

The Place and Space of a Donator in Late Medieval Devotional Art

The Reciprocal Nature of the Living and the Dead

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Abstract

This thesis examines the place and space of the donator in late Medieval Art.

The first part of this study investigates the supplicants' relations and interactions based on their position within an artwork. I analyze the importance of being visible and its connection with the act of devotion, as the space that the donor is occupying and sharing with the other depicted figures. I try to find the patterns and the rules governing the ways in which the commissioners are portrayed. To illustrate this aspect, I will use the concept of *memoria* and care for the here and the hereafter as well as its connection to the donor's appearance. It is a three-way relation, a kind of pattern of influence where there is a supplicant, a regular churchgoer who is a spectator, and God himself.

In the second part of my thesis, I focus on the commissioners' place in the society and the significance of being seen not only as a pious but also as a noble, rich and powerful person. The way in which donators attempted to present themselves, both for the here and the hereafter, apparently played a significant role in the medieval devotional art.

The third part approaches the question of donators' visibility for the sake of their salvation. The issue examined is how being a part of sacred narratives influence the time spent in Purgatory and all the actions the donators took in order to be seen. They wanted to be visible, remembered and prayed for. Furthermore, I will present the discussion related to the terminology of patronage in Medieval Art studies.

The analysis conducted shows that being visible is strictly connected with the desire of salvation. Depiction, position, place and space of the figures is deeply related to care for the here and the hereafter and the necessity of being close to God hereafter is stronger than vanity in here.

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Introduction

Background

In the year of 1436 Jan van Eyck executed a huge panel ordered by Joris van den Paele, the Canon of the Church of Saint Donatian in Bruges (fig. 1). This large-scale painting depicts van den Paele kneeling in front of the enthroned Virgin Mary with Christ Child on her lap. The supplicant is accompanied by his patron saint - Saint George. On the left side of the painting the artist portrayed the patron of the church which this work was ordered for: Saint Donatian. The identification of the donor is possible due to the inscription on the frame. *The Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele* is one of the most impressive examples of the early Netherlandish devotional art.¹ Not a specific topic or design qualified an image as devotional, it was more about the function that the art work had, this being a medium between a devotee and God himself, bringing them closer to each other.²

In *Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele* Jan van Eyck's artistry and talent reaches its peak. Realism and care for details make this image almost life like. Van der Paele died a few years after this painting was finished. His face painted with care for the smallest detail may suggest that he was already suffering from some kind of disease.³ The artist's precision is visible not only in the unflattering appearance of van der Paele but also in expensive fabrics and clothes of the depicted figures. We can almost feel the weight of the ornate brocade of Saint Donatian's robe and admire the precious jewels painted so vividly that they look like real gemstones, as if attached to the panel. The armour of Saint George's reflects everything that is happening beyond the painting, so well, that we see another picture within the panel. Not one detail has been neglected.

What is the purpose of this, and other similar paintings from this period and does such care for detail mean anything? Why is a mortal person placed right next to the saints, and why was it possible for a historical person, like Joris van der Paele to sit so close to a holy one? What

¹ Ferrari, S., (2013), *Van Eyck*, Munich, London, New York, Prestel Publishing, p. 98

² Honée, E. in Os, van, H., (1994), *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, p. 158

³ Ferrari, S., (2013), p. 98

relationship did the depicted figures have in the picture and how these pictures were perceived by contemporary people? What was the purpose of the unification of these two different realms?

One of the characteristics of late Medieval Art north of the Alps is realism. In this context it is worth mentioning that realism in late Medieval art was not a mirror of reality, it was rather a world constructed for the need of presenting special effects or explaining certain meanings⁴. It was understood differently than it is in our modern times. When it comes to historical figures it is understandable, but how can Jesus or Virgin Mary be realistic if we have no knowledge of what they looked like? The term realism, at the closer look, becomes problematic. It is a complex term which is going to be discussed broader in the third part of this thesis.

Joris van der Paele ordered the painting shortly before his death. He might have tried to secure his afterlife status with it. At the same time the picture is overflowing with precious metals, stones and expensive fabrics, which raises a question: was he also trying to accentuate his status here on earth and if so, why was he doing that?

Medieval Art was produced on commission. Consequently, a commissioner's role, particularly regarding contribution and influence in the creating process, was crucial. Knowing when, why and how an artwork was ordered is a vast source of information both for historians in general and art historians in particular. All these factors affect the knowledge of a singular artwork, as stated by Maximilliaan P.J. Martens: "Since the function of a painting is inextricably bound up with its content and its artistic form, the study of the patronage is an indispensable part of art-historical research"⁵. To formulate it differently, study on patronage inevitably covers research on artworks.

Research Questions

What interests me the most when it comes to patronage is what is there under the surface. It is actually the commissioner's place within the artwork, the space he or she is occupying. I am talking about the setting here: how the commissioners were portrayed and how they were depicted in relation to other figures. Why were the mortals placed right next to the saints? Why was it possible for a historical person to sit next to a holy one? What relationship did the depicted

⁴ Nash, S., (2008), *Northern Renaissance Art*, New York, Oxford University Press, p. 36

⁵ Martens, M., P., J., (2005), *Patronage* in Ridderbos, B., van Buren, A., van Veen H., (eds.). *Early Netherlandish paintings: rediscovery, reception and research*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, p. 352

figures have in the picture and how were these pictures perceived? What was the purpose of the unification of these two different realms?

The second aspect of commissioners' placement within an artwork is their position in the contemporary society and their social background. What made it possible for a commissioner to be depicted in the painting? The commissioner's status made it achievable to be included in the picture, but at the same time their presence could not be justified only by the class they represented.

To understand the donator's place and space in late Medieval Art it is necessary to look closer at the historical background. It was a very particular time in the European history; time of change, time of new discoveries', time when a new class and new countries emerge. The late Middle Ages were also uncertain times. In the 14th century the fast growth of population led to an agricultural crisis which was followed by famine, yet these were not the only disasters of that period. During the next century people were outnumbered by both the plague and the Hundred Years' War. Despite all of that the late Medieval culture was blooming.⁶

Initially this research was supposed to focus on art produced between 14th and 15th century in Flanders and Netherlands. However, such limitation might be problematic. Firstly, the wars and changes on the European thrones during the late Medieval period prompted the instability of the borders.

Additionally, those territories were important art producing centers, but the artists did not always come from that region and the artworks were very often distributed around Europe. Every bigger city in this area had many working artists not native to the city or the country.⁷ Hans Memling can serve as an example, as he worked in different cities in Flanders, but was German. Therefore, the art itself was not completely vernacular, it was influenced, and it was under constant influence.

⁶ Blockmans, W., P., (1999), *The fourteenth Century: The Age of Uncertainties* in J., H., C., Blom, Lamberts, E., (eds.). *History of the Low Countries*, Berghahn Books, New York, Oxford, p. 73

⁷ Campbell, L., (1998), *The Fifteenth Century Netherlandish Schools*, London, National Gallery Publications, p.19

The time and territorial borders are not completely impermeable. In art history it is very often difficult to restrict oneself to a limited period of time, therefore my research is going to focus in general on the art from the late Medieval Era.

Between the late Middle Ages and until after the Reformation, the Netherlands and Flanders were first under the authority of the Burgundy Court, which had strong connections with French rulers, and eventually the Habsburg Monarchy. In the early Middle Ages, in the feudal system, the church and rulers owned most of the land, and therefore they had the most power and money.

The feudal system was slowly weakening towards the end of the Middle Ages. Already in the 12th century, European cities began to become more independent. Possession of land stopped being the only source of income. Trade and industry led to accumulation of capital in the cities. To phrase things another way, the rise of *capitalism* led to the exchange of money and the exchange of money increased the need for goods. Yet, it was not a simple process. Let us not forget that the need for goods was one thing, but the more important factor that contributed to such a big demand for art, was the Catholic faith.

Although in the Burgundian Netherlands more than a half of the population's income came from the countryside, it was still less than in the rest of Europe. The density of population there was very high.⁸ It did not stop the cities from growing. The fast urban development of this area lies in its geographical position. The vicinity of the sea and the infrastructure of waterways and old roads contributed to the rise of Burgundian towns as both political and cultural centers. The area was small which made the trade more accessible. Goods were not the only imported and exported things, as short distances enabled also the exchange of experience and information. Since the trading took place in the cities, the fact that they became providers of transport, administration and financial services was a natural consequence.⁹ In this context it is worth mentioning for example that the first European bank was created in Bruges.

The rulers depended on nobility, but their importance decreased after the 14th century. At the same time the burghers gained more status. Consequently, the Burgundian court started depending financially on the rich cities and their inhabitants. Dukes were the great patrons of art

⁸ Prevenier, W., Bloockmans, W., (1986), *The Burgundian Netherlands*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 48

⁹ Prevenier, W., Bloockmans, W., (1986), p. 70

but economically they relied on the rich bankers from the Flemish cities. Considering this situation one can risk saying that all the commissions came from the burghers.

The rise of the city prompted new a class to take the lead in the donations and art commissioning. The burghers started playing a crucial role and took over a position as the main patron of artist, competing in this field with the rulers and the church. The rich bourgeoisie began to gain more importance in the art field. The enrichment of the bourgeoisie meant the increased activity of donors. Although most of the new donor group was a lay group, no longer coming from the clergy, art orders were still largely intended as devotional, and so meant to be placed in churches.

I would like to focus on how the social position of a donor was emphasized within the artwork. Was the way in which these donors were portrayed connected to their status and could this kind of portraits be used to boast about themselves? We may find examples of donators who wished to be depicted in a certain way, for example in full armour.¹⁰ Some tried, we can speculate, to demonstrate their wealth by wearing expensive fabrics.¹¹ How was the need of refining one's appearance or boosting one's image coterminous with the act of piety which the commissioning of a religious artwork is first of all? There are many cases in which patrons demanded to be depicted in certain ways, but was it to accentuate their status here on earth?

I would like to concentrate on the agency of the image - the function of the art and its communication with the believers - the dialogue that occurs within a work of art and the dialogue between a spectator and the artwork itself. Our, that is modern reception of depicted donors might be strictly aesthetic, while for medieval believers an inclusion of rich, very often noble commissioners had a deeper meaning and it was connected strictly to the religious, Catholic sphere. This bond, or relation was not a passive or an abstract one. It looks as if the image was reciprocating the gaze - it was not just referential.

It seems that the line between what is depicted within the artwork and what is happening in the real life does not exists. The border between the sacred and the profane was crossed, with the

¹⁰ Velden, van der, H., (2000), *The donor's image: Gerard Loyet and the votive portraits of Charles the Bold*, Turnhout Brepols Publishers, p. 268

¹¹ Rothstein, B., (2000), 'On Devotion as Social Ornament Jan van Eyck's Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin', *Dutch Crossing*, 24:1, 96-132, p.99

work of art as medium. Members of the corporal realm were able to cross the spiritual border and project themselves within the work of art. They could take the donators space, as Henning Laugerud formulated it: “They are both participants and spectators in a form of non-participating participation [my translation].”¹²

I would like to explore the connection between piety and self-promotion as well as different ways of expressing it. What might be of interest here is the connection and unification of the two different realms: life here on earth and life after death, saints and seculars sharing one space like equals. A question arises: what is human and what belongs to the Kingdom of Heaven? The main purpose of this thesis would be to find connections and mechanisms which created these traditions and customs.

Before I begin the in-depth analysis of the subject, it is essential to explain three fundamental terms within the discussed topic: the perception of the Medieval Art in contemporary times, patronage and devotion in the Middle Ages.

Theory and Method

Research on late medieval patronage has started to bloom in the last decades.¹³ However, the studies focus mainly on the surface of the art commissioning phenomenon, examining for example: the reasons for ordering an artwork, who contracted it and to whom it was given. All these technicalities contribute to the knowledge about an artwork, yet they do not give us a comprehensive view on sponsoring and commissioning of art in the Middle Ages. The variety of contexts in which art was ordered prevents us from finding a common denominator for the donator’s realm.¹⁴ In other words: most studies in that field, explore specific countries and areas. Altarpieces constitute a good example as we find a lot of relevant literature exploring and investigating this type of church furnishing. Yet, particular researchers focus mostly regionally, and they lack in general international approach.¹⁵

¹² “De er både deltakere og betraktere i en form for ikke deltakende deltakelse.”

Laugerud, H., (2005), *Det Hagioskopiske blikk: bilder, syn og erkjennelse i høy- og senmiddelalder*, (Doctoral dissertation), Universitet i Bergen, Bergen, p. 283

¹³ Hourihane, C., (2013), introduction in Hourihane, C., (ed.). *Patronage, Power and Agency in Medieval Art*, Princeton, Index of Christian Art, pp. ix-xxiii

¹⁴ Hourihane, C., (2013), p. xx

¹⁵ Kroesen, J., E., A., Schmidt, V., E., (2009), introduction in Kroesen, J., E., A., Schmidt, V., E., (eds.): *The Altar and its Environment 1150-1400. Studies in the Visual Cultures of the Middle Ages*, Turnhout, Brepols, pp. 1-10

The world of Medieval patronage is complex, which makes it, very often, a case study. For example, a cloister donation would be different from a secular one, or a patron would not always be a user etc. Furthermore, the context of donations varied as well as the intentions of the patrons. This diversity makes it hard to find a common denominator. Nevertheless, I would like to present a wider view by comparing the individual studies and find overlapping places in the patronage realm.

Moreover, studies on patronage were part of an evolutionary model of art history, accommodating traditional approaches on commissioning, where this phenomenon evolves around rich ruler as the main sponsor of art who is as well the main source of an artist's income. This traditional view on the subject of patronage has its sources in Vasari and Burkhardt.¹⁶

The more we want to explore the subject of art benefaction, the more obstacles we meet on our way. Patronage study is also limited by the lack of documentation. Due to time and Reformation, most of the contracts or documents containing descriptions of commissioned artworks or descriptions of their purpose have been lost. Thus, in many cases historians and art historians may only speculate, interpret and apply data known from the surviving accounts into any given artwork from the period, which might be unclear and not necessarily correct.¹⁷

Spectator

The subject of my thesis is the donors place and space in the late Medieval Netherlandish and Flemish art. The title immediately points in the direction of a donor, yet the subject of traditional patronage is only a small part of this thesis. As I consider the patrons intentions, I rather aim my attention towards the viewers' experience. This particular approach has not been explored until recent years. In the last decades art historians tried to turn their focus away from the style or iconographic meaning of an artwork.¹⁸ Iconography plays an important role in Medieval Art. However, instead of interpreting and understanding narratives I would rather direct my attention onto the ongoing relation between the individual believer, depicted donor and Divinity. Where is the supplicant placed? Which space is he or she occupying and how does that affect the viewer?

¹⁶ Caskey, J., (2006), *Whodunnit? Patronage, the Canon, and the Problematics of Agency in Romanesque and Gothic Art* in Rudolph, C., (ed.), *A Companion to Medieval Art*, Malden, Mass, Blackwell Publishing, p.193

¹⁷ Hourihane, C., (ed.). (2013), p. xix

¹⁸ Williamson, B., (2004), 'Altarpieces, Liturgy and Devotion', *Speculum* 79 (Apr. 2004), pp.341-406, p. 341

Are there any reasons for depicting the donor in a certain way and how does this influence the spectator?

The meeting between these three parts has to do with the functionality of an artwork. As stated by Henk van Os in the introduction to *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500* it was not until recent years that the Medieval Art history redirected its focus from iconography to functionality of an artwork.¹⁹ Focusing mostly on the stylistic qualities or conventional meanings ascribed to an artwork, deprives us of the opportunity of full understanding and the right interpretation. The function of an artwork was very much determined by a spectator. Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* constitutes a good example (fig. 2). Before this panel was placed in the Rolin's family chapel in Notre-Dame du Châtel in Autun it was most probably kept by Rolin and used in his everyday devotional practices. The painting later changed its function from private devotional practice to a public one. I will also try to prove that the painting gained a broader meaning when placed in the space of its original destination. As we can see in Rolin's example, the spectator is the main factor that influences the functionality of an artwork. Contemporary perception of the devotional art as well as the role of a spectator had not been explored extensively enough by the art historians until the recent years.²⁰ Traditional iconography gave fixed meaning to an artwork. The medieval interpretive method *Quadriga* reveals yet new layers and meanings of viewed objects. *Quadriga* was constructed for the needs of reading the Bible. It was polysemic and consisted of four levels of interpretation: historical, allegorical, tropological and anagogical. We have to remember that *Quadriga* was not about discovering a new meaning of a given passage of the Bible but understanding it on many levels.²¹ This method of interpretation can be applied to art which brings us to a better understanding of the medieval era.

¹⁹ Os van, H., (1994), in Foreword Os van, H., (ed.). *The Art of Devotion in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, New Jersey, Princeton University Press, p.8

²⁰ Harisson Caviness, M., (2006), *Reception of Medieval Images by Medieval viewers* in Rudolph C., (ed.). *A Companion to Medieval Art: Romanesque and Gothic in Northern Europe*, Malden Mass, Blackwell Publishing p. 71

²¹ Laugerud, H., (2016), 'And how could I find Thee at all, if I do not remember Thee?' *Visions, images and memory in late medieval devotion* in Laugerud, H., Rayan, S., Skinnebach, L., K., (eds.). *The Materiality of Devotion in Late Medieval Northern Europe*, Dublin, Four Court Press pp. 60-61

Artwork

The spectator is not the only active participant. In the meeting between a beholder and an image, both parties are active and the image has an agency of its own.

As David Carrier wrote “The spectator stands before a work, the spectator sees the work, and the work looks back; the spectator is as if absorbed in the work; the work elides the spectator presence.”²² The reciprocal nature of Medieval Art requires a more thorough examination of *the practice of a picture*. Since art like any other area of medieval life revolved around the Catholic religion and the Church, it is necessary to look both into the medieval theology and philosophy to understand all the interactions between the supplicant, spectator and God. It is worth underlining that there are not many texts describing directly the beholder’s point of view and the reception of an artwork.²³ In the Middle Ages art was not commercial. Moreover, the Medieval theology and philosophy did not treat aesthetics directly. Therefore, it is necessary to build my thesis with a support of texts which related to Medieval mystics’ visions and a concept of *memoria*.

Saint Augustin in *The Literal Meaning of Genesis* writes about vision, yet his treatise does not concern the perception of art.²⁴ His text, however, helps to elucidate how the contemporary spectator looked at devotional art and how it was possible for an individual believer to be able to see more than its materiality. Overcoming the materiality of an artwork relates to visions, which were very common amongst mystics and saints in the Middle Ages.

These visions are crucial here considering that in many texts describing them we find a connection between a physical image and a vision itself. Gertrude of Helfta, a German mystic from the second half of 13th century describes the role of images in her visionary experiences. In her own writings she describes how her visions occurred. First, she saw a crucifix in the church, then after receiving the sacrament of Eucharist she got back to her chambers. There, while

²² Carrier, D., (Autumn, 1986), ‘Art and its Spectators’, *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, Vol. 45, No. 1, pp. 5-17, p. 6

²³ Hoven, van Genderen, B. van den, (2005), *Remembrance and Memoria: Descriptions of Four Churches compared* in Bueren, Van, T., (ed.). *Care for the Here and the Hereafter: Memoria, Art and Ritual in the Middle Ages*, Turnhout, Brepols Publishers, pp.267-290

²⁴ The works of Saint Augustine: a translation for the 21st century, (2002): Pt. 1 Vol. 13: *Books on Genesis: a refutation of the Manichees; Unfinished literal commentary on Genesis; The literal meaning of Genesis*, bk XII, pp.465-506, Hyde Park, N.Y, New City Press

reading from the illuminated book, she saw a ray of light shining from the crucifix depicted on one of the illuminations.²⁵ The connection between the image and the vision is noticeable, but the other thing is the mechanics of the process. She sees and remembers the crucifix in the church to later recall it and recognize it in her vision. Memoria is an active element which aids the recognition of the vision through the image.

As Saint Augustin wrote “If I find thee without memory, then I shall have no memory of thee; and how could I find thee at all, if I do not remember thee?”.²⁶ Although Saint Augustin talks here about God, the concept of *memoria* concerns also the recognition of donors and their donations. The identification of supplicants gave them a chance to spend less time in Purgatory as they were prayed for and the act of donation itself equaled to a good deed.

All the primary sources do not directly discuss the dynamics occurring between the viewer or the object of art, the place and space of the donor in the late Medieval Art, and as the reception of art. However, the information that they provide when gathered open the possibility to speculate and formulate answers to my thesis questions.

As mentioned before, only a small number of accounts concerning commissioning of art eluded destruction. Building up theories or stating something is a meticulous process. However, the accounts which survived are available in different publications, among others by Ridderbos, B., van Buren, A., van Veen H., (2005), in *Early Netherlandish paintings: Rediscovery, Reception and Research*. Here we can find a few examples of contracts made between a guild and a patron and see the dynamics occurring in the medieval patronage world.²⁷ Bret Rothstein in his article (2000) *On Devotion as Social Ornament Jan van Eyck's Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* quotes a text of a French contemporary scholar Jean Gerson, which helps to determine what kind of person Rolin was.²⁸ Using these documents as a secondary source will contribute to exploring and further understanding of the medieval phenomenon of commissioning.

²⁵ Gertrude of Helfta, *The Herald of Divine Love*, (1993), ed. and trans. Winkworth M., New York, bk II, ch. 5, p. 102

²⁶ St Augustine, *Confessions*, (2002), New York, bk 10, ch XII, p.187

²⁷ Martens, M., P., J., (2005), pp. 345-377

²⁸ Rothstein, B., (2000), pp. 96-132

Setting

Since I am investigating place and space of a donator, it is crucial to consider some theories concerning placement of donors in an attempt to set an art object in its original surroundings.

Older theories presented and accepted for many decades, for example Erwin Panofsky's *law theory*, a theory concerning placement of the supplicant in relation to holy figure or the members of a donator's family, are finding opponents in younger generations of art historians such as for instance Lorne Campbell or Hugo van der Velden.²⁹

The composition of an artwork might be dependent on its original placement. With the use of examples, I will try to put back the panels on the original site and elaborate on the meaning and importance of the placement of an art work.

Material

The art of this period was incredibly rich; therefore, it is rather difficult to concentrate only on one type of media. Various types of religious art depicting donors were intended for both public and private devotion. Thus, not only altarpieces but also diptychs and votive gifts will be studied here. In addition, I will analyze the miniatures from diverse types of manuscripts as they constitute an enormous source of information about art and life in the late Middle Ages. It is worth emphasizing that miniatures were very often prototypes for the depictions of devotional scenes in the panel paintings.³⁰ They tend to be omitted, as in the mentioned above Panofsky's *laws theory*.³¹ Overlooking the art of manuscripts might limit our interpretation and understanding of Medieval Art.

The examples presented for the need of this paper vary from well known artworks such as *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* by Jan van Eyck to small illuminations in less known manuscripts such as the *Legiloque*.³² Comparing the widely discussed panels with the newest research on less known illuminations results in a broader understanding of patronage and how the donors were perceived. As already stated, very often art commissioning is a case study.

²⁹ Campbell, L., (2007), *Diptychs with Portraits in Hand*, J., O., Sponk, R., (ed.). *Essays in context: unfolding the Netherlandish diptych*, New Heaven, Yale University Press, pp. 32-45

³⁰ Harbison, C., (1985) 'Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish paintings', Netherlands, *Quarterly for the History of Art*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp.87-118, p. 91

³¹ Panofsky, E., (1966), *Early Netherlandish painting*, London, Oxford University Press p. 479

³² *Legiloque* Compendium, (Ms. fr. 1136), Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Paris, France, (ca. 1330)

Therefore, comparison of different artworks is important. It helps us to see the connection between various media and the importance of small anonymous masters.

For a broader examination of the donator's place and space, I am using examples that have not survived until our times such as church Notre-Dame du Châtel in Autun. This particular church is connected with Nicolas Rolin's donations. An attempt at reconstructing the space of this building and placing *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* on a site, putting the picture in its original environment, gives it yet another dimension. Art had a function in the Middle Ages and this functionality is more comprehensible if we see where the artwork was placed. Seeing a painting in the place of its destiny, in the right context makes more sense than seeing it detached from the space it is occupying in the museum. Other no longer existing examples I am using in this thesis are votive wax or terracotta effigies. This particular form, which can be compared to sculpture, makes the concept of *presence of an absence* more comprehensible. Very often those figures were made lifelike, wearing clothes of the votive giver. The realistic depiction was connected with the concept of *memoria*.

As we can see the connection between the image vision and memory is ongoing and perpetual, just like the relation between the viewer, the image and God

Disposition

In the first part of this thesis I am going to approach supplicants' relations and interactions based on their position within the artwork, as well as the importance of being visible and its connection with the act of devotion. I will investigate also the original placement of artworks. How they were separated from the surroundings and at the same time they were a part of it. I will use the concept of *memoria* and care for the here and the hereafter its connection to the donor's appearance. It is a three-way relation, a kind of pattern of influence where we have a supplicant, a regular churchgoer who is a spectator and God himself.

In the second part of my thesis I am going to focus on commissioners' place in the contemporary society and the significance of being seen not only as a pious but also as a noble, rich person. The way in which donators attempted to present themselves, both for the here and the hereafter apparently played a significant role in the medieval devotional art.

The third part approaches donators visibility for the sake of salvation. The main question is to see how being a part of sacred narratives influences their time spent in Purgatory. They wanted to be seen, remembered and prayed for. I will stress all the actions they took in order to be seen Furthermore, I will present the discussion related to the terminology of patronage in Medieval art studies.

Understanding of Medieval Art

Firstly, we must consider that art in the Middle Ages was perceived differently to how it is understood today. Art throughout Antiquity and Medieval Time was considered being rather technical, craft-based, than sublime or aesthetic in the modern sense of the word. It does not mean that aesthetics was something *foreign* to medieval people, but art belonged more to the theological and ethical sphere than to the aesthetic one.³³ The medieval aesthetics was the Christian aesthetics, and thus the purpose of art was more educational and moral than purely aesthetic.³⁴

Artists worked and thrived affiliated to the guilds, where they were equal to stone makers, goldsmiths and other craftsmen. *Ars* in medieval times had a double meaning. The word could be translated as a practical skill and ability, or as a science, discipline, same as found in *Artes Liberales*-Liberal Arts, the medieval educational system.³⁵ *Artes Liberales* consisted of *Trivium* and *Quadrivium*. The seven liberal arts did not include visual art, as it was part of *Arte mechanicae* together with, among others, music, didactics or goldsmithing. Liberal arts were theoretical, while the mechanical ones were more *practical* in the way demanding skills, not only knowledge. Furthermore, most of art was created with devotional purpose and as such was supposed to bring people closer to God. Accordingly, Medieval art was functional, and so the aesthetic sensation as such was the means not the end in itself. The iconography revolved around the liturgical calendar and was formed by theology, Catholic dogmas, as well as mystical visions or medieval poetry.³⁶ The religious context gave the Medieval Art its meaning.³⁷ The functionality of the artworks was strongly connected and dependent on the receiver. The image had its agency, it was not just referential. The artwork created a dialogue between itself and the spectator. What is more, in a way it was supposed to be perceived by all the senses.

³³ Tatarkiewicz, W., (1970), *History of Esthetics Medieval Esthetics*, The Hague, Mouton Publishers, p. 292

³⁴ Tatarkiewicz, W., (1970,) p. 291

³⁵ Laugerud, H., (2001) 'Fortidens blikk, Noen refleksjoner omkring bilder, tolkning og forståelse', *Transfiguration, Nordisk tidsskrift for kunst og kristendom*, 3(1), Museum Tusulanums Forlag, Københavns Universitet, 7-22, p.13

³⁶ Vicelja, M., (2017), *Religious Iconography* in Hourihane, C., (ed.). *The Routledge Companion to Medieval Iconography*, London, Routledge, p. 225

³⁷Laugerud, H., (2001), p.13

According to medieval philosophy knowledge was acquired by all the senses, consequently art was supposed to be sensed by: sight, touch, smell, hearing and taste.³⁸ At the same time what a medieval individual sensed was shaped by culture and the environment.³⁹ To phrase it another way experiencing the world was experiencing it through the Catholic faith. Here we encounter another obstacle in the reception of Medieval Art. In our times we are able to see only the *surface*, while in the Middle Ages, people were capable of seeing beyond that *surface*, *deep* into the artwork.⁴⁰

Now the majority of artworks from the Middle Ages is placed in museums and galleries all over the world. The way of exhibiting these works of art allows us to look at the work in all its splendour. For example, altarpieces are approachable from every side, giving us the opportunity to examine every single picture at once while the Medieval spectators were allowed to see some of the images only on festive days, perhaps just a few times a year. At the same time the place and the way of displaying Medieval Art nowadays puts it out of its original context, which in almost all the cases was a church. Consequently, the viewers are not able to experience a medieval piece in the way it is supposed to be. We are not able to touch it, for example. Medieval Art loses its functionality; it does not spread faith anymore as it becomes merely an aesthetic experience. The fact that is worth emphasizing here is that even though aesthetics was perceived differently, the concept of beauty was not foreign to medieval people, but, like every sphere of life in the Middle Ages, it was connected to God and Christian religion. Beauty was associated with the good and consequently the good was allied with God.⁴¹

In this thesis I intend to focus mainly on paintings, illuminations and goldsmith works and for the sake of a simplification I am going to use terms like art or artwork to generally describe these commodities. This is a modern term which was not used in the Middle Ages as one describing those objects.

³⁸Bagnoli, M., (ed.). (2016), *A Feast for the Senses, Art and Experience in Medieval Europe*, Baltimore, Md, The Walters Art Museum, p.13

³⁹ Lohfert Jorgensen, H.H., (2015) *Into the Saturated Sensorium, Introducing the Principles of Perception and Mediation in the Middle Ages* in Lohfert Jorgensen, H.H., Laugerud, H., Skinnebach, L.K., (eds.). *The Saturated Sensorium: Principles of perception and meditation in the Middle Ages*, Arhus, Arhus University Press, p.27

⁴⁰ Laugerud, H., (2010), 'Visualitet, tekst og materialitet, Modernismens middelalderen og middelalderens modernitet', *Konsthistorisk tidsskrift*, 79:3, 146-159, p.154

⁴¹ Tatarkiewicz, W., (1970), pp. 285-292

Understanding of patronage

Territories of today's Belgium and Netherlands were one of the biggest art producing centers in the late Middle Ages. The rich Burgundian dukes started a new trend, where they became the patrons of various art. They "[...] gave new impetus to existing traditions and stimulated artists". Their patronage was soon followed by the members of the other classes who started mimicking dukes' behaviour. Nobility, clergy and finally wealthy citizens became part of the art commissioning world. Thus, the most important factor that influenced the development of art in both quality and quantity in this era was the rich bourgeoisie.

Research on patronage in the Medieval Art requires also understanding of such terms as a commissioner, donator and patron and slight differences that occur between them. The role they played in a creating process is often confused with the user or artist's involvement. Furthermore, the traditional art historical approach to patronage circulates around two terms: sponsor-commissioner and author-artist. This focus creates a limitation to two persons who participated in the creative process. Yet, there are many examples which prove this to be a simplification.

An example can be the *Vaudetar Bible* from 1372 which will be discussed more thoroughly later.⁴² It is known that four people contributed to the final product. They either contributed financially, executed the ideas or were the authors of the esthetics. Thus far, only one was portrayed in the book, the one who ordered it.⁴³ This example shows us that commissioning in the Middle Ages was a more complex phenomenon than it seems and that is why it needs a deeper investigation.

Art history has a tendency to simplify the relationship between a patron and an artist. These two had different roles in the influencing on what the final product would look like.

The *who is who* in Medieval Art commissioning seems more complex and multidimensional. If we take a closer look, we might notice some subtle distinctions between terms such as patrons, donors, and commissioners, which tend to be simplified and used correspondently. While some

⁴² *Vaudetar Bible*, 1372, (Ms. 10B 23) Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, the Hague, Netherlands, (1372)

⁴³ Perkinson, S., (2013), *Portraits & Their Patrons: Reconsidering Agency in Late Medieval Art* in Hourihane, C., (ed.). *Patronage, Power and Agency in Medieval Art*, Princeton, Index of Christian Art, p. 273

art historians lean towards separation, others approach this subject more cautiously, as we not always know which role a certain person played in the artwork contracting process.⁴⁴

Medieval Art had different ways of depicting patrons simply because the portraits were different in the Middle Ages. The medieval depiction of a donor might have differed from what we now understand as a likeness. Portrayed people did not necessarily have to be recognized thanks to their particular physical features. A medieval portrait was not a mirror reflection of the depicted person, it was rather an idealization. This means, that in my research I will have to focus on the various ways of understanding and perceiving physiognomic likeness, and how portraits were understood. In many cases it can relate to an idea of a patron, where the depicted figure is not anyone in particular, just a symbol of a donor, or where we have more people who participated in the creative process, yet only one of them is depicted. Here, we have a case of contribution by partial patrons. Their identity could be recognized for example by added inscriptions or coats of arms.⁴⁵

Contrary to medieval idealization and interpretation of likeness we find realism. Realism is one of the characteristics of art of that time, north of the Alps. Medieval artists tried to recreate the world and at the same time, they tended to idealize it by showing the spiritual world through the corporeal. Art had many layers and was struggling between radical idealism and radical realism.⁴⁶ Northern realism was something new and different. It is very often put in the opposition to the style represented in Italy, for example. The purpose of the realistic depiction like in van Eyck's *The Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele* can be understood as a tactic maneuver. His face is supposed to be recognized and supposed to remind people to say a prayer for him. He is supposed to be remembered long after he died and next generation prayers should shorten his time in the purgatory. This is connected directly to a concept of *memoria*, which will be explained broadly in the third part of this thesis. At the same time realism in northern art is a complex phenomenon, which is more than reflecting reality, I will try to explain it in the third part of this thesis.

⁴⁴ Hourihane, C., (2013), p. xix

⁴⁵ Perkinson, S., (2013), pp.257-266

⁴⁶ Tatarkiewicz, W., (1970), p. 260

Understanding of Devotion

Devotion and devotional art were a significant component of medieval piety. Piety was articulated in devotional practices and it is essential for us to understand the medieval period itself, along with the late Medieval Christianity.⁴⁷

A member of the Catholic Church was supposed to live in a pious, devotional manner hence getting closer to God, “[...] *devotio* was literary to dedicate oneself to God and turn to Him”.⁴⁸ Devotion was not a passive action, it demanded an active declaration of faith, which always meant an interaction with God. The devotional image (*Andachtsbild*) served as a tool in meeting between the individual believer and God.⁴⁹ The majority of art produced in medieval times was intended for sacred spaces, and even though devotion was rather a private matter, narrative or representative art could still be devotional. Furthermore, a devotional image did not necessarily have to be a physical object; it could be a product of our imagination, a recollection of an image in our own mind.⁵⁰ It was the role of the spectator to convert any given artwork into a devotional one with a prayer or meditation.⁵¹ Anything from loud or quiet praising the Lord, asking for help to just contemplating over Jesus’ or saints’ lives was a devotional practice.

Another thing that should be mentioned in this context is that prayer and meditation were not the only devotional acts - context and intentions were equally important.

The Moreel Triptych by Hans Memling constitutes a good example (fig. 3). In the second half of 15th century, Willem Moreel ordered a triptych depicting him, his wife and their eleven children accompanied by saints and patron saints of their families. Some of the portrayed children died before the panel was completed.⁵² *Moreel’s Triptych* constitutes a good example of the fact that prayer and meditation are not the only acts of devotion - the altarpiece can be considered a devotional event itself.⁵³ Willem Moreel’s act of donation of this precious object has even more

⁴⁷ Laugerud, H., Skinnebach, L., K., (2007), Introduction in Laugerud, H., Skinnebach, L., K., (eds), *Instruments of Devotion, The Practices and Objects of Religious Piety from the Late Middle Ages to the 20th Century*, Aarhus, Aarhus University Press, p. 14

⁴⁸ Skinnebach, L., K., (2003), *Practices of Perception- Devotion and Senses in Late Medieval Northern Europe*, (Doctoral dissertation), Bergen University, Bergen, p. 23

⁴⁹ Laugerud, H., Skinnebach, L., K., (2007), p. 14

⁵⁰ Skinnebach, L., K., (2003), p.137

⁵¹ Os, van, H., (1994), p. 1

⁵² Martens, M., P., J., (2005), p. 358

⁵³ Skinnebach, L., K., (2003), p. 23

devotional layers. The painting depicts his family members, who are portrayed in the act of devotion, as they are kneeling and praying with hands clasped together. Hans Memling included in his triptych both the living and the dead children of the Moreels', their presence reminded an individual believer to pray for them, which is another devotional act, in this case performed by individual believers and priests performing masses. Let us not forget that Moreel was eventually buried in front of the triptych, which turns this church furnishing into an epitaph. The art of devotion depicted within this painting, its connection to the Moreel's donation as well as the reception by the believers creates a kind of continuous devotion.

The artworks I intend to discuss in this thesis have mainly one commemorative purpose: securing the afterlife for a donor or a person in whose name the artwork was commissioned. Despite self-promotion here on earth, Medieval Art had a more important purpose. The concept of *memoria* was a way to *overcome temporality*.⁵⁴ Commemoration of the dead became a very important aspect of medieval life and concerned members of any class.⁵⁵

The Middle Ages were dominated by religion, piety and devotion, which occupied every day of life of all social classes - from nobility to peasants. The Bible was the main book of that period, and everything written in it was taken literally. We also know that time in the Middle Ages was understood in a completely different way than it is today. Instead of planning the future here on earth, medieval men and women thought that the judgment day is the only future available, and it is coming soon in the nearest future. Since the Day of Doom was not coming, people while waiting for it needed to understand what happened to the souls of the dead. Thus, the concept of Purgatory emerged.

Following the church teachings, the souls of the sinners went to Hell, Saints went straight to Heaven and common, good people were awaiting the Judgment Day in the Purgatory. They could shorten their time there by acts of good, donations, prayers, as well as being prayed for, hence the concept of indulgences. It is worth mentioning here that salvation was therefore a

⁵⁴ Laugerud, H. (2010), p.8

⁵⁵ Bueren, van T., (2005), *Care for the Here and the Hereafter: a Multitude of Possibilities* in Bueren, van T., (ed.). *Care for the Here and the Hereafter: Memoria, Art and Ritual in the Middle Ages*, Turnhout, Brepols Publishers p.13

collective work, where the living people prayed for the dead and the *dead* could ask the saints for help.⁵⁶ Any act of piety worked in favor of the praying person as well as the prayed for one.

Indulgences were and still are a part of the Catholic faith. Nowadays they are rather omitted. However, during the Middle Ages they were an important element of the common Christian life.⁵⁷ According to the teachings of the Catholic Church sinners could receive a pardon in a sacramental confession of sins. To make the confession valid the sinner not only had to honestly repent for their sins, then promise improvement, but the penitent still had to fulfill the penance. Yet, there was another way to “[...] cancel part of all the debt of sin [...]”.⁵⁸ Remission of the served penance could be achieved by a prayer, performance of good deeds or a pilgrimage. While any priest could give pardon and penance after the sacrament of confession, only bishops had right to award the indulgence.⁵⁹ Throughout the Middle Ages indulgences became a commodity and trading of indulgence became a problem for the Catholic Church. The commercialization of indulgences was used by such critics of the Church as Luther and the Protestants.

Death was not the absolute end. The deceased kept on existing in the memory of the ones who were still living.⁶⁰ By these type of acts medieval people believed that they were ensuring their stay in the Purgatory to be briefer. Presence within the artwork in any form was reminding the members of the congregation of a prayer, long after a donor’s death. Care for here and hereafter was strongly connected to and a very important part of the Medieval people’s lives. One can say that the functional aspect of Medieval Art, was expressed by *memoria*.

⁵⁶ Bueren, van T., (2005), p.15

⁵⁷ Swanson, R., N., (ed.). (2006), *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, Leiden, Boston, Brill, p.1

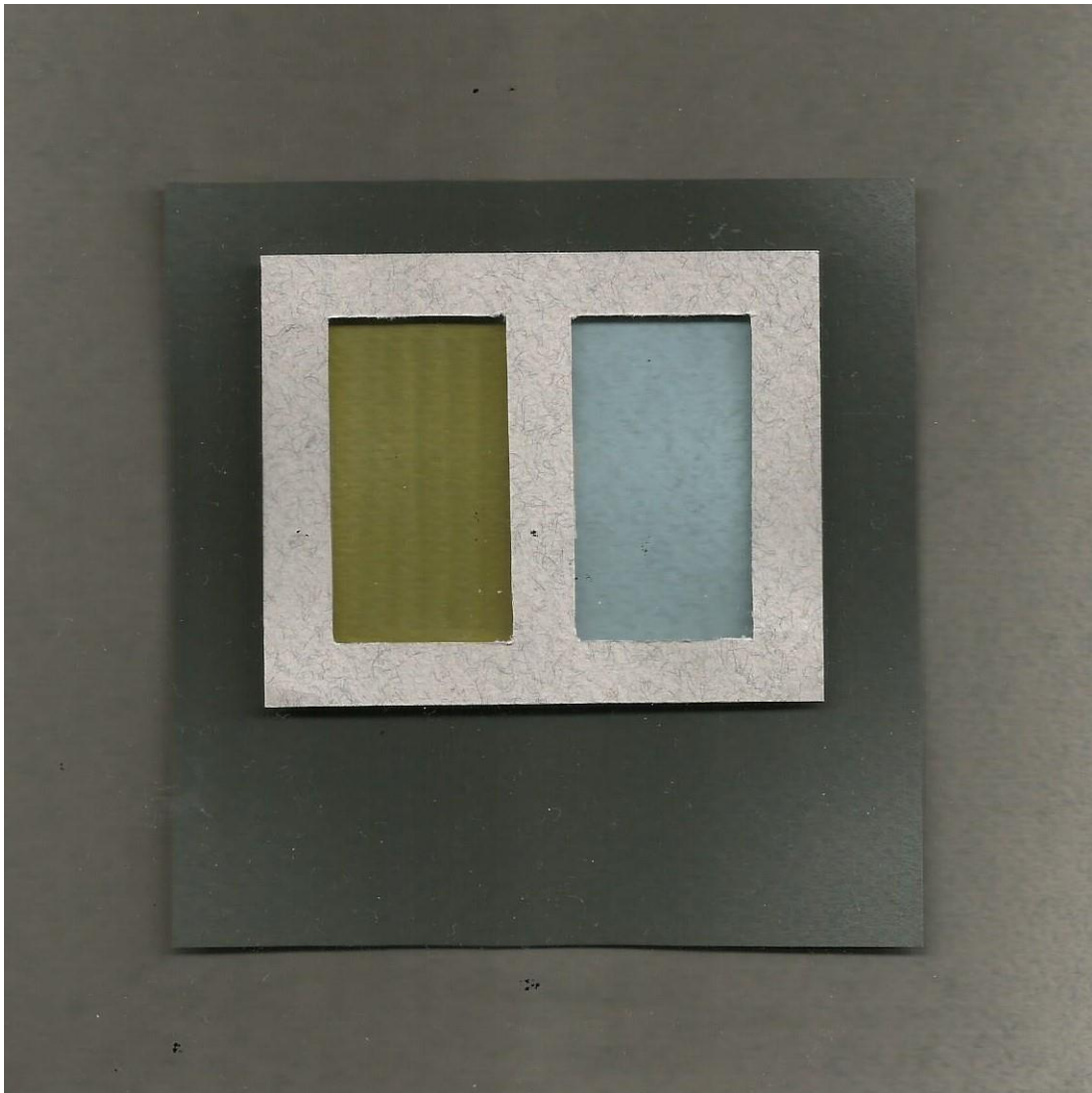
⁵⁸ Shaffern, R., W., (2006), *The Medieval Theory of Indulgences* in Swanson, R., N., (ed.). *Promissory Notes on the Treasury of Merits: Indulgences in Late Medieval Europe*, Leiden, Boston, Brill, p.11

⁵⁹ Shaffern, R., D., (2006), p.11

⁶⁰Lohfert Jørgensen, H., H., Laugerud, H., (2018), *I: 10 Medieval Architecture* in Glauser, J., Hermann, P., Mitchell, A., S., (eds.). *Handbook of pre-modern Nordic Memory Studies: Interdisciplinary Approaches*, Volume 1 De Gruyter, Berlin p. 471

Part I

Donator's Space and Place within the Artwork



Chapter 1

Space

To begin the discussion about the donators' place within the artwork, we must first consider the space that the supplicant is occupying within the artwork and the space occupied by the artwork itself. It will be studied broader later in the chapter but let us start with explaining what kind of space is going to be discussed here.

Firstly, it is not just one space, it is a *multilayered experience* where one room is a part of another- a space within a space. The church building serves as a room for a number of chapels, they are small spaces where different objects are held. The objects like panels for example are yet another space, limited by frames - a realm filled with holy and secular personages. These spaces can be disjoint as well as exist together and be seen as one complex place. If everything is in the right place, that is on the original site of the devotional objects, all those pieces create their own reality, a reality which helps the individual believer meditate, understand and explore his or her faith. But not all of the devotional art is on their due site nowadays. Furthermore, the due site could be difficult to establish as most of the accounts documenting the original placement of artworks have been lost or destroyed. Relevant documentation would simplify the determination of the purpose of an artwork. Meanwhile, art historians tend to speculate using circumstantial evidence to point to the original setting of artworks.

The majority of the commissioned Medieval Art was intended for private devotion. The *private*, however, in the medieval-religious context was not necessarily an antonym of the *public*.⁶¹ The miniature depicting Philip the Good at prayer from *Traite sur l'Oraison Dominicale* made in the second half of 15th century, serves as an example that such a dichotomy-private or public- depended on the context and it is not so simple and definite (fig. 4).⁶² The miniature depicts Philip the Good while he prays in his semi-private chapel. The space he is using for meditation is separated from the church building by a piece of suspended material which forms an independent room. He is holding a book of hours and he is kneeling in front of the diptych, depicting most probably him and the Virgin Mary. Philip the Good's placement would suggest that what we see

⁶¹ Williamson, B., (January 2013), 'Sensory Experience in Medieval Devotion: Sound and Vision, Invisibility and Silence', *Speculum*, Vol. 88, No. 1, pp. 1-43, pp.2-3

⁶² Jean le Tavernier, *Traite sur l'Oraison Dominicale* Ms. 9092, Brussels: Bibliotheque Royale, (1454-71457)

in this miniature is an example of a private devotion, but he is also focusing on what is taking place in front of the main altar. His individual inward prayer is set in the liturgical, essentially public context.⁶³ This example shows also that a painting which was assigned just one function of an individual service, could be used as an object of both private and public devotion. Hence users can pray in front of it during liturgical services or outside of them.

What kind of meaning has this separated, designated space in which Philip the Good is praying? Since Philip is expressing his piety in a kind of semi-primitive chapel, placed in the church building, his separation has to have a certain meaning and a purpose. To explain the significance of the space he is occupying I will use another example, connected with Philip the Good, namely Chancellor of his court Nicolas Rolin. The painting *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*, now in Louvre Museum in Paris, is one of the most famous and widely discussed artworks of Jan van Eyck, but the reason why it constitutes a good example does not lay in its prominence. It is a very particular painting containing many divisions and simultaneously serving as one compact devotional object.

The painting was executed in 1434 and depicts Nicolas Rolin- the commissioner in the company of Virgin Mary and Christ Child. The panel was most probably in private possession of Rolin and after his death it was placed in the Saint Sebastian chapel in Notre-Dame du Châtel in Autun as one of many donations made by Nicolas Rolin for that particular church.⁶⁴

This chapel in Notre-Dame du Châtel, which belonged to Rolin's family, is a point of departure, or rather the place where my discussion about space and place of donators in the late Medieval Art starts. This chapel was a small room, filled with the visual presence of Rolins, starting with tiles decorated with the family coat of arms and finishing with van Eyck's panel.

Jan van Eyck portrayed Nicolas Rolin, a mortal person, in close proximity to the Holy Family. He is depicted as being blessed by Christ Child himself. Moreover, there is no patron saint present. The supplicant is painted in the same scale as the Virgin herself. The scene takes place in a small loggia, open on one side towards a beautiful landscape. Since the church *titulus* is Notre-Dame du Châtel, it may be considered that Virgin Mary could play a role of Rolin's patron

⁶³ Williamson, B., (2004), pp.380-383

⁶⁴ Gelfand, L., D, Gibson, W., (2002), 'Surrogate selves: the 'Rolin Madonna' and the late-medieval devotional portrait', *Simiolus* 29.2002, pp. 119-xx, p.124

saint *substitute*. I would, however, lean towards a different explanation of the absence of a patron saint. A lot of images of this kind depicting such an intimate scene, no company or witnesses needed, are found in 14th century prayer books.⁶⁵ In the illuminations the owners of such books were usually placed close to the object of their prayers. The devotional portraits were commonly accompanied by a text of a specific prayer. For example, *The Matins of the Hours of the Virgin*, known as *The Little Office (Officium Parvum)* starts with: “*Domine labia mea aperies* (Oh Lord open my lips) and is always illustrated with a supplicant and the object of his or her prayers. He or she would usually be depicted kneeling on prie-dieu with a book opened and facing a holy personage.⁶⁶ A miniature from *The Hours of Margaret of Cleves* constitutes a good example (fig. 5). The left side of the book is occupied by a scene of meditation and the right side contains the text of a prayer.⁶⁷ Moreover, the devotional diptychs which developed in the beginning of 15th had their origin in illuminated books and their iconography resembles *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*. The diptychs two parts usually depicted a donor on one of the wings and a divinity on the other. It was usually a simple intimate scene without mediation of saint patrons.⁶⁸ Despite the fact that *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* is not a diptych and it is quite a big painting, its form does not exclude the possibility that it was used by Rolin in his private devotional practices. Additionally, the Chancellor is portrayed with the book opened on the page with words: *Domine labia mea aperies*. As already stated, private devotion does not exclude the public one. During his life, Rolin might have kept the panel at home and used it for private devotion purposes. It is almost certain that the painting was intended for the above mentioned chapel and that is where it was placed, most possibly after Rolin’s death.⁶⁹

⁶⁵ Kumler, A., (2013), *A Patron-Function* in Hourihane, C., (ed.). *Patronage, Power and Agency in Medieval Art*, Princeton, Index of Christian Art, p. 314

⁶⁶ Gelfand, L., D, Gibson, W., (2002) pp. 127-129

⁶⁷ Master of Margaret of Cleves, *Hours of Margaret of Cleves*, Ms.l.a. 148, Museu Caluouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon, Portugal, (1375-1412)

⁶⁸ Gelfand, L., D., (2007), *The Devotional Portrait Diptych and the Manuscript Tradition* in Hand, J., O., Sponk, R., (eds.) *Essays in Context, Unfolding Netherlandish Diptych*, New Heaven, Yale, p. 48

⁶⁹ Rothstein, B., (2000), p.119

Church, Chapel, Painting

For the medieval people a church was not only an architectural construction, it was a world in itself, embodying heavenly Jerusalem here on earth. It was filled with iconography which illustrated events that took place in the worldly Jerusalem. The building served not only as a frame for furnishing but also liturgy, singing or any other sermons.⁷⁰ This applied also to every part of a church, for example, a single chapel.⁷¹ Entering any church, a worshiper was entering a sacred space. Within the church one could find paintings, altarpieces or epitaphs which were also sacred spaces in themselves. The world inside of the world, a multilayered world or as stated by Donna L. Sadler *multilayered experience*.⁷² In other words, the church building functions like a vessel, its structure consists of smaller spaces like chapels. The whole church, as well as the chapels is filled with art. Art is an object, but at the same time it can be referred to as a *place*. It is a structure that reminds me of a *Russian doll*: it is a toy consisting of a number of wooden dolls, each decreasing in size, placed one inside the other. Just like a *Russian doll*, containing a number of dolls inside and revealing them one after the other, a church gives us a possibility to see all its parts separately and all at once. They can exist apart but at the same time they are a part of a *bigger phenomenon*. A church containing a number of chapels, serves as a *frame* for them and they serve as a frame for artworks. Art is yet another *frame* depicting a world inside its borders. This creates a separation, yet it serves as one multilayered world, where spaces are very often divided physically by a wall or a frame. In spite of that, those *lines* are not an obstacle, they can be crossed, they are porous. Furthermore, the way the church is designed and the way it is furnished allows an individual believer to see *the whole picture*, to catch a few elements with just one look. Later in this chapter, I will continue explaining this phenomenon using Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* example.

Borders: Frames, Cracks, Rivers and Walls

Frames played an important role in devotional paintings of the 15th century. They were popular in the whole Europe, easily found in numerous manuscripts. Yet, the art of framing was brought to perfection in the Lower Countries. Jan van Eyck decorated his frames with signature, date or

⁷⁰ Sadler, D., L., (2018), *Touching the Passion: Seeing Late medieval Altarpieces Through the Eyes of Faith*, Leiden, Brill, p.170

⁷¹ Vicelja, M., (2017), p. 225

⁷² Sadler, D., L., (2018), p.170

sometimes added a motto to them. Their function was simply recognized as a sort of a border separating sacred religious scenes depicted on the panels from our earthly lives. What was taking place within the artwork was supposed to stay inside the frames and not get contaminated by whatever there was outside. The frame is rather a part of the depicted world than the real world outside of it.⁷³ To phrase it in another way, the main purpose of the frames is demarcation, but since they are a part of the painting we tend not to see them, not to notice them while looking at the panel.⁷⁴ Even though they constitute a physical border between the spectator and the picture itself, we tend to omit it whether consciously or subconsciously. Carved retables constitute a good example of how the frame being a part of what is depicted inside of it can be, at the same time, a separate and a separating element. The frame is a part of an art work, as it is very often made of the same material and in the same style as the retable itself. Here, the border might be a more flexible as the transition from what is the frame and what is within the frame is more fluid. The altarpiece from the church of Saint Pierre-es-Liens in Les Riceys from the first part of 16th century is a carved and gilded retable divided into moldings in which we find scenes depicting the Passion of Christ (fig. 6). I would like to use this example to show that the division between the scenes serves as a frame, simultaneously being a part of those scenes. The frame in case of this altarpiece can be a part of the ceiling or a wall of the carved scenes. Furthermore, the figures in the Crucifixion section seem to extend beyond the framing (fig. 7). It creates a situation in which a regular churchgoer is so close to all the events shown within the altarpiece that he or she becomes almost a participant of them. At the same time the frame becomes one with what is carved within it, forcing the *visual effort* and letting the spectator enter beyond the border of the frame.⁷⁵ This particular carved retable used as an example does not include a depiction of a donor. However, it demonstrates the way in which a frame is a border that can be crossed, both by what is happening within the artwork and by the gaze of the spectator. This kind of a three-dimensional effect was easy to achieve when it comes to sculpture or carved altarpieces, but painters north of the Alps were masters in imitating reality in such a way that an illusion of a painted world entering the real world was also possible in panel painting.

⁷³ Sadler D., L., (2018), p.161

⁷⁴ Duro, P., (1996), *The Rhetoric of the Frame, Essays on the Boundaries of the Artwork*, Cambridge, University Press, p. 1

⁷⁵ Sadler, D., L., (2018), p.174

Let us look at a painting - a devotional diptych by Hans Memling *Virgin and Child and Maarten van Nieuwenhove* from 1487 (fig. 8). On the right panel the artist portrayed the donor and on the left we see Virgin Mary with Christ Child. Even though it is a diptych and the figures are separated by the frame we know that they are sharing the space, they are sited in the same room. Their reflection in the mirror placed behind the Virgin's back is visible to the spectators (fig.9). The form of a diptych naturally separates these two by a frame. At the same time, they are sharing an intimate space, being very close to each other, in such proximity that Maria's robe extends from her panel to the donor's side, and his prayer book is placed on it (fig. 10). What is vital in this context is that the same robe, painted on both panels extends also to the frame surface, so does the pillow on which Christ Child is sitting. This creates a situation where a frame again plays a role of a separator and at the same time includes participation of a potential devotee in the whole scene. It creates a paradox where the frame separates and connects these two worlds at the same time.

Although the frame “[...] never loses its identification with the fictive world that it encloses” it belongs partially to the human world, it serves as a transition, a kind of a bridge connecting these two worlds.⁷⁶ Individual believers, by the power of prayer could easily project themselves into the place of a painted donor. Not only the *Holy* would reach out of the painting but also the person praying in front of it could cross the border of a frame, imagining that he or she is the participant of a given scene.

The division and simultaneous connection of these two realms was achieved not only by physical or carved frames. Among many late medieval works of art we come across various attempts to separate the divine and the earthly worlds with painted frames, arches and niches keeping the holiness locked inside the painting.⁷⁷ This type of separation occurs in Rogier van der Wyden's *Miraflores Altarpiece* executed in the middle of 15th century (fig. 11). Each of three panels depicting scenes from Jesus' life is framed and each has a very decorative architectural frame painted within it. The scene takes place inside of a building. Van der Wayden painted it in a way which makes it look like a cross-section through the building and the cut walls play a role of an

⁷⁶ Sadler, D., L., (2018), p.171

⁷⁷ Harbison, C., (1985), p. 108

additional frame. It gives these panels a certain depth, which invites the viewer to look inside. At the same time, it creates a double separation from the outside world.

The division did not limit itself only to the outside frames of the panels. Artists signified the division between the supplicant and the holy figure by painting, not only something as visible and obvious as a wall but also a river or a fissure in the ground. Donors could be separated from the objects of their prayers and their visions yet in another way- by simply being painted on separate panels. The famous altarpiece by Robert Campin and his workshop from 1427-32 *Merode Altarpiece* depicts annunciation scene on the central panel. Saint Joseph is painted on the right wing and kneeling donors on the left one (fig 12). This particular painting is very interesting: not only are the donors portrayed together on one separate wing, but they are also in a way, double isolated from the central panel by the wall of the building and by the frame of the painting. While the annunciation scene takes place inside a contemporary merchant house, the donors are kneeling outside the room. They are depicted on the same level as the figures on the central panel, yet three steps which are leading to the annunciation room give the impression that the donors are somehow on the lower level. They are peeping through the open door, isolated from Virgin Mary and Archangel Gabriel. They are the witnesses of the scene, yet they are not the direct participants of it. It creates yet another paradox of being included while excluded (fig 13).

The division of the two realms repeats in the portraits of donors painted on the outside wings. This *composition* or rather placement of the supplicants creates a strange situation in which when the altarpieces are closed the donors are facing each other in a silent meditation and seem to pray to the crack created between them by the closed wings.⁷⁸ The commissioners of *The Last Judgment* triptych painted by Hans Memling between 1471-73 are depicted in a similar way (fig. 14). Angelo Tani and his wife Caterina Tangali are facing each other, kneeling with their hands clasped together in a prayer. It looks as if the couple were praying to the crack created by the closed wings (fig. 15). The frames are separating them from each other, however, the tiny gap between them, has yet another function. It serves as a bridge connecting the earthly realm with a visionary deity of the inside of the triptych. While closed, the painting depicts silent, calm meditation of the supplicants; they are focused, accompanied by their patron saints. The

⁷⁸ Harbison, C., (1985), p. 106

atmosphere changes drastically when the triptych is open. The three inside panels are very bustling and dynamic. Even though the left side depicting heaven gives hope, the cruelty of the right side had to have a bigger impact on the spectators and certainly terrified them. Donors, on the outside layer are meditating, and their vision which they received during their prayer is depicted inside of the panel. The inside layer is not from this world, while the outside wings depict human beings. Again, the couple are outside the heavenly border, but they are the link to the holy vision painted inside.⁷⁹ The border is emphasized by the physical frames, the crack seems to separate the holy and human realm even more, yet it serves as a connecting agent. It connects the donors with their vision and allows us, the spectators, to enter the holy vision of the commissioners' and be a part of it. Again, all those worlds penetrate each other constantly while being independent of each other.

Separation and Unification: Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin

In *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* by van Eyck the supplicant is captured while being interrupted in the moment of silent meditation from the reading of his book of prayers, to look and see the Virgin Mary herself. His vision is *enclosed* within the panel and separated from the chapel room where the considered artwork hung. This intimate yet vividly painted scene takes place in a small loggia with a view over the palace garden and an unidentified city. The room, where these figures are seated serves as a kind of separation from what is going on outside the loggia. Even though the supplicant and the *object* of his prayers are set in a small space, the painter manages to separate the holy from the earthly within the panel.

First of all, the figures are set on the opposite sides of the panel. Rolin's separation from the supreme being might not be so obvious and visible at the first sight, but the river dividing the landscape, seen through the open loggia plays the role of a border between what is profane and what is sacred. What is very interesting in this context is the actual bridge connecting the banks of the river: it is yet another example of simultaneous division and unification, a proof that these lines can be crossed and are not definite (fig. 16).

The landscape on Nicolas Rolin's side is not accidental as the beautiful vineyards could clearly refer to his earthly estate. One can also spot a church, which most probably accentuates all the

⁷⁹ Harbison, C., (1985), p. 107

donations made by him during his life. This side of the panel might underline his allegiance to an earthly realm. The Virgin side of the panel is a little bit busier, we see a city and couple of church towers protruding from the rooflines. This ecclesial landscape might be connected to the Mother of Christ herself.

In a different painting *Madonna in a Church* c. 1426-8, also executed by Jan van Eyck Virgin Mary is represented as a Church (*Ecclesia*), (fig.17). Likewise, in Christian tradition she is not only a mother of Christ but the Queen of the Church and Heaven.⁸⁰ According to the Church Fathers' interpretation of the Old Testament's Song of Songs, Christ is the Bridegroom and the Church is the Bride. Additionally, the Bride in some mystical way turns into Virgin Mary. This way van Eyck's *Madonna in a Church* is actually *Madonna as the Church*. Virgin Mary can personify Mother, Bride, Queen of Heaven and Church on earth.⁸¹

This association between Mary and the landscape behind her, seems to be weaker in comparison to the one connection on the left side of the panel.⁸² In my opinion, it is because the Virgin's side is generally not so much discussed and there are fewer elements that could be connected or interpreted than there are on Rolin's side. I would rather lean more towards the fact that Rolin had the wish to be depicted in a certain way not only to secure his hereafter but also to endorse his social status. The importance of being visible and demonstrating wealth and social position here in this earthly life will be discussed in the second part of this thesis.

All these attempts to separate donors from their vision, church goes from what is depicted on the panel lose their meaning when these two worlds can be combined throughout prayer. This creates a paradox; every separation is a unification. The border is always something that can be *crossed over*. All this practice of division always finds its way to link the two worlds, very often being a bridge between them. The created borders are not absolute, they are physical, visible but can be crossed. The divine realm, while being closed and separated from the earthly world can be penetrated, because it is open for humans and it is directly connected to them.

⁸⁰ Smith, J., C., (2004), *The Northern Renaissance*, London, Phaidon, p.64

⁸¹ Panofsky, E., (1966), p. 145

⁸² Rothstein, B., (2000), p. 98

Visions

This takes us to the understanding of vision in the Middle Ages. Medieval people believed in dreams and visions. Visions did not belong to the *imaginary world*, they were considered real.

“[...] the order between the likely and the unlikely did not lie where it does today. Confidence in the possibility of miraculous was exceptionally strong, since it responded to [...] the proper order of things. Faith did not oppose the fact, but embraced circle sufficiently wide include facts.”⁸³

People believed that through prayers one could position themselves in the heart of the events from Jesus' or the saints' lives. In this context it is worth discussing briefly the understanding of vision in the Middle Ages. This explanation will not discuss optics as it is not important in the context of devotion, meditation and inner prayer.

The theories explaining the process of seeing come from the Church Father's writings. The most significant is the work of Saint Augustin. In *The Literal Meaning of Genesis*, he divides visions into three types: corporeal - what we see with our physical eyes, spiritual- what we dream and imagine (recollection of our corporeal vision), and intellectual - where we have the ability to understand the divine knowledge.⁸⁴ Even though Augustin did not elaborate specifically on vision and its connection to art, his treatises can help us understand the perception of art and its connection to devotion. The content of religious texts was supposed to be recreated in the readers mind, to help the devotee to be a part of the events it was describing. Devotional art had the same purpose - “Through methodical meditations the Passion of Christ was to unfold dramatically in the mind's eye.”⁸⁵

The aspiration to be a part of the holy vision spread among ordinary people. What is vital in this context that as many attempts' artist made to separate the holy from the earthly, the vision was not separated from the one who was experiencing it. To phrase things in another way the donor witnessing the Nativity scene was a part of it, he or she was not a detached spectator. The vision was not drifting in the clouds somewhere far away, on the horizon.⁸⁶ As stated in this chapter

⁸³ Gurevic, A., (1988), *Medieval Popular Culture: Problems of Belief and Perception*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 55

⁸⁴ The works of Saint Augustine: a translation for the 21st century, (2002): Pt. 1 Vol. 13: *Books On Genesis: a refutation of the Manichees; Unfinished literal commentary on Genesis; The literal meaning of Genesis*, Hyde Park, N.Y, New City Pressbk XII, 6.15, p. 470

⁸⁵ Harbison, C., (1985), p. 95

⁸⁶ Harbison, C., (1985), pp. 90-100

artists made attempts to draw a line between the holy and the earthly, but it was a porous, flexible line and the figures depicted within the panels were conjoint by occupying the same space.

Visions included in the panels were accessible to a regular churchgoer by the power of prayer. In this context it is vital to look at the connection between the vision, the artwork and the memory that keeps and helps to recall the images. Visions received by people have many *common threads*. It seems as if they all contain familiar elements from Christian iconography.⁸⁷ Images were both a result of and a reason for the vision. One could have a vision looking at a painting or one's vision could be identical to the one depicted in the painting.⁸⁸

Visions are also strongly connected to liturgy and its highest point being the transubstantiation. Many of the saints were experiencing visions during the celebration of Eucharist. It is understandable since it is the moment where bread and wine are turned into the body and blood of Christ- the dead becomes alive. Moreover, the individual believer was reuniting with the Saviour and by that could experience, for example, the Lord's Passion.⁸⁹ Memory is a third element that keeps alive both visions and images. One must remember what he or she saw for the sake of being able to see it again and again and recognize what is seen.

This makes the connection between vision, image and memory perpetual. The image is a result of vision and at the same time a cause of the vision and the vision itself. One could project themselves in the picture, in the place of the depicted supplicant. Through the image medium, the church members could spiritually cross the border and set themselves beside the saints which means that, in a way, they could be in two places at the same time. However, the believers were not supposed to pray towards the figures depicted within the art work. The portrayed people, Divinity were there to help them *realize* their inside prayer, the donors were acting as a devotional aid or adjunct.

Before painted panels became widely popular in the late Middle Ages, sculpture was the main devotional medium. They did not disappear after popularization of the panel painting by being painted and incorporated in pictures. It is worth pointing out that these images of sculptures,

⁸⁷ Laugerud, H., (2016), pp. 51-52

⁸⁸ Laugerud, H., (2016), p. 54

⁸⁹ Laugerud, H., (2016), p. 55

executed in *en gressile* technique depicting saints belonged to the earthly realm. They were usually painted on the outside wings together with the donors. Hans Memling's *The Last Judgment* constitutes a good example (fig. 15). Donors of that painting are depicted in the company of sculptures of Arch-angel Gabriel and Virgin Mary with Christ Child. The sculptures were "[...] the recipients of prayers, not the result."⁹⁰ To rephrase it: the supplicants prayed towards the sculptures in the outside wings; the sculptures were not supplicants' vision. What was depicted inside the triptych was a result of a prayer and an actual vision of the supplicants. They were an aid in the devotional process, helping in a transition from the earthly world to what is depicted inside the panel, what is the divine vision.

The concept of time and space were treated differently in Middle Ages and it was tied to faith. This made the spiritual journey possible.⁹¹ This translates as follows: the saints had their visions, the supplicants wanted to be a part of those visions and they could achieve it by being included in the artwork. An individual believer also wanted to be the part of that holy event. By seeing a contemporary figure caught up in the divine vision just as a result of that person's religious contemplation made it obvious to him or her that the vision was achievable.

Jan van Eyck's *The Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele* constitutes a good example of the pattern that could be followed by a regular churchgoer. The painting depicts the donor while taking a moment in his meditation. He stops his reading to look up (just like Rolin in *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*), his vision neither *material* nor from this world, to see what is taking place in front of him using his mind's eye. In this context it is worth pointing out that he is taking off his earthly glasses *to see* something which is beyond this world (fig 18).⁹²

This brings us to the paradox of a physical object such as a painting and its ability to overcome its materiality to depict and fulfill somebody's vision. A vision is serving as a unifying factor of all the spaces discussed in this chapter. I am going to come back to the subject of vision as it is a very important aspect of the medieval beliefs and Christian religion. Let us explore the placement – both the supplicant's placement within the artwork and the artwork's placement in a

⁹⁰ Harbison, C., (1985), p.107

⁹¹ Camille, M., (1997), *Gothic Art, Glorious Visions*, London, Laurence King Publishing Limited, p. 92

⁹² Harbison, C., (1985), p.100

chapel or church – a vital factor which serves as a link between the pictorial world and the real world – the one - outside the frames.

Chapter 2

Placement

A church building, chapel, and a painting - all these spaces seem to coexist and function separately constituting at the same time one *working* unity. What about the placement of a supplicant in those spaces or a panel itself? A decision where to place the commissioner in the picture or the complete painting could not be coincidental.

Let us use an example of visions, which I discussed at the end of the previous chapter. Meditation is a common denominator of Rolin's and van der Paele's vision. Yet most of the visions were connected to the highest and most important moment of the mass in the Catholic church – the Eucharist. Provided that, placing a painting or a sculpture in the strategic place in the church, where it could be visible for everyone, would seem to be the right solution.⁹³ It could help both a deceased donor and individual believers to get closer to the Kingdom of Heaven.

The placement of the personages within the artwork and their relation to each other is not coincidental. Hierarchy was a vital element during the Middle Ages. Society was divided into three classes – clergy, nobles and third leisure class.⁹⁴ In the late Medieval Era a new class gained more importance – bourgeoisie. Hierarchy existed not only in the life of medieval people, but also in their presence in devotional art.

“At the most fundamental level, medieval image – making was governed by the need to establish hierarchy. In the “who is who” in Medieval iconography, the main protagonists were carefully distinguished from minor actors. [...] the rank and the file had to be arranged with heavenly hosts in accordance with the rules of status and propriety.”⁹⁵

There are many theories that support and describe the order of appearing within the painting or an altarpiece. The hierarchy in positioning of the donors, their coats of arms and patron saints are important in this context.

⁹³ Laugerud, H. (2016), p.55

⁹⁴ Prevenier, W., Bloockmans, W., (1986), p. 128

⁹⁵ Velden, H., van der, (2007), p. 129

Panofsky's Law and its Opponents

For many decades it was generally accepted that the supplicants were always depicted on the left-hand side of the holy figure. This theory was created by Erwin Panofsky. Panofsky used few examples of diptychs to create his own rules concerning positioning of men and women, as well as praying donors and objects of their prayers. In the heraldic world, which Panofsky used as a source to support his theory, a person's right side is left, and so at the same time the left becomes the right. Since heraldry experts look at a coat of arms from the viewpoint of a man holding a shield, then consequently a woman's coat of arms will always be on the man's left side, our right. The beholder's left side becomes what is called in heraldry *dexter* side and the right becomes *sinister* side. This translates to the placement of people or saints depicted on diptychs. A wing depicting a supplicant would be the one on our right, while the holy persons would be the one on the left.⁹⁶ But Panofsky's examples can easily be described as selective. The *dextrality principle* does not apply to every picture from that period. One might find many pictures that depict The Virgin or Christ on the *sinister* side of the supplicant, beholder's right side. Additionally, a new data has emerged in the last decades challenging Panofsky's law theory. For example, what was assumed as a right wing of a diptych by Hans Memling, depicting Benedetto Portinari, is actually a part of a triptych.⁹⁷ There is a number of devotional diptychs and portraits where the donor or a man is depicted on the left wing. Miniatures in illuminated books constitute an even better example overthrowing Panofsky's theory. The art historian explained the reversed setting of saints and supplicants claiming that the miniaturists had far more freedom than the panel painters.⁹⁸ According to Lorne Campbell this variation in placing depicted figures in illuminated books translates into change of sides on diptychs. There one can find various examples of pictures where supplicants are positioned on the right side of the holy figure, our left. Moreover, in France, for example, a donor was usually depicted on the *dexter* side, beholder's left side, while in Flanders on the *sinister* one. This rule applies to most of the survived diptychs.⁹⁹

⁹⁶ Panofsky, E., (1966), p. 294

⁹⁷ Campbell, (2007), p. 38

⁹⁸ Panofsky, E., (1966), pp. 479-480 note 16

⁹⁹ Gelfand, L., D., (1994), *Fifteenth-century Netherlandish devotional portrait diptychs: Origins and function*, (Doctoral dissertation), Cleveland, Case Western University, p. 2

In fact, according to Campbell, there was no consistency in choosing the sides of portrayed persons, regardless whether diptychs were depicting a secular or a saint.¹⁰⁰

The placement of supplicants in devotional pictures arguing traditional approach is discussed further by Hugo van der Velden:

“The goal was to capture the spirit of intercession, the interaction between clients and patrons at the root of everyday devotion [...]. Therefore, placing the Divinity, the saints, and the ordinary men in their right order was of the utmost importance, leading to a pronounced concern with the issue of whom to put where.”¹⁰¹

Van der Velden in contrast to Campbell does not reject the heraldic theory, instead he reformulates it. Panofsky's *law theory* is problematic for him, law being the key term here. Laws are firm and cannot stand breaking, while there will always be exceptions to the rules.¹⁰² Van der Velden prefers the term *principle of dextrality*. He is still using heraldry, applying its rules to devotional paintings, but what is vital here is that he clarifies positioning of the figures in relation to each other when their number increases. A Saint or Virgin Mary will always be on the *dexter* side, beholder's left side and the supplicant on the *sinister*, beholder's right side

“[...] the next person in range is subordinated to the rule that an axial position signifies prominence: the most distinguished person will reside in the middle, the second in rank goes to the *dexter* side of this figure, and the third to the *sinister*.”¹⁰³

While justifying placement of the donors in relation to the Divine, he is leaning more towards a text on etiquette: *Les Honneurs de la cour* from the second half of 15th century, written by Alieonor de Poitiers.¹⁰⁴ This text explains rules and customs of medieval social court life. What is interesting here is that the author while writing about the relation between and positioning of people of different importance, is using instead of “to go on the right” - “to go above” and consequently, “to go on the left” - “to go below”.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁰ Campbell, L., (2007), p. 40

¹⁰¹ Velden, H., van der, (2007), p. 128

¹⁰² Velden, H., van der, (2007), p. 132

¹⁰³ Velden, H., van der, (2007), p. 130

¹⁰⁴ Alieonor de Poitiers *Les Honneurs de la cour* in *Memoires sur l'ancienne chevalerie*, (ed.). J.B. de la Curne de Sainte-Palaye, 2 vols. (1826), 2:143-216

¹⁰⁵ Velden, H., van der, (2007), p. 131

Gerard David's *Diptych of Bernardijn Salvati*

Hugo van der Velden discusses a few examples of diptychs, in which a donor and his family are depicted on our left wing. He argues that this positioning can be explained by the special location of the pictures and the way diptychs were opened. To support his case, he uses Gerard David's *Diptych of Bernardijn Salvati* from 1501 as an example (fig 19). The two parts of this painting are now separated and located in two different countries, one in the United Kingdom and the other in Germany. The left panel depicts Canon Bernardijn Salvati in between three saints: Martin, Bernardino, and Donatian. Behind them we can see a beggar. The right panel contains a scene of Christ on the cross accompanied by Virgin Mary and John the Baptist amongst others. The supplicant is portrayed on the *dexter* side of the holy persons (left side from the beholder's point of view), while the painting is fully open. However, van der Velden stresses that this particular panel could be open only half ways in. David's choice of this uncommon composition could be the result of the original placement of the painting. The way of exhibiting was prompted by the size and placement of the diptych in the church. *Diptych of Bernardijn Salvati* was hidden, most probably in the corner of John the Baptist chapel in Saint Donatian church, which being small and narrow, could not fit this kind of work. The diptych had to be half open (fig. 20). Due to the 90 degrees opening the depicted supplicant and the saints faced the crucifixion scene - they were placed more *vis à vis* Jesus and the saints than on their left side. In a way this simulates a situation in which depicted persons on the left panel would pray towards the scene of Passion on the right panel.

It is worth pointing out that art historians are still speculating if this is a diptych or the left wing and a central panel of a triptych.¹⁰⁶ Despite the number of panels, it is still unusual that the donor and the saints, including Virgin Mary to stand on the left side of the Cross. The Cross in the crucifixion scenes is usually depicted centrally in between Virgin Mary and Saint John, who are placed symmetrically on both sides. Also, the composition where the cross is positioned exactly *vis-à-vis* the spectator, so that Christ is facing the beholder is the most common one. Here the scene is painted with an angle, the Cross is in a way turned towards the left: the donor's panel.¹⁰⁷ Half-open panel, the Cross painted with an angle, and finally all the figures turned towards the Cross create an illusion of three-dimensionality. The scene is no longer taking place on the flat

¹⁰⁶ Campbell, L., (1998), p.130

¹⁰⁷ Campbell, L., (1998), p. 130

surface of the panels. It is more inviting to take part in it. The composition of this artwork is subordinated to the place the panels were sited. Despite the small space, pious believers still would get a chance to see both panels even though the diptych would not be fully open.

Both hypotheses presented in this chapter argue against Panofsky's laws: Campbell discusses Panofsky's selectivity, whereas van der Velden, transforms Panofsky's laws into rules which give room for more flexibility. The latter additionally uses the role of a diptych placement as an argument why sometimes the depicted figures are on the *wrong* sides. This is omitted by Campbell; therefore, I would be more inclined towards van der Velden's *rule theory*. It does not totally dismiss Panofsky's, but it casts new light on the hierarchy in diptychs. In addition, Hugo van der Velden does not dismiss artworks just because they do not fit his theory as Panofsky did.¹⁰⁸

The position of a donor within the artwork might be dependent on the purpose of the work itself or/and its original placement. With that we see that the relationship between the depicted figures and the person who was praying in front of the artwork is very important. The individual believer, standing in front of the artwork could simultaneously pray both towards the main altar and the given panel, having both artworks in the range of their eyesight. Nothing was hidden from them. Moreover, the painted figures were placed in such a way that they were easily visible to the congregation. The *Diptych of Bernardijn Salvati* discussed above, serves here as an example of this kind of *double/multiple devotion* where the pious believer can pray simultaneously towards more than one devotional artwork.

Original Placement of Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin

Let us elaborate on our main example; *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*, described in the beginning of chapter one. It is a rather unique painting. At a closer look it is not only an example of devotional picture with a donor depicted in the same scale as the object of his prayers, but also a painting where the commissioner of the artwork is depicted on the *dexter* side of the panel, beholder's left. One can argue that Rolin is sitting opposite Virgin Mary, not on Her right side.¹⁰⁹ Either way, again, the positioning of the supplicant is not coincidental, and again in my opinion it has to do with the original placement of the panel. Unfortunately, the small parish

¹⁰⁸ Panofsky, E., (1966), pp. 479-480 note 16

¹⁰⁹ Velden, H., van der, (2007), p. 146

church Notre-Dame du Châtel in Autun does not exist anymore - we can only try to speculate in an attempt to find the exact placement of this panel based on old plans and documents.

The chapel was situated on the south side of the church building. On the east and south walls, it had windows and, on the east, a small door. The north side was separated from the choir by an arcade (fig. 21). This planning gave art historians two possibilities for the placement of the painting within the chapel's room. The former theory places the panel on the west wall, but this can be eliminated. It is because of the door, and since the chapel's altar was facing east, the congregation would be standing with their backs turned towards the painting. The present theory puts the artwork in the north east corner. In this way the painting is visible to the churchgoers. They could see both the painting and the altar. This placement is beneficial for Nicolas Rolin as well. He is not only contemplating Virgin Mary with Christ Child, but he is turned towards the chapel's altar. He is painted on the far left of the panel, so he was always in the sight of people praying inside the chapel, no matter if they were looking on the high altar or the chapel's altar. Furthermore, in the painting he is placed in the corner of the loggia with a colonnade behind him. In this way the arcade on the north side of the chapel would *continue* into the painting, giving an illusion of Nicolas Rolin being a part of the actual crowd singing in the choir of the church.¹¹⁰ He in a way, *melts* into the surroundings. The loggia he is sitting in acts as a part of a chapel where painting most probably hung. He is therefore kneeling in the chapel, he becomes a *surrogate self*, making an impression that he is present while being absent.¹¹¹ The phenomenon of surrogacy which I am going to discuss broader in chapter four is rather complex. It occurs when the depicted donor *overcomes* the materiality of the artwork and his or her portrait becomes him or her. It is not an image of praying donor-it is actually him or her praying while not physically present.

The placement of supplicants in relation to the saints and in relation to the space in which the artwork is located is significant. First of all, it demonstrates that many theories, which were dominating the field of art history for the decades are subjected to doubt and sometimes disqualified. Any change in the rules can find its justification in the original placement. Thus far, because of the lack of data we will never be sure if a particular painting was produced for a

¹¹⁰ Buren van, A., (Dec. 1978), 'The Canonical Office in Renaissance Painting, Part II: More about the Rolin Madonna', *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 60, No. 4, pp. 617-633, pp. 630-632

¹¹¹ The concept of surrogacy see: part III

particular church or if it just ended up there after the owner's death. Furthermore, the artists were not always aware of the intended purpose of a commissioned artwork. Considered function of a painting could always be changed.¹¹² It could be moved from a private house to a church or the other way around. What is more, if we consider the placement of the panel, the supplicant is not only enclosed within the artwork, he or she is a part of a *bigger picture*. This is why those paintings are not an alien object placed in the church building. They have the agency of their own, which brings them to life in the surroundings, where they were intended to be hung. Individual believers are reminded by those objects to say a prayer. The depicted donors, being absent physically can be present, as present is their image and they can act as a *surrogate self*. The *presence of an absence* gives them opportunity to fully participate in masses or prayers, being always in *the right position* to see and to be seen.

Nicolas Rolin melts into surroundings still being trapped in a panel. And again, the line is crossed: what is happening within the painting blends with what is currently taking place in the church or chapel.

Now I can see... The Eucharist in Iconography

This takes us back, yet again, to the subject of visions and their connection with the image-to be more specific, a connection between a vision and a placement of a painting.

Visions are very often a mirror image of what was already seen in the Christian iconography.¹¹³ Therefore the image plays here a very important role. Following Saint Catherina of Siena, some of the visions are a result of a prayer performed in front of a painting or a sculpture.¹¹⁴ If we consider this and the fact that frequently the “[...] point of (visions) departure is in the liturgical celebration – that is to say common church activities institutionalized by the Church and accessible to all believers.”¹¹⁵ Thus the placement of an artwork, supplicant and saints is crucial here. Let us elaborate on this and take a closer look at the iconography which is also a

¹¹² Campbell, L., (1998), p. 23

¹¹³ Laugerud, H., (2016), p. 52

¹¹⁴ Laugerud, H., (2016), p. 56

¹¹⁵ Laugerud, H., (2016), p. 51

background, an environment in which transubstantiation takes place and how important it is for an individual believer.¹¹⁶

In Catholic Church the practice of Eucharist is connected with a need for supplementary explanation by the illustrations on the altar panels.¹¹⁷ Even though in the early Netherlandish painting we find few existing examples of themes directly connected to the institution of the Eucharist, some art historians argue that depicting any scene of the Christ's passion as *Corpus Christi* is strictly connected with the act of the Eucharist and could be easily interpreted in this way by medieval members of the congregation.¹¹⁸ Pious believers would not only witness the elevation of the Host but could also experience it just from the narrative of the panels.

The variety of topics depicted on altarpieces was very rich. Any pictures illustrating the incarnation of Christ like the *Nativity* or *Annunciation*, where the biblical prophecy is fulfilled and the written word becomes flesh, can be loosely referred to the Eucharist. Ursula Nilgen goes even further in translation of the altarpieces narratives and claims that any scene of Christ's infancy could be seen as reference transubstantiated.¹¹⁹ It is possible to read scenes such as Adoration of the Magi according to the following manner:

“The table around which the saints gather is the altar of Christ's self-sacrifice; the Child is the life-giving bread which the faithful receive at the altar. The meaning that other masters conveyed by wine, bread, and ears of grain, Bosch conveyed by the scene of the Gathering of the Manna on the sleeve of the Moor and with the secluded concentration of his pictorial conception.”¹²⁰

Barbara G. Lane extends her interpretation, pointing out that in the pictures depicting the enthroned Virgin Mary with the Child, the Mother of Christ can be interpreted as a vessel for consecrated Eucharist.¹²¹

¹¹⁶ Christian dogma of Transubstantiation- Christ becomes present in a sacrament of the Altar by the transformation of the whole substance of the bread into His Body and of the whole substance of the wine into His Blood
Ott, L., (1964), *Fundamentals of Catholic Dogma*, St. Louis, B. Herder book CO., p. 379

¹¹⁷ Lane, B., G., (1984), *The altar and the altarpiece: sacramental themes in early Netherlandish painting*. New York, Harper and Row, p. 1

¹¹⁸ Lane, B., G., (1984), p.79

¹¹⁹ Nilgen, U., Franciscono, (Dec.1967), ‘The Epiphany and the Eucharist: On the Interpretation of Eucharistic Motifs in Mediaeval Epiphany Scenes’, *The Art Bulletin*, Vol. 49, No. 4, pp. 311-316, p. 316

¹²⁰ Nilgen, U., Franciscono, (1967), p. 316

¹²¹ Lane, B., G., (1984), pp. 12-35

The connection between an altarpiece and Eucharist seems well demonstrated through arguments and analyses, but there is always a possibility of overinterpretation while reading this type of images. In the last two decades art historians tend to be more careful in their interpretation of the non-narrative images. Sometimes a so-called common-sense interpretation works better than the symbolic one. Images of Virgin Mary with the Child, instead of being read in the Eucharistic manner, could be understood as pictures depicting Mary with Christ as her attribute, hence these types of altarpieces are devoted rather to the cult of Mary or other saints, than to the act of transubstantiation itself.¹²² Altarpieces were not inextricably linked with liturgy, which means that they did not need to be seen as a reference to Eucharist. Panels could also be devoted to various saints.¹²³ This specific topic: saints, was connected to either the saint to whom the church was dedicated or to the saint patron of the altar. In times of early Christianity churches were built around or close to the saints' graves, hence altars could serve as a sort of vessels where relics were stored.¹²⁴ The subject of any altarpiece standing on such an altar was automatically connected with the saint, and for that reason not depicting any Eucharistic matter.¹²⁵

Different explanations of the altarpieces' subjects and their interpretation do not exclude one from the other as the Medieval symbolism can be understood in various ways, it is not limited to one interpretation.

Narratives

The major part of medieval altarpieces can be described as story-telling pictures. Altarpieces constructed with many images from life of Christ, Virgin Mary or the saints were very often telling a story, as a narrative was a very important aspect incorporated in Medieval Art.¹²⁶ Particularly exceptional were the carved Southern Netherlandish altarpieces, from the 15th and 16th century, full of events described in the Gospels or apocryphal writings such as *Golden Legend*(*Legenda Aurea*).¹²⁷ This type of church furnishing is not my main focus in this thesis but

¹²² Williamson, B., (2004), p. 352

¹²³ Binski, P., (1995), *The Thirteenth-Century English Altarpiece in Norwegian Medieval Altar Frontals and Related Material*: papers from The Conference in Oslo, 16th to 19th December 1989, vol. 11, Roma, Bretschneider pp. 47-57, p. 48

¹²⁴ Williamson, B., (2004), p.354

¹²⁵ Binski, P., (1995), p. 48

¹²⁶ Jacobs, L., F., (1998) *Early Netherlandish Carved Altarpieces 1380-1550, Medieval Tastes and Marketing*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 35

¹²⁷ Jacobs, L., F., (1998) p. 35

it constitutes a good example and can help to clarify some of the dynamics occurring in the late Medieval Art, as well as the importance of placement of an art work.

Stories told by carved altarpieces are rich and multilayered. They were by all means a supplement in the explanation of the mass performance. The dramatization of the depicted scenes increased throughout the Middle Ages. It is quite possible that there is a connection between a narrative elaboration in the Early Netherlandish carved altarpieces and so-called “holy week dramas” and non-liturgical formats, such as *mystery plays*.¹²⁸ *Mystery plays* which were performed outside of the church in the vernacular language rather than in Latin, are as well a possible factor that could contribute to the looks of carved altarpieces.¹²⁹ Not so many texts from that period have been preserved, yet we find an evidence based on remaining material and other scholars’ claims, that these particular mystery plays might have influenced iconography and artistic conception of carved altarpieces.¹³⁰ There are similarities found in both carved retables and plays in the iconography, particularly the Passion scenes. Many of those performances were reenacted simultaneously, hence carved altarpieces consisted of many scenes. An altarpiece is connected to liturgy in the way that the liturgy is a basic condition for retable’s existence, but it is not absolutely essential for the mass performance.

One Working Whole

Let us connect all those described elements together bearing in mind the title of this chapter: the placement of an artwork.

Vision is inevitably connected to Eucharist which in turn is connected with the altar. Altar is very often equipped with an altarpiece or a sculpture. These artworks were usually adorned with a commissioner’s image, as the proximity of the donors’ portraits to the altar was required. It gave them the desired attention of individual believers and guaranteed participation in daily masses or prayers.

The richness of the scenes and narratives were a great stimulant for the Christian spiritual life. Very often subjects of the altarpieces did not have an obvious connection with Eucharist. The pictorial world of medieval panels had to be an overwhelming stimulation for an individual

¹²⁸ Jacobs, L., F., (1998), pp. 64-72

¹²⁹ Jacobs, L., F., (1998), p. 70

¹³⁰ Jacobs, L., F., (1998), p. 71

believer. It could very much enrich his or hers internal, spiritual life. Same thing applies to the plays performed by the *real* people who looked like the ones depicted in the art inside the church. Conversely, narratives from the painting were reconstructed outside the church walls. It reminds of *virtual reality*, furthermore, *virtual – visual* reality. Stories depicted within the artwork worked as a spiritual stimulation influencing the pious church members. Since images were so vivid, very often busy, telling a few stories simultaneously, they had to leave a deep mark in the memory of spectators.

Very often donors wanted their portraits to be placed close to the altars where they could be easily noticed. I am going to discuss the significance of being visible both for here and hereafter later in this thesis. In the context of the placement of an artwork or the supplicant we can see how everything creates a harmonious, balanced whole, where an individual believer experiencing Eucharist, being stimulated by the narratives of an altarpiece simultaneously has the likeness of the donor in the sight range. One can say: exactly in the right place.

The placement of devotional art in a church building is not coincidental. It seems like the image itself takes everyone *into the consideration*: individual believer, patron and in the center God himself. Not one detail is neglected, neither are the surroundings. The space is as crucial as the placement. For the donors it was important to be close to the (high) altar. Panels were placed as close as possible to the altars; hence, they were visible for all the people gathering in a church building. The case is completely different if we consider small spaces of the church chapels. Artists had to adapt the artwork, its size and composition, to the conditions prevailing there.

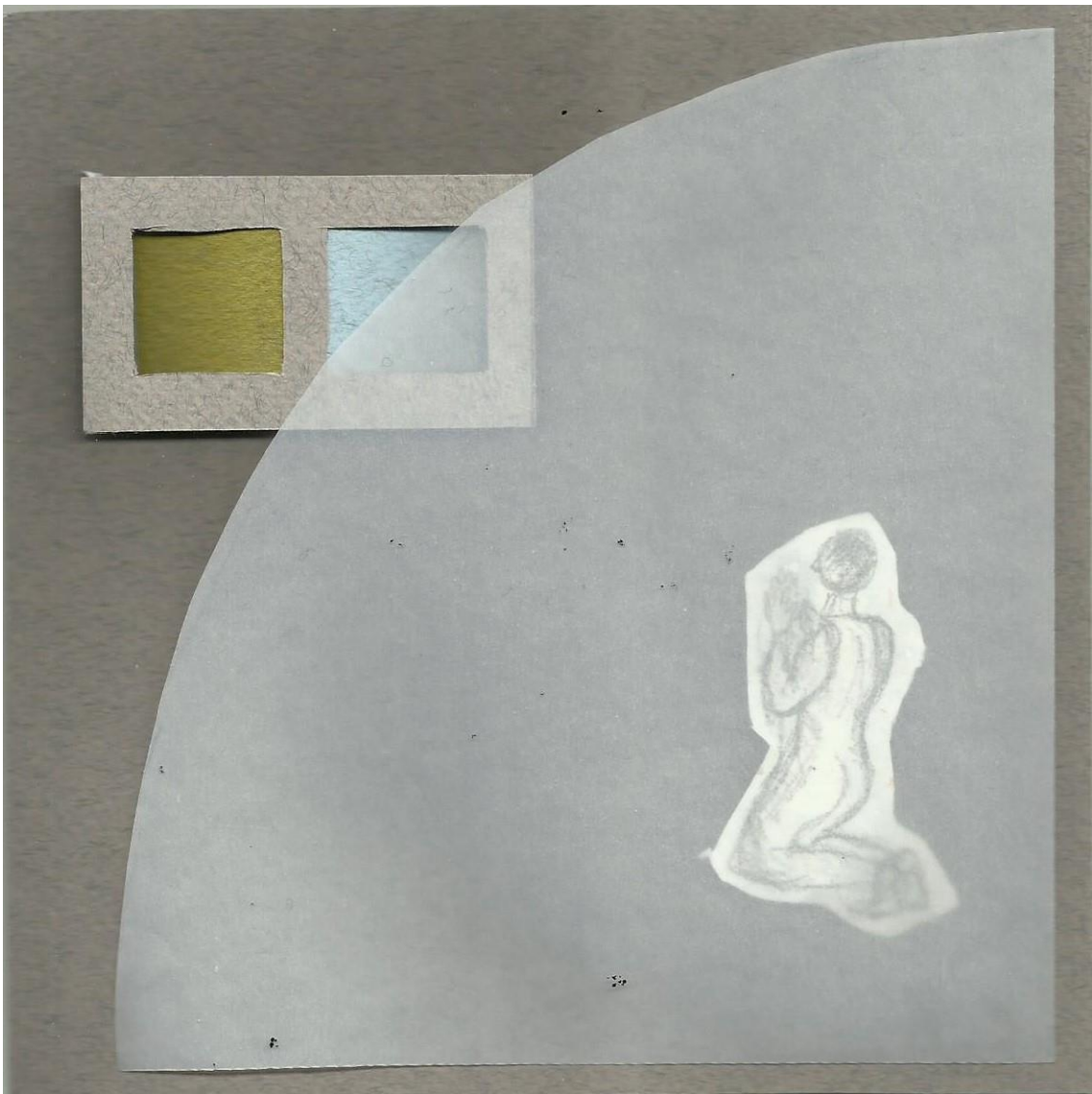
A strategically placed panel could perfectly fulfill its devotional function. It was serving as an aid for all the parties. The donor was visible, encouraging to pray for him and as a *surrogate self* was in the *center* of the church events. It means that he or she also participated in the offices or the liturgy. A donor's depiction was *brought to life* by the way in which he or she was placed; by the coordination of what is taking place inside the pane and outside of it. Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* constitutes a good example. Rolin's placement makes him a part of a chapel, he is blending in with the surroundings, giving an impression that he is there, that it is not only his effigy.

The individual believer was stimulated by narratives of the panel and by the performance of the priest, being able to see all of it at the same time. Witnessing the highest moment of the mass, a

member of the Church could both pray for the deceased and experience the proximity of divinity. Pious believers could project themselves into the panel and take the place of a donor. He or she could participate in the narratives of the artwork. A panel placed close to the altar where Eucharist was consecrated could as well trigger a vision. At the same time a vision was a result of remembering and recalling the rich iconographic language of the art in the Middle Ages. It was a constant, infinite relation between the material object, pious believer, donor and God himself, where all the parties influenced and stimulated one another in the continuous circle.

Part II

Donators Place in Society



Chapter 3

The Significance of Being Visible - HERE

The medieval religious art was beneficial to the commissioner in two ways. Not only did it shorten the way towards the salvation but by depicting a supplicant in a certain way it could emphasize the wealth and worldly power of a portrayed person.¹³¹ Although most artworks were created with a devotional purpose, very often intended to be placed in sacred places, it is speculated that, for example, in one of the most important cities in Europe in 15th century – Bruges, commissioning of art was rarely supported merely by pious motives.¹³²

It might seem strange that religious commissions did not come solely from piety. What was important for patrons was their social status as well. Supplicants' visibility, or visibility of their donations, gave them the social prestige in the community. It was not only about spending less time in purgatory. We can say that even though the donations were made for securing one's place in the Kingdom of Heaven, it was vital not to be forgotten here on earth. Moreover, it was crucial to be recognized and by that to be connected to the donation. All of this, without a doubt, translates into a concept of *memoria*, which is going to be discussed broader in the last part of this thesis. It cannot be denied that the worldly prestige and a certain self-promotion in this life was also an important motivating factor. But these two *functions* were not separated.

Nobles

Pious and Powerful

Gerard Loyet was a goldsmith, *Valet de chamber* hired by Duke of Burgundy Charles the Bold. During his service he executed many precious artworks: votive gifts donated by the Duke to different churches around Burgundy in the act of gratitude. It was the one given to the Liege Cathedral in 1470 that survived until these days. A small, gold and silver figurine depicts Charles the Bold kneeling while being presented by Saint George (fig. 22). The Duke is holding a reliquary containing most certainly a finger of Saint Lambert.¹³³ Charles the Bold is depicted

¹³¹ Krul, W., (2005), *Realism, Renaissance and Nationalism* in Ridderbos, B., Buren, van, A., Veen, van, H., (eds.), *Early Netherlandish paintings: rediscovery, reception and research*, Amsterdam, Amsterdam University Press, p. 286

¹³² Martens, M., P., J., (1992) *Artistic patronage in Bruges institutions, ca. 1440-1482*, (Doctoral dissertation), Santa Barbara, University of California, p. 37

¹³³ Velden, van der, H., (2000), p. 81

wearing full armour with his helmet by his side. It was speculated by Marian Campbell that the figurine originally might have been holding a sword or the keys to the city. She supports her claim by the fact that there was no record of a reliquary in the relic list exhibited in Liège in 1489.¹³⁴ However, Hugo van der Velden discards this theory. Firstly, there is a possibility that the discussed statuette was at that time in Paris, hence could not be included in the inventory. Secondly there are no signs of any modification, moreover the octagonal box fits perfectly in the Duke's hands.¹³⁵

This is a very interesting thought considering the fact that the Duke is shown as if going to or coming back from a military campaign. As this gift was presented to the Liège Cathedral after Charles the Bold's several successful military campaigns directed to suppress the rebellions in the city, his appearance cannot be coincidental. The way he is depicted, tells us about his position and his intentions. With the intercession of Saint George, acting in the name of Saint Lambert, he conquered the city. Saint Lambert was Liège's patron and titulus of the Cathedral and that was enough for Charles the Bold to justify his actions and obtain the legal authority over the city.¹³⁶ Wearing armour portrays him as a powerful man; the choice of gold and silver as material is also calculated as it increased the value of the artwork and in this context signified Duke's prestige, as a powerful, prominent and generous man. On the other hand, Charles the Bold was a devoted man, the act of donation itself indicated his devotion. It is a votive gift, so by presenting it he fulfilled his religious obligation. Furthermore, the tradition of veneration was practiced by all the rulers for many generations in the whole Burgundy. The votive representations were in a way a proof that the transaction, between the commissioner and the saint, had been completed.¹³⁷ In the context of his military success this figurine could be interpreted as an evidence of God standing by his side.¹³⁸ Charles the Bold's appearance and the agenda standing behind the gift, resulted in this dual perception of his persona - he could be seen both as a strong and a pious individual.

¹³⁴ Blair, C., Campbell, M., (1981), L'enigmatique offrande du Temeraire, *Connaissance des Arts*, no. 349, pp78-81, p.81

¹³⁵ Velden, H., van der, (2000), p. 115

¹³⁶ Velden, H., van der, (2000), p. 152

¹³⁷ Velden, H., van der, (2000), p. 268

¹³⁸ Velden, H., van der, (2000), p. 187

It is worth mentioning here that Saint George in Loyet's votive portrait of Charles the Bold resembles one depicted in Jan van Eyck's *The Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele*. These two artworks, however, have different purposes. The former is a votive gift - the transaction is in a way closed, and it is between the commissioner and the saint.

The latter is an epitaph, made to remind us of a prayer for Canon van der Paele. The devotional *activity* is not over. Next generations are supposed to be praying for him until the Doomsday comes. In a way the votive gift might secure something here on earth, and the devotional portrait secures the future in Heaven. One must not forget, however, that all those objects produced in the Middle Ages are not limited to just one purpose. One main function might be ascribed to them, but they could still fulfill other functions. To put it differently: Charles the Bold votive gift could be a devotional object, reminding a pious believer to pray for the depicted donor.

Lay Popularization of Visions

Votive gifts were objects given as an act of gratitude to a certain church or parish, but throughout the 14th century another type of gifts became very popular and was institutionalized in the end of 1300's. These gifts were exchanged between dukes and high nobility of French and Burgundian courts on New Year's Days. Their function was more than a simple gratitude. They were expressing loyalty, alliances or status between the Valois aristocrats.¹³⁹ One of the persons who were collecting gifts rather than distributing them, was a younger brother of Philip the Bold, Jean de France, Duc de Berry. He was also one of the greatest patrons of art during the Middle Ages. First and foremost, he took liking in the illuminated manuscripts. In his outstanding collection one book *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* is exceptional.¹⁴⁰ The volume was completed in 1409 and illuminated by the Limburg brothers. It contains one of the most beautiful miniatures made in the Middle Ages. Despite the fact that the book contains a portrait of the commissioner, which is the main subject of this thesis, a different picture is significant here. It is one particular illumination depicting Emperor Augustus while receiving a vision (fig.23). As already mentioned, in the medieval times the visions experienced by Saints were a common thing and it was reflected in art. Even ordinary people or mystics who never got canonized to name but

¹³⁹ Husband, T. B., (2008), *The Art of Illumination, The Limburg Brothers and Belles Heures of Jean de France, Duc de Berry*, New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, pp. 21-22

¹⁴⁰ *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry* (Ms65), Bibliothèque du château de Chantilly, Chantilly, France, (1411-1416)

Gertruda of Helfta, also received visions. However, in the 15th century a layman began *to have* them as well. Firstly, the rulers wanted to be portrayed as the great personages described in different hagiographic writings. Jean de Berry popularized his representation, as a vision receiver modelled on Emperor Augustus. It can be found in many manuscripts from that time.¹⁴¹

A legend of Augustus' vision was a part of a very popular literature of that time *The Golden Legend (Legenda Aurea)* and *Mirror of the Human Salvation (Speculum Humanae Salvationis)*. Golden Legend was one of the most important hagiographic collection in the Middle Ages.¹⁴² Mirror of the Human Salvation was a typological book; the events of the New Testament were prefigured in the Old Testament.¹⁴³ According to those sources, Augustus on the night of Jesus birth turned to one of the Sybils – the Tiburtine Sybil and asked if there was anyone greater than him.¹⁴⁴ This was the moment when the vision of Mary and Christ Child appeared in front of him.¹⁴⁵ This particular depiction of Augustus, Sybil and the vision is to be found in many of the manuscripts of that time. Moreover, in a number of portraits depicting the Duke he is shown wearing the same clothes as Augustus did. He ordered to portray the emperor in the contemporary clothes, just like the ones he was wearing. Jean de Berry used the legend of emperor Augustus as an *archetype* of himself.

This mimicking became popular amongst other courtiers and then spread further into rich burghers' class. We find many illuminations where Sybil and the Emperor are substituted by pious believers, positioned in the same way as their prototypes. An illumination from Marshal Boucicaut's *Book of Hours* constitutes a good example. He and his wife are depicted while receiving a vision of the Virgin and Child illuminated in the same manner as in *The Belles Heures of Jean de France, Duc de Berry*. In one of his articles Craig Habrison takes it even further by using an example of Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*. He claims that Virgin Mary holds the baby in the same manner as she is doing it in Augustus'

¹⁴¹ Harbison, C., (1985), p. 91

¹⁴² Metford, JCI, (1983), Dictionary of Christian Lore and Legend, London, Thames and Hudson, p. 112

¹⁴³ Wilson, A., (2003), *A Medieval mirror, Speculum humanae salvationis, 1324-1500*, University of California Press, p.10

¹⁴⁴ Sybils - according to Greek and later Roman mythology Sybils were oracles. They are considered to predict the coming of Christ.

Metford, JCI, (1983), p. 227

¹⁴⁵ Metford, JCI, (1983), p. 38

vision.¹⁴⁶ As the Roman Emperor Augustus is a lay, even a pagan person, his representation serves as an archetype. What is interesting here is that he is as well a ruler and therefore mirroring his image is equal to comparing yourself to a noble person.

Burghers

What is crucial here is that both examples of Charles the Bold and Duke Jean de Berry are members of aristocracy. While the first one emphasizes his power still remaining a pious believer, the other one contributes to the laicization of the vision, making this phenomenon available not only for the nobles. In the late Middle Ages devotional art, donations, art patronage spread among a new, lower class: the burghers. This class had high aspirations. The aspirations are found reflected in art.

Boosting One's Social Status

Another person who put an effort into being visible and recognizable both for the needs of this earthly realm and the Kingdom of Heaven and who has already been mentioned many times here, is Chancellor Nicolas Rolin. The panel that he ordered from van Eyck depicting him and Virgin Mary with Christ Child is overflowing with expensive fabrics, precious stones and gold (fig. 3). Rolin is the same size as the object of his prayer; he is wearing expensive brocade coat with a fur collar, while Virgin Mary is dressed in a red damask robe. He seems to be over dressed for this intimate moment of private meditation. Even the clothes which he was wearing on his funeral day were not as exquisite as the ones painted by van Eyck.¹⁴⁷ Additionally, Rolin's wealth is accentuated in the decoration of the interior of the loggia as well as in the landscape behind him, probably referring to the assets he owned and to his numerous donations.

Nicolas Rolin was born in the bourgeois family. He was not a noble member of the Burgundian court. Yet, he advanced quickly and became one of the wealthiest and one of the most influential men in Burgundy and one of the closest advisors of Philip the Good.

In this context it is worth pointing out that throughout the 15th century only noble members of the court could afford objects like Gerard Loyet's gold figurine of Charles the Bold described in the first part of this chapter. The court commissions were countless, and the court members did not

¹⁴⁶ Harbison, C., (1985), p. 92

¹⁴⁷ Harbison, C., (1991), *Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism*, London, Reaktion Books, p.109

hesitate to invest in artifacts made of precious metals and stones. At the same time a new, rising social group: bourgeoisie, started playing an important role in the commissioning world. They were not as wealthy as aristocracy but rich enough to become a group of the greatest patrons of art in the late Medieval Era. However, the main object of their interest was panel painting “[...] the illusion of all the wealth and beauty that only the nobility could afford, in any quantity, in reality”- this meaning, they could achieve the same splendor for less money.¹⁴⁸

Rolin, at the peak of his career had a very high position on the Burgundian court. It is known that he denied his bourgeoisie heritage, claiming that he came from an aristocratic background.¹⁴⁹ The painting might have been an attempt to prove or just accentuate his *nobility*. As stated by Herman Kemp, Rolin’s depiction flaunting his wealth was simply an articulation of class - anxiety. In 1422 Nicolas Rolin was knighted and became a Chancellor on the Burgundian court. This promotion did not give him a full fledged nobility and the picture might be an attempt at elevating his position.¹⁵⁰ Bearing in mind that “[...] the role or status of a person defined them in the eyes of others [...]” the image of a person could be modeled and adjusted in order to improve his or her position. This has to do with social stereotypes, where the ugly would always be a peasant and the beautiful would be associated with the noble.¹⁵¹ Additionally, the political power itself descended from and was legitimized by God.¹⁵² To phrase things another way, the better they looked or represented themselves by wearing, for example, expensive clothes, the more respectable they seemed. The position one had in the social noble hierarchy, independent of one’s piety or devotion imposed social supremacy and proximity to our Savior.

An expensive clothing was not the only way of enhancing Rolin’s appearance; the objects surrounding him as well played an important role in how he was perceived, too. Rolin is caught in the moment of meditation. His reading is interrupted by a vision of the Virgin and the Child. The book that he was reading from is slightly bigger than the ones used for such purposes. Manuscripts were luxurious objects. This one is particular, not only because of its size but also because of the expensive red velvet binding. The book might relate to Philip the Good and his

¹⁴⁸ Harbison, C., (2012), *The Art of the Northern Renaissance*, London, Laurence King Publishing, p.47

¹⁴⁹ Harbison, C., (1991), p.100

¹⁵⁰ Kamp, H., (1993), *Memoria und Selbstdarstellung: die Stiftungen des burgundischen Kanzlers Rolin*. Sigmaringen, pp. 156-158

¹⁵¹ Camille, M., (1996), pp.164-165

¹⁵² Rothstein, B., (2000), p. 99

numerous investments in manuscripts. At the same time, it might be a *tool* helping Rolin to be portrayed in a certain way. He could be seen both as a good Christian devoted to a prayer, and as a literate, well-educated man.

The act of devotion itself in the context of this painting is interpreted by Bret Rothstein as a *social ornament*.¹⁵³ Appearance is not the only factor contributing to lifting one's status in the eyes of spectators. Presenting oneself in these beautiful surroundings as a pious, meditating man leads to aestheticizing the act of devotion itself. It is a private performance, but it becomes public the moment the painting is put on display. This is vital concerning how Rolin was remembered by his contemporaries. In *Memoires of Jacques Du Clerque*, who was both an advisor and the son of the advisor of Philip the Good we find a very significant sentence that is included in almost any major discussion about Rolin that I came across. Du Clerque writes: "[Rolin] was reputed to be one of the wisest men in the kingdom [of France], to speak temporally; with respect to the spiritual, I shall remain silent:"¹⁵⁴ His intellect and wealth might not have been enough to enhance his appearance both in the eyes of God and the contemporary people, perhaps he needed to compensate for his insufficient piety.

Omitted Purse

It seems that Nicolas Rolin was trying to boost himself in every possible way, yet there is a line in this self-promotion. The detail which I am going to discuss was discovered recently, thanks to modern technology, which allows us to look deep into the painting, under the layers of paint. In the preliminary painting Rolin is carrying a purse decorated with gold, most probably a money sack (fig. 24). Now, we will never know why this detail was omitted and never included in the final version of the panel. It will be a mystery to discover who is responsible for this exclusion. Was it van Eyck's suggestion, or maybe it was Nicolas Rolin's decision?

According to Harbison this omission might be connected to the interpretation of the iconography of the painting as Rolin's confession. It is suggested that sculptures depicted on the panel represent some of the seven deadly sins, and since we do not find all of them it is possible that

¹⁵³ Rothstein, B., (2000), p. 100

¹⁵⁴ "Jacques Du Clerque: 'un des plus sages hommes du royaume [de France], a parler temporalement; car au regard de l'espirituel, je m'en tais.'" Rothstein, B., (2000), p. 107

the purse was overpainted intentionally. Rolin might have confessed to some of the sins, but he did not want to be exposed and seem *too human*. It could be, as stated by Harbison *a selective confession*, he admits to committing only some of the sins, while on the others he *drops a curtain of silence*.¹⁵⁵

Bret Rothstein does not fully agree with this theory claiming that Rolin is rather surrounded by various references to sin not because he committed them, but because they serve rather as a background to his devotional act.¹⁵⁶ He is showing his pious side, letting us know that he is like any other devotee. At the same time, he is a man of power, wearing his expensive gown and getting absolution from Christ himself.

In addition, there are several miniatures depicting Chancellor Rolin which survived to our times. In a number of them he is depicted with a purse affixed to his belt. A miniature in *Chroniques de Hainaut* produced in the middle of 15th century could serve as an example.¹⁵⁷ The illuminator painted a scene where Philip the Good, surrounded by the high members of his court is receiving the mentioned manuscript from Jean Wauquelin (fig. 25). Nicolas Rolin is the only one portrayed with a sack of money. If we take a closer look at the purse it is almost identical to the one depicted in van Eyck's picture. Similar depiction can be found in a different manuscript: *Traite sur l'Oraison Dominicale* (fig 26). It was no secret that Rolin was one of the richest men during and after his service for the Duke of Burgundy.¹⁵⁸ He was a Chancellor, an advisor and negotiator, yet he was not responsible for the Duke's money. Van Eyck's depiction of Rolin with omitted purse is similar to Dino Rapondi's votive statue from Notre Dame in Dijon (fig. 27). Rapondi was a banker of Burgundian court which explains the manner in which he is represented with a big sack attached to his belt.¹⁵⁹ It is possible that Nicolas Rolin was always carrying money with him, this might be how he was seen by his contemporaries, as this particular accessory indicated his wealth. The purse appears in the secular depictions; however, it is not present in the ones with sacred narratives. In the presence of the Holy and in the church surroundings Chancellor Nicolas Rolin becomes humble. The lack of purse adds a sense of

¹⁵⁵ Harbison, C., (1994), pp.113-115

¹⁵⁶ Rothstein, B., (2000), p. 110

¹⁵⁷ Jean Wauquelin, *Chroniques de Hainaut*, 1446-1450, (Ms 9242), Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, Belgium, (1446-1450)

¹⁵⁸ Harbison, C., (1994), p.111

¹⁵⁹ Dhanes, E., (1980), *Hubert and Jan van Eyck*, New York, Tabard Press, p.279

balance to this devotional donor portrait. This kind of portraits not only depicted the wealth of a commissioner, but just like in Gerard Loyet's figurine they demonstrated also "[...] public religious posture [...]" of the donor.¹⁶⁰

Two Rolins

Nicolas Rolin was wealthy and powerful and left behind numerous commissions, furnishing not only his own parish in Autun, but building Hospices de Beaune in the neighboring town. His portrait can be found in many illuminations and panels. All the depictions constitute an immense source of information, but in the context of representation and visibility, one particular artwork is crucial: the polyptych depicting *the Last Judgment* painted by Rogier van der Weyden in 1443 for the Beaune hospital (fig. 28).

The subject of this painting is very suitable for the place it was designed for, but what is interesting for my thesis is the donor's portrait on the outside wings. The main corpus of this polyptych shows Christ in his glory coming back to earth to judge us for the last time. The outside panels painted in darker tones depict the commissioner of the painting Nicolas Rolin and his third wife Guigone de Salins with the patron saints of the hospital and the scene of Annunciation (fig. 29). Van der Weyden's and van Eyck's portraits give us a unique chance to look closely on the issues of *being visible here*.

These two depictions were painted over a period of ten years. Nicolas Rolin in Rogier van der Wyden's artwork contrary to van Eyck's portrait, is painted on the outside panel, which is a more common place for a donor. This makes him, in a way, seem more modest; he does not share the space with any holy figure. It might be connected to the fact that this altarpiece was intended for a hospital - a place where sick and dying people seek for hope and help. In this surrounding there is no need for the supplicants to demonstrate their wealth or emphasize their earthly position. He is humble as also the patients need to be humble and repent (fig. 30).

The situation differs in case of *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* painting. Its execution coincides in time with some very important events that form Rolin's private and public life. His own son Jean became the bishop of Autun Cathedral and in 1435 the treaty of Arras was signed, putting the end to the 100 Years' War. As Suggested by Harbison these events could

¹⁶⁰ Harbison, C., (1985), p. 99

encourage Rolin to boost himself, to present himself as a wealthy, literate, generous and at the same time pious man.¹⁶¹ However, being depicted in the same dimensions as Virgin Mary, being so close to Her within the same panel, contrary to van der Weyden's polyptych, could imply his arrogance.¹⁶² Lorne Campbell adds one more detail to this keeping with the appearances. He is pointing out that there can be another explanation for the way Rolin is sited. Van Eyck might have tried to hide the ugliness of his sitter's mouth.¹⁶³ We can speculate that on the top of underlining his status and showing off his achievements Nicolas Rolin might have wanted to be seen as a handsome man. This takes us back to the perception of the medieval people who associated beauty with something good and ugliness with something evil.

Materialization of Social Aspirations - Confirmation of the Social Status

Nicolas Rolin was trying to boost himself in the eyes of the contemporaries. As he was not a noble born, he tried to be depicted in a certain way, just as any other aristocratic member of the court would wish to. His likeness was supposed to be pious and prominent. The early medieval portraits were reserved only for the highest class of the society. At the end of that period it became more and more available for aristocracy and then for rich merchants.

In 1487 Maarten van Nieuwenhove, a member of a very powerful family in Bruges ordered a diptych depicting him and Virgin Mary with the Child (fig. 8). For various reasons this painting is very particular and can serve as a good example for the importance of being visible here. Let us start from the inspiration behind this commission.

Maarten was young, only 23 when he turned to one of the most important painters of that time: Hans Memling. This type of diptych format, depicting the figures half way was created by other Northern master Rogier van der Wyden. The composition was indeed very popular amongst the members of the court.¹⁶⁴ It is therefore obvious that the burghers, who were collecting a lot of capital wanted to mimic the court, particularly to be represented as the nobles. In Chancellor Rolin's case, as he was part of the court, he wanted to be seen as a noble, but it seems that Maarten did not have such an aspiration – he rather followed the fashion of the time. What the

¹⁶¹ Harbison, C., (1994), pp. 111-112

¹⁶² West, S., (2004), *Portraiture*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p.24

¹⁶³ Campbell, L., (1990), *Renaissance Portraits: European Portrait-Painting in the 14th, 15th and 16th Centuries*, New Haven, Conn, Yale University Press, p.14

¹⁶⁴ Martens, P.J., M., (2000), p. 85

highest class was doing was most tasteful, therefore the best and worth copying, but this is only a speculation.

Maarten van Nieuwenhove came from a family in which all the male members held important positions either in the city council or as heads of the city neighborhoods. It created an obvious situation and the environment in which Maarten just as his relatives chose a political career. Almost ten years after the diptych execution van Nieuwenhove reached the peak of his career in Bruges and became the mayor of the city. This whole anticipation and commissioning of the diptych is best formulated by Maximilian P.J. Martens as *a materialization of social aspiration*.¹⁶⁵

The painting, apart from the portrait of the donor, contains his own motto as well as the family coat of arms. Above Maarten's head the painter depicted his patron Saint. This shows that despite the format, usually connected with the private devotion, this diptych could fulfill a representational function.¹⁶⁶ The artist depicted the sitter as a pious man, but he emphasized also his status, showed the connection to one of the most influential families in Bruges. It seems as if both the artist and the commissioner anticipated political career. Therefore, they or one of them chose this very way of depiction.

If we compare the two important figures, Nicolas Rolin and Maarten van Nieuwenhove, it seems that the Chancellor wanted to *supply* for what he did not achieve, while Maarten *supplies* for what is yet to be accomplished. Rolin shows what is not there, he will always be a burgher with aspirations to be noble. Maarten is in a way condemned to success, he shows who he will become soon.

These different examples show how crucial the donor's image was for the contemporaries. It seems that for various reasons the commissioners tried to upgrade their appearance. The reasons behind the motives one and each decision to emphasize or boost oneself in the eyes of the others might still be circumstantial. We can speculate what the reasons for focusing on the external appearance were; we will never be sure of the right answers. Additionally, since all the discussed artworks are characterized as devotional, why did something so superficial played such an important role? Devotional art was designed to keep the deceased in memory of the family and

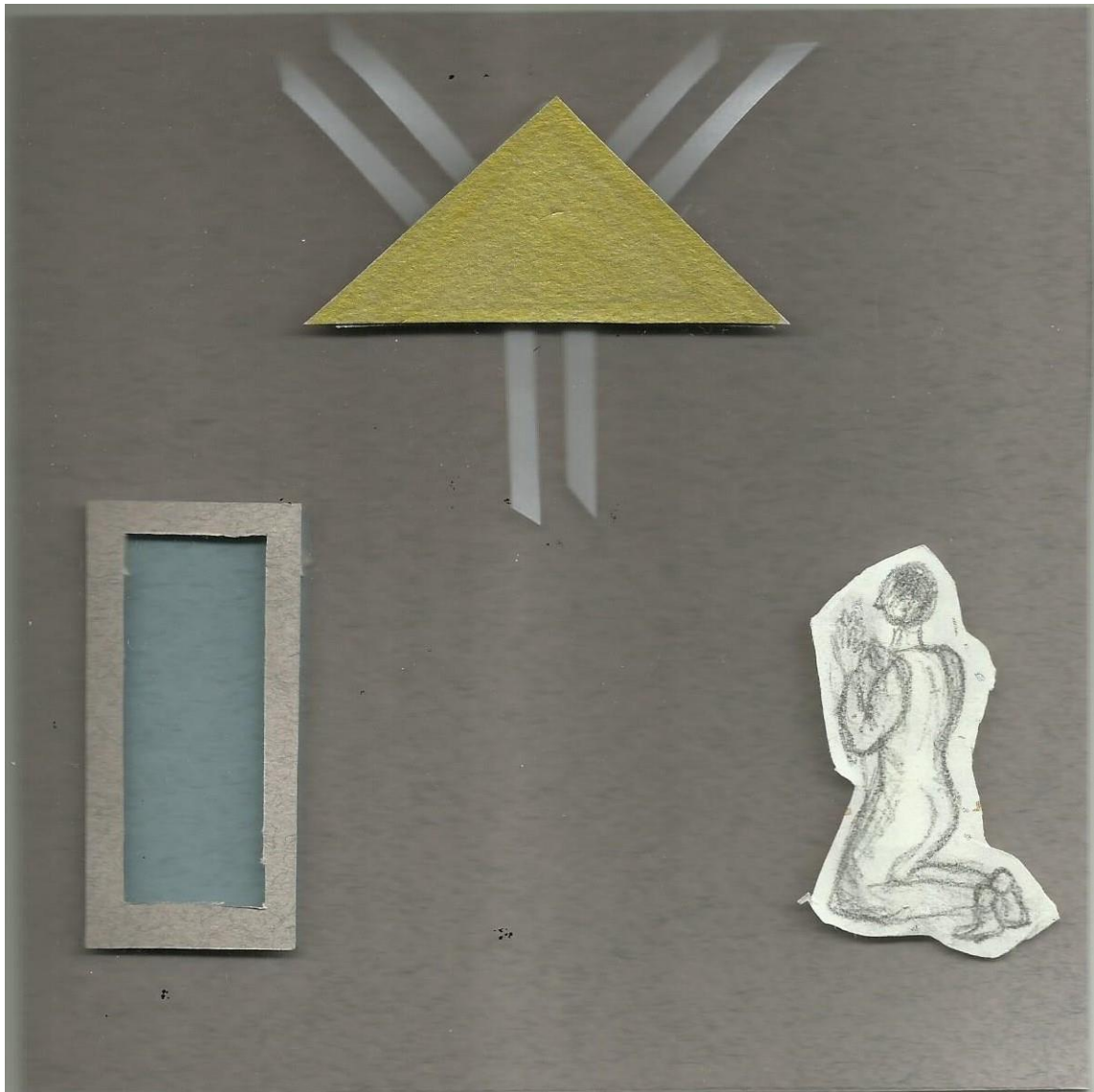
¹⁶⁵ Martens, P.J., M., (2000), p. 85

¹⁶⁶ Borchert, T., H., (2011), *Van Eyck to Durer. The influence of Early Netherlandish painting on the European art, 1430-1530*, London, Thames & Hudson, p.194

church members. On the Doomsday everyone is going to be naked and judged not according to the social status but according to the weight and number of sins he or she committed. Regardless of this, I would speculate that the care for appearance is related to the care for the hereafter. Boosting oneself could benefit the supplicant in multiple ways. Improving one's outward look could gather a larger public. This means more individual believers praying for the deceased. A donor depicted in a certain way could be more eye-catching, hence supplicant's portrait could be effortlessly pressed into someone's memory. Paradoxically, the significance of being visible here would contribute to shortening the time spent in purgatory. In the next part I will try to present the significance of being visible hereafter.

Part III

Donator's Hopeful Place in Heaven



Chapter 4

Significance of Being Visible - HEREAFTER

Pious, powerful or wealthy, these are just a few ways to present oneself by donors to the contemporaries in the late Middle Ages. However, the devotional art of the Middle Ages was fulfilling a function which was pleading for the dead to shorten their way to Kingdom of Heaven. The deceased remained present in their communities, with the aid of their donations. Being recognized was therefore crucial.

All the donations had one thing in common. They needed to be visible. This visibility was encouraging others to pray, helping to keep the dead in the memory of the living. Individual believers did not only pray for the deceased, but also through an act of prayer itself they could project themselves as decent Christians.¹⁶⁷ In the previous chapter I focused on the importance of appearance. I discussed suppose *vanity* of the donors and their families rather than their modesty. Here, I would like to treat the desire to be recognized and the connection to a donation as a direct benefaction for the donor's soul.

Purgatory and Indulgences

Devotional art, to be more specific, devotional portraiture was an integral part of the late Middle Ages' piety. From the 14th century throughout the Reformation the number of commissioned arts depicting a supplicant in the company of Virgin Mary, Jesus or the saints increased considerably.¹⁶⁸ A greater number of ordered artworks had to do with two things: the concept of Purgatory and the indulgences.

The former was popularized at the end of the 12th century and became a very important part of the Catholic Church in later centuries.¹⁶⁹ It was somewhat a second chance given to the sinners, to avoid the eternal flames of Hell. According to the Catholic dogma, the souls of the deceased who by some means were still charged with venial sins or temporal punishment, were sent to the Purgatory.¹⁷⁰ There, their souls were purged with fire. Purgatory was the place and the state of repentance; it was not a lighter punishment than Hell, yet it was temporary, so the sinner's soul

¹⁶⁷ Bueren, van, T., (2005), p. 16

¹⁶⁸ Gelfand, L., D, Gibson, W., (2002), p.122

¹⁶⁹ Gelfand, L., D., (1994), p. 161

¹⁷⁰ Ott, L., (1964), p. 482

could eventually leave the place and join God and all the saints in the Kingdom of Heaven. The length of the punishment was of course dependent on the volume of the sins, but it could be regulated by good deeds, prayers, masses, pilgrimages or fasting by those who were still alive, and the sinner himself.¹⁷¹ Yet, the most important suffrage in reducing the misery of the sinners repentance in Purgatory were compensatory actions: the indulgences.

The concept of indulgences, which has not changed much in the Catholic Church was shaped in the 11th century, emerging from the absolution, known already in the early Middle Ages.¹⁷² Principally, indulgences are a *release* from the temporal, not canonical punishment for sins and even though they – the sins - still remain, they have already been forgiven.¹⁷³ Moreover, according to the great Christian thinker Thomas Aquinas the act of repentance contributes not only to the reduction of sins but it works as a protection against committing them in the future.¹⁷⁴ Indulgences were allowed by the Catholic Church; they were often traded for money.

“Lay people who had committed sins could now affect their own destiny. The establishment of an intermediate area between Heaven and Hell where souls could perform penance which they had not completed on earth gave entirely new connotations to the afterlife. Thus, not only was Purgatory beneficial to the spiritual well-being of the laity but it was readily supported by the clergy.”¹⁷⁵

As we can see money played a very important role in the process of salvation. Laity, especially rich ones, could save their souls and secure their eternal future not only through the non-material contributions for saving one’s soul such as good deeds, a prayer, but also a donation. Investing in reduction of the time spent in purgatory was expressed in various ways. To follow Truus van Bueren:

“Donations came in form of money, real estate, annuities, leases and consumer goods in addition there were donations for the building or renovation of the convents and charitable institutions as well as gifts of the altar equipment and liturgical vestments and church decorations like altarpieces, stained glass windows, painted or sculptured monuments [...]”¹⁷⁶

¹⁷¹ Gelfand, L., D., (1994), p.170

¹⁷² Ott, L., (1964), p. 442

¹⁷³ Ott, L., (1964), p. 441

¹⁷⁴ “poena satisfactoria est ad duo; scilicet ad solutionem debiti, et ad medicinam pro peccato vitando.” Thomas Aquinas, (Parma 1881-1902), *Commentum in IV libros sententiarum*, 4.20.1.2.3, in his *Opera omnia*, 24 vols., 7:842:

¹⁷⁵ Gelfand, L., D., (1994), pp.162-163

¹⁷⁶ Bueren, van, T., (2005), p. 14

Despite the galore of the different commissions, I am going to focus on the donations that include commissioner's portrait.

Memoria

As stated in the beginning of this chapter all the donations had one thing in common: they needed to be visible and by that connected to the donor. This visibility was encouraging others to pray, hence the identification of the portrayed person within the artwork, for the sake of salvation was very important if not crucial. Furthermore, an individual believer who prayed for the deceased, by doing a good deed contributed to his own redemption.¹⁷⁷ The importance of being recognized relates to the concept of *memoria*.

Memoria has its roots in antiquity, where it was a part of the art of rhetoric. In Latin it literary means memory, recollection. In the research covering donators' portraits the term recollection is the one I am going to focus on mostly, because the ability of remembrance, while looking at the artwork awakes the agency of the image. Knowing who the person *standing* behind the donation is plays here an important role. Both the beholder and the picture are active; the image is *looking back* - what we see stays in our memory and can be evoked at any given time.¹⁷⁸

Let us consider some primary sources in order to explain the role which the image, a material object played, in the devotional process. A letter attributed to Gregory the Great to a hermit Secundinus constitutes a good example. The letter was actually written in the 9th century. It was added to the Pope's correspondence almost three centuries after his death.¹⁷⁹ The hermit asked the Pope to send him an image of Jesus Christ. The picture of *Our Savior* was supposed to help Secundinus in his daily meditation. In his reply, Pseudo Gregory wrote, amongst other things, how the image stimulates active recollection. By looking at a portrait depicting Jesus Christ, for example, we are able to call him back in our mind. Moreover, with pictures we can do it more effectively than with writings.¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁷ Bueren, van, T., (2005), p. 16

¹⁷⁸ Laugerud, H., (2016), pp. 64-65

¹⁷⁹ Honée, E., (1994), p. 158

¹⁸⁰ Honée, E., (1994), p. 159

“Et nos [...] illum adoramus, quem per imaginem aut natum aut passum vel in throno sedentem recordamur. Et dum nos ipsa picture quasi scriptura ad memoriam filium Dei reducimus, animum nostrum aut de resurrectione laetificat aut de passione emulcat”¹⁸¹

Visual communication is central here. It is not a passive action; the image is kept *alive* at all times and we can always recall it as long as we can remember.¹⁸² Furthermore, as discussed earlier, *Memoria* has a strong connection to vision. Again, I would like to underline that the vision described here is not an optical vision. The descriptions of visions found in medieval writings are almost always connected with the image presence. Additionally, very often subjects of visions resemble actual works of art. Visions of the medieval mystic, Gertrude of Helfta constitutes a good example. Amongst many things which appeared in her holy visions she describes Virgin Mary with a pure crystal womb. This image could be connected to a representation of *Maria Gravida*, one of many medieval depictions of Virgin Mary. Yet we can only speculate if Gertrude ever saw this type of artwork. The question if what she actually saw in her vision was a consequence of what she saw with her earthly sight arises. Or, perhaps she saw something first in her vision using a mind's eye and later it was translated into a devotional object?¹⁸³ What came first: the vision or the image? We can speculate; however, it is the *memoria* that aids to execute the vision. If she saw a depiction of the Mother of Christ, she remembered it and she could see it again very specifically without the actual image present. Something visible only for her, as it was stored in her memory materialized itself. Furthermore, she was able to recognize it, maybe because she saw it earlier but as well because the divine is revealed in the way to be recognized. God appearing in the vision has to be recognized and the only way He is going to be recognized is if the recipient of the vision is familiar with the God's image.¹⁸⁴

Pseudo Gregory elaborated on God's image but the concept of *memoria* might concern any other image. Hence the artworks which depict either a likeness of a patron or his coat of arms, family name or/and saints presenting the donor like epitaphs. These artworks are also described as memorial pieces (*memorialbilder*).¹⁸⁵ Historical figures are depicted not to be forgotten. We see,

¹⁸¹ Gregorius magnus, (1982) *Registrum Epistolarum*, xi, 1, in *S. Gregorii Magni Registorum Epistolarum*, Norbert, D (ed.). 2 vols, Turnhout, Corpus Christianorum, II, pp.1110

¹⁸² Laugerud, H., (2015), pp. 64-65

¹⁸³ Laugerud, H., (2015), p. 56

¹⁸⁴ Laugerud, H., (2015), p. 56

¹⁸⁵ Bueren, van, T., (2005), p. 14

we remember and then we can recall an image at any given time. The image is present and *alive*. The depicted donor is absent but by the power of *memoria* he or she is still present. Through the likeness, good deeds or continuous masses, a person who is dead continues to be a part of the congregation or a family who still remembers. One of the reasons why commissioners were depicted within the artwork is to be remembered and to remind individual believers to pray for them. The deceased stayed alive in the memory of the church community and then with aid of the devotional art the individual believers would keep his or her image in the memory for generations. To phrase things another way: I am praying for my deceased father as is the daughter of my sister who has never met him. Furthermore, her children will continue securing his salvation by daily prayers. He exists in our memory as long as we pass his image through next generations.

Memoria is the commemoration of the dead and as Patrick J. Geary formulated it, it became: “[...] the key organizing principle, not only in medieval theology, but in every aspect of medieval life.”¹⁸⁶

The main focus of this thesis is the donor’s place and space in the Late Medieval Art. However, during my study, I came across a rather new and interesting research proposition by Bram van den Hoven van Genderen who approaches *memoria* not from a founder’s or an artist’s perspective, but from a beholder point of view. Since the data used in the research on patronage comes mostly from the creators not the spectators, there is a clear lack of substantial material concerning the reception of donors’ portraits, which in turn may result in inaccurate or rather incomplete outcome. It is as well for Van den Hoven van Genderen, who despite restricted material sources tries to tackle the issue, leaving us with many questions open for a debate.¹⁸⁷ However he points out one very important aspect of *memoria*, that it “[...]could only be effective if the living did remember the dead, if epitaphs texts were read, if prayers were recited and if viewers devotion was aroused.”¹⁸⁸ This takes us back to the agency of the image and its perpetual, active relation with the beholder.

¹⁸⁶ Geary, P., J., (1994), *Phantoms of Remembrance: Memory and Oblivion at the End of the First Millennium*, Princeton, Princeton University press, p.18

¹⁸⁷ Hoven, van Genderen, B., van den, (2005), pp.267-290

¹⁸⁸ Hoven, van Genderen, B., van den, (2005), p.268

Location

The space in which the donors' portraits are located and its importance is widely discussed in the first chapter of this thesis. It shows how important the placement of the artwork was. However, the donors also wanted to be as close to the main altar as possible. Being close to the essential part of the church, the highest altar, gave the donors a chance to be remembered. Their presence reminded the priests to offer masses and helped the regular churchgoers to say prayers for them. The effigy of a donor acted more like a tomb but the actual burial place was crucial for the contemporary people. The proximity to the highest altar guaranteed acknowledgment and not being omitted in the prayers.¹⁸⁹ Let us not forget that the chapel altar had the same status. Mentioned in the introduction the *Moreel Triptych* by Hans Memling constitutes a great example of how important the place the of eternal rest was. At the end of the 15th century, Willem Moreel ordered a triptych from Hans Memling (fig. 3). The central panel depicts Saint Kristoffer, with Christ Child in his arms, surrounded by Saint Maurus on his left side and Saint Giles on the right side. On the wings, the artist portrayed the Moreel, his wife and their eleven children with the patron saints of their families. On the left panel we see Willem with all the sons and on the right panel his wife with all the daughters. Some of his children died before the panel was executed.¹⁹⁰ Willem Moreel donated the Triptych to the Saint James Church, and he pledged to pay a certain amount of money to cover some of the Church's expenses. His generosity was supposed to secure a burial place in front of the altar dedicated to Saint Giles and Maurus. He died without keeping his promise and this resulted in him being buried outside the church. Only after his son's involvement and arranging unpaid bills, Willem Moreel was eventually moved and buried inside the Saint James church.¹⁹¹

It is worth accentuating that a burial place inside the church could not be secured for everyone. It was the most prestigious and desired place, nonetheless limited by the space. The situation caused the Catholic Church to introduce some regulations concerning burials next to the (high) altar. It raises a question if some spaces lost their importance because they were not occupied by

¹⁸⁹ Gelfand, L., D, Gibson, W., (2002), p. 126

¹⁹⁰ Martens, M., P., J., (2005), p. 358

¹⁹¹ Martens, M., P., J., (2005), p. 358

any donations? Consequently, did any of the locations gain importance being designated space for the *memorial pieces*?¹⁹²

One of the strategies used to keep the deceased in the memory of the ones that are still alive was putting inscriptions on the frames or banderols. Not only would they identify the deceased but containing prayer texts, they would have yet another function. A person looking at an epitaph for example, would read what was written and by that, would unconsciously recite a prayer.¹⁹³

The importance of identification of patrons and problems connected with the term donors' portraits, requires mentioning here that the donors' portraits are not always what might be expected. The name limits itself to the depictions of kneeling persons and not every portrayed kneeling person was the one that ordered a picture. Paul Trio divides donators into passive ones – those who were saved, that occurred when, for example, a family ordered an artwork in the name of a relative, very often after one's death. Another type of donor portraits was active ones. Here those who paid for the commission were the ones depicted within the artwork.¹⁹⁴ In the next chapter I will discuss broader the recognition of a donor and the nuances occurring in the used terminology.

Surrogate Self

The division in an active and passive donor is a little bit more complex if we take a closer look at it. Devotional portraits are multifunctional, and the depicted donor can often function as a *surrogate self*.¹⁹⁵ Andrea Pellegrini's funerary monument constitutes a good example and explains the concept of surrogacy. In the beginning of the 14th century, this man ordered in his own name a sculptured tomb to be placed in Saint Anastasia church in Verona. In his testament he requested that the monument would be finished in three years after his departure from the earthly realm. During those three years he demanded a Mass of Saint Gregory to be said continuously. What is the most significant here is that the main and most important part of the Pellegrini's tomb was the sculpture depicting him while kneeling and praying turned towards the altar. When this artwork was under construction, he needed help of a prayer, but after the commission was finished, the masses he ordered were no longer necessary, as he could pray

¹⁹² Bruen, van, T., (2005), p. 18

¹⁹³ Gelfand, L., D, Gibson, W., (2002), p. 128

¹⁹⁴ Van Bueren, H., (2005), p. 22

¹⁹⁵ Gelfand, L., D., Gibson, W., (2002), p.122

himself, being a surrogate self, depicted in a sculpture.¹⁹⁶ He was absent, but still present within his own portrait.

The Middle Ages abound in this type of attempts of *substituting* oneself, not only in a donor's depiction within an artwork, as the examples of surrogacy occur in different forms.

People could be paid to go on a pilgrimage in the name of a supplicant or could be paid to pray for him or her. Furthermore, a devotee could project oneself on the pilgrimage sites, and it would still count as an actual journey to the sacred places. Throughout meditation the journey could happen in one's mind, so not only somebody's actual, physical presence would serve as a substitute, the good intentions were also valid.¹⁹⁷ Medieval pious activity went even further. Wax and terracotta life size figures were made to be placed in a church and participate in masses in the absence of the persons themselves. Very often they were dressed in the clothes of the person they were depicting; real hair was used for example, to ensure their likeness to the *prototype*.¹⁹⁸ Lorenzo de' Medici after being wounded in 1478 had made a representation of himself – an effigy to be placed in several churches. What was significant here, is that one of the figures was wearing the exact clothes he was wounded in. There were several reasons for putting so much effort into creating of his image: to keep him safe under the guidance of his Saint patrons and to express gratitude for keeping him alive. Moreover, one of the churches submitted indulgence pardon, which was also an advantage.¹⁹⁹ “The use of life-sized, three dimensional and fully clothed effigies suggest that likeness-the closest similarity between the effigy and the person represented-was particularly important in the 'substitution' of image for beseecher.”²⁰⁰

Surrogacy is connected with a kind of communication between the depicted figure and the divine: here *I am standing* in front of God praying, despite the fact that I am not physically present, yet a part of me, my likeness should be enough. It is a presence of an absence. One extra pair of hands to pray for the soul, which is in fact the deceased soul.

¹⁹⁶ Gelfand, L., D., Gibson, W., (2002), p. 134

¹⁹⁷ Gelfand, L., D., Gibson, W., (2002), p.132

¹⁹⁸ Gelfand, L., D., Gibson, W., (2002), p.122

¹⁹⁹ Gelfand, L., D., Gibson, W., (2002), pp. 133-134

²⁰⁰ Shepherd, R., (2000), *Art and Life in Renaissance Italy: a Blurring of Identities?* in M. Rogers (ed.), *Fashioning identities in Renaissance art*, London, Aldershot & Burlington, pp. 67-68.

The communication does not limit itself to God and the donor. Representations of donors, their portraits serving as *surrogate selves* operate long after the donor's death as his image will communicate with next generations of pious believers. This likeness is a reminder to say a prayer for the soul of the deceased infinitely.

Likeness

This takes us to a question of resemblance in the Medieval portraiture and understanding of likeness, which was different from the modern understanding of it. The physiognomic likeness and how portraits are understood nowadays differ from how it was comprehended in the Middle Ages. It is necessary to state that the Medieval portrait did not serve as a mirror reflection of a depicted person; images rather signaled the individuality. Portrayed people did not necessarily have to be distinguished thanks to their particular features, a person's identity could be recognized by inscriptions, particular clothing or certain iconographic details²⁰¹. The reasons for choosing to portray a person more or less according to physiognomic likeness differed. The aesthetics could change either because no skilled artist was available or because the donation budget was too small to hire one. Occasionally the portrait was not necessary just because an inscription or coat of arms was enough. However, it is problematic for us to determine how the individual looked like and if his or her portrait resembled a real person.

Nicolas Rolin can be found in a few paintings and book illuminations. We can recognize him immediately on each one of them by comparing them to Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*. A tendency to consider van Eyck's panel as an archetype, a *real* image of Rolin might be caused by how realistic it is, as it is a very vibrant and extremely detailed portrait. The original frame of that painting did not survive the time. However, it is very possible that it had an inscription and Rolin's name on it.

Maarten van Nieuwenhove can be recognized by his family's coat of arms and inscriptions on the diptych's frame. This painting has his and his family presence all over it. It is inevitable for a spectator to notice who he is, and which family is he a member of.

The portraiture in the early Middle Ages was rather superficial and idealized. One of the reasons might have been the fact that it was usually reserved for the nobles, so the representation carried

²⁰¹ Perkinson, (2013), pp. 258-260

“[...] social rather than subjective identity”.²⁰² In the late Medieval Era portraits became more common among bourgeoisie. Paintings were more affordable than, for example, objects made of gold. Portraits became more distinct and particular in the depiction of the sitter. It was a process stimulated by the emerge of a new social class: burghers, and an economic change.²⁰³ This might explain the likeness of Nicolas Rolin’s and the distinctive features of Maarten van Nieuwenhove’s.

Realism

Visual realism is one of the main elements characterizing Medieval Art north of the Alps, it is very often put in the opposition to the Italian Renaissance idealism. It might be caused by the fact that the Italians were not as familiar with Northern art as with their own - they preferred naturalism. *Veracity*, on the other hand was not as important as for the artists north of the Alps.²⁰⁴ Does it mean, though, that in the Middle Ages the artists of the northern Europe depicted materiality of this world, copying every detail with perfect precision, while the Italians were interpreting and fixing the surrounding world to portray it in a better way than it really was?

Let us look at an example. The painted jewels in Jan van Eyck’s masterpiece *Adoration of the Mystic Lamb* for many decades were interpreted as a metaphor of the *contemporary aspirations*, as something adequate and proper for an altarpiece (fig. 31). Yet, the jewels were not an object taken from real life and painted so vividly by the artist. It was a metaphor taken from the Holy Scripture and the Church Fathers writings.²⁰⁵ It was a vision of new Jerusalem where the old earth and heaven will be substituted by new better places, hence the richness, beauty and precious stones.

The main obstacle keeping us from understanding of that term is that we look at it very directly. What is real is something that exists, in art it would be something that mirrors the reality with all the details. Northern art is full of details, but its realism does not necessarily depict the real things in modern understanding of this word. It is because medieval people believed, truly and unconditionally in God’s presence and all his miracles. Visions were real, the bread turned into

²⁰² Camille, M., (1996), p.163

²⁰³ Vos, de, D., (2002), *The Flemish Primitives, The Masterpieces*, Princeton University Press, Amsterdam University Press, p. 13

²⁰⁴ Campbell, L., (1998), p. 19

²⁰⁵ Velden, H., van der, (2000), p. 5

the body of Christ undeniably. This was the reality of every single Christian. Earthly world and divine realm existed together. We can find descriptions in the Holy Scriptures of angels appearing and being visible to everyone. This means that they can be seen by a physical eye, hence they are physical, real like any other person walking the earth.²⁰⁶

Realism in the Medieval Art is a rather complex and difficult subject. In the beginning of this thesis I stated that when it comes to historical figures it is completely understandable, but how can Jesus or Virgin Mary be realistic if we have no knowledge of what they looked like? The sense of reality, so different to our modern perception is what, in my opinion, can explain the coexistence of historical and divine figures in one space. They might not be real for us, but they were real for an individual Christian in the Middle Ages. Our modern perception of realism would immediately suggest that the realistic depiction is copying the world as it *really is*. Medieval realism operated on the same principles with the exception that what was real then is no longer real now.

Recognition of the donor was a very important part of devotional art; here, realism was very useful. However not every donor could afford the best painter and it was not always necessary to have your own likeness depicted for the sake of salvation.

Realism characterizing art of northern Europe was different. Following Dirik de Vos “This realism should not be understood as ‘drawn from life’ but as life like in the execution of the representation”.²⁰⁷ It was a tool used by artists to bring the Divine closer to the spectator. Something non-materialistic like prayer, spiritual part of our being could be processed via something that looked real - materializing itself in the artwork. Such an approach could serve as an aid in understanding sacred narratives and benefit the communication occurring between individual believers and God. A kind of anthropomorphization of the Divinity surely helped. Realism made the divinity more familiar. Development of the realism in the North of the Alps painting has to do with a movement called *Devotio Moderna*

²⁰⁶ Laugerud., H., (2015), p. 50

²⁰⁷ Vos, de, D., (2002), p. 9

Devotio Moderna

Devotio Moderna was a popular piety movement which emerged in the Netherlands in the end of 14th century and in the next centuries spread all over Europe.²⁰⁸ It is crucial to mention that the consolidation of the new dynamic patronage group coincides with the emergence of the movement. *Devotio Moderna*'s main doctrine was to find God in practice: in a prayer, humility and simplicity of life. This uncomplicated approach towards faith was set in opposition to “[...] the liturgically based practices prescribe by clergy.”²⁰⁹ What was bringing devotees close to God was not a difficult theological teaching of the church but a natural and individual piety, coming from within the ordinary man. Daily practices were a fundamental ingredient for a human being to become an image of God. The book *Imitatio Christi*, written by one of the spiritual authors of *Devotio Moderna* Thomas à Kempis was a verbalization of the movement.²¹⁰ The movement found its followers in the cities among simple people. To live and explore the faith one did not need to be educated. However, it is necessary to emphasize that during decades the movement was presented rather as “[...] a narrow minded and moralistic way of life contrary to the great cultural innovations of the 15th century [...]”. This is just a wrong image of the movement presented by the historian Johan Huizinga in *Autumn of the Middle Ages*, and then repeated by the next generations.²¹¹

Devotio Moderna was a vital element of the late medieval life and was connected to the pererspective on art as well. We can see it to some extent in the donors' portraits made North of the Alpes as they are more understandable and accessible. Visions of Dutch and Flemish people were more *down to earth*, set in the familiar environment, humble and easy to relate to. Furthermore, for a simple individual believer visions were more like visualizations, not complicated by the Church teachings. On the contrary, the Italian depiction of these subjects create a more dramatic milieu for such scenes.²¹²

²⁰⁸ Harbison, C., (1985), p.87

²⁰⁹ Harbison, C., (1985), p.88

²¹⁰ Bocken, I., (2018), *Jan van Eyck and the active mysticism of the Devotio Moderna* in Appelton, H., Nelstrop, L., *Art and Mysticism, Interfaces in the Medieval and Modern Periods*, London, New York, Routledge Taylor & Francis Group, p. 91

²¹¹ Bocken, I., (2018), p. 90

²¹² Harbison, C., (1985), p.88

The narratives of many of the late Medieval art north of the Alps are set in the contemporary interior of a regular burgher house (fig. 12). Many paintings present scenes from the Bible which were moved from city Jerusalem to imaginary or real city somewhere in the Low Countries (fig. 31). The landscapes do not show the Middle East, but Dutch cities; Maria does not float in the sky, but sits in contemporary bourgeois spaces, surrounded by ordinary everyday objects. *Devotio Moderna* made the Catholic faith more approachable through a universal language, more comprehensible for an average urban citizen. Consequently, the art became more intimate and different from the Italian art from the same time. This was caused not only by the fact that *Devotio Moderna* found most of its members in the cities. We can speculate that the artists themselves were familiar with the teachings of the movement. The heart of *Adoration of the Lamb* shows striking similarities to Thomas à Kempis' description of the similar event in his other book *Soliloquium*.²¹³ We have no evidence that those two were aware of each other's work, however, these two created at the same time and the visual parallels cannot be denied.²¹⁴

One aim

All the efforts put in to being visible and recognized had one purpose: save the donor's soul from long time spent in purgatory. The more prayers were said in the intention of the deceased, the faster his or her soul would be purged with fire and he or she could rest in peace.²¹⁵

As discussed in this chapter and previous part of this thesis, the location of the donors' portraits played a very important role. It was crucial to be in the center of the events taking place in the church. The right placement made the donor noticeable. With the help of realism and likeness he or she could be recognized and remembered. Furthermore, for the sake of salvation, images of donors were acting as donors themselves, as *surrogate selves*. A supplicant depicted within the panel could pray in his or her own name and at the same time could be prayed for.

Significance of a commissioners' appearance was a crucial element in the salvation process. Yet the donors did not only focus on boosting their own image in the eyes of the contemporaries.

²¹³ Bocken, I., (2018), p. 89

²¹⁴ Bocken, I., (2018), p.90

²¹⁵ Gelfand, L., D., (1994), p.170

Recognition required likeness and what follows: realism. Yet realism in the medieval era was understood a little bit differently.

Setting narratives of the depicted scenes in the contemporary burghers' interiors in European cities made these images more approachable. Artists used realism to bring the divine close to the human. This kind of simplification made it easy for an individual believer to identify oneself with the donor. The approach to art and devotion, uncomplicated by church teachings had a connection with *Devotio Moderna* movement.

Chapter 5

Who is who in the world of patronage?

Different shades of patronage

As stated above, the identification of the donor is crucial to get to Kingdom of Heaven.

Patronage had many forms but one denominator: “[...] salvation lays at the core of patronage and belief that by doing good on this earth the patron will benefit in the next world”.²¹⁶ Despite that, the world of late medieval patronage is a rather complicated phenomenon. This translates to: what name we give to the parties participating in commissioning of an artwork depends on the context and the artwork itself. A person commissioning a panel does not necessarily have to be the one depicted in it. A person designing a manuscript might be omitted as a patron just because we are used to defining the patron from the iconography as the one who is kneeling. Therefore, in the discussion about donator’s place and space, I think, it is very important to consider different kinds of patronage and take a closer look at the dynamics of the group.

New Dynamic Patronage Group

The waning of the feudal system and increasing position of the cities created a wonderful environment for the growth of a new dynamic patronage group: bourgeoisie.

In the early medieval time, it was the aristocracy and the rulers who were occupied with the exchange of gifts. The act of exchange had an economic and social dimension. In this context it is worth mentioning that not only the physical objects were changing hands. A private prayer or a public mass functioned as gifts as well. The monasteries were the main producers of goods and at the same time places where aristocracy was commemorated thanks to their donations. The situation started to change with the emerge of new markets, trade and growth of the cities. It encouraged the individual believers coming from the merchant class to be part of the commissioning world. The city was also a place where new monastic orders were formed. This created a situation in which a new donor’s group *gained* a new place to order their gifts for. “As a result, in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries we observe contributions by more donors from different classes of the population and spread over more receiving institutions”²¹⁷

²¹⁶ Hourihane, C., (2013), p. xx

²¹⁷ Bueren, van, T., (2005), p.14

Commissioner, Donator, Patron, etc....

In the beginning of *Painting and Experience in 15th century Italy* Michael Baxandall claims that “A fifteenth-century painting is a deposit of a social relations”. A painter offered his work in exchange for money. With money comes power, so the one commissioning art could influence the process and the final result of the artist’s work. What is quite significant here is that Baxandall discards the term patron suggesting a better name for the buying/ordering party, *the client*.²¹⁸ The problem of the terminology in the world of medieval patronage varies enormously: “considerateur, decideur, auctor, patronus, patron, instigator, donor, founder, promulgator, commissioner, creator, benefactor, real patron, supposed patron, imagined patron, beneficiary and user to refer to some involved in patronage process.”²¹⁹

Art historians tend to apply those terms correspondently. It can be confusing and, in many cases, wrong, yet this practice is still very common. Moreover, the traditional art historical view on patronage circulates around two parties: sponsor- commissioner and author-artist. Very often the whole creative process might involve more than these two. The client could be a commercial or religious institution, or the artwork needed involvement of more than one person during the creative process. The galore of media and situations in which the artworks were ordered invites us to investigate and explain this terminology more broadly.

Group Patronage

The Moreel triptych is an instance of a rather simple case. Depicted Moreel couple with their eleven children are all the supplicants. According to the accounts that survived, and an investigation carried out by art historians we know that it was Willem Morell who ordered and paid for the triptych. His family, depicted in the act of devotion is recognizable and therefore prayed for, even though they did not pay for this piece. But what if an artwork has more than one patron or only one can be recognized?

As already discussed, *Vaudetar Bible* constitutes a good example of this type of patronage. This particular bible is a copy of *Bible Historiale* presented by Jean de Vaudetar to Charles V in the year 1372(fig.32). Jean de Vaudetar was the one who painted all of the illuminations in this book and one of four patrons who contributed to the creation of this bible. The patronage in this case is

²¹⁸ Baxandall, M., (1988), *Painting and Experience in fifteenth-century Italy*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, p. 1

²¹⁹ Hourihane, C., (2013), p. xix

approached from a different, not traditional point of view. It is known that *Vaudetar Bible* had four different patrons, however, only the one for whom the artwork was ordered was depicted in one of the illuminations. There were three more people who participated in the creative process and therefore their contribution made them partial patrons.

This takes us to the problem of identification of supplicants. In the commissioning process the patron can be mistaken for the user.²²⁰ Not every kneeling person who was depicted within the artwork was the one that ordered it. We should not take it for granted that the image depicting Jesus and a woman praying is in fact depicting a donor. Firstly, we have to determine the origin of the manuscript, was it a gift for example? Furthermore, when it comes to big donations, it was not commonly done by one person- a *superpatron*.²²¹ The so-called donors' portraits or *Stifterbilder* are not what they may be expected to be. The donator could for example commission the painting for himself or in the name of a member of his family.²²² The identification is very important. Yet, in the next part of this chapter I am discussing a case where the donor is not named, there is no presence of a coat of arms or a family name. However, the iconography of the illumination points out in the direction of considering it as a donor portrait.

Patronage as an effect not cause of art

The identification of a patron is a difficult task in many cases. Not all the artworks are signed and not all the documentation is found. We can only speculate that the kneeling person is in fact a benefactor of a given artwork. Aden Kumler in her essay gives a very interesting solution to the problem of identification of donors. She tries to look at medieval patronage from an entirely different perspective: patron as an effect rather than the cause of the work of art.²²³ What is interesting is that, since we do not have the appropriate data the recognition of the donor is frequently based only on the visual identification alone. Hence, we tend to ascribe the donor's role to the kneeling person accompanied by Christ or Virgin Mary.

Kumler elaborates using an example of a female depiction in a manuscript *Legiloque* compendium from the end of the first part of 14th century. Even though the female figure remains

²²⁰ Hourihane, C., (2013), p. xx

²²¹ Caskey, J., (2006), pp.196-197

²²² Bueren, van, T., (2005), p.22

²²³ Kumler, A., (2013), pp. 317-318

nameless, she is recognized as a patron.²²⁴ She is portrayed in a few places in this manuscript (fig. 33, fig. 34, fig 35). The composition and the surroundings change but she is always kneeling in front of the holy personages. Sometimes her clothes are a different colour, sometimes she is depicted on the left side of Virgin Mary, sometimes on the right side of Jesus. Her depiction is an iconographic *topoi*. This type of composition of the illumination was common in the Middle Ages. Kneeling in the front of divinity resembles Marian devotion or lamentation in the front of the cross, a common depiction in the medieval times. Therefore, she is ascribed a function of a patron. Since she cannot be recognized due to the lack of name or coat of arms, she can be anyone and anyone can identify with her. Reading this Bible, individual believers can be her, can project themselves in her place. She is not any particular person, she serves as an idea of a patron. This takes us back to the *surrogate self* phenomenon. The example of this particular manuscript demonstrates that it is not her acting as herself, it is anyone who is reading this particular book that is her. She is an idea of a patron while not being an actual patron. It is the user, spectator or reader that is at any given moment of meditation becoming her, becoming the donor. With this *flexible* change of roles Kumler argues that a patron function is considered more as an effect than cause of a piece of art.

It was mentioned already in this thesis that the person who is depicted within the artwork not necessarily has to be the one who ordered it. Moreover, it was not unusual for the donor to be alive while the artwork was finished. The galore of different forms of patronage and the situation in which an act of commissioning was taking place, put art historians in a very difficult position. Dividing patrons into different categories is an important but complicated and sometimes even impossible task. However, it is crucial to distinguish the act of donations from the persons involved in the process. Recognizing these nuances helps to understand late Medieval patronage and gives us an opportunity to see it from a wider perspective. The relationship between the person ordering and the person executing the order is no longer reciprocal. Understanding the roles played by people involved in art patronage is a vast source of information deepening our knowledge of the art history.

²²⁴ Kumler, A.,(2013), p. 310

Conclusion

Jan van Eyck's painting *The Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele* was ordered shortly before the Canon's death. The writing on the frame mentions his other two foundations. In addition, several masses were supposed to be celebrated to secure his afterlife. The function of the painting has been subject for art historical debates. Most likely the panel was created to serve as an epitaph commemorating van der Paele.²²⁵ The Canon was most probably aware of his disease or at least he was conscious of his old age. Knowing that the end might come soon, he made all these efforts to be remembered and be prayed for long after he had passed away. He is both the commissioner and the supplicant depicted within the panel.

The painting is one of many examples of devotional art where the historical individual shares a common space with Divine or Holy persons. Neither their presence nor the place they are occupying is accidental. Those artworks had their function, purpose and agency of their own. Whatever takes place within the artwork is connected with the outside world. The donor and the saints are not passive representations of themselves. They are as active as an individual believer praying in front of them. The image agency makes the dialogue between the supplicant, individual believer and God possible. The dialogue is constant and perpetual. The portrayed donor takes on the role of himself - he becomes a *surrogate self*, but at the same time he can act as an aid in a pious believer's meditation. The image of the donor can help to materialize a mystic vision of a regular church goer.

Unifying and Dividing

Devotional art unified the earthly realm with the heavenly one. While depicting the coexistence of these two worlds, the artists tried to draw a line between them. This is an example of one of many paradoxes that arose in the Medieval Era. Donors shared space with sacred personages, yet they were separated from them. Furthermore, the demarcation was not impermeable. Frames, cracks or rivers draw a visible line, but it is porous. One of the great examples of such a separator is the river in the *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* panel. The river divides the picture in two and in a way separates Rolin from Virgin Mary. Yet, the artist painted a bridge connecting two banks, a visible connection between the two realms. It seems as the

²²⁵ Vos, de, D., (2002), p. 72

donor was invited to the supernatural realm but kept at a distance at the same time. It is comparable to the distance set in the church or a chapel between an individual believer and the altar or devotional piece of art. The art object is placed in a distance which allows the churchgoer to look, to see, but not to touch. A pious believer is inside the holy space - a church, participating in a mass but still has to, physically, stand at a certain distance from the altar or an artwork. However, the depicted world is achievable and can become one's reality just by the power of prayer. Hence, the distance is no longer an obstacle and does not separate the two worlds. Thus, the spiritual unification is possible.

Moreover, many paintings placed in their original setting enhance *blending* of these two realms and bring us closer to the right perception of their *meaning*. Material objects melt into the surroundings giving an impression that the donor really is there, and he or she is participating in whatever is taking place outside of the painting. He or she is separated and simultaneously a part of the place in which he or she is positioned. Many objects of devotional art changed their function while not being on the original site whereas when placed in the original surroundings their meaning could be completed. Jan van Eyck's panel *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* serves as a good example. In both cases, on the site or not, the painting fulfills its devotional function. Yet, placing the image in its *proper* space made the Christian experience and prayer fuller. It brought the depicted figures, saint or secular, back to life. Rolin *materialized* himself. His vivid portrait, the space he is occupying - so similar to the actual chapel the panel was hanging, all those factors made it possible.

The placement of an artwork relates to the space, the background and what was in its proximity. Sometimes artists had to change the composition, for instance, the sides occupied by of the supplicants, to make the most out of the space an artwork was placed. Gerard David's *Diptych of Bernardijn Salvati* constitutes a good example. Composition of the panels is subordinated to the size of the chapel it was intended for. David made the donor visible, made him interact with the holy personages. The spatial limitation was not an obstacle. Gerard David constructed those panels in a way enabling an individual believer *to catch* with one glimpse events taking place inside of the chapel as well as in front of the main altar, not mentioning the narratives of the diptych.

Modest vanity

On the one hand, being visible by the church community made salvation possible. On the other hand, the need of being portrayed in a certain way for the contemporaries was crucial. The extra care for the superficial look might be problematic, and it might not be completely understandable. Beautiful fabrics, rich interiors, gold and gemstones, all these efforts immediately raise the question: what did the superficiality have to do with salvation? Humility and modesty are virtues; they are desired in an exemplary member of the Catholic Church. Why then, when one is supposed to be humble, one will do exactly the opposite? Why were donors depicted in such a way?

All the commissions discussed in this thesis are religious, devotional. Yet, the visual upgrading of the donors might point in a different direction. Many commissioners who were ordering the artwork for the sake of securing the heavenly future still demanded to be depicted in a certain way. At the same time, we know that many of the donations were not made solely from piety.²²⁶ Either way, emphasizing one's status or enhancing appearances is strongly connected to visibility. Due to the lack of written evidence, we can only use images and try to speculate what the different reasons for the choice of the supplicants' looks were.

The range of justifications of particular choices is very interesting, yet it is still connected with the things, which the donors desired to prove. They wanted to seem more powerful, become more noble or prettier in the eyes of the spectators. Of course, we can rationalize the need of looking better with a general idea of how beauty and power was perceived in the Middle Ages. Someone beautiful was associated with being good, their power was legitimized by God.²²⁷ The powerful look of the donor might inspire the regular churchgoer to think that this person is blessed by God himself. Hence, he or she is closer to the Savior than any other worshiper. Therefore, the prayer in the intention of this particular donor, we can speculate, would be heard faster and bring the individual believer closer to God. This kind of showing off, boosting oneself might be interpreted as an additional way to secure the heavenly afterlife - both for the supplicant and the pious believer. We can theorize that maybe the beauty of the fabrics and the shining of the precious metals gather bigger public, hence more hands to pray. We can speculate that this

²²⁶ Martens, M., P., J., (1992), p. 37

²²⁷ Rothstein, B., (2000), p. 99

superficial looks made an impression on the common worshipers and encouraged them to pray for the deceased. The visibility of the commissioner for the here and the hereafter could serve as *a double guarantee* for entering early into Heaven. The content of the image might be perceived in different ways: “pray for me because you see me here and now, pray for me, because you recognize me, pray for me because I am an important person.” Visible wealth could simply be something more attractive and catch the attention of pious believers. It remains a theory, since little evidence of the actual perception of devotional art exists, or it does not bring the valid conclusion.²²⁸ The documents that survived the time and Reformation always tell a story from an artist’s or commissioner’s point of view, while the spectator is often omitted.

Depicting oneself for the sake of looking better might have nothing to do with vanity. One can speculate that the reason behind boosting one’s appearance might have to do with wanting to be noticed. The whole process of upgrading the looks might work as a magnet and attract more individual believers encouraging them to pray. This way the significance of being visible here is directly connected to the significance of being visible hereafter. Earthly status contributes to our salvation. It seems to be yet another paradox, a kind of *modest vanity*. This did not only concern the regular members of the bourgeoisie class, who actually might need the upgrading, but also rich nobles who used their appearance as a tool to help them to get to heaven.

Presence of an Absence

Being recognized, visible and seen in a certain way had a purpose: the quickest way to Kingdom of Heaven. Securing afterlife was the main function of the devotional art depicting a supplicant. The concept of indulgences and purgatory prompt an increase in such donations, hence this type of art works depicting donors was high in demand.²²⁹ Nevertheless, a painted image of a commissioner surrounded by the Holy personages was more than just a functional object.

All the examples included in this thesis show how an object, such as a panel, conquers its materiality and becomes one with the environment, in which it is placed. The same rules apply to the donors’ portraits. Where the artwork was located is as important as where the donor was placed within it. He or she is not only portrayed but present as well, just as present as Maria or

²²⁸ Hoven, van Genderen, B., (2005), pp.267-290

²²⁹ Gelfand, L., D, Gibson, W., (2002), p.122

saints depicted on the same surface and in the same space. If we are to come closer to understanding of the medieval visions and how real and present they were in everyday life, then the physical aspect of the painting will fade away.

Chancellor Nicolas Rolin *participates* in whatever is taking place in the church, in which the panel was hung. It is possible because of the space intended for the painting and because of the fact that Rolin acts as himself. The donor's image is a *surrogate self*. A physically absent donor materialized himself in his own effigy. Andrea Pellegrini's funeral monument constitutes a good example.²³⁰ What is worth underlining in this context is that the donor is not passive here. He is prayed for, but he can also pray for himself. His image is there to remind people to pray. At the same time, he himself can join the prayers. We come across another paradox here - *presence of an absence*, where the deceased is *brought to life* by his own image.

The phenomenon of surrogacy does not limit itself to a particular donor and the particular artwork he or she ordered. Unidentified donors could serve as a *surrogate self* for any recipient of the image as the example of the manuscript *Legiloque* demonstrates.²³¹ Nevertheless, realism and likeness made this paradox more comprehensible. Recognition helped the individual believer to remember and pray for the right person. On the other hand, the location of an artwork helped the priest to remember to celebrate the mass in the intention of the deceased. As the high altar was a desired location for the donors' commissions, we can speculate if places gained or lost their importance as the main site of the artworks depending on the number of visible donations. Regardless of this, the high altar or proximity of it was in high demand. This takes us to the concept of *memoria* and medieval mystics' visions. Again, we deal with one working whole. A *good location* made donators visible, at the same time they, as a *surrogate selfs*, they could participate in whatever was taking place in the church. Being recognized they could be remembered and recalled at any time by the contemporaries and even next generations. Furthermore, I would speculate that setting donors and objects of their prayers in a more *approachable* interior or familiar, contemporary landscape made it easier for individual believers to identify with the donors. A spectator had a possibility to project himself in the place of the supplicant and in this way the roles could be exchanged. Undoubtedly, *Devotio Moderna*, briefly

²³⁰ Gelfand, L., D., Gibson, W., (2002), p. 134

²³¹ See the last part of a previous chapter

mentioned in the last part of this thesis, had some impact on this kind of visualization, which was not complicated by theological teachings. The proximity to the altar where the consecration of the Eucharist was taking place, was also of major importance.

All these efforts, place and space of a donor, location of the artwork, boosting oneself, likeness and realism had one thing in common: to make the journey from this earthly realm to the Kingdom of Heaven as short as possible. The amount of work put in shortening time spent in purgatory was divided between the living and the dead and God almighty.

In this thesis I have tried to investigate the place and space that the donors were occupying in the late Medieval Art and what the purpose of their inclusion both within the artwork and on the original site, was. During the late medieval period patrons became an integral part of the commissioned works. They were placed amongst the saints, Virgin Mary and Jesus. They were part of the stories from the Bible which took place thousands of years before. Being a part of sacred narratives shortened their time in Purgatory in multiple ways. It is as if their proximity to the Holy could serve as the first proof of their *pureness*, first step on their long way to Heaven. Once the commissioner *found his place* in the space of an art work, he or she already got closer to the Kingdom of Heaven. Yet, the depicted donors had a long *journey* ahead which required a number of prayers and good deeds. Being visible for the hereafter became crucial. The donor could be recognized, prayed for and serve as an aid in the Christian experience of vision. At the same time, we can observe how important the appearance was for the late Medieval commissioners. The way the donor presented himself became not only a part of care for the here, but as stated in the part two of this thesis, for the hereafter.

Donors wanted to stay in the memory of the next generations not only for the benefit of their soul but also to be remembered as a certain person. The common denominator of this type of work is visibility and salvation. Without being visible and recognized chances of salvation are decreasing. Therefore, all those proceedings took place. The place and space both of a supplicant and an artwork itself were crucial. It is a strategic game not about life and death but eternal future of the donor. It reminds me of a contemporary commercial. To catch attention, it has to be placed in a visible position. Apart from being flashy and colourful, it has to be comprehensible for everyone. This will guarantee a bigger audience. Additionally, a particular commercial will most likely be remembered, and lead to selling the advertised product.

Patronage is an extremely important element in understanding art, traditions and life of medieval people. Literature concerning patronage is very rich, but as I mentioned many times it focuses mostly on technicalities. Who ordered what, and when? How much money was donated and for what? Documents that survived help to reconstruct those patterns, but they do not tell the whole story of devotional commissions. Patronage is still a subject of research where new theories come to light and change our view on this phenomenon.

A very important factor in this research that must be emphasized is that medieval art served the Church. Due to the growing prosperity of the cities and fall of the feudal system, a new secular donor group developed: the bourgeoisie. It became stronger and stronger in the 15th century. Commissioned art depicted secular people next to Virgin Mary, Jesus and the saints. The donor's position, both in the picture and in the community, was very important. A donor's image was a part of the commission, whether or not he or she was portrayed or represented by the coat of arms. The donors' presence was not only a reminder of a prayer for their soul, even long after their death, but it was also a sign of a social status. In my thesis I have mainly focused on these two aspects of commissions. Most of the literature collected for the purpose of this thesis, casts a new light on the latter issue. Care for the hereafter was a crucial reason for commissions.

Another aspect of patronage that is particularly interesting, is the interaction between the depicted seculars and the saints, and the interaction between the portrayed donor and the people who are praying for him. In this case the pictures' commemorative function secured donator's place in heaven, through the power of the spectator's prayer. It also enabled the spectator to be projected into the picture, hence the spectator becomes a participant. It seems that the portrayed donors stand on the line between what is human and what is divine. Time does not exist between what is happening in the picture and what is happening in the church. The border between the sacred and the secular is blurred. It points to the agency of the image, where it can overcome its own materiality. It can be both a reason for and a result of a mystic vision.²³² This shows us how important knowledge about the recipients' users' perspective is. Although patronage studies have received more and more attention in the last decades, I think that this particular issue has not been discussed enough and thus needs deeper exploration. The reciprocal relationship between the artwork and the viewer occurring in the Late Medieval Art is still an open topic demanding

²³² Laugerud, H., (2015), p. 54

thorough research. This would undoubtedly contribute to a better understanding of Medieval Art and patronage.

List of illustrations

Figure 1

Jan van Eyck, (1436) *The Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele*, [oil on panel], Groeningemuseum, Bruges. Retrieved from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jan_van_Eyck_069.jpg

Figure 2

Jan van Eyck, (1434-35), *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Rollin*, [oil on panel], Louvre, Paris

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Eyck_madonna_rolin.jpg

Figure 3

Hans Memling, 1484, *Moreel Triptych*, [oil on panel] Groeningemuseum, Brugge. Retrieved from:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Moreel_Triptych#/media/File:Memling_Triptych_of_Family_Moreel.jpg

Figure 4

Philip the Good at the mass, *Traité sur l'Oraison Dominicale*, Jean le Tavernier, 1457, Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale, ms 9092, fol. 9r. Retrieved from:

http://employees.oneonta.edu/farberas/arth/Images/ARTH_214images/Manuscripts/Burgundian_Presentation/BR_9092_f9.jpg

Figure 5

Margaret of Cleves kneeling before the Virgin, *Hours of Margaret of Cleves*, (*Ms l.a.148*), Lisboa, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Portugal Holland, Haia, ca. 1395-1400, 283 fls.

Retrieved from:

https://gulbenkian.pt/museu/en/works_museu/hours-of-margaret-of-cleves/

Figure 6

The Passion Retable, (1520-1525), St Pierre- és-Liens, Ricey-Bas, [carved wood retable], Les Riceys

Retrieved from:

<http://a53.idata.over-blog.com/2/61/81/68/Les-riceys/Les-Riceys--15-.jpg>

Figure 7

Detail: The Passion Retable, (1520-1525), St Pierre- és-Liens, Ricey-Bas, [carved wood retable], Les Riceys

Retrieved from:

[https://www.aube-champagne.com/en/poi/eglise-saint-pierre-es-liens-4/#prettyPhoto\[rel-4944-1003736931\]/1/](https://www.aube-champagne.com/en/poi/eglise-saint-pierre-es-liens-4/#prettyPhoto[rel-4944-1003736931]/1/)

Figure 8

Hans Memling, (1487), *Virgin and Child and Maarten van Nieuwenhove* from, [oil on panel], Old Saint John's Hospital, Bruges

Retrieved from:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/26/Hans_Memling_Virgin_and_Child.jpg

Figure 9

Detail: Hans Memling, (1487), *Virgin and Child and Maarten van Nieuwenhove* from, [oil on panel], Old Saint John's Hospital, Bruges

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diptych_of_Maarten_van_Nieuwenhove#/media/File:Hans_Memling_-_Diptych_of_Maarten_Nieuwenhove_\(detail\)_-WGA14957.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Diptych_of_Maarten_van_Nieuwenhove#/media/File:Hans_Memling_-_Diptych_of_Maarten_Nieuwenhove_(detail)_-WGA14957.jpg)

Figure 10

Detail: Hans Memling, (1487), *Virgin and Child and Maarten van Nieuwenhove* from, [oil on panel], Old Saint John's Hospital, Bruges

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/26/Hans_Memling_Virgin_and_Child.jpg

Figure 11

Rogier van der Wyden, (1442), *Miraflores Altarpiece*, [oil on panel], Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

Retrieved from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?sort=relevance&search=Miraflores+altarpiece&title=Special:Search&profile=advanced&fulltext=1&advancedSearch-current=%7B%7D&ns0=1&ns6=1&ns12=1&ns14=1&ns100=1&ns106=1&searchToken=8d1ckpzlx55p0e6e6rr5esm1n#%2Fmedia%2FFile%3ABerl%C3%ADn_Miraflores_01.JPG

Figure 12

Robert Campin, (1427-32), *Merode Altarpiece*, [oil on panel], Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Retrieved from:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/e/ef/Robert_Campin_-_Triptych_with_the_Annunciation%2C_known_as_the_%22Merode_Altarpiece%22_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Figure 13

Detail: Robert Campin, (1427-32), *Merode Altarpiece*, [oil on panel], Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

Retrieved from:

[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:M%C3%A9rode_Altarpiece_by_the_workshop_of_Robert_Campin,_left_panel#/media/File:Annunciation_Triptych_\(Merode_Altarpiece\)_MET_DT7256.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:M%C3%A9rode_Altarpiece_by_the_workshop_of_Robert_Campin,_left_panel#/media/File:Annunciation_Triptych_(Merode_Altarpiece)_MET_DT7256.jpg)

Figure 14

Hans Memling, (1471-73), *The Last Judgment*, [oil on panel], Muzeum Narodowe, Gdansk

Retrieved from:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/9/9b/Hans_Memling_-_Last_Judgment_Triptych_%28open%29_-_WGA14829.jpg

Figure 15

Hans Memling, (1471-73), *The Last Judgment*, [oil on panel], Muzeum Narodowe, Gdansk

Retrieved from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?sort=relevance&search=the+last+judgment+hans+memling+closed&title=Special%3ASearch&profile=advanced&fulltext=1&advancedSearch-current=%7B%7D&ns0=1&ns6=1&ns12=1&ns14=1&ns100=1&ns106=1#/media/File:Memling_-_giudizio_universale_20.jpg

Figure 16

Detail: Jan van Eyck, (1434-35), *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Rollin*, [oil on panel], Louvre, Paris

Retrieved from:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/3/33/Virgin_with_Chancellor_Rolin-Detail.jpg

Figure 17

Jan van Eyck (1426-8), *Madonna in a Church*, [oil on panel], Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

Retrieved from:

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Category:Madonna_in_a_Church_-_Jan_van_Eyck_-_Gem%C3%A4ldegalerie#/media/File:Jan_van_Eyck_-_The_Madonna_in_the_Church_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg

Figure 18

Detail: Jan van Eyck, (1436) *The Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele*, [oil on panel], Groeningemuseum, Bruges

Retrieved from:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/5/5f/Canon_van_der_Paele_%28Book_and_Glasses%29_Van_Eyck.jpg

Figure 19

Gerard David, (1501), *Diptych of Bernardijn Salvati*, reconstruction, [oil on panel], left wing: National Gallery, London, right wing: Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

Retrieved from:

Hand, J., O., Sponk, R., (ed.). (2007), *Essays in context: unfolding the Netherlandish diptych*, New Heaven, Yale University Press, pp. 238-239

Figure 20

Gerard David, (1501), *Diptych of Bernardijn Salvati*, reconstruction, [oil on panel], left wing: National Gallery, London, right wing: Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

Retrieved from:

Hand, J., O., Sponk, R., (ed.). (2007), *Essays in context: unfolding the Netherlandish diptych*, New Heaven, Yale University Press, pp. 240

Figure 21

Plan, 1773, former church of Notre-Dame-du-Chastel, Autun. Destroyed (photo: Archives - departementales de Côte d'Or.)

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Figure 22

Gerard Loyet, (1470), *Charles the Bold kneeling while being presented by Saint George*, [gold and silver figurine], Le trésor de la cathédrale de Liège, Liège

Retrieved from:

https://www.wga.hu/html_m/l/loyet/reliquar.html

Figure 23

Limbourg Brothers, Augustus and the Tiburtine Sibyl. Chantilly, *Les Très Riches Heures du duc de Berry*, (Ms65), Bibliothèque du château de Chantilly, Cantilly, France, fol 22

Harbison, C., 2 (1985), 'Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish paintings', Netherlands, *Quarterly for the History of Art*, Vol. 15, No. 2, pp. 87-118, p. 91

Figure24

Detail: Jan van Eyck, (1434-35), *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Rollin*, [oil on panel], Louvre, Paris

<http://clostovaneyck.kikirpa.be> , © KIK-IRPA, Brussels.

Figure 25

Rogier van der Weyden, Presentation of the Manuscript to Philip the Good, in Jean Wauquelin, *Chroniques de Hainaut*, 1446-1450, (Ms 9242), Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels, Belgium, fol 1

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/1/1a/Rogier_van_der_Weyden_-_Presentation_Miniaature%2C_Chroniques_de_Hainaut_KBR_9242.jpg

Figure 26

Jean Miélot presenting his translation of the *Traité sur l'Oraison Dominicale* to Philip the Good. Flamish ca. 1457, (ms 9092), Brussels, Bibliothèque Royale Albert I^{er}, fol 1r

Retrieved from:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean_Mi%C3%A9lot#/media/File:Jean_Mi%C3%A9lot_Presentation.jpg

Figure 27

Drawing, Paris Bibliothèque de l'Arsenal, Ms. 3901, after the lost votive state of Dino Rapondi

Retrieved from:

https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a7/Dinus_rapondi.JPG

Figure 28

Rogier van der Weyden (1443), *The Last Judgment*, [oil on panel], Hospices de Beaune, Beaune

Retrieved from:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaune_Altarpiece#/media/File:Rogier_van_der_Weyden_\(1399of_1400-1464\)_Het_Laatste_Oordeel_-_H%C3%B4tel-Dieu_Beaune_22-10-2016_13-55-42.JPG](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaune_Altarpiece#/media/File:Rogier_van_der_Weyden_(1399of_1400-1464)_Het_Laatste_Oordeel_-_H%C3%B4tel-Dieu_Beaune_22-10-2016_13-55-42.JPG)

Figure 29

Detail: Rogier van der Weyden (1443), *The Last Judgment*, Hospices de Beaune, [oil on panel], Beaune

Retrieved from:

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaune_Altarpiece#/media/File:Rogier_van_der_Weyden_\(1399of_1400-1464\)_Het_Laatste_Oordeel_gesloten_luiken_-_H%C3%B4tel-Dieu_Beaune_22-10-2016_13-56-37.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Beaune_Altarpiece#/media/File:Rogier_van_der_Weyden_(1399of_1400-1464)_Het_Laatste_Oordeel_gesloten_luiken_-_H%C3%B4tel-Dieu_Beaune_22-10-2016_13-56-37.jpg)

Figure 30

Detail: Rogier van der Weyden (1443), *The Last Judgment*, Hospices de Beaune, [oil on panel], Beaune

Retrieved from:

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Figure 31

Jan van Eyck, (1432), Ghent Altarpiece, [oil on panel], St Bavo Cathedral, Ghent

Retrieved from:

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Figure 32

Jean Bondol, Jean de Vaudeter presenting the book to Charles V in *Vaudetar Bible*, 1372, (Ms. 10B 23) Museum Meermanno-Westreenianum, the Hague, Netherlands, fol 2

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Figure 33

Lez quinze ioies nostre dame in *Legiloque Compendium*, 1325-1350, (Ms. fr. 1136), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France, fol 134^r

Retrieved from:

Kumler, A., (2013), *A Patron-Function* in Hourihane, C., (ed.). *Patronage, Power and Agency in Medieval Art*, Princeton, Index of Christian Art, p.311

Figure 34

Un petit liuret à l'essample dou rossignolet in *Legiloque Compendium*, 1325-1350, (Ms. fr. 1136), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France, fol 143^v

Retrieved from:

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Figure 35

1 Liure de uie et aguillon d'amour et de devotion in *Legiloque Compendium*, 1325-1350, (Ms. fr. 1136), Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, France, fol 143^v

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Illustrations



Figure 2 Jan van Eyck, (1436) *The Virgin and Child with Canon van der Paele*, [oil on panel], Groeningemuseum, Bruges

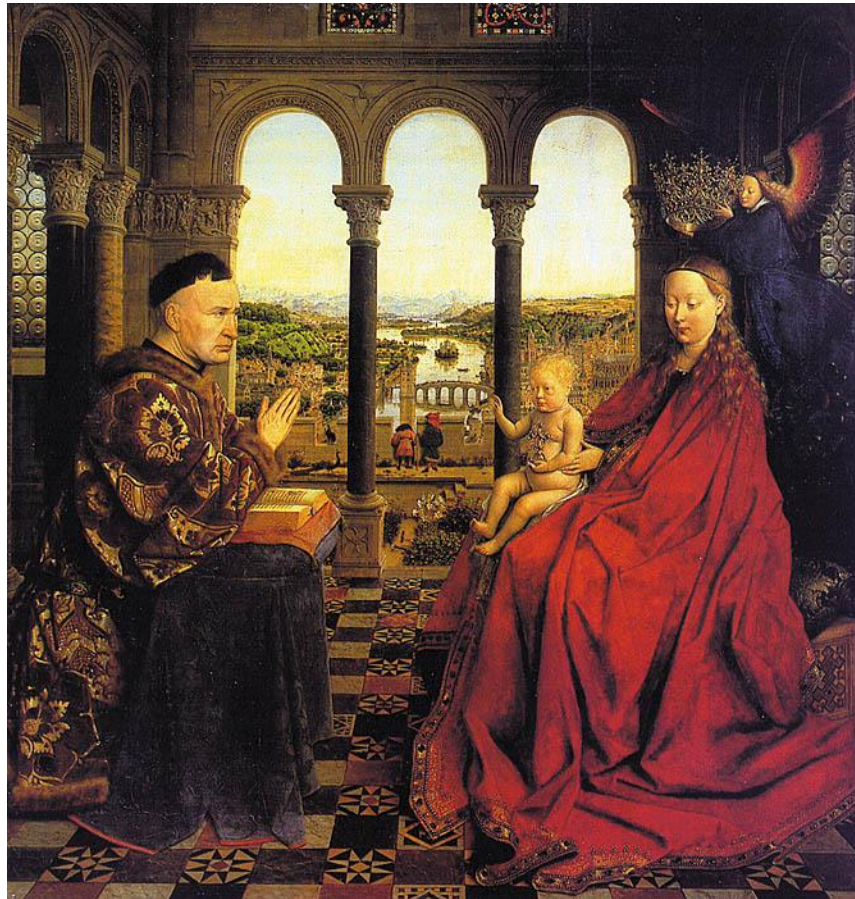


Figure 3 Jan van Eyck, (1434-35), *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Rollin*, [oil on panel], Louvre, Paris

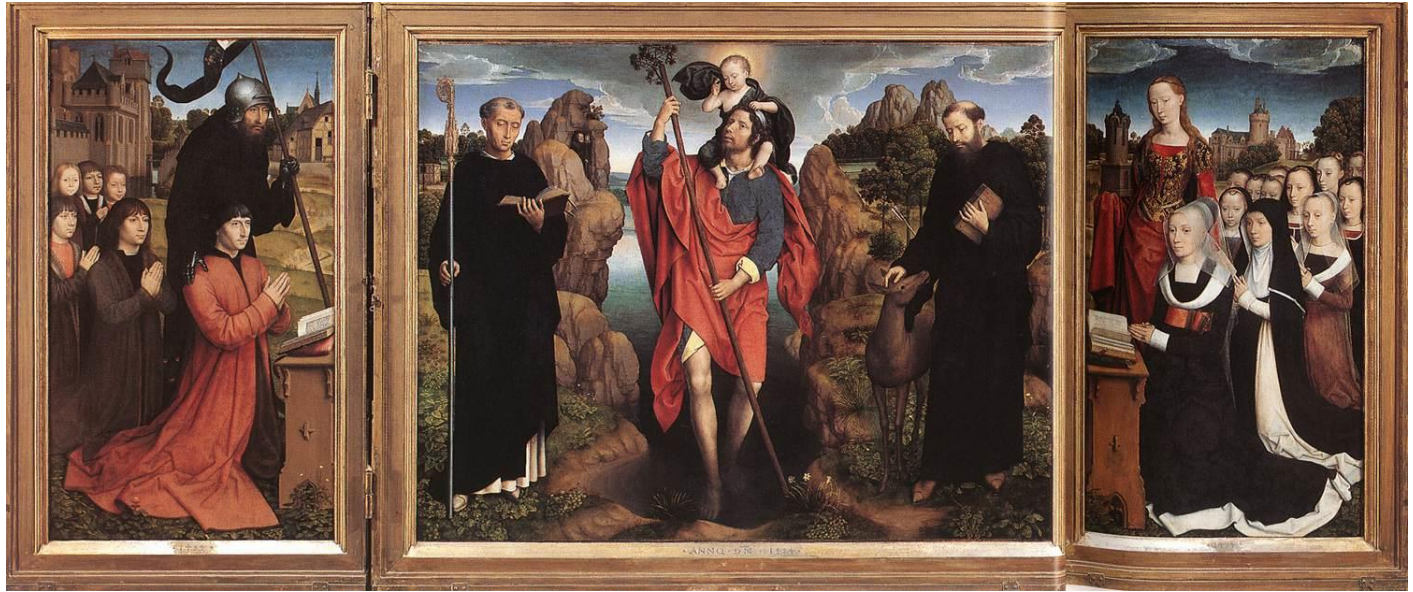


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Figure 14 Detail: Robert Campin, (1427-32), Merode Altarpiece, [oil on panel], Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York

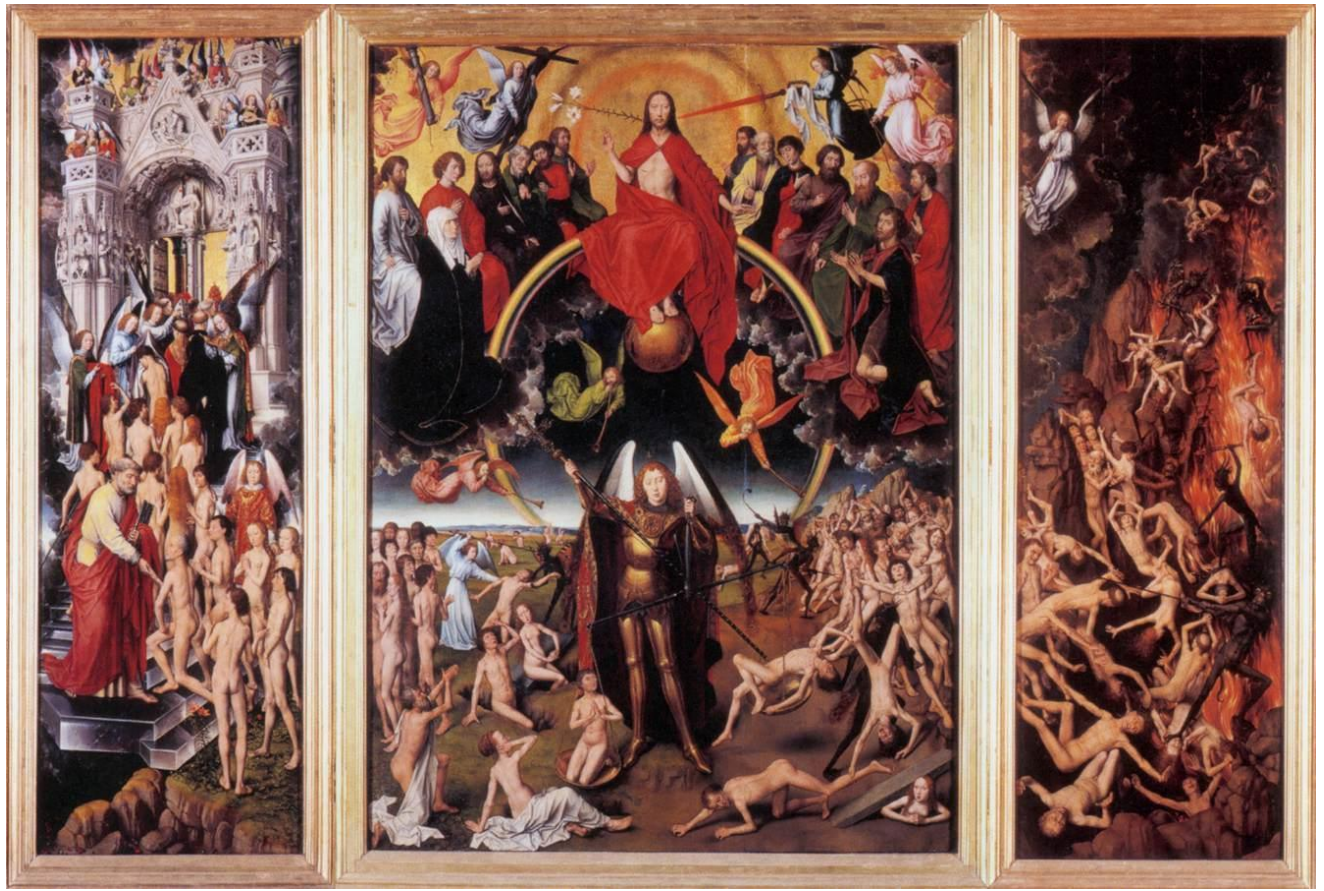


Figure 15 Hans Memling, (1471-73), *The Last Judgment*, [oil on panel], Muzeum Narodowe, Gdansk

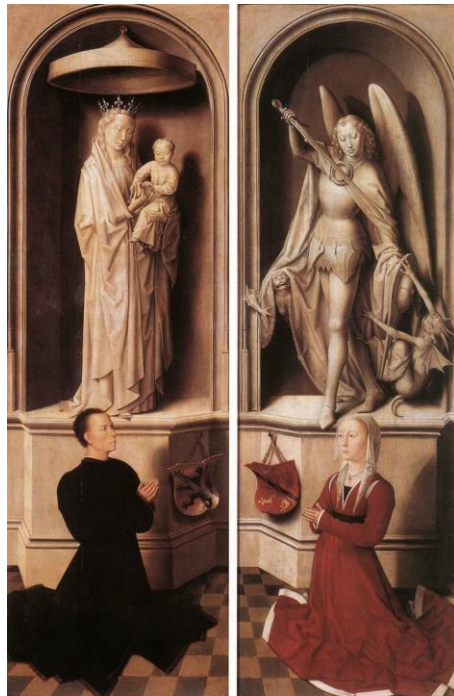


Figure 16 Detail: Hans Memling, (1471-73), *The Last Judgment*, [oil on panel], Muzeum Narodowe, Gdansk

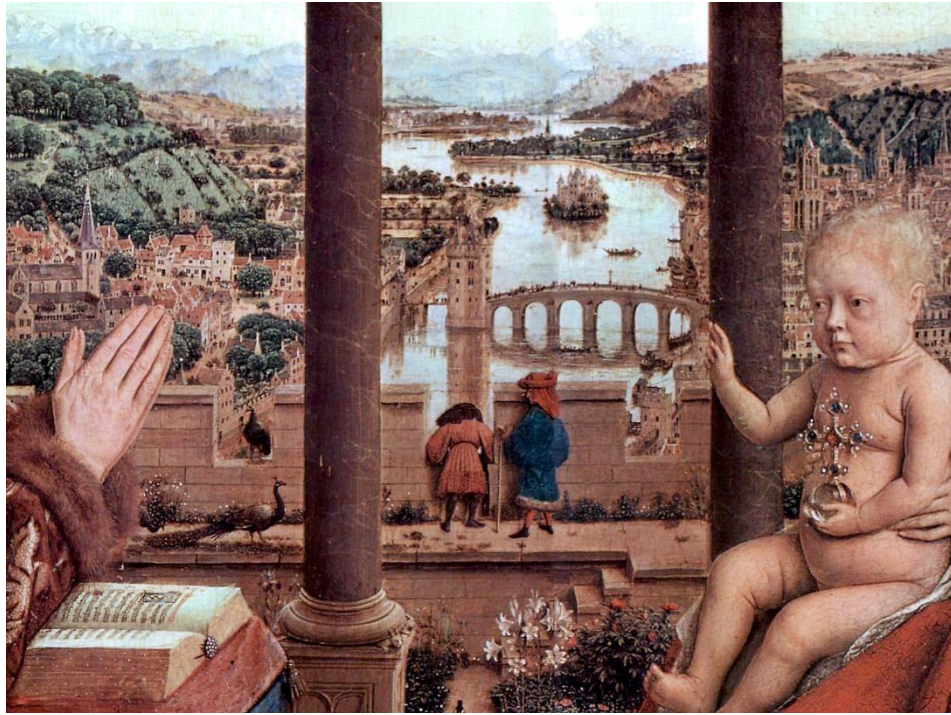


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Figure 21 Gerard David, (1501), Diptych of Bernardijn Salvati, reconstruction, left wing: National Gallery, London, right wing: [oil on panel], Gemäldegalerie, Berlin

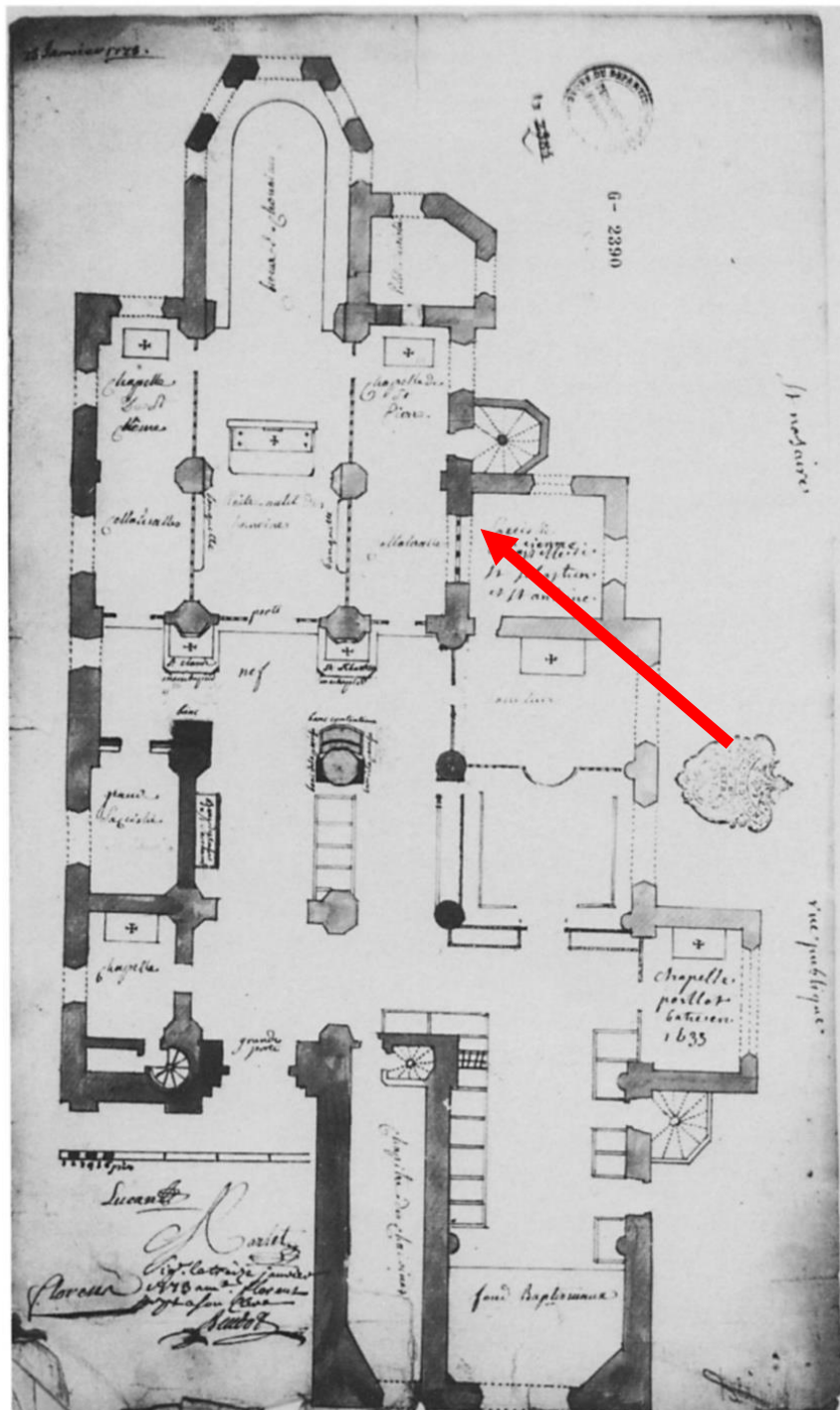


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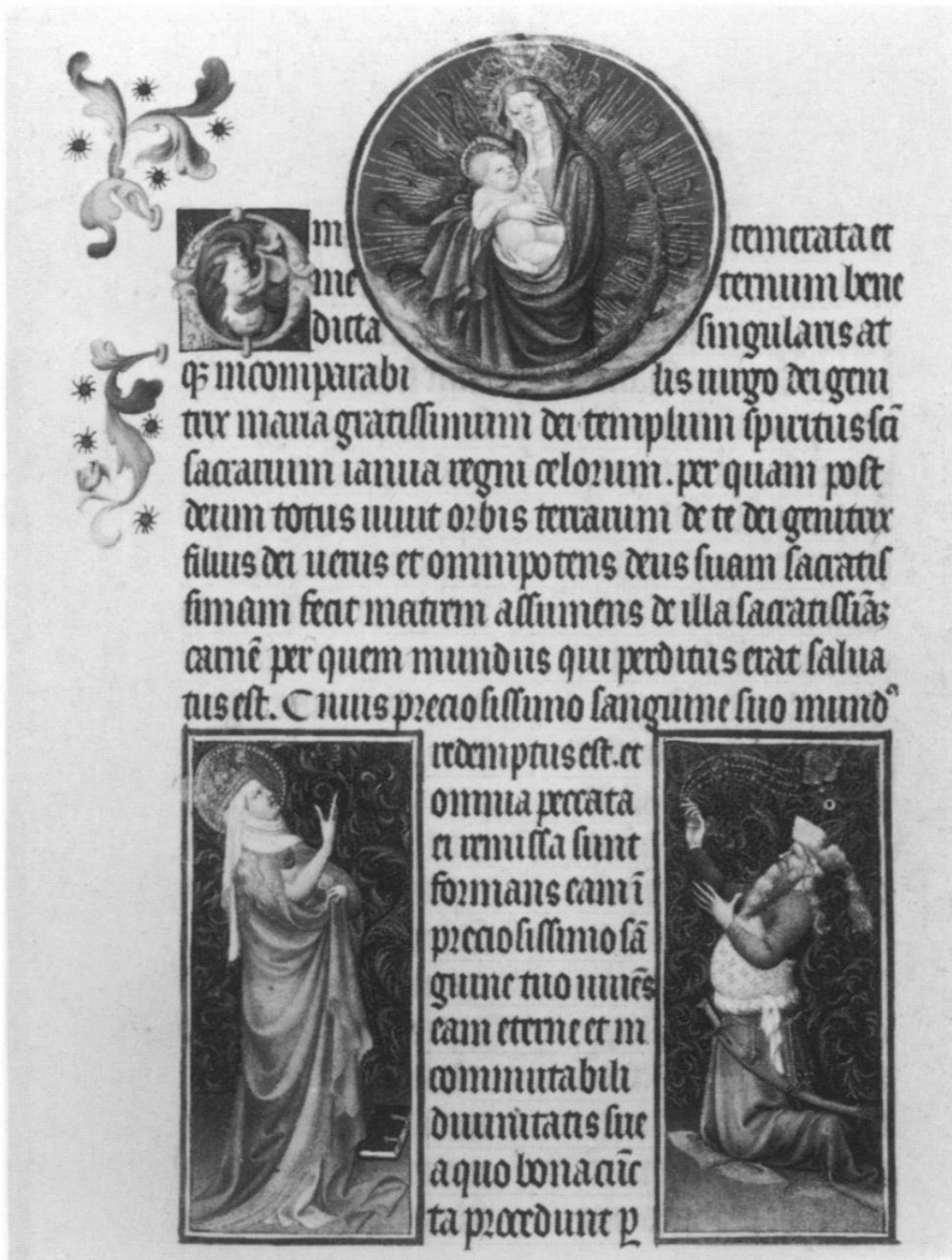


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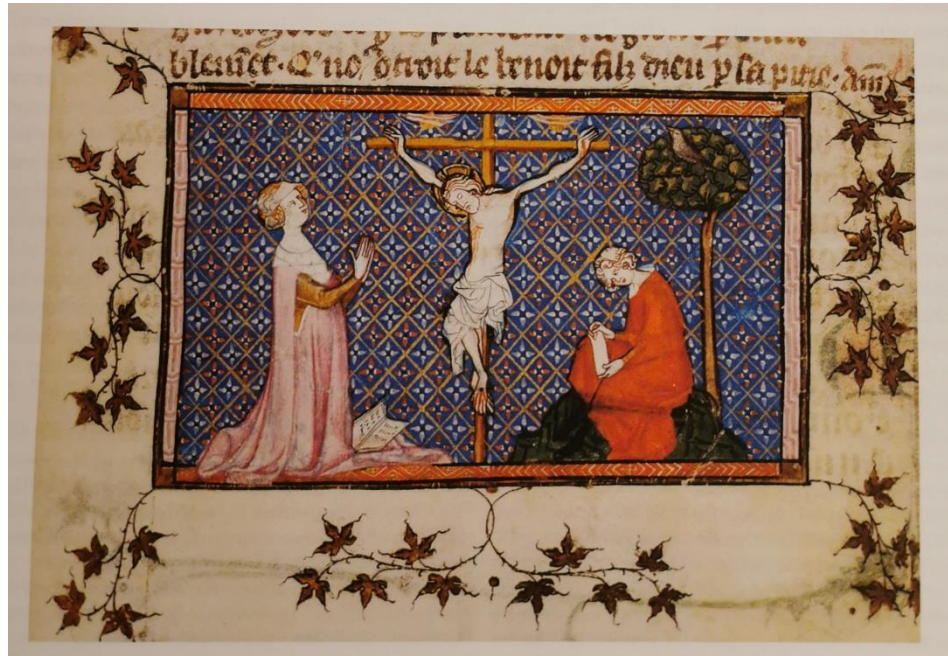


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