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Nothing Good without Pain: Hans Memling's Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation

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NOTHING GOOD WITHOUT PAIN:
HANS MEMLING'S *EARTHLY VANITY AND DIVINE SALVATION*

by

MEGAN PIORKO

Under the Direction of John Decker

ABSTRACT

Hans Memling's polyptych, *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, presents many art historical issues. In my thesis, I have addressed the scholarly debate about the original construction of the currently separated six extant panels of this work. I have also attempted to put this object in its original context by considering contemporary religious movements and painting customs, identifying the patron and examining the artist, and exploring themes within the imagery in the framework of Early Modern devotional practice.

INDEX WORDS: Hans Memling, *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, Vanitas, Loiani, Salvator Mundi, Early Modern devotion

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1 INTRODUCTION

Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation (c.1485), an altarpiece created by Hans Memling, had four original panels each painted on both sides. Of these panels, one is now missing from the group. The three extant panels have been sawn apart (after their creation and before the Strasbourg Museum's acquisition in 1890), to create six separate paintings that are shown as a group at the Strasbourg Museum. In this thesis I argue that the member of the noble family, whose crest appears on the polyptych, used this altarpiece for speculative devotion by meditating on it to promote the health and wellbeing of his soul. I believe that the devotional program of the panels required viewing them in a particular order, encouraged by the original arrangement of the subject matter. To explore these avenues, I place the altarpiece in the milieu of spiritual practices popular among the laity in the fifteenth century as well as in the context of noble culture in the city of Bruges. In order to understand the entire work, I also suggest what the missing panels may have contained and how they would have fit into the larger devotional thrust of the work.

While there is some connoisseurial scholarship from around 1900 attributing *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* to Memling, the work has been largely understudied due to disagreement among scholars on its attribution. Wilhelm Bode, who acquired this work for the Strasbourg Museum, thought it belonged to Simon Marmion, and this was documented in the 1890 museum catalog.ⁱ Hugo von Tschudi was the first to promote Memling as the artist of this work, and it began to be attributed to him in the museum catalog in 1899. Hulin de Loo and Max Friedländer both defended the attribution to Memling at the exposition of the *Primitifs flamands* in Bruges in 1902.ⁱⁱ Others have since argued that it is a workshop piece. Attribution to Memling was reaffirmed 92 years later by Dirk De Vos and Philippe Lorentz during the 1994 celebration of the 500th anniversary of Memling's death.ⁱⁱⁱ

De Vos's monograph on Memling and the Strasbourg Museum's catalogue of this polyptych provide starting points for a discussion of the altarpiece. Though I build on the work of De Vos, I disagree with his notion that it was a triptych and have concluded that the panels originally formed a polyptych that had two central panels and left and right wings, but is now missing one of the central panels. The subject matter and the mechanics of opening and closing the polyptych necessitate, as suggested by Faure in his 1996 article, a fourth panel. When a fourth panel is added, the two outer panels fold inwards to create a diptych when closed.

In this thesis, I use popular Early Modern moral and religious themes in an attempt to reconstruct the patron's viewing experience. In order to do this it is necessary to understand contemporary lay piety and practices of speculative devotion, as they are an integral aspect of viewing this altarpiece. Relevant religious practices in conjunction with the repeated reference to the family motto, nothing good without pain, shed light on the spiritual aspirations of the original owner. Through the investigation of Memling's workshop in Bruges and the patronage of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, I attempt to understand the purpose of commissioning this work by placing it in historical context. I believe that the viewer is meant to take a "virtual pilgrimage" (a term used by Mitzi Kirkland-Ives) through the polyptych ultimately ending at the image of Christ as *Salvator Mundi*, which would be viewed as a diptych adjacent to the imagery on the missing panel. Throughout this virtual pilgrimage, the themes of *Vanitas* and *Memento Mori* play a significant role, which is understandable in the frameworks of contemporary pious practices and cultic devotion.

2 IMAGES AS EARLY MODERN DEVOTIONAL TOOLS

Early Modern Christians ultimately desired to build souls worthy of redemption to achieve eternal life in paradise. To this end, they employed various theological and devotional aids that allowed them to explore late-Medieval concepts of spiritual justification. A sophisticated material culture developed in order to support their introspective practices.^{iv} The works of theologians, catechism writers, and tract authors, as well as sermons by popular preachers, provided the faithful with orthodox concepts to use in their spiritual pursuits. Devotional tools, including images of saints, small printed books, and panel paintings such as Hans Memling's polyptych, *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, served as inspiration for performing the daily meditative tasks required to purify one's soul.^v While there were many reasons for using devotional prompts, and as many modes of employing them, the driving factor was the exercise of individual piety.

For fifteenth-century Christians, frequent meditation was necessary to condition and reform the soul.^{vi} In general, the goal of contemplation was to bring peace to the soul and direct it towards salvation. Devotional aids provided material for reconstructing one's soul for the purpose of attaining Heaven instead of damnation. Images of Christ, the Virgin, or saints were often included on many devotional objects. Although Christ was judge, he also offered redemption, and these figures could act as intercessors on behalf of a worthy soul.^{vii} Conversion toward God and away from Satan was not a one-time event, but a constant training of the soul.^{viii} In Early Modern Christianity every person had the opportunity to take control of her or his spiritual future here on earth.^{ix} Control of one's own destiny is central to Early Modern lay piety.

During the fifteenth century, religious sentiment moved outside the relatively confined arenas of scholastic debate and liturgical ritual. Evidence supports the theory that throughout

Northern Europe the laity relied less on church sacrament and ceremony to create souls worthy of redemption, and more on personal resources. Private prayer books were also increasingly produced and, combined with stories of the saints' lives and panel paintings of religious subjects, raised the value of the pictorial image in devotional life. During this period in the Netherlands, lay people commissioned twice the number of the extant religious themed paintings as the clergy.^x These devotional tools served as models for the increasingly common practice of the wealthy and literate performing daily devotions in their homes.^{xi} The practices associated with lay piety allowed the "average" Christian to engage in and negotiate theological ideas normally reserved for high churchmen while, for the most part, still maintaining orthodoxy.^{xii}

There are many potential reasons for the rise of lay piety and devotion in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries. These range from the increased importance of vernacular languages to a gradual assimilation of speculative forms of monastic contemplation among the clergy and laity.^{xiii} The "book of hours" is an example of a popular lay-devotion tool that originated in the monasteries, containing the offices, prayers, and bible readings for the canonical monastic nine hours of the day. The movement towards a more monastic and speculative type of devotion reflects the contemporary turmoil within the church. Various popular reform movements in this period placed prominence on personal piety.^{xiv}

Private religious devotion and social pretension took on a new immediacy in Early Modern Europe. Their popularity gives the overwhelming impression of a society where the increasingly wealthy urban classes, as well as the nobility, had money to spend on saving their souls and good reason to do so.^{xv} In the fifteenth century, panel paintings were one means for a patron to commission a personalized devotional tool that simultaneously asserted his or her elevated social status. These were carefully considered individual pieces that reflected a willingness among

painters to tailor a work to a particular context or function. Many of these paintings served as tools for speculative devotion within the home, and reflected the religious needs of the patron.^{xvi}

Early Modern Christians practiced this type of devotion by meditating on religious imagery, often with the hope of receiving a vision of the divine, to promote the health and wellbeing of their souls.^{xvii} *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* was designed to meet the spiritual needs of a patron who likely engaged in this type of devotion. The complex imagery portrayed on the six extant panels would have given the votary with ample subject matter upon which to meditate in order to reconstruct his soul. The variety of images was important as it made it possible to practice devotion frequently by providing the viewer with subject matter designed to spark religious contemplation.

Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation is portable and custom-made to serve a specific patron in his or her daily devotional tasks. The Loiani family crest on the polyptych's exterior identifies the patron (likely Giacomo di Giovanni Loiani) and signals his social status as well as his personal spiritual aspirations for this commission. The family motto placed above the coat of arms (figure 1), *Nul Bien sans Peine*, translates from French as "nothing good without pain", and establishes that benefit awaits those who suffer. In the context of a devotional panel, the motto encompasses the required daily struggle of introspection and comprehension that is inseparable from speculative devotion.

I argue that the Loiani motto is a recurring theme throughout the panels of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*. While contemplating the subject matter of *Vanitas*, Death, and Hell on the interior panels (figure 2) of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, the votary would be forced to face the potential consequences of exercising free will improperly in daily life. I believe that for a devout fifteenth-century viewer, these images would have been terrifying in order to cause the

mental and emotional suffering that is necessary for speculative devotion. The veracity created by these scenes is amplified by the medium of oil on panel, which allows for a new level of intricate detail and naturalism that aided this introspective practice. Why would someone desire to speculate on something that caused such discomfort? The patron's motto offers an answer –there is “nothing good without pain”. Concentrating on such agonizing imagery could induce the spiritual self-knowledge vital to salvation.

Esther Cohen examines the uses of pain in Early Modern culture in her article, “Towards a History of European Physical Sensibility: Pain in the Later Middle Ages.” According to Cohen, this type of seeking-out of pain is the complete opposite of human instinct. In her view, pious men and women invited the physical sensation of pain because it was considered useful. She notes, for example, that Early Modern medicine saw salutary properties to pain, considering it a normal, even vital, part of both physical and spiritual healing.^{xviii} Conversely, the tendency of modern culture is to view pain as something to be either avoided, or if necessary, heavily anesthetized with medication. We are constantly seeking to eradicate pain in any form, be it emotional, physical, or spiritual.^{xix}

In the late Middle Ages and Early Modern period, however, the conscious attempt to feel as much physical anguish as possible in certain circumstances was fairly common. As a result, being able to bear pain stoically, or as stoically as possible, was preferred and was considered a noble trait.^{xx} Impassivity to pain was viewed as a virtue and status symbol. Pain was designated as a purely human attribute, given to Eve as a curse during childbirth and synonymous with Adam's sentence of perpetual labor.^{xxi} Therefore, expression of pain was fit only for the laboring class suffering from Adam's plight, or women bearing Eve's punishment of *dolor*. The noble class, however, did not labor in the Adamic sense. For them, and for the bourgeoisie aspiring to

nobility, inducing pain through speculative devotion was a way to experience the beneficial effects of suffering without stooping to real, physical labor.^{xxii} In Memling's polyptych, the role of pain in devotion is expressed by the prominent placement of the patron's motto, *Nul Bien sans Peine*.

For Christians, the ideal form of suffering was an empathetic identification with Christ during his Passion, a concept that Cohen has termed "philopassionism."^{xxiii} Pain was both penance for original sin and vital to Christ's sacrifice in order to redeem humanity.^{xxiv} In this way, Christianity connected the body, pain, and salvation. Within Early Modern concepts of pain, there is no difference between the body and the soul, with bodily sensations serving as a tool for higher means.^{xxv} If the human body is tied with physical and metaphysical reality, then pain dually serves as penance and a means to salvation.

Paradoxically, one means of achieving spiritual peace was to purge sin with pain. The belief that salvation was gained through suffering was the basis for the conception of Purgatory, a place where people experienced physical, emotional, and spiritual pain as penance for earthly sins in order to eventually reach Heaven. In Purgatory, sinners suffered physically through corporeal fire, emotionally by reliving their misdeeds, and spiritually by understanding their distance from God.^{xxvi} Purgatory gave Christians a chance at redemption after death. It was possible and preferable, however, to begin purgation on earth and decrease or even avoid time in Purgatory.^{xxvii} Pain in Purgatory was infinitely worse than any suffering on earth, and the proper place for purging was during life.^{xxviii} Thomas à Kempis, whose *Imitatio Christi* was well-known among the laity, noted that, "it is better to atone for sin now and to cut away vices than to keep them for purgation in the hereafter."^{xxix} Pain, then, was salutary as it exchanged short-term discomfort for eternal peace and pleasure.

For a votary looking to heal his or her soul and increase the chance of gaining Heaven, seeking and bearing as much spiritual pain as possible would have been part of a preventive regime; better to suffer here on earth than in Purgatory, or worse, the eternal fires of Hell. The necessity of pain to redeem humanity validated physical suffering among all classes during the Early Modern period, and it was believed that through meditation one could achieve control of pain, if not eradicate all bodily sensations.^{xxx} Pain, however, was not something to be sustained, but needed resolution. For the therapy to be efficacious, it had to bring about relief.

I assert that the reverse exterior panel of Memling's polyptych depicting Divine Salvation (figure 3) provided the votary with such respite. The image of Christ as Savior of the World provides a joyful counterpart to his Passion as well as relief from the votary's empathetic spiritual suffering. The joy that this panel offers the faithful provides the resolution alluded to by the family motto: that good can come from the various pains experienced during speculative devotion. Only after completing the struggle and potential discomfort of concentrating on the imagery that comprises the interior panels, and working through the various stages of temptation, realization, and self-recrimination, could the owner of this polyptych benefit from the benign peace of Christ and angelic host.

In my argument for the original order and use of this polyptych, upon which I will elaborate further, the votary must meditate on his mortality and overcome the difficult imagery on the interior panels, before he can receive the respite of Christ as *Salvator Mundi*. The subject matter depicted on these panels draws from contemporary popular religious themes. I believe that these were chosen to reflect the specific spiritual needs of the patron while simultaneously including necessary religious aspects of personal devotional tools from this period.

In Memling's polyptych, the panel containing a skull in a niche (figure 4), was likely located beside the panel displaying the coat of arms and family motto. The skull serves as a *momento mori* image, an increasingly popular theme during this period. Familiar objects such as the skull, watch, mirror, and hourglass assumed a new symbolism within *momento mori*. These images spelled out the message: "death comes to all living things."^{xxxix} The skull included in *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* reminds the votary of his own mortality, and thus encourages preparation for death while there is still time. *Memento mori* images were often accompanied by appropriate inscriptions, and this panel is no exception. The text above and below the skull appears to be carved into the rock of the niche, and is taken from the book of Job in reference to the *Salvator Mundi* image on the reverse exterior. The text translates from Latin as: "I know that my redeemer lives and that I shall rise again on the last day, when, wrapped in my skin and flesh, I will see God, my savior."^{xxxix} Situated around the skull, the text reassures that votary that although death awaits all, there is a reward for those who go through the painful process of constructing a soul worthy of redemption. This assurance is manifested a second time within the polyptych by the family motto, "nothing good without pain," in combination with the final exterior panel portraying the jubilant image of Christ as Savior of the World.

In order to gain Heaven, reforming one's soul was essential, especially during one's last moments here on earth. To instruct individuals on the proper way of dying, small printed books circulated among a wide public. Printmaking was extremely important for the dissemination of ideas and information in the later years of the fifteenth century, and these instructional books had great impact on the Early Modern literate.^{xxxix} The Art of Dying, or *Ars Moriendi*, provided the sick and dying with a guide to prepare for a "good" death, so that they could expect salvation rather than damnation.^{xxxix} The moral and religious issues that face the dying are also addressed

in the panels of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*. This is not surprising, as the two devotional aids had the same goal of conditioning the soul to overcome the devil's temptations in order to gain eternal life. Practicing this test of faith was beneficial, for Early Modern Christians knew that salvation was not guaranteed.^{xxxv} The struggle against vainglory, especially difficult for the privileged nobility, is a temptation featured in the *Ars Moriendi* and emphatically depicted in Memling's polyptych.

As someone with an elevated social status, made apparent by his ability to commission work from a master artist and by his family shield, Loiani would have been seen socially as being particularly susceptible to the vice of vainglory. The *Vanitas* scene (figure 5) of the polyptych is comprised of an alluring image of a nude female figure lost in her mirror reflection, situated in a paradisiacal Northern landscape. The consequences of surrendering to the temptation of vainglory flank the *Vanitas* panel, which is made more dramatic by being placed between the panels depicting a decaying corpse representing death (figure 6) and the devil leaping through the flames of Hell (figure 7). The figure of Death holds a banderol that reads: "behold the end of man; clay I was and to dust and ashes I returned" and on the devil's banderol in Roman capitals: "in hell there is no redemption."^{xxxvi} These texts are both adaptations from the book of Job and serve as a warning to the votary of the reality of death without salvation.^{xxxvii} The proximity of a woman embodying earthly pleasure to death and damnation impress upon the viewer the meaninglessness and temporality of earthly things.

Contemplating death and bodily decay would have been difficult and pain inducing for a fifteenth-century viewer. While the *Vanitas* and Death scenes of Memling's polyptych were certainly uncomfortable, they were nowhere near as utterly terrifying as imagining one's own soul in Hell. The concept of Hell was a devotional phenomenon during this period. In its earliest rep-

representations on ancient Byzantine icons, Hell figured only discreetly.^{xxxviii} Between the thirteenth and sixteenth centuries, however, it became a more central aspect of altarpieces and other devotional tools.^{xxxix} It was previously believed that if damned to Hell, one's being would be lost forever and become nonexistent. However, Early Modern Christian theology evolved to claim that no soul could be eradicated, not even in Hell. As a far worse punishment, man was condemned to remain himself throughout all eternity, with his own identity and physical senses kept intact.^{xl} Fifteenth-century depictions of Hell stressed the darkness and eternal fire described in the Bible, as well as a range of ingenious tortures, often with punishments tailor-made to fit the vices of the sinner. The torments of Hell were usually shown within the wide gaping jaws of an unnamed monster. Depictions of the jaws of Hell, or "hell mouth," ultimately derived from Old Testament descriptions of the monster, Leviathan.^{xli}

The banderol scrolling across the top of the scene reminds the votary that once a soul has been damned to Hell, it cannot be redeemed. The permanence of Hell, in combination with the recent theological claims that the damned remain physically and mentally intact, would have been a horrifying proposition for a contemporary viewer. These images of death and Hell affected the votary because, to the Early Modern Christian mind, life after death was real. Graphic images of the afterlife, based largely on written texts, were so close to reality that they evoked emotions such as fear and despair or, conversely, awe and gratitude.^{xlii} Descriptions of the afterlife varied radically in their detail, but everyone agreed on two final destinations for the soul: Heaven or Hell. The two options could not be more opposite; Hell was an eternity of pain and Heaven was reunion with God himself.^{xliii} The motto on the polyptych's front, seen at the end of the journey in Christ as *Salvator Mundi*, establishes that benefit awaits those who suffer. Only after

active reflection on the cold reality of a Hell without the possibility of salvation could the viewer understand the hope, rest, and healing offered by the image of Christ.

Early Modern Christians believed that the fallen state of man continuously kept the soul from choosing the right path. Original sin introduced the possibility that Satan could interfere with man's decision-making process and persuade the soul to stray from God. It was human nature to turn away from God and without the intervention of Christ and other heavenly beings human souls would succumb to the devil's temptations.^{xliv} *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* provides the votary with the means to condition his soul to choose Heaven by allowing him to physically close the wing of the polyptych depicting the devil in Hell, and in doing so, turn towards the image of Christ on the exterior panel. By successfully performing the movement away from Satan and toward God, both literally and metaphorically, the votary habituated his soul in the direction of salvation rather than damnation and increased the chances of winning a spiritual battle between good and evil when the time came.

It is clear that *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* was created for personal devotion purposes, and that the polyptych was tailor-made for its patron. I have attempted to analyze the family motto, *Nul Bien sans Peine*, in the context of the Early Modern Christian themes depicted on the panels that make up this piece. If the coat of arms does indeed belong to Giacomo di Giovanni Loiani, what is the significance of a wealthy Italian man commissioning a work from Memling and his workshop in Bruges? In turn, what does this say about Memling's fame as a devotional painter and also about the city of Bruges as an international commercial capital?

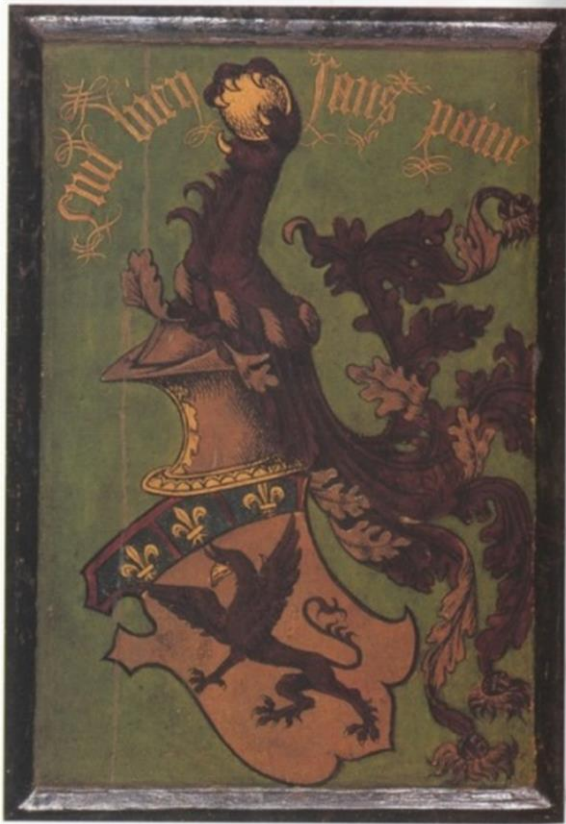


Figure 1 Coat of arms panel



Figure 2 Interior panels



Figure 3 *Salvator Mundi* panel

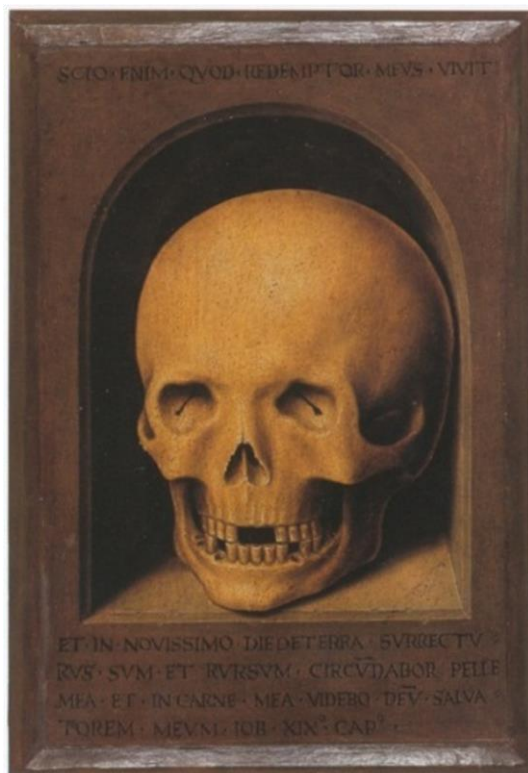


Figure 4 Skull in a niche panel



Figure 5 *Vanitas* panel



Figure 6 *Death* panel



Figure 7 Hell panel

3 HISTORY OF PATRONAGE AND ART PRODUCTION IN BRUGES

By Hans Memling's arrival around 1460, Bruges had become one of Europe's most important commercial capitals.^{xlv} A fifteenth-century traveler described Bruges as,

“...a large and very wealthy city, and one of the greatest markets of the world. Anyone who has money, and wishes to spend it, will find in this town alone everything which the whole world produces.”^{xlvi}

It is apparent that Bruges attracted many foreign visitors, in particular nobility and the aspiring upper-class. The city gained notoriety as a destination for the wealthy and travelers. A large contributing factor to Bruges's market success was hosting the 1430 wedding celebrations of Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy.^{xlvii} These grandiose events required the skills of numerous workers and attracted well-known artists, such as Jan van Eyck. As many craftsmen relocated themselves to Bruges over the course of the fifteenth-century, including Memling, the city became recognized as both a court and international trading community.^{xlviii}

After Philip the Good's wedding celebrations, Bruges continued to be a location for major court festivities. These attracted the upper and noble classes to the city, and fueled an already growing desire for social and political representation among the elite. The merchants contributed so substantially to the wealth of Bruges that their class was elevated by the influence they had on the city. The Burgundian court was especially reliant on their resources and services, in particular those of the Italian merchant-financiers based in Northern Europe.^{xlix} By receiving the Duke's specific attention and appreciation, the status of the merchant class in Bruges was further raised during this period, and members of this class joined the nobility in enjoying an increased standard of living.¹

The mobility of the upper and middle classes in Bruges during this period resulted in an increased demand for painting, as patrons wished to give visible form to their social positions and aspirations and to solidify their social standing.^{li} The creation of woodblock printing in the early fifteenth century set panel painting apart as a noble medium. Woodblock printing was a simple and cheap medium of reproduction which made a great number of images affordable to the middle class, and as a consequence panel painting came to be considered a luxury reserved for the elite.^{lii}

Memling relocated his workshop to Bruges during a period when demand for commemorative and devotional paintings and portraits by wealthy and distinguished patrons was greater than ever. He was granted citizenship in 1465, and while he moved into a district that housed painters and miniaturists, he does not appear as a member of the Bruges painters' guild or on the roles of those with free master status.^{liii} This is extremely rare, especially since he received expensive and highly prestigious commissions immediately after coming to Bruges. It is likely that he was the protégé of someone with an excellent reputation, and many scholars have argued that Memling had this type of relationship with Rogier van der Weyden.^{liv}

The exceptional number of works produced by Memling after he was first documented in Bruges (there are no known works of his before this time), leads scholars to argue that Memling had a fairly large workshop.^{lv} His residence in Bruges was a double house with an extension, which was possibly also the location of his studio. Dirk de Vos has identified 93 extant panel paintings by Memling. His shop must have employed a number of journeymen and assistants in order to produce that kind of output in the 29 years he worked in Bruges until his death on August 11, 1494. He had three children and two known apprentices. The first apprentice's name is mentioned on May 8, 1480 as Hannekin Verhanneman, and he registered with the painters' guild

as the pupil of “master Jan van Memmelynghe.”^{lvi} This is the first time that Memling’s name appears in the guild register.^{lvii} Following the traditional four year apprenticeship time-frame, Memling took his second apprentice between 1484 and 1488, Passchier van der Mersch.^{lviii}

Documentation on Memling is very sparse; no contracts survive for any of his paintings, nor did he sign his work.^{lix} In addition to discerning attribution, various solutions as to the patronage and original use of his work have been analyzed through contextual and historical clues. The patrons of his smaller religious works likely used them for private devotion. Most of Memling’s commissions, however, were for altarpieces, and the majority of these came from local patrons.^{lx} Memling’s second largest clientele base was comprised of Italian merchants in Bruges, and he received almost as many commissions from them as from Bruges citizens and religious institutions.^{lxi} Many foreign clients commissioned diptychs, triptychs, and polyptychs that were portable and could be used for personal devotion at certain times, and could also function as small altarpieces in domestic settings or family chapels. There are even records of these personal devotion tools serving as epitaphs following the death of the owner.^{lxiii}

Memling’s skillfully executed devotional panels and portraits were held in high regard during his professional life in Bruges. As Memling’s fame spread throughout Europe, it may have become the fashion for Italians visiting or working in Bruges to have him paint their portraits, which represent the largest portion of his known commissions by foreign clients.^{lxiv} At least eleven of Memling’s extant works were Italian commissions. This is more Italian commissions than any of his Flemish predecessors or contemporaries, although Flemish painting had been admired and collected in Italy since the time of Jan van Eyck. An appreciation for the radiant color and naturalistic detail that were the trademarks of the Flemish style of painting grew in Italy, where the effects of oil paint could not be equaled with Italian tempera.^{lxv}

Memling in particular had an influence on Italian painting of the late fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries. His influence was apparent in the metropolitan hub of Florence, but also in the smaller city of Bologna, where it is especially evident in the work of Francesco Francia.^{lxvi} Memling's work must have been known and respected in the city of Bologna, since the Loiani family crest depicted in *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* is Bolognese, indicating the patron of this work is from that city. Ownership of an altarpiece by a venerated artist would mark Loiani as fashionable, wealthy, and pious.^{lxvii}

Italian commissions of Bruges master works were frequent during the fifteenth-century, the usual patrons being either Florentine or Genoese. Bolognese clients were more atypical. Memling was not the only Flemish artist Loiani commissioned, as noted by Hulin de Loo in 1927. The same Bolognese family crest appears in two other Flemish works in addition to its prominent placement in *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*: a Bruges school deposition in the Durazzo-Pallavinci collection and *Saint Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors* by the Master of the Baroncelli Portraits (figure 8). The relatively close dating on all of these works makes it possible that the same patron commissioned them all.^{lxviii} The Master of the Baroncelli Portraits' other patrons include Pierantonio Bandini Baroncelli, successor of Tommaso Portinari of the Medici bank in Bruges, and his wife Maria Bonciani.^{lxix} Memling also had a number of impressive Italian commissions including ones from Angelo Tani and Tommaso Portinari.^{lxx} That Loiani shared patronage with such significant Italian names in Bruges at the time is an indication of his high position in society.

The choice of family motto is yet another means that the Loiani family used to assert its noble status. In *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* the motto, *Nul Bien sans Peine*, is prominently displayed above the coat of arms (figure 9). This phrase has evolved into our modern idi-

om of “no pain, no gain.” Bearing pain stoically and bravely, as the motto suggests, was considered a noble trait.^{lxxi} The text of the family motto in Memling’s work was applied in gold leaf, a traditional representation found in coats of arms of the Knights of the Golden Fleece, a Burgundian order. The use of French, rather than Latin, is also an aspect specific to the order of the Golden Fleece.^{lxxii} Many members of the confraternity commissioned work to commemorate their newly acquired status and celebrate the prestige of being selected by Philip the Good. There is research that promotes Loiani as being a member of the Bolognese senate, on which I will elaborate further in the following paragraphs, and the use of French script in gold leaf may have been an expression of his political ties with the ducal court.^{lxxiii}

Social and religious identities were largely inextricable in this period, and familial lineage was a necessary aspect of accruing merit within these power structures. To this end, documentation of ancestry became a principal preoccupation among the nobility.^{lxxiv} Many patrons also included their family crests in commissioned devotional imagery. Despite its miniature size and function as a wall decoration, the artist of *Saint Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors* went to great lengths to make the arms legible in order to indicate patronage.^{lxxv} This, in addition to the portrait of Loiani identifying him as the donor, makes it clear that he did not desire to remain anonymous. Piety was considered a virtue essential to achieving high social status, and a motivating factor behind patron visibility within the realm of devotional images.^{lxxvi}

In the past, there has been some discrepancy as to which Italian family the crest belongs. For many years it was thought to belong to the Borelli family. It has been successfully argued by Hulin de Loo that the arms should be reattributed to the Loiani family of Bologna.^{lxxvii} It has been suggested that the patron was Giovanni d’Antonio Loiani, and he is listed as such in the catalogue raisonné from the Strasbourg Museum where *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* is

located.^{lxxviii} Margaret Koster made a convincing argument for Giacomo di Giovanni Loiani, not Giovanni, as the patron of all three works bearing the Loiani crest.^{lxxix}

According to Koster, several lines of the Loiani family had resided in Bologna since the eleventh century. The family name was prominent in Bolognese society beginning in the thirteenth century until well into the sixteenth century. Two eighteenth-century manuscripts, one written by Guidicini and the other by Carrati, contain elaborate Loiani family trees.^{lxxx} These manuscripts were created independent of one another, yet overlap and corroborate one another. Several members of the Loiani family served in the Bologna judicial system as lawyers, jurors, and on the councils of the 120 and the *Anziani*. Giacomo di Giovanni Loiani was elevated to the senate in 1508, the highest government body in fifteenth-century Bologna.^{lxxxi} Commissioning devotional paintings from famed Flemish masters would have been advantageous in his quest for such prestigious appointments. These works would have also presented him as a devout individual. Loiani must have been a household name in Bologna, with strong religious ties. In his will dated January 5, 1387, Giovanni di Leonardo Loiani left instructions for his heirs to construct a chapel in the church of San Giacomo Maggiore, one of the city's most venerated churches.^{lxxxii}

Giacomo di Giovanni Loiani is the only Loiani to marry twice, with his first wife being Flemish. This fact strongly suggests that *Saint Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors* was indeed commissioned by Giacomo, as this would explain the inclusion of two wives. According to the manuscripts, this would date the painting to around 1510. Giacomo is on record as having journeyed to Flanders from June 1, 1485 to September 1, 1486. During this trip, he could have commissioned *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* (dated 1485 or later) from Memling. He then returned to Flanders to marry his first wife, Marie van Stakenborch, and they lived in Antwerp from 1497 to 1503. He went home to Bologna by 1508, which is the year he was elevated to sen-

ate, and married his second wife Elisabetta in 1510. The next year, Giacomo built a grand senatorial house in Bologna, including an antechamber off of the bedroom to serve as his personal chapel. According to his will, they lived there until his death in 1544.^{lxxxiii}

The wealthy person who commissioned small portable diptychs, triptychs, and polypptychs tailored to his or her personal religious needs often displayed these objects as indicators of status and piety. The altarpiece may have been relocated to Italy after its execution, and Loiani likely furnished his private family chapel with *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, in addition to his other religious commissions.^{lxxxiv} Jean Wilson has noted, for example, that the purchase and display of expensive items like religious panels was part of *vivre noblement* (living nobly).^{lxxxv} While on display the wings of the altarpiece would have been closed to conceal the interior, and opened only for practicing devotion or showing the object to significant visitors.^{lxxxvi} Memling's polyptych, I argue, was no different and was displayed with the wings closed to reveal only the family coat of arms next to a skull in a niche.

By exploring contemporary religious, social, and political themes surrounding the patron and artist of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, I have attempted to place this work in historical context. However, key questions remain to be examined. What does the specific imagery on the panels say about Giacomo di Giovanni Loiani's spiritual identity? In what order were the six extant panels originally arranged, how did they fit together, and how were they used?



Figure 8 *Saint Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors*



Figure 9 Detail of family motto

4 A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY

The primary function of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* was to aid the owner in performing daily devotional tasks necessary for constructing and reconstructing the soul.^{lxxxvii} By commissioning this work, Loiani provided himself with a means to meditate on the difficult subject matter at hand and, in doing so, provide spiritual “medicine” useful for his salvation. The lack of documentation surrounding Memling’s workshop makes it impossible to ascertain how much of the subject matter Loiani chose for himself, and how much was Memling’s creative interpretation. The inclusion of the Loiani family crest, however, suggests that the rest of the subject matter included in the polyptych was somehow representative of Loiani’s personal spiritual aspirations, and the polyptych’s relocation to Italy would seem to indicate that the patron found the finished product acceptable.

The three extant panels of this polyptych were painted on both sides and then subsequently sawn apart (after its creation and before the Strasbourg Museum’s acquisition in 1890), thus creating the six paintings that presently make up the polyptych. Each panel is roughly 8.5 x 5.5 inches and the frames have been over-painted or re-gilded over time.^{lxxxviii} The subject matter and the mechanics of opening and closing the polyptych necessitate, as suggested by Faure in his 1996 article, a fourth panel.^{lxxxix} When a fourth panel is added, the two interior wings fold inward to create a diptych of the images on their reverse panels (likely the Loiani family crest and skull in a niche) when closed. Family crests were often elaborately illustrated on the reverse of interior panels in this way.^{xc} Such subjects as armorial bearings and *memento mori* imagery are commonly paired in diptychs from this period, the most well-known being Jan Gossaert’s *Diptych of Jean Carondelet* (figure 10).

Philippe Lorentz has proposed that the four, double-sided panels were hinged like an accordion.^{xcⁱ} Hinged arrangements were common and had practical use as the multi-part work could be folded down to its smallest unit.^{xcⁱⁱ} Once folded, it took up as little space as possible and was also well protected, two essential requirements for a portable altarpiece that travels regularly with its owner. Travel could be a dangerous prospect, especially in the Early Modern period, and prayer was an integral part of life both at home and when journeying.^{xcⁱⁱⁱ} For Loiani, the ability to travel was crucial, as the distance from Bologna to Bruges is about 760 miles one way and he made this trip at least twice.

The *Antwerp-Baltimore Polyptych* (named for the two current locations of the panels) is a portable altarpiece that was created for Philip the Bold, Duke of Burgundy, and is fashioned in a four-piece accordion style.^{xc^{iv}} He owned a number of polyptychs, and at least one other four part altarpiece that was also hinged for maximum portability, even though they were commissioned close to home.^{xc^v} These works were likely known among the nobility in Bruges due to their ducal patronage, and they support the argument for the similar construction of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, as during the time of its execution there was an established tradition within the Burgundian court of portable altarpieces.

These portable panels were attached to each other by hinges so that when traveling they lay on top of one another in their smallest form. When erected for use they would be closed, with the wings shut forming a diptych, or open to display the narrative of the interior panels.^{xc^{vi}} The altarpiece would have been open when in use for prayer and meditation and then presented in its closed form for visitors. Scenes would have been viewed independently and in connection with their neighboring panels.^{xc^{vii}}

I argue that the devotional program of the panels required viewing them in a particular order, in which the votary moved through a “virtual journey” by contemplating the outer panels, then opening the wings to reveal the more challenging interior panels, and then returning to the peaceful exterior image of Christ and the adjacent exterior painting on the missing fourth panel (figure 11). Before discussing the polyptych as a whole, I will describe the individual paintings in what I deem to be their logical order to better comprehend the effect that the order of the panels has on the entire altarpiece.^{xcviii}

Mediation begins with the Loiani coat of arms and family motto. In my proposed reconstruction of the altarpiece this scene appears on the front exterior, next to the skull in a niche, and the family motto foreshadows the interior imagery.^{xcix} The crest is made up of a silver shield and armor, a griffin, a sable arm and claw clutching a gold orb, a blue band on the top of the shield with three fleurs-de-lys in gold, and the family motto.^c The frame around this panel appears to be painted in *trompe l'oeil* to imitate granite.^{ci} The motto, *Nul Bien sans Peine*, is the guiding principal for the votary's reception of this polyptych.

The viewer is immediately reminded of the pain involved with speculative devotion by the adjacent panel. The right exterior wing showcases a skull that takes up most of the frame, set within a grisaille arch. Below the skull, *trompe l'oeil* is employed again with the text which appears to be chiseled into the rock, referring to the *Salvator Mundi* on the reverse exterior of the polyptych.^{cii ciii} The skull is a token of the meaninglessness of earthly life, and it paradoxically urges the viewer onward into the interior of the polyptych. What should be a warning of the constant presence of death invites the votary to contemplate it as a means to achieving eternal life. Once opened, the succession of scenes inside the polyptych was: Death, unknown panel, *Vanitas*, Hell. Upon opening the wings of the altarpiece, the viewer is directed away from the morbid de-

piction of a skull, which showcases the foolishness of vanity, to the pleasurable aspects of the personification of *Vanitas*. She wears a diadem in her long hair and looks into a mirror, unashamedly showing off her nakedness but for the sandals on her feet, which work to accentuate her absolute nudity. She is the ideal image of fifteenth-century female beauty with her elongated neck, high hairline, long flowing blond hair, and a protruding abdomen signaling fertility.

The female figure is not easily reducible to a mere concretization of vice, however. As is often the case in Northern religious images, she can be read in more than one way. Situating her mostly nude in a paradisiacal landscape, frames her as Eve in the Garden of Eden. Images of Adam and/or Eve in conjunction with the skull evoke the traditional links between knowledge and death.^{civ} Memling again employs the method of *trompe l'oeil*, by projecting her foot outward into the viewer's space. Eve's punishment for bringing sin onto humanity was pain during childbirth. By inducing pain through speculative devotion, the viewer could work to bridge the gap created between humankind and Christ formed by original sin. As Eve, appearing to move outward into the viewer's realm, this figure introduces a type of salutary pain associated with atonement.

The conflation of *Vanitas* and Eve is tenable as the portrayal of Eve as a fool staring at herself in a mirror was a commonplace theme during this period.^{cv} According to Augustinian theology, Eve was the incarnation of dangerous seductive feminine beauty and successfully tempted Adam through sight. Thus she was frequently depicted holding a mirror, a tool for sight. This tension between true and false awareness was possible because the mirror also referred to a righteous self-knowledge.^{cvi} The mirror in the *Vanitas* panel is a complex element. It simultaneously signals the sin of Vanity, seductive and faulty self-knowledge resulting from original sin, and the duty of all Christians to gain spiritual self-knowledge as a condition of forming and reforming their souls.

At this point, it is difficult to read the sequence fully because of the missing panel. I believe that an image of Adam is a plausible suggestion for the subject matter of this panel, and precedence for an Adam/Eve pairing exists within Memling's oeuvre on the exterior wings of *Triptych with the Virgin and Child Enthroned* (figure 12). Whatever its content, the panel would have been part of a sequence that read: Death, unknown subject, *Vanitas*, and Hell. Hell is the most logical end to this sequence because of its associations with temptation, sin, and mortality. As it is the destination awaiting all those who are ensnared in vanity, and is the result of humankind's fallen state, it forms a logical cause-and-effect pairing with *Vanitas*/Eve. For the votary, the allure of vanity (one of the sins associated with nobility in the form of vainglory) would be counterbalanced by the grim threat of Hell beside her. In this way, the pleasure of sin and desire is made less alluring, by its placement between the eternal torment of perdition, and an image of death and decay.

The figure of Death in the left interior panel, when viewed individually, reminds the viewer of the consequence of his fragile mortality. Death is represented as a decomposing corpse that has been reanimated and is portrayed holding a banderol, which manifests the fate of all humankind. The finality of death is exhibited in this image through the worms consuming the corpse's guts. The cadaver was not solely a reminder of humankind's frail state, it was also a reminder of the pain and suffering that became part of humanity's destiny as a result of the fall. Yet, the sparse vegetation growing up out of the barren ground alludes to rebirth and new life even in the midst of death and decay.

Compared to the *memento mori* skull on the exterior of the polyptych, the interior panels illustrate a much more literal and gruesome view of the impending death and subsequent decomposition that awaits all living things. Pairing the living and the dead was a popular theme that

spread rapidly across Early Modern Europe. It likely had origins in the French poem “Three Living and Three Dead,” about three men who went out hunting and came across three corpses who lectured them on their worldly ways, closing with the words: “as you are, we once were; as we are, so shall you be.”^{cvi} In *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, the votary, like the men in “Three Living and Three Dead,” is abruptly confronted with a corpse that very well could be his own, redirecting him from worldly pursuits.

Another representation of the living confronted by death can be found in the *Danse Macabre*, or Dance of Death, which circulated across Europe through print.^{cvi} In the *Danse Macabre* individuals are confronted by their dead counterparts, as they dance with their own corpses.^{cix} The image of Death in the left interior panel is reminiscent of the Dance of Death in his dynamic pose. The figure of death as a reanimated body in an advanced state of decomposition is a reminder of the transitory quality of flesh.^{cx} Juxtaposing the desire to enjoy *vivre noblemen* with the concept of death as the great equalizer emerged as a literary and pictorial theme in Europe in the late Medieval era.^{cx} The interior scenes of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* together call for repentance and declare the inevitability of death, while the scene of hell demonstrates the direct consequence of death without atonement.^{cxii}

The two final destinations that remain for the dead, paradise and hell, are depicted next to each other in the interior of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, exemplifying their complete opposite natures. Christians desired to be counted among the happy elect in heaven and avoid eternal damnation.^{cxiii} The physical and emotional pain, suffering, and strain, which were part-and-parcel of typical Hell scenes in the fifteenth-century, were often designed to evoke emotions of dread, regret, and compunction within the viewer (one need only think of Rogier van der Weyden’s *Beaune Last Judgment* to find an example of the emotional turmoil suffered by those

contemplating Hell).^{cxiv} In Memling's polyptych, the devil is a chimera that leaps through flames while simultaneously stepping on souls to shove them down into the mouth of a dragon that represents the gates of Hell.

The composition of the three interior panels creates a complex narrative that relies on a balance between the illusion of three-dimensional depth and two-dimensional pattern.^{cxv} The figures of Death and *Vanitas*, for example, share compositional traits. Specifically, the toad that is attached to the genitalia of the corpse corresponds to the female figures genitalia.^{cxvi} The griffin that is noticeable element of the Loiani coat of arms is featured as a noble pet next to the figure of Vanity. Memling appears to use such shared compositional elements to propel the viewer between and through the panels. Another example is the banderol in the Hell panel, which corresponds visually to the one above the image of Death. Both of these banderols serve to warn the viewer of the permanence of the consequences of his or her sin.

The banderol in the panel depicting Death is one of the few examples of Gothic script in Memling's oeuvre, another being the family motto on the front of this polyptych. The rest of his scripts are written in Roman capitals, such as the scroll in the panel of hell. Memling was the first known painter in the Low Countries to use non-hybrid purely classic lettering in the manner of his Italian contemporaries.^{cxvii} As in Memling's Floreins triptych and his Van Nieuwenhove diptych, the text in the Hell panel ends in little eyes placed in a triangular pattern.^{cxviii}

Upon shutting the wings depicting Death and Hell and turning the polyptych over, the votary is offered the relief and reward of changing the altarpiece into a diptych made up of the reverse exterior images of the *Salvator Mundi* and the unknown fourth panel. In the Divine Salvation panel, four angels playing musical instruments flank the *Salvator Mundi*. The heavenly bodies are represented in a timeless space by arranging the angelic host in a circle around Christ.^{cxix}

Based upon popular Early Modern devotional themes, I believe that the subject matter on the missing fourth panel that would complete the Divine Salvation aspect of this altarpiece would have been an image of the Virgin Mary enthroned. This was a popular way to represent the Virgin Mary in altarpieces, and example can be found again in Memling's *Triptych with the Virgin and Child Enthroned* (figure 13). The virtual journey of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* constantly moves toward the image of Christ as Savior of the World, and in closing the interior the votary is physically moving away from sin and the devil and towards salvation.^{cxx cxxi}

The images portrayed in *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* demand that the votary work through difficult concepts as part of restructuring his or her soul, and the arrangement of the interior panels offers a route for a visual journey in which this can take place. The narrative of the interior panels requires the viewer to travel between the temptation of sin and its consequences. The goal of meditation on such a sequence would have been to diagnose and heal the "sickness" caused by sin in order to become worthy of redemption and achieve heavenly rewards in paradise as depicted on the final exterior panels.^{cxxii}

Early Modern Christian concepts of individual piety and penance promote the idea of a spiritual journey throughout the panels of this polyptych in a particular order. Mitzi Kirkland-Ives, for example, discusses some of Memling's narrative works within the context of a "virtual pilgrimage."^{cxxiii} I believe this concept can be applied to the movement throughout the panels of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*. In my proposed journey the votary started with the front exterior diptych of the panels depicting the Loiani crest and motto and the skull in a niche. The family motto, "nothing good without pain," sets the tone for the rest of the mediation. Upon opening the wings, the votary revealed *Vanitas* and a missing panel flanked by Death to the left and Hell to the right. After careful reflection on the powerful subjects of the interior panels, the

wings would be closed and the polyptych turned to the back exterior diptych created by Christ as the *Salvator Mundi* and the unknown missing panel. In this final act of devotion, the panel of Christ provided the votary with recompense for his pain during the previous more challenging imagery.

In this thesis I have attempted to reconstruct Hans Memling's controversial polyptych in a way that supports contemporary religious and social practices of the Early Modern period. Through recognizing the patron of *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* as Giacomo di Giovanni Loiani, it is possible to grasp a sense of why this particular work may have been commissioned and of its intended use. I believe that there is technical and historical information that supports my proposed original construction including a missing fourth panel, however, this deconstructed altarpiece will likely continue to be a topic of scholarly debate within Memling's oeuvre.

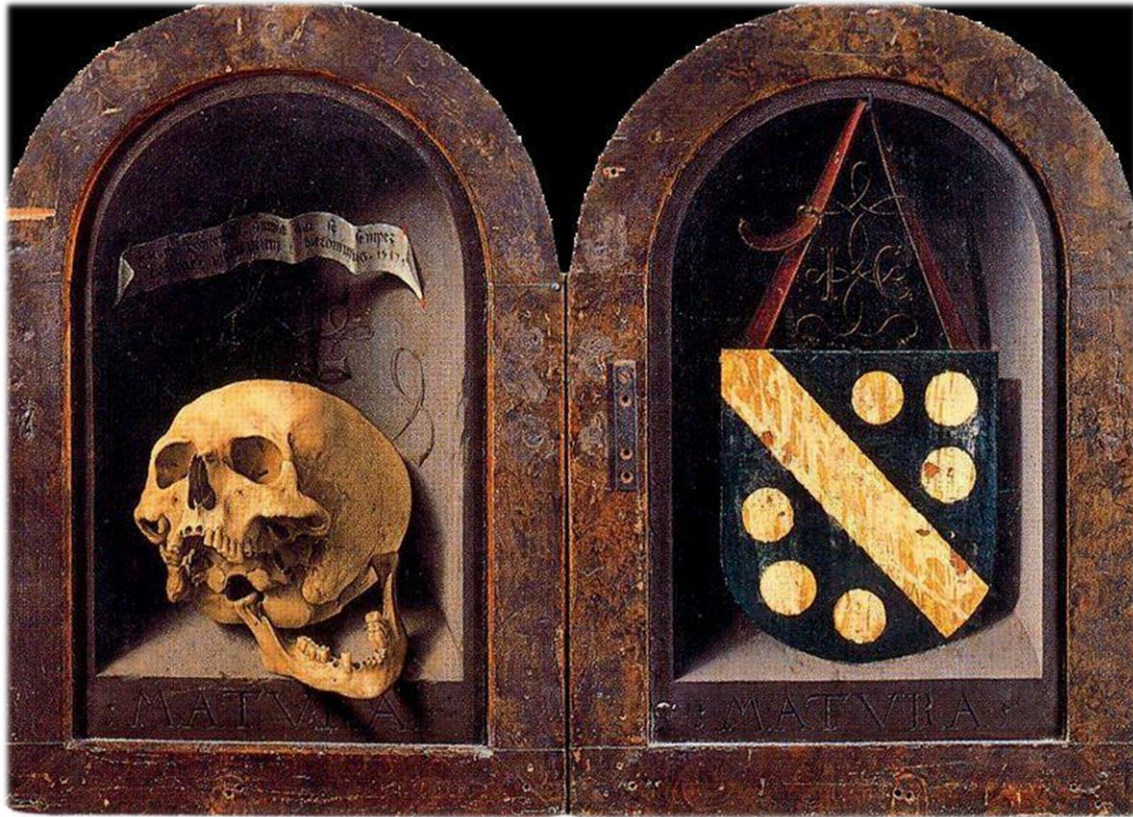


Figure 10 *Diptych of Jean Carondelet*



Figure 11 Reconstruction with missing panels; exterior front, interior, exterior back



Figure 12 Exterior panels from *Triptych with the Virgin and Child Enthroned*



Figure 13 Interior panel from *Triptych with the Virgin and Child Enthroned*

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- ^{xxxiii} Craig Harbison, *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in its Historical Context* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Laurence King, 1995), 75.
- ^{xxxiv} John R. Decker, "Between Conversion and Apostasy, Moriens's Struggle and the Fate of the Soul," In *The Turn of the Soul*, edited by Lieke Stelling, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 249.
- ^{xxxv} John R. Decker, "Between Conversion and Apostasy, Moriens's Struggle and the Fate of the Soul," In *The Turn of the Soul*, edited by Lieke Stelling, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 251.
- ^{xxxvi} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 245.
- ^{xxxvii} The text from the Devil's banderol is from the Book of Hours service, The Office for the Dead, at Matins, in the third nocturne, for Wednesday and Saturday
- ^{xxxviii} Philippe Ariès, *Images of Man and Death*. Translated by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 143-147.
- ^{xxxix} Philippe Ariès, *Images of Man and Death*. Translated by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 143-147.
- ^{xl} Philippe Ariès, *Images of Man and Death*. Translated by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 143-147.
- ^{xli} Eleanor Townsend, *Death and Art: Europe 1200-1530* (London: V&A Publishing, 2009), 16.
- ^{xlii} Philippe Ariès, *Images of Man and Death*. Translated by Janet Lloyd (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1985), 143-147.
- ^{xliii} Eleanor Townsend, *Death and Art: Europe 1200-1530* (London: V&A Publishing, 2009), 11-15.
- ^{xliv} John R. Decker, "Between Conversion and Apostasy, Moriens's Struggle and the Fate of the Soul," In *The Turn of the Soul*, edited by Lieke Stelling, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 254.
- ^{xlvi} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 19.
- ^{xlv} Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 1-2.
- ^{xlvii} Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 1-2.
- ^{xlviii} Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 1-2.
- ^{xlix} Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 64.
- ^l Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 21.
- ^{li} Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 1-2.
- ^{lii} Craig Harbison, *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in its Historical Context* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Laurence King, 1995), 75.
- ^{liii} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 21-22.
- ^{liv} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 21-22.
- ^{lv} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 96.
- ^{lvi} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 43.
- ^{lvii} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 43.
- ^{lviii} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 96.
- ^{lix} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 119.
- ^{lx} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 115-116.
- ^{lxi} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 115-116.
- ^{lxii} Maximilian Martens study of Memling's patrons 1994-1997
- ^{lxiii} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 117.
- ^{lxiv} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 201.

- ^{lxv} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 199.
- ^{lxvi} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 215.
- ^{lxvii} Some scholars have argued that the *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* panels are not by Hans Memling. The main argument for this is that the quality is lacking. I have seen this work in person, and was impressed by the detail that could only have been accomplished by a one-haired paint brush (Memling was a known miniaturist) and the complexity of subject matter. The most recent dismissal of this work was by Dr. Barbara Lane, who did not include it in Memling's oeuvre in her book on the artist published in 2009. She addressed this piece in the appendix by stating that it should be assigned to a workshop assistant or follower. In the same book she discussed Memling's large workshop with apprentices. It was not uncommon for assistants to contribute to a piece and the master painter would have been responsible for various details such as faces and hands. I believe this was the case with *Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation*, and it would account for the discrepancies in style. Memling was well known in Italy and Bologna, and the patron of this work also commissioned other works from renowned Flemish artists. I do not believe that a member of the upper class who could afford to commission other impressive works would settle for a Memling 'knockoff'.
- ^{lxviii} Margaret Koster, "Reconsidering 'St. Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors' by the Baroncelli Master of Bruges," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 26, no. ½ (1998): 5-8.
- ^{lxix} Hans J. Van Miegroet, "Master of the Baroncelli Portraits," Oxford Art Online, http://www.oxfordartonline.com.ezproxy.gsu.edu/subscriber/article/grove/art/T055065pg38?q=loiani&search=quick&pos=1&_start=1#firsthit.
- ^{lxx} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 245.
- ^{lxxi} Esther Cohen, "Towards a History of European Physical Sensibility: Pain in the Later Middle Ages." *Science in Context* 8 (1995): 53.
- ^{lxxii} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 372.
- ^{lxxiii} Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 48.
- ^{lxxiv} Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 28.
- ^{lxxv} Margaret Koster, "Reconsidering 'St. Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors' by the Baroncelli Master of Bruges," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 26, no. ½ (1998): 5-6.
- ^{lxxvi} Barbara G. Lane, *Hans Memling: Master Painter in Fifteenth-Century Bruges* (Belgium: Brepols, 2009), 118.
- ^{lxxvii} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 245.
- ^{lxxviii} *Collection du musée des Beaux-Arts: Peinture flamande et hollandaise, XVe – XVIIIe siècle*. Strasbourg: Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, 2009: 49-53.
- ^{lxxix} Margaret Koster, "Reconsidering 'St. Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors' by the Baroncelli Master of Bruges," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 26, no. ½ (1998): 7-8.
- ^{lxxx} Margaret Koster, "Reconsidering 'St. Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors' by the Baroncelli Master of Bruges," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 26, no. ½ (1998): 7-8.
- ^{lxxxi} Margaret Koster, "Reconsidering 'St. Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors' by the Baroncelli Master of Bruges," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 26, no. ½ (1998): 7-8.
- ^{lxxxii} Margaret Koster, "Reconsidering 'St. Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors' by the Baroncelli Master of Bruges," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 26, no. ½ (1998): 7-8.
- ^{lxxxiii} Margaret Koster, "Reconsidering 'St. Catherine of Bologna with Three Donors' by the Baroncelli Master of Bruges," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 26, no. ½ (1998): 7-8.
- ^{lxxxiv} *Collection du musée des Beaux-Arts: Peinture flamande et hollandaise, XVe – XVIIIe siècle*. Strasbourg: Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, 2009: 49-53.
- ^{lxxxv} Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages* (University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998).
- ^{lxxxvi} Alistair Smith, *Early Netherlandish and German Paintings* (London: The National Gallery, 1985), 42-44.
- ^{lxxxvii} John R. Decker, *The Technology of Salvation and the Art of Geertgen tot Sint Jans* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 42.
- ^{lxxxviii} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 245.
- ^{lxxxix} *Collection du musée des Beaux-Arts: Peinture flamande et hollandaise, XVe – XVIIIe siècle*. Strasbourg: Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, 2009: 49-53.

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- ^{xc} Craig Harbison, *The Mirror of the Artist: Northern Renaissance Art in its Historical Context* (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Laurence King, 1995), 77.
- ^{xcⁱ} *Collection du musée des Beaux-Arts: Peinture flamande et hollandaise, XVe – XVIIIe siècle*. Strasbourg: Musées de la Ville de Strasbourg, 2009: 49-53.
- ^{xcⁱⁱ} Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion: in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, translated by Michael Hoyle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 148.
- ^{xcⁱⁱⁱ} Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion: in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, translated by Michael Hoyle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 148.
- ^{xc^{iv}} Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion: in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, translated by Michael Hoyle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 136.
- ^{xc^v} Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion: in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, translated by Michael Hoyle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 145.
- ^{xc^{vi}} Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion: in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, translated by Michael Hoyle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 148.
- ^{xc^{vii}} Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion: in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, translated by Michael Hoyle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 148.
- ^{xc^{viii}} Henk van Os, *The Art of Devotion: in the Late Middle Ages in Europe 1300-1500*, translated by Michael Hoyle, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 137.
- ^{xc^{ix}} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 245.
- ^c Max J. Friedlander, *Hans Memling and Gerard David* (New York: Praeger Publishers, Inc., 1971), 48.
- ^{ci} Based upon my personal assessment of the altarpiece when visiting the Strasbourg Museum
- ^{cⁱⁱ} The trompe l'oeil text that appears to be chiseled into the rock of the niche is from the book of Job, which also contains a reference to the act of chiseling text onto granite. Not only the text, but the family motto and subject matter strongly reference and reflect this book of the bible. In my future research on this work of art I would like to examine the parallel of the patron Loiani and the biblical character of Job.
- ^{cⁱⁱⁱ} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 245, 373.
- ^{c^{iv}} Rose Marie San Juan, "The Turn of the Skull: Andreas Vesalius and the Early Modern Memento Mori," in *The Erotics of Looking: Early Modern Netherlandish Art*, edited by Angela Vanhaelen and Bronwen Wilson, (West Sussex: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013), 98.
- ^{c^v} Yona Pinson, *The Fools Journey: A Myth of Obsession in Northern Renaissance Art* (Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2008), 79.
- ^{c^{vi}} Yona Pinson, *The Fools Journey: A Myth of Obsession in Northern Renaissance Art* (Belgium: Brepols Publishers, 2008), 14.
- ^{c^{vii}} Eleanor Townsend, *Death and Art: Europe 1200-1530* (London: V&A Publishing, 2009), 42.
- ^{c^{viii}} First appearing in visual form in the wall paintings around the cloisters of the cemetery of Les Innocents, Paris (1424-1425)
- ^{c^{ix}} Eleanor Townsend, *Death and Art: Europe 1200-1530* (London: V&A Publishing, 2009), 42.
- ^{cx} Elina Gertsman, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages: Image, Text, Performance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010), 23.
- ^{cxⁱ} Elina Gertsman, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages: Image, Text, Performance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010), 3.
- ^{cxⁱⁱ} Elina Gertsman, *The Dance of Death in the Middle Ages: Image, Text, Performance* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2010), 10.
- ^{cxⁱⁱⁱ} John R. Decker, *The Technology of Salvation and the Art of Geertgen tot Sint Jans* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 42.
- ^{cx^{iv}} John R. Decker, *The Technology of Salvation and the Art of Geertgen tot Sint Jans* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009)
- ^{cx^v} John R. Decker, *The Technology of Salvation and the Art of Geertgen tot Sint Jans* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 38.
- ^{cx^{vi}} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 245.
- ^{cx^{vii}} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 371-373.
- ^{cx^{viii}} Dirk De Vos, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works* (Ghent: Ludion Press, 1994), 371-373.
- ^{cx^{ix}} John R. Decker, *The Technology of Salvation and the Art of Geertgen tot Sint Jans* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 41.

^{cxx} John R. Decker, "Between Conversion and Apostasy, Moriens's Struggle and the Fate of the Soul," In *The Turn of the Soul*, edited by Lieke Stelling, (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 254.

^{cxxi} I have viewed the technical report of the extant panels of Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation executed by the Louvre in 1995. The images of the back of the panels support that they were once in pairs that have been subsequently sawn apart. It appears that there are matching patterns in the wood grain that would suggest the pairing of Vanitas and Divine Salvation, Hell and the Skull, and the coat of arms and Death (which also share a vertical crack in their panels) as once having been one single panel painted on both sides.

^{cxxii} John R. Decker, *The Technology of Salvation and the Art of Geertgen tot Sint Jans* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate Publishing Company, 2009), 46.

^{cxxiii} Mitzi Kirkland-Ives, *In the Footsteps of Christ: Hans Memling's Passion Narratives and the Devotional Imagination in the Early Modern Netherlands* (Turnhout, Belgium: Brepols, 2013), xix.