint even before he began to be mentioned in the liturgy in 1514 (Panofsky cites the *Acta sanctorum*, October, vol. 3, pp. 694–98).
2. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 310 n. 5. Following Meyer Schapiro's suggestion, Panofsky points out that this identification would be in keeping with the introduction of the fly on the frame. Dionysius of Louvain's *De venustate mundi* discusses a hierarchy of the natural beauty of the universe, which begins with lowly insects.
3. Scholtens 1960, pp. 59–72. Scholtens suggested several lay brothers at Genadedal who might be represented in this portrait: Adam Mullinc, Jacob Deynart, Jan de Pape, or Jan Collarits. However, no direct link may be made with any of these names.
4. Friedländer 1916, p. 21.
5. Hubert von Sonnenburg (Sherman Fairchild Chairman, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art), who carried out this restoration, returning the painting closer to its original form, stated in an examination and treatment report of June 15, 1992: "Examination under magnification clearly showed that an incision had been made with a compass [its center point damaged the paint layers at the sitter's right temple] prior to the rather coarse application of paint and shell gold used for the halo. . . . It is inconceivable that the incision into the original finished paint layer was made at the time of its origin. Undoubtedly this damaging intervention dates from a later, though unspecifiable period and obviously

- served as a crude guideline for the painted circle."
6. Van Eyck appears to have painted the backs of many of his portraits in imitation porphyry, a practice he probably derived from Italian or Bohemian art. M. Cämmerer-George ("Eine italienische Wurzel in der Rahmen-Idee Jan van Eycks," in *Kunstgeschichtliche Studien für Kurt Bauch zum 70. Geburtstag von seinen Schülern* [Munich and Berlin, 1967], pp. 69–76) notes that such decoration was common in Italian religious paintings of the Trecento, signifying eternity and defining a panel as a type of epitaph. See also A. Dülberg, *Privatporträts: Geschichte und Ikonologie einer Gattung im 15. und 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin, 1990), pp. 116–27.
 7. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 310.
 8. Red backgrounds in Flemish portraits are rather unusual. I know of only two, both in the Groeningemuseum, Bruges: a copy after the Master of Flémalle's *Virgin and Child* and a *Portrait of Louis de Gruuthuse* attributed to the Master of the Court Portraits (illustrated in D. De Vos, *Groeningemuseum, Bruges: The Complete Collection* [Bruges, 1983], pp. 17, 34).
 9. Upton 1990, p. 28 n. 15.
 10. Philostratus the Athenian's *Imagines*, as quoted in Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 310 n. 5.
 11. See H. Friedmann, *The Symbolic Goldfinch: Its History and Significance in European Devotional Art*, Bollingen Series 7 (Washington, D.C., 1946), p. 27, for references to flies as evil beings in Isaiah 7:18 and Ecclesiastes 10:1; and I. Bergström, "Disguised Symbolism in 'Madonna' Pictures and Still Life, I," *Burlington Magazine* 97 (October 1955), p. 307.
 12. A. Pigler, "La Mouche peinte: Un Talisman," *Bulletin du Musée Hongrois des Beaux-Arts*, no. 24 (1964), pp. 47–64.
 13. Burroughs 1938, pp. 249–50.
 14. Although it is not possible to trace the earliest ownership of the *Carthusian*, two later copies, both formerly in Valencia, confirm that the painting was there in the nineteenth century. An old copy of the *Carthusian* with the halo is said to be in the collection of the conde de Berbedel, Valencia (photograph, Centre National de Recherches "Primitifs Flamands," Brussels). A miniature on ivory (16.7 x 12.8 cm) by the Valencian painter Rafael Montesinos y Ramiro (1811–1877) of the *Carthusian* without the halo is now in the Museo de Bellas Artes, Bilbao (see J. A. Gaya Nuño, *Pintura europea perdida por España de van Eyck a Tiépolo* [Madrid, 1964], p. 22).

Saint Eligius

1449

Oil on oak, 38 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 33 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (98 x 85 cm)Inscribed: $\overset{\circ}{m}$ petr xpī me • fecit • a^o 1449 • $\overset{\circ}{v}$

Provenance: possibly painted for the Bruges goldsmiths' guild;

A. Merli, Bremen?; Gerard Siebel, Elberfeld (Wuppertal); Baron Albert Oppenheim, Cologne; Busche, Mainz, 1914; Philip Lehman, New York; Robert Lehman, New York; The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, Robert Lehman Collection (1975.1.110)¹

A sense of the opulent world of wealthy fifteenth-century burghers is nowhere better portrayed in Christus's oeuvre than in *Saint Eligius*. This view into a goldsmith's stall shows a fashionably dressed couple—their betrothal girdle cast aside—choosing rings to finalize their agreement. The goldsmith pauses while weighing a ring and with a searching glance seems to question the couple's resolve as they prepare to partake of the holy sacrament of matrimony.

Among the best known of Christus's paintings, *Saint Eligius* is also perhaps his most enigmatic. James Weale's early identification of the scene as an illustration of the legend of Saint Godeberta,² the saint wedded to God by Eligius with King Clotaire III as a witness, was rejected by Erwin Panofsky and others, as this portrayal does not follow the narrative described in the *Acta sanctorum*.³ Alfred Woltmann, who pointed out this discrepancy, suggested instead that the painting is an actual wedding portrait commissioned by the couple, a theory that evokes Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (fig. 94).⁴ H. Clifford Smith identified the coat of arms on the man's necklace as that of the dukes of Gelders. Although James II, king of Scotland, married Mary of Gelders at Holyrood in 1449, this is probably not a commemorative portrait, since the man wears no kingly insignia.⁵ Finding little in the faces of the man and woman to indicate specific portraits, Max J. Friedländer proposed that the representation is simply of an ideal bridal couple.⁶ According to Panofsky, this explanation would be in keeping with the type of painting commissioned by a goldsmiths' guild in order to advertise its services to the community, including its valued participation in the sacraments of the church.⁷

The identification of the figure in red as Saint Eligius is compatible with all these theories. His halo, however, was added later and, as was the case with the *Portrait of a Carthusian* (cat. no. 5), introduced a planar, decorative feature that interrupted the intended flow of space from the foreground to the middle ground.⁸ Halos were not common on saints in early Netherlandish painting and rarely appear in Bruges school pictures. Furthermore, the aureole was painted in shell gold rather than brown and yellow pigments, Christus's usual manner of

rendering gold objects. This false addition, therefore, was recently removed.⁹

The large dimensions of the painting and the nearly life-size scale of the figures probably eliminate the possibility of private devotional use and instead support the idea that the work was destined for public display at a guild whose patron was Saint Eligius. The unsubstantiated assertion that it originally belonged to the Antwerp goldsmiths' guild derives from Karl Friedrich Schäffer's letter to François Brulliot for his dictionary of artists' monograms.¹⁰ Crowe and Cavalcaselle reiterated this early provenance, adding that the painting was actually ordered by the guild, a rather romantic notion that was accepted and repeated in subsequent literature.¹¹

The most convincing theory to date has been proposed by Peter Schabacker.¹² He linked *Saint Eligius* with the tradition of vocational paintings, such as *Saint Luke Painting the Virgin* attributed to Rogier van der Weyden (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston), which were produced for installation in guild chapels.¹³ Schabacker argued against a commission by the Antwerp goldsmiths' guild principally because this group was enfranchised on February 24, 1456—some six years after the creation of the Lehman painting—and apparently did not have the financial resources to endow a chapel with an altar until 1480. Furthermore, as early as 1442 the Antwerp painters' guild had instituted ordinances to protect its members from outside competition, decreasing the likelihood that a Bruges artist like Christus would be allowed to fulfill such an important commission for the goldsmiths' chapel.

Schabacker's more viable theory links the painting with Bruges, where Saint Eligius was associated with the guilds of the gold- and silversmiths, the blacksmiths and metalworkers, and (along with Saint Luke) the painters and saddlemakers. The gold- and silversmiths had established their corporation by 1328, and they shared a chapel with the blacksmiths and metalworkers until late in the fifteenth century. This chapel was not in a church but in a building directly attached to their meeting-house. Interestingly enough, the chapel was reconsecrated in 1449, the date of the Lehman picture, prompting Schabacker to





Fig. 112. Detail of cat. no. 6 (objects on the shelves)

conclude that the painting was commissioned for a subsidiary oratory dedicated for the daily devotions of the goldsmiths. The high altar was probably decorated with paintings of the more traditional miracles of Saint Eligius.¹⁴

The diversity of finely crafted objects at the right in the painting serves as a kind of advertisement for the goldsmiths' guild (fig. 112). Included are the raw materials of the trade—coral, crystal, porphyry, open sacks of seed pearls, precious stones, and a string of beads—and finished products made from them—brooches, rings, and a belt buckle. Of special note are the pair of “serpents' tongues” (actually, fossilized shark's teeth) hanging on the wall, which were supposed to change color when dropped into liquids or foods containing poison. They were combined with coral in decorative pieces that had an apotropaic function.¹⁵ The cup partially hidden by the curtain is made out of a coconut, which was also used as an antidote for poison.¹⁶ The crystal container with the self-sacrificing pelican, pricking its breast to feed its young, was probably meant for storing Eucharistic wafers. The cast pewter vessels on the upper shelf are *presentkannen*, or donation pitchers, which the city's aldermen offered to distinguished guests on official occasions. They were sometimes partially gilt and embellished with dedicatory inscriptions, as they are here.¹⁷ The assemblage of objects thus presents gold- and silversmiths in the service of both religious and secular segments of the community.

The mirror, coins,¹⁸ weights, scales, rings, and marriage girdle in the foreground refer to the secular and sacred worlds, but their placement establishes a polarity in the painting that suggests a moralizing message. One of the two men reflected in the mirror carries a falcon, a traditional symbol of pride and greed. This meaning is reinforced by the mirror, an attribute of *Superbia*, the personification of pride and vanity and one of the Seven Deadly Sins.¹⁹ The world reflected (that is, *our* world) is not a perfect one, as indicated by the cracks and spots on the mirror. An alternative example is offered by the devout couple and the saint. In his left hand, Eligius holds scales that are tipped in the direction of the righteous, as they are in representations of the Last Judgment, perhaps indicating that the couple's virtue outweighs the vices of the dandies in the mirror.²⁰

Some attribute this inventive, genre-like scene to a lost van Eyck painting of 1440 recorded about 1530 by Marcantonio Michiel as being in the Casa Lampagnano in Milan.²¹ Described as a depiction of two half-length figures, presumably an agent and his client, busy with their accounts, the lost van Eyck is probably more directly reflected in Quentin Massys's *Money Changer and His Wife* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) or Martin van Reymerswaele's *Two Tax-Gatherers* (National Gallery, London) and his *Banker and His Wife* (Museo del Prado, Madrid)²² than in *Saint Eligius*.

The Lehman painting may be identical with another purport-



Fig. 113. Detail of cat. no. 6 (Saint Eligius's head)

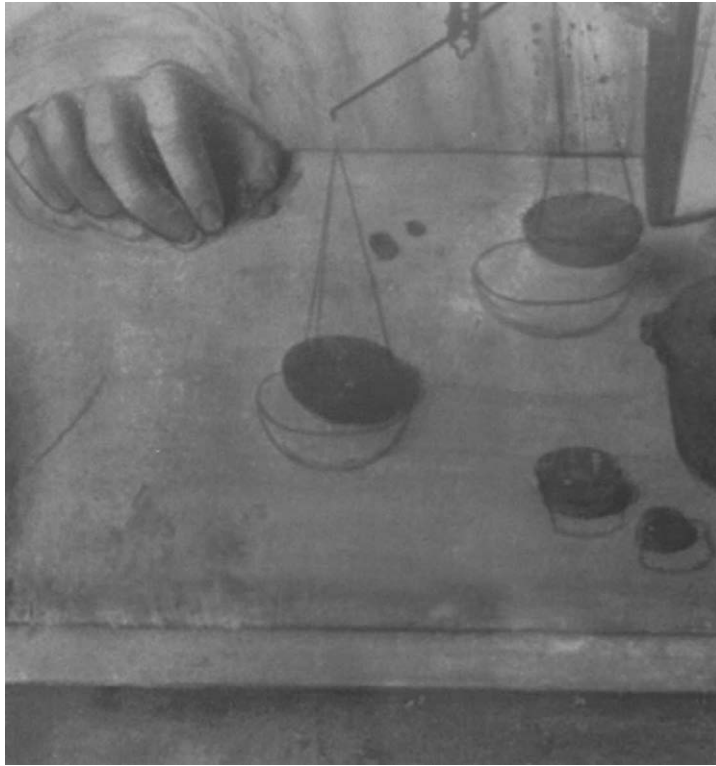


Fig. 114. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 6 (underdrawing of the bench)

edly “lost” van Eyck, a *Saint Eligius* listed as signed and dated by Jan in 1441 that was offered on the Frankfurt art market in 1811 from the A. Merli collection, Bremen.²³ According to the sale catalogue, its description and dimensions are close to those of the Lehman panel. The so-called monogram could well have been misread as that of van Eyck during this period prior to the rediscovery of Petrus Christus by Gustav Waagen and Johann David Passavant.²⁴

The design of *Saint Eligius* is so unlike any known by van Eyck that it deserves to be more clearly acknowledged as Christus’s own invention. The composition recalls Christus’s other early corner-space portraits (*Carthusian*, *Edward Grymeston*, *Portrait of a Young Man*). At this point in his stylistic development, before his understanding of one-point perspective, Christus cleverly positioned the mirror to extend the space of the painting into that of the viewer. Reflected in the mirror are both Saint Eligius’s red sleeve and the doorframe of the stall as well as the two figures representing the viewer’s space. The dramatic proximity of the mirror to our world—presenting no alternative but to become a part of a dialogue with the painting—is very different from van Eyck’s mirror in the *Arnolfini Portrait*, which was used to emphasize the action within the space of the painting rather than outside it.²⁵

A few ruled brush strokes in the underdrawing at the edge of the goldsmith’s bench (fig. 114) and incised lines at the window shutters (evident in the X-radiograph) show how Christus constructed the space around the figures. In his usual detailed man-

ner, he planned all aspects of the design, including the objects and figures.²⁶ Broad brush strokes form the outlines, and interior modeling of the figures is carried out with fine parallel hatching and limited cross-hatching in brush, pen, and, in certain areas of the heads, possibly metalpoint (figs. 41, 42, 43). The underdrawing of Saint Eligius’s face, in particular, is very fully modeled, more so than the faces of the bridal couple (fig. 71), suggesting the possibility of a portrait.²⁷ This would be consistent with representations of saints in other guild paintings, such as those of Saint Luke painting the Virgin, in which it is supposed that the artist himself or a famous practitioner of the represented craft is portrayed.²⁸ The abraded state of the faces and the loss of modeling glazes make it difficult to determine whether Saint Eligius is an actual likeness. Indeed, as early as 1825 Waagen had noted that the painting “a beaucoup souffert.”²⁹

Christus signed *Saint Eligius* in a more personal manner than he signed his other extant works, in a form resembling the written signatures found on goldsmiths’ and manuscript illuminators’ guild tablets.³⁰ He took great care to continue the illusion of the signature by coordinating its illumination with that of the scene. The intriguing symbol after the date appears to be a heart, along with the elements of a foliot escapement for a mechanical clock.³¹ If this is Christus’s personal mark, he did not use it regularly to sign his other paintings, and the possibility remains that it directly relates to the subject of this picture. Although an association of the heart with the bridal couple seems reasonable, any reference intended by the clock parts to fleeting time, or to earthly time as opposed to eternity, or to the transitory nature of the world of wealth represented remains pure speculation.

1. For clarification of details of this provenance, I am indebted to Martha Wolff, Curator of European Painting before 1750, Art Institute of Chicago.
2. Weale 1863b, p. 240; suggestion repeated in Bruges 1902b, p. 8, no. 17; Weale 1903, p. 51; A. Marguillier, review of *Collection du Baron Albert Oppenheim: Tableaux et objets d’art*, introduction by E. Molinier, *Chronique des arts et de la curiosité*, April 22, 1905, p. 126; H. C. Smith, *Jewellery* (New York and London, 1908), pp. 155–56; Smith 1914, p. 331; R. Lehman, *The Philip Lehman Collection, New York: Paintings* (Paris, 1928), no. 82; K. Toth, *Die alten Niederländer von Eyck bis Brueghel* (Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1943), p. 46; and T. A. Heinrich, “The Lehman Collection,” *Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin*, n.s., 12 (April 1954), p. 220. Identification rejected by Panofsky (1953, vol. 1, p. 313 n. 2); Friedländer (1967–76, vol. 1, p. 83); Upton (1972, p. 351); and Schabacker (1974, p. 87).
3. J. Bollandus and G. Henschenius, eds., *Acta sanctorum*, 67 vols. (Paris and Rome, 1863–1931), April 1866, vol. 2, pp. 31–36.
4. Woltmann 1879, pp. 298–300. Conway (1921, p. 109) suggested that all three figures in *Saint Eligius* are portraits and that the goldsmith looks like Dunois, Bastard of Orléans, as depicted by Fouquet, though the resemblance is most likely accidental.

5. Smith 1915, pp. 16–17.
6. Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pp. 82–83.
7. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 313 n. 2.
8. Conway (1921, p. 109) doubted the authenticity of the halo, an opinion repeated occasionally in the subsequent literature.
9. Removed in October 1993 by Hubert von Sonnenburg, Sherman Fairchild Chairman, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
10. Lorne Campbell first called attention to this important reference in his review of *Petrus Christus*, by P. Schabacker, *Burlington Magazine* 117 (October 1975), p. 677. Schäffer's comments are published in F. Brulliot, *Dictionnaire de monogrammes, chiffres, lettres initiales et marques figurées sous lesquels les plus célèbres peintres, dessinateurs, et graveurs ont désigné leurs noms* (Munich, 1817), col. 874, no. 145.
11. Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1857, p. 117; Weale 1863b, p. 236; Kugler 1874, pt. 1, p. 76; Woltmann 1879, pp. 298–300; Weale 1903, p. 51; Smith, *Jewellery*, p. 155; Weale 1909, p. 98; Smith 1914, p. 331; Schöne 1939, p. 27; Puyvelde 1953, p. 188; Musée de l'Orangerie, *Exposition de la collection Lehman de New York*, exhib. cat., 2nd ed., rev. (Paris, 1957), pp. 4–6, no. 6; and The Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Masterpieces of Fifty Centuries*, exhib. cat. (New York, 1970), no. 205.
12. Schabacker 1972, pp. 103–20. This connection with vocational scenes is supported by a tradition of representations of the saint at his workbench that are found on pilgrims' badges.
13. Examples illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, pls. 118, 119.
14. Such as the *Triptych of Saint Eloy* drawing attributed to Rogier (Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Paris). See Sonkes 1969, pp. 212–14, no. D23, pl. LIIIb.
15. For fifteenth-century objects using these materials, see Smith 1914, pp. 332–33; and J. M. Fritz, *Goldschmiedekunst der Gotik in Mitteleuropa* (Munich, 1982), p. 257, no. 506.
16. Smith 1914, p. 335.
17. The inscriptions on these vessels are only partially legible. For examples, see Detroit 1960, pp. 281–82, nos. 115–16; and Centrum voor Kunst en Cultuur, *Gent: Duizend jaar kunst en cultuur*, exhib. cat., 3 vols. (Ghent, 1975), vol. 3, pp. 399–401, no. 690, pl. 53. Other examples of presentation pitchers include those given to Ferry de Clugny, bishop of Tournai, on his visit to Bruges in 1473–74 and to Adolph and Philip of Cleves (Martens 1992, pp. 105, 529–30). I am grateful to Maximiliaan Martens for providing information and documents concerning these vessels.
18. On the coins, see Smith 1915, pp. 6–7; and F. T. Klingelschmitt, *Mainzer Goldgulden auf dem Eligiusbild des Petrus Christus in der Sammlung Baron Albert Oppenheim, Köln* (Wiesbaden, 1918). Schabacker (1972, p. 108) suggests that the three different types of coins (Mainz florins, “angels” of Henry VI's French territories, and “ryders” minted under Philip the Good's rule), which had to be changed into the common currency of the realm, allude to the money changers, who belonged to the gold- and silversmiths' guild.
19. Schabacker 1972, p. 112; see also G. F. Hartlaub, *Zauber des Spiegels: Geschichte und Bedeutung des Spiegels in der Kunst* (Munich, 1951), pp. 149–50; and H. Schwarz, “The Mirror in Art,” *Art Quarterly* 15 (summer 1952), p. 103.
20. Schabacker (1972, p. 112) tentatively suggests a text for this representation, the sixth sermon under the letter “S” in Jacobus de Voragine's “Mariale,” found in the last section of the *Sermones aurei de B. Maria Virgine*: “For as all things are reflected from a mirror, so in the Blessed Virgin, as the mirror of God, ought all to see their impurities and spots, and purify and correct them, for the proud, beholding her humility see their blemishes, the avaricious see theirs in her poverty, the lovers of pleasure theirs in her virginity” (translation from E. C. Richardson, *Materials for a Life of Jacopo da Varagine*, 4 pts. [New York, 1935], pt. 2, p. 66).
21. Weale and Brockwell 1912, p. 200, no. 13; and Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 354. Those assuming Christus followed this or another Eyckian model include: Reinach (1905–23, vol. 4, p. 545); N. von Holst (“Frankfurter Kunst- und Wunderkammern des 18. Jahrhunderts: Ihre Eigenart und ihre Bestände,” *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 52 [1931], p. 47); Cuttler (1968, p. 131); M. Whinney (*Early Flemish Painting* [New York and Washington, D.C., 1968], p. 69); Schabacker (1972, pp. 108–9); and Panhans-Bühler (1978, pp. 91–108).
22. Illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 7, pl. 51; vol. 12, pls. 94, 96.
23. “‘Ein sehr seltenes Bild, ein Goldarbeiter in seinem Laden, welcher seine Waren einem Herrn und seinem bey sich habendem Frauenzimmer zeigt, mit der Jahreszahl und dem Monogramm dieses berühmten Künstlers J. van Eyck (sic! v. H.) 1441, ein sehr gut erhaltenes Gemälde auf Holz, breit 32 Zoll, hoch 37.’ Pariser Fuss,” as quoted in Holst, “Frankfurter Kunst- und Wunderkammern,” p. 47. The recorded painting measured 100 x 86.6 cm; the Lehman painting is 98 x 85 cm.
24. Waagen 1824, p. 448; and Passavant 1833, p. 92.
25. Gellman 1970b, pp. 96–100. On mirrors in painting, see also Benjamin 1973, pp. 214–16.
26. In particular, the two figures at the left appear to be a motif invented by Christus rather than by Albert van Ouwater in his *Raising of Lazarus* of about 1460–65 (Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin), as Upton (1990, p. 48) supposed. Dendrochronology of the Ouwater painting by Peter Klein (letter to the author, September 1, 1993) shows that the felling date of the tree for the Berlin panel was about 1451—that is, after *Eligius* was painted.
27. Gellman (1970b, pp. 97–98) thought *Eligius* might be the portrait of a well-known goldsmith. Upton (1990, p. 33 n. 29) suggested it is Christus's self-portrait.
28. For a review of the literature concerning the identification of Saint Luke as a self-portrait, see C. T. Eisler, *New England Museums, Les Primitifs flamands, I: Corpus de la peinture des anciens Pays-Bas méridionaux au quinzième siècle 4* (Brussels, 1961), pp. 73, 85–86.
29. Waagen 1824, p. 448.
30. See Ainsworth, “Art of Petrus Christus,” n. 25, this volume.
31. George Szabó (*The Robert Lehman Collection: A Guide* [New York, 1975], pp. 79–80) recognized the components of Christus's emblem. For an illustration of clock parts, including the weights and pallets that are part of Christus's mark, see E. L. Edwardes, *Weight-Driven Chamber Clocks of the Middle Ages and Renaissance*, vol. 1 of *Old Weight-Driven Chamber Clocks, 1350–1850* (Altrincham, England, 1965), pl. 1. I am grateful to Clare Vincent, Associate Curator, Department of European Sculpture and Decorative Arts, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for the identification of the clock parts.

Virgin and Child with Saint Barbara and Jan Vos (Exeter Madonna)

About 1450

Oil on oak, 7% x 5½ in. (19.5 x 14 cm)

On reverse, seal and paper with inscription from original Dutch by Florente le Comte: *A cabinet painting, representing an abbot kneeling before the Holy Virgin and the portrait of a woman, etc.; by Jan van Eyck, the first inventor of oil painting, in the year 1426 being painted by him for the Saint Martins Church at Ypres.*

Provenance: Archduke Ernest of Austria, 1595 (inventory as “Rupert van Eyck”)?; Jean Chrysostom de Backer, The Hague (inventory of April 17, 1662)?; marquis of Exeter, Burleigh House, Stamford, England, 1815; sold (as Jan van Eyck) to Charles Fairfax Murray, London, 1888; Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin, 1888; Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin (523B)

The intriguing label on the back of the *Virgin and Child with Saint Barbara and Jan Vos* unfortunately does not clarify the origin or date of the painting and must have been mistakenly attached to the panel at an unknown date. Although, as described on the label, a cleric kneels before the Holy Virgin, the attribution, date, and original site mentioned cannot be associated with the work.¹ Two other descriptions that more closely match the picture place it in 1595 in the collection of Archduke Ernest of Austria, stadtholder of the Netherlands, and in 1662 in the private collection of Jean Chrysostom de Backer, doyen of Eindhoven.² The earliest securely documented owner of the painting, however, is the marquis of Exeter, from whom it gets its designation as the *Exeter Madonna*.³

There has been no significant debate in recent years over the attribution of the *Exeter Madonna* to Christus, only over its date and the circumstances of its commission.⁴ Its inevitable comparison with the Frick *Virgin and Child with Saints Barbara and Elizabeth and Jan Vos* (cat. no. 2) provokes these questions, for the figures of Saint Barbara, the Carthusian donor, and the Virgin and Child, as well as the setting of a portico opening onto a view of a distant landscape, all appear to be based on the Frick painting.

Due to an early identification of the donor as Herman Steenken, vicar of the Carthusian cloister of Saint Anna ter Woestine, near Bruges, who died in 1428, both paintings were thought to date about 1426, before the vicar’s death.⁵ However, using archival information, H. J. J. Scholtens convincingly showed that the donor of the Frick *Virgin and Child* was most probably Jan Vos, prior of the Carthusian monastery at Genadedal, near Bruges, from 1441 to 1450 and prior of the Nieuwlicht monastery, near Utrecht, from 1450 to 1458.⁶ The Carthusian in the *Exeter Madonna* is certainly the same donor repre-

sented in the Frick painting.

In 1450, when Jan Vos was called to return to Nieuwlicht as prior, he most likely took the Frick painting with him, for archival documents state that a painting of this description was in place on the altar of Saint Barbara in Nieuwlicht about 1450.⁷ The representation of Saints Barbara and Elizabeth pertained to the prior’s origins in the Teutonic order and, therefore, in a certain way presented his credentials. It is perfectly understandable why Vos would have taken such a personal statement with him to display on the church altar in the Carthusian monastery where he would next reside.

Scholtens suggested that the *Exeter Madonna* was commissioned by Jan Vos for the Genadedal monastery as a replacement for the painting the prior was taking with him in 1450.⁸ Because of the exclusion of Saint Elizabeth, however, it is by no means an exact copy of the Frick painting or a suitable replacement, if one considers the indulgences attached to the Frick image by Bishop Martinus of Mayo in 1443.⁹ Furthermore, the diminutive size of the *Exeter Madonna* probably made it less suitable for placement on a church altar. It is instead a personal devotional panel that could easily be carried from place to place, even from room to room, as a constant reminder of Vos’s dedication to the Virgin and Child.

Jan Vos is presented to the Virgin and Child by Saint Barbara, who was particularly revered by the Carthusians. The monastery in Nieuwlicht consecrated an altar to her in 1446, and an annual festival of Saint Barbara was inaugurated in 1451 by the Grande Chartreuse.¹⁰ In the light of all these associations, the tiny *Exeter Madonna* would seem to have been painted about 1450 for Vos’s personal use.

The attribution of the painting to Christus is supported by details of its manufacture. Particularly characteristic of his hand





Fig. 115. Jan van Eyck, *Virgin of Chancellor Rolin*, ca. 1436. Oil on oak, 26 x 24 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (66 x 62 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris

is the association between manuscript illumination and the design of this composition, the palette, and the execution in paint. There is certainly a rich tradition in panel painting of donors kneeling in adoration before the Virgin and Child. A notable example that Christus would have known is Jan van Eyck's *Virgin of Chancellor Rolin* (fig. 115). In the general arrangement of figures in space, including the row of tiles that separates the realm of the Virgin and Child from that of the donor, the Exeter *Madonna* reflects Jan's painting.¹¹ Christus made his scene more intimate, however, in effect pushing it into the far left corner of the room of the *Rolin Madonna*. He thus emphasized the asymmetrical view he favored in his paintings, a type of composition typical of manuscript illumination. Presentation scenes of various types set in an open portico whose far wall runs parallel to the picture plane and whose side wall runs at an oblique angle appear in numerous manuscript illuminations, particularly around the time the Exeter *Madonna* was painted.¹²

As it is in other Christus paintings (for example, the Berlin *Annunciation*, the *Death of the Virgin*, and the Kansas City *Holy Family*), the focal point (or focal area in this case) is off-center, falling at the lower part of the Christ Child's body (fig. 116).¹³ Not all of the orthogonals meet at this point, however, which suggests the painting slightly predates those in which Christus first understood the concept of a one-point perspective, such as the Berlin *Annunciation* of 1452¹⁴ or the Frankfurt *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* of 1457. Yet even at this

relatively early date, Christus had the viewer in mind, for he constructed the perspective asymmetrically, toward the side of the Virgin and Child and at the level of Jan Vos's eyes, thus giving the viewer the same position as Vos, kneeling in adoration before the Virgin and Child.¹⁵

Going beyond the closed spatial configurations of his predecessor van Eyck, Christus opened up the space, creating a dynamic arrangement that is unique for a panel of this size.¹⁶ His awareness of atmospheric perspective gives the distant city view the illusion of being real. Joel Upton has identified the city below as Bruges, with accurate views of the Huydvettiers Plaetse at the left and the Minnewater and the Ghent canal at the right.¹⁷ The idea that Vos might have specifically requested such a view of Bruges is very appealing. The small size of the image, however, makes it difficult to determine the location.

There is a direct relationship between the small size of the painting and the nature of the execution, which approximates manuscript illumination. In this instance, Christus apparently did not begin with a complete preliminary design.¹⁸ Rather, he made a series of ruled lines for the architectural plan and proceeded as he did in his other small-scale paintings that show little or no apparent underdrawing (for example, the *Madonna*

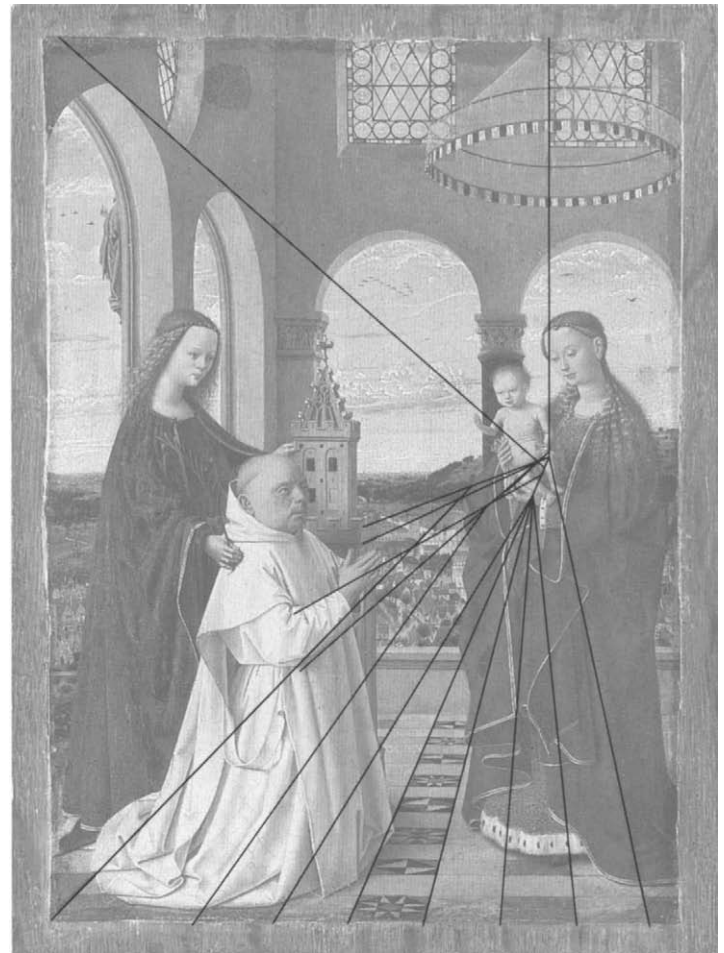


Fig. 116. Perspective diagram of cat. no. 7

of the Dry Tree, the Christ as the Man of Sorrows, and the Head of Christ), building up the paint layers as if he were making one continuous colored drawing and modeling as he went along. Details of the heads of the figures (figs. 91, 117) illustrate this point well; here, as is often found in manuscript illumination, modeling strokes are not fully blended but simply daubed on with impasto touches deftly placed to achieve the illusion of volume and form using an economy of means.

Although aspects of the representation of space and details of the execution in paint may be reminiscent of manuscript illumination, Christus's figures were inspired by panel paintings. Saint Barbara and Jan Vos are in some respects so close to the figures in the Frick *Virgin and Child* that Christus must either have seen that painting in its completed form in Nieuwlicht or had access to workshop drawings of all or parts of it. To these models he added the head of Jan Vos, which was no doubt studied from life and shows a less idealized and, judging from his lined face, somewhat older prior than the one depicted in the Frick *Virgin and Child*. The motif of the Virgin and Child is taken from the Maelbeke *Madonna* (fig. 95), a late work that was probably never finished by van Eyck. The sprightly Child, however, was more likely inspired by Jan's *Dresden Triptych* of 1437 (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden).¹⁹ Christus found the drapery patterns of late, small-scale Eyckian paintings, such as the *Virgin at the Fountain* (fig. 134) and the *Madonna in the Church* (Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin), more suitable for his tiny painting than those of the Maelbeke *Madonna*.²⁰ Other details, including the design of the floor tiles and the capitals of the columns, come from the *Rolin Madonna*. These diverse but mostly late Eyckian sources of inspiration suggest that Christus was familiar with the patterns, models, and even some details of the execution of van Eyck's paintings. He may have had close connections with an Eyckian workshop that presumably continued after Jan's death in 1441.

The Exeter *Madonna* is not so much a condensed version of the Frick *Virgin and Child* as it is an enlarged illuminated manuscript page that borrows motifs from panel-painting examples, representing the rich exchange between the two sister arts. Christus's achievement is the successful merging of manuscript illumination and panel painting in this work, which is small in size but monumental in effect. Such a fusion of the arts could perhaps be mastered only by an artist who trained as an illuminator but matured as a panel painter.

1. In Upton's opinion (1990, p. 15 n. 25), neither of the two paintings described on the label is the Exeter *Madonna*. The abbot before the Holy Virgin may be the Maelbeke *Madonna*, and the portrait has not been identified. The 1426 must refer to the date Jan van Eyck "invented" oil painting rather than to the date the painting was made.



Fig. 117. Detail of cat. no. 7 (child)

2. Mentioned by Blaise Hütter in an inventory of the collection of the archduke, where it is listed as a "Sainte Marie avec l'enfant et près d'elle un ange et saint Bernard" and attributed to "Rupert van Eyck" (Laborde 1849–52, vol. 1, p. cxiv n. 1). See also Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, *Beschreibendes Verzeichnis der Gemälde im Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum und Deutschen Museum* (Berlin, 1931), p. 119, no. 523B, as "Cristus." Weale (1900b, pp. 254–55) thought the painting might have belonged to the Diest convent and later to Jean Chrysostom de Backer. Tschudi (1889, p. 162) first noted the possibility of the de Backer provenance. See also A. Bredius, "Een Kunstverzamelaar der 17e eeuw," in *Archief voor Nederlandse kunstgeschiedenis*, comp. D. O. Obreen, 7 vols. (Rotterdam, 1877–90), vol. 5, p. 301.
3. *A Guide to Burghley House, Northamptonshire, The Seat of the Marquis of Exeter* (Stamford, England, 1815), p. 57.
4. Initially, some scholars attributed the work to Jan van Eyck: see G. F. Waagen, *Works of Art and Artists in England*, 3 vols. (London, 1838), vol. 3, pp. 277–78; Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1857, pp. 341–45; A. Woltmann and K. Woermann, eds., *Geschichte der Malerei*, 3 vols. (Leipzig, 1882), vol. 2, p. 21; Tschudi 1889, pp. 154–65; and Conway 1921, pp. 105–6. A couple attributed it to Hubert van Eyck: see H. G. Hotho, *Die Malerschule Hubert's van Eyck*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1858),

- vol. 2, p. 179; and Seeck 1899–1900, col. 69 n. 1. Weale (1909, p. 116 n. 2) attributed it to Petrus Christus II.
5. W. H. J. Weale, "Hubert van Eyck," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 3rd series, 25 (June 1901), pp. 476, 478.
 6. Scholtens 1938, pp. 49–62.
 7. *Ibid.*, p. 51.
 8. *Ibid.*, p. 61.
 9. *Ibid.*, p. 51. Also rejecting the notion of the Exeter *Madonna* as a replacement for the Frick painting are: Baldass (1952, p. 280); W. Schöne (1954, pp. 149–52); J. Lejeune (*Les van Eyck: Peintres de Liège et de sa cathédrale* [Liège, 1956], pp. 163–66); Bruyn (1957, pp. 119–20); Lejeune (1968, pp. 164–65); Gellman (1970b, pp. 181–92); Upton (1972, p. 71); Schabacker (1974, p. 94); Collier (1975, pp. 118–20); Panhans-Bühler (1978, pp. 81–85); Snyder (1985, pp. 154–55); and Upton (1990, pp. 15–16).
 10. Scholtens 1938, p. 57.
 11. Gellman 1970b, p. 185.
 12. See examples illustrated in T. Kren, ed., *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion, and "The Visions of Tondal"* (Malibu, 1992), figs. 17, 20, 124, 125, 135, 172; and in M. P. J. Martens, *Lodewijk van Gruuthuse: Mécenas, en Europees diplomaat, ca. 1427–1492* (Bruges, 1992), figs. on pp. 115, 123, 179, 183, 195.
 13. Collier (1975, pp. 118–19) thought that the painting was cut down at the right and that the focal point originally would have been at the center. There is a *barbe* on all edges of the painting, however, proving it has not been cut down.
 14. Bruyn 1957, p. 120. See also Doehlemann 1911, pp. 503–6, and Kern 1912b, pp. 55–57, for a dispute over the authorship of the painting based on the sophistication of the perspectival system. Doehlemann viewed the perspectival construction as more coherent than it actually is and placed the picture later than the Frankfurt *Madonna* and the Berlin wings.
 15. Upton (1990, p. 18) noted this as well.
 16. Panhans-Bühler 1978, pp. 81–85.
 17. Upton 1990, p. 18.
 18. At least not as far as can be detected. There is always the possibility that Christus, like many manuscript illuminators, made his underdrawing in brown ink, which is transparent to infrared light. If so, he made an underdrawing for the architecture in a different infrared-absorbing medium, since these lines are visible. The use of brown ink would be a departure for Christus, as his other, larger paintings are fully underdrawn in a most meticulous and detailed manner using a black pigment.
 19. Schabacker 1974, p. 95.
 20. Corroborated by Lejeune (1968, pp. 164–65) and Gellman (1970b, p. 183). *Madonna in the Church* is illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pl. 39.

8

Lamentation

About 1450

Oil on oak, 10¼ x 14⅞ in. (26.1 x 35.9 cm)

Provenance: Albert John Hamborough, Steephill Castle, Ventnor, Isle of Wight, until 1887; Sir John Charles Robinson, Newton Manor, Swanage, Dorset (from 1887); Henry G. Marquand, New York (by 1889–90); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, 1890 (91.26.12)

One of Christus's more harmoniously composed and tightly edited compositions, the New York *Lamentation* takes as its primary source the Gospel of Saint John (19:33–41), the only account of this episode from the Passion of Christ in which both Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus are present. Christus elicits a compassionate response from the observer through the attitudes of the main protagonists: Christ's limp, lifeless body is paralleled in the pose of the swooning Virgin and further emphasized by the supportive gestures of John, Mary Magdalene, Joseph of Arimathea, and Nicodemus.

Rogier van der Weyden's *Deposition* of about 1435–40 (fig. 10), which originally hung in the Chapel of the Crossbowmen's Guild just outside Louvain, is traditionally suggested as the model for the New York *Lamentation*.¹ The *Deposition* is, however, much closer to Christus's large-scale Brussels *Lamentation*

(fig. 11), which assimilates the poses of Rogier's Virgin supported by Saint John and one of the Marys, the increased number of attendant figures, the monumental conception, and the striking color harmonies. The New York version shares with Rogier's painting simply the general underlying concept of the presentation, including the themes of *compassio* and *co-redemptio*.² This is specifically illustrated by the manner in which Mary collapses in emulation of the pose of her dead son, thereby imitating his suffering and sharing his role as Redeemer.

What had begun in the twelfth-century writings of Bernard of Clairvaux as an expression of special attention to the compassion of the Virgin developed into doctrine in the fifteenth century.³ Denis the Carthusian was the main proponent of these ideas, expressed above all in his various Mariological writings, principally in his "Dignity of Mary."⁴ Denis questioned the



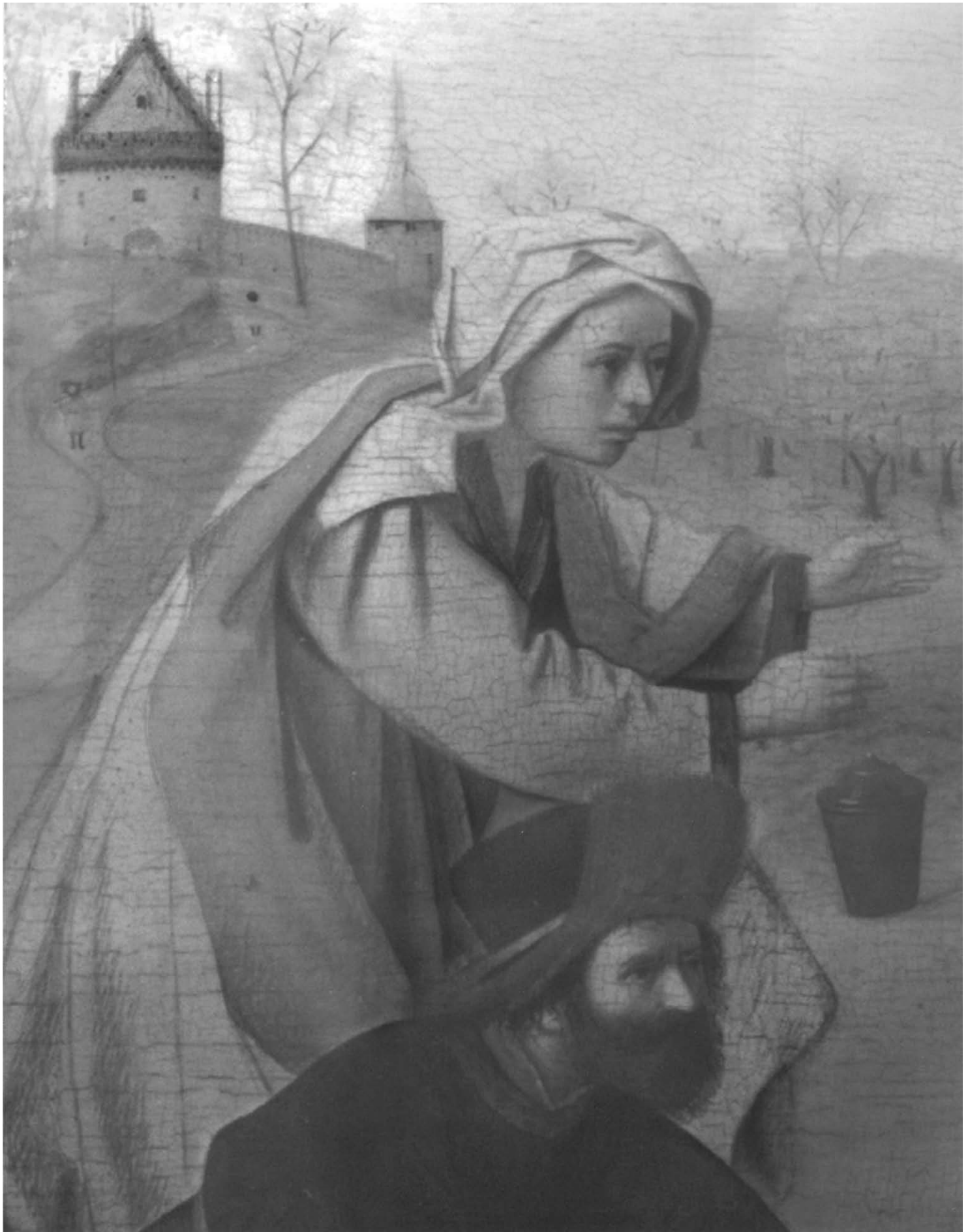


Fig. 118. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 8 (underdrawing of the Magdalene and Joseph of Arimathea)



Fig. 119. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 8 (underdrawing of the Virgin and Saint John)

traditional view of Mary's quiet acceptance of fate at the Crucifixion and suggested instead that the Virgin's suffering was tantamount to martyrdom, even to death. He referred to her as *Salvatrix Mundi* because of her compassion at the Crucifixion, by which she, too, was understood to be aiding in the process of Redemption.⁵ This elevated status given to the Virgin finds a visual counterpart in Christ's composition, in which Mary and Christ are given nearly equal prominence.

Beyond the focus on the figures of the Virgin and Christ in this *Lamentation* is the special emphasis given to Joseph of Arimathea (left) and Nicodemus (right) through their prominent frontal placement in the composition. Following accounts found in contemporary Passion plays, Christus invites the observer to identify with the humble Nicodemus, who says to Joseph of Arimathea, "Take thou the head, I shall take the feet."⁶ The action of Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus, who appear to lift or lower Christ's body, conveys further meaning. In the Deposition scene in the Passion play series by the York Realist, Joseph and Nicodemus raise and lower the body on a winding cloth, a reference to the elevation of the Host during the Mass.⁷ Thus Christus emphasizes the association between Christ's body and the Host. The intimate close-up view and the absence of any fully developed representation of space compel the viewer to dwell on the meaning of the grouping, which is presented very much as a contemporary *tableau vivant*.

This *Lamentation* is distinctly different from the others attributed to Christus (figs. 11, 36), and comparison with these thematically similar works has created confusion. Basing their arguments on its dependence or lack of dependence on the art of Jan van Eyck as well as on its relationship to the Brussels *Lamentation*, scholars have dated the New York painting to the 1440s, 1450s, and 1460s.⁸

The influence of Eyckian art, particularly of the miniatures of the *Turin-Milan Hours* attributed to Hands G and H, is evident to varying degrees throughout Christus's oeuvre and cannot be used as a basis for precise chronological distinctions. In any case, the New York *Lamentation* does not manifestly exhibit this influence, as Sterling proposed,⁹ making any specific chronological link with the *Turin-Milan* illuminations of about 1444–45 impossible to support.

Schöne noted that the space of the *Lamentation* appears to be ordered according to a centralized perspective and that the figures are three-dimensional in form and cohesively arranged to create an interlocking unit.¹⁰ The figures, their facial types and draperies, and the landscape are all close to representations found in Christus's 1452 Berlin wing showing the *Annunciation and Nativity* (fig. 9).¹¹ The arrangement of the figures in the *Lamentation* is reminiscent of that in the *Nativity*, and individual figures take on similar poses and attitudes—Nicodemus paral-



Fig. 120. Antonello Gagini, *Lamentation*. Marble. Cathedral, Palermo

lels Salome, and Saint John parallels Joseph. The urgency of the approaching Magdalene mirrors that of Gabriel in the *Annunciation* scene.

New information provided by infrared reflectography supports a date of about 1450 for the New York *Lamentation* (figs. 118, 119). The underdrawing in the figures relies on closely knit parallel hatching. (What little cross-hatching there is appears along the lower side of Christ's torso.) This gives more definition to the shading of forms than to their volume. The *Lamentation* thus appears to predate the Berlin wings, in which volumetric effects were planned at the underdrawing stage through the frequent use of cross-hatching.

Although quite possibly produced as an individual work for private devotion, this small panel may also have been part of a larger altarpiece consisting of multiple panels of Passion scenes. At some point the *Lamentation* was cut down at the top, perhaps to fit into a new frame. This must have occurred soon after it was made, as two early-sixteenth-century copies from the Bruges workshop of Adriaen Isenbrandt or Ambrosius Benson reflect the cropped format.¹²

Even though an exact provenance is not yet traceable, certain clues suggest that the New York *Lamentation* was exported to the South. Bazin argued that this work, along with several others by Christus, shows a strong connection to Italian art, particularly to paintings attributed to Antonello da Messina and Colantonio.¹³ Indeed, the motif of Christ on the winding cloth,

originally found in Byzantine representations, was popular in Italian art even before arriving in the North through fourteenth-century Franco-Flemish miniatures.¹⁴ Perhaps the most compelling argument for the presence of the New York *Lamentation* or a derivation of it in the South, however, is found in the relief sculpture of Antonello Gagini. His *Lamentation* of about 1507 (fig. 120) for the cathedral in Palermo shows a hybrid composition that appears to depend on both the New York *Lamentation* and the Brussels *Lamentation*, above all emphasizing the ovoid compositional arrangement of the interlocking figures.¹⁵

1. This has been suggested by Pächt 1926, pp. 158–60; Fierens-Gevaert 1927–29, vol. 2, p. 92; and Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 309.
2. O. G. von Simson, “*Compassio* and *Co-redemptio* in Roger van der Weyden’s *Descent from the Cross*,” *Art Bulletin* 35 (March 1953), pp. 9–16.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 11.
4. “De praeconio et dignitate Mariae,” in *Opera omnia* 35 (Tournai, 1908), pp. 559ff., cited in Simson, “*Compassio* and *Co-redemptio*,” p. 14 n. 38.
5. “De dignitate et laudibus B. V. Mariae,” in *Opera omnia* 36 (Tournai, 1908), p. 99, cited in Simson, “*Compassio* and *Co-redemptio*,” p. 14 n. 36.
6. Réau 1955–59, vol. 2, p. 515.
7. Mark Trowbridge, who is preparing the dissertation “Mystery Plays and Fifteenth-Century Flemish Art,” kindly drew this source to my attention. See C. Davidson, “The Realism of the York Realist and the

- York Passion,” *Speculum* 50 (April 1975), pp. 270–83.
8. The 1440s: Baldass 1920–21, p. 12; Wehle and Salinger 1947, p. 19; and Upton 1990, pp. 44–47. The 1450s: Schöne 1954, pp. 146, 148–50; Bruyn 1957, pp. 109–10; Rowlands 1962, p. 420; Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 85; Gellman 1970b, p. 208; Richter 1974, pp. 319–22; Schabacker 1974, pp. 101–2; and *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: The Renaissance in the North* (New York, 1987), p. 27. The 1460s: Conway 1921, p. 110; Burger 1925, pp. 35, 90; Pächt 1926, pp. 158–60; and Lavalleye [1936–39], p. 184.
 9. Sterling (1971, p. 21) associated the *Lamentation* with the *Turin-Milan Hours* and dated it about 1433–35.
 10. Schöne 1938, pp. 25, 57.
 11. Schöne (*ibid.*), Bruyn (1957, p. 109), Rowlands (1962, p. 420), Gellman (1970b, p. 208), Schabacker (1974, pp. 101–2), and Upton (1990, p. 45) concur with this view.
 12. One copy is presently in the church of San Esteban, Hormaza, Spain (illustrated in Lavalleye 1953–58, vol. 2, pp. 32–33, no. 81, pl. XXI). The other was auctioned at Sotheby Parke Bernet, London, April 8, 1981, lot no. 17. Both copies are similar in size to the Metropolitan painting; the Hormaza panel has wings with donors.
 13. Bazin 1952, pp. 194–208.
 14. By the mid-fifteenth century, this motif began to appear in panel painting, perhaps emanating from works by Rogier van der Weyden, such as the *Entombment* of about 1450 (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence; see Schabacker 1974, p. 102).
 15. H.-W. Kruft, *Antonello Gagini und seine Söhne* (Munich, 1980), pp. 386–403, esp. 403, no. 81, pl. 137, where the location is incorrectly identified as Nicosia.

Christ as the Man of Sorrows

About 1450

Oil on wood, 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (11.2 x 8.5 cm)

On reverse: seal of Empress Maria Theresa embossed in paper and affixed with red sealing wax; inscribed underneath in ink, *Rougier van der Weyde*

Provenance: Empress Maria Theresa?; Rev. Henry Parry Liddon; Mary Ambrose (niece of H. P. Liddon); Major M. R. Liddon; Trustees of the Feeney Charitable Trust; gift to the Birmingham Museums and Art Gallery, Birmingham, England, 1935 (P.306.35)

Like Christ's other small-scale devotional image of Christ (cat. no. 4), this allegory of the Eucharist is a conflation of two closely related themes. Boldly displaying the wounds of his sacrifice is Christ as the Man of Sorrows; the sword of judgment and the lilies of mercy carried by the angels signify the Christ of the Last Judgment.¹ In keeping with the tone of contemporary devotional literature, such as the *Imitatio Christi* by Thomas à Kempis, the viewer is meant to meditate on Christ's suffering and, thereby, to experience his presence and redemptive powers.² This was part of habitual devotional practice, as is well illustrated by fragments of a drawing of the *Celebration of the Eucharist* from the workshop of Rogier van der Weyden (fig. 121).³ Here, a vision of the Holy Trinity (including Christ as

the Man of Sorrows), accompanied by the Virgin and Saint John as well as two angels carrying the sword and the lilies, appears above scenes of the Sacrament of Holy Communion. The link is thus made between the mystical presence of Christ and the celebration of the Mass, emphasizing the notion that to partake of the Sacrament is to receive Christ directly.

Not uncommon in fifteenth-century Flemish art, the theme of the Man of Sorrows was treated in paintings, manuscript illuminations (fig. 122), woodcuts, and engravings.⁴ The Birmingham painting shares with these examples the image of the suffering Christ crowned with thorns and displaying his wounds and the two angels with the sword and lilies of the Last Judgment. But the *Man of Sorrows* differs in significant ways, namely



Fig. 121. Workshop of Rogier van der Weyden, *Celebration of the Eucharist*. Silverpoint on prepared paper, each fragment approx. 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{8}$ in. (70 x 98 mm). Ashmolean Museum, Oxford





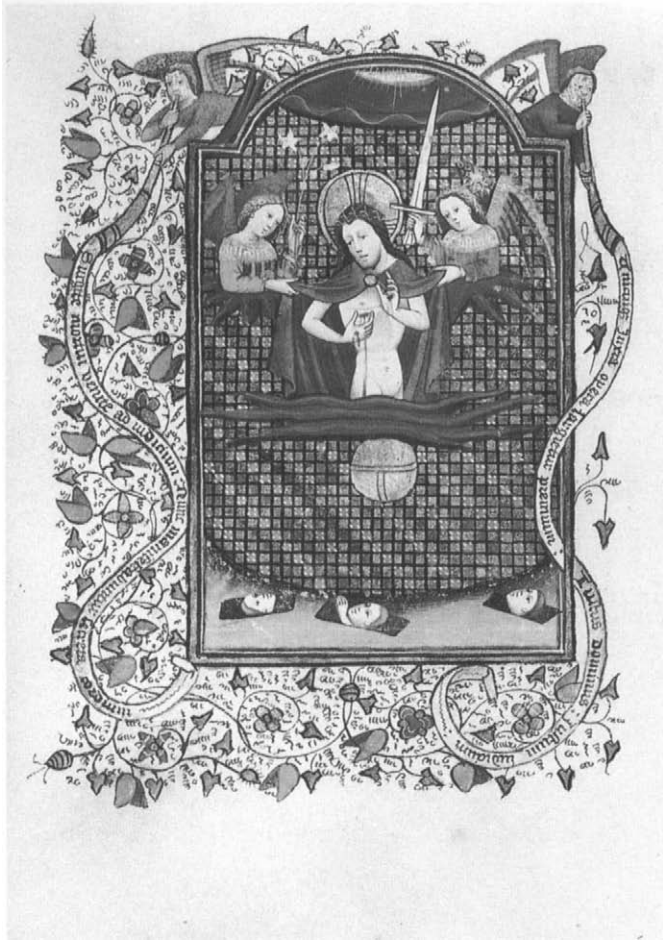


Fig. 122. Flemish school, *Man of Sorrows*, from a Book of Hours, MS M.46, fol. 99v. Tempera on vellum. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

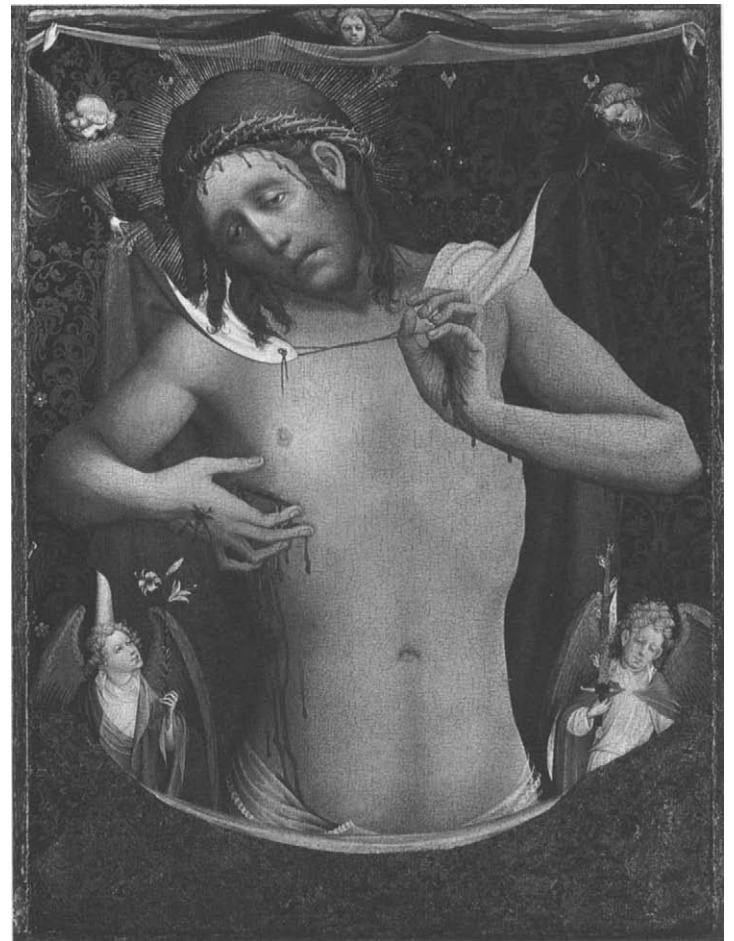


Fig. 123. Master Francke, *Man of Sorrows*. Oil on oak, 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 26 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (92.5 x 67 cm). Kunsthalle, Hamburg

in the addition of the drawn-back curtain and the flowing water at the lower edge as well as in the omission of the robe of majesty around Christ's shoulders. Furthermore, in the engraved and illuminated examples, Christ raises his left hand in blessing; the Birmingham Christ, like the figure in the Master Francke painting (fig. 123), instead displays his nail-pierced hand, emphasizing the physical manifestation of the sacrifice he made. The blood streams from the crown of thorns piercing Christ's head, over his shoulders and onto his chest. It nearly meets the gushing wound at his side, which he pushes up with his right hand, offering to all of us, as if we were doubting Thomases, the chance to dismiss any skepticism about the recurring miracle of the Mass, in which the bread and wine are changed into his body and blood.⁵

Other features of the Birmingham painting—the angels with the symbols of the Last Judgment and the flowing water below—further illustrate the direct relationship between participation in the Sacrament of Holy Communion and salvation, as expressed in biblical references such as John 6:53–54, in which Jesus says:

Truly, truly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of man and drink his blood, you have no life in you; he who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

Certain fifteenth-century propagandistic woodcuts depict the allegory of the Eucharist more blatantly. In one, Christ actually bleeds Eucharistic wafers that fall onto the souls below, cleansing them of their sins (fig. 124). In another, Christ and the Virgin kneel before a well in which wafers float on holy blood; the nourishment is intended for the souls below the well.⁶

The emphasis in the *Man of Sorrows* on the streaming blood, the flowing water, and the curtain—which is drawn back by the angels as if to reveal a concealed object of great value, such as a relic or the Eucharist—may be explained by contemporary devotional practices in Bruges.⁷ The most important relic in the city since the Middle Ages has been that of the Holy Blood, reportedly brought back by Count Derrick of Alsace in 1150 after the second of four Crusades to the Holy Land.⁸ In 1281, the annual procession of the Holy Blood was inaugurated,

and the Confraternity of the Holy Blood was formed in the fifteenth century, counting among its thirty-one members some of the most prominent citizens of Bruges.⁹

The relic was housed in the Burg square in the two-story chapel of the Holy Blood, built by Count Derrick in the first half of the twelfth century. The subsequent burgeoning of the cult of the Holy Blood necessitated the enlargement of the upper chapel toward the end of the thirteenth century; now the chapel of the Holy Cross, it is the present repository of the relic. The original interior decoration of the chapel was destroyed during the Beggars' Revolt and the French Revolution. However, a nineteenth-century mural on the east wall showing the mystery of the Holy Blood reflects the traditional iconography associated with the relic. Before a landscape including Jerusalem and Bethlehem, God the Father supports the crucified Christ, shedding his blood into dishes held by angels. Two other angels carry the instruments of the Passion, and below, twelve lambs (symbolic of the disciples of Christ) drink from the water flowing from the base of the cross into a running river, recalling the water along the bottom of the *Man of Sorrows*. The tiny Birmingham painting appears to be a condensed version of the themes of sacrifice and redemption through baptism represented in the large wall painting.¹⁰

Although it is not possible to reconstruct the circumstances of its framing or original installation, the painting's excellent state of preservation suggests it was protected from frequent



Fig. 124. Swabian school, *Allegory of the Eucharist*, ca. 1480–1500. Woodcut, 2 $\frac{3}{8}$ x 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (72 x 57 mm). National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

handling—perhaps it adorned a box, cupboard, or Host reliquary. Or, as the contemporary interior church scene of the veneration of the relics of Saint Ursula from the *Legend of Saint Ursula* in the Groeningemuseum, Bruges, shows, it may simply have been among the objects placed on the chapel altar for contemplation and liturgical purposes.¹¹

The embossed seal of Empress Maria Theresa attached to the reverse of the panel suggests the painting was part of the legacy of the rulers of Flanders. Maria Theresa and Francis I, who had dominion over Flanders from 1740 to 1790, are depicted along with other rulers of the area in stained-glass windows on the upper level of the chapel of the Holy Blood.¹² Although it is intriguing to consider a connection between the royal couple and the chapel, there is no evidence to suggest they ever even traveled to Bruges.¹³

The old inscription *Rougier van der Weyde* on the back of the panel has not been taken seriously in modern times as an attribution for the Birmingham *Man of Sorrows*. Given to the “Flemish School, late fifteenth or early sixteenth century” in a 1957 loan exhibition catalogue at Thomas Agnew and Sons¹⁴ and subsequently to a “Follower of Jan van Eyck” in the 1960 catalogue of the Birmingham museum’s paintings,¹⁵ the work was first attributed to Christus by John Rowlands.¹⁶ This attribution has generally been accepted.

The Birmingham *Man of Sorrows* is most directly related to Christus’s paintings of the 1450s.¹⁷ Using his more generic Christ type (not the portrait style of the *Head of Christ*), Christus repeated the bold and strongly modeled facial features of the Christ in the New York *Lamentation*: the furrowed brow, heavily lidded eyes, long triangular nose, and full lips. The tubular and seemingly boneless fingers, the manner in which the neck is anchored to the collarbone, the flow of blood over the neck in single rivulets, and the way the gaping side wound is painted all recall the *Lamentation* Christ. The curtain, like the one in the Frankfurt *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* of 1457, falls in long, even, rounded folds, here and there broken into elongated U-shaped pockets of fabric.

The closest parallels in technique, however, are to manuscript illumination. Characteristic of Christus, the smaller the scale on which he worked, the more nearly he approximated the handling and execution of illuminations. Like the *Head of Christ*, the *Exeter Madonna*, and the tiny *Madonna of the Dry Tree* (cat. nos. 4, 7, 18), the Birmingham *Man of Sorrows* shows little detectable underdrawing. Only a few stray lines in very thin, even strokes in the draperies of the angels give any indication of a preliminary design. Rather than blend the colors, Christus painted the pink and yellow-green draperies of the angels in alternating strokes of pure color over a light base tone (figs. 26, 27). The tripartite halo is underpainted with a brownish color to which no intermediary tone is added, simply yellow

highlights, deftly placed to give the illusion of changing light over the form. Tiny losses in the areas of draperies and flesh tones alike reveal a pinkish underpainting, a technique often used in manuscript illumination (fig. 29). Over this, Christus applied the darker modeling strokes in the areas of the flesh. In the face, these extremely fine parallel strokes appear much like the underdrawing in his paintings. As he does even in his largest paintings (for example, the Brussels *Lamentation*, fig. 11), the artist outlined the darkest contours with black paint and the broadly lit areas with brown paint. This diminutive scale is one to which Christus was obviously accustomed, and he handled the brush with great facility and remarkable precision.

1. Panofsky (1953, vol. 1, pp. 123–25) suggested that these intertwined themes are expressed by Christ's words at the Last Judgment: "Behold what I have suffered for you, what have you suffered for me?"
2. On contemporary devotional literature, see J. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Middle Ages and Early Renaissance* (Kortrijk, 1979), pp. 1–32 and bibliography. On the image of Christ as the Man of Sorrows, see Panofsky 1927, pp. 261–308; R. Bauerreiss, *Pie Jesu* (Munich, 1931); G. von der Osten, *Der Schmerzensmann: Typengeschichte eines deutschen Andachtsbildwerkes von 1300 bis 1600* (Berlin, 1935); W. Mersmann, *Der Schmerzensmann* (Düsseldorf, 1952); C. Bertelli, "The Image of Pity in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme," in *Essays Presented to Rudolf Wittkower on His Sixty-fifth Birthday*, ed. D. Fraser, 2 vols. (London, 1967), vol. 2, pp. 40–55; and Ringbom 1984, pp. 107–70.
3. Rowlands 1962, pp. 419–23. Upton (1990, p. 55) noted that the Birmingham painting is thematically related to the subject of Christ's miraculous appearance at the Mass of Saint Gregory.
4. For examples, see Panhans-Bühler 1978, figs. 24–26; and Upton 1990, figs. 54–57.
5. Panhans-Bühler (1978, p. 51) and Upton (1990, p. 56) stressed direct engagement of the viewer with this figure.
6. Illustrated in R. S. Field, *Fifteenth Century Woodcuts and Metalcuts from the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.*, exhib. cat. (Washington, D.C., [1965]), nos. 267, 268.
7. Gellman (1970b, p. 204) mentioned the possible link of the Birmingham painting with the cult of the Holy Blood.
8. Technical examination of the relic in 1970 suggested that it was made in the beginning of the thirteenth century.
9. On the confraternity, see J. Cuvelier, "Inventaire analytique des archives de la Chapelle du St.-Sang à Bruges précédé d'une notice historique sur la chapelle," *Annales de la Société d'Emulation de Bruges* 50 (1900), pp. 5–7.
10. It is, as well, reflective of similar iconographic programs in the van Eycks' *Ghent Altarpiece* (Sint Bavo, Ghent) and the two workshop versions of the *Fountain of Life* (Museo del Prado, Madrid; and Allen Memorial Art Museum, Oberlin, Ohio). See Bruyn 1957, esp. pp. 7–36; and E. Underhill, "The Fountain of Life: An Iconographical Study," *Burlington Magazine* 17 (May 1910), pp. 99–109.
11. Illustrated in D. De Vos, *Groeningemuseum, Bruges: The Complete Collection* (Bruges, 1983), p. 32. The tiny painting, which appears to be a *Man of Sorrows*, propped on the altar is visible in the original but not easily seen in reproductions of the Saint Ursula altarpiece.
12. The original windows are now in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London; the replacement windows were made after drawings now exhibited in the Museum van het Heilig Bloed, Bruges.
13. Dr. Gottfried Mraz, archivist of the state archives in Vienna, finds no information to support any particular devotional interest of Maria Theresa or any patronage of such religious cults as the Holy Blood. Information kindly provided by Dr. Wolfgang Prohaska of the Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.
14. Thomas Agnew and Sons, *Loan Exhibition of Pictures from the City Art Gallery, Birmingham*, exhib. cat. (London, 1957), no. 22.
15. City Museum and Art Gallery, *Catalogue of Paintings* (Birmingham, 1960), p. 51.
16. Rowlands 1962, pp. 419–23. This attribution was also accepted in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 107; Kunsthalle, *Meister Francke und die Kunst um 1400*, exhib. cat. (Hamburg, 1969), p. 66, no. 24; Gellman 1970b, pp. 428–30; Sterling 1971, pp. 21, 24; Upton 1972, pp. 282–85; Schabacker 1974, pp. 105–6; Panhans-Bühler 1978, pp. 36–53; Ringbom 1984, p. 52; Upton 1990, pp. 44–47, 55–57; and Hand 1992, pp. 7, 9–10, but rejected in Richter 1974, pp. 357–60.
17. Dating the painting to the 1450s are: Rowlands 1962, p. 420; Gellman 1970b, p. 204; and Schabacker 1974, p. 105. Upton (1972, p. 109) dates it 1444–45.

Attributed to Petrus Christus

Annunciation

About 1450

Oil on oak, 30% x 25% in. (77.5 x 64.4 cm)

Inscribed (on step): REGINA C[O]ELI L[A]ET[ARE] (inverted Ls)

Provenance: prince of Charleroi, duke of Burgundy; J. J. van Hal, Antwerp (before 1836); C. J. Nieuwenhuys, Brussels (1836–after 1847); M. Parent, Paris (by 1860); Countess O’Gorman, Paris (until 1925); [F. Kleinberger Galleries, Inc., New York, 1925]; Philip Lehman, New York (1925–26); [F. Kleinberger Galleries, Inc., New York, 1926]; Colonel Michael Friedsam, New York (1926–31); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, The Friedsam Collection, Bequest of Michael Friedsam, 1931 (32.100.35)

The Friedsam *Annunciation* is exceptional in early Netherlandish art for its bird’s-eye view of this scene, which takes place at the portal of a church, not within it or in the Virgin’s bedroom, as was more commonly the case.¹ Equally unusual is the lack of any view toward the horizon, which causes confusion over the extent of the landscape and the location of the obliquely angled church. Furthermore, the massive, inverted, cone-shaped figures seem incongruous with the more refined, delicate handling of details of the plants, the angel’s wings, the architecture, and the decorative borders of the garments. These anomalies have led to considerable debate over the attribution of the painting and its date, with two renowned art historians, Max J. Friedländer and Erwin Panofsky, entrenched in opposing views.

In an early critical assessment of the painting, Gustav Waagen observed the hallmarks and high quality of a work by Jan van Eyck but found a “disturbing realism” in the figure types.² Friedländer essentially supported this view by attributing the work to Petrus Christus (acknowledging the strong influence of van Eyck),³ and this is the name under which it entered the Metropolitan Museum in 1932.⁴

Concurrently, Hanns Swarzenski reattributed the Friedsam *Annunciation* to Jan van Eyck’s brother, Hubert, a position seconded by Panofsky in a major article in 1935.⁵ The latter’s objections to an attribution to Christus were based primarily on fixed notions about the artist’s stylistic development (which he later modified) and a negative assessment of the quality of his work. Panofsky noted that the *Annunciation* was too “Eyckian” to be an early work by Christus and too “archaic” in composition, coloring, and perspective to be a late Christus.⁶ Absent, Panofsky stated, were the emptiness, bareness, and lack of richness ordinarily found in Christus’s paintings. He recognized closer associations with the lower part of the *Ghent Altarpiece* as well as with the *Three Marys at the Tomb* (Museum Boymans-van

Beuningen, Rotterdam) and thus assigned the picture to Hubert van Eyck.

One of the more bitter exchanges in the art-historical literature of the 1930s ensued when Hermann Beenken challenged Panofsky’s attribution of the painting. Beenken’s principal arguments concerned the perspective design of the Friedsam *Annunciation*, which, he declared, on the basis of its exact construction with two vanishing points for all orthogonal lines of the space, excluded authorship by the van Eycks, who never successfully employed more than an empirical perspective system. In his own perspective rendering of the *Annunciation*, he identified these vanishing points at the upper right of the porch and at the far left, outside the painting.⁷ Panofsky noticed the inaccuracies of the rendering and demonstrated that the vanishing lines do not converge.⁸ As a recent tracing of the orthogonals made on Mylar over the actual painting proves, the Friedsam *Annunciation* is simply an obliquely constructed scene without perspectival accuracy.⁹

This exchange between Panofsky and Beenken did not settle the question of attribution. Harry Wehle and Margareta Salinger suggested the problem might be solved by considering workshop assistance in the painting or the possibility that Christus was copying an Eyckian composition.¹⁰ In the 1950s, Panofsky and Friedländer maintained their earlier attributions to Hubert van Eyck and Christus, respectively.¹¹ A few scholars regarded the fundamental questions of the state and condition of the painting, which have a decisive impact on the attribution. Julius Held and Ludwig Baldass wondered whether the Friedsam *Annunciation* had been cut down, and Eric Larsen alone noted its poor state of preservation.¹²

The *Annunciation* is a fragment of what was no doubt a much larger composition. Only the right edge of the painting is original; the others have been cut down. The lower edge may not



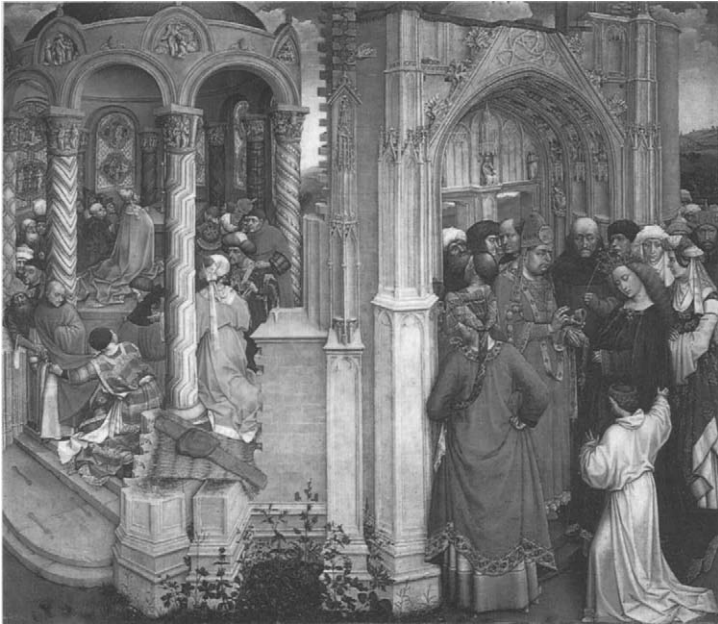


Fig. 125. Master of Flémalle, *Marriage of the Virgin*, ca. 1420. Oil on wood, 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 34 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (77 x 88 cm). Museo del Prado, Madrid

have lost too much, as the composition appears to be complete, including the *repoussoir* elements of rocks and grassy patches in the foreground. However, the absence of a view of the horizon at the top left and the uncharacteristically truncated architecture imply that the painting was somewhat taller than it is at present. In addition, a significant portion of the left side is probably missing. The panels of a vertical composition, like those of the *Friedsam Annunciation*, are generally oriented vertically. The panels of the *Annunciation*, however, run horizontally, indicating that the painting must have extended considerably beyond its current left edge.

Any reconstruction of the original composition must remain hypothetical.¹³ Comparison with other examples, however, provides possible solutions for the missing portions and helps explain the oblique angle of the architecture. The *Marriage of the Virgin* of about 1420 (fig. 125) attributed to the Master of Flémalle¹⁴ and the *Annunciation and Visitation* of 1394–99 (fig. 126) executed by Melchior Broederlam for the Chartreuse of Champmol are both horizontal in format and depict two sequential scenes within a setting of obliquely angled architecture.

Another striking parallel to the *Friedsam Annunciation* is provided by the *Legend of Saint Joseph* (fig. 127) from the circle of Jacques Daret, a pupil of the Master of Flémalle in Tournai from about 1418 to 1432.¹⁵ Within one long horizontal painting (25 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 79 $\frac{3}{8}$ in.), similar in height to the *Annunciation*, there are five main scenes and two subsidiary ones. The backgrounds, like the setting of the *Annunciation*, consist of obliquely angled buildings viewed from above, each truncated to allow for the adjacent narrative episode. It can well be imagined that the *Friedsam Annunciation* once shared an extended space with

additional scenes from the life of the Virgin. As such it would be a forerunner of the later, more complicated multinarrative compositions of Hans Memling (for example, *Passion of Christ* [Galleria Sabauda, Turin] and *Scenes from the Life of the Virgin* [Alte Pinakothek, Munich]).¹⁶

The condition of the *Friedsam Annunciation* is a major impediment to resolving the question of attribution. The painting is not only cut down but is severely abraded as well. Its final modulating color layers are now largely missing in the architecture and in the faces of the figures, especially that of the Virgin.¹⁷ In the light of this situation, authorship may be more reliably determined on the basis of other factors, especially the evidence of the artist's working method. Compared to the paintings in the Eyckian group and those attributed to Christus, the *Friedsam Annunciation* appears to be more closely connected with the latter. The X-radiograph of the painting (fig. 128) reveals a broadly applied whitish tone in the flesh areas, which is typical of both Jan van Eyck and Christus. The underdrawing, however, is also close to that in Christus's other paintings and is clearly different from the preliminary sketches



Fig. 126. Melchior Broederlam, *Annunciation and Visitation*, 1394–99 (left exterior wing of the *Crucifixion Altarpiece*). Oil and tempera on oak, 65 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 49 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (166.5 x 124.9 cm). Musée des Beaux-Arts, Dijon



Fig. 127. Circle of Jacques Daret, *Legend of Saint Joseph*. Oil(?) on oak, 25¼ x 79¾ in. (64 x 203 cm). Sainte-Catherine, Hoogstraten



Fig. 128. X-radiograph of cat. no. 10



Fig. 129. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 10 (underdrawing showing ruled lines in the church façade)



Fig. 130. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 10 (underdrawing showing ruled lines in the angel's face)



Fig. 131. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 10 (underdrawing showing ruled lines in the Virgin's face)

found in works by the van Eycks. As is typical in paintings by Christus but uncommon in those of the van Eycks, the architecture in the *Friedsam Annunciation* is fully planned in the underdrawing, with ruled horizontal and vertical lines. A preliminary design for the architecture appears to have been drawn before the figures, since the ruled lines for the church façade extend through the lower edges of the Virgin's draperies, her book, and the faces of the two figures (figs. 129, 130, 131). The original conception may have included more of an open porch scene than was eventually painted, as there are incised lines that project the pattern of the floor tiles to the left of the vase of lilies beneath the buttresses, and ruled lines that carry the mullions beyond the steps, which were themselves drawn farther into the foreground space. The system of lighting in the architecture was planned through parallel hatching and cross-hatching that is not restricted to one direction and is sometimes quite loosely worked, looking more like a quickly scribbled line.

Although the figures in Jan van Eyck's paintings are usually fully underdrawn, his graphic mannerisms differ from those found here. Precise, even, parallel hatching in the preliminary sketches for his figures routinely runs parallel to the predominant folds of the garments, not obliquely to those folds, as it does in the *Annunciation* (compare figs. 93 and 132). Jan tended to limit cross-hatching to the deepest folds of the draperies and did not use it more generally to indicate a middle tone, as is the case here.

In the *Friedsam Virgin*, an underdrawing applied with an extremely fine pen or brush in a very close network of feathery strokes provides for shading rather than volume. An area at the lower left of her skirt shows Christus's idiosyncratic handling: a distinctive, continuous, vertically oriented scribble, rapidly applied, crosses the more carefully angled hatching, as if simply to finish off the form (fig. 132). All of these details of handling in the underdrawing are also found in Christus's *Frankfurt Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* (figs. 142, 145).

In their standing poses, ostensible immobility, and placement outside a church, the Virgin and Gabriel¹⁸ seem to have a greater affinity to sculptural representations than to painting. The closest parallels for both figures, however, may be found in Jan van Eyck's late grisaille *Annunciations* in Madrid (fig. 133) and on the exterior wings of the *Dresden Triptych* (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden). As she does in the *Thyssen Annunciation*, the standing Virgin in the *Friedsam Annunciation* looks up from her devotional reading to receive Gabriel's message and the manifestation of that message in the form of the Holy Ghost (the dove) coming from the upper left. Christus has taken inspiration from Jan's grisaille figures and reintegrated them into a naturalistic setting.¹⁹

The sheer bulk of the figures is characteristic of Christus's treatment. The Virgin and Gabriel are reduced to great block-like forms firmly planted within their setting. The massive, repeating V-shaped folds of the Virgin's draperies are patterned after late Eyckian workshop models, such as the unfinished



Fig. 132. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 10 (underdrawing of the Virgin)

Maelbeke *Madonna* (fig. 95) or the Frick *Virgin and Child* (cat. no. 2). Even though it is in poor condition, the head of the Friedsam Virgin, with her sharply projecting nose and tightly pulled-back hair, resembles the heads of the Virgins in Christus's *Annunciation and Nativity* wing in Berlin (fig. 9). In

shape, color, and decorative effect, Gabriel's remarkable multi-colored wings recall those of Gabriel and the archangel Michael in Berlin. Other details—such as the technique and coloring of the hands (which are comparable to those in the New York *Lamentation* [cat. no. 8]) and the painting of the gold decoration on Gabriel's scepter and of the edging on the Virgin's cloak—are also characteristic of Christus's handling. Although often included for iconographic reasons, the columns of jasper and porphyry in red and green are a common motif in Christus's work, found, for example, in the Budapest *Virgin and Child*, the Washington donor portraits, the Frankfurt *Madonna*, and the Madrid *Virgin and Child* (cat. nos. 11, 12, 13, 14).

Further evidence precludes an attribution to Hubert or Jan van Eyck. According to Peter Klein, the probable felling date of the tree used to make the panels for this painting is about 1432.²⁰ This factor, as well as an approximate ten-year storage time before the panels could be used for painting, results in a date too late for the authorship of Hubert (d. 1426).²¹ Even though a dating very late in Jan's oeuvre is theoretically possible, the Friedsam *Annunciation* is not stylistically compatible with his late works.

Taking into account the dating of the panels and the associations with Christus's working manner, particularly with the underdrawings in his authenticated paintings, it seems most plausible that the Friedsam *Annunciation* was painted by Christus near the beginning of his career, before he learned one-point perspective. It was perhaps painted under the influence of a post-Eyckian workshop as a copy of an earlier design. This might explain the unusual pictorial format that Panofsky assumed could not be found in Flemish painting after 1430.²² Although Panofsky's dating may have been correct with respect to the uncommon oblique angle and high viewpoint, it is not true of the doorway *Annunciation* scene, which appears to be unique in Flemish painting.²³ As John Ward pointed out, before about 1430 Northern *Annunciations* take place either entirely inside a building or with the Virgin inside a small chamber and the angel outside it.²⁴ Later *Annunciations* are usually set inside a room that becomes increasingly realistic.

The relative simplicity of the pared-down scene is counterbalanced by the richness of the Eyckian iconographic program. Panofsky, Ward, and John Malcolm Russell have dealt with the details of the depiction that present the Virgin not just as the *Annunciate* but also as the personification of the church.²⁵ The architectural elements of the church were chosen for their iconographic significance, but Christus interjected the locally identifiable element of the acanthus-leaf decoration in the doorway arch, a ubiquitous feature of fifteenth-century Bruges architecture. The sense of realism dissolves and the presentation of meaningful details takes over with the division of the church into two parts. The Romanesque section to the



Fig. 133. Jan van Eyck, *Annunciation*. Oil on oak, each panel 15¼ x 9⅞ in. (39.8 x 23.2 cm) with original frames. Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid

Virgin's left is the Old Testament era, *sub legum*, shown with its two symbolic porphyry columns, Jachin and Boaz, from the porch of the temple (1 Kings 7:21).²⁶ These are held up by a monkey, a symbol of original sin, introduced by Adam and Eve's fall from grace. The monkey is at eye level with the viewer, confronting him with his own imperfect and base nature.²⁷

The niche above the Virgin is empty, waiting for the statue of the Savior, who will effect the change from the old order to the new, which is represented to the Virgin's right. Here is the Gothic architecture of the New Testament world, *sub gratie*, with its windows representing divine illumination. The two Gothic buttresses are decorated with the *Kruisbloeme* (cross flower), symbolic of Christ's Crucifixion; the sprouting flowers may also be a metaphor for Christ's birth growing out of the church.²⁸

The Virgin fills the portal entrance at the threshold between exterior and interior space, the *porta coeli*, or spiritual gateway to heaven. On the step are the first words of the prayer sung to

her in this manifestation, "Regina C[oe]li L[et]et[are]" (Queen of Heaven Rejoice), and the greeting from Gabriel, "Ave Maria," is signaled by the letters A and M in the tiles to the right and left of her feet. But the route to salvation and to heaven is not an easy one, as evidenced by the broken pieces of the initial step before the church. As Russell suggested, the damaged step could well be a reference to Isaiah 8:14–15 and to a further explanation in Saint Paul's letter to the Romans (9:30–33).²⁹ Sanctuary is offered through Christ only for those who believe. The unfaithful will stumble and fall at this step, unable to attain entrance to the house of God. The step in the Friedsam *Annunciation* thus represents a stumbling block, apparently newly chipped by those who have literally fallen from grace. The door beyond these steps is closed. The Virgin may thus be understood as the intercessor through whom one gains entrance to the holy realm.

The untended growth of the garden and the crumbling wall imply the era "before the Advent of Christ, its Restorer."³⁰ Isaiah 58:11–12 describes such a setting in which the ruins shall

be rebuilt, the foundations of generations raised, the breach repaired, and the paths restored. Christ is the restorer, the spring of life that will renew this spiritual world. These interpretations, as Russell explains, are supported by the exegetical writings of Saint Jerome and Walafrid Strabo and paralleled in the biblical concept of Christ as a gardener.³¹

The rich, complex iconography of the *Friedsam Annunciation* thus refers to the coming of Christ and to his ultimate sacrifice and the Redemption of man. These multiple themes are conveyed not only by visual clues but also by the juxtaposition of text—the A and M of Gabriel’s “Ave Maria” greeting and the “Regina Coeli Laetare,” the first line of the Eastertide antiphon to the Blessed Virgin.³²

1. D. M. Robb, “The Iconography of the Annunciation in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries,” *Art Bulletin* 18 (December 1936), pp. 500–518.
2. G. F. Waagen, “Nachträge zur Kenntnis der altniederländischen Malerschulen des 15ten und 16ten Jahrhunderts,” *Kunstblatt*, August 24, 1847, p. 163.
3. Friedländer 1916, p. 21; Friedländer 1924–37, vol. 1, p. 158; F. Kleinberger Galleries, Inc., letter to Colonel Michael Friedsam, April 13, 1926, mentioning the certificate of authenticity from M. J. Friedländer on the back of a photograph of the *Annunciation* (Department of European Paintings files, The Metropolitan Museum of Art); and M. J. Friedländer, “Petrus Christus, *The Annunciation*,” in “The Michael Friedsam Collection,” no. B-119, unpublished catalogue completed in 1928 (Department of European Paintings files, The Metropolitan Museum of Art).
4. B. Burroughs and H. B. Wehle, “The Michael Friedsam Collection,” *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum of Art* 27, sect. 2 (November 1932), pp. 14–16.
5. Cited in Panofsky 1935, pp. 433 n. 1, 434.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 433. Panofsky’s analysis that Christus was influenced by Jan van Eyck only in the latter part of his career was revised (1953, vol. 1, pp. 310–13).
7. Beenken 1937, pp. 220–35, with a perspective rendering, fig. 3.
8. Panofsky 1938, p. 421.
9. This was checked in July 1993 by the author and Yvette Bruijnen, former art-historian intern, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art. See also Collier 1975, pp. 120–21.
10. Wehle and Salinger 1947, pp. 13–16.
11. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 226; and Friedländer 1956, p. 15.
12. J. S. Held, review of *The Metropolitan Museum of Art: A Catalogue of Early Flemish, Dutch and German Paintings*, by H. B. Wehle and M. Salinger, *Art Bulletin* 31 (June 1949), pp. 140–42; Baldass 1952, pp. 24–25, 275; and Larsen 1960, pp. 36–38, 109.
13. For a discussion of the internal pictorial structure of this fragment, see Upton 1990, pp. 76–79.
14. Tolnay (1939, pp. 23–24) suggested the influence of the *Marriage of the Virgin* but not as a solution for the truncated design of the *Friedsam Annunciation*.
15. Christus could have seen the *Legend of Saint Joseph* or similar Tournai school paintings while traveling through Tournai on his way to Cambrai in the early 1450s, when he was commissioned to copy the Cambrai *Madonna* (1454). According to Sterling (1971, p. 5), the *Saint Joseph* panel is dated “not later than ca. 1440.”
16. Illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 6a, pls. 82, 86, no. 34.
17. The painting was restored in 1993 by Hubert von Sonnenburg, Sherman Fairchild Chairman, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art.
18. Gabriel’s densely painted draperies are mostly opaque to infrared reflectography; only a small amount of free brushwork may be discerned along the right edge of his robe. This looks very much like the underdrawing in the lower edge of the draperies of the *Magdalene* at the far left in the *Paris Lamentation* (fig. 37).
19. Ward 1968, p. 185.
20. See Appendix 2.
21. This would argue against the attribution of the painting to Hubert van Eyck by Otto Pächt (1989, p. 174) and Burkhard Richter (1974, pp. 377–79).
22. Panofsky 1938, p. 419. Panofsky’s assumption is generally valid, though there are exceptions, including other Bruges school paintings, such as Gerard David’s *Justice of Cambyses* of 1498 (Groeningemuseum, Bruges; illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 6b, pls. 224, 225).
23. As Panofsky noted (1938, p. 419), there are closer parallels to the porch Annunciation in Italian art. The prototypes of the Italian examples are found in Byzantine mosaics and painting.
24. Ward 1968, pp. 184–87.
25. Panofsky 1935, pp. 433–73; Ward 1968, pp. 184–87; and Russell 1978, pp. 24–27.
26. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 133.
27. Upton 1990, p. 78.
28. Ward 1968, p. 187.
29. Russell 1978, p. 27.
30. *Ibid.*
31. *Ibid.*, pp. 26, 27.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 27.

Virgin and Child in an Archway

About 1450–55

Oil on oak, 21 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 12 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (55.5 x 31.5 cm)

False date 1537 at base of column at right

Provenance: Count Johann Palffy collection; Szépművészeti Múzeum, Budapest, 1912 (4324)

The demand for devotional images of the Virgin Mary increased significantly in the Netherlands in the second half of the fifteenth century, partly because of the outcome of the 1438–45 meetings of the Council of Ferrara-Florence, which attempted to find common ground between the dissident views of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. Devotion to the Virgin Mary became that common ground. The resulting cult was particularly strong in Bruges, where various relics, such as the Virgin's hair, were kept and a number of confraternities were dedicated to her.¹ Sint Salvatorskerk

instituted special devotions to the Assumption and Seven Sorrows of the Virgin, and the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Dry Tree and the Minorites venerated her Immaculate Conception. A profusion of hymns, devotional literature, and theological treatises focused on various aspects of the Virgin and her role as the bearer of the Savior of mankind.

The Budapest panel is among the numerous small-scale paintings produced to satisfy the demand for private devotional images of the Virgin and Child. The specific doctrinal statement of this work is the Redemption made possible through the mir-



Fig. 134. Jan van Eyck, *Virgin at the Fountain*, 1439. Oil on oak, 9 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 7 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (24.8 x 18.1 cm) with original frame. Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp



Fig. 135. Rogier van der Weyden, *Virgin and Child in a Niche*. Oil on oak, 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (18.8 x 12.1 cm). Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna



acle of Christ's Incarnation. At the very heart of this doctrine is the concept of the virgin birth of the Redeemer, who overpowered sin and death. Mary became the new Eve, spiritual mother of mankind. Saint Paul refers to Christ as the second Adam, the Son of God in whom all will be reborn, pure and incorrupt.²

Visually illustrating this doctrine, Christus juxtaposed the Virgin and the Christ Child with prominently displayed reminders of the Fall of Man, the golden statuettes of Adam and Eve on the columns in the arch.³ The two sinners are depicted after the Fall, according to Saint Augustine's *City of God*, with Adam and Eve holding the forbidden fruit and covering their genitals in reference to their sin.⁴ The generally misogynistic tone of much patristic thought is the underlying source for the representation of Satan as a woman, here shown as a snake with a female head entwined around the tree next to Eve.⁵

The Virgin, acting as intercessor for mankind, literally supports the Savior and facilitates access to him. In order to emphasize the role of Christ as Redeemer, Christus organized his composition around the central motif of the orb, symbol of the *Salvator Mundi*. A reference to Christ as the "light of the world" (as in John 8:12) is inferred from the mystical light reflected in the orb and evident to the right of Christ's blessing hand in the column beneath Adam.⁶

The Budapest *Virgin and Child* is a conflation of Eyckian and Rogierian motifs that Christus transformed in his own manner.⁷ By borrowing the poses of the Virgin and Child from the Eyckian workshop Frick *Virgin and Child* (cat. no. 2) and modeling the Virgin's draperies after those in Jan van Eyck's *Virgin at the Fountain* of 1439 (fig. 134), Christus paid homage to two presumably well-known works in Bruges.⁸

Rogier van der Weyden's *Virgin and Child in a Niche* (fig. 135), which also may have been made in Bruges,⁹ was influential as well. Christus must have known the setting of this painting, as indicated not only by his inclusion of the statuettes of Adam and Eve (apparently unique to Rogier's representations at this time) but also by the preliminary design found in the underdrawing of the Budapest panel (fig. 136). Christus originally planned to follow Rogier's design more closely by including a rectangular, not an arched, framework with tracery and adding Gothic spires on niches for the figures of Adam and Eve.¹⁰ His final painted version relinquishes the more ornate Gothic model in favor of a stripped-down Renaissance purity of form, ostensibly in an attempt to update or modernize the previous representation.

Christus's innovative placement of the Virgin and Child in a plain-air setting before an extended landscape does not change the traditional meaning of the image; rather, it enhances the viewer's accessibility to it. Going beyond Rogier's *Virgin and Child in a Niche* or his *Altarpiece of the Virgin and Saint John*

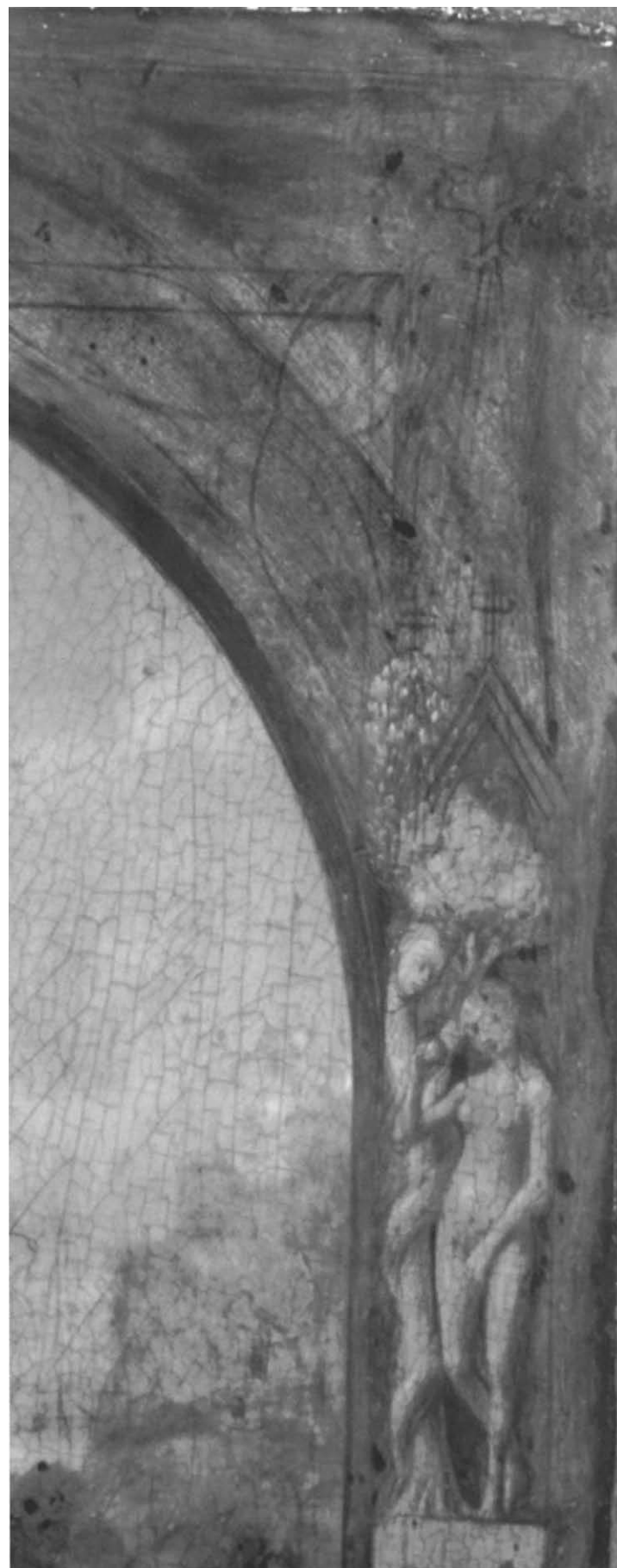


Fig. 136. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 11 (underdrawing of the arch)



Fig. 137. Gerard David, *Wrightsman Madonna*, ca. 1505. Oil on oak, 24 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 15 $\frac{5}{8}$ (62.2 x 39.1 cm). The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Altarpiece (both Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin),¹¹ Christus's Virgin stands behind (not under or at) the *porta coeli*, where she appears to the viewer as a heavenly vision in a realistic space. Although the representation of space may have been Christus's primary interest, the symbolic content of the landscape should not be discounted. The rocky cliffs at the right may symbolize Christ as "a rock from which flow the pure rivers of the gospel," and the river may represent the source of purification from sin through baptism.¹²

In the rendering of the landscape—a balanced view of boats on a lake or river and rocky crags—the Budapest painting is close to works of Christus's middle period, such as the Frankfurt *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* (cat. no. 13). The overall organization of the space, however, suggests that it

predates the Frankfurt example, in which the perspective system includes a single vanishing point at the horizon line for all the orthogonals. In the perspective scheme of the Budapest picture, not all the orthogonals of the floor tiles meet at the main focal point, the lower side of the orb (fig. 52).¹³ Those at the right side of the painting fall outside this plan,¹⁴ and the arch depends upon a separate empirical construction made using a compass to produce a half circle whose center point is at the Virgin's left eye.

Although the very damaged condition of the Budapest painting makes it difficult to see clearly the hallmarks of Christus's hand, it is possible to identify characteristic traits of the artist's middle period: incised lines and underdrawn ruled lines form the architectural features, broad brush lines create the general outlines of forms, and the details of internal modeling in the draperies are produced with extremely fine parallel lines and cross-hatching. In the execution in paint—the green and red marble columns, the figures of Adam and Eve, the marvelous light effects on the orb, and the pinkish underpainting in the flesh tones—Christus's technique and handling of illusionistic effects are at once apparent.

The facial type of the Budapest Virgin recalls those in the Exeter *Madonna* of about 1450 (cat. no. 7) and the Berlin *Annunciation* of 1452 (fig. 9), suggesting it dates to the early 1450s. Firmly bound to Eyckian and Rogierian types, the Budapest Virgin does not show the more stylized treatment seen in the later Madrid *Virgin and Child Enthroned on a Porch* (cat. no. 14), in which the Virgin is reduced to a more severe and solemn monumental form, perhaps in response to Christus's exposure to Italian Madonna and Child images. Although the suggested dating for the Budapest *Virgin and Child* has varied widely,¹⁵ it appears from the simultaneous blending of Eyckian and Rogierian motifs, as well as from the not yet fully perfected one-point perspective system, that a date of about 1450–55 is most appropriate. This dating concurs with the dendrochronological findings of Peter Klein, who estimates that the painting could have been made after about 1449.¹⁶

Christus's introduction of the Virgin and Child into a landscape setting furthered the evolution of this motif, begun in van Eyck's small-scale *Virgin at the Fountain* and continued in later and larger works by Bruges artists after Christus, such as Gerard David's *Wrightsman Madonna* of about 1505 (fig. 137) and the version attributed to the Master of the André Madonna of about 1500 (Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid).¹⁷ A comparison of the Budapest *Virgin and Child* with David's *Madonna* shows how Christus's more generalized representation was altered to suit the particular requirements of the patron, perhaps the Carthusian monk or monastery shown in the background of David's painting. The nonspecific nature of Christus's rendition, pared down to the essential iconographic

details, supports the notion that it was a work intended for sale on the open market.

Two exact but inferior copies of the Budapest *Virgin and Child* (Rijksdienst voor Beeldende Kunst, The Hague; and formerly Stroganoff collection, Saint Petersburg) attest to the popularity of the image during its own time and thereafter.¹⁸ Christus's painting or copies of it must have remained in Bruges, where David and the Master of the André Madonna knew it and adapted it, continuing the evolution of a Virgin and Child type that is a hallmark of the Bruges school.

1. J. A. F. Kronenburg, *Maria's heerlijkheid in Nederland*, 9 vols. (Amsterdam, [1904–31]), vol. 2, pp. 328, 330; and S. Beissel, *Geschichte der Verehrung Marias in Deutschland während des Mittelalters* (Freiburg, 1909), chap. 17, pp. 292–304.
2. In 1 Corinthians 15:22, 2 Corinthians 5:17, and Romans 5:14. See also M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* (New York, 1976), p. 59.
3. The representations of Adam and Eve standing on the jasper and porphyry columns of Solomon's temple and on bases of gold as described in the Song of Songs offer Old Testament typological parallels for their New Testament counterparts. For the multifarious associations of the motifs in this painting that have iconographic parallels in medieval art, see Urbach 1974, pp. 341–53.
4. Saint Augustine, *Concerning the City of God Against the Pagans*, trans. H. Bettenson (Harmondsworth, England, 1972), bk. 13, chap. 13.
5. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex*, p. 58.
6. For further discussion of this light with reference to the Salvator Mundi, see C. Gottlieb, "The Mystical Window in Paintings of the Salvator Mundi," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6th series, 56 (December 1960), pp. 313–32, esp. 315.
7. Panhans-Bühler 1978, pp. 75–90.
8. Van Eyck's *Virgin at the Fountain* was listed in Margaret of Austria's 1516 inventory of her possessions in Malines (see Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 44). The conflation of these two van Eycks in Christus's painting was noted in Gellman 1970b, pp. 258–64, 461–63; Upton 1972, pp. 297–301; Schabacker 1974, pp. 117–19; and Urbach 1974, pp. 341–53.
9. Schabacker 1974, p. 58.
10. We do not know the provenance of Rogier's painting before 1772, when it was mentioned in the Austrian imperial collection. K. M. Birkmeyer ("Notes on the Two Earliest Paintings by Rogier van der Weyden," *Art Bulletin* 44 [December 1962], p. 331) suggested it came from the Chartreuse of Champmol. F. Winkler (*Der Meister von Flémalle und Rogier van der Weyden, Zur Kunstgeschichte des Auslandes* 103 [Strasbourg, 1913], p. 126) linked it with the painting described by Marcantonio Michiel in 1530 as being in the Gabriel Vendramin collection in Venice. Panofsky (1953, vol. 1, p. 251 n. 2) rejected this association.
11. See Birkmeyer 1961, pp. 1–20, 99–112.
12. G. Ferguson, *Signs and Symbols in Christian Art* (New York, 1954), p. 58.
13. Collier (1975, p. 126) noted as well that Christus did not understand transversal diminution when he made this painting. Myers (1978, pp. 160–61) reiterated a relatively late dating for the Budapest painting based on the arch motif, which he believed to be similar to that in Christus's Washington *Nativity*, and on the sfumato treatment. The arch motif of the Budapest painting, however, is much simpler than that of the Washington picture, and the sfumato effect is more likely due to the poor state of the painting.
14. Although it is intriguing to consider that a donor might have been painted at the right, requiring the adjustment of the orthogonals on that side, there are no clues to support this notion. Furthermore, neither copies of this painting nor related works by other artists appear to have been in diptych form.
15. About 1445: Friedländer (1967–76, vol. 1, p. 95) and Schabacker (1974, p. 117). About 1450–60: Urbach (1974, p. 341). About 1452: Collier (1975, p. 194). After 1460: Upton (1972, pp. 297–301) and Myers (1978, p. 160). About 1500: Richter (1974, pp. 337–41, as a copy after Christus).
16. See Appendix 2.
17. Eisler 1989, pp. 146–51. Other paintings closer to the style of Dieric Bouts also reflect the general interest in images of the Virgin and Child in a landscape. See, for example, the Follower of Dieric Bouts *Virgin and Child* in the Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, discussed in Eisler 1989, pp. 98–101.
18. For these versions, see Hermann Kühn, report, August 1966, Doerner Institute files, Munich; and J. R. J. van Asperen de Boer and B. Breninkemeyer-de Rooij, report, April 22, 1976, curatorial files, Szépművészeti Múzeum. Although the copy in The Hague has been called a fake (Rijksdienst voor Beeldende Kunst, *Old Master Paintings: An Illustrated Summary Catalogue* [Zwolle and The Hague, (1992)], p. 67, no. 431), there is no supporting evidence from the pigment analysis. It is probably a weak though contemporary copy.

Portrait of a Male Donor

Portrait of a Female Donor

About 1450

Oil on oak, male: 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (42 x 21.2 cm);

female: 16 $\frac{1}{6}$ x 8 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (41.8 x 21.6 cm)

Provenance: private collection, Genoa?; Count Alessandro

Contini-Bonacossi, Florence (by 1937); Samuel H. Kress, New York

(1937–61); National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Samuel H. Kress

Collection (1961.9.10–11)

Like Jan van Eyck before him, Christus achieved a certain popularity with Italian patrons.¹ This is evident from the mention of his paintings in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian collections, from the Italian copies made after them, and from the large number of his panels that have an Italian provenance.² The works of the 1450s and 1460s in particular exhibit Christus's attempt to accommodate foreign patrons by incorporating Italian motifs or modes of presentation.³

The source of these commissions was probably local, for commercial contacts with Italian city-states had attracted a large number of foreign residents to Bruges, especially Genoese, Lucchese, and Venetians,⁴ among them the couple who apparently requested an altarpiece in which they were represented on the wings. Although the proposed early provenance of these Washington paintings in a Genoese collection cannot be verified,⁵ the couple must have come from two prominent Genoese families living in Bruges.⁶ The coat of arms above the female donor is that of the Vivaldi family; the woodcut of Saint Elizabeth tacked to the wall perhaps denotes the woman's first name and patron saint. Behind the male donor is probably the coat of arms of the Lomellini family.

The two wings, which now complement each other in rich, deep harmonies of red and brown, originally were enlivened by the man's purple velvet robe, the green cloth beneath the woman, and the multitoned marble insets in the arcade wall, all of which have significantly darkened. Yet, compatible as these wings may be in color, they are discordant in their rendering of space. As Charles Sterling pointed out, except for the floor tiling, the architectural structures are different, with a deeper spatial recession in the left wing and a more extensive landscape view in the right.⁷ This raises the question of how the central panel might have accommodated these disparate spatial representations.

The donor and his wife—he has his pattens and chaperon removed and she is at a prie-dieu with an open prayer book—kneel before the object of their veneration, presumably a Virgin and Child in an interior. Whether or not the central panel was

the *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* (cat. no. 13), as Barbara Lane proposed, is a matter of much dispute.⁸ Citing the similarity in size of the Frankfurt and Washington panels and the identical floor tiles, Lane also observed that they share a unified light source (from the left), a single-point perspective (if certain accommodations are made for the cutoff left section of the Frankfurt panel), and a continuous space extending from the architecture through the landscape. She also noted that both the donors and the *sacra conversazione* format of the Frankfurt *Madonna* are Italian.

While some scholars supported Lane's proposed reconstruction, others voiced objections.⁹ Peter Schabacker correctly pointed out that Lane's illustration of the reconstruction is misleading because it erroneously shows the wings and the central panel as the same height. He discounted the common elements of lighting and floor tiles, citing other post-1446 paintings by Christus that include the same features. He also rejected the notion that Christus deliberately would have planned a triptych in which the donors appear larger than the more important object of their devotion, the landscape views in the wings are of varying distances from their architectural settings, and the stylistic features and scale of the architecture in the wings and central panel are so different.¹⁰ Martha Wolff seconded these objections, observing that the space in the wings seems more compatible with a shallower interior in the central panel, as indicated by the orthogonals projected from the elements in the wings toward their central focal point. Both Wolff and Jochen Sander found the isolation of the donors on the wings, separated from the saints who might present them to the Virgin, an unusual arrangement.¹¹

Is there any evidence in the preliminary design of these panels that would link the wings to the Frankfurt picture? Because all three panels were cut down—the Frankfurt one at the left, and the Washington wings on all sides to some degree—it is difficult to determine their correct placement in relation to one another. The Frankfurt *Madonna* has often been identified as the earliest known example of one-point perspective in the







Fig. 138. X-radiograph, detail of cat. no. 12 (lower left)



Fig. 139. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 12 (lower left)

North. Indeed, technical examination of the painting shows that Christus carefully planned the composition by establishing a central focal point around which he organized the figures and the space.¹² X-radiographs and infrared reflectogram assemblies of the Washington wings, on the other hand, show that far less care was taken when devising their perspective system. There are few visible ruled lines in the floor tiles for the orthogonals, which in any event are not coordinated between the two panels to achieve a unified scheme. Furthermore, the prie-dieu was added over part of the woman's dress and the completed tile floor (figs. 138, 139), probably to hide the place where the back wall meets the floor, because there is no continuity with the architectural features in her husband's space. These wings must have been commissioned to go with another, missing central panel, perhaps one like the Madrid *Virgin and Child*, which unites interior and exterior spaces, shows extended landscape views, and exhibits certain inconsistencies in the description of the architecture.

The underdrawing is very difficult to see in these panels—none of it is visible in the face of either donor, and only sum-

mary broad brush strokes are found in the contours of the male donor and his sleeves. The extremely fine parallel hatching to the lower right in the robe and in the shadow at the right on the floor recalls the underdrawing to Mary's right in the *Virgin and Child in an Archway*.

Although it is highly unlikely that these donors formed an altarpiece with the Frankfurt *Madonna*, there has never been any significant challenge to the attribution of the wings to Christus.¹³ The Washington and Frankfurt paintings do contain similar doll-like figures, and the shape of their heads and hands are common types. The integration of interior and exterior views and the color harmonies used to weave the composition together are also comparable. The projection of space in the wings, however, is less perfectly constructed than it is in the Frankfurt painting of 1457,¹⁴ suggesting an earlier date. With regard to the rendering of space, the Washington donor panels are more closely related to Christus's paintings of the early 1450s, such as the *Virgin and Child in an Archway* and the *Annunciation* wing in Berlin.¹⁵

1. Weiss 1956, pp. 1–15; and Weiss 1957, pp. 7–21.
2. See Appendix 1, docs. 28–29. See also Bazin 1952, pp. 194–208; Campbell 1981b, p. 468; and Ainsworth, “Art of Petrus Christus,” this volume.
3. See, for example, *Virgin and Child Enthroned on a Porch*, *Death of the Virgin*, *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis*, and *Portrait of a Man*.
4. Martens, “Bruges During Petrus Christus’s Lifetime,” this volume; and J. Heers, *Gênes au XV^e siècle: Activité économique et problèmes sociaux* (Paris, 1961).
5. Hand and Wolff 1986, p. 49 n. 1.
6. Schabacker 1974, p. 114; and Hand and Wolff 1986, p. 49 nn. 4, 5.
7. C. Sterling, “A la recherche des oeuvres de Zanetto Bugatto: Une Nouvelle Piste,” *Scritti di storia dell’arte in onore di Federico Zeri*, 2 vols. (Milan, 1984), vol. 1, p. 163 n. 5.
8. Lane (1970, pp. 390–93), who credits Levenson (1965, pp. 43–45) with the same conclusion. Gellman (1970b, pp. 237–44, 449) independently discussed the same reconstruction, which she noted was first tentatively proposed by Charles Sterling, lecture, fall 1962, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University.
9. Supported by Gellman (1975–76, p. 33); Eisler (1977a, pp. 52–53); Eisler (1977b, p. 141); Panhans-Bühler (1978, pp. 118–23); and Sterling (“Recherche des oeuvres,” p. 163 n. 5). Refuted by Schabacker (1971, pp. 281–82; 1974, pp. 112–13); Paolini (1980, p. 164 n. 76); Hand and Wolff (1986, pp. 52–53); and Sander (1993, p. 171).
10. Schabacker 1971, p. 282; and Schabacker 1974, p. 112. For an illustration of the correct proportional relationship of the wings to the Frankfurt panel, see Hand and Wolff 1986, p. 53, fig. 2.
11. Hand and Wolff 1986, p. 52; and Sander 1993, p. 171.
12. See discussion in cat. no. 13.
13. Only Richter (1974, pp. 349–52) thought the wings were close in style to Christus’s paintings but not by him.
14. Collier 1979, pp. 36–37.
15. The only departures from a dating to the 1450s were by Upton (1977, p. 52), who placed the panels about 1445, an opinion he changed from his dissertation (1972, pp. 401–5), and Burroughs (1938, p. 250), who dated them about 1460, on the basis of costume. Wolff (Hand and Wolff 1986, p. 53) noted that “the lady’s rather loose sleeves and the bulky fabric of her bodice pleated into the waistband reflect an earlier fashion than the constricted silhouette of the later 1450s,” which would support the dating suggested here. Peter Klein has determined that the Washington wings and the Frankfurt *Madonna* were made of panels cut from the same tree (see Appendix 2).

Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis

1457

Oil on oak, 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 17 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (46.7 x 44.6 cm)

Inscribed: ✠ PETRVS • XPI • ME • FECIT • 14[5]7 •

Provenance: Karl and Eliza Aders, London (before 1830); Johann David Passavant, Frankfurt (before August 1834); gift to the Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt am Main, 1846 (920)

In many ways, this small private devotional panel epitomizes Christus's art. Signed and dated, it is the only autograph painting by Christus that demonstrates his mastery of one-point perspective, his profound debt to the art of Jan van Eyck, and his successful integration of Italian pictorial elements that were presumably meant to accommodate his foreign patrons.

The Frankfurt *Madonna* was one of the four works that formed Christus's oeuvre when it was first established by Gustav Waagen and Johann David Passavant.¹ Along with *Saint Eligius*, *Portrait of a Lady*, and the Berlin wings, it provided the basis for all subsequent attributions to the artist. Initially, however, Passavant gave the painting to van Eyck after studying it in the Aders collection in 1833.² He misread the inscription as "PETRVS PERVS ME FECIT 1517" and, considering it false, recognized certain Eyckian traits instead. Shortly thereafter, he acquired the painting himself, cleaned it, and decided that the inscription was

genuine and that the artist was a pupil of van Eyck's.³

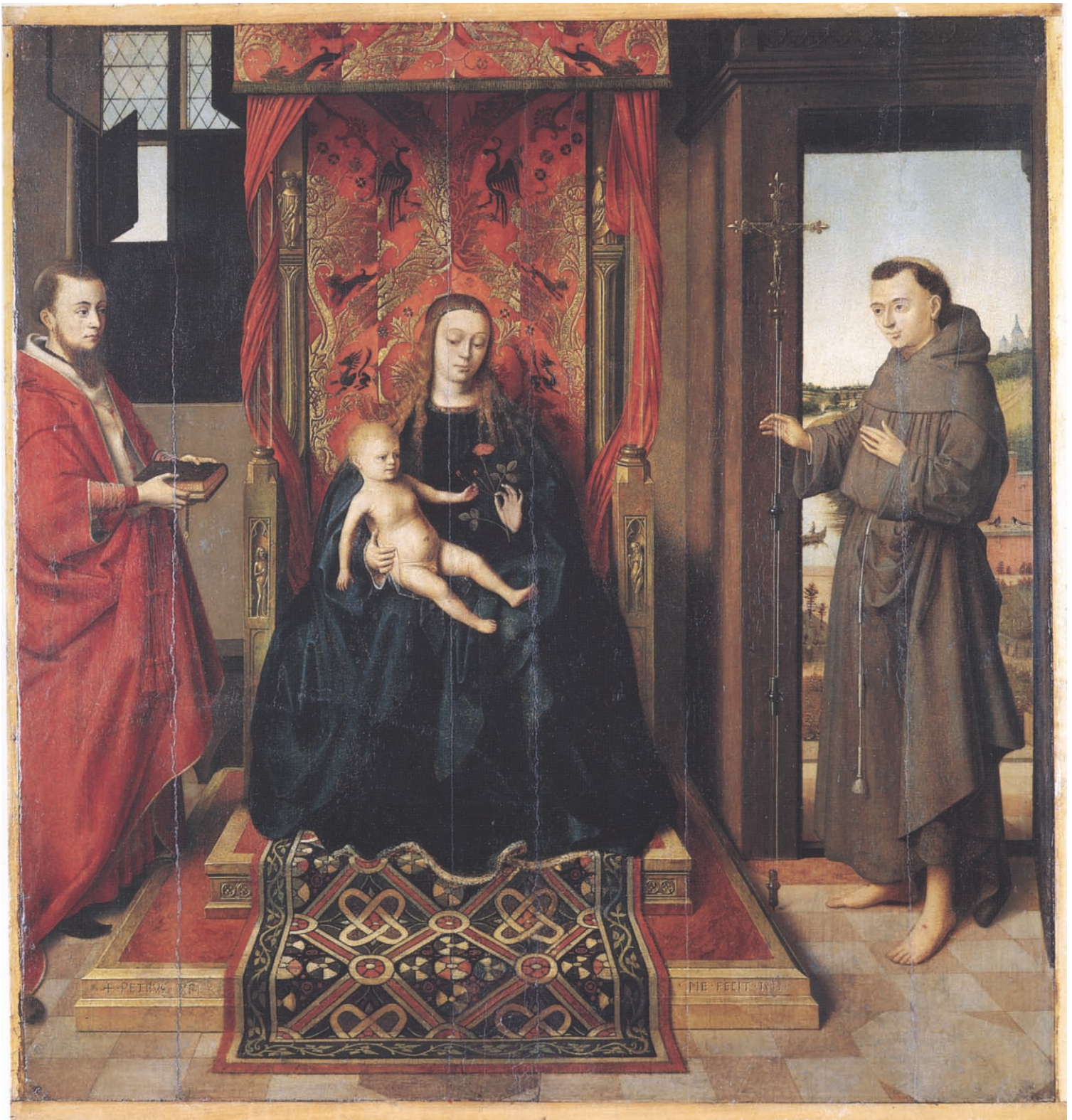
Although the correct attribution had been given, the date was still controversial, owing to the damaged third digit.⁴ Various interpretations as 1417, 1427, 1447, and 1457, it was finally reasonably established that the last reading is correct.⁵ Among the considerations affecting this determination was the rediscovery of the precise perspective of the painting. The controversy generated in 1904 by Joseph Kern and Karl Doehlemann over the question of perspective in Northern painting eventually culminated in the identification of the Frankfurt *Madonna* as the earliest dated one-point-perspective design in Netherlandish art.⁶ James Collier demonstrated the evolution from the 1452 Berlin *Annunciation* wing, wherein the perspectival accuracy is restricted to one plane, to the Frankfurt panel, where a focal-point perspective is evident on all planes.⁷ This progression helped confirm the accuracy of the 1457 reading of the date.



Fig. 140. Jan van Eyck, *Lucca Madonna*, ca. 1436. Oil on oak, 25 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 19 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (65.7 x 49.6 cm). Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt am Main



Fig. 141. Jan van Eyck, *Madonna with Canon George van der Paele*, ca. 1434–36. Oil on oak, 55 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 69 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (140.8 x 176.5 cm) with original frame. Groeningemuseum, Bruges



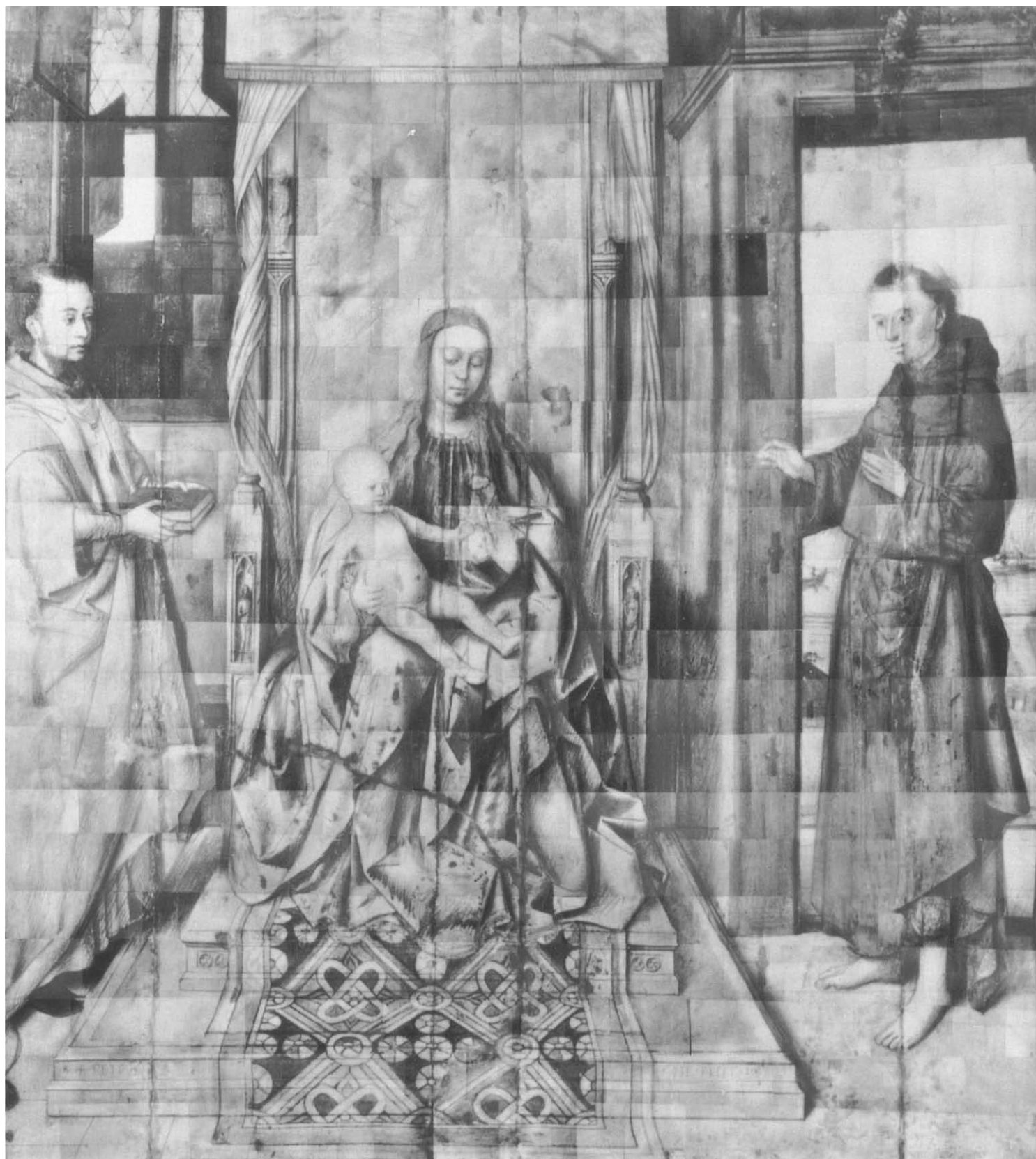


Fig. 142. IRR assembly, detail of cat. no. 13

Collier and Marshall Myers saw this development of perspective as an indication of Christus's contact with Italian art and a possible sojourn in Italy sometime between 1452 and 1457.⁸ Martens, on the other hand, noted that during this time Christus was fulfilling commissions (among them, the 1454 copies of the Cambrai *Madonna*) and advancing into social prominence in his own city and is less likely to have traveled very far south.⁹ In addition, the gradual manner by which Christus learned the principles of perspective suggests that his understanding was not acquired all at once during a visit to Italy. He probably assimilated the techniques bit by bit through exposure to Italian paintings brought north by foreign patrons or through directions given by these patrons.¹⁰

The most identifiable Italian feature of the Frankfurt *Madonna*, its *sacra conversazione* format, was first noted by Willy Burger.¹¹ In an attempt to establish the two National Gallery portraits of Genoese donors (cat. no. 12) as the wings to the Frankfurt *Madonna*, Barbara Lane pointed out that Christus's adherence to this format would justify the placement of the saints in the central panel rather than presenting the donors on the wings, as was usually the practice.¹² Other Italian elements include the introduction of Saints Jerome and Francis (particularly when the latter is wearing a Southern-type brown habit), who are more commonly seen in Italian representations,¹³ and the pattern of the brocade cloth of honor behind the Virgin.¹⁴

If Christus attempted to accommodate foreign patrons by adopting the *sacra conversazione* presentation and adding certain Italian motifs, he combined these with other features that are clearly Northern. His point of departure was the compositional scheme so impressively executed by his predecessor Jan van Eyck in such paintings as the *Lucca Madonna*, the *Madonna with Canon George van der Paele* (figs. 140, 141),¹⁵ and the *Dresden Triptych* (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Dresden). Van Eyck's paintings also taught Christus certain techniques of rendering various textures: metal objects (such as the cross held by Saint Francis and the gold edging of the throne steps), the shimmering gold in brocades, and the convincing depiction of the thick pile of Asian carpets.¹⁶

Christus's painting, however, differs from Jan's examples in the rendering of space. Joel Upton, discussing the varied approaches of the two artists, referred to van Eyck's spatial representation in the *Lucca Madonna* as an empirical creation unified only by light, symmetry, and a certain hierarchical order. He explained that Christus translated van Eyck's pictorial world into a direct experience of nature by giving the Frankfurt Virgin a precise location in a rationally described, perspectively correct space, thus enhancing the viewer's comprehension of and participation in the picture as an extension of the real world.¹⁷

Technical examination of the Frankfurt painting using infra-

red reflectography and X-radiography provides clues to how Christus achieved his representation of space.¹⁸ The underdrawing is extremely complete; figures, setting, and landscape were all planned (figs. 142, 143, 145). The forms carried out only in paint are the staff with a cross held by Saint Francis, the inscription on the throne step, and the brocade cloth behind the Virgin. The few deviations between this design and the painted layers include minor alterations in the contours or extent of forms (Saint Francis's head was painted smaller than it was drawn, and the carpet on the throne was extended from the top step to the lower step). As it is in the earlier Berlin wings of 1452, the underdrawing is predominately planar in effect, though groupings of parallel hatchings and cross-hatchings create tonal differentiation (fig. 144) and there are slightly curved strokes here and there in the draperies that are indicative of Christus's stylistic developments of the 1460s.

Christus initially made a point at the intersection of the horizontal and vertical axes of the painting near where the horizon would be located. He then drew the figures and the throne of the Madonna and continued to create the space around them by fixing the orthogonals with underdrawn ruled brush lines and incised lines for the floor tiles. This was all painstakingly planned at the underdrawing stage, which eliminated the necessity of reworking certain architectural features in the paint layers to achieve an optically correct space, as van Eyck routinely did.

It is hard to say just when and why Christus's Frankfurt *Madonna* was cut down at the left side. This alteration, as well

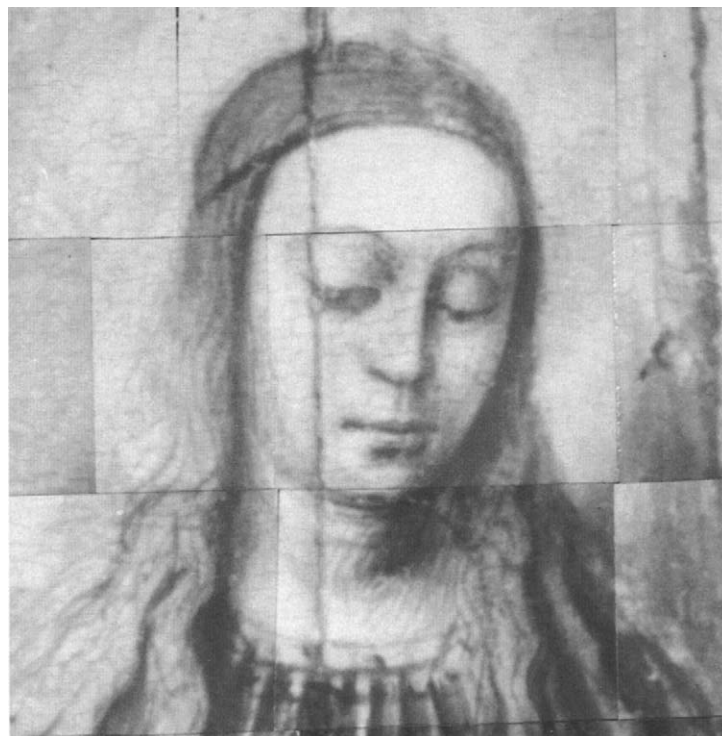


Fig. 143. IRR assembly, detail of cat. no. 13 (underdrawing of the Virgin's head)

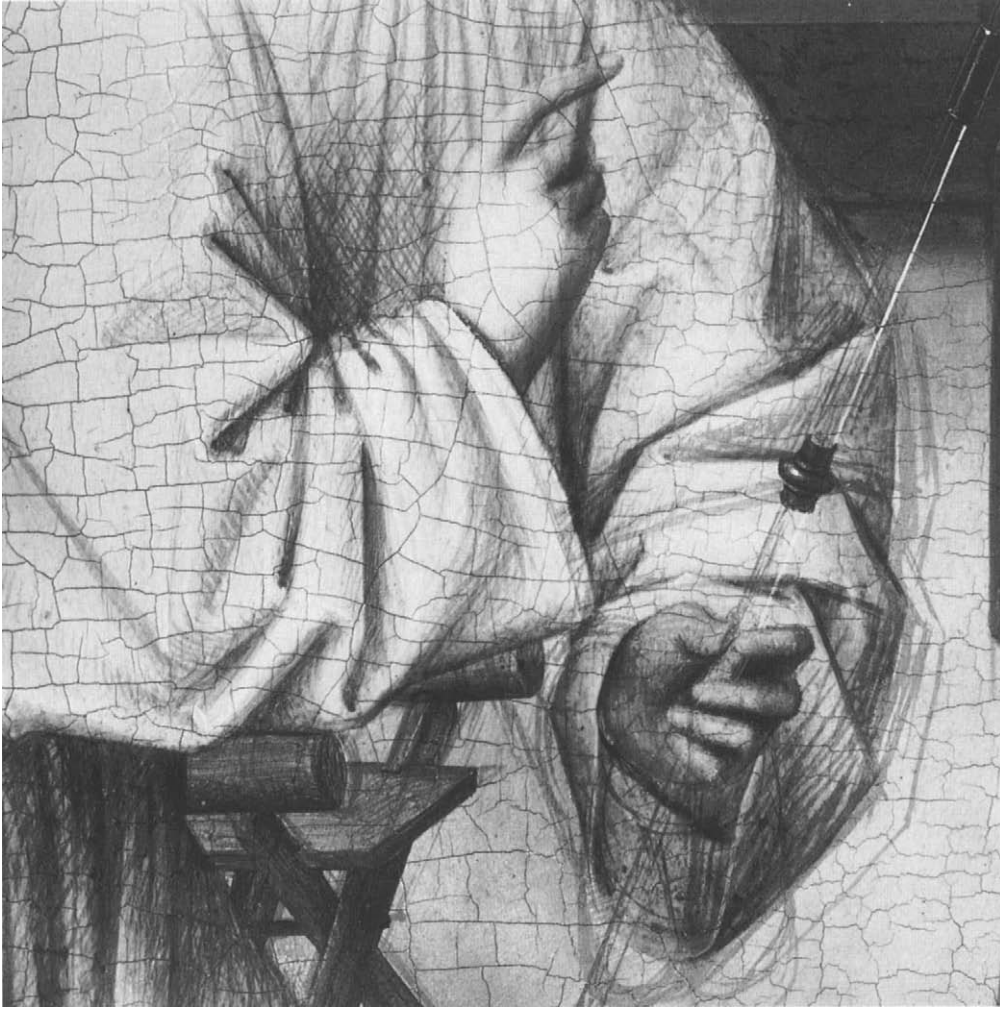


Fig. 144. IRR computer assembly,
detail of fig. 9 (underdrawing of Gabriel)

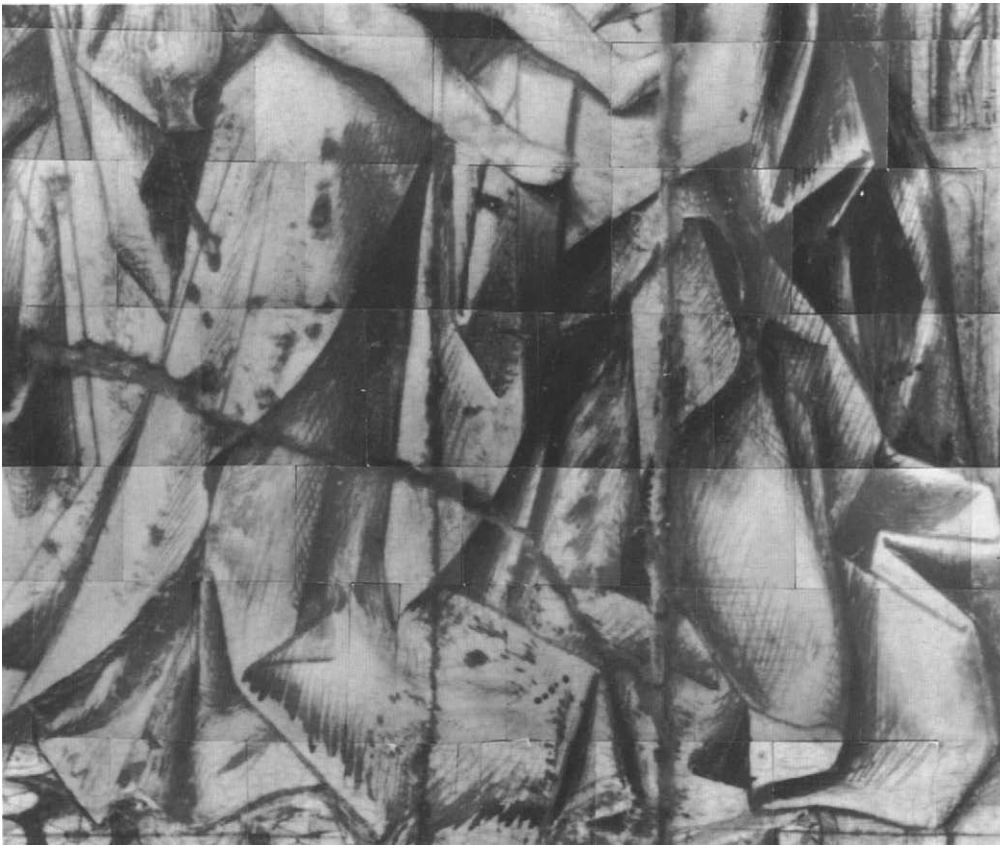


Fig. 145. IRR assembly, detail of cat. no. 13
(underdrawing of the Virgin's drapery)

as the abraded state of the painting, marks what is otherwise a remarkable achievement and development in the description of space in early Netherlandish painting.

1. Waagen 1824, p. 448; Passavant 1833, p. 92; and Passavant 1842, pp. 212–13.
2. Passavant 1833, p. 92.
3. J. D. Passavant, "Beiträge zur Kenntnis der altniederländischen Malerschulen des 15ten und 16ten Jahrhunderts," *Kunstblatt*, January 12, 1841, pp. 15–16.
4. For the history of the controversy over the reading of the date, see Sander 1993, pp. 158–59.
5. Wauters (1855–56, p. 249 n. 1) was the first to argue for the 1457 reading.
6. Kern 1904, p. 17; Kern 1905, pp. 60–61; Doehleemann 1911, p. 503; and Sander 1993, pp. 163–70.
7. Collier 1975, pp. 66–67.
8. *Ibid.*, pp. 126–34, esp. 133–34; and Myers 1978, pp. 115–64.
9. Martens, "Petrus Christus: A Cultural Biography," this volume.
10. Even though we do not know who commissioned the Frankfurt *Madonna*, an old copy found in Turin in the early twentieth century supports the notion that Christus's work was in Italy (C. de Mandach, "Un Atelier provençal du XVI^e siècle," *Monuments et mémoires* [Fondation Eugène Piot] 16 [1909], p. 197).
11. Burger 1925, pp. 34–35. See also Fierens-Gevaert 1927–29, vol. 2, p. 91; M. Whinney, *Early Flemish Painting* (New York and Washington, D.C., 1968), p. 69; R. Koch, review of *Northern Painting from Pucelle to Bruegel: Fourteenth, Fifteenth, and Sixteenth Centuries*, by C. D. Cuttler, and *Early Flemish Painting*, by M. Whinney, *Art Bulletin* 52 (June 1970), p. 202; Lane 1970, pp. 392–93; and Schabacker 1974, p. 112. The *sacra conversazione* form is unusual in the North but not unknown; see, for example, Follower of Robert Campin, *Madonna and Child with Saints in the Enclosed Garden* (National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.), and Rogier van der Weyden, *Medici Madonna* (Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt am Main), illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, pl. 142, no. add. 152, pl. 42.
12. Lane 1970, p. 392.
13. Schabacker 1974, p. 112.
14. O. von Falke, *Kunstgeschichte der Seidenweberei*, 2 vols. (Berlin, 1913), vol. 2, pp. 108, 110; and L. Trench, "Italian Silks in Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Painting," in *New Perspectives: Studies in Art History in Honour of Anne Crookshank*, ed. J. Fenlon, N. Figgis, and C. Marshall (Dublin, 1987), pp. 68–69.
15. The association between the Frankfurt *Madonna* and these van Eycks is discussed in Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 311; Bruyn 1957, p. 105; Cuttler 1968, p. 132; Lane 1970, p. 393; Sterling 1971, p. 11 n. 46; Upton 1972, pp. 88–91; Schabacker 1974, p. 111; Panhans-Bühler 1978, pp. 119–23; Lane 1984, p. 23; and Upton 1990, pp. 40–43. The *Dresden Triptych* is illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pl. 54.
16. The Frankfurt carpet is similar to, but not exactly like, the one in the *Lucca Madonna*. On this type of carpet, see K. Erdmann, "Orientalische Tierteppeiche auf Bildern des XIV. und XV. Jahrhunderts: Eine Studie zu den Anfängen des orientalischen Knüpfteppichs," *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 50 (1929), p. 295.
17. Upton 1990, pp. 41–43.
18. Examined by Ronda Kasl, former art-historian intern, and the author, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, March 1989. The Städel's examination is discussed in Sander 1993, pp. 164–67.

Virgin and Child Enthroned on a Porch

About 1460–65

Oil on oak, 19 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (49 x 34 cm)

Provenance: convent of del Risco, Piedrahita, Avila (1836); Museo de la Trinidad; Museo del Prado, Madrid (1921)

The *Virgin and Child Enthroned on a Porch* shares a certain kinship with the earlier Budapest *Virgin and Child in an Archway* (cat. no. 11) in its statement of theological doctrine, though it shows subtle formal differences that suggest a later stage in Christ's career. Just as the Budapest painting gives equal prominence to the Virgin and to Christ as the new Eve and the new Adam, so too the Prado picture balances the aspect of the Christ Child as *Salvator Mundi* with the Virgin as Queen of Heaven. The Child is presented naked, in reference to his humanity, but holds the orb and blesses with his right hand as a true sign of his divinity. The Virgin's lofty status is signaled by her imminent crowning by the angel and her placement on the Throne of Wisdom (*sedes sapientiae*).

Like the Cambrai *Madonna*, which Christus copied three times in 1454, this image originated from Italo-Byzantine representations. The motif of the Virgin Mary holding the standing Christ Child and facing the viewer may be seen in countless early Christian and medieval sculptures as well.¹ Christus probably had in mind more-contemporary examples, such as the Virgin and Child from Jan van Eyck's *Virgin of Chancellor Rolin* (fig. 115). Also derived from the Eyckian prototype are the Christ Child facing outward holding the orb and blessing, the

Virgin receiving her crown from an angel, and the extensive river landscape beyond a crenellated wall.

Peter Schabacker suggested that a Rogier van der Weyden painting of the Virgin and standing Child in an open porch, which is known only in copies by followers, may have served as Christ's model instead.² The proximity of this Rogierian composition to Flémallesque designs could indicate a now-lost work that merged Rogierian and Flémallesque workshop patterns.³ In any event, the general type of the Madrid *Virgin and Child* continued to be produced, becoming even more popular toward the end of the century in Bruges through a profusion of examples attributable to Hans Memling and his workshop.

Although the Budapest and Madrid paintings share certain features—the blue dress and green-lined red robe of the Virgin, the naked Christ Child carrying the crystal orb, the porphyry and jasper columns, the tapestry covering the bench, the marble inset panels backing the Virgin's throne—they are subtly, but markedly, different in presentation. The Madrid painting is distinguished by its considerable reduction to the essential forms, its solemnity, and above all its monumentality, despite its rather diminutive size.

Instead of appearing to float in space like the Budapest Virgin

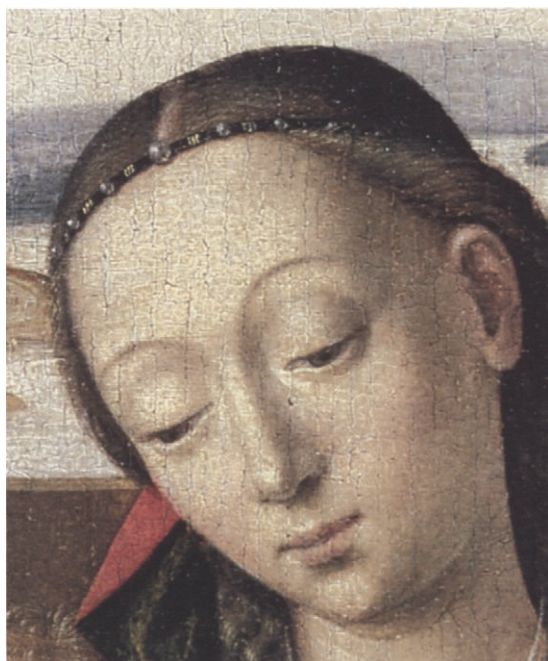


Fig. 146. (left) Detail of cat. no. 14 (Virgin's head)

Fig. 147. (right) X-radiograph, detail of cat. no. 14 (Virgin's head)





Fig. 148. Dieric Bouts, *Virgin and Child with Angels on a Porch*, ca. 1468. Oil on oak, 20% x 13¼ in. (53.8 x 39 cm). Museo de la Capilla Real, Granada

and Child (partly a fault of the imperfectly constructed perspective of the design), the Madrid figures are more firmly anchored in their porch setting. Christus achieved this successful integration of figure and space through a newly mastered and rigorously applied perspectival scheme. He began by inserting a point into the ground preparation at the desired intersection of the vertical and horizontal axes near the proposed horizon line. Visible in close-up photographs of the painting as well as in an X-radiograph (figs. 146, 147), this punch mark at the center of the Virgin's head, just below her left eye, served as the focal point at which all of the orthogonals, mostly in the floor tiles, converge. Some of these orthogonals, such as those of the steps and tile floor, were incised into the ground preparation. Christus organized the figural group around this point, fully working up the modeling of the draperies and details of the architecture.

Based on the perspective scheme, James Collier dated the work to the late 1450s, and Marshall Myers, who suggested a date in the 1460s, believed the painting was perhaps the first unequivocal example of a totally consistent Northern perspec-

tival construction, wherein every orthogonal is impeccably focused on a single point.⁴ Neither scholar noted that the arch above the Virgin falls out of this precise system, its central compass point established within the crown held by the angel (fig. 54).

Since 1906, when Karl Voll attributed the Madrid painting to Christus, there has been no significant dissent about its authorship.⁵ Still unresolved, however, is the question of its date, which has varied from the 1450s, to after 1457, to the last years of the artist's life.⁶ Schabacker supported a date after 1457, noting the general popularity of this type of image among Christus's contemporaries in the 1460s.⁷ This dating corresponds to that generally assigned to Dieric Bouts's *Virgin and Child with Angels on a Porch* (fig. 148), which appears to have been modeled after Christus's composition. Because Bouts improved upon Christus's design, particularly by inserting a more convincingly rendered building to the right while maintaining a one-point perspective system for the lower half of

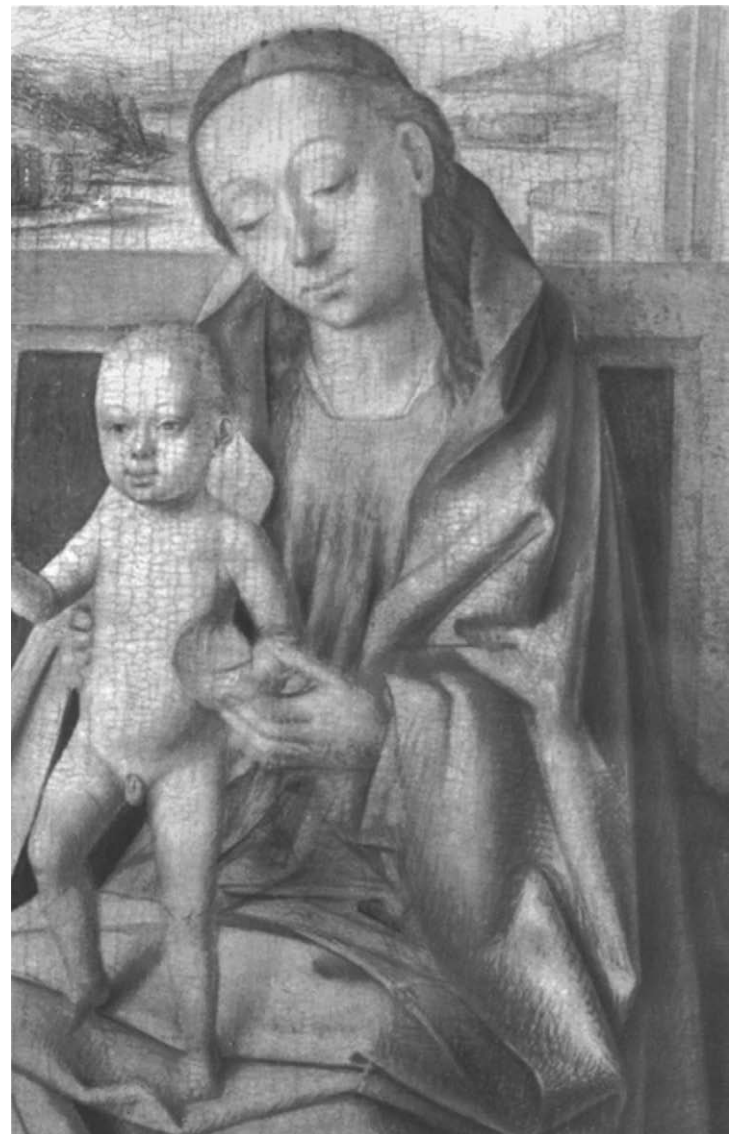


Fig. 149. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 14 (underdrawing of the Virgin and Child)



Fig. 150. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 14 (underdrawing of the angel)

the composition, his painting would seem to postdate the Madrid picture.⁸

Other details of Christus's working method in this painting support a date in the mid-1460s. One of the closest parallels to the Madrid picture is Christus's *Death of the Virgin* (cat. no. 15). In both, the perspective system depends upon a vanishing point for the orthogonals that is near, but not exactly at, the horizon line and upon a separate system for the arches. The underdrawing, showing a rough outline sketch in broad brush strokes and fully worked-up, three-dimensional, sculptural modeling with parallel hatching and diagonal cross-hatching, is typical of these as well as of other late works by the master (compare figs. 57 and 149). In these paintings there are seldom significant changes in design at the preliminary stage. Only the position of the wings of the angel in the Madrid panel was altered, from fully extended to more angled (fig. 150), presumably to accommodate the curve of the arch.

What sets these two paintings apart from Christus's earlier representations is a new, more solid integration of figures within the setting. Although produced on a significantly different scale, the pictures share a similar construction of space—that is, a blend of exterior and interior views with an exterior arched porch to the right and steps leading to an arched interior room. The increasingly sophisticated spatial rendering accounts in part for the shift toward a monumental conception, which is complemented by a certain abstraction in form. Figures appear to be composed of geometrically inspired shapes, and facial features are further stylized in a markedly patternlike fashion. The nature of these paintings could well have been dictated by the

taste of the artist's clients. Although we have no definitive proof that either work was commissioned by foreigners in Bruges for export to Italy or Spain, both paintings ended up in Southern collections (the *Death of the Virgin* quite early), which seems to support this notion.⁹

Christus abandoned this rather monumental style in his latest works, when he became more accomplished at placing figures within a perspectively correct space. In this regard, the geometricized nature of the Madrid painting shows this progression toward the increasingly successful compositions of Christus's last years, the *Washington Nativity* and the *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (cat. nos. 17, 20).

The *Death of the Virgin* and the Madrid *Virgin and Child* were created when Christus apparently had a workshop. The Madrid painting was copied at least once, by a close follower who slavishly reproduced it detail for detail in form and size but not in handling, particularly with regard to the finishing touches.¹⁰

1. D. C. Shorr, *The Christ Child in Devotional Images in Italy during the Fourteenth Century* (New York, 1954), pp. 26–29.
2. Schabacker 1974, pp. 121–22. One of these copies is a drawing (Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden), and the other is a painting in Brussels (Ministry of National Education and Culture) in which the Virgin is crowned by two angels. Both are illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, pl. 125, nos. 121b, 121e, and the drawing is discussed in Sonkes 1969, pp. 106–9, no. C10.
3. Suggested in Sonkes 1969, pp. 106–9, no. C10.
4. Collier 1975, pp. 135–36; and Myers 1978, pp. 161–62.
5. Voll 1906, p. 308. For other consenting opinions, see Durand-Gréville 1911, p. 207; Schöne 1938, p. 25; C. Terlinden, "La Peinture espagnole et la peinture flamande au XV^{me} siècle," *Revue belge d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'art* 16 (1946), p. 8; Lavalleye 1953–58, vol. 1, p. 30; Bruyn 1957, pp. 114–15; Koch 1957, p. 276; Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 87; Gellman 1970b, pp. 253–58; Upton 1972, pp. 344–47; and Schabacker 1974, pp. 121–22. Richter (1974, pp. 341–45) felt the Prado picture was a copy of a lost Christus painting made after 1460.
6. The 1450s: Schöne 1938, p. 57; and Vos 1989, p. 46. After 1457: Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 87; Upton 1972, pp. 344–47; and Schabacker 1974, pp. 121–22. Last years of Christus's life: Bruyn 1957, p. 114; Koch 1957, p. 276; and Gellman 1970b, pp. 253–58.
7. Schabacker 1974, pp. 121–22.
8. Bouts's *Virgin and Child with Angels on a Porch* probably dates after the perfectly organized one-point perspective system the artist first realized in his *Holy Sacrament Altarpiece* of 1464–67 (Sint-Pieterskerk, Louvain).
9. For the known, early provenance of the Madrid painting, see P. de Madrazo, *Catalogo de los cuadros del Museo del Prado* (Madrid, 1910), pp. 341–42, no. 1921.
10. Some confusion over the number of copies has persisted in the literature. As Schabacker noted (1974, p. 122), the copy formerly in a Madrid private collection is the painting that was at M. Knoedler and Company, New York, in 1930 and is now in a private collection in Spain (illustrated in Lavalleye 1953–58, vol. 1, pp. 29–30).

Death of the Virgin

About 1460–65

Central panel: oil on oak, transferred to mahogany and cradled,
67½ x 54¼ in. (171.1 x 138.4 cm)

Wings: oil on oak, each 68½ x 24¼ in. (173 x 63 cm)

Provenance: (central panel) Sciacca, Sicily (16th century); Gaetano Consiglio, Sciacca (until 1856); Marianna Consiglio (until 1865); Giuseppe Santacane Denti, Palermo (by 1865); Villa Santa Canale, Bagheria, Sicily; [sold, M. Knoedler and Company, New York, 1938]; acquired by the Timken Art Gallery, Putnam Foundation, San Diego, 1951; (wings) Sicily?; purchased, Florence, 1908, by Wilhelm Bode for the Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin; destroyed in the Flakturm fire, 1945

The Virgin's death is not recounted in the Bible, but passages of the *Golden Legend* describe details of the gathering of the apostles from all over the world, summoned by an angel to witness her passing.¹ Christ's unique contribution to traditional representations of this theme in panel painting is his conflation of three distinct events: the death of the Virgin, her Assumption,² and the reception of her girdle by Saint Thomas (the latecomer to the event) as proof of the Assumption. The assembled apostles of the Timken painting prepare to administer Extreme Unction to the Virgin, bringing along a container of holy water and an aspergillum, a censer, the Holy Scriptures, and a candle (traditionally placed in the hands of the dying as a symbol of



Fig. 151. Detail of cat. no. 15 (Eucharistic wafer)

the Christian faith). A heretofore unknown detail found directly to the right of the candle, above the apostle's hand, has been uncovered during the recent cleaning of the painting and is central to its meaning. This nearly transparent, round object with a decorative border and an embossed cross is a Eucharistic wafer (fig. 151).³ The Host here symbolizes Christ's presence at the Virgin's death, illustrating John 6:51: "I am the living bread, which came down from heaven." This passage occurs in the liturgy only in the Common Mass for the Dead.⁴

According to Catholic doctrine, the consecrated Host becomes the real presence and body of the Lord. As Caroline Walker Bynum pointed out, in medieval times the "mass and the reception or adoration of the eucharist were closely connected with mystical union or ecstasy, which was frequently accompanied by paramystical phenomena." The "reception of Christ's body and blood was a substitute for ecstasy. . . . To receive was to become Christ."⁵ Considered in this context, the presence of the Host signals Mary's mystical union with Christ after death. It is the visual proof of Christ to the Virgin and to the apostles. The echo of the miraculous appearance of the Host is found in the background scene, in which an angel brings the Virgin's girdle to the doubting Thomas as tangible evidence of the Virgin's Assumption.

The grisaille painting of the Crucifixion with Mary and John that was on the exterior of the wings (now destroyed) of the altarpiece would have boldly introduced the notion of Christ's sacrifice, which was to be carried through to the theme of Redemption.⁶ Thus, the doctrines of Incarnation, Transubstantiation, and Redemption underlie the narrative of the Virgin's death. The painting focuses on the celebration of the Eucharist as the means by which the viewer may commune with God.

Although Max J. Friedländer suggested that the Timken painting was the first representation of the death of the Virgin in early Netherlandish painting, others stressed the precedent





Fig. 152. Follower of the Master of Flémalle?, *Death of the Virgin*. Oil on oak, 15 x 13 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (38.1 x 34.9 cm). National Gallery, London

of a lost model attributed to the Master of Flémalle.⁷ Another version of this work (fig. 152) shows a composition similar to the Timken painting but in reverse: the Virgin's bed is placed parallel to the picture plane and surrounded by apostles in a room with a vaulted ceiling and a large double window at the back. The vision of the Assumption is directly over the head of the bed, and another key element, the Host by the candle, is also represented.⁸

Following Charles Sterling's proposal, Joel Upton convincingly stressed the painting's visual and thematic link with manuscript illumination.⁹ The vision of God the Father receiving the Virgin in the Timken panel may have been derived from a similar image of God the Father surrounded by angels and an aureole of light in the *Prince near the Sea* (fol. 59v) miniature in the *Turin-Milan Hours*. Also found in manuscript illumination is the confluence of separate episodes at one historical point. A *Coronation of the Virgin* (fol. 100v) in the *Turin-Milan Hours* is linked with a *bas-de-page* representation of the Dormition of the Virgin that includes Saint Thomas receiving the girdle and the Assumption of the Virgin.¹⁰

Just as important as these suggested visual precedents is the link with the written word. Noting that Christus maintained the direct devotional experience associated with reading a prayer book, Upton referred to the *Death of the Virgin* as a "painted reconstruction of a sermon whose purpose was to demonstrate

and instruct." In this regard, he suggested, the two central apostles serve as ministers or spokesmen for the "visual homily."¹¹

Highly unusual for a Netherlandish painting of the mid-fifteenth century are both the size of the panel and its spatial representation. It is the largest work in Christus's known oeuvre; half of the cavernous space is occupied by the height of the walls topped by a barrel-vaulted ceiling. Any discussion of the perspective system must take into account the wings, which Lola Gellman convincingly demonstrated formed a triptych with this panel.¹² Representing Saint John the Baptist on the left and Saint Catherine on the right (fig. 153), these wings were destroyed in the Flakturm fire in Berlin in 1945. Only black-and-white photographs remain, along with color notes.¹³ There has been no dissenting voice concerning the proposed reconstruction of the triptych, which shows a serene, continuous landscape across the three panels.

Generally overlooked is the somewhat awkward juncture of the wings, whose saints are larger in scale than the figures in the central panel (except for the figure holding the censer).¹⁴ If the altarpiece was destined for an Italian location, we must consider the possibility that Christus adjusted his perspective plan accordingly. Dating to the thirteenth century is a tradition of Italian altarpieces with stationary wings held open in an angled position, thereby situating the figures on the wings closer to the viewer. These figures are often life-size; in any event, they are larger than those in the central portion of the triptych and placed to suggest the extension of the viewer's space.¹⁵ Saints John the Baptist and Catherine on the destroyed wings would have served as midway markers in the transition from the viewer's space to that of the main scene. When the wings are placed at an oblique angle to the central panel, their perspective system falls into line with that of the central panel, uniting several orthogonals from the two wings (fig. 58).¹⁶

Close examination of the perspective scheme in the Timken painting shows that it is not a perfectly unified system. Even though, as James Collier noted, the existing orthogonals appear to converge on a single vanishing point on the wall to the left of the window, the vaults of the ceiling are not aligned with this point.¹⁷ The semicircles of the vault are formed by an arc made by a compass; the center point of the smallest semicircle is located within the right curtain sack. However, each successive vault spandrel is not produced from the same compass point, which further confuses the perspective system.

Friedländer's proposed attribution of the Timken painting to Petrus Christus has not been uniformly accepted.¹⁸ In 1953, Erwin Panofsky noted its large size and poor state of preservation and thought it may have been produced by a southern Italian or Hispano-Italian master working in the Flemish manner.¹⁹ Julius Held, in a review of Panofsky, agreed, as did Peter Schabacker and Burkhard Richter in 1974.²⁰



Fig. 153. Petrus Christus, *Saint John the Baptist and Saint Catherine*, ca. 1460–65. Oil on oak, 68 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 24 $\frac{1}{4}$ in. (173 x 63 cm). Destroyed during World War II; formerly Kaiser-Friedrich-Museum, Berlin



Fig. 154. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 15 (underdrawing of the landscape)



Fig. 155. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 15 (underdrawing of the apostle with the aspergillum)

The painting has suffered greatly over time. It has lost its original enamellike surface and the fine finishing details of modeling due to severe abrasion and transfer to another support. In addition, until its recent cleaning and restoration, the *Death of the Virgin* was obscured by a very thick, yellowed varnish.²¹ All of these factors have thwarted efforts to deal effectively with the attribution of the painting. Further complicating the issue is the picture's uncommonly large size, an unaccustomed scale for

Christus, whose paintings are usually far smaller.

Nevertheless, many features of the *Death of the Virgin* indicate Christus's technique. He began by identifying a point somewhat off-center, to the left of the window and level with the horizon line, and made the orthogonals of the room meet at this point. The orthogonals—both incised lines and ruled lines in pen—are found in the ceiling planks, door and window openings, and floorboards, sometimes extending beyond the

forms they describe. The semicircular spandrels of the vaulted ceiling, formed with the aid of a compass, are independent of this perspective system. The landscape is also freely drawn, with Christus's typical brush loops for the placement of bushes and of a large tree at the window and summary sketch lines for the hills, comparable to the landscape in the Berlin *Nativity* (compare figs. 154 and 48).²²

In the underdrawing, Christus concentrated on the foreground figures, which are particularly important because they serve as spatial markers along a diagonal from the lower left through the doorway on the right. The prominence of these figures, as well as the fixing of the focal point of the perspective system on the back wall of the room instead of on an object of iconographic significance, suggests that Christus was more interested at this stage in the representation of the space than in the subject per se.

The underdrawing is typical of that found in Christus's late works: the areas of shadow on the floor around the figures are indicated with dense parallel hatching; the contours of the foreground figures are very broadly worked with brush; and the interior modeling of the draperies is carried out with a fine brush or pen in a dense network of parallel hatching and angled cross-hatching (fig. 57). In the apostle wearing white, the modeling is suggested with very broad parallel hatching, just as it is in the figure of Joseph in the Washington *Nativity* (compare figs. 155 and 160).

A second and less accomplished hand is discernible principally in the upper left portion of the central panel, where there is no fully worked-up underdrawing for the Virgin, the four apostles behind the bed, or the Assumption scene. This difference in approach in the foreground versus the background figures is also apparent in the execution in paint. The description of the forms of the four apostles behind the bed is less proficient, lacking the detailed modeling of the faces that gives greater expression to the figures in the foreground. Christus's characteristic light touches of pinkish tones—at the tips of the fingers, or beneath the eyes, or at the ears—which are evident in the apostle seated on the step of the bed, are missing. In addition, the draperies of the figures behind the bed are more loosely painted with broad strokes of washlike applications in the deepest folds, in contrast to the crisper, more sculptural folds found in the foreground draperies. These characteristics of the second hand appear in Saints John the Baptist and Catherine, though this can now be judged only through black-and-white photographs. Christus may have enlisted workshop participation in this instance to complete the wings of the large triptych.²³

Christus's paintings at this juncture appear to assume characteristics of what might be described as a Northerner's perception of Italian painting. Both the Madrid *Virgin and Child* and the *Death of the Virgin* show a new monumentality, an abstraction of form, and a significant reliance upon geometrically inspired shapes. The paintings also exhibit a reduced palette,

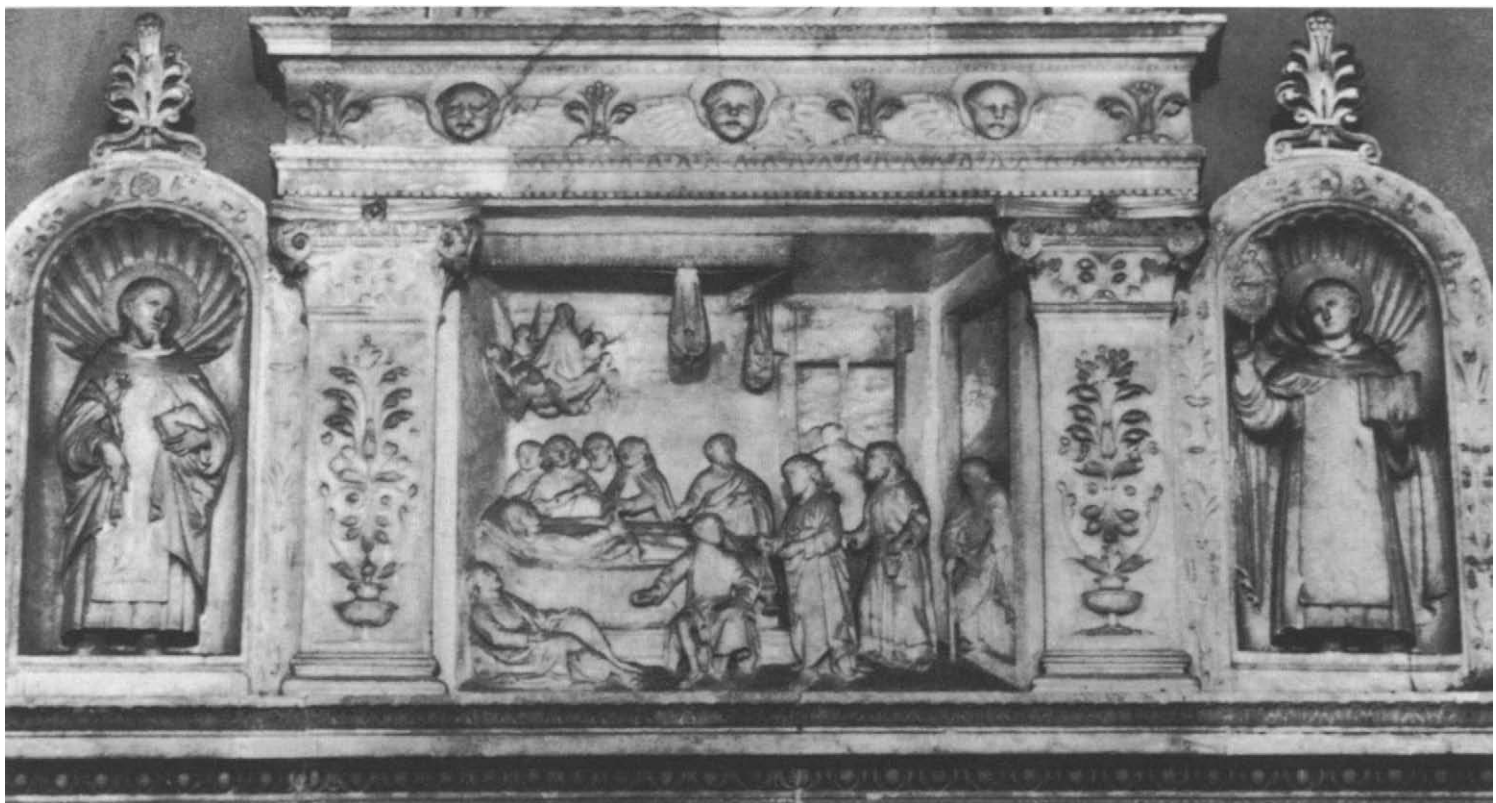


Fig. 156. Studio of Antonello Gagini, *Death of Saint Zita*, ca. 1503–4 (detail of the retable). Marble. Santa Zita, Palermo

heavily dependent upon reds and darker colors for the garments of the figures. These stylistic changes were not permanent for Christus and were perhaps largely made to accommodate the taste of his Italian clients.²⁴

The triptych must have been sent south to Italy soon after its completion,²⁵ for Christus's unusual composition found no particular following in the North.²⁶ Roberto Longhi maintained that the *Death of the Virgin* was in Sicily all along and that it was the most important source of Antonello da Messina's knowledge of Christus and early Netherlandish painting.²⁷

The most significant proof that the *Death of the Virgin* was in Sicily early is a sculpted altarpiece executed about 1503–4 by the studio of Antonello Gagini for Santa Zita in Palermo (fig. 156).²⁸ Even though it represents the death of Saint Zita, there is no question that it was Christus's model (minus the subsidiary Saint Thomas scene) that was adopted by Gagini. The link with Christus or Christus-like compositions is further reinforced by the sculpted *Nativity* found directly below the death scene in Gagini's altarpiece. While not an exact quotation, it was certainly derived from a composition such as Christus's Washington *Nativity*.

The *Death of the Virgin* has traditionally been thought to have belonged to the Santacane family of Palermo from the fifteenth century until 1938, when it was purchased by the Timken. Vincenzo Scuderi, however, has recently discovered that it previously belonged to the Consiglio family of Sciacca, a town in southern Sicily.²⁹ Although we do not know who commissioned the work or its original location, the large altarpiece was apparently still in Sicily in the sixteenth century, when Vincenzo degli Azani (called Vincenzo da Pavia) copied it for his own version of the *Death of the Virgin* for the Chiesa del Carmine, Sciacca, which he left unfinished at his death in 1557.³⁰ The Gagini are known to have worked on commissions in Sciacca, so there is no reason to believe the altarpiece traveled to the Palermo area before 1865, when it was owned by the Santacane family.

As with many of Christus's paintings, theories about the date of the *Death of the Virgin* vary from the 1440s, to the 1450s, to the 1460s.³¹ It now seems clear—from the sophisticated spatial representation of the painting, its mostly uniform perspective design, the likely Italian connections of the 1460s, and the advanced stage in stylistic development of the preparatory drawing—that the Timken painting was created late in Christus's career, about 1460–65.³²

1. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. W. G. Ryan, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1993), vol. 2, pp. 77–97.
2. The text of the Song of Solomon is echoed in the *Golden Legend* account of Mary's Dormition and Assumption, in which Mary is received by God as a youthful woman (see M. Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex: The Myth and Cult of the Virgin Mary* [New York, 1976], p. 122:

"Mary, triumphantly assumed into heaven and embraced by Christ, prefigures the Church's future glory and the soul's promised union with Christ in terms of the mystical love song, the *Cantica Canticarum*, or Song of Songs. Her youthful beauty . . . has a theological purpose: the Virgin is no dowager queen mother, but the beloved Shulamite bride of Christ").

3. There are miniatures showing Christ in Majesty holding a wafer that is an enlarged cross-inscribed disk representing, concurrently, the globe of Christ in Majesty and the Eucharistic wafer (see C. Gottlieb, "The Mystical Window in Paintings of the *Salvator Mundi*," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 6th series, 56 [December 1960], p. 316). From the early twelfth century on, the Host was sometimes stamped with a picture of Christ rather than simple crosses or monograms (see C. W. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption: Essays on Gender and the Human Body in Medieval Religion* [New York, 1991], p. 127).
4. *The Roman Missal*, introduction by A. Fortescue (New York, [1951]), pp. 923–33, esp. 932.
5. Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption*, pp. 125–26.
6. Friedländer (1907, col. 34) described the exterior of the wings.
7. Friedländer 1946, p. 159; Sterling 1971, pp. 1–3; Panhans-Bühler 1978, pp. 123–36; and Upton 1990, pp. 44, 46, 65, 71–77.
8. On the London version, see J. Dunkerton, "'The Death of the Virgin': A Technical Approach to an Art-Historical Problem," *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 7 (1983), pp. 21–29. Lorne Campbell (letter to the author, May 8, 1993) questions a Flémallesque origin of the London painting as well as the supposed early date. He suggests, rather, that it was made by a follower of Hugo van der Goes, in which case the influence would likely be from Christus's painting to Hugo's workshop. Although some have mentioned Hugo's *Death of the Virgin* (Groeningemuseum, Bruges) in connection with both the Flémalle and the Christus examples, Hugo's is a far more dramatic representation, focusing on the drama of the death rather than the conflation of various episodes into one scene.
9. Sterling (1971, p. 3) suggested a link with representations of this theme in Franco-Flemish and Netherlandish illumination before 1415 by the Bedford Master and with the *Coronation of the Virgin* (fol. 100v) of the *Turin-Milan Hours*. Upton (1990, p. 75) also mentioned that Christus's conflation of various scenes appears in manuscripts, including the Bedford Master's *Breviary of Chateauroux*, Jean Mansel's *Les Fleurs des Histoires*, and the *Speculum Humanae Salvationis*.
10. *Prince near the Sea* is illustrated in Durrieu 1902, pl. XXXVII; *Coronation of the Virgin* is illustrated in Upton 1990, fig. 68.
11. Upton 1990, p. 76.
12. Gellman 1970a, pp. 147–48. This was also proposed by Charles Sterling, lecture, fall 1962, Institute of Fine Arts, New York University. See also Sterling 1971, p. 1 n. 3.
13. Wilhelm Bode purchased the wings in Florence in 1908. See H. Posse, ed., *Die Gemäldegalerie des Kaiser-Friedrich-Museums* (Berlin, 1913), pp. 103–4, nos. 529E, F, for detailed color notes on the wings. See also C. Norris, "The Disaster at Flakturm Friedrichshain: A Chronicle and List of Paintings," *Burlington Magazine* 94 (December 1952), pp. 337–47. Old photographs in the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague, show the two panels joined into one painting and their very damaged state before restoration.
14. Panhans-Bühler 1978, p. 134.
15. Filippo Lippi's *Annunciation* (San Lorenzo, Florence) is one example in which monumental architecture and the perspective are used to persuade the observer to accept simulated reality (see Benjamin 1973, p. 216).
16. Lola Gellman (conversation with the author, February 1993) sug-

- gested that the Washington donor wings may have been added to the Frankfurt *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* in a similar way, at a fixed oblique angle.
17. Collier 1975, p. 135.
 18. Friedländer 1946, pp. 159–63.
 19. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 311 n. 8.
 20. J. S. Held, review of *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character*, by E. Panofsky, *Art Bulletin* 37 (September 1955), p. 206; Richter 1974, pp. 390–94; and Schabacker 1974, pp. 132–34.
 21. Cleaning and restoration were carried out privately by David Bull and Teresa Longyear of Washington, D.C., and completed in October 1993.
 22. A preliminary idea for a large tree seen through the left side of the window was apparently abandoned, for it was not carried out in paint.
 23. This would have been a workshop in the North, since, contrary to early reports by Germain Bazin (1952, p. 202), the Timken painting was not executed on soft wood but on the traditional Northern support of oak (William Suhr, conservation report, December 10, 1938, William Suhr Archive, Getty Center for the History of Art and the Humanities Library, Santa Monica). In addition, its ground preparation is calcium carbonate, the material typically employed in Northern paintings (Chris McGlinchey, Associate Research Chemist, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, conservation report, December 16, 1993).
 24. The issue of artists of this period attempting to accommodate the tastes of their clients needs further research. I have suggested this was the case (review of *Gerard David*, by H. J. van Miegroet, *Art Bulletin* 72 [December 1990], pp. 650, 652–53) with Gerard David's *Sedano Triptych* (Musée du Louvre, Paris) and *Cervara Altarpiece* (divided among the Palazzo Bianco, Genoa; Musée du Louvre; and The Metropolitan Museum of Art).
 25. It is unlikely, as Upton suggested (1990, p. 43 n. 54), that the painting was sent to Venice. A document dated July 30, 1451, that states a "maestro Piero de Fiandra" was paid 78 ducats for an altarpiece ("pala") and additional expenses for transporting an altarpiece to Santa Maria della Carità, Venice, could refer to a ship captain or dealer as well as an artist. In any event, 1451 is too early for the *Death of the Virgin*, which is demonstrably later.
 26. The exception to this is an early *Death of the Virgin* by Bartolomé Bermejo that appears to have been directly influenced by the Timken painting. Bermejo was known to have traveled to Flanders early in his career, and Eric Young (*Bartolomé Bermejo: The Great Hispano-Flemish Master* [London, 1975], pp. 10–16, pl. 1) placed the artist in association with Christus about 1460, allowing for direct observation of his work.
 27. R. Longhi, "Frammento siciliano," *Paragone*, no. 47 (November 1953), p. 26. See also Sterling 1971, p. 8 n. 33; V. Scuderi, "La collocazione originaria della 'Morte della Vergine' attribuita a Petrus Christus, già della collezione Santocanale a Palermo e ora a S. Diego di California," in *Antonello da Messina: Atti del convegno di studi tenuto a Messina dal 29 novembre al 2 dicembre 1981* (Messina, 1987), p. 104; and Ainsworth, "Art of Petrus Christus," this volume. According to S. Bottari (*Antonello da Messina*, trans. G. Scaglia [Greenwich, Conn., (1955)], p. 10), as early as 1463 Antonello copied the seated foreground figure from the *Death of the Virgin* for a scene of *Three Prisoners* in his altarpiece *Saint Nicholas Enthroned with Eight Stories from His Life* (destroyed during the earthquake of 1908; formerly San Niccolò dei Gentiluomini, Messina).
 28. H.-W. Kruft, *Antonello Gagini und seine Söhne* (Munich, 1980), p. 408, pls. 35, 41. Although Panhans-Bühler (1978, p. 124) noted a later date for the sculpture, she first reported this connection.
 29. Scuderi, "Collocazione," pp. 101–10. Scuderi did not mention a listing in the Consiglio inventory of any wings for the triptych. I am grateful to Jeffrey Jennings, former art-historian intern, Department of Paintings Conservation, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, for researching this provenance.
 30. V. Scuderi, "Vincenzo degli Azani, *Transito della Vergine*," in *VIII mostra di opere d'arte restaurate: Catalogo* (Palermo, 1972), pp. 27–28, no. 7, pl. 29. T. Viscuso ("Scheda sulle tavolette fiamminghe di S. Caterina e S. Rocco," *XI catalogo di opere d'arte restaurate [1976–78]* [Palermo, 1980], p. 57 n. 8) mistakenly assumed that Vincenzo copied it from the Gagini marble for Santa Zita in Palermo. However, as Sciacca was the home of the Consiglio family, it is most likely that Vincenzo saw Christus's painting there.
 31. Scholars favoring a date in the 1440s include D. Brian, "The Masters of Gothic Flanders," *Art News* 41, no. 5 (April 15–30, 1942), pp. 14, 18; and J. van der Elst, *The Last Flowering of the Middle Ages* (Garden City, N.Y., 1944), p. 70. The 1450s: Friedländer 1946, p. 163; Bruyn 1957, pp. 110–11; A. and E. Mongen, comps., *European Paintings in the Timken Art Gallery* (San Diego, 1969), p. 46; Gellman 1970a, pp. 147–48; Gellman 1970b, p. 249; Sterling 1971, p. 1; Upton 1972, pp. 110, 280–81; Upton 1990, p. 73 n. 63; and H. J. van Miegroet, "Petrus Christus, *The Death of the Virgin*," in *Flemish Paintings in America: A Survey of Early Netherlandish and Flemish Paintings in the Public Collections of North America* (Antwerp, 1992), p. 62. The 1460s: Schabacker 1974, p. 134; Panhans-Bühler 1978, p. 134; and Collier 1979, p. 34.
 32. Although Schabacker (1974, pp. 132–34) did not accept the attribution of the painting to Christus, he did make some interesting comments regarding the dating. He noted that the sleeping figure in the lower left corner of the *Death of the Virgin* is identical to one in the right interior wing of Joos van Ghent's *Crucifixion* triptych of about 1460 (Sint Bavo, Ghent). Similarly, the forefront figure interrupted from his reading recalls the figure of Lazarus in Albert van Ouwater's *Raising of Lazarus* of about 1460–65 (Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin). The matter of influences aside, the dating of these paintings corresponds to the years Christus must have been working on the *Death of the Virgin*.

Portrait of a Man

About 1465

Oil on oak, 17 $\frac{7}{8}$ x 13 $\frac{3}{8}$ in. (45.4 x 33.5 cm)

Provenance: Sir George Lindsay Holford, London and Westonbirt, Gloucestershire (before 1902–28); [Christie Manson and Woods, London, May 17–18, 1928, no. 9]; [Colnaghi and Company, London, 1928]; [M. Knoedler and Company, New York, 1929]; Allan C. Balch, Los Angeles (1929–44); gift to Los Angeles County Museum of Art, Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch Collection (M.44.2.3)

Although this portrait was exhibited in London at Burlington House in 1927 and in the major shows of fifteenth-century art in Bruges and Detroit in 1960, it has received remarkably little scholarly attention.¹ This is partly because it was housed in private collections in England and California for almost the first half of this century and subsequently in the Los Angeles County Museum of Art, in relative isolation from the principal collections of early Netherlandish painting in America.

The painting was first assigned to Christus by Sir Charles Holmes,² and the attribution remained unchallenged while the panel was in the Holford and Balch collections.³ During this period, Roger Fry commented on the work's close links to portraits by Antonello da Messina,⁴ an observation reiterated by Ludwig Baldass and Germain Bazin but challenged by Josua Bruyn.⁵ The subsequent negative or equivocal judgments of Erwin Panofsky, Max J. Friedländer, and Lola Gellman about Christus's authorship were made without the benefit of studying the painting firsthand.⁶ Peter Schabacker believed the picture was by a Northern contemporary of Christus, while Joel Upton and James Collier accepted the painting as by Christus, Upton placing it about 1452.⁷

Early in the century, James Weale noted the close similarity between the Los Angeles portrait and the London *Portrait of a Young Man* (fig. 66), suggesting that the model was the same but depicted at different times in his life.⁸ Any physiognomic parallels between these portraits, however, do not extend to the modeling of the faces. Partly due to its abraded condition, the London painting shows a less sculptural treatment than the Los Angeles work, in which the play of light and shadow across the face is remarkably subtle. This difference is apparent even in the preliminary drawing in brush on each panel (compare figs. 67 and 68). Although the two paintings show the same general idiosyncrasies of handling in the underdrawing⁹—summary indications of the main contours of the head and the interior folds of the costume; abbreviated notation in quick, broad strokes for the ear; and fully worked-up modeling for the face, done with an extremely thin brush—the Los Angeles picture exhibits a more refined execution. Straight, even, and rather coarse

parallel hatching and cross-hatching in the London portrait, along the jawbone, around the mouth, and in the neck, indicate the shading of the features in broad, flat planes, as is typical of the underdrawing in Christus's work around 1450.¹⁰ In the Los Angeles painting, the artist's handling has evolved to a more volumetric description of the features, achieved through hatching and cross-hatching in slightly curvilinear strokes grouped in areas of dense shading, precisely placed and modulated to imitate lifelike forms (fig. 68). The more refined brushwork and plastic treatment in the underdrawing of the Los Angeles portrait are characteristic of Christus's late work of the 1460s and 1470s, including the Madrid *Virgin and Child*, the *Death of the Virgin* (foreground figures), and the Kansas City *Holy Family* (cat. nos. 14, 15, 20; figs. 149, 55, 56, 167). A dating of about 1465 is also supported by the sitter's costume, which appears in other contemporary works.¹¹

In certain respects, the Los Angeles painting represents a change in approach from Christus's earlier portraits. Although the sitter shares with the *Carthusian* (cat. no. 5) and *Edward Grymeston* (fig. 65) a slightly obliquely angled position vis-à-vis the picture plane, the illumination of the head is altogether different. Here, the near side of the face is broadly lit, allowing for a masterful play of deep, rich shadows on the far side that gently build up the rounded forms of the cheek, the fleshy pocket beneath the eye, and the cleft chin. A thin, light contour at the right side of the head silhouettes it against the dark background. This lighting scheme appears elsewhere, mostly in Christus's later works, though not in any of his other surviving portraits.¹²

Compared to the *Carthusian* and *Edward Grymeston*, the Los Angeles image, like the Berlin *Portrait of a Lady* (cat. no. 19), is more tightly cropped, providing a close-up view of the sitter in nearly life-size proportions. Strips of wood added to all four sides of the *Portrait of a Man* have been removed recently, revealing the original, intact edges of the panel.¹³ By isolating the figure against a dark, flat background in an indeterminate space, Christus recalled the portraiture of Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, and Robert Campin. However, the exclusion of the sitter's hands, an expressive device used by these artists, as well





Fig. 157. Pieter I de Jode, *Peter Adornes*. Engraving. Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, Brussels

as the close-up view, projects the image forward, inviting a direct confrontation with the viewer.

This mode of portraiture is not commonplace in contemporary Northern examples but finds a close parallel in the works of Antonello da Messina.¹⁴ Antonello's *Portrait of a Man* (fig. 87) and Christus's painting are similar in size and share the tightly cropped view of the sitter against a dark background, the figure's pose and costume, and the subtle modeling of the face, all of which suggest a direct encounter and an artistic exchange.¹⁵ Although some characterize this relationship as superficial, due more to a parallel development from van Eyck's portraiture,¹⁶ various visual clues in Christus's other works of the 1460s indicate a more direct knowledge of Italian painting.

The sitter of the Los Angeles painting cannot be positively identified.¹⁷ A close comparison of his facial features with those of the London sitter does not confirm that the same man is depicted in both paintings, as Weale supposed. However, a pair of seventeenth-century Dutch engravings by Pieter I de Jode (act. 1600–1634) that carry inscriptions identifying Peter Adornes (fig. 157) and his wife, Elisabeth Bradericx, do offer an intriguing identification for consideration.¹⁸ There are general similarities in pose (in reverse for the print), costume, and physiognomy between the Los Angeles portrait and the engraving of Adornes. In particular, the fullness and shape of

the lips, the cleft chin, and the proportions and basic contour of the nose are alike. Furthermore, the life history of Peter Adornes, a prominent member of one of the most important Genoese families in Bruges who died in 1464, approximately the time the Los Angeles portrait was painted, makes it quite tempting to identify him as the Los Angeles sitter.¹⁹ However, the accentuation of the facial features in the print (particularly the heavily lidded eyes) opposes the softer, gentler description of the Los Angeles portrait. For now, any identification of the sitter must remain tentative.

1. London 1927, p. 141, no. 15; Bruges 1960, pp. 48–49, no. 6; and Detroit 1960, pp. 98–99, no. 15.
2. Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Catalogue of Pictures and Other Objects of Art, Selected from the Collections of Mr. Robert Holford [1808–1892] mainly from Westonbirt in Gloucestershire* (London, 1921), p. 14, no. 4; and R. Benson, ed., *The Holford Collection* ([London], 1924), p. 43, no. 15.
3. Burlington Fine Arts Club, *Catalogue of Pictures*, p. 14, no. 4; Benson, *Holford Collection*, p. 43, no. 15; S. de Ricci, "La Collection Holford," *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, 5th series, 11 (January 1925), p. 38; Los Angeles County Museum, *The Balch Collection and Old Masters from Los Angeles Collections, Assembled in Memory of Mr. and Mrs. Allan C. Balch*, exhib. cat. (Los Angeles, 1944), no. 17; R. McKinney, "Old Masters in the Balch Collection," *Los Angeles County Museum Quarterly* 4, nos. 1, 2 (spring–summer 1944), p. 3; R. McKinney, "The Balch Art: Rich Gift for California," *Art News* 43, no. 17 (December 15–31, 1944), p. 11; and "Gifts and Bequests to the Los Angeles County Museum During the Year 1944," *Los Angeles County Museum Quarterly* 4, nos. 3, 4 (fall–winter 1945), p. 10.
4. Fry 1927, pp. 62–63. See also London 1927, p. 141, no. 15.
5. Baldass 1927, p. 82; Bazin 1952, pp. 199 n. 14, 200; and Bruyn 1957, p. 110.
6. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 311 n. 8; Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 104; and Gellman 1970b, pp. 478–79. Richter (1974, pp. 373–74) also rejected the attribution to Christus.
7. Schabacker 1974, pp. 134–35; Upton 1972, pp. 110, 335–37; and Collier 1975, p. 131.
8. Weale 1903, p. 51.
9. As noted by Comblen-Sonkes (1970, pp. 201–2).
10. For example, the underdrawing of *Saint Eligius*, dated 1449 (fig. 41). Based on other stylistic criteria, the London *Portrait of a Young Man* has generally been dated to the 1450s; see Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 313; Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 88; Davies 1968, p. 34 n. 2; Gellman 1970b, p. 426; Upton 1972, p. 110; and Schabacker 1974, p. 48.
11. Such as Rogier van der Weyden's *Portrait of Laurent Froimont* (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels), dated after 1460 (Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, no. 30), and Hans Memling's *Portrait of a Man* (Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt am Main) and *Portrait of an Elderly Man* (Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin; see Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 6a, nos. 73, 75).
12. The lighting scheme appears, for example, in the head of the Virgin in the *Washington Nativity*, in the *Washington Portrait of a Male Donor*, and in the apostle seated in the center front in the *Death of the Virgin*. Hans Memling, a contemporary of Christus's in Bruges who excelled in portrait painting, also occasionally used this lighting scheme, which he may have learned from Christus's example (see Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 6a, nos. 71, 75, 78, 84, 88).

13. Joseph Fronek, Conservator, Los Angeles County Museum of Art, conversation with the author during the 1993 restoration of the painting.
14. Thiébaud 1993, pp. 102–8.
15. Baldass 1927, p. 82; Fry 1927, pp. 62–67; Art Institute of Chicago, *Catalogue of A Century of Progress: Exhibition of Paintings and Sculpture, 1934*, exhib. cat. (Chicago, 1934), no. 116; E. Feinblatt, *The Gothic Room* (Los Angeles, [1948?]), pp. 31–32; Bazin 1952, pp. 199 n. 14, 200; Bruges 1960, pp. 48–49, no. 6; Detroit 1960, pp. 98–99, no. 15; Upton 1972, pp. 335–37; Castelfranchi Vegas 1984, p. 86; and R. Salvini, *Banchieri fiorentini e pittori di fiandra* (Modena, 1984), p. 25.
16. Bruyn 1957, p. 110; Gellman 1970b, pp. 477–80; and Schabacker 1974, pp. 134–35.
17. The portrait apparently inspired a reduced copy of unknown date that was last seen on the art market in Amsterdam in 1944 (sold, Mak von Waay, Amsterdam, June 13, 1944, p. 5, no. 16, for Fr 2,500). Photographs in the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague, and in the Witt Library, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London, listed as Dutch school, fifteenth century, 28 x 20 cm.
18. Impressions of these prints may be found in the Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, Brussels. I am indebted to Maximiliaan Martens for calling my attention to them.
19. For the correct death date of Peter Adornes and the identification of the sitter in the Los Angeles portrait as Adornes, see Martens 1992, pp. 293–96.

Nativity

About 1465

Oil on oak, 51¼ x 38¼ in. (130 x 97 cm)

Provenance: Señora O. Yturbe, Madrid; F. M. Zatzstein (1930); [Duveen Brothers, London and New York, 1930–37]; A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust, Pittsburgh (January 1937); National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C., Andrew W. Mellon Collection (1937.I.40)

The Washington *Nativity* is one of Christus's richest and most complex devotional images, demonstrating a masterful integration of composition and color in what is an unusually large work for the artist. The message of the painting quietly emerges from a strict, perspectively correct space constructed to engage the viewer. Although the design of the framing arch has attracted attention because of its narrative content and its association with the works of Christus's contemporaries Rogier van der Weyden and Dieric Bouts, it is but an introduction to the more elaborate spatial conception within the picture.¹

The arch above the figures of Adam and Eve, whose transgressions led to Christ's Incarnation and sacrifice, presents six Old Testament scenes, which Charles de Tolnay recognized are representations of sin and punishment.² These scenes from the Book of Genesis show (from left to right) the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve at work, Cain and Abel making an offering, Cain slaying Abel, the Lord speaking to Cain, and Cain leaving for the land of Nod.³ Facing each other in the roundels above are two warriors, indicative of the unsettled and bellicose state of the world before Grace.⁴ Bearing the heavy burden of man's sin are the two atlantes at the base of the columns supporting Adam and Eve, who, covering themselves, acknowledge their iniquity.

The solemnity of the scene deviates from the conventional joyous depiction of the Nativity as described in the *Revelations* of Saint Bridget.⁵ Here, the emphasis is less on the narrative of Christ's birth than on the implicit meaning of the Redemption of man through Christ's sacrifice. Mary and Joseph, his patters removed, quietly contemplate the Son of God in the moments before the Annunciation to the Shepherds.⁶ The kneeling angels wear Eucharistic vestments, including a deacon's cope (on the angel at the far left),⁷ and the naked Child lies on a radiant disk that is suggestive of a paten—both references to Christ as the Host.⁸ The view into the distant landscape leads to the domed buildings of Jerusalem, the site of Christ's ultimate sacrifice.⁹

Of all the representations of the Nativity in Christus's oeuvre, the one in Washington most clearly signifies the theme of sacrifice. The versions in a private collection in Spain (formerly Wildenstein and Company, New York)¹⁰ and in Berlin (fig. 9) follow

the popular account of Saint Bridget, while the Bruges *Nativity* (fig. 23) appears to be an earlier, less complex treatment of the Washington composition.¹¹

There has never been any significant challenge to Max J. Friedländer's attribution of the *Nativity* to Christus.¹² Opinions about its date, however, have varied widely, from the mid-1440s, to about 1450, to the latter part of Christus's career.¹³ In each case, these datings rely upon the scholar's reconstruction of the artist's stylistic development—specifically, whether Rogierian



Fig. 158. Dieric Bouts, *Nativity* (from the *Altarpiece of the Virgin*), ca. 1445. Oil on oak, panel 31½ x 22½ in. (80 x 57.2 cm). Museo del Prado, Madrid





Fig. 159. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 17 (underdrawing of two angels)

influence came early or late—and the degree to which the painting is dependent upon Rogier’s *Saint John Altarpiece* and *Altarpiece of the Virgin* (both Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) as well as Bouts’s *Altarpiece of the Virgin* (fig. 158).¹⁴

The consensus of opinion dating the *Nativity* to the mid-1440s considers the Rogierian and Boutsian influences as decisive factors. Indeed, their altarpieces devoted to the Virgin, which date



Fig. 160. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 17 (underdrawing of Joseph)

about 1445, provided a model for Christus’s archivolt sculpture and column figures. Bouts’s *Altarpiece of the Virgin* also contains the roundels with warriors and the crouching figures at the bases of the columns. The shape and position of the shed vis-à-vis the foreground arch, the shepherds in conversation by the arched window in the deteriorating back wall, and even the role played by the similarly dressed angels all anticipate Christus’s treatment.

The Washington *Nativity*, however, is far more complex and spatially sophisticated than the Bouts composition. Instead of being one of a series of four paintings, like Bouts's altarpiece, the *Nativity* is complete in itself.¹⁵ In a kind of cause and effect, the sins of Adam and Eve illustrated in the arch are absolved through the sacrifice and Redemption initiated in the *Nativity* shown below. In contrast, the Boutsian and Rogierian archivolt scenes merely expand the main narrative.

The advanced representation of space suggests a date late in Christus's career, when he was preoccupied with the rational coordination of natural phenomena. Relying on a one-point perspective for the design, he identified the intersection of the horizontal and vertical axes of the painting at the level at which he wished to place the heads of his main figures. Christus roughly worked out the predominant orthogonals with summary brush strokes (seen in the infrared reflectogram assembly just above the angels at the lower left, fig. 159) and then situated the figures and the precise location of the orthogonals, which appear in the X-radiograph as a series of incised lines.¹⁶ He used a compass for the roundels and arch and incised various triangular shapes in the peak of the shed before painting them.

As Marshall Myers noted, a few of the steps Christus employed to construct the perspective are described in Alberti's *On Painting*: dividing the groundline (here, the threshold) into uniform intervals; drawing orthogonals from this line to the vanishing point; and making this interval measurement one-third the height of the main figures.¹⁷ Although Christus's figures are not one-half the height of the painting, as Alberti suggested they should be, the middle-ground figures are properly diminished in size according to their distance from the foreground plane.

Comparable sophisticated perspective plans are found in other late paintings, such as the *Death of the Virgin* and the *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (figs. 58, 60). Furthermore, the rather summary nature of the underdrawing in the *Nativity*, mainly broad brush contour lines for the placement of figures and relatively little interior modeling, has a direct parallel in the preliminary sketch of the *Death of the Virgin*. A comparison of the underdrawing of the broad, flat draperies of the apostle carrying the aspergillum in the *Death of the Virgin* with that of the figure of Joseph in the *Nativity* shows comparable long, unbroken contour lines for the draperies and even, parallel hatching at an oblique angle for the interior modeling of the folds (figs. 155, 160).

The one major change between the underdrawing and the painted layers in the *Nativity* is in the Virgin's drapery, which extends beyond the angels at the left in the underdrawing but was not executed in paint. This is the only area of the Virgin's drapery where underdrawing is visible, the majority of it probably being obscured by the extensive overpainting of her dress and robe. No perceptible underdrawing is found in the land-

scape, and only incised lines appear in the architecture.

Christus's characteristic Virgin and Joseph types are recognizable in the *Nativity*, but they are less squat and geometric than those in earlier paintings, such as the 1452 Berlin *Nativity* wing (fig. 9). Both the Virgin and Joseph show the softer, sweeter facial types of the *Madonna of the Dry Tree* and the *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (cat. nos. 18, 20), which reflect a strong, late Rogierian influence. The integration of these figures within the setting is more natural, even though the methods of spatial construction are more complex than those in the earlier works. The remarkable genre-like quality of the shepherds casually chatting behind the wall in the *Nativity* and of the disciple whose back is to us, leaning out the window in the *Death of the Virgin*, indicates the transition Christus made from using such figures as spatial markers to focusing on their humanity.¹⁸

The rigorous treatment of a perspectively accurate space and the special attention given to the sensitive rendering of the figures within that space are characteristic of the harmony of all aspects of design found in Christus's late works. Although the *Nativity* shares some features with the *Death of the Virgin*, it is closer in handling to the more Rogierian *Holy Family* and, therefore, probably dates about 1465.

1. Birkmeyer 1961, pp. 103–9. See Upton 1990, pp. 90–92, for a detailed description of the spatial organization.
2. Tolnay 1941, pp. 180–81. Upton (1977, pp. 73–77) elaborated on this Old Testament–New Testament dialogue in his discussion of typological parallels for Christus's representation.
3. This last scene has also been described as Seth beginning his search for the Tree of Life (Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 312 n. 1). Steefel (1962, pp. 237–38) suggested a connection between this episode and the shoot emerging from the crossbeam of the shed as a sign of the Tree of Life. See also Upton 1977, pp. 61–65; and Hand and Wolff 1986, pp. 42–44.
4. Ward 1975, p. 203, as cited in Hand and Wolff 1986, p. 44.
5. Upton (1977, pp. 49–79; 1990, pp. 90–108) provided the most thorough discussion of the iconography. The conventional depiction is covered in Cornell 1924, pp. 1–27.
6. Upton (1977, pp. 72–73) related the removed patters to the Old Testament incident of Moses before the burning bush.
7. M. B. McNamee, "Further Symbolism in the Portinari Altarpiece," *Art Bulletin* 45 (June 1963), pp. 142–43.
8. None of the angels wears the chasuble reserved for the celebrant at High Mass, the role to be played by Christ (Hand and Wolff 1986, p. 42). Upton (1977, pp. 67–68) interpreted the shed as the "altar of the first mass" and the roof over it as the ciborium protecting the altar. Current technical investigation of the painting by Catherine Metzger, conservator at the National Gallery of Art, reveals that the Virgin's halo and the disk around the Christ Child, though very old, perhaps from the sixteenth century, are not original (telephone conversation with the author, November 16, 1993).
9. The octagonal building in the background is the Holy Sepulcher, which was known in fifteenth-century drawings. The Jerusalem chapel, based on the design of the Holy Sepulcher, was built in Bruges

by the Adornes family, several of whom made pilgrimages to Jerusalem (Martens, 1990–91, pp. 13–14).

10. Illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pl. 82.
11. On the relationship between the various versions, see Vos 1985, pp. 28–30, 379–80. Although it is very difficult to assess the considerably damaged and much overpainted Bruges painting, remnants of the original appear to follow the design of certain features of the 1452 Berlin *Nativity*, particularly with regard to the Virgin and the Child. What little underdrawing is visible in the figures of Joseph, Mary, and the Christ Child in the Bruges version shows Christ's typical broad brush contour lines for the forms and an extremely fine parallel hatching here and there in the draperies and the Virgin's right hand. The type of underdrawing is very similar to that found in the Budapest *Virgin and Child* and the *Portrait of a Male Donor*, suggesting a date in the early 1450s for the Bruges *Nativity*.
12. Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 104. Only R. H. Wilenski (*Flemish Painters, 1430–1830*, 2 vols. [New York, 1960], vol. 1, p. 33) and Colin Eisler (according to Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 311 n. 8) opposed his attribution.
13. For a date in the 1440s, see Schöne 1938, p. 56; Tolnay 1941, p. 179; Baldass 1952, pp. 98–99; Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 311–12; Bruyn 1957, p. 107; Birkmeyer 1961, pp. 103, 105; Cuttler 1968, p. 129; Ward 1968, p. 187; Gellman 1970a, p. 147; and B. G. Lane, "'Ecce Panis Angelorum': The Manger as Altar in Hugo's Berlin *Nativity*," *Art Bulletin* 57 (December 1975), p. 484. Relating the *Nativity* to the *Saint Eligius* of 1449 were Bruyn (1957, pp. 107–8); Panhans-Bühler (1978, pp. 71–72); and Châtelet (1981, p. 90). Hand and Wolff (1986, pp. 44–46) dated it about 1450. Bazin (1952, pp. 199–202), Richter (1974, pp. 314–18), and Collier (1979, p. 34) favored a date between 1454 and 1463, after a proposed trip to Italy by Christ. Schabacker (1974, pp. 45, 67) suggested a date as late as 1458–60, and Sterling (1971, p. 19), as late as 1462.
14. Illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, pls. 1a, 4.
15. Birkmeyer (1961, p. 107); and Hand and Wolff (1986, p. 46). Since it is an independent composition, the Washington *Nativity* (which has a Southern provenance) could have been a model for Antonello Gagini's sculpture in Santa Zita, Palermo (see cat. no. 15).
16. These lines are only partially visible in various places and disappear under the upper paint layers. Therefore, it is not possible to make a precise reconstruction of all the lines contributing to the overall plan.
17. Myers 1978, p. 159; and L. B. Alberti, *On Painting*, trans. J. R. Spencer, rev. ed. (New Haven, 1966), pp. 56, 57 n. 48.
18. Upton (1977, pp. 69–70) suggested that the position of the shepherds in the *Nativity* mirrors that of the viewer before the painting and speculates that the figures may indicate "man who would listen without hearing and look without seeing."

18

Madonna of the Dry Tree

About 1465

Oil on oak, 5¼ x 4¼ in. (14.7 x 12.4 cm)

Provenance: private collection, Belgium; Ernst Oppler, Berlin (before 1919); Fritz Thyssen, Mülheim an der Ruhr (by 1937–1960s); Konrad Adenauer, Rhöndorf am Rhein (Bonn); Thyssen-Bornemisza collection, Lugano (1965); Fundación Colección Thyssen-Bornemisza, Madrid (1965.10)

The Virgin and Child, shimmering like brilliant jewels against the dark background, stand on a dead tree trunk, encircled by a crown of thorns. This unusual representation, which has no known precedent in early Netherlandish painting, finds its source in Ezekiel 17:24: "And all the trees of the field shall know that I the Lord have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree, have dried up the green tree, and have made the dry tree to flourish." The dry tree—the Tree of Knowledge, which withered when Adam and Eve ate its fruit—was made to come alive again through the Virgin. According to the *Pèlerinage de l'âme* (1330) of Guillaume de Deguileville, the Lord grafted a green branch from the Tree of Life onto the dry Tree of Knowledge, a metaphor for the barren Saint Anne giving birth to the Virgin, the foundation of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception.¹

The *Madonna of the Dry Tree* is almost a literal translation of de Deguileville's text, the Virgin being the graft on the dead tree and the Christ Child, the fruit of this growth and the Savior of mankind. His role as the Redeemer is indicated by the orb with a cross that he holds in his left hand, and his sacrifice for man's salvation is symbolized by the dry tree limbs fashioned into a spiny crown of thorns. The dry tree thus represents the Fall of Man and, as a result of Christ's sacrifice on the cross, man's Redemption.²

The tiny panel was meant not only as a statement of Christian doctrine but also as an aid for personal devotion. The golden *as* dangling from the branches probably refer to the first letter of the prayer to the Virgin, the Ave Maria. They are fifteen in number, suggesting the Mysteries of the Virgin commemorated in the fifteen decades of Ave Marias to be recited in





Fig. 161. Seal on cover of *Ledenlijst en Inventaris van het Kerkgoed*, 15th century. *Gilde Droogenboom*, no. 505, Stadsarchief, Bruges

the rosary. Although the first confraternity of the rosary was not established in Flanders until 1470 (by the Dominican Alanus de Rupe), the use of the rosary had already gained widespread popularity.³

The Ave has further significance in the context of the *Madonna of the Dry Tree* because it was understood in medieval interpretations as the reverse of “Eva.”⁴ It is a reminder that the Fall of Man, initiated by Eve, is redressed by the new Eve (Mary), whose son becomes the Savior of mankind. The Virgin’s pivotal role as the mother of Christ and intercessor for mankind is emphasized by her central placement in the composition.

Although legends say Philip the Good founded the Confraternity of the Dry Tree following a victory in battle about 1421, the Franciscans, staunch supporters of the doctrine of the Immaculate Conception, actually inaugurated the first group before 1396.⁵ Meeting in Bruges at the Church of the Friars Minor,⁶ the confraternity developed into one of the most prestigious of the day, counting among its number the Burgundian dukes—from Philip the Good to Philip the Fair—elite courtiers, representatives of the most distinguished upper-class families in the city, and eminent painters, such as Christus himself.

As the members included Bruges’s most prominent patrons of the arts, it is curious that only one known work, the *Madonna of the Dry Tree*, is clearly identifiable with the confraternity at this time.⁷ The panel is not listed among the items in the 1495 inventory of the confraternity’s treasures⁸ and thus may have been painted for an individual member of the group rather than for the adornment of their chapel, an assumption supported by its diminutive size.

Whatever the circumstances of its commission, the image seems official in nature, for as Maximiliaan Martens has noted, it closely resembles the emblem stamped on the covers of the confraternity’s bound archival records from this period (fig. 161).⁹ These seals show a Madonna and Child standing in a tree whose branches form a crown of thorns with dangling *as*.¹⁰ The same image was perhaps imprinted on the medallions given to members at the annual feasts; however, the only surviving examples are from the eighteenth century, and these are quite different.¹¹

The attribution of the *Madonna of the Dry Tree* to Christus has been unanimous since Grete Ring first studied the painting in 1919.¹² Opinions regarding its date, however, vary considerably. Those favoring an early date, about 1444, saw a relationship between this work, the Exeter *Madonna*, and the Frick *Virgin and Child*, an association also noticed by those who suggested a somewhat later date, in the 1450s. The majority of scholars recognized Christus’s return to late Eyckian influences at the end of his career as well as his membership in the confraternity (as of 1463) as determining factors for a date in the 1460s.¹³

Although Christus’s personal association with the society is interesting, it does not affect the dating of the work, which is more reliably determined on the basis of style and technique. Christus recalled late Eyckian workshop models, such as the Frick *Virgin and Child* and the Maelbeke *Madonna*, for the poses of the Virgin and the Christ Child (cat. no. 2, fig. 95). Mary’s elegant draperies, with their sinuous curve, turned-back front edge, and long, narrow looped opening at her right arm, were modeled after those of the Virgins in van Eyck’s *Madonna in the Church* (Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin)¹⁴ and *Virgin at the Fountain* (fig. 134).

Christus turned to Rogier van der Weyden for the motif of the Christ Child wearing a shirt and for the sweet facial type of the Virgin.¹⁵ It is difficult to determine whether he had firsthand knowledge of specific paintings by Rogier or knew them through models, drawings, and copies that Hans Memling presumably brought with him to Bruges after leaving Rogier’s Brussels atelier in 1464. The conflation of Rogierian and late Eyckian types and motifs occurred in Christus’s latest works, such as the Washington *Nativity* and the *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (cat. nos. 17, 20).

Still employing the technique of an illuminator, Christus strategically placed tiny daubs of pure color to achieve three-dimensional effects, as on the Virgin’s left hand, the Child’s toes, the orb, and the *as* dangling from the tree (fig. 28). Although the red, green, and blue of the Virgin’s robes are more fully blended, the modeling of the Christ Child’s shirt is achieved by juxtaposing strokes of pure white and gray that merge when viewed from a distance. Small in size but not in impact, this painting exemplifies the peak of Christus’s abilities.

1. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 311 n. 4. Christus perhaps knew the text through the translation that Abbot Lubrecht Hautschilt of the abbey of Eeckhout made for Philip the Good (Upton 1990, p. 61 n. 38), two copies of which are in the Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, Brussels, MS 10176–78 and MS 10197–98 (see C. Gaspar and F. Lyna, *Les Principaux Manuscrits à peintures de la Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique*, 2 vols. [Paris, 1937], vol. 1, pp. 379–83, 393–95).
2. See Upton 1990, pp. 60–65, for a discussion of the iconography.
3. E. Wilkins, *The Rose-Garden Game: The Symbolic Background to the European Prayer-Beads* (London, 1969), p. 36; Schabacker 1974, p. 107; and G. C. Bauman, “A Rosary Picture with a View of the Park of the Ducal Palace in Brussels, Possibly by Goswijn van der Weyden,” *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 24 (1989), pp. 135–51, esp. 138.
4. Upton 1972, p. 341; and A. Rosenbaum, “Petrus Christus, *Our Lady of the Barren Tree*,” in *Old Master Paintings from the Collection of Baron Thyssen-Bornemisza*, exhib. cat. (Washington, D.C., [1979]), pp. 107–9, esp. 108, no. 19.
5. Philip is said to have had a vision of the Virgin in a tree during a battle he was losing against the French. He prayed to her to intercede and won as a result. Upon his return to Bruges, he supposedly founded (or revived) a confraternity devoted to the Dry Tree. Each of the sixteen members wore a medal that had the Virgin in a tree on one side and the duke’s portrait on the other (see Custis 1843, pp. 379–85, esp. 384). On the Confraternity of the Dry Tree, see also A. de Schodt, “Confrérie de Notre-Dame de l’Arbre Sec,” *Annales de la Société d’Emulation de Bruges* 28 (1876–77), pp. 141–87; and Martens, “Petrus Christus: A Cultural Biography,” this volume.
6. This church was destroyed in 1578 (Ring 1919, p. 78).
7. There is a far more elaborate rendition of about 1620 by Peter Claeysens (Saint Walburge, Bruges; ill. in Upton 1990, fig. 60). Ring (1919, pp. 76–79), Panhans-Bühler (1978, pp. 79–81), and Umland (in Eisler 1989, p. 96) associated this work with Christus’s painting and suggested a lost model for both. Münzel (1958, pp. 256–60) and Upton (1990, pp. 62–63) rightly rejected this hypothesis, as the Claeysens painting illustrates the more complicated and entangled traditions of the legends of Alexander and the Holy Roman Empire, the Holy Cross, and the tree of Seth.
8. Martens 1992, doc. 159.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 313 n. 25. Umland (in Eisler 1989, p. 97) suggested that the painting may have been “modelled upon a *joyau* mounted on a crozier used for the society’s ceremonies.”
10. This would tend to refute Schabacker’s theory (1974, pp. 107–8) that the *as* were added at the request of a patron.
11. Custis 1843, pp. 379–80, pl. opp. p. 380; Schodt, “Confrérie,” pp. 176–80, pls. 1, 2; Ring 1919, p. 79; Upton 1972, p. 149; and Umland, in Eisler 1989, p. 95.
12. Ring 1919, pp. 75–80.
13. On an early dating, see K. Algermissen et al., eds., *Lexikon der Marienkunde*, 8 pts. (Regensburg, 1957–67), pts. 3–4, col. 509; Münzel 1958, p. 256; E. Guldan, *Eva und Maria: Eine Antithese als Bildmotiv* (Graz and Cologne, 1966), p. 227, no. 167; and Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pp. 87, 95. Gellman (1970b, p. 192) suggested a date about 1449. The 1450s are suggested in Baldass 1952, p. 99; Sterling 1971, p. 19; Upton 1972, p. 342; Schabacker 1974, p. 74; and Umland, in Eisler 1989, pp. 92, 97. For the 1460s, see Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 311; Schöne 1954, pp. 148–49; Bruyn 1957, pp. 113–14; Cuttler 1968, p. 134; Ebbinge-Wubben 1969, vol. [2], p. 69; Richter 1974, pp. 326–30; Panhans-Bühler 1978, p. 81; Lurie 1981, p. 94; and Snyder 1985, p. 156.
14. Illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pl. 39.
15. For examples of the Christ Child wearing a shirt, see *ibid.*, vol. 2, pl. 16, no. 8; pl. 123, no. 118; pl. 124, nos. 119, 120a, add. 142; pl. 137. The sweet facial type of the Virgin is particularly evident in pl. 16, no. 8; pl. 137.

Portrait of a Lady

About 1470

Oil on oak, 11 x 8¼ in. (28 x 21 cm)

Provenance: Solly collection, London; Staatliche Museen

Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, 1821 (532)

This enigmatic portrait of a young woman, imbued with a haunting sense of stillness, has been cloaked in mystery since it surfaced in the Solly collection, which was acquired by the Berlin Gemäldegalerie in 1821. The identity of the sitter and the date of execution have been continuously debated in the literature. Only the attribution of the painting has remained unchallenged. This is due in part to an old inscription on the now-lost original frame that Gustav Waagen interpreted as “Petrus Christophori.”¹ The frame apparently also carried the identification of the sitter, which Waagen said was a “Nichte des berühmten Talbot.”²

Following Waagen, scholars continued to place the woman in the Talbot family until George Scharf suggested in 1863 that

because of similarities in size and general treatment, the painting was intended as a pendant to the *Portrait of Edward Grymeston* (fig. 65). Wilhelm Bode and James Weale concurred with this opinion, the latter suggesting that the sitter was Grymeston’s first wife, Alice.³ Grete Ring, however, correctly pointed out that the dimensions of the two portraits differ and the background spaces do not correspond, and Archibald Russell quoted documentary evidence proving that none of Grymeston’s three wives came from the Talbot family.⁴ Following the 1950 exhibition “Chefs-d’oeuvre des musées de Berlin” at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels, Germain Bazin and Simone Bergmans claimed the sitter for Flanders, suggesting she was Isabella of Bourbon, second wife of Charles the Bold.⁵



Fig. 162. Master of 1473, *Triptych of Jan de Witte*, 1473. Oil on oak, each panel approx. 29½ x 15½ in. (74.5 x 38.5 cm).
Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels



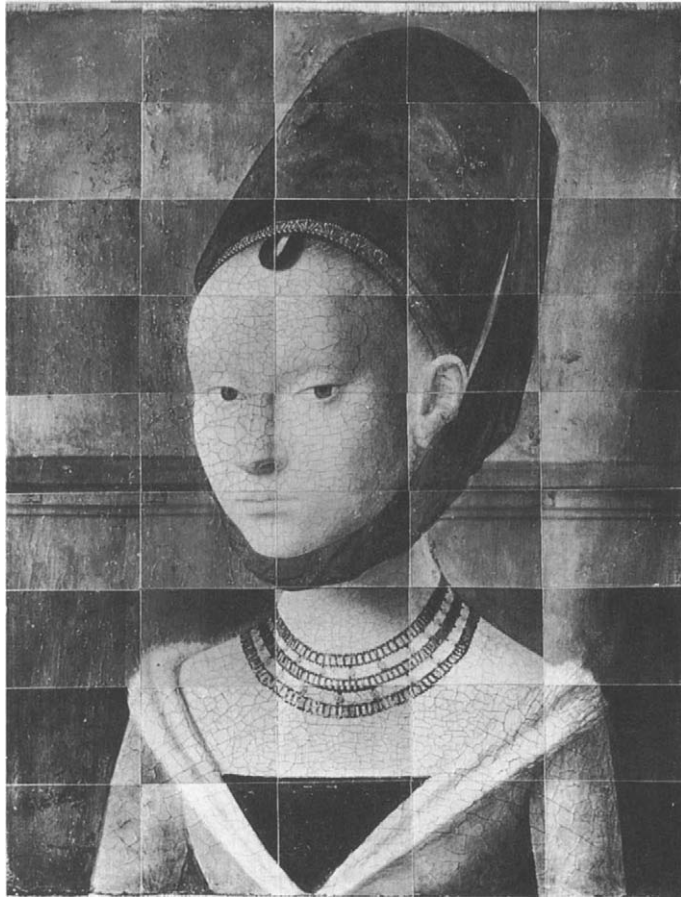


Fig. 163. IRR assembly of cat. no. 19



Fig. 164. X-radiograph of cat. no. 19

The matter of the sitter's identity was not taken up again in earnest until 1990, when Joel Upton returned to Waagen's interpretation of the inscription on the frame.⁶ Upton suggested that John, Lord Talbot, the first earl of Shrewsbury (d. 1453), must be the Talbot referred to and that perhaps due to Waagen's mistranslation of the Latin word *nepos* as *Nichte*, or niece, rather than grandchild, the woman represented could be Anne or Margaret Talbot, daughters of the second earl of Shrewsbury.⁷ As the parents of the two girls were married in 1444–45, either daughter could have been as youthful as this sitter. Furthermore, since the girls' aunt, Elizabeth Talbot, the duchess of Norfolk, was present at the marriage of Margaret of York to Charles the Bold in 1468 in Bruges, either of these two girls, who presumably accompanied her, could have posed for the portrait.

Although the identification of the sitter as Anne or Margaret Talbot admittedly relies on hypothetical circumstances, Upton's careful reconstruction appears to be the most plausible to date. His suggestion presents the first credible reading of Waagen's recording of the inscription on the lost frame and has the advantage of producing an identification that closely corresponds to the likely date of the painting.

The early literature on the *Portrait of a Lady* favors a date in the 1440s,⁸ most likely to suit now-unconvincing efforts to link

the picture with the *Portrait of Edward Grymeston*, which is signed and dated 1446. In rejecting the association of the two paintings, Erwin Panofsky noted that the costume of the young lady parallels that worn by Maria Baroncelli in a portrait of 1470–71 by Hans Memling (The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York).⁹ Other examples, such as the costume of the female donor in the *Triptych of Jan de Witte* (dated 1473 on the frame; fig. 162) by the Bruges Master of 1473 or of a woman in an illustration from the first volume of the *Chronique universelle, dite "La Bouquechardière"* of about 1470 by the workshop of Philippe de Mazerolles,¹⁰ confirm a dating of about 1470 for the Berlin portrait.¹¹

In this late work, Christus discarded the ambiguous lighting effects of the *Portrait of a Carthusian* (cat. no. 5) and the more complex spatial description of the *Edward Grymeston* in favor of an elegant simplicity. As is typical in his late works, he relied on a compositional balance of vertical, horizontal, and diagonal lines to anchor the sitter in a dynamic geometrical construct. The tonal differentiations have lessened over time, but the original cool palette of blues, whites, grays, and blacks would have further underscored the haunting psychological detachment of the figure, with her averted glance. The crisp description of form is achieved by the focused light coming from the left,

which evenly bathes the sitter and is reflected from the jeweled adornments of her elaborate costume. Christus has distilled his presentation to her essential features, thus perfecting a bold confrontation between subject and observer.

To achieve the effects he desired in the *Portrait of a Lady*, Christus did not prepare an elaborate underdrawing but instead limited his preliminary sketch to a few broad brush lines visible at the contours of the figure, in the fur collar, and at the band of the hat (fig. 163). There is some parallel hatching in the deepest shadow areas of the neck and along the side of the face at the right. An X-radiograph of the portrait shows that, as he did in the *Carthusian*, Christus broadly brushed in a layer of whitish underpaint for the head, reserving unequal odd-shaped slits for the eyes (compare figs. 111 and 164). He relied on the glazes applied over this layer to accomplish the subtle modeling of the face. However, as Crowe and Cavalcaselle noted in 1872, the *Portrait of a Lady* is “now deprived of its coloured glazing,”¹² which results in the accentuated starkness and porcelainlike quality of the face.¹³

Intriguing as it may be to link this remarkable portrait with the one referred to in a 1492 inventory of Lorenzo de’ Medici’s belongings as “una tavoletta dipintovi di una testa di dama francese cholorita a olio, opera di Pietro Cresti da Bruggia,”¹⁴ there is no definitive proof that the painting was ever in Italy. A vastly inferior, probably modern copy, formerly in the Forrer collection, Strasbourg and Zurich, was published in 1942.¹⁵

1. Waagen 1824, p. 448. Since Waagen mentioned that the *Saint Eligius* was signed the same way as the *Portrait of a Lady*, we may reasonably assume that the inscription on the Berlin portrait was similar to that on the Lehman Collection painting—that is, *petr xp̄i*. Upton (1990, p. 29 n. 21) suggested that the frame must have been lost between 1824 (he means 1825—see the bibliography, s.v. *Waagen*, this volume), when Waagen recorded the inscription on it, and 1833, when Passavant (1833, p. 424) published the painting, claiming the frame was lost.
2. G. F. Waagen, *Handbuch der deutschen und niederländischen Malerschulen*, 2 vols. (Stuttgart, 1862), vol. 1, p. 94.
3. Scharf 1866, pp. 471–72; Bode 1887b, p. 217; and Weale 1909, p. 101. Conway (1921, p. 108) also agreed with this identification. She is called

- “Lady Talbot” by Schöne (1938, p. 56) and A. H. Cornette (*De Portretten van Jan van Eyck*, Maerlantbibliotheek 20 [Antwerp, 1947], p. 69).
4. Ring 1913, p. 6; and A. G. B. Russell, “Van Eyck and His Followers,” *Burlington Magazine* 40 (February 1922), p. 102. The identification of the sitter as the wife of Edward Grymeston was also rejected by Burger (1925, p. 36); Fierens-Gevaert (1927–29, vol. 2, p. 88); Friedländer (1967–76, vol. 1, p. 82); and Gellman (1970b, p. 468).
 5. Bazin 1952, p. 199; and S. Bergmans, *La Peinture ancienne: Ses mystères—ses secrets* (Brussels, 1952), p. 86. Following in this vein, Panofsky (1953, vol. 1, p. 313 n. 7); Gellman (1970b, pp. 468–69); Sterling (1971, p. 19); Schabacker (1974, p. 110); *Catalogue of Paintings, Thirteenth–Eighteenth Century: Picture Gallery, Staatliche Museen, Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Berlin*, trans. L. B. Parshall, 2nd rev. ed. (Berlin, 1978), pp. 106–7; and M. de Grèce (*Portrait et séduction* [Paris, 1992], p. 222) associated this portrait with the one mentioned in the Medici inventory of 1492 (see Appendix 1, doc. 28).
 6. Upton 1990, pp. 29–30.
 7. Upton (ibid., p. 29) noted that if the Talbot is John, Lord Talbot, the sitter could not be his niece, since Talbot’s only niece, Ankaret, died at the age of five in 1421.
 8. Bode 1887b, p. 217; Weale 1909, p. 101; Durand-Gréville 1911, p. 142; Conway 1921, p. 108; Pächt 1926, p. 158; Schöne 1938, p. 56; Schöne 1939, p. 27; Forrer 1942, p. 7; Lavalleye 1945, pl. XXVI; Cornette, *Portretten*, p. 68, fig. 33; and Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 95. Frank Herrmann (“Who Was Solly? Part 2: The Collector and His Collection,” *Connoisseur* 165 [May 1967], p. 14) and de Grèce (*Portrait*, p. 222) concurred with this view.
 9. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 313 n. 7. Panofsky also suggested an association with the dress of a female figure in the *Chroniques* of Jean Froissart (MS fr. 2643, fol. 321v, Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris).
 10. MS M.214, Pierpont Morgan Library, New York; see Gellman 1970b, p. 265 n. 187.
 11. Agreeing with a late date in the 1460s or 1470s are Panofsky (1953, vol. 1, p. 313 n. 7); Bruyn (1957, p. 113); Cuttler (1968, p. 134); Gellman (1970b, pp. 468–69); Sterling (1971, pp. 18–19); Upton (1972, p. 275); Richter (1974, pp. 333–36); Collier (1975, pp. 139, 195); *Catalogue of Paintings*, pp. 106–7; Snyder (1985, p. 165); and Upton (1990, p. 29). Schabacker (1974, p. 110) favored a somewhat earlier date of 1452–57.
 12. Crowe and Cavalcaselle 1872, p. 145.
 13. The abraded state of the glazes in the face may be what led some to call attention to the eyes “curiously marked by a Chinese obliquity” (ibid.) and to their “Chinese stylization” (Bazin 1952, p. 199). Sterling (1971, p. 19) thought this feature and others were attributable to the influence of Jean Fouquet.
 14. See Appendix 1, doc. 28.
 15. Forrer 1942, pp. 5–8, fig. 2.

Holy Family in a Domestic Interior

About 1470

Oil on oak, 27 $\frac{3}{4}$ x 20 in. (69.5 x 50.8 cm)

Provenance: duchess of Berry, Palazzo Vendramin, Venice, as Lucas van Leyden (1856); [Hôtel Drouot, Paris, April 27, 1865, lot 434]; comte F. de la Ferronay, Paris (1866?); [Paul Demidoff sale, Paris, April 1–3, 1869, lot 3]; comte de Chambord (1873); [Frederick Mont and Company, New York, 1956]; Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City, 1956 (56.51)

One of the more recent additions to Christus's oeuvre, this remarkably well-preserved painting became generally known only when it resurfaced in 1956 and was acquired by the Nelson-Atkins Museum. Previously, it had circulated among various private collections, the most noted being that of the duchess of Berry, daughter-in-law of Charles X of France. In 1856, while in her collection, the painting was catalogued as a Lucas van Leyden,¹ no doubt because its genre-like qualities were thought of as Dutch.

Although subsequently sold in Paris in 1865 as a van Leyden, the Kansas City *Holy Family* finally claimed its proper attribution the following year, when it was exhibited with works

from private collections in Paris.² The painting was listed as a "Christophsen," a name similar to that given to Christus in early articles by Gustav Waagen and Johann David Passavant.³ Since that time, there has been no dispute about the attribution.

Most scholars ascribe the particular placement of symbolic objects—the fruit on the windowsill, the orb held by the Christ Child, the chandelier, and the carved wooden figures on the furniture—to Eyckian influence. The bedroom is at once reminiscent of the setting of Jan van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* and of Rogier van der Weyden's *Annunciation* (figs. 94, 165). But the manner in which space is telescoped into successive interior



Fig. 165. Rogier van der Weyden, *Annunciation*, ca. 1435. Oil on oak, 34 x 36 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (86 x 93 cm). Musée du Louvre, Paris

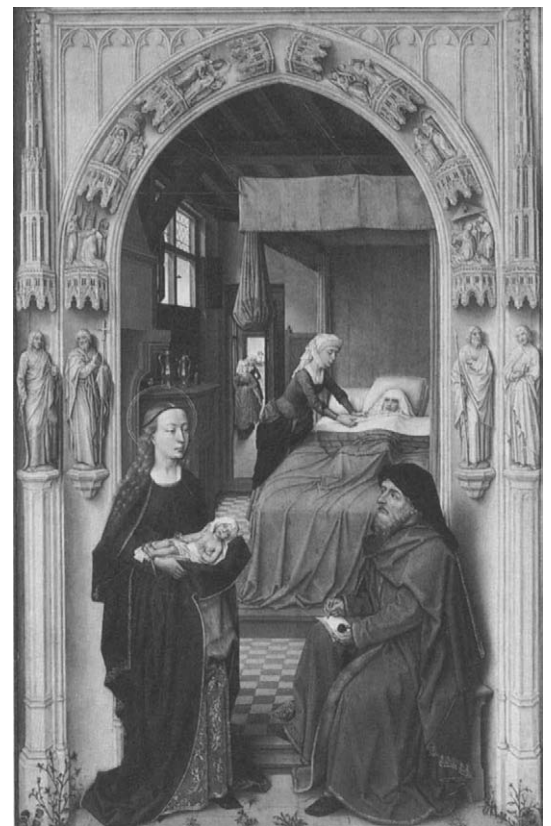


Fig. 166. Rogier van der Weyden, *Birth of Saint John* (from the *Saint John Altarpiece*), ca. 1450. Oil on oak, panel 30 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 18 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (77 x 48 cm). Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin





Fig. 167. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 20 (underdrawing of the Virgin and Child)

rooms calls to mind other compelling contemporary examples, such as Rogier's *Saint John Altarpiece* and, even more, the *Birth of Saint John* in the *Turin-Milan Hours* (figs. 166, 81). As is typical of Christus's late works, the *Holy Family* shows a masterful blending of influences—from van Eyck, Rogier, and manuscript illumination—reshaped into a new idiom. For Christus, the composition was paramount, as it served in a fundamental way to reinforce the doctrinal message. Along with the *Washington Nativity* (cat. no. 17), this painting is the summation of Christus's efforts in this regard.

Although the suggested dating of the picture has ranged from the 1440s to the 1460s, features of its execution and likely commission place it in the last years of Christus's production.⁴ It also shows the most sophisticated and advanced understanding of perspective, which Christus learned to use in an increasingly successful way to manipulate the viewer's access to the message of his paintings. This work achieves that perfect union between meaning and underlying structure. In light and color harmonies as well, the *Holy Family* is Christus's greatest achievement. Progressing from warmer to cooler tonalities, the modulation of color facilitates the reading of spatial recession. Light coming from the outside bathes the interior space, crisply defining the forms.

Presumably because of the important nature of the commission, this painting was fully worked up in the preliminary stages, which involved a number of steps beyond inscribing the perspective system in the ground with a stylus. Christus initially created the essential features of the composition with sketchy, broad brush strokes, which are apparent at the lower left, where the original idea was to provide a longer window (fig. 167). He proceeded to secure the correct orthogonals of the design, making ruled lines around the figures and main compositional features, then fully modeled them with fine parallel strokes and cross-hatching (fig. 168). He used broader brush strokes for the deepest areas of shadow in the draperies, thus providing an undermodeling for the paint layers. Such a complete underdrawing, leaving nothing to impromptu consideration, would have looked like a *vidimus*, or presentation drawing. If so, it apparently met with the approval of the patron, for only minor adjustments were made between the preliminary and the final, painted stages.

Previous efforts to explain the theme of the painting have been unsatisfactory because inadequate attention was paid to contemporary theological discussions about the character of the Holy Family. Patrick Kelleher, followed by Ellen Goheen, suggested that the scene represents preparations for the Flight into Egypt.⁵ Objecting to this suggestion on the grounds that the flight (as described in Matthew 2:14) occurred at night, not during the day, and that the Christ Child is hardly dressed for travel, Robert Koch claimed that Christus simply intended to

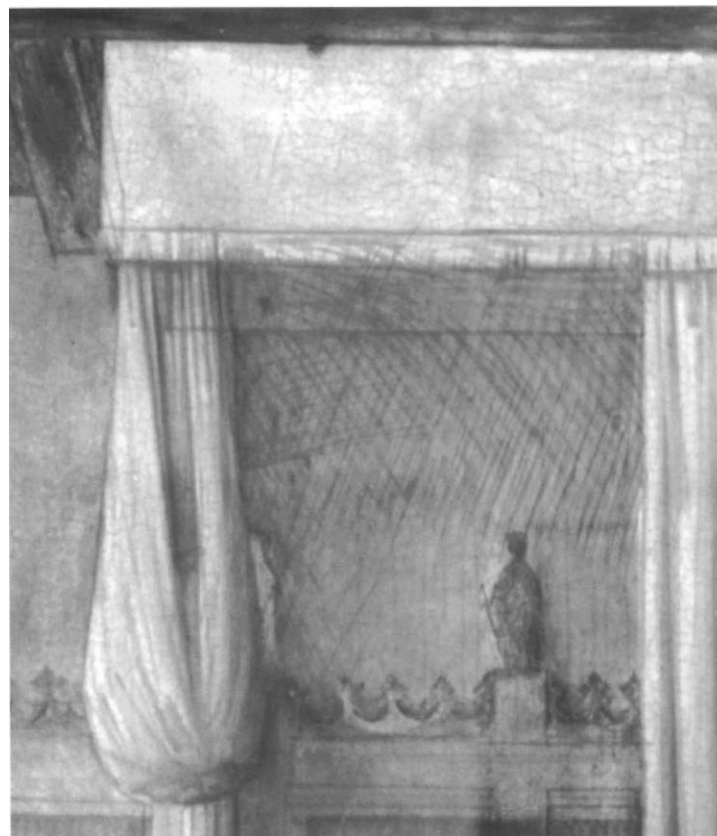


Fig. 168. IRR computer assembly, detail of cat. no. 20 (underdrawing of the bed)

show the Virgin and Child, brought “down from the ‘throne room’ where they were left by Jan van Eyck and to give them privacy in an upper-middle-class residence.”⁶ Peter Schabacker concurred with this view, and Joel Upton, finding no specific biblical source for the representation, reiterated that the *Holy Family* “represents merely an unexceptional moment without historical, narrative, liturgical, or political substance.”⁷

Although Lola Gellman also agreed that Christus was “simply portraying the Holy Family at home,” she alone observed certain details that play a key role in the interpretation of the painting.⁸ She called attention to the conspicuous presence of Joseph, who carries a rosary in recognition of his piety and virtue, characteristics that were assigned to him in the development of a cult during the fifteenth century. Gellman also recognized that an emphasis on the figure of Joseph was created not only through compositional means (such as the diagonal running from the Virgin to him) but also through color (the repetition of red and blue in their garments).

The Kansas City picture derives from a significant number of late medieval images and texts that show the Holy Family in their daily life, but its meaning is not superficial or anecdotal. Rather, the painting is a vision of the sacred nature of marriage and the family, this Holy Family being represented as an earthly Trinity.⁹ Specifically, the iconography draws upon theological tenets proposed by Jean Gerson, who served as the dean of Sint

Donaas in Bruges after 1397.¹⁰ Along with his teacher, Cardinal Peter d'Ailly, bishop of Cambrai, Gerson championed the role of Joseph, helping to change his image from that of an aged, ineffective attendant to the Virgin and Child to an industrious provider for his family and a paradigm of perfection.¹¹

Gerson's sermons presented Joseph as a moral model who was sanctified in the womb and thus incapable of sin.¹² He was praised for his chastity and his ability to control the fires of sexual desire. One sermon in particular dwells on Joseph's victory over lust, which is described as the "carnal concupiscence of the corrupted flesh," a "fiery furnace."¹³ Gerson worked toward establishing Joseph as the protector of God's plan for salvation, thus securing for him a place at the head of the family and, along with his spouse, Mary, as an exemplar of holy matrimony. According to Gerson, theirs was the "most genuine of marriages . . . a great sacrament, signifying the union of God and the church."¹⁴ This is the Joseph represented in the Kansas City painting: an equal member of and participant in the Holy Family and integral to God's plan for man's salvation.



Fig. 169. Master of Girart de Roussillon or Workshop, *Margaret of York and the Resurrected Christ*, in Nicolas Finet, *Le Dialogue de la Duchesse de Bourgogne à Jésus Christ*, add. MS 7970, fol. iv. Tempera on vellum. British Library, London

Mary is seated on a cushion on the floor as the Madonna of Humility, reading to her son from the Holy Scriptures. In her role as educator, she personifies the church, the repository of true knowledge and the source for teaching and perfecting the soul.¹⁵ The Christ Child gestures with his right hand toward the book, the written promise of salvation, and holds in his left hand the orb mounted with a cross, the symbol of that promise. The family is thus made complete, just as it is described in the *Golden Legend's* account of a vision of Saint Dominic: "Mary will enlighten you, Joseph will perfect you, and the Child Jesus will save you."¹⁶ According to this formula, each member of the Holy Family has a prescribed role, and a spiritual task lies behind every seemingly mundane one.

In the *Holy Family*, signs of divinity are expressed through the representation of ordinary objects in their customary settings. Doctrine is presented in the context of domestic tranquillity. At the very root of Christus's presentation is a carefully devised perspective system that emphasizes two focal points of the composition, both literally and figuratively. These points are meaningfully placed, one at the upper left of the *thalamus*, or conjugal bed, denoting the physical union of marriage, and the other just to the left of Joseph in the doorjamb, emphasizing his position literally at the apex of this Holy Family (fig. 60). Anchored within this plan are the Virgin and Child, a great solid pyramid in the lower left corner of an even larger triangle composed of the lateral orthogonals meeting at the figure of Joseph and the base line of the composition.

The major symbolic references are placed along the orthogonals of the perspective system in order to clarify their collective meaning. Across from the conjugal bed is the fireplace, which is empty but shows the sooty remains of previous fires, suggesting the past existence of now-harnessed lust.¹⁷ The unused fireplace is on an orthogonal that runs parallel to the one between the Virgin and Joseph, implying the chasteness of their union.

Revealed through the window at the left is the *hortus conclusus*, or enclosed garden, of Mary's virginity. It may also be understood as the Garden of Paradise, since the fruit of that paradise sits on the windowsill, calling to mind Mary's reopening of the way to heaven, which had been closed by Eve through her sin. Joseph enters from this garden, possibly in his role as co-redeemer of the sin of Adam; "Only through . . . true Christian marriage in the union of Mary and Joseph are the sexual shame and sin of Adam and Eve redeemed and may marriage exist as a *bonum sacramentum*."¹⁸ Christ stands in his role as the Redeemer incarnate, the product of a pure union of God and mankind, underscored by the two carved statuettes on the top of the headboard. The figure to the left is difficult to identify, but he appears to hold keys.¹⁹ This may be a reference to sermons that mention Joseph's two keys to Paradise, symbolic of the Virgin

and the Christ Child.²⁰ The figure to the right is Saint Catherine, who envisioned a chaste, mystical marriage with Christ.

The nature of the iconographic program and the extraordinary care with which the painting was executed suggest it was commissioned for a special occasion, perhaps a marriage.²¹ Clues to the possible identity of the patron may be found in the picture. The particular combination of red and blue in the garments of Joseph and Mary is unusual for Christus, who often favored red and green for draperies. If this color scheme is joined with other seemingly inexplicable details—the fleurs-de-lis in the decoratively carved band at the top of the headboard and the golden lion crowning the chandelier suspended from red and blue banded cords—we find the components of the coat of arms of Charles the Bold.

On April 19, 1468, Charles made his official entry into Bruges. From May 8 to 10, he presided over the meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece; that month, he also attended the annual fair that included the traditional procession of the Holy Blood. On July 3, he capped off these events with the grandest celebration of all, his marriage to Margaret of York. The images appropriate for such an occasion certainly would have included the Holy Family, which, in terms of Gerson's sermons, emphasized the sacramental nature of holy matrimony. The interest Charles and Margaret had in Gerson's writings is evident from an illuminated manuscript of his spiritual dialogues that Margaret commissioned for her own library between 1468 and 1477. It carries the monogram *C & M* (for Charles and Margaret) as well as the signature of Margaret of York.²² Gerson's texts would have been new to the duchess at this time, for they were apparently not familiar to the laity in England.²³

Beyond the connections with Gerson, the *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* represents Margaret of York's devotional practice, exemplary piety, and earnest desire to provide progeny for the twice-widowed Charles. In an extraordinary gesture, she traveled to Aachen to place her splendid wedding crown on the head of the statue of the Virgin in the cathedral, perhaps hoping for a miracle from this pure symbol of motherhood. She worshiped saints—Gummar, Catherine, and Barbara among them—who were protectors of married women.²⁴ Later, still childless, Margaret became especially devoted to the proper education of orphans, and she herself tutored the children of Mary and Philip the Fair. The way the duke and duchess had themselves depicted in illuminated manuscripts illustrates the concerns that preoccupied them. A miniature in *La Vie de Sainte Colette* by Pierre de Vaux (MS 8, Clarissenklooster, Ghent) shows the two as witnesses to the miracle of Saint Anne, which was intended to draw a parallel with Christ blessing their marriage; another, from *Le Dialogue de la Duchesse de Bourgogne à Jésus Christ*, shows Margaret with the resurrected Christ instruc-

ting her in devotion and praising her piety (fig. 169).²⁵ The latter takes place in Margaret's bedroom, which, perhaps quite intentionally, looks very much like the chamber in the Kansas City *Holy Family*.

Christus was in Bruges during the festivities of 1468 restoring props he had made earlier²⁶ and indeed could have received the commission for the *Holy Family* at that time. He therefore must have executed the painting after 1468, perhaps about 1470, making it his latest known panel painting.

1. See F. Zanotto, *Nuovissima guida di Venezia e delle isole della sua laguna* (Venice, 1856), p. 359.
2. Palais des Champs-Élysées, *Exposition retrospective: Tableaux anciens empruntés aux galeries particulières*, exhib. cat. (Paris, 1866), no. 24.
3. For the early confusion about Christus's name, see Ainsworth, "Art of Petrus Christus," this volume.
4. The 1440s: Bruyn 1957, pp. 108–9; Friedländer, in Kelleher 1957, p. 113; and Kelleher 1957, pp. 113–15. The 1450s: Panofsky, in Kelleher 1957, p. 113; Cuttler 1968, p. 133; Gellman 1970b, p. 213; Richter 1974, pp. 322–26; Schabacker 1974, p. 104; and Snyder 1985, p. 154. The 1460s: Koch 1957, p. 276; Upton 1972, p. 323; Collier 1975, pp. 138–39; Panhans-Bühler 1978, p. 114; and Collier 1979, p. 34. On close examination with magnification, no date or letters could be found on the clasp of the book at the left, as Collier (1979, p. 34 n. 55) suggested.
5. [Kelleher] 1956; Kelleher 1957, pp. 113–16; and E. R. Goheen, *The Collections of the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art* (New York, 1988), pp. 37–39.
6. Koch 1957, p. 274; and R. A. Koch, "Petrus Christus, *Virgin and Child in a Gothic Interior*," in *Flemish Paintings in America: A Survey of Early Netherlandish and Flemish Paintings in the Public Collections of North America* (Antwerp, 1992), p. 52.
7. Schabacker 1974, p. 104; and Upton 1990, pp. 79–80. Upton (p. 80 n. 81) tentatively suggested the subject is the Virgin teaching the Christ Child to read.
8. Gellman 1970b, pp. 213–29, esp. 216, 438–41. The connections Gellman made with Rogier's *Reading Magdalene* (National Gallery, London) are coincidental rather than a matter of influence.
9. In formulating this theory, I have benefited greatly from the information presented by Cynthia Hahn in "'Joseph Will Perfect, Mary Enlighten and Jesus Save Thee': The Holy Family as Marriage Model in the Mérode Triptych," *Art Bulletin* 68 (March 1986), pp. 54–65. A precedent for Christus's domestic Trinity may be the *Holy Family in Front of a Fireplace* of about 1431–32 attributed to Robert Campin in the treasury of the cathedral in Le Puy (Sterling 1971, p. 5; ill. in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, pl. 143, add. 153).
10. Gellman (1970b, p. 218), following M. Schapiro ("'Muscipula diaboli': The Symbolism of the Mérode Altarpiece," *Art Bulletin* 27 [September 1945], p. 184), mentions Gerson. On Gerson, see J. B. Morrall, *Gerson and the Great Schism* (Manchester, England, 1960), pp. 1–29. See also M. Lieberman, "Pierre d'Ailly, Jean Gerson et le culte de Saint Joseph," *Cahiers de Josephologie* 13 (1965), pp. 227–72; 14 (1966), pp. 271–314; 16 (1968), pp. 293–316; and P. Glorieux, "Le 'Considérations sur Saint Joseph' de Jean Gerson," *Cahiers de Josephologie* 23 (1975), pp. 5–22, as cited in Hahn, "'Joseph Will Perfect,'" p. 56 n. 9.
11. Both theologians proposed elevating Joseph to a rank above the apostles, equivalent to the Virgin. They petitioned for the institution of a feast of the marriage of Joseph and Mary, which was eventually adopted in Bruges about 1430 (see Schapiro, "'Muscipula diabola,'" p. 184). Bernard of Clairvaux expressed a similar opinion: "Joseph was

- heaven and to have there his part" (*Oeuvres mystiques*, trans. A. Béguin [Paris, 1953], p. 926, as cited in Hahn, "Joseph Will Perfect," p. 58).
12. J. Gerson, "Considérations sur S. Joseph," in *Oeuvres complètes*, 7 vols. (Paris, 1960–66), vol. 7, p. 67, as cited in J. Pelikan, *Reformation of Church and Dogma (1300–1700)*, vol. 4 of *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (Chicago and London, 1984), pp. 48–49.
 13. Gerson, "Considérations," vol. 7, p. 95, as cited in Hahn, "Joseph Will Perfect," p. 61.
 14. As cited in Pelikan, *Reformation*, p. 51.
 15. Hahn, "Joseph Will Perfect," p. 64. On Mary as the church, see also Purtle 1982, pp. 6–8.
 16. Jacobus de Voragine, *The Golden Legend: Readings on the Saints*, trans. W. G. Ryan, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1993), vol. 2, p. 58. Hahn ("Joseph Will Perfect," p. 64) suggested this applies to the *Mérode Altarpiece* (The Cloisters, Fort Tryon Park, N.Y.).
 17. Hahn, "Joseph Will Perfect," p. 61.
 18. See G. Bertrand, "Un Office du XIII^e siècle en l'honneur de Saint Joseph (Abbaye Saint-Laurent de Liège)," *Cahiers de Josephologie* 2 (1954), p. 316; see Hahn, "Joseph Will Perfect," p. 65 nn. 83, 84.
 19. This figure has sometimes been identified as John the Baptist, symbolic precursor of Christ (Upton 1990, p. 80).
 20. Hahn ("Joseph Will Perfect," p. 61 n. 47) refers to the sermons of Pope Innocent III and Bernardino da Feltre.
 21. Other paintings that seem to derive from the *Holy Family*, such as a *Virgin and Child* in the Galleria Sabauda, Turin, and a *Holy Family* in the Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp, do not ap-

- pear to employ the same iconographic program; rather, they further emphasize the genre aspect of the Kansas City painting (see C. Aru and E. de Geradon, *La Galerie Sabauda de Turin*, Les Primitifs Flamands, I: Corpus de la peinture des anciens Pays-Bas méridionaux au quinzième siècle [2] [Antwerp, 1952], pp. 1–5; and P. Vandebroeck, *Catalogus schilderijen 14e en 15e eeuw* [Antwerp, 1985], pp. 81–83).
22. C. Gaspar and F. Lyna, *La Bibliothèque de Marguerite d'Autriche*, exhib. cat., Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique (Brussels, 1940), p. 27, no. 22, MS 9305–6; Gerson's manuscript is listed in Margaret of Austria's 1523 inventory, p. 41, as "La première partie du dialogue de M^e Jehan Jars-son." For a discussion of the place of Gerson's writings in Margaret's devotional practice and library, see W. Blockmans, "The Devotion of a Lonely Duchess," and N. Morgan, "Texts of Devotion and Religious Instruction Associated with Margaret of York," in *Margaret of York, Simon Marmion, and "The Visions of Tondal"*, ed. T. Kren (Malibu, 1992), pp. 40, 43, 65, 69; the appendix (p. 261, no. 21) gives a list of the other texts by Gerson owned by Margaret.
 23. Morgan, "Texts of Devotion," p. 69.
 24. Blockmans, "Devotion," pp. 42–43.
 25. J. C. Smith, "Margaret of York and the Burgundian Portrait Tradition," in *Margaret of York*, pp. 47–56, esp. 51–52. A barrel-vaulted ceiling similar to the one in the miniature may have been planned for the Kansas City painting, since a series of incised lines in the upper portion of the panel were formed with arclike strokes.
 26. See Appendix 1, docs. 9, 10.

21

Trinity

Folio 155v from a Book of Hours

Flanders, about 1470–75

Tempera on parchment, 6¼ x 4⅞ in. (15.8 x 10.4 cm), justification 3½ x 2¼ in. (8.8 x 5.8 cm); newly bound with the arms, motto, and monogram of Henri d'Orléans, duke of Aumale¹

Provenance: van Overtvelt family, probably Pauwels (about 1470–75); Henri d'Orléans, duke of Aumale; gift to Monsieur Bertin; M. Chesnet (before May 1853 sale of his collection); anonymous English collection, Twickenham (1853); F. Tulkens, Brussels (1959); Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, Brussels, 1959 (MS IV95)

This little-known and rarely published Book of Hours, made for use in the bishopric of Tournai, exhibits a standard presentation of the traditional iconography of the worship of the Virgin Mary.² The book comprises 299 leaves with fifteen miniatures, each with a border of stylized blue-and-gold acanthus leaves, flowers, and birds. A blank page replaces missing folio 74 at the beginning of Vespers, which probably represented the *Massacre of the Innocents* or the *Flight into Egypt* and was perhaps removed when the book was rebound.³ The miniatures are by two differ-

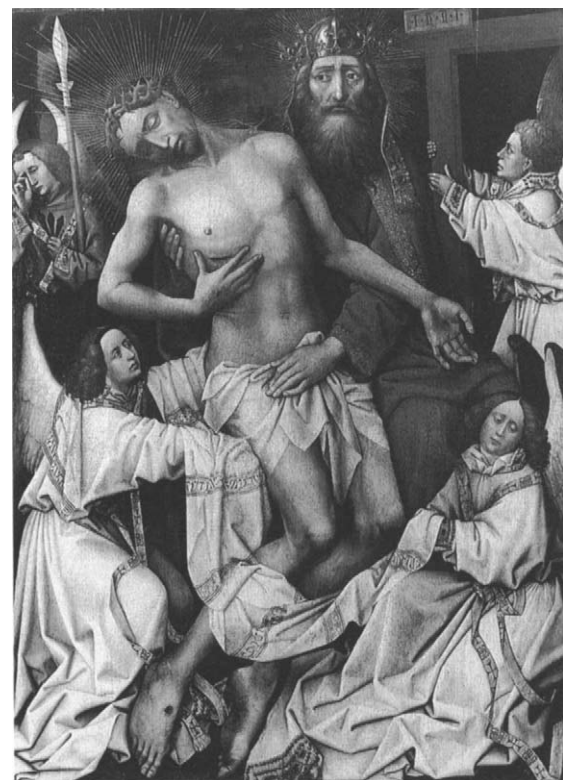


Fig. 170. Rogier van der Weyden? *Trinity*. Oil on oak, 50¼ x 36⅞ in. (127.7 x 93 cm). Stedelijk Museum Vander Kelen-Mertens, Louvain



Memoria & sancta e unitate.

Dulcissime domine ihu
su vixisti verus deus
qui de sinu dei patris



Fig. 171. Bruges school, *Trinity*, from the *Llangattock Hours*, ca. 1450, 83.ML.103 (MS Ludwig IX 7), fol. 25v. Tempera on vellum. J. Paul Getty Museum, Malibu



Fig. 172. Bruges school, *Trinity*, from a Book of Hours, ca. 1450, MS M. 421, fol. 15v. Tempera on vellum. Pierpont Morgan Library, New York

ent artists: one is responsible for the *Trinity*, and the other, for the rest of the illuminations.

The original owner of the Book of Hours was probably Pauwels van Overtvelt, whose coat of arms appears on folio 21r.⁴ Van Overtvelt is of interest not only because of his illustrious tenure in the service of Isabella of Portugal and in various official posts in Bruges but also because he certainly was acquainted with Petrus Christus.⁵ He must have joined the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Dry Tree around the time Christus did, for the signatures of both men are found on a document of 1469, when van Overtvelt was serving as dean.⁶

The remarkable quality of the *Trinity* miniature is well above that of the other illuminations in the volume.⁷ Its borders and lettering are consistent with those in the rest of the book, which is a competent but routine production that recalls many books attributed to the workshop of Willem Vrelant, a well-known contemporary Bruges illuminator.⁸

Although not unique, the representation of the third part of the Trinity as a winged and bearded figure instead of a dove is unusual in Netherlandish art. Ursula Panhans-Bühler, who first attributed the miniature to Christus, suggested a lost Eyckian

model incorporating a Flémallesque Trinity as the probable source.⁹ Certainly the motif of Christ in contrapposto, sitting on the right knee of God the Father, is reminiscent of Flémallesque and Rogierian types (fig. 170).¹⁰ However, no specific model by Jan van Eyck is traceable. The closest parallels include illuminations stylistically connected with the Eyckian portion of the *Turin-Milan Hours*, such as the *Trinity* miniatures from the *Llangattock Hours* and from a Book of Hours in the Pierpont Morgan Library, both dated about 1450 (figs. 171, 172).¹¹ These compositions are very similar to that of the van Overtvelt miniature except for the reversal (from left to right) of God the Father and the Holy Ghost and the placement of the figures beneath a canopy.¹²

The subtle differences between the Llangattock and Morgan miniatures and the van Overtvelt *Trinity* consist precisely of those features that reveal Christus's hand. In addition to the gold-and-red border, which also appears in the Llangattock and Morgan miniatures, the van Overtvelt *Trinity* alone is set within an illusionistic blue-gray stone frame lit from the left, as are the figures of the Holy Ghost, Christ, and God the Father. The same illusionistic framing device and consistent lighting are also

found in Christus's *Head of Christ* and *Portrait of a Carthusian* (cat. nos. 4, 5).

Certain color preferences, morphological details, and features of execution in the van Overtvelt *Trinity* are close to Christus's style as well. The juxtaposition of red and green in the exterior and interior of the mantle of God the Father and in the glow behind the figures is a combination much favored by Christus and is very different from the colors in the Llangattock and Morgan miniatures, which feature deep reds and blues.¹³ Furthermore, the surface modeling of the draperies of God the Father shows even, parallel hatching at an oblique angle to the main folds, typical of Christus's habitual manner of introducing shading in forms in the underdrawings of his paintings. The wings of the Holy Ghost are remarkably similar in their conformation and coloring (including the stippling on the underside) to those of Gabriel in the Berlin *Annunciation* wing and in the Friedsam *Annunciation* (fig. 9, cat. no. 10); the patterning of the folds in his robe also recalls that of Gabriel's wing in the Berlin painting.

Other details, such as the execution of the triforium halo at Christ's head and the gold-banded, translucent globe at his feet, find ready parallels in the halo in the *Head of Christ* and in the crystal globes in the *Madonna of the Dry Tree*, *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior*, *Exeter Madonna*, *Last Judgment*, and both the Budapest and the Madrid *Virgin and Child*.

The *Trinity* facial types are those of Christus's paintings—God the Father, for example, with his broad and flat forehead, furrowed brow and prominent nose, heavily lidded eyes, and forelock emerging from his crown. The illumination of the tiny faces, broadly lit from the left with U-shaped pockets of light beneath the eyes, is comparable to that in Christus's small-scale paintings, such as the *Head of Christ* and *Man of Sorrows* (cat. nos. 4, 9), and even to that of the heads in his later, larger paintings, such as the *Death of the Virgin* (cat. no. 15).

Similarly, the articulation of Christ's body—the light contour along the darkened side of the torso, the pronounced collarbone and rib cage, the thin creases at the waist, and the navel—conforms to a preexisting model on a vastly different scale, the Christ in the Brussels *Lamentation* (fig. 11). Typical, too, of Christus's handling is the general reliance on applied pinkish tones—in Christ's face, shoulders, and legs—or pink impasto touches at fingertips to give the illusion of three-dimensional, lifelike forms. The outlining of contours, brown for those in half-light and black for those in areas of shadow, is a consistent feature of Christus's work.

The date of about 1470–75 provided by manuscript scholars depends upon the border decoration and the style and structure of the book. Also relevant is the particularly successful blend of motifs from panel paintings and manuscript illumination in an overall concept that is monumental in form despite its diminu-

tive size, as in the case of the *Madonna of the Dry Tree* of about 1465 (cat. no. 18). This achievement is indicative of an illuminator well versed in the style of painting on panel. A late date in Christus's career would thus seem appropriate.

1. Information based on M. Dewèvre, "Livres d'heures," in *Quinze Années d'acquisitions de la pose de la première pierre à l'inauguration officielle de la bibliothèque*, exhib. cat., Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er} (Brussels, 1969), p. 106, no. 84. I am grateful to Maximiliaan Martens (letter to the author, November 12, 1993) for providing additional information on other aspects of the Book of Hours, including its provenance and codicological description.
2. Dewèvre, "Livres d'heures," p. 106, no. 84. For additional information on this volume, see M. Dewèvre, "La Trinité," in *La Librairie de Bourgogne et quelques acquisitions récentes de la Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}: Cinquante Miniatures* (Brussels, 1970), pp. 47–48, no. 45; A. H. van Buren, "The Master of Mary of Burgundy and His Colleagues: The State of Research and Questions of Method," *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 38 (1975), p. 300 n. 64; *Vlaamse kunst op perkament: Handschriften en miniaturen te Brugge van de 12de tot de 16de eeuw*, exhib. cat., Gruuthusemuseum (Bruges, 1981), pp. 273–74, no. 116; and C. Lemaire and M. Henry, *Isabelle de Portugal: Duchesse de Bourgogne, 1397–1471*, exhib. cat., Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er} (Brussels, 1991), p. 124, no. 27.
3. Dewèvre, "Livres d'heures," p. 106, no. 84.
4. The coat of arms consists of "d'Or à la fasce de gueules, accompagnée en chef d'une épée d'argent garnie de sable, la garde à dextre posée en fasce" and appears to be both original and unadulterated (M. Martens, letter to the author, November 12, 1993). No texts in this Book of Hours are personalized for van Overtvelt, nor is there any specific reference to him in the calendar, litany, or memorials. Given his social and political prominence in Bruges, however, it is most likely that this was his Book of Hours.
5. Van Overtvelt was the secretary of Isabella of Portugal, duchess of Burgundy, beginning in 1435, and after 1442 he served as her collector of finances in Flanders. In 1454, he became a member of the Council of Flanders and in 1457–58 traveled as an ambassador of Philip the Good to Lübeck and also to London to negotiate a treaty with the Hanseatic League cities. Van Overtvelt resigned his post with the Council of Flanders to become bailiff of Bruges in 1460. He died in 1483 (V. Vermeersch, *Grafmonumenten te Brugge voor 1578*, 3 vols. [Bruges, 1976], vol. 2, pp. 284–86, no. 291).
6. See Appendix 1, doc. 16.
7. This miniature is in excellent condition. The only question regarding its state concerns the authenticity of the blue of the sky, which rather clumsily cuts off the draperies of God the Father at the lower edge. The same blue, however, does appear in the initial *D* (*Dulcissime domine*) of the text below the miniature, but it is not the blue used in the acanthus leaves of the border decoration (M. Martens, letter to the author, November 12, 1993).
8. An illuminated page by Vrelant with a border very similar to that of the *Trinity* miniature is illustrated in G. Dogaer, *Flemish Miniature Painting in the Fifteenth and Sixteenth Centuries* (Amsterdam, 1987), pl. 7. For the most recent discussion of Vrelant's contribution to manuscript illumination in Bruges, see Smeyers and Cardon 1991, pp. 99–104. The *Trinity* miniature is the second folio of a regular quarternion in quire XXI (M. Martens, letter to the author, November 12, 1993).
9. Panhans-Bühler (1978, p. 18) attributes the van Overtvelt miniature to Christus without giving specific reasons. See also G. Weber, re-

- view of *Eklektizismus und Originalität im Werk des Petrus Christus*, by U. Panhans-Bühler, *Scriptorium* 34 (1980), p. 328.
10. For a Flémallesque example, the *Holy Trinity*, see Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, pl. 92. See Asperen de Boer, Dijkstra, and Schoute 1990, pp. 222–24, 228, for a summary of the literature on the attribution of the *Trinity* (fig. 170) to both the Master of Flémalle and Rogier van der Weyden.
 11. Two other related Trinity miniatures are found in the Missal of the Bruges Leper's House (MS 483, archives, Grooteseminarie, Bruges), and in a Book of Hours in the Pierpont Morgan Library, New York (MS 387, fol. 171v; see Smeyers and Cardon 1991, p. 101 n. 103). For a summary of the major literature on the stylistic and pictorial links between the *Turin-Milan Hours* and the *Llangattock Hours*, see A. von Euw and J. M. Plotzek, *Die Handschriften der Sammlung Ludwig*, 4 vols. (Cologne, 1979–85), vol. 2, pp. 126–40.
 12. See Panhans-Bühler 1978, pls. II–IV, for examples showing the interchangeable placement of the figures of God the Father and the Holy Ghost.
 13. Christus's characteristic juxtaposition of red and green is found in the robes of the Virgin in the *Madonna of the Dry Tree*, in the costume in the *Portrait of Edward Grymeston*, in the dress and mantle of the Magdalene in the New York and the Paris *Lamentation*, in the pillows and bed curtains in the *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior*, and in Joseph's costume in the Washington *Nativity*.

Drawings

The study of drawings attributed to early Netherlandish painters is particularly problematic because so few remain. Only five hundred to six hundred fifteenth-century drawings have been documented—about one-tenth the number of paintings that have survived from the period.¹ Even the most illustrious painters—Jan van Eyck, Petrus Christus, Rogier van der Weyden, Dieric Bouts, Hugo van der Goes, Hans Memling, and Gerard David, for example—are little known in this medium.

Although accidents of nature and the ravages of war are partly responsible for this situation, other factors have also had an impact. Drawings were not collected until well into the sixteenth century, when a wide variety were produced, including finished sheets that could be appreciated as autonomous works of art. The types of drawings commonly made in the fifteenth century—sketches for compositions and motifs, studies of heads and hands, and *ricordi* made after an artist's work—were part of the stock materials of the workshop. As such, they were repeatedly handled, became worn, and were most likely discarded. In addition, the complexity and the highly finished nature of underdrawings in many early Netherlandish paintings suggest that Northern artists may not have made as many preparatory sketches on paper as did their Italian counterparts, instead executing their preliminary designs directly on the ground of the panel.

The lack of documentary evidence about early drawings, however, remains perplexing. Surviving records of commissions or payments rarely mention drawings. None of the documents related to Christus refers to a drawing, even though he may have made a considerable number of preparatory sketches for his paintings. These probably included motifs copied from the works of other artists, such as van Eyck, as well as his own studies of individual figures, compositions, and perhaps perspective designs.

The paucity of drawings from this period makes the rediscovery of the artist's underdrawings in panel paintings all the more

valuable. Underdrawings provide clues to the style and technique of an artist as well as to his characteristic mannerisms as a draftsman. Great caution must be exercised, however, in making comparisons between drawings and underdrawings. The size, medium, and purpose of drawings on paper and of underdrawings on panels may differ considerably.² The more examples of both that can be compared, the more reliable are the conclusions about the artist.

There is no complete study of the five drawings attributed to Christus. Max J. Friedländer mentioned four of them (excluding the Paris *Portrait of a Woman*), attributing the *Man with a Falcon* to van Eyck and the others to his circle.³ Joel Upton merely listed the four works known to him in his 1972 dissertation, and Peter Schabacker catalogued the *Madonna and Child with a Donor* and the Rotterdam *Portrait of a Young Woman* as by Christus in his 1974 monograph.⁴ Otherwise, the individual sheets have been studied in the scholarly catalogues of the museum collections in which they are housed.

The vagaries of time have left an incomplete picture of Christus as a draftsman, but there are consistencies within the small group of drawings attributed to him. All five are silver-point on prepared paper, a favored technique (along with quill pen and ink) of the mid-fifteenth century. Four are portrait or head studies; the fifth records a van Eyck composition that Christus later partially incorporated in his own paintings. Although they differ, these drawings are typical of the studies artists of this period routinely made as part of their working method.

1. These numbers are based on information compiled by the Centre National de Recherches "Primitifs Flamands," Brussels.
2. On the methodology of comparing drawings and underdrawings of Northern Renaissance artists, see Ainsworth 1989, pp. 5–38.
3. Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pp. 72–74.
4. Upton 1972, pp. 424–26; and Schabacker 1974, pp. 125–28.

Madonna and Child with a Donor (copy of the Maelbeke Madonna)

About 1445

Silverpoint on prepared paper, 11 x 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (27.8 x 18 cm)

Provenance: Ploos van Amstel

Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Vienna, 1800 (4841)

Among Jan van Eyck's late works was a now-lost *Madonna and Child with a Donor* commissioned by Nicolas Maelbeke, abbot or dean of Saint Martin's monastery, and placed in the choir of Saint Martin at Ypres in 1445. A number of copies were made of the so-called Maelbeke *Madonna*, and one replaced the original in the church choir about 1757–60, when the Maelbeke memorial was removed prior to restoration of the site.¹ This unfinished copy (fig. 95), first recorded in the sixteenth century, had been identified as van Eyck's work,² but its execution and handling bear little resemblance to his.³

Several additional replicas attest to the fame of Jan's painting; these include the present drawing and one in Nuremberg (fig. 173).⁴ Both drawings show only a hint of the kneeling donor, suggesting that the artist planned to leave open the option of changing the donor figure or that Jan's painting itself was unfinished. If the latter hypothesis is correct, then the Maelbeke *Madonna* must have been one of the works left incomplete in Jan's atelier at his death in 1441.

The two drawings, which are clearly by different hands, document a standard activity of workshops—the recording of finished or nearly finished compositions that might be used later as models for new compositions. The Nuremberg drawing, which is less well preserved, is the weaker of the two renderings. The Albertina drawing (slightly reinforced with pen by a later hand but otherwise in excellent condition) is a characteristic early silverpoint drawing of the post-Eyckian workshop.

Ludwig Kaemmerer was the first to note the strong stylistic similarity of the Albertina drawing to the works of Christus, an opinion that has been reiterated by several scholars.⁵ The figure of the Virgin is especially close to other representations in Christus's early works. Her oval head, receding chin, small and heavily lidded eyes, and sharp, pointed nose recall the features of the Virgin of the Berlin *Nativity* of 1452 (fig. 9). Also characteristic of both figures are the compartmentalized nature of the head, neck, and upper chest and the tightly pulled-back hair with curls cascading over the shoulders. The Albertina Virgin's tiny, seemingly boneless hands and angled fingers recall the hand of the saint in *Saint Anthony and a Donor* (fig. 8).

The graphic mannerisms of the Albertina drawing—even, parallel hatching often at an oblique angle to the drapery folds, minimal cross-hatching reserved for the deepest folds, and zones of shading restricted to broad planes—are often found in

the underdrawings of Christus's early paintings. Already aiming toward a rationally described space, the artist worked out the perspective as well as he was able to at this point in his development. He employed a compass to form the arches and a straightedge to mark individual architectural features, as he did in the preparatory stages of his paintings.

Peter Schabacker pointed out that Christus conflated the Maelbeke *Madonna* composition with another late Eyckian work, the *Virgin and Child with Saints Barbara and Elizabeth and Jan Vos*, to create the pose of the Virgin and Child in the Exeter *Madonna* (cat. nos. 2, 7).⁶ Christus also used the model of the Maelbeke Virgin for the deep, V-shaped drapery folds of the Virgin's mantle in the Friedsam *Annunciation* (cat. no. 10). The architecture may have provided a prototype for the elevated porch setting of the Exeter *Madonna*.



Fig. 173. Copy after Jan van Eyck, *Madonna and Child with a Donor*. Silverpoint on prepared paper, 5 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 4 in. (134 x 102 mm). Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg



Christus copied in detail only those features of the Maelbeke *Madonna* that he was interested in using in his own compositions, namely the Virgin and Child and the architecture. The incorporation of these motifs in his early works supports a date of about 1445 for the Albertina sheet.⁷ This drawing illustrates how van Eyck's art continued to be disseminated by his followers after his death, and it is persuasive evidence that Christus participated in a post-Eyckian workshop.

1. Dhanens [1980], pp. 310–15.
2. Durand-Gréville 1910, p. 162; and Dhanens [1980], p. 313.
3. The location of the so-called Maelbeke *Triptych* is unknown (ill. in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pl. 59a). A dissertation on the Maelbeke *Madonna* is being written by Susan Jones, Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London.
4. Weale and Brockwell (1912, pp. 140–42) commented on the Eyckian nature of both drawings. Otto Benesch (*Die Zeichnungen der nieder-*

ländischen Schulen des XV. und XVI. Jahrhunderts, Beschreibender Katalog der Handzeichnungen in der Graphischen Sammlung Albertina 2 [Vienna, 1928], p. 3, no. 13) attributed the Vienna drawing to van Eyck. Friedrich Winkler ("Jan van Eycks Madonna von Ypern," *Pantheon* 4 [November 1929], p. 493) noted that the drawings differ from the extant painting in the configuration of the Virgin's draperies and that their relationship to each other is therefore problematic. Friedländer (1967–76, vol. 1, p. 65) felt that both drawings reflected Jan's late style, especially in the rendering of the draperies.

5. Kaemmerer 1898, p. 99; J. Schönbrunner and J. Meder, eds., *Handzeichnungen alter Meister aus der Albertina und anderen Sammlungen*, 12 vols. (Vienna, [1896–1908]), vol. 8, no. 847; H. Leporini, *Die Stilentwicklung der Handzeichnung, XIV. bis XVIII. Jahrhundert* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1925), pp. 49–50, no. 45; E. Renders, *Hubert van Eyck: Personnage de légende* (Paris and Brussels, 1933), pp. 148–49; *Graphische Sammlung Albertina, Europäische Meisterzeichnungen aus dem Zeitalter Albrecht Dürers*, exhib. cat. (Vienna, 1971), p. 16, no. 27; and Schabacker 1974, pp. 126–27.
6. Schabacker 1974, pp. 126–27.
7. Panofsky (1953, vol. 1, p. 190), however, dated it about 1460.

23

Portrait of a Young Woman

About 1445

Silverpoint on gray prepared paper, 5¼ x 3¾ in. (132 x 89 mm)

Provenance: F. J. O. Boymans; bequest to the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1847 (MB 328)

The direct and ingenuous manner in which this sitter addresses the viewer perhaps led to the attribution of the drawing to Hans Holbein the Younger in the 1852 and 1869 catalogues of the collection of the Boymans Museum.¹ Following the important 1902 exhibition in Bruges, which offered the first major opportunity for a comparative study of a large number of early Netherlandish paintings, Pieter Haverkorn van Rijsewijk reattributed the sheet to Rogier van der Weyden.² The then barely visible inscription *Rogier*, added at the upper right by a later hand, as well as the opportunity to compare the drawing to paintings by Rogier in the exhibition, particularly the *Portrait of a Lady* (fig. 176), may have influenced his decision. Extolling the beauty of the drawing in a detailed description of the figure's *mise en page* and the silverpoint technique, Frederick Schmidt-Degener later rejected the attribution to Rogier and instead gave the *Young Woman* to Jan van Eyck.³ For the most part, the drawing stayed with this Eyckian attribution until Erwin Panofsky recognized a stylistic resemblance to the *Portrait of Edward Grymeston* (fig. 65) and suggested it was by Christus.⁴



Fig. 174. Copy after Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of Isabella of Portugal*. Pen and ink on paper. Whereabouts unknown



Several authors have noted the propinquity of the Rotterdam drawing to the spirit of van Eyck's portraits, such as the *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw* (fig. 110), the *Portrait of Marguerite van Eyck* (Groeningemuseum, Bruges), and the *Timotheus* (National Gallery, London). Perhaps the most compelling prototype in this regard is Jan's *Portrait of Isabella of Portugal* of 1429 (fig. 174), now known only through copies, particularly a seventeenth-century drawing.⁵ This *Isabella* shares with the Rotterdam *Young Woman* the three-quarter-length view of the sitter facing right, gazing boldly at the observer, and framed below by a ledge on which her right arm and left hand rest (the hands meeting at the lower right corner).⁶ Both figures are broadly illuminated from the left, creating a spotlight effect in the background behind the sitter at the right.

Schmidt-Degener compared the subtlety of the handling of the metalpoint in the *Young Woman* to that in van Eyck's only known drawing, a study of Cardinal Albergati (fig. 175).⁷ There are certainly similarities in the description of the space and lighting—the long strokes of parallel hatching as well as cross-hatching at the left of each head, the dense cross-hatching to the right of Albergati's head and at the lower right by the lady's left sleeve. However, the subtle modeling of the woman's face and the distinctive treatment of the lighting on the angular drapery folds recall the works of Christus, particularly the *Carthusian* (cat. no. 5), the most Eyckian of his painted portraits. The *Young Woman* and the *Carthusian* share the same pose, the slightly oblique axis in space, and a dependence upon certain morphological details—the heavy lids and remarkable translucent quality of the eyes, the prominent, triangular-shaped nose, and the sensitive but somewhat awkwardly foreshortened mouth. The two convey the stylization of a portrait, which, though individualized to a degree, reflects a type that Christus used more than once. Common to both sitters is their demeanor, a sense of self-assurance as well as reticence.⁸ The similarity of the portraits suggests that the *Young Woman* may have been created about the same time as the *Carthusian*, in the 1440s. This dating is also supported by details of the woman's attire.⁹ Rogier's painting *Portrait of a Woman with a White Headdress* of about 1435 (Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) and his drawing *Portrait of a Woman* of about 1435–40 (British Museum, London) show the same style of dress and headdress.¹⁰ In addition, the sitter's prominent, broadly lit, seemingly boneless hands resemble the hands of the donor in the early *Saint Anthony and a Donor* (fig. 8).

The illumination of the young woman's face is most closely associated with that of the London *Portrait of a Young Man* (fig. 66), in which a strong light comes from the left, leaving the right cheek in semishadow and creating small pockets of light in the upper right of the cheek, the far side of the mouth, and the chin. Short parallel strokes at an oblique angle form the



Fig. 175. Jan van Eyck, *Portrait of Cardinal Albergati*, 1438. Silverpoint on prepared paper with some traces of color, 8% x 7% in. (214 x 181 mm). Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden

modeling above the eyes, at the nose, and beneath the lower lip, just as they do in the underdrawing of the London portrait (fig. 67).

The diminutive size of the drawing might suggest it originally formed a leaf in a sketchbook in which Christus recorded various images to be used in paintings or as independent studies.¹¹ The high degree of finish would have enabled the artist to use the drawing as the basis for a painted portrait. It is unlikely that it represents a copy of a finished painting:¹² Christus would not have drawn the sitter's right sleeve over the already demarcated windowsill.

1. *Catalogus van teekeningen in het museum te Rotterdam*, gesticht door Mr. F. J. O. Boymans (Rotterdam, 1852), no. 395; and *Beschrijving der teekeningen in het museum te Rotterdam*, gesticht door Mr. F. J. O. Boymans (Rotterdam, 1869), p. 10, no. 273.
2. See Bruges 1902b; and P. Haverkorn van Rijsewijk, *Jaarverslag Museum Boymans* (1903), pp. 11–12.
3. F. Schmidt-Degener, "Notes on Some Fifteenth-Century Silverpoints," *Burlington Magazine* 19 (August 1911), pp. 256–61. See also F. Winkler, *Der Meister von Flémalle und Rogier van der Weyden*, *Zur Kunstgeschichte des Auslands* 103 (Strasbourg, 1913), p. 54 n. 3; Popham 1926, p. 21, no. 6; Tolnay 1939, p. 74, no. 5; A. Leclerc, *Flemish Drawings, Fifteenth–Sixteenth Centuries* (New York, Paris, and London, [1949]), p. 24; J. Besançon, *Les Dessins flamands du XV^e au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1951), p. 26; and Baldass 1952, pp. 78 n. 1, 291, no. 85. Only S. de

- Ricci ("A Flemish Triptych for Melbourne, II," *Burlington Magazine* 40 [April 1922], p. 166) reattributed the drawing to Rogier because of similarities he found between this sitter and the female donor in Rogier's *Crucifixion Triptych* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).
4. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 200 n. 3, 310 n. 7. This opinion was generally sustained in subsequent literature; see E. Haverkamp-Begemann, *Vijf eeuwen tekenkunst: Tekeningen van Europese meesters in het Museum Boymans te Rotterdam* (Rotterdam, 1957), p. 4, no. 1; Národní Galerie v Praze, *Tři století nizozemské kresby, 1400–1700*, exhib. cat., Palác Kinských (Prague, 1966), p. 14, no. 3; Sonkes 1969, pp. 259–60, no. E24; Upton 1972, p. 425; Schabacker 1974, pp. 127–28; Lurie 1981, p. 95; Luijten and Meij 1990, pp. 45–47; and Upton 1990, p. 25 n. 9. Friedländer (1967–76, vol. 1, p. 74) listed it among the "Eyckian" drawings, calling it "an original, but by a somewhat mediocre hand." Ursula Panhans-Bühler (1978, p. 105 n. 220) and Jacques Dupont ("Quelques dessins flamands," *Arts et métiers graphiques*, no. 51 [February 15, 1936], pp. 20–21) rejected the attribution to Christus.
 5. Sterling (1971, p. 18) as cited in Schabacker (1974, p. 128); also discussed in L. Dimier, "Dessin du portrait d'Isabelle de Portugal, par van Eyck," *Bulletin de la Société Nationale des Antiquaires de France* (1921), p. 116; L. Dimier, "Un Portrait perdu de Jean van Eyck," *Renaissance de l'art français et des industries de luxe* 5 (September 1922), pp. 541–42; and S. Reinach, "Un Portrait d'Isabelle de Portugal," *Revue archéologique*, 5th series, 15 (January–June 1922), p. 174. According to documentary evidence, the portrait was started on January 13, 1429 (1428 Old Style),

- and sent to Philip the Good on February 12 (see D. Wolfthal, *The Beginnings of Netherlandish Canvas Painting: 1400–1530* [Cambridge, 1989], pp. 9–10). Wolfthal discounts the association of the seventeenth-century drawing with Jan's portrait of Isabella because of the discrepancies between it and the description of the painting in the 1523 inventory of Margaret of Austria's collection.
6. Just as he did in the *Portrait of a Carthusian*, Christus made ruled lines to delimit the confines of his space (in the *Carthusian* he incised lines in the ground of the panel). There are parallels with the positioning of the hands in other paintings by Christus—Edward Grymeston's right arm and hand and Saint Eligius's right hand, for example.
 7. Schmidt-Degener, "Notes," p. 261.
 8. Also suggested in Luijten and Meij 1990, p. 47.
 9. Compare the similar attire of Guigone de Salins, second wife of Nicolas Rolin, in Rogier's *Altarpiece of the Last Judgment* (Hôtel-Dieu, Beaune), datable 1443–51, ill. in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, pl. 31.
 10. Ill. in *ibid.*, vol. 1, pl. 11. See also Sonkes 1969, pp. 26–29, esp. 27, no. 43, pl. 2a.
 11. Compare, for example, a similarly highly finished and very small-scale *Portrait of a Woman* by Gerard David in the Rothschild collection (Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Dessins, Paris); the damage in the lower half links it to other drawings that are pages from a sketchbook (see Ainsworth 1993, p. 16).
 12. Suggested by Schabacker (1974, pp. 127–28) and restated as a possibility by Luijten and Meij (1990, p. 47).

24

Portrait of a Man with a Falcon

About 1445–50

Silverpoint on ivory prepared paper, 7% x 5% in. (189 x 143 mm)

Provenance unknown

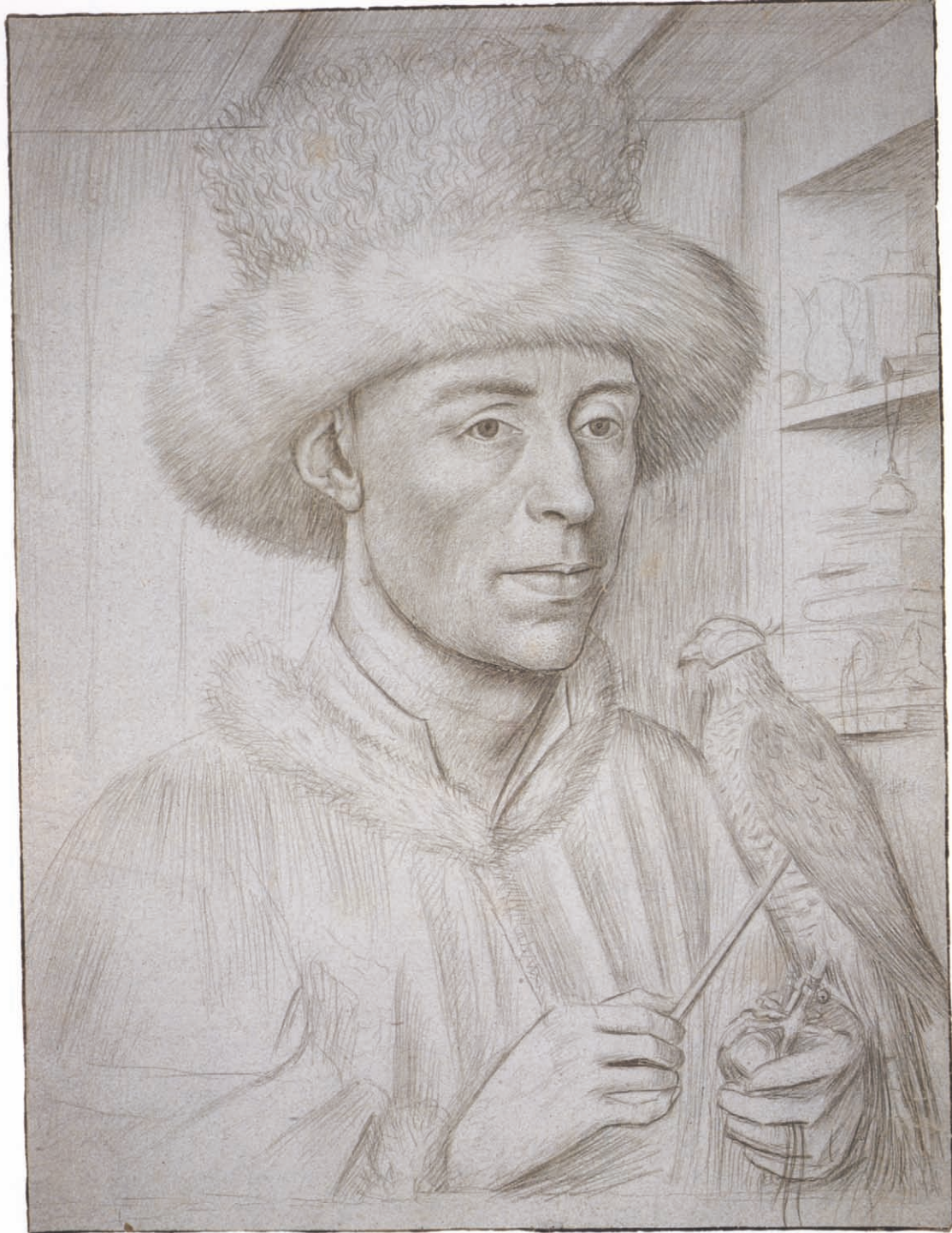
Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Graphische Sammlung, Frankfurt am Main (725)

Various identities have been proposed for this falconer, whose luxurious dress establishes him as a member of the upper class. James Weale linked him with the falconer Hendrick van Eyck, who, along with Jan van Eyck, was in the service of John of Bavaria, count of Holland, and subsequently of Philip the Good, duke of Burgundy.¹ Albert Cels refined Weale's argument, noting that the falconers of the house of Arendonck included a van Eyck family, one of whom may be portrayed here (not Hendrick, he noted, but probably his father).² Marguerite Devigne, on the other hand, supported the suggestion of Jan Six, who identified the sitter as William IV of Bavaria and Hainaut. Six referred to a statue of William by Jacques de Gérines in the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, which he believed closely resembled the sitter in the drawing.³

The early literature concerning the authorship of the drawing is divided between attributions to Rogier van der Weyden and to van Eyck. Most of those associating the drawing with

Rogier offered few precise arguments,⁴ but Friedrich Winkler's more detailed assessment concluded that it must be a copy after a painting by Rogier.⁵ As Micheline Comblen-Sonkes later pointed out, however, Rogier never painted portraits of this type, favoring instead sitters posed against a neutral background with their hands in prayer or holding a small object.⁶

Max J. Friedländer attributed the *Man with a Falcon* to van Eyck on the basis of the quality of the drawing, which he considered close to that of Jan's *Portrait of Cardinal Albergati* (fig. 175).⁷ This evaluation was also proposed by others but was questioned by Charles de Tolnay.⁸ Hermann Beenken, Bernhard Degenhart, and Ludwig Baldass thought the drawing was post-Eyckian, Beenken and Baldass noting a resemblance to the works of Christus, especially the *Portrait of Edward Grymeston* (fig. 65).⁹ Erwin Panofsky also recognized the character of Christus's portraits, particularly in the corner-space setting, which the artist devised.¹⁰ The attribution to Christus has been



seconded in the recent literature but not without reservation.¹¹

The hallmarks of Christus's portraiture are apparent in *Man with a Falcon*. Especially similar to the portrait of Grymeston are the corner-space setting, the relationship of the figure to the space, and the tightly cropped view of the sitter, who is at a slightly oblique angle to the picture plane. The shape and interior forms of the falconer's head bear a close resemblance to those of Grymeston's head—the undulating contour at the right and the sweeping curve of the jawline at the left, the square chin, the articulation and shape of the ear, and the heavily lidded eyes. The nuanced lighting of the falconer's head and the extremely refined modeling of the face recall the *Portrait of a Carthusian* (cat. no. 5), in which these subtleties are better preserved than they are in Grymeston's likeness.

The discrepancy between the remarkable precision with which the falconer's face is executed and the very summary rendering of the rest, as well as the cutoff right hand at the lower edge, has led some scholars to regard it as a copy after a drawing or painting.¹² In evaluating this possibility, it is helpful to consider Christus's underdrawings.

The Frankfurt portrait is constructed in much the same way as Christus's *Saint Eligius* (cat. no. 6), a painting in which the figures are underdrawn first and the space is then formulated around them. In both, Christus used a straightedge to define the walls, ceilings, and shelves, here and there slightly extending these lines into the figures. He delimited the lower edge of the Frankfurt composition, closely cropping the hands, as he did in the Rotterdam *Portrait of a Young Woman* (cat. no. 23). Evident here is the even, parallel hatching Christus employed early in his career to suggest lighting, which tended to flatten his forms, such as the jackets of the falconer and of Eligius (fig. 43). This flattening is also apparent in their hands (fig. 42), which are awkwardly formed and modeled with regular parallel strokes across the fingers.

Some of the aspects of this drawing that have been regarded as disturbing or indicative of a copy are thus consistent with Christus's working method. The remarkable refinement and state of finish of the head as opposed to the rest of the drawing may be explained as the careful rendering of a preparatory study for a painted portrait. It would have been important to capture the head in great detail, but the rest could be left in a preliminary state, minimally describing the formulaic setting that Christus would work up more elaborately in the final portrait, though no associated painting survives. Because of the drawing's close association with *Edward Grymeston* and *Saint Eligius*, *Man with a Falcon* should be dated early, about 1445–50.

1. Weale 1908, pp. 24–25.
2. A. Cels, "'L'Homme au faucon' et le lieu d'origine possible de Jean van Eyck," *Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts bulletin* 7 (1958), pp. 29–32.
3. J. Six, "De beeltenis van Margaretha van Burgondië, gravin van Henegouwen, Holland en Zeeland," *Jaarverslag van het Koninklijk Oudheidkundig Genootschap* (1919), pp. 39–43; and M. Devigne, "Un Nouveau document pour servir à l'histoire des statuettes de Jacques de Gérines au musée d'Amsterdam," *Revue d'art* 23 (January–June 1922), p. 101.
4. R. Weigel, comp. and ed., *Die Werke der Maler in ihren Handzeichnungen, beschreibendes Verzeichniss der in Kupfer gestochenen, lithographirten und photographirten Facsimiles von Originalzeichnungen grosser Meister* (Leipzig, 1865), p. 653, no. 7077; J. Schönbrunner and J. Meder, eds., *Handzeichnungen alter Meister aus der Albertina und anderen Sammlungen*, 12 vols. (Vienna, [1896–1908]), vol. 4, no. 397; Wurzbach 1906–11, vol. 2, p. 873; and F. Lees, *The Art of the Great Masters As Exemplified by Drawings in the Collection of Emile Wauters, membre de l'Académie Royale de Belgique* (London, 1913), p. 61.
5. Winkler suggested that the rendering of the face reflected Rogierian types but that the drawing as a whole showed weaknesses that eliminated the possibility of Rogier's authorship and suggested a follower of Rogier instead. He considered the portrait drawing of Jacqueline de Bavière (Städelsches Kunstinstitut und Städtische Galerie, Frankfurt am Main) as by the same hand (see F. Winkler, "Skizzenbücher eines unbekanntes rheinischen Meisters um 1500," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch*, n.s., 1 [1930], p. 124; F. Winkler, "An Attribution to Roger van der Weyden," *Old Master Drawings* 10 [June 1935], p. 3; and F. Winkler, "Rogier van der Weyden's Early Portraits," *Art Quarterly* 13 [summer 1950], pp. 216–17). Winkler later assigned the drawing to Mostaert ("Zur Kenntnis und Würdigung des Jan Mostaert," *Zeitschrift für Kunstwissenschaft* 13 [1959], p. 200 n. 34).
6. Sonkes 1969, pp. 248–51, esp. 250, no. E19.
7. Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pp. 72–73. To my knowledge, the drawing was first attributed to Jan by J. A. Crowe and G. B. Cavalcaselle (*Geschichte der altniederländischen Malerei* [Leipzig, 1875], p. 452).
8. H. Leporini, *Die Stilentwicklung der Handzeichnung, XIV. bis XVIII. Jahrhundert* (Vienna and Leipzig, 1925), p. 49, no. 43; Popham 1926, p. 21, no. 5; W. Rothes, *Die altniederländische Kunst in Farbe und Graphik, Die Kunst dem Volke* 6 (Munich, 1926), p. 8; Destrée 1930, vol. 1, p. 189; Tolnay 1939, p. 73, no. 1; and K. Toth, *Die alten Niederländer von Eyck bis Brueghel* (Bielefeld and Leipzig, 1943), p. 39.
9. Beenken 1941, p. 52 n. 1; B. Degenhart, *Europäische Handzeichnungen aus fünf Jahrhunderten* (Berlin and Zurich, 1943), p. XIII, pl. 14 (as follower of van Eyck); and Baldass 1952, p. 78 n. 5.
10. Panofsky 1935, p. 438 n. 14; and Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 200 n. 3, 310 n. 7.
11. O. Benesch, "After Petrus Christus, *Portrait of a Man with a Falcon*," in *German, Flemish and Dutch: Thirteenth Through Nineteenth Century*, vol. 2 of *Great Drawings of All Time*, ed. I. Moskowitz, 4 vols. (New York, 1962), vol. 2, no. 462; Rowlands 1962, p. 420; C. T. Eisler, *Flemish and Dutch Drawings from the Fifteenth to the Eighteenth Centuries* (New York, 1963), p. 38; Sonkes 1969, pp. 250–51, no. E19; Upton 1972, p. 424; and Upton 1990, p. 25 n. 9.
12. Benesch, "After Petrus Christus," no. 462; and Sonkes 1969, p. 250.

Attributed to Petrus Christus

Portrait of a Woman

About 1449

Silverpoint on buff-colored prepared paper, $5\frac{1}{4} \times 3\frac{3}{4}$ in. (133 x 92 mm)
 Provenance: Elie Angély, Amsterdam, as Holbein (until 1880); private collection, Haarlem (until about 1905); Walter Gay, Paris; Musée du Louvre, Cabinet des Arts Graphiques, Paris, 1938 (R.F. 29.067)

It is not difficult to see why this drawing of a woman was once associated with Rogier van der Weyden, specifically with his portrait of Guigone de Salins, second wife of Nicolas Rolin, as she appears on the wing of Rogier's *Altarpiece of the Last Judgment* in Beaune.¹ The likenesses of the two women are generally analogous, and this type, with lowered gaze and pensive expression, was adopted by Rogier in several portraits (fig. 176).²

In 1926, however, A. E. Popham noted that the Paris drawing is done in Christus's manner and that the sitter is similar to the female figure in *Saint Eligius* (cat. no. 6).³ The mode of dress and headdress are much the same, and each woman has an ovoid head with a gently curved left contour (broken only by the brow), heavily lidded eyes, a long and prominent nose, full lips, and a columnar neck with pronounced creases. There has been general agreement with Popham's attribution to Christus of this seldom published drawing.⁴

Jacques Dupont and Ursula Panhans-Bühler compared the Paris drawing with the Rotterdam *Portrait of a Young Woman* (cat. no. 23) and noted discrepancies in handling that led them to believe that they could not be by the same artist.⁵ The inferior condition of the Paris sheet (it is abraded, and nearly all the contours have been reinforced with pen and brown ink by a later hand) does not entirely account for the markedly different appearance of the two drawings. The extent to which they are finished varies dramatically. Whereas the Paris woman has a simplified form with summary modeling achieved by regular parallel hatching, the Rotterdam woman is elaborately rendered with passages of very subtle descriptive silverpoint strokes of varying lengths and directions.

Viewed in the broader context of Christus's oeuvre and his working method, however, the two drawings, diverse in form and function, might be seen as exemplary of the polarities of the artist's style.⁶ Despite its diminutive size, the Rotterdam drawing is so fully worked up that it seems to be a captivating record of someone Christus studied from life. This portrait may have been a starting point for a painted version or a drawing in its own right. The Paris sheet, in contrast, presents a type that Christus may have recorded to use for the female figure in *Saint Eligius*. Unlike the Rotterdam *Young Woman*, it was not carried

further than a simple study of form and attitude. The shading is suggested with Christus's characteristic oblique parallel hatching, creating a planar effect in the headdress, costume, and face.

The diversity seen in the Paris and Rotterdam drawings is analogous to that found in the artist's signed and dated paintings. The remarkable refinement and quality of the *Portrait of a Carthusian* (cat. no. 5) compared to the standardized types represented in the bridal couple in *Saint Eligius*, for instance, cannot be entirely explained by their relative dating or factors of influence. This was a deliberate choice on Christus's part, made perhaps to differentiate between fact and fiction.

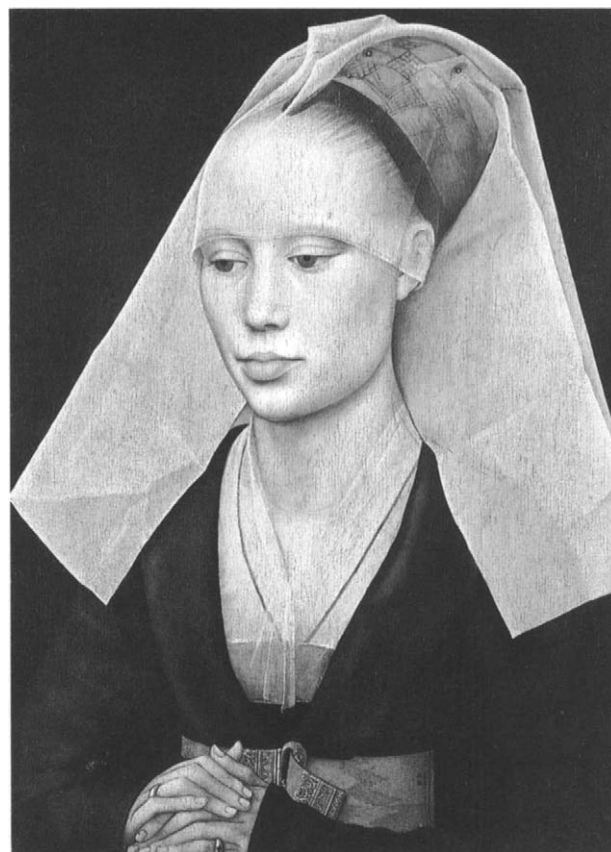


Fig. 176. Rogier van der Weyden, *Portrait of a Lady*, ca. 1460. Oil on oak, $13\frac{3}{8} \times 10\frac{1}{8}$ in. (34 x 25.5 cm). National Gallery, Washington, D.C.



1. Société de Reproduction des Dessins de Maîtres 3 ([Paris], 1911), unpaginated; ill. in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, pl. 31.
2. See also Workshop of Rogier van der Weyden *Portrait of a Woman* (National Gallery, London); illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 2, pl. 56, no. 34.
3. Popham 1926, p. 22, no. 10.
4. Only Louis Hautecoeur (“Les Dessins de la collection Walter Gay,” *Illustration*, December 3, 1927, unpaginated) and Jacques Dupont (“Quelques dessins flamands,” *Arts et métiers graphiques*, no. 51 [February 15, 1936], pp. 20–21) suggested a follower of van Eyck or van Eyck himself. For attributions to Christus, see P. Jamot, *De van Eyck à Bruegel*, exhib. cat., Musée de l’Orangerie (Paris, 1935), p. 106, no. 185; A. Leclerc, *Flemish Drawings, Fifteenth–Sixteenth Centuries* (New York, Paris, and London, [1949]), p. 83; Palais des Beaux-Arts, *De van Eyck à Rubens: Dessins de maîtres flamands*, exhib. cat. (Brussels, 1949), p. 15, no. 12; J. Besançon, *Les Dessins flamands du XV^e au XVI^e siècle* (Paris, 1951), p. 27; Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, p. 310 n. 7; F. Lugt, *Maîtres des anciens Pays-Bas nés avant 1550*, Inventaire général des dessins des écoles du nord, publié sous les auspices du Cabinet des Dessins [8] (Paris, 1968), p. 8, no. 13; Upton 1972, p. 424; and Panhans-Bühler 1978, pp. 105–6.
5. Dupont, “Quelques dessins,” pp. 20–21; and Panhans-Bühler 1978, pp. 105–6.
6. A similar proposal has been made with regard to Bruges artist Gerard David’s diverse drawings of women (see Ainsworth 1993, p. 16).

26

Follower of Petrus Christus

Two Female Heads

About 1450

Silverpoint on gray prepared paper, 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 3 $\frac{1}{2}$ in. (55 x 88 mm)

Provenance unknown

Biblioteca Reale, Turin (16344)

Commenting on the drawings in the Biblioteca Reale, Charles Loeser questioned the traditional attribution of this tiny sheet to Jan van Eyck, citing the indeterminate glances and the harsh modeling of the faces as uncharacteristic of his hand.¹ Although an association with the circle of van Eyck was largely maintained in subsequent references to the sheet, a few assigned it to the circle of Rogier van der Weyden.²

The drawing was first associated with Christus when Erwin Panofsky, reporting Colin Eisler’s observation that the heads resemble those of the women in Christus’s *Nativity* (formerly Wildenstein and Company, New York), noted that the sheet “reflects a work by Petrus Christus.”³ As Micheline Comblen-Sonkes later pointed out, the costume of the woman at the left closely resembles that of the woman in *Saint Eligius* (cat. no. 6).⁴ This figure is also comparable to that of Salome in the Berlin *Nativity* (fig. 9), and her companion at the right wears a head-dress similar to Salome’s. Furthermore, the female types represented in the Turin drawing recall those in several paintings attributed to Christus, such as the Virgin and female saints in the Dessau *Crucifixion*,⁵ the Mary Magdalene of the New York *Lamentation* (cat. no. 8), and the woman in *Saint Eligius*.⁶

These heads, independent and unassociated types, are surely not studies from life but copies after figures in other works. The heads may have been cut from a much larger sheet with additional sketches, or they may have been part of a model book of

images recorded from various sources. The graphic mannerisms are not close to those of Christus, and the rather harsh modeling creates a bold chiaroscuro. The medium and style of the drawing suggest a mid-fifteenth-century date.⁷

1. C. Loeser, “Die Handzeichnungen der Königlichen Bibliothek in Turin, mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der italienischen Meister,” *Repertorium für Kunstwissenschaft* 22 (1899), p. 18.
2. For attributions to the circle of van Eyck, see Fierens-Gevaert 1927–29, vol. 1, p. 114; Baldass 1952, p. 78 n. 1; and Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, p. 74. Tolnay (1939, p. 74, no. 6) considered the drawing an apocryphal Eyckian work. For attributions to the circle of Rogier, see F. Winkler, *Der Meister von Flémalle und Rogier van der Weyden, Zur Kunstgeschichte des Auslandes* 103 (Strasbourg, 1913), p. 54 n. 3; and A. Bertini, ed., *Mostra dei disegni di maestri stranieri della Biblioteca Reale di Torino: Catalogo*, exhib. cat., Biblioteca Reale (Turin, 1951), p. 11, no. 1 (where it is called an anonymous work from the end of the fifteenth century, the figure at the left influenced by Rogier).
3. Panofsky 1953, vol. 1, pp. 200 n. 3, 310 n. 7; illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pl. 82.
4. Sonkes 1969, pp. 257–58, no. E23.
5. Illustrated in Friedländer 1967–76, vol. 1, pl. 92.
6. Sonkes 1969, p. 258, no. E23.
7. Gianni Carlo Sciolla dates the sheet toward the end of the fifteenth century (G. C. Sciolla, “I disegni fiamminghi della Biblioteca Reale di Torino,” *Commentari*, n.s., 24 [January–June 1973], pp. 35–36; and G. C. Sciolla, ed., *I disegni di maestri stranieri della Biblioteca Reale di Torino* [Turin, 1974], p. 169, no. 188).



Appendix 1

Archival Documents and Literary Sources

Letters or words not actually in the text are indicated by italics. Superscript letters refer to notes about the text itself.

Superscript numbers refer to traditional footnotes dealing with interpretation and/or bibliographic references.

[...] means an irrelevant portion of text has been omitted.

[gr.] means the currency is not explicitly mentioned at that specific place in the text, but other evidence (such as a previous reference in the same text) makes it certain that it is also meant here.

N.S. means “New Style,” indicating that “Old Style” (O.S.), or “Easter style,” dates have been converted into modern dating (for further explanation, see “Petrus Christus: A Cultural Biography,” note 7, this volume).

// means end of the document; used when last line printed.

Doc. 1. July 6, 1444 — *Petrus Christus purchases his right of citizenship in Bruges.*

[fol. 60r] Poorters ghemaect zidert den anderen / dach van septembre anno mcccc xliij / [...]

[fol. 72v] [...] Pieter Xpistus filius Pieters gheboren van Baerle cochte zijn poorterscip / upten vj sten dach van hoymaend bi Joos vander Donc omme scildere te zine /

[fol. 60r] *Citizens made since the second day of September year 1443 [...]*

[fol. 72v] [...] *Pieter Christus, son of Pieter, born in Baerle, purchased his citizenship on the sixth day of July through Joos vander Donc, in order to be a painter*

Bruges, Stadsarchief (hereafter, SAB), *Poorterboeken*, no. 130, September 2, 1434–September 2, 1449, fols. 60r, 72v.

Published: Weale 1863b, p. 236; Weale 1909, p. 100 n. 3; Upton 1972, p. 429; Schabacker 1974, p. 138; and Upton 1990, p. 7.

Doc. 2. September 2, 1443–September 2, 1444 — *Excerpt from the municipal accounts: income from purchases of citizenship.*

[fol. 6r] Ontfaen vanden ghoenen die haer / poorterscip ghecocht hebben / Eerst ontfaen upten vierden dach van september van guyot de la hede filius / Guyots iij lb.[gr.] [...]

[fol. 12r] Item doe ontfaen van patricke david filius Robrechts, iij lb.[gr.] [...]

Item vj in hoymaend van pieteren xpistus filius pieters iij lb.[gr.] [...]

[fol. 6r] *Received from those who have purchased their citizenship First received on the fourth day of September from Guyot de la Hede, son of Guyot, 3 lb.[gr.] [...]*

[fol. 12r] *Item then received from Patricke David, son of Robrecht, 3 lb.[gr.] [...]*

Item 6 in July from Pieteren Christus, son of Pieter, 3 lb.[gr.] [...]

SAB, *Stadsrekeningen*, no. 216, 1443–44, fols. 6r, 12r.

Published: Weale 1863b, p. 236 n. 4; Weale 1909, p. 100 n. 3; Upton 1972, p. 429; Schabacker 1974, p. 138; and Upton 1990, p. 8 n. 8.

Doc. 3. April 24, 1454 — *Excerpt from the acts of the chapter of the cathedral of Cambrai: three copies of the miraculous Cambrai Madonna commissioned by the count of Etampes from Petrus Christus will be paid for and offered to the count by the office of works of the church.*

[fol. 87r] Datum anno liiij.^{to} die xxiiij^{ta} aprilis /

Ad requisitionem illustris domini comitis de Stampis, Petrus Crestus, / pictor, incola Brugensis, Tornacensis diocesis, depinxit tres ymagines / ad similitudinem illius ymaginis Beate Marie semper virginis que in capella est / Trinitatis collocata et a beato Luca picta fuisse creditur. Cui pictori / volunt domini de salario per ecclesiam satisfieri *quamquam* per dominum archidiaconum / Hanonie ex parte ecclesie dicto principi presententur et propinentur, / expensas vero solvent officia ecclesie prout erit advizatum //

[fol. 87r] *Given in the year 1454, the 24th day of April.*

Petrus Crestus, painter, citizen of Bruges, in the bishopric of Tournai, painted at the request of the illustrious count of Etampes three images after the resemblance of the image of the Blessed Mary, eternal Virgin, that is placed in the Chapel of the Trinity and which is believed to have been painted by the blessed Luke. The lords want to pay this painter from the allowance of the church, and [the paintings] will be given and presented to the said count by milord the archdeacon of Hainaut on behalf of the church. The expenses, however, will be paid by the office of works of the church, as will be stipulated

Cambrai, Médiathèque municipale, MS 1059, *Délibérations du chapitre cathédrale de Cambrai*, October 15, 1451–September 30, 1457, fol. 87r.

Published: J. Houdoy, *Histoire artistique de la cathédrale de Cambrai, ancienne église métropolitaine Notre-Dame* (Lille, 1880), p. 71 n. 1; Weale 1909, p. 102 n. 1; Abbé Bègne, *Histoire de Notre-Dame de Grâce, patronne du diocèse de Cambrai* (Cambrai, 1910), p. 121; Rolland 1947–48, p. 102 n. 14; Upton 1972, p. 430; and Schabacker 1974, p. 138.

Doc. 4. April 29, 1454 — *Excerpt from the accounts of the cathedral*

of Cambrai: first payment for three copies of the miraculous Cambrai Madonna.

[fol. 20r] Item xxix^a mensis Aprilis domini ordinaverunt quod de xxv scutis ad que ascendunt / expense pro tribus ymaginibus principali ymagini quae sanctus Lucas pinxisse / dicitur similibus, domino Comite de Stampis presentatis, officium fabrice solvat iiii^{or} / scuta, ideo hic, viij lb.

[fol. 20r] Item, the 29th of the month of April, the lords ordered that of the 25 shillings, to which amount the expenses for three images resembling the principal image believed to have been painted by Saint Luke that were presented to milord the count of Etampes, the office of works of the church should pay off 4 shillings, this means 8 lb.

Lille, Archives départementales du nord, *Compte de la fabrique et des ornements. Comptes pour la période 1453–1454*, no. 4 G 4660, fol. 20r.

Published: Houdoy, *Histoire artistique*, p. 190; Weale 1909, p. 102 n. 1; and Upton 1972, pp. 430–31.

Doc. 5a. April 29, 1454 — Excerpt from the accounts of the cathedral of Cambrai: second payment for three copies of the miraculous Cambrai Madonna.

[fol. 29v] Item xxix^a aprilis ordinatum fuit per capitulum quod de xxv scutis pro / pictura trium ymaginum beate Marie Virginis similibus ymagini / quam Sanctus Lucas pinxisse creditur, presentarum domino comiti / destampes, solverent hec prepositure contra alia officia huius ecclesie, x lb.

[fol. 29v] Item, the 29th of April, it has been ordered by the chapter that of the 25 shillings for painting three images of the Blessed Virgin Mary similar to the likeness of the image believed to be painted by Saint Luke presented to milord the count of Etampes, would be paid off this installment against others by the office of this church, 10 lb.

Lille, Archives départementales du nord, *Compte des prévôtés du Cambrésis, et plus précisément de celle de Neuville* (Computus prepositure sen partitionis de Neuvelis, pro anno presenti quinquagesimo tertio), no. 4 G 4667, fol. 29v.

Published: Weale 1909, p. 102 n. 1; and Upton 1972, p. 431.

Doc. 5b. 1453–54 — Excerpt from the accounts of the cathedral of Cambrai: third payment for three copies of the miraculous Cambrai Madonna.

[fol. 16v] Item, sicut per cedula[m] patet, domini mei ordinaverunt quod de xxv scutis / ad que ascendunt expense pro tribus ymaginibus principali / ymagini, quam sanctus Lucas pinxisse creditur, similibus, domino / comiti de Stampis presentatis, presens officium solveret et de quibus / hic fit misia, iiii lb.

[fol. 16v] Item, as it is stated in the charter, my lords have ordered that of the 25 shillings to which amount the expenses for three images similar to the likeness of the image believed to be painted by Saint Luke presented to milord the count of Etampes, the office pays off and clears now, 4 lb.

Lille, Archives départementales du nord, *Compte de l'office du grand métier*, no. 4 G 5088, fol. 16v.

[unpublished]

Doc. 5c. 1453–54 — Excerpt from the accounts of the cathedral of Cambrai: fourth payment for three copies of the miraculous Cambrai Madonna.

[fol. 104v] Item, ordinarunt domini quod de xxv scutis ad que expense pro tribus / imaginibus pinctis ad similitudinem ymaginis, quam sanctum Lucam / creditur depinxisse, in capella sanctissime trinitatis existentis, domino / de Stampis presentatis, presens officium solveret, xij lb.

[fol. 104v] Item, the lords order that of the 25 shillings to which amount the expenses for three images painted after the likeness of the image believed to be painted by Saint Luke, which is kept in the Chapel of the Holy Trinity, presented by milord the count of Etampes, the office pays off now, 12 lb.

Lille, Archives départementales du nord, *Compte de l'office de l'assise*, no. 4 G 5419, fol. 104v (with copies in *Compte de l'office de l'assise*, no. 4 G 5420, fol. 87, and *Compte de l'office de l'assise*, no. 4 G 5741, fol. 134r).

[unpublished]

Doc. 6. 1453–54 — The chapter of the cathedral of Cambrai transmits to the archdeacon of Hainaut the expenses for the copies of the miraculous Cambrai Madonna.

[fol. 37] Item de mandato capituli tradite fuerunt domino archidiacono / Hanonie, pro portione expensarum ratione ymaginis gloriose / Virginis Marie domino comiti de Stampis presentate per capitulum / et pluries depicte, unde pro porcione presentis officii contra / alia officia ecclesie prout patet per cedula[m] in capitulo passatam, x lb.

[fol. 37] Item, on the order of the chapter transmitted to milord the archdeacon of Hainaut, for his part in the expenses for the image of the glorious Virgin Mary that was presented to the count of Etampes by the chapter and copied various times, of which a part for the present office of works of the church against the other offices of the church, as it is stated in a charter passed before the chapter, 10 lb.

Lille, Archives départementales du nord, *Comptes des prévôtés d'Artois, la prévôté de Sains*, no. 4 G 6074, fol. 37r.

Published: Weale 1909, p. 102 n. 1; and Upton 1972, p. 431.

Doc. 7. May 1, 1454 — Excerpt from the acts of the chapter of Cambrai: it is ordered that no more than 20 pounds will be paid to Nicolas de Valkenisse for his expenses with respect to the copies of the miraculous Cambrai Madonna.

Datum anno domini millesimo cccliij.^{to} die prima mensis May / [...]

[**fol. 87v**] Magistro Nicolao de Valkenisse quia certas^a expensas in materia de / biscophoven, ac etiam pictorem qui ymagines beate Marie pro domino / comite de Stampis depinxerat, gubernavit domini faciunt gratiam / talem quae reparationes de [...] ^b quod debebat in domo predictem / sua et magister domini Nicolai [...] ^c supportabit ecclesiam^d operam que de illud / aquitabit usque ad summam viginte lb. et non ultra //

Given in the year of our Lord thousand 454, the first day of the month of May [...]

[**fol. 87v**] *With respect to Master Nicolas de Valkenisse, who made certain^a expenses related to Biscophoven, and also to the painter who painted the images of the Blessed Mary for the count of Etampes, it was agreed that the lords will do such favors as the repairs of [...] ^b which he has to undertake in his said house and that master lord Nicolas [...] ^c will support the office of the church^d for which he will be reimbursed the sum of twenty pounds and no more.*

- a. ces crossed out.
- b. Illegible passage.
- c. Illegible word.
- d. ecclesie inserted by the same hand.

Cambrai, Médiathèque municipale, MS 1059, *Délibérations du chapitre cathédrale de Cambrai*, October 15, 1451–September 30, 1457, fol. 87v.

Published: Rolland 1947–48, p. 102 n. 14; and Upton 1972, pp. 431–32.

Doc. 8. 1454–95 — *List of members of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Dry Tree.*

[**fol. 1r**] Ter eeren van gode es dit ghe-/ selscepe van onser liever vrou-/ wen ten droghen bome dat / men hout ten freren minoren / in Brugghe

Hertoghe philips van Bourgoendie

Hertoginne Ysabeele van Bourgoendie

Heere van chaerloes kaerle

Mijn vrouwe van charloes¹

Heere lodewijc vande gruuthuse

Mijn heere van archi

Mijn vrouwe van archi [...]

[**fol. 5r**] [...] Mijn heere Anthonis bootsaert / Abt vanden eechoute²

[**fol. 7r**] [...] Grietkin coolbrants^a

Jacob honing Ende Joncfrauwe / tanne sijn wijf^b [...]

[**fol. 8r**] [...] Adriaenkin avogaer xpistoffels sone [...] ^c

[**fol. 9r**] Anthuenis valke^d [...]

[**fol. 12r**]

Dheer vrancke van moerkerke

Zeghin de baenst^e

Pietre baridin^f

Martin lem

Meester gillis vande / bussche

Meester donaes de beer / de Jonghe^g

xpistofle baridain ontfangher van vlandren^h

[**fol. 12v**]

Messire philippe de bourgoingne chevalier / Seigneur de bevre

Jehan darloy gouverneur de / monseigneur de bevre

Jaques de le moro Recepveur / de monseigneur de bevre

Jaques trom ende Joncfrauwe / Cornelia sijn wijf
Rougier Vanden Weghe Ende / Elisabeth sijn Wijf
Meester Antheunis michiel / ende sijn wijf

[**fol. 13r**]

thomas parrot

pieter cristi ende sijn wijf

Arnoud de mol ende sijne wijfⁱ

Meester Simon Kareest et / uxor eius^j

Jan Walgherlinc et uxor

Messire anthoine Baestaerd van / Bourgoingnen cam int

gheselschip / int jaer lxij. m cccc in meye [...]

[**fol. 18v**] [...] Benedeto de ciola et iacomina sa / femme le xxij de
januaire 1494^{k3}

[**fol. 1r**] *To the honor of God, this is the company of Our Lady of the Dry Tree, which is held among the Minorite brothers at Bruges*

Duke Philip of Burgundy

Duchess Isabella of Burgundy

Lord Charles of Charolais

Milady of Charolais¹

Lord Louis of Gruuthuse

Milord of Archy

Milady of Archy [...]

[**fol. 5r**] [...] *Milord Anthonis Bootsaert, Abbot of Eechout²*

[**fol. 7r**] [...] *Grietkin Coolbrants^a*

Jacob Honing and Mrs. Tanne, his wife^b [...]

[**fol. 8r**] [...] *Adriaenkin Avogaer, Christopher's son [...] ^c*

[**fol. 9r**] *Anthuenis Valke^d [...]*

[**fol. 12r**]

Sir Vrancke van Moerkerke

Zeghin de Baenst^e

Pietre Baridin^f

Martin Lem

Master Gillis vande Bussche

Master Donaes de Beer the younger^g

Christofle Baridain, receiver of Flanders^h

[**fol. 12v**]

Milord Philip of Burgundy, Knight Lord of Beveren

Jehan d'Arloy, governor of Milord of Beveren

Jaques de le Moro, receiver of Milord of Beveren

Jaques Trom and Mrs. Cornelia, his wife

Rougier Vanden Weghe and Elisabeth, his wife

Master Antheunis Michiel and his wife

[**fol. 13r**]

Thomas Parrot

Pieter Cristi and his wife

Arnoud de Mol and his wifeⁱ

Master Simon Kareest and his wife^j

Jan Walgherlinc and wife

Milord Anthony, Bastard of Burgundy, entered the company in the year 1463 in May [...]

[**fol. 18v**] [...] *Benedeto de Ciola and Iacomina his wife, the 22nd of January 1494^{k3}*

a. The entire text, from the beginning of the list on fol. 1r to this entry, was written by one hand (Hand A1) in *littera formata*, except for additions on fol. 3v, l. 8 (“sijn wijf”), fol. 6r, l. 4 (“ende zin wijf”) and l. 11 (“ende zin wif”).

b. The entries from fol. 7r, l. 6 (starting with Jacob Honing) up to fol. 8r, l. 8 were written by Hand A2 in a densely spaced *littera*

- formata*. This hand might be identical with A1, but the text is written with a smaller pen than the rest.
- c. The last entry written by A2. This entry is followed by a later addition in a smaller *littera formata* (l. 9) and by three entries in a careless *littera cursiva* (ll. 10–12), added in 1479.
- d. Continuation of entries inscribed by Hand A1.
- e. Last entry inscribed by A1. There is only one minor addition, on fol. 11r, l. 7 (“dit riquart”).
- f. First entry written by Hand B, in a sloppy *littera formata*.
- g. Last entry written by B.
- h. From this entry in fol. 12r on, names are inscribed by Hand C in a densely spaced and spiky *littera formata*.
- i. Last entry by Hand C.
- j. From this entry on, names are individually added to the list at different times; the earliest dated entry is on folio 13r, ll. 7–8: Anthony, the Great Bastard of Burgundy, May 1463.
- k. Last entry in the list.

SAB, *Gilde Droogenboom*, no. 505, portfolio 2, *Ledenlijst van de gilde*, fols. 1r–18v.

[unpublished]

1. This must be Isabella of Bourbon, second wife of Charles the Bold, whom he married in 1454. The date of this marriage offers a *terminus post quem* for this document as a whole and, more specifically, for the text written by Hand A1.
2. Anthonis II Bootsart, abbot of the Bruges abbey of the Canons Regular of Saint Augustine, commonly known as the abbey “ten Eeckhout,” from 1451 until his death on September 5, 1458 (see W. H. J. Weale, “Notice sur la fondation de l’abbaye de l’Eeckhout et sur les abbés qui l’ont gouvernée,” *Flandre* 3 [1869–70], p. 287; and Martens 1992, p. 325). The date of his death is a *terminus ante quem* for the text written by Hand A1 in this list.
3. That is, 1495 (N.S.).

Doc. 9. September 2, 1462–September 1, 1463 — *Excerpt from the municipal accounts: expenditure made for the festivities during the visit of Duke Philip the Good and his sister Agnes of Bourbon to Bruges.*

[fol. 52r] Huutgheven van extraordinaire zaken / Eerst betaelt ten bliden incommene van onzen harden gheduchten heere met / mer vrouwe van Bourbon zijn zestre, hier binnen de stede commende van / Ghend, te watre, Janne Laerke den scipman omme de baerke te ghreedene / ende te vermakene, daer de bailliu, scoutheeten, buerchmeesters, scepenen ende raden / inne voeren tieghens onzen voors. gheduchten heere, ende was xxij in sporcle / int jaer m.iiijc lxij. Voor al, xx s. x d.gr. / [...]

[fol. 53r] [...] Item betaelt pieteren cristus ende meester pieter nachtegale als principael / last hebbende van te doen makene eenen boom van Jesse ende in sghelycx / Jherusalem met datter toebehoorde ende dat al te stoffeirne van scilderyen / van allen den houte ende yserwercke van canevetse, van de dachueren vanden themmerlieden vande montkosten van lxxij persoonen alle bezich upden / dach vanden ommeganghe anden voors. boom ende Jherusalem met datter / toebehoort voor al, xl lb. viij s.[gr.]

[fol. 52r] *Expenditure for exceptional business*
First, on the occasion of the triumphal entry of our very redoubtable lord with milady of Bourbon, his sister, coming here into the city from Ghent by boat, paid [to] Janne Laerke, the bargeman, to prepare and repair the

boat, in which the bailiff, sheriff, mayors, aldermen, and counselors sailed to meet our aforementioned redoubtable lord, and this was [on] February 22 in the year 1462. For everything, 20 s. 10 d.gr. [...]
 [fol. 53r] [...] *Item paid Pieteren Cristus and master Pieter Nachtegale, as those chiefly entrusted with the supervision of the execution of a Tree of Jesse and a Jerusalem with everything included and for furnishing all this with paintings. For all the wood and ironwork, canvas, and daily wages of the carpenters, for the cost of food for 72 employees, all active on the day of the procession on the aforementioned Tree and Jerusalem, with everything included. For all, 40 lb. 8 s. [gr.]*

SAB, *Stadsrekeningen*, no. 216, 1462–63, fols. 52r–53r.

Published: Gilliodts-van Severen 1871–85, vol. 5, p. 534; Weale 1909, p. 102 n. 2; Upton 1972, pp. 432–33; Schabacker 1974, p. 139 (all inaccurately); Martens 1990–91, p. 19; and Martens 1992, pp. 468–73.

Doc. 10. September 2, 1466–September 1, 1467 — *Excerpt from the municipal accounts: payment to Petrus Christus for repairing the Tree of Jesse.*

[fol. 46v] Huutgheven van ghemeene zaken [...]
 [fol. 53v] [...] *Item betaelt pieter xpistus ter causen van dat hij repareerde met / nieuwen scilderien den boom van Jesse, dienende upden dach vander / voors. processie up rekeninghe ende in minderinghe van ix lb. x s.gr., v lb.gr.*

[fol. 46v] *Expenditure for ordinary business [...]*
 [fol. 53v] [...] *Item paid Pieter Christus for repairing with new paintings the Tree of Jesse, to be used on the aforementioned day of the procession, on account and as advance on 9 lb. 10 s.gr., 5 lb.gr.*

SAB, *Stadsrekeningen*, no. 216, 1466–67, fols. 46v, 53v.

Published: Weale 1863b, p. 237; Weale 1909, p. 103; Upton 1972, p. 433; Schabacker 1974, p. 139; and Martens 1992, p. 481.

Doc. 11. August 10, 1467–August 10, 1468 — *Petrus Christus and Willem Vrelant pay their annual dues to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow.*

[fol. 1r] Rekenynghe Joos Van der Hooghelande, / deken van der gilde van Onser Liever / Vrouwe vander Sneer die men hout in Onser Vrouwen kerke bin der stede van / Brucghe mids Clais de Brauter, Clais / de Bueckel,^a Heinderyc Van Hove, Jacob van der / Castele, Joos van Damme, Xpistiaen Berthelemeus, / hover zyenders, ende Lievin Gheeraerts, / Heinderyc Coopman, Antonis Van Hove, / Jacob de Vos de jonghe, Gildolf de Grooteeren, / Ogier vander Braucke, Aernaute de Mellin, / Mateus Canselier, zorghers der selver / gilde ende dit anno lxxvij beghinnende x in / oest ende hendende anno lxxvij x in oest / [...]

[fol. 1v] *Ontfaen in de busse van buuten / [...]*

[fol. 2v] [...] *Willem Vrelant ij gr. [...]*

[fol. 5v] *Ontfaen in de busse vander kerke / [...]*

[fol. 6r] [...] *Pieter Xpistiaen, scilder ij gr.*

[fol. 1r] *Account [by] Joos Van der Hooghelande, dean of the guild of Our Lady of the Snow, held at the Church of Our Lady in the city of Bruges, with Clais de Brauter, Clais de Bueckel, Heinderyc Van Hove,*

Jacob van der Castele, Joos van Damme, Christiaen Berthelemeus, [as] supervisors, and Lievin Gheeraerts, Heinderyc Coopman, Antonis Van Hove, Jacob de Vos the Younger, Gildolf de Grooteren, Ogier vander Braucke, Aernaute de Mellin, Mateus Canselier, [as] administrators of the same guild, commencing in the year 1467, August 10, and ending in the year 1468, August 10 [...]

[fol. 1v] Received in the collecting boxes outside [...]

[fol. 2v] [...] Willem Vrelant, 2 gr. [...]

[fol. 5v] Received in the collecting boxes in the church [...]

[fol. 6r] [...] Pieter Christiaen, painter, 2 gr.

a. The letters *bueck* crossed out.

Bruges, Rijksarchief (hereafter, RAB), *Kerkfabriek Onze Lieve Vrouwe, Algemene rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw*, 1467–1499, no. 153I, fols. 1r–6r.

Published: Martens 1990–91, p. 19; and Martens 1992, p. 483.

Doc. 12. September 2, 1467–September 1, 1468 — Excerpt from the municipal accounts: Petrus Christus is paid in arrears, and François van den Pitte and Jacob de Jonghe are paid for conservation work.

[fol. 65r] Huutgheven van ghemeene zaken [...]

[fol. 71v] [...] Item betaelt Pieter xpistus ter cause van dat hy reparaerde met nieuwen / scilderien den boom van yesse inde jaerschare voorleden ende die jeghen / hem bevoorwaert ix lb. x s.gr. daerof hem ter laetster rekenynghe niet / meer betaelt en was gherekent dan v lb. gr. dus hem hier over de / vulle betalinghe iiij lb. x. s.gr.

Item xj in meye betaelt Fransoys vanden Pitte ende Jacob den Jonghe, / scilders, van dat zy den voorn. Boom van Yesse weder verschildert ende / ghestoffeirt hebben ter voors. processie van meye lxxvij, hemlieden die / besteid in tasweerde om vij lb. viij s.gr. [...]

[fol. 65r] Expenditure for ordinary business [...]

[fol. 71v] [...] Item paid Pieter Christus for repairing with new paintings the Tree of Jesse last year, contracted to him for 9 lb. 10 s.gr., of which was given to him in last [year's] accounts no more than 5 lb.gr. Consequently, here [given] to him toward the full amount 4 lb 10 s.gr. Item 11 in May paid Fransoys vanden Pitte and Jacob de Jonghe, painters, for having repainted and decorated the aforementioned Tree of Jesse for the aforementioned procession of May 68, paid to them for contracted work, 7 lb. 8 s.gr. [...]

SAB, *Stadsrekeningen*, no. 216, 1467–68, fols. 65r, 71v.

Published: Gilliodts-van Severen 1871–85, vol. 6, p. 109 (inaccurately); Weale 1909, p. 103; Upton 1972, p. 433; Schabacker 1974, p. 139; A. Schoutet, *De Vlaamse primitieven te Brugge: Bronnen voor de schilderkunst te Brugge tot de dood van Gerard David*, Fontis *Historiae Artis Neerlandicae* 2, 1 vol. to date (Brussels, 1989), p. 284 (fragmentary); and Martens 1992, pp. 484–88.

Doc. 13. July 7, 1468 — Excerpt from the accounts of the municipal lotteries: Petrus Christus acts as a witness for a woman who has won the first prize.

[fol. 13r] Rekenynghe ende bewys vanden / ontfanghe ende uutghevene vanden / zester lotinghe ghedaen vij in hoymaent anno miiijc lxxvij /
Eerst ontfaen / vanden voors. lotinghe van viijc lxxj loten / te iij s. gr. tlot, comt in ghelde cxxx lb. xij s.gr. /
Uutgheven ter causen vander voors. lotinghe / van prysen scrooderye¹ ende tiensten² /
Eerst betaelt den ghenen die meest loten / ingheleyt hadde die eerst ende laetst uutquamen / elken vj pieters valent j lb. xvj s.gr. Item betaelt Hannekin Coopman, present Pieter Xpistus scildere over de scrooderye vichtich pond gr. Item betaelt den ghenen die stappans / voor ende naer de voors. scrooderye uutquamen / elc iiij pieters comt viij pieters valent xxiiij s. [...]

[fol. 13r] Account and certificate of the income and expenditure of the sixth lottery, held July 7, 1468

First received with said lottery for 871 lottery tickets at 3 s. gr. a ticket, amounts to 130 lb. 13 s.gr.

Expenditure for the said lottery of prizes, “scrooderye,”¹ and tenths²

First paid to those who had bought the most lottery tickets, who were drawn first and last, each 6 pieters, worth 1 lb. 16 s.gr.

Item paid to Hannekin Coopman, in the presence of Pieter Christus, painter, for the “scrooderye,” fifty pound gr.

Item paid to those who were drawn immediately before and after the “scrooderye,” each 4 pieters, makes 8 pieters, worth 24 s. [...]

SAB, *Lotterien*, no. 273, lotterij 1468, fol. 13r.

[unpublished]

1. *Scrooderye*: municipal office in the harbor responsible for collecting fees paid for loading and unloading wine and beer barrels (see J. Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch handwoordenboek* [The Hague, 1932; reprint, 1981], p. 528, s.v. *Schroderie*).

2. *Tienste*: one tenth (see Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch handwoordenboek*, p. 605); here, a lottery ticket worth only one tenth of a regular one.

Doc. 14. August 14, 1468–August 28, 1469 — Petrus Christus and Willem Vrelant pay their annual dues to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow.

[fol. 17r] Rekeninghe ende bewijs van alden ontfanghe / ende huutghevenne bi my, Jan de Blazere, als / deken van Onzer Vrouwe Van der Snee beghinnende / den xiiijten dach in oest int jaer mcccc / lxxvij, hendende den xxvijten dach van oest / int jaer mcccc lxxix / [...]

[fol. 18r] Ander ontfaen van jaerghelde / ontfaen metter busse int ommegeaen / van buten der houder veste / [...]

[fol. 19r] [...] Willem Vrelant ij gr. [...]

[fol. 19v] Den ontfaen vanden jaerghelde / int ommegeaen metter busse binnen / de houde veste / [...]

[fol. 22r] [...] Pieter Xpistus ij gr.

[fol. 17r] Account and confirmation of all receipts and expenditure by me, Jan de Blazere, as dean of Our Lady of the Snow, commencing August 14, 1468, and ending August 28, 1469 [...]

[fol. 18r] *Other receipt of annual dues received in the collecting box outside the old walls [...]*

[fol. 19r] [...] *Willem Vrelant, 2 gr. [...]*

[fol. 19v] *Annual dues received in the collecting box within the old walls [...]*

[fol. 22r] [...] *Pieter Christus, 2 gr.*

RAB, *Kerkefabriek Onze Lieve Vrouwe, Algemene rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw, 1467–1499, no. 153I, fols. 17r–22r.*

Published: Martens 1990–91, pp. 19–20; and Martens 1992, pp. 490–91.

Doc. 15. January 4, 1469 (N.S.) — *Petrus Christus represents the guild of the image-makers' corporation as elder in a contract with the brothers Jan and Antoon Losschaerd, in which the supervision of masses founded by the brothers in the cloister of the Bruges Austin friars is delegated to the corporation.*

Wij Gheeraerd van Benthem, deken, Jacob van Ghiseghem, Jacob de Jonghe, Jan vanden Zanden, Jan van Hilten, Adriaen Kaele, Diederick van Thien, Augustijn Buerze, vijnders vanden ambochte van den / beeldmakers, zadelaers in Brugghe, Aernoud de Mol ende Jan de Cloot gouvernerers, Jan van Benthem, Jan Caudron, Joris van Zeven ende Pieter vanden Bogaerde, ghecommitteerden, ende wij, Pieter Nachtegale, / Pieter Kristus, Pieter Casimbroot, Jan Malekyn, Cornelis Bollaert, Clais van Hegghe mont, Jan Hughezone, Michiel Vilt, Adriaen van Claerhoudt, Willem vanden Leene, Jacob Steeghere, Jacop Freet, / Gheeraerd / Fromenteyt, Pieter de Witte, Cornelis van Smalevoorde, Jacob vanden Bussche, Adriaen Lottezuene, Jan Kaerle, Symoen Lombaert, Jan Lombaert, Aelbrecht van Lent, Anthuenis de Langhe, Rogier van Troys als houderlingen ende voort al tghemeene vanden vors. ambochte in desen tijden, doen te wetene allen den gonon die desen lettren zullen zien of horen lezen ute dien dat verbare ende wijze Jan ende Anthuenis Losschaerd, / ghebroeders, wille ende begheerte hebbende achtervolghende den testamente ende uterste wille van wilen Janne Losschaerd Jans zuene, haerlieder hoom, in lavenesse van zynre ziele ende allen kerstenen zielen / te fonderene int clooster vanden Augustinen in Brueghe, eene lezende messe van Requiem sdaechs eeuwelike ende ervelike gheduerende ghedaen te zine inden choor vander kerke ten hoghen houtare te zekeren huere [...]¹

Dit was ghedaen int jaer duust vierhondert achte ende tzestich up den vierden dach / van laumaendt. //²

We, Gheeraerd van Benthem, dean, Jacob van Ghiseghem, Jacob de Jonghe, Jan vanden Zanden, Jan van Hilten, Adriaen Kaele, Diederick van Thien, Augustijn Buerze, inspectors of the corporation of image-makers, saddlers of Bruges; Aernoud de Mol and Jan de Cloot, financial administrators; Jan van Benthem, Jan Caudron, Joris van Zeven, and Pieter vanden Bogaerde, administrators; and we, Pieter Nachtegale, Pieter Kristus, Pieter Casimbroot, Jan Malekyn, Cornelis Bollaert, Clais van Hegghe mont, Jan Hughezone, Michiel Vilt, Adriaen van Claerhoudt, Willem vanden Leene, Jacob Steeghere, Jacop Freet, Gheeraerd Fromenteyt, Pieter de Witte, Cornelis van Smalevoorde, Jacob vanden Bussche, Adriaen Lottezuene, Jan Kaerle, Symoen Lombaert, Jan Lombaert, Aelbrecht van Lent, Anthuenis de Langhe, Rogier van Troys as elders; and furthermore all members of the present said corporation, are proclaiming to everyone who will see this letter or who will hear it being

*read, that the wise brothers, Jan and Anthuenis Losschaerd, wanted to found, according to the testament and last will of the late Jan Losschaerd Jan's son, their uncle, to alleviate his soul and all Christian souls, to found in the cloister of the Austin friars in Bruges a requiem mass read daily, perpetual and inheritable, done in the choir of the church at the high altar [...]*¹

*This was done in the year thousand four hundred sixty-eight, on the fourth day of January.*²

Ghent, Archief van de Paters Augustijnen, *Klooster Brugge*, no. 73.

Published: A. Keelhoff, *Histoire de l'ancien couvent des ermites de Saint Augustin à Bruges* (Bruges, 1869), pp. 173–74 (fragmentarily and incorrectly).

1. The charter continues with a list of all the masses making part of the foundation, the real estate that has to yield the resources for it, and other practical arrangements. A charter of December 19, 1468, concerning the real estate is quoted literally.
2. The charter is legalized by another one, issued by the Bruges magistrates on February 14, 1469 (N.S.).

Doc. 16. June 20, 1469 — *Contract between the representatives of the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Dry Tree, including Petrus Christus, and the Franciscans of Bruges.*

Cond ende kennelic zy allen den ghenen die desen chaertere zullen zien oft hooren lesen, uute dien dat tusschen den notablen ende werden personen vanden eerbaren gheselscepe ende ghildebroederscepe vander cappelle der glorieuser ende reyner maghet Maria, staende binden cloostre ende convente vanden freren minueren in Brugghe, an deen zyde, ende ons gardien meesters ende vaders vanden voors. cloostre ende convente over ende inde name vanden ghemeenen broeders ende gheselscepe vanden voors. convente, an dandere. Zekere queste ende gheschillen gheweist ende ghezyn hebben ter causen van eender lettre onder svoors. convents zeghele in tiden voorleden ghegheven bi wylen onzen voorders, gardien meesters ende vaders vanden voors. convente, ghewaghende van diversschen messen, sermoenen ende anderen kerkelicke ceremonien binder voors. capelle te moeten doene omme zekere loon ende aelmoessenen der over tontfanghene, daerof wy gardien meesters ende vaders noch ooc onse voorders binnen zekere termyn van jaren copien noch registres binnen den zelve convente ghevonden en hebben, daerute dat diverssche fauten ende ghebreken bi ygnorancien zo te bemoedene es ghefallen zijn. Ende het zo zy dat wy over ende inde name vanden voors. convente zo verre ende zo breede metten voors. gheselscepe vanden voors. drooghenboome in communicatie commen zyn dat wy daerof veertenst ende verleken zyn bi wetene ende consente van onzen eerwerdeghen vader in Godt, den ministre van Vranckericke, meester Claise Guyotely, docteur inder heleghe godheyt ende theologie, inde naervolghende maniere. So eist dat wy gardien meesters ende vaders ende al tghemeene vanden voors. convente over ons ende onze naercommers, beloft hebben ende bi desen onzen lettren al noch beloven bi wetene, consente ende ottroye vanden voors. onzen eerwerdeghen vader ende prelaed als boven ten eeuweghen daghen ter eere ende werdichede der voors. glorieuser maghet Marie ende ter zalicheyt ende lavenesse vanden broeders ende zusters gheestelic ende weerlic levende ende doode vanden voors.

gheselscepe ende ghildebroederscepe te doene of te doen doene de naervolghende messen, sermoenen ende ander ceremonien hier onder verclaerst up de peynen ende broken daer bi begrepen: Ende eerst inde voors. capelle te lesene of te zinghene alle daghe eene messe, te wetene tsondaches eene zinghene messe vander voors. glorieuser maghet Marie, smaendaechs eene messe te lesene over alle zieken, svrindaechs vanden heleghe cruuse, sdincendaechs, swoensdaechs, sdonderdaechs ende saterdaechs vander voors. glorieuser maghet, het en ware dat up eenighe vanden voors. daghen camen notabelen ende feestelike daghen up welke men danne lesen zal moghen vanden voors. daghen. Ende al diere ghelyke up alle andere daghen die den voors. gheselscepe ghelieven zal te ordonneren omme zielmessen of uuttaerden te doene te haerlieder devotie die wij ghehouden zullen lezen of zinghen zal ghehouden zijn vooren of naer der voors. messe eene drooghe messe te lesene van Onservvrouwen. Ende welke messen wy ende onse naercommers ghehouden zullen zijn te doene, te wetene inden zomer tusschen den zessen ende zevene huere te verstante van maerte toot Baefmesse¹ ende inden wintere van Baefmesse toot maerte tusschen den zevene ende den achten huere. Van al welken diensten, messen ende anderen ceremonien de dekene ende zorghers vanden voors. gheselscepe ende ghildebroederscepe voordan ghehouden zullen zijn den voors. convente jaerlicx daervooren te besorghene in caritaten ende aelmoesenen, de somme van drie ponden grooten Vlaemscher munte ten drie paymenten siaers waerof teerste wesen ende vallen zal te midwintere² int jaer duust vierhondert neghene ende tsestich, tander te meye anno tseventich ende tderde ten hende vanden jare ende immer ombegrepen tderde octave vander upvaert der voors. glorieuser Maghet Marie die men jaerlicx houdt telken halfougste up welken dach altoos tjaer beghinsel ende hende nemen zal ende also voort ten eeuwegen daghen.³ Ende waert dat wy, gardien meesters vaders ende tvoors. convent of onze naercommers in faulten ende ghebreken vielen up eenighen vanden voors. daghen de voors. messe te doene, zo beloven van sdaechs daer naer te doen doene binder voors. cappelle twee messen zonder eenich wederzeggene. Dies zo zal de clerc vander voors. gilde voor tConfiteor van elker messe die men lesen of zinghen zal ghehouden zijn of de costre vander voors. kerke te luudene of te doen luudene de belle vander voors. ghilde drie waerssten, ten hende dat tvolc inde voors. kerke wesende te tyde ter voors. cappelle commen moghen. Voord dat wij broeders vors. ten eewighen daghen ghehouden zullen zijn upde vive principale feestelike daghen vande voors. glorieuser maghet te doen doene een sermoen bi eenen vanden voors. broeders vanden convente voor twelke sermoen et convent den broeder vernoughen zal ende vuldoen. Ende eene messe met dyakene ende subdiakene ende al diere ghelike upden heleghe kersdach, nieudagh, dartiendach,⁴ paessche dach, assenwoens dach, sinxen dach ende alder helegher dach, eene ghelyke messe met dyakene. Ende ghesworen vanden voors. gheselscepe den voors. convente ghehouden zullen zijn te besorghene telken meye de somme van tien schellinghen ende zesse penninghen groten, dies zo zal tvoors. convent ghehouden zijn te besorghene ende te ghevene telken vanden voors. vijf feesten van Onservvrouwen den broedere die tsermoen doen zal zesse groten voors. wel verstante zynde daer eenich vanden voors. ghildebroeders naermaels uut devocien anderen zinghene messen begheerden ghedaen thebbene dat wij, gardien ende broeders voors. ende onse naercommers, ghehouden zullen zijn die te doene ons ende onse naercommers van dien recompenserende

ende loonende in avenante vanden voors. anderen messen. Ende zo welken tiden dat den zelven gheselscepe vanden voors. ghilde ghelieven zal eenighe zielmessen over eenighe broeders of zusters overleden zynde deser werelt ghedaen te hebbene dat wij die ghehouden zullen zijn te doene met diakene ende subdiakene. Den priestere die de voors. messe doen zal daervooren hebbende viere grooten, diake ende subdiake elken twee grooten, ende den zesse broeders die de voors. messe zinghen zullen, elken eenen groote, den costre voor zijn arbeyt ende moeyte, twee grooten. Dies zo zal de voors. priestere die de messe doen zal ghehouden zijn ter offerande te lesene over de zielen vanden dooden ende allen zielen De Profundis ende eene collecte daertoe dienende. Voordt zo zullen zij noch, gaerdien meesters ende vaders vanden voors. convente ende onze naercommers ten eeuweghen daghen ghehouden zijn alle jare naer allen zielen dach te doen doene binder voors. capelle, eene zinghene messe van Requiem met diake en subdiake ten trooste ende lavenesse vanden ghildebroeders ende zusters danne deser werelt overleden ende alle gheloveghe zielen ende al diere ghelyke ter offerande te doen zeggene ende den priester te doen lesene een Deprofundis ende collecte als boven. Ende zullen also de voors. deken, ghesworen ende ghildebroeders ghehouden werden daer te commene ende te offerne den voors. convente blivende de offer kerssen ende penninghen die ten exequien of zielmessen commen ende vallen zullen. Es voordt tusschen ons ende den voors. ghildebroeders ghesloten ende over een ghedreghe es dat der voors. capelle voordan toebehooren ende bliven zal tapport vervallen ende profijten van wasse, beylden, kerssen, zelve, cappen, pelders, ornamenten ende andere ghelyke kerkelike juweelen die der voors. ghilde inde cappelle ghebracht zullen werden in voormt van beteringhen, beloften, mirakelen, devocien of bi anderen procuracien uutghedaen dat den voors. convent alleene toebehooren ende bliven zal al tghuent dies men ter offerande binder voors. messe offeren zal het zij ghelt, kerssen, wyn, brood, vleesch of andere ghiften ende tote dien alle de profitten die commen ende volghen zullen van eeuighen sepultueren ofte lyken zonder daer inne de voors. cappelle of ghildebroeders eenich recht of onderwindinghe te moghen hebbene. Ende zullen de voors. ghildebroeders vander voors. ghilde ten autare vander zelve glorieuser maghet up hare vive principale feesten moghen zegnen ende doen zegnen al diere ghelyke binder octave vanden zelve feeste naer thuutwysen van huerlieder bulle mids dat tvoors. convent vanden voors. vervallen ende profijten hebben zal van elker feeste twaelf grooten ende den costre vander voors. kerke voor de voors. vijf feesten naer doude costume vijf grooten. Ghebuerdet ooc dat eenich meinssche inde voors. ghilde wesende of der buuten uut devocien begheerde binder voors. cappelle sepultuere te hebbene of daer begraven te zine, dat zullen de vaders, broeders ende tghemeene convent moghen gheven ende consenteren zo zy diet begheeren zullen met hemlieden veereenen ende verlycken zullen commen te verstante ten profyete ende oorboore vanden voors. convente. Mids dat wy over ons ende onze naercommers den voors. ghilde broeders ende zusters gheconsenteert hebben ende al noch consenteren inde voors. cappelle eene ghemeene sepulture te hebbene ende te makene thueren kosten elken zyn recht behouden te verstante vanden ghuenen die daer van ouden tiden huere sepultuere ghehat hebben, danof den convente dienende naer der ouder ende goeder costume. Altoos wel verstante daer vrienden ende maghen van eenighe dooden die men daer begraven zal breeder devocie

hadden van diensten, messen, exequien of tlichame met processien ghehaelt te zine ofte int abydt van Sinte Franchoise begraven te zine, dat zullen moghen doen, den voors. convente daerof recompenserende zo zys eens vallen ende wesen zullen. Voordt zo zullen de voors. ghildebroeders voordan ghehouden zijn de voors. cappelle te houden staende ghelaesdich ende te ghereicx jeghens wyndt ende watere zonder cost of last vanden voors. convente. Ghebuertet ooc dat God verbiede dat byden ghebreke of faulte vanden voors. diensten of ceremonien te doene ofte anders de voors. ghildebroeders in naercommende tyden van daer vertrocken dat zy dat doen zullen moghen ende draghen al dat hemlieden toebehoort van beilden, taefelen, candelaeren, orghelen ende kerkelicke juweelen als ornamenten, keilcten, ampullen, boucken, cortinen, outaer cleederen, frontalen, dwalen ende andere ghelycke zaken ter voors. cappelle ende outare van diere dienende alzo wal de ghuene die ande mueren vander voors. cappelle hanghen ende afdoenlic zyn zonder groote quets vanden voors. mueren als andre den voors. convente uplegghende ende betalende dat zy den zelven convente ter cause van dies vooren verhaelt staet als danne schildich ende tachter wesen zullen. Behouden altoos dat de voors. broeders ende gheselscepe vander voorghenomder ghilde ghebruucken zullen vanden hove staende byder voors. cappelle hebben haren inganc ende uutganc uit zelve hof van beede den dueren ende daer inne huere ghenouchte vertrec ende colatie hebben alst hemlieden ghelieven zal bi daghe naer der messe nuchtens of achternoen naer den love also van ouden tiden huere voorders ghehat hebben zonder meer kennesse of proffit daerin thebbene, dies zo zal tvoors. gheselscip vanden Drooghen Boome ghehouden zijn de duere ende inganc vanden voors. hove tonderhoudene van mueren ende van houten wercke in zulker wys dat den broeders vanden voors. convente bi dien gheen schade en gheschiede. Ende in oorcondschepe van welke dinghen hebben wy, Niclaus Guyotely, docteur ende ministre voors., Jan Boudins, gardien in desen tyd ende Heindric De Rutere, Jan Van Ghistele, Gillis De Bartmakere, meesters inder godheyt, Pieter Bischoep, baceler, Jan Jacomin, Jan Van Lisseweghe, lector, Cornelis Haec, Lauwereins Boen, Adriaen Wouters, Jan Dullaert ende meer andre vaders ende broeders vanden voors. convente, ende wy, Pauwels Van Overtvelt als deken, Ancelmus Adorne, riddere, heere van Cortewyc, Jan Arnolphin, ruddere, Joos Berthilde, meester inder godheyt, Jan van Nieuwenhove, schouteeten van Brugghe, Zeghin De Baenst, Donaes de Beer, Pieter van Bochoute, Jan Van Huerne, Jan Tsolle, Collaert Dhaut, Jan van Raveschote, Thomaes Portenary, Anthuenis Damast, Pieter Christi, Staessin De Melles ende meer andere zorghers ende ghildebroeders vander voorghenomder ghilde ende gheselscepe dese lettren uuthanghende beseghelt metter zeghelen vanden voors. meestre Nicolaes Guyotely, ministre voors. [...] vanden voors. convente ende vander voors. ghilde vanden Drooghen Boome upden twinstichsten dach van Wedemaent int Jaer duust vierhondert neghen ende tsestich.

It is to be made public and known to all those who will see this charter or will hear it being read, that between the notables and dignitaries of the honored company and guild confraternity of the chapel of the glorious and pure Virgin Mary, situated within the cloister and the convent of the Franciscans in Bruges, on one side, and our supervising masters and fathers of the aforementioned cloister and convent for and in the name of the community of brethren and company of the aforementioned convent, on the other, certain problems and differences have originated and existed because of a letter under the seal of the aforementioned convent, given out

in the past by our late chairs, supervising masters, and fathers of the aforementioned convent, concerning diverse masses, sermons, and other religious ceremonies to be held in said chapel, in order to receive certain wages and gifts, of which we, supervising masters and fathers and also our chairs, have found copies and registers within a certain number of years, in which diverse mistakes and negligences, out of ignorance it may be assumed, have occurred. And it shall be that we, for and in the name of the aforementioned convent, have discussed [this issue] so thoroughly and broadly with the said company of the said Dry Tree, that we have reached an agreement and compromise, with the knowledge and the approval of our honored father in God, the minister of France, master Claise Guyotely, doctor in holy divinity and theology, in the following manner. It shall be that we, supervising masters and fathers and the whole community of the aforementioned convent, have promised and by this, our letter, will continue to promise, for us and our successors, by the knowledge, consent, and charter of our aforementioned honored father and prelate, as mentioned above, forever, to the honor and honorability of the aforementioned glorious Virgin Mary and to the salvation of the brethren and sisters, conventuals and lay people, living and dead, of the said company and guild confraternity, that we will celebrate or will have celebrated the following masses, sermons, and other ceremonies, described here following, on pain and penalty of what is stipulated. And first, to read or sing a mass every day, namely, on Sundays a choral mass for the said glorious Virgin Mary; on Mondays, a low mass for all ill people; on Fridays, for the Holy Cross; on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays, for the aforementioned glorious Virgin, unless on one of those said days notables are coming or [they are] feast days, on which days it will be allowed to read [the mass] of said days. And we will have to celebrate, or have celebrated, all similar [events] on all other days that the said company wants to commission soul masses or funerary services for their devotion, in such a manner as is demanded and wanted, and the brother who will read or sing these kinds of masses will have to celebrate a low mass of Our Lady before or after the said mass. And we and our successors will have to celebrate these masses, to be known, in the summer between six and seven o'clock, namely from March until Bavo's Mass,¹ and in the winter, from Bavo's Mass until March, between seven and eight o'clock. For all these services, masses, and other ceremonies, the dean and the supervisors of the said company and guild confraternity will have to donate annually to the aforementioned convent, as charity and gift, the amount of three pounds groats of Flemish currency, in three installments a year, of which the first will be and be established on mid-winter² in the year thousand four hundred sixty-nine, the other one in May year seventy, and the third one at the end of the year, namely on the third octave of the Assumption of the aforementioned glorious Virgin Mary, celebrated every year on half August, that is the day the year will always begin and will take an end and so on until eternity.³ And in case we, supervising masters, fathers, and the aforementioned convent or our successors will be in default to celebrate mass on one of the said days, we promise to have two masses celebrated the next day, without any dispute, and in this case, the clerk of the said guild or the sexton of the said church will have to ring the bell of the said guild or have the bell rung three times before the confiteor of each mass that will be read or sung, so that the people who are in the church can come to the said chapel on time. Further, that we brethren, mentioned above, will have a sermon read, until eternity, on each one of the five principal feast days of the aforementioned glorious Virgin, by one of the said brethren of the convent, for which sermon the convent will pay and satisfy this brother. And a mass with deacon and subdeacon and all their equals on the holy day of Christmas, New Year's, Thirteenth Day,⁴ Easter, Ash Wednesday, Pentecost, and All Saints', a similar mass with deacon. And each May the representatives of

the said company will have to provide the said convent the amount of ten shillings and six pennies groats, of which the aforementioned convent will have to provide and give each of the said five feasts of Our Lady to the said brother who will read the sermon, six groats, to be known, that in case one of the said guild brethren wants to have other choral masses celebrated, out of devotion, we, supervisors and the said brethren and our successors, will have to celebrate these, for a compensation and wages, similar to that for the other masses, [to be paid] to us or our successors. And at any time that the same company of the said guild wants to have a soul mass celebrated for a brother or sister departed from this world, that we will have to celebrate this with deacon and subdeacon. The priest who will celebrate the aforementioned mass shall receive for this four groats; the deacon and the subdeacon, two groats each; and the six brethren who will sing the mass, one groat each; the sexton for his work and effort, two groats. The priest who will celebrate this mass will have to read a *de profundis* during the offertory for the souls of the dead and all souls and hold a collection. Further, we, supervising masters and fathers of the said convent and our successors, will have to celebrate a choral requiem mass with deacon and subdeacon each year after All Souls' Day until eternity as comfort and satisfaction for the guild's brethren and sisters who will be departed from this world by then, and all the faithful souls and all their equals, and at the offertory the priest will read a *de profundis* and hold a collection, as above. And the said dean, representatives, and guild brethren will have to come and sacrifice the sacrificial candles and medals that will have been given at funeral services or soul masses and which will then remain in the aforementioned convent. Further has been agreed and concluded between us and the said guild brethren that all donations and profits, such as wax, statues, candles, silver, copes, chasubles, decorations, and other similar church treasures, which the said guild has brought to the chapel through indemnity, promises, miracles, devotions, or by any other document, will remain the property of the said chapel, except all that will be sacrificed during the aforementioned masses, be it money, candles, wine, bread, meat, or other gifts, and will belong to and remain in the said convent, as well as all profits ensuing from eternal sepulchers or corpses, without any right or profit for the said chapel or guild brethren. And the said guild brethren of the said guild will be allowed to bless all this or have it blessed on the altar of the same glorious Virgin on her five principal feast days, within the octave of the same feasts, in accordance with their bull, provided that the aforementioned convent will receive twelve groats for each feast from the said maturities and profits, and the sexton of the said church for the said five feasts according to the old custom, five groats. In case someone belonging to the said guild or not wants to have a sepulcher in the said chapel or wants to be buried there, then the fathers, brethren, and the whole community of the convent may approve and give their consent when those who want it will meet with them and come to an agreement, to be known, to the profit and usage of the aforementioned convent. Since we, for us and our successors, have given our consent and will give our consent to the said guild brethren and sisters to have a common sepulcher in the said chapel made at their expense, provided that everyone who has a sepulcher there since past times will keep their privileges and that they will serve the convent according to the old and good custom. Also to be understood that friends and relatives of dead people who will be buried there will be allowed to celebrate with devotions, services, masses, funerals, or have the corpse brought in by procession or be buried in the habit of Saint Francis if the aforementioned convent is paid when it happens so. Further, the said guild brethren will have to maintain the chapel, the windows, and protect it against wind and water without any expense to the said convent. In case—God forbid—that [we] are in default or fail the said services or ceremonies, or, on the other hand, when the said guild brethren leave the

chapel in the future, they will be allowed to do so and take all that belongs to them of statues, paintings, chandeliers, organs, and church treasures, such as decorations, chalices, ampullae, books, curtains, altar cloths, antependia, ritual textiles, and other similar objects used in the said chapel and on the altar, as well as everything that hangs on the walls and can be taken down without great damage to the walls, as well as other things, provided that they pay the same convent all possible debts or arrears, as is stipulated above. In case the said brethren and company of the said guild make use of the yard next to the said chapel, using the entrance and exit from both doors of the yard, and if they want to meet there as they please during the days after mass in the mornings or afternoons after the benediction, as was done by their chairs in the past, without having any knowledge of it or profit from it, then the said company of the Dry Tree will have to maintain the door and entrance of the aforementioned yard, the walls, and the woodwork in such a way that the brethren of the said convent do not experience any damage from it. And considering these things in this charter, we, Niclaus Guyotely, doctor and minister aforementioned, Jan Boudins, supervisor at this time, and Heindric De Rutere, Jan Van Ghistele, Gillis De Bartmakere, masters in theology, Pieter Bischoep, bachelor, Jan Jacomin, Jan Van Lisseweghe, lector, Cornelis Haec, Lauwereins Boen, Adriaen Wouters, Jan Dullaert, and other fathers and brethren of the said convent, and we, Pauwels Van Overtvelt as dean, Ancelmus Adorne, knight, lord of Cortewyc, Jan Arnolphin, knight, Joos Berthilde, master in theology, Jan van Nieuwenhove, sheriff of Bruges, Zeghin De Baenst, Donaes de Beer, Pieter van Bochoute, Jan Van Huerne, Jan Tsolle, Collaert Dhaut, Jan van Raveschote, Thomaes Portenary, Anthuenis Damast, Pieter Christi, Staessin De Melles, and other representatives and guild brethren of the said guild and company, have hung up this letter sealed with the seal of the aforementioned master Nicolaes Guyotely, minister aforementioned [...] of the said convent and of the said guild of the Dry Tree on the twentieth day of June in the year thousand four hundred sixty-nine.

a. Lacuna in the parchment.

Original charter, parchment, two fragmentary seals.

SAB, Gilde Droogenboom, no. 505, box 6a, unnumbered charter.

Published: Martens 1992, pp. 492–97.

1. Bavo's Mass was celebrated in Bruges on October 1 (see E. I. Strubbe and L. Voet, *De chronologie van de middeleeuwen en de moderne tijden in de Nederlanden* [Antwerp and Amsterdam, 1960], p. 447, s.v. Bavo).
2. Midwinter is Christmas, December 25 (see *ibid.*, p. 504, s.v. Midwinter).
3. The third octave after Assumption is September 5. This means that the administrative year of the confraternity began on September 5 and ended on September 4 of the following year.
4. Thirteenth Day is January 6, the feast of the Three Magi, on the thirteenth day after Christmas (see Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch handwoordenboek*, p. 133, s.v. Dertiendach).

Doc. 17. 1469 — *The officials of the corporation of image-makers, including Petrus Christus, receive documents relating to the gifts and the foundation in their chapel by Willem, lord of Montbléru.*

Wij, Jacop de Deckere ende Lodewyc Scolleboone, scepenen in Brugghe in dien tiden doen te wetene allen lieden dat camen voor

ons als voor scepenen, Anthuenis de Langhe, als deken, Willem vanden Leene, Anthuenis Jacopssuene, Fransoys De Paeu, Jan de Cupre, Rogier Van Trois, als vindere, Aernoud de Mol, als gouvernerere, Jan Caudron, Jooris Van Zevene, Pietre Vanden Boomgaerde, als gecommiteerde, Pietre Xpistus ende Gheeraerd Van Benthem, als notable vanden ambochte vanden beeldmakers ende zadelaers binnen der voors. stede van Brugghe, kenneden ende lyeden ontfanghen hebbende, inde name vanden voorseyden ambochte, van eerzamen ende wijsen Pauwelse van Overtvelt, als testamentaris ende executuer vanden testamente¹ ende uterste wille van wijlen Willemme, heere van Monbleru, de letteren, brieven dienende ter fondacien ghedaen bijden zelven heere van Monbleru ende ooc de juweelen, cappen, cazuulen, keilct, bouc ende andre hier onder gheexpresseert ende verclaerst omme zekere messen ende andre devocien die hij ghefundeirt, gheadmortiseirt ende gheordoneirt heift te doene inde capelle van Sinte Luuc ende van Sinte Loy, toebehoorende den voors. ambochte.²

Eerst eene lettere, ghezeghelt in groenen wasse ende in zydene coorden verleert ende ghegheven den zelven heere van Monbleru bij hooghen ende moghenden prinche, den goeden hertoghe Philips, hertoghe van Bourgoingen, etc. zalegher ghedochten in daten vanden twee ende twijntichsten daghe van Laumaendt int jaer duust viere hondert vive ende tzestich³ byder welker gheconsenteirt was den zelven heere van Monbleru te vercrighene hondert ende twijntich ponden van veertich grooten Vlaemscher munten tpondt erveliker renten, de tzestich ponden in leenen of achterleenen ende dandre tzestich ponden in erven omme daer mede te fondeirne zulke messen ende diensten als de zelve heere van Monbleru ordoneren zoude bij zijnen testamente, welke voors. lettre es gheteeckent upden rugghe metter A.

Item eene andre lettere confirmerende de voors. eerste lettere, ghegheven bij onzen harden gheduchten heere ende prinche, mijnen heere den hertoghe Charles, hertoghe van Bourgoingnen etc., zuene vanden voors. hertoghe Philips, bezeghelt in groenen wasse ende in zydene coorden, vander date vander maendt van juing int jaer duust vierehondert achte ende tzestich, buten gheteeckent metter B.

Item eene darde lettere, ooc bezeghelt in groenen wasse ende zydene coorden, ghegheven bijden voornomden onzen harden gheduchten heere ende prinche inde stede van Pironne inde maendt van septembre int zelve jaer duust viere hondert achte ende tzestich, bijwelker lettere onze voors. harde gheduchte heere ende prinche consenteirdt ende ottroyerd, mer Boudine, bastaert van Bourgoignen te vercoopene eene plecke of sticke lands, liggende bij Middelburch in Zeelandt, groot wesende viere waerven twijntich ghemeten landts,⁴ toebehoorende den voors. mer Boudine, den executeurs ende testamentarissen vanden voors. heere van Monbleru, nietjeghenstaende dat tmeeste deel vanden voors. landt leengoedt es van zulken dienst, condicie ende vervallen als andere leengoeden zyn, liggende in Walgheren int voors. landt van Zeelandt also de voors. lettre dat ten vullen verclaerst buten gheteeckent metter C.

Item eene vierde lettre twelke es eene translacie in Vlaemsche vander voornomder laetster lettren, gheteeckent metter handt van meester Donaes de Beer, secretaris vander stede van Brugghe ende ooc notaris publijc, welke translacie ghecorobreirt ende duersteken es met eenre lettre van approbacien bezeghelt metten zeghele van zaken vander stede van Brugghe, buten gheteeckent metter D.

Item eene vijfste lettre, bezeghelt metten zeghele van zaken vander voors. stede van Brugghe vander daten vanden zevensende twijntichsten daghe van septembre int voors. jaer achte ende tzestich, byder welker de voors. Pauwels van Overtvelt, als principael executuer vanden voors. testamente vanden voornomde heere van Monbleru, voord, Jan van Benthem ende Pieter vanden Boomgaerde, als machtich over tvoors. ambocht, constitueirden ende maecten huerlieder procureurs, meester Pieter Vanden Boude, Boudin den Wachtere, bailliu van Zomerghem, Pietren der Busschere ende Jan Caudron, omme te coopene jeghens den voors. mer Boudine, de voornomde viere waerven twijntich ghemeten lands, de voors. lettre buten gheteeckent metter E. Item eene zesste lettre vanden voors. mer Boudin, bastaert van Bourgoingnen, ruddere, heere van Lovendeghem ende van Zomerghem, gheteeckent met zijnre handt ende bezeghelt met zijnen zeghele, bijder welker hij kendt vercocht hebbende den voornomde executeurs vanden voors. heere van Monbleru, de voors. viere waerven twijntich ghemeten lands liggende in Zeelandt, gheldende alle jaren boven allem costen ende lasten, de somme van twijntich ponden groten ende welken coop hij also beloofd te warandeirne jeghens elken, buten gheteeckent de zelve lettere metter F.

Item eene zevenste lettere vanden zelven mer Boudin, ooc gheteeckent met zijnre handt ende bezeghelt met zijnen zeghele ende es eene macht of procuracie bij hem ghegheven den voors. meestre Pietre Vanden Boude, Boudin de Wachtere, Pietre de Busschere ende elken zonderlijnghe omme de ontvernesse vanden voors. viere waerven twijntich ghemeten lands te doene ende houdt ooc de zelve lettre ghenoch innen quitancie, buten gheteeckent metter G.

Item eene achste lettere ghezeghelt met vijf zeghelen vanden mannen vander gravelicheyt van Zeelandt, bijder welker blijkt vander ervennessen daer inne Jan Caudron gheerft es, inde name als boven, buten gheteeckent metter H.

Item eene neghenste lettere bezeghelt met drien scepenen zeghelen vander stede van Middelburch in Zeelandt, byder welker de voors. meestre Pietre Vanden Boude, prochiaen int noordmonstre kendt ghenomen hebbende in pachte, de voors. viere waerven twijntich ghemeten lands, tiene jaren lanc gheduerende, omme de somme van een ende twijntich ponden grooten Vlaemscher munten tsiaers vrije ghelds boven allen costen ende lasten de zelve lettere buten gheteeckent metter I. Item eene tienste lettere ende es eene coppie, ghecollacioneirt ende gheteeckent van meester Jan de Vlamijnc, clerc vanden capitle van Sinte Donaes in Brugghe ende notaris publijc, inhoudende ende verclaersende al int langhe de fundacien vanden messen, jaerghetiden ende aelmoesenen, gheordoneirt ghedaen te wesene bijden voors. heere van Monbleru, hoe men de voors. een ende twijntich ponden grooten jaerlicx distribueren zal, commende vanden pachte vanden voors. viere waerven twijntich ghemeten lands, buten gheteeckent metter K.

Item ende eene cedula in papiere gheteeckent metter handt vanden voors. meestre Pietre Vanden Boude ende bezeghelt met zijnen zeghele, byder welker hij beloofd den deken ende ghezwoornen vanden voors. ambochte da bij also dat eenich ghebrec ware an zijne betalynghen ende dat zij ter causen van die zenden moesten in Zeelandt ende cost daer omme doen, hemlieden die costen up te rechtene zonder de principale somme te minderne, buten gheteeckent metter L.

Voordt kenden de voors. deken, vindere, zoorghers, gouverneers,

ghecommitteerde ende notable vanden voornomden ambochte doch ontfaen hebbende vanden voors. Pauwelse als executeur vanden testamente vanden voors. heere van Monbleru, die naer ghenoomde juweelen:

Eerst eene perssche fluweelen choor cappe gheboordt met rooden vergulden lakenene, ende ghevoedert met groenen semite. Item eene blauewe choor cappe, fluweel up fluweel, eene casule, twee tornikelen, blauu fluweel al gheboordt met beilden van bordueren ende al ghestoffeert van ammutten, alben, stolen, manipelen ende gordelen ende verwapent metter wapene vander voors. heere van Monbleru. Item drie cuskins gheschakiert van witten ende blauewen fluweele. Item eenen messael. Item eenen zelveren vergulden keilct metter patenen corporale ende datter toebehoort. Item twee zelveren ampullen. Item een zelveren verguldin paes bart ende twee zelveren candelaren, weghende tiene maercken.

Van al welken lettren pardcheelen ende juweelen de voors. deken, vindere, gouvernerer, ghecommitteerde ende notable vanden voors. ambochte, hemlieden aldaer wel ghepaeyt ende vernocht hilden ende den voors. Pauwelse ende allen anderen dies quitance behoort danof quite scholden. Consenterende voort de voors. deken, vindere, gouvernerers, ghecommitteerde ende notable vanden voors. ambochte, den voors. executeur ende testamentaris inde cappelle vanden voors. ambochte, staende tusschen der Zelverin- ende Noordzandstrate te zulcker plecken ende plaetsen alst hem ghelieven ende best voughen zal, te stellene eene epitaphie vanden overlidene tittle ende fundacien vanden voors. heere van Monbleru, de voors. cappelen ende ambochte ghedaen ende dat in een bardt ofte in eenen steen naer dat heeschen zal. Ende es te wetene dat hier of twee chaerters eens zijn danof dat de voors. executeur den eenen helft ende tvoorseide ambocht den andren. In kennessen van desen dinghen hebben wij scepenen voors. dese letteren uuthanghende bezeghelt met onzen zeghelen. Dit was ghedaen int jaer duust viere hondert.^a

[**verso**] Eene kennesse dat tambocht ontfaen heift alle de juweelen vanden capelle de welke Monbleru ghegheven heift der capelle. Ende ooc alle de brieven vanden amortisacie ende andere van zinen bezette boven gheteeckent by den a.v.c. toter [...] ^b In deze brief staet Pauwels van Overtvelt ghenamt als testamentaris van heer Willem van Monbleru.

We, Jacop de Deckere and Lodewyc Scolleboone, aldermen in Bruges in these times, make known to everyone that appeared before us, aldermen, Anthuenis de Langhe, as dean, Willem vanden Leene, Anthuenis Jacopssuene, Fransoys De Paeu, Jan de Cupre, Rogier Van Trois, as inspector, Aernoud de Mol, as financial administrator, Jan Caudron, Jooris Van Zevene, Pietre Vanden Boomgaerde, as representative, Pietre Christus and Gheeraerd Van Benthem, as notables of the corporation of image-makers and saddlers within the said city of Bruges, acknowledge and confess to have received in the name of the said corporation, from the respectable and wise Pauwelse van Overtvelt, as executor of the testament¹ and the last will of the late Willemme, lord of Monbleru, the documents of the foundation made by the same lord of Monbleru, and also the jewels, copes, chasubles, chalice, book, and other [gifts] expressed and explained hereunder, concerning certain masses and other devotions that he has endowed, transmitted, and ordered to do in the chapel of Saint Luke and Saint Eloy, [that] belongs to the said corporation.²

First, a letter, sealed in green wax and with a silk ribbon, granted and given to the same lord of Monbleru by the high and mighty prince, the good Duke Philip, duke of Burgundy, etc., blessed memory, dated the

twenty-second day of January in the year thousand four hundred sixty-five,³ in which the consent was given to the same lord of Monbleru to receive one hundred twenty pounds of forty groats Flemish currency in annuities, of which sixty pounds in fiefs or subfiefs and the other sixty in heritage for the endowment of such masses and services as the same lord of Monbleru wants to order in his testament, this said letter is signed on the back with an A.

Item, another letter confirming the said first letter, given by our mighty, redoubtable lord and prince, milord Duke Charles, duke of Burgundy, etc., son of the said Duke Philip, sealed with green wax and with a silk ribbon, dated in the month of June in the year thousand four hundred sixty-eight, signed on the back with a B.

Item, a third letter, also sealed with green wax and a silk ribbon, given by the said our mighty, redoubtable lord and prince in the city of Pironne in the month of September in the same year thousand four hundred sixty-eight, in which letter our aforementioned mighty, redoubtable lord and prince gives his consent and patent to Sir Boudine, bastard of Burgundy, to sell a place or piece of land, situated near Middelburg in Zeeland, measuring four times twenty measured land,⁴ belonging to the said Sir Boudine, to the executors of the testament of the said lord of Monbleru, notwithstanding that most of this said land is a fief of such service, under conditions and maturing as other fiefs situated in Walcheren in the said land of Zeeland, which the said letter explains in detail, signed on the back with a C.

Item, a fourth letter, which is a translation in Flemish of the said last letter, signed with the hand of master Donaes de Beer, secretary of the city of Bruges and also notary public, which translation is corroborated by and pierced through with a letter of approval, sealed with the business seal of the city of Bruges, signed on the back with a D.

Item, a fifth letter, sealed with the business seal of the said city of Bruges, dated the twenty-seventh day of September in the said year sixty-eight, by which the said Pauwels van Overtvelt, as principal executor of the said testament of the said lord of Monbleru, further, Jan van Benthem and Pieter vanden Boomgaerde, as authorized by the said corporation, appointed and made their attorneys, master Pieter Vanden Boude, Boudin den Wachtere, bailiff of Zomergem, Pietren der Busschere, and Jan Caudron, in order to buy from the said Sir Boudine the said four times twenty measured land, the said letter signed on the back with an E.

Item, a sixth letter of the aforementioned Sir Boudin, bastard of Burgundy, knight, lord of Lovendegem and of Zomergem, signed with his hand and sealed with his seal, by which he acknowledges to have sold the said four times twenty measured land, situated in Zeeland, to the said executors of the aforementioned lord of Monbleru, which yields the sum of twenty pounds groats annually after all expenditure and charges, and [by which] he also promises to guarantee this sale against whomever, the said letter signed on the back with an F.

Item, a seventh letter of the same Sir Boudin, also signed with his hand and sealed with his seal, by which he authorizes or gives proxy to the said master Pietre Vanden Boude, Boudin de Wachtere, Pietre de Busschere, and to each separately to disinherit the said four times twenty measured land, and the same letter also includes a receipt, signed on the back with a G.

Item, an eighth letter sealed with the five seals of the men of the county of Zeeland, which proves that Jan Caudron, as representative, has inherited from the estate as explained above, signed on the back with an H.

Item, a ninth letter, sealed with the three seals of the aldermen of Middelburg in Zeeland, by which the aforementioned master Pietre Vanden Boude, parishioner of Noordmunster, acknowledges to have rented the said four times twenty measured land, for a period of ten years, for the annual sum of twenty-one pounds groats Flemish currency

of free money, all expenditure and charges excluded, signed on the back with an I.

Item, a tenth letter, which is a copy, written and signed by master Jan de Vlamiync, clerk of the chapter of Saint Donatian in Bruges and notary public, which includes and explains in detail the endowment of masses, annual masses, and alms ordered to be held by the aforementioned lord of Monbleru, [and] how the said twenty-one pounds, yielded by the said four times twenty measured land, will be distributed annually, signed on the back with a K.

Item, a declaration on paper, signed with the hand of the said master Pietre Vanden Boude and sealed with his seal, by which he promises to the dean and the sworn members of the said corporation that whenever his payments would be late, so that they would have to send [someone] to Zeeland and make expenditure, he will reimburse them without decreasing the principal sum, signed on the back with an L.

Further, the said dean, inspector, member of the guild's board, financial administrators, representatives, and notables of the said corporation acknowledge to have received from the said Pauwelse, as executor of the testament of the aforementioned lord of Monbleru, the following treasures:

First, a purple velvet choir cope with a hem of red-gilt cloth and lined with green velvet, a chasuble, two blue velvet dalmatics with a hem of embroidered images and decorated with amulets, albs, stoles, maniples, and girdles. Item, two chasubles of red velvet. Item, a black damask chasuble, all decorated with albs, amulets, stoles, girdles, and with the arms of the said lord of Monbleru. Item, three checkered pillows of white and blue velvet. Item, a missal. Item, a silver-gilt chalice with patens, cloths, and everything included. Item, two silver ampullae. Item, a silver-gilt Easter board and two silver chandeliers weighing ten marks.

The said dean, inspectors, financial administrators, representatives, and notables of the said corporation, declared to be satisfied and pleased with all these letters, parcels, and treasures. They remitted the said Pauwelse and all the others who had the receipts. The said dean, inspectors, financial administrators, representatives, and notables of the said corporation further gave their consent to the said executor of the testament to erect wherever he wants and likes an epitaph in the honor of the foundation of the lord of Monbleru in the chapel of the aforementioned corporation, situated between the Zilver- and Noordzandstraat, and [this epitaph will be made] in wood or stone, as is appropriate.

And it is to be known that these two charters are one, of which the said executor has one half and the said corporation has the other half. Acknowledging all this, we, the aldermen, have posted this letter, sealed with our seal. This was done in the year thousand four hundred.^a

[**verso**] A declaration that the corporation has received all the chapel jewels given to the chapel by Monbleru. And also all the letters of transference and others of his will, signed at the top with a.v.c. to [...]^b In this letter, Pauwels van Overtvelt is mentioned as the executor of the testament of Lord Willem van Monbleru.

a. The exact year is not mentioned.

b. Illegible word.

SAB, *Academie*, no. 409, box D, *Charters Beelden-makers*, 1469.

Published: Weale 1863a, pp. 151–52; and Martens 1992, pp. 497–502.

1. Both *testamentaris* and *executuer vanden testamente* mean “executor of the testament.”

2. Some of the documents listed here are still preserved in the same collection of charters as this one, *Charters Beelden-makers* (see Weale 1863a, pp. 145, 149–50).

3. That is, January 22, 1466 (N.S.).

4. *Ghemeten landt* (measured land) is a square measurement (see Verdam, *Middelnederlandsch handwoordenboek*, p. 198, s.v. *Gemet*).

Doc. 18. August 29, 1469–August 27, 1470 — *Petrus Christus and Willem Vrelant pay their annual dues to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow; the outlay for Pieter Nachtegale's funeral mass.*

[**fol. 37r**] Rekeninghe ende bewijs van al den ontfanghe / ende huutghevene bi mi, Jan de Blazere, als deken / van Onzer Vrouwe Vander Snee, beghinnende den / xxixten dach in oest anno lxix, hendende den / xxvijten dach in oest anno tseventich / [...]

[**fol. 38v**] Andre ont fanc van jaerlix / ghildegheelt ontfanghen uut omme gaen metter busse / buten der houder veste / [...]

[**fol. 39v**] [...] Willem Vrelant ij gr. [...]

[**fol. 45r**] Den ont fanc van jaerlicx ghildegheelt / ontfanghen inde kercke v in oest anno lxx / [...]

[**fol. 45v**] [...] Pieter Xpistus, de schilder ij gr. [...]

[**fol. 49r**] Den ont fanc vande zielmessen ghedaen / over der zielen van onzen ghildebroders / ende ghildesusters die van dezen jare / verscheeden zijn van dezer weerelt / daer ons heere Jhesus de zielen of hebben / moete / [...]

[**fol. 49v**] [...] Item vanden zielmesse van meester / Pieter Nachtegale iij s. vj d.

[**fol. 51r**] Dit naervolghende es thutgheven ende / betalinghe ghedaen binnen deze vors. / jaerschare begonnende den xxix dach / in oest anno lxix, hendende den xxvij dach / in oest anno lxx / [...]

[**fol. 51v**] [...] Item vanden zielmesse van meester / Pieter Nachtegale, xxj gr.

[**fol. 37r**] *Account and confirmation of all receipts and expenditure by me, Jan de Blazere, as dean of Our Lady of the Snow, commencing August 29, 1469, and ending August 27, 1470 [...]*

[**fol. 38v**] *Other receipt of annual guild dues received in the collecting box outside the old walls [...]*

[**fol. 39v**] [...] *Willem Vrelant, 2 gr. [...]*

[**fol. 45r**] *Annual guild dues received in the church on August 5, 1470 [...]*

[**fol. 45v**] [...] *Pieter Christus, the painter, 2 gr. [...]*

[**fol. 49r**] *The receipt for funeral masses for the souls of our guild brethren and sisters who departed this world this year, whose souls Jesus should have [...]*

[**fol. 49v**] [...] *Also for the funeral mass of master Pieter Nachtegale, 4 s. 6 d.*

[**fol. 51r**] *The following are the expenses and payments made during the aforementioned year, commencing August 29, 1469, and ending August 27, 1470 [...]*

[**fol. 51v**] [...] *Also the funerary mass of master Pieter Nachtegale, 21 g.*

RAB, *Kerckfabriek Onze Lieve Vrouwe, Algemene rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw, 1467–1499*, no. 1531, fols. 37r–51v.

Published: Martens 1990–91, p. 20; and Martens 1992, pp. 502–3.

Doc. 19. August 28, 1470–August 29, 1471 — *Petrus Christus and Willem Vrelant pay their annual dues to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow.*

[**fol. 60r**] Rekeninghe ende bewijs van al den ontfanghe / ende

huutghevene bi mi, Jan de Blazere, / als deken vander ghilde van Onser Vrouwe / vander Sneer, beghinnende den xxviiijten dach / van oust anno mcccc lxx, en hendende / den xxix in oust lxxj / [...]
[fol. 61r] Andre ontfanc int ommegaen / van buten den houden vesten / als van jaerlicx ghildegheelt / de anno lxxj / [...]
[fol. 62v] [...] Willem Vredelant ij gr. [...]
[fol. 64r] Dit es den ontfanc van den jaerlix / ghildegheelde ontfanc in ommegaen / van binnen der houder veste / [...]
[fol. 66v] [...] Pieter Xpistus ij gr.

[fol. 60r] *Account and confirmation of all receipts and expenditure by me, Jan de Blazere, as dean of the guild of Our Lady of the Snow, beginning August 28, 1470, and ending August 29, 1471 [...]*
[fol. 61v] *Other receipt of annual dues collected outside the old walls in the year 1471 [...]*
[fol. 62v] [...] *Willem Vredelant, 2 gr. [...]*
[fol. 64r] *This is the receipt of the annual dues collected within the old walls [...]*
[fol. 66v] [...] *Pieter Christus, 2 gr.*

RAB, *Kerkfabriek Onze Lieve Vrouwe, Algemene rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw, 1467–1499*, no. 153I, fols. 60r–66v.

Published: Martens 1990–91, pp. 20–21; and Martens 1992, p. 511.

Doc. 20. August 22, 1471–August 24, 1472 — *Petrus Christus and Willem Vrelant pay their annual dues to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow.*

[fol. 81r] Rekeninghe ende bewijs / Robrechts De Brune van alden ontfanghe ende uut- / ghevene aengaende der ghilde van Onser liever Vrou- / we vander Sneer in Brugghe wanof hi deken / was ende dit vanden jare ingaende den xxijen daghe / van oust anno m iijc een ende tseventich, ende / hendende xxiiij in / oust lxxij / [...]
[fol. 82v] Ander ontfang int ommegaen buten / den ouden vesten van jaerlicschen / ghildegheelde van desen jare lxxij / [...]
[fol. 83v] [...] Willem Vreland ij gr. [...]
[fol. 84v] Hier naer volcht den ommeganc / vanden jaerghelde binnen den ouden / vesten vander vors. jare lxxij / [...]
[fol. 86v] [...] Pieter Cristus ij gr.

[fol. 81r] *Account and confirmation [by] Robrecht De Brune of all receipts and expenditure concerning the guild of Our Lady of the Snow in Bruges when he was dean, and this for the year commencing August 22, 1471, and ending August 24, 1472 [...]*
[fol. 82v] *Other receipt of annual guild dues collected outside the old walls in the year 1472 [...]*
[fol. 83v] [...] *Willem Vreland, 2 gr. [...]*
[fol. 84v] *Here follows the collection of the annual dues within the old walls in the said year 72 [...]*
[fol. 86v] [...] *Pieter Cristus, 2 gr.*
RAB, *Kerkfabriek Onze Lieve Vrouwe, Algemene rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw, 1467–1499*, no. 153I, fols. 81r–86v.

Published: Martens 1990–91, p. 21; and Martens 1992, p. 512.

Doc. 21. March 19, 1472 — *Verdict in a conflict between the corporation of image-makers of Bruges, on one side, and the court painter Pierre*

Coustain and his assistant, Jan de Hervy, on the other, in which Petrus Christus is mentioned as representative of the corporation.

Au jour dhuy, dixneufviesme jour du mois de Mars, lan mil quatrecentsoixante et onze,¹ par devant maistres Jehan Vincent, prevost de Cassel, et Richart de la Chappelle, chantre et chanoine de leglise Saint Donas, conseillers de mon tresredoute seigneur, monseigneur le duc de Bourgogne, et maistres des requestes de son hostel, commissaires de par icellui seigneur en ceste partie, comparans Adrien van Cleroute, doyen des pointres, Pietre Xpistus, Jehan Fabien et Pietre Casenbroot, jurez et comme commis dudit mestier des pointres de la ville de Bruges, supplians et complaignans, et maistre Jehan Doublet, leur procureur avec eulx, dune part, et Pietre Coustain, aussi pointre et varlet de chambre de mondit tresredoubte seigneur, ensemble Jehan de Hervy de Valenciennes, son serviteur, dautre part. Apres que lesdictes parties en leurs doleances et remonstrances ont este oyees dune part et dautre, finalement par lesdiz commissaires a este ordonne et appointie que le dit Pierre Coustain, tandis quil sera serviteur et officier domestique de mon dit tresredoubte seigneur, pourra par luy et ses varles serviteurs, faire ou faire faire tous ouvraiges du mestier de pointre en la ville et eschevinaige de Bruges, pour les affaires et bonplaisirs de mondit tresredoubte seigneur et messeigneurs les princes, barons et officiers de son hostel tant seulement^a le tout sans fraude et malengin, et sans pour ce encourir es paines et amendes des keures et costumes dudit mestier desdits doyen et jurez dudit mestier de pointres de Bruges, et sans en requerir aucun congie ou consentement desdits commissaires. Tant par le contenu en la requeste desdits pointres de Bruges supplians, que aussi par leurs remonstrances et doleances, ont apperceu entre autres choses, que ilz se doloient et complaignoient dudit Jehan Hervy, varlet et serviteur du dit Pietre Coustain, qui journallement faisoit son mestier en ladite ville de Bruges, en plusieurs lieux particuliers et pour autres gens que pour mondit tres redoubte seigneur, messeigneurs les princes, barons et vrais serviteurs de son hostel. Il a este aussi advise et appointie par lesdiz commissaires que le dit Jehan Hervy, pour bien de paix et aussi pour la conservacion des droits dudit mestier de pointres de ladite ville de Bruges endedens Lundi prochain venant, et que a ce lesdits doyen et jurez seront tenuz de le recevoir en leurdit mestier, non obstant quil nait este de leur apprentissage et non obstant toutes keures, status ou costumes que lon povroit pretendre au contraire, le tout pour ceste fois et sans preiudice en aucune cas pour le temps advenir, moiennant ce toutefois que ledit Jehan Hervy sera tenu payer prealablement les droits dudit mestier montans jusques a la somme de six livres de gros et au dessoubz, et moiennant aussi quil sera tenu de faire le serement aussi que ont accoustume de faire les autres pointres nouvellement recueuz oudit mestier, laquelle ordonnance et appointement lesdictes parties et chascune dicelles ont accepte, et ont promis et accorde de le ainsi faire, fournir, entretenir et accomplir entierement, sans jamaisaler ne consentir aler au contraire. Ce fut fait par lesdictes commissaires et en la presence diceulx, ou cloistre de Saint Donas a Bruges, lan et jour dessus dits. [signed] J. Vincentius, R. Capella.

Today, the nineteenth day of the month of March in the year fourteen hundred seventy-one,¹ before master Jehan Vincent, provost of Cassel, and Richart de la Chappelle, singer and canon of the Church of Saint Donatian, counselors of my very redoubtable lord, milord the duke of

Burgundy and masters of requests at his court, in this function judges of milord, have appeared Adrien van Cleroute, dean of the painters, Pietre Christus, Jehan Fabien, and Pietre Casenbroot, sworn members and as representatives of the aforementioned corporation of the painters of the city of Bruges, supplicating and complaining, and master Jehan Doublet, their attorney with them, on one side, and Pietre Coustain, also painter and chamber servant of my aforementioned very redoubtable lord, accompanied by Jehan de Hervy of Valenciennes, his servant, on the other. After hearing the said parties in their complaints and defense from one side and the other, the said judges have ordered and sentenced that the said Pierre Coustain, as long as he remains servant and courtier of my aforementioned very redoutable lord, he and his servants will be allowed to do or have done all the works of the painter's trade in the city and area of the aldermen's jurisdiction of Bruges, for the business and pleasure of my aforementioned very redoutable lord and milords the princes, barons, and courtiers only,⁴ all this without any fraud or wrong intentions, and without risking any charges or fines applicable by the statutes and customs of the said trade of the dean and sworn members of the said painters' corporation of Bruges, and without asking the permission or consent of the said judges. By the content of the request of the supplicating Bruges painters, as well as by their defenses and complaints, [we] have remarked, among other things, that they are grieving and complaining about Jehan Hervy, employee and servant of the aforementioned Pietre Coustain, who works on a daily basis in the city of Bruges in several private places and for people other than my aforementioned very redoutable lord, milords the princes, barons, and true courtiers. It has been advised and ordered by the said judges, for the sake of peace and to protect the rights of the said corporation of the painters of the said city of Bruges, that by next Monday the said Jehan Hervy will have to be accepted by the said dean and sworn members in their said corporation, notwithstanding he has not been apprenticed with them and notwithstanding all the charters, statutes, or customs that could be invoked to the contrary, all this for this one time only and without prejudice and in no other case in the future, on the condition, however, that the said Jehan Hervy will have to pay in advance for the rights of the said corporation the sum amounting to six pounds groats, and also on the condition that he will have to pledge the oath as is the custom with all other painters newly accepted in the corporation. This sentence and order has been accepted by the said parties and each among them, and they have promised and committed themselves to have it done, executed, maintained, and fully accomplished without ever consenting to do the opposite. This was done by the said judges and in their presence in the cloister of Saint Donatian in Bruges, in the year and on the day mentioned above. [signed] J. Vincentius, R. Capella.

a. tant seulement inserted.

Original, parchment.

SAB, Academie, no. 409, box D, Charters Beelden-makers, March 19, 1472.

Published: Weale 1863a, pp. 205–6; Upton 1972, pp. 434–38; and Martens 1992, pp. 519–21.

1. That is, March 19, 1472 (N.S.).

Doc. 22. August 25, 1472–August 25, 1473 — *Petrus Christus and Willem Vrelant pay their annual dues to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow.*

[fol. 99v] Rekeninghe ende bewijs / van Marc vanden Velde van alden / ontfanghe ende uutghevene angaende / der ghilde van Onzer liever Vrouwe / vander Sneer in Brugghe waer of / hij deken was ende dit vanden jaere / ingaende den xxvten dach in oust / lxxij, ende hendende den xxvten in / oust anno m iijc lxxij / [...]
 [fol. 101r] Andre ontfang int ommegeaen / buten den ouden vesten van / jaerlicschen ghildeghelde van / desen jaere / [...]
 [fol. 102r] [...] Willem Vrelant ij gr. [...]
 [fol. 103r] Hier naer volcht den ommeganct / vanden jaerghele bynnen der / houder vesten van desen voors. jaere lxxij / [...]
 [fol. 105v] [...] Pieter Xpistus ij gr.

[fol. 99v] *Account and confirmation by Marc vanden Velde of all receipts and expenditure concerning the guild of Our Lady of the Snow in Bruges, of which he was dean, and this for the year commencing August 25, 1472, and ending August 25, 1473 [...]*

[fol. 101r] *Other receipt of annual dues collected outside the old walls during this year [...]*

[fol. 102r] [...] *Willem Vrelant, 2 gr. [...]*

[fol. 103r] *Here follows the collection of annual dues within the old walls during the aforementioned year 72 [...]*

[fol. 105v] [...] *Pieter Christus, 2 gr.*

RAB, Kerkfabriek Onze Lieve Vrouwe, Algemene rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw, 1467–1499, no. 1531, fols. 99v–105v.

Published: Martens 1990–91, p. 21; and Martens 1992, pp. 523–24.

Doc. 23. August 26, 1473–August 29, 1474 — *Petrus Christus and Willem Vrelant pay their annual dues to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow.*

[fol. 118r] Rekeninghe ende bewijs van al den ontfanghe / ende huutgheven bi mi, Jan de Blazere, als deken / vanden ghilde van Onzer Vrouwe vander Sneer / beghinnende den xxvten dach in oust anno m / cccc lxxij, ende hendende den xxixten dach / van oust anno lxxiiij / [...]

[fol. 120r] Alden ontfanc int ommegeaen van / buten der houder vesten van / jaerlicks ghildeghelt van dezen jare / lxxiiij / [...]

[fol. 120v] [...] *Willem Vrelant ij gr. [...]*

[fol. 126r] Dit es den ontfanc van jaerlix / ghildeghelt betaelt inde kercke / [...]

[fol. 126v] [...] *Pieter Xpistus ij gr. [...]*

[fol. 127v] [...] *Pieter Cristiis ij gr.*

[fol. 118r] *Account and confirmation of all receipts and expenditure by me, Jan de Blazere, as dean of the guild of Our Lady of the Snow, commencing August 26, 1473, and ending August 29, 1474 [...]*

[fol. 120r] *Receipt of all annual guild dues collected outside the old walls during the year 1474 [...]*

[fol. 120v] [...] *Willem Vrelant, 2 gr. [...]*

[fol. 126r] *This is received of annual guild dues paid in the church [...]*

[fol. 126v] [...] *Pieter Christus, 2 gr. [...]*

[fol. 127v] [...] *Pieter Cristiis, 2 gr.*

RAB, Kerkfabriek Onze Lieve Vrouwe, Algemene rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw, 1467–1499, no. 1531, fols. 118r–127v.

Published: Martens 1990–91, p. 22; and Martens 1992, pp. 526–27.

Doc. 24. September 4, 1474–August 30, 1475 — *Petrus Christus and Willem Vrelant pay their annual dues to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow.*

[fol. 139r] Rekeninghe ende bewijs van alden ontfanghe / ende huutgheven bi mi, Jan de Blazere, als deken / vander ghilde van Onzer Vrouwe vander Sneer / beghinnende den iiijden dach in Septembre anno / lxxiiij, ende hendende den xxx dach in oust / anno lxxv / [...]

[fol. 141r] Ontfanc van jaerlix ghildeghelt / int omme gaen van buten der / houder veste anno lxxv / [...]

[fol. 142v] [...] Willem Vrelant ij gr. [...]

[fol. 143r] Ontfanc van jaergheltin ommegaen / van binnen der houder veste anno lxxv / [...]

[fol. 145r] [...] Pieter Xpistus ij gr.

[fol. 139r] *Account and confirmation of all receipts and expenditure by me, Jan de Blazere, as dean of the guild of Our Lady of the Snow, commencing September 4, 1474, and ending August 30, 1475 [...]*

[fol. 141r] *Received of annual dues collected outside the old walls year 75 [...]*

[fol. 142v] [...] *Willem Vrelant, 2 gr. [...]*

[fol. 143r] *Received of annual dues collected within the old walls year 75 [...]*

[fol. 145r] [...] *Pieter Christus, 2 gr.*

RAB, *Kerkfabriek Onze Lieve Vrouwe, Algemene rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw, 1467–1499*, no. 1531, fols. 139r–145r.

Published: Martens 1990–91, p. 22; and Martens 1992, pp. 539–40.

Doc. 25. September 2, 1475–December 19, 1476 — *Gaudicine Christus and Willem Vrelant pay their annual dues to the Confraternity of Our Lady of the Snow; the expenses for Petrus Christus's funeral are inscribed.*

[fol. 157r] Rekeninghe ende bewijs van al den ontfanghe / ende huutghevenne bi mij, Jan de Blazere, / als deken vander ghilde van Onzer Vrouwe / vander Sneer beghinnende den tweesten dach / in Septembre anno lxxv, ende hendende den / xixten dach in decembre anno lxxvj / [...]

Item ontfaen van Pieter Coustain over / zin ghildeghelt van xix jaer, iij s. ij d.gr.

[fol. 159r] Ontfanc van jaerlix ghildeghelt / int ommegaen van buten der houder / veste de anno lxxvj / [...]

[fol. 159v] [...] Willem Vreland ij gr. [...]

[fol. 161r] Ontfanc vanden jaerlix ghildeghelt / int ommegaen van binnen der / houder veste anno lxxvj / [...]

[fol. 162r] [...] Gaudicine Cristes ij gr.

[fol. 168r] Dit es den ontfaen vanden nieuwen / ghildebroeders ende ghildesusters ontfaen / binnen dezen jaere / [...]

Pieter Coustain v gr.

[fol. 169r] Dit es den ontfaen vanden doodghelde / ontfaen binnen dezen vors. jare / [...]

Item vanden zielmesse van Pieter Xpistus v s.gr.

[fol. 171r] Dit es de betalinghe ende thuutgheven / beginnende den vors. tweesten dach / in septembre anno lxxv ende hendende / den vors. xixten dach in decembre / anno lxxvj / [...]

Item betaelt vanden zielmesse van / Pieter Xpistus xxj s.gr. /

[fol. 157r] *Account and confirmation of all receipts and expenditure by me, Jan de Blazere, as dean of the guild of Our Lady of the Snow, commencing September 2, 1475, and ending December 19, 1476 [...]*

Also received of Pieter Coustain for his dues of 19 years, 3 s. 2 d.gr.

[fol. 159r] *Received of annual dues collected outside the old walls year 76 [...]*

[fol. 159v] [...] *Willem Vreland, 2 gr. [...]*

[fol. 161r] *Received of annual dues collected within the old walls year 76 [...]*

[fol. 162r] [...] *Gaudicine Cristes, 2 gr.*

[fol. 168r] *This is the receipt from the new guild brethren and sisters accepted during this year [...]* Pieter Coustain, 5 gr.

[fol. 169r] *This is the receipt of the expenses for funerals collected during the aforementioned year [...]* Also of the funeral mass of Pieter Christus, 5 s.gr.

[fol. 171r] *This is the payment and expenditure commencing the aforesaid September 2, 1475, and ending the aforesaid December 19, 1476 [...]*

Also paid for the funeral mass of Pieter Christus, 21 s.gr.

RAB, *Kerkfabriek Onze Lieve Vrouwe, Algemene rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwe-ter-Sneeuw, 1467–1499*, no. 1531, fols. 157r–171r.

Published: Martens 1990–91, pp. 22–23; and Martens 1992, pp. 541–42.

Doc. 26. March 13, 1476 (N.S.) — *Bastyaen Christus, Petrus's bastard son, becomes a member of the corporation of image-makers.*

[fol. 28v] Int jaer van lxxv zo was / deckin Gheeraedt Janszuene / [...]

Bastyaen Xpistus Pieters zuene / was ontfaen als meesters kynt / ende nam an et let vanden scilders / ende hij en hadde ne gheen kynderen / Int jaer van lxxvⁱ den xiiijden dach in / maerte. Hij was meesters kyndt ende bastaert. Hij gaf xij groten. /

[fol. 28v] *In the year 75, Gheeraedt Janszuene was dean [...]*

Bastyaen Christus, Pieter's son, was accepted as master's child, and he chose the branch of the painters and he had no children in the year 75,ⁱ the thirteenth day of March. He was master's child and bastard. He gave 12 gr.

SAB, *Beeldenmakers*, no. 314, *Ledenlijst reg. A*, fol. 28v.

Published: Weale 1909, p. 112 n. 3; and Upton 1972, p. 439.

i. That is, 1476 (N.S.).

Doc. 27. After April 19, 1450 — *Petrus Christus's name is inscribed in the obituary of the Bruges corporation of image-makers.*

[...]ⁱ [fol. 7r] Int iaer ons heeren duust / vierhondert vichtich upten / neghentiensten dach van / april, zo was den eersten steen gheleyt van onser capelle. Ende daer toe waren / ghecoren .vj. gouvernerers omme / te vulbringhen, te wetene, / Heyndric van claerhoudt,^a / Jan van der donck,^b / Steven ysereel,^c / Philips van smaelvoorde,^d / Jan van bethem,^e / Ende anthuenis Ringhel.^f / Ende alle de ghildebroeders die sich- / tent dier tyt ghestorven zijn die staen / hier naer ghenoeemt. Elc leze een / pater noster ende een ave maria / over de zielen.

[fol. 8r] Willem van blecspoele zadelmaker^s [...]

[fol. 10r] [...] Pieter cristus scilder

[...] ¹[fol. 7r] In the year of our Lord fourteen hundred fifty, on the nineteenth day of April, the first stone of our chapel was laid. And therefore 6 administrators were chosen to bring it to an end, to be known Heyndric van Claerhoudt,^a Jan van der Donck,^b Steven Ysereel,^c Philips van Smaelvoorde,^d Jan van Bethem,^e and Anthuenis Ringhel.^f And all the brethren of the guild who have died ever since are listed here. Everyone prays a Pater Noster and an Ave Maria for their souls.

[fol. 8r] Willem van Blecspoele, saddler^s [...]

[fol. 10r] [...] Pieter Cristus, painter

a. *sadelmaeker* added in a sixteenth-century *littera cursiva*.

b. *schilder* added in same handwriting.

c. *glaesmakere* added in same handwriting.

d. *clederscriver* added in same handwriting.

e. *schilder* added in same handwriting.

f. *glaesmakere* added in same handwriting.

g. This is the first entry in the list of deceased members. As in all the texts between fols. 7r and 13r, it is written in brown ink in a regular *littera formata*. From fol. 13v on, the list seems to be updated now and then in less careful (sometimes even sloppy) handwriting.

SAB, *Gilde St. Lucas en St. Eloy*, no. 409, *Obituarium*, fols. 7r–10r.

Published: C. Carton, "Obituaire de la Société de St. Luc," *Annales de la Société d'Emulation de Bruges*, 2nd series, 12 (1862–63), p. 6.

i. Fols. 1r and 1v contain a prayer with the incipit *Miserere mei deus* [...] written in a brown *littera bastarda*; on fols. 3r–6r, the same prayer is repeated in a heavy *littera formata* in black ink.

Doc. 28. 1492 — A painting by Petrus Christus is recorded in the inventory of the art collection of Lorenzo de' Medici.

Una tavoletta dipintovi di una testa di dama francese cholorita a olio, opera di Pietro Cresti da Bruggia

A small panel painting of a head of a French lady painted in oil, work of Pietro Cresti of Bruges

Florence, Archivio di Stato, *Mediceo avanti il principato*, no. 165 (inventory of the collection of Lorenzo de' Medici, 1492), fol. 40r.

Published: Müntz 1888, p. 79; Upton 1972, p. 438; and Upton 1990, p. 43 n. 53.

Doc. 29. March 20, 1524 — Letter, dated March 20, 1524, Naples, from Pietro Summonte to Marcantonio Michiel mentioning a painting by Petrus Christus in the Sannazaro collection.

Have il Signor Sannazaro oggi in poter suo un picciolo quadretto dove è la figura di Christo in maiestate, opera bona di mano di un chiamato Petrus Christi, pictor famoso in Fiandra, più antiquo di Joannes e di Rogiero.

Signor Sannazaro has at present in his possession a little painting with the image of Christ in Majesty, a good work by the hand of someone called Petrus Christi, famous painter in Flanders, older than Joannes and Rogiero.

Published: Fabriczy 1907, p. 148; F. Nicolini, *L'arte napoletana del rinascimento e la lettera di Pietro Summonte a Marcantonio Michiel* (Naples, 1925), p. 163; Upton 1972, pp. 438–39; and Upton 1990, p. 1 n. 1.

Doc. 30. 1567 — Guicciardini mentions Petrus Christus in his *Descrittione di tutti i Paesi Bassi*.

A Ruggieri successe Hausse suo scolare, il quale fece vn' bel' quadro a Portinari, che hoggi ha il Duca di Fiorenza, & a Medici medesimi fece la bella tauola di Careggi. Seguirono a mano a mano Lodouico da Louano, Pietro Crista, Martino d'Holanda, & Giusto da Guanto, che fece quella nobil' pittura della comunione al Duca d'Urbino, & dietro a lui venne Vgo d'Anuersa, che fece la bellissima tauola, che si vede a Firenze in santa Maria nuova.

Ruggieri was succeeded by Hausse, his pupil, who made a beautiful painting for Portinari, which the duke of Florence presently owns, & for the same Medici he made the beautiful panel of Careggi. He was followed by Lodouico of Louvain, Pietro Crista, Martino of Holland, & Giusto of Ghent, who made that noble picture of the Communion for the duke of Urbino, & after him came Ugo of Antwerp, who did the very beautiful panel that can be seen in Florence in the Santa Maria Nuova.

Guicciardini 1567, p. 98.

Doc. 31. 1568 — Vasari mentions Petrus Christus in the second edition of his *Vite*.

Del dipingere a olio in tavola, e su le tele.

Fu una bellissima invenzione ed una gran comodità all'arte della pittura, il trovare il colorito a olio; di che fu primo inventore in Fiandra Giovanni da Bruggia, il quale mandò la tavola a Napoli al re Alfonso, ed al duca d'Urbino Federico II, la stufa sua; e fece un San Gironimo, che Lorenzo de' Medici aveva, e molte altre cose lodate. Lo seguì poi Ruggieri da Bruggia, suo discepolo; ed Ausse, creato di Ruggieri, che fece a' Portinari, in Santa Maria Nuova di Firenze, un quadro picciolo, il qual è oggi appresso al duca Cosimo; ed è di sua mano la tavola di Careggi, villa fuori di Firenze della illustrissima casa de' Medici. Furono similmente de' primi Lodovico da Luano e Pietro Crista, e maestro Martino e Giusto da Guanto, che fece la tavola della Comunione del duca d'Urbino ed altre pitture; ed Ugo d'Anversa, che fe la tavola di Santa Maria Nuova di Fiorenza.

Di diversi artefici Fiamminghi.

Lasciando adunque da parte Martino d'Olanda, Giovan Eyck da Bruggia ed Uberto suo fratello, che nel 1510¹ mise in luce l'invenzione e modo di colorire a olio, come altrove si è detto, e lasciò molte opere di sua mano in Guanto, in Ipri ed in Bruggia, dove visse e morì onoratamente; dico che, dopo costoro, seguì Ruggieri Vander-Weyde di Bruselles, il quale fece molte opere in più luoghi, ma principalmente nella sua patria, e nel palazzo de'

Signori quattro tavole a olio bellissime, di cose pertinenti alla Iustizia. Di costui fu discepolo Hausse, del quale abbiàn, come si disse, in Fiorenza in un quadretto piccolo, che è in man del duca, la Passione di Cristo. A costui successero Lodovico da Lovanio, Luven Fiammingo; Pietro Christa, Giusto da Guanto, Ugo d'Anversa, ed altri molti; i quali, perchè mai non uscirono di loro paese, tennero sempre la maniera fiamminga

About painting with oil on panel and on canvas.

The discovery of painting with oil was a most beautiful invention and a great commodity for the art of painting, of which the first inventor in Flanders was Giovanni of Bruges, who sent the panel to Naples to King Alfonso, and to the duke of Urbino, Frederic II, his bathroom; and he made a Saint Jerome, which Lorenzo de' Medici owned, and many other esteemed works. After him came Ruggieri of Bruges, his pupil; and Ausse, pupil of Ruggieri, who painted for the Portinari in Santa Maria Nuova of Florence a small painting that is now with Duke Cosimo; and by his hand is a panel in Careggi, in a villa outside Florence, belonging to the illustrious house of Medici. Among the first painters was also Lodovico of Louvain and Pietro Crista, and master Martino and Giusto of Ghent, who made the panel of the Communion of the duke of Urbino and other paintings; and Ugo of Antwerp, who made the panel of Santa Maria Nuova of Florence.

About different Flemish artists.

Leaving aside now Martino of Holland, Giovan Eyck of Bruges, and Uberto, his brother, who around 1510¹ brought to light the invention and manner of painting with oil, as said elsewhere, and who left many works of his hand in Ghent in Ypres and in Bruges, where he lived and died honorably; I say that after them followed Ruggieri Vander-Weyde of Brussels, who made many works in various places, but mainly in his city, and four beautiful panels in oil, with subjects pertaining to Justice, in the City Hall. A pupil of his was Hans, by whom, it is said, is a little painting in Florence that is in the hands of the duke, the Passion of Christ. He was succeeded by Lodovico of Louvain, Leuven in Flemish; Pietro Christa, Giusto of Ghent, Ugo of Antwerp, and many others, who, because they never left their country, always stuck to the Flemish manner.

Vasari 1906, vol. 1, pp. 184–85; vol. 7, pp. 580–81.

1. He means 1410.

Doc. 32. 1795 — *The Bruges painter Pieter Le Doulx mentions Petrus Christus and his son Bastyaen in his Levens der konst-schilders.*

[fol. 13r] [...] Dit ambacht ofte gilde der schilders is seer oud bin- / nen brugghe, en het was ten Jaere 1450 als dat sij bouw- / den hunne Capelle vanden H. Lucas gelijck bewijst een / van hun oudste registers, alwaer staet dit volghende / [...]¹

waer naer volght in het selve register de overledene / van het geseyde ambacht, waer uijtgetrocken is dese volgende lijste vande schilders daer op bekent

Jan vander donck

Jan vanden driessche [...]²

Meester pieter cristus

[fol. 13r] [...]

This corporation or guild of the painters is very old in Bruges, and it was in the year 1450 that they built their chapel of Saint Luke, as proven by one of their oldest registers, where is written the following [...]¹

In this same register follows the deceased of the said corporation, from which is taken the following list of painters who are known

Jan vander donck

Jan vanden driessche [...]²

Master Pieter Cristus

SAB, Fonds Academie, no. 409, MS 230; P. Le Doulx, *Levens der konstenaers en konstenaeressen, zoo in 't schilderen beeldhouwen als ander konsten, de welke van de stadt van Brugge gebooren sijn ofte aldaer hunne konsten geoeffent hebben, verrykt met veel aenmerkelyke en historijke aenteekeningen, getrokken uyt verscheyde schryvers, handschriften en andere bewijsstukken* (Bruges, [1795], fol. 13r).

[unpublished]

1. Here follows a transcription of fol. 7r of the obituary of the corporation of image-makers; see doc. 27.

2. The author gives a list of painters appearing in the obituary, including Christus.

Appendix 2

Dendrochronological Analysis of Panels Attributed to Petrus Christus

Dendrochronological analysis of panels is an important dating tool in art history. This method allows us to arrive at a *terminus post quem* for a painting by determining the felling date of the tree from which the panel was cut. The method involves measuring the width of the annual rings on the panel and comparing the growth-ring curve resulting from this measurement with the dated master chronologies. A fairly precise dating of the panel can then be determined based on the specific characteristics of the growth-ring curve and on the geographic origin of the wood.

In preparing oak panels for paintings, panel makers usually cut the planks radially with regard to the cross section of the tree (fig. 1). The bark and the light, perishable sapwood were cut off, thereby eliminating evidence of the latest growth rings and making a determination of the exact felling year impossible. Only the latest measured growth ring of the panel can be determined to the exact year.

The estimated number of sapwood rings cut off (and hence to be added) may be derived by statistical evaluation. The provenance of the oak is significant in establishing the statistical basis for sapwood analysis. The number of sapwood rings varies: a range from 7 to 50 can be found in western Europe, and only 9 to 36 in the eastern part. This information is especially important, as the wood used for Netherlandish panels generally came from the Baltic region (fig. 2).

The number of sapwood rings found in 179 oak trees from northern Poland was analyzed with the result of a median value of 15; 50 percent of all trees had 13 to 19 sapwood rings, the minimum was 9, the maximum 36. The number of sapwood rings also depends on the age of the tree—that is, a tree 300 years old generally has more sapwood rings than a tree 100 years old.

In order to determine the earliest possible felling date, at least 9 sapwood rings must be added to the latest growth ring found on the panel. If some of the sapwood is still preserved, the felling date of the oak tree can be estimated by adding the median of 15 growth rings to the number of heartwood rings; a span of only -2 to $+4$ years must be taken into account. If a panel is made exclusively of heartwood, the felling date of the

tree cannot be determined as precisely. In this case, 15 years must be added. The tree might have been cut down 2 years earlier and x years later. The x signifies an unknown number of sapwood and heartwood rings that may have been cut off during preparation of the panel.

The next problem is to determine how much time has elapsed between the cutting of the tree and the painter's use of the panel. Signed and dated panels of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries show that most panels were used 2 to 8 years after the tree was felled. Few signed and dated early Netherlandish paintings from the fifteenth century exist. On the basis of a few examples (tables 1, 2), it seems probable that painters used the panels about 10 years or more after the tree had been cut down. Obviously, the estimate of 10 years' storage time is also a statistical figure that can differ widely from case to case.

Notwithstanding these problems, dendrochronological analysis often helps to date and to locate a painting geographi-

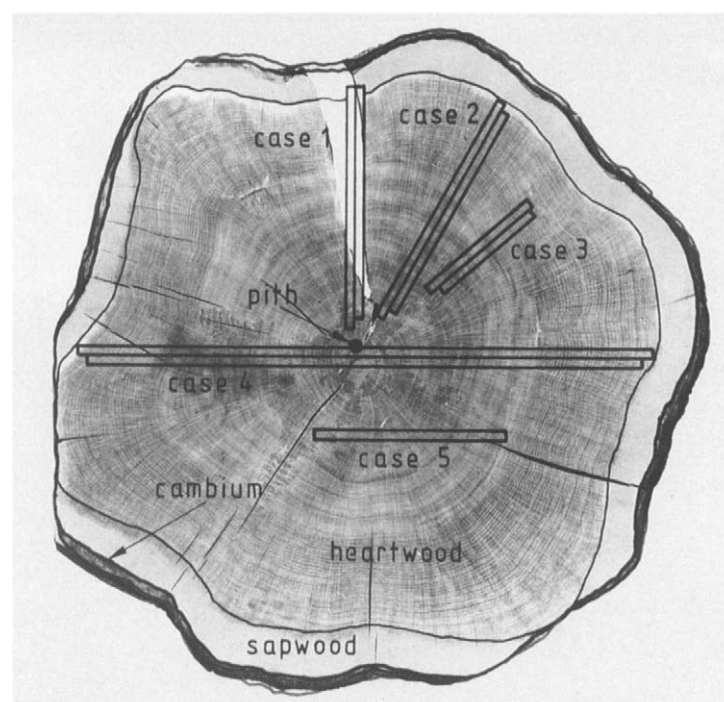


Fig. 1. Various methods of extracting boards from an oak tree

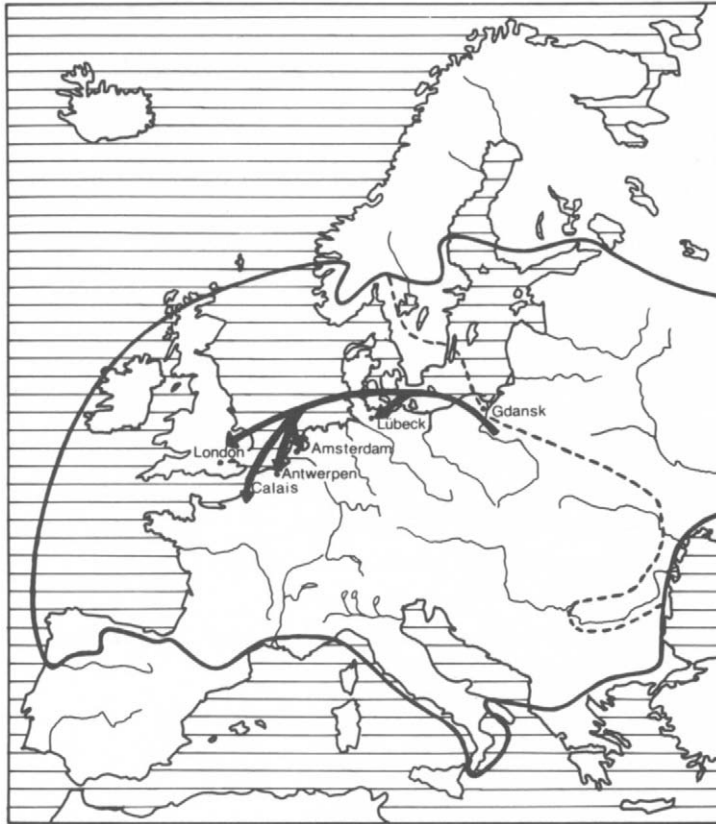


Fig. 2. The areas of the natural distribution of oak. Distribution of *Quercus robur* L. (European oak) is shown as a heavy line; distribution of *Quercus petraea* Liebl. (sessile oak) is shown as an interrupted line. European oak originates farther northeast than does sessile oak. The source of oak timbers of type II three-ring patterns and the places of their utilization as panels are indicated by arrows.

cally. Examination of Petrus Christus's panel paintings demonstrates this clearly (table 3).

By evaluating the data taken from the boards of the different panels, it is evident that boards I and II of the Berlin *Last Judgment* were cut from the same tree as board III of the

Annunciation and Nativity; boards I and III of the *Last Judgment* come from a different tree. For the middle boards of the wings, one wide board was sawn in two pieces. The outside was used for the *Annunciation*, and the central part was used for the *Last Judgment*. Based on the width of the missing rings, a saw cut of about 5 mm has been calculated.

Furthermore, the two boards of the Frankfurt *Madonna Enthroned with Saints Jerome and Francis* (cat. no. 13) and the boards of the Washington donor portraits (cat. no. 12) were cut from the same tree. The last growth ring that we could measure on the Frankfurt painting dates from 1421. This year must also be accepted as a *terminus post quem* for the panels in Washington.

Dendrochronological studies of panels can thus give a *terminus post quem* for the boards of paintings. Furthermore, a comparison of the growth-ring series from single boards often enables us to determine whether or not they come from the same tree. If they do, an attribution to a particular workshop is possible. Information gathered from the nearly complete oeuvre of a painter may supply art historians with corroborative evidence for issues of attribution and dating.

For further information about dendrochronological analysis, see D. Eckstein et al., "New Evidence for the Dendrochronological Dating of Netherlandish Paintings," *Nature* 320 (April 3, 1986), pp. 465–66; J. Bauch, D. Eckstein, and P. Klein, "Dendrochronologische Untersuchungen an Gemäldetafeln des Wallraf-Richartz-Museums, Köln," in F. G. Zehnder, *Katalog der Altkölner Malerei, Kataloge des Wallraf-Richartz-Museums II* (Cologne, 1990), pp. 667–83; and P. Klein, "The Differentiation of Originals and Copies of Netherlandish Panel Paintings by Dendrochronology," in *Le Dessin sous-jacent dans la peinture: Dessin sous-jacent et copies*, ed. H. Verougstraete-Marcq and R. van Schoute (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1991), pp. 29–42.

Table 1

Last Judgment and Annunciation and Nativity (Staatliche Museen Preussischer Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin)
Dated 1452

	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Sapwood	9 rings	15 rings	36 rings
Felling date	1428	1434	1455
Storage time	24 years	18 years	—

Table 2

Saint Eligius (cat. no. 6)
Dated 1449

	Minimum	Median	Maximum
Sapwood	9 rings	15 rings	36 rings
Felling date	1422	1428	1449
Storage time	27 years	21 years	0 years

Table 3

Dendrochronological Results

Painting ¹	Number of boards	Number of rings/youngest heartwood ring	Earliest possible felling date: 9 sapwood rings	Estimated felling date: 15 sapwood rings	Presumed date: 15 sapwood rings + 10 years' storage
<i>St. Jerome</i> (cat. no. 1)	I	86/1401	1410	1416	1426
<i>St. John the Baptist</i> (cat. no. 3)	I	61/1355	1364	1370	1380
<i>Carthusian</i> (cat. no. 5)	I	133/1415	1424	1430	1440
<i>St. Eligius</i> (cat. no. 6)	I*****	180/1410	1422	1428	1438
	II	80/1413			
	III*****	73/1408			
<i>Exeter Madonna</i> (cat. no. 7)	I	154/1387	1396	1402	1412
<i>Lamentation</i> (cat. no. 8)	I	207/1426	1435	1441	1451
<i>Friedsam Annunciation</i> (cat. no. 10)	I*****	25/1334	—	—	—
	II*****	121/1417	1426	1432	1442
	III*****	103/1411	—	—	—
	IV*****	108/1415	—	—	—
<i>Virgin and Child</i> (cat. no. 11)	I	176/1424	1433	1439	1449
<i>Male Donor</i> (Washington) (cat. no. 12)	I***	148/1412	1430	1436	1446
<i>Female Donor</i> (Washington) (cat. no. 12)	I***	129/1391	—	—	—
<i>Annunciation and Nativity</i> (Berlin)	I*	231/1416	—	—	—
	II*	130/1311			
	III**	215/1398			
<i>Last Judgment</i> (Berlin)	I**	240/1400	1428	1434	1444
	II*	97/1419			
	III**	246/1408			
<i>Lamentation</i> (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels) ²	I*****	246/1414	—	—	—
	II*****	257/1412	—	—	—
	III	393/1424	1433	1439	1449
<i>Madonna Enthroned</i> (cat. no. 13)	I***	106/1421	1430	1436	1446
	II***	181/1420			
<i>Washington Nativity</i> (cat. no. 17)	I	286/1431	1442	1448	1458
	II****	136/1433			
	III****	177/1431			
	IV	147/1430			
<i>Portrait of a Lady</i> (cat. no. 19)	I	212/1415	1424	1430	1440
<i>Virgin and Child</i> (Turin)	I	161/1426	1435	1441	1451
<i>Virgin and Child with Sts. John the Baptist and Jerome</i> (E. E. M. Lemberger-Proehl coll., Amsterdam)	I	105/1407	1442	1448	1458
	II	190/1433			
	III	96/1399			

Asterisks indicate attribution to the same tree.

1. The *Head of Christ* (cat. no. 4) could not be dated because its primary support of parchment on oak was transferred to a mahogany panel.

2. The *Lamentation* was examined in 1993 by J. Vynckier, Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, Brussels.

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