

Van Eyck (Chaucer Library of Art)

Amanda Tomlinson

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Jan van Eyck, the most famous and innovative Flemish painter of the 15th century, is thought to have been born in the village of Maaseyck in Limbourg around 1390 and died in Bruges in 1441. He served as court painter to two powerful patrons, first John of Bavaria, Count of Holland (1422-24) and then Philip the Good, Duke of Burgundy, for whom he undertook many secret diplomatic missions including visits to Spain and Portugal.

Van Eyck has been credited with the invention of painting in oils and, although this is incorrect, there is no doubt that he perfected the technique. He used the oil medium to represent a variety of subjects in microscopic detail with striking realism; for example, he infused painted jewels and precious metals with a glowing inner light by means of subtle glazes. Scholars consider Jan van Eyck to be the single most influential Flemish painter of the northern Renaissance and one of the greatest masters of all time. Illustrated with many of van Eyck's finest works, this book ably proves this assertion.



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