Since it was first published in English in 1924 this book has established itself as a leading work on the close of the Middle Ages. The author came to write it as a result, as he says, of ‘endeavouring to arrive at a genuine understanding of the art of the brothers Van Eyck and their contemporaries.’ In other words he was led to consider this fascinating period, between the end of one civilization and the beginning of another, through its art. For this reason it is distinguished not only by a wide range of historical knowledge and scholarship, but also by an unusual feeling and understanding for the art of the period and the way in which the culture was integrated with the entire life of the times.

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