Jan van Eyck, The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, and the Scientific Examination of Early Netherlandish Paintings

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For Ingrid and Blaide,
and to the memory of Frank Rinder

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This revised edition differs from the first in the addition of illustrations, some minor new material in the discussion of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s provenance in Chapter One, additions to and revisions of the discussion of its iconography in Chapter Three, the inclusion of some elusive references in the work's historiography in Appendix C, as well as a number of clarifications and corrections of errata throughout.

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Abbreviations

IRPA	Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique
IRR	Infrared Reflectography
NGL	National Gallery, London
NGV	National Gallery of Victoria
PROV	Public Record Office Victoria
SLV	State Library of Victoria

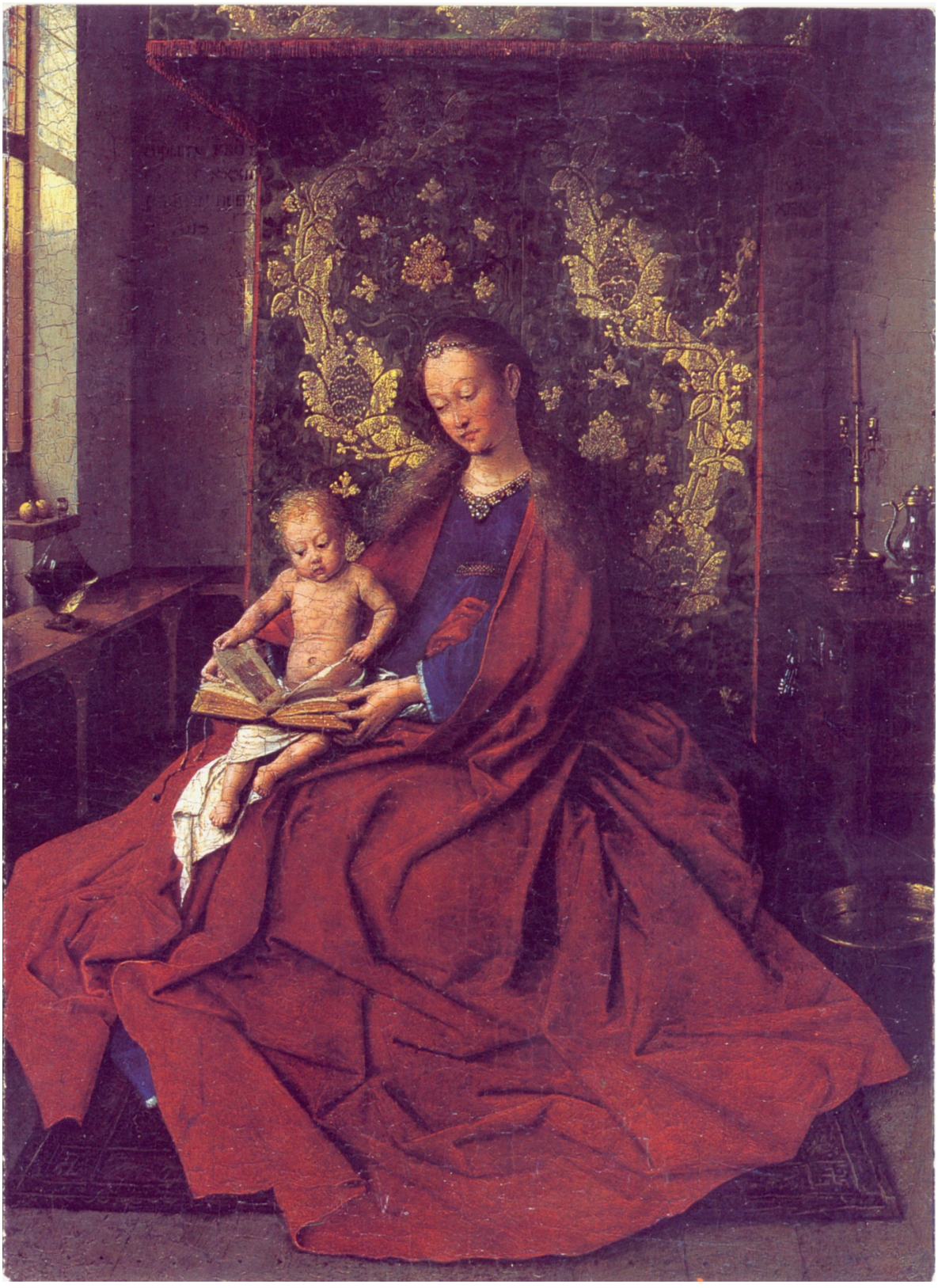


Fig. 1. Attributed to Jan van Eyck (and workshop?), *Virgin and Child*, after the 1958 restoration.

Introduction

> last evening at the French embassy I met Röell, the Director of the Rijks Museum. Almost before he shook hands he said "The van Eyck—is it genuine?" It seems he had known for a year that Coremans believes it is not.
>
> The Felton Bequest Advisor, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to the Felton Bequest Chairman, Sir Owen Dixon, 7 July 1957.

The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* (Fig. 1) is a small painting that entered the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria in 1923 as a work of Jan van Eyck (*c*. 1390–1441), one of the foremost artists of the Renaissance. When it was purchased for the Gallery in the year before by the Felton Bequest it was the most expensive art acquisition in Australia's history. This was met with a mixture of local media praise, and international acclaim, despite the scepticism of the Melbourne public at its huge price. For some decades it was regarded as the most important European painting in Australia. It remains, almost certainly, the most frequently discussed and widely exhibited work of art in an Australian collection, having appeared in well over 200 journal articles, catalogues, dissertations, and books internationally, as well as countless newspaper articles, and having been displayed in nineteen cities in seven countries. In spite of this, it has not been well understood, and its changing critical reception has affected its standing, and with it that of the Gallery.[1]

Once heralded as an authentic and important work of the master, it is now regarded at the Gallery as a pastiche by an anonymous follower, of uncertain geographic and temporal origin. The reasons for this dramatic change in attribution may be found chiefly in two publications: the entry for the work by the late Ursula Hoff (1909–2005) in *The National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne* of 1971, a volume of the Belgian '*Primitifs Flamands*' *Corpus* series dedicated to four early Netherlandish paintings in the Gallery's collection, and the fourth and most recent edition of Hoff's *European Paintings before 1800 in the National Gallery of Victoria* of 1995. Hoff was the Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the Gallery from 1943, and a part-time tutor and lecturer in the Department of Fine Arts at The University of Melbourne from 1948.[2] No doubt partly because of the high academic standard of her

publications, Hoff was appointed Assistant Director of the Gallery in 1968, and subsequently enjoyed a long and distinguished career. The first of these publications presented in some detail the results of an intense scientific and art historical examination of the work by European experts in Brussels and London in the late 1950s. The examination was undertaken in the re-classification of the work as no longer an original Van Eyck, but rather as a copy after a lost Van Eyck, and possibly a forgery. It was one of the first cases of a celebrated Old Master painting being de-attributed on the basis of a scientific study. The second publication, as an entry in the National Gallery of Victoria's catalogue of Old Master paintings, summarised this material and incorporated more recent art historical criticism suggesting that not even the composition of the work is Eyckian. Consequently, it was attributed to a follower of Van Eyck. However, around the time of her ninetieth birthday, four or so years after the latter publication, Hoff was asked in an interview whether she had encountered any particular difficulties in her discussion of the work in view of the specialised technical analyses involved. Hoff replied obliquely that the matter was now one for others to address.[3]

Numerous publications have touched on the issue of the work's authenticity, however, prior to this author's research a detailed account of the work's de-attribution could only be found in unpublished documents distributed between Melbourne, Brussels, London, and Amsterdam. This research, initiated in postgraduate studies at The University of Melbourne, is the only comprehensive, critical re-examination of the scientific and art historical analysis of the work to be conducted since the 1950s. This may be because of the high esteem in which the work's analysts have been held, because the full reports of their analyses have not been published, or because the little scientific analysis that has been published appeared in French. What follows is a re-examination of the autograph status of the work, intended to correct the inaccuracies and inconsistencies of the work's analysis over half a century, to emphasise the ambiguous and sometimes even misleading nature of the evidence used to sustain the work's de-attribution, and to present unpublished material that can be used to argue for its authenticity.

The first chapter examines the work's provenance from Ince Hall, identifying for the first time its likely number in the Blundell family's collection of over 200 Old Master paintings, on the basis of a series of unpublished inventories. The work's critical reception is then recounted from 1850, when it was first identified as a Van Eyck, until a hundred years later when its authenticity was first seriously challenged. The hitherto slightly mysterious circumstances in which this reversal occurred in the late 1950s are elucidated, drawing on extensive archival records left by all the key figures involved, among them some of the

leading gallery directors, curators, conservators, and art historians of the time. How the limited and frequently inaccurate information about the work's analysis that was published then adversely affected its reputation is recounted. Nevertheless, around the world a number of specialists in early Netherlandish painting continued to believe in the work's authenticity.

The second chapter examines the technical basis for rejecting the work's attribution, but also brings new technical evidence to the discussion. Of particular importance are the results of the infrared reflectography (IRR) analysis conducted for this research (Fig. 4). This allows the work's creative development to emerge clearly for the first time, from the initial drawing of the composition with fine contours and hatched shading, through many changes in the drawing and painting stages, to the composition as it was completed in the final paint layers. It is also shown that there are no technical grounds for the rejection of the work's attribution to Van Eyck. The possibility that the work is a later free copy is not excluded, but is undermined by the Eyckian nature of the work's *pentimenti*, additive painting technique, pigments, paint layer structures, and numerous other aspects of the work's materials and technique. A fact that has not been sufficiently understood is that the paint surface is not well preserved in places, and the extent of overpainting is greater than has been generally recognised. The question of the work's condition has been obscured by the hypothesis that the work might be a modern forgery. If it were not meticulously documented, it might be difficult to accept that this idea was seriously considered. Indeed, it is highly unlikely, due to the presence of the pigment lead-tin yellow in the painting, which is generally agreed to have fallen out of use after the middle of the eighteenth century—well before there was sufficient demand for early Netherlandish paintings to warrant the production of sophisticated forgeries. The category of forgery applies when there is evidence to show that a work was painted with the intention to deceive. It is argued that this is not the case here.

The third chapter addresses more purely art historical concerns such as the orthography of the signature, the elements of the composition, and the iconography, and their relationship to works by or attributed to Van Eyck, as well as those of his followers. Of considerable significance are the clear links between the *Virgin and Child* and Van Eyck's securely attributed panel paintings on the one hand, and the best of the celebrated miniatures from the Turin-Milan hours on the other. The latter were initially attributed to an anonymous artist called 'Hand G' when they were discovered at the beginning of the twentieth century, but by the end of the century a majority of art historians—but not all—accepted that this artist is to be identified with Van Eyck, on the basis of his superb naturalism.[4] The possibility that the *Virgin and Child* might be a pastiche based on such Eyckian models is undermined

by the existence of two panel paintings with similar compositions, probably from the fifteenth century, bearing inscriptions that suggest Van Eyck was the author of the composition. There is also a substantial number of works by early Renaissance artists known to have been influenced by Van Eyck that reproduce details of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition. For these reasons the composition seems to originate in Van Eyck's oeuvre. The final chapter then weighs the available evidence to conclude that the work's attribution to Van Eyck, possibly with the assistance of his workshop, is justifiable.

The questions raised by this one diminutive painting have broader ramifications than its attribution, important though that is. How can sometimes conflicting aesthetic, scientific, and historical assessments of an artwork's value be reconciled? How do these disagreements impact on conservation practices? How should the histories of contested artworks be written, in a way that does not reduce them to academic curiosities on the one hand, or sensational controversies on the other?

Notes for the Introduction

[1] Although, Wright (1992, 1, p. 157) referred to the National Gallery of Victoria as still the leading collection of Old Masters in the Southern Hemisphere, despite the re-classification of the Van Eyck.

[2] For a review of Hoff's career, see: Anderson, 2000–01, pp. 250–56.

[3] Anderson, Professor Jaynie, Melbourne. Tape recording of Dr Ursula Hoff in interview with Professor Jaynie Anderson and Dr Paul Paffen, 5 May 2000.

[4] For a comprehensive discussion of Hand G and the Turin-Milan hours, see: A.H. Van Buren, J. Marrow, and S. Pettenati, *Heures de Turin-Milan: Commentary* (Lucerne, 1996).



Fig. 2. Ince Hall, Ince Blundell, Lancashire, England.

1

From Ince Hall to Melbourne: Provenance and Critical Reception

> In the year 1777 I made a party to meet some friends in Italy a most pleasant ramble. At Rome I met with Mr Charles Townley. His great knowledge in antique marbles & the arts not only instructed me but inspired me with a desire of being proficient in that line.
> Henry Blundell, *A Letter Intended for a Friend*, 1808.

The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was acquired in 1922 for the Felton Bequest by Frank Rinder, who was its London based Art Advisor from 1918 to 1928. Since 1904 the Felton Bequest has endowed the National Gallery of Victoria with one of the world's great public art legacies, particularly rich in European Old Master paintings.[1] The work was accessioned by the Gallery when it arrived in Melbourne in the following year. The small painting came from Ince Blundell, near Liverpool, England, the seat of the Blundell family since at least the early thirteenth century.[2] Their late English Baroque home, set in secluded, wooded parkland, beside an ornamental lake, is called Ince Hall (Fig. 2). The painting had been part of a large and distinguished art collection established by Henry Blundell (1724–1810), which grew to include paintings, drawings, prints, tapestries, at least one illuminated manuscript,[3] and, notably, the largest collection of antique sculpture in England outside the British Museum.[4]

The paintings collection included a number of important Northern European works, such as the *Law and Grace* by Hans Holbein the Younger, which was acquired from the collection by the National Gallery of Scotland,[5] and Joos van Cleve's *Virgin and Child with Angels*[6] and Jan van Goyen's *View of Dordrecht with the Grote Kerk across the Maas*, both now in the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool.[7] The *Meeting of the Three Kings, with David and Isaiah* (with the *Assumption of the Virgin* on its reverse) by the Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece was bought by the J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles.[8] Other paintings attributed to Dieric Bouts, Adriaen Isenbrant, David Teniers the Younger, Salomon van Ruysdael, Jan Baptist Weenix, Gerrit Berckheyde, Bernardo Daddi, Sebastiano Ricci, Pompeo Batoni, Canaletto, Giuseppe Nogari, Ribera, Joshua Reynolds, Richard Wilson,

George Stubbs, Mathieu Le Nain, and Jean-François Millet have also been recorded in the collection.[9]

No documentation for the acquisition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* by Henry or his son Charles (1761–1837) has been found. Only a small, red seal on the reverse of the panel, generally thought to originate from a seventeenth- or eighteenth-century ecclesiastic or ecclesiastical institution, gives any clue to the work's earlier provenance. It has never been identified,[10] although the image of the Risen Christ it contains suggests, perhaps, a Franciscan owner. None of the old numbers inscribed on the reverse of the panel are clearly legible. Although Charles Townley, Henry's Lancashire neighbour and fellow Catholic, may have inspired his collecting of antique marbles,[11] less is known about the tastes and habits that informed Henry's purchases of paintings. The first painting listed in Henry's privately published catalogue of his art collection of 1803, *An Account of the Statues, Busts, Bass-Relieves, Cinerary Urns, and Other Ancient Marbles and Paintings At Ince, Collected by HB*, is the *Armoury* signed and dated by Jacobus Biltius in 1666 (now in a private collection). It had been bought from Arras College at Louvain in 1770.[12] Other catalogue entries indicate that Blundell also purchased paintings in London, Paris, Florence, Naples, and Rome.[13] He obtained them from other collectors—notably, Ignatio Hugford and Consul Joseph Smith,[14] dealers such as Cavaceppi in Rome and Volpini in Florence,[15] agents such as the ex-Jesuit John Thorpe (1726–92) in Rome,[16] from the Royal Academy,[17] and at auction in London.[18] Blundell also acquired paintings from British artists, notably, Wilson and Stubbs.[19]

Until 1961, Ursula Hoff thought the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* might correspond to the 1803 catalogue item number 116: '*The Virgin and Child*. The great merit of this picture consists of its being a very ancient painting, as appears by the name and date on it. It is much in the style of Albert Durer, and shews the progress of the arts'.[20] However, another work in the collection had elsewhere been identified as this entry in 1928, apparently on the basis of a number on its frame. The double-sided panel by an artist probably from the workshop of Dieric Bouts shows on the obverse a half-length depiction of the Virgin and Child with a false Dürer monogram and the date 1490 in the bottom left corner. On the reverse is an unfinished, half-length portrait of a man.[21]

Hans Gronau's 1948 inventory of the painting collection (made for Sotheby's after the death of the co-owner Alice Mary Weld-Blundell, with a preface by the Weld-Blundell family) preserved the numbering system established by Henry Blundell, as is evident in the correspondences between many of the numbers, subjects, and attributions. While Gronau noted a number of works no longer in the collection, having been lost, destroyed, or

bequeathed out of the estate, the Weld-Blundell family indicated that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was the only work sold from the collection. The inventory did not include any work by Van Eyck or unattributed work before number 197, the last number in the Appendix of Henry Blundell's 1803 catalogue (which included a number of tapestries, *pietre dure*, drawings, and prints).[22] Therefore, the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was probably not acquired by a member of the Blundell family before 1803. The only numbers in Gronau's inventory that are not attributed in any way, not described as lost, destroyed, or given away, and that might refer to a panel painting of the Virgin and Child are 221 and 287,[23] and the latter can be ruled out, since an inventory of 1929 had described its subject as *Christ Teaching in the Temple*.[24]

Housed in the British Public Record Office is the *Inventory and Valuation of the Household Furniture, Plate, Linen, China, Glass, Horses, Carriages and Household Fixtures also of the Marbles (loose and attached to the walls), Bronzes, Marble Tables, Paintings, Curiosities, Watches, Coins, Glass and Ornamental China, Engravings (framed and unframed), Drawings, Tapestries, Stained Glass Etc and also of The Library of Books, late the Property of the late Charles Robert Blundell Esq, of Ince Hall Ince Blundell*.[25] It states towards the front that it was 'taken by order of the Executors 18, 19 and 20 December 1837.' Since the inventory includes some 314 entries for pictorial artworks in various media that were displayed in the house, and since the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is likely to be number 221 in the collection, it is most probably listed therein. However, as the inventory provides no numbers for the works it lists, it is not possible to determine with certainty which one of the many paintings of the Virgin and Child it might be.

However, a facsimile of the inventory is in the possession of Mr Wilfred Weld, heir to the painting collection, at Lulworth Castle House in Dorset. It includes numbers added in the margin for some works. The date of the facsimile is uncertain, as are the date and basis on which the numbers were added. If the numbers are reliable, it is possible by a process of elimination to deduce the likely location and value given to the painting in 1837. The only work described as showing the Virgin and Child that is not attributed to an Italian artist, and that does not have a different number allocated to it in the margin is the one in the Housekeeper's room, the *Virgin and Child* valued at a mere sixteen shillings.[26] The inventory did not mention the Chaplain's room where the painting is known from a later source to have been in 1850,[27] however, it seems more likely that the room's use changed or the small painting was moved, than that the extensive 1837 inventory overlooked part of the collection.

John Jacob, a former Deputy Director of the Walker Art Gallery in Liverpool, thought Henry Blundell probably acquired the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* late in life, possibly with

the aid of his friend William Roscoe (1753–1831). Roscoe is celebrated as an antiquarian, the author of a biography of Lorenzo de' Medici, and a prescient collector of paintings from the early European schools, notably, of important works by Simone Martini and Ercole Roberti. Jacob drew attention to the fact that in 1806 Henry was reported by an auctioneer to have granted an annuity of the substantial sum of £500 to an unnamed person aged fifty-two or three to acquire a collection of works of art, and noted that Roscoe was fifty-three in that year.[28] At an advanced age, and perhaps already with failing eyesight—he was unable to read or write after 1808[29]—it seems Henry sought assistance to continue building his collection.

The identification of Roscoe as Blundell's agent is entirely plausible, given their shared enthusiasm for the arts. Blundell was President, and Roscoe Vice-President, of the Liverpool Society of Artists exhibition of 1784, which included a number of Roscoe's paintings exhibited in a house belonging to Roscoe. And it was Roscoe who encouraged Blundell to leave £1,600 in his will towards the provision of an art gallery for the Society.[30] Roscoe certainly collected early Netherlandish paintings for himself before his financial troubles in 1816 and bankruptcy in 1820. He owned the *Descent from the Cross* triptych now in the Walker Art Gallery, which reflects an important work by Robert Campin (of which only a fragment survives in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt am Main).[31] The Liverpool artist and art dealer Thomas Winstanley helped Roscoe acquire his collection and later acquired works for the Liverpool Royal Institution as well. As a local dealer who certainly sold early Netherlandish paintings,[32] Winstanley could have been the source for the Blundell family's acquisition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, through Roscoe or directly. It was Winstanley who sold Roscoe's collection of paintings, drawings, prints, and books in 1816—many of the drawings bought by Charles Blundell.[33]

Jacob thought there was no reason to believe Charles added to his father's painting collection.[34] However, Xanthe Brooke, Curator of European Fine Art at the National Museum and Galleries on Merseyside, has suggested it is possible Charles acquired the painting, noting that as Catholics, both men had lasting contacts with the Church in Flanders and Northern France through which early Netherlandish paintings may have been acquired. Henry was educated in France, first at St Omer,[35] from 1743 at the English college in Douai,[36] and from 1745 in Paris. His son Charles' contacts with that area originated in his student days in Liège, and he was more active as a collector than has generally been acknowledged, although he seems to have been most interested in the graphic arts. He acquired a group of important Old Master drawings from Roscoe's sale, and subsequently others that had belonged to Benjamin West.[37] Charles' interest in collecting is also evident in

correspondence from Winstanley in 1823 discussing Charles' purchases of prints.[38] Recently, Edward Morris has suggested that Charles did in fact buy paintings, as well as books, from Winstanley and from the sculptor and cabinet-maker, George Bullock, based in part on the evidence of a newspaper report some years after Charles' death.[39]

Certainly, the majority of the early Northern European paintings came to the collection after 1803. Before that, Henry had owned a small group of modest quality, comprising one of the numerous versions of the *Virgin and Child with Cherries* by a follower of Joos van Cleve (no. 12), an Ambrosius Benson-esque *Saint Mary Magdalene* (no. 54), a follower of Hugo van der Goes *Adoration of the Magi* (no. 105), the Bouts workshop *Virgin and Child* (no. 116), and the *Virgin and Child with Saints Louis and Margaret* (no. 190), possibly by the Master of the Youth of Saint Romold, first recorded in the early seventeenth century in an annex of the Abbeye de Tronchiennes in Ghent.[40] After 1803, however, over a dozen such works entered the collection, including a few of high quality: a fragmentary Dieric Bouts *Rest on the Flight* (no. 204),[41] the Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece *Meeting of the Three Kings* (no. 211), the Adriaen Isenbrant *Rest on the Flight* (no. 215), the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* (probably no. 221), and the Van Cleve *Virgin and Child with Angels* (no. 223). The Holbein *Law and Grace* was among the latter group also (no. 280).

It is not clear whether works were numbered in the order in which they were added to the collection after 1803. If they were, all the important early Northern European paintings would have been acquired by 1807, since the Holbein was recorded by John Britton at Ince Hall in that year.[42] In any event, the shift in collecting after 1803 lends support to the hypothesis of the intervention of a discerning agent with an inclination towards the earlier schools of painting, such as Roscoe.[43]

Interestingly, the Holbein has been identified with a work listed in an inventory made of the collection of Thomas Howard, Earl of Arundel, while residing in Antwerp in the mid-seventeenth century.[44] The Earl also owned Van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*.[45] Thus, the Blundells possessed three paintings from collections known to have been in the territory that became Belgium in 1830 (Louvain, Ghent, and Antwerp), one of which had also included a Van Eyck.

As Charles never married, on his death the collection was left to his distant relative Thomas Weld (d. 1887) on the condition that he add Blundell to his surname. Through Thomas the family's links with Flanders were maintained by his education in Bruges, and his subsequent purchase of a house there (he also owned houses in Boulogne and in the hills outside Florence). The collection then passed to Thomas' son Charles Joseph Weld-Blundell

(1844–1927), from whom the *Virgin and Child* was acquired by the Felton Bequest in 1922.[46] It was bought through the agent Captain Robert Langton Douglas, the collector, dealer, art historian, and Director of the National Gallery of Ireland in the years 1916–23. The remainder of the collection was inherited jointly by Charles' daughters Alice Mary (d. 1947) and Mary Teresa Weld-Blundell (d. 1957), and subsequently by Colonel Joseph Weld at Lulworth, who generously presented the majority of the antiquities to the Liverpool Corporation in 1959, in recognition of the fact that the end had come for the collection in its original home.

Ince Hall was bought by the Canonesses of Saint Augustine in the following year,[47] and the Weld family moved the paintings and drawings to their estate at Lulworth in Dorset around this time.[48] They gave permission for a selection of the paintings to be shown in the exhibitions *Pictures from Ince Blundell Hall* at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool in 1960,[49] and *Paintings from Lulworth Castle Gallery*, at the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery and Museum, East Cliff, Bournemouth, in the following year.[50] Many of the paintings were sold at Christie's in London in 1980, 1991, and 1992,[51] although, a few of them remained at Lulworth Castle House in the possession of Joseph's son, Mr Wilfred Weld. The majority of the Old Master drawings were acquired by the Walker Art Gallery in 1995, including works by Mantegna, Fra Bartolommeo, Parmigianino, Tintoretto, and Rubens, thus preserving in Lancashire another aspect of this historically significant collection.[52]

* * *

Ernst Förster was the first to publish the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, in his small book on early Northern European art that appeared in 1853,[53] although he was not the first to recognise it as a Van Eyck. This credit belongs to his compatriot Gustav Friedrich Waagen, the Director of the Berlin Gemäldegalerie from 1830 to 1868, who was regarded as an authority on Van Eyck on account of his book *Über Hubert und Johann van Eyck* (Breslau, 1822). This has been acclaimed as one of the first modern monographs for a Renaissance artist. Waagen had seen the painting at Ince Hall in 1850 and published it in 1854 in his *Treasures of Art in Great Britain: Being an Account of the Chief Collections of Paintings, Drawings, Sculptures, Illuminated MSS etc etc*., describing it thus:

> Drawing Room. I understand from a friend that a small picture of the Virgin and Child now hangs in this apartment, which was formerly in the Chaplain's room, and was there

> recognised by me as a JAN VAN EYCK. The Virgin is seated under a canopy of a full green, holding the Child on Her lap, and turning over the leaves of a book. Her small head is of unusually noble character for Jan van Eyck. She has a blue dress with a splendid red mantle with numerous sharp breaks. Upon a table at the window is a vessel, on the other side a candlestick, on the ground a dish. 9 in. high by 6 in. wide. Throughout of a most masterly miniature-like execution, and deep glow of colouring; and, excepting the many cracks in the colour, well preserved. Next the canopy I found the inscription "Completum anno domini MCCCCXXXII per Johannem de Eyck Brugis," and his motto, "Als ich chan". This was consequently executed in the same year that he and his brother Hubert finished the great altar-piece for the cathedral of Ghent.[54]

Waagen's discovery of the 'beautiful little picture' was soon noted in the British literary journal *The Quarterly Review*.[55] However, it was not until 1906 that the preeminent Van Eyck scholar of his generation, W.H. James Weale, correctly recorded the final 'J' shaped numeral in the date, which makes the year of completion 1433.[56] This is probably because the numeral is very small, is abraded, was obscured until 1922 by an opaque varnish, and because for the unwary eye it is readily confused with the edge of the cloth of honour immediately beside it.[57]

All the nineteenth-century critics who saw the painting at Ince Hall were in agreement about its attribution to Van Eyck, despite the pronounced craquelure (exacerbated by the panel's slight warp, this marred the paint surface, notably, in the Virgin's face). Those who published the work at this time included the distinguished art historians James Arthur Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle (1857),[58] W.H. James Weale (1861),[59] and Ralph Nicholson Wornum (1863)—Keeper of the National Gallery, London,[60] Alfred Michiels (1866),[61] Weale, again (1867),[62] Carl Schnaase (1879),[63] Weale, once more (1883),[64] and Frederick George Stephens (1883)—Art Critic for *The Athenæum* journal and member of the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood.[65]

In 1884 the *Virgin and Child* was exhibited in London at the *Royal Academy Exhibition of Works by the Old Masters and by Deceased Masters of the British School; Including a Special Selection from the Works of Paul Falconer Poole, R.A., Winter Exhibition*,[66] where it was seen and praised by the art critic Claude Phillips.[67] Eight years later it was exhibited at the Guildhall *Loan Collection of Pictures* in London,[68] and in 1892–93 it was also shown in London at the Burlington Fine Arts Club *Exhibition of Pictures by Masters of the Netherlandish and Allied Schools of XV. and Early XVI. Centuries*. The

catalogue of the latter exhibition brought what would become an important element to the discussion of the work, noting that Wilhelm von Bode had found a copy of it of good quality in the collection of the duke of Verdura in Palermo, Italy.[69]

The art historian Paul Leprieur, later a professor at the École du Louvre and then a curator in the paintings department of the museum, reviewed the latter exhibition. While he is not remembered as a significant contributor to Van Eyck studies, he proposed a theory about the *Virgin and Child* that would prove to be influential—that the signature was not original. Citing the poor overall condition of the work, the 'bizarre' form of certain letters in the signature, and the fact that certain words appeared to him to have been cut short, Leprieur hypothesised that the painting was a genuine work by Van Eyck but that the signature had been transferred from the lost original frame by a later, less adept hand than Van Eyck's.[70] It is not clear what frame was on the work at this time, but it was apparently not the original one. The elaborate Gothic revival frame in which the painting was acquired in 1922 by the Felton Bequest was replaced by the current sober, and more historically appropriate frame in the 1950s.[71] Leprieur's skepticism about the authenticity of the signature might strike the uninitiated as a worrying development for the attribution of the painting as a whole, although suspect inscriptions on otherwise genuine Old Master paintings are not uncommon in art history. Indeed, the authenticity of the quatrain signature on the outer frames of the Ghent altarpiece has notoriously been called into question without, of course, casting any doubt on the authenticity of the work itself, the bedrock of Eyckian attributions.[72]

Statistically, Leprieur's hypothesis is reasonably well founded. Of the ten paintings that are commonly accepted as bearing Van Eyck's original signatures (see Appendix A for the list), eight are signed on their frames, while only two are signed within their pictorial spaces. There has, however, been some speculation that the Ghent altarpiece contains disguised signatures within its pictorial space, as discussed in Chapter Three. The two works with explicit signatures within their pictorial spaces, which are portraits rather than religious subjects, are the *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* (Fig. 6), both housed in the National Gallery, London.

In 1893 Hugo von Tschudi, Assistant Curator at the Berlin Gemäldegalerie, also reviewed the Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition, noting the existence of the copy in Palermo.[73] In the following year he listed that work, now known as the Verdura *Virgin and Child* (current location unknown, its last known owner was the daughter of the Baron de Gemmis, Rome),[74] in a summary description of the art collection belonging to the dukes of Verdura. Recorded as a copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, number 474 in the collection

was described as a work of the Flemish school dating from the end of the fifteenth century, with its inscription on either side of the baldachin.[75] Thus, if the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature was not original, it must in any case have been added at a very early date.

In 1898 Ludwig Kaemmerer, later the Director of the Kaiser Friedrich Museum in Berlin, observed that doubts had also been expressed about the cursory handling of certain elements in the background of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. However, he stated that the work's qualities, such as the lovable child, the type of Virgin, and the warm lighting, spoke in favour of the signature, as did the fact that the Verdura copy bore a similar inscription.[76] In 1899 Otto Seeck concurred that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was by Van Eyck.[77]

The following year Karl Voll surprised his colleagues when he described the signature of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as inauthentic, and suggested the painting originated in Bruges among the school of Memling at the end of the fifteenth century. Voll was an art historian who became a curator at the Munich Pinakotheka, and after that a professor at the University in that city. In his book on Van Eyck, Voll attempted to distinguish the master's works from those of his imitators. However, Voll did not provide substantial comparative evidence to support his sceptical views. As well as the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, he also rejected—remarkably—the authenticity of the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* and the *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw*. The former has frequently been taken to be Van Eyck's self-portrait, while both works are signed and dated on their original frames, and both have been otherwise universally attributed to Van Eyck.[78]

In the same year Max Friedländer, who was working in the Paintings Department of the Berlin Gemäldegalerie as one of the foremost connoisseurs of early Netherlandish art, wrote a lengthy review of Voll's book, rejecting his commentary on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, and noting that Voll had not seen the work in the original. Friedländer described the work's signature as 'wrong', but maintained that the painting itself was authentic, referring to the existence of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* as supporting its authenticity.[79] In the next year Wilhelm von Bode, the formidable Director of the Gemäldegalerie, rejected Voll's views on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in withering terms (he spoke of Voll as offering 'a magnificent prospect into a *terra incognita* that promises Voll's admirers a radical change in the history of the old Dutch school'). Von Bode stated that two copies of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* were known, the one in Palermo of the fifteenth century bearing an inscription similar to the one on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, and another in the Catania Museum, which was apparently Sicilian and of the early sixteenth century. He implied that the presence of the inscription on the Verdura *Virgin and Child* was sufficiently strong evidence to support

the authenticity of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature, even if overpainting had made it difficult to assess the latter.[80] A detailed account of the version in Catania has never been published, although, an anonymous note on the reverse of a photograph of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* held in the Victoria and Albert Museum suggests it was a nineteenth-century copy that was at one time number 36 in the Catania Museum.[81]

Ludwig Kaemmerer also reviewed Voll's book in 1901, noting his rejection of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, and *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw*—works usually attributed to Van Eyck.[82] However, the comments of the leading art historians Friedländer and Von Bode dispelled the doubts raised by Voll, and from this point onwards the *Virgin and Child*'s authenticity was consistently supported by authors such as Alfred Marks (1903),[83] G. Joseph Kern (1904),[84] and Hippolyte Fierens-Gevaert (1905)—a Professor at the University of Liège, and later Director of the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts in Brussels.[85] Although, Émile Durand-Gréville (1905) suggested the conception, design, and possibly the beginnings of the execution of the work might be attributed to Hubert van Eyck, while it was completed by Jan.[86]

In 1906 the painting was again exhibited as a Jan van Eyck at the Guildhall in London in the *Exhibition of a Selection of Works by Flemish and Modern Belgian Painters*,[87] after which it was published as an authentic work of his (albeit minor and not in perfect condition) by numerous authors, including W.H. James Weale (1906),[88] Max Friedländer (1906),[89] T. Humphrey Ward (1906),[90] Margarete Siebert (1906),[91] Alfred von Wurzbach (1906),[92] Daniel Burckhardt (1906),[93] the *Revue de l'Art Chrétien* (1906),[94] Émile Durand-Gréville ([1906])—by Jan after a design of Hubert's,[95] Claude Phillips (1907),[96] Louis de Fourcaud (1907),[97] W.H. James Weale again (1908),[98] Émile Durand-Gréville (1910—three times), as painted by Jan after a design by Hubert,[99] Eric MacLagan (1911),[100] W.H. James Weale and Maurice Brockwell (1912),[101] Friedländer once more (1915),[102] Sir Martin Conway (1921),[103] Friedländer again (1921),[104] and Kurt Pfister (1922).[105]

On 29 June 1922 Frank Rinder proposed acquiring the work to the Felton Bequest Trustees, which he described as 'by far the most important duty that has yet devolved upon me as Art Advisor.'[106] As early as 1893 the owner, Charles Weld-Blundell, had indicated a willingness to sell his Van Eyck to the National Gallery, London.[107] He later claimed to have rejected an offer in excess of £100,000 from an American benefactor associated with the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, for the work and two other Renaissance paintings. This he did at the request of his son, who wanted them put at the disposal of the British nation. According to the owner, the Trustees of the National Gallery, London, had all been in

favour of aquiring the three paintings, while the Director, Charles Holmes, demurred because the Premier would not hear of any further demands for financial support. This would have been either Asquith, who was Prime Minister from 1908 to 1916, or his successor Lloyd George.[108] Before the First World War, the Treasury's Grant-in-Aid to the Gallery for purchases was a low £5,000 per annum, and it indicated it could not contemplate increasing the sum at war's end.[109] Nevetheless, on rare occasions the Treasury did support special measures, such as the £35,000 it found in 1918 to offer Lady Pembroke for the Wilton diptych, a work of unparalleled importance for the British patrimony. Even this sum was not sufficient to pursuade Lady Pembroke to part with it.[110]

During the war Charles Weld-Blundell had deposited the *Virgin and Child*, three other Renaissance paintings and one attributed to Hobbema at the Gallery for safekeeping. At this time he continued discussions with Holmes about their sale, suggesting the *Virgin and Child* alone might be worth the princely figure of £50,000. Holmes did express interest in one of the less expensive works offered, but not the *Virgin and Child* since he claimed he could not justify its price during wartime, particularly as Van Eyck was already well represented in the Gallery's collection.[111] Indeed, the National Gallery, London, was already fortunate to possess three works by Van Eyck, more than most galleries in the world (equalled only by the Gemäldegalerie, Berlin), and it may have been for this reason, as well as the costs involved, that it had not acquired Van Eyck's *Portrait of Baudouin de Lannoy* when it was offered for sale to the Gallery in 1900.[112] Two years later the portrait was bought by the Gemäldegalerie.

By 1911 the National Gallery, London, had set up a committee chaired by a board member, Lord Curzon, to investigate the sale of artworks out of private British collections. It found that a staggering 500 important paintings had been exported in recent years, including fifty Rembrandts and eleven Holbeins.[113] In the face of such market forces the Gallery had to choose potential acquisitions carefully. And in these circumstances the sale of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* to a Commonwealth buyer could be seen as a lesser evil, since it was American and German buyers who were generally perceived as the greater threat to British pride.[114] Charles Holmes and Frank Rinder had a close relationship, and though no evidence has yet come to light suggesting Holmes encouraged Rinder's purchase of the *Virgin and Child*, they certainly wrote to each other about it,[115] and Holmes and one of the Gallery's two Consultant Restorers, W.A. Holder, provided Rinder with expert advice about the work's condition prior to its acquisition.[116]

According to Langton Douglas, who was engaged as the agent for the sale of the work, Weld-Blundell had rejected a number of offers of £30,000 for the painting, holding out

for £50,000, although he was prepared to accept £35,000 if it went to a public collection.[117] Interestingly, Langton Douglas had an Australian connection, which may have worked to Rinder's advantage. He had taken the post of Professor of Modern History at the University of Adelaide in 1900, albeit briefly, the same year his monograph on Fra Angelico was published.[118] Having studied at Oxford, he may have been the first university educated art historian of note to teach at an Australian university. Another fortuitous fact for Rinder was that Charles Weld-Blundell's close relative, Roger Vaughan, had been Archbishop of Sydney (he was, also, appparently, a distant relative of the current Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Gerard Vaughan). Indeed, the archbishop had passed away in his sleep on a visit to Ince Hall in 1883, and was buried there. Eventually, his remains were transferred to the crypt of Saint Mary's Cathedral in Sydney.

During negotiations, the miniature painter Georg Frederick Zink was employed to remove an opaque varnish covering the *Virgin and Child*, which he did in June 1922.[119] Significantly, in a letter written to *The Daily Telegraph* (London) later that year Zink claimed that during his treatment he observed the work's contentious signature to be authentic, that is, in his opinion it was by Van Eyck.[120] Rinder then secured an option over the work, fending off a rival buyer connected with the Fogg Art Museum at Harvard.[121] He wrote that a few days before his final offer the owner received a telegram from a Paris dealer offering £30,000.[122] Rinder successfully negotiated between the Felton Bequest Trustees and Langton Douglas for a price of £31,395. In the spirit of the times Rinder reflected on his work: 'I feel it an honour to have served as instrument in thus helping to repay to Australia a part, however small, of the debt which the Mother Country owes to the Commonwealth for the gallantry and resourcefulness of her troops, the energy of her manhood and womanhood during the Great War.'[123]

Following the acquisition, the painting was exhibited in the National Gallery, London, from October 1922.[124] At the request of its Trustees the loan was extended until 30 December 1922, before the work was sent to Australia.[125] Maurice Brockwell noted that the Director and Trustees of the National Gallery, London, 'strangely' decided to withdraw from exhibition Van Eyck's two small works, the *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)* and the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, when the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was shown at Trafalgar Square. It may have been thought that by displaying the *Virgin and Child* beside Van Eyck's large, tour de force *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* difficult questions about why the work had not been saved for Britain could be preempted by emphasising its modest size and relative simplicity.[126] A sense of this may be gained from the Director's comments

in *The Burlington Magazine*. While hailing the Felton Bequest's acquisition of the work as an achievement of stunning audacity for Australia, he admitted that its execution could not compare with his gallery's double portrait.[127]

Sir Claude Phillips, described by Maurice Brockwell as the 'Doyen of the English Press' and credited as one of the instigators of the return of the Ghent altarpiece wings to Belgium from Germany after the First World War,[128] still mourned Britain's loss:

> It is good news that before the "Madonna of Ince Hall" departs for its new home and its new surroundings it will be seen for a time in the great Flemish room at the National Gallery. Thus may some consolation be afforded both to those who know the treasure now with gentle persuasion taken from us and to those who know it not. Or will our regret become but the more poignant when, for a moment, we make, or renew, acquaintance with a thing infinitely precious that we then must lose forever.[129]

Coincidently, in the same year the British Government finally acceded to years of pressure to protect from export the most important artworks in private British collections. The highly secret 'Paramount List' was drawn up, identifying a dozen or so works that if ever came up for sale the Treasury would recommend to Parliament funds be voted towards purchasing them for national collections.[130] Speaking in the House of Commons, the MP Sir Philip Sassoon, who was also on the board of the National Gallery, London, lamented: 'It is part of our civilisation that leaves us whenever one of these outstanding triumphs of man's creative genius is carried away to another country.'[131]

The acquisition of the *Virgin and Child* for the Felton Bequest received considerable coverage in the international media, being reported in *The Times,* London,[132] and in France, Italy, Germany, and Canada,[133] and across Australia.[134] *Art in Australia: A Quarterly Magazine* publicised the acquisition of the *Virgin and Child* with a full-page illustration.[135] Maurice Brockwell published a brief scholarly article on the *Virgin and Child* in *Art in America*, explaining the circumstances of its acquisition for the Felton Bequest. He described the painting as a magnificent but tiny work of Van Eyck.[136] Writing in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, Sidney N. Deane reported that the acquisition had been cause for much comment in America.[137] This may have been because American collectors had unsuccessfully pursued the work. Instances in which Australian collectors have trumped American rivals for paintings of outstanding significance are decidedly rare. This was one, and it would be a long time before the purchase of Jackson Pollock's *Blue Poles* for US$2 million in 1973, by the

National Gallery of Australia. The *Virgin and Child* had been one of the last Van Eycks in private hands, and it was only the second to leave Europe, the first being the even smaller *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis*, bought in 1894 by the American collector John G. Johnson for £700 from a dealer in London, who in turn had acquired it in the same year from Lord Haytesbury's collection in Wiltshire. It is now in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.[138]

The *Report of the Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria* for 1923 described the presentation of the *Virgin and Child* at the Gallery:

> The most important event in the Gallery was the acquisition of the famous little painting by Van Eyck, which was unveiled by His Excellency the Earl of Stradbroke on the 13th of March. Sir John MacFarland, representing the Trustees, Executors, and Agency Company, formally handed over the picture to the Trustees of the National Gallery under the terms of the Felton Bequest. The President received it and, before asking His Excellency to perform the ceremony of unveiling it, stated that it was a most valuable addition to the collection, and that every possible care would be taken by the Trustees to preserve a treasure of such immense value and fame. His Excellency expressed the opinion that it was a piece of extraordinary good fortune that the Trustees had been able to make such a purchase—a work that would be highly thought of for all time.[139]

At the time the local press reported the Melbourne public's astonishment that something so small could cost so much.[140]

Despite its geographic isolation, the painting continued to prompt a steady stream of scholarly references from authors including Salomon Reinach (1923),[141] Karl Voll (1923)—still alone in rejecting Van Eyck's authorship,[142] Max Friedländer (1924),[143] Auguste Schmarsow (1924),[144] Friedrich Winkler (1924),[145] Hans Wendland (1924),[146] James S. MacDonald (1925),[147] Willy Burger (1925),[148] Max Dvořák (1925),[149] Max Meldrum (undated but probably 1925 or later),[150] Marguerite Devigne (1926),[151] Édouard Michel (1927),[152] Hippolyte Fierens-Gevaert (1927),[153] Sir Paul Lambotte (1927),[154] Franz Dülberg (1929),[155] Friedländer again (1930),[156] Paul Fierens (1931),[157] Friedrich Winkler (1931),[158] Karl von Tolnai (1932),[159] Emile Renders (1933),[160] Chandler Rathfon Post (1933),[161] K. Smits (1933),[162] Georges Hulin de Loo (1934),[163] Alan Burroughs (1938),[164] Charles de Tolnay—who previously published under the name Karl von Tolnai (1939),[165] and Basil Burdett (1939).[166]

In 1939 the painting was borrowed by Wilhelm Valentiner, Director of the Detroit Institute of Arts, to be shown in the exhibition he curated for the New York World's Fair: *Masterpieces of Art*.[167] It was displayed as a signed and dated work of Van Eyck, with 400 European Old Master paintings from private and public collections around the world, including such masterpieces as Vermeer's *The Milkmaid* from the Rijksmuseum. Valentiner was a respected art historian specialing in Renaissance painting,[168] who had acquired the Eyckian *Saint Jerome* for Detroit.[169] This equally diminutive painting was exhibited in New York beside the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a possible collaboration between Van Eyck and Petrus Christus.[170] It has more recently been described as a work of Van Eyck alone,[171] or a collaboration between the artist and his studio.[172]

Time magazine heaped praise on Valentiner's Australian loan:

> Chief triumphs of the show were in his own favourite field of Flemish and Dutch painting. In the eyes of connoisseurs, the Ince Hall *Madonna* […] by Jan van Eyck was worth an exhibition all by itself. This tiny (8 3/4 inches by 6 inches) painting on wood came all the way from the National Gallery in Melbourne, Australia, where it is valued at $250,000. Until 1922 it lurked, under a heavy scum of varnish, in the murk of Ince Hall, near Liverpool. When the Australian gallery bought and cleaned it, English art lovers cried aloud to see it lost to the Antipodes. So infinite in detail and so opulent are the Madonna's cascading red robe, blue tunic and gold embroidered background that the painting seems less a miniature than a heroic picture seen through a small window.[173]

Positive notices of the work's appearance at the New York World's Fair were also printed in *The Art News*,[174] *Magazine of Art*,[175] *Parnassus*,[176] *Christian Science Monitor*,[177] and the *New York Times*.[178] The painting remained in the United States after the Fair due to the outbreak of the Second World War, but also because Valentiner was keen to have it tour the country as part of a travelling exhibition.[179] Subsequently, the painting was shown at the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1939,[180] the California Palace of the Legion of Honour and M.H. De Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco[181] and the Cleveland Museum of Art in 1940,[182] and museums in Pittsburgh, St Louis, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Newark, Toledo, Springfield,[183] and at the Cincinnati Art Museum in 1941.[184] Valentiner had a very high regard for the work, asking permission to display it for a second time at his museum in Detroit at the end of the touring exhibition,[185] which request the Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria felt compelled to deny.[186]

The *Virgin and Child* was returned to Melbourne in early 1941,[187] some months before the Pacific became a theatre of war. Its recent exposure continued to fuel its discussion, and it was published by the National Gallery of Victoria (1941),[188] Hermann Beenken (1941),[189] Millard Meiss (1941),[190] and Baron Joseph van der Elst (1946).[191] Two years later the National Gallery of Victoria published a catalogue in which the entry for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was almost entirely quoted from Weale and Brockwell's 1912 description of the work.[192] This may be indicative of the still nascent art historical research into its collection at this time. Further publications followed from Theodore Musper (1948),[193] Leo van Puyvelde (1948),[194] Ursula Hoff (1949),[195] Kenneth Clark (1949),[196] Anthony Bertram (1950),[197] Van der Elst again (1951),[198] René Cazier (1951),[199] Ludwig Baldass (1952),[200] André Chastel (1952),[201] Eberhard Schenk zu Schweinsberg (1952),[202] and Van Puyvelde again (1953).[203] The work was consistently attributed to Van Eyck.

More than any other author, Erwin Panofsky made the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* known to an international audience through his classic book of 1953 *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origin and Character*. Panofsky attributed the work to Van Eyck unreservedly and accepted the date of execution as 1433, although he did not think the signature original, and was the first to acknowledge that the Virgin's face had been overpainted. He analysed the work's composition, style, and iconography, and fully integrated it into his discussion of Van Eyck's oeuvre. It was particularly important for his discussion of disguised symbolism. Although the work manifestly represents the Virgin and Child, it does not contain any explicit religious symbols, such as haloes. Panofsky noted, however, that it may contain more subtle—or 'disguised'—religious symbolism, such as the fruit on the windowsill as a reference to the Original Sin, and the light passing through the carafe (without affecting it) as an allusion to Mary's virginity.[204] In the same year Daryl Lindsay, Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, summed up the work's preeminent position in the Gallery's collection in an internal Gallery document: 'The most important work in our collection is the Van Eyck "Madonna"—this little gem has a world wide reputation, and its possession has done more to set the standard of the collection than any dozen other works.'[205]

Following Panofsky's book the work was also published by Valentin Denis (1954),[206] Martin Davies (1954),[207] Maurice Brockwell (1954),[208] Joz Duverger (1955),[209] Julius Held (1955),[210] Jacques Lassaigne (1955),[211] and Otto Pächt (1956),[212] always as a Van Eyck. It may have been because of its growing fame that a request to borrow the *Virgin and Child* for an exhibition in Bruges was written in January 1956 by Leo Collard, Minister of Public Instruction in the Belgian Government. Collard also cited the loan as an opportunity for the

Committee of the '*Primitifs Flamands*' *Corpus* project to study the work.[213] This recently established project was being undertaken by the Centre National de Recherches '*Primitifs Flamands*', directed by Paul Coremans (1908–1965). His portentous title was Directeur des Archives Centrales Iconographiques d'Art National et du Laboratoire Central des Musées de Belgique (A.C.L.), Brussels, and he was also a professor at the University of Ghent. The Centre is now known as the Centre for the Study of Fifteenth-Century Painting in the Southern Netherlands and the Principality of Liège, and its aim has been to publish every Netherlandish painting of the fifteenth century. A technical analysis in Belgium was considered an integral part of the work's publication, as it is a feature of the *Corpus* volumes that technical information is included in the entry for each work.

A condition of the loan was that Paul Coremans was to give his opinion regarding the condition of the work, particularly whether it required cleaning, for the benefit of the Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria.[214] Thus, the work was sent to Europe to be exhibited, to be examined for the *Corpus* project, and to determine whether its condition required any treatment, particularly cleaning. Two years earlier another of the Gallery's masterpieces, Giambattista Tiepolo's *Banquet of Cleopatra*, had been sent to London 'with a view to having it cleaned and possibly relined'.[215] The treatment of the Tiepolo was undertaken by Horace Buttery, the highly respected English conservator of Old Master paintings[216] who had cleaned a number of the Gallery's masterpieces,[217] and the work was also exhibited in London at this time. In this period the National Gallery of Victoria evidently considered it prudent to send its most valuable works to London for conservation.

The Archives Centrales Iconographiques d'Art National et du Laboratoire Central des Musées de Belgique came under the Ministry of Public Instruction, and were transformed into the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique in 1957,[218] during the period in which Coremans examined the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. He is regarded as a pioneering figure in the field of the technical analysis of artworks,[219] particularly for his searching investigation and fulsome presentation of the materials and technique of the Van Eycks' Ghent altarpiece, in the *Corpus* volume he edited in 1953.[220] However, aspects of his work have also attracted degrees of criticism from scientists, conservation specialists, and art historians. While admired for the flair he brought to his rôle as an expert witness in the Van Meegeren forgery court case, due to his involvement in this case Coremans also became a figure of some controversy from the late 1940s until 1956 when a court case brought against him by the wealthy owner of one of the forgeries, Daniel George van Beuningen, failed following the collector's death.[221] This case brought to light Coremans' curious avoidance of professional

scrutiny and subjective methodology (see Appendix B for an account of the controversy surrounding Coremans after the Second World War).

On 2 June 1956 the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* left Melbourne on the liner *S.S. Otranto*, bound for London. By 23 July it had arrived at the National Gallery, London, where x-radiography, infrared, and ultraviolet images were made of the work. Within a day or so it was sent on to Bruges, and further x-radiography and infrared images were made by the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, presumably in their laboratory in Brussels.[222] From 31 July (inauguration—official opening 1 August) until 16 September the painting was exhibited as a Van Eyck in *L'Art flamand dans les collections Britanniques et la Galerie Nationale de Victoria* at the Musée Groeninge (Groeningemuseum in Dutch) in Bruges.[223] Sir Philip Hendy, Director of the National Gallery, London, Professor Ellis Waterhouse, a curator at the same gallery, and the art historian Christopher Norris had been involved in selecting the exhibits. The *Virgin and Child*'s appearance at the exhibition was considered newsworthy, *The Illustrated London News* reported: 'One of the most important works in the exhibition is the superb little van Eyck "Ince Hall Madonna" […] which has been lent from Melbourne'.[224]

Coremans claimed not to have seen the work before the exhibition.[225] He did examine the painting at the Musée Groeninge and had doubts about its attribution then. He shared these doubts either at the exhibition or shortly afterwards with the directors of the National Gallery, London,[226] and the Rijksmuseum,[227] and Christopher Norris,[228] but not Ursula Hoff, whom he met there,[229] or the Director of National Gallery of Victoria, the late Eric Westbrook (1915–2005).[230] By November the work had been sent to London,[231] where it was exhibited at the National Gallery until 21 December as a Van Eyck.[232] The matter of the proposed cleaning was then discussed by the Felton Bequest Committee. The cleaning was apparently to have been undertaken in London, but the matter was deferred until Coremans provided his report on the work's condition.[233] However, on 8 February 1957 Hendy forwarded to Westbrook a letter from Coremans in which he explained he had serious doubts about the *Virgin and Child* and that he would try to avoid making the expected report.[234] On 5 March Westbrook showed the letter to the Gallery's Trustees.[235] He had been appointed Director in January of the previous year. From 1946 to 1949 he had been Director of the Wakefield Art Gallery, Yorkshire, then Chief Exhibitions Officer for the Fine Arts Department of the British Council, before becoming the first full-time director of the Auckland Art Gallery in 1952.[236] He would come to be highly regarded as a modernising influence at the National Gallery of Victoria, and for the arts in Victoria. His achievements were recognised with high honours from the French and British governments.[237]

In July 1957 a meeting was held at the National Gallery, London, between Coremans, Davies, Hendy, the Head Chemist of the National Gallery London Laboratory (F.I.G. Rawlins), and A.J.L. McDonnell representing the Felton Bequest,[238] in which Coremans explained his doubts about the work. The painting was placed on a table at the meeting. Coremans' suspicions prior to the work's cleaning were threefold. First, he suggested that the paint surface had sharply defined edges that seemed not to be the result of having been trimmed at any time. Since this would preclude the existence of an unpainted fringe around the panel, he believed this feature of the work was un-Flemish. Second, he thought the craquelure pattern uncharacteristically evenly distributed across the paint surface. Third, he believed the paint layers were not laid down in accordance with what he thought normal for Van Eyck's technique.[239]

Coremans' suspicions do not reflect a close observation of the painting itself. Suffice to say here that if he had looked closely at the paint surface or consulted one of the x-radiographs, the first was made in London by 23 July 1956[240] and the second was made in Belgium by 10 August 1956,[241] he would have seen that the edges of the paint layer are not sharply defined. The paint layers are damaged at the edges—quite badly along parts of the top and right sides. Hoff and Davies later stated that damaged paint layers at the edges of a panel are an indication that a panel has been cut down.[242] Thus, the absence of an unpainted fringe could be reasonably explained. Coremans admitted that if the paint layers had been transferred to the current panel this would account for what he perceived to be an unusual craquelure, which close inspection reveals does follow the paint layers to some extent. He could not have had much idea about the paint layers, other than those on the surface, prior to microscopic and microsample analyses. It subsequently turned out that some parts of the surface were obscured by overpainting—over, between, and under three layers of varnish. There was, thus, no substantial technical basis to Coremans' initial suspicions about the work as they were recorded.

The Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria[243] had earlier received advice from Horace Buttery strongly recommending against an invasive cleaning treatment, the effects of which could not be known.[244] Christopher Norris was also against cleaning the work. Their opinions, together with 'rather disquieting reports' about Coremans, worried McDonnell. He then advised Westbrook against a complete cleaning of the work.[245] Ursula Hoff, Philip Hendy, and Eric Westbrook, on the other hand, were in favour.[246] According to Martin Davies, the person responsible for the work's actual treatment at the Institut, Albert Philippot,

'had a strong feeling that the picture ought not to be cleaned'.[247] However, Coremans wanted it cleaned to facilitate his expressing an opinion of it.[248]

The work was despatched to the Institut in Brussels on 12 September 1957.[249] Albert Philippot (Chief Restorer), René Sneyers (Laboratory Director), and Jean Thissen (Laboratory Assistant) contributed to its analysis and restoration. In November Westbrook visited the Institut where he was impressed by Coremans' criticisms of the work. Nevertheless, something of Westbrook's unease in the situation can be gauged from the awkward manner in which he expressed his confidence in Coremans: 'I think he is an honest chap—a Fleming—and as such much pleasanter than the Walloons'.[250] Westbrook's probably unintended aspersion on the French speaking population of Wallonia, one of three autonomous regions of federal Belgium, may be indicative of the pressure he felt.

During Westbrook's visit the painting was taken to Antwerp for comparison with at least one of the two Van Eyck paintings in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, in Dutch), in the presence of Philip Hendy. Hendy later recalled his meeting with Westbrook: 'When we saw it [the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*] together in Antwerp beside an undoubted original of similar dimensions in the Antwerp Museum, it undoubtedly looked inferior—but I also remember how well it stood up to the van Eyck in many respects.'[251] Despite this not entirely negative assessment, Westbrook then summarised the case against the work's authenticity in three points: the quality of the execution of the original paint layers as they could be seen below the retouching was not equivalent to Van Eyck's; the panel was uncharacteristic, although the paint layers might have been transferred to the present panel; and the painting lacked the atmosphere of Van Eyck's works. He concluded it had 'a very doubtful history whichever way it is looked at.'[252]

Each of these observations is open to question. When original paint layers are obscured by overpainting, this is often an indication that the work has been damaged. If the paint layers of the *Virgin and Child* had been abraded (as was found to be the case when it was cleaned) then this might explain the less than perfect impression made by the painting, including any perceived lack of atmosphere in the work. Atmosphere is one of the first qualities to be lost when a painting is abraded. Art historians had long noted the work's relatively poor condition (warping, pronounced craquelure, and overpainting), while maintaining that the work showed sufficient overall quality to be attributed to Van Eyck. The suggestion that the panel was unusual (lacking an unpainted fringe) has already been addressed and will be discussed in detail in the following chapter. The suggestion that the work had a doubtful history is also unfounded. The work's provenance was known with

certainty from 1850 when Waagen discovered it in the Weld-Blundell family's large art collection, with a number of important drawings, paintings, and sculptures. From what is known, it seems the paintings came from reputable sources, certainly none of them has been shown to be a forgery. Further investigation could have extended the provenance back to 1837 with a high degree of probability, as has been demonstrated here. From 1853 to 1956 the attribution of the work to Van Eyck was accepted by every author who saw it. The absence of a longer or more distinguished provenance cannot be considered an argument against the work's authenticity. The provenance of Van Eyck's uncontested Thyssen-Bornemisza *Annunciation* was, and still is, uncertain before the 1930s.[253]

Limited cleaning tests were conducted in Brussels in Westbrook's presence, removing areas of varnish and overpainting.[254] Then, unexpectedly, a very tough, transparent layer was discovered covering virtually the entire paint surface. Samples later revealed the layer responded to tests in a manner consistent with an aged egg white (egg white was traditionally used as a cheap alternative to mastic varnish,[255] and when used as such can be called a glair). The analysts initially thought the glair might have been an original part of the paint layer structure, although they soon realised that it was not.[256] At the end of November 1957, Westbrook telegrammed his Trustees strongly urging them to authorise a complete cleaning.[257] And in early December 1957 a formal declaration was prepared by Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers to the effect that the scientific analysis for which the work had been sent to Brussels could only be accomplished if the work was fully cleaned (which meant removing the glair).[258] It seems Coremans' concerns about the attribution of the work weighed more heavily than concerns the Trustees might have had that an invasive cleaning or sampling of the paint layers could potentially alter their condition for the worse,[259] since the cleaning was approved.[260]

Writing to the President of the Gallery's Trustees, Leonard Cox, Westbrook averred: 'I don't think I have been panicked by this'.[261] It could, though, be thought he had been pursuaded somewhat precipitously. The painting was cleaned, with all varnish layers, most of the inpainting, and some of the overpainting removed. Then, for more than six months—from late April to early November—the work lay in a stripped state in Coremans' laboratory, while Westbrook sought approval from his Trustees for the restoration and Coremans looked for funds to pay for it.[262] It seems there had been little preparation, on both sides, for what was to come after the cleaning. Westbrook accepted Coremans' doubts about the work, and then delegated a sensitive aspect of his responsibility for it—its restoration—to Coremans before there could be an informed discussion of these matters by the Gallery's Trustees or

verification sought from independent Van Eyck scholars. The most appropriate time to try to reach a consensus on the work's attribution would have been before, rather than after, the restoration. Or so it would seem from the censure of one of the Gallery's Trustees, Aubrey Gibson, quoted in the next chapter.[263] The restoration (inpainting, overpainting, and varnishing) proceded until January 1959. The National Gallery London Laboratory assisted with the chemical analysis of some microsamples, providing a report written by Francis Ian Gregory Rawlins, Joyce Plesters, and Margaret Hey; while Martin Davies, Assistant Keeper at the Gallery, contributed a report on the work's art historical analysis.

In December 1957 Coremans wrote to Davies of his suspicions that the work was at best a sixteenth-century copy.[264] However, after removing the glair, the analysts discovered that the retouching that had been underneath it resisted solvents to the same degree as the rest of the paint layers, and seemed to them to be composed of the same materials. This, and the character of the craquelure, which they judged comparable with artificial craquelure, led them to conclude that the painting was probably the work of a forger imitating an aged appearance.[265] Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers signed a report on file at the Institut in which they stated that the work's signature and other passages of painting previously believed to be additions of lesser quality were demonstrably original to the work, and its materials and technique were un-Eyckian, and indeed un-Flemish. They argued that the most positive interpretation of the work was as an old painting of an Eyckian character, influenced by the other known versions of the composition, but added:

> It is, however, more logical to suggest first that the work dates from a more recent period. With regard to this, the first accepted mention of the Ince-Blundell Madonna—the catalogue of 1803—does not contradict this conclusion. In effect, if we are permitted to think that the Melbourne Madonna dates from the nineteenth century, the laboratory cannot prove that this dating could not be advanced a number of decades.[266]

The conclusion that the work might be a nineteenth-century forgery was not made public, and it may not even have been made known to all of the Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria, as it does not appear in any of the official reports available from the National Gallery of Victoria. It was not recorded in the Trustees' minutes. It was, however, made known to Davies, Hendy, Westbrook, and (possibly only in a diluted form) to Hoff and Cox, as will shortly be explained.

Since the analysts did not find any anachronistic materials in the original paint layers, the work's attribution as probably a forgery was based upon their interpretation of its technique. However, their opinion was expressed differently to different parties, was at times not unanimous, and decreased in certainty with time. In the signed report at the Institut, quoted above, the work is described by Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers as at best an old copy, but more likely a recent forgery.[267] Coremans expressed a different opinion to Westbrook in December 1958, stating that Philippot and Sneyers believed the work to be a deliberate nineteenth-century forgery, while he suggested it was similar to sixteenth-century works produced in Spain and Italy.[268] It seems Coremans' opinion made a particular impression on Westbrook, since it appeared in a preliminary draft of the press release later prepared at the Gallery,[269] even though it was not included in any of the official reports sent to Melbourne from Brussels. The wording of Coremans' opinion was eventually expressed in the final draft of the press release in less geographically specific terms. In turn, Westbrook wrote to Leonard Cox that the work was an early picture, not by Van Eyck, which 'was in effect a fake'.[270]

The final report sent by the Brussels analysts to the National Gallery of Victoria, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, signed and dated 14 November 1958,[271] does not record the analysts' same negative observations supporting their hypothesis that the work was probably a forgery, as those found in the earlier Brussels report *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed but undated.[272] The changes were made, apparently, following the advice of Martin Davies who commented on the earlier version (a copy of the earlier report with his hand-written criticisms is on file in the National Gallery London Archives),[273] and who wrote to the Institut saying: 'Some of the things I have commented on are due to my continued feeling that some people at Melbourne, due to study this report, although they may not know much about pictures, are trained in dealing with legal evidence and that we should all, therefore, be rather careful about phrasing.'[274] Davies was undoubtedly referring to the legal expertise of Sir Owen Dixon, Chairman of the Felton Bequest Committee and Chief Justice of Australia, whom he had met in the National Gallery, London, on 4 July 1958 with McDonnell and Hendy to discuss the work's analysis.[275] According to Joseph Burke, the first Herald Chair of Fine Art at The University of Melbourne and fellow Trustee of the Felton Bequest Committee, Dixon was 'intellectually the most outstanding figure in the country'.[276]

It might be thought, given his position, that Burke would have had something to say on the matter, but as he confided to Kenneth Clark, he was 'not a Renaissance specialist' and so

he passed his material on to Franz Philipp, a colleague in Art History at The University of Melbourne.[277] Philipp's thoughts on the subject are not known.

By 26 July Sir Owen Dixon had returned to Australia, where he chaired a Felton Bequest Committee meeting to which Westbrook and Hoff were invited. They heard Dixon's report on his meeting in London. The minutes record his judicious comments:

> He expressed the view that in the opposition between the traditional ascription of the picture and the indecisive reasons which had been given for regarding it as probably a sixteenth century copy of a hypothetical original now lost, the question would remain one about which opinion might be expected to fluctuate.
>
> In the circumstances it was desirable that the report when it was forthcoming should be communicated to some journal like the Burlington Magazine and that there should be no prior announcement of the investigation or its result, more particularly there should be none to the press […].
>
> He also expressed the view that until an exhaustive attempt to trace the whereabouts or fate of the picture the subject of the photograph [presumably the photograph of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* Davies obtained from the Victoria and Albert Museum] was made, the conjecture that there had been an original from which the Melbourne picture had been copied must remain unsatisfying as a hypothesis.

Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' response to the prospect of a legalistic appraisal of their report in Australia was to modify it, presumably not relishing the thought of fresh litigation so soon after Van Beuningen's death. The version of the final report sent to Melbourne retained only a few of their earlier observations suggesting it might be a modern forgery.[278] An instance in which the changing expression of their opinion had important ramifications for the question of the work's attribution is their examination of the signature, generally believed at the time to be a later addition unworthy of Van Eyck. In an interim report of February 1958 it was observed that the application of 94° alcohol to areas adjacent to the signature revealed no solubility. Application of the same solvent to the downstroke of the 'D' in the signature began to cause abrasion to the ridges of the paint, while an application of the same solvent without rubbing revealed no solubility. This and related evidence was interpreted in various ways.[279] In a discussion between Davies and Coremans, recorded in another interim report in May, the question was asked whether the inscription could be considered 'as authentic' as the rest of the painting. Coremans answered 'yes, based, above all, on its solubility'.[280] He and his colleagues Philippot and Sneyers maintained this

assertion in the signed report on file in Brussels.[281] However, in the modified version of that report sent to Melbourne it was expressed ambiguously, and more accurately, stating only that the inscription, like the rest of the painting could be considered 'very old' ('*ancienne*'). Although, it was suggested that this was significant, and contributed to their belief that the work was possibly an imitation.[282]

Subsequently, however, Hoff's 1961 catalogue entry for the work stated that the scientific analysts in Brussels had reaffirmed Zink's claim that the signature was by the same hand as the painting as a whole.[283] None of the reports from Brussels expressed the conclusion in this way. In fact Coremans had admitted in an interim report that he did not know if Zink had observed the paint layer without a remaining varnish layer over the surface, and that if he had not, Zink's assertion about the originality of the signature would be of no value.[284] Hoff presumably reverted to a semblance of Coremans' earlier interpretation that the signature was contemporary with the painting as a whole, to follow the spirit of Davies' report (if not the letter), which was completed two days before Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers modified their version of the final report for Melbourne, revising their observation about the originality of the signature, as well as a number of other observations. Davies did eventually see their revised final report for Melbourne, but only after he had already sent his own.[285]

True to his word, Davies was careful about the way he phrased his report. Much of Davies' criticism of the painting, in relation to the signature and other details he thought unworthy of Van Eyck, was based on the analysts' earlier suggestions that solvent tests had shown them to be original—Davies cited the interim report of May 1958 and the 'report from Brussels' (i.e. the original version of the final report he had recently critiqued). Evidently, though, Davies realised that none of the physical tests carried out on the suspect areas of paint actually proved them to be original as the Brussels analysts had claimed. The final Brussels report sent to him had said:

> After the lifting of the transparent layer, the most suspect areas (inscription, details of doubtful execution, retouches filling losses and the craquelure) were treated locally with 94° ethyl alcohol for a longer time than in a normal cleaning. Always the painting resisted. Based on the solubility alone, and as much as other analyses do not lead to any contradiction, it must be concluded that the whole painting including the inscription, the most doubtful details of the execution, the retouches filling losses, and the craquelure are contemporary. It would even be appropriate to add: and are the product of the same hand.

But Davies had circled the words 'it must' ('*il faut*') and in the margin he added 'one may' ('*on peut*')—a fundamental distinction in modality.[286] In his own report, Davies did not say that tests had found the contested passages of painting to be original, rather, he said that in his view the likelihood that these passages were not original was little. This opinion can best be explained by Davies' acceptance of the idea that the work could be considered a forgery. This is most apparent in relation to those passages of painting overlying losses (commonly accepted as a sign of later repainting), which he agreed were most likely to be original, even in the absence of specific technical evidence.[287] But even his more moderately expressed position (compared with the final Brussels report) was undermined by the further equivocation in Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' revised report sent to Melbourne:

> After the lifting of the transparent layer, the most controversial elements (the inscription, doubtful details of style, retouches filling in losses and cracks cf. (a) on the same page) were locally treated with ethyl alcohol 94% (solvent 4) for a longer time than in a normal cleaning: the colour still resisted, as in the rest of the picture (cf. L7333B: state of the picture after cleaning).
>
> Solely on the basis of the resistance of the paint layers to the solvents mentioned above, it would be permissible to consider the painting as very old.[288]

Unease with the changing nature of the Institut's reports may have caused Davies to decline accepting co-authorship of the entry for the work in his and Hoff's *Corpus* volume in 1971. After all, the rewording of the Institut's revised report had undermined a good deal of his.[289]

Importantly, Hoff never seems to have realised the implications of Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' modified final report for Melbourne, or at least did not take them into account. It would remain one of her primary arguments against the work's attribution to Van Eyck that the Brussels analysts had shown the painting and the inscription were 'of the same date and by the same hand' (expressed in these words in her 1961, 1967, 1973, and 1995 catalogues),[290] and other authors have accepted this misrepresentation of the conclusions in the final Melbourne report until recently.[291]

Philippot and Sneyers' 1971 revised précis of their original analysis omitted any reference to their analysis of the signature in the body of their report written in French. Yet, strangely, in the caption in English to Plate LXI, they stated that the inscription was 'contemporary with the painting' as a whole, reverting to their interpretation in the final Brussels report, but ignoring that they had rescinded that claim in the version of the final

report subsequently made for Melbourne. If this caption were thought to provide some justification for those who later believed the inscription had been shown to be original, this is still not quite the case. Plate LXI in fact shows the right side of the signature prior to Philippot's removal of overpainting from its letters. Thus, it was apparently his judgement that not all this inscription as it was illustrated was contemporary with the painting. This would have been apparent to anyone comparing Plate LXI with the condition of the right part of the signature after Philippot's restoration. The reference to passages of paint over losses that was made in the body of Philippot and Sneyers' report indicated that these resisted solvents to the same degree as the rest of the paint layers, but did not conclude that this showed they were original, as before. So on what basis could the inscription be said to be original?

In other respects, the précis also differed from the reports of the late 1950s. The hypothesis of a recent date for the picture was not excluded, but it was noted that this marked a strong discord with the historical 'givens'.[292] This comment constitutes a reversal of the authors' previous opinions regarding the work, one for which no explanation was given. Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers had been withdrawing from their most unsustainable conclusions as early as 1958, and the latter two continued to do so in 1971, joined then by Davies who would not accept responsibility for the entry in the *Corpus*, leaving only Hoff to attempt to maintain the value of the earlier findings. It is little wonder that the art historian P. Filedt Kok was disturbed by the fact that Hoff had been unable to reconcile the various views about the work in her 1971 *Corpus* entry.[293] They were by then irreconcilable.

Just as there had been little consistency among the technical and historical analysts concerning the condition and attribution of the work, there was little in the reception of their various opinions. Erwin Panofsky agreed to assess the findings of the analysis, but in his letter accepting the task he stressed that he was not an expert in technical matters and that he did not consider himself a connoisseur in the way Max Friedländer was.[294] The documents were sent from Melbourne to Panofsky at The Institute for Advanced Study at Princeton, New Jersey. Panofsky is recorded in Hoff's entry in the 1971 *Corpus* volume as having 'agreed with the findings' of the Institut—she neglected to mention that he expressed scepticism concerning one key aspect of its findings, and that he disagreed with a number of Davies' arguments.[295]

While Panofsky may have accepted the conclusions, in his report addressed to Westbrook he stressed again that he was in no position to evaluate the technical aspects of the analysis. Still, in the only footnote to his text, Panofsky seemed unconvinced by the assertion

that the signature could be thought an original part of the paint layers (even if he expressed his feelings in inconclusive terms). Since Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' Melbourne report does not actually say this, the most likely explanation for Panofsky's having thought so is that he gained the impression from Davies' report, which favours this idea and which cited earlier reports from Brussels as the origin of this view. It seems Panofsky did not suspect that the most recent London and Brussels reports could be at variance with each other on a matter of importance, overlooking the ambiguity of the wording in the report from Brussels. As Panofsky had signalled he would, he gave greater attention to Davies' art historical report than the Brussels technical report (citing Davies' name four times, to Coremans' once). Panofsky expressed a number of reservations about Davies' art historical analysis. He disagreed with Davies that it should be thought possible that Van Eyck placed the signature on the panel himself, whether of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* or a lost original. He believed it more likely that an original had had its signature transferred to its panel. Panofsky also disagreed that the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* (Museo Paroquial, Iglesi de San Cosme y San Damian, Covarrubias/Burgos) could be considered a more faithful record of the composition of a lost Van Eyck than the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[296]

On 22 June 1959 the work was delivered to Hendy's office at the National Gallery, London, for safekeeping.[297] At this time Hendy wrote to Westbrook that he was 'fully prepared to accept nearly all the conclusions that he [Coremans] has deducted from it.' The one conclusion that Hendy could not accept was that the picture might date to later than the sixteenth century, based solely on his own 'unscientific' observations.[298] Thus, Hendy implicitly rejected Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' hypothesis that the work could be a nineteenth-century forgery. Hendy would have learnt of their hypothesis through Davies, if not directly from the Institut.

Not having been directly involved in the work's scientific analysis and restoration up to this point, Hoff was now called upon to seek verification of the analysis, while based in London, as well as undertaking research for the National Gallery of Victoria's next catalogue of Old Master paintings, and discussing acquisitions for the Gallery with McDonnell.[299] From the end of June,[300] Hoff prepared a report on her consultations with the art historians Otto Pächt, at Oriel College, Oxford, and Ludwig Baldass, in Vienna. It is not clear how much of the material they reviewed, although it seems likely they saw the version of the final report prepared for Melbourne, as well as Davies' report. Hoff's own report was tendered on 28 August 1959. She noted that Pächt was 'up to a point, opposed to the methods employed by Brussels', but did not suggest what implications this might have for the reliability of their

analysis of the *Virgin and Child*. But then, Hoff's report did not include reference to consultation with any specialist in the scientific analysis of paintings. Hoff also recorded that Pächt disagreed with some of Davies' art historical analysis, in particular that the plain mantle in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* could be considered un-Eyckian. He believed it was more likely characteristic of an early phase in Van Eyck's manner, close in style to Campin's paintings of the Virgin and Child. She reported that Davies conceded Pächt might be right.

Hoff did not report any criticisms made by Baldass, who was pursuaded that the work was a faithful fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century copy of a lost original by Van Eyck, despite suggesting that the facial types had long been recognised as un-Eyckian (perhaps a reference to Panofsky having identified the presence of overpainting in the Virgin's face?). Another important feature of Hoff's report was her comment that the hypothesis of a recent origin for the work (that it was a modern forgery) had been somewhat modified. Hoff did not say by whom, in what way, or for what reason this change came about, but it probably reflects Hendy's views described above, which she could have heard at the National Gallery, London. Because of the changing nature of the opinions about the work, Hoff recommended that her report not be published. Hoff also advised that it was standard practice in European museums when important attributions were challenged not to change the label immediately and not to produce any special publications.[301]

The work was despatched by air from London on 19 September[302] and returned to the National Gallery of Victoria on 22 September 1959.[303] On 13 October 1959, Sir Owen Dixon met with the Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria where he 'expostulated at the slender evidence accumulated and the inadequacy of the enquiry.' Dixon's diary entry on another date recorded the opinion of Sir Lionel Lindsay, brother of the previous Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Daryl Lindsay, that the 'evidence against the authorship of the Ince Hall Madonna is worthless.' Dixon subsequently left the drafting of a press release on the affair to the Gallery, amidst much tension, according to his diary.[304] The press release was prepared by the Gallery's Trustees and staff.[305] There were at least three drafts of the text. The final version said of the work:

> It left this gallery in 1956 to be shown in the exhibition of Flemish paintings from British collections at Bruges, and also for a short time in London at the National Gallery. For some time previous to this there had been some anxiety as to the state of the wood panel upon which it was painted and the dirt and discoloured varnish which appeared to be obscuring the paint surface [...].

The text continued that the Trustees had received reports:

> […] which, while tending further to strengthen opinion that "The Ince Hall Madonna" was painted in the period of the 15th or the early 16th century, have further expressed the view that the painting is not the work of Jan van Eyck (*c*. 1390–1441), as had been previously accepted, but is probably the work of a non-Flemish artist of that period, after a lost original by van Eyck.

A further paragraph was a late addition to the draft press release,[306] which, while running contrary to many art historical criticisms of the signature, by its wording seems to have been added to acknowledge the possibility that the work might be authentic:

> However, the painting bears an inscription stating that it was painted by Jan van Eyck in 1433, and this inscription has resisted all attempts by chemical methods to show that this is a later addition. In view of the importance of this matter the Trustees intend taking all possible steps to encourage further research and the publication of scholarly and expert opinion on this painting which may be tested on a world-wide basis.[307]

Thus, the original conclusion reached in Brussels—that the work was most likely a modern forgery—had been significantly modified in successive retellings in a short period of time. Simultaneous with the Trustees' press release, which did not specify who had rejected the work's traditional attribution, Coremans issued a statement to the press in Europe advising that the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique had been responsible for the work's analysis.[308] Was this curious synchronised strategy a way to discourage the Australian press from pursuing the story to its source, while still being able to show that the disclosure had been made? The European news agency Reuters provided information about the story, which stated that the Institut believed the work was a copy of a lost original by a contemporary of Van Eyck.[309] The story was reported in *The Age*, Melbourne,[310] *The Times*, London,[311] *Le Soir*, Brussels (where the work was referred to as possibly of the sixteenth century),[312] and *Die Weltkunst*, Munich, included a brief announcement that the work was now considered to be a non-Flemish copy of a lost original by Van Eyck.[313]

The painting's label was changed upon its return to the Gallery. Although Coremans had invited Hoff to prepare a *Corpus* volume for the National Gallery of Victoria's early Netherlandish works in 1956, the records of the scientific and art historical analysis were not to be published in this volume until 1971, thirteen years after they were written, and then in a

significantly modified form. The records of the 1957–58 analysis and restoration housed in the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, the National Gallery, London, and the National Gallery of Victoria, as well as copies of records in the possession of Professor J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, a distinguished student of the Institut, have never been published—with the exception of those reproduced as an appendix to this author's Master of Arts thesis, available from The University of Melbourne. The majority of the Melbourne and London documents are, however, now in the public domain, most of the former having been transferred to the Victorian Public Record Office and made available without restriction in recent years, the latter are available for consultation by appointment in the archives of the Gallery in London. The Institut's documents have also been available for consultation by appointment.

It is not clear why Westbrook discounted Dixon's and Hoff's independent advice not to produce any special publicity, such as the press release, that doubts had been expressed about the work's authenticity, which would effectively give these doubts the Gallery's imprimatur. Nor is it clear why, following the publicity generated by that press release, when an interested party in Belgium wrote asking to see the scientific reports[314] Westbrook declined, claiming they had been made 'privately' to the Trustees.[315] Nor is it known why the reports were not published for scholarly review in the form in which they were received, as Dixon had suggested, or why it took thirteen years for any version of the scientific reports to be published. It might be thought Westbrook was trying to protect the Gallery from the disapprobation that would follow if it were known that the Institut's staff regarded the gem of its collection as a nineteenth-century forgery. Or did the fact that he had allowed Coremans to follow his own initiative in the analysis and—more importantly since it could not easily be reversed—the restoration of the work (as explained in the next chapter), effectively commit Westbrook to Coremans' interpretation of the work? In any case, by showing his support for the Brussels-London analysis (implicit in his publicising of its results and explicit in his correspondence), Westbrook would have made it difficult for any employee of the National Gallery of Victoria to then query or correct any significant aspect of the findings, for to do so could be construed as insubordination. The fact that a majority of the Trustees supported Westbrook no doubt reinforced this, even if the quality of their support is now to be judged in relation to how forthright he had been with them as to the true nature of the Institut's findings. To this day, no publication of the Gallery has queried the Institut's interpretations or corrected its errors, although others have been critical.

Arnold Shore's response to the press release shows he was perplexed by the manner in which the announcement was made. The Art Critic for *The Age* newspaper (Melbourne)

and the National Gallery of Victoria's Guide Lecturer 1948–57 called for an explanation of the change of attribution, with prodigious perspicacity:

> Are there any reasons which the so far unnamed expert or experts have given in support of his or their "opinion" that our Madonna and Child was not painted by Jan van Eyck? Why should what has apparently been of great moment to the trustees not been detailed? Why has the "opinion" been accepted readily enough to have the label changed?
>
> Has the suggestion that the work, if not genuine, is that of a non-Flemish painter, any validity? If so, on what is it based?
>
> Is there any explanation of the curious idea or fact that the statement that "the signature and date…having resisted all attempts by chemical methods to show they are later additions" seems to mean nothing?[316]

The late David Carritt, a London art dealer renowned for his discoveries of Old Master paintings, refuted Coremans' findings solely on the basis of his own connoisseurship, stating:

> These experts who have cast doubt on it are led by a Belgian, Dr. Cooremans, who is a leading authority on the technical side of connoisseurship. No doubt he was able to examine it with every sort of technical equipment when it was lent to Bruges in, I think, 1956. I do not yet know precisely what his arguments are. Apparently he does not doubt that the picture is of the fifteenth century. If he has misgivings about the inscription on it, which gives the date of execution as 1432 [sic] and Jan van Eyck as the artist, then I entirely agree with him. It is coarsely written, and probably copies an old inscription on the original frame, now lost. But if he attempts to maintain that the picture is not completely worthy of Jan van Eyck, and not completely consistent with his style, then I think he is making a big mistake. The picture is of the highest possible quality, one of the first perfect sunlit interiors in European art. The only possible way in which it could be discredited would be if an even better version of it turned up.[317]

Thus, initially the work's critical reception was not adversely affected. It was published as a Van Eyck by F. Grossmann (1957),[318] Christopher Hussey (1958),[319] Peter and Linda Murray (1960),[320] and John Jacob (1960).[321]

Ursula Hoff's 1961 *Catalogue of European Paintings before Eighteen Hundred* (first edition), however, reclassified the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a copy 'After Van Eyck'. In

an oversight, this important change in attribution was not recorded in the 'List of Attributions Changed from the General Catalogue of 1948 and Appendix I of 1950, II of 1954' at the front of the catalogue. In the entry itself, Hoff gave three principal reasons for classifying the work as a copy. First, the signature was described as unusually and incorrectly spelt, and poorly written. The 1957–58 examination was said to have re-affirmed Zink's assertion that the painting and signature were by the same hand, although, as has been shown, this was not the conclusion in the Institut's final Melbourne report. She did not mention that it was not known on what basis Zink's observation was made, nor did she specify the nature of the evidence on which the 're-affirmation' was based. Second, Hoff stated that no overpainting had been found to account for what she referred to as the Virgin's un-Eyckian features, and errors in the construction of the cupboard, window frame, and shutters (sic—only one is visible). Hoff did not specify what these un-Eyckian features and errors were, or explain what scientific methodology had been used to arrive at the conclusion that no overpainting could be found in them. Again, the question of the extent of overpaint had actually been left undetermined by the Brussels analysts in their final Melbourne report.

Third, Hoff stated that a photograph of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* had been discovered showing that details of its inscription and composition differed slightly from those in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. She claimed these differences allowed the assumption that the two works were copies of a lost original. Thus, the long-held belief that the existence of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* supported the case for the authenticity of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was undermined.[322] Her argument was, however, puzzling. A copy may be faithful or not. The fact that the Verdura *Virgin and Child* differs slightly from the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* may be due to the lesser ability of its painter or their lack of care. Technical evidence discussed in Chapters Two and Three, some of which was available in 1956, indicates that the Verdura *Virgin and Child* is almost certainly a copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. This is evident in the fact that the former composition corresponds in significant details such as the height of the window to the one in the final paint layers of the latter, whereas x-radiography shows that a number of modifications were made to arrive at the final composition in the Melbourne painting, thus establishing the primacy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.

Hoff's arguments against the work's authenticity were without foundation. However, assessments of the work's attribution around the world were thereafter mixed, and became increasingly negative. It would have been impossible to challenge Hoff's assertions, unsupported by technical evidence at this stage, since the reports and scientific images from

Brussels and London on which they were based—albeit loosely—had not been made freely available or published. Millard Meiss (1961) then came out against the painting,[323] while Otto Kurz (1961) remained in favour,[324] Gerald Reitlinger (1961) seemed to be in favour,[325] Michael Levey (1962) was against,[326] Keith Roberts (1962) thought the work 'suspect',[327] while E. Schiltz (1963) was equivocal.[328] Jacqueline Folie (1963), writing for the *Bulletin* of the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, was unequivocally in the negative,[329] as was Kenneth Clark (1964),[330] while Paul Wescher (1965) retained the traditional attribution,[331] and Vladimir Loewinson-Lessing and Nicolas Nicouline (1965) did not come down for or against.[332]

Hoff's (1967) entry for the work in the second edition of the Gallery's catalogue of Old Master paintings was almost word for word the same as that in the first edition.[333] Robert Genaille (1967),[334] Robert A. Koch (1967),[335] and Max Friedländer (1967—published posthumously), however, maintained the attribution to Van Eyck.[336] Charles Cuttler (1968) appeared uncertain about accepting the de-attribution of the work, describing both conception and execution as of high quality.[337] Margaret Whinney (1968) was clear that it was not by Van Eyck.[338] Raffaello Brignetti and Giorgio T. Faggin (1968) listed the work as probably by Van Eyck, but noted doubts had been expressed since the work was exhibited in Bruges in 1956, citing Hoff's 1961 publication.[339] Giorgio T. Faggin (1968) discussed the work briefly as among those by Van Eyck,[340] as did Robert Hughes (1968).[341] Giovanni Carandente (1968) referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a work previously attributed to Van Eyck,[342] R.W. Scheller (1968) referred to it as a copy of a lost original,[343] and so did Ursula Hoff again (1968),[344] and César Pemán y Pemartín (1969),[345] while Eug. Schiltz (1969) seemed to maintain the traditional attribution,[346] as did Alfons Lieven Dierick (1970),[347] and Lola B. Malkis Gellman (1970).[348]

In 1971 Ursula Hoff and Martin Davies co-authored the National Gallery of Victoria's volume in the '*Primitifs Flamands*' *Corpus* series, which gave entries for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the *Man of Sorrows in the Arms of the Virgin* by Hans Memling, the *Virgin and Child* by Simon Marmion, and a late fifteenth-century triptych, a collaborative project attributed to a group of anonymous Netherlandish masters.[349] Hoff had been approached by Paul Coremans to write the volume, he suggesting that she might collaborate on the book with Davies.[350] With Hoff's agreement,[351] Davies was approached by the National Gallery of Victoria to contribute to it.[352] By 1961 Hoff was corresponding with Davies about a draft of the entry for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* she had written,[353] although it would be ten years before it was published. As noted, Davies did not assume co-

authorship for the entry for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, alone of the four entries in the volume, even though he contributed observations to Hoff's entry and his 1958 report on the work's composition and execution was extensively published therein. His report was, though, edited for the 1971 publication. It is not clear who was responsible for the editing—presumably Davies approved it—and while the revised nature of the text was alluded to in the Foreword at the front of the book, it was not readily apparent in the entry itself. Ellipses were not used to indicate the missing parts of the text.[354]

Hoff's entry for the work included a revised précis of the scientific analysis written by Philippot and Sneyers, as Coremans and Thissen had both passed away in the intervening years. Hoff had asked to reproduce the original scientific reports from Brussels and London.[355] However, the decision was made for a single new report to be written instead, which was to include some material not found in any of the earlier official reports. It is not clear who was responsible for this decision, although it was presumably made at the Institut. The work's x-radiograph, infrared photograph, macro-photographs, and photographs during cleaning and after restoration were illustrated. Hoff concluded that the work was an 'un-Eyckian and un-Flemish' version, more or less faithful, of a lost original by Van Eyck showing the Virgin and Child with a book, which had enjoyed a distinct popularity in the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. The entry included insinuations that the condition of the painting could be interpreted as the work of a forger, in Davies' report and Philippot and Sneyers' notes in the Physical Characteristics section (in French), although the latter two expressed the opinion that they did not think it likely to be a modern forgery in their contribution to the Author's Comments section (also in French). These controversial suggestions were not discussed in depth by any of the contributors. Philippot and Sneyers' report contained errors, lacked consistency, showed numerous misinterpretations of the technical data, and adopted the least favourable view of the evidence, as will be discussed at length in the next chapter. Davies' report, though edited, was still undermined by the changing nature of the Brussels analysts' reports, and still contained unfounded arguments of its own—discussed here in Chapter Three. Hoff's presentation of their commentaries accepted virtually all of their assertions (good and bad) and also contained inconsistencies of its own.

Despite its shortcomings, this volume in the respected *Corpus* series virtually sealed the work's fall from grace. Thereafter, the majority of international authors did not accept it as authentic, and many cited this publication as the source of their assessment. The view was also cemented in Australia in Leonard Cox's history of the Gallery published *c*. 1971. Cox

was a neurologist and art collector who had a long association with the Gallery. In 1947 he helped establish the National Gallery Society, he was later appointed Honorary Curator of Oriental Art, and became President of the Trustees of the Gallery from 1957 to 1965. In 1958 he was also appointed to the Felton Bequest Committee.[356] With Westbrook, he was most directly responsible for managing the investigation into the authenticity of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, which had already begun when he assumed his position as President. In his book Cox described the re-assessment of the Gallery's 'greatest picture' as a 'painful duty to the world of art'. However, a number of statements in Cox's book suggest he had not been well informed about significant details of the work's history and analysis, or no longer recalled them by the time he wrote his book.[357]

The traditional attribution had, then, been definitively abandoned in the publications from the National Gallery of Victoria, and in their wake the majority of critics followed. Negative views of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* now began to predominate. Lorne Campbell (1972) thought the painting not by Van Eyck,[358] Ursula Hoff (1973—twice), a copy,[359] Josua Bruyn (1975), not by Van Eyck,[360] Carol Purtle (1976), not by Van Eyck,[361] Penny Howell Jolly (1976), a copy,[362] and Annie Jolain (1976) was noncommittal.[363] Kenneth Clark (1977) called it a copy,[364] Anne Hagopian van Buren (1978) was equivocal,[365] Elisa Bermejo Martinez (1980) thought it probably a copy,[366] likewise Albert Châtelet (1980),[367] while Elisabeth Dhanens (1980) rejected the work,[368] as did Dana Goodgal (1981),[369] and, implicitly, Lorne Campbell (1982).[370] Carol Purtle (1982) reaffirmed that it was not by Van Eyck.[371] János Végh (1983),[372] Larry Silver (1984),[373] Ann Galbally (1987),[374] Dirk de Vos (1989),[375] and Licia Collobi Ragghianti (1990) all called it a copy.[376] Craig Harbison (1991) said it was not by Van Eyck,[377] and Christopher Wright (1992) also called it a copy.[378]

A further deterioration of the work's reputation occurred in 1993 when Jochen Sander, Curator at the Städelsches Kunstinstitut in Frankfurt, attributed the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* to a follower of Van Eyck in his catalogue entry for Van Eyck's Lucca *Virgin and Child* in his gallery. He thought the Melbourne painting was likely to be a pastiche of the one in Frankfurt because, despite the similarities between their compositions, he judged the iconography of the former insufficiently regal compared with that of the latter. Sander developed and modified views previously expressed by Von Tolnai and Pächt concerning a perceived contradiction in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* between the so-called 'Madonna of Humility' representation of the Virgin on the one hand, and the cloth of honour with a baldachin suitable for a so-called 'Queen of Heaven' on the other. He concluded that the

composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was uncharacteristic of Van Eyck, and so was more likely to be a pastiche than a copy of a lost original.[379] Sander's arguments pursuaded Hoff, who altered the work's attribution from 'After Van Eyck' (a copy) in her 1973 catalogue,[380] to 'Follower of Van Eyck' (a pastiche) in her next catalogue of 1995. In the latter she accepted Sander's argument that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* cannot be a copy of a Van Eyck original, stating that Van Eyck's 'images of the Madonna and Child seated [...] always include the armrests and podium of a throne.'[381] Both authors, however, overlooked Van Eyck's celebrated Rolin *Virgin and Child* in the Musée du Louvre, Paris, in which the Virgin and Child are shown on a simple, box-shaped seat with a cushion—with no podium and no armrests.

The origins of Sander's argument are revealing of the way iconographic interpretation may serve different purposes. In 1932 Von Tolnai accepted the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a work of Van Eyck, and believed it was evidence Van Eyck had been influenced by the Master of Flémalle (subsequently identified by many scholars as the documented painter Robert Campin, *c*. 1375–1444). In particular, Von Tolnai suggested that the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* had been influenced by the *Virgin and Child by a Fireplace* attributed to the Master of Flémalle (Hermitage, Saint Petersburg), and that Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin) had been influenced by the Flémallesque *Virgin and Child in a Niche*, known from a number of copies and variants. Von Tolnai's hypothesis tended to favour the Master of Flémalle as the founding figure of the early Netherlandish school, in place of Van Eyck.[382]

He developed this line of reasoning (under the name Charles de Tolnay) in 1939, arguing that the Master of Flémalle could be credited with the invention of a number of innovative compositions that Van Eyck subsequently adapted to his own purposes. He thought the Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation* was probably inspired by the Master of Flémalle's Mérode *Annunciation* (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), citing the relatively modest interior of the former as closer to the Master of Flémalle's habitual style than Van Eyck's other interiors, which are generally more elaborately furnished. Likewise, he argued that the idea of showing the Virgin and Child in a domestic interior, painted by Van Eyck in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, was more probably the Master of Flémalle's invention, citing again the *Virgin and Child by a Fireplace* in Saint Petersburg as the likely model, than an Eyckian one. For De Tolnay the humbly furnished interior of the Saint Petersburg picture was conceptually complete and self-consistent, in contrast to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*

composition in which Van Eyck introduced a somewhat incompatible, luxurious cloth of honour and baldachin to the otherwise fairly modest domestic interior.[383]

Following the de-attribution of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, Pächt still regarded the style of the composition as close to those paintings of the Virgin and Child in a domestic interior by the Master of Flémalle in New York and Saint Petersburg, which he said were commonly dated to the 1420s. He developed De Tolnay's observation regarding the contrast between the Flémallesque Virgin sitting upon the ground—or so he thought—as a Madonna of Humility (appropriate in a humble Flémallesque interior) and the Eyckian cloth of honour and baldachin behind the Virgin befitting a monarch (appropriate to a Queen of Heaven). This contrast he described as anomalous. Similarly, Pächt described the depiction of the spatial relationships of the objects in the room as 'entirely vague'. Since Pächt had also described the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as amazingly well painted, it seems these comments were intended as stylistic observations, proferred to support his argument that the composition originated at a much earlier date than the 1433 in the signature. Presumably, Pächt thought Van Eyck's early style might have been more strongly influenced by the Master of Flémalle, and so was less consistent and less concerned with clear spatial construction than in his later works. This interpretation of Pächt's comments is supported by the fact that he had expressed a similar view regarding the early date of the work in Van Eyck's career in his review of Panofsky's book in 1956, when he still believed the work was authentic,[384] and again in 1959, when he believed it was a copy.[385] Thus, the idea of a conflation of a Madonna of Humility and a Queen of Heaven iconography in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was originally for Von Tolnai and Pächt evidence of Van Eyck's indebtedness to the Master of Flémalle, but Sander and Hoff later interpreteted it as evidence that the composition was un-Eyckian—in line with their view (overly narrow as it happens) of what constituted Van Eyck's iconography.

In 1993 the work was shown at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, in the exhibition *Stephan Lochner, Meister zu Köln: Herkunft-Werke-Wirkung*, where it was described as a copy by a follower of Van Eyck. The exhibition catalogue suggested the iconography and style of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*—stressing the Virgin's purity and her role as the 'new Eve', and Van Eyck's physical types of the girlish looking Virgin and the plump Child—were of the kind by Van Eyck that very probably influenced Stephan Lochner's representations of the Virgin and Child.[386] Thus, even within Germany there were those who did not share Sander's doubts about the *Virgin and Child*'s Eyckian style. The work's critical fortunes then fluctuated between the status of a copy and a pastiche: Albert

Châtelet (1993) thought it a copy,[387] Rintaro Terakado (1994) described its composition as Eyckian but did not discuss the question of its attribution,[388] while Mark Evans (1995) thought it a copy,[389] Maurits Smeyers (1995), by a follower of Van Eyck,[390] Susan Urbach (1995) was non-committal.[391] Albert Châtelet (1996) still believed it was a copy.[392] For Anne van Buren (1996) it was a copy *and*, paradoxically, a copy of a lost imitation of Van Eyck's work,[393] while Mark Evans (1996) was not supportive of its authenticity, without expressing a view as to the origin of the composition.[394]

The response to the work's demotion was not entirely positive, as shown earlier. Special mention should be made of P. Filedt Kok's 1972–73 review of Hoff and Davies' *Corpus* volume in *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art*. Filedt Kok, an expert in technical analysis who is presently Curator of Early Netherlandish Painting at the Rijksmuseum, while praising the intention behind the *Corpus* project, drew attention to a number of shortcomings in the entry for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*: the long time that had elapsed between the work's technical analysis and the detailed publication of the findings, the fact that Philippot and Sneyers' technical document was not translated from the French, Hoff's inability to reconcile the various views expressed about the work by the different contributors, the lack of evidence to support the proposition that the technique of the painting was un-Flemish, and the conclusion that the Verdura *Virgin and Child* was not a copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* even though its composition followed that of the final paint layers of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, notably, in the window, as a copy would (although this last point was expressed in somewhat ambiguous terms).[395] While he did not reject the work's de-attribution, he found little to praise about the manner in which it had been documented.

James Snyder, Professor of Art History at Bryn Mawr College in the United States 1964–89 and a leading American scholar of early Netherlandish art, did reject the de-attribution. In 1973 he wrote that he was inclined to view the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as an authentic work of Van Eyck despite Hoff's de-attribution of it.[396] He reaffirmed this opinion in 1985 in his book on Northern European Renaissance art—regarded in North America as a classic in the field. Putting aside any doubts about the work, Snyder stated: 'some believe the work to be a copy—the Madonna's head has been repainted—but its charming qualities, much in tune with his later works, seems to affirm the attribution'.[397]

Similarly, Charles Sterling, the highly regarded curator at the Musée du Louvre 1929–61, and then professor at New York University Institute of Fine Arts 1969–72,[398] implicitly retained the attribution of the work to Van Eyck in 1971.[399] And in 1976 he put the Ince Hall

Virgin and Child third on his list of the seventeen defensible attributions of paintings to Jan van Eyck, in an influential essay on the artist's early career.[400] On the basis of Sterling's assessment, Liana Castelfranchi Vegas (1998) also maintained that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is by Van Eyck.[401] Others have expressed more or less positive views about the work in recent times: Gustav Künstler (1972) published it as a Van Eyck,[402] as did David L. Carleton (1982)—following Panofsky's attribution.[403] Araki Shiseko (1983) thought it was possibly by Van Eyck, although it had weaknesses.[404] Brian Madigan (1986) suggested it was either a Van Eyck or a copy,[405] while the *Lexikon der Kunst* (1988) published it as a Van Eyck.[406] Cyriel Stroo and Maurits Smeyers (1994) described the work's status as contested, although it reflected an Eyckian original. They illustrated the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* beside the caption in French '*Jean van Eyck?*'[407] Carlenrica Spantigati ([1998]) then referred to the work as signed and dated by Van Eyck in an illustrated book from the 'Art Dossier' series.[408]

In 1998 this author included an appendix on the authenticity of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in a Postgraduate Diploma thesis, completed at The University of Melbourne, on the international acquisition policy of the Felton Bequest during Frank Rinder's adviserships. Despite a limited focus on the issue of overpainting, without access to many of the documents relating to the work's technical analysis, and a modest first-hand knowledge of early Netherlandish paintings, the conclusion was reached that there was 'no evidence raised by the scientific analysis which excludes the work from Van Eyck's oeuvre, or any other XVth century Flemish artist, and the evidence appears in some respects to suggest that the work is closer to Van Eyck's oeuvre than the majority of early Flemish artists', and, 'It may be that there is not yet enough evidence to discount any possibility regarding the work.'[409] A copy of the appendix was sent to the then Director of the National Gallery of Victoria, Dr Timothy Potts.[410] Access to the Gallery's unpublished documents was subsequently provided, and these and new technical materials were discussed in the author's Master of Arts thesis, completed in 2001: *Re-examining Van Eyck: A New Analysis of the Ince Hall Virgin and Child*.[411] The present research is a revised and expanded version of the latter thesis.

In the meantime, Dirk de Vos (1999), Curator at the Musée Groeninge in Bruges, referred to the *Virgin and Child* as an original work of Van Eyck, but also as following a lost prototype,[412] and Dietmar Lüdke (2001), Curator at the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe, described the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as attributed to Van Eyck.[413]

While such prominent art historians as James Snyder and Charles Sterling have maintained the attribution of the work to Van Eyck, the majority of the references to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* since the late 1950s analysis have concluded that the work is a copy, a

pastiche, or a forgery. These are the only conclusions that could be reached if the published reports of the scientific analysis are taken in good faith. These reports asserted among other things that the work exhibits features incompatible with an origin in fifteenth-century Flanders. The following chapter will demonstrate that this assertion cannot be sustained and that the work's attribution to Jan van Eyck is one of a number of possibilities that can be considered following a re-examination of the technical evidence.

Notes for Chapter One

[1] For a history of the Bequest, see: Poynter, 2003; for a catalogue of selected masterpieces from the Gallery's painting collection, many acquired through the Felton Bequest, see: Melbourne, 2000.

[2] On the history of the Blundells at Ince, see: Farrer and Brownbill (eds), 1906–14, 3 (1907), pp. 78–85. Hussey (1958, pp. 756–59, 816–19, and 876–79) also provided a short history of the Blundell family, Ince Hall, and its art collection from ancient times to the nineteenth century.

[3] Morrison, 2003, pp. 387–89. An early sixteenth-century book of hours illuminated by the Master of the David Scenes in the Grimani Breviary belonged to Thomas Weld-Blundell at Ince Hall in the twentieth century, possibly having been acquired by Charles Blundell or Thomas Weld (1750–1810) of Lulworth. It was sold by the heir in 1980, and now belongs to the private collector Heribert Tenschert, in Ramsen.

[4] Fejfer and Southworth, 1991, 1, p. 1.

[5] For a description of the work see: Grossmann, 1961, pp. 491–93.

[6] Evans, 1982, pp. 623–25.

[7] [The Council for Museums, Archives, and Libraries, 2002] pp. 22–23.

[8] Schawe (2002, p. 28) described the attribution as 'very secure'.

[9] Hussey, 1958, pp. 876–79; Jacob, [1960] pp. 1–16; Teasdill, [1961] unpaginated.

[10] It is difficult to date seals on the basis of their style. Weale (1883, p. 193) suggested the seal on the reverse of the *Virgin and Child* might be eighteenth-century. Hoff (NGL Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, *Extracts from the Correspondence of Mr. Frank Rinder Regarding the Condition of the Madonna by Jan van Eyck, Additional Notes by U. Hoff*, [*c.* 1957]) recorded the views of a Professor Folz Dijon, who thought it to be sixteenth-century, and Coremans and a Dr Middledorf, who thought it to be seventeenth-century, or more likely eighteenth. Dott. M. Antonietta de Angelis, Assistente per l'Archivio Storico dei Musei Vaticani (personal communication, 5 November 1998) suggested it might be seventeenth-century.

The IRPA archives contain a note expressing the opinion of a Mr Bolsée from 1953 that the seal could bear the arms of an abbot, a prior, a curate, or possibly even a religious institution (kindly brought to my attention by Pierre-Yves Kairis, personal communication, 16 May 2000). Hoff (ed. 1971, p. 33) argued that the star with a wavy base at the top right of the seal might indicate that the arms were Sicilian, Italian, or Spanish in origin, since she said a wavy base was common in these areas. However, Hoff's description of the base as wavy is an exaggeration—the only deformation consists of a small lump in the lowest ray. Davies (PROV, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, *Some Notes on the Melbourne Van Eyck*, 11 September 1957, p. 2) noted that in Rietstap's heraldic study a star over a tree was found in the arms of the Hovlard family of Liège, and the Buit family of Amsterdam, while a star beside a tree was found in the arms of the Noto family of Sicily.

Also on the reverse, there are indications of numbers, some possibly scratched into the reverse: 13 (?), and another possibly written in white chalk: 0 or 6 (?). These do not correspond with the National Gallery of Victoria's inventory number (1275/3), or the likely Blundell family number for the work—as discussed presently in this text.

[11] For Blundell and Towley, see: Vaughan, 1989, pp. 13–20.

[12] Blundell, 1803, 2, p. 211.

[13] Blundell, 1803, 2, pp. 210–73.

[14] Blundell, 1803, 2, pp. 217 and 230 (Hugford); 230 and 240 (Smith).

[15] Blundell, 1803, 2, pp. 237 (Cavaceppi); 216 and 242 (Volpini).

[16] Blundell, 1803, 2, pp. 213, 219, 238, and 248. For Blundell's relationship with Thorpe, see: Vaughan, 1989, p. 17.

[17] Blundell, 1803, 2, pp. 212.

[18] Blundell, 1803, 2, pp. 229 and 232.

[19] Blundell, 1803, 2, pp. 224–26 (for Wilson); 226–27 (for Stubbs).

[20] Hoff, 1961 p. 46 n. 2; Blundell, 1803, 2, p. 244.

[21] The tentative attribution of the work to an artist probably in Bouts' workshop is this author's own, based on a comparison of reproductions with such works as the very similar *Virgin and Child* by Bouts' workshop in The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Drown (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Curatorial Files, [Weld-Blundell Collection files] William Drown [a 'Picture Cleaner and Restorer' from London], letter to G.F. Weld-Blundell Esq. and report on the condition of the paintings and quotes for proposed treatments, 23 May 1928, unpaginated) listed number 116 as a *Virgin and Child* with a picture on the back. Gronau (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Curatorial Files, [Weld-Blundell Collection files] [Hans] Gronau [Sotheby's], *Ince Blundell Hall Catalogue of Paintings*, 1948, p. 5a) listed number 116 as a double-sided work on panel in the manner of Dieric Bouts. Jacob ([1960] p.7) also associated number 116 with a painting in the manner of Bouts in the collection, although he had not seen the work himself. Hoff (NGV Archives, Hoff Papers, Ursula Hoff, letter to Martin Davies, 9 June 1967; and Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 35) received the information from Jacob that Gronau had listed the double-sided work in the manner of Dieric Bouts as number 116.

[22] Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Curatorial Files, [Weld-Blundell Collection files] [Hans] Gronau [Sotheby's], *Ince Blundell Hall Catalogue of Paintings*, 1948, p. 3.

[23] Jacob (National Gallery London Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, letter to Martin Davies, 14 April 1960) came to almost the same conclusion, identifying the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with either number 221 or 273. However, Gronau's inventory (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Curatorial Files, [Weld-Blundell Collection files] [Hans] Gronau [Sotheby's], *Ince Blundell Hall Catalogue of Paintings*, 1948 [p. ii]) described the medium of number 273 as ivory, and Lever (Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Curatorial Files, [Weld-

Blundell Collection files] Samuel V. Lever, *Valuation of Pictures at Ince Blundell Hall*, Lord Mobray v Weld-Blundell, 1929, p. 15) referred to the subject of 273 as a '*Lady and Cupid*'.

[24] Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Curatorial Files, [Weld-Blundell Collection files] Samuel V. Lever, *Valuation of Pictures at Ince Blundell Hall*, Lord Mobray v Weld-Blundell, 1929, p. 10.

[25] Public Record Office, Kew, C104/250, *Blundell v. Gladstone: Inventory of the Goods (Including a Large and Valuable Art Collection) of Charles Blundell of Ince Hall, Ince Blundell, Lancs, signed by Thomas Weld Blundell (marked A); affidavit of William Witham of Gray's Inn, Middx, solicitor for the plaintiff; and draft certificate of deposit. 1841–1845*.

[26] In 2000 (p. 16), this author noted Xanthe Brooke's suggestion (personal communication, 6 December 1999) that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* might correspond to a work listed in the mid-nineteenth-century inventory of the Ince Hall collection, on page 67 as in the Needlework Chamber, described as an early German *Virgin and Child* valued at £1.11s. However, the copy of the inventory in the Walker Art Gallery Curatorial Files does not include all the numbers in the margins found in the facsmile owned by the Weld family in Dorset. Subsequent enquiries revealed that this work has been numbered 296, which is a *Rest on the Flight* in the style of Patenir (Mr Wilfred Weld, personal communication, 20 January 2003, subsequently verified by the author).

[27] Waagen, 1854, 3, p. 249.

[28] Jacob, [1960] pp. 7–8. The report of Henry Blundell giving an annuity to an agent was found in *The Farington Diary*, in the entry for 26 June 1806 (8 vols, J. Greig (ed.), (London, 1922–28) 3, p. 262).

[29] Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool, Curatorial Files, [Weld-Blundell Collection files] H. Blundell, A *Letter Intended for a Friend*, 1808, [typewritten, 'copied from a copy made by F.J. Tempest, circa 1835' in the Tempest Archives, Box, XV, bundle 33B] p. 1.

[30] Mayer, 1852–53, p. 148, and Morris, 1998, pp. 1–4.

[31] For a brief history of Roscoe's collection, see: [Liverpool] 1963, text, pp. 1–3, and p. 42 for his *Descent from the Cross* triptych, p. 107 for his *Saint Mary Magdalen* by the Master of the Female Half-Lengths, and p. 113 for his *Entombment* by the Master of the Virgo inter Virgines, among other early Netherlandish works from his collection now in the Walker Art Gallery.

[32] A number of early Netherlandish works in the Walker Art Gallery passed through Winstanley's hands, not including works in the Roscoe sale of 1816. For one example, see: [Liverpool] 1963, 1, p. 34.

[33] Brooke, 1998, p. 1 n. 1. The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was not listed among the works at the sale of Roscoe's collection (Xanthe Brooke, personal communication, 6 December 1999).

[34] Jacob, [1960] p. 7.

[35] Vaughan, 1989, p. 14.

[36] Harris (ed.), 1972, p. 125.

[37] Xanthe Brooke, personal communication, 6 December, 1999. See also: Brooke, 1998, pp. 18–20. Davies (PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, p. 8) referred to the will of Charles' successor, which indicates that Charles had also acquired part of an ornamental tripod, and an ancient head of the Indian Bacchus or Jupiter.

[38] Lancashire Record Office, Preston, DDIN/14/57, T. Winstanley, letters to Charles Blundell, [date illegible] January, 25 January, and 17 February 1823.

[39] Morris, 2007, pp. 187–82.

[40] For two closely similar versions of the *Adoration of the Magi*, catalogued by Friedländer as copies after a lost original by Van der Goes, see: Friedländer, 1967–76, 4, *Hugo van der Goes*, 1969, pp. 38, 72, figs 21a and b. For the *Virgin and Child with Saints Louis and Margaret*, see: Hulin de Loo, 1933, pp. 137–40; Comblen-Sonkes and Van den Bergen-Pantens, 1972, 1, pp. 198–98. The tentative attribution to the Master of the Youth of Saint Romold is this author's own, and is based on the resemblance of the painting to the *Enthronement of Saint Romold as Bishop of Dublin* in the National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin.

[41] On the attribution of this work to Dieric Bouts, see: Grossmann, 1957, p. 4, and Marlier, 1957, p. 4.

[42] Britton, 1807, p. 312: 'there are several fine paintings, in which number, the *Fall and Redemption of Man*, an early picture, by Raphael, stands conspicuous.'

[43] If the assumptions of sequentially numbered acquisitions and the intervention of an agent were both entertained, then the entry of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* into the collection might be narrowed to between 1806, when Henry acquired his agent, and 1807, when Britton saw the collection.

[44] [The Hague] 2003, p. 165.

[45] Campbell, 1998, p. 212.

[46] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 11 January 1923, p. 2.

[47] [Augustinian Sisters] undated, p. 12.

[48] *The Times* (London), 10 November 1959, p. 9; *The Daily Telegraph* (London), 10 November 1959, p. 16; although Teasdill ([1961] unpaginated) wrote that the collection was relocated in 1961.

[49] Jacob, [1960] p. 8.

[50] Teasdill [1961].

[51] Ingamells, 1997, p. 102.

[52] Brooke, 1998, p. 6.

[53] Förster, 1853, p. 67.

[54] Waagen, 1854, 3, p. 249.

[55] [*The Quarterly Review*] 1854, p. 484.

[56] Weale, 1906, p. 185.

[57] It does not seem likely that the last numeral of the date was a post-1850 addition, since its condition is similar to that of the rest of the inscription.

[58] For example, Crowe and Cavalcaselle (1857, pp. 339–41) described the condition of the work as excellent, with the exception of the craquelure that marred many parts, the Virgin's face in particular.

[59] Weale, 1861, p. 9 n. 3.

[60] Wornum, 1863, p. 91 n.

[61] Michiels, 1866, 2, p. 342.

[62] Weale, 1867, p. 3 n.2.

[63] Schnaase and Eisenmann, 1866–79, 8, p. 157–59.

[64] Weale, 1883, p. 193.

[65] [Stephens] 1883, p. 440. Hoff (1971, p. 41) credited the article to R.A.M. Stevenson. However, Valentiner and McCall (1939, p. 57) and Rinder (NGV Archives, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 2 November 1922, p. 2) credited F.G. Stephens. The latter claimed (1906, p. 4) virtually to have been *The Athenæum*'s representative for the arts over a period of forty years.

[66] [London] 1884, p. 53, exhibited as number 267.

[67] Phillips, 1884, p. 181.

[68] Temple, 1892, unpaginated, exhibited as number 48.

[69] Armstrong, 1892, pp. 8–9, exhibited as number 14A.

[70] Leprieur, 1892, p. 170.

[71] Payne, Villis, and MacDonald Anderson, 2001, p. 266 n. 13.

[72] For a discussion of the authenticity of the Ghent altarpiece quatrain, concluding in favour of Jan's authorship of it, see: Hulin de Loo, 1934, pp. 62–87.

[73] Von Tschudi, 1893, p. 101.

[74] Professor C. Strinati, Il Soprintendente Per i Bene Artistici e Storici di Roma, (personal communication, 18 March, 2000) states that the barons de Gemmi of Rome presently have no knowledge of the work.

[75] V[on] T[schudi], 1894, p. 244.

[76] Kaemmerer, 1898, pp. 58–60.

[77] Seeck, 1899, pp. 7, 21, 30, 38, 43, and 48.

[78] Voll, 1900, pp. 84, 87–89, and 91–100.

[79] Friedländer, 1900, p. 475.

[80] Von Bode, 1901, p. 122 n.1. Indeed, overpainting does seem to have been removed from the signature in the cleaning of the work undertaken in Brussels in 1957–58, as is discussed in Chapter Two.

[81] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, p. 2.

[82] Kaemmerer, 1900–01, columns 71–72.

[83] Marks, 1903, pp. 24–25.

[84] Kern, 1904. p. 9.

[85] Fierens-Gevaert, 1905, pp. 142–43.

[86] Durand-Gréville, 1905, pp. 34–35.

[87] Temple and Corbould-Ellis, 1906, pp. 20–22, exhibited as number 3.

[88] Weale, 1906, p. 185.

[89] Friedländer, 1906, p. 574.

[90] [Humphrey Ward] *The Times* (London), 4 May 1906, p. 15. The article is unattributed. However, the author is identified by Frank Rinder (NGV Archives, Melourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 29 June 1922, Enclosure B) as T. Humphrey Ward.

[91] Siebert, 1906, p. 11.

[92] Von Wurzbach, 1906, 1, p. 513.

[93] Burckhardt, 1906, p. 194.

[94] [*Revue de l'Art Chrétien*] 1906, p. 283.

[95] Durand-Gréville, [1906] pp. 62–63.

[96] Phillips, 1907, p. 104.

[97] De Fourcaud, 1907, p. 206.

[98] Weale, 1908, p. 66.

[99] Durand-Gréville, [1910?] 'Notes sur les Van Eyck […]', pp. 33–36; 1910 (*Hubert et Jean van Eyck*), pp. 133–35; 1910 ('Les frères Van Eyck'), p. 10.

[100] MacLagan, 1911, p. 242.

[101] Weale and Brockwell, 1912, pp. 109–11.

[102] Friedländer, 1915, 11, p. 130.

[103] Conway, 1921, pp. 68–69.

[104] Friedländer, Berlin, 1921, p. 183.

[105] Pfister, [1922] p. 65.

[106] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, F. Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 29 June 1922, p. 1.

[107] NGL Archives, NG 39/98–102, Weld-Blundell, letter [to National Gallery, London], 9 May 1893.

[108] NGL Archives, Desiderata Owners, S331. Weld-Blundell, letter to Mr Holmes, 16 January 1918.

[109] NGL Archives, NG1, National Gallery, Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 9, p. 17: Meeting of the National Gallery Board Held Tuesday 14th January 1919.

[110] NGL Archives, NG1, National Gallery, Minutes of the Board of Trustees, 9, p. 15.

[111] NGL Archives, NG 19/1–2, Loans In 1895–1971, List of Pictures Lent to the National Gallery, p. 29; and Desiderata Owners, S331, Charles Weld-Blundell, letter to Mr Baker, 21 April 1915; [Charles Holmes], letter to Mr Weld-Blundell, 4 January 1918; Charles Weld-Blundell, letter to Mr Holmes, 16 January 1918; [Charles Holmes], letter to Mr Weld-Blundell, 17 January 1918.

[112] Dhanens, [1980] p. 329.

[113] Maurice and Turnor, 1992, pp. 273–74.

[114] Rees Leahy, 2007, pp. 75–87, especially p. 79.

[115] Their extensive correspondence is found at: NGL Archives, NG16 183, including a number of mentions of the *Virgin and Child*. My thanks to Jaynie Anderson for this reference.

[116] NGV Archives, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 29 June 1922, Enclosure B, p. 5.

[117] NGV Archives, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 29 June 1922, Enclosure B, p. 7.

[118] *The Burlington Magazine*, 1951, p. 330.

[119] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 29 June 1922, p. 7. Zink was a London based miniaturist who exhibited at the Royal Academy and the Society of Miniaturists 1882–1914. A portrait of Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands by Zink is in the Ashmolean Museum, Oxford—number 967 (Foskett, 1972, 1, p. 591).

[120] Zink, (1922, p. 4) wrote a letter to the editor of *The Daily Telegraph* (London) shortly after Claude Phillips' article in the same paper that had reiterated the old hypothesis that the signature was a later addition.

[121] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 5 October 1922, p. 4.

[122] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 19 October 1922, p. 2.

[123] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 19 October 1922, p. 1.

[124] Hoff, 1967, p. 45.

[125] *The Times* (London), 8 November 1922, p. 15.

[126] Brockwell, 1923, p. 144.

[127] Holmes, 1922, pp. 232–33.

[128] Brockwell, 1954, pp. 69–70.

[129] Phillips, 1922, p. 13.

[130] Maurice and Turnor, 1992, p. 274.

[131] Stansky, 2003, p. 182.

[132] *The Times*, (London), 14 October 1922, p. 14.

[133] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/5, Frank Rinder, Letters to E. La Touche Armstrong, 11 January 1923, p. 2—refering to notices in France, Italy, and Germany; and 19 April 1923, p. 2—refering to a notice in Canada.

[134] *The Advertiser* (Bendigo), 18 October 1922; *The Age* (Melbourne): 14 and 19 October 1922, 14, 15, and 20 March 1923; *The Argus* (Melbourne): 14, 18, and 20 October 1922, 25 November 1922, 14,15, and 17 March 1923; *The Bulletin* (Sydney), 14 December 1922; *The Herald* (Melbourne), 9 December 1922, 19 and 20 March 1923; *The Leader* (Adelaide), 28 October 1922 and 24 March 1923; and *The Sun* (Melbourne) 14 April 1923.

[135] [*Art in Australia*] 1923, unpaginated.

[136] Brockwell, 1923, pp. 143–49.

[137] Deane, 1923, p. 489.

[138] Rishel, 1997, pp. 45–46.

[139] SLV, Melbourne, [Arts Department] *Report of the Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria*, 2 [1914–44], 1923 [p. 1].

[140] *The Herald* (Melbourne), 19 March 1923; *The Sun* (Melbourne), 19 March 1923; and *The Age* (Melbourne), 20 March 1923—all lampooned the 'lowbrow' response of Melbourne audiences to the work's huge price compared with its small size.

[141] Reinach, 1923, pp. 15–16.

[142] Voll, 1923, p. 37.

[143] Friedländer, 1924, 1, pp. 50 and 53–55.

[144] Schmarsow, 1924, pp. 100–03.

[145] Winkler, 1924, p. 57.

[146] Wendland,1924, p. 117.

[147] MacDonald, 1925.

[148] Burger, 1925, pp. 27–28.

[149] Dvořák, 1925, pp. 46, 57.

[150] National Library of Australia, Canberra, Meldrum Papers No. 1, MS6569, M. Meldrum, *Personal Interpretations of Van Eyck's 'Madonna and Child'*, handwritten monograph, undated.

[151] Devigne, 1926, pp. 90–91.

[152] Hulin de Loo and Michel, 1927, p. 79.

[153] Fierens-Gevaert, 1927, pp. 89–90, and 93.

[154] Lambotte, 1927, p. 10.

[155] Dülberg, 1929, pp. 21–22.

[156] Friedländer, 1930 [unpaginated].

[157] Fierens, 1931, pp. 16, and 19.

[158] Winkler, 1931, p. 258.

[159] Von Tolnai, 1932, pp. 324, and 334.

[160] Renders, 1933, pp. 59–60.

[161] Post, 1933, pp. 19–20.

[162] Smits, 1933, p. 145.

[163] Hulin de Loo, 1934, p. 70.

[164] Burroughs, 1938, pp. 200 and 202.

[165] De Tolnay, 1939, pp. 25, 31, and 66.

[166] Burdett, 1939, p. 118.

[167] Valentiner and McCall, 1939, p. 57, exhibited as number 113.

[168] For Valentiner's career, see: *The Art Quarterly*, 1958, pp. 349–50.

[169] Richardson, 1956, p. 227.

[170] Valentiner and McCall, 1939, pp. 57–58, exhibited as number 114.

[171] For an art historical appraisal of the work, see: Hall, 1998, pp. 11–37. For technical appraisals of the work, see: Heller and Stodulski, 1995, pp. 131–48; and Heller and Stodulski, 1998, pp. 39–55.

[172] Borchert et al., 2002, p. 237.

[173] *Time*, 26 June 1939, p. 40.

[174] *The Art News*, May 6 1939, pp. 6–7.

[175] Breuning, 1939, p. 278.

[176] Vaughan, 1934, p. 10.

[177] *Christian Science Monitor* (Boston), 17 June 1939: 'The most unforgettable impression is made by the miniature Jan van Eyck, the "Ince Hall Madonna" lent by the National Gallery of Melbourne […]'.

[178] *The New York Times*, 5 June, 1939: 'In Gallery four, the visitor turns away from the art of the Italian to Flemish and Dutch paintings of the fifteenth century. Here is a painting never before seen in this hemisphere, Jan van Eyck's "Ince Hall Madonna", a precious loan from the National Gallery in Melbourne. Here also hang paintings by Petrus Christus, Rogier van der Weyden, Dirk Bouts, Gerard David, Memling and others.'

[179] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, R. Valentiner, telegraph to J.S. MacDonald, 26 September 1939.

[180] [Detroit] 1939, pp. 5–6, exhibited as number 12 in *Masterpieces of Art from Foreign Collections: European Paintings from the Two World's Fairs*.

[181] [San Francisco] 1940, exhibited as number L-15 in *Seven Centuries of Painting: A Loan Exhibition of Old and Modern Masters*.

[182] [Cleveland] 1940, exhibited as number 12 in *Masterpieces of Art from the New York and San Francisco World's Fairs*.

[183] The forementioned seven destinations were not included in Hoff's itinerary for the work (ed., 1971, pp. 35–36). However, they were listed in Valentiner's letter of gratitude to the National Gallery of Victoria, written on the return of the work: PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, W.R. Valentiner, letter to The Trustees The Public Library, Museums, and National Gallery, 26 March 1941.

[184] [Cincinnati] 1941, unpaginated, exhibited as number 17 in *Masterpieces of Art: European Paintings from the New York and San Francisco World's Fairs; To Which Have Been Added a Number of Outstanding Paintings from Public and Private Collections of Cincinnati*.

[185] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, L.R. Macgregor, letter to E.R. Pitt, 26 December 1940.

[186] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, [Ernest] Pitt, cable to Australcom, 16 January 1941.

[187] Hoff (ed., 1971, p. 36) thought the painting returned to Melbourne in 1946. However, PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, Chief Librarian and Secretary [Ernest Pitt], letter to L.R. Macgregor, 8 May 1941, indicates it had returned by that date.

[188] [Melbourne] 1941, Plate number 17.

[189] Beenken, 1941, pp. 72–73.

[190] Meiss, 1941, p. 64.

[191] Van der Elst, 1946, pp. 65–66, and 124–25.

[192] [Melbourne] 1948, pp. 46–47.

[193] Musper, 1948, pp. 104, and 107.

[194] Van Puyvelde, 1948, p. 24.

[195] Hoff, 1949, p. 12.

[196] Clarke, 1949, p. 12.

[197] Bertram, 1950, p. 14.

[198] Van der Elst, 1951, p. 97.

[199] Cazier, 1951, pp. 222–25.

[200] Baldass, 1952, pp. 51–52.

[201] C[hastel], 1952.

[202] Zu Schweinsberg, 1952, p. 17.

[203] Van Puyvelde, 1953, p. 92.

[204] Panofsky, 1953, 1, pp. 61, 143–44, 183–85, and 191–94.

[205] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12731, P0001, 28, Daryl Lindsay, *National Gallery of Victoria […] Overseas Buying Policy*, 14 October 1953.

[206] Denis, 1954, pp. 45–46.

[207] Davies, 1954, 2, p. 122.

[208] Brockwell, 1954, p. 74.

[209] Duverger, 1955, pp. 102 and 120.

[210] Held, 1955, p. 217.

[211] Lassaigne, 1955, p. 22.

[212] Pächt, 1956, pp. 272 and 274.

[213] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Leo Collard, letter to Sir John Medley, 17 January 1956.

[214] NGV Archives, Melbourne, [Trustees Minutes] 2, Febraury 1956–June 1967, National Gallery Trustees meeting 5th February, 1957 (continued), p. 422, point 21: 'It was agreed to write to the Belgian Government pointing out that this painting was lent to them on condition that the Trustees would get a report from Dr. Coremans, and requesting that same be forthcoming.'

[215] Fraser, 1994, p, 32—quoting from NGV, General Conservation File, letter of 25 July 1954.

[216] Nicolson, 1963, p. 325.

[217] Hamilton Kerr Institute, Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge, MS. 1112–1993 [Horace Buttery's workbooks] Book C, records the treatments of masterpieces now in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria: on p. 146 (Henry Raeburn's *Portrait of James Wardrop of Turbane Hill*); p. 222 (Giambattista Tiepolo's *Banquet of Cleopatra*); p. 332 (John Constable's *'The Quarters' behind Alresford Hall*); and p. 416 (Nicolas Poussin's *Crossing of the Red Sea*).

[218] W[ildenstein] 1959, p.1.

[219] Grasmon, 1999, p. 155.

[220] Roy, 2000, p. 99.

[221] [*The College Art Journal*] 1957, pp. 348–49.

[222] NGV, Melbourne, Conservation Files, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* files] anonymous, *Summary of Events to Date Concerning the Ince Hall "Madonna and Child"*, 5 February 1959, pp. 1–2; containing an extract of Philip Hendy, letter to Eric Westbrook, 23 July 1956; a summary of Burgomaster of Bruges, letter [to the National Gallery of Victoria], 24 July 1956; and an extract of 'Belgian Minister of Public Instruction', [Leo Collard] letter to Chairman of Trustees, 10 August 1956. That scientific analyses were conducted in Belgium before the exhibition is also is shown by the date of the infrared image (B L4 434 1956) published in Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 49. Furthermore, a letter from J. van Lerberge to Sir John Medley dated 10 August 1956 (PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60) states that infrared and x-radiography images had already been made.

[223] [Bruges] 1956, pp. 16–17, exhibited as number 2.

[224] *The Illustrated London News*, 25 August 1956, p. 303. See also: *The Times* (London), 'Van Eyck Painting on Way to London, on Loan from Australia', 6 July 1956, p. 8; *The Times* (London), 'Flemish Art from British Collections at Bruges', 1 August 1956, p. 6.

[225] SLV, Melbourne, Manuscripts, Minute Books, The Felton Bequests, Minutes of a Meeting of the Felton Bequests' Committee Held at 401 Collins Street, Melbourne, on Wednesday 16th January 1957, p. 117.

[226] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Paul Coremans, letter to Sir Philip Hendy, 25 September 1956.

[227] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to Sir Owen Dixon, 7 July 1957. McDonnell reported that the Director of the Rijksmuseum seemed to have known of Coremans' suspicions that the work was not genuine a year earlier.

[228] SLV, Melbourne, Manuscripts, Minute Book, The Felton Bequests, Minutes of a Meeting of the Felton Bequests' Committee Held at 401 Collins Street, Melbourne, on Wednesday 16th January 1957, p. 118. McDonnell reported that Norris had told him of Coremans' 'adverse opinion' about the work.

[229] SLV, Melbourne, Manuscripts, Minute Books, The Felton Bequests, Minutes of a Meeting of the Felton Bequests' Committee Held at 401 Collins Street, Melbourne, on Wednesday 16th January 1957, p. 117.

[230] As can be deduced from the fact that Coremans chose to report his doubts about the work directly to Hendy rather than Westbrook. PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Paul Coremans, letter to Sir Philip Hendy, 25 September 1956: 'I believe that it is my duty to let you know confidentially that I have the most serious doubts as regards the "Ince Hall madonna" and that if I can help it I shall try to avoid sending a report on this picture to Melbourne.'

[231] SLV, Melbourne, Manuscripts, Minute Books, The Felton Bequests, Minutes of a Meeting of the Felton Bequests' Committee Held at 401 Collins Street, Melbourne, on Saturday 24th November, 1956, p. 112, point 5.

[232] Grossmann, 1957, p. 3.

[233] SLV, Melbourne, Manuscripts, Minute Books, The Felton Bequests, Minutes of a Meeting of ihe Felton Bequests' Committee Held at 401 Collins Street, Melbourne on Saturday, 24th November, 1956, p. 112.

[234] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Andrew Doggett, Secretary to the Director [National Gallery, London], letter to Eric Westbrook, 8 February 1957, with a copy of Paul Coremans' letter to Philip Hendy of 25 September 1956 attached.

[235] SLV, Melbourne, Manuscripts, Minute Books, The Felton Bequests, Minutes of a Meeting of the Felton Bequests' Committee Held at 401 Collins Street, Melbourne on 5th March 1957 (continued), p. 426: 'The Director reported having received copy of a letter sent by Dr. Coremans to Sir Philip Hendy, and read it to the meeting. Noted.'

[236] [*Quarterly of the Auckland City Art Gallery*] 1971, p. 12.

[237] For an account of Westbrook's career, see: Perry, 2006, pp. 67–69.

[238] *The Daily Telegraph* (London), 1 April, 1950, p. 17; A.J.L. McDonnell was the Felton Bequest Art Advisor from 1945. Coincidentally, he had worked for the Supreme Headquarters Allied Expeditionary Forces recovering artworks looted by the Nazis during the Second World War, and was present at the salt mine at Alt Aussee when the Ghent altarpiece was retrieved. He might have met Paul Coremans at this time, as Coremans was active in the post-war recovery of the altarpiece.

[239] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to Sir Owen Dixon, 7 July 1957.

[240] NGV, Melbourne, Conservation Files, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* files] anonymous, *Summary of Events to Date Concerning the Ince Hall "Madonna and Child"*, 5 February 1959, p. 2; containing an extract of Philip Hendy, letter to Eric Westbrook, 23 July 1956, noting that x-radiography, infrared, and ultraviolet images made at the National Gallery, London, were being forwarded to the National Gallery of Victoria.

[241] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, J. van Lerberge, letter to Sir John Medley, 10 August 1956.

[242] Hoff and Davies (eds), 1971, p. 56. They were referring to Hans Memling's *Man of Sorrows in the Arms of the Virgin* in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne.

[243] [*The Quarterly Bulletin of the National Gallery of Victoria*] 1957, unpaginated. At the end of 1956 the Trustees comprised Dr. Leonard Cox, M.D., F.R.A.C.P., M.R.C.P. (Chairman), Sir John Medley, Kt., D.C.L., LL.D., M.A. (Deputy Chairman), Aubrey H.L. Gibson E.D. (Honorary Treasurer), The Hon. T.W. Mitchell, M.A., M.L.A., William Ritchie, The Hon. Mr. Justice Sholl, M.A., B.C.L., and A.T. Smithers.

[244] NGV, Melbourne, Curatorial Files [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file], *Corpus*, Reports on Van Eyck, H. Buttery, *Report by Mr. Buttery on condition of "Madonna and Child" by Jan van Eyck, as requested by Mr. A.J.L. McDonnell*, 'Nov. 1956' [date is handwritten; transcription of tape recording].

[245] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to Eric Westbrook, 5 November 1956.

[246] NGV, Melbourne, Conservation Files, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* files] anonymous, *Summary of Events to Date Concerning the Ince Hall "Madonna and Child"*, 5 February 1959, pp. 2–3; containing extracts of Philip Hendy, letter to Eric Westbrook, 23 July 956, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to Eric Westbrook, 25 September 1956, and Eric Westbrook, cable to Trustees, 21 November 1957.

[247] NGL Archives, NG16/252, Brussels Centre 1956–66, folder 1, [Martin Davies] letter to Paul Coremans, 15 November 1957.

[248] NGL Archives, NG16/252, Brussels Centre 1956–66, folder 1, Martin Davies, letter to Paul Coremans, 19 November 1957.

[249] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, James Bourlet and Sons Ltd, letter to Paul Coremans, 12 September 1957, copied to Director, National Gallery of Victoria.

[250] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Leonard Cox, 24 November 1957.

[251] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Philip Hendy, letter to Eric Westbrook, 18 August 1959.

[252] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Leonard Cox, 24 November 1957.

[253] Bosshard, 1992, p. 4 and p. 11 n. 2.

[254] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Brussels] *Compte rendu des tests, en présence de MM. E. Westbrook, P. Coremans, R. Sneyers, et A. Philippot*, 24 December 1957, pp. 1–2.

[255] Nicolaus, 1999, p. 314.

[256] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, P[aul] C[oremans], *Compte-Rend des conversations entre MM. Martin Davies, Paul Coremans, Albert Philippot and René Sneyers*, 14 May 1958, p. 1. The report stated that the transparent layer (glair) was more independent of the paint layers than had initially been thought. The presence of the glair may have aroused the analysts' suspicions that the work might be a forgery, since such a layer would resist solvents like an aged oil paint. A forger wishing to disguise the freshness of his paint layers might cover them with a hard, clear layer such as a glair. Nevertheless, glair layers are a traditional and inexpensive varnish, as discussed later in this text.

[257] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, telegram to trustees, 23 November 1957. For a fuller account, see Chapter Two.

[258] NGL Archives, NG16/252, Brussels Centre 1956–66, folder 1, P. Coremans, letter to Martin Davies, 4 December 1957 including the following: P. Coremans, R. Sneyers, and A. Philippot, *Declaration*, 3 December 1957: '*Que l'on souvienne que le nettoyage est une étape indispensable de l'examen scientifique pour lequel la peinture est actuellement à Bruxelles et qui doit être conclue par un rapport aux Trustees*.'

[259] NGL Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, Eric Westbrook, letter to Paul Coremans, 11 March 1958: 'I am happy to say that the Trustees have not wavered at all in their determination that the investigations should be carried through to the end, and therefore they are, after proper consideration, prepared that your staff should lift the "*couche transparante*". I am very pleased about this, as we would obviously gain nothing by stopping at the present stage.'

[260] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Thomson, telegram to Eric Westbrook, 26 November 1957.

[261] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Leonard Cox, 24 November 1957.

[262] The cleaning of the painting seems to have continued to around April 1958 (PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60 [Brussels, L7 190 B, photograph of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* during or after cleaning with the date 24 April 1958 on the reverse]), whereas the restoration did not commence until about November (PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, Paul [Coremans], letter to Eric [Westbrook], 17 November 1958).

[263] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Aubrey Gibson, letter to Eric Westbrook, 13 May 1958.

[264] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, letter to Martin Davies, 4 December 1957: '"off the record" *nous pouvons avoir affaire au mieux:—à une composition Eyckienne;—d'une facture incorporable au 16e siècle (ou plus tardive)*'.

[265] For a detailed discussion of the hypothesis that the work could be a forgery, see Chapter Two.

[266] IRPA Archives, Brussels [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated, pp. 4–15, quote from p. 15: '*Il est cependent plus logique de mettre en avant que le tableau date d'une époque plus récente. A cet égard, la première mention acceptable de la Ince Blundell Madone—le catalogue de 1803—ne contredit pas cette conclusion. En effet, s'il nous est permis de penser que la Madone de Melbourne date du XIXe siècle, le laboratoire est dans l'impossibilité de prouver que cette datation ne peut être avancée de plusieurs decades*.'

[267] IRPA Archives, Brussels [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated. In addition to the quote in the text above, the analysts made the following negative statements: '*Au pire, peut-on donc songer à un imitateur mal intentionné désireux de donner l'impression que son tableau est une ouevre ancienne et dont les blessures due a l'âge ont du être soigneés*.' (p. 12) and '[Craquelure] *Il est cependent plus aisé d'accepter l'intervention d'un imitateur d'époque plus récente*.' (p. 13).

[268] Van Asperen de Boer, Professor J.R.J., Amsterdam, notebook containing handwritten copies of documents associated with Paul Coremans and the IRPA, undated, p. 30: in which is copied:

> *Corresporatatie [?] Melbourne Madonna (Kast Fotokasser [?] Laboratorium Brussel)*, 12.12.58:
>
> '(*vertrawetyte evenals rapport*)
>
> *lit brief een E. Westbrook (Director Nat. Gall. of Victoria Melbourne) en Prof. Coremans d.d. 12-12-58*:
>
> [in English]
>
> …Philippot and Sneyers believe that the picture is a deliberate forgery from the 19th century, their best evidence being the poor quality all over the surface and certain technical observations w[h]ich one sometimes finds in 19th century paintings.

…I believe that it is an old picture painted in the Eyckish style as we know from other examples in Italy and Spain. The best evidence for this hypothesis is:

- A pictorial quality and structure w[h]ich one finds in 16th century Flemish primitives imitated abroad.

- The resistance to solvents similar to what you find in old pictures.

- The presence of the lead-tin oxide, an old pigment w[h]ich has never been identified in modern works.

- I should say too that we all admire the final decision of the National Gallery of Victoria to make public the truth about the Ince Hall Madonna. If only a few Galleries did the same, things would change completely in the field of art history within a few years'.

[269] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Gallery trustees and staff] Draft Only, Proposed Press Statement Amended—After Meeting Held On 13th October, 1959.

[270] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Leonard Cox, 9 May 1958.

[271] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958. This report was translated as *Laboratory Examination of the Ince Hall Madonna*, by David Lawrence, Conservator at the National Gallery of Victoria.

[272] The report is, however, datable after May 1958, when an interim report was written which it refers to, and before 7 November 1958, when Davies returned a copy of the report with comments to the Institut (NGL Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, Martin Davies, letter to Jacqueline Folie, 7 November 1958).

[273] NGL Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne* [with Martin Davies' comments], original document and later comments both undated.

[274] NGL Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, Martin Davies, letter to Jacqueline Folie, 7 November 1958.

[275] Danby, Ms Betty [Melbourne], held by Dr. Philip Ayres, Sir Owen Dixon, Diary, 4 July 1958. I am grateful to Dr Ayres for providing extracts from the diary.

[276] The University of Melbourne Archives, Sir Joseph Burke Papers, J.B. Personal C, U61/9, Joseph Burke, letter to Kenneth Clark, 24 September 1948.

[277] The University of Melbourne Archives, Sir Joseph Burke Papers, J.B. Personal C, U61/9, Joseph Burke, letter to Kenneth Clark, 11 September 1959.

[278] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958. The final Melbourne report includes the following, suggesting the work might be a forgery, on p. 10: 'The easiest interpretation would be to say that an imitator had created an artificial network of craquelure, then filled certain of these in order

to improve the general appearance of the picture (10). […] (10) This method of operating is very popular with imitators.' ('*L'interprétation facile consisterait à dire qu'un imitateur a provoqué l'apparition d'un réseau de craquelures artificielles, puis a bouché certaines de celles-ci afin d'améliorer l'aspect général du tableau (10) […] (10): Cette technique operatoire est très en vogue chez les imitateurs*.').

[279] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P[aul] C[oremans], *Compte-rendu des tests, établi en présence de MM. M. Davies, P. Coremans, A. Philippot et R. Sneyers*, 21 February 1958, pp.1–2. This report stated that 'the three technicians see that the inscription is composed of the same materials, has the same structure, and presents the same quality as the rest of the painting'. ('*les trois techniciens voient que cette inscription est composée des mêmes matériaux, a la même structure et présente la même qualité que le reste de la peinture'*).

[280] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P[aul] C[oremans], *Compte-rendu des conversations entre MM. Martin Davies, Paul Coremans, Albert Philippot et René Sneyers*, 14 May 1958, pp. 1–2: '*L'inscription telle qu'elle est maintenant est-elle authentique au même degree que le reste de la peinture? […] Oui, en se basant surtout sur la solubilité*.'

[281] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell* Madone de Melbourne, signed, undated, p. 10.

[282] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 10.

[283] Hoff, 1961, p. 48.

[284] VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P[aul] C[oremans], *Compte-rendu des tests, établi en présence de MM. M. Davies, P. Coremans, A. Philippot et R. Sneyers*, 21 February 1958, p. 1.

[285] This is shown by the following document: NGL Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall (Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria)*, 14 November 1958, initialled [with Martin Davies' comments].

[286] NGL Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne* [with Martin Davies' comments], original document and later comments both undated, p. 10: '*Après l'enlèvement de la couche transparente, les endroits les plus litigieux (inscription, détails à graphique doûteux, retouches bouchant des lacunes et des craquelures) fures traités localement à l'alcool éthylique 94° (solvent 4) pendant un temps plus long que celui d'un nettoyage normale. Toujours la peinture résista. Se basant sur la seule solubilité, et pour autant que d'autres examens n'amènent pas de contradiction, il faut conclure que l'ensemble du tableau y compris l'inscription, les détails dont la graphique est le plus doûteux, les retouches bouchant des lacunes et des*

craquelures sont contemporains, Il conviendrait même d'y ajouter: et sont le produit de la même main.'

[287] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958. The report was partially published in Hoff (ed.) 1971, pp. 44–49.

[288] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 10: '*Après l'enlèvement de la couche transparente, les éléments plus litigieux (inscription, détails à graphique douteux, retouches bouchant des lacunes et des craquelures cf. même page a) ont été traités localement à l'alcool éthylique 94° (solvent 4) pendant un temps plus long que celui d'un nettoyage normal: toujours la couleur y a résisté, comme le reste du tableau (cf. L7333B: état du tableau après nettoyage). Sur la seule base de la résistance des couches picturales aux solvents indiqués plus haut, il serait permis de considérer la peinture comme ancienne*.'

[289] Davies' belief that the signature and other doubtful passages of paint, even when they passed over losses, were original to the painting was based on the Institut's hypothesis that the whole work was a forgery. The fact that this hypothesis was expressed much less forcefully in the final Melbourne report weakened the argument that these passages of painting could be considered original, the basis of much of Davies' criticism of the painting.

[290] Hoff, 1961, p. 48; Hoff, 1967, pp. 44; Hoff, 1973 (*The National Gallery of Victoria*), p. 53; and Hoff (ed.), 1995, p. 105.

[291] [Borchert] 2002, p. 237.

[292] A[lbert] P[hilippot] and R[ené] V. S[neyers] [under Author's Comments section], in Hoff (ed.), 1971, pp. 29 and 41. In a few other instances the analysts' observations were interpreted differently for the 1971 précis. For example, whereas earlier (IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated, p. 8; PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958) they stated that the difference between the underpainting of the window and the final version is not a true *pentimento*, but only a faltering piece of perspective (pp. 7–8), the précis lists it as a change in composition (Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 31).

[293] Filedt Kok, 1972–73, pp. 209–10.

[294] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Erwin Panofsky, letter to Eric Westbrook, 31 December 1958.

[295] Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 34.

[296] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Erwin Panofsky, letter to Eric Westbrook, 24 February 1959.

[297] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, J. Bourlet and Sons Ltd, letter to Director, National Gallery of Victoria, 22 June 1959.

[298] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Philip Hendy, letter to Eric Westbrook, 18 August 1959.

[299] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Philip Hendy, 10 February 1959.

[300] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Ursula Hoff, letter to Eric Westbrook, 26 June 1959. Hoff noted she had seen the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* at the National Gallery, London.

[301] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Ursula Hoff, *Confidential Report from Dr Ursula Hoff*, 10 August 1959, p. 1.

[302] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [James Bourlet and Sons Ltd] telegram [to the National Gallery of Victoria], 18 September 1959.

[303] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to The Secretary, Tender Board, 22 September 1959.

[304] Danby, Ms Betty [Melbourne], held by Dr. Philip Ayres, Sir Owen Dixon, Diary, 13 and 22 October, and 14 November 1959.

[305] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Philip Hendy, 30 November 1959.

[306] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, A.H.L. Gibson, letter to Eric Westbrook with proposed 'Press Release' attached, 28 October 1959. This paragraph was not present in the draft of the press release of 13 October: VPRS 12730, P0001, 60 [National Gallery of Victoria Trustees and staff], *Draft Only, Proposed Press Statement, Amended—After Meeting Held on 13th October, 1959*.

[307] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [National Gallery of Victoria Trustees and staff, untitled press release] 9 November 1959.

[308] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Paul Coremans, 30 November 1959.

[309] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60 [clipping of a Reuters story in French, following the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique's press release].

[310] *The Age* (Melbourne), 11 November 1959.

[311] *The Times* (London), 10 November, 1959, p. 12

[312] *Le Soir* (Brussels), 12 November 1959, p. 2.

[313] P., N., 1959, p. 18.

[314] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Jean Decoen, letter to 'the Conservator of the National Victoria Museum, Melbourne, Australia', 21 November 1959.

[315] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Jean Decoen, 10 February 1960. It seems an agreement had been made between the authorities at the National Gallery of

Victoria and Leo Collard, the Belgian Minister of Public Instruction, to keep the Brussels reports 'entirely confidential except in the field of art scholarship' (VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Leo Collard, letter to Leonard Cox, 26 March 1957).

[316] Shore, 1959.

[317] Carritt, 1959, p. 97.

[318] Grossmann, 1957, pp. 3–4.

[319] Hussey, 1958, p. 876.

[320] Murray and Murray, 1960, p. 104.

[321] Jacob, [1960] p. 8.

[322] Hoff, 1961, pp. 46–49.

[323] Meiss, 1961, p. 278 n. 12.

[324] Kurz, 1961, 5, p. 326.

[325] Reitlinger, 1961, p. 306.

[326] Levey, 1962–63, p. 125.

[327] Roberts, 1962, pp. 51–52.

[328] Schiltz, 1963, p. 1.

[329] Folie, 1963, p. 194.

[330] Clark, 1964, p. 13.

[331] Wescher, 1965, p. 180.

[332] Loewinson-Lessing and Nicouline, 1965, p. 13.

[333] Hoff, 1967, pp. 42–46.

[334] Genaille, 1967, p. 219.

[335] Koch, 1967, p. 48.

[336] Friedländer, 1967–76, 1, *The Van Eycks—Petrus Christus*, 1967, pp. 39–40.

[337] Cuttler, 1968, pp. 95–96.

[338] Whinney, 1968, p. 54 n. 11.

[339] Brignetti and Faggin, 1968, p. 93.

[340] Faggin, 1968 [unpaginated].

[341] Hughes and Faggin, 1968, pp. 6 and 93.

[342] Carandente, 1968, pp. 46–48.

[343] Scheller, 1968, p. 135 n. 1, and p. 137 n. 23.

[344] Hoff, 1968, p. 26.

[345] Pemán Pemartín, 1969, pp. 66–69.

[346] Schiltz, 1969, p. 3.

[347] Dierick, 1970 [unpaginated].

[348] Malkis Gellman, 1970, p. 213.

[349] Hoff and Davies, 1971.

[350] The University of Melbourne Archives, Ursula Hoff Papers, Box 4, 1/40, Ursula Hoff, letter to Martin Davies, 10 December 1971.

[351] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Ursula Hoff, *Confidential Report from Dr Ursula Hoff*, 10 August 1959.

[352] This is according to the text by the anonymous author of the catalogue for 'NG 33, Sir Martin Davies' Papers 1939–1975' in the NGL Archives.

[353] NGL Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, [Martin Davies] letter to Ursula Hoff, 17 January 1961.

[354] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958. A section of Davies' report describing the Verdura, Covarrubias, and Catania *Virgin and Child* paintings (pp. 1–2) was cut from the 1971 publication. Another two sections claiming the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* may not include all of the original Eyckian composition preserved in the Covarrubias painting (pp. 5–8) were also cut. Davies thought the shadow falling over the bench at the extreme left of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was unexplained, whereas the casket on the bench of the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* accounted for the shadow in that work. He concluded that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* might have omitted the casket present in the putative lost original by Van Eyck. He did not consider that the shadow in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* may be cast by the left, short, window-sill, only the edge of which is painted at the extreme left of the picture. Furthermore, Davies' report was attributed to the 'director of the London National Gallery' even though Davies was Deputy Keeper at the time the report was written.

[355] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Hoff Papers, Ursula Hoff, letter to Mlle Sonkes, 9 November 1966.

[356] Schwieger, 1993, pp. 521–22.

[357] Cox ([1970] p. 285) seems to have re-interpreted the work's critical history restrospectively in light of the conclusions of the 1950s analysis, incorrectly giving the impression that the examination reflected doubts about the work's authenticity already held at the National Galley of Victoria. He stated that as far back as the time of Rinder's acquisition of the work, 'the data on which the attribution was based did not satisfy all', but does not state who was dissatisfied with the attribution or why. As demonstrated above, the literature on the work from the time supported the attribution of the work to Van Eyck consistently. Cox stated, unjustly, that Rinder 'was no art historian'. Rinder had, however, published art historical articles and books, specialising in Scottish printmakers and painters. His publications include *The Etched Work of D.Y. Cameron* (London, 1908), and *The Royal Scottish Academy (1826–1916)* (Glasgow, 1917). On Rinder, see also: Hoff, 1983, pp. 36–37. Cox wrote that one letter of the signature was held to have been used in error, presumably referring to the transcription of '*IXH*' as '*IXA*'. However, this supposed anomaly was not noted by Martin Davies until after the analysis of the work in Brussels had begun, and was primarily the result of

overpainting, as is explained here in Chapters Two and Three. Cox stated that doubts were expressed about the work when it was exhibited in America, but does not say by whom or what their doubts concerned. Doubts had been expressed about the signature in the early twentieth century, but not about the painting as a whole. Cox wrote that the exhibition in Bruges 'came as an opportunity for re-examination by those most qualified to judge, and in the presence of unquestionable works by the Master' although Aubrey Gibson, a Trustee of the Gallery at the time of the investigation, noted, 'Originally we sent our "Van Eyck" to Europe to show and be cleaned. *When there* doubts as to the attribution were raised' (italics added, PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Aubrey Gibson, letter to Eric Westbrook, 13 May 1958). Cox stated that authorities in Belgium *and* London expressed doubts about the work's attribution soon after its arrival and prior to its examination at the IRPA, however the documents show that doubts about the attribution originated in Belgium and were transmitted to London after the work had been shown in both Bruges and London as a work of Van Eyck (as detailed in this text). Cox's book contains other significant misunderstandings relating to the work's technical analysis, apparently perpetuating ideas from other sources associated with the Gallery, discussed here in Chapter Two.

[358] Campbell, 1972, p. 460.

[359] Hoff, *The National Gallery of Victoria*, 1973, pp. 24–25; Hoff, *European Paintings and Sculpture before 1800*, 1973, pp. 51–55.

[360] Bruyn, 1975, pp. 67–68.

[361] Purtle, 1976, pp. 226–27 n. 1.

[362] Howell Jolly, 1976, p. 42–43.

[363] Jolain, 1976, 3, p. 228.

[364] Clark, 1977, p. 152.

[365] Hagopian Van Buren, 1978, p. 629.

[366] Martinez, 1980, pp. 54–56.

[367] Châtelet, 1980, pp. 44–47.

[368] Dhanens, [1980] pp. 346–67. Two paintings *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* (Galleria Sabauda, Turin and John G. Johnson Collection, Philadelphia) may be attributed to Van Eyck or his workshop. Whether or not the Philadelphia *Saint Francis* is accepted as the work of Van Eyck's own hand, it almost certainly came from his workshop, as is discussed in Chapter Three. In addition, the figures of the Dresden triptych may be derived from earlier works. The posture of the donor is similar to that of Saint Francis in the Turin and Philadelphia paintings, Saint Catherine's posture and drapery are similar to those of Arnolfini's wife in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, and the Virgin and Child, in part, may derive from the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition.

[369] Goodgal, 1981, pp. 29 and 47.

[370] Campbell, 1982, pp. 106–07.

[371] Purtle, 1982, p. 98 n. 1 and p. 114.

[372] Végh, 1983 [unpaginated—No. 22, Lucca *Virgin and Child*].

[373] Silver, 1984, p. 75.

[374] Galbally, 1987, pp. 87–90.

[375] De Vos, 1989, p. 34.

[376] Collobi Ragghianti, 1990, p. 3.

[377] Harbison, 1991, p. 93.

[378] Wright, 1992, 1, p. 73.

[379] Sander (1993, pp. 260–61) proposed that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*, and a *Virgin and Child* painting previously in the Simpson-Carson Collection, are pastiches of the Lucca *Virgin and Child*. Sander did not explain how Rogier van der Weyden and Petrus Christus, among others, came to adapt the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition. He did not note that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* have more in common with each other than they do with the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, and he did not refer to the Verdura *Virgin and Child*.

[380] Hoff, *The National Gallery of Victoria*, 1973, pp. 51–55.

[381] Hoff (ed.), 1995, p. 105.

[382] Von Tolnai, 1932, pp. 324 and 334.

[383] De Tolnay, 1939, pp. 25, 31, and 66.

[384] Pächt, 1956, pp. 272 and 274. See Appendix C for a discussion of Pächt's argument.

[385] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Ursula Hoff, *Confidential Report from Dr Ursula Hoff*, 10 August 1959.

[386] T[hoss], D., 1993, p. 262.

[387] Châtelet, 1993, p. 72.

[388] Terakado, 1994, p. 210.

[389] Evans, 1995, p. 186.

[390] Smeyers, 1995, 2, p. 1068.

[391] Urbach, 1995, p. 557.

[392] Châtelet, 1996, p. 129.

[393] Van Buren, 1996, 10, p. 712.

[394] Evans, 1996, p. 333.

[395] Filedt Kok, 1972–73, pp. 209–10.

[396] Snyder, 1973, pp. 294–295, and 297.

[397] Snyder, 1985, p. 102.

[398] Laclotte, 1991, p. 252.

[399] Sterling, 1971, p. 11 n. 47.

[400] Sterling, 1976, p. 7 n. 5, and pp. 11 and 57.

[401] Castelfranchi Vegas, 1998, pp. 9–10, and 60.

[402] Künstler, 1972, pp. 107–09.

[403] Carleton, 1982, pp. 118 and 120.

[404] Shiseko, 1983, p. 84.

[405] Madigan, 1986, p. 227 n. 1.

[406] Stadler (ed.), 1988, p. 208.

[407] Stroo and Smeyers, 1994, p. 291, reproduced with caption on p. 292.

[408] Spantigati, [copyright 1986–98] p. 48.

[409] Hudson, 1998, pp. 71 and 86. The thesis was written under the supervision of Associate Professor Ann Galbally.

[410] Hudson, Dr Hugh, Melbourne, Timothy Potts, letter to Hugh Hudson, 4 August 1998.

[411] The thesis was written under the supervision of Professor Jaynie Anderson.

[412] De Vos, 1999, pp. 95 and 189.

[413] Lüdke, '74, Martin Schongauer' 2001, p. 162.



Fig. 3. Attributed to Jan van Eyck (and workshop?), *Virgin and Child*, during the 1958 cleaning. The photograph is dated 24 April 1958 on the reverse. Reproduced with the permission of the Keeper of Public Records, Public Record Office Victoria, Australia.

2

Science and Interpretation: Materials, Technique, and Condition

> Naturally, much of the information deduced from scientific evidence in the Brussels report is not to be taken as a totally objective diagnosis but as a more or less subjective interpretation of specific data. Many observed facts lend themselves to more than one interpretation; and at times the authors of the report have succumbed to the temptation of presenting the view most congenial to the technical experts as if it were the only one. In such cases, the stylistic critic begs to differ.
>
> Otto Pächt, *Van Eyck and the Founders of Early Netherlandish Painting*—referring to the Institut's analysis of the Ghent altarpiece in the early 1950s.

The application of sophisticated scientific methods to the study of Old Master paintings essentially dates from the early twentieth century. A pioneer in the field was Alan Burroughs from the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, who travelled Europe and America in the 1930s making the first x-radiogaphs of many important paintings, including Hubert and Jan van Eyck's Ghent altarpiece, as well as a number of smaller paintings attributed to them. From the outset there seemed to be an expectation that in addition to revealing more about the condition of works of art and their materials and technique, science might shine a light on some of the mysteries that the largely stylistic and documentary evidence used by art historians had failed to illuminate. In particular, there were contested issues of attribution to be resolved, such as the extent of Hubert van Eyck's contribution to the Ghent altarpiece, and the distinguishing of his independent paintings from those of his brother—in the absence of a single signed or documented work by him alone. Certainly, Burroughs tried to interpret his x-radiographs—or 'shadowgraphs' as he called them—to construct an idea of the Van Eycks' individual styles and development. However, even in undisputed works, the technical evidence was disconcertingly inconsistent. Far from clarifying most matters, Burroughs' scientific evidence succeeded in adding a further set of variables to the equation.[1]

In the post-war 'Atomic Age' of the late 1940s expectations for the scientific analysis of paintings rose, and seemed at last to be justified by its role in unmasking Han van

Meegeren's forged Vermeers and De Hooghs. Even if the scientific analysis, led by Paul Coremans, essentially only confirmed what Van Meegeren had admitted in court—including a detailed account of his technical procedures for making his fakes—the perception was that science could provide clear evidence against their authenticity where the stylistic evidence was in some respects ambiguous or was debated. Some collectors and art critics did not believe Van Meegeren was telling the truth, but the science suggested he was.[2] By the 1950s the stage was set for scientific analysis to provide clear results in the study of the Van Eycks' oeuvres.

The 1957–58 technical analysis of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, directed and largely undertaken by Coremans' Institut, purported to show that this work, which had been all but universally accepted as a Van Eyck for over a century, was not authentic. It was the first time a Van Eyck had been de-attributed on the basis of scientific evidence. Indeed, it was one of the first famous Old Master paintings to suffer this fate. However, in this instance, Coremans and his colleagues had overextended themselves methodologically. A re-examination of the extensive records of the analysis shows the evidence presented does not justify its negative conclusions.[3] Although knowledge of early Netherlandish painting has since advanced considerably, the conclusions reached in 1958 describing the work's materials and technique as un-Eyckian and un-Flemish were at odds with the evidence available at the time of their writing. This situation has been exaggerated with increased knowledge of Van Eyck's oeuvre from new investigations of his works.

There are many problems with Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' analysis. They disregarded disagreement between evidence they obtained in Brussels and that supplied by the National Gallery London Laboratory, and suppressed observations they made themselves in the course of their analysis that conflicted with their final conclusions that the work was inauthentic. They misleadingly represented the conclusions that could be reached on the basis of their tests of suspected overpaint, including the signature, correcting their interpretation only for the final Melbourne report, at Martin Davies' suggestion. However, they failed to heed other sound advice from Davies that their interpretation of certain technical evidence was incorrect. Aspects of the work that were described as unusual had been observed in authentic works of Van Eyck, sometimes by themselves and sometimes by parties known to them, and other apparent anomalies could reasonably have been explained. The use of pigments was described as un-Flemish when the constituents and structures of the paint layers are similar to Van Eyck's own, comparable in many ways to their own analysis of the Ghent altarpiece undertaken a few years earlier. And no attempt was made to account for the

relationship between the Verdura *Virgin and Child* and the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* using technical data. The former work arguably copies the latter and so undermines the conclusion that the Ince Hall painting is not of the fifteenth century and is un-Flemish.

The following account of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s materials and technique is arranged largely in 'stratigraphic' order, from the reverse of the panel support to the varnish layers. Extracts from the four interim reports from Brussels, the two final reports for Brussels and Melbourne (all of these translated from French), Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey's report from London, and the 1971 revised précis (also translated from French) are discussed together for the first time. Comparisons are made with more recent technical analyses of the work and with technical studies of paintings by Van Eyck, as well as those of other early Netherlandish artists.

Reverse of the Panel

A thin, grey-black wash is painted directly onto the reverse of the panel. In the final report to Melbourne it was stated that this stain was readily soluble in water and so was definitely not of the fifteenth century.[4] The reverses of some small- and medium-scale Eyckian panels are painted in imitation of stone or of marbling, over a preparation of ground. This treatment may be intended to block the absorption of moisture by the panel, but it also serves an aesthetic purpose. Small paintings were not necessarily always hung on a wall, but might be kept in cases, to be brought out for inspection on certain occasions, when their reverses could come into view. Van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)* has a so-called marbled reverse, consisting of dark paint speckled with lighter coloured paint, although this has been scraped away around the edges of the panel.[5] The *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* has a thin black layer applied directly to the panel, which has been judged not to be original, as there are the remains of a chalk ground towards the lower edge, possibly an original preparation for a marbled reverse.[6] No original preparation or paint layer has been found on the reverse of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, only a later covering.[7] The Antwerp *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* has slight remnants of painting, possibly not original, on its reverse, while the workshop copy of it in a private collection retains its original marbling.[8] Whether the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* once had a painted reverse that was later scraped off is impossible to say.[9]

The Support

In 1883 Weale observed that the support was an oak panel,[10] and in 1906 he noticed that the panel was warped.[11] Frank Rinder wrote: 'The slight warping of the panel, alluded to by Weale, now rectified, was due, says Captain Douglas (who acted as agent of Mr. Weld-Blundell's) to water from a defective roof at Ince Hall dropping on to it some sixty years ago.'[12] Rinder reported in 1922 that the warp was treated by Zink.[13] Warping was again noticed when the *Virgin and Child* was in Detroit in 1941,[14] which was remedied in the same year, when the work was returned to Melbourne.[15] The panel still retains a slight convex warp across its horizontal axis.

Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers described the support in their final Melbourne report as a single piece of oak 'so-called Central European', with vertical grain, quarter sawn, and measuring 26.4 cm high by 19.5 cm wide by 0.7 cm thick (± 0.1). They also stated that it was of variable thickness and that the care given to the making of fifteenth-century panels was absent, notwithstanding the possibility that the panel may have been reworked subsequent to its original production.[16] Oak is typically used as a support in early Netherlandish paintings, while poplar is commonly used in Italian early Renaissance paintings. There is, though, no real evidence to indicate the geographic origin of the oak from which the panel was cut. In 1999 Peter Klein measured the panel's growth rings, but found that the panel was undatable by dendrochronological methods.[17] It is uncertain whether this is because the oak came from outside the Baltic region, from where all of Van Eyck's panels originated that have been tested dendrochronologically,[18] or because the tree from which the panel was cut grew outside a forest, in a singular microclimate that created an atypical pattern of growth rings.

The dimensions of the paint surface of the *Virgin and Child* correspond closely to those of three of Van Eyck's paintings: the *Portrait of Baudouin de Lannoy*, at 26.0 cm by 19.5 cm,[19] the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, at approximately 26 cm by 19 cm; and the *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw*, at 24.6 by 19.2 cm.[20] Hélène Verougstraete and Roger van Schoute noted the correspondence between the sizes, shapes, and methods of construction of three of the original frames on Van Eyck's small-scale paintings, including the second and third portraits from the list above, suggesting that Van Eyck probably used a standard panel type.[21] The thickness of the *Virgin and Child*'s panel also corresponds to that of two of Van Eyck's paintings: the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, which is 8 mm thick,[22] and the *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)*, which is approximately 8 mm thick.[23]

Despite Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' comment about the lack of care given to the preparation of the panel, there is no significant difference in the quality of the finish apparent on the reverse of the panel, compared with the reverse of the panel of Hans Memling's *Man of Sorrows in the Arms of the Virgin*,[24] which has been dated to the fifteenth century.[25] Nor is there any significant lack of quality, such as unevenness visible to the naked eye on the surface on the obverse of the panel (through the ground and paint layers) or knots in the wood visible in the x-radiography. The reverse of Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* in Antwerp has been described as: 'very rough (sawn) and […] not parallel to the front'.[26] Evidently, not all early Netherlandish panels were entirely carefully made, or have been carelessly treated afterwards.

The *Barbe* and Absence of an Unpainted Fringe

Coremans gave as one of the initial reasons for his skepticism about the work's authenticity that the picture had sharply defined edges, which seemed to him to be in their original condition and not the result of having been trimmed at any time. Coremans said that in his experience this finish was unknown in Flemish primitives, these having usually a *barbe* (the French word for beard, referring to the small ridge of ground and/or paint that accumulates against the edges of the original frame already attached to the panel when the artist began painting) and an unpainted fringe (that would have been covered by the original frame, but was revealed if the frame was later removed),[27] unlike modern paintings, which are usually fitted into their frames after they have been painted. In some cases Van Eyck's frames were partly integral with the panels themselves: the carpenter carved the vertical members from the same piece of wood as the panel, and attached the horizontal members with glue and dowels. In such cases an unpainted fringe could only be found on the vertical edges if the frame had been reduced to the level of the panel by an operation such as planing. In other cases Van Eyck's panels were made separately, and were wedged into their frames before painting, which required that the panels were first given a chamfered edge.[28]

It was pointed out in the previous chapter that the paint layers of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* do not have sharply defined edges, in fact they are rather jagged, particularly at the right of the top edge, and at the bottom of the right one. Photographs of the work from before 1957 show this, and the x-radiographs of the work made in London and Brussels in 1956 would undoubtedly have confirmed it, as the one made in 1958 does.[29] Subsequently, Hoff and Davies' *Corpus* volume noted of Memling's *Man of Sorrows in the Arms of the Virgin*

that the damaged paint layers at the edge of the panel were an indication that the panel has been cut down.[30] It is equally likely that the panel of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* has been trimmed too, explaining the absence of an unpainted fringe.

Comparing their succession of reports Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers can be seen to have skirted with difficulty around their own observations of indications the *Virgin and Child* had been painted in a traditional manner (with a frame attached from the outset). In the final Brussels report they described the panel as trimmed, specifying that the horizontal edges had been sawn and the vertical edge planed.[31] However, the observation was omitted in the final Melbourne report, only for the latter part of it to re-appear in Philippot and Sneyers' 1971 revised précis.[32] Why did it disappear? The draft of the final Brussels report sent to Martin Davies at the National Gallery, London, for comment gives a clue. On page five it reads:

> there is no chamfer along the edges […] The panel has been trimmed all around: the absence of unpainted edge and *barbe* leads one to believe this. It seems that this operation must have been carried out by sawing the horizontal edges and by planing the vertical edges.

Davies circled and joined in pencil the two parts of the text here separated by an ellipsis, and in the margin wrote: '? Sure apart from anything else does this fit p. 12, c?' That part of the text reads:

> At the top and left edges of the picture, one has brought to light a small but clear groove forming a hollow in the paint layer (cf.). This groove is, furthermore, parallel to the edges of the picture.
>
> It seems this phenomenon must be interpreted as the result of the impression into the paint layers of a hard body, parallel to the edge of the picture, and that, before the paint layers had completely dried. Above all, one thinks of the impression of the edge of a frame.[33]

Thus, the presence of a fine groove along the left edge of the paint layer was interpreted on page twelve as evidence that the work might have been painted on the panel, and a frame applied shortly afterwards, which left an indentation on the edge of the fresh paint layer. When Davies noticed that this was seemingly at odds with their earlier observation that the vertical edges of the panel had been planed and the horizontal edges

sawn, the latter was edited from the final Melbourne report. Hypothetically, the planing and sawing of the panel could have occurred prior to its painting, so this observation alone did not contradict the analysts' idea that the panel had not been painted with a frame in place. However, the macrophotograph of the right edge of the panel made in 1957,[34] shows the panel *and* ground are visible in cross-section, a state only possible by the reduction of the panel after the application of the ground or if some element surrounding the panel when the ground was applied had been removed (such as a frame). But for the authors to acknowledge in the final Melbourne report that the edges of the panel had been planed and sawn might have alerted the reader to the possibility that a frame had originally been present but had been removed. Apparently, this was cause to edit the observation, although footnote twelve admitted it was possible the work might have been cut down after all.

Their interpretation of the groove in the paint layer is, however, not conclusive. In Hoff and Davies' *Corpus* volume they noted of Memling's *Man of Sorrows in the Arms of the Virgin*: 'inside the *barbe* there is a groove as if pressed in by a frame'.[35] Evidently, a groove pressed into the edge of the paint layers of a panel painting need not be considered evidence that a work was not made in a traditional manner—inside its original frame—but may result from an impression made into the paint layers either during or after the execution of a panel painting by any object, including perhaps a frame added later.

Given the amount of damage sustained by Renaissance paintings over the centuries, it is unsurprising that not all fifteenth-century Netherlandish works have retained a *barbe* and unpainted fringe. Van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)* has been cut to the edges of the paint surface, removing any unpainted fringe.[36] There is, though, a slight lip in parts of the left edge of the paint layer indicating the location of a *barbe*, although a *barbe* is not visible around the entire paint surface. The Eyckian *Three Maries at the Tomb* (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam) has neither a *barbe* nor an unpainted fringe,[37] and Coremans is known to have examined this work in 1948.[38] In his technical report on the work, written in 1949, he noted that the panel lacked unpainted edges.[39] Nevertheless, he wrote in a letter to Martin Davies:

> I know of no example of a fifteenth-century Flemish picture that does not present in its original form with an unpainted fringe and a '*barbe*'. In the present case [of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*], there is no unpainted fringe, but perhaps in certain places the remains of what one could call a *barbe*.[40]

Any reply by Davies to this letter is not included in the Institut's file on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. However, Davies would have known that the National Gallery, London's *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)* did not have surviving unpainted edges and Coremans might well have known this also, as it was recorded by Davies in the '*Primitifs Flamands*' *Corpus* volume that Coremans, as Director of the Centre National de Recherches '*Primitifs Flamands*', had published in 1954.[41]

In the final Melbourne report Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers wrote:

> One could also admit that in a more recent period, a painter little familiar with fifteenth-century Flemish painting technique has created a work of Eyckian character. This would explain the numerous divergences observed in comparison with the technique of the Flemish primitives: the carelessly made support, the absence of a *barbe*, and of an unpainted edge […].[42]

Subsequently, in the same report they wrote:

> As mentioned above, no Flemish easel painting of the fifteenth century is known that does not exhibit an unpainted edge and *barbe*, and this around all its edges, unless the panel has been reduced.
>
> In the present case, no part of the edge is unpainted, and it can be seriously doubted (direct vision and radiography) that there is the remains of a *barbe*. There would have to have been, therefore, a cutting down of the four edges, at least if one wanted include the work among Flemish works of the fifteenth century. This cutting down would be of the order of 1 to 2 cm, in admitting that the strongest radiographic densities at the edges correspond to the remains of the *barbe*; it would have to be more important and therefore have affected the composition, so this local radiographic density does not correspond to the remains of a *barbe*.[43]

The logic of rejecting the possibility that the panel had been cut down by suggesting that during an operation eliminating the *barbe* the composition of the work would have been affected is difficult to fathom. It seems to have been an attempt to deny that any feature in the x-radiograph might correspond to a *barbe*, no doubt because there is indeed in the x-radiograph at the left of the top edge of the painting, and just right of centre on the same edge, fine white lines that could well justify such an interpretation. A *barbe*, being thickest along the edge of the panel, may appear in x-radiography as a white line. If, for the sake of

argument, one ignored the white lines at the top of the x-radiograph of the *Virgin and Child*, and the original dimensions of the panel were considered unknown, as well as the original extent of the composition, there is no reason an unpainted fringe, *barbe*, and any amount of the edges of the composition could not have been removed to leave the work in its current condition.

In conclusion in the 1958 Melbourne report, the analysts wrote:

> Now it must be recalled that the picture being studied here does not exhibit a *barbe* or unpainted edge. The absence of these two elements, like the presence of the groove, indicates, according to us, that one is not in the presence of a Flemish work of the fifteenth century (12). […] (12). Unless it is admitted that the panel has been reduced around all its edges (cf. below). In this case the *barbe* and the unpainted edge could have disappeared.[44]

Thus, in an endnote, the analysts admitted that their hypothesis about the panel not having been made in the traditional early Netherlandish manner might be wrong, and undermined their own argument that a reduction of the panel would have affected the composition. In the revised précis published in 1971 Philippot and Sneyers maintained that the painting had no *barbe* (incorrectly) and no unpainted fringe (correctly) and that no fifteenth-century Flemish panel paintings were known without these features (incorrectly).[45]

What is the best evidence for the presence of a *barbe*? This author has observed what can reasonably be thought the remnants of a *barbe* along the left edge of the paint surface. It is visible as a discontinuous ridge less than 1 mm high adjacent to the left edge of the panel; the macrophotograph of the left edge of the paint layer published in the *Corpus* volume to illustrate the presence of the thin groove also showed parts of the *barbe* at the extreme left throwing a shadow in the raking light.[46]

Though the panel cannot be dated by dendrochronology at present, the available evidence shows that its material and dimensions are similar to those of Van Eyck's panels. The panel is oak, as are all of Van Eyck's panels that have been examined. The presence of a *barbe* indicates that the painting was executed inside its original frame as many of Van Eyck's works are known to have been, and that the painted surface dimensions are original.[47] These dimensions are similar to those of three of Van Eyck's paintings, and the panel is of a similar thickness to two of Van Eyck's panels.

The Ground Layers

In the interim report from Brussels dated 24 December 1957 a cleaning test in an area 2 by 1.5 cm in the bottom right corner of the painting revealed a whitish ground and a craquelure filled with dirt. The medium of the ground was identified by saponification as the 'usual' aqueous medium. The ground was specified as chalk and glue in the analyses of the first and second microsamples. In the analysis of the sixth microsample the ground was measured as ± 240μ thick, in the seventh microsample it was 450μ and the observation was made that two layers of ground were believed to be visible. In the eighth microsample it measured 600μ, and two layers of ground were clearly visible, and in the ninth microsample it measured 700μ while the number of layers was not specified.[48]

Appended to the final Melbourne report was a photo of the painting with numbers written in white indicating the locations where microsamples had been taken (photo no. L7300B). It confirms that the numbers given to the samples referred to in the interim report of 24 December are those given for the sample sites in the diagram, since the colours in the descriptions of the paint layers in the microsamples correspond to those in the areas from which the samples were taken. The diagram shows that the sixth microsample was taken about 5 or 6 cm from the left edge of the bottom of the paint surface, the seventh microsample was taken from about 2 or 3 cm from the left edge of the bottom of the paint surface, the eighth microsample was taken from about 6 or 7 cm from the top of the right edge, and the ninth sample was taken from near the top of the left edge of the paint surface.

In the final Melbourne report Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers recorded the following:

> Whitish ground; normal composition based on calcium carbonate (chalk) and animal glue, with which it is very strongly impregnated. Its thickness—up to 700μ—is altogether unusual. This is usually between 100μ and 200μ in the pictures of Van Eyck; it may reach a maximum of 300 to 400μ in those of the other Flemish primitives (1). […]
> (1) The Institute has examined a considerable number of Flemish pictures of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, including the majority of Eyckian works.[49]

This view was reiterated by Philippot and Sneyers in the revised précis published in 1971, with the exception that the ground was there described as heavily impregnated with oil at one point in their text[50] but glue in another.[51] While it is possible that oil from the paint

layers has been absorbed into the ground, none of the reports from the 1957–58 analyses mentioned the presence of oil in the ground, let alone a heavy impregnation.

While one sample of ground measured 700µ, this does not indicate that it is the average thickness, or that the thickness is unusual for a work by Van Eyck or any early Netherlandish painter. As mentioned, the sample in which the ground measured 700µ was taken from the top of the left edge of the paint surface, that is, on top of or adjacent to a ridge of ground and paint that in all probability is the *barbe*. Likewise, the microsample in which the ground measured 600µ was taken from the right edge of the paint surface where a *barbe* might once have been, which though no longer visible may still account for the relatively thicker ground, compared with the microsamples taken from the bottom edge. This is because the ground layer would be expected to become thicker closer to the *barbe,* even if the visible ridge has been removed. The measurement of the ground in the microsamples from the bottom edge measured ± 240µ and ± 450µ. Since no samples from the middle of the paint surface, away from the *barbe*, seem to have been measured, the thickness of the ground over the majority of the panel is unknown, but could be expected to be thinner than at the edge. Nevertheless, there is no reason to believe that a ground thickness in the vicinity of ± 240µ and ± 450µ would be unusual. The ground of Petrus Christus' *Lamentation* (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels) has been described as on average half a millimetre, i.e. ± 500µ.[52]

Emil Bosshard described the ground of Van Eyck's *Annunciation* (Thyssen-Bornemisza Collection, Madrid) as:

> a thick yellow-white ground, which is rather brown on the surface. The ground seems to be made out of two or three layers, and is composed of different, comparatively coarse types of chalk. Presumably the lower layer is a type of chalk which has larger quantities of naturally occurring clay and red iron oxide compounds. The upper layers are rather fine grained. Animal glue was used as the binding agent for the ground […].[53]

F.I.G. Rawlins, J. Plesters, and M. Hey of the National Gallery London Laboratory conducted an independent analysis of a number of samples taken from the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in Brussels. They described the ground layer of one sample as a 'Creamy-white gesso consisting of calcium carbonate and glue. There is also a little iron present that may be responsible for the yellowish tint.' They considered the presence of iron in the ground unusual in a Flemish primitive painting, but common enough in Italian gessoes (calcium sulphate) of the same

date. They added that while the presence of iron in the gesso could be a natural impurity, the addition of an iron oxide to a new gesso layer is an 'obvious' method for giving it the yellowish appearance of an aged gesso.[54] This was one of a number of references in their report to the possibility that the work might be a forgery, a conclusion they were unable to support in the end on the evidence available to them. Bosshard's discovery of iron oxide impurities in the ground of the *Annunciation* shows in retrospect that this speculation was unwarranted.

Another aspect of the ground layers to be considered is the hypothesis entertained at a number of points in the 1957–58 analysis that the painting had been transferred to the present panel. In 1957 Coremans suggested that a transfer possibly in the nineteenth century might account for what he perceived to be an unusually consistent pattern in the craquelure.[55] Indeed, in 1918 Charles Weld-Blundell had informed the Director of the National Gallery, London, that he intended having the work transferred in Paris after the First World War.[56] Although, it is fairly clear that this did not happen. The current panel bears an old seal on its reverse, which must pre-date the ownership of the Blundell family, since it is not theirs.

In a letter to Martin Davies of 4 December 1957 Coremans stated 'off the record' that the work had been transferred but was waiting for absolute proof.[57] However, in the final Brussels report Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers concluded that a transfer was doubtful in this instance because transferred works have a double craquelure (that from the new support added to that from the original one), whereas this work did not.[58] A similar conclusion was recorded in the final Melbourne report.[59] In 1959 Philip Hendy maintained, 'nothing has been discovered to prove that the picture has been transferred from one panel to another; but I should still expect this to be the most likely explanation of the most obvious divergence from 15th century Netherlandish custom.'[60] Hendy was presumably referring to the absence of an unpainted fringe and the alleged absence of a *barbe*. While unlikely, to dismiss completely the possibility that the paint layers have been transferred to the present panel prior to the twentieth century it would be useful to have data concerning the composition of the two ground layers, as well as comparative stratigraphic evidence from transferred works.[61]

The available information concerning the ground layers of the *Virgin and Child,* that they are composed of off-white chalk and glue in at least two layers measuring between ± 240μ on the bottom edge and 700μ in the vicinity of the *barbe*, and containing iron oxide impurities, does not differ significantly from what has been published of Van Eyck's ground layers in works such as the Thyssen-Bornemisza *Annunciation*.

The Apparent Absence of an All-Over Isolating or Priming Layer

In the early 1950s Coremans and his colleagues identified a thin, yellow-brown layer composed primarily of drying oil in the microsamples of the Ghent altarpiece, located between the ground and the paint layers. This they described as a 'sealing' or 'isolating' layer ('*couche d'impérmeabilisation (d'isolation)*'), interpreting it as a protective measure taken to minimise the leaching of medium from the paint layers into the ground.[62] Similar layers have also been identified in the works of Van der Weyden and his shop, there composed primarily of lead white, sometimes tinted with other pigments,[63] as well as in the works of many other early Netherlandish artists. No previous author has addressed the question of whether there is a similar layer in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. However, it appears there is not. This observation is based on the descriptions of the microsample cross-sections originating in Brussels and the macrophotographs of the microsamples provided by Brussels, and has since been confirmed by examination of the original microsamples with an electron microscope at the Institut.[64]

Two paintings by Van Eyck have also been said to lack an oleaginous isolating layer or pigmented priming: the *Portrait of a Man with a Ring* (Museum of the Romanian Republic, Bucharest)[65] and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. Lorne Campbell said of the latter work: 'In most of the paintings [fifteenth-century Netherlandish paintings in the National Gallery, London], there is an extremely thin priming layer on top of the ground and underdrawing, which would have remained visible. Some paintings, however, do not have primings. No such layer was observed during examination of Jan van Eyck's portrait of the Arnolfini couple.'[66]

Uta Neidhardt and Christoph Schölzel noted of the Dresden triptych:

> Observations with the microscope of a part of the uncovered ground, in the area of the tiled floor in the middle panel, offered no definite conclusion with the regard to the existence of an *imprimitura* or isolating layer, as was shown to be the case by Kockaert in his examination of the *Ghent altarpiece*. […] Should such an *imprimitura*, oiling or only glue size be present, it is not mixed with pigments, or with only a little, so that the light, ivory coloured tone of the ground remains uncoloured.[67]

Similarly, during a recent examination of the Thyssen-Bornemisza *Annunciation* 'no intermediate layer was observed'.[68]

There is too little information available to sustain hypotheses about Van Eyck's use of isolating or priming layers throughout his career, for example, whether he used them only in large works, such as the Ghent altarpiece. Nevertheless, bearing in mind the difficulty in observing such layers, an isolating or priming layer is not present, is unpigmented, or is so thin as to remain undetected in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, and Van Eyck's *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, Dresden *Virgin and Child* triptych, Thyssen-Bornemisza *Annunciation*, and Bucharest *Portrait of a Man with a Ring*—in contrast to a large number of early Netherlandish paintings in which such layers have been detected.

Infrared Studies of *Pentimenti*, Additive Painting, and Underdrawing

Coremans and his colleagues were among the first to publish a detailed account of Eyckian underdrawing, as it was revealed to them by infrared photography.[69] In their 1953 publication of the technical analysis of the Ghent altarpiece, Paul Philippot (Albert's son) wrote of the work's underdrawing:

> the preparatory drawing reveals the artist in the act of creation. Free and spontaneous like handwriting, it is much less meticulous than one ordinarily believes. Many details are only provisionally indicated, demonstrating the liberty that will be taken in regard to them when they are painted. In the figures, very little or no modelling in grisaille, but almost always a chiaroscuro largely sketched in hatching with the brush (Pl. III 2). From all indications, the drawing is never a tyrannical cartoon remaining to be coloured, but rather the general laying out of the composition, comparable with the sinopie of medieval frescoes. Certain motifs, on the other hand, were probably painted after the underdrawing was already hidden by an underpainting (Pl. LI).[70]

This assessment of Eyckian underdrawing could still be considered valid today. It is therefore surprising that Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' analysis of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in the final Brussels report only a few years later adopted a quite different premise:

> A Flemish pictorial composition is based on a precise design. It is within these delimited forms that the master applies the different layers of colours, following a structure and materials that constitute a constant and this despite the variations in detail from artist to artist. This is not at all the case here: one does not meet with any trace of a precise drawing, and the underlying coloured layers sometimes extend well beyond the limits of

> the forms on the surface. This is so in numerous places and notably for the green underpainting of the baldachin that one finds also beneath the brownish background. These observations make one think of a superficial imitation.[71]

The question of how extensive Van Eyck's drawing was and how closely he adhered to it in the paint layers had been debated since 1938 when Joseph van der Veken suggested Van Eyck and the early Netherlandish painters barely drew on their panels at all. This was shown to be incorrect by the publication of infrared analyses of the Ghent altarpiece and *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* in the *Corpus* volumes of 1953 and 1954 respectively,[72] and by Jules Desneux' article 'Underdrawings and *Pentimenti* in the Pictures of Jan van Eyck' in *The Art Bulletin* in 1958.[73] Fine and extensive underdrawing executed with a brush was found in all of Van Eyck's paintings that were examined. In many cases the artist altered his compositions as he executed them, adjusting the positions of limbs and hands, the directions of gazes, and the shape and position of furniture and fixtures. In some instances the artist only summarily indicated objects—even large ones—in his underdrawing (such as the chandelier in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*), and sometimes it seems, not at all (such as the fountain in the Ghent altarpiece). Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' implication that Van Eyck painted without making corrections is readily challenged. After all, Van Eyck's *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* shows even to the naked eye that the red paint of the cloth covered bench extends beneath the greyish paint of the back wall (which has become more transparent in time). Thus, there was no reason to consider as un-Eyckian the closely comparable phenomenon of the green paint of the cloth of honour in the *Virgin and Child* extending beneath the greyish paint of its back wall.

Infrared reflectography (IRR) sheds new light on the technique of the *Virgin and Child* (Fig. 4), providing evidence for a very different interpretation than Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' one. The green paint of the baldachin that became visible though losses in the brownish paint of the back wall during cleaning, was not the result of the artist loosely applying paint in a superficial imitation of an Eyckian composition or even only an adjustment to the position of the cloth of honour. IRR shows a major change in the composition that infrared photography had not.[74] In an early stage of the execution of the work the artist painted two bundled curtains hanging from the front corners of the baldachin, one on each side, apparently using the same copper green paint as was used for the baldachin and cloth of honour. Judging from the shadow visible in the IRR on the right side of the left bundled curtain, the execution had reached an advanced stage, possibly of glazing with

copper resinate. Similar bundled curtains are represented in many fifteenth-century miniatures and panel paintings.[75] In particular, the miniature *Jean Miélot in his Study* (*Le miroir de la salvation humaine*, Flemish, late fifteenth century, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Fr. 6275, fol. 96v) shows how the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* baldachin might have looked in an early stage of its execution.[76] The inclusion of the curtains would have made the Virgin's setting more elaborate, however, they would have interrupted the direct relationship between the viewer and the Virgin and Child. By painting out the curtains the artist brought the viewer into a more direct visual relationship with the Virgin and Child, an arrangement appropriate for a small panel painting evidently intended for personal devotion. It may also have had the benefit of creating space for the signature.

Van Eyck painted out details of his compositions in a number of his works.[77] An example of this practice was found by this author in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, housed in the Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt. The IRR assembly shows that Van Eyck painted a figure of a bearded young man below the rear, left lion on the Virgin's throne. This figure was painted over with the Gothic niche and cornice on the throne in the final paint layers.

A major *pentimento* in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* that was observed in the 1958 x-radiography and that was also interpreted as evidence of poor execution, may be viewed differently in the light of the IRR of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, published by the National Gallery, London, in 1995. The x-radiography of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* made in 1958 clearly shows the top surface of the window alcove painted in an x-ray opaque pigment, probably lead-white, or possibly lead-tin yellow based. In the final paint layer the top of the window was extended beyond the top of the picture plane. Of this *pentimento* Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers wrote:

> In the upper left corner of the picture in the window the x-radiography (cf.) reveals a change to the composition executed in the course of painting the work. Such changes are frequently found in old pictures and notably in those of fifteenth century Flanders. However, in that case, the modification made—to the original composition, in terms of the design—has a plastic meaning that corresponds to an improved vision of the artist. Here, this is not at all the case as in numerous other parts of the picture, the painter has hesitated erroneously to arrive at a perspective of poor quality; the basis of the pictorial composition—the correct and precise design—failed in this place as elsewhere across all the surface of the picture.[78]

It is interesting to compare their negative assessment of the *pentimento* in the window of the *Virgin and Child* with Rachel Billinge's assessment of the *pentimenti* in the window of Van Eyck's *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, visible in IRR: 'In the underdrawing the crossbar dividing the glazed and unglazed sections was lower, the bar was narrower and the perspective less steep. The glazed part, above, was smaller, *allowing the top of the window frame to be seen*' [italics added].[79]

Thus, in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* the windows on the left of the similar domestic rooms have been elevated in the paint layers beyond the top of the picture planes. In the *Virgin and Child* the artist showed the top of the window in the painting stage and then extended it beyond the top of the picture plane in the final paint layers, and a similar change was made in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. In the latter work it is more difficult to verify whether such a change occurred between the underdrawing and painting stages or in the painting stage. This is because the x-radiograph is difficult to read due to interference from x-ray opaque material on the reverse of the panel.[80] The significance of this correlation in the *pentimenti* of the two works is a matter for conjecture. However, taken together with the similarities in aspects of the two works' execution, compositions, iconography, and the close dates in the signatures, it may be hypothesised that the two works were executed in quick succession or concurrently, and that the *pentimento* in the earlier work was transferred to the later one or that the changes were made simultaneously, as will be discussed further in Chapter Three. Alternatively, these correspondences may be an uncanny coincidence.

Other compositional changes are apparent in the IRR of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. The cloth of honour was initially drawn and/or painted extending down to the right, draped over the low seat on which the Virgin is sitting. It was later painted out with the dark brown-black paint of the shadow to the right of the Virgin, and the corner of a green cushion painted protruding to the right. The photograph of the left area of the signature during cleaning and before repainting (Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LX) shows the green paint identified by Coremans, revealed by the numerous losses to the surface paint layers. Much of this must be the bundled curtain that was painted over. However, as the green paint appears to continue in the area immediately adjacent to the left edge of the cloth of honour, also predominantly green, it may be that the cloth of honour was originally more symmetrically placed within the room, rather than showing more of the left side of the back wall than the right side, as it is in the final paint layers.

The area of the Virgin's mantle to the right of the opening on the carpet appears initially to have been executed folding over itself, but was executed in the final paint layers as a flat expanse. Other small folds of the mantle visible in the x-radiography directly above this area are not visible in the final paint layer, having been painted out. Some changes appear to have occurred between the drawing and the painting stages. The Infant's proper left hand appears to have been drawn with its fingers straight, whereas it was painted with the fingers curled. The Infant's right foot appears to have been painted a little higher than it was underdrawn. The area of carpet on the right appears to have been painted short of the underdrawn finishing point. The bottom of the rear of the bench support appears to have been adjusted downward a little. This may have occurred in the painting stage or between the drawing and the painting stages. The Virgin's jewelled collar seems to have been painted a fraction higher than it was underdrawn. The edge of the mantle appears to have been underdrawn a little closer to her body in the area of her lap and the shape of the edge may have been altered in the drawing stage as well. The folds of the mantle in the bottom left area appear not to follow the summary underdrawing. One change clearly occurred in the underdrawing stage. The area of the Virgin's robe where it is revealed between the edges of the mantle on the carpet first appeared in the underdrawing as a curved shape, but was altered to a small triangle between the sides of the mantle. This triangle was heavily hatched, perhaps to emphasise the change to the composition. In the painting stage the blue of the robe was extended downwards beyond the small triangle area.

There is some evidence for a partly additive painting technique in the IRR and the x-radiography of the *Virgin and Child*. Some details appear not to have been underdrawn and to have been painted over previously painted parts of the composition. IRR shows no underdrawing for the carafe on the bench. X-radiography also shows the left edge of the bench running across the area where the carafe is painted. This suggests that the carafe was painted over the completed bench. The appearance of the chest is difficult to interpret in the IRR, however, x-radiography shows a pale horizontal line bisecting the top of the chest, level with the height of the bench running across the back wall. The chest may have been painted over the completed bench. Less likely is the possibility that a flat object was initially depicted on the top of the chest, although a small light coloured square is visible on the top of the chest in the IRR of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, perhaps representing a small piece of paper below the oranges, which was not carried through to the final paint layers.[81]

In 2000 this author hypothesised that the artist may have initially drawn only a vertical line for the position of the window, painted the grey coloured reveal to this point,

explaining the darker area on the right side of the vertical member of the window frame in the IRR, and then painted the brown window frame over the edge of the grey area, in a partially additive painting technique. Noting a line running vertically in the underdrawing of the window frame of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, it was hypothesised that Van Eyck may have followed a similar procedure in that work. In a paper published subsequently, Rachel Billinge noted the same line approximately bisecting the vertical member of the window frame in the IRR of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. She suggested that the window frame may have been intended to be made of stone like the narrow mullion, rather than the wider bricks visible in the final paint layer.[82] In the two paintings it seems possible that either the window frames have been widened or were initially depicted with a single vertical line around which the features of the windows were constructed. If Billinge's hypothesis is correct, Van Eyck may have had the stone window frame of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in mind when planning the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* window frame.

In the *Virgin and Child* the edge of what may be a shutter or window attached by hinges to the outside of the window frame was painted over the completed sky and the top of a tree (or bush), as seen through tiny losses in the paint layer, visible with the aid a microscope. It would not be surprising if this and other small features, such as the fruit on the windowsill, were executed in an additive painting technique.

Philippot and Sneyers, having stated that there was no trace of a precise drawing in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in 1958, modified their observation in 1971, noting underdrawing in the sleeve, the girdle, the lower edge of the robe where it is revealed by the mantle on the floor, and in certain folds of the mantle, on the basis of the same infrared photography evidence.[83] IRR suggests that the underdrawing is even more extensive. It seems to be present in, though not necessarily limited to, the figures, the drapery, the carpet, certain shadows, and possibly the bench and architecture. The underdrawing defines many contours, and to a lesser extent volumes and shadows. It is generally very fine and appears pale in the IRR, while certain details are more heavily indicated. The fine, tapered appearance of certain small strokes in the mantle suggests that the underdrawing may have been executed in a liquid medium with a very small brush.

In the Infant's proper right thigh and calf a small amount of hatching is apparent as slightly overlapping strokes, running parallel to the contour of the leg, defining the shadow on the viewer's right. Part of this area was covered in the paint layer by the Infant's white cloth. Just below where the Infant's right foot was painted, a dark scalloped line appears to

define the position of his toes in the underdrawing. In the Infant's proper left hand a series of strokes appears to define his fingers held straight. A number of short strokes in the Infant's torso near his neck may define the contours and suggest, in a summary way, the shadows. The white cloth, where it falls over the mantle to the left of the Infant seems to have at least some underdrawing, visible as a single stroke running alongside the fold in the drapery as it was painted.

The Virgin's proper left sleeve shows a series of strokes in the underdrawing indicating wrinkles in the fabric, which were not followed closely in the final paint layers. The shadow between the Virgin's girdle and her mantle on her proper right side seems to have a series of dark strokes in the underdrawing fanning out from the bottom left angle. The girdle itself and the folds coming from it are apparently underdrawn. In the mantle, underdrawing defines some of the contours of the folds. A series of short strokes at an angle to the main contour in a lower, horizontal fold on the right appears to be underdrawing suggesting a shadow. A series of closely drawn, evenly spaced, rounded strokes just to the left indicates both volume and shadow. A 'Y' shaped configuration appears in the IRR to the left of the mantle's opening, near the ground. This may be underdrawing that was not closely followed in the paint layers. A shadow to the right of the Virgin appears in the IRR as a series of diagonal strokes running from top left to bottom right. There may also be a few very small strokes running in the opposite direction in the same area, at the very edge of the mantle, possibly constituting a limited amount of cross-hatching.

In an enlarged photograph of the Virgin's head prior to cleaning in 1958 (Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LXIV) three short, dark strokes are visible in the corner of her left eye, between the eye and the bridge of the nose. These strokes are not clearly visible now and may have been painted over in the 1958 restoration. Although somewhat fuzzy, the IRR reveals a darkness in this area perhaps confirming that the strokes remain under the present surface. The IRR of the woman's face in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* shows at least three short, dark lines in a very similar arrangement as occurs in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[84] It is possible the lines in the latter were underdrawing made visible prior to the 1958, perhaps by an earlier, overly rigorous cleaning.

The bottom edge of the right side of the carpet was underdrawn with a single, thick line. The left corner of the room and the edge of the window alcove may be underdrawn, as these lines appear comparatively darker than the surrounding area of the walls in the IRR, however, this is difficult to verify as the paint on the surface may be responsible for this effect. There are long, slightly perpendicular strokes running through the laver on the floor.

These lines are not visible in the x-radiograph. They may be underdrawing for the shadow on the floor or dark glazes for the shadow itself over which the laver was painted. Less likely is the possibility that they are part of the painting of the laver itself.

Notwithstanding the limited sample of underdrawing arising from the small size of the work and the lack of clarity in parts of the IRR assembly, points of comparison can be found between the appearance of the underdrawing in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and that in Van Eyck's works. The extremely fine quality of the majority of the underdrawing, apparently executed with a small brush in a liquid medium, is broadly comparable with the appearance of the underdrawing in Van Eyck's Dresden triptych.[85] The underdrawing of the Infant's right foot may be compared with the underdrawing of the Infant's left foot in the IRR of the Rolin *Virgin and Child*.[86] In both works the Infant's toes are indicated in the underdrawing by a dark, scalloped line while the foot is painted a little higher up than it was drawn.[87] The series of short strokes at an angle to the contour in a lower horizontal fold of the drapery in the mantle, is comparable with similar hatching in a lower horizontal fold of the drapery in the IRR of the *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* (Galleria Sabauda, Turin).[88] The short rounded strokes in the Virgin's left sleeve are comparable with the short rounded strokes in the woman's left sleeve in the IRR of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. The scratchy looking hatching in the Infant's proper right thigh is comparable with the scratchy looking hatching in the fingers of the first drawn version of the man's proper right hand in the IRR of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. The shadow to the right of the Virgin is similarly placed to the one on the right of the subject in the *Saint Barbara* (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp) although the hatching is principally in the opposite direction.[89]

IRR has revealed that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is finely and extensively underdrawn for a work of its small size. Furthermore, it contains numerous *pentimenti*, small and large, such as would be expected in an original work of art, rather than a copy, even a free copy. The painting is partly executed in an additive technique—again, not something that would be expected in a small copy. The underdrawing and *pentimenti* are comparable in a number of ways with features of Van Eyck's works.

The Composition and Structures of the Paint Layers

In 1957, prior to the work's extended laboratory examination, Coremans suggested the paint layers were not laid down in the way he thought normal for Van Eyck.[90] Since it is not likely

that microsamples would have been taken by that time, it seems that his comment referred to the paint layers visible on the surface. Jean Thissen carried out at least some of the pigment tests of the *Virgin and Child*, making notes about his analysis, but he did not co-author any of the official reports. The four interim reports from Brussels, the two final reports for Brussels and Melbourne, Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey's report from London, and the 1971 revised précis all refer to aspects of the condition and composition of the paint layers. However, Philippot and Sneyers' 1971 revised précis, which closely followed the analysis of the paint layers found in the final Brussels and Melbourne reports, makes a useful point of departure for a discussion of the paint layer analysis, since the opinion is there expressed clearly that the composition and structures are un-Flemish.

The 1971 revised précis stated:

> These compositions and structures do not correspond to that which one generally observes in fifteenth-century Flemish works where the blue has generally azurite bound in oil for an initial layer, the green is not composed of lapis lazuli but of malachite covered in a copper resinate glaze and red shadows are obtained with the application of a thick layer of madder.
>
> On the other hand, the lead tin yellow is a material generally considered as characteristic of Flemish paintings of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.[91]

Blue paint, they said, usually has an initial layer of azurite in an oil medium in Flemish primitives. Azurite was cheaper than lapis lazuli, and so was often used in underpainting, where this economising might escape notice. However, the initial layer of blue in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was described as lapis lazuli with an admixture of lead white in an oil medium, followed by another layer of a lapis lazuli glaze in an aqueous medium.[92] This might have been considered uncharacteristic, were it not the fact that in 1953 Coremans and Thissen had recorded that the Virgin's jewels in the Ghent altarpiece had an initial layer of lapis lazuli with an admixture of lead white in an oil medium, followed by another layer of a lapis lazuli glaze in an aqueous medium,[93] exactly the same composition and structures as the robe in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Evidently, Van Eyck used lapis lazuli more lavishly in small areas where he wanted to achieve a jewel-like, deep glow of colouring. In 1993 E. Melanie Gifford noted that in the paint layers of the Virgin's blue mantle in Van Eyck's *Annunciation* in the National Gallery of Art, Washington: 'the artist used only ultramarine, rather than reserving it to use only as a glaze over azurite lower

layers.'[94] The headdress of the man in the Bucharest *Portrait of a Man with a Ring* also contains lapis lazuli with a little white pigment.[95] The use of an aqueous medium in the lapis lazuli glaze, producing an opaque and brilliant finish,[96] is also considered an Eyckian characteristic.[97] Unfortunately, many areas containing lapis lazuli in Van Eyck's paintings have suffered from blanching.[98] The reason for 'ultramarine disease' is not known.[99] However, the blue jewels in the Ghent altarpiece (e.g. the *Singing Angels* panel) appear not to have suffered extensively from this problem.

It was suggested that green paint is not usually composed of lapis lazuli, but malachite covered with a copper resinate glaze. However, immediately before in the same report it was stated that the initial green layer *is* composed of malachite with only a *little* lapis lazuli and lead white added, followed by another layer of green rendered clearer by the addition of lead white.[100] Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey conducted an independent analysis of a sample of green paint in London. Their report was acknowledged at the Institut on 21 May 1958.[101] The London analysts did not identify a lapis lazuli admixture in their green sample and they did identify a copper resinate glaze.[102] The failure of the London analysts to report lapis lazuli as a component of the green paint layers, in their very detailed descriptions, suggests that the lapis lazuli admixture identified in Brussels is not likely to be responsible for its colour or in any other way the principal component of it. The suggestion that there is a significant absence of a copper resinate glaze is also contradicted by Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey's report.

The identification of the green pigment as malachite may also be incorrect. As J.R.J. Van Asperen de Boer has noted:

> At the Brussels Institute, Thissen always concluded that a pigment that was green and had a positive chemical reaction for copper was malachite. But he did not make mounts […] it is optically easy to differentiate copper resinate from malachite, since the copper resinate is not birefracting. Thus, malachite is not the usual green pigment in Flemish primitive painting; ground copper resinate is.[103]

Furthermore, the presence of lapis lazuli as an admixture in a paint layer that is not predominantly blue cannot be described as un-Flemish. Coremans and Thissen had identified lapis lazuli in samples of red, brown, and white paint in the Ghent altarpiece.[104]

Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey noted that black and brown were added to the initial green layer of the sample they examined, a feature they thought uncharacteristic.[105] However, Pim Brinkman et al. revealed in the 1989 re-examination of the Ghent altarpiece microsamples

that in some instances black had been added to the initial copper green layers.[106] Similarly, Campbell noted that a red-brown earth pigment was added to the underlayers of the red bed-hangings of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*.[107] It seems that Van Eyck often blended his pigments, rather than using them pure.

The recent re-examination of the Ghent altarpiece microsamples also revealed that 'in the green areas, one has discovered an underpainting in grisaille that seems to be necessary to sustain the weak colour of green pigment.' This initial grey paint layer was dubbed a local priming ('*imprimitura locale*').[108] The green paint layers of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* are executed over an initial layer of grey, in accordance with the Van Eycks' technique in the Ghent altarpiece.

It was also stated in 1971 that the shadows in areas of red in Flemish primitive technique were executed with a thick layer of madder—a red lake pigment derived from the root of the madder plant.[109] Apparently, the perceived problem in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was the presence of black pigment in the shadows of the red drapery. In the final Melbourne report the point had been made more explicitly:

> In fifteenth-century Flemish painting a shadow is not obtained by the application of a dark colour or black, but by use of a thick glaze over a coloured substratum (3); for red, this glaze is based on madder. […] (3) Excluded from this are certain pictures on canvas that cannot be called true 'easel paintings'.[110]

In 1971 Philippot and Sneyers described the black in an area of shadow of the mantle in the *Virgin and Child* as composed of a layer of animal black in an aqueous medium.[111] The origin of this observation can be traced back to the final Melbourne report, where the black of the shadow in the mantle was similarly described, and the number of the relevant microsample was given as L3192 E.[112] In the macrophotograph and annotations of the microsample L3192 E (*noir*), appended to the final Melbourne report, a final layer of animal black was identified over an initial layer of vermilion with an admixture of madder, followed by a layer of madder glaze.[113] Thus, the analysts seemed to argue that the final layer of black was uncharacteristic of Flemish primitive technique, which they thought normally relied solely on red lake glazes to depict shadows.

However, this is undermined by three factors. First, it cannot be excluded that the top layer of black was an addition of a restorer reinforcing the abraded shadows of the mantle. Second, not all of the tests of the shadows of the mantle revealed a final layer of black—

Thissen's hand written notes on the examination of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* paint layers state:

> Red mantle—the shadows consist of fixed madder applied on a fine layer of vermilion, very small sampling, examined as a transparency after crushing; fixed madder, no black pigment, occasional blue grains recognised as lapis lazuli.[114]

Third, black *has* been identified in the final paint layers of early Netherlandish paintings in areas of shadows in red drapery. The recent re-examination of the Ghent altarpiece microsamples has revealed that lapis lazuli and black are present in the glazes to deepen the shadows of the red paint layers:

> Dark red: on an initial layer of vermilion and red lake, many glazes of red lake often containing a little ultramarine [lapis lazuli]; in the deep folds, the glazes, thick and in relief, contain eventually a little black. Then, black lines sometimes accentuate the hollows of folds in the still fresh glazes.[115]

The National Gallery, London, has also noted: 'Certain other fifteenth-century Early Netherlandish paintings in the collection [apart from those by Van der Weyden or his workshop], notably Jan van Eyck's *Man in a Turban*, (NG 222), *Portrait of a Young Man* (NG 290), *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* (NG 186) and Robert Campin's *Portrait of a Man* (NG 653.1) have ultramarine or black added to the red lake to deepen the shadows of red draperies.'[116] The *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* has black and ultramarine over or in the red lake glazes of the bed.[117] Petrus Christus added black to vermilion in darker tones of drapery.[118] In fact, the National Gallery, London, observed that the addition of lapis lazuli to the shadows of red appears to be more common in the circle of Van Eyck and Petrus Christus.[119] Thissen's identification of a lapis lazuli admixture in the red lake glaze of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was not included in any of the official reports written in Brussels, but demonstrates how characteristic of Van Eyck the use of pigments in the work is.

As for the red layers not specifically noted as areas of shadow, a layer of vermilion followed by a layer of red lake glaze was identified in both the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the Ghent altarpiece in the 1950s analyses.[120] A layer of vermilion with an admixture of red lake followed by a layer of red lake glaze has been identified in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife,* as well as a work of Van der Weyden.[121]

Whether the red lake glazes in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* are actually composed of madder as Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers thought, or another red lake pigment such as kermes is open to question. It has been observed that in another instance Coremans and Thissen automatically identified a red lake glaze as madder without conducting tests that could have identified it specifically.[122]

Lead tin yellow was identified on the basis of microchemistry and confirmed by spectroscopy.[123] Since the pigment was described as '*d'oxyde double de plomb et d'étain*'[124] it seems to have been lead tin yellow type 1 (Pb_2SnO_4), which is more common than type 2 ($PbSnO_3$).[125] The identification of this pigment provided some of the clearest evidence of the painting's age, yet the interpretation of this data was highly inconsistent. In a letter to Martin Davies dated 23 January 1958, Coremans wrote that he did not believe the presence of lead tin yellow was of sufficient weight as evidence to demonstrate that the work could be considered old.[126] And in the signed final report in Brussels it was stated that the work could be considered to date from the nineteenth century, although it could not be excluded that it could date from a few decades earlier.[127] Coremans, though, indicated elsewhere that while Philippot and Sneyers believed the work to be a deliberate nineteenth-century forgery, he believed it was similar to works produced in Spain and Italy in the sixteenth century, because, among other things, of, 'The presence of the lead tin oxide, an old pigment w[h]ich has never been identified in modern works'.[128] In the final Melbourne report it was stated that the pigment is characteristic of paintings of various schools up to the end (sic) of the eighteenth century, and that it had not been yet been found in works of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[129]

The identification of lead-tin yellow, however, indicates that the painting most probably does not date between 1750 and 1941, since this pigment has never been found in paintings after 1750 and the recipe for its production was only re-discovered by Richard Jacobi of the Doerner Institute in 1941.[130] Wallert dated the disappearance of lead tin yellow to the 1720s, noting that there is no adequate explanation for its disappearance.[131]

The pigments, media, and paint layer structures in the original paint layers of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, as they have been analysed to date, are quite close to and sometimes identical with those in the Ghent altarpiece and other works by Van Eyck.

Style of the Brushwork

As noted, Alan Burroughs was one of the first to use scientific methods to investigate the Van Eycks' technique. In 1938 he published an x-radiograph—then called a 'shadowgraph'—of Van Eyck's *Portrait of Margaret van Eyck* (Musée Groeninge, Bruges). He noted that the surface of the painting showed no trace of brushstrokes, and that this was matched to an extent in the x-radiograph where there were no signs of manipulation of lead white in the highlights of the sitter's face. Though white in the painting, the face is mostly dark in the x-radiograph, indicating that the brushstrokes applying lead white (a highly x-ray opaque pigment) to the face are thin and smoothly blended. However, Burroughs noted that thicker and more vigorous brushstrokes were visible in the x-radiograph in the area of the sitter's robe. Since the forms in this part of the x-radiograph do not correspond exactly to those on the surface Burroughs considered them to be Van Eyck's initial working out of the picture. Thus, he seemed willing to accept a degree of variation in the artist's brushstroke style: light and polished in the flesh tones, but freer in the drapery. What he could not accept was that the sitter's hand was by Van Eyck, since it was not foreseen in the initial sketching of the robes, and because he thought it appeared different in the x-radiograph to the fleshtones of the face—presumably he meant more opaque, or thicker.

Burroughs concluded that, despite the differences in brushstrokes observed in this one painting, in the mature phase of Van Eyck's career he was above all a 'flat' painter who modelled his forms primarily in thin glazes rather than with a loaded brush in the underpainting, particularly in the use of white pigment.[132] Yet, Burroughs also noted that the fleshtones in a number of the x-radiographs of Van Eyck's earlier works appeared different from that of the *Portrait of Margaret van Eyck*. He described the x-radiographs of the *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)*, *Portrait of a Man* (*Cardinal Albergati?*), and *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw* as showing thicker, less polished brushwork in the faces. Burroughs struggled to find an explanation for this, suggesting that it might represent an early phase in Van Eyck's technique. Realising that the last of these paintings is dated 1436, the same year as Van Eyck's mature Van der Paele *Virgin and Child*, Burroughs wondered if in this work the thicker brushwork might not be due to a repainting by the artist.[133]

Furthermore, Burroughs developed a convoluted hypothesis that thick brushwork was also a characteristic of Hubert van Eyck's (earlier) technique, as visible in passages of the Ghent altarpiece. He then hypothesised that the *Virgin and Child in a Church* (Gemäldegalerie, Berlin), which shows execution with a loaded brush in the drapery, could

perhaps be attributed to Hubert van Eyck for that reason. The influence of the older brother on Jan's 'early' technique would then explain the thicker brushwork of Jan's works before 1436. This is an indication of how problematic it can be to attribute a work on the basis of one aspect of its technique, or to characterise a painter's technique as developing in a consistent and linear fashion. Currently, the *Virgin and Child in a Church* is generally, perhaps universally, attributed to Jan van Eyck, and the recent tendency has been to date it later in his chronology on stylistic grounds, to around 1437.[134]

From the conflicting data about Van Eyck's brushwork provided by Burrough's x-radiographs, for works separated in date by only a few years, it should have been clear that few consistent conclusions could be drawn about the nature of Van Eyck's brushstroke technique. However, the urge to match a famous artist with a distinctive and superior technique won out, and the idea of Van Eyck's technique that emerged most clearly was that of the 'flat' painter, who used lead white sparingly because he modelled flesh tones first with a thin layer of lead white and then with fine, coloured glazes. This view has found a degree of favour since, having been repeated in various forms by Erwin Panofsky[135] and Catheline Périer-d'Ieteren.[136]

Périer-d'Ieteren suggested Van Eyck used very little lead white in his paintings because the reflectance of the white chalk ground was the basis of the luminosity of his works, and pictorial precision could best be achieved through the superimposition of fine layers of translucent glazes.[137] However, lead white is one of the most commonly used pigments in any early Netherlandish painter's palette, including Van Eyck. It was used by the artist as an admixture with blue, green, yellow, red, brown, and black pigments, and was the standard pigment, with admixtures of other colours, for flesh tones.[138] The belief that the ground layer provided the luminosity for skin tones is somewhat undermined by the fact that ground layers were seldom pure white, as they often contained impurities.[139] The 'isolation' layer occasionally reported in Van Eyck's works and the priming layers of other early Netherlandish painters, would have reduced any reflectance that the ground provided. Furthermore, the belief that Van Eyck generally employed a complex stratigraphy of paint layers, including numerous layers of glazes, is undermined by microsample analyses of his works, some of which show a straightforward paint layer structure, such as the red bed hangings of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* composed of just two layers, with only a single layer of glaze.[140]

Concerning the brushstroke style visible in x-radiograph of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* drapery, the final Melbourne report stated:

> Many of the folds and contours of the Virgin's mantle (cf. Photo 165025 B and L 5790 B) are unusual. They are not modelled in depth on the basis of the superimposition of coloured glazes, but traced with a fine brush loaded with lead white, then covered with a light glaze. […] With Van Eyck and the great Flemish masters of the fifteenth century only modelling in the glazes is acceptable (5) […] (5) From time to time, with van der Weyden, for example, an impasto in lead white delimits a highlight that is clearly localised.[141]

In Philippot and Sneyers' 1971 revised précis they reiterated: 'Many folds and contours of the Virgin's mantle (Plates LVIII and LIXa) are executed in lead white covered by a fine layer of red lake glaze, when the usual technique of Van Eyck and the Flemish masters of the fifteenth century renders modelling by the superimposition of glazes'.[142] However, they added the following comment below the illustration of the x-radiograph of the detail of the Holy Maidens from the *Adoration of the Lamb* of the Ghent altarpiece (Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LXVII): 'On this detail of the Holy Maidens, the modelling is built up in subtle gradations of density while in the Ince Hall Madonna, highlights only are present.' If it were true that the only correct method for early Netherlandish painters was to model in the glazes, the x-radiograph of the Ghent altarpiece Holy Maidens should appear as a mostly black image with no significant density in the x-ray opaque underpainting (e.g. lead white, lead tin yellow, and vermilion). Faced with the fact that such density is clearly visible in the x-radiograph, Philippot and Sneyers modified their comments to suggest that it was not the presence of such high density that mattered but rather how smoothly the gradations in the density of painting were executed, from thick to thin. They suggested that the gradation of the density of paint in the Ghent altarpiece was smooth, while that in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was not.

There are a number of factors to bear in mind when considering Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' opinions concerning the brushwork of the *Virgin and Child*'s drapery. First, it is true that the contours of the Virgin's mantle were executed with a small brush loaded with pigment, as is visible on the paint surface under magnification, where fine ridges are visible standing slightly above the surrounding areas. However, the appearance of these ridges is exaggerated in places by the loss of glazes from the surface, which has left the ridges of the underlying paint layers exposed. This is especially the case in the lower right area of the mantle where photographs of the work during cleaning show significant losses to the glazes.

Second, these relatively thickly painted contours in the mantle are visible in the x-radiograph since vermilion is x-ray opaque. This seems to have led to the analysts' incorrect description of the folds of the mantle as executed with lead white covered with a glaze, whereas all the microsample analyses identified the paint of the mantle as vermilion, sometimes with a red lake admixture, followed by a red lake glaze. The analysts apparently confused the white contours in the x-radiography of the mantle with lead white, because both pigments appear white in x-radiography. Davies drew attention to this error, without being able to persuade the Brussels analysts to correct it in the final Melbourne report. The Brussels report Davies commented on described the folds of the mantle: 'They are not modelled in thickness on the basis of a superimposition of coloured glazes, but traced with a brush loaded with lead white covered with a fine glaze'. Davies, however, underlined the words 'lead white' ('*blanc de plomb*') and in the margin he added the comment: '? no led in it'.[143]

Third, Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers ignored that the x-radiographs of the Van Eycks' paintings did not sustain their characterisation of the Van Eycks' brushwork as lacking impasto applications of underpainting. It should be noted at this point that the nature of x-ray equipment and its use can affect the appearance of x-radiographs, not to mention the printing of such x-radiographs in photography and publications where the contrast can be adjusted. The density of x-ray opaque pigments can appear greater or lesser depending on the way the images were produced and printed. Comparisons should be made between two x-radiograph images bearing in mind the possible differences in the circumstances in which they were made. Nevertheless, it is a fact that x-radiographs of Van Eyck's works show areas of relatively thick layers of x-ray opaque paint, as well as areas of little density, and in the thicker areas rough looking brushstrokes sometimes do appear.

The *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* is of similar dimensions to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, has a similar preponderance of red drapery, and also bears the date 1433. It is, therefore, the closest work with which to compare the thickness of the paint application in red drapery. The x-radiograph of the portrait has not been published, but a print of it was sent to the National Gallery of Victoria around 1958.[144] It shows distinct white lines in many of the contours and across some areas of the headdress, produced by the presence of a densely applied pigment, presumably vermilion. The headdress was apparently painted with a fine brush loaded with pigment. Van Eyck may have defined the contours of the drapery first when applying the red paint to the ground, before applying the paint more broadly, leaving thicker deposits along the contours. The artist also seems to have dragged a fine instrument through the thickly applied paint, judging by the fine black line running through some of the

white areas in the x-radiograph, perhaps to refine the position of certain contours. The thickness of paint is only approximately comparable with the degree of light and shade in the final paint layer. The appearance of the brushstrokes is more distinct and much less polished in the x-radiograph than in normal vision of the paint surface, where almost all evidence of brushstrokes has been erased.

J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer also noted the presence of broad brush strokes executed with less care in the x-radiography of the Ghent altarpiece. He hypothesised that the initial layers (of opaque pigment) might have been applied by assistants as an economical way of dividing the labour of execution of a painting.[145] While such a hypothesis cannot be entertained with regard to the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, which for many reasons is regarded as fully autograph, Van Asperen de Boer's observation of visible, rough brushwork in x-radiographs of an Eyckian painting supports the view that this can be considered characteristic of the technique of Van Eyck's studio.

In reference to the execution of the primarily lead white paint in the Virgin's face, the analysts said in the final Melbourne report:

> The members of the Institut insist on the fact that the style of the picture examined is totally incompatible with that seen in the work of Van Eyck: we refer in this regard to the various attached photographs, and particularly to the radiograph 5 x (cf L7301B) where the flesh structure of the Virgin and Child appears in all its mediocrity. This material document shows clearly the pictorial weaknesses that certain specialists had noticed and that had led them to wonder particularly whether the original flesh tones had not been obscured and weakened by local restorations. The radiography reveals that this is not the case (except for a few details of no great importance) […].[146]

They did not specify what the weaknesses in the execution were that could be seen in the x-radiograph. Judging from Coremans' interpretation of the x-radiography of other Eyckian works, it seems likely he considered the presence of a thick application of lead white in the parts of the Virgin's face, the unblended appearance of the strokes, and the lack of a precise correspondence between the strokes in the x-radiograph and the modelling on the surface of the paint layers as weaknesses. However, the presence of a thick application of lead white in flesh tones need not be considered a weakness or un-Eyckian just as a thick, sometimes rough application of pigment in drapery has been shown to be present in parts of some Eyckian works. Furthermore, the separate brushstrokes of unblended appearance in

some of the flesh tones may be overpainting, a possibility that the analysts dismissed, but then later admitted. The lack of correspondence between the thickly applied pigment visible in the x-radiography and the surface appearance of the paint layers in flesh tones, as with drapery, also has parallels in Van Eyck's oeuvre.

A thick application of lead white is visible in the areas of flesh in x-radiographs of a number of Van Eyck's works. The x-radiograph of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, despite the visual interference from the x-ray opaque layer on the reverse of the panel, shows the hands of the man and woman distinctly.[147] The Infant's flesh in the Lucca *Virgin and Child* shows distinctly in the x-radiograph of the work,[148] notably, in his face, lower back, and right thigh, while the Virgin's face does not show up at all. This shows Van Eyck's varied technique even in the fleshtones within a single work. The x-radiograph of the *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)*[149] shows the sitter's face and neck distinctly as a result of a substantial thickness of x-ray opaque pigment, almost certainly lead-white. The x-radiograph of the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* shows a thick application of lead white in the sitter's right cheek, forehead, the bridge of his nose and, to a lesser extent, in his chin. There is a gradual reduction in the density of the pigment across the face from the viewer's left to the right, generally corresponding to the transition from light to shadow in the final paint layers. J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer noted a thick application of lead white in the faces of the two Maries in the x-radiograph of the *Holy Hermits* panel of the Ghent altarpiece.[150] In Mary of Egypt's forehead, the areas under her eyes, her nose, and lips, a relatively thick application of lead white shows, as in the same areas of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. This is especially significant because of the stylistic similarities between the face of the Virgin in the Ince Hall picture and the face of Mary of Egypt: they share a high forehead, wide-set narrow eyes, fine arched eyebrows, a small mouth, slightly puckered at the sides, a small chin, a jaw-line that extends to the side, and a very similar softly rounded profile. Additionally, the lead white in the Virgin's face of the Ince Hall painting leaves in reserve the area where her hair is swept back over the jewelled fillet, like the underpainting of the faces of two Holy Maidens in the *Adoration of the Lamb* panel.[151]

Fourth, Coremans assumed that the density of lead white visible in x-radiography should correspond precisely to the highlights visible in the skin tones of the painted surface in Eyckian works. When he observed that this was not the case in the faces of the Virgin, God, and Saint John the Baptist of the Ghent altarpiece, he attributed the differences between the substructure and the surface appearance to old overpaints, despite finding only local retouches with solvent tests.[152] Coremans did not give the same benefit of the doubt, so to

speak, to the passages of suspected overpaint that resisted solvent in the Virgin's face of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. The lack of clarity or precision in the x-radiograph of the Detroit *Saint Jerome* also led him to doubt the authenticity of that work.[153]

In the x-radiograph of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* the lead white in the Virgin's face shows as thickest in her forehead, the areas under her eyes and her nose. There is a gradual reduction in the density of the lead white across her face from the viewer's left to the right, corresponding to the transition from light to shadow in the final paint layers. As far as the question of overpainting is concerned, the x-radiograph shows the strokes of lead white applied in the Virgin's face, either blended together or more distinctly visible. However, the x-radiograph cannot provide evidence to distinguish overpaint from original paint. For example, the stroke along the Virgin's nose is somewhat clumsy in appearance, and appears to sit a little above the paint layers when viewed under the microscope. Also, this stroke is surrounded by a dark shadow in the IRR, perhaps indicating that dirt has accumulated around the raised edge of a superimposed brush stroke. It may be overpaint, but nothing in the x-radiograph can determine whether this is the case. Thus, whether the 'free' execution visible in the x-radiograph in the Virgin's face is entirely original or partly the result of a restorer's additions is difficult to answer on the basis of the x-radiograph alone. A similar 'free' execution is visible in the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, where the x-radiograph shows pronounced white marks on the sitter's proper left nostril that are not as clearly visible in the final paint layers. As with some of the prominent strokes visible in the x-radiograph of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, whether these are Van Eyck's own brushstrokes or a restorer's has not been determined.

Philippot and Sneyers illustrated and discussed a comparison of the quality of execution in the Virgin's face in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with that of the Dresden *Virgin and Child*, in Hoff and Davies' *Corpus* volume (Plates LXIV–LXV). The photograph of the Virgin's face in the former work is dated 1956, and so it shows the Virgin's face before overpaint had been removed, which itself probably masked older overpaint and losses.[154] The pinkish line that currently can be seen running across the shadow of the Virgin's chin, which may be old overpainting, was revealed after cleaning. Thus, the comparison between the two works, particularly the comment that the glazes in the Virgin's face of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* are not as fluid as those in the Dresden *Virgin and Child*, ignores the question of overpaint and does not address the complexity of Van Eyck's handling of glazes across his oeuvre. There are at least two kinds of glazes in the Ince Hall Virgin's face: subtly modelled pinkish and brownish glazes for the colour and shadow, and the reinforcement of these glazes

with a series of hatched strokes extending from the hair on the Virgin's left temple. The latter may appear unnecessary, and may not even be original, since the same technique is not found in other areas of flesh tones in the picture. It may have resulted from a reinforcement of the shadow by a restorer. In any case, Van Eyck used a large range of treatments of glazes in his works: hatching and stippling in the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, *sgraffito* and manual manipulation in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, and an unknown treatment of the glazes in the *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)*, possibly resulting from the impression of cloth onto the glazes. Whether glazes are applied smoothly or are hatched on such a small scale may have as much to do with a painter's varied technique as with the viscosity of the paint used.

While the use of glazes is certainly an important aspect of the Van Eycks' technique, this did not preclude their applying pigments thickly in the initial layers in some parts of their paintings. While the Van Eycks probably remain unsurpassed to this day in their control of paint, this did not preclude their applying paint freely in the underlying layers and, occasionally, in the final paint layers. To what extent such free execution can be attributed to their workshop assistants is a matter for speculation. The impasto execution of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* visible in the x-radiograph can be compared with a number of similar looking x-radiographs of Eyckian works. Nevertheless, some of the lead white paint detected in the Virgin's face in the x-radiograph is certainly overpainting and some of the glazing may be also. Precisely how much is overpainting is difficult to determine precisely on the basis of the available evidence.

The *Sgraffito* Technique

Interestingly, Van Eyck painted the brush hanging from a nail on the back wall of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* in a *sgraffito* technique. The grey coloured paint of the back wall is visible through the brown paint of the brush, where an instrument has been used to scratch rapidly the design of the brush's bristles or twigs.[155] A *sgraffito* technique is an economical one, seemingly at odds with Van Eyck's legendary attention to the painting of his tiniest details. However, it occurs in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* and the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, in both cases this involves the incision of brown and red-brown coloured paint layers over grey ones. The majority of the light coloured lines for the geometric, plant based, and animal (?) pattern of the carpet in the *Virgin and Child* have been incised with a fine, blunt instrument into the brown and red-brown pigments of the carpet. Although a

scalloped pattern on the outer border of the left side was not carried over onto the right side, that such an absent-minded incomplete design need not be considered un-Eyckian is evident in the two rows of nails running down the wood on the inside of the window of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, which inexplicably stop at a point level with the man's neck.

A cleaning test of the bottom right corner of the *Virgin and Child* in 1957 revealed two paint layers of 'good quality and resistance to solvents' (presumably original): a brownish layer over a greyish one.[156] The brownish layer is most likely the paint for the floorboards, making the grey one a preparatory layer. This layer apparently extends beneath both the floorboards and carpet. The x-radiograph shows a high density of x-ray opaque pigment in the lower part of the painting, notably, on the right side where one corner of the carpet is painted, although this is much less so for the left corner of the carpet. It seems that the painter first applied a layer of lead white based paint across the foreground area, and subsequently painted dark brown and red-brown paint over this to form the basic shape of the corners of the carpet, and a lighter brownish paint over the rest for the floorboards. The artist then incised the still fresh brown and red-brown layers of the carpet, revealing the grey coloured layer below, to create the carpet's pattern. In the left corner of carpet, at the top right corner of the gammadion (also known as a fylfot or swastika), the instrument appears to have dragged paint through the intersection of two such lines.

Unfortunately, in the carpet where the edges of the craquelure have subsequently lifted as a result of the penetration of moisture, and then been abraded, the underlying grey layer shows through as well, in addition to the *sgraffito*. This has the effect of disrupting the pattern, and is particularly noticeable on the right side. Not all of these losses were filled in the 1958 restoration. Originally, then, the pattern of the carpet would have appeared clearer and more regular than it does now.

The Craquelure

In 1854 Gustav Waagen expressed regret at the *Virgin and Child*'s heavy craquelure,[157] as did later commentators in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Undoubtedly, it was aggravated by the water damage sustained from the leaking roof at Ince Hall. Little more was said about the craquelure until Coremans expressed suspicion about the *Virgin and Child* in 1957, in part because of its craquelure pattern. He thought the craquelure too evenly distributed over the surface, although, initially he allowed that this might be due to a transfer of the paint layers from an earlier support to the current panel.[158] The possibility of a transfer

was, however, ultimately ruled out by the Brussels analysts due to the absence of a double craquelure they thought a transfer would provoke (the craquelure influenced by the new support superimposed over that influenced by the original support).[159]

Initially, craquelure forms in a painting as a result of the pigments drying more or less independently. The process is to a certain extent dependent on the intrinsic qualities of each pigment, such as its molecular structure. Although, it is also influenced by extrinsic factors such as the thickness with which the artist has applied the paint, the type and quantity of medium in which it is bound, the thickness of the ground, the nature of the support, and specific ambient conditions. The assumption underlying Coremans' suspicion seems to have been that a slow-forming, natural craquelure was likely to vary according to the different pigments over the paint surface, whereas a craquelure that did not vary was a possible indication of an artificial craquelure, that is to say the work of a forger.

From the 1920s a number of descriptions were published of how an artificial craquelure could be produced. The most detailed were those of Émile Renders, the banker, collector, and art historian, whose collection of Flemish primitives it has since been found contained a large number of hyper-restorations, that is, badly damaged old works that have been extensively restored. These restorations were carried out for Renders by Joseph van der Veken—Albert Philippot's father-in-law, who was also known to Coremans after the Second World War. Among the heavily restored paintings of Renders' collection was the celebrated *Virgin and Child* by Rogier van der Weyden or his studio now in the Musée des Beaux-Arts of Tournai.[160] Renders (perhaps relying on information supplied by Van der Veken) described four methods to create an artificial craquelure: using a fast-drying varnish to crack the still fresh paint layers; painting onto a canvas that is rolled and then transferring the paint layers and ground to a panel; subjecting a painted panel to extremes of heat and cold; and reusing an old panel painting from which the paint layers had been removed. Renders noted that none of these methods could produce a craquelure with raised edges, or one that varied over the surface of a painting.[161] A.P. Laurie, however, wrote that he had invented a ground layer that could produce a raised craquelure but did not publish the recipe.[162] Coremans' laboratory had also studied the production of false craquelure. In Coremans' analysis of the Van Meegeren forgeries, published in 1949, he identified two kinds of 'crackle': 'youth crackle' and 'age crackle'. He described 'youth crackle' as a consequence of bad painting technique. He described 'age crackle' as occurring once the paint layers had dried, as relatively thin, with sharp outlines, and sometimes with raised edges caused by the

penetration of dampness into the cracks over time. 'Age crackle' was considered useful in determining a painting's authenticity, while 'youth crackle' was not.[163]

In the final Brussels report Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers made the following observations about the *Virgin and Child*'s craquelure: 'the pattern of the network is uniform across the entire surface'; (and somewhat contradictorily) 'if the pattern appears of a rectangular type in certain places, in numerous others, it differs considerably'; and 'one has above all the impression of an artificial craquelure of which the appearance is related to the rupture of a paint layer not yet dry and zigzagging freely across the surface of the picture'. The analysts noted that this craquelure pattern vaguely recalled the pattern of 'secondary' fifteenth-century Flemish paintings on oak, but added: 'It is, however, easier to accept the intervention of an imitator of a more recent era', noting Rawlins' comment that the application of a glair to incompletely dry paint layers was an excellent means of producing a false craquelure.[164] Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey had observed that the cracks in the sample they analysed did not extend into the ground, concluding that the cracks had been caused by contraction in or on the paint layer rather than as a response to movement from the panel. The London analysts then suggested that although egg white had been readily available throughout the history of painting, a glair could be used to produce a false craquelure.[165]

In the final Melbourne report the description of the craquelure was very similar, although the conclusion was more moderate. The analysts admitted that it was difficult to decide whether the craquelure was a natural one resulting from poor technique, such as a ground layer too heavily impregnated with glue, or was an artificial one resulting from forgery.[166] Philippot and Sneyers' 1971 revised précis was similar to the final Melbourne report in its ambiguous conclusions about the origin of the craquelure.[167] In the caption under the macrophotograph of the paint surface (Plate LXIII) Philippot and Sneyers attributed the ruptures in the paint layer to the shrinkage of the 'protein layer' (glair), although it remains unclear whether they were referring to the concentric rings of fine cracks within the islands of the main craquelure, or the main craquelure itself, or both. In any event, this image goes to show how extensively damaged the paint layers are, as even the islands of paint within the craquelure have been cracked.

Renders' first method for creating an artificial craquelure is of interest in the case of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* because a number of the analysts' comments suggest this could have been the method used to create the artificial craquelure they thought present in the work: Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey's comment that the glair could be used to produce an artificial craquelure; Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' observation that the zigzag pattern

suggested a craquelure that had formed while the paint layers were not completely dry; and their comment that the craquelure did not vary sufficiently over the paint layers.

There are, however, any number of reasons to doubt that the painting has an artificial craquelure. First, while attempts have been made to categorise craquelure patterns according to the age and origin of different schools of painting,[168] these patterns may vary considerably within a particular school and between an artist's works, making it difficult to cite an uncharacteristic craquelure as evidence against an artist's authorship. The craquelure in the area of the sitter's hat in Van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)* has been said to be unusual.[169] The Bucharest *Portrait of a Man with a Ring* has a pronounced craquelure with raised edges,[170] and the *Three Maries at the Tomb* has an unusual and visually disruptive craquelure.[171] Second, slightly zigzag craquelure may be observed in works where there is no reason to suggest that the technique is faulty or the craquelure artificial. Enlarged reproductions of Van Eyck's *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw* and *Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini* show slightly zigzag cracks.[172] Third, premature craquelure, due to faulty technique, has actually been observed in Van Eyck's Rolin *Virgin and Child* and the Ghent altarpiece.[173] So, even if the craquelure could be described as premature or faulty, it could not be described as un-Eyckian.

Fourth, the concern about a supposed lack of variation in the pattern of the craquelure following the different pigments in the paint layers is unfounded, as some variation can be observed. In those areas where the initial paint layer is primarily lead white, such as the walls, the cloth of honour, and the floor, the direction of the cracks is predominantly horizontal, with smaller vertical cracks. However, the direction of the craquelure in parts of the vermilion mantle is predominantly vertical with smaller horizontal cracks, such as the area at the bottom left. Lead white requires less binding agent than vermilion and so dries more quickly.[174] If the lead white had partly dried before the grain of the panel could exercise as much influence over its craquelure as it did over the slower drying vermilion, this might explain the difference in the craquelure patterns between the two areas of paint.

Fifth, though the cracks did not extend into the ground in the sample analysed by Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey, the published photograph of the work during cleaning (Plate LI), does show the craquelure continuing in areas where the paint layers had been removed down to the ground layers.[175] This casts doubt on the possibility that the glair was responsible for the craquelure, since it would require an improbably large amount of force in its contraction to open cracks through the paint layers and the ground layers, and this would also require an improbably strong adhesion between the paint layers and the ground layers.[176] And sixth, as

Renders and Coremans had indicated, a glair could not produce a craquelure with raised edges like that in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, caused by the penetration of dampness into the cracks over time.

The craquelure in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* shows every indication of having been formed as a result of the drying characteristics of the pigments, the ground, and the movement of the wood support. It has pronounced raised edges, caused by the penetration of moisture over time, probably exaggerated by the water damage sustained at Ince Hall in the mid-nineteenth century. This no doubt increased the panel's warp, which in turn exacerbated the craquelure. The glair most likely had nothing to do with the creation of the work's main craquelure, although it may well have had a debilitating effect on the paint layers, creating its own finer network of cracks, closer to the surface, within the pre-existing larger network of craquelure.

The Condition of the Paint Layers

In the final Melbourne report, Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers described the condition of the paint layers as extremely satisfactory: 'no paint losses or important restorations could be observed', admitting only the presence of numerous small restorations in 'cavities' and 'cracks'.[177] Of course, their assessments must be qualified by their hypothesis that the work is probably or possibly a forgery. In this case, many of the apparent losses and the repainting would be interpreted as intrinsic to the work, rather than evidence of its poor condition and restoration. By 1971, when the hypothesis that the work was a forgery was less certain, Philippot and Sneyers described the condition of the paint layer as only satisfactory, based on the same evidence, noting abrasion to the edges of the craquelure and retouches in the craquelure and on the edges of the painting.[178]

The photographs of the work during cleaning and before restoration published in the *Corpus* volume (Plates LI and LX), show relatively major losses along the edges of the panel, probably resulting from when it was cut down. There is abrasion along the raised edges of the craquelure across virtually the entire paint surface. In some places near the left part of the signature the paint layer was worn down to the ground layer. There are also numerous small losses at the intersections of the craquelure. All of these losses were overpainted prior to the cleaning undertaken in Brussels.

Some areas of the paint surface are in relatively good condition, such as the Virgin's jewelled collar. Coremans noted repaints over losses and in areas where there was no

apparent damage to the paint surface.[179] It seems that the existence of overpaints where there are no losses were considered suspicious, presumably because they are redolent of a forger creating the appearance of a restored work.[180] However, it is not uncommon for certain details of paintings to be reinforced by restorers, such as eyes, hair, and shadows.[181] The analysts asserted that overpainting in losses and where there were no losses could be considered original to the work on the basis of their comparable solubility, their observation that the materials of the strokes appeared the same as for the rest of the paint layers, and because x-radiography did not reveal significantly different density of pigments in these areas. They were in the analysts' opinion probably the work of a forger. However, as discussed below, solubility is not a conclusive test of coeval paint layers, visual analysis may not provide an adequate comparison of the materials used in overpaints and original paint, and, as has been shown, x-radiography may not distinguish overpaint from original paint or overpaint in x-ray transparent pigments. A restorer would be expected to execute overpainting as close as possible to the appearance of the original paint layers, in order not to draw attention to their work.

A photograph of the whole work 'after cleaning and before restoration' was given the identifier B L7 333 and the date 1958 when it was published (Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 49 and Pl. LI), despite being given the identifier L7333B and the date December 1957 in the final Melbourne report.[182] However, it may not show the work at the very end of the cleaning process, and so the painting may be more damaged that has generally been recognised. Another photograph sent to Melbourne, numbered L7190B, is dated 24 April 1958 on the reverse (Fig. 3).[183] In some respects, it seems to show the painting in a slightly more advanced stage of cleaning, with losses not visible in the published photo, such as a small triangle of paint missing on the right edge, level with the top of the candle. There also seems to be more abrasion to the Virgin's face, perhaps more abrasion to the left edge of the carpet, and a curious dark line running diagonally through the carafe from top left to bottom right that is difficult to account for (a stain?). In any event, Philippot did not remove all passages of likely old restoration, such as the yellow inpainting in the crack in the centre of the flower to the right of the Virgin's head, and whichever of the photographs of the work during cleaning is the more advanced, it still represents only the point at which the restorer decided to stop removing old inpainting and overpaints. It provides only an indication of the state of the original paint layers.

Notwithstanding all the losses and abrasion described, if the state of preservation may still be judged satisfactory for a painting that has survived over many centuries, the aesthetic

impact of damage to a painting is related to the degree of finish in the artist's style. To quote the American paintings conservator Sheldon Keck:

> The appearance of a picture is affected by these two kinds of loss [chipping or flaking and abrasion] according to the style and technique of the painting as well as the extent and size of the losses. Losses of considerable area in a Mancini or a Van Gogh may go undetected because of the technique employed. Losses on a Jackson Pollock or a Romanesque painting may be visible but not irritating because of style. Even a slight loss in a painting by Van Eyck or Vermeer may be so disturbing as to shatter its illusion. The more convincing the illusion of three dimensions, the greater the entity suffers if part is missing.[184]

Overpainting

Prior to the Institut's analysis, it had been proposed that overpainting was present in two important features of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*: the signature (suggested by Leprieur), and the Virgin's face (suggested by Panofsky). That there was indeed overpainting in the face is clear from the condition of the paint layers revealed by cleaning, as seen in the photograph L7190B. This shows that Philippot had removed overpaint, exposing abrasion, notably, on the Virgin's forehead, cheeks, and lips. The question of whether the signature in its entirety could be considered overpaint is more difficult to determine, and it is worth examining closely the evidence for it here. In 1892 Leprieur doubted the originality of the signature on stylistic grounds. However, in 1922 Zink wrote that while cleaning the painting he had observed that the signature was original. Although he did not provide any technical evidence, perhaps because of his privileged access to the work, credence has sometimes been given to his assertion. On the other hand, Coremans thought Zink's assertion would be of no value if he had observed the signature with a layer of varnish still over it, but did not know if he had or not. Coremans seems to have meant that only a direct solvent test could be the basis of such an interpretation. So did Zink examine the signature directly? The following evidence suggests he did not.

In 1957–58 when the work was cleaned down to the paint layers, three layers of varnish were observed and removed, the lowest one described as an all-over, egg white like varnish, or glair. The upper-most varnish of natural resin was described as having a craquelure, indicative of its being 'of a certain age',[185] and the glair was described as

responding to tests in a characteristic way for an aged egg white. Also, a layer of dirt was reported between the bottom varnish and the next layer of varnish.[186] W.H. James Weale had reported in 1906 that a half-filled goblet could be seen on the window-sill of the *Virgin and Child*.[187] This was removed in 1957 because it was found to have been painted between two layers of varnish, and so was almost certainly not original. Significantly, it was removed prior to the removal of the glair, and so must have been painted over it.[188]

Thus, for Zink to have cleaned the work down to the paint layers he presumably must have removed the goblet and the opaque varnish, analysed the signature, added the glair and then repainted the goblet. After a period of time, long enough for dust to accumulate on the surface, two other varnishes must have been applied between 1922 and 1956, sufficiently before 1956 for the upper-most varnish to be described as fairly old. This seems unlikely for reasons of insufficient time and the unlikely choice of material in the context (egg white would have been an unusually cheap, very old fashioned, and potentially damaging material to use as a varnish for a work of enormous value). Since there is little likelihood that Zink took microsamples from the work, the technical evidence suggests that Zink's assertion that the signature was original was based on visual analysis alone—and that through at least one layer of varnish. Therefore, Zink's observation has no real technical value.

As well as cleaning the panel and rectifying its warp, Maurice Brockwell reported that Zink 'refreshed' the last letters of the second and third lines of the signature.[189] When questioned by Rinder as to the meaning of the term 'refreshed', Brockwell replied elliptically that he did not mean restored or repainted.[190] However, there is evidence that the last letter of the second line of the motto in the signature was repainted prior to the late 1950s, although not necessarily by Zink. The macro-photograph of the motto published in the *Corpus* volume in 1971 (Plate LXI), shows the letter as an 'A' with a horizontal stroke across the top. The photo is dated 1956, and was taken before cleaning, whereas the macro-photograph of the left area of the signature (Plate LX) is dated 1958[191] and the caption states that it was photographed after removal of the 'transparent layer' (glair). The latter image also shows that some repainting has been removed, revealing losses down to the ground layer in some places, confirming that it was made during cleaning. Observation of the letter in question under a stereo-microscope by this author in 2000 confirmed that there is no longer a stroke along the top and this can be seen in recent macro-photography. It was removed, apparently during the 1957–58 cleaning, and was presumably a relatively recent addition. Comparison of the images of the right part of the signature before and after cleaning shows there is now abrasion

to most of the letters not previously visible. This part of the signature was presumably overpainted, infelicitously, before 1956, and the overpainting removed during cleaning.

In Chapter One, the Institut's interpretation of the signature was discussed, which changed from describing it as 'as authentic' as the rest of the painting, to being described only as 'very old'. This modification seems to have been a late acknowledgment that it could not be said whether the signature was contemporary with the work as a whole or was added later on the basis of any of the tests conducted. The inability of solvent tests to prove paint layers to be contemporary has been common knowledge among painting conservators since at least 1958. This is demonstrated by Helmut Ruhemann's article 'Criteria for Distinguishing Additions from Original Paint' in the October edition of the journal *Studies in Conservation* of that year, in which he referred to solvent tests of suspected overpaint as 'of course, only confirmatory'.[192] Ruhemann would have been well known to all the specialists involved in the examination of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, since he was a Consultant Restorer at the National Gallery, London, from 1946 to 1972, and was effectively the founder of the Gallery's Conservation Department.[193] Indeed, in 1948 Coremans had defended Ruhemann's controversial cleaning of a Rubens painting at the National Gallery, London in *The Burlington Magazine*.[194] Ruhemann's article was timely, appearing just before the revised Melbourne report, which rescinded the earlier claim that solvent tests had shown the signature to be original. What Ruhemann had highlighted was the fact that solvent tests may help to distinguish recent additions that have not completely dried from an old paint layer that has completely dried, but provide much less clear evidence in distinguishing old repaints on an old painting.

The expectation that the action of solvent on the signature could provide a clear indication of whether it was original or a later addition was always an unrealistic one, since the signature was already known to be over a hundred years old. Furthermore, there are many variables affecting solubility that need to be taken into account, such as medium type, pigment type, and the condition of the paint layers, not to mention the strength of the solvent, and the method of its application. And there is too much subjectivity in the interpretation of the signs of dissolution. In the case of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* where no specific, comparative medium analyses were recorded for the signature and the adjacent paint, which are comprised of different combinations of pigments, the solvent test was of no diagnostic value in determining whether the signature was a later addition or not, and it seems Coremans, Philippot, Sneyers, and Davies recognised this. Coremans and Thissen, in particular, would have known that the comparable solubility of the signature (and other

passages of paint suspected of being overpaint) with the rest of the paint layers did not prove that they were original. This is shown by their comment in 1953 that even though the paint on the faces of the Virgin, God, and Saint John the Baptist in the Ghent altarpiece had a comparable solubility to the rest of the paint layers, they still believed they had been overpainted.[195]

During stereo-microscopic analysis of the signature by this author in 1999 no black paint of the inscription was found in or over the craquelure of the grey-brown paint of the back wall. However, the signature is heavily abraded, and any such evidence might have been lost. The absence of evidence demonstrating that the signature is a later addition does not prove that it is original.

Many areas of possible or certain overpainting across the rest of the paint surface were identified in the Institut's interim reports. The interim report of 24 December 1957 mentioned the removal of a layer of brown paint of poor quality (overpaint?) from an area 2 by 1.5 cm at the bottom right corner of the painting, overlying two layers of good quality resistant to solvents (original paint?) that were in any case also removed. An overpaint was said to have been possibly not entirely removed from a little further up on the edge of the painting, level with the corner of the mantle. Solvent removed recent red overpaint or inpainting from the left edge of the baldachin, revealing small losses. Overpaint in losses on the top of the chest resisted solvents, as did retouching over losses on its front. The half-filled glass on the window-sill was legitimately removed by solvent, as it had been painted between two layers of varnish. A mixture of artificial and natural ultramarine was identified as overpaint in the lower area of the blue robe. A retouch between the letters of the signature on the left was removed by solvent. Small retouches on the Virgin's 'head', just above her blue robe (i.e. on her neck) were removed by solvent. The sixth microsample, taken from the bottom edge approximately 6 cm from the left side was described as containing a transparent layer (presumably varnish) possibly separating an original layer below from layers above that may not have been original. Brownish spots were removed from the mantle using solvent, and red paint was observed in cracks in the mantle.[196] The interim report of 5 April 1958 also referred to retouching in the base of the candlestick.[197]

The interim report of 14 May 1958 recorded a discussion between Coremans, Philippot, Sneyers, and Davies regarding the originality of certain doubtful passages of paint. In addition to the signature that has already been addressed, these included the carpet, the face of the chest and its metallic fixtures, the window-frame, the outward opening shutter (or window), the fringe of the baldachin, and the faces of the Virgin and the Child. As with the

signature, all these details were said to be as authentic as the rest of the paint layers, based above all on their solubility (or lack thereof). Special attention was given to the shadow of the Virgin's chin. It was mentioned as an instance where paint passed into a crack, as well as constituting the execution of a detail they considered original.[198] In other words, they felt the 'retouching' in the shadow of the chin might have been added by the same hand as the one who painted the chin, and so could be interpreted as a sign of forgery.

The hypothesis that the work might be a nineteenth-century forgery was explicitly stated in the final Brussels report. However, even in the watered down final Melbourne report the hypothesis is fairly clear. There, Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers described the paint layers as in an extremely satisfactory state with no paint losses or important restorations observed with the exception of numerous retouches filling in small cavities and the hollows of some of the cracks. They also referred to the retouches filling the losses in the base of the candlestick, on the top surface of the chest, and in the mantle. They concluded, 'The easiest interpretation would be to say that an imitator had created an artificial network of craquelure, then filled certain of these in order to improve the general appearance of the picture (10). […] (10) This method of operating is very popular with imitators.' They also stressed that retouches or touches had been observed in parts of the paint surface such as the face and hair of the Virgin, the Infant's face and legs, the chest and the carpet, which were said to be 'completely undamaged'.[199] The hypothesis of a forgery, of course, complicated the identification of overpainting, but this was not clarified by the analysts—whether, for instance, they thought the painting as it was when it arrived in their laboratory was entirely the work of a forger, or whether the supposed forgery with its 'false' repainting had itself been later repainted. The final Melbourne report did acknowledge further overpainting above the varnishes—often a sign of overpainting. Microsample L. 3174 E (*brun*) from the bottom edge of the chest showed brown ochre based overpaint over a layer of varnish. Microsample L. 3177 E (*rouge*) from the mantle showed a layer of red lake glaze overpaint over a layer of varnish.[200] Furthermore, the artificial ultramarine identified in overpainting of the Virgin's robe was only available after 1828,[201] and since the painting was thought to be documented already in 1803, they should have entertained the possibility that the work had been restored after it was originally painted. Although, they did not in fact attempt to distinguish between the work of the hypothetical early nineteenth-century forger and the work of the post-1828 restorer.

The 1971 revised précis reiterated many of the previously mentioned overpaints, but noted in addition overpaint inside the Virgin's ear, in the area between the chest and the cloth

of honour, and the top edge of the paint layers, which do not appear to have been mentioned in any previous report.[202] These could conceivably be references to Philippot's own inpainting and overpainting, but if so, this list would be incomplete.

So what now can really be said about the extent of overpainting? One of the strongest indications of overpaint is the presence of paint lying over the craquelure or losses to the underlying paint surface, since the original paint layer would have to have dried over a period of time before it cracked or could be chipped (in most cases after it left the artist's studio). The Brussels analysts were aware that some strokes of paint passed over the craquelure and others over losses,[203] and this was re-affirmed in 1999 by Carl Villis, a paintings conservator at the National Gallery of Victoria, who reported to this author that paint could been observed passing over losses in the Infant's proper right eye and in some of the details on the front of the chest.[204] These observations were confirmed by this author during stereo microscopic analysis of the work. The black dot in the Infant's right eye extends into a small area of loss directly above the eye. The top right 'hinge' on the front of the chest is executed with a thin layer of black paint below a slightly raised stroke of white for a highlight, both of which pass through a small area of loss. The highlight of the lock also passes through a minute loss. To this list can be added the small number of yellow dots in the brocade of the cloth of honour, darker than the majority, at least one of which passes over a crack.

This author also observed other details of probable overpainting such as the keys in the lock of the chest executed in a raised, crystalline, white paint different in appearance to the other passages of white paint in the painting, which are generally flat and off-white. Other possible areas of overpaint were identified on more subjective grounds (differences in style) in the dark hatches extending from the Virgin's left temple over the shadowed side of her face, the black lines reinforcing the pattern of the carpet on the left, as well as a very small amount of off-white paint in the same area, and the lines along the edges of the windowsill on which the fruit is resting. In addition to these are the numerous losses re-filled by Philippot in 1958, as well as his extension of a shadow beside the carafe, his hatched retouching of the red lake glazes on the mantle, his repainting of the floorboards particularly on the right with a beige colour, his accentuation of the craquelure with a dark greyish paint in the lower left area of the floorboards, and his reinforcement of the bench between the cloth of honour and the chest.

The *Virgin and Child* has been overpainted on a number of occasions and on a minute scale, affecting to a degree almost every significant feature of the composition. This has involved the inpainting of losses, the reinforcement of abraded details, and even the

embellishment of the original composition. Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' hypothesis that the work is probably a forgery, in which the craquelure was artificially induced, the losses artificially created, and the repaints executed to create the impression of an old, restored work, was an intuitive and ultimately implausible one unsupported by objective evidence, and one that has obscured the question of the extent of repainting present on the work.

The Varnishes and Cleaning

According to Rinder (paraphrasing Langton Douglas), following the work's exposure to water from a leaking roof at Ince Hall in the middle of the nineteenth century it was covered with a thick varnish by a house painter.[205] In 1922 Claude Phillips wrote that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* had been shown at the *Exhibition of Early Flemish Art* in 1906 much darkened by a covering of opaque and discoloured varnishes, the recent removal of which allowed the painting to be seen 'in all its brilliance'.[206] Yet, in 1956, while in London in transit to the exhibition in Bruges, the work was examined at the National Gallery, London, where Philip Hendy expressed his hope that Coremans would recommend the work be cleaned again, to free it of a semi-opaque varnish and repainting in the folds of the mantle. However, at this time McDonnell wrote to Westbrook: 'I am worried about the van Eyck, I must admit. Buttery (London restorer) strongly advises against anything more than removal of varnish. I have heard rather disquieting reports lately of Coremans, and Norris (English Art Historian, connected with the exhibition) is rather against the idea of cleaning it. Ursula Hoff (who was then in London) I know on the other hand is rather keen.'[207]

Buttery gave the following advice in his report to the National Gallery of Victoria:

> I do not consider the picture is urgently in need of complete cleaning for its future preservation. The varnish is clear and not frosted or chilled, although slightly discoloured. If one is prepared to accept these defects, then a lifting of the varnish is all that is required to give the picture extra brilliance and to enable better appreciation of it. The picture is organically sound, and cleaning the picture to the paint surface will not, in my opinion, preserve it better for the future. I feel very strongly actually about this point of starting with just a lifting of the varnish, and not to go directly down to the paint surface before you know what's going to happen.[208]

In November of 1957 Philippot was reported as being against the idea of a complete cleaning of the work, as he thought the cleaning would not change his opinion about it.[209] Davies initially seemed cautious. However, Coremans argued that in such an important matter all available methods of analysis, including cleaning, that might clarify their understanding of the paint layers should be pursued. However, he believed the ultimate responsibility for making a decision to attempt a complete cleaning lay with Westbrook.[210] After the initial cleaning tests were conducted in Westbrook's presence, he telegrammed his Trustees for approval to continue. After sending a second telegram explaining why he thought the cleaning should go ahead, the Trustees agreed.[211] Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers expressed their dismay that Westbrook was not able to stay longer in Brussels during the cleaning to participate in such an important and delicate matter.[212]

In the interim report of 21 February 1958 Coremans wrote that a uniform, aged varnish and the remnants of another, older varnish in the bottom right area of the mantle had been removed, while another all-over transparent layer remained.[213] Samples of the transparent layer were examined in the National Gallery London Laboratory by Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey. They observed that the flakes and granules of the sample contained a few particles of lead-white, and that the substance itself responded to tests in a similar way to aged egg white.[214] In the final Melbourne report, Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers stated that no similar layer had been discovered in fifteenth-century Flemish paintings.[215] However, an egg varnish had been identified on the *Adam* and *Eve* panels of the Ghent altarpiece during a conservation analysis conducted by Joseph van der Veken (Philippot's father-in-law) in the Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts in Brussels in 1937. At the time the varnish was taken to be the original one.[216] Whether or not this is the case, and it seems a rather too crude material for the Van Eycks to use as varnish, there was no reason to represent the discovery of an egg white varnish on the *Virgin and Child* as unusual. Coremans was certainly aware of Van der Veken's analysis of the *Adam* and *Eve* panels of the Ghent altarpiece.[217]

Coremans admitted he had feared removing the glair layer might affect the underlying paint layers for the worse. In the event, he stated that the operation had hardly affected the paint layers, which may allow the inference that some very minor damage occurred.[218] The presence of particles of lead white paint in the glair samples analysed by Rawlins, Plesters, and Hey suggests that paint may have been removed with the glair. Whether this was original paint or overpainting detached from the surface, or pigment added to the glair, is not clear.[219]

Determining an Approach to the Painting's Restoration

After the removal of the varnish layers, and passages of old inpainting and overpainting, the question of the work's restoration remained to the addressed. How flattering, so to speak, should the restoration be? On 26 April 1958 Coremans wrote that the restoration of the work could be approached either with the intention of returning it to the condition it was prior to treatment, or leaving the initiative to Brussels for an optimal presentation, the details of which he claimed it would be impossible to discuss at a distance. Coremans recorded that he, Davies, Philippot, and Sneyers all preferred the latter option.[220] Many months before the final Melbourne report was tendered, Coremans sent an extract of this interim report in a letter to Westbrook.[221] Westbrook then wrote on 9 May to the President of the Gallery's Trustees, Leonard Cox, with an extract of Coremans' letter, noting that he and Gordon Thomas (the Assistant Director) were in favour of Coremans' second option, stating: 'It seems quite clear now that there is an early picture there, even if it is not by van Eyck, and the second course would be a much more honest one, that is to bring the picture back to something like its original condition, and not fix it up to look like what was in effect a fake already.'[222] Thus, he equated giving the Brussels analysts the freedom to use their initiative with the idea of restoring the work to its original condition. A different letter was sent to other Trustees, saying: 'Undoubtedly M. Phillipot [sic] can bring the picture very close to its appearance when it left Melbourne, but as ait [sic] is almost certain now that something of a genuine 15th century picture exists, I believe it would be more honest if he were asked to restore the picture to the character of the original work and not that of a picture containing so much late repainting.'[223] If not before, then by the end of the year, Westbrook had learnt that Philippot's idea of the work's original condition was as a nineteenth-century forgery, although he would later change his mind.

Kenneth G. Begg, a recently appointed Trustee of the Gallery, wrote to Westbrook: 'I am not conversant with this matter but from the information supplied I agree with you that it would be best to restore the picture to the character of the original work'.[224] Begg, a successful businessman, was Chairman and Director of Imperial Chemical Industries of Australia and New Zealand Ltd, but as a recently appointed Trustee it is not likely that he had any experience in the restoration of Old Master paintings.[225]

Another Trustee of the Gallery, Justice R.R. Scholl wrote to Westbrook: 'I agree with you that we should seek a restoration in the character of the original work.' Although, Scholl pointed out that this did not correspond to either of Coremans' options.[226]

Aubrey Gibson, also a Trustee of the Gallery, wrote to Westbrook less sympathetically:

> It is almost laughable to be asked to give a view in this matter on the evidence (facts) submitted!
>
> Originally we sent our "Van Eyck" to Europe to show and to be cleaned. When there doubts as to the attribution were raised and the experts got to work and skinned it down to "something of a genuine 15th century painting".
>
> What is it now in the opinion of the experts—(a) A Van Eyck? (b) A school of Van Eyck (c) A Studio of van Eyck? Or just a "15th century painting"?
>
> If the experts could or would say that it is one of the first three alternatives—then I would have no hesitation in saying let us have it restored in the character of (a), (b) or (c)—certainly eliminating such later repainting as was obviously out of character (i.e. in period as well as style).
>
> Whilst I appreciate the urgency of this matter, I also think it is one of such importance that, with all the facts before it, the Board of Trustees should discuss it in detail before making a final decision.
>
> The painting has been regarded by the public of Victoria (and art circles abroad) as the most important work in our collection, and we should, I think, be as fully advised as possible not only by you and Dr. Ursula Hoff, but by experts abroad before giving a decision which wrong (and possibly also if right), could give grounds for great criticisms not only in the immediate future, but in decades ahead.
>
> Whilst the short extract from Dr. Coremans' letter states "All four of us would 'prefer' the second alternative"—I do not find the remainder of his remarks at all useful as producing any facts on which to base a decision by us.[227]

Indeed, the choice offered to the Gallery was a curious one. Returning the painting to its appearance before the restoration would negate the value of having done the restoration. Leaving the restoration to the initiative of the Institut meant restoring it to a level of finish appropriate for an attribution that it had not yet officially communicated, and consequently had not been independently confirmed. What if the analysts were wrong about the attribution? It subsequently emerged that the restorer believed the work to be a nineteenth-century forgery, and this *is* incorrect, as even he seems to have recognised by 1971. Indeed, it is an odd state of affairs when a conservator undertakes to restore a work (even if unwillingly) he believes to be a modern forgery. But then a number of aspects of the process

are perplexing. Why not delay the restoration until a decision could formally be made about the work's attribution? Why were the details of the restoration impossible to discuss at a distance as Coremans claimed? Why was a representative of the Gallery not present in Brussels to oversee the restoration when Gibson at least was aware of the importance of the operation? Why did the Gallery not pay for the restoration?

The minutes of the National Gallery Trustees meeting held on 5 August 1958 recorded that after discussion: 'during which the Chairman gave a verbal report on discussions with the Felton Bequest Committee at its recent meeting, it was agreed to write to Dr. Coremans asking him to arrange for the immediate restoration of the picture, bringing it back to an exhibition state, without any attempt to simulate darkened varnish.'[228] Westbrook then wrote to Coremans:

> Obviously, without a representative of this Gallery to discuss this matter in detail with you in front of the picture, we are not absolutely clear as to what is meant by your second alternative. We suppose, however, that you and your colleagues are urging us not to restore artificially such signs of age as the picture had acquired. Based on this then, my Trustees would like to make the following request; that the picture should be restored immediately; that the damaged portion should be appropriately filled; that no attempt should be made to replace the wine glass on the window-sill to the Virgin's right hand; that no attempt be made to simulate discoloured varnish; that in such areas as the Virgin's skirt a general unity of colour and tone should be achieved; that the picture should finally receive such coverage of new varnish as you and the restorer think appropriate.[229]

Thus, the finer distinctions of the approach to the restoration, based on the question of attribution, which had been raised as an issue by Gibson, were not addressed in the Gallery's final instructions. For the most part, the restorer was given the initiative in determining the outcome.

The Restoration as It Was Carried Out

The restoration raises a number of questions: whether the cleaning process might have adversely affected the original paint layers, to what extent the restorer's inpainting and overpainting are in accord with what can be deduced of the work's original condition, and to

what extent the restoration might now positively or negatively affect an assessment of the work's attribution based on its quality of execution, for anyone unaware of the extent of restoration.

By comparing a colour image of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* made before the restoration,[230] an x-radiograph made before the restoration,[231] the photographs of the work made during cleaning, and the present appearance of the work in normal conditions and under the microscope, it is possible to identify the areas where Philippot removed paint, and the nature of his subsequent inpainting and overpainting. The x-radiograph shows numerous old losses to the paint layers as dark areas, frequently at the intersections of the craquelure and around the edges of the painting. In the photographs of the work during cleaning, white patches show where Philippot removed paint down to the ground layers, although one loss on the left side of the bottom edge extended down to the panel. For the most part, the white patches correspond to black patches in the x-radiograph. However, one small patch of white may correspond to what were original paint layers: the white area between 6.5 and 7 cm from the left edge and between 3 and 4 mm from the top edge of the published photograph of the work during cleaning (Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LI). The restorer appears to have joined a small, isolated area of loss to a larger loss at the edge of the painting. However, the x-radiograph shows a continuous white line running horizontally through this area. This line may have been a brushstroke from an early stage of painting, showing the top edge of the baldachin, which extends beyond the top edge of the painting in the final composition, or just underpainting for the front of the baldachin. Thus, it seems possible that a very small amount of original paint was removed during cleaning.

The removal of old overpaint was fairly thorough, although most probably not complete. During the cleaning process, many losses to the paint surface were exposed. Many of these losses were then filled in a manner that seems consistent with less damaged areas. However, some losses were filled and some overpainting carried out in a manner that may be inconsistent, discussed here from the largest area to the smallest.

The photographs of the work during cleaning show relatively major losses to the red lake glazes in the lower right area of the mantle, with some small isolated areas of glazing remaining. While these isolated areas were reintegrated by the application of a more or less homogenous red tone to the damaged areas, the restored glazes are not very smoothly applied and do not always follow the indications of the chiaroscuro in the drapery folds of the surviving original glazes. Under magnification this is more clearly the case, a number of strokes of red glaze are distinctly visible, rather than being blended into smooth gradations of

tone. Under magnification a number of these strokes also show a minute scratching, where the restorer has perhaps attempted to make his additions less prominent, without using strokes of his brush. Similar scratching is visible in the brown spots of the shadow beside the carafe. While the degree to which a conservator should ameliorate the appearance of damaged paint layers is a matter of opinion, in the case of two Van Eycks restored in the twentieth century (the Washington *Annunciation* and the Antwerp *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*) decisions were made to execute overpainting and inpainting (respectively) to a high level of finish. As a majority of scholars agreed to the attribution of these paintings to Van Eyck, and as Van Eyck's technique is generally distinguished by polished execution, these decisions were justified. The glazes of the Virgin's mantle in the Washington *Annunciation* were restored from 1992 to 1994, and now show smooth and subtle transitions of tone.[232] A more sympathetic restoration of the mantle in the *Virgin and Child* might have affected a similar outcome, and at the time of the restoration it was still the case that a majority of scholars accepted its attribution to Van Eyck.

The image of the work prior to cleaning shows a deepening shadow in the area of the floorboards from the middle of the bottom edge towards the right edge. The photographs of the work during cleaning show this shadow more clearly, although it contains many areas of losses. It might be thought that the losses and the dark paint surrounding them resulted from exposure to a flame, perhaps from a candle placed too close to the paint surface. However, no mention of charring was made in any of the Brussels reports. Presently, this shadow is covered by a much more homogenous grey-brown mass of brush strokes, diminishing the air of three dimensionality created by the figures and the shadows they cast. The *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* has a similar shadow covering the floorboards on the right side of the painting, resulting from the sophisticated interaction of light entering the room from the two windows, the one visible on the left and the other, to the left of the picture plane, visible only as a reflection in the mirror. Given the sophisticated light effects in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the work's close relationship to the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, it may well be that the shadow in the former has been incorrectly painted out.

An image of the bottom left of the painting prior to cleaning (Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LVIII) shows the lines for the edges of the floorboards running virtually uninterrupted between the carpet and the bottom edge of the painting. In the photographs of the work during cleaning the line at the far left is visible only with difficulty and the lines second and third from the left are interrupted. Also, the wood grain pattern is less clear and extensive, and has been interrupted where it crosses the craquelure. After repainting, the losses to the

lines for the edges of the floorboards and the wood grain pattern were not replaced and some of the nails have different shapes and positions. Observation under the microscope also reveals that the craquelure has been accentuated by the restorer with dark, greyish brushstrokes. Thus, the best that can be said is that the restorer here removed old restoration of reasonable quality and partially replaced this with overpainting of lesser quality that highlights the painting's damaged condition.

In the small, yellow, tri-leaf detail of the brocade design directly below the flower above and to the right of the Virgin's head, two old in-fills were removed below each side leaf. That these were old in-fills can be deduced from the x-radiograph, which shows diminished x-ray opacity in these areas. Prior to restoration, both losses were filled with green pigment. However, these losses were inpainted during the 1958 restoration in a yellow pigment, in a manner inconsistent with the shapes of the similar features elsewhere in the brocade. Conversely, a loss to the tip of the lowest, left segment or petal of the flower above and to the right of the Virgin's head was inpainted in green, where it had been inpainted in yellow prior to the restoration, in a manner that was consistent with the same features of the other flowers, which continue in yellow to a small curved tip. These three areas of Philippot's inpainting have the effect of making the execution of the brocade appear less consistent and controlled than it was before the restoration.

In the upper quarter of the centre of the flower above and to the right of the Virgin's head a loss is visible in the x-radiograph running diagonally from top left to bottom right, which seems to have been only partly cleaned out in 1958. This loss was filled with yellow pigment prior to restoration, but it is unlikely that it would have been so originally. The flower to the left of the Virgin's head is in a better condition and shows a clear division of its heart into four parts, the top quarter filled with a green background and yellow dots.

The abraded edges of the craquelure in the area of the carpet on the right are more visible after the cleaning than before and, as discussed above, detract from the clarity of the *sgraffito* pattern of the carpet.

The area on the top of the bench directly to the right of the base of the carafe in the photograph of the work during cleaning shows that the shadow of the carafe has a lighter area in its centre. While the prominent white fleck in the centre of this area may have been the result of abrasion, it is also possible that the larger unshaded area resulted from the painter's desire to represent light passing through the carafe and falling onto the bench. In the right panel of Van Eyck's Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation* a carafe is shown on a short window-sill like the window-sill in the *Virgin and Child*. The carafe, like the one in the Ince Hall *Virgin*

and Child, is half filled with liquid, and light entering from the left plays on the right side of the glass. The Ghent altarpiece carafe casts a shadow to the right, in the middle of which a light area has been painted. During the 1958 repainting of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* a series of dark brown dots was added beside the carafe, obscuring any sophisticated depiction of light that might have been intended. While it may be difficult to distinguish between such small areas left unpainted by the original artist and losses that occurred subsequently, the arbitrary nature of the repainting should be borne in mind in assessing the work's quality of execution.

Presently, in the sliver of light on the back wall there is an abrupt transition from the light at the bottom to the infill between 4.2 and 4.4 cm from the left edge and 4.7 and 5.3 cm from the top edge of the published photograph of the work during cleaning. Given the likely continuity of the layers as they were originally painted, this sudden transition is not consistent with the work's probable original condition.

In the photographs of the work during cleaning a dark line appears between the corner of the right window-sill and the carafe, which was not clearly visible prior to cleaning, and which was left visible after the 1958 repainting. Whether the cleaning exposed original paint or overpaint that itself had been painted out is uncertain. However, as this line does not extend beyond the other side of the carafe towards the bench, it seems less likely to be original paint.

Similarly, in photographs of the work during cleaning a black line appeared along the bottom edge of the carpet on the left, extending 1 mm or so over the mantle, which was not visible prior to cleaning. This line was left visible after repainting, but its originality is also uncertain.

The x-radiograph shows a loss on the left side of the base of the candlestick. Not all of the in-painting appears to have been removed during cleaning. In the photograph of the work during cleaning, two distinct 'highlights' are visible close to the bottom of the candlestick not visible in the image of the work prior to cleaning. Presently these 'highlights' remain, although the lower one appears a little removed from the base of the candlestick and the upper one also seems a little isolated from the tones of the candlestick beside it. Whether these are part of the original paint layers that have become isolated following losses to the surrounding paint layers or are poorly integrated in-painting is uncertain.

The extent to which original parts of the painting might have been lost during the 1958 cleaning, the amount of old in-painting and overpainting left in 1958, and the extent to which the inpainting and overpainting of 1958 is consistent with what can be said to be

original are all uncertain. However, some pre-1958 inpainting and overpainting of poor quality was very probably left in 1958, and parts of the 1958 inpainting and overpainting are very probably not consistent with the original condition of the painting, in a way that diminishes its appearance. Thus, if one looks at the painting now in order to assess the quality of its execution, and its attribution, one must do so through at least two programs of restoration of secondary quality.

Conclusion on the Technical Analysis

While the 1957–58 analysis provided a great deal of valuable new information about the work's materials and technique, the accompanying interpretation, which provided the basis for the work's restoration, was subjective, contradictory, sometimes inaccurate, and sometimes at odds with standard conservation principles and research conducted into the Van Eycks' works at that time. While the analysis involved scientific tests, the interpretation of the results of these tests was not expressed scientifically. The final Melbourne report refers at numerous points to the technical conventions of the Flemish primitive painters as the Institut had studied them, but it does not include specific comparative data from any published or unpublished scientific analysis to support the interpretations of the scientific data presented.

The assertion that the materials and technique of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* are not consistent with an attribution to Van Eyck or any other leading Netherlandish master has not been sustained by any conclusive evidence to date. There is no clear divergence from what is known of early Netherlandish painting technique. Indeed, there are numerous close correspondences with Van Eyck's own works, particularly works dating from the early 1430s such as the Ghent altarpiece (1432), the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* (1433), and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* (1434).

Notes for Chapter Two

[1] Burroughs, 1938, pp. 172–203. See below in this chapter for a more detailed discussion of Burroughs' findings.

[2] See Appendix B for a discussion of Coremans' role in the Van Meegeren case.

[3] Discussion of the scientific reports raises philological issues of the status of technical observations made at different points in the course of the analysis. In any investigation mistakes may be made and corrected or new information may come to light that requires the modification of earlier interpretations. In the following discussion the technical observations are, as far as possible, discussed in relation to the period in which they were made. The endnotes identify the date of origin of each observation.

[4] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 4.

[5] Campbell, 1998, p. 218.

[6] Campbell, 1998, p. 212.

[7] Campbell, 1998, pp. 181–82, and 202. Campbell suggested that only small-scale works were prepared in this way. However, the Rolin *Virgin and Child*, which is not particularly small, has a marbled reverse.

[8] This observation derives from the photographs of the reverses of the two works illustrated in Depuydt-Elbaum, 2002, pp. 18–19.

[9] For a discussion of the painting on the reverses of Eyckian paintings, see: Verougstraete and Van Schoute, 2000, pp. 110–11.

[10] Weale, 1883, p. 193. In 1941 the National Gallery of Victoria's catalogue entry for the work inexplicably stated: 'The painting is on canvas, affixed to an oak panel.' ([Melbourne] 1941, Plate number 17). There is no real explanation for this observation, as there is no evidence of a canvas support. If there had been one, it would have become visible when x-radiographs were made of the work. That observation was corrected in 1948 when the work was described by the Gallery as painted on an oak panel ([Melbourne] 1948, p. 46).

[11] Weale, 1906, p. 185.

[12] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 29 June 1922, p. 2.

[13] As recorded by Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 36, referring to a letter from Rinder dated June 1922. NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 29 June 1922, p. 2, does mention that the warp had been rectified, but does not say by whom.

[14] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, L.R. Macgregor, letter to E.R. Pitt, 3 March 1941. An anonymous source from Detroit is quoted as saying: 'As important museums generally prefer to make their own restorations, we are shipping the picture in its present condition.'

[15] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, J.S. MacDonald, memorandum to Ernest Pitt, 23 May 1941.

[16] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, pp. 4–5.

[17] Klein, 1999, pp. 44–47.

[18] Klein, 1995, p. 150.

[19] [Berlin] 1978, p. 155.

[20] Campbell, 1998, p. 212.

[21] Verougstraete and Schoute, 1996, pp. 89–90. They also noted that the frames of two other works are constructed in a similar fashion, although one is smaller—the Antwerp *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*—and the other is larger—the Thyssen-Bornemisza *Annunciation*.

[22] Sander, 1993, p. 246.

[23] Campbell, 1998, p. 218.

[24] Illustrated in Hoff and Davies, 1971, Plate XLVIII.

[25] Klein, 1999, pp. 44–45.

[26] Vandenbroeck, 2002, p. 25.

[27] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to Sir Owen Dixon, 7 July 1957.

[28] For a discussion of Van Eyck's semi-integral and engaged frames, see: Verougstraete and Van Schoute, 2000, pp. 108–09. For the chamfered edges on Ghent altarpiece panels, see: Coremans, 1953, p. 85.

[29] Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate L, the date of the x-radiograph is given on p. 49.

[30] Hoff and Davies, 1971, p. 56. They were referring to Hans Memling's *Man of Sorrows in the Arms of the Virgin* (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne).

[31] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated, p. 5.

[32] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 31.

[33] NGL Archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne* [with Martin Davies' comments], original document and later comments both undated, p. 5: '*il n'y a pas de chanfrein le long des bords […] Le panneau a été écourté sur tout le pourtour: l'absence de bord non peint et de barbe en fait foi. Il semble que cette opération se soit effectuée par sciage aux bords horizontaux et par rabotage aux bords verticaux.*') And p. 12 ('*Aux bords supérior*

et gauche du tableau, on a mis en évidence un sillon net mais peu large et formant un creux dans la couche picturale (cf.). Ce sillon est en outre parallèle aux bords du tableau. Il semble qu'il faille interpréter cette présence comme la conséquence d'une impression dans la couches picturale, d'un corps dur, parallèlement au bord du tableau, et cela avant que la couche picturale ne soit complètement durcie. Avant tout, on songe évidemment à la pression du bord d'un cardre.'

[34] Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LIII (b), the date of the photograph is given on p. 49.

[35] Hoff and Davies, 1971, p. 56.

[36] Campbell, 1998, p. 218.

[37] G[iltaij], 1994, p. 35.

[38] Van Asperen de Boer and Giltaij, 1987, p. 275.

[39] Van Asperen de Boer, Professor J.R.J., Amsterdam, notebook containing handwritten copies of documents associated with Paul Coremans and the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, undated, unpaginated, containing notes: '*Technisch rapport Prof. Coremans d.d. 2.8.49 […] Pas de bords non peints aux 4 côtés*'.

[40] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, letter to Martin Davies, 23 January 1958: '*Je ne connais aucun example de tableau du XVe siècle flamand qui ne présente dans sa forme originale et un bord non peint et une 'barbe'. Dans le cas present, il n'y a nulle part de bord non peint, mais peut-être à certains endroits des restes de ce que l'on pourrait appeler une barbe*.'

[41] Davies, 1954, 2, p. 133.

[42] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 11: '*On pourrait aussi admettre qu'à une époque plus reculée, un peintre peu familier avec la technique picturale du XVe siècle flamande a réalisé une oeuvre de style eyckien. Ainsi s'expliqueraeint les nombreux écarts constatés par rapport à la technique des primitifs flamands: support peu soigné, absence de barbe (11) et de bord non peint*'.

[43] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 13: '*Comme il a été dit plus haut, on ne connaît pas de tableau de chevalet flamand du XVe siècle, qui ne présente de bord non peint et de barbe, et cela sur tout son pourtour-si le panneau n'a pas été réduit.*

Dans le cas présent, il n'y a nulle part de bord non peint, et il est permis de douter sérieusement (vision directe et radiographique) de la présence de restes d'une barbe. Il y aurait donc eu écourtement aux quatre bords, du moins si l'on veut incorporer cette oeuvre au XVe siècle flamand. Cet écourtement serait de l'ordre de 1 à 2 cm, en admettent que les plus fortes densites radiographiques aux bords correspondent à des restes de barbe; il aurait pu être plus important et donc avoir affecté la composition, si cette densité radiographique locale ne correspondait pas à des restes de barbe.'

[44] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 12: '*Or, rappelons-le, le tableau étudié ici ne présente pas de barbe ni de bord non peint. L'absence de ces deux éléments, comme la présence du sillon, indique, selon nous, que l'on n'est pas en présence d'une oeuvre du XVe siècle flamand (12). […] (12): A mojns d'admettre que le panneau ait été diminué sur tout son pourtour (cf. plus loin). Dans ce cas, la barbe et le bord non peint auraient pu disparaître*.'

[45] Hoff (ed.), 1971, pp. 29 and 31.

[46] Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LIV (left).

[47] The directly visible *barbe* along the left edge and the fragmentary *barbe* along the top edge, visible in the x-radiography, indicate that these edges of the paint surface are original. While no *barbe* is visible along the right and bottom edges, judging by the centrality and symmetry of the composition in relation to the left and top edges, it can reasonably be deduced that the paint surface dimensions overall are original.

[48] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Brussels] *Compte rendu des tests, en présence de MM. E. Westbrook, P. Coremans, R. Sneyers, et A. Philippot*, 24 December 1957, pp. 1–5.

[49] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 3: '*Préparation blanchâtre; composition usuelle à base de carbonate de calcium (craie) et de colle animale, dont elle est très fortement imprégnée. Son épaisseur—jusqu' à 700μ—est tout à fait inhabituelle. Celle-ci est de 100 à 200μ dans les tableaux de van Eyck; elle peut atteindre des maxima de 300 à 400μ dans ceux des autres primitifs flamands (1). […] (1) L'Institut a examinè un nombre considèrable de tableaux flamands du XVe et du XVI siècle, y compris la majoritè des oeuvres eyckiennes*.'

[50] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 31.

[51] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 30.

[52] Kockaert, 1995, p. 191.

[53] Bosshard, 1992, p. 6.

[54] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, F.I.G. Rawlins, R.J. Plesters and M. Hey, *[Report from Mr. F.I.G. Rawlins National Gallery Laboratory, London] Examination of Samples from the Van Eyck (?) "Virgin and Child" in the Collection of the Melbourne Art Gallery*, signed, 15 May 1958, p. 3.

[55] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to Sir Owen Dixon, 7 July 1957, p. 1.

[56] NGL Archives, Desiderata Owners, S331, Charles Weld-Blundell, letter to Mr Holmes, 16 January 1918

[57] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, letter to Martin Davies, 4 December 1957, p. 2, unpublished IRPA files.

[58] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated, p. 14.

[59] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 13 n. 14.

[60] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Philip Hendy, letter to Eric Westbrook, 18 August 1959, p. 1.

[61] The history of speculation concerning the possibility of a transfer was recorded in drafts of this author's Master of Arts thesis presented to the National Gallery of Victoria Conservation Department in 2000 (For example, Hudson, Dr Hugh, Melbourne, *The Ince Hall Madonna: A Scientific and Art Historical Analysis, and its Place within the Group van Eyck* [draft of Master of Arts thesis], May 2000, pp. 13, 39–40). In an endnote to the conclusion of a draft it was suggested that the National Gallery of Victoria might undertake tests of the ground layers to determine whether there was any evidence to support the hypothesis of a transfer (p. 140, n. 312). Subsequently, examination of the *barbe* in cross-section under high stereoscopic magnification was undertaken by Payne and Villis, revealing: 'the ground layer extending from the panel directly to the paint layer, with no evidence of intermediate layers […] [suggesting] that the painting has not been transferred to another [sic] oak panel as has been speculated in earlier reports.' (Payne, J., Villis, C., and MacDonald Anderson, F., 2001, p. 266, [English version provided by the authors in 2000]). Their text cited a draft of this author's Master of Arts thesis as the source of information regarding the speculation about a transfer. Payne and Villis' report, as published, did not refer to or distinguish between the two layers of ground identified in the Brussels reports. This would need to be done to eliminate the possibility, however small, that different types of ground in the two (or more) layers were the result of a transfer to a new support that had been prepared with a layer of ground.

[62] Coremans (ed.), 1953, p. 75.

[63] Campbell, Foister, and Roy (eds), 1997, pp. 71–72. Hélène Verougstraete-Marcq (1987, p. 23) suggested that certain mid-tone shadows in the Virgin's face of the Van der Paele *Virgin and Child* show striations from an *imprimitura,* or priming layer, and interpreted this layer in the context of wider practices of Netherlandish painters from the fifteenth to the seventeenth centuries, as a means of preparing the paint layer for fluid brown glazes that rest in the striations created, thereby producing a mid-tone shadow This, however, seems to relate to a different, specifically local, use of priming layers.

[64] While a lead white based layer was identified under the green of the cloth of honour and under the brown of the floorboards, no lead white was identified under the red of the mantle or the blue of the robe. Thus, lead white apparently does not constitute an all-over priming layer in the Ince Hall *Virgin*

and Child. Some microsamples were examined under an electron microscope at the IRPA, Brussels, on 16 September 2003, thanks to the generous assistance of Ms Janka Sanjova.

[65] Van Asperen de Boer, Ridderbos, and Zeldenrust, 1991, p. 12.

[66] Campbell, 1998, p. 30.

[67] Neidhardt and Schözel, 2000, p. 29.

[68] Hand, Metzger, and Spronk, 2006, p. 282.

[69] This discussion of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s infrared analysis is based on this author's paper 'Shedding light on an Eyckian Virgin', 2001. As part of research for this author's Master of Arts a request was made to the National Gallery of Victoria Paintings Conservation department to undertake the first IRR of the work. Scans were made in September 1999 and a complete assembly was provided in February 2000. Certain parts of that assembly in the area of the Virgin's mantle are slightly unfocussed and one area on the side of the chest facing the viewer is very dark, for unknown reasons. On 31 July 2009 the author received a new IRR assembly from Ms Jennie Moloney, Scheduling and Copyright Coordinator, in which these problems had been corrected. The earlier assembly was chosen for illustration here (Fig. 4) because the important *pentimenti* in the baldachin are more clearly visible than in the new assembly, even with an adjustment to the contrast of the new image.

[70] Philippot, 1953, pp. 95–96: '*le dessin préparatoire révèle l'artiste en pleine création. Libre et spontané comme une écriture, il est beaucoup moins poussé qu'on ne le croit d'ordinaire. Bien des détails n'y figurent qu'à titre provisoire, comme le prouve la liberté qui sera prise à leur égard au moment de peindre. Dans les figures, très peu ou point de modelé en grisaille, mais presque toujours un clair-obscure largement esquissé en hachures au pinceau (Pl. III 2). De toute évidence, le dessin n'est jamais un camaïeu tyrannique qu'il reste à colorier, mais bien plutôt la mise en place générale de la composition, comparable à la sinopie des fresques médiévales. Certains motifs, d'ailleurs. ont probablement été peints alors que le dessin en était déjà caché par un ton de fond (Pl. LI).*'

[71] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated, p. 7: '*Une composition picturale flamand est supportée par un dessin précis. C'est a l'intérieur des forms limitées par celui-ci que le maître applique les diverses couches de couleurs, suivant une structure et des matériaux que constituent un constante et ce malgré les variants de details d'artiste à artiste. Ce n'est nullement le cas ici: on n'entrevoit nulle trace de dessin précis, et les couches colorées sous-jacentes débordent parfois largement des formes limitées en surface. C'est le cas en plusiers endroits et notamment pour le vert sous-jacent du baldaquin que l'on retrouve sous le fond brunâtre. Ces constatations font penser à une imitation en surface*.'

[72] Martin Davies' *Corpus* volume of 1954 did not discuss the underdrawing present in the three Van Eycks in his Gallery, although he did illustrate infrared photographs of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* showing the underdrawing clearly: Plates CCLXXXII, CCXCVI, and CCXCVIII.

[73] Philippot, 1953, pp. 95–96, but also in many places throughout Coremans (ed.), 1953; Desneux, 1958, pp. 13–22, p. 13 n. 1 refers to Van der Veken's publication.

[74] The bundled curtains are not visible in the infrared photograph (Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LII) presumably because infrared photography could not sufficiently penetrate the paint for the back wall overlying the curtains as that paint includes an admixture of black pigment.

[75] Eisler (1998, pp. 199–200) referred to a number of early Netherlandish panel paintings and miniatures in which bundled curtains are attached to various kinds of baldachins in the vicinity of the Virgin.

[76] Illustrated in Hall, 1994, p. 85, Figure 39.

[77] Van Asperen de Boer and Fairies (1990, p. 43) observed that Van Eyck showed Rolin with a purse in the underdrawing of the Rolin *Virgin and Child*, whereas it does not appear in the final paint layers. E. Melanie Gifford (1999, p. 112) noted that Van Eyck initially executed pilasters on the back wall in the underdrawing of the Washington *Annunciation*, painted those out with a light tan paint layer embellished with red decorations, and then overpainted this layer with the roundels visible in the final paint layers.

[78] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated, p. 8: '*Au coin supérieur gauche du tableau à la fenêtre la radiographie (cf) décèle un changement de composition exécuté en pleine pâte, donné en cours d'exécution de l'oeuvre. De tels changements se retrouvent fréquement dans les tableaux anciens et notamment dans ceux du XVe siècle flamand. Cependant dans ce cas, la modification apportée—soit l'écart vis-à-vis de la composition originale, en substance du dessin—à un sens plastique qui correspond à une vision ameliorée de l'artist. Ici, ce n'est nullement le cas comme en de nombreux autres endroits du tableau, le peintre a hésité fâcheusement pour arriver finalement à une perspective de piètre qualité; le base de la composition picturale—le dessin correct et précis—fait défaut à cet endroit comme d'ailleurs sur toute la surface du tableau*.'

[79] Billinge, 2000, p. 93. See also, Billinge and Campbell, 1995, p. 50.

[80] Campbell, 1998, p. 182.

[81] For the IRR image see Campbell, 1998, p. 177.

[82] Billinge, 2000, p. 93.

[83] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 31.

[84] Billinge, 2000, Figure 17.

[85] Faries, 1999, p. 229 n. 10. This does not include the area of the Virgin's mantle, which has been damaged and repainted.

[86] For the underdrawing of the Infant's foot in the Rolin *Virgin and Child* see: Van Asperen de Boer and Fairies, 1990, p. 38 and Figure 3.

[87] Anne van Buren (Van Buren, Marrow and Pettenati, 1996, p. 315) described the shrinkage of forms between the underdrawing and the paint layer, particularly in legs, as a characteristic of Van Eyck's works.

[88] An enlarged IRR image is in the possession of Professor J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, Amsterdam.

[89] That the drawing in the *Saint Barbara* was probably intended at least initially to be underdrawing for a finished painting, is suggested by the presence of incisions. See: Van Asperen de Boer, 1992, pp. 9–18.

[90] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to Sir Owen Dixon, 7 July 1957, p. 1.

[91] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 30: '*Ces compositions et structures ne correspondent pas à ce que l'on observe généralement sur les oeuvres du XVe siècle flamand où le bleu a couramment pour couche de fond de l'azurite liée a l'huile, le vert n'est pas composé de lapis-lazuli mais de malachite recouverte d'un glacis au résinate de cuivre et l'ombre des rouges y est obtenue par application d'un épais glacis de garance. Par contre, le jaune à base d'oxyde de plomb et d'étain est un matériau généralement considéré comme caractéristique des tableaux flamands des XVe et XVIe siècles*.'

[92] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Brussels] *Compte rendu des tests, en présence de MM. E. Westbrook, P. Coremans, R. Sneyers, et A. Philippot*, 24 December 1957, p. 4.

[93] Coremans and Thissen, 1953, p. 71.

[94] Gifford, 1995, p. 86.

[95] Van Asperen de Boer, Ridderbos, and Zeldenrust, 1991, p. 10.

[96] Bomford, Roy, and Smith, 1986, p. 53.

[97] Gifford, 1995, p. 86; although Bomford, Roy, and Smith (1986, p. 53) noted that a lapis lazuli glaze with an aqueous medium was found in Dieric Bouts' *Virgin and Child* housed in the National Gallery, London.

[98] Rachel Billinge, personal communication, October 1999.

[99] Nicolaus, 1999, pp. 184–85.

[100] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 30.

[101] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] R. Sneyers, letter to F.I.G. Rawlins, 21 May 1958.

[102] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, F.I.G. Rawlins, R.J. Plesters and M. Hey, *[Report from Mr. F.I.G. Rawlins National Gallery Laboratory, London] Examination of Samples from the Van Eyck (?) "Virgin and Child" in the Collection of the Melbourne Art Gallery*, signed, 15 May 1958, pp. 2–3.

[103] Heller and Stodulski, 1995, (J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, 'Discussion') p. 147.

[104] Coremans and Thissen, 1953, pp. 73–74.

[105] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, F.I.G. Rawlins, R.J. Plesters and M. Hey, *[Report from Mr. F.I.G. Rawlins National Gallery Laboratory, London] Examination of Samples from the Van Eyck (?) "Virgin and Child" in the Collection of the Melbourne Art Gallery*, signed, 15 May 1958, p. 3

[106] Brinkman, Kockaert, Maes, Thielen, and Wouters, 1988–89, p. 48.

[107] Campbell, 1998, p. 182.

[108] Brinkman, Kockaert, Maes, Thielen, and Wouters, 1988–89, p. 49: '*Ainsi, dans les zones vertes, on a découvert un sous-peint en grisaille qui semble être nécessaire pour soutenir le pouvoir colorant plutôt faible du pigment vert*.'

[109] Kirby and White, 1996, p. 65.

[110] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 7: '*Au XVe siècle flamand, une ombre n'est pas obtenue par application d'une couleur sombre ou de noir, mais à l'aide d'un glacis épais à substractum coloré (3); pour le rouge, ce glacis est à base de garance. […] (3) Y font exception certaines tableaux sur toile qui peuvent ne pas être de véritables "peintures de chavelet"*.'

[111] Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 30.

[112] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 6.

[113] NGV Conservation Department files, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, [appended image] L3192 E (*noir*).

[114] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] J. T[hissen], *Van Eyck (?) Melbourne*, [handwritten notes] 30 December 1957, p. 1: '*Rouge manteau—les ombres sont constituées de garance fixée appliqué sur une fine couche de vermillon, très léger prélèvement, examen par transparance après broyage: garance fixée, pas de pigment noir, rares grains bleus reconnus comme lapis lazuli*.'

[115] Brinkman, Kockaert, Maes, Thielen, and Wouters, 1988–89, p. 48: '*Rouge foncé: sur une couche de fond au vermillon et à la lacque rouge, plusieurs glacis de laque rouge contenant souvent un peu d'outremer; dans les plis profonds, le glacis épais et en relief contient éventuellement un peu de noir. Enfin, des traits noirs accentuent parfois les creux des plis dans les glacis encore frais*.'

[116] Campbell, Foister, and Roy (eds), 1997, p. 74.

[117] Campbell, 1998, p. 182.

[118] Kockaert, 1995, pp. 190 and 192.

[119] Campbell, Foister, and Roy (eds), 1997, p. 38.

[120] For the Ghent altarpiece: Coremans and Thissen, 1953, p. 73.

[121] Roy, 2000, Plates 43 and 45.

[122] K[ockaert], 1992, p. 177.

[123] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, pp. 6–7.

[124] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 30.

[125] Martin and Duval, 1990, p. 117.

[126] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, letter to Martin Davies, 23 January 1958, p. 3.

[127] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated, p. 15.

[128] Van Asperen de Boer, Professor J.R.J., Amsterdam, notebook containing handwritten copies of documents associated with Paul Coremans and the IRPA, undated, p. 30.

[129] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 7 n. 2.

[130] Martin and Duval, 1990, p. 117.

[131] Wallert, 1999, p. 16.

[132] Burroughs, 1938, pp. 173–74 and 177.

[133] Burroughs, 1938, pp. 178–79.

[134] Snyder, 1973, pp. 293–97. Purtle (1982, p. 155) associated the now lost marbled frame of the *Virgin and Child in a Church* with those of the Dresden triptych and the Saint Barbara, both dated 1437.

[135] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Erwin Panofsky, letter to Eric Westbrook, 24 February 1959, p. 3.

[136] Périer–d'Ieteren, 1985, p. 23.

[137] Périer–d'Ieteren, 1985, p. 23.

[138] Coremans (1953, pp. 69–74: Plate XXXVII) mentioned a chalk admixture in the lead white of the dove in the *Adoration of the Lamb*, however chalk used alone in an oil medium would not have been very opaque.

[139] Campbell, Foister, and Roy (eds) (1997, p. 72) noted: 'The tinting effect of a priming seems inconsistent with the widespread belief that painting on a white ground is a fundamental part of Early Netherlandish painting technique, but artists may have preferred to work on an off-white preparation.'

[140] Roy, 2000, p. 99.

[141] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 8: '*Plusieurs plis et des contours du manteau de la Vierge (cf. 165025B et L5790B) sont inhabituels. Ils ne sont pas modelés en épaisseur à partir d'une superposition de glacis colorés, mais tracés au pinceau fin chargé de blanc de plomb, puis recouverts d'un léger glacis. […] Chez van Eyck et les grands maîtres flamands du XVe siècle,*

seul le modelé en glacis était de rigeur (5) […] (5) De temps à autres, chez van der Weyden par example, un relief en blanc de plomb délimite une haute lumière nettement localisée.'

[142] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 31: '*Plusieurs plis et contours du manteau de la Vierge (pl. LVIII et LIXa) sont exécutés au blanc de plomb couvert d'un léger glacis rouge, alors que la technique usuelle de van Eyck et des maîtres flamands du XVe siècle rend le modelé par superposition de glacis*.'

[143] NGL Archives, London, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne* [with Martin Davies' comments], original document and later comments both undated, p. 8: '*Ils ne sont pas modelés en épaisseur à partir d'une superposition de glacis colorés, mais tracés au pinceau fin chargé de blanc de plomb que recouvre un léger glacis*.' ['*blanc de plomb*' underlined in pencil and in the margin the comment '? no led in it'.]

[144] NGV, Melbourne, Conservation Files [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* files], X-radiograph of the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, detail [London, *c*. 1958].

[145] Van Asperen de Boer, 1973, p. 95.

[146] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 5: '*Les members de l'Instutut insistent sur le fait que le graphique du tableau examiné est totalement incompatible avec celui observé chez van Eyck: nous renvoyons à cet égard aux diverse photographies jointes, et particulièrement à la radiographie 5 x (cf. L7301B) où la structure des chairs de la Vierge et de l'Enfant apparaît dans toute sa médiocrité Ce document physique montre clairement les faiblesses picturales que certaines spécialistes avaient entrevues et qui les avaient amenés à se demander notamment si les chairs originales n'étaient pas obscurcies et affaiblies par des restaurations locales. La radiographie révèle que ce n'est pas le cas (excepté localement pour des détails sans importance majeur)*.'

[147] Campbell, 1998, p. 182 and Figure 11.

[148] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, [Frankfurt] X-radiograph of the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, detail, undated.

[149] Burroughs, 1938, Figure 78.

[150] Van Asperen de Boer, 1979, p. 181 and Figure 51b; see also the x-radiograph in Coremans (ed.), 1953, Plate LVII.

[151] Illustrated in Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LXVII.

[152] Coremans, 1953, p. 102: The differences between the substructure and the surface appearance in the face of God in the Ghent altarpiece may be partly due to old overpaints that had become resistant to solvents. However, the same may be true of the Virgin's face in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.

[153] Heller and Stodulski, 1995, p. 135.

[154] See Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 49 for the date of the photograph.

[155] Campbell, 1998, p. 184. The idea that the execution of the carpet could be a *sgraffito* technique was first suggested to me by Rachel Billinge, personal communication, September 1999.

[156] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Brussels] *Compte rendu des tests, en présence de MM. E. Westbrook, P. Coremans, R. Sneyers, et A. Philippot*, 24 December 1957, p. 1.

[157] Waagen, 1854, 3, p. 249.

[158] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to Sir Owen Dixon, 7 July 1957, p. 1.

[159] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated, pp. 4, 9, and 12–14.

[160] Serck (ed.), 2005, pp. 3–7.

[161] Renders, 1928, pp. 59–65.

[162] Laurie, 1935, p. 123.

[163] Coremans, 1949, pp. 9–10.

[164] IRPA Archives, Brussels, [Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* file] P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Ince-Blundell Madone de Melbourne*, signed, undated, pp. 9, 12–14: '*la maille du réseau est uniforme sur toute la surface*'; '*si la maille apparaît du type rectangulaire à certains endroits, à de nombreux autres, elle s'en éloigne considérablement*'; '*on a plûtot l'impression de craquelures artificelles [sic] dont l'allure est apparantée à la rupture d'une pâte non encore dure et zigzagant plus librement à travers la surface du tableau*'; '*Il est cependant plus aisé d'accpeter l'intervention d'un imitateur d'époque plue recent*'.

[165] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, F.I.G. Rawlins, R.J. Plesters and M. Hey, *[Report from Mr. F.I.G. Rawlins National Gallery Laboratory, London] Examination of Samples from the Van Eyck (?) "Virgin and Child" in the Collection of the Melbourne Art Gallery*, signed, 15 May 1958, p. 2.

[166] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 13.

[167] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 30.

[168] For example, Bucklow, 1997, pp. 129–40.

[169] Davies, 1954, 2, p. 133.

[170] Van Asperen de Boer, Ridderbos, and Zeldenrust, 1991, p. 15.

[171] G[iltaij], 1994, p. 39.

[172] For enlarged reproductions of a number of Van Eyck's paintings showing a zig-zag craquelure, see: Dhanens, [1980] especially Figure 208—a detail of the *Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini*.

[173] Van Asperen de Boer and Fairies (1990, p. 38) noted premature craquelure in the Rolin *Virgin and Child* and the Ghent altarpiece.

[174] Nicolaus, 1999, p. 272.

[175] Hoff (ed.), 1971, Plate LI, notably, in the bottom right corner.

[176] As pointed out to me by Rachel Billinge, personal communication, September 1999.

[177] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, pp. 3–4.

[178] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 29.

[179] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 11.

[180] J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, confirmed this had been an accepted argument at the time, personal communication, October 1999.

[181] Laurie (1935, p. 132) noted that eighteenth- and nineteenth-century restorers did not confine themselves to retouching losses, but repainted large areas of paintings.

[182] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 16.

[183] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Brussels] L7190B [photograph of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* during cleaning] dated 24 April 1958 on the reverse. That the number order of the photographs is not strictly chronological is shown by the fact that the final Melbourne report gives the date of L 7333B as December 1957, and L7301B (1 and 2) as May 1958 (PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 16).

[184] Keck, 1963, p. 173.

[185] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, p. 3.

[186] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, [appended image] L. 3088 E (*bleu*).

[187] Weale, 1906, p. 185.

[188] The Brussels analysts mentioned in December 1957 that the glass disappeared at the same time as the varnish (PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Brussels] *Compte rendu des tests, en présence de MM. E. Westbrook, P. Coremans, R. Sneyers, et A. Philippot*, 24 December 1957, p. 2). Coremans later mentioned that the '*couche transparente*' (glair) was yet to be removed (VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Brussels] *Compte rendu des échanges de vues, entre MM. F.I.G. Rawlins, P. Coremans, A. Philippot R. Sneyers, et J. Thissen*, 5 April 1958, p.1).

[189] Brockwell, 1923, pp. 144–45. It is not clear when the glass was added to the painting. A photograph of the work published in 1906 (Temple, 1906) does not clearly show the glass, however, the photograph itself is undated.

[190] NGV Archives, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/5, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 19 April 1923, p. 2.

[191] Dates for the two photographs are given in Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 49.

[192] Ruhemann, 1958, p. 159.

[193] Hendy, 1973, pp. 607–08.

[194] Coremans, 1948, pp. 257–61.

[195] Coremans, Loose, and Thissen, 1953, p. 102.

[196] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Brussels] *Compte rendu des tests, en présence de MM. E. Westbrook, P. Coremans, R. Sneyers, et A. Philippot*, 24 December 1957, pp. 1–6.

[197] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, [Brussels] *Compte rendu des échanges de vues, entre MM. F.I.G. Rawlins, P. Coremans, A. Philippot R. Sneyers, et J. Thissen*, 5 April 1958.

[198] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P[aul] C[oremans], *Compte-rendu des conversations entre MM. Martin Davies, Paul Coremans, Albert Philippot et René Sneyers*, 14 May 1958, pp. 1–2.

[199] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, pp. 3–4 and 10–11: '*L'interprétation facile consisterait à dire qu'un imitateur a provoqué l'apparition d'un réseau de craquelures artificielles, puis a bouché certaines de celles-ci afin d'améliorer l'aspect général du tableau (10) […] (10): Cette technique operatoire est très en vogue chez les imitateurs*.'

[200] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, [appended images] L. 3174 E (*brun*) and L. 3177 E (*rouge*).

[201] Coremans, Loose, and Thissen (1953, p. 99) noted that artificial ultramarine was invented in 1828.

[202] Philippot and Sneyers, 1971, p. 29.

[203] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P[aul] C[oremans], *Compte-rendu des conversations entre MM. Martin Davies, Paul Coremans, Albert Philippot et René Sneyers*, 14 May 1958. pp. 1–2.

[204] Carl Villis, personal communication, May 1999.

[205] NGV Archives, Melbourne, Felton Bequest Correspondence, 2/24/4, Frank Rinder, Letter to E. La Touche Armstrong, 29 June 1922, p. 2.

[206] Phillips, 1922, p. 13.

[207] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, A.J.L. McDonnell, letter to Eric Westbrook, 5 November 1956.

[208] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, [H.] Buttery, *Report by Mr. Buttery on condition of "Madonna and Child" by Jan van Eyck, as requested by Mr. A.J.L. McDonnell* ['Transcription from Tape Recording, Nov. 1956'] pp. 1–2.

[209] NGL Archives, London, NG16/252, Brussels Centre 1956–66, folder 1: [Martin Davies] letter to Paul Coremans, 15 November 1957; P. Coremans, letter to Martin Davies, 19 November 1957.

[210] NGL Archives, London, NG16/252, Brussels Centre 1956–66, folder 1, P. Coremans, letter to Martin Davies, 19 November 1957.

[211] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, telegram to trustees, 23 November 1957. The trustees telegrammed back for an explanation for the request for a full cleaning on 25 November (VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Thomson, telegram to Eric Westbrook, 25 November 1957), to which Westbrook responded on 26 November (VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Thomson, telegram to Eric Westbrook, 26 November 1957).

[212] P. Coremans, R. Sneyers and A. Philippot, Declaration, 3 December 1957, unpublished, National Gallery, London archives, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2.

[213] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P[aul] C[oremans], *Compte-rendu des tests, établi en présence de MM. M. Davies, P. Coremans, A. Philippot et R. Sneyers*, 21 February 1958, p. 2.

[214] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, F.I.G. Rawlins, R.J. Plesters and M. Hey, *[Report from Mr. F.I.G. Rawlins National Gallery Laboratory, London] Examination of Samples from the Van Eyck (?) "Virgin and Child" in the Collection of the Melbourne Art Gallery*, signed, 15 May 1958, pp. 1–2.

[215] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot, and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958, pp. 8–9.

[216] Van Puyvelde, 1947, p. 115.

[217] Van Puyvelde's book, in which part of the analysis was published, was listed in the 1953 compilation of records concerning the treatments of the Ghent altarpiece edited by Coremans himself (Coremans (ed.), 1953, p. 65).

[218] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P[aul] C[oremans], *Compte-rendu des conversations entre MM. Martin Davies, Paul Coremans, Albert Philippot et René Sneyers*, 14 May 1958, p. 1.

[219] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, F.I.G. Rawlins, R.J. Plesters and M. Hey, *[Report from Mr. F.I.G. Rawlins National Gallery Laboratory, London] Examination of Samples from the Van Eyck (?) "Virgin and Child" in the Collection of the Melbourne Art Gallery*, signed, 15 May 1958, p. 1.

[220] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P[aul] C[oremans], *Compte-rendu des conversations entre MM. Martin Davies, Paul Coremans, Albert Philippot et René Sneyers*, 14 May 1958, p. 1.

[221] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, letter to Mr. Eric Westbrook, 2 May 1958.

[222] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Leonard Cox, 9 May 1958.

[223] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to NGV trustees [except Leonard Cox], 9 May 1958.

[224] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, K[enneth] G. Begg, letter to Eric Westbrook, 13 May 1958.

[225] Weickhardt, 1993, p. 152.

[226] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, R.R. Sholl, letter to Eric Westbrook, May 1958.

[227] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Aubrey Gibson, letter to Eric Westbrook, 13 May 1958.

[228] NGV Archives, Melbourne, [Trustees Minutes] 2, February 1956–June 1967, *Minutes of Meeting of National Gallery Trustees Held on August 5th, 1958*. IV. General (continued), p. 496, item number 24.

[229] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Paul Coremans, 22 August 1958.

[230] A colour slide of the work, apparently from the late 1940s, when it was in the Gothic revival frame in which the National Gallery of Victoria acquired it, is in the slide library of the Art History Department at The University of Melbourne.

[231] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Frank Partridge and Sons [London], x-radiograph addressed to A.J.L. McDonnell, date stamped 7 January 1957. The x-radiograph published in Hoff (ed.), 1971, Pl. L (identified as BL7 301 on p. 49) is dated May 1958 in the final Melbourne report (PROV, Melbourne, VPRS12730, P0001, 60, P. Coremans, A. Philippot and R. Sneyers, *Examen de laboratoire de la Vierge d'Ince Hall*, 14 November 1958.) and so was apparently not made prior to cleaning as this author had supposed in the first edition of this book of 2008.

[232] For the restoration of the Washington *Annunciation*, see: Gifford, 1995, pp. 108–16, especially p. 88; for the Antwerp *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*, see: Depuydt-Elbaum, 2002, pp. 8–20, especially p. 15.



Fig. 4. Attributed to Jan van Eyck (and workshop?), *Virgin and Child*, infrared reflectography mosaic (oil on wood panel, 26.3 x 19.4 cm, National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, Australia, Felton Bequest, 1923). Image courtesy of the National Gallery of Victoria.

3

The Iconography of the Virgin: An Art Historical Appraisal

> As the vine brought forth I pleasant savour, and my flowers are the fruit of honour and riches.
> I am the mother of fair love, and fear, and knowledge, and holy hope
> Ecclesiasticus, 24: 17–18.

Since technical evidence does not preclude an attribution of the *Virgin and Child* to Van Eyck, the signature again becomes a matter of importance, warranting close scrutiny. A review of the history of interpretations of the signature is in order. When the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* first came to the attention of art historians in the mid-nineteenth century the signature was accepted as genuine. Towards the end of the century, however, Leprieur thought certain infelicities in the text could be explained by the theory that a signature painted by Van Eyck on the lost original frame had been copied to the picture surface by a careless hand when the frame was removed. However, he did not explain in great detail what he thought the signature's faults were. Nevertheless, Friedländer was among the many authorities who initially accepted this interpretation.[1] However, when Georg Zink cleaned the work in 1922, he claimed, 'the inscriptions thereon are quite genuine, and were placed there by Jan van Eyck at the time that the picture was painted […]. During the process of cleaning an early work of art it is quite easy to detect any repaints, or inscriptions, that have been added to a painting in any period subsequent to that in which the original work was executed.'[2] If only it were so easy!

Perhaps because of the conflicting opinions, and the lack of detailed evidence provided on both sides of the argument, Friedländer subsequently left the question of the signature's authenticity open, although he and other authors thereafter referred to the work as signed and dated.[3] Erwin Panofsky still favoured the hypothesis of a transfer of the signature,[4] but this seems to have been to maintain consistency with his famous argument that the signature in the pictorial space of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* serves a special, quasi-legal function as a kind of marriage certificate, something that could not apply to a

representation of the Virgin and Child.[5] Panofsky, however, ignored the signature in the pictorial space of the *Portrait of a Young Man (Léal Souvenir)*, which cannot be said to serve a legal function. In any case, apart from Voll, writers generally accepted that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature either was or reflected an original signature by Van Eyck.

The 1957–58 examination of the signature by the Institut and the National Gallery, London, caused most subsequent writers to deny its authenticity and that of the work as a whole. Certainly, there were differences of opinion in the reports, described in the previous chapters, concerning whether the signature could be considered original or not. However, the outcome reported by Hoff was that the signature contained a number of errors and uncharacteristic features in the orthography that could not be attributed to Van Eyck, and that it was demonstrably original to the painting. This subsequently became the received opinion. However, both the scientific and stylistic analyses are problematic. The scientific analysis was based on inconclusive solvent tests and visual analysis, and the stylistic criticisms did not take into account the signature's actual condition and the known variations in Van Eyck's use of Latin, Greek, French, and Dutch in his inscriptions (original signatures are included in Appendix A, marked 'a' to 'j' in chronological order), or the similar practices of other early Renaissance artists.

The part of the signature on the left of the cloth of honour reads '*COPLETV ANO D/ MCCCCXXXIIJ°/ P IOHEM DE EYC/ BRVGIS*', which can be translated as 'Completed in the year of Our Lord 1433 by Jan van Eyck in Bruges'. The letters and surrounding paint are heavily abraded, especially the date, the artist's first name, and the word '*BRVGIS*', which are only just legible. The words on the right of the cloth of honour read '*AΛC⬧/ ⬧IXH⬧/ ⬧XAN⬧*', which can be translated as 'as I can'. This area is also abraded and the letters do seem to have been repainted some time before 1956, since their appearance has changed noticeably since the 1957–58 cleaning.

The verb in the signature, '*CO(M)PLETV(M)*', is an abbreviated form of the perfect passive participle of the Latin '*COMPLEO*', as is the case in one of Van Eyck's signatures (e in Appendix A). Georges Hulin de Loo noted that Van Eyck used passive verbs to express his authorship of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, dated 1433, and the *Portrait of a Young Man (Léal Souvenir)* ('*Actu(m)*'), dated 1432.[6] Van Eyck also signed one work in Dutch with a passive verb, '*GHECONTERFEIT*' (f), and an active verb, '*BEGA(N)*' (f). He used Latin active forms in the verbs '*COMPLEVIT*' (i), '*FECIT*' (c, h), and '*COMPLEVIT*' and '*FECIT*' together (g, j) in his signatures. The Ghent altarpiece is signed with the Latin active form

verbs '*incepit*' and '*perfecit*' (a), while the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* is elliptically signed with the verb '*fuit*' (d).

The suspension marks, in the form of horizontal bars, above the 'O' and the 'V' indicate that an 'M' has been abbreviated in each instance. In Martin Davies' 1958 report he asserted that the abbreviation '*COPLETV*' was unusual in Van Eyck's work, suggesting that the use of a Latin abbreviation for '*con*' or '*com*' was normal. This abbreviation can be written like the number '9' with the circle not quite closed,[7] or a 'C' with a horizontal bar above. Van Eyck used the former version in his signatures to replace the first three letters of the words '*COMPLETVM*' (e) and '*COMPLEVIT*" (i, j). Davies admitted that the form '*COPLETV*' was comparable to the form of the word '*compa(ra)ta*' in the biblical inscription on the frame of the *Virgin and Child with Saints Michael and Elizabeth and a Donor* (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden) where the three letters '*com*' are spelled out rather than replaced with an abbreviation.[8] In the year after Davies wrote his report, the Dresden triptych frame was cleaned. This revealed the previously obscured signature, which includes the verb '*c(o)mplevit*'—showing that Van Eyck did not always use an abbreviation for '*com*' in his signatures.[9]

'*ANO D*' occurs before the date in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature as the abbreviation of '*anno domini*'. Van Eyck used the forms '*ano dni*' (b), '*ano*' (c, i, j), '*Anno Dm*' (g), and no version of '*anno domini*' at all (d, e, f, h) before the dates in his signatures. The date in the Ghent altarpiece quatrain is given as a chronogram with no version of '*anno domini*'. The suspension mark over the 'A' indicates that the letter 'N' has been abbreviated, as in the same word of the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* signature. Davies suggested that the form '*ANO D*' instead of '*ANO DNI*' or '*ANO D^{I}*' seemed strange.[10] However, the former is not the most common form of abbreviation used by Van Eyck and none of his signatures contains the latter form.[11] The signature of Petrus Christus' *Virgin and Child* (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp) does have '*Domini*' abbreviated as '*D^{I}*'. Maryan Ainsworth has described this abbreviation as 'curious, and for Christus, unusual'.[12]

The date is entirely in Roman numerals. From 1853 it was given as 1432, but Weale read it correctly as 1433 for the first time in 1906 by transcribing the 'J' shaped numeral at the end, the same form as the last numeral for 'one' in a date in one of Van Eyck's inscriptions (e). In 1955 Julius Held thought the date being in Roman numerals might be an argument against its authenticity, as no other work by Van Eyck was known to be dated in this manner.[13] The cleaning of the Dresden triptych frame, however, subsequently revealed

that its date is in Roman numerals also.[14] Van Eyck also used Arabic numerals in the date of some works (b, d, e, h, i, j), a combination of Roman and Arabic numerals (c), Roman numerals alone for another date referred to in an inscription (e), a chronogram in place of a numerical date (a), and chronograms in addition to Arabic numerals for the date of the execution of a portrait and the date of birth of its subject in the *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw*.[15]

The superscript 'o' at the end of the date in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is the Latin ablative case ending for ordinal numerals. It is not clear whether superscript 'o's also once appeared after the 'M', the 'C's, and the 'X's, prior to the abrasion of the signature. Their presence would be appropriate following the word '*AN(N)O*', since each of these numerals or groups of numerals represents a single Latin word, and each of these words would take the case ending 'o', as in '*ann**o** millenisim**o** quadrigentensim**o** tricensim**o** terti**o***'. There is a dark spot above the top right corner of the 'M' that might once have been part of a case ending. However, Van Eyck was rather inconsistent in his use of the case ending, giving it for some but not all of the Roman numeral clusters in one date (e), apparently not for any in another date in Roman numerals (g), for both Roman numeral clusters and Arabic numerals—unusually combined in one date (c), but not for the day of the month in Arabic numerals in the same signature, while elsewhere he did give it for the day of the month in Arabic numerals (j). Sometimes he gave the case ending for years in Arabic numerals (e, i, j), and sometimes he did not (b, d, h).

The 'P' with a bar across the downstroke is an abbreviation of the preposition '*per*', while '*IOH(ANN)EM*' is an abbreviation of the Latin accusative form of the artist's first name, as is the case in one of Van Eyck's signatures (e), although it has been observed that the name in that signature may be overpainted.[16] Susan Jones noted that Van Eyck might also have used the accusative form in the signature of his lost *Virgin and Child with Nicholas van Maelbeke*, based on an eighteenth-century record of it.[17] The artist also used the Latin nominative form of his first name (a, c, d, g, h, i, j) and the ablative form (b).

The Latin particle '*de*' occurs in seven of Van Eyck's signatures (b, c, d, e, g, h, j). The artist also used the Dutch '*van*' (f) and twice used his first name only (a, i). The surname following Hubert's name in the Ghent altarpiece quatrain is usually read as '*e eyck*' although Hulin de Loo thought it could possibly read '*d'eyck*'.[18]

The form of the name '*EYC*' in the *Virgin and Child*'s signature is virtually unique, there is usually a 'K' at the end. In 1923 Brockwell noted that although Van Eyck's name had been recorded in (fifteenth-century) documents with many variations in spelling, the version in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was otherwise unknown.[19] This no doubt contributed to

Leprieur's hypothesis that some words had been cut short during a transferral of the signature from the lost original frame into the small space between the left corner of the room and the left edge of the cloth of honour on the paint surface. However, Brockwell later came to believe that the Ghent altarpiece contains a number of disguised signatures, in the form of inscriptions on the tiles beneath the singing and music-making angels, reading '*ioh*' and '*v eyc*', short for '*Johannes van Eyck*'.[20] This interpretation has not found acceptance, but neither has a satisfactory alternative explanation of the inscriptions been found.[21]

The transferral of the signature from the lost original frame to the paint surface of the *Virgin and Child* remains a possibility. Of the twenty-seven paintings (not including manuscript illuminations) that major institutions attribute fully or partly to Jan van Eyck, only ten retain significant parts of their original frames.[22] One of these, the Ghent altarpiece, has new frames on the central panels bearing inscriptions that have possibly been copied from the lost originals. Of the remaining works, three possess inscriptions within their pictorial spaces that are possibly or certainly not original: the Turin *Saint Francis*,[23] the Detroit *Saint Jerome*,[24] and the Bucharest *Portrait of a Man with a Ring*.[25] The Eyckian *Head of Christ* (Swinburne Collection, Newcastle) has an inscription on its reverse including Van Eyck's name and the date of execution of the work, which was transferred from the original frame when it was sawn off in the eighteenth century.[26] While Hoff stated that she knew of no instance of an inscription copied from a frame onto the front of a panel, Josua Bruyn pointed out that this was contradicted by her own suggestion that the date on Hans Memling's *Man of Sorrows in the Arms of the Virgin* was likely to have been copied from the lost original frame.[27] More recently, Dirk de Vos suggested that date is original.[28]

However, it does not seem to have been suggested before that the artist may have omitted the letter 'K' and the first *punctus* of the motto to suggest the signature is written on the back wall extending behind the cloth of honour out of view, much as Benozzo Gozzoli's signature and date (1450) in the *Virgin and Child with an Angel* (San Fortunato, Montefalco), depicted as though carved into the base of a pilaster, are partly obscured by the cushion on the bench where the Virgin is sitting. Each of the three inscriptions behind the Deësis of the Ghent altarpiece contains a letter or a cross that extends behind a cloth of honour. Furthermore, as Jacques Paviot noted, in the *Portrait of a Young Man (Léal Souvenir)* the last letter of the words '*TYM.WΘEOC*', which appear within the pictorial space in the form of a painted inscription on a worn and cracked parapet, partly disappears into an area of simulated damage on the surface of the stone.[29] Thus, illusionistic and playful depictions of partially

obscured texts within pictures are not unknown in the period and occur more than once in Van Eyck's works of the early 1430s. Elisabeth Dhanens' suggestion that a miniature in the *Livre de la Toison d'Or* (Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique, Ms. 9028, fol. 6), depicting a Chapter of the Order of the Golden Fleece, might reflect a prototype created by Van Eyck for his patron Philip the Good is intriguing in this context.[30] The miniature shows Charles the Bold seated before a cloth of honour with a baldachin, with his motto '*Je lay emprins*' painted on the back wall of the room, on either side of the cloth of honour. If Dhanens is correct, the signature in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, placed on the back wall on either side of the cloth of honour, with the inclusion of a motto, would have a close corollary in Eyckian practice.

The word '*BRVGIS*' may be read as the locative form of the name of the city in which Van Eyck paid for accommodation from 1432.[31] No other Eyckian signature includes a place name. For this reason, Hoff speculated that the wording of the signature might have been varied by a non-Flemish painter.[32] The 2002 catalogue entry for the work in *The Age of Van Eyck* exhibition stated that the inclusion of '*BRVGIS*' was problematic, although it was suggested it might indicate that the work was painted for a temporary resident in Bruges.[33] However, Hans Memling, another fifteenth-century artist active in Bruges, did specify the location of the ecclesiastical institution to which his patron belonged in a signature with the word '*BRVGGHE*'. The Jan Floreins triptych (Memlingmuseum, Sint-Janshospitaal, Bruges) was probably painted by Memling in Bruges, was commissioned by a resident of Bruges, for an ecclesiastical institution in Bruges, and is still housed there.[34] The inscription of Adriaen Isenbrant's *Portrait of Paulus de Nigro* (Musée Groeninge, Bruges) contains the word '*brugys'* on the panel after the date 1518. It was not Memling or Isenbrant's habit to include place names in their signatures, however, neither of these signatures should be thought inauthentic for this reason.

The part of the signature on the right of the cloth of honour reads '*AΛC⬧/ ⬧IXH⬧/ ⬧XAN⬧*'. This is Van Eyck's motto, which also appears in four original works (c, g, i, j), the earliest of which is dated 1433. In the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* it has been transcribed until recently with an 'A' for the third letter of the second word, instead of an 'H'.[35] In 1958 Davies wrote that the character did not resemble what remained of the letter 'H' in the artist's name, and that it did resemble quite closely the letter 'A' elsewhere in the signature. Davies presumed that the painter of the signature did not understand what they wrote.[36] From 1961 to 1995 Hoff transcribed the letter as an 'A' and maintained that the letter was used in error.[37]

As explained in the previous chapter, after cleaning the letter is closer to an 'H' than an 'A'. There is no horizontal bar across the top of the letter, and it has a horizontal cross bar, rather than the forked ('v' shaped) cross bars in the three 'A's in the signature. It is also pertinent that Von Bode's transcription of the motto on the Verdura *Virgin and Child* gave the letter in question there as an 'H',[38] since this work is almost certainly a copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, as will be presently discussed in detail. The Verdura Master apparently read the letter in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as an 'H', at an early date when the inscription may have been less abraded, and before it was repainted.

The motto on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is comparable in form with four of Van Eyck's signatures in which the motto appears, except that they appear on the frame rather than within the pictorial space, and they are disposed on one line rather than three. The unique disposition of the motto in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* may be of some interest for the origin of the motto itself. Van Eyck's motto has been interpreted as an abbreviation of a Flemish proverb '*Als ik kan niet als ik wil*', meaning 'as I can, not as I would'.[39] Elisabeth Dhanens noted that the motto has also been associated with the antique formula '*ut potui, non sicut*', meaning 'as I could, not as I wished', traditionally used by writers and copyists.[40] A particularly interesting variant of this tradition of humble declarations is found in the *Commemorative Labyrinth* in the tenth-century manuscript *Moralia in Iob*, made by the scribe Florentius in the Monastery of Valeranica in Spain. The labyrinth includes the phrase '*Florentius indignum memorare*' asking the reader to remember the unworthy scribe. Ironically, this humble entreaty is presented in an extravagant format surrounded by elaborate border decoration. The three words are embedded in a grid of letters, thirteen letters wide by twenty letters high. At first sight the grid appears to be meaningless. However, beginning from the middle letter of the top row reading downwards, it becomes clear that the grid is composed only of the same three words repeated in sequence countless times, and it is possible to read the phrase vertically and horizontally.[41]

The grid of nine letters in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* motto would doubtless have appeared meaningless at first sight to many among its original audience. However, a Greek-reading and Dutch-speaking viewer can find in it Van Eyck's motto disposed over three lines. Additionally, they may find the artist's name, spelled phonetically, as an acrostic: the first letters of each word read downwards are '*AIX*', which can be transliterated as 'Eyck'. Since the motto in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is the only instance where it is disposed over three lines, it is the only instance in which the acrostic is apparent.

Ludovic Nys and Daniel Lievois believed that Van Eyck's grasp of Greek displayed in the motto was not good, since he 'renders the muted gutteral with the Greek chi, which normally denotes the aspirated gutteral. Further proof is found in his addition of the letter H to denote aspiration in the first person singular pronoun ICH—a letter which normally signifies the capital form of the vowel eta.'[42] While their criticisms are admittedly technically correct, the first problem may, however, be explained by Van Eyck's desire to emulate the form of Christ's monogram in Byzantine works. Developing an interpretation by Dirk de Vos, Lorne Campbell accounted for the second problem by interpreting the 'H' in the second word as 'eta', to transliterate '*IXH*' as 'Eyck'.[43] Following this interpretation, the artist's name appears in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* motto again, horizontally, as well as vertically. The motto would then also have a second reading: 'as Eyck can'. For De Vos, the motto as a whole may be an anagram of the Dutch 'Jan van Eyck' in Greek letters.[44] To accommodate the most number of allusions in his motto, Van Eyck rendered the transliteration of certain letters imprecisely. Nevertheless, the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* motto achieves in nine letters much more than Florentius' labyrinth achieved in two-hundred-and-sixty.

Dhanens speculated that Van Eyck wrote his motto in Greek letters as a response to the Byzantine icon tradition, which often incorporates texts into the pictorial space, available to him through such works in the collection of his patron Philip the Good. These works are recorded in an inventory as in the '*façon de Grèce*' (Greek manner) with inscriptions '*éscripte en grec*' (written in Greek). Dhanens cited as an example of such Greek texts: '*IC XC NI KA*' (Jesus Christ is Conqueror).[45] The fourteenth-century Cambrai *Virgin and Child*, considered a miracle working icon, served as a model for a number of early Netherlandish painters, including Petrus Christus. While it was not installed in the cathedral at Cambrai until 1452,[46] its inscriptions provide an interesting illustration of the kind of text that may have inspired the form of Van Eyck's motto, especially in the context of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature. In the Cambrai *Virgin and Child*, the somewhat unevenly written inscriptions in Roman and Greek letters are disposed on the left and right sides of the Virgin's head. The abbreviated inscription on the left reads '*ΦMRΦ*' and those on the right side, disposed over three lines, read '*ΦDIΦ/ IhS/ XRS*', standing for '*Mater*' and '*Domini/ Iesus/ Christus*'. Similarly, in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* the somewhat unevenly written signature in Roman and Greek letters is disposed on the left and right sides of the cloth of honour behind the Virgin, with the words on the right side disposed over three lines, reading '*AΛCΦ/ ΦIXHΦ/ ΦXANΦ*'.

Thus, the appearance of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* motto may be an allusion to the Byzantine tradition of writing abbreviated Greek texts within the pictorial space of icons. The reverence for Byzantine and Italo-Byzantine icons in the fifteenth century is evident in paintings of the Virgin and Child produced north and south of the Alps, such as the copy of the Cambrai *Virgin and Child* in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas, traditionally attributed to Hayne de Bruxelles, and Giovanni Bellini's *Madonna Greca* in the Pinacoteca di Brera, Milan. In the latter, the texts are disposed on either side of a cloth of honour, as in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. By 1432 Hubert or Jan van Eyck had incorporated Greek and Hebrew looking texts into the textiles behind the Virgin and John the Baptist in the Ghent altarpiece.[47] Charlene Engel reiterated Scheller's suggestion that the 'X' in '*IXH*' might be a reference to the monogram of Christ, and stated that she would be very much surprised if the artist's motto did not have a religious double meaning.[48] Van Eyck may have conceived his motto for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in 1433 and subsequently used it in signatures on the frames of works with sacred as well as secular subjects.

In the two other instances where explicitly worded signatures occur within the pictorial spaces of Eyckian works, both of which are portraits, the wording of the signatures also seems to relate to the subjects, albeit somewhat enigmatically. In the *Portrait of a Young Man (Léal Souvenir)* of 1432 the verb used in the signature is '*Actu(m)*', which Jacques Paviot noted is a term used in the fifteenth century 'at the end of notarial deeds, to introduce the place, date and witnesses'. Paviot interpreted Van Eyck's choice of this word as a reference to the sitter's profession, which he deduced to be that of a notary.[49] Campbell, however, stated that this interpretation is not conclusive.[50] In the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* of 1434 the verb used is '*fuit*', a word used in fifteenth-century graffiti. The signature literally means 'Jan van Eyck has been this one'. While stressing that the precise meaning of the signature is not clear, Campbell saw it as 'an assertion of Jan's skill in counterfeiting reality; and it seems to be a clear statement that he is the foremost of the two men reflected in the mirror.'[51] In these two signatures Van Eyck used somewhat unusual textual formulae, seemingly to add meaning to the subjects of his paintings, in a witty or ironic way. One painting is signed portentously, and improbably, on a stone parapet, while the other is signed with a piece of mock graffiti, surely more refined and elaborate than any normal piece of graffiti, improbably placed prominently on the wall of the couple's reception room.

The language of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature is predominantly Latin, as in most of Van Eyck's signatures (a, b, c, d, e, g, h, i, j), with elements of Greek and Dutch in

the motto. The artist also signed a work entirely in Dutch (f). The script is predominantly Roman capitals as in five signatures (c, f, h, i, j). Elsewhere Van Eyck used a lower case script (a, e, g); a cursive, lower case script called *bastarda* was used in two instances where the signatures are within the pictorial space (b, d). Van Eyck depicted Roman and Greek capitals in his signatures with highlights, either as though in negative relief (c, h, i, j) or in negative and positive relief (f). Van Eyck also painted some signatures predominantly in lower case, without highlights (a, b, d) or with highlights (e, g). In the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* there are no highlights.

The execution of the characters is coarser than the *bastarda* script signatures on the *Portrait of a Young Man (Léal Souvenir)* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, where the text is sharper and more even. The closer correspondence between the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature and Van Eyck's frame signatures, such as that on the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* may have contributed to the hypothesis that the former had been copied from the lost original frame. The forms of certain characters in the *Virgin and Child* signature correspond closely to those forms in the signature of the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, which is also dated 1433. In both, the 'X's are thick from top left to bottom right and thin from top right to bottom left, the 'M's in the dates are Roman Uncial (with rounded sides and a central downstroke) but are Roman Capital (angular and without a central downstroke) in other parts of the signatures, the 'Y's in the artist's name have a low junction between the stem and arm, and the 'C's in the motto are square.

The quality of execution in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature is, however, similar to a number of inscriptions within the pictorial spaces of Van Eyck's works, such as the simulated ancient wall inscriptions, text in the niello floor, and the yellow-gold text for the speech uttered by Gabriel and the Virgin in the Washington *Annunciation*. Indeed, the quality of the text in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature is only marginally coarser than the speech in the Washington *Annunciation*. Notably, in each the serifs in the 'A's form little concave curves. Also of similar quality are the inscriptions on Saint Michael's armour and shield in the *Last Judgment* panel of the *Crucifixion; Last Judgment* diptych (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York). While most of the upper part of the *Last Judgment* has been attributed to an anonymous workshop assistant, the figure of Saint Michael and the depiction of hell have been attributed to Van Eyck.[52] The inscriptions on Saint Michael's shield read '*AΔWNAH*', '*TET(PA)ΓPA/MAΘWN*', and '*AΓΛA*', which can be transcribed and translated as *ADONAI* (Lord), *TETRA GRAMMATON* (the name given to the four letters 'YHWH', or a

group formed from one of these letters repeated four times, referring to the one and only name of God), and the acronym AGLA (another name for God, formed from the initial letters of *ATTÂH, GIBBOR, LEHOLÂM,* and *ADONÂI*, meaning 'Thou art strong for ever, O Lord!') respectively. These cabalistic inscriptions may serve a protective, talismanic function for the saint. There is also what appears to be a modified '*Chi-Ro*', or monogram of Christ on the shield, which may be a reference to the legend that the Emperor Constantine put the figure on his soldiers' shields. On the saint's armour are the inscriptions '*VINΔE(X)*', meaning 'avenger', and '*IVCΘIX*', an abbreviation of '*IUST(ITIA) J(ESU) CH(RISTI)*'.[53] Common to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature and the New York diptych inscriptions, particularly those on Saint Michael's costume, are the Greek letters, the pronounced serifs ending in concave curves, and the square 'C's, all painted in a rustic style.

The carpet in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* also bears two gammadia in its front corners. These may be viewed as a type of Tetragrammaton, being comprised of four gammas (the Greek letter 'Γ'), perhaps alluding to the 'G' in AGLA. The gamma can also be interpreted as a symbol of Christ as a cornerstone.[54] Taken together, the rustic script, acrostic in Greek letters, the square C, and the gammadia in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* all suggest an allusion to early Christian art. The Constantinian mosaics at the Basilica of the Nativity in Bethlehem include gammadia, and the acronym '*IXΘYC*' (standing for 'Jesus Christ, son of God, Saviour'), in which the C is square.[55] Sterling argued that Van Eyck probably undertook a pilgrimage to the Holy Land in 1426,[56] which could be viewed in light of preparations for Philip the Good's later contribution to the restoration of the Basilica of the Nativity, as well as the duke's patronage of the Franciscan convent at the Cenacle on Mount Sion in Jerusalem.[57] Renaissance pilgrim accounts also record that the duke financed a pilgrim hostel, run by Franciscans, in Ramla, located between Jerusalem and Jaffa on the coast.[58]

Thus, the signature of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is composed of elements of Latin, Greek, and Dutch. It does not clearly contain spelling different from Van Eyck's other signatures. The suggestions that it contains unusual abbreviations and unusual information, and that it is unusually written are undermined by the ingenuity and variety of means with which Van Eyck signed his works. The most that can be said definitively against the signature is that it is much less elegant than Van Eyck's two larger, more prominently placed signatures within the pictorial spaces of his paintings. It is, however, fairly close in style to a number of the artist's other inscriptions within his paintings, as well as his signatures on the frames of a number of smaller works. It cannot be ruled out that the Ince Hall *Virgin and*

Child signature was transferred from the lost original frame at an early date. It has a number of features in common with Van Eyck's frame signatures and differs in some ways from those that appear within the pictorial space.

Nevertheless, the evidence for the signature being Van Eyck's own should not be dismissed. It is precisely in the period between 1432 and 1434 that Van Eyck adopted the practice of signing his works within the pictorial space. The idea of painting an inscription as though it extends behind a cloth of honour was known to Van Eyck at this time. The form of the motto, comprised of groups of three Greek letters disposed over three lines, was probably inspired by texts on Byzantine icons of the Virgin and Child, as well as sophisticated scribes' colophons. Van Eyck may have used a rustic script in the signature as a reference to early Christian scripts, such as those on Byzantine icons. Such an erudite signature is appropriate for the composition, which shows the Virgin and Child with a book, as a *Sedes Sapientiae*, the representation of the Virgin as a seat of divine wisdom. He may also have eschewed an overly elaborate, decorative script for his signature in deference to the holy subject. In his portrait of the Arnolfinis, whom he knew well enough to paint the male subject on a separate occasion, the patrons evidently tolerated the artist's flamboyant intrusion into their figurative space.[59] Compared with Van Eyck's sometimes extravagant painterly finesse, the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature certainly underwhelms. However, viewed as an example of Van Eyck's historical and archaeological knowledge, intellectual dexterity, and wit, the signature appears to be a rather ingenious device.

* * *

The Virgin and Child are shown in a small, apparently domestic, interior. Its fittings are in part austere, and in part luxurious, but all is completely consistent with Van Eyck's milieu, as we shall see through a study of the contents of the room. The occupants are depicted in a moment of quiet distraction, apparently unconscious of anything outside of their own interest in the book held open by the Virgin before the Child. The book has two clasps hanging to its right, with a decorative tassel attached to the top one. The Child is looking at an open page showing (mock) black text illuminated with tiny alternating red and blue capitals, while the sides of the book are embellished with yellow-gold dots in diagonal lines. In these features it resembles the books in the *Adoration of the Lamb* panel of the Ghent altarpiece, which also have clasps, tassels, gold dots in diagonal lines on their sides, mock black text, and red and

blue capitals on their pages. The book on the lectern in the *Singing Angels* panel of the altarpiece also has two clasps on the right, the top one with a tassel, and the side of the book has gold dots in diagonal lines.

Behind the Virgin and Child is a cloth of honour, with a baldachin at the top. It is not centrally located within the picture, but, like the cloth of honour in the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*, positioned slightly to the right of centre. It seems to be made of an Italian, green silk velvet textile, either voided or with two heights of pile, and with gold brocade. The brocade design is of a thick, sinuous vine producing large flowers and small fruit on branches running across the direction of the stem, with small trimmed branches at regular intervals on the sides of the vines.[60] The fruit are traditionally referred to in textile studies as pomegranates. A similar brocade design was used by Van Eyck for the cope of the foremost singing angel in the Ghent altarpiece, where a thick, sinuous vine also produces large flowers and small fruit on branches running across the direction of the stem, with small trimmed branches at intervals on the sides of the vines.[61] The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* brocade is closer still to that on Saint Donatian's cope in the Van der Paele *Virgin and Child*. In both works the thick, sinuous vine motif with flowers, fruit, and trimmed branches has a subsidiary pattern between the curves of the vine in which five, small, gold, leaf-shaped motifs are disposed in a hexagonal pattern around a larger gold motif. The pomegranate motif was frequently used by Van Eyck, appearing also in the cloths of honour of the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, the Dresden triptych, and the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*. The Ince Hall cloth of honour is edged with red, the same colour as the baldachin's fringe. Judging by Lisa Monnas' assessment that large repeat patterns in gold brocade textiles of the fifteenth century were more expensive than short ones,[62] the long repeat of the pattern in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, Ghent altarpiece, and Van der Paele textiles all represent what would have been distinctly expensive items.

The brocade in the *Virgin and Child* is painted in a yellow pigment, possibly yellow-brown ochre and lead white,[63] over a mid-brown underpainting, the latter visible with the aid of a stereo microscope. The yellow paint is applied in a minute network of dots, dotted lines, and lines, with the lines and dotted lines running diagonally from bottom left to top right. There is a more generous application of yellow paint in the details on the edge of the brocade pattern. This produces the effect of a raised edge to the brocade, which, contrasted with the varied density of yellow dots across the brocaded areas, gives the impression that the gold is in slight relief and shimmering in the light. As the gold brocade passes into shadow the yellow paint is less densely applied and becomes a darker yellow, almost yellow-brown,

colour.[64] In the gold brocade of Van Eyck's *Portrait of Baudouin de Lannoy* the artist applied a generous amount of yellow pigment in the scalloped edges of the leaves, as in the scalloped edges of the flowers in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. And in the angel's cope of Van Eyck's Washington *Annunciation* the yellow hearts of the six or so red leaf (?) shapes at the bottom are executed solely with yellow dots, with no dotted lines or lines, as are the central gold motifs of the subsidiary pattern of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* brocade.

The Virgin sits on a patterned, dark green cushion, the corner of which is protruding to the right over what must be a small seat completely hidden by her voluminous mantle. Her somewhat lowly position prefigures that of the Rolin *Virgin and Child*, where Mary likewise sits on a small seat with a cushion. The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s mantle is of a plain, red material, probably intended to represent scarlet, the expensive woollen textile for which Flanders was famous in Van Eyck's time.[65] Like the Annunciate's mantle in the Ghent altarpiece, the mantle in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* lacks the elaborate jewelled borders found in the later Lucca, Van der Paele, and Dresden paintings. Panofsky alluded to the similarity in style between the drapery in the Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation* and that in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in 1953.[66] And as noted earlier, Pächt believed the plain mantle in the latter work was characteristic of an early phase in Van Eyck's manner, when he was still influenced by Campin's depictions of the Virgin and Child showing plain mantles.

The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s mantle forms a cascade of looped folds to the right of Mary's waist. It forms large, distinctly angular cascades at the lower right, passing first to a complex array of smaller folds in the lower central part, and then to an area of softly executed folds at the lower left. The Virgin has tucked up a part of the mantle under her left arm to manage its great size, and in this respect it is similar to the arrangement of her drapery in the *Virgin and Child in a Church* and the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*, as well as Saint Catherine's in the Dresden triptych, and that of both of the figures in the Thyssen-Bornemisza *Annunciation*. The cascade of looped folds to the right is reminiscent of the looped folds to the left of the Annunciate in the Ghent altarpiece. The style of the drapery to the lower right is comparable with the large, angular folds in the saint's drapery in Van Eyck's *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* (Galleria Sabauda, Turin), which Charles Sterling thought heralded the style of Van Eyck's works after 1432.[67] Whereas, the drapery over the floor is comparable with that in the *Saint Barbara* (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp), in the massed angular folds of the mantle as it spreads over the ground. In particular, a rhomboid shape forming the top of a large leftward pointing 'V' shaped fold in the drapery on the right side of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, is very similar to an

arrangement of the drapery in a similar position in the *Saint Barbara*. Further to the left the Ince Hall drapery is somewhat less elegant than Saint Barbara's. Yet, overall, its forms are still more harmonious than those of the Ghent altarpiece Annunciate's drapery. An elegant, reversed 'S' shape is formed by the angle of the Virgin's head, leading to the curve of the mantle over her left arm and down around a large fold directly below. This 'S' curve is preceded by the bold sweep of the brocade pattern of the left vine and is mirrored by the vine on the right. A comparable 'S' curve is also formed by the figure of the Virgin in Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church*.[68]

Underneath her mantle the Virgin wears a blue, fur-lined robe with a 'V' shaped collar of pearls and red and blue-green jewels on a gold backing. The jewels on the right throw shadows over the row of pearls below. The yellow dots for the gold backing of the collar are larger at the front, creating the impression of the greater reflectivity of the gold closer to the light sources at the left. The jewelled collar is similar to—though more neatly executed than—those of the *Virgin and Child in a Church* and the Dresden triptych. The collars of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the Dresden triptych are, however, similar inasmuch as the top edges are defined by fine, black lines and rows of white dots representing pearls. The Virgin's robe is gathered together above her waist with a red band, which may be intended to represent leather decorated with tiny gold studs. The Virgin's extremely fine, wavy brown hair is parted centrally, gathered together behind her head, and spread out over her shoulders. She wears a black fillet adorned with pearls, of a kind that Van Eyck painted with varying degrees of elaboration in all of his depictions of the Virgin on panel.

The Child is naked except for a plain white cloth wrapped around his waist, covering his right knee. Although Van Eyck's seated infants in Bruges, Dresden, Frankfurt, and Paris are shown naked on a white cloth, here the cloth around his waist serves to protect the valuable manuscript placed in his lap. In the *Mystic Marriage of Saint Catherine* (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg), perhaps a copy drawing of a lost Eyckian altarpiece,[69] the Infant's legs and lap are similarly covered by a piece of drapery, either a part of the Virgin's mantle or a separate piece of material. His waist is also covered in the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*. The Child's hair in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s is blond, executed as a series of flecked, yellow strokes over an orange-brown underlayer. He holds two pages of the book in a way that parallels the Virgin's two-handed grasp of the book. His position, on the Virgin's right side with his back to her is similar to the Infant's position in the *Virgin among the Virgins* of the Turin-Milan hours (*Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame*) by an illuminator from Van Eyck's circle.[70]

As Campbell has noted, the representation of wooden floors, instead of the more usual tiles or semi-precious stones, was apparently briefly in vogue with Van Eyck and Van der Weyden around the year 1434.[71] Floorboards are seen in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife,* in Willem van Haecht's copy of Van Eyck's *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)*—a detail of the *Visit of Albert and Isabella of Austria to the Collection of C. van der Geest in Antwerp*, the Eyckian *Saint Jerome* in Detroit, and Van der Weyden's *Magdalene Reading* (National Gallery, London)—the latter a fragment of a dismembered altarpiece with the Virgin and Child formerly at its centre. In the IRR of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, two short horizontal lines below the dog's proper front right paw, extending approximately half the width of the floor board, and another line similarly close to the bottom edge, but further to the right suggest that Van Eyck may have considered painting an end to the row of floorboards there, which he did not execute. Since these lines are much more clearly visible in IRR than in direct vision of the paint surface, they are probably underdrawn. Whether the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* once had an end to the row of floorboards along the front of the picture is difficult to say because of the poor condition of the painting in that area, but is at least suggested by the row of nails near the bottom.

Below the Virgin is a predominantly brown and red-brown fringeless carpet, the corners of which are visible to the left and right. Campbell noted that the carpet of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* is unusual in having no fringe, and that its pattern is not particularly like those in Van Eyck's other carpets,[72] and the same is true of the Ince Hall carpet. While the paint layers in the latter carpet are abraded, certain patterns can be made out, notably, the gammadia in the corners. In their book on Christian symbolism, Heather Child and Dorothy Colles illustrated a fifth-century, near-eastern mosaic with a geometric decorative motif of interlocking loops, the interior, dark lines of which form a gammadion. They noted that an imperial decree of 427 forbade the use of crosses where they could be stepped on. This led to the substitution of abstract cross designs, such as interlocking loops.[73] It is not clear whether Van Eyck would have known of such a decree. Nevertheless, the principle is based on a piety with which Van Eyck is likely to have agreed. It may not be a coincidence, therefore, that similar interlocking loops were used by Van Eyck to decorate the carpet and tiles in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*.

Evidently, gammadia in early Netherlandish art, like the interlocking loops, were considered sufficiently different from crosses that they could be placed on items where they might be trodden on. They are found on a cushion under the feet of Saint Catherine in the

Boucicaut Master's *Boucicaut Venerating Saint Catherine* (Boucicaut Hours, Musée Jacquemart-André, Paris) and on a carpet below the Virgin in Hans Memling's *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Two Angels* (St Osyth's Priory, Trustees of the Right Honourable Olive, Countess Fitzwilliam's Chattels Settlement and Lady Juliet de Chair). They also appear on tiles below God the Father's throne in the carved relief, *Throne of Grace* (Burgundian, *c*. 1450, Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna).[74] A variation on the common gammadion is found in the corners of a carpet below Charles VI, in the illumination *Pierre Salmon Presents his Book to Charles VI*, from Pierre Salmon, *Réponses à Charles VI et Lamentation au roi sur son état*, of *c*. 1409 (Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris).[75] A much earlier and geographically distant example of a work incorporating gammadia into a carpet below the Virgin is Ambrogio Lorenzetti's *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Angels and Saints* (*c*. 1340, Pinacoteca Nazionale, Siena). The textile behind the Virgin on the inside of the Ghent altarpiece bears brocade texts that have been transcribed as '*IHESUS XPS*' in a faux-Hebrew script.[76] Here the letter 'X' is painted with curved ends (pointing in a counter-clockwise direction), and in this form it resembles a tetragrammaton comprised of four 'yod's. Some of the inscriptions on the inside wings of the Ghent altarpiece, which may have been copied from the original frames, have similar tetragrammata (with curved ends) at the beginning and end of the texts.

On the carpet there is also a rectangular border along the front, possibly with animal motifs within, a simple flower motif on the left, and a scalloped design along the front of the left corner, all executed in a *sgraffito* technique. A vine and node motif in rectangular borders on the left and right sides of the carpet are more clearly visible in IRR than on the paint surface. The pattern of the carpet may be reinforced by pre-1958 overpainting, particularly the left corner, with a series of black lines and a very small amount of an off-white colour.

At the left, the window extends beyond the top of the picture plane, with a light brown, stone frame, and a diamond pattern of glass in the upper section. The window pane has a border of red, blue, and clear glass. The light passing through the blue glass falls as pale blue squares on the reveal of the window. The depiction of stained glass throwing coloured shadows is not common in early Netherlandish painting, but does occur in Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church* (the top two windows on the left), Rolin *Virgin and Child* (the top right window) and in the Detroit *Saint Jerome* (where there is only one window).

A small amount of vegetation is visible outside the window, below blue sky. The edge of a shutter (or window) is also visible outside, attached to the window frame by two sets of hinges. Though uncommon, the depiction of an outward opening shutter or window is not

unknown in early Northern European art. For example, the Master of Catherine of Cleves' miniature *Preparation of the Corpse of the Deceased* from the Hours of Catherine of Cleves, of *c*. 1440 (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York), shows an outward opening shutter. Willem Vrelant's illumination *Philip the Good Kneeling in Front of an Annunciation*, from Jean Miélot's *Traité sur la salutation angélique* (Bibliothèque Royal Albert Ier, Brussels) of 1461 shows an outward opening lattice shutter in the lower half of a window.[77] The *Judgement of Solomon* (National Gallery of Art, Washington) engraving by Master FVB shows a fifteenth-century Flemish throne-room with an open window to the left and what appears to be the edge of a shutter attached to the outside of the window with two hinges, very similar to the arrangement in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[78] Davies noted that the *Annunciation* (National Gallery, London) by the Master of Liesborn shows an outward opening shutter.[79] This arrangement also occurs in the Master of Alkmaar's *Seven Acts of Charity* (Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam), and in Dürer's print *The Holy Family in Egypt (The Life of the Virgin)* (an example is in National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). Marinus van Reymerswaele's *Virgin and Child* (Madrid, Prado) shows the Virgin and Child in a small, apparently domestic, interior with a window to the right and a shutter opening outwards. Thus, it is not correct to describe the arrangement of the window with an external shutter (or window) in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as an error, as Hoff did until 1995.[80] This arrangement may have been adopted, rather than the more common internal shutters, to allow the brilliant depiction of the light falling on the reveal of the window.

Running across the left of the room before the window-sills is a plain wooden bench with two vertical supports of a simple Gothic shape. It is similar in design to the one below the window in Dieric Bouts' *Annunciation* (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles). There is a void between the bench and the window in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, as there is between the bench and the window beside Zacharias in the Turin-Milan hours *Birth of Saint John*. The edge of a bench between the chest and the right edge of the cloth of honour was reinforced in repainting in 1958. It is uncertain whether there was previously any evidence that the bench was once more clearly indicated there or whether the decision to reinforce it was a subjective one based on a desire for spatial clarity on the restorer's part. Similar benches running along the left and rear walls of a small domestic room are depicted in Dürer's engraving *Saint Jerome in his Study* (an example of which is in the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne). And a similar arrangement is depicted in a miniature from a *Valerius Maximus memoribilia* made in Bruges in 1479.[81]

Against the right wall is a simply constructed and undecorated chest. The simplicity of its design is comparable with that of the chest (or cupboard?) in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. As mentioned, the 'hinges' on the right of the front side of the chest in the *Virgin and Child* and the keys in the lock, as well as the highlight for the lock may all be later additions. There is a dark brown square on the side of the chest facing the viewer apparently representing a panel inserted into the side. Whether this is original or a later addition is unclear. The front foot of the chest is not carefully painted. The bottom edge facing the viewer should be parallel with the bottom edge of the picture plane, as the top edge of the chest is, whereas it is actually painted at a slight angle. There is, though, a similar anomaly in the foot of the cupboard in Van der Weyden's *Magdalene Reading* (National Gallery, London), demonstrating that such flaws of design can be found even in works containing the highest quality of execution. The shading of the different surfaces of the chest, in its current condition, does not show anything like the subtle gradations of tone from light to dark over receding surfaces or the precise changes of tone between adjacent surfaces that one frequently encounters in Eyckian paintings. Pulpy looking shading of surfaces is, though, found in the lid of the tomb and the shield leaning against it in the *Three Maries at the Tomb* in Rotterdam.

Two small, yellowish pieces of fruit are resting near the window of the *Virgin and Child*, apparently a type of citrus, perhaps oranges. These would have been expensive and exotic commodities in fifteenth-century Flanders. Snyder noted that the piece of fruit held by Eve in the Ghent altarpiece is yellow with a rough skin and a smooth cap, and so is not an apple as related in the Bible. Instead, he identified the fruit as an 'Adam's apple', a species of orange with thick, rough, pale yellow skin whose name has long been understood to be associated with the story of Genesis.[82] Panofsky, too, interpreted the citrus in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as '*gaudia paradisi*', symbolic of the Fall, and alluding to the Virgin as the new Eve and the Child as the new Adam.[83]

On the bench at the left is a half-filled carafe with no stopper, and a prominent ridge running horizontally around its middle. The shape of the carafe may have been inspired by fifteenth-century Northern European 'Forest' glassware, particularly the *Doppelkonischeflasche* (double conical bottle), although these were frequently made of green glass.[84] A fifteenth-century German example of a green *Doppelkonischeflasche* is housed in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inventory number 8694). Rademacher published a similar carafe, as well as an illustration of a glassmaker's workshop appearing to show such a design being made in about 1430.[85] The Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece

depicted a similar bottle in the *Virgin and Child with Musical Angels* (National Gallery, London), painted around 1485–1500. The *Saint Jerome in his Study* (North Carolina Museum of Art, Raleigh) commonly attributed to Stephan Lochner and dated to around 1440,[86] also shows a vessel on the lower shelf like a small, double conical bottle.

Interestingly, the *Birth of Saint John* illumination from the Turin-Milan hours (Fig. 5) shows a beaker on the cupboard with distinctive, round protuberances on its surface, characteristic of a *Krautstrunk* (literally 'cabbage stalk'), a style of Forest glassware beaker with decorative mounds of glass on its exterior, looking something like a trimmed cabbage stalk with leaf stumps. The Victoria and Albert Museum houses an example of a *Krautstrunk* from fifteenth- or early sixteenth-century Germany (inventory number 8684). This example, too, is green, although the beaker was painted clear in the *Birth of Saint John*. The significance of this common interest in Forest glassware will become more apparent later in this chapter, when the authorship of the *Birth of Saint John* is discussed in connection with the authorship of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.

The execution of the carafe in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is close to that of the hemispherical, glass roundels on the left side of the mirror in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. The glass in these features is represented predominantly with a dark brown background, a yellowish highlight on the right to represent the tinted light that has passed through the glass, and whitish highlights on the left to represent the light from the windows reflected off their surfaces.

On top of the chest is a branched pricket candlestick with a brown candle on the central pricket, its wick unlit. Two brass candlesticks of similar shape, but slightly thicker, are housed in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. These have been dated to the second half of the fifteenth century.[87] Similarly shaped candlesticks are depicted in the Campinesque *Annunciation* (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts, Brussels), the *Birth of Saint John* in the Turin-Milan hours, and the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*. The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* candlestick is, compared with those examples, taller and more slender, and the branches are more foreshortened to increase the object's three dimensionality. To the right of the candlestick is a metal ewer with a spout, the side with the handle extending beyond the right edge of the picture plane. The ewer is of modest design, compared with some in early Netherlandish paintings, such as the one in the Van der Weydenesque *Annunciation* in the Musée du Louvre. Like the ewer in the Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation*, the lid of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* ewer must be attached to the body near the handle, and has a projecting piece of metal at the top of the hinge, to suggest that the lid could be opened with the thumb

while being held by the handle. On the floor before the chest and to the right of the Virgin is a metal dish, probably intended to represent a laver made of brass. It is apparently partly filled with water. Similar lavers were depicted by Van Eyck in the Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation*, the lost *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)*, and Lucca *Virgin and Child*. A quadrilateral pattern of four drops of water on the right side of the laver is reflected within.

The *Annunciation* of the Ghent altarpiece, dated 1432, provides a number of precedents for the design of the room and its contents in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, dated just one year later. Perhaps Van Eyck still had the former composition in mind when he designed the latter. The walls of the *Annunciation*'s rooms are a slightly greyish, light brown colour, representing plaster-covered masonry, while those in the Virgin and Child are somewhat greyer. In the right corner of the *Annunciation*, beside the Virgin, a number of short, nearly horizontal lines seem to represent cracks (or spiderwebs?), as in the left and right corners of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. The lines in both the *Annunciation* and the *Virgin and Child* are slightly angled to accord with the perspective of the rooms.

In the room behind the Virgin in the *Annunciation*, light enters through a window, falling on the window reveal in a long, vertical sliver, much as the light touches the back wall in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in a vertical sliver. In the *Annunciation*, the rays of light fall as two lancet shapes on the adjacent wall, just as the ray of light passes through the corner of the room of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Fazio described a comparable detail in Van Eyck's Lomellini triptych, once owned by Alphonse V in Naples but since lost, in which between the portraits of the donors 'as if through a chink in the wall, falls a ray of sun that you would take to be real sunlight'.[88] Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church*, too, shows rays of light passing through the interior and falling as pools on the floor. The naturalistically executed light in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is, thus, a particularly Eyckian feature. According to Otto Pächt, the depiction of light in this work is superior even to that in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*,[89] and in one respect it is also superior to that in the Ghent altarpiece. There the pools of light are not accurately rendered if they are intended to originate from the visible window. In this case the leftmost pool of light on the wall should be flat along its left side, rather than lancet shaped, since the light passing through the window has already touched the window reveal.[90] This may be one of Van Eyck's occasional indiscretions, although the layout of the two rear rooms is also incoherent—how is anyone meant to have entered them when the only visible access is through the fenestration behind Gabriel and the Virgin? Furthermore, these figures are too large for their setting. Was the planning of the *Annunciation* rushed, or might these solecisms have a symbolic meaning?

Beneath the right, rear window of the *Annunciation* is a short window-sill, like those below the window of the *Virgin and Child*. In the latter work, the right sill is visible in its entirety, while only the very edge of the left one is visible, although it throws a shadow over the bench. In both the *Annunciation* and *Virgin and Child* a carafe is placed near a window. The Annunciate's plain mantle fills the lower half of the panel she occupies, and the precise position of her body is impossible to determine beneath the drapery, as in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. In the *Annunciation* appear a metal ewer, candlestick, and laver, as in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. And in both works art historians have observed Campin's influence in the representation of contemporary Netherlandish interiors.

As Paul Philippot has observed, in the Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation* shadows are painted falling into the pictorial space as though cast by the vertical members of the picture frames, thereby playing on the semiotic tension between the pictorial space and the real space in which the frames exist, and beyond, where the spectator stands.[91] In the Vijd Chapel of Saint Bavo's Cathedral, where the altarpiece originally stood, the windows were located to the right and behind a spectator standing in front of the altarpiece, explaining why the shadows of the frames fall into the picture and to the left. The fall of light in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* also connects the represented space with the outside world of which the spectator is a part, though in a subtler way. The position of the sun above the horizon, to the left of the room, and on the viewer's side of the picture plane is implied by the angle of the shadow of the window's crossbar and the sunlight touching first the window reveal and then the back wall. The artist exploited this construction by also showing highlights on the laver, the ewer, and the carafe facing not the visible window as one might expect, but a second window that must be behind the viewer's left shoulder, beyond the edge of the picture field. If the pictorial space of the painting corresponds approximately to the viewer's field of vision, the existence of a second window beyond the left edge of the painting places the viewer between the two windows, and so within the same room and immediately in front of the Virgin and Child. Similarly, Van Eyck placed highlights on the chandelier of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* reflecting a second window beyond the left edge of the picture, which is also responsible for throwing the woman's shadow over the bed (in the opposite direction from the directly visible window). The 'implied' second window can actually be seen reflected in the mirror, as light entering the room through open shutters beyond the directly visible one.

The composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is a delightful one, charming, intimate, affecting, and not without gravity and subtlety. In the relative sobriety of its interior

it is closely related to the Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation* of 1432. In its domesticity and spatial construction it is closely related to the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* of 1434. Although a few of its details are comparable with features of Van Eyck's works from the second half of the 1430s, the majority of the stylistic evidence points very strongly to a date of 1433 for its composition.

Iconography

The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is a small-scale, iconic, religious representation whose composition maximises the immediacy and empathy of the viewer's aesthetic and emotional experiences before the image of the Virgin and Child. The work's small size suggests it was intended for personal devotion. There is also likely to be a symbolic intention in aspects of the subject matter, providing an intellectual and spiritual dimension to the experience of the work.

The principal feature of the work's iconography that has attracted comment from numerous authors is the representation of the biblical figures in a distinctly contemporary environment. The fixtures and accessories are of a kind that would have been fashionable in the court of Philip the Good. In this modern approach, Van Eyck seems to have drawn inspiration from Robert Campin's paintings of the Virgin and Child in contemporary domestic interiors (whether or not some were executed by workshop assistants they may be described as Campinesque). Both artists' representations of the Virgin and Child highlight the paradox of the consubstantiality of the sacred and earthly.

There is a long history of art historians observing similarities between the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the works of Campin. In 1932 Charles de Tolnay compared the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with the Master of Flémalle's (Campin's) *Virgin and Child by a Fireplace*, suggesting that the former may have been derived from the latter.[92] He reiterated this view in 1939, arguing that the relatively simply furnished interior of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* (for Van Eyck) reflected the Master of Flémalle's more generally austere style.[93] In 1938 Alan Burroughs described the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a 'phlegmatic, Campin-like work',[94] and in 1952 Ludwig Baldass discussed the similarities and differences between the Melbourne and Saint Petersburg paintings, illustrating them side by side in his book on Van Eyck.[95] In 1994 Otto Pächt thought the style and date of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* close to Campin's Mérode altarpiece (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York) as well as his work in Saint Petersburg.[96] Two years later Albert Châtelet reaffirmed the suggestion that Van

Eyck was indebted to Campin for the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Although, he suggested that while Van Eyck may have been inspired by Campin's composition, the artist somewhat repudiated the informality of Campin's representation of the Virgin and Child.[97] Whereas Campin's Virgins sit on the footrest of a bench or on cushions on the floor, the Ince Hall Virgin sits on a low seat, mid-way between a Madonna of Humility and an Enthroned Madonna, as Panofsky pointed out.[98] She is, thus, a little more elevated, and so a little closer to the eye-level of the viewer implied by the perspectival construction of the room than Campin's Virgins usually are. Campin's influence on Van Eyck has been seen already at work in the Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation*, completed in 1432,[99] as well as in undated works by Van Eyck, such as the Washington *Annunciation*.[100]

While the emergence in 1987 of Campin's *Virgin and Child in an Interior* (bought and publicly exhibited for the first time in that year by the National Gallery, London) demonstrates the accommodation of a degree of luxury in the depiction of a Campin interior—in the form of the cloth of gold hung over the bench behind the Virgin and Child—the work still confirms the basis of De Tolnay's thesis that a Master of Flémalle (Campin) interior is generally less elaborately furnished than an equivalent Eyckian one. This remains true, even if the similarities between the London and Melbourne paintings show just how closely the two artists worked stylistically. While the former work was acquired as by Campin, Lorne Campbell suspected that it may have been executed by Jacques Daret in Campin's workshop, and so would have to date before he left his master's shop in 1432. While the attribution of paintings to Campin and his workshop assistants is particularly problematic, this author believes that the great refinement of the *Virgin and Child in an Interior* can best be explained by Campin's own execution, with a date before 1432 remaining plausible, if not demonstrable.[101]

Discussing the iconography of the Mérode altarpiece, Châtelet referred to Geert Groote's late fourteenth-century theological text proposing a modern veneration of the Virgin and Child as though they were as real as members of one's own family.[102] The contemporary domestic interiors of the Mérode altarpiece, the *Virgin and Child before a Firescreen* (National Gallery, London), and the *Virgin and Child by a Fireplace* can be explained partly as illustrations of this idea. In these works religious imagery is implied, such as the 'halo' formed by the firescreen behind the Virgin's head, rather than represented in the form of more explicit religious symbols. In the latter work there are no traditional, overt religious symbols. However, in the other panel of the diptych of which it is a part, the *Trinity*, there is a multitude of such symbols, such as the cross, the dove, and the crown of thorns. In the Ince

Hall *Virgin and Child* the closest things to traditional religious symbols are the gammadia on the corners of the carpet. That Van Eyck gave some thought to the amount of explicit religious imagery in his representations of the Virgin and Child is suggested by the IRR of the Lucca *Virgin and Child*.[103] The surface paint layers show no unmistakeable religious imagery, although the lions on the throne could be interpreted as a reference to the Throne of Solomon.[104] IRR shows, however, that Van Eyck painted out a statue of a bearded young man below the rear, left lion on the throne. Since the sculpted human figures in Van Eyck's thrones all seem to represent biblical figures,[105] it seems likely that the statue there was of a biblical figure too. Van Eyck may have painted it out in order to maintain the work's ambiguity as a domestic-religious image.

Panofsky saw early Netherlandish realism as a potential vehicle for 'hidden' or very subtle symbolic meanings, notably, in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the Lucca *Virgin and Child*.[106] In the absence of explicit or traditional religious imagery, the role previously played by attributes or other unmistakeable religious imagery may be taken over in these works by naturalistic details of their compositions, such as the carafes (alluding to Mary's virginity), lavers (her purity), and fruit (her status as the 'new Eve'). Similarly, in Van Eyck's *Saint Barbara*, the saint's traditional religious symbol of a miniature tower takes the form of a real tower behind her, and the same is true of the Campinesque *Saint Barbara* in the Prado, Madrid.

Catherine Reynolds has, however, stressed that Campinesque Virgins, though depicted in some respects in a manner comparable with a Madonna of Humility, were not likely to have been mistaken for ordinary women by fifteenth-century viewers, citing features of their clothing and settings distinguishing them from ordinary women. Customarily, fifteenth-century women covered their heads in public after marriage, with the exception of queens who could go bare-headed on the most formal occasions. Similarly, only the 'greatest of great ladies' would have breast-fed her own child. So a mother seen with exposed hair, breast-feeding her child, as in the Campinesque *Virgin and Child before a Firescreen*, could only have been a distinctly noble woman, even if she was sitting close to the ground.[107]

De Tolnay and Pächt saw a tension in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* between the Virgin's low seated position, appropriate for a Madonna of Humility, and the cloth of honour and baldachin appropriate for a Queen of Heaven.[108] De Tolnay described Van Eyck's inclusion of a brocade cloth of honour and baldachin in a Campinesque interior as absurd, but did so in an argument for the primacy of the Campinesque versions of the domestic interior. Pächt described this combination as an anomaly, but did so in a similar argument placing the

composition at a very early date in Van Eyck's career, as though Van Eyck had not yet brought his composition into harmony. Panofsky and Châtelet, on the other hand, saw the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* simply as combining aspects of Campin's depictions of the Virgin, in which her humility is stressed, with a more courtly milieu, appropriate for his position as the duke's *valet de chambre*. All of these authors accepted that the work's composition is Eyckian. Yet, because of Sander's argument that Van Eyck's seated Virgins are always depicted on an elaborate throne—although incorrect—Hoff,[109] and later Benson,[110] argued that the iconography of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is un-Eyckian.

Reynolds has noted that there is no evidence that early Netherlandish artists recognised the Madonna of Humility as a distinct iconographic category in the way that modern art historians do, let alone that they felt unable to combine it with other modes of representing the Virgin.[111] Indeed, the combination of attributes of a Madonna of Humility and a Queen of Heaven seems to have been employed by Campin, and influenced his pupil Van der Weyden, as well as Van Eyck. Purtle noted that the London *Virgin and Child in an Interior* combines aspects of a Madonna of Humility with indications of the 'splendour of heaven in the light of the resurrection. It is clear that the elaborate brocade of the bench beyond the seated figures is the beginning of a throne'.[112] For Purtle, Rogier van der Weyden's *Saint Luke Drawing the Virgin* (Museum of Fine Arts, Boston) represents a homage to Campin in which: 'the Madonna of Humility finds Mary seated at the foot of a throne clearly patterned after that of the domestic ducal court.'[113] Discussing Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*, Purtle referred to the precedent of a cloth of honour behind a Madonna of Humility in a work by a follower of Campin: 'where the cloth of honour is used to create a throne-like setting within the outdoor paradise garden'. Furthermore, Purtle argued that 'Jan's contemporaries would have recognised his cloth of honour and low garden bench [in the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*] as an outdoor version of a royal throne.'[114] If Van Eyck could show Mary in his *Virgin and Child by the Fountain* with no crown, in a relatively humble garden setting, but with a cloth of honour and two angels, as well as her uncovered head, to distinguish her from any other woman, he might also have represented Mary in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with no crown, in a relatively humble domestic setting, but with a cloth of honour and a baldachin, and her uncovered head, to distinguish her from any other woman.

In Craig Harbison's analysis of the Dresden triptych, the contrast between the scroll held by the Infant bearing the words: '*Discite a me quia mitis et humilis corde*' ('Learn from me, for I am meek and humble in heart') and the extraordinarily rich and ornate interior, were

described as leaving the viewer with 'an ironic relation between these different elements, the simplicity of the Virgin, Child and inscription and the ornateness of setting and accessories.'[115] Similarly, in the Rolin *Virgin and Child*, while the Virgin sits on a fairly simple box-shaped seat with a cushion, an angel flies above holding a stupendous crown over her head. There is no reason to believe that Van Eyck always sought to depict the Virgin and Child in an entirely regal way. Indeed, the ambiguity of their human (humble) and sacred (regal) nature is an important characteristic of his religious iconography.

Van Eyck provided texts accompanying some of his images of the Virgin and Child, and these may act as a general guide in establishing other aspects of the iconography of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. The text most commonly associated with the Virgin in Van Eyck's paintings is from the Wisdom of Solomon, Chapter 7: verses 29 and 26. This is found behind the Virgin in the Ghent altarpiece Deësis, on the frames of the Dresden and Van der Paele *Virgin and Child* paintings, and perhaps on Mary's hem in the *Virgin and Child in a Church*. Van Eyck also quoted passages of Ecclesiasticus Chapter 24 in the Dresden and Rolin *Virgin and Child* paintings (in the latter the text is taken from a Matins lesson of the Virgin's Office), and since Ecclesiasticus Chapter 24 is also concerned with wisdom, this is clearly the most important Marian metaphor for Van Eyck.

Barbara Lane drew attention to the fourteenth-century text *Speculum humanae salvationis*, which provides a textual source for Marian wisdom iconography in early Netherlandish painting: 'The throne of the true Solomon is the most Blessed Virgin Mary,/ In which sat Jesus Christ, the true Wisdom.' As Lane pointed out, many authors have interpreted Van Eyck's Lucca *Virgin and Child* as alluding to the Virgin as a throne of divine wisdom. This has been justified, in part, by interpreting the four lions on the throne as references to the fourteen lions around Solomon's throne (1 Kings 10: 18–20).[116] The passages from the Wisdom of Solomon quoted by Van Eyck in his inscriptions describe wisdom as, firstly, the brightness of eternal light, and, secondly, as a spotless mirror reflecting God's majesty, and as such she is said to be even more beautiful than the sun and stars of the natural world.[117] Earlier in Chapter 7, wisdom is praised as more precious even than gold, silver, and jewels. It is as though by choosing this text, the artist suggests that for all his artifice and contrivance to represent worldly beauty in his paintings, the Virgin, as an embodiment of wisdom, is more beautiful than anything that he can depict realistically—a message of professional humility if this interpretation is correct.

However, it has been argued that Van Eyck did exploit his powers of realism to communicate symbolic meanings in honour of the Virgin. The justification for this has been

found in the inscription previously on the frame of the *Virgin and Child in a Church*, which was recorded before the frame was lost in the nineteenth century. It contained lines from the first half of the second stanza of a nativity hymn:

> This mother is the daughter
> This father is born
> Who has heard of such a thing?
> God born a man, etc.[118]

The inscription confirms that Van Eyck appreciated the paradoxical nature of Christ's being, divine and human. Millard Meiss argued that as Van Eyck added 'etc.' to the part of the hymn quoted, it can be inferred that the artist had the fifth stanza in mind, which begins:

> As the sunbeam through the glass
> Passeth but not staineth,
> Thus the Virgin, as She was,
> Virgin still remaineth.[119]

In the *Virgin and Child in a Church* two beams of light pass through the glazed windows on the left, falling first on the adjacent walls before falling on the floor in two pools of light. Panofsky noted in his chapter on the subject of symbolism in *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origins and Character* that this iconography could equally apply to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, where light passes through the carafe beside the window. Panofsky, though, translated the second line as 'Passeth but not breaketh'.[120]

Although it is not known that Van Eyck was familiar with Saint Bernard's twelfth-century discussion of Marian symbolism, also quoted by Meiss, his paintings illustrate it just as vividly:

> As a pure ray enters a glass window and emerges unspoiled, but has acquired the colour of the glass […] the Son of God, who entered the most chaste womb of the Virgin, emerged pure, but took on the colour of the Virgin, that is, the nature of a man and a comeliness of human form, and he clothed himself in it.[121]

Meiss mentioned this text in passing and did not associate it directly with either the *Virgin and Child in a Church* or the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. However, he incorrectly

stated that the church windows in the former were filled with clear glass, when in fact they contain a very fine wash of red and blue paint—distributed, admittedly, a little roughly for Van Eyck. The red and blue paint in the windows surrounds clear areas of glass approximately in the shapes of human figures. In the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the brilliant light enters the window, passes through the coloured glass border, and falls on the window reveal as pale blue squares. Similarly, the light passing through the partly stained glass windows in the *Virgin and Child in a Church*, falling on the adjacent walls as a mixture of dappled pure light as well as delicately tinted blue patches, and possibly also pale red patches.

Another of Van Eyck's inscriptions may help to interpret the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s iconography. The inscription around the central frame of the Dresden triptych contains a passage taken from Ecclesiasticus (24: 17–18), quoted at the outset of this chapter. It compares wisdom with a flowering vine. Perhaps not entirely unrelated is the fact that the lost frame inscription of the *Virgin and Child in a Church* also compared the Virgin with a flower: '*FLOS FLORIOLORUM APPELLARIS*' ('you are called flower of the little flowers').[122] Extracts from Ecclesiasticus 24 are also found on the border of Mary's mantle in the Rolin *Virgin and Child*, there taken from its appearance in a Matins lesson of the Virgin's Office.[123] Carol Purtle interpreted the grapes held in the Infant's left hand in the Dresden *Virgin and Child* as an elaboration of this iconography, representing the Infant as the eucharistic fruit of the vine.[124] In this way, the motif of the fruitful vine applies to both the Virgin and Child, in a way that underlines their complimentary roles. The prominent vine motifs of the cloth of honour in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* may be a similar symbolic reference to the Virgin and Child as a fruitful vine. The harmonious repetition of curves in the brocade vines is echoed in the reversed 'S' curve of the Virgin's drapery and in the postures of the Virgin and Child, particularly their hands and arms. The symbolism of the two vines as references to the Virgin and Child is, thus, connected formally to the figures themselves. The cloth of honour behind the figure of God in the Ghent altarpiece includes brocade patterns of the Pelican in her Piety, grape vines, and pomegranate blossoms, all Eucharistic symbols. It is, therefore, not farfetched to imagine that the flowering vines of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* might have a symbolic, as well as decorative and honorific role.

The psychological intensity of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s composition derives from the innovation of showing the Virgin and Child in a distinctly contemporary interior. The atemporal representation allows the possibility that the Infant is examining the Gospels and so will find there a record, and a premonition, of his own sacrifice. Harbison has noted

that the Infant in the Dresden triptych is 'surrounded by statues alluding to his sacrifice.'[125] Van der Weyden's Saint Columba altarpiece (Alte Pinakothek, Munich) shows a crucifix hanging behind the Holy Family in a scene depicting the adoration of the magi, a less subtle reference to the Infant's destiny. This association of the Infant with the Gospels in the Ince Hall painting seems also to emphasise the idea that the Infant is the Word made flesh.

The depiction of the Virgin and Child with a book in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the identification of the Virgin and Child with vines, and the original context of that imagery in wisdom literature, may have been intended by Van Eyck as references to the Virgin as a seat of divine wisdom, a category of representation known as the *Sedes Sapentiae*. The signature of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, with its display of learning in the use of elements of three languages, may have been intended to emphasise the wisdom iconography.

The motif of the book as an accessory of the Virgin and Child has a very long tradition. A twelfth-century Spanish carving, the *Adoration of the Magi* in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London (inventory number 142–1866), shows the Virgin and Child, the latter with a closed book in his hand. This is one of countless sculptural representations from across Europe during the Middle Ages showing the Child holding the attribute of a book. The motif of the Virgin and Child engaged in reading or writing occurs in French early Renaissance sculpture. Johnathon J.G. Alexander dated the *Enthroned Virgin and Child Writing* (The Cleveland Museum of Art) to the early fifteenth century.[126] A more direct precedent for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is the *Virgin and Child* polychrome sculpture in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, depicting the Virgin with the Child on her lap while both of them hold an open book. It has been attributed to Claus de Werve and dated to *c*. 1415–17. An inscription on the bench quotes from Ecclesiaticus Chapter 24: 9: 'From the beginning, and before the world was I created', confirming that the Virgin and Child with a book are being associated with divine wisdom. It has been suggested the sculpture was donated by John the Fearless, duke of Burgundy, to the Franciscan Order of Poor Clares, in Poligny.[127] Although, it has more recently been dated to the 1430s, and described as a collaboration between De Werve and his assistant Jean de la Huerta.[128] Interestingly, by 1423 De Werve was in the employ of Philip the Good,[129] who was also Van Eyck's patron.

In a number of Van Eyck's paintings of the Virgin he complemented his images with texts that identify the Virgin as an embodiment of wisdom, which of course has no form, but can be alluded to in terms of light, a mirror, and a flowering vine. One of Van Eyck's inscriptions referred to the Virgin as a flower, and may also allude to the Virgin, indirectly, through a reference to glass. There is no surviving Eyckian inscription that refers to the

Virgin as the 'new Eve' or the Infant as the 'new Adam', but this does not exclude the possibility that Van Eyck included fruit in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and Lucca *Virgin and Child* to refer to such an analogy. Discretion is required on the part of the modern viewer in interpreting the extent of iconographic intent in Van Eyck's painting, as it must have been in the artist's own time. However, the artist's love of embellishment, encoded messages, and displays of erudition, justifies the assumption that there is probably more symbolic intent in his works than surviving inscriptions suggest. Just as the artist developed a repertoire of figure types, poses, and costumes that he used and re-used in different arrangements in his works, he seems to have developed a number of related iconographic analogies, which he combined and reconfigured in his works. Like the biblical texts he quotes, Van Eyck added analogy to analogy in honour of the Virgin. There seems not to be only one iconographic idea in each of his works, but rich, multi-layered combinations and variations of literary and visual symbols.

The Origin of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* Compositions: A Developmental Link

In his discussion of Hubert van Eyck's career, Charles Sterling drew attention to archival evidence suggesting the artist was engaged in a number of commissions in the last years of his life: 'concurrent production is always symptomatic of a successful master' ('*la production simultanée est toujours symptomatique d'un maître à succès*').[130] Hubert's successor in business, Jan, apparently received numerous commissions in the years following the installation of the Ghent altarpiece, and it seems likely given the length of time he devoted to his works, that some of these were executed concurrently in his workshop. Interestingly, the *pentimenti* in the underlying paint layers of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* suggest it may have been executed very closely in time to a number of Jan van Eyck's works, or concurrently with them.

The date of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* has been much discussed in the literature. Many authors have thought the date in the signature not original, either having been copied from the lost original frame, or from a lost original painting. Some speculated that it had been copied incorrectly. Châtelet thought the soft, plain execution and Gothic style of the work characteristic of an early date in Van Eyck's career. Whereas Snyder thought the charming, diminutive style comparable with his late works. Panofsky, though, accepted the 1433 date of the inscription, as did many others, once it was recognised that the date in the signature

actually reads 1433, not 1432. Even when re-attributing the work as a copy, Hoff noted the similarity of the composition to the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* (Fig. 6), agreeing that 1433 was a likely date for the origin of the *Virgin and Child*'s composition.[131] That interpretation is supported by the close examination of the work's composition given above. The relationship of the composition to the works that probably inspired it, and to those works that in turn were probably inspired by it, also tends to confirm a date of 1433 for the composition.

As noted, a number of authors suggested the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* may have been a response to the *Virgin and Child before a Fire* by Robert Campin. The two works do share a number of features, such as the Virgin's red mantle and blue robe and the relationship between the size of the figures and the spaces of the rooms depicted. However, it seems it has not been noticed that Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is closer in a number of ways to the *Virgin and Child in an Interior* in London. The *Virgin and Child in an Interior* and the Ince Hall picture show the Virgin and Child before a cloth of gold, the Virgin sitting on a cushion, the corner of which is protruding to the right, and the brass laver on the floor. These features are absent in the Saint Petersburg picture or differently arranged. The London and Melbourne paintings also share the remarkable fall of light through an open window, particularly a triangle of light formed by the fall of the shadow of the window's crossbar, separating the intense direct sunlight below from the dappled light passing through the window's leadlights above. Such representations of light are rare in early Renaissance art, and it seems quite likely that one of these representations depends on the other.[132]

It also appears to be significant that a few details of the *Virgin and Child in an Interior* recur in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, namely: the single lit candle, the cloth covered bench with a red cushion against the back wall,[133] the discarded patten, a wooden ceiling, and a similar arrangement of the shutters, showing a sliver of light between the top left shutter and the window frame. The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* follow the *Virgin and Child in an Interior* in showing the top of the window in the initial stages of their execution, and both alter the design in the paint layers by extending it beyond the top of the picture. They share compositional features that are uncommon in early Netherlandish painting, such as the bare floorboards and the fringeless carpets. It appears that the *Virgin and Child in an Interior* may have served as an inspiration for the compositions of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. The first work is possibly from before 1432, the second is dated 1433, and the last is dated 1434.

The *pentimenti* in the elevation of the windows of the latter works might be explained by their having been executed simultaneously. In works of such similar composition, a change to the composition of one might well have been introduced in the other. This kind of *pentimento* is a highly idiosyncratic one, rarely (if ever?) observed in another fifteenth-century Netherlandish artist's work, and represents a spontaneous and individual response to the development of a composition. For the same change to have been made by Van Eyck in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* and a copyist in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, in the course of the execution of each work, would be a phenomenal coincidence.

The elevation of the window beyond the top of the picture plane, in its transgression of the picture plane, represents an advance in the depiction of interiors in Netherlandish painting of the early fifteenth century. The features of Campin's interiors sometimes extend beyond the left and right edges of the picture plane but rarely the top, since the tops of his interiors are usually delimited by a roof. Campin's open windows puncture the walls of his interiors, but usually reinforce the solidity of the represented world by showing a townscape outside. With the exception of the *Virgin and Child before a Firescreen*, which has been cut down at the top, no Campinesque window extends beyond the top of the picture plane. Van Eyck superseded the work of this artist who inspired him, in his greater transgression of the picture plane. As Panofsky put it: 'the bold novelty of liberating three-dimensional space from its ties with the front plane of the picture; this was an entirely personal exploit of the great Jan van Eyck.'[134] Van Eyck painted objects at the edge of the picture plane extending beyond, virtually into the viewer's space, he depicted shadows cast by objects outside the picture plane falling into the represented space, he placed a mirror so that it reflected what lay outside the represented space, and his windows, rather than partaking of the rectangular architecture of his rooms, extend beyond the top of the picture plane. Furthermore, by depicting a window in steep perspective, making only a sliver of the outside visible, Van Eyck also used the power of suggestion to create the impression of the extension of space, rather than trying to represent it explicitly.

The original hanging of the baldachin in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with bundled curtains like the one in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* is another connection between the two works not previously suspected. This is especially significant as no other surviving work by Van Eyck includes such a feature, making it likely that the compositions originated in the same period. The partially additive painting technique of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, described above, corresponds to the highly additive painting technique of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* that Rachel Billinge and Lorne Campbell have described.[135] The

dates in the signatures of each painting, 1433 for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and 1434 for the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, might lead to the hypothesis, supported by the additive painting technique and *pentimenti* of both, that the two works were conceived as figures in a basic domestic interior with the contents of each room adjusted progressively from the beginning to suit the subject matter of each. Anne van Buren has noted that Van Eyck characteristically conceived of his works primarily as settings with figures inserted, rather than figures around which settings are constructed.[136]

If the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was painted by Van Eyck as a highly domestic form of religious representation, then the artist may have pursued a diametric logic in making the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* a sacred-secular work. The addition of potentially symbolic fruit, prayer beads, the image of Saint Margaret, and the scenes from the Passion of Christ on the mirror to the domestic interior of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* suggests a creative mind mixing the tropes of conventional representation, but in a pious way. Campbell noted that the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* is the earliest surviving Netherlandish portrait in a domestic setting on panel.[137] There was, however, a precedent for showing the Virgin and Child in a domestic setting in the works of Robert Campin. Thus, Van Eyck seems to have arrived at his original composition through a combination of the portrait format and the Campinesque type of devotional image explored just prior, or simultaneously, by the artist in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition.

The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* are intimately connected in many aspects of their production. They seemingly borrow from the same composition, and adapt that composition in similar ways. Both works are apparently missing the common priming layer of early Netherlandish paintings, they employ an additive painting technique, and have an economic *sgraffito* technique in details of their compositions. They share a colour scheme dominated by the contrast between red and green, and brown offset by a small amount of gold, and they mix tropes of traditional representation in a way that was worked out on their panels.

A third work by Van Eyck (and an assistant?), now lost, is closely connected to the compositions of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*.[138] The composition of the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* is known from a small copy at the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, and a reproduction of a work of virtually identical composition, but considerably larger, in Willem van Haecht's *Visit of Albert and Isabella of Austria to the Collection of C. van der Geest in Antwerp* (Rubenshuis, Antwerp) of 1615. The latter was presumably the original. The 1668 sale catalogue of the Antwerp art dealer Pierre

Stevens described what may be the same work, as showing Van Eyck's wife dressed and undressed. Stevens associated it with a Van Eyck painting said to have belonged to Federico, duke of Urbino.[139] Bartolommeo Fazio, in his *De viris illustribus* of 1454, had recorded a work by Van Eyck portraying a number of women at the bath, which belonged to the duke's nephew Ottaviano Ubaldini della Carda, but which may have found its way into the duke's collection. While the description of that work is in some ways similar to the copies of the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)*, it seems not to have been the same work, since Fazio mentioned that an extensive landscape was visible, while there is no evidence of such a landscape in the copies.[140] Thus, Van Eyck or his workshop may have made more than one version of a similar subject.

The composition of the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* known in the copies consists of two females, one nude, in an interior nearly identical to that of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* except that the mirror is shown in front of the window and a folding chair is included at the left. This chair, though not directly visible in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, is visible as a reflection in its mirror. The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* have the motifs of a transparent carafe and a metal laver, which are absent in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. Though the nude figure has variously been interpreted as Judith, Giovanna Cenami, and Jan van Eyck's wife,[141] Bernhard Ridderbos more convincingly interpreted the subject as an allegory of Vanity, in which the naked woman washing herself before a window, with a comb beside the basin, corresponds to a contemporary documentary source concerning *Bathseba*. He referred to speculation that as a representation of Vanity it would have made an appropriate cover for the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*.[142]

Regardless of whether the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* was a cover for the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* or an independent work, the almost identical nature of the settings makes it probable that the two works originated in the same period of the artist's career. While it will probably never be known whether there was a *pentimento* in the window of the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)*, it seems likely that its composition, showing the window extending beyond the top of the picture plane, resulted from its having been composed at the same time as, or shortly after, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. Thus, it is likely to date to 1434 or later. Since it showed the folding chair in the left corner, which is only visible as a minute reflection in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, it was most probably painted when Van Eyck still had the earlier work fresh in his mind. Thus, the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* probably does not date much later than 1434. The Ince Hall

Virgin and Child, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, and the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* constitute a series of compositions created by Van Eyck around 1433–34. All three share the basic domestic interior with bare floorboards, plain, light coloured walls, and one window directly visible to the left. Each of the interiors is furnished with a chest (or at least a low cupboard), and each has fruit resting near the window. All three contain varying amounts of domestic-religious imagery. Curiously, none has a fireplace, a common feature of early Netherlandish interiors.[143] Van Eyck may have preferred not to include such a prominent feature of the domestic interiors of his rival Robert Campin.

The links between the three works described are supported by Rintaro Terakado's catalogue essay 'The Eve-Bathseba-Maria Lineage and the Netherlandish Primitives'. The author suggested there is an iconographic connection between the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, and the lost *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)*. This is based on a succession of biblical mothers, with Eve, as the first mother, signifying the Fall, Bathseba signifying the redemptive role of motherhood, and the Virgin as its ideal expression. The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is in greater accord with the argument than the similar Lucca *Virgin and Child*, since the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s partly Madonna of Humility iconography forms a closer link to the earthly iconography of Eve and Bathseba, than the more clearly Queen of Heaven representation of the Lucca *Virgin and Child*.[144] Van Eyck began paying for a house in Bruges, got married, and had a child between the years 1432 and 1434.[145] It may not be accidental that he produced a series of works during this period in which domesticity, matrimony, and maternity became prominent themes.

The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, and the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* are evidence of a particularly productive period in the artist's life, one in which he borrowed from a great contemporary to produce a series of paintings based on a similar domestic interior, with each work invested with details specific to its subject matter. The resulting works are among the most innovative creations of early Netherlandish art and yet, ironically, appear in some respects to have been produced in an economical and hasty manner.[146]

Hand G, Van Eyck, and the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*

In the early sixteenth century, the Italian humanist Pietro Summonte informed the art collector and connoisseur Marcantonio Michiel that Van Eyck had been an illuminator at the beginning of his career, but on what authority he had this is not known. If this led to an

expectation that such early works might one day be recovered, this was tantalisingly briefly realised in 1902. In that year, Paul Durrieu published a series of miniatures from part of the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame*, a richly-decorated manuscript apparently commissioned by John, duke of Berry, which was housed in the Biblioteca Nazionale Universitaria of Turin, some of whose illuminations were of extraordinary and manifestly Eyckian quality. Tragically, these perished in a fire only two years later. Fortunately, their appearance was preserved in black and white photographs. Then, in 1911, Hulin de Loo published a further series of illuminations from the same book of hours, belonging to the prince of Trivulzio in Milan, but now housed in the Museo Civico d'Arte Antica in Turin. These two parts of the *Très Belles Heures* have come to be known as the Turin-Milan hours. The illuminations in the manuscripts, being of differing style and quality, and in the absence of documentary evidence for their authorship, were provisionally assigned by Hulin de Loo to eleven anonymous masters (or 'hands'), identified for convenience by the letters A through K.

While there has since been some disagreement as to precisely which master was responsible for which illuminations, it is generally acknowledged that two folios are of unsurpassed quality, and these are universally given to Hand G. These folios contain the *Birth of Saint John the Baptist* (Fig. 5), with the *Baptism of Christ* in the *bas-de-page*—perhaps the most magical landscape in the history of manuscript illumination—and the *Mass for the Dead*, with the *Funeral Procession* in its *bas-de-page*. As has frequently been observed, the *Birth of Saint John* shows numerous correspondences with the domestic interior of Van Eyck's *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, and the *Mass for the Dead* shows obvious similarities with the church interior of Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church*. A majority of art historians[147]—though not all[148]—now recognises that such an exceptionally talented artist, who shares many visual traits with Jan van Eyck, must indeed have been him.[149]

Further, even if the *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame* were commissioned by the duke of Berry, the presence of the arms of the counts of Holland, of the house of Bavaria, in the *Prayer on the Shore* illumination on the verso of folio 59 of the Turin manuscript suggests that their decoration continued under the patronage of one of his nephews, William or John, or a close relative of theirs. This is significant, because this illumination is attributed to Hand G, and Jan van Eyck is documented from late 1422 to early 1425 in the employ of John of Bavaria, duke of Burgundy. The illuminations attributed to Van Eyck are often dated to this period as a consequence.

While the *Birth of Saint John* has often been compared with the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, the illumination is in fact closer in scale, execution, subject matter,

and many of the details of its composition to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Martin Davies noted the similarity between the two smaller works' arrangements of windows, window-sills, and benches[150]—unusual in each case because of the void left between bench and window. They also share the grey-buff walls, the wooden floorboards and chests, the metal ewers, lavers, and branched pricket candlesticks, and above all, the masterly execution of light falling on the tops of window reveals. As mentioned above, each depicts an item of Forest glassware, but in a clear material rather than the usual green. The shape of the ewers and the prominent execution of their highlights are also similar in the two works, as is the shorthand execution of hinges with a series of three dots (the hinges attaching the shutter or window to the outside of the window frame in the *Virgin and Child* and the internalised hinges of the *Birth of Saint John* cupboard). Such Morellian similarities of execution provide suggestive evidence that they were painted by the same artist. But was this Jan van Eyck?

Another visual coincidence suggests the *Birth of Saint John* may well have been painted by Van Eyck. In the illumination, the tiny figure of the maidservant viewed through the far doorway, ascending the stairs with her blue outer skirt hitched up over her red one is remarkably similar in conception to the two tiny figures descending the stairs behind the doorway in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, visible as a reflection in the mirror. The light falling on the reveals of a row of windows beside Zacharias in the *Birth of Saint John* is also paralleled, sketchily, in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* mirror. Clearly, neither work is a copy of the other, and yet the staggeringly sophisticated conception of space is the same. Even if Van Eyck made a preparatory drawing for the reflection in his mirror, later accessible to illuminators, it is difficult to envisage that Van Eyck would have included such minute details as the stairs below the figures beyond the doorway, which are only sketchily indicated in the painting. The depiction in the miniature is actually superior to, and is only marginally larger than, the comparable feature in the panel painting: the stairs are more clearly indicated, the light source at the top of the stairs is clearer (in this case a window), and the costume is more minutely detailed. It is in this author's opinion difficult to reconcile the execution of the miniature with the work of anyone other than Jan van Eyck.

The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s composition and execution provide important links between Hand G's illuminations in the Turin-Milan hours and Van Eyck's panel paintings. The fact that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* bears a signature with Van Eyck's name, even if it was copied from the lost original frame, may be the most literal evidence to survive that Hand G was Jan van Eyck.

The Verdura *Virgin and Child*: A Copy After All

The closest known variant of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition is the Verdura *Virgin and Child*, which has been judged to be a fifteenth-[151] or sixteenth-century[152] Netherlandish painting, on stylistic grounds as well as its oak support and *barbe*.[153] At 36.8 by 27.7 cm it is much larger that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. It was discovered by Von Bode at the end of the nineteenth century in the collection of the dukes of Verdura, Palermo, one of whom had purchased it in the second half of the nineteenth century from a private collector in Messina. In 1894 the work was sold to a sister of the then duke, through whom it passed by marriage to Baron Paino, still in Palermo. Around 1925–30 it was sold to the Baron de Gemmis, who took it first to Bari, and then to Rome, where it came into the possession of his daughter. In 1968 she indicated she would like to leave it to a central Italian state museum.[154]

From the end of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, numerous authors described it as an old copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. During the 1957–58 investigations Coremans indicated he would attempt to locate the work, which he was unable to do. Davies did, however, find a black and white photograph of it in the Victoria and Albert Museum, London. In Davies' 1958 report he mentioned the relationship between the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the Verdura *Virgin and Child* in passing at a number of points. Observing certain details of the bench and chest in the Verdura *Virgin and Child* that he thought better painted than in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* he stated: 'These points seem not to offer support to the view that the Melbourne picture is an original from which the Verdura picture was copied'.[155] While this is expressed inconclusively, in 1971 Hoff credited Davies with the idea that the Verdura *Virgin and Child* was not a copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[156] Hoff surmised that the Verdura *Virgin and Child*, having a *barbe* and painted on oak, is most likely to be Netherlandish. Thus, the work it copies is most likely to be from that region. Perhaps Hoff more strongly denied that the Verdura *Virgin and Child* could be a copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in order to validate Coremans' assertion that the technique of the latter was un-Flemish.

The differences between the two works, such as the disposition of the inscription, the distance between the head of the Virgin and the baldachin, the degree of foreshortening of the window, differences in the details of the chest and the key in its lock, the pattern of the shadows cast by the stained glass window, and other minor details were cited by Hoff to suggest that the two works are copies of a lost original. However, she did not consider that

the ability and dedication of a copyist can affect the degree of exactitude in their work. A comparison between the Verdura and the Ince Hall pictures reveals in the former simplifications in the rendering of the folds of the mantle, the jewels around her collar, the pattern of the cloth of honour, and the pattern on the carpet. Of the two works, the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is the finer by a considerable margin. Hoff characterised the overall appearance of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* as poor, with the exception of the faces, which she described as more Eyckian. She did not expand this point at all, however, she did state that she was following Davies' opinion in her analysis of the differences between the two works. It is impossible to say whether Hoff or Davies was referring to, or took into account, the overpainting in the Virgin's face of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, and it is not an opinion that any other commentator has recorded. In this author's opinion it is not correct.

In the early 1970s J.P. Filedt Kok was the first to realise that technical evidence might show the Verdura *Virgin and Child* is indeed a copy of the Melbourne painting.[157] More recent technical analysis shows beyond a reasonable doubt that this is the case, since the composition of the former follows a significant number of the changes that occurred in the execution of the latter, revealed by x-radiography and IRR. The window of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* follows the form of the window in the top paint layers of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and not the underpainted version where the top of the window is visible. It follows the final arrangement of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* baldachin, not the original design in which curtains were shown. Its length of blue robe revealed by the red mantle on the floor follows the painted version of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, but not the underdrawing where it was shorter. It follows the wide opening of the Virgin's mantle over her lap seen in the top layer of paint in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, but not its underdrawing where it was a little closer to her body. The Verdura picture follows the corner of the Virgin's mantle to the right of the opening on the floor, where in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* it was originally folded over itself, but was finally painted flat. The position of the inscription of the Verdura painting follows that of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, which was apparently not foreseen from the outset since the underpainted curtains were put there at an earlier stage. Thus, in many places the Verdura *Virgin and Child* follows the adjustments to the composition that occurred on the panel of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.

The Verdura Master has also painted a dark vertical line below the window's crossbar that corresponds to the shadow of the shutter or window in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Having reduced the foreshortening of the window, the Verdura Master should show a landscape through the window. Since there is no landscape in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*

this may explain why the Verdura Master has added two crossbars to the lower window, as though to glaze it and so obscure the view. Despite this, it is apparent that the Verdura Master began painting the window with the external shutter (or window) of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in mind.

Strangely, the Verdura *Virgin and Child* shows what appear to be internalised hinges on the right side of the face of the chest, contradicting the presence of the lock at the top, in a similar way to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Since these details in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* appear to be partly or fully overpainting, it may be that this overpaint was already present when it was copied by the Verdura Master. Whoever repainted the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* chest may have wished to mask its damaged condition, or to embellish its plain execution, and in doing so may have taken the chest (which should open at the top) for a cupboard (opening at the front).

Carandente documented the inscription in Italian on the reverse of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* that indicates: '1619, 2 July/ this painting […] of Luciano Costa/ given in pledge 15 *onze*/ 60 *scudi* ('*1619. 2 Iuglio/ questro quadro […] di Luciano Costa/ dato in pegno onze 15/ Scuti 60*').[158] From this it can be deduced that the picture was in Italy by the early seventeenth century. It is not certain how closely the inscription of the obverse of the Verdura painting follows that on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Carandente wrote that it follows closely, but he may have been misled by a transcription of the inscription attached to the reverse of the work. Von Bode transcribed the inscription on the recto as '*COMPLETVM ANNO MCCCCXXXIII'* on the left of the cloth of honour, and *'IOHAN VAN EYCK […] IXH XAN*' on the right.[159] This reading seems to be confirmed, as far as the disposition of the text is concerned, by the photograph from the Victoria and Albert Museum (a copy of which is in the National Gallery of Victoria Conservation Department files). Thus, while the wording is similar to that in the Ince Hall painting, Van Eyck's name appears on the right side of the cloth of honour, rather than the left. The Verdura Master may have adjusted the disposition of the inscription to balance the parts more evenly.[160] Nevertheless, the Verdura *Virgin and Child* indicates that the signature of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was, in all likelihood, in its current position before 1619.

The Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*

Salomon Reinach's 1923 publication of the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* (Museo Paroquial, Iglesi de San Cosme y San Damian, Covarrubias/Burgos) in *The Burlington Magazine* was

one of the first notices of the work in modern times. Reinach recognised immediately that its composition was Eyckian. Indeed, he was able to transcribe an inscription on the right wall as '*Wie ich des sicher bin*', a 'German motto which reminds us of Jan van Eyck's motto: Als ich kan (after 1433)'. However, he also observed that it showed the Master of Flémalle's (Campin's) influence, as well as that of other artists.[161]

Its composition shares with the Ince Hall painting the Virgin and Child before a book, on a low seat before a cloth of honour with a baldachin, a window with two short window sills and two pieces of fruit on the right sill, with a bench before the window leaving a void between the two, the cracks (or spiderwebs?) in the corners of the room, the branched pricket candlestick, and three carafes where the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* has one.[162] The colouring of the Covarrubias picture is generally the same as in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, each has a blue robe with white fur lining, a red mantle, and a green cloth of honour. However, it also includes prayer beads like those of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, an open chest like the one in the *Birth of Saint John* from the Turin-Milan hours, as well as a cross formation in the construction of the side of the chest facing the viewer, as appears on the chest in the copies of the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)*, and a variation of the alcove shelves in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*. The elaborate calligraphy of the wall inscriptions is similar to Van Eyck's signature in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, however, the inclusion of a motto like Van Eyck's within the pictorial space shows its close affinity with the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition. In no other case does Van Eyck's motto appear within the picture field. The Covarrubias Master knew the composition in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the compositions of a number of Van Eyck's works. But who was he?

Aru and De Geradon stated that Friedländer had studied the painting and claimed to have read the date 1452 and a signature comparable with the Italianate version of Petrus Christus' name cited in a fifteenth-century inventory of the Medici collection.[163] Friedländer seems to have associated it, on the basis of its similar composition, with the *Virgin and Child in an Interior* by an anonymous artist from the circle of Petrus Christus, housed in the Galleria Sabauda in Turin. His dating and tentative attribution are not followed in the more recent publications of the Covarrubias painting. However, no one has been able to decipher the rest of the work's inscriptions either, which might include the artist's name. Sneyers and Coremans examined the Covarrubias painting between 1954 and 1958, observing that it is painted on oak, and has a *barbe* and unpainted fringe. Nevertheless, they thought the harshness of the highlights, the impasto execution of the flesh tones, and the poor quality of

the execution precluded an attribution to a Flemish artist, concluding that it was probably a sixteenth-century, non-Flemish imitation.[164]

Though sometimes referred to as possibly the work of a Spanish artist, more recently, the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* has been deemed to be Netherlandish in origin due to its oak support, oil medium, and the reliance of its composition on Eyckian models.[165] Eberhard König has identified the Covarrubias Master with an artist who worked on the Turin-Milan hours with Van Eyck himself, observing that the face of the Infant in the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* is similar to that of Saint John in the *Descent from the Cross* (Turin-Milan hours, Museo Civico d'Arte Antica, Turin, fol. 36).[166] Anne van Buren has concurred with this assessment.[167] On stylistic grounds, Bodo Brinkmann and Jochen Sander also attributed a dismembered altarpiece to the painter, divided between Modena, Venice, Liège, and Frankfurt. The panel in Liège reproduces enough of the composition of the *Birth of Saint John* from the Turin-Milan hours that they believed the Covarrubias Master must have had access to the original. Furthermore, the Frankfurt panel was noted by Brinkmann and Sander to have a painted imitation stone reverse like a number of Eyckian works, and so could reasonably be thought to have originated in an Eyckian milieu. Brinkmann and Sander wrote:

> In conclusion, the Master of the Covarrubias Madonna seems to have been a wandering artist who spent some time in Bruges and took part in one of the final campaigns to complete the *Turin-Milan Hours* there. Later, he created the altarpiece of which the Frankfurt *Rest on the flight to Egypt* was once a part.[168]

The question remains whether the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* is a free copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, or derives from an independent prototype. In his report rejecting the authenticity of the Ince Hall picture, Martin Davies favoured the latter idea, and indeed thought the Covarrubias painting might reflect an original more closely. He found the more overtly religious imagery in the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* (such as the inclusion of the prayer beads) and richness (such as the jewelled border of the Virgin's mantle) 'less in disaccord with what is known of Jan van Eyck's taste in the matter' than the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* where there is little overt religious imagery and a greater simplicity.[169] In his commentary on Davies' report Panofsky thought otherwise:

> I am firmly convinced (and in this respect too, I regret to disagree with my friend Martin Davies) that both the Ince Hall Madonna and the "Verdura" Madonna reflect the original

> more accurately (even if the former should have been slightly cut down) than the Covarrubias picture. This rather unattractive creation is the work of a South German master (witness the inscriptions which are definitely High and not Low German), possibly operating in Spain rather than the Netherlands, who rather indiscriminately attempted to enrich the Eyckian original by motifs in part Eyckian and in part reminiscent of the Flémalle Master (the awkwardly foreshortened book chest, the prospect through the window etc.), and who adapted the whole composition to the standards of a somewhat later period (I should think, the third quarter of the fifteenth century). In my opinion the Covarrubias picture is a rather dismal pastiche and cannot be used to reconstruct the Eyckian original at all.[170]

Till-Holger Borchert has since proposed an alternative solution, suggesting both the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* are by anonymous workshop assistants of Van Eyck, deriving from lost drawings by the master.[171] Since both paintings have inscriptions on either side of their cloths of honour, with a version of Van Eyck's motto on the right side, a putative prototype should have had these features as well—although, it is virtually unknown for a fifteenth-century Netherlandish drawing to contain an elaborate signature.

Unlike the case of the Verdura *Virgin and Child*, technical evidence does not provide compelling evidence for the primacy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. On one hand, the Covarrubias Master followed the final version of the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in omitting the baldachin curtains and the cloth of honour continuing to the right of the Virgin. On the other hand, he showed the top of the window as well as the corner of the Virgin's mantle folded over itself, as occurs in the underlying paint layers of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. The latter features could be considered evidence for the existence of an independent prototype, were it not for the conceptual weaknesses in details of the Covarrubias painting's roof. The artist has painted nearly horizontal strokes crossing from the ceiling joists to the side walls, which make little sense as cracks, or even as spiderwebs, if that interpretation of these marks is preferred. This suggests that the artist extended the composition to show a ceiling that was not present in the original. And the florid folds of the Covarrubias Virgin's mantle do not suggest they faithfully reflect an Eyckian model of drapery either. Despite the differences in their compositions, the possibility that the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* is a free copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* should not be excluded. From the artist's freely adapted version of the *Birth of Saint John* composition in

Liège, it is clear that he did not feel constrained to copy his Eyckian models faithfully. Whatever the case may be, the Covarrubias painting supports the idea that the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* originated in an Eyckian milieu, as does the numerous works listed below, many of which have long been described in the literature as reflecting the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.

The Wider Influence of the Composition

The composition recorded in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* left an indelible impression on the leading early Northern European and even Spanish artists, comparable with that made by Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*. In some of the derivative works the central parts of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition recur in new settings, in others the subject matter is more freely adapted. The composition of Rogier van der Weyden's Durán *Virgin and Child* (Prado, Madrid) is one of the most faithful adaptations, of which Hoff said, 'The red mantle, the inclination of the Madonna's head, the motif of the book, the S curve of the figure are comparable'.[172] In 1953 Panofsky observed that, 'With the Virgin clad in a glowing crimson robe and permitting the infant Jesus to handle—even roughly—the pages of a manuscript, the picture is manifestly derived from Jan van Eyck's "*Ince Hall Madonna*"'.[173] The entry for the work in the 1989 catalogue of the Prado's early Netherlandish paintings, written by De Vos, referred to the Eyckian composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as without doubt the inspiration for its work.[174] Other authors have also seen the influence of Van Eyck in this composition.[175]

Panofsky argued that the *Annunciation* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), which he attributed to Rogier van der Weyden, 'is embellished with such eminently Eyckian objects as the glass carafe and fruit which made their first appearance in the "Ince Hall *Madonna*", a bed and chandelier decidedly reminiscent of the London Arnolfini portrait and a brass medallion, gleaming from the penumbra of the deep-red tester, that takes the place of the Arnolfini's historical mirror.'[176] The work also has a naturalistic depiction of light on the ceiling approaching the style of that on the walls of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[177]

An altarpiece by Van der Weyden, of which there are surviving fragments, and which was partially recorded in a drawing, is discussed by Lorne Campbell and dated by him to before 1438.[178] It showed the Virgin and Child, the latter leaning towards a book held before him, on a bench before a cloth of honour, in the middle of a domestic interior with wooden floorboards, and a cupboard to the right, similar to the arrangement in the Ince Hall *Virgin*

and Child. These elements were expanded substantially with the inclusion of other figures and a more elaborate architectural setting. Thus, Rogier van der Weyden (and perhaps his studio) produced at least three works in the years immediately following the creation of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition, based on its essential elements or including its domestic setting and details.

Petrus Christus' *Virgin and Child in a Domestic Interior* (Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art, Kansas City) reflects the compositions in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, and the *Birth of Saint John*. Christus is documented in Bruges shortly after Van Eyck's death, and appears to have made a connection with his workshop.[179] It has been recognised that he adapted Van Eyck's compositions on a number of occasions,[180] sometimes combining elements from more than one Eyckian composition at a time.[181] Campbell noted that, 'the whole interior, including the bed, the high-backed chair, the chandelier and the fruit on the window-sill, appears to have been suggested by the interior in NG 186 [*Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*].'[182] However, Malkis Gellman wrote of the Kansas painting: 'There are some general similarities in the general pose of the Mother with Child on her lap to Jan's Ince Hall Madonna, even in the inclusion of a book'.[183] The Melbourne and Kansas paintings also share the window at the left of the composition extending beyond the top of the picture, with a diamond pattern in the leadlights of the upper section of the window, the piece of fruit on the window-sill, the two short window-sills below, with a bench before, leaving a void between the bench and the window, the Virgin on a low seat, with a plain, red mantle and a blue, fur-lined robe, the turning of the Virgin to the left, the slight inclination of her head, and the position of the chest, with objects on top, to the right.

The *Virgin and Child in an Interior* (Galleria Sabauda, Turin), attributed to an artist in the circle of Petrus Christus,[184] shares a large part of its composition with Christus' work described above. Although, unlike that work, the Turin painting shows a cupboard with a branched pricket candlestick and a metal ewer with a spout, together with other domestic objects. This is similar to the arrangement on the chest in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. These paintings by Petrus Christus and a workshop assistant or follower testify to Christus' familiarity with the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition.

In 1906, Daniel Burckhardt observed that the *Virgin and Child* had been a model for the *Holy Family with Saints Catherine and Barbara in a Church* (Museo Nazionale di Capodimonte, Naples), then attributed to Konrad Witz.[185] In the following year, Claude Phillips concurred with this assessment.[186] The painting in Naples reverses the figures in the

Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*—the Virgin in a flowing red robe forming an 'S' curve, with the Child on her lap looking intently at a book—with the addition of Saints Joseph, Catherine, and Barbara, and places them in an interior borrowed from Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church*, which is also reversed. More recently, the *Holy Family* has been described as a work of Hans Witz, copying a lost original of Konrad's, of which a related workshop drawing survives. This *Virgin and Child in a Small Interior* (Universitätsbibliothek, Erlangen) shows almost the same Virgin and Child as the painting in Naples, although they appear alone in a small interior, with the Virgin holding both sides of the book, closer to the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[187]

Hans Memling's *Sir John Donne of Kidwelly* triptych (National Gallery, London) shows the Virgin wearing a blue, fur-lined robe with a jewelled collar, and a plain red mantle, carrying the Infant on her knee and a book in her hand, sitting on a low seat before a cloth of honour with a boldly asymmetrical vine motif, a baldachin above and a carpet below her feet, as in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. This kind of composition is common in Memling's oeuvre. Another example is the *Virgin and Child with an Angel, Saint George, and a Donor* (National Gallery, London), which is even closer to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in showing the Virgin on a low seat completely hidden from view by her mantle. Aspects of these depictions of the Virgin and Child seem to go back to one of Memling's earliest independent paintings, the *Virgin and Child with Two Musical Angels*, housed in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas.

Édouard Michel referred to the *Virgin with the Child and an Angel in a Room* (formerly Renders Collection, Bruges), which he attributed to Memling, in this way:

> The general arrangement of our panel with the drapery hangings taking up the whole of the painting, and the canopy, recall in a general way the milieu in which are placed the Ince Hall Virgins [sic] (now in Melbourne) and the ones [sic] of the Institut Stoedel [sic] in Frankfort, both due to the genius of John.[188]

The Renders *Virgin* is closer to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* than the Lucca *Virgin and Child* in showing the Virgin before an open window and on a low seat, rather than before a glazed window and sitting on a throne. Though the Renders *Virgin* was apparently extensively restored while in Renders' collection,[189] there is no evidence that the work was not an authentic, though minor and damaged, early Netherlandish painting when it entered the collection.

Larry Silver noted that a number of Quinten Massys' devotional works are derived from the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*,[190] as had Paul Wescher.[191] Although, Silver emphasised the equally important influence of the Durán *Virgin and Child*. Massys' *Virgin and Child* (Musées Royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, Brussels), though similar to the Durán *Virgin and Child* in some ways, is closer to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in others. It follows the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in the slight inclination of the Virgin's head, the Virgin not wearing any head covering, and the Infant's attention to the book. Massys' *Virgin and Child Enthroned with Four Angels* (National Gallery, London) shows the Virgin wearing a blue, fur-lined robe with a jewelled 'V'-shaped collar, and a red mantle, carrying the Infant in her lap and holding a book with both hands while the Infant turns a page, as in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.

Gerard David's *Virgin and Child and the Sedano Family* triptych (Musée du Louvre, Paris) shows the Virgin seated, wearing a blue robe and a red mantle, with the Child in her lap, holding the pages of an open book. Behind the Virgin and Child is a cloth of honour with a baldachin and below is an oriental carpet. The composition is, thus, reminiscent of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, although aspects of the Musée du Louvre painting also seem to reflect the Durán *Virgin and Child*, and the Van der Paele *Virgin and Child*.

Dietmar Lüdke noted the similarity of Martin Schongauer's *Virgin and Child at a Window* (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[192] The former work shows the Virgin wearing a red mantle and a black fillet in her hair, and the Infant naked except for a white cloth, before a book, as in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. The arrangement of the Infant's legs and feet are particularly close. The charming intimacy of Schongauer's *Holy Family* in the Kunsthistorisches Museum in Vienna also bears an uncanny resemblance to the style of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.

The *Virgin and Child* panel painting once in the collection of Lucien Bonaparte, and later belonging to Mrs Carson Simpson in England,[193] was judged by Weale to be the work of an assistant or close follower of Van Eyck dating from *c*. 1475–80, possibly with additions by a later hand.[194] The composition is an Eyckian pastiche, which freely adapts the cloth of honour and tiles of the Van der Paele *Virgin and Child*, the Virgin's grasp of the Infant and possibly the original drapery of the mantle from the Dresden triptych (before the drapery was repainted), and lions on the armrests of the throne like those in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*. It also includes Campinesque details such as the ewer and laver resting on a stool, and the view through the window over a landscape. The work shares not only a similar mix of styles with the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*, but also shows its rectangular shelved alcove on the right

wall, with the books and domestic objects resting therein. The relationship between the two works is unclear. They are manifestly not by the same artist, yet the rectangular alcove shelf found in both works, which does not occur in this form in any surviving work by Van Eyck, suggests that the two compositions may be closely linked. Hoff stated that in the Carson Simpson *Virgin and Child*, 'the only feature remotely similar [to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*] is the nature of the support of the bench under the window'.[195] It does, though, show an interior that in other respects is similar to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, notably, in the absence of a vaulted ceiling (as it is in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*), and the rectangular window at the left extending beyond the top of the picture plane.

Jan Gossaert's *Virgin and Child* (National Gallery of Art, Washington) shares with the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* the two pieces of fruit on a short window-sill, with a bench below at the right, and the Virgin, between a Madonna of Humility and a Queen of Heaven with an elaborate decorative backdrop and her drapery spreading out on the floor, shown with the Child in a small, half lit, apparently domestic room with an open book prominently displayed in the foreground. Pauwels, Hoentink, and Herzog noted that the elaborate carving behind the Virgin's head was similar to that invented by Gossaert to embellish his partial copy of the Ghent altarpiece housed in the Prado.[196]

Von Bode wrote of another copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* that he saw at the Museum of Catania, in Sicily, and which he described as a work of the early sixteenth century.[197] No trace of this work was found by Carandente during his investigations in Catania, although he suggested that a *Virgin and Child* then in the Pappalardo Collection might correspond to the work.[198] However, since that painting shows the Virgin and Child in a landscape and without a book, this seems unlikely.

An anonymous, possibly Castilian, sculptor active around the end of the fifteenth century carved a large, polychrome, sculpture in wood of the Virgin and Child with a book, which is now housed in the Museu Frederic Marès in Barcelona.[199] While the Child is dressed, as in Van der Weyden's Durán *Virgin and Child*, the particular manner in which the Child holds two pages of the book, while the Virgin supports the book, inserting her index finger between its pages, is more similar to the arrangement in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, even though some of its elements are reversed.

The *Virgin and Child* painting (private collection, Madrid) in the exhibition dedicated to Bartolomé Bermejo in the Museo Nazionale d'Arte di Catalogna and the Museo di Belle Arti di Bilbao in 2003, which was presented as an early work by the master, shows some slight resemblances to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his*

Wife. The representation of the Virgin with the Child in her lap and holding a book in her hand, in a small, apparently domestic, interior, in front of a cloth of honour, and with a window to the left, is possibly indebted to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, while the mirror and its frame with concave curves and the prayer beads hanging on the back wall seem to derive from the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. In his review of the exhibition, Mauro Natale hypothesised that Bermejo may have served an apprenticeship with Lluis Alimbrot, who in turn may have spent time in Van Eyck's workshop.[200] Thus, the two important Eyckian compositions seemingly recorded in Bermejo's work could have been transmitted to him from the originals via Alimbrot's workshop drawings or painted copies.

There is, perhaps, also a reminiscence of the drapery from the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in the *Virgin and Child with Saint Anne* miniature from the Hours of Catherine of Cleves (Pierpont Morgan Library, New York).

If it is not the earliest, then the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition is one of the earliest Netherlandish compositions to show the Virgin and Child seated, in front of the viewer, before a cloth of honour and under a baldachin, an arrangement that would be adopted in a great many variations over the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. Even if it is not the first version, it is among the most influential. The composition was imitated by the Covarrubias Master, Christus, and Memling, probably in Bruges, Van der Weyden in Tournai or Brussels, Massys in Antwerp, Schongauer in Colmar, and Konrad Witz in Basel, and by other artists further afield. However, it is difficult to conceive that the original could have travelled to all these places or that all these artists saw it in Bruges or its subsequent locations as yet unknown. It is more likely that the composition was transmitted through copies, either painted or drawn. Interestingly, a number of the derivative compositions combine details of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* compositions. It seems that the two compositions were associated in their early artistic reception, perhaps because they were produced around the same time, in the same place, and by the same artist.

Conclusion on the Art Historical Analysis

Close examination of the *Virgin and Child*'s composition, execution, and iconography reveals numerous, intimate, and important correspondences with Van Eyck's works. Probably the most significant discovery concerning the work's origin is the correspondence between the *pentimento* in the window of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the one in the window of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, when viewed in the context of the development of

Van Eyck's domestic compositions in the early 1430s. Either this correspondence is an uncanny coincidence or the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is an important stage in the development of Van Eyck's domestic interiors. Even if it could be proved that the *Virgin and Child* itself was not executed by Van Eyck in 1433, there is considerable evidence that the artist must have created a work very much like it at that time.

Notes for Chapter Three

[1] Friedländer, 1900, p. 475.

[2] Zink, 1922, p. 4.

[3] Friedländer, 1924, pp. 53–55; 1930 [unpaginated].

[4] Panofsky, 1953, 1, p. 183 n. 1.

[5] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Erwin Panofsky, letter to Eric Westbrook, 24 February 1959, pp. 1–2.

[6] Hulin de Loo, 1934, p. 70.

[7] In Davies' original report (PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, p. 2) the abbreviation was drawn by hand accurately. In 1971, however, it was printed with a figure like a question mark without the stop (Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 45).

[8] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, p. 3.

[9] Neidhardt and Schölzel, 2000, p. 25.

[10] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, p. 3.

[11] Hoff maintained Davies' suggestion that the abbreviation '*ANO D*' was unusual for Van Eyck in four catalogues of the National Gallery of Victoria's collection: Hoff, 1961, p. 48; Hoff, 1967, p. 44; Hoff, *The National Gallery of Victoria*, 1973, p. 53; and Hoff (ed.), 1995, p. 105.

[12] Ainsworth, 1994, p. 30.

[13] Held, 1955, p. 217.

[14] As noted in Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 33.

[15] For a discussion of the form of the chronograms see Hudson, 2003, pp. 96–99.

[16] Janssens de Bisthoven, Baes-Dondeyne, and De Vos, 1983, pp. 195, 202, and 214.

[17] Jones, 1998, p. 75.

[18] Hulin de Loo, 1934, pp. 67–69.

[19] Brockwell, 1923, p. 149.

[20] Brockwell, 1945, pp. 101–03, and 123.

[21] Monnas (2000, p. 153) described the inscription 'YECYC' on the tiles beneath the music-making angels as obscure, but did not refer to the suggestion that this might represent a disguised signature.

[22] The works attributed to Van Eyck by the institutions that house them, which retain significant parts of their original frames, are: the Ghent altarpiece (Cathedral of Saint Bavo, Ghent), *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* (National Gallery, London), *Virgin and Child with Saints George and Donatian and Canon Van der Paele* (Musée Groeninge, Bruges), *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw* (Kunsthistorisches

Museum, Vienna), *Virgin and Child with Saints Michael and Catherine and a Donor* triptych (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden), *Saint Barbara* (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp), *Portrait of Margaret van Eyck* (Musée Groeninge, Bruges), *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp), *Crucifixion; Last Judgment* diptych (Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), and the *Annunciation* diptych (Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum, Madrid). Works without original frames are: *Portrait of a Young Man (Léal Souvenir)*, *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* (both National Gallery, London), *Annunciation* (National Gallery of Art, Washington), *Virgin and Child and an Angel with Chancellor Rolin* (Musée du Louvre, Paris), Lucca *Virgin and Child* (Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt am Main), *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* (Galleria Sabauda, Turin), *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* (Philadelphia Museum of Art), *Three Maries at the Tomb* (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam), *Saint Jerome in his Study* (The Detroit Institute of Arts), the *Virgin and Child with Saints Barbara and Elizabeth and Jan Vos* (Frick Collection, New York), *Architectural Fragment* (Musée des Arts Decoratif, Paris), *Portrait of a Man (Cardinal Albergati?)* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), *Portrait of a Man with a Ring* (Museum of the Romanian Republic, Bucharest), and *Virgin and Child in a Church*, *Portrait of Baudouin de Lannoy*, *Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini*, and *Crucifixion* (all four Gemäldegalerie, Berlin).

[23] Spantigati, 1997, p. 35.

[24] Heller and Stodulski, 1995, p. 138.

[25] Van Asperen de Boer, Ridderbos, and Zeldenrust, 1991, p. 8.

[26] Friedländer 1924, p. 116.

[27] Bruyn, 1975, p. 68 n. 1.

[28] De Vos, 1994, p. 136.

[29] Paviot, 1995, p. 212.

[30] Dhanens, [1980] pp. 168–69.

[31] Weale and Brockwell, 1912, p. xxxv; Paviot, 1990, p. 88.

[32] Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 39.

[33] [Borchert] 2002, p. 237.

[34] De Vos, 1994, pp. 158–61.

[35] Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 32; Hoff (ed.), 1995, pp. 103 and 105.

[36] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, p. 3.

[37] Hoff, 1961, pp. 46, 48; Hoff, 1967, pp. 43–44; Hoff, *The National Gallery of Victoria*, 1973, pp. 51, 53; Hoff (ed.), 1995, pp. 103 and 105.

[38] Von Bode, 1901, p. 122 n. 1.

[39] Carton (1848, p. 73) attributed the interpretation of Van Eyck's motto as an abbreviation of a Flemish proverb to a Mr Mertens.

[40] Dhanens, [1980] pp. 179–80.

[41] Williams, 1977, p. 50 and Plate 6.

[42] Nys and Lievois, 2002, pp. 1040–41.

[43] Campbell, 1998, p. 214.

[44] De Vos 1983, pp. 1–4.

[45] Dhanens, [1980] pp. 179–80.

[46] Sprinson de Jesus, 1998, p. 104.

[47] Monnas, 2000, pp. 152–53.

[48] Engel, 1993, pp. 50 and 61.

[49] Paviot, 1995, p. 212.

[50] Campbell (1998, p. 222) stated that the scroll is small for a deed and is unusual in having writing on its back, and that '*actum*' was used by other artists in signatures on works in which the subjects are not, or are not likely to be, notaries.

[51] Campbell, 1998, pp. 200–01.

[52] Ainsworth, 'Jan van Eyck', 1998, p. 89.

[53] Transcribed in the Roman alphabet in Belting and Eichberger, 1983, pp. 106–07.

[54] Hulme, 1976, pp. 210–12.

[55] Bagatti, 1971, p. 177 and Fig. 50.

[56] Sterling, 1976, pp. 28–30.

[57] Rossi, 1981, p. 42; Pringle and Leach, 1993–(2007), 3, pp. 269–70.

[58] Pringle and Leach, 1993–(2007), 2, pp. 197–99.

[59] Campbell, 1998, p. 201.

[60] The brocaded trilobed design with a 'stem' at the centre of the subsidiary green pattern is similar to a design in an Italian brocaded, cut-voided silk velvet textile of the first half of the fifteenth century (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. 568–1892). The symmetrical, scalloped-edged flowers with six large petals share a number of features with a silk damask textile from the second quarter of the fifteenth century (Victoria and Albert Museum, London, inv. 1294–1864).

[61] Subsidiary parts of the brocade design in the Ghent altarpiece design were re-used by Van Eyck in 1439 for the cloth of honour of the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* (Jones, 2000, p. 198, Plates 62 and 64, citing Monnas' essay in the same volume, although the particular reference could not be found by this author). Van Eyck also reused part of the design of the robe of the angel playing the organ in the Ghent altarpiece for the angel's cope in the Washington *Annunciation* (Monnas, 2000, pp. 151–52).

[62] Monnas, 2000, p. 149.

[63] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, F.I.G. Rawlins, R.J. Plesters, and M. Hey, *[Report from Mr. F.I.G. Rawlins National Gallery Laboratory, London] Examination of Samples from the Van Eyck (?) "Virgin and Child" in the Collection of the Melbourne Art Gallery*, 15 May 1958, p. 3. A small area of yellow-brown ochre and lead white in an oil medium was found on the top of the green microsample analysed in London. Although they could not identify it from their photographs as being part of the brocade, this would seem the most likely source of a yellow pigment on a green paint layer. It is possible, though, that their sample included some of the dark yellow overpainting in the brocade referred to earlier.

[64] Depending on the light conditions, the colour of the brocade in shadow appears yellow-green or yellow-brown.

[65] Monnas, 2000, p. 147.

[66] Panofsky, 1953, 1, p. 222.

[67] Sterling, 1976, p. 56

[68] The similar turning posture of the Virgins in these two paintings was noted by Baldass (1952, p. 51).

[69] Steyaert, 2000, p. 126.

[70] Boespflug and König (1998, pp. 136–37) gave the attribution for the miniature as 'Hand G/Van Eyck?'.

[71] Campbell, 1998, p. 186.

[72] Campbell, 1998, p. 187.

[73] Child and Colles, 1971, pp. 44–45.

[74] Illustrated in Belozerskaya, 2002, Figure 13 on p. 99.

[75] Illustrated in Buettner, 2001, Figure 10 on p. 610.

[76] Monnas, 2000, pp. 152–53.

[77] Illustrated in Ainsworth, 'Religious Painting', 1998, Figure 41 on p. 79.

[78] Shestack, 1967, unpaginated (No. 126).

[79] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, p. 7.

[80] Hoff (ed.), 1995, p. 105.

[81] Illustrated in Backhouse, 1997, p. 199.

[82] Snyder, 1976, pp. 511–15.

[83] Panofsky, 1953, 1, p. 144.

[84] Tait (ed.), 1991, p. 154.

[85] Rademacher, 1931, Abbildung 2 on p. 290.

[86] For a compelling argument in favour of the work's attribution to Lochner, see: Levine, 2004.

[87] [Rotterdam] undated, pp. 85 and 91.

[88] Translation by Baxandall, 1964, p. 102.

[89] Pächt, 1994, p. 88.

[90] Jolly, 1998, pp. 381–82.

[91] Philippot, 1959, pp. 20–21.

[92] Von Tolnai, 1932, p. 324.

[93] De Tolnay, 1939, pp. 25, 31, and 66.

[94] Burroughs, 1938, p. 200.

[95] Baldass, 1952, pp. 52–53.

[96] Pächt, 1994, pp. 87–88.

[97] Châtelet, 1996, p. 129.

[98] Panofsky, 1953, 1, p. 183.

[99] Panofsky, 1953, 1, p. 222.

[100] Purtle, 2000, pp. 69–74.

[101] In the first edition of this book, of 2008, this author did not reject Lorne Campbell's attribution of the work to Campin's studio, and accepted the possibility of a dating before 1432, based on his tentative attribution of the work to Jacques Daret while in Campin's studio (1998, p. 91).

[102] Châtelet, 1996, p. 94.

[103] Thanks are due to Dr. Bodo Brinkmann, Curator, Städelsches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt for providing a detail of the IRR of the Lucca *Virgin and Child*.

[104] As discussed in Purtle, 1982, pp. 113–14.

[105] Such as the figures of Adam, Eve, Cain, Abel, and Samson on the throne of the Van der Paele *Virgin and Child*.

[106] Panofsky, 1953, 1, pp. 143–44.

[107] Reynolds, 1996, pp. 188–89.

[108] Pächt, 1994, p. 88; Sander, 1993, pp. 260–61.

[109] Hoff (ed.), 1995, p. 105.

[110] Benson and Dean, 2000, p. 45.

[111] Reynolds, 1996, pp. 185–86.

[112] Purtle, 1996, p. 179.

[113] Purtle, 1996, p. 179.

[114] Purtle, 1982, pp. 159–60.

[115] Harbison, 1991, pp. 143–45.

[116] Lane, 1984, p. 15.

[117] Meiss, 1945, p. 180: '*HEC EST SPECIOSIOR SOLE SUPER OMNEM STELLARUM DISPOSICIONEM LUCI COMPARATA INVENITUR PRIOR CANDOR EST ENIM LUCIS ETERNE SPECULUM SINE MACULA DEI MAIESTATIS*'.

[118] '*MATER HEC EST FILIA/ PATER HIC EST NATUS/ QUIUS AUDIVIT TALIA/ DEUS HOMO NATUS ETCET*'.

[119] Meiss, 1945, pp. 179–80.

[120] Panofsky, 1953, 1, pp. 143–44.

[121] Meiss, 1945, pp. 177.

[122] Meiss, 1945, p. 179. I am grateful to Dr Grantley McDonald for his advice on the translation of the Latin text, personal communication, 25 March 2009.

[123] Hagopian van Buren, 1978, pp. 617–18.

[124] Purtle, 1982, p. 131.

[125] Harbison, 1991, p. 145.

[126] Alexander, 1982, Figure 1 on p. 91.

[127] Forsyth, 1986, pp. 41–63.

[128] De Winter, 1987, p. 431 and Fig. 50.

[129] Roser, 2000, p. 372.

[130] Sterling, 1976, pp. 60–62.

[131] Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 40.

[132] The x-radiography of the *Virgin and Child in an Interior*, which shows the strength of light falling on the back wall as similar above and below the shadow of the window's crossbar, may be evidenced that it is the original model that inspired the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. The effect of dappled light falling through the leadlights above the crossbar, reproduced in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, appears to have been worked out on the panel.

[133] The initial design of the bench in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* is closer to that of the *Virgin and Child in an Interior*, in not having a post at the right end. In the infrared reflectogram of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* the top edge of the bench seems to run through the post's carved top and the bottom edge seems to run through the middle of the post.

[134] Panofsky, translation by C.S. Wood, 1991, pp. 59–60.

[135] Billinge and Campbell, 1995, pp. 47–60.

[136] Van Buren, 1996, p. 315.

[137] Campbell, 1998, pp. 201–02.

[138] Campbell (1998, p. 201) suggested the similarities between the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* and the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* were probably coincidental, due to differences in the colouring of the bed tester and the design of the mirror; whereas Seidel (1993, p. 207) argued that Van Eyck paid particular attention to his settings, and so the many similarities in the two compositions indicates that they 'were intended to be associated in some way'.

[139] Public Record Office, Kew, SP121/56, *Catalogue des raretez très renomées de feu S^r Pierre Stevens, en fon vivant aumônier de la ville d'Anvers*, 13 August 1668.

[140] Held (1957, p. 74) noted that Fazio's description did not entirely match the composition known in the copies.

[141] Seidel, 1993, pp. 206–18.

[142] Ridderbos, 1993, p. 74. Held (1957, p. 83) was probably the first to suggest that the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* may have been a cover for the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, since the two works would have been of similar size. Campbell (1998, pp. 201–02), however, argued that the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* was probably designed to be fitted with wings.

[143] Campbell (1998, p. 191) described the absence of a fireplace in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* as disturbing, suggesting that the room and its contents did not entirely reflect a real room.

[144] Terakado (1994, pp. 218–21 (citing Z. Kepinsky, ''Arnolfini Couple' or 'John and Margaret van Eyck' as 'David and Bathseba', *Rocznik Historii Sztuki*, 10, pp. 149–64, who referred to the Lucca *Virgin and Child* rather than the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as part of this series of paintings) suggested Van Eyck's representation of Bathseba is prefigured by, and so symbolically associated with, his representation of Eve in the Ghent altarpiece. This association is implied by their nudity. Likewise, Mary is said to be prefigured by Bathseba. Their association is implied by the symbolic role of the everyday objects of personal hygiene around them. The carafe and the basin seen in both the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* are said to refer to the Virgin's purity and Bathseba's cleansing of her moral impurity respectively. The *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* is said to refer to the ideal marriage of David and Bathseba.

[145] Paviot, 1990, pp. 88–89.

[146] Campbell (1998, pp. 184–85) described a few details of the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* as betraying a hurried execution. Apparently Van Eyck dropped his brush on the surface of the painting, leaving a dab of blue paint over the frame of the mirror. The execution of the prayer beads is relatively rapid.

[147] For example: Panofsky, 1953, 1, pp. 245–46; Châtelet, 1993, especially pp. 158–59; and Van Buren, 1996, p. 705.

[148] For example: Smeyers, 1989, pp. 55–70; Reynolds, 2000, pp. 7–12.

[149] For a comprehensive discussion of Hand G (identifying the artist as Jan van Eyck) and the Turin-Milan hours, see: A.H. Van Buren, J. Marrow, and S. Pettenati, *Heures de Turin-Milan: Commentary* (Lucerne, 1996).

[150] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, p. 7.

[151] V[on] T[schudi], 1894, p. 244; Von Bode, 1901, p. 122 n. 1.

[152] In Elsig, 'Taller de Jan van Eyck 30. La Virgen con el Niño de Ince Hall *c*. 1433', 2001, p. 264, the date under the illustration is *c*. 1550. While, in Elsig, 'Taller de Jan van Eyck 30. La Mare de Deu amb el Xiquet d'Ince Hall *c*. 1433', 2001, p. 264, the date is *c*. 1500.

[153] Hoff ((ed.), 1971, p. 40) described the Verdura *Virgin and Child* as the work of a Flemish painter on the basis of its oak panel and *barbe*, although neither of these features is found only in early Netherlandish paintings.

[154] The Verdura *Virgin and Child* is discussed and illustrated in Carandente, 1968, pp. 46–47, Plate XXII (obverse) and XXIIIa (reverse).

[155] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, pp. 1–3 and 5–6.

[156] Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 39.

[157] Filedt Kok, 1972–73, pp. 209–10.

[158] Carandente, 1968, p. 47.

[159] Von Bode, 1901, p. 122 n. 1.

[160] The inscription is illegible in Carandente's reproduction (Plate XXII). On the reverse of the Verdura panel is a transcription of the inscription: '*Copletu an D MCCCCXXXIII/ P IOHEM DE EYC/ BRUGIS*' and '*ΑΛC IXH XAN*' (Carandente, 1968, pp. 46–47, and Plate XXIIIa). However, since the disposition of the text follows the arrangement on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and not that on the verso of the Verdura painting itself, it might have been written from a knowledge of the Ince Hall picture, perhaps through a publication.

[161] Reinach, 1923, pp. 15–16.

[162] Van Buren, *Heures de Turin-Milan*, 1996, p. 348 n. 35. The painting was cleaned around 1980. The haloes of the Virgin and Child were removed, as well as the mullions of the windows, and the pattern on the cloth of honour, on what technical grounds is unrecorded in any publication. However, the recent identification of the painter as an artist in whose other works haloes are found, raises questions. Anne van Buren suggested the haloes may have been removed in error, even if they had previously been restored in modern times.

[163] Aru and De Geradon, 1952, p. 3.

[164] NGL Archives, London, NG16/252 cont., Brussels Centre, Melbourne Madonna Written Material, folder 2, R[enée] S[neyers], 3 April 1954, and P[aul] C[oremans], 15 October 1958, *Anonyme, d'apres Van Eyck—Vierge et Enfant*.

[165] Martinez, 1980, pp. 54–56.

[166] Boespflug and König, 1998, pp. 266–67 (reiterating an earlier assessment).

[167] Van Buren, *Heures de Turin-Milan*, 1996, p. 348.

[168] Brinkmann and Sander, 1999, p. 19.

[169] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Martin Davies, *The Ince Blundell Madonna at Melbourne*, signed and dated 12 November 1958, pp. 6–7.

[170] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Erwin Panofsky, letter to Eric Westbrook, 24 February 1959, p. 3.

[171] Borchert, 2002, p. 22.

[172] Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 38.

[173] Panofsky, 1953, 1, p. 259.

[174] De Vos, 1989, p. 34.

[175] Van Asperen de Boer, Dijkstra, and Van Schoute, 1992, p. 232.

[176] Panofsky, 1953, 1, pp. 252–53.

[177] The Louvre *Annunciation* has sometimes been attributed to Van der Weyden's workshop, for example: Campbell, 1998, p. 22.

[178] Campbell, 1998, pp. 398–400.

[179] Jones, 1995, p. 91.

[180] Ainsworth and Martens, 1994, and Ainsworth (ed.), 1995, provide an extensive discussion of Petrus Christus' reliance on Eyckian models.

[181] Jones, 1995, p. 92.

[182] Campbell, 1998, p. 178.

[183] Malkis Gellman, 1970, p. 213.

[184] Ainsworth, 1995, p. 128.

[185] Burckhardt, 1906, p. 194.

[186] Phillips, 1907, p. 104.

[187] Elsig, 2001, p. 315–18. See also: Lüdke, 2002, pp. 60–61, who attributed the painting in Naples to a follower of Konrad Witz.

[188] Hulin de Loo and Michel, 1927, p. 79.

[189] De Vos (1994, p. 346) stated that an imitation 'Eyckian' craquelure was painted over the surface of the Renders' *Virgin* (but does not state whether this was carried out following the repainting of damaged paint layers or was applied over undamaged paint layer, perhaps to give the work an exaggerated appearance of age).

[190] Silver, 1984, p. 75.

[191] Wescher, 1965, p. 180.

[192] Lüdke, 2002, pp. 162–63.

[193] Edeleine-Badie, 1997, p. 218.

[194] Weale, 1909, pp. 49–50.

[195] Hoff (ed.), 1971, p. 38.

[196] Gossaert's *Virgin and Child* is illustrated and discussed in Pauwels, Hoetink, and Herzog, 1965, pp. 231–32.

[197] Von Bode, 1901, p. 122 n. 1.

[198] Carandente, 1968, pp. 47–48, and Plate XXIIIb.

[199] Yarza Luaces, undated, pp. 286–87.

[200] Natale, 2003, pp. 3–5.

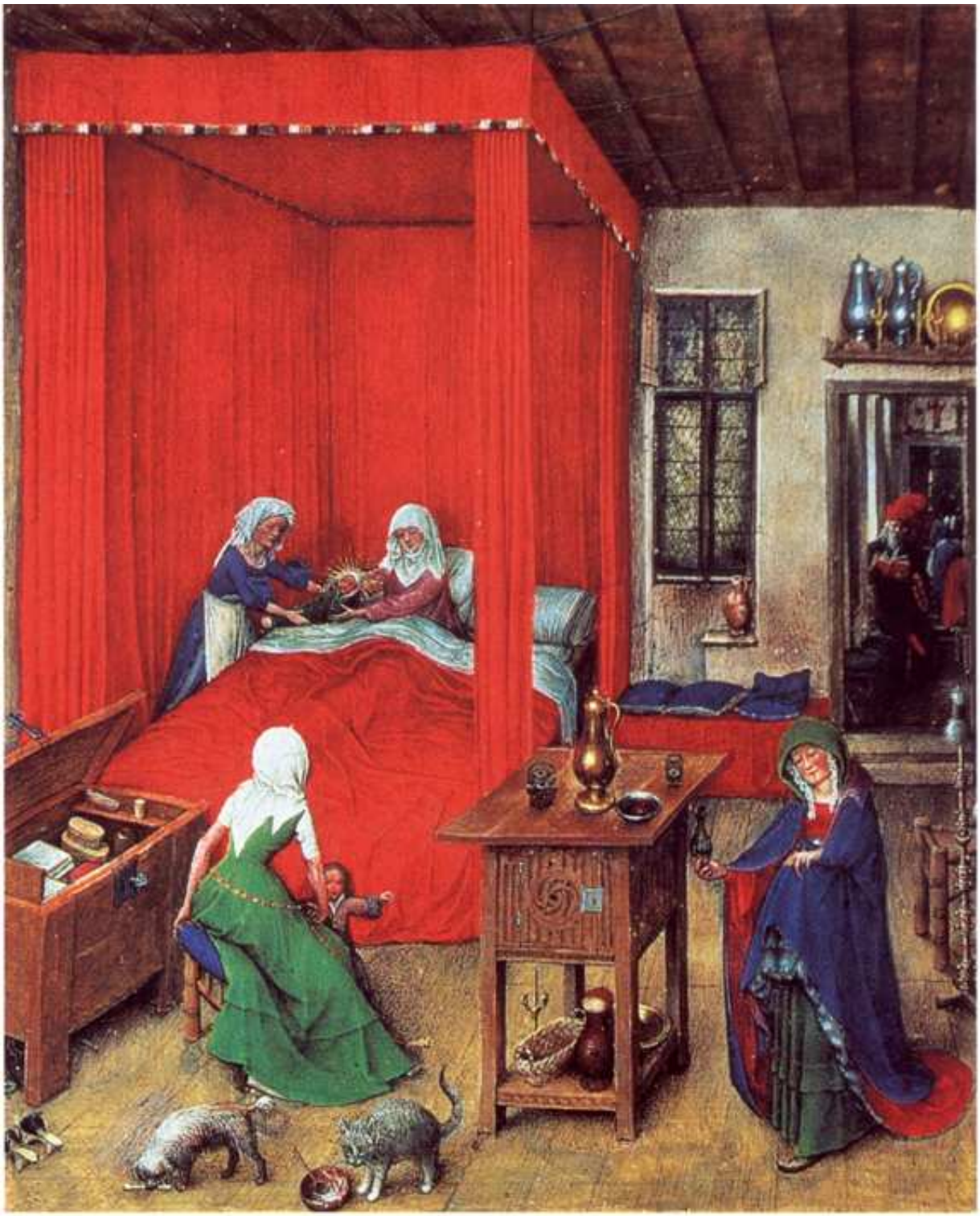


Fig. 5. Jan van Eyck, *Birth of Saint John the Baptist*, *Très Belles Heures de Notre-Dame* (Turin-Milan hours), fol. 93v. Museo Civico d'Arte Antica, Turin. Image: Bridgeman Art Library.

4

The Question of Authorship: 'is it genuine?'

Since the scientific and art historical argument used to cast doubt on the attribution of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* to Van Eyck is inconclusive, the question of its authenticity must be re-considered. Due to the two other close versions of the composition, and many more distant ones, it is unlikely that the work could be a pastiche. No evidence that the work is a forgery has been found. To distinguish the work as original or copy, its *pentimenti*, paint layers, and execution must be compared with those of Van Eyck's works, particularly works dating from the early 1430s. The raw technical evidence produced by the Belgian and English analysts in the 1950s, together with data gathered more recently, a close reading of the work's painting technique, and a new understanding of the origin of its composition may amount to a case for the painting's authenticity. Van Eyck's authorship could be reinstated if questionable aspects of the paint layer were accepted as overpainting, if the soft style of parts of the execution was acknowledged as appropriate for a small scale work, if the execution was judged to be better than a copyist's capability, and if the many *pentimenti* were accepted as an indication that Van Eyck's composition of the Virgin and Child behind a book originated in this work. The work could be a copy, but if so it contains features to be expected in the original, even in the paint layers beneath the surface, without being the original.

Until the late 1950s art historians had tried to explain differences in Van Eyck's execution chronologically. Works in a retardaire style (the *Three Maries at the Tomb*), a Gothic style (the *Virgin and Child in a Church*), and a delicate, atmospheric style (the Dresden triptych) were dated to the artist's early career, works in a robust, hard-edged, and realistic style (the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, and the Van der Paele *Virgin and Child*) were dated to the artist's mid-career, while the artist's late works were characterised by a return to a charming diminutive style (the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*). This view of the development of Van Eyck's style came unstuck with the cleaning of the Dresden triptych frame, which revealed the date 1437, one year after the Van

der Paele *Virgin and Child*. Sterling then suggested the determining factor in Van Eyck's execution was not the date, but the scale he was working on. Small works intended for personal devotion could be characterised by a more Gothic, 'soft' execution, while larger works intended for public display, such as an altarpiece, could be characterised by a more modern, 'hard' style, even if they contain 'soft' execution in details.[1] Châtelet made a similar observation in his assessment of Van Eyck's painted oeuvre, that the delicate forms of certain works, such as the Dresden triptych, were due to their small size.[2]

There are nine paintings in which the Virgin is a primary subject that are generally attributed to Jan van Eyck (not including the Ghent altarpiece Virgins possibly begun by Hubert), with which to compare the execution of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. These are listed below in order of size, which is that of painted surface only, except where indicated[3] (with the inclusion for reference of the *Virgin and Child with Saints Elizabeth and Catherine, and Jan Vos* in the Frick Collection in New York, generally attributed to Van Eyck and/or his workshop).[4]

Antwerp *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*	19 x 12.2 cm
[Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*	26.3 x 19.4 cm]
Dresden triptych (central panel)	27 x 21.5 cm
Dresden triptych (exterior of right wing)	27.5 x 8 cm
Virgin and Child in a Church	31 x 14 cm
Thyssen-Bornemizsa *Annunciation*	38.8 x 23.2 cm (each panel, with frame)
[Frick *Virgin and Child*	47 x 61 cm]
Lucca *Virgin and Child*	65.5 x 49.5 cm
Rolin *Virgin and Child*	66 x 62 cm
Washington *Annunciation*	90.2 x 34.1 cm
Van der Paele *Virgin and Child*	122.1 x 157.8 cm

Any discussion of the quality of execution of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* must take into account that it would be the second smallest of Van Eyck's paintings of the Virgin, and one of the smallest paintings in his oeuvre. In many respects, the execution of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* fits well between the simple, iconic charm of the Antwerp *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* and the more ornate setting of the Dresden triptych. Cuttler thought the weaknesses of the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* perhaps sufficient to attribute part of its

execution to Van Eyck's workshop,[5] although this assessment has not been followed by others. It is in some ways a less ambitious work than the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. The space is shallower, the light effects are simpler, parts of the physiognomies less carefully observed, and the gold brocade of the cloth of honour is more sketchily executed. The Dresden triptych is Van Eyck's only surviving triptych and one of his most richly decorated small-scale works. However, the jewels on the Virgin's robes are much more freely painted than in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, perhaps because they are smaller. In one feature the execution of the Infant in the Dresden triptych could be said to presuppose that in the Ince Hall picture. The Infant's left arm is very similar to that of the Infant in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, particularly the hand with curled fingers which follows the painted hand of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, not the underdrawn version where all the fingers are straight. Indeed, the quality of execution of the Infant's left hand is arguably higher in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, which is admittedly fractionally larger, than the Dresden triptych. In the former work there are little touches for the Infant's knuckles, pinkish glazes on the fingertips, and a subtler arrangement of the fingers.

Connoisseurship may help to distinguish a copy from an original. As noted by Pächt, the rendering of light in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is superior even to the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. This is a significant point when it is considered that the representation of light was one of the reasons for Van Eyck's fame. Jan Gossaert and the Bruges Master of 1499 each reproduced the composition of Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church* (their versions are the *Virgin and Child with Antonio Siciliano and Saint Anthony* diptych, Galleria Doria, Rome, and the *Virgin and Child in a Church*, Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunst, respectively) with minute attention to reproducing the architectural setting and the figures. While it may not be clear which artist, if either, was copying from the original, neither reproduced the pools of light on the floor of the church, and this may be a measure of how much the vivid representation of sunlight was an aspect of Van Eyck's personal practice, imitated only occasionally. Neither of the two close versions of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition has a pool of sunlight illuminating the back wall as it does. Few other early Netherlandish painters demonstrated a comparable imagination or were inclined towards such impressionistic execution—with the notable exception of the artist whose work it has been argued here probably inspired the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, Campin's *Virgin and Child in an Interior*.

Of the copies of Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church* and *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* that faithfully reproduce details of the architectural and garden settings,

inevitably most copyists imposed their own physiognomic styles onto the Virgin's face. Jan Gossaert's *Virgin and Child with Antonio Siciliano and Saint Anthony* diptych imposes a typically Gossaert style face onto Van Eyck's composition. The face of the Virgin in the Ince Hall painting, though, shows no imposition of an un-Eyckian style. Indeed, the Virgin's face is remarkably similar to Mary of Egypt's face in the *Holy Hermits* panel of the Ghent altarpiece. As noted in the last chapter, the two faces share a high forehead, wide set narrow eyes, fine, arched eyebrows, a small mouth with a slight pucker in each corner, a small rounded chin, a jawline that extends to the side, and a very similar softly rounded profile. Significantly, the two faces were built up with a similar density of lead white pigment in certain areas such as the forehead and the areas under the eyes, as visible in the x-radiographs of the two works. The style of Saint Catherine's face in the Dresden triptych is similar as well, suggesting that the three faces are variants of a generic young woman's features. Of the three, the face of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* appears to be the most generalised.

The size of the painted surface of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the oak panel, its chalk and glue ground, the remnants of a *barbe*, the Eyckian underdrawing, the expensive pigment used in the blue layers containing lapis lazuli, the paint media, the adjustments between the work's underdrawing and the paint layers, the many characteristic *pentimenti* in the paint layers that may relate to the development of other paintings by Van Eyck, the partly additive painting technique, aspects of the impasto underpainting, the *sgraffito* technique, the illusionistic foreshortening of the manuscript, the harmony of contours within the composition, the superb handling of paint in the Virgin's jewels, the manuscript, the candlestick, and the gold brocade, as well as the outstanding lighting of the room and the Eyckian physiognomy, necessarily lead to a reconsideration of Van Eyck's authorship.

Yet, when specialists in the technical examination of paintings cannot reach agreement on whether the sky in Van Eyck's *Saint Barbara* was actually painted by Van Eyck or a later hand,[6] and when some art historians disagree that the superlative *Birth of Saint John* and the *Baptism of Christ* miniatures in the Turin-Milan hours can be attributed to Van Eyck, there is no reason to expect unanimity on the subject of the authorship of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* based only on the quality of its execution. Nevertheless, the record shows that all the leading art historians and connoisseurs of the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth agreed that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was a work of Van Eyck. Art historians in previous generations accepted that Van Eyck was capable of executing minor works; of growing importance is the developing understanding of his workshop.

Master, Assistant, or Master *and* Assistant?

It is possible the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was executed by Van Eyck and an assistant, or solely by an assistant. In 2001 the work was published in the exhibition catalogue of the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid as attributed to Van Eyck's workshop,[7] and in the following year it was published in the exhibition catalogue of the Musée Groeninge in Bruges with the same attribution.[8] This represents a considerable improvement in the work's critical fortunes, but in the enormous scholarship undertaken for these two exhibitions it was not possible to consider all the evidence for the extent of the master's involvement.

If Van Eyck and his studio produced the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, and the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* in 1433–34, it would not be surprising if the master required his assistants to paint as well as to make more menial contributions, such as grinding pigments. Since the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* shows no obvious signs of workshop execution, Van Eyck may have concentrated his attention on that work and delegated some or all of the execution of the smaller Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the repetitious elements of the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* to his assistants. Notwithstanding the abraded and overpainted condition of the *Virgin and Child,* there appears to be a disparity in the quality of execution between parts of the work. While the jewels, the cloth of honour, the fall of light, and other details indicate a very high level of skill, a few details show a less thorough and polished execution. The fringe of the baldachin is a little thin across the front. The pattern of the carpet is uninspired, although the IRR indicates that it was begun in a more sophisticated manner. The chest is probably disfigured by overpainting, but it is difficult to imagine that all of its soft outlines and modelling can be attributed to damage and poor restoration.

It is, though, not always easy to distinguish the work of a master from that of the studio. While it might be thought that a greater degree of polish distinguishes a master's execution, this may not always be the case. Indeed, the large, technically brilliant Van der Paele *Virgin and Child* appears somewhat wooden in the execution of the faces, and has been thought by one author to be partly the work of studio assistants for this reason.[9] Similarly, Ainsworth made a general distinction between Petrus Christus' refined, jewel-like, and animated smaller works, and the stiff looking larger works.[10] Assistants would quite likely have been employed in the time consuming, but less demanding role of filling in larger areas of colour in large works. A correlation can then be postulated between the work of a master being found in smaller, individualistic paintings and the work of assistants being found in

large, as it were, mechanically produced ones, even though these smaller works can sometimes show a greater freedom in painting, which to some eyes might be taken for weak execution. Smaller paintings can, however, be strong conceptually, such as Petrus Christus' *Virgin and Child of the Dry Tree* (Thyssen-Bornemizsa Collection, Madrid) and Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child at the Fountain*. It is also an irony that the minutiae which are especially prized in early Netherlandish painting are often found in the larger works. No doubt the larger commissions afforded a greater luxury of execution, but it was possibly appreciated that smaller works were more amenable to iconic representations in which the conception spoke more powerfully than the execution.

The point at which the quality of execution falls below that of a particular master, indicating the execution of an assistant, may be difficult to define even when comparing works of similar size. The quality of execution in Van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* is significantly higher than that in the *Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini* (Gemäldgalerie, Berlin). This is particularly noticeable in the elegant repetition of curves in the drapery of the headdress of the former work, with its gradual transitions from light to dark, compared with the less elegant shapes in the headdress of the latter and its less subtle tonal transitions. However, no author seems to have attributed the *Portrait of Giovanni (?) Arnolfini* to Van Eyck's workshop. Given that the subject of that portrait appears in two of Van Eyck's paintings, he must have been an important patron or acquaintance of the artist. The execution of an important subject would seem to require the master's hand, rather than that of an assistant, despite the reduced quality of the Berlin portrait.

Furthermore, paintings by Van Eyck of very high quality may contain small passages of lesser precision. In the Lucca *Virgin and Child* the bottom of the window is not clearly defined and the lions on the front of the throne are not of equal height or size. In the *Virgin and Child by the Fountain* the brick courses are not of even height on either side of the cloth of honour, the Infant's left arm is very awkwardly placed, and his left hand ill-defined. In the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* the artist's signature is crooked and the date is not centred, while in the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* the signature is awkwardly squeezed into the bottom right corner of the frame and does not follow the horizontal guidelines. Van Eyck was only human.

That Van Eyck had a number of studio assistants is recorded in contemporary documents, however there is no record of their exact role. In late 1432 Philip the Good visited Van Eyck's studio to see a 'certain work' and gave a tip to Van Eyck's assistants for the work they had done.[11] Before the last decade of the twentieth century, few art historians

discussed in detail the possibility that Van Eyck's workshop might have been responsible for any part of his production. Martin Davies, for example, stated that: 'It is an exceptional characteristic of Jan's pictures that 'studio execution' is apparently unusual.'[12] Anne van Buren more recently suggested that Van Eyck always worked with assistants, listing the various hands that illuminated the Turin-Milan hours under his guidance or influence.[13] Some works, such as the Frick *Virgin and Child*, are thought to have been begun by Van Eyck and finished by his workshop after his death in 1441.[14] Van Buren has plausibly suggested that Lambert van Eyck, who is documented as Jan's brother and as a painter, may have taken over Jan's workshop at his death.[15]

The Philadelphia *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* is on a panel identified by dendrochronology as coming from the same tree as Van Eyck's *Arnolfini* and *Baudouin de Lannoy* portraits (both Gemäldegalerie, Berlin).[16] In all likelihood, the former work was made in Van Eyck's workshop,[17] even though it has the same composition as the Turin painting of the same name, which is underdrawn and has minor *pentimenti*, and so has been attributed to Jan himself.[18] The Philadelphia Museum of Art maintains that its work is by Van Eyck, although Van Buren has attributed it to a workshop assistant dubbed the 'Master of the Philadelphia Saint Francis'.[19] The Detroit *Saint Jerome* has been dated dendrochronologically to Van Eyck's lifetime, has a painted *trompe l'oeil* stone reverse like a number of his works, and can be been linked iconographically to a possible patron of Van Eyck.[20] The Detroit Institute of Arts exhibits the work as 'attributed to Jan van Eyck',[21] while Van Buren has given it to the 'Master of the Berlin Crucifixion'.[22] Parts of the *Three Maries at the Tomb*[23] and the New York *Last Judgement*[24] show differences in the quality of execution that it has been suggested may be attributable to two hands, indicating the collaboration of Van Eyck and an assistant. In the latter case, it is thought the assistant may have been an illuminator, due to the lack of blending in the execution. And as previously explained, the Covarrubias Master is another panel painter and illuminator now thought to have spent time in Van Eyck's workshop.

In all likelihood, Van Eyck had a busy workshop, in which his assistants probably executed parts of the master's paintings and entire works. It would be unusual if the *pentimenti* in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* did not originate from a master's intervention, since it is thought that only a master could authorise changes to a composition that might need to be authorised in turn by the patron. In this instance, the nature of the *pentimenti* suggests a direct relationship between a Campin model (the *Virgin and Child in an Interior*) as an inspiration for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*,

and the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)*, with the possibility of the concurrent execution of the first two or even all three works in this series. If this were the case, it would suggest the supervision of the master in the creation of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition at least. The use of expensive pigments such as lapis lazuli is also associated with execution by a master. The background parts of the composition, such as the walls and floor of the room, the subsidiary parts of the cloth of honour, the carpet, and the furniture may well have been within the scope of an assistant's role. Still, the signature on the work, either as it appears now on the paint surface or as it might have appeared in a putative previous existence on the lost original frame, suggests that even if Van Eyck delegated part or all of the execution of the painting to an assistant, he was willing to put his name to it.

The Case for the Work as a Copy

Given the numerous works by early Netherlandish artists that seem to depend on an original painting by Van Eyck showing the Virgin and Child with a book, together with the problematic aspects of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s current appearance, such as the rough looking carpet and chest, many authors have considered the work to be a copy, more or less faithful, of a lost original by Van Eyck. If the work is argued to be a copy, either by Van Eyck's workshop or by a follower, it is impossible to say how greatly it varied from its model. The work's *pentimenti*, such as the opening of the Virgin's robe, and the position of the Infant's fingers and toes, though in themselves characteristically Eyckian, might suggest that the differences were relatively minor, merely small adjustments to the original composition. They might also have been the copyist's working procedure in which he attempted to get as close as possible to his model. However, if the underpainted curtains result from the artist copying a lost Van Eyck with these present, it is strange that these features of such a celebrated model do not appear in any of the derivations.

Since the Verdura *Virgin and Child* is almost certainly a copy of the Ince Hall painting, it cannot be used to reconstruct a putative lost original. Panofsky's comments about the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* show that it too provides little evidence of a lost original either. There are a number of features of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition suggesting a copyist must have kept details that were highly Eyckian from the period around 1433. The bare floorboards are noted by Campbell to have been fleetingly represented around the year 1434 by Van Eyck and Van der Weyden. The carpet without a fringe in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is comparable to that of the *Arnolfini portrait*, a detail that Campbell noted

is unusual in early Netherlandish art. In this author's opinion, aesthetically, the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is manifestly the most Eyckian of all the versions of the composition.

The two almost identical paintings of *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* (Turin and Philadelphia), the two almost identical paintings of the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* (Antwerp and private collection), and the two slightly different compositions of the *Head of Christ* preserved in copies (Berlin, Bruges, and one possibly autograph or workshop version in the Swinburne Collection in Newcastle) demonstrate that small scale copies and, possibly, variants of compositions were produced in Van Eyck's studio. The *Saint John the Baptist with the Virgin and Child* diptych (Musée du Louvre, Paris) differs significantly from the Thyssen-Bornemisza *Annunciation* diptych in its details, while sharing major features of its overall format. This may be an indication of the degree of variation from an original by the master possible in a painting created in his workshop.

If the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* were considered a copy, more or less faithful, by a workshop assistant of Van Eyck of a lost original design by the master this might explain those features of its materials and technique that are characteristically Eyckian such as the size of the painted dimensions, the apparent absence of a priming layer, the underdrawing style (if it is accepted that Van Eyck's assistants may have learnt some of the master's drawing style), and the Eyckian use of pigments and paint media. Other features would be more difficult to explain as the work of an artist other than Van Eyck, such as the elevation of the window beyond the top of the picture plane in the paint layers, the characteristic shortening of the Infant's leg between the underdrawing and the paint layer, and the tiny reflections on glass and metal indicating the location of the implied second window beyond the left edge of the picture, as we see in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. It is also difficult to imagine that a modified copy would have been made in Van Eyck's studio quoting the signature, including the date, of the original version. If the work were considered a copy by a follower outside of Van Eyck's studio, all of the work's Eyckian materials and technique would have to be accepted as coincidences, and with respect to those features in or under the paint layers such as the underdrawing style and the *pentimenti*, uncanny ones.

Not a Pastiche

The case for the work being a pastiche has been based on supposed contradictions in the composition being the result of a pasticheur unaware that they were combining elements of other compositions in an un-Eyckian way, notably, the combination of Madonna of Humility

and Queen of Heaven attributes. Reasons for doubting these arguments were given in the discussion of the work's iconography. The work cannot be a pastiche later than the fifteenth century (or at least the 1619 date on the back of the Verdura *Virgin and Child*), since the Verdura *Virgin and Child* is almost certainly a copy of it. If the Ince Hall picture is taken to be a pastiche of the fifteenth century (or before 1619) it apparently assumes a position between Van Eyck and Campin. In this scenario the works of the Virgin and Child behind a book in an Eyckian manner would have to be accounted for with reference to this one work, making it an early and improbably influential pastiche. The work's relationship to the other versions of the composition argue against it being a pastiche. The Verdura and Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* paintings include Van Eyck's motto and a variation thereof, respectively, in their inscriptions. These are in effect a kind of documentary evidence, probably from the fifteenth century, that the composition was taken to be by Van Eyck.

It also becomes a little difficult to imagine a scenario in which a pasticheur working outside Van Eyck's studio would have had access to the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* or the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)* for the domestic interior, the Lucca *Virgin and Child* for the Virgin and Child alone in a small room, the fruit on the windowsill and the carafe, the Rolin *Virgin and Child* for the Virgin's low seat with a cushion, the Thyssen-Bornemisza diptych or the Ghent altarpiece for the Virgin's fingers interleaved in the book, the Van der Paele *Virgin and Child* for the design of the brocade, the *Saint Barbara* for the Virgin's fulsome mantle, and the *Birth of Saint John* for the domestic-religious imagery including the particular arrangement of the bench before the window.

Not a Forgery

There is no evidence to support the suggestion that the work could be a forgery. There are a number of circumstances that may have inspired Coremans, Philippot, and Sneyers' unlikely hypothesis concerning the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. An account of these is given in Appendix B.

* * *

The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* shows every indication of being an early Netherlandish panel painting. The dating of the panel, however, remains an unknown quantity in an assessment of

the work's attribution. Nevertheless, the available evidence provides a compelling case for the work's authenticity as a painting partly or entirely by Jan van Eyck. The work is extensively and finely underdrawn. Many areas of the composition show either modifications in the drawing stage or the painting stage, or an additive painting technique. The *Virgin and Child*'s close relationship to the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* in its underdrawing, paint layer structures, and *pentimenti*, indicates that the two works may be related in their development as well as their compositions. The Ince Hall composition belongs to a series of domestic interiors created by Van Eyck between 1433 and 1434, comprising the *Virgin and Child*, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, and the *Woman at her Toilet (Bathseba?)*, the latter known from copies. The three works may have been executed concurrently and possibly with the assistance of the artist's workshop. Technically, the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* contains elements of Eyckian underdrawing, paint layer structures, and *pentimenti*. Aesthetically, it represents as David Carritt stated 'one of the first perfect sunlit interiors in European art', but contains small passages of secondary quality that are further compromised by the work's abraded and overpainted condition. The numerous related compositions by leading early Northern European artists suggest a work by Van Eyck bearing the features found in the final paint layers of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*—without the bundled curtains of the baldachin—was widely known and admired at an early date.

Further scientific tests may provide more evidence of similarities between the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and Van Eyck's uncontested works. However, no scientific evidence can confirm the attribution of the work to him. An examination could provide evidence ruling out the attribution of the work to Van Eyck, if some original part of its materials could be shown to be anachronistic.[25] At present, the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* can be described as an important Eyckian composition, painted in a manner consistent with the materials and technique of works attributed to Jan van Eyck, and containing a number of features in the underlying paint layers consistent with execution by the master in 1433. It is of sufficient overall quality to be attributed to the master, in the opinion of this author, in the opinions of all the leading historians of early Netherlandish art from the middle of the nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth, and a number of respected authorities since.

Notes for Chapter Four

[1] Sterling, 1976, pp. 7–11.

[2] Châtelet, 1980, pp. 46–47.

[3] Dhanens, [1980] pp. 382–91: for the dimensions of all the works with the exception of Bosshard, 1992, p. 5, for the Thyssen-Bornemizsa *Annunciation* diptych.

[4] For a recent assessment of the Frick *Virgin and Child*, see: [Ainsworth and Martens] 1994, pp. 72–78.

[5] Cuttler, 1968, p. 101.

[6] Billinge, Verougstraete, and Van Schoute, 2000, pp. 43–44.

[7] Elsig, 2001, pp. 264–71.

[8] [Borchert] 2002, p. 237.

[9] Goodgal, 1981, pp. 145–46.

[10] Ainsworth, 1994, pp. 33–34.

[11] Paviot, 1990 (pp. 88–89) corrected Weale and Brockwell's (1912, p. xxxv) date of 1433 for the visit.

[12] Davies, 1987, p. 49.

[13] Van Buren, *Heures de Turin-Milan*, 1996, p. 329.

[14] [Ainsworth and Martens] 1994, pp. 72–78.

[15] Van Buren, 1996, pp. 326–27.

[16] Klein, 1995, p. 151.

[17] Klein, 1995, p. 158.

[18] The case for the attribution of the Turin *Saint Francis* to Van Eyck is summarised in Mund, 'La Copie', 1998, p. 236.

[19] Van Buren, *Heures de Turin-Milan*, 1996, pp. 330–31.

[20] Heller and Stodulski, 1995, pp. 131–42.

[21] Dr Leon Stodulski, personal communication, February 2000.

[22] Van Buren (*Heures de Turin-Milan*, 1996, p. 331) described the Detroit *Saint Jerome* as a replica of a lost version by Van Eyck.

[23] Van Asperen de Boer and Giltaij, 1987, p. 276.

[24] Ainsworth, 'Jan van Eyck', 1998, p. 89.

[25] Further tests might include: 1) a precise description of the individual ground layers to determine if there are differences supporting the hypothesis of a transfer, 2) quantitative electron beam microscope analysis of the lead white, to determine if it is compatible with the known ranges for trace elements in early Netherlandish lead white, 3) SEM/EDS (scanning electron microscopic energy-dispersive x-ray) analysis of microsamples to determine the particle sizes of the lapis lazuli, 4) medium analysis, 5) red-

lake analysis, 6) a second opinion on the dendrochronological analysis of the panel, or, conceivably, alternative wood dating techniques, such as mass accelerated spectrometry, and 7) a close comparative analysis of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* microsamples to determine whether there is evidence on a microscopic level supporting the hypothesis of their concurrent execution.



Fig. 6. Jan van Eyck, *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*. Image courtesy of the National Gallery, London.

Appendix A: Van Eyck's Signatures

Following are transcriptions of the ten signatures widely attributed to Jan van Eyck, made from the originals unless specified, noting where the signature occurs in each work. The Ghent altarpiece quatrain, which dedicates the altarpiece and also proclaims its authorship, is included here as there is no conclusive argument that it is not authentic, and there is much evidence that it is attributable to Jan van Eyck.[1] Van Eyck's motto is treated here as a part of his signatures, since it literally refers to his authorship of his works. Letters in brackets are those abbreviated by Van Eyck.

a. Ghent altarpiece (Cathedral of Saint Bavo, Ghent), on the lowest members of the external frames, transcribed by Hulin de Loo.[2] The 'M', 'C's, 'L's, 'X', 'V's, and 'I's in the last line are painted in red. The '3' stands for the Latin abbreviation for 'ue'. Judging from photographs[3] the word Hulin de Loo transcribed as '*Vyd*' may actually be written '*Vijd*'.

P..to. Hubertus eeyck . Maior quo nemo repertus
Incepit . pondus . q3 Johannes arte secundus
[…] cit . Judoci Vyd prece fretus
Versu sexta Mai . vos collocat acta tueri

b. *Portrait of a Young Man (Léal Souvenir)* (National Gallery, London), in the pictorial space. Suspension marks are painted over the 'u' in '*Actu*', the 'n' in '*an[n]o*', and the 'ni' in '*d[omi]ni*'.

Actu[m] an[n]o d[omi]ni ◆ 1432 ◆ 10 ◆ die octobris ◆ a ioh[anne] de Eyck

c. *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* (National Gallery, London), on the frame. The 'C' in the motto and word '*OCTOBRIS*' are square. There are two 'dots' over the '21', a suspension mark across the 'H' and the 'E' of '*JOH[ANN]ES*', and a suspension mark over the 'A' in '*AN[N]O*'.

◆ AΛC ◆ IXH ◆ XAN ◆/

⬥ JOH[ANN]ES ⬥ DE ⬥ EYCK ⬥ ME ⬥ FECIT ⬥ AN[N]O ⬥ M°CCCC° ⬥ 33° ⬥ 21 ⬥ OCTOBRIS

d. *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* (National Gallery, London), in the pictorial space.

Johannes de eyck fuit hic ⬥/ ⬥ 1434 ⬥

e. *Virgin and Child with Saints George and Donatian and Canon Van der Paele* (Musée Groeninge, Bruges), on the frame. There is a suspension mark over the 'e' in '*pictore[m]*', and another over the 'u' in '*au[tem]*'. There is a vertical line before '*9p[le]t[um]*'. Some words are difficult to read due to the dark colours used, and the abrasion of parts of the signature. Janssens de Bisthoven, Baes-Dondeyne, and De Vos have observed that the inscription has been repainted. Parts of the text identified by them as not in their original condition are here in bold.[4] In this transcription the apostrophe stands for a figure like a question mark without the stop, which is the abbreviation for 'us'.

*⬥ hoc op' fecit fieri mag[iste]r georgi' de pa**la** hui' **eccleli' canoni[cus] p[er] Iohanne[m] de** eyck pictore[m] ⬥ **Et fundavit hic duas capell[an]ias de gr[em]io chori** domini ⬥ M°⬥ cccc° ⬥ xxxiiij° ⬥ 9p[le]t[um] au[tem] ⬥ 1436 °⬥*

f. *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw* (Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna), on the frame, transcribed from reproductions. There is a square 'C' in '*EYCK*'. The three *puncti* before '*DAT*' are in a diagonal row.

+ ⬥ IAN DE [PICTURE OF A LION IN PLACE OF 'LEEUW'] OP SANT ORSELEN DACH/ ⬥ ⬥ ⬥ DAT CLAER EERST MET OGHEN SACH ⬥ 1401 ⬥/ + GHECONTERFEIT NV HEEFT MI IAN ⬥ ⬥/ VAN EYCK WEL BLIICT WANNEERT BEGA[N] ⬥ 1436 ⬥

g. Dresden triptych (Gemäldegalerie, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen, Dresden), on the frame, transcribed by Neidhardt and Schölzel,[5] with the exception of the second letter of the motto, which is transcribed from reproductions. A suspension mark is painted over the 'm' in '*D[o]m[ini]*'.

Johannes de eyck me fecit et c[o]mplevit Anno D[o]m[ini] M–CCCC–XXXVII
⬥ AΛC ⬥ IXH ⬥ XAN

h. *Saint Barbara* (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp), on the frame. There is a suspension mark across the 'H' in '*IOH[ANNE]ES*'.

⬥ IOH[ANN]ES DE EYCK ME FECIT ⬥ 1437 ⬥

i. *Portrait of Margaret van Eyck* (Musée Groeninge, Bruges), on the frame. There is a suspension mark over the 'O' and the 'V' in '*CO[N]IVX*', there is possibly a highlight for a suspension mark over the 'M' in '*M[EU]S*', and possibly a highlight for a suspension mark over the 'E' in '*JOH[ANN]ES*', however, these details may have been abraded and perhaps were not heavily indicated originally. There are suspension marks over the 'A' in '*AN[N]O*', the 'V' in '*TRIV[M]*', and the 'A' and 'V' in '*AN(N)ORV(M)*'.

CO[N]IVX M[EU]S JOH[ANN]ES ME 9PLEVIT A[N]N0 ⬥ 1439° ⬥ 15° IVNIJ
ETAS MEA TRIGINTA TRIV[M] AN[N]ORV[M] ⬥ AΛC ⬥ IXH ⬥ XAN ⬥

j. *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* (Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Antwerp), on the frame. The motto is fairly damaged, with the second word mostly lost. There is a suspension mark over the 'H' in '*IOH[ANN]ES*', and a square 'C' in the motto.

AΛC [IXH] XAN/
⬥ IOH[ANN]ES DE EYCK ME FECIT + 9PLEVIT AN[N]O 1439°

Notes for Appendix A

[1] Engel, 1993, pp. 47–45.

[2] Hulin de Loo, 1934, p. 65.

[3] Van Puyvelde, 1947, p.87.

[4] Janssens de Bisthoven, Baes-Dondeyne, and De Vos, 1983, pp. 195, 202, and 214.

[5] Neidhardt and Schölzel, 2000, p. 25.

Appendix B: Paul Coremans' Controversies

How did Paul Coremans and his colleagues Albert Philippot and René Sneyers arrive at the unlikely conclusion that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* could be a modern forgery? An explanation may be found in the context of the scientific analysis of paintings after the Second World War, particularly the involvement of Coremans in the case of Han van Meegeren's forgery of Vermeer paintings. Herman Liebaers, who worked with Coremans in the early 1950s at an art history summer school organised by the Belgian Ministry of Public Instruction and the Belgian American Educational Foundation, wrote that Coremans 'was a key figure in the scandal of the faked Vermeers, which created in his mind, I am afraid, some confusion between art history and detective fiction.'[1] In this post-war milieu of suspected forgeries, Coremans conducted a similar analysis to that of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* on the *Saint Jerome in his Study* from the Institute of Arts, Detroit. This panel he also described as a non-Flemish imitation,[2] while it is now known to be Netherlandish and of the fifteenth century.[3] In all probability it was painted either by Van Eyck or his workshop. To be sure, others have occasionally described early Netherlandish paintings as modern forgeries on insufficient evidence, although not such well known works in public collections.[4]

Modern forgeries in the style of early Netherlandish paintings certainly do exist.[5] Yet, there seem to be no clear cases prior to the middle of the nineteenth century.[6] Van Asperen de Boer has pointed out that the techniques of early Netherlandish painting were too little understood, even in the twentieth century, for a forger to achieve a convincing recreation,[7] let alone in the mid-nineteenth century when the demand for these works was greatest.[8] There are also cases of early Netherlandish paintings that turn out on close examination to contain more work of modern restoration than original painting. An intriguing case of a restorer whose work bordered on forgery is that of Joseph van der Veken, father-in-law of Albert Philippot. He restored the *Adam* and *Eve* panels of the Ghent altarpiece, and painted the copy of the *Just Judges* panel of the altarpiece to replace the original when it was stolen, but also restored certain paintings and made imitation early Netherlandish drawings in such a way that it can be construed his intention was to present them as being more valuable than they were.[9]

Perhaps the most infamous forger of Old Master paintings is Han van Meegeren. Before the Second World War, this Dutch artist, who felt aggrieved because of insufficient success, began forging works mostly in the manner of Vermeer, one of the most revered painters of all time. The key to Van Meegeren's strategy was the falsification of an

intermediary style in Vermeer's oeuvre, between his little known early style, said to be influenced by Italian art, Caravaggio especially, and his celebrated mature style. Van Meegeren's 'early Vermeers' proved attractive to some art historians seeking to formulate a progression in the artist's oeuvre, and were somewhat difficult to criticise for being uncharacteristic, given that Vermeer's early style was still a matter of debate. The Vermeer expert Abraham Bredius, in particular, hailed one of the forged works as an authentic masterpiece. Van Meegeren was perhaps too successful, since the sale of one of his works to the Nazi Hermann Göring led to the possibility of a post-war trial for collaboration. In order to escape a conviction on this charge, Van Meegeren admitted to forging the work and others. Despite his admission, those who had greeted the emergence of his fake Vermeers as major discoveries were loathe to accept they could have been deceived, and so the Dutch government called upon scientific and art historical expertise to provide definitive proof.[10]

Coremans conducted some of the analysis of the fake Vermeers (and De Hooghs) and testified in Van Meegeren's trial. Also on the scientific committee of review was F.I.G. Rawlins from the National Gallery London Laboratory, who would later contribute to the analysis of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Coremans surprised his fellow committee members when he chose to write his own book about the affair,[11] in so doing acquiring a reputation in the international media.[12] In 1956 a semi-fictional account of the Van Meegeren story was published in London including a favourable account of an expert technical witness, a 'foreigner and a professor' whose description matches Coremans.[13] The spotlight followed Coremans for years, in 1961 he wrote an introduction to an exhibition of Van Meegeren's works.[14] However, irrefutable technical proof that all the works were forged had been difficult to find. For years Coremans searched for definitive tests or compelling circumstantial evidence, all the while subject to objections and pointed criticisms from his detractors. Jean Decoen, a Belgian artist and self-published art historian who had publicly disputed that all of the suspect 'Vermeers' were in fact forgeries,[15] wrote to the National Gallery of Victoria after Coremans' analysis of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* warning that his methods were 'very seriously contested' in Belgium and asking to see Coremans' reports.[16] The reports were not sent because Westbrook claimed they had been made privately to the Trustees.[17]

In his book *Vermeer—Van Meegeren, Back to the Truth, Two Genuine Vermeers* Decoen brought together the opinions of a number of specialists critical of Coremans' methodology in the Van Meegeren case. Among these were E. Bontinck who suggested Coremans' physical analysis may have been accurate, but his interpretation of that evidence

was possibly unsubstantiated,[18] and J. van Vaerenbergh and C. Meurice, of the Institut Meurice Chimie, who described Coremans' analysis as insufficiently conclusive.[19] D.G. van Beuningen, one of the leading European collectors of Old Master paintings of the time, after whom the Museum in Rotterdam is partly named, had purchased a number of the false Vermeers. In 1952 he sued Coremans for unjustifiably depreciating the value of the *Last Supper* (now in the Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam) the most famous of the disputed works. In so doing he implicitly questioned Coremans' scientific probity. Coremans countersued and eventually won the case in 1956, after Van Beuningen died on 2 June 1955.[20]

Nevertheless, Coremans had lost the support of Henri Lavachery, Honorary Chief Curator of the Musées Royaux d'Art et d'Histoire de Belgique. On 7 December 1954 Lavachery held a conference at the Palais des Beaux-Arts in Brussels on the issue of the suspect 'Vermeers' and Coremans' analysis of them, producing an unfavourable eighteen-page report for the occasion.[21] Lavachery admitted his interest in the case arose out of a sense of duty as an amateur in the fields of Old Master paintings and conservation science, rather than as a matter falling within his professional jurisdiction. Nevertheless, he noted that Coremans was a dependent of the museums Lavachery directed. On that authority, he called Coremans to his office to give him the opportunity to defend his analyses. Lavachery also attempted, unsuccessfully, to persuade Coremans to produce another version of the *Last Supper*. Coremans had claimed this work supported his case that Van Beuningen's *Last Supper* was a forgery, but had sequestered it shortly after announcing its discovery, meaning that his claims could not be tested. Lavachery referred to a number of the scientific specialists, named above, who had questioned whether a key aspect of Coremans' scientific argument against the works—that they had tested positive to the presence of a modern, synthetic medium—could be considered conclusive. Lavachery understood from the peer reviews of Coremans' analysis that the tests Coremans claimed were definitive were actually inconclusive.

An article subsequently co-written by the technician most responsible for the identification of the synthetic medium in the Van Meegeren case[22] indicates there were reasonable grounds to doubt Coremans' claim. In 1975 W. Froentjes, together with R. Breek, suggested the identification of a synthetic resin in the post-war analysis should have been sufficient evidence to conclude that the works in question were modern and painted in a similar medium to the one Van Meegeren admitted to having used. However, by the later standards of the time in which their article was written they stated that, 'the general colour

reactions on aldehyde and phenols and the similarity of refractive indices were insufficient proof for a conclusive identification of the medium and of the similarity of it to Van Meegeren's resin.' They claimed that their new analysis, using more modern techniques, proved conclusively the nature of the medium used and its identity with Van Meegeren's one.[23]

Lavachery ultimately decided against Coremans' arguments concerning the Van Beuningen *Last Supper* and another of the suspect works of higher quality than the rest. He declared that they were not modern and, although he was not an expert on Vermeer, he found Decoen's attribution of them to Vermeer convincing.[24] It seems that Coremans then turned to the Director of the National Gallery, London, for support in 1955. Hendy wrote to the Belgian Minister for Public Instruction defending Coremans and criticising Lavachery, noting that Coremans' review of the National Gallery, London's controversial cleaning practices had been well received.[25] Indeed, the report prepared by J.R.H. Weaver, George L. Stout, and Coremans had praised the National Gallery's scientific laboratory fulsomely and recommended greater funding for conservation at the Gallery.[26] Coremans replied to Hendy: 'The "Minister" has just sent me your letter. Thanks a lot. Just what is needed.'[27]

Despite such high powered support from Hendy, it appears Coremans felt pressure to demonstrate to his superior—the Minister—as well as directors of important European galleries, if not to a wider audience, the ability of his scientific analysis to provide useful insights into art historical questions, and to detect forgeries in particular. There are some parallels between Coremans' analyses of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and Van Meegeren's faked Vermeers. The *Virgin and Child* remained in private hands after the majority of Van Eyck's works had passed into the collections of the world's major art galleries.[28] It had been discussed with much enthusiasm by leading art historians as amongst the artist's first signed, independently produced works, and one that showed an 'early' phase in the artist's manner, influenced by another great artist of early Netherlandish painting, Robert Campin. The *Virgin and Child* could have been viewed as having a similar profile as a work of art as Van Beuningen's *Last Supper*: both involved highly esteemed artists (and so worth forging), both appeared to belong to an early phase in their artists' careers influenced by another great artist (that art historians found particularly intriguing), both had prominent signs of ageing and restoration (that could be taken for falsification of an aged appearance), and neither demonstrated an execution at the height of the artist's powers (that could be taken for the work of a forger, rather than just a minor example of the artist's abilities). The substantial difference between the case of the *Virgin and Child* and the *Last Supper* was that the former

had been known to art historians for over a century and had been all but universally accepted as an authentic Van Eyck, while the *Last Supper* had been seen by only a small number of art historians and was accepted by only few of them. Furthermore, it emerged amidst the confusion and heightened patriotism of wartime, when the Dutch were trying to protect their patrimony from predatory Nazi collectors.

From 1953 Coremans began attracting criticism on another front. In his *Early Netherlandish Painting*, Panofsky suggested that significant aspects of Coremans' interpretation of the Ghent altarpiece analysis were incorrect. Three years later, just as Coremans was beginning his analysis of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, Pächt's review of Panofsky's book was published, supporting Panofsky's views.[29] Coremans had suggested that the tiles, the inscription on the podium, and the crown at the feet of God in the Ghent altarpiece were later, maladroit additions to the Van Eycks' painting. Of the earlier, underlying designs he thought only vestiges remained, partly revealed by technical analyses and 'probing' ('*sondage*') in the paint layers.[30] Panofsky had rejected Coremans' interpretation on the basis of the comparable quality of the execution of the crown with details of the work judged original (even if both had suffered some overpainting), and referred to the *Kronyk van Vlaenderen*—which contains a description of an enactment of the Ghent altarpiece of 1458 including a representation of the crown—to show that the crown must have been present not long after the altarpiece was completed, and long before any recorded restoration. Panofsky interpreted the crown superimposed over the tiles and the second version of the inscription superimposed over the first version, as modifications made by Jan to the unfinished altarpiece as he had inherited it from Hubert.[31] More recently, Van Asperen de Boer has also accepted that Coremans' rejection of an Eyckian origin of the tiles, the final version of the inscription, and the crown was technically unfounded.[32]

It is a salient point that in 1956, prior to the Trustees of the National Gallery of Victoria giving permission for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* to be sent to the Brussels Institut to investigate the doubts about the work that had originated there, Pächt wrote:

> What actually emerges from the Brussels report [on the Ghent altarpiece] is quite clearly this: although the thorough surface—and also sub-cutaneous examination of the Eyckian retable, carried out with infinite patience and with the most up-to-date scientific apparatus, has put a wealth of new and extremely valuable observations at our disposal, much food for thought, as it were, which no serious student of Van Eyck can afford to neglect, there is hardly anything in all their findings—apart from minor details—which

> in itself is 'historically meaningful'. Nothing results from it which gives a clear-cut answer to the major problems with which generations of scholars have been struggling, nothing that can be read without the key supplied by those who can understand the stylistic implications of the technical data and can weigh this evidence in the context of the historical evolution.[33]

This rebuff may have spurred Coremans initially to make more decisive conclusions in his analysis of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, but it did not change his methodology. Curiously, there seems to have been virtually no mention in the correspondence and reports from the 1950s housed in the National Gallery of Victoria, that this criticism of part of Coremans' scientific analysis of a work by Van Eyck had occurred in such widely available and highly respected publications as Panofsky's *Early Netherlandish Painting* and *The Burlington Magazine,* and the implications this might pose for his assessment of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Although, the warning signs were there in McDonnell's mention of disquieting reports he had heard about Coremans, Hoff's acknowledgment that Pächt was up to a point opposed to the Institut's methods, and Decoen's frank letter to the Gallery.

That Westbrook, Hoff, and a majority of the National Gallery of Victoria Trustees gave credence to the conclusions of Coremans and his colleagues, against the misgivings of one Trustee, Aubrey Gibson, as well as Sir Owen Dixon, Sir Lionel Lindsay, and Arnold Shore, is in the final analysis cause for some regret. Though the Gallery had acquired an important collection of European paintings through the Felton Bequest, and had a long history of conservation practice, it seems that most attention went towards the maintenance of the collection rather than its study for more specialised purposes such as the investigation of attributions or the study of artists' materials and technique.[34] Even until 1965 the Gallery only had two conservators and no curator of European painting.[35] This may well reflect the priorities of government funding of the Gallery until the last quarter of the twentieth century, a situation quite different from the substantial government support the Gallery now receives. It is not surprising that there was no specialist in early Netherlandish painting or conservation scientist of international standing in Melbourne in the 1950s to scrutinize in detail the analyses from Brussels and London. In any case, the final report sent to Melbourne from Brussels was edited, apparently to avoid the possibility of litigation. Even Panofsky, the internationally recognised critic whom the National Gallery of Victoria consulted for verification of the analysis, received the material from Melbourne, and so would have received the edited version of the final report. Furthermore, he admitted that he was not able

to comment on the technical aspects of the analysis. It might, then, have seemed churlish to refute the opinion of the leading scientific analyst of early Netherlandish painting, especially when it seemed to be supported by Davies, a respected art historian in the field, and had been condoned up to a point by Sir Philip Hendy, and other art historians.

On the other hand, Coremans' negative opinion regarding an Eyckian painting in its collection was not accepted at The Detroit Institute of Arts. Until 1956, the *Saint Jerome* had been described as a collaboration between Van Eyck and Petrus Christus, since the work exhibited an Eyckian quality of conception as well as some areas of weak execution, which could be attributed to the supposedly less sophisticated artist Christus. William Suhr conserved the work in America for The Detroit Institute of Arts, removing passages of poor quality overpainting, particularly from the saint's robes. Suhr also reported that the date 1442 on the paint surface—one year after Van Eyck's death—was perhaps not original (presumably acknowledging the difficulty in determining whether adjacent paint layers in a given work are contemporary). Following Suhr's cleaning, the areas of the painting that had been considered un-Eyckian had either been removed or identified as possibly later additions, clearing the way for an attribution of the work as a whole to Van Eyck in 1956,[36] a finding that was acclaimed in the media.[37] Subsequently, Coremans was allowed to analyse The Detroit Institute of Arts' *Saint Jerome* in 1961, but his negative comments insinuating that the work was a forgery were not accepted there: 'The pattern forms a single type of craquelure across the entire surface, evidently with variations (but insufficient […]) following the local paint structure. In fact one could say that it appears to be an artificial craquelure […] one could equally say that the majority of the losses, notably in the mantle, have been created artificially.'[38]

In 1978, Roger H. Marijnissen, Head of the Conservation Department at the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique since 1958, wrote an article in which he warned art historians to be careful about proposing interpretations of artworks without due regard for technical evidence. Marijnissen claimed that although the Detroit *Saint Jerome* was attributed to Van Eyck by a number of leading art historians, 'it is in vain that technicians look for any reliable physical data that allow them to consider the Detroit *St. Jerome* as a 15th century painting. And it is not a 16th-century painting either. Whether we call it a replica, a copy, a pastiche or a fake is for the technician a question of minor importance. And I think we have to agree with them.' Marijnissen suggested the evidence for the origins of the work might be found among the early Netherlandish works and publications of them available in Germany at the end of

the nineteenth century.[39] Thus, Marijnissen implied that the work could be a nineteenth- or early twentieth-century forgery produced in Germany.

The attribution of the work to Van Eyck was maintained at The Detroit Institute of Arts after 1961 and in 2001 it was exhibited as 'Attributed to Jan van Eyck'. Edwin Hall has described the work's early technical analysis as a 'scientific misadventure',[40] and Albert Châtelet has repudiated Marijnissen's claims about the painting in view of the insufficient evidence presented to support his negative comments about it.[41] J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, who studied at the Institut under Coremans in 1961 and was personally involved in the analysis of the Detroit *Saint Jerome* that led to its being described as a forgery, put it this way:

> I would like to end by putting in perspective, as it were, what the Institute did at that time. One must, or course, remember that Coremans was being harassed after the war because he had been asked by the Dutch government to sit on the committee in the van Meegeren affair, and those who believed that the van Meegeren pictures were really Vermeers were still actually making his life very, very bitter in a sense. So the word "fake" had a particular significance at the Brussels Institute. Today we know, I think, that fakes are rare. They are very easy to recognize. You usually have considerably damaged paintings that have been retouched or something—ruins that are original, but don't look very nice any more.[42]

Coremans' involvement in the Van Meegeren affair brought conservation science to the attention of an international audience, and in many respects he was a successful advocate for the development of conservation as a profession. His publication of the Ghent altarpiece analysis and restoration raised the standard for painting conservation publications worldwide. By making others privy to the details of his analysis shortly after the analysis was conducted, Coremans provided material for a discussion of these results, even by parties who possessed information disagreeing with his interpretation. Unfortunately, the same did not occur in his analyses of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* or the *Saint Jerome*. Eventually, even Marijnissen became disillusioned. In 2004 he wrote candidly of Coremans, accusing his former colleague in no uncertain terms of scientific misconduct—of placing artwork at physical risk, of exploiting others' ignorance of the technical analysis of artworks to falsify the results of tests, of hiding behind high-minded rhetoric, and of creating a media circus at the Institut for the

purpose of self-advancement.[43] This, from the Head of the Conservation Department at the Institut during the time in which Coremans analysed the *Virgin and Child* from Melbourne.

The last word may still go to Coremans himself, who recognised, in principle, the limits of conservation analysis:

> Natural sciences can undoubtedly provide a more *objective* view than the aesthetics and history of art, thus helping to solve certain artistic problems. However, the merits of results obtained—as is the case with all so-called *exact* sciences—is in proportion to the precision of the method and the sensitivity of the apparatus used, as well as dependent on the degree of accuracy in the interpretation of documents.[44]

Notes for Appendix B

[1] Liebaers, 1980, p. 83.

[2] Van Asperen de Boer, Professor J.R.J., Amsterdam, notebook containing handwritten copies of documents associated with Paul Coremans and the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, undated, pp. 286–87.

[3] Heller and Stodulski, 1995, p. 138.

[4] According to Hubert von Sonnenburg (1993–94, pp. 8–19), in 1974 staff of the Courtauld Institute in London described the small *Man of Sorrows* panel, later acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, as certainly a modern forgery. However, more recent research has shown that the panel dates from the late fifteenth century, and the painting's materials and technique are consistent with an origin in the Renaissance.

[5] Hand and Wolff (1986, pp. 87–89) catalogued the *Saint Bernard and Donor* in the National Gallery of Art, Washington, as by an 'Imitator of Netherlandish School', probably of the early twentieth century. This assessment was based on uncharacteristic lead white impurities, an uncharacteristic mix of pigments to make green paint, an uncharacteristic yellow ground extending beyond the painted surface, and stylistic similarities to a known imitation published by Hulin de Loo.

[6] Ainsworth ('The Business of Art', 1998, p. 36) noted Felipe de Guevara's sixteenth-century account of painting, which referred to an abundance of forgeries of Bosch's works in Antwerp, suggesting that this is the context in which the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Boschian *Adoration of the Magi* should be considered. The modern controversy over the attribution of this work to Bosch, his studio, or a more distant follower begs the question whether early commentators might have elided the last two categories with that of a forgery.

[7] Heller and Stodulski, 1995, (J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, 'Discussion') p. 148.

[8] Campbell (1998, p. 12) noted that early Netherlandish painting was out of fashion in the eighteenth century and did not gain in popularity until the nineteenth.

[9] Serck (ed.), 2005, pp. 2–6.

[10] Werness, 1983, pp. 1–57.

[11] Coremans, 1949.

[12] *The Times* (London), 28 January 1956, p. 5; *The Times* (London), 21 June 1965, p. 12.

[13] Baesjou, 1956, pp. 118–19.

[14] Coremans [*c*. 1961, unpaginated].

[15] Decoen, 1951.

[16] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Jean Decoen, letter to 'the Conservator of the National Victoria Museum, Melbourne, Australia', 21 November 1959.

[17] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 12730, P0001, 60, Eric Westbrook, letter to Jean Decoen, 10 February 1960.

[18] Decoen, 1951, pp. 52–54 (reprint of an article published in *Chimie des Peintures*, January, 1950).

[19] Decoen, 1951, Figure 177.

[20] Jeppson, 1970, pp. 193–95; [*The College Art Journal*] 1957, pp. 348–49; *The New York Times*, 12 June 1955, p. 28.

[21] Lavachery, 1954.

[22] Identified by Coremans (1949, pp. 14–15) as Dr W. Froentjes.

[23] Breek and Froentjes, 1975, pp. 183–84.

[24] Jeppson, 1970, pp. 192–93.

[25] NGL Archives, NG 35/21, Philip Hendy, NG: cleaning and conservation: Dr Coremans' Lawsuit, Director [Philip Hendy], letter to The Minister of Education, 12 February 1955. Hendy wrote that he had received a copy of a lecture by Lavachery apparently given at the Palais des Beaux Arts, Brussels on 7 December, which he said surprised him as what was allowed to pass for science in lectures by art historians. Hendy noted that Coremans was invited by the Trustees of National Gallery, London, to review, together with George Stout of the Fogg Museum, the cleaning of paintings at the Gallery and that their report had greatly impressed all. He also pointed out that Coremans was head of the International Institute for the Conservation of Museum Objects.

[26] British Library, London, J.R.H. Weaver, G.L. Stout, and P. Coremans, *Report of a Committee of Confidential Inquiry into the Cleaning and the Care of Pictures in the National Gallery*, period of inquiry 29 July to 21 August 1947, especially pp. 37 and 47.

[27] NGL Archives, NG 35/21, Philip Hendy, NG: cleaning and conservation: Dr Coremans' Lawsuit, Paul [Coremans], letter to Philip [Hendy], 11 [?] February 1955.

[28] Goodgal, 1981, pp. 24–31.

[29] Pächt, 1956, pp. 267–69.

[30] Coremans, Loose, and Thissen, 1953, pp. 102–05 and Plates XIV–XVIII.

[31] Panofsky, 1953, 1, pp. 228–30.

[32] Van Asperen de Boer, 1979, pp. 173–78.

[33] Pächt, 1956, p. 268.

[34] Fraser, 1994, pp. 25–37.

[35] Westbrook [1968], p. 79. Hoff was at this time Curator of Prints, Drawings, Watercolours, and Manuscripts.

[36] For a review of the work's critical reception, see: Hall, 1998, pp. 11–15.

[37] *The New York Times*, 25 July 1956, p. 27.

[38] Van Asperen de Boer, Professor J.R.J., Amsterdam, notebook containing handwritten copies of documents associated with Paul Coremans and the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique, undated,

pp. 286–87: '*Le réseau forme un seul type de craquelure sur tout le surface, évidement avec variantes (mais insufficiantes…) suivant la structure picturale locale. En fait on pourrait dire qu'il sagit de craquelures artificielles….on pourrait également dire que le plupart des dégâts, notament au manteau, ont été provoqués artificiallement*.'

[39] Marijnissen, 1978, p. 6.

[40] Hall, 1998, p. 16.

[41] Châtelet, 1980, p. 58 n. 6.

[42] Heller and Stodulski, 1995, (J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer, 'Discussion'), p. 147.

[43] Marijnissen, 2004, pp. 16–18.

[44] Coremans, 1949, p. 1.

Appendix C: Historiography of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*

Following is a summary of the majority of the scholarly publications, dissertations, and some archival manuscripts referring to the *Virgin and Child* during the period of a century-and-a-half between 1853 and 2003. This may prove useful to the reader by identifying the origin of some misconceptions about the work. Attention will be given primarily to the attributions and datings authors have given it. Where these sources have already been addressed in the foregoing text, commentary is kept to a minimum.

Ernst Förster (1853) gave a simple description of the *Virgin and Child* as a work of Van Eyck, in his book on early 'German' painting. In the mid-nineteenth century some German art historians saw early Netherlandish artists as forerunners of the German Renaissance, and included them in their histories of German art. Förster thought the *Virgin and Child* was dated 1432, rather than 1433, and noted that it bears the artist's motto.[1]

Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1854), having seen the work at Ince Hall in 1850, was the first to recognise it as a Van Eyck. He also gave its date as 1432.[2]

An unidentified author writing for *The Quarterly Review* (1854) noted Waagen's discovery of the *Virgin and Child* in a review of his book, observing that the attribution of the small painting to Van Eyck was supported by the appearance of the same motto as appears in its signature in the signature of one of Van Eyck's paintings in the National Gallery, London.[3]

James Arthur Crowe and Giovanni Battista Cavalcaselle (1857) gave the *Virgin and Child* to Van Eyck, with the date 1432, in their book surveying the works of early Netherlandish painters. They described the condition of the work as excellent, with the exception of the craquelure marring many parts, the Virgin's face in particular.[4]

W.H. James Weale (1861) referred to the work in a footnote to his discussion of the documentary evidence for Van Eyck's life. He argued from the then universal reading of the date as 1432 and the unusual inclusion of '*BRVGIS*' in the signature, that Van Eyck had meant to commemorate his relocation to the city in that year in the *Virgin and Child*'s signature. Weale deduced from this that it must have been the first painting Van Eyck completed upon returning there. He also surmised that the painting was among the works seen by the burgomaster of Bruges during a documented visit to Van Eyck's premises in July or August of that year.[5] Each of these hypotheses would be proved incorrect by Weale's own later correction of the reading of the date to 1433 (see below under the year 1906).

Gustav Friedrich Waagen (1862) mentioned the *Virgin and Child* again briefly, still with the date 1432, in a book on early German and Netherlandish art.[6]

Ralph Nicholson Wornum (1863) referred to the work as by Van Eyck and dated 1432 in a footnote to his catalogue of the foreign schools of painting in the National Gallery, London. He observed that it was not necessarily the first painting completed by Van Eyck after his return to Bruges in 1432, as Weale had supposed.[7]

Alfred Michiels (1866) listed the *Virgin and Child* as a signed and dated (1432) original work of Van Eyck in a book on Flemish painting.[8]

W.H. James Weale (1867) referred to the work again, in a footnote to his catalogue of an exhibition of early Netherlandish paintings in Bruges.[9]

Carl Schnaase (1879) grouped the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with the Lucca *Virgin and Child* in a discussion of Van Eyck's paintings, in a multi-volume history of art, noting their similar comfortable, domestic settings including gleaming brass lavers, candlesticks, and glass carafes.[10]

W.H. James Weale (1883) described the *Virgin and Child* at some length and with some precision, in a journal article on Eyckian works in English collections. He gave the work's dimensions as 265 by 195 mm, an accurate measurement of the paint surface, and recorded the support as oak. He did not mention a glass on the window-sill that he would refer to in 1906, perhaps because it had not been painted yet (by a restorer) or because it was obscured by an opaque varnish. He correctly recorded the appearance of the artist's name in the signature as 'EYC' but still incorrectly read the date as 1432. Weale thought that apart from the craquelure caused by the warping of the panel, the work was in perfect condition, having escaped the hands of restorers.[11] This turned out not to be the case.

Also in 1883, the work was described in an unattributed article for *The Athenæum* as:

> the gem of this [the Blundell] collection. It is a small upright panel representing the Virgin and Child and undoubtedly rightly attributed to John van Eyck, whose signature, with the complex flourish, and his motto, "Als ich kan", occurs upon it, as in the renowned example in the National Gallery.[12]

Frederick George Stephens—the likely author—appears to have conflated the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* in the National Gallery, London, which is signed '*Johannes de eyck fuit hic* ⬥/ ⬥ *1434* ⬥' in an elaborate calligraphy on the back wall, and the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, also in London, which is signed in a simpler style on the frame, but with the

addition of the artist's motto. It is difficult to account for Stephens' suggestion that the signature on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is accompanied by a 'complex flourish'. This observation has not been repeated in any other publication on the work, and no elaborate calligraphy is visible in the earliest published photographs that are legible.[13] Perhaps Stephens meant only that the signature is accompanied by a complex *rhetorical* flourish, since Van Eyck signed and dated his works more elaborately than any other fifteenth-century Netherlandish painter.

In 1884 the work was exhibited at the Royal Academy *Exhibition of Works by the Old Masters and by Deceased Masters of the British School; Including a Special Selection from the Works of Paul Falconer Poole, R.A., Winter Exhibition*, in London, as no. 267.[14]

Claude Phillips reviewed the exhibition, writing:

> Among the Flemish pictures, there is an authentic *Virgin and Child* by Jan van Eyck (no. 267), of very small dimensions, bearing the master's signature and the date 1432. This panel, already known to admirers of Flemish art, is of a splendid colour and in a good state of conservation. The beautiful effect of the light entering the window precedes the triumphs in this genre of the seventeenth-century Dutch school.[15]

In 1892 the work was exhibited at the Guildhall *Loan Collection of Pictures* in London, as no. 48.[16]

From 1892 to 1893 it was also exhibited at the Burlington Fine Arts Club *Exhibition of Pictures by Masters of the Netherlandish and Allied Schools of XV. and Early XVI. Centuries* in London, as no. 14A.[17]

Paul Leprieur reviewed the Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition, suggesting the painting was a genuine work by Van Eyck with a signature that had been transferred from the original frame by a later hand.[18]

Hugo von Tschudi (1893) also reviewed the Burlington Fine Arts Club exhibition. While accepting the attribution of the work to Van Eyck, he stated that it was covered by a cloudy English varnish, and noted that it did not show the artist at the peak of his abilities, citing the relatively plain setting, the restless pattern of the textile behind the Virgin, and the uncertain and 'childish' execution of the signature. Von Tschudi noted that although the signature was on the painting, the writing had the character of a stone inscription—presumably meaning that it is written in capitals and has *puncti* (the diamond shaped points in the motto).[19]

Von Tschudi (1894) described the Verdura *Virgin and Child* in a brief article on the art collection belonging to the prince of Verdura. He called number 474 a copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, and a work of the Flemish school dating to the end of the fifteenth century, bearing its inscription on each side of the baldachin.[20]

Ludwig Kaemmerer (1898) noted that doubts had been expressed about weakness in the execution of certain minor elements in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, but affirmed the attribution of the painting to Jan van Eyck (dated 1432), in his monograph on the Van Eycks.[21]

Otto Seeck (1899) included the *Virgin and Child* in his book discussing the works of the Van Eycks. Seeck grouped the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and Lucca *Virgin and Child* paintings together in his discussion, noting their compositional similarities.[22]

Karl Voll (1900) rejected the authenticity of the signature on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and attributed the work to an anonymous artist working in Bruges among the school of Memling in the late 1400s.[23]

Max Friedländer (1900) reviewed Voll's book, rejecting his commentary on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, and noting that Voll had not seen the work in the original. Friedländer maintained that the painting was authentic, while the signature was not.[24]

Wilhelm von Bode (1901) rejected Voll's commentary on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in a footnote of an article on Van Eyck. He noted that there were two old two copies of the work, the fifteenth-century Verdura *Virgin and Child* with an inscription similar to the one on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, and an apparently Sicilian work from the early sixteenth century in the Catania Museum. For Von Bode, the inscription on the Verdura *Virgin and Child* supported the authenticity of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature. He supposed that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* must have been in Sicily at an early date, due to the existence of the work in Catania.[25]

Ludwig Kaemmerer (1901) reviewed Voll's book, noting his rejections of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, and *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw*, among other works usually attributed to Van Eyck.[26]

Alfred Marks (1903) referred to the *Virgin and Child* as one of Jan van Eyck's earliest signed works, in a short book discussing the attribution of paintings to Jan and Hubert van Eyck.[27]

G. Joseph Kern (1904) listed the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a work of Van Eyck, dated 1432, in a book analysing the Van Eycks' use of perspective.[28]

Hippolyte Fierens-Gevaert (1905) described the *Virgin and Child* as a signed and dated (1432) masterpiece by Van Eyck, in his book surveying the works of the early Netherlandish masters. He echoed Weale's deduction that it must have been the artist's first work to be painted in Bruges after the installation of the Ghent altarpiece. However, even allowing for the incorrect reading of the date as 1432 rather than 1433, the *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)*, dated 1432, could have been painted in Bruges beforehand. Further, Fierens-Gevaert suggested the *Virgin and Child* was the first work by Van Eyck to include his motto, which may be correct, if it was completed before 21 October 1433, when the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* was signed and dated with the motto. He noted the *Virgin and Child*'s many delightful details provided by the artist for the viewer's delectation and commented on the contrast between the vast theological program of the Ghent altarpiece and the more familiar iconography of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[29]

In a discussion of Hubert van Eyck's oeuvre, Emile Durand-Gréville (1905) suggested the conception and design, and possibly the initial painting of the *Virgin and Child* might be by Hubert van Eyck, while most or all of its execution was by Jan.[30]

In 1906 the work was exhibited at the Guildhall *Exhibition of a Selection of Works by Flemish and Modern Belgian Painters* in London, as no. 3.[31]

W.H. James Weale (1906) reviewed the exhibition. He referred to the work as by Van Eyck and described its composition in some detail, mentioning the presence of a half-filled goblet on the window-sill for the first time, and correcting the reading of the date from 1432 to 1433 by transcribing a 'J' shaped final numeral after two 'I' shaped numerals.[32]

Max Friedländer (1906) also reviewed the exhibition, citing the work as an original by Van Eyck whose signature had been transferred from the lost original frame.[33]

T. Humphrey Ward (1906) reviewed the exhibition for *The Times* newspaper of London. He described the work as an 'original and rather celebrated work' of Van Eyck, but commented that with the deeply cracked state of its varnish, the work did scant justice to the master.[34]

Margarete Siebert (1906) included the *Virgin and Child* in an article discussing the Van Eycks' paintings of the Virgin.[35]

Alfred von Wurzbach (1906) wrote in his dictionary of Netherlandish artists that the *Virgin and Child* was regarded as a genuine work of Van Eyck with a false signature.[36]

Daniel Burckhardt (1906) mentioned the *Virgin and Child* as a model for the Naples *Holy Family with Saints Catherine and Barbara in a Church* then attributed to Konrad Witz,

but now attributed to a follower of Konrad, sometimes identified as Hans Witz, in an article on Konrad and the influence of the Van Eycks on his early career.[37]

The *Revue de l'Art Chrétien* (1906) noted Weale's commentary on the work in *The Burlington Magazine*, in particular that the work was not well preserved.[38]

Émile Durand-Gréville ([1906]) reviewed the Guildhall exhibition, describing the *Virgin and Child* as painted by Jan after a design of Hubert van Eyck's.[39]

Claude Phillips (1907) invoked Daniel Burckardt and Robert Stiassny's comments about the close relationship between the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Holy Family with Saints Catherine and Barbara in a Church*, in his attribution of a *Crucifixion* to Konrad Witz, which he thought also showed Eyckian influences.[40]

Louis de Fourcaud (1907) listed the *Virgin and Child* as a signed and dated (1432) work of Jan, in his entry on the Van Eycks in a multi-volume history of art.[41]

W.H. James Weale (1908) included the *Virgin and Child* as an autograph work of Van Eyck in a monograph on the artist. In his bibliography for the work, Weale was somewhat exasperated by Voll's commentary: 'Voll, 8, 87–89, 131, declares the inscription to be a forgery, and the picture, which he had never seen, to date from the end of the fifteenth century!!'[42]

Émile Durand-Gréville's (1910) book on the Van Eycks described the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as characteristic of Hubert, while he thought the execution (which he described as unpolished in the flesh tones, and comprised of superimposed glazes in the drapery rather than executed in impasto) was characteristic of Jan. He suggested that Jan might have taken one of Hubert's compositions as a model for the work. In addition, Durand-Gréville thought the painting in danger from the thick, degraded varnishes covering it, and recommended that it be treated to remove this threat.[43]

Émile Durand-Gréville (1910) reiterated in a journal article his belief that the work was executed by Jan after a design by Hubert.[44]

Émile Durand-Gréville ([1910?]) expressed the same opinion as above, in a short article on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, one of a series of articles on Hubert van Eyck's career.[45]

Eric MacLagan (1911) mentioned the *Virgin and Child* in a letter to the Editors of *The Burlington Magazine*, apologising to Durand–Gréville for referring to his belief that the work had been conceived and designed by Hubert van Eyck, a view formerly expressed by him but since modified in favour of Jan's authorship of the composition.[46]

W.H. James Weale and Maurice Brockwell (1912) listed the *Virgin and Child* among Jan's works in their monograph on the Van Eycks. The dimensions of the work were inaccurately given as '0.225 by 0.15 m'. The Verdura *Virgin and Child* was listed as a copy of it, and they noted there might be another copy at Catania. However, the text describing the Verdura *Virgin and Child* was split by the short reference to the Catania work. The description of the pledge written in Italian on the back of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* was given in a new paragraph and it gave some readers the impression that the discussion had returned to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, rather than continuing on the subject of the Verdura *Virgin and Child*.[47] Consequently, some later authors believed, incorrectly, that there is a pledge in Italian on the reverse of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.

Max Friedländer (1915) listed the *Virgin and Child* as a Van Eyck in the Thieme-Becker *Lexikon*, referring to the signature and date as having been transferred from the lost original frame. He noted Voll's rejection of the attribution, together with the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)*, and the *Portrait of Jan de Leeuw*.[48]

Sir Martin Conway (1921) mentioned the *Virgin and Child* briefly in his monograph on the Van Eycks, describing the execution of the room's accessories as delightful and Jan's painting of the Infant in this work as reminiscent of the sweetness of Hubert's style, and as more delightful than in Jan's Lucca and Van der Paele *Virgin and Child* paintings, whose Infants he described as ugly. He also noted that photographs did not do the work justice.[49]

Max Friedländer (1921) listed the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a signed and dated (1433) work of Van Eyck in his book surveying early Netherlandish painting.[50]

Kurt Pfister ([1922]) included the *Virgin and Child* as signed and dated (1433) in a list of Van Eyck's works, in his short monograph on the artist.[51]

Sir Claude Phillips (1922) supported the hypothesis of the non-originality of the signature in an article in *The Daily Telegraph* newspaper (London), written on the occasion of the work's acquisition for the Felton Bequest.[52]

Georg Frederick Zink (1922) wrote a letter to the Editor of the same newspaper shortly after Phillips' article, stating that he had cleaned the work, and attesting to the originality of the signature, which he described as having been painted by Van Eyck.[53] He provided no objective evidence for his assessment, and the basis of his observation is unclear, but seems to have been visual analysis alone.

Sir Charles J. Holmes (1922), Director of the National Gallery, London, hailed the Felton Bequest's acquisition of the work as an achievement of stunning audacity for Australia, in a brief notice in *The Burlington Magazine*. Though admitting the execution of

the work could not compare with his Gallery's *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, he stated that the attractiveness of the Infant had not been excelled by Van Eyck in any other work, and no other work by the artist was 'more bold and more felicitous in design than this tiny panel.'[54]

Maurice Brockwell (1923) published the *Virgin and Child* in a journal article for *Art in America* as a magnificent but tiny work of Van Eyck, describing the circumstances of its acquisition for the Felton Bequest. He noted, in particular, that the restorer Zink had 'refreshed' parts of the signature as well as cleaning the painting.[55]

In a resumé of recent literature in the *American Journal of Archaeology*, Sidney N. Deane (1923) summarised Brockwell's article on the *Virgin and Child*, 'the recent acquisition of which by the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, has caused so much comment'.[56]

Salomon Reinach (1923) published a photograph of the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* (Museo Paroquial, Iglesi de San Cosme y San Damian, Covarrubias/Burgos), a work he suggested was based on a lost composition by Van Eyck, possibly via an intermediary version by Petrus Christus. He thought it showed reminiscences of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife*, the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, the Dresden triptych, Petrus Christus' *Goldsmith with a Couple in his Shop* (formerly known as *Saint Eligius*, Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York), and a number of Campinesque works.[57]

Karl Voll (1923) described the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as little more than a pleasant imitation of Eyckian art, in his book on early Netherlandish painting, without advancing any substantial arguments for this characterisation.[58]

Art in Australia: A Quarterly Magazine (1923) noted the work's acquisition for the Felton Bequest in its editorial.[59]

Max Friedländer (1924) listed the *Virgin and Child* among Van Eyck's signed and dated (1433) works in the first edition of his important multi-volume survey of early Netherlandish painting. Friedländer noted, in particular, the depiction of sunlight entering the window, causing the glass and metal objects, and the gold brocade in the room, to shimmer and sparkle.[60]

Auguste Schmarsow (1924) attributed the work to Van Eyck, and dated it 1432, in his monograph on the artist. He suggested it might be inferred from the word '*CO[M]PLETV[M]*' in the signature that the work had been begun by Van Eyck earlier in his career, when he had not yet developed the characteristics of his mature style, and only completed it in 1432.[61]

Friedrich Winkler (1924) included the work as by Van Eyck in his survey of early Netherlandish painting.[62]

Hans Wendland (1924) noted that the composition of the Naples *Holy Family with Saints Catherine and Barbara in a Church* was evidently derived from an Eyckian composition, either the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* or a similar lost version, in his monograph on Konrad Witz. Wendland cited Burckhardt's 1906 publication as the source of the observation relating the Naples and Ince Hall compositions, and noted, in particular, the similarity between the 'S' shaped form of the drapery in the two works.[63]

J.S. Macdonald (1925), the art critic who became Director of the National Gallery of Victoria in 1936, described the work in *The Herald* newspaper (Melbourne):

> Of all the Van Eycks I have seen, this is the least important and significant. It has been said that it has been very much restored. Nevertheless, it shows up valourously and is easily one of our proudest possessions. Let anyone examine it carefully and see how piously and humbly the subject has been approached and how triumphantly it has been accomplished.[64]

Max Meldrum (undated—probably 1925 or later), the Australian artist and Trustee of the National Gallery of Victoria, wrote a manuscript now housed in the National Library of Australia, in which he argued that the claims made for the importance of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* following its acquisition for the Felton Bequest misrepresented its real importance. He seems to have been alluding to Macdonald's article referred to above. The work's true value, he claimed, lay in its significance as an early achievement in the history of European painting, rather than a superlative example of painting that could compare with the achievements of more recent masters.[65] Interestingly, in 1941 Meldrum carried out conservation work on the panel with Macdonald at the National Gallery of Victoria to rectify its warp.[66]

Willy Burger (1925) included the *Virgin and Child* among Van Eyck's works in his book surveying early Netherlandish painting.[67]

Max Dvořák (1925) referred to the work in passing with a group of paintings by Jan van Eyck of the Virgin and Child in his book on the attribution of works to Jan and Hubert van Eyck and the origins of the early Netherlandish school.[68]

Marguerite Devigne (1926) described the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as an authentic, signed and dated (1433) work of Van Eyck in her monograph on the artist, noting in

particular that Zink had affirmed the authenticity of the signature, had freed the work of a degraded varnish, and had retouched it. Devigne did not specify where his retouches were made. She noted that although the originality of the signature had been called into question, the existence of two copies of the work that repeated the signature, as well as Zink's commentary, confirmed its authenticity.[69] It has, however, not been established whether the version of the composition seen by Von Bode in Catania carried the signature also, and even if it did, whether it was not a copy of the Verdura *Virgin and Child*. Devigne also perpetuated the idea that the existence of an inscription in Italian on the reverse of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* (in reality on the reverse of the Verdura *Virgin and Child*), together with the existence of two copies of the work in Italy, implied that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* must have been in Italy.

Édouard Michel (1927) referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a work of Van Eyck and as a possible distant model for a Memlingesque work with a similar composition in his exhibition catalogue of early Netherlandish paintings in the Renders collection.[70]

Hippolyte Fierens-Gevaert (1927) referred to the work as signed and dated (1433) by Van Eyck. He described the work as a little masterpiece showing, in its small accessories, the light entering the window, and the grouping of the Virgin and Child, the artist's genius for representing intimacy. Von Bode's hypothesis that the work must have been in Italy at an early date due to the presence of two copies of it there was reiterated.[71]

Sir Paul Lambotte (1927) noted that Van Eyck's principal works were dispersed in the great museums of Europe, with one in Melbourne—evidently referring to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*—as well as others in the United States.[72]

Franz Dülberg (1929) included the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* among Van Eyck's works in his book surveying Gothic and Renaissance art.[73]

Max Friedländer (1930) wrote an entry for the work, describing it as a Van Eyck, in a catalogue of lesser-known masterpieces edited by Wilhelm Valentiner, many from private collections.[74]

Herbert Read (1930) mentioned the work in passing, as a Van Eyck, in a discussion of an early sixteenth-century enamel triptych produced in the workshop of Jean I. Pénicaud. The triptych was possibly owned by Henry Blundell, being in the collection of his heirs at the time the article was written.[75]

Paul Fierens (1931) listed the *Virgin and Child* among Van Eyck's authentic signed and dated works in his short monograph on the artist, and described it as equal in its depiction of maternal tenderness to the Lucca *Virgin and Child*.[76]

Friedrich Winkler (1931) referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, without specifying an attribution for its execution, in a discussion of the origin of the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*'s composition. His article discussed the works of Van Eyck's followers.[77]

Karl von Tolnai (1932) accepted the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a work of Van Eyck in an article, referring to it as evidence that Van Eyck had been influenced by the Master of Flémalle. Von Tolnai suggested that Van Eyck's composition of a Virgin and Child in a domestic interior had been influenced by the Flémallesque *Virgin and Child by the Fire* and that Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church* had been influenced by the composition of the Flémallesque *Virgin and Child in a Niche*, preserved in a number of copy-variants. Von Tolnai's argument favoured the Master of Flémalle as the founding figure of the early Netherlandish school.[78]

Emile Renders (1933) mentioned the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in passing, together with Van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)* and *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?),* as not of sufficient size to have been the work Philip the Good saw in Van Eyck's studio in 1433, an event recorded in a document in the Lille archives. Renders assumed that a small work would have been brought to the duke. The date of the visit has since been corrected to late 1432. The reference was made in a book arguing against the historical existence of Hubert van Eyck. Renders interpreted the duke's visit to Jan van Eyck's studio as evidence of the artist undertaking a large project at that time, which he argued could have been the Ghent altarpiece.[79]

Chandler Rathfon Post (1933) described the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* as probably a Spanish copy after a lost composition by Van Eyck bearing similarities to Van Eyck's Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Post's discussion of the relationship between the two works featured in his monumental multi-volume study of early Spanish painting. He assumed that the differences between the compositions of the two works could not have been the result of the Covarrubias Master making changes to Van Eyck's composition, suggesting he was too servile an artist to have done so. Post thought, moreover, that the differences in the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* were characteristic of Van Eyck (presumably referring to such details as the prayer beads on the wall). Paradoxically, he also suggested the haloes in the Covarrubias picture were an addition to the original composition, possibly indicating that the artist was Spanish. Post described the quality of the work as high for a Spanish artist, though low for a Netherlandish one. Despite partially transcribing the German inscription of the Covarrubias painting, Post concluded that the artist was probably Spanish. He excluded the possibility that a Spanish painter copied an Eyckian original in the Netherlands and then

brought it home with him, and noted that the reported existence of two copies of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in Italy implied an Italian provenance for that work, leaving the hypothesis that an alternative version of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition had been in Spain where it had been copied by the Covarrubias Master.[80] Post did not consider the simpler hypothesis that the Covarrubias Master might have painted his *Virgin and Child* in Bruges as a free copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, combining details of Van Eyck's other paintings as well as those of Robert Campin, as well as some of his own inventions, that this painting was then purchased by or perhaps commissioned by a Spanish collector, while another artist produced a more faithful copy, the Verdura *Virgin and Child*, which was purchased or commissioned for an Italian collection.

K. Smits (1933) briefly discussed the iconography of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in a book on the iconography of early Netherlandish art, without specifying an attribution.[81]

Georges Hulin de Loo (1934) noted in an article that the verb in the signature of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was in the passive tense, as is that in Van Eyck's *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)*. He proffered this observation as evidence supporting his reading of the verb '*incepit*' in the Ghent altarpiece quatrain as lacking an explicit complement.[82]

Alan Burroughs (1938) described the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as rightly attributed to Van Eyck, although he suggested that it and the *Virgin and Child at the Fountain* were evidence that Van Eyck did not achieve his best results on a small scale. Burroughs referred to these works in an argument largely attempting to prove that the *Virgin and Child in a Church*, a small but exceptionally well executed work, was painted by Hubert rather than Jan van Eyck. Burroughs was a paintings conservation scientist at the Fogg Art Museum, Cambridge, whose book analysed the recently produced 'shadowgraphs' (x-radiographs) of Old Master paintings, although an x-radiograph of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* itself was yet to be made.[83]

Charles de Tolnay (1939) reiterated in French the views expressed in his article in German mentioned above. He argued that the Master of Flémalle could be credited with the invention of a number of innovative compositions that Van Eyck subsequently appropriated. He also described the decorative 'S' shaped form of the drapery that overrides the representation of the Virgin's body in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as the 'last echo' of a taste for the Gothic in Van Eyck's work, completely transformed in the comparable Lucca *Virgin and Child*, in which the volumes are all clearly represented.[84]

Basil Burdett (1939) mentioned the acquisition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, which he referred to as a work of Van Eyck, together with Frank Rinder's purchase of Van

Dyck's *Portrait of Rachel de Ruvigny, Countess of Southhampton*, and a late fifteenth-century Netherlandish triptych, as the true beginning of the Felton Bequest. Burdett's article in *Apollo* discussed the history of Old Master purchases at the National Gallery of Victoria.[85]

In 1939 the *Virgin and Child* was exhibited in *Masterpieces of Art*, as no. 113, catalogued as signed by Van Eyck and dated 1433.[86] Subsequently, the work was exhibited at: the Detroit Institute of Arts in 1939 in *Masterpieces of Art from Foreign Collections: European Paintings from the Two World's Fairs*, as no. 12;[87] the California Palace of the Legion of Honour and M.H. de Young Memorial Museum in San Francisco in *Seven Centuries of Painting: A Loan Exhibition of Old and Modern Masters* in 1939–40, as no. L–15;[88] the Cleveland Museum of Art in *Masterpieces of Art from the New York and San Francisco World's Fairs* in 1940, as no. 12;[89] museums in Pittsburgh, St Louis, Minneapolis, Los Angeles, Newark, Toledo, Springfield;[90] and the Cincinnati Art Museum in *Masterpieces of Art European Paintings from the New York and San Francisco World's Fairs; To Which Have Been Added a Number of Outstanding Paintings from Public and Private Collections of Cincinnati*, 1941, as no. 17.[91]

The National Gallery of Victoria (1941) published the *Virgin and Child* in an illustrated catalogue of selected works in its collection. The catalogue incorrectly stated that the work is painted on canvas attached to an oak panel. Subsequent technical analyses have not revealed any indication of a canvas interlayer (a technique more commonly encountered in Italian early Renaissance paintings). The catalogue also stated that the work is the earliest dated painting by Van Eyck, ignoring that the Ghent altarpiece and the *Portrait of a Young Man (Léal Souvenir)* were completed and dated in the previous year. An accurate transcription was given of the signature, including abbreviation marks and the distinctive orthography of certain letters, with the second word of the artist's motto being recorded as '*IXH*'.[92]

Hermann Beenken (1941) included the *Virgin and Child* among Jan's works in his monograph on the Van Eycks.[93]

Millard Meiss (1941) referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Virgin and Child in a Church*, as paintings by Van Eyck that could have provided a precedent for Piero della Francesca's depiction of light in the *Virgin and Child with Two Angels* (also known as the 'Senigallia *Madonna*', in the Galleria Nazionale delle Marche, Urbino).[94] The depiction of light entering the window on the left of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, falling on the window reveal, passing through the room and then falling on the rear wall of the room in a thin strip, suggesting that it extends behind the cloth of honour, is remarkably similar to

Piero's depiction of light, and is much closer to it than that in the *Virgin and Child in a Church*. How Piero might have known such an Eyckian model is uncertain, although Vasari recorded that Federico da Montefeltro, for whose court Piero worked, owned a work by Van Eyck showing an interior scene that may have been lit in similar manner as the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[95] However, both Van Eyck and Piero della Francesca's models for this type of representation of light may have been early fifteenth-century Florentine Annunciations. Fra Angelico's *Annunciation* now in the Prado, Madrid, shows comparable light effects.[96]

Baron Joseph van der Elst (1946), in a book on early Netherlandish painting, described the work in the following rhapsodic manner:

> When one stands before the Melbourne *Madonna* it is immediately apparent that van Eyck created a great pyramidal composition in this minute panel, probably without being aware of having done so. The picture is scarcely larger than its coloured reproduction in COLOUR PLATE 107 [approximately A4], yet it could be enlarged a hundred times and lose none of its power and dignity. Its monumentality is the result of a combination of factors: the sculptural modelling harmonizing with luminous light and atmosphere; the distribution of various yet counterbalanced areas of colour; the geometric scale of the forms; and the single idea expressed with great clarity in orderly and rhythmic language of forms.
>
> In these qualities this *Madonna* may be said to be one of the finest examples of the Flemish style of painting.[97]

In 1948 the National Gallery of Victoria published a catalogue in which the entry for the *Virgin and Child* was quoted almost entirely from Weale and Brockwell's 1912 description of the work.[98]

Theodore Musper (1948) included the *Virgin and Child* among Van Eyck's works in his book on Rogier van der Weyden and Van Eyck.[99]

Leo van Puyvelde (1948) listed the *Virgin and Child* as a work of Van Eyck in his book on early Netherlandish painters.[100]

Ursula Hoff (1949) wrote an entry for the work in a catalogue of masterpieces from the National Gallery of Victoria, accepting the attribution of the work to Van Eyck. Hoff described the contrast between the Virgin's stylised mantle and the precious canopy, on the one hand, and the everyday setting on the other, as intended to enforce a deliberate religious lesson, that the Virgin as a Queen of Heaven was not to be seen as a remote figure, but rather an ideal Flemish woman. The work was illustrated with a heavily retouched photograph.[101]

Kenneth Clark (1949), while Slade Professor of Fine Art at Oxford, gave a lecture at The University of Melbourne on the idea of a great public gallery, subsequently published as a pamphlet. In it he described the *Virgin and Child* as the greatest work of art in the National Gallery of Victoria's collection.[102]

Anthony Bertram (1950) included the work as by Jan in a small, illustrated volume of the Van Eycks' works, describing the motto as written in 'curious semi-Greek lettering.'[103]

Joseph van der Elst (1951) described the *Virgin and Child* as painted by Van Eyck with an exceptional tenderness, in a book on Flemish art.[104]

René Cazier (1951) listed the work as signed and dated (1433) by Van Eyck, noting in particular its heavy craquelure, in a dictionary of Belgian painters.[105]

Ludwig Baldass (1952) listed the *Virgin and Child* as among Van Eyck's first mature works in his monograph on the artist. Baldass thought the turning of the Virgin's body comparable with the Virgin's posture in Van Eyck's *Virgin and Child in a Church*. He also noted that the relationship of the figures to the interior was comparable with Campin's *Virgin and Child by a Fireplace* (Hermitage, Saint Petersburg), illustrating the works side by side. Baldass noted, however, that the perspective in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was better than that in the *Virgin and Child by a Fireplace*.[106]

Baldass' book was reviewed by André Chastel in *Le Monde* (Paris, 1952), where the attribution of the work to Van Eyck was described as 'sometimes contested' (a reference to Karl Voll?).[107]

Eberhard Schenk zu Schweinsberg (1952) included the work in his discussion of Jan van Eyck's authentic works, in a book on the compositions of the Van Eycks' paintings.[108]

In his book *Early Netherlandish Painting: Its Origin and Character* Erwin Panofsky (1953) accepted the *Virgin and Child* as a Van Eyck. Panofsky noted overpainting on the Virgin's face and did not accept the signature as original, although he accepted its date of 1433.[109]

Leo van Puyvelde (1953) listed the work as signed and dated (1433) by Jan van Eyck in his book on Flemish painting in the Van Eycks' time.[110]

Valentin Denis (1954) included the *Virgin and Child* as an authentic work of Van Eyck in a short monograph on the artist, but followed the textual confusion of Weale, stating that there is an inscription in Italian, dated 1619, on the back, which is in fact on the reverse of the Verdura *Virgin and Child*. Furthermore, Denis suggested that the signature had in all probability been transferred from the lost original frame, but made the impossible suggestion that this had perhaps been done by Zink in 1822. Zink treated the work in 1922, more than

seventy years after the signature has been seen on the paint surface. Denis described the condition of the work as not very satisfactory, with numerous repaints. The Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* was listed as a copy of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[111]

Martin Davies (1954) mentioned the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as by Van Eyck, noting that it, like the Lucca *Virgin and Child* and the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife,* showed oranges below the window. The reference was made in a list of comparative material in Davies' entry for the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* in the second '*Primitifs Flamands*' *Corpus* volume for the National Gallery, London.[112] From 1956 Davies would become an influential figure in the critical reception of the *Virgin and Child*. He had joined the National Gallery, London, in 1930 as an honorary attaché, became Assistant Keeper in 1932, Deputy Keeper in 1946, Keeper in 1960, and Director in 1969. He was knighted in 1972. Davies is renowned for his scholarship at the National Gallery, notably, the three editions of his catalogue of the early Netherlandish paintings, containing critical discussions of the literature for the most important works.[113] He also wrote a monograph on Rogier van der Weyden.[114]

As a connoisseur Davies made some art historical discoveries. He was the first to attribute the *Meeting of the Three Kings, with David and Isaiah* (obverse) and the *Assumption of the Virgin* (reverse) from Ince Hall to the Master of the Saint Bartholomew Altarpiece.[115] However, Davies also made a number of judgments about the authorship of paintings that have not been widely accepted. His attribution of the *Saints Jerome and John the Baptist* (National Gallery, London) to Masolino rather than Masaccio is not generally accepted.[116] His rejection of the *Saint George and the Dragon* (Musée Jacquemart André, Paris) as a work of Paolo Uccello[117] has not been sustained in the recent literature.[118] As noted below in relation to Jaynie Anderson's 2003 publication, Davies' negative assessment of Giambattista Tiepolo's *Banquet of Cleopatra* (National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne) is quite unjustified. Lorne Campbell's catalogue of early Netherlandish paintings in the National Gallery, London, also revised a number of Davies' attributions.[119]

Maurice Brockwell (1954) described Voll's rejection of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Portrait of a Man (Self-Portrait?)* as unwise and not needing to be seriously considered, in a book on the even more controversial topic of the non-existence of Hubert van Eyck's career as a painter.[120]

Joz Duverger (1955) referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition as similar to the lost original model by Van Eyck or Petrus Christus for the Covarrubias *Virgin and*

Child. The latter he attributed to a follower of Van Eyck working in Bruges, in an article on painters of the Bruges school of the first half of the fifteenth century.[121]

Julius Held (1955) questioned the date of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, which he discussed as a work of Van Eyck in a review of Panofsky's book, reverting to the early reading of the date as 1432, without explanation. Presumably, the abraded last digit was not (sufficiently) visible to him. Held accepted the hypothesis that the signature had been transferred from the lost original frame, offering as supporting evidence the suggestion that the use of Roman numerals was unusual in Van Eyck's works.[122] The date on the frame of the Dresden triptych would, however, subsequently be revealed by cleaning to be in Roman numerals also.

Jacques Lassaigne ([1955]) listed the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* among Van Eyck's signed and dated (1433) works in a chapter on early Netherlandish painting, in a book on fifteenth-century painting in Europe.[123]

Otto Pächt (1956) reviewed Panofsky's book, mentioning the *Virgin and Child* in footnote 32:

> in the Ince Hall *Madonna* […], however, there is a transition from the thorax down to the knee-section which, together with the serpentine movement of the main current of the folds and the lack of precision in the sitting posture, makes me wonder whether any trust should be put on the evidence of the inscription on the back wall (suggesting Jan as author and 1433 as date), supposedly transferred from the original frame now lost.

It need not be concluded that he was implying a doubt as to the authenticity (per se) of the work as Hoff later stated.[124] In footnote 23 he referred to the Virgin of the Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation* as characteristic of Hubert's style, writing:

> From the Eyckian *oeuvre* only a few figures can be quoted in which a similar archaic or transitional structure is apparent, a similar lack of precision in the spatial organization of the body behind the drapery façade; one such instance is the angel […] of the *Three Maries at the Sepulchre* picture (who could disentangle the position of the legs?) in whom Panofsky, in my opinion mistakenly, proposes to see a twin brother of the Angel Gabriel in Ghent (and an addition by Jan to a painting otherwise by Hubert's hand!)

Pächt seems to have been implying that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* showed characteristics of Hubert's archaic style, or that it was in fact a work by Hubert with a later,

misleading signature.[125] The elliptical quality of his observations may be explained by the difficulty of attributing any work to Hubert securely given the absence of any work signed by him.

From 31 July (inauguration—official opening 1 August) until 16 September 1956 the work was exhibited as a Van Eyck in *L'Art flamand dans les collections Britanniques et la Galerie Nationale de Victoria* at the Musée Groeninge in Bruges, as no. 2.[126]

F. Grossmann (1957) reviewed the exhibition, accepting the attribution of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* to Van Eyck. He considered the following questions: first, whether the date was 1432 or 1433; second, whether the reading of the date agreed with the work's stylistic features, and third, whether the signature was authentic. Grossmann avoided making a firm conclusion regarding the first question by accepting unreservedly the hypothesis that the signature had been transferred from the lost original frame for the third question. This allowed him to speculate that the copyist might have misread the last 'V' for an 'X', making the original date 1428. Grossmann suggested that the earlier date was in keeping with the view recently expressed by Pächt that the style of the work was compatible with early Eyckian works, slightly simplifying Pächt's ambiguous comments, though preserving their spirit. Further supporting evidence for an early date for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was advanced in a footnote. Grossmann related Baldass' observation that the Virgin's 'S' shaped drapery was reminiscent of the similarly shaped Virgin in the *Virgin and Child in a Church,* which he suggested was widely regarded as an early work of Van Eyck (but is now generally regarded as a late work). Grossmann described the Lucca *Virgin and Child* as Van Eyck's modernising revision of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition.[127]

Christopher Hussey (1958) described the work as 'Blundell's outstanding treasure […] the celebrated little Virgin and Child signed and dated 1432 by Jan van Eyck', in a series of articles in *Country Life Magazine* on Ince Hall and its art collection.[128]

Following the National Gallery of Victoria's 1959 press release announcing the results of the recent analysis of the *Virgin and Child*, Arnold Shore (1959), Art Critic for *The Age* and the National Gallery of Victoria's Guide Lecturer 1948–57, called for an explanation for the change of attribution.[129]

The late David Carritt (1959) refuted Coremans' findings, publicised in Europe by Reuters, on the basis of his own connoisseurship.[130]

Peter and Linda Murray (1960) referred to the work as signed and dated by Jan van Eyck in a small art dictionary, although the inscription was said not to be contemporary.[131]

John Jacob (1960) briefly referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as by Van Eyck in an essay accompanying the catalogue of the exhibition *Pictures from Ince Blundell Hall* held from 3 to 31 April 1960, at the Walker Art Gallery, Liverpool. Jacob stated that the work had been the only one sold from the collection.[132] Before the exhibition it had been publicly announced that the Weld family was removing the paintings collection from Ince Hall to their estate at Lulworth, and this seems to have been the occasion for the exhibition.[133]

Ursula Hoff's 1961 *Catalogue of European Paintings Before Eighteen Hundred* (first edition) reclassified the *Virgin and Child* as 'After Van Eyck'.[134]

In a journal article Millard Meiss (1961) responded to the results of the 1957–58 analysis, to which he had been made privy together with Panofsky, by describing the work as a free copy. Meiss noted the key role that the analysis of the signature played in his reattribution:

> That the Melbourne Madonna [...] was not painted by Jan van Eyck became clear to me upon examination, together with Professor Panofsky, of the analysis of the inscription undertaken by the Centre National de Recherches "Primitifs Flamands" in Brussels, under the direction of Paul Coremans, and upon study of the photographic details of the painting that were made at the Centre.[135]

Otto Kurz (1961) retained the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as one of Van Eyck's works in his art encyclopedia entry for Hubert and Jan van Eyck. He noted in particular that 'the small *Madonna* of 1433 in Melbourne (Nat. Gall.) anticipates to a certain extent the interior of the *Arnolfini portrait* which Jan was to paint in the following year.' Kurz seems to have been the first author to draw attention to the correspondences between the compositions of these works.[136]

Gerald Reitlinger (1961) listed the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as costing £31,395, among the Van Eycks' paintings whose values had been recorded. In his book on the changing value of artworks, he noted that with the exception of the Ghent altarpiece wings, which had long been recognised as one of the most valuable artworks ever to reach the market, the value of the Van Eycks' works skyrocketed from a few hundred pounds at the end of the nineteenth century to hundreds of thousands of pounds in the first three decades of the twentieth.[137]

Michael Levey (1962) reviewed Hoff's 1961 catalogue, praising her setting out of the reasons why the *Virgin and Child* could be no more than a copy. He did, however, correct her statement that the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* was the only instance in which Van Eyck put his signature within the pictorial space, noting that this also occurred in the *Portrait of a Man (Léal Souvenir)*.[138]

Keith Roberts (1962) reviewed Valentine Denis' monograph on Van Eyck, criticising the inclusion of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* under the heading of autograph works, since he said the Melbourne catalogue had shown that this status was increasingly suspect.[139]

E. Schiltz (1963) noted that the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* closely resembled the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, in a brief discussion of the influence of Van Eyck's works in Spain. The bulk of his pamphlet was devoted to a discussion of a number of Eyckian depictions of the Crucifixion and the two Eyckian *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* paintings, noting in particular a number of supposed concealed signatures.[140]

Jacqueline Folie (1963) stated that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* had been shown not to be an authentic work of Van Eyck during its examination at the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique in 1957–58. In her article discussing the types of evidence available for attributing early Netherlandish paintings, she did not specify what evidence had been discovered to support this conclusion, citing instead Hoff's 1961 summary of the analysis. Folie described the work as probably an old copy of a lost original by Van Eyck.[141]

Kenneth Clark (1964), while accepting that the *Virgin and Child* was a copy, still expressed the opinion that it was among the National Gallery of Victoria's finest works, in a slightly revised publication of his 1949 paper.[142]

Paul Wescher (1965) described the compositions of a number of Quinten Massys' paintings of the Virgin and Child as deriving in part from Van Eyck's Melbourne version.[143]

Vladimir Loewinson-Lessing and Nicolas Nicouline (1965) mentioned De Tolnay and Panofsky's differing points of view regarding which of the *Virgin and Child by a Fireplace* by Campin (undated) and the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* by Van Eyck (dated 1433) was earlier, in their *Corpus* entry for Campin's work.[144]

Ursula Hoff's (1967) entry for the work in the second edition of the Gallery's catalogue of Old Master paintings was almost identical to that in the first edition, except for the correction of the error noted by Levey, mentioned above.[145]

Robert Genaille (1967) listed the *Virgin and Child* as a signed and dated work of Van Eyck in his dictionary of Flemish and Dutch painters.[146]

Robert A. Koch (1967) agreed with Panofsky in describing Van der Weyden's Durán *Virgin and Child* as based on the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, which he referred to as a Van Eyck.[147]

The posthumous, English language edition (1967) of Max Friedländer's volume on Van Eycks and Petrus Christus, from his multi-volume survey of early Netherlandish painting, maintained the attribution of the *Virgin and Child* to Van Eyck of the original German edition. However, the text incorrectly referred to the cloth of honour as blue and gold rather than green and gold, and followed Weale's textual confusion suggesting that there was a note on the reverse of the panel in Italian, which is on the reverse of the Verdura *Virgin and Child*.[148]

Charles Cuttler (1968) appeared uncertain about accepting a reclassification of the work in the wake of the 1950s analysis, retaining the attribution to Van Eyck in his book on early Northern European painting, but not without question. Cuttler wrote, 'Despite the signature, the work has been doubted as an original by Jan van Eyck, but it does fit logically into his development […]. Even though there is repainting on the face of the Virgin, both conception and execution are of high quality.'[149]

Margaret Whinney (1968) stated that the work 'is now known to be a non-Flemish copy' in her book on early Flemish art, but inexplicably wrote that it bears the date 1434, which she described as 'somewhat dubious' on the basis that the design may have been earlier. Whinney also stated that the Virgin sits upon a throne.[150] While regal in appearance, the low seat with a cloth of honour and baldachin in the work need not be considered an attribute solely of a monarch or bishop. In numerous fifteenth-century miniatures and panel paintings kings and dukes sit on seats of varying degrees of elaboration at state occasions, from a simple bench with a cloth of honour and baldachin (for example, in *Philip the Bold and Margaret of Flanders Receiving Burgesses of Ghent* from the *Privileges of Ghent and Flanders* by the Master of the Privileges of Ghent and Flanders in the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Vienna) to a throne with a podium, armrests, and elaborate canopy. Doubtless, the degree of ostentation was related to the symbolic importance of the occasion. However, it was not only kings and dukes who owned seats with cloths of honour and baldachins (see, for example, the scribe's furnishing in *Jean Miélot in his Study* (*Le miroir de la salvation humaine*, Flemish, late fifteenth century, Bibliothèque Nationale, ms. Fr. 6275, fol. 96v). Thus, the cloth of honour and baldachin in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* might not have been recognised as attributes of a throne by a fifteenth-century viewer, so much as luxurious furnishings.

Raffaello Brignetti and Giorgio T. Faggin (1968) listed the *Virgin and Child* as probably an authentic work of Van Eyck in their illustrated catalogue of Van Eyck's works, but noted that doubts had been expressed since the work was exhibited in Bruges in 1956, citing in particular Hoff's 1961 catalogue entry.[151]

Giorgio T. Faggin (1968) discussed the work briefly among those by Van Eyck in a short essay in a picture book of Van Eyck's works.[152]

Robert Hughes (1968) mentioned the green and gold brocade textile of the *Virgin and Child* as requiring virtually 'a strenuous act of the imagination' in order for it to be seen as paint, such was Van Eyck's ability to paint illusionistically. The reference came in Hughes' introduction to a catalogue by Giorgio T. Faggin of the Van Eycks' works, in which the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was described as probably by Van Eyck, notwithstanding the questions raised about the attribution following the Bruges exhibition of 1956.[153]

Giovanni Carandente (1968) referred to the *Virgin and Child* as a work previously attributed to Van Eyck, in his '*Primitifs Flamands*' *Corpus* volume for Sicilian collections. Carandente noted that art historians had referred to two copies of the work discovered at the end of the nineteenth century in Sicily, which had subsequently been lost. He thought these works of interest inasmuch as they might provide evidence of a Sicilian provenance for the prototype. He located the Verdura *Virgin and Child* in a private collection in Rome, while the other, formerly in the Museum at Catania, could not be definitively identified. The Verdura *Virgin and Child* was in the possession of the daughter of the duke de Gemmis, and photographs of the recto and verso were published, the latter showing the pledge in Italian, dated 1619, which had been recorded by Weale.[154]

R.W. Scheller (1968) mentioned the work in two footnotes of an article on the origin and meaning of Van Eyck's motto. Scheller referred to its signature as one of a number of copies of lost signatures by Van Eyck. He noted, in particular, that the verb in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* signature was the Latin '*complevit*', as used by the artist on other occasions.[155]

Ursula Hoff (1968) described the work as a copy, probably contemporary, of a lost original by Van Eyck from 1433, making no mention of the work's earlier attribution or the reasons for changing it.[156] The work was illustrated in a book on the Gallery's collection, with a poor, hand-coloured, pre-restoration photo dating from *c*. 1923 (it was reproduced in *Art in Australia* in that year).

César Pemán y Pemartín (1969) referred to the *Virgin and Child* in his book on Van Eyck and Spain, as a copy after a lost original by Van Eyck. He wrote that the original,

together with a number of other works by Van Eyck, influenced the composition of the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*.[157]

Eug. Schiltz (1969) listed the work among those by Jan that show books, in a pamphlet that claimed to decipher inscriptions, including disguised signatures, in the artist's representations of texts.[158]

Alfons Lieven Dierick (1970) included the work as by Van Eyck in his small picture book of the artist's works. In a short accompanying text he compared the homely interior to the Master of Flémalle's work, and the Virgin's large mantle to the robe in Van Eyck's *Saint Barbara*.[159]

Lola B. Malkis Gellman (1970) referred to 'Jan's' Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as similar in composition to Petrus Christus' *Virgin and Child in an Interior* (Nelson-Atkins Museum, Kansas), in her Doctoral dissertation on Christus.[160]

Ursula Hoff edited the entry for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in the 1971 *Corpus* volume for the National Gallery of Victoria's early Netherlandish paintings, describing the work as a non-Flemish copy of a lost Van Eyck.[161]

Leonard Cox (1971) accepted the de-attribution of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in his book on the history of the National Gallery of Victoria.[162]

Charles Sterling (1971) referred to the work in an article on Petrus Christus' chronology as not important enough to be the work by Van Eyck seen by Philip the Good on a visit to the artist's workshop in 1433 (although the date of the visit has been modified by a subsequent scholar to late 1432). Nevertheless, Sterling implicitly retained the attribution of the work to Van Eyck.[163]

Otto Pächt (based on lectures delivered *c*. 1972 but published in 1994) accepted Hoff's conclusion that the signature was an original part of the paint layers, as with passages of painting previously suspected of being overpaint, such as that on the Virgin's face. Pächt concluded in his book on early Netherlandish painters that the work was 'not an original Van Eyck but an amazingly well-painted copy of a lost work of which a number of other copies and paraphrases are known.' He drew attention to aspects of the composition he thought defective, but close to the style of the Flémalle Master: the way the Virgin's form is hidden by the drapery, and the lack of spatial clarity in the relation of the figures to their surroundings. These allowed him, tentatively, to date the composition to the early part of Van Eyck's career, prior to the Ghent altarpiece. While the influence of Campin is probably correct, Pächt may have exaggerated the work's spatial problems to make his point. The Virgin cannot be sitting on the ground, as he suggested, but can only be on a low seat, as

Panofsky noted,[164] with a cushion, the edge of which is protruding to the right. If the Virgin was sitting on the ground she would be level with the laver on the floor to the right, but this is manifestly not the case. Pächt's misreading of the position of the Virgin has affected his reading of other objects in the composition, such that he also claimed that the laver is misplaced compared with that in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*. Purtle thought that the reverse was true, observing that the laver in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was depicted more naturally than the one in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, where the basin is shown tipped up, possibly for a symbolic purpose.[165] Nevertheless, Pächt praised the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s lighting, 'which even excels that of the Arnolfini double portrait […] the superb way in which it captures the half-light of a space only partly illuminated from one side. These are effects that seem to anticipate the achievements of Jan Vermeer and Pieter de Hooch.'[166]

Lorne Campbell (1972) reviewed Hoff and Davies' *Corpus* volume and described the work as 'a close imitation, based on a lost Van Eyck composition of which other versions are known or recorded'. Campbell stated that the signature had been revealed to be original and that 'the technique of the painting, in the opinions of all the contributors, is not fifteenth century Netherlandish.' He also recognised the hypothesis hinted at in the *Corpus* volume that the work was a forgery: 'the conclusion seems inescapable; and there are indications that the picture must be an early, and highly successful, forgery.'[167] However, the idea of an early forgery is undermined by the prevalence of copying as a legitimate means of satisfying the early Netherlandish market's demand for works in the manner of the best artists, a practice that was prevalent from Van Eyck's own lifetime.[168]

J.P. Filedt Kok (1972–73) criticised a number of aspects of the entry for the work in Hoff and Davies' *Corpus* volume, but did not reject the de-attribution.[169]

Gustav Künstler (1972) listed the *Virgin and Child* among the ten independently produced works signed and dated by Jan van Eyck, in his article on the artist's motto.[170]

Ursula Hoff (1973) listed the work under the heading 'After Jan van Eyck, Flemish' while stating, paradoxically, that, 'in 1957 and 1958 it was examined at the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique in Brussels, when it was found that the paint constituents and the structure of the paint layers were inconsistent with fifteenth-century Flemish practice.' Fifteen years after the work's restoration, it was still illustrated with a pre-restoration photograph of the work, distinguishable by the presence of the glass on the window-sill, which was removed in 1958.[171]

In the same year the third edition of Hoff's catalogue of Old Master painting appeared, including entries for pre-1800 European sculpture. The entry for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* did not differ significantly from that for the 1961 edition.[172]

James Snyder (1973) was inclined to view the *Virgin and Child* as an authentic work of Van Eyck despite Hoff's rejection of it in 1967. In a short essay, Snyder acknowledged that the work had been cited by Panofsky as important evidence for the development of Van Eyck's style in 1433 from the exuberant, informal, and free style of his early works to the more ordered, restrained, and balanced style of his late ones. However, Snyder doubted whether this characterisation of the artist's stylistic development was tenable, given the revelation of the date of the Dresden triptych during the cleaning of its frame. Panofsky had dated the Dresden triptych to the early years of the artist's career. However, the cleaning revealed the date 1437, close to the end of Van Eyck's life. Snyder also questioned the date of the *Virgin and Child* as 1433, without providing particular reasons for doing so, or suggesting an alternative.[173]

Josua Bruyn (1975) reviewed Hoff and Davies' *Corpus* volume and accepted the majority of their conclusions regarding the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*. Bruyn did note, however, that Hoff's statement that she knew of no instance in which an inscription formerly on a frame had been transferred to the picture surface, was contradicted by her own hypothesis, advanced in the same volume, that the date on Memling's *Man of Sorrows in the Arms of the Virgin* might have been copied from its lost original frame.[174]

Carol Purtle (1976) wrote that, 'laboratory examination and recent scholarship have shown convincingly that it [the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*] is not an original panel by Jan van Eyck' in her Doctoral dissertation at Washington University on Jan van Eyck's Marian imagery. Purtle cited Hoff and Davies' 1971 *Corpus* volume as the source of this evidence. Purtle wrote that the painting, 'reflects Eyckian ideas without being either by the master himself or a very exact copy of one of his works.'[175]

Penny Howell Jolly (1976) accepted that the work was a copy of a lost original by Van Eyck, citing the opinion in Hoff and Davies' 1971 *Corpus* volume, as well as Meiss and Panofsky's attribution of the work to a follower of Van Eyck, recorded in Meiss' 1961 article listed above. Jolly accepted the hypothesis that the lost original by Van Eyck or a copy of it had been in southern Europe by 1500, noting the presence of the Verdura *Virgin and Child* in Messina, the Catania version, and the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* in Spain as evidence for this, despite Hoff's suggestion that the Verdura *Virgin and Child* was Flemish, the fact that the work seen in Catania had since been lost (and might have been a copy of the Verdura

Virgin and Child), and the fact that the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* may have been Flemish as well.[176]

Annie Jolain (1976) listed the location of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* at the end of her dictionary entry for the Van Eycks but did not include it in her discussion.[177]

Charles Sterling (1976) listed the *Virgin and Child* among Van Eyck's authentic works in his influential article on Van Eyck's early career. He referred in particular to the representation of the Infant as characteristic of Van Eyck's small-scale works. Sterling made no reference to any doubts about the work's authenticity.[178]

Kenneth Clark (1977) claimed in the second volume of his autobiography that he was convinced the *Virgin and Child* was a copy from the moment he saw it.[179]

Anne Hagopian van Buren (1978) mentioned the work in passing, in an article on the Rolin *Virgin and Child*. In a discussion of the latter work's possible date, Van Buren noted that the drapery of the Rolin *Virgin and Child* was less angular than that in the Van der Paele *Virgin and Child*, running in little 'rivulets', as in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, 'whose added date of 1433 may be correct.'[180]

Elisa Bermejo Martinez (1980) referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* as probably copies after a lost original by Van Eyck, in her discussion of the latter work. She referred to Hoff and Davies' 1971 publication as the source of evidence against the authenticity of the former. Martinez remarked on some surprising aspects of the conservation treatment of the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*, such as the removal of the mullions in the windows, details so unimportant that it is surprising to think that a later hand might have added them.[181]

Albert Châtelet (1980) referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a very faithful copy of a lost original by Van Eyck, lacking only Van Eyck's 'vigor' (of execution), in an essay accompanying a book illustrating the artist's works. Châtelet noted, in particular, its similarity to the Frick *Virgin and Child*, using the correspondence to date the latter to shortly after the completion of the Ghent altarpiece (around the 1433 in the date of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*). Châtelet also observed that while the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was comparable to the *Saint Barbara* in the arrangement of the drapery, the greater representation of depth in space in the latter was symptomatic of Van Eyck's stylistic development towards the end of his career.[182]

Elisabeth Dhanens' (1980) monograph on the Van Eycks accepted the reattribution of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with little comment except to say that it must have taken great courage. She noted that in the past almost any early Netherlandish painting could be

attributed to one or other of the Van Eycks. However, Dhanens' methodology for distinguishing the original works of Van Eyck from copies or imitations, based on the assertion that Van Eyck never copied himself, is belied by the repetition of parts of, and possibly entire, compositions in his oeuvre.[183] Furthermore, Dhanens claimed the style of the brocade in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was not current in Van Eyck's lifetime, implying that the composition could only be a pastiche.[184] The Eyckian nature of the brocade design is described here in Chapter Three.

Harley Griffiths (1980), an artist, and a conservator at the National Gallery of Victoria for twenty-five years, including the period in which the *Virgin and Child*'s authenticity was challenged in the late 1950s, published a short tract on the role of literary art criticism in art appreciation. His text amounts to a diatribe against the pretensions of art criticism and connoisseurship, particularly as practiced by museum trustees and curators—its tenor can be gauged by the title: *The Literary Parasites of Art*. He singled out Hoff's 1961 catalogue of the National Gallery of Victoria's Old Master painting collection for particular criticism, suggesting that attempts to distinguish between copies, variants, and forgeries were futile. For Griffiths the only matter of real importance was a painting's quality (which he implied he was better qualified to judge). Given this, he did not advance a specific attribution for the *Virgin and Child*, except to say that it was not by Van Eyck, and he ventured that it originated more than a century after the date in the signature.[185]

Dana Goodgal (1981) listed the *Virgin and Child* in her discussion of the discovery of the Van Eycks' oeuvres in modern times, forming an introduction to her discussion of the iconography of the Ghent altarpiece. Goodgal grouped the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with the two *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis* paintings (Galleria Sabauda, Turin, and Philadelphia Museum of Art), two versions of the *Crucifixion* (Ca d'Oro and Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussisches Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie) and the *Portrait of a Man with a Pink* (Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Preussisches Kulturbesitz, Gemäldegalerie) as works at the edge of the Eyckian oeuvres whose attributions to Jan were open to doubt.[186]

Lorne Campbell (1982) reviewed Dhanens' monograph, noting her reclassification of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, together with the Hand G miniatures in the Turin-Milan hours, the *Three Maries at the Tomb*, the Washington *Annunciation*, the Detroit *Saint Jerome*, the Bucharest *Portrait of a Man with a Ring*, the Frick *Virgin and Child with Saints*, and the *Portrait of a Man with a Pink*. Campbell admitted that the section of Dhanens' book in which the attributions of these works were briefly dismissed would be among the most controversial. He predicted that this section would attract criticism, however, he did not

himself make any criticisms on the grounds that Dhanens planned to publish two articles dealing with these issues at greater length.[187] These articles seem not to have come to fruition.

Carol Purtle's discussion (1982) of the work in her book on Van Eyck's Marian paintings did not differ significantly from that in her Doctoral dissertation.[188]

David L. Carleton (1982) referred briefly to the work in his discussion of Van Eyck's use of perspective, following Panofsky's attribution of the work to Jan.[189]

János Végh (1983) wrote in a short monograph on Van Eyck that the 'Madonna is probably not a work of Van Eyck's own hand, but a nearly contemporary copy; in any case it has preserved one of his very attractive compositions for us. The Madonna is seated under a canopy but not on a throne, merely on a low chair or bench.' Végh noted, in particular, that the depiction of the Infant was distinguished by his being engaged in an activity that would have been seen as the preserve of adults, and pious and learned ones in particular, at the time.[190]

Araki Shiseko (1983) included the work in a short, illustrated catalogue in Japanese of the Van Eycks' works, with the attribution 'Jan van Eyck (?)', noting that the work showed a kind of weakness that might justify its exclusion from Van Eyck's oeuvre as many other authors had thought.[191]

Larry Silver (1984) described the *Virgin and Child* as one of the best copies of a lost original by Van Eyck, which, together with Van der Weyden's Durán *Virgin and Child*, had influenced the compositions of a number of Quinten Massys' works.[192]

James Snyder (1985) maintained the attribution of the work to Van Eyck in his book on Northern Renaissance art.[193]

Brian Madigan (1986) referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in the body of his article on the iconography of Van Eyck's representations of illuminated carafes, as by the master, while stating in a footnote that the work was thought to be a copy of a lost original by Van Eyck.[194]

Ann Galbally (1987) referred to the work briefly in a book on the collections of the National Gallery of Victoria. Galbally stated that the lengthy analysis of the work in Brussels in 1957–58 had led to the conclusion that the work was a copy, possibly of early date, after a lost original by Van Eyck.[195]

The *Lexikon der Kunst* (1988) described the *Virgin and Child* as Jan van Eyck's earliest dated (independently produced) religious work, in its entry for the artist.[196]

Dirk de Vos (1989) described Van der Weyden's Durán *Virgin and Child* as inspired, without doubt, by a small work by Van Eyck now lost, of which the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was one of a number of copies.[197]

Licia Collobi Ragghianti (1990) described the *Virgin and Child* as an old copy after an original by Van Eyck, in a volume describing Netherlandish paintings in Italy. The Verdura *Virgin and Child*, the Italian provenance of which was the cause for Ragghianti's mention of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, was also described as a copy after Van Eyck.[198]

Craig Harbison (1991) wrote that technical evidence had shown the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* cannot be a work of Van Eyck, in his book on the artist's iconography. He also doubted it as an Eyckian composition, claiming that none of the leading early Netherlandish painters 'verifiably' invented domestic-religious imagery between the years 1425 and 1450, despite admitting that the Lucca *Virgin and Child* is outwardly just such a work, and despite admitting that the *Annunciation* in the Musée du Louvre is usually attributed to Rogier van der Weyden.[199] Harbison's thesis relied upon the questioning of the traditional attributions of a number of works in a domestic-religious vein. He cited as examples the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, the *Virgin and Child before a Firescreen* (National Gallery, London),[200] and the *Trinity; Virgin and Child* diptych in the Hermitage, Saint Petersburg. However, Harbison did not discuss the merits of the arguments against the traditional attributions of these works. Furthermore, he ignored that two works probably from the fifteenth century, the Verdura and Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* paintings, suggest through their inscriptions that the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* originated in Van Eyck's oeuvre. Neither did Harbison acknowledge that even if these works were not executed by the leading early Netherlandish masters themselves, they may have been produced under their direction in their workshops. Below the illustration of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* Harbison gave the attribution: 'Anonymous 16th century (?Spanish) artist'. In his 'Bibliographic Commentary', provided in place of endnotes, he referred to Hoff and Davies' *Corpus* publication as the source of discussion of a sixteenth-century Spanish origin for the work. However, in her text Hoff actually stated: 'No supporting evidence for a Spanish origin of No. 132 [the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*] is at present available.'[201]

Christopher Wright (1992) described the 'once celebrated' Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a copy after a lost composition, in the first of his two volumes listing the locations of Old Master paintings around the world.[202]

In 1993 the work was exhibited at the Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, in *Stephan Lochner, Meister Zu Köln: Herkunft-Werke-Wirkung*, as no. 17, attributed to a follower of

Van Eyck. The exhibition catalogue entry for the work suggested its iconography and style, referring to Mary's purity and her status as the new Eve, and Van Eyck's types of the youthful Virgin and the plump Child, which it represents, most likely influenced Stephan Lochner's depictions of the same subjects.[203]

Jochen Sander (1993) attributed the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* to a follower of Van Eyck, proposing that it, the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*, and a *Virgin and Child* painting previously in the Carson Simpson Collection, are pastiches of the Lucca *Virgin and Child*.[204] He did not explain how Van der Weyden, among other important artists, came to adapt the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition, and did not refer to the Verdura *Virgin and Child*. Nor did he note that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child* have more in common with each other than they do with the Lucca *Virgin and Child*.

Albert Châtelet (1993) mentioned the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in passing as a copy of a lost original by Van Eyck, in his book on Van Eyck's work as an illuminator. He remarked that the painting's delicate depiction of forms, absent in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*'s similar version of the composition, could be taken as an example of the transition from Van Eyck's early works characterised by the Gothic silhouettes of the figures, a familiar realism, and a masterly construction of space based on geometric and atmospheric depictions of the play of light on the one hand, and his later more monumental compositions, on the other.[205]

Cyriel Stroo and Maurits Smeyers (1994) referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the Detroit *Saint Jerome* as works whose authenticity had been challenged but which reflected Eyckian originals, in their chapter on Van Eyck, in a book surveying early Netherlandish painting. Other works whose attributions were also in doubt were described as created by the continuers of Van Eyck's legacy. The Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was illustrated with the caption in French '*Jean van Eyck?*'[206]

Rintaro Terakado (1994) mentioned the *Virgin and Child* as an Eyckian composition in an exhibition catalogue essay discussing the artist's representation of biblical women as wives and mothers.[207]

Mark Evans (1995) rejected Sander's notion that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is a pastiche of the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, in a review of Sander's catalogue. Evans noted that the latter work originally had a flat roof like that in the former (this is presumably the case, but the roof is not visible in the latter), before being overpainted by the vaulted roof currently visible. Evans suggested both works refer to an earlier lost prototype. He also noted that a work by Fra Filippo Lippi, the *Virgin and Child* (1437, National Gallery, Rome) once

thought to have been influenced by the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, must be contemporary with it following the dendrochronological dating of the latter to the late 1430s. This would support the hypothesis of an earlier version.[208] Interestingly, Lippi's *Virgin and Child* shows a book prominently to the left, perhaps indicating that it followed a model that likewise had the Virgin and Child with a book, as in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, rather than without, as in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*. How Lippi might have had access to any Eyckian composition in the 1430s is, however, open to question.

Ursula Hoff (1995) discussed Campbell, Harbison, and Sander's commentaries, but not Sterling, Snyder, or Evans', in the fourth edition of the Gallery's Old Master catalogue. Thus, of the range of opinions available, Hoff discussed only negative assessments of the work. Hoff re-classified the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as the work of a follower of Van Eyck, rather than as a copy, based on Sander's argument.[209]

Maurits Smeyers (1995) listed the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with the Friedsdam *Annunciation* and the *Crucifixion; Last Judgement* diptych in New York, the *Fountain of Life* in Madrid, the *Crucifixion* in Berlin, and the *Saint John; Virgin and Child* diptych in Paris as works by followers of Van Eyck, in a dictionary of Belgian painters.[210]

Susan Urbach (1995) referred to the 'Eyckian *Madonna* in Melbourne' in passing, as showing a laver, as in the Lucca *Virgin and Child*. The reference was made in a conference paper on the iconography of the *Virgin and Child in an Interior* (National Gallery, London), which also shows a laver.[211]

Professor J.R.J. van Asperen de Boer (1995) mentioned the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in passing in a discussion of problematic aspects of Paul Coremans' painting analyses of the 1950s and 60s, without expressing an opinion of its attribution.[212]

Albert Châtelet (1996) maintained the attribution of the work as a copy, agreeing with the idea that the composition was Van Eyck's response to Campin's *Virgin and Child by a Fireplace*, but one that included, in its trappings of majesty, a critique of the Tournai painter's excessively familiar representation of the Virgin and Child.[213]

Anne van Buren (1996) referred to the work as a copy of a lost work by Van Eyck and, paradoxically, a copy of a lost imitation of Van Eyck's work, in the entry for Van Eyck in an art dictionary. Van Buren cited the work, with the Lucca *Virgin and Child*, as evidence that Van Eyck sometimes represented the Virgin in an intimate context. The work was also cited, with the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*, as evidence that Van Eyck's works were imitated by other artists, in a discussion of the artist's followers.[214]

Mark Evans (1996) reviewed Pächt's 1994 publication, describing Pächt's inclusion of references to 'secondary' works in his discussion of Van Eyck's oeuvre, such as the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Fishing Party* in the Musée du Louvre, as sometimes disconcerting.[215]

This author (1998) included an appendix on the authenticity of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in a Postgraduate Diploma thesis on the international acquisition policy of the Felton Bequest during Frank Rinder's advisership. It was concluded that there was perhaps not enough evidence to exclude any attribution: it could be an original Van Eyck, which the pigments and the execution of principle parts of the painting might indicate, a collaboration between Van Eyck and his studio, which would account for certain weaknesses of execution in peripheral areas of the painting, a work entirely by his studio, a contemporary pastiche, a later pastiche, or a forgery.[216]

Lorne Campbell (1998) referred to the *Virgin and Child*, in passing references, as a copy, and possibly a copy, in his discussion of Van Eyck's works in his catalogue of the National Gallery, London's fifteenth-century Netherlandish paintings.[217]

Hélène Mund and Cyriel Stroo (1998) listed nine of the publications since 1984 that referred to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child,* in a bibliography of the recent literature on early Netherlandish painting.[218]

Susan Jones (1998) mentioned the work in passing in a number of contexts in her Doctoral thesis on Van Eyck's workshop and followers, completed at the Courtauld Institute in London. She referred to it as at least partly based on a lost *Virgin and Child* by Van Eyck with a signature possibly copied from a genuine original.[219]

Liana Castelfranchi Vegas (1998) listed the painting among seventeen certain works by Van Eyck, not including the Ghent altarpiece, in her essay on the artist's oeuvre. The list was based on Sterling's second article, referred to above, and appeared in a small book illustrating Van Eyck's paintings.[220]

Carlenrica Spantigati ([1998]) described the *Virgin and Child* as signed and dated by Van Eyck, in an illustrated book from the 'Art Dossier' series.[221]

Dirk de Vos (1999) highlighted the continuing uncertainty regarding the attribution of the *Virgin and Child* when he referred to it both as an original work of Van Eyck and as following a lost prototype, in his monograph on Van der Weyden. De Vos stated there is no doubt that the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* inspired Van der Weyden's Durán *Virgin and Child* (Prado, Madrid).[222]

Albert Châtelet (1999) agreed that the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, which he described as a copy of a Van Eyck, influenced Van der Weyden's Durán *Virgin and Child*. Although, the dating of the latter to *c*. 1430–32 would be contradictory unless Van Eyck's original composition could be dated earlier than 1433.[223]

Peter Klein (1999) wrote that he could not establish a dendrochronological dating for the 113 growth rings of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*'s oak panel. He was unable to date five of the twenty-two planks from panel paintings in the National Gallery of Victoria's collection that he examined.[224] Klein approached the Gallery to conduct the analyses on a trip to Australia he made to undertake analyses of Old Master works in a private collection.[225]

Annie Jolain (1999) did not refer to the work in her entry for Jan van Eyck in a dictionary of artists, although the National Gallery of Victoria, Melbourne, was listed among the collections housing Eyckian works.[226]

In 2000 the work was chosen by Mary Kisler, MacKelvie Curator of International Art at the Auckland Art Gallery, New Zealand, for inclusion in the exhibition *The Master's Eye: Five Centuries of European Painting*, drawn from the National Gallery of Victoria's collection (the work was not numbered). In the exhibition catalogue, Laurie Benson, Assistant Curator, International Art, at the National Gallery of Victoria, stated that the critical issue of the attribution of the painting had occupied scholars for over a hundred years. Although, as the foregoing historiography shows, until 1956 the attribution of the work to Jan van Eyck had been all but universally accepted. Thus, the question had really only occupied scholars for about forty years. He also stated that recent opinions classified the work as either a copy by a near contemporary of Van Eyck's or an original composition by one of his followers, failing to mention the authorities who had maintained the attribution of the work to Van Eyck.

Despite classifying the work as 'after Jan van Eyck', a category used for copies, and dating the work *c*. 1433, Benson argued that the work was likely to be the invention of one of Van Eyck's followers. If such an invention had originated in 1433, then it would have included many features of Van Eyck's *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* of 1434, and so the anonymous imitator presumably had access to Van Eyck's studio. Benson stated that the subject of the painting is the Virgin depicted as a Queen of Heaven and argued that this status is indicated by the 'baldachino', the cloth canopy (in reality these are one and the same), and the isolation of the group. He did not consider that the isolation of the Virgin and Child is equally if not more frequently associated with a Madonna of Humility than a Queen of Heaven.[227] Benson paraphrased Sander's argument that the representation of the Virgin

before a cloth of honour appropriate for a Queen of Heaven was combined with a representation of her sitting on a cushion in a Madonna of Humility pose, in an unusual or un-Eyckian way, and paraphrased his incorrect assertion that an Eyckian Queen of Heaven is always shown on an elaborate throne. Benson also stated that the inscription is not consistent with those found in Van Eyck's paintings, without specifying in what way, or how that might affect the work's attribution. He concluded: 'Although the painting is probably not by van Eyck, it is a work of outstanding quality by a master yet to be identified.'[228]

Alfred Acres (2000) referred to the Eyckian composition of the *Virgin and Child* as an example of a representation of the Virgin and Child with a book in which the direction of the subjects' perusal of the book is not specified. The brief mention came in an article discussing Van der Weyden's depictions of texts in his paintings, which began with a discussion of the Durán *Virgin and Child*. Acres argued that the Infant in the Prado painting is represented leafing backwards through the text in search of the part of the Old Testament in which the prophets foretell his coming. Be that as it may, the Virgin's left index finger in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is inserted at a point earlier in the book than the open pages, as even Acres observed. This suggests that she, at least, has been inspecting the book from the front to the back and it can be assumed that the Child has been following her guidance. It also suggests that she intends returning to that part of the text at some point in the near future. Acres illustrated the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* above the caption 'Follower of van Eyck' and cited Hoff and Davies' 1971 publication as a source of information about the work.[229]

In 2000, this author's Master of Arts thesis *Re-examining Van Eyck: A New Analysis of the Ince Hall Virgin and Child* was submitted for assessment in The School of Fine Arts, Classical Studies and Archaeology at The University of Melbourne. In the course of previous years' research, drafts of the thesis had been given to the Senior Conservator of Paintings, the Collections Manager, and the Director of the National Gallery of Victoria. In 2001, a final version of the thesis was submitted to the Arts Faculty. It was concluded that there was a compelling, though not conclusive, case for the attribution of the work to Van Eyck, possibly with the assistance of the workshop. This text is a revised and expanded version of that thesis.

Jaynie Anderson (2000) described the *Virgin and Child* as the most famous Old Master painting in Australia, in an article honouring the career of Ursula Hoff. Anderson stated that Hoff visited Belgium in 1956 with the work to have it analysed with the most modern scientific methods.[230] However, Hoff's trip to Europe was initially related to the exhibition in Holland of two paintings by Rembrandt from the Gallery's collection. While

there, her trip was extended to allow her to visit the exhibition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in Belgium.[231] Although Hoff was reportedly in favour of having the work cleaned, she was not directly involved in any stage of the work's scientific analysis and restoration from 1956 to 1959, being called upon only to seek verification of the results at the end of the analysis.

Sasha Grishin (2000) briefly recounted the history of the Felton Bequest's acquisition of the *Virgin and Child* in an article on controversial art acquisitions in Australia. Grishin described the work and the *Portrait of Rembrandt ('Self-Portrait')*, another Felton Bequest acquisition, as 'over-priced fakes'. Grishin commented that even though these works were 'fake' they may still have exerted a positive influence on Melbourne artists of the 1930s and 1940s for whom Old Masters were thin on the ground. While the *Portrait of Rembrandt ('Self-Portrait')* was attributed to a follower of Rembrandt in an early phase of the Rembrandt Research Project, as Grishin observed,[232] he did not note that it has since been associated unequivocally with Rembrandt's studio on technical grounds, by Ernst van der Wetering of the (second phase of the) Rembrandt Research Project. Van der Wetering suggested the work is a free copy of modest quality of a Rembrandt original, painted by an unidentified workshop assistant.[233]

In 2001 the *Virgin and Child* was shown at the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza in Madrid in the exhibition *El Renacimiento Mediterráneo: Viajes de artistas e itinerarios de obras entre Italia, Francia y Espana en el Siglo XV*, as no. 30, and subsequently in the Museu de Belles Arts de València. In the exhibition the work was attributed to Van Eyck, while in the catalogue it was given to his workshop. The catalogue entry was compiled by Frédéric Elsig, with this author contributing a section on the work's materials and technique.[234] At a late stage, an additional contribution on the work's materials and technique was accepted from John Payne and Carl Villis of the National Gallery of Victoria Paintings Conservation Department.[235]

Margaret L. Koster (2001) reviewed the exhibition, observing of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*:

> Many years ago, Coremans had declared this work to be a late copy, after submitting it to technical analysis. Since he was the man who worked on the *Ghent altarpiece*, one was persuaded by his arguments to feel confident about this conclusion. Today we are presented with new evidence that contradicts his findings, and it is declared to be an

> original. In order to be convinced, however, more extensive illustrations are needed than were provided in the catalogue.[236]

Elke von Radziewsky (2001) also reviewed the exhibition, referring to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a splendid work by Van Eyck, and noting in particular the delicate depiction of the shadows of the leadlights falling on the window reveal, the luxurious representation of the Virgin's mantle, and the shining, gold brocade cloth of honour, a more precious representation than even in a traditional gold-ground painting.[237]

When reviewing the exhibition, Carl Brandon Strehlke (2001) referred to the Eyckian Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and Turin *Stigmatisation of Saint Francis*, Campin's *Virgin in Glory* (Musée Granet, Aix-en-Provence), and Van der Weyden's *Saint George* (National Gallery of Art, Washington) as splendid masterpieces demonstrating the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza's vast powers in obtaining loans.[238]

Dietmar Lüdke (2001) suggested that the composition of Martin Schongauer's *Virgin and Child at a Window* (J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles) was derived ultimately from the composition of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, in the catalogue of the exhibition *Spätmittelalter am Oberrhein* held at the Staatliche Kunsthalle in Karlsruhe.[239] Lüdke, who attributed the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* to Van Eyck, also noted that the *Holy Family with Saints Catherine and Barbara in a Church* in Naples, together with an associated drawing from Konrad Witz' workshop, were probably derived from the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition.[240]

In a book surveying early Netherlandish painting, Tzvetau Todorov (2001) described the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* as a copy of an original by Van Eyck of 1433, and dated the Lucca *Virgin and Child* to the same year based on its similar composition.[241]

Elena Filippi (2002) wrote an article praising the conception of the Renaissance proposed in the Museo Thyssen-Bornemisza exhibition of 2001. Filippi referred to the technical analyses that had been conducted on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, reproducing the work (slightly cropped) above the caption 'Jan van Eyck?'.[242]

In 2002 the work was exhibited at the Musée Groeninge in Bruges, in *Jan van Eyck, Early Netherlandish Painting and the European South 1430–1530*, as no. 31. The work was attributed to an assistant of Van Eyck. However, the catalogue entry contained a number of solecisms. First, the fruit near the window were referred to as pomegranates and as symbols of Christ's Passion. However, the fruit do not have a calyx as a pomegranate does, nor is the red interior of a pomegranate depicted that could have confirmed the identification. The fruit

are round and yellow, and are probably a kind of citrus. Second, the candlestick was described as holding snuffed candles, where there is only one. Third, the assertion that the signature forms part of the original paint layer, dissavowed by the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique in 1958, but perpetuated by Hoff, was maintained. This assertion cannot be sustained, as has been demonstrated above. Fourth, the signature was described as problematic because it gives the name of the town Bruges as the place in which the work was painted, even though the possible explanation that the work may have been commissioned by a patron from outside of Bruges was given. Fifth, the signature was described as clearly retrospective in character, although it is not more so than any signature employing a verb in a past tense, including the majority of Van Eyck's signatures. Sixth, the quality of execution of the flesh tones was criticised, without taking into account their abraded and overpainted condition. The spatial construction was also criticised. Seventh, the work was dated *c*. 1435 without explanation,[243] which inexplicably differed from the date of *c*. 1440 in the small handbook given to visitors to the exhibition.[244] In Till-Holger Borchert's essay on Van Eyck's workshop the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was referred to as the work of an assistant, made after a drawing of a lost original by Van Eyck that subsequently also provided the model for the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*.[245]

Elena Parma (2002) contributed an essay to the *Jan van Eyck* exhibition catalogue in which she suggested the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* may have been painted by Van Eyck's workshop for a Genoese client, on the basis that it had belonged to a certain Luciano Costa before 1619.[246] However, the inscription implicitly referred to here, attesting to Costa's ownership, is instead on the reverse of the Verdura *Virgin and Child*.

Till-Holger Borchert (2002) wrote an article on Van Eyck to coincide with the exhibition he curated in Bruges, including a chronology of the artist's works, which stated that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* and the *Portrait of Man (Self-Portrait?)* were signed and dated in 1433. It should be assumed, given Borchert's comments in the exhibition catalogue, that he meant to refer to the former work's hypothetical model.[247]

Damian Sausset (2002) concurred with the opinion expressed in the Bruges exhibition catalogue, that the *Virgin and Child* could be attributed to a collaborator of Van Eyck, in a brief discussion of Van Eyck's workshop. Sausset's pamphlet on Van Eyck appeared in a series, '*l'ABCdaire*', evidently intended for a general audience, as indicated by the alphabetical arrangement of its texts. Some reliance on Borchert's exhibition catalogue is apparent from the identical attributions and similar illustrations in the two publications.[248]

Alberto Arbasino (2002) reviewed the Bruges exhibition for *La Repubblica* newspaper in Italy and referred indirectly to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, which was illustrated (in reverse). Arbasino noted that the same *Virgin and Child* (the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*) and the same *Saint Jerome* (the Detroit *Saint Jerome*) had been included in the Stephan Lochner exhibition of 1993, to demonstrate the influence of Flemish painting on the Cologne school, as were included in the Bruges exhibition whose theme was the influence of Flemish artists on Southern European painting.[249]

Lorne Campbell (2002) reviewed *The Age of Van Eyck* exhibition, referring to the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* in passing as sometimes attributed to Jan van Eyck.[250]

In 1999 Gerard Vaughan presented a paper on Charles Townley's art collection at a conference at The University of Melbourne. Referring to Townley's friend Henry Blundell, Vaughan noted that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was attributed to a follower of Van Eyck, but that some recent research had re-opened the question. He also noted that he was a distant relative of Blundell's.[251] Following the Madrid and Bruges exhibitions, in the 2002 publication of his paper, Vaughan referred to the *Virgin and Child* as 'identified by Waagen in 1854 as by Van Eyck, and purchased as such by the Felton Bequest in 1922, but now regarded as by an artist associated with the Van Eyck studio—although some recent research has re-opened the question.'[252] He also suggested it was almost certainly Henry Blundell who had acquired the work, from whose descendents it was subsequently bought by the Felton Bequest. It is not clear, however, that Henry acquired the work for the Blundell collection. Indeed, Vaughan had expressed the view that Henry's son Charles had acquired Flemish primitives in the entry he wrote for Henry Blundell in the *Grove Dictionary of Art*.[253]

In an article primarily concerned with the Dresden triptych and related works, Georg Zeman (2002) grouped the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with the Covarrubias *Virgin and Child*, and the *Virgin and Child* from the Carson Simpson Collection, as works with compositions whose interiors were derived from the Lucca *Virgin and Child*. He cited the 1971 *Corpus* volume as the source of information for the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, and did not discuss the relationships between these works in any detail.[254]

Larry Silver (2003) reviewed *The Age of Van Eyck* exhibition, describing the work as 'surprisingly strong'.[255]

Mark Evans (2003) reviewed the same exhibition, mentioning in passing that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was probably a workshop copy of a lost original.[256]

John Poynter (2003) referred to the work's acquisition and subsequent critical history in his history of the Felton Bequest. Poynter quoted from the conclusion of this author's

Master of Arts thesis, among other sources, without expressing a personal opinion about the work's attribution.[257]

Jaynie Anderson (2003) referred to the work at a number of points in her book on Giambattista Tiepolo's *Banquet of Cleopatra* in the collection of the National Gallery of Victoria. She noted, in particular, that the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* was the more expensive acquisition. She also observed that Martin Davies' negative report on the *Banquet*, while it was being considered for acquisition by the National Gallery, London, suggested that his connoisseurship may have been influenced by professional-political pressure, and in an endnote related that to this author's study of Davies' role in the analysis of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.[258]

Barry Jones (2003), former President of the Australian Labor Party, noted in a lecture on Australian philately that the work had been selected for Australia Post's Christmas postage stamp in 1978. Jones observed that, 'whether it is original or not, it is one of the glories of the National Gallery of Victoria.'[259]

Carl Villis (2003), Conservator of European Paintings before 1800 at the National Gallery of Victoria, attributed the work to an anonymous Netherlandish artist probably active in the second half of the fifteenth century. This attribution appeared in a brief entry in a catalogue of the Gallery's Old Master paintings that was prepared for the re-opening of the Gallery after a major renovation. Villis did not refer to art historians who maintained the attribution of the work to Van Eyck after 1959, or the 2001 Madrid and 2002 Bruges exhibitions (although he had contributed to the catalogue for the former) in which the work was attributed to an assistant of Van Eyck. But for that matter, no catalogue of the National Gallery of Victoria since the late 1950s has acknowledged any of the art historians supporting the work's authenticity.

Among a number of arguments against the work's attribution to Van Eyck, Villis briefly proposed three new ones, which, because they are new, merit close consideration. First, he suggested that the execution of the laver is unresolved; second, he suggested that the representation of light was uncharacteristic of Van Eyck; and third, he argued that the presence of influences from Campin and Van der Weyden suggested the work may well date from the second half of the fifteenth century—after Van Eyck's death.[260]

If the argument concerning the execution of the laver is a suggestion that the laver lacks the precise representation of form frequently encountered in Van Eyck's paintings, one can point to the artist's execution of the right side of the inner frame of the mirror in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* to show that this was not always the case. The loose

brushstrokes are only suggestive of the form of the frame as it passes from light to shadow, rather than representing the round form punctiliously. The laver in the *Virgin and Child* is depicted among the shadows on the floor cast by the Virgin, just as the right side of the Arnolfini mirror is in shadow; in each case the artist probably did not anticipate that his work would have to pass close critical scrutiny. Van Eyck's relatively rapid and free painting technique in the *Giovanni (?) Arnolfini and his Wife* was noted by Campbell in his recent investigation of the work.[261] A comparable phenomenon occurs in the baldachin of the Lucca *Virgin and Child*. The fringe on the left side, which is in light, is painted with numerous short, vertical strokes for the tips of the tiny hanging threads, while the side on the right, which is in shadow, shows only a vague suggestion of forms with no individual threads. This is very similar to the painting of the baldachin in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*.

The suggestion that the lighting of the *Virgin and Child* is un-Eyckian is a curious one. Indeed, the depiction of light has often been described as one of the work's most impressive and Eyckian features, notably, by Phillips, Carritt, Pächt, and Meiss. The number of early Renaissance artists who conceived of sunlit interiors with light entering through a window, touching the window reveal, and passing through an interior before falling as a distinct pool on an adjacent wall or floor, can be counted on one hand. These are Fra Angelico (the Madrid *Annunciation*), Campin (the *Virgin and Child in an Interior* in London), Piero della Francesca (*Virgin and Child with Two Angels*), and Van Eyck (Ghent altarpiece *Annunciation*, and *Virgin and Child in a Church*).

The observation of Campin's influence on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* is probably correct, but it cannot be used to date the work to the second half of the fifteenth century. Campin is documented as an artist as early as 1406, and has long been recognised as an influence on the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* by authors who attributed it to Van Eyck and accepted the date of 1433, notably, De Tolnay. Despite recent disagreements about the attribution and datings of Campin's works, there has been no re-dating of all of the Campinesque paintings of the Virgin and Child to about 1450 that would sustain this argument.[262] Furthermore, this is inherently unlikely, since Campin died in 1444. Thus, the Campinesque prototype(s) must date to the first half of the fifteenth century. A number of authors have also seen Campin's influence in the Ghent altarpiece, and this work evidently cannot be dated to the second half of the fifteenth century. No other author has seen the influence of Van der Weyden in the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child*, indeed, an inverse relationship has been routinely suggested by Panofsky, Châtelet, Koch, and De Vos. Examination of the numerous related compositions cited in Chapter Three (the Verdura and

Covarrubias versions chief among them, but also the paintings by Petrus Christus and Hans Witz) is strongly suggestive of an Eyckian origin of the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* composition.[263]

This author (2003) published a detailed interpretation of the work's IRR, based on the research contained in this text, concluding that aspects of the work's underdrawing and *pentimenti* were comparable with those in Van Eyck's works.[264]

Notes for Appendix C

[1] Förster, 1853, p. 67.

[2] Waagen, 1854, 3, p. 249.

[3] [*The Quarterly Review*] 1854, p. 484.

[4] Crowe and Cavalcaselle, 1857, pp. 339–41.

[5] Weale, 1861, p. 9 n. 3.

[6] Waagen, 1862, p. 87.

[7] Wornum, 1863, p. 91 n.

[8] Michiels, 1866, 2, p. 342.

[9] Weale, 1867, p. 3 n. 2.

[10] Schnaase and Eisenmann, 1866–79, 8, p. 157–59.

[11] Weale, 1883, p. 193.

[12] [Stephens] 1883, p. 440.

[13] Schmarsow (1924, Plate XIX) illustrated the Ince Hall *Virgin and Child* with a black and white photograph in which the signature is mostly visible. No elaborate calligraphy is present. However, the photograph has been touched up, notably in the carafe, the left corner of the carpet, and the Virgin's shoulders. Weale and Brockwell (1912, Plate XXII) illustrated the *Virgin and Child* in 1912 with a black and white photograph in which the area around the signature is dark and the signature illegible.

[14] [London] 1884, p. 53.

[15] Phillips, 1884, p. 181: '*Parmi les tableaux flamands, il y a une Vierge avec l'Enfant, authentique de Jean van Eyck (no. 267), de très petites dimensions, portant la signature du maître et la date 1432. Ce panneau, déjà connu des amateurs de l'art flamand, est d'une couleur splendide et d'une bonne conservation. Le bel effet de la lumière entrant par une fenêtre derrière la Madone devance les triomphes dans ce genre des Hollandais du XVIIe siècle*.'

[16] Temple, 1892 [unpaginated].

[17] Armstrong, 1892, pp. 8–9.

[18] Leprieur, 1892, p. 170.

[19] Von Tschudi, 1893, p. 101.

[20] Von Tschudi, 1894, p. 244.

[21] Kaemmerer, 1898, pp. 58–60.

[22] Seeck, 1899, pp. 7, 21, 30, 38, 43, and 48.

[23] Voll, 1900, pp. 84, 87–89, and 91–100.

[24] Friedländer, 1900, p. 475.

[25] Von Bode, 1901, p. 122 n. 1.

[26] Kaemmerer, 1900–01, columns 71–72.

[27] Marks, 1903, pp. 24–25.

[28] Kern, 1904. p. 9.

[29] Fierens-Gevaert, 1905, pp. 142–43.

[30] Durand-Gréville, 1905, pp. 34–35.

[31] Temple, 1906, pp. 20–22.

[32] Weale, 1906, p. 185.

[33] Friedländer, 1906, p. 574.

[34] [Humphrey Ward] *The Times* (London), 4 May 1906, p. 15.

[35] Siebert, 1906, p. 11.

[36] Von Wurzbach, 1906, p. 513.

[37] Burckhardt, 1906, p. 194.

[38] [*Revue de l'Art Chrétien*] 1906, p. 283.

[39] Durand-Gréville, [1906] pp. 62–63.

[40] Phillips, 1907, p. 104.

[41] De Fourcaud, 1907, p. 206.

[42] Weale, 1908, p. 66.

[43] Durand-Gréville, *Hubert et Jean van Eyck*, 1910, pp. 133–35.

[44] Durand-Gréville, 'Les Frères Van Eyck', 1910, p. 10.

[45] Durand-Gréville, [1910?] 'Notes sur les Van Eyck […]', pp. 33–36.

[46] MacLagan, 1911, p. 242.

[47] Weale and Brockwell, 1912, pp. 109–11.

[48] Friedländer, 1915, p. 130.

[49] Conway, 1921, pp. 68–69.

[50] Friedländer, 1921, p. 183.

[51] Pfister, [1922] p. 65.

[52] Phillips, 1922, p. 13.

[53] Zink, letter to the Editor, *The Daily Telegraph* (London), 17 October 1922, p. 4.

[54] Holmes, 1922, pp. 232–33.

[55] Brockwell, 1923, pp. 143–49.

[56] Deane, 1923, p. 489.

[57] Reinach, 1923, pp. 15–16.

[58] Voll, 1923, p. 37.

[59] [*Art in Australia*] 'Editorial', *Art in Australia: A Quarterly Magazine*, 4, 1 May 1923, unpaginated.

[60] Friedländer, 1924, pp. 50 and 53–55.

[61] Schmarsow, 1924, pp. 100–03.

[62] Winkler, 1924, p. 57.

[63] Wendland, 1924, p. 117.

[64] MacDonald, *The Herald* (Melbourne), 4 April 1925.

[65] National Library of Australia, Meldrum Papers No. 1, MS6569, Meldrum, M., *Personal Interpretations of Van Eyck's 'Madonna and Child'*, handwritten monograph, undated.

[66] PROV, Melbourne, VPRS 805, P0004, 6, J.S. MacDonald, memorandum to Ernest Pitt, 23 May 1941.

[67] Burger, 1925, pp. 27–28.

[68] Dvořák, 1925, pp. 46 and 57.

[69] Devigne, 1926, pp. 90–91.

[70] Hulin De Loo and Michel, 1927, p. 79.

[71] Fierens-Gevaert, 1927, pp. 89–90, and 93.

[72] Lambotte, 1927, p. 10.

[73] Dülberg, 1929, pp. 21–22.

[74] Friedländer, 1930 [unpaginated].

[75] Read, 1930, p. 278.

[76] Fierens, 1931, pp. 16 and 19.

[77] Winkler, 1931, p. 258.

[78] Von Tolnai, 1932, pp. 324 and 334.

[79] Renders, 1933, pp. 59–60.

[80] Post, 4, Part 1, 1933, pp. 19–20.

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