A Rediscovered Work By Hugo van der Goes[1]

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Introduction

After more than a hundred years of art historical research and photographic documentation, rediscoveries of works by famous masters have become extremely rare. Reattributions, as part of the general process of research, are more frequent. The painting that is the subject of this article is one of these very rare rediscoveries. It presents us with a completely new and complex problem, for this is not merely the report of a discovery, but a Cinderella story in which the main figure was so cleverly concealed by rags that generations of art historians ignored it. Recent restoration, however, has brought to light the unexpected elegance of a masterpiece.

The work, now in a private American collection, is a large early Netherlandish panel painting representing the Virgin and Child flanked by saints, all set under an elaborate architectural framework in front of a landscape (pl. I). At some time in the past this composition had been obscured (fig. 1); the Virgin and Child in the center were covered with an architectural perspective view of a church, and the saints were almost totally transformed to make them participants in a scene usually identified as the Marriage of Henry VII. It is astonishing to note that even in its altered form this work was well thought of in the eighteenth century. Both collectors and connoisseurs held it in high regard and competed in their attempts to identify the subject.

An analysis of this painting must take into account two different questions: its fate before restoration and its art historical status afterwards. The first part of this article therefore deals with its history and reception in its altered state; the second details the restoration, and is concerned with the work's original appearance, its significance, and its creator.

The Panel's Early History

In 1890 the painting was included in *The Tudor Exhibition* at the Royal Academy, London. Claude Philips, reviewing the exhibition for the *Gazette des beaux-arts*, was able to discern the original figures of the Virgin and Child hidden under the church interior, and described both this major work and the contemporary opinion of it:

> Un grand panneau des plus curieux est celui qu'on a affublé de la définition 'Mariage de Henri VII' avec Elisabeth d'York, en l'attribuant à Mabuse ... une oeuvre supérieure de la main d'un Flamand ou Hollandais de la fin du XVe siècle ... Au millieu, se voyait, sans aucun doute, le groupe traditionnel la 'Vierge avec l'Enfant' ... mais quelque zélè spectateur hollandais du XVIIe siècle a dû le faire remplacer par une perspective d'église nue et froide, comme en peignaient les Steenwyck et les Saanredam. . . .[2]

At the time of the exhibition and this review, the painting was in the collection of the Dent family at

Fig. 1. *The Marriage of Henry VII and Elisabeth of York*, oil on panel. Formerly at Sudeley Castle, England.

Sudeley Castle in Gloucestershire, and there it remained until recently acquired by its present owner. The Dent family's ownership dates back to its purchase by John Dent in 1842 for £178.10 at the sale of the famous writer and collector Horace Walpole. Walpole had hung the painting on the east wall of his great Gothic-revival "Long Gallery" at Strawberry Hill. He, in turn, had bought it for £80 in 1753 at the estate sale of Lord Pomfert.[3] A friend of Walpole, A. C. Ducarel, twice visited the seat of the Pomfert family at Easton Neston, Northamptonshire, before the sale to study the work.[4] He provided information which Walpole, who was clearly proud of the painting, incorporated into *Anecdotes of Painting in England* which, in the words of manuscript notes by George Vertue, Walpole "digested and published" in 1762. He there reproduced an engraving of the panel and gave the following description:

The only work besides I know of this master [Mabuse] in England, is a celebrated picture in my possession. It was bought for £200 by Henrietta Louisa Countess of Pomfert, and hung for some years at their seat at Easton Neston in Northamptonshire, whence it was sold after the late Earl's death. The Earl of Oxford once offered £500 for it. It is painted on board and four feet six inches and three quarters wide by three feet six inches and three quarters high. It represents the inside of a church, an imaginary one, not at all resembling the abbey where those princes were married. The perspective and the landscape of the country on each side are good. On one hand on the foreground stand the King and Bishop of Imola who pro-

nounced the nuptial benediction. His majesty + is a trist, lean, ungracious figure, with a down-cast look, very expressive of his mean temper, and of the little satisfaction he had in the match. Opposite to the Bishop is the Queen +, a buxom well-looking damsel, with golden hair. By her is a figure, above all proportion with the rest, unless intended, as I imagine, for an emblematic personage, and designed from its lofty nature to give an idea of something above human. It is an elderly man, dressed like a monk, except that his habit is green, his feet bare, and a spear in his hand. As the frock of no religious order ever was green, this cannot be meant for a friar. Probably it is St. Thomas, represented, as in the martyrologies, with the instrument of his death. The Queen might have some devotion to that peculiar Saint, or might be born or married on his festival. Be that as it may, the picture, though in a hard manner, has its merits, independent of the curiosity.[5]

George Vertue, a distinguished connoisseur, historian, antiquarian, and engraver, who was many years Walpole's elder, acted as his adviser. According to him, the Pomferts had purchased the painting from the art dealer Sykes (ca. 1659–1724).[6] No earlier history of it is recorded. Its subject and significance greatly preoccupied Vertue, and a letter from Walpole to Ducarel of 1762 provides an inkling of the differences of opinion between collector and connoisseur:

I am very much amazed at Vertue's blunders about my Marriage of Henry VII. His account is a heap of ridiculous contradictions. He said, Sykes knowing how to give names to pictures to make them sell, called this the Marriage of Henry VII and afterwards, he said, Sykes had the figures inserted in an old picture of a church. He must have known little indeed, Sir, if he had not known how to name a picture that he had painted on purpose that he might call it so! That Vertue on the strictest examination could not be convinced that the man was Henry VII not being like any of his pictures. Unluckily he is extremely like the shilling which is much more authentic than any picture of Henry VII—but here Sykes seems to have been extremely deficient in his tricks: did he order the figure

Fig. 2. Top, Detail of crown from Fig. 1. Infrared reflectograph showing underdrawing. Bottom, Detail of current state.

to be painted like Henry VII and yet could not get it painted like him, which was the easiest part of the task? Yet how came he to get the Queen painted like, whose representations are much scarcer than those of her husband? And how came Sykes to have pomegranates painted on her robe, only to puzzle the cause? It is not worth adding, that I should much sooner believe the church was painted to the figures than the figures to the church. They are hard and antique; the church is a better style, and at least more fresh. If Vertue had made no better criticisms than these, I would never have taken so much trouble with his MSS.[7]

Today it is clear that both were right in their own way: Vertue recognized the artificial reworking of the two royal figures, Henry VII and Elisabeth of York, and the fact that they were deliberately so named. Walpole, for his part, recognized the differing ages of the paint layers and the more modern style of the church interior.

Findings of the Restoration

Restoration was carried out in 1983 and 1984 by David Bull, now at the National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. Overpainted areas were carefully removed. (The adhesive qualities of the upper layer being less strong, they could be removed with comparative ease.) The results of restoration are as follows:

1. Entire areas of the original paint surface were revealed beneath the overpainting. These are stylistically related to the surrounding areas previously visible on either side. A homogenous composition appeared (pl. I). This shows the Virgin and Child seated in the center and, from left to right, four standing saints: Thomas, John the Baptist, Jerome, and Louis. Two sections have been scratched away: a rectangular area around the Virgin and the silhouette of St. John.

2. The support, six oak boards measuring a total of 110.7 x 124.8 cm, was originally glued together vertically. An additional board, about fifteen centimeters wide, was later inserted into the middle section, where the panel had been divided, cutting through the figures of the Virgin and Child.

3. After removal of the overpainting a series of details in the original paint surface became visible. A survey of differences (pre- and post-restoration) reveals a distinction between basic and superficial alterations. The removal was probably done by solvents which touched the colors of the figure of St. John more than the central panel whose drawing remains largely intact. Solvents also removed some of the green of St. Thomas's cloak on the left, since repainted. The removal of the Virgin and Child, which must have been due to a distaste for its religious content, was radical, while the saints were simply "secularized" by the obliteration of their attributes. Thus, the figure of St. Jerome became an historical bishop with the removal of his red cardinal's hat and the lion at his feet. Objects related to the Virgin Mary at the lower edge of the painting, such as the glass vase with the columbine and the open censer, were also hidden. The robed figure of "Elisabeth of York" took the place of the bare-legged St. John the Baptist. Even the pillars and marble tiles were reworked. A church interior replaced the Virgin and Child, and the open arcade was integrated into the immediate foreground, and stained glass windows painted into the flanking niches to underline this effect.

4. Contrary to the usual practice of the time, the paint surface was removed with such care that part of the original drawing beneath the protective layer of priming is still intact. (One may assume that the alterations were carried out in such a way as to minimize irregularities in the repainted surface.) It is of considerable art historical significance that in its present state this painting is one of only very few surviving examples showing the original underdrawing to the naked eye. Aside from the many examples previously recorded with the aid of infrared reflectography, evidence of the technique of underdrawing was until recently provided only by unfinished works such as the *St. Barbara* by van Eyck (1437, Antwerp), the *Salvator mundi* by Dürer (ca. 1503, New York), the *Madonna and Child, St. John, and Four Angels* from the studio of Michelangelo (ca. 1510, London), and the *Allegory of Virtue* by Correggio (Rome, Doria Gallery).

Reconstruction of the Painting's Original Appearance

As a result of these findings, and with the newly acquired view of the whole, speculation naturally arose as to the original appearance of the painting. A comparison with the engraving produced by Grignion for Walpole shows that the overall format of the panel, as it then existed, is identical with its dimensions before the recent removal of the added board. The extent of the original paint surface is visible on all sides of the work (pl. I). The close proximity of some architectural details and figures on the carved stone facade and capitals to the panel's edges is thus an aspect of the original composition. (It is improbable, after all, that the alteration of the painting included the complete removal of ground and paint from its outer edges.) Subsequent examination with an infrared Vidicon camera has brought to light additional underdrawing, visible under all surfaces except those where verdigris has been used.[8] Two further details, which were not immediately apparent as alterations, could also be detected by means of infrared. These are the crown (fig. 2) and the robe of the king (fig. 3). The underdrawing of the former shows a flat ring ornamented only with fleurs-de-lis; the ribs in the background architecture are visible beneath the hat of the crown and the clumsily added crosses. The original design resembles that shown in an early sixteenth-century miniature of Louis XI from Rouen (fig. 4).[9] The motif visible on the robe of the king in the panel is an indication that he, too, was meant to be recognized as a king of France. The opaque dark blue now seen represents a particularly stubborn section of overpainting, beneath which there is very probably a light shade of blue ornamented with many gold fleurs-de-lis.

Conjectures on the Reasons for Overpainting

The painting was probably commissioned for a specific purpose and place, and was not regarded as a movable object, as Walpole rightly remarked. (On account of its size, it is very unlikely that it was frequently moved.) A connection with England is indicated by its early appearance on the English art market and, particularly, by its intentional transformation into an English historical picture traditionally interpreted as representing a royal marriage. The elimination of French attributes, the crown and the fleurs-de-lis on the robes, also points to England. Unfortunately, the most reliable piece of evidence that could have been scientifically tested for age and regional characteristics, the added panel, was lost after restoration. The style of the overpainting is thus the only means for determining the date of the alterations.

The style of the overpainting can be dated to the late sixteenth or the first half of the seventeenth century by the treatment of architecture and figures. It could point to the Low Countries as well as to England, but it is inconceivable that a painting which had survived the turmoils of the iconoclastic rebellion there in the mid-sixteenth century should have been remodeled subsequently. Re-Catholisized Flanders would have presented no necessity for such an operation, and even in the northern Netherlands there would have been no justification, historically speaking, for the concealment of a French king.

Assuming that the painting was in England, the possible political and religious motives for its transformation should be sought within the period of time provided by stylistic evidence. The similarity to works by the Steenwijks was already pointed out in 1890 by Claude Philips. Steenwijk the Elder's earliest representations of church interiors date from the early 1580s; Aerts and others in the northern Netherlands were producing similar works around 1600.[10] It is likely that this genre of painting was also known in England before Steenwijk the Younger settled in London (1617), where he remained until his death around 1646. The popularity of such church interiors can be adduced from the fact that Charles I gave him a number of commissions.

But even in the reproduction of the painting before restoration (fig. 1), it is evident that the exe-

Fig. 3. Detail of robe from Pl. I. Infrared reflectograph showing underdrawing.

Fig. 4. Louis XI. Detail of manuscript miniature in *Mémoires* of Philippe de Commynes, Nantes, Musée Dobrée.

cution of this interior view is much cruder than genuine works by either Steenwijk. A stylistic analysis, however, is difficult due to confusion arising from the combination of two different perspective-constructions dating from different periods. The original painting shows a multiple perspective: the vanishing points for the marble tile in the center and for the upper part of the architecture are situated within the face of the Virgin Mary; however, the outer edges of the tiles at each side come together within the figure of the angel beneath the keystone in the vault. These inconsistencies have been "corrected" in the enlarged painting to form a strict central perspective. The style of the figures and their dress appear to fit into the earlier part of the seventeenth century.[11]

The conflict between different religious groups is the first factor to consider in the discussion of possible historical causes for the alteration of such a religious painting. It is possible that the owner of the painting would have been hesitant to sell such an obviously Catholic work, preferring to make it more saleable by transforming it into a historical scene. It might even have been the owner who commissioned the careful overpainting in order not to be suspected of being a Catholic or harboring conspiratorial beliefs. Distrust of popism and pro-Catholic policies in England dates to the time of Queen Mary I (1553–8). A generation later the main reason for the execution of Mary Stuart (1587) was the fear of military plots by leading Catholics. Mary Stuart's connection with France—until 1560 she was married to François II—explains the combination of religious suspicion and fear of treason. Then there were the plots in support of Spanish intervention, culminating in the Gunpowder Plot of 1605. The next anti-Catholic uprising started after the defeat and expulsion of the Elector Palatinate, Frederic, son-in-law of James I, from the Kingdom of Bohemia and his German properties. The marriage of Charles I to the French Princess Henrietta Maria in 1625 and the ensuing pro-Catholic policy aggravated existing mistrust.

Later, similar events were the protests by the Scottish Calvinists in 1637–8, the "Long Parliament" of 1640, called in opposition to Charles I, the Civil War of 1640–9, the protectorship of Oliver Cromwell of 1649–60, and the secret diplomatic relations between Charles II and Louis XIV of France, all of which repeatedly aroused a combination of anti-Catholic and anti-French feeling. However, the style of the overpainting makes a dating in connection with events after 1630 improbable.

Fig. 5. Rogier van der Weyden, *Medici Madonna*, oil on panel, Frankfurt, Städelsches Kunstinstitut.

Iconography

The original composition (pl. I) combines a series of familiar themes. The spatial arrangement is dominated by an open arcade in the immediate foreground, which is set parallel to the picture plane. A hilly landscape with trees, a castle, and a church tower can be glimpsed in the far background. The central arch opens into a chapel, and the upper part of the painting shows a symmetrical arrangement of arches beneath a richly ornamented façade. Consoles, pilasters, and creepers decorate the area above the curved arches of the portals. Each of the four red marble pillars is surmounted by a capital.

The capitals on either side of the head of the Virgin illustrate scenes from the Old Testament: Esther before Ahasuerus and the Finding of Moses (pl. II). Queen Esther, to save her throne, had dared to enter before King Ahasuerus, a crime for which any other woman would have suffered death. But touching her with his scepter, Ahasuerus granted her special permission, and this was taken to symbolize God's grace towards the Virgin Mary. Similarly, Moses, as one of God's elect, is a precursor of Christ. The

sculpted figures above the columns (pl. III) cannot be identified as they have no attributes; they may be ancestors of the Virgin.[12]

The chapel behind the Virgin is traditionally seen as a representation of the Church, the Temple of God, and therefore analogous to Mary the Mother of God.[13] The crown on Mary's head identifies her as Queen of Heaven. Similarly, the glass vase with the partially abraded columbine symbolizes virginity and the presence of the Holy Ghost.[14] The silver incense burner can probably be interpreted as an allusion to the gifts brought by the Three Kings and thus symbolic of their wisdom and reverence; its top clearly points towards the king on the right. The enthroned figure of Mary is seen looking down, holding the left hand of the Child, who is seated on her lap with outstretched legs. This gesture resembles that of the same figures in Hugo van der Goes's *Montforte Altarpiece* (Berlin-Dahlem). The standing saints on either side, each of whom is holding a book, appear to be in deep thought with downcast eyes. They are identified by their attributes, from left to right: St. Thomas, with a spear, as in a wing of Hugo's *Portinari Altarpiece* (Florence, Uffizi Gallery); St. John the Baptist, in a pose related to that found in Memling's *St. John Altar* of 1485 in Bruges; St. Jerome, with a book bag, lion, and Cardinal's cross and hat; and St. Louis, recognizable as a French king by his scepter and crown with the fleur-de-lis.

Emphasis should be laid on the colorful marble flooring and on the landscape in the background, which is divided into several views. The castle on the left and the church tower on the right have not been identified.

The composition under discussion has several precursors. It goes back to the type of architectural arrangement first found in Jan van Eyck's *Madonna of Canon van der Paele*, now in the Groeninge Museum, Bruges. There, too, the throne of the Virgin Mary is placed upon a low stone base. The arrangement of the figures has a predecessor in Rogier van der Weyden's *Medici Madonna*, of around 1450, in Frankfort, in which the saints also form a semicircle in front of the Virgin (fig. 5) Their isolated expression is similar and the gestures of the hands appear related. However, van der Weyden's painting shows them awkwardly grasping their attributes, whereas here, the books are held in such a way as to suggest that even after they have been closed, the saints will continue to reflect upon their contents. This is a new use of psychological observation; the saints are not indicated solely by their attributes, but are recognizable as thinking beings.

The architecture of the painting, with its decorated open arcade, seems to have no immediate predecessor, but it has its imitators. It is encountered in scarcely altered form in altarpieces by Memling: with the exception of the use of a double row of figures, the *St. John Altar* of 1479, in the St. Janshospitaal in Bruges, takes up several compositional elements of our rediscovered painting, in particular, the spatial setting of the central panel and of the outsides of the wings. A similar type of architecture is found in the wing exteriors of the *Rein Triptych* (ca. 1480), and those of the *Floreins Triptych* (1479), both of which are now also in the St. Janshopitaal in Bruges.

The Question of Authorship

The pyschological urgency, the pensiveness, and the spatial unity, as described above, are all elements which suggest links with the known works of Hugo van der Goes. Yet, since an immediate attribution to van der Goes might seem presumptuous, a series of detailed comparisons is needed in order to consider other stylistically related painters.

Because the painting includes the representation of a French king, it is conceivable that the commissioner of the work had such connections and that the painter may have been French, possibly a Flemish trained court painter. The works of Jean Hey, the Master of Moulins, are close in style to the painting in question and to the works of Hugo van der Goes. It is even possible that Hey was a pupil of the latter. However, a precise comparison shows that the French artist's use of color is different. The modeling of the faces is lighter throughout, and the drapery shows a preference for dominant areas of color. A cooler overall effect rather than atmospheric tonality emerges from the juxtaposition of large areas of color.

Another comparable early Netherlandish master is Gerard David, and many details in his works compare favorably with details from the painting under discussion. The hands of King Cambyses, for example, in the right wing of David's *Judgment of Cambyses* (Bruges, Groeninge Museum) are paralleled almost exactly by those of the St. Louis. Related motifs can also be found in David's *Adoration of the Magi* in Munich, which presumably goes back to a lost painting by Hugo.

Plates IV–VII juxtapose a head from our newly discovered painting (pl. IV) with David's Munich copy after Hugo van der Goes (pl. V), Hugo's *Montforte Altarpiece* (pl. VI), and St. John from a painting in The Walters Art Gallery (pl. VII).[15] It is clear that David's head is far less convincing in execution and in its

understanding of volumes and proportions. The face is flatter, the areas around the eyes, mouth, and nose are merely drawn, without the confidence reflecting an understanding of spatial forms. Thus, on balance, our St. Thomas appears closer to the magus in the *Montforte Altar* and John the Baptist in the Walters panel. Moreover, further comparisons with details from accepted works by Hugo van der Goes reinforce the attribution:

1. The modeling of heads with a light source from the left:
   a) St. Louis (pl. VIII)
   b) Monk donor in the *Virgin and Child with St. Anne* (Brussels) (pl.IX)
2. The anatomical treatment of legs and feet:
   a) Left foot of St. Thomas (fig. 6)
   b) Feet in the *Death of the Virgin* (Bruges) (fig. 7)
   c) Leg of St. John the Baptist (fig. 8)
   d) Leg of Adam in the *Fall of Man* (Vienna) (fig. 9)
3. The use of color and treatment of details in areas of landscape:
   a) Section of background above St. Louis (pl. X)
   b) Section of background in the *Montforte Altarpiece* (pl. XI)
4. The drawing and treatment of light in still life elements:
   a) Incense burner (pl. XII)
   b) Gold casket in the *Montforte Altarpiece* (pl. XIII)

These comparisons show a marked similarity in anatomical accuracy, in the luminosity of landscapes, the harmonious treatment of colors, in the forms, the subdued tonal effects, and in the brilliant observation of the play of light on faces and metal objects between the newly discovered work and accepted paintings by Hugo van der Goes.

Chronological Classification

The chronology of Hugo van der Goes's work poses great problems, since historical criteria are provided only by the *Portinari Altarpiece* and the wing-panels (Trinity panels) at Edinburgh.[16] As these are insufficient for the elaboration of a theory of development, we have to turn to other methods.

Until now, van der Goes's *oeuvre* has been catalogued according to: genuine works categorized as such by the consensus of art historians, and stylistic features that can be visibly detected and ordered according to varying theories on the development of style. One of the problems with this approach, as Thompson and Campbell have convincingly demonstrated, is that several of van der Goes's altarpieces took several years to complete.[17] This is clear in the

Fig. 6. Detail of St. Thomas from Pl. I.

Fig. 7. Hugo van der Goes, detail of *Death of the Virgin*, oil on panel, Bruges, Groeninge Museum.

obvious differences between the individual panels of the *Portinari Altarpiece*. Dendrochronological evidence provided by Peter Klein has also shown that the two panels in Vienna belong to different periods.[18] The execution of these need not differ by as much as the

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date of the felling of the trees, but a difference of ten years could well account for the stylistic differences.

To judge from the accepted works by Hugo van der Goes, one cannot simply speak of a single style for the artist, but is obliged to distinguish between several styles. Even within the context of one altarpiece, a multitude of personal characteristics may be found. The handwriting of an underdrawing may not be homogeneous and sometimes may be by another hand from that of the painting done over it. The latter may be inconsistent in its manufacture because of the participation of helpers. As far as can be judged today, most underdrawings are the work of the master himself, since they are usually more homogeneous than the upper paint surfaces.

The differences in execution of Hugo's two altarpieces in Berlin are striking; indeed, the treatment of faces, hands, plants, and the background in the *Montforte Altarpiece* seems unlike the *Adoration of the Shepherds* and other panels. Such differences can be found even within a single work; the execution of the land-

Fig. 8. Detail of St. John the Baptist from Pl. I.

Fig. 9. Hugo van der Goes, detail from the *Fall of Man*, oil on panel, Vienna, Kunsthistorisches Museum.

scape in the Vienna *Fall of Man*, for example, cannot be compared with the excellence of the figures, and the Edinburgh panels are noticeably weaker where drapery areas are concerned than in the faces and hands. Compared with these, the painting in question is remarkably homogeneous. An infrared examination of the underdrawing leaves no doubt of the close relationship of this painting with the *Montforte Altarpiece*, though the underdrawing appears more detailed and refined in the earlier panel.

It appears possible to redefine the development of Hugo van der Goes's style on the basis of recent findings with infrared reflectograms and the dating of key works by dendrochronology. These findings reveal that Hugo's underdrawing changes from fine hatching with silver point and pen in his earlier works to summary brushwork for the contours and shading later. Flat and evenly drawn diagonal planes grading dark and light replace a pattern of forms that is shaded by close hatching and partly by cross-hatching. This development away from the early, more conventional preparatory design could not be fully documented before the rediscovery of this lost painting. All other early works by Hugo van der Goes are comparatively small and show less of the underdrawing, which is limited to outlines and only a few modeling hatches, as far as the Vienna and Brussels paintings have disclosed in recent infrared reflectograms.[19] The closest similarity, though not entirely comparable due to the difference in size, can be observed between the underdrawing of the back of the *Fall of Man*, in the St. Genovefa, and in the rediscovered painting.[20]

A heightened perception of dark and light contrasts in the execution of the paint surface can be seen to parallel the above-noted development toward improved underdrawing. Thompson has given a convincing account of the interrelationship between increasing skill and the impact of a growing self-confidence in a new personal concept. This puts a surprising emphasis on expressive values (in relation to the *Death of the Virgin* panel in Bruges).[21]

The painting discussed here must be dated shortly after the earliest works by van der Goes (the *Virgin and Child* in Frankfort, the *Fall of Man* in Vienna, and the *Virgin and Child with St. Anne* in Brussels) but before the *Montforte Altarpiece* in Berlin. The fine underdrawing found in all parts of the painting distinguishes it from the latter. Similarly, the modeling of the faces is smoother here, but the relationship is already apparent.

"Before the *Montforte Altarpiece*" means far earlier than the *Portinari Altarpiece* and the Edinburgh altar panels. To suggest a date falling within the bounds of

the following dendrochronological report by Pieter Klein,[22] the painting is thus of about 1470.

The oak panel (110.7 x 124.8 cm) consists of six boards with the following sizes (all measurements are cm) and number of annual rings:

Board I	110.7 x 28.5 (top) 28.9	
	(bottom)	196 rings
II	110.7 x 20.8 (18.5)	152
III	110.7 x 7.7 (10.6)	75
IV	110.7 x 28.7 (29.3)	201
V	110.7 x 27.8 (28.2)	204
VI	110.7 x 10.0 (9.2)	78

Between boards II and III a new small shaving is fixed in. It is certain that boards I-V came from the same tree and board V includes four sapwood rings. The origin of the wood is in the Polish/Baltic region and the single boards can be dated as follows:

Board I:	1447–1282
II:	1447–1296
III:	1296–1222
IV:	1448–1250
V:	1453–1250
VI:	1422–1344

The youngest growth ring of all boards was grown in 1453 and because board V includes four sapwood rings the sapwood-heartwood boundary is between 1449 and 1450.

For the determination of the felling date the statistical number of sapwood rings must be added. Based on the origin of the wood in Eastern Europe, a felling date in the range 1462 . . 1464 . . 1468 in 50 percent of all values can be derived. Regarding the age of the tree with more than 200 years a felling date from 1454 upwards is more plausible.

Under the assumption of ten years of storage time for the wood, a creation date of this painting from 1474 is probable. But an earlier creation time is also possible given the storage times common in the 16th and 17th centuries.

The evaluation of the growth ring curves reveals that those of the *Adam and Eve* panel (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) and from boards I–V are very similar. A relation to the same woodland can be derived, but whether from the same tree cannot be proved with certainty. A similar cutting date for both panels is possible, but cannot be proved because the smaller panel has the sapwood rings cut off.

The Identity of the Patron

The likelihood that the painting was in England during its alteration provides many arguments for its having been there before this date. Prior to 1600

such a work was not an object for an art dealer and was unsuitable for a private household; it was instead an altarpiece intended for a particular setting, such as a church or chapel. Since nothing is known of the person who commissioned the work, a plausible identification must take into account all the saints and explain the connection with St. Louis as well as the portraitlike appearance of both saints to the right of Mary.

There is no suitable connection to be made between members of the Burgundian court and Louis XI, or with the names of the saints included here, in particular, with Thomas, which is more common in England. A provisional suggestion of an English patron is Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick, a political ally of Louis XI. Both were descendants of St. Louis and were aware of this relationship. Both were linked by a strong devotion to the Virgin Mary.[23] Warwick had been at the court of Burgundy in 1459 and continued diplomatic relations with Burgundy subse-quently. Warwick's older brothers were Thomas and John. His younger brother George became Arch-bishop of York in 1466 and made attempts to obtain a cardinal's office.[24] From May to September, 1470, Warwick was in northern France (Honfleur, Va-logues) where he was warmly greeted by Louis XI as the two laid plans for Warwick's return to England to establish the House of Lancaster. He was killed in the battle of Barnet, 1471, and his body was laid to rest in Bisham Abbey, which was destroyed during the reign of Henry VIII.

A further understanding of the historical context of the painting may become clear when more is known about other representations of St. Louis: his appearance in other altarpieces at the time, and who is represented in his likeness, as in the painting at Ince Hall.[25] In comparison with these unanswered questions, the reattribution of this painting to Hugo van der Goes and the strengthening of our vision of his early style are happily a very clear affair.

NOTES

1. I thank Miss Susan Cubitt for help with the translation and Dr. Eric Zafran for his contributions. For historical advice and useful hints I am indebted to Dr. Michael Henker and Jurgen Rapp.

2. C. Philips, "La 'Tudor Exhibitions' à la New Gallery: Exposition des maîtres anciens à la Royal Academy," *Gazette des beaux-arts*, (1890), 252.

3. Catalogue of the Strawberry Hill sale, 1842. See H. Walpole, "Correspondence," in H. Walpole, *Works*, Lewis, ed. (New Haven, 1937), 68, note 12 (hereafter, Walpole, "Correspondence"). The sale price is elsewhere given as £84. See "Correspondence," 215–6 (letter from A. C. Ducarel of February 23, 1762).

4. See letter from A. C. Ducarel of February 27, 1762 (Walpole, "Correspondence," 222).

5. G. Vertue, *Anecdotes of Painting in England, 1*, H. Walpole, ed. (Strawberry Hill, 1762). The head of the Queen may be related to a historical model because of a general likeness to a portrait of the sixteenth century, which is now in the National Portrait Gallery, London. Also, the identification of the King as Henry VII is not absurd since there is a distant resemblance to the paintings deriving from the portrait by Michael Sittow (also in the National Portrait Gallery, London; see *The Illustrated Dictionary of English History*, A. Marwick, ed. [London, 1980], 138 [hereafter, *Illustrated History*]).

6. Letter to A. C. Ducarel of February 24, 1762 (Walpole, "Correspondence," 219).

7. *Ibid.*

8. The reflectograms were taken by the research team of Konstanz University: Bernd Konrad, Henry Gerlach, Emanuel Weissen, and the author.

9. *Mémoires* of Philippe de Commynes (Nantes, Musée Dobrée).

10. Compare the painting by Aerts, dated 1600, in a private collection, reproduced in the catalogue *Terugzien in Bewondering* (The Hague, 1980), pl. 1.

11. As best seen in the position of the king's legs and the figure of "Elisabeth of York." Compare the similar fashion and position of legs in paintings of late Elizabethan date: for example, *Queen Elizabeth on the Shoulders of Her Knights*, attributed to Robert Peake (coll. Digby Sherborne Castle, see *Illustrated History*, 103).

12. As suggested by Elizabeth Dhanens in a discussion with the owner of the painting in February 1986.

13. Compare the literature on the many paintings of Mary in the Church. See R. Lemaire, "De Madonna in de Kerk uit het Berlijnse Museum," *Mededelingen van de Koninkl. Vlaamse Academie . . .* (1950); E. Herzog, "Zur Kirchenmadonna van Eycks," *Festschrift Jantzen, Berliner Museen*, N.F. 6 (1956), 2–16; J. L. Ward, "Hidden Symbolism in Jan van Eyck's Annunciations," *Art Bulletin*, 57 (1975), 195.

14. See L. Behling, *Die Pflanze in der mittelalterlichen Tafelmalerei* (Weimar, 1957/Cologne, 1967); I. Bergström, "Disguised Symbolism in Madonna-Pictures and Still Lifes," *Burlington Magazine* 97 (1955), 203–8.

15. For the latter, see the article in this volume by E. Gordon. In general, see the illustrations in C. Thompson and L. Campbell, *Hugo van der Goes and the Trinity Panels in Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1974) (hereafter, Thompson and Campbell, *Hugo*). Photograph of van der Weyden's *Medici Madonna*, courtesy of Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfort.

16. Following the argument for dating given by C. Thompson and L. Campbell, *Hugo*, the *Portinari Altarpiece* was not commissioned before 1473 and finished by 1479/80, with the wings being definitely later than the center panel. Similarly, the commission for the Edinburgh altarpiece may have been given in 1473, whereas the completion may have been not before 1479.

17. *Ibid.*

18. Dr. Peter Klein, Hamburg University, Ordinariat für Holzbiologie, examined the Vienna panels in 1986. I am grateful for his permission to publish his results, conveyed in his letter of June 22, 1987: The oak panel *Adam and Eve* (33.9 x 22.9 cm) was thinned to

2 mm and joined with a tangentially cut oak board. On the original board, 237 growth rings with signs typical of a Baltic origin were measured. The growth ring curve could be dated between 1448 and 1212. Without any sapwood rings, a felling date of 1464 ± 2 can be derived. Creation of the painting can be presumed from 1473 upwards, assuming a median of 15 sapwood rings and ten years storage time. The oak panel *Deposition of the Cross* (24.3 x 22.8 cm) contains only 155 rings and also originates from the Baltic region. Notwithstanding that the growth ring curve of this board is very dissimilar from the other panel, from the dating of the curve between 1454 and 1300 a felling date of 1469 ± 2 can be derived for the tree.

Though these have long been thought to be a diptych, Klein's research points to a much later dating for the *Deposition*. Klein's storage time of 10 years is comparatively long in my opinion. For different arguments concerning tree-ring dating, see S. Bunney, "A Firmer Footing for Tree-Ring Dating of Old Masters," *New Scientist* (May, 1986), 29.

19.   I am indebted to Dr. Pauwels, Brussels, Royal Museum of Fine Arts, for his support with infrared reflectography of the *Virgin and Child with St. Anne* panel. Furthermore, I thank Ingrid Alexander for her information and comment on the underdrawings of the Vienna panels. The informative reproductions of the underdrawings can be found in I. Alexander, F. Mairinger, R. van Schoute, "Le dessin sous-jacent chez van der Goes. Le diptyche du péché originel et de la déploration du Kunsthistorisches Museum de Vienne," *Revue des archéologues et historiens d'art de Louvain*, 11 (1978), 73–83.

20.   *Ibid.*, p. 82.

21.   Compare Thompson and Campbell, *Hugo*, 90–3.

22.   Dr. Peter Klein provided the dendrochronological data in a letter of January 22, 1987.

23.   P. M. Kendall, *Louis XI* (London, 1971/Munich, 1979), notes that Warwick and Louis XI called each other "cousin" because of their common descent from St. Louis (see his note 56). Louis XI went to the church of Notre Dame in Caen and, on behalf of Warwick, presented one large candlestick, six consecrated vessels, and a devotional wax figure of himself (p. 283).

24.   P. M. Kendall, *Warwick the Kingmaker* (London, 1957), 187, 192.

25.   This painting of *The Madonna with St. Louis and St. Margaret* by an unknown master, ca. 1500, is reproduced in Thompson and Campbell, *Hugo*, pl. 49.

Pl I. Hugo van der Goes?, *Virgin and Child with Saints Thomas, John the Baptist, Jerome and Louis*, oil on panel, United States, private collection.
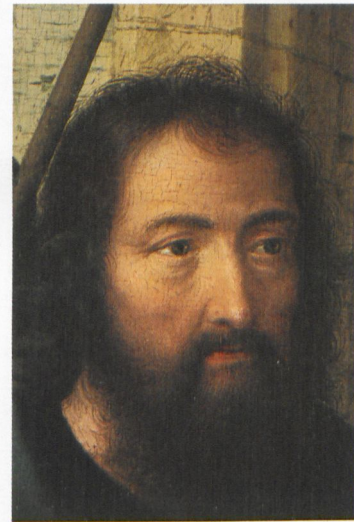
Pl. II. Detail of the *Finding of Moses* from Pl. I.

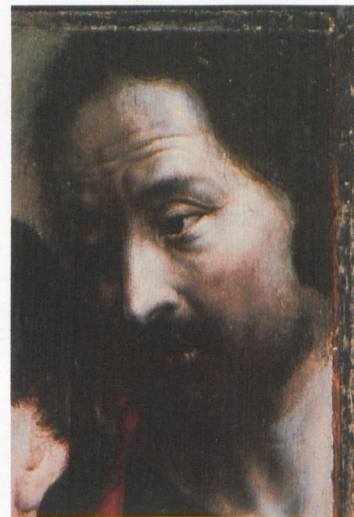Pl. III. Detail of architectural sculpture (ancestor of Mary?) from Pl. I.

Pl. IV. Detail of St. Thomas from Pl. I.

Pl. V. Gerard David, detail of the Holy King from the *Adoration of the Kings*, oil on panel, Munich, Alte Pinakothek.
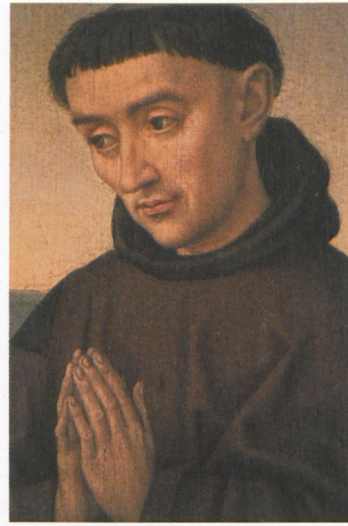

Pl. VI. Hugo van der Goes, detail of the Holy King from the *Montforte Altarpiece*, Berlin-Dahlem, Gemäldegalerie.

Pl. VII. Hugo van der Goes, detail of St. John the Baptist from *Portrait of a Man with John the Baptist*, oil on panel, Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, no. 37.296.

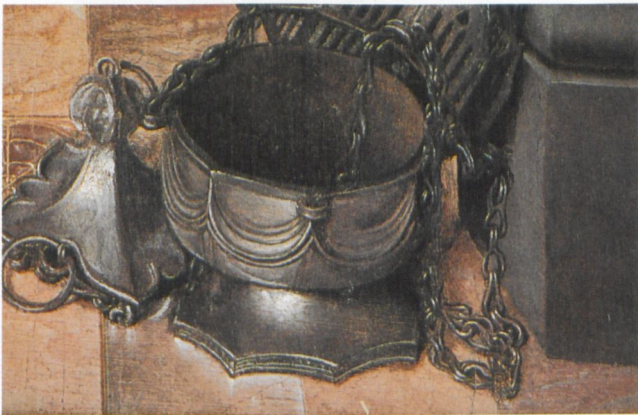Pl. VIII. Detail of St. Louis from Pl. I.

Pl. IX. Hugo van der Goes, detail of donor from *Virgin and Child and St. Anne*, Brussels, Royal Museum of Fine Arts.

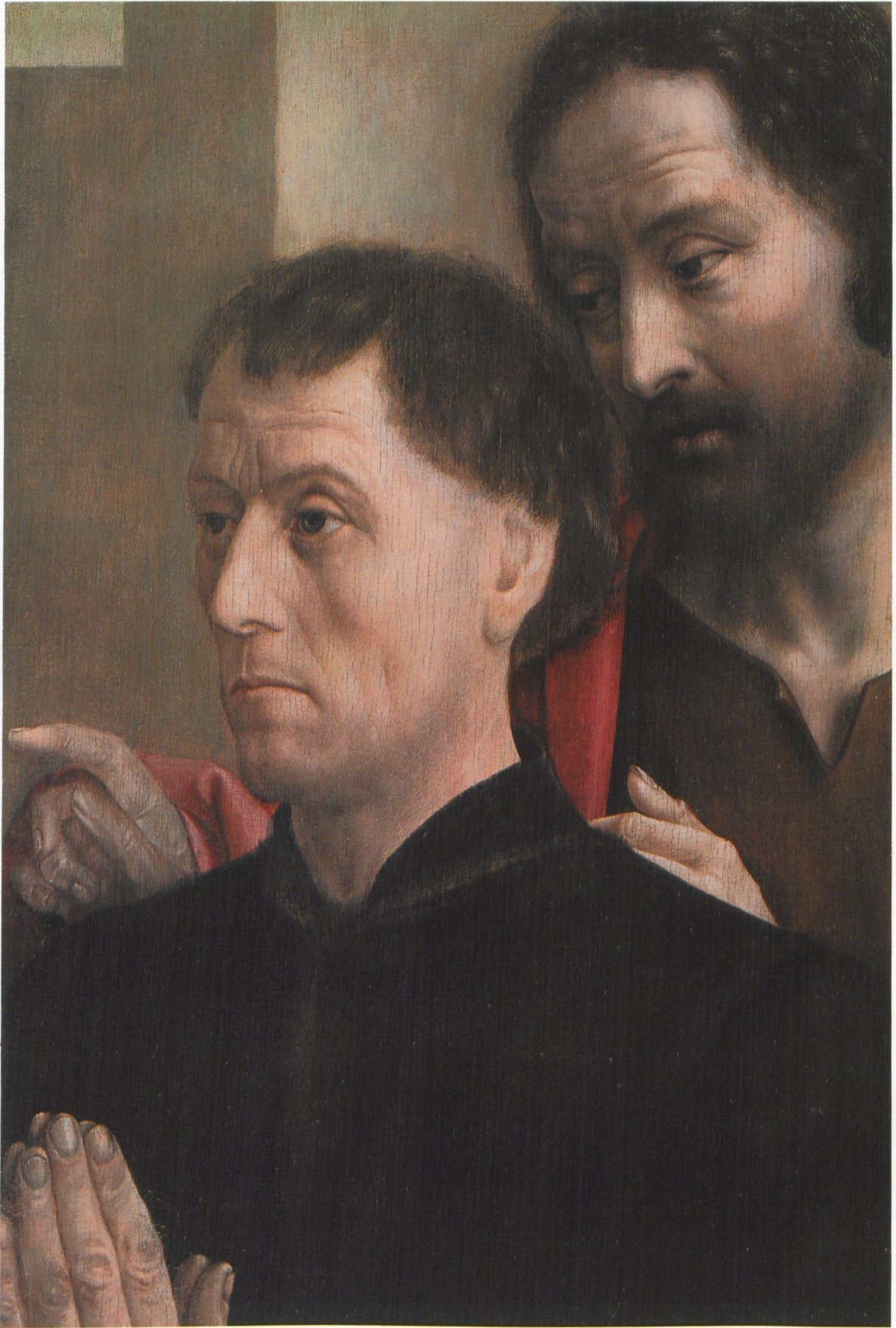Pl. X. Detail of landscape from Pl. I.

Pl. XI. Hugo van der Goes, detail of landscape from the *Montforte Altarpiece*, Berlin-Dahlem, Gemäldegalerie.

Pl. XII. Detail of censer from Pl. I.

Pl. XIII. Hugo van der Goes, detail of casket from the *Montforte Altarpiece*, Berlin-Dahlem, Gemäldegalerie.

Pl. 1. Hugo van der Goes, *Portrait of a Man with St. John the Baptist*, oil on panel, Baltimore, The Walters Art Gallery, no. 37.296.