

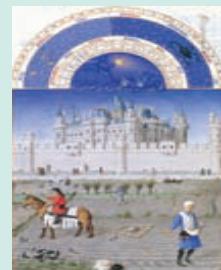
# WELCOME TO WESTERN HISTORY ARTISTS

Late Medieval and Early Renaissance  
Northern Europe

## REGIONS



BURGUNDY AND FLAUNDERS



FRANCE



HOLY ROMAN EMPIRE

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## BURGUNDY AND FLAUNDERS

## FLEMISH ARTISTS

Melchior Broederlam

Jan Van Eyck

Giovanni Arnolfini

Roger Van Der Weyden

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## Jan Van Eyck



Jan van Eyck, Giovanni Arnolfini and His Wife, 1434.

Ghent Altarpiece ,Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium

Madonna in a Church,  
ca. 1425–1430.

Ghent Altarpiece (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium, completed

The Retable de Champmol also foreshadowed another significant development in 15th-century art—the widespread adoption of oil paints (see “Tempera and Oil Painting,” page 427). Oil paints facilitated the exactitude in rendering details so characteristic of northern European painting. Although the Italian biographer Giorgio Vasari (1511–1574) and other 16th-century commentators credited Jan van Eyck (figs. 15-4 to 15-7) with the invention of oil painting, recent evidence has revealed oil paints had been known for some time, well before Melchior Broederlam used oils for Philip the Bold’s Dijon altarpiece and Robert Campin painted the Mérode Altarpiece (fig. 15-1) for Peter Inghelbrecht. Flemish painters built up their pictures by superimposing translucent paint layers on a layer of underpainting, which in turn had been built up from a carefully planned drawing made on a panel prepared with a white ground. With the oil medium, artists could create richer colors than previously possible, giving their paintings an intense tonality, the illusion of glowing light, and enamel-like surfaces. These traits differed significantly from the high-keyed color, sharp light, and rather matte (dull) surface of tempera. The brilliant and versatile oil medium suited perfectly the formal intentions of the generation of Flemish painters after Broederlam, including Campin (fig. 15-1) and van Eyck, who aimed for sharply focused clarity of detail in their representation of objects ranging in scale from large to almost invisible.

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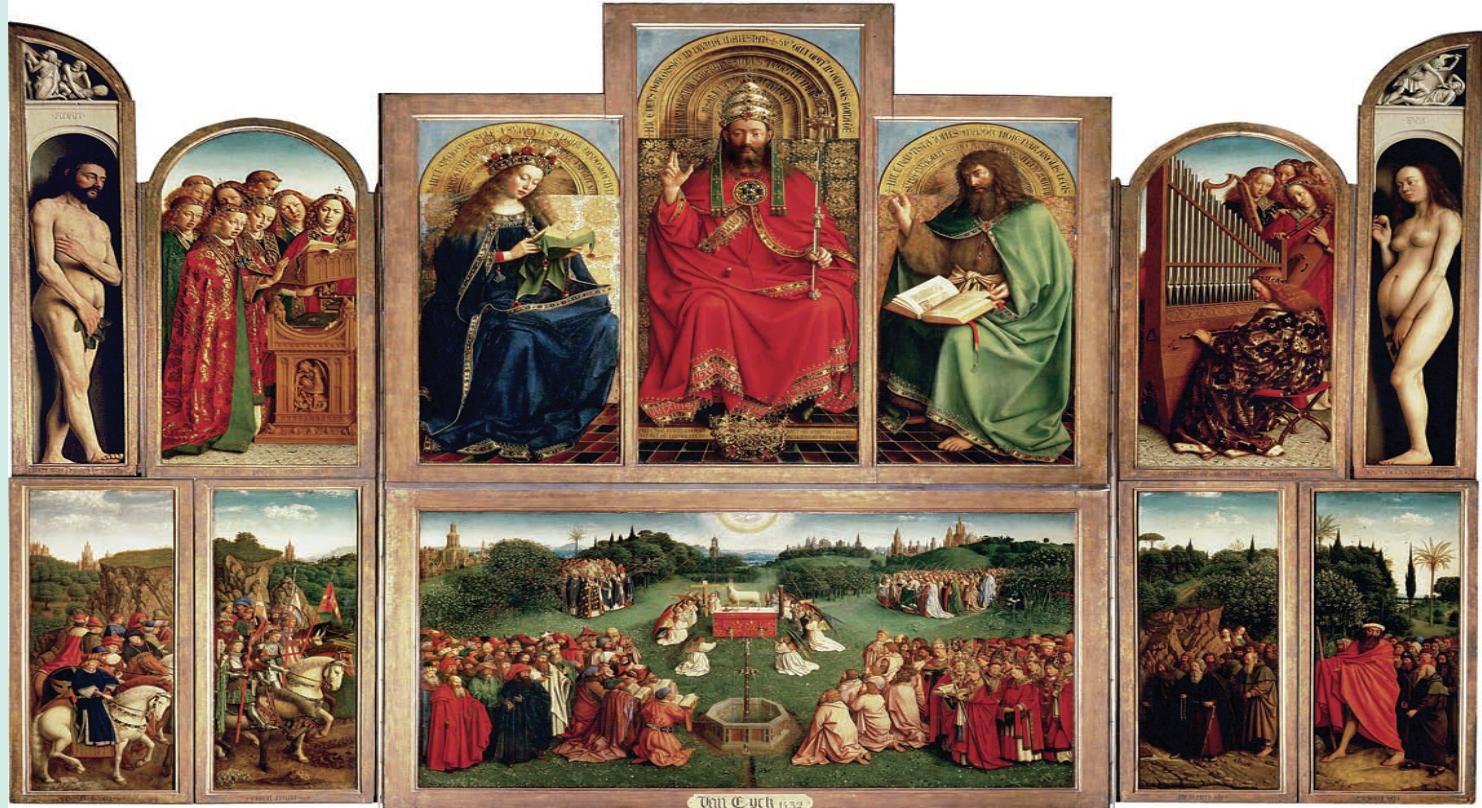
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JAN VAN EYCK

## Jan Van Eyck



Hubert and Jan van Eyck, Ghent Altarpiece (open), Saint Bavo Cathedral, Ghent, Belgium, completed 1432. Oil on wood, 11' 5" x 15' 1".

In this sumptuous painting of salvation from the original sin of Adam and Eve, God the Father presides in majesty. Van Eyck used oil paints to render every detail with loving fidelity to appearance.