

# Rogier van der weyden



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Assignment #1 " Biography of Rogier van der Weyden" Prepared by: GE161

Art History Jan 30th 2013 Rogier van der Weyden an early Netherlandish painter was originally given the name Rogier da la Pasture (Roger of the Pasture) and was born 1399 in Tournai which would now be called Belgium. He was the son of knife maker Henry de la Pasture and Agnes de Watrelos.

Records of his life were destroyed during World War 2 so we cannot be sure as to his early years before he became a recognized painter of the 15th century but there are quite a few different interpretations on his life solely based on bits and pieces that have been put together by scholars over the years. One fact that is known was that he did marry Elisabeth, the daughter of a Brussels shoemaker named Jan Goffaert and wife Cathelyne van Stockem. Rogier and Elisabeth did happen to have four children and of those children Cornelius the eldest actually painted a portrait of his father later on.

The life of Rogier van der Weyden was one that was not as eventful or exciting as some of the other painters or sculptures of the 15th century but his story is one that picks up later on at the end of his career and even now into the 21st century. Since Rogier van der Weyden was a son of a knife maker he did manage to fiddle around with sculpting but only as a tinter, he added color to the stark white stone sculptures (" whilst tinting given to the ornaments themselves, and the presence of angels dyed in pink and blue might betray his early occupation as a colorist of stone, and almost suggest that in his youth he painted miniatures" (1)).

Records show that he did study under Robert Campin, who was known as the " Master of Flemalle" which can be easily argued today. Under Campin, Rogier became quite the artist and his career soon took off quite quickly

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which landed him his own title as a master. His career then took off and Brussels were so amazed by his art that they actually appointed him as their official painter. Once that people became aware of this Rogier van der Weyden his popularity grew and his status was of high regard. As town painter Van der Weyden was furnished with cloth of certain fineness, and allowed to hang his cloak on the right shoulder; his dignity was below that of a surgeon; his perquisites were higher than those of an architect". (2) This quote expresses the true status of Rogier and how he was a significant person in the community. His rise to stardom continued on in Brussels and throughout Europe. He was also commissioned to paint the Dukes of Burgundian and their relatives; this states that he was more than an acquaintance to the elites of the Netherlands. Being a painter in the 15th century couldn't of been an easy job.

There was constant competition amongst them. One in particular was John Van Eyck, a well known painter also from the 15th century. Van Eyck had a huge influence on Van der Weyden paintings. The noticeable difference is Van Eyck illustrated the joy on the Virgin Mary's face and the baby Jesus always smiling but as for Van der Weyden he wanted to show gloom and never painted a smile nor a happy expression. This was huge importance to his work showing that Christ died for the sins of man and it was not a happy moment reminding a person of the pain and agony that was endured.

His paintings were of the upmost detail almost trying to achieve perfection. He sometimes even added details that were not true to the scene, for example he would over embellish the crease in a lady's dress painting it maze like, also he would change features on people to make them look even

more appealing. The use of icons and symbols were strongly associated with Rogier van der Weyden's art like most of the painters from that time. These tricks were the trademark of Rogier van der Weyden.

Most all of his art had an impact on the person viewing it and he wanted it to continue having an impact on the centuries there after. Rogier van der Weyden never signed his work so historians still to this day have a hard time knowing what he actually painted. His use of bold colors and clear composition are other techniques of his personal touch. His unique style of painting not only had an influence on European art in the 15th century but also influenced his competitors and followings. The altarpieces are to be said his greatest pieces and that includes the

Descent from the Cross and The last Judgment in Beaune which he actually tried to out paint Van Eyck's Lamb of God which are very similar. The constant rivals were interesting and it produced significant pieces of art. Rogier van der Weyden died in Brussels where he is said to be buried at the St. Gudula Church, now know to us in the present day as St. Michaels Cathedral. His paintings had a huge impact on the way we look and perceive art. He was the guy you went to if you wanted a painting done; Rogier van der Weyden was my kinda guy. Bibliography: