



<p>Jan van Eyck, 1434, <i>The Arnolfini Portrait</i> National Gallery, London</p>		<p>first analysis</p>
<p>Small room with wooden floor and with a chest, bench, bed and draped canopy. Daylight from window on left.</p>	<p>Man dressed in purple chlamys or tabard with sable trims worn over a darker doublet. He has light footwear and sports a prominent hat</p>	<p>Women dressed in green garment It has a white fur lining which also provides neck and sleeve trims, over a blue underdress with gold trim sleeves and fur trimmed base. She wears a gold necklace The quantity of cloth in the garment, partly lifted to her waist, gives the impression that she is pregnant She wears a white headress over shaped hair forms</p>
<p>Brass candelabra with only one lit candle Writing on wall over mirror Six wooden shutters opened to a window revealing a Cherry tree with fruit The upper window has stained glass decoration Part of a metal rail seen through the window may indicate that the room is on an upper storey Orange on sill, Three oranges on wooden chest Patten shoes</p>		<p>Wood panelled ceiling Carving of figure on wooden bed post and Brush hanging from this Bed with red drapes Oriental carpet on floor</p>
	<p>Amber beads on string with green tassels, hung on wall left of mirror Circular convex Mirror surrounded by gem stones and by ten enamelled discs depicting figures all in floret-shaped wooden frame Carving of figure with goat's feet and 'fool's' hat on wooden bench arm and a carved lion's head just below this. Red shoes in middle at back under bench Terrier dog</p>	<p>In the mirror are reflected two figures</p>

		second analysis
<p>Room would not be thought of as a separate bed chamber.</p> <p>The chlamys or <i>crossina</i> represents protection and the hat represents power in Italian custom. The hat could also simply be a stylish straw hat, but the heavy chlamys and doublet seem too warm for the summer.</p> <p>Fur and amber from Baltic outposts.</p>	<p>Giovanni Arnolfini (note 1) Giovanna Cenami (note 2) She is not pregnant but dressed in a contemporary fashion Headress and hair style similar to that worn by Margaret Van Eyck</p> <p>Their hands held in <i>fides manualis</i> (hands <i>iunctio</i>: in agreement and could be 'subject to Canon law'). [What was once carried out by the father of bride, then the marriage priest, became the Christian <i>fides pactiones</i>], Arnolfini's righthand is in <i>fides levare</i> that signifies the taking of an oath. (note 3)</p>	<p>In 1938 Kenneth Clark noted that the work has the 'Gothic Naturalism of Flemish painting' that is in contrast to the 'scientific humanism of Italian.' (note 5)</p> <p>The man's chlamys could be made from an expensive silk velvet. The purple pigment used in the painting has probably faded. His doublet could be silk damask.</p> <p>The woman's trim may be miniver derived from ermine The treatment of the green costume is known as dagging</p>
<p>Candle lit during the drawing up of legal acts, left to burn down to make the document final and indisputable</p> <p>The writing over the mirror is a signature which reads 'Johannes de Eyck fuit hic [was here] 1434'</p> <p>Cherry tree with fruit in window indicative of summer with open shutters.</p> <p>The 'casting of golden apples' (oranges) was thought of as a declaration of love in Tuscany</p> <p>Patten shoes, a common gift in marriage</p>		<p>The carved figure could represent St. Margaret as fertility and patroness of women in labour and of chaste life.</p> <p>Brush as attribute of a woman's home</p> <p>Bed hangings in scarlet using dyes from Spain</p> <p>Anatolian carpet from Levant</p>
	<p>Amber prayer-beads (akin to a rosary)(possibly a gift)</p> <p>Mirror with surrounding enamelled <i>Passion</i>, 'Marriage of Christ and his Church'. (note 4) with two 'witnesses' in mirror itself</p> <p>Is the carved figure with goat's feet and 'fool's' hat a caution against mischief? Is the lion's head a reminder of 'Judgement'?</p> <p>Red shoes in middle at back</p> <p>Dog as faithfulness or as a marriage gift</p>	<p>There is controversy over what is depicted in this 1434 picture. Arnolfini's first wife, Costanza Trenta, died in 1433. Arnolfini's second marriage, to Giovanna Cenami was in 1447.</p> <p>Alternative ideas about the function represented vary. It is now unlikely to be a 'marriage painting', but it could be a 'betrothal painting'. It could also represent a business agreement in which the wife becomes the procuress and which would give her leave to act in legalities for the husband in his absence.</p>

Notes:

1. Arnolfini was a money-lender from Lucca, Tuscany (on coast west of Florence) who lent money using a system of trade and finance. For example, in 1421 he imported goods (hats or textiles) for the City of Bruges, who paid six months later; in 1425 he made a loan through the purchase of tapestries and ornate goods for Philip the Good. Arnolfini also worked on behalf of the Medici bank in Bruges. Philip appointed Arnolfini to his Great Council 1461 and was then appointed as Financial Minister and Collector of Taxes in Normandy for the King of France (until 1465 when France and Burgundy fell apart).
2. Giovanna Cenami's parents were in Paris, her cousins, the Raondi banking family, were in Bruges.
3. In Thomas Aquinas *Summa theologia*, but also in the work of Bernadino of Siena.
4. Marriage is a sacrament in Aquinas and in *The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians* 5: 25, 'Husbands, love your wives, as Christ also loved the church and gave himself up for it ...' Marriage of Richard II of England and Isabella of France 1396, in a profane setting was consecrated three days later in Church.
5. Kenneth Clark. *One Hundred Details from Pictures in the National Gallery*, London: National Gallery Trustees, 1938.

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