

# Embedded Old Testament Iconography

Its functions and meaning in Netherlandish and  
German paintings of the 'Annunciation'  
(c. 1400-1550)



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Research Institute for History and Culture  
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Hendrik Eising

(0451282)

Supervisor: Prof. Dr. Jeroen Stumpel  
Second reader: Dr. Ann-Sophie Lehmann

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*'Der liebe Gott steckt im Detail'*  
- Aby Warburg



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# Introduction

Standing in front of Jan van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* of c. 1434 (Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art; see ill. SN3a on p. 136), an attentive viewer would likely notice the abundance of Old Testament figures depicted in the scene's church-like interior. These figures are depicted as murals, in stained glass or as nielli in the foreground. A real hunter of iconographic details might even also notice, to his astonishment, that the figures of Moses, Jacob, and Isaac are actually depicted with haloes. As these obviously are no Christian saints, one could assume that they are depicted as 'Jewish saints'. This would suggest that van Eyck's New Testament scene is in fact supposed to be set in a Jewish temple, with the interior decorated with Jewish saints, just as a church would be decorated with images and statues of Christian saints. Surprisingly, when searching for confirmation that this interpretation might actually be correct, one would be hard pressed to find any literature on this subject, as most scholars never considered the possibility of any other model of interpretation than the one prescribed by their predecessors. This thesis is intended as a start at filling up this gap.

Fifteenth-century Netherlandish painting in general is often characterized by its precise and delicate manner of painting, and its recreation of the visible world through an imposing amount of detail. Next to van Eyck (c. 1395-1441), the main representatives of this art are, of course, the Master of Flémalle (often identified as Robert Campin; c. 1375-1444) and Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1399-1464). Additionally, dozens of their contemporaries and followers, throughout Europe, tried to copy or even emulate their work. Van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* is therefore only a foremost example of a growing fifteenth-century artistic tradition, that is the enrichment of New Testament scenes with the depiction of Old Testament figures as lifeless decoration or art works, in a variety of different possible media. For example, a statue of Moses might be included in the background of a scene set in the Temple of Jerusalem, or the Virgin might be reading a book decorated with a miniature of King David. The reason why one would be hard pressed to find any literature on the above mentioned interpretation of these so called 'images of the second degree', or – following up on the terminology suggested by Kemp and Ward – 'embedded images', is that the majority of scholars has interpreted this iconography in a typological manner, that is, stressing the transition, antithesis or prophecy of the Old Testament with respect to the New.<sup>1</sup>

In art and theology, the stories and characters of the Old Testament have been related and intertwined with the New Testament since Early Christianity. Up until the fourteenth century, however, Western artists generally let Old and New Testament figures coexist in the same plane, as if

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<sup>1</sup> Kemp speaks of 'embedded narratives', and Ward proposed the term 'embedded symbolism'. See Wolfgang Kemp, *Die Räume der Maler. Zur Bilderzählung seit Giotto*, 1996, p. 100, and John L. Ward, 'Disguised Symbolism as Enactive Symbolism in Van Eyck's Paintings', *Artibus et Historiae* 15 (1994), No. 29, p. 11.

they had been contemporaries. Alternatively, they depicted them in a connecting context, yet in separate, independent scenes (p. 45, ill. 3). With the growing naturalism in the depiction of the spatial and chronological contexts of fourteenth- and fifteenth-century religious scenes, it is thought that the 'Old Testament' was literally placed in the background, either integrated in the painted architecture or as part of the interior decoration.

It was Erwin Panofsky (1892-1968) who, with his hugely influential interpretations of fifteenth-century art works, published from the 1930s to early 1950s, genuinely discussed this embedded iconography for the first time. It was also Panofsky who in his iconic studies stressed the supposed typological meaning of these embedded Old Testament figures, leaving little room for other interpretations or explanations for their inclusion. As a result of Panofsky's influence, most scholars of the second half of the twentieth century, up to the present day, have interpreted embedded Old Testament iconography accordingly.

However, Panofsky largely based his interpretations on personal, subjective assumptions. One of these was that medieval theological traditions could almost automatically be applied to fifteenth-century art. Furthermore, he never considered the most basic of questions: why did artists go to all the trouble of including these Old Testament details? And how did this tradition of including embedded Old Testament iconography come about and develop over time? Perhaps artists, or their patrons, had other motivations for the inclusion of this iconography than referring to typology. It might for example have been a means to allude to the historical and cultural context of the New Testament scenes – hence the halo around Moses' head.

The problem is that there has never been a study pure on embedded Old Testament iconography alone, at least not without resorting to the conventional strategy of automatically identifying this iconography as an expression of typology. The current thesis was therefore born out of a desire to deconstruct this art historical problem built on twentieth-century historiography, and instead take back a step and consider the more basic aspects of and questions surrounding this topic. It is therefore the purpose and central research problem of this study to analyze and discuss the possible functions and meaning of embedded Old Testament iconography. The analysis of the historiography of this subject is therefore essential, in order to properly understand, and put into context, previous interpretations by art historians. Secondly, in order to grasp the role of embedded Old Testament iconography in painting, its origins and development should be known. More important even is the consideration concerning the possible motives of artists, or their patrons, for including this iconography. With regards to particular paintings, the correct identification of the embedded figures is of course of the utmost importance. Additionally, the style and medium of the figures might be informative on their function in the composition, as is their position in relation to the main scene. In order for this study to remain comprehensible, the analyses presented here will be

limited to depictions of the 'Annunciation' on panel and canvas, painted in the Netherlands and Germany between c. 1400 and c. 1550.<sup>2</sup>

The 'Annunciation' was chosen as sample of a New Testament scene, as it was one of the most popular subjects in fifteenth-century art. As a result, there are sufficient *Annunciations* featuring embedded iconography to illustrate certain developments, and make comparisons. Additionally, the 'Annunciation' has also been one of the most discussed and analyzed Christian subjects in art history, and therefore is an interesting topic for historiographical analysis. Lastly, the representation of the 'Annunciation' is generally quite uncomplicated, with only two main characters and very little diversity in setting, which also allows for easier comparisons.

Of course, Netherlandish art was chosen as it was especially in the Low Countries that embedded iconography flourished in art. German art was added, as certain regions of Germany, such as the Rhineland, were strongly influenced by fifteenth-century Netherlandish art, while other regions, such as Franconia, less so. A comparison between these regions might be informative about whether the inclusion of embedded iconography was mostly a result of artistic motivations, such as the wish to copy or emulate Flemish painters, or due to religious, devotional concerns on behalf of the patrons.

The analyses were limited to works on panel and canvas, as the number of works of this category with Old Testament figures are still somewhat manageable, as opposed to manuscript illumination, and illustrative material is more widely available. However, when vital to the argumentation, manuscript illumination will also be included, as this art form can definitely be considered to have been the more progressive medium, and strongly influential on panel and canvas painting.<sup>3</sup>

The chronological parameters were set by Melchior Broederlam (active 1381-1410), the first Franco-Flemish artist to include embedded Old Testament iconography in one of his panel paintings, and the significant decline of *Annunciations* featuring embedded Old Testament iconography after c. 1550. The first half of the sixteenth century, on the other hand, was of great importance to the codification and standardization of Old Testament iconography, and consequently also to typology.

Regarding the structure of this thesis, in Chapter I, the general problem of embedded Old Testament iconography will be discussed. The first part of the chapter consists of an overview of the academic historiography concerning this topic, followed by a discussion on typology. Consequently, an overview is presented of the artistic development of Judeo-Christian embedded iconography, from the beginning of the fourteenth century to the middle of the sixteenth century. This overview is

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<sup>2</sup> As much as possible, the 'Annunciation' will refer to the scene depicted in the painting, the *Annunciation* will refer to the art object in question, and the Annunciation will refer to the biblical and theological concept.

<sup>3</sup> See also Anne Hagopian van Buren, 'Thoughts, Old and New, on the Sources of Early Netherlandish Painting', *Simiolus* 16 (1986), No. 2/3, p. 94.

followed by discussions about whether the media chosen to represent Old Testament iconography with had any particular relevance other than esthetics, and on who's initiative this iconography might have been included. A main element of Chapter I is the discussion on the possible motives for the inclusion of embedded Old Testament iconography, other than typology. Lastly, the chapter ends with a short discussion on supposed architectural symbolism in fifteenth-century painting related to the interpretation of Old Testament iconography.

Chapter II solely concerns the subject of the 'Annunciation'. The chapter begins with an overview of the general iconography of the 'Annunciation' and the traditional possible settings of the scene. The second paragraph discusses the most important texts concerning the Annunciation in relation to the Old Testament, from Early Christianity to the late Middle Ages. Comparable to Chapter I, the art historical development of *Annunciations* featuring embedded Old Testament iconography is presented, followed by a discussion on 'Annunciations' set in an explicitly Hebrew context. The chapter ends with a summary of the findings discussed in Chapter III, and, lastly, an overview of the influence of northern *Annunciations* featuring embedded Old Testament iconography in France, Italy and Spain.

Chapter III consists of a Catalogue of over fifty Netherlandish and German *Annunciations* featuring embedded Old Testament iconography.

Naturally, the study of such a topic such is not without its hazards; one of the great dangers is the likelihood of over-interpretation. Ernst Gombrich, for example, once asked a question very relevant to this topic: '...where [...] does the meaning end and the decorative pattern begin?'<sup>4</sup> In other words, where should one draw the line in searching for meaning and the artist's intention of communicating a particular idea? For that matter, with the exception of the advancements in current technical research such as infrared-reflectography, the possibilities of academic research have not progressed much since Panofsky. We are still crippled by the lack of the most basic conditions for finding answers; 'First, it seems to be [...] evident that the meaning of works of northern art from this period cannot be adequately defined by analyses, no matter how full, of their iconographic content; [...] Second, we may have to recourse to bodies of textual evidence to help us identify and understand some or all of the 'things' represented in art of this period, or to define some of the concerns which motivated aspects of artistic change.'<sup>5</sup> Unfortunately, the lack of textual evidence is one of the most fundamental problems regarding the study of this art historical period.

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<sup>4</sup> Ernst H. Gombrich. 'Aims and Limits in Iconology', in idem, *Symbolic Images. Studies in the Art of the Renaissance II* (1972), p. 3.

<sup>5</sup> James H. Marrow, 'Symbol and Meaning in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and the Early Renaissance', *Simiolus* 16 (1986), No. 2/3, p. 169.



Of course, a study such as this, written over the period of five months in the context of a Research Master's Program, cannot be without its faults. Especially due to time constraints, various errors have most likely been made and essential aspects may have been excluded from the discussion. One of these is the discussion on the possible influences of different theological philosophies on embedded iconography, such as Nominalism, Scholasticism and the *Devotia Moderna*. Additionally, the Catalogue would have greatly benefited if the embedded iconography in the *Annunciations* that are, or were, part of larger altarpieces, would have been analyzed in the context of the embedded iconography in the entire altarpieces. Additionally, despite great efforts to ground the research presented here on a solid foundation of previously published studies, it was not possible to consult every publication. Lastly, it is also necessary to ask to look past the probably regular incorrect use of the English language in this thesis.

Despite of these faults, this study can hopefully provide a minor addition to a renewed analysis and reconsideration of embedded Old Testament iconography, and not only shed new light on the function and purpose of this specific iconography, but also on the spread of style and iconography across Europe, the consciousness of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century artists, patrons, and viewers of past historical periods and different cultural contexts, and our understanding of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century perceptions of Judaism.

I would like to thank, first of all, Prof. Dr. Jeroen Stumpel, my thesis advisor, for guiding me through the daunting process of writing this thesis, with wisdom and good humor, and for indulging me in writing this massive text. I would also like to thank Dr. Ann-Sophie Lehmann, for her willingness to be this thesis' second reader. Many thanks also go out to Prof. Dr. Jochen Sander and Dr. Stephan Kemperdick, for their personal help, suggestions and advice. Further thanks go out to Dr. Uta Neidhardt, Prof. Dr. Peter Hecht, Dr. Almut Pollmer-Schmidt, Dr. Jessica Buskirk, Ulrike Müller, Mascha Justus, Eleonora Höschele, and Dr. Johan Plasman, for their discussions, information and any other form of help they provided. Finally, I would like to thank my family, who has seen too little of me this past period, and Juliane, who is indescribable, for all that she has done for me.

## Chapter I:

# The problem of embedded Old Testament iconography

# 1. Historiography

Up until the early twentieth century, scholars paid little, if any, attention to the depiction of embedded Old Testament iconography in fifteenth- or sixteenth-century New Testament scenes.<sup>6</sup> Nineteenth-century scholars would no more than state the fact of their inclusion, without further explanation or interpretation, if at all. Even in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century sources no acknowledgment can be found concerning the existence of Old Testament figures depicted in scenes of the New Testament.

## *Mâle*

The consideration over the meaning of embedded Old Testament iconography in Christian settings was given a major impulse by Émile Mâle (1862-1954) and his series *l'Art religieux [...] en France*. In *l'Art religieux du XIIIe siècle en France* (1899) and *l'Art religieux de la fin du Moyen Âge en France* (1908), the French art historian provides some of the first and, at the time, most thorough studies of medieval, sacral art in France, including the iconographic relationship between the Old and the New Testament. Analyzing the decorative programs of French Gothic cathedrals, Mâle concludes that for thirteenth century artists, the Old Testament was 'a vast prefiguration of the New': 'With the Church Doctors as their guides, they chose a certain number of Old Testament scenes and placed them in correspondence with scenes from the Gospels, in order to make clear the perfect concordance of the two.'<sup>7</sup> According to Mâle, for the medieval believer the Old Testament solely had meaning in relation to the New Testament, and therefore any Old Testament figure or scene referred to a New Testament equivalent and should be interpreted accordingly.

In his follow-up study of fifteenth-century religious art, the French art historian points out that, during that period, Old Testament iconography was continuously used in a 'prefigurative' or 'typological' manner (see the following paragraph (par.)).<sup>8</sup> The French scholar explicitly considered the work of late-medieval artists to consist of copies, or even devaluations, of their thirteenth-century predecessors, while medieval iconography was merely repeated: 'Not all the fruit of theological teaching or the study of the old commentators, [...] this servile imitation seemingly

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<sup>6</sup> Iconography itself was considered to be nothing more than an auxiliary subject, and the discipline of art history was dominated by a preoccupation with form and style analysis. 'Content' in general was of no more than secondary importance. See Michael Ann Holly, *Panofsky and the foundations of art history*, 1984, p. 24, and Henri van de Waal, *In memoriam Erwin Panofsky, March 30, 1892-March 14, 1968*, 1972, p. 7.

<sup>7</sup> Émile Mâle, *Religious art in France: the thirteenth century: a study of medieval iconography and its sources*, 1984, p. 138.

<sup>8</sup> However, he does not specifically discuss Old Testament figures actually embedded in New Testament scenes.

devoid of any thought, attests to the incapability of the fifteenth-century artists to bring the ancient symbols to life.<sup>9</sup>

### *Panofsky*

Although Mâle's critical assessment of fifteenth-century (French!) iconography was not shared by many other scholars, his notion that medieval Old Testament iconography had a prefigurative or typological function would be a major element of Panofsky's interpretation of Netherlandish art of that age. Panofsky, if not the first, than in any case the most prominent and influential art historian to study embedded Old Testament iconography, developed, from the 1930s on, a new 'iconological' system of interpretation, which would become paramount to the study of this subject.<sup>10</sup>

In his 1939 *Studies in Iconology: humanistic themes in the art of Renaissance*, Panofsky formally describes the three layers, or 'strata' of interpretation. These consist of an art work's primary or natural subject matter (the pre-iconographical layer, concerning pure forms, factual analysis, and, if possible, expressional qualities), the secondary or conventional subject matter (the iconographical layer, concerning artistic motifs connected to themes and concepts), and, lastly, intrinsic meaning or content (the iconological or symbolical layer, connecting an art work's iconography with the personal, cultural and historical history of the work, its creator and the public).<sup>11</sup> As Panofsky states, the iconological layer reveals 'the basic attitude of a nation, a period, a class, a religious or philosophical persuasion – *unconsciously* qualified by one personality and condensed into one work.'<sup>12</sup> In order to determine the iconological meaning of a work of art, a deeper knowledge and understanding of (contemporary) literary texts should be combined with the visual image.<sup>13</sup>

Panofsky's iconological method caused a definite paradigm shift in the field of art history and opened the gates to a new but soon very popular sub-discipline of iconology. However, with his 1953 *Early Netherlandish Painting: its origins and character*, Panofsky caused a perhaps even greater shift in the study of pre-modern art. This was not only due to his actual analysis of and research on fifteenth-century Netherlandish painting – specifically of the works of the Master of Flémalle, the van Eycks and Rogier van der Weyden – but also as a result of the book's fifth chapter, called 'Reality and

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<sup>9</sup> Émile Mâle, *Religious art in France: the late Middle Ages: a study of medieval iconography and its sources*, 1986, pp. 216-17.

<sup>10</sup> The first publications in which Panofsky discussed the iconological interpretation of images are: Erwin Panofsky, *Hercules am Scheidewege und andere antike Bildstoffe in der neueren Kunst*, 1930. Erwin Panofsky, 'Zum Problem der Beschreibung und Inhaltsdeutung von Werken der bildenden Kunst', *Logos: internationale Zeitschrift für Philosophie der Kultur* 21 (1932), pp. 103-19. Erwin Panofsky, 'Jan van Eyck's 'Arnolfini' Portrait', *The Burlington magazine for connoisseurs* 64 (1934), No. 372 (January), pp. 117-27.

<sup>11</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Studies in Iconology: humanistic themes in the art of the Renaissance*, 1939, pp. 5-8.

<sup>12</sup> *Idem*, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> Italics added.

Symbol in Early Flemish Painting'. In this chapter Panofsky formally defines his concept of 'disguised symbolism'. In medieval art works, figures from the past or future could 'share the stage of time – or, rather, timelessness –' with characters of the present, as this art was non-perspective and non-naturalistic, did not recognize either unity of space or unity of time, and could 'employ symbols without regard for empirical probability or even possibility.'<sup>14</sup> However, as fifteenth-century Flemish painting became more mimetic and naturalistic in its depictions of spatial settings, there was no more room for blatant (religious) symbolism. On the other hand, the world of art could not at once become a world of things devoid of meaning. Therefore, Panofsky argues, religious symbols were integrated in the composition as regular objects or architectural elements: 'A way had to be found to reconcile the new naturalism with a thousand years of Christian tradition.'<sup>15</sup> This meant, for example, that Old Testament prophets could no longer be depicted standing beneath the crucified Christ, but they could be integrated as statues in the house of the Virgin.

With his iconological method, Panofsky intended to reveal the deeper meaning of regular objects and architectural elements in paintings, although he was aware of the hazards of possible over-interpretation, and the false identification of random objects as symbols: 'There is, I am afraid, no other answer to this problem than the use of historical methods tempered, if possible, by common sense. We have to ask ourselves whether or not the symbolical significance of a given motif is a matter of established representational tradition; whether or not a symbolical interpretation can be justified by definite texts or agrees with ideas demonstrably alive in the period and presumably familiar to its artists [...]; and to what extent such a symbolical interpretation is in keeping with the historical position and personal tendencies of the individual master.'<sup>16</sup>

### *Panofsky's legacy*

Contrary to the study of supposed 'disguised symbolism', relatively few scholars have been tempted to focus on the study of embedded Old Testament iconography. On the other hand, where the hunt for disguised symbolism peaked during the 1970s, before slowly becoming an academic curiosity, most research dealing with embedded Old Testament iconography was published during the 1980s and 1990s. It is plausible that the newly regarded 'lack' of disguised symbolism in fifteenth-century Netherlandish art, greater than originally considered, made iconographers and iconologists turn towards religious iconography that was undeniably depicted. Nevertheless, the harvest of publications has been modest, in most cases only concerns Netherlandish art of the first half of the fifteenth century (Van Eyck and the Master of Flémalle, and their circles), and never did the study of

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<sup>14</sup> Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting: its origins and character*, 1953, p. 140.

<sup>15</sup> Idem, pp. 140-41.

<sup>16</sup> Idem, pp. 142-143.

embedded Old Testament iconography become the sole or primary topic of an art historian's research. Besides incidental discussions in monographs discussing fifteenth-century art, the most notable studies are those by Smith, Ward, and Purtle.<sup>17</sup>

Smith, in his analysis of the Prado *Betrothal of the Virgin* (ill. 1) by the Master of Flémalle, was very much influenced by Panofsky and his sense of disguised and architectural symbolism. Yet, in his essay he also discusses in detail the large number of embedded Old Testament figures in the scene. Smith awards them, like Panofsky, a typological meaning, indicating the transition from the Old Testament to the New Testament. Ward might also be valued in the same light as Smith, though especially he was tempted to over-interpret and reach for overly complicated theological meanings, especially in his analysis of van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3; incidentally, the most common subject in the study of embedded Old Testament iconography).<sup>18</sup> However, Ward rightfully restrained himself and tempered his analysis in his re-evaluation of this topic in 1994. Purtle as well tackled the work of Jan van Eyck and especially in her 1999 article greatly contributed to the study of embedded Old Testament iconography. Although she followed Panofsky in her typological interpretation of the painting's iconography and supposed architectural symbolism and mainly interpreted the Old Testament iconography as an indication of the transition from the Old to the New, Purtle's study is well-founded and well-argued, and proved that the subject was still very relevant and alive at the turn of the century.

However unrealistic the notion of upholding Panofsky's three scholarly 'safety checks' mentioned above might be – and have been proven to be – they do properly represent the research, and its problems, of embedded Old Testament iconography of the past sixty years. As already mentioned, Smith, Ward and Purtle, like Panofsky, strongly placed the noted iconography in a typological *tradition* – Panofsky's first check. However, it would not be unfair to suggest that they fitted their iconological interpretations to the tradition of typology, instead of considering whether typology is actually applicable in the case of these works of art. They furthermore presented medieval and fifteenth-century religious *texts* as foundations for their arguments – Panofsky's second check. Lastly, they saw the artists discussed – though admittedly van Eyck more so than the Master of Flémalle – as theologically knowledgeable and highly intelligent individuals tempted or pushed to fill their paintings with multiple and complex layers of meaning.

At the same time, in citing textual sources – though sometimes texts that may not even have been relevant to fifteenth-century Christians – Smith, Ward and Purtle more or less formed

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<sup>17</sup> G. Smith, 'The Betrothal of the Virgin by the Master of Flémalle', *Pantheon* 30 (1972), pp. 115-32, John L. Ward, 'Hidden Symbolism in Jan van Eyck's Annunciations', *The Art Bulletin* 57 (1975), No. 2, pp. 196-220, Ward (op. cit. note 1), pp. 9-53, and Carol J. Purtle, 'Van Eyck's Washington Annunciation: Narrative Time and Metaphoric Tradition', *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999), No. 1, pp. 117-25.

<sup>18</sup> References in brackets, such as (SN3), refer to the Catalogue-entries in Chapter III.

exceptions to a rule that is characterized by iconographical and iconological analyses based on association, personal assumptions, and second- or third-hand sources (one such source being Panofsky). Jakoby, for example, provides an admirable attempt in the identification, analysis and interpretation of embedded Old Testament iconography in Rhinisch and Westphalian *Annunciations*.<sup>19</sup> However, besides some misidentifications (see RH1) and occasional over-interpretations, she bases many of her interpretations on personal assumptions, without referring to other sources. On the other hand, she is less bound by the notion, shared by the scholars mentioned above, that all Old Testament figures should be considered to be typologies.

Lastly, one more recent publication that explicitly discusses embedded Old Testament iconography in late fifteenth- and early sixteenth-century Flemish painting is Cardon's essay 'Typologische beeldvoorstellungen in de late 15de en de vroege 16de eeuw', although the text provides few new insights and its title already bespeaks the basis from which Cardon interprets the works in question.<sup>20</sup>

#### *Different approaches*

During the 1990s, a small number of studies were published which approach the problem of embedded Old Testament iconography from a wholly different perspective, for example by focusing on the medium used to depict the embedded figures and scenes. The highly valuable studies by Steinmetz and Täube discuss the depiction of, respectively, altarpieces and sculpture in paintings, though not necessarily Old Testament in subject.<sup>21</sup> As opposed to the aforementioned art historians, Steinmetz and Täube focus on the form and appearance of these visual elements, not on iconology, tradition or texts, and from there on out try to identify the function and role of these painted objects. Although Täube tends to associate many embedded sculptures with typology, Steinmetz considers the possibility that art works embedded Old Testament figures and scenes might allude to the Jewish character of the main scene's temporal or spatial context.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> Barbara Jakoby, *Der Einfluss niederländischer Tafelmalerei des 15. Jahrhunderts auf die Kunst der benachbarten Rheinlande am Beispiel der Verkündigungsdarstellung in Köln, am Niederrhein und in Westfalen (1440-1490)*, 1987.

<sup>20</sup> Bert Cardon, 'Typologische beeldvoorstellungen in de late 15de en de vroege 16de eeuw', in Maurits Smeyers (ed.), *Dirk Bouts (ca. 1410-1475): een Vlaams primitief te Leuven*, exh. cat. Louvain (Sint-Pieterskerk and Predikherenkerk) 1998, pp. 109-26.

<sup>21</sup> Anja Sibylle Steinmetz, *Das Altarretabel in der altniederländischen Malerei: Untersuchung zur Darstellung eines sakralen Requisites vom frühen 15. bis zum späten 16. Jahrhundert*, 1995, and Dagmar R. Täube, *Monochrome gemalte Plastik: Entwicklung, Verbreitung und Bedeutung eines Phänomens niederländischer Malerei der Gotik*, 1991.

<sup>22</sup> Täube, idem, p. 165. Steinmetz, idem, p. 44.

Of great relevance as well are the studies by Kemp.<sup>23</sup> In his 1996 book, Kemp pleads for a discontinuation of regarding images of the first degree (main scene) and second degree (embedded iconography) as theologically codependent.<sup>24</sup> Instead, he proposes that one should consider embedded Old Testament figures as being part of the 'reality of circumstances', as expressions of historicization, an indication of the fact that a painted biblical scene took place in a past era, possibly even by means of depicting the embedded figures in an older style.<sup>25</sup> Not only could they allude to the scene's setting in a past era, the 'reality of circumstances' might also refer to the setting's function. Van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3) is considered by Kemp to be set in a Jewish temple. It would therefore be natural that the interior would therefore be decorated with Jewish, Old Testament images, which is not to say that the embedded images might not comment on the main scene.<sup>26</sup>

### *New possibilities*

Almost immediately after the publication of *Early Netherlandish Painting* in 1953, Panofsky was criticized for the fundamental flaws in his iconological method; it presupposes an improbable objectivity on the part of the art historian, it presupposes that a certain image means one certain thing at one certain time, there is a definite lack of specific historical documentation for the theory, it presupposes that the 'realism' or naturalism of fifteenth-century Flemish painting needed symbolism in order to develop more fully, and Panofsky's theory lacked attention to social history.<sup>27</sup> These flaws, perhaps unavoidable as they are, also plague the (ongoing) study of embedded Old Testament iconography, and will probably continue to do so as there is as good as no auxiliary material, such as archival documents, to work with. Yet, with studies as those by Steinmetz and Kemp, new possibilities are put forward in the approach of the problem of embedded Old Testament iconography, which can possibly, at least partially, circumvent the problems inherent in this scholarly field. However, everyone of these researchers will likely admit that there is no end to the complexity of Christian iconography. As Baxandall declares, 'In systems like [...] Christian theology, matured and

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<sup>23</sup> Kemp (op. cit. note 1), and Wolfgang Kemp, 'Praktische Bildbeschreibung. Über Bilder in Bildern, besonders bei Van Eyck und Mantegna', in: Gottfried Boehm (ed.), *Beschreibungskunst – Kunstbeschreibung. Ekphrasis von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, 1995, pp. 99-119.

<sup>24</sup> Idem, 1996, p. 100: 'Vielleicht sollte man grundsätzlich Abstand nehmen von der Vorstellung, dass erstes und zweites Register theologisch wie DNS-Stränge ineinandergreifen müssen.'

<sup>25</sup> Idem, p. 102.

<sup>26</sup> Kemp (op. cit. note 23), 1995, 105.

<sup>27</sup> See Craig Harbison, 'Iconography and Iconology', in: Bernhard Ridderbos, Anne van Buren,, Henk van Veen (eds.), *Early Netherlandish Paintings: Rediscovery, Reception and Research*, 2005, pp. 390, 392.



elaborated over centuries, almost everything can signify something [...]; many things can signify various things.<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Michael Baxandall, *Patterns of intention: on the historical explanation of pictures*, 1985, p. 132.

## 2. Typology

As has been described in the previous par., from Mâle and Panofsky on, most scholars have interpreted the meaning of (embedded) Old Testament iconography in New Testament scenes in a typological context. Typology is a theory or doctrine which links the events described in the Old Testament with those in the New Testament. Its roots can already be found in the New Testament itself: 'These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled,' (Luke 24:44) and 'Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them' (Matthew 5:17).<sup>29</sup> In the Gospels, Christ himself already gives examples of this fulfillment and Old Testament foreshadowing: 'For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth,' (Matthew 12:40) and 'And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up' (John 3:14).<sup>30</sup> The typological interpretation of the Old Testament was further developed and systematized by the Early Church Fathers, such as Origen (c. 185-254) and St Augustine (354-430) who wrote that all events from Scripture 'must be understood as referring solely to Christ and his Church'.<sup>31</sup> The New Testament lay hidden in the Old Testament and the Old Testament could only be understood in relation to the New. As a result, in the Middle Ages the stories of the Old Testament were not understood as Jewish history and law, but regarded as prophecies or prefigurations, as mirror images of Christ.<sup>32</sup> Or, the theological content of the Old Testament was regarded as muddled, without the light of Christ; as Abbot Suger (c. 1081-1151) remarked: 'What Moses had covered with a veil, the doctrine of Christ revealed.'<sup>33</sup>

During the Middle Ages, it were especially texts such as the *Glossa ordinaria* in which these Old Testament connections were discussed. In the case of Christ's Passion, for example, the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' was regarded as prefiguring the sacrifice of Christ, 'Moses smiting the rock' was regarded as prefiguring the crucified Christ's blood flowing from his side wound, and 'Cain killing Abel', an innocent shepherd, mirroring Christ being killed by the Jews.<sup>34</sup>

From the second half of the fifteenth century, with the advent of the printing press, it were especially the *Biblia pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis* which functioned as artists'

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<sup>29</sup> Quotations from the Bible are taken from the English Standard Version.

<sup>30</sup> Examples of typological comparisons can also be found in the New Testament letters: Hebrews 7, Galatians 4, 1 Peter 3:20-21, 1 Corinthians 10, and 2 Corinthians 3:14-15.

<sup>31</sup> As quoted by Purtle (op. cit. note 17), p. 123. See also Mâle (op. cit. note 7), p. 140, and Horst Appuhn, *Einführung in die Ikonographie der Mittelalterlichen Kunst in Deutschland*, 1979, p. 14.

<sup>32</sup> Mâle, idem, p. 179.

<sup>33</sup> 'Quod Moyses velat Christi doctrina revelat', as quoted by Mâle, ibidem.

<sup>34</sup> Idem, pp. 145, 148, 159.

main sources for typological connections. The first version of the *Biblia pauperum* was probably created during the first half of the thirteenth century in southeastern Germany, after which copies were spread all over Europe in the fourteenth century.<sup>35</sup> The book consists of 34 groups of three images, with one New Testament scene accompanied by two typologically related Old Testament scenes, such as the 'Entombment of Christ' accompanied by 'Joseph being thrown in the well' and 'Jonah being thrown in the sea'. The first block book edition of the *Biblia pauperum* was printed c. 1430.<sup>36</sup>

The *Speculum humanae salvationis* was first created at the end of the thirteenth century, most likely in Italy. It consists of 42 chapters with a hundred Latin verses. From the third chapter onwards, one New Testament scene is accompanied by three Old Testament scenes, two of which often, although not necessarily, the same as those presented in the *Biblia pauperum*. The first printed versions of the *Speculum* were published at least before 1473.<sup>37</sup> Naturally, these two works were known to scholars and patrons before their publication in print. Yet, its audience up until the early fifteenth century was limited to the wealthy, and copies may not have been widely available to artists.

Despite certain typological 'codifications' and standardization, during the later fifteenth century, as a result of printed editions of the *Biblia pauperum* and the *Speculum*, typology was not a doctrine set in stone.<sup>38</sup> Over time and throughout Europe, typological interpretations in writing were subject to deviations and change. For example, in the fourteenth-century *Concordantia caritatis* the 'Entombment of Christ' is connected to the funerals of Abraham and King Saul, instead of the stories of Joseph and Jonah, and in the *Concordantz unnd Vergleychung des alten und newen Testaments*, published in 1550, the 'Entombment' is prefigured by 'Tobit burying the dead'.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Karsten Falkenau, *Die "Concordantz alt und news Testaments" von 1550: ein Hauptwerk biblischer Typologie des 16. Jahrhunderts illustriert von Augustin Hirschvogel*, 1999, p. 120.

<sup>36</sup> Appuhn (op. cit. note 31), p. 16.

<sup>37</sup> Idem, p. 19.

<sup>38</sup> Cardon (op. cit. note 20), p. 99, speaks of an intensification of typology in art between 1450 and 1475.

<sup>39</sup> Falkenau (op. cit. note 31), p. 94.

### 3. The development of embedded Old Testament iconography in European painting

In early Christian and medieval art it is hardly possible to find Old Testament iconography without any relation to New Testament figures or scenes. Indeed, with most medieval works, such as the thirteenth-century sculptural programs of French Gothic cathedrals or their stained glass windows (ill. 2), it seems clear, or at least highly likely, that the Old Testament figures are indeed placed in a typological context (see par. 2).<sup>40</sup>

Outside of France, typological works can also be found. An early and well known example is Nicholas of Verdun's (1130-1205) altarpiece in Klosterneuburg, Austria (1181) (ill. 3). For the altar, the French goldsmith and enamellist designed three rows containing 45 copper plates with New Testament scenes in the central row, accompanied by typologically related Old Testament scenes above and below. The Old Testament scenes in the upper row are all set in the era before Moses received the Ten Commandments (*ante legem*, 'before the law'), with the scenes in the lower row all stemming from the era *sub lege* ('under the law'). Also in western Germany, for example, Old Testament prophets and heroes were depicted referring to the New Testament (ill. 4 and 4a).

#### *Italy*

Embedded iconography related to paganism was already included by Roman artists of the fourth century (see par. 6 below, and ill. 38). For the origins of Judeo-Christian embedded iconography and the depiction of human figures as decorative details in New Testament scenes, however, we have to look at early Trecento Italy and the revolutionary developments in the increasingly naturalistic spatial depictions of architecture and other environments. Trecento art would have a large impact on Netherlandish painting with regards to embedded iconography, and it is therefore essential to illustrate its development.

Pioneering work was done by Giotto di Bondone (1266/7-1337) and his contemporaries and followers. In his fresco cycle (c. 1305) in the Scrovegni Chapel in Padua, Giotto used traditional, typologically related Old Testament scenes, such as 'Jonah being eaten by the whale', yet also painted the probably first examples of biblical 'embedded' iconography.<sup>41</sup> These were not yet Old Testament figures. For example, the *Annunciation to St Anna* (ill. 5 and 5a) and the *Birth of the Virgin*, both represented taking place in the same house, feature a grisaille or stone relief image of the bust

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<sup>40</sup> Although Stumpel, in conversation, has expressed his skepticism about Mâle's conclusions that the exterior decorations of French Gothic cathedrals form complete and all-encompassing theological programs.

<sup>41</sup> It is possible that older biblical embedded iconography might be found in illuminated manuscripts, though, as of yet, no examples could be found.

of a Godhead carried in a conch by two *putti*, depicted on the exterior tympanum.<sup>42</sup> A similar motif, this time as a tondo featuring a Godhead with angels, was later used by the Master of Fossa in a *Presentation of Christ* dated c. 1340 (L'Aquila, Museo Nazionale d'Abruzzo) (ill. 6 and 6a).<sup>43</sup>

In Giotto's *Stefaneschi Altarpiece* (c. 1320; Vatican City, Pinacoteca Vaticana) (ill. 7), the donor is depicted presenting the actual painted 'Stefaneschi Altarpiece', as a painting within a painting, to St Peter. Lastly, the hotly disputed fresco cycle of the *Life of St. Francis* (c. 1300) in the Upper Church of Basilica of St Francis in Assisi, which may or may not have been painted by Giotto, contains a depiction of the *St Clare grieving over the Body of St Francis* (ill. 8) in which a church decorated with statues of angels, Christ, and two prophets is featured in the background. If the fresco was indeed painted by Giotto, this would be his only work in which explicit Old Testament figures are embedded.

The meaning of Giotto's embedded imagery is not singular. His inclusion of the Godhead in the scenes of St Anna in Padua is quite possibly a variation on the tradition to depict God the Father as present at the Annunciation, sending down the dove of the Holy Spirit or the incarnate Christ Child. However, the decorative image should also be considered to be part of the decoration of the house, as it is included in two separate scenes. The embedded figures in the *Stefaneschi Altarpiece* are the result of the painter's intention to depict the donor presenting the actual altarpiece. The church in the background of the Assisi fresco is probably intended to represent a richly decorated church and probably does not have a specific symbolical function. It may refer to an actual church façade which Giotto might have known.

Trecento embedded Old Testament iconography in general is in almost every case limited to singular, monochrome statues or stone reliefs, without a contained narrative context. The images mostly consist of angels in various guises and anonymous prophets.<sup>44</sup> Besides the work of Giotto, most Trecento paintings containing embedded iconography can be found in the oeuvres of Sienese painters. In Duccio's (c. 1255-1319) predella of the *Maestà Altarpiece* (1308-1311; Siena, Museo dell'Opera del duomo), the temple in the 'Christ among the doctors' (ill. 9) features statuettes of rather grim looking angels. It is plausible that these are intended as an indication of the (negative) Jewish context of the scene, with the titular doctors contesting Christ's words.

However, the first artist to decorate New Testament scenes with particular, identifiable Old Testament figures was the Sienese painter Ambrogio Lorenzetti (c. 1290-1348) with his highly

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<sup>42</sup> Laurine Mack Bongiorno, 'The Theme of the Old and the New in the Arena Chapel', *The Art Bulletin* 50 (1968), p. 14. Panofsky identifies the Godhead as God the Father, intended to indicate that the scene is set in the era *sub legem*. See Erwin Panofsky, '*I Primi Lumi: Italian Trecento Painting and Its Impact on the Rest of Europe*', in: idem, *Renaissance and renaissances in Western art*, 1960, p. 148, note 3.

<sup>43</sup> Alessandro Tomei, *Giotto e il Trecento*, exh. cat. Rome (Complesso del Vittoriano), 2009, pt. 2, p. 207.

<sup>44</sup> Kemperdick, in conversation, has suggested that only an actual scene, a depiction of an event, can be typological.

influential *Presentation in the Temple* (c. 1342; Florence, Galleria degli Uffizi) (ill. 10 and 10a). The scene is set in a symmetrical space, with a painted or mosaic image of Christ as *Salvator Mundi* in the upper center, flanked by two angels.<sup>45</sup> There are also statues of angels holding guirlandes on the roof of the building, yet the most remarkable details are the statues of Moses, holding the Ten Commandments, and Joshua, holding the sun, standing on the front two columns.<sup>46</sup> Ambrogio's brother Pietro Lorenzetti (c. 1280-1348) was also one of the pioneers of painted sculptures on panel (ill. 11 and 12) (see also Chapter II).

In the second half of the fourteenth century, Sienese painters continued to paint embedded Old Testament figures. Bartolo di Fredi Cini (active 1353-1410), for example, painted a *Presentation of the Virgin* (c. 1360-1364; San Gimignano, Church of St Augustine) (ill. 13) featuring two statues of prophets standing on the pillars of the temple.<sup>47</sup> Martino di Bartolomeo (1370-1434/35) painted a *Dispute between St Stephan and the Libertines* (c. 1390; Frankfurt, Städel Museum) (ill. 14), in which the temple (or synagogue) where the dispute takes place is decorated with a grisaille or relief depiction of Moses holding the Ten Commandments, and two statues of men holding palm leaves.<sup>48</sup>

However, the inclusion of painted sculpture was not exclusively Sienese, as can be seen in the *Nobili Chapel Altarpiece* (c. 1387-1388; Florence, Santa Maria degli Angeli) by Agnolo Daddi (c. 1350-1396) and Lorenzo Monaco (c. 1370-1425). The left predella panel, painted by Monaco, is decorated with a 'Feast of Herod' (ill. 15), containing a building with statues of men holding banderoles (likely to be prophets), and, in the tympanum, a stone relief of a sconch, similar to Giotto's, containing the bust of a man writing.<sup>49</sup>

Panofsky claims that the inspiration for the inclusion of painted sculpture, from the late thirteenth century on, originated from Roman sculpture, which enjoyed increasing popularity and influence in painting up until the middle of the fourteenth century.<sup>50</sup> Painters such as Ambrogio Lorenzetti are considered to have been inspired by these Roman works of art to set their biblical scenes in an 'antique' or antiquated setting.

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<sup>45</sup>The identification of the figure as Christ, instead of God the Father, according to George Rowley, *Ambrogio Lorenzetti*, 1958, p 20.

<sup>46</sup> According to Rowley, *idem*, p. 19, the statues of Moses and Joshua respectively represent the ritual of purification and the deliverance of the Jews. However, Panofsky (*op. cit.* note 42), p. 141, states that the statues allude to the omnipresent correlation between the Old and New Testament. Dorothy C. Shorr, 'The Iconographic Development of the Presentation in the Temple', *The Art Bulletin* 28 (1946), No. 1, p. 28, on the other hand, suggests that the statue of Joshua refers to Christ's lineage.

<sup>47</sup> Gaudenz Freuler, *Bartolo di Fredi Cini: ein Beitrag zur sienesischen Malerei des 14. Jahrhunderts*, 1994, p. 436.

<sup>48</sup> Rudolf Hiller von Gærtringen, *Italienische Gemälde im Städel 1300-1550: Toskana und Umbrien*, 2004, p. 162.

<sup>49</sup> Erling Skaug in: Angelo Tartuferi, Daniele Parenti (eds.), *Lorenzo Monaco: a bridge from Giotto's heritage to the Renaissance*, exh. cat. Florence (Galleria dell'Accademia) 2006, pp. 106-10.

<sup>50</sup> Panofsky (*op. cit.* note 42), pp. 148-49, 152-53, and 155.

## France

In the fourteenth century, Tuscan and especially Sieneese painting was very influential across Europe, although not everywhere in the same magnitude. According to Panofsky, Trecento influence in Germany, for example, was only episodic and marginal.<sup>51</sup> That is why the introduction of embedded Old Testament iconography would enter the German lands only from the middle of the fifteenth century on, via the Netherlands. On the other hand, Italian painting clearly captivated France. Whether the establishing of the papacy in Avignon in 1309 was of any influence to this process is a matter of debate, yet it cannot be denied that French art, in the words of Meiss, experienced a 'continuous, methodical and selective assimilation of the Trecento [Sieneese] style', starting at the beginning of the century.<sup>52</sup>

It is true that Avignon enjoyed an influx of Italian scholars, merchants, bankers, lawyers and artists after 1309, but while Sieneese painters like Simone Martini (c. 1284-1344) established themselves in the papal city (in Martini's case c. 1340), Italian art was also imported from the peninsula by the French royal court in Paris, and the court of Burgundy.<sup>53</sup> It is at these northern courts that illuminators, in most cases originating from the Netherlands, created works revealing a taste for embedded iconography.

One of the first northern illuminators inspired by Trecento art was Jean Pucelle (c. 1300-1355), although the Italian influence in his art can mostly be deduced from his depictions of architecture. Actual embedded sculptures can be seen, from c. 1375 on and right on through the fifteenth century, in the works of Franco-Flemish illuminators such as Jacquemart de Hesdin (c. 1355-1414) (ill. 16), the brothers de Limbourg (c. 1385-1416) (ill. 17, 18, 19), and the so called Boucicaut Master (active c. 1400-1430) (see also Chapter II).<sup>54</sup> The nature of these embedded images were mostly limited to painted statues of anonymous prophets or pagan deities, although occasionally a 'Moses' was included, or even hints of a scene, such as a the 'Adam and Eve' alluding to the 'Fall of Man' in the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (ill. 19). Meanwhile, embedded iconography had also

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<sup>51</sup> Idem, p. 156.

<sup>52</sup> Millard Meiss, *French painting in the time of Jean de Berry: the late fourteenth century and the patronage of the duke*, 1967, pp. 24-25. Panofsky, idem, p. 157. Victor M. Schmidt, 'Panel Painting in France and the Southern Netherlands and the Influence of Italy', in: Cyriel Stroo (ed.), *Pre-Eyckian panel painting in the Low Countries II*, 2009, pp. 183-216.

<sup>53</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 24. Meiss, idem, p. 26, also mentions that northern French artists travelled to Avignon.

<sup>54</sup> These illuminators especially enriched their scenes of the 'Annunciation' with embedded iconography, which is why some of these artists, like the Bedford Master and Rohan Master will be discussed in Chapter II.

made its entrance in panel painting at the Burgundian court, through the work of Melchior Broederlam (c. 1350-after 1409) (SN1).<sup>55</sup>

### *The Southern Netherlands*

Also working as an illuminator at the Burgundian court, from 1425 on, was Jan van Eyck. The Netherlandish master had been in the service of Duke John of Bavaria (1374-1424) in The Hague up until his patron's death, and at the courts in Holland and Burgundy van Eyck must have come into contact with plenty of Trecento and Trecento-influenced art. One can therefore assume that it was also there that van Eyck became inspired to enrich his later work with embedded iconography. Back in Flanders, van Eyck created paintings that can be considered the high points of embedded Old Testament iconography, such as his *Washington Annunciation* (SN3), but also for example his *Madonna of Chancellor Rolin* (1435; Paris, Musée du Louvre) (ill. 20) and *Madonna with Canon van der Paele* (1436; Bruges, Groeningemuseum) (ill. 21). Especially in these last two works, van Eyck painted storiated capitals, probably inspired by the storiated capitals he might have seen in northern French churches, with very detailed and complex iconographical programs, mostly related to the Old Testament.

Although the storiated capital as medium of choice was rarely copied by later artists, van Eyck seems to have instigated a great impulse in painters to include embedded iconography in their art, especially in the second half of the fifteenth century. Artists like Dieric Bouts (c. 1410-1447) (ill. 22), The Master of the 'Prado Adoration of the Magi' (ill. 23), Petrus Christus (c. 1425-1475) (ill. 24) and, not to forget, Rogier van der Weyden (c. 1399-1464) (SN5 and SN7), added sculptures, reliefs, paintings or stained glass windows featuring religious figures and scenes in a substantial number of their works. And, as can be seen in Chapter III, this tradition continued until well into the sixteenth century, and even beyond.

### *The Northern Netherlands*

Unfortunately, relatively few fifteenth-century Northern Netherlandish paintings have survived up to this day, with only a small minority of them featuring embedded iconography. Interestingly, virtually all Northern Netherlandish painters who painted works featuring embedded iconography seem to have had ties to the city of Haarlem. The most prominent fifteenth-century works featuring embedded Old Testament iconography, for example, were painted by Haarlem painters Albert van Ouwater (c. 1410-after 1475) (ill. 25) and his presumed pupil, Geertgen tot Sint Jans (c. 1455?-c.

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<sup>55</sup> The Master of Flémalle has already been mentioned, though discussing his paintings and the origins of his often extensive use of embedded iconography, from the 1420s on, is quite difficult because of the disagreement over his identity and body of work (see also SN2 and SN4).



1485) (ill. 26). Quite remarkably, both painters presented their embedded scenes via storiated capitals, which makes it highly probable that they were especially, perhaps even directly, influenced by Jan van Eyck. The Master of the Gathering of the Manna, quite possibly also a Haarlem artist, painted a highly intriguing scene of a Jewish ritual of sacrifice in front of an altarpiece featuring an image of 'Cain slaying Abel' (c. 1460-1470; Rotterdam, Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen) (ill. 27). Prominent sixteenth-century paintings featuring embedded iconography were made by Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostanen (c. 1472-1533) (ill. 28 and NN1), who probably enjoyed his apprenticeship in Haarlem, and Jan van Scorel (1495-1562) (ill. 29), who studied under Haarlem painter Cornelis Willemsz., before he worked in the workshop of van Oostanen.

### *Germany*

From the middle of the fifteenth century on, German painters were also inspired by Netherlandish art to include embedded iconography in their religious works. This is especially visible in paintings from the Rhineland and Westphalia, where Netherlandish influences were overall strong. German embedded figures were mostly represented in stone or as wood carvings. Major representatives of German embedded iconography are Stephan Lochner (RH1 and ill. 30) and the Master of the Life of the Virgin (RH3). Yet, Netherlandish influences also reached regions as far as Swabia (SW4 and SW5) and Bavaria (BA1). However, by the early sixteenth century, the inclusion of embedded iconography had greatly diminished in German art. Most likely, new influences of the Italian Renaissance had begun to overshadow Netherlandish art, which' style, especially in the region of Antwerp, had developed strongly towards Mannerism. Also, the innovative art of Albrecht Dürer (1471-1528) and the so called *Danube School* had a large impact on certain parts of Germany as well. Yet, an interesting assimilation of Italian and Netherlandish influences can still be seen in Lucas Cranach the Elder's (1472-1533) *Christ Expelling the Exchangers from the Temple* (c. 1510; Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister) (ill. 31), in which biblical embedded iconography has been replaced by mythological creatures.

### *Return to Southern Europe*

Meanwhile, most likely as a result of the growing fascination with geometric architecture, Italian artists of the first half of the fifteenth century had largely ceased to depict embedded iconography in their religious paintings. However, with the growing popularity of Flemish art on the peninsula, from the middle of the fifteenth century on, many Italian artists reintroduced the representation of

embedded iconography (ill. 32 and 33).<sup>56</sup> Even in Spain, where a number of Spanish or 'Hispanoflamenco' artists produced paintings under the influence of van Eyck's legacy, a large number of paintings were made, enriched with embedded sculptures and paintings of Old Testament scenes (see Chapter II).

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<sup>56</sup> For the popularity of Flemish art in Italy, see Paula Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence: the impact of Netherlandish painting, 1400-1500*, 2004.

## 4. The matter of medium

The vast majority of fifteenth-century Netherlandish and German paintings that feature embedded iconography do so through the media of sculpture and stone reliefs. As was illustrated in the previous par., sculpture was also the most common medium for embedded iconography in Trecento Italy, where artists became increasingly influenced by antique, Roman sculpture; of course, there was hardly any sample of Roman painting known, to be inspired by. Consequently, this preference also became the rule in northern Europe, as northern artists took their inspiration from Italian art.

Before the last quarter of the fifteenth century, with works such as Gerard David's *Annunciation* (SN12) and the introduction of the embedded altarpiece in panel painting (see SN8), 'paintings within paintings' were hardly ever depicted on panel. Main exceptions in this, though in a very limited measure, are the *Annunciations* by van Eyck and the Master of Flémalle and his circle (SN3 and SN4).<sup>57</sup> Only in the sixteenth century did embedded painting get a more prominent role, even nearly equaling sculpture, especially through the embedded altarpiece (see for example SN15, SN21, SN27, SN28, and SN32).

The earliest European examples of embedded painting were often born out of special need; Giotto included embedded painting in his *Stefaneschi Altarpiece* (ill. 7), probably because the patron wished the work to be self-referential: the altarpiece depicts the donor presenting the very same altarpiece to St Peter, and this donation was likely supposed to be clearly illustrated. The miniature of *Christine de Pisan admiring the 'Halle de fortune'* (1410-1411; from the 'Livre de la mutation de Fortune' fol. 57, Munich, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek) (ill. 36), for example, needed to contain embedded painting as the grand decoration of the hall is the very subject of the scene. Otherwise, it appears that if artists did not have a special reason to include embedded painting, they most likely did not do so. With regards to embedded painted altarpieces, it should of course also be taken into account that the first actual completely painted altarpieces in northern Europe were only created in the course of the fifteenth century. For example, the *Crucifixion Altarpiece* (1390-1399), of which Broederlam's *Annunciation* and *Visitation* (SN1) form the interior left panel wing, has a wood carved shrine as centerpiece, which was typical for that time. Because of its three dimensionality, among other reasons, sculpture and wood carving were for a long time regarded as the superior art form, and therefore, in the early fifteenth century, there were only few examples of painted altarpieces for artists to be inspired by, regarding embedded paintings.

Returning to embedded sculpture, it is perhaps an oversimplification to cite the preference for embedded sculpture in Netherlandish art as the result of the influences of Italian paintings,

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<sup>57</sup> In manuscript illumination, 'painting within painting', especially in the case of embedded altarpieces, was already more common in the early fifteenth century (see also SN8).

although one might also cite the popularity of embedded sculpture in Germany as a result of strong Netherlandish influences. Yet, it is plausible that there were additional motivations, since it was not as if Netherlandish artists knew of no other possibilities than embedded sculpture (SN2 and SN4). Unfortunately, however, additional reasons can only be guessed at. Perhaps, although it is not highly probable, the embedding of sculpture by painters was an early expression of 'paragone', the debate about which art form was superior, and the notion that painters were able to 'conquer' sculpture after painting was for a long time regarded as an inferior art form. Another reason might be that, since we can see in the miniature of Christine de Pisan (ill. 36) how challenging it was for the miniaturist to depict paintings on a diagonal plane, perhaps problems of perspective and the lack of freedom were reasons why artists mostly ignored the medium of painting.

The only explanation for the popularity of embedded sculpture provided in modern literature is that, in sculptural form, Old Testament figures could be depicted without color. Not only could the monochrome representation of these figures clarify that these were not supposed to be living characters in the scene, Butzkamm suggests that, since most real fifteenth-century sculptures were polychrome, the loss of color is supposed to indicate decay and the need for replacement.<sup>58</sup> There is no single contemporary textual source that supports this hypothesis and, astonishingly, Butzkamm ignores the dozens of embedded monochrome sculptures of Christ, God the Father and the Virgin Mary that have been painted throughout the fifteenth century (such as in ill. 34, 35, WE2).<sup>59</sup> Additionally, Geertgen tot Sint Jans' *Holy Kinship* (ill. 26a) contains an – albeit rare – polychrome sculpture of the 'Sacrifice of Isaac', while the Old Testament reliefs on the capitals in the painting have remained grey.<sup>60</sup> Täube, however, suggests that the contrast between monochromy and polychromy *within a single work* might have been intended symbolically.<sup>61</sup> Rogier van der Weyden's *Columba Altarpiece* (SN7), for example, contains a polychrome image of the crucified Christ in the centerpiece, and a monochrome wood carving of the 'Fall of Man' on the left wing, supposedly indicating that the Old Testament was replaced by the New.<sup>62</sup> Still, Täube's suggestion is not based on firm proof, and the monochrome depiction of the wood carving on the left panel – placed in a rather simple composition that offers very few other painted surfaces to feature such an embedded scene – might also simply be due its placement on a wooden, typically unpainted, prie-dieu. Similar

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<sup>58</sup> Aloys Butzkamm, *Bild und Frömmigkeit im 15. Jahrhundert: der Sakramentsaltar von Dieric Bouts in der St.-Peters-Kirche zu Löwen*, 1990, p. 94.

<sup>59</sup> Contrary to Butzkamm, Täube, (op. cit. note 21), p. 28, suggests that the monochrome depiction of these figures was indeed based on the imitation of actual monochrome sculptures. To support this, she also quotes Klaus Kraft, *Zum Problem der Grisaille-Malerei im italienischen Trecento*, 1956, pp. 4, 50.

<sup>60</sup> In Geertgen tot Sint Jans' panel it is indeed very difficult to discern whether Abraham and Isaac are supposed to be 'living' actors in the scene or merely sculptures. The decisive factor in the end is the smaller size of the figures compared to the surrounding 'living' figures.

<sup>61</sup> See Täube (op. cit. note 21), p. 45.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibidem*.

wood carvings of the New Testament representations of 'St Michael slaying the dragon' and Christian saints (Sts Peter and Paul?) on comparable wooden furniture, by the Master of the Life of the Virgin (RH3), are also depicted without color. Evidently, if the contrast between monochromy and polychromy played a role, its application clearly remained flexible.

Legner wonders whether embedded sculptures such as painted by fifteenth-century artists actually existed.<sup>63</sup> The answer, at least partially, is yes (ill. 37). Considering the extensive decorative programs of Gothic cathedrals and the numerous wood carved retables, for example, it is reasonable to assume that many, if not most, of the figures and scenes featured as embedded sculptures in painting also had equivalents in real churches, though maybe not always in such a lively and dynamic form as in which they are presented in oil.<sup>64</sup> In the case of embedded altarpieces, Steinmetz suggests that, based on contemporary depictions of church interiors, fifteenth-century altarpieces primarily decorated with Old Testament scenes actually did exist in Christian churches.<sup>65</sup> However, in the cases of both sculpture and painting, more Old Testament figures and scenes have survived in embedded form than as actual art works.<sup>66</sup>

In the end, only in the fifteenth-century Southern Netherlands were other media than sculpture also regularly used for embedded iconography, although with lesser frequency. If not as paintings than as stained glass scenes (SN2, SN3, SN4, SN6, SN13, SN18, SN28) or as prints (SN2, SN15).<sup>67</sup> Even in Westphalia and the Rhineland, where artists were so heavily influenced by Flemish painting, embedded iconography was limited to mostly sculpture and woodcarvings. There is no decisive explanation for this Netherlandish 'exuberance', other than perhaps a sense of virtuosity and variety on behalf of the Flemish painters. With regards to content or symbolism, there cannot be any particular symbolic meaning discerned in the choice of medium.

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<sup>63</sup> Anton Legner, 'Polychrome und monochrome Skulptur in der Realität und im Abbild', in: Museen der Stadt Köln (ed.), *Vor Stefan Lochner. Die Kölner Maler von 1300-1430. Ergebnisse der Ausstellung und des Colloquiums, Köln 1974, 1977*, p. 161.

<sup>64</sup> The liveliness of the prophet statues painted by Broederlam (SN1), for example, could never have been represented by fourteenth-century sculptors. The 'convincing' polychrome sculpture of the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' in Geertgen tot Sint Jans' painting (see ill. 26a) seems hardly to have been within the capabilities of contemporary sculptors as well.

<sup>65</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 16. Steinmetz does not sufficiently answer the question where these altarpieces might have remained.

<sup>66</sup> See also Legner (op. cit. note 63), p. 161.

<sup>67</sup> The nielli of Jan van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3) remained a single and unique occurrence.

## 5. The question of motive

'We have no confirming evidence, outside the panels themselves, that detailed religious symbolism was of special interest to the patron or artist' writes Harbison in his 2005 survey of the history of 'Iconography and Iconology'.<sup>68</sup> That fifteenth-century artists enriched many of their works with embedded Old Testament iconography does not automatically mean that they did so on their own initiative or as a result of their own interest. In fact, considering that most fifteenth-century artists who painted works featuring embedded iconography actually created more works *without* embedded iconography, even when dealing with identical New Testament subjects, it is reasonable to assume that enriching religious paintings with embedded iconography did not have the highest priority for these artists. Jan van Eyck is one of the very few artists of who's work it can be said that embedded iconography was an actual regular feature.<sup>69</sup> But even in van Eyck's case not all of the embedded iconography was originally intended to be included by the artist, as for example practically all of the embedded iconography of the *Washington Annunciation* was not part of the painting's original design (see SN3).

The fact that the majority of religious paintings of the fifteenth- and sixteenth centuries do not feature embedded iconography also illustrates that the Old Testament scenes and figures in no way were regarded as essential to the right understanding of the picture, neither in a liturgical or devotional context. It seems that it was also not considered a problem or an intrusion on the painting's meaning to entirely alter or even leave out the embedded iconography when copying a specific painting, such as the *Louvre Annunciation* (see SN5). Additionally, it is also important to take into account that, in all likelihood, most artists were no theologians or had the intellectual capabilities to design deep and intricate iconographic programs through embedded iconography. (Reading the astonishingly complex academic interpretations of van Eyck's paintings (see for example SN3) or the *Mérode Altarpiece* (see SN2) one can only but conclude that many scholars think or thought otherwise). Instead, one should assume that artists had basic knowledge of religious and biblical concepts, acquisitioned during their training, but rather used apprentice-years to study art, not theology. Neither can the sole explanation for the inclusion of embedded iconography be that northern artists merely wanted to copy or emulate Trecento art. Artists had to have had a specific reason to go to all the trouble of painting these details, even if only to fill up empty surfaces, although this motivation seems to be the least likely.<sup>70</sup> Thus, regarding the ambiguous relation

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<sup>68</sup> Harbison (op. cit. note 27), p. 381.

<sup>69</sup> The Master of Flémalle might also be considered as an example, yet his oeuvre is too disputed to be considered the work of one single artist.

<sup>70</sup> A possibility, suggested in conversation, by Kemperdick.

between artists and embedded iconography, one should again stress the importance of considering the possible role of the patron, or even of hypothetical advisors, in the inclusion of these details.

An analysis of the identified or presumed patrons of Netherlandish and German *Annunciations*, as mentioned in Chapter III, reveals that they do not share a particular profile other than apparent financial means; they belonged to the aristocracy, the clergy and the bourgeoisie (in which case they were most often merchants). In some cases paintings were also commissioned by groups, such as city councils (for example RH1). Geographically, there is also no particular focus point; works were commissioned throughout Flanders and beyond, and there is no concentration on a specific region or city, other than perhaps Antwerp during the first half of the sixteenth century, with the success of the Antwerp Mannerists (SN15, SN19, SN20, SN23). Works featuring embedded iconography were also commissioned by foreign patrons, such as Spaniards (most likely SN6) and a notable number of Italians of north-western Italian origins (esp. Genoa), many of whom were living in the Netherlands (such as SN5, SN13(?), SN15(?)). There is no data on any possible specific religious affinities that might have influenced patrons in commissioning works with embedded iconography.<sup>71</sup>

There are virtually no fifteenth-century contracts or other contemporary documents which specify that specific religious iconography or symbolism should be included in the commissioned paintings, yet sometimes the patron stated specific wishes concerning the inclusion of particular genre details, such as specific types of furniture.<sup>72</sup> Thus we know that patrons sometimes wanted a particular sense or level of realism in their paintings. Harbison, however, remarks that a distinction should be made between works commissioned by private persons for private use, and works commissioned for public locations, such as churches, town halls, and monasteries.<sup>73</sup> With such commissions, a painting's appearance and content was often more precisely stipulated. Yet, for this latter group of art works, there is also no proof of any particular concern about the painting's (theological) meaning or symbolism.

Ainsworth, Powell, and Marrow all conclude that fifteenth-century patrons most of all desired conventional, conservative works of art, often copies of paintings that 'had already established their value spiritually'.<sup>74</sup> Thus, perhaps patrons requested works that harked back to medieval art, which so often featured typological symbolism, yet at the same time adhered to the

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<sup>71</sup> Though, in the discussion on van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3), the hypothesis is presented that, considering the abundance of Old Testament figures and scenes, the patron might have been someone of Jewish origins, possibly converted to Christianity.

<sup>72</sup> Harbison (op. cit. note 27), p. 379. The contracts also do not mention a wish to set the biblical scenes in a historically or culturally correct Jewish setting (see also the following par.).

<sup>73</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>74</sup> Quote by Ainsworth, in: John Philip O'Neill, Pamela T. Barr (eds.), *Facsimile in early Netherlandish painting: Dieric Bouts's "Virgin and child"*, 1993, p. 4. Amy Powell, 'A Point "Ceaselessly Pushed Back": The Origin of Early Netherlandish Painting', *The Art Bulletin* 88 (2006), No. 4, p. 711. Marrow (op. cit. note 5), pp. 151-52.

developments in the depiction of increasingly naturalistic spatial and temporal settings (archaisms in Biblical scenes).<sup>75</sup> However, this does not explain the highly untypical and unprecedented level of embedded iconography of early fifteenth-century artists such as van Eyck (SN3) and the Master of Flémalle and his circle (SN4), and the exuberance of embedded iconography in some sixteenth-century works (SN28) as well.<sup>76</sup> Additionally, Marrow also remarks that, based on contemporary texts, fifteenth-century patrons and Christians in general were especially preoccupied with the use of religious art, the required and appropriate actions or meditations while standing or kneeling in front of it, and not so much with its appearance.<sup>77</sup> Incidentally, this begs the question whether Old Testament figures and scenes would not have been too much of a distraction during devotional practices, such as prayer and meditation on Christ and the Virgin.

Another point is made by Campbell, who firmly argues that probably only a small portion of fifteenth-century paintings were actually commissioned, while perhaps most were chosen by the patron from the artist's or dealer's stock.<sup>78</sup> If Campbell is correct, this would mean that in many cases the patron was of no influence on the embedding of Old Testament iconography, besides the possibility that the patron would request for some additional elements after the completion of the work. For this, however, there is no proof, and it does not seem very plausible.<sup>79</sup>

As was already mentioned, it would be a mistake to consider most fifteenth-century artists to be theologically schooled or even intellectually capable of designing intricate embedded iconographical programs. However, it is possible that sometimes, especially for prominent assignments such as works for public locations, artists may have had theological assistance. Heckscher and Gottlieb, for example, find this hypothesis entirely acceptable.<sup>80</sup> Even Jan van Eyck, perhaps the most 'intellectual' of fifteenth-century Flemish painters, is considered by Gifford and Ward to have had assistance from theological advisors.<sup>81</sup> Yet, again, there is virtually no proof to

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<sup>75</sup> Despite some blatant anachronisms in a number of works (see for example SN2 and SN25). It is also noteworthy that a number of German painters, who were not so much concerned with the depiction of realistic and correct spatial settings, such as Johann Koerbecke (WE1) and the painter of BA2, still included embedded figures in their painting.

<sup>76</sup> Although van Eyck can always be considered an exception.

<sup>77</sup> Marrow (op. cit. note 5), pp. 151-52.

<sup>78</sup> Lorne Campbell, 'The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century', *The Burlington Magazine* 118 (1976), No. 877, p. 194.

<sup>79</sup> A still lingering question, in the case that patrons were largely responsible for the inclusion of embedded iconography, is what terminology they used. As there are no textual sources that could provide information on this matter, answering it is nigh impossible. Nevertheless, it is interesting to consider whether they would explicitly use an equivalent of the term of 'typology', 'concordance' or simply request for suitable 'Old Testament scenes'. This matter would of course also require research on the etymology of these terms.

<sup>80</sup> William S. Heckscher, 'The Annunciation of the Mérode Altarpiece, An Iconographic Study', in: Jozef Duverger (et al.), *Miscellanea Jozef Duverger: bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis der Nederlanden*, 1968, p. 38. Carla Gottlieb, 'Respiciens per Fenestras: The Symbolism of the Mérode Altarpiece', *Oud Holland* 85 (1970), p. 84.

<sup>81</sup> Melanie E. Gifford, 'Van Eyck's Washington Annunciation: Technical Evidence for Iconographic Development', *The Art Bulletin* 81 (1999), No. 1., p. 115. Ward (op. cit. note 17), p. 220, n. 129.



confirm or dispute whether or not this was actually the case, or whether this help was requested by the artist or by the patron.

There is one case in which it is certain that an artist was instructed by theologians, and that is Dieric Bouts' *Altarpiece of the Holy Sacrament* (ill. 22). On 15 March 1464, a contract was signed by four members of the Brotherhood of the Holy Sacrament of St Peter's Collegiate Church in Louvain, Bouts, and a number of witnesses, in which the commission of an altarpiece was determined. The themes of the altarpiece's different scenes were to be specified by two professors of theology at Louvain University, Jan Vaerenacker and Gielys Bailluwel.<sup>82</sup> The subjects eventually were to be 'The Last Supper' as the centerpiece, with on the interior wings the 'Gathering of the Manna', 'Passover', 'Abraham and Melchizedek' and 'Elijah in the Wilderness', the last four of which all being Old Testament themes dealing with the gathering or passing of bread, and therefore typologically related to the Eucharist. It should be noted that the contract only states that the themes were to be determined by the theologians, not the manner in which these were to be depicted. This contract is the oldest surviving Netherlandish painter's contract and the only one from this period. However, it is likely, that in the same period similar contracts were drawn up.<sup>83</sup>

Bouts' case, in which the biblical themes were determined beforehand, is something else than for example the cases of Broederlam (SN1), van Eyck (SN3) and the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2), where additions were made after the completion of the first design, and – considering that no additional underdrawing was added at a later point – perhaps even after the painting was (partially) finished. The simple fact is that we do not know what happened. The inclusion of embedded iconography might have been the painter's idea, the patron's wish or the theologians advice. However, seeing that it is most plausible that the advisor was hired by the patron – considering the

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<sup>82</sup> Micheline Comblen-Sonkes, *The Collegiate Church of Saint Peter, Louvain*, 1966, p. 73: '...na de kunst die hem god verleent heeft dair inne te thoenen is alsulker vuegen ende waerheit als hem die / eerwerdige heren meester jan vaerenacker ende meester gielys bailluwel professeurs inde godheit overgeven selen / op die voirscreven materie Ende is vorwerde dat de voirscreven meester dieric als hy dese tafele voirscreven begonst sal...' The document was lost in 1914.

<sup>83</sup> There is another highly interesting fifteenth-century document concerning Old Testament scenes, written in Florence in 1424: for Lorenzo Ghiberti's (1378-1455) bronze doors of the Florence Baptistery, which were later to be called the 'Gates of Paradise', Leonardo Bruni suggested a design of twenty Old Testament scenes, added with the depictions of eight prophets. The two principal features of these scenes, according to Bruni, were that they should be 'resplendent' and 'significant', that is, representing principal stories from the Old Testament ('[...] lo consider che le 20 historie della nuova porta le quail avete deliberato che siano del vecchio testament, vogliono avere due cose principalmente: l'una che siano illustri, l'altra che siano significanti.'). Thus, Bruni was apparently solely preoccupied with the notion that the reliefs should be impressive and represent well known, recognizable scenes, while factors of religious meaning, symbolism or typology did not play any role. The design suggested by Bruni consisted of a narrative of Old Testament 'highlights', without any specific theological relation. The final design, which ended up on the bronze doors, does actually feature more scenes that can be interpreted typologically. See Richard Krautheimer, *Lorenzo Ghiberti*, 1956, pp. 169-70, 372. With thanks to Prof. Dr. Stumpel for making me aware of this source.

probable cost of such a consult –, and most painters just as gladly left embedded iconography out of their compositions, the responsibility might very well have lain with the patron.

Lastly, painters, or patrons, at the end of the fifteenth century, as opposed to a few decades earlier, might have had additional motives for enriching their works with embedded iconography. Powell states that at the end of that century, a revival of the style of early fifteenth-century Netherlandish art occurred, visible in the work of artists such as Gerard David (c. 1460-1523).<sup>84</sup> It resulted in a return to the style and iconography of van Eyck and his contemporaries, most likely out of admiration of these artists' work. On the other hand, perhaps the conventional taste of late fifteenth-century the patrons had now shifted to the 'proven', successful and admired art of that era. Either way, it is possible that late fifteenth-century artists included embedded iconography because their early fifteenth-century predecessors had done so.

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<sup>84</sup> Powell (op. cit. note 74), p. 717.

## 6. Non-typological interpretations of embedded Old Testament iconography

By now it has been established that since, and as a result of, Panofsky's studies, most art historians have identified embedded Old Testament figures in New Testament scenes as typological symbols, practically by default. However, this tendency to automatically interpret Old Testament figures in a typological context is misleading. Not to deny the often undeniable typological iconography of many fifteenth-century, and especially sixteenth-century paintings, yet scholars should nevertheless consider more carefully, per painting, whether an embedded Old Testament figure would not more likely be intended as a sign referring to a particular cultural or historical context, such as Old Testament Judaism, than a theological symbol. The differentiation between a 'sign' and a 'symbol' in the context of this study is that a symbol has meaning in itself, and in the case of the embedded iconography discussed here, would be the visualization of a theological doctrine.<sup>85</sup> The proposed definition of a 'sign' here is a visual indication that has no intrinsic meaning by itself but signifies something else, such as the setting of a scene.

As already mentioned in par. 3, the iconography of embedded statues of pagan deities, in order to indicate a scene's pagan setting, was already included in fourth-century Roman art (ill. 38). This iconography was similarly used by Trecento artists; Pietro Lorenzetti, for example, depicted a naked idol with a worshipper on the city gate in his fresco of *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem* (ill. 39), apparently to establish Jerusalem as a pagan city.<sup>86</sup> We have also already seen the use of sculptures of angels and prophets as an indication of a scene's non-Christian setting (ill. 9, 12, 15).<sup>87</sup> This iconography was consequently also applied in Franco-Flemish manuscript illumination (ill. 18). The idols in these pictures are not so much symbols in themselves, with a specific meaning; they are generalized figures that illustrate and support the content and context of the scene. This method was used up until the sixteenth century and beyond, for example by Lucas van Leyden (1494-1533), who in his print of *Virgil in the basket* (1512-1516) (ill. 40) included an apparently ecclesiastical building featuring a tondo with the image of a centaur, in order to illustrate the pagan or antique setting of the scene. Considering these examples, it is not more than likely that fifteenth- and sixteenth-century

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<sup>85</sup> See also the discussion on the difference between *res* and *signa* in Johan Chydenius, *The Theory of Medieval Symbolism*, 1960, p. 35.

<sup>86</sup> Henk van Os, 'Idolatry on the gate: Antique Sources for an Assisi Fresco', *Simiolus* 15 (1985), No. 3/4, p. 171. Michael Camille, *The Gothic idol: ideology and image-making in medieval art*, 1989, p. 16.

<sup>87</sup> See also the distorted angels in Giotto di Bondone(?), *St Francis before the Sultan in Assisi*, c. 1300 (?) (Assisi, Upper Church of the Basilica of St Francis), and the winged idols in Giovanni di Paolo, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, c. 1430-1435 (Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art).

artists applied the same iconographic language to biblical scenes set in a Jewish context, just as Kemp has suggested.<sup>88</sup>

It is hardly believable, for example, that an embedded statue of Moses would always and automatically be intended to symbolize the contrast between the Old Covenant and the Covenant of the New Testament.<sup>89</sup> In some cases, it would in fact be impossible for a statue of Moses to be a typological symbol, for example when there is no possible juxtaposition between Old and New Covenant to speak of. Such would be the case in actual Old Testament scenes. Hans Memling 's (c. 1430-1494) *Bathing Bathseba* (c. 1480; Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie) (ill. 41 and 41a), for example, features the sculpted images of Moses and other important Old Testament characters, quite possibly as a 'sign' that the scene is set in a Jewish, Old Testament context.<sup>90</sup> The same applies to the Moses statue in the left upper corner of the panel wing depicting *King Solomon Receiving the Queen of Sheba* (c. 1515-1520; Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago) (ill. 43 and 43a) by an anonymous Antwerp painter. Hans Burgkmair 's (1473–1531) *The Story of Esther* (1528; Munich, Alte Pinakothek) (ill. 42 and 42a) also contains embedded reliefs of Old Testament and mythological scenes. Even Herman de Limbourg's 'The Ark of God Carried into the Temple', from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (c. 1412-1416; Chantilly, Musée Condé) (ill. 42), is decorated with a statuette of Moses – not as a theological symbol, but as an indication that the depicted chest is the Ark of the Law of Moses.

If it is possible that embedded statues of Moses were not intended as typological symbols in Old Testament scenes, but rather as decorative details that indicate the scene's cultural and historical context or a certain object's function, they could also very well have this same function in New Testament scenes. There are for example numerous Netherlandish and German works featuring the 'Presentation of the Virgin' and the 'Betrothal of the Virgin', depicted taking place in or in front of the Temple, in which the temple building is decorated with a statue of Moses (for example ill. 44, 45, 46).<sup>91</sup> These scenes take place in the so called 'era of the Law of Moses', the time of the Jewish Old Testament, all of the depicted figures are Jewish, and there is not yet any reference or allusion to the Incarnation of Christ. The statues of Moses are therefore most likely intended as an attribute of the building, as an visual indication of the Jewish religious function of the architectural setting, instead of

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<sup>88</sup> See note 23.

<sup>89</sup> See, for several applications of this argumentation, Chapter III.

<sup>90</sup> De Vos' interpretation that the embedded Old Testament figures signify David 's forefathers cannot be correct, as Moses is not regarded as a forefather of David. See Dirk de Vos, *Hans Memling: het volledige oeuvre*, 1994, p. 94.

<sup>91</sup> For example the *Presentation of the Virgin* of the *Altarpiece of the Mainz Life of the Virgin* (c. 1500) by the Housebook Master and workshop (Mainz, Landesmuseum), the *Presentation of the Virgin* and *Betrothal of the Virgin* (c. 1460-1465) by the Master of the Life of the Virgin (Munich, Alte Pinakothek), the *Presentation of the Virgin* by an anonymous Augsburg Master (1520s Augsburg, Staatsgalerie), the altar wing with a *Presentation of the Virgin* by the workshop of Colijn de Coter (c. 1485-1500; London, Clerkenwell, St John's Gate, The Order of St John), and the *Presentation of the Virgin* by Bernard van Orley (The Hague, ICN).

representing a personification of the Old Testament that is to be replaced in the future. Similarly, embedded New Testament figures – statues of Christ, the Virgin or the Holy Trinity – are most likely not always intended as symbol of their actual presence in religious scenes, but as signs of the main character 's piety (see for example ill. 34 and 35).

A highly interesting example of the use of embedded iconography as an indication of a scene's cultural and historical context is the *Altarpiece of St John* in the Church of St Elisabeth in Marburg, the centerpiece of which was carved in 1512 by Ludwig Juppe, and the wings painted by Johann von der Leyten. The left interior wing features the 'Birth of St John the Baptist' (ill. 48), naturally taking place in a Jewish setting, with, in the background, the 'Annunciation to Joachim' featuring John 's father, dressed as a priest, kneeling in front of an altar decorated with representations of the stone tablets of Moses. In the foreground, Elisabeth is laying in her childbed, which is decorated with various Old Testament figures. On the interior right wing, however, the 'Excavation of the body of St John' (ill. 49) is depicted, which, according to tradition, was ordered by Julian the Apostate (331-363), the last non-Christian Roman emperor. The architecture in the scene is decorated with pagan idols, putti and guirlandes. Even the greyer color of these statues might indicate the contrast between the Roman marble and the brown, stone Old Testament statues on the left wing. Evidently, the change in sculptural decoration indicates that the two scenes are set in different periods.

The form and style of embedded iconography might furthermore assist with the indication of the past, historical setting of the main scene. Steinmetz, for example, remarks that, between c. 1450 and c. 1540, 'Jewish altarpieces' (as she describes embedded altarpieces featuring Old Testament scenes) were depicted in Flemish paintings, often featuring 'outdated' or irregular shapes and iconography, such as gold backgrounds, and appearing as being made of unusual material, such as stone, instead of the usual wood. Many embedded altarpieces in sixteenth-century paintings, for example, look like altarpieces from the beginning of the fifteenth century.<sup>92</sup> Another possible example might be van Eyck 's *Washington Annunciation*, in which Old Testament scenes are depicted as murals, in a style dated by Panofsky as belonging to the beginning of the thirteenth century (see SN3).<sup>93</sup>

Embedded Old Testament figures might also have been used as forms of 'functional realism'. A statue of Moses featured on a temple building would also fit in that category. An ecclesiastical building, for example, is usually decorated with religious decoration. In the same manner, fifteenth- and sixteenth-century places where judgment was spoken, such as the aldermen's chambers in a

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<sup>92</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), pp. 14, 16, esp. 44.

<sup>93</sup> See Chapter III for more examples.

town hall, were usually decorated with biblical or mythological scenes of rightful judgment.<sup>94</sup> It would therefore be reasonable to assume that, when an artist was to depict a biblical scene taking place at a location where judgment was spoken, such as 'Christ before Pilate', the artist would have considered it logical, realistic, and recognizable to the viewer, when the depicted architecture would also feature embedded judgment scenes. As a result, Hans Memling's 'Christ before Pilate' as part of his in his *Scenes from the Passion of Christ* (c. 1470-1471; Turin, Galleria Sabauda) (ill. 50), features a decorative depiction of right judgment, namely the 'Judgment of Solomon'.<sup>95</sup>

Lastly, embedded Old Testament iconography could also be used with more negative implications. There are several painted Passion series, especially from Germany, in which embedded figures stress the Jewish guilt in relation to the Passion of Christ. For example, in the *Flagellation* by the Master of the Karlsruhe Passion (c. 1450; Karlsruhe, Staatliche Kunsthalle) (ill. 51), the room is decorated with two statuettes of Jewish men (recognizable by their pointed hats) in the upper corners, pointing at a personification of the Synagogue, a blindfolded figure holding a banderole. The blindfold represents the Jews not seeing that Christ was the Messiah. These statues, together with the ('evil') distorted faces of Christ's tormentors, and their hats, stress the fact that the Jews were regarded as responsible for Christ's suffering. Similarly, the so called Master of the Passion Scenes painted a *Flagellation* (c. 1415-1440; Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum) (ill. 52), in which the top of the scene is decorated with images of two sitting prophets, with banderoles featuring (pseudo-) Hebrew writings depicted above them, and the statue of a devil-figure holding a banner and a Jewish hat. Around 1450, the so called Master of the Darmstadt Passion painted a *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Darmstadt, Hessisches Landesmuseum) (ill. 53 and 53a), in which Christ is depicted among a large group of Jewish men and children, recognizable by their headgear, a banner with an image of a Jewish hat, and a banner featuring Hebrew letters, with the city gate of Jerusalem in the left background.<sup>96</sup> The gate is decorated with a statue of a prophet on the left, a statue of Moses on the right, and a representation of the stone tablet of the Ten Commandments, with pseudo-Hebrew writings, in the center. Comparable to Lorenzetti (ill. 39) the identity of the city of Jerusalem is indicated through embedded figurative details, though in this case Jerusalem is identified as a Jewish city. However, in the context of this Passion scene and the depiction of the Jewish people surrounding Christ, the

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<sup>94</sup> See also Hans J. van Miegroet, 'Gerard David's "Justice of Cambyses": exemplum iustitiae or Political Allegory?', *Simiolus* 18 (1988), No. 3, pp. 116-17.

<sup>95</sup> De Vos suggests that the embedded scene of Solomon is intended to stress the antithesis between the rightful judgment of the Old Testament king, and the cowardly judgment of Pilate. (See Dirk de Vos, *Hans Memling: catalogus*, exh. cat. Brugge (Groeningemuseum) 1994, p. 49). However, this is somewhat of a circular argument, as places of judgment were of course *only* decorated with depictions of rightful judgment.

<sup>96</sup> Hans M. Schmidt, 'Zum Meister der Darmstadter Passion', *Kunst in Hessen und am Mittelrhein* 14, pp. 7-48.

embedded Old Testament figures actually assist in stressing the Jews' supposed responsibility for Christ's suffering.

The alternative interpretations of embedded iconography suggested above illustrate that Old Testament figures and scenes might be more than mere typologies. They might have been the result of a sense of decorum, an attempt to be more historically and culturally 'correct'. They might have played a part in adding a sense of realism and logic to the scene or might have been used as part of expressions of 'anti-Semitic' tendencies. However, one also has to realize that not every interpretation might be applicable to every period, European region, or even painter. Early fifteenth-century painters most likely had a different notion about indicating a scene's historical setting than sixteenth-century artists. And, as far as known, there are no Netherlandish paintings in which embedded Old Testament figures are used to stress negative role of the Jews in the New Testament. It is therefore important, again, to consider these possibilities with every new painting.

## 7. Architectural symbolism

In the previous par., it has been suggested that a number of painters of religious scenes might have tried to indicate that the biblical events depicted took place in a past era. Over the course of the sixteenth century, as northern artists began to travel to Italy and study the remains of Roman antiquity and the works of Italian Renaissance masters, painters increasingly indicated this past world through antiquated painted architecture, such as Roman ruins and temples. Fifteenth-century artists generally were not yet as occupied with the reconstruction of historical architecture as their colleagues roughly a century later. However, as can be seen in paintings such as the *Lamentation* (c. 1480-1490; Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister) by the Housebook Master (ill. 54), or even earlier works, fifteenth-century artists could nevertheless be aware of the fact that Jerusalem, for example, must have looked different than any known European city.<sup>97</sup> Thus, in a way at least some painters were aware of the possibility to indicate a different historical and/or cultural setting through exotic or older, or even ancient, architecture.<sup>98</sup>

Since – and as a result of – Panofsky's studies, scholars have often awarded symbolic meaning to different architectural styles in fifteenth-century painting. In *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Panofsky for example analyses the architecture of Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1) and concludes that the stylistic contrast between the Gothic portico in which the Virgin is sitting, and the older, orientalist architectural style of the domed building in the background 'marks the transition from the Old Dispensation to the New'.<sup>99</sup> Gothic architecture is supposed to represent Christianity, and orientalist, or for example Romanesque, architecture the pre-Christian or Jewish era. Panofsky concludes that it 'might seem hazardous to attach so specific a significance to the architectural features of Broederlam's paintings were it an isolated case', but the art historian sets out to prove it is not. Panofsky provides a number of examples of religious scenes in which the contrast between the Gothic style and older (Romanesque) or supposed 'oriental' styles is argued to embody specific antithetic or transitional symbolism. The growing tradition of this iconography, blossoming at the beginning of the fourteenth century, supposedly culminated in van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3), with its vertical transition from Romanesque architecture to the Gothic, and with the 'antithetic mise-en-scene' of the *Friedsam Annunciation* (c. 1450; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art) (ill. 55). The architecturally stylistic contrast in these paintings is, again, argued to indicate the

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<sup>97</sup> Example suggested, in conversation, by Kemperdick.

<sup>98</sup> See for example also Carol Herselle Krinsky, 'Representations of the Temple of Jerusalem before 1500', *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 33 (1970), pp. 1-19, Marie-Léopoldine Lievens-de Waegh, 'Iconografie van de werken: de onderwerpen', in: Roger van Schoute, Brigitte de Patoul (eds.), *De Vlaamse primitieven*, 1994, p. 186, and the discussion on domed architecture in SN1.

<sup>99</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 132.



antithesis between Judaism and Christianity, and visualize that Judaism, often represented as a crumbling or ruinous Romanesque structure (the 'symbolic ruin'), was in dire need of replacement.<sup>100</sup>

Panofsky's hypothesis was in fact largely based on assumption and the observation of these different styles in a variety of works. However, similarly to Panofsky's 'disguised symbolism', there is actually no supporting evidence for these interpretations in either contemporary documents or other sources. In fact, a substantial number of paintings that do not seem to fit the mold (such as SN4) seem to have been ignored or erroneously interpreted (SN1, see below). Nevertheless, the architectural symbolism was also recognized by later scholars, such as by Smith in the case of *The Betrothal of the Virgin* (ill. 1), and by Purtle in her confirmation of Panofsky's analyses of van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* and Broederlam's *Dijon Annunciation*.<sup>101</sup>

While it is not the intention of this thesis to entirely refute Panofsky's hypothesis, as there still seems to be some truth to Panofsky's ideas, it is nevertheless necessary to carefully consider its applicability to New Testament scenes featuring embedded Old Testament iconography.<sup>102</sup> If the architectural symbolism in a painting namely expresses an idea about the relation between the Old Testament and the New, it might also help with the interpretation of the meaning and function of those embedded Old Testament figures. One should however approach Panofsky's hypothesis with some reservations.

In some cases, such as Broederlam's altar panels and van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation*, which will be further discussed in Chapter III, the supposed symbolism of the architectural styles was used inconsistently. While Broederlam indeed depicted different architectural styles in his *Annunciation*, with the Gothic portico in the foreground creating a stark contrast to the 'older' temple buildings in the background, it is the Gothic section that is decorated with Old Testament prophets. Additionally, it is odd that, in the *Presentation of Christ in the Temple* on the right altar wing (see ill. SN1e), Broederlam depicted the Jewish Temple in Jerusalem as a Gothic structure. Additionally, it is inconsistent that the Gothic section in van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation*, the supposed level of the New Covenant, would be the location of a storiated capital featuring battling figures, which are supposed to symbolize the struggle and chaos before the arrival of Christ.

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<sup>100</sup> Idem, pp. 132-33.

<sup>101</sup> Smith, and Purtle (op. cit. note 17). See also Carol J. Purtle, 'Assessing the Evolution of van Eyck's Iconography through Technical Study of the Washington Annunciation, II: New Light on the Development of van Eyck's Architectural Narrative', in: Susan Foister, Sue Jones, Delphine Cool (eds.), *Investigating Jan van Eyck*, 2000, p. 68. See also Lievens-deWaegh (op. cit. 98), p. 212.

<sup>102</sup> In fact, examples of this iconography can already be found in miniatures from the first half of the thirteenth century. See Reiner Haussherr, 'Templum Salomonis und Ecclesia Christi: Zu einem Bildvergleich der Bible moralisée', *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 31 (1968), ill. 1, an illustration from a copy of an early thirteenth-century *Bible moralisée*, in which the Temple of Salomo is depicted as a Romanesque building, and the Church of Christ is presented in the Gothic style.

One art work repeatedly referred to as an argument supporting the 'Panofskian' interpretation of Gothic and Romanesque architecture is a miniature by the Orosius Master (ill. 56), featuring pagans pointing at their house of worship, a domed building with round ( 'Romanesque ') windows – yet also with a pointed entrance –, and Christians pointing at their Gothic church featuring pinnacles and traceries.<sup>103</sup> Yet, what is never mentioned in discussions on architectural symbolism is that another early fifteenth-century miniature, depicting *Ecclesia and Synagoga* (ill. 57), represents the synagogue as a building with more typically Gothic elements, such as turrets and traceries, than the Christian church.

As with the interpretation of embedded Old Testament iconography, one should be cautious to not automatically refer to the conventional interpretation strategy, but carefully consider whether the interpretation of architectural symbolism mentioned above can actually be applied. It might for example also be possible that the depiction of Gothic architecture was intended as a form of 'functional' symbolism. The Gothic style was usually the style used for churches. Therefore, the setting of a biblical scene in a Gothic structure might merely be intended to indicate the scene is supposed to take place in an ecclesiastical setting (see for example SN1, SN10 and, possibly, SN8).

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<sup>103</sup> Kemperdick, in Stephan Kemperdick, Jochen Sander (eds.), *Der Meister von Flémalle und Rogier van der Weyden*, exh. cat. Frankfurt am Main (Städel Museum) 2008, p. 229.

# Chapter I: Illustrations

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17. Herman de Limbourg, *Healing of the Dumb-possessed*, c. 1412-1416, from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, fol. 166r (Chantilly, Musée Condé).

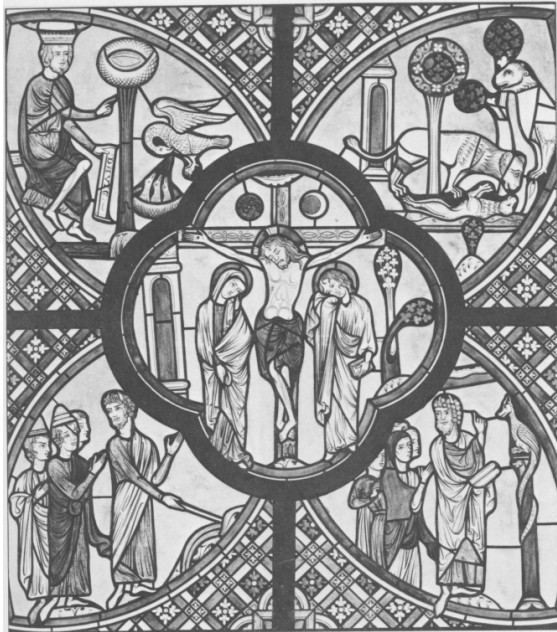
18. Herman de Limbourg, *Christ's Entry into Jerusalem*, c. 1412-1416, from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, fol. 173v (Chantilly, Musée Condé).
19. Paul de Limbourg, *The Flagellation of Christ*, c. 1412-1416, from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry*, fol. 144r (Chantilly, Musée Condé).
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III. 5a

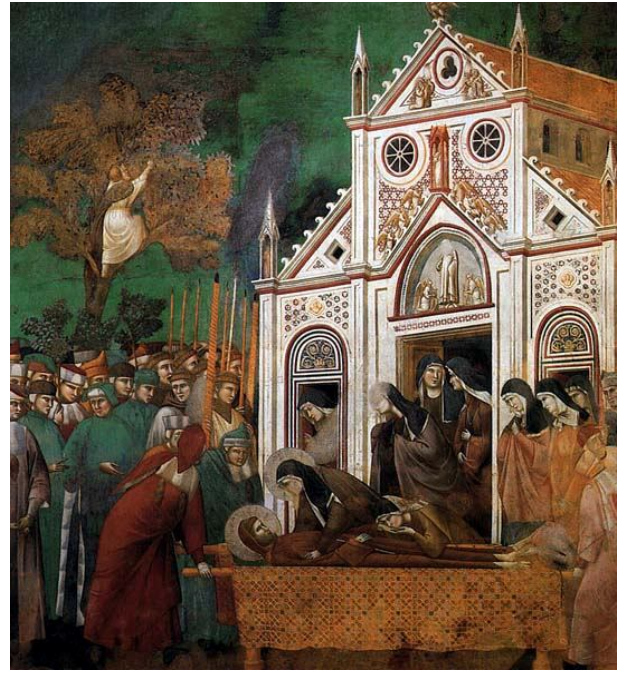


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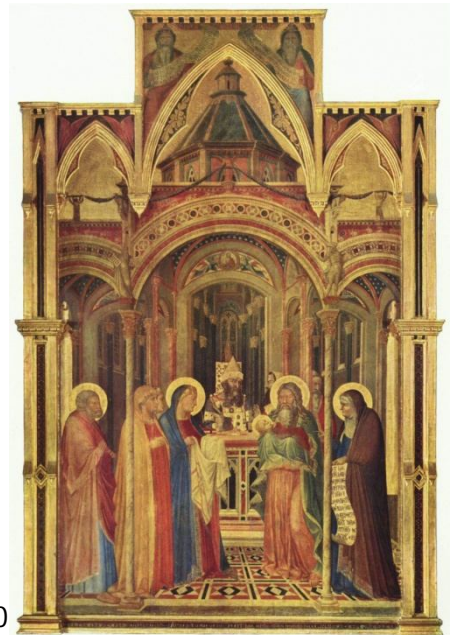
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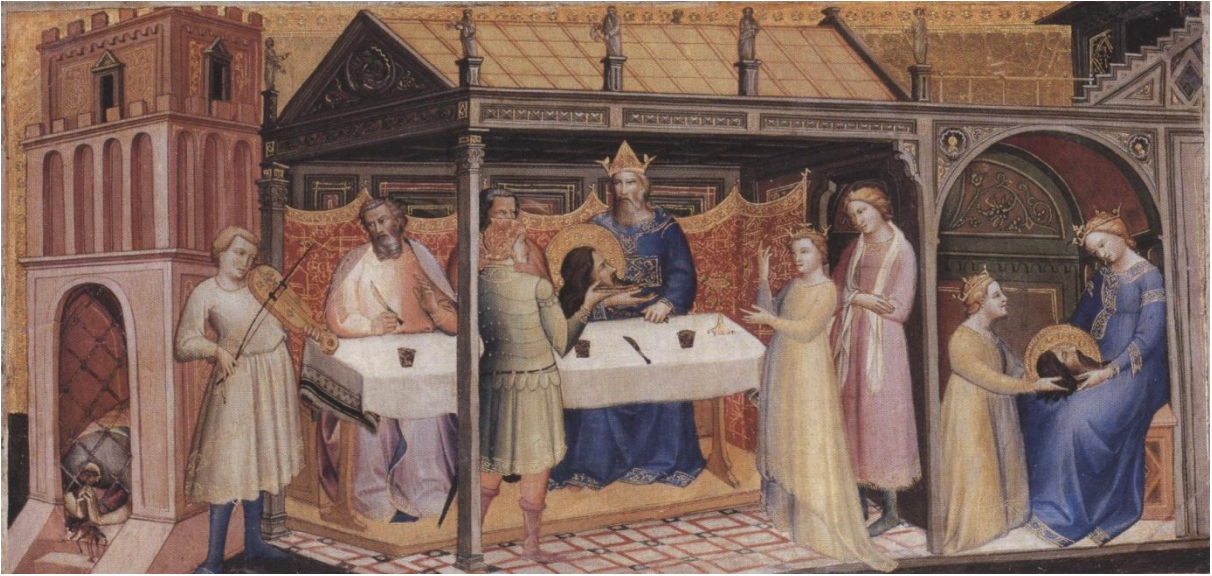


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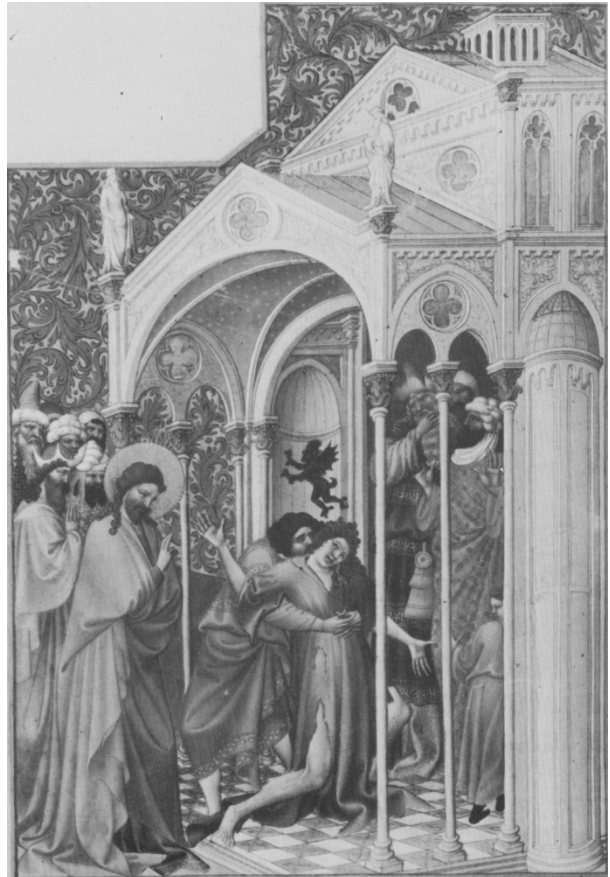




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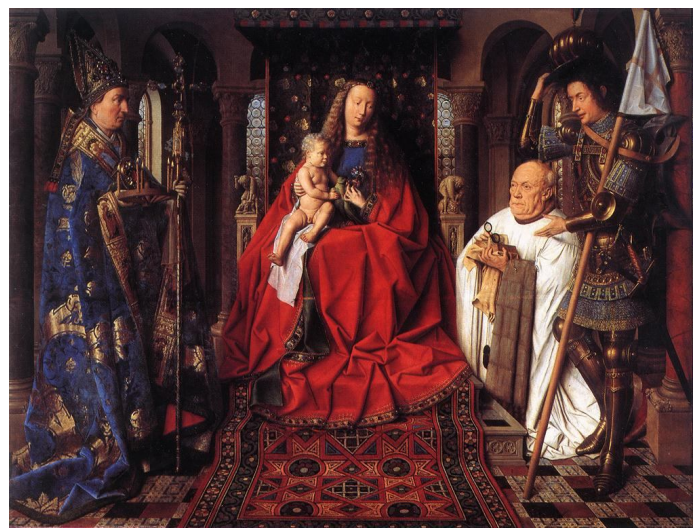
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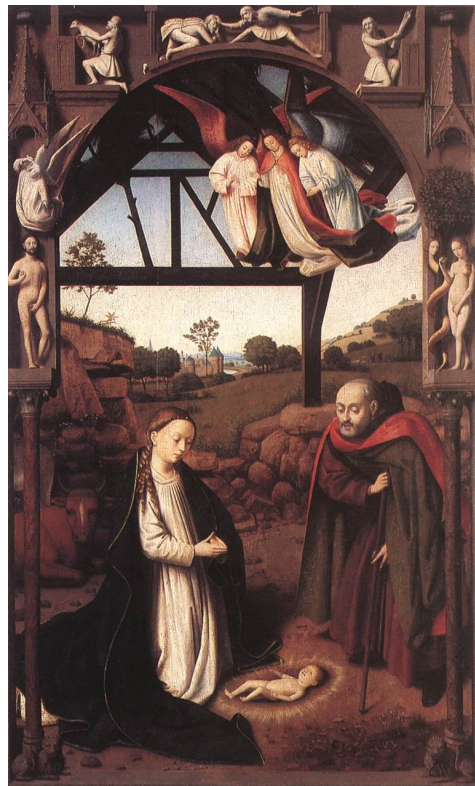




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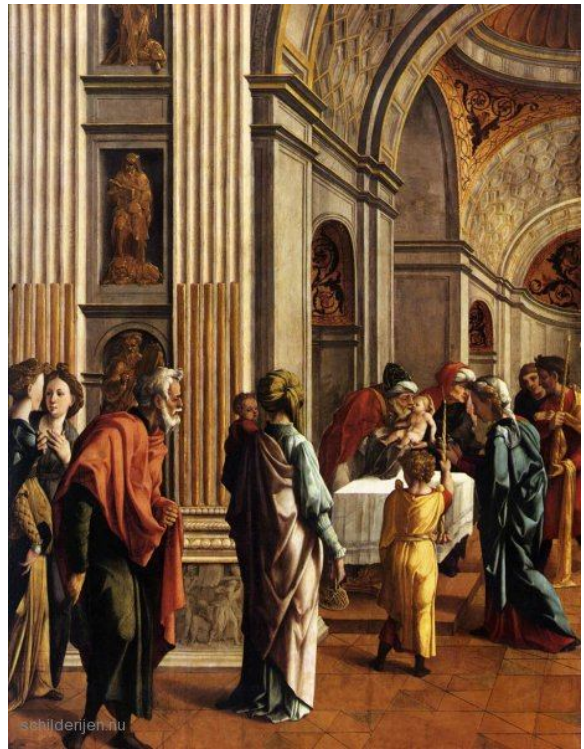


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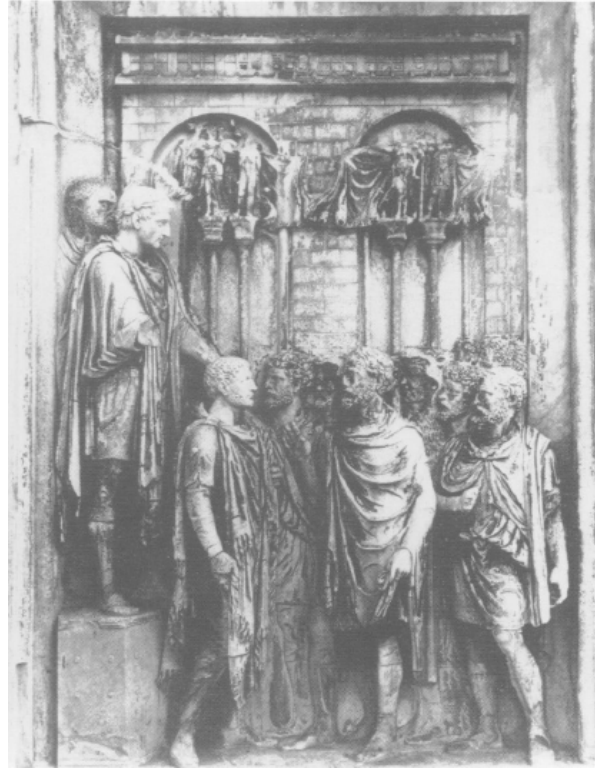


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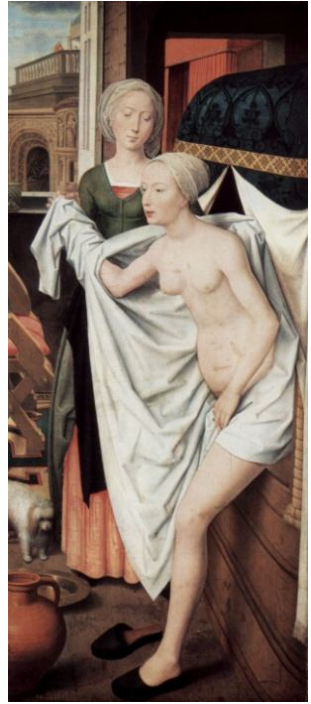


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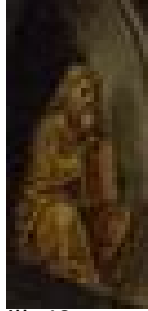


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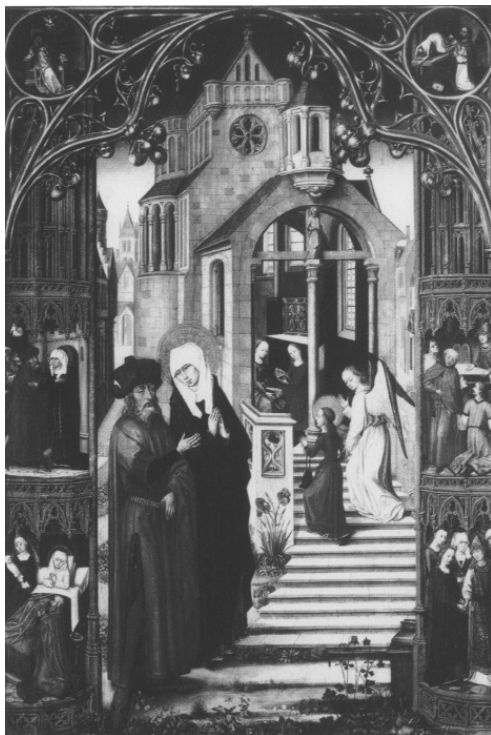
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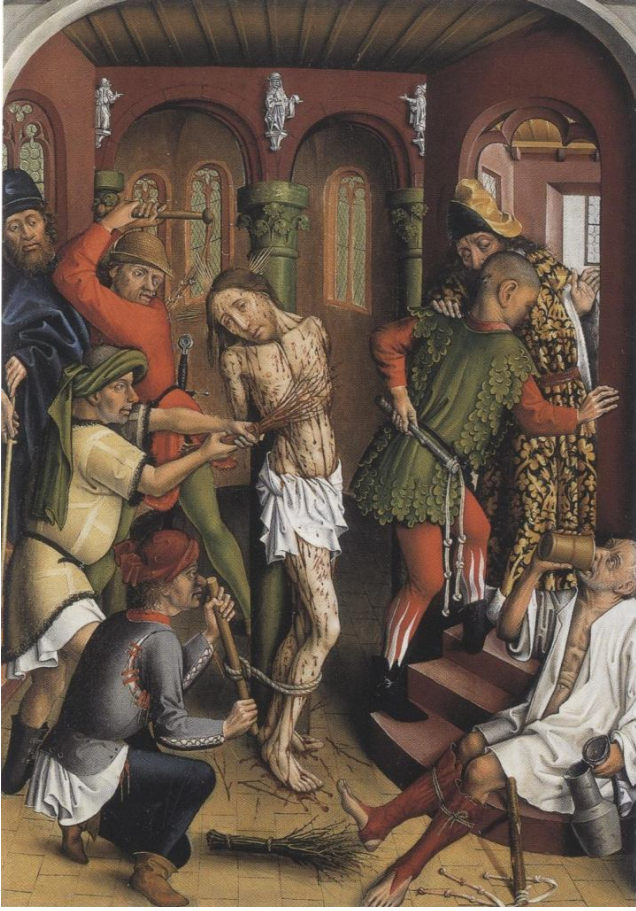


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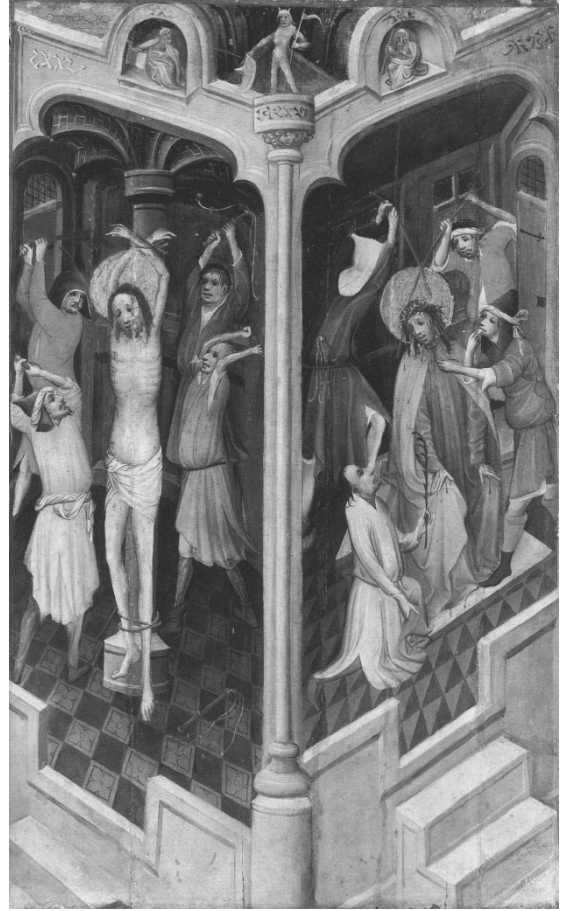


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III. 52

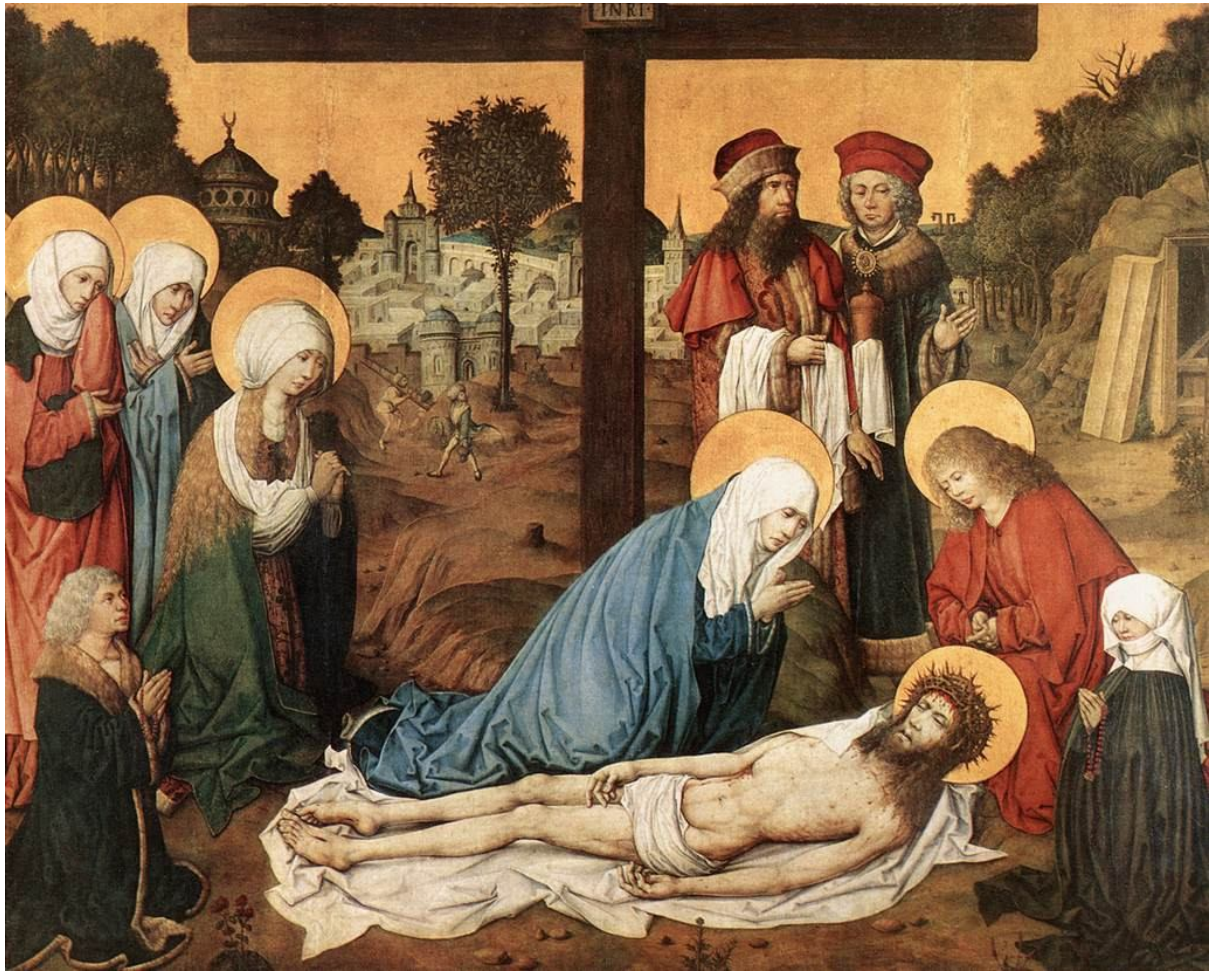


III. 53



III. 53a

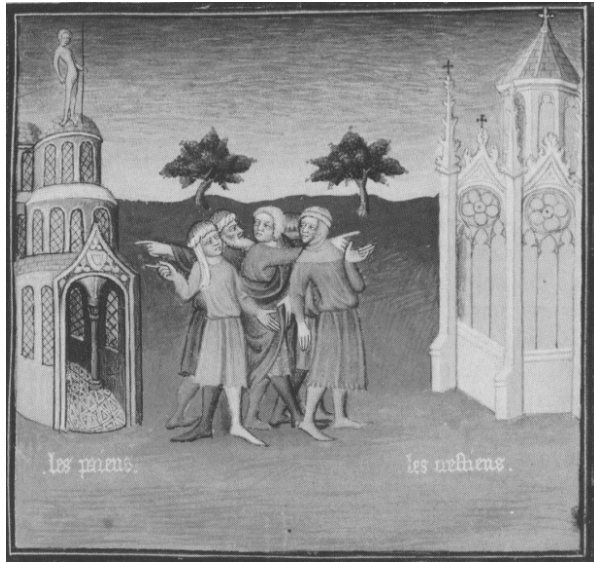




III. 54



III. 55



III. 56



III. 57

## Chapter II:

# Embedded Old Testament iconography in paintings of the 'Annunciation'

# 1. General iconography and setting of the 'Annunciation'

The sole canonical account of the Annunciation, yet describing only the most basic elements featured in painted representations of the event, is Luke 1:26-38:

'In the sixth month [of Elizabeth's pregnancy] the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy — the Son of God. And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. For nothing will be impossible with God." And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.'

The principal figures in depictions of the 'Annunciation' are usually solely Gabriel and the Virgin; the angel (later determined to be an archangel) has entered the scene, often accompanied by the written words of his traditional greeting, either written in the air, as if coming from his mouth, or depicted on a banderole in his hands.<sup>104</sup> As he is a messenger from God, he is often depicted in fifteenth-century Netherlandish and German art holding a messenger's staff. From the second quarter of the fifteenth century, he is also often depicted wearing liturgical vestments, usually a cope, though sometime also a dalmatic.

The Virgin is usually depicted on the opposite side of the composition, either sitting, kneeling or standing, while wearing a blue dress which symbolizes her purity. She is often reading or holding a book, which alludes to the belief that the Virgin was a very pious and studious girl. Her body language and facial expression usually express surprise, astonishment, humility, and sometimes fear. If Gabriel's words are depicted in the painting, the Virgin's answer is often depicted as well, either in the air, on a banderole or in a book.

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<sup>104</sup> For more detailed descriptions and analyses, see David M. Robb, 'The Iconography of the Annunciation in the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Centuries', *The Art Bulletin* 18 (1936), No. 4, pp. 480-526, and Engelbert Kirschbaum, *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* 4, 1968-.



Perhaps the most common symbolic element in depictions of the 'Annunciation' is the white flower, usually a white lily. Most commonly, a whole vase with lilies is presented somewhere on the floor of the scene. These lilies, in fact, are virginity symbols.<sup>105</sup> In German and Netherlandish art of the first half of the fifteenth century, a remainder of fourteenth-century iconography can often still be seen, namely the image of God the Father in heaven, sending down rays of light which often carry or follow the dove of the Holy Spirit.<sup>106</sup> As Gabriel states that the Holy Spirit will come upon the Virgin, the dove is virtually always depicted in the scene. In fifteenth-century Rhinish *Annunciations*, the Incarnation of Christ – Christ becoming flesh – is often symbolized by a tiny Christ Child descending towards the Virgin, often already holding a cross.

### *The setting of the 'Annunciation'*

In the New Testament, the setting of the 'Annunciation' is not mentioned. Therefore, artists have often drawn from the *Apocrypha*, for further details on the scene. Apocryphal Gospels containing a description of the Annunciation are the Infancy Gospel of James (c. 140-170), chapter 11, the Gospel of the Pseudo-Matthew (c. 600-625), chapter 9, and the Gospel of the Nativity of Mary (ninth century), chapter 9, the latter of which was popularized by Vincent of Beauvais (c. 1190-1264?) in the *Speculum Historiae*, and by Jacobus de Voragine (c. 1230-1298) in the *Legenda Aurea*.<sup>107</sup> The Infancy Gospel of James describes the Annunciation taking place first at a well – which has never been depicted in fifteenth-century Netherlandish or German art – and later in the Virgin's house.<sup>108</sup> Pseudo-Matthew describes how the Virgin was first greeted by a voice at a fountain, after which the actual Annunciation took place the next day. However, the setting is not specified in the text, although it is indirectly suggested that the scene takes place in Joseph's house. On the other hand, it might also have been the Temple, as in the previous chapter of the apocryphal gospel the Virgin is described as having received the assignment by the high priest to make a new purple veil for the Temple.<sup>109</sup> The Gospel of the Nativity of Mary only mentions a 'chamber', to which de Voragine adds

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<sup>105</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>106</sup> Wilhelm Molsdorf, *Christliche Symbolik der Mittelalterlichen Kunst*, 1984, p. 21.

<sup>107</sup> Robb (op. cit. note 104), p. 480, even states that fourteenth- and fifteenth-century artists did not so much draw upon these texts as the artists of 'pre-Gothic periods', but more on medieval texts like the *Legenda Aurea* and the *Meditationes Vitae Christi* (c. 1300) by Pseudo-Bonaventura that were based on the New Testament Apocrypha.

<sup>108</sup> Peter Kirby (ed.), 'The Protoevangelium of James', on *Early Christian Writings*, <<http://www.earlychristianwritings.com/text/infancyjames-roberts.html>> (13-05-2011).

<sup>109</sup> Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, Arthur Cleveland Coxe (eds.), *The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew*, <<http://www.gnosis.org/library/psudomat.htm>> (*Ante-Nicene Fathers 8*, 1886) (13-05-2011).

'in which the maidens and virgins ought to abide in their houses'.<sup>110</sup> In the *Meditationes Vitae Christi*, Pseudo-Bonaventura speaks of '...a room in her little house'.<sup>111</sup>

Thus, in fifteenth-century Netherlandish and German *Annunciations* the scene most often takes place in a domestic setting, and frequently, influenced by Rogier van der Weyden (see SN5 and SN7), more specifically in a bedchamber.<sup>112</sup> However, as Kirschbaum mentions, the 'Annunciation' is also often set in an ecclesiastical space (a more neutral term than the word 'Kirchenraum' actually used by Kirschbaum).<sup>113</sup> This setting should most likely be interpreted as a reference to the apocryphal stories that, before her betrothal to Joseph, the Virgin lived in the Temple as a temple maiden.<sup>114</sup> In early fifteenth-century German art, especially in the Rhineland and Westphalia, the 'Annunciation' was usually not set in a specific architectural environment, but in front of a gold background.

From the last quarter of the fifteenth-century, in Netherlandish paintings, the Virgin can be depicted before an altar, although in Franco-Flemish manuscript illumination this iconography was included much earlier (see also SN8), as was in German art (ill. 1). Like the iconography of the book, this iconography most likely harks back to the perception of the Virgin as a very devout and pious girl. The altar can be featured in *Annunciations* set in a domestic as well as ecclesiastical context.

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<sup>110</sup> Jacobus de Voragine, *The golden legend: readings on the Saints I*, Princeton 1993, pp. 196-202.

<sup>111</sup> Isa Ragusa, Rosalie B. Green, *Meditations on the life of Christ: an illustrated manuscript of the fourteenth century*, Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale, MS. ital. 115, 1977, p. 16.

<sup>112</sup> The meaning of the bed as a (possible) nuptial symbol is further discussed in SN5 and SN7. Additionally, Blum (not quite convincingly) suggests that the bedchamber refers to the sacred act of conception. See Shirley Neilsen Blum, 'Hans Memling's "Annunciation" with Angelic Attendants', *Metropolitan Museum Journal* 27 (1992), p. 44.

<sup>113</sup> Kirschbaum (op. cit. note 104), p. 432.

<sup>114</sup> Gert Duwe, *Die Verkündigung an Maria in der niederländischen Malerei des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, 1994, p. 161. See for example also the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew (note 109).

## 2. Theological connections between the Annunciation and the Old Testament

As can be deduced from the text of Luke 1:26-38, the only reference to Old Testament figures made in the canonical account of the Annunciation is that 'the Lord God will give to [Christ] the throne of his father David, and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever', which is no actual, direct comparison between Christ and the content of the Old Testament. The only specific mentioning of an Old Testament figure in the Apocrypha occurs in the Infancy Gospel of James, chapter 10, where it is stated that the Virgin was a descendant of King David.<sup>115</sup>

The Early Church Fathers, whose texts were not widely read in the fifteenth century, but who certainly were important sources for medieval scholars and authors, on the other hand did often write about the relation between the Annunciation and the Old Testament. Generally, the Annunciation was simultaneously regarded as the beginning of the fulfillment, as well as the overcoming of the Old Testament. Justin Martyr (103–165), Irenaeus of Lyon (died c. 202) and Tertullian (c. 160-220) explicitly describe the antithesis between the Virgin Mary and Eve; Eve's disobedience and death-bringing actions – the eating of the forbidden fruit – in their eyes provided a stark contrast to the obedient, and faith- and joy-bringing Virgin.<sup>116</sup> Irenaeus also regarded the reign of the 'son' of David, mentioned by Gabriel, as the fulfillment of the entire Old Testament, and the Incarnation of Christ as a transition of power from Abraham to the Church.<sup>117</sup> Additionally, Justin, as well as later Church Fathers such as St Jerome (c. 347-420) and Cyril of Alexandria (c. 376-444), interpreted the passage of Isaiah 7:14 ('Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel') as a prophecy of the Annunciation and the virgin birth. In the fourth and fifth centuries, with scholars such as St Augustine (354-430) and Ambrose (c. 337-397), more Old Testament analogies to the Annunciation were described, as the Old Testament was evermore interpreted as a so called 'prefiguration' of, or a mirror to, the New Testament story of Christ.<sup>118</sup>

During the Middle Ages, this tradition of connecting the Old with the New Testament was continued, such as in twelfth-century Marian lyrical poetry, where for example the entire *Song of Songs* was interpreted as a description of the Virgin.<sup>119</sup> Especially the work of Bernard of Clairvaux (1090-1153) had an enormous impact on the typological interpretation of the Old Testament,

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<sup>115</sup> Kirby (op. cit. note 108).

<sup>116</sup> Julia Liebrich, *Die Verkündigung an Maria: die Ikonographie der italienischen Darstellungen von den Anfängen bis 1500*, 1997, p. 23. Maria Elisabeth Gössmann, *Die Verkündigung an Maria im dogmatischen Verständnis des Mittelalters*, 1957, p. 23.

<sup>117</sup> Gössmann, *ibidem*.

<sup>118</sup> Liebrich (op. cit. note 116), pp. 24-25.

<sup>119</sup> Liebrich (op. cit. note 116), p. 32.

especially with regards to the Annunciation. In the second of his homilies *De Laudibus Mariae*, Bernard describes how several Old Testament passages are revealed to be prophecies of the virgin birth, such as the 'Temptation of Eve' and 'Fall of Man' (Genesis 3), 'Moses and the burning bush' (Exodus 3) with the bush which burns but is not consumed by fire, the blossoming staff of Aaron (Numeri 17), 'Gideon and the fleece' (Judges 6) with the fleece remaining dry while the grass is filled with dew (see SN8), the 'strong wife' of Proverbs 31, the woman who encircles a man (Jeremiah 31:22), the shoot from the tree of Jesse (Isaiah 11:1), and, of course, Isaiah 7:14.<sup>120</sup> The antithesis of Eve and the Virgin, and the overcoming of sin, was also discussed by Albertus Magnus (1193-1280) and St Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274), while St Bridget of Sweden (1303-1373) compared the Virgin to a valley, containing a lily, surrounded by five high mountains representing the five great men of the Old Testament.<sup>121</sup>

In the *Legenda Aurea*, Jacobus de Voragine also takes his time to discuss the typological relation between Eve and the Virgin, suggesting that, opposed to Mary, Eve had followed the deceptive words of the evil angel, instead of the good angel.<sup>122</sup> De Voragine continues that the Annunciation took place on March 25, on which day also happened the creation of Adam, the Fall of Man, Cain slaying Abel, Melchizedek visiting Abraham (See SN28), the Sacrifice of Isaac, the beheading of John the Baptist, the deliverance of St Peter out of prison, the beheading of St James the Great by Herod, and the Crucifixion. Kirschbaum stresses that it was especially the *Legenda Aurea* which made the wider public familiar with apocryphal elements of the story of the Annunciation and the typological connections mentioned above.<sup>123</sup>

The above mentioned medieval scholars and writers were of course not the only ones who occupied themselves with the relation between the Old and the New Testament. However, it has to be stressed that no other had more influence on late-medieval typological iconography than the *Biblia Pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis* (see Chapter I: 2. Typology). In the *Biblia Pauperum*, the 'Annunciation' is accompanied by the 'Temptation of Eve' and 'Gideon and the Fleece', though also often additionally by images of Isaiah and David, and Ezekiel and Jeremiah (ill. 2).<sup>124</sup> In the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, the 'Annunciation' is paired with 'Gideon and the Fleece', 'Moses and the burning bush', and 'Rebecca and Eliezer' (Genesis 24).<sup>125</sup> The latter scene is actually

<sup>120</sup> Gössmann (op. cit. note 116), p. 79. Liebrich (op. cit. note 116), p. 35 and note 121.

<sup>121</sup> Gössmann, idem, pp. 157, 164, 216. It is not made clear which five men are meant.

<sup>122</sup> De Voragine (op. cit. note 110), pp. 196-202, for this and the following.

<sup>123</sup> Kirschbaum (op. cit. note 104), p. 422. A later work, Ludolph of Saxony's *Vita Christi* (1374), also became one of the best known and popular late-medieval texts on the life of Christ in the fifteenth century. Unfortunately, however, it was not possible to consult a copy of this text on any Old Testament references.

<sup>124</sup> Jules Lutz, Paul Perdrizet, *Speculum humanae salvationis: texte critique I*, 1907, p. 279ff. Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 200.

<sup>125</sup> Lutz, Perdrizet, idem, p. 16.

never depicted in fifteenth- and sixteenth century Netherlandish and German renditions of the 'Annunciation'; the analogy of the latter story to the Annunciation is that, comparable to Abraham, God had sent out a messenger to search for the maiden who would bear his 'offspring'.

During the late Middle Ages, scholars and poets did not enrich their texts with as many allegories as their Early Christian and medieval predecessors. Occasionally, in religious poetry, the Virgin might perhaps be compared with Noah's ark, symbolizing life and grace.<sup>126</sup> Dante Alighieri (c. 1265-1321), in his *Purgatorio*, canto X, lets the two protagonists of his *Divina Commedia* (1308-1321) encounter a frieze with a relief depiction of the 'Annunciation'; to its left, 'King David bringing the Ark of the Covenant into Jerusalem' (1 Chronicles 13) is depicted, and to its right 'Emperor Trajan and the poor widow'. Both stories represent lessons in humility, with the humility of the Virgin as an example in the center.<sup>127</sup> In general, late medieval authors continuously stressed the introduction of Original Sin and the need for salvation as a result of the 'Fall of Man' prior to the Annunciation, but without providing explicit allegories.<sup>128</sup> Occasionally, again in poetry, (anonymous) Old Testament prophets are mentioned as harbingers of Christ's Incarnation.<sup>129</sup> However, during the fifteenth century, especially after the invention of the printing press and the widespread distribution of the *Biblia Pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, typology became more or less codified. As a result few new analogies than those mentioned above were added in writing. Ultimately, the 'Fall of Man', 'Gideon and the fleece' and 'Moses and the burning bush' remained the most common and popular typologies of the Annunciation.

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<sup>126</sup> Gössmann (op. cit. note 116), p. 252.

<sup>127</sup> Dante Alighieri, *De goddelijke komedie*, 1987, pp. 208-11.

<sup>128</sup> Gössmann (op. cit. note 116), 209-70.

<sup>129</sup> Idem, p. 256. Interesting is also the account of a Russian bishop, Abraham of Souzdal, who in 1439 attended a church council in Florence where he saw a play of the 'Annunciation', in which four bearded prophets took the stage, holding banderoles, and discussed the mystery of the Virgin birth. See Liebrich (op. cit. note 116), p. 44.

### 3. The development of *Annunciations* featuring embedded Old Testament iconography

As with almost every other New Testament scene, medieval artists, roughly from the eleventh century on, had already developed had a tradition of combining depictions of the 'Annunciation' with typologically related Old Testament figures and scenes. As part of the exterior sculptural programs of French Gothic cathedrals, for example, the Virgin was often accompanied by a (small) image of Eve to stress the antithesis between the 'Temptation of Eve' and 'Fall of Man' and the Incarnation of Christ and the birth of the Church.<sup>130</sup> The *Klosterneuburg Altarpiece* of 1181 (see also Chapter I, ill. 3) features an 'Annunciation' accompanied by the 'Promise of the birth of Isaac by the three angels' (Genesis 18) and the 'Promise of the birth of Simson to Manoah's wife' (Judges 13:2-5), all three as autonomous scenes.

As discussed in Chapter I, the origins of biblical embedded iconography should be sought in the art of Trecento painters. In fourteenth-century Italian polyptychs, New Testament scenes were often enclosed in elaborate wooden frames featuring tondo's with the heads of Old Testament prophets and heroes, sometimes holding banderoles symbolizing their prophecies of the coming of Christ.<sup>131</sup> The polyptych featuring an 'Annunciation' that, more than any other, could be considered to be a 'prototype' of later *Annunciations* featuring embedded iconography again came from the hands of a Sienese painter. The upper central part of Pietro Lorenzetti's *Polyptych* (1320; Arezzo, the Santa Maria della Pieve) (ill. 3) features an 'Annunciation' that is topped by an oculus featuring a painted male head that is commonly identified as King David's.<sup>132</sup> The Virgin is sitting in a portico with white walls and a flat roof. The tondo featuring David's portrait, which is in fact somewhat larger than the heads of both Gabriel and the Virgin, is placed in the center of an architectural, wooden, gold-colored frame, which is not quite part of the painted architecture below. However, the arches of the frame do correspond with the pillars of the painted portico, which in the end makes the frame at the same time part and not part of the scene. To a certain extent, the image reminds of Giotto's *Annunciation to Anna* (Chapter I, ill. 5), also featuring a male bust in the upper part of the

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<sup>130</sup> Gertrud Schiller, *Ikongraphie der christlichen Kunst I*, 1966, pp. 51-52.

<sup>131</sup> Liebrich (op. cit. note 116), p. 66.

<sup>132</sup> Henk van Os, *Sienese altarpieces, 1215-1460: form, content, function I*, 1984, pp. 69-74. Van Os, on p. 71, quotes the contract for the painting commissioned by Guido Tarlati, bishop of Arezzo, who stipulated that '...in the circumferences and spaces of this panel are to be painted images of prophets and Saints in good and select colors to the wishes of the said Lord Bishop' (Quoted from John White, *Duccio: Tuscan art and the medieval workshop*, 1979, p. 35). The iconography of a tondo featuring David (with a harp) was later repeated by Bicci di Lorenzo, in an *Annunciation* (c. 1425-1430; Baltimore, Walters Art Museum), but as an actual embedded figure in the painted scene.

architectural setting. According to van Os, the role of David in the context of the 'Annunciation' is to confirm the incarnated Christ as descending from David's royal lineage.<sup>133</sup>

As the acceptance of David's bust by Lorenzetti as genuine embedded iconography remains ambiguous, the first unequivocal example of true embedded iconography in an *Annunciation* should be considered that by Jacopo del Casentino (c. 1297/1315?-1349) (ill. 4), an artist based in Florence and strongly influenced by Giotto, and Ambrogio and Pietro Lorenzetti, among others.<sup>134</sup> Around 1325-1335, del Casentino painted an *Annunciation* (Florence; Private collection?) which just as Lorenzetti's piece was originally part of a larger, storied altarpiece. The panel features the Virgin in front of a red curtain, seated in a polychrome marble interior. Renner identifies the room as a religious setting, possibly a chapel in a side aisle of an ecclesiastical building.<sup>135</sup> The right side of the room features a niche, and the back wall two cross-vaulted alcoves painted blue with gold stars. Both the niche on the right as well as the background alcoves feature embedded figures, either supposed to be grisaille wall paintings or relief figures, although the former medium seems more plausible (ill. 4a). The figures in the alcoves might feature haloes. Renner describes the left figure as holding a banderole, and the figure in the right niche as holding a wind instrument.<sup>136</sup> Because of the banderole, both Renner and Natale identify the figures as anonymous prophets.<sup>137</sup> Between the arches, grisaille *putti* are painted. It is very interesting that del Casentino appears to have embedded these anonymous figures as grisaille paintings, as a tradition of embedded grisailles had not yet been developed during the first half of the fourteenth century.

The third known Trecento *Annunciation* featuring embedded iconography was painted by the Florentine artist Jacopo di Cione (1340-1399).<sup>138</sup> His fresco of the 'Annunciation' (1369) (ill. 5) presents the main scene in the foreground, in what might be a portico, with on the background wall five small statues similar to those in Lorenzo Monaco's *Feast of Herod* (c. 1387-1388) (Chapter I, ill. 15). The left embedded figure is most likely male, wearing armor and holding a sword and shield. To the right is a possible female figure, holding an unidentifiable object. In the center is a female figure holding a chalice, and next to her another figure holding an unidentifiable object. The figure on the extreme right is depicted holding either a torch or a palm leaf. All five statues feature haloes.

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<sup>133</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>134</sup> Mauro Natale, 'Jacopo del Casentino, *Annunciazione*', *Scheda tratta da Mauro Natale, catalogo dei dipinti, Milano 1982* (2004), <<http://www.museopoldipezzoli.it/userfiles/4324.pdf>> (22-03-2011).

<sup>135</sup> Stefanie Renner, *Die Darstellung der Verkündigung an Maria in der florentinischen Malerei: von Andrea Orcagna (1346) bis Lorenzo Monaco (1425)*, 1996, pp. 87-91, esp. p. 89.

<sup>136</sup> Idem.

<sup>137</sup> Natale (op. cit. note 134). See also Richard Offner, Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting. Section 3. The fourteenth century*, II, 1986, p. 404.

<sup>138</sup> See Richard Offner, Miklós Boskovits, *A Critical and Historical Corpus of Florentine Painting. Section 4. The fourteenth century*, III, 1960-1969, pp. 2-4

During the later fourteenth century, the tradition of painting *Annunciations* featuring embedded iconography travelled north, to France, a process also described in Chapter I.<sup>139</sup> The so called *Sachs Annunciation* (c. 1350-1360; Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art) (ill. 6), painted by a presumably French anonymous master, is probably the single remaining French *Annunciation* on panel featuring embedded figures, although they are not Old Testament. The Virgin is seated on a throne with a baldachin, decorated with stained glass images of Sts Peter and Paul on the inner left (ill. 6a), and St Stephanus(?) and a fourth saint on the outer right side of the throne (ill. 6b). The exact origins of the painting's creator are difficult to pinpoint. Schmidt located the artist in northern France, recognizing aspects of Parisian painting of the middle of the fourteenth century, yet also stylistic similarities to the art of Sienese painters active in Avignon at the time.<sup>140</sup> The punched fleur-de-lis motif, sprinkled liberally over the border of the reverse of the painting, for example, occurs repeatedly in Sienese Trecento painting.<sup>141</sup>

As with many other New Testament subjects, depictions of the 'Annunciation' featuring embedded iconography also became widespread in French and Franco-Flemish manuscript illumination. In most cases, the figures were depicted on embedded altarpieces (see SN8). A number of these embedded altarpieces feature Christian iconography. The Boucicaut Master (see for example ill. SN8f) most likely was the first French illuminator to include embedded altarpieces in his depictions of the 'Annunciation'. He was quickly followed by such miniaturists the Master of the Brussels Initials (active c. 1389-1410) (ill. 7), the Bedford Master (c. 1405-1465) (ill. 8 and 9) and the Rohan Master (active c. 1410-1440) and his workshop (ill. 10). The figures on these embedded altarpieces (see also ill. SN8e) are in most cases rather vaguely rendered and hardly identifiable. The embedded sculptures of the Bedford Master and Rohan Master usually consist of anonymous Old Testament prophets. The most elaborate and detailed embedded iconography in miniature depictions of the 'Annunciation' was painted by the Limbourg brothers. In the *Belles Heures du Duc de Berry*, the 'Annunciation' (c. 1409) (ill. 11) features the Virgin kneeling before a lectern decorated with a statuette of Moses (compare with Chapter I, ill. 44). The structure at the top featuring God the Father accompanied by angels is carried by a grey statue of a prophet. The iconography of the 'Annunciation' (c. 1412-1416) (ill. 12) in the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* is more complex,

<sup>139</sup> The tradition was at least continued up until the turn of the century, as can for example be seen in Spinello Aretino's fresco of the 'Annunciation', c. 1390-1400 (Arezzo, Church of St Francis).

<sup>140</sup> According to Renate Eikelmann (ed.), *The Cleveland Museum of Art: Meisterwerke von 300 bis 1550*, exh. cat. Munich (Bayerisches Nationalmuseum) 2007, p. 206.

<sup>141</sup> The painter is suggested to have possibly come from Paris or Hainaut, according to Sherman E. Lee (ed.), *The Cleveland Museum of Art catalogue of paintings: I. European paintings before 1500*, 1974, pp. 21-22. See also Schmidt (op. cit. note 52), pp. 197-99, for a suggestion that the painting was commissioned to mark the marriage in 1385 of Margaret of Bavaria to John the Fearless of Burgundy.



featuring the Virgin seated in a Gothic structure decorated with statues of a pagan or Old Testament knight or soldier (compare with the pagan deity in SN4), and two Old Testament prophets, one of which is depicted with a pointed hat identical to the hat worn by Moses in ill. 11. None of the illuminated embedded images mentioned above are of any explicitly typological nature. They depict the Virgin as a pious maiden, for example studying the books of Moses, such as in the *Belles Heures*, or, for example in ill. 9, anachronistically present the Virgin already as a devout Christian.

Just as Italian art and influences spread over Europe, evidently inspiring French and Franco-Flemish artists, so did French art in other regions. One very early example of an 'Annunciation' on panel featuring embedded Old Testament iconography outside of Italy or France, even predating many of the French manuscripts discussed above, can be found in Austria. The so called Master of Heiligenkreuz (active c. 1395-1420) was either a French artist active in Austria, or an Austrian painter who had studied in Paris.<sup>142</sup> Presumably for Heiligenkreuz Abbey, the master painted a diptych featuring an 'Annunciation' (ill. 13) on the left panel and a 'Marriage of St Catherine' on the right (c. 1400-1410; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum). In the 'Annunciation', the Virgin is seated against a stone wall decorated with a red-golden cloth. The structure, which at the moment of the Annunciation is actually under construction, with angels working on top, is decorated with a Gothic window and a statue of Moses standing under a Gothic baldachin. Schiller interprets the symbolism of the continuing construction as a reference to Christ as the cornerstone mentioned in Matthew 21:42 and Ephesians 2:20.<sup>143</sup> As there is no actual cornerstone being placed in the scene, the correctness of Schiller's interpretation is doubtful. It is possible that the construction of the wall symbolizes the construction of the Church in general. However, it is remarkable that a Gothic window is placed next to an Old Testament figure (see Chapter I, 7. Architectural symbolism). The statue of Moses in fact places the structure in a Jewish context. However, as the painter was not highly concerned with spatial realism, it is plausible that the structure should indeed rather be interpreted symbolically, as the construction of the Christian faith, but built on the foundations of the Old Testament.<sup>144</sup> This intriguing Austrian work remained a singular occurrence, however. For other *Annunciations* featuring embedded Old Testament iconography, one needs to look in the Netherlands and Germany, as will be discussed further below and in Chapter III.

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<sup>142</sup> J. Oberhaidacher, 'Zur kunstgeschichtlichen Herkunft und Bedeutung des Meisters von Heiligenkreuz', *Österreichische Zeitschrift für Kunst und Denkmalpflege* 52 (1998), pp. 501-17.

<sup>143</sup> Schiller (op. cit. note 130), p. 61.

<sup>144</sup> The right panel of the diptych, featuring the 'Mystical Marriage of St Catherine', features the Virgin and Christ Child presenting a ring to St Catherine, set under a structure with Gothic elements and two statues of Old Testament prophets.

## 4. 'Annunciations' set in an explicitly Hebrew context

One of the major questions of this study is whether, in selected cases, figurative embedded Old Testament iconography was added to 'Annunciations' with the intention of setting the scene in a Jewish context. As Old Testament figures and scenes can be interpreted in a variety of ways, as was illustrated in Chapter I, 'Annunciations' featuring Hebrew or pseudo-Hebrew writings might be helpful in determining the most probable meaning of embedded iconography. Perhaps not surprisingly, paintings of 'Annunciations' featuring (pseudo-)Hebrew writings were predominantly, if not solely painted in Germany (see Chapter I, par. 6).<sup>145</sup> Mellinkoff states that, during the late Middle Ages, Hebrew or pseudo-Hebrew script in religious painting was meant to symbolize Judaism – to stamp a place, object, person, event, or the responsibility for an act as Jewish, often, though not always, with a negative connotation).<sup>146</sup> These writings can not be interpreted in an allegorical or typological manner, as there is no contrast or antithesis to speak of. Therefore, it seems that there cannot be any other possibility than that, in the case that Hebrew texts were added to scenes of the Virgin, the painter intended to present the Virgin as a Jewish girl.

There are various *Annunciations* in which the Virgin is depicted before an altar featuring representations of the tablets of the Ten Commandments, such as by the Boucicaut Master (ill. 14) and, in a more indirect manner, Hans Schuchlin (ill. 15). This in itself is already quite a clear reference to Judaism. However, the Housebook Master, for example, took it one step further and depicted (pseudo-)Hebrew writings on the stone tablets (ill. 16), while an anonymous Hungarian painter, who had studied in the Netherlands, and an anonymous Swabian painter depicted the stone tablets, with (pseudo-)Hebrew writings on the wall of the Virgin's chamber (ill. 17 and 17a, 18 and 18a).

Hebrew writings might also be depicted on furniture, such as in the *Annunciation* by Absalom Stumme (1499; Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle) (ill. 19 and 19a), household objects (RH4), or a piece of paper on the wall (ill. 20).<sup>147</sup> Even more explicit is the Virgin's book in Hans Holbein the Elder's 'Annunciation' of the *Sebastian Altarpiece* (1516; Munich, Alte Pinakothek) (ill. 21 and 21a). *Annunciation* (xx) (ill. 21 and 21a). Hebrew writings might however also be depicted on architecture (see BA1). Again, as a result of the writings, all these paintings depict the Virgin as a Hebrew maiden.

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<sup>145</sup> The reason why this iconography was particularly used in Germany is most probably because Germany had a relatively larger Jewish population than the Netherlands in the fifteenth century.

<sup>146</sup> Ruth Mellinkoff, *Outcasts: signs of otherness in northern European art of the late Middle Ages*, 1993, p. 97.

<sup>147</sup> Unfortunately no possible translation of the Hebrew text on Stumme's painting could be found. The Hebrew characters on the vase in RH4 are the letters Jod, Ajin, Sin, Aleph, which make out 'Ja' ('Vessel') and Se[t] (presumptuousness) (see RH4).

The most fascinating example of Hebrew writings in an *Annunciation*, however, is a large Austrian drawing, dated c. 1430, now in the Albertina in Vienna (ill. 22).<sup>148</sup> The drawing shows the Virgin in a Gothic and partially somewhat fantastical open structure in front of an altar which is decorated with at least one tablet featuring Hebrew writings. The Archangel has entered on the left. Above him, a tympanum is depicted also featuring Hebrew text. The building is furthermore decorated with a featuring the image of a horseman, and a statue of a male figure is placed on a pillar right of the Archangel. In the background, two domed buildings are depicted with statues on the top, on the left dome a figure in armor with sword and shield, and on the right dome a figure holding a sword in his left and an unidentifiable object in its right hand. The cupola structures might represent the Temple of Jerusalem (see also SN1), and the structure in the foreground might be intended as part of the same building. The setting of the Annunciation itself is in any case unmistakably Jewish. Borchert suggests the drawing is a copy, possibly based on a wall painting, tapestry or stained glass image, rather than an independent invention.<sup>149</sup> Unfortunately, a possible translation of the two Hebrew texts could not be found.<sup>150</sup> It is unique in fifteenth-century art that the Virgin would so explicitly, in two elements of the composition, is depicted as Jewish. The combination of Hebrew writings and embedded figure – no matter how mysterious – makes the drawing a beautiful example of the possibility that embedded figures might play a role in the painter's intention to place the 'Annunciation' in a specific cultural context. It is true that most of the discussed works discussed above, with the notable exception of ill. 20 and 22, were made at the end of the fifteenth or beginning of the sixteenth century, telling us little about artists' intentions earlier in the fifteenth century. The lack of Netherlandish examples also complicate matters. Perhaps Netherlandish artists did not depict Hebrew texts in their paintings, as they may not have had the possibility to study these letters due to a possible absence of Jews. As some German artists used text to indicate the context, Netherlandish artists might have resorted to figurative details, but with the same intentions.

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<sup>148</sup> Borchert, in Till-Holger Borchert, Till-Holger, Paul van Calster (eds.), *Van Eyck bis Dürer: altniederländische Meister und die Malerei in Mitteleuropa*, exh. cat. Bruges (Groeningemuseum), 2010, p. 443.

<sup>149</sup> Borchert, *ibidem*.

<sup>150</sup> Ironically, both in Borchert (*ibidem*), as in Catherine Marquet (ed.), *Art from the Court of Burgundy, 1364-1419*, exh. cat. Dijon (Musée des Beaux-Arts), 2004, p. 263, the Hebrew writings are not mentioned. Benesch notes the writings, but leaves them undiscussed. See Otto Benesch, *Meisterzeichnungen der Albertina: europäische Schulen von der Gotik bis zum Klassizismus*, 1964, p. 334.

## 5. Netherlandish and German *Annunciations* featuring embedded Old Testament iconography (c. 1400-1550)

### *Southern Netherlands*

Between the end of the fourteenth and the middle of the fifteenth century, over 33 Southern Netherlandish *Annunciations* were painted that feature embedded Old Testament iconography.<sup>151</sup> This group of paintings represents the largest, with regards to iconography and depicted media most diverse, and chronologically most widespread corpus of paintings. The development of embedded Old Testament iconography in Southern Netherlandish *Annunciations*, started in the early fifteenth century with a large difference in represented scenes and figures between paintings, with practically no similarities in depicted styles and media, yet also without almost any conventional, established typological symbolism. It 'ended' in the sixteenth century with rather standardized and traditional typological iconography on the one hand, or, on the other hand, Old Testament versions of actual Christian devotional objects and art works, with only a selected number of featured media.

The four *Annunciations* painted before 1450 (the *Louvre Annunciation* of c. 1440 (SN5) excepted since it actually does not feature Old Testament iconography) do not decisively reveal a distinct iconographic tradition or possible formula for embedded iconography. On the one hand, Broederlam (SN1) depicted two anonymous stone prophets in the foreground, while the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2) features four stained-glass anonymous figures, possibly prophets, in the background. On the other hand, both van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3) and the *Prado Annunciation* (SN4) from the circle of the Master of Flémalle, are set in an ecclesiastical context with an abundance of specific embedded iconography depicted in various media. It is possible that the painter of the *Prado Annunciation* was inspired by van Eyck, considering the similar settings, and the fact that both paintings feature a relatively rare representation of 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments'. The main difference is that van Eyck depicted clearly identifiable embedded scenes and figures, while many of the embedded figures in SN4 are only vaguely rendered. The most fascinating aspect of these earliest *Annunciations* is that the embedded iconography of the first three – the results of eventual technical research on the *Prado Annunciation* has not been published yet – was not included in the underdrawings of these paintings, but added later.<sup>152</sup> This would suggest that an external factor, such as the patron or his advisor, caused these embedded figures to be added later in the painting process. With regards to the iconography's function, the prophets in

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<sup>151</sup> This paragraph is predominantly based on the Catalogue in Chapter III.

<sup>152</sup> In the case of SN2, this concerns the 'St Christopher'-print, not necessarily the stained glass figures.

Broederlam's painting are possibly intended to stress that the Virgin is seated in a Jewish temple, or refer to the Old Testament prophecies of the virgin birth. Of the *Brussels Annunciation* it cannot be said that historical or cultural context played any factor, considering the remarkably anachronistic print of 'St Christopher carrying the Christ Child' and the fact that the stained glass figures are hardly visible. The *Washington Annunciation* is the toughest nut to crack; the amount of Old Testament iconography in the ecclesiastical setting suggest that the Virgin is depicted in a Jewish temple. However, considering that most of the embedded figures and scenes can be interpreted as prefigurations of Christ and the Virgin, it is most likely that they are additionally intended to comment on the main scene. What is extremely noteworthy, however, is that virtually none of the embedded scenes are actual established, traditional typologies related to the Annunciation (see par. 2 above). The embedded sculptures in the left background of the *Prado Annunciation* suggest that the painter intended to stress the contrast between the era before Christ and the 'era of grace' under Christ'. The embedded iconography in the right foreground, however, are probably mainly intended as suitable decoration for a (Jewish) religious setting.

The second half of the fifteenth century, represented by about nine *Annunciations*, saw more diversity in iconographical themes spread across these paintings, yet also a considerable simplification of featured embedded figures within single compositions; each painting features only few embedded figures, and their meaning seems more singular. What is striking, however, is the diversity in depicted media between these paintings; most popular were stone statues and reliefs (such as in SN6, SN8, SN13), yet also polychrome paintings (SN8, SN11), manuscript miniatures (SN9) and stained glass scenes (SN12) were depicted.

Somewhere during the second quarter of the fifteenth century, Rogier van der Weyden invented the iconography of the 'Annunciation' set in a bedchamber. The bedchambers depicted by the master and his followers are all designed as contemporary rooms, such that it does not seem to have been the painters' intention to place these 'Annunciation' in a particular archaic context. Presumably, the symbol of the canopy bed was intended as an allusion to the Virgin's mystical marriage. The *Louvre Annunciation*, in fact, does not feature actual Old Testament embedded iconography, yet copies after its composition illustrate that particular artists were prepared to alter the compositions iconography to place the 'Annunciation' in a more Jewish, Old Testament context and/or, at the same time, create a visual analogy between the founding of the Old and the founding of the New Covenant (see ill. SN5m). The relief of the 'Fall of Man' in van der Weyden's *Columba Annunciation* (SN7), on the other hand, clearly seems to be intended as a typological element in relation to the entire *Columba Altarpiece*, and less a decorative element of the Virgin's interior.

The iconography that was to become the most common and traditional, with respect to the 'Annunciation', was apparently introduced by the Master of the Legend of St Mary (SN13); he

painted a sober bedchamber, based on van der Weyden's work, merely featuring a singular statue of Moses holding the Ten Commandments. As the embedded statue does not embody a specific action, it is very likely that the statue was intended as a made-up, 'Jewish' equivalent of Christian devotional statues of the Virgin or other saints. The singular statue of Moses was also included in depictions of the 'Annunciation' set in an ecclesiastical context (SN10), possibly to stress that the structure is a Jewish house of worship.

The *Annunciation* by Aelbert Bouts (SN8) and the *Annunciation* by Gerard David (SN11) mark the first Southern Netherlandish *Annunciations* on panel in which the embedded scenes are unambiguously based on established, traditional typology. The 'Temptation of Eve' and 'Gideon and the Fleece', included by Bouts, are both depicted in the *Biblia pauperum*. 'Moses and the burning bush', painted by David, is mentioned in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*. Bouts' painting is additionally interesting because it is the first Netherlandish *Annunciation* on panel featuring an embedded altarpiece. Although the figurative iconography of this altarpiece is not very significant, it is noteworthy that the iconography of the gold background makes the altarpiece rather archaic.

With his Prado *Annunciation* (SN6), Dieric Bouts did not seem much occupied with typology, as the embedded iconography mainly consists of a 'historical', instead of thematic narrative of the first chapters of the Book of Genesis. The embedded iconography of God the Father in the book of the Virgin in SN9 mainly indicates that the Virgin is reading the Old Testament. The stained glass figures in the 'Annunciation' by the Master of St John the Evangelist (SN12) are not identifiable, quite possibly also not for contemporary viewers. Yet, the figures in the background very much remind of those depicted in the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2).

During the first half of the sixteenth century, the iconography of the 'Annunciation' in the contemporary bedchamber remained popular, beginning with Jan Provoost's *Annunciation* (SN14) now in Genoa. Together with the *Brussels Annunciation*, Provoost's painting is the only Netherlandish *Annunciation* featuring a print, pinned to the wall, depicting a religious scene. In this case, 'Moses and the burning bush' is depicted, the established typological scene referring to the virgin birth, as included in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*. Another interesting element in Provoost's painting is the largely hidden painting in the background. It is likely that the hiding of the – presumably – Old Testament scene has a symbolic meaning. It might be intended as an indication that the Old Testament had become obsolete at the moment of the Annunciation. Other 'Annunciations' set in a bedchamber, but featuring the familiar singular statue of Moses, were painted by the Master of 1518 (SN23), Pieter Coecke van Aelst and his workshop (see SN29), Jan II van Coninxloo (SN31) – who even depicted the statue standing on an altar – and an anonymous Bruges painter (SN30), which possibly was a product of serial production.

The *Annunciation* by an artist from the circle of Provoost (SN17) is filled with embedded Old Testament iconography, in such a manner that it seems to have been one of the painter's absolute priorities. The embedded scenes, from 'Gideon and the fleece' to the depictions of Adam and Eve, can all be interpreted typologically. The quantity of embedded figures, in so many different media, is rather untypical for the period, as sixteenth-century artists were usually much more restrained with the number and variety of media of embedded figures.

The *Annunciation* by the Master of 1518's, painted c. 1510-1530 (SN15), is possibly the first work featuring the later to be standardized iconography of the embedded triptych, depicted frontally against the background wall. The embedded scenes on these triptychs were often intended typologically, such as in the case of 'Gideon and the fleece' (SN15, SN27), the 'Creation of Eve' (SN25) (with Eve represented as the antithesis of the Virgin), the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' (SN21) (alluding to Christ's Passion), and the 'Fall of Man' and 'Cain slaying Abel' (SN32 and SN33), both intended as references to the introduction of Original Sin and death. Joos van Cleve painted an *Annunciation* featuring a similar triptych (SN28), on which the 'Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek' is depicted. This Old Testament scene is typologically related to the Eucharist. Similarly to SN17, van Cleve's *Annunciation* is decorated with an abundance of embedded Old Testament figures, most noteworthy being several depictions of a static Moses, depicted in various media. Additionally, the painting also features a number of embedded figures of which the identity cannot be deciphered, as they were rendered too vaguely. Considering this multitude of repeated figures and the fact that the painter was not preoccupied with the correct identification of the embedded images, it is likely that decoration and a Jewish context was more important than theological content. This is made more apparent through the visual similarities between the embedded art works featuring Old Testament figures in the 'Jewish' bedchamber, and actual, Christian devotional works of art from the early sixteenth century. Additionally, both in SN15 and SN28, the Virgin is reading an illuminated manuscript which' miniature decoration seems to suggest that the Virgin is reading the Old Testament.

During the first half of the sixteenth century, *Annunciations* were painted in non-domestic environments as well. Examples are the temple setting of SN16, again featuring a singular statue of Moses, and SN18, featuring Moses as a relief figure on the altar medallion of the Virgin. The so called Antwerp Mannerists Bernard van Orley (SN19) and Jan de Beer (SN20) depicted the 'Annunciation' in an apparently combined setting, namely with the Virgin's bed placed in a corner of a large, possibly ecclesiastic, hall. The decoration of these spaces is rich, with many statues of mostly unidentifiable figures, but in both cases also featuring an image of Moses. The sculptures seem somewhat archaic and fantastical in style. This iconography was also copied in minor works (SN22).

It is interesting that many of the sixteenth-century 'domestic' *Annunciations* featuring typological iconography are evidently based on fifteenth-century examples, and therefore quite conventional in their compositions. This might actually suggest that embedded iconography had become something old fashioned. The most frequently included embedded figure in these works, the statue of Moses, might be considered to be a personification of the Old Testament. However, as there is actually never any indication that the painter actually intended this interpretation, it is more plausible that this statue was intended as a an element of the Jewish 'interior'. Taking all these observations in to account, it can be concluded that the probable intended functions and meaning of Netherlandish embedded iconography, painted between c. 1400 and c. 1550, were as diverse as the media in which they were depicted, with, perhaps surprisingly, a growing tendency towards typology in the later fifteenth and early sixteenth century.

Some paintings of the 'Annunciation' could not be included in this study: the RKD in The Hague possesses a photo of an unknown, unpublished *Annunciation* (c. 1460) by an anonymous Netherlandish painter (ill. 23) that was found too late in the research process for this study. The scene features a statue of Moses holding the Ten Commandments, placed on the foreground pillar. The orphreys of Gabriel's cope are decorated with what seem to be saints. Goswin van der Weyden (c. 1465-after 1538) painted a highly interesting 'Annunciation' for his altarpiece that is now on display in Burgos Cathedral (ill. 24). Unfortunately, there are no available images that allow for any identification of the embedded figures.<sup>153</sup> The same artist also painted an 'Annunciation' featuring a frieze of embedded (New Testament?) scenes, as part of his *Altarpiece of the Betrothal of the Virgin* (1516; Lierre, Church of St Gomarus) (ill. 25). The scene is set in the same ecclesiastical hall-setting as the centerpiece and the 'Presentation of Christ' on the right panel. Of course, there is a possibility that van der Weyden intended all of the three scenes to be set in the same location – the Temple in Jerusalem – although it seems likely that the setting is intended to be symbolical. The *Annunciation* attributed to Petrus Christus (1452; Bruges, Groeningemuseum) (ill. 26) is heavily enriched with embedded iconography, both in the foreground portal as well as in the background window. However, it was recently discovered that during past restoration(s), the painting's iconography was heavily altered, so that it is not possible to determine which embedded figures were originally included by the painter.<sup>154</sup> Lastly, Jan Provoost's 'Annunciation' of the *Altarpiece of the Adoration of the Magi* (first quarter of the sixteenth century; Stourhead/Wiltshire, National Trust), features an altarpiece in the right background behind the Christ Child, which, according to Steinmetz, features a

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<sup>153</sup> See also Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 148.

<sup>154</sup> See H el ene Verougstraete-Marcq, *Fake or not fake: het verhaal van de restauratie van de Vlaamse Primitieven*, exh. cat. Bruges (Groeningemuseum) 2004, pp. 86-97.



New Testament scene, namely 'Christ in the Garden'.<sup>155</sup> For these reasons, these paintings were not included in the Catalogue in Chapter III.

#### *Northern Netherlands*

The single Northern Netherlandish *Annunciation* (NN1), by Jacob Cornelisz. Van Oostsanen or one of his followers, features rather traditional iconography of Moses depicted as a statue. However, it is interesting that the statue is placed in a more devotional 'Jewish' context. The image itself is probably inspired by Southern Netherlandish painting. With a dating of either c. 1508 or c. 1530, the painting is surprisingly late. It is possible that more northern *Annunciations* featuring embedded iconography were painted, but were destroyed for example during the Iconoclasm of 1566 or later.

#### *Germany*

It is clear that German artists were familiar with a variety of embedded iconography, most of which was evidently inspired by Netherlandish art. Less diverse in depicted media than Flemish painters, most of this iconography was depicted in stone – as sculptures or reliefs, and relatively few paintings feature actual embedded *scenes*. There are very few instances where German embedded iconography has a clear and unambiguous meaning (such as in LS1); the majority of figures consists of anonymous prophets. Cologne can be considered as the center of German embedded iconography, with a certain tradition and a variety of themes and media that is not found anywhere else in Germany. The frequent depiction of anonymous Old Testament prophets and the copies of Netherlandish iconography, such as that of the *Columba Altarpiece*, and the general lack of actual Old Testament scenes, suggest that most German artists were not so much concerned with theology and actual typology, as with artistic inspiration; to take over the art of Flemish painters.

#### *Westphalia*

The two Westphalian *Annunciations*, by Johann Koerbecke (WE1) and the Master of Liesborn (WE2) were painted in respectively 1457 and c. 1480-1490. The embedded iconography is largely simple, with both compositions featuring a pair of monochrome stone statues of prophets, comparable to Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1). There are no explicit typological elements to speak of; the prophets might either refer to the Old Testament prophecies of Christ, or be intended as Jewish decoration. The only ambiguous element is the statue of the Godhead in WE2. It might either be intended as a Jewish devotional statue of God, or an anachronistic representation of Christ.

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<sup>155</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), pp. 162-63.

### *Rhineland*

The nine included *Annunciations* from the Rhineland were painted between c. 1440 and c. 1490, of which the oldest, Stephan Lochner's painting (RH1), actually does not feature explicit Old Testament embedded iconography, yet should still be considered an important work in the development of Rhinish iconography. The *Annunciation* by an anonymous Lower Rhinish artist (RH2) is the outsider of the group. The painting features a rather crude composition featuring two statues of prophets, which are similar to those in the Westphalian paintings and Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1). Most of the other *Annunciations*, painted in or near Cologne, however, were inspired by van der Weyden's *Columba Annunciation* (SN7). The Master of the Life of the Virgin (RH3), a follower of the Master of the Legend of St George (RH5), as well as the Master of the Aachen Life of the Virgin (RH7) included a chair or prie-dieu featuring a wood-carved scene, with the latter two even featuring representations of the 'Fall of Man' similar to van der Weyden's. The Master of the Life of the Virgin, however, mostly included anachronistic wood-carvings, such as 'St Michael slaying the dragons' and Christian saints. The *Annunciation* by the Master of the Aachen Life of the Virgin, incidentally the Rhinish *Annunciation* with the most embedded figures, features an anachronistic image as well, namely an image of Christ as apocalyptic judge. Also characteristic for the Rhineland paintings is Gabriel's elaborately decorated cope, featuring images of saints and/or Old Testament figures, or even renditions of the 'Annunciation' itself (RH6, RH7). Gabriel's cope in RH4, RH6 and RH7 are all decorated with an image of Moses.

Iconographically divergent is the *Annunciation* by a follower of the Master of the Bonn Diptych (RH8), which features two stone statues of Old Testament figures, similar to the Westphalian paintings, yet in this case identifiable as Moses and King David. Another original work is the *Annunciation* by the older Master of the Holy Kinship (RH9), in which a statuette of Moses is almost hidden in a chandelier. The Moses replaces the statuette of a saint normally depicted on actual such fifteenth-century chandeliers.

The decoration on Gabriel's vestments of course do not belong to the interior decoration of the Virgin's home. Especially the representation of Old Testament figures such as Moses in relation to God's heavenly messenger can be considered somewhat odd. With the exception of RH3, all scenes are set in a domestic environment. There is no indication to believe that the artists wanted to set their scenes in a specific historical or cultural context.

Excluded from the Catalogue is a nonetheless interesting *Annunciation* from the circle of Barthel Bruyn the Elder (c. 1525-1530; Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum) (ill. 28). In the composition, which was most likely inspired by early sixteenth-century Southern Netherlandish paintings, an altarpiece, standing against the background wall, is hidden from view by the curtain of the canopy bed.

### *Lower Saxony*

The sole Lower Saxon *Annunciation* featuring embedded iconography was painted by Hans von Geismar (LS1). The altarpiece depicted in the scene features an image of 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments', an understandable analogy to the Annunciation, as both events signified the beginning of a new Covenant by God. It is very interesting that von Geismar does not seem to have been directly influenced by Netherlandish, Westphalian or Rhinish painting.

### *Swabia*

There are three interesting Swabian *Annunciations* (SW1, SW2, SW3), mostly painted between c. 1440 and c. 1475 by anonymous artists, which feature the same iconography. Just as in Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1) and the Westphalian *Annunciations*, the scenes feature two stone statues of Old Testament prophets, placed on both sides of an arch. It somehow seems unlikely that the painters would have a specific theological intention with this iconography. It is more plausible that the artists were inspired to add these figures as a result of the influence of a major art work (Broederlam's *Annunciation*?). The same iconography can also be seen in a work by a supposedly Swabian artist, which is not included in the Catalogue because it is a fresco painting, namely Justus (Amman) von Ravensburg *Annunciation* (c. 1451) in Genoa (ill. 29), a city where (northern European) embedded iconography was evidently popular (see Chapter I, par. 5.). The fresco features similar prophet statues as the three paintings in the Catalogue. Clearly, this iconography developed itself as a Swabian 'tradition' during the fifteenth century.

A different Swabian *Annunciation* is that of the *Ehningen Altarpiece* (SW4), which was very likely inspired by the work of Dieric Bouts (see SN6). The composition features a stone relief depiction of the 'Fall of Man', next to the coat of arms of the altarpiece's patron. This seems to be an indication that the embedded scene was intended as a reference to the sin of mankind and the desire for salvation on behalf of the patron. Very interesting is also the embedded altarpiece on the left, featuring Moses and an Old Testament prophet, seemingly reacting on the main scene. This 'interactive' depiction suggests that these figures were not merely intended to set the 'Annunciation' in a Jewish context and depict the Virgin as a pious Jewish maiden, but to theologially comment on the main scene. Lastly, the *Rohrdorf Altarpiece* (SW5) was painted by a pupil of the Master of the Ehningen Altarpiece and features a singular statue of a prophet.

### *Franconia*

Franconia developed no tradition of embedded iconography. Dürer's print of the *Annunciation* (c. 1503) (ill. 30) marks a very rare example. The scene features a tondo with Judith presenting the head of Holofernes. As far as known, there is not textual source that connects Judith to the Annunciation.

Her inclusion might be due to her role as the most prominent of female Old Testament heroes, and an example for women, just like the Virgin.<sup>156</sup> With regards to panel painting, Matthias Grünewald's wing of the *Isenheim Altarpiece* (1506-1515) (FR1) is the sole example. The 'Annunciation' is set in an ecclesiastical, Gothic space, with the Virgin reading the text of Isaiah 7:14. In the upper left corner, a large monochrome image of a prophet, most likely supposed to represent a statue, is depicted. This prophet is usually identified by scholars as Isaiah. The surprising inclusion of the prophet, especially in the context of Grünewald's oeuvre, is most likely the consequence of the odd shape of the panel, which' left vertical extension needed to be filled.

### *Bavaria*

There are three known 'Bavarian' *Annunciations* featuring embedded iconography, all painted ca. 1450-1460. One of these paintings, featuring a very obscure embedded statue (ill. 31), was noticed too late to be included in the Catalogue.<sup>157</sup> The Master of the Munich Marian Panels (BA1) was a Munich artist influenced by Netherlandish art. His *Annunciation* features various Old Testament figures, most notably prophets and Moses and an (unrecognizable) embedded scene. Interestingly, the painting also features (pseudo-)Hebrew writings. The 'Annunciation' of the so called *German-Netherlandish Altarpiece* (BA2) is somewhat of an enigma. It was painted by a travelling artist, who possibly originated from Bavaria or south-western Germany, worked in Bruges, where he came into contact with the work of van Eyck and the Master of Flémalle, before he travelled to Italy where he evidently painted his altarpiece. The setting is a combination of ecclesiastical and seemingly domestic elements, with originally four stone statues presented in the foreground. Two of this have remained recognizable, namely Moses and an anonymous king.

### *Austria*

Due to time constraints, Austrian painting could unfortunately not be included in the Catalogue. There is at least one Austrian *Annunciation* which features embedded iconography, and that is the painting by the Salzburg Master of St Leonard (ill. 32).<sup>158</sup> The composition features two stone statues of Old Testament prophets on the pillars of a portal in the foreground, three smaller statues of male figures on the pillar in the center of the painting, and in the upper left and right corners tondi with depictions of seated figures (prophets?).

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<sup>156</sup> Interestingly, the niche with the kettle seems to refer to the *Mérode Altarpiece* (see SN2, more specifically, ill. SN2b). The rare inclusion of embedded iconography in the work of Albrecht Dürer might be related to this reference to early fifteenth-century Flemish painting.

<sup>157</sup> See Otto Fischer, 'Quelques remarques sur les primitives des écoles Suisses et Allemandes dans la collection Dard a Dijon', *Gazette des Beau-Arts* 1931 (73), pp. 94-102.

<sup>158</sup> See Otto Fischer, *Die altdeutsche Malerei in Salzburg*, 1908, pp. 78-86. See also Alfred Stange, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik. X. Salzburg, Bayern und Tirol in der Zeit von 1400 bis 1500*, 1960, p. 35.

## 6. Embedded Old Testament iconography in French, Italian and Spanish 'Annunciations' (c. 1400-1550)

Embedded Old Testament iconography, as developed by Southern Netherlandish artists, did not only spread north and east, it also returned south, to panel painting in France, Italy and even Spain.

### *France*

There are very few fifteenth- and sixteenth-century French non-miniature depictions of the *Annunciations* that feature embedded Old Testament iconography. Interestingly, there are a number of examples in rather unexpected art forms. For example, a French tapestry of the 'Annunciation', dated c. 1520-1530, features a medallion with the image of Moses presenting the tablets of the Ten Commandments (ill. 33). The medallion is depicted in the same location as the medallion of Christ in the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5). Additionally, an interesting example of a depiction in stained glass is the window of the 'Annunciation' (c. 1447-1450) in the chapel of Jacques Coeur of Bourges Cathedral (ill. 34), featuring Adam, Eve, and Old Testament prophets.<sup>159</sup> In French manuscript illumination, the tradition of enriching 'Annunciations' with embedded Old Testament iconography continued at least until the middle of the fifteenth century (see also ill. SN8g), after which manuscript illumination slowly 'died' as a result of the invention of book printing. The most noteworthy example is perhaps Jean Fouquet's ecclesiastical 'Annunciation' (c. 1452) from the *Hours of Etienne Chevalier* (Chantilly, Musée Condé) (ill. 35), featuring embedded statues of Old Testament prophets on the side walls, a statue of Moses presenting the Ten Commandments standing under a Gothic baldachin in the central end of the choir, and a large tabernacle or ark (the Ark of the Covenant?) above the altar.

The only relevant 'Annunciation' on panel is the so called *Aix Annunciation* of c. 1443 by Barthelémy d'Éyck (or the Master of the Aix Annunciation) (Aix-en-Provence, Church of St Mary Magdalene) (ill. 36). The 'Annunciation' is set in a Gothic, ecclesiastical space. In the left upper foreground, two large monochrome stone statues of prophets are depicted, standing under baldachins, seemingly in debate (see RH3). The arch between them is decorated with a sculpted bat and a winged monster. This places the two prophets in a rather negative context. The style and level of detail of the sculptures indicate that the artist was influenced by Southern Netherlandish art. The orphreys of Gabriel's cope feature images of haloed men, most likely apostles or other saints.

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<sup>159</sup> Another stained glass depiction of the 'Annunciation', c. 1460-1470, featuring Adam and Eve was made by the Master of Romont in the Church of Our Lady in Romont, Switzerland. However, it was not possible to establish, through literature, the origins of this master.

## Italy

After a decline during the first half of the fifteenth century, the number of Italian *Annunciations* featuring embedded iconography slightly increased again between 1480 and c. 1530, possibly as a result of the growing Italian interest in Netherlandish art during the second half of the fifteenth century (see also Chapter 1, par. 6).<sup>160</sup> These paintings also often featured mythological or classical embedded iconography, instead of Old Testament figures and scenes, possibly to set the scene in ancient antiquity. It is also noteworthy that a substantial number of these *Annunciations* were painted by (nowadays) lesser known artists.<sup>161</sup> A number of examples: Fra Bartolommeo in 1497 painted an *Annunciation*, now in the Cathedral in Volterra (ill. 37), featuring a roundel above the central entrance with the 'Sacrifice of Isaac'. Francesco Ferrari painted a fascinating *Annunciation* around 1510 (Modena, Galleria Estense) (ill. 38), in which two large relief scenes depict the 'Deluge' and the 'Closing of the Red Sea', smaller tondo's feature images of the 'Creation of Eve', the 'Fall of Man', the 'Expulsion from Paradise' and a fourth, unrecognizable scene, and a broad frieze with many unrecognizable figures in the upper part of the composition. Giovanni Antonio Sogliani in 1517 painted an *Annunciation* (Florence, Santa Maria degli Innocenti) (ill. 39) featuring a singular statue of Moses holding the Ten Commandments. Lastly, Arcangelo di Jacopo del Salliaio, painted an *Annunciation*, (c. 1500-1530; Florence/London/New York, Moretti) (ill. 40) in which the background walls are depicted with relief scenes of the 'Fall of Man' and the 'Expulsion from Paradise'.<sup>162</sup> Interesting is that many of these embedded scenes, such as the 'Closing of the Red Sea' were complete inventions by the artist. Whether these scenes were intended as allusions to salvation, or depicted as important stories from the history of the Israelites is not clear. Depictions such as that of the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' can of course be identified as typological.

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<sup>160</sup> Although embedded iconography never quite disappeared during the early decades of the fifteenth century. See for example Fra Angelico, *The Annunciation*, c. 1426 (Madrid, Museo del Prado).

<sup>161</sup> For the following examples, especially see Daniel Arasse, *L'Annonciation Italienne: Une histoire de perspective*, 1999.

<sup>162</sup> Also see Lorenzo di Credi, *The Annunciation*, 1480-1485 (Florence, Uffizi Gallery), with the 'Creation of Eve', the 'Fall of Man' and the 'Expulsion from Paradise' in the Foreground'; Luca Signorelli, *The Annunciation*, 1491 (Volterra Pinacoteca), with a tondo featuring David playing the harp (compare with ill. 3); Filippino Lippi and Raffaellino del Garbo, *The Annunciation* (Fiesole, Church of St Francis), featuring large roundels with prophets; the Master of the Annunciation of Saint Rosalia, *The Annunciation*, 1524 (Turin, Galleria Sabauda), with an embedded scene that might be another 'Annunciation' (perhaps to St Anna?); Il Garofalo (Benvenuto Tisi), *The Annunciation*, first half of sixteenth century (Venice, Fondazione Giorgio Cini); and Giovanni Mazzone, *Annunciation with Sts James, John the Baptist, Dominic and Sebastian*, second half of fifteenth century (Genoa, Santa Maria del Castello), in a style very reminiscent to the work of Justus van Ravensburg (ill. 29), with two unidentifiable embedded statues. For non-biblical, pagan or mythological embedded iconography see Marco Palmezzano, *The Annunciation with City by the Sea*, c. 1490-1539 (Vatican City, Vatican Picture Gallery), which features several naked figures or figures with toga's, but also an embedded scene of the sacrifice of a sheep; and School of Marches, *The Annunciation*, second quarter of sixteenth century (Sobotka, Humprecht Castle).

## Spain

There were several fifteenth-century artists active in Spain that were very much influenced by Jan van Eyck, Rogier van der Weyden, and Dieric Bouts.<sup>163</sup> Of these artists it cannot always be determined whether these were actual Spanish painters, or Flemish who had travelled south. Whatever the case may be, by the middle of the fifteenth century, embedded Old Testament iconography was definitely introduced on the Iberian peninsula. The Master of Sopetrán, for example, painted an *Annunciation* (c. 1460; Madrid, Museo del Prado) (ill. 41), based on the 'Annunciation'-compositions of Rogier van der Weyden, but with a singular statue of Moses placed on the hearth on the left, and a medallion hung over the bed with an unidentifiable scene (see also SN5). Bähr states that other iconographic elements were inspired by Dieric Bouts, the Master of Flémalle and Hans Memling, but that the placement of the Moses statue was definitely inspired by the representation of the 'Seat of Mercy' on the right altar panel of the *Werl Altarpiece* (Chapter I, ill. 35).<sup>164</sup> Highly interesting is that the Moses was not part of the underdrawing and evidently added after the initial completion of the painting.<sup>165</sup> The so called Master of Castrojeriz painted an 'Annunciation' (ill. 42) featuring a tondo with a man laying on the ground, seemingly asleep, visited by an angel holding a bottle. The man is most likely the prophet Elijah (1 King 19). Surprisingly, neither the subject or style of the embedded scene reflect particular Netherlandish influences.

A last example is the *Annunciation* (c. 1504) (ill. 43) by the Spanish painter Pedro Berruguete (c. 1450-1504), in which the 'Annunciation'-scene on both sides is framed by pillars featuring statuettes of Adam and Eve, and disputing men – probably prophets, but possibly also apostles –, and two roundels in the upper corners featuring the portrait of a male and a female, possibly the patrons. The pillars with statues cannot really be considered to be actual elements of the interior, but rather an embedded frame for the painting. However, the style and plasticity of the figures definitely reveal Netherlandish influences.

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<sup>163</sup> See Julia Bermejo Martínez, Julia, *La pintura de los primitivos flamencos en España*, Madrid 1980, Didier Martens, Didier, *Peinture flamande et goût ibérique aux XVème-XVIème siècles*, Brussels 2010, Till-Holger Borchert (ed.), *The age of Van Eyck 1430-1530: the mediterranean world and early Netherlandish painting*, exh. cat. Bruges (Groeningemuseum) 2002, and Francesc Ruiz i Quesada (ed.), *La pintura gótica hispanoflamenca: Bartolomé Bermejo y su época*, exh. cat. Bilbao ( Museo de Bellas Artes) 2003.

<sup>164</sup> Ingeborg Bähr, 'Bilderfindungen der frühen niederländischen Malerei im Spiegel der Tafeln des Meisters von Sopetrán', *Pantheon* 55 (1997), p. 47.

<sup>165</sup> Ibidem.

## Chapter II: Illustrations

1. Anonymous (Cologne), *The Annunciation*, c. 1420, part of the *Altarpiece of the Lives of Christ and the Virgin* (Berlin, Gemäldegalerie).
2. Anonymous (Lower Austria), 'The Annunciation, with the Temptation of Eve, Gideon and the Fleece, and Isaiah, David, Ezekiel and Jeremiah', c. 1330, from the so called *Viennese Biblia pauperum*, Codex Vindobonensis Palatinus 1198 (Vienna, Österreichische Nationalbibliothek).
3. Pietro Lorenzetti, 'The Annunciation', 1320, detail of an unnamed *Polyptych* (Arezzo, Church of Santa Maria della Pieve).
4. Jacopo del Casentino, *Annunciation*, 1325-1335 (Florence, Private collection(?)).
- 4a. Detail of ill. 4.
5. Jacopo di Cione, *Annunciation*, 1369 (Florence, Refectory of the Church of All Saints).
6. Anonymous (Northern France?), *Sachs Annunciation*, c. 1350-1360 (Cleveland, Cleveland Museum of Art).
- 6a. Detail of ill. 6.
- 6b. Detail of ill. 6.
7. The Master of the Brussels Initials, 'The Annunciation' (detail), c. 1406-1407, from a *Paris Book of Hours* (London, British Library).
8. Bedford Master, 'The Annunciation', first half of the fifteenth century, from a *Book of Hours* (Lisbon, Fundação Calouste Gulbenkian).
9. Bedford Master, 'The Annunciation', c. 1422, from a *Book of Hours* (London, British Museum).
10. Rohan Master (workshop), 'The Annunciation', c. 1413-1415, from a *Book of Hours* (Paris).
11. Limbourg brothers, 'The Annunciation', c. 1409, from the *Belles Heures du Duc de Berry* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).
12. Limbourg brothers, 'The Annunciation', c. 1412-1416, from the *Très Riches Heures du Duc de Berry* (Chantilly, Musée Condé).
13. Master of Heiligenkreuz, *Annunciation*, c. 1400-1410 (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum).
14. Boucicaut Master, 'The Annunciation', c. 1409, from a *Book of Hours* (Paris, Bibliothèque nationale).
15. Hans Schuchlin, *The Annunciation*, 1469 (Tiefenbronn).
16. Housebook Master (circle?), 'The Virgin of the Annunciation', c. 1480-1490 (Speyer, Private collection(?)).
17. Anonymous (Hungary), *The Annunciation*, 1499 (Spišské Podhradie, Cathedral of St Martin).
- 17a. Detail of ill. 17.
18. Anonymous (Swabia(?)), *The Annunciation*, end of the fifteenth century (Moscow, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts).



- 18a. Detail of ill. 18.
19. Absalom Stumme, *The Annunciation*, 1499 (Hamburg, Hamburger Kunsthalle).
- 19a. Detail of ill. 19.
20. Anonymous (Upper Rhine), *The Annunciation*, c. 1440 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).
- 20a. Detail of ill. 20.
21. Hans Holbein the Elder, 'The Virgin of the Annunciation', 1516, part of the *Sebastian Altarpiece* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).
- 21a. Detail of ill. 21.
22. Anonymous (Austria), *The Annunciation*, c. 1430 (Vienna, Albertina).
23. Anonymous (Southern Netherlands), *Annunciation*, c. 1460 (Brussels(?)).
24. Goswin van der Weyden, 'The Annunciation', early sixteenth century, part of the *Altarpiece of the Virgin and Child* (Burgos, Cathedral).
25. Goswin van der Weyden, 'The Annunciation', 1516, part of the *Altarpiece of the Betrothal of the Virgin* (Lierre, Church of St Gomarus).
26. Petrus Christus, *The Annunciation*, 1452 (Bruges, Groeningemuseum).
27. Jan Provoost, 'The Annunciation', first quarter of the sixteenth century (Stourhead/Wiltshire, National Trust).
28. Barthel Bruyn the Elder (circle), *The Annunciation*, c. 1525-1530 (Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum).
29. Justus (Amman) von Ravensburg, *The Annunciation*, c. 1451 (Genoa, Santa Maria di Castello).
30. Albrecht Dürer, *The Annunciation*, c. 1503 (from the 'Life of the Virgin'-series).
31. Anonymous (Bavaria), 'The angel of the Annunciation', c. 1460 (Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts).
32. The Master of St Leonard, *The Annunciation*, c. 1455 (Salzburg, Nonnberg Abbey).
33. French school, Tapestry featuring the 'Annunciation' (detail) (c. 1520-1530; Reims, Palais du Tau).
34. Anonymous (France), 'The Annunciation', c. 1447-1450 (Bourges, Cathedral).
35. Jean Fouquet, 'The Annunciation', c. 1452, from the *Hours of Etienne Chevalier* (Chantilly, Musée Condé).
36. Barthelemy d'Eyck (Master of the Aix Annunciation), *Aix Annunciation*, c. 1443 (Aix-en-Provence, Church of St Mary Magdalene).
37. Fra Bartolommeo, *The Annunciation*, 1497 (Volterra, Cathedral).
38. Francesco Ferrari, *The Annunciation*, c. 1510 (Modena, Galleria Estense).
39. Giovanni Antonio Sogliani, *The Annunciation*, 1517 (Florence, Santa Maria degli Innocenti).
40. Arcangelo di Jacopo del Sallai, *The Annunciation*, c. 1500-1530 (Florence/London/New York, Moretti).

41. Master of Sopetrán, *The Annunciation*, c. 1460 (Madrid, Museo del Prado).
42. Master of Castrojeriz, 'Annunciation', early sixteenth century(?) (Castrojeriz, Church of St John the Baptist).
43. Pedro Berruguete, *Annunciation*, c. 1504 (Burgos, Charterhouse of Miraflores).



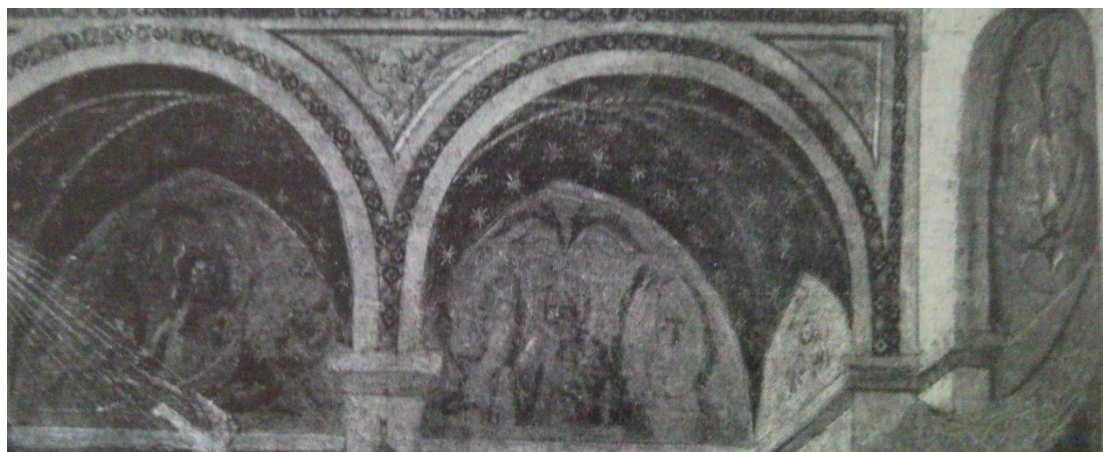
III. 1



III. 2

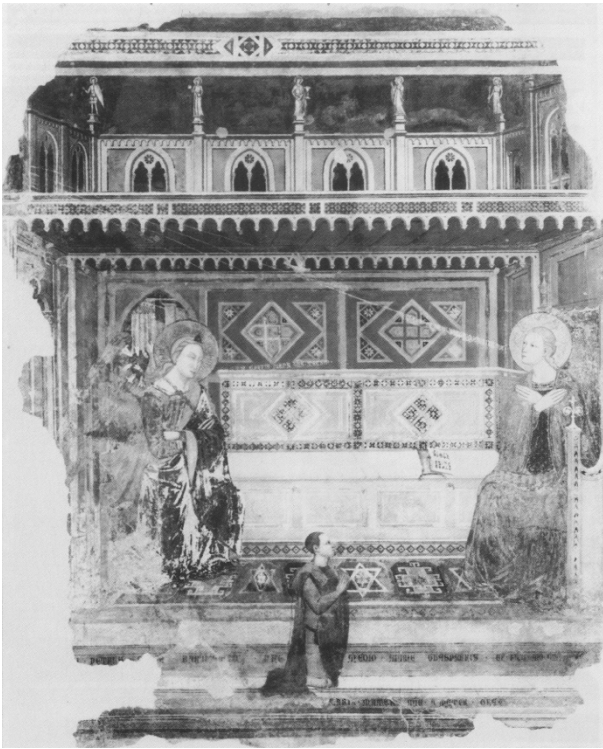


III. 3



III. 4a





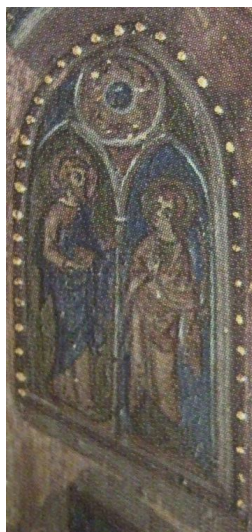
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III. 6b



III. 7





III. 8



III. 9



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III. 11





III. 12



III. 13

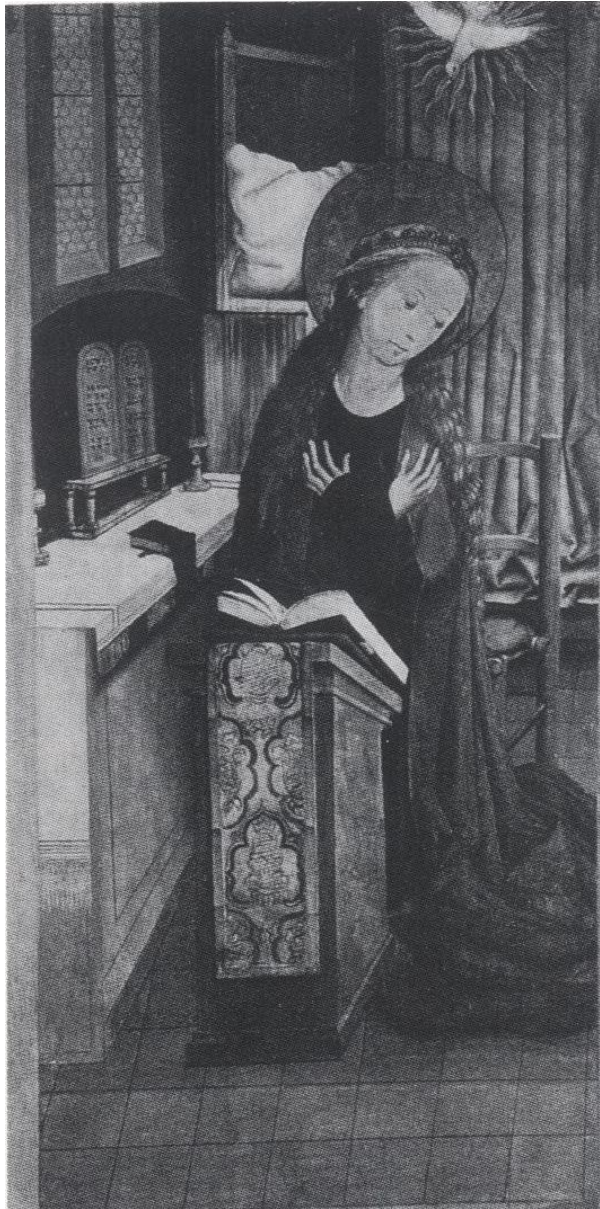


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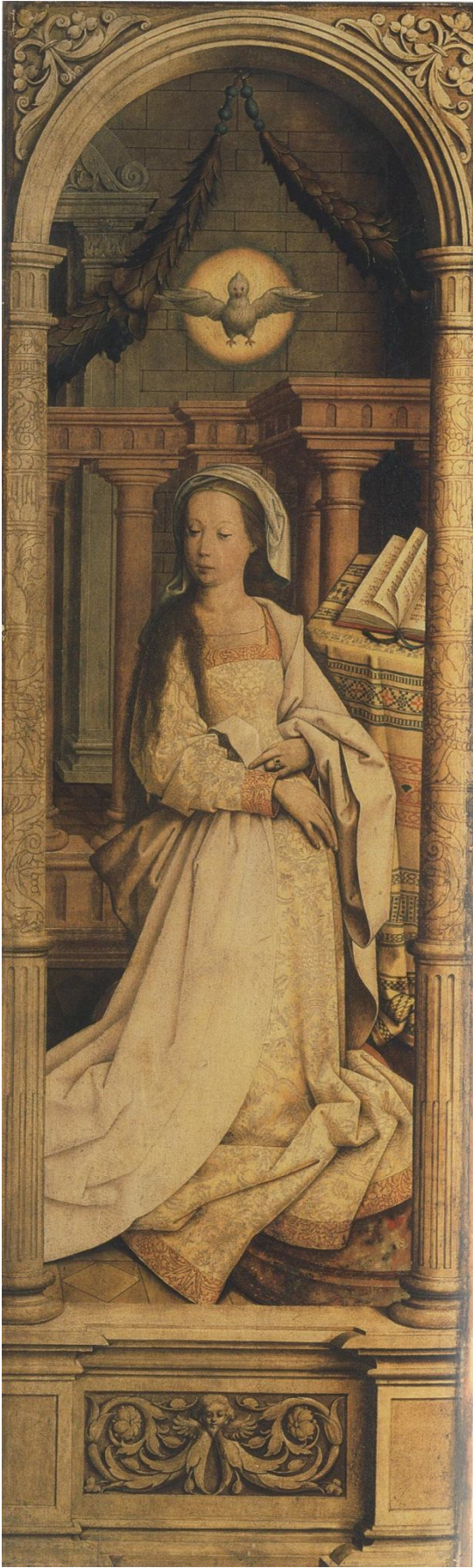


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III. 21a



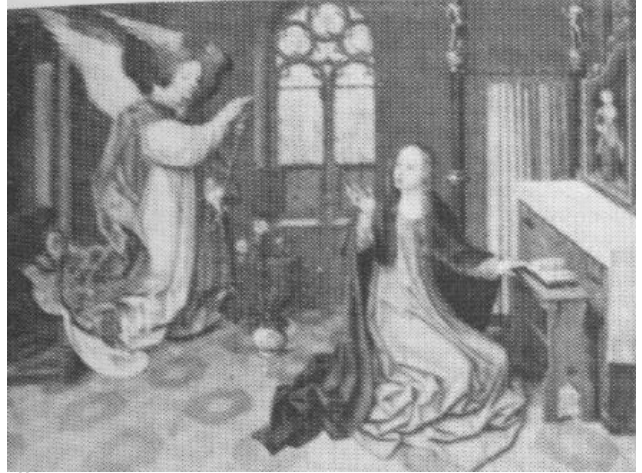


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III. 29





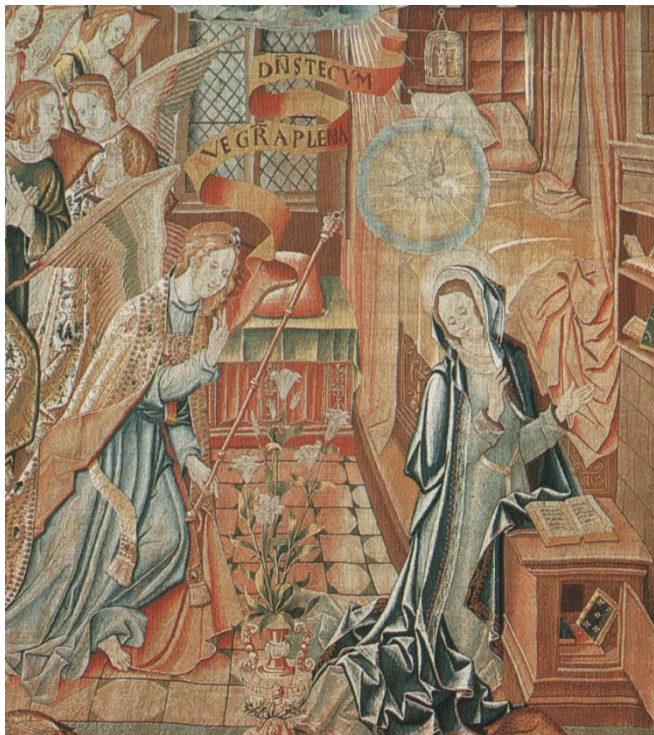
III. 30



III. 31



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III. 33





III. 34



III. 35



III. 36





III. 37



III. 38



III. 39



III. 40





III. 41



III. 42



III. 43

## Chapter III: Catalogue

# Introduction to the Catalogue

The paintings discussed in the catalogue are divided into different region sections. The Low Countries are divided between the Southern Netherlands ('Flanders') and the Northern Netherlands. Naturally, only the German regions where *Annunciations* featuring embedded Old Testament iconography were painted are included, namely Westphalia, the Rhineland, Lower Saxony, Swabia, Franconia, and Bavaria.<sup>166</sup> This division of the German lands in the catalogue was made in order to create a proper overview of the varying amount of Netherlandish influences in different German areas. The sections on Netherlandish painting should be nigh to complete, at least regarding published works, although some excluded paintings are mentioned in Chapter II.4). The corpus of relevant German paintings are most likely not entirely complete; as a substantial number of fifteenth-century German altarpieces are still *in situ*, it is much more difficult to gather proper images of these works. Nevertheless, the German paintings provided below should make out the large majority of relevant *Annunciations*.<sup>167</sup> Included are also a select number of paintings, such as SN5 and RH1, that do not actually contain explicit embedded Old Testament iconography, but nonetheless have proven to have been of great importance in the development and spread of embedded Old Testament iconography.

Within every region, the paintings have been placed in chronological order, as much as the known datings allowed. Except for basic data, such as size, dating and current location, most entries also feature the original location and probable patron, in order to allow for analysis of these aspects of these works and seek for any patterns. Behind every painter, the city or region where the artist in question was predominantly active, or active at the time the specific *Annunciation* was painted, is mentioned.

Following the description of and background information on the painting, the 'Historiography'-section discusses what other scholars have written on the general, or non-Testament, iconography of the painting (only when available and/or applicable), the scene's architectural setting (in order to discern whether the setting is ecclesiastical or domestic and explicitly Jewish or not), and the Old Testament iconography (both embodied in embedded human figures and other objects). Unfortunately, not in every case could all relevant publications be included. Some grave lacunas may have occurred, but hopefully the included literature offers a balanced overview of analyses and opinions. Finally, the 'Discussion' on each painting provides own analyses of the painting's iconography, style, attribution, and/or mentioned literature.

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<sup>166</sup> Unfortunately, other German speaking regions, such as Austria and Switzerland could not be included in the catalogue due to time constraints. See also Chapter II.4.

<sup>167</sup> A few German paintings were excluded that only featured unspecific embedded figures on Gabriel's cope.

# Southern Netherlands



# SN1

**Artist:** Melchior Broederlam (Ypres; active 1381-1410)  
**Work:** *Annunciation and Visitation*  
**Date:** 1393-1399  
**Part of:** *Crucifixion Altarpiece*  
**Part:** Exterior left wing  
**Measurements:** 166,5 × 125 cm (with frame)  
**Current location:** Dijon, Musée des Beaux-Arts  
**Original location:** Chartreuse de Champmol, near Dijon  
**Patron:** Philip the Bold (1342-1404)(?)



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Prophet	upper right corner of portico	sculpture	often (falsely) identified as Moses
Prophet	upper left corner of portico	sculpture	often identified as Isaiah

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN1a) occupies the left half of Broederlam's panel wing. The Virgin is sitting in a rectangular portico decorated with a blue and gold painted cross vault and Gothic traceries and windows. On the exterior front corners, two small sculpted prophets, wearing turbans and holding banderoles, are placed under Gothic baldachins. The Virgin, dressed in blue, is sitting on a bench draped with red golden cloth behind an eagle-shaped lectern with a book. In her left hand she has candle. From the ceiling, three lamps, not burning, hang in front of a door that leads to a room with a table or altar. At the back, the portico is attached to a round, domed building built in a simpler, Romanesque-like style, although it features buttresses. The exterior architecture extends further to the left, displaying an unidentifiable roofed but open space with a swastika-patterned pavement and a stone triptych or 'crown' topped by an angel blowing a trumpet. To its left, a closed rectangular building is attached in front of which a walled garden can be seen. The archangel Gabriel, dressed in red and carrying golden wings, has come from the left with a banderole reading: '*Ave . gracia . plena . dominus . tecom*'.<sup>168</sup> A vase with white flowers stands in the central foreground. In the upper left corner of the panel, God, surrounded by red and blue angels, is depicted blowing a golden beam of light towards the Virgin, carrying the dove of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>168</sup> Micheline Comblen-Sonkes, *Le Musée des Beaux-Arts de Dijon*, 1986, p. 104. The text refers to Luke 1:28: 'Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!'

## Background information

Broederlam's two wings depicting the 'Annunciation' and 'Visitation' on the left, and the 'Presentation in the Temple' and the 'Flight into Egypt' on the right, were painted for Jacques de Baerze's (active c. 1384-1399) *Retable of the Crucifixion* (1390-1393) destined for the Chartreuse de Champmol.<sup>169</sup> Possibly commissioned by Philip the Bold (1342-1404) in 1393, these panels form the earliest known dated examples of so called 'pre-Eyckian' panel painting.<sup>170</sup> As a Franco-Flemish painter, Broederlam's artistic roots can be seen in the solidity of the figures and sense of detail.<sup>171</sup> However, the design and detail of the painted architecture, the exterior viewpoint of the 'Annunciation', and Broederlam's use of color reveal a strong influence of Italian, especially Sienese, painting.<sup>172</sup>

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

As a justification to base his iconographical interpretation of the panel on New Testament Apocrypha, Panofsky identifies the string in the Virgin's hand as a skein of wool destined for the new temple veil which the Virgin, according to the Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, was required to make as a temple girl.<sup>173</sup> Comblen-Sonkes refutes this identification, instead – correctly – remarking that the string is in fact a thing, long candle (or taper), recognizable by its unraveling end.<sup>174</sup>

Duwe claims that the eagle of the lectern is an Old Testament symbol for the love of God, which would also refer to his might and power, yet he does not provide a textual source for this

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<sup>169</sup> Broederlam's wings were commissioned three years later than De Baerze's retable.

<sup>170</sup> Comblen-Sonkes (op. cit. note 168), p. 104-5. Christina Currie, 'Genesis of a Pre-Eyckian Masterpiece: Melchior Broederlam's Wings for the *Crucifixion Altarpiece*', in: Cyriel Stroo (ed.), *Pre-Eyckian panel painting in the Low Countries*, 2009, II, p. 23.

<sup>171</sup> Anne Hagopian van Buren, 'Thoughts, Old and New, on the Sources of Early Netherlandish Painting', *Simiolus* 16 (1986), No. 2/3, p. 106. Gert Duwe, *Die Verkündigung an Maria in der niederländischen Malerei des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, 1994, p. 65.

<sup>172</sup> Comblen-Sonkes (op. cit. note 168), p. 87. Van Buren, *ibidem*. However, technical research on the Champmol panels has revealed Broederlam's highly different working methods than those of Italian artists at the time, which makes Italian influence early in Broederlam's career highly unlikely. See: Currie (op. cit. note 170), p. 75. Although Jugie recognizes direct influences of Ambrogio Lorenzetti and his *Presentation in the Temple* (1342) in Broederlam's work, Schmidt highly doubts an Italian journey and a direct study of Lorenzetti's work by Broederlam actually occurred, and suggests the artist might have been influenced by sketches and drawings that were brought from Italy. See Sophie Jugie, in Marquet (op. cit. note 150), p. 197, and Victor M. Schmidt, 'Panel Painting in France and the Southern Netherlands and the Influence of Italy', in: Cyriel Stroo (ed.), *Pre-Eyckian panel painting in the Low Countries*, 2009, II, p. 185.

<sup>173</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 131. The actual passage can be read in The Gospel of Pseudo-Matthew, Ch. 8.

<sup>174</sup> Comblen-Sonkes (op. cit. note 168), pp. 83-84. A very clear example of such a candle can be seen in the *Vanitas Still-life with Skull, Wax Taper and Pocket Sundial*, painted c. 1620 by an anonymous German master (Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum).

interpretation.<sup>175</sup> Therefore, this interpretation cannot be considered to be correct at this point. Whether the hanger with the three candles represents the Holy Trinity remains unclear. Panofsky does not dare to make the connection, though Schiller is convinced of the candles' Trinitarian symbolism.<sup>176</sup> The walled garden probably refers to the *Hortus conclusus*, a symbol of Mary's virginity.<sup>177</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

Panofsky states that the architecture of Broederlam's *Annunciation* is 'invested with symbolical significance', referring to the contrast between the Gothic portico, representing the new faith, and the cupola building built in an earlier style, representing the old faith.<sup>178</sup> Purtle expands on this, interpreting the contrast between the Gothic portico and alleged 'Romanesque' domed building as a 'clear indication of the timely transition from the Jewish to the Christian era'.<sup>179</sup> The general consensus is thus that the domed structure represents a Jewish house of worship, which would make the object visible through the opened door an – empty – altar.<sup>180</sup> Schiller claims that the Gothic frontage with the three arches in the center of the background architecture is a symbol of the Holy Trinity.<sup>181</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

The right figure (ill. SN1b) on the portico corner has traditionally been identified as Moses, the figure on the left (ill. SN1c) as the prophet Isaiah.<sup>182</sup> In these male figures Panofsky and Jakoby recognize an antithesis between the Old Testament, personified by Moses, and the New Testament, personified by Isaiah with his prophecy of a virgin giving birth to the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14).<sup>183</sup> Comblen-Sonkes, however, rejects the identification of the right figure as Moses and states that he, like the figure on

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<sup>175</sup> Duwe (op. cit. note 114), p. 67. No other similar interpretation of the eagle symbol could be found.

<sup>176</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 132: 'Whether or not the three lamps – as yet unlit – in the chandelier suspended from the ceiling of her little shrine are a further illusion to the Trinity, I dare not decide.' Schiller additionally interprets the portico as a 'Tempel der Dreifaltigkeit', see Schiller (op. cit. note 130), p. 59.

<sup>177</sup> Panofsky, *ibidem*.

<sup>178</sup> *Idem*, p. 131-32.

<sup>179</sup> Purtle (op. cit. note 101), p. 68. Panofsky, *idem*, p. 132.

<sup>180</sup> See Comblen-Sonkes (op. cit. note 168), pp. 86-87, for an overview of interpretations. Duwe (op. cit. note 114), p. 66, nonetheless thinks the structure is meant to represent a palace.

<sup>181</sup> Schiller (op. cit. note 130), p. 59.

<sup>182</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 87. Schiller, *ibidem*, p. 59. Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 189: 'Sofern [die] Propheten überhaupt etwas auf dem Haupt tragen, gebührt der Rundturban in der Regel Isaias, obwohl es diesbezüglich immer wieder Abweichungen gibt.'

<sup>183</sup> Erwin Panofsky, 'The Friedsam Annunciation and the Problem of the Ghent Altarpiece', *The Art Bulletin* 17 (1935), No. 4, p. 446. Jakoby, *idem*, p. 191.

the left, is in fact an anonymous prophet.<sup>184</sup> The mistaken identification of Moses is based on the figure's turban, which is draped around his head in a manner which makes it seem as if the figure has horns on his head. Because both prophets are depicted as practically identical – the only difference between the two being the length of their beards – the identification of the right figure Isaiah is also implausible. The anonymous presentation of these prophets is more in line with Mâle's description of Old Testament prophets depicted in medieval New Testament contexts in that, as apostles of the Old Law, their prophecies differed very little and their depiction therefore lacked in individuality.<sup>185</sup> These prophets were thought of only as shadows of the apostles.

Technical research has revealed that the two stone figures were not underdrawn by Broederlam, but carefully delineated in the paint layer, as was also the lectern.<sup>186</sup> In the case that Duwe's interpretation of the lectern as an Old Testament symbol is correct, an extra layer of meaning referring to the Old Testament was added later by the artist in the painting process.

## Discussion

Despite the somewhat incorrect identification of the domed building as 'Romanesque', considering its buttresses, its presentation does conform to the traditional (late-)medieval representation of the Temple in Jerusalem.<sup>187</sup> The stylistic differences between this building and the portico in the foreground are clearly intentional, and a symbolism of the 'Old' versus the 'New Covenant' seems possible. However, this interpretation would make the role of the open hall and the building on the left problematic. The supposed Trinitarian symbolism of the Gothic frontage (ill. SN1d) is probably incorrect, as the Holy Trinity is usually depicted as three equal elements. Its position between two older ('Romanesque') structures, partially hidden by the Gothic portico, makes awarding the hall a special, Christian significance even more difficult.<sup>188</sup> In fact, the frontage is very similar to the Gothic decoration on top of the synagogue in the *Ecclesia and Synagogue* (Chapter I, ill.57) miniature from a *Bible moralisée* of c. 1410. Additionally, considering the evident Sieneese influences visible in Broederlam's art, the angel standing on top of the frontage very much reminds of the winged idols painted by Duccio (ill. 9), Lorenzetti (ill. 11 and 12), and Giovanni di Paolo (see note 87) as a means to

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<sup>184</sup> Cobmlen-Sonkes (op. cit. note 168), p. 85: '...en réalité, les deux statues sont coiffées d'un chaperon et n'ont pas d'attributs permettant de les distinguer l'une de l'autre.' See also p. 118.

<sup>185</sup> Mâle (op. cit. note 7), pp. 165-66.

<sup>186</sup> Currie (op. cit. note 170), p. 48.

<sup>187</sup> Krinsky (op. cit. note 98).

<sup>188</sup> Schiller's theory that the three windows of the open hall, through which golden 'light' is visible, also symbolize the Holy Trinity seems to be false, since here too the three windows are not depicted as equal – the right window is barely visible – and if they did represent the 'light of Christianity' shining through a Christian structure, it would be even more odd that the two Gothic windows of the portico remain completely in the dark. See: Schiller (op. cit. note 130), p. 59. The various interpretations of the swastika as a Christian symbol in general are not conclusive enough to warrant any interpretation within this particular context.



indicate their scenes' non-Christian settings. A Jewish function of the hall could therefore also be very well possible. Simultaneously, the presence of anonymous Old Testament prophets on a Gothic portico supposedly representing Christianity would be just as implausible.

Ignoring Panofsky's hypothesis that the contrast between the Gothic and (pseudo-) Romanesque styles were used symbolically, it seems more likely that the entire structure is supposed to be a building of the 'Old Faith', a Jewish temple. In that case, the differences in style would be explainable by differences in practical purpose. The sections with Gothic elements, the portico with the religious statues in which the Virgin is seated and the domed building with buttresses as the heart of the Temple, have an ecclesiastical purpose. Remembering the apocryphal stories of the Virgin living in the Temple as a temple maiden, the section on the left could then be the maidens' living quarters, as the minimal decoration and small windows would be more fitting for a domestic purpose. The function of the open hall still remains unclear, although its role as a non-Christian structure appears to be just as likely as vice versa.<sup>189</sup> What we can conclude, in any case, is that Broederlam intended the Virgin to be depicted in a Jewish context.

The two prophet sculptures, other than their size and color - although slightly brighter than the stone color of the portico -, do not really appear to be sculpted. The figures seem quite naturalistic, with dynamic body language, lifelike faces, and draperies and banderoles that would hardly seem achievable in late fourteenth-century sculpture. The prophets do not visually comment on the main scene. They are looking up, away from the actual Annunciation, and their banderoles are blank, their 'words' empty. Whether their ignorance of the main scene, by looking upward, is intentional is not clear.

The lack of underdrawing for these sculptures raises a number of questions, not least of which why and on who's initiative the sculptures were added later. Contemporary documents do not hint at an interference by someone other than the painter, be it the donor or a hypothetical adviser.<sup>190</sup> Nevertheless, looking at their placement on the portico, their rather clumsily added supports, and the clearly tacked on baldachins, one cannot but conclude that the sculptures are not properly placed on and integrated in the architecture. Although in line with the style of the portico, and Gothic architecture in general, the baldachins are an odd feature, as a baldachin was a symbol of special honor and worthiness, and would not particularly seem fitting for a non-Christian figure.<sup>191</sup> However, on a 'Gothic' Jewish temple, baldachins over Old Testament figures would seem plausible.

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<sup>189</sup> I would like to thank Stumpel for suggesting this new interpretation of the architecture. He additionally suggested that the left golden rectangle in the farther left corner of the hall is a shutter, an unusual element for an ecclesiastical building and more suited for a 'domestic' setting.

<sup>190</sup> Comblen-Sonkes (op. cit. note 168), pp. 105-06.

<sup>191</sup> However, Old Testament figures placed on the exterior of French Gothic cathedrals are also often topped by baldachins.

It is most likely that Broederlam was inspired by Trecento Sieneese artists for his depiction of the two prophets. In fact, the two sculptures remind somewhat of the embedded sculptures in the *Presentation of the Virgin* (ill. 13) by Bartolo di Fredi. It is noteworthy, however, that Broederlam chose to decorate his 'Annunciation' with figurative sculptures, instead of his 'Presentation in the Temple' (ill. SN1e) on the right wing of the retable, the composition of which was most probably inspired by Lorenzetti 's *Presentation in the Temple* (ill. 10) and its numerous imitators.<sup>192</sup>

### Illustrations

- SN1a Melchior Broederlam, *The Annunciation and Visitation*, 1393-1399, exterior left wing of the *Crucifixion Altarpiece* (Chartreuse de Champmol, Dijon).
- SN1b Left prophet sculpture (detail of SN1a).
- SN1c Right prophet sculpture (detail of SN1a).
- SN1d Frontage on 'hall'-section of background architecture (detail of SN1a).
- SN1e Melchior Broederlam, 'The Presentation in the Temple', detail of *The Presentation and the Temple and the Flight into Egypt*, 1393-1399, exterior right wing of the *Crucifixion Altarpiece* (Chartreuse de Champmol, Dijon).

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<sup>192</sup> The architecture of Broederlam's *Presentation in the Temple*, a scene that by definition is set in a Jewish temple, is also Gothic in style.



III. SN1a

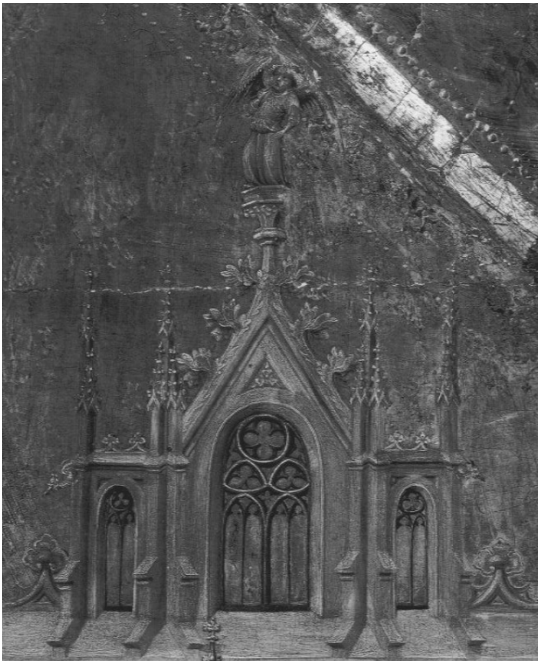




III. SN1b



III. SN1c



III. SN1d



III. SN1e



## SN2

<b>Artist:</b>	The Master of Flémalle / Robert Campin (circle) (Tournai; c. 1375-1444) <sup>193</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>Brussels Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1415-1425(?) <sup>194</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	Unknown triptych(?)
<b>Part:</b>	Centerpiece(?)
<b>Measurements:</b>	61 x 63,2 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Brussels, Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique
<b>Original location:</b>	Westphalia or Rhineland?
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



### Old Testament figures:

Prophet(?) (4x)	<i>Position</i> back wall windows	<i>Medium</i> stained glass
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### Other figurative decorative elements:

'St Christopher carrying the Christ Child'	<i>Position</i> above fireplace, on right	<i>Medium</i> colored woodcut or drawing
Heads of male and female	left and right of fireplace	sculpture

### Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN2a) is set in a bourgeois domestic interior with white walls, a tiled pavement and a wooden ceiling. The Archangel, dressed in white, has entered from the left. The Virgin, dressed in blue with a red mantle, is seated on the right in front of a bench decorated with dog- or lion-like animals, before a hearth. Along the seams of the Virgin's red robe an inscription runs which refers to the Marian antiphon *Salve Regina*.<sup>195</sup> The Virgin is reading a book, while another book lies unwrapped on a table between her and the Archangel. On the table are also a vase with white

<sup>193</sup> Châtelet attributes the Brussels *Annunciation* to Jacques Daret, basing himself on De Loo (1911), Burroughs (1938), Gottlieb (1957), Frinta (1957) and Van Gelder (1967). See Albert Châtelet, *Robert Campin. De Meester van Flémalle*, 1996, p. 318. Thürlemann attributes the panel to the so called 'Master of the Hortus conclusus (Willem van Tongeren?)'. See Felix Thürlemann, *Robert Campin. Eine Monographie mit Werkkatalog*, 2002, pp. 305-06.

<sup>194</sup> Dating according to Cyriel Stroo, Pascale Syfer-d'Olne, *The Flemish primitives: catalogue of early Netherlandish painting in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium, I: The master of Flémalle and Rogier van der Weyden groups*, 1996, p. 37. Thürlemann, *ibidem*, dates the work c. 1425-1430 (terminus post quem). According to him, the dating of the work depends on the relation between the Brussels *Annunciation* and the *Merode Altarpiece* (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).

<sup>195</sup> Stroo, Syfer-d'Olne, *idem*, p. 44: 'Only a few of the words are clearly legible; others have been repainted, sometimes incorrectly: (?) : SALVE : REGIN(A)/REGINA : MIS(ERICORDIE)/A(?) : SALVE : / : AD / ?G(?) or IT(?) EMET = (GEMENTES?) : FLENT(ES) / ? (=OPIA?) : O : DUL(CIS)/H(?)VE:RAD/?.' Stroo and Syfer-d'Olne presume this is the first instance of the use of an inscription to decorate clothing appearing on a painted panel.

lilies and a candleholder, the one candle not burning. A book bag on the floor next to the Virgin and a brush hanging on the wall are other domestic objects depicted. Above the partially opened windows that open up to a golden background, four stained-glass figures holding banderoles can be seen. Above the hearth, between two sconces, a colored woodcut or drawing depicting St Christopher carrying the Christ Child across the water is hung, with an unreadable text written at the bottom of the paper. Two human heads, one male and one female, decorate the corners of the hearth. The entrance on the left opens up to an adjoining room with what seem to be wall paintings or some other form of wall decoration, showing two birds and a bouquet of flowers, possibly roses.<sup>196</sup>

### **Background information**

The Brussels painting constitutes the first *Annunciation* on panel depicted in a domestic interior (see below).<sup>197</sup> The composition bears strong similarities to the better known *Mérode Altarpiece* (ill. SN2b). For decades, scholars have disagreed about which panel was painted first, though with help of infrared reflectography and the analysis of the underdrawings of both paintings, a rather convincing argument has been made by Dijkstra that the Brussels *Annunciation* was painted not long before the *Mérode Altarpiece*, by a different artist but in the same workshop.<sup>198</sup> This workshop has been identified by virtually every scholar as that of the Master of Flémalle (often identified as Robert Campin).

In the later fifteenth century, quite a surprising number of paintings in Westphalia and the Rhineland were freely copied after the Brussels *Annunciation*, which would suggest that this work was commissioned for a destination in that region.<sup>199</sup>

### **Historiography**

#### *General iconography*

As forms of 'disguised symbolism', the furniture and the domestic objects, like the brush and the lilies, have traditionally been interpreted as metaphors for the Virgin's virtues.<sup>200</sup> As in Broederlam's

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<sup>196</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>197</sup> Idem, p. 46.

<sup>198</sup> Jeltje Dijkstra, 'The Brussels and the Merode *Annunciation* Reconsidered', in: Susan Foister, Susie Nash (eds.), *Robert Campin: new directions in scholarship*, 1996, pp. 95-104. See also Stephan Kemperdick, *Der Meister von Flémalle: die Werkstatt Robert Campins und Rogier van der Weyden*, 1997, pp. 81-82, and Stroo, Syfer-d'Olne, idem, p. 43. Thürlemann is the main, modern exception in arguing that the Brussels panel is a copy after the *Merode Altarpiece*. See Thürlemann (op. cit. note 193), p. 306.

<sup>199</sup> The best known example is The Master of the Schöppingen Altarpiece, *Annunciation* (wings of the *Schöppingen Altarpiece*, exterior), shortly after 1453 (Schöppingen, Parish Church). The influence of the Flemish composition reached even further than the Rhineland, see: the *Annunciation*, c. 1460 by an anonymous Bohemian master (Prague, Národní Galerie).

panel (SN1), the book on the Virgin's lap refers to her pious study of Holy Scripture, as is written in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*: '[the Holy Virgin] understood very well the books of the prophets and the Holy Scriptures [...]. In reading them and realizing their meaning she profited.'<sup>201</sup> As mentioned by Stroo and Syfer-d'Olne, the bench with 'lions' before the hearth is often said to refer to the throne of King Salomon and the Virgin as the *Sedes sapientiae*, 'the Seat of Wisdom'.<sup>202</sup> The half-opened windows with the gold background have been interpreted as a reference to the Marian epithet *Fenestra coeli*, the 'Window to Heaven'.<sup>203</sup>

The image of St Christopher (ill. SN2c), incidentally not included in the *Mérode Altarpiece*, functions as an analogy to the Annunciation. 'Christophorus' literally means 'bearer of Christ'; with the Incarnation of Christ at the moment of the Annunciation, the Virgin Mary in a sense also became the 'bearer of Christ'.<sup>204</sup> There is a similar colored woodcut with the same subject (ill. SN2d), dated early fifteenth century, in the Berlin Kupferstichkabinett.<sup>205</sup> Infrared reflectography research revealed that no underdrawing could be detected under the scene of St Christopher, the sconces, and the two sculpted heads.<sup>206</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

Although the setting of the Brussels *Annunciation* has generally been interpreted as a fifteenth-century domestic interior, Gottlieb has argued that the scene of the Brussels and New York *Annunciations* takes place in a sanctuary, with the central table functioning as an altar.<sup>207</sup> Since no other scholar has agreed with Gottlieb's identification and her argumentation seems quite far-fetched, the interior having a religious purpose will not be further considered here.

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<sup>200</sup> Stroo, Syferd'Olne, (op. cit. note 195), p. 43.

<sup>201</sup> Quoted by Margaret B. Freeman, 'The Iconography of the Merode Altarpiece', *The Metropolitan Museum of Art Bulletin* 16 (1957), No. 4, p. 131.

<sup>202</sup> Stroo, Syfer-d'Olne (op. cit. note 195), p. 46. In analyzing the *Mérode* panel, Ridderbos cites Heckscher (William S. Heckscher, 'The Annunciation of the Mérode Altarpiece, An Iconographic Study', in: Duverger, Jozef (et al.), *Miscellanea Jozef Duverger: bijdragen tot de kunstgeschiedenis der Nederlanden*, Ghent 1968, p. 55), who suggested the carved dogs are nuptial symbols, signifying the fortitude of the husband and the faithfulness of the wife, making the bench a 'pictorial sermon' about 'marital faith and constancy' as hallmarks of marriage under the New Covenant inaugurated by the coming of Christ. In contrast, Ridderbos interprets Heckscher, the hearth, recalling the gate of hell, should be interpreted as a symbol for the darkness of the Synagogue, just as the little sculptures of a man and a woman under the mantel piece could refer to 'those unfortunate ones who marriage dated from before the time when Mary and Joseph were chastely joined in matrimony and when the Holy Spirit overshadowed the Virgin'. Although not necessarily plausible, this interpretation mentioned by Ridderbos is nonetheless amusingly interesting. See Bernhard Ridderbos, Anne van Buren, Anne van, Henk van Veen (eds.), *Early Netherlandish Paintings: Rediscovery, Reception and Research*, Amsterdam 2005, p. 19.

<sup>203</sup> Stroo, Syfer-d'Olne, idem.

<sup>204</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>205</sup> Thürlemann, (op. cit. note 193), p. 76.

<sup>206</sup> Stroo, Syfer-d'Olne, (op. cit. note 195), p. 37.

<sup>207</sup> Carla Gottlieb, 'Respiciens per Fenestras: The Symbolism of the Mérode Altarpiece', *Oud Holland* 85 (1970), pp. 65, 73.

### *Old Testament iconography*

The stained glass figures in the background of the Brussels panel (ill. SN2e and SN2f) have been interpreted by Stroo and Syfer-d’Olné as Old Testament prophets.<sup>208</sup> However, in previous analyses they have not been given notable attention, being overshadowed by the image of St Christopher and the supposed ‘disguised’ symbolism of the furniture and household items. Only Thürlemann suggests the four figures represent the four great Old Testament prophets: Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel.<sup>209</sup>

De Tolnay suggests that the two books featured in the scene represent the Old and the New Testament, even going so far as arguing that in the *Merode Altarpiece* the Archangel has brought the Gospel that is laying on the table, while the Virgin is still reading the Old Testament, and that in the Brussels *Annunciation* the Virgin has already accepted and uncovered the New Testament, having lain the Old Testament away.<sup>210</sup> Kemperdick rejects this hypothesis, arguing that there is no other fifteenth-century depiction of the Annunciation in which Gabriel has brought a book that would represent the Gospel, furthermore interpreting the letter ‘A’ visible in the book on the table of the Brussels *Annunciation* as the first letter of Gabriel’s traditional greeting ‘Ave Maria’, and the ‘E’ in the Virgin’s book as the first letter of her reply ‘Ecce ancilla domini’.<sup>211</sup> However, Kemperdick ignores the ‘D’ clearly visible in the left book, which would make the book representing the Archangel’s traditional greeting unlikely.<sup>212</sup>

### **Discussion**

The domestic setting of the Brussels *Annunciation* should probably be identified as the Virgin’s own home. Where in Broederlam’s *Annunciation* the Old Testament prophets have a prominent position in the composition’s central foreground, the stained-glass figures in the Brussels *Annunciation* are small background details and easily overseen. Their importance could be deemed negligible, though nevertheless, the artist found them relevant enough to include them in his composition.

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<sup>208</sup> Stroo, Syfer-d’Olné, (op. cit. note 195), p. 46.

<sup>209</sup> Thürlemann, (op. cit. note 193), p. 75.

<sup>210</sup> Charles de Tolnay, ‘L’autel Mérode du Maître de Flémalle’, *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 101 (1959), p. 71. This was backed up by Thürlemann, ‘Rezension von Asperen de Boer u.a., Underdrawing in Paintings of the Rogier van der Weyden and Master of Flémalle Groups’, *Kunstchronik* 46, 1993, p. 724, and Thürlemann, idem, p. 76.

<sup>211</sup> Kemperdick (op. cit. note 198), p. 84.

<sup>212</sup> In fifteenth-century Netherlandish art, the ‘D’ and ‘A’, sometimes in reversed order, are often depicted in books read by the Holy Virgin and other Saints. (See for example Rogier van der Weyden, *The Magdalene Reading*, c. 1445 (London, National Gallery).) While, in the Latin Vulgate, there is no New Testament passage where a chapter starting with the letter D is followed by a chapter starting with the letter A, there is one in the Torah: Genesis 12 (‘Dixit autem...’), followed by Genesis 13 (‘Ascendit ergo...’). Genesis 12 describes the Calling of Abraham, an Old Testament story that would make a perfect analogy to the Annunciation to the Virgin. Whether this was intended by fifteenth-century artists is doubtful, as it would make little sense for, for example, Mary Magdalene to be depicted reading the Torah.



Interestingly, the stained glass figures are absent from the *Mérode Annunciation*.<sup>213</sup> In fact, stained glass (human) figures are only occasionally included in fifteenth-century Southern Netherlandish *Annunciations*.<sup>214</sup>

The figure on the extreme left is depicted standing under a Gothic arch. He seems to be wearing a long gown and nobleman's or scholar's hat and has an object in his hands, possibly a piece of paper. The figure to his right, standing under a Romanesque arch, is broader and depicted wearing a helmet, which would be very untypical for a prophet. Nevertheless, he can clearly be seen holding a banderole. He has his left hand held diagonally across his chest, with one or two fingers stretched. The second figure on the right is, again, standing under a Romanesque arch. He is depicted with a hat and holding an object which looks like a large staff topped with an orb. The figure to the extreme right, standing under a Gothic arch, has a Phrygian hat and is holding a banderole in his hands.

The identification of the four figures as prophets is not as clear-cut as it seems at first sight. The identification of the second and fourth figures (from the left) as prophets is possible, considering their banderoles as attributes. However, the helmet of the second figure complicates matters. He cannot be one of the 'traditional' Old Testament prophets, yet might perhaps be meant to represent a different, military, Old Testament hero. Which Old Testament hero that would be is not clear; he should have had at least a partial role as a prophet, considering his banderole. The fourth figure's Phrygian hat makes it clear that he is intended to be a foreign, oriental man. The third figure lacks a banderole. His staff might be intended as the attribute of a ruler, although the man does not wear a crown and the staff looks rather exotic and not quite royal. Lastly, the left figure looks like a scholar studying a document. The contrast between the outer two Gothic arches and the inner two Romanesque arches cannot be clearly connected to the figures standing underneath them.

Whether prophets or not, it seems likely that the four men represent non-Christian figures. This hampers the supposed symbolism of the *Fenestra coeli*, since the painting's composition would then suggest that the golden light of heaven would be made visible through these non-Christian men. Therefore, the possibility that the gold background, also visible in Broederlam's panels, is merely a remainder of the outdated International Style without any further meaning, is more likely. On the other hand, the Virgin, as a Jewish girl, only knew God through the words of prior 'prophets', so that the symbolism might also refer to the state of the Virgin's faith before the Annunciation.

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<sup>213</sup> The windows in the *Merode Altarpiece*, through which a full landscape can be seen, carry two coats of arms, probably belonging to the patron's family.

<sup>214</sup> See SN3, SN4, SN10 and SN12.

Interestingly, the landscape of the *Mérode Altarpiece* also happens to be painted over a former gold background.<sup>215</sup>

Despite the above mentioned possible symbolical interpretations, one should also consider the possibility that the four stained glass figures carry no specific meaning, as they are such small details and nearly unidentifiable. Even as prophets, the symbolism would be rather simplistic, comparable to Broederlam's panel in either referring to Old Testament prophecies of the Messiah in general or signifying the Jewish setting of the scene. However, the latter explanation is rendered impossible by the anachronistic image of St Christopher. Yet *this* problem should be nuanced by the consideration that the image of St Christopher was not originally planned by the painter – perhaps even requested by the patron or a hypothetical advisor – and might not have been intended to fit in the original composition. Taking this into account, the function of the stained glass figures might indeed be to stress the Virgin's pious sensibilities; she was a devout Jewish believer, and just like a devout Catholic would decorate his or her home with images of Christ, the Virgin would have her home decorated with biblical figures from the Old Testament.

The prophets, nor St Christopher, are featured in the German paintings after the Brussels composition. This could mean that the inclusion of these figurative details carried a specific meaning related to the context of its commission, and had no purpose in the intended context of the German copies.<sup>216</sup>

## Illustrations

- SN2a The Master of Flémalle (circle), *Brussels Annunciation*, c. 1415-1425 (Brussels, Musées Royaux de Beaux-Arts de Belgique).
- SN2b The Master of Flémalle (circle?), *The Mérode Altarpiece* (central panel), c. 1427-1432 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).
- SN2c Anonymous master, *St Christopher Carrying the Christ Child*, early fifteenth century (Berlin, Kupferstichkabinett).
- SN2d 'St Christopher Carrying the Christ Child' (detail of SN2a).
- SN2e Two left stained glass figures (IRR image) (detail of SN2a).
- SN2f Two right stained glass figures (detail of SN2a).

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<sup>215</sup> Gottlieb (op. cit. note 80), p. 79.

<sup>216</sup> Although the donors on the wings of the *Mérode Altarpiece* have never been identified with certainty, they were probably Flemish. (See Kemperdick, Kemperdick, Sander (op. cit. note 103), p. 197) Therefore, it would be improbable that the *Mérode Altarpiece* was the source of inspiration for the German works with similar compositions.



III. SN2a



III. SN2b

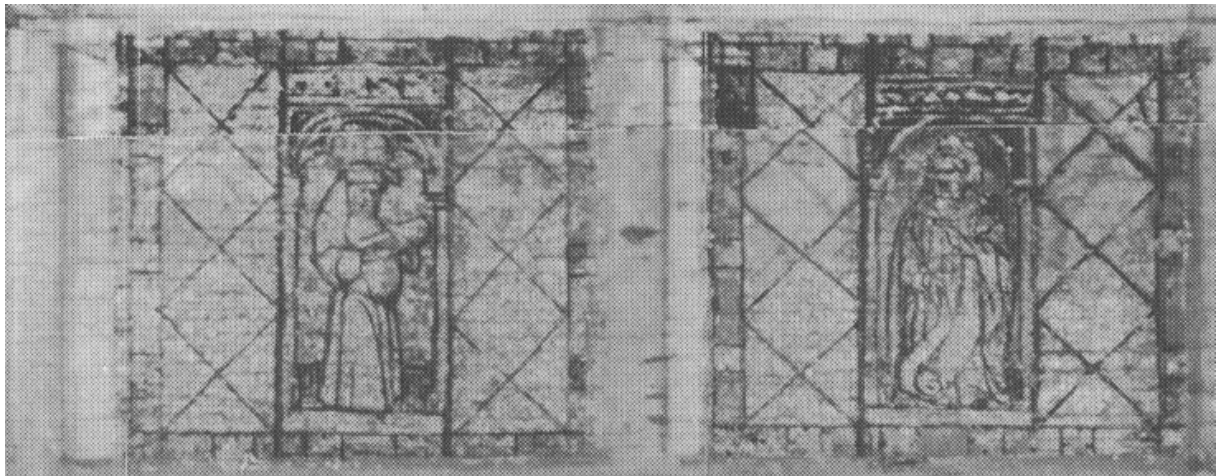


III. SN2c





III. SN2d



III. SN2e



III. SN2f



# SN3

<b>Artist:</b>	Jan van Eyck (Bruges; c. 1395-1441)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1434/1436(?)
<b>Part of:</b>	Unknown (lost) triptych
<b>Part:</b>	Interior left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	90,2 x 34,1 cm (painted surface)
<b>Current location:</b>	Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art
<b>Original location:</b>	Possibly the Chartreuse de Champmol <sup>217</sup>
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown (Philip the Good (1396-1467)?) <sup>218</sup>



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Godhead/Lord of Sabaoth <sup>219</sup>	back wall, upper window	stained glass	stands upon a world globe labeled 'ASIA' <sup>220</sup>
Moses (unseen, in basket)	back wall, upper left side	mural painting	Inscription: 'MOYSES F[II]SCELLA'
Pharaoh's daughter	back wall, upper left side	mural painting	Inscription: 'FI... PHARAONIS' On banderole: 'O IN... VS HEBREORVM HIC EST'
Pharaoh's daughter's servant girl	back wall, upper left side	mural painting	
God	back wall, upper right side	mural painting	Inscription: 'DNS' On banderole: 'NO ASSVMES NOM DI TVI I VAN [VM]'
Moses	back wall, upper right side	mural painting	Inscription: 'MOYSES'
Isaac	back wall, center, left side	roundel	Inscription: 'ISAAC'
Jacob	back wall, center, right side	roundel	Inscription: 'JACOB'
Samson (3x)	pavement, lower left side	niello	
Delilah	pavement, lower left side	niello	Inscription: 'A DALIDA VXORES'

<sup>217</sup> Reinach quotes a fragmentary description of the Chartreuse from 1791, in which three paintings kept in the Prieur's room are described, that originally were on display in the ducal chapel of the Chartreuse: 'Dans la chambre du Prieur on conserve deux tableaux sur bois dans le genre des premiers peintres flamands, qui proviennent des chapelles [sic] des Ducs: ils ont environ 4 pieds de haut. Le premier, d'à peu près un pied de large, est un *Annonciation*...' See: S. Reinach, 'Three Early Panels from the Ducal Residence at Dijon,' *Burlington Magazine* 50 (1927), p. 239. Hand mentions that, although the dimensions do not match those of van Eyck's painting, the general shape is similar and the tall, narrow format is rather unusual for a Netherlandish Annunciation. See John Oliver Hand, Martha Wolff, *Early Netherlandish painting: Washington, National Gallery of Art*, 1986, p. 76, note 1.

<sup>218</sup> Hand, idem, p. 76 quotes C. J. Nieuwenhuys, *Description de la Galerie des Tableaux de S.M. le Roi des Pays-Bas*, 1843, p. 2: 'D'après les meilleurs renseignements qu'on a pu obtenir, ce tableau faisait suite à deux autres peintures du même maître; il a été peint pour Philippe le Bon, duc de Bourgogne, et destiné à orner un monument religieux à Dijon.' According to Hand, the reference to a 'monument religieux' instead of a church might mean that a different work is described. O'Meara suggests the Virgin has been given the features of Isabella of Portugal, the wife of Philip the Good. See: Carra Ferguson O'Meara, 'Isabella of Portugal as the Virgin in Jan van Eyck's Washington Annunciation', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 97, pp. 99-103.

<sup>219</sup> The identification as the Lord of Sabaoth according to Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 138.

<sup>220</sup> These and following inscriptions as noted by Hand (op. cit. note 217), p. 76.

David	pavement, lower center	niello	Inscription: 'DAVID'
Saul	pavement, lower center	niello	Inscription: 'SAVI REX'
Goliath	pavement, lower center	niello	Inscription: 'GOLIAS'
[Abimelech]	under Holy Virgin's gown	niello	According to Ward <sup>221</sup>
[Absalom]	pavement, lower right side	niello	According to Ward <sup>222</sup>

### Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
'The Presentation of the infant Moses to Pharaoh's daughter'	back wall, left side	mural painting	On banderole: 'O IN... VS HEBREORVM HIC EST'
'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments'	back wall, right side	mural painting	On banderole: 'NO ASSVMES NOM DI TVI I VAN [VM]'
['Isaac blessing Jacob?']	back wall, center	roundel	Inscription: 'ISAAC', 'JACOB'
'Samson slaying the Philistines'	pavement, lower left side	niello	
'Samson betrayed by Delilah'	pavement, lower left side	niello	
'Samson pulling down the Temple'	pavement, lower center	niello	Inscription: 'SAMSSON MVLTA GENTES INTERFECIT T VIVIO'
'David cutting off the head of Goliath'	pavement, lower center	niello	
['The Death of Abimelech']	under Holy Virgin's gown	niello	According to Ward
['The death of Absalom']	pavement, lower right	niello	According to Ward

### Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Red cherub (2x)	back wall, upper window	stained glass	
Signs of the zodiac	pavement	niello	Not all signs are visible.
Battling figures	capital, left back corner	stone relief	

### Description

Van Eyck's painting (ill. SN3a) shows the 'Annunciation' in a high, ecclesiastical interior setting. The lower portion of the building is designed in the Gothic style, with three Gothic windows at the back, and diversely ornamented capitals at the back and left side. The corner capital at the far left is decorated with battling figures. The upper portions of the building are depicted in a more Romanesque style, topped by a flat ceiling. From the front left window seven rays of light, carrying the dove of the Holy Spirit, descend towards the startled Virgin Mary who is standing at the lower right, dressed in blue. She has an opened book, a vase with white lilies and a wooden, red-cushioned footstool in front of her. The Archangel Gabriel is crowned, dressed in a red-golden mantle, and carrying rainbow-colored wings. He has a messenger's staff in his left hand. To Gabriel's right an inscription reveals his words: 'AVE GRĀ. PLENA' ('Hail, full of grace...'). The Virgin responds 'ECCE

<sup>221</sup> John L. Ward, 'Hidden Symbolism in Jan van Eyck's Annunciations', *The Art Bulletin* 57 (1975), No. 2, p. 198.

<sup>222</sup> Ward (op. cit. note 217), p. 205.

*ANCILLA DÑI* ('Behold the handmaiden of the Lord') (Luke 1:26-38). Her words are depicted upside down. In relation to the architecture the two principal figures are disproportionately large.

The back wall is decorated with mural paintings showing scenes from the life of Moses, 'The finding of Moses' on the left, 'Moses being presented the Ten Commandments' on the right, and roundels showing Jacob and Isaac. Above them is a stained-glass window depicting a Godhead standing on a globe labeled 'ASIA', accompanied by two red cherubim. The pavement is decorated with Old Testament scenes from the lives of Samson and David, and with signs of the zodiac.

### **Background information**

Van Eyck's Washington painting is the first 'Annunciation' on panel fully situated in a ecclesiastical interior.<sup>223</sup> It was possibly commissioned for the same charterhouse as Broederlam's panels, perhaps even also by the duke of Burgundy.<sup>224</sup> The *Washington Annunciation* constitutes the most complex example of embedded (Old Testament) iconography in panel painting up to that time, with figures and scenes in stained glass, stone relief, niello and as murals. However, technical study has shown that Van Eyck developed and extended the depictions of Old Testament figures in several stages *after* he began the work, which according to Gifford would imply interference from a patron or advisor.<sup>225</sup> The artist's apparent original intention was to depict the 'Annunciation', with exception of the stained glass Godhead, in an undecorated interior.<sup>226</sup>

### **Historiography**

#### *General iconography*

Panofsky points out that the words spoken by the Virgin are depicted upside down so that God in heaven could see or read them.<sup>227</sup> According to Hand, the seven rays of light entering the hall represent the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit that will descend on Christ as branches of the Tree of Jesse (Isaiah 11:2-3): wisdom, understanding, counsel, strength, knowledge, piety, and fear.<sup>228</sup>

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<sup>223</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 137.

<sup>224</sup> See notes 217 and 218.

<sup>225</sup> Gifford (op. cit. note 81), p. 115: 'For the final version van Eyck repainted the greater part of the rear wall [with depictions of] the blessing of Jacob by Isaac and scenes from the life of Moses. In the foreground van Eyck also introduced Old Testament references, painting over the patterned floor of the underdrawing with the inlaid niello floor of the final composition', adding: 'While such modifications, made during the painting process after the underdrawing was completed, could reflect an ongoing development of the iconographic program by the artist himself, it seems likely that they reflect consultations during the creation of the painting with a patron or advisor.'

<sup>226</sup> Purtle (op. cit. note 17), p. 67.

<sup>227</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 137.

<sup>228</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 217), p. 79.

Hand additionally states that the depiction of the signs of the zodiac in the pavement harks back to actual medieval churches in which the symbols were incorporated to show that God has dominion over the physical universe and the movement of the planets, as well as over the world of the spirit.<sup>229</sup> According to Panofsky's reconstruction of the design, Gabriel stands on Aries, representing the month of March (the month of the Annunciation), and the Virgin covers Virgo; the sign at the far right would be Capricorn, December, the month of the Nativity.<sup>230</sup>

No scholar has offered a concise interpretation of the battling capital figures, mounted and on foot (ill. SN3b). Ward does not come any further than making a connection between the violence of the battling figures and the violence of the niello scenes.<sup>231</sup> Hand interprets them as an allusion to the 'malevolence of the world' before the Incarnation of Christ.<sup>232</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

According to Robb and Purtle, the ecclesiastical interior of the *Washington Annunciation* was probably inspired by French manuscript illuminations, such as the work of the Boucicaut Master.<sup>233</sup> Ever since Panofsky's iconographic analysis of the painting, the transition from the Romanesque upper floor to the Gothic lower floor has been interpreted by scholars as symbolizing the transition from the Old Covenant (the era 'under the law', *sub lege*) to the New Covenant with the arrival of the Christ (the era 'under grace', *sub gratia*).<sup>234</sup> That the later style is used for the lower parts of the structure is odd though, since normally the oldest parts of a church are visible on ground level. Yet the interior as depicted was not a complete invention by van Eyck, as Lyman provides several examples of (late-)medieval religious buildings in modern-day Belgium containing a similar top-down design.<sup>235</sup>

In van Eyck's original design, visible through the underdrawing, the ceiling is in disrepair, with several gaps and broken elements. Purtle awards this a symbolic significance, as the disrepair would

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<sup>229</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 217), p. 80.

<sup>230</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 138. Not quite convincingly, Ward argues that the signs are in fact not real signs of the zodiac, instead seeing in them impure hybrids that would supposedly symbolize the disruption of the cosmos by the forces of evil prior to the advent of Christ. See Ward (op. cit. note 17), p. 203.

<sup>231</sup> Ward, *idem*, p. 197.

<sup>232</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 217), p. 80. Purtle, (op. cit. note 101), note 22, compares the capital figures to the capital above St Michael on the left wing of van Eyck's *Dresden Triptych*, 1437 (Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister).

<sup>233</sup> Robb (op. cit. note 104), 500. Carol J. Purtle, 'The Iconography of Prayer, Jean de Berry, and the Origin of the Annunciation in a Church', *Simiolus* 20 (1990-1991), No. 4, p. 227.

<sup>234</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 138.

<sup>235</sup> The best example would be Saint Quentin in Tournai. See Thomas W. Lyman, 'Architectural Portraiture and Jan van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation*', *Gesta* 20 (1981), No. 1, pp. 263-71. Hand additionally mentions the Cistercian abbey at Villers-la-Ville and the cloister of the abbey at Orval. Hand, (op. cit. note 217), p. 83.



signify the crumbling Old Covenant of the Jews.<sup>236</sup> Her suggestion is that, in van Eyck's original design, the viewer would regard the stained glass Godhead as a representation of the singular, Old Testament God, presented in the context of a 'crumbling' faith, and then would go down to the three windows, which supposedly represent the Holy Trinity, in the Christian, Gothic style.<sup>237</sup> Thus – going from top to bottom – one would see the transition from Old to the New Testament.

### *Old Testament iconography*

According to Hand, the traditional interpretation of the Old Testament iconography stipulates that the iconography comments on the transition from the Old to the New Covenant as well.<sup>238</sup>

### Godhead

There has never been a true consensus on the identity of the stained glass figure (ill. SN3c), the only figure that was originally embedded in van Eyck's architectural design. It is a generalized image, that, according to Hand, does not seem to correspond with any single particular description of God.<sup>239</sup> Thus, De Tolnay, Baldass and Ward have identified the figure as Christ.<sup>240</sup> According to Purtle and Panofsky, it would however be more correct to identify the figure as God the Father, as he has a non-cruciform nimbus; the globe (inscribed with 'ASIA') under his feet could refer to Isaiah 66:1 ('Thus says the Lord: "Heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool"') and the cherubim above its head to Ezekiel 10 and its description of the Glory of God.<sup>241</sup>

### Moses murals

The upper left mural painting (ill. SN3d) represents the scene from Exodus 2 in which the infant Moses is presented in a basket to the daughter of the Pharaoh. Ward calls this scene a visual analogy to the Annunciation and a parallel to the life of Christ, as here also a woman of royal blood is presented with and raises a son not of her husband, a child that will 'transmit God's covenant to

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<sup>236</sup> Purtle (op. cit. note 101), p. 67. Purtle (op. cit. note 17), p. 120 also refers to Amos 9:1 in which she claims the Lord orders for the destruction of the roof of the Temple. In fact, he is speaking about the temple's thresholds.

<sup>237</sup> Purtle (op. cit. note 101), p. 120.

<sup>238</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 217), p. 79.

<sup>239</sup> Hand (ibid.).

<sup>240</sup> Charles de Tolnay, 'Flemish Paintings in the National Gallery of Art', *Magazine of Art* 34 (1941), p. 176. Ludwig Baldass, *Jan van Eyck*, 1952, p. 277. Ward (op. cit. note 17), p. 206. Ward identifies the figure as Christ as *Maiestas Domini*, or the God of both the Old and New Testament, the inspiration for his depiction supposedly coming from Old Testament descriptions of God and from the Book of Revelations.

<sup>241</sup> Purtle (op. cit. note 17), p. 120. Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 138. Panofsky's identification of the figure as God as the Lord of Sabaoth, the Lord of Hosts, is perhaps somewhat too particular and unfounded.

man'.<sup>242</sup> According to Hand, the finding of Moses has additionally been interpreted as a symbol of baptism or a prefiguration of the reception of Christ by the faithful.<sup>243</sup>

Moses receiving the Ten Commandments (Exodus 19) (ill. SN3e) is depicted on the right side of the back wall, a scroll – a quite unusual element – inscribed with the second Commandment ('You shall not take the name of the LORD your God in vain') being handed by the divine figure to Moses.<sup>244</sup> This image represents the establishing of the era *sub lege*, just as the Annunciation could be considered the beginning of the era *sub gratia*.<sup>245</sup> Purtle refers to prominent medieval exegetes who associated the first three Commandments with the three entities of the Holy Trinity, such as Hugh of Saint Victor (c. 1096-1141) who connected the commandment inscribed in the painting to the Incarnation of Christ: 'He who believes that the Son of God is only a man is taking the name of God in vain.'<sup>246</sup> Panofsky dates the style of the murals c. 1200, referring to similar mural paintings in Tournai.<sup>247</sup>

### Isaac and Jacob

It is difficult to determine whether the actual act of Isaac blessing Jacob (Gen. 27) (ill. SN3f) is depicted, since both figures have one hand raised and Jacob, like Isaac, is standing upright, as an equal to his father. Generally, a connection is made by scholars between the blessing of Jacob and Luke 1:33: '...and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever'.<sup>248</sup> Ward awards special significance to the position of the Virgin's head between the two patriarchs, as if the blessing is bestowed on her and not necessarily on Jacob, the promise of Jacob's sovereignty (Gen. 27:29) transcending to the sovereignty of Christ.<sup>249</sup>

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<sup>242</sup> Ward (op. cit. note 17), p. 205.

<sup>243</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 217), p. 79.

<sup>244</sup> Ward stresses that it is Christ giving Moses the Commandments, not God the Father. The divine figure has a youthful appearance and a cruciform nimbus. See Ward (op. cit. note 17), p. 206. Although the cruciform nimbus makes for a strong argument, the inscription 'DNS' probably does signify 'DEUS', 'God'.

<sup>245</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 217), p. 80.

<sup>246</sup> Carol J. Purtle, *The Marian Paintings of Jan van Eyck*, 1982, p. 51, note 4.

<sup>247</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14) p. 138. Hand, (op. cit. note 217), p. 83, note 16, refers to the Église Saint-Brice in Tournai. Purtle, *idem*, p. 46, notes that the churches of Saint Salvator and Saint Jacob in Bruges also give evidence of having had wall decoration.

<sup>248</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 217), p. 80. Purtle, *idem*, p. 52.

<sup>249</sup> Ward (op. cit. note 17), p. 206, note 67; Ward adds: 'The Church Fathers [Isidore of Seville, Rabanus Maurus, et. al.] saw Isaac as a figure of God the Father, Jacob as the Church or Christ, Esau as the Jews or Satan, and Rebecca as the Holy Spirit. The blessing was taken to signify the elevation of the Church over the Synagogue.'

### Scenes of Samson and David scenes on pavement

Purtle refers to William Durandus (c. 1230-1296), who wrote that a church's pavement represents the people by whose work the church is nourished and maintained.<sup>250</sup> Applying this thirteenth-century notion to van Eyck's *Annunciation*, the images on the pavement (ill. SN3g) would symbolize the Church, personified by the Virgin, growing out of the people of Israel. Ward additionally interprets the pavement, which is also decorated with leaves and branches – perhaps alluding to the Tree of Jesse – as an allusion to Christ's Old Testament forefathers and forbearers.<sup>251</sup> Hand sees the scenes as prefigurations of Christ's redemptive activities.<sup>252</sup> What is striking, in any case, is that all niello scenes contain elements of violence, betrayal and death – a stark contrast to the Annunciation.

Three scenes from the life of Samson can be recognized: 'Samson slaying the Philistines' (Judges 15), 'Samson betrayed by Delilah' (Judges 16:4-5), and the 'Death of Samson by pulling down the Temple' (Judges 16:23-30). According to Panofsky, these scenes respectively represent the triumph of Christ over sin, the Entombment, and the Crucifixion.<sup>253</sup> Hand and Ward see Samson as a prototype of Christ as *Sol justitiae* ('Samson' meaning 'little sun' in Hebrew), and Hand connects Samson's betrayal by Delilah to Christ's betrayal by the Synagogue, and the destruction of the Temple with the Last Judgment.<sup>254</sup> Ward also refers to the Messianic prophesy of Isaiah 1:4: '...but with righteousness he shall judge the poor, and decide with equity for the meek of the earth; and he shall strike the earth with the rod of his mouth, and with the breath of his lips he shall kill the wicked'; as an antetype of Christ, Samson was an Old Testament judge who was righteous and judged the poor, but also slew the wicked.<sup>255</sup> Lastly, Ward interprets the seven locks of hair, cut by Delilah as the seven-fold spirit of God descending on the Virgin – the spirit of God leaving Samson and entering the Virgin – and sees a resemblance between Samson's pose and countenance in the 'Destruction of the Temple' and the Flagellation and Mocking of Christ.<sup>256</sup> None of the interpreters take into account the inscription accompanying the destruction of the temple, namely that 'Samson killed many people'.

According to Panofsky, the victory of David over Goliath (1 Samuel 17:25) prefigured Christ's victory over the Devil.<sup>257</sup> Like Samson slaying the Philistines, David's victory is another example of God's covenant to, and protection of, his people.<sup>258</sup> Purtle makes a connection between the scenes

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<sup>250</sup> As referred to by Purtle, (op. cit. note 246), pp. 50-51, note 38, from Durandus' *Rationale*, vol. 1, p. 25.

<sup>251</sup> Ward (op. cit. note 17), 197.

<sup>252</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 217), p. 80.

<sup>253</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14) p. 138.

<sup>254</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 217), pp. 80-81. Ward (op. cit. note 17), p. 201 refers to Isidore of Seville who saw Christ as the *Sol justitiae* referred to in Malachi 4:2.

<sup>255</sup> Ward, *ibidem*.

<sup>256</sup> *Idem*, p. 202.

<sup>257</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 138.

<sup>258</sup> Purtle (op. cit. note 17), p. 120.

of Samson and David through Amos 9, in which God orders for the destruction of the Temple (Samson), but also promises the rebuilding of the 'booth' of David, which essentially happens with the Annunciation.<sup>259</sup>

Ward is the only scholar who has attempted to identify the merely partially visible niello scenes. He identifies the scene under the footstool (ill. SN3h) as the death of David's third son Absalom, who is run through with a spear as he hangs by his hair from an oak tree (2 Samuel 18).<sup>260</sup> He additionally suggests that the practically hidden scene under the Virgin's gown might depict the death of the Philistine king Abimelech (Judges 9). In this context, Absalom would be an antitype of Christ on the Cross, representing those who have denied Christ as Absalom had rebelled against his father.<sup>261</sup> Abimelech would represent the Antichrist.<sup>262</sup> According to Panofsky, the style of the niello scenes could be dated somewhat later than the mural paintings of Moses.<sup>263</sup>

## Discussion

Besides the unsurpassed complexity of the embedded iconography in van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation*, it is also the first Netherlandish *Annunciation* on panel containing embedded depictions of specific, identifiable Old Testament characters. Most of the embedded figures and scenes are rather unconventional choices, not in line with typological tradition. As Kemp evaluates, the scholars analyzing the panel frequently had a hard time finding a convincing connection between the various Old Testament figures and Christ.<sup>264</sup> At this point, however, it would not be reasonable to propose a better interpretation of specific scenes and figures.<sup>265</sup> Though still, the typological meaning of the Moses murals is evident and convincing, and the broad meaning of the scenes from the life of Samson as judge, hero, and martyr, an established Old Testament antetype of Christ, is also clear. But the function of the Isaac and Jacob, for example, is quite obscure, and there seem to be no easy answers to the riddle of the iconographic program as a whole.

With the main exception of Ward, and in some cases Purtle, typological connections and interpretations are made without references to textual sources. However, when a textual source is actually provided, it is often a rather obscure bible passage, such as the Book of Amos, or a centuries-old scholarly text (f.e. by Isidore of Seville) of which there is no certainty at all whether these were

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<sup>259</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>260</sup> Ward (op. cit. note 17), p. 198.

<sup>261</sup> Idem, p. 205.

<sup>262</sup> Idem, p. 198.

<sup>263</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 138.

<sup>264</sup> Kemp (op. cit. note 23) p. 104.

<sup>265</sup> However, it should be noted that the identification of the stained glass figure as God the Father, as opposed to Christ, makes sense considering the lack of a cruciform halo, and the fact that it was an iconographic tradition to depict the Lord as a witness to or actor in the Annunciation (see f.e. SN1 and SN4).



known to or relevant for the designer of the iconographic program. Furthermore, one has to wonder who, as viewer, had to identify and connect all these different references. It might be telling that the iconographic inventions of the *Washington Annunciation*, and the choices of medium, such as the nielli, have never been imitated by other artists. Perhaps the work's iconography was not as successful and clear to the viewer as one would imagine from an artist of van Eyck's caliber.<sup>266</sup> Moreover, the focus on the Old Testament, although never dominant, is so strong that one might wonder whether the Old Testament stories held a special significance to the patron not shared by many other fifteenth-century commissioners of altarpieces.<sup>267</sup>

The question whether van Eyck devised the iconographic program himself is one of the most pregnant. Gifford suggests there is a probable chance that an advisor played a role, and this possibility is also considered by Purtle.<sup>268</sup> Van Eyck frequently depicted Old Testament imagery embedded in the main scene, though never this prominent and never in this variety of media; besides the *Washington Annunciation* one can only find storiated capitals, sculptures and reliefs in van Eyck's oeuvre. Apart from the capitals, there is no single sculpture in the painting. This notable deviation from van Eyck's usual visual language might thus be due to the wishes of other parties. Just as Broederlam's stone prophets and the Master of Flémalle's image of St Christopher, the embedded images were not part of the original design. That van Eyck also changed parts of the architecture, especially the ceiling, makes it less likely that van Eyck left a number of blanks in the underdrawing, with the intention of filling them in later; for that the differences between the underdrawing and final composition are too drastic.

One should also consider whether the adding of the Old Testament figures changed the meaning of the painting. Except for its ecclesiastical setting, van Eyck's *Annunciation* would have been a wholly conventional 'Annunciation' without the added embedded Old Testament iconography. In its current form, however, the iconography stresses, as Hand puts it, Christ's divine nature and his association with the Lord of the Old Testament on the back wall, while the lower portion refers, through Old Testament prefigurations, to Christ's human existence and sacrificial death.<sup>269</sup> Ergo, with the final composition van Eyck did not create a work about the Virgin but a work about Christ.<sup>270</sup>

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<sup>266</sup> It is not known whether, in the fifteenth century, the triptych to which the *Annunciation* belonged was accessible to persons other than the patron or patron's family.

<sup>267</sup> Could the patron of the triptych have been a converted Jew?

<sup>268</sup> See note 225. Purtle (op. cit. note 17), p. 117.

<sup>269</sup> John Oliver Hand, *Jan van Eyck's Annunciation: 22 May – 5 Sept. 1994*, exh. cat. Washington, D.C. (National Gallery of Art) 1994, p. 6.

<sup>270</sup> Purtle (op. cit. note 246), p. 52: 'The iconographic setting Jan has created for his Annunciation, then, emphasizes that the Lord had prepared his Chosen People to receive the Messiah through the victories of her kings and leaders. The iconography of the back wall indicates that those same people should be prepared to

Despite the ecclesiastical, medieval appearance of the interior, it would be erroneous to immediately assume that the *Annunciation* is set in a church. It is clear that the direct visual language of the setting is not Christian, but Jewish. Only in its iconological interpretation can the embedded iconography be seen in a Christian light. But it has also always gone unnoticed that, in the painting, Moses, Isaac and Jacob actually are depicted with haloes. They are represented as if they were Jewish 'saints', which would, hypothetically, only be possible in a Jewish temple or synagogue. Taking this into consideration, it would be plausible that van Eyck intended to depict the Virgin as a temple maiden, studying in the Temple as described in the Proto-Evangelium of James among others.<sup>271</sup>

On the other hand, one should also consider the possibility that it was not van Eyck's intent to depict a literal architectural environment, but a symbolical setting – the embedded images are only visible on the surfaces that are most directly visible to the viewer (the partially covered pavement scenes notwithstanding – , and not, for example, on the side wall, which would likely be the case in an actual interior.<sup>272</sup> If it had been van Eyck's intention to attempt to immerse his 'Annunciation' in a culturally correct depiction of a Jewish temple, optimal visibility for the viewer would probably not have had the highest priority.<sup>273</sup> The inscriptions accompanying many of the embedded images also suggest that the right identification and interpretation of the figures and scenes, as opposed to giving a general sense of religious decoration, was very important.

Panofsky's specific dating of the murals' style to c. 1200 and that of the pavement nielli to 'somewhat later' is, frankly, not that relevant.<sup>274</sup> Van Eyck himself probably would not have been able to precisely date the respective styles of the murals. He probably copied them from examples he had seen in actual churches because the medium fit his intentions. For example, he might have chosen to include the murals as an elegant solution to the problem of filling the back wall and thus depicted the thirteenth-century murals because they were the only examples he had seen. Or, for example, he might have wanted to include these medieval paintings because the style generally looked 'old'. This would be in line with the use of Romanesque architecture as representing Judaism and the Old

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recognize the Messiah through his likeness to Moses, Isaac, and Jacob.' This interpretation would only be plausible when the painting was intended for an audience new to Christianity.

The often mentioned interpretation that the Virgin in the painting personifies the Church is not further considered here. See Hand, *ibidem*.

<sup>271</sup> Schiller (*op. cit.* note 130), p. 34. It is noteworthy, however, that, surprisingly for a Jewish Temple, there is no altar depicted.

<sup>272</sup> I would like to thank dr. Stephan Kemperdick for pointing this out to me (February 4<sup>th</sup> 2011).

<sup>273</sup> See for example the partially hidden embedded figures in SN4, ill. 1, and Jacques Daret's *Presentation in the Temple* (1433; Paris, Petit Palais). For a representation of embedded painting on a diagonal plane, see ill. Chapter I, ill. 36.

<sup>274</sup> The Jacob and Isaac roundels also look somewhat archaic.

Covenant. Or, hypothetically, van Eyck wanted to present the murals in an older style because he wanted to hint at the fact that the Annunciation took place in past, biblical times.<sup>275</sup>

The biggest mystery still remains the battling capital figures, mounted and on foot. Hand's and Ward's interpretations seem somewhat odd, considering the valuation of the top-down iconography in the composition; the capitals are depicted in the Gothic, 'Christian' level of the structure, almost at the same height of Gabriel and the Virgin and right next to the Gothic windows that, supposedly, represent the Holy Trinity<sup>276</sup>. The negative interpretation of the figures should therefore probably be reconsidered.

### Illustrations

- SN3a Jan van Eyck, *The Washington Annunciation*, c. 1434-1436 (Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art).
- SN3b Storiated capital featuring battling figures (detail of ill. SN3a).
- SN3c Window with stained glass images of the Godhead with two red cherubim (detail of ill. SN3a).
- SN3d Mural of 'The finding of Moses' (detail of ill. SN3a).
- SN3e Mural of 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments' (detail of ill. SN3a).
- SN3f Roundels with Jacob and Isaac (detail of ill. SN3a).
- SN3g Nielli scenes from the lives of Samson and David, and the death of Abimelech(?) (detail of ill. SN3a).
- SN3h Nielli scene of the 'Death of Absalom' (detail of ill. SN3a).

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<sup>275</sup> However, this notion would not be in line with his use of Gothic architecture.

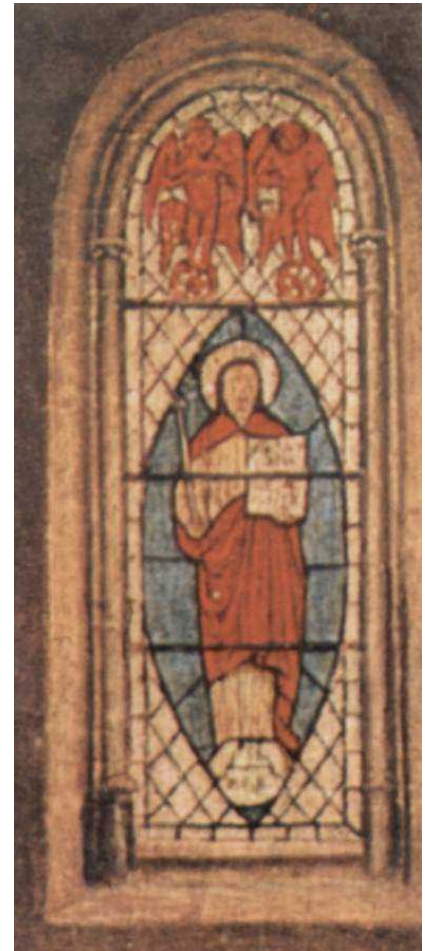
<sup>276</sup> That van Eyck might have used actual churches as examples for his interior is not an argument that van Eyck did not have any symbolical intent with his architectural design.



III. SN3a



III. SN3b



III. SN3c

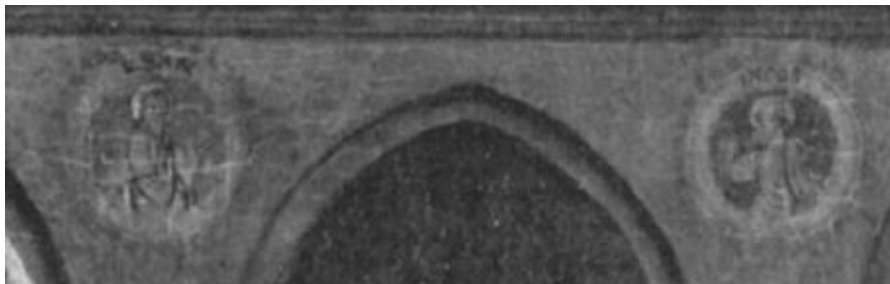




III. SN3d



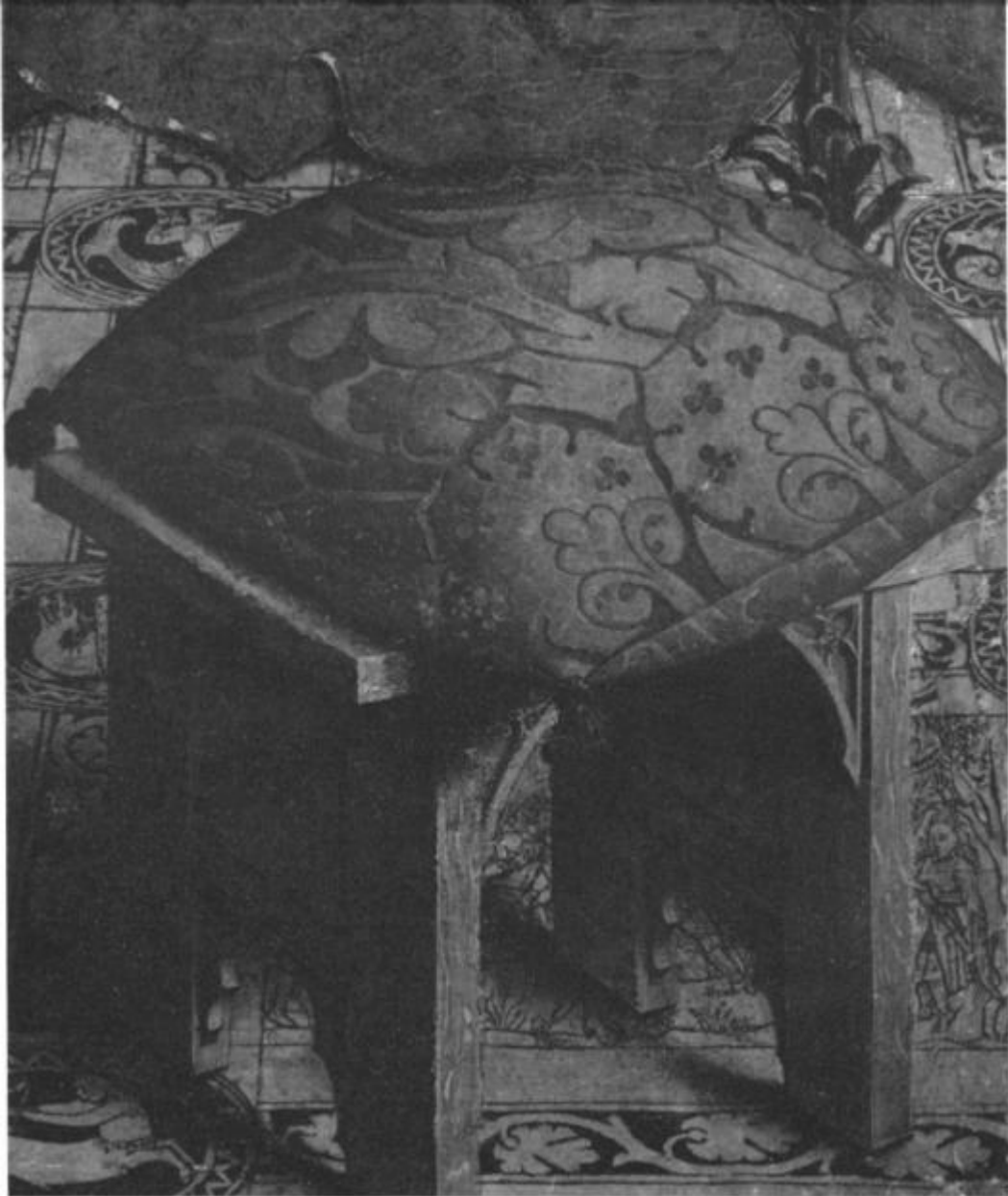
III. SN3e



III. SN3f



III. SN3g



III. SN3h

# SN4

**Artist:** The Master of Flémalle / Robert Campin (circle) (Brussels(?); c. 1375-1444)<sup>277</sup>  
**Work:** *Prado Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1435<sup>278</sup>  
**Part of:** Unknown ensemble<sup>279</sup>  
**Part:** Centerpiece(?)  
**Measurements:** 76 x 70 cm  
**Current location:** Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Guillaume de Bousies(?)<sup>280</sup>



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	façade of building in background, left	sculpture
King David	façade of front building, left	sculpture
God	upper left part of right window	stained glass
Moses	upper left part of right window	stained glass
Abraham	upper central part of right window	stained glass
Isaac	upper central part of right window	stained glass
Prophet (x2) <sup>281</sup>	lower central part of right window	stained glass

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments'	upper left part of right window	stained glass
'The sacrifice of Isaac'	upper central part of right window	stained glass

<sup>277</sup> Châtelet, (op. cit. note 193), pp. 319-20, attributes this work to Jacques Daret. Thürlemann, (op. cit. note 193), pp. 309-312, attributes it to the, by him named 'Master of the Marriage of the Virgin'. Fischel claims the work is a copy after a lost work by Campin. See: Lilli Fischel, 'Die "Vermählung Mariä" des Prado zu Madrid', *Bulletin / Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique* 7 (1958), pp. 3-16. Concerning the location of the painter's workshop, Kemperdick sees influences of both the Brussels and Kleeve schools. See: Kemperdick, (op. cit. note 198), pp. 111-12.

<sup>278</sup> Dating after Kemperdick, idem, p. 112. The Prado dates the work 1418-1419, at least before van der Weyden entered Campin's workshop in 1427. See Museo Nacional del Prado, <<http://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/online-gallery/on-line-gallery/obra/the-annunciation-3>>, 04-03-2011. Thürlemann, idem, p. 311, dates the work c. 1440, if it is indeed a copy after Campin.

<sup>279</sup> Thürlemann argues that the panel originally formed the centerpiece of a triptych, together with a second, unknown panel. This second panel could not have been the Prado *Marriage of the Virgin* because of the difference in measurements. See: Thürlemann, idem, p. 312. Kemperdick, on the other hand, is convinced that, despite the differences in size, the Prado *Annunciation* and *Marriage of the Virgin* were part of the same ensemble, and painted in the same workshop. See: Kemperdick, idem, p. 102.

<sup>280</sup> Châtelet (op. cit. note 193), p. 320, not quite convincingly, suggests that the stained glass coat of arms beneath the kneeling knight in the right window might belong to the Bousies family. Guillaume de Bousies was lord of Romeries en married to Guillemette van Heule, who was distantly related to a woman of whom Robert Campin had painted a portrait.

<sup>281</sup> Falsely identified by Kemperdick as the 'Visitation'. See Stephan Kemperdick, Jochen Sander (eds.), *Der Meister von Flémalle und Rogier van der Weyden*, exh. cat. Frankfurt am Main (Städel Museum) 2008, p. 229. The left figure has a beard and is holding a banderole.

### Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Godhead	building façade in background	sculpture
Pagan female figure (Venus?)	building façade in background	sculpture
Pagan male figure (Mars?)	building façade in background	sculpture
Battling figure (2x)	building façade in background	sculpture
Battling dragon (2x)	building façade in background	sculpture
Knight in armor	lower left part of right window	stained glass
Female carrying coat of arms	lower central part of right window	stained glass
Unidentifiable (helmet?)	lower left part of right window	stained glass
Male figure (with banderole) (2x)	Gabriel's morse	gold relief
Unidentifiable figure	second visible window from the right	stained glass
Unidentifiable figure with nimbus	window above Gabriel's entrance	stained glass
Signs of the Zodiac	furthest window of right wall of gothic hall	stained glass
Two pairs of figures with nimbus	extreme right of inner right wall of gothic hall	murals

### Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN4a) takes place in a late-Gothic open hall. The Virgin, on the right, is reading a book on the floor, sitting against a bench with pillows. Her dark blue dress is decorated with a mixture of Greek, Roman and Hebrew letters of which only singular words such as 'JESUS CHRISTUS, AVE MA[RIA], MATER DEI' can be deciphered.<sup>282</sup> Behind the Virgin, an opened cabinet reveals more books. The vase with lilies stands on the floor to her left. Above the Virgin is a large Gothic window with stained glass figures, among them Old Testament scenes and coats of arms. Further inside the hall more stained glass windows can be seen of which one is decorated with signs of the zodiac, and on the wall below the windows are murals of (male?) figures with haloes. On one of the pillars, a plate hangs with a text of which only an 'A' and a 'D' are decipherable. The Archangel cope, holding a messenger's staff, is about to enter the hall from the left. He is wearing a red mantle, decorated with gold-colored leaf-patterns, Greek crosses, swastika's and letters positioned in circles. His mantle is fastened by a morse in the form of two tablets, each with a figure under a baldachin, the left of which is carrying a banderole. Above Gabriel's entrance is a window with a stained glass figure with a nimbus. On the exterior wall to the left of Gabriel, a sculpture of King David can be seen. Behind the late-Gothic hall, a larger building is depicted, built in an apparently earlier Gothic style but still with turrets and buttresses. On the façade, a number of statues are placed: a bearded figure holding a globe, below him Moses, on the left a statue of a nude, winged female wearing a turban and on the right a nude male carrying a shield and spear. Both nude figures are standing on twisted columns. The style of this wall-element is somewhat more exotic and fantastical, with round forms and niches

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<sup>282</sup> Thürlemann (op. cit. note 193), p. 310.



and antiquated capitals. Framing the top of the left niche below Moses are two human figures in battle, and above the right niche two dragons. In the upper left corner God, crowned, depicted in gold-color, and accompanied by angels, has sent seven rays of light down through the windows of the gothic hall to the Virgin.<sup>283</sup> Lastly, there are two buildings depicted in the right background.

### **Background information**

The *Prado Annunciation* is a rather enigmatic work; little is known about its provenance, and there is much disagreement about its origins, the possible artist, the dating, and its role as part of a hypothetical larger ensemble. Although both attributed to the circle of the Master of Flémalle, it is highly unlikely that the painter of the *Prado Annunciation* also painted the *Brussels Annunciation*; other than the Virgin's posture and position within the composition, the iconography and painting styles of the two works differ too much.<sup>284</sup>

### **Historiography**

#### *General iconography*

Kemperdick suggests that the nude figures on the background architecture (ill. SN4b and c) might represent Venus and Mars.<sup>285</sup>

#### *Architectural setting*

Purtle and Châtelet both notice the difference in architectural styles between the front hall and the background architecture, although both describe this as a contrast between Gothic and Romanesque architecture.<sup>286</sup> Châtelet identifies the building featuring the statue of King David as a palace.<sup>287</sup>

#### *Old Testament iconography*

Kemperdick and Châtelet both identify the statue of the bearded figure standing on the background architecture as God the Father.<sup>288</sup> Kemperdick furthermore suggests the fighting figures and dragons

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<sup>283</sup> Kemperdick (op. cit. note 198), p. 228: 'sieben goldene Stahlen, die als die Sieben Gaben des Heiligen Geistes verstanden werden mögen'. See also SN3.

<sup>284</sup> See note 193 and 277.

<sup>285</sup> Kemperdick (op. cit. note 198), p. 228. Châtelet naively calls the two nudes 'wild men'. See Châtelet (op. cit. note 193), p. 214.

<sup>286</sup> Purtle (op. cit. note 101), p. 69. Châtelet, *ibidem*.

<sup>287</sup> Kemperdick (op. cit. note 198), p. 227. See for example also the *Prado Marriage of the Virgin*. That Gabriel enters through a door right next to the open front side might be an indication that the physical aspects of the structure should not be taken too literally.

<sup>288</sup> Kemperdick, *idem*, p. 228. Châtelet (op. cit. note 193), p. 214. For Christ as Pantocrator see SN5.

below him would represent the era *ante legem*, with Moses representing the era *sub lege*.<sup>289</sup> He also states that the statue of King David (ill. SN4d) refers to the coming of Christ announced with the Annunciation.<sup>290</sup> Purtle assigns special value to the placement King David, at the supposed architectural transition from the older structure to the Virgin's Gothic space, characterizing the foreground as the House of David, the genealogical home of the Messiah.<sup>291</sup>

## Discussion

The Gothic style, the predominantly religious nature of the decoration, and the absence of domestic objects make it plausible that the structure depicted in the *Prado Annunciation* is meant to have a religious function.<sup>292</sup> In a sense, the *Prado Annunciation* features an elaborated variant of Broederlam's painted architecture (SN1), with a Gothic hall or portico in the foreground, occupied by the Virgin, adjacent to an older religious building, possibly with living quarters, in the background. Presumably, the contrast in architectural styles was intended to signify the difference between the 'old' and the 'new', the pre-Christian era (its definition broadened from Judaism by the presence of pagan deities) and the era of Christ. The main deviation is that in the Prado painting the contrast is signified by late Gothic and early Gothic, not Gothic and Romanesque architecture as suggested by Purtle and Châtelet. The exception is the tower featuring the Old Testament and pagan figures (ill. SN4e), which looks more Romanesque and exotic than the rest of the building; the twisted columns on which the nude figures stand usually represent the Jewish Temple of Jerusalem.<sup>293</sup>

The left wing of the foreground structure, featuring the statue of King David, looks somewhat like a domestic building with its castle-like wall and rectangular windows. In avoiding the too literal interpretation of the building as the 'house of David', it could represent the living quarters of the temple maidens, of which according to the Apocrypha the Virgin was the foremost (see also SN1). In that case, the whole composition would present the Virgin as a temple maiden, studying in the Temple at the moment of the angel's visit. However, as the first Temple was not built by David but by his son Solomon, the question why the statue of David was placed so prominently on the exterior remains unanswered.

One could argue that there is no actual architectural transition visible where the statue of King David is placed which Purtle suggests would signify Christ's Old Testament genealogy. The statue is placed quite in the foreground. As there is no ancestor of David or Christ depicted in the background, and the only ancestors depicted in the Gothic hall being the two patriarchs Abraham

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<sup>289</sup> Kemperdick, *ibidem*.

<sup>290</sup> *Idem*, p. 229.

<sup>291</sup> Purtle (*op. cit.* note 101), p. 69.

<sup>292</sup> Châtelet calls the Gothic hall an oratorium. (Châtelet, (*op. cit.* note 193), p. 320.

<sup>293</sup> Engelbert Kirschbaum (ed.), *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie* 4, 1968-1976, p. 55.

and Isaac (and, of course, Christ's mother), one can hardly call the Gothic hall the genealogical home of the Messiah.<sup>294</sup>

That the Gothic hall is open at the front might be due to the painter's desire to optimize the visibility of the main scene, but it could also signify that the construction of the Gothic building is not yet finished, indicating that the creation of the Christian church was only at its beginnings.<sup>295</sup> However, this would again clash with the identification of the structure as a Jewish temple. The two buildings in the right background signify the architecture is set in an urban environment. Despite all this, the possibility should have to be considered that, as possibly with van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3), the artist intended to set the Annunciation in a symbolic setting, and not a literal architectural environment.

It appears to be clear that the sculptures on the background tower represent the pre-Christian era, indicated by Judaism and (Roman?) paganism. The statues do not look sculpted; their posture is lean and dynamic, and the draperies too sophisticated. The definite lack of visual harmony, in the presentation of the sculpture and in the tower as a whole, might be intentional and signify the disharmony of the world before Christ. The identification of the bearded figure on the background architecture as God the Father, as opposed to Christ, is likely correct, considering the placement of the sculpture on the archaic tower, surrounded by the non-Christian sculptures. In this sense, the iconography is quite similar to the stained glass Godhead of van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation*. The identification of the naked figures as Venus and Mars is not conclusive, since the female has wings and the male is not wearing armor or helmet. They might just be intended to represent generalized pagan deities. If the fighting figures and dragons below would represent the era *ante legem*, with Moses representing the era *sub lege*, there would be a slight discrepancy in the positioning of Moses (ill. SN4f) between the two nude pagan figures, as they do not quite belong together.<sup>296</sup> This is the first *Annunciation* featuring an embedded image of a seated Moses, depicted in a roundel, holding the Ten Commandments – an iconographical element that would occasionally appear again in early sixteenth-century Flemish *Annunciations* (see SN18, SN20, and SN22).

Again as with Broederlam, the Gothic foreground hall occupied by the Virgin is the space most decorated with Old Testament imagery. This would also contradict the idea of the Virgin sitting in a church. What was absent from van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* is prominently featured in this painting: a whole wall of embedded decoration on a diagonal plane, partially hidden and suboptimally placed in relation to the viewer's viewpoint. The right interior wall of the Gothic hall is

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<sup>294</sup> At least according to Matthew 1, Moses is not considered to be a forefather of Christ.

<sup>295</sup> Kemperdick (op. cit. note 198), p. 227. See for example also ill. 1. That Gabriel enters through a door right next to the open front side might be an indication that the physical aspects of the structure should not be taken too literally.

<sup>296</sup> Idem, p. 228.

filled with figures, the identity of which is mostly only hinted at. The farthest window features stained glass zodiac signs (ill. SN4g) that are only recognizable thanks to a few contours; from top to bottom they seem to be Gemini, Virgo(?), Aquarius, Sagittarius, Scorpio or Cancer, and Aries.<sup>297</sup> The windows to the right (ill. SN4h and i) clearly feature stained glass decoration, though they are hidden behind pillars. Of the four figures painted on the wall below these windows (ill. SN4j and k), one can discern their haloes, their eyes and dress, but no attributes by which they could be identified. Their haloes would suggest they are Christian saints, but van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* has shown that, in a certain context, Old Testament characters could also be depicted with haloes. It is possible that the second figure on the left, dressed in blue, is depicted with a banderole. This reminds somewhat of Thürlemann's suggestion about the *Brussels Annunciation* (see SN2) that the four stained glass figures represent the four great prophets. However, the manner in which the pillar with the text pinned to it is placed before the wall, suggest it hides the view of more figures painted on the wall.

Of the decoration in the utmost right window (ill. SN4l), the typological relevance of 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments' – the beginning of the era of the law in contrast to the beginning of the era under grace – has already been established (see SN4). It is noteworthy, however, that, opposed to van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* and the mural figures in the painting discussed here, only God the Father, not Moses, is depicted with a halo. The 'Sacrifice of Isaac' is a typological antetype of the sacrifice of Christ.<sup>298</sup> Here, the willingness of the father, Abraham, to sacrifice his son, is likely compared to the Virgin having to witness her son's Passion later on. The soldier in armor below the Moses scene probably has no specific meaning and might be a generalized image or perhaps a representation of the painting's donor. The two male figures to his right probably represent prophets, as indicated by the banderole. The coats of arms should be interpreted in relation to the unsecured donor. As in Broederlam's painting, the Old Testament figures are placed under high Gothic baldachins. Not only does that disrupt the symbolic interpretation of the architectural styles – the Gothic does not solely signify the New Covenant – it depicts the Old Testament figures as persons of great worthiness, a further indication that the building, including the Gothic hall, should be considered to be a Jewish temple.<sup>299</sup> The figure in the window above the Archangel (ill. SN4m) cannot be identified. It appears to be a man with a halo, dressed in brown, and looking upwards. It seems that there is a beam of light or other manifestation coming from the upper left side of the stained glass setting. The coarseness and vagueness of the stained glass figure – in fact, of all stained glass figures in the painting – suggest that easy identification and interpretation of

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<sup>297</sup> For more on the signs of the zodiac, see van SN3.

<sup>298</sup> Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien. I. Ancien Testament*, 1955, pp. 134-37.

<sup>299</sup> It might also be that the visual language of late-Gothic stained glass images featuring Christian figures was directly copied to this painting, with Old Testament scenes replacing the Christian scenes.



the figures did not have the highest priority to the painter; this would indicate that the artist's primary objective was to give the architecture an aura of decoration, religiousness and meaning, without actually working out a comprehensive iconographical program.

The two tables making out Gabriel's morse (ill. SN4n) probably refer to the tablets of the Ten Commandments. This is an odd representation, as it is precisely Gabriel's role to introduce the New Testament that will replace the Old. This oddity also applies to the two figures depicted in the 'tablets'; they seem to be prophets with banderoles, again standing under Gothic baldachins. The significance of the letters, placed in circles, on Gabriel's cope – of which none are the same – remains unclear.

The text on the board featuring the readable 'A' en 'D' (ill. SN4o), the reverse of the 'D' and 'A' visible in the book on the table in the Brussels *Annunciation*, probably has a specific meaning. Which meaning that is can only be guessed at; perhaps it refers to 'Ancilla Domini' the handmaiden of the Lord.

The ecclesiastical setting of the *Prado Annunciation*, the use of Gothic architecture, the abundance of embedded iconography, its variety of media to depict embedded figures and its inclusion of the signs of the zodiac, beg the question whether the painter of this work knew van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation*. In any case, the designer of this painting's iconography seems to have been less erudite, as the work lacks coherence and – also literally – clarity in its embedded iconography.

## Illustrations

- SN4a The Master of Flémalle, *The Prado Annunciation*, c. 1435 (Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado).
- SN4b Sculpture of female pagan deity (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4c Sculpture of male pagan deity (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4d King David (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4e Tower in background architecture (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4f Moses seated, sculptures of battling figures and battling dragons (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4g Window containing stained glass images of the signs of the zodiac (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4h Window containing unidentifiable stained glass images (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4i Window containing unidentifiable stained glass image (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4j Mural with two men with haloes (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4k Mural with two men with haloes (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4l Stained glass images of 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments, the 'Sacrifice of Isaac', a knight, two prophets, two coats of arms, one held by a female (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4m Window containing stained glass image of unidentifiable figure (detail of ill. SN4a).
- SN4n The Archangel's morse with images of two prophets (detail of ill. SN4a).

SN4o Board with text ('A' and 'D')(detail of ill. SN4a).



III. SN4a



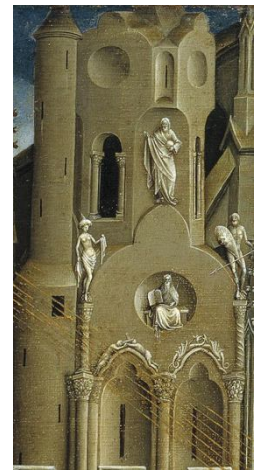
III. SN4b



III. SN4c



III. SN4d



III. SN4e

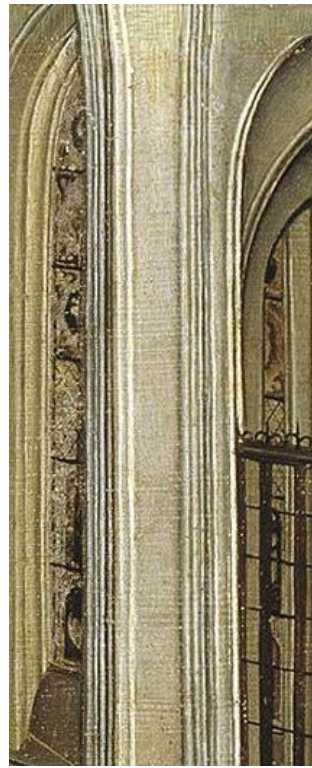




III. SN4f



III. SN4g



III. SN4h



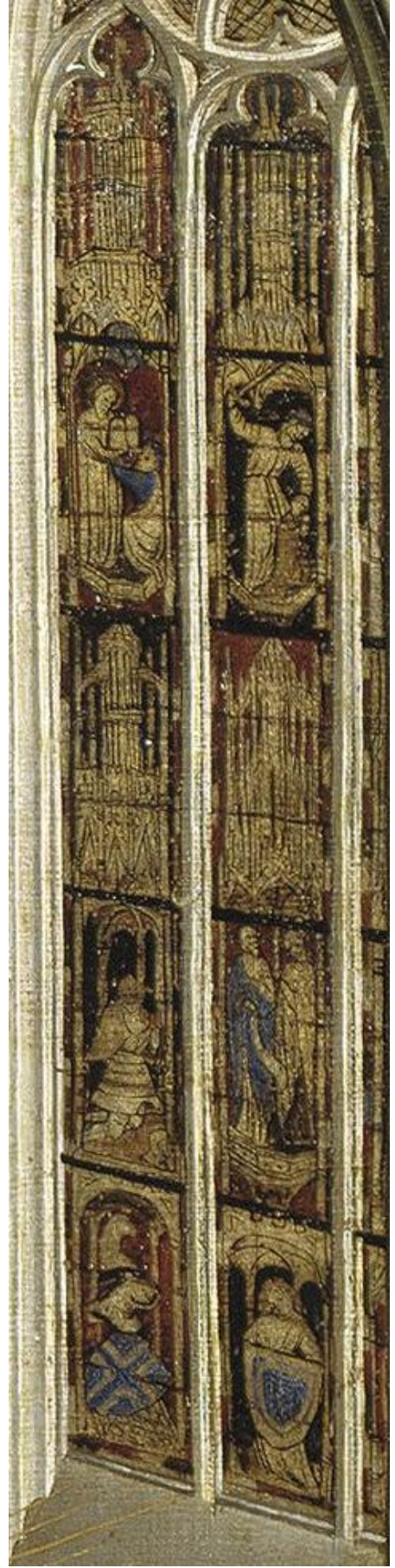
III. SN4i



III. SN4j



III. SN4k



III. SN4l





III. SN4m



III. SN4n



III. SN4o

# SN5

<b>Artist:</b>	Rogier van der Weyden (circle) (Brussels; c. 1399-1464)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>Louvre Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1440 <sup>300</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	Triptych, together with Turin panels? <sup>301</sup>
<b>Part:</b>	Centerpiece
<b>Measurements:</b>	85,7 x 92,3 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Paris, Musée du Louvre
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Oberto de Villa? <sup>302</sup>



## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Christ as <i>Salvator Mundi</i>	back wall of bed	medaillon	Also (falsely) identified as God the Father
Unidentifiable figure (3x)	Gabriel's morse	gold relief	
Lions	on top of bench	wood sculpture	
Beast (lion?)	on top of chandelier	metal sculpture	
Dragon (6x)	arms of chandelier	metal	
Animal (monkey or lion?)	on top of laver, background	metal sculpture	

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN5a) is set in a bourgeois, domestic bedchamber. The Virgin is sitting by the opened window in front of a prie-dieu which is covered by a cloth decorated with leaf-patterns. She has lowered her left hand, in which she is holding a book, as she is startled by the appearance of the Archangel. Gabriel, wearing rich liturgical vestments that are also partially decorated with leaf-patterns, has just entered the room, which is made visible through the bent lilies in the left corner of the image. Gabriel's cope is decorated with three figures standing in a Gothic structure, the largest of which in the center can be identified as a male. The most prominent element in the room is the large red canopy bed, on the back wall of which a medallion with the image of Christ hangs. Beside the bed stands a night table with, standing in a basin, a laver decorated with an animal, possibly a lion or

<sup>300</sup> Châtelet dates the panel 1428-1430. See Albert Châtelet, *Rogier van der Weyden: problèmes de la vie et de l'oeuvre*, 1999, p. 97. This seems unlikely, considering the influence of van Eyck's *Arnolfini portrait* (1434; London, National Gallery) on the composition discussed below.

<sup>301</sup> It is possible that the Louvre panel is the centerpiece of a triptych of which the two wings are kept in the Galleria Sabauda, Turino (inv. 210 and 320). On the left panel the donor is depicted, with the 'Visitation' on the right. The main problem in connecting the Louvre painting with the Turin panels is the difference in the age of the panel wood. See Dirk de Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden: het volledige oeuvre*, 1999, p. 195-96.

<sup>302</sup> The three panels of the supposed triptych have been connected with the De Villa family of Chieri, Piedmont. Considering the portrait of the donor on the left wing, Oberto de Villa would be the most likely candidate. See De Vos, *ibidem*, and Campbell in: Lorne Campbell, Jan van der Stock (ed.), *Rogier van der Weyden, 1400-1464: de passie van de meester*, 2009, pp. 348, 352.

monkey, on top. From the ceiling a chandelier hangs, with six arms in the form of dragons, and with a beast or lion on top. On the left, behind the Archangel in front of a closed hearth, is a bench with red pillows, decorated with small wooden lions. In the left corner of the room, an opened window looks out on a wide river landscape.

## Background information

Lorentz has provided convincing arguments that the *Louvre Annunciation* was not painted by Rogier van der Weyden himself, but by one of his followers, based on the master's designs.<sup>303</sup> In the depiction of the domestic setting and objects, but also in the postures of Gabriel and the Virgin, the painting was much influenced by the *Mérode Altarpiece* and/or the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2) – van der Weyden having been a pupil of Robert Campin, the artist often identified as the Master of Flémalle –, next to van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* (1434; London, National Gallery).<sup>304</sup> The *Louvre Annunciation* actually does not contain explicit embedded Old Testament iconography, although it was often claimed otherwise. For this reason, and because the painting had a tremendous influence on later compositions of the 'Annunciation', this work has been included in this catalogue.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Several, if not most, scholars consider the domestic objects to carry a symbolic meaning; Delenda and de Vos mention the laver as a symbol of the Virgin's purity, the transparent water bottle on the hearth as a symbol of the virginity of Christ's mother (the light passing through but not breaking), the blown out candle on the chandelier as a reference to the arrival of the divine Light (John 1:8-9), and the fruit on the hearth as a reference to the forbidden fruit.<sup>305</sup> De Vos adds that the hearth, as a symbol of passion and physical love, is closed, while Châtelet interprets the bed as symbolizing the mystical marriage of the Virgin.<sup>306</sup> Lane, in presenting a liturgical interpretation of the painting, identifies the laver and basin as objects used by priests to wash their hands during mass; she adds 'these objects are perfectly logical as daily washing utensils, but they also contribute to the

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<sup>303</sup> Philippe Lorentz, Micheline Comblen-Sonkes, *Musée du Louvre, Paris, III*, 2001, pp. 21-70, esp. pp. 35-36, 50.

<sup>304</sup> Hermann Beenken, *Rogier van der Weyden*, 1951, p. 32. Châtelet (op. cit. note 300), p. 97.

<sup>305</sup> Odile Delenda, *Rogier van der Weyden: das Gesamtwerk*, 1997, p. 53. De Vos (op. cit. note 301), p. 199, note 3. De Vos doubts the symbolism of the fruit (See idem, p. 195). Lorentz, (op. cit. note 303), p. 25, states that the fruit probably consists of a fig and an orange, or possibly two oranges.

<sup>306</sup> De Vosidem, p. 195. Châtelet (op. cit. note 300), p. 97. Kemperdick is inclined towards a more practical explanation for the closed hearth; on March 25, the date of the Annunciation, a fire would not have been necessary anymore. See Kemperdick (op. cit. note 103), p. 304.

identification of the space as a sanctuary.<sup>307</sup> Delenda, on the other hand, stresses the contemporary setting and realism through the inclusion of homely details that were intended to help the believer relate to and take part in the biblical event.<sup>308</sup>

The most explicit embedded image in the painting is the medallion (ill. SN5b), made of gold, enamel and enriched with twenty pearls, hanging on the back wall of the bed. Châtelet and Davies identify the figure, sitting on a throne with Gothic pinnacles, as the Lord God, but the cruciform halo, Lorentz convincingly argues, indicates that the figure is in fact Christ as *Salvator Mundi*, making a blessing gesture with his right hand, while resting his left hand on a globe.<sup>309</sup> Neuner sees the medallion as a visual manner to bring the beginning and end of the New Testament together in that the medallion-image represents the ultimate consequence of the Annunciation, namely Christ depicted as apocalyptic Judge.<sup>310</sup>

The top of the chandelier (ill. SN5c) is decorated with a beast that looks somewhat like a lion, though has a distorted head, oversized tongue, and a fiery tail. The arms of the chandelier are shaped like dragons. Jakoby suggests these creatures personify evil, with the 'beast' even representing the devil, who has been 'banned' to the chandelier, defeated by Light.<sup>311</sup> She even goes as far as suggesting the monsters represent the broken rule of the Synagogue.<sup>312</sup> Lorentz mentions that six-armed chandeliers were luxury items, in the later middle ages frequently presented as wedding gifts.<sup>313</sup> The creature featured on the laver (ill. SN5d) has been virtually neglected by scholars.

### *Architectural setting*

According to Panofsky and Châtelet, the setting of the *Louvre Annunciation* is a representation of the *thalamus* or nuptial room, based on the prominent presence of the bed, making it possibly the first 'Annunciation' presented in this context.<sup>314</sup> Kemperdick, however, nuances this particular

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<sup>307</sup> Barbara G. Lane, *The Altar and the Altarpiece: Sacramental Themes in Early Netherlandish Painting*, 1984, pp. 42-43, 47. The laver also occurs in the *Mérode Altarpiece* in what she calls a 'liturgical niche'. She follows Gottlieb (op. cit. note 80), p. 65ff, in calling that particular setting a sanctuary as well. The laver and basin also occur in a niche in the *Annunciation* of van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece* (1432; Ghent, St Bavo Cathedral).

<sup>308</sup> Delenda (op. cit. note 305), p. 51.

<sup>309</sup> Lorentz (op. cit. note 303), pp. 23-24. For the identification as God, see Châtelet (op. cit. note 300), p. 97, Martin Davies, *Rogier van der Weyden: an essay with a critical catalogue of paintings assigned to him and to Robert Campin*, 1972, p. 236, and Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 254. Kemperdick, (op. cit. note 198), p. 306, identifies the figure as Christ Pantocrator, despite the fact that the figure in the medallion is not holding a book.

<sup>310</sup> Antje Maria Neuner, *Das Triptychon in der frühen altniederländischen Malerei: Bildsprache und Aussagekraft einer Kompositionsform*, 1995, pp. 70-71.

<sup>311</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 202.

<sup>312</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>313</sup> Lorentz (op. cit. note 303), p. 26.

<sup>314</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 254. Châtelet (op. cit. note 300), p. 97.



identification, as he states that during the later middle ages, a bedchamber was commonly used for receptions.<sup>315</sup> Lane identifies the room as a sanctuary, or at least as symbolizing a sanctuary, as she interprets the various objects depicted as objects for liturgical use.<sup>316</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Gabriel's morse in the form of a four leaf clover (ill. SN5e) contains a relief of a Gothic shrine or the cross section of a three-naved Gothic ecclesiastical building; the two sides are topped with pinnacles, with a cross on the central peak. De Vos rejects the possibility that the three figures represent the Holy Trinity, as they are not of the same size.<sup>317</sup> The central figure, unidentifiable but obviously male, possibly could be Isaiah or Moses, according to Lorentz.<sup>318</sup> Campbell suggests that the figure might represent a prophet, with the figures left and right possibly being angels.<sup>319</sup> The creatures on the bench have been interpreted, by Davies, among others, as lions which would refer to the throne of Solomon (Kings 10:19).<sup>320</sup>

### **Discussion**

As opposed to the only slightly older *Washington* and *Prado Annunciations* (SN3 and SN4), the figurative embedded iconography in the *Louvre Annunciation* is left almost to a minimum, and mostly concentrated on one single point: the medallion over the bed. The animal figures are easily overseen details, and, if the scholars mentioned above are correct, it is the domestic objects that carry most of the symbolic content.

The presence of Christ in the canopy bed supports the identification of the bed as a symbol for the Virgin's mystical marriage to Christ.<sup>321</sup> Held remarks that it was customary in the fifteenth and sixteenth century to hang devotional tondo's, reliefs or paintings, at the head end of beds. These

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<sup>315</sup> Kemperdick (op. cit. note 103), p. 304.

<sup>316</sup> Lane (op. cit. note 307), p. 47.

<sup>317</sup> De Vos (op. cit. note 301), p. 196.

<sup>318</sup> Lorentz recognizes a connection with Moses in the left panel of the supposed Turin wings, on which the marquee in front of the portico contains the representation of grapes, which would refer to the grapes brought from Canaan (Numbers 8:17-24). See: Lorentz (op. cit. note 303), p. 26. Why this should be connected to Gabriel's morse Lorentz does not explain.

<sup>319</sup> Campbell (op. cit. note 302), pp. 351-52.

<sup>320</sup> Davies (op. cit. note 309), 236. Jacoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 168, identifies the creatures as monkeys. This identification is strongly refuted by Lorentz (op. cit. note 303), p. 25.

<sup>321</sup> Panofsky, (op. cit. note 14), p. 254, saw God the Father as the true spouse of the Virgin. Hahn refers to Bernard of Clairvaux who described the Annunciation as taking place in the nuptial chamber. Cynthia Hahn, "Joseph Will Perfect, Mary Enlighten and Jesus Save Thee': The Holy Family as Marriage Model in the Mérode Triptych', *The Art Bulletin* 68 (1986), No. 1, p. 63: 'The marital bed, which was elaborately blessed by the priest during the nuptial liturgy, was often represented in images of the Annunciation, such as in examples by Rogier van der Weyden.' The medallion also reminds of the mirror in the *Arnolfini Portrait*, which also contains probable marital symbolism. See for example Erwin Panofsky, 'Jan van Eyck's "Arnolfini" Portrait', *The Burlington magazine for connoisseurs* 64 (1934), No. 372 (January), pp. 117-27.

would have hung from a small chain attached at two points, just as the medaillon in the painting here.<sup>322</sup> The image must therefore have been very recognizable for fifteenth-century viewers. The anachronism of a Christ-image in an 'Annunciation' seems jarring at first, though considering the 'St Christopher' in the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2) not impossible. Despite the artist's probable aim for a realistic setting, achieved by the many details and the fifteenth-century design of the bedchamber and the objects present, meaning and symbolism was placed over realistic chronology.

Later compositions based on the *Louvre Annunciation* reveal that the more explicit nuptial symbolism, at least the explicit reference to Christ, was often discarded by other artists: an engraving of the *Annunciation* (c. 1480) by the Netherlandish Master FVB (ill. SN5f and g) reveals that the artist replaced the Christ-image in the medaillon with an image of the Lamb of God, *Agnus Dei*, carrying a cross. As a consequence, the nuptial symbolism of the composition is compromised in favor of allusions to Christ's Passion and sacrifice. The German Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet also designed an *Annunciation* (c. 1475-1495) (ill. SN5h and i) based on the *Louvre Annunciation's* composition, in which the image in the medaillon seems to be a flower. The Master of the Legend of the Magdalene, on the other hand, painted a mirror instead of a medaillon in his *Annunciation* of c. 1515-1520 (ill. SN5j).<sup>323</sup> Quite surprising is the free copy after the *Louvre Annunciation* painted by the Master of the Legend of St Catherine (ill. SN5k), in which the medaillon is largely hidden by the bed curtain, while an anonymous follower of van der Weyden was one of several artists who left the medaillon out altogether in an *Annunciation* now in Antwerpen (ill. SN5l). Most intriguing, however, is a painting by an anonymous Flemish master from the late fifteenth century, in which the image of Christ is replaced by a depiction of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments (ill. SN5m and n).<sup>324</sup> Here, despite the presence of the large canopy bed, the affirmation of the nuptial symbolism is discarded in favor of a typological representation that refers to the establishing of the Old Covenant in relation to the introduction of the New Covenant, as in van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3) and the *Prado Annunciation* (SN4). However, in depicting a painting of Christ over the bed of his *Annunciation* (c. 1490-1495; Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago) (ill. SN5o), French painter Jean Hey returned to the nuptial symbolism displayed in the *Louvre Annunciation*.

It is interesting that, with Gabriel's morse, the painter wanted to create the suggestion of religious content, but did not hand the viewer any indications as to the figures' identities. The structure probably represents a church, as its roof is decorated with a cross. This makes it less likely that the figures represent Old Testament characters. In fact, there is no reason whatsoever to interpret the figures in an Old Testament context, as they lack any attribute. It is also unlikely that

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<sup>322</sup> Julius S. Held, 'A Tondo by Cornelis Engebrechtsz', *Oud Holland* 67 (1952), p. 236, referred to by Lorentz (op. cit. note 303), p. 26.

<sup>323</sup> Again, a comparison with van Eyck's *Arnolfini Portrait* and its supposed marital symbolism can be made.

<sup>324</sup> Lorentz (op. cit. note 303), p. 52, plate XLVa.

the three figures are a prophet flanked by angels, as it seems improbable that a 'mere' prophet would be depicted so large in relation to the very small 'angels', who incidentally have no wings.<sup>325</sup> The design and level of detail do not go any further than suggesting a certain symbolism depicted in the morse, instead of actually being symbolic.

The meaning of most of the animal sculptures also remains obscure. The interpretation of the bench as the Throne of Solomon, as in the in the *Brussels Annunciation*, might be correct, as a bench or throne featuring lions is often featured in scenes of the Virgin, including depictions of the Virgin as the *Sedes sapientiae*, the 'Seat of Wisdom'. However, the iconography of the chandelier seems to be self-contradictory. The idea of a 'banishment' of 'evil' to the chandelier, a source of light, is implausible, as there is no reason to see the chandelier or its high location in the composition as baring any negative meaning. Chandeliers such as these appear more often in early Netherlandish painting, for example in Dieric Bouts' depiction of the 'Last Supper' in the altarpiece of *The Holy Sacrament* (1464-1467; Louvain, Church of St Peter) (ill. SN5q), in Petrus Christus' *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (c. 1470; Kansas City, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art) (ill. SN5r), and, though without animal on top, in van Eyck's *Arnolfini portrait*. In Bouts' and Christus' paintings, the animal is more clearly a lion, while there is no indication in these paintings that the chandelier is supposed to embody a truly negative role, despite the lack of a (burning) candle. In analyzing Bouts' altarpiece, Butzkamm nevertheless interprets the chandelier with no actual light source anymore as an indication that Christ is the new Light, while he interprets the lion as a symbol of Christ.<sup>326</sup> Considering the notion that in the fifteenth century similar chandeliers were presented as wedding gifts, the chandelier in the *Louvre Annunciation* should probably also be interpreted in a marital context..<sup>327</sup> A reference to the Synagogue, or Judaism in general, in any case seems farfetched.

The book read by the Virgin again contains the letters 'A' and 'D' (see SN2). Lorentz's assertion that the Virgin is supposed be reading Isaiah 7:14 ('Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel'), as dictated by the Church fathers, is probably false as the letters do not fit the Latin Bible passage.<sup>328</sup>

It is striking that both Gabriel's mantle and the cloth over the Virgin's prie-dieu have leaf patterns; one might imagine that there was a specific reason for this.

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<sup>325</sup> In Dieric Bouts' *Coronation of the Virgin* (c. 1464; Vienna, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste), the morse of the cope worn by God the Father, in the form of a four-leaf clover, is decorated with an image of the Godhead in the center, and two smaller angels on each side.

<sup>326</sup> Butzkamm (op. cit. note 58), pp. 67-73.

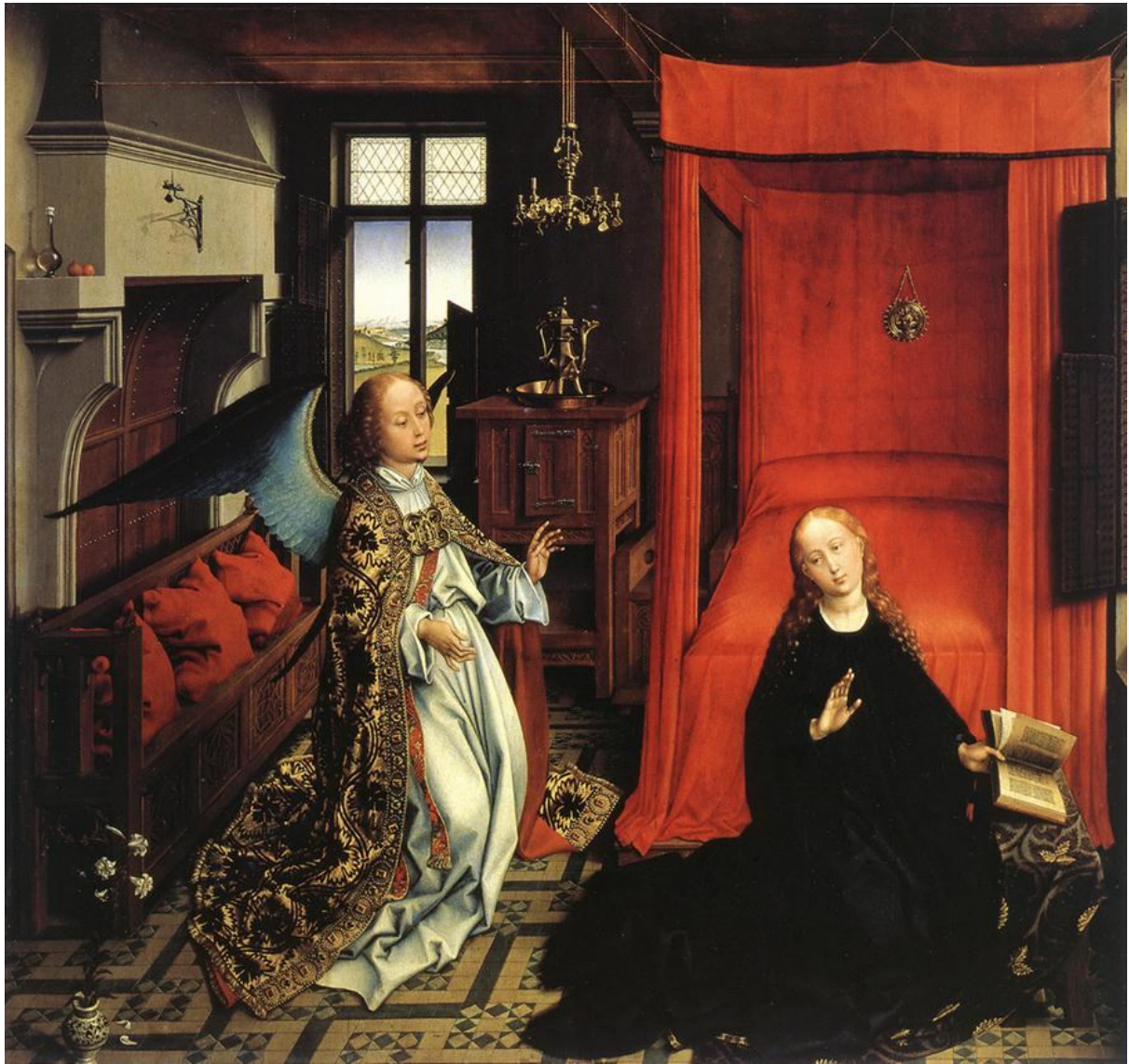
<sup>327</sup> Admittedly, dragons and deformed animals would make for odd wedding gifts. Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 197, note 990, mentions that, at least in the early sixteenth century, many chandeliers were produced with statuettes of the Holy Virgin (see also SN28).

<sup>328</sup> Lorentz (op. cit. note 303), p. 27. In the Latin Vulgate, Isaiah 7:14 reads: 'propter hoc dabit Dominus ipse vobis signum ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitis nomen eius Emmanuhel'.

## Illustrations

- SN5a Rogier van der Weyden (circle), *Louvre Annunciation*, c. 1440 (Paris, Musée du Louvre).
- SN5b Medallion with Christ as *Salvator Mundi* (detail of SN5a).
- SN5c Chandelier (detail of SN5a).
- SN5d Animal sculpture on top of laver (detail of SN5a).
- SN5e Gabriel's morse (detail of SN5a).
- SN5f Master FVB, *Annunciation*, c. 1480.
- SN5g Detail of SN5f.
- SN5h Master of the Amsterdam Cabinet, *Annunciation*, c. 1475-1495.
- SN5i Detail of SN5a.
- SN5j Master of the Legend of St Mary Magdalene, *The Annunciation*, centerpiece of the *Du Quesnoy-van der Tommen*-triptych, c. 1515-1520 (Brussels; Musées Royaux de Beaux-Arts de Belgique).
- SN5k Master of the Legend of St Catherine, *Annunciation*, c. 1470-1500 (Florence, Museo Nazionale del Bargello).
- SN5l Rogier van der Weyden (follower), *Annunciation*, n.d. (Antwerpen, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten).
- SN5m Rogier van der Weyden (circle), *Annunciation*, n.d. (Private collection).
- SN5n Detail of SN5m.
- SN5o Jean Hey, *Annunciation*, c. 1490-1495 (Chicago, Art Institute of Chicago).
- SN5p Detail of SN5o.
- SN5q Dieric Bouts, *The Last Supper* (detail), centerpiece of the *Altarpiece of the Holy Sacrament*, c. 1464-1467 (Louvain, Church of St Peter).
- SN5r Petrus Christus, *The Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (detail), c. 1470 (Kansas City, Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art).





III. SN5a



III. SN5b





III. SN5c



III. SN5e



III. SN5d



III. SN5f



III. SN5g



III. SN5h



III. SN5i



III. SN5j





III. SN5k



III. SN5l



III. SN5m



III. SN5n

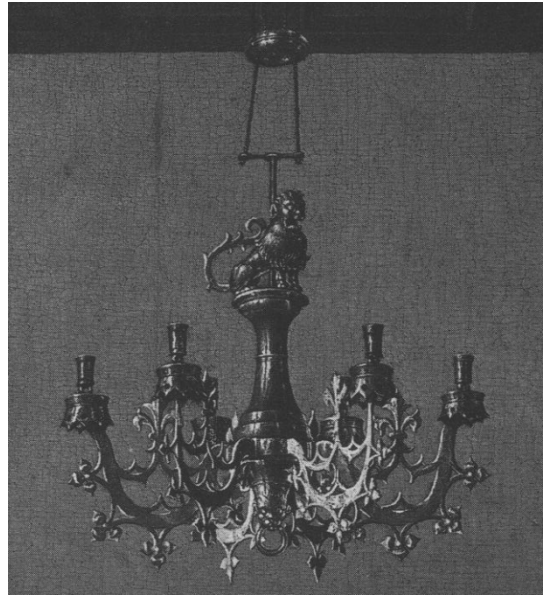




III. SN5o



III. SN5p



III. SN5q



III. SN5r



# SN6

<b>Artist:</b>	Dieric Bouts (Louvain; c. 1420-1475) and workshop <sup>329</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1452-1460 <sup>330</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	Triptych of the Life of the Virgin
<b>Part:</b>	Interior left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	80 x 54 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado
<b>Original location:</b>	Spanish(?)
<b>Patron:</b>	Spanish(?)



## Old Testament figures:

Adam (5x)	<i>Position</i> archivolts of arch	<i>Medium</i> relief sculpture
Eve (5x)	archivolts of arch	relief sculpture
Cain (1x)	archivolt of arch	relief sculpture
Abel (1x)	archivolt of arch	relief sculpture
God (2x)	archivolts of arch	relief sculpture
Snake (2x)	archivolts of arch	relief sculpture
Archangel (1x)	archivolt of arch	relief sculpture
Prophet (2x)	arch	stone sculpture

## Old Testament scenes:

'The Creation of Eve'	<i>Position</i> archivolt of arch	<i>Medium</i> relief sculpture
'God with Adam and Eve at the Tree'	archivolt of arch	relief sculpture
'The Fall of Man'	archivolt of arch	relief sculpture
'The Expulsion from Paradise'	archivolt of arch	relief sculpture
'Adam and Eve tilling the ground'	archivolt of arch	relief sculpture
'Cain killing Abel'	archivolt of arch	relief sculpture

## Other figurative decorative elements:

Godhead	<i>Position</i> Gabriel's morse	<i>Medium</i> gold relief
Warrior (2x)	upper corners of frame	stone relief
Male figure (c. 4x)	Gabriel's orphrey	embroidered

<sup>329</sup> According to Périer-D'Ieteren, *Dirk Bouts: het volledige oeuvre*, 2005, p. 301, the triptych was at least partially painted by Bouts' workshop. The Prado attributes the painting solely to Bouts. See: <<http://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/online-gallery/on-line-gallery/obra/triptych-of-the-virgins-life/>> (23-03-2011).

<sup>330</sup> According to Périer-D'Ieteren, *ibidem*, based on recent dendrochronological research. Before the findings of this research, scholars dated the triptych in the 1440s: c. 1445, according to Christopher Brown, in: *I Dipinti del Prado*, 1998, p. 344, the 1440s, according to Schöne, *Dieric Bouts und seine Schule*, 1938, pp. 75, and 1445-1450 according to Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), pp. 314-15.

## Description

In a room with a wooden barrel vaulted ceiling (ill. SN6a), a Gothic window and a Gothic entrance, the Archangel has entered from the left through a side entrance, while the Virgin is standing on the right, in front of a small wooden bench on which she has lain a book. The Archangel is richly dressed, wearing a red-golden cope with embroidered male figures on the orphrey. The cope is held by a golden mose featuring a Godhead enthroned, who is holding a globe and making a blessing gesture. Gabriel's wings feature peacock feathers. In his left hand, the Archangel is holding a messenger's staff. Behind Gabriel and the Virgin there is a wooden bench with red pillows. On the right stands a cabinet on which a tin ewer, basins and an orange lay. The window in the background features a stained glass image of the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

The composition is framed by a stone arch, that features on each side a statue of a prophet and above them, in archivolts, scenes from the lives of Adam and Eve, and Cain and Abel in stone. In the top corners, roundels with stone relief warriors are depicted.

## Background information

Bouts' *Annunciation* forms the left inner panel of his so-called *Triptych of the Life of the Virgin*. The other scenes (from left to right) are: the 'Visitation' (framed by scenes from the Passion of Christ), the 'Nativity' (framed by further scenes from the Passion of Christ and Christ's Resurrection), and the 'Adoration of the Magi' (framed by scenes from the Acts of the Apostles). Each panel is topped by corner images of warrior figures or horsemen, and features statues of prophets in the arch frame. Instead of anonymous warriors, the right panel contains images of 'Samson killing the lion' and a battle between a man (St George?) and a dragon in the upper corners.

The architectural frame, that evokes a Gothic portico, is based on Rogier van der Weyden's *Miraflores Altarpiece* (c. 1435; Berlin, Gemäldegalerie).<sup>331</sup> In the composition of the *Annunciation* itself, Bouts was also very much inspired by van der Weyden.<sup>332</sup> Like van der Weyden's ensembles just mentioned, the *Triptych of the Life of the Virgin* was probably painted for a Spanish patron; the structure of the altarpiece, appearing like a quadriptych, with the 'Visitation' and 'Nativity' as the central scenes, is typically Spanish, and according to Périer-D'leteren, most likely the specific wish of the patron.<sup>333</sup> It was donated to the Escorial by Philip II (1527-1598) in 1548.

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<sup>331</sup> Karl M. Birkmeyer, 'The Arch Motif in Netherlandish Painting of the Fifteenth Century: Part One', *The Art Bulletin* 43 (1961), No. 1, pp. 1-20.

<sup>332</sup> See for details Périer-D'leteren (op. cit. note 329), p. 307.

<sup>333</sup> Idem, p. 304. De Vos (op. cit. note 301), p. 232.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

According to Périer-D'leteren, the warriors in the upper corners represent the uncertainty and war before the coming of Christ.<sup>334</sup> However, since they are also featured in the panel of the Nativity, and in more specific depictions in the Adoration, Birkmeyer argues that these figures are purely decorative.<sup>335</sup> He adds that the lack of unity with respect to content between the New Testament archivolt scenes in the three right panels, which do not specifically relate to the main scenes, and the scenes from the Book of Genesis in the *Annunciation* panel indicate that Bouts was more concerned with the aesthetics of the painting than with religious contingencies.<sup>336</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

Jakoby interprets the room in which Bouts' *Annunciation* is set as the room of a convent.<sup>337</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Birkmeyer mentions that the male statues on the frame arch cannot precisely be identified as either apostles or prophets, although, because of their costumes and hats, they are presumed to be the latter.<sup>338</sup> He furthermore mentions that the Genesis scenes do not in any particular way stress the sin and curse of first man, which would be a common reason to depict Adam and Eve, nor that there is a typological parallel with the main scene.<sup>339</sup> They merely depict the narrative of the first chapters of Genesis. Panofsky mentions that the life of Adam and Eve after the expulsion is conceived as a family idyll rather than a life of mere labor.<sup>340</sup>

## Discussion

The assumption that Bouts' *Annunciation* is set in a religious setting is quite plausible, considering the Gothic architectural elements and the stained glass image of the Ten Commandments. However, the choice for a ('Gothic') barrel vaulted ceiling might also merely have been the result of the form of the arch frame. If any, the depiction of the tablets in the window would make it a Jewish religious context. Because of the overlap of the Virgin's dress, the arch should be considered as part of the

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<sup>334</sup> Périer-D'leteren (op. cit. note 329), p. 304.

<sup>335</sup> Birkmeyer, Karl M., 'The Arch Motif in Netherlandish Painting of the Fifteenth Century: A Study in Changing Religious Imagery', *The Art Bulletin* 43 (1961), No. 2, p. 108.

<sup>336</sup> Idem.

<sup>337</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 198.

<sup>338</sup> Birkmeyer (op. cit. note 335), p. 107.

<sup>339</sup> Idem, p. 108.

<sup>340</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 314.

setting and not as just a frame for the composition. Whether the opened door in the right background, through which golden light can be seen, has any specific meaning should be a matter for further thought.

The sculptures of the two male figures (ill. SN6b and c), standing in the arch frame, are most probably prophets, as apostles are seldomly depicted with headgear, let alone the type of pointed hat that is usually an attribute of Jews. There is indeed no thematic unity in the sculptures illustrating the lives of Adam, Eve, Cain and Abel (ill. SN6d-i); they simply illustrate the narrative of the relevant bible passages without any particular message or meaning other than the tragedy of the downfall of the first humans. Nevertheless, the 'Temptation of Eve' and the 'Fall of Man' are themes that have often been connected to the Annunciation (see SN7 and SN8 for more), as 'original sin', the result of Adam and Eve's actions, would be erased by the salvation by the incarnated Christ. However, as Bouts did not just depict these particular scenes, the particular typological connection has been lost. The orange on the cabinet might nevertheless also be a reference to 'Fall of Man', as an allusion to the forbidden fruit.<sup>341</sup> The warrior images in the upper corners of the panel remind somewhat, in nature though not in style, of the battling capital figures in van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3).

The work discussed here is the only Netherlandish 'Annunciation' with a stained glass image of solely the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, without Moses (ill. SN6j).<sup>342</sup> Its very modest size and mostly transparent form makes the image hardly noticeable. Either Bouts did not deem the iconography important enough – which would be odd, as he might just as well have left it out entirely – or he might have wanted to stress the fact that, with the Annunciation, the Old Law had been replaced by Christ's New Covenant and become redundant, a thing of the past.

Although the Godhead on Gabriel's morse (ill. SN6k) does not have a cruciform halo, it would be reasonable to assume that it is an image of Christ as *Salvator Mundi* (see also the medallion in SN5). The globe on the figure's lap and the blessing figure is a very common pose for the enthroned Christ. However, in the *Coronation of the Virgin* (c. 1450; Vienna, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste), Bouts painted God the Father, himself enthroned and with a globe in his hand, carrying a morse (ill. SN6l) featuring a very similar Godhead, accompanied by angels. The main difference between the depiction of the actual God in that work and the Godhead depicted on the morse is that the actual God the Father has a tiara on his head. It seems in any case unlikely that God

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<sup>341</sup> Lievens-de Weagh (op. cit. note 98), pp. 208-9, states that the forbidden fruit was often considered to be an apple, as the Latin word for apple, 'málum', is practically identical to the Latin word for evil, 'malum'.

<sup>342</sup> An *Annunciation* by an anonymous fifteenth-century Swabian painter(?) (Moscow, Pushkin Museum of Fine Arts) shows the two tablets with the Ten Commandments as wooden pieces hanging on the wall (Chapter II, ill. 18). A Netherlandish-influenced anonymous Hungarian artist painted an *Annunciation* (1499; Spišské Podhře, Cathedral of St Martin) (Chapter II, ill. 17) in which the tablets are presented as stone reliefs, although accompanied by the head of Moses, above an entrance.



the Father would be wearing an image of Christ, who is seated next to him in the *Coronation*. Because of these multiple possibilities, the matter of the identification of the Godhead on Gabriel's cope is still open. The embroidered men on Gabriel's cope are depicted with haloes, with at least one of the figures holding a banderole in his hand (ill. SN6m). A banderole is not necessarily the attribute of choice for an apostle or evangelist, who most often are depicted with individual attributes. However, despite the fact that for example van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3) has proven that Old Testament figures could also be depicted with haloes, the combination of halo with lack of headgear (be it turban or pointy hat) makes it most likely that the figures represent apostles.

As the form of the triptych was likely chosen by its patron, perhaps he or she also had influence on the iconography of the scenes.

### Illustrations

- SN6a Dieric Bouts, *The Annunciation*, left panel of the *Triptych of the Life of the Virgin*, c. 1452-1460 (Madrid; Museo Nacional del Prado).
- SN6b Left male figure (prophet) of arch frame (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6c Right male figure (prophet) of arch frame (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6d 'The Creation of Eve' (relief image in archivolt) (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6e 'God showing Adam and Eve the Tree of Knowledge' (relief image in archivolt) (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6f 'The Fall of Man' (relief image in archivolt) (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6g 'The Expulsion from Paradise' (relief image in archivolt) (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6h 'Adam and Eve Working on the Field' (relief image in archivolt) (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6i 'Cain Killing Abel' (relief image in archivolt) (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6j Stained glass image of the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6k Gabriel's mosre (detail of ill. SN6a).
- SN6l Dieric Bouts, *The Coronation of the Virgin* (detail), c. 1450 (Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum).
- SN6m Detail of Gabriel's cope (detail of ill. SN6a).



III. SN6a





III. SN6b



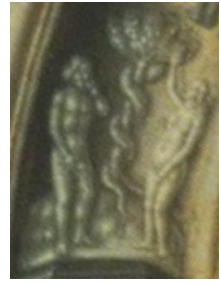
III. SN6c



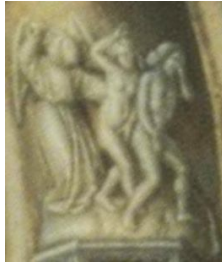
III. SN6d



III. SN6e



III. SN6f



III. SN6g



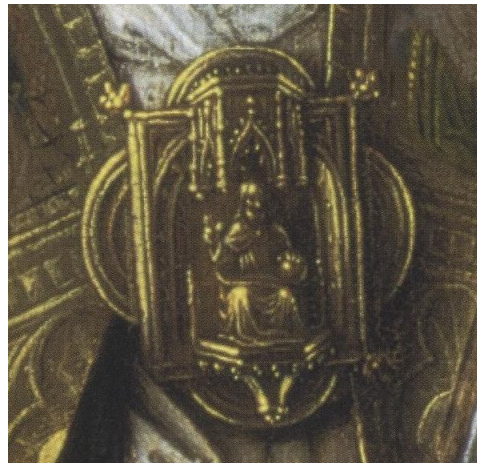
III. SN6h



III. SN6i



III. SN6j



III. SN6k



III. SN6l



III. SN6m

# SN7

<b>Artist:</b>	Rogier van der Weyden (Brussels; 1399/1400-1464)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>Columba Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1455
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Columba Altarpiece</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Interior left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	138 x 70 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Munich, Alte Pinakothek
<b>Original location:</b>	Cologne, Church of St Columba <sup>343</sup>
<b>Patron:</b>	Johann Dasse the Elder (died 1448)(?) <sup>344</sup>



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Adam	right side of prie-dieu	wood carving
Eve	right side of prie-dieu	wood carving

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Fall of Man'	right side of prie-dieu	wood carving

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN7a) is set in a narrow bedchamber, with a red canopy bed set against the back wall, and above it a large rose window with stained glass flowery motifs. In the foreground, the Archangel, dressed in white and holding a messenger's staff, has entered from the left. His words are visible: 'AVE GRACIA PLENA DOMINUS TECVM' ('Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!' (Luke 1:28)). The Virgin is kneeling in front of a prie-dieu on the right and is looking up from her book. The right side of the prie-dieu is decorated with a relief of 'The Fall of Man'. A vase with lilies stands in the foreground. From one of the windows on the left, the dove of the Holy Spirit has entered, descending on golden rays.

## Background information

The *Annunciation* is part of the so called *Columba Altarpiece* (ill. SN7b), a major work in van der Weyden's oeuvre with the *Adoration of the Magi* as its centerpiece, named after the Cologne church for which it was commissioned. The compositions and iconography of the altarpiece were highly

<sup>343</sup> Angela Kulenkampff, 'Der Dreikönigsaltar (Columba-Altar) des Rogier van der Weyden. Zur Frage seines ursprünglichen Standortes und des Stifters', *Annalen des Historischen Vereins für den Niederrhein* 192/193 (1990), pp. 9-46.

<sup>344</sup> Idem, p. 29. Dasse, a wealthy Cologne merchant, counts as the most probable candidate for the donor of the altarpiece. Mayor Goedart van dem Wasserfass (1437-1462) has also been suggested. The man depicted on the extreme left of the centerpiece is possibly a portrait of the donor.



influential in the German Rhineland during the second half of the fifteenth century, though not so much with Netherlandish artists; only Flemish artists with direct ties to van der Weyden, such as his pupil Hans Memling (c. 1430-1494), copied elements for their own works.<sup>345</sup>

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Neuner sees the rose window as a virginity symbol for the Holy Virgin.<sup>346</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

As in the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5), the scene on the left wing of the *Columba Altarpiece* takes place in a bourgeois bedchamber, a *thalamus* according to Panofsky, Schawe, and Neuner, although the interior has been greatly simplified compared to the former painting.<sup>347</sup> For a bedchamber, the barrel-vaulted ceiling and rose window are odd features, however, and Lane therefore considers the chamber to be in or part of a sanctuary, if not symbolize the sanctuary itself.<sup>348</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Acres stresses that the small carving of the 'Fall of Man' (ill. SN7c) is positioned in such a way that it is only visible to the viewer.<sup>349</sup> There is disagreement on the actual moment of the Genesis story that is depicted; Jakoby states that the moment directly after the actual 'Fall' is shown, with Adam and Eve both holding an apple and their body language expressing shame.<sup>350</sup> Neuner, on the other hand, states that Adam has not yet eaten from the apple, while Eve already has.<sup>351</sup> The snake, wrapped around the tree in the center, has directed its attention towards Eve. Lane suggests that van der Weyden purposefully alludes to the relation between the Incarnation of Christ depicted on the left wing and the Transubstantiation of Christ's body and blood, symbolized in the centerpiece via the Magi's gifts representing liturgical objects, and the crucifix (ill. SN7d) on the wall.<sup>352</sup> Additionally, Täube claims that the relief on the left wing is intentionally monochromatic, while the Crucifix is

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<sup>345</sup> Kulenkampff (op. cit. note 343), p. 9. Vanessa Vaes, in: Lorne Campbell, Jan van der Stock (ed.), *Rogier van der Weyden, 1400-1464: de passie van de meester*, 2009, p. 361.

<sup>346</sup> Neuner (op. cit. note 310), n. 128, quotes Anselm Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder und Beiworte Mariens in der deutschen Literatur und lateinischen Hymnenpoesi des Mittelalters*, 1967, p. 71: 'Wie die Sonne durch das Glas dringt ohne es zu verletzen, so ward Maria Mutter und blieb dennoch Jungfrau.'

<sup>347</sup> Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 287. Martin Schawe, *Alte Pinakothek: altdeutsche und altniederländische Malerei*, 2006, p. 342. Neuner, idem, p. 128.

<sup>348</sup> Lane (op. cit. note 307), p. 47.

<sup>349</sup> Alfred Acres, 'The Columba Altarpiece and the Time of the World', *The Art Bulletin* 80 (1998), No. 3, p. 433.

<sup>350</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), pp. 182-82.

<sup>351</sup> Neuner (op. cit. note 310), p. 129.

<sup>352</sup> Lane (op. cit. note 307), p. 60.

depicted in color, to indicate the passing of the Old Covenant and the presence of the New.<sup>353</sup> De Vos points out that the wood carving is intended to remind the viewer why the birth of the Messiah and His subsequent salvation was necessary in the first place.<sup>354</sup>

Acres furthermore sees a connection in the positioning of the prie-dieu as opposed to the donor in the adjacent panel, the position of his prayer beads, the convergence of the Virgin's armrest and the donor's elbow, as well as the structural conjunction of the prie-dieu and the low wall in front of the donor.<sup>355</sup> Whether this is intended to visualize the donor's personal expression of feelings of guilt – the sins of mankind also being his sins – is not clear.<sup>356</sup>

## Discussion

Despite the fifteenth-century appearance of the interior, the barrel vaulted ceiling and rose window do indeed seem odd for a domestic setting. Yet, a number of sixteenth-century *Annunciations* (such as SN28) depict the Annunciation in an unmistakably domestic setting, though also with a barrel vaulted ceiling. A rose window such as the one here in a domestic setting remains unlikely, however, and the stained glass decorative motifs look similar to the stained glass windows in the *Presentation in the Temple* on the right wing (ill. SN7e).

The *Columba Annunciation* marks the first example of a singular representation of Adam and Eve embedded in a Netherlandish 'Annunciation' on panel, if not at all.<sup>357</sup> The iconography of van der Weyden's painting was not completely new, however; a drawing of the 'Annunciation' (c. 1430; Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek) (ill. SN7f and g), sometimes attributed to Jan van Eyck, contains a similar representation, with the Virgin seated on a chair decorated with a relief of the 'Fall of Man'. In the drawing, the scene of the 'Fall' is more static, Adam and Eve merely standing beside the tree, without any actual event taking place.<sup>358</sup> Van der Weyden's relief shows more emotion, especially through Adam's shame, which indicates that the actual moment depicted is right after the eating of the apple. The Wolfenbüttel-drawing cannot be firmly attributed to a particular artist, yet the iconography of the wood carved furniture might have originated with another artist, namely the Master of Flémalle. The London *Virgin and Child before a Fire-screen* (c. 1425-30; London, National Gallery) (ill. SN7h and i), painted by the Master of Flémalle (Robert Campin) or one of his followers,

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<sup>353</sup> Täube (op. cit. note 21), p. 115.

<sup>354</sup> De Vos (op. cit. note 301), p. 280.

<sup>355</sup> Acres (op. cit. note 349), p. 433.

<sup>356</sup> Acres' observation is further complicated by the fact that the donor was not originally part of the composition. See Schawe (op. cit. note 347), p. 344.

<sup>357</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 181.

<sup>358</sup> Idem, pp. 181, 313, note 526; Hildegard Zimmermann, 'Eine Silberstiftzeichnung Jan van Eycks aus dem Besitze Philip Hainhofers', *Jahrbuch der königlich-preussischen Kunstsammlungen* 36 (1915), p. 222, dates the drawing c. 1428. Robb (op. cit. note 233), p. 506, note 81, and Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 504, note 4, date the work c. 1440-1450.

contains the image of a cupboard decorated with a woodcarving of two saints (Sts Peter and Paul?) standing next to each other in a similar manner as the two figures in van der Weyden's 'Fall of Man'.<sup>359</sup> That both this artist and van der Weyden, a pupil of Campin, used this particular visual element, might be reason to consider the possibility that the idea of such wood carved furniture originated with the Flémalle Master.<sup>360</sup>

Following the placement of the altarpiece in the Cologne church of St Columba, several other paintings containing images of reliefs of the 'Fall of Man' were painted, though mostly restricted to the Rhineland (see RH3, RH5, and RH7).<sup>361</sup> This visual element on furniture was not popular in the Netherlands, however.<sup>362</sup> In fact, the Columba panel is also the only *Annunciation* by van der Weyden with explicit Old Testament iconography. That the rather tiny relief, placed in the foreground, is only visible to the viewer and not to the two principle actors, is an indication that the embedded figures are intended symbolically and are not primarily meant as interior decoration or a means of placing the scene in a particular cultural or historical context. It should most likely indeed be interpreted as an expression of the origins of original sin, which Christ was to take away through his sacrifice (hence the crucifix in the centerpiece).<sup>363</sup> Related to this is the identification of the Virgin as the 'new Eve', the woman who, instead of bringing sin upon mankind, helped free the faithful from sin.<sup>364</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> Dating according to Châtelet (op. cit. note 193), p. 296, and Thürlemann (op. cit. note 193), p. 272, both of whom ascribe the work to Campin himself. The National Gallery dates the work c. 1440 and ascribes it to a follower of Campin. See <<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/follower-of-robert-campin-the-virgin-and-child-before-a-firescreen>> (23-03-2011).

Whether the wood carved figures are in fact authentic is not certain. The right side of the painting was heavily restored in the nineteenth century, and a fifteenth-century copy of the work only features a simple bench. However, the copy might also be a simplified version after the original. See Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), pp. 163-64.

<sup>360</sup> Despite the fact that van der Weyden had already painted several works of the Virgin with embedded representations of Adam and Eve (such as *St Luke Drawing the Virgin* (c. 1435; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts) and the diptych of the *Virgin and Child* and *St Catherine* (c. 1430-1432; Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum), the master might have been inspired to connect specifically the Annunciation with Adam and Eve as a result of his 1450 journey to Rome. Especially in Italian art one can find quite a number of *Annunciations* featuring Adam and Eve, such as several works by Fra Angelico. Acres' hypothesis about the positioning of the donor in relation to the prie-dieu, although not wholly convincing, would suggest however, that the inclusion of the 'Fall of Man' was not due to any Italian inspiration, but due to the wishes of the donor. The iconography of Dieric Bouts' *Prado Annunciation* (SN6), also containing an embedded 'Fall of Man', might also have been influenced by its Spanish(?) patron, just like its form.

<sup>361</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 181.

<sup>362</sup> See for examples of *Annunciations* which would have been easy subjects for similar embedded iconography Dieric Bouts' *Annunciation* (c. 1465-1470; Lissabon, Calouste Gulbenkian Museum) and Hans Memling's *Annunciation* (c. 1465-75; New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).

<sup>363</sup> It is interesting that only the left wing and centerpiece contain embedded Old Testament iconography, the centerpiece containing statues of Moses, David and another figure (a prophet?) on the ecclesiastical building on the right, which is identified by Châtelet as the Temple of Salomon. See Châtelet (op. cit. note 300), p. 195, and Davies (op. cit. note 309), p. 227. The *Presentation in the Temple*, an obvious possible subject for embedded Old Testament iconography, has no figurative decoration. The Master of the Prado 'Adoration of the Magi's' *Presentation in the Temple* (c. 1470-1480; Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art) (ill. 23), which is

## Illustrations

- SN7a Rogier van der Weyden, *The Annunciation*, c. 1455, interior left wing of the *Columba Altarpiece* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).
- SN7b Rogier van der Weyden, *The Columba Altarpiece*, c. 1455 (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).
- SN7c 'The Fall of Man' (detail of ill. SN7a).
- SN7d Crucifix (detail of ill. SN7b).
- SN7e Stained glass decoration (detail of ill. SN7b, right panel).
- SN7f Anonymous (Jan van Eyck?), *The Annunciation*, c. 1430 (Wolfenbüttel, Herzog August Bibliothek).
- SN7g 'The Fall of Man' (detail of ill. SN7f).
- SN7h The Master of Flémalle (Robert Campin) (or follower?), *The Virgin and Child before a Fire-Screen*, c. 1425-1430 (London, National Gallery).
- SN7i Detail of ill. SN7h.

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closely based on van der Weyden's composition, on the other hand does contain embedded iconography in its windows.

<sup>364</sup> Friedrich Kobler, 'Eva-Maria', in: Deuchler, Florens; Neubecker, Ottfried (et al.), *Reallexikon zur deutschen Kunstgeschichte* 6, Stuttgart 1973, pp. 417-38.



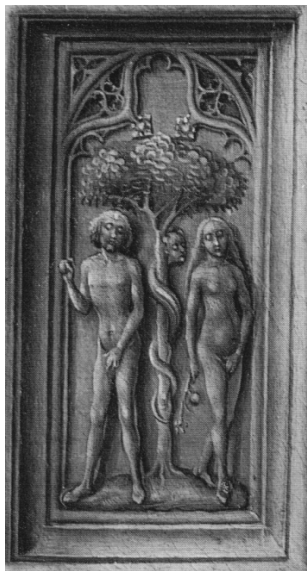


III. SN7a

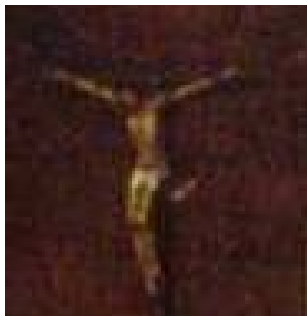




III. SN7b



III. SN7c



III. SN7d



III. SN7e



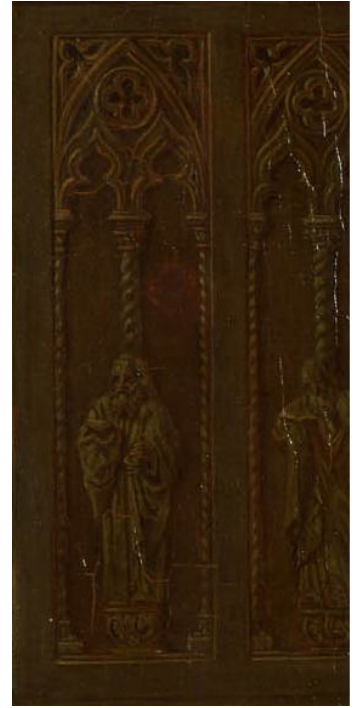
III. SN7f



III. SN7g



III. SN7h



III. SN7i



# SN8

**Artist:** Aelbert Bouts (Louvain; 1450s-1549)  
**Work:** *Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1480  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Part:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 114 x 109 cm  
**Current location:** Munich, Alte Pinakothek  
**Original location:** Louvain(?)<sup>365</sup>  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Eve	back wall, left side	roundel, stone relief
Snake	back wall, left side	roundel, stone relief
Gideon	back wall, right side	roundel, stone relief
Angel	back wall, right side	roundel, stone relief
Prophet(?)	on altar	painting

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Fall of Eve'	back wall, left side	roundel, stone relief
'Gideon and the fleece'	back wall, right side	roundel, stone relief

## Description

In a room with a wooden vaulted ceiling and Gothic windows (ill. SN8a), the Archangel Gabriel, wearing a cope and holding a crystal messenger's staff, has entered from the left, having come through a hall with a window that looks out on a far landscape. The Virgin, dressed in blue, is standing on the right before a small altar placed in a Gothic niche. The altarpiece contains the painted image of a bearded man. The Virgin is looking up from her book which is placed in front of the altar. A closed book lies on a bench with red cloth and pillows, which goes around to the back wall. A glass vase with white flowers is placed in the right foreground corner. The back wall is decorated with relief roundels, on the left the 'Temptation of Eve', and on the right 'Gideon and the fleece'. The main window is decorated with stained glass coats of arms. On the window-sill lies a piece of fruit. The top foreground of the composition is decorated with Gothic traceries, although it is not clear whether these are actually part of the scene or form a painted frame.

<sup>365</sup> The city coat of arms can be seen in the window.



## Background information

The composition of Bouts' *Annunciation* is possibly based on a now lost painting by his father, Dieric Bouts.<sup>366</sup> This theory is supported by its rather unusual iconography (a vaulted niche with a house altar) which recurs in a few works dated between 1467 and c. 1480.<sup>367</sup> The coats of arms visible in the window are the that of the city of Louvain (above), the Louvain Guild of St Luke (left) and, presumably, that of the Bouts family.<sup>368</sup> There are practically similar versions of this composition by Bouts in the Cleveland Museum of Art and the Gemäldegalerie in Berlin, although the Munich painting is the only version featuring the roundels.<sup>369</sup>

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Jakoby states that the setting has the unmistakable appearance of a monastery.<sup>370</sup> Steinmetz refutes the identification of a monastic setting, stating that the scene lacks the architecture and furniture that one would expect in a convent.<sup>371</sup> She also does not want to identify the room as a house chapel, which would have been another possibility, instead preferring the interpretation of the room as a symbolical setting. Schawe speaks of a 'sacralization of the bourgeois room', stressing the presence of bourgeois elements, such as the bench with pillows, but on the other hand recognizing the symmetry of the room, the depiction of the vaulted ceiling, the Gothic decorative elements, and the wall reliefs.<sup>372</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

According to Schawe, the Old Testament scenes of Eve and Gideon stress the importance of the Annunciation in the context of mankind's salvation; the scene featuring Eve (ill. SN8b), who caused sin to enter the world, alludes to the Virgin as the 'New Eve', thanks to whom original sin was vanquished. This is stressed further by the fruit on the window-sill.<sup>373</sup> Jakoby points out that, as opposed to the 'Fall of Man' in van der Weyden's *Columba Annunciation* (SN7), in the roundel featuring Eve the actual 'Fall' is still to happen; Bouts depicted the prelude to that event, with Eve

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<sup>366</sup> Schawe (op. cit. note 347), p. 296. Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 197.

<sup>367</sup> Wolfgang Stechow, *European Paintings Before 1500: The Cleveland Museum of Art Catalogue of Paintings I*, 1974, p. 141. Schöne (op. cit. note 330), p. 149.

<sup>368</sup> Schawe, *ibidem*.

<sup>369</sup> The Cleveland painting, however, seems to be of the best quality. See Schöne (op. cit. note 330) p. 191.

<sup>370</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 197.

<sup>371</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 146.

<sup>372</sup> Schawe (op. cit. note 347), p. 296.

<sup>373</sup> *Ibidem*.

being tempted by the snake in a human appearance, the blame being laid more on the snake than on Eve herself.<sup>374</sup> Jakoby also stresses the antithesis of Eva and the Virgin, her son being the one who would later defeat the evil that came into the world with the Fall.<sup>375</sup>

The story of Gideon (Judges 6:36-40) (ill. SN8c), in which the Old Testament judge asks for a sign from the Lord that he is the chosen one to save Israel, describes how Gideon lay a fleece on the earth that that became moist despite the earth remaining dry, and the other day the fleece remaining dry despite the earth being filled with dew. This story was a generally accepted allegory to the virginity of Christ's mother.<sup>376</sup> Jakoby remarks that the story of Gideon was originally seen as a sign for the coming of the Messiah, though she also accepts the virginity symbolism.<sup>377</sup>

Steinmetz, on the other hand, concentrates on the house altar in the niche.<sup>378</sup> On the third of the altarpiece that is visible, a man is painted with dark, long hair and a beard. He is wearing a gold-brown cloth. He has his head tilted toward the middle of the altar, and has his right hand lifted in a gesture of greeting. In his left hand, he has a banderole, though without recognizable text. Steinmetz therefore identifies the figure as a prophet, and suggests that an image of Christ would be expected in the center. The fact that the image of Christ is still obscured might be interpreted as a symbol that he has not yet been born. Steinmetz furthermore remarks that painted altarpieces such as depicted here are quite rare, though examples may be found in fourteenth-century Cologne painting. The size, form and composition of the piece is more typical for carved retables than painted altarpieces. The golden background is also very untypical, and can virtually only be found in Flemish painting up until the early fifteenth century. However, the representation of the figure, and especially the drapery, is contemporary of the 1480s.

## Discussion

The Gothic architectural elements and lack of explicitly domestic objects understandably raise the question whether Bouts' *Annunciation* might be set in a religious setting – a monastery or, considering the Old Testament decoration, the Temple in Jerusalem. On the other hand, it is indeed also true that none of the various elements, from the bench, the hallway on the left, the piece of fruit, to the altar niche, actually allude to a monastic setting. If it was Bouts' intention to depict a literal environment, the most plausible possibility might for the space to be a house chapel, although perhaps a bit too luxurious for the pious and humble Virgin. If, on the other hand, the setting should

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<sup>374</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 198.

<sup>375</sup> Idem, p. 199.

<sup>376</sup> Schawe (op. cit. note 347), p. 196..

<sup>377</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 199.

<sup>378</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), pp. 145-46. The description of this detail is taken from Steinmetz, as available images did not allow for own analysis.

be interpreted symbolically, it is not clear what this symbolism is supposed to signify; for this, the iconography lacks in coherence. Bouts must have had a particular idea, and must have wanted to express a particular notion, when he decided for this setting, yet another possibility would be that he adjusted his father's assumed original composition in such a way that, in its current form, particular aspects of the original's iconography were not translated properly.

The roundels, though most probably intended to represent sculpted reliefs, in fact look more like trompe-l'oeil grisailles, as the figures are too dynamic, detailed and lifelike for sculpture. The roundels also seem to be somewhat oversized, not really fitting on the wall between the ceiling and the window. This would indicate that the roundels were primarily meant as symbols presented to the viewer, and less as decorative details to suggest a 'real', decorated interior. The two Old Testament scenes are the two typologies of the Annunciation as published in the *Biblia Pauperum*. In focusing on Eve in the left roundel, and not depicting her together with Adam in the 'Fall of Man', Bouts put the relation between the first woman, Eve, and the mother of Christ, the new Eve, more into focus.

As far as can be gathered from extant paintings, the inclusion of embedded depictions of Gideon in Netherlandish *Annunciations* on panel was completely new c. 1480. This is remarkable since both the *Biblia Pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis* mention 'Gideon and the fleece' as a typological counterpart to the Annunciation.<sup>379</sup> One might imagine that artists during the first half of the fifteenth century were familiar with copies of these manuscripts. However, it seems that the invention of the printing press c. 1450, and the spread of printed editions of these two books during the second half of the century for the first time truly allowed for these works' iconography to influence panel painting.<sup>380</sup>

Bouts' *Annunciation* also marks the first remaining Netherlandish *Annunciation* on panel in which the Virgin is depicted before an altar. Where for example in van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3) – which is unmistakably placed in an ecclesiastical setting – an altar is surprisingly absent, there were already numerous illuminated manuscripts at the beginning of the fourteenth century, if not earlier, with *Annunciations* featuring embedded altarpieces.<sup>381</sup> Most of these early manuscript examples were produced in France, sometimes with an altarpiece featuring a painted figure, which in most cases would be a rather vaguely painted and undefined singular figure, possibly

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<sup>379</sup> See Chapter II, par. 2. Kirschbaum states that the relation between Gideon and the Annunciation was already established in the twelfth century. See Kirschbaum (op. cit. note 104), p. 126.

<sup>380</sup> The first block book editions of the *Biblia Pauperum* were published c. 1430, though, apparently, these did not yet find their way to artists to be used as sources for inspiration. 'Gideon and the fleece' especially became more popular in Southern Netherlandish painting of the early sixteenth century (see SN15, SN17, SN24). For a different take on the connection between Gideon and the Annunciation, see Jan Joest, *The Annunciation*, panel of *High Altar of the Life of Christ*, 1505-1508 (Kalkar, Church St Nicholas).

<sup>381</sup> See Purtle (op. cit. note 233).

intended to be God, Christ or Moses (see for example ill. SN8e and f). In the middle of the fifteenth century, these embedded altarpieces in manuscripts could be more elaborately decorated, usually with Old Testament scenes (for example SN8g). Eventually, this iconography was not limited to France. One of the most intriguing examples was painted in southern Germany and in fact is not even a representation of the Annunciation; an Upper Rhinish follower of Konrad Witz (c. 1400-1446) painted a *Virgin as a Temple Maiden* (c. 1440-1450; Strasbourg, Musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame) (ill. SN8h) in which the Virgin is depicted kneeling before a retable with the statuettes of King David, Moses, and an unidentified figure (possibly a prophet).<sup>382</sup> The painted retable is one of the most detailed and specific altarpieces of the Virgin painted in the first half of the fifteenth century, and results in the explicit representation of the Virgin as a pious, Jewish girl.

The iconography of the 'Jewish altarpiece' is of course a complete invention. There is no evidence that altarpieces with Old Testament iconography were ever used in medieval Judaism. The iconography of the altarpiece was most likely chosen, however, as it was a way of stressing the Virgin's piety as a Jewish maiden that was recognizable and relatable for fifteenth-century Christian viewers.

Considering that the tradition of the embedded altarpiece thus dated back to at least the beginning of the fifteenth century, Bouts' painting is a surprisingly late first example of an *Annunciation* with this iconography. It is also possible that his father, Dieric, had also included an altarpiece in his lost original work, since the 'Annunciation' of the *Ehningen Altarpiece* (SW4), believed to be based on a composition by Dieric Bouts, also features an embedded altarpiece. Most of the fifteenth-century embedded altarpieces depicted in a biblical context, including the work discussed here, feature images of Old Testament figures, the prophet in Bouts' Munich *Annunciation* being the most simple variant. To consider the central missing figure to be Christ is premature. The retable of the *Virgin as a Temple Maiden* contains three figures standing next to each other, none of which is Christ. The altarpiece featured in the *Ehningen Altarpiece*, is also supposed to feature three figures, of which the two visible ones are Moses in the center and a prophet on the right. However, the fact that the prophet in Bouts' *Annunciation* is turned towards the center, as if the figure in the center is of higher stature, and the center being much higher, makes it possible that the altarpiece would accommodate an image of, for example, the crucified Christ.

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<sup>382</sup> Dietmar Lüdke. in: Marcus Dekiert (ed.), *Spätmittelalter am Oberrhein: grosse Landesausstellung Baden-Württemberg. I. Maler und Werkstätten 1450-1525*, exh. cat. Karlsruhe (Staatliche Kunsthalle) 2001, p. 57. For an early German example of a miniature *Annunciation* featuring an altarpiece, see the Master of Catharine of Kleve, *Annunciation*, c. 1450, from the *Hours of Catharine of Lochorst*, fol. 16v (Münster, LWL-Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte).



The deliberate archaic form of the altarpiece suggests that the painter wanted to indicate the ancient, 'biblical' context of the 'Annunciation'. However, that he chose 'modern', Gothic elements for his architecture makes this somewhat paradoxical.

### Illustrations

- SN8a Aelbert Bouts, *The Annunciation*, c. 1480 (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).
- SN8b 'The Temptation of Eve' (detail of ill. SN8a).
- SN8c 'Gideon and the fleece' (detail of ill. SN8a).
- SN8d Prophet (detail of ill. SN8a).
- SN8e Master of the Mazarine, *Annunciation* (detail), c. 1415, from the 'Hours of Joseph Bonaparte' (Paris, Bibliothèque Nationale de France).
- SN8f Boucicaut Master (workshop), *Annunciation*, c. 1410, from a *Book of Hours* (Canon. Liturg. 75) (Oxford, Bodleian Library).
- SN8g Jean Colombe, *The Annunciation*, c. 1451, from the 'Hours of Jacques Coeur' (Munich, Staatsbibliothek).
- SN8h Konrad Witz (follower), *The Virgin as a Temple Maiden*, c. . 1440-1450 (Strasbourg, Musée de l'Œuvre Notre-Dame).



III. SN8a



III. SN8b



III. SN8c

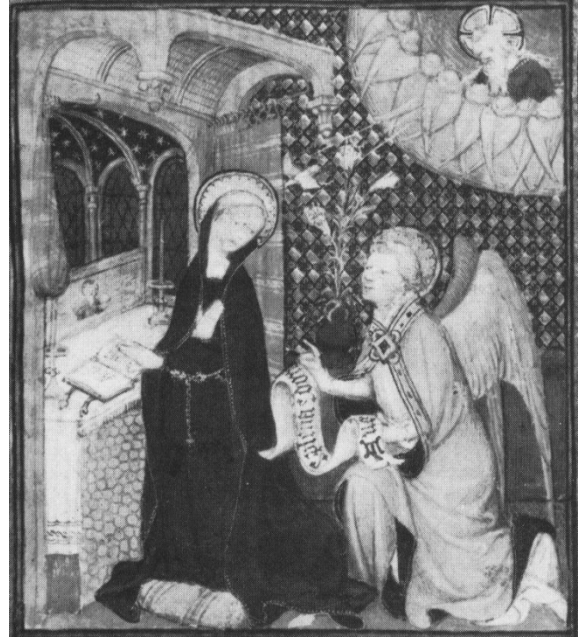


III. SN8d





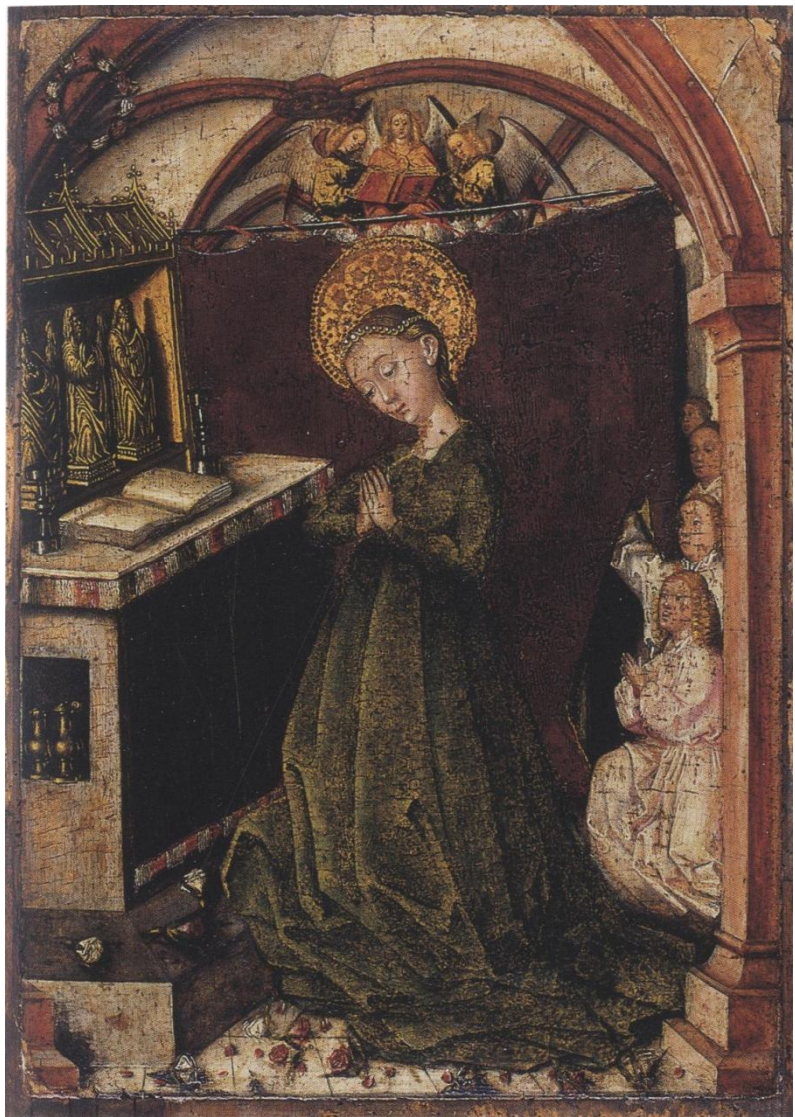
III. SN8e



III. SN8f



III. SN8g



III. SN8h

# SN9

<b>Artist:</b>	Anonymous (Ghent(?)) <sup>383</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1480-1490
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Nativity Triptych</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Interior left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	127,6 x 39,9 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Brussels, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Other figurative decorative elements:

God the Father enthroned	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Godhead	Book on Virgin's lap	illumination
St Peter	Gabriel's morse	gold relief
Male figure (c. 3x)	upper right of Gabriel's cope	orphrey
	Gabriel's cope	orphrey

## Description

In a narrow patio (ill. SN9a), the Virgin is sitting with an illuminated book on her lap. The left page of the opened book shows an image of God the Father enthroned. The Archangel has approached the Virgin from the right. He is holding a large messenger's staff and wearing a cope on which male saints, one of whom St Peter, are depicted. Gabriel's morse contains an image of God the Father. The Archangel is accompanied by the dove of the Holy Spirit. The windows in the back wall contain two monograms. On the right, two classical pillars carry a barrel-vaulted ceiling. In the background, a far landscape is painted, with a garden in the foreground that is enclosed by a wooden fence and a stone wall behind it. Behind the wall, the 'Visitation' is visible with disproportionately large figures.

## Background information

The panel with the 'Annunciation' forms the interior left wing of a triptych that features the 'Nativity' as centerpiece and a 'Circumcision of Christ' on the right. The Exterior wings show a St Catherine on the left and a St Barbara on the right. The monograms in the windows have not been identified.<sup>384</sup>

<sup>383</sup> Possible Ghent-attribution according to Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Département d'Art Ancien, *Catalogue inventaire de la peinture ancienne*, 1984, p. 387. See also Lievens-De Waegh (op. Cit. note 98), and Winfried Wilhelmy, *Der altniederländische Realismus und seine Funktionen: Studien zur kirchlichen Bildpropaganda des 15. Jahrhunderts*, 1993, p. 133, albeit with a questionmark. Dubois and Slachmuylders are not convinced of the Ghent-attribution and opt to refrain from ascribing the work to a particular artistic environment. See: Anne Dubois, Roel Slachmuylders, *The Flemish primitives: catalogue of early Netherlandish painting in the Royal Museums of Fine Arts of Belgium. V. Anonymous masters*, 2009, pp. 140-41.

<sup>384</sup> Dubois, Slachsmuylders, idem, p. 123.



## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Dubois and Slachmuylders interpret the windows in the back as a simultaneous allusion to the Virgin as *fenestra coeli*, the 'Window to Heaven', and Christ's conception *sine macula*; just as light streams through a glass window without breaking it, so too was Christ miraculously placed in the body of Mary, leaving her virginity intact.<sup>385</sup> They also interpret the foreground of the landscape as an allusion to the *Hortus conclusus*. Notably, the vase with lilies is absent in the composition.

### *Architectural setting*

The setting of the *Annunciation* cannot be properly identified; Dubois and Slachmuylders refer to a lost composition by van der Weyden of a sitting *Madonna*, known from a drawing conserved in the Dresden Kupferstichkabinett.<sup>386</sup> It features the same ceiling, similar pillars and capitals, a garden, and windows, though without the monograms.

### *Old Testament iconography*

Dubois and Slachmuylders propose the Virgin is reading the passage of Isaiah 7:14.<sup>387</sup> Furthermore, they mention that the morse of Gabriel's cope features an edging, decorated with a frieze of flowers, similar in the miniature on the left page of the Virgin's book.<sup>388</sup>

## Discussion

The setting of the 'Annunciation' is highly irregular. The barrel-vaulted ceiling, as in Aelbert Bouts' and van der Weyden's *Annunciations* (SN7 and SN8), might perhaps allude to a religious setting, as do the somewhat luxurious capitals which would probably not have been common in a domestic setting. Additionally, the openness of the patio does not inspire a sense of humble domesticity. The interpretation of the supposed disguised symbolism, mentioned by Dubois and Slachmuylders, might be somewhat farfetched, as if for example not a single window depicted in scenes of the Virgin might escape the stigma of referring to the *fenestra coeli*.

The illumination of God the Father enthroned, recognizable by his grey beard and crown (tiara?), in the book read by the Virgin (ill. SN9b) is a rather neutral biblical image and does not help with identifying the book that the Virgin is supposed to be reading. God is depicted sitting on a throne, under a baldachin in a Gothic interior, possibly a choir. The suggestion that the Virgin would

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<sup>385</sup> Dubois, Slachsmuylders (op. cit. note 383), p. 133.

<sup>386</sup> Dubois, Slachsmuylders (op. cit. note 383), pp. 140-41.

<sup>387</sup> Dubois, Slachsmuylders (op. cit. note 383), p. 133.

<sup>388</sup> Ibidem.

be reading Isaiah 7 seems to be a careless assumption, as that chapter does not correspond with the image depicted on the left page.

The enthroned Godhead depicted on Gabriel's morse (ill. SN9c) is a singular figure, somewhat similar to the figure in the Virgin's book, surrounded by flowers. This connection might have been intentional. It cannot be recognized whether the Godhead on the morse actually is Christ enthroned. If this would be the case, it would make for an apt analogy of the Old Testament read by the Virgin, and the Archangel bringing the New. As the upper right figure on the Archangel's cope is St Peter, recognizable by his keys, it is plausible that the other figures, some of which only an head is visible, though all are depicted with haloes, also represent apostles. The largest figure, on the lower right, has a long staff.

### Illustrations

- SN9a Anonymous (Ghent?), *Annunciation*, c. 1480-1490, interior left wing of the *Nativity Triptych* (Brussels, Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique).
- SN9b God the Father enthroned (detail of ill. SN9a).
- SN9c Godhead (detail of ill. SN9a).
- SN9d St Peter and unidentified saint (detail of ill. SN9a).



III. SN9a



III. SN8b



III. SN8c



III. SN9d

# SN10

<b>Artist:</b>	Master of the Legend of St Barbara (Brussels; active c. 1470-1500) or Ghent artist(?) <sup>389</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1475-1500
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Triptych of the Annunciation</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Central panel
<b>Measurements:</b>	107 x 70 cm (central panel only)
<b>Current location:</b>	Private collection
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	upper right background	statue
God(?)	left capital of Gothic arch	stone relief
Adam(?)	left capital of Gothic arch	stone relief
Eve(?)	left capital of Gothic arch	stone relief
Archangel(?)	right capital of Gothic arch	stone relief

## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The creation of Eve'(?)	left capital of Gothic arch	stone relief
'The expulsion from Paradise'(?)	right capital of Gothic arch	stone relief

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Battling figure (2x)	upper corners of Virgin's portico	stone relief
Unidentifiable figure (5x)	Gabriel's ophrey	embroidered

## Description

The Virgin is kneeling, in front of a small red-clothed table with a book, in a portico with round arches (ill. SN10a). The front of the portico is decorated with traceries. The upper corners of the exterior wall are decorated with reliefs of two battling figures. Through the portico, a larger hall with round arches and windows, and with pillars featuring Corinthian capitals, is visible in the background. The windows in the larger hall feature some unidentifiable stained glass decoration. A man has entered

<sup>389</sup> Attribution according to Elisa Bermejo Martínez, *La pintura de los primitivos flamencos en España*, 1980, p. 177, although she also mentions the possible attribution to the Master of the Embroidered Foliage. Ghent-attribution according to Lempertz, Cologne. See Lempertz, *Alte Kunst: Gemälde, Zeichnungen, Skulpturen u.a. aus dem Nachlass der Kölner Kunsthistorikerin Dr. Hella Robels und aus zwei süddeutschen Privatsammlungen*, 2004, no. 1052, in which the work is attributed to an anonymous Ghent painter. Sotheby's, London, retained Martínez's attribution, see Sotheby's, *Old master paintings, evening and day sales: summary catalogue*, 2007, lot 48.



the hall on the left, seemingly following an angel to the right. Above the opening between the portico and the hall, a statue of Moses is placed. A vase with lilies stands behind the Virgin. The dove of the Holy Spirit has entered through the ceiling, accompanied by golden rays. The Archangel is standing in the portico's left entrance, barefoot and wearing a white gown and a cope featuring indiscernible human figures. In his right hand he has a messenger's staff and with his left hand he is pointing towards the dove of the Holy Spirit. Gabriel has entered through a Gothic hall with a pointed arches and windows, a pointed roof and Gothic turrets. It is not clearly visible whether the left and right foreground pillars of the Gothic hall feature storiated capitals, but the right one seems to feature an angel and the left capital a standing figure on the left with two laying figures on the right. The capital in the middle background is Corinthian. In the left background, a wide landscape can be seen.

### **Background information**

The *Annunciation* is the centerpiece of a triptych featuring the 'Temptation of Eve' on the interior left wing, 'Gideon and the fleece' on the interior right wing, and on the exterior panels Sts Thomas Aquinas and James the Great. The authorship of the altarpiece has not been definitively cleared, nor is the provenance known. The Master of the Legend of St Barbara, also known as Aert van den Bossche or Aert van Panhedel, was a follower of Rogier van der Weyden and active in Brussels in the later fifteenth century.<sup>390</sup>

### **Historiography**

Nothing has been published on the general and Old Testament iconography, or the architectural setting of the altarpiece.

### **Discussion**

The architectural setting, the statue of Moses, and especially the large hall in the background suggest the 'Annunciation' takes place in a religious building, namely the Jewish temple. Which occurrence is depicted in that background is unclear. The architectural style of the temple building is not necessarily Romanesque, since the capitals are Corinthian and the arch in the foreground features rather Gothic-looking traceries. However, the large, round hall in the background (ill. SN10b), with Corinthian capitals and round arches, seems designed to look 'old' in general, perhaps more as antique ('Roman') than as Romanesque architecture. The Gothic hall in the left foreground does not seem intended to express a stylistic contrast between the 'old' and the 'new'; the hall features a

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<sup>390</sup> See RKD, The Hague <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkddb/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoiceArtists&search=preref=53620>> (12-05-2011).

Corinthian capital as well, and the Archangel has already left the hall, progressing to the portico of the Virgin. If the two capitals in the foreground are indeed decorated with Old Testament scenes, the Gothic section of the building just as well belongs to the 'old faith'. The Gothic tympanum features a support for a statue still to be placed there.

The left foreground capital (ill. SN10c) features what seems to be a man standing on the left, bent over two figures laying on the right. A biblical subject which normally features this iconography is the 'Creation of Eve', with Adam sleeping on the ground and God the Father creating Eve from one of Adam's ribs. Because of the similarity in color, it is difficult to see where the left edge of the right foreground capital (ill. SN10d) ends and Gabriel's wing begins. The capital might perhaps feature an image of the Archangel of the 'Expulsion from Paradise', but this cannot be confirmed.

The statue of Moses (ill. SN10e) is a conventional rendition of the Old Testament leader, with the figure standing upright, horned, and holding the two tablets of the Ten Commandments. The statue is regularly featured in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century painting to signify a particular setting as the Jewish temple, a Jewish house or a synagogue. In the context of the Annunciation, one could of course also interpret the image of Moses as a personification of the Old Law, which was replaced by the New Law. This actually is the most given interpretation of the Moses statue, although it is based on assumption, not on proof. If the creation of this altarpiece might be placed at the beginning of the last quarter of the fifteenth century, the painting would mark the first Netherlandish *Annunciation* on panel containing a singular statue of Moses, an iconographic element that would soon after become the most common and popular embedded figure in Netherlandish *Annunciations* (see SN13, SN16, SN23, SN24, SN28, SN30, SN31, NN1).

Unfortunately, the available visual material does not allow for identification of the figures on Gabriel's cope (ill. SN10f), which seem to feature haloes. Similarly, the stained glass images in the background (ill. SN10g and h) would probably only be identifiable in the original painting, if at all.

The warrior figures (ill. SN10i) very remind of Dieric Bouts' Prado *Annunciation* (SN6) and, in idea, of the storiated capital in van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3). They might have the symbolical function of representing the chaos and strife before the arrival of Christ as well.

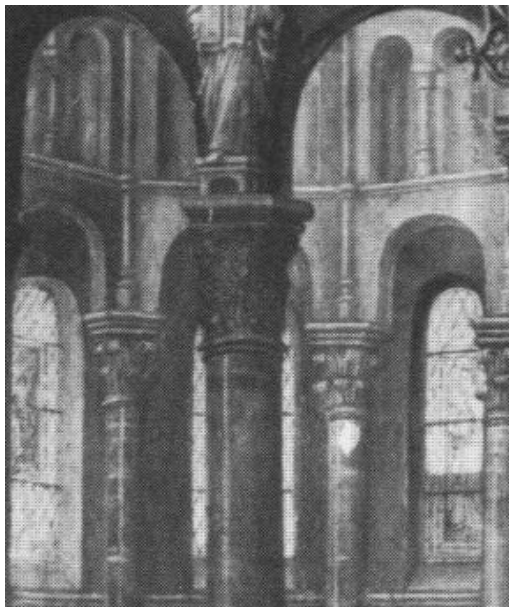
The scenes on the panel wings, featuring Eve and Gideon, are the Old Testament typologies of the Annunciation provided in the *Biblia Pauperum* and symbolically refer to the Virgin in the same manner as in Aelbert Bouts' *Annunciation* (SN8). The 'Temptation of Eve' alludes to the Virgin as the 'new Eve' and the necessity of Christ's salvation. The miracle of 'Gideon and the fleece' symbolizes Mary's virginity.

## Illustrations

- SN10a The Master of the Legend of St Barbara, *Triptych of the Annunciation*, c. 1475-1500 (Private collection).
- SN10b Background hall (detail of ill. SN10a).
- SN10c Left foreground capital (detail of ill. SN10a).
- SN10d Right foreground capital (detail of ill. SN10a).
- SN10e Moses (detail of ill. SN10a).
- SN10f Gabriel's cope (detail of ill. SN10a).
- SN10g Stained glass decoration (detail of ill. SN10a).
- SN10h Stained glass decoration (detail of ill. SN10a).
- SN10i Warrior figures (detail of ill. SN10a).



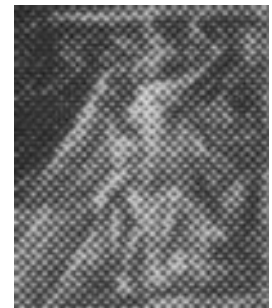
III. SN10a



III. SN10b



III. SN10c



III. SN10d

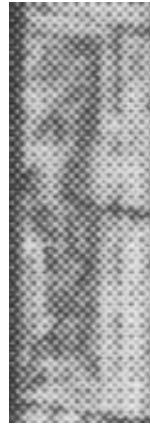




III. SN10e



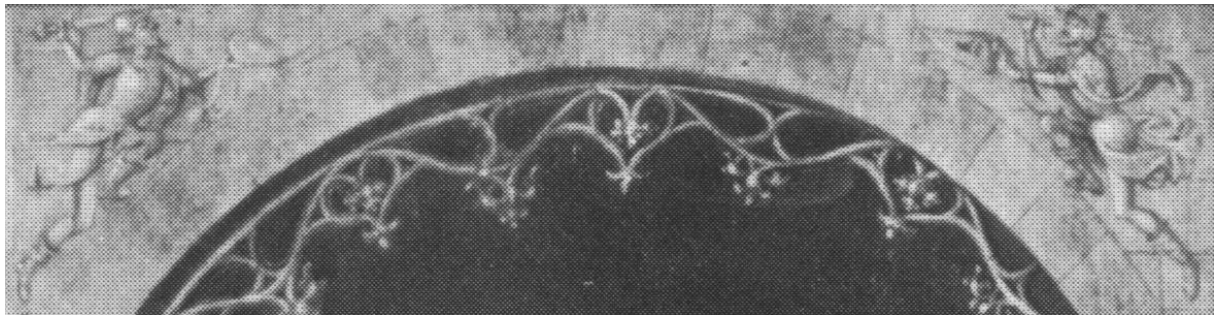
III. SN10f



III. SN10g



III. SN10h



III. SN10g

# SN11

**Artist:** Gerard David (Bruges; c. 1460-1523)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1490(?)  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Part:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 31,8 x 22,9 cm  
**Current location:** Detroit, Detroit Institute of Arts  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	back wall	painting
God	back wall	painting

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'Moses and the burning bush'	back wall	painting

## Description

David's 'Annunciation' (ill. SN11a) is set in a bourgeois domestic bedchamber, with a large canopy bed on the right, a chair that looks somewhat like a throne to its right, and, above a cabinet, a painting of 'Moses and the burning bush' hanging on the wall. On the cabinet lies a piece of fruit. In the foreground, the Archangel, holding a messenger's staff, has come from the left. On the right, an astonished Virgin is seated or kneeling on the floor with a book on a small table. A vase with white flowers stands in the foreground. The dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted above the Virgin.

## Background information

This is the only *Annunciation* by David containing embedded Old Testament iconography. The provenance of the painting is unknown.

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Van Miegroet identifies the setting as a domestic interior, fully in the tradition of older fifteenth-century Flemish painters such as van der Weyden.<sup>391</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Several scholars, such as van Miegroet and Hall, remark that 'Moses and the burning bush' was an established and traditional medieval typology of the virginal motherhood of Mary, for example published in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*.<sup>392</sup> The bush burning without being consumed refers to Mary getting pregnant of Christ without losing her virginity.

## Discussion

Comparable to Bouts' depiction of 'Gideon and the fleece' (SN8), it is remarkable that the first Netherlandish *Annunciation* on panel featuring an embedded image of 'Moses and the burning bush' (ill. SN11b), a typology known from the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, was only painted as late as c. 1490. This is further proof of the minor influence of the *Speculum* on embedded iconography in the early fifteenth century, and an indication of the effects of book printing. However, considering that the first printed edition of the *Speculum* was published in 1473, it remains remarkable that it took so long for its influence to be seen in Netherlandish *Annunciations*. The symbolism of 'Moses and the burning bush' is clear and uncomplicated. Nonetheless, within the timeframe of this research, 'Moses and the burning bush' would only be embedded twice more in a Netherlandish *Annunciation* (SN14, SN31), a surprisingly low number considering that the scene was an established typological convention.

David's *Annunciation* also marks the sole instance of a polychrome painting, not an altarpiece, but autonomous, hanging on the wall, was chosen as medium for the embedded iconography. The composition of the embedded scene, especially the depiction of God appearing out of the burning bush holding a globe in his hand, is similar to Dieric Bouts' *Moses and the Burning Bush* (c. 1460-1464; Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art) (ill. SN11c). Bouts, however, depicted Moses as falling on his knees, where David shows Moses already kneeling on the ground. In terms of the direction of the composition and the vertical appearance of God from the bush, the scene is more reminiscent of Aelbert Bouts' painting of the same subject (ill. SN11d).

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<sup>391</sup> Hans J. van Miegroet, *Gerard David*, 1989, p. 280.

<sup>392</sup> *Ibidem*. Detroit Institute of Arts, *Flanders in the fifteenth century: art and civilization*, exh. cat. Detroit (Detroit Institute of Arts) 1960, p. 184.

The piece of fruit, for example also included in the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5) and Aelbert Bouts' *Munich Annunciation* (SN8) might refer to the Fall of Man and the Virgin's role as the new Eve.

### **Illustrations**

SN11a Gerard David, *The Annunciation*, c. 1490 (Detroit, The Detroit Institute of Arts).

SN11b 'Moses and the burning bush' (detail of ill. SN11a).

SN11c Dieric Bouts, *Moses and the Burning Bush*, c. 1460-1464 (Philadelphia, Philadelphia Museum of Art).

SN11d Aelbert Bouts, *Moses and the Burning Bush with Gideon and the Fleece*, n.d. (San Antonio, McNay Art Museum).





III. SN11a



III. SN11b



III. SN11c



III. SN11d



# SN12

<b>Artist:</b>	Master of St John the Evangelist(?) (Bruges/Antwerp; active c. 1490-1520) <sup>393</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1490-1510
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Altarpiece with Annunciation, Sts Lazarus and Anthony Abbot, Catherine of Alexandria and Clare, Anthony of Padua and John the Baptist, Francis and Jerome</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Central scene
<b>Measurements:</b>	234 x 223 cm (entire panel)
<b>Current location:</b>	Milan, Museo Poldo Pezzoli
<b>Original location:</b>	Genua or Iberian peninsula(?) <sup>394</sup>
<b>Patron:</b>	Franciscan(?)



## Other figurative decorative elements:

(Male) figure (4x)	<i>Position</i> background window	<i>Medium</i> stained glass
(Male) figure (4x)	Gabriel's cope	embroidered

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN12a) is set in a high interior space with a vaulted ceiling and a large Gothic window in the background featuring four stained-glass (male) figures topped by golden decoration. In the left background a green-red baldachin can be seen. On the right, an opening framed by a large pillar reveals a red canopy bed in an adjacent room. The dove of the Holy Spirit has entered the room descending on three golden rays through the background window. It is descending towards the Virgin, who is kneeling in the left foreground, with her hands raised, in front of a prie-dieu featuring a book. The Archangel has descended from the right, wearing a cope featuring human figures and holding a messenger's staff. A vase with lilies stands in the right foreground. The tile-floor features some unidentifiable and probably meaningless characters in groups of three.<sup>395</sup>

The trompe l'oeil frame, which is not part of the scene but painted around all of the scenes of the altarpiece, features two sculptures of prophets, standing under Gothic baldachins.

<sup>393</sup> Toussaint states the artist worked in Bruges. See: Nathalie Toussaint, 'De kleine meesters van het einde van de 15de eeuw: Brugge', in: Roger van Schoute, Brigitte de Patoul, (eds.), *De Vlaamse primitieven*, Louvain 1994, p. 510. Russoli on the other hand states that the artist was active in Antwerp, see Ranco Russoli, *La Pinacoteca Poldi Pezzoli*, 1955, p. 150. Since the nineteenth century, the altarpiece has been attributed to several painters from Flanders and the Upper Rhine. Even nowadays, the attribution to the Master of St John the Evangelist is not certain.

<sup>394</sup> Raffaella Colace, *Consulta la scheda scientific*, n.d. <<http://www.museopoldipezzoli.it/userfiles/1129.pdf>> (21-04-2011).

<sup>395</sup> Bert W. Meijer, Guido Janse, Paola Squellati Brizio (eds.), *Repertory of Dutch and Flemish paintings in Italian public collections: II. Lombardy. 2 (M-Z)*, 1998, p. 68.

## Background information

The 'Annunciation' is the central scene of an altarpiece featuring depictions of Sts Lazarus and Anthony Abbot (upper left), Catherine of Alexandria and Clare (upper right), Anthony of Padua and John the Baptist (lower left), and Francis and Jerome (lower right). The altarpiece was almost certainly painted for a southern European patron, although there is much disagreement about whether the provenance should be sought in Genoa or the Iberian Peninsula. The work was in any case most probably commissioned by Franciscans, as two coats of arms on the back, and the depiction of Sts Francis, Anthony and Clare refer to the Order of St Francis.<sup>396</sup> The altarpiece was first attributed by Friedländer, who recognized similarities in style to an *Altarpiece of St John the Evangelist* in the Galleria di Palazzo Bianco in Genoa.<sup>397</sup>

## Historiography

Nothing has been published on the general and Old Testament iconography, or the architectural setting of the altarpiece.

## Discussion

Considering the height of the interior space and the large Gothic window in the background, the 'Annunciation' is clearly not set in a domestic setting, although a canopy bed is featured on the right. Possibly, the scene is set in a religious setting, with the bed representing the living quarters of the Virgin. In that case, the Virgin would be depicted as a temple maiden, studying and living in the Temple of Jerusalem.

Unfortunately, the available images of the altarpiece do not allow for identification of the figures in the window (ill. SN12b) or of those on Gabriel's cope (ill. SN12c). The four stained glass men all wear long mantles, and at least the right three are depicted with hats. As these hats of the middle two appear to be somewhat exotic – a possible indication that the figures are Jews, or at least Orientals – and the apostles are very rarely depicted wearing hats, these four figures might represent Old Testament prophets. On the other hand, they all have individual traits, just as the four stained glass figures in the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2), which is quite untypical for the depiction of prophets, so that they might also represent other, specific Old Testament figures.

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<sup>396</sup> Colace (op. cit. note 394).

<sup>397</sup> Max J. Friedländer, 'Drei niederländische Maler in Genua', *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst* 61 (1927/1928), p. 278.



## Illustrations

- SN12a The Master of St John the Evangelist(?), *Annunciation*, c. 1490-1510, from the *Altarpiece with Annunciation, Sts Lazarus and Anthony Abbot, Catherine of Alexandria and Clare, Anthony of Padua and John the Baptist, Francis and Jerome* (Milan, Museo Poldi Pezzoli).
- SN12b Windows with four stained glass figures (detail of ill. SN12a).
- SN12c Figures on Gabriel's cope (detail of ill. SN12a).



III. SN12a



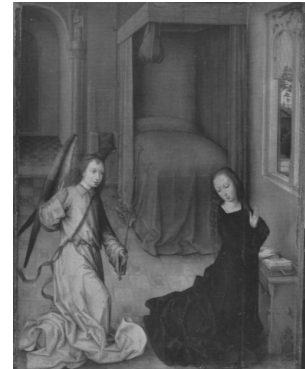
III. SN12b



III. SN12c

# SN13

**Artist:** Master of the Legend of St Mary Magdalene  
(Brussels; active c. 1480-1527)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1490-1500  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 44 x 34,4 cm (painted surface)  
**Current location:** Granada, Capilla Real  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	background wall, upper left	statue

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN13a) is set in a simple bedchamber, with a large canopy bed in the right background, a window looking out to a landscape on the right and an entrance in the left background. Between the entrance and the bed is a large chair decorated with two lions holding coats of arms. On a pillar on the corner a statue of Moses holding the Ten Commandments is displayed. In the foreground, the Archangel has approached the Virgin from the left. He is holding a messenger's staff in his left hand and pointing upwards with his right hand. The Virgin is kneeling on the right, interrupted from reading her book.

## Background information

The painting's composition is very much influenced by the work of Rogier van der Weyden, especially by the *Annunciation of the Columba Altarpiece*.<sup>398</sup> The decoration of the interior and dress of Gabriel and the Virgin have been reduced to almost a minimum.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Schoute calls the two lions on the chair purely decorative.<sup>399</sup>

<sup>398</sup> Jeanne Tombu, 'Le Maître de la Légende de Marie-Madeleine', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 71 (1929), p. 264.

Roger van Schoute, *La Chapelle Royale de Grenade*, 1963, p. 124.

<sup>399</sup> Schoute, *ibidem*.



### *Architectural setting*

Nothing specific has been published on this aspect of the painting.

### *Old Testament iconography*

Schoute calls the inclusion of the Moses statue 'traditional'.<sup>400</sup>

## **Discussion**

The setting of the 'Annunciation' in a bedchamber (*thalamus*) originated with van der Weyden (SN5 and SN7). However, the inclusion of a singular, standing statue of Moses (ill. SN13b) presenting the Ten Commandments was almost completely new in depictions of the Annunciation, especially in a domestic setting.<sup>401</sup> Where similar statues of Moses had become very common in New Testament temple scenes before the late fifteenth century, the painting by the Master of St Mary Magdalene, contrary to what Schoute suggests virtually stands at the beginning of a long tradition of singular statues of Moses outside of a narrative context or a broader iconographical program. This out-of-context presentation is precisely the reason why it is so difficult to interpret the meaning and function of the sculpture. The typology-inspired interpretation à la Panofsky would state that Moses, with the Old Law, represents the Old Covenant that has been replaced with the Incarnation of Christ. The statue would stress the contrast between the era of the Law and the era under grace. On the other hand, the decoration of the Virgin's bedchamber with an Old Testament, 'Jewish' figure also illustrates the historical and cultural context of the Virgin's life and indicates that she was a faithful believer. The statue is depicted in the upper background, far away from the main scene and certainly not in the Virgin's vicinity. This might suggest that the typological interpretation would be correct. Moses has his eyes closed, which reminds somewhat of the blindfolded personification of the Synagogue who does not see the true faith, although the iconography in the *Annunciation* here would be not nearly as explicit. It might just as well have been an esthetic choice on the painter's behalf. The statue itself does not truly have a statuesque appearance, considering its posture, drapery and the rendering of the hair. Moses' face has a gentle expression. The text on the tablets is not legible.

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<sup>400</sup> Schoute, *ibidem*.

<sup>401</sup> SN10 contains a similar statue of Moses in an ecclesiastical setting. As SN10 could only be dated very roughly, the *Annunciation* by the Master of St Mary Magdalene might in fact be the first extant painting with this particular element. Additionally, in the Discussion on SN10 it is suggested that the scene might have been painted by a German painter, making SN13 the first Netherlandish *Annunciation* featuring this iconography.

## Illustrations

SN13a The Master of the Legend of St Mary Magdalene, *The Annunciation*, c. 1490-1500 (Granada, Capilla Real).

SN13b Moses (detail of ill. SN13a).



III. SN13a



III. SN13b



# SN14

**Artist:** Jan Provoost (Bruges/Antwerp; c. 1465-1528)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1500-1510(?)  
**Part of:** Autonomous painting<sup>402</sup>  
**Measurements:** 258 x 202 cm  
**Current location:** Genoa, Galleria di Palazzo Bianco  
**Original location:** Portugal(?)<sup>403</sup>  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	left wall	colorized print

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'Moses and the burning bush'	left wall	colorized print

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Godhead (possibly Christ)	left wall	colorized print
Unidentifiable figure	background painting behind cabinet	painting
Female head	corner of hearth	stone sculpture

## Description

In a dark, but richly furnished bourgeois bedchamber (ill. SN14a), the Archangel has entered from the right. Gabriel, with yellow-golden wings, is modestly dressed, yet has a very large messenger's staff in his right hand. The hearth behind him on the right features a female head. The green canopy bed features a medallion decorated with precious materials and pearls. The Virgin is kneeling and looking up from her book that she has lain on the bench on the left. The edge of the Virgin's mantle is decorated with the words of the angelic greeting 'SALVE O REGINA' in Gothic letters.<sup>404</sup> On the bench is one candle, providing light. The cabinet in the left background largely hides a painting, on the edge of which is at least one unidentifiable figure depicted. A vase with lilies, a piece of fruit, and two candles are placed on what seems to be an altar before the painting. A colorized print depicting

<sup>402</sup> Often – falsely – considered to have been the central piece of a triptych, see Carla Cavelli Traverso, *Primitivi fiamminghi in Liguria*, 2003, pp. 188-89.

<sup>403</sup> It has been suggested several times that the panel was painted for a Portuguese patron, partially based on stylistic similarities between this work and other paintings which Provoost had painted for Portuguese patrons. The first records that reveal the presence of the painting in Genoa, in the Church of St Columba, date to the seventeenth century. The coat of arms featured on the chair in the background is not Genoese. See Traverso, *ibidem*.

<sup>404</sup> *Idem*, p. 190.

Moses and the burning bush is pinned to the wall on the left. Through the upper window on the left, rays of light have descended towards the angel, with the dove of the Holy Spirit bathed in golden light. Several household objects, and a black cat in the left foreground, are depicted throughout the composition.

### **Background information**

The available literature provides no further analysis of the painting's provenance.

### **Historiography**

#### *Architectural setting*

Nothing specific has been written on this aspect of the painting.

#### *Old Testament iconography*

Steinmetz identifies the painting in the background as a 'retable' or altarpiece.<sup>405</sup> She describes what is visible of the embedded scene as a standing person in a brightly colored, long robe, who has his left arm wrapped around the shoulder of a second figure who is kneeling or sitting to his left. The standing figure has its right hand pointed upwards. As the painting is hidden and displayed in the dark, Steinmetz considers it to be without direct meaning in relation to the main scene. However, she also suggests that the standing figure might be an angel, and that the scene therefore might represent 'Gideon and the fleece', with the angel pointing towards the cloud from which dew descends upon the earth.

### **Discussion**

The setting and design of the bedchamber is very likely inspired by compositions of van der Weyden and his followers (see SN5 and SN7) and present the Virgin in a *thalamus*-setting. Whether Provoost intended to include the canopy bed as a nuptial symbol, or did so merely because the bed had become a traditional element in depictions of the Annunciation is not clear.

The print of 'Moses and the burning bush' (ill. SN14b), pinned to the wall, very much reminds of the 'St Christopher carrying the Christ Child' in the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2). In fact, both paintings also contain sculpted heads as decorative elements of the hearth. The subject of the print was an established typological scene referring to Mary's virginity, and was included in the *Speculum*

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<sup>405</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 163, for this and the following.

*humanae salvationis*.<sup>406</sup> The print contains the image of Moses, sitting in the foreground, next to a tree in which the Godhead can be seen holding a globe.<sup>407</sup> Behind Moses is his flock of sheep. In the background a medieval city is depicted. Below the scene an illegible text is written. Since the Godhead has a cruciform halo, he could also be identified as Christ. However, this would of course not be consistent with the original Old Testament bible passage. It is not known whether the embedded composition is based on an actual print. The composition looks quite modern and sophisticated for the early sixteenth century, and the image might therefore be considered contemporary.

The depicted print is quite small and difficult to recognize, though very precisely rendered. A print, pinned to the wall, as opposed to a framed painting, such as by David (SN11), might be considered to be an odd element in such a luxurious setting. A point could also be made that the print does not entirely fit, in size or placement on the wall, in the composition, and the possibility should perhaps be considered that the print was added later. Unfortunately, as far as known no technical research was done on the painting which could prove or disprove this hypothesis. However, as the composition is presented now, there is no indication that the scene should be interpreted as an expression of the inferiority of the Old Testament, as the Virgin is kneeling, reading and presumably praying practically in front of it.

How different it is for the painting in the background (ill. SN14c). The painting is actually presented as an altarpiece, as it is placed above a table with a white cloth and two candles standing on each side. The white flowers are of course virginity symbols, and the piece of fruit might refer to the 'Temptation of Eve' or the 'Fall of Man'. Steinmetz' arguments supporting her identification of the partial scene as 'Gideon and the fleece' are not wholly convincing, however. She does not provide any examples of contemporary works of 'Gideon and the fleece' in which the angel is standing beside Gideon, instead of depicted in the air as is most often the case (see for example SN8). The standing figure might in fact also be woman, considering the details of the figure's body. The piece of fruit on the altar, depicted so near to the altarpiece, might be an indication that the embedded scene might refer to the story of Adam and Eve. On the other hand, 'Gideon and the fleece' as well as 'Moses and the burning bush' are two of the typologies connected to the Annunciation in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, and Provoost might have gotten his inspiration from that book.<sup>408</sup> In any case, Steinmetz is right with her remark that the embedded painting does not have a meaningful role in the composition.

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<sup>406</sup> See Discussion of SN11.

<sup>407</sup> See also the panel paintings of the same subject by Dieric and Aelbert Bouts, mentioned in the discussion of SN11.

<sup>408</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 200, note 1984, provides several examples, especially of miniatures, in which both 'Moses and the burning bush' and 'Gideon and the fleece' are presented in the context of the

It is difficult to determine whether the various household objects should be considered as religious symbols. The composition is closely based on fifteenth-century artistic traditions instigated by artists such as van der Weyden, whose included household objects were indeed interpreted as religious symbols (see SN5).<sup>409</sup> As with the possible symbolism – or lack thereof – of the canopy bed, the question remains what motivation Provoost had to depict these various elements; it could be because they add to the, supposedly desired, religious symbolism of the scene, or it could be simply because of the fact that these elements belonged to the accepted tradition of fifteenth-century Flemish painting. But then again, the one motivation does not exclude the other.

### Illustrations

SN14a Jan Provoost, *The Annunciation*, c. 1500-1510 (Genoa, Galleria di Palazzo Bianco).

SN14b 'Moses and the burning bush' (detail of ill. SN14a).

SN14c Partially hidden altarpiece (detail of ill. SN14a).

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Annunciation. However, she does not mention that both are referred to as typologies to the Annunciation in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*.

<sup>409</sup> The medallion above the bed is most likely also based on the composition of the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5) or one of its copies. Here, it is also interesting that Provoost decided not to take over the image of Christ as *Salvator Mundi*.





III. SN14a





III. SN14b



III. SN14c

# SN15

**Artist:** Master of 1518 (Antwerp; active c. 1510-1530)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1510-1530  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Part:** Centerpiece(?)  
**Measurements:** 111 x 138 cm  
**Current location:** Private collection  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
King David	book of the Virgin, left page	illumination
Gideon	retable in far background	painting

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'Gideon and the fleece'	retable in the background	painting

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Male figures (c. 7x)	Gabriel's cope	embroidered

## Description

In a domestic interior with three sections (ill. SN15a), the Archangel has entered from the left with a messenger's staff in his left hand, and accompanied by two putti holding his cope. Gabriel speaks the words 'Ave gratia plena dūs tecū' with the text written in the composition. His gold-colored cope is decorated with circa seven male figures of which at least four have haloes. Above the Archangel the dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted, radiating light, from which three golden rays descend towards the Virgin. She is sitting on the right with her hands in prayer and an illuminated book on her lap that contains an image of King David with his harp in the field. To the Virgin's right stands a vase with white lilies and a table, which might function as an altar, decorated with four plates featuring grotesques and floral motives, and a cloth hung above it.<sup>410</sup> In the right background a room with a bed is visible. In the left background a room is seen with a bench and a window looking out on houses on the left and to the right a triptych containing a painting of 'Gideon and the fleece' standing on a cabinet.

<sup>410</sup> The table is made of marble, according to Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 149.



## Background information

Hofmann remarks that the *Annunciation* by the Master of 1518 is closely related to the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN4).<sup>411</sup>

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Hofmann stresses the contemporary (early sixteenth-century) environment in which the 'Annunciation' is set.<sup>412</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Steinmetz states that the left wing and centerpiece of the triptych depicting Gideon (the right wing of which is not visible) form one entire scene in a bright landscape with low horizon (ill. SN15b).<sup>413</sup>

Gideon is depicted in the center, dressed in armor, and kneeling with his back to the viewer in front of the fleece with his hands raised towards heaven. In the right background of the centerpiece and on the left wing, horsemen with raised lances are waiting for their commander. The story of Gideon was an established typological theme referring to Mary's virginity. Steinmetz further remarks that the actual altarpiece's size, form, frame, and the landscape spanning the whole altarpiece, makes the altarpiece a work typical of early sixteenth-century Antwerp painting.

## Discussion

The setting and furniture, including the altarpiece, do make the scene appear as if it is set in an early sixteenth-century domestic interior. On the other hand, the Old Testament topic depicted on the embedded altarpiece would most likely have been anything but typical for a sixteenth-century Flemish interior. This is an example of what Steinmetz calls a 'Jewish altarpiece', a complete invention, yet also a recognizable visual element for contemporary viewers.<sup>414</sup> Considering that the Virgin is reading a book featuring an image of King David with his harp, which would most likely make the opened text the Old Testament Psalms, the whole context of the scene is presented as Jewish. The symbolical meaning of the Gideon-scene is well known and included in both the *Biblia Pauperum* and *Speculum humanae salvationis*. The meaning of the image of King David (ill. SN15b) is not as clear. It might purely be meant as an indication that the Virgin is reading the Old Testament, as a

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<sup>411</sup> Werner Hofmann (ed.), *Luther und die Folgen für die Kunst*, exh. cat. Hamburg (Hamburger Kunsthalle) 1983, p. 255.

<sup>412</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>413</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 149, for this and the following.

<sup>414</sup> Ibidem.

pious Jewish girl. Or it might refer to Christ and the Virgin's earthly genealogy. If the table on the right is indeed an altar, its emptiness is likely intentional, reflecting the shortcomings of faith without Christ.

The figurative decoration on Gabriel's cope is similar to that painted by for example Dieric Bouts (SN6) and the Master of St John the Evangelist (No. 13). Unfortunately, with the available images it has not been possible to identify the men, some of whom are depicted with haloes. They might be apostles or other saints, although the possibility of some of them being prophets should also be considered. It is also not clear whether there is an actual scene depicted on Gabriel's shoulder.

### **Illustrations**

SN15a Master of 1518, *The Annunciation*, c. 1510-1530 (Private collection).

SN15b Altarpiece with 'Gideon and the fleece (detail of ill. SN15a).

SN15c Illumination of King David praying in the field (detail of ill. SN15a).

SN15d Figurative decoration on Gabriel's cope (detail of ill. SN15a).



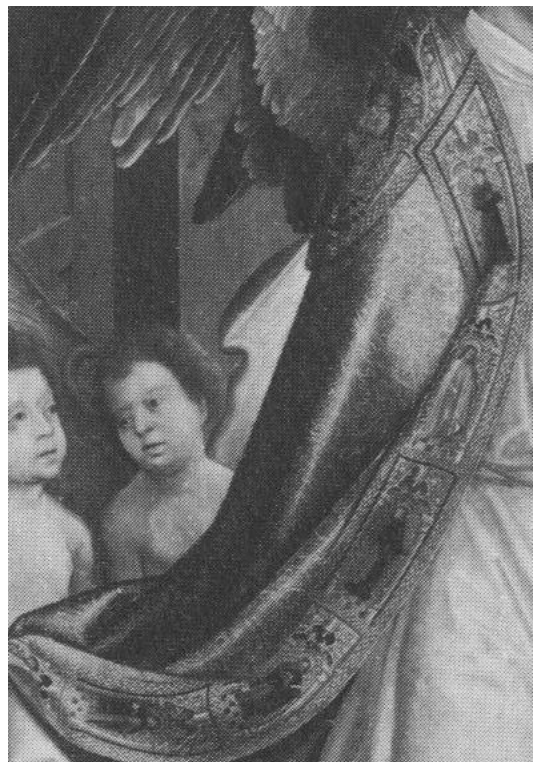
III. SN15a



III. SN15b



III. SN15c



III. SN15d

# SN16

**Artist:** Anonymous (Flemish)<sup>415</sup>  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1500-1525  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Part:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 61 x 42 cm  
**Current location:** Private collection  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	on right foreground pillar	statue

## Description

In an open structure with Gothic arches and cross-vaulted ceilings in the foreground (ill. SN16a), the Virgin is kneeling on the right with a book in her hands. Above her, a cloth baldachin can be seen. The Archangel has entered, flying from the left, with a messenger's staff in his left hand. Between the Archangel and the Virgin, a vase with lilies stands on the floor. Also between the Virgin and Gabriel is a pillar on which a statue of Moses stands. To its right the dove of the Holy Spirit can be seen. To the extreme left, part of a canopy bed can be seen. In the background, a cityscape is visible.

## Background information

This painting has not yet been published.

## Discussion

The scene is set in a somewhat fantastical open structure which might be identified as the Temple in Jerusalem; the Gothic architecture in the foreground, together with the Moses statue, suggest the building has a religious function, with Moses representing the Jewish faith. It is interesting that Moses is placed in the 'Gothic' foreground and not near the round arches in the background. On the other hand, the canopy bed in the left background also indicates that at least part of the structure is intended as living quarters. Most likely, this refers to the Virgin living in the Temple as a temple maiden. It is probably no coincidence that the Virgin is placed under the baldachin, as a subtle sign of honor. It seems more likely that the Moses statue signifies the Jewish context of the Virgin's

<sup>415</sup> Attributed by the RKD, The Hague <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkd-db/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoiceImages&search=preref=35729>> (27-04-2011).



surroundings than that it is meant typologically as an indication of the contrast between and transition from the Old Covenant to the New Covenant.

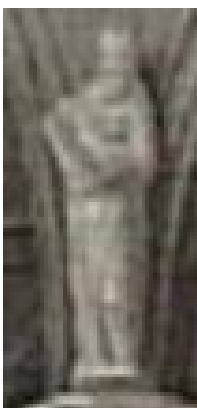
### **Illustrations**

SN16a Anonymous (Flemish), *The Annunciation*, c. 1500-1525 (Private collection).

SN16b Moses (detail of ill. SN16a).



III. SN16a



III. SN16b

# SN17

**Artist:** Jan Provoost (circle) (Bruges/Antwerp; c. 1465-1528)<sup>416</sup>  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1500-1520  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 56,5 x 39,7 cm  
**Current location:** Private collection  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Adam (2x)	roundels in background window	stained glass
Eve (2x)	roundels in background window	stained glass
Snake	left roundel in background window	stained glass
Archangel	right roundel in background window	stained glass
Gideon	retable in background	grisaille
Isaiah or King David(?)	left page of Virgin's book	illumination
Moses	upper right of Gabriel's cope	embroidered
Prophet(?) (8x)	Gabriel's cope	embroidered

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Fall of Man'	left roundel in background window	stained glass
'The Expulsion from Paradise'	right roundel in background window	stained glass
'Gideon and the fleece'	retable in background	grisaille
'Isaiah receiving the prophecy of the virgin birth' or 'King David praying'(?)	left page of Virgin's book	illumination

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Soldier (3x)	retable in background	grisaille
Face radiating light	on vase with lilies	painted

## Description

*The Annunciation* (ill. SN17a) is set in a bedchamber with a Gothic window featuring stained glass roundels depicting the 'Fall of Man' and the 'Expulsion from Paradise', and to the right an entranceway with Gothic decorations. Through the entrance a hearth and a scone with a candle can be seen. The Virgin is standing in the left foreground with a book in her hand which seems to contain

<sup>416</sup> According to Christie's, *Old Master Pictures, 7 July 2006. London, 2006*, No. 112, p. 24. The RKD rejects this attribution and lists the artist as 'Anonymous (Southern Netherlands)', see: RKD, The Hague <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkddeb/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoiceImages&search=preref=191623>> (27-04-2011).

an image of a man kneeling in a field. She has stood up from the chair behind her. To the left there is a red canopy bed with a richly decorated medallion. The dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted above the Virgin. The Archangel Gabriel has kneeled on the right, making a blessing gesture with his right hand and holding a messenger's staff in his left. His cope is decorated with male figures which might be identified as prophets and, on his upper back, Moses holding a staff. A vase with lilies stands between the two, the vase being decorated with a face radiating light. In the background, between the Virgin and Gabriel, cabinetis depicted with a retable that contains a grisaille of 'Gideon and the fleece'.

### **Background information**

According to Christie's, the composition is derived from *Annunciations* by Rogier van der Weyden and his workshop, from the bedchamber-setting to the figure types, while stylistically the painting shows similarities to Provoost.<sup>417</sup>

### **Historiography**

#### *Architectural setting*

As already mentioned, Christie's states that the *Annunciation* is set in the Virgin's bedchamber.

#### *Old Testament iconography*

Beside the unambiguous identifications of most embedded figures, the scene depicted in the Virgin's book according to Christie's is a depiction of Isaiah receiving the prophecy of the Virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14).<sup>418</sup> The unidentified figures on Gabriel's cope are said to be prophets.

### **Discussion**

The *Annunciation*, though modest in size, is filled to the brim with Old Testament iconography, as if it was the painter's intention to outdo the preceding painters of the fifteenth century. Most of the Old Testament scenes have a clear typological connection to the 'Annunciation', and the choice of scenes, such as 'Gideon and the fleece' and the 'Fall of Man', had become common standardized by the time the work was painted. Nevertheless, the abundance of Old Testament decoration in the bedchamber additionally – intentionally or not – represent the Virgin as a very pious Jewish maiden.

Despite the bedchamber-setting, the Gothic window and decoration of the entrance, as well as the religious stained glass images, seem to be unusual features for a domestic environment.

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<sup>417</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>418</sup> Ibidem, for this and the following.



However, it is not quite possible to determine whether or not the scene is set in the Virgin's home or in the living quarters of the Temple.

Whether the domestic elements, such as the hearth and the candle in the background, and the mirror in the bed – which does not feature any figures, which is surprising considering the painter's penchant for figurative details (see also SN5) – were intended to be symbols is unclear. By the early sixteenth century, these objects had become traditional, stock elements for *Annunciations* as a result of van der Weyden's influence, and might have been mainly included to fit the established pictorial tradition.

The buste of Moses on the back of Gabriel's cope (ill. SN17b) might be considered surprising as the Archangel is seen as God's messenger to introduce the New Covenant, and Moses could be seen as the personification of the Old Covenant. The depiction of Moses with a staff instead of the Ten Commandments is rare in depictions of the 'Annunciation'. Behind Moses mountains are depicted.

The inclusion of the Old Testament Moses on Gabriel's cope makes it more likely that the other figures on the cope (ill. SN17c and d) also represent Old Testament figures, indeed, most likely prophets. Their posture and hands seem to indicate that they are preaching or disputing (see also RH3), and they are not depicted with haloes. Additionally, the exotic headgear worn by some are usually not featured in images of the apostles or other saints. For these figures it is also odd that they are worn by the heavenly messenger. Of course, the figures could probably represent those Old Testament prophets who foretold the coming of Christ, just as Gabriel is doing in the actual 'Annunciation'. The partially Gothic, partially fantastical decorative framing in which the figures are placed is very similar to the decoration of the Gideon retable.

The scene featuring Gideon (ill. SN17e) is, unusually, depicted as a grisaille; it can not be an ivory relief as the background is completely black. Yet the earth has been colored brown and the heaven gold. The singular shape of the retable in which the scene is placed would be unusual very unusual for actual early sixteenth-century retables. Perhaps the choice of this shape, as opposed to a triptych, was due to a wish to differentiate between Christian altarpieces and 'Jewish altarpieces'.<sup>419</sup> As in the framing of the figures on Gabriel's cope, the extensively decorated frame contains a mixture of fantastical and Gothic elements. The retable stands on small lions. The inclusion of the three soldiers in the scene is not found in other embedded depictions of 'Gideon and the fleece'. At least the left soldier wears a contemporary hat. The other two soldiers have somewhat caricature faces. The four figures seem to be too large in relation to the size of the retable. The story of 'Gideon

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<sup>419</sup> See Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 44.

and the fleece' is a common typology of Mary's virginity. It is notable, however, that the Virgin does not pay any attention to this retable standing in the background.

The stained glass scenes from the Book of Genesis, the 'Fall' and the 'Expulsion' (ill. SN17f and g), refer to the introduction of Original Sin, the Virgin as the counterpoint to Eve, and the necessity of the salvation of Christ. The rendition of the embedded scenes in this painting is somewhat crude, the figures not well defined. In the 'Fall of Man', Adam already has an apple in his hand, while the snake is offering a second apple to Eve. The round frames of the two scenes are each decorated with floral motives and a banderole with illegible text.

The identification of the scene in the Virgin's book (ill. SN17h) as the prophecy to Isaiah is not definitive. There is no recognizable feature that would make the figure instantly recognizable as the Old Testament prophet. The figure is wearing a pinkish dress and kneeling in front of a tower of some sort. To the right, a green landscape is depicted. In the heavens, a figure, possibly an angel, has appeared. It is almost impossible to discern, but the kneeling figure might be wearing a crown, which would most probably make him a praying King David. The building in the left background might then be his palace. There could also be a harp depicted on the ground to the right. The scene of Isaiah receiving the prophecy, especially embedded in New Testament scenes, is very rare. Nevertheless, the inclusion of the prophet would be fitting in the context of the Annunciation, as his prophecy refers to the coming of the Messiah (Isaiah 7:14). If the figure would be King David, the Virgin would probably be reading the Old Testament Psalms, as in the *Annunciation* by the Master of 1518 (SN15). It might also refer to Christ and the Virgin's genealogical connection to the House of David.

## Illustrations

SN17a Jan Provoost (circle), *The Annunciation*, c. 1500-1520 (Private collection).

SN17b Moses (detail of ill. SN17a).

SN17c Prophets (detail of ill. SN17a).

SN17d Prophets (detail of ill. SN17a).

SN17e 'Gideon and the fleece' (detail of ill. SN17a).

SN17f 'The Fall of Man' (detail of ill. 18a).

SN17g 'The Expulsion from Paradise' (detail of ill. 18a).

SN17h Illumination in the Virgin's book (detail of ill. 18a).



III. SN17a



III. SN17b



III. SN17c





III. SN17d



III. SN17f



III. SN17e



III. SN17g



III. SN17h



# SN18

**Artist:** Jean Bellegambe (Douai; c. 1470-1535)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** 1516-1517  
**Part of:** *Triptych of the Annunciation*  
**Part:** Centerpiece  
**Measurements:** 109 x 80 cm (centerpiece)  
**Current location:** St Petersburg, Hermitage  
**Original location:** Probably the Benedictine abbey of St Amand, near Valenciennes  
**Patron:** Guillaume de Bruxella<sup>420</sup>



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	on medallion	metal (bronze?) relief
David	patron's bishop's staff	gold statuette <sup>421</sup>
Saul	patron's bishop's staff	gold statuette <sup>422</sup>

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Virgin and Child	Patron's morse	gold relief
Male figures (Saints?) (3x)	Patron's cope	embroidered

## Description

In Bellegambe's 'Annunciation' (ill. SN18a), the Virgin is sitting on the right with a book in her lap. On her left, a table is placed which might function as an altar, decorated with a cloth baldachin and a medallion containing an image of Moses holding the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. On the left, the Archangel is depicted with a messenger's staff in his right hand, and with his left hand pointing towards the Virgin. He might also be gesturing towards the included patron, a clergyman, who is kneeling in veneration before the Virgin. The patron has a small white dog by his side and a miter on the floor in front of him. In his hands he is holding a bishop's staff decorated with images of Kings David and Saul. Behind these three figures is a gallery decorated with floral motifs. In the top, God is depicted in a cloud of light. He has sent down the incarnated Christ, who is represented as an infant holding a cross, bathed in light. Below him flies the dove of the Holy Spirit.

Behind the gallery is a large room with a flat ceiling. To the left there are stairs leading to an entranceway. In the background right of the Archangel is a canopy bed with a woman sitting on the

<sup>420</sup> According to Robert Genaille, 'L'Annonciation de Jean Bellegambe', *Gazette des Beaux-Arts* 103 (1961), p. 14.

<sup>421</sup> According to Genaille, *idem*, p. 6.

<sup>422</sup> *Ibidem*.

ground in front of it. Above her a chandelier hangs from the ceiling. To the right is a door leading to another room. In the right background corner a cabinet is depicted with an ewer and platter, and an altarpiece decorated with indefinable figures.

### **Background information**

According to Genaille, the Franco-Flemish triptych (ill. SN18b) was most probably commissioned by Guillaume of Brussels, the sixty-ninth abbot of the Benedictine abbey of St Amand, near Valenciennes, from 1513 until 1516.<sup>423</sup> In 1517, he became abbot of the abbey of St Trond, near Liège. The triptych would have been a donation from the abbot on the occasion of his departure from St Amand.

On the left inner wing of the altarpiece Sts Amand, William of Bourges and Benedict are depicted. On the right inner wing Sts Bernhard, William of Aquitaine and Trudo. The Exterior wings are decorated with an grisaille of the Virgin and Child venerated by St Bernhard.

### **Historiography**

#### *General iconography*

The scene depicted on the centerpiece of the triptych is not an 'Annunciation' in its pure form. Genaille remarks that an actual angelic salutation is absent, and that Gabriel in this composition has the function of intercessor, presenting the donor to the Virgin.<sup>424</sup> He furthermore states that, 'kneeling before the Virgin, the abbot is engaged in a sort of "sacred conversation" about the dogma of the Incarnation with [the saints depicted on the wings].'<sup>425</sup> Nevertheless, as the actual Incarnation – the descent of the bodily Christ towards the Virgin – is also depicted, the scene might still be considered to be an 'Annunciation'.

#### *Architectural setting*

Nothing specific has been written on this aspect of the painting.

#### *Old Testament iconography*

Genaille stresses that the image of Moses with the Ten Commandments (ill. SN18c) refers to the Law of the Old Testament, the iconography stressing the contrast between the Old Law and the New Law

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<sup>423</sup> See note 420.

<sup>424</sup> Genaille (op. cit. note 420), pp. 9-10.

<sup>425</sup> Idem, p. 15.

of Christ – as opposed to any virginal symbolism that might be related to Moses, such as ‘Moses and the burning bush’.<sup>426</sup>

## Discussion

The interior space in which the scene is set is very large, although a bed is placed in the middle of the hall-like room in the background. The size of the interior makes the setting seem less domestic, although the flat wooden ceiling does not seem typical for a religious building. More than anything, the interior, with its rich decoration above the doors, reminds of a palace. It is also not entirely clear in how far the foreground section with the three figures is part of the same space as the background interior, and who the figure in front of the bed should be.

The Virgin is seated at an altar, which, with image of Moses, has been given a Jewish role. This provides the impression that the Virgin was studying the Jewish religion just before the event depicted in the painting. The medallion reminds somewhat of the medallion in the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5) and might be interpreted in the same manner as the popular Christian devotional tondo’s of the fifteenth and sixteenth century discussed by Held.<sup>427</sup> The image of Moses with the Ten Commandments does not directly refer to the Annunciation; there is no single moment depicted in the medallion which would make it thematically fitting to the Annunciation. However, in the main scene it is also not entirely clear whether or not the actual Annunciation is depicted. The Moses could indeed refer to the ‘era of the Law’ as a contrast to the era under Christ’s grace. However, its prime function might also be to present the Virgin as a pious Jewish maiden.

It is not clear what the thematic meaning would be of the images of David and Saul on the patron’s bishop’s staff. However, as with the figurative decoration on the cope of the patron, these figures belong to the reality of said patron, and not necessarily to the reality of the New Testament Annunciation.

Unfortunately, on the available images it is not clear who the embedded figures on the background altarpieces should represent.

## Illustrations

SN18a Jean Bellegambe, *Annunciation*, c. 1516-1517, centerpiece of the *Triptych of the Annunciation* (St Petersburg, Hermitage).

SN18b Jean Bellgambe, *Triptych of the Annunciation*, c. 1516-1517 (St Petersburg, Hermitage).

SN18c Medallion with the image of Moses (detail of ill. SN18a).

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<sup>426</sup> Idem, pp. 8-9.

<sup>427</sup> Held (op. cit. note 322).

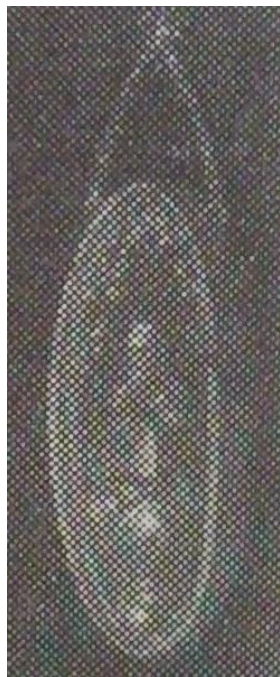


III. SN18a





III. SN18b



III. SN18c

# SN19

**Artist:** Bernard van Orley (Brussels; c. 1491-1542)<sup>428</sup>  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1517  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 68 x 54 cm  
**Current location:** Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	above second arch in background	statue
God(?)	left roundel over second arch	stone relief
Adam(?) (2x)	roundels over second arch	stone relief
Eve(?) (2x)	roundels over second arch	stone relief

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Creation of Eve' (?)	left roundel over second arch	stone relief
'Adam and Eve working on the field' (?)	right roundel over second arch	stone relief

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Warrior	left, above Gabriel	statue
Sitting man (2x) <sup>429</sup>	upper right, above Virgin	statue
Unidentifiable figure	lectern in foreground	wood carving
Unidentifiable figures (3x?)	on chandelier	bronze(?) statuettes
Unidentifiable figure	above entrance	statue
Unidentifiable figure	above door in right background	statue
Unidentifiable figure (3x)	external pillar	statue
Unidentifiable figures	roundels in background windows	stained glass

## Description

In a large, hall-like space (ill. SN19a), the Virgin is seated on the right in front of a book on a wooden lectern which is decorated with a relief figure and contains an inkpot and banderole on the right. She has her hands in prayer for the arrived Archangel, who has entered from the left. He is holding a messenger's staff in his left hand, and is pointing upwards with his right. In the foreground a basket

<sup>428</sup> Attribution and dating according to the Fitzwilliam Museum website, <[http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/opac/search/cataloguedetail.html?&preref=1096&\\_function\\_=xslt&\\_limit\\_=100](http://www.fitzmuseum.cam.ac.uk/opac/search/cataloguedetail.html?&preref=1096&_function_=xslt&_limit_=100)> (13-05-2011). Gerson and Goodison attribute the painting to 'Flemish school, early sixteenth century'. See Horst Gerson, J.W. Goodison (et al.), *Fitzwilliam Museum Cambridge: catalogue of paintings* 1, 1960, p. 39.

<sup>429</sup> Unfortunately, the available images of the painting do not allow for the identification of most of the figurative details.

with a white cloth is placed on the right. Between Gabriel and the Virgin a vase with lilies is depicted. In the right background stands a red canopy bed with a medallion containing a mirror hanging in the middle. Above the Virgin, on the right, two statues of sitting men in exotic dress are placed. On the left, above the Archangel, stands the statue of an exotic warrior with a feathered helmet and an exotic spear. Behind the Archangel, on the left, an altar with a tin ewer is depicted, with (pseudo-) Gothic decoration above it.

In the middle section of the hall, the upper back wall is decorated with a statue of Moses holding the Ten Commandments in the center, to the left a roundel possibly containing a relief of the 'Creation of Eve', and on the right a roundel that might contain an image of 'Adam and Eve working on the field'. The chandelier in front of the wall also seems to contain small figurative details. Underneath the arch, a white cat is seated on the floor.

In the background, a large entrance decorated with ornaments and a figure standing under a baldachin on top can be seen. Left and right are windows featuring stained glass roundels containing unidentifiable figures. Through the entrance way, a small hall can be seen featuring other statues of human figures. Outside, a man (Josef?) is plowing the field. In the farthest background, a landscape can be seen with a large building, perhaps a church or castle.

### **Background information**

The painting was first ascribed to van Orley by Friedländer, before being attributed to an anonymous, early sixteenth-century Flemish painter who worked in the Antwerp Mannerist style of Jan de Beer, the Master of 1518 and Bernard van Orley.<sup>430</sup> However, the attribution to van Orley has recently been restored.

### **Historiography**

No literature discussing the general and Old Testament iconography, or the architectural setting of the painting could be found.

### **Discussion**

The interior space and its decoration is similar to those in Jan de Beer's *Annunciation* (SN20). Considering the large halls, the sculptures, and the altar on the left, the setting most likely is not domestic, despite the bed and such homely elements as the basket. It should probably be seen as a combination of a living space within a larger religious building. The exotic looking warrior sculptures are odd features; they can not be identified as religious figures and would therefore not entirely fit in

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<sup>430</sup> Gerson and Goodison (op. cit. note 428), p. 39. Max Jakob Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting 8. Jan Gossart and Bernard van Orley*, 1972, no. 103.

a religious setting. They might have a similar role as the warrior figures in van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (SN3) and *Bouts Prado Triptych* (SN6) and refer to the discord and strife before the coming of Christ. However, the warriors depicted in this painting are not battling themselves.

The statue of Moses, though standing instead of sitting, should be interpreted in the same manner as the Moses statues in SN10 and, possibly, SN13. The possible 'Creation of Eve' would refer to the introduction of Original Sin as a result of Eve's actions. If the identification of the scene in the right roundel is correct, 'Adam and Eve working on the field' would most likely refer to the fate humanity had to endure after the 'Fall of Man' up until the coming of Christ. Whether the plowing man outside is intended to be a visual reference to this scene is not clear.

Unfortunately, the other figurative details can not be identified. What is clear is that the painter intended to depict a richly decorated, monumental, most likely religious setting. The stained glass roundels are reminiscent of the roundels in the *Annunciation* from the circle of Provoost (SN17). Weniger states that writing material and texts in the Virgin's lectern refer to the Virgin's piety and work as a temple maiden.<sup>431</sup>

### **Illustrations**

SN19a Bernard van Orley, *The Annunciation*, c. 1517 (Cambridge, Fitzwilliam Museum).

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<sup>431</sup> Weniger in: Borchert (op. cit. note 148), p. 371.





III. SN19a

# SN20

**Artist:** Jan de Beer (Antwerp; c. 1475-1536)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1520(?)  
**Part of:** Autonomous painting  
**Measurements:** 67 x 52,5 cm  
**Current location:** Private collection<sup>432</sup>  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Moses Prophet(?) (c. 3x)	upper background arch on left side	stone relief roundel stone statue	more easily identifiable on Munich copy

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Torch bearing angel (3x)	pillar behind the Virgin	sculpture
Figure resting on sword	far left background	sculpture

## Description

In a large, high and richly ornamented interior (ill. SN20a), the Virgin is seated on the right, while reading a book laying on a small bench. The Archangel has come flying from the upper left, holding a messenger's staff and an unwritten banderole. A vase with lilies stands between the Archangel and the Virgin. To the left, a white cat is sitting on the floor. Above the vase, a mirror can be seen hanging on a pillar. On the pillar to the extreme right hangs a board with an illegible text. Behind the Virgin, left of the pillar a basket with a white cloth and a pincer stands on the floor. Also behind the Virgin, in the background, is a pillar decorated with statues of angels holding torches, standing under Gothic baldachins. Above the pillar a stone-relief roundel with Moses enthroned, holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments, is depicted. Behind the pillar is a red canopy bed with a chair. To the right is a cabinet with tin ewers and platters, and what seems to be a stove. A chandelier hangs from the ceiling. The window in the back looks out on to a city. In the left background, behind the Archangel, a bench and an opening looking out on trees can be seen. There is also a pillar, featuring a statue of a figure resting on a sword. The left arch features difficult to identify figures under baldachins.

<sup>432</sup> Sold: Sotheby's, *Old master paintings*, 11 November 2005 Amsterdam, Amsterdam 2005, lot no. 42.

## Background information

A copy after De Beer's proposed original is in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich (ill. SN20b), which Friedländer describes as a slightly rougher painting, with only slight deviations compared to the original.<sup>433</sup> Differences between the painting by Jan de Beer and the Munich copy are only noticeable in details, such as in the form of certain objects – for example the book bag on the floor – and the treatment and colors of some surfaces. De Beer's original features more reflections on polished objects. The transitions between light and shadow on the other hand are somewhat softer in the copy. Figurative details, such as the Moses, are indeed more roughly painted and less detailed. The figure on the left arch in the Munich version is bigger, broader, and clearly male. The sculpture of the figure resting on a sword is changed into a female figure blowing a horn. The mirror is missing in the copy, and Gabriel's banderole features writings.

Previously unmentioned in discussions on both paintings is a work almost identical to De Beer's painting, in the Kunstmuseum Basel (ill. SN20c), attributed to De Beer himself and dated c. 1500.<sup>434</sup> In the Basel version the cat is missing, the decoration on Gabriel's cope is different, the colors of his wings are reversed, and also, here his banderole features text. However, there is no legible text on the board on the right. The baldachins above the torch bearing angels are absent, as is the chandelier. Additionally, the Basel version also features fewer reflections and softer transitions between bright and dark areas.

Duwe discusses the style of the Munich painting, calling it the "Grotesque Style", "Antwerp Renaissance" or "Antwerp Mannerism", which was in vogue between 1520 and 1540/60.<sup>435</sup> Typical works by artists working in this manner were small, carryable triptychs with New Testament subjects or lives of saints, filled with exotic elements (dress, architecture, jewelry), mixed with Renaissance and mannerist forms.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

As in Netherlandish religious works of the fifteenth century, various objects have been awarded symbolic meaning by scholars: Duwe states that the basket with the white cloth and the pincer refers

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<sup>433</sup> Max Jakob Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting 11. The Antwerp Mannerists: Adriaen Ysenbrant*, 1974, No. 24a.

<sup>434</sup> Kunstmuseum Basel <[http://80.74.155.18/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultDetailView/result.inline.list.t1.collection\\_list.\\$TspTitleLink.link&sp=13&sp=Sartist&sp=SfilterDefinition&sp=0&sp=1&sp=1&sp=SdetailView&sp=24&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=T&sp=0&sp=SdetailList&sp=0&sp=F&sp=Scollection&sp=I2706](http://80.74.155.18/eMuseumPlus?service=direct/1/ResultDetailView/result.inline.list.t1.collection_list.$TspTitleLink.link&sp=13&sp=Sartist&sp=SfilterDefinition&sp=0&sp=1&sp=1&sp=SdetailView&sp=24&sp=Sdetail&sp=0&sp=T&sp=0&sp=SdetailList&sp=0&sp=F&sp=Scollection&sp=I2706)> (20-03-2011).

<sup>435</sup> Duwe (op. cit. note 114), p. 153, only discusses the Munich copy, though his analysis is also applicable to the original painting.

to Christ's Passion.<sup>436</sup> He also suggests that the single burning candle on the extreme left refers to Christ's omnipresence, though he does not state how the one candle relates to the chandelier in the right background.<sup>437</sup> The cat symbolizes evil and laziness. The figure blowing the horn (only featured in the Munich copy!) refers to the Last Judgment (described in Matthew 24:31). The angelic statues holding their torches upwards refer to morning – if they had held their torches downwards they would have represented night and darkness. The tin objects in the background are symbols of the Virgin's purity.<sup>438</sup> Duwe additionally remarks that, according to his analysis, some objects are symbols, while others are merely decoration; how he determines the difference is not clear.<sup>439</sup> Eikemeier identifies the basket as a sewing basket, symbolizing the Virgin's diligence.<sup>440</sup> Both Duwe and Eikemeier consider the pillar with angels to represent the 'column novae legis', the pillar of the New Law, with the three half-columns of the base symbolizing the Holy Trinity.<sup>441</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

Duwe identifies the interior as the nave of a church – a combination of a sanctuary and a domestic space.<sup>442</sup> He connects this setting with the role of the Virgin as a temple maiden. Duwe additionally sees the space in which the bed is placed as a choir, with the bed replacing the high altar. He has copied his analysis from Eikemeier, who also notes that the combination of a churchlike building filled with domestic objects, identifies the Virgin, as a temple maiden, representing *Ecclesia*, the church.<sup>443</sup> Schawe, on the other hand, identifies the architectural setting as a palace-like building.<sup>444</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Eikemeier only notes that Moses depicted in the roundel represents the Old Testament.<sup>445</sup> Duwe describes the form in which Moses is depicted as 'stone imitation', though it is not clear whether he means that the roundel is depicted in an oil painting, or whether the material, in the actual setting, is supposed to be stone imitation.<sup>446</sup> In the Munich copy, Duwe identifies the statues on the left, behind the Archangel, as prophets.<sup>447</sup>

<sup>436</sup> Idem, p. 155, for this and the following.

<sup>437</sup> The candle in the original is much smaller and less prominent.

<sup>438</sup> Duwe (op. cit. note 114), p. 156.

<sup>439</sup> Idem, pp. 155-56.

<sup>440</sup> Peter Eikemeier, in *Alte Pinakothek, Munich, Alte Pinakothek München: Erläuterungen zu den ausgestellten Gemälden*, 1983, pp. 65-66.

<sup>441</sup> Duwe (op. cit. note 114), p. 155. Eikemeier, idem, p. 66.

<sup>442</sup> Duwe, idem, p. 153.

<sup>443</sup> Eikemeier (op. cit. note 440), p. 65.

<sup>444</sup> Schawe (op. Cit. note 347), p. 192.

<sup>445</sup> Eikemeier (op. cit. note 440), p. 66.

<sup>446</sup> Duwe (op. cit. note 114), p. 155.

<sup>447</sup> Ibidem.



## Discussion

The large, hall-like space and the prominent, almost monumental depiction of Moses (ill. SN20d and, for comparison, ill. SN20e), together with the other sculptural decoration, suggest that the scene is set in a monumental religious setting, most likely the Temple in Jerusalem. The interior space is in fact quite similar to that by van Orley (SN19). Considering the rich decoration with religious imagery, a palace-setting seems unlikely. The exotic and grotesque-like details create a somewhat archaic appearance, perhaps with the purpose of indicating the ancient era in which the Annunciation took place. The high Gothic baldachins above the angels do not quite fit with the fantastical decoration seen elsewhere in the composition. It would be plausible that the bed is intended to refer to the Virgin living in the temple as a Temple maiden. It could also, perhaps simultaneously, be a nuptial symbol (see SN5). It is of course also possible that the setting should not be interpreted as a literal architectural structure, but a symbolical setting.

The large image of Moses, enthroned, and prominently placed high up above an arch, probably indicates that the setting is a building of the Law of Moses. The throne and staff (scepter?) in his hand present the Old Testament leader as a triumphant figure of power; this makes it less likely that the image is meant to indicate the passing of the Old Law and the introduction of the New. The iconography of the roundel placed in an arch above a pillar was also used by an anonymous, early sixteenth-century Antwerp painter (SN22), with a similar enthroned figure who might be Moses, and by Cornelis Engebrechtsz. (c. 1462-1527) in his depiction of *Christ's second visit to the house of Mary and Martha* (c. 1515-1520; Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) (ill. SN20f). Engebrechtsz, however, replaced the image of Moses with what seems to be a scene of a long-haired figure, possibly a woman, attacking a soldier laying on the ground (ill. SN20g). Apparently, for Engebrechtsz the role of Moses and the setting of the scene in an explicitly Jewish context were not important.

It is difficult to identify the figures placed in the arch on the left (ill. SN20h). The figures in the Munich copy (ill. SN20i) are clearly male, and, considering their robes and their gestures – as if they are in dispute – should probably be identified as prophets. There is only one figure truly visible in the original painting, and it cannot even be determined clearly whether the figure is male or female.

The sculptures of the angels (ill. SN20j) and the figure in the left background (ill. SN20k) cannot be awarded a truly singular identification or meaning. Their inclusion might stem from the Antwerp Mannerist style, keen on enriching compositions with details, decoration and figures. They might also have been included primarily to give the setting an exotic, archaic appearance. In idea they somewhat remind of the winged idols sometimes included in Trecento art (see Chapter I, par. 3). None of the sculptures in the painting are placed in a direct visual relation to the Virgin.

## Illustrations

- SN20a Jan de Beer, *The Annunciation*, c. 1520(?) (Private collection).
- SN20b Jan de Beer, follower(?), *The Annunciation*, c. 1520-1530 (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).
- SN20c Jan de Beer, *The Annunciation*, c. 1520 (Basel, Kunstmuseum).
- SN20d Roundel featuring Moses enthroned (detail of ill. SN20a).
- SN20e Roundel featuring Moses enthroned (detail of ill. SN20b).
- SN20f Cornelis Engebrechtsz., *Christ's second visit to the house of Mary and Martha*, c. 1515-1520 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) .
- SN20g Roundel (detail of ill. SN20f).
- SN20h Sculpture placed in left arch (detail of ill. SN20a).
- SN20i Prophet sculptures in left arch (detail of ill. SN20b).
- SN20j Angel sculptures (detail of ill. SN20a).
- SN20 Sculpture of figure resting on sword (detail of ill. SN20a).



III. SN20a





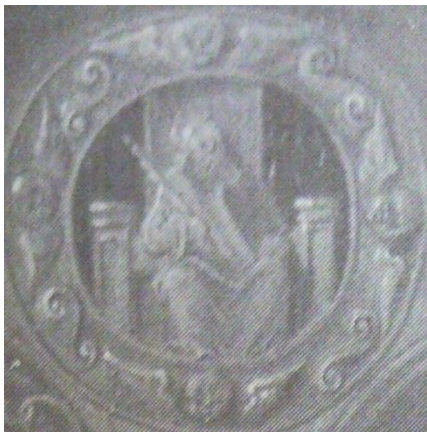
III. SN20b



III. SN20c



III. SN20d

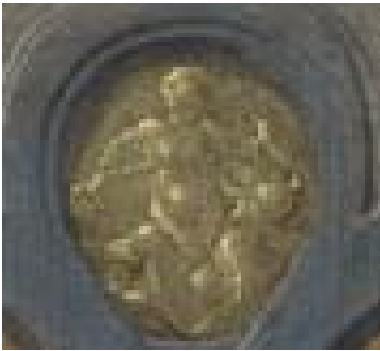


III. SN20e



III. SN20f

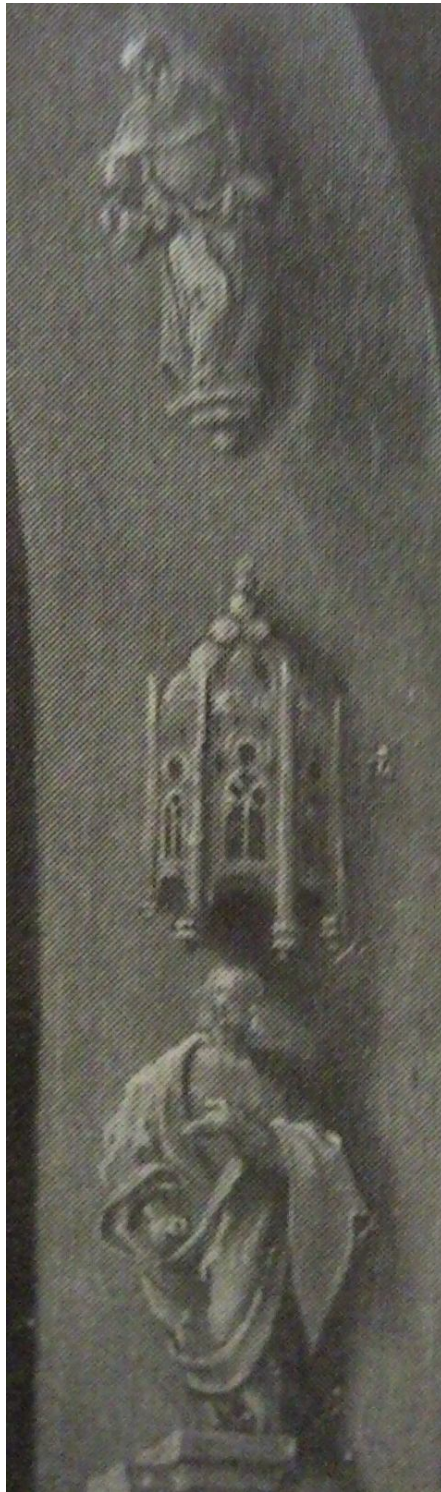




III. SN20g



III. SN20h



III. SN20i



III. SN20j



III. SN20k

# SN21

**Artist:** Anonymous (Flemish)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1520-1530  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 110 x 78 cm  
**Current location:** Private collection  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Abraham	centerpiece of triptych in background	painting
Isaac	centerpiece of triptych in background	painting

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Sacrifice of Isaac'	centerpiece of triptych in background	painting

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Sibyl (2x)	wings of triptych in background	painting

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN21a) is set in a domestic bedchamber, with a hearth on the right featuring a sconce with a single candle, and a basin. In the right background is a canopy bed. On the left an opened window is depicted, and an entrance on the left through which the Visitation, a tree and a building can be seen. One of the most prominent interior elements in the composition is a triptych, placed upon a table left of the bed, with the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' as its centerpiece and female figures, possibly sibyls, on the wings. In the foreground, the Archangel has descended upon a cloud into the room. He is wearing a cope and holding a staff in his left hand, while pointing his right hand upwards. The Virgin is kneeling on the right, with her hands in prayer, in front of a prie-dieu with a book. The dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted in the upper center of the composition. A vase with lilies stands in the foreground, between Gabriel and the Virgin.

## Background information

This painting on canvas was first attributed to an anonymous fifteenth-century Flemish painter, before it was stylistically placed in the early sixteenth century, in the circle of Rogier van der Weyden.

According to Wolfthal, the painter could also be placed in the circle of Jan Provoost, based on the Italianate face of the angel, and the tall, bodiless figures with long, hanging sleeves in the Visitation.<sup>448</sup>

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Despite the remarkably conventional iconography of the *Annunciation*, Wolfthal states the cloud on which the Archangel has descended is highly unusual in Flemish painting of this period.<sup>449</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

Steinmetz also calls the interior of the bedchamber 'conventional'.<sup>450</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Steinmetz remarks that, comparable to the triptych depicted by the Master of 1518 (SN15), the embedded altarpiece is in all aspects – the size and framing, the depiction of the landscape and dress, the filling out of the subjects in the centerpiece, and the wings of the altarpiece – wholly typical of the early sixteenth century.<sup>451</sup> The female figures on the wings, despite the fact that the left wing is only slightly visible since it is largely obscured by Gabriel's wing, are identified by Steinmetz as sibyls, female equivalents of the Old Testament prophets. Their attention is directed towards the centerpiece in a manner similar to saints on the wings of actual, Christian altarpieces. Similarly, Steinmetz sees the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' as an Old Testament replacement for the Crucifixion, which – as is also stated by Wolfthal – through its theme of sacrifice is a common typological subject for the Crucifixion.<sup>452</sup> In the Virgin's house the retable fulfills the same function as a Crucifixion altarpiece would have in a Christian interior. With the typological symbolism, the Incarnation is connected with Christ's death.

## Discussion

The setting of the 'Annunciation' is a domestic bedchamber in the tradition of Rogier van der Weyden and the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5) with very familiar furniture and household objects. Whether this painting is intended to contain the same 'disguised symbolism' as suggested to be

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<sup>448</sup> Dianne Wolfthal, *The Beginnings of Netherlandish Canvas Painting: 1400-1530*, 1989, p. 75.

<sup>449</sup> Idem, p. 75.

<sup>450</sup> Idem, p. 160.

<sup>451</sup> Ibidem, and for the following.

<sup>452</sup> Idem, p. 75.

contained in the *Louvre Annunciation*, or whether the painter was simply following the established pictorial tradition without eye for symbolism, is unclear.

The triptych's centerpiece has a decorated frame with a pinnacle, in the same manner as the retable in the *Annunciation* from the circle of Provoost (SN17).<sup>453</sup> The 'Sacrifice of Isaac' is a rather uncommon embedded scene for an *Annunciation*; the only other Netherlandish examples are the *Prado Annunciation* (SN 4) and the SN22. The symbolism of sacrifice, and the connection between Christ's Incarnation and death, reminds of the *Columba Altarpiece* (see SN7). The possible inclusion of the sibyl might indeed indicate that the painter tried to depict a culturally correct 'Jewish' altarpiece, though recognizable for Christians. That the left wing is hidden by Gabriel's wing probably has no specific reason or meaning, as the left wing most likely mirrors the right wing.

### Illustrations

SN21a Anonymous (Flemish), *The Annunciation*, c. 1520-1530 (Private collection).

SN21b Triptych with the 'Sacrifice of Isaac' and two sibyls (detail of ill. SN21a).

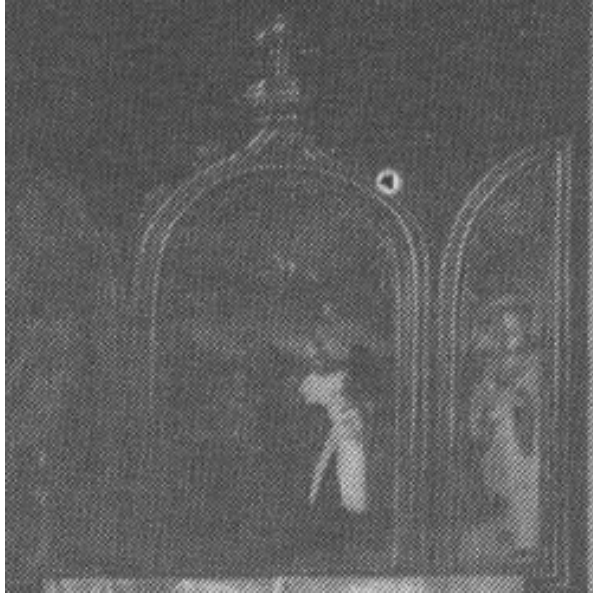
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<sup>453</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 160, describes the frame as 'vermutlich figürlich beschnitten'.





III. SN21a



III. SN21b

# SN22

**Artist:** Anonymous (Antwerp)<sup>454</sup>  
**Work:** *Annunciation*  
**Date:** Early sixteenth century  
**Part of:** *Nativity triptych*  
**Part:** Interior left wing  
**Measurements:** 109 x 32 cm  
**Current location:** Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Abraham	roundel in left upper corner back wall	stone relief
Isaac	roundel in left upper corner back wall	stone relief
Cain	roundel in right upper corner left wall	stone relief
Abel	roundel in right upper corner left wall	stone relief

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Sacrifice of Isaac'	roundel in left upper corner back wall	stone relief
'Cain slaying Abel'	roundel in right upper corner left wall	stone relief

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Enthroned figure (Moses?)	roundel above Virgin's head	stone relief
Figure (putto?) (2x)	in roundel, beside throne	stone relief
Putto (2x)	left and right of roundel	stone relief

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN22a) is set in a high room with round arches and windows. The Virgin is kneeling in the right foreground, in front of a low stone table with a book on it. She is looking upwards to the Archangel who has come from the upper left, making a blessing gesture with his right hand and holding a messenger's staff in his right. The dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted in the upper left. In the background, between the Virgin and the Archangel, a chair is depicted before a green canopy bed behind a pillar. There is a bench on the back wall and a window. Above the pillar and a double arch dividing the foreground and the space in the back, a roundel is depicted with a stone relief image of a figure enthroned, blessing with one hand and holding a 'book' of some sorts in the other, accompanied by a putto both to his left and right. The roundel itself is also enriched with figures, reminiscent of putti, on both sides of the throne. In the upper left corner of the back wall,

<sup>454</sup> According to Christian Heck, *Collections du Nord-Pas-de-Calais: la peinture de Flandre et de France du Nord au XVe et au début du XVIe siècle*, 2, 2005, p. 413.

there is a roundel with a large standing figure on the left holding a weapon over his head, and a smaller figure kneeling on the right. This is probably intended to represent the 'Sacrifice of Isaac'. In the upper right corner of the left wall, a roundel is depicted with a large figure on the left holding a weapon over his head, and with his left hand holding another figure to the ground. This would possibly be 'Cain slaying Abel'. Some of the tiles on the floor are decorated with figures, though only one double-headed eagle in the foreground is recognizable.

### **Background information**

The altar wing depicting the 'Annunciation' is part of a triptych with a 'Nativity' (ill. SN22b) in the center and the 'Massacre of the Innocents' on the right. The triptych was probably painted in a workshop where triptychs like the one under discussion were painted in series; Heck states that several hands can be identified having worked on the altarpiece.<sup>455</sup>

### **Historiography**

#### *Architectural setting*

Heck calls the setting a 'Renaissance room' ('une pièce de style Renaissance').<sup>456</sup>

#### *Old Testament iconography*

Although Heck was not able to identify the scenes in the three roundels, he remarks that the two roundels on the left contain scenes of murder or sacrifice.<sup>457</sup>

### **Discussion**

Although a bed is depicted in the scene, the interior space is too high and decorated with stone reliefs for it to be representing a domestic environment. In fact, the composition seems to be based on Jan de Beer's *Annunciation* (SN20), especially in the background section on the right and the depiction of the Archangel. As with de Beer's work, the setting might have been a palace, were it not for the purely religious decoration. Despite the fact that the space is somewhat smaller, and the decoration more subdued, the setting might still be the Temple in Jerusalem – or a non-literal, symbolic setting.

The roundel featuring the enthroned figure is very similar spatial to the Moses in de Beer's *Annunciation*. However, the embedded figure in the present painting is rendered with too little detail

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<sup>455</sup> Idem, p. 415.

<sup>456</sup> Idem, p. 414.

<sup>457</sup> Ibidem.



to determine with any certainty whether or not the figure here is supposed to be Moses. Depictions of an enthroned Moses accompanied by two 'servants' is highly unusual, and would be more fitting for the depiction of the Godhead. Additionally, the object in his hand is indeed more likely to be a book, rather than the Ten Commandments. Indeed, it is interesting that the painter was unoccupied with the recognizability of the figure, instead seeming to merely intend to suggest the presence of religious decoration.

There is a thematic connection between 'Cain slaying Abel' and the 'Sacrifice of Isaac', beside the visual similarities of the weapons held over the heads of the 'aggressors', that is that both Old Testament stories were seen as typologies of Christ's death and sacrifice. In typology, the 'Slaying of Abel' refers to the sacrifice of Christ, with Abel functioning as Christ's prototype.<sup>458</sup> Cain, then, might be considered a prototype of Judas.<sup>459</sup> However, in St Augustine's interpretation of the Book of Genesis, Cain represents the Jews, who murdered Christ, in general – an interpretation often shared by later scholars.<sup>460</sup> The 'Sacrifice of Isaac' refers to Christ's sacrifice and the willingness of God to have his Son killed. The right wing of the triptych, featuring the 'Massacre of the Innocents', carries the same thematic content of sacrifice and death, yet in that story it was precisely Christ who's death was avoided with the flight into Egypt. Similarly, Isaac's sacrifice was ultimately also avoided through God's intervention.

### Illustrations

- SN22a Anonymous (Antwerp), Annunciation, early sixteenth century (Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts).
- SN22b Anonymous (Antwerp, *Nativity Triptych*, early sixteenth century (Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts).
- SN22c Roundel with enthroned figure (detail of ill. SN22a).
- SN22d Roundels featuring 'Cain slaying Abel' and the 'Sacrifice of Isaac'.

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<sup>458</sup> Carolus Maria Joseph Hubertus Ignatius Smits, *De iconografie van de Nederlandsche primitieven*, 1933, p. 24. Karl Künstle, *Ikongrafie der christlichen Kunst*, I, 1926, p. 280.

<sup>459</sup> James Hall, *Hall's iconografisch handboek: onderwerpen, symbolen en motieven in de beeldende kunst*, 1992, p. 176.

<sup>460</sup> Kirschbaum (op. cit. note 104), p. 6.



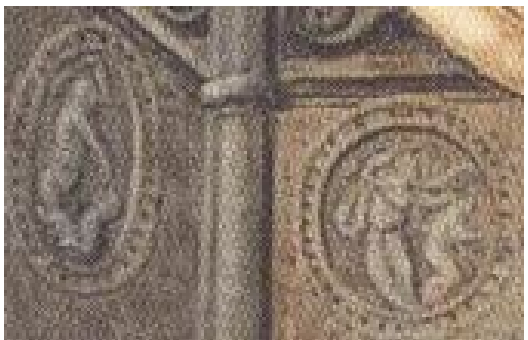
III. SN22a



III. SN22b



III. SN22c



III. SN22d

# SN23

**Artist:** Master of 1518 (Antwerp; active c. 1510-1530)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** 1518  
**Part of:** So called 'Antwerp Altarpiece'  
**Part:** Exterior wings  
**Measurements:** 286 x 254 cm (whole shrine, opened)  
**Current location:** Lübeck, Church of St Mary  
**Original location:** Lübeck, Church of St Mary  
**Patron:** Johann Bone<sup>461</sup>



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	upper right of left wing	statue

## Description

The 'Annunciation' is set in a bedchamber (ill. SN23a) with, on the left wing, the Archangel Gabriel entered from the left, holding a messenger's staff and pointing his right hand upwards. In the upper right background a statue of Moses is depicted. Behind the Archangel, on the ground, there are two large candles. What is depicted behind them is not clear. A vase with lillies stands in the right foreground. There is a clock in the left background. Gabriel is holding a banderole containing, in Latin, the words of the Angelic greeting: 'Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!' (Luke 1:28).

On the right wing, a bed is depicted in the right background, with a table or altar to the left, and the Virgin kneeling and praying in the foreground in front of a prie-dieu with a book. The prie-dieu has an opening on its side, though it is not clear what is kept in it. On the ground are household objects, such as a book bag and a basket with a white cloth. A banderole is depicted featuring the Latin text of the Virgin's answer to the Annunciation: 'Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word.' (Luke 1:38).

## Background information

The 'Annunciation' is depicted on the Exterior wings of a double-winged retablo featuring twenty-six painted and wood carving scenes from the life of the Virgin. The inner retablo features polychrome relief scenes with a large 'Death of the Virgin' in the center. The second layer, with the first wings shut, features painted scenes from the life of Christ and the Virgin.

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<sup>461</sup> Bone was a local merchant. He donated the altarpiece to the church in 1522. See Friedländer (op. cit. note 433), p. 74.

## Historiography

Nothing has been published on the general and Old Testament iconography, or architectural setting of this work.

## Discussion

The *Annunciation* is painted in a rather mannerist manner, with the relatively small interior space filled with objects, and the exuberant draperies and banderoles. The setting should probably be identified as a domestic bedchamber. The clock in the left background is almost identical to the clock depicted in Provoost's *Annunciation* (SN14). The basket with white cloth and the prie-dieu featuring an opening in the side, can also be seen in Van Orley's *Annunciation* (SN19) and are symbols of the Virgin's diligence. The statue of Moses (ill. SN23b) should be interpreted as a 'Jewish' devotional statue, indicating the Jewish faith of the Virgin and the cultural context of the scene; if the Master of 1518 wanted to add typological symbolism to his work, the statue might also mark the contrast between the Old and the New Law, introduced by Gabriel.

## Illustrations

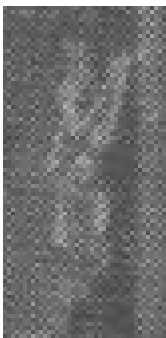
SN23a Master of 1518, *The Annunciation*, 1518, from the *Antwerp Altarpiece* (Lübeck, Church of St Mary).

SN23b Moses statue (detail of ill. SN23a).





III. SN23a



III. SN23b

# SN24

<b>Artist:</b>	Anonymous (Southern Netherlands) <sup>462</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	Early sixteenth century
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Altarpiece of the Annunciation, Pentecost and Coronation of the Virgin</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Second scene on the left
<b>Measurements:</b>	72 x 30 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Arras, Trésor de la Cathédrale, Musée des Beaux-Arts
<b>Original location:</b>	Chartreuse de Gosnay(?)
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

Moses	<i>Position</i> right wall	<i>Medium</i> statue
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## Other figurative decorative elements:

Human figure (c. 3x)	<i>Position</i> Gabriel's cope	<i>Medium</i> embroidered
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## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN24a) is set in a simple interior, with a wooden barrel vaulted ceiling, an opened window in the back looking out on a city, and a statue of Moses on the right wall, standing upon a sconce. The Virgin is seated on the right with a book on her lap. The dove of the Holy Spirit has appeared above her. The Archangel Gabriel has entered from the left. He is wearing a decorated cope, possibly intended to indicate figurative decorations, making a speaking gesture and holding a messenger's staff. A vase with lilies stands in the left foreground.

## Background information

The 'Annunciation' is part of a large altarpiece (ill. SN24b) with five scenes, with, from left to right, duke Philip the Good and St Andrew (patron saint of the House of Burgundy), with the Chartreuse de Gosnay in the background, the 'Annunciation', 'Pentecost', the 'Coronation of the Virgin', and Philip's third wife duchess Isabella of Portugal with St Elisabeth of Hungary, with probably the Chartreuse de Mont-Sainte-Marie in the background.<sup>463</sup>

<sup>462</sup> According to Heck (op. cit. note 454), p. 483.

<sup>463</sup> Ibidem.

The archaic style and rather harsh restorations of the work make it difficult to date the panel, though, according to Heck, it is possible that it was painted in the early sixteenth century for the Chartreuse de Gosnay in honor of their benefactors, Philip the Good (1396-1467) and Isabella of Portugal (1397-1471).<sup>464</sup> This might also be the reason for the archaisms in the painting; the portraits are reminiscent of the portraits by Rogier van der Weyden and the interior *Annunciation*, for example, recalls the composition of the *Werl Altarpiece* by the Master of Flémalle. Therefore, it was likely the commissioner's wish to have an altarpiece that might have been painted around the middle of the fifteenth century.

### Historiography

Nothing has been published on the general and Old Testament iconography, or architectural setting of this work.

### Discussion

The statue of a standing Moses holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments (ill. SN24c) is practically the only decorative element in the architectural setting, which, apart from the barrel vaulted ceiling, does not necessarily hint at being part of a religious building. The Moses statue seems to have been a stock element for painters during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth century. Yet, in fact this is only the third Netherlandish domestic *Annunciation* featuring this iconography (after SN13 and SN23), after which three others were painted (SN28, SN30, SN31), the last one of which may have been part of a serial production of this composition. In ecclesiastic *Annunciations* the statue of the standing Moses is featured only thrice (SN10, SN16, SN19). Its meaning is most likely comparable to that in SN23. The iconography reminds somewhat of actual statues of the Virgin Mary and other saints commonly placed in Christian homes. The statue's position on a sconce, usually used for candles, is noteworthy, as Old Testament figures were generally not seen as bearers of light. However, the statue's position here might also have been purely arbitrary or coincidental.

### Illustrations

SN24a Anonymous (Southern Netherlands), *The Annunciation*, early sixteenth century (Arras, Trésor de la Cathédrale, Musée des Beaux-Arts).

SN24b Anonymous (Southern Netherlands), *Altarpiece of the Annunciation, Pentecost and Coronation of the Virgin*, early sixteenth century (Arras, Trésor de la Cathédrale, Musée des Beaux-Arts).

SN24c Moses statue (detail of ill. SN24a).

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<sup>464</sup> Idem, p. 485.



III. SN24a





III. SN24b



III. SN24c

# SN25

**Artist:** Adriaen Isenbrant (Bruges; c. 1490-1551)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1500-1525<sup>465</sup>  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 41,5 x 34,5 cm  
**Current location:** Unknown  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Adam	triptych in background	painting or polychrome relief(?)
Eve	triptych in background	painting or polychrome relief(?)
God	triptych in background	painting or polychrome relief(?)

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Creation of Eve'	triptych in background	painting or polychrome relief(?)

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Sibyl?	left wing of triptych	painting or polychrome relief?	
Unidentifiable figure	right wing of triptych	painting or polychrome relief?	
Unidentifiable figure	on cabinet below triptych	wood carving	
'St Michael slaying the dragon'	on chair beside the bed	wood carving	Only in copy

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN25a) is set in a bedchamber, with a large canopy bed on the left, a wooden chair to its right and the white dove of the Holy Spirit flying above it. On the right of the back wall, a cabinet is depicted, decorated with floral motifs and an unidentifiable human figure, with a tin can placed underneath. On the cabinet, behind two candles, stands a triptych with the 'Creation of Eve' in the center, a female figure, possibly a sibyl, on the left wing and an unidentifiable figure on the right wing.<sup>466</sup> It is not clear whether these scenes are painted or polychrome wood carvings.<sup>467</sup> Above

<sup>465</sup> According to the RKD, The Hague <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkddb/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoeicImages&search=preref=44679>> (27-04-2011). Steinmetz, however, mentions a dating of 'after 1525/1530?', based on the notion that Isenbrant based his composition of the 'Creation of Eve' on a miniature by Simon Bening which he painted c. 1525-1530. See Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), pp. 154-55, also for the following except stated otherwise.

<sup>466</sup> Steinmetz claims the left wing features a kneeling figure with another figure behind it. See Steinmetz, *ibidem*.

the triptych, a cloth baldachin is depicted. In the right foreground, the Virgin is half kneeling with a book placed on a bench in front of a window through which a rural landscape can be seen. The Virgin is looking over her shoulder at the Archangel who has entered from the left, holding a staff with a banderole featuring illegible text. Behind them, in the center, a vase with lilies is placed on the floor.

### **Background information**

The whereabouts of the painting by Isenbrant are unknown. However, a virtually identical work (ill. SN25b), though more than twice the size (105 x 86,6 cm) was auctioned by Sotheby's in London on 16 April 1997 as a work by a 'Follower of Jan Provost', and dated 'first half of the sixteenth century'.<sup>468</sup>

### **Historiography**

#### *Architectural setting*

Steinmetz remarks that the interior strikes one as modern. However, the baldachin is an odd feature, normally not seen in a domestic setting, especially since the baldachin is not symbolically placed only over the Virgin, but also over the vase and the triptych.

#### *Old Testament iconography*

Steinmetz calls the form of the triptych (ill. SN25c, and for comparison, ill. SN25d) wholly contemporary, remarking that such a piece could also be found in Isenbrant's own oeuvre. Following her identification of the image on the left wing as a kneeling figure with a standing figure behind it, she suggests they might be the hypothetical patron and patron saint.<sup>469</sup> On the other hand, it might also represent a scene of a vision, such as 'Emperor Augustus and the Tiburtine Sybille'. On the 'Creation of Eve' Steinmetz writes: 'Adam lagert im Vordergrund mit angewinkelten Beinen leicht schräg nach rechts hinten. Sein Kopf ruht in der Hand des aufgestützten linken Armes, während der rechte Arm entspannt vor dem Körper liegt. Gottvater steht auf der linken Seite hinter ihm und legt Eva die linke Hand auf die rechte Schulter. Eva hat die Hände zum Gebet gefaltet und ist der Seite Adams bereits bis zu den Knien in aufrechter Haltung entstiegen. Rechts von ihr, hinter Adams Kopf,

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<sup>467</sup> Steinmetz claims they are painted. However, she mentions that she only had an image published by Friedländer as visual material and did not see the original painting. Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 195, note 944.

<sup>468</sup> Sotheby's, *Old master paintings, 16 April 1997 London*, London 1997, lot no. 3. That attribution has been discarded by the RKD, The Hague <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkd/db/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoiceImages&search=priref=18892>> (27-04-2011). The color images of the copy allow for much better analysis of the Old Testament figures.

<sup>469</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 155.

steht der Paradiesbrunnen, der durch ein Auffangbecken in halber Höhe eine kreuzförmige Silhouette erhält.<sup>470</sup> She also remarks that there are no known early sixteenth-century altarpieces that have the 'Creation of Eve' as an autonomous subject as centerpiece. Furthermore, she mentions the rarity of combining the 'Creation of Eve', as opposed to the 'Fall of Man' or the 'Expulsion from Paradise', with the 'Annunciation'. The two scenes are nevertheless combinable, since the Virgin was considered to be the new Eve, and would help relieve humanity from Original Sin, which originated with Eve.<sup>471</sup>

## Discussion

The interior setting gives the impression of being a domestic bedchamber. Nothing specifically indicates that the interior belongs to a religious building. However, the baldachin is an unusual feature for a domestic setting.

The 'Creation of Eve', though unusual, was not unique as an embedded scene in Netherlandish *Annunciations* (see SN10, SN15 and SN19). It is not clear from the available images whether the figures on the triptych are painted or wood carving figures. On the larger copy of the composition, the figures identified by Steinmetz on the left wing cannot be discerned; it seems to be a single standing figure under some sort of structure. On the right what seems to be a (male?) figure bent over is depicted. One might compare these figures with the sibyl depicted in SN21, possibly having a similar function as an Old Testament equivalent of a saint. Steinmetz's analysis of the centerpiece is most likely correct. The decoration of the triptych's frame is comparable to those seen in SN15 and SN21, though is here somewhat more elaborate and pointed.

The larger copy of Isenbrant's painting features a wood carving of 'St Michael slaying the dragon' (ill. SN25e) on the chair next to the bed, which is an exact copy of the relief featured in van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece* (ill. SN25f). This marks an anachronistic, non-Jewish image depicted in the 'Annunciation', as the Book of Revelations was not known during the Virgin's life. The reason for its inclusion might be a general reference to the End of Days, the triumph of Christ and God, or it might have been a purely decorative decision by the painter, based on the great reputation of Van Eyck's altarpiece. Wood carvings with the same subject were also embedded in paintings from the Rhineland (see RH3).

The unidentified wooden figure on the cabinet beneath the triptych (ill. SN25g) might have a beard. He remains unidentified.

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<sup>470</sup> Idem, p. 154.

<sup>471</sup> Idem, p. 155.



## Illustrations

- SN25a Adriaen Isenbrant, *The Annunciation*, c. 1500-1525 (location unknown).
- SN25b Unknown artist, *The Annunciation*, first half of the sixteenth century, copy after Isenbrant (Private collection).
- SN25c Triptych with the 'Creation of Eve' (detail of ill. SN25a).
- SN25d Triptych with the 'Creation of Eve' (detail of ill. SN25b).
- SN25e 'St Michael slaying the dragon' (detail of ill. SN25b).
- SN25f 'St Michael slaying the dragon', detail of Jan van Eyck, *The Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432 (Ghent, St Bavo Cathedral).
- SN25g Unidentifiable wooden figure (detail of ill. SN25a).
- SN25h Unidentifiable wooden figure (detail of ill. SN25b).



III. SN25a



III. SN25b



III. SN25c



III. SN25d



III. SN25e



III. SN25f



III. SN25f



III. SN25g

# SN26

<b>Artist:</b>	Adriaen Isenbrant (Bruges; c. c. 1490-1551) <sup>472</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	First half of the sixteenth century
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Altarpiece of the Christ of the Cross</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Exterior wings
<b>Measurements:</b>	69 x 96,5 cm (entire altarpiece)
<b>Current location:</b>	Private collection(?)
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

Moses	<i>Position</i> left panel, upper window	<i>Medium</i> stained glass
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## Old Testament scenes:

'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments'	<i>Position</i> left panel, upper window	<i>Medium</i> stained glass
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## Other figurative decorative elements:

Human head (Moses?)	<i>Position</i> left panel, in roundel above entrance	<i>Medium</i> relief
Boy (3x)	up and around tympanum above entrance	sculpture

## Description

The *Annunciation* (ill. SN26a) consists of two panels. On the right panel, the Virgin is kneeling in front of a prie-dieu or lectern with a book, with her hands in prayer. Behind her is a large canopy bed. Behind the bed, to the left, is an entranceway through which another room with an entrance and a small stairs can be seen. On the left panel, the Archangel is depicted in the foreground, his left arm raised, and in his right hand holding a messenger's staff. In the background, windows can be seen of which the upper window features a stained glass depiction of 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments'. Behind the Archangel to the left is an entranceway decorated with a tympanum above it. The tympanum is decorated with a roundel featuring the relief depiction of a head which seems to be horned. On top and around the tympanum are three statuettes of boys, two of which are holding a long staff in their right hand, and all of which have an unidentifiable object in their left.

<sup>472</sup> See Friedländer (op. cit. note 433), p. 81, no. 130.



## Background information

Other than the basic information provided by Friedländer, nothing is known or published about the altarpiece or its whereabouts.

## Discussion

The 'Annunciation' is depicted with quite a conventional composition, clearly based on the work of van der Weyden (SN7). The scene is set in the traditional (domestic) bedchamber. A new element, however, is the classical, antique tympanum above the left entrance, most likely influenced by Italian Renaissance art. The choice for this antique element is remarkable considering the otherwise conventional, northern interior. It is possible that Isenbrant with this element intended to refer to the era of the New Testament. The identity and role of the three boys on the tympanum (ill. SN26d) is unclear. They can not be identified, nor can be established whether they have a positive or negative role. They might merely be intended to evoke classical antiquity as wingless putti. The figure depicted in the roundel (ill. SN26c) might be an image of Moses, as the head seems to feature horns. The figure also has a staff. If it is indeed Moses who is depicted in the classical tympanum, it is plausible that Isenbrant wanted to reflect the historical (ancient) and cultural (Jewish) context of the scene.

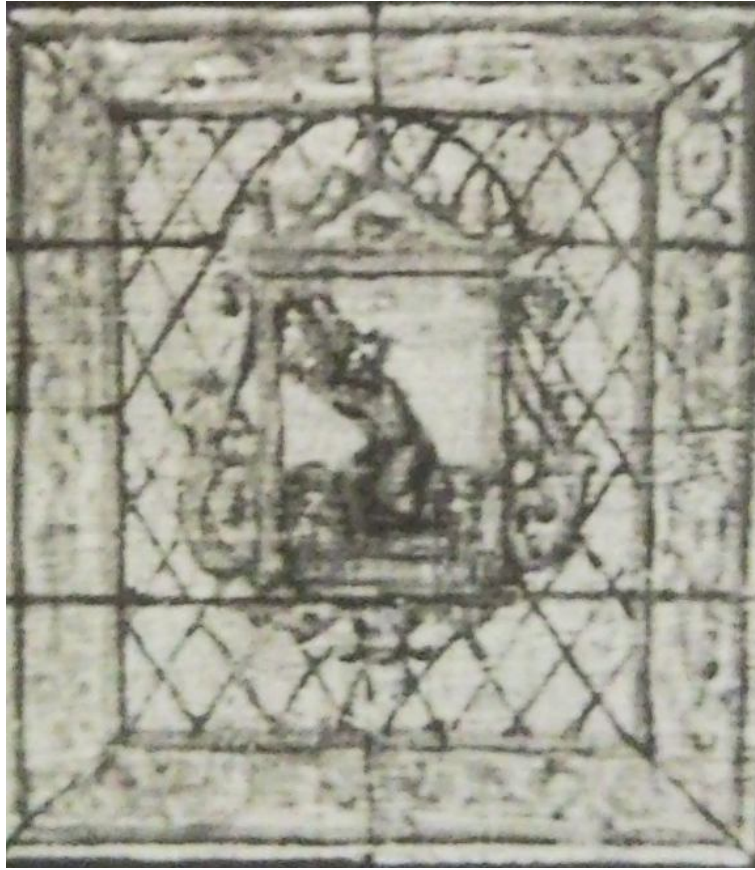
The possibly second embedded depiction is Moses in the stained glass scene in the background with 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments' (ill. SN26b). The subject is quite rare in Netherlandish *Annunciations*, and Isenbrant's painting is the only sixteenth-century work featuring this story as embedded scene (see otherwise SN3, SN4, and ill. SN5m). The scene represents the establishing of the Old Covenant between God and the Israelites, such as the Annunciation marks the establishing of the New Law, with the Incarnation of Christ. Of course, such a fundamental scene from the Old Testament would make a logical subject for the decoration of a 'Jewish home'.

## Illustrations

- SN26a Adriaen Isenbrant, *The Annunciation*, first half of the sixteenth century, from the *Altarpiece with the Christ on the Cross* (Private collection?).
- SN26b 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments' (detail from ill. SN5a).
- SN26c Head in roundel (Moses?) (detail from ill. SN5a).
- SN26d Tympanum with statuettes of three boys (detail from ill. SN5a).



III. SN26a



III. SN26b



III. SN26c



III. SN26d

# SN27

<b>Artist:</b>	Anonymous (Southern Netherlands) <sup>473</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	Annunciation
<b>Date:</b>	First half of the sixteenth century(?)
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Nativity Altarpiece</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Lower row, second scene from the left
<b>Measurements:</b>	103 x 99 cm (entire panel)
<b>Current location:</b>	Arras, Trésor de la Cathédrale-Musée des Beaux-Arts
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Gideon(?)	centerpiece of triptych	painting	possibly Isaiah
Angel	centerpiece of triptych	painting	

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
'Gideon and the fleece' (?)	centerpiece of triptych	painting	possibly 'Isaiah receiving the prophecy'

## Description

In a domestic bedchamber (ill. SN27a), the Virgin is seated on the right, her hands in prayer and with a book on her lap. To her left, a vase with lilies is placed on the floor. Behind her a canopy bed can be seen with the white dove of the Holy Spirit. The Archangel has entered from the left, with a staff with a banderole featuring unreadable writings in his hands. Between the two figures, against the back wall, a cabinet is placed with a triptych featuring black wings and a centerpiece featuring a figure kneeling in a landscape looking upwards towards a figure in the sky.

## Background information

The 'Annunciation' is part of a panel which has the Nativity as its central scene, surrounded by symbols of the evangelists, the Church Fathers, prophets and two biblical scenes (ill. SN27b). In the outer ring depicted are sixteen biblical scenes which mostly refer to prophecies and heavenly signs, such as 'Gideon's fleece' and the 'Dream of Jacob'.<sup>474</sup>

<sup>473</sup> According to Heck (op. cit. **note 454**), p. 531.

<sup>474</sup> For a detailed description, see Heck, *ibidem*.



## Historiography

Nothing has been published on the general and Old Testament iconography, or the architectural setting of the scene.

## Discussion

The setting should probably be considered to be a domestic bedchamber. The dark wings of the triptych in the background seem to feature decoration, but they are too unclear to be identified. The kneeling figure in the landscape depicted on the centerpiece, with what might be an angel in the upper corner, might be Gideon, Isaiah or King David. In Aelbert Bouts' *Annunciation* (SN8), the miracle of Gideon is depicted with an angel in the upper right corner. However, the book held by the Virgin in the *Annunciation* from the circle of Provoost (SN17) also features a kneeling figure with another figure in the sky, possibly intended to represent Isaiah or King David. Any of these three figures has a plausible typological connection to the *Annunciation*. Considering that 'Gideon and the fleece' was the most popular typological themes at the time, described in both the *Biblia pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, and had also already been depicted as the centerpiece of an embedded altarpiece (SN15) this subject forms the most likely candidate.

The overall composition is reminiscent of the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5), but also of the *Annunciation* by the Master of 1518 (SN15), Joos van Cleve (SN28) and SN21, with a bed in the right background and a triptych to the left. It is surprising that such a small composition would be enriched with such a small, and hardly identifiable embedded scene. The composition might therefore be based on another, larger composition such as that of the aforementioned works.

## Illustrations

SN27a Unknown (Southern Netherlands), *The Annunciation*, first half of the sixteenth century, part of the *Nativity Altarpiece* (Arras, Trésor de la Cathédrale-Musée des Beaux-Arts).

SN27b Unknown (Southern Netherlands), *Nativity Altarpiece*, first half of the sixteenth century (Arras, Trésor de la Cathédrale-Musée des Beaux-Arts).



III. SN25a



III. SN27b

# SN28

<b>Artist:</b>	Joos van Cleve (Antwerp; c. 1485-1540/41)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1525
<b>Part of:</b>	Unknown
<b>Measurements:</b>	85,7 x 79,6 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	New York, The Metropolitan Museum of Art
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Moses	back wall	colorized print	
Moses	on doors of cabinet	wooden statuette	
Moses (3x)	on chandelier	messing(?) statuette	
Abraham	central altar panel, back wall	painting	Inscription: 'ABRAHAM'
Melchizedek	central altar panel, back wall	painting	Inscription: 'MELCHICED'
Unidentified black man	central altar panel, back wall	painting	
Prophet or sibyl(?)	right altar wing, back wall	grisaille	
Prophet(?)	right altar wing, back wall	grisaille	

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
'The Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek'	central altar panel, back wall	painting	Inscriptions: 'ABRAHAM', 'MELCHICED'

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Unidentifiable figure (2x)	left roundel in window	stained glass
Unidentifiable figure (3x)	right roundel in window	stained glass
Unidentifiable figure	Virgin's book	illumination

## Description

The 'Annunciation' is set in a richly decorated bedchamber (ill. SN28a). A red canopy bed stands on the right, featuring a medallion containing a painted landscape.<sup>475</sup> The Virgin is kneeling in the right foreground, in front of a prie-dieu on which she has a book containing the illuminated picture of a figure in a landscape. To her right, in front of the bed, stands a vase with lilies on the floor. Above the Virgin the dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted. Above the dove, a chandelier hangs featuring three statues of Moses. The Archangel has entered from the left, holding a messenger's staff in his left hand and blessing with his right. Against the back wall a cabinet is placed, decorated with a wooden statuette of Moses on the doors. Below it are a tin ewer and basin. On the cabinet stands an

<sup>475</sup> Steinmetz, (op. cit. note 21), p. 157, also notes an unrecognizable scene painted in front of the landscape.

altarpiece. Its shutters are decorated with grisailles, with a young male figure on the opened left wing and an exotically dressed figure with a banderole on the right. The gender of the latter is not clear, but it probably is a prophet or a sibyl. The centerpiece is decorated with a painting of the 'Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek'. This is clarified by the inscriptions under the scene. To the right of the altarpiece, a colorized woodcut is pinned to the wall featuring an image of the buste of Moses with the Ten Commandments. To the left an opened window is depicted, with above it two roundels decorated with unrecognizable scenes: one figure with a walking stick in the left roundel, and three figures, a male and female in the foreground and one figure in the background, in the right roundel. The entrance of the bedchamber is painted on the left, with above it a single candle on a sconce and a platter.

### **Background information**

Ainsworth concludes that the domestic setting of the *Annunciation* suggests that it was made for private devotional use and perhaps served as a house altar of the type depicted in the painting.<sup>476</sup>

### **Historiography**

#### *General iconography*

Ainsworth interprets the household objects – the basin, ewer, and towel beneath the triptych – as 'disguised' symbols of Mary's purity and virginity, as in earlier fifteenth-century painting (see SN5).<sup>477</sup> Additionally, she suggests that the canopy bed refers to the nuptial bed (also see SN5). The objects depicted in the scene resemble household objects that would have been found in wealthy Antwerp households of that period; 'Familiarity with these objects', Ainsworth asserts, 'invited the contemporary viewer into the scene to share in the mystery of the Incarnation.'

Hand also considers the different objects to be symbolically charged, with the ewer, basin and towel also interpreted as virginity symbols, and the single candle in the upper left suggested to be a reference to the all-seeing eye of God.<sup>478</sup>

#### *Architectural setting*

Nothing is further said on this matter than that both Ainsworth and Steinmetz state that van Cleve's *Annunciation* is set in a wealthy contemporary domestic interior.<sup>479</sup>

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<sup>476</sup> Maryan W. Ainsworth, Keith Christiansen (eds.), *From Van Eyck to Bruegel: early Netherlandish painting in the Metropolitan Museum of Art*, exh. cat. New York (Metropolitan Museum of Art) 1988, p. 364.

<sup>477</sup> Ibidem, for this and the following.

<sup>478</sup> John Oliver Hand, *Joos van Cleve: the complete paintings*, 2004, p. 84.

<sup>479</sup> Ainsworth (op. cit. note 476), p. 364. Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 157.



### *Discussions on Old Testament iconography*

According to Steinmetz, the embedded triptych (ill. SN28b) in Van Cleve's painting is a typical Antwerp retable of the early sixteenth century.<sup>480</sup> The grisailles on the exterior shutters are entirely painted in the style and taste of the time. Steinmetz considers the figure on the left shutter of the triptych to be a young, beardless man. She notes his fantastical clothing and shoes, and his banderole. The figure on the right shutter is noted to be hardly recognizable, though Steinmetz considers the figure to be a pendant of the figure on the left, with a similar banderole.

Steinmetz describes the centerpiece of the triptych featuring the 'Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek' as set in a far landscape, with a tree in the center. Melchizedek is depicted on the right as an old man with a long grey beard, the robes of a priest and a turban on his head. He is giving Abraham, who is kneeling in front of him to his left, a piece of bread. Between them, a jug of wine stand on the ground. Abraham is depicted as a young, beardless man wearing late-medieval armor. Behind them stands a dark skinned man with a red hat who is turned toward a man who practically stands out of frame on the left.

Steinmetz remarks that the composition used for the meeting scene is identical to typical compositions of the 'Adoration of the Magi', not only in the positioning of the figures, but also in their appearance. As in the traditional depiction of the 'Adoration of the Magi' there are three men in the three different stages of life, youth, middle age, and old age, of which one is a man of color. Additionally, two of the figures are standing, and one is kneeled. In traditional typology, the 'Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek' stands for the Eucharist and the Last Supper, which is also mentioned by Ainsworth and Hand; the offering of bread by the priest Melchizedek to the weakened Abraham refers to Christ's sacrifice.<sup>481</sup> However, Steinmetz also cites Réau, who notes that the Old Testament scene can also be meant as a direct typological analogy to the 'Adoration of the Magi', besides visual similarities.<sup>482</sup> The scene does not have a straight connection to the Annunciation.

Triptychs featuring the 'Adoration of the Magi' were produced *en masse* in the early sixteenth century, especially for house altars such as in the domestic interior painted by van Cleve. Steinmetz concludes that, instead of the well known 'Adoration' with which most sixteenth-century viewers would have been familiar, van Cleve used the same compositional form to depict a Jewish 'devotional' altarpiece featuring Old Testament iconography, which would have been recognized as such by contemporary viewers.

Also in the different images of Moses, Steinmetz recognizes direct Christian equivalents; the colored print on the wall (ill. SN28c) is an Old Testament, visual equivalent to the image of Christ as

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<sup>480</sup> Steinmetz, *idem*, pp. 157-58.

<sup>481</sup> Ainsworth (*op. cit.* note 476), p. 364. Hand (*op. cit.* note 478), p. 84.

<sup>482</sup> Réau (*op. cit.* note 298), II p. 128f.

Salvator Mundi as depicted in the time of van Cleve.<sup>483</sup> Moses' saintly halo then would make him the Old Testament forbearer of Christ, a 'Jewish saint'. Ainsworth describes this Moses as an antetype of Christ as well, and an indication of the era *sub lege*, before Christ's arrival.<sup>484</sup> Hand also grabs to the traditional notion that the image of Moses refers to the transition from the era *sub lege* to the era *sub gratia*.<sup>485</sup> Steinmetz also remarks that the chandelier with Moses statuettes (ill. SN28d) is very similar to sixteenth-century chandeliers with statuettes of the Holy Virgin.<sup>486</sup>

## Discussion

Van Cleve's *Annunciation* contains all the characteristics of a rich bourgeois domestic interior, yet also features a barrel vaulted ceiling – an indication that such a ceiling not necessarily represents an ecclesiastical setting (see SN7). As with the *Annunciation* from the circle of Jan Provoost (SN17), the room is filled to the brim with figurative details, and therefore supposedly with additional layers of meaning. The room is arranged very traditionally, largely along the lines of the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5). What cannot be deciphered, however, is whether the household objects, like the ewer and basin, the canopy bed, and the one single candle, were included in order to enrich the painting with purity symbols, or because they had, by the early sixteenth century or even earlier, become stock elements as a result of van der Weyden's influence.

what is in any case clear is that van Cleve wanted many of the embedded elements to hint at or suggest meaning, without giving them actual, clear content. The medallion in the bed (ill. SN28e), for example, contains a painted scene – a landscape even – instead of the optional jewelry or mirror. Yet, what the subject of the painting should be is impossible to decipher.

The roundel in the left window (ill. SN28f) contains a scene of which the figures are merely hinted at. In close up, it is possible to discern three figures, one of which is possibly leaving the two characters in the foreground, or just arriving. The right roundel contains a woman on the left and a man, it seems in conversation. It is likely that van Cleve had specific stories in mind when painting the - or better, drawing - these details. It is also probable that they represent bible scenes. However, they are virtually impossible to recognize with the naked eye, and therefore their (intended) content is meaningless to the viewer.

The same more or less goes for the illuminated book page (ill. SN28h). A human figure, male or female, is standing or kneeling in a landscape with a bush or a tree on the left. There might also be a figure depicted in the upper left corner. It could be Moses and the burning bush, but it could also be King David, the writer of the Psalms. Or it might be a prophet (Isaiah) receiving a prophecy from

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<sup>483</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 197, note 990.

<sup>484</sup> Ainsworth (op. cit. note 476), p. 364.

<sup>485</sup> Hand (op. cit. note 478), p. 84.

<sup>486</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 197, note 990.

God. None of these identifications have any meaning as long as the viewer can not identify the figure him- or herself. The embedded illumination becomes mere decoration, and it appears that the painter found it more important to suggest that the Virgin was reading a richly decorated book than comment, typologically or otherwise, on the main scene.

Moses is depicted five times: four full body statuettes of the Old Testament leader holding the Ten Commandments, on the cabinet (ill. SN28i) and the chandelier, and the buste of the woodcut. The four statuettes are almost invisible because of their tiny size and them having the same color as the objects their standing on. It becomes almost satirical how the painter used the the traditional iconography of the Moses statue so abundantly. If Moses had been depicted once, one might have considered the painter's intention of marking the contrast between the Old Law and the era under Christ. However, in large numbers such an image loses its meaning.<sup>487</sup>

The woodcut of Moses is pinned to the wall in the same manner as the prints in the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2) and the *Annunciation* by Provoost (SN14). As with the altarpiece, the Virgin has turned her back towards the image and pays no attention to it. This might be significant; the Old Testament figure is depicted with a halo (compare with SN3), as if Moses was a Jewish equivalent of a saint. However, with the Annunciation, the Virgin had found the new faith. If van Cleve had wanted to present Moses as Christ's predecessor, as suggested by Steinmetz, instead of stressing the Jewish context of the setting, he might just as well have depicted Moses without a halo, as was done in most other paintings of the 'Annunciation'.

Another argument against the representation of Moses primarily as an antetype of Christ, is Steinmetz's own assertion that the Moses statuettes on the chandelier replace the statuettes of the Virgin commonly featured on contemporary chandeliers. As Moses could hardly be both predecessor of Christ as well as the Virgin, one should probably interpret the Moses statues as Jewish equivalents of Christian saints. The advantage of depicting Moses lies in his recognizability; with his horns and stone tablets he is much more easily recognizable than other Old Testament figures who could have functioned as Jewish 'saints'.

The notion of Old Testament 'replacements' is also prominently featured in the embedded triptych. It is surprising that Steinmetz does not identify the grisaille figure on the right as a prophet or sibyl (depending on its unclear gender) as the figure is holding a banderole. Its somewhat exotic dress and hat can be compared to the prophets depicted on Gabriel's cope in the *Annunciation* from the circle of Provoost (SN17). The grisaille figure on the altar wing is presented as the Jewish equivalent of a Christian saint. And, as was noted by Steinmetz, the 'Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek' became interchangeable with the 'Adoration of the Magi', even to the composition and positioning of the

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<sup>487</sup> I would like to thank Dr. Stephan Kemperdick for sharing this analysis.

figures, and their appearance in age and race.<sup>488</sup> If Steinmetz is correct and Abraham is indeed wearing late-medieval armor, it could imply that van Cleve wanted to also visually set the scene in the past. The choice for this particular scene, other than its visual similarities to and typological relation with the 'Adoration of the Magi', although rather unique in Netherlandish *Annunciations*, falls in the tradition of connecting the Annunciation with the Eucharist (see SN7).

### Illustrations

- SN28a Joos van Cleve, *The Annunciation*, c. 1525 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).
- SN28b Triptych with the 'Meeting of Abraham and Melchizedek' (detail of ill. SN28a).
- SN28c Woodcut of Moses (detail of ill. SN28a).
- SN28d Moses statuettes on chandelier (detail of ill. SN28a).
- SN28e Medallion featuring landscape scene (detail of ill. SN28a).
- SN28f Roundel of left window (detail of ill. SN28a).
- SN28g Roundel of right window (detail of ill. SN28a).
- SN28h Illuminated book of the Virgin (detail of ill. SN28a).
- SN28i Moses statuette on cabinet (detail of ill. SN28a).

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<sup>488</sup> It is interesting to note, however, that the composition of the centerpiece could never be an actual painting, as all of the action is placed in the left half of the painting, leaving nothing for the right half; the design of the composition accommodates the half-opened status of the triptych.





III. SN28a



III. SN28b



III. SN28c



III. SN28d



III. SN28e



III. SN28f

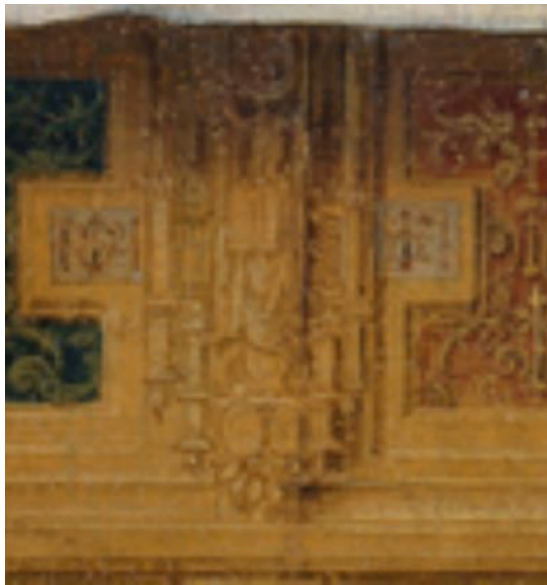


III. SN28g





III. SN28h



III. SN28i

# SN29

<b>Artist:</b>	Pieter Coecke van Aelst (Antwerp/Brussels; 1502-1550) and workshop(?)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i> (7x)
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1520-1528
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi</i> (7x)
<b>Part:</b>	Interior left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	Various
<b>Current location:</b>	Multiple
<b>Original location:</b>	Multiple
<b>Patron:</b>	Multiple (unknown)



## Old Testament figures:

Moses	<i>Position</i> in retable, right background	<i>Medium</i> statuette	<i>Noteworthy</i> sometimes (partially) hidden
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## Other figurative elements:

Unidentifiable figure (4x?)	<i>Position</i> on wings of retable	<i>Medium</i> painting	<i>Noteworthy</i> according to Steinmetz; partially hidden; not in Zürich version
Unidentifiable figure	on cabinet	statuette	only in Brussels version

## Description

In the various *Annunciations* based on the same composition, the Virgin is kneeling in the foreground, at a table with a book. To the left is a vase with white lilies, and behind the Virgin to the right are a tin ewer and basin. The Archangel has entered from the upper left, making a blessing gesture with his right hand, and in his left hand holding a banderole with the Latin words of the angelic greeting: 'AVE MARIA, GRAZIA PLENA DOMINUS... TECUM BENEDICTA TU...' <sup>489</sup> In the left background, arched windows are partially visible. In the right background a cabinet or altar is displayed on which an opened retable with four wings (except in the Zürich version) and a statuette of Moses in the center. The background wall of the altar is red, the baldachin over the retable green.

## Background information

There are several *Annunciations* with the same composition – though usually with some slight deviations – as the interior left wings of serial produced *Altarpieces of the Adoration of the Magi*

<sup>489</sup> Traverso (op. cit. note 402), p. 79.



(such as ill. SN29a). Marlier lists these altarpieces, the following undoubtedly featuring the *Annunciation* with the embedded iconography:<sup>490</sup>

- *Annunciation*, 1520s (92 x 25 cm; Genoa, Galleria di Palazzo Bianco) (ill. SN29b).
- *Annunciation*, 1527-1528 (88 x 23 cm; Princeton, Princeton University Art Museum ) (ill. SN29c).<sup>491</sup>
- *Annunciation*, c. 1530 (75 x 24 cm; Buscot (Oxfordshire), Church of St Mary) (ill. SN29d).<sup>492</sup>
- *Annunciation*, 1520s (Brussels, Private collection) (ill. SN29h).<sup>493</sup>
- *Annunciation* (London, Private collection) (ill. SN29i).<sup>494</sup>
- *Annunciation*, 1526-1528 (106 x 30 cm; Zürich, Private collection) (ill. SN29j).<sup>495</sup>
- *Annunciation* (location unknown) (ill. SN29n).<sup>496</sup>

Generally, these works are attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst and his workshop, though Grössinger considers the Buscot altarpiece for example to be entirely from Coecke's own hands.<sup>497</sup> However, as Coecke inherited his workshop from his father-in-law, Jan van Dornicke (c. 1475-1527), who is sometimes identified as the Master of 1518, the possibility should also be considered that the original composition originated with Dornicke; some of the altarpieces in question have in the past been attributed to Dornicke or the Master of 1518, as well as Pieter Coecke van Aelst.<sup>498</sup> Whatever the correct attributions might be, Marlier states that the composition and style of the altarpieces reveal influences from Dornicke, as well as from van Orley and Jan Gossaert (c. 1478-1532).<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> Georges Marlier, *La Renaissance flamande: Pierre Coeck d'Alost*, 1966, pp. 117-31.

<sup>491</sup> Dating according to Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 171.

<sup>492</sup> Dating according to Christa Grössinger, *North-European panel paintings: a catalogue of Netherlandish & German paintings before 1600 in English churches & colleges*, 1992, p. 78.

<sup>493</sup> The centerpiece of which is in Milano, Museo di Brera.

<sup>494</sup> RKD, The Hague <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkddeb/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoiceImages&search=preref=38652>> (14-07-2011).

<sup>495</sup> RKD, The Hague <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkddeb/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoiceImages&search=preref=38620>> (14-07-2011).

<sup>496</sup> RKD, The Hague <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkddeb/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoiceImages&search=preref=38649>> (14-07-2011).

Marlier mentions several more *Annunciations* with the same composition, of which it is not certain, however, that they feature the embedded Moses image. See Marlier (op. cit. note 490), pp. 117-31. The *Annunciation*, attributed to Pieter Coecke van Aelst, in the Museo del Prado, Madrid, for example, lacks the embedded altarpiece.

<sup>497</sup> Grössinger (op. cit. note 492), p. 79.

<sup>498</sup> Idem, p. 77.

<sup>499</sup> Marlier (op. cit. note 490), p. 117.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Steinmetz notes that the four wings of the retable in the Princeton painting are decorated with standing figures – the Zürich version has no altar wings at all.<sup>500</sup> The left panel wings of the embedded altarpiece in the Princeton version are largely hidden by Gabriel's wing, but the wings on the right are described as containing the image of a man with a white ruff and a hat on the left panel, and the image of a woman on the right.

### *Architectural setting*

Steinmetz describes the setting as a 'private' setting or environment, though with sacral elements, such as the altarpiece and its cabinet or altar, and the arched windows.<sup>501</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Steinmetz describes the function of the image of Moses as the representative of the Old Covenant.<sup>502</sup> The curled, detailed decoration of the top of the retable is contemporary, however, the tower form is not typical for domestic settings and the shape of the retable is in its entirety somewhat archaic.

## Discussion

It cannot be determined whether the *Annunciation* is set in a domestic or ecclesiastical context; the smallness of the scene speaks for a domestic setting, yet the sacral elements – next to the retable and the windows also the furniture and the rich capitals – and the high ceiling do suggest a setting in a religious building.

The retable in the Zürich version (ill. SN29m) looks similar to the retable featuring 'Gideon and the fleece' in the *Annunciation* from the circle of Provoost (SN17). It is not possible to determine whether the paintings other than the Zürich and Princeton versions, those featuring the embedded altarpiece with wings, also contain images of standing figures on the altar wings. However, some of the retables (ill. SN29k, SN29l) do seem to feature more than mere black wings. Moses, as a singular standing figure holding the Ten Commandments, can indeed be interpreted as a representative of the Old Law, though this also makes the Virgin a follower or disciple of that Old Law, thus setting the 'Annunciation' in a Jewish context. Gabriel's wing hiding the Moses figure might be interpreted

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<sup>500</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 171.

<sup>501</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>502</sup> Ibidem.

symbolically, as the Archangel at the moment of the Annunciation announces the introduction of the New Law.

The Brussels version (ill. SN29h) seems to have been painted by an entirely different artist than Dornicke or Coecke van Aelst. The figures have more volume, different elements appear to be more solid, and the faces of the figures represented more flat. Especially the Virgin seems to have been painted more in the style of Provoost (SN14). Additionally, the retable is depicted hidden in shadows, and the cabinet features an additional statuette of a standing figure which cannot be identified. It cannot be discerned in the Zürich version, but the Brussels version, with its different placement of Gabriel's left wing, reveals that Moses is actually pointing at the tablets of the Ten Commandments.

### Illustrations

- SN29a Pieter Coecke van Aelst, and workshop(?), *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi*, 1520s (Genoa, Galleria di Palazzo Bianco).
- SN29b Pieter Coecke van Aelst, and workshop(?), *Annunciation*, from the *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi*, 1520s (Genoa, Galleria di Palazzo Bianco).
- SN29c Pieter Coecke van Aelst, and workshop(?), *Annunciation*, from the *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi*, 1527-1528, from the *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi* (Princeton; Princeton University Art Museum).
- SN29d Pieter Coecke van Aelst, *Annunciation*, c. 1530, from the *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi* (Buscot (Oxfordshire), Church of St Mary).
- SN29e Retable featuring statuette of Moses (detail of ill. SN29b).
- SN29f Retable featuring statuette of Moses (detail of ill. SN29c).
- SN29g Retable featuring statuette of Moses (detail of ill. SN29d).
- SN29h Pieter Coecke van Aelst, *Annunciation*, 1520s, from the *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi* (Brussels, Private Collection).
- SN29i Pieter Coecke van Aelst, *Annunciation*, 1520s, from the *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi* (London, Private collection).
- SN29j Pieter Coecke van Aelst, *Annunciation*, 1526-1528, from the *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi* (Zürich, Private collection).
- SN29k Retable featuring statuette of Moses (detail of ill. SN29h).
- SN29l Retable featuring statuette of Moses (detail of ill. SN29i).
- SN29m Retable featuring statuette of Moses (detail of ill. SN29j).
- SN29n Pieter Coecke van Aelst, *Annunciation*, 1520s, from the *Triptych of the Adoration of the Magi* (location unknown).
- SN29o Retable featuring statuette of Moses (detail of ill. SN29m).



III. SN29a

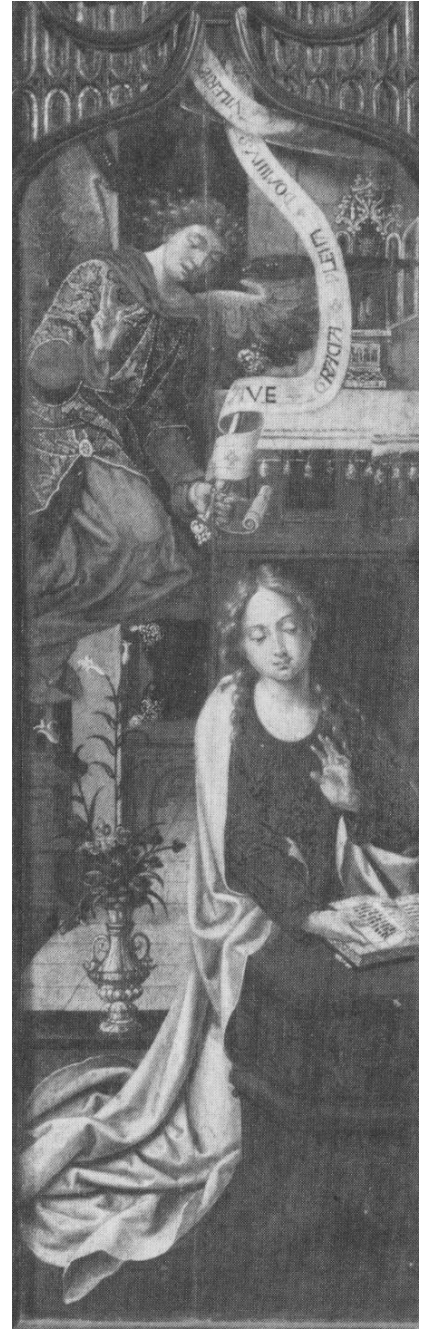




III. SN29b



III. SN29c



III. SN29d



III. SN29e



III. SN29f



III. SN29g





III. SN29h



III. SN29i



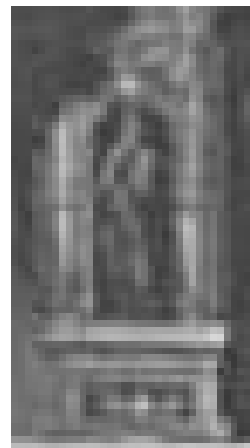
III. SN29j



III. SN29k



III. SN29l



III. SN29m



III. SN29n



III. SN29o

# SN30

**Artist:** Anonymous (Bruges(?))<sup>503</sup>  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1530  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Part:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 15,7 x 10,8 cm  
**Current location:** Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	upper right corner	statue

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN30a) is set in a bedchamber with various Gothic elements, such as the window and arch above the entrance door in the right background. Above the doors, a stone statue of Moses holding the Ten Commandments and a staff is placed under a Gothic baldachin. The Virgin is kneeling in the left foreground, before a small bench with a book. To the left is a red canopy bed with what appears to be the right edge of a medallion or mirror. The Archangel has approached the Virgin from the right, holding a long messenger's staff in his left hand, and making a blessing gesture with his right. He is accompanied with the dove of the Holy Spirit. In the extreme foreground, grass, flowers and plants are painted across the width of the painting.

## Background information

This painting has not yet been published.

## Discussion

Although the scene is set in a bedchamber, the various explicit Gothic elements make it difficult to identify the setting as domestic, since, as far as known, no late-medieval houses were built with such elaborate Gothic decoration. One possibility might be that the Gothic style was meant as functional symbolism, in that the painter wanted to indicate the scene is set in an ecclesiastical setting – perhaps the living quarter of the Virgin while she was living in the Temple as a temple maiden. The other possibility might be that, as the Gothic style had already become old fashioned by 1530, the

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<sup>503</sup> I would like to thank dr. Almut Pollmer-Schmidt for providing the basic data and visual material of this painting.



architecture was meant to indicate that the scene is set in the past. However, clearly the setting cannot be considered as an entirely realistic or literal setting, as the flora in the foreground could not possibly be actual elements in the room.

The composition seems inspired by the work of Rogier van der Weyden and his followers, as the red canopy bed originated with the fifteenth-century master (for example SN5 and SN7), and the medallion seems to have been inspired by the *Louvre Annunciation* and its copies as well. As the Frankfurt painting is somewhat modest in quality, its composition quite basic, and the iconography, such as the canopy bed and the Moses statue, very traditional, it is possible that the work was the result of serial production of this type of painting. The composition also reminds of the *Annunciation* by the Master of the Legend of St Mary Magdalene (SN13), although that painting did not feature the Gothic baldachin over the Moses statue such as here (ill. SN30b). The function of the statue can be compared to the similar statues in SN13, SN23, SN24, and SN31. An interesting feature in the present painting, however, is the staff of Moses, which makes him appear somewhat like a shepherd. Whether this was intentional, to present Moses as an Old Testament equivalent of Christ as the Good Shepherd, is not clear. The tabernacle-like structure in which the statue is placed is somewhat similar to that in the *Annunciation* by a follower of Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostsanen (NN1).

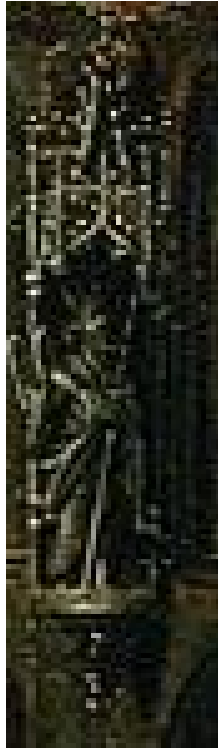
### Illustrations

SN30a Anonymous (Bruges?), *The Annunciation*, c. 1530 (Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum).

SN30b Moses statue (detail of ill. SN30a).



III. SN30a



III. SN30b

# SN31

<b>Artist:</b>	Jan II van Coninxloo (Brussels; c. 1489-after 1555) (follower) <sup>504</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1550-1560 <sup>505</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	Altar wings containing scenes from the 'Legend of St Anne' and the 'Childhood of Christ'
<b>Part:</b>	Exterior left wing, interior side
<b>Measurements:</b>	166 x 84 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Forest (Brussels), Church of St Denis
<b>Original location:</b>	Forest, Benedictine monastery Church of St Denis <sup>506</sup>
<b>Patron:</b>	Liederkerke family(?) <sup>507</sup>



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	altar in background	statue
Moses	Virgin's book	illumination

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'Moses and the burning bush'	Virgin's book	illumination

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN31a) is set in a chamber with a canopied bed on the right and the Virgin kneeling in the right foreground. In front of her is a prie-dieu, covered with green cloth, on which a book containing an image of Moses and the burning bush lays.<sup>508</sup> Behind the prie-dieu stands a small vase with lilies. The Archangel has entered from the left, kneeling, and holding a messenger's staff, while pointing his right hand upwards. In the background, a second room is visible in which a small altar is placed against the back wall. On it stands a statue of Moses between two candles. In the upper left corner, God the Father is depicted in heaven, having sent down the dove of the Holy Spirit on rays of light. Outside, on the left, the 'Visitation' is depicted.

<sup>504</sup> This work has previously also been attributed to van Coninxloo himself. See Cecilia Engellau-Gullander, *Jan II van Coninxloo. A Brussels Master of the First Half of the 16th Century*, 1992, p. 185.

<sup>505</sup> Engellau-Gullander, *ibidem*,, cites Farmer (1981) who dates the work c. 1540, partially based on the assumption that van Coninxloo painted the work himself.

<sup>506</sup> *Ibidem*, p. 181.

<sup>507</sup> According to Engellau-Gullander, *idem*, p. 183, the arms of the Liederkerke family are visible in the window in the back. She does not further identify the family.

<sup>508</sup> According to Engellau-Gullander, *ibidem*. The available published images do not reveal any details of the book. The cabinet in the background, features a cloth with the coat of arms of the abbey in Forest. See Jacqueline Lafontaine-Dosogne, 'Étude Iconographique. Le polyptyque de l'église Saint-Denis à Forest', *Bulletin / Koninklijk Instituut voor het Kunstpatrimonium* 12 (1970), p. 140.



## Background information

The *Annunciation* is part of the double wings of an altarpiece containing scenes from the 'Legend of St Anne' and the 'Childhood of Christ', of which the centerpiece was lost. The other scenes are the 'Vision of St Elias, the 'Holy Kindred' and the 'Nativity' on the interior wings, and, together with the *Annunciation*, the 'Adoration of the Magi' and 'St Anne with the Holy Family' on the exterior wings.

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Lafontaine-Dosogne describes the room in the background in which the Moses statue is placed a 'chapel'.<sup>509</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Nothing has been published on this aspect of the painting.

## Comments

It is reasonable to assume that the 'Annunciation' takes place in a domestic environment, considering the back room with the small altar and the flat wooden ceiling (likely not a chapel), and the canopy bed in the foreground room. The absence of grander architecture or more architectural decoration are in contrast to a religious building.

Together with the works of Pieter Coecke van Aelst (SN29), this is the only Netherlandish *Annunciation* in which a figure that can explicitly be identified as Moses is placed upon an altar (ill. SN31b). In Coecke's work, however, the figure was placed in a retable and the object it is placed on might also be a mere cabinet. Here, the figure is a singular statue placed between two candles, which unambiguously makes the combination of elements a Jewish altar, and the Virgin a Jewish maiden. Again, Moses is regarded as the prime Old Testament figure and the leader-or founder equivalent of Christ.

If the Moses statue had been the sole Old Testament figure in the painting, one might have considered the possibility that the statue was intended to indicate the contrast between or, transition of, the Old Law and or to the New Covenant. However, the book illumination of 'Moses and the burning bush' (of which unfortunately no image is available), a traditional virginity allegory, included in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*, also gives the Old Testament figure a definite other function; if it was the artist's main priority to, with the embedded figures, allude to this contrast or

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<sup>509</sup> Lafontaine-Dosogne, *ibidem*.

transition, he would have more likely excluded the manuscript illumination. Now, the figure of Moses has a more prominent position, and his role and meaning is ambiguous.

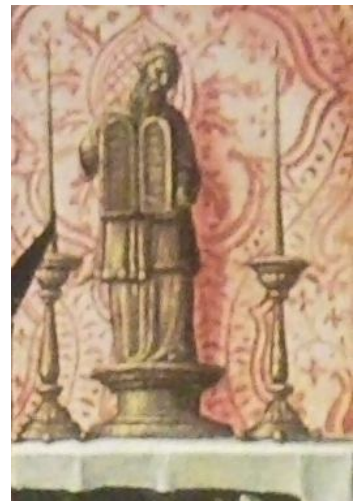
### **Illustrations**

SN31a Jan II van Coninxloo (follower), *The Annunciation*, c. 1550-1560, from the altar wings containing scenes from the 'Legend of St Anne' and the 'Childhood of Christ' (Forest (Brussels), Church of St Denis).

SN31b Altar with statue of Moses (detail of ill. SN31a).



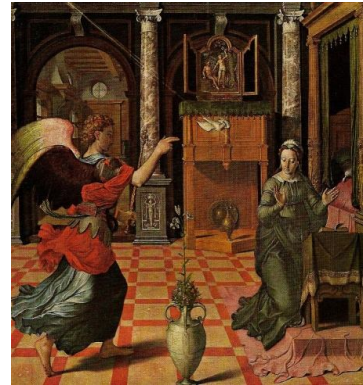
III. SN31a



III. SN31b

# SN32

**Artist:** Pieter Pourbus (Bruges; c. 1523-1584)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** 1552  
**Part of:** *Altarpiece of the Adoration of the Magi*  
**Part:** Interior left wing  
**Measurements:** 124,5 x 116 cm  
**Current location:** Gouda, Stedelijke Musea  
**Original location:** Bruges, Convent of the Sisters of the Annonciade  
**Patron:** Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), per will



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Adam	triptych in background	painting
Eve	triptych in background	painting
Snake	triptych in background	painting

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Fall of Man'	triptych in background	painting

## Description

The 'Annunciation' is set in a room with classicist elements (ill. SN32a): a four-poster bed featuring Ionic pillars on the right, and against the back wall two marble Ionic columns. In between these two pillars stands a cabinet carrying a triptych featuring a painting of the 'Fall of Man' as centerpiece and black painted altar wings, and an ewer and basin underneath it. The Virgin is kneeling on the right in front of a prie-dieu with a book. She is startled by the Archangel, who has entered from the left, holding a messenger's staff and pointing toward the dove of the Holy Spirit, which has come down from the upper left on rays of light. Both the Virgin and Gabriel are wearing antiquated clothes. In the middle foreground, a large vase with lilies is placed. In the left background is an entrance to another room featuring a hearth.

## Background information

Pourbus' *Annunciation* was commissioned by the executors of the will of Margaret of Austria (1480-1530), on order of Charles V (1500-1558).<sup>510</sup> It was to supplement the retable of the 'Adoration

<sup>510</sup> Paul Huvenne, *Pieter Pourbus, meesterschilder 1524-1584*, exh. cat. Bruges (Sint-Janshospitaal), 1984, p. 142.



of the Magi' in the convent of the Sisters of the Annonciade, just outside of Bruges, which' inner wings had been left unpainted up until that time.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

On the one hand, Huvenne states, Pourbus' *Annunciation* stands completely in the tradition of the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5) and its followers: the traditional household objects are depicted, such as the vase with lilies, the bed, and the tin utensils, with supposedly all having symbolic meaning.<sup>511</sup> On the other hand, the clothing style and decoration of the interior are along the lines of a Renaissance sense of the antique, and Huvenne suggests Pourbus with all means tried to avoid the Gothic style. The composition of the *Annunciation* itself was probably based on an invention by Rafael, which was copied as a print by Marco Dente de Ravenna (ill. SN32b).<sup>512</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

The 'Annunciation' is set in a domestic interior, which antiquated style, according to Huvenne, was inspired by Pieter Coecke van Aelst's 1539 translation of Serlio's treatises on architecture.<sup>513</sup> The choice for the Ionic order is not a coincidence, as already in the early Renaissance this order was connected to the cult of the Holy Virgin.

### *Old Testament iconography*

Huvenne remarks that the typological motif of Adam and Eve was an excuse to depict the Renaissance nude (ill. SN32c).<sup>514</sup> Steinmetz, on the other hand, holds on to the typological notion that the depiction of Adam and Eve primarily refers to the role of the Virgin as the counterpoint to Eve.<sup>515</sup> It is probable that Pourbus used Lucas van Leyden's print of the *Fall of Man* (1529) (ill. SN32d) as an inspiration. Steinmetz states that the form and presentation of the retable itself is typical for a piece from the early sixteenth century, and that it was not uncommon for house altarpieces to have black interior wings.<sup>516</sup> The contract for the painting does not stipulate anything regarding the inclusion of the 'Fall of Man'.<sup>517</sup>

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<sup>511</sup> Huvenne, *ibidem*. Steinmetz, (op. cit. note 21), p. 162, concurs with the conventional depiction of the interior environment.

<sup>512</sup> Huvenne, *idem*, p. 141.

<sup>513</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>514</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>515</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 162.

<sup>516</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>517</sup> Huvenne (op. cit. note 510), p. 142.

## Discussion

Despite the antiquated appearance of the room, the 'Annunciation' is clearly set in a domestic bedchamber and not a temple. This is especially clear through the second room in the left background. The inclusion of the Ionic order and the antiquated dress of the main actors can be seen in two diverging ways: it might have been Pourbus' intention to depict the Annunciation, in an attempt for historical correctness, in an antiquated setting that would represent biblical times. Or, considering the recent discoveries and developments of the Renaissance, among which the division of the classical orders according to Serlio, and Italianate dress, Pourbus might have wanted to make the painting seem very modern and up-to-date, with recently acquired knowledge, especially considering the inspiration of Rafael's invention. However, in following Steinmetz's analysis of the triptych, that the altarpiece is typical for the early sixteenth century would hint towards an attempt of Pourbus to depict this Annunciation in the past.

Huvenne's consideration that the 'Fall of Man' was included so that Pourbus could demonstrate his ability to paint Renaissance nudes feels short-sighted; the 'Fall of Man' was of course one of the most traditional typologies connected to the Annunciation, and the bodies of both Adam and Eve does not seem to have been painted with much attention to proportion or musculature, especially compared to van Leyden's print. On the other hand, although Steinmetz automatically refers to typological tradition, the question begs how much worth was laid in traditional typology anno 1552. The tradition of typology itself was not dwindling, as can be discerned from the 1550 publication of the *Concordantz unnd Vergleychung des alten und newen Testaments* (See Chapter I, par. 2). However, this new publication, for example, largely discarded medieval tradition. It would therefore be prudent to consider and eventually reconsider the role of medieval typology around the middle of the sixteenth century.

It is interesting that the inner wings of the triptych are painted black. Although it occurred more often in the sixteenth century, it would be interesting to consider what could otherwise have been painted on the shutters. As Adam and Eve were the first humans, it would not have been plausible for figures observing the 'Fall' to have been depicted.

## Illustrations

- SN32a Pieter Pourbus, *The Annunciation*, 1552 (Gouda, Stedelijke Musea).
- SN32b Marco Dente, *The Annunciation*, first half of sixteenth century.
- SN32c 'The Fall of Man' (detail of ill. SN32a).
- SN32d Lucas van Leyden, *The Fall of Man*, 1529.



III. SN32a





III. SN32b



III. SN32c





III. SN32d

# SN33

**Artist:** Pieter Pourbus (Bruges; c. 1523-1584)  
(circle)<sup>518</sup>  
**Work:** *Annunciation*  
**Date:** First half of the sixteenth century  
**Part of:** Unknown  
**Measurements:** 90,8 x 77,5 cm  
**Current location:** Vienna, Private collection  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Cain	retable	grisaille(?)
Abel	retable	grisaille(?)
King David	retable	grisaille(?)

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'Cain slaying Abel'	retable	grisaille(?)

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SN33a) is set in a room with classical elements; to the right is a four-poster bed with Ionic columns and a classical tympanum. In the left background is an entranceway also featuring ionic columns and a classical tympanum. The entrance leads to a brighter, seemingly larger room in the back. Between the bed and the entranceway, a cabinet is displayed featuring a retable containing images of the 'Slaying of Abel' and, in the top, 'King David playing the harp'. In the right foreground, the Virgin is depicted, kneeling behind a small table with a book. To the left, the Archangel has appeared, holding a messenger's staff in his left hand and greeting with his right. He is accompanied by the dove of the Holy Spirit. A vase with lilies and red flowers (roses?) is depicted between Gabriel and the Virgin. In the upper left corner, a cloud with God the Father has appeared, apparently having sent down the Holy Spirit.

## Background information

Nothing is further known about this painting.

<sup>518</sup> Attribution and dating according to RKD, <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkddb/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoiceImages&search=priref=15941>> (27-04-2011).

## Discussion

The composition is clearly derived from the *Annunciation* by Pourbus (SN32). Therefore, the dating by the RKD is probably somewhat too early. The present painting features even more classical monuments, and the 'Annunciation' is set in a more monumental setting than SN32. The ceiling appears to be higher, the entranceway is grander and more richly decorated – not quite appropriate for a regular domestic setting, as is the high window – and the partially visible portion of the bright room in the back suggests an even larger structure. Therefore, the possibility that the present 'Annunciation' is set in a domestic environment is somewhat less likely than in the case of Pourbus' painting. For the further analysis of the classical elements and its function see SN32. It should be noted, though, that the inclusion of God the Father in the upper left corner is rather archaic for sixteenth-century painting, and is more typical of the early fifteenth century.

The shape and decoration of the retable seems somewhat exotic, though, at the present, no statements can be made about the dating of its style or in how far such pieces actually existed in the sixteenth century or earlier.

The subject of 'Cain slaying Abel' (ill. SN33b), recognizable here by the jaw-bone held by Cain, is not often embedded in Netherlandish *Annunciations*, the only other works being Bouts' Prado *Annunciation* (SN6), in which the scene is part of the Genesis cycle in the archivolt, and the vague rendition in SN22.<sup>519</sup> The scene usually alludes to the sacrifice and death of Christ, by which in the scene the Incarnation and Passion come together. The figure's themselves are clearly influenced by the Italian Renaissance and are somewhat Michelangelesque in their physique and posture.

King David is depicted above the aforementioned scene, playing the harp. This might be meant as a general image of one of the most prominent Old Testament figures – too allude to the Jewish context of the scene –, it might refer to the Virgin's royal ancestry, or to the incarnate Christ's genealogy and his future role as the King of Kings.

## Illustrations

SN33a Pieter Pourbus (circle), *The Annunciation*, first half of the sixteenth century(?) (Vienna, Private collection).

SN33b Retable with 'Cain slaying Abel' and King David playing the harp (detail of ill. SN33a).

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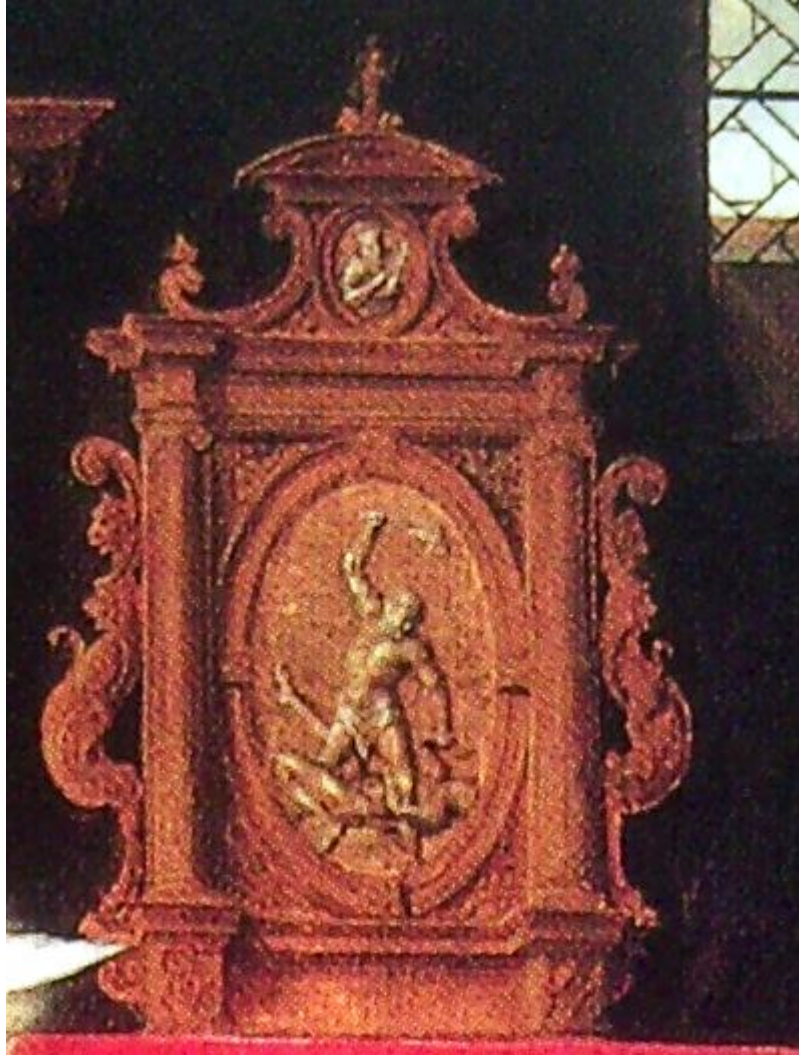
<sup>519</sup> Meyer Schapiro, 'Cain's Jaw-Bone that Did the First Murder', *The Art Bulletin* 24 (1942), No. 3, pp. 205-12.





III. SN33a





III. SN32b

# Northern Netherlands

# NN1

**Artist:** Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostanen (Amsterdam; c. 1472/1477-1533) or the Master of the Berlin Sketchbook (Northern Netherlands; active c. 1513-1540)<sup>520</sup>

**Work:** *The Annunciation*

**Date:** c. 1508 or c. 1530<sup>521</sup>

**Part of:** Unknown

**Measurements:** 61 x 44,8 cm

**Current location:** Indianapolis, Indianapolis Museum of Art

**Original location:** Unknown

**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	behind curtain on the right	statue

## Description

The 'Annunciation' is set in a dark room (ill. NN1a), presumably at night, although there are no candles lit. The Virgin is standing in front of an altar above which a tabernacle with a statue of Moses is placed. The altar section of the room seems to be usually covered by a green curtain. However, the Archangel has entered the room and has lifted the curtain revealing the Virgin. Gabriel has a red-golden banner with a cross and the inscription of the angelic greeting 'AVE GRA(tia) PL(en)A D(omi)N(u)S (tecum)'. Few further details of the room can be seen, other than some tin utensils in the left background. Through a door or window in the background an angelic host is witness to the Annunciation. The dove of the Holy Spirit has also taken a central place in the scene.

## Background information

Nothing is further known or has been published on the provenance of this painting.

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<sup>520</sup> Attribution according to the Indianapolis Museum of Art, <<http://www.imamuseum.org/art/collections/artwork/annunciation-jacob-cornelisz-van-oostanen>> (11-05-2011). Kurt Steinbart, *Die Tafelgemälde des Jakob Cornelisz von Amsterdam*, 1922, p. 164, dismisses the attribution to Cornelisz. Himself. Boon, in R. van Luttervelt (ed.), *Middeleeuwse Kunst der Noorderlijke Nederlanden*, exh. cat. Amsterdam (Rijksmuseum) 1958, pp. 95-96, connects the work to the oeuvre of the Master of the Berlin Sketchbook, a follower of Cornelisz, as does Jane Louise Carroll, *The paintings of Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostanen (1472?-1533)*, 1987, pp. 329-30, who also notes that Held attributed the work to the Master of the Morrison Triptych.

<sup>521</sup> Early dating according to Indianapolis Museum of Art, *ibidem*.. Later dating according to Carroll, *idem*, p. 330, based on the attribution of the painting to the Master of the Berlin Sketchbook.

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

The architectural setting of the painting is not discussed in available literature.

### *Discussions on Old Testament iconography*

Boon notes that Moses represents the Old Law.<sup>522</sup> The Indianapolis Museum of Art writes that the angelic host bears witness 'to the initial mystery in Christian history, when the Old Law of Moses is superseded by the New Law and Christ's promise of salvation.'<sup>523</sup> They also suggest that the statue of Moses is made of gold.

## Discussion

The sole existent, and therefore rather late, Northern Netherlandish *Annunciation* featuring embedded Old Testament iconography – although van Oostanen overall painted a number of biblical scenes containing embedded (Old Testament) figures – follows the Flemish tradition, started in the late fifteenth century, of including a single statue of Moses. It is not evident that the statue, a seated Moses with horns holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments, is made of a material as precious as gold. However, it is placed in a richly decorated tabernacle with baldachin that features both Gothic and fantastical stylistic elements. The iconographic intention of the painter seems not too hard to guess; the Virgin is standing, presumably praying, at a Jewish altar (indicated by the statue), which is hidden by the curtain. Judaism, or religion before the coming of Christ, hides the believer in darkness, hidden by a veil from the vision of heaven, the angelic host. Gabriel, with his Annunciation and the arrival of Christ, has lifted the veil and brought the light to the Virgin. In effect, the Virgin thus is depicted as, originally, a pious Jewish maiden. The statue of Moses might have been a mere personification of the Jewish faith, instead of an indication of the antithesis or contrast of the Old and the New Law.

The scene is set in a domestic environment. It is very unusual to depict the 'Annunciation' taking place at night (see, for the other major example SN14). Whether one should literally interpret the darkness as night is unclear, however, as there are no candles. Perhaps the darkness is intended to further symbolically stress the darkness of the world and religion before Christ's arrival. Also, sunlight might have been blocked by the angelic host.

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<sup>522</sup> Boon (op. cit. note 520), p. 95.

<sup>523</sup> The Indianapolis Museum of Art (op. cit. note 520).



## Illustrations

NN1a Jacob Cornelisz. van Oostanen, or the Master of the Berlin Sketchbook, *The Annunciation*, c. 1508 or c. 1530 (Indianapolis, Indianapolis Museum of Art).

NN2b Tabernacle with Moses statue (detail of ill. NN1a).



III. NN1a



III. NN1b

Westphalia



# WE1

**Artist:** Johann Koerbecke (Münster; c. 1420-1491)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** 1457  
**Part of:** *Marienfeld Altarpiece*  
**Part:** Interior left wing, upper right  
**Measurements:** 93,3 x 65,8 cm  
**Current location:** Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago  
**Original location:** Church of the Cistercian abbey at Marienfeld  
**Patron:** Arnold von Bevern (abbot, 1443-1478)



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Prophet (2x)	above Gabriel and Virgin	statue

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. WE1a) is set in an open structure that mainly consists of a late-Gothic roof featuring two statues of prophets holding banderoles, standing under baldachins. Below, the Virgin is kneeling or standing on the right, in front of a lectern with a book, with her hands in prayer. The Archangel has come from the left, holding a messenger's staff and a banderole with the angelic greeting '[a]ve gratia plena dominus tecum'. The morse of his cope contains an image of an eagle. Behind the Virgin and the Archangel is a bench and four angels holding up a green cloth as if to cover up the scene from behind. God is depicted above the principal actors, having sent down the infant Christ holding a cross on rays of light. The painting has a gold background.

## Background information

Koerbecke was a Westphalian master, active in Münster, who's work was inspired by Conrad von Soest (c. 1370-after 1422) and Stephan Lochner (c. 1400-1451). The *Marienfeld Altarpiece* (1457), the master's principal work, contains sixteen scenes dedicated to the 'Life of the Virgin' on the interior, and the 'Passion of Christ' on the exterior. Jakoby suggests that the work might have been based on an unknown altarpiece by Stephan Lochner (see RH1).<sup>524</sup>

<sup>524</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 31.

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Pieper states that Koerbecke did not depict the 'Annunciation' in a domestic space, but in an imaginary, unreal space with made-up architecture in front of a gold background.<sup>525</sup> The furniture and other objects are placed as if the setting is a stage. Wolff is more nuanced in her analysis and suggests that, while the wooden bench could belong to a domestic setting, 'the tabernacle-like architectural canopy suggests a realm removed from everyday reality', with the cloth held by the angels creating a privileged enclosure, in accord with courtly and ecclesiastical usage.<sup>526</sup> Jakoby states that, with its Gothic architecture, the setting reminds of a church, though its centrally planned structure refers to an oriental temple.<sup>527</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Wolff states that, by including the two prophets, the painter 'alludes to the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of the Messiah'.<sup>528</sup> Jakoby remarks that, with their lively posture and suggested movement, the prophets are depicted being in dispute.<sup>529</sup> They represent the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah. The painting, on the one hand, expresses the disbanding of the 'church of the Jews' by the new, rightful Church personified by the Virgin. Yet, Jakoby also states that there are signs of the Old Testament taking part in Salvation as well, since the prophets coexist with the Virgin and Gabriel.

## Discussion

Although the 'Annunciation' is set in an unreal, non-literal setting, the appearance and style of the structure is unmistakably Gothic. It is therefore interesting that, as in Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1), the Old Testament prophets are placed in this 'Christian' architecture, under baldachins. Considering this juxtaposition, it is more likely that the Gothic style is meant to indicate a certain religious function of the structure, rather than that the style symbolically represents Christianity or the Church. The prophets (ill. SNWE1b and c) are regular, though lively, late-medieval statues. They are both holding their heads downwards and to the right, with their eyes closed. This generally gives them a humbled appearance, and not the expression of dispute mentioned by Jakoby (for

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<sup>525</sup> Paul Pieper, *Das Westfälische in Malerei und Plastik*, 1964, p. 22.

<sup>526</sup> Martha Wolff (ed.), *Northern European and Spanish Paintings before 1600 in the Art Institute of Chicago: a catalogue of the collection*, 2008, p. 380.

<sup>527</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 33.

<sup>528</sup> Wolff (op. cit. note 526), p. 377.

<sup>529</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), pp. 32-33, for this and the following.

prophets disputing or debating see RH3); they are not holding their hands up or counting their fingers, gestures usually indicating dispute. The closed eyes of the Old Testament figures might be symbolical, as Old Testament figures did not see the truth of Christ (see SN13), though prophets of course were regarded as those who *did* see the upcoming Incarnation of Christ. Wolff's interpretation of the prophets' inclusion should in any case most likely be regarded as correct. Their placement, one on both sides of a portico's arch, is reminiscent of Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1). The meaning of the eagle on Gabriel's horse is not entirely clear. In his discussion of Broederlam's *Annunciation*, the eagle is described by Duwe as a symbol of the Old Testament (also see SN1).

### **Illustrations**

- WE1a Johann Koerbecke, *The Annunciation*, 1457, from the *Marienfeld Altarpiece* (Chicago, The Art Institute of Chicago).
- WE1b Left prophet statue (detail of ill. WE1a).
- WE1c Right prophet statue (detail of ill. WE1a).



III. WE1a





III. WE1b



III. WE1c

## WE2

<b>Artist:</b>	Master of Liesborn (Johann von Soest?) (Westphalia; active 1460-1490) <sup>530</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1470-1480 <sup>531</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Liesborn Altarpiece</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Upper left part of left interior wing(?)
<b>Measurements:</b>	95 x 68 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	London, National Gallery
<b>Original location:</b>	Church of the Benedictine abbey of Liesborn
<b>Patron:</b>	Heinrich von Cleve (abbot; died 1490)



### Old Testament figures:

Prophet (2x)	<i>Position</i> upper corners	<i>Medium</i> statue
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### Other figurative decorative elements:

Godhead	<i>Position</i> against plaster on right wall	<i>Medium</i> statue
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### Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. WE2a) is set in a long, narrow room with a wooden barrel vaulted ceiling and windows on the right featuring coats of arms, through which one can see a wide landscape and parts of a city. In the back of the room a red canopied bed can be seen. To its right stands a cabinet on which an ewer, candle, basin and writing material is placed. There is a bench against the right wall, on which pillows are lain, one featuring the image of a stag, and also one featuring a coat of arms. A board on the wall contains an illegible text. On a pilaster on the right, a statue is placed of a bearded man holding a globe and making a blessing gesture, standing under a Gothic baldachin. In the left foreground the Virgin is seated in front of a prie-dieu with a book on her lap. She is startled as the Archangel has entered from the right, holding a staff with a banderole with the angelic greeting: 'Ave gratia plen(a) dominus tecum'. The angel is pointing at himself. The tile floor contains floral decoration and images of stags and birds. The room is framed by a pink wall and purple and green columns left and right with capitals featuring oak leaves. On the columns stand two bearded men, one with a fez and one with a hat, holding banderoles. They are presumably prophets.

<sup>530</sup> According to Karrenbrock, the Master of Liesborn can be identified as the Münster painter Johann von Soest. See Karrenbrock, in Till-Holger Borchert, Paul van Calster (eds.), *Van Eyck bis Dürer: altniederländische Meister und die Malerei in Mitteleuropa*, exh. cat. Bruges (Groeningemuseum), 2010, p. 241.

<sup>531</sup> According to the National Gallery, <<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/master-of-liesborn-the-annunciation>> (11-05-2011). Karrenbrock provides a dating of c. 1485/1490. See Karrenbrock, *ibidem*.

## Background information

The Master of Liesborn is named after the now-dismantled altarpiece that was commissioned for the abbey of Liesborn in Westphalia. In recent years, however, some art historians – most notably Karrenbrock – have suggested that the Master might be identified as the Münster painter Johann von Soest.<sup>532</sup> The *Liesborn Altarpiece* consisted of a large Crucifixion, surrounded by saints Benedict, Scholastica, Cosmas and Damian, and furthermore on the wings several scenes from the childhood of Christ.<sup>533</sup> Although the principal patron of the altarpiece was the abbey's abbot, von Cleve, several other, unknown donors might have co-financed the altarpiece. Their unidentified coats of arms are depicted in the windows and visualized by the stag on the pillow and tiles.<sup>534</sup>

The Master of Liesborn, notably in the interior of his *Annunciation*, was very much inspired by the work of Rogier van der Weyden, especially his *Columba Altarpiece* (SN7).<sup>535</sup> For the Church of St George in Lünen, an altarpiece was painted by the Master's workshop or followers, for which the *Annunciation* was freely copied, though in reverse and without the three statues.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Dunkerton supposes the text on the board pinned to the wall is religious in nature.<sup>536</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

Pieper describes the room as Gothic and narrow.<sup>537</sup> He notes that the space in which the actual Annunciation takes place is separated from the bedchamber by the arch and by one step.<sup>538</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Both Dunkerton and Karrenbrock identify the two foreground figures as prophets.<sup>539</sup> Dunkerton interprets them as framing devices, figures who foretold Christ's birth. Both scholars are silent on the

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<sup>532</sup> Karrenbrock, *idem*, p. 241.

<sup>533</sup> Pieper (op. cit. note 525), p. 25.

<sup>534</sup> Jill Dunkerton, *Giotto to Dürer: early Renaissance painting in the National Gallery*, 1991, p. 324.

<sup>535</sup> Karrenbrock, (op. cit. note 530), p. 241.

<sup>536</sup> Dunkerton (op. cit. note 534), p. 324.

<sup>537</sup> Pieper (op. cit. note 525), p. 26.

<sup>538</sup> Paul Pieper, 'Der Meister von Liesborn und die Liesborner Tafeln', *Westfalen* 44 (1966), p. 12.

<sup>539</sup> Dunkerton (op. cit. note 534), p. 324. Karrenbrock (op. cit. note 530), p. 241.

third stone figure, with the globe. Pieper first identified him as a blessing Christ.<sup>540</sup> However, he later called him God the Father, as does Jakoby.<sup>541</sup>

## Discussion

It is noteworthy that, although the interior is clearly based on van der Weyden's *Columba Annunciation* (SN7), the painter opted to not decorate the side of the Virgin's prie-dieu with figurative reliefs. The master instead chose to conventionally depict two prophets in grey stone flanking the main scene. The left prophet (ill. WE2b), wearing a fez, is pointing towards the other prophet (ill. WE2c), while the right prophet is pointing at himself, as if the two are in debate (on prophets disputing or debating, see RH3) The debating appearance of the two Old Testament figures does not imply that they are merely meant to refer to the Old Testament prophecies of the coming Messiah in general. The two seem to be in conflict over who is right and who is not, as if one is foretelling the coming of Christ, while the other one is negating it. Their placement, one on both sides of an arch, is reminiscent of Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1).

It is also interesting that Dunkerton and Karrenbrock do not mention the bearded figure with the globe (ill. WE2d). In simple form and appearance he appears more similar to traditional depictions of Christ, with his plain clothes, and blessing gesture, instead of God the Father who is usually depicted more richly dressed and often wears a crown of tiara. Yet, the figure also strongly resembles the image of God the Father by Koerbecke (WE1). The image of the bearded figure, blessing and holding a globe, on the other hand, resembles the Christ-image in the medallion of the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5), although that figure was enthroned. Considering the Master of Liesborn's penchant for van der Weyden's work, it is possible that the figure therefore is indeed Christ. Whether or not the master would have wanted to include such a major anachronism is debatable, of course.<sup>542</sup> It would more logical, and culturally and chronologically correct, if the figure would be God the Father, and therefore the image of the deity in a Jewish home.

There is nothing that directly indicates that the text on the board is religious, although a similar board is also featured in the ecclesiastical setting of the *Prado Annunciation* (SN4).

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<sup>540</sup> Paul Pieper (ed.), *Westfälische Maler der Spätgotik, 1440-1490*, exh. cat. Münster (Landesmuseum für Kunst und Kulturgeschichte) 1952, no. 120.

<sup>541</sup> Pieper (op. cit. note 538), p. 12. Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 105.

<sup>542</sup> However, it is not certain that the Master of Liesborn knew any other of Van der Weyden's works outside of the *Columba Altarpiece*. On the other hand, the various household objects do not feature as prominently in the *Columba Annunciation* as in the *Louvre Annunciation*. Besides the *Louvre Annunciation*, the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2), believed to have been painted for a Westphalian patron, also features anachronistic decoration.



## Illustrations

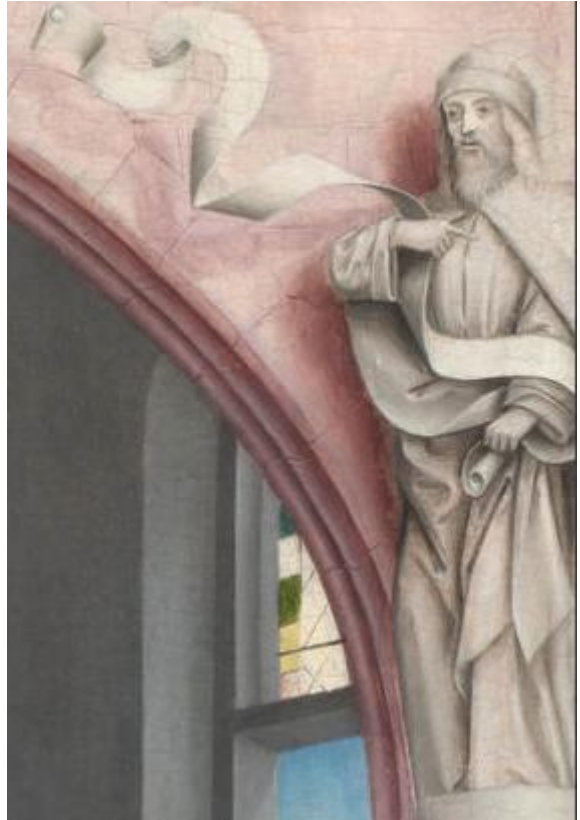
- WE2a Master of Liesborn, *The Annunciation*, c. 1470-1480, from the *Liesborn Altarpiece* (London, National Gallery).
- WE2b Left prophet statue (detail of ill. WE2a).
- WE2c Right prophet statue (detail of ill. WE2a).
- WE2d Sculpture of bearded figure in the background (detail of ill. WE2a).



III. WE2a



III. WE2b



III. WE2c



III. WE2d

# Rhineland



# RH1

<b>Artist:</b>	Stephan Lochner (Cologne; c. 1400-1451)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	1440s <sup>543</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Altarpiece of the Cologne City Patrons</i>
<b>Parts:</b>	Exterior wings
<b>Measurements:</b>	234 x 118 cm (each)
<b>Current location:</b>	Cologne, Cathedral
<b>Original location:</b>	Town hall chapel of 'St Mary in Jerusalem'
<b>Patrons:</b>	Cologne city patrons



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
God(?)	Gabriel's morse	gold relief	also, falsely, identified as King David
Angel (5x)	Gabriel's cope	stitched	

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. RH1a) is set in a modest room with a flat wooden ceiling and a gold-colored curtain as background. The Virgin is seated or kneeling on the left, in front of a prie-dieu with a book on it. The prie-dieu is opened on the side, and beside it, on the floor, lies another book. Behind the Virgin is a low bench and a vase with lilies. Above her, the dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted. The Archangel has entered from the right, holding a messenger's staff and a text on a piece of parchment with a seal. The borders of Gabriel's cope are decorated with images of angels. Gabriel's morse is decorated with the image of a bearded figure holding a globe.

## Background information

During the fifteenth century, Lochner was Cologne's foremost and most influential painter. He combined the art of Cologne painters with the style, spatial representation and iconography of the Master of Flémalle and Jan van Eyck.<sup>544</sup> He was city councilman of the city in 1447 and 1450. From that city council he was commissioned to paint an altarpiece for the chapel of the city council which was built in 1426. The large triptych is dedicated to the Magi, with the 'Adoration of the Magi' as the centerpiece, and the city patron saints, Sts Ursula and Gereon, on the interior wings. The *Annunciation* was painted on the exterior of the shutters.

<sup>543</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 245, note 8, notes that the traditional date for the altarpiece is 'c. 1440', while Lochner can only with certainty be located in Cologne from 1442 on. She suggests that Lochner might have received the commission for the altarpiece when he became councilman himself, in 1447.

<sup>544</sup> Frank Günther Zehnder, *Katalog der altkölnner Malerei*, Cologne 1990, p. 66.

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Nothing in available literature is explicitly discussed concerning this aspect of the work.

### *Old Testament iconography*

Jakoby suggests that the male figure depicted on Gabriel's morse (ill. RH1b) is King David, though without offering any supporting arguments.<sup>545</sup> David would in this case be depicted as Christ's forefather, and as a reference to Christ being the chosen one to become king, like the Old Testament ruler.<sup>546</sup> Stylistically, Jakoby compares the morse with that worn by Gabriel in the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5).

Fritz, on the other hand, identifies the embedded figure holding the globe as God the Father.<sup>547</sup> He furthermore remarks that the quatrefoil form and style of the morse is not late-Gothic or contemporary to Lochner, but instead typical for the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. The style and drapery of the embedded figure is reminiscent of the goldsmith work of Nicholas of Verdun (c. 1130-after 1205), Verdun incidentally having made the Shrine of the Magi in the Cologne Cathedral. Fritz suggests that Lochner may purposely have depicted the morse in this somewhat archaic style to make it similar to the style of Verdun's Shrine. The angels on Gabriel's cope might be interpreted as being in adoration of the embedded God the Father.

## Discussion

It is not possible to state with any certainty what the function of the Virgin's room is, whether it represents a domestic or a religious setting. There is no decoration that might indicate its purpose, nor is there any setting-specific furniture depicted. The wooden ceiling seems typical for a domestic setting. The large curtain, on the other hand, might be considered an odd feature for a house. Perhaps it was not Lochner's intention to depict a literal interior environment.

There is no reason to follow Jakoby's identification of the embedded figure as King David. The gold relief man wears a hood, not a crown, and he is also not depicted with David's usual attribute, a harp. On the other hand, a hood would also be somewhat unusual for God the Father. The globe in the figure's hand nonetheless points towards a godhead, with the notable long beard being untypical

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<sup>545</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 19.

<sup>546</sup> Jakoby, idem, p. 260, note 62. She furthermore remarks that Psalm 22, traditionally considered to have been written by David, refers to the Passion and Crucifixion of Christ.

<sup>547</sup> Johann Michael Fritz, 'Auf Gold gezeichnete und gemalte Goldschmiedearbeiten', in: Frank Günter Zehnder, *Stephan Lochner, Meister zu Köln: Herkunft, Werke, Wirkung*, exh. cat. Cologne (Wallraf-Richartz-Museum) 1993, p. 137, for this and the following. Chapuis seconds Fritz's identification. See Julien Chapuis, *Stephan Lochner: Image Making in Fifteenth-Century Cologne*, 2004, p. 61.

for Christ. If it is indeed God, his inclusion needs no explanation. It is possible that the embedding of the figure was intended as a variation on the traditional depiction of God sending the dove of the Holy Spirit in earlier *Annunciation*. It is not clear whether the figure has something in his right hand. If so, it is not a clearly defined object and might be merely a part of his clothing.

In the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5), Gabriel also has a quatrefoil morse with a large male figure in the center, though there he does not have a globe. In later works, such as Bouts' Prado *Annunciation* (SN6) and SN9, there is also a Godhead depicted in the center, although these works are of course all of a later date. Lochner might have been inspired by the *Ghent Altarpiece*, which features a choir of angels of which one has a morse containing the relief image of a single male figure (see ill. RH4c). The archaic style of the morse is intriguing, and Fritz's explanation seems very plausible. An alternative explanation could be that Lochner, with the older style, wanted to indicate that the *Annunciation* took place in the past. These two explanations are of course not mutually exclusive. Yet, if Lochner wanted to stress the period of the scene, indicating this through the appearance of a timeless, heavenly messenger would be somewhat odd.

### **Illustrations**

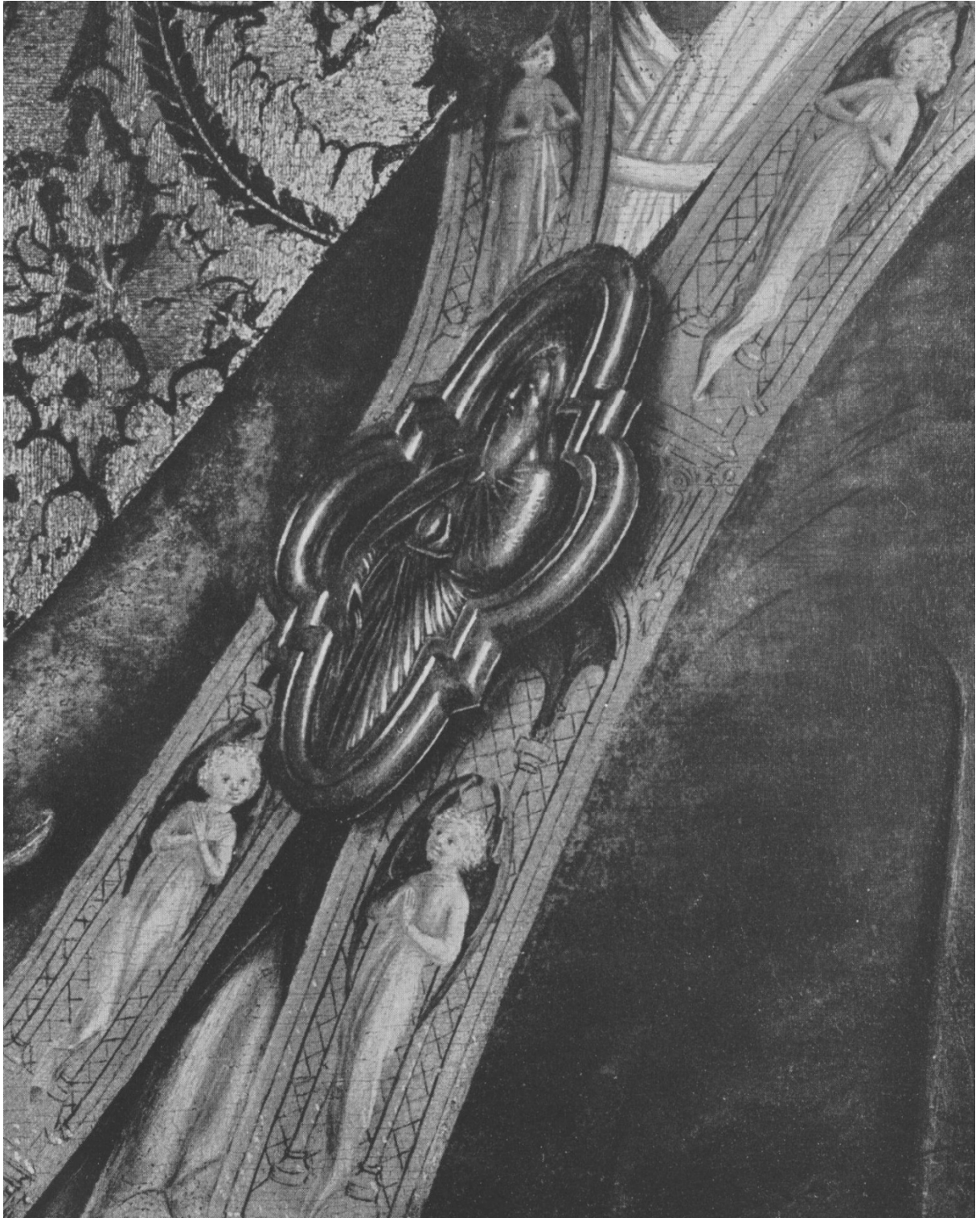
RH1a Stephan Locher, *The Annunciation*, 1440s, from the *Altarpiece of the Cologne City Patrons* (Cologne, Cathedral).

RH1b Gabriel's morse (detail of ill. RH1a).



III. RH1a





III. RH1b

## RH2

<b>Artist:</b>	Anonymous (Lower Rhine) <sup>548</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1460 <sup>549</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	Unknown triptych
<b>Part:</b>	Left (inner) wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	52,5 x 21,5 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Private collection
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



### Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Prophet (2x)	wall in the center	statue

### Description

In this 'Annunciation' (ill. RH2a), the Virgin is seated in a high, Gothic hall in front of a prie-dieu with a book, while she has another book in her hand. She is startled by the Archangel who has come from the left, holding a messenger's staff with a banderole featuring the text of the angelic greeting ('ave gracia plena dominus tecum'), and pointing towards the Virgin. Above the central pillar, and on the left wall of the Gothic hall, two statues are placed of two male figures, presumably prophets. Beyond the structure, in the upper left, a far landscape can be seen. In the upper left corner, God is depicted in heaven, having sent down the dove of the Holy Spirit.

### Background information

Together with a preserved *Nativity*, this panel was probably part of a now lost triptych.<sup>550</sup> According to Jakoby, the composition of the architecture, with a thin long pillar and a barrel vaulted hall, puts it close to fifteenth century Cologne art.<sup>551</sup> She also refers to the influences of the tradition of Jean Pucelle (c. 1300-1355) and French book illumination in general.

<sup>548</sup> According to Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 41. Eugen Lühgen, *Rheinische Kunst des Mittelalters aus Kölner Privatbesitz*, 1921, p. 100, attributes the panel to an anonymous Flemish painter. Alfred Stange, *Kritisches Verzeichnis der deutschen Tafelbilder vor Dürer. I. Köln, Niederrhein, Westfalen, Hamburg, Lübeck und Niedersachsen*, Munich 1967, nr. 217, attributes it to the Master of the Sinzig Calvary, a problematic provisional name that has lost most academic support. See Jakoby, idem, p. 266, note 105. Hans Martin Schmidt, *Der Meister des Marienlebens und sein Kreis: Studien zur spätgotischen Malerei in Köln*, 1978, pp. 120-22, considers the master to be a Cologne or Middle Rhinish artist.

<sup>549</sup> According to Jakoby, idem, ill. 8.

<sup>550</sup> Idem, p. 270, note 130.

<sup>551</sup> Idem, p. 42.

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Jakoby states that the Gothic hall has the appearance of a choir.<sup>552</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Jakoby identifies the statues as – presumably – the Old Testament prophets Daniel and Isaiah.<sup>553</sup>

## Discussion

This is a lesser work considering the somewhat crude depiction of the architecture and the fact that the two main figures are far too large for the space they occupy. The Gothic architectural style and high hall make it likely that the 'Annunciation' is supposed to take place in a religious setting, a temple. How Jakoby arrives at her identification of the two statues is a riddle, as it is not even certain that both men are actually supposed to be prophets. The lower figure (ill. RH2c) has a beard, wears a medieval Jewish, pointed hat, and has a banderole in his hand. About him one can surely say that he is a prophet. The upper figure (ill. RH2b), however, has no beard, wears a cap over his head, and does not have a banderole. Presumably, Jakoby thought this would be Daniel. As the upper figure has no attributes, he probably was not intended to have a specific identity, and can, at the most, merely be called an anonymous prophet, and only by assumption. If indeed prophets, they would probably be meant to refer to the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of Christ. That the lower statue, through his pointed hat, is explicitly depicted as a Jew, is a rarity in fifteenth century *Annunciations*.

## Illustrations

RH2a Anonymous (Lower Rhine), *The Annunciation*, c. 1460 (Private collection).

RH2b Upper statue (detail of ill. RH2a).

RH2c Lower statue (detail of ill. RH2a).

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<sup>552</sup> Idem, p. 41.

<sup>553</sup> Ibidem.





III. RH1a



III. RH2b



III. RH2c



# RH3

<b>Artist:</b>	Master of the Life of the Virgin (Cologne; active c. 1460-1490)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1460-1465
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Altarpiece of the Life of the Virgin</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Upper panel of interior left wing(?) <sup>554</sup>
<b>Measurements:</b>	85 x 105 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Munich, Alte Pinakothek
<b>Original location:</b>	Cologne, Church of St Ursula
<b>Patron:</b>	Johann von Hirtz (died 1481) <sup>555</sup>



## Old Testament figures:

The Queen of Sheba(?) <sup>556</sup>	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Servant of the Queen of Sheba(?) (2x)	back of Gabriel's cope	embroidered
King Solomon(?)	back of Gabriel's cope	embroidered
Moses <sup>557</sup>	back of Gabriel's cope	embroidered
Male figure (prophet?)	seam of Gabriel's cope	embroidered
	on front of right choir stall	wood carving

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Queen of Sheba before King Solomon'(?)	back of Gabriel's cope	embroidered

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'St Michael slaying the dragon'	on side of right choir stall	wood carving
Male figure (2x)	on side of left choir stall	wood carving
Christ enthroned	Gabriel's morse	gold relief
Evangelist symbol (4x)	Gabriel's morse	gold relief
Saint Jerome <sup>558</sup>	seam of Gabriel's cope	embroidered
Saint with sword (2x) <sup>559</sup>	seam of Gabriel's cope	embroidered
Saint with chalice <sup>560</sup>	seam of Gabriel's cope	embroidered
Cat-like creature	on armrest of right choir stall	wooden statuette

<sup>554</sup> According to Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 178.

<sup>555</sup> Von Hirtz was a Cologne patrician and knight, Cologne city counselor from 1440 to 1474, and mayor of the city in 1443, 1453, 1461 and 1467. See Gisela Goldberg, Gisela Scheffler, *Altdeutsche Gemälde: Köln und Nordwestdeutschland: vollständiger Katalog, Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, München, 1972, p. 314.*

<sup>556</sup> Identification of the entire scene on the back of Gabriel's cope according to Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 182. Goldberg and Scheffler, *ibidem*, also mention that C. Aldenhoven, *Geschichte der Kölner Malerschule, 1902, p. 211, identified this scene in the same manner.*

<sup>557</sup> According to Goldberg, Scheffler (op. cit. note 555), p. 314.

<sup>558</sup> According to Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 182.

<sup>559</sup> According to Goldberg, Scheffler (op. cit. note 555), p. 314.

<sup>560</sup> *Ibidem.*

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. RH3a) takes place in a space with a golden background, bordered by two wooden choir stalls left and right, and a golden cloth held up by six angels in front of which a long, low bench is placed. On the right side of the left choir stall, two male figures, probably Sts Peter and Paul, are depicted standing next to each other. On the side of the right choir stall, in front of which the Virgin is standing as she had been reading a book, a relief scene of 'St Michael slaying the dragon' is depicted, with a sole male figure depicted on the front. The Virgin's halo is decorated with the inscription '. Sancta . maria . virgo'.<sup>561</sup> The Archangel is standing on the left, holding lilies in his left hand, and making a blessing gesture with his right. The back of his cope is decorated with a scene featuring multiple figures. The orphreys of the angel's cope consist of singular figures standing under baldachins: Moses, Saint Jerome, two saints holding a sword, and one saint with a chalice. The morse of Gabriel's cope features an image of Christ enthroned, surrounded by the symbols of the four Evangelists. Above the central scene, in the center, God is depicted, accompanied by angels, having sent down the incarnate Christ, who is holding a cross, towards the Virgin. The infant Christ is preceded by the dove of the Holy Spirit. In the foreground a vase with lilies is placed, with leaves and petals spread over the floor. The Virgin's slippers are hidden under the right choir stall.

## Background information

The *Annunciation* was originally part of an altarpiece in the Church of St Ursula in Cologne, which featured eight scenes from the 'Life of the Virgin', the series after which the painter is named. The Master of the Life of the Virgin was a Cologne artist who most probably studied in the Netherlands for an undetermined period, and was considerably influenced by Flemish artists such as Rogier van der Weyden and Dieric Bouts.<sup>562</sup> Additionally, he was also influenced by Cologne's foremost master Stephan Lochner, as can for example be seen in the gold background of the *Annunciation*.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Goldberg and Scheffler identify the figures on the left choir stall (ill. RH3b) as Sts Peter and Paul, one carrying a sword and one carrying keys.<sup>563</sup> Jakoby states that these two saints refer to the time after the salvation of Christ.<sup>564</sup> Goldberg and Scheffler also interpret the depiction of 'St Michael slaying the dragon' (ill. RH3c) as a reference to mankind's salvation that has commenced with the arrival of

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<sup>561</sup> Goldberg, Scheffler (op. cit. note 555), p. 311.

<sup>562</sup> Goldeberg, Scheffler, idem, p. 307. Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 466.

<sup>563</sup> Goldbeg, Scheffler, idem), p. 319, for this and the following.

<sup>564</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 193.

Christ. Jakoby recognizes similarities to the relief of St Michael in the *Ghent Altarpiece* (see ill. SN25f).<sup>565</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

Stange interprets the setting as a wealthy room depicted with minimal means.<sup>566</sup> Jakoby sees the decorated furniture as an indication that the 'Annunciation' is supposed to be set in a convent.<sup>567</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Schmidt suggests that the scene on the back of Gabriel's cope (ill. RH3f) represents the 'Queen of Sheba in front of King Solomon', probably inspired by Psalm 45:13-16: 'All glorious is the princess in her chamber, with robes interwoven with gold. In many-colored robes she is led to the king, with her virgin companions following behind her. With joy and gladness they are led along as they enter the palace of the king. In place of your fathers shall be your sons; you will make them princes in all the earth.'<sup>568</sup> The Psalm was part of the Liturgy of the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25<sup>th</sup>) and is a song of praise on the blessed God and his bride.

Jakoby discusses the unidentified male on the right choir stall in a detailed manner (see ill. RH3c).<sup>569</sup> She considers it very well possible that the figure is meant to be a prophet, considering his hat and the fact that he is holding his hands and fingers as if he is counting arguments. The figure with whom he would be disputing would be hidden by the Virgin. The theme of the prophets' dispute was a familiar theme in medieval epic poems and mystery plays. One prophet would argue against the prophecy of the coming Messiah and one would claim his arrival would be near. Which one of the prophets is depicted in the painting is not clear, though.

## **Discussion**

Opinions vary on the nature of the setting, although it seems clear that the artist did not want to recreate a literal environment. However, if an identification had to be made, the presence of choir stalls and the absence of any household objects would make it more likely that the 'Annunciation' takes place in a religious setting.

The figurative reliefs on the choir stall convincingly reveal the influence of Rogier van der Weyden's *Columba Annunciation* (SN7). The relief that most resembles the 'Fall of Man' by van der Weyden is the one featuring Sts Peter and Paul standing next to each other. The choice of these two

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<sup>565</sup> Idem, p. 184.

<sup>566</sup> Alfred Stange, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik. V. Köln in der Zeit von 1450-1515*, 1952, p. 27.

<sup>567</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 195.

<sup>568</sup> Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 182.

<sup>569</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), pp. 190-93, for the following.

figures seems somewhat odd and anachronistic. Naturally, they refer to the spreading of the Gospel, but they might also function as a Christian counterpoint to the prophet(s) on the right choir stall.

The dress and posture of the arguing prophet figure is reminiscent of the prophet figures on Gabriel's cope in the *Annunciation* from the circle of Provoost (SN17). It seems indeed very likely that a choir stall such as here would have featured a second figure, although it is not clear what the meaning of the blocking by the Virgin is. The hypothetical prophet that is visible cannot be identified as either particularly for or against the coming of Christ. Perhaps it is noteworthy that the prophet figure is directly facing the Virgin.

The relief of 'St Michael and the dragon' is, like that of the two saints, anachronistic. The reference to mankind's salvation is a probable reason for its inclusion. Though also presented in wood carving form in the *Ghent Altarpiece*, the depiction of St Michael here cannot really be compared with van Eyck's relief, which features an entirely different composition. The scene here is broader, more crudely rendered, the dragon is depicted more as a beast with arms and not like a snake, and St Michael is not wearing armor. Whether the depiction here is based on an older existing composition – painted or otherwise – such as in the case of the embedded print in the *Brussels Annunciation* (SN2), is not yet known.

An (as far as known) unpublished *Annunciation*, attributed to an anonymous Flemish master, c. 1460 (Private collection) (ill. RH3d), also features a prie-dieu on the right side of the composition with a relief of 'St Michael slaying the dragon'.<sup>570</sup> The composition and setting of the scene is very reminiscent of van der Weyden's *Columba Annunciation* (SN7).<sup>571</sup> But the composition of the embedded scene is different than the embedded relief by the Master of the Life of the Virgin. The scene by the anonymous artist is comparable to traditional depictions of 'Cain slaying Abel', with the triumphant angel holding the dragon down on the ground on his back, while the dragon has one hand raised, and St Michael has his sword held above his head. Still, considering its similarities with the *Annunciation* by the Master of the Life of the Virgin, considering that the ultimate source of inspiration for the embedded wood carving, the *Columba Altarpiece*, was in Cologne at the time of both paintings' creation, similarities in the rendering of the interior compared to the works of Cologne artists, such as the windows found in the *Annunciation* by the workshop of the Master of the Legend of St George (RH5), and the fact that there are no other fifteenth-century Netherlandish *Annunciations* with a similar prie-dieu and wood carving placed in the composition, the painter of this work should probably also be located in the Rhineland, instead of the Southern Netherlands.

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<sup>570</sup> Attribution and dating according to the RKD, The Hague <<http://www.rkd.nl/rkddb/dispatcher.aspx?action=search&database=ChoiceImages&search=priref=35633>> (27-04-2011).

<sup>571</sup> The most notable differences are the flat ceiling here, the absence of the rose window, the particular type of bed, the division of the room in two sections, and the taller, standing posture of the Virgin.



If the identification of the scene depicted on the back of Gabriel's cope as the 'Queen of Sheba before King Solomon' is correct, it would be a unique occurrence in fifteenth and sixteenth century art.<sup>572</sup> However, it does not seem that the scene features any element or detail that might specifically link it to this particular Old Testament story, nor does Schmidt give any arguments for his identification. The argument that the inclusion of the detail might be based on Psalm 45, traditionally sung on March 25<sup>th</sup>, is strong, however. Yet the Psalm itself does not refer to any Old Testament characters. As Psalm 45 speaks of the Lord and his bride, the scene might also depict the mystical marriage of the Virgin – or another female saint – or, for example, the Coronation of the Virgin.

The other figures on Gabriel's cope are, again, reminiscent of Gabriel's cope in the *Annunciation* from the circle of Jan Provoost (SN17), including the image of Moses. The main difference is that most of the figures on Gabriel's cope here have haloes, and some are recognizable as specific saints. This makes the depiction of the Old Testament Moses among Christian saints noteworthy. The image of Christ and the symbols of the Evangelists on Gabriel's cope speaks for itself.

### Illustrations

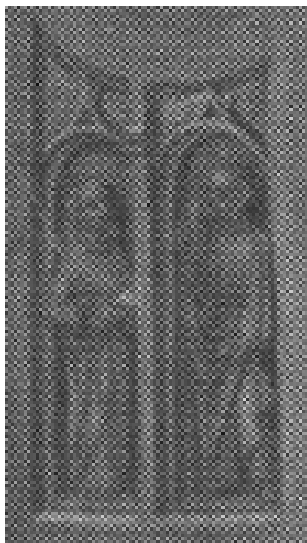
- RH3a The Master of the Life of the Virgin, *The Annunciation*, c. 1460-1465, from the *Altarpiece of the Life of the Virgin* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).
- RH3b Saints depicted on left choir stall (detail of ill. RH3a).
- RH3c Right choir stall, featuring 'St Michael slaying the dragon' and a disputing prophet (detail of ill. RH3a).
- RH3d Anonymous (Flemish)(?), *The Annunciation*, c. 1460 (Private collection).
- RH3e 'St Michael slaying the dragon' (detail of ill. RH3d).
- RH3f Back of Gabriel's cope (detail of ill. RH3a).

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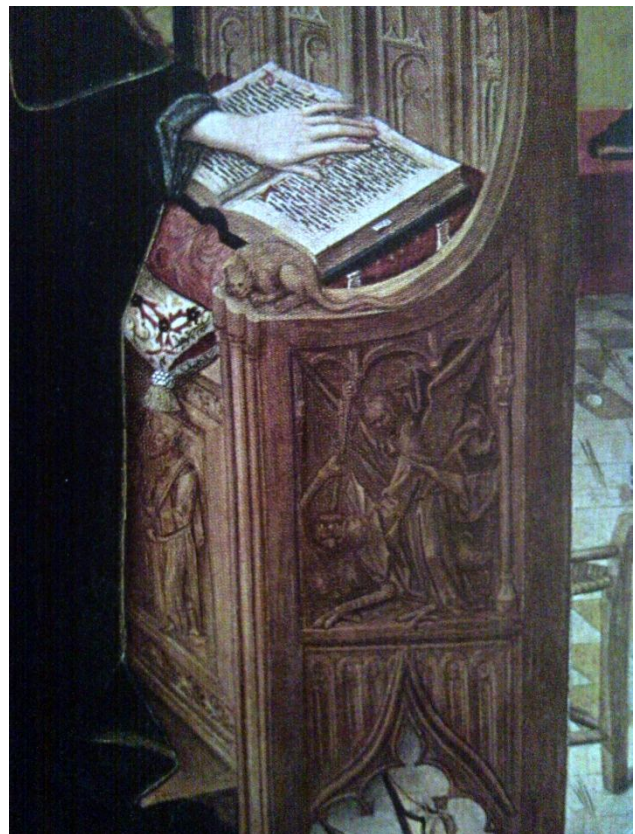
<sup>572</sup> The images available of the painting are of such quality that they unfortunately do not allow for an analysis of the details on Gabriel's cope.



III. RH3a



III. RH3b



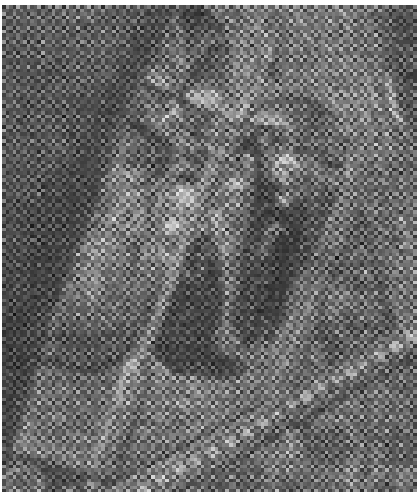
III. RH3c



III. RH3d



III. RH3e



III. RH3f



# RH4

**Artist:** Master of the Lyversberg Passion  
(Cologne; active c. 1460-1490)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** 1464  
**Part of:** *Altarpiece of the Lyversberg Passion*  
**Part:** Exterior left wing  
**Measurements:** 186 x 136 cm  
**Current location:** Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum  
**Original location:** Cologne, Charterhouse  
**Patrons:** Johannes and Peter Rinck<sup>573</sup>



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	Gabriel's morse	metal (gold?) relief

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. RH4a) is set in a room with a cross vaulted ceiling and Romanesque windows through which a wide landscape with a small village can be seen. The Virgin is kneeling on the right, in front of a prie-dieu, on which she has lain a book. A very small dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted in the Virgin's halo. A vase with lilies - the vase decorated with Hebrew script - stands on the floor behind her. The Archangel has entered from the left, holding a long messenger's staff in his left hand and making a blessing gesture with his right. The words of the angelic greeting ('. Aue maria gracia plena dominus tecum.') are depicted to his right. Gabriel is wearing a cope with a morse featuring an image of Moses, seated, holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments.<sup>574</sup> The incarnate Christ is depicted descending from heaven towards the Virgin, bearing a cross. In the right background of the room an opened vestibule can be seen. A coat of arms is depicted in the lower right corner.

## Background information

The so called Master of the Lyversberg Passion is named after Jakob Johann Lyversberg (1761-1834), a Cologne merchant and collector who once had the panels in his collection. The master was a Cologne painter, stylistically closely related to the Master of the Life of the Virgin (see RH3).<sup>575</sup> His work was also very much influenced by the paintings of Rogier van der Weyden and Dieric Bouts.

<sup>573</sup> Goldberg, Scheffler (op. cit. note 555), pp. 281-32. The coat of arms belongs to the Cologne patrician family Rinck. The contract for the commission, dating 1464, cites Johannes Rinck, merchant, and his son Peter Rinck, doctor of law, as the donors of the altarpiece.

<sup>574</sup> According to Goldberg, Scheffler, idem, p. 285. The figure is not identifiable on the available images of the work.

<sup>575</sup> Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 58.



Zehnder even suggests the master enjoyed his education in the Low Countries.<sup>576</sup> Next to Bouts and van der Weyden, the Master of the Lyversberg Passion was, in his *Annunciations*, also inspired by the Master of Flémalle and, according to Jakoby, stood under the influence of van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece*.<sup>577</sup>

The *Annunciation* was part of the so called 'Lyvensberg Passion' altarpiece, which was placed above the high altar of the Cologne Charterhouse. Together with an *Adoration of the Magi* it decorated the outer shutters of the triptych. The interior was decorated with eight scenes from the 'Passion of Christ', now in the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

The vase with lilies is decorated with the Hebrew letters Jo, Sin and Aleph, which make up the words 'Ja' ('vessel') and 'Se[t]' ('presumptuousness'), which would make the vase the 'Vessel of presumptuousness'.<sup>578</sup>

According to Jakoby, the vestibule in the right background is a completely new motif in fifteenth-century *Annunciations*.<sup>579</sup> She suggests it is a variation on the opened door in the background of Dieric Bouts' Prado *Annunciation* (SN6). According to Gottlieb, this motif refers to the closed Paradise now being reopened again.<sup>580</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

Nothing specific has been written on this aspect of the painting.

### *Old Testament iconography*

Jakoby states that the morse, decorated with the image of Moses, forms a parallel to the morse depicted in Lochner's *Annunciation* (RH1).<sup>581</sup>

## Discussion

Because a cross-vaulted ceiling is not necessarily typical for a domestic setting, it is possible that the 'Annunciation' is depicted taking place in a religious setting, though the interior lacks any decoration

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<sup>576</sup> Zehnder (op. cit. note 544), p. 346.

<sup>577</sup> Goldberg, Scheffler (op. cit. note 555), p. 284. Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), pp. 152-53.

<sup>578</sup> Goldberg, Scheffler, idem, p. 281.

<sup>579</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 154.

<sup>580</sup> Gottlieb (op. cit. note 80), pp. 67, 73.

<sup>581</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 155.

that would refer to this environment. The only embedded figure in the scene is depicted on the morse of the Archangel. The choice of Moses (ill. RH4b, though not recognizable on any available image) as decoration for the Archangel is surprising. Gabriel announces the incarnation of the Messiah and the forming of the New Covenant; that such a heavenly messenger is associated with an Old Testament figure, the embodiment of the Old Law and Covenant, is a paradox. Moses might be regarded as an antetype or Old Testament equivalent of Christ, yet this does not explain his function in the scene.

Bouts' Prado *Annunciation* (SN6) also features a morse decorated with a single male figure. Jakoby points out the similarities in the depiction of the right background in both paintings, indirectly suggesting that the Master of the Lyversberg Passion might have been familiar with Bouts painting. However, it is probable that Bout' altarpiece was in Spain at the time. The supposed influence of the *Ghent Altarpiece* might provide a better explanation. One of van Eyck's singing angels is depicted wearing a cope with a round morse with a deep frame (ill. RH4c) almost identical to that painted by the Master of the Lyversberg Passion. Depicted in the singing angel's morse is Christ, crowned and enthroned, making a blessing gesture with his right hand, and holding a book with his left hand. It is possible that the Cologne master had seen the *Ghent Altarpiece* and misidentified the embedded figure in the cope as an enthroned Moses holding the Ten Commandments.<sup>582</sup> Perhaps Lochner's *Annunciation* (RH1) was also an influential factor in the painter's decision to depict Gabriel wearing a cope with an embedded figure, although the two morses are very different in form and style. As with the image of Moses on Gabriel's cope painted by the Master of the Life of the Virgin (RH3), the image of Moses worn by the messenger announcing the arrival of the New Covenant makes somewhat of a paradox.

Incidentally this painting, together with BA1, is the only rendition of the 'Annunciation' on panel in which both an embedded Old Testament figure, as well as Hebrew script is included.

## Illustrations

- RH4a Master of the Lyversberg Passion, *The Annunciation*, 1464, *Altarpiece of the Lyversberg Passion* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).
- RH4b Gabriel's morse (detail of ill. RH4a).
- RH4c Cope of singing angel, detail of Jan van Eyck, *Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432 (Ghent, Cathedral of St Bavo).

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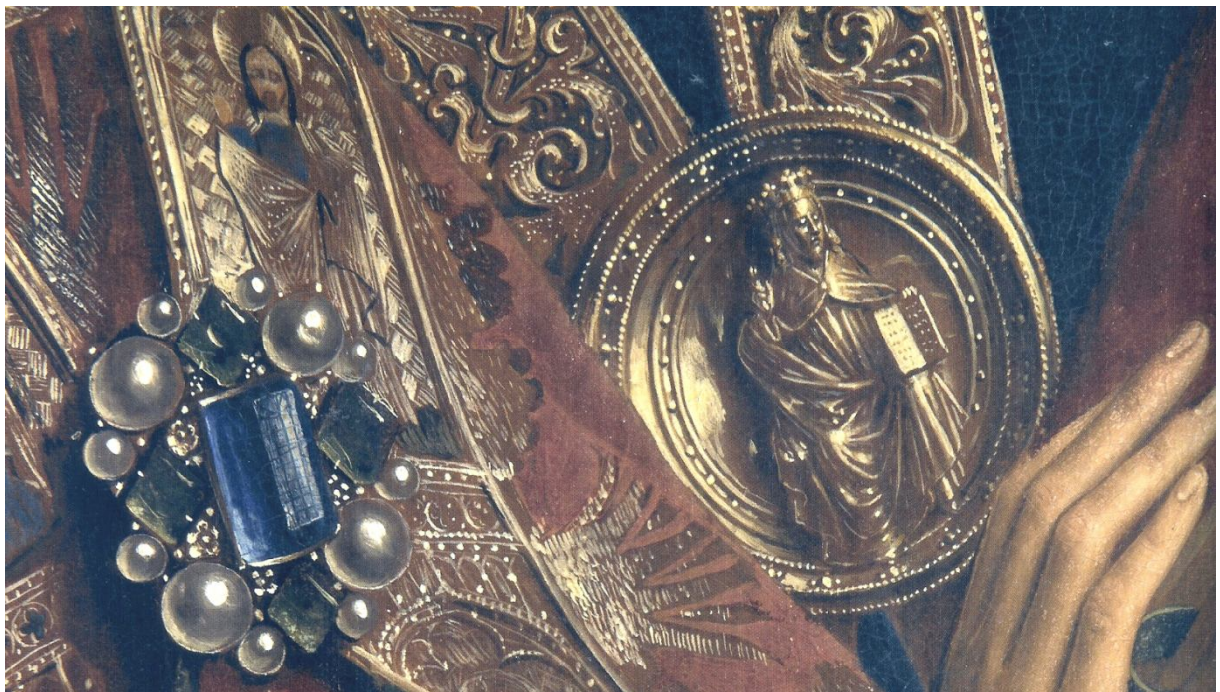
<sup>582</sup> It is not possible to say in how far Goldberg, Scheffler, and Jakoby might have misidentified the embedded figure in the Cologne painting.



III. RH4a



III. RH4b



III. RH4c



# RH5

**Artist:** Master of the Legend of St George (Cologne; active c. 1460-1490) (workshop)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1475-1480  
**Part of:** Unknown triptych  
**Parts:** Exterior wings  
**Measurements:** 77 x 31 cm (painted surface)  
**Current location:** Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Adam	on prie-dieu	wood carving
Eve	on prie-dieu	wood carving

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Fall of Man'	on prie-dieu	wood carving

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Unidentifiable male figure	on prie-dieu	wooden carving
Male saint (4x)	on Gabriel's cope	stitched

## Description

The heavily damaged *Annunciation* (ill. Rh5a) depicts the scene in a simple, undecorated room with a flat wooden ceiling, and windows on the right, through which the incarnate Christ child bearing a cross has entered on golden rays. The Virgin is standing or kneeling on the right, in front of a prie-dieu, decorated with relief depictions of the 'Fall of Man' and a male figure, with a book on it. The Archangel has entered from the left, wearing a richly decorated cope featuring images of male saints standing in niches. He has a banderole in his hand containing the words of the angelic greeting ('Ave gracia plena dominus tecum'). The background is decorated with a brocade curtain.

## Background information

The Master of the Legend of St George is named after the altarpiece containing scenes from the saints legend, now kept in the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum in Cologne. For a long time, a significant portion of the Cologne master's work was attributed to the Master of the Life of the Virgin and the Master of the Lyversberg Passion, while on the other hand pieces now attributed to the Master of

the Bonn Diptych were attributed to him.<sup>583</sup> His work reveals clear influences from the Master of the Life of the Virgin, with whom he may have worked together, although the Master of the Legend of St George was also one of the major representatives of the Netherlandish influence in Cologne, especially concerning the influence of Rogier van der Weyden. It is presumed that the master was not a native of Cologne, but may have come from Westphalia or even the Netherlands.

The *Annunciation* is depicted on the exterior wings of a triptych which' centerpiece has been lost. On the interior side of the wings, one panel features St Catharine with the altarpiece's donor and eight sons. On the other wings, St Barbara is depicted with the female donor and seven daughters.

## Historiography

### *Discussions on architectural setting*

Nothing specific has been written on this aspect of the panels.

### *Old Testament iconography*

Schmidt suggests the male saint depicted below the 'Fall of Man' might be St John the Baptist.<sup>584</sup> Zehnder on the other hand states it might be the prophet Isaiah, who foretold the Virgin birth.<sup>585</sup> According to him, the relief of the 'Fall of Man' might refer to the fact that the era of the Old Testament was still ongoing up until the moment of the Annunciation. At the same time, he suggests that the embedded scene might foreshadow the salvation of mankind, with the Virgin as the antithesis of Eve. Jakoby stresses that this particular rendition the 'Fall of Man' stresses the interaction of both Adam and Eve, with Adam reaching for a fruit offered to him by Eve, thus sharing the blame.<sup>586</sup>

## Discussion

Little can be said concerning the function of the room the *Annunciation* is set in, as it is mainly an empty space. The motif of the prie-dieu on the right featuring a wood carving of the 'Fall of Man' (ill. RH5a) is, of course, inspired by Van der Weyden's Columba *Annunciation*. As Jakoby states, where the focus in Rogier's painting is indeed largely on the emotional expression of guilt, sadness and shame after the actual 'Fall', the moment depicted in the *Annunciation* by the Master of the Legend of St George is just before the sin itself, which creates a certain anticipating tension in the scene.

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<sup>583</sup> Zehnder (op. cit. note 544), p. 250, for this and the following.

<sup>584</sup> Schmidt (op. cit. note 548) p. 224.

<sup>585</sup> Zehnder (op. cit. note 544), p. 259.

<sup>586</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 185.

The identity of the figure beneath the 'Fall of Man' (ill. RH5c) remains unclear. There is no particular reason to believe it is John the Baptist; he carries no attribute, and his clothing does not seem to represent camel's hair. There are no proper arguments for the identification of the figure as a saint as well, as he does not have a halo, although Sts Peter and Paul in RH3 were also depicted without haloes. The suggestion that the figure is an Old Testament prophet, Isaiah or anyone else, is just as arbitrary. as, for example, in the *Annunciation* by the Master of the Life of the Virgin. Unfortunately, the available images are not good enough to see any details, but it might be possible that the figure has little horns on his head, although he does not seem to be holding any tablets.

Most of the figures on Gabriel's cope, on the other hand, do indeed have haloes (ill. RH5d, e, and f); only of the lowest figure it cannot be determined for sure. The depictions of saints together with Old Testament figures on the Archangel's cope can also be seen in the *Annunciation* by the Master of the Life of the Virgin (RH3).

### Illustrations

- RH5a The Master of the Legend of St George, *The Annunciation*, c. 1475-1480 (Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum).
- RH5b 'The Fall of Man' (detail of ill. RH5a).
- RH5c Unidentifiable male figure (detail of ill. RH5a).
- RH5d Figurative decoration on Gabriel's cope (detail of ill. RH5a).
- RH5e Figurative decoration on Gabriel's cope (detail of ill. RH5a).
- RH5f Figurative decoration on Gabriel's cope (detail of ill. RH5a).



III. RH5a



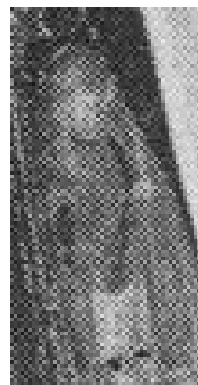
III. RH5b



III. RH5c



III. RH5d



III. RH5e



III. RH5f



# RH6

<b>Artist:</b>	Master of the Life of the Virgin (Cologne; active c. 1460-1490) (follower)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1485
<b>Part of:</b>	so called 'Apostle altarpiece'
<b>Part:</b>	Left (outer) wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	119 x 85 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Bamberg, Staatsgalerie
<b>Original location:</b>	Cologne, Church of St Cunibert(?)
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

Moses	<i>Position</i> Gabriel's morse	<i>Medium</i> metal (gold?) relief
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## Other figurative decorative elements:

Male haloed figure (2x)	<i>Position</i> Gabriel's cope	<i>Medium</i> embroidered
Virgin of the Annunciation	back of Gabriel's cope	embroidered

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. RH6a) is set in a modest room, furnished with a bench on which a pillow, decorated with an 'M', lays. On the right wall, a shelf is placed on which books, a piece of fruit and a single candle rest. Below the shelf, a text (featuring the capitals 'A' and 'D') is nailed to the wall. The Virgin is kneeling in the right foreground, in front of a prie-dieu, with a book opened in her arm. To her upper left, the little white dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted, followed by the incarnate Christ child holding a cross, who has entered the room on golden rays through the open window. In the lower left corner, a young myrtle tree is depicted. The Archangel has entered from the left, making a blessing gesture and holding a long messenger's staff. The words of the angelic greeting, 'Aue gracia plena dñs tecum', are depicted to his right. Gabriel wears a cope, decorated with haloed male figures, and, on his back, a haloed female sitting in a room. The angel's morse is decorated with an image of Moses. Through the open window, a landscape with a city can be seen.

## Background information

The *Annunciation* is attributed by Goldberg and Scheffler to a follower of the Master of the Life of the Virgin (RH3), while Schmidt attributes the work to the Master of the Legend of St George (see

RH5).<sup>587</sup> As Goldberg and Scheffler base their attribution on extensive arguments, as opposed to Schmidt, the painting is here also attributed to the Master of the Life of the Virgin's anonymous follower.<sup>588</sup> The *Annunciation* was part of an altarpiece decorated on the inside with images of the apostles, and, on the right outer wing, a 'Nativity'.

Both Goldberg and Scheffler, as Schmidt, note the strong dependence on van der Weyden's Columba *Annunciation* (SN7), especially in the posture of the Virgin.<sup>589</sup> Jakoby agrees, though also notes that the Archangel is very similar to the Gabriel in Dieric Bouts' Prado *Annunciation* (SN6), as are certain elements of the room.<sup>590</sup>

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

The myrtle, replacing the traditional lilies, is considered to be a symbol of Mary's virginity as well.<sup>591</sup> The male figures on Gabriel's cope are identified as saints by Goldberg and Scheffler, though Schmidt suggests they might also be prophets.<sup>592</sup>

Jakoby considers the possibility that the female on the back of Gabriel's cope might be the Virgin of the Annunciation, though concludes that this notion remains hypothetical.<sup>593</sup> She considers it more likely that the scene is an image of the Virgin relating to the 'House of Wisdom' (Proverbs 9:1), as she seems to be sitting in an arcade and the passage in the Book of Proverbs refers to seven pillars of wisdom.

### *Architectural setting*

Nothing specific has been written on this aspect of the painting.

### *Old Testament iconography*

The morse featuring Moses holding the Ten Commandments is inspired by Van Eyck and Bouts, according to Jakoby.<sup>594</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> Goldberg, Scheffler (op. cit. note 555), p. 373. Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 225.

<sup>588</sup> See Goldberg, Scheffler, idem, pp. 373-374.

<sup>589</sup> Idem, p. 369. Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 226.

<sup>590</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), pp. 128-29.

<sup>591</sup> Goldberg, Scheffler (op. cit. note 555), p. 373.

<sup>592</sup> Ibidem. Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 225.

<sup>593</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 135, for this and the following.

<sup>594</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), pp. 134-35.

## Discussion

The setting of the 'Annunciation' is not clear, and might be either domestic or religious. The embedded image of the horned Moses holding the Ten Commandments (ill. RH6b) is largely hidden by Gabriel's blessing right hand. This might be symbolically intentional, as the blessing of the Archangel, and the simultaneous incarnation of Christ, forms the beginning of the new era under Christ's grace, which has made the Old Law redundant. Otherwise, the image of Moses worn by the angelic messenger of God is a paradox, as it is precisely Gabriel's role to announce the New Covenant (see also RH5 and RH7). The connection with Dieric Bouts' Prado *Annunciation* (See SN6), suggested by Jakoby, should probably be reconsidered, as it is likely Bouts' altarpiece was in Spain at the time of the present *Annunciation's* creation. The suggested influence of the *Ghent Altarpiece* is not as clear here as in the Lyversberg *Annunciation* (RH5).

An *Annunciation*, attributed by Goldberg and Scheffler to the Master of the Life of the Virgin, and by Schmidt to the workshop of the Master of the Legend of St George (Munich, Alte Pinakothek) (ill. RH6c and d), contains a very similar composition, also with the Archangel wearing a cope with a morse, in this case containing an embedded representation of the Annunciation.<sup>595</sup>

It is likely that the male figures on Gabriel's cope are saints, not prophets, because of their haloes. In the *Annunciation* by the Master of the Life of the Virgin (RH3), saints are depicted with haloes, where the Old Testament Moses, also depicted on the cope, is not. It is very well possible that the female on the back of Gabriel's cope (also ill. RH6b) is the Virgin of the Annunciation. The rendition is very similar to that by the Master of the Aachen Life of the virgin (RH7), where the traditional iconography of the Annunciation is even more clear.<sup>596</sup> Jakoby's reference to the Book of Proverbs seems arbitrary.

The single candle and the piece of fruit are both elements also depicted in the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5). Whether the single candle actually has a symbolic meaning and the fruit is intended to refer to the Fall of Man, as is suggested to be the case in the Louvre Painting, is not clear. For the text containing the initials 'A' and 'D', see SN2.

## Illustrations

RH6a Master of the Life of the Virgin (follower), *The Annunciation*, c. 1485 (Bamberg, Staatsgalerie).

RH6b Gabriel's cope and morse (detail of ill. RH6a).

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<sup>595</sup> Incidentally, the pillows feature the same image of a stage as in the *Annunciation* by the Master of Liesborn (WE2).

<sup>596</sup> A similar *Annunciation* to RHxx (c. 1470-1475; Nuremberg, Germanisches Nationalmuseum), attributed by Goldberg and Gessler to the Master of the Life of the Virgin (Goldberg, Gessler (op. cit. note 555), p. 342), though the work has also been (partially) attributed to the Master of the Legend of St George. See Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 222, features the Archangel with a cope decorated with a depiction of the Annunciation and unreadable letter-like signs.

- RH6c The Master of the Life of the Virgin, or the Master of the Legend of St George (workshop), *The Annunciation* (Munich, Alte Pinakothek).
- RH6d Gabriel's cope (detail of ill. RH6c).





III. RH6a



III. RH6b



III. RH6c



III. RH6d

# RH7

**Artist:** Master of the Aachen Life of the Virgin (Cologne; late fifteenth- to early sixteenth century)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1485<sup>597</sup>  
**Part of:** *Altarpiece of the Aachen Life of the Virgin*  
**Part:** Upper half of interior left wing  
**Measurements:** 105 x 62,5 cm (entire wing)  
**Current location:** Aachen, Cathedral  
**Original location:** Aachen, Cathedral  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Adam	side of chair	wood carving
Eve	side of chair	wood carving
Snake	side of chair	wood carving
Moses	Gabriel's morse	embroidered

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Fall of Man'	side of chair	wood carving

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Christ as apocalyptic Judge	upper right corner	painting on animal skin
The Virgin of the Annunciation(?)	back of Gabriel's cope	embroidered

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. RH7a) is set in a dark-grey room, with a bench against the wall around the room, and two windows in the back, one closed and one opened to a view of a far landscape. The Virgin is standing in the right foreground, in front of a chair on which she has lain a book. Above her, the dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted. The chair has a board with a text (starting with a P) nailed to it and is decorated with three little lions on top. Its side is decorated with a relief of the 'Fall of Man'. On the right wall, a long shelf is placed with bottles, a book, bread, a pear and other fruit (apples?) on it, and a frame with stretched animal skin on which an image of Christ as apocalyptic Judge is

<sup>597</sup> Commonly accepted dating. According to Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 118, the dating of the panels is based on the painting style and style of dress.

painted.<sup>598</sup> To the left of the chair another piece of paper is pinned to the wall. In the central foreground, a vase with lilies stands on the floor. A small table with a brush, a bottle and two books stands behind the Virgin, together with a small stool. The Archangel has come from the left holding a messenger's staff. The back of his cope is decorated with the image of a woman seated under a Gothic structure with a blue ceiling and a window on the right. Gabriel's morse is decorated with a buste of what appears to be Moses. Above Gabriel, towards the center, the incarnate Christ child is descending towards the Virgin, holding a cross.

### **Background information**

'The Master of the Aachen Life of the Virgin' is the provisional name given to a painter who was active in Cologne in the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. Because of its similarities in composition and iconography to the Cologne altarpiece by the Master of the Life of the Virgin (RH3), it has often been suggested that the younger painter was a pupil of that Cologne master. However, Schmidt questions this assumption based on the stylistic differences between the two painters.<sup>599</sup> For example, instead of resorting to gold backgrounds, the Master of the Aachen Life of the Virgin usually decorated his backgrounds with landscapes and painted more realistic, contemporary interior settings. However, the Master was very much influenced by other Cologne painters, such as the Master of the Bonn Diptychon (RH8), though, perhaps surprisingly, less so by Netherlandish painters.<sup>600</sup> Grimme, on the other hand, detects influences from the Brussels Master of the View of St Gudula (later fifteenth century).<sup>601</sup>

The Aachen *Altarpiece of the Life of the Holy Virgin* was commissioned for the high altar of the Aachen Cathedral. In its original state it contained seven scenes from the 'Life of the Virgin', together with a 'Christ as Man of Sorrows' and a 'Mother of Sorrows'. The exterior shutters were decorated with images of the Virgin and Child, Charlemagne and Sts Leopard and Blaise.

### **Historiography**

#### *Architectural setting*

Nothing specific has been written on this aspect of the painting.

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<sup>598</sup> I would like to thank Juliane Reininghaus for pointing out the technique displayed here.

<sup>599</sup> Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), pp. 117-18.

<sup>600</sup> Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 119. Sven Lüken, *Die Verkündigung an Maria im 15. und frühen 16. Jahrhundert: historische und kunsthistorische Untersuchungen*, Göttingen 2000, p. 136.

<sup>601</sup> Ernst Günther Grimme, *Der Dom zu Aachen: Architektur und Ausstattung*, 1994, p. 288.

### *Old Testament iconography*

Only Jakoby discusses the iconographic details of the painting, though her analysis is limited to the relief of the 'Fall of Man' (ill. RH7b).<sup>602</sup> Based on the comparison between this *Annunciation* and other Rhinish Annunciations (such as RH3, and RH5), and the drawing of the *Annunciation* in Wolfenbüttel (ill. SN7f), Jakoby suggests that the origins of this iconography originated with van Eyck. The main difference, according to her, is that the German painted reliefs are not that symbolically pregnant, missing the expression of guilt by Adam and Eve, and instead of emotion focusing on action. In the particular painting discussed here, the snake is seducing Eve, who already is holding a piece of fruit. A bearded Adam seems to be holding his hand to his chest, more or less similar to the Adam in the *Ghent Altarpiece*, which has mistakenly been interpreted as a gesture of sorrow and regret. Jakoby continues that the addition of the snake removes the blame from Adam and Eve, who in van Eyck's altarpiece look at each other with feelings of guilt, to the snake.

### **Discussion**

The storage of food and drinks in the same room where the Virgin is reading (and most likely praying), together with the flat wooden ceiling and the depicted furniture, make it most likely that this 'Annunciation' is set in a domestic environment, though a rather large and wealthy looking one.

That Jakoby wants to link the relief of the 'Fall of Man' to the work of van Eyck via the Wolfenbüttel-drawing (ill. SN7f) should be considered an error. The style of Master of the Aachen Life of the Virgin is partially typified by its lack of Netherlandish influences. Despite the – in fact rather vague - similarities between the Adam here and van Eyck's Adam of the *Ghent Altarpiece* (ill. RH7c), it does not seem likely that the anonymous master ever saw the work. For that, there are too many differences in composition and execution. The image of the bearded Adam holding his arm in front of his upper body, and that of Eve with an only slightly similar posture as in van Eyck's altarpiece (ill. RH7d), might have reached Cologne through other means, such as prints and drawings. In no other way does the master seem to have been inspired by van Eyck in his work. The connection to the Wolfenbüttel-drawing is also rather thin, as the drawing might have been anywhere in Northern Europe at the time.<sup>603</sup>

Instead, in van der Weyden's *Columba Annunciation* (SN7), the anonymous painter would have had a perfect inspirational source of an *Annunciation* containing a wooden piece of furniture on the right side of the composition featuring a relief of the 'Fall of Man', right in his own city. Why the

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<sup>602</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), pp. 184-85 for the following.

<sup>603</sup> The form of both chairs, featuring the 'Fall of Man' wood carvings, with little lions, is indeed similar, but of a rather common type.



painter chose to feature the relief, the only element revealing any inspiration stemming from van der Weyden's work, is not clear. Perhaps the artist was indeed influenced by the Master of the Life of the Virgin (see RH3), himself somewhat of a van der Weyden-devotee, unsteady though the artistic relationship between these two artists might be in the eyes of modern art historians.

The scene itself is indeed one more of action than of contemplation. It is more dynamic than Rogier's rendition, and the snake has been given a more prominent presence. It is also noteworthy that the chair with the relief decoration and the lions on top was apparently not intended to be used as an actual chair, considering the board with the text. Maybe it is intended to represent a symbolic throne.

The animal skin stretched on the frame in the upper right corner of the composition (ill. RH7e) contains an image of Christ as apocalyptic Judge. Christ, dressed in red cloth though with a naked torso, is seated on a rainbow, with his arms stretched and his feet resting on a globe. The inclusion of the image embedded in a depiction of the 'Annunciation' is unique. According to Vogelaar, the rainbow represents the universe, while the globe symbolizes Christ's dominion over the earth.<sup>604</sup> It is an image perhaps most famously featured in the *Altarpiece of the Last Judgment* by Lucas van Leyden, dating 1526-1527 (Leiden, Museum De Lakenhal), though altarpieces featuring the same iconography were already painted in the early fifteenth century Netherlands (see for example ill. RH7f, g, and h).<sup>605</sup> A lesser known painting (c. 1480; Rome, Private collection) (ill. RH7i), containing the same iconography, was attributed by Friedländer to the Master of the Life of the Virgin, and by Stange to the same Master's workshop.<sup>606</sup> Indeed, when comparing the way the red cloth is draped around Christ in both the Rome painting and the embedded Aachen image, and the way Christ had his arms and hands held up, the only conclusion is that both renditions are intriguingly similar. Despite the fact that the attribution of the Rome *Last Judgment* has more recently been questioned, and rather sought in Leiden, the original attribution makes clear that this particular iconography of Christ as apocalyptic Judge was also known in Cologne.<sup>607</sup>

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<sup>604</sup> Vogelaar, in: Christiaan Vogelaar (ed.), *Lucas van Leyden en de Renaissance*, exh. cat. Leiden (Museum De Lakenhal) 2011, p. 322.

<sup>605</sup> Another interesting example is: Anonymous (Northern Netherlands), *The Last Judgment*, c. 1440 (Paris, Musée des Arts Décoratifs). See also Georg Tröscher, 'Weltgerichtsbilder in Rathäusern und Gerichtsstätten', *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 11 (1939), pp. 139-214, and Charles de Tolnay, 'Zur Herkunft des Stiles der van Eyck', *Münchner Jahrbuch der bildenden Kunst* 9 (1932), pp. 320-38..

<sup>606</sup> Attribution by Friedländer mentioned in: Frans Baudouin, Karel Gerard Boon, *Dieric Bouts*, exh. cat. Brussels and Delft (Paleis voor Schone Kunsten Brussel and Museum Prinsenhof) 1957, p 80. Stange (op. cit. note 566), p. 47, who also remarks that the Rome painting might be a variation on a lost work by Lochner.. There is another *Altarpiece of the Last Judgment*, attributed to Jan Provoost in the Musée de la Chartreuse in Douai with the same iconography.

<sup>607</sup> P.F.J.M. Hermesdorf, M.L. Wurfbain, K. Groen, J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer and J.P. Filedt Kok, 'The examination and restoration of 'The last judgement' by Lucas van Leyden', *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 29 (1978), p. 317.

In any case the image of the Apocalyptic Christ is an anachronism. Like the apocalyptic image of 'St Michael slaying the dragon' (see also SN25 and RH3), it probably refers to the salvation of mankind by Christ, the beginning of which is depicted with the Annunciation; thus, the beginning and end of the 'era under grace' are depicted together.

Gabriel's morse (ill. RH7j) features a male head that should be considered to be Moses', as he seems to have two stumps on his forehead. The depicted medium is rather unusual; it seems embroidered, rather than made of metal (gold), and the form of a square with a triangle cannot be found in any other fifteenth-century *Annunciation*. Its depiction differs greatly from the morse's by van Eyck (ill. RH4c), Lochner (RH1), the Master of the Life of the Virgin (RH3), or the Master of the Lyversberg Passion (RH4), the latter which incidentally also contains an image of Moses. As with RH4, the inclusion of Moses in this context is rather odd; Gabriel is the announcer of the beginning of the new era, the coming of Christ. That his dress should be decorated with the image of the representative of the Old Law is a paradox.

The female depicted on the back of Gabriel's cope (ill. RH7k) is standing in front of a prie-dieu or lectern, her head slightly tilted and her hands crossed before her chest. The iconography fully fits the Virgin of the Annunciation. It is interesting that the embedded partial scene is not identical to the actual 'Annunciation' scene.

The fruit depicted on the right reminds of the piece of fruit depicted in, among others, the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5), in which it is said to be a symbol of the 'Fall of Man' and the role of the Virgin as the new Eve. It is plausible that the fruit in this work should be interpreted in the same manner. It would perhaps be too free-thought to consider the bread having Eucharistic implications; the bottles, in any case, do not seem to contain wine.

## Illustrations

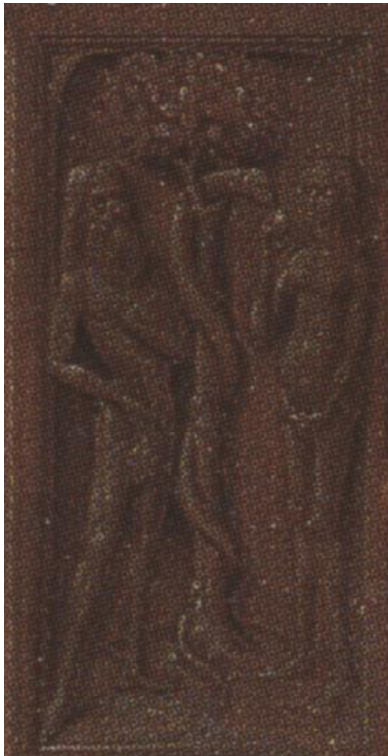
- RH7a The Master of the Aachen life of the Virgin, *The Annunciation*, c. 1485, from the Aachen *Altarpiece of the Life of the Virgin* (Aachen, Cathedral).
- RH7b The 'Fall of Man' (detail of ill. RH7a).
- RH7c Adam (detail of: Jan van Eyck, the *Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432 (Ghent, Cathedral of St Bavo)).
- RH7d Eve (detail of: Jan van Eyck, the *Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432 (Ghent, Cathedral of St Bavo)).
- RH7e Christ as apocalyptic Judge (detail of ill. RH7a).
- RH7f Jan van Eyck and workshop assistant, *The Last Judgment* (detail), c. 1430 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art).
- RH7g Rogier van der Weyden, *The Last Judgment* (detail), 1446-52 (Beaune, Musée de l'Hôtel Dieu).
- RH7h Anonymous, *The Last Judgment* (detail), c. 1400-1425 (Brussels, Musées Royaux de Beaux-Arts de Belgique).
- RH7i Master of the Life of the Virgin (workshop)(?), *The Last Judgment*, c. 1480 (Rome, Private collection).

RH7j Moses (detail of ill. RH7a).

RH7k Virgin of the Annunciation(?) (detail of ill. RH7a).



III. RH7a



III. RH7b



III. RH7c



III. RH7d



III. RH7e





III. RH7f



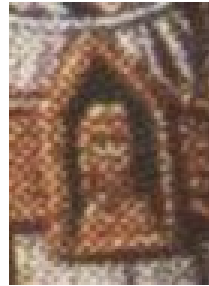
III. RH7g



III. RH7h



III. RH7i



III. RH7j



III RH7k



# RH8

<b>Artist:</b>	Master of the Bonn Diptych (Cologne?; active late fifteenth century), circle <sup>608</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1490 <sup>609</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	Unknown Passion altarpiece
<b>Parts:</b>	Exterior Wings
<b>Measurements:</b>	43,5 x 26 cm (each)
<b>Current location:</b>	Basel, Kunstmuseum
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	left panel, back wall	statue
King David	right panel, back wall	statue

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. RH8a) is set in a small room with a barrel vaulted ceiling and windows on two sides that look out on a wide landscape. The Archangel has entered from the left, wearing a cope enriched with jewels and carrying wings consisting of peacock's feathers. He has a messenger's staff with a banderole featuring the angelic greeting ('Ave gracia plena dns' tecum') in his left hand, and is making a blessing gesture with his right. The Virgin is standing or kneeling on the right in front of a small prie-dieu with a book. Against the back wall a bench is placed above which two statues are placed on the wall, Moses on the left and King David on the right.

## Background information

The two wings that make up the *Annunciation* were made by a painter from the circle of the so called Master of the Bonn Diptych, an artist most probably active in Cologne. His style and iconography also feature elements reminiscent of the Westphalian Master of Liesborn (WE2), who might have been

<sup>608</sup> According to Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 252, Lüken, (op. cit. note 600), p. 135. Stange attributes the wings to the Master of the Lyversberg Passion as that master's earliest work. See Stange (op. cit. note 566), pp. 43, 45.

<sup>609</sup> Lüken, ibidem, dates the work c. 1480. Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 104, dates the work c. 1490 or even later, as she recognizes some elements inspired by a work of the Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece, dated c. 1500. The Kunstmuseum Basel also dates the work c. 1490. See Unknown, *Kunstmuseum Basel: Katalog. I. Die Kunst bis 1800: sämtliche ausgestellten Werke*, 1966, p. 40.

his master.<sup>610</sup> Lüken presumes a relation between this work and an *Annunciation* (c. 1465) by Dieric Bouts in the Museu Calouste Gulbenkian, Lisbon (ill. RH8b).<sup>611</sup>

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Lüken describes the style of the interior as 'Romanesque', because of the window shapes and the small block-shaped capitals.<sup>612</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

Lüken, on the other hand, calls the two sculptures 'Gothic'.<sup>613</sup> He interprets Moses and King David as Old Testament 'saints' and the sculptures as Jewish versions of Christian devotional images. Jakoby states that the statues are artifacts of panel painting from c. 1430.<sup>614</sup> She also notes that, usually, sculptures such as these are depicted on the exterior of buildings, though notes that the Master of Liesborn similarly depicted a rather large stone sculpture in an interior setting (WE2). Schmidt also remarks that the statues might be inspired by the Master of Liesborn.<sup>615</sup>

## Discussion

The humble interior suggests a domestic setting, although the openness of the room, as a result of the three windows, and the fact that the entrance leads directly outdoors, make it unlikely that the setting should literally be seen as a domestic environment. There are not enough interior elements that would suggest a religious setting either. It is interesting that the artist chose to depict the 'Annunciation' in a Romanesque setting. Whether he had any specific intentions with regards to the scene's eventual archaic setting remains unclear. The style of the statues indeed does not correspond with the Romanesque architecture, as they are somewhat looser, more dynamic, and with more carefully detailed draperies than one would expect in a Romanesque setting.

Moses (ill. RH8c) is holding the tablets of the Ten Commandments while he is looking downwards. Incidentally, the statue is placed over a board with a text pinned to the wall. The statue of King David (ill. RH8d) is similar to the statue in the *Prado Annunciation* (SN4), though, as opposed to the stern look of David in the Flemish painting, in this painting he has a gentler, slightly smiling

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<sup>610</sup> Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), pp. 108, 110. Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 105.

<sup>611</sup> Lüken (op. cit. note 600), p. 135.

<sup>612</sup> Idem, p. 141.

<sup>613</sup> Ibidem, for this and the following.

<sup>614</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), pp. 104-05.

<sup>615</sup> Schmidt (op. cit. note 548), p. 163, note 685.

face. This statue is placed over a scone holding a candle. Whether this has any symbolic meaning is not clear.

Lüken might be quite right in calling the figures Jewish 'saints', as they replace the images of saints usually seen in Christian interiors. Of course, one can find more or less typological connections with Christ; Moses represents the Old Law, and David represents Christ's royal human lineage. Yet these two figures are also two of the most important characters of the Old Testament and therefore two of the most logical (and neutral) choices to decorate a hypothetical Jewish interior with.

The comparison of the painting with the *Annunciation* by the Master of Liesborn (WE2) is very interesting and it is very well possible that the artist was inspired by that Westphalian master. However, in the choice of figures he was not inspired by the *Liesborn Annunciation*. The singular statue of a standing Moses had only fairly recently become a tradition in Southern Netherlandish painting (see for example SN8), and the only surviving *Annunciation* featuring a statue of King David is the aforementioned *Prado Annunciation*. The iconography of this work can therefore be considered to be original.

The connection between this painting and the Lisbon *Annunciation* by Bouts seems unlikely and arbitrary.

### Illustrations

- SN8a Master of the Bonn Diptychon (circle), *The Annunciation*, c. 1490 (Basel, Kunstmuseum).
- SN8b Dieric Bouts, *The Annunciation*, c. 1465 (Lisbon, Museu Calouste Gulbenkian).
- SN8c Moses (detail of ill. SN8a).
- SN8d King David (detail of ill. SN8b).



III. RH8a



III. RH8b



III. RH8c



III. RH8d



# RH9

**Artist:** Master of the Holy Kinship (II)  
(Cologne and Lower Rhine;  
c. 1450-1516)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1490<sup>616</sup>  
**Part of:** *Crucifixion Altarpiece*  
**Parts:** Exterior wings  
**Measurements:** 136,4 x 94 cm  
**Current location:** Private collection  
**Original location:** Richterich, Aachen  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Moses	on chandelier	messing(?)	Identified by Jakoby

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Noteworthy</i>
Unidentified faces(?)	Gabriel's cope	embroidered	Not clear on available images

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. RH9a) is set in a room with Romanesque windows. On the left panel, the Virgin is seated on a bench with a book on her lap. To the left stands St Bartholomew. To the right a vase with lilies is depicted on the floor. Coming through the left window is the incarnate Christ Child bearing a cross, preceded by the dove of the Holy Spirit. From the ceiling hangs a chandelier featuring a statuette of Moses. Below the chandelier, a niche in the wall containing a kettle is depicted. Through the windows a city landscape can be seen.

On the right panel, the Archangel has appeared wearing a cope, and appearing to be letting go of his messenger's staff. It is not clear whether there are faces depicted on the cope or non-figurative decoration. Behind the Archangel, St Peter is depicted.

<sup>616</sup> According to Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 223 and Lüken (op. cit. note 600), p. 136. Stange (op. cit. note 566), p. 77, dates the work c. 1480 at the latest. Jakoby, idem, p. 330, note 714, however, also suggests that the wings of the altarpiece might have been painted later than the central *Crucifixion* and perhaps should be dated c. 1500.

## Background information

The younger Master of the Holy Kinship was active in Cologne and the Lower Rhine region during the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. During this period, he was one of Cologne's leading artists, and combined the legacy of Lochner and the Master of the Life of the Virgin with inspiration he received from Southern Netherlandish art.<sup>617</sup>

The exterior wings containing the *Annunciation* were part of a *Crucifixion Altarpiece* of which the centerpiece is kept in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique in Brussels. The inner wings contained an 'Adoration of Christ' and a 'Resurrection'.

Brockmann, Stange as well as Jakoby note the manner in which the master was inspired for his *Annunciation* by Flemish art; Brockmann states that the interior was inspired by van Eyck's Ghent *Annunciation* (ill. RH9b), although his figures are more according to the work of Gerard David (see SN11).<sup>618</sup> Jakoby also notes the similarities in setting between this painting and the *Annunciation* of the *Ghent Altarpiece*, although she also remarks that the painter seems to have been even more influenced by Robert Campin (the Master of Flémalle), most notably by the *Werl Altarpiece* (Ch. I, ill. 32, 33).<sup>619</sup> Especially the hearth behind St Peter, the vase with lilies and the mirror on the left seem to be similar to the scenes depicted on the wings of that work. On the other hand, the niche with the kettle seems to have been inspired by the *Mérode Altarpiece* (ill. SN2b).

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Jakoby interprets the setting as a rich bourgeois interior.<sup>620</sup> Lüken, on the other hand, considers the setting to be a luxurious palace room.<sup>621</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

The statuette of Moses is placed on, or in, the chandelier hanging from the ceiling (ill. RH9c).<sup>622</sup> The 'chapel crown'-chandelier consists of eight arms decorated with vine branches and grapes, which is typical for actual chandeliers of this type.<sup>623</sup> In the center of actual such chandeliers, a small structure, or 'chapel', contains the statuette of a saint. In the painting it is the Old Testament leader,

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<sup>617</sup> Zehnder (op. cit. note 544), p. 271.

<sup>618</sup> Harald Brockmann, *Die Spätzeit der Kölner Malerschule: der Meister von St Severin und der Meister der Ursulalegende*, 1924, p. 50.

<sup>619</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), pp. 224, 226.

<sup>620</sup> Idem, p. 207.

<sup>621</sup> Lüken (op. cit. note 600), p. 136.

<sup>622</sup> The statuette itself is not visible on available images and its identification is based on Jakoby.

<sup>623</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 207.

pointing at the tablets of the Ten Commandments. The figure is described by Jakoby as 'hidden' between the branches and the 'chapel crown', so that it can only be recognized on closer inspection.<sup>624</sup> She offers several explanations for this iconography; first of all, Jakoby reckons that the wine symbolism refers to the Jewish people, as wine and grapes are of great importance in the stories of the Old Testament.<sup>625</sup> Furthermore, she connects the Eucharistic symbolism of the grapes with the Jews' 4000-year search for salvation, and the 40-year wait in the desert under Moses leadership. Thirdly, Moses is considered to be an antetype of Christ. Additionally, the vine might also refer to the Tree of Jesse and therefore Christ's predecessors and genealogy.

Jakoby also refers to the 'diabolical' animal on the chandelier in the *Louvre Annunciation*, which, according to her, reminds of the dark era of Judaism before Christ's advent (see the discussion on SN5).<sup>626</sup> However, as in that painting an animal and not a human figure is depicted, and the Master of the Holy Kinship in no way seems to have been further influenced by the work of Van der Weyden, Jakoby considers the possibility of a lost painting containing a similar chandelier with – possibly – a Moses statue. The most likely candidate for this would be the lost centerpiece of the *Werl Altarpiece*, which would have had a similar interior setting, and which' scenes on the wings were also supposedly used as sources of inspiration for this *Annunciation*.<sup>627</sup>

## Discussion

The *Annunciation* seems indeed to be set in a richer bourgeois environment; it is too humble and undecorated for the room to be part of a palace. The inclusion of Romanesque windows is interesting, as if the painter wanted to depict a somewhat archaic room (see also RH8). However, more pragmatic possible reasons should also not be forgotten, such as that, due to the relatively low ceiling of the room, Gothic windows would have to be somewhat smaller and therefore make the scene darker. The Gothic appearance of the niche does not fit the style of the rest of the room, and might be due to its quotation from the *Mérode Altarpiece*.

The chandelier containing the statuette of Moses is, besides the specimen in the *Louvre Annunciation*, reminiscent of examples such as in Bouts' *Altarpiece of the Holy Sacrament*, and Petrus Christus' *Holy Family in a Domestic Interior* (see SN5 for both). A chandelier featuring statuettes of Moses can also be seen in Joos van Cleve's *New York Annunciation* of c. 1525 (SN28). Regarding Jakoby's interpretations of the image, it would be illogical to suddenly give a domestic object usually associated with light, and decorated with the Holy Virgin and other saints, a negative meaning, as she

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<sup>624</sup> Idem, p. 224.

<sup>625</sup> Idem, p. 208, for this and the following.

<sup>626</sup> Idem, p. 210.

<sup>627</sup> Idem, p. 225.

also suggested in her analysis of the *Louvre Annunciation*.<sup>628</sup> Taking the interpretation of the iconography to a literal plain, the Moses figure is actually enveloped in light. Rather, as with van Cleve's *Annunciation*, one should probably interpret the Moses statuette as a Jewish 'replacement' of a Christian saint, fitting to the cultural and historical context of the Annunciation. That Moses points towards the Ten Commandments might be to stress that those words formed the core of the Old Testament.

That the Moses statuette is such a small detail in the composition, and, purposefully, almost entirely hidden by the decoration of the chandelier, is confusing. On the one hand, the painter took the effort and found it relevant enough to include the Old Testament figure, though on the other hand found it not relevant enough to make him easily detectable. As it is, the figure was apparently deemed not to be crucial for a right understanding of the painting.

The wine branches were common features of a chandelier of this type, yet the Eucharistic symbolism in a painting such as here of course immediately comes to mind. Yet, whether the wine branches should be interpreted in the context of the Old Testament and the Moses statuette is doubtful. It is unlikely that a Christian painter circumscribed Christian Eucharistic symbolism – in all likelihood common knowledge to contemporary viewers – and wanted to refer Old Testament symbolism. There is no indication, however, that Moses was *not* meant to be seen as an antetype of Christ. Jakoby's hypothesis that the Master might be inspired by the *Werl Altarpiece* is well thought and does not seem impossible.

### Illustrations

RH9a The Master of the Holy Kinship (II), *The Annunciation*, c. 1490 (Private collection).

RH9b Jan van Eyck, 'Annunciation', detail of the *Ghent Altarpiece*, 1432 (Ghent, Cathedral of St Bavo).

RH9c Chandelier (detail of ill. RH9a).

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<sup>628</sup> See also Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 197, note 990.



III. RH9a



III. RH9b





III. RH9c

# Lower Saxony

# LS1

**Artist:** Hans von Geismar (Göttingen; died 1502/1503)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** 1494  
**Part of:** *Passion Altarpiece*  
**Part:** Upper half of exterior left wing  
**Measurements:** 65,5 x 60 cm  
**Current location:** Hevensen, parish church  
**Original location:** Hevensen, parish church(?)  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	altar in right background	relief or grisaille(?)
God	altar in right background	relief or grisaille(?)

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'God giving Moses the Ten Commandments'	altar in right background	relief or grisaille(?)

## Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. LS1a) is set in a room with large windows on the left, through which a mountain- and riverlandscape can be seen. God in heaven has breathed out rays of light, on which the incarnate Christ Child and the dove of the Holy Spirit descend towards the Virgin, who is kneeling in the right foreground, in front of a lectern with a book. To the right, a vase with lilies stands on a table. Behind the Virgin is a large altar table with an ewer, cups, a basin and what looks like a ciborium. The altar is decorated with a stone or wooden plate decorated with the scene of 'God giving Moses the Ten Commandments'. The frame features the text: 'ANNO D[O]M[IN]I 1494 GOT GEB IM DEN EWIGEN LON'.<sup>629</sup> The Archangel is standing on the left, simultaneously blessing and pointing with his right hand, and holding a messenger's staff and a banderole with the words of the angelic greeting ('Ave gracia ple[na]') in his left.

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<sup>629</sup> Hans Georg Gmelin, *Spätgotische Tafelmalerei in Niedersachsen und Bremen*, 1974, p. 503.

## Background information

Hans von Geismar was a Göttingen artist, generally not influenced by Netherlandish art, as opposed to most other Lower Saxon artists, but by Franconian art.<sup>630</sup> The *Annunciation* forms the upper half of the left exterior wing of a *Passion Altarpiece*, with on the lower left exterior wing the 'Adoration of the Magi', on the right the 'Nativity' and 'Massacre of the Innocents', on the interior wings four Passion scenes, and as the centerpiece a carved 'Crucifixion', accompanied by the four Church Fathers.<sup>631</sup> Gmelin suggests the inscription on the retable might indicate that the entire altarpiece might have been a posthumous commission of an unknown patron.<sup>632</sup>

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Nothing specific has been written on this aspect of the scene.

### *Old Testament iconography*

Gmelin suggests that the bush on the right side of the embedded scene might be a reference to the burning bush.<sup>633</sup> He furthermore states that the inclusion of the scene clearly visualizes the concordance between the Old and the New Covenant.

## Discussion

The shape and size of the featured altar, with the large and seemingly massive altarpiece, do not make it likely that the 'Annunciation' is set in a domestic environment. The Virgin's mantle or gown is also too sumptuous and elaborate for a homely setting.

The embedded scene of 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments' is not very common in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century *Annunciations* (see also SN3, SN4, SN26, ill. SN5m). The painting by Geismar is the only German painting containing this subject as embedded scene. Even more, with the exception of the – often stilted and eventless – depictions of the 'Fall of Man' in *Annunciations* from the Rhineland and the Master of the Ehningen Altarpiece (SW4), and perhaps the possible scene in BA1, this is the only German *Annunciation* featuring an actual embedded Old Testament *scene*. The presentation and style reveal absolutely no influence from Netherlandish art, yet there is also no Franconian work that might have inspired von Geismar to enrich his *Annunciation* in this manner.

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<sup>630</sup> Lüken (op. cit. note 600), p. 105. Stange (op. cit. note 548), p. 244, states that Geismar was strongly influenced by Nuremberg-Düreresque painting.

<sup>631</sup> Gmelin (op. cit. note 629), p. 502.

<sup>632</sup> Idem, p. 503.

<sup>633</sup> Ibidem.

How the painter arrived at this iconography is therefore an intriguing question. Could it be possible that von Geismar wholly came up with this iconographic idea himself, without awareness of developments in the Netherlands, Westphalia and the Rhineland? Hypothetically, it might also have been possible that the patron, or someone related, had seen works featuring embedded Old Testament iconography and requested von Geismar to a similar embedded scene to the composition, without the painter having seen Netherlandish or Netherlandish-influenced paintings to study their style.

Moses, with long horns on his head, is kneeling with his hands in prayer (ill. LS1b). God's upper body is depicted in a cloud - his pointed hat somewhat resembling that of the embedded figure in Stephan Lochner's *Annunciation* (RH1). The 'bush' in the lower right corner actually looks more like a forest, though it is nevertheless plausible that the painter wanted to refer to the burning bush. It is in any case not a typical element of the mountain top setting of the scene. Just as the *Annunciation*, for Christians, constitutes a key moment in the history of grace, and the beginning of a new era, so is the introduction of the Ten Commandments, for the Jews, the beginning of the era of the law. Therefore, the embedded scene might be considered a Jewish equivalent of the 'Annunciation'. Both the typological interpretation of the embedded scene, and the hypothesis that the scene is intended to indicate the historical and cultural context of the scene with the Virgin, would be plausible explanations for its inclusion. The objects on the altar itself can all be connected to the Eucharist.

### **Illustrations**

LS1a Hans von Geismar, *The Annunciation*, 1494 (Hevensen, parish church).

LS1b 'God giving Moses the Ten Commandments' (detail of ill. LS1a).





III. LS1a



III. LS1b

Swabia

# SW1

<b>Artist:</b>	Master of the Lösel Altarpiece <sup>634</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1440 <sup>635</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	Unnamed triptych
<b>Part:</b>	Half of interior left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	100 x 138,5 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Freiburg, Augustinermuseum
<b>Original location:</b>	Adelhausen, Convent of Adelhausen
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Prophet (2x?)	corners of structure	sculpture

## Description

The Virgin is kneeling on the right, in front of a lectern with a book (ill. SW1a). She is surprised by the Archangel, who has come from the left, holding a banderole with the words of the angelic greeting in his left hand and a messenger's staff in his right. The dove of the Holy Spirit has approached the Virgin on her upper left. Behind the Virgin is a Gothic structure featuring two statues on both corners. The right statue is cut off but the left statue is a man holding a banderole, presumably a prophet.

## Background information

According to Stange, the anonymous master, named after the altarpiece of Johann Lösel (died 1468), pieces of which are now kept in Basel, Dijon and Mulhouse, was active during the second quarter of the fifteenth century.<sup>636</sup> The painter came from the tradition of the Upper Rhinish Master of the Little Paradise Garden ('Meister des Paradiesgärtleins'). It is possible that he had his workshop in either Freiburg im Breisgau or Basel. Besides Upper Rhinish influences, Stange remarks that the painter was also influenced by Southern Netherlandish art, and names Rogier van der Weyden, the Master of Flémalle, Jaques Daret and Petrus Christus as possible sources of inspiration.<sup>637</sup>

<sup>634</sup> Attribution according to Alfred Stange, *Kritisches Verzeichnis der deutschen Tafelbilder vor Dürer. II. Oberrhein, Bodensee, Schweiz, Mittelrhein, Ulm, Augsburg, Allgäu, Nördlingen, von der Donau zum Neckar*, Munich 1970.

pp. 20-21, for this and the following, unless stated otherwise.

<sup>635</sup> Stange, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik. IV. Südwestdeutschland in der Zeit von 1400 bis 1450*, 1951, p. 65.

<sup>636</sup> Lösel was Great Prior of the Order of St. John.

<sup>637</sup> Stange (op. cit. note 635), p. 65.

The *Annunciation* was part of an altarpiece with a 'Nativity', 'Crucifixion', and 'Resurrection' as the centerpiece, Sts John the Baptist and Peter, and the 'Annunciation', on the interior left wing, and the 'Ascension of Christ', and Sts Peter Martyr, Thomas Aquinas and Dominic praising the Man of Sorrows on the right.

### **Historiography**

Nothing specific has been written on the general and Old Testament iconography, or the architectural setting of the painting.

### **Discussion**

This relatively early and somewhat crudely painted 'Annunciation' is most likely supposed to be set in a religious setting, considering the Gothic, churchlike architecture in the background. The statues, at least one of which is holding a banderole, should almost certainly be identified as prophets. Their representation and positions are very similar to the prophet statues in Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1), although they are not depicted under baldachins. Nevertheless, the Old Testament figures give the building an 'Old Testament' appearance, as a Jewish setting. They might also be intended to refer to the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of Christ.

### **Illustrations**

SW1a Master of the Lösel Altarpiece, *The Annunciation*, c. 1455 (Freiburg, Augustinermuseum).



III. SW1a



## SW2

<b>Artist:</b>	Anonymous (Upper Rhine, Lake Constance)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1460
<b>Part of:</b>	Unnamed polyptych
<b>Part:</b>	Interior left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	109,5 x 57,5 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



### Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Prophet (2x)	corners of arch above the Virgin	sculpture

### Description

The Virgin is seated on the right, in front of a prie-dieu with an open book (ill. SW2a). She has a second book on her lap. The Archangel has entered from the left, making a blessing gesture and holding a messenger's staff and a banderole featuring the words of the angelic greeting. Behind the Virgin, a small structure is depicted, the exterior, as well as the interior. The exterior is decorated with two sculptures of men holding banderoles, standing under Gothic baldachins. A bench is placed against the back wall, the wall containing a small cupboard, and a shelf on which an ewer, books and an unidentified object are placed. The room has a barrel-vaulted ceiling. The painting has a gold background.

### Background information

The *Annunciation* is attributed to an anonymous painter, active in the Upper Rhine region, most probably in or near Constance, c. 1460-1490.<sup>638</sup> Stange named the artist the 'Master of the Werdenberg Annunciation', after the *Annunciation* of c. 1465 in Donaueschingen.<sup>639</sup> However, Konrad states that the Lyon and Donaueschingen *Annunciations* have too many stylistic differences to be considered part of the same oeuvre.<sup>640</sup> The painter of the present *Annunciation* was probably

<sup>638</sup> Valérie Lavergne-Durey, *Catalogue sommaire illustré des peintures du musée des Beaux-Arts de Lyon. I. Écoles étrangères XIIIe-XIXe siècles*, 1993, p. 23.

<sup>639</sup> Alfred Stange, *Deutsche Malerei der Gotik. VII. Oberrhein, Bodensee, Schweiz und Mittelrhein in der Zeit von 1450 bis 1500*, 1955, p. 45. See also Madeleine Vincent, 'Un polyptyque allemand du XVe siècle au Musée des Beaux-Arts', *Bulletin des Musées et Monuments Lyonnais* 4 (1968), No. 2, pp. 97-104.

<sup>640</sup> Bernd Konrad, Claus Grimm, *Die Fürstenbergssammlungen Donaueschingen : altdeutsche und schweizerische Malerei des 15. und 16. Jahrhunderts*, 1989, pp. 40-41. Lavergne-Durey (op. cit. note 638), p. 23, however,

active in Constance, after his apprenticeship with or in the circle of Hans Hirtz (active c. 1420-1463) in Strasbourg.<sup>641</sup> Additionally, Stange mentions that the artist was very much influenced by Netherlanish painting, more than by his Constance contemporaries.<sup>642</sup> The *Annunciation* was originally part of a polyptych containing scenes from the 'Life of the Virgin' and scenes from the Passion, which are now spread over Lyon, Karlsruhe and Stuttgart, with one panel lost.

### Historiography

Nothing specific has been published on the general and Old Testament iconography, or the architectural setting of the painting.

### Discussion

The spatial depiction of the architectural setting is not entirely realistic; the structure is too small in relation to the main figures and, although the interior is visible, the roof seems to be 'open' as if the Virgin is sitting in a small courtyard. Because of this, it is also difficult to determine the function of the setting. The objects and furniture depicted in the interior indicate that the setting is domestic. The exterior, on the other hand, with its sculptures and baldachins, would be more fitting for a religious building. It is probable that the painter did not intend to explicitly set his *Annunciation* in either single kind of setting.

The *Annunciation* bares similarities with Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1). Both paintings feature the Virgin sitting in an arched space, with two statues of prophets holding banderoles, standing under baldachins on the corner of the arch. Also, the arched spaced is bordered on the left by a flat roof. It is also very interesting that SW1 and SW3 feature the same iconography of the two singular statues of male figures (prophets) on each side of an arch as well. Whether or not these artists were actively influenced by Broederlam's *Annunciation*, cannot be proven, though.

As with Broederlam's *Annunciation*, the Old Testament prophets standing under Gothic baldachins might indicate a Jewish religious setting. Additionally, they might also be meant to refer to Old Testament prophecies of the coming of Christ, though this is not made specific.

The sculptures themselves are slim figures, quite static, with small heads and hats or fezzes. Their yellowish color contrasts with the white of the banderoles, which do not appear to be sculpted.

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states that Stange's attribution is generally accepted, although she herself does not acknowledge it in her catalogue.

<sup>641</sup> Stange (op. cit. note 634), p. 64, no. 252. Laverigne-Durey (op. cit. note 638), p. 23: The panel was placed in a Strasbourg context by Michael Roth.

<sup>642</sup> Stange (op. cit. note 639), p. 45.

## Illustrations

SW2a Anonymous (Upper Rhine, Lake Constance), *The Annunciation*, c. 1460 (Lyon, Musée des Beaux-Arts).



III. SW2a

## SW3

<b>Artist:</b>	Anonymous (Ravensburg or Überlingen(?)) <sup>643</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1450-1475(?)
<b>Part of:</b>	Unknown triptych
<b>Part:</b>	Left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	154 x 80 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Private collection
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



### Other figurative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Bishop	right side of central arch	statue
Unidentified male figure (prophet?)	left side of central arch	statue

### Description

The architecture depicted in the *Annunciation* (ill. SW3a) is symmetrically composed, consisting of a round Gothic building, with two statues standing under baldachins on the exterior, one of a male figure with a pointed hat on the left, and one of a bishop on the right. In the center of the structure, the bust God the Father is featured, crowned and depicted in clouds, having sent down the dove of the Holy Spirit towards the Virgin on the right, who is kneeling in front of a prie-dieu with a book. The Virgin has her hands in prayer as she is greeted by the Archangel on the left. The Archangel is pointing slightly upwards with his right hand. In his left hand he has a banderole with the words of the angelic greeting. In the foreground stands a vase with flowers, possibly lilies.

### Background information

The *Annunciation* is attributed by Stange to an artist living at Lake Constance, possibly Ravensburg or Überlingen, during the third quarter of the fifteenth century. The scholar constructed an oeuvre containing this *Annunciation* and other works, which supposedly belonged to the 'Lake-Swabian Workshop of the Crucifixions' ('Seeschwäbische Werkstatt der Kreuzigungen'), though no other scholar has accepted this construction. Stylistically, the *Annunciation* is related to the Master of the Allegory of Transience ('Meister der Vergänglichkeits-Allegorie'), a late-fifteenth century painter from the Lake Constance-region who was very much influenced by Netherlandish painting, especially book illumination, and the Master of the Kempten Life of Christ.<sup>644</sup> The *Annunciation* probably was

<sup>643</sup> According to Stange (op. cit. note 634), pp. 68-69, also for the following.

<sup>644</sup> Idem, pp. 59-60.



the left wing of a triptych of which the right wing, featuring a 'Crucifixion', is in the same private collection.

### **Historiography**

Nothing specific has been published on the general and Old Testament iconography, or the architectural setting of the painting.

### **Discussion**

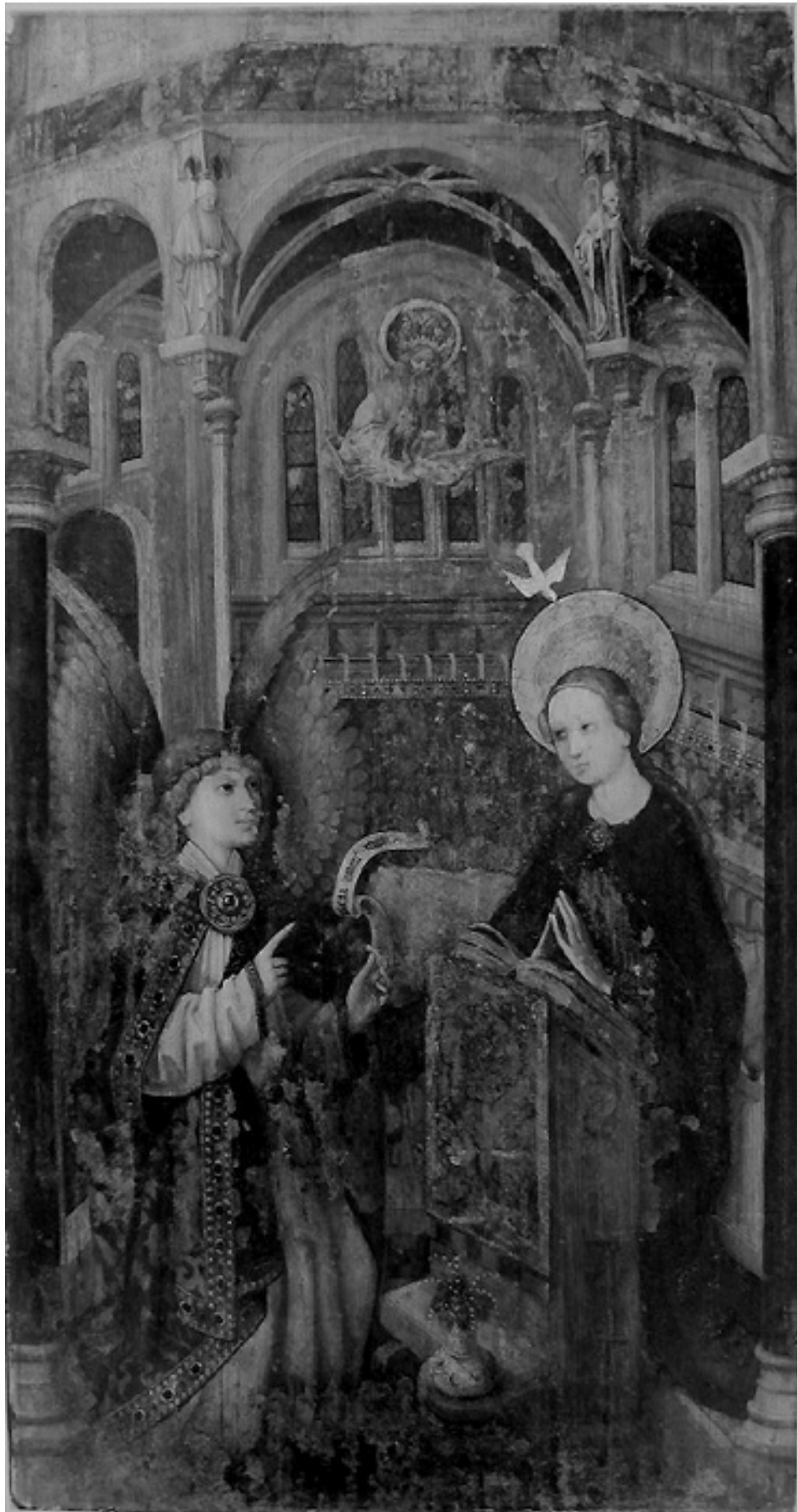
The Gothic structure behind the Virgin should most probably be interpreted as a religious building. It is somewhat reminiscent of the temple in Broederlam's *Presentation in the Temple* in Dijon (ill. SN1e), and, as with SW1 and SW2, the exterior structure is decorated with two singular male sculptural figures – in this case also standing under baldachins – comparable to Broederlam's *Annunciation* (SN1). The left figure (ill. SW3b) has a hat similar to the figures in SW2. His hands and fingers are arranged in a manner which seems to indicate debate or dispute (see RH3). However, he has no banderole, which is the typical attribute of an Old Testament prophet. The right figure (ill. SW3c) has the appearance of a Christian bishop, with his liturgical vestments, miter, and bishop's staff. There are no clues concerning any particular identification. The figure might perhaps refer to the triptych's patron. The style of the sculptures is more comparable to Netherlandish painting, as opposed to the sculptures in SW2. They have more volume, are more dynamic and are depicted in action; the left figure in argument, and the right figure seemingly orating.

### **Illustrations**

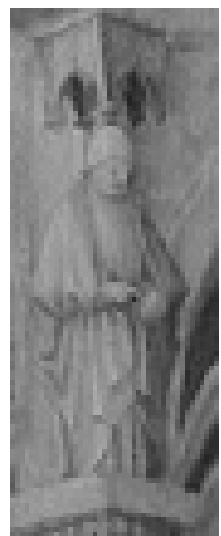
SW3a Anonymous (Ravensburg or Überlingen?), *The Annunciation*, c. 1450-1475(?) (Private collection).

SW3b Left sculpture (detail of ill. SW3a).

SW3c Right sculpture (detail of ill. SW3a).



III. SW3a



III. SW3b



III. SW3c

# SW4

**Artist:** Master of the Ehningen Altarpiece (Rottenburg; active c. 1470-1480)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** before 1482  
**Part of:** *Ehningen Altarpiece*  
**Parts:** Exterior wings  
**Measurements:** 146 x 73 cm (each)  
**Current location:** Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie  
**Original location:** Ehningen, parish church  
**Patron:** Mechthild of the Palatinate (1419-1482)



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	on retable on the left	relief sculpture
Prophet (Isaiah?)	on retable on the left	relief sculpture
Eve	on relief above entrance	stone relief
Adam	on relief above entrance	stone relief
Snake	on relief above entrance	stone relief

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
'The Fall of Man'	on relief above entrance	stone relief

## Description

In this 'Annunciation' (ill. SW4a), the Virgin is kneeling on the left, in front of a chest on which she has lain a book. Before her is a Gothic niche, with a retable featuring relief images of Moses and a prophet. Above the Virgin, the dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted, and behind her on the floor stands a vase with lilies. Against the back wall, a bench is placed with red pillows, and covered with red cloth. Above it a cupboard is placed in the wall, containing books, a piece of paper with a text, an hour glass, and bottles. On the right, the Archangel is depicted wearing a dalmatic and holding a crystal messenger's staff in his left hand. On the right, a window looks out on a wall and, in the background, a tree and a mountain. Behind Gabriel, the entrance is decorated with a relief of the 'Fall of Man' above it. To the left, a coat of arms is displayed. Through the entrance, a garden can be seen, surrounded by a cloister and wall.

## Background information

Although there are no biographical data on the painter, the so called Master of the Ehningen Altarpiece is considered to have been trained in Dieric Bouts' workshop before he began his own

workshop in Rottenburg am Neckar.<sup>645</sup> His construction of space and sense of detail point toward Bouts, as well as the fact that a *Resurrection* by Aelbert Bouts, now in the Mauritshuis in Den Haag, is practically identical to the *Resurrection* featured on the Ehningen Altarpiece.<sup>646</sup>

Based on the coat of arms depicted to the left of the 'Fall of Man', scholars have concluded that the altarpiece was commissioned by Princess Mechthild of the Palatinate (1419-1482), who had her seat in Rottenburg after the death of her second husband, archduke Albrecht VI of Austria, in 1463.<sup>647</sup> For a long time, the altarpiece was considered to have been commissioned in 1476, in honor of the completion of the new choir of the Ehningen parish church. As it was discovered that the choir in fact had already been completed 1436, the dating was changed to before Mechthild's death.<sup>648</sup>

The original altarpiece was – unusually for a Swabian retable, yet wholly in accordance with Netherlandish tradition – a painted triptych, consisting of a 'Resurrection' as the centerpiece, with the 'Appearance of Christ to his Mother' on the left interior panel, and 'Christ and the doubting Thomas' on the right interior wing. The 'Annunciation' was depicted on the exterior shutters. It is a generally accepted hypothesis that the anonymous master closely based his *Annunciation* on a lost *Annunciation* by Dieric Bouts (see also SN8).<sup>649</sup>

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Wiemann and Rettich consider the objects depicted in the cupboard in the wall as symbols of the Virgin's virtues.<sup>650</sup> The lilies refer to her purity, and the garden seen through the entrance represents the *hortus conclusus*, a symbol of Mary's virginity. Rettich additionally interprets the three pillows as symbols of the Holy Trinity.<sup>651</sup> She also states that the geometrical patterns on the tile floor are symbols of perfection (circle) and the earthly world which Christ had entered with his Incarnation (square).

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<sup>645</sup> Elsbeth Wiemann, *Hans Holbein d. Ä.: die Graue Passion in ihrer Zeit*, exh. cat. Stuttgart (Staatsgalerie) 2010, p. 334.

<sup>646</sup> Peter Krüger, 'Boutskompositionen in Schwaben. Zu Bildprogramm und Maler des Ehninger Altars', in: Bert Cardon (ed.), *Bouts studies: proceedings of the international colloquium (Leuven, 26-28 November 1998)*, 2001, p. 277.

<sup>647</sup> Edeltraud Rettich, *Altdeutsche Malerei*, 1992, p. 23.

<sup>648</sup> Wiemann (op. cit. note 645), p. 334. Panofsky (op. cit. note 14), p. 504, note 4, already called the 1476 dating 'arbitrary' and proposed a *terminus ante quem* of 1482.

<sup>649</sup> Rettich, *ibidem*.

<sup>650</sup> Wiemann (op. cit. note 645), p. 338. Rettich, in Dekiert (op. cit. note 382), p. 207.

<sup>651</sup> Rettich, *ibidem*.

### *Architectural setting*

Wiemann states the 'Annunciation' is set in a bourgeois domestic interior that has been 'sacralized' by the niche and the cloister.<sup>652</sup> For Jakoby, the cloister is reason to believe that the 'Annunciation' actually takes place in a convent.<sup>653</sup> However, Steinmetz criticizes Jakoby's analysis, claiming that the building in the background is part of the *hortus conclusus*-symbolism, and states that the 'Annunciation' takes place in a house chapel, although she admits that there are no actual conclusive hints as to the architecture's function.<sup>654</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

The house altarpiece (ill. SW4b) contains the relief figures of Moses and, as identified by all scholars mentioned below, Isaiah.<sup>655</sup> Rettich calls both of them 'prophets', adding that Moses is presented as the founder of Judaism, and Isaiah, first of the four great Old Testament prophets, is included because of his prophecy of the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14).<sup>656</sup> Rettich's description of Moses as founder is seconded by Wiemann, who adds that the identification of Isaiah is based on the fact that the figure points at the Virgin.<sup>657</sup> Both figures refer to the fulfillment of the Old Covenant by the New Covenant. Krüger observes that Moses has his head slightly tilted, as if he directly refers to the viewer when pointing at the Ten Commandments.<sup>658</sup>

Steinmetz remarks that the presentation and form of the altarpiece and its figures is similar to the sculptural imitations in Dieric Bouts' works, with the main differences that the figures in the Ehningen *Annunciation* seem to be actively commenting on the main scene, as if they are alive.<sup>659</sup> Steinmetz furthermore remarks that the material out of which the altarpiece is made is not identifiable, although its surface certainly seems to be gilded. She reckons that it is more likely that the altarpiece is carved, rather than sculpted.<sup>660</sup> Wiemann adds that the monochrome appearance of both the altarpiece, and the stone relief above the entrance, are to stress their nature as objects and differentiate between the 'live' actors and the interior decoration.<sup>661</sup> Lastly, Steinmetz suggests that the simple finishing of the Old Testament figures is to give the altarpiece a 'Jewish character',

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<sup>652</sup> Wiemann (op. cit. note 645), p. 337.

<sup>653</sup> Jakoby (op. cit. note 19), p. 196.

<sup>654</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), pp. 146, 195, note 855.

<sup>655</sup> It is noteworthy that Steinmetz bases her identification of the figure as Isaiah on Jakoby, p. 189, who claims that the turban is a traditional attribute of this prophet. For a discussion on this, see Broederlam (SN1).

<sup>656</sup> Rettich (op. cit. note 382), p. 207.

<sup>657</sup> Wiemann (op. cit. note 645), p. 338.

<sup>658</sup> Krüger (op. cit. note 646), p. 279. Krüger's observation that the Virgin points at the altarpiece should probably be considered erroneous

<sup>659</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), p. 147.

<sup>660</sup> Idem, p. 146.

<sup>661</sup> Wiemann (op. cit. note 645), p. 338.



whereby the depiction of two figures instead of three is possibly also a reference to pre-Christian times.<sup>662</sup>

Rettich interprets the relief of the 'Fall of Man' (ill. SW4c) as a reference to the introduction of Original Sin, by the actions of Adam and Eve, and the eventual salvation of mankind, which started with the Incarnation of Christ.<sup>663</sup> Wiemann projects the symbolic meaning of the relief more on the Virgin herself, as she is the one who opened the way to salvation by her virtue.<sup>664</sup> Krüger observes that, as with Moses pointing at the stone tablets and the prophet figure looking at him while pointing at the Virgin, Gabriel is pointing upwards at the stone relief, where Adam is pointing at the snake and the Tree of Knowledge.<sup>665</sup> He furthermore interprets the placement of the relief over the entrance as a symbolic allusion to the gate of Paradise being reopened thanks to the virtues of the Virgin. Lastly, Krüger also notes that Mechthild's coat of arms is placed right next to the 'Fall of Man', which might signify the donatrix' desire for salvation ('Erlösungsbedürftigkeit').<sup>666</sup> With these elements combined, Krüger sees a representation of all era's in the *Annunciation*, from the era *ante legem* (the 'Fall of Man'), through the era *sub legem* (Moses and the prophet), to the era *sub gracia* (the Incarnation of Christ), with the figure of Isaiah functioning as a bridge between the Old and the New Testament.<sup>667</sup>

Rettich and Wiemann claim the open book of the Virgin refers to the New Testament text of the Annunciation ('Ecce ancilla domini'), while both also interpret the chest on which the book lays as the symbolical holder of the Old Testament ('arca testamentis'), an analogy to the Virgin as 'carrier' of the Son of God.<sup>668</sup>

## Discussion

Determining the function of the *Annunciation's* setting is problematic. On the one hand, the Gothic arches and large exterior walls seem to indicate that the setting is not intended to represent a domestic setting, but refer to a convent. On the other hand, the furnishing and the size of the room would be more fitting for a domestic setting – indeed possibly a house chapel, as there is no bed. The niche with the house altarpiece also seems unfitting for a room in a convent. Yet again, a large stone relief would be highly implausible in a domestic setting. Most likely, the painter did not intend to depict a literal setting, instead combining several architectural and decorative elements for symbolic purposes.

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<sup>662</sup> Steinmetz (op. cit. note 21), pp. 147, 193, note 857.

<sup>663</sup> Rettich (op. cit. note 382), p. 207.

<sup>664</sup> Wiemann (op. cit. note 645), p. 338.

<sup>665</sup> Krüger (op. cit. note 646), p. 279.

<sup>666</sup> Idem, p. 273, note 2. This notion was already expressed in Van Eyck's *Madonna of the Chancellor Rolin* (Chapter I, ill. 20), in which the capital over the chancellor's head is decorated with a relief of the 'Fall of Man'.

<sup>667</sup> Idem, p. 279.

<sup>668</sup> Rettich (op. cit. note 382), p. 207. Wiemann (op. cit. note 645), pp. 334, 338.

The Ehningen *Annunciation* is one of the very few fifteenth century paintings in which decorative figures act in or react to the main scene.<sup>669</sup> The form of the retable indicates there should be a left section, probably featuring a third figure. Moses' stress on the Ten Commandments does indeed make the retable appear like a Jewish altarpiece, although Steinmetz's hypothesis that the simple finishing of the retable also alludes to this nature is dubious. The turbaned man holding a scroll, might just as well be an anonymous prophet, instead of Isaiah. The consideration of the turban as Isaiah's attribute is still unfounded (see SN1). Of course, Isaiah is the most important Old Testament prophet when the prediction of the virgin birth is concerned. Like in Joos van Cleve's later New York *Annunciation* (SN28), the retable seems to be a visually exact replacement of a Christian altarpiece with Jewish substitutes. Moses is the antetype of Christ, the prophet an Old Testament equivalent of an apostle or saint.

The inclusion of the 'Fall of Man' has had a clear function in fifteenth centuries renditions of the Annunciation, ever since the *Columba Annunciation* (SN7). Considering the possibility that the Master of the Ehningen Altarpiece used a work by Dieric Bouts as an example, a comparison with Aelbert Bouts' *Annunciation* (SN8), also believed to be based on a painting by Dieric, reveals that the two embedded scenes in those works depict different interpretations of the 'Fall'; Aelbert Bouts puts the blame entirely on Eve, who solely accepts the fruit from the snake, where in the Ehningen *Annunciation* Adam is just as well an actor, with the snake taking a more passive stance. It is of course very likely that both artists adjusted the scene to personal taste and wishes. With regards to personal wishes, in this case of the patron, Krüger might truly be right in his interpretation of the placement of the coat of arms, as an accidental or inpurposeful association of the altarpiece's patron with the 'Fall of Man' seems unlikely.

As far as can be asserted by the available images of the painting, the Virgin's book does not seem to contain the text of Luke 2. As the Virgin is kneeling in front of the 'Jewish' altarpiece, seemingly in prayer, it would be unlikely for the book to contain the New Testament. The interpretation of the chest as an 'arca testamentis' seems arbitrary and without proper argument.

## Illustrations

SW4a Master of the Ehningen Altarpiece, *The Annunciation*, before 1482 (Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie).

SW4b Altar featuring sculptures of Moses and a prophet (detail of ill. SW4a).

SW4c 'The Fall of Man' (detail of ill. SW4a).

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<sup>669</sup> Only Jan van Eyck's *Madonna of the Canon van der Paele* (Chapter I, ill. 21) otherwise comes to mind.



III. SW4a



III. SW4b



III. SW4c

## SW5

<b>Artist:</b>	Master of the Rohrdorf Altarpiece (Rottenburg; active c. 1480-1485)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	1482 <sup>670</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Rohrdorf Altarpiece</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Upper half of interior left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	117 x 148 cm (original size 205 x 148 cm)
<b>Current location:</b>	Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie
<b>Original location:</b>	Rohrdorf, Commandery of the Order of St John
<b>Patron:</b>	Jörg Bombast von Hohenheim (komtur; 1453-1496)



### Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Prophet	on central pillar	statue

### Description

The 'Annunciation' (ill. SW5a) is set in a Gothic arcade built with crystal pillars, with a wide river landscape in the background. On the central pillar stands a statue of a male figure, presumably a prophet. The Virgin is kneeling on the right, in front of a prie-dieu with a book. On the wall behind her stands a vase with lilies, to the left a closed book. The Archangel has come from the left, making a blessing gesture and holding a large, crystal messenger's staff.

### Background information

The Master of the Rohrdorf Altarpiece was a painter who probably had his workshop in Rottenburg am Neckar, c. 1480-1485. He is considered to have been a pupil of the Master of the Ehningen Altarpiece in Rottenburg (see SW4), as he enjoyed his learning period in the Upper Rhine region, was influenced by Martin Schongauer and the Master E.S. and the Cologne School, yet his work also reveals unmistakable Netherlandish influences probably obtained from the aforementioned master.<sup>671</sup>

<sup>670</sup> The last number of the year provided in the commemorative inscription in the hollowed out back of one of the remaining sculptures of the central shrine, a sculpture of the Virgin, is either a 2, 5 or 7, though most probably a 2.

<sup>671</sup> Anna Moraht-Fromm, 'Ludwig Schongauer und die anderen... Zum Problem des künstlerischen Austausches zwischen der schwäbischen und oberrheinischen Kunstlandschaft', in: Marcus Dekiert (ed.), *Spätmittelalter am Oberrhein: grosse Landesausstellung Baden-Württemberg. I. Maler und Werkstätten 1450-1525*, exh. cat.



The *Rohrdorf Altarpiece* was commissioned, most likely in 1482, by the komtur of the Rohrdorf Order of St John, Jörg Bombast von Hohenheim. It originally was a triptych with a wood carved shrine in the center, scenes from the lives of Sts John the Baptist and John the Evangelist on the exterior wings, and scenes from the 'Life of the Virgin' on the interior wings. The *Annunciation* was reduced in size in the nineteenth century, and lost its rectangular shape, together with the head of the painted statue.

## Historiography

### *Architectural setting*

Lüken calls the setting not a realistic space, but a fictional combination of Gothic architectural elements of rich materials and fine decoration.<sup>672</sup>

### *Old Testament iconography*

According to Rettich, the painted sculpture was originally intact, and represents a prophet, most likely Isaiah.<sup>673</sup> She also suggests that the closed book behind the Virgin contains the Old Testament, which is now replaced by the opened New Testament.

## Discussion

The *Annunciation* is obviously not set in a domestic interior; the Gothic style, however fantastical the structure may seem, indicates the setting is supposed to be religious. Considering the other Swabian panels discussed above, it is very likely the sculpture is indeed that of a prophet, though it does not seem to have – nor is there any mention that it used to have – an attribute referring specifically to Isaiah. If it was the painter's purpose to refer to one particular prophet, Isaiah is nevertheless the most likely candidate, considering his prophecy of the virgin birth (Isaiah 7:14).

In its current form, the prophet might on the one hand indicate that the depicted 'Annunciation' takes place in an Old Testament context, or, on the other hand, refer to Old Testament prophecies of Christ in general. The form and style of the sculpture does indeed resemble Netherlandish painting, especially in its volume, detail and drapery. Considering that the Master of the Rohrdorf Altarpiece is believed to have been a pupil of the Master of the Ehningen Altarpiece, it is interesting that the Ehningen *Annunciation* (SW4), as sole Swabian *Annunciation* in this catalogue,

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Karlsruhe (Staatsgalerie), 2001, p. 33. Stange (op. cit. note 639), pp. 104, 106, 108. Edeltraud Rettich, *Alte Meister*, 1992, p. 252. Lüken (op. cit. note 600), pp. 198-99.

<sup>672</sup> Idem.

<sup>673</sup> Rettich (op. cit. note 382), p. 253.



does not contain singular statues itself. Rettich's hypothesis about the contents of the two books is based purely on assumption, as there is nothing which indicates identity of the books.<sup>674</sup>

### Illustrations

SW5a Master of the Rohrdorf Altarpiece, *The Annunciation*, c. 1480-1485 (Stuttgart, Staatsgalerie).

SW5b Embedded statue (detail of ill. SW5b).

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<sup>674</sup> The same problem is also a point of discussion with the Brussels Annunciation (SN2) and the Mérode Annunciation, see SN2. Works like the *Annunciation* by the Master of the Aachen Life of the Virgin (RH7) contain several books, likely meant purely as decorative details, or to indicate the studiousness of the Virgin in general.



III. WS5a

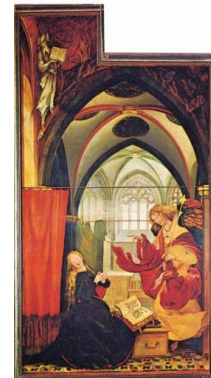


III. WS5b

Franconia

# FR1

<b>Artist:</b>	Matthias Grünewald (Franconia; c. 1475-1528)
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	1506-1515 <sup>675</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	<i>Isenheim Altarpiece</i>
<b>Part:</b>	Second view, left wing
<b>Measurements:</b>	269 x 142 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Colmar, Musée d'Unterlinden
<b>Original location:</b>	Issenheim, Monastery of St Anthony
<b>Patron:</b>	Guido Guersi (preceptor) <sup>676</sup>



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Isaiah	left upper corner	statue

## Description

The 'Annunciation' is set in a large Gothic hall (ill. FR1a). The Virgin is seated in the left foreground, with a book on a chest in front of her. The book contains the Latin text of the prophecy of Isaiah, with the passage of Isaiah 7:14, appearing once on the left page and once on the right page, with an unknown sentence in between.<sup>677</sup> The Archangel has approached the Virgin from the right, making a pointing or blessing gesture with his right hand, and holding a messenger's staff in his left. Behind the Virgin are two opened curtains behind which a cabinet and books can be seen. The dove of the Holy Spirit is depicted above the green curtain. The upper foreground of the architecture is decorated with floral motives, such as leaves and branches. In the upper left corner, a statue of the prophet Isaiah with an open book can be seen. The text in the book is illegible.

## Background information

The *Isenheim Altarpiece* was painted by Matthias Grünewald between 1506 and 1515 for the Monastery of St Anthony in Issenheim, now France. The altarpiece has two sets of wings, with three so called 'views'. Originally, the first view consisted of a large 'Crucifixion', with Sts Anthony and Sebastian right and left. The second view contains, next to the 'Annunciation', a depiction of the 'Virgin bathing the infant Christ accompanied by an angelic choir', and a 'Resurrection'. The third view contained a 'Temptation of St Anthony' and the 'Meeting of St Anthony and the Hermit Paul',

<sup>675</sup> Commonly accepted dating, though Vogt dates the altarpiece c. 1512-1515. See Adolf Max Vogt, *Grünewald: Mathis Gothart Nithart, Meister gegenklassischer Malerei*, 1957, p. 159.

<sup>676</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>677</sup> '...ecce virgo concipiet et pariet filium et vocabitis nomen eius Emmanuel'.

and a wood carved shrine (c. 1490) by Nicolas Hagenau, featuring Sts Anthony and Jerome, and St Augustine with the patron.

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Lanckorońska states that, in nearby Strasbourg, at the time of the altarpiece's creation, it had become church custom during the Feast of the Annunciation (March 25<sup>th</sup>) to open the curtain in front of the church tabernacle – in which the host was kept – on the eve before the feast, up until Compline the following day.<sup>678</sup> The curtains in Grünewald's *Annunciation* are opened as well, revealing the Virgin, who was also seen also a 'tabernacle' carrying the body of Christ. Sarwey adds that the curtain symbolism was also known in Judaism, where the sacred Thora was also kept between a red and green curtain.<sup>679</sup> Ziermann reckons that the floral decoration in the upper foreground refers to the Tree of Jesse.<sup>680</sup>

### *Architectural setting*

Schiller states that the Gothic structure symbolizes the Church, which was created on earth with the Annunciation and the Incarnation of Christ.<sup>681</sup> Lanckorońska mentions that the Gothic chapel is built in a style typical of the middle of the fifteenth century, and was probably based on the Neithardt chapel in the Ulm Cathedral, built 1444-1450.<sup>682</sup> She remarks that the architectural style had become old fashioned in the early sixteenth century, although it was occasionally still used.<sup>683</sup> Lanckorońska also considers a connection between the architecture and the popular medieval notion of the Virgin as the living chapel, as do Fraenger and Sarwey.<sup>684</sup> Geissler takes this one step further and suggests the church space represents the Virgin as the personification of Ecclesia, the Church of the New Testament.<sup>685</sup> Ziermann, on the other hand, identifies the religious setting as the temple, with the Virgin in the guise of temple maiden.<sup>686</sup>

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<sup>678</sup> Maria Lanckorońska, *Matthäus Gotthart Neithart: Sinngehalt und historischer Untergrund der Gemälde*, 1963, p. 148.

<sup>679</sup> Franziska Sarwey, *Grünewald-Studien zur Realsymbolik des Isenheimer Altars*, 1983, p. 57.

<sup>680</sup> Horst Ziermann, *Matthias Grünewald*, 2001, p. 110.

<sup>681</sup> Schiller (op. cit. note 130), p. 62.

<sup>682</sup> Lanckorońska (op. cit. note 678), p. 145.

<sup>683</sup> Sarwey (op. cit. note 679), p. 52.

<sup>684</sup> Lanckorońska (op. cit. note 678), p. 147. Wilhelm Fraenger, *Matthias Grünewald*, 1985, p. 37. Sarwey, idem, p. 57.

<sup>685</sup> Heinrich Geissler, in Max Seidel, *Matthias Gotthart Neithart Grünewald: der Isenheimer Altar*, 1973, p. 89.

<sup>686</sup> Ziermann (op. cit. note 680), p. 106.



### *Old Testament iconography*

Lanckorońska, Ziermann and Geissler identify the embedded statue as a representation of the prophet Isaiah, and claim that the text in his book is Isaiah 7:14.<sup>687</sup> Furthermore, Geissler considers the placement of the large, long figure to be a convincing solution to the problem of the difficult, vertically extended form of the panel, and interprets the presence of the prophet also as a reference to the Virgin's immaculate conception.<sup>688</sup>

### **Discussion**

The large, Gothic interior of Grünewald's *Annunciation* undoubtedly places the scene in a religious setting. However, it is not entirely clear whether the setting is supposed to be Jewish or Christian. The Gothic style is typically Christian, yet no explicit or specific references to a Christian church are included. Lanckorońska's statement that the opened curtain refers to the Feast of the Annunciation in Strasbourg is interesting, although she ignores the fact that there are in fact two curtains. Sarwey's analysis of Jewish custom is much more exact, although it would be very unlikely for a Jewish girl, a temple maiden according to Ziermann, to be seated where the Thora is kept – though whether this was of any concern to Grünewald is another matter. The statue of the Old Testament prophet (ill. FR1b) also gives the setting a Jewish character. Additionally, the peculiar floral decoration add a rather exotic element in the composition. Nevertheless, despite the fact that Grünewald probably used a real chapel for the appearance of his decor, the setting should probably not be taken too literally, as the scene and the architecture neither exactly fit Christian nor Jewish tradition. The – for early-sixteenth century standards – old fashioned architectural style might be supposed to indicate that the scene is set in the past, although if so intended, Grünewald could probably have chosen an even older style, as Sarwey notes that the style was occasionally still used at the time the *Isenheim Altarpiece* was painted.

The inclusion of the statue of the prophet is actually quite excessive as Isaiah's prophecy is already explicitly referred to via the Virgin's book (ill. FR1c). It is interesting that Isaiah's prophecy of the virgin birth is depicted twice, yet the content and origin of the sentence between the repeated prophecy remains unknown. Regarding the prophet statue, Geissler's observation that the figure solves the compositional problem of the vertical extension is spot on. This compositional necessity might also be an explanation why this panel is the sole painted Franconian *Annunciation* featuring an embedded Old Testament figure. Nevertheless, it is still interesting to consider where Grünewald got his inspiration for the embedded statue from, although his question cannot be answered at present time.

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<sup>687</sup> Lanckorońska (op. cit. note 678), p. 150. Ziermann, idem, p. 110. Geissler in Seidel (op. cit. note 685), p. 91.

<sup>688</sup> Geissler, idem, p. 90.

Considering the text of Isaiah 7:14 featured in Virgin's book, the prophet should also probably be identified as Isaiah, although the assertion that the prophet can be identified by his turban is still not convincing (see Jakoby's argument concerning the statue in SN1), nor is the statement that the book held by the prophet is, again, Isaiah 7:14. The scribbling in the prophet's book, other than the first letters perhaps, does not fit the words of the Latin bible passage, and most of the two pages are merely filled with dots and stripes.<sup>689</sup> The statue itself does not seem to be sculpted, other than through its monochrome appearance, and appears quite dynamic and lifelike. Its curved posture reminds somewhat of the International Style of the early fifteenth century.

The idea that the floral motifs symbolize the Tree of Jesse is not quite convincing. The typical branching of the trunk is not clearly presented. Also, the style and color of the branches have a rather gloomy and somewhat frightening appearance, which would not likely be associated with Christ's genealogy.

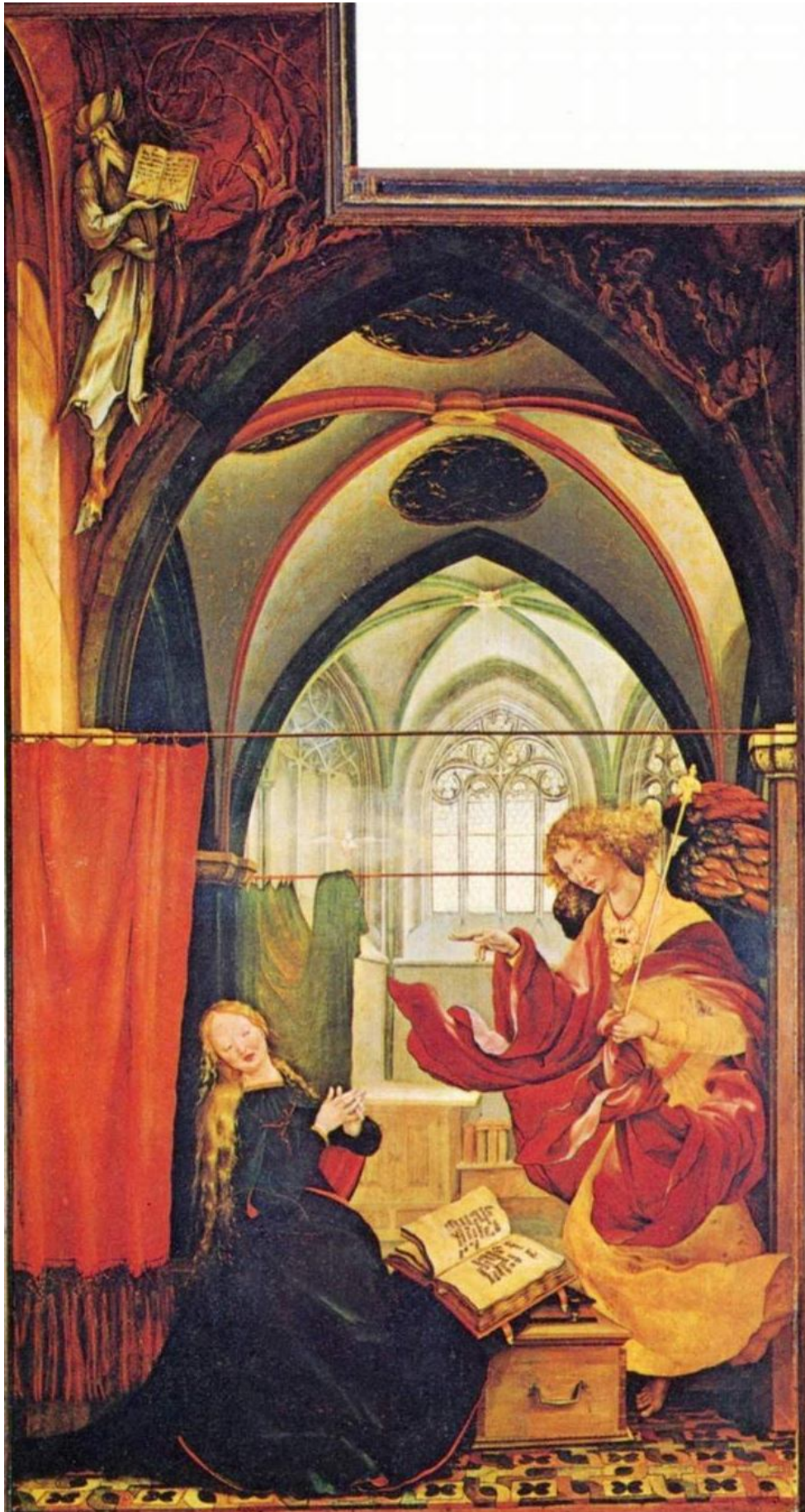
The chest in front of the Virgin looks similar to the chest depicted in the Ehningen *Annunciation* (SW4), which Rettich and Wiemann (unconvincingly) identified as the 'arca testamentis'.

### Illustrations

- FR1a Matthias Grünewald, *The Annunciation*, 1506-1515, from the *Isenheim Altarpiece* (Colmar, Musée d'Unterlinden).
- FR1b Prophet statue (detail of ill. FR1a).
- FR1c The Virgin's book (detail of ill. FR1a).

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<sup>689</sup> Although some scholars claim the text is actually that of Isaiah 7:14 See Ziermann (op. cit. note 680), p. 110, and Lanckorońska (op. cit. note 678), p. 150.



III. FR1a





III. FR1b



III. FR1c

# Bavaria



# BA1

<b>Artist:</b>	Master of the Munich Marian Panels (Munich; middle of the fifteenth century) <sup>690</sup>
<b>Work:</b>	<i>The Annunciation</i>
<b>Date:</b>	c. 1450-1460 <sup>691</sup>
<b>Part of:</b>	Unknown altarpiece
<b>Part:</b>	Upper half of exterior left wing <sup>692</sup>
<b>Measurements:</b>	107 x 80,5 cm
<b>Current location:</b>	Zürich, Kunsthaus
<b>Original location:</b>	Unknown
<b>Patron:</b>	Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	upper left corner	stone relief
Moses(?) <sup>693</sup>	above entrance	stone relief or grisaille
Prophet	above the Virgin	grisaille stone relief
Prophet(?)	above lilies	statue

## Old Testament scenes:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses and the burning bush(?) <sup>694</sup>	above entrance	grisaille or stone relief

## Description

The 'Annunciation' is set in a modest, red interior (ill. BA1a). The Virgin is kneeling or seated on the right, in front of a prie-dieu with a book. In the prie-dieu, books and writing material are stored. In front of the prie-dieu stands a vase with flowers. In the right background, an ewer and bird cage with a bird can be seen. The Archangel has entered from the left, holding a parchment document with three seals. The haloes of Gabriel and the Virgin contain the texts: 'GADRIEL' and 'HILF / VNS . AVS . / NOT. DVRC / DEINES S / PITTR'.<sup>695</sup> Between him and the Virgin, a vase with lilies is depicted. Outside, on the left, are a tree and a large wall. The dove of the Holy Spirit has almost entered the room. The upper left corner is decorated with a relief image of Moses. To the right, over the entrance, is a scene

<sup>690</sup> Stange (op. cit. note 158), p. 57, refers to the artist as the Master of the Munich Cathedral Crucifixion ('Meister der Münchener Domkreuzigung'), though means the same painter.

<sup>691</sup> Ingrid Sibylle Hoffmann in Christian Klemm (ed.), *Kunsthaus Zürich: Gesamtkatalog der Gemälde und Skulpturen*, 2007, p. 26, dates the work c. 1445-1450. Lüken (op. cit. note 600), p. 239, dates the work c. 1455.

<sup>692</sup> According to Friedrich Winkler, 'Jos Ammann von Ravensburg', *Jahrbuch der Berliner Museen* 1 (1959), p. 80. The lower half is supposed to have been an *Adoration of the Magi in the Snow*, now also in the Zürich Kunsthaus.

<sup>693</sup> According to Matthias Weniger, in Borchert (op. cit. note 148), p. 371.

<sup>694</sup> Ibidem.

<sup>695</sup> Hoffmann in Klemm (op. cit. note 691), p. 26.

that might be 'Moses and the burning bush'. Above the lilies, a statue of (presumably) a prophet is placed, and above the Virgin's head a prophet is depicted holding a banderole featuring (pseudo-) Hebrew letters.

### **Background information**

The Master of the Munich Marian Panels was a Bavarian master, active in Munich in the mid-fifteenth century. Of the master's hand are also a 'Nativity', 'Christ in the Garden' and 'Entombment' with the same measurements as the *Annunciation*, though if and in what way they were part of the same altarpiece is not clear.<sup>696</sup> The master's best known work is a large 'Crucifixion' in the Munich Church of Our Lady. Although the anonymous master seems to have been familiar with some Netherlandish works of the 1430s and 1440, he was not as influenced by Netherlandish art as his Munich contemporaries.<sup>697</sup> Especially un-Netherlandish are the monumentality of the figures in relation to the interior, which makes Gabriel and the Virgin stand so close to each other. Although the artist remained fairly faithful to the local Munich style, Lüken remarks that he seems to have been more influenced by Italian, especially Veronese art, which is for example especially visible in the arches.<sup>698</sup>

### **Historiography**

#### *General iconography*

Weniger states that the motif of the Archangel holding a piece of parchment, symbolizing the good news, is frequently featured in older German works.<sup>699</sup> The three seals symbolize the Holy Trinity. The prie-dieu with books and writing material refer to the work of the Virgin as a temple maiden. The empty ewer and the bird cage refer to Christ's Passion.

#### *Architectural setting*

Weniger describes the architecture as 'fictional'.

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<sup>696</sup> Weniger in Borchert (op. cit. note 148), p. 370.

<sup>697</sup> Idem, p. 371. Weniger remarks that the master's *Nativity* (Zürich, Kunsthaus) betrays more influences from Netherlandish art than the *Annunciation*, and reckons that especially Rogier van der Weyden's *Bladelin Altarpiece* (1445-1450; Berlin, Gemäldegalerie) might have been influential. The Munich Master would have had to have seen very shortly after its completion. Stange mentions that the only, hypothetical, possibility of any direct Netherlandish influences would have had to have come from the Master of Flémalle. He also admits that the Netherlandish influences in the master's oeuvre is actually relatively limited. See Stange (op. cit. note 158), p. 58.

<sup>698</sup> Lüken (op. cit. note 600), p. 239.

<sup>699</sup> Weniger (op. cit. note 148), p. 371, for this and the following.

### *Old Testament iconography*

Weniger states that the Old Testament figures stand for the theological foundation of the Incarnation of Christ. He identifies the scene above the entrance as 'Moses and the burning bush', which he calls a prefiguration of the Annunciation. Hoffmann argues that, for his depiction of the two prophets – which she calls relief figures – and other elements, the artist was influenced by the work of the southern-German Master of the Polling Panels (active c. 1440-1450), especially his *Presentation in the Temple* (ill. BA1b).<sup>700</sup> Winkler speaks of the painter's love of stone sculptures and identifies the embedded figures in the *Annunciation* as God the Father, Abel and a prophet, as 'prefigurations', after which he mentions a figure on the right which could possibly be Joseph.<sup>701</sup>

### **Discussion**

The furnishing and homely details, such as the bird cage and the flowers, indicate that the 'Annunciation' is set in a domestic environment. However, the large entrance, the wall outside and the extensive figurative decoration, not to forget the books and writing material that, according to Weniger, refer to the work of the Virgin as a temple maiden, would be more suited for a religious setting. The architecture should therefore be rather interpreted symbolically, as the interior does not properly fit either possibilities.

It is highly interesting that a Munich artist who was less influenced by Netherlandish art than his fellow Munich colleagues would be the only painter from that city including embedded Old Testament iconography in his *Annunciation*. The figure depicted above the Virgin (ill. BA1c) has a banderole featuring a (pseudo-)Hebrew script, making this, together with the *Annunciation* by the Master of the Lyversberg Passion (RH4), the only German *Annunciation* featuring embedded Old Testament figures as well as (pseudo-)Hebrew text. The banderole, the writings, together with the pointy hat indicate that the figure is supposed to represent a Jewish prophet. As the statue to the left (ill. BA1d) features the same hat, he too can be considered to be a prophet. As both figures have no specific attribute that might refer to a particular prophet, the function of these general depictions should be considered to be symbolizing the Old Testament prophecies of the coming of Christ. Or, considering the (pseudo-)Hebrew script, they might be included to stress the Jewish context of the main scene, and possibly, its Jewish religious setting. If Weniger is correct in identifying the figurative decoration above the entrance as 'Moses and the burning bush' (ill. BA1e), which cannot be determined with available images, the embedded scene would indeed refer to the virginity of Mary, as indicated in the *Speculum humanae salvationis*.

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<sup>700</sup> Ingrid-Sibylle Hoffmann, *Der Meister der Pollinger Tafeln. Wege der Erneuerung in der bayerischen Malerei des mittleren 15. Jahrhunderts*, 2007, p. 212.

<sup>701</sup> Winkler (op. cit. note 692), pp. 82, 87.

The horned figure in the upper left corner is, without a doubt, Moses holding an (unwritten) banderole (ill. BA1f). It is not clear whether the banderole refers to the Ten Commandments, which might be supposed to indicate the passing of the Old Covenant and the introduction of the New, or if it is an attribute of Moses in the role of Old Testament prophet. Either way, the embedded figure also suggests a Jewish setting of the main scene. It is in any case not clear whether the figures and scenes over or cornering the arches are painted as grisailles or supposed to be stone reliefs. The tree and the wall outside probably refer to the *hortus conclusus*.

Winkler's identifications are inexplicable and cannot be believably applied to the actual painting.

### Illustrations

- BA1a The Master of the Munich Marian Panels, *The Annunciation*, c. 1450-1460 (Zürich, Kunsthaus).
- BA1b Master of the Polling Panels, *The Presentation of Christ in the Temple*, 1444 (Polling, Church of St Augustine).
- BA1c Prophet (detail of ill. BA1a).
- BA1d Prophet (detail of ill. BA1a).
- BA1e 'Moses and the burning bush' (?) (detail of ill. BA1a).
- BA1f Moses (detail of ill. BA1a).





III. BA1a





III. BA1b



III. BA1b



III. BA1c



III. BA1d



III. BA1e

# BA2

**Artist:** Anonymous (Southern Germany; Bavaria? Master of the Madonna of Covarrubias?)  
**Work:** *The Annunciation*  
**Date:** c. 1450(?)  
**Part of:** So called 'German-Netherlandish Altarpiece'  
**Part:** Interior left wing  
**Measurements:** 80 x 31 cm  
**Current location:** Modena, Galleria Estense  
**Original location:** Unknown  
**Patron:** Unknown



## Old Testament figures:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
Moses	left foreground pillar	statue

## Other figurative decorative elements:

	<i>Position</i>	<i>Medium</i>
King	left foreground pillar	statue
Left half of figure (2x)	right foreground pillar (cut off)	statue
Human figure	corbel	wooden sculpture
Animal	on ewer	metal sculpture

## Description

In the 'Annunciation' (ill. BA2a), the Virgin is seated in a room with a flat wooden ceiling, decorated with a corbel decorated with a human figure on the left, and a chandelier hanging in the center. Also, a blue and red piece of cloth, perhaps a curtain, is draped over a pole that is horizontally hanging from the ceiling. In the background there are windows through which a town can be seen. An unidentifiable object is placed on the stone bench at the window. The Virgin is depicted almost right underneath a round arch. She is seated on the right, wearing a blue dress, and keeping an opened book on her lap. She has a second, closed book on a chest. Behind the chest, a red curtain is hung on the wall in front of a wooden frame. The pillars framing the arch are decorated with stone sculptures standing under baldachins. Moses, holding the Ten Commandments, is depicted in the upper left, and a king, wearing a crown and holding a scepter, below him. The pillar on the right is cut off. As a result only the left halves of two unidentifiable stone figures can be seen. The Archangel is depicted in the left foreground, holding a long crystal staff and a banner featuring writings. In the right foreground, a table is depicted on which a cloth, and an ewer and basin are placed. In the extreme foreground the words 'O. EMANVEL. XRS.' are depicted on the side of the floor stones. On the left edge of the painting, a taller interior space can be seen through an arch. It features a long red-marble

pillar, and tall arches. On a table or altar, the left half of a triptych is depicted, together with a single candle.

### **Background Information**

The *Annunciation* was most likely part of a polyptych which was reconstructed and named by Winkler as the 'German-Netherlandish Altarpiece'.<sup>702</sup> Belonging to this altarpiece were also a 'Birth of the Virgin' (Liège, University Library), 'Visitation' (also Modena, Galleria Estense), half a panel featuring a 'Rest on the Flight into Egypt' (Frankfurt am Main, Städel Museum), a St Margaret and a St Dorothea, which originally formed the reverse sides of the Modena paintings, and a St Catherine and a St Barbara (Venice, Museo Civico and Galleria dell'Accademia), most likely also reverse sides of two of the other panels. A panel featuring the 'Adoration of the Magi' is believed to be lost.

Voss considered the painter of these scenes to have come from the Upper Rhine region or Switzerland, and have been a follower or pupil of Konrad Witz (c. 1400-1446).<sup>703</sup> As not all scholars thought this is plausible, the anonymous artist was more generally regarded as a travelling artist with southern German origins, who worked or studied for a period in the Netherlands before travelling to Italy, where he painted the panels of the altarpiece discussed here. The paintings especially reveal influences of Netherlandish art of the period 1430-1445, visible in the genre motifs, spatial concepts, figures, and embedded statues.<sup>704</sup> More precisely, the work of Jan van Eyck, especially his miniatures, seems to have been the prominent inspirational source. It is therefore plausible that the artist worked in the posthumous workshop of van Eyck in Bruges, while he also seems to have studied paintings and drawings by the Master of Flémalle.<sup>705</sup>

In 2000, Brinckmann suggested the anonymous painter might be identified as the German Master of the Madonna of Covarrubias, named after a painting in the collegiate church of Covarrubias, near Burgos.<sup>706</sup> Two years later, Brinckmann suggested, as a result of definite mid-fifteenth-century Bavarian influences in his paintings, such as from the Master of the Munich Marian Panels (BA1), and the Master of the Polling Panels (see also BA1), that the painter may have had his roots in Bavaria.<sup>707</sup> Borchert, however, has nuanced this hypothesis, though still considers it a

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<sup>702</sup> Winkler (op. cit. note 692), p. 88.

<sup>703</sup> Hermann Voss, 'Einige unerkannte Ober-Deutsche Gemälde in Italienischen Galerien', *Zeitschrift für Bildende Kunst* 19 (1908), p. 282. See also Augusta Ghidiglia Quintavalle, *La Galleria Estense di Modena*, 1959, p. 132.

<sup>704</sup> Borchert (op. cit. note 148), p. 374.

<sup>705</sup> Thürlemann (op. cit. note 193), pp. 206 and 209, also stresses the influences of the Flémalle Master and his workshop. He also mentions a young Rogier van der Weyden as influential.

<sup>706</sup> Bodo Brinckmann, 'Ein deutscher Maler in der Werkstatt Jan van Eycks', in: Frank Matthias Kammel, Carola Betinna Gries (eds.), *Begegnungen mit alten Meistern: altdeutsche Malerei auf dem Prüfstand*, 2000, p. 66.

<sup>707</sup> Brinckmann, in Bodo Brinckmann, Stephan Kemperdick, *Deutsche Gemälde im Städel 1300-1500*, 2002, p. 242.

possibility.<sup>708</sup> The hypothesis that the *Annunciation* and its related panels were painted in northern Italy is in any case very likely, considering the current locations of the majority of the paintings, and the fact that Netherlandish art was highly sought after in this region from the middle of the fifteenth century on (see also SN5, SN12, and, possibly, SN14).

## Historiography

### *General iconography*

Brinckmann considers the corbel to be one of several typically Flémallesque elements.<sup>709</sup> He also remarks that the blue-red cloth usually is white.

### *Architectural setting*

Thürlemann identifies the space in the left background as a temple interior.<sup>710</sup>

### *Old Testament Iconography*

For the iconography of the two books, one opened and one closed, Thürlemann refers to the similar iconography of the *Mérode Annunciation* (ill. SN2b), where supposedly the book of the Old Testament is replaced by the book of the New Testament, delivered by Gabriel.<sup>711</sup>

## Discussion

Unfortunately, almost none of the scholars mentioned above expressed any interest in the specific iconography of the painting. However, Thürlemann's identification of the left background space as a temple is most likely correct. The pillar and arches, together with the tallness of the space, give the hall an ecclesiastical character. Of the triptych on the altar (ill. BA2b) only the extensively frame is clearly visible, but no figurative decoration. It is quite possible that (pseudo-)Hebrew writings are depicted on the centerpiece, though this is not certain.

Whether the room of the Virgin should be regarded as being literally adjacent to the temple, making the Virgin a temple maiden, is unclear. Considering the difference in architecture, and, for example, the different height of the ceiling, it would be more likely that the inclusion of the different settings should be interpreted symbolically. The room of the Virgin seems more domestic. The chandelier (ill. BA2c) is similar to the ones discussed in SN5 and SN28, and is likely one of the genre motifs the painter would have gotten familiar with in the Netherlands. Whether the red-blue cloth

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<sup>708</sup> Borchert (op. cit. note 148), pp. 374-76.

<sup>709</sup> Brinckmann (op. cit. note 706), p. 66, for this and the following.

<sup>710</sup> Thürlemann (op. cit. note 193), p. 209.

<sup>711</sup> Ibidem.



and the red curtain on the left wall carry a symbolic meaning is also unclear (although one is reminded of the curtain symbolism in the later *Annunciation* by Grünewald (FR1)). The symbolism of the two books, discussed in detail in SN2 (*Brussels Annunciation*), was most likely also inspired by the Master of Flémalle or his workshop. It is very well possible that one of the books represents the Old Testament and the other the New. The ewer in the right foreground (ill. BA2d) is reminiscent of the ewer in background of the *Louvre Annunciation* (SN5).

This might be the only *Annunciation* featuring a statue of Moses, in which the Old Testament leader is depicted with a mustache (ill. BA2e). The object supposedly containing the Ten Commandments looks more like a book than stone tablets. The embedded king below Moses (ill. BA2f) wears a crown and a long mantle, and has a scepter in his hand. He does not seem to represent a specific king, as he is not depicted with an attribute. The foremost possibility would be for the king to represent King David, although in that case he could just as easily have been depicted with a harp (SN4 and RH8). Another possibility would be King Solomon. Of the upper right figure (ill. BA2g), only the draperies can be discerned. The lower right statue (ill. BA2h), of which only the left half is visible, seems to be of a hooded figure, most likely male. Because the figures on the right are not recognizable, it cannot be said whether or not the four sculptures were intended to form a cohesive iconographic program. Yet, taking into account that the 'king' is depicted as an anonymous figure, it is plausible that statues were not intended to be deeply symbolical or typological. The Moses statue, of course, could have a number of meanings; since the temple is depicted on the left, the statue might be intended to stress the Jewish ecclesiastical setting. It is also possible that the book in his hands refers to the closed book, the Old Testament, which the Virgin has just laid away. The corbel figure (ill. BA2i) seems to be a hooded figure, bended over. It cannot be determined whether the figure has a pointed hat, an attribute of Jews, or not.

## Illustrations

- BA2a Southern Germany (Bavaria? Master of the Madonna of Covarrubias?), *The Annunciation*, c. 1450 (Zürich, Kunsthaus).
- BA2b Embedded altarpiece (detail of ill. BA2a).
- BA2c Chandelier (detail of ill. BA2a).
- BA2d Ewer (detail of ill. BA2a).
- Ba2e Moses statue (detail of ill. BA2a).
- BA2f Statue of anonymous king (detail of ill. BA2a).
- BA2g Upper right statue (cut off) (detail of ill. BA2a).
- BA2h Lower right statue (cut off) (detail of ill. BA2a).
- BA2i Corbel (detail of ill. BA2a).



III. BA2a



III. BA2b



III. BA2c



III. BA2d

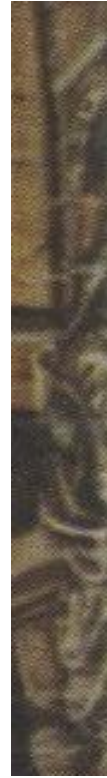




III. BA2e



III. BA2f



III. BA2g



III. BA2h



III. BA2i

# Conclusion

The typological interpretation of embedded Old Testament iconography in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Netherlandish painting has been an art historical convention, ever since Panofsky introduced his iconological method of interpretation in the 1930s, and expanded on his hypotheses in *Early Netherlandish Painting: its origins and character* (1953). Fifteenth-century religious iconography was mainly regarded as a continuation of medieval tradition. During the last sixty years, the majority of scholars have therefore often automatically interpreted Old Testament figures and scenes, embedded in paintings with New Testament subjects as lifeless objects or decoration, as referring either to the antithesis, transition or prophecy of the Old Testament with regards to the New. However, the present study shows, specifically through the analysis of Netherlandish and German paintings of the 'Annunciation', painted between c. 1400 and 1550, that in a substantial number of paintings the embedded Old Testament iconography most likely does not have a typological function.

First of all, it is argued in this study that the origins of Biblical embedded iconography in fresco and panel painting should be sought in early fourteenth-century Italian art. Evidently starting with Giotto, yet especially visible in Sienese art, many Trecento artists added sculptures or relief depictions of angels, prophets, and occasionally specific Old Testament figures, to their paintings of the New Testament, in order to stress the non-Christian – Jewish or even pagan – setting of these scenes. The Temple of Jerusalem would for example be decorated with sculptures of prophets, just as a Christian church would be decorated with sculptures of saints. As a result of the growing French interest in Italian art, this iconography was subsequently introduced to and applied by late fourteenth- and early fifteenth-century artists at the northern French courts, both in Paris and in Burgundy. Especially French and Franco-Flemish manuscript illuminators began including sculptures of prophets, Moses, Adam and Eve, in some cases pagan deities to their religious scenes. A number of these illuminators also painted altarpieces featuring figurative decoration in their biblical scenes. In most cases, the iconography of these works cannot be regarded as typological, as the majority of these embedded figures are non-specific or do not express a particular aspect of the Old Testament, such as a specific bible passage. However, in these miniature paintings there is a noticeable focus on the prophecies of Old Testament prophets regarding the Incarnation of Christ.

In the 1420s, embedded iconography was picked up by Flemish artists as well – first by the Master of Flémalle, who in his religious works painted Old Testament scenes as sculptures, stone reliefs, but also as stained glass images, such as in *The Betrothal of the Virgin* (c. 1420(?); Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado). A decade later, Jan van Eyck, who had worked at the Burgundian court during the second half of the 1420s, painted works with even more delicate and detailed embedded iconography, which would never be surpassed in their complexity. Consequently, the embedding of

Old Testament iconography became a certain tradition in Southern Netherlandish art. Contemporaries and followers of the Master of Flémalle and van Eyck, such Rogier van der Weyden and Dieric Bouts, and, later in the fifteenth-century, Hans Memling, Aelbert Bouts and Gerard David, painted numerous works featuring similar iconographic elements. Characteristic for this Southern Netherlandish art are the divergent Old Testament figures and scenes, as well as the great variety in depicted media. However, despite the considerate popularity of embedded iconography during the first half of the sixteenth century, embedded iconography became more standardized and codified, with a decrease in selected themes and media.

During the second half of the fifteenth century, the depiction of embedded Old Testament iconography also spread from the Southern to the Northern Netherlands, with the city of Haarlem as a focus point. The earliest northern representatives of this tradition, Albert van Ouwater and Geertgen tot Sint Jans, were evidently influenced by van Eyck. The tradition of embedded iconography never became as popular in the Northern Netherlands as in Flanders, although it was occasionally featured in works painted well into the first half of the sixteenth century, such as by Jan van Scorel.

In addition to Netherlandish embedded Old Testament iconography, this study also focuses on its spread from the Southern Netherlands to Germany. Embedded iconography can frequently be found in Netherlandish-influenced works painted in Westphalia, Swabia and even Bavaria, yet these images are mostly limited to monochrome sculptures of Old Testament prophets. Embedded iconography was very rare in Lower Saxon and Franconian art, yet, during the second half of the fifteenth century, it became remarkably popular in the Rhineland, with Cologne as its center. Cologne artists were especially influenced by Rogier van der Weyden as a result of the presence of the *Columba Altarpiece* (c. 1455; Munich, Alte Pinakothek) in the city, and the Netherlandish-influenced paintings of Stephan Lochner. Characteristic for Cologne embedded iconography, in the case of depictions of the 'Annunciation', is the considerate number of depicted wood carvings – influenced by van der Weyden – and decorated copes and morses, most likely inspired by Lochner, though possibly also by van Eyck's *Ghent Altarpiece* (c. 1432; Ghent, Cathedral of St Bavo). Interesting is also the frequent embedded Christian iconography, anachronistically featured in biblical scenes.

During the fifteenth century, embedded Old Testament iconography did not find a real platform in French panel painting, yet, after a decline in the first half of the century, embedded iconography found renewed popularity in Italian painting from the 1480s on. This was most likely a result of the growing Italian interest in Netherlandish painting. From the Southern Netherlands, the iconography of embedded Old Testament figures even reached Spain, where a number of painters influenced by van Eyck, van der Weyden, and Dieric Bouts were active.



The present study discusses that it is not clear who, in general, was the initiator of the inclusion of embedded Old Testament iconography in particular paintings, no matter where in Europe. Three main possibilities are plausible: the artist, the patron, and the hypothetical theological advisor. Indications that embedded iconography was not always featured on the painter's initiative are for example paintings such as van Eyck's *Washington Annunciation* (c. 1434; Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art), in which the embedded figures were not included in the painting's original design, but added later. Additionally, almost all of the artists who painted works featuring embedded iconography painted more works, with identical subjects, without embedded figures. There are as good as no direct indications that theological advisors played a role in the inclusion of embedded iconography, but it is possible that in cases of prominent commissions, or in case that the patron requested a very complex iconographical program, they were asked for advice. In the end, it is perhaps most plausible that it often were the patrons who requested the inclusion of embedded figures, especially in works where there is a direct visual relation between the representation of the patron and the embedded details. The patron would most likely also be the person responsible for the hiring of a theological advisor, as opposed to the artist. The possible influence of prominent artists, such as in the case of van der Weyden in Cologne, might have resulted in the painter's, as well as the patron's wish to copy details from these artists' work, for example because the iconography had proven to be successful, or to give the commissioned painting higher status.

The primary question of this study concerns the possible functions and meaning of embedded Old Testament iconography in Netherlandish and German art, besides typology. It has to be concluded, after analyses of depictions of the 'Annunciation', that there are various possibilities, sometimes varying per Netherlandish or German region. In Southern Netherlandish art, the conventional typological interpretation of embedded Old Testament iconography is definitely applicable to a substantial number of paintings. When for example 'Moses receiving the Ten Commandments' is featured in a depiction of the 'Annunciation', it is clear that both scenes represent the beginning of a new Covenant of God. What is noteworthy, however, is that in paintings up until c. 1480, the number of clearly, unambiguously typological embedded scenes is smaller than one would expect. Only from the last quarter of the fifteenth century can one speak of established, conventional typological representations. This was most likely the result of the spread of printed editions of the *Biblia pauperum* and the *Speculum humanae salvationis*. As the variety of embedded scenes significantly declined in the early sixteenth century, embedded scenes in depictions of the 'Annunciation' for example, were often reduced to 'Gideon and the Fleece', 'Moses and the burning bush' and the 'Temptation of Eve' or the 'Fall of Man', as they are represented in the above mentioned books. However, even in sixteenth-century Southern Netherlandish painting, the typological interpretation of embedded iconography is not always applicable.

As embedded Old Testament iconography was overall less typological than generally assumed, an alternative motivation for Southern Netherlandish artists might have been the desire to copy Italian and Italian-influenced art, considering its popularity. Secondly, as Southern Netherlandish painters were very much occupied with the increasingly naturalistic representation of the visible world, especially through the application of many details, the inclusion of embedded iconography might have helped establishing these convincing, detailed painted scenes. Alternatively, though rather crudely stated, an artist might have decided to add an embedded figure in order to merely fill up an empty painted surface. However, these last two suggestions do not explain why it often were specific Old Testament figures and scenes, instead of generalized figures, that were included in compositions. Therefore, this study concludes that the intention of setting New Testament scenes in a particular historical or cultural – Jewish – context, similar to the manner embedded iconography was usually used in Trecento art, would be the most probable alternative explanation for the depiction of embedded Old Testament iconography in Southern Netherlandish painting.

Next to the manner in which embedded old Testament iconography is featured in depictions of the 'Annunciation', this conclusion is additionally based on the observation that a number of fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Netherlandish, German and Italian artists evidently used similar visual strategies to indicate a scene's context, yet not necessarily in depictions of New Testament scenes; fifteenth- and sixteenth-century German artists, for example, occasionally painted scenes of the 'Annunciation' featuring (pseudo-)Hebrew writings, evidently in order to depict the Virgin as a Jewish maiden. Secondly, there are a number of Netherlandish paintings of Old Testament scenes featuring embedded Old Testament iconography, that can by definition not be typological, as they do not stress the antithesis, transition or prophecy of the Old Testament with respect to the New. Instead, they can practically only refer to the fact that these Old Testament stories took place in a Jewish context. Lastly, there are a number of art works, for example by Lucas van Leyden, German artist Johann von der Leyten, and multiple fifteenth-century Italian painters, that feature mythological (pagan) embedded iconography, either in profane scenes set in Roman antiquity, or in biblical scenes, to stress that these scenes are set in an ancient, classical era. Although many of these examples were not painted by Southern Netherlandish artists, it would be plausible that Flemish artists were at least familiar with these concepts and ideas behind these compositions. For these reasons, in New Testament scenes in which the embedded Old Testament iconography is either not unambiguously typological, or in cases where the embedded images are depicted so vaguely that they are clearly not intended by the artist to be precisely identifiable, it would be reasonable to assume that these embedded Old Testament images would have these same functions. This possible function of embedded Old Testament iconography was also considered a possibility as likely by scholars such as Kemp and Steinmetz.

What is additionally important to consider is that in a large number of paintings, embedded Old Testament figures and scenes are depicted as 'Jewish' equivalents of actual Christian art works (see for example Joos van Cleve's *Annunciation* of c. 1525 (New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art)). Artists such as van Cleve chose forms and media that were familiar and recognizable to contemporary viewers, such as triptychs featuring Old Testament scenes, or 'devotional' sculptures of Moses that mirror actual sculptures of Christian saints. Even more, these artists often represented such objects in an outdated style or featuring an outdated iconography, apparently to indicate the archaic setting of the biblical scene.

Another alternative reason for the inclusion of embedded Old Testament scenes is that these elements could function as an expression of 'functional realism', for example when a biblical scene of judgment, such as 'Christ before Pilate', is decorated with a 'Judgment of Solomon'; fifteenth-century places of judgment were similarly decorated with scenes of rightful judgment.

Northern Netherlandish embedded Old Testament iconography was likely used both typologically as well as context-indicating. Unfortunately, there are too few remaining northern examples to make any further statements on this iconography in Northern Netherlandish art.

As German embedded Old Testament iconography mostly consists of depictions of anonymous prophets, it cannot be said that typology played an as significant role in German art as in the Southern Netherlands. Of course, such prophets could well be interpreted as references to Old Testament prophecies of Christ, yet the usual lack of any other, specific, Old Testament figures suggests that German artists were not so much occupied with typology. The similarity between the depiction and placement of German embedded prophets and embedded prophets in Trecento art might suggest that German embedded prophets were intended to stress the Jewish context of a New Testament scene as well. However, it is important to realize that German artists were not directly influenced by Trecento art. Additionally, since the more specific embedded scenes were often copied from, or inspired by, prominent (Netherlandish) works of art, such as in the case of the *Columba Altarpiece*, it might be argued that German embedded iconography was largely the result of artistic influences, and the wish to equal popular, sought-after and celebrated (Netherlandish) art, and not so much religious or context-indicating motivations. Lastly, in scenes of Christ's Passion, embedded Old Testament figures refer to the Jewish identity of Christ's tormentors, and stress the Jewish responsibility for Christ's suffering and death.

The sole French *Annunciation* on panel featuring embedded iconography, *the Aix Annunciation* of c. 1443, places the embedded sculptures of prophets in a negative context, possibly to stress the antithesis between Old and New Testament. Late fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Italian embedded iconography could be both typological as well as context-indicating, in the case of biblical

as well as mythological embedded iconography. It has not been possible to make such observations about Spanish painting.

The result of the analysis of the different media used to present embedded iconography in Netherlandish, as well as German art is inconclusive about whether the chosen medium to present embedded images conveys specific intentions or meaning, other than esthetics. It has been suggested by some scholars that the difference between monochrome and polychrome embedded figures might have a symbolic function, with monochrome images belonging to the (Old Testament) past. However, this argument has been proven to be unconvincing, as a result of the numerous examples of monochromatic embedded New Testament iconography.

To conclude, this study illustrates how particular iconographic as well as stylistic elements spread throughout Europe – from Italy, through France, to the Southern Netherlands, and, from the Southern Netherlands, to the Northern Netherlands, Germany, as well as Spain and back to Italy. It additionally illustrates that the relevance of religious symbolism in fifteenth- and sixteenth-century art should be nuanced in favor of a more practical, context-indicating function of embedded iconography. Fifteenth-century artists were apparently conscious of ways to depict different historical era's and cultures, without the knowledge to use actual stylistic elements of the particular era or culture in question. However, typology did nevertheless play a significant in the representation of Old Testament iconography, especially from the last quarter of the fifteenth century on. Independently from the various possible functions and meaning of embedded Old Testament iconography, this study also places under discussion the responsibility for particular iconography – whether it was the responsibility of the artist, the patron, or a theological advisor. It also illustrates how different perceptions of Judaism, both positive as well as negative, could be expressed through embedded Old Testament images. Most of all, however, this study stresses the importance of a more careful consideration of the function and meaning of particular paintings' iconography, of not too eagerly use a particular model of interpretation, without considering its applicability.

The present study does not include a discussion on the possible effects of religious and philosophical developments during the fifteenth and sixteenth century. Neither was the particular function and use of paintings featuring embedded iconography sufficiently considered. Analyses of the embedded iconographical programs of entire altarpieces featuring multiple scenes were left out as well. These aspects, among others, should all be included in further research on this topic. To provide more solid arguments, the study of embedded Old Testament iconography should be placed in a wider context, for example by close analysis of New Testament scenes that are depicted taking place in definite Jewish houses of worship, such as the 'Betrothal of the Virgin, and the 'Presentation of Christ'. Also significant would be a closer analysis of scenes from the Passion of Christ, in order to analyze the negative functions of embedded Old Testament iconography. An analysis of Passion

scenes, such as 'Christ before Pilate, could also further inform us on the use of embedded iconography as a form of 'functional realism'. Furthermore, this specific iconography should be further compared to medieval and contemporary religious texts, in order to search for additional written comparisons and descriptions of Old Testament stories with regard to New Testament events. Ideally, paintings featuring embedded iconography should also be researched on changes in its design and composition, for example through the study of underdrawings. It is clear: there is still much to be discovered.



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