MEMLING'S INDEPENDENT PORTRAITS

by

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ABSTRACT

At the very end of this thesis I call Memling the mirror of Brugian upper-class society. In order to arrive at this conclusion I approached Memling's portraits in a new way. My starting point was Max J. Friedländer's book on Memling in which the author catalogued, in an apparently unsystematic way, the Memling portraits accepted by him.

The first chapter of this thesis is an attempt to construct a working chronology. For a stylistic analysis I distinguish six categories. The first three deal with the three types of background which are found in the portraits. The remaining three relate to basic types in the pose of the hand. The emphasis of the analysis falls on spatial development and anatomical correctness. In several instances my suggestions are at variance with accepted dates. The new chronology forms the foundation for the other chapters.

In chapter II the identity of some known sitters is discussed, using information which has been known for some time. What I have done is simply to combine some of this relevant information in order to make some suggestions for the unidentified sitters, and to show that they came from a restricted social-economic group, and to suggest some possible reasons for commissioning portraits.

The third chapter consists of three sections. The first deals with Memling as a historically documented figure.
Nothing new could be added, but I give special attention to his social-economic status, which turns out to be similar to that of his sitters. The second concentrates on the historical events between 1465 and 1494, while Memling was a Brugian citizen. I give special emphasis to the unification policy of Charles the Bold, because it manifested itself in two ways which were disastrous for Charles as well as for Bruges. The wars which were a result cost Charles his life in 1477 and the money which was needed to wage them contributed to the financial downfall of Bruges. It is my contention that the social-economic-political-financial instability following Charles' death influenced Memling's style, his iconography and his patrons. The third focuses on the spiritual life of this period. Late fifteenth century Dutch-Flemish literature indicates two schools of thought, namely of pietism and humanism. I discuss the influence of these two schools of thought in Memling's portraits in the last chapter.

In discussing the iconography I return to the six categories of the first chapter. The pose of the hands and the objects the sitters hold point in the direction of humanism and piety. It is also in this section dealing with the hands that I reject the idea that any of the portraits are part of a triptych, and also that all sitters with prayer-clasped hands must be a part of a diptych. I suggest that in some cases these portraits could be independent. Furthermore, in case of a diptych it is not necessary that the other wing must be a Madonna and Child. It could also
be Christ alone or a saint.

My suggestion for the neutral background is that for some portraits there is a possibility that they are related to court portraiture. Italian influence is perhaps most noticeable in the pure landscape portraits. Nearly all the sitters for this type were Italian. Although Memling never saw Piero della Francesca's Sforza portraits, they may have influenced and stimulated him, via his Italian sitters, to introduce this type in Flemish portraiture. All three types of background create a special psychological atmosphere, closely related to the two schools of thought. It is through the iconography, backed up by historical events and spiritual life, that Memling reflects the spirit of his time and becomes the mirror of Brugian upper-class society.
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INTRODUCTION

John Memmeling and John van Eyck
Hold state at Bruges. In sore shame
I scanned the works that keep their name,
The carillon, which then did strike
My ears, was heard of theirs alike:
It sets me closer to them.1

With these words Rossetti put the sentiments of his contemporaries into a poem. It is rather appropriate that Rossetti mentioned Memling first, because he was the first of the "Flemish Primitives" to be rediscovered. Memling's work was readily accessible at Bruges, the city of which Memling became a citizen in 1465 and in which he died in 1494. For the Pre-Raphaelite Rossetti, Memling must have seemed to be a "devotional ancestor". Perhaps the stagnation of research into Memling's work and his relation to his time found in the twentieth century is a reaction to this nineteenth century enthusiasm. In spite of the ardor, exemplified best by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, it was not until the turn of the century that Weale produced some hard historical facts on the artist's life and work. Even so, the tide had turned and Memling tended to be somewhat ignored. Memling became Friedländer's "flower without thorns" and Panofsky's "very model of a major minor master". Nevertheless, it was Friedländer who produced a volume on Memling in his series Die altniederländische Malerei. And this volume contained a chapter on Memling's portraits. This volume and this chapter have formed the basis of subsequent publications and not much has been added to the information supplied by Friedländer.
It was not until the 1960s that scholars started to look more sympathetically at Memling. Some facts, like those unearthed by the historian McFarlane, and the discovery of the original underdrawings, led to a better understanding of Memling's development. Yet, very little attention has been given to the portraits in spite of the fact that roughly one-third of the generally accepted Memling oeuvre consists of independent portraits. It is with this neglected section that this thesis is concerned.

When we ask ourselves the question "What are Memling's contributions to the art of portraiture?" immediately serious problems occur, the most serious of which is that none of the generally accepted portraits is signed. Since none are documented either, the portraits have to be ascribed to Memling on stylistic grounds. The problem is compounded by the fact that only two Memling paintings are signed and dated, two others are documented, while a few are 'documented' through tradition. Some of the paintings had a date either on the original frame or in the painting itself which made it easier to ascribe them to Memling, using the others as guidelines. Fortunately, four of the portraits have a date, two of which always stayed in Bruges. To these four portraits two husband-wife pendant pairs can be added which can be roughly dated by historical information. Out of these portraits—Gilles Joye, 1472; Tommaso Portinari and his wife, between 1470 and 1475; a young woman's portrait, 1480; Willem Moreel and his wife, between 1478 and 1484; Benedetto Portinari, 1487; Maarten van
Nieuwenhove, 1487- some interesting patterns emerge: the earlier portraits have a neutral background, while the later ones show an interior-exterior; except one, all the sitters have their hands in prayer.

Simplistically stated, Memling seems to have a special interest in the background and in the hands. Technically these two aspects can be described as a concern in spatial development and anatomical correctness. However, I think that Memling's portraits go beyond a mere technical exercise. It is my contention that the aforementioned aspects contributed purposefully to a better understanding of the sitters. In other words, these aspects are essential to Memling's portraits. Since they are essential I have taken them as a basis and as working tools for this thesis. Within these two essential aspects a few characteristics emerge. As far as the background is concerned we have already noted the neutral background and the interior-exterior. Looking at the other, usually accepted portraits, we notice a third characteristic, the pure landscape. None of these portraits are dated so that they have to be correlated to the others. In order to do this the characteristics will be dealt with separately. Within each characteristic the essential aspects will be discussed, so that a certain sequence appears. In order to tie these characteristics together into a working chronology, the category of hands is used. I make the distinction between prayer-clasped hands and non-prayer-clasped hands. The latter can be more specifically defined by looking at the other portraits. Some sitters hold an object in their hands, while others have their hands at rest. I discuss each of these
characteristics separately.

Since a certain background does not correlate to a certain hand characteristic, new sequences occur which enable us to draw up a chronology. Although the description "circa" has to be applied to the final results, some useful facts emerge to give a clearer understanding of Memling's contribution to the art of portraiture. These facts are discussed more fully in chapter IV, using again the characteristics, but now as interpretation of what I called "purposeful contributions". These interpretations only make sense in the light of other knowledge, that is, information about Memling and his sitters. This historical background information will be discussed in chapters II and III. First the sitters are discussed because knowledge about them sets the scope and limit for investigation into other areas. Knowledge about the sitters justifies the limitations of historical information recalled in the next chapter. Memling offers the sitters, at least partly, a way to give expression to their own ideas. These ideas are discussed in the chapter called "Memling's Time". Finally, after the discussion of the ideas and the interpretations, backed up by traditions, I want briefly to discuss Memling's place in and contribution to the art of portraiture. This will take place in the Summary of this thesis.
CHAPTER I

THE CHRONOLOGY

In the introduction several characteristics have been noted which help to establish a possible chronology. The categories dealing with the background are initially loosely connected. Only by combining them with the categories dealing with the hands is it possible to tighten the chronology. Yet, watertight it cannot be, because of the lack of documentation.

Since the basis of this chapter is a stylistic analysis of the characteristics of the background and of the hands, much of the extraneous evidence has been relegated to the footnotes. The technical aspects of spatial development and anatomical correctness constitute the basis for the stylistic analysis.

The order of the categories dealing with the background is based on historical data and complexity. The first dated portrait has a neutral background, which provides the rationale for starting with this characteristic. Furthermore, it looks simplest in perspective. The most complex characteristic is that of the interior-exterior, which has the problem of the interior perspective related to the exterior perspective. This characteristic will be discussed last of the three. The interior-exterior category is followed by an interlude of one painting which is a mixture of neutral background
combined with interior.

The order of the categories dealing with hand characteristics is based on number and activity. The largest category is that of prayer-clasped hands. Next is a small category in which the sitters hold an object. The last category is that of hands at rest on a visible or invisible parapet.

THE NEUTRAL BACKGROUND

Eleven portraits share the characteristic of a neutral background; three have some form of documentation, while the rest have none. The earliest portrait with a neutral background is that of Gilles Joye (Fr. 72): the original frame bears the date 1472. The sitter is placed against a dark background. His face, turned to the left at an angle of 20 degrees, receives light from left above. The light models the face, but not the space. It is used for the prayer-clasped hands, but not for the dark fur-lined jacket. Thus there are two foci: face and hands. The rest of the bust-length body of the sitter receives very little attention and remains flat. To borrow a term of Samuel van Hoogstraten, Gilles Joye looks somewhat like a "playing card". Technically there is little spatial development and volume. Anatomically, the nose is just a bit too heavy and not completely foreshortened; his jawbone is a bit too square and the right side of his face has a linear quality. Memling has not achieved a satisfactory spatial and anatomical solution in his earliest dated portrait.

Other portraits can be grouped around the Gilles Joye in a reasonably simple manner. Better solutions to the two
aspects would indicate a later date, while poorer solutions might be dated earlier.

The next two portraits belong together, that of Tommaso Portinari (Fr. 69) and his wife Maria Maddalena Baroncelli (Fr. 70). Their organization is very much like that of Gilles Joye (Fr. 72) and yet there are some significant differences. Their faces are nearly turned at an angle of 45 degrees as is Tommaso's bust-length body; Maria's body is turned more frontally. Tommaso's place in space is different from that of Gilles Joye. The latter is placed behind the frame, as it were caught in the frame, while the former is placed in front of the frame. The frame is now used as a spatial device and tends to become a part of the background. A similar situation is witnessed in Maria's portrait, where her hennin and long diaphanous veil cover a part of the right frame. Thus, although there is no interaction between them and the neutral background, there is a sense of spatial illusion through the inclusion of the frame. At the same time the sizes of their heads in relation to their bodies and the available space differs from that of Gilles Joye. There is space around and above the sitters, unlike in Gilles Joye's portrait. Moreover, the light seems to come from one source, namely from the right. Thus Maria's left facial side receives the full light, with her right lightly shadowed, while Tommaso's left side, turned away from the viewer, receives the full light, while the right is subtly shadowed. As far as Maria is concerned, the hennin, face, bust, arms and hands do
not correlate too well. Her left arm and hand are parallel
to the picture plane while the body is slightly turned, like
that of Gilles Joye, and her head and hennin are turned even
more; yet, the neck does not have the necessary tension to
make these twists anatomically correct.

In relation to Gilles Joye these two portraits seem to
have a more developed spatial concept and Tommaso at least is
far more volumetric, while the subtle use of light contributes
to a better modelling of the face. Since these two portraits
are technically more developed I suggest that they could be
placed after Gilles Joye. The diagonal pose of Tommaso, which
is completely followed through, is more satisfying than the
pose of Maria which has some awkward aspects. Thus the
sequence could possibly be Gilles Joye (Fr.72), Maria Porti-
nari (Fr.70), Tommaso Portinari (Fr.69).

The next portrait to be discussed is that of a young
man (Fr.233) of which Friedländer wrote that it is "unusual
in its vigorous modelling, probably from the master's early
period". This vigorous modelling is noticeable in a much
better foreshortening of the nose and mouth, not only com-
pared to Gilles Joye, but also to the Portinaris. The chin
in relation to the neck is rather distinct. In regard to
the background there are two important aspects which concern
us here. The first relates to the colour; instead of the
dark tones used in the portraits of Gilles Joye, Tommaso
Portinari and Maria Maddalena Baroncelli, the background here
has a light colour against which the sitter is contrasted.
The direct result is more depth, even though the pose of the sitter is less diagonal than Tommaso Portinari. The second aspect, only possible when the background becomes lighter, is that the young man, turning towards the one light source, casts his shadow behind him on the lower right side. In this way Memling was able to create interaction between the sitter and his background. In the category of neutral background this portrait is the only one of its kind. Keeping in mind that Memling was apparently concerned with spatial relationships, this portrait could possibly be the culmination point of the neutral background in relationship to the sitter. In other words, I would like to suggest that this portrait is later than the three previously discussed portraits.

I date the next four portraits somewhere in between the Gilles Joye (Fr. 72) and the San Diego portrait (Fr. 233). The first one is a portrait of a man with folded hands (Fr. 88). The sitter is placed diagonally in space, like Tommaso Portinari. His hands are placed in the right corner, but they are not cramped into the available space as in the case of Gilles Joye. The background is dark. The contour of the shoulders, seen through the lighter fur trimming of the coat, gives a sense of continuation to the arms, even though these are actually not visible. The light, coming from the left, casts a somewhat heavy shadow on the left side of his face. The nose is rather linear, like that of Tommaso Portinari, but the right side of the chin is more modelled. The light does not only model the face, but also the white undershirt and hands. Thus the light unifies the parts of the body. Spatially
the sitter is not hampered by the frame; he is free in his own space. This would suggest that this portrait was painted before the San Diego portrait (Fr.233) and close to Tommaso Portinari (Fr.69), perhaps somewhat later.

An overly cleaned portrait of an old man (Fr.81) has been the subject of some debate. His reddish brown fur trimmed jacket covers the lower half of the painting. His right shoulder, arm and hand are clearly visible. His hands—of the left only fingertips are just noticeable—rest on a ledge, which could be regarded as an extension of the frame. The body is nearly parallel to the picture plane, but not pressed against the frame as in the case of Maria Portinari (Fr.70). The seam of the jacket and the slightly darker area of left arm and left side separate spatially the hands from the body. The head nearly covers the other half of the panel. His silvery hair, which just does not touch the frame, helps to contrast the face against the dark background. Friedländer speaks about that face as rather flat and elaborated mainly in line, and hesitant in the use of shading. Overcleaning has made judgment rather difficult, but there are some points which Friedländer seems to have ignored. The man's face seems to miss a firm outline, but it should not be forgotten that a tanny, leathery skin with a stubbly beard of some older people is not firm either. His eyebrows do not look like the plucked eyebrows of Gilles Joye or Tommaso Portinari. Both his nostrils are visible, even more
so than in the San Diego portrait (Fr.233). The head and body have more volume than those of the early portraits. Thus, somewhat disagreeing with Friedländer I tend to place this portrait some years later than 1470 and close to but not after the San Diego portrait.

A third portrait, that of a man with an arrow (Fr.85), can probably also be placed between the Gilles Joye and the San Diego portraits. In his right hand, which rests on a ledge similar to the one in the previous portrait, the sitter holds an arrow. Like the Old Man (Fr.81) this sitter is placed nearly parallel to the picture plane, but the pose is now to the left. Unlike the Old Man he does not show his lower arm. The somewhat unsatisfactory connection between shoulder and hand is partly solved by the shaft of the arrow, which diverts the attention from this aspect. The end of the shaft points to the back, while the left shoulder comes slightly forward, creating a sense of space. His dark hair and black hat contrast against the less dark background on which there is no shadow of the head. The lighter background is suggestive of a close connection to the San Diego portrait. The modelling of the face is not as linear as in the earlier portraits, with for example the mouth, nose and jaw, while the slightly flat shoulder gives a sense of volume. Although not everything has been solved satisfactorily in spatial development and anatomical credibility, it is close to the San Diego portrait (Fr.233) and the New York Old Man (Fr.81),
perhaps somewhat later than the latter.

There is probably a fourth portrait which can be dated close to the San Diego portrait. The background of the Pierpont Morgan portrait (Fr. 83) is lighter than the clothes of the sitter, who is placed diagonally, freeing space in the right corner for his hands. In his left he holds a carnation and in his right a small folded card or letter. His right under arm rests on a non-visible ledge, while the upper arm goes slightly inwards to connect with the shoulder. The result is that there is more space between the hands and the body. The solution is better than that of the Washington portrait (Fr. 85) and the face is more firmly painted. Under the skin there is a sense of bone structure. Friedländer linked the two last portraits together and I tend to agree with him here, with the stipulation that the Pierpont Morgan portrait could possibly be slightly later than the Washington portrait.

Following Friedländer's suggestion "that not every portrait with a neutral background is earlier than with a landscape background", I would suggest that not every portrait with a neutral background is done before the San Diego portrait (Fr. 233).

Three portraits are still existing which most likely were painted around 1480. In the Royal Collection at Windsor Castle is a man's portrait (Fr. 91). After restoration it turned out to be that the sitter touched a chain (?) with
his right hand. This detail gives some sense of space to an otherwise rather flat figure placed against a dark background. Spatially this portrait could be connected to early portraits except that it is not as cramped as the Gilles Joye portrait (Fr. 72). However, on the ground of facial features like nose, mouth and bonestructure, this portrait should not be dated early, but possibly between 1478 and 1480. To arrive at these dates we can use two sources, namely the Bruges Young Woman (Fr. 94), dated 1480, and two other Memling panels, Madonna Enthroned with St. George and a Donor (Fr. 63), which perhaps can be dated around 1480, and Christ Giving the Blessing (Fr. 39), dated on the now lost original frame 1478.

The Bruges Young Woman (Fr. 94) has on its original frame the date 1480. Her hands rest on a ledge which is an extension of the frame. Her arms drop slightly under the frame, but are not completely cut off. As such the spatial problem has been solved in a better way than in the Maria Portinari portrait (Fr. 70). The shorter hennin and the diaphanous veil are kept within the frame, again different from Maria Portinari, and the difference extends into the colouring, the direction of the gaze and the modelling. The control which Memling has to indicate space in 1480 becomes clear in a small detail. Maria Portinari's waist belt is of the same colour as the white trimming of her gown. It even touches the frame. The young woman's belt has been toned down, not only compared to the white trimming, but also to her dark, nearly black dress. And nowhere does it touch the frame. Maria Portinari is pressed against the frame and
tends to be flat, while this young woman has space between her hands on the frame and her body.

Anatomically this young woman's portrait also shows Memling's improved understanding. Again I use a detail to show the development by subtle means. Her marble coloured face shows here and there some faint bluish traces, indications of veins. The clearest example, however, is in her neck, just below her ear and in the direction of her pendant. This awareness of what is under the skin is absent in the Maria Portinari.

Thus the development of space and the understanding of anatomy is not only seen in lighter background and volume, but also in other details. I already hinted at this in the Windsor portrait (Fr. 91). The conclusion is important, for it seems that Memling was not afraid to fall back on older aspects - in this case a dark background- but to modify them through new and better solutions gained in the meantime. Old and new can go together. It is impossible to say as yet, whether this is a general tendency and if so, when it started.

The mixture of old and new is important in connection with the last portrait in this category. The shape of the National Trust portrait (Fr. 87) is peculiar, because the rounded top is unique for the portraits. Unfortunately, the portrait is badly damaged. Since the background is scarcely visible, it is difficult to point out any spatial relation between the sitter and the background. The prayer-clasped hands are not cramped into the corner like those of
Gilles Joye (Fr.72), but are cut off. They are in a nearly parallel plane with the canvas and not completely perpendicular to the body. Spatially it is not completely convincing, but anatomically it looks like a later work.

As a conclusion we can say that most of the portraits with a neutral background were painted early in Memling's career as a portraitist. The earliest known one seems to be that of Gilles Joye (Fr.72) with the next seven probably not later than 1475. Up to the San Diego portrait (Fr.233) there is a development towards a better integration of the foreground, sitter and background. There is a tendency to anatomical correctness and an experimentation with volume. After 1475 there are few portraits in this category. The surviving portraits seem to be painted around 1480.

**THE LANDSCAPE BACKGROUND**

This group, which consists of ten portraits, presents more complicated problems than those encountered in the previous category. Here none of the portraits are dated, so that there is no fixed chronological starting point. And none of the sitters is known by name, so that there is little extraneous evidence to help us. Since it is my contention that there is in Memling's portraiture a spatial development, already noticed in the previous category, it is logical to look for a similar development in the pure landscape background. In simplified terms it means a development from the simple to the more complex landscape. During the following
discussion these terms will be given content.

The first portrait is that of a somewhat fuzzy haired young man (Fr. 89). His right hand rests in front of him on a balustrade. He himself blocks off the front space. Behind his dark coat is a nearly geometrically patterned grass area. The patches of grass just above his shoulders are slightly darker than the stretch above. The grass ends rather abruptly just above his collar, and Bluish green trees, rather compact and as undefined as his hair, predominate. A whitish sky turns gradually blue, giving the impression of a bright day. On the left and right are two individual trees, nearly as high as the sitter's head. The tree on the left is close enough to give the impression of touching the hair. These two trees stand on a hillock, on the line where one grass area is separated from the other. These separation lines tend to divert attention away from the sitter. One can view the trees apart from the sitter. Yet, the touching of the hair with the tree has the opposite effect. Thus we have here a somewhat ambiguous, unresolved spatial problem. These two trees also function as a framing device for the head. They define a limited space and also block off the sky above the other trees. The over-all result is a shallow space in which the sitter is 'pressed' between the parapet—pushing backwards—and the trees—pushing forwards.

In short we can say that the massive undefined trees block off a view into deeper space, that the grass areas are geometric designs separated and defined by lines and that the
the grass area comes nearly halfway up the panel.

The next portrait, that of a swarthy young man with an Italian cap (Fr.77), shows several differences. The grass is not divided into three geometric shapes as in the Uffizi portrait (Fr.89), but is a unified stretch with some highlights and shadows. On the left is a smoothly meandering stretch of water, which contributes to the unification and the continuity of the landscape. This small stream is an interesting connection between the sitter and the landscape. Some of the water is painted so close to the mouth, that mouth and water seem to echo each other. The organization of the trees and the black cap is much more subtle. The descending shape of hat and hair is continued in the trees on the left and contrasted in an upward way by the trees alongside the water. The one higher tree on the right is integrated with the rest of the trees. The horizon has been slightly raised, and the grass area ends halfway up the face. Compared to the Uffizi portrait (Fr.89), this landscape is much more spacious and continuous. While the poses are basically the same, the Venice sitter has been more successfully integrated with his background than the Uffizi sitter.

In the Venice portrait (Fr.77) the trees still block the view somewhat abruptly, but that is not the case anymore in the Brussels portrait (Fr.84). The sitter's body has been slightly turned towards the left-right diagonal. The horizon has been lowered again. The sitter's curly hair is 'mirrored' in the various trees. The clusters of trees and
shrubs in the background are not as solid and do not rise up like a forbidding wall or an inpenetrable forest as occurs in the two previous portraits. Grass continues to grow behind the first cluster of trees on the right side. There is no sharp separation between the grass and the trees. The static solidity has been broken through. The sunlight puts highlights on the hair as well as on the trees, thus uniting the various parts of the panel. It also means that the trees start to get more defined and that there is a beginning of a sense of atmosphere. This atmospheric sense goes together with the greater spaciousness, an openness created by the new interplay between grass and trees. These new characteristics, as part of the spatial development, would suggest that the Brussels portrait comes after the two previous portraits.

The fourth portrait, that of a young sitter (Fr.80), shows quite a different landscape. The sitter's shoulders block off the landscape on both sides. The grass stretches have given way to a hilly landscape with clusters of trees spread all over. The movement from the side to the center is slightly downwards, which gives the impression that the sitter is placed in front of a valley. The trees close to the sitter are relatively small, so that the viewer can look over them, far into the distance. What in the Brussels portrait (Fr.84) was barely announced is here fairly far developed into an atmospheric perspective. The details like the swans, people, individual trees, water and hills give a sense of topography. Whereas the previous landscape could be
anywhere, this landscape has been particularized. The landscape as such has thus gained two new aspects, namely atmospheric perspective and a topographical setting.

In relation to the sitter, this landscape is more or less separate from the sitter, because the direction of the body does not really lead into the landscape. Yet, there are important interactions. The upward movement of the shoulders contrasts the downward movement from the side to the center. The eyes are on the same level as the distant hills. His hat and hair 'continue' in the hills and trees. Thus although the sitter is placed before the landscape, there are subtle interactions between the two.

Until the Montreal portrait the sky has been the same: white towards the horizon, pale blue in the middle and somewhat darker high above. The next portraits show a change because clouds start to appear, becoming more and more substantial.

The first portrait which shows some clouds, somewhat hesitantly painted, is the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82). But not only the sky has changed, also the landscape itself. Before, it was a real landscape, now it is a village scene. Houses dot the scenery and a road and a stream travers it, while the village or the city is silhouetted in the distance. Instead of the hills, the landscape is rather flat. The road and the stream give the sense of continuity and spatial depth. In relation to the face, the horizon is lowered a 'nose length'.
While this portrait continues the topographical and atmospheric aspects it adds a better integration of the sitter. The body is placed more diagonally, which leaves an open space on the left. The hands, placed in the corner, create space between the body and the arms. The right arm leads into the open space on the side and the curve of the shoulder is continued in the water. The fur trimming on the right continues behind him in a small road; the fur trimming on the left continues in a stream. On the debet side are the angles which the face makes with the environment, for they are somewhat hard and uninteresting. And some of the new details tend to distract the attention from the sitter.

In the Palazzo Vecchio portrait (Fr.86) Memling returned to a more hilly landscape. The portrait is as it were a combination of the successful solutions of the Montreal portrait (Fr.80) with those of the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82). The landscape is kept much simpler in details than that of the Copenhagen portrait. Yet, the details tend to accentuate the contour of the sitter. The undulating landscape forms a smooth turn with the right side of his hair and makes his somewhat blown hair on his left side acceptable. Karl Voll dated this portrait around 1470, but the well-developed sense of landscape and the interplay between the sitter and the landscape is far superior to that of the earlier Uffizi portrait (Fr.89) and it should be dated therefore much later.

One of the most discussed portraits is that in Antwerp (Fr.71). Although there are some differences in details in
this portrait is very similar to the Palazzo Vecchio portrait (Fr. 86). The landscape does not come above the sitter's mouth. Bluish grass and trees start halfway up the landscape. The somehow awkward road behind the Palazzo Vecchio sitter is not found again in this portrait. There is, however, an environmentally inconsistent object in this northern landscape in the form of a palm tree. Although it is prominently displayed on the right, it does not constitute an awkward aspect.

Different from most portraits is the warm tonality of the face and the lower part of the sky and the earth colour right behind the sitter. These various qualities can also be detected in the side panels of the best documented altar piece, that of the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine (Fr. 11), which, on the frame, is signed and dated 1479. This would reasonably correlate with Hulin de Loo's suggestion of 1478 for the Antwerp portrait.

In spite of all these good qualities there is also a negative aspect. The separation between the brown earth and the bluish trees and grass is rather abrupt on the left. The shadow on the right is rather harsh. In other words, there is a loss of subtlety and a hint of early linearity.

Quite different again is the portrait in The Hague (Fr. 79). The horizon has been lowered even more and the landscape itself is rather minimal, just two small fragments above the broad shoulders. The colouring is much cooler and compared to the Antwerp portrait (Fr. 71) much subtler, due to a better sense of shadows. The foreground on the left is a
good example of this. In turn it gives a better feeling for deep space, even though the landscape is only a fraction of the canvas. While the Antwerp portrait still shows a part of the face lower than the horizon, the The Hague portrait has even the solid neck above the landscape. The lowering of the horizon already started with the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82) and I think that this is the latest one in this series. The sky is unlike anything we have seen before. Broad white-reddish-blue strokes are painted behind the sitter's head. The diaphanous clouds of previous portraits have completely disappeared. It is the only portrait which has this natural phenomenon. Although there are other paintings which have a sky with a similar tendency, the closest one is probably the Moreel altar piece of 1484 (Fr.12). The white close to the horizon has been replaced by a clarity which is Vermeer-like in quality. The objects like the trees, houses and church, have a miniature quality which creates a sense of deep space. Unfortunately, this portrait, which is so different in setting, also is the end of the sequence of the pure landscape background. The spatial development gradually unfolded from the early Uffizi portrait (Fr.89) to the mature Antwerp portrait (Fr.71). But between the Antwerp portrait and the The Hague portrait (Fr.79) there is a gap in the continuity, so that a complete reconstruction is not possible.

In the eight discussed portraits we have followed Memling more as a landscapist than as a portraitist. And we
have seen his development in space, perspective, atmosphere, topography and individualization. With the help of this development we are able to place two other controversial portraits which fit more or less into this category. Up to the present time an early date has been suggested for both. My suggestion for a somewhat later date for the Frankfurt portrait (Fr.73) and the Frick portrait (Fr.231) is based on the development of the landscape.

All the proponents of an early date cite different reasons, but the basic reasons for the early date for the Frankfurt portrait, with which I want to deal first, can be reduced to three. The first concerns the red sugar loaf hat, popular in the 1460s. However, some Brugian manuscripts show this hat in the 1470s as well, so that this reason for an early date is not valid anymore. The second, which also counts for the Frick portrait (Fr.231), is more serious and centers around the window frame. Already in the portraits with a neutral background we noticed that Memling used this device, certainly as late as 1480. Moreover, a complete landscape background framed by a window frame appears to be a novelty. It is not far-fetched to state that novelty creates new problems which may not necessarily be solved completely or correctly. The development of the landscape as we have followed it is an example of this fact. Thus some aspects may look earlier, but others show a much later development. The third centers around certain deficiencies of the head. The objections are indeed correct—see footnote 50—but they
are not sufficient for an early date. Only by looking at the painting can the problem be solved. The sky turns from white to blue. The horizon is in the middle of the canvas. On the right side the small trees on a hillock do not come above the fur-lined collar of the sitter. On the left side the sunlit plain is blocked off by far away buildings, which rise nearly as high as the sitter's mouth. The small trees are carefully placed, creating a garden-like environment. The silhouetting buildings could be a church, a townhall or a belfry, but they are not described in detail and shimmer in the distance. Although the sitter blocks off the connection between the left and the right one could imagine a continuous landscape, but the juxtaposition of the sunlit plain with the darker hillock is not completely satisfactory. The atmospheric and topographic qualities occur for the first time in the Montreal portrait (Fr. 80). The size of the trees, the garden-like setting, the lower horizon and the silhouetting buildings are found in portraits after the Montreal portrait.

The frame behind the sitter is rounded and leads into the landscape, yet, it separates the sitter from that landscape. The Copenhagen portrait (Fr. 82) already showed a better integration of the sitter and his background, so that possibly the Frankfurt portrait comes in between the Montreal portrait (Fr. 80) and the Copenhagen portrait (Fr. 82).

The organization of the landscape in the Frick portrait (Fr. 231) is more logical. There is no problem to imagine this
as a continued terrain in spite of the massive head and bust placed in front of it. The buildings are not placed on the horizon as in the Frankfurt portrait, but are scattered about and there is more variation in the landscape itself: a serpentine road leads to the back; beyond the first row of trees a hilly landscape continues; strips of land and shadows of trees lead the view into deeper space. The horizon is placed below the sitter's massive chin. The deep blue sky with a little white, combined with some technical problems in face and hands could perhaps indicate a date after the Frankfurt portrait and before the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82). Hulin de Loo thought that the Frankfurt portrait could be dated around 1473 or at the latest 1475. As far as the landscapes are concerned both the Frankfurt and the Frick portraits could possibly be dated around 1475.

In the first eight portraits of this category the sitter could be thought of to be in the landscape, that is in the same space. The last two portraits have the sitters separated from the landscape through their frames. That means that they can be conceived as being in a different space. As such they could function as an introduction to the following category.

THE INTERIOR-EXTERIOR BACKGROUND

This is the smallest category as far as the background is concerned, for there are only nine portraits. Of these, Benedetto Portinari (Fr.23B) and Maarten van Nieuwenhove(Fr.14)
are firmly dated 1487, so that for them not much discussion is necessary to establish a chronology. Two other portraits, those of Willem and Barbara Moreel (Fr.67,66), can be supported by the St. Christopher altar piece (Fr.12), donated in 1484. Furthermore, the Chicago portrait (Fr.92) can be supported by a Madonna and Child (Fr.50).

The problems in this category are two-fold: the complexity of the interior and the complexity of the exterior, together with their combination. For the landscape the findings of the previous category can be used.

The first portrait in this category is a soft brownish coloured portrait of a man in the Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection (Fr.232). The diagonally placed sitter looks towards the right from where the light comes. The green brownish wall behind him is somewhat lighter around the sitter's head, turning darker toward the center, where there is a multi-coloured marble column. A carpet over a balustrade and a very simple landscape of a little bit of grass and a few trees complete the background. The size of the landscape does not help much to determine the date. The grass has a few details and the trees have some touches of individuality. This hints at a date probably later than the Venice portrait (Fr.77). The play of light and shadow around the head recalls the San Diego portrait (Fr.233), but the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait has a subtler use. The diagonal pose leaves more space for the hands, fairly similar to the Pierpont Morgan
portrait (Fr.83) and the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82). These details indicate a close proximity to these portraits.

The second and third portrait in this category are taken together. There is a good reason for, even though the portraits are now separated by a few hundred kilometers. In Berlin hangs the portrait of an elderly man (Fr.75) and in Paris the portrait of an elderly woman (Fr.76) is on view. They are nearly similar in size; the Berlin portrait is 34x29 cm. and the Paris portrait is 35x29 cm. Placing them side by side, a few things become obvious: the balustrade continues; the road starting in the Berlin portrait continues in the Paris portrait, curves, passes a house and leads to the gate in the Berlin portrait; the landscape itself is unified. If we place precisely the continuing details together we notice that the bottom of the Berlin portrait must have been cut. Further support for this is found in the fact that the man is missing two fingers. The woman’s left hand rests on a parapet and his right arm also seems to rest. Thus a bit of the parapet also has been cut.

The differences with the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr.232) are remarkable. The wall has disappeared and much greater prominence has been given to the landscape. The columns are placed to the side so as not to interfere with the continuity between the two portraits. The balustrade is almost horizontal. Friedländer’s argument in defense of a date around 1470 is worth quoting:

"I take the aged couple portrayed on the two panels in the Louvre (Fr.76) and the Kaiser Friedrich Museum
(Fr.75) to be an early work, although the landscape background, here set with columns at the side and a shoulder-high wall, is already well-developed. What speaks for an early origin are the somewhat stunted hands the rather flat faces elaborated mainly in line, and the hesitant use of shading."

There is no excuse for the flat faces, but older people often have lined faces. The wrinkles in his forehead, the sharp cheek lines, the strong lines of his neck are easily attributable to old age.

An argument against the stunted hands will be put forward in the category dealing with hands, but even a cursory glance at hands other than prayer-clasped hands is sufficient to realize that Memling was not always successful in this part of anatomy.

As Friedländer pointed out, the landscape is already well-developed. That could suggest a later date. Further evidence of a later date is the colour of the faces, which in its warm tonality is closer to that of the Antwerp portrait (Fr.71) than to the earlier portraits. Looking solely at the landscape of the two portraits combined, we notice characteristics of the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82) and the Palazzo Vecchio portrait (Fr.86): the buildings are solid, there is a slightly hilly landscape, the trees have been individualized and the road is not satisfactorily integrated. Compared to the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr.232) there is a much better relationship between the interior and exterior. The columns in the Berlin-Paris portraits have a function, for they anchor the sitters without blocking the view. The column in the Thyssen-Bornemisza is not really functional but
additive. It blocks the view and does not help to relate to either the interior or exterior. This means for a possible date that the two portraits are somewhat later than the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr.232) and close to the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82) and the Palazzo Vecchio portrait (Fr.86).

Looking at the other portraits in this category we notice that they all have a well-developed landscape, so that roughly we can say that this category is—for the surviving portraits at least—characteristic for the mature and late period of Memling.

In the Robert Lehman Collection is a portrait of a young man (Fr.74), which deserves this description well-developed. The horizon is as high as the mouth of the sitter which is slightly above the middle of the canvas. The landscape is only on the left side, intersected by two marble columns. Behind the sitter is a very light, nearly luminous wall. The wall and the columns form an angle of 90 degrees behind the head of the sitter. The diagonal direction of the parapet, on which the columns stand, and the wall invite the viewer to look into space. The curving road and the trees lead the eye towards the horizon, which is vaguely hilly. The pose of the sitter can be regarded as the base of a triangle, with the columns and the wall as its legs. This creates a space behind the sitter, a space which is defined by the clear indication of the corners formed by the wall and column. His hands rest comfortably on an invisible ledge and the direction of the arms create
distance between the body and the hands. There is a subtle
balance in this painting, built up by its elements: the many
verticals in the deep velvet red dress and the columns and
the angle of the wall; the dark collar with the white line
and the fur trimming of the jacket; the hands with the
horizon; the heavy columns and the wall and the landscape.
These few examples are sufficient to indicate that the
portrait is later than the previous portraits in this
category.

The next two portraits have Willem Moreel and his wife
Barbara van Vlaenderberghe as sitters (Fr. 67, 68). These
two portraits are certainly later than the Berlin-Paris
portraits (Fr. 75, 76), for the red marbled columns are not
as heavy and are placed on a diagonal balustrade. Instead of
one column per portrait there are two and, unlike the Lehman
portrait (Fr. 74), the heads are placed between the columns.
Placed beside one another, the inside columns and the balus-
trade give the impression of a corner in a room. Separation,
however, forestalls this connection line to become the
central axis. The hennin and veil of Barbara Moreel prevent
much of the landscape from being shown. A cluster of trees,
somewhat clumsily tucked in between the columns and the veil,
and a bluish distant hill with a cloudless sky are all what
is visible. Yet, there is one interesting aspect worth
mentioning here. Through the diaphanous veil a slightly dis-
torted landscape is visible. The portrait of Willem Moreel
contains more landscape. A road close to the inside column
pulls the view away from this column and into the landscape. Houses and castles are placed left and right of the sitter's head. Especially the left side is close to the The Hague portrait (Fr.79). The high balustrade necessitated a high horizon, roughly as high as the eyes of the sitter. This contrasts to what we have noticed in the pure landscape category. Yet, the depth and the clarity are indicative of a later date. The usual dating for these portraits, 1484, seems to be reasonably acceptable.

The next portrait, at Chicago (Fr.92), is quite different in composition. The sitter is seated with a prayer book in front of him. Behind him is a cupboard and a glass vase holding red carnations. A dark corner is behind his head. Through a window we can see a meandering stream, a tree and a church half hidden by the trees in front of it. The horizon divides the window at midpoint. The window and the landscape make it possible to match it with a *Virgín and Child* painting (Fr.50) and in 1936 the diptych was reunited.

The landscape alone is not sufficient for a precise date. The continuity of landscape from one panel into another appeared already in the portraits of the Elderly Couple (Fr. 75,76). The smallness of the trees and the clarity reminiscent of the The Hague portrait (Fr.79) indicate a possible later date. In the interior is a lot of space between the hands, body and corner, more than in the Lehman portrait (Fr.74), and this is probably due to the presence of the ground and the cupboard. Compared to the dated Maarten van Nieuwenhove
the interior and the exterior are not as detailed and refined. Thus it is probably painted before 1487. On the basis of interior-exterior alone this portrait could be placed between the Lehman portrait (Fr.74) and the Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14).

The last two portraits in this category, Benedetto Portinari (Fr.23B) and Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14) are both dated 1487. It is difficult to say which one is earlier, but for establishing a working chronology this is not so important, especially not since no other portraits are known to be later. Since we return to these paintings several times, in this chapter as well as in others, a short description should suffice.

Benedetto Portinari is placed diagonally in a room, behind a desk on which lies an open prayer book. Behind him, on a low balustrade, are two columns which above the capital start to form an arch. Outside is the by now familiar Memling landscape but with a somewhat awkward curved road.

Maarten van Nieuwenhove nearly rests against a multi windowed wall. A prayer book lies open on a cloth-covered ledge in front of him. Through two open windows a small portion of the landscape is visible. Although the parts are tiny, a bridge with a watchtower is visible as well as deep space and a narrow strip of sky. The interior is rather detailed in the window shutters with nails and lock, the small glass panes and a stained glass panel with his patron saint. In the right corner, hardly noticeable, is a column.

The sophistication of this portrait, which is actually part
of a diptych, has generally received great acclaim. It sums up the conquests Memling has made since the early portraits in spatial development, unification, topography, atmospheric perspective, individualization and volume.

It would be nice to leave the general aspect of background on such a laudatory note. However, one painting, the London portrait (Fr. 78), could not be included in any of the three background characteristics. The sitter is placed, perhaps the word pressed is better, between two multi coloured marble columns. The background is a neutral dark green. In front, on a desk or ledge, is an open book. Backgroundwise this is a combination of the neutral background and the interior. The diagonal position, the space available in front and the two columns indicate a date from 1475 onwards and possibly as late as 1487.

A few conclusions could be drawn from these three characteristics. We have discussed and followed what Friedländer called a well-developed landscape and in general Memling's spatial development. The emphasis on the kind of background seems in time to switch more or less in the order discussed here. The inceptions may have been consecutive-difficult to prove since not all portraits have survived-but for some time at least the three categories existed concurrently. The method applied here had some definitive advantages. Within each category it was possible to follow the progress as well as notice possible regressions. What seems regressive compared to one category may be progressive in another one. Thus it is impossible to say that from
Gilles Joye (Fr.72) of 1472 to Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14) of 1487 there is an uninterrupted progress which flows from one category into another.

In discussing Memling's spatial development some attention was given to the placement of the hands, the three-dimensionality of the sitters and to anatomical structure. That no more attention could be given shows the limitations of one aspect. The second aspect, that of hands, helps to rectify some of these shortcomings and make it possible to construct a tighter chronology.

**PRAYER-CLASPED HANDS**

All the portraits discussed above either show one or both hands. Absence of hands in a portrait attributed to Memling should make one suspicious. Nearly half of the sitters have their hands put together in prayer. This is not only the largest category, but also the most uniform, and this uniformity makes it easier to discuss progression, regression and deviation.

The starting point is again Gilles Joye (Fr.72). His arms are cut close to the armpits and his hands are tucked away in the corner. His little finger is awkwardly placed against the frame. Hardly anything is visible of his right hand. This is probably due to the fact that the hands are placed parallel to the picture plane. Even his left hand is not completely visible, because it is cut close to the knuckles of the thumb and little finger. The thumb bends somewhat strangely to the back. This spatial and structural
inaccuracy, the uncertainty of the relationship of the hands with the frame, the body and each other is important enough to help us to date more firmly the Portinari portraits (Fr.69,70). The first and major difference is that Tommaso is shown nearly to the waist. Secondly, he is placed diagonally in space. Thus the space for his hands has been enlarged and includes the arms as well. The hands are away from the corner and free in space. They point in the same upward direction as those of Gilles Joye (Fr.72), but now the other hand is much more visible. The thumbs are normal and not bending backwards. In the fingers there is more of a bone structure, but not all the results are correct: the left little finger has a strange knick; the angle connecting the left hand with the arm is too large and the flesh between the thumb and the index finger is undefined. However, the better over-all structure tends to confirm the earlier suggestion that this portrait is slightly later than the Gilles Joye.

Maria Portinari's hands form an angle of 30 degrees with the lower edge, that is, they point to Tommaso, not upwards. They are close to the left corner, but do not quite touch the edge. The sleeve covers the lower part of the hand, which is painted parallel to the picture plane. Her right hand is barely visible, the little finger has again a strange knick and the right index looks misshapen. Anatomically her hands are less correct than his. Structurally and compositionally her hands resemble more Gilles
Joye's hands than Tommaso's, so that her portrait may have been painted before Tommaso's.

The fourth portrait is again of a sitter with a neutral background, namely the San Diego portrait (Fr. 233). He is cut just under the armpits. Thus his situation is similar to Gilles Joye (Fr. 72). However, his hands are not pressed into the corner. His right little finger is circa three centimeter away from the left frame. The hands are cut from the second joint of the little finger to the third joint of the index, but what is visible is rather slender. That is because the last joints are barely indicated. The thumbs are a bit too long anatomically. Compared to Tommaso Portinari's hands they have, however, gained even more in the understanding of the bone structure. This confirms the earlier findings in the neutral background characteristic that the San Diego portrait is of a later date.

The Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr. 232) is comparable to Tommaso Portinari in several aspects. The sitter looks to the right, his hands are away from the frame, his pose is diagonal and he is seen nearly to the waist. However, the hands are much freer: the left thumb crosses the right; the whole little finger is curved, not just the joint; the folds around the wrist and thumb are much more natural; the knuckles are better indicated. This new freedom is indicative of a date after the San Diego portrait (Fr. 233).

In contrast to the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait stands the National Trust portrait (Fr. 87). The sitter is cut just
below the shoulders. Thus there is very little space for the hands. Not all fingertips are visible and the hand is cut just above the wrist to just below the third knuckle of the little finger. Since this portrait is poorly preserved it is not easy to make a judgment about the anatomical structure. At least the thumbs are of proper length and the fingers seem to bend a little bit and the upper knuckles are indicated. The area above the little fingers seems to be badly damaged. In spite of the poor preservation it is still possible to date it after the San Diego portrait (Fr.233).

Compared to the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr.232) the hands seem to have a similar confidence, which suggests that it could be dated from that time onwards.

Superficially, there does not seem to be a consistency for the length of the sitter, for the London portrait (Fr.78) shows the sitter as far as the waist. The hands are at an angle of 45 degrees with the ledge on which the open prayer book rests. Much of the inside of his left hand is shown, more than in any of the others discussed here. The knuckles show that there is an understanding of the bone structure. The thumbs are freely placed against one another and are of proper length. The flesh is somewhat pale, which may be due to the age of the sitter. While the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr.232) showed cupped hands, this sitter shows parting hands and the shadow increases gradually. The spatial relationship to the book and the corner shows a greater ease compared to the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait. The better
anatomical structure and spatial relationship indicate that the London portrait could be dated after the Thyssen-Borne­misza portrait. Compared to the hands of Benedetto Portinari (Fr. 23B) and Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr. 14), the London sitter's hands are fairly similar, except in the angularity of the thumb and the pale flesh colour. Taking also the Chicago portrait (Fr. 92) into consideration, one aspect in connection with the prayer book becomes apparent. In the London portrait the book lies flat on the table; in the Chicago portrait it is at an angle, but it is not clear how; in the Benedetto Portinari the book rests on an object to form an angle; in the Maarten van Nieuwenhove it rests on a clearly defined red cloth. And at the same time the hands move farther away from the book, while the book becomes smaller. Thus although the hands of these four sitters are fairly similar, there is a spatial development in relation of the hands to the open book. The consequence for the London portrait is that it can be regarded as belonging to Memling's mature or later period, but probably not later than the Chicago portrait.

The situation for the Moreels (Fr. 67, 68) is different again. His hands are partly covered by his sleeves so that only the fingers are visible. They are away from the frame and point at an angle of 60 degrees upwards. There is a fair amount of space between his little finger and ring finger and shadow indicates that the hands are not tightly pressed together. This relaxed manner is also noticeable in her
hands. They are only partly visible because they are cut by the frame. Her right thumb crosses the left and her little finger bends considerably in the middle joint in a quite natural manner. The angle of the hands with the lower edge is 45 degrees, pointing more to the husband than upwards. The bone structure of the hands is quite well understood and they convey an easiness of handling. This tends to confirm a later date.

It is rather difficult to say much about the hands of the sitter of the The Hague portrait (Fr.79), because only the fingertips are shown. What is visible shows that the hands are placed on the axis left bottom-top right, which gives depth to the painting. The top knuckles are clearly indicated, so that even these few details tend to confirm a later date.

A few words still about the Chicago portrait (Fr.92). His right thumb rests upon his left hand, something already noticed in the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr.232) and in the Barbara Moreel (Fr.68). Both Benedetto Portinari (Fr.23B) and Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14) miss this playful aspect, because their thumbs are placed beside one another. His hands do not part as far as Willem Moreel's (Fr.67), which is noticeable in the little fingers which are positioned more parallel. This is comparable to the last two portraits. His hands form an angle of 45 degrees with the lower edge, in between the Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14), with an angle of 30 degrees, and the Benedetto Portinari (Fr.23B), with an
angle of 52 degrees. This would suggest that this portrait is close to the last two portraits of 1487 and close to and probably after the Moreels (Fr.67,68). The date which Friedländer suggested for the Virgin and Child (Fr.50), before it was united with this portrait, was circa 1485, which in the light of our discussion seems to be acceptable. With the two dated portraits of 1487 this one rounds out this category.

A few conclusions need to be drawn which are useful for a discussion in the next categories and chapters. The early portraits show a lack of anatomical understanding. It is not until the San Diego portrait (Fr.233) that there is a sense of underlaying bone structure; and it is not until the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr.232) that a certain freedom with and confidence in this anatomical aspect occurs. Spatially there is a tendency away from the corner, although there are subgroups, like those with a prayer book, which follow an added pattern. Even if the hands are placed close to or in the corner they tend to become freer after the pressed hands of Gilles Joye (Fr.72). Although all hands are prayer-clasped hands, they do not always point in the same direction. There are basically two directions: upwards and sideward. The significance of this will be discussed in chapter IV.
HANDS HOLDING AN OBJECT

Although this is the smallest category, it is closely related to the previous one, since the hands 'do' something. The object or objects the sitters hold as well as the way the objects are held determine partially the position of the hands. Through the grip on the object the anatomical understanding is revealed. Since the objects vary a different grip may be required, which in turn creates new problems. Moreover, two of the sitters show both hands, the Pierpont Morgan portrait (Fr.83) and the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82). Of the three categories this is the most complex one.

Since the two portraits with the two hands have an added variable, they will be discussed together. The hands of the Pierpont Morgan sitter (Fr.83) are placed in the right bottom corner; those of the Copenhagen sitter (Fr.82) in the left bottom corner. The latter has a rosary in his fingers and the way the hands are placed is rather relaxed. The fingers are parted and curved around the rosary. Some fingers curve more than others, giving more variation. The left thumb hides behind the rest of the hand and the little finger is cut. The fingers and hand are smoothly continued into the sleeved arms. It all looks like a natural movement.

Not so for the Pierpont Morgan portrait, who has two objects in his hands, a carnation and a small folded card. The hand area is cramped; the left and right have no real relationship. The fingers of the left hand, which holds the carnation, are varied in length, but rather unnatural. The
ring finger seems longer than the middle finger. This is partly due to the fact that the middle finger has been withdrawn from the stem of the flower. The variation now achieved is through an unnatural, cramped movement. The right hand has rather long fingers, which look insubstantial. This suggests that the Pierpont Morgan portrait is of an earlier date than the Copenhagen portrait. Probably not very much, for the latter still has a slight insubstantiality in the fingers. Since both portraits have a different background and yet are relatively close, they tie other portraits closer together. At least all the portraits with a neutral background before the Pierpont Morgan portrait are also before the Copenhagen portrait, and some of the landscape backgrounds are before the Pierpont Morgan portrait.

The result of this interrelation of categories is that two other portraits with a different background come before the Copenhagen portrait, namely the Washington portrait (Fr. 85) and the Montreal portrait (Fr. 80). The latter has a scroll in his hand, the former an arrow. In pose the hands look very much alike. In the Montreal portrait the forefingers are only visible, in the Washington portrait there is a bit more. This little addition gives the hand a more relaxed feeling, although a certain stiffness remains. Allowing for the difference in age and objects the two hands look rather similar. In both portraits the relation to their arms is undefined, so that also spatially there is not much
difference. Probably these portraits were done very close together in time. Since the Washington portrait is closely related to the Pierpont Morgan portrait (Fr.83) and perhaps slightly earlier, the Montreal portrait can be dated around the same time. For the landscape portraits it means that those earlier than the Montreal portrait are also earlier than the Washington portrait.

According to our discussion on the landscape background the Frick portrait (Fr.231) is close to the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82). Like the Berlin Elderly Man (Fr.75) the sitter shows only three fingers. Like that portrait it may also have been cut. The sitter has a sash in his right hand. In comparison to all other hands his fingers look massive. Two fingers are placed partly parallel to the picture plane and catch all the light; then they bend perpendicularly away and are heavily shadowed. A rather clumsy and unsuccessful attempt in structure, both from an anatomical as well as spatial point of view. There is a discrepancy between the achievements in landscape and facial modelling and the hands, a discrepancy not unlike the situation in the Pierpont Morgan portrait (Fr.83).

Of the three other portraits the Palazzo Vecchio sitter (Fr.86) has a similar pose as the Montreal sitter (Fr.80) and the Washington sitter (Fr.85). A copy of this portrait (Fr.86a) shows that the lower part has been cut. The fingertips are now cut off. Yet, the remaining parts show that there is a better understanding, for the last
knuckles are just visible. The fingers are parted so that there is a play with shadows. This freedom was first noticeable in the prayer-clasped hands of the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr. 232). Thus the hands tend to confirm that this portrait belongs to Memling's mature period.

The order of the Palazzo Vecchio portrait (Fr. 86) and the Antwerp portrait (Fr. 71) has already been discussed in the landscape background. A discussion on the hands of the latter does not substantially add to our knowledge. The left hand, which holds a Roman coin, is tucked away in the corner. The properly foreshortened thumb, the space in between the fingers, modelled by their shadows, are indicative of Memling's mature period.

The last portrait in this category showed the hand of the sitter only after a restoration. This gives some clue to the quality of this area. The little finger is only partly cut off. With his index and middle finger the Windsor sitter touches a chain (?) hanging down from his neck. The sharp curve of the other two fingers adds to the variety, especially since the fingers part in the center. These details still give a sense of anatomical correctness, which confirms the suggestion that this is not an early portrait with a neutral background, but a portrait of Memling's mature period.

In spite of the complexity and variety this characteristic tends to confirm the findings of the category with the prayer-clasped hands. Due to greater mixture of the backgrounds the chronology can be more firmly established. For
the remaining portraits the basic problem is where they fit in before 1480, that is, before the Bruges Young Woman's portrait (Fr.94).

HANDS AT REST

There are ten portraits in this category of which one, the Bruges Young Woman's portrait (Fr.94), is dated 1480. But several others are roughly dated because of the sequences. The most important for the early portraits is the Uffizi portrait (Fr.89). By establishing its date, the others fall more easily into place. The sitter has his right hand on a broad ledge. The pose is fairly similar to those of the Montreal portrait (Fr.80) and the Washington portrait (Fr.85). Although the fingers are parted, the shadowing does not really model the fingers, but creates a strong linearity. Compared to another portrait in the Uffizi (Fr.88), in which the sitter has placed his hands one over the other, the hand is not as varied and structured. And compared to the Venice portrait (Fr.77) his hand does not have the tension. This means that this portrait is one of the earliest Memling made. This is more likely so if we look more carefully at the Venice portrait (Fr.77). This sitter's right hand is placed in the corner and he presses his hand on a ledge. The joints are consequently slightly bent. A little bit more of the upper hand is visible, but not much. The position of his little finger recalls the hand of Gilles Joye (Fr.72). There the hand was pressed into the corner, here the hand has been cut and not pressed into the available space. Therefore, the
Venice portrait is done probably some time after the Gilles Joye. But it also means that the Uffizi portrait (Fr.89) is painted around the same time as that of the Flemish composer.

The other Uffizi sitter (Fr.88), with his hands placed one over the other, may be more varied and structured, but the structure is more that of the flesh, not of the bones. And that counts also for the Brussels portrait (Fr.84). The fingers look all the same and do not have an individual character. The fingers are in both cases close together and the separation is mainly done by line, not through modelling of light and dark. Both these portraits are painted fairly close together.

The only other portrait before the Washington portrait (Fr.85) is the New York Old Man (Fr.81). Since this area is badly rubbed a complete assessment is impossible. His right hand covers his left hand, except for the nails of the middle finger and the ring finger. The higher position of the right index is not believable and the fingers have a peculiar curve. Friedländer called them stunted hands, and rightly so. But aspects discussed in the neutral background category should not be forgotten. Furthermore, as we have seen, some other hands are not successful either. We already discussed the very clumsy hand of the Frick portrait (Fr.231) and the less than successful hands of the Pierpont Morgan portrait (Fr.83). And of roughly the same date is the Frankfurt portrait (Fr.73). The hands are very close to the left corner. The right hand, fully resting, shows parted fingers
rather mechanically organized and separated more through line than through modelling with light and shadow. The left hand shows long but insubstantial fingers. The hands miss completely the bonestructure underneath the flesh. This is all the more remarkable, since other portraits of the same period show a much better grasp of the anatomy of the hands. Although the tendency is still somewhat present in the Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82), it shows already quite an improvement.

As we saw on page 27-28 Friedländer called the hands of the Elderly Couple (Fr.75,76) stunted hands. Conceding that the landscape was advanced, he used the hands as one of the arguments to place them early. As I just indicated from maybe as early as 1474 onwards there is a group of portraits which seems to be regressive in hands. The Copenhagen portrait (Fr.82) has still a few disproportionally long fingers, but the length of the fingers of the Elderly Couple seems to be fairly acceptable. Of the Elderly Man's hand only three fingers are visible, the other two are cut, so that a judgment like "stunted hands" is not completely fair. Her right hand rests under her clearly visible left hand, not much better than the solution in the New York Old Man (Fr.81). Yet, spatially the result is better, because the hands are away from the frame and the corner.

Although Friedländer's "stunted hands" remains true, there are thus two points which considerably modify his argument. The first one is that the hands are spatially
more successful than those of the early portraits. The second point is that compared to this group of "stunted-hands-portraits" her hands, and his as well, show an improvement, thus suggesting a later date which is compatible with Friedländer's idea about the landscape.

With what ease Memling could paint two resting hands becomes clear in the Lehman portrait (Fr. 74). Part of the right fingertips are cut. Around the fingertips of the left hand, which rests on the right hand, the colour is faintly lighter. Between the fingers are no sharp lines as in the early portraits. The same features can be found in the Bruges portrait (Fr. 94). Since this portrait is firmly dated 1480, it is possible that the Lehman portrait was painted close to it, probably somewhat earlier, because the hands do not recede as well; the last knuckle is higher than the middle one.

Looking back on the three categories of hands it should be noted that they fulfilled their purpose in more firmly establishing a chronology. For the purpose of this thesis the relative chronology here established is sufficient to draw some conclusions which will be discussed in the following chapters. But the hands established more than a firmer chronology. Spatially they show basically two developments: a tendency to move away from the corner and a freedom of pose. The latter is the more important development, for in cases where the hands are placed in a corner in a later period, the freedom remains.
There is a restriction to the spatial development, due to the anatomical development. Initially the hands are very fleshy with long fingers without a sense of bone structure. Gradually, through modelling with light and dark instead of lines, and details like knuckles and length of thumb, and in some cases the connection to the wrists, this bone structure becomes apparent. However, in the middle of this development a group of portraits appears which is qualitatively much poorer in hands. It is this group which puts a restriction on the aspect of spatial development. After 1477 the development is more continuous.

Furthermore, it should be noted that although all portraits discussed here show hands, it does not mean that the whole hand is always portrayed. In whole or in part this aspect shows its importance to Memling and his sitters.

The last point I want to mention here concerns the modelling. Early in his career Memling used to separate parts through darker outlines. Gradually the lines gave way to a modelling through light and dark. Some of the discussion here centered around the face as part of the ongoing development of space and anatomy. Also there the line gave way to light and dark modelling. And if we take into consideration the background development we can roughly divide Memling's portraits into three periods. The early period up to circa 1475 is characterized by a searching for spatial effects and anatomical correctness. The results are, however, not yet successful. After 1475 Memling has gained a freedom and con-
fidence in both, so that the term mature period seems to be justified. Around 1480 certain early characteristics return, the most notable a hardening in line and a cooler light, especially in the landscape. The first clear example is the The Hague portrait (Fr.79) of around 1484. The time between 1480 and 1484 could be designated as a transitional period leading into Memling's late style. This division in time is useful when we discuss in the next chapters the number of sitters in these periods and discover who they are.
CHAPTER II

THE SITTERS

In the chapter on chronology some names of Memling's sitters were mentioned to indicate particular portraits. Who the sitters actually were was not discussed. In this chapter some historical information is provided, which, it is hoped, will clarify the findings related to the chronology. Although that is important, it is not the major reason for discussing the historical background of the sitters. Some of this information sheds light on the reasons for commissioning portraits. Furthermore, it gives an insight into the kind of people who commissioned them, that is, we learn about the status of the sitters. With this knowledge about their status we can make some suggestions about the sitters whose identities are as yet unknown or not documented. Moreover, some of this information contributes to our understanding of the personality and character of the sitter. Thus it provides some background to the discussion of the iconographical types in chapter IV.

As pointed out in chapter I, Gilles Joye's portrait (Fr.72) may be Memling's first known portrait. Yet, the name is not given in the painting or on the original frame. On that frame, in gold coloured capital letters, is written "ANNO.DOMINI. 1472" and "ETATIS.SVE.47". Furthermore, it has a coat of arms, repeated on the sitter's signet ring, and an armorial device. What is not shown on the frame are clearly
discernible hinge marks, although there are some nail holes in the frame edge. This seemingly not so important aspect of absence may, however, provide a clue later on when we examine the iconography.

On the back of the panel is a slip of paper, added later, with the following inscription:

"Effigies venerabilis viri domini Egidij Joye, sacerdotis...ecclesie Sancti Donatiani Brugensis et pastoris ecclesie Sancti. Ypoliti Del(fen)sis, sepulti in sanctuaris dicte ecclesie Sancti Donatiani anno Domini 1473, ultima decembris. Requiescat in pace." 4

F. van Molle, whose information I summarize here, was able to confirm that this sitter was indeed Gilles Joye. He was a priest in the diocese of Tournai and obtained a prebend as a canon of the chapter of the Notre-Dame at Cleves on April 24, 1453. He resigned, however, before September 9, 1460 in order to take a prebend of the chapter of Saint Donatian of Bruges. But he was not installed until March 2, 1463 as its tenth prebendary. Provosts of the Bruges' cathedral were chancellors of Flanders as well and closely allied to the Burgundian court. Like the dean and the canons of the Notre-Dame, next in importance, they were nearly all court appointments. No wonder that in a publication of 1731 we can find the following entry "Aegidius Joye, Capellanus Honoris Philippi Boni Burgundiae Ducis, Canonicus S. Donatiani,... 9" Accounts exist which show that he was paid as a clerk (he succeeded Philippe du Passaigne) and then as chaplain. It may have been his reputation as a composer which earned him these positions, for in 1462 he was a member of chapelle
musicale of Philip the Good. He remained a member until early 1468 when sickness caused reverses in his ascending career.

That Gilles Joye was highly regarded as a composer in his time may be gathered from the fact that he was mentioned as an equal of Guillaume Dufay, still regarded as one of the great masters of the Burgundian School, in Cretin's Déploration sur la mort de J.Okeghem, written between 1496 and 1499.

For some time during his court period he was also a priest in charge of the Sint Hippolitus or Oude Kerk of Delft (1465 to 1469). After his illness he mostly stayed in Bruges where he died in 1483 (and not in 1473 as stated on the paper affixed on the back of the panel). Thus it was shortly after the ascendency of Charles the Bold that he lost his court position. Knowing that Gilles Joye was in Bruges in 1472 strengthens the argument that Memling painted this portrait.

In the portrait he is dressed in a simple russet coloured jacket with greyish fur trim. He wears a ring with a blue jewel and one with his coat of arms. It is difficult to say in what function he let himself be portrayed. Is this a commemoration of him with respect to his court functions, as a priest, or as a musician? A bit of light may be shed upon this problem by the blue green neutral background. In connection with this point three other portraits need to be mentioned, that of Tommaso Portinari (Fr. 69) and two copies of the portrait of Anthony of Burgundy (Fr. 102a and b). Both men were closely related to the court and their portraits
also have a neutral background. It is possible that this neutral background practice has kept something of its association with the court. Although the evidence is slim, this suggestion of court association may help in the search for the identity of the sitters.

The next figure to be considered is Tommaso Portinari, who played a very important role during the reign of Charles the Bold. But before anything can be said about him, we have to take a look at the Medici banking branch at Bruges of which he was for some time manager. Raymond de Roover, who did much research in this field, pointed out that between 1416 and 1430 the Medici were represented, in Bruges as well as England, by either the Bardi or the Borromei firms. In 1436 Bernardo di Giovanni di Adoardo Portinari (1407-1455), son of the Venice Medici branch manager, explored the possibility of setting up a Medici branch in Bruges. In 1438 he became a Medici agent and the branch was officially founded on March 24, 1439. In 1455 a contract for the Bruges branch was made between Piero and Giovanni di Cosimo and Pierfrancesco di Lorenzo de' Medici, senior partners, Gierozzo de' Pigli, investing partner, and Agnolo Tani, managing partner. All partners shared in the capital, though to varying degrees, while the profits were to be shared according to a special arrangement. Pigli had also interests in the London branch, where Tani had worked for some time. The contract was for four years, from March 25, 1456 to March 24, 1460, and the company was to be called, according to article
one, "Piero di Cosimo de' Medici, Gerozzo de' Pigli & Co." This company was "to deal in exchange and in merchandise in the city of Bruges in Flanders." Tani, the manager, had to live in Bruges and only special occasions could warrant his absence from the city (for example the yearly markets in Antwerp or Bergen-op-Zoom). He was more of a subordinate than his legal status of co-partner indicated. Yet, this legal status was important, for it created an independent branch at Bruges. This independence would create havoc under Tommaso Portinari, for the various branches were not obliged to support one another. The contract of 1455 could be terminated only after March 24, 1460, but it could also be renewed and, if necessary, the various clauses could be changed. Initially it was renewed, but on August 6, 1465 a new contract was made between somewhat different people. Piero de' Medici became the senior partner, Agnolo Tani the investing partner, and Tommaso Portinari (1428-1501) the managing partner. Tani had left Bruges in 1464 to discuss the new contract and he was opposed to Tommaso's appointment. That the latter became manager after all may be due to paternal and fraternal influence. Folco Portinari was the Tavola manager in Florence. His son Pigello (1421-1468) was the first manager of the Milan branch (1453-1468), while Accerito Portinari (1427-1503) was the second manager (1468-1478). It was, in any case, a rare occurrence, for as De Roover writes "I know of no instance in which the Medici ever refused to renew the contract with a manager who had given them satisfactory service."
Although Tani came twice to the north, in 1467 and in 1468-1469, in order to save the London branch, he had no direct influence on the managing of the Bruges branch. His indirect influence, however, must be stated. In the first place, a successful attempt to save the London branch could avoid the possible disaster of the larger Bruges branch. In the second place, he attempted to steer Tommaso away from the Burgundian court. In both attempts he was not successful and the results for both branches were ultimately disastrous.

Perhaps Tani himself was guilty of the court connection. In 1457, when he was manager, he wrote to Florence for permission to sell silk to the Burgundian court, even though the contract of 1455 stipulated that credit was not to be extended to spiritual and temporal rulers (They had to pay in advance!).

His assistant manager at that time was Tommaso Portinari. And although Cosimo and Piero de' Medici were against court involvement ("rulers involved more risk than profit"); there was a breach of contract, for the silk was sold at the court. Carlo Cavalcanti, who could speak French, became the salesman at the court, but Tommaso learned a lesson: a breach of contract was possible without retaliatory measures. When he became manager in 1465 he associated himself more and more with the court, especially with Charles the Bold. He learned nothing from the precarious situation of the London branch, which had extended loans to Edward IV and to the supporters of the House of Lancaster. He actually was stimulated in his dangerous policy by Lorenzo the Magnificent who ignored
the cautious policy of his predecessors and in 1471 renewed the partnership with a new clause that permitted Tommaso to extend credit to Charles the Bold up to £ 6000 groat.

In the contract renewal of 1473 this maximum was dropped. It must have been the highlight of Tommaso's career, for not too long after that the clouds began to gather over Charles the Bold's head. Initially militarily successful, he was unable to sustain his momentum and when he was killed in the battle of Nancy in January 1477 he owed Portinari £ 9500 groat, or more than three times the invested capital mentioned in the 1473 contract. In 1478 Tommaso was in Italy and Folco Portinari (1448-1490), a nephew of Bernardo di Giovanni di Adoardo Portinari, the first Bruges branch manager, became acting manager. In 1479 Tommaso was forced to take the consequences of his financial dealings and had to take over the Bruges branch from the Medici. The final settlement, actually an adjustment of a previous settlement, took place on February 15, 1481. Although the settlement probably gave more to Tommaso than he legally could expect, he was not free of creditors. In 1488 he was forced to forfeit his rights in exchange for ready cash supplied by his nephews Benedetto and Folco Portinari. Even in 1500, three years after his retirement to Florence, he himself received nothing when he sold the 'pawned' Burgundian crown jewels. And his son Francesco decided, after the death of his father on February 15, 1501, not to accept the inheritance, because he was afraid that the debts were more than the assets.
The most successful period for Tommaso can be placed, therefore, between 1465 and 1475. Although before 1465 complaints reached Florence that Tommaso spent too much time at the Burgundian court, it was not until after the conclusion of the 1465 contract that he became an influence at the court. He became advisor and later counsellor to Charles the Bold, even when the latter was still Count of Charolais. De Roover, in an assessment on Tommaso stated that "perhaps he was cut out to be a diplomat rather than a merchant". It was Tommaso who persuaded Piero di Cosimo to charter the two galleys Philip the Good had ordered for his crusade against the Turks. It was Tommaso who persuaded Piero di Cosimo to buy Hotel Bladelin for 7000 Rhenish florins in 1466. It was he who secured a charter for Gravelines' toll in 1465. It seemed an innocent adventure and lucrative as well, for Flanders still got English wool and Portinari expected even more import via this city. But it did not turn out that way. De Roover stated it quite bluntly:

"There is no question that the toll of Gravelines was the first step which led Tommaso Portinari and the Medici with him on the road to greater and greater involvement in loans to the Duke of Burgundy, the uncrowned king of the Low Countries." 

In 1469 Tommaso went to Florence to negotiate a new contract. The first one was voided by the death of Piero di Cosimo on December 2, 1469. But Tommaso had already returned to Bruges when Piero died. With the correspondence on a new contract he also wrote that he intended to marry Maria Maddalena di Francesco Bandini-Baroncelli, who was only
fifteen at the time, twenty-five years younger than Tommaso. The marriage took place in Bruges in 1470. The first child, Maria, was born in 1471; the second, Antonio, in 1472, and the third, Pigello, in 1474. These three are represented in the altar piece Tommaso ordered from Hugo van der Goes. Since the fourth child, Margherita, was probably born in 1475 that altar piece was presumably finished before her birth. Frequently the Memling portraits are compared with the Hugo van der Goes donors. But since the two artists were of a quite different nature, their products were of necessity also different. Nothing more definite can be said than that the sitters are roughly of the same age.

The Memling portraits could be marriage portraits, commissioned some time after the ceremony. But they could also represent another occasion. The voided contract of October 14, 1469 was replaced by a much stricter one on December 15, 1469. It stipulated that Portinari should "deal as little as possible with the court of the Duke of Burgundy and of other princes and lords,..." As we have seen above, this stipulation was rescinded in the contract of May 12, 1471 and Tommaso's powers were enlarged in the 1473 contract. Both of these dates could be used for commemoration. Since the two portraits seem to be somewhat later than the Gilles Joye, the 1473 contract could possibly serve as a moment of thanksgiving and celebration. In the light of Tommaso's financial success around 1473, the suggested date for these portraits is even more acceptable.
In the case of Gilles Joye we saw that he could represent several groups, and a similar situation occurs with regard to the Portinaris. They can be regarded as representatives of the Italian colony at Bruges, as courtiers, as bankers or banker-merchants. With Gilles Joye they have the aspect of courtier in common and, as pointed out above, the neutral background may in these cases relate to the backgrounds depicted in previous court portraits.

A few words suffice about Anthony of Burgundy, named the Great Bastard. Few, because the two portraits are copies (Fr.102a and b), and his social position is much clearer. He was the son of Philip the Good and Jeanne de Prelle and born in 1421. Early in his life he participated in Philip the Good's wars. He became commander of the army and restored in 1458 Burgundian power in the Sticht. He was supposed to lead the Burgundian army in the crusade against the Turks in 1464, but the death of pope Pius II prevented the crusade to materialize. In 1467 and 1474 he went to England in order to strengthen a league between England and Burgundy. He was captured at Nancy in 1477 by the Swiss, but handed over to the French king, Charles VIII. He pledged an oath of fealty to the French king and continued to live in France where he obtained new possessions. He mediated in the conflict between the city Ghent and Maximilian, the husband of Mary of Burgundy. Philip the Handsome honoured him for this service with a pension. At his death in 1504 he had collected a great number of books and manuscripts. This lover of art was
portrayed for example by Rogier van der Weyden. Since the Memling copies show a Golden Fleece chain, which he received in 1456, and he resembles the Rogier portrait, the identification seems to be an acceptable one. The original could not be after 1477 when he was captured. It is more likely that the portrait was painted at a fairly early date.

It is known that the Burgundian princes resided occasionally in Bruges. No documents have come to light indicating that Memling was officially associated with the court. But that does not mean that Memling could not portray courtiers. It is therefore possible that some of the unidentified sitters in one way or another were connected with the court, such as the sitter of the Washington portrait (Fr.85). This sitter has an arrow in his right hand. Friedländer suggested that this perhaps indicated a membership in some St. Sebastian fraternity. The brown jacket and the white silk shirt do not easily indicate the position of the sitter. His face and longish hair could indicate an Italian, just like Tommaso Portinari. There are, however, some aspects which would make the court connection possible. There is first of all the blue neutral background. Secondly, the black hat differs from that of his contemporaries. A miniature in the Histoire de la Toison d'or, showing Charles the Bold surrounded by twelve members of the order, contains two figures, seen at the back and seated at a table, who also have such a hat. Thirdly, the arrow could refer to hunting, a sport which was the prerogative of the nobility. These details suggest that this unidenti-
fied sitter may well be a person associated with the court.

Quite distinct from this possible court association are the other identified sitters. The first ones of this new group are Willem Moreel and his wife Barbara van Vlaenderberghe. Moreel's family had come from Italy to Bruges in the thirteenth century and the name had been changed from Morelli to Moreel. Willem, as eldest son, inherited the title and the land, which was granted to his father by Robert de Cleyhem in 1435. He was one of the wealthiest and most influential men in Bruges. K.B. McFarlane stated that Moreel belonged to the corporation of merchant-grocers, while the Detroit Exhibition Catalogue stated that he was a broker and a branch manager of the Bank of Rome. He served as burgomaster in 1478, a year after the death of Charles the Bold. A strong believer in the rights of Bruges, he did not see eye to eye with his temporal overlords. Maximilian, the husband of Maria of Burgundy, had him imprisoned in 1481 for five months, after he had made peace with Flanders and had granted amnesty to every one else. He was burgomaster again in 1483. Around this time he ordered the St. Christopher altar piece (Fr. 12) for the chantry of the chapel of the St. Jakobskerk. Between 1485 and 1488 he was in Nieuwpoort, and the year of his return, 1488, saw Maximilian imprisoned in Bruges and Moreel holding the office of écoute. In 1489 he became treasurer of the city. A tax list for 1490 included him as one of the forty richest men in Bruges and in 1491 he was number eleven on the tax list. Ten years
later he died, but was originally not buried in his funerary chapel. He had married "joncbrauwe Barbara, filia Jan van Herstvelde". She bore him five sons and thirteen daughters and died two years before Willem in 1499.

Looking at the dates above, three possibilities emerge during which the portraits could have been painted: 1/ before his imprisonment in 1481; 2/ between 1481, after his imprisonment, and 1485, when he left for Nieuwpoort; 3/ after his return in 1488. Agewise and compared to their portraits in the St. Christopher triptych (Fr.12) they fit best into the second possibility. Stylistic evidence supports this suggestion.

That Moreel chose Memling should not come as a surprise. The painter was well-to-do, he was the best one in Bruges, and, like Moreel, he was a member of the Broederschap van Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-Ter-Sneeuw.

Willem Moreel can be regarded as a representative of naturalized Italians, upper class Brugian citizens, successful businessmen and magistrates. Thus he represents very different groups compared to the previously discussed sitters.

Chronologically close in time to the Moreel portraits is the National Trust portrait (Fr.87). At the same time the Moreels ordered the St. Christopher triptych (Fr.12). On the left wing, behind Willem Moreel, are his five sons. The eldest, also a Willem, wears the same clothes, has the same hair and, in general, looks like the National Trust sitter. If this sitter is indeed Willem Moreel jr., he could be regarded as a representative of wealthy young men.
Quite often another portrait is associated with the
Moreels. It is that of the Bruges Young Woman in the St.Jans
Hospitaal (Fr.94). Since the inscriptions are of later date,
they are of no immediate help. Frequently she is regarded
as Maria Moreel, their second daughter, but that suggestion
has not been accepted by all scholars. Their objection is
based on the St.Christopher triptych of 1484, which is four
years later than the portrait. On the altar piece she seems
to look younger instead of older. This identification seems,
therefore, indeed somewhat questionable. A.Monballieu tried
to keep the identity within the Moreel family when he wrote
that she could be a relative of the Moreel family.

The next known sitter is Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14).
On the original frame of the diptych we can read that he
was 23 years old in 1487; he was born on November 14,1463.
Sir Martin Conway, perhaps not knowing who the sitter was,
stated bluntly that "the man himself is evidently something
of a fool, but Memling hides his weakness by a treatment
exceptionally dramatic." This "fool", a merchant-patrician
who was a guardian of St.Julian's hospital, became a magis­
trate in 1492, alderman in 1495 and a burgomaster in 1497,
at a time when Bruges was rapidly declining. Early in the
1490s he married Margaret of Haultrain, and he died in 1500.
These historical facts do not seem to warrant Conway's out­
burst. Although there was no officially closed oligarchy,
the magistrates were chosen from the richer and influential
families. Therefore, Van Nieuwenhove represents fairly
similar interests and groups as Moreel. There are differences,
however. He does not represent naturalized Italians and he is much younger than the Moreels.

A usually accepted suggestion is that for Benedetto Portinari (Fr.23B). It was Warburg who identified the sitter. In the Uffizi where this portrait hangs is also the sinister wing with St. Benedict. Both panels came from the S. Maria Nuova hospital, Florence, the center of the Portinari religious activities. Combining these facts, Warburg suggested that this was Benedetto di Pigello di Folco Portinari, the nephew of Tommaso. He was born in 1466 and his age seems to be compatible with the sitter's face. Benedetto was in Bruges, with Folco Portinari, to help Tommaso after the dissociation of 1480 with the Medici. In 1488 Tommaso had to sell out to his two nephews and transferred to them the rights of the captured Burgundian galley, which had carried the Last Judgment (Fr.8). Benedetto can be regarded as the young Italian entrepreneur.

His identification could lead to another portrait, as yet unexplored. At the back of the Benedetto Portinari portrait is a device which reads "De Bono in Melius". A much earlier portrait, also in the Uffizi, and painted probably around 1473 (Fr.88), has at the back the same device in French. If we could connect him to the Portinaris, could he be Folco di Adoardo di Giovanni Portinari, the nephew of Bernardo Portinari? Folco was born in 1448 and worked at least since 1466 in Bruges at the Medici branch. He stayed as assistant manager till the mid 1480s in Bruges, was imprisoned for
embezzlements and died in 1490. If the suggested date of 1473 is right he would be 25 years old, which could fit the sitter of this portrait.

Two other sitters have been identified, but the usual identification does not seem to be correct. The first one concerns the sitter of the Antwerp portrait (Fr.71). Before 1927 the sitter was believed to be the Italian medallist Niccolò Spinelli, who, between 1467 and 1468, worked for Charles the Bold. Hulin de Loo proposed that it was Jean de Candida, another medallist in the service of the duke.

Jean de Candida also worked for the duke as a secretary from 1472 to 1474 and, in the same function, for Charles' daughter Maria from 1474 till 1479. He was sent on several diplomatic missions, but decided to go to France in 1480. The medals he struck have an antique quality. His contemporary sitters were shown in profile. The Memling portrait differs from one of his own medals. Although the suggestion makes sense timewise, Friedländer, for whom Hulin de Loo had constructed this hypothesis, disagreed with the identification and pointed out that the coin was not of a contemporary medallist. The coin, a sestertius of Nero, was very common north of the Alps. For this reason McFarlane suggested that the coin was not only unsuitable for a medallist, but also for a numismatist. He combined two unusual aspects of the painting to find a possible name, namely the coin (Nero) and the palm (Palma). Although unable to further substantiate and document his suggestion, he was undoubtedly
on the right track, especially since a Simone di Nerone was a partner of the Medici in 1458. His suggestion of 'Palma Nerone' seems to be a step in the right direction. As a representative of a group he could possibly represent Italian merchant-bankers.

The second person who has been 'identified' is the sitter of the London portrait (Fr.78). It has been thought that the sitter was John II, surnamed the Clement, Duke of Cleves, who was born April 23, 1458. He got his training at the Burgundian court at Bruges, away from his father, John I, the Warlike. When his father died in 1481 he started wars, imitating his admired Charles the Bold. Later he found somewhat more peaceful exploits, for he became the father of 63 bastards, which earned him the nickname of "Kindermacher". He married in 1489 Mathilde, daughter of Henry III, the Landgrave of Hesse. Since the sitter looks rather young and the date I have suggested for the portrait is towards the middle of the 1480s when the duke was not in Bruges, this sitter is not likely to be the Duke of Cleves.

Some conclusions can be drawn here. All the identified sitters stayed for some time in Bruges, either for several years and longer, or for regular or irregular periods of time. All belonged to the upper class, gentry or nobility. One group, centered around the Portinaris, represents the Italian colony as well as the merchant-bankers. Most of the later portraits could be associated with the Brugian magistracy and their families. There is a possibility that one
group is closely connected with the Burgundian court. Several of these sitters also commissioned other paintings for a much more public view. This could mean that information about donors gathered in connection with these paintings could be useful in determining the identity of the sitters.

Other evidence becomes apparent by looking at the other portraits. One of the most difficult problems is to determine the nationality of the sitters. Fashion provides some clues. Usually the Italians dressed the same as the Flemish. But there were some minor exceptions. Italians wore usually a black hat with a double rim, while the Flemish wore a hat with a single rim. Of the not yet discussed sitters, probably six can be regarded as Italians: the sitters of the Venice portrait (Fr.77), the Brussels portrait (Fr.84), the Montreal portrait (Fr.80), the San Diego portrait (Fr.233), the Pierpont Morgan portrait (Fr.83) and the Palazzo Vecchio portrait (Fr.86). That leaves very few others with a hat. The sitter of the Frankfurt portrait (Fr.73) is obviously a northerner with his red sugar loaf hat (and his haircut). That leaves us with the Elderly Couple (Fr.75,76). Her hennin is somewhat oldfashioned and northern; his hat is single rimmed so that we may assume that they are not Italians.

It would be tempting to suggest that they are Willem Vrelant and his wife, Memling's friends, who ordered an unknown altar piece. He was a well-known miniaturist from Utrecht who came to Bruges in 1454, started the guild of the "boekverluchters" (book illuminators) of St. Jan de Evangelist,
and died in Bruges in 1481. Although his year of birth is unknown he was regarded as an older man and the suggested date for the portraits, 1477, would not exclude this possibility. Furthermore, both the Portinaris and the Moreels ordered an altarpiece around the same time they had their portraits painted. Memling painted for Vrelant a passion scene, which was presented to the Stationers' Guild in 1478 at a meeting attended by Memling. Since we do not know what Vrelant and his wife looked like, the suggestion out of necessity must remain a hypothesis.

Even more difficult to determine are those without a hat. In some cases the hair can give a clue. Early in the 1470s the Italians have longer hair than the northerners, although age is a variable. Gradually the Italians let their hair grow shoulder length, followed somewhat later by the younger Brugian citizens. Around 1480 the latter seem to part their hair in the center. Older people like Moreel have their hair fairly straight and cut in front. On these grounds the New York Old Man (Fr. 81), the Windsor sitter (Fr. 91), and perhaps the Copenhagen sitter (Fr. 82) and the Lehman sitter (Fr. 74) could possibly be Flemings. The others, either with curly or fuzzy hair à la Benedetto Portinari, could be Italians with the exception of the London portrait (Fr. 78) whose sitter has a much lighter skin.

There is a startling consequence resulting from this number game. Perhaps as much as 60 percent of the sitters could be Italians! That this is an extremely high percentage
becomes apparent if we realize that the Medici as largest bank had not more than eight people working for it. Before 1475 the majority of the sitters is Italian; between 1475 and 1480 the number of Italian and Flemish sitters is nearly equal, and after 1480 the majority is Flemish.

Before leaving the question "Who are they?" one aspect still deserves attention. Already in discussing some portraits a passing remark has been made about the age of the sitters. Since many of the sitters are unidentified, the ages have to be guessed at and that is sometimes a haphazard game. A. Warburg was very careful when he described the age of a man between 20 and 40, and G. Rosenberg, in a public lecture on Rembrandt’s Montreal female sitter described her age as between 17 and 35. However, some sitters are obviously young, like the Montreal sitter (Fr. 80), the London sitter (Fr. 78), or the Venice sitter (Fr. 77). For others the age is reasonably well established, like Maria Portinari (Fr. 70), perhaps 18, Benedetto Portinari (Fr. 23B), probably 21, and Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr. 14), who was 23. Of the here accepted portraits possibly as much as 45 percent may be adolescents and young men and women. Again, that is a very large percentage and of this number probably two-thirds is Italian.

From the information about these sitters we can also deduce a more negative statement. There seems to be little indication that middle class people had themselves portrayed. The reason may be simply economic: they could not afford the
expense. In Bruges the financial status was closely connected to the social status. Though difficult to prove conclusively, it seems likely that portraits were only painted for a few restricted social groups. Some insight may be gained from R. de Roover's research into medieval banking, especially in connection with the Medici and Bruges. He wrote:

"The main point... is that there were in Bruges three different classes of money-dealers: the Italian merchant-bankers who combined foreign trade with dealings in bills of exchange, the lombards who were chiefly pawn-brokers, and the money-changers who assumed the important function of purveyors to the Mint and added deposit banking to this activity. From a legal point of view each group enjoyed a special status. The merchant-bankers were protected against any arbitrary acts of authority by their trade privileges which were in fact diplomatic treaties between the Count of Flanders and the Italian city-states. The lombards were merely tolerated as the lesser of the two evils and were permitted to lend money at usury under the protection of a licence system. As for the money-changers, they were citizens who did not have any special rights or privileges and whose profession was strictly regulated. As dealers in bullion, the money-changers were expected to comply with monetary ordinances and were even entrusted with their enforcement."

The consuls of the Italian nations, certainly those of Venice, Genoa and Florence, lived around the Place de Bourse. This differed strikingly from the lombards or "Cahorsins", who lived along the Lange Rei, in the parish St. Gilles (also called 't Wye), away from the money center. Probably because they frequently went bankrupt the contracts referred to groups. Since they were outcasts it is not very likely that they had their portraits painted.

On October 13,1467, Charles the Bold declared that all new money-changers had to relinquish their citizenship.
Before that, men and women, citizens as well as aliens could be money-changers. Before Memling's time the licensed money-changers had disappeared and only four free money-changers had survived. They belonged to the upper and middle class bourgeoisie and the gentry. The former got frequently courtesy titles. But they also went bankrupt, like Collard de May and Willem Roelands in 1482. The suppressive ordinances of Maximilian accelerated the financial decline of Bruges. The Groot Placcaet Boeck Volume I, published in The Hague in 1658, stated already that "these failures have wrought utter ruin among all classes of people, but especially among the merchants and the people of note." In spite of their failures, the native money-changers belonged to the ruling class. To this native upper class ("poorterie") belonged the rentiers (real estate owners), inn-keepers-brokers, cloth merchants (who were moderately rich), successful money-changers and commission agents. Basically lacking here are the native merchants. The more influential and richer merchants were the Italians. Thus it is from these fairly restricted groups that one can expect portraits.

But the social-economic-legal status does not fully explain portraiture and the variety within it. Since we know the social status of the sitters, we can use thoughts prevalent among these sitters and expressed in other ways than portraiture. In other words, what was the context in which these portraits were painted? What was the time like?
Who was Memling? Answers to these questions help us solve questions and problems raised before and yet remained unanswered. These questions set the stage for the next chapter.
CHAPTER III

MEMLING'S TIME

This chapter is divided into three sections. In the first section we take a look at Memling as a historically documented figure. It is rather short due to the scarcity of documents, and no attempt has been made to include any possible documentation related to his paintings. In the second section a short historical survey is given, basically dealing with Charles the Bold, duke of Burgundy from 1467 to 1477 and Maximilian of Hapsburg, husband of Maria of Burgundy and father of, and regent for, Philip the Handsome. Underlying the wars the Burgundians fought at this time was one basic concern: unification and consolidation of the Burgundian lands. These wars, however, had serious monetary repercussions, some of which dramatically influenced the financial power of Bruges. The third section deals mainly with two schools of thought, that of piety and that of humanism. Both are documented with the help of literature, especially poetry, music and some other forms of art. This section is the longest of the three, not only because several poems are quoted, but also because it provides much inside into the complexity of Memling's iconography.
THE HISTORICAL MEMLING

Very few documents dealing with Memling have survived. Perhaps that is the reason why several myths were created years after his death. These myths reflect more their creators than the historical Memling. In 1931 R.A. Parmentier published two lines in his *Indices op de Brugsche Poorterboeken* which are crucial to the knowledge about Memling. In the book for 1465 is written "Jan van mimnelinghe, Harmans Zuene, Ghebooren Zaleghenstat, poorter 30 in Laumaent. Omme 24 sh. gr." Seligenstadt am Main is close to Frankfurt and Memelungen. Romboudts de Doppere, the notary who wrote Memling's death act in 1494, stated that Memling came from the surroundings of Mainz, the capital of Rhenish Hesse to which Seligenstadt belonged till 1803. Therefore, Vaernweijck in his *Historie van Belgies* was correct when he called him "duytschen Hans". The archives of Seligenstadt show that Memling's parents lived at Aschaffengerstrasse 5, in a patrician house with a façade stone inscribed with the year 1444. As the entry of the Poorterboek indicates, the name of Memling's father was Herman; his mother's name was Luka Stirn. But there is no birthday entry for Hans and nothing is known before the entry of January 30, 1465. Usually a person had to fulfill two conditions in order to become a citizen. One had to live within the walls for some time, often a year and a day, and one had to be 25 years of age. The latter condition means that Memling could have been born in or before 1440.
Guild lists do not help much either, for they do not mention his name, except Bruges and then only in connection with his own pupils. Since the Brugian guild list starts in 1453 there are two possibilities. Friedländer stated one in this way:

"Dare we conclude, from the silence of the records, that Memlinc became a master in Bruges before 1453?" The problem with this suggestion is, that no independent works are known of his early style. The other possibility is, that he became master somewhere else, perhaps in Germany. Towards the end of his life Memling painted the St. Ursula shrine (Bruges, 1489, Fr. 24) and the scene depicting Cologne is far more accurate than the fantasies about Basle and Rome. In Memling's youth master Stephan Lochner (1400-1451) resided in Cologne and some of Memling's madonnas have an affinity with those of Lochner: young, circa 15 years old, gracious, serene and somewhat withdrawn. Did Memling fulfill the guild requirements of seven years apprenticeship here, make his masterpiece and leave? Did he then enter Rogier van der Weyden's workshop? The parallel to the Tournai master's own start would make this plausible. There is some outside evidence that Memling worked with Rogier. Georgio Vasari called Memling a pupil of 'Rugiero' and Guicciardini, describing the inventory of Margaretha of Austria in 1516, stated that the wings of an altar piece were done by master Hans, the center by Rogier.

In Bruges, Memling lived in the parish of St. Nicolaas in the Walhuusstraat. Between 1470 and 1480 he married Anna van Valchenaere, who died on December 10, 1487, leaving him
with three young sons, Jan, Cornelius and Nicholaes. Memling became a member of the Broederschap van Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Ter-Sneeuw during the service year 1473-1474 and he is mentioned four times in the register of this fraternity as "Master Hans". Many influential people were members of this fraternity, so that this membership gives some indication of Memling's social status. In 1480 his name appeared as one of 283 on a tax list, paying for the war Maria of Burgundy was fighting against France. This indicates that he was one of the richest people in Bruges. In other words, the painter and his patrons have more or less the same economic level!

Also in 1480 his name appeared in the guild list in connection with his pupil Jan Verhanneman; in 1483 with that of Passchier van der Mersch and in 1485 with that of Louis Boels. The last time that his name officially appeared was at his death. His friend, the notary-chronicler Romboudts de Doppere wrote on August 11, 1494:

"Die XI Augusti Brugis obiit Magister Joannes Memmelinc, quem praedicabant peritissimum fuisse et excellentissimum pictorem totius tunc orbis christiani. Oriendus erat Magunciaco, sepultus Brugus ad Aegidii."

He was buried in the churchyard of the Sint Gilles church, but his grave has disappeared.
A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In this short survey of the historical setting our attention will focus on the time Memling was a citizen of Bruges. In 1465 Bruges was the financial center of the north. At Memling's death in 1494, Bruges had collapsed as a financial power. It is between those two monetary extremes that the political situation changed drastically. The Count of Charolais had to wait until 1467, when his father Philip the Good died, to get complete powers over the Burgundian possessions. Charles, born on November 10, 1433, had impatiently waited for that moment and he had tried to speed it up, but had not been completely successful.

Since Philip the Good frequently resided at the Princenhof in Bruges, Charles decided to stay away from that city. He was in Bruges, however, in 1468 to celebrate his marriage to Margaret of York. Nothing of the banners and other decorations painted by artists like Hugo van der Goes for the festivities have survived. Memling may have helped, but he is nowhere mentioned. And if he did any portraits, none have survived. But although Charles did not reside at Bruges, he had several connections with the city through his entourage. Older counsellors like Pierre Bladelin, the treasurer of Philip the Good, founder of Middelburg in 1448 and citizen of Bruges; Baudouin de Lannoy, governor of Lille and chamberlain to Philip the Good; and Pierre de Goux, the third and last chancellor to Philip the Good, lost their influence. They died shortly after one another: Bladelin and De Goux in
1471 and De Lannoy in 1474. Most of Charles counsellors had rallied around him before he became duke. Besides Tommaso Portinari, Charles had other Brugian advisors: Antoine Haneron, the provost of St. Donatian; Jan de Witte, who was burgomaster in 1472-1473 and in 1482; Lodewijk, Seigneur de Gruuthuse, who was made a Knight of the Golden Fleece in 1461 and became governor of Holland, Zeeland and Friesland in 1463. There were other influential counsellors like Jean Gros III (1434-1484), a finance officer, audiencier to Charles in 1467, comptroller of finance in 1473 and who married the niece of chancellor Guillaume Hugonet in Bruges in 1472; Philippe de Croy, count of Chimay and baron of Quiévrain, who returned to the court in 1468, was made a Knight of the Golden Fleece in 1473 and lieutenant of the duchy of Gueldre in 1474.

Charles, who liked to be compared to Hercules, Alexander the Great, Cyrus, Hannibal or Caesar and who tried very hard to live up to that image, was either counselled to expand his possessions or had his counsellors concur with his ideas of expansionism. Charles tried to unify the duchy of Burgundy with his possessions in the north. He tried to do so in two ways: unification through conquest and by obtaining a crown. Initially he was successful, but defeat started soon and ended at Nancy on January 5, 1477 with his death. Several prominent leaders were imprisoned, like Anthony of Burgundy, Philippe de Croy, Jean Gros III.

The death of Charles and the imprisonment of several leaders caused chaos at the political front. But before that
date, Charles had already created quite a few financial problems. The first one was his ordinance of October 13, 1467 concerning money-changers. Secondly, he tried to pressure the clergy into paying for his wars, but initially they took advantage of the situation, especially the Notre-Dame in Bruges with the amortization of certain estates. Between 1474 and 1476, the Estates General refused to give money, but finally the clergy in Bruges gave the subsidies (which was regarded as treason by the other Estates). In the third place, Charles' borrowing through Tommaso Portinari caused the downfall of the Bruges Medici branch. On top of that, on April 26, 1478 the Pazzis tried to topple the Medici, but they only succeeded in murdering Guiliano while Lorenzo escaped. The tables were turned and the Pazzis were either exterminated or exiled. And the repercussions were felt in Bruges. It was this political, social and financial instability which caused the Italians to go somewhere else. This explains why Memling gradually had fewer Italian patrons.

But not only war and financial politics caused a decline for Bruges. Perhaps the most immediate problem was the silting of the harbour. In the fourteenth century Damme was made the outer port of Bruges, but Damme was not sufficient; the opening of the Zwartegat, a canal, in 1470 did not help much; the Zwin finally became full of sediment and completely cut off Bruges from the sea. In 1481 the people were described as poor and needy; and the plague of 1483, which killed one-fourth of the population, further imbalanced the situation.
The city's income went down to 70,000 écus per year and the debts accumulated and at the death of Memling the city was 600,000 écus in debt.

The instability of several sectors of society fermented rebellions, not only in Bruges. The most notorious rebellions between 1477 and 1494 were the uprising of the weavers in Ghent, the Jonker Fransen war and the Kaas-en-Broodvolk war (Cheese-and-Breadpeople). The people of Ghent hung chancellor Hugonet, the lord of Humbercourt and the prelate of Cluny in the presence of Maria of Burgundy. In 1488 Maximilian was put in a somewhat comfortable prison in Bruges. But he got his revenge, for after his release he ordered his German soldiers to plunder the city and ordered the foreign merchants to Antwerp. Although Memling may have painted other portraits, Benedetto Portinari's portrait of 1487 may well be regarded as the closing of an era.

But another conclusion can be drawn from the chaotic situation. Several authors have commented on Memling's change around 1480. Blum, in her research on the triptych's development, made this especially clear in comparing the St. Catherine altar piece of 1479 (Fr.11) with the St. Christopher altar piece of 1484 (Fr.12). It hardly seems accidental that the change in Memling's work comes at the time the disturbances begin to accelerate. These disturbances help explain why there are fewer commissions in general and why there are fewer portraits, perhaps only seven after 1480. It is difficult to say which disturbance was more important,
but it is remarkable, that within the time of the two triptychs used by Blum— the St. Catherine altar piece (Fr. 11) and the St. Christopher altar piece (Fr. 12)— there was a devastating plague. More than hundred years before, a similar catastrophe had influenced painting, best described by Millard Meiss in his book Painting in Florence and Siena after the Black Death. Disturbances and catastrophes in particular find their reflections in man's thinking. It is to this thought process that we need to turn next.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

The above-mentioned disturbances were not the originators of new thoughts and attitudes, but they stimulated some of them. Huizinga, dealing with the period with which we are concerned, called his book Herfsttij der Middeleeuwen (The Waning of the Middle Ages). The Dutch title indicates stronger than the English title the transitional character of this period. It is impossible to discuss here the whole gamut of thought, which ranges from Nicholas Jacquier's publication of Flagellum Maleficarum in 1458, the predecessor of the more famous Malleus Maleficarum of 1487, to Thomas à Kempis' De Imitatio Christi, from autodafés to mysticism and contemplative life, from morality plays to rude farces. Nevertheless, attention has to be given to some pertinent aspects, because they help to explain some of the unanswered questions and problems.

Since so many of Memling's paintings seem to be infused
with religious sentiments, it provides the rationale to start with that aspect. Probably the most influential stream of thought in the church of the Low Countries was that of the 'Modern Devotion', best exemplified by the Brethren and Sisters of the Common Life and the canons regular of Windesheim. R.R. Post pointed out that the Brethren had no regard for study, theology, teaching at school, sound philosophical or theological training for priests. Josse de Bade (1462-1535), who had lived with the Brethren at Ghent, summed up their influence and attitude when he wrote "in the observance of their order and by their shining sanctity, (they) propagated the sweet spirit of Christ to the edification of the people." Thomas à Kempis, of whom Huizinga wrote that he "was no theologian and no humanist, no philosopher and no poet, and hardly even a true mystic", made it very clear in his De Imitatio Christi that study to acquire knowledge was by no means as important as the nourishment of the soul. It was no wonder, therefore, that Erasmus could not live in this atmosphere of pietism and non- (and even anti-) humanism. I think that this sense of piety is not only visible in Memling's altar pieces, but also in his portraits. The serene, withdrawn Madonnas could be examples of the former. The prayer-clasped hands of the sitters could be examples of the latter.

Let us start with two diptychs, the Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr. 14) and the Chicago diptych (Fr. 50, 92), which have through the presence of a Madonna and Child panel strong religious affinities. Both contain a mirror and reflections.
The mirror, the 'Speculum sine macula', is the symbol of the Virgin's purity and also the symbol of Truth. It is possible to say that the mirror's presence was simply the result of the fact that in Bruges St. Luke was the patron saint of painters as well as of glass and mirror makers, or that a convex mirror was common inventory in a workshop. And since the Netherlands and Germany were the leading mirror manufacturers in the north, competing with Venice, such a suggestion seems at first glance to be sufficient. Yet, I think it is too simplistic. As M. Meiss pointed out, light contributed to a "new subtlety to the personalities that appear in painting". It is this light which reflects in the mirror and the glass. But light and reflections were not only scientific phenomena as an old Flemish poem already indicated:

"Een glas al heel dat schijnt daerdoor,
Ten breket niet van der sonnen;
So heeft ene maghet nae ende voor,
Joncfrouwe een kint ghewonnen."  

This spiritualized light was not a new thought. In a poem "In praise of Wisdom" a biblical poet wrote these words:

For within her (Wisdom) is a spirit intelligent, holy unique, manifold, subtle, active, incisive, unsullied, lucid, invulnerable, benevolent, sharp, irresistible, beneficent, loving to man, steadfast, dependable, unperturbed, almighty, all-surveying, penetrating all intelligent, pure and most subtle spirits;
for Wisdom is quicker to move than any motion;
she is so pure, she pervades and permeates all things.

She is a breath of the power of God, pure emanation of the glory of the Almighty;
hence nothing impure can find a way into her.
She is a reflection of the eternal light, untarnished mirror of God's active power, image of his goodness.
Although alone, she can do all; herself unchanging, she makes all things new. In each generation she passes into holy souls, she makes them friends of God and prophets; for God loves only the man who lives with Wisdom. She is indeed more splendid than the sun, she outshines all the constellations; compared with light, she takes first place, for light must yield to night, but over Wisdom evil can never triumph. She deploys her strength from one end of the earth to the ordering all things for good.\(^46\)

And in another poem this biblical poet wrote that Wisdom is "an initiate in the mysteries of God's knowledge". The Letter of James revealed something of that mystery when the apostle wrote "it is all that is good, everything that is perfect, which is given us from above; it comes down from the Father of all Light". The First Letter of John also reveals something of that light:

\[
\text{This is what we have heard from him, and the message that we are announcing to you: God is light; there is no darkness in him at all. If we say that we are in union with God while we are living in darkness, we are lying because we are not living the truth. But if we live our lives in the light, as he is in the light, we are in union with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.}^{49}
\]

It was this Wisdom and Light that Thomas à Kempis had in mind. Thus the mirror and the glass give clues to the intention of the sitters. They give additional information to the prayer-clasped hands. Thus we find in these diptychs a variety of religious aspects: a sense of devotion, of purity and purification, of truth and wisdom. They touch upon the mystery of God, a common theme in Flemish mystic poetry.
since Hade wych (ca.1250), and maintained by Jan van Ruusbroec (1293-1381), Jan van Leeuwen (ca.1350) and the great preacher Johannes Brugman (ca.1400-1475).

The two discussed portraits are both associated with a Madonna and Child panel, unlike the other portraits. Probably some Madonna and Child panels got lost in the same way as the portraits themselves. There are, however, several 'unclaimed' Madonna and Child panels which seem to belong to a portrait. Therefore, it is possible that some of the religious ideas discussed above could count for several other portraits.

One thing has to be made very clear: the prayer-clasped hands, the open book, the glass and mirror are clarifications of an attitude. Since especially the prayer-clasped hands play an important role in Memling's portraits I want to emphasize their function in regard to this attitude. Since Maarten van Nieuwenhove's and the Chicago sitter's hands point towards the Madonna and Child, we could say that the function of the hands is one of adoration. But, more generally, they can also be symbols for devotion, piety, humility (in prayer one communicates with someone who is greater). Perhaps even in some cases where they are related to other objects like prayer books or mirrors, they symbolize a search for Truth and Wisdom. This interpretation of the hands, however, makes sense only if we accept the fact that there was an inner compulsion on the part of the sitter to have him or herself portrayed in this way. None of the sitters unfortunately documented their inner motives, so that direct proof
of this interpretation is impossible. There is, however, some indirect evidence in a special form of piety.

It is important to note that piety was not confined to monasteries or clergy, as was often thought in the early Middle Ages. Already the beghards and beguines protested against the way of life of monks and clergy. The Brethern and Sisters of the Common Life continued this protest. An anonymous poet ended the stanzas of a poem with the words "Dus maect die cap die monic niet". Anthonis de Roover, an older Brugian contemporary of Memling, let a priest say "Volcht onse woorden, niet onse wercken". After the turn of the century Erasmus in his *Laus Stultitiae/Moriae Encomium* (Praise of Folly) of 1508, made a devastating attack on monks and clergy, showing that they were not pious at all. Complaining about his countrymen, he attacked the piety of monks as well: "Ginds verachten mij die botterikken en onwetenden, die menen, dat de gehele vroomheid in een monnikskap en droefgeestigheid gelegen is". Erasmus condemned here at the same time an important time-characteristic. Huizinga wrote about this pessimistic outlook:

"At the close of the Middle Ages, a sombre melancholy weighs on the people's souls. Whether we read a chronicle, a poem, a sermon, a legal document even, the same impression of immense sadness is produced by them all. It would sometimes seem as if this period had been particularly unhappy, as if it had left behind only the memory of violence, of covetousness and mortal hatred, as if it had known no other enjoyment but that of intemperance, of pride and of cruelty."

Some of this sentiment could already be found long before Memling's time. In the Gruuthusen manuscript of Bruges
(ca.1360-1400), we find the poem "Egidius":

Egidius, waer bestu bleven?
Mi lanct na di, gheselle myn.
Du coors die doot, du liets mi tleven.
Dat was gheselscap goet ende fijn.
Het sceen teen moest ghestorven syn.
Nu bestu in den troon verheven
Claerre dan der sonnen schijn:
Alle vruecht is di ghegheven.
Egidius, waer bestu bleven?
Mi lanct na di, gheselle myn.
Du coors die doot, du liets mi tleven.

This sadness of separation and death was also expressed in the still familiar "Het waren twee conincs kinderen". In the last stanza the princess holds her drowned lover in her arms and jumps with him into the sea:

Sy hielter haer lief in haer armen en spranc er met hem in de see:
'adieu' sayde sy,'schone werelt, ghy sieter my nimmermeer;
adieu, o mijn vader en moeder, mijn vriendekens alle ghelyc;
adieu, mijne suster en broeder ic vaere naer themelrijc.

These ideas of heaven, death, separation and union accelerated in the fifteenth century. An anonymous poet wrote in his "Allegoric Passion Song":

Ick wil mi gaen vermeyden
In Jhesus liden groot,
Van daer en wil ic niet sceyden
int leven noch in die doot.

The mystic-preacher Johannes Brugman, using words and images from worldly lyrics, spoke of his longing to be with Christ in "Ic heb Ghejaecht myn Leven Lanc":

Ic heb ghejaecht myn leven lanc
Al om een joncfrou scone,
Die alresoetste wijngaertranc,
Die daer is in shemels trone;
In several of these poems there is a sense of resignation, although not necessarily negative. I think that in many cases the resignation is due because the poets know about the promise of a good, that is heavenly, future. An anonymous poet wrote the following stanza in his poem "Als ic met mijn lief spelen gaen":

So wie Gode vercoren heeft,
Te begheven all dinc is hem cleyn.
Die de werelt ghelaten heeft
Van alle beelden blijft hi rheyn.

Dirk Coelde van Munster (Munster 1435-Leuven 1515), Memling's countryman and also living in the Low Countries, wrote in his "Och edel siele":

Die bruydegom seyt:
Ick wil dat ghi sult laten
Alle bliscap ende ghemack,
Der creaturen afsaten,
Ende vlyen der werelt wrack,
Ende hebt mi lief alleene:
Ick wil u bruydegom sijn.
Der menschen trou is cleene,
Int laatste niet dan pijn.

Concern about the soul is also expressed by an anonymous Limburg poet in a long poem called Dit is een schone Reyme van Herdenckenisse der Doot ende Vertyenisse der Wereld.

Stanzas 19 and 20 are here central:

O ziel, o ziel, o gheystelijc natuer,
Die god selve nae sijn figuer
In den lichame heeft gheplant,
Daer moeten wy uut in dander lant.

Och ziel, och ziel, wy en kennen u nyet,
Mer metten lichaem int verdriet
Soe coemder in den ewighen brant,
Int veghevier, of in dander lant.
At the end of the century, titles like Jan van de Dale's *De ure van der doot* (The hour of death; Diest, ca. 1500) are not uncommon. And it is not only in poetry that these ideas are expressed. They are found on the stage as well. Most familiar probably is the play *Den Speygel der Salichheyt van Elckerlijc* by Pieter Doorlant (Petrus van Diest, 1455-1507), written around 1470. It was popular enough to be one of the first printed plays, as well as to be translated into English under the title *Everyman*. The second play I want to mention here is *Mariken van Nieumeghen*, written around 1485, the Faust story of the Dutch-Flemish fifteenth century. The author, maybe born in Nijmegen and probably working in Antwerp, used witchcraft, sorcery and the inquisition to show his concern for the soul.

Many of these given examples centered around death, the *ars moriendi*, the art of dying, showing a genuine concern about the soul. And this concern took a special form, because it called up the readers or listeners to live a devout christian life. Thus the call for a devout, pious life was heard quite often. Therefore, Memling's sitters with prayer-clasped hands are not at all exceptional to the spirit of the time. In Memling's oeuvre there are some paintings which strengthen this argument. Several altar pieces were ordered in connection with funerary chapels, for example the Moreel altar piece (Fr. 12). Also in those altar pieces the donors are shown in a devotional, pious attitude.

That there is a close relationship between Memling's
paintings and thoughts expressed in literature, I would like to show with a few examples, in order to place the portraits in their proper perspective within Memling's whole oeuvre. The first example is related to a painting called *The Seven Joys of Mary* (Fr. 33). It has been suggested that Memling worked for some time in Rogier's studio in Brussels. If this hypothesis is correct, Memling may have seen a series of seven plays, called the *Bliscap van Maria* (Mary's Joy). These plays were written in 1448 and performed at the Grote Markt of Brussels till 1560. N. Schneider, discussing the Munich panel, pointed out the schematic composition in this theologically rich painting. Strangely enough, he failed, however, to mention these plays, while the schematic composition is not unlike medieval 'theatre' productions. The second example concerns the age of Mary, which is described in two stanzas of "Ons is gheboren" and "In 't Stedetje van Nazareth". Especially the second poem is closely related to the Lehman *Annunciation* (ca. 1482, Fr. 26). The second stanza of "Ons is gheboren" reads:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Wel di, wel di joncfrouwelijn,} \\
\text{Der soeten weerder stonden,} \\
\text{Dattu dat soete kindekijn} \\
\text{Mit ganser minnen hebt ghwonnen.}
\end{align*}
\]

In the second stanza of "In 't Stedetje van Nazareth" we read:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Zij was maar veertien jaren oud,} \\
\text{Die zuiver klare fonteine,} \\
\text{Als haar de boodschap wierd gedaan:} \\
\text{Dat ze den Zone Gods zoud' ontvaan} \\
\text{En blijven maged reine.}
\end{align*}
\]
Although few, these examples indicate that we may use literature to arrive at a better understanding of the paintings and that the examples used in connection with the portraits do not make the portraits stand apart, but incorporate them into Memling's whole output.

In the beginning of this section I indicated that there was a whole gamut of thought. So far the discussion has centered around the religious aspect in its various manifestations. The second group of manifestations is centered around humanism. For clarity's sake, religion and humanism are dealt with separately, but this should not be interpreted as polarization. What I hope to demonstrate in this last part of the chapter, is simply that there were certain forms which indicated a new awareness related to learning, antiquity, self-consciousness; aspects which are frequently associated with the Renaissance.

Information concerning northern humanism is not as abundant as for the religious aspect. But there are details from a variety of fields which help us form some ideas about it. Important in the development towards humanism were the rhetoricians. In the Low Countries the "Kamers van Rhetorike" originated around 1400 under French influence. They were organized like a guild. The head, often an influential person, was called a 'Keizer' (emperor) or 'Prins' (prince). Usually, but not always, he was an administrative figure. The artistic leader was the 'Factor' (producer). Membership
was an honour and gave a considerable social standing. Although few names are known, their productions show that they were interested in form and technique like retrograde, chess board, refrain and acrostichon. Similar interests can be witnessed in the music of G. Dufay (ca.1400-1474), J. Ockeghem (1420-1495), J. Obrecht (1450-1505) and Josquin des Prés (ca.1450-1521). Donald Jay Grout in his book *A History of Western Music* decided that the changes brought about by Ockeghem warranted a chapter called "The Age of the Renaissance: Ockeghem to Josquin". And the same interest in form and technique can be witnessed in the paintings of Van Eyck, Campin and subsequent artists.

Through form and technique, the rhetoricians tried to compete with one another. To best each other they sometimes referred to antiquity. In an already mentioned poem of an anonymous Limburg poet (page 89) we read in stanza eight:

> Waer sijn Hector ende Alexander,  
> Julius, Artier ende menichander,  
> Bænrits, ridder ende vroem seriant?  
> Sy sijn ewech in dander lant.  

Or we can read in the prologue to the first *Bliscap van Maria* that Brussels is compared to Troy.

Many of their religious poems were published in 1539 under the title *Een Devoot ende Profitylyck Boeckken* and their secular poems in 1544 known as *Antwerpse Liedboek*. In the latter edition many poems are simply called "Old Song". Some deal with historical events, especially with Maria of Burgundy, Maximilian and Bruges. Poem 83, stanza 14, deals with those
"Gheboren wt griecken stout" (Born of brave Greeks).

Another aspect of their work is realism and again this runs parallel to Flemish painting. The landscape in Memling's portraits is only one example.

One of the most important rhetoricians was Anthonis de Rooverere, who, at the age of 17, became Prince of Rhetoric inspite of the fact that he was only a bricklayer. Most of his poems are often bitter satires on the transitoriness of worldly vanities. Throughout his work he mentions classical names like Nestor, Aeneas, Alexander the Great, Caesar, Hector, Paris, Trôy, and he expressed the idea that immortality came through fame; a predominate idea of the Renaissance.

Besides the rhetoricians and the musicians, we need to look at miniatures and tapistries. A tapistry was woven in Tournai (?), probably between 1465 and 1470, which contained the story of Caesar crossing the Rubicon and his battle against Pompei (Berne, Historisches Museum). Makers as well as commissioners are unknown, but it has been suggested that it was for Charles the Bold's throne room. The connection with the Burgundian court is also noticeable in the works of the miniaturists. For example, Loyset Liédet, who came to Bruges in 1469 and was still there in 1478, worked on Plutarch's Life of Alexander. In the Burgundian court library with mainly French and a few Dutch manuscripts there were also translations of antique manuscripts, like Lé's Paiz du Grant Alexandre, now in Paris in the Bibliothèque Nationale.
But the miniaturists did not only work for the Burgundian court. In Bruges they worked for example for Lodewijk van Gruuthuse. An exhibition in Brussels and Amsterdam called De Gouden Eeuw der Vlaamse Miniaturier Het Mecenaat van Filip de Goede 1445-1475 exhibited the following Brugian works: Epitome de Julius Valerius. Lettre d'Alexandre à Aristote (no.107); Raoul Lefèvre: Histoire de Troie (no.111); Curtius Rufus, Histoire d'Alexandre (no.116); Leonardo Bruni d'Arezzo: La Première Guerre Punique (no.138). The first and the last mentioned miniatures were made by Willem van Vrelant's workshop. We have already seen that Van Vrelant was a friend of Memling, so that we may assume that Memling was familiar with thoughts associated with antiquity.

Furthermore, Charles the Bold, who liked to be compared to great military leaders of antiquity, looked upon the Golden Fleece, instituted January 10,1430 in Bruges, as Jason's fleece, much to the disgust of bishop Fillastre, who proposed Gideon as patron. And people around Charles, like Wauquelin, Olivier de la Marche and Waleran de Wavren, frequently discussed antiquity and made comparisons between Burgundy and Classical Antiquity. Moreover, Jean de Candida used antique profile forms for his medals. And whoever the sitter of the Antwerp portrait (Fr.71) is, the antique coin shows a certain familiarity with and knowledge of Roman Antiquity. Lastly, Bruges had its own humanists in Pierre Burry and Charles and Jean Fernand.
All these details show the stirring of a new era and these new ideas affected Memling's patrons and himself.

This interest in man and man's history is one of the aspects of the Renaissance. Man is not only the supplicant in his relation to the deity, but also a person who has earthly aspirations, such as Anthonis de Roovere, who sought immortality through fame. It is more difficult for a portrait painter to show "earthly worth". Yet, many of Memling's sitters cannot be classified as 'pious, devotional' like those with the prayer-clasped hands. The Montreal sitter (Fr.80) has a scroll; the Frick sitter holds a sash (Fr.231); the Antwerp figure has a medal (Fr.71). Others, like the Venice sitter (Fr.77) and the Frankfurt sitter (Fr.73), have nothing in their hands, letting their hands rest on a parapet.

One group of portraits can be interpreted through religious aspects; others seem to defy this interpretation. It is tempting, in the light of our discussion, to associate some of the portraits with a humanistic tendency. In the next chapter this suggestion is tested through the iconography.

Before turning to that chapter a very brief conclusion of this section is necessary. The two tendencies of piety and humanism, which are not exclusive, were both part and parcel of Memling's time and known to, and often expressed by, members of the higher social class. And it was from this select social class that Memling drew his sitters. We also noticed that after 1480 even a greater emphasis fell on piety
than before, a tendency which may be reflected in Memling's portraits after that date, which all show sitters with prayer-clasped hands. The phrase "a child of his time" may be worn out, but Memling's portraits seem very much to reflect the spirit of the time.
CHAPTER IV

MEMLING'S PORTRAIT ICONOGRAPHY

Until now in this thesis Memling has been separated from the artistic tradition in which he operated. The immediate tradition was that of his Flemish predecessors and contemporaries. But it is reasonable to assume that through the Italian sitters Memling was also influenced by the developments which had taken place in Italian portraiture of the fifteenth century. ¹ Both the Flemish and Italian tradition had developed certain types and it is with these types that we are concerned in this chapter. ²

HUSBAND-WIFE PENDANT PAIRS

Two pairs are presently still preserved together and their names are known. The earliest pair is that of Tommaso Portinari and his wife Maria Maddalena Baroncelli, painted around 1472-1473 (Fr.69,70). The other pair is that of Willem Moreel and his wife Barbara van Vlaenderberghe, painted around 1484 (Fr.67,68). All four sitters are shown with prayer-clasped hands. There is another pair, that of the Elderly Couple (Fr.75,76), which differs in this respect. ³ They have their hands at rest. This is a very crucial distinction. Half a century before this pair, Robert Campin and Jan van Eyck also painted husband-wife pendant pairs, which also do not have prayer-clasped hands. ⁴
Elderly Couple indicates that it is highly unlikely that they were wedding portraits. There is a possibility that they were anniversary portraits, but there is no factual evidence to support this. It is also possible that a special event was the prime reason for commissioning them. But nothing indicates that originally the portraits of the Elderly Couple had a religious function or connotation. Therefore, there is no reason to suggest that originally this pair, as well as those by Campin and Van Eyck, had a central panel containing a devotional picture. Memling's Portinaris and Moreels are the first known husband-wife pendant pairs which show the prayer-clasped hands. Panofsky suggested that prayer-clasped hands in portraits indicated that there should be a devotional panel attached to the portrait panels. Applied to the Portinaris and the Moreels, it would mean that these portraits were part of a triptych. There is, however, no evidence to confirm this proposition for the husband-wife pendant pairs. But there is evidence against it. In the first place, the husband-wife pendant pairs in the Flemish tradition do not have religious connotations. Secondly, no devotional image stayed with the portraits, although the portraits apparently stayed together. In the third place, the direction of the hands of the two husbands is substantially different from that of the two wives. The former point upwards, at an angle of 60 degrees; the latter point sidewards at an angle not more than 45 degrees, that is, towards another figure. If this figure were
a Madonna and Child, then it raises the question why the husband does not do the same. For doctrinal reasons it is unacceptable to suggest that he could ignore the Madonna and Child. If he could, the central panel would lose its function. My suggestion is that there was no central panel and that the wives point to their husbands, who in turn point heavenwards. That there is an element of submission on the part of the wives is further indicated by the fact that they appear on the sinister side of the husband.

The consequence of the absence of a devotional image is far-reaching, not only for the husband-wife pendant pairs, but also for the other portraits with prayer-clasped hands. These hands are therefore not necessarily a reflection of adoration towards a visible image, but of a much broader idea of attitude, of state of mind and soul. The attitudes of the husbands and wives are two-fold, namely devout and submissive. To substantiate this argument further, we need to look at the next type.

SITTERS WITH PRAYER-CLASPED HANDS

As we just saw the left panel of the husband-wife pendant pairs is occupied by the husband and the right panel by the wife. Of the nine other portraits which show the sitters with prayer-clasped hands there are two panels with praying males, who look to the right, namely the Thyssen-Bornemisza sitter (Fr. 232) and the London sitter (Fr. 78). In this respect they appear to be similar to Tommaso Portinari
and Willem Moreel. They could possibly be panels of a husband-wife pendant pair. But there are more possibilities. Firstly, they can be fully independent portraits; secondly, they can form a part of a devotional diptych; thirdly, they can be part of a devotional triptych. That both portraits probably are not part of a husband-wife pendant pair may become clear by looking at the angle of their hands, which both form an angle of 45 degrees. Besides the Maria Portinari and the Barbara Moreel there are two other sitters who have their hands at such an angle or less, namely the Chicago sitter (Fr.92) and Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14). Both these portraits are part of a diptych with a Madonna and Child on the dexter side. Thus the direction of the hands suggests a solution other than the husband-wife pendant pair or triptych. For the London portrait (Fr.78) there are two other clues supporting this. The sitter is most likely an adolescent. And under his prayer-clasped hands is an open prayer book. The prayer book is similar to that in the just mentioned Chicago portrait and in the Maarten van Nieuwenhove and can also be seen in the Benedetto Portinari (Fr.23B). Thus the direction of the hands and the presence of the prayer book seem to go against the suggestion of complete independence. The problem is, however, that the sitter is on the left wing, that is on the dexter side of a possible Virgin and Child, while in the Maarten van Nieuwenhove and the Chicago portrait the man is on the sinister side. There are no immediate
precedents for this situation in the London portrait, but there are a few indirect ones. In the first place, there is the situation in a few Memling altar pieces. Adriaen Reins is the only donor on his altar piece, done around 1480, and he occupies the left wing (Fr. 5). A decade later Heinrich Greverade commissioned an altar piece (Fr. 3), which shows a donor in the corner of the left wing, close to Christ carrying the cross. That the donor could be shown praying with an open prayer book is evidenced in the Moreel altar piece (Fr. 12). Before Memling, Petrus Christus in his Exeter Madonna (Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum), a follower of Rogier in a Calvary triptych (Berne, Kunstmuseum, Abegg Stiftung), Jan van Eyck in his Madonna of Jan Vos (Paris, Rothschild Collection) and his Madonna of Chancellor Rolin (Paris, Louvre) had already used this form of presentation. Thus there is an indirect tradition supporting the placement of the London sitter. The suggestion made here is that the London portrait is the left wing of a diptych, a novelty as far as the existing portraits is concerned.

The situation for the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr. 232) is equally complicated. At the back of this portrait is a still-life with a vase and flowers on a table. On the jug are the letters IHS, of which the H ends in a cross. The flowers are white lilies, indicating probably the Virgin; purple iris for the Mater Dolorosa and the columbine for Mary's grief and sorrow. There is no precedence for this
pure still-life either. The sitter's hands and this still-life indicate a religious nature. It seems to me likely that this is also the left wing of a diptych. When closed, the still-life could announce some of the contents.

Of the other seven portraits probably the easiest one to deal with is the Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14). The original frame shows that it is a portable diptych together with a Madonna and Child. Maybe half a century before Rogier van der Weyden had invented this type. But there are two important departures from Rogier's diptychs. None of his sitters is shown with an open prayer book, and their hands point upwards at an angle of 60 degrees. Maarten van Nieuwenhove is Memling's most extreme case of an acute angle, for the hands form an angle of 30 degrees. But otherwise it is obvious that Memling relied here on the tradition established by Rogier.

Hulin de Loo's successful research in establishing the Rogier diptychs and the existence of the Maarten van Nieuwenhove led scholars to the idea that similar combinations could exist. Their search had as result the reunification of Memling's Chicago portrait (Fr.92) with another Madonna and Child (Fr.50). On the back of the sitter's panel is a St. Anthony of Padua, which in a religious nature is similar to the still-life of the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr.232). The hands form an angle of 45 degrees, similar to that of the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait and to that of the London sitter (Fr.78).
Three of the portraits with an open prayer book have the hands at an angle of 45 degrees or less. At least two of these, the Maarten van Nieuwenhove and the Chicago sitter, are part of an existing diptych; and the third one, the London portrait, was, as I suggested, most likely a part of a diptych. The fourth portrait, that of Benedetto Portinari (Fr.23B), is an exception to the angle of 45 degrees or less. This portrait came, with a St.Benedict (Fr.23C), from the Portinari chapel of the Santa Maria Nuova, Florence. On the assumption that these were shutters, Friedländer suggested a *Virgin and Child* (Fr.23A) as centre piece. Spatially the background constitutes a disunity, quite contrary to what we have seen in other pairs. Therefore, I do not think that Friedländer's suggestion is a proper solution. Furthermore, Benedetto does not pray to his name saint, for that is against catholic doctrine. But it is possible for him to pray through his patron saint St.Benedict. But that means that God, not St.Benedict is the object of the devotion. This explains why the hands do not point sidewards, but upwards at an angle of 52 degrees.

My suggestion is that whenever the male sitter has his hands pointing sidewards at an angle of 45 degrees or less, Christ is present in another panel; and that whenever the sitter has his hands upwards, usually at an angle of 60 degrees, Christ is not present in another panel. The absence of the Christ figure can result in two possible solutions for the remaining four portraits in this category. The
first solution is that the portrait goes together with a patron saint panel, exemplified in the Benedetto Portinari panel. The second solution is that these portraits are fully independent.

The four portraits for which these solutions are possible are Gilles Joye (Fr.72), the San Diego portrait (Fr.233), the National Trust portrait (Fr.87) and the The Hague portrait (Fr.79). The The Hague portrait has on the reverse a coat of arms, which possibly could indicate another panel of a saint. But the others do not have such an indication and may indeed be independent. The absence of hinge marks on the Gilles Joye panel seems to confirm this suggestion.

Looking now over the whole category of sitters with prayer-clasped hands, we may make the following conclusions and suggestions. In cases of husband-wife pendant pairs, the panels form a diptych, not a triptych. The wife points to the husband who in turn points upwards. In the other cases, some panels are part of a diptych with probably a Madonna and Child. In such diptychs the sitters can be shown on the dexter as well as on the sinister wing, with their hands sidewards. At least one panel, possibly more, forms a diptych with a saint. The hands, like those of the husbands, point upwards. The last suggestion is that some panels may be independent portraits.

As far as the content is concerned, all these portraits stress the religious aspect. Where Christ is present in a
diptych panel the attitude could perhaps be restricted to adoration, but it is more likely that, in unison with the others, the idea of piety and devoutness also played a role.

THE OBJECTS IN THE HANDS OF THE SITTERS

When and where the tradition of sitters with objects in their hands started is unclear. It is certain that it existed around Burgundy before 1419, because John the Fearless had himself portrayed with a ring in his right hand. From then onwards objects like rings, scrolls, weapons and rosaries became a common feature. These objects fulfilled a special purpose as I would like to show through two examples. The first one is Jan van Eyck's Jan de Leeuw. The sitter, a goldsmith, holds a golden ring in his hand. Due to the preciousness of gold, a goldsmith held a very special social position. In this case the golden ring helps to identify the sitter as a goldsmith and at the same time establishes a particular social status. The second example is Rogier van der Weyden's Philippe de Croy. In his prayer-clasped hands the sitter also holds a rosary. A rosary is a catholic devotion consisting of prayer recitation, using the beads to count the prayers. The depiction of the rosary accentuates the religious nature of the sitter. These two examples, representatives of a much larger group, make a few thing very clear. In the first place, the objects can help to identify the sitter. In the second place, they can indicate the social status of the sitter. And thirdly, they
can contribute to the insight of the nature of the sitter.

It is within this tradition that Memling painted eight portraits in which the sitters hold an object. The objects these sitters hold were common objects, found in previous representations. Object wise, therefore, Memling was firmly entrenched in the tradition. But our concern is centered not so much around the object as object, but around the function, the purpose of the object, to which we shall turn presently.

It was only during a short period of time that Memling portrayed his sitters with objects. Several of these portraits were painted during a period in which Memling was not always successful in the portrayal of the hands. This technical deficiency unfortunately is reflected in some objects, thus obscuring the meaning.

The first portrait I want to deal with is the Washington portrait (Fr.85). In his right hand the sitter holds an arrow. The meaning is not immediately clear, but there are some possibilities. Rogier van der Weyden painted in the early 1450s a Knight of the Golden Fleece (Brussels, Koninklijk Museum) with an arrow. Usually Rogier's sitter is regarded as Anthony of Burgundy, commonly known as the Great Bastard. If this is true, the arrow could possibly mean two things, namely an indication of his military capacity or his fondness of a noble's pastime, hunting. Although these possibilities should not be excluded for the Memling portrait, there are other meanings which need to be looked at. Around this time the arrow was frequently associated with St. Sebastian.
This saint was the patron saint of the victims of the plague as well as of a military guild, the archers. Both aspects do make sense if we realize that Bruges suffered several times from the plague and that being a member of the St. Sebastian's guild was an honour. Thus in the former case the arrow could mean thankfulness for survival and in the latter case a status symbol. I think that there is a fifth possibility as well. Somewhat obscurely hidden on the sitter's hat is an emblem with a Madonna and Child, a religious subject which seems to be quite out of place. However, the arrow was not only a weapon of war, but a spiritual symbol as well, and as such an indication of the dedication to the service of God. The combination of the two objects seems indicative of the religious nature of the sitter.

Much simpler is the object in the hands of the Copenhagen sitter (Fr. 82). The beads of the rosary are shown slightly apart as if the sitter is counting his prayers. It is interesting to note that around the time the portrait was painted, circa 1475, the rosary devotion received its definitive Western form through the preaching of the Dominican Alan de Rupe. There does not need to be any doubt that this is a religious object. Thus the object seems again to indicate the religious nature of the sitter.

A much more complicated situation is created by the two objects in the hands of the Pierpont Morgan sitter (Fr. 83). In his left hands he holds a flower, while the object in his right hand may be a folded card or letter. Friedländer
designated the portrait as "Man with a Pink". George Ferguson pointed out that there existed a Flemish custom of a pink. The flower was worn by the bride upon the day of her wedding and the groom was supposed to search her and find it. In that way the pink became a symbol of marriage. In the light of our discussion on husband-wife pendant pairs this could be a possibility, especially since the sitter looks towards the right. There are, however, two objections against this interpretation. The first is provided by an imitator (?) of Jan van Eyck, who painted a portrait of a "Man with a Pink" (Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum). Around the sitter's neck is a heavy chain with a cross and a small bell. Close to the cross he holds a pink. The red carnation, of which the pink is a variety, is a symbol of pure love. Christ's death on the cross was an act of pure love. Thus we could say that this portrait sets a precedent of the symbolic meaning of the pink. The second objection is due to the name Friedländer gave to the flower, for it is not a pink, but a red carnation. As I just pointed out, the red carnation was a symbol of pure love. Thus also in this third portrait the objects may indicate something of the religious nature of the sitter.

There is a portrait which could be associated with this small group of objects with religious connotations, even though the sitter does not have an object in her hands. I am referring here to the Bruges Young Woman (Fr. 94). Already during the sixteenth century she was regarded as a
Persian Sibyl as we can read in the added inscriptions. Although the Persian Sibyl tradition has been rejected, the reasons for this description are generally ignored. Sibyls had a religious connotation. If we look at the objects on her fingers, this religious aspect becomes clearer. She wears a total of seven rings. None of the sitters has so many. Seven is the symbolic number for completion and perfection; rings are the symbol of love. The seven rings may stand for complete love, which, according to christian doctrine, was only shown by Christ. Thus the tradition seems to have had a grain of truth at its basis.

In the four portraits just discussed the objects seem to have religious connotations. In this respect they are closely related to the prayer-clasped hands and fulfil a similar function, that is, they express the sitter's religious attitudes.

But there are other objects, without religious significance. There are two clear examples of this, both related to two Italian portraits. Memling's Antwerp portrait (Fr.71) relates to Botticelli's Youth with a Coin and his Frick portrait (Fr.231) to Castagno's Man with a Sash. There is another relationship as well because the sitters are Italians. Botticelli probably painted his portrait in the early 1470s. Behind the youth is a somewhat schematic landscape, receding till just past the middle of the canvas. The sky shows a few clouds. The sitter is shown in three-quarter pose and most of his head is placed above the horizon. The coin represents
Cosimo de’ Medici in profile, not the sitter. The similarities with the Antwerp portrait, described in chapters I and II, are too great to be ignored. Although for both portraits the names of the sitters have not been found, the coins may give a clue to their names. Furthermore, medals evoked associations with the courts and antiquity, so that they tell us something about the social status of the sitters.

The Frick portrait (Fr.231) is perhaps less clear in its relation to the Castagno sitter. The major differences are the background, the volume of the figure and the hand. Castagno's patron distinctly holds his sash, something which is rather easily overlooked in the Memling portrait. Memling's sitter bursts out and beyond the frame, while Castagno's sitter is contained within its given space. The most obvious difference is the landscape, which plays such a prominent role in the Memling portrait, but which is absent in the Castagno portrait. But it is this background too which recalls a similarity. The sky in the Frick portrait is Memling's darkest blue sky found in the portraits. Behind Castagno's sitter is a dark blue background gradually lightening towards an imaginary horizon. The sash holds the key to the interpretation. The sash was fashionable at least as late as 1470, when Federico II da Montefeltro was portrayed with one in the *Brera altar piece*. And it was fashionable in higher social classes. Thus, in the first place, the sash may indicate a particular social class. Secondly, like the coin referred to Roman Antiquity, so does the sash refer to Greek Antiquity.
There are several Greek statues which show the figures holding their togas in a very similar way, for example Dioscurides of Delos. I would suggest that we have here a similar interest in antiquity as was shown by the humanists.

The meaning concerning the other objects is rather obscure. The young Montreal sitter (Fr. 80) holds a scroll in his left hand and nothing appears to be written upon it. This differs from an earlier portrait, Jan van Eyck's Tymotheus (London, National Gallery). But even for that portrait Panofsky was at a loss with the scroll when he tried to interpret the portrait. The scroll in the Memling portrait is even obscurer. Does it indicate a specific event in the sitter's life? Has it anything to do with his study? His name? His work? The questions have to remain unanswered, not only for the Montreal portrait, but also for the Palazzo Vecchio portrait (Fr. 86). In the latter the object has been partly cut, but it could be a booklet. The age of the sitter makes it also possible to suggest that it could relate to a financial action. The obscurest, however, is the Windsor portrait (Fr. 91). The sitter seems more to touch than to hold the tassel (?) of a chain (?). It is impossible to make here even suggestions.

Thus, it is on a note of failure that this section has to come to a close. And in our failure we have to admit that the modern viewer cannot always properly identify the object. On the more positive side stands, however, the fact that the majority of objects could be interpreted, either having re-
igious connotations (carnation, rosary, arrow, rings, prayer book) or secular ones (coin, sash). In an indirect way those objects tell us who and what the sitters are, that is, something about their nature and their social position.

HANDS AT REST

Although it may seem to be a very common gesture, two resting hands are a rather unfamiliar sight in Flemish art. One of the first times we come across hands placed one over the other, but not really at rest, is in Très Riches Heures in a group of ladies (Chantilly, Musée Condé). In portraiture, Robert Campin showed D'Alatruye and his wife with their hands at rest (Brussels, Koninklijk Museum). But it was really Rogier van der Weyden who made it more common. Two portraits, both of women, show the hands very prominently displayed one over the other, namely Portrait of a Young Lady (Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum) and Portrait of a Lady (Washington, National Gallery). There is another work which shows several men with their hands clasped one over the other. Although Rogier did perhaps not make it, he most likely designed the Dedication Page of the Chroniques du Hainaut (Brussels, Koninklijke Bibliothek). Panofsky, who was more concerned about chancellor Rolin when he wrote the following, offers in an indirect way some good insight:

"In the dedication scene of the "Chronique du Hainaut", inexoribly dominated by Burgundian etiquette, the patience of the great man of action, the Chancellor Rolin, seems to be sorely tried by the boredom of a ceremony complacently and somewhat superciliously endured by his neighbour, the good Bishop Chevrot of Tournai." 74
And the good bishop has his hands placed one over the other. The question we need to raise here is if the hands at rest are only a compositional device or if there is a meaning behind it. In the previous categories we noticed that the hands were more active; they were either engaged in prayer or held an object, but they were not compositional devices. That the suggestion of hand interpretation is warranted may become more evident when we realize that already Quintilian (ca.35- ca.100) used the term of Chironomia, which he defined as "the law of gestures" and that in the sixteenth and seventeenth century hand gestures became standardized. In his attempt to standardize Bulwer wrote that "Both hands do sometimes rest and are out of action; yet this rhetorical silence of the hand is an act proper where no affection is emergent;..." This could perhaps be applied to Memling's Lehman portrait (Fr.74), his Paris Elderly Woman (Fr.76), his New York Old Man (Fr.81), his Uffizi portrait (Fr.88) and his Bruges Young Woman (Fr.94). But Bulwer dealt with rhetoric, not with art. Yet the art of ancient Greece provides us with an early example of this pose in the Boxer at Rest. This leads us one step further, for in contrast to active hands, his hands at rest could be viewed as passive. This idea could ultimately lead to the idea and meaning of contemplation as being implied. In the light of so many Memling portraits which have a religious nature this meaning takes on more credence.

Of the portraits with two hands at rest only the Frank-
furt portrait (Fr.73) deviates. The hands are not crossed, but separated. Furthermore, the left hand is perpendicular to the right hand as well as to the frame. There is no precedent for this in Flemish portraiture. The hand perpendicular to the frame also occurs in two other portraits, the Berlin Elderly Man (Fr.75) and the Brussels portrait (Fr.84). In both these cases it is the right hand, which is the most competent hand in rhetoric. It should be noted that the Berlin Elderly Man differs here from his wife (Fr.76). If there is significance behind it, is hard to tell.

The last two portraits in this category are the Uffizi portrait (Fr.89) and the Venice portrait (Fr.77). Both sitters have their right hand in the same way as the Washington sitter (Fr.85), except that there is no object. And again the pose is unprecedented. It should not go unnoticed that those portraits which defy at this moment a possible interpretation belong mainly to Memling's early period. The two-handed portraits on the other hand are generally of Memling's mature period. Although time-wise the division is not totally clear-cut, it may suggest that Memling only gradually established an iconography of consistent hand positions. Since only half of this category can perhaps be interpreted, we have to leave the possibility open that the other half did not have a special meaning and could perhaps be regarded as compositional devices.
THE BACKGROUND

So far in this thesis the iconography centered around the hands of the sitters and in at least three-quarters of the portraits the hands are just not anatomical objects or compositional devices, but fulfill a special function. Much of the interpretation could be based on and backed by tradition. This reliance on tradition seems to be much more haphazard for the background.

The earliest known independent portraits, of Jean le Bon (Louvre, ca. 1360) and archduke Rudolf IV (Vienna, Diocesan Museum, ca. 1365), have a neutral background. For Flanders this remained a tradition for nearly a hundred years, only slightly longer than in Italy. Frequently, but not always, this background was dark, either green, brown or blue. Important exceptions before Memling's time were Campin's Portrait of a Musician (New York, Mrs. J. Magnin Collection) and his Portrait of Robert de Masmines (Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum) and Rogier van der Weyden's Francesco d'Este (New York, Metropolitan Museum).

But this traditional background changed after 1446, when Petrus Christus produced his Portrait of a Carthusian (New York, Metropolitan Museum), Edward Grymestone (London, National Gallery) and Portrait of a Young Girl (Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum). It is in this new tradition that most of Memling's paintings fit. But it is the old tradition which deserves our attention first.
THE NEUTRAL BACKGROUND

Regardless of light or dark neutral background very many sitters had some connection with the court. Campin portrayed Robert de Masmines and Mary of Savoy; Van Eyck portrayed Baudouin de Lannoy, Giovanni Arnolfini and Gilles Binchois (?); and Rogier van der Weyden portrayed even more court figures: Guillaume Fillastre, Isabella of Portugal, Anthony of Burgundy, Francesco d'Este, Jean Gros III, Philippe de Croy, Laurent Froimont, Philip the Good, the Duke of Cleves, the Count of Charolais, the later Charles the Bold. Moreover, Jan van Eyck was first court painter to Jan of Bavaria in The Hague and later to Philip the Good.

It may be that Memling continued this type, which seems to have been associated with the court, for some of his known sitters also had some court connections. The first one is Gilles Joye (Fr.72), the Burgundian court clergyman-musician. There was a tradition for musicians to be portrayed and honoured. Campin portrayed one and so did Jan van Eyck. Flemish musicians were highly regarded due to their excellent training, and many members of the papal musical entourage were Flemish. Thus, the honour Gilles Joye received is nothing extraordinary. He was not a member of the court in 1472 (no payments are known to have been made), but through his close connection with it he may have become acquainted with a certain "court painting style".

Another person closely allied to the court was Tommaso Portinari, the banker-counsellor to Charles the Bold. He
must have known his Lucchese rival Arnolfini who had himself portrayed by Jan van Eyck. As we have seen before, one Uffizi sitter (Fr.88) may be another member of the Portinari family and therefore close to the court. The last one in this small group concerns copies of Memling's Anthony of Burgundy (Chantilly, Musée Condé; Dresden, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen). It is highly likely that the original also had a neutral background. This portrait shows at least that Memling had some connections with the court. The extent, however, is unknown and can only be surmised.

Although these portraits were made early in Memling's career, the sitters could have chosen a landscape background. That they did not do so may be due to this court tradition, which may have had a certain prestige. The prestige may have carried over to the other portraits in this category. It should not be forgotten that of the three background categories, as introduced in chapter I, at present the neutral background is numerically the largest single group.

There is a different approach to the neutral background, which strengthens my argument and adds a new aspect. In portraits with a neutral background the real attention falls namely on the sitter, not on the details. Jan van Eyck had used it to create his particularism. Panofsky summed it up in the following words:

"Exhaustively particularized, completely unique, and existing within an indefinable space exclusively his own, each personage is, as Leibniz would say, a "nomad without window" or, to borrow a telling phrase from a great nominalist, a 'res se ipsa singularis', " a thing
individual of and by itself"—solidly real but incommensurable with any other member of the species and isolated from the rest of the world." 94

The key phrase for our purpose is "an indefinable space exclusively his own". Thus the neutral background creates separation between the viewer and the sitter and elevates, through isolation, the sitter to a different level. This brings us back to the status and prestige this neutral background had acquired in Flemish as well as in Italian portraiture. Yet, at the same time it functions as a special psychological environment, creating a person "res se ipsa singularis". But as I pointed out in chapter I, Memling tried to break through this neutrality, thus creating a different space, a different environment. And it is to this new environment that I want to turn to next.

THE LANDSCAPE BACKGROUND

Already in the general introduction to the background Petrus Christus' portraits were mentioned. With their interior backgrounds they broke through the old tradition of neutral backgrounds. But it did not stop with the interior. Dieric Bouts broke through the confinement of the interior by introducing a view out of the window in his 1462 portrait of an unknown man (London, National Gallery). Basically Bouts' portrait is the ancestor to Memling's interior-exterior background. For a direct prototype of the landscape portrait we need to look to Italy, not Flanders. In 1465 Piero della Francesca painted his famous pair Federigo II
da Montefeltro, duke of Urbino, and his wife Battista Sforza (Florence, Uffizi). Behind the sitters placed in profile is a vast landscape, while on the back of the panels are allegories, related to the sitters. It seems more than likely that Memling followed the Italian tradition, for nearly without exception his sitters in this category are Italians. The important difference between Memling's and Piero's portraits is not the three-quarter view instead of the profile, but the absence of allegories on the back. Piero's allegories ascribed to his patrons certain virtues of character. But these allegories were not visible when the portraits were viewed. Thus without them the portraits had to speak a similar language. Panofsky, dealing with the character of Rogier's sitters, wrote that

"A likeness conceived as a study in character will therefore reflect these outside forces together with their substratum; it will present the sitter... as a thing co-determined by its environment." 100

In other words, the landscape behind the sitter is a means to interpret the character of the sitter. In chapter I we followed the spatial development of the landscape and already noted there certain characteristics. The landscape is either flat or slightly hilly; the trees and shrubs are often rather dense with foliage; some of the portraits with mature sitters show a slightly cloudy sky; frequently there is a bit of water often with the protected princely swans; buildings and people in it tend to be small and unobtrusive; the grass ranges from brown to green and blue. The colour of the land-
scape in general is more tonal than local. There is really nothing which disturbs the landscape. It evokes a sense of peace, quietude and calmness through its garden-like setting. These qualities can also be an aspect of the human character. Thomas à Kempis in his *De Imitatio Christi* wrote that "a peaceful person is of greater use than a great scholar" and in a prayer to enlighten the mind he stated:

"Order the winds and storms, say to the sea: Be quiet! and to the north wind: don't blow! and great peace will rule there."  

Thomas à Kempis equated the peace of nature with the peace of mind, Panofsky's "reflection of the outside forces".

Thus, while the neutral background is a passive attribution to the concentration of the sitter, the landscape background is an active contributor.

Much of what is attributed to the pure landscape could be applied to the interior-exterior as well. It is to this last category in this chapter that we now turn our attention.

**THE INTERIOR-EXTERIOR BACKGROUND**

In the previous category we saw that the landscape through its garden-like, pastoral setting evoked a sense of peacefulness. Even though some details could slightly modify this picture, the general essence of it remains true. But the "addition" of the interior is just not a minor detail. In the pure landscape category the sitter could be thought of to be in nature and to be one with nature. This is not
possible for this category, because the sitter is physically separated from the landscape through walls, balustrades or columns. It should be clearly stated that this different background evokes a different quality, which results in a different character trait. But it does not change the fact that as an environmental factor it contributes to the psychological make-up of the sitter.

The first quality which becomes apparent is the duality. There is a duality between interior and exterior, between nature and man-made structures, between infinity and limitation. This duality is strengthened in the portraits with sitters with prayer-clasped hands. There we have the duality of "in the world but not of the world".

The second quality is due to the interior. Although the columns are somewhat opulent and the walls impersonal, the interior confines the sitter to a more intimate setting. This is perhaps strongest in the 'familiar' setting of the Chicago sitter (Fr.92) and of Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14). In six of the nine portraits in this category the sitter has prayer-clasped hands. Intimacy with a husband or wife, a saint, the Virgin or the Godhead could be of great importance.

The third quality has already been discussed in the pure landscape. The only addition I want to make to it is that the viewer can enter the same space as the sitter, which enforces, at least for the interior-exterior, the quality of intimacy.

The presence of these three qualities makes the inter-
pretation more difficult, but not impossible. The important thing is to keep in mind that no individual aspect fully interprets the sitter. As we have seen in all categories in this chapter, the aspects suggest the direction in which interpretation may be found. But the backgrounds, the hands, the objects, and other details as well, must be taken together in order to interpret the character of the sitter properly and to discover the attitude of the sitter.
SUMMARY

"Man's features and pose do not fully reveal the character; for if they did so accurate representation of the body would at the same time depict the inner qualities of the mind." 1

Perhaps portraitists of all time have tried to reconcile the problem of the sitter's appearance and the inner quality. But it is undoubtedly true that the emphasis has been placed on the one or the other. Pliny praised Apelles, because his portraits were of perfect likeness. Ku K'ai-chih, the first named Chinese painter, was willing to sacrifice the literal representation for chuan-shen, the soul of the sitter. In the context of this thesis, Panofsky's statement on the situation after Jan van Eyck's "descriptive portraits" sheds light on Memling's position and contribution to portraiture:

"Progress was possible only on one of two roads leading in opposite directions but ultimately converging toward the "interpretive" and later on meeting, via Memling, in the masters of the sixteenth century; the sitter's individuality could be made accessible to the beholder either by presenting him within a well-defined environment which the beholder can share; or, by reducing the amorphous complexity of his being to well-defined psychological qualities and attitudes which the beholder can re-experience." 4

Probably Memling's place in the art of portraiture could not be better defined than Panofsky's statement indicates. Unfortunately, he never 'proves' Memling's position. In this thesis I hope to have shown that Memling tried to combine the two roads walked by his predecessors. On the first road, Petrus Christus and Dieric Bouts introduced a well-defined
space. Memling went beyond their achievements through the introduction of a pure landscape. In chapter I I pointed out the spatial development which was noticeable in the three categories. It is probably clearest in the pure landscape category, where the early portraits show a blocked-off space, while the later ones show a 'limitless' space. This vast space parallels that of Piero della Francesca's Sforza portraits, of which Lipman stated that the landscape was a clarification for an expressive force. But at the same time this awareness for distance was more than a technical aspect in perspective. In chapter IV I indicated that the landscape had a psychological effect on the sitters. Panofsky suggested that the science of perspective had as corollary a new historical sense. Distance was therefore not only optical, but also historical and took on a symbolic form. This psychological effect and symbolic form are the bridge to the second road, a road which was built by Rogier van der Weyden and Hugo van der Goes. Especially in chapter IV I dealt with the categories of the hands in their function of purpose. Frequently the word attitude was used to describe that function. Just like the profile face suggest direction, so do the prayer-clasped hands. But these hands are symbolic for the soul of the sitter. In this particular case, the prayer-clasped hands symbolize the devout nature of the sitters; an aspect which is fully compatible with the spirit of the time. This religious connotation can be experienced in
some of the objects as well. For other poses I have suggested that they may be connected to an interest in humanism and antiquity. But Rogier van der Weyden and Hugo van der Goes stayed on this road, concentrating often on the religious nature of the sitter. Memling, by combining the two roads, went beyond them and introduced a new spirit in the north. Friedländer, trying to characterize Memling, stated that

"Memling was neither a discoverer like van Eyck, nor an inventor like Rogier. He lacks the passion of vision, the fanaticism of faith. In purely material terms, he is not as dense as van Eyck, nor as hard as Rogier."

Perhaps Friedländer used the wrong measuring stick to assess Memling's achievements. He used his own personal preferences and dislikes to judge the artist, without taking the spirit of the time into consideration. As we saw in chapter III, this spirit was a mixture of strong religiosity in the form of piety with an emerging humanism. Instead of judging Memling myself and fail like Friedländer or Panofsky did in this respect, I want to point out that his contemporaries had a different opinion. Memling never slavishly followed the Flemish tradition. He skillfully grafted Italian innovations into northern portraiture without being overwhelmed by the Italian achievements. That something of the Italian spirit went along is evidenced by the fact that so many of his sitters were Italians. At the same time his own achievements influenced Italian artists like Fra Bartolommeo.
For his contemporaries Memling, the mirror of Brugian upper-class society, was, to close with notary Romboudt de Doppere's death act phrase of 1494, an "excellentissimum pictorem totius tunc orbis christiani".
FOOTNOTES

INTRODUCTION


2. For documentation and information about Memling see chapter III, section I.

3. For a good list of books and articles, see Jan Bialostocki, *Les Musées de Pologne Gdansk, Krakow, Warsaw* (Brussels: Centre nationale de recherches "Primitifs Flamands", Vol. 9, 1966), pp. 94-104. Further references to this series are given under *Primitifs Flamands* and the volume number. For a discussion on the interpretations, see Max J. Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting* (Leiden: Sijthoff, Vol. VI: 2, 1971), the Editor's Note, especially page 121.


5. ibid., p. 35.


7. Max J. Friedländer, *Die altniederländische Malerei* (Leiden: Sijthoff, 1934-1937). These volumes have been translated into *Early Netherlandish Painting*. References in this thesis are made to this translation.

8. Friedländer, *op. cit.*, p. 119. "Very few thorough-going studies of Memlinc have been published since 1937."

9. ibid., pp. 120-121. "Since the middle of the 20th century, however, some authors seem to view the painter in a rather different light."


11. The abbreviation Fr. which I use here and in the text refer to Friedländer's catalogue numbers. The two signed and dated works are the *Jan Floreins altar piece* (Fr. 2) and the *Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine* (Fr. 11), both of 1479;
documented are the Munich Seven Joys of Mary, commissioned by P. Bultync in 1480 (Fr. 35) and the Bruges St. Ursula shrine in 1469 (Fr. 24); documented by tradition are the Dibelbeck Greverade altar piece of 1491 (Fr. 3) and the Willem Moreel altar piece of 1484 (Fr. 12).

12. These paintings are the Ottawa St. Anthony with Virgin and donor of 1472 (Fr. 64); the Melbourne Virgin and Christ of 1475 (Fr. 37); the portrait of Benedetto Portinari of 1487 (Fr. 23B) and the Maarten van Nieuwenhove diptych of 1487 (Fr. 14).

13. Compared to previous artists in Flanders the interior-exterior is quite new, although not an innovation. Bouts' London portrait of 1462 antedates Memling's portraits by perhaps as much as ten years. Since Memling goes beyond Bouts' portrait, this aspect deserves more attention. The prayer-clasped hands are not an innovation either, since Rogier van der Weyden already used this aspect. See also chapter IV.

14. This does not mean that there are no other aspects. But these other aspects do not constitute a developing pattern and are often not as tangible.

15. In Appendix I these sequences are tabulated, both of the backgrounds and of the hands; Appendix II is the combination of the various sequences; Appendix III provides a chart with the Friedländer numbers which are used to identify the portraits.

16. The combinations are: 5 neutral background- prayer-clasped hands; 3 neutral background- hands at rest; 3 neutral background- object; 1 landscape- prayer-clasped hands; 4 landscape- hands at rest; 5 landscape- object; 6 interior-exterior- prayer-clasped hands; 3 interior-exterior- hands at rest; 1 neutral interior- prayer-clasped hands.

17. This I hope to show when I discuss the ideas of the time in chapter III.

18. The reason for this title is that in the case of "Memling and his Time" Memling is somewhat set apart from his time, a mistake Friedländer made; in case of"Memling in his Time", Memling is too much emphasized at the cost of the ideas and happenings.
CHAPTER I

THE NEUTRAL BACKGROUND

1. This could also be a ledge or a window frame.

2. See Appendix IA. Some sitters will not be discussed here, because the sitters do not show their hands; or are cut, thus hampering a proper evaluation; or are stolen and no good reproductions and descriptions are available; or are probably copies and in some cases are not really portraits.

3. See chapter II for the documentation; in the same chapter some suggestions are offered for some others.

4. Where the name of the sitter is known, the portrait will be called under that name; otherwise the place name is used with the exception where confusion is possible. The appendices list the names of the portraits as they are used in this thesis.

5. There are also a monogram and a coat of arms on the frame, together with the words ANNO.DOMINI.1472 at the top, and ETATIS.SVE.47 at the bottom. See chapter II for the identification.

6. On the negative side too: the pose of the hands (see under the category of prayer-clasped hands); cut-off shoulders; no space above the head, which gives the impression that the sitter is cramped into his space. The portrait is generally accepted. See also Primitifs Flamands Vol.4 (1961), no. 72, pp. 66-70. The term 'generally accepted' means that the majority of the scholars who discuss a particular portrait accept it as a Memling product.

7. Samuel van Hoogstraten used the term when he favourably compared Rembrandt's Night Watch to the stiff other militia pieces which were made for the Kloveniersdoelen.

8. That this conclusion is warranted becomes clear when we discuss the Bruges Young Woman (Fr.94) of 1480, the only other dated portrait with a neutral background, and the Portinari portraits (Fr.69,70), the next portraits to be discussed and which have a relative certainty of date.

9. Both are in the Metropolitan Museum, New York, via the Altman bequest. See Art in America IV (June 1916): 187-195. For further discussion of the identification, see chapter II. The portraits are now generally accepted; the date cannot be earlier than 1470 due to their marriage and probably not later than 1475, because Tommaso got into financial difficulties around that time.
10. Although mentioned here, the discussion of the hands takes place in the category of prayer-clasped hands. This counts for the other portraits as well, so that from now onwards only the spatial aspect will be discussed.

11. The problem may be caused by the high hennin and veil. For the twisting of the neck some muscles would be more obvious. Colouristically, there is a greater contrast between her and the background than between Tommaso and the background. Yet, she is flatter than Tommaso. This means that brighter colours do not necessarily contribute to a better illusion of space.

12. Friedlander, op. cit., p. 110. The San Diego Museum gives as date 1470, but does not give any reason. On the frame are parts of letters still visible, which have not been deciphered. The last three look like 147, while vaguely maybe another number looks like a 3 or 5. The length of the hair indicates a later date, not 1470. Compare also the Montreal (Fr.60) and the Venice (Fr.77) portraits. The red underground is uncommon for Memling; it is more Rogerian. I do not think that this can be used as an argument for a 1470 date; that is six years after Rogier's death, while nothing about the intervening years is known. The portrait is generally accepted. Some description is given in Flanders in the Fifteenth Century; Art and Civilization. Catalogue of the Exhibition Masterpieces of Flemish Art: Van Eyck to Bosch (The Detroit Institute of Arts and the City of Bruges. October-December 1960), p. 155. Further references to this catalogue will be given as Detroit Exh.Cat.

13. For example both nostrils are visible; the nose is not a line, but a flesh continuation; the right side of the mouth is shorter than the left side, without a tendency to pull the mouth down, which is especially the case with Gilles Joye.

14. A touch of light on the right side of the neck and chin; also in the Portinaris, but not in the Gilles Joye.

15. This does not mean that it is the last one of the neutral backgrounds, for there are probably three later portraits, but these three do not show this spatial development.

16. There are very few references to this portrait, but it seems to be accepted where it is discussed (J.Held, A.Warburg).

17. I wonder if Fr.90 is of the same sitter. The portrait disappeared during the second world war. The harsh light on the undershirt, the placing of the pupils, the weak modelling of the chin and neck make me wonder if it could not be a workshop product or a copy.
18. Before 1900 it was regarded as a Jan van Eyck; after 1900 generally accepted as a Memling. Friedländer dates it around 1470. (op.cit., p. 29 and 55)

19. The ratio of 1 : 2 occurs in a few other Memling portraits: Antwerp portrait (Fr.71), The Hague portrait (Fr.79), Venice portrait (Fr.77), Gilles Joye (Fr.72), San Diego portrait (Fr.233), National Trust portrait (Fr.87); and relatively close is the Washington portrait (Fr.85).

20. Friedländer, op.cit., p. 29.

21. Compare for example Van Eyck's portraits of Canon Van der Paele, Vyö, Albergati and his Nicodemus in the Prado Descent.

22. Otherwise called the Washington portrait. Generally accepted. Friedländer, op.cit., p. 29, dates it around 1475.

23. As will become clear in the rest of this chapter, this portrait is the first surviving one with an object. This may explain why the shoulder-hand-arrow relation has not been solved with complete satisfaction.

24. In the show of French Primitives in Paris in 1904 it was attributed to the French School of the Loire or Rhône of 1470. Now generally accepted as a Memling.

25. Friedländer, op.cit., p. 28.

26. In both editions of the Friedländer volume the portrait is described as "without hands", although in the translated edition, after a cleaning of around 1950, the illustration shows the sitter with his hands. J.A.Crowe and G.B.Cavalcaselle gave in The Early Flemish Painters. Notices of Their Lives and Works (London: John Murray, 1857) on page 266 the following description:

"A portrait in the Hampton Court Gallery, long catalogued as being of an unknown author, strikes us as a careful effort of Memling in the earlier and cold manner which he took from Van der Weyden. It represents a young man of rather spare features, with his hair divided in the middle."

They also note that at one time it was attributed to Sir Anthony More.

27. The face of the St.George, although somewhat more turned, seems to be fairly close to that of the sitter. The Christ figure is turned frontally, has a light ring beard and is somewhat softer in expression. The closeness may explain why this sitter has a fairly similar gesture to that of Christ. One may wonder if Memling used his sitters for other paintings as well.
28. The inscriptions are sixteenth century additions; see Friedländer, _op.cit._, p. 57. The portrait is generally accepted.

29. K.B. McParlane, _op.cit._, chapter I, argued a similar case for the Donne triptych (Fr.10) which he dated around 1480. In the portraits with a landscape a somewhat similar tendency emerges around this time. Perhaps the 'return' hangs together with the happenings of and after 1477. For the historical aspect, see chapter III, section 2.

30. There are some altar pieces which Memling probably did towards the end of his life, such as the Louvre diptych (Fr.15) around 1490 and two altar piece shutters (Fr.18). If the dates are correct, it would further support my suggestion of a later date.

THE LANDSCAPE BACKGROUND

31. Accepted by Friedländer, McParlane, Bialostocki.

32. Compare for example the Turin Passion (Fr.34) of around 1470, the St.Sebastian (Fr.45), ca.1470, the Ottawa St.Anthony (Fr.64) of 1472 with the Grenada Deposition (Fr.13), ca.1475, and the Rotterdam Lamentation (Fr.6) of around 1475. The landscape in these paintings develop along very similar lines.

33. Generally accepted.

34. Water was one of Memling's favourite devices. The word landscape is a derivation from the Dutch word landschap or landschap. Originally it meant a view of the countryside as opposed to the townscape. Since water was abundantly available, both within and outside the town, the word landscape should not be restricted to land only.

35. The sitter has an Italian hairstyle of the early 1470s. The linearity of the nose and chin-jaw indicates an early Memling as well.

36. Generally accepted.

37. The Montreal Museum of Fine Arts purchased the portrait in 1956. Shortly afterwards it was described by John Steegman, "Montreal Acquires a Memling and a Brueghel", Canadian Art 13 (1956): 332-333. See also the Detroit Exh. Cat., p. 156.

38. From now onwards only new aspects will be discussed.
in order to avoid repetition, unless a direct comparison is necessary.

39. I suspect the landscape to be between Bruges and Ghent; even at the present time one can view a similar landscape there.

40. It is interesting that there is a parallel in public life. More and more clouds gathered above the head of Charles the Bold and the storm broke with the battle of Nancy in 1477. Bruges encountered serious difficulties with Maria of Burgundy and her husband Maximilian of Hapsburg. See also chapter III, section 2.

41. Mentioned only by Friedländer.


43. These elements are missing in a copy of this portrait (Fr. 86a), which may be a workshop production or done by a follower.


45. Generally accepted. The discussion centers around the identity of the sitter; see for that discussion chapter II.

46. On the frame is written OPVS. JOHANNIS. MEMLING. ANNO. MCCCLXXIX. Especially in the John the Baptist panel in the area of Christ's baptism is a very similar patterning, hilly landscape and clusters of trees.


48. Generally accepted.

49. A cloudy sky usually appeared with a crucifixion or deposition, for example the Turin Passion (Fr. 34), the Capilla Real Deposition (Fr. 13), the Greverade altar piece (Fr. 3). The Moreel altar piece is somewhat more secular, see also S.N.Blum, Early Netherlandish Triptychs A Study in Patronage (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), chapter 10, where she suggests that this altar piece reflects the changes which occurred.

50. Bernice Davidson wrote in "Tradition and Innovation: Gentile da Fabriano and Hans Memling", Apollo 93:2 (April-June 1971): 378-385 that "The Frick portrait seems tentative when compared to the above-mentioned works (they were Fr. 71, 84, 77, 86), for at this date Memling had scarcely begun to appreciate the
possibilities of the landscape portrait. In the Frick Frankfurt panels the figures are separated from their backgrounds by the window frames behind them; the country side is more distant, the trees and roads smaller. The division between figure and landscape is sharper in the Frick than in the Frankfurt portrait, because the window frame is flatter and provides little recession into depth, the shoulders slope more stiffly, raising an abrupt barrier between the foreground and background, and the straight line of the horizon does not respond to the silhouette of the figure." (pp. 381-2)

Shortly after the acquisition for the Frick Collection, Francis Spar wrote "Les experts pensent qu'il s'agit d'un des tout premiers portraits commandés à Memling, en 1470, sinon dans les dernières années de la décennie 1460." In "Un Memling à New York", Connaissance des Arts 223 (Septembre 1970):9. In the catalogue of the Bruges exhibition Musée Communal-Bruges: Le Portrait dans les Anciens Pays-Bas (Bruxelles: Éditions de la Connaissance, 1953), no. 13 is written that the Frick portrait is between 1462 and 1472 because it is close to the Man with a Medal (Fr.71).

Friedlander writes about the Frick portrait that it is "unusual in its vigorous modelling, probably from the master's early period." (Op. cit., p. 110). And about the Frankfurt portrait the same author writes

"I regard the portrait of a man in a tall cap in Frank­furt as Memling's earliest to show a landscape. Certain crudities and deficiencies in the line and the stiff and looming attitude of the head, which lacks animation, incline me to date this painting around 1470. The nose is too much in profile, the averted side of the face not sufficiently foreshortened." (Op. cit., p. 29.).

Hulin de Loo dated the Frankfurt portrait somewhat after 1470, "parce que le haut bonnet tronconique que porte le personnage n'a été à la mode que pendant une periode assez courte: je ne l'ai relevé que de 1465 environ à 1473 (mettons 1475 pour être large)." Festschrift, p.106.

51. Generally accepted. Crowe and Cavalcaselle, op. cit., give on page 266 the following description which may refer to this portrait:

"In the Gallery of Francfort, not catalogued, is a portrait which we suppose to have come from the Ador's Collection. It represents a young man, one-third of the life size, having all the characteristics of Memling's manner. The head is covered with the long cap of the period, and the hands are joined together before the figure, of which only half is visible."

52. Generally accepted.

53. For examples, see De Gouden Eeuw der Vlaamse

54. Early examples are Maria Portinari (Fr.70), perhaps the best example, and the Uffizi portrait (Fr.88); somewhat later are the New York Old Man (Fr.81) and the Washington portrait (Fr.85); late is his Bruges Young Woman (Fr.94).

55. Although there is no definitive proof for this portrait and the Frick portrait, I think that Memling is experimenting here for his interior-exterior background. If this is true, than it would further support a later date.

56. The nose is too much profile; the hands are poorly done; the negative shape between the face and the landscape is better than in the Frankfurt and the Copenhagen portraits.

57. Festschrift, p. 106.

THE INTERIOR-EXTERIOR BACKGROUND


59. On the back is a pure still-life with a vase and flowers; see also chapter IV.

60. Generally accepted. The Berlin portrait is the left wing, the Paris portrait is the right wing.

61. Perhaps a fairer comparison for the Thyssen-Borne misza portrait would be the Lehman portrait (Fr.74) and for the Elderly Couple, the Moreel husband-wife pendant pair (Fr.67, 68).

62. Friedländer, op.cit., p. 29.

63. One look at a later portrait shows that Friedländer is not consistent here in his argumentation, for the The Hague portrait (Fr.79), which he dates around 1484, shows rather harsh lines on the neck and around the nose.

64. With well-developed is meant then Memling's achievement in spatial development through topography, individualization and atmospheric perspective.

65. Generally accepted.
66. The two-column system also appears in the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine (Fr.11). The use of the light in the central panel is not unlike this portrait, probably somewhat more advanced. Since the altar piece is dated 1479, this portrait could probably be dated somewhat before this date.

67. Generally accepted. The identity comes through the coats of arms on the back. His is on hers and hers is on his. The sitters also appear on the wings of the St. Christopher altar piece, which was donated in 1484 to the St. Jakobskerk. The age cannot be that much different in the altar piece and the portraits.

68. For similar problems see S.N. Blum, op.cit., ch.10.

69. K. Voll published a Palermo copy (p.163) which misses the distortion.

70. Accepted by Friedländer, Held, Comstock.

71. The sitter was probably called Anthony, because St. Anthony of Padua is on the reverse.

72. Other evidence for this date is provided by the Madonna and Child (Fr.50), which Friedländer, op.cit., p.52, dated around 1485; the Lehman Annunciation (Fr.26), which on its lost original frame was dated 1482 and which shows a well-developed interior, but the figures are full-length (interiors with full-length figures are shown in Fr.10 the wings, Fr.64 and Fr.58); the face is more profile as occurs in more later portraits; the colour and the fashion indicate a later style.

73. Generally accepted. The date appears on a stone slab. Strangely enough, the 4 is inverted. The reason is not very clear.

74. Generally accepted. There is an inscription on the frame which identifies him.

75. There are some awkward aspects, especially the angled road. I wonder if there is shopwork in involved. There are no contracts which would state what was to be done by the master and what by others. There is an interesting contract which Luca Signorelli signed on April 5, 1499 for the ceiling of the Orvieto Cathedral. The contract stipulated that Luca had to do the faces and the upper parts of the body and the rest could be done by others (see M. Salmi, Luca Signorelli (Munich: Wilhelm Goldmann Verlag, 1955), p. 29). Perhaps something similar was expected from Memling.

76. Generally accepted.

77. Some overpainting has taken place, here as well as
in other places; see Primitifs Flamands, Vol.3:III, pp. 170-172.

78. Friedländer dated this portrait early, originally around 1470, later 1475. Beard on the other hand dated it late in "Another National Gallery Problem," The Connoisseur 88:360 (August 1931): 74. Musper agreed with Beard when he wrote "Wegen der engen Beziehung zu dem datierten Klappaltärchen mit dem hl. Benedikt in Florenz läßt er sich 'um 1487' datieren." H.Th. Musper, Altniederländische Malerei von Van Eyck bis Bosch (Köln: M.Dumont Schauberg, 1968), p. 64. The base of the column appears only once more in a portrait, Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14), and the capital only in the Benedetto Portinari (Fr.23B), while in other panels they appear from 1475 onwards.

**PRAYER-CLASPED HANDS**

79. This is one of the reasons why Fr.93,95 and 230 have not been discussed here.

80. This "close cut" can also be seen in Fr.233, 87,79.

81. Tommaso's hands form an angle of 60 degrees with the lower edge, using the middle finger for determining the direction.

82. It is the closest of all the portraits.

83. I disregard here for a moment the badly damaged parts and rely on the parts which show a certain freedom.

84. Support for a more precise date has to be gained through fashion, anatomical details like the jugular vein, the more profile nose. There is a closeness to the Moreel triptych (Fr.12) and the The Hague portrait (Fr.79), especially in the texture of the fur.

85. I think there definitely is: 4 with a book are shown to the waist; husband-wife pendant pairs are just a bit shorter; 3 with dark background close to the arm pits; 1 with a landscape close to the arm pits; 1 interior-exterior nearly to the waist.

86. As we have seen probably done before 1487 and not earlier than 1480.

87. Very similar to the San Diego portrait (Fr.233).

88. Other evidence supports a later date: harder outlines and shadows and face more towards the profile, especially noticeable in the nose. See also London (Fr.78),
Benedetto Portinari (23B), Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr.14), National Trust portrait (Fr.87) and the Chicago portrait (Fr.92).

89. It is probably cut, for it is the only one where the fingertips are visible, while the rest of the hands is not. Moreover, the hair touches the frame, the pendant is partly cut off and so is the second ring.

90. Friedländer, op.cit., p. 52.

HANDS HOLDING AN OBJECT

91. What the objects precisely are is discussed in chapter IV, together with their meaning. Some of the objects are not very clear.

92. There are no others in this category to compare with. In other categories are Fr.73 (not firmly dated), Fr.74, Fr.81 and Fr.88.

93. Other aspects like fashion, foreshortening of the nose, shadow modelling and the face, may indicate that the Montreal portrait is a fraction later.

94. Compare the gesture with Andrea del Castagno's Portrait of a Man (Washington, National Gallery), painted around the middle of the 1440s.

95. In the next category a few other portraits with not very successful hands will be discussed and they are all painted close together.

HANDS AT REST

96. Other evidence like volume, light and shadow on the face, the nose, tends to confirm this suggestion.

97. Friedländer, op.cit., p. 29.

98. For example the Washington portrait (Fr.85) and the San Diego portrait (Fr.233).

99. With the cutting this area may have been damaged.

100. There are two other portraits with this pose, both more successful; the Uffizi portrait (Fr.88) and the Lehman portrait (Fr.74).
This clumsiness helps with the dating, probably between 1474 and 1477. Shopwork is possible and even likely, but there is no proof.

CHAPTER II

1. \textit{Primitifs Flamands} Vol. 4, p. 68 describes it as "argent, a chevron gules between what may be three billets or."

2. \textit{ibid.} for a full description.

3. \textit{ibid.}, p. 67.


5. \textit{ibid.} This short volume is concerned only with F. van Molle's research on Gilles Joye.

6. \textit{ibid.}

7. E. de Moreau, \textit{Histoire de l'Eglise en Belgique} 4 (Brussels: L'Editions Universelle, 1949), p. 70. He gives the following examples: Louis de Bourbon, later bishop of Liège, was a son of Charles the Bourbon and Agnes, daughter of John the Fearless; Antoine Haneron was counsellor to Charles the Bold; François de Busleyden was counsellor to Philip the Handsome and in the next century Jean Carondelet was secretary to Charles V.


10. When the duke died he had in his employ the musicians Constans de Languebroek (since 1442), Robert Morton (since 1457) and Gilles Joye (since 1462).

11. Guillaume Crétin's \textit{Déploration} welcomes Ockeghem in the underworld. Verse 213 reads

(There worthy Dufay stepped to the fore/ also Busnois and over twenty more,/ Dunstable, Barbingant, Fedé, Binchois, Pasquin, the famous Barizon, Lannoy,/ Copin, Regis, Gilles Joye and)
Constans too;/ Full many folk about them listening drew,/ For

good it was to hear such harmony..." Quoted from G.Reese,

Also the persons in Nicole de la Chesnaye's Condamnacion
des bancquetz dance to one of his tunes "Non pas":

"Sus Gallans qui avez l'usaige
De harper ou instrumenter,
Trop longuement faictes d'usaige
Une chançon convient fleuter
Savez vous point, J'ay mis mon cuer,
Ou Non pas, ou Quand ce viendra,..."

Quoted from J.Marix, Histoire de la Musique et des Musiciens
de la Cour de Bourgogne sous le règne de Philippe de Bon (1420-

12. Since quite a few Portinaris are mentioned I have
provided a genealogy in Appendix VI.

13. Rogier van der Weyden's portraits of Philip the
Good are good examples of court portraits.

14. It is possible that Gilles Joye could be portrayed
as, and be a representative of, the clergyman, the successful
musician or as the courtier.

15. Raymond de Roover, The Rise and Decline of the
(Otherwise known as The Rise). I am concerned here only with
the Bruges branch.

16. ibid., p. 87.

17. ibid., p. 87 and 144.

18. ibid., p. 88. De Roover cites more examples, so that
Tani's position as a manager is not really exceptional.

19. Raymond de Roover, Money, Banking and Credit in
Mediaeval Bruges. Italian Merchant-Bankers, Lombards and
Money-Changers. A Study in the Origins of Banking (Cambrige,
(Otherwise known as Banking)


21. The London branch was discontinued by the Medici in
1472, although Gherardo Canigiani remained in London to
manage his own affairs.


23. Banking, p. 86.
24. ibid., p. 87.

25. ibid. The amount was twice the capital of the partnership.

26. ibid.

27. The Rise, p. 357.

28. ibid.

29. These ships play an important role in the attribution of the Danzig altar piece to Memling. For stylistic attribution J. Bialostocki is probably the best (Primitifs Flamands 9). For historic arguments against the attribution, see K.B. McFarlane, op. cit., chapter II. Further, The Rise, pp. 341 and 347.


31. ibid., p. 341.

32. She was a relative of Bernardo Bandini-Baroncelli, the murderer of Guiliano de' Medici, and of Pierantonio di Guasparre Bandini-Baroncelli, the Pazzi representative in Bruges in 1478.

33. The difference in age was not uncommon. When Tani married in 1466 he was fifty, while his bride Catarina Tanagli was twenty. Furthermore, it was common practice that Italians married Italians.

34. The Portinaris ordered a triptych, now in Turin, and dated around 1470. Since they appear as donors, this painting could possibly be regarded as a marriage thanksgiving.

35. That was the date the contract was signed, after which Tommaso left for Bruges.


37. The richness of Maria's necklace is between that worn in the Turin altar piece and that in Van der Goes triptych of 1475.

38. There can easily be a difference between the reason for commissioning and the way someone is represented.

40. The Sticht is the name for the Dutch province Utrecht, which at that time consisted of the present day province Utrecht and parts of Overijssel and Gelderland.

41. He actually went to North Africa. In 1975 Morocco threatened the Spanish possessions in the Sahara. These possessions were conquered by Anthony of Burgundy.

42. Frequently this portrait is described as "Knight with an Arrow". It is now in Brussels, Koninklijk Museum. Panofsky dates it around 1455, Cuttler around 1452.


44. For other interpretations, see chapter IV. The aspects are not necessarily exclusive.

45. The Italian branch of the family kept of course its original name. One of them, Giovanni Morelli, kept a diary for his son around 1400.


47. K. B. McFarlane, *op. cit.*, p. 31.


50. McFarlane gives as name St. James; Blum as St. Jacques and the Flemish is St. Jakob. The church is located at the St. Jakobstraat.

51. *Primitifs Flamands* 1, p. 94.


55. *Primitifs Flamands* 9, p. 98. "Willem Moreel ende joncveruwe Barbara filia Jan van Herstvelde, syn ghesellenede."

56. ibid., p. 92.

57. In English usually the French is used for this fraternity: Notre Dame des Neiges. Moreel became a member of it in the service year 1474-1475, a year after Memling.

58. It is remarkable how many young people Memling portrayed. I wonder if this has anything to do with a 'family tree'. They could function in a similar way as at the present
photographs do

59. The inscription in the left corner reads "Sibylla Sambetha quae et Persica anno ante Christ. Nat. 2040" (Sibyl Sambetha of Persia born in the year 2040 B.C.). At the bottom the inscription reads "Ecce bestia conculcaberis. Gignetur Dominus in orbem terrarum et gremium virginis erit salus gentium. Invisibile verbum palpabitur." (Now wilt thou conquer the savage beasts, the Lord will appear on the terrestrial globe and the fruit of a virgin will be the salvation of the people. The invisible world will become flesh).

60. A. Monballieu, "Sibylla Sambetha", Openbaar Kunstbezit in Vlaanderen (1964), no. 3. Erasmus in his Colloquia familiari wrote that the women of his time had their fingers loaded with rubies and diamonds and that originally only noble women plucked their hair of the foreheads and temples, but that later on everyone did so. (In his chapter on "Advice to Women").


65. It was founded by Folco di Ricovero Portinari, the father of Dante's Beatrice, in 1288. Tommaso was buried there; the Van der Goes altar piece was there.

66. The affair was finally settled in 1499, but payments were made as late as 1512.

67. Festschrift, p. 103-106.


69. Max J. Friedländer, op. cit., p. 27.


71. There is perhaps an other possibility: that the coin stands in relationship to his master, just like Van Eyck's Tymotheus.
72. John I was portrayed by Rogier; a copy is at the Bibliothèque Nationale.


74. The reason why he left Utrecht was probably due to the problems of selling: in 1427 an order came out that nothing painted in Utrecht could be sold in Bruges.

75. K.B. McFarlane, *op.cit.*, p. 32 footnote 18. The guild ordered shutters and the polyptych was installed in their chapel in 1480. The last known information about it is that it was sold in 1624.

76. *The Rise*, pp. 92–93. The percentage of Italians in relation to the Flemish citizens must have been small, although I do not know the actual number.

77. See chapter III for possible reasons.


80. Brugian merchants often belonged to the middle class.


82. The family Van der Beurse were inn-keepers-brokers till the first half of the fifteenth century. Their house is now occupied by the Bank van Roeselaere en West-Vlaanderen.

83. *Banking*, p. 115. He gives several examples on page 101.

84. ibid., p. 171.

85. ibid., p. 175.

86. ibid., p. 189. For example Evrard Gaederic, a money-changer, was called "Sire". See also François Cali, *Bruges The Cradle of Flemish Painting* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964), p. 49.

87. He suppressed all banks on December 14, 1489.


89. These functions often went together (F. Cali, *op.cit.*, p. 48.). One of them, the naturalized Antoine Adornes, became burgomaster in 1473. The Italian family branch produced several doges.

90. *Banking*, pp. 13 and 190.
CHAPTER III

THE HISTORICAL MEMLING


4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.


7. Max J. Friedländer, op. cit., p. 12. Weale thought that the absence was due to the fact that Memling was in the service and protection of Charles the Bold. Friedländer doubted that, because there is no documentary evidence. However, Weale's notion of court connections could fit in with my suggestion on some of the neutral background portraits.

8. Before 1470 nothing has been firmly dated, not even the debated Danzig altar piece.

9. See E. Panofsky, op. cit., in his chapters on Rogier, especially chapter IX, p. 247ff. Memling's borrowings for some of the portraits seem to indicate that he was fairly familiar with Rogier's work. However, most borrowings seem to be from before 1460. This whole field of Memling's relationship to Rogier is rather confused and, I think, not thoroughly researched.


12. Ibid., p. 13. See also Detroit Exh. Cat., p. 369.
13. A. Schouteet, "Nieuwe teksten betreffende Hans Memling," Revue Belge d'Archeologie et d'Histoire de l'Art 24 (1955), pp. 81-84. He gives the following four accounts:

Pol. 129 (1473-1474) "Dit is den ontfanc van den nieuwen ghildebroeders ende susters ontfaen binnen desen jare:...Meester Hans, schilder, 4. gr." (This is the receipt of the new guild brothers and sisters received in this year:...Master Hans, painter, 4. gr.).

Pol. 160 (1475-1476) "Ontfanc van jaerlix ghildeghelt in 't ommegaen van buten de houder veste de anno 76;...Meester Ans, schildere, 2 gr." (Receipt of yearly guild money of a procession outside the walls for the year 76:...Master Ans, painter, 2 gr.).

Pol. 277 (1493-1494) "Andre ontfanc van doodschult ende zielmessen dit jaer:...Meester Hans, de schilder, 3 s.gr." (Other receipt of death debt and Requiem masses this year:...Master Hans, 3 s.gr.).

Pol. 280 (same account) "Betalinghe van zielmessen dit jaer ghecelebreirt;...Meester Hans, de schilder, 13 gr." (Payments for Requiem masses celebrated this year:...Master Hans, the painter, 13 gr.).

In the service year 1471-1472 the name "Lodewic de Valkenare et uxor" is mentioned. Probably they were Memling's parents-in-law. In 1468-1469 "Kaele, hertoge van Bourgoigne, grave van Vlaendre, etc., ons harde gheduchtich heere ende prince" and "Minheere de bisscop van Doornike" became members and in 1472-1473 "Mevrauwe van Bourgoigne".


17. Flowers still grow now in the little garden.

A HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

18. Raymond de Roover makes this clear in both books cited here, The Rise and Banking.


20. Charles plotted a kind of coup d'état, but his father stayed in power. However, Charles got far more responsibilities after that.

22. Holland, Zeeland and Friesland form the west and north of the Netherlands. Holland was roughly equal to the present two provinces Noord- and Zuid-Holland.


24. The two main areas, Burgundy and Flanders, were separated from each other by French territory and bishoprics. Charles tried to obtain these intervening areas through conquest. The crown was to be given by the German emperor, the father of Maximilian, who at the last moment backed out of the deal.

25. See also page 71.


28. See also page 70.


30. The Jonker-Fransen war was basically a rebellion of the 'Hoekse' party against the monarchical 'Kabeljauwse' party. Thomas Basin, bishop of Lisieux, who had fled to the north for Louis XI of France, compared the viciousness with the Guelfs and Ghibellines in Italy and the Bourguignons and Armagnacs in France. The 'Hoeken' were led by Frans van Brederode and Jan van Naaldwijk in the north and by Filips van Kleef in Flanders. In 1492 their last strongholds, Ghent and Sluis, fell into the hands of Maximilian. In the same year, the free farmers in the north were defeated. They had rebelled against the levies used to pay for a war in the south. In their banner they portrayed a saint as well as a loaf of bread and cheese. See also J. & A. Romein, *op.cit.*, pp. 221-228.


32. S. N. Blum, *op.cit.*, chapters 9 and 10.

SPIRITUAL LIFE

34. J. Huizinga, The Waning of the Middle Ages (New York: Doubleday, 1954). The original Dutch edition was published in 1919, but the first English translation of 1924 differed in some respect from the Dutch text.

35. The Dutch words for farces are 'cluten, boerden, sotternieën'. There are some differences between the three, but they were all played after the main play. They are often quite rude. Not many have survived complete.

36. R.R. Post, The Modern Devotion. Confrontation with Reformation and Humanism (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1968), p. 257. There was a difference between the Windesheimers and the Brethren in that the former showed more concern for education. Only once in a while some of the Brethren taught in Zwolle. On the other hand, the Brethren often provided the churches and monasteries with good candidates for the priesthood.

37. ibid., p. 225.

38. ibid.

39. Thomas à Kempis, De Navolging van Christus (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1957). Thomas Hemerken, born around 1380, entered the monastery of St. Agnietenberg, close to Zwolle, in 1399 and stayed there till his death on July 25, 1471. He was either the writer or the editor of this booklet, which appeared around 1420. It became one of the most read books of western Christianity.


42. ibid.

43. ibid., p. 94.


45. Horae Belgicae X (Hannover: Carl Rumpler, 1854), p. 53. Also quoted by Millard Meiss, op.cit., p. 177. "An unbroken glass through which light shines, does not break through the light of the sun; Similarly has a virgin, before and after, given birth to a child."
It is noteworthy that the poem is found in a group of "minnenliederen", poems of the loving soul (no. 42-110). Furthermore, in the Chicago portrait two children's heads are reflected in the glass.

46. The Book of Wisdom chapter 7: 22- 8: 1. The biblical quotations are taken from the Jerusalem Bible (Garden City: Doubleday, 1966).

47. The Book of Wisdom chapter 8:4.


49. 1 John 1: 5-7.

50. This mystery can also be detected in the Mystic Marriage of St. Catherine (Fr.11).

51. J. Huizinga, op.cit., p. 198 gives an interesting quote, worthwhile to quote again: "Ruysbroeck, in The Adornment of the Spiritual Marriage, says:"Here begins an eternal hunger which is never appeased; it is an inner craving and hankering of the loving power and the created spirit for an uncreated good..."...The metaphor may be inverted, so that the hunger is Christ's, as in The Mirror of Eternal Salvation."

52. Horae Belgicae X gives two of Brugman's poems, no. 107,109. Perhaps his most familiar poem is "Ic heb ghejaecht myn leven lanc" (I have hunted my life long).

53. Fr.14a, Fr.23A, Fr.47, Fr.48, Fr.49, Fr.53, Fr.54.

54. A further discussion on the connection between the religious ideas and the portraits will follow in chapter IV.

55. The aspect of attitude will be discussed in chapter IV in connection with the iconography.

56. It is possible that there is a Stoic influence, but if there is, it is at least 'biblicized'.

57. The inner compulsion could be the result of two motives. In the first place, a genuine religious compulsion without any other motives. In the second place, the sitters may like to be seen by others in this way.

58. Even at the present time catholic doctrine states that celibate life, away from the world, is a higher state than that of the layman. The roodscreen in the churches is actually a good example of this separation.
59. Horae Belgicae X, no. 119. A free translation of it gives the intention "You do not have to be a monk to be a follower of Christ."


61. Desiderius Erasmus, Lof der Zotheid (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1912). In part 54 Erasmus deals with the vices of the religious and monks.

62. J. & A. Romein, Erflâters van onze Beschaving (Amsterdam: E.M. Querido, 1959), p. 75. "There these blockheads and stupids despise me, those who think that the total piety is found in a monk's cap and in sadness."

63. J. Huizinga, op. cit., p. 31.

64. J.C. Brandt Corstius, et al., Nederlands Literatuurboek I (Amsterdam: J.M. Meulenhoff, 1959), 32. Jos Vandeloo, Vlaamse Poëzie (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1965), pp. 69-70 gives a slightly different version, but the essence is the same. "Egidius, where have you gone to? I am longing for you, my companion. You choose death, you let me live. We made good and fine company. But it seems one had to die. Now you have been elevated into the throne, brighter than the sunshine: All joy has been given to you. Egidius, where have you gone to? I am longing for you, my companion. You choose death, you let me live."

65. J.C. Brandt Corstius, et al., op. cit., pp. 33-34 with a variation in Jos Vandeloo, op. cit., pp. 72-73. "There were two kings' children": "She held her lover in her arms and jumped with him into the sea: 'farewell', she said, beautiful world, you'll never see me again; farewell, o my father and mother, my friends all the same; farewell sister and brother I go (ride) to heaven's kingdom."

66. Ibid., p. 44 with a variation in Horae Belgicae X, no. 61 and 62. "I want to enjoy myself In Jesus' great suffering, I do not want to separate from this, in life nor in death."

67. Ibid., pp. 45-46. "I have hunted my life long For a beautiful young girl (woman), The sweetest vine branch, Which is in heaven's throne; Surrounded by angels is she, And I can't come near to her; My sins have prohibited this, I am very sad about it."

68. Jos Vandeloo, op. cit., p. 90. "When I play with my lover" "Thus for him who has chosen God, Everything to give up is a small thing, Who has left the world Remains clean of all statues."
69. ibid., p. 111. "Oh noble soul" "The groom said:
I want you to leave All joy and comfort, of human creatures,
And lay down worldly vengeance, And only love me: I want to
be your groom. Human fidelity is small, At the end nothing
but pain."

70. ibid., p. 120. "O soul, o soul, o spiritual nature,
That God himself, after his own image, has planted into the
body, Which we have to leave for the other land." "Oh soul,
Oh soul, we do not know you, But with our body in sorrow,
we arrive at the eternal fire, In purgatory, or in the
other land."

71. Louvain got presses (at the university) in 1473,
Bruges in 1475, Brussels in 1476, Ghent in 1477, Antwerp in
1480.

72. It is possible that the eyes, which do not look at
the viewer, may reflect this attitude. Eyes are the mirror of
the soul. In the bible the physical organs also have psychical
and moral values, for example the eye is proud (Isaiah 5:15),
has pity (Deut.7:16), desire (Ezk.24:16), shows sorrow (Job
17:7, Psalm 6:7; 51:9), evil (Deut. 15:9; 28: 54; Matth.20:15).

73. Generally accepted and documented.

74. Some authors accept this as a fact instead of an
hypothesis. Conclusive proof as yet has not been given.

75. J.C.Brandt Corstius, et.al., op.cit., p. 60.
Every summer one 'bliscap' was played. Only the first and the
last are now known.

76. Norbert Schneider, "Zur Ikonographie von Memling's
'Die Sieben Freuden Mariens'," Münchner Jahbuch der bildenden

77. Frequently the platforms on which the plays took
place were divided into several 'compartments'; a different
area meant a different scene.

78. J.C.Brandt Corstius, et.al., op.cit., p. 41. "Unto
us is born": "Well done, well done, young lady, of the sweet,
worthy hours, That you have won that sweet child with complete
love."

79. Jop Pollmann and Piet Tiggers, Nederlands Volkslied
(Haarlem: Musica, 1959), pp. 48-49. "In the City of Nazareth":
"She was only fourteen years old, That pure, clear fountain,
When the message was brought to her:That she would receive
God's Son, and remain a pure virgin."

80. Donald Jay Grout, A History of Western Music (New
York: W.W. Norton, 1964), chapter VI.
81. Their "landjuwelen" (festivals) drew large crowds. The Burgundian dukes realized that these Chambers of Rhetoric could be used in their drive for unification.

82. Jos Vandeloo, op.cit., p. 118. "Where are Hector and Alexander, Julius, Artier and so many others, Baenrits, knight and brave sergeant? They are for ever in the other land."

83. ibid., p. 109. "Tprieel uut Troyen, den edelen greyne, Gegroyt, gebloeyt, es Brussel genaent." (The arbour from Troy, the noble green, grown and flowering, is called Brussels).

84. The former is published in Horae Belgicae X; the latter in Vol. XI of 1855.

85. ibid., XI, numbers 4, 6, 16, 65, 126.

86. ibid., number 83.

87. On the reverse of the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr.233) is a pure still-life with a jug and flowers. In poetry Jesus is often compared to a gardener, for example in "Heer Jesu heef een Hof ken" (Lord Jesus has a Garden). One poem in Horae Belgicae X, number 94, compares the flowers to Spes, Fides, Caritas and Humilitas.

88. Reinder P. Meyer, Literature of the Low Countries A Short History of Dutch Literature in the Netherlands and Belgium (Assen: Van Gorkum, 1971), p. 64. These names are mentioned in a poem called "The Dream of De Roovere about the Death of Duke Charles of Burgundy of Blessed Memory". Although De Roovere wanted a larger measure of individual fame, he never explicitly stated this in his poetry. It is more through bitterness that his personal disappointment shows.


91. Philip the Good had learned to speak some Flemish.


93. De Gouden Eeuw der Vlaamse Miniatur: Het mecenaat van Filips de Goede 1445-1475. The Exhibition was held in 1959. The descriptions are found on pp. 111, 113, 115, 125.

94. John Bartier, op.cit., p. 256. "Jason devenait un des deux patrons de la Toison d'Or, au grand scandale de
de l'évêque Guillaume Pillastre qui lui fit substituer Gédéon, de plus sainte mémoire."

95. ibid., p. 256.
96. See also chapter II.
97. E. de Moreau, op.cit., p. 140.

CHAPTER IV

1. In his other works, Memling used swags of fruit and puttis, while the multi-coloured columns appear in the portraits as well in his other paintings.

2. Portraiture had more or less disappeared not long after Pliny wrote that "realistic portraiture indeed has for many generations been the highest ambitions of art." (The Elder Pliny's Chapters on the History of Art, trans. K. Jex-Blake (Chicago: Argonaut, 1968), p. 99.) It was only after 1350 that portraiture returned to the art of painting. A good survey of this early period is found in E. Panofsky, op.cit., p. 21. Panofsky also pointed out that the first autonomous portraits appeared at the same time as nominalism became more prominent; see his page 170.

HUSBAND-WIFE PENDANT PAIRS

3. That they belong together has been pointed out in chapter I; for their identity see chapter II. Julius Held, at the end of an article on the Chicago diptych ("A Diptych by Memling," Burlington Magazine 68, 1939, pp.176-179.) suggested a fourth pair (Fr.88,94). I reject this suggestion on the basis of time, size and pose.

4. Robert Campin painted Bartholomew d'Alatruye and his wife (Brussels, Koninklijk Museum) and the more famous anonymous pair now in the London National Gallery. Jan van Eyck's Margaret van Eyck (Bruges, Groeninge Museum) looks to the left and tradition has it that his selfportrait hung together with hers in the guild hall (see Detroit Exh.Cat., p. 68.). For a good discussion related to this portrait and its possible companion piece, see E. Panofsky, op.cit., p.198 and footnote 3. The Italian tradition shows in Piero della Francesca's Sforza portraits a significant difference, because the husband and wife are reversed.
5. In the case of the Portinaris a suggestion for a wedding anniversary is not possible.

6. A special event in the Portinaris' lives could be a new contract; for the Moreels either his release from prison or his appointment as burgomaster; for the Vrelants(?) membership of the fraternity of Onze-Lieve-Vrouw-Ter-Sneeuw and the presentation of the altar piece to the guild.

7. E. Panofsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 294-296, where he discusses Hulin de Loo's reconstructions. The suggestion has been generally accepted that sitters with prayer-clasped hands were accompanied by a devotional image. The hypothesis is only partly correct as I hope to show in this chapter.

8. The Italian tradition, exemplified by Piero's Sforza portraits, seems to be secular, although the Sforza portraits on their reverses may give a more religious interpretation. But the references, couched in religious terms, are basically classical.

9. The difference of angle is also found in the Moreel triptych (Fr.12), the Turin Passion (Fr.34) and the controversial Danzig altar piece (Fr.8). Although the angles are not the same as in Memling's works, the difference between husband and wife is also noticeable in Rogier's Beaune altar piece and Van Eyck's Ghent altar piece. Concerning the aspect of the absence of a central panel, we are at a disadvantage with the frames, for I have been unable to check if the frames had any special marks.

10. The sinister side aspect has biblical foundations: Christ discussed the division between left and right in Matth. 25: 31-46. Paul's statement on the submission of women has often been taken out of context, and due to these misinterpretations these texts (e.g. Eph. 5:21f; 1 Cor. 7: 11; 3: Col. 3: 16f) provided a strong impetus to the submission of the wife. These texts also give the reason why women had their heads covered while praying, while men have bare heads. Even to-day lefthandedness is still often frowned upon in schools. Children are taught to give the right hand while greeting. A practical example can be given in Van Eyck's so-called Arnolfini double portrait in London.

11. Prayer in christian doctrine means communication with the Godhead through submission. This counts just as much for the husband as for the wife.

SITTERS WITH PRAYER-CLASPED HANDS

12. The seven others look to the left.
13. As I have pointed out before, age guessing is a haphazard game. Perhaps the more general description 'young person' would have been adequate, but that term is rather vague and could be misleading.

14. The reason why I leave Benedetto Portinari out of the discussion here, is that he has his hands in a different direction.

15. The procedure may have followed a similar plan as Rogier's invention for the sinister side, that is, he took probably the pose of the sitter out of the familiar surroundings of an altar piece.

16. Max J. Friedlander, op.cit., p. 45, where he discusses the painting. The donor's hands are at an angle of 45 degrees.

17. ibid. Also here the hands are at an angle of 45 degrees. Who the donor is, is still a matter of debate. The agreement is on the family Greverade, but not on the individual member. The altar was commissioned in 1491.

18. This altar piece is important, because it is close in time and the attitudes are similar. Close as well is Francisco Royas (Fr.228). Compare Fr.4B, Fr.10 and Fr.20. Furthermore, it occurs several times with saints and Mary. An early predecessor of an open book with husband and wife is Rogier's Beaune altar piece.

19. It does not seem to be cut. See Primitifs Flamands 3;II, p. 170. Thus, there is no possibility that it would be a part of a larger panel.

20. A good comparison can be found in Hugo van der Goes Portinari altar piece of around 1475, which is close in date and provides similar flowers.

21. The problem for the triptych is the direction of the hands. It is unknown what would be on the right wing. The diptych panel could be a Christ with a Cross. Jan Provost painted such a diptych (which is dated on the frame 1522), now in Bruges, St. John's Hospital. On its reverse is a skull.

22. There is general agreement on this point, especially after Hulin de Loo's successful combinations of some of the portraits with a Madonna and Child. See his "Diptychs by Rogier van der Weyden," Burlington Magazine 43 (1923), p. 53ff and 44 (1924), p. 179ff.

23. Since the prayer book appears to be late in his work, it seems that Memling wanted to re-emphasize the devout attitude. It is possible that they are the last four known portraits.
24. See footnote 22.

25. As we have seen in chapter I, the backgrounds of the two panels form a unity. A parallel to the St. Anthony on the reverse is Rogier's Laurent Froimont, who also has his patron saint on the reverse.

26. K.B. McFarlane, op. cit., p. 35, footnote 30, also rejects Friedlander's suggestion "To postulate in this case a central panel with a Madonna...might be redundant." The staff of St. Benedict contains symbols of victory, which is rather appropriate in the light of his take-over from Tommaso.

27. D. Bont, et. al., De Katholieke Kerk (Utrecht: Het Spectrum, 1946), Vol. I, p. 679, where the authors write "The figure of the one mediator, however, cannot disappear behind the figure of the saints." And Vol. III, p. 1115 "We should short change God's honour through reverence to saints if we should worship Mary and the other saints, in other words, if we show them a very special honour which only is due to God and Him alone. But whatever many protestants may assert, that is not what catholics do!" (translation mine).

28. Ibid., Vol. III, p. 1116 "There is no church order stating that one should call upon a saint, although the custom is widespread. But the request is always "Pray for us", not "Have mercy upon us" for that is the prerogative of God."

29. Christ's presence could be either in a Madonna and Child panel or in a Man of Sorrows; that means that the Godhead is present.

The qualification 'male' is necessary due to the situation in the husband-wife pendant pairs, where the position of the wife is of a different nature.

30. Fairly similar situations occur in the Benedetto Portinari (Fr. 23B), the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait (Fr. 232) and the Chicago portrait (Fr. 92). J. Bruyn, "Mans Portret", Openbaar Kunstbezit 5 (1961), p. 2b.) states that the coat of arms indicates the presence of a Madonna and Child. Proto-types could be Rogier's Philippe de Croy (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum) and Jean Gros III (Chicago, Art Institute), who both have a coat of arms on the reverse. A later example is Jan Gossaert's diptych with Jean Carondelet of 1517 (Paris, Louvre). It also has a still-life with a skull.

THE OBJECTS IN THE HANDS OF THE SITTERS

31. John the Fearless was murdered that year. The portrait is now in the Louvre, Paris.
32. Other examples could be mentioned as well, like Jan van Eyck's Tymotheus or Baudouin de Lannoy (Berlin-Dahlem, Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen) and Rogier's Francesco d'Este (New York, Metropolitan Museum), Anthony of Burgundy and Philippe de Croy.

33. There is an inscription on the frame, which indicates that he was born on October 21, 1401. See E. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 198.

34. For a discussion on this portrait, see E. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 295. For information about him as a person, see John Bartier, op. cit., p. 42.

35. According to the category of sitters with objects in their hands, there are eight portraits. I have included here the Bruges Young Woman (Fr. 94), while there is actually little discussion on the Windsor portrait (Fr. 91), due to damage.

36. The surviving portraits all date from 1475 to 1480, that is in Memling's mature period.

37. At least so for the present viewer and with the available knowledge.

38. Panofsky dates the portrait around 1455, Cuttler around 1452. Rogier's arrow looks solid, Memling's arrow looks more like a dart. I do not know if the difference has any iconographic significance.

39. For information about him, see chapter II.

40. St. Sebastian survived his ordeal like the victims theirs. See also G. Ferguson, op. cit., p. 304.

41. At a later time, the military aspect would lead to group portraits, the so-called militia pieces ('Schuttersstuk') Memling painted a St. Sebastian around 1470 (Fr. 45) and around 1490 (Fr. 7).

42. The most notable plague occurred in 1483, see chapter III.

43. The usual interpretation is the one connected to the guild. Other interpretations are not mentioned, either for the Memling or the Rogier portrait.

44. This information I obtained from the National Gallery, Washington.

45. The spiritual nature of the arrow is found in several biblical texts: "The arrows of Shaddai stick fast in me" (Job
6:4); God exclaims "I will make my arrows drunk with blood." (Deut. 32: 42) and Jeremiah laments "He has bent his bow and taken aim, making me the target for his arrows." (Lamentations 3: 12).

46. The presence of the Madonna and Child make a hunting or military solution less likely. However, their presence does not preclude the guild association, because the guilds performed important religious functions.

47. Encyclopedia Britannica 19 (1968), p. 619. The prayers which are recited are the Pater Noster, Ave Maria and Gloria Patri. In 1520 pope Leo X gave his pontifical approbation to the devotion.

48. Undoubtedly Philippe de Croy is its ancestor, also for the Master of Royal Portraits' Portrait of Lodewijk van Gruthuse (Bruges, Groeninge Museum), between 1480 and 1490, which is even closer to the Rogier portrait.

49. It has not been determined what it is exactly. The object has a pseudo-inscription.

50. G. Ferguson, op.cit., p. 34. If the second object is a letter, it could make this suggestion more acceptable.

51. Friedländer gives it to Van Eyck, Panofsky to an imitator.

52. G. Ferguson, op.cit., p. 34. The Master of the Legend of St. Ursula used a pink several times. In a diptych of 1486 (Fr. 116) Christ is shown with a pink. In Fr. 128 Mary holds a pink and in Fr. 127 an angel reaches out to Christ with a pink. The marriage aspect is spiritualized in Fr. 118, where St. Catherine reaches out with a pink.

53. For example Paul's letter to the Galatians 2: 20 "faith in the Son of God who loved me and who sacrificed himself for my sake", or 1 John 4: 7- 5: 4.

54. Flowers often had (have) a symbolic meaning. A good example for an 'anjelier' or 'anjer' (carnation) I have not been able to find.

55. For the inscription see chapter II, footnote 59.

56. The tradition is often kept, however, in the assigned title. The two most common ones are Maria Moreel and Sibyl Sambetha.

57. I have not found anyone who gave a good reason for the inscription. Usually it is stated that it happened more often. A good example can also be found in Rogier's
Isabella of Portugal, who is also designated as a Persian Sibyl (New York, John D. Rockefeller Collection) and who wears three rings.

58. Sibyls had been appropriated by Christianity from antiquity. The most famous example is undoubtedly Michelangelo's use of them in the Sistine Chapel. A good sixteenth century example in the north is Maarten van Heemskerk's De Sibylle Erythraea of 1564 (Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum).

59. There are no other examples in his other paintings either. The closest we can come is with Rogier's Isabella of Portugal, painted around 1445, who wears three rings, and a Portrait of a Young Lady (Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum), painted around 1435, who wears four rings. Both were thus painted long before Memling's time.

60. In the bible the number seven is associated with completion, fulfilment and perfection. For example the creation story, the naming of the Sabbath, the sabbatical year (Lev. 25: 2-5), the branches of the candlestick and the churches mentioned in Revelation 1.

61. Rings are still exchanged in marriage as tokens of love. According to Isaiah 61: 10 it is proper to put on ornaments in case of a wedding, but immoderate use is condemned (Is. 3: 16-23; 1 Tim. 2:9).

62. F. Hartt, History of Italian Renaissance Art (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 281, introduces Botticelli in this way "The unquestioned leader of our second, or poetic current in later Quattrocento Florentine art is Sandro Botticelli (1445-1510)." And the same author writes about Andrea del Castagno (1417/9-1457) that "his deepest interest is in man, and the man he presents is characteristically the truculent mountaineer of his Tuscan surroundings." (p. 220).

63. ibid., p. 291. Hartt thinks that the sitter is Lorenzo di Pierfrancesco. The date he gives is 1470 (?)

64. It may also be possible that the objects work in a similar way as Van Eyck's Tymotheus. In a mathematical equation we would get Tymotheus = Alexander the Great = Binchois = Philip the Good, or Alexander the Great = Binchois (sitter) = Philip the Good : Tymotheus. Expanded to the two other paintings we would get Alexander the Great : Binchois (sitter) = Philip the Good : Tymotheus = Cosimo : sitter = Nero : sitter. In words we would get "like the 'servant' (Petronius? Suetonius?) served Nero, so does the Antwerp sitter serve his master (Charles the Bold?).

65. For the influence of medals on Italian portraiture, see John Pope-Hennessy, op.cit., chapter II. It is possible,
if not likely, that Memling's sitter knew the Botticelli painting.

66. As far as the hand of the Frick sitter goes, he is here at a disadvantage, because a part may have been cut. Memling's portrait is nearly half Castagno's portrait.


68. It seems that the sash was a leftover of the liripipe and turban, which we see for example in Van Eyck's Tymotheus.

69. Reinhard Lullies, Greek Sculpture (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1960) gives other examples in a male portrait (Hippocrates), a marble of Cos (no. 266) and an attic funerary relief at the National Museum of Athens (no. 241). Also a bronze statue of Hadrian (?) in Istanbul, Archaeological Museum, holds his hand on his drapery in a similar pose.

70. E. Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 196-197. See also his "Who is Jan van Eyck's "Tymotheus"?", Journal of Warburg and Courtauld Institutes XII (1949), pp. 80-90. Rogier painted a Philip the Good (copy at Bruges, Groeninge Museum) with a scroll on which some letters can be seen.

71. It could also be a ledger. The thickness of the object makes it unlikely to be a letter. The copy (Fr. 86a) is not very clear on this point either.

72. The chain or chord does not go around the neck. In the middle it has a strange knot. It cannot be confirmed by other portraits if it is a chord to tie the shirt, since it is quite unlike those.

HANDS AT REST

73. E. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 268 and especially footnote three. A later example is D. Bouts London Man's Portrait of 1462.

74. ibid., p. 292.

75. Actually the question is not properly phrased, because "at rest" is already an interpretation. The term is used here as a means of differentiation between hands with objects and prayer-clasped hands and those which 'do nothing'.


77. ibid., see especially the Preface (pp. 5-7), where he quotes F.Bacon. See also the Editor's introduction, p.XIII.

78. ibid., p. 248 Cautio XXVII.

79. Bulwer's 'Confido' cannot be applied here, because, although the pose is reasonably similar, there are two persons involved.

80. Although the Boxer (bronze, Rome, Museo delle Terme) was not found until 1884, we may assume that this tradition of hands at rest was familiar during Memling's time.

81. The closest we come to this pose is with Rogier's portrait of John the Fearless (Antwerp, Koninklijk Museum) (Panofsky regards it as a workshop production), where the hands are reversed, and in his portrait of Charles the Bold (Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum), which may be a replica. Cuttler dated this work around 1457. Charles has a sword in his hand, but otherwise this aspect is fairly similar. Moreover, the way Charles holds his sword is unbelievable, to say the least.

82. John Bulwer, op.cit., pp. 247-248, Cautio XXVI, where he states that the left hand alone is the most incompetent.

83. There does not seem to be a precedent for this pose either. Campin's London portraits also differ. The man does not show his hands, while she shows one. The reason is unknown to me. John Bulwer does not write anything about this pose. One may wonder if the Brussels portrait is also a wing of a husband-wife pendant pair.

THE BACKGROUND

84. For a further discussion, see E.Panofsky, op.cit., chapter VI; VII and IX; X.

85. ibid., p. 310, footnote 5. The first two are dated 1446. The dates for the Young Girl differ considerably. Friedlander thinks 1446, Panofsky regards it as one of his very last works, while Cuttler dates it between 1468 and 1472.
THE NEUTRAL BACKGROUND

86. Robert de Masamines was counsellor to and general of John the Fearless and Philip the Good. He was killed in the battle of Bouvines in 1430.

Mary of Savoy was the wife of Filippo Maria Sforza. Panofsky thinks at least that she is the princess with the book (op. cit., p. 175). She looks to the left, which also occurred in the husband-wife pendant pairs.

87. Baudouin de Lannoy (Berlin, Kaiser Friedrich Museum) was a Knight of the Golden Fleece, ambassador to Spain with Jan van Eyck, governor of Lille and chamberlain to Philip the Good. For the date of the portrait, see E. Panofsky's discussion on pages 197 and 198.

Giovanni Arnolfini was a Lucchese merchant-banker who became a counsellor to Philip the Good and died a knight. He stayed for half a century in Bruges, from 1420 till 1472. Tommaso could have seen his portrait and also the so-called Arnolfini double portrait, now in London. For the latter, see Peter E. Schabacker's article "De Matrimonio Ad Morganaticam Contracto: Jan van Eyck's "Arnolfini" Portrait Reconsidered," Art Quarterly 35:4 (1972), pp. 375-398.

Gilles Binchois, the Burgundian court musician, is, according to Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 196–197, to be equated with Tymotheus. See also footnote 70.

88. For information about Guillame Fillastre, see E. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 292, especially footnote 5, and John Bartier, op. cit., p. 4.

For the identification of Isabella of Portugal, see E. Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 293-294.

Anthony of Burgundy has been discussed in chapter II. For the identification of Francesco d'Este, see E. Panofsky, op. cit., pp. 272-273.

For the much despised Jean Gros III, John Bartier, op. cit., p. 96 gives some information.

E. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 295 gives some information on Philippe de Croy; see also his footnote 6. Furthermore, John Bartier, op. cit., p. 42 adds some more to it.

Not much is known about Laurent Froimont.

Philip the Good, Charles the Bold and John I, Duke of Cleves have been discussed several times in this thesis.

89. For some of the documents related to his position, see Wolfgang Stechow, Northern Renaissance Art 1400-1600 (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1966), pp. 5-8.

90. Several times Campin's Portrait of a Musician and Van Eyck's Tymotheus have been mentioned (see chapter II). The great Italian composer Landini was crowned with a laurel wreath and Guillaume de Machaut was made a court troubadour.
91. There is a possibility that the Washington portrait (Fr. 85) belongs to this group. His arrow and the one of Rogier's Anthony of Burgundy could make this suggestion acceptable. See, however, my discussion in chapter IV on the objects. The religious interpretations do not necessarily exclude court connections.

92. I do not think that the financial aspect would have played a decisive role (assuming that landscape portraits were more expensive), for the sitters were all well-to-do as I pointed out in chapter II.

93. In Italy this possible court tradition was certainly broken with Piero della Francesca's Sforza portraits. I have been unable to strengthen this suggestion with research done by other scholars. Nothing seems to be written about it. At least one courtier differed. There is a copy of James of Savoy (Fr. 101), which has a landscape of an early date as background. The condition of it is very poor.

94. E. Panofsky, op. cit., p. 289.

95. We have to keep in mind that the word psychology is a much later 'invention', but that does not mean that the painters were not concerned about either the personality or the character of the sitters. The difference between personality and character is, that personality is innate, while character is acquired. The Greek word charassein means to carve into.

THE LANDSCAPE BACKGROUND

96. It has been suggested, e.g. by Friedlander, that Petrus Christus' London donor was an earlier portrait with an interior-exterior. However, this painting is not really a portrait, but an altar wing. And thus it cannot count as an earlier example. Similarly, Rogier's St. Ivo, rediscovered in 1970, shows an interior-exterior, close to Memling's later portraits, such as Maarten van Nieuwenhove (Fr. 14). Martin Davies made a worthwhile statement on the St. Ivo: "The picture here is from its presentation not acceptable as a portrait, although the features may record those of someone who made himself available to be used." Quoted from his Rogier van der Weyden. An Essay, with a critical Catalogue of paintings assigned to him and to Robert Campin (London: Phaidon, 1972), p. 222.

97. For inscriptions, see Pierluigi de Vecchi, op. cit., p. 100, no. 22. The allegories show the four cardinal and the four theological virtues. The profile of the sitters may refer to antiquity.
98. Rogier's Brueghel altar piece (louvre, Paris) has wings which could easily be converted into a sitter with a landscape background, but they are not as close as Piero's portraits.


101. Thomas à Kempis, *op.cit.*, p. 56 (section II:3).

102. ibid., p. 115 (section III: 23).

103. Although the general impression for the landscapes is peaceful, the individual landscapes could contribute other aspects.

**THE INTERIOR-EXTERIOR BACKGROUND**

104. In itself the oneness with nature could constitute a psychological aspect, although Flemish literature is silent about it. It is noteworthy that towards the end of this century artists like Leonardo and Dürer are in the forefront of interest in nature.

105. Compare Christ's priestly prayer in John 17, especially verse 15, 16 "I am not asking you to remove them from the world, but to protect them from the evil one (or: from evil). They do not belong to the world no more than I belong to the world." See also 1Cor.5:10; 1 John 2:15 and 1 John 5:19.

**SUMMARY**


7. Max J. Friedländer, *op. cit.*, p. 34.

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SPECIFIC ASPECTS


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Book Review


BOOKS AND ARTICLES ON FIFTEENTH CENTURY FLEMISH ART, INCLUDING MEMLING


Book Review


Primitifs Flamands. Corps de la peinture des anciens Pays-Bas méridionaux au XVe Siècle. Bruxelles: Centre nationale de recherches "Primitifs Flamands".


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Vol. IV *Hugo van der Goes.* 1934.


HISTORICAL AND RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND


**DUTCH-FLEMISH LITERATURE AND MUSIC**

Bosch, J. van den. *Dat was gezelschap*. Amsterdam: E.M. Querido, 1963.


ITALIAN PORTRAITURE


MUSEUM AND EXHIBITION CATALOGUES


**MISCELLANEOUS**


APPENDIX I

A/ PORTRAITS WITH A NEUTRAL BACKGROUND

1/ Gilles Joye Fr.72
2/ Maria Portinari-Baroncelli Fr.70
3/ Tommaso Portinari Fr.69
4/ Uffizi Portrait (Folco Portinari?) Fr.88
5/ New York Old Man Fr.81
6/ Washington Portrait Fr.85
7/ Pierpont Morgan Portrait Fr.83
8/ San Diego Portrait Fr.233
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10/ Bruges Young Woman (Maria Moreel?) Fr.94
11/ National Trust Portrait Fr.87

B/ PORTRAITS WITH A LANDSCAPE BACKGROUND

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2/ Venice Portrait Fr.77
3/ Brussels Portrait Fr.84
4/ Montreal Portrait Fr.80
5/ Frankfurt Portrait Fr.73
6/ Frick Portrait Fr.231
7/ Copenhagen Portrait Fr.82
8/ Palazzo Vecchio Portrait Fr.86
9/ Antwerp Portrait Fr.71
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C/ PORTRAITS WITH INTERIOR-EXTERIOR BACKGROUND

1/ Thyssen-Bornemiszza Portrait Fr.232
2/ Elderly Man (Willem Vrelant?) Fr.75
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4/ Lehman Portrait Fr.74
5/ Willem Moreel Fr.67
6/ Barbara Moreel- van Vlaenderberghe Fr.68
7/ Chicago Portrait Fr.92
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PORTRAIT WITH NEUTRAL-INTERIOR BACKGROUND

London Portrait Fr.78

D/ SITTERS WITH PRAYER-CLASPED HANDS

1/ Gilles Joye Fr.72
2/ Maria Portinari-Baroncelli Fr.70
3/ Tommaso Portinari Fr.69
4/ San Diego Portrait Fr.233
5/ Thyssen-Bornemisza Portrait Fr.232
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E/ SITTERS WITH OBJECTS IN THEIR HANDS

1/ Washington Portrait  Fr.85
2/ Montreal Portrait  Fr.80
3/ Pierpont Morgan Portrait  Fr.83
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F/ SITTERS WITH THEIR HANDS AT REST

1/ Uffizi Portrait  Fr.89
2/ Venice Portrait  Fr.77
3/ Uffizi Portrait (Folco Portinari?)  Fr.88
4/ Brussels Portrait  Fr.84
5/ New York Old Man  Fr.81
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9/ Lehman Portrait  Fr.74
10/ Bruges Young Woman  Fr.94
## APPENDIX II

### CHRONOLOGICAL ORDER OF THE PORTRAITS

Legend: N: Neutral; L: Landscape; I-E: Interior-Exterior;

P: Prayer-Clasped Hands; O: Objects; R: Hands at Rest;

N-I: Neutral-Interior.

<table>
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22/ Windsor Portrait
23/ Bruges Young Woman (Maria Moreel?)
24/ National Trust Portrait
25/ London Portrait
26/ Willem Moreel
27/ Barbara Moreel- van Vlaenderberghe
28/ The Hague Portrait
29/ Chicago Portrait
30/ Benedetto Portinari
31/ Maarten van Nieuwenhove

N/O ca.1479 Fr.91
N/R 1480 Fr.94
N/P ca.1483 Fr.87
N-I/P ca.1483/4 Fr.78
I-E/P ca.1484 Fr.67
I-E/P ca.1484 Fr.68
I/P ca.1484 Fr.79
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I-E/P 1487 Fr.23B
I-E/P 1487 Fr.14

COPIES, DOUBTFUL WORKS

Uffizi Portrait Fr.90
Houston Widow Fr.93
Woman Fr.95
Chantilly Anthony of Burgundy Fr.102A
Dresden Anthony of Burgundy Fr.102B
Duke of Savoy Fr.101
APPENDIX III

Legend: N: Neutral; L: Landscape; I-E: Interior-Exterior; N-I: Neutral-Interior; P: Prayer-Clasped Hands; O: Objects; R: Hands at Rest.
All numbers are Friedländer numbers.

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APPENDIX IV

CATALOGUE RAISONNÉ

1/ Gilles Joye Fr.72.

Location: Sterling and Francine Clark Art Institute, Williamstown, Mass. Cat. no. 408.

Dimension with original frame: 37.3x29.2 cm.; without frame: 30.5x22.4 cm.

Condition: face badly rubbed, lightly overpainted.

Paper with inscription on the back. Original frame inscribed with the date 1472.


Molle, Frans van. Les Primitifs Flamands III:3.

Joye was priest, courtier and musician (see chapter II).

Neutral background typical of early Flemish portraiture.

May have court associations. Figure somewhat crammed into the available space. First known dated portrait. Probably independent.

2/ Uffizi Portrait Fr.89.

Location: Uffizi, Florence. Inv. no. 1102.

Dimension: 38x27 cm.

Condition: Unknown.

Sitter: Unidentified Italian Youth.

Background is a somewhat geometrically patterned landscape.

Ambiguous relation between the sitter and background.

Probably the first portrait with a landscape. Independent portrait.
3/ **Maria Portinari-Baroncelli** Fr.70.

   Dimension: 44.2x34cm.
   Condition: Unknown


   Maria Baroncelli became Tommaso's wife in 1470 (see chapter II). Neutral background. The use of the frame to create space frees the sitter from its confinement as was still the case with Gilles Joye. Hands unsatisfactorily placed. Right wing of a husband-wife pendant pair.

4/ **Tommaso Portinari** Fr.69.

   Dimension: 44x33.5 cm.
   Condition: Unknown. Seems to be rubbed.

   Bibliography: See Maria Portinari.

   Tommaso was manager of the Medici branch in Bruges. Cour­tier at the Burgundian court (see chapter II). Neutral Background. Placed diagonally in space. Hands satisfactorily placed. Hands are not anatomically correct. Left wing of a husband-wife pendant pair.

5/ **Venice Portrait** Fr.77

   Location: Academia, Venice. No. 586.
   Dimension: 26x19cm.
   Condition: Good, except along the border; restored in 1907 and 1949.

Sitter: Unidentified Italian Youth.
Background: landscape; trees blocking off deep space; geometric pattern has disappeared. Certainly later than the Uffizi portrait. Independent portrait.

6/ **Uffizi Portrait Fr.88.**
Location: Uffizi, Florence. Inv. no. 1101.
Dimension: 32x23 cm.
Condition: Unknown.
Sitter: May be a member of the Portinari family, perhaps Folco Portinari (see chapter II).
Neutral background. Hands placed in the right corner, which could indicate an early date. Spatially the sitter is not hampered by the confinement of the frame. More distinction between sitter and background than in Tommaso Portinari's portrait. Independent portrait.

7/ **Brussels Portrait Fr.84.**
Location: Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels. No.294.
Dimension: 34x25 cm.
Condition: Unknown.
Sitter: Unidentified Italian.
Background is a pure landscape. The trees do not block off
the view into deeper space as before. There is a better integration between the sitter and the landscape. Facial bone structure does not show under the fleshy skin. Probably independent portrait. Possibly the left wing of a husband-wife pendant pair.

8/ **New York Old Man** Pr. 81.
Dimension: 25x18 cm.
Condition: Badly rubbed and overcleaned in the flesh parts.
Bibliography: See Maria Portinari.
Sitter: Unidentified Fleming.
Neutral background. Hands are rather weak, but not placed in the corner. Proper foreshortening. Facial bone structure is noticeable. There is a definite space between the hands and body. Independent portrait.

9/ **Washington Portrait** Fr. 85
Location: National Gallery of Art, Mellon Collection, Washington. Inv. no. 42.
Dimension: 32x26 cm.
Condition: Good.
Sitter: Unidentified Italian with possible Burgundian court connections (see chapter II).
Neutral background of medium blue colour. This background is lighter than the previous ones. First known sitter with an object in his hand. Modelling of the face with the help of light and shadow, without heavy accentuation. He holds
the arrow without really gripping it. Lack of tension. Independent portrait.

10/ Montreal Portrait Pr.80.
Location: Museum of Fine Arts, Montreal. Acc. no. 1129.
Dimension: 33.9x22.8 cm.
Condition: Face and hair carefully repainted before 1939, otherwise untouched.
Sitter: Unidentified Italian Youth.
The background is a far extending hilly landscape; the trees are relatively small and somewhat individualized. The horizon has been raised to achieve deep space. Independent portrait.

11/ Pierpont Morgan Portrait Pr.83
Location: Pierpont Morgan Library, New York.
Dimension: 36.5x20 cm.
Condition: Apparently not damaged.
Sitter: Unidentified Italian.
Neutral background, similar to the Washington portrait. The sitter holds two objects in his hands, a red carnation and a booklet(?). The hands are unconvincing. A somewhat
bony face gives sharp features to the sitter. Placed diagonally in space, the pose creates more depth than the Washington portrait. Most likely an independent portrait, but possibly the left wing of a husband-wife pendant pair.

12/ San Diego Portrait Fr.233.
Location: Collection of the Fine Arts Society of San Diego, San Diego. Acc. no. 47.1.
Dimension: 30.5x21.5 cm.
Condition: Good. Original frame contains undeciphered legend.
Sitter: Unidentified Italian Youth.
Background: light, neutral with the sitter's shadow on the right. The only portrait of this kind. Strongly modelled. The prayer-clasped hands are away from the corner. Probably an independent portrait.

13/ Frankfurt Portrait Fr.73.
Dimension: 42x31 cm.
Condition: Unknown.
Sitter: Unidentified Fleming.
Bibliography: See chapter I footnotes 50,51. I reject the conclusions the authors have drawn.
A bust-length figure placed before a 'window' frame with
a landscape behind him. The landscape contains small trees and a few buildings. The figure separates the landscape completely. Face and hands are poorly modelled. Perhaps an introduction to the interior-exterior background. Independent portrait.

14/ Frick Portrait Fr.231.
Location: Frick Collection, New York.
Dimension: 32x23 cm.
Condition: Unknown, possibly cut at the bottom.
Sitter: Unidentified Italian.
A bust-length figure placed before a flat 'window' frame, with a luminous, far extending landscape. Strong modelling of the face, weak in the hand. Pose similar to a Castagno portrait (see chapter IV). Garden-like nature of landscape indicates a date around 1475/6. Independent portrait.

15/ Copenhagen Portrait Fr.62.
Location: Statens Museum for Kunst, Copenhagen. Inv.No. 738.
Dimension: 44x32 cm.
Condition: Unknown.
Sitter: Unidentified Fleming.
The bust-length sitter holds a rosary in his hands. The landscape is dotted with buildings. For the first time diaphanous clouds appear in the sky. Horizon somewhat lower than eye level. Independent portrait.
16/ **Thyssen-Bornemisza Portrait Fr. 232.**

Location: Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Schloss Rohoncz Foundation, Castagnola.

Dimension: 28x21 cm.

Condition: Unknown.


Sitter: Unidentified Italian.

The diagonally placed sitter has prayer-clasped hands. There is a good understanding of the anatomy. Behind the sitter is a light wall, lighter around his head, with a marble column and a tiny piece of landscape. It is probably the first known interior-exterior background. On the back of this portrait is a still-life with a jug and flowers. Perhaps an independent portrait, but more likely the left wing of a diptych.

17/ **Elderly Man Fr. 75.**

Location: Gemäldegalerie der Staatlichen Museen, Berlin-Dahlem. No. 529C.

Dimension: 34x29 cm.

Condition: 1 cm. cut at the bottom.

Sitter: Unidentified Fleming, perhaps Willem van Vrelant. Behind the sitter is a column with a balustrade, behind which is a landscape with a bridge, gate and watchtower. The space available for the landscape is not blocked by
trees as in the Thyssen-Bornemisza portrait. Left wing of a husband-wife pendant pair (see number 18).

18/ Elderly Woman Fr. 76.
Dimension: 35x29 cm.
Condition: Unknown.
Sitter: Unidentified Fleming; perhaps the wife of Willem van Vrelant (see above).
Background: A continuation of the interior-exterior of the previous portrait. Right wing of a husband-wife pendant pair.

19/ Palazzo Vecchio Portrait Fr. 86.
Dimension: 33x25 cm.
Condition: Unknown; probably cut at the bottom.
Sitter: Unidentified Italian.
The background is a pure, slightly hilly landscape. Fairly broad light stretch of sky close to the horizon, which is lowered to the mouth of the sitter. The clouds are more substantial. Landscape and sitter, who holds a ledger (?), are carefully related. Shadow on face somewhat abrupt. Probably an independent portrait.

20/ Antwerp Portrait Fr. 71.
Location: Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp. No. 5.
Dimension: 29x22 cm.
Condition: Good. Parchment on wood.


Sitter: Unidentified Italian. For suggestions, see chapter II and IV.
The sitter holds a coin of Nero in his hand. Behind him, in a Flemish landscape, is a palm tree. There are more and bigger clouds in the sky. Well-modelled. The colour of the landscape changes too abruptly from brown to blue. Independent portrait.

21/ Lehman Portrait Fr.74.
Location: Robert Lehman Collection, New York.
Dimension: not given.
Condition: Unknown.
Sitter: Unidentified Fleming (?).
Background: A very light wall, two marble columns in between which a far extending landscape is visible. The horizon is nearly halfway the canvas. Very carefully gardened landscape. The youth has his hands placed one over the other, but the knuckles of the little finger is higher than that of the middle finger.
Independent portrait.
22/ Windsor Portrait Fr. 91.

Location: Royal Collections at Windsor Castle.
Dimension: 31.3x26.2 cm.
Condition: Badly damaged; after cleaning in the 1950s a hand became visible.

Sitter: Unidentified Fleming.
The background is neutral. Anatomical structure indicates a good understanding, in spite of the fact that damage makes judgment on the modelling difficult. Close to a Christ Giving the Blessing, dated 1478 (Fr. 39).
Independent portrait.

23/ Bruges Young Woman Fr. 94.

Location: St. Jans Hospitaal, Bruges.
Dimension: 37x22.5 cm.
Condition: Good; original frame with the date 1480. Other inscriptions are 16th century additions.


Sitter: Unidentified young Flemish woman; perhaps a member of the Moreel family (see chapter II).
Neutral, dark background. Good anatomical understanding. Her hennin is placed away from the frame. It is covered with a veil which partly covers the face. Her hands are freely placed on a ledge and the frame. She wears seven rings, which is quite unusual. Perhaps an independent portrait. Maybe the right wing of a husband-wife pendant pair.
24/ **National Trust Portrait** Fr. 87.

Location: Upton House, Banbury, National Trust.

Dimension: 16x12 cm.; rounded at the top (cut?).

Condition: rubbed.

Sitter: Unidentified Fleming; possibly Willem Morrel jr. (see chapter II).

Very little is visible of the dark neutral background.

Texture of clothes is close to the Moreel triptych (Fr.12) of ca. 1484. Prayer-clasped hands are large, but anatomically correct. Perhaps an independent portrait.

25/ **London Portrait** Fr. 78.


Dimension: 39x25.5 cm.

Condition: slight general wearing, with some overpainting in the face, hair, background. The frame is probably original.

Bibliography: Davies, Martin. *Les Primitifs Flamands* 3:II.

Sitter: Unidentified Fleming (?). See also chapter II.

Background: A dark green with marble columns; unique for Memling's portraits. The sitter looks to the right. His prayer-clasped hands are placed over an open prayer book. The dating is difficult, probably done around the same time as the Moreel triptych (Fr.12) of ca. 1484. Most likely the left wing of a diptych.

26/ **Willem Moreel** Fr. 67.

Location: Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels.

No. 292.
Sitter: Willem Moreel, burgomaster of Bruges in 1478 and 1483. Merchant-banker (see chapter II). 

Background: Two columns on a high balustrade are placed on either side of the sitter. A landscape is visible on both sides of his head. Balustrade and sitter are placed diagonally. One of the better solutions between hands, arms and body. On the reverse is the coat of arms of his wife Barbara. Left wing of a husband-wife pendant pair.

27/ Barbara Moreel- van Vlaenderberghe Fr. 68.

Location: Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Brussels. N. 293.

Sitter: Barbara van Vlaenderberghe, wife of Willem Moreel.

Background: Similar to that of Willem Moreel, except that there is less landscape due to her hennin and veil. On the reverse is the coat of arms of Willem Moreel. Right wing of a husband-wife pendant pair.

28/ The Hague Portrait Fr. 79.

Location: Mauritshuis, The Hague. Inv.no. 595.

Sitter: Unidentified Italian.
Background: Unusually coloured cloudy sky at the top. Close to the horizon is a broad stretch of white sky. Luminous small patches of landscape are Vermeer-like in quality. The sitter has a very large head compared to the available space. The prayer-clasped hands are only partly visible. Strong modelling, although there are some linear aspects. On the verso is an armorial bearing. Perhaps the right wing of a diptych, but possibly independent.

29/ Chicago Portrait Fr. 92.
Location: Art Institute, Chicago. A. Sachs Bequest. Acc. no. 53.467.
Dimension: 35x27 cm.
Condition: Unknown.
Sitter: Unidentified Italian, surnamed probably Anthony.
Background: An interior space with a cupboard and a small window, looking out onto a landscape with a river, a few trees and a church. The sitter is placed diagonally in the room with his prayer-clasped hands above an open prayer book. On the reverse is a St. Anthony of Padua. The right wing of a diptych with a Madonna and Child (Fr. 50).

30/ Benedetto Portinari Fr. 23B
Location: Uffizi, Florence. No. 769.
Dimensions 43x31 cm.
Condition: Unknown.

Sitter: Identified by A. Warburg as Benedetto Portinari, who was in Bruges to take over the business of Tommaso Portinari in 1487 (see chapter II).

The background is an interior with three columns, giving the impression of a small room or cell. In front of Benedetto is a table on which an open prayer book rests. On the table the date 1487 is inscribed, the numbers of which are not all common. Behind the balustrade is a somewhat blocked off landscape. A few diaphanous clouds are in the sky. On the reverse is a coat of arms. Probably the right wing of a diptych with St. Benedict (Fr. 23C).

31/ Maarten van Nieuwenhove Fr. 14.
Location: St. Jans Hospitaal, Bruges.
Dimension: 44x33 cm.
Condition: Unknown, but seems to be good. The original frame bears an inscription and the date 1487.


Sitter: A young Brugian magistrate who in the 1490s became involved in city politics (see chapter II).

The half-length figure is placed behind a ledge on which an open prayer book rests as well as his coat sleeve. Behind him, diagonally, is a wall with windows. Through
an open window a clear landscape with several details is visible. Strong modelling and a good anatomical structure. Probably the last portrait.

The right wing of a diptych with a Madonna and Child (Fr.14).
**APPENDIX V**

**CONCORDANCE**

Legend: Fr. Friedländer; D: Dumont; V: Voll; McF: McFarlane; 
Bl: Baldass; Bz: Bazin.

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APPENDIX VI

PARTIAL GENEALOGY OF THE PORTINARI FAMILY

Folco di Ricovero di Folco
d.1289
father of Dante’s Beatrice

Manetto
d.1334

Giovanni
d.1349

Adoardo
1333-1398

Sandro
1336-1358

Accerito
c.1361-c.1427
branch manager in Venice, 1417-1435

Giovanni
c.1363-1436
manager of tavola in Florence, 1420-1431

Folco
1386-1431

Bernardo
1407-1455
factor in Venice, 1435
branch manager in Bruges, 1439-1448

Adoardo
1406-1470

Pigello
1421-1468
branch manager in Milan, 1453-1468

Accerito
1427-1503
branch manager in Milan, 1468-1478

Tommaso
1428-1501

Giovanni
1438-c.1526
factor in Bruges, 1448-1490

Folco
1448-1490
factor of 1462-1527

with Tommaso in Portinari
Bruges, 1480-1487

Benedetto
1466-1551

with Tommaso Portinari

in Bruges