Wayfarer Triptych

A The Wayfarer

Oil on oak panel, 71.3 x 70.7 cm
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, 1779

B RCP examination and documentation data:
Rotterdam, 23–26 May 2017; BRCF, Technical Studies, cat. 19a, RR 8; //Boschproject.org no. 19a.

Condition
The Wayfarer consists of the two exterior wings of a now-disassembled triptych. These were later joined into a single painting (resulting in a 0.5 cm compositional gap in the middle), subsequently cropped into its current octagonal format and extensively cradled. The panel has a few small, old woodworm holes and is deformed slightly. There are some old, short panel cracks, but overall the ground and paint layers adhere well and appear relatively stable. There are only small losses, the smallest of which unrestored, and slight overall abrasion. The thin paints have become more transparent and have significantly increased visibility of the ground, underdrawing and lower paint layers. Residues of thin, dark overpaint remain in interstices of the paint, on top of old varnish, for instance in the sky. This, and local blanching, slightly reduces the excellent legibility of the original paint surface.

Provenance

Literature

19b The Ship of Fools

Oil on oak panel, 58.1 x 32.8 cm
Musée du Louvre, Département des Peintures, Paris, RF 2218

B RCP examination and documentation data:

Condition
The panel originally functioned as the top section of the interior of the left wing of the Wayfarer Triptych. Strips of wood were added at the top, left and right sides – the latter being painted – after which a plywood backing and a cradle were applied. The join is slightly open and there are multiple old, partially open panel cracks, but the adhesion of paint and ground is good and the limited losses, mainly in the bottom right, have been restored. The red lakes have faded considerably and lighter paints have become more transparent. The figure group is well preserved, but the entire background is severely abraded and has been extensively retouched and overpainted, including the sky, the extended foliage around the small branch with the owl, the hill and the water. The poor condition of the varnish furthermore impedes proper visibility of the original paint surface. Conservation issues were addressed during the 2015 full treatment of the painting.

Provenance

Literature
Gluttony and Lust
(fragment of the Ship of Fools)

Oil on oak panel, 34.9 x 30.6 cm
Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven, 1959.15.22
Gift of Hannah D. and Louis M. Rabinowitz

BRCP examination and documentation data:

Condition
This panel originally functioned as the lower section of the interior of the left wing of the disassembled triptych. Strips of wood were added on the left and right sides and then painted. A wooden backing and a cradle were then applied and there are local panel deformations. Previous issues with raised paint have resulted in many losses and the surface is severely abraded overall. Red lakes have faded (e.g. the cloth in the bottom left used to be purplish) and green lakes have discoloured brown (e.g. the landscape and the robe of the man in the tent). Numerous unrestored damages resulted in a patchy appearance, but the saturation of the original paint surface is relatively good overall.

Provenance

Literature

Death and the Miser
Oil on oak panel, 94.3 x 32.4 cm
National Gallery of Art, Washington. Samuel H. Kress Collection, 1952.5.33

BRCP examination and documentation data:

Condition
Death and the Miser originally functioned as the interior of the right wing of the Wayfarer Triptych. Wooden strips were added to all sides and a triangular insert was used to replace the top left corner, after which a plywood backing and a cradle were applied. The panel join is slightly open and there are many old cracks. Adhesion of paint and ground is fairly good, although slightly tenting paint is apparent throughout. There are small restored losses in predominantly the bottom part of the panel and a larger damage below the money bag and in the lower part of the red bed curtain on the right side of the panel. The paint surface is somewhat abraded overall. Increased transparency of lighter paints and the fading of red lake paints have resulted in a greater visibility of the underdrawing. Apart from multiple small distracting spots, the legibility of the painting is good.

Provenance
1836 private collection, England (possibly in or near Arundel, Sussex); 1932–51 Baron Joseph van der Elst, Brussels/Briot; purchased in 1951 by the Samuel H. Kress Foundation, New York; donated in 1952 to the National Gallery of Art.

Literature

**TRIPTYCH**

From the 1960s onwards, a number of art historians began to suggest for a variety of reasons (technical, stylistic and morphological) that the Ship of Fools, the fragment in New Haven, Death and the Miser and the Wayfarer originally belonged together. It subsequently became clear during the preparations for the Bosch commemorative exhibition in Rotterdam in 2001 that all these works had been painted on wood from the same tree. Precise comparison of the structure of the wood used for the respective paintings has since demonstrated that the Wayfarer originally formed the exterior of the wings of a triptych, the left interior of which contained the Ship of Fools above the fragment now in New Haven, and the right interior wing Death and the Miser. In other words, the Ship of Fools and the fragment from it in the Yale University Art Gallery are the interior of the left half of the Wayfarer; and Death and the Miser the reverse of the right half. The Wayfarer was given its octagonal shape at some later date, only after the front of the panel was separated from the back. It is not clear when the two sides were sawn apart. Nor do we know the subject of the image in the central panel, which appears to have been lost. Several principal themes have been suggested (Haywain, Last Judgement, Marriage at Cana), but in the absence of documentary evidence, this can be no more than conjecture. In the absence of the central panel, the surviving elements have to be considered in context with one another.

Together, the three scenes in these panels form an image addressing the course of human life. Human beings act and make choices. They often misbehave and choose wrongly. The question here seems ultimately to be what choice will they make in the course of their lives in the face of death? Will they succeed in turning to God and letting go of their urge for material things? Will the sinner – for that is what the human being is, by definition – repent or not? The answer to that question is crucial, because nothing less is at stake than the salvation of his or her soul. This being so, it might make most sense that the central...
panel was a Last Judgement, although an *exemplum virtutis* such as an elevating scene from the life of a saint would also fit. Even an episode from the Passion of Christ, such as the Carrying of the Cross or the Crucifixion, is not beyond the bounds of possibility. Bosch’s work is fundamentally Christocentric, and he constantly reminds the viewer of his paintings of the message that Christ, who died on the cross for humanity’s sins, offers the only hope of salvation.

**WAYFARER, PILGRIM, PRODIGAL SON, EVERYMAN**

The *Wayfarer* – the painting that once adorned the closed shutters of the triptych – is somewhat confusing in its current form. Not only did its two halves form the wings of a triptych, which opened precisely where the traveller’s backpack is fastened, the doors were also rectangular in shape, rather than octagonal as they are now, which makes a significant difference. We have to conclude, therefore, that the tondo containing the painting of the wayfarer – placed in a reddish-brown painted frame with two thin contour lines – was set against a brown background that extended considerably further around the tondo. A reconstruction of this original state shows that the effect would have been that of a mirror on a wall. The association of the wayfarer scene with the image in a mirror is extremely important: it means that Bosch wanted to stress that everyone who looked at this traveller saw – or ought to see – him or herself.

The iconography of the *Wayfarer* is unusual and striking. The figure must have fascinated Bosch, however, as he painted him again later and larger on the closed wings of the exterior of the *Haywain Triptych* (cat. 20). Eric De Bruyn demonstrated in a comprehensive study that the figure of the wayfarer ought to be viewed in Bosch as a penitent sinner making his way, for better or worse, through life. He is a pilgrim journeying through existence. All the same, it is significant that Bosch’s wayfarer is not identified as a pilgrim as such. The equivalent figure in the famous and popular *Le pèlerinage de la vie humaine* by Guillaume
Deguileville (1330–31), which is frequently cited in this regard, is invariably illustrated with a pilgrim's staff, bag and hat.4 The principal figure in a German woodcut from this period, which for formal and substantive reasons forms a useful point of comparison with the themes of the Wayfarer Triptych, is also recognizable as a 'life pilgrim'.5 The traveller crosses a wooden bridge with a pack on his back, a pilgrim's staff under his arm and a pilgrim's badge on his hat. The devil tugs at his jacket, while Death waits ahead of him, bow and arrow at the ready. A grave has been dug beneath the bridge for the body of a dead pilgrim. The Tablets of the Law, surmounted with a crucifix and accompanied by an angel, stand on a column on top of the bridge. The scene is set in a tondo surrounded by four figurative scenes (Holy Trinity, Last Judgement, Hell, Salvation), which are accompanied in turn by angels who speak the appropriate texts and state what the pilgrim has to do.6 The image as a whole is intended to suggest a mirror hanging from a cord with a banderole that contains a text spoken by the Holy Trinity: 'We three are one God and lord over all races. Therefore, pilgrim, look in the mirror of understanding. When are you coming? Where are you? For whom do you live, I ask. Where do you want to go? Where will you shun for eternity?'

The fact that Bosch chose not to depict the traveller as a pilgrim does not mean he is not one, but it does make the figure less clear-cut. It is understandable, therefore, that this wayfarer has also been variously described in the art-historical literature as the 'Prodigal Son', the 'Pedlar' and 'Everyman'. The theme of the repentant sinner and that of the Prodigal Son do not rule one another out, though – one is the extension of the other. The detail with the pigs at a trough in front of the inn towards which the wayfarer looks back is so striking that it is hard to believe a viewer in Bosch's time could have seen it without immediately thinking of the familiar parable (Luke 15:11–32).7 The fact that the man has a pack on his back argues against his identification as the Prodigal Son, but it does not make him a pedlar either, which is why the more neutral term 'wayfarer' has been used here.8 Homo viator, the travelling man, might be an even more neutral and universal description for him. Calling the wayfarer 'Everyman' would also seem apt, with the proviso that – like 'Prodigal Son' – it risks reducing the figure to the illustration of a text.9 As an 'everyman' with a lower-case 'e', by contrast, he makes this painting a mirror, just as the Everyman text itself does. The full title of Elckerlijc – in translation of the Middle Dutch version of Everyman – reads: 'The Mirror of Everyman's Salvation. How every man is summoned to give reckoning to God.' Text and painting are linked by the notion that at the end of each human life, a balance sheet must be drawn up and an accounting given to God. However, where Everyman/Elckerlijc is a morality tale with an extremely clear progression from sin and repentance to salvation, the situation in Bosch remains unspecified. The outcome of the wayfarer's life is unclear; we cannot say with any certainty whether he has truly repented. It looks like he is passing an inn with loose women. This gives the impression that he is leaving that world behind him, yet it is far from obvious where he is headed.10 What is plain is that life's road is beset with temptations and dangers, and that it does not leave those who travel it unscathed.

There is a striking similarity between the aggressive dog in the painting and the animal in an engraving by Israhel van Meckenem. On closer examination, we find that the theme of the print also offers interesting comparative material for the painting. The print shows a meeting between a young noblewoman hunting for ‘true fidelity’ (echte trouw) and a clergyman, speaking from experience, who tells her she will only find it in God (goede). The dog – traditionally a symbol of fidelity – is far from well-disposed towards the man, making it an ironic illustration of his point. Earthly existence is (frequently) a vale of tears, and the theme of contemptus mundi (contempt for the world) plays a part here. Pieter Bruegel’s Misanthropist (1568), who complains ‘Om dat de werelt is soe ongetru/ Daer om gha ic in den ru’ (‘Because the world is perfidious/ I am going into mourning’), is a late but magnificent illustration of this theme. Where the tondo functions in Bosch as a mirror intended to encourage reflection and self-improvement, Bruegel’s tondo offers a window onto a ridiculous world. This subtle, yet fundamental difference helps us understand both paintings more acutely.

The Wayfarer is an image that evokes associations with different texts, themes and images, without it being entirely clear how that image ought to be interpreted. Ambiguity and uncertainty are recurring features of Bosch’s art, with the result that a compelling appeal is made to the judgement of the viewer: it is he or she, after all, who has to choose which way to go. The image is made personal and sets the viewer thinking. Bosch’s paintings were not made for lazy beholders; they are tools, in the sense that their viewers – people making their way haltingly through life like pilgrims – have to use them to improve themselves.
When the triptych opens, the mirror ‘breaks’ and its contents – or rather the view it offers of them – are shown inside. We will begin with what was once the left wing, with its boatload of merrymakers, surrounded by drunkards and lovers. These are people in the flush of their lives, concerned with neither God nor his commandments. They have given themselves over to eating, drinking, swimming and lovemaking, and their most pressing concern seems to be the pie balanced on the head of one of the swimmers, which they are eager to get onto dry land in one piece. Death still seems a long way away. None of the figures realizes what Sebastian Brant declared in the prologue to his Stultifera Navis (Ship of Fools, 1497), namely that ‘In the ship, we are separated but three fingers’ breadth from death.’

Brant’s Ship of Fools must have been an important inspiration for Bosch’s boatload of carousers. Brant describes his encyclopaedic collection of prints and verses on human folly as a mirror in which everyone can (or ought to) recognize themselves:

They who at writings like to sneer
Or are with reading not afflicted
May see themselves herewith depicted
And thus discover who they are,
Their faults, to whom they’re similar.
For fools a mirror it shall be,
Where each his counterfeit may see.
His proper value each would know;
The glass of fools the truth may show.

Who sees his image on the page
May learn to deem himself no sage,
Nor shrink his nothingness to see,
Since none who lives from fault is free;
And who could honestly have sworn
That cap and bells he’s never worn?
Who'er his foolishness decrees
Alone deserves to rank as wise.

Bosch set out to achieve something similar with the Wayfarer Triptych and with the Ship of Fools as part of it, namely the cultivation of self-knowledge on the part of the viewer through contemplating and reflecting on the painted themes. The relationship between the respective panels gives further direction to this hermeneutic process. Knowing, for instance, that the right wing of the triptych consisted of Death and the Miser undeniably shapes the way we look at both the Ship of Fools and the Wayfarer. Memento mori, remember that you must die, is the message of this triptych. Consideration of the significance and scope of this idea, as illustrated in ostensibly everyday scenes, has resulted in a painting that confronts its viewers with themselves and with the moral choices they must make in the course of their lives.

The changes made to the painting over more than half a millennium make it considerably harder to read. Apart from the disappearance of the central panel and the splitting of the fronts of the wings from the backs, the Ship of Fools has been subjected to overpainting. This is somewhat offset by the stroke of fortune that a workshop ricordo has survived, which provides a good impression of the painting’s original composition (cat. 56). The mountain that closes off the image on the right edge is a later addition which, judging by the drawing, was painted over a view of a city. It is logical to suppose that this overpainting occurred at the point when the panel was presented as an autonomous painting and no longer as the wing of a triptych. The foliage of the branch tied to the mast was considerably enlarged at that point too, as was that of the branch in the boat, slightly to the right. The water on which the vessel floats was significantly overpainted as well. These adjustments largely cancel out the instability of the little boat, which is a fundamental theme of the painting.

Sebastian Brant explains why he chose a ship of fools in his prologue. He says that the world is represented as a sea or lake in the Bible, and nothing in that world is permanent or sure: the whole of earthly existence is unstable. The Haywain tapestry in the Patrimonio Nacional’s collection, made after a painting by Bosch, is illustrative in this respect. It shows a globe bobbing on the water, in which there is a cart laden with hay that is coveted by all humanity. The cross in the upper right corner makes it a globus cruciger – the cross-bearing orb of God’s Creation. This tipped-over cross, surrounded by angels (are they lamenting?) tells us that the world is out of kilter. It could
hardly be otherwise, given that it is adrift on a sea full of monstrous fish. Demons try to grab human figures out of the orb to load them onto a little boat.

The rudderless and unstable quality of Bosch’s *Ship of Fools* becomes all the more obvious when we try to make out how the vessel is constructed; the mast is held up by two stays, the right one of which is tied to the tree-branch on which the fool is sitting. The branch appears in turn to have been placed loosely in the boat. It is also unclear which way the boat is travelling; it seems to be sailing into the wind, as the bow is painted on the right and the pennant is blowing to the left. The vessel is not, therefore, making any headway; to emphasize the absurdity of the situation, one of the crew grips a large spoon as a rudder (or is it an oar?), but does so at the bow end. We also wonder, lastly, how much longer it will be before the swell causes the tabletop with the plate, the cherries and the cup to tip over, and the fool bobbing along on a barrel in the foreground to slide off into the water.

All these goings-on are observed by an owl from a branch lashed to the mast. The branch in the mast and the one in the boat on which the jester is sitting evoke a phenomenon that we do not find in Sebastian Brant’s *Ship of Fools*, but which does appear repeatedly in contemporary illustrations of calendars in Books of Hours. ‘May boats’, as they are
known, carry courting couples who sing and play music, enjoy the beginning of spring and make themselves giddy with amorous thoughts. There is a fine example in the Book of Hours that Joanna of Castile, wife of Duke Philip the Fair, commissioned from a Bruges workshop between 1486 and 1506. The prayers set out in the manuscript are preceded by a calendar of saints’ days and other church festivities. The months of the year are accompanied by illustrations of the activities associated with the relevant season. The month of May is decorated with a miniature showing three people making music in a little boat decorated with budding branches. The boat flies a pennant from its bow, while a fool perches on the stern playing the bagpipes. The illustration on the opposite page shows a kneeling man making a proposal to a young lady, while the rest of the miniature is suggestively devoted
to hunting. The illustrations show that the link between music, love, folly, spring and May boats was a relatively common one. The boat decorated with branches and the musicians we find in Bosch’s Ship of Fools mean we need to take this aspect into account when interpreting the painting, which also shows someone playing the lute. In the May boat image, the lute no doubt represents the harmony of the music itself and between the lady who plays the instrument and her lover. The nun and the monk in the Ship of Fools also sing along to the strains of the lute – less mellifluously, we imagine – but here the allusion can only be to indecency. The branches in Bosch’s little ship consist of wood that is considerably older than we normally find in May boats. The revellers it carries are likewise well past their youth and a lot closer to death. That they themselves fail to realize this or else choose to disregard it is what makes them fools.

The image Bosch creates with the Ship of Fools – as with the Wayfarer – combines different and complementary iconographies. It will have been obvious to a sixteenth-century viewer where this ship, which lacks a rudder and could not actually exist, is heading. A reprint of a sixteenth-century engraving which, according to an inscription, was made after an invention by Bosch, states above the image where a boat like this, full of good-for-nothings, is headed. The boat is named the Blau Schuyt (‘blue barge’), referring to a tradition of world-turned-upside-down festivities and literature; as if that were not enough, inscriptions in Latin, French and Dutch specify that the boat is heading ad perditionem (to perdition).25

Many viewers of the Ship of Fools will also have made the association, lastly, with the story of the satirical ‘Sint Reynuut’ and his boat. Reynuut – a contraction of the words rein uit, meaning wholly empty – is a fictional saint, the patron of all those whose drunkenness leaves them destitute. His shrine is located on the island of the same name, to which he sails on his ship the Quat Regement (Bad Government). The drunkards in Bosch’s painting are certainly devoted to this saint. Sebastian Brant pithily sums up the moral of all these images in his Ship of Fools: ‘Who takes his place on the ship of fools sails laughing and singing to hell.’26

DEATH, HOLDING ON, LETTING GO

‘Who dieth well, his grave’s the best/ The sinner’s death is never blest’ is another fine couplet from Brant’s Ship of Fools.27 It offers a nice introduction to the dilemma facing the protagonist of the right wing of the Wayfarer Triptych. A man sits up in bed, looking into the eyes of Death, who appears from behind the door. Death points an oversized arrow directly at him. It is time. The final hour has come. The question now is whether the dying man will grasp the bag held out to him by a demon from beneath the curtain of the bed. The answer to this question will determine the man’s fate: is it to be heaven or hell? An angel behind him tries to draw his attention to the image of a crucifix that appears in the window in the upper left corner. The rays of light that enter the room via the crucified Christ do not (yet) extend, however, as far as the dying man. The struggle between the angel and the devil, who has positioned himself on the canopy of the bed in the hope that the man will make the wrong choice, has not been settled. The wing encourages us to think about what we would do in the face of death: hold on or let go. The little demon in the foreground looks out of the picture plane, making contact with the viewer and leading him or her into the image. Its pose, with its head resting on one hand, is a common gesture of contemplation that we also find, for instance, in John the Baptist (cat. 5).

It is clear from the action going on between the thoughtful demon and the scene in the bed that we cannot have faith in the happy outcome of the struggle between good and evil. The elderly man we see there leans on a walking stick as he drops money into a sack. The moneybag and the chest in which it is kept are surrounded by three demons. Although the man wears a rosary, his money is not blessed. We cannot say for certain whether this is the same man who is also shown dying in his bed; he might also be a more emblematic image of avarice, intended to emphasize that too strong a desire for earthly goods helps pave the road to hell. Whatever the case, the figure in green serves to amplify the tension evoked by the dilemma facing the man in the bed.
19.12 Man on his deathbed, Office of the Dead, Hours of Catherine of Cleves, c. 1435-40. The Morgan Library and Museum, New York, MS M.917, p. 180
We find a similar composition in an amusing illuminated page in the *Hours of Catherine of Cleves*, in the margin of which a young man is depicted rummaging in a money-chest. The same youth appears in the main miniature at the deathbed of what is probably his father. He seems to be allowing his finely-dressed friend to talk him into taking an advance on his inheritance. The combination of the money-chest in the margin and its relationship to the principal scene has a striking, though somewhat enigmatic similarity to Bosch’s *Death and the Miser*; it is hardly likely, after all, that Bosch ever saw this exclusive manuscript, which was made for the Duchess of Guelders, probably in Utrecht, over half a century before he produced his painting. On the other hand, this is not a common juxtaposition of motifs.

The combination of the well-filled money-chest and the approach of death does not feature in what was probably another important source for Bosch in this case, namely the illustrations in the *Ars moriendi*, a treatise on the ‘Art of Dying’. The book was printed frequently in the Low Countries and the neighbouring regions at the end of the fifteenth century, and was available in both Latin and vernacular editions. Its purpose was to help people prepare for a ‘virtuous death’, to which end it included eleven full-page woodcut illustrations, each showing a man on his deathbed. He is tempted by the devil five times, with an angel coming to his rescue on each occasion. The third temptation is that of avarice, in which the devil tries to tempt the dying man to cling to his worldly possessions and attributes and to give them to his family and friends rather than the Church. The illustration accompanying this enticement shows the dying man surrounded by a group of friends and in possession of a well-stocked house and a fine horse. Three demons stand at his bedside, whispering: ‘Take care of your friends’ (‘Versiet dijne vrienden’) and ‘Think of your earthly wealth’ (‘Ghedencket uu grote guet’). In the next woodcut in the sequence, two angels stand by the man’s bed, with a crucifix, the Virgin Mary, John the Baptist and saints in the background. One of the angels places a sheet protectively around the shoulders of a man and woman, telling them ‘Think not of your friends.’ The other turns to the dying man, to whom he says ‘Hanker not after earthly goods.’ A demon shrinks away in the lower right corner, muttering ‘What shall I do to you?’

Bosch’s artistic challenge was to express the dying man’s dilemma in a single image rather than a series of illustrations. He places greater responsibility than the *Ars moriendi* does, moreover, on the man himself. It is up to him to choose. The choice between money-bag and crucifix has not yet been made: Bosch leaves the viewer with a cliff-hanger. It is evident from the painting’s underdrawing that the artist initially had a simpler image in mind. The man’s hand was originally clamped around the moneybag, and he also held a costly jar in his left hand. The painter evidently decided that this solution was too one-dimensional, as he ultimately omitted the jar, while the dying man in the painting has not yet grabbed the bag. This makes the miser slightly less miserly, while introducing an element of suspense to the struggle for the man’s salvation. In the earlier configuration, the demon looking down from the canopy of the bed would have got its way, and the dying man’s soul would have been lost. In the current form of the painting, by contrast, there is still some hope for the man in the bed. The decision has yet to be taken.

**CENTRAL PANEL**

Looking back at *Death and the Miser*, the *Ship of Fools* and the *Wayfarer*, and at the relationship between these elements of a triptych, the question remains as to whether there is any point in speculating about the iconography of the central panel. Until more specific evidence emerges in this regard, every proposal has to remain speculative. Johannes Hartau, followed by Stefan Fischer, proposed a *Marriage at Cana* as the central panel. This would have placed an exemplum – a positive example of faith in God – at the centre. In this case, the iconography of the central panel would however be a long way removed from the wings. Jos Koldeweij proposed a Last Judgement or a vision of the Apocalypse as the central theme. The wings would then show the behaviour of human beings during
their lifetimes, for which they will be called to account on Judgement Day. A third vari-

ation is offered by Bosch's surviving work, namely an image of a haywain in the central

panel, as Herman Colenbrander has suggested. The Christological element would then be

formed by the manifestation of the Redeemer in the middle, high above the cart laden with hay. The Haywain Triptych (cat. 20) has a wayfarer on its closed shutters that corresponds

significantly with the one in Rotterdam. The poverty of the traveller is linked in that case
to the urge for earthly goods in the central panel, while the overall image is flanked by scenes showing the emergence of evil during the Fall of the Rebel Angels and a Hell scene, in which evil reigns.

In itself, a variation on the Haywain would be a plausible subject for the central panel of the Wayfarer Triptych. The human longing for earthly pleasures and wealth and the need to renounce such tendencies in the face of death form a tightly-knit iconographic programme. The main difference between the wayfarer in Rotterdam and the one in Madrid is the way they are framed. As indicated above, the scene with the Rotterdam wayfarer is presented as a mirror, while the one in Madrid occupies the entire surface of the panel. In this way, a compositional unity is created in the Madrid Haywain Triptych between the exterior of the wings, in which the wayfarer journeys through the world, and the central panel, in which the haycart is drawn through a similar 'world landscape'. It is entirely plausible that a similar unity existed between the closed shutters and the central panel of the Wayfarer Triptych. A comparable unity of form and also of content is obtained if we were to imagine a central panel with a haycart enclosed within an orb, as we see in the aforementioned tapestry in the Patrimonio Nacional collection. The link between this composition and the Ship of Fools has already been noted, but the dominant tondo shape would also form a perfect match with the Rotterdam Wayfarer. The allegorical character of the wayfarer tondo would, to continue with this thought-experiment, then be extended into the central image with the haywain. The viewer begins by seeing his or her reflection in the wayfarer, and in the second instance recognizes the violence and folly of the world as a whole. If we look closely, we see Death – complete with arrow – already at work here. This figure does not appear in the Haywain in the Prado, but would form a logical link with Death and the Miser in the right wing.

It should be emphasized that this proposed reconstruction is also hypothetical and lacks any further evidence. Perhaps it is no more than coincidence that two works by Bosch are mentioned in the collection of Thomas Howard (1585–1646), Earl of Arundel, ‘a small picture’ and a ‘Hay Cart’. The sketchbook from which a drawing after Death and the Miser comes, attributed to William Henry Brooke (1772–1860), also comes from the Arundel circle.

**Attribution**

The underdrawing of the fragments of the Wayfarer Triptych has prompted debate regarding the painting’s authorship since the late 1960s. Writing in the 1968 catalogue of early Netherlandish drawings in the Louvre, Frits Lugt noted with regard to the drawing of Death and the Miser (cat. 57) that ‘it is curious that the hatching in the drawing was done with the right hand, while the opposite is the case in the painting’. As for the Ship of Fools (cat. 56), he wrote that – as with Death and the Miser – the drawing was done with the right hand, as with all Bosch’s drawings, while the underdrawing on the panel was done with the left hand. So it was that the question of whether Bosch was left- or right-handed first made its appearance in the art-historical literature. Jetske Sybesma Ironside was the first to systematically investigate the problem of Bosch’s left- or right-handedness in her thesis on the artist’s underdrawings (1973; published in 1974). She concluded that Bosch was left-handed. Ironside based her reconstruction of Bosch’s oeuvre on the paintings that were later shown to have formed the Wayfarer Triptych. The assumption that Bosch was left-handed relies on the direction of the hatching in the underdrawing of this group of paintings. It is supposedly possible to determine from the preferred direction of hatching whether it was done by a left-handed or a right-handed artist. A left-handed draughtsman mostly (and unconsciously) draws hatching from upper left to lower right (or vice versa), while a right-handed
one does so mainly from upper right to lower left (or vice versa). The implication of Bosch’s supposed left-handedness is, according to Ironside, that he could not have been responsible for drawings like the Tree-Man, the Owl’s Nest and The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes (cat. 35–37). Fritz Koreny, by contrast, takes the corpus of drawings as his starting point, of which the Tree-Man is the cornerstone. He believes that Bosch was right-handed, which leads him to conclude that Bosch cannot have been the person who made the underdrawing of the Wayfarer Triptych. Although he does not say so explicitly, Koreny assumes that the underdrawing and the painting were done by the same artist, causing him to attribute the Wayfarer Triptych as a whole to a left-handed workshop assistant of Bosch.

Whatever the case, the issue gives rise to three key questions. We have to ask ourselves, first of all, whether the distinction between left- and right-handedness in drawings and underdrawings can be made in such a simple and clear-cut way. The second question relates to whether we should suppose that underdrawing and painting were always done by one and the same hand. And the third question is whether it is actually possible to determine left- or right-handedness in a painting. In other words: if it were determined that the underdrawing of a painting was done by a different artist from the one responsible for the underdrawing of other paintings by Bosch, does that mean the painting cannot be deemed autograph? This prompts the further question as to what it is we are attributing – paintings, underdrawings or both?

It is not set in stone, in our view, that underdrawing and painting have to be done by the same artist. They are two phases in the production process and can be readily separated from one another. When we attribute a painting to Bosch it is the painting process that clinches the matter, not the underdrawing. This in no way diminishes the importance of studying underdrawings in order to achieve a fuller understanding of workshop practice.
While we recognize the unusual status of the underdrawing of the Wayfarer Triptych compared to the other underdrawings in the Bosch group, we are by no means persuaded that this fact ought to lead to the painting’s attribution to a master other than Bosch. The painting of the Wayfarer, the Ship of Fools and Death and the Miser corresponds closely with other works by Bosch, including the Haywain. The artist who executed the angel in Death and the Miser is undoubtedly the same one who painted the angel on top of the Haywain. We see no reason whatsoever not to view the Haywain as autograph (see cat. 20). It is nevertheless the case that the underdrawing of the Haywain differs from that in the paintings from the Wayfarer Triptych. As noted already, the manner of underdrawing in the Wayfarer Triptych does not match the other paintings in the corpus at all. This leads us to conclude that a painter other than Bosch, in this case undoubtedly a workshop assistant, was responsible for the underdrawing of the Wayfarer Triptych. This must have been done based on a carefully worked-out model, either painted or drawn, since the detailed underdrawing shows virtually no sign of searching for the right forms or proportions. Hieronymus Bosch then executed the final painting on top of this drawing, during which he chose at certain points to deviate from the design after all.
Brant is quoting here from the Twelfth Satire of Juvenal, in which the poet describes the thin line between life and death. For sailors, this line is provided by the wood of the ship, which spares the crew from drowning: ‘want also iuvenalisc scribit int schip wi maer drie vingheren benders vander doot: dat es van verdrukken en zin: en die int narrescip varen zinder noch naerdere: want zii also verten alst in hemlieden es alte dood zin die dodelijke zonden zin en comen zonder sonderlinghe graet gods nemer verryzen vander dood der zielen, hoe wel dat god zin grace nyemand en weyghert, also langhe al hi noch leeft.’ Brant 1900, fol. A 1 verso. The Ship of Fools (Das Narrenschiff) was published in German in 1494, followed in 1497 by Latin and Middle Dutch translations. A Middle Dutch translation after the Latin version was published in Paris in 1500 by Guy de Koopman. The quotation here comes from the Middle Dutch translation, a single copy of which survives in the Bibliothèque Nationale de France, Rés. Yh 64, accessible online at http://gallica.bnf.fr/ark:/12148/bpt6k1106490r. The reference to Juvenal is missing in the 1844 edition.

No such overpainting is found on the fragment from New Haven. This either that the changes were made after the Yale fragment was separated from the painting in Paris, or that any overpainting of the New Haven piece was removed during some earlier restoration. See BVP, Technical Studies, cat. 118, pp. 17–18.

The catalogue for the exhibition celebrating the 90th anniversary of the Rijksmuseum (1998) actually states that the boat is moored. Van Luttervelt 1918, 81.

Erst om dat inder heiligher scrifturen af de wereld geheten es dat mer dat is der zee: overmids dat inder wereld noch in de zee gheene ghastedich in noch verscherethen en.’ Brant 1500, fol. A 1 verso.


Marijnissen [1987, 314] keeps open the possibility that this is a mask or a skull; the 14th leaves no room for doubt, however.


Joanna of Castile was married from 1496 to 1506 to Philip the Fair, Duke of Burgundy and one of Bosch’s patrons. See Chapter 1, pp. 21–27. The manuscript can be accessed online at http://www.bl.uk/manuscripts/FullDisplay.aspx?ref=Add.MS.18952.

See Peijs 1983 for this tradition. For the print, see Wyckoff in Bass and Wyckoff 2015, 158–63; Isisik in Van Grieken, Luijten and Van der Stock 2013, 250–51.

Brant 1500, fol. p. iii, cap. 109.


Koldeweij, Van den Broeck and Vermet 2001, 137.
However, the four surviving tapestries woven after Bosch all have a horizontal format, while the central panel of the Wayfarer Triptych must have been vertical in format.

Inventory drawn up in 1655 following the death of his wife and heir Aletheia Talbot. Mary F.S. Hervey, The Life, Correspondence and Collections of Thomas Howard, Earl Arundel, Cambridge 1921, 476-480. Jeronimo, 43. A small picture. 44. The Hay Cart.


‘Il est curieux que dans le dessin les hachures sont faites de la main droite, tandis que dans le tableau c’est le contraire.’ Lugt 1968, 25 no. 70.

‘… le dessin est fait de la main droite, comme tous les dessins de Bosch, et la préparation sur le panneau de la main gauche.’ Lugt 1968, no. 71, 26.

Ironside 1974.

She places Christ Carrying the Cross in Vienna (cat. 12) and the Haywain (cat. 20) in the same group.

Koreny 2012, 63–71, with literature. See also Bambach 2003b. Morgan 1987; Reuterswärd 1993. Koreny does not cite this literature.

Koreny detects the same hand in the Haywain and so gave the assistant the provisional name the ‘Master of the Prado Haywain’. Cf. Ilsink 2013 for a more detailed discussion of this hypothesis.

See the website Boschproject.org, link 133.

The question of whether Bosch was left- or right-handed is much harder to answer than the art-historical literature suggests. Simple hatching tests show that not every right-handed (or left-handed) draughtsman applies hatching in the same way. What’s more, right-handed artists are found to hatch parts of their drawings in a way that has traditionally been described as specific to left-handed draughtsmen (and vice versa). All this is even before we consider the possibility that hatching can be used for modelling purposes, prompting the question as to what extent the direction of hatching is determined by the composition. Virtually no scientific research has been performed into these or related questions. We therefore think it wise to refrain from drawing any conclusions at this juncture. A comparative study into different aspects of the brush- and pen-strokes found in drawings and paintings belonging to the Bosch group might provide more reliable information in this regard.
The Haywain

Hieronymus Bosch
1510–16

Oil on oak panel, left wing 136.1 x 47.7 cm; central panel 153 x 100 cm; right wing 136.1 x 47.6 cm
Signed central panel, lower right: Hieronymus bosch
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, P2052

BRCP examination and documentation data:

Condition
The engaged frames of the wings are original. In the centre of the closed wings, the composition continues over the planed-down vertical framing elements. The rabbeted frame of the central panel is of later date, it originally also had an engaged frame. The reverse of this panel was thinned considerably and cradled. Some old panel cracks and joins are apparent. Locally, there are some youth cracks in the paint, but the adhesion of both paint and ground appears good. Copper-green paint in the landscape has discoloured into brown, and lighter areas have become more transparent. There are paint losses and damages throughout, as well as abrasion primarily in the lower areas. Most damages were restored between 2006 and 2009, and overall the painting is in relatively good condition. However, discoloured varnish residues in paint interstices interrupt the fluent modelling of skin tones. Locally, matte spots and glossy retouchings slightly distract from the otherwise good visibility of the paint surface.

Provenance
Much of the Haywain’s provenance remains unclear, due in part to the existence of different versions. Philip II purchased a Haywain from the estate of Felipe de Guevara in 1570 and had it transferred to the Escorial in 1574, though it is not clear to which of the two surviving triptychs this relates. A 1636 inventory of the Alcázar in Madrid includes a Haywain triptych, while two Haywains are recorded in 1800 – one in the Escorial and another in the Casa de Campo, Madrid.1 The central panel of the triptych now in the Prado was acquired around 1845 by the Marquis of Salamanca. Isabella II of Spain purchased it in 1848, following which it was kept at the royal palace in Aranjuez. The triptych was included in the “Toison d’or” exhibition in Bruges in 1907, for which the left wing was brought from the Prado, the central panel from the Palacio Real de Aranjuez and the right wing from the Escorial. The ensemble has been in the Museo Nacional del Prado since 1914.

Literature

Analysis
The Haywain is a painting that enjoyed immense success in the sixteenth century: two versions found their way into the Spanish royal collections at an early date, inventories list other variations on the theme, and Mencía de Mendoza asked for both a copy and for a tapestry to be woven after it in 1539. There can be no doubt that the version in the Prado is the original version, while the one in the Escorial is a copy. There is nothing in the painting’s execution, in either the underdrawing or the paint layer, to suggest that the Prado Haywain is not an autograph work. The dating of the wood indicates that the triptych must have been painted after 1510, making it an important point of reference for Bosch’s late painting style.

Life’s Pilgrimage

’Blessed are those who live as pilgrims in this wicked world and remain untainted by it … For the pilgrim travels the king’s highway neither on the right or the left. If he should come upon a place where there is fighting and quarrelling, he will not become involved. And if he should come to a place where there is dancing and leaping or where there is a celebration … upon a place where there is fighting and quarrelling, he will not become involved. And if he

It is easy to imagine, looking at the threadbare elderly man with the basket on his back depicted on the closed wings of the Haywain triptych, that Bosch had this passage from one of Saint Bernard’s sermons in mind when he painted the scene. The traveller’s path runs through a world in which discord rules and is exalted.

Bernard’s sermon (published in Middle Dutch editions in 1484–85 and 1495) is one of the many texts from Bosch’s time and earlier to describe human beings as pilgrims journeying through life. A passage from the Spiegel der menscheliker behoudenisse (Mirror of Human Salvation) – a typological text that was extremely popular in the fifteenth century – is also worth quoting in this context:

Now this stick we might rightly call a staff, such as pilgrims carry when they take the back roads and in many a town to chase away the dogs. We too need such a staff, by which I mean God, who is the staff we all clutch so that we do not fall from grace. It serves us, moreover, at every hour to ward off the hounds of hell.
The dog who harasses the traveller in the painting is not large, but it certainly appears aggressive and the man might well have to resort to his staff. Comparison with the passage from the *Speculum humanae salvationis* enables us to place a scene that appears entirely secular at first sight in a religious light. The artist seems to have deliberately restricted the visibility of Christian symbols: the little shrine with the crucifix on the tree and the sketchily rendered church towers in the background are the scene’s only allusions to a Christian world. The composition as originally prepared included more of the road that the man has already walked prior to reaching the little bridge. A strikingly detailed cross was included here in the underdrawing, of which nothing remains in the final painting; grass grows on the same spot instead. The adjustment heightens the sense of uncertainty; the viewer is left to guess the precise identity of the man trudging through the countryside and whether or not he is on the ‘true’ path. Where will he find himself after he crosses the rickety little bridge and leaves the world we see here behind him? Does this traveller obey Thomas a Kempis’s admonition to ‘keep yourself a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth, to whom the affairs of this world are of no concern’? Or does poverty force him to cling onto the world and to fight tooth and nail to preserve every last shred of earthly belongings?

Bosch is often painted as a preaching moralist, but if so, he was an inventive and subtle one. First and foremost, though, he remained an artist; it was important to him to appeal to the same judgement and discernment that his viewers had to apply every time they were faced with a difficult life-choice. Bosch makes it personal. The traveller looks over his right shoulder and sees the gnawed remains of a horse: everything becomes personal when we face death, and Bosch leaves us in no doubt that death is indeed precisely what we face. What we need, he believes, is a moral compass to direct us towards Christ. Yet for many people, Christ can only be glimpsed with great difficulty; this is the case not only for the traveller, but also for the beholder of the painting.
The same is true of the rabble in the central panel, who fight bitterly to get hold of the hay stacked up on a great cart that trundles through the world en route to eternal death. The angel kneeling on top of the haystack is the only one attending to the figure of Christ, who appears in the clouds, displaying his stigmata against a golden background. No one else seems to realize that it is only in Christ that true ‘gold’ is to be found, and not in earthly possessions.

Bosch offers a powerful and highly innovative image in the Haywain, for which there is no prior visual tradition. And while the Bible compares the transience of human existence with that of grass – referred to as ‘hay’ (hoey/hoy) in the 1477 Delft Bible – there is no point of reference for the theme of the haywain as such in the traditional literature of the time. Nevertheless, thanks to Jan Grauls we do know of a text dating from before the triptych was painted, which can be linked with its content. A passage in Van den hopper hoys (‘The Haystack’; c. 1460–70) reads as follows:8

De vader god van hemelrijcke
Heeft dit eersche goet ghegheven
Recht eenen hopper hoys ghetelike
Dat wy daer up souden leven
Alle ende niement uit ghescreen
Maer het maect te vele vernoyys
Dat hi onghedeelt es bleven
Desen goeden hopper hoys

God the Father in heaven
has given this earthly good,
that resembles a haystack
from which they must live,
all, without exception.
Yet it causes much suffering
that it should remain undivided,
that good haystack.

Uut siner groter mithedhen
Gaf hi den hopper al gheheel
Om ons te nutten met minnelicheden
Sonder kijf ofte crackeel
Maer elc wils een groot partseel
Vlaminc duutsche ende franchoeys
Elc hadde gheerne tmeeste deel
Van den goeden hopper hoys

In his great kindness
he gave this haystack entirely
to us to enjoy in peace,
without quarrel or strife.
But everyone wants a large portion,
Fleming, German and Frenchman.
Each wants the best part
of the good haystack for himself.

Bosch shows how, contrary to God’s commandment, people give free rein to their greed. Left unchecked, human beings act like beasts and in doing so condemn themselves to hell.9 That hell, meanwhile, is still being constructed, in what is a striking new invention – like the haywain itself – in Netherlandish visual culture of around 1500.10 As Eric De Bruyn has noted, the ladder leaning against the infernal tower forms a visual rhyme with the one placed against the haywain,11 strengthening the link between the behaviour of the people in the central panel and its consequences in the right wing. Middle Dutch literature once again provides a context: Dirk van Delf’s Tafel vanden Kersten Ghelove (‘Survey of Christian Faith’; 1404) describes how demons build hell from humanity’s sins.12

Although the principal motif appears to be greed, other sins are depicted too, including wrath, envy, gluttony and lust. All humanity is shown here: men, women, peasants, townsfolk, nobles and clergy. The monk in the lower right corner of the central panel watches as nuns obligingly fill his sack. The pope rides behind the cart, amicably at the emperor’s side. While the mob of men tries to grab the hay, the women tend to their babies and cook pork and fish. Music is played on top of the haystack, while a couple of lovers amuse themselves in the bushes. No one seems to notice that they are dancing to the devil’s tune.

The seeds of this human degradation are sown in the left wing of the triptych, which makes it clear in four separate scenes – the Fall of the Rebel Angels, the Creation of Eve, the Fall of Man, and the Expulsion from Paradise – in what light we are supposed to interpret the human behaviour in the central panel. Interestingly, the figure of God who casts out
Going to hell [cat 20b–c]
On top of the haycart [Cat 20b]

God the Father: vis, irp and irr [Cat 20a]
Satan and his angels resembles Christ more than he does God the Father; this was evidently a deliberate choice, as a bearded figure with his head covered was planned in the underdrawing. The effect is to create a stronger formal connection between this figure and that of Christ in the central panel. The God who casts Lucifer out of heaven is the same God who sacrifices himself to redeem humanity’s sins. Bosch follows a similar strategy in the relationship between the God who creates Eve in the left wing and the emperor who rides behind the haywain in the central panel: they wear virtually identical crowns, and the emperor figure is a mirror image of God in the Garden of Eden.

Eve was traditionally viewed as the first human being to commit a sin; she took the forbidden fruit from the serpent and offered it to Adam. Eve as originally planned in the underdrawing made eye contact with the viewer, whereas in the final version of the painting, she turns her head towards Adam, making this a tragic scene between herself and her husband, who is about to take a bite from the apple. The open triptych as a whole is in fact an inwardly looking illustration of humanity’s fall into sin; not a single person in the whole of the finished painting really looks out of the picture plane. The world that Bosch presents to us is a difficult one to escape – one that human beings have created for themselves by acting contrary to God’s commandment. During the painting process, the artist emphasized the separation between Eden and the world beyond – our world. Small deer, grazing and lying in the grass, were originally drawn above Adam and Eve as they leave the garden; in the final painting, by contrast, a higher and even more impenetrable wall cuts the sinners off from their lost Paradise.
ATTRIBUTION AND DATING

The angel (more specifically its underdrawing) who expels the first human couple from the Garden of Eden has played a pivotal role in the painting’s attribution in the recent literature. Fritz Koreny (2002/03 and 2012), following the example of Gerd Unverfehrt (1980) among others, believes that the Haywain ought to be attributed to a workshop assistant of Hieronymus Bosch, rather than to the master himself. Koreny detected a left-handed draughtsman in the underdrawing of the angel, on the basis of which he ascribed the painting to an unidentified (left-handed) artist he provisionally calls the ‘Master of the Haywain’. His grounds for attributing the underdrawing to a left-handed draughtsman/painter are the preferred direction of hatching, which runs here from upper left to lower right (or vice versa). A right-handed draughtsman/painter normally prefers to hatch from upper right to lower left (or vice versa). Koreny finds the latter preferential direction in the drawings he ascribes to Bosch, from which he infers that Bosch must have been right-handed. He then extends this logic to conclude that the person who made the underdrawing of the angel was not Bosch but a workshop assistant. And from there he makes the (huge) leap from attributing the underdrawing of the angel to a talented assistant in Hieronymus Bosch’s workshop to attributing the entire painting to that assistant. According to Koreny, this ‘Master of the Haywain’ was also responsible for works including the Temptation of Saint Anthony (cat. 4) and the Wayfarer Triptych (cat. 19).
The hop, skip and jump by which Koreny goes from ascribing part of the underdrawing to a workshop assistant, to giving him first the whole of the underdrawing and finally the entire triptych, is highly problematic in methodological terms. It is important to note, for instance, that a full set of infrared reflectograms has only been available for the triptych since July 2013. Prior to this, historians had to rely on the partial and technically unsatisfactory documentation published by Garrido and Van Schoute. If we examine the underdrawing of the triptych as a whole, we note that it was done in several phases, styles and materials, and hence possibly also by several different hands. As a matter of fact, the hatching in the angel of the Expulsion is largely uncharacteristic for the painting as a whole, in which hatching is only used to a limited extent, either to distinguish one area from another, or for modelling and indicating form. Since hatching used to specify form partially determines the direction of the strokes, this direction is not in itself a sufficiently compelling argument to conclude that a single, left-handed draughtsman was responsible for the underdrawing.

Even if it could be determined that the entire underdrawing was produced by a single, left-handed artist and even if we were certain that Hieronymus Bosch was right-handed, this would still allow us to conclude no more than that the underdrawing was not Bosch’s work; it would tell us nothing about who painted the panels. Koreny makes no attempt to compare the direction of hatching in the underdrawing with that of the brushstrokes in the painting. What is more, no reliable, rational method of analysis has yet been found to identify left- or right-handedness or ambidexterity based on surviving drawings and paintings.
20.16–17  Tooth puller, Haywain (Prado): v15 and 18R [CAT 20B]

20.20–21  Angel, Haywain (Prado): v15 (on the left) and 18R [CAT 20A]
20.22–23  Angel, *Haywain* (Escorial): IRR and VIS [detail of Fig 20.15]

20.18–19  Tooth puller, *Haywain* (Escorial): VIS and IRR [detail of Fig 20.15]
Meanwhile, rotating the panel or sheet alters the maker’s position, not to mention the fact that artists will have tried to avoid an overly uniform direction of hatching or lines.

It should be pointed out that Fritz Koreny is not alone in his rejection of the attribution of the Haywain to Hieronymus Bosch; Ludwig von Baldass (1959) felt that the technique of the painting in Madrid was entirely out of keeping with Bosch, and thought it was the work instead of a copyist. Lorne Campbell too recently concluded that the Haywain is unlikely to have been painted during Bosch’s lifetime. He based his rejection of Bosch’s authorship on dendrochronological rather than stylistic grounds, which led him to conclude that if the painting absolutely had to be attributed to Bosch, it would need to be a relatively late work. The most recent measured growth ring dates from 1499, suggesting that the triptych cannot have been painted before 1510, although for statistical reasons, production after 1512 would be more likely. In other words, the dating of the wood on which the triptych was painted in no way precludes its attribution to Bosch, who did not die until August 1516. The most recent growth ring detected in the version of the Haywain in the Patrimonio Nacional collection in the Escorial dates from 1487. This tempted Campbell to suppose that the Escorial version was painted before the one in the Prado, but this is certainly not the case; the free and spontaneous underdrawing of the Prado Haywain, which moreover differs in numerous respects from the painting laid on top of it, shows that the composition was conceived here and not copied. Besides, the Escorial Haywain comes nowhere near in quality to the Prado version. The underdrawing of the Escorial triptych, lastly, which was done using a dry medium, shows no significant deviation from the finished painting, which is rather arid, forced and by no means creative. The poor state of conservation of the Escorial version does not essentially alter these facts. All this leads to the clear conclusion that the version in the Escorial is a replica of the original in the Prado. The underdrawing of the Prado Haywain, by contrast, shows evidence of a creative process, while the painting too was executed with unusual rapidity, bravura and efficiency. The triptych is comparable in this respect, as Koreny likewise indicates, with the Temptation of Saint Anthony in Lisbon (cat. 4). However, the execution of the Garden of Earthly Delights, which Koreny also attributes to Bosch, does not differ substantially (cat. 21). Although that work is painted with greater refinement than many other paintings by Bosch, we find his characteristic brushwork there as well; Bosch once again shows himself to be a draughtsman in paint. If we focus in the Paradise wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights on a detail like the fish-creature lying in the water reading, we find that the painting style is not materially different from that of the Haywain or the Temptation of Saint Anthony. The hand that painted the Haywain might have been older than the one that created the Garden of Earthly Delights and the Temptation, but as far as we are concerned, it is the same hand.
Nothing certain is known regarding the Haywain's original patron or destination, but the Spanish connection is strong and stretches back a long way. A Haywain by Bosch is mentioned in 1574 in the first entrega (transfer) – an inventory of paintings donated by Philip II to the monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial. The Spanish king had purchased six works by Bosch in 1570 from the estate of Felipe de Guevara (died 1563), including a Haywain. It is not clear which of the two versions this refers to, as both originated in the Spanish royal collections.

Although archival evidence is lacking, it is logical to suppose that Felipe de Guevara's Haywain came from the collection of his father, Don Diego de Guevara (c.1450–1520). Diego was attached to the Burgundian and later the Burgundian-Habsburg court for over forty years. He served Charles the Bold, Mary of Burgundy, Philip the Fair and, from 1506, Charles V, during which time he collected art and owned works including Jan van Eyck's Arnolfini double portrait (National Gallery, London). As Philip the Fair's chamberlain, Diego probably visited 's-Hertogenbosch as part of the Duke's entourage. His presence in the city is also supported by the fact that he became an ordinary member of the Brotherhood of Our Lady in 1498/99, when he paid both the customary membership dues and the compulsory ante obitum – the doodschuld or 'death fee'. His career at court paralleled that of Hippolyte de Berthoz until the latter's death in 1503. Diego evidently knew Engelbert II and Henry III of Nassau very well too, as Henry's widow, Mencía de Mendoza, had a portrait of him.

All this tells us that in the ten years around 1500 Diego de Guevara belonged to the intimate circle of Philip the Fair, along with Hippolyte de Berthoz and Engelbert or Henry of Nassau, all of whom presumably commissioned triptychs from Hieronymus Bosch. Given this context, it is not improbable that Felipe de Guevara's Haywain was acquired by his father from Bosch himself, and that this must have been the original version, the one now in the Prado. It is notable that Mencía de Mendoza attempted to acquire a version of the Haywain for shipment to Spain in November 1539 – that is, after the death of Henry III of Nassau. The evidence is provided by an instruction to her Antwerp agent, the merchant Arnao del Plano, to seek out another version of the painting on her behalf. Evidence that several versions and copies were in circulation is provided, for instance, by the 1614 inventory of Philips van Valckenisse in Antwerp, which refers to 'an original and copy of Haywain', and to the 1572 inventory of Jean Noiret, master of the Antwerp mint, which includes a 'hay-wain on canvas with the temptation of Saint Anthony'.

The Haywain Triptych was greatly admired in Spain. The painting was described and identified with a reference to the Dutch language in a Spanish text by Ambrosio de Morales (1513–1591), the Hieronymite monk and tutor of Diego de Guevara’s grandson. The text was published in 1586, but according to the author had been written as early as around 1530. The basic idea expressed by the painting – omnis caro foenum (‘All flesh is grass’; Isaiah 40:6) – had already been noted by Fray José de Sigüenza (1605), another Hieronymite monk and librarian of the Escorial.

The same distinction, though reversed, can be seen in the Garden of Earthly Delights (cat. 21), in which God the Father with a beard and crown can be seen in the Creation scene on the closed wings, while a ‘Christomorphic’ God introduces Eve to Adam in the open left wing.

The triptych was fully analysed and documented by the brcp team between 1 and 5 July 2013. See brcp, Technical Studies, cat. 1, rr 97–102.

We are not claiming that this cannot have been the case, merely that it is not possible to determine as readily as Koreny suggests whether the underdrawing of the Haywain was done by a left-handed or a right-handed artist. The photographic documentation that is now available makes it possible to study the beginning and curvature of the lines in the underdrawing – important elements when seeking to determine whether the draughtsman was left- or right-handed. In addition to how the drawing was done, however, it is also important to consider what was drawn, as the content determines the form.

See the website Boschproject.org, link l.23.

De Bruyn 2001, 155.


See the website Boschproject.org, link l.22.

See the website Boschproject.org, link l.21.

Blijf u gedragen als een pelgrim en gast op de aarde, die met de zaken van de wereld reeds van doen heeft.’

Thomas a Kempis, De navolging van Christus, naar de Brusselse autograf, Kapellen 1995, 77. ‘Keep yourself a stranger and pilgrim upon the earth, to whom the affairs of this world are of no concern.’

The Garden of Earthly Delights and the Ússer is revealing in this context; there too we find that Bosch made changes between the underdrawing and the final version of the painting to heighten the sense of uncertainty and hence tension in the image (cat. 19). He uses a different technique, though to no less effect, in the Garden of Earthly Delights (cat. 21) and the Abortion of the Magi (cat. 9) to evoke a sense of confusion about what we are seeing.

1 Cein Bermudez 1800, 175–76.


4 Grauls 1939/40. ‘De vader god van hemelniehe/ Heeft dit eedschol goet gheheheve/ Recht eenen hoper hoyens gheheke/ Dat wy daer up souden leven/ Alle ende niemant uut ghescreven/ Maer het maet te vele vernouys/ Dat hi ongedeelt et sleven/ Desen goeden hoper hoyts/ Uut sierer groot mithedens/ Gaal hi den hoper al gheheke/ Om ons te ruiten met minnelicheden/ Sonder kij ofte crackete/ Maer elc wils een groot parteete/ Vlamic deutsche ende franchoeys/ Elic hadde gheerne theeeste deele/ Van den goeden hoper hoyts.’ (De Bruyn 2001, 156–58; De Bruyn 2001 [reading edition].)

5 Note that the captions wrongly identify it as the Prado Fassung is well not from Bosch. Schon der Strich des Bortenpinsels, der in der pastos aufgetragenen Farbschicht sichtbar ist und die Maloberfläche merkwürdig rau wirken lässt, passt nicht zu Bosch. Auch erscheinen die Konturen der gezeigten Gegenstände und Figuren unscharf. Zudem hat der Maler bei der Anlage des landschaftlichen Hintergrundes die Figuren ausgespart, die dann erst in einem zweiten Arbeitschnitt eingefügt wurden. So ist diese Version des Heuwagens eines Mitarbeiter Bosch zu zuschreiben – vielleicht einem schon von Guevara gelobten Schüler, den manche Autoren mit dem aus Brüssel stammenden Maler Geels Panheled identifizieren.”

6 Campbell 2014, 139, 141.

7 See brcp, Technical Studies, cat. 51, rr 103–108.

8 Campbell 2014, 141. The illustrations accompanying Campbell’s text (figs. 1 and 2, 138 and 139) show the Prado Haywain triptych in both its open and closed state, but the captions wrongly identify it as the version in the Escorial.

9 Cf. Garrido and Van Schoute 2001, 156.


11 Justi 1889, 141, Tascon 1988, 218–61. See also Vázquez Dueñas 2015, 12.

12 811c, ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Rekeningen Illustre Lieve Vrouwe Broederschap, inv. 123, fol. 176v, 186.

13 See cat. 4 [Temptation of Saint Anthony], 17 [Last Judgement], 21 [Garden of Earthly Delights].


15 ‘een originaal ende copie van hoywagen’: Denéche 1922, 32.

16 ‘hoywagenen ob lynwaet metter temptatie van St. Anthonis’ Smolderen 1939, 32.


18 Tercero parte de la historia de la Orden de san Geronimo (Libro iv, discurso 17), 837–41. See translation p. 580.
Hieronymus Bosch
c. 1435–1516

Oil on oak panels, central panel 190 × 175 cm, wings 187.5 × 76.5 cm

Inscribed on the exterior of the wings:

(upper left) *Ipse dixit et facta sunt*; (upper right) *Ipse mandavit et creata sunt* (‘For he spake and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.’ Psalms 33:9); Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, 2823 (on loan from Patrimonio Nacional)

*BRCP* examination and documentation data:
The *BRCP* has not been granted permission to examine and document the painting in the Prado museum. //Boschproject.org no. 21.

Condition

The triptych’s frame is modern, but traces of the original engaged frame such as barbs and unpainted edges remain. The original vertical frame members of the central panel were outfitted with a broader base. The reverse of the central panel was thinned and cradled, and wooden strips have been added to its sides. Substantial damage can be observed in the original paint and ground, especially in the central panel and in the exterior of the right wing, which was reinforced with dovetails at a later date. The adhesion of the apparently underbound paint is poor. Paint was consolidated, and gauze imprints from the 1944–45 treatment remain visible. There is severe abrasion and much of the craquelure has opened up. Green lakes are better preserved in the landscape on the inside of the left wing. Damages were restored during the 1999–2000 treatment and the original painted surfaces are easily legible.¹

Provenance

1517 Henry III of Nassau (Nassau Palace, Coudenberg, Brussels); 1538 René of Chalon; 1544 William of Orange; 1567–68 Fernando Alvarez de Toledo, Duke of Alva; between 1570/71 and 1591 Fernando de Toledo, Alva’s illegitimate son; 1591 Philip II; presented to the Escorial by Philip II in 1593; since 1939 in the Museo Nacional del Prado.

*Literature*


Analysis

The triptych known as the Garden of Earthly Delights for the colourful scene in its central panel tells a story that runs from the Creation in the closed wings to hell and the last days in the inside right wing. The principal theme is a warning against the danger of human desire, created by God, which came into the world with the first human couple. We know from the large number of adjustments that have been detected that Hieronymus Bosch continued to seek the right forms and imagery as he painted this, his largest surviving work. The references to Hartmann Schedel’s Weltchronik indicate that the triptych was executed in 1494 at the earliest. In 1517 it was located in Brussels, at the palace of the Counts of Nassau, who most likely commissioned it from Bosch at the beginning of the sixteenth century.

‘BIZARRE IMAGES’

A chronicle of the world from its creation to the present day was completed in Nuremberg on 23 December 1493. Hartmann Schedel’s printed *Weltchronik* was extremely ambitious in its scope, size and number of illustrations, and swiftly found a large readership in Europe in the years that followed. The first of its more than 1,800 illustrations would be an important source of inspiration for Hieronymus Bosch when he came to paint his own chronicle of the world, the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. The woodcut is by Wilhelm Pleydenwurff and Michael Wolgemut and shows God the Father, crowned and enthroned, holding an orb with his left hand and making a sign of benediction with his right. A banderole above his head contains a quotation from the Bible: *Ipse dixit et facta sunt*; Psalm 32 ‘(For he spake, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm. Psalm 32).’¹ The woodcut takes up an entire page and is a visual tribute to the almighty God, creator and ruler.

Bosch took the woodcut as the starting point for his preamble to the *Garden of Earthly Delights* – the grisaille scene on the closed wings of the triptych. He made several fundamental adjustments, however, compared to his model. God does not wear a worldly crown, for instance, but a papal tiara, and Bosch also replaced the orb with a book. The world that God holds in his hand in the woodcut becomes a large, transparent sphere in Bosch’s version, floating against a dark background beneath the Creator’s feet. This world, and its relationship with God, is the subject of a triptych that was described on its registration at the Hieronymite monastery of the Escorial on 8 July 1593 as ‘la bariedad del mundo’. This is generally translated as ‘the variety of the world’, but it could be interpreted equally well, if
not better, as the ‘world’s variety show’ or ‘vaudeville’. Where the Schedel’sche Weltchronik emphasizes God’s might, Bosch is more concerned with the creation brought about by that power. The image of God in this case is tiny, and has almost disappeared from view. His omnipotence is chiefly expressed by the quotation from the Bible at the top of the closed wings.

The world that Bosch painted on the exterior of the Garden of Earthly Delights is in the early stages of creation; the third day has just ended. Having created heaven and earth, and light and dark on the first day and the firmament on the second, God separated the land from the water on the third day and caused seed-bearing plants to grow on the earth.

Then God said, ‘Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.’ And it was so.
The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good.
And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

We see trees that are presumably fruit-bearing, and enormous seed-lobes. It is a world freighted with potency. The story continues when the triptych is opened: from the creation of the first human couple to hell, the end of time. Not only is the painted surface now doubled in size and the number of depicted details many times greater, the sober and hushed grisaille gives way to a teeming pageant, full of colour and movement.

21.3 ‘... some figures come out of a mussel shell …’ (Antonio de’ Beatis) [CAT 21B]

21.4 God the Father [CAT 210]
Cardinal Luigi d’Aragona saw this painted world in all its glorious colour on 30 July 1517 at Henry III of Nassau’s palace on the Coudenberg in Brussels. The cardinal’s secretary, Antonio de’ Beatis, recorded the event in his travel journal.6

There are besides several paintings with various bizarre images, with pictures of seas, skies, forests, fields and many other things; some [figures] come out of a mussel shell; others shit cranes; men and women and whites and blacks in various actions and poses; birds and beasts of every kind and with much naturalism; things so charming and fantastic that it is impossible to describe them satisfactorily to someone who is not familiar with them.

De’ Beatis makes surprisingly little attempt to interpret the painting; he is struck primarily by the visual spectacle, the variety of the juxtaposed elements, and the realism with which all this is achieved, but also by the fantastic element in the painting: it is a fairground attraction. While much can be said about the work’s meaning – both eschatological and otherwise – we should never lose sight of the fact that what Bosch composed in the open triptych is in the first instance a visual feast.7

**VISUAL APPROACHES**

The obvious way to consider the overwhelming wealth of depicted plants, people, animals and things is with reference to the heightened expectations generated by the seeding of the earth on the third day of Creation. The forms we see on the closed triptych continue into the upper part of the open left wing, where they are populated by birds including a pink owl, which can now be made out only with reference to the copy in the Escorial. There are many visual approaches the viewer can take to a triptych as rich in detail as the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. Bosch used recurring elements, for instance, in a variety of locations and forms to achieve a sense of coherence between the different parts of the composition. The owl is one such linking element: it appears twice in the left wing, frames the central panel on both sides, and is enthroned as king of hell on a commode in the right wing. As we move from the top of the left panel across to the Hell wing of the open triptych, the owl occupies a steadily larger position; it is clearly growing.

Bosch gives the owl a function that seems to go beyond simply linking the different parts of the composition. The bird features regularly in his work, and almost always to ominous effect. Paul Vandenbroeck and others have demonstrated that owls enjoyed a sinister
Not all roses... [CAT 23A]
reputation in the culture of around 1500, and were generally associated with menace and death. This interpretation does not obviously fit the left wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights, however; the action here takes place in the Garden of Eden, where God is shown introducing Eve to Adam. The first human couple is surrounded by fruiting trees, but the Fall of Man has yet to take place. Adam seems to look towards Eve with interest, while she lowers her eyes demurely.

And the rib that the Lord God had taken from the man he made into a woman and brought her to the man. Then the man said, ‘This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one shall be called Woman, for out of Man this one was taken.’ Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh. And the man and his wife were both naked, and were not ashamed.

The Fall occurs immediately after this episode. Bosch does not depict it as such, but he does allude to it by placing Adam and Eve in a setting full of the fruit-bearing trees described in the Bible.

Out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

These words prompt us to look for the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which the Bible says is located in the middle of Paradise; what we find instead is a fountain, composed of forms suggestive of plants and their seed-lobes, and with a perfectly circular hole in its base, in which an owl perches. How, one wonders, does this structure relate to God’s
Creation? The fountain stands on a little island, which seems to consist of precious stones.\(^\text{11}\)

A toad sits on a rock in the water, looking towards the bank, where all sorts of dark, oddly shaped animals crawl out onto the land. Below them, we see a three-headed creature and another with a dark snout protruding from a white carapace. Some of these animals disappear into a cave, while others climb up the rock, at the top of which stands a palm tree, coiled round with a serpent. A small, inconspicuous tree with red fruit grows behind the palm to the left. The combination of a tree with fruit and a serpent in Paradise inevitably puts the viewer in mind of the Fall.

Although Martin Schongauer’s engraving of the *Flight into Egypt* is often cited as a visual source for the ‘dragon tree’ (*dracaena*) in the left wing, it appears that Bosch turned to Scheidel once again when conceiving his Paradise wing. The woodcut illustrating the passage in the *Weltchronik* dealing with the Fall of Man and the Expulsion from Paradise contains a number of elements that we also find, albeit arranged differently, in Bosch. The print includes the palm tree, for instance, the dragon tree and a tree with red fruit and a serpent coiled around its trunk between Adam and Eve.

Once again, however, Bosch has deviated significantly from his printed model. Although the allusion to the Fall is present in the Paradise wing of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Bosch has chosen to depict only the threat of it. The principal action is the bringing together of man and woman. Eve – referred to in Middle Dutch Bibles of around 1500 as *manhaghet* or ‘she who pleases man’ – has been created out of Adam. ‘Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and clings to his wife, and they become one flesh’ (Genesis 2:24). What Bosch shows here is the first stirring of desire, God’s creation of human love.
Human beings inflamed with desire are the theme of the central panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. The viewer is presented with a kaleidoscopic survey of men and women’s behaviour, and how they interact with each other and with nature. The situation seems harmonious. Antonio de’ Beatis mentioned the couple in the mussel shell, accompanied by two pearls; the way these lovers are enclosed in a veined, spherical membrane separating them from the outside world is another masterful touch. What appears to be a vegetable structure sprouts from a scaly stem, which grows in turn from a hollow red sphere, and is topped with a hairy white bud with blue speckled leaves. There is also a large, red fruit inside the membrane, where we see the woman laying her hand on the man’s leg while he places his on her stomach, their red lips almost touching. (De’ Beatis was quite right incidentally when he wrote that it is impossible to describe everything you can see in this painting.) Red fruit seems to be scattered across the landscape, systematically contrasting with large and small blue fruit; in some places it is strawberry-like, in others closer to berries; and sometimes, as on the far right of the central panel, it is plainly intended to represent apples. Compared with the modest fruit tree in the shade of the palm in the left wing, we find ourselves here at the height of the growing season; all is ripe and bursting open, and is devoured greedily and exuberantly. It is hard to tell whether the group of twenty men and women sitting around the enormous strawberry are eating it or worshipping it. And is the full-figured woman beneath the transparent cloche full of the fruit she has eaten, or does she bear the ‘fruit’ of the man who supports her? She certainly stands out among all the other young and slender people. Directly below this woman, human and fruit have become one in the shape of the recumbent man whose head has been taken over by a large...
blueberry. Placing his arm around the woman lying alongside him, he ‘clings to his wife, and they become one flesh’.  

Geometry holds sway in the middle and background, above the happy chaos of the foreground. Halfway across the central panel, in an expanse of green, there is a circular pond containing only women. The circle is repeated and therefore emphasized by the carousel of men who, mounted on all manner of animals, circle the pond rapturously in an anticlockwise direction. Other groups of men, large and small, come streaming from the left and right to join in the wild ride. The strict ordering of this part of the composition is striking and recalls the central panel of Van Eyck’s *Adoration of the Lamb* – an altarpiece that Antonio de’ Beatis was able to view two days after seeing the *Garden of Earthly Delights* and which he described as the loveliest painting in all Christendom. The idea, incidentally, that there is some kind of antithetical relationship between Bosch’s *Garden of Earthly Delights* and Van Eyck’s *Adoration of the Lamb* is intriguing and quite possibly fruitful. There is little reason to suppose that an ambitious painter like Bosch, working in this case on behalf of an extremely prestigious patron, would not have studied a painting as famous and close-at-hand as Van Eyck’s *Ghent Altarpiece*. Rather than the Lamb of God, however, Woman is the central focus here. The women stand in little groups, gesticulating, and seem to discuss the men circling around them. The background of the central panel shows men and women expressing a more explicit interest in one another and seeking to pair off; one man, for instance, can be seen fondling a woman in the hollow of the fountain.

The forms of the fountain in the central panel are cleaner and more ‘cultivated’ than those of the one in the Paradise wing, yet they are unmistakably reminiscent of it. As with the recurring owls, Bosch uses spheres and round holes to lend structure to the composition as a whole; they hold everything together. Yet what is this ‘whole’? What are we looking at?

Our view of the central panel is framed by what we see in the wings on either side of it, and what we previously saw on the closed shutters. Were it not for the Hell wing on the
right, the central panel might easily be read as a continuation of the Paradise scene on the left. This is plainly not right, however, and would mean we had allowed ourselves to be distracted by the compositional structure of the triptych, in which the horizon runs across from left to right, and green fields extend interruptedly over the left and central panels. The Creation story in the left wing is very clear: the creation of the woman from Adam and the scene in which she is presented to him are immediately followed by the Fall of Man and the expulsion of Adam and the woman he now calls Eve from the Garden of Eden.

The Creation story recounted in the Second Book of Genesis overlaps to some extent and adds detail to the account in the First Book. Genesis 1 also describes the creation of man, which occurs on the sixth day, with no mention of Paradise.

Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.' So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the air and over every living thing that moves upon the earth.' God said, 'See, I have given you every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.' And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.14

We see in the central panel that humankind has indeed multiplied and populated the earth; in what condition, though, does the earth now find itself? Paradise? Or something else? If the central panel were a continuation of the Paradise wing on the left, the right-hand panel of the triptych would have nothing to do with the rest of the painting. Hell is filled, after all, with the damned and not with the blessed. It makes perfect sense, therefore, to assume that hell follows on from – or is the extreme consequence of – what we see in the rest of the triptych. This makes the painting a tragedy in four acts, the story of how God’s Creation degenerated. The appealing scene in the central panel might have developed out of what happened in the Garden of Eden, yet the hell scene on the right tells us that we should not interpret this as another paradise.15 Ruled by desire (or, to put it in more orthodox terms, having chosen to allow itself to be ruled by desire), humanity has embarked on the path to damnation. However tempting that path might be, it has but one destination: hell, where the damned souls are crammed together to form the nucleus of a massa perditionis or ‘mass of perdition’.16

Bosch shows a world in the Garden of Earthly Delights which, although its origins were good, has degenerated into a place where humanity lives in sin, having disobeyed God’s commandment. The only logical outcome of this way of life is hell. In this painting, however, even hell is a visual banquet.
Bosch’s representation of eternal damnation is a feast for the eye that the viewer can only admire for its seemingly unbridled creativity. The hell depicted in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* is undoubtedly one of the most famous scenes of its kind in Western painting. There is no daylight here: what illumination we find is cast by a series of conflagrations. Bosch primarily uses burning urban architecture for this purpose, a reference to the contemporary world, of which there is otherwise no trace in the triptych. The scene is an encyclopedia of pain and suffering, knives and arrows, death and decay. We take pleasure as viewers in the variety of forms and in the fact that what we are seeing is a painting and not reality. The contrasting use of pink and blue elements is continued here; the ‘tree-man’, for instance – an utterly remarkable creature with a human face looking back towards a hollow rear-end like a seed-pod or egg – is crowned with a set of pink bagpipes. His cavernous backside houses an infernal inn, the landlady of which serves wine from a barrel to guests sitting on monstrous toads. The landlord gazes down pityingly at a damned soul below, balancing an egg on his back. The tree-man’s body is supported by two ‘trunks’ planted in little boats in which several more little fires burn and a number of sinners have sought shelter. The creature’s head supports a large disc, on which further lost souls are chaperoned by demons. Bosch was clearly delighted with the tree-man’s success as an artistic creation, as he used him again, plucked from his hellish surroundings, as the protagonist in an equally magnificent drawing, now in the Albertina in Vienna (cat. 35).

A demonic figure dressed in blue and with a head that most resembles an owl or an owl chick is enthroned on a commode and crowned with a cooking pot in the lower right of the panel. Its feet are thrust into a pair of green jugs and it uses its right arm to devour a human figure, whose backside billows fire, smoke and a flock of birds. The souls it digests pass

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*21.23* Pentimenti ‘below the ice’  
*cat 21c*

*21.24* Tree-man  
*cat 21c*
through the demon bird’s body into a blue bubble beneath the commode, before dropping into a hole, the perfectly circular form of which recalls the pond in the central panel, and the hole in the fountain with the owl in the left wing. Even hell, it seems, has a drain into which its denizens can puke and shit.

The soul-devouring, crowned king of hell, whose throne is hung with a pink cloth to make a canopied bed for two sleeping figures on either side, forms the grand finale to one of the most spectacular works of Western painting. The blue, demonic bird of destruction is the perfect foil to the pink God of creation in the left wing. No matter how apt this ‘nemesis’ might be within the painting as a whole, however, it was not originally planned this way. X-radiographs of the painting reveal that Bosch overpainted substantial areas of the Hell wing. Just above the demon bird’s head, for instance, in the zone where the cooking pot and the archer on skates are located, a large monster was painted, whose belly contained a sitting figure and a demon displaying its backside and a book. If we look closely, the figure still actually shows through the current painting, making it look as if it is situated beneath the ice. The whole of the demon bird might actually have been painted over an earlier image, as numerous pentimenti can be made out here and in the immediate vicinity. The figures in front of the bird to the left, for instance, were painted on top of a large upturned helmet. In the area higher up above the enthroned demon bird, where we now see the knife and the hell hounds standing on a slice of sausage and devouring a knight, a squatting figure was originally painted in the place occupied by the jug; one leg in a basket, it reached an arm between its legs to grab its own backside. Virtually the entire right wing of the composition was revised and overpainted. The obvious conclusion is that this happened at the end of the creative process, when Bosch had the opportunity to review the triptych as a whole and evidently saw that his creation was not yet perfect.

On further reflection, then, the artist decided to revise several areas of the painting after they had been completed. In the left wing, for instance, he turned God’s head – originally shown more frontally – towards Eve, thereby focusing more attention on the woman and presenting her more emphatically. A group of trees was painted out in the upper left of the central panel and replaced by an open plain, across which people and animals move towards the middle. A man, whose upper body sticks out of a fruit, points towards them excitedly. It is a relatively small adjustment, but one that emphasizes the beginning of the scene to come, including the ideas of germination, birth and growth. It is no coincidence that Bosch painted the Creation on the closed wings at the end of the third day, when the earth had just been seeded.

The discovery that the magnificent demon bird that ‘concludes’ the triptych was not initially planned in this form makes us look afresh at those elements elsewhere in the painting to which the figure relates. The demon’s head most resembles that of an owl, causing us to follow its gaze back across the panels, to see how else Bosch has used owls as compositional elements. The little owl in the Paradise wing, for instance, is almost hidden, but is nonetheless positioned at the centre of the panel. A much larger tawny owl, meanwhile, is embraced by a man on the left of the central panel, and an equally large owl frames the scene on the right. It is difficult, if not impossible, to tell human and owl apart any more. The symmetry in this sequence is striking, but when we know it was not conceived in advance and we take a close look at the owls that close off the central panel on both the left and the right, we see that these creatures too have been changed and are painted largely over the background. Bosch shows himself here to have been a painter who prepared his composition carefully to be sure, but who allowed himself the freedom to deviate from his initial plan during the creative process and who, as a consequence, often painted directly on the panel. Having completed the painting, he reviewed the overall work and then made a number of further changes to heighten the coherence between the different parts. This, at least, is how it seems to us after carefully studying the painting as a work of art. It would be extremely useful in this context to be able to examine the underdrawing too as the first stage in the genesis of these motifs; unfortunately, the quality of the available documentation does not currently allow this.
EARLY TESTIMONY

The Garden of Earthly Delights is so rich a work of art that Antonio de’ Beatis, writing in 1517, could only express his delight at the visual spectacle. Fray José de Sigüenza – rector of the Colegio de El Escorial and later prior of the monastery of San Lorenzo de El Escorial – made a more comprehensive attempt to characterize Bosch’s work in his Historia de la Orden de San Jerónimo (’History of the Order of St Jerome’, 1595–1605) – an early, extensive and hence extremely important attempt to situate and understand Bosch’s paintings. At the time de Sigüenza was writing his history, Bosch’s large triptychs (Adoration of the Magi, Haywain and Garden of Earthly Delights) were all located at the palace monastery. De Sigüenza made no attempt to conceal his admiration for Bosch and for the Garden of Earthly Delights, which he described as ‘the most ingenious and artful thing it is possible to imagine’. And I speak the truth,’ he wrote, ‘when I say that – if anyone were to conceive such a plan, and some great genius were willing to write it – this would be a very useful book, because countless examples from Holy Scripture are to be seen here, vivid and clear, touching on man’s wickedness.

A little later, de Sigüenza wrote wistfully ‘that one might wish the whole world to be hung with versions of the painting, as Bosch drew his absurdities from the reality and actuality of the world’. He went on, somewhat elliptically, to state that ‘if we set the beauty, the ingenuity, and the admirable and considered execution to one side (astonishing that a single mind can think up so many things), we could benefit greatly from looking at ourselves, portrayed from the life inside, unless we do not realize what is in us and we are so blind that we have no understanding of the passions and defects of character that turn us into a beast, or rather many beasts.

José de Sigüenza’s text is undoubtedly enlightening and valuable, yet it can also be overly one-dimensional, in that the author takes no account of the triptych’s spatial complexity. He makes no mention of the closed wings, for instance, even though the scene Bosch presents there establishes the context for those set out in the open triptych. After the viewer has contemplated the painting in all its glory, splendour and perversity and its shutters have been closed once again, what we are left with is the omnipotence of God. He has only to speak, the Bible says, and it comes to pass. He commanded and it was created. His creation is visible on the triptych’s exterior as a sphere in the darkness, where the Word was with God. The image recalls the poetic and mysterious verses from John’s Gospel – another creation story:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Bosch’s painted God really is light, gives light and shines in the darkness. For as long as people are able to close the triptych again there is hope (the parallel de Sigüenza makes between Bosch’s painting and a book is an extremely apt one). The closed triptych reminds us that we can turn to the Word, which offers hope and mercy to every sinner. The open triptych seduces and delights us, just as it did Antonio de’ Beatis in 1517. Only by looking closely do we realize that this is a book that ought best to remain closed. Curiosity, hubris and desire, however, will cause us to open it over and over again.
COMMISSION AND DATING

It is not known precisely when or for whom Bosch created his masterpiece. The publication of Schedel’s Weltchronik towards the end of 1493 suggests that the Garden of Earthly Delights was painted in 1494 at the earliest. As noted earlier, the triptych was located in 1517 at the ‘Hôtel de Nassau’ – the Nassau Palace on the Coudenberg in Brussels – which had belonged to Count Henry III of Nassau-Breda (1483–1538) since the death of his uncle, Count Engelbert II (1451–1504). It is highly probable that one of the two commissioned the triptych. Cases have been made in the literature for both uncle and nephew, based primarily on whether the triptych was felt to date stylistically from earlier or later in Bosch’s career. Both men were significant patrons of the arts who granted numerous and prestigious commissions, and each also belonged to the inner circle of the Burgundian court under Charles the Bold, Maximilian of Austria, Mary of Burgundy and Philip the Fair, respectively. Engelbert was certainly present in 1481 at the chapter meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece in ’s-Hertogenbosch. And as the Duke’s chamberlain, he will undoubtedly have been in the city again for Philip’s ceremonial entry in 1496, and once again in 1504–05 as first chamberlain, when his nephew and heir Henry was also
among Philip the Fair and Maximilian of Austria’s entourage. On the latter occasion, the young Duke of Burgundy ordered a Last Judgement triptych from Hieronymus Bosch. The Nassaus undoubtedly visited ’s-Hertogenbosch fairly frequently. In 1513, for example, Henry chose the city as his operating base for his war against Guelders. The obvious conclusion is that one or both Counts of Nassau commissioned the Garden of Earthly Delights from Bosch to place in their palace in Brussels.
...
The Flood

A  After the Flood   B  After the Last Judgement

Workshop of Hieronymus Bosch

C. 1510–20

Oil on oak panels, After the Flood 70 x 39.2 cm, After the Last Judgement 70.5 x 37.4 cm

Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, St. 27 and St. 28

BRCP examination and documentation data:


Condition

The two panels were painted on both sides, and both were cropped at the bottom and top. In addition, After the Flood was somewhat cropped on the left and After the Last Judgement on the right. The latter has a wooden strip inserted between its two planks and two old cracks run from the wood loss at the bottom edge. The join in After the Flood is partly visible at the bottom. The ground and paint layers appear stable now, but extensive losses have occurred and the surfaces are abraded. During the 1982–85 treatment, a variety of manners of reintegration have led to various results: a more complete appearance of After the Flood; a more fragmented manifestation of After the Last Judgement; and a rather archaeological display of their reverses. Natural discoloration has led to browner landscapes and a general increase in transparency of paint resulted in the increased visibility of underlying layers.

Provenance

Both panels reported in 1927 at the home of Marquis de Chiloedres, Madrid; 1929 Nicolaas Beets art dealers, Amsterdam; 1935–40 Franz W. Koenigs, Haarlem, loaned to Museum Boymans, Rotterdam; 1940–41 Daniel George van Beuningen; donated in 1941 to Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Literature


Analysis

The two Flood panels must originally have been the wings of a triptych. When closed, they showed two pairs of roundels or tondi. Greyish-green scenes with the world After the Flood on the left and After the Last Judgement on the right were visible when the triptych was opened. Noah’s beached Ark shows God’s goodness, notwithstanding the fact that he has otherwise almost entirely destroyed his Creation. The lost central panel must have represented the possibility of salvation via a Last Judgement scene. The four anecdotal scenes on the exterior of the wings emphasize how humankind is constantly beset by the devil and by evil, and that God’s help is essential. The painting technique differs from the works in Bosch’s core oeuvre.

The conclusion, based on the links with numerous painted and underdrawn details in other works from the Bosch group, has to be that these panels were produced in Hieronymus Bosch’s workshop.

DIVINE JUDGEMENT

The two panels, painted on both sides, were probably the wings of a triptych. Their history prior to the twentieth century is unknown. Anecdotal scenes are painted in four tondi on the backs of the panels, while those on the inside take up the entire surface. Bosch scholars have differed as to their identification of the scenes since the panels were first published by Friedländer in 1927, while there is also a lack of agreement regarding the position of the wings relative to one another. The only scene that can be readily identified is the one with Noah’s Ark, which has come to rest on Mount Ararat as the Flood recedes. The heavily retouched paintings were restored as ‘honestly’ as possible in the 1980s according to the practice of the time, and were stripped of all elements not deemed original. Each picture plane was then individually integrated, depending on the degree of damage, with virtually no supplementary retouching in some cases. This approach disrupted the cohesion of the paintings and considerably hampers their legibility and aesthetic appreciation.

The two panels are in keeping with Hieronymus Bosch’s oeuvre and workshop output in terms of underdrawing, pictorial style and imagery. In seeking an interpretation, it makes sense to begin with the narrative structure found in other, surviving triptychs, in which the closed painting sets out a theme that is elaborated further when the wings are opened. In the case of the Saint Wilgefortis Triptych in Venice, the Adoration of the Magi in the Prado and the Last Judgement in Bruges (cat. 8, 9 and 16), this elaboration takes the form of a single scene stretching across the three panels, with or without donors’ figures. The Flood panels, however, are discrete scenes that flanked a primary image, as in the Vienna Last Judgement, the Haywain, the Garden of Earthly Delights, the Hermit Saints Triptych, the Temptation of Saint Anthony and also the reconstructed Wayfarer Triptych (cat. 17, 20, 21, 2, 4 and 19).
Both panels are extensively underdrawn, but the content of the panel with Noah’s Ark was significantly altered between the underdrawing, the initial painting and the work as it appears in the final version. The underdrawing in particular is hard to read, but the following is a likely analysis: in the version originally planned, the Flood was still underway and the Ark was bobbing about on the water. The drawing of the middleground shows people swimming – rendered very sketchily with a broad brush – while others on the landmass in the foreground flee the still-rising water. A person on the left vainly attempts to reach higher ground. This figure had already been left in reserve in the underpainting when the composition was altered. The water in the middleground was replaced by Mount Ararat with the Ark, now depicted smaller, somewhat higher up and aground: the Flood is over. Noah and his family look out over the receding water, while a procession of animals disembarks. The essential difference is that the subject is no longer God’s destruction of his Creation but, on the contrary, his saving of it. The moment represented is the one where God informs Noah and his family that the Flood is past and that they may leave the Ark.¹

The second panel shows a very different image: in the background of a similar and no less desolate landscape we see a burning city. Clouds of smoke billow against a sky lit up in red; land and air alike are overrun with demons. Once again there are some deviations from the underdrawing, including a barrel creature in the middle of the foreground, which was ultimately not painted. Not a single human soul is left, other than an old man, who is grasped by a seductive female demon in the cave on the left. The world here is entirely in the hands of devils and monsters. Yet this is not an image of hell, as has frequently been suggested, nor can it be the sinful world prior to the Flood. The end times have come – the Last Judgement has taken place and glowing ashes, represented by numerous dots of red paint, settle over the earth.

Viewed as pendants, the panels depict the destruction of the world twice over. Creation is wiped out by God’s judgement, drowned beneath the waters of the Flood and consumed
by fire after the End of Days. This contrasting image is specifically alluded to in the Second Letter of Saint Peter: ‘the world of that time was deluged and destroyed’, while the present world was ‘reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgement’ (2 Peter 3:5–7). We can infer from this that the panel with Noah’s Ark was the left wing, and the world given over to evil must have been the right wing. Ludwig von Baldass suggested as early as 1943 that the central panel showed a Last Judgement scene, since the Flood functioned as a prefiguration of what will occur in the end times. The scenes from the inside of the wings are painted, unusually, in muted colours verging on grisaille, which must have given the open triptych an ominous appearance. The central panel might have been done in full colour, however, which would have made it an even stronger visual focus.

DEMONS

The position of the wings does, of course, determine the sequence of the scenes on the exterior. The bottom left tondo contains God the Father or Christ blessing a kneeling man; the one above shows a man being attacked by three demons. In the other panel, upper right, we see another kneeling man and a woman fleeing from a burning house; while the roundel below has a farmer being robbed of his horse by a demon.

All four images feature demonic forces that threaten human beings. Two monsters fly across the sky of the lower left tondo, while three figures below them try to swim to safety from a sinking ship. An angel to the right of the middleground hands a piece of clothing to an almost naked man. The figure of God or Christ giving his blessing was slightly larger in the underdrawing and was turned more towards the kneeling man, who originally
leaned further forward, and looked directly ahead; he also seems to have been painted that way initially.

The demon with the pig’s head in the second scene was much larger in the underdrawing, and was shown with its right arm raised, with a long tail and with a cockerel’s claw. The man he attacks had longer, curly hair in the underdrawing and was painted slightly smaller. A farm was originally planned in the background. The large bird that approaches high in the sky from the left and the small demon with the raised club were not prepared in advance, and neither was the catlike monster in the central foreground. The latter creature corresponds exactly with a monstrous animal in a drawing by Hieronymus Bosch (see cat. 51).5

In the third tondo, at top right, a winged demon flies out menacingly from a burning building; a second monster is visible in the gateway, attacking a child who holds a toy windmill in its right hand (now barely visible). The child’s mother runs in panic towards a man who faces her, half-kneeling. Each of them wears a conspicuous purse, suggesting that they are well-off. The woman in the underdrawing wears a fashionable dress with a low, square neckline, and her midriff is accentuated. A strip of bare oak has been inserted next to the man, making it difficult here to follow the underdrawing. Further wickedness has occurred around the large, burning house: two pigs lie dead in front of it, and at least three of the sheep in the distant herd have been killed, leaving one black sheep and three others still standing. The burning buildings – like the man, the woman and the flying demon – were prepared in relative detail in the underdrawing, which differs from the final image; the gateway as painted on the far left is significantly different from the initial sketch, in which the arch is positioned much higher and the wall is crenellated; the windows in the building behind the woman, meanwhile, were initially larger and more numerous.

22.4–5
The fourth scene shows a demon unseating a farmer as he harrows the field with his horse. As he falls to the ground, the man looks up to see what happened. The horse, as well as the demon, were initially placed nearer the middle of the tondo. The demon as underpainted has a fox’s head, whereas the final painted version, in so far as it can still be seen, has a more apelike face. The underdrawn position of the figure, which was left in reserve, can still be made out to the left of the underpainted demon. Buildings – probably a house, a church and a fortified tower – were sketched in the upper right background of the underdrawing. The harrow behind the horse is extremely weak compared to the rest of the painting and has no underdrawing at all, yet it appears to belong to the original painting. The sack of seed in the right foreground was not underdrawn either, but is also nonetheless original.

Sylvie Wuhrmann suggested in 1998 that the scenes in the four roundels refer to the story of Job, albeit based on non-literal depictions of the Bible story. If that were true, the scenes would have been difficult to recognize in Bosch’s time too, as they contain very little of the imagery normally associated with the ‘holy man Job’. The scene with the semi-naked man to whom the angel gives a piece of clothing is the only detail that might be linked to that tradition. According to Wuhrmann’s interpretation, the first scene in the lower left can only be God speaking to Job, which the Bible says happened after all his trials were complete (Job 38–42); the other three scenes would then have to relate to those trials (Job 1–2).
Whatever the case, the four scenes must be considered in relation to one another and probably refer to the life of a specific saint or (apocryphal) exemplum. The central theme of these images is the threat that demonic powers pose to human existence and – embodied in the scene lower left – the possibility of divine salvation. This theme was continued and brought to a climax when the triptych was opened and the other side of the two little panels was displayed: the judgement of God, which could lead to destruction, with or without the prospect of salvation.

**Style and Date**

Stylistically, the two panels deviate in terms of both painted surface and underdrawing from what must be considered Bosch’s autograph oeuvre. There are substantial similarities, by contrast, with the Job Triptych in Bruges (cat. 23), in which the style of the underdrawing but also the handling of the paint are extremely close. The dendrochronological dating of the panels is identical; both works could have been painted from 1508 onwards, although execution after 1510 is more likely. The conception of the two works and the motifs they contain show that they must have been created at more or less the same time in Hieronymus Bosch’s workshop.
Consequently, a whole series of details in the Flood Panels are found in other works by Bosch and his workshop, in which model drawings and ricordi must have been employed. The use of examples facilitated collaboration within the workshop. God the Father or Christ in the first medallion, for instance, is reminiscent of John the Evangelist on the closed wings of the Ecce Homo Triptych in Boston (cat. 24). The young man kneeling in the third medallion resembles John the Evangelist in Berlin (cat. 6), while the motif of the gatekeepers carved in stone by the entrance to the house in the background is similar to the passageway flanked by sculpted guards in the left wing of the Adoration of the Magi in the Prado (cat. 9) and the variation of this in the central panel of the triptych with Saints Anthony, Job and Jerome in Bruges (cat. 23). The fox's head in the underdrawing of the demon in the third medallion immediately recalls the one in the sinister group behind Job in the central panel of the Bruges triptych.

The giraffe and the first elephant of the pair stepping onto dry land after the Flood are virtually identical to their counterparts in the Paradise wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights (cat. 21). The latter painting also contains the motif of the disc with a branch protruding through it that can be seen in After the Last Judgement. This is the scene that includes in its underdrawing the monster in the shape of a barrel and short legs, which was omitted from the final painting. The same figure appears in the foreground of a drawing of an infernal scene that we attribute to Bosch (see cat. 44). Taken together, these comparisons form a dense and almost inextricable web of connections between the Flood Panels and a whole series of other paintings (plus a drawing) from Hieronymus Bosch’s workshop.
In the words of the 1477 Delft Bible: ‘... god sprak tot noe ende seide Ganc wt der arcken du ende dijn wijf, dijnre zonen, ende dijnre zonen wiwe mitti; ende leide wt mitti alle di dieren die bi di sijn, van alle vleisch beide in ghevogelte ende in beesten ende alle crupende dieren ende die crupen boven der aerden leitse mitti wt ende gaaet wt op ter aerden. Wast ende wort gemenichfoudicht boven der aerden’ (Genesis 8:15–17).

Also cited by Van Waadenoijen 2007, 176.

The panels were also presented in this order when they were discovered. It has frequently been suggested in later literature that After the Flood was the right wing. See Jeroen Giltaij in Lammertse 1994, 97.

See Von Baldass 1943, 235.

This too was already noted by Von Baldass (1943, 233).

Minnen 2011 has a more recent discussion of the relevant veneration and visual representation of Job.

A comparable example – the only one identified to date – is provided by a detail in the background of the right wing of the Job Altarpiece by the Master of the Legend of Saint Barbara, alias Aert vanden Bossche, and workshop, Brussels 1485–89, Cologne, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum. Wuhrmann 1998, 112; Minnen 2011, 46–47; Griet Steyaert, in Bücken and Steyaert 2013, 265–56. The text to which this scene refers is so far known only from the English poem The Life of Job, c. 1450–75, and the French mystery play La Pacience de Job from the mid-fifteenth century: Minnen 2011, 46.

The figure on top of the barrel was also included in the underdrawing. His protruding legs are clearly visible, and the helmet was underdrawn as well. See the website Boschproject.org, link 131.
Three precious paintings by Hieronymus Bosch were mentioned in the record of the 1571 trial of the Portuguese humanist Damião de Góis for alleged heresy. One of them was described as ‘um painél de tentação de S. Job, de Jerónimo Bosch’. It is not known what became of this panel.

What is interesting, however, is that the source refers to a painting by Bosch of the trials endured by the Old Testament figure of Job. The triptych with the ‘Holy Man Job’ and Saints Anthony and Jerome has been linked with Hieronymus Bosch and his workshop and followers since it was discovered in the 1860s. Dendrochronological analysis of the panels suggests that the triptych could have been painted after 1508 and more likely after 1510. The quality of the overall work does not match that of the core Bosch oeuvre, but numerous details show that it was produced in an environment in which Bosch’s autograph works were known exceptionally well. What is more, the triptych displays strong similarities in both its underdrawing and manner of painting with the Flood Panels in Rotterdam (cat. 22), to which the same applies. Both works were prepared with an underdrawing laid down fluently and confidently with a fairly broad brush. However, the execution lacks the characteristic finesse, variety of texture and superior quality of Bosch’s autograph works. Free use has been made of his motifs and compositions, but the essence and the sense of tension of the examples from which the motifs were borrowed are not achieved in the work as a whole.

**Open**

As the main figure of the scene, Job is presented in the middle of the central panel, sitting on a low, straw-covered wall, beneath the awning of his ruined house. A large fire on the horizon refers to the other disasters that befell him and his worldly goods. His body is covered in the sores inflicted in the course of his second trial (Job 2:4–8). Job turns round to
look at a band of demons approaching him from inside the ruined building. They are led by a figure with a fox’s head, dressed in a monk’s habit and with a sword hanging from its belt. A bagpipe-player and two other figures – difficult to make out now – stand immediately behind the creature. The viewer’s eye is drawn more strongly, however, to the six musicians who approach Job from the left: a striking ensemble of five brass and woodwind players, and a lone ‘fiddler’. Only the two rearmost musicians – one with a flute and a drum, hidden behind the figure before him, and another with a trumpet – have realistic instruments. Strangest of all is the horse’s skull which, although not strung, is nonetheless played with a bow like a viol. This latter instrument in particular casts an ominous light on the musicians. The scene nevertheless refers to a popular late-fifteenth- and sixteenth-century miracle tale about musicians who offer Job solace and distraction in his misery. Job paid them with scabs picked off his wounds, which promptly turned into gold coins.1

The left wing shows Saint Anthony in the cave to which he has withdrawn in isolation. He is surrounded by demons who torment him incessantly. The saint kneels low over an improvised altar and is deep in prayer. He holds a long string of prayer beads in his hands and faces a simple cross made of two slender branches. A small monster stands by this altar, which Anthony has evidently defeated, as its armoured hands are bound behind its back. An anecdotal detail is painted in the foreground: a naked child, accompanied by a large bird, sits in the husk of a fruit, where it has caught a fish. The burning church in the background refers to one of Anthony’s visions, as recounted in the Passionael (the Middle Dutch version of the Legenda aurea or Golden Legend) and other sources.2

23.2–3

The right wing shows Saint Jerome kneeling before the crucifix he has installed on a chair or throne. He touches the cross with his left hand, while in his right he holds a rock with which to chastise himself. Snakes and other ominous creatures crawl about among the plants and stones just above his head. He is identifiable as a cardinal from his galero – the flat red hat with long cords that are still just about visible. The lion, Jerome’s faithful companion after the hermit extracted a thorn from its paw, devours a deer in the distance.

PARALLELS

A surprising number of elements in this triptych correspond closely with details from other works by Bosch. The ruined building in which Job sits strongly resembles the setting in which Joseph is placed on the left interior wing of the Prado Adoration (cat. 9). Although the doorway with its Gothic consoles behind him and to the left is topped with a round rather than a pointed arch, the statue of the prophet on the right and the toad standing on its head that decorates the keystone are identical, while the statue on the left has been turned into a complete figure. The corner of the high wall on the right and the articulation of the wall are different, but the structure, including the slate awning, is very similar, and a tall buttress terminates the wall at the edge in both cases. The view in the distance is also very alike, with its green fields and woods, the fencing on the left and the gigantic round tower surrounded by low, thatched buildings in the Madrid triptych. Even the rider on the white horse in front of the buildings appears in both panels, as does the tall roadside cross a little further to the right. The same horseman is also painted in the background of the Rotterdam Saint Christopher (cat. 7). The opening into the vaulted cellar and the steps leading down to it, consisting of a stack of low column drums, is quoted almost verbatim from the Hermit Saints Triptych in Venice (cat. 2). The figure of Jerome and the throne-like structure before which the Church Father kneels in the right wing of the Job Triptych is likewise a reflection of the Jerome panel in Venice. The similarity extends to the details of the carved reliefs: the man who is about to mount a unicorn and even – very vague, but still recognizable – Judith outside the tent in which she has beheaded Holofernes. The crucifix is placed in the same position and a piece of tree trunk can once again be seen in the seat.

Whereas the artist continued to seek the right proportions and composition in both the underdrawing and painting of the Hermit Saints Triptych, the principal forms in the Job Triptych were planned from the outset and left in reserve in the underpainting. The vault
beneath which the hermit kneels and the skull-shaped outcrop of rock with plants and fruit above it are almost identical to the location in which Saint Jerome has withdrawn in prayer (cat. 1). In that case too, the tombstone directly above Jerome’s head refers to the passage in his vita describing the grave he dug for himself near to the cave to which he withdrew. A lion devours a deer in the distance, just as it does in the Paradise wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights (cat. 21) and, now reversed, in the background of the small panel with the Garden of Eden in Venice and the Paradise wing of the Vienna Last Judgement (cat. 18, 17). The horse’s skull played as a string instrument by the musician behind Job is also found in the Hell wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights and reversed in the Saint Giles panel in Venice (cat. 2c), and on the exterior of the left wing of the Haywain (cat. 20). Anthony himself, bent deeply over the altar in his cave, was borrowed from the central panel of the Saint Anthony Triptych in Lisbon (cat. 4). The saint, who is almost lying down, is shown in reverse, and the direction of his gaze and his hand gestures have been adjusted. The fat bird with a fish in its beak lower right also appears, slightly altered, in the right wing of the Bruges Last Judgement and the left wing of the Saint Anthony Triptych (cat. 16, 4).

The striking similarities with elements and even minute details from the securely attributed oeuvre of Hieronymus Bosch – such as the Adoration of the Magi and the Garden of Earthly Delights in Madrid; the Garden of Eden panel, the Wilgefortis Triptych and the Hermit Saints Triptych in Venice; Saint Jerome in Ghent; the Last Judgements in Vienna and Bruges; the Saint Anthony Triptych in Lisbon and Saint Christopher in Rotterdam – can only be explained if they were created in a workshop with access to drawn and painted ricordi. It is, after all, impossible that the maker or makers of the Job Triptych would have been able to quote from all these works or would have had such a visual repertoire available at any other location. This is not to say that the Job Triptych is merely a pastiche: this painting too shows evidence of a search for the right overall iconography and composition during the creative process. Based on the underdrawing, the main figures were left in reserve when the darker passages were being prepared in paint. The lighter elements were then painted, with the reserves largely, though not slavishly, followed. All manner of smaller details were added during a final stage.

**PENTIMENTI**

Most of the changes relative to the underdrawing and in the paint layers are found in the left wing. The bird-man in the foreground was a little larger in the underdrawing and turned to the left, while Anthony’s staff leaned against the altar, and was grabbed at the bottom by the little monster which we still see, but which initially lacked a beak. The two fantasy creatures both now stand with their beaks to the right, directing the viewer’s gaze towards the central panel. The most fundamental change is that the first version of this panel was largely painted over. Saint Anthony was initially located in a hut constructed from two tall tree-trunks on the left and right, almost against the edge of the panel. On the far right, another figure – both underdrawn and painted – peered around the corner of the hut at the praying saint. An almost naked woman, leaning forwards in a dark, arched opening in the wall in an attempt to seduce him, is visible in the infrared photograph, the infrared reflectogram and the X-radiograph. She holds a jar in her outstretched right hand, and a long scarf around her waist is draped over her right hand. The face of a second figure, accompanying the seductress, can be made out just behind her. All this was painted out in a brown-green colour and replaced with the little demon who offers the saint a cup and the siren with the naked, demonic child. These are more than compositional adjustments: they fundamentally alter the Temptation scene. The emphasis now is less on resisting earthly temptations through resolute faith but rather on the trust in God that is to be found in seclusion and isolation. The same simplification also placed the emphasis of this wing firmly on the hermit himself.

The composition of the Job Triptych as a whole has raised the question in the past as to whether the wings ought to be mounted the other way around, so that Jerome and Anthony
would be oriented directly towards one another in the closed triptych. In that case, it is argued, the triptych would have had a polychrome exterior. The imitation marble with the coats of arms we see there now would then have been added later following the removal of an original, figurative painting. The frames are, however, original and the hinges have not been moved or adjusted, from which it may be concluded that the present configuration corresponds with the original situation. It was a deliberate yet unusual choice, therefore, to place the two saints with their backs to the central panel. A number of compositional adjustments were nevertheless made to the horizon to balance out the overall triptych interior. Where the strange, inward-leaning tree-trunk in the upper left of the left wing is positioned, for instance, there was originally a mountain cut off by the outer edge of the panel. The sky was painted over the top of the ‘half’ mountain. The same occurred with the mountain top in the left of the right wing, which was added precisely on the right-hand side of that panel. This had the effect of opening up the right wing more towards the central panel, while closing it off visually on the outer side. The way the two hermits in the wings are turned away from the central panel emphasizes both their own isolation and that of the ‘Holy Man Job’. This isolation is also precisely what links the two saints with the Old Testament figure of Job. All three managed in their seclusion to persist in their faith in God, to defy the devil’s torments and to withstand their earthly trials.

CLOSED

The exteriors of the wings are painted with imitation marble and each contains the coats of arms of a married couple – a decorative Renaissance shield for the husband on the left, and a lozenge-shaped escutcheon for the woman on the right. Since their publication in the Corpus van de vijftiende-eeuwse schilderkunst in de Nederlanden in 1981, the arms have been identified as those of the married couple Vervoort/Van de Voorde-Maes (though this should actually be Van der Voirt-Smaechs) from Antwerp and De Haro-Pijnappel from Antwerp/’s-Hertogenbosch. The escutcheons were painted at the same time as the marbling, and there is nothing to suggest that the heraldic elements have been altered by the overpainting. The Renaissance style of the male arms and the type of marble painting suggest, however, that none of this occurred before the second quarter of the sixteenth century. Technical analysis of the wings has also shown that the backs were initially painted with a uniform layer of black and were only overpainted some time later. The arms on the left wing refer to Pieter van der Voirt (died 6 May 1477) and his wife Maria Smaechs (or Smachs), and those on the right wing to Diego de Haro (died c. 1520) and Johanna Pijnappel (died c. 1545). Pieter van der Voirt served not only as a steward of the City of Antwerp in the years 1472–75, but also as alderman. His son Jacob van der Voirt (died 1520) also became an alderman; Christina van Driel, the daughter of Jacob van Driel and Johanna Pijnappel from ’s-Hertogenbosch, became his second wife. Johanna, the daughter of the cloth-dyer Jan Mathijsz Pijnappel, was remarried some time before 1506 to the wealthy Diego de Haro, an Antwerp-based Spanish merchant who traded with Spain, Portugal and the East, while also investing in real estate. The De Haros were involved with the City of ’s-Hertogenbosch in a variety of ways, both financial and personal. Diego de Haro and Johanna Pijnappel lived in Antwerp, but also owned houses and other properties in ’s-Hertogenbosch, including a number inherited by Johanna. The De Haro family had risen to the administrative elite in Antwerp, to which the Van der Voirts also belonged, as did the Scheyfves and De Grammes, who commissioned the Adoration of the Magi Triptych, which Hieronymus Bosch painted around 1495 (cat. 9). Juan de Haro, one of Diego and Johanna Pijnappel’s sons, was appointed alderman in Antwerp on 29 November 1532, the first Spaniard to accede to the office. His alderman’s seal features the same coat of arms as Diego de Haro’s. It is noteworthy that the second and third quadrants of the quartered shield contain the three pinecones that form the distinctive arms of the Pijnappel family. The De Haro merchant family probably used the golden lion on a red shield as its emblem, which Diego de Haro combined after marrying Johanna Pijnappel with the three naturalistic pinecones on a silver ground.
The coats of arms of the Van der Voirt-Smaechs and De Haro-Pijnappel families on the exterior of the wings were undoubtedly added before the death of the latter couple. The commission must have been placed by Diego de Haro or – more likely – on the occasion of his death by his widow Johanna Pijnappel. Diego died around 1520 and Johanna not until after 1544. The decorative Renaissance form of the shield with the male arms appeared in the Southern Netherlands and certainly in Antwerp early in the sixteenth century, as seen for instance in the 1515 gravestone of Adriaan and Nicolaas Rockox in St James’s Church in that city. The addition of the coats of arms made the triptych a memorial for the two couples, who were linked with one another by the marriage of their son and (step)daughter. Pieter van der Voirt was buried in the Dominican church in Antwerp in 1477. Other family graves, possibly a shared crypt, were probably located there too. The Dominican church is likely, therefore, to have been the original destination of the Job Triptych as a memorial painting for the Van der Voirt-Smaechs and De Haro-Pijnappel families.
1 Janssens de Bisthoven, Baes-Dondeyne and De Vos 1981, 55.
2 De Gós was present in the Southern Netherlands in 1523–33 and again in 1538–45, where by his own account he acquired numerous works of art.
3 Engelenburg 1901, 196; Unverferth 1980, 19, 23, 116; Van Dijck 2001a, 93–94; Vanderbroeck 2002, 155, 323; Caetano 2014, 77; De Gós gave the panel to Cardinal Giovanni Ricci of Montepulciano, probably between 1544 and 1550. The two other paintings were a Crowning with Thorns (see also cat. 27) and a Temptation of Saint Anthony (cat. 4).
4 James H. Weale was the first to do so. See the historiographical overview in Janssens de Bisthoven 1957, 14–16, and De Vos 1979, 91–92.
6 For references to written and other sources, see the texts on the presentation of Saint Anthony in the left wing of the Hermit Saints Triptych in Venice (cat. 2) and the triptych with the Temptation of Saint Anthony in Lisbon (cat. 4).
7 Janssens de Bisthoven and Parmentier 1951, 7–8.
8 See note 13 below. No trace of any such overpainted or removed image has been found.
9 See Bk29, Technical Studies, cat. 23, 88 63–68.
10 Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique/Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, Brussels, MS 11 6606, 170–71.
11 Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique/Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, Brussels, MS 11 6606, 117.
12 Génard 1879, 144.
13 In 1502–03, ‘Jacop de Haro spaengiaert [Spaniard]’ paid membership dues and the ‘death fee’ (while still alive) as a member of the Brotherhood of Our Lady, Brabants Historisch Informatie Centrum. ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Archief Lieue Vrouwe Broederschap, Register 131, fol. 79, 82; Van Dijck 2001a, 64–65.
14 ‘Suster Anna de Haro opont udenborc’ (‘Sister Anna de Haro’) paid membership dues and the ‘death fee’ (while still alive) in 1543. Brabants Historisch Informatie Centrum, ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Archief Lieue Vrouwe Broederschap, Register 131, fol. 79, 82.
15 ‘Sasse van Ysselto 1510–14, 11, 209–10, 212–13, Dieo (Deguis) de Haro was mentioned on 30 August 1512 in connection with a tax payment, together with Johan Pijnappel, a relative of his wife, Brabants Historisch Informatie Centrum, ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Archief 244 Jezuïetencollege, inv. 64.
16 Peeter de Gramme and Peeter Schevfly both served as municipal stewards between 1495 and 1505, at one point at the same time. Peeter van der Vort had been a steward in the years 1472–75. Peeter Schevfly was an alderman in 1510/2, 1505/06, his son Jan Schevfly from 1516 to 1521, and a Jan Schevfly from a following generation in 1524–44. Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique/Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, Brussels, MS 11 6606, fol. 5, 6, 9, 81, 86, 87; Prims 1998, 187–88, 192–93, 202–03; Duquenne 2004, 3–6. Felix Archief, Antwerp, Matrizen en stempels, MSS 441, 447, 459, 516.
18 Bibliothèque Royale de Belgique/Koninklijke Bibliotheek van België, Brussels, MS 11 6606, fol. 6 no. 37 Felix Archief, Antwerp, Matrizen en stempels, MS 447 Joannes de Haro.
19 Alderman Engelbertus Ludic Pijnappel was already using the three pincenes in his coat of arms in the late fourteenth century. Brabants Historisch Informatie Centrum, ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Zegels toegang 221, inv. 74 (afdruk 07–6–1398).
20 It has been suggested incorrectly that Diego de Haro was related to the aristocratic De Haro family from Spain, who were related in turn to Diego and Felipe de Guervara. Van Dijck 2001a, 64–65.
21 The Pijnappel family also belonged to the urban elite in ‘s-Hertogenbosch, which commemorated its dead with memorial paintings, as evidenced by a witness statement by the prominent citizen Joest Pynappel Janssone in connection with iconoclastic damage to St John’s Church in 1566: ‘Dan is hy deponent omtrent zynen reken, ende huyt kynck, ende de heilich sytsten ende daer by. Cuypers van Velkhoven 1883, 433.
22 Wouters 2000–01, 188 no. 61.
23 Other relatively early examples of similar Renaissance coats of arms in present-day Belgium: Albain de Maeyence, 1512, Cathedral of Saint-Aubain, Namur; Jan de Berlaain, 1529, St-Antoine, Liège; Wouter Crabbé, 1531, St Bavo, Ghent; Sabina Barthanson, 1536, St Etienne, Reuland; Herman van Hynsdale, Marie van Quaerwerm, 1538, H. Kruis, Guevelingen-Sint-Truiden, Margriet, 1539, Sint-Jan, Poperinge; Margarita Borman, 1539, Sint-Domius, Oostkerke.
24 Génard 1873, 189, Génard 1879, 144.
Ecce Homo Triptych

Workshop of Hieronymus Bosch
c.1495–1500 (Ecce Homo), c. 1500 (wing interiors and predella), mid-1503 (wing exteriors)

Oil on oak panels, left wing 69.3 × 26 cm, central panel 73.4 × 58.4 cm, right wing 69.2 × 26 cm, predella 15.5 × 68.4 cm
Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. William K. Richardson Fund; William Francis Warden Fund; Juliana Cheney Edwards Collection, 56.171.1a–b, 53.2027, 56.171.2a–b

Condition
The three surviving engaged frames are original. The predella was similarly framed, but that frame has been lost. The frame of the central panel was cropped at the bottom and possibly an additional protruding frame element was once attached to its top. The two planks of the central panel were rejoined, perhaps together with the crack that runs the entire length of the panel. In the right wing another such crack and a shorter fracture were restored. In general, the adhesion of both paint and ground appears good. There are mainly small damages in the wings. Most of the extensive paint loss and abrasion in the central panel and abrasion in the predella has been restored. Red lakes have faded somewhat, resulting in several purplish areas to appear more blue, such as Christ’s mantle. Green lakes have discoloured slightly and especially lighter paints have increased in transparency, revealing the underlying layer. Discoloured varnish residues and uneven retouching distract somewhat from the otherwise good visibility of the original paint surfaces.

Provenance

Literature
BRCP, Technical Studies, cat. 24, RR 77–84; //Boschproject.org no. 24.

Analysis
The triptych of the Van Os and Van Langel families was painted in Hieronymus Bosch’s workshop. It is closely related in several respects with works by Bosch himself and by his workshop, where a variety of painters collaborated. The likely genesis of the triptych can be reconstructed in detail based on the people depicted in it and their coats of arms. The slightly older Ecce Homo painting was used around 1500 as the central panel of a triptych with wings and a predella. Donor portraits of Peter van Os and Henrickseen van Langel, accompanied by their patron saints, were painted in the open wings; Franco van Langel was added to the closed wings some years later, together with his wife and eleven children.

ORIGIN
On 3 July 1481, ’Jheronimus known as Joen, the son of the late Antonius van Aken, painter’ appeared before the municipal secretary Franck or Franco van Langel in connection with a financial matter. Almost twenty years later, a triptych was painted in Hieronymus Bosch’s workshop, with Franco van Langel, his wife and their eleven children on the wing exteriors, and his son-in-law and daughter on the interior. The genesis of the triptych, on which no fewer than four different painters appear to have worked, is extremely complex. The central panel must have been completed first, possibly as an autonomous painting, without wings. The main subject of the triptych is the Ecce Homo scene in the central panel – Pontius Pilate’s showing of the tortured Christ to the people just before sentencing him to death by crucifixion (John 19:5). Both the structure of the panel and many of its details display strong similarities with the Ecce Homo that Bosch painted in the 1480s, now in the Städel Museum in Frankfurt (cat. 11). Christ is shown bent over slightly and viewed from the side in that work, whereas in this triptych he is depicted statically, frontally, and with much less blood. His cross-shaped nimbus, made up of golden rays, was borrowed too, although it was later removed almost entirely in the central panel in Boston; only the vertical rays were partially retained – turned into dirt dripping from the bird’s nest high in the wall. An owl looks down on the distressing scene below from a window high on the right of
24.1 VIS [CAT 248]
the courthouse building. What will follow is shown to the right on the square in the background, where we see Christ carrying his cross towards Golgotha. The way the episode is rendered here is similar to the corresponding scene – also painted extremely small – on the back of the Saint John on Patmos panel in Berlin (cat. 6). There too we see Simon of Cyrene helping Christ to carry the cross and the legionary with the lituus – the curved war-trumpet – leading the closely packed band of soldiers. Simon is dressed in white, just as he is in the large-scale Christ Carrying the Cross in the Escorial (cat. 13). We notice that the cross has once again been drawn fairly crookedly, heightening the sense of movement in the scene and giving the struggling Christ a little more space beneath the macabre burden he must haul to his place of execution.

The distant view of the city upper right and the group of onlookers in the right foreground are virtually identical to the Ecce Homo in Frankfurt, with some variations in the weapons and in the colours and decoration of the clothing. The brocade decoration of the robe worn by the man in the middle of the foreground, with the fleur de lis and the bird pecking at a berry, matches precisely in the two Ecce Homo panels (Boston and Frankfurt) and in their exact replicas – one of unknown origin, the other from the Mariënwater monastery (Koudewater) in ’s-Hertogenbosch. The bridge painted in the Frankfurt panel was included in the underdrawing of the city shown upper right in the Boston Ecce Homo, but was left out during the painting process, which implies that the Boston work was produced later than the one in Frankfurt. Several stylistic details and the dendrochronological dating also point in that direction. The differing position of Christ and Pilate (not to the left of the group, but further back in the picture) has the curious effect that the onlookers in the right foreground do not appear to be responding to the Ecce Homo scene itself but to a non-existent occurrence in the left foreground.

DONORS

The donors of the triptych are shown in the open wings: Peter van Os (died 1542) on the left, and Henrickxen van Langel (died 1500) on the right. Van Os – municipal secretary of ’s-Hertogenbosch and the son-in-law of Franco van Langel – wears a blue chaperon (a hood with flaps) over his fur-trimmed tabard, to which is pinned the silver insignia of the Brotherhood of Our Lady. His patron saint, Peter, presents him to Christ. Peter van Os’s wife, Henrickxen van Langel, kneels in the right wing, holding an open prayerbook; a rosary hangs from her belt. A swaddled infant lies in front of her on the hem of her gown and half concealed beneath her cloak. The child, who died shortly after birth, was painted on top of the woman’s figure, which had already been completed, but nevertheless forms part of the original painting. Saint Catherine stands behind Henrickxen. Like the Apostle Peter in the left wing, she is disproportionately large. A striking symbolic reference to Catherine’s martyrdom can be seen at her feet: the two wheels mounted on stands, with which she was tortured, were destroyed in the nick of time by an angel of God; she was then beheaded with the sword. The form of the counter-rotating wheels to which blades are fitted – as described in detail in the Passio[n] – are strikingly similar to the insignia of the Brotherhood of Saint Catherine in ’s-Hertogenbosch, of which Henrickxen was most likely a member.

The coats of arms of the donors, who kneel in prayer, were painted over the completed painting but are nonetheless original. Peter van Os, who was not a nobleman, chose a set of arms with three horizontal tripartite bars in the lower half, beneath an bull’s head and an eight-pointed star. Henrickxen van Langel’s arms are divided vertically, with a lion passant on the heraldic right for the Van Langel family and three rosettes and a six-pointed star on the heraldic left for her mother’s family, the Van der Rullens. The animals in the coats of arms – like the donors and their patron saints – are directed towards Christ in the centre, drawing the heraldic figures too into the religious hierarchy. The bull’s head (ossenkop) in Peter van Os’s arms refers to his birthplace, Oss, and to his toponymic surname; the lower half with the three horizontal tripartite bars was a popular heraldic figure in the Campine (Kempen) region. The Van Langel arms feature a lion, which is also found in the
Unusually, a second donor family is depicted on the exterior of the wings, and thus visible when the triptych was closed. This is the only example we know of among Netherlandish memorial triptychs and can be explained by the phased execution of the overall work. G.C.M. van Dijck identified the family as Franco van Langel (died 1497) and his wife Heylwich van der Rullen (died 1493–94) with their five sons and six daughters.

Franco van Langel is shown kneeling, reading a prayerbook. He is dressed in a long, fur-trimmed tabard and wears a green chaperon on his head, decorated with the insignia of the Brotherhood of Our Lady. The Apostle and Evangelist John stands behind him as his patron saint. The third son can be identified as a Cistercian monk. This is Franco’s son Jan van Langel (died 1539), who became cellarer at the priory of Mariëndonk (1510–15) in Elshout and later the abbot of Mariënkroon (1517–36) in Heusden. The two other sons, wearing brimless hats with black chaperons over their shoulders, must be Franck Junior (died 1515) and Wouter. The underdrawing reveals that the rearmost of the two originally held an open prayerbook. Nothing is known regarding the two considerably younger sons placed a little further in the background; they are likely to have died at a young age, but after the memorial triptych was painted.

The figure of Saint John the Evangelist blessing the poisoned chalice seems to have been based on the same model as the much smaller Christ making the sign of benediction in one of the tondi of the Flood Panels in Rotterdam (cat. 22). Saint John is included here as the patron saint of the principal church in ‘s-Hertogenbosch – the depicted families’ parish

alderman’s seal of Franck van Langel Junior, who used it during his term as alderman of ‘s-Hertogenbosch to seal documents with a ‘lion rampant contourné’ (i.e. turned to face the heraldic right or ‘sinister’).

The figure of Saint John the Evangelist blessing the poisoned chalice seems to have been based on the same model as the much smaller Christ making the sign of benediction in one of the tondi of the Flood Panels in Rotterdam (cat. 22). Saint John is included here as the patron saint of the principal church in ‘s-Hertogenbosch – the depicted families’ parish
chapel – and was also held in high esteem by the Brotherhood of Our Lady (see cat. 6). He
is placed, moreover, next to the more prominently positioned son, the Cistercian Jan van
Langel, no doubt as the latter’s name saint.

Heylwich van der Rullen is shown kneeling in prayer like her husband, a rosary clasped
between her hands. Lysbeth, the daughter shown immediately behind her, is dressed as
a regular canoness: she entered Bethany Priory on Windmolenberg in ’s-Hertogenbosch,
where she is recorded as early as 1481. ‘Elisabeth Franconis’ is subsequently listed as pri-
oress there in the years 1493 and 1494; she died in 1539. The second daughter, dressed as a
married woman, is Henrickxen, who married Peter van Os; she is shown wearing the same
costume on the open wing. Nothing is known regarding the four other daughters. Mary
Magdalene stands behind Heylwich van der Rullen as her patron saint. She is likely to have
been chosen because she was the most important patroness of Bethany Priory, which was
dedicated to Mary Magdalene, Lazarus and Martha.

Together the known details of the various donor figures provide the basis for dating the
triptych, which was produced in two further phases after the slightly older Ecce Homo panel
was painted. Peter van Os married Henrickxen van Langel in 1498–99. She died around
1 January 1500. Henrickxen and her first and only baby might not have survived childbirth,
or both might have died shortly afterwards. Franco van Langel had already died in 1497 and
his wife Heylwich in 1493–94. Peter van Os remarried after 20 August 1503. This means the
triptych certainly dates from before 1503, although it would be more likely to have been
painted in 1500. It must have been intended, after all, as a memorial triptych and will have
been installed by the tomb of Henrickxen van Os-van Langel, no doubt near to that of her
father Franco van Langel, where her husband Peter van Os would also later be interred,
along with the second wife he married in 1503. Annual masses continued to be celebrated
for Peter van Os at the Dominican church until well into the sixteenth century, so it is here
that the graves will have been located.

The making of this unusual memorial triptych, in which both couples are commemo-
rated to a more or less equal degree, will chiefly have been prompted by the death of Hen-
rickxen van Os-van Langel, since it is Peter van Os and Henrickxen who are presented as the
donor couple on the open wings. There must have been an important reason, however, for
placing the previously deceased parents-in-law, Franco van Langel and Heylwich van der Rullen, together with all their children, on the exterior of the wings. Peter van Os worked as a clerk for Franco van Langel from 1483; he became deputy secretary in July 1497, the year of Franco’s death, and succeeded him as municipal secretary in 1498. Van Langel belonged to the town’s social elite and had been a sworn member of the Brotherhood of Our Lady since around 1466; Van Os became a sworn brother in 1496/97. Surprisingly, Peter van Os was only granted official citizenship of ’s-Hertogenbosch in 1499. This was no doubt a require-

ment if he was also to succeed Franco van Langel as a notary public – a position Franco had occupied since 1461. Van Langel’s protocols were formally presented to Peter van Os on 11 July 1500, enabling Peter to follow in his father-in-law’s footsteps in this regard too. Peter’s marriage to Franco’s daughter Henrickxen and her death at a young age meant he was bound to his mentor and predecessor almost literally to the grave. Their equal status is expressed most explicitly in their respective positions in the Brotherhood of Our Lady, and it is precisely this aspect which the triptych emphasizes so firmly.

This context too suggests the year 1500 as the year of origin of the painting. As sworn brothers, Peter van Os and Franco van Langel both wear the silver insignia of the brotherhood on their coloured chaperons. The badge comprises a lily with a banderole containing the word *sicut* – a reference to the brotherhood’s motto ‘sicut lilium inter spinas’ (‘like a lily among thorns’), taken from the Song of Solomon. The colour of the chaperon that the sworn brothers were obliged to wear at their meetings and ceremonies varied from
year to year, but details are sadly lacking for the late fifteenth century. We know from the account books that the colour was determined from 1526/27 onwards by a four-yearly cycle of red-purple-blue-green, and this is likely to have been the case in previous years too. The colour was formally adopted each year on the Wednesday before Laetare or Mid-Lent Sunday. The new colour then probably had to be worn from the Easter celebrations onwards. Peter van Os is wearing blue in the triptych and Franco van Langel green. It seems most likely, therefore, that the colour of the chaperon was blue in the year in which Peter van Os commissioned the triptych and green in the year of Franco van Langel's death, 1497. If we assume that the later, regular cycle was already in place at the time of the commission, the blue chaperon would have been worn in the year 1500/01.

The fact that the brotherhood played a key part in the triptych is also apparent from the recurring figurative motif of the painted green damask or brocade in the background of the closed triptych, which is also found conspicuously in the corpulent figures in the left foreground of the Ecce Homo scene: a swan set in elaborate scrollwork. The swan can only refer to the ‘Swan Brethren’ as the Brotherhood of Our Lady was also known because of its annual swan banquet and the select little group of noble ‘swan brothers’ – affiliates who were entitled and could afford to supply the swans to be served up to the guests. There is no evidence whatsoever that the fabric as painted ever existed in reality; it must have been conceived in the artist’s workshop as a specific reference to the prestigious fraternity. The fact that the same motif is found in both the closed wings and in the central panel is irrefutable proof of the original connection between the central panel and the wings – something that has been doubted in the past. Given the brotherhood’s central role in the nature of the commission and in these painted motifs, it is surprising that Bosch himself appears to have had little if any hand in the triptych’s execution.

Two small but noteworthy alterations were made during the painting of the exterior of the wings: Jan van Langel’s head was significantly increased in size and Lysbeth’s eyelids were lowered, making her seem more pious than originally planned. The adjustments seem to have been instigated by Jan and Lysbeth themselves, which might indicate their direct involvement with the commission for the painting of the outside of the wings. The occasion for this is thus likely to have been Jan’s profession as a monk at the Cistercian monastery of Mariëndonk in Heusden on 24 June 1503. He was probably twenty-one when he took his vows and withdrew into monastic life, at which point he will have definitively renounced his worldly possessions. It would have been the perfect moment to add the portraits of his late parents and all their children to the as yet unpainted exterior of the memorial painting.

There are several striking similarities between the Boston triptych and the Adoration of the Magi in the Prado (cat. 9). As many authors have pointed out already, the Apostle Peter on the interior of the left wing corresponds almost exactly – in size too – with the figure of Peter in the corresponding position in the Prado triptych, in which he is likewise included as the donor’s patron saint. In addition, the tongue of land with the walled city in the background to the right of Saint Peter is almost identical to the somewhat more finely executed island and the profile of the city in the distance at the top of the inside right wing of the Adoration of the Magi Triptych. The image on the exterior of both triptychs forms a continuous whole, so that when the wings are closed, the viewer sees a scene that runs uninterruptedly across the frame elements in the middle. The Adoration of the Magi also has portraits on both the insides and outsides of the wings; in the semi-grisaille on the closed Prado triptych, however, only the memorial portraits are rendered realistically, in colour.

**DATING**

Dendrochronological analysis of the Boston triptych’s Ecce Homo panel produced a date of 1478 for the most recent heartwood ring. This means the painting could have been painted from 1489 onwards, although a date after 1491 is more likely. The predella, the qual-
ity of which is considerably inferior to that of the triptych, was probably painted immediately after the completion of the rest of the ensemble. The construction with a predella that remained visible when the triptych was closed, resulted in the current unusual situation that the height of the wings is less than that of the central panel.26

If we combine the varied evidence for the dating of this triptych, we arrive at a commission and execution in 1500, at which point the central panel probably existed already, whereas the exterior wings were not painted until over three years later. The work shows close similarities both in its conception and in a number of details with the Adoration of the Magi Triptych in the Prado, which was painted at an earlier date (around 1495) for Peeter Scheyfve from Antwerp (cat. 9), while the central panel is based on the even earlier Frankfurt Ecce Homo (c.1475–85). The original destination of the triptych – painted as a memorial for the patron, Peter van Os, his wife and only child, and for Franco van Langel, his
wife and their eleven children – will have been the Dominican church in ’s-Hertogenbosch. The Apostle Peter is included as the patron’s name saint. The Apostle and Evangelist John, meanwhile, was the patron saint of Franco’s son, the Cistercian monk Jan. The two female saints were chosen with reference to the particular devotion of the Van Os and Van Langel families (which also applies, incidentally, to the Apostles Peter and John, giving them a dual role here). Mary Magdalene was the most important of the patron saints of Bethany Priory, which was entered by one of Van Langel’s daughters. Saint Catherine was the patroness of the Brotherhood of Saint Catherine in ’s-Hertogenbosch, with which Heylwich van Langel will have been associated. John the Evangelist was the patron saint of the principal church in ’s-Hertogenbosch, and can therefore be viewed in this light as the protector of the city as a whole; he was likewise held in high esteem by the Brotherhood of Our Lady. Peter, lastly, was also the saint to whom the Dominican church was dedicated.

2 See also Bic, Technical Studies, cat. 24, fig. 77–84.

3 There is a virtually identical copy of the central panel dating from the later sixteenth century in a French private collection (ask panel, 84 x 61.5 cm). Photograph and letter dated 12 February 1993, David Guiraud; Paris, Boston, MFA, Curatorial Files inv. 33, 2027, Examination, 12, 19, 11, and 11, photography on 12 January 2015 in Paris by David Lainé (restorer, 1942C, Leuven) and Jos Koldeweij.

4 Fischer 2013, 44, 26.

5 Esther van Dijck has noted that it is precisely these patterns that often differ in later copies made in other workshops. Van Dijck 2013, 121–25. For more information about the Marienwater copy, see the entry for the Frankfurt Ecce Homo, cat. 11. See note 4 above regarding the Paris copy.

6 Van den Bichelaer 1998, Appendix 170, 292; Van Dijck 2012, p. 52. Koreny (2012, 54, 141 n. 80) wrongly states that the donor couple was added later; they were both prepared in the underdrawing and form an integral part of the paint layer.

7 Passionel Winterstui 1982, fol. 47v.

8 Janssen 2002, 112–13; Le Blanc 2002, 36–37; Nijhof and Janssen 2000, 274–75. The fraternity was associated with an altar in St John’s Church. Located in the first ambulatory chapel on the south side, it was dedicated to Saint Catherine in 1418; the same insignia were later used by a guild of rhetoricians devoted to the saint; Peeters 1985, 28, 373. The same symbol is found on the tomb of a beguine near this chapel, with a sword running through the wheels, the woman interred there will also have belonged to the fraternity. Van Oudheusden and Tummers 2010, 111, 284–85. Saint Catherine is also shown with these wheels as an attribute in the vault paintings in St Martin’s Church in Zaltbommel, which are related to the painting in St John’s in ‘s-Hertogenbosch.

9 The Van der Rullen arms comprised three rosettes, which might explain the decoration of the ‘Rose Room’ in the home of Wouter van der Rullen (pharmacist and churchwarden of St John’s, and brother of Heylwich van der Rullen), on the corner of Ridderstraat and the Markt. Franco van Langel had his will drawn up there on 6 May 1475 in his capacity as notary. The house was very close, therefore, to ‘In St. Thoenis’ – now ‘De Kleine Winst’ – the Van der Rullen (pharmacist and churchwarden of St John the Evangelist with members of the donor family around a five-pointed star. Het Noordbrabants Museum, ‘s-Hertogenbosch, silver alderman’s seal of Peter van Os Jr., 1504, inv. 01049.

10 No other example has been found among the hundred or so memorial paintings catalogued by the MeMO project, Department of Art History, Utrecht University: Medieval Memoir Online, accessed February 2017: http://memo. hum.uu.nl/database/index.html.


12 Saint John is also very similar to the huge, reversed figure of the apostle in the badly damaged doors of the ‘Oralogium’ that was installed in St John’s Church in ‘s-Hertogenbosch in 1513; the wings, painted on canvas, were most likely made in the same town, and possibly also in Bosch’s workshop. Right wing Oralogium, tempera on canvas, 247.5 x 84 cm, ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Saint John’s Cathedral. Le Blanc 1990, 414.

13 Koreny (2012, 54) wrongly describes this as ‘Nonnentracht’ (a nun’s clothing).


16 Koldeweij 1990c.

17 Hezemans 1877, 56, 120; Van Dijck 1973, 118–19; Schutteelaers 1988, 383.

18 Roelvink 2002, 84.


20 The Ecce Homo panel was sold separately to the museum in Boston by the art dealer Arthur Kauffmann, London, in 1953; Kauffmann donated the wings and predella in 1956 at the suggestion of Hanns Swarzenski; MFA, Boston, Curatorial Files inv. 33, 2027, Eisler 1961, 37–43.

21 Johannes Francozn van Langel was the cellarer at Mariendonk monastery from 5 December 1510 to 11 November 1515, and prior of Marienkroon from 20 November 1515 to 11 October 1536. He died at the priory on 11 November 1540. Only one brother who can be identified as Jan van Langel was professed during the long priorate of Johannes van den Bosch (1474-1503): Johannes, clericus; [1503 juni 24 (ips. die Nativitate Baptiste). ‘Ann. etatis sue xxviii.’; ‘s-Hertogenbosch, 181c, inv. 239 Kloosters Marienkroon en Mariendonk in Heusden, 1455-1631, inventaris, bijlage 101 Lijst van abten en prioreen van Marienkroon, bijlage 104 Lijst van celliers van Marienkroon, bijlage 106.2 Aamnlst der geproofsten van Mariendonk (inv. 61) nr. 23.

22 The date on which Lysbeth entered Bethany Priory is not known.

23 Peter Klein, report Kl/Sz, 12 November 1991, Hamburg University, Department of Wood Biology. The most recent heartwood ring of the predella was formed in 1474 (ibid.). The two wings were not examined.

24 A similarly constructed work is the memorial triptych of Thomas Snoel (c. 1515), which originated in St Peter’s Hospital in Amersfoort: Amersfoort, Museum Flehite, on loan from the ‘Amen de Poel’ foundation. Van Buren 1989, 91, 213 no. 1.
The Adoration of the Magi

Workshop of Hieronymus Bosch
C. 1495–1520

Oil on oak panel, 77.5 x 55.9 cm
Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, 1917, 1321

BRCP examination and documentation data:
Philadelphia, 18–19 April 2012; BRCP, Technical Studies, cat. 25, RR 57–58; //Boschproject.org no. 25.

Condition
The bottom edge of the panel was cropped slightly and its reverse thinned and cradled. There is some wood loss at the upper right panel edge and an old crack extends down from here. The adhesion of both paint and ground appears to be relatively good. The extensive craquelure has opened up further as a result of past harsh cleaning and multiple areas are highly abraded (e.g. in Joseph, the kneeling king, the sky and gold leaf detailing). There are many losses of differing sizes, mainly along the join and at the bottom left, as well as several scratches. Conservation issues were addressed in the 2014–15 full treatment of the painting.

Provenance
Edward Law, 1st Earl of Ellenborough (1790–1871); sold from his estate on 3 April 1914 in London, Christie’s, no. 97, purchased by St. Hensé; 1914–15 Julius Böhler art dealers, Munich; sold in 1915 to John G. Johnson, Philadelphia; bequeathed by him to the City of Philadelphia in 1917; since then in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Literature

Analysis
We know from dendrochronological analysis that the Adoration of the Magi could have been painted in 1493 at the earliest, and more likely from 1495. This eliminates the hypothesis that it was an early painting by Bosch. The composition draws on models from the first half of the fifteenth century. Elements can also be identified from a number of works by Hieronymus Bosch, including the Wayfarer Triptych (cat. 19), the New York Adoration (cat. 10), the Garden of Earthly Delights (cat. 21) and the Adoration in the Prado (cat. 9). Given the large number of connections, the painting is likely to have been produced in Hieronymus Bosch’s workshop.

TRADITIONAL

A dilapidated stable is shown against a background with an expansive landscape containing a view of a city. An ox and an ass stand to the right of the building, which no longer has any walls on the viewer’s side, while two shepherds converse with one another on the left. The thatched roof of the half-open structure rests on the remains of a tall brick upright, which runs virtually all the way up the left edge of the scene. The stretch of wall on which the roof over the stable section on the right is supported seems to be the same height, which is not possible given the depicted interior spaces. Together, these elements create a very odd perspective. The Holy Family is shown inside this impossible building. Mary sits with the infant Christ on her lap in front of a large table, with Joseph – presented as an old man – on the other side. He looks on respectfully (and somewhat surprised) at the sumptuously attired Three Kings on the right. The oldest of the three is the first to kneel at Mary’s feet. Dressed in a green robe, he offers the Christ Child a piece of precious metalwork resembling a gold ciborium. The three elements at the top, supported by tiny figures, are filled with shiny grains of frankincense or myrrh. The foreshortening is unusual here too. The second king seems to be looking at the beholders of the painting. He is dressed in red and holds a gift reminiscent of a reliquary, featuring a rock-crystal cylinder with gold fittings. The black king, the youngest, also holds a gold, ciborium-like object decorated with unidentified figures and containing myrrh or frankincense beneath the tower-shaped lid. In keeping with tradition, the third king is dressed the most exotically, in gold-trimmed white robes, with a turban of light-blue and white fabric and pink shoes. The extremely wide hanging sleeve of his costume is embroidered with the shower of manna, which flutters down from a cloud and is caught and gathered by the starving Israelites in the wilderness (Exodus 16). The scene was not underdrawn and is now hard to read as the paint has partially discoloured, and both the paint itself and the gold details are badly worn. The star that showed the Magi the way to Bethlehem originally shone above the stable; the gold leaf has almost entirely worn off here, however, as it has in the gifts. Other highly abraded
25.1–2 The second king: 188 and VIS

25.3–4 Sleeve of the black king: detail from Combe 1946 (pl. 4) and VIS (2012, before restoration)
and heavily retouched elements include the sky, the figure of Joseph and the kneeling king. This earlier retouching was partially removed during the 2014–15 restoration. The composition of the Three Kings and the Virgin and Child is in keeping with a tradition in scenes of this kind dating back to the 1420s. This design seems to have been in circulation especially as a model for book illuminators. Two similar miniatures were painted by the Master of Catherine of Cleves, who was active in Utrecht between around 1430 and 1450. There are clear similarities in terms of structure and colour scheme, but also of details, such as the Christ Child’s outstretched arms and the purse of the kneeling king.

**Comparisons**

The distant landscape with the high, slightly curved horizon and the silhouette of the city on the right, the layered structure with stands of trees and the peacefully grazing flock in the middleground are in keeping with what we find in the Bosch core group, but its condition makes the painting hard to read. The basic form of the stable with the thatched roof strongly resembles the tavern in the Wayfarer panel in Rotterdam, and the form of the ox is identical to the animal in that picture. The cattle differ from one another, however, in their technical execution. The Virgin Mary leans forward slightly. Her head, with its loose hair, lowered eyes, narrow mouth and sharp nose resembles that of the female figures in the central panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, and the Virgins beneath the cross in Brussels and the *Adoration* in New York. The head of the black king, shown in profile, also appears almost identically in the central panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*. With his striking and very stylish white costume, he is closely related to the equivalent figure in the Prado *Adoration*. This is also the case in several copies and imitations of that triptych, in which this king wears a piece of embroidery over his sleeve with a scene showing the Dance around the Golden Calf (Exodus 32). The design, as noted, shows the Shower of Manna (Exodus 16). Both motifs were chosen as Old Testament prefigurations of the life of Christ. It was during the Dance around the Golden Calf that Moses received the Tablets of the Law. The Gathering of the Manna was interpreted as a direct allusion to the Salvation: the shower of food from the sky saved the Israelites as they journeyed from Egypt to the Promised Land, while the coming of Christ saved humanity from original sin. The Gathering of the Manna was
also seen as a prefiguration of the Eucharist, which obviously alludes to Christ’s redemption of humankind.

The figures were underdrawn in detail with hatching and outlines executed in several different stages and using different brushes and underdrawing materials. The phased underdrawing is readily comparable with the preparatory drawings found in other paintings. It was followed strikingly closely however in the painted layers, which is not usual for works belonging to the Bosch core group. The layered structure is partially similar, but the consistency of the paint is coarser locally. The abundant use of oil gilding is striking, with the colour of the mordant varying from yellowish to reddish-brown.

The illogical spatial effect – that of the architecture in particular – stands out here. The impression of depth and the perspective treatment recall the structure of the central panel of the Job Triptych in Bruges (cat. 23). Here too, sections of wall are used as repoussoir, and a theatrical effect is created by the tall section of wall in the immediate foreground running up alongside the principal action. The grouping of the Three Wise Men seems to be based on that in the New York Adoration, unless both derive from the same composition sketch. The oldest king kneels in the foreground and has placed his crown on the ground respectfully. The black king stands behind him and is shown in profile, while the king next to him is presented face on; he is the only figure who looks out of the painting and makes eye contact with the beholder.

Since the panel was auctioned in 1914, it has been viewed by virtually all authors as an early work, if not Bosch’s earliest. This changed with Peter Klein’s dendrochronological dating in 1987. The most recent growth ring dates from 1482, suggesting that the panel cannot have been painted before 1493, and more likely from 1495. Insofar as the painting has still been viewed as autograph since Klein’s findings, it has been seen as a late work. Others have argued that it must be an archaising painting from Bosch’s workshop, while some reject the work completely. Based on the considerations and comparisons set out above, we place the painting in Bosch’s workshop in the period 1495–1520.

25.9–10

25.7–8 Adoration (Philadelphia) [CAT 25] and Wayfarer [CAT 19A]
1 Tolnay 1937, pl. 11, and Combe 1946, 75, pl. 4 include a detailed photograph (enhanced?) in which the scene is clearly legible.

2 The early Netherlandish paintings in the Johnson Collection, including the celebrated Crucifixion panels by Rogier van der Weyden, suffered badly from intrusive restoration by David Rosen. The Van der Weyden panels, like the Adoration of the Magi, were restored by Rosen in 1941; see Tucker 1997.


4 See also BCRP, Technical Studies, cat. 25, RR 57–58.

5 See BCRP, Technical Studies, cat. 25, RR 57–58.

6 The early Netherlandish paintings in the Johnson Collection, including the celebrated Crucifixion panels by Rogier van der Weyden, suffered badly from intrusive restoration by David Rosen. The Van der Weyden panels, like the Adoration of the Magi, were restored by Rosen in 1941; see Tucker 1997.

7 In the recent literature: Vermet 2001, 98 (1493, probably from 1499 onwards); Koldeweij, Vandenbroeck and Vermet 2001, 38 (1518 or later); Silver 2006, 152–53, 155, 300 (after 1493/1499); Elsig 2004, 29–31, 41–42, 225 (Van Aken workshop, c. 1500, Hieronymus?); De Vrij 2012, 203–04, 246, 506–07 (after 1490, Bosch workshop).

Fragments of an Adoration of the Magi Triptych

A. Two Shepherds  
B. Retinue of the Magi  
C. Adoration of the Magi

Follower of Hieronymus Bosch  
c.-1515–35

The two fragments of the wings of a triptych in Philadelphia were attributed to Hieronymus Bosch in the early twentieth century. It was subsequently suggested that an Adoration of the Magi, which reappeared not long ago, was the ensemble’s central panel. The fragments were recently published again as the work of Hieronymus Bosch. The two fragments and the Adoration could have belonged together. These pieces, like a triptych owned by the National Trust in the United Kingdom and a version in Anderlecht, were painted by followers of Hieronymus Bosch. One of them might have been Gillis Panhedel, also called Giels vanden Bossche, from Brussels, who also painted a pair of extra panels in 1521–23 for the altarpiece of the Brotherhood of Our Lady in ’s-Hertogenbosch, to which Hieronymus Bosch had previously added wings.

26a–b Two Shepherds; Retinue of the Magi

Oil on oak panel, 26a: 36.5 x 22.8 cm; 26b: 36.5 x 21.8 cm  
Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, 1275 and 1276

BRCF examination and documentation data:  

Condition

The Two Shepherds and the Retinue of the Magi panels are fragments of larger compositions, presumably the wings of a triptych. The panels were thinned to a thickness of about 1–2 and about 3 mm, respectively, and have subsequently been glued into an oak tray and laminated with plywood. In the bottom left of the Retinue of the Magi an old fracture extends about 11.8 cm from the panel edge. The X-radiograph shows a crack over the entire length of the auxiliary support, which is not present in the original panel. The paint and ground are adhered well. Losses are restored and the paint is somewhat abraded overall. Despite the uneven varnish the surfaces are reasonably legible.

Provenance

Purchased in 1915 by John G. Johnson from Julius Böhl er art dealers, Munich; bequeathed in 1917 to the City of Philadelphia; since then in the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Literature


26c Adoration of the Magi

Oil on oak panel, 70.8 x 55.6 cm  
Private collection, Paris

BRCF examination and documentation data:  
’s-Hertogenbosch, 23 October 2013; BRCF, Technical Studies, cat. 26c, RR 109–110; //Boschproject.org no. 26c.

Condition

The painting has retained its dimensions. Probably original tool marks are visible on the panel reverse, which was at some point coated with a white ground and subsequently painted black. Micro-organisms damaged the wood and a vertical reinforcing bar was partly inserted into the panel reverse, covering the entire join. At the join, just above the opening in the roof, a possible dowel caused a slim, rectangular crack. Cracks were also noted on the left side of the painting at both top and bottom. Adhesion of ground and paint is good. The surface is abraded and in poor condition, for instance at the barely visible ox and ass (?) in the architectural space behind the fire. There are numerous discoloured retouchings and a yellowed, damaged varnish.

Provenance


Literature


Attribution and Reconstruction

The connoisseur and art historian Max J. Friedländer gave a lecture in Berlin in autumn 1914, in which he referred to ‘two small altarpiece wings’ by Hieronymus Bosch, ‘at a Munich art dealer, with princely horsemen on one side and shepherds on the other, which belong to a so far unidentified Adoration’. The American lawyer and collector John G. Johnson (1841–1917) purchased the two little panels in 1915, having consulted the authoritative art historian Bernard Berenson regarding the ‘extremely fine examples of Hieronymus Bosch he wished to acquire from the art dealer Böhl er in Munich’. Johnson bequeathed his art collection, together with these panels and several other works attributed to Bosch at that time, to the City of Philadelphia in 1917.

Some fifteen years after attributing the two fragments to Bosch, Friedländer saw an Adoration of the Magi on the art market that he...
recognized as the central panel of a dismantled triptych, of which the Two Shepherds and the Retinue of the Magi in Philadelphia were fragments. He subsequently confirmed in a note ‘with certainty that the wings of the Johnson Collection, which I have not seen for many years, are by JEROME BOSCH’. Friedländer also included them in the fifth volume of Die alt-niederländische Malerei, in which he describes them as ‘probably original’. The three panels were exhibited together in 1939 with a reconstruction of the triptych that was attributed on Friedländer’s authority and without any qualification to Hieronymus Bosch. Shortly afterwards, the central panel disappeared into private ownership and has barely been mentioned in the Bosch literature since. It was recently rediscovered in a private collection in Paris, and the BRCP has been able to examine it. The two fragments in Philadelphia, by contrast, have been regularly published, and variously considered as imitations, works from the circle of, or autograph works by Bosch. They were recently published as autograph by Larry Silver, as Bosch’s workshop after 1516 or a copy by Marc Rudolf de Vrij, and as the product of the workshop or a former workshop assistant by Stefan Fischer.

Ludwig von Baldass considered them to be early works by Bosch, while Charles de Tolnay felt they were probably copies. The starting point for the 1939 reconstruction was a much later (after 1550) triptych with the Adoration of the Magi, then in a Spanish collection and now owned by the Noordbrabants Museum in ’s-Hertogenbosch. The fragments in Philadelphia undoubtedly come from wings like those of that triptych. The central panel shows numerous similarities to the rediscovered panel in Paris, and to a panel cropped on all four sides in the Wallraf-Richartz Museum in Cologne. The central panel of the triptych in ’s-Hertogenbosch shows the Adoration of the Magi in a dilapidated Renaissance-style building. The landscape view in the background is continued in the two wings. The right wing shows the retinue of the Magi: a group of horsemen with three pennants, referring to the Three Wise Men. The building continues into the left wing, where we find the ox and the ass and several shepherds. Two shepherds in the foreground make their way towards the scene in the central panel. The shepherds as well as the Three Wise Men and their retinue were guided to the new-born Christ by the star in the sky, which glitters in the central panel and can be made out through a hole in the ceiling. The underdrawing of the triptych and the results of the dendrochronological analysis show that this is a replica after an example that ultimately derived from the work of Hieronymus Bosch. Stylistic elements too suggest that the work was done somewhat later in the sixteenth century. The most striking feature is the surbased arch, flanked with columns, which dominates the composition. The white stone structure is decorated with Renaissance ornaments, as are the capitals and the architrave, the arcade, which continues into the left wing, and the architrave beam in the building there. The two other versions of this central panel largely match this configuration with one exception: Christ’s stepfather Joseph sits in a room further back in the building drying washing in front of a fireplace. The Cologne and Paris versions incorporate a stable behind the hearth – i.e. in the far left of the room – with the ox and the ass next to a sarcophagus-shaped trough. This detail is absent in the ’s-Hertogenbosch triptych, in which the ox and the ass are shown in the left wing. The two animals also appear in the left wing in the fragment with the shepherds in Philadelphia. This means that the sharply reduced Adoration in Cologne cannot possibly have formed a triptych with the little panels in Philadelphia, but that is less clear with regard to the Paris version. The ox and the ass were left in reserve from the dark background but probably never painted, unlike the trough, which is depicted. The concept of the composition was thus changed during the painting process: the ox and the ass were eliminated from the central panel and moved to the left wing, where they were indeed not prepared, but painted over the already completed background. This suggests that the central panel was painted after an existing model, and that it was subsequently expanded into a triptych by another painter. This ensemble is likely to have provided the example for the considerably later triptych in ’s-Hertogenbosch. Support for this idea is provided by the various pentimenti in the fragments, including the ox and the ass, which were adopted in the later triptych. As Tolnay noted as early as 1937, the dog in the shepherds panel in
Fragments of an Adoration Triptych, Philadelphia and Paris


26.3 Follower of Hieronymus Bosch, Adoration of the Magi. Maison d’Erasme/Erasmushuis, Anderlecht

26.7–8 Anderlecht [FIG 26.3] and underdrawing Saint Anthony Triptych [CAT 48]
Philadelphia was also laid down over the already-painted legs of the men and was later carefully followed in the triptych in 's-Hertogenbosch. The horses in the other fragment in Philadelphia were set down in modified form over the underdrawing and a preliminary painted version, and this adjusted configuration was likewise imitated precisely in the 's-Hertogenbosch right wing. There are several differences in the Paris panel too between the underdrawing and the painted image;12 once again, it was the latter that was followed in the central panel of the triptych in 's-Hertogenbosch.13 In other words, the two fragments in Philadelphia and the panel in Paris once belonged to the same triptych. These works all contain creative elements that recur as slavish copies in the 's-Hertogenbosch painting. It is also plain that the Philadelphia fragments and Paris panel are not by the same hand, in terms of either the preparatory underdrawing or the actual painting.

A striking detail in the Adoration scene is the elaborately embroidered panel over the black king’s right sleeve. The effect is that of a Gothic window surrounded by an outline decorated with curled thistle-leaves: the lower half shows the Dance around the Golden Calf, while in the tondo above we see the horned Moses kneeling with the Tablets of the Law. The Dance around the Golden Calf was viewed as an Old Testament typology of the Adoration of the Christ Child by the Three Wise Men – a negative, superstitious adoration contrasting with the genuine act of homage. It is a simplified version of the same prefiguration that Bosch painted as a carved stone relief in the central panel of the Saint Anthony Triptych in Lisbon (cat. 4). Attention is paid there and also in the Adoration of the Magi to the position of the idol: the face of the Golden Calf is averted from the Virgin Mary and the infant Christ. The black king in the Philadelphia Adoration from Bosch’s workshop (cat. 25) – who differs slightly, but is also dressed very stylishly and conspicuously in white – also belongs to this series.

A more or less identical black king is found in another triptych by a follower of Hieronymus Bosch, which was probably painted for the parish church in Anderlecht. The stable in the central panel was inspired by the Prado Adoration (cat. 9), but the figures of the Virgin and Child and the Three Kings are virtually identical to those in the panels in Paris...
and Cologne and the triptych in ’s-Hertogenbosch. The inside of the wings is, however, very different: the large building that closes off the left wing appears as a variation in the architecture in the equivalent position in the triptych in ’s-Hertogenbosch and the wing fragment in Philadelphia. The exteriors of the wings in Anderlecht are strongly reminiscent of the Hermit Saints Triptych in Venice and the Job Triptych in Bruges (cat. 2, 23). A most noteworthy feature is the representation of the Dance around the Golden Calf on the sleeve shield of the black king in Anderlecht: the image of the idol is not shown here, as it is in the other two versions and in Lisbon, on a tall mound around which the people dance, but on a high column. This is the form given to the scene, oddly enough, in the underdrawing of the Saint Anthony Triptych (cat. 4). This means that the painter of the Anderlecht triptych had access to a model in which the Dance around the Golden Calf was shown in the form that Hieronymus Bosch used in a preparatory underdrawing before painting it differently, and also to a ricordo (a drawn or painted copy) of the Adoration now in the Prado. Since the Prado Epiphany was originally a memorial painting for Peeter Scheyfve and Agnes de Gramme, it might also have been publicly accessible in an Antwerp church. This would likewise help explain why this widely admired Adoration scene by Bosch was copied so frequently, primarily in Antwerp. 14

One more triptych ought to be mentioned in this comparison – the Adoration of the Magi owned by the National Trust and kept at Upton House, Warwickshire. The central panel is a copy of the Prado Adoration, whereas the wings have elements in common with both the triptych in Anderlecht and the one in ’s-Hertogenbosch. The figure of Joseph filling a washing tub with water in the left wing in Anderlecht is a somewhat weaker reflection of the one in Upton House. The annexe with the open arcade behind Joseph in the left wing in Warwickshire is also found in the Two Shepherds fragment in Philadelphia and in the much later triptych in ’s-Hertogenbosch. The left wing in Anderlecht initially copied the architecture in the Upton House wing, but was later overpainted to give it a large fireplace and, in a third and final stage, a façade with a pronounced perspective effect. 15 This building was adopted in turn in the triptych in ’s-Hertogenbosch. The right wing in Upton House shows the retinue of the Three Kings; this is arranged slightly differently, but is otherwise clearly related once again to the triptych in ’s-Hertogenbosch and the right-wing fragment in Philadelphia. At the same time, the figure shown in the foreground bending over to lift a large chest reappears in Anderlecht, where the group of horsemen has been pushed further into the background. The tondo with the Ecce Homo on the closed wings of the Upton House triptych, lastly, cannot be viewed in isolation from the Escorial Crowning with Thorns (cat. 27), while the grisaille-like painting around it recalls the reverses of the Flood Panels in Rotterdam (cat. 22).

Taken together, these similarities and connections mean that the Adoration scenes discussed here are interconnected and that all are linked in one way or another to Bosch’s legacy. At the same time, the Renaissance elements that feature in all these works make it unlikely that they were painted any earlier than 1515–20. According to dendrochronological analysis, the Paris panel could have been painted from 1501 onwards and more likely from 1503. It was not possible to date the Philadelphia fragments. The triptych in ’s-Hertogenbosch could not have been painted before 1550. The Upton House triptych has also been dendrochronologically analysed; the earliest it could have been painted is 1512 and more likely some time from 1514 onwards. 16 It has not yet been possible to analyse the triptych in Anderlecht, where the work is part of the historic inventory of St Peter’s Church. It might have been made by the master painter Gielis vanden Bosche, who painted a work on panel for the churchwardens of St Peter’s in 1528–29 to serve as a memorial. 17 Vanden Bossche has been identified as the Gillis Panhedel who was commissioned in 1521–22 to paint two wings for the altarpiece made by Adriaen van Wesel for the Brotherhood of Our Lady in ’s-Hertogenbosch. These were added to the ensemble, which had already been fitted with shutters painted by Hieronymus Bosch (see cat. 5–6). Gielis vanden Bossche’s work was approved and paid for in 1522–23. When the altarpiece was cleaned a quarter of a century later, explicit reference was still made to the shutters painted by Gielis vanden...
Bossche, residing in Brussels (‘geschildert by gielis vanden Bossche tot Bruessel wonende’). Gielis was married to Yda – daughter of the wealthy ‘s-Hertogenbosch citizen Hendrik Martenszoon de Greve. The latter’s brother, Marten de Greve, was a sworn member of the Brotherhood of Our Lady and was directly involved in the commission awarded to Gielis, his niece’s husband. The same Marten sold a piece of property on the couple’s behalf in 1523, on the occasion of which Gielis was identified as ‘Egidius de Panhedel alias de Buscoducis’. He must have been born around 1490 and he lived in Brussels. He moved to Bruges in 1505 with his father Aert Panhedel alias Vanden Bossche, but later returned to Brussels. The direct connection between the triptych in Anderlecht and the work of Hieronymus Bosch together with the aforementioned relationships of the painter Gielis vanden Bossche make it likely that the triptych should be attributed to him. The painting appears to be based in part on the triptych in Upton House, which displays the highest quality of the works in this group of Adoration triptychs. The Philadelphia fragments were added to the Paris central panel in the course of production and the resulting triptych served as the model for the significantly later triptych in ‘s-Hertogenbosch. Other versions and wings clearly existed, and it has not proved possible yet to determine a more precise order of production. The paintings were perhaps still produced in part in Hieronymus Bosch’s workshop following his death in 1516, partly in the Brussels workshop of Aert and Gillis Panhedel alias Vanden Bossche, and possibly even in Antwerp at a later stage for the open market. The example for the Golden Calf placed on a tall column must, at any rate, have originated in Bosch’s workshop.

National Trust, Upton House, Warwickshire
1 With thanks to Laurent Texier, Paris.

2 Lecture to the Kunsthistorisches Gesellschaft, Berlin, 9 October 1914. The note and the comments quoted below can be found among the documentation at the Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, inv. 1275–76.

3 Philadelphia Museum of Art, John G. Johnson Collection, inv. 352 (Ecce Homo), 353 (Christ Crowned with Thorns), 354 (Christ and the Woman Taken in Adultery), 354 (Adoration of the Magi), 386 (Last Judgement), 408 (Christ at the Whipping Post and Carrying the Cross), 1321 (Adoration of the Magi; see cat. 25), 2055 (Descent into Limbo).

4 Friedländer 1927, no. 70.


6 Unverfehrt 1980, 43.

7 Silver 2006, 180–84; Silver 2015, 12–13; De Vrij 2012, 124, 513–14 no. 9, 18, Fischer 2013, 62–63 no. 23.

8 Tolnay 1937, 102 no. 40; Von Baldass 1943, 246; Von Baldass 1959, 51, Tolnay 1964 (1965), 310 no. 40.


10 Oil on panel, 66 × 44.2 cm, Wallraf-Richartz-Museum, Cologne, Inv. 0.475. Unverfehrt 1980, 102–11.

11 Owing to increased transparency of the paint layer, or as a result of abrasion or paint loss caused by overcleaning, the eliminated ox and donkey began to re-emerge, thus ‘unwittingly’ completing the Adoration iconography of the central panel after it had been separated from its wings.

12 The head of the king standing on the right in particular was set out differently in the underdrawing, as was the jewel hanging around his neck; the kneeling king has a beard in the underdrawing that was omitted in the painted version. See concise technical report brcp, Technical Studies, cat. 26c, nos. 109–10. These were important arguments to Larry Silver for attributing the panel to Hieronymus Bosch himself. Silver 2015, 9–10.

13 The Cologne Adoration must have been based on the same prototype as the Paris painting.


15 Van Schoute, Verougstraete and Garrido 2001, 111.

16 Ian Tyers, Project Report 3710, March 2012, Arcus Dendrochronology Laboratory, University of Sheffield. The most recent growth ring measured was 1498, but Tyers observed at least three rings that do not run through to the end, giving a most recent ring of 1501. According to our formula, this gives 1501 + 9 + 2 = 1512 as the earliest possible year and 1514 as the more likely one as of which the triptych could have been painted.

17 Roobaert 2011, 154. The previously unpublished reference is as follows: 1528–29 – the executor of Jan de Merck, priest at Andelecht, deceased in May 1528, paid the joiner Merck de Brusse for the woodwork for the panel painting to be placed by the priest’s tomb; another payment relates to Master Giels van Bossche, who painted the panel and gilded the edges and foot of the panel (4 Rhenish florins). A locksmith was paid for supplying the fittings for a curtain to be hung in front of the painting. Archives générales du Royaume/Algemeen Rijksarchief, Brussels, Kerkelijke archieven van Brabant, 37/a. Thanks to Edmond Roobaert for this note (email 22 May 2015).

The Crowning with Thorns

Follower of Hieronymus Bosch
C. 1530–40

Oil on oak panel, 157.5 x 194.8 cm
Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial/Patrimonio Nacional, 10014743

BRCP examination and documentation data:
El Escorial, 26–29 October 2015; BRCP, Technical Studies, cat. 27, RR 157–158; //Boschproject.org no. 27.

Condition
The format of the panel seems original. A small piece is missing at the lower right and there are four old cracks. Five horizontal strips have been planed down on the back and small blocks of wood glued to the joins. The paint surface is well preserved, and previously restored damage is largely confined to the joins and the edges. Ageing of the paint layer has caused the ground and underdrawing locally to show through. The legibility of the original paint layer is excellent, despite locally disruptive retouching.

Provenance
Recorded in 1593 in a list of works of art transferred to the Escorial on the order of Philip II of Spain.

Literature

Analysis
The Crowning with Thorns was transferred to the Escorial in 1593 on the order of King Philip II of Spain. The panel was attributed at that point to Hieronymus Bosch. Dendrochronological analysis has shown, however, that it cannot have been painted before 1527 and is more likely to have been produced from 1529 onwards. This rules out the possibility that it is an autograph work by Bosch, although the composition does ultimately derive from his Crowning with Thorns in London, as do those of several other imitations painted in Antwerp between 1530 and 1550. The panel in the Escorial can be situated at the beginning of that group, which also includes the Passion Triptych in Valencia (cat. 28), the imitation signature on which confirms that the invention of this type of Crowning with Thorns was associated with Bosch from an early date.

CROWNED KING

The Crowning with Thorns is shown in a tondo with a gold, archaizing ground and surrounded by darkness. One of the guards grasps Christ with his armoured left hand, while another uses a stick to force the crown of thorns onto his head. Christ seems unmoved; he gazes slightly pityingly and resignedly out of the picture. A third guard stands in the right background with a lituus, the bronze signalling horn. Two other men on the left of the tondo look over Christ’s shoulder to see his coronation as ‘King of the Jews’. The foremost figure, wearing a red cloak and headdress, is identified by the emblem of office he holds in his right hand; the crystal sphere on the sceptre contains an image of the horned Moses with the Tablets of the Law. He must therefore be Caiaphas, the high priest who, a little earlier, had declared that ‘it would be good if one man died for the people’. The man standing next to Caiaphas in the luxurious green cloak watches somewhat aloofly as the crown of thorns is pressed onto Christ’s head. This will be Pontius Pilate, the Roman prefect, who had Christ flogged in order to satisfy the mob. When he realized this was not going to be enough, he declared: ‘You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.’ Christ, wrapped in a white robe, sits on a white stone bench; the other figures stand around him. It is a shallow space – the guards and their attributes cast shadows on the gold ground. The torturer with the stick has stuck an arrow through the brim of his hat, and he wears a conspicuous gold-coloured badge with a black double-headed eagle on his shoulder, with a few little flowers inserted behind it. The heart-shaped shield on the eagle has a gold ground with black crossbar, which is seemingly intended as a variation on the Austrian coat of arms – a red field with a white bar – and might thus be a critical reference to Habsburg rule. Angels battle with evil in the darkness around the tondo. Two angels – in the upper right and lower left corners – are armed with croziers; two of their comrades in the other corners lay about the demons with a sword.

The dendrochronological dating of the panel shows that it could have been painted from 1527, and more likely from 1529. This means it might indeed have been produced shortly before the triptych in Valencia, which was probably based on this Crowning with
Thorns and was done at the behest of Mencia de Mendoza in the 1530s (cat. 28). The fact that the panel was originally housed in a rabbeted frame also points to a later date. It is therefore not surprising that the technical execution of this Crowning with Thorns differs in several respects from works in the core group. Shaded areas were painted by means of hatching and wet paint was surprisingly often worked with fingers and also with incisions, for example in the rendering of hair. In addition, locally highly fluid paint was used, which must have been very rich in medium. The underdrawing is schematic in nature and rather roughly executed in a dry material, which is also not found in works by Bosch or from his immediate circle.

The man identified here as Pontius Pilate has repeatedly and erroneously been seen as a self-portrait of the artist, and hence as Hieronymus Bosch. Jan Mosmans was the first to make this often-repeated but entirely unsubstantiated suggestion in 1947. Van Schoute, Verougstraete and Garrido rejected this in their publication on the Crowning with Thorns in 2001. They referred to the marks on the lituus held by the guard at the back of the group as ‘forged signatures’. Signal horns like this originated in the Roman era, but were still in use in the late Middle Ages. The equivalent instrument in the Valencia copy also has these marks, consisting of a sun and the letter ‘H’. It has been suggested based on them that the Crowning with Thorns in the Escorial, or its prototype, was originally painted for the silversmiths’ guild in ’s-Hertogenbosch, but that is highly hypothetical.

King Philip II had the panel, mounted at the time in a gilded and marbled frame, transferred to the Escorial monastery in 1593. It was already described at that time as ‘de Hierónimo Bosco’. Some authors consider it to be an early work, while others place it in the middle of Bosch’s career; one believes it to be an especially late work. It was only in the wake of the dendrochronological dating of the panel that a more critical look was taken at the Crowning with Thorns and it was acknowledged that the style, manner of painting and scale of the work all differ markedly from Bosch’s autograph oeuvre.

1 John 18: 14.
2 John 19: 1–6. Baldass (1943, 249) goes no further than to state that this is a representative of worldly power as opposed to the religious authority embodied by the man with the Moses sceptre.
3 Escherig 1940 took it as the basis for a political interpretation.
5 Rabbeted frames replaced engaged frames as the standard method of framing in the second half of the sixteenth century. The earliest known example of a rabbeted frame (the central panel of Van Orley’s Last Judgement in Antwerp) dates from 1518 to 1525; see Verougstraete 2015, 64. We are grateful to Hélène Verougstraete for communicating her findings by email (6 February 2015) before her book was published.
8 Dückers and Priem 2003, 142–43 no. 3b (Jos Koldeweij): bronze signal horn, 15th century, Museum Valkhof, Nijmegen.
10 Van Schoute, Verougstraete and Garrido (2001, 114–15) reconstructed how the Crowning with Thorns in the Escorial was derived by copyists from the Crowning with Thorns in London.
11 Vandenbroeck 2002, 129.
The Arrest of Christ, Crowning with Thorns and Flagellation

_Follower of Hieronymus Bosch_

\begin{itemize}
  \item c. 1530–40 (central panel) and c. 1540–50 (wings)
\end{itemize}

Oil on oak panel, left wing 152.2 × 85.6 cm; right wing 152.4 × 84.5 cm; central panel 139.7 × 170.2 cm

Signed central panel, bottom left: Hieronymus · bosch;
on the sleeve of the guard at the front: SPQR;
on the frame of the central panel: O BONE IESIV PER CORONA[m] HANC SPINEA. QUE TVM MQUSTIS PVNUCTIVS/ VERTICEM DIVVINERAVIT. PERQUE TAM TVBGIDAM EV...[?]

PERCVSSIONIBVS FACIE. LACRIMIS ET PLAGIS LIVIDAM.
AC EFFVSO/ SANGVINE SPVTISQE FEDATAM. SERVA NOS INETERVM.\(^1\)
Museu de Belles Arts de València, 264–66

**Condition**
The wings are still housed in their original engaged frames, but the central panel is rigidly mounted in a rabbeted frame. The form of the tondo is cut off by the panel’s top and bottom edges, but the panel was not necessarily cropped, as the scenes in the corners fit very well. On the reverses, non-original dovetail buttons were applied onto the joins, damaging the marbling on the wings. Aside from some minor old cracks, the central panel appears stable. On the wings however, panel shrinkage has resulted in extensive areas of raised paint and losses, predominantly on the marbled sides. The paint surface of the open triptych appears only slightly abraded overall, although the green glaze on the robe of the tormentor in the right wing is damaged. Despite some matte areas and discoloured old varnish residues, the legibility of the open triptych is reasonably good.

**Provenance**
Convento de Santo Domingo de Valencia, memorial chapel of Mencía de Mendoza; confiscated by the authorities during the Desamortización (1835–37) and placed in the Museu de Belles Arts.

**Literature**

**Analysis**
The Passion Triptych, comprising the Crowning with Thorns flanked by the Arrest of Christ and the Flagellation, was recorded in the estate of Mencía de Mendoza, the third wife of Count Henry III of Nassau. The central panel on the one hand and the two wings on the other were installed as altarpieces in her memorial chapel in Valencia shortly after her death in 1554. Mencía de Mendoza probably had the Crowning with Thorns, which can be dated to the 1530s, expanded to form a triptych in the 1540s. With its remarkably grotesque heads, the painting is one of the group of Bosch imitations painted in Antwerp. The central panel is the only one in this group to include an imitation Hieronymus Bosch signature.

**MENCÍA DE MENDOZA**

The Passion Triptych originated in the collection of Mencía de Mendoza y Fonseca (1508–1554), Marquise of Zenete. She was the third wife of Count Henry III of Nassau (1483–1538), whom she married in 1524. She lived in the Spanish Netherlands in the years 1530–33 and 1535–39 in the castle at Breda, the Nassau Palace in Brussels and the castle at Turnhout. She returned to Spain following Henry’s death in 1538 and had her possessions, including an extensive art collection, shipped from the Low Countries. Mencía also instructed her agent in Antwerp, Arnao del Plano, to procure additional works of art for her, including a copy of the Haywain (see cat. 20). The inventory of her estate mentions three paintings on canvas by Bosch: an ‘Old man and an old woman holding a basket’, a ‘Tower of Babel’ and a ‘John the Evangelist holding a chalice’. It is not possible to determine at this remove to what extent these were by followers of Bosch or possibly autograph works.\(^3\)

**ICONOGRAPHY**
The large triptych with three scenes from the Passion of Christ focuses on the trials Jesus suffered in the lead-up to his death on the cross. The left wing shows the Arrest, the central panel the Crowning with Thorns and the right wing the Flagellation. The sequence of
events is clearly described in the New Testament. Christ allowed himself to be arrested in
the Garden of Gethsemane. He was then tried by the high priest and taken to the Roman
prefect, Pontius Pilate, who considered him to be entirely innocent. However, in order to
pacify the mob, Pilate had Christ flogged, following which the soldiers wove a wreath of
thorns and ‘crowned’ him with it. They wrapped a purple cloak around his shoulders, gave
him a reed stick to hold, addressed him mockingly as ‘King of the Jews’, and slapped him
in the face.

The triptych does not follow the biblical chronology, as the Crowning with Thorns is the
central scene. Christ holds the fragile reed stick in his hands like a sceptre, but there is no
sign of the purple cloak. The white robe that slips from his shoulders emphasizes his cen-
tral position among his tormentors. He is surrounded by hostile figures in the wings too.
The composition of the central panel – a crowded tondo with an archaizing gold ground
surrounded by darkness, in which angels painted in semi-grisaille do battle with evil in the
four corners – revolves entirely around Christ as the optical and hence also the devotional
centre point. This principle is repeated in the wings, in which the tondo is ‘squashed’ to
form a vertically oriented oval that will fit in the narrower panels. The execution of the
wings is weaker than that of the central panel, which is painted more accurately and with
greater refinement. The tondo was prepared using incisions in the ground layer, and inci-
sions can also be made out in Christ’s beard, possibly made with the end of the paintbrush.
We do not find this technique in the wings, which do show signs, by contrast, of dabbing with paint (possibly with a sponge or the artist's fingers), particularly around the edges of the flesh tones. There are clear differences too in the underdrawing of the panels. The underdrawing in the central panel was done using a dry medium, probably charcoal or black chalk; the modelling was also prepared to a large extent, chiefly by means of parallel hatching. The wings, by contrast, were underdrawn with a relatively small brush in a wet medium, which was used primarily to set down the outlines.4

The differences between the wings and the central panel might be explained by production in stages. The central panel was no doubt painted after the example of the Crowning with Thorns in the Escorial (cat. 27) or of the prototype of that painting, of which two other versions exist, one in the Museo Lázaro Galdiano in Madrid and the other in the museum in Segovia.4 The group as a whole was probably painted in Antwerp between 1530 and 1550, and ultimately derives from the Crowning with Thorns in London (cat. 14).6 The ground layer on the backs of both wings, decorated with imitation stone, contains chalk (calcium carbonate), which is a strong indication that the panels were painted in Northern Europe, in this case the Low Countries.7 Of the four Crowning with Thorns paintings, the central panel in Valencia is the only one with a signature (Jheronimus · bosch).

The fact that the tondo seems to be cut off at the top and bottom reflects the fact that this is a one-to-one copy in terms of its dimensions of the Crowning with Thorns in the Escorial. The compositions filling the corners fit perfectly, and so the panel in Valencia does not appear to have been cropped (or if so, only slightly).

**TRIPTYCH**

Canon Joris-Karel Steppe, a professor at Leuven University, identified ‘una tabla grande de la Pasion’ (a large panel with the Passion), which was left with the merchant Martín Lopez in Antwerp following Mencía de Mendoza’s departure from the Netherlands in November 1539, as the central panel of the Passion Triptych.8 The Crowning with Thorns had been there since Mencía de Mendoza’s first visit to the Low Countries in the years 1530–33.9 The panel must have been added to in order to form the Passion Triptych before being shipped to Spain. As noted already, the quality of the wings differs considerably from that of the central panel.
The wings were painted in their engaged frames (the paint slightly overlaps the frame) and were therefore conceived as a triptych at the same time as the current central frame was added.\(^{10}\) The slightly lower central panel was provided with a wider rabbeted frame with the text of a prayer running around the flat part (see above). The type of frame used for the central panel has generally been dated to the second half of the sixteenth century.\(^{11}\) The triptych as a whole must, however, have been made in the 1540s, following which it was shipped to Spain. It was located at Mencía de Mendoza’s castle at Ayora after her death on 4 January 1554. Her heirs were her daughter Mencía and Luis de Requesens, the future governor of the Netherlands. Requesens had the altarpiece installed in Mencía de Mendoza’s memorial chapel, the Capilla de los Reyes in the Dominican abbey in Valencia, as Mencía instructed in her will. She also stated that ‘[i]f there is a need for other small altarpieces for other altars where the aforesaid masses may be read, these may be made, to which end the painted devotional panels I have may be used’.\(^{12}\) This clearly occurred, as the central panel and the wings, placed alongside one another, were used as separate altarpieces in the niches on the north and south sides.\(^{13}\) Following the confiscation of monastic property – the ‘Desamortización’ – under Minister Juan Álvarez Méndizábal in 1835–37, the panels were placed in the Museo Provisional in the former Carmelite abbey, the precursor of what is now the Museu de Belles Arts de València.\(^{14}\) The imitation stone on the panel backs indicates, as do their dimensions, that the paintings were used as the wings of an altarpiece that could be closed, of which the Crowned with Thorns was the central panel. As stated, the wings were painted by a different artist and slightly later than the central panel, but in the same workshop, most likely in Antwerp and on the order of Mencía de Mendoza.

The prototype, in all likelihood the unsigned Crowned with Thorns in the Escorial (cat. 27), was viewed at the time as the work of Hieronymus Bosch on account of the signature inserted on the central panel of the Passion Triptych. Other work by Bosch must have been known in the workshop where the triptych was painted, as the signature is a fairly accurate imitation of that on original paintings by him. The same is suggested by a number of details in the wings, including the letter ‘M’ as a cutler’s mark in the panel on the left. This is also found in the Hell wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights and the central panel of the Last Judgements in both Vienna and Bruges (cat. 21, 16 and 17). Several of the heads in both the Arrest and the Flagellation of Christ, meanwhile, seem to have been inspired by fig-
The motif of the owl, the banderole, the thorn branches and the pearls on the sleeve of the guard who grasps Christ in the central panel are directly comparable with the embroidered hose of the man in the foreground of the Saint Wilgefortis Triptych (cat. 8). The ensemble unmistakably dates both stylistically and in terms of the painting technique to later than Bosch’s work; this is particularly evident from the physiognomy of the angels and demons surrounding the three Passion scenes, the decoration of the sword of the man on the far left in the Arrest of Christ and the trompe-l’œil bee on the bared knee of the torturer on the far right of the Flagellation.

Several other early Bosch imitations are closely related to the Valencia Passion Triptych. Christ Carrying the Cross in Ghent (cat. 29), for instance, was attributed to Bosch around 1900 because of its resemblance to the Valencia triptych and to Christ Before Pilate in the Princeton Museum of Art, both of which were considered at the time to be autograph works by Bosch. The Arrest of Christ acquired by the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam in 1930 and a similar version that came into the possession of the Timken Art Gallery, San Diego, in 1938 were not known at that time, nor was a Christ Before Pilate now in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam. Carl Justi attributed the Passion Triptych to Bosch himself in 1889, and his example was followed by Gustav Glück in 1904 and by Luis Tramoyeres Blasco in 1915. Hermann Dollmayr firmly argued as early as 1898, however, that the triptych was definitely not an autograph Bosch, but a copy after him or the work of a follower. This view was endorsed by Maurice Gossart in 1907 and by Max J. Friedländer in 1927, since when it has been the consensus view. The same applies to the entire group of paintings centring on the triptych in Valencia, with the exception of Christ Carrying the Cross in Ghent, which is also the work of a follower but which, ironically, came to be adopted as an iconic image by Bosch.

1. ‘O good Jesus! Save us for eternal life through this crown of thorns, which wounded your head with its many little spikes, and through your face, so battered by blows, pale with tears and wounds, and smeared with blood and spit.’
3. See also brcp, Technical Studies, cat. 28, pp. 91–96.
5. It seems possible to indicate the order in which these were painted, with the proviso that a role might also have been played by examples that have since been lost. The version in the Museo Lázaro Galdiano was probably painted after the one in Valencia, which was based in turn on the painting now in the Escorial. This is evident from numerous details. In the Valencia panel, for instance, the bird was added at a later stage of the creation process, as was the plaster on the guard’s knee, whereas these details were included from the outset in the Lázaro Galdiano version and are absent from the Escorial version, which may therefore be viewed as the group’s prototype. The larger version in Segovia (oil on canvas) was based directly on the Escorial version. There is also a larger group of imitations in which the Crowning with Thorns is not placed in a triptych. Unverfehrt 1980, 177–33, 295 no. 33, 267 no. 85. De Vrij 2012, 357–69. According to De Vrij (2012, 363), there is a fifth copy in a private collection.
6. Van Schoute, Verougstraete and Garrido [2001, 114–15] have reconstructed how the Crowning with Thorns in the Escorial was derived by copyists from the one in London.
7. The brcp was permitted to take samples of the ground layer for analysis at the Stichting Restauratie Atelier Limburg (sral) in Maastricht. See also brcp, Technical Studies, cat. 28, pp. 91–96.
9. Dendrochronological dating of the central panel: most recent growth ring 1506, earliest production date 1517 and more likely 1519 or later. The wings were not analysed. Klein 2003b, 5.
10. The partially surviving closing mechanism, the hinge traces on the wings and the four single hinge plates on the frame of the central panel are original. See also brcp, Technical Studies, cat. 28, pp. 91–96.
11. In addition, the central panel was designed to be housed in a rabbeded frame, which points to a production date after c. 1520–25. Verougstraete 2015, 68.
12. ‘[t]il hay necesidad de otros retablos pequeños para otros altares donde se puedan decir las dichas misas, se hagan e que para ello puedan aplicar las tablas pintadas de devoción que yo tengo.’ As cited by Steppe 1967, 22.
13. [op.] This view was endorsed by Maurice Gossart in 1907 and by Max J. Friedländer in 1927, since when it has been the consensus view. The same applies to the entire group of paintings centring on the triptych in Valencia, with the exception of Christ Carrying the Cross in Ghent, which is also the work of a follower but which, ironically, came to be adopted as an iconic image by Bosch.
15. Princeton, Christ Before Pilate, most recent growth ring 1498, earliest possible production 1507, but more probably 1509 or later; no underdrawing observed with X-r.
16. Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. nr. A–3113, Arrest of Christ, oil on panel, 51.2 × 80.8 cm, c. 1530–50 (on loan to the Nordbrabant Museum), most recent growth ring 1494; the panel has probably been cropped, no underdrawing observed with X-r (with thanks to Norman Muller). See also cat. 29 note 27.
18. Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. 2438, Christ Before Pilate, oil on panel, 46.5 × 36.5 cm, c. 1530–40, most recent growth ring 1497, earliest possible creation date 1508, more likely 1510 or later; no underdrawing observed with X-r; see cat. Rotterdam 1994, 119. Klein 2001, 126.
21. Gossart 1917, 55, 289; Friedländer 1927, 146 no. 79.
Caiaphas and Pontius Pilate: Crowning with Thorns, Escorial [CAT 27] and Valencia [CAT 28b]

Passion Triptych, Valencia
Christ Carrying the Cross

Follower of Hieronymus Bosch
C. 1530–40
Oil on panel, 76.8 x 83.1 cm
Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, 1902–H
BRCP examination and documentation data: Ghent, 22–24 November 2010; BRCP, Technical Studies, cat. 29, RR 1; //Boschproject.org no. 29.

Condition
Documentation assembled before the 1956–57 restoration reveals original painted edges on the front and bevelling on the reverse. This indicates that the painting was originally housed in a rabbeted frame. The degraded edges have been slightly planed and wooden strips added to all four sides. An insert along the damaged join completed the original dimensions of the composition. Two sliding battens (now jammed), held in place by cleats, reinforce the panel. Besides older fractures and a crack that runs the entire length of the panel, slightly opened cracks and joins were observed. Especially at the joins there is extensive paint loss. The original ground and paint layers are generally stable and in excellent condition. The restoration materials have degraded noticeably, resulting in a reduced legibility of the painting.

Provenance
The work belonged to a private collection in England in the nineteenth century, followed by Nicholson art dealers, London; O. Hemme collection, Brussels; April 1902 purchased through Georges Hulin de Loo by the Société des Amis du Musée de Gand from F. Kennis and donated to the Ghent museum.

Literature

Analysis
The composition of this panel, with its close-up of Christ carrying the Cross surrounded by his torturers and Veronica with her miraculous cloth, is surprising and its technical execution is strong. It turned up in private hands in the late nineteenth century and was acquired by the museum in Ghent in 1902. It was identified as a characteristic work by Hieronymus Bosch based on several other paintings that were attributed to him at the time. As the twentieth century progressed, the panel increasingly became a cornerstone of Bosch’s oeuvre, although doubts gradually began to be expressed from the time of the exhibition in ‘s-Hertogenbosch in 1967. Careful comparison of the painting technique, the style, the cursory underdrawing and the imagery with the other paintings ascribed to Bosch and his immediate circle shows that this Christ Carrying the Cross occupies an entirely isolated position. There is no evidence whatsoever for placing it in either Bosch’s oeuvre or in his workshop.

Attribution
Christ Carrying the Cross was purchased in April 1902 and donated to the Ghent museum by its friends association. Shortly before that date, Georges Hulin de Loo had seen the panel – ‘attribué à Jérôme Bosch’ – in a collection in Ghent, and proposed its acquisition, as he considered the painting to be extremely important. The panel was presented for the first time that summer at the famous exhibition ‘Les Primitifs flamands et l’art ancien’ in Bruges. The official exhibition catalogue, compiled by the Bruges-based Englishman James Weale, included a brief description of the panel and attributed it firmly to Bosch: ‘Jérôme Bosch. Le Portement de la Croix. Bois. H. 72. L. 78. La Société des Amis du Musée de Gand.’

Hulin de Loo, who played an important part in assembling the hundreds of works for the exhibition, published his Exposition de tableaux flamands des XIVe, XVe et XVIe siècles: Catalogue critique six weeks after the opening. He did not simply reproduce the lenders’ attributions in this catalogue raisonné, but provided each work with a brief commentary, in which he offered his own independent and often very lucid view. The entry for Christ Carrying the Cross was equally concise; in it he identified the triptych with the Adoration of the Magi in Anderlecht en passant as an original by, or possibly a copy after Bosch. Hulin de Loo also firmly attributed Christ Carrying the Cross to ‘Hieronymus van Aken dit Bosch’ and described it as ‘one of the master’s most important works outside Spain’. Max J. Friedländer likewise praised the panel in his comments on the Bruges exhibition. As far as he was concerned, it was ‘certainly original, despite its highly grotesque appearance’, and he was in no doubt ‘that the painting, which transcends all limits, is an original work by Hieronymus Bosch’.

Friedländer and Hulin de Loo much respected one another, and shared their enthusiasm about the panel. Since its presentation in 1902, Christ Carrying the Cross has been assigned to Bosch’s oeuvre, and has been viewed by most authors as an entirely characteristic work by the late-medieval master from ‘s-Hertogenbosch. Paul Vandenbroeck does not doubt Bosch’s
authorship either, referring to the painting as 'one of the most hallucinatory creations in Western art history', in which 'frenzied lust for sensation, baying crudity and sly sadism are all unflinchingly displayed'. It was recently described in the following terms in a digital presentation by an alliance of Flemish museums and heritage organizations: "This absolute masterpiece of Western art history clearly illustrates why we are right to call Hieronymus Bosch a radical painter. Never before had such a tangle of hideous and insane-looking faces been painted: mean, frenzied, sadistic and downright stupid. This is a close-up of collective wickedness, given that many were convinced in Bosch’s time that “ugly” equated with “sinful” and “bad”. At the centre of this infernal mob, the serene, defenceless Jesus carries his cross, meekly and with his eyes closed. In the bottom left, Veronica gazes smilingly at her cloth, the sudarium, with its miraculous image of Christ’s face. The only woman in
this panel stands apart from the demonically baying crowd. Bosch is religiously radical too: according to him, we can all liberate ourselves from sin by following Christ.’

Most authors consider Christ Carrying the Cross to be a late work by Bosch.11 In his seminal monograph of 1937, Charles de Tolnay went so far as to state that it was the very last painting by Bosch to have survived.15 Leo van Puyvelde took a different line in his 1962 book on the Flemish Primitives, in which he argued that it was an early work by Bosch. He was followed in this regard, oddly enough, by Frédéric Elsig in 2004.13

DOUBT

A note of caution was increasingly struck after the Bosch exhibition in ’s-Hertogenbosch in 1967, however, and the first doubts were likewise expressed as to the picture’s attribution.14 While the painting remained iconic for Bosch’s oeuvre, it was increasingly labelled as ‘ascribed to’. In a 1975 article, the American art historian Leonard J. Slatkes went further, stating that in his view the Ghent panel was a workshop copy after an original by Bosch that Albrecht Dürer had seen in Italy, and which inspired his Christ Among the Doctors of 1506.15 In 1987, Roger Marijnissen asked rhetorically: ‘If the work is not that of Bosch, then whose is it?’, before concluding: ‘Even apart from the problem of attribution, this painting remains inextricably bound up with Bosch’s oeuvre and the religiosity of the Old Netherlands at the time of Bosch.’16 The tone was now set, and the more serious literature on the subject steadily began to distance itself from the attribution to Bosch.17 It is surprising, to say the least, that few arguments, if any, have been presented either way. Even the major technical study that Roger Van Schoute published in 1959 and 1967, for which the question of authenticity served as the starting point, did not contribute to the discussion. Although his research provided more information about the genesis of the painting, no conclusions were drawn from the results and the work continued to be viewed as an indisputably autograph Bosch.18

The attribution of Christ Carrying the Cross to Bosch, which was accepted in 1902 by Hulin de Loo, Friedländer and Louis Maeterlinck, curator of the Ghent museum, was based on similarities with four works that were ascribed to Bosch at the time: the Passion Triptych in Valencia (cat. 28), Christ Before Pilate in Princeton, the Crowning with Thorns in the Escorial (cat. 27) and the Ecce Homo in Frankfurt (cat. 11), which was owned from 1889 to 1902 by Louis Maeterlinck, and was exhibited some time at the museum in Ghent.19 The attribution probably dates from the period in which Christ Carrying the Cross was still in the possession of Nicholson art dealers in London.

There are particularly notable affinities with the painting in the Princeton University Art Museum.20 The triptych in Valencia is clearly signed ‘Hieronymus – bosch’ and was essential to the attribution to Bosch of both Christ Carrying the Cross and Christ Before Pilate.21 The other panels that now belong to the group around the Valencia and Princeton paintings had not been identified in 1900 and so could obviously not be taken into consideration.22 It has become clear in the meantime that, of the four paintings on which the attribution was based, only the Ecce Homo is actually an autograph work by Hieronymus Bosch. The three other panels featuring half-length figures, just like the Ghent Christ Carrying the Cross, were painted by relatively early followers.23 This means that the most important points of reference – the triptych in Valencia, the panel in Princeton and the Crowning with Thorns in the Escorial – can no longer be used as an argument for attributing Christ Carrying the Cross to Bosch. The Crowning with Thorns in the National Gallery in London, by contrast, has been added since the work was linked to Hieronymus Bosch in 1921, albeit in the first instance as a copy after a lost original.24 Friedländer and Tolnay had already published the London painting as autograph, and their attribution has since been generally followed.25 The attribution of Christ Carrying the Cross to Bosch was based on the caricature-like heads found in Valencia and Princeton. We are dealing in both cases – and in that of the paintings subsequently grouped around them – with an early Bosch reception that zoomed in on precisely this exaggerated grotesquery. The latter is much stronger, however, than we find in Bosch’s
original work, as made plain by a critical comparison of the heads in the panels in Valencia, Princeton and also Ghent with those in the *Crowning with Thorns* in London (cat. 14). The faces of the guards in London are distinctive, malevolent, very different from one another, and contrast sharply with the suffering Christ; yet they are definitely not crude caricatures. This is not something we find in the rest of Bosch’s autograph oeuvre either.

The results of technical analysis similarly fail to offer any support for the autograph or original status of the work; they point firmly instead towards it being a copy after an existing composition. The outlines alone were underdrawn, and this tentative drawing was then followed relatively closely in the painted layers – something we do not find in Bosch or his workshop. Most of the facial types do not refer to a Bosch prototype either, nor is it any more likely that the painting was produced in the family workshop. The fact that the panel was painted right up to the edges, which were bevelled on the reverse, means that the painting cannot originally have had an engaged frame. It must have had a rabbeted one instead – a frame type that only became common after the first quarter of the sixteenth century. Dendrochronological analysis could make a useful contribution in this respect, but this has so far not been possible.

Fritz Koreny considers *Christ Carrying the Cross* in Ghent to be a core work in Bosch’s painted oeuvre, along with the *Garden of Earthly Delights* and the *Last Judgement* in Vienna. One important reason for this is the morphological similarity he detects between one of the heads in *Christ Carrying the Cross* and the head of the beggar in the Saint Hippolytus wing of the Vienna *Last Judgement*. Although the form of these heads is indisputably related, their execution differs. The rapid wet-on-wet painting we find in virtually all Bosch’s panels, including the exterior wings of the Vienna *Last Judgement*, is all but absent in the Ghent panel. Numerous brushstrokes are visible there, despite the fact that the paint is often applied thinly. The effect is heightened by the uncommon use of fine lines, frequently

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29.2 *Christ Carrying the Cross* (Ghent) [CAT 29]
29.3 *Crowning with Thorns* (Valencia) [CAT 28A]
29.4 *Two Men* [CAT 50]
29.5 *Last Judgement* (Vienna) [CAT 17E]
hatched, to indicate details like the curly facial hair, the hatching in some of the fingers and the white highlights in several of the eyes.

Taking everything into account, we have to conclude that there is no evidence to include Christ Carrying the Cross in Bosch’s oeuvre, regardless of how exceptional a painting it is. We cannot detect Bosch’s hand in either its underdrawing or its painting. Nor is there any evidence to link the panel to Bosch’s workshop, even after the painter’s death. It seems more plausible to us to situate this painting in the second quarter of the sixteenth century (in Antwerp?). It is possible that a prototype by Bosch existed, as also appears to be the case for the Crowning with Thorns acquired by Mencia de Mendoza for her memorial chapel in Valencia. The caricature-like head in the drawing in a private collection (cat. 50) and the aforementioned beggar on the exterior of the Last Judgement in Vienna (cat. 17) are comparable tronies. All the same, we do not find such an outrageous collection of villains anywhere in Bosch as appear in Christ Carrying the Cross in Ghent. Like the work of several followers, the painting is more ‘Bosschian’ than Bosch himself ever was. The difference compared to other imitators, however, is the outstanding quality of this work and its rigorously developed visual concept, which match what we find by Bosch’s hand in the London Crowning with Thorns (cat. 14).
A short letter written on 28 April 1902 by Georges Hulin de Loo reveals that Fernand Scribe, the chairman of the friends association in Ghent, was still negotiating the purchase price at the time. Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, dossier 1902/h, Hieronymus Bosch, ‘De kruisdraging’.


Hulin de Loo 1902, 76 no. 285.

‘Une des œuvres les plus importantes du Maître, hors d’Espagne.’

Friedländer 1903a, 169; Friedländer 1903b, 32.

‘Gewiss Original, wenn auch äusserst fratzenhaft …’ and ‘… keinen Zweifel daran, dass das alle Grenzen überschreitende Werk eine Originalarbeit des Hieronymus Bosch ist’.

It is not clear who was the first to link this Christ Carrying the Cross with Hieronymus Bosch. According to Hulin de Loo’s notes, the work originated in a private collection in England; it was then offered for sale by Nicholson art dealers in London, following which it was owned by a Mr O. Hemmel in Brussels and finally by Mr F. Kennis, from whom the friends association purchased it for the museum. Georges Hulin de Loo Archive: Ghent, Universiteitsbibliotheek, bhsl. Hs. 3231 map 12. Friedländer (1903b, 32) adds that F. Kennis resided in Ghent.

Vandenbroeck 2002, 192–33.


Von Baldass (1917, 196), followed in virtually every subsequently published study. Koreny (2012, 35) also views it as autograph and places it late in Bosch’s oeuvre.

Tolnay 1986, 44–45 (original edition 1937); followed by Combe 1946, 15.


Simon Schummer – better known among Bosch specialists by his monastic name Father Gerlach O.F.M. Cap. – took the lead in this regard, but the Antwerp art historian Leo Wuyts and Professor Jan Karel Steppe of Leuven University also expressed their doubts. Gerlach 1968; Wuyts 1968. Gerd Unverfehrt, who considered the painting to be autograph, responded in 1975.

Slatkes 1975, 340–42.

Marijnissen 1987, 380.


Maeterlinck 1900; Maeterlinck 1906, 299–307.

Allan Marquand purchased Christ Before Pilate from Colnaghi art dealers in London some time around 1891. The painting was already attributed to Hieronymus Bosch based on similarities with the panels in Valencia. Marquand donated it to Princeton University Art Museum. Marquand 1903. There is a photograph in Hulin de Loo’s archive of the panel when it was still owned by Marquand. Georges Hulin de Loo Archive: Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ghent, ms 3160 map 6: Hieronymus Bosch. Louis Maeterlinck informed Allan Marquand of the similarity, to which the latter responded on 11 July 1903. Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent, Doos H. Bosch, Briefwisseling voor 1945.

We note, however, that Louis Maeterlinck expressed doubt as early as 1900 and again in 1906 regarding the Valencia panels, which he thought more likely to be the work of a follower. Maeterlinck 1900, 74; Maeterlinck 1906, 305.


The most important arguments are the documented later provenance of the panels in Valencia [see cat. 28] and above all the exaggeratedly stereotypical heads, the painting style and strongly caricature-like nature of which build on Hieronymus Bosch’s work, while simultaneously deviating from it. They ought in fact to be placed in the second quarter of the sixteenth century in a loose circle of anonymous painters around Quentin Metsys in Antwerp.

Conway 1921, 344.


Cf. also Fischer 2013, 266.

See also brcp, Technical Studies, cat. 29, ill. 1. The panel in Princeton has barbs and unpainted edges around the sides. However, infrared reflectography performed in 2015 with a Goodrich IR camera equipped with an InGaAs detector was unable to reveal any underdrawing for that painting. The brcp is grateful to Norman E. Muller of the Princeton University Art Museum for this information (email, 17 March 2015).

The ends of the board are not currently accessible because of the edges fitted around the panel during its restoration in 1956–57.

Koreny 2012, 28ff. He follows the example here of Unverfehrt 1975 and 1980.

Koreny 2012, 64–65. See also cat. 50.

Cf. also Fischer 2013, 266.
The Last Judgement (fragment)

Follower of Hieronymus Bosch
C. 1530–40
Oil on oak panel, 59.6 x 113 cm
Bayerische Staatsgemäldesammlungen, Alte Pinakothek, Munich, 5752

BRCP examination and documentation data:

Condition
The panel is cropped on three sides. It is extensively cropped at the top and on the left, but presumably less is missing at the bottom. The presence of a barb and unpainted edge on the right indicates that it was originally housed in an engaged frame. It is generally assumed to have formed the lower right section of a much larger Last Judgement. The panel reverse, which is locally thinned and has nine wooden blocks glued to the join, appears to be original in part. There is a small unstable crack in the top right corner and locally slightly raised paint, but adhesion of paint and ground is very good in general. Different craquelure patterns can be observed, some relating to the canvas strips applied before the ground. The main (restored) losses are at the central join. Abrasion is limited, but locally paint is severely damaged (for instance in the rooster-figure) or scratched (in the winged fish). Especially the skin tones have increased in transparency and appear darker locally, but aside from minor imperfections, the legibility of the original paint surface is excellent.

Provenance
1822 Bildergalerie, Nuremberg; 1877–1920 Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg; since 1920 Alte Pinakothek, Munich.

Literature

Analysis
The Last Judgement fragment in Munich was attributed to Bosch in the nineteenth century. Charles de Tolnay went so far as to identify it in his 1937 monograph as part of the Last Judgement commissioned by Philip the Fair in 1904. It was still being exhibited as such at the anniversary exhibition in ’s-Hertogenbosch in 1967. It became clear at that point, however, that the style and the technique differ so markedly that this must be the work of a follower, an attribution since adopted by most authors. A Temptation of Saint Anthony (rr 113–114) that was also once attributed to Bosch and a sheet of model drawings in Oxford might be the work of the same artist.

Attribution and Rejection
The fragment showing an array of monsters and chimeras was first attributed to Hieronymus Bosch in 1893. Prior to this, in the early nineteenth century, ‘Hell Brueghel’ (Pieter Brueghel the Younger, 1564/65–1638) had been proposed as the fragment’s author; this was subsequently rejected when the panel was published as an anonymous work of around 1530. Doubts concerning its authorship persisted, however, until Ernst Buchner published it as an autograph Hieronymus Bosch in 1935–36. This attribution was then generally adopted, with Charles de Tolnay going so far as to state in 1937 that the fragment undoubtedly came from the Last Judgement that Philip the Fair had commissioned in 1504. This hypothesis was still being advanced in 1967 during the major anniversary exhibition in ’s-Hertogenbosch. On the same occasion, however, it was stressed that the painting differs significantly from Bosch’s other works. Karl Arndt homed in on this in his critical discussion of the exhibition in ’s-Hertogenbosch, in which he firmly argued that the Munich fragment is not by Bosch nor a faithful copy of an original by him. The same had already been concluded a year earlier in connection with a study of the drawings in Oxford and Providence. Since then, virtually all authors agree that the painting can be attributed to a follower of Hieronymus Bosch.

Resurrection of the Dead
The panel has been cropped on three sides. The surviving barb and unpainted edge on the right show that this side is original. The left half of the surviving fragment shows the resurrection of the dead on Judgement Day. Naked men and women emerge from fifteen or so open graves; they include a king, an emperor, a bishop and a cardinal, each identifiable by his headgear. In the right half, demons take charge of the dead, who are evidently being led off to hell. A section of blue fabric has been left over in the lower left corner of the fragment, which must originally have belonged to the robes of a large figure. Buchner concluded from
this in the mid-1930s that the panel was the right half of a large Last Judgement scene, with the standing figure of the Archangel Michael – the weigher of souls, robed in blue – as its central focus. Buchner had in mind – with subsequent authors generally concurring – a painting similar to the large Last Judgements of Rogier van der Weyden (Beaune) and Hans Memling (Gdańsk). In the case of the Last Judgement to which the Munich fragment belonged, this would imply a panel measuring almost three metres across – a gigantic work, given that the central panel of the Garden of Earthly Delights is 175 cm wide and that of the Vienna Last Judgement 127 cm. What is more, Van der Weyden and Memling’s Last Judgements are spread across seven and three adjacent panels respectively. The central panel of Bosch’s Vienna Last Judgement, however, provides an intriguing point of reference. The underdrawing of its left foreground includes a kneeling donor who, for some unknown reason, was never actually painted (see cat. 17). It is possible, therefore, that the drapery in the Munich fragment might be the front part of a kneeling donor’s cloak. If so, to continue the parallel with the central panel in Vienna, there will have been a brightly lit entrance to heaven high above him, at the right hand of Christ enthroned in the centre. The darkness of hell will then have been shown at Christ’s left hand – in the upper right from the beholder’s point of view. With the exception of the blue cloak in the lower left, all the figures have been painted on a dark-brown base layer. The cloak is also the only detail in which a few underdrawn lines have been found using infrared reflectography.

DATE

Dendrochronological dating suggests that the work could have been painted after 1442 and more likely 1444 (see below). In his study on Bosch’s reception in the sixteenth century, however, Gerd Unverfehrt drew on earlier literature to assemble a small body of work around the anonymous ‘Master of the Munich Last Judgement’. He placed the double-sided model sheet in Oxford in this group, along with the drawing in Providence, the panel with
the Temptation of Saint Anthony in ’s-Hertogenbosch, and the one with the Descent into Limbo in Philadelphia. Fritz Koreny concluded that this group was certainly not the work of a single artist, but that the corresponding details in the different sheets and panels ought to be traced back to common examples deriving in part from Bosch himself. Several details in the Oxford model sheet are directly linked to the creatures in the panel in Munich. Koreny’s date of 1530–40, with which we concur, is later than that suggested by Unverfehrt, who wanted to place the entire group in the second decade of the sixteenth century.

**SAINT ANTHONY**

The Temptation of Saint Anthony in ’s-Hertogenbosch also corresponds in certain respects with the sheet in Oxford. Friedländer attributed the painting to Bosch in 1927 and it was still being exhibited as an original Hieronymus Bosch in Munich in 1930. Since then, it has been considered the work of a follower, as have the two drawings and the Munich panel. The Saint Anthony panel remains intriguing nevertheless. The image is painted on a support consisting of two boards; dendrochronological analysis indicates that painting could have occurred from 1461 onwards, but more likely from 1463. IR and IRR images make clearer what could already be made out to some extent with the naked eye: the Temptation of Saint Anthony was painted on top of another work. It was originally a memorial panel, the existing picture of which was removed. Two groups of donors are portrayed in the foreground. Four veiled women kneel on the right, while on the left there are at least two and possibly two more underdrawn and partially painted men. Although the underlying image appears never to have been finished, this impression might also be due to damage to the paint layer. The donors are positioned in front of a standing figure of Christ as the Man of Sorrows, viewed from an angle. Mary, baring her right breast, stands behind him on the right of the panel, while God the Father can be seen on the left, enthroned and blessing his Son with his right hand. Traces of painting as well as several lines from the underdrawing can be made out in these three figures. This is an example of a ‘Stairway of Salvation’ or Intercessio image, highlighting the way prayers directed to God will be heard through the intercession of the Virgin Mary and of her Son, who sacrificed himself on behalf of humanity. The aureoles of three saints or angels are still vaguely visible at the top of the panel.
At some unknown time, this image was partially removed and partly covered over by a thin layer of light paint. The panel was rotated ninety degrees to the left and was then used for a fairly linear and probably incomplete underdrawing. It was subsequently straightened up again, at which point the image we see now was underdrawn and finally painted. The memorial scene with donors can be dated stylistically to the final quarter of the fifteenth century; it was overpainted with the Temptation of Saint Anthony probably just under half a century later.

Saint Anthony is presented as a hunched-over old man in a hilly landscape that merges in the background into rocky outcrops silhouetted against infernal flames. The hermit is barefoot, dressed in a russet habit and wears a small blue-green cap on his head. A girdle book hangs from the cord tied around his waist. In his left hand he holds a rosary with a tau or Saint Anthony’s cross as pendant, while leaning on a staff. He is also holding a little bell. These are all attributes by which he can be identified immediately. He is surrounded by all manner of monsters.

The panel’s provenance goes back to the collection of the Munich art dealer A.S. Drey in 1927. Oddly enough, a replica of this Temptation of Saint Anthony done on canvas in Italy in the eighteenth or nineteenth century follows the original so faithfully that the ghostly traces of God the Father and the Virgin Mary that show through the paint layer in the panel were also reproduced faithfully, though presumably inadvertently.

In view of the similarities of style, quality and motifs between the fragment of a Last Judgement in Munich, the Temptation of Saint Anthony in ’s-Hertogenbosch and the model drawing in Oxford, we believe that these are all the work of the same artist.
In the third edition of the catalogue of paintings at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg, where the panel was located at the time. Essenwein 1893, 16 no. 60.

1. Essenwein 1885, 14 no. 69.


5. Tornay 1937, 35, 95 no. 21. The Last Judgement commissioned by Philip the Fair is discussed in Chapter I, ‘Hieronymus Bosch c. 1450–1516’, and under cat. 17. Vandenbroeck (2006, 228) once again shares Tornay’s view that the Munich panel is a fragment of the 1504 panel for Philip the Fair.


13. Art Collection Van Lanschot, ‘s-Hertogenbosch, oil on panel, 60.1 × 52 cm. Date 1530–40. brcp examination and documentation data: ‘s-Hertogenbosch, 23 October 2013. Condition: The panel is thinned, revealing old worm damage, and extensively cradled, but it has retained its original dimensions. Multiple restored damages visible in irr and at the bottom centre in vis relate to the initial, overpainted composition. Its main shapes shimmer through as a result of increased transparency of especially lighter background paints. The paint surface is easily legible.


16. Friedlander 1927, 150 no. 91.

17. See also brcp, Technical Studies, cat. s3, rr113–114.

18. The authors are grateful to Michel van de Laar.
**The Temptation of Saint Anthony**

Follower of Hieronymus Bosch  
C. 1530–40  
Oil on oak panel, 73 × 52.5 cm  
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, P 2049

Not examined or documented in situ by the BRCP.  
Condition  
The BRCP was not given permission to examine the painting in the Prado. For the technical data, see Garrido and Van Schoute 2001, 58–67.

Provenance  
Escorial, probably 1574; between 1849 and 1857 listed in the first inventory of the Museo Nacional del Prado collection (no. 466).

Literature  

**Analysis**

This Temptation of Saint Anthony is attributed to Hieronymus Bosch in early inventories, with the one drawn up at the Escorial in 1574 probably the earliest. The last time it was exhibited without reservation as an autograph Bosch was at the anniversary exhibition in ’s-Hertogenbosch in 1967. Since then, it has been almost universally accepted that the panel is the work of a follower. It assumed its current form in two stages: the panel originally had a semi-circular top and was later extended to make it rectangular. The image was seriously damaged in and around the figure of the saint and was substantially overpainted in the same intervention.

**Attribution and Rejection**

The Bosch exhibition in 1967 was the last time the Prado Temptation of Saint Anthony was presented without qualification as an autograph painting by Hieronymus Bosch.1 The German art historian Karl Arndt devoted the entire first issue of Kunsthchronik in 1968 to a detailed and critical review of the exhibition, in which he focused on a number of issues relating to imitations and copies of Bosch versus autograph works. Arndt firmly rejected this Saint Anthony panel, which he placed instead among the free imitations.2 In so doing, he broke with a tradition stretching back to the sixteenth century, given that the painting can probably be identified as one of the nine works ascribed to Bosch that were transferred to the Escorial in 1574 on the order of King Philip II: ‘another painting on panel, rounded at the top, of Saint Anthony, by Hieronymus Bosch, three feet high and two feet wide’.3 Although these dimensions seem too large for the Prado Temptation, the list in question systematically states the measurements of the works including their frames, which means it could still be the same painting. This Temptation of Saint Anthony was consistently described as an original work by Bosch from Gossart (1907) and Cohen (1910) onwards, including by Friedländer (1921), until it was exhibited alongside other followers and copies in 1967. Arndt’s view was then gradually adopted by other authors, marked at first by regular expressions of doubt.

Since Gerd Unverfehrt’s study (1980), no scholar believes this to be an autograph Bosch any longer, although opinions differ as to whether it is a workshop piece or a Northern Netherlandish painting from around 1510. Be that as it may, in Bosch at the Museo del Prado: Technical Study (2001), Carmen Garrido and Roger Van Schoute cautiously challenged what was by then the consensus view, namely that the panel was not the work of Bosch himself. They argued that the composition and some of the iconographical details are identical with other works by the master, and that the panel resembles Bosch’s style even more closely if we look beyond the repainting and alterations.4 Garrido and Van Schoute’s view is not persuasive, however, and did not result in a further shift of opinion. Stefan Fischer argues in his recent monograph that it is now generally agreed that the painting cannot be an original Bosch.5 It is our opinion too that the work is definitely not by Bosch himself and also not a copy after an original by him. Instead, it is a free imitation in the spirit of the ’s-Hertogenbosch master. Although the painting’s atmosphere and subject matter were undoubtedly inspired by Bosch’s work, it differs from his art in virtually every other
respect, including its composition, depth effects, style and technique. Moreover, as various authors have already noted, the monsters depicted here are amusing cartoons for the most part, which do not frighten the viewer – not at all what we have come to expect from Bosch himself.

The panel was originally rounded at the top but was extended at some point to make it rectangular (if the panel is indeed the one mentioned in the *Entregas* from the Escorial, this must have occurred after 1574). Large parts of the composition were repainted at the same time. What is more, published infrared reflectograms and X-radiographs show that the figure of Saint Anthony – which Garrido and Van Schoute consider to be part of the original paint layer – was likewise painted on top of an extensive area of damage. As no underdrawing was detected, it seems highly unlikely that traces of an original composition by Hieronymus Bosch are concealed beneath the overpainting. The original, rounded panel is nevertheless an old one. It consists of two boards of almost equal width, to which dendrochronological analysis gives an early date.6

Stylistically speaking, however, the Temptation of Saint Anthony cannot have been painted before the second decade of the sixteenth century.

**ICONOGRAPHY**

Anthony is depicted as a hermit sitting in a tree trunk that has been turned into a primitive hut. His clasped hands show that he is absorbed in prayer. The bell hanging at the top of the barren tree, which Anthony can ring by pulling a rope, is the saint’s characteristic attribute. He wears the brown habit of the Antonine Order, with the typical tau (T-shaped) cross on his right shoulder. A precious girdle book hangs at his right hip, with a crystal sphere stopping the leather flaps from slipping beneath his wide belt. A pig lies to his left, as deep in thought as the saint himself. The little bell in its right ear shows it to be one of the ‘Saint Anthony’s pigs’ that rooted around in late-medieval cities. Anthony is beset by demons on both sides, while further off in the background other monstrous creatures advance towards the exotic-looking building we identify as an Antonine monastery from the tau cross above its entrance gate. The monastery is on fire: a red glow is visible through the open door, and flames can also be seen behind the building and to the right. A large city is visible on the horizon. The image as a whole shows Anthony being tormented by the devil during his time in the wilderness, as described at length in his *vita*.7 The demons and monsters depicted in this panel might be imaginative, but they differ in crucial ways from the imagery used by Bosch himself. The creature attacking the pig with its sharp beak and a raised sledgehammer, for instance, is an artificial amalgam of elements – fortress/bird/human/monster – that is far removed from Bosch’s own fantastical hybrids, which for all their strangeness always seem plausible and natural. The drooling two-legged monster that enters the scene lower left resembles the weird creature followed by two of its young that we find in the foreground of the Vienna *Last Judgement* (cat. 17), and one of the monsters drawn in a model sheet in the Louvre (cat. 52v). All the same, it too is essentially different from those creatures. This monster, with its iridescent, shot-coloured head, is moreover placed prominently in the lower left corner, almost in the manner of a signature, which

\[31.1\]

\[31.2\]

\[31.3\]

\[31.4\]
is not something we find in Bosch or in any of his known followers. One detail in particular stands out when we examine the creature more closely – the sheathed ‘bollock dagger’, painted meticulously and in accurate foreshortening, that hangs from the longest of the curled hairs (?) on its back. The combination of a realistically rendered implement with an invented creature is something we do not actually find in Hieronymus Bosch. The dagger recalls a signature like that of the Swiss draughtsman, printmaker and painter Niklaus Manuel Deutsch (1484–1530), who was the first artist to sign his works with a Swiss dagger (Schweizerdolch). His example was later followed by many other artists from the Swiss Confederacy, including the Monogrammist HD and the better-known Urs Graf. Archaeological evidence shows that bollock or ballock daggers of this kind, named for their phallic appearance, were known throughout northern Europe from the fourteenth century. Examples are also found in paintings by Bosch himself, such as the Wayfarer Triptych (cat. 19) and Christ Carrying the Cross in Vienna (cat. 12), and in the Cure of Folly (cat. 33).

This Temptation of Saint Anthony was probably painted in the period 1530–40, with the repainting and extension most likely occurring after 1574.³

¹ Exhib. cat. ‘s-Hertogenbosch 1967, 64–65 no. 3.
² Arndt 1968, 18.
³ ‘Otra tabla de pintura en redondo por lo alto de San[ [...], Vandenbroeck 2001a, 52; Checa Cremades, Mancini and Vázquez Dueñas 2013, 219.
⁴ Garrido and Van Schoute (2001, 23, 31) suggest that it was painted by Bosch, arguing on p. 65: ‘In addition, the high quality of certain elements of the facture incline us to attribute the work to the artist …’.²
⁵ Fischer 2013, 265, no. 27.
⁶ The most recent growth ring dates from 1451. The panel could have been painted from 1462 onwards, therefore, although production after 1464 is more likely. It is not impossible that the painting was originally intended as the central panel of a small triptych. The join between the boards runs almost down the middle, prompting Marc Rudolf de Vrij to suggest that the panel might originally have been the exterior wings of a triptych, which were later joined together. However, there is no material evidence to support this. De Vrij 2012, 532–33 no. d.12.
⁷ Bosch depicted this much more intensely in the Saint Anthony Triptych in Lisbon; see cat. 4 in this regard and for references to Anthony’s vita.
⁹ Unverfehrt (1980, 250) thinks that the panel was painted around 1510 in the Northern Netherlands.
The Conjurer

Follower of Hieronymus Bosch
after c. 1525

Oil on oak panel, 53.6 × 65.3 cm
Musée municipal de Saint-Germain-en-Laye, 872.1.87

BRCP examination and documentation data:

Condition
The wooden support is severely warped but in excellent condition with a nearly invisible join and slight beveling at the edges. The format is largely original. Traces of the use of a temporary work frame are visible at the top right. The adhesion of both ground and paint layers is outstanding and no recent losses were observed. There are, however, several restored losses and abraded areas, especially in the centre of the panel in and around the green-robed man. Ageing cracks are relatively obvious in white areas and broader drying cracks are visible in the sky, but overall the legibility of the original paint surface is excellent.

Provenance
1850 Ducastel family; bequeathed to the museum in 1872 by Louis-Alexandre Ducastel.

Literature

Analysis
The Conjurer derives from a prototype by Hieronymus Bosch and, like the Cure of Folly (cat. 33), is a moralizing painting on the dangers of deception and gullibility. The painting is closely related to two drawings by Bosch and an engraving from the mid-sixteenth century, which refers to him as the inventor. Bosch’s invention is likely to have been more complex in its imagery than the surviving painting. In this case, the conjurer’s accomplice, the man supposedly spitting out frogs, is not only a deceiver, he himself is also deceived. The underdrawing shows that the painting is not an original design but a copy after an earlier composition.

DRAWSINGs
There are two drawings by Hieronymus Bosch that can be viewed as studies for a painting of a conjurer (cat. 47 and 48). One of these sheets, in Liège, has little to show apart from the conman and his victim. The other drawing, now in Paris, is clearer. The conjurer in this sheet performs his tricks behind a table; his wife or assistant beats a drum behind him, while a leashed dog and a monkey sit at her feet. A sword, tambourine and dish lie on the ground. The audience facing the conjurer watches his performance attentively, while one of them has his purse stolen. A couple of people, with their arms around each other, observe the proceedings in the foreground, positioning them as it were between the beholder of the drawing and the events it shows; these figures are probably in on the conspiracy too.

Evidently, the conjurer and his assistant have carefully orchestrated the scene: the couple to the side keep lookout while another accomplice robs members of the audience. The viewer of the sheet sees it all – deceivers and deceived alike. The conjurer is a deceiver twice over: his magic tricks are themselves fake, while the performance as a whole has been staged to allow the real deception to take place. The victim has likewise been had twice: fooled by the conjuring trick and robbed of his money. These multiple layers of meaning link the drawing to the conception of The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes and the Cure of Folly (cat. 37 and 33).

PAINTING
The painting of the Conjurer shows only the central scene, which makes the image seem more one-dimensional at first sight: the magic trick is performed and a fool is fleeced. The panel – which the drawings suggest derives from Bosch – has not, however, lost all of its ambiguity. Unlike the drawing, the action takes place here before a blank wall adjoining a ruined building to the left. There is a bird’s nest in a round window opening, in which a large chick gazes up hungrily with its beak wide open. Infrared images of the panel reveal
that it is being cared for by a much smaller songbird sitting on the crumbling wall. This bird, which was done in brown paint, has suffered considerable abrasion. It was much more clearly visible around 1550, when the engraver Balthasar Sylvius/van den Bosch (s-Hertogenbosch 1518–Antwerp 1580) made a print after the painting: the chick is a cuckoo that has hatched in the deceived songbird’s nest.¹

One important change in the painting compared to the drawing relates to the person whose purse is being cut. The victim of the robbery in the drawing is the young woman whose lover directs her attention to the conjurer. In the painting, by contrast, it is the tall man spitting out frogs whose money is stolen. One frog sits on the table while another emerges from his mouth,² suggesting he is an assistant of the conjurer, as they perform the illusion together. Unlike the drawing, therefore, the painting shows the deceiver being
deceived. This is taken a step further in the print, in which the bent-over man drools as he
witnesses the magic trick and is not in on the crime. The cutpurse behind him is accom-
panied by a helper who has already taken hold of the purse. The question in this case is
whether the conjurer and the pair of thieves are actually working together; the moralizing
inscription simply warns the viewer against conmen.

The prototype of the Conjurér was, at any rate, already being linked with Hieronymus
Bosch in the mid-sixteenth century, as shown by Balthasar van den Bosch’s print, which is
inscribed ‘HERONIMUS BOSCH INVINTOR’. The painting in Saint-Germain-en-Laye was
first published as a Bosch by Henri Hymans in 1893. Hymans presented it more or less as
a pendant of the Cure of Folly (cat. 33). Several authors viewed the painting as an early work,
because of its relatively simple style and composition. Some changed their mind over time,
joining the group of Bosch experts who considered it to be an early imitation or a copy after
a lost original. Paul Vandenbroeck went furthest in this regard, writing in 1987 that the
freer and considerably larger variations with more anecdotal details in Jerusalem and Phila-
delphia were more faithful replicas of a lost original. In 2002, Vandenbroeck described the
version in Saint-Germain-en-Laye as a ’later, pseudo-archaic forgery of a Bosch prototype …
possibly painted on an old panel in the second quarter of the sixteenth century’. He dated
this lost prototype to 1496–1502 or later. Fritz Koreny recently attributed the Conjurér to a
follower of Bosch of around 1515–20, and Stefan Fischer stated that it was painted in Bosch’s
workshop or by a follower in the 1510s. Dendrochronological analysis of the panel gives a
post quem date of 1496 and more probably 1498. A later date – after about 1520–25 – seems
likely, however, on stylistic grounds and also in view of the method of framing.

The underdrawing was done in a dry but somewhat greasy material. The contours alone
were prepared with relatively broad lines and no further modelling. This method of under-
drawing confirms that the composition was not conceived on the panel but was copied
from an existing example. A similar type of underdrawing is found in the Cure of Folly in
the Prado (cat. 33). The underdrawing was carefully followed in the paint layer, although
some of the contours were moved and the little dog and several objects on the table shifted
to the left. Doubts existed for some considerable time as to whether the panel’s size is
original and regarding the related unpainted edge of the upper half of the right side; the
dimensions nevertheless seem largely unchanged. Although the ground layer runs over
this edge, the presence of a barb in the paint shows that the panel was barely larger here, but that the primed panel was painted in a temporary ‘working frame’, before being placed in a rabbeted frame.\(^{10}\) A noteworthy aspect of the way the paint was applied is the visibility of numerous fine brushstrokes, particularly in the faces in which, surprisingly, blue paint has also been used in some cases. Brushstrokes like this are also visible locally in much subtler form in the Ghent Christ Carrying the Cross (cat. 29). This technique, combined with the thinly applied paint, is not found, however, in works from the core of Bosch’s oeuvre.

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2. Opinions differ as to whether this is a man or a woman. Hymans (1893, 235) thought the figure was female, as did Brand Philip (1958, 35 n. 67) followed by the exhibition catalogue ’s-Hertogenbosch 1967 (128–31 no. 33).
8. The fact that the panel was originally housed in a rabbeted frame points to a production after c. 1520–25. Verougstraete 2015, 68.
9. Le Chanu and Mottin 2006, 120 and 121 (fig. 1).
10. A similar barb also appears to be visible in the upper part of the left edge. The panel edges to which the ‘working frame’ was attached have been partially planed off. See also the concise research report in brcp, Technical Studies, cat. 32, 87–88.
The Cure of Folly

Workshop or follower of Hieronymus Bosch

C. 1500–20

Oil on oak panel, 48.8 x 34.6 cm

Inscription: Meester snijt die keye ras/
Myne name Is lubbert das
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, 92056

Condition

The panel has been almost completely preserved and the painting is generally very stable. The edges were cropped slightly and two non-original dovetails reinforce the join on the reverse, which was planed down in the centre. Woodworm damage has weakened the painting at the bottom left and the regluing of a crack there has resulted in differences in surface level. Besides the retouched join and a slightly abraded paint surface, there are only minor restored losses. Red lakes have faded somewhat and the surgeon’s shoulders and the woman’s robe originally appeared more purple. Green lakes have discoloured brown and several lighter paints have increased in transparency. The original paint surface is relatively well legible.

Provenance

Probably owned before 1524 by Philip of Burgundy at Wijk-bij-Duurstede; 1794 Duke of Arco; subsequently the Escorial; since the mid-nineteenth century in the Museo Nacional del Prado.

Literature

BRCP, Technical Studies, cat. 33, 88 85–86; //Boschproject.org no. 33.

Analysis

The panel with the Cure of Folly and the explanatory verse Meester snijt die keye ras/ Myne name Is lubbert das (‘Master, cut the stone out quickly, my name is Lubbert Das’) is an early copy after an invention by Hieronymus Bosch. The original version was probably painted during or shortly after the chapter meeting of the Order of the Golden Fleece in ’s-Hertogenbosch in 1481. The combination of a complementary text and image, both with a double meaning, makes this an early example of a Renaissance emblem. The version discussed here was painted in the late fifteenth or early sixteenth century, perhaps in Bosch’s workshop. The commission might have come from Admiral Philip of Burgundy, who was admitted to the Order of the Golden Fleece in 1501.

PROVENANCE

King Philip II of Spain gave the order in 1570 for a number of works of art to be purchased from the estate of Felipe de Guevara (1500–1563), including a Haywain triptych (cat. 20) and five paintings on canvas, listed as the work of Hieronymus Bosch. One of these canvases was described in the following terms: ‘Another rectangular canvas, in which folly is cured, has yet to be framed, as all other works have been framed.’ It was in the Escorial in 1574 and was still listed in 1600 in the estate of King Philip II as ‘a canvas done by Hieronymus Bosch, in poor condition, painted in watercolour, with a surgeon operating on a man’s head’. This painting has been lost, along with many other fragile works done in water-based paint on canvas.

A painting showing the Cure of Folly – a theme known also as ‘Cutting the Stone’ and the ‘Extraction of the Stone of Folly’ – was located in the early sixteenth century at Duurstede Castle. This was the residence of Philip of Burgundy (1464–1524), who was bishop of Utrecht from 1517 until his death on 7 April 1524. The painting was subsequently described as ‘A picture of Lubbert Tas, from whom the stone is being cut’. It was auctioned in Utrecht in July 1527, following which there is no further trace of it. The painter’s name was not mentioned, but the description indicates that it must have been a Cure of Folly and it seems entirely possible that it was the panel now in the Prado. The panel might have been taken to Spain at an early stage; it is striking, after all, that not one of the many variations that were painted in the course of the sixteenth century, or others of which descriptions have survived, include the calligraphic reference to Lubbert Das.

The Cure of Folly in the Prado came from the Duke and Duchess of Arco’s collection at their country estate of Quinta del Pardo near Madrid, where it was recorded in 1745 and again in 1794. The painting, by then part of the royal collection in the Prado, was attributed in the mid-nineteenth century to the Netherlandish school under the title ‘Operacion quirurgica burlesca’ (‘comical surgical operation’). The German art historian Carl Justi was
the first to publish the *Cure of Folly* as the work of Hieronymus Bosch. He did so in 1889, since when the panel has generally been attributed to Bosch, and mostly as an early work. Doubt as to Bosch’s authorship has also been expressed, however, since the end of the nineteenth century.

Physical analysis of the *Cure of Folly* confirms the suspicion that this is a copy, since Bosch’s characteristic way of working, with its continuous exploration and adjustment of the composition, is all but absent here. The underdrawing likewise differs sharply in terms of both style and material from those in other paintings from the Bosch group. The composition was prepared in detail using a dry, slightly greasy material, and the underdrawing
was then followed almost exactly in the paint layer. The paint itself was also applied precisely and carefully, in a noticeably smoother manner than we have come to expect from Bosch. Virtually no impasto is found in the underpainting of the red lake either. The more painterly character of the landscape and the atmospheric perspective make it likely that this copy was done not after a drawing but after another painting.

Dendrochronological dating of the panel indicates that the painting was done after 1488 and more likely after 1490. Stylistically speaking, there is little reason to propose a date well into the sixteenth century as some authors have done. Gerd Unverfehrt goes no further than 1510–20, arguing that of all Bosch imitations, the Cure of Folly is the closest to Bosch himself. The baluster-shaped table leg decorated with acanthus leaves is an element with a strikingly Renaissance character. The similarity has already been noted between this element and the whipping post in a prayer-card printed in or under the immediate influence of Marienwater monastery near ‘s-Hertogenbosch at the beginning of the sixteenth century, indicating that a motif of this kind would not be in conflict with the time or place.

On the other hand, the dendrochronological dating need not preclude the painting’s execution in Bosch’s workshop.

MEANING

Given the design and the historical context in which the overall composition of the Prado Cure of Folly can be placed, it seems fair to look to Hieronymus Bosch for the prototype. The interaction between image and text is comparable with that in the drawing The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes (cat. 37). Bosch’s invention in the Cure of Folly lies in the transformation of a popular saying into an image, which he has then extended into a verbal and visual game through the calligraphic text around the picture. The wordplay is taken even further by the fact that rather than a stone, it is a flower that is supposedly being removed from the portly idiot’s head: the Middle Dutch word keye not only meant ‘stone’, but also ‘carnation’ and ‘flower’ in general. To have ‘a stone in your head’ was to be stupid or mad, and so its removal would cure the sufferer’s folly. However, the idea of ‘cutting the stone’ also assumed the secondary meaning of robbing someone or deceiving them, which was in turn synonymous with the verb lubben – literally to cut or castrate.

The scene painted in the tondo and the text that surrounds it – ‘Master, cut the stone out quickly, my name is Lubbert Das’ – both have several layers of meaning. The picture heightens the significance of the inscription, while the text adds an extra dimension to the image. The surgeon is performing an operation everyone knows to be a charade. The inverted funnel on his head marks him out as a fool, while the beer-jug hanging from his belt hardly inspires confidence either. The company he keeps – an elderly woman and a man – seem equally dubious. The woman, who appears to be watching attentively, has a closed book on her head, and a purse hanging somewhat ostentatiously from her belt. Although the man makes a solicitous gesture – almost a blessing – towards the victim with his right hand, he too clutches a wine or beer-jug in his left. The idiot lolls back in the chair, doing full justice to his name, Lubbert Das. The badger (das) was thought to be lazy, being a nocturnal creature that naturally sleeps all day; ‘Lubbert’, meanwhile, is a standard male name, but was also used – as was the female equivalent ‘Lubba’ – as a nickname for a fat, lazy and/or stupid person, while the verb lubben meant, as already noted, to castrate or emasculate. The patient’s belt-pouch, through which a ‘bollock dagger’ has been stuck, adds to the double entendre, as does Lubbert’s conspicuous hose, complete with codpiece. Taken together, these elements make the Cure of Folly an early example of a Renaissance emblem – an illustration with a pithy and often moralizing saying, in which word and image complement one another.

The scene with the Cure of Folly is set in a tondo against a black background on which the explanatory text is laid out in gold letters with elaborate cadels. The visual association between this image and the panels with shields of the Order of the Golden Fleece is unmistakable. These heraldic paintings were installed from 1430 onwards in every church where
the Burgundian chivalric order held a chapter meeting. The venue in 1481 was 's-Hertogenbosch. Only four of the thirty-six shields installed in St John's Church at that time have survived. Bosch is sure to have been familiar with them, especially since one of the boards was hung upside-down in a porch outside the church as a humiliating punishment for one of the knights of the order, Philippe de Crèvecoeur.15

The visual rhyme between the *Cure of Folly* panel and the Golden Fleece paintings must likewise have been obvious to Bishop Philip of Burgundy who, as already noted, owned a 'Cure of Folly of Lubbert Das' in the early sixteenth century. Philip himself had been inducted into the Order at its sixteenth chapter meeting in Brussels in 1501, and the emblematic painting would have been perfectly at home in the kind of intellectual and cultural circles to which he belonged.16 He had a large art collection and even managed to engage Jan Gossart as his court painter. In addition to the *Cure of Folly*, there was a painting on canvas at Duurstede Castle with a comical scene by (or after) Bosch; it was probably signed, since the inventory explicitly states the painter's name as 'Jeronimus Bosch'.17 It is entirely plausible that Philip himself, while still Admiral of the Low Countries and a knight of the Golden Fleece, commissioned his copy of the *Cure of Folly*. In 1511 the 'Bastard of Burgundy and Admiral of the Fleet' was in 's-Hertogenbosch with a large retinue.18 The *Cure of Folly* is a painting that invites discussion – a conversation piece that Philip displayed in the dining room of his Duurstede residence following his appointment as Bishop of Utrecht. He had probably seen the prototype at the home of one of his art-loving friends or acquaintances, to whom he is known to have given paintings as gifts.19 We do not know, however, for whom Hieronymus Bosch painted his original work, inspired by the shields of the Golden Fleece knights as installed in 's-Hertogenbosch to mark their 1481 chapter meeting. The *Cure of Folly* in the Prado stands at the beginning of a long visual tradition. Not only is there a relatively large group of Bosch imitations, the theme has also been adopted and reworked by countless other artists, including Jan Sanders van Hemessen, Pieter Brueghel the Younger, Maerten van Cleve, Pieter Baltens, Rembrandt, Frans Hals and Jan Steen. Its influence even extended into the twentieth century, when James Ensor drew on it for a performance, a painting and a photograph.20

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1 Justi 1889, 123, 141–42; Silva Maroto 2000b, 524 n. 43; Vandenbroeck 2001a, 49–50; Vázquez Duellas 2016, 12.
2 ‘Otro lienzo quadrad, Donde se cura de la Locura; por guarnesçer, porque todos los demás están guarnedjados.’
3 Garrido and Van Schoute 2001, 51; Vandenbroeck 2002, 40; Vandenbroeck 19872, 37, 372 n. 217.
4 ‘Een tafereel van Lubbert Tos die men die keye uyt snyt’: It is described in the inventory drawn up five years later which also included works that had been removed in the meantime, as ‘Een tafereel van Lubbertas, die men de keye snyt’ (Mattheus 1698, 1, 349; Sterk 1980, 55, 248, 309; exhib. cat. ‘s-Hertogenbosch 1967, 124–25 no. 30.
5 Unverfehrt 1950, 21, 111–14, 263–64 no. 55.
9 Brand Philip 1958, 45, has even suggested a date as late as 1560–70; Unverfehrt 1950, 111–14, 263–64 no. 55.
11 Bax 1967, 70; Koldeweij 1991, 10. Justi [1889, 130] already noted that there was no stone to be seen: ‘… sieht aus wie eine Tulpe’.
13 The upturned funnel as headgear with a negative connotation is used twice in the Temptation of Saint Anthony in Lisbon (cat. 4), once in Gluttony and Lust (cat. 196), and there are three inverted funnels in the Bruges Last Judgment Triptych (cat. 16). It does not appear in any other surviving works by Bosch. See the website Boschproject.org, link 126.
14 ‘Lubbert in de wei laten lopen’ (‘Taking Lubbert for a walk in the meadow’) is a euphemism, according to the dictionary of erotic proverbs, for sexual intercourse. Lubbert = penis. See Van den Broek 2002, 61.
20 Koldeweij 1996.
The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things

Workshop or follower of Hieronymus Bosch

Oil on poplar panel, 120 × 150 cm
Signed lower centre: jheronimus bosch
Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, 2822 (on loan from the Patrimonio Nacional)

BCCP examination and documentation data:
the BCCP did not obtain permission to examine the painting in the Prado.

Condition
The poplar support was enlarged at some point with two strips that were nailed to the sides. On the reverse, dark red paint, oakum and other materials were added later, including a strip of canvas that covers the crack in the centre that runs over the entire length of the panel. Other cracks were observed as well and although there are multiple losses and damages, the original paint surface appears to be in a fairly good state overall.¹

Provenance
By 1560 in the possession of Philip II of Spain; transferred to the Escorial in 1574 on the order of Philip II; since 1939 in the Museo Nacional del Prado.

Literature

Analysis
The attribution and function of this painting have been the subject of considerable debate. The earliest description, by Felipe de Guevara (c. 1560), suggests that it is the work of an apprentice or a follower—an analysis confirmed by closer examination of the work’s execution. The fact that the painting was done on poplar rather than oak, combined with De Guevara’s reference to it as a mesa (literally ‘table’, but also ‘panel’), has led to recurring suggestions that this is actually a tabletop, which is indeed probably the case. The painting’s provenance stretches back to Philip II’s private quarters in the Escorial. José de Sigüenza cited the painting as evidence of the orthodoxy of both the artist and Philip II.

MEANING

The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things represents a challenge in terms of its attribution to Hieronymus Bosch. The painting is signed in the lower middle and boasts a royal provenance stretching back to Philip II’s private quarters in the Escorial, where it was registered between 12 and 16 April 1574 as being ‘de mano de Géronimo Bosqui’.² The Seven Deadly Sins are set out within a series of concentric circles, the centrepiece of which is formed by the resurrected Christ standing in a sarcophagus; this central circle is set against a golden yellow background and surrounded by a circle of gilded rays. The extremely clear composition must have appealed to the pious king of the great Spanish Empire and founder of the Escorial. The words cave domini videt (‘beware, the Lord is watching’) are inscribed below Christ. The text heightens the suggestion that Christ is located in the pupil of an eye that sees all the sins of the world reflected in it. There are four medallions in the corners around the large central roundel, illustrating the ‘Four Last Things’: death, judgement, hell and heaven. The medallions and the large circle are set against a dark, monochrome background, painted largely in shades of green and brown in an imitation stone pattern.³ Two banderoles containing cautionary texts from Deuteronomy appear above and below the central circle. The one at the top reads: Gens absconditae [con]sillii et sine prudencia // deuto[m]y] 32[um] // utina[m] saperent [et] [i]stig[T]ac novissim[a] [r]eo[v]iderunt [n]t (‘They are a nation without sense, there is no discernment in them. If only they were wise and would understand this and discern what their end will be!’); and the one underneath: Abscondita[m] facie[m] mea[m] ab eis [et] [con]siderabo novissim[a] eo[r]um (‘I will hide my face from them; and see what their end will be’).⁴

The image sums up schematically what Bosch shows in a more implicit and complex way in paintings like the Garden of Earthly Delights, the Haywain and the Wayfarer Triptych (cat. 19–21), namely that hell is the inevitable destination of those who turn away from God. In his history of the Hieronymite Order (1595–1605), José de Sigüenza describes the painting as a mirror in which the truth of Christianity is reflected and in which viewers can
therefore see themselves. He concludes his description of the painting with the comment that ‘he who painted this had nothing against our faith’. His words need to be understood in the context of the task De Sigüenza set himself in his discussion of Bosch’s work, namely to show that any suggestion that the artist had been a heretic was nonsense. De Sigüenza plainly considered The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things to be an instructive example with which to emphasize its maker’s orthodoxy. He lent weight to his argument by stating that he was convinced the king had been a pious and devout man, and that if there had been any truth in the accusations of heresy levelled against Bosch, his works would never have been permitted to enter his majesty’s quarters. The painting played an important part, therefore, in justifying the presence of Bosch’s work in the Spanish royal collections.

Felipe de Guevara, writing forty years earlier in around 1560, also felt the need to stress that there was nothing unnatural about Bosch’s work. He drew a distinction in his Comentarios de la pintura between Bosch himself, who always worked with prudence (prudencia) and decorum (decoro), and his followers, whose imitations lacked discernment (disección) and judgement (juicio). All they cared about, De Guevara wrote, were monsters and strangeness, and they paid no heed to the content for which such forms were appropriate. It was only fair (justo), he went on, to report that among these imitators, there was one who had been Bosch’s pupil and who, whether out of respect for his master or to give his works a good name, did not sign his paintings with his own name but with that of Bosch.

In the very next sentence, without beginning a new paragraph, De Guevara goes on to mention The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things – already in the king’s possession – as an example of this kind of art.

An example of this type of painting is a ‘table [or panel]’ owned by His Majesty, in which the Seven Deadly Sins are painted in a circle, depicted in figures and examples: and although the painting is marvellous in itself, the depiction of Envy is, in my opinion, so rare and so ingenious, and expresses her emotion so well, that it can vie with Aristides, the inventor of the paintings the Greeks call Ethice, which in our Castilian language can be translated as ‘paintings that show the customs and feelings of human beings’.

Don Antonio Ponz, who published De Guevara’s manuscript in the eighteenth century, added a footnote in which he stated that he was convinced that the work in question was The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things and that the painting was located in the Escorial, in the bedchamber where Philip II had died, adjoining the first room of the royal apartments, and which could be entered via a door on the sacristy stairs.

**Attribution**

Felipe de Guevara’s passage on Bosch and The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things prompted the suggestion – one that persists to this day – that he was attributing the painting to a pupil of Bosch. This means De Guevara might be distinguishing here between work he considered to have been painted by Bosch himself and this particular painting. We know that De Guevara sold six paintings by Bosch to Philip II in 1570, from which we
can infer that he must have known Bosch’s work well. In his text about the artist, he therefore makes a point of distinguishing between original paintings by Bosch and those of his followers. He refers in this regard to a trick used by forgers to make their work seem older so that it could pass for Bosch’s own, by smoking them in the fireplace. The place where De Guevara cites the example of the ‘Tabletop’ at least keeps open the possibility that it may be interpreted as an example of the work of a pupil rather than simply as an example of a work by Bosch done with decorum and discernment. He could, after all, equally well have mentioned it in some other place if he wanted to avoid any doubt regarding the attribution.

The passage from the Comentarios de la pintura would undoubtedly have been discussed less frequently if there were no other grounds for doubting the painting’s attribution to Bosch; this is not the case, however. The painting was done on a thick poplar panel – the only time, as far as we can tell, that this ever occurred in early Netherlandish painting. The vast majority of panels are made of oak, preferably of the fine-grained Baltic variety. Poplar wood, by contrast, was widely used in Italy and Spain as a support for panel paintings. The painterly execution of the work is likewise difficult to link to the output of Bosch and his workshop. The painting was extensively prepared; the central circle was divided into regular segments and the composition was then underdrawn in considerable detail in at least two phases. The style of the underdrawing is precise, detailed and a little stiff, in a manner we do not find in the Bosch group. The artist handled the underdrawn design quite freely during the painting stage, deviating from it in numerous places. The uniform segmentation was abandoned, with the result that some of the scenes are larger than others. This means that the painter only felt bound to a limited degree by the design set out before him on the panel.

The way the sins are visualized, in contemporary, everyday situations rather than personifications, is engaging rather than brilliant. The elements of each image are mostly placed next to one another and complex compositions are avoided, giving the scenes a somewhat naive character. The perspective is not very successful in many cases, as we see in particular in the rendering of the table in Luxuria (Lust) and the chair in Gula (Glu-tony). This is in spite of the considerable attention paid to the positioning of the various objects in the underdrawing. Bosch’s brilliant and rapid way of working, which we find in the Temptation of Saint Anthony (cat. 4) and especially in the Haywain (cat. 20), but also in the more refined Garden of Earthly Delights (cat. 21) and the Adoration of the Magi (cat. 9) is as
good as absent here. As has frequently been noted, the images of the Four Last Things are of even lesser quality, and also differ from the Deadly Sins in terms of technique. The question arises, therefore, as to whether they might have been done by another artist.\textsuperscript{12} Death in the upper left medallion seems indebted to Death and the Miser in Washington (cat. 19c), but comes nowhere near the pictorial quality of that painting, in terms of either content or form. The underdrawing of this medallion is still somewhat comparable with the underdrawings of the panels from the Wayfarer Triptych, including the one in Washington, but was done with considerably less skill.\textsuperscript{13} The perspective of the faces painted in three-quarter profile is distorted in virtually all the scenes in the painting. The painter of this work was unable to represent the human face convincingly en trois quarts.\textsuperscript{14}

The available data for The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things raises serious doubts regarding its execution by Bosch or even by his workshop. The style of both the underdrawing and the painting is hard to link to signed paintings by Bosch, the attribution of which is beyond doubt.\textsuperscript{15} All the same, we have a signature here, and the underdrawing shows that the painting is not a replica, as is the case, for instance, with the Haywain in the Escorial and the Passion Triptych in Valencia: this is ruled out by the way the artist clearly continued to search for the final composition as he worked. The theme of the work, moreover, does appear ’Boschian’.

The Four Last Things were the subject of a treatise that was printed and translated in Europe from the 1470s until well into the sixteenth century. Cordiale quattuor novissimorum was the most important source for The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things, and actually concludes with the quotation from Deuteronomy set out at the top of the painting.\textsuperscript{16} The text is attributed to Gerard van Vliederhoven, an otherwise unknown Dutch monk, who was active in the Utrecht area around the end of the fourteenth century. The printed version of his treatise prepared by Denis the Carthusian – a monk who was appointed prior in 1466 of the newly founded Charterhouse of St Sophia in ’s-Hertogenbosch, and who lived in Roermond, eighty kilometres to the southwest, from 1469 until his death. The little book was published not only in Latin and Dutch, but also in German, French and English. There was a Castilian translation too, which appeared in May 1495, and a month later a version in Valencian. The treatise must have been readily accessible throughout Europe in the late fifteenth century.

The status of the signature is another issue to be addressed. In so far as we can tell based on the technical analysis performed and published by Garrido and Van Schoute, there is no reason to view it as a later addition.\textsuperscript{17} The placement of the signature, jammed in between the lower banderole and the edge of the painting, is a little awkward, and therefore raises certain questions. If the hand of Hieronymus Bosch cannot be detected in this panel, in either the underdrawing or painting, can it still be a Bosch? Archive material, including the passage from De Guevara in which he mentions an apprentice, refers to painters who worked for or with Bosch, namely assistants and close relatives who were also painters. The Ecce Homo Triptych in Boston (cat. 24) is not of the same artistic quality as the Adoration of the Magi in the Prado (cat. 9) or the Ecce Homo in Frankfurt (cat. 11), but its relationship with those paintings and the fact that it was commissioned by patrons from ’s-Hertogenbosch, make it highly improbable that the triptych was not produced in Bosch’s workshop. If we assume that the paintings that left a master’s workshop did so with his approval, even if they were executed by assistants, then they did so in his name. The case of The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things differs from that of the triptych from Boston or of the Flood Panels (cat. 22) and the Job Triptych (cat. 23). No patrons are known in this case and the links with other works by Bosch are not very strong.

POPLAR WOOD

The issue of the support, a poplar panel, does not make it any easier to view this as an autograph work by Bosch. We do not know of any other work by an early Netherlandish master painted on this type of wood. X-radiographs also detect fills in the joins on the front of the
panel, which was not a usual technique in the Low Countries. On the other hand, the chalk (calcium carbonate) used as a filler in the ground layer points firmly towards production in Central or Northern Europe, whereas gypsum (calcium sulphate) was generally used for this purpose in Spain and Italy. It is theoretically possible that a patron, perhaps from Southern Europe, supplied Bosch with the wood for the commission, but in that case, we would expect to find considerable input from Bosch himself.

The argument that the support may be explained by the work’s function as a tabletop ought to be taken seriously. The images of the Deadly Sins can indeed be read more clearly when the painting is laid flat, yet not the medallions with the Four Last Things or the banderolles with the quotations from Deuteronomy. On the other hand, we would expect a tabletop to show considerably more wear, as we find, for instance, in the tabletop of Berne Abbey in Heeswijk – a very rare example of a painting on an oak (?) support, which is known to have been used as a table. The principal argument against viewing the panel as a tabletop is the way the painting has been conceived as a mirror of the sins and as God’s all-seeing eye. These functions are fulfilled more effectively when the painting is hung on the wall, as it was in Philip II’s bedroom at the Escorial, and the figure of Christ at the centre stands upright in his sarcophagus (which, oddly enough, is depicted at an angle). The four medallions, the texts and the signature are all then correctly oriented. In his description of the painting, Felipe de Guevara uses the word mesa, which can be read as ‘table’ but also as ‘panel’ (De Sigüenza refers in this context to tabla y quadro). His use of the term has contributed significantly to the view that this really was a tabletop, and for good reason: elsewhere in his text he uses the word mesa fifteen times, and in each case it has the meaning of ‘table’. He even refers at one point to the German custom of painting tables that were not used for dining. This written source links perfectly with the painted tabletops that were recently analysed by Jens Kremb, who believes that the work in the Prado is indeed a table.
Without more substantial evidence, it is not possible to draw any secure conclusion as to whether or not this tabletop/painting should be placed in the group of paintings attributable to Bosch (or his workshop). Poplar cannot be dated dendrochronologically, which rules out this form of analysis. It is conceivable that the panel was produced in the Van Aken family workshop after Hieronymus’s death – a possibility that is not too far removed from the practice described by Felipe de Guevara. In all probability, the presence of chalk in the ground layer places the painting in Northern Europe, even if a few rare examples are known from Italian and Portuguese art around 1500. Although a Netherlandish painter – whether or not from Bosch’s workshop – might have painted this work somewhere else, the ripples that *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* left in later Netherlandish art argue against this. There is a copy of *Ira* (Wrath) in Bergamo, done on oak by a Netherlandish painter in the mid-sixteenth century. Intriguingly, the little painting originated in the collection of the celebrated connoisseur Giovanni Morelli (1816–1891). A Netherlandish oil sketch on paper in Leipzig, meanwhile, incorporates quotations from the painting in Madrid. Works like this seem to indicate that the painting remained in the Low Countries before finding its way into the Spanish royal collection. It is worth mentioning, moreover, that two examples of Bosch’s *Seven Deadly Sins* were reported in Antwerp in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. A ‘Tafreel van Jeronimus Bosch wesende de vii doodsonden’ is recorded in 1565 in the possession of the Antwerp merchant and banker Nicolaas Jongelinck, who also owned a large number of paintings by Pieter Bruegel. The other example is mentioned in 1574 in the estate of Margaretha Boge, the widow of the wealthy Joris Vezelaer (‘s-Hertogenbosch 1493–1570 Antwerp), who was a goldsmith, master of the mint, and trader in jewellery, precious metalwork and tapestries. Vezelaer probably became a citizen of Antwerp in 1515–16. His father, the goldsmith Jacob Vezelaer (died 1495), purchased a house on the Markt in ‘s-Hertogenbosch in 1473 and a large, newly built dwelling in December 1485 next door to the home of municipal secretary Franco van Langel (see cat. 24).
See, for instance, the diagonally placed parallel hatching behind the angel in the upper left of the medallion, published in exhib. cat. Madrid 2006, 95 (fig. 3) and 99 (fig. 8). The quality of execution of the underdrawing in the medallion is significantly inferior to that in the panels of the Woywod Triptych (cat. 19), this is chiefly apparent in the faulty preparation of the modelling of the drapery, for instance. The lines here also lack the assurance and suppleness of the underdrawings in the triptych, but both images might go back to the same source, possibly a print in the tradition of the Ars Moriendi. Further comparison has been hindered by the fact that the \textit{brcp} was unable to document this painting itself.

Cf. the convincing way in which Bosch painted the risen Christ in the Mass of Saint Gregory on the exterior of the Adoration of the Magi (cat. 9).

Saint John on Patmos in Berlin (cat. 6), for instance, and the Adoration of the Magi in the Prado (cat. 9).

Lane 1985.

Garrido and Van Schoute 2001, 76–95.

Reference is sometimes found in the literature to use of calcium carbonate as a filler in the ground layer of Spanish panels, but this is merely repeating an early, erroneous source. Maite Jover de Celis (email, 9 January 2015) reports that the analytical laboratory at the Prado’s restoration department has never detected calcium carbonate in a Spanish panel, and its alleged discovery was never described in a reliable publication. Calcium sulphate was always used for this purpose, even in coastal regions.

Given that the \textit{brcp} was not granted permission to examine and document the painting in the Prado, the technical data assembled here are largely based on Garrido and Van Schoute 2001, 77–95.

Checa Cremades, Mancini and Vázquez Dueñas 2013, 216.

The dark background is fully opaque to infrared. See exhib. cat. Madrid 2006, no. 3, 94 fig. 1.

Deuteronomy 32: 28–29 and 32: 20, respectively.

‘quien esto pintava no sentia mal de nuestra fe’. See p. 579; Catalina Garcia 1907–09, ii, 637.

‘porque comunemente las llaman los disparates de Geronimo Bosque gente que repara poco en lo que mira, y porque pienso que sin razon le tienen infamado de herege’. See p. 578; Catalina Garcia 1907–09, ii, 635.

Precisely whose works were being given a good name is ambiguous: Bosch’s or those of the pupil. See also Vázquez Dueñas 2015, 14–15.

See p. 576. De Guevara (Ponz) 1788, 43–44. The ‘genre’ to which De Guevara refers here seems to be that of apocryphally signed paintings. See Silva Maroto 2000c, 536 for an alternative interpretation.

See p. 577 and fig. 34.7.

Koreny 2012, 110.

Peter Klein (2003a, 72, table 4) cites just four other exceptions: lime, fir (2) and beech.

Gibson 1973, 34. For the deviating technique, see Garrido and Van Schoute 2001, 76–95.

Seven Deadly Sins, Madrid
Bosch as Draughtsman

NOTES ON THE ORGANIZATION OF THE DRAWING CATALOGUE

The drawings numbered 35–54 are attributed to Hieronymus Bosch. This is not to say that we believe all twenty sheets are entirely autograph. Most of the verso of The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes (cat. 37), for instance, was drawn by assistants or apprentices of Bosch. In Concert in an Egg and the Temptation of Saint Anthony (cat. 43), only the little sketch of a monster’s head can be attributed to Bosch. The versos of the Conjurer in both Paris and Liège (cat. 47 and 48) must have been drawn outside Bosch’s immediate sphere of influence.

It goes without saying that our survey is indebted to earlier research into Bosch’s drawn oeuvre, first and foremost to the comprehensive study by the Viennese drawing expert Fritz Koreny and his colleagues Erwin Pokorny and Gabriele Bartz. Although research into Bosch’s drawings was carried out throughout the twentieth century, this frequently occurred in the context of museum catalogues and so was not done with an overview of the corpus in mind. Where drawings featured in monographs devoted to Bosch’s work, meanwhile, they tended to be side-lined and were referred to largely with reference to the paintings. Building on Koreny’s study, but also on prior work by Gerard Lemmens and Ed Taverne and by Jan Piet Filedt Kok, our aim here is to consider Bosch’s drawn oeuvre as a whole, while also linking it where possible to his painted work. The documentation produced by the BRCP has proved immensely important to these efforts; it has made it possible to include the underdrawings of paintings in our study, while macrophotography of Bosch’s work has enabled us to look much more precisely at the line and brushwork in drawings and paintings and to compare them with one another. Macrophotography also means that we can now look at the drawings and the paintings in much greater detail and can transcend differences not only of style but also of scale. The huge quantity of narrative and other details in Bosch’s paintings and drawings can be highlighted and compared much more than previously, and to greater effect. It was evident during this process that comprehensive photographic documentation of drawings – in both visible and infrared light – can contribute significantly to our understanding of an artist’s work.

We have not attempted to organize our catalogue according to the function of the drawings, as too few sheets by Bosch have survived and their purpose cannot be determined with sufficient accuracy to justify such a breakdown. Chronological ordering, as applied by Koreny, is not feasible either in our view, as it tends to create an illusion of certainty. In our opinion, the arguments used to date drawings are not strong enough since Koreny takes virtually no account of differences of function, which can influence the appearance of a drawing.

The order in which we present the drawings takes the Tree-Man (cat. 35) as its starting point, as it is here that the strongest arguments in favour of attribution to Hieronymus
Bosch can be made. It is then a matter of building on this first attribution. Function does play a significant role here and dating very little, except to the extent that we do not expect a drawing done in 1480 to look precisely the same as one done by the same hand in 1515 (whoever’s hand that might have been, although there is no reason to suppose that Bosch did not continue to draw over a period even longer than thirty-five years).

The primary reason for our attribution of twenty drawings to Bosch rather than the eleven Koreny gave him is that the differences are considerably smaller than the similarities. What is more, we believe Koreny’s ‘Master of the Prado Haywain’ to have been Bosch himself rather than a workshop assistant. The differences compared to drawings produced by the workshop and by followers, as in cat. 37 verso, 43, 47 verso, 48 verso, 56, 57 and 58 are much greater than the differences between cat. 35 to 54 themselves.

The drawing of Two oriental men (cat. 55) is difficult to evaluate. The painterly character of the drawing differs so sharply from the other drawings in the Bosch group that attempts to link them seem unconvincing. Stephanie Buck’s comparison with figures from the Frankfurt Ecce Homo (cat. 11), by contrast, is sufficiently interesting for us to include the sheet in this catalogue as a doubtful case.
Hieronymus Bosch was a draughtsman through and through. Paper, pen and ink were the perfect medium for an artist who focused so strongly on seeking out new forms, on invention. Bosch is the first Netherlandish artist by whom a small body of drawings has come down to us. Fritz Koreny identified eleven autograph sheets in his catalogue raisonné – a group that should, we argue here, be extended to twenty drawings, almost double Koreny’s total.

Early Netherlandish drawings have only survived to a very limited extent. Roughly 700 sheets are known from the period 1400–1500. To put this in perspective, the catalogue of drawings by Albrecht Dürer (1471–1528) alone includes around 1,000 entries. Drawing in the Low Countries largely consisted of copies of and variations on compositions that were more or less well-known and which, most importantly, existed already. Some of these drawings can be linked to a particular artist's workshop (or its wider circle), but this often remains uncertain too, as it is necessarily based on the content of the image (iconography and composition) and less so on personal draughtsmanship. The distinctive drawing style of an individual artist cannot have been very important in the late fifteenth century. Drawings were intended more as working documents to serve a workshop practice geared toward skilfully rendered and highly finished pictures. More than this, it was evidently considered important in many cases that the maker’s ‘hand’ should not be visible in the finished product, as this might cause the artist to ‘come between’ the beholder and the image. For many years, awareness of the individual artist was primarily a by-product of the work’s quality rather than something considered desirable at the outset. Attributions of drawings to artistic ‘personalities’ like Rogier van der Weyden (1399/1400–1464), Petrus Christus (active 1444–1475/76), Dirk Bouts (c.1410/20–1475), Hugo van der Goes (c.1430/40–1482) and Hans Memling (active 1465–1494) are few and far between, and those that do exist are frequently open to question.

Jan van Eyck (c.1390–1441) is the almost inevitable exception to this rule. His metalpoint portrait of a cardinal (Nicolò Albergati?) has survived (Kupferstich-Kabinett, Dresden), and Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen in Rotterdam acquired a Calvary in silverpoint and goldpoint in 2014, which seems to have been produced within Van Eyck’s circle. Leaving aside the question of whether it ought to be considered an ‘autonomous’ drawing, Saint Barbara (1437) in Antwerp is a magnificent, signed and dated example of this Southern Netherlandish master’s draughtsmanship. Van Eyck likewise prepared the way for Bosch in the way he used his signature.

A larger number of drawings that may be attributed to individual artistic personalities has survived from the period around the turn of the century. Gerard David (c.1455–1523), Jan Gossart (c.1478–1532) and Lucas van Leyden (1494–1533) all left small bodies of drawings; roughly fifteen are currently known by David, while Stijn Alsteeens has counted over forty drawings for Gossart. Twenty-eight drawings are currently attributed to Lucas van Leyden. The art of drawing took off in the Low Countries after 1500, with the result that far more examples are known of later artists who expressed themselves this way and by whom a larger or smaller body of works has therefore survived.

Hieronymus Bosch stands at the beginning of a drawing tradition in which paper was used as a sketch medium to capture the artist’s visual ideas. Max Friedländer wrote of Bosch that designing to him equalled inventing: ‘Gestalten war ihm stets erfinden’. This is largely true, although not all of his drawings can be identified as sketches, and none of them were repeated in his paintings. The Tree-Man (cat. 35) had (previously?) been painted in the Garden of Earthly Delights, while the fantastic animal in part of a model sheet in Berlin (cat. 51) also appears in one of the so-called Flood Panels from Bosch’s workshop (cat. 22c).

The genesis of Bosch’s paintings almost never followed a linear pattern from preliminary sketch to completed panel; the artist continued throughout the creative process to invent new things and alter compositions even in the painting stage. This is revealed with particular clarity by infrared reflectography, which allows us to look below the paint layers...
at the underdrawing in which the composition was prepared, and by X-radiography, which makes overpainting easier to see. It is this creative flow that makes Bosch’s art so extraordinary, but also difficult to order, frame and categorize.

As with Bosch’s paintings, we both need and lack firm points of reference with which to study his drawings. There are few if any certainties, and what little evidence does exist to aid us in the attribution of paintings is not particularly useful for the drawings. As far as we know, Bosch – unlike Lucas van Leyden or Jan Gossart, say – did not sign his drawings. We also find very little use of surviving drawings in a painting. As noted already, Bosch continued to think and invent while working on the panel, up to and including the final paint layer. An example is the previously mentioned fantastic animal in one of the Flood Panels. The X-rays tell us that the animal was added after the composition had been set down in the underdrawing. The legs of the beaten figure were originally larger and ran through the place where the animal is now located. The artist deviated from the underdrawing during the painting process, reducing the size of the human figure and adding the animal. It is plausible that this was done based on a drawing, possibly the one in Berlin. A second example of a correspondence between a drawing and a painting is likewise found in the Flood Panels, now in combination with the image of an Infernal Landscape (cat. 44). In the bottom right of the panel, just above the area of worst damage, a face can be made out in infrared light in a barrel on legs. A very similar motif is found in the bottom right of a
spectacularly drawn hell scene in a private collection. The detail in the panel was later over-painted, removing it from view.

These are all links in a chain that must have begun somewhere. The drawings that seem to connect with the Flood Panels are not the most obvious candidates for determining precisely where, however, primarily because the attribution of the panels themselves is contested. Nor can the relevant drawings have been produced as straightforward preliminary studies for the paintings, as they are not related closely enough. Consequently, even if we were certain about the authorship of the panels – Bosch and/or his workshop – this would not necessarily tell us much about the attribution or function of the two drawings.

The Tree-Man (cat. 35) in Vienna is a more obvious place to start, therefore, when reconstructing Bosch’s drawn oeuvre. The sheet has solid links with the Garden of Earthly Delights – a painting of uncontested authorship, in spite of its being unsigned. Moreover, the drawing is large and detailed, allowing comparisons to be made with other paintings and drawings, and its quality is phenomenal. Like that of the Tree-Man, the attribution of the Owl’s Nest (cat. 36) and of The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes (cat. 37) is not disputed. A great many stylistic similarities can be identified between these three sheets, enabling us to adopt them as the basis and point of reference for the reconstruction of Bosch’s corpus of drawings. The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes had a slightly different function than the Tree-Man and the Owl’s Nest (both of which seem to be completed works of art in their own right) and the sketches on the verso by assistants/apprentices tell us that it was used in the workshop, which explains the somewhat freer character of the sheet. All the same, the draughtsman has sought to achieve a harmonious composition here too, so that the drawing on the recto
ought also to be viewed as a completed work. The subject-matter and the inscription are strong indications to suggest that the drawing was used as a model in the workshop. The drawing style of *The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes* is similar in many respects to the sheet with two monsters in Berlin (cat. 38). The figures were copied again at a later date in a model sheet now in Providence. The latter offers a possible impression of the original scale and content of the prototype, since the two monsters from the recto are also copied there. The model sheet with witches in Paris (cat. 39) can be readily linked with cat. 37, 38 and 40 on stylistic grounds but also in terms of certain motifs, and must be by the same artist. It is incomprehensible, therefore, why Fritz Koreny dismissed this sheet in his catalogue raisonné as the work of a follower around 1530–50.

The little drawing of two old women (recto) and the fragment of a composition with a fox and a cockerel (verso) in Rotterdam (cat. 40) acts as a link between the model sheet with witches and two drawings with the battle between birds and mammals in Berlin (cat. 41 and 42). The two women are very similar to those in the Paris sheet, while the fox and cockerel also feature again in the battle between the animals, having already appeared together, as we have seen, in *The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes* (cat. 37). It was Fritz Koreny who recognized Bosch’s hand in the two brilliantly drawn sheets with birds and mammals. Both the composition drawing showing the mobilization of the birds and mammals (cat. 41) and the more rapidly and dynamically executed battle between the two armies (cat. 42) can be readily linked with other drawings from the group (e.g. cat. 35–37, 39, 53). These sheets, along with the privately owned *Infernal Landscape* (cat. 44), represent the most important additions to the corpus of Bosch drawings in recent decades.

Like Buck and Koreny, we consider *Concert in an Egg* and the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* (cat. 43 recto/verso) to have originated in Bosch’s workshop. However, this sheet – along with cat. 37 and 38 – must also have been used for practical purposes in the workshop, where master and assistant worked successively on the same drawing; *Concert in an Egg* includes a sketch of a monstrous bird, which we do believe to be by Bosch himself. The
creature was repeated lower right by a weaker hand. The handling of the lines in the little sketch corresponds with the Battle between the Birds and Mammals (cat. 42), but also with the Infernal Landscape (cat. 44), in which we find a similar bird.

We view the Infernal Landscape as by the same hand as the Tree-Man (cat. 35) and the Owl’s Nest (cat. 36), and hence as an autograph Bosch. The drawing is a creative but carefully executed compositional sketch of a scene from hell. If it has to be defined as an ‘accomplished pastiche’, as Koreny writes, then it must be one in which Bosch himself found forms that he used in a different but comparable way in paintings like the Last Judgements in Bruges and Vienna (cat. 16 and 17), and above all in the Garden of Earthly Delights. The drawing can probably best be characterized as the search for a full or partial composition with an impressively dominant fantasy figure, such as the tree-man in the Garden of Earthly Delights.

The Burning Ship in Vienna (cat. 45) is less ambitious and less worked out, yet those are not sufficient reasons to argue that the drawing is not autograph. It is the kind of sketch that Bosch must have made in large numbers to capture an idea, and can be compared in that respect with the invention of the figure in a hop-basket with birds flying out of its backside (cat. 46). The St Petersburg copy after the Burning Ship might show the composition of which the Vienna sheet formed part. Either way, the drawing in St Petersburg shows just how complicated it is to successfully imitate Bosch’s drawing style – a feature it shares with the model sheets from Brussels, Vienna, Providence and Oxford.25

The figure in the hop-basket and the other sketches on that sheet (cat. 46) were drawn, according to Koreny, by the left-handed ‘Haywain Master’, an assistant in Bosch’s workshop. We attribute the Haywain (cat. 20) to Bosch himself, as we do this drawing, in which the same hand can indeed be recognized.26 The very confidently drawn children on the recto can also be compared, for instance, to the two monsters in the lower left of the sketch sheet with studies for Saint Anthony (cat. 52). The much more cursorily rendered verso recalls the little sketch with a conjurer in Liège (cat. 48 verso). It was Koreny once again whose keen eye identified the handful of lines in the Liège sheet as a conjurer and his mark, and who linked them with the more elaborate and better-known drawing in Paris (cat. 47). However, we disagree with him once again when he goes on to ascribe the two drawings to a follower of Bosch and to date them to around 1530–40.27 The Paris drawing has a more dynamic composition and is, moreover, executed very confidently. Comparison can be made with elements from the Haywain, such as the virtually identical way in which

FIGS 8–9 Tree-Man [Cat 35] and Christ Carrying the Cross (Escorial) [Cat 13]
a little dog has been painted there. The use of short strokes – somewhat more so here than in other drawings – is comparable with the execution of the underdrawing of the Haywain.

The Conjurer differs in this respect from the much more carefully conceived sheet with a group of ten men (cat. 49). Lemmens and Taverne rejected the drawing – partly because of this feature – in an article written at the time of the Hieronymus Bosch exhibition in ’s-Hertogenbosch in 1967. Koreny concurred with them and attributed the drawing to a follower in around 1530–40. We agree with Friedländer and de Tolnay and ascribe the drawing once more to Bosch. The quality is excellent and the foreshortening of the man with the helmet (third from the right) is very effective. A detail like the headgear of the second man from the left, which is drawn over an earlier outline of the figure’s head, indicates moreover that the drawing is not a copy. Stylistic affinities can also be detected here with drawings like the Tree-Man (cat. 35) and the Model sheet with ‘Witches’ (cat. 39). These drawings might be less spontaneous than swiftly executed sketches like cat. 41, 42, 46–48 and 52, but that does not necessarily mean they are by another hand. First and foremost, it probably says something about the function of these sheets. In this case, we are dealing with a drawing in which part of a composition has been worked out. We do not have any composition drawings of this kind by Bosch, although we do have (fragments of) model sheets that are finished to the same degree (cat. 38, 39, 51). The completed drawings can also be cited by way of comparison (cat. 35–37).

The sheet with Two men and the Fall of Man (cat. 50) on the reverse is closely related in stylistic terms to the fragment of a model sheet with monsters in Berlin and the study sheet including sketches of Saint Anthony (cat. 51 and 52), but also with the studies of monsters and an infernal scene in Berlin (cat. 53). The rapid and scratchy drawing style in the Fall of Man is readily comparable with certain figures in the Saint Anthony sheet (cat. 52) and above all with the figures armed with sledgehammers who attack a human figure on an anvil in cat. 53. The two male figures on the front of cat. 50 are related, meanwhile, in terms of drawing style and motif to the head-and-feet figure in Berlin in particular (cat. 51). Koreny accepts this group as autograph, with the exception of cat. 53, which he views as the work of an assistant. Stephanie Buck hesitated between workshop and autograph. We consider the drawing to be autograph, due primarily to the similarities of style with cat. 50–52.

The London Entombment (cat. 54) is of a very different order again; it is a type of drawing for which it is not easy to find comparative material within the group that we can ascribe to Bosch. This is chiefly because the drawing displays more painterly features than the others; a brush and washes have been used, which are elements we do not find elsewhere among the drawings ascribed to Bosch. When the British Museum acquired the sheet in 1952, Arthur Ewart Popham attributed it to Bosch, based primarily on a comparison with the angel in the Berlin Saint John on Patmos (cat. 6) – an adequate comparison in our view. Bosch shows himself there to be a draughtsman in paint in the way that he modelled the folds of the angel’s robe in the paint layer. The underdrawing, however, is much sketchier and cannot be used for purposes of comparison. The drawing in London was built up in several phases, like the angel in Berlin: there is an underdrawing in black chalk, and at least two phases in ink. We find a much more articulated and more readily comparable underdrawing in Christ Carrying the Cross in the Escorial (cat. 13), for instance, especially in the robe of the figure who flogs Christ. This style of underdrawing, in which a broad, brushed line is alternated with short hatching, is comparable with that in the London Entombment. It is hard to say whether this is a preparatory drawing or a record of a completed composition: a modello or a ricordo. Whatever the case, it is closer to a painting than the other drawings in the group. Koreny attributed the sheet to the ‘Master of the Haywain’. We agree, with the proviso that we believe this master to have been Hieronymus Bosch himself.
It is often difficult to draw stylistic comparisons between drawings, underdrawings and paintings; drawing serves quite a different function to underdrawing, and differences in scale are at least as important. Generally speaking, the amount of detail in a drawing on paper is much greater than that found in panel underdrawings, which focus in many cases on the (relatively) sketchily indicated position of the figures and other elements of the composition. This is what we find, for instance, in the underdrawing of *Saint John on Patmos, Saint John the Baptist, the Adoration of the Magi (Prado), Christ Crowned with Thorns (London), Saint Christopher, Saint Jerome, Christ Carrying the Cross (Escorial), and the Hermit Saints and Saint Wilgefortis triptychs*. We only find a similar degree of sketchiness in the drawings on the verso of *Man in a basket* (cat. 46 verso) and the little sketch of the *Conjurer in Liège* (cat. 48). Both these drawings are interesting, incidentally, as they happen to include the following stage of the design process, in that the same motif recurs in a more worked-out form (cat. 46 recto and cat. 47). The motif of the man in a basket from the Vienna drawing also reappears in slightly altered form in the central panel of the *Hermit Saints Triptych* (cat. 28). The pictorial elements are similarly sized in absolute terms, but what is the main part of the image in the drawing is merely a detail in the painting. That detail is nevertheless a marvellous little example of drawing in paint, which is why no underdrawing has been detected here. Although the motif of a man in a large basket with bare buttocks and a flock of birds occurs in both the drawing and the painting, the way it is worked out in the painting differs once again from that in the drawing. It is a small but revealing illustration of Bosch’s working method which Friedländer aptly described as ‘Gestalten war ihm stets erfinden’. He constantly found new forms, and although he sometimes reused them, they were also altered in the process.

The most glorious comparison between a drawing and a painting by Bosch is undoubtedly that between the *Tree-Man* (cat. 35) and the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (cat. 21c). Here too, like the *Man in a basket*, the drawing and the painting are the same in terms of subject, yet also different. The degree to which the tree-man drawing is finished and the fact that it includes a composition that has been carefully enclosed on all sides suggests that this is a completed work of art in its own right and not merely an intermediate sketch or a drawing intended to develop or record a particular form. The character of the tree-man in the drawing also differs from his painted counterpart. Generally speaking, the figure in the drawing is more tree than man compared to the creature in the painting, whose ‘right leg’ is wounded and bandaged. This detail is absent in the drawing, which also emphasizes the landscape element. The ‘right leg’ of this figure has a knot sprouting branches on which a bird sits. The equivalent spot in the painting, just above the bandaged wound, has something more suggestive of a knee joint or an elbow. The miraculous figure is much more of a curiosity in the drawing than it is in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* – a fact that is also emphasized in the print made after the drawing around 1600.

Thanks to the high resolution of the photographic documentation now available for both the painting and the drawing, we can compare the two at a level that comes close to that of individual brush- and penstrokes. In both cases, the manner (what Van Mander would have called the *handeling*) of drawing and painting can be compared much more precisely than was previously the case. It reveals that the drawing is structured in layers, with one line laid over another and several different types of ink for different elements and phases – a structure that is also found in many underdrawings on panels. What stands out most when we zoom in on the painting is the ‘drawing-like’ nature of the brushwork. We mostly view a large painting like the *Garden of Earthly Delights* from a distance, focusing on iconography; now, however, the opportunity to magnify the image offers us a better insight into the painting method. When we place the drawn face of the tree-man next to the painted face, it is clear how the penstrokes resemble the brushstrokes: Bosch drew here in paint. A similar comparison can be made between the way one
Monk at the foot of the cross, Saint Wilgefortis Triptych [CAT 88]: before and during restoration.

Eyes: Infernal Landscape [CAT 44] and Death and the Miser [CAT 19C]
of the little figures inside the tree-man has been drawn and the painting of Saint John the Evangelist’s face in Christ Carrying the Cross, with penstrokes and brushstrokes displaying a comparable pattern.

Another comparison of drawing and painting in Bosch that illustrates how similarly he used the two media is that between the drawing of an Infernal Landscape (cat. 44) and Death and the Miser (cat. 19c). The way the eye of the monster sitting on the barrel lower left is rendered in the drawing is very similar to the style of the miser’s eye in the painting. The effect in both cases is that of a mask. There seems to be another eye in the drawing, lying deeper below the triangular eye socket. The eye in the painting is indicated only sparingly in paint, and Bosch has incorporated the underdrawing and the painted ground in the final result. On closer viewing, we find that Bosch did something similar on quite a few occasions, as in the Saint Wilgefortis Triptych (cat. 8), where the approach is used to model the eye of the monk at the foot of the cross on the left. Karel van Mander commented on this practice in his biography of Bosch: ‘Also, just like some other old masters, he used to draw his subjects onto the white of the panel, laying over that a transparent, flesh-coloured ground layer; he often allowed the ground to contribute to the effect of the picture.’ It is possible, now that high-quality imaging techniques are becoming increasingly accessible, to make these and countless other comparisons. We have much more opportunity than in the past to establish relationships between drawings and paintings and between different drawings.

The result is that a more substantial catalogue of drawings is proposed here than was the case with Fritz Koreny (2012). Instead of the eleven drawings Koreny considered to be autograph, we attribute twenty sheets to Bosch.
Strictly speaking, it is not possible here to distinguish between apprentices and followers.

Koreny 2012.

Van der Coelen 2012; Buck 2001; Lugt 1968.

Marijnissen 1987; Silver 2006; Fischer 2013.

Lemmens and Taverne 1967–68; Filedt Kok 1972–73.

Cf. Chapman and Faietti 2010. For the purposes of this study, the most important groups of Bosch drawings – those in Berlin, Vienna and Paris – were documented using the following imaging techniques: macrophotography in visible light (vis), raking light, ultraviolet (uv) light, infrared photography (irp) and infrared reflectography (irr). No pigment analysis was carried out. All the documentation can be accessed via Boschproject.org.


Koreny 2012.


Koreny, Pokorny and Zeman 2002.


See the website Boschproject.org, link 13.

Koreny, Pokorny and Zeman 2002; Borschert 2010, 145.

Answorth 1998, 8.

Alsteen, in Answorth 2010, 89.


Van den Brink 2004/05 (with further literature); Hand et al. 1986.

Friedländer 1927, 123.

See the website Boschproject.org, link 14.

For Lucas van Leyden, see Kloek 2011, no. 80; for Jan Gossart, see Alsteen in Answorth 2010, no. 64.

See the website Boschproject.org, link 15.

Ilsink 2013, 401–03.


Fig 15 Model sheet with ‘Witches’ [Cat 39]
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink on paper, outlines emphasized in various places in grey ink

277 × 211 mm

Albertina, Vienna, 7876

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks: Lower left: BRVEGEL; lower left: stamp of Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen (l. 174).

Watermark: not visible, drawing has been lined.

Condition/Restoration

Yellowing and grime. The upper-right corner has been restored. A number of small, dark spots are visible near the tree-man’s left leg. Several tears along the edges; one tear approx. 3 cm long on the left.

BOP documentation

The drawing was documented on 26 August 2014 with macrophotography in visible light and in infrared, ultraviolet and raking light. An 188 was made using an OSIRIS camera.

Provenance

Duke Albert of Saxony-Teschen (1738–1822).

Literature


Although Bosch was famous for his visualization of the unnatural, he shows himself in his paintings and drawings to have been an excellent observer. A small but fine example of this is the pair of ducks swimming in the water in the foreground of the drawing. The first bird is identifiable as a drake by the curl in its tail, which is lacking in the second, female duck. The identification of these waterfowl as a male and female enables us to recognize a second pair of ducks and their ducklings – drawn above the mother with nine strokes of the pen – between the little boat and the water’s edge. The landscape surroundings in which the waterfowl find themselves – a riverscape with a little harbour and villages – is drawn totally convincingly.

This context makes the bizarre creature in the middle of the sheet all the stranger. Even so, the figure has been set down on the paper very confidently, not as if it were an invention but something that merely needed to be drawn. The tree-man is undoubtedly one of Bosch’s most famous ideas – a highly successful example of inventio, to borrow a term from rhetoric. In its entirely naturalistic representation of something unnatural, the drawing embodies much of the essence of Bosch’s artistic practice. A non-existent thing-animal-person is firmly rooted in two unstable little boats bobbing on the water. It is a perfect impossibility.

The drawing is harmoniously composed and neatly closed off on all sides, forming a world in and of itself. It is finished to such a degree that we can assume it to be a completed work in its own right, and not simply the sketch of an artistic idea. It is definitely not a preliminary study for the Garden of Earthly Delights (cat. 21) nor a record of it. Although closely related in formal terms, the two tree-men are autonomous figures, conceived and executed in relation to their context. The one in the drawing obviously dominates the scene, yet his counterpart in the painting also plays a central role in the right wing. Substantial adjustments were made around the tree-man in the panel during the painting process, yet the creature itself, as the central figure, was neither altered nor overpainted. This tells us that the tree-man was immediately recognized as a successful figure in the Garden of Earthly Delights too – without doubt Bosch’s most ambitious painting. So much so that the artist evidently decided he could carry a composition in his own right, and so chose him as the central motif for a drawing.

The drawing is carefully structured and worked out, with considerable attention to detail. Its relatively large format, homogeneous style and close relationship with the Garden of Earthly Delights makes the Tree-Man a logical point from which to begin our reconstruction of the artist’s drawn oeuvre. It is hard to overstate the importance of this sheet, therefore, to our thinking about the autograph status of works associated with the Bosch group. The drawing is a confident and triumphant example of Bosch’s creativity and his ability to express visually what his eye observed and his mind conceived. Viewed in these terms, its subject is first and foremost Bosch’s own creativity. The Tree-Man is a true image of Bosch, an ironic vera icon. The tree-man can only exist in Bosch’s art and is thus entirely cheiropoieton or manufactum – made by human hand, artificial. It is a general observation that Bosch’s artistry is frequently expressed through a refined play of irony, in the inversion of the relationship between the natural and the unnatural, and in the contrast between the divine and the demonic. The Tree-Man is an entirely natural image of an unnatural creature; of an invented and man-made construction. As such, it is an ambitious example of that artistry.
Giulio Carlo Argan wrote on this in 1967: ‘Bosch forces us to believe in his demonic apparitions, because every detail of this absurd world is familiar to us. The only new elements are the setting for these fragments of reality and the inversion of normal proportions. The transformation of large into small and vice versa, reflects an antithesis that is at once moral and religious, social and political. Nevertheless, it is invariably the endless study of nature that supplies him with the means to realize the supernatural.’ Argan 1967, 185.

Compare this with the text quoted at the top of The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes (cat. 37), in which the term inventio features prominently.


This makes the tree-man sheet an extremely early – if not the earliest – example of ‘autonomous’ drawing in the Netherlands.

See the comment in this regard in the section ‘Drawing in ink and in paint’ above. Appropriately enough for a hell scene, little fires can be seen burning in the little boats in the painting, and damned souls are led inside the tree-man via a ladder. These infernal details are absent from the drawing.

See cat. 21c.

Use of the term cheiropoieton is intended here to evoke the association with its opposite, acheiropoieton – the term used in connection with images of Christ’s true face, which were supposedly not made by human hand. The contrast between the transience of human creations (cheiropoieton/manufactum) and the eternal nature of God’s (acheiropoieton/non manufactum) is mentioned in several places in the Bible. See Mark 14:58; Acts 7:48 and 17:24; Ephesians 2:11; Hebrews 9:11 and 9:24. It is a noteworthy feature of the Garden of Earthly Delights that all the man-made things in the painting are located in hell.
The Owl’s Nest

Owls must have appealed to Bosch, as they appear very frequently in his work.¹ There are no fewer than five of them in the Garden of Earthly Delights (cat. 21), but owls are also found in most of the other paintings, often rendered in sufficient detail for us to identify the species. The bird almost invariably functions in Bosch as a symbol of menace, death and the devil.²

There are two owls in the Tree-Man (cat. 35): a disproportionately large one at the top of the ‘mast’, and one surrounded by smaller birds at the water’s edge – also an unnatural spot for an owl. An owl likewise roosts in the hollow of a dead tree at the centre of The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes (cat. 37). That one too is unrealistically large.⁻¹ Its presence at the centre of a rebus-like visualization of a Middle Dutch proverb suggests that we are right to assume its significance goes beyond simply offering a convincing representation of visible reality.

The question is whether this is also the case with the birds in the Owl’s Nest.⁴ The three owls take the leading role here, rather than featuring as details in a larger composition. With an acute sense of detail, Bosch has deftly and meticulously drawn a little owl with outspread wings, its gaze fixed on another, smaller owl (a chick?) in the hollow of a tree.⁵ A third owl perches higher up the tree, looking up into the sky. Four other birds are placed around the owls – an image that appears again, for instance, in the underdrawing of the Wayfarer, also in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. A highly unusual feature of this drawing is that the crowded tree is shown in ‘dramatic’ close-up, solely against the background of a distant view, with no middleground. The composition is closed off on the left by a wheel on a high pole, and on the right by a tall, slender tree of the kind also found in the Tree-Man and Saint John on Patmos (cat. 6). The design of the procession in the bottom left of the drawing is found in a very similar manner, also drawn, in the background of the Gathering of the Birds (cat. 41) and in painted form in the Adoration of the Magi (cat. 9). The image of small armies crossing the landscape must have been very familiar in the ‘s-Hertogenbosch region around 1500.⁶

There is nothing in the sheet to suggest that more was intended than was actually drawn. The image Bosch sketches here of a pair of owls and their chick is an almost touching indication of the artist’s fascination for a bird that was freighted with negative connotations in the late fifteenth century. It is also an example, first and foremost, of his powers of observation, and of his ability to turn those observations into a dynamic composition, which he then executed with great skill. The natural appearance of the constructed image that results from this makes the Owl’s Nest a pendant of the Tree-Man.
The effect of the owl’s large size is heightened when we realize that this is a ‘little owl’, one of the smallest species, which does not grow larger than about 20–25 cm in height.


Mebs and Scherzinger 2010, 311–33.

’ve-Hertogenbosch is located in the north of Brabant, almost on the border with Guelders and not far from the zone where the Guelderian Wars were fought, beginning in 1502.
36.4–33 Owls
The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes / Study of a beggar and workshop sketches

Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink and black chalk on paper, 205 x 130/127 mm
SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, KdZ.549

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Recto: top in pen and brown ink: misserrimi quippe est ingenij semper uti inventis et numquam inveniendis ('Poor is the mind that always uses the inventions of others and invents nothing itself'). A dead tree stands prominently in the middle of the sheet with an oversized owl perching in a hollow, peering out of the picture plane. A second hollow at the foot of the tree contains a fox and a cockerel. Four birds perch in the branches above, two of which seem agitated. A group of young, blossoming trees stands immediately to the rear of the dead trunk, forming a copse in which we make out two large human ears, one on either side of the hollow tree. All this vegetation grows on a hilly field in which seven human eyes can be seen. The composition as a whole is strongly centred and ordered.

It illustrates the proverb campus habet oculos, silva aures (the field has eyes, the wood ears), which is explained as follows in the collection of proverbs – Proverbia Germanica – published in 1508 by Heinrich Bebel: ‘... in the wood and in the field [where other people may be present] we should do nothing we wish to be secret’. In other words, the proverb urges us to be discreet. A simpler illustration is provided by a unique Dutch woodcut from 1546, also now in Berlin, which shows a man stepping forward cautiously with his hand over his mouth as he points towards the wood ahead of him in which other people can be made out. The Middle Dutch text above his head reads: ‘The field has eyes / the wood has ears / I want to see / keep silent and hear’. What remains implicit in Bosch is here made explicit.

The viewers of Bosch’s drawing are expected to play a more active role and to tease the proverb out of the image themselves. The image is complex and ambiguous, and does not seem to refer only to the proverb but also to its visualization by a creative hand. A single line of Latin text runs across the upper edge of the sheet. There is no reason to suppose that it was not placed by the draughtsman himself. The words give the drawing the feel of an emblem, complete with motto and pictura. A true emblem would also feature a subscriptio, which is lacking here, yet it remains fruitful to discuss the drawing in these terms. The pictura in emblemata is the visual presentation of an idea by means of a concetto: a witty and unexpected linkage of disparate images or ideas. Although emblemata took off with the publication of Alciati’s Emblemata Liber in 1531, it drew on earlier concepts, such as the rebus, the epigram and rhetoricians’ mottoes and blazons. Without slotting precisely into any of these categories – a problem we frequently encounter with Bosch – the image evokes a variety of associations with them. The associative function of the elements brought together in the drawing means, however, that any interpretation of that image must ultimately remain incomplete.

One important association evoked by the wood is that of disorder, chaos, error, darkness, death and hence of evil. The expression ‘no longer seeing the wood for the trees’ is probably the pithiest summary. The dark forest – the selva oscura – in which Dante finds himself in the opening canto of his Commedia, having erred from the straight path – is undoubtedly the most famous poetic expression of the idea. The forest is the archetypal place where danger lurks. Vigilance and prudence are called for. This is no doubt how we are supposed to view the cockerel in the drawing, who wanders recklessly into the hollow in the tree where a fox lies in wait. It is not hard for the viewer to predict the outcome of this scene, which also prompts the question of whether the birds in the tree are aware of the rather large owl perched beneath them.

The owl is at the drawing’s visual centre, but what position does it occupy metaphorically? The bird is found over and over again in Bosch, and must therefore have been very important to what the artist was seeking to convey. He generally used it as an ominous
symbol, placing it in contexts with an atmosphere of menace.\footnote{To emphasize the owl’s threatening presence, Bosch drew from time to time on a visual tradition in which it is surrounded by other, hostile birds that try to drive the owl away.} Although the image is one observed in nature, it frequently assumes an emblematic, moralistic significance in the art and literature of around 1500.\footnote{The Dialogue of the Creatures (Dialogus creaturarum), for instance, tells the story of a long-eared owl who wanted to rule over the other birds (dialogue 82).} The description of the owl is based in the first instance on Bartholomeus Anglicus’s On the Properties of Things (De proprietatibus rerum), but the ‘moral dialogue’ turns this into a fable on pride, in which the Fall of the Rebel Angels (the origin of evil) is the plainly recognizable subtext. The owl’s association with menace, death and the devil is not unusual for the period.

It is hardly surprising that we should find an owl – a bosvogel (both ‘forest bird’ and ‘Bosch bird’) – in The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes. Its disproportionate size, the central position it occupies in the composition, and the context in which it appears all suggest

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image1}
\caption{Owl harassed by other birds, Dialogus creaturarum dat is twespraec der creaturen, Gouda (Gerard Leeu) 1482, Dialogue 82. Woodcut. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image2}
\caption{Anonymous (Netherlands), ‘Dat Velt heft ogen, dat Wolt heft oren. Ick wil sien, swijghen ende hooren’, 1546. Coloured woodcut. SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin}
\end{figure}

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{image3}
\caption{Albrecht Dürer, ‘Der Eulen seynht alle Vigel neydig und gram’, the owl attacked by other birds, 1515. Woodcut. Kunstsammlungen der Veste Coburg}
\end{figure}
that there is more going on here than the simple observation of nature. All the same, it is doubtful whether we ought to interpret this owl in a purely negative light. With its steady, emphatically vigilant gaze, and its position in the shelter of a hollow tree, the bird seems to be doing precisely what the proverb calls for, namely ‘hear all, see all, say nowt’. Viewed in this light, the owl is the embodiment here of wisdom, with which it has been associated since antiquity. It is, however, a rather practical and defensive kind of wisdom – one based on experience; this is an owl we might describe today as ‘streetwise’. Precisely this kind of wisdom is alluded to in an inscription on a 1515 woodcut by Albrecht Dürer, which shows an owl being attacked by other birds. In this case, the owl is a symbol of good being threatened by evil, in a similar way to the owl in Psalm 102. However, as soon as the printed text has been trimmed from the image (as is the case with most of the surviving prints), the viewer is left with just the picture and its blank bänderole, and has to make out the meaning for him or herself. In the absence of further context it remains an ‘open image’ that depicts conflict with no guidance as to how we should interpret it. Although the owl in Bosch’s drawing is placed in a more detailed context, it is still possible to read the bird in both a negative and a positive way.

We conclude with a few observations and thoughts on how the owl and the other visual elements have been arranged in the composition of the drawing. We referred above to the emblematic features of the sheet and the interplay between image and inscription. The emblematic character is heightened by the orderly, even strict arrangement of the elements. The way the large, centrally placed tree is flanked by smaller trees that together represent a wood (bosch) is reminiscent of the municipal seals used in ‘s-Hertogenbosch in the artist’s time. These stamps were affixed to official documents and provided a symbolic representation of the city. ‘s-Hertogenbosch is abbreviated here to bosch, a ‘wood’ represented by three trees – a large one in the middle, flanked by two smaller ones. The text around the image explains what we see: ‘sigillum burgensium ducis in buscho’ (‘seal of the citizens of the duke in the wood’). The seal was used throughout Bosch’s life and he must have known it well. The image it incorporates seems to have provided the basic idea for the drawing to which it adds a further layer of meaning. Throw in the fact that the artist’s professional surname ‘Bosch’ corresponded with the name of the city in which he lived, grew up and worked, and it becomes clear that what is being ‘discussed’ in this drawing is much greater in scope than merely the visualization of a proverb urging caution. The inscription makes this an artistic manifesto too, in which the master urges his apprentices and others to develop a creative mind-set. It is a quotation from a thirteenth-century text on the training of pupils – De disciplina scholiarum, attributed to Pseudo-Boethius. The relationship with the ‘s-Hertogenbosch municipal seal adds an extra dimension here and enables us to view the drawing simultaneously as a general symbol of the city and as a personal document. The drawing illustrates an everyday, widely used proverb, but does so in a proud and original way. The combination of the anthropomorphic wood, the inclusion of the owl as a bosvogel (forest bird/Bosch bird) as the central visual element and the somewhat heraldic manner in which these elements are ordered, result in an image that is specifically linked to Bosch’s artistic personality.

The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes is an exceptionally rich image, in which Bosch demonstrates that he reflects on art, the world in which it is created, and the place of the human being and the artist in that world. It is at once universal, therefore, and idiosyncratic. Otto Benesch’s description of the drawing in 1937 as an eingekleidetes Selbstbildnis is not so far from the mark. It is a self-portrait, however, of an artist emphatically engaged with the world as the head of a workshop with assistants and as a citizen of ‘s-Hertogenbosch.

The verso of the sheet contains sketches by Bosch and his workshop. They provide an interesting example of how Bosch’s workshop must have functioned. The master himself drew the beggar and probably also the little dog above the beggar’s head. Other hands, most likely workshop assistants, then repeated certain elements elsewhere on the sheet. The dog appears three more times, and the beggar’s head is also repeated. The cripple’s begging bowl features again too and has been drawn by a different (and significantly less
Follower of Hieronymus Bosch, Model sheet with Monsters, recto/verso.
Ashmolean Museum, Oxford

"Miserrimi quippe est ingenij semper uti inventis et numquam inveniendis"
("Poor is the mind that always uses the inventions of others and invents nothing itself"). Inscription [CAT 376]
gifted) hand in an ink that now appears blacker than in other areas. We find the same ink (and hence also the same hand?) in the initial lines of the head in the left of the drawing, the eye in the middle, parts of the hatching in the edifice on the right, the little head in the upper right, and the animal in the upper centre of the sheet. The patterns and the little dog at the lower right were also done in the same ink. The infrared reflectogram readily reveals the difference between the inks. The iron gall ink used to draw the beggar and the architecture becomes virtually transparent at 1700 nanometres, while other elements remain clearly visible. This image also shows that two heads were drawn in black chalk – one directly below the leg of the animal looking over its shoulder at the top of the sheet, and one to the left of the beggar’s head. With the exception of the Entombment (cat. 54), black chalk has not been detected elsewhere in the drawings of Bosch and his workshop. Macrophotography in visible light shows that the hand of the draughtsman who drew in darker ink partially crosses over an earlier drawing in iron gall ink. This is the case in the architecture, to which hatching has been added, but also in the head of the animal looking over its shoulder at the top of the sheet. This animal, which has been cropped at the top, comprises two inventions of Bosch, of which we find a copy on the front and back of a model sheet in Oxford. It looks as though an assistant of Bosch dutifully put into practice here the motto inscribed on the recto at the top of the drawing, by attempting to come up with something new with the aid of his master’s inventions.
Ah, it is hard to speak of what it was, / that savage forest, / for I had lost the path that does not stray. / Of our life’s way, I found myself within a shadowed forest, dense and difficult, / which even in recall renews my fear: / so bitter – death is hardly more severe! / ‘I am like an owl of the wilderness, like a little owl of the waste places. I lie awake; I am like a lonely bird on the housetop. All day long my enemies taunt me; those who deride me use my name for a curse.’


6 Le Goff 2003, 166–69.

7 See cat. 1.

8 See Bosch’s use of owls in, for instance, the Vienna Last Judgement, the Temptation of Saint Anthony and the Haywain. Bosch goes furthest in his use of the owl as a symbol of disaster in the Garden of Earthly Delights. Viewing the painting from left to right, we see the owls growing steadily larger as the threat increases. See Vandenbroeck 1985 on the owl as a negative symbol in Bosch. José de Sigüenza, writing around 1600, considered the use of the owl in Bosch to be a classical symbol of wisdom. See p. 582.

9 This is shown most clearly in the drawing of the Tree-Man (cat. 35), in which the phenomenon is drawn literally. See also De Bruyn 2001, 134–35.

10 The phenomenon was also exploited by hunters in Bosch’s time; bird-catchers used owls as decoys in the knowledge that other birds would recognize the threat they posed and would attempt to drive the owl away. They smeared glue on the branches around the decoy so that the other birds could be captured as soon as they landed on them. See Vandenbroeck 1987b, 134–35; De Bruyn 2001, 85.

11 Dialogue creaturarum dat is tweespraec der creaturen, Gouda (Gerard Leeu) 1482. See also cat. 41–42.

12 See Morris 2009 for a cultural History of the owl, including a focus on the shifting and occasionally contradictory significance placed on it.


14 ‘I am like an owl of the wilderness, like a little owl of the waste places. I lie awake; I am like a lonely bird on the housetop. All day long my enemies taunt me; those who deride me use my name for a curse.’

15 The earliest seal with this image dates from the late twelfth or early thirteenth century. It was renewed in the early fourteenth century and the new seal remained in use until the eighteenth century. Van Zuijlen 1863a, 15; Koldewey 1985b, 124–25.
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink on paper
163 × 116 mm
SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, KdZ 547 recto

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Bottom in pen and yellow-brown ink: Jer. Bosch.

Condition/Restoration
Recto: brown, grey and black spots; somewhat smudged at the bottom.
Verso: the image has been cropped on the left. Horizontal fold in the middle. A small tear is visible diagonally below the monster. Large green stain upper left and two substantial brown stains lower left, together with numerous small spots.

Documentation
The drawing was documented on 27 May 2014 with macrophotography in visible light and in infrared, and in ultraviolet and raking light. An IR-R was made using an OSIRIS camera.

Provenance
Old holdings (acquired before 1879).

Literature
The two monsters on the recto of this small sheet are among the most powerful Bosch drew. They were set down on paper quickly and with bravura and great accuracy. The original sheet was undoubtedly larger and contained other monsters too, similar to the copy in Providence, in which the Berlin monsters reappear, surrounded by other strange creatures. As in the Model sheet with ‘Witches’ in Paris (cat. 39), this sheet comprises a collection of figures set down on paper individually and with no overlapping. The function of this sheet is similar to that of another drawing with monsters in Berlin (cat. 51), except that we do not see the creatures in that sheet recurring verbatim in any of the surviving paintings.

The horse’s skull on the verso is a regular motif in Bosch. There is a detail in the foreground of the central panel of the Hermit Saints Triptych (cat. 2) which seems to show the moment immediately prior to that of the drawing (fig. 38.2, bottom left); a creature explores the skull in the painting, while in the drawing it has made itself comfortable inside. However, where the two elements are rendered individually in the painting, they merge in the drawing into a single entity. The strange little creature at the bottom of the sheet shows how Bosch developed the final form as he worked: the figure originally had nothing on its head, but was given a funnel to wear in the finished version of the drawing.

The attribution of this drawing to Bosch has never been seriously disputed.
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink over black chalk on paper, 204 × 264 mm
Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, Paris, 1972

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Lower left in a later hand in pen and brown ink: Bruegel / manu / propria. Left of this: Louvre stamp r.f. (l. 2207); lower right: Louvre stamp MW (l. 1899) and Mariette stamp (l. 1852). Verso, in pen and brown ink: 8460; in pencil: PV 17; stamp No. d’Ordre 19.721; below this in pencil: NIII / 8965.

Condition/Restoration
The drawing has been cut vertically down the middle and the two halves then reattached and stiffened. The paper is smudged, contains moisture stains and has yellowed. Large brown stain on the right of the barrel. Various small tears. The border was added at a later date.

BRCP documentation
The drawing was documented on 29 and 30 June 2015 with macrophotography in visible light and raking light. An IRIR was made using an OSIRIS camera.

Provenance
Pierre-Jean Mariette (1694–1774); Cabinet du Roi; Musée Napoléon (no. 8460); Musée du Louvre.

Literature

Strictly speaking, the madwomen in this drawing ought not to be identified as witches, although they are behaving most peculiarly. One of them rides a wheel while using a distaff for a lance, from which a pig’s foot is suspended. Another is mounted on an impossible pose on a barrel pulled along by a cockerel. A plateau with a jug containing sprigs of blossom balances on her back. In the upper left of the sheet, a woman rides a baker’s shovel, on the handle of which perch an owl. This behaviour is similar to that found in images of witches, and several of these figures were indeed used as witches in a painting, now in Brussels, by a follower of Bosch.¹ It is for that reason that we have retained the term ‘witches’ in the title for this model sheet, while placing it in inverted commas.²

The eight human figures in the drawing have been laid down carefully so that they do not overlap. This makes them easier to read and indicates that the drawing could have served as a model sheet. In our view, the fact that the figures do not interact with one another and that the individual elements lack coherence is not due to any lack of quality, but reflects the drawing’s function as a set of examples.³

Koreny and others have noted the similarities in drawing style between the old woman with a pot on her head and the beggar on the back of The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes (cat. 37). Unlike Koreny, we detect the same hand in the two works, namely that of Bosch himself.⁴ This sheet may be linked to other drawings by Bosch in other ways too: the way the blossoms in the jug are drawn is the same, for instance, as that of the flowers on the little trees in The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes, and also in several places in the Tree-Man (cat. 35). A very similar cockerel is found, meanwhile, in the drawing of a fox and a cockerel on the verso of the Rotterdam sheet (cat. 40) and at the bottom of The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes. The rooster in the drawing of the Gathering of the Birds (cat. 41) can be added to the list too. A final noteworthy similarity is found in the figure with a basket over her (‘?) head and an arrow piercing her belly and the basket; the way the foot of her standing leg is drawn corresponds with the left foot of the spinster in the Rotterdam sheet. The unusual detail of the instep indicated by a double line is identical in the two sheets, which must have been done by the same artist. In our view, therefore, there is every reason to attribute this drawing to Bosch.
1 Koreny 2012, 231.
3 Koreny 2012, 290.
4 Koreny assigns the sheet to a follower and dates it to between 1530 and 1550.
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown and greyish-brown ink on paper, 120 x 85 mm
Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, Rotterdam, N.190

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Recto, lower left in brown ink: [illegible]; to the right of this in pencil: Q.41; lower right: Rodrigues stamp (L.897) and Vallardi stamp (L.1223a).
Verso, lower right in brown ink: bo[ich].

Condition/Restoration
Recto: smudged on both sides; brown stains showing through from the verso; horizontal fold just below the middle; later border in brown ink.
Verso: the image has been trimmed at left, top and bottom.

BCCP documentation
The drawing was documented on 7 September 2015 with macrophotography in visible light. An IRR was made using an OSIRIS camera.

Provenance
Giuseppe Vallardi (1784–1865; L.1223); Eugene Rodrigues (1853–1928; L.897), Paris; his auction, Amsterdam (Muller) 12–13 July 1921; Dr Leo Baer, Bad Homburg (1924); Franz W. Koenigs (1889–1941), Haarlem (L.1023a); in or after 1924; loaned to the museum, 1935–40; acquired with the Koenigs collection by D. G. van Beuningen (1871–1955), Rotterdam, and donated to the Museum Boijmans Foundation, 1940; loaned to the museum since 1940.

Literature

Two Old Women / Fox and cockerel

As in the Model sheet with ‘Witches’ (cat. 39), the women in this drawing have often been identified as witches. Unlike their counterparts in Paris, however, the two old women here do not display any deviant behaviour; one leans on a stick, while the other clutches a distaff. The drawing is undoubtedly a fragment of a larger work, which makes it impossible to identify and explain the women precisely. It is unlikely, though, that Bosch intended to offer a non-judgemental representation of the picturesque appearance of two elderly women. The association between ‘down-at-heel’ and ‘ugly’ on the one hand, and ‘foolish’ and ‘wicked’ on the other, is an obvious one, especially in Bosch.

Interestingly, Bosch drew here using two inks of different composition, which have therefore aged differently over the centuries. This reveals that the artist completed the women in this sheet in two phases: he began with the drawing in brown ink and then overlaid the greyer lines, chiefly for hatching purposes, but also to heighten the outlines. The difference between the brown and the grey ink that we see today was probably less obvious at first.

Koreny proposed an early date between 1480 and 1490 for this drawing, based on a comparison with the underdrawing of the Frankfurt Ecce Homo (cat. 11). Although he was followed in this by Peter van der Coelen in the catalogue of early Netherlandish drawings in Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen, we do not feel there is sufficient evidence for such a conclusion. It is true that the underdrawing of Christ in the Frankfurt painting shows some resemblance to the pose of the spinster, and the way the two figures’ feet are rendered is also comparable. This applies equally well, however, to Eve’s feet in the left wing of the Haywain (cat. 20), a painting which, based on the dating of the wood of its panels, must have been produced at a late stage – after 1510, at any rate. There are so few points of reference by which to date or even to suggest a sequence for these and other drawings by Bosch, that we will not attempt to do so.

The abruptly cropped elements around the little sketch of a fox and cockerel make it plain that this is a fragment of a larger drawing. What we see now suggests an unsuspecting cockerel who rounds a small hill in which a fox lurks in its den. The remains of an earlier meal, in which a duck evidently came to its end, are scattered in the foreground. Foxes and cockerels appear regularly in Bosch’s work, both separately and together. A cockerel in The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes (cat. 37) sticks its head into the hollow of the tree in which a fox lies in wait, while in the Battle of the Birds and Mammals (cat. 42) a fox stretches out among a scattering of severed birds’ legs, wings and heads. Another fox is curled up asleep in Saint Jerome (cat. 1), surrounded by the remains of a devoured cockerel. The fox is a cunning, clever and observant predator, making it a favourite character for Bosch (along with the owl) in compositions dealing with the struggle for life, both physical and spiritual. Things do not always turn out well even for the crafty fox, as we see in the painting of Saint Christopher (cat. 7), in which two cockerels parade behind a tree from which a dead fox dangles.

2 Koldewey 2001c.

3 Cf. the Tree-Man (cat. 35), in which the contours were also emphasized in a greyer ink during a second phase.


5 See, e.g., cat. 1 and 37.

6 The Paradise wing of the Vienna Last Judgement (cat. 17a) includes a fox that rushes out of the trees towards a cockerel standing in the open field.
40.1 Saint Jerome [CAT 1]
40.2 The Wood Has Ears, ... [CAT 37R]
40.3 Battle of the Birds and Mammals [CAT 42]
40.4 Cranach, Lost Judgement (Berlin)
[see also FIG 17.14]
40.5 Job Triptych [CAT 23B]
40.6 Saint Christopher [CAT 7]

40.8–9 Adam and Eve, Haywain [CAT 20A]: V1S and 1RR
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink on paper, 195 × 284 mm
SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, KdZ 13136

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Verso, lower left in pencil: Henry van Bles (Civetta).
Kupferstichkabinett stamp (L.1606). Right in pencil: KdZ 1316.

Watermark
Jug with lid and handle; height 23 mm. Comparable with Briquet 12496 or 12505, but there with a cross. Chain line distance: approx. 20–22 mm.

Condition/Restoration
The image has been trimmed somewhat on the left. Several slightly smudged folds have been smoothed. Various small tears. Lower left: various stains; upper middle: several paint and ink spots. Correction by the artist himself in the left leg of the commander of the bird army, in which the first phase has been scratched out.

BCCP documentation
The drawing was documented on 27 May 2014 with macrophotography in visible light and in infrared, and in ultraviolet and raking light. An IRR was made using an OSIRIS camera.

Provenance
Old holdings (acquired prior to 1879).

Literature

The Gathering of the Birds
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink on paper, 203 × 290 mm
SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, KdZ 14715

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Verso middle: Kupferstichkabinett stamp (L.1606); lower left: illegible inscription in pencil; right in pencil: KdZ. 14715.

Condition/Restoration
The paper is smudged and has been trimmed top and right; various smoothed folds; several tears along the left, right and top edges; significant damage upper right; various brown and black-brown spots and several moisture stains.

BRC documentation
The drawing was documented on 27 May 2014 with macrophotography in visible light and in infrared, and in ultraviolet and raking light. An IRR was made using an OSIRIS camera.

Provenance
Old holdings (acquired before 1879).

Literature
The Gathering of the Birds and the Battle of the Birds and Mammals are the most important additions to Bosch’s drawn oeuvre in recent decades, together with the Infernal Landscape (cat. 44). The Berlin sheets are also extremely important to our picture of Bosch as a draughtsman in terms of the type of drawing. The fact that the two sheets stand in direct relationship to one another enables us to learn something not only about the master’s drawing style but also about his thought processes.

The Gathering of the Birds was first published by Bock and Rosenberg in 1930 as a copy by a follower; nothing more was then heard of the drawing for some considerable time.1 Stephanie Buck included the sheet and the one with the Battle of the Birds and Mammals in her very thorough and comprehensive catalogue of fifteenth-century Netherlandish drawings in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin. She felt that the sheets were too weak to be attributed to Bosch himself and concluded that they were a workshop product or the work of a follower.2 It was Fritz Koreny who presented both drawings as autograph in 2002 at the exhibition of early Netherlandish drawings in Antwerp. Koreny’s comparisons with drawings like the Tree-Man, the Owl’s Nest, The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes and the sketch with studies including Saint Anthony (cat. 52) are persuasive and the attribution of these drawings to Bosch has since been generally accepted.3

The foreground of Gathering of the Birds contains a collection of fowl – owls, storks, spoonbills, peacocks, ducks, swans, cockerels, eagle-like birds and a griffin – holding a council of war. The griffin is the flag-bearer sitting at the centre of the drawing, opposite two large birds of prey who seem to be the commanders of this avian army. A row of storks faces one of spoonbills on the right of the sheet; flags hang from their beaks, while another bird beats the drums between them. An army of mammals can be seen in the upper right background, led by a stag standing on a hill next to a cross. The lines beyond include unicorns, an elephant with what is probably a monkey on its back, and deer.

We view the scene from the perspective of the birds; the mammals are far away, on the horizon. In the second sheet, which shows the Battle of the Birds and Mammals, the birds advance from the left behind a slope in the landscape. We infer from this that we are now looking at the mammals’ territory and hence that the birds are the aggressors. The drawing presents the chaos of the battlefield, in which birds and mammals fight fiercely. Although the outcome is not yet certain, it is significant that the lion has the griffin – the birds’ standard-bearer – by the throat. It is surely no coincidence that in the drawing of the birds preparing for war, a (triumphal) cross was shown on the mammals’ side.

What is unusual about these drawings is that the artist sought here to present a narrative – an event with a distinct passage of time. This relates not only to the fact that the two drawings apparently depict successive scenes, but also to the composition of each drawing individually. Whereas virtually all the other drawings in the Bosch group are concerned with the development (invention) of figures and compositions with a relatively static character, this is about preparing for action and the subsequent action itself. It is not clear what story these drawings are intended to illustrate. The double-headed eagle (symbol of the Holy Roman Empire) in the banner of the bird army in Gathering of the Birds (an obvious visual rhyme) suggests that the story can be translated to the human world. The idea that the drawings refer to a specific political conflict is, however, difficult to prove.4 At the same time, it is undeniably the case that the boundary between a ‘scientific’ description of things and animals, and a moral explanation of these characteristics and their deployment in fables was not clearly delineated around 1500.

An example is On the Properties of Things (De proprietatibus rerum) – a thirteenth-century encyclopaedia compiled by Bartholomeus Anglicus (Bartholomew the Englishman, c. 1240), of which both Latin and Middle Dutch editions were in circulation in the Low Countries towards the end of the fifteenth century. It comprised nineteen volumes of
descriptions of subjects ranging from rocks and minerals, trees and plants, birds, and the sun, moon and stars, to scents and colours. Book 12, Chapter 6 is devoted to the owl, which it describes as a bird with full plumage, lazy and a poor flier, which is drawn to churchyards and caves. ‘Diviners [wijchelaers] and Aristotle consider the owl to betoken evil. They say that if the bird is seen in the town, it heralds a death or a fire among the people or that the city will be laid waste.’

In another popular book – the Dialogue of Creatures (Dialogus creaturarum, dialogue 82), probably written in northern Italy in the fourteenth century and published in Middle Dutch in the late fifteenth century under the title Tweespraec der creaturen – the ‘scientific’ description of the owl is expanded into a story about the ‘long-eared owl who wanted to rule over the other animals’. It is interesting that the owl, as a nocturnal creature and bird of prey, figures here in a fable-like, moralizing tale of pride. The owl wishes, contrary to the laws of creation, to achieve dominion over the other birds. He ultimately pays a high price – pride comes before a fall – and he is put to death. The story that resonates here in the background is that of the Fall of the Rebel Angels which, according to exegetical tradition since Augustine, was the moment at which evil came into being when God separated light from dark. This implies that the owl in the story ought to be associated with darkness and evil and is hence also comparable with the devil. This is not to say that he is the devil, merely that Satan can be detected in him.

Animals are thus assigned characteristics and personality traits comparable with those of people. Stories with animals in the principal role, from which people could draw lessons, were an entertaining and popular form of education. The best-known example is the collection of fables attributed to Aesop, which were also illustrated and circulated in the Northern Netherlands in the late fifteenth century. One of the fables is about a battle between birds and mammals (beasts). The principal figure in the story is the bat, who wants to choose the winning side and tells the birds he is a bird, and the beasts that he is a beast. Once the battle has been fought, both sides shun and punish the bat. The moral of the tale is that it is impossible to serve two masters.

We find a contrasting moral in a fable in the Tweespraec der creaturen (dialogue 85). The story of ‘The lion who fought against the eagle’ also deals with a conflict between beasts and birds. In this case, the king of the beasts is pitted against the eagle, leader of the birds. The griffin intervenes, being himself half eagle, half lion. He observes the battle between the two sides and positions himself on a hill, so that they can all see him. The lion and the eagle both respect the griffin, as each sees that half of him belongs to the enemy. The foes also see themselves united in the griffin, who thus becomes the peacemaker between the two warring factions. In this case, the fact that he cannot choose between the birds and the beasts has a positive outcome. The griffin is the Other to both sides, yet at the same time, each side recognizes itself in that Other. Consequently, the griffin provides the vehicle here for an appeal for tolerance.

Dialogue 87 of the Tweespraec der creaturen shows, incidentally, that the griffin can also be viewed entirely differently, as in that instance the animal compiled from the king of the beasts and the king of the birds is a tyrant. The griffin is described in this case as an intolerant oppressor, who is able to behave in that way because of the powers united in him (lion and eagle). All this indicates yet again that while animals can be used to symbolize ideas, those symbols do not have the same meaning always and everywhere.

It seems very much as though stories from books like On the Properties of Things, the Dialogue of the Creatures and Aesop’s fables were the seedbed for these two drawings by Bosch. And that goes not only for the stories, but also for the illustrations accompanying them. A comparison between the Gathering of the Birds and a woodcut with birds from the Proprieteyten suggests that Bosch was indeed familiar with this book. The griffin and the ostrich/eagle are particularly striking in this regard. Comparison with these wood-
cuts and the illustrations accompanying Aesop’s fable about the bat and the one about the lion and the eagle in the Twespraec provides additional insight into Bosch’s ambitions in this instance. The book illustrations are limited in their dynamism by the woodcut medium; the same limitation barely applies, by contrast, to pen drawings. Bosch’s two drawings seem to have been primarily intended therefore as studies in the visual representation of movement and suspense rather than as illustrations of a specific allegory. The only penticimento in these sheets – the leg of the ostrich/eagle in the Gathering of the Birds, which was initially straight – is geared precisely to that aspect.

1 Bock and Rosenberg 1930, 2.
5 Bartholomeus Anglicus, Von den proprieteyten der dinghen, Haarlem (Jacob Bellaert) 24 December 1485, fol. 223r/v. Belief in the owl as a symbol of disaster is ancient and widespread, and goes back to at least Greek and Roman times. Cf. Pliny, Naturalis Historia, Book 10, 34–42. Morris (2009, 27–28) describes the custom among Roman farmers of nailing an owl to the front door to ward off evil. See also in this regard the 2007 short story La Cività by Raffaele La Capria [http://www.sagarana.net/anteprima.php?quale=144].
6 Dialogus creaturarum, Gouda (Gerard Leeu) 1480; Twespraec der creaturen, Gouda (Gerard Leeu) 1481.
7 Kok 2013, 1, 134–41; 11, 377–87. Use is made here of Aesop, De historien ende fabulen van Esopus die leert die wonderk en ende seer ghastichick syn, Delft (Hendrik Eckert van Homberch) 1498.
8 Koreny, Pokorny and Zeman 2002, 418 n. 3.
41.4 Griffin and eagles [CAT 41]

41.5 Die historien ende fabulen van Esopus die leerlic wonderlick ende seer ghenoechlick syn, Delft (Hendrik Eckert van Homberch) 1498. Woodcut. Universiteitsbibliotheek, Ghent

41.6 Twespraec der creaturen, Gouda (Gerard Leesu) 1481. Woodcut. Koninklijke Bibliotheek, The Hague
The Temptation of Saint Anthony / Concert in an Egg and two sketches of monsters

Workshop of Hieronymus Bosch (recto)
Hieronymus Bosch and workshop (verso)

Recto: pen and brown ink on paper; the four figures below the main scene were drawn in light brown ink and emphasized in a second phase using dark brown ink
Verso: pen and dark brown ink on paper; the monsters left of centre and lower right are in light brown ink, as is the hatching upper right
258 x 179 mm
SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, KdZ 711

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Recto, lower middle in pencil 3 x
Verso, on the left in pencil: Prügel; lower left in pencil: K.d.Z. 711; upper left: Kupferstichkabinett stamp (1.1606) and Altenstein stamp (l.8).

Condition/Restoration
Recto: the image has been cropped slightly top and left; torn in the middle. Heavily discoloured around the repair. There is another repair next to Anthony’s knee and in the upper right corner. The paper is yellowed and smudged; moisture stains above and below; grey-green paint spatters on the right. Traces of folds and creases in the corners; lower right corner cut off. Vertical line of a previous repair along the right-hand side.
Verso: brown discoloration caused by the glue used for repair. Traces of black paint left of centre. Brushstrokes (next to the figure with the bare behind) and traces of paint (upper right).

BRCP documentation
The drawing was documented on 27 May 2014 with macrophotography in visible light and in infrared, and in ultraviolet and raking light. An IRr was made using an OSIRIS camera.

Provenance
Heinrich Friedrich Karl Freiherr von Altenstein (1757–1831), Berlin; acquired before 1879.

Literature
Saint Anthony sits in a landscape, surrounded by Boschian monsters, in a composition that is remarkably simple but consistently worked out overall. Images of this type were repeated countless times in the course of the sixteenth century, when Bosch’s imagery was popular. They often consisted of small paintings produced by now-anonymous masters for the open market.

The simplification of Bosch’s frequently complex and refined images, done in a manner lacking the master’s brilliance, is not a phenomenon, however, that dates only from after his death. It seems as though pictures of this kind were already being produced in his workshop and this drawing is an example. The reason for supposing that the sheet came from Bosch’s workshop is found on the verso, where in addition to a scene with a concert in an egg, the head of a monstrous bird has been drawn twice, with the quality we recognize from other drawings by Bosch, such as the Battle of the Birds and Mammals (cat. 42) and the demonic creature sitting on a barrel on the left of the Infernal Landscape (cat. 44). In our view, these sketches have to be attributed to Bosch – an opinion previously expressed by Haverkamp-Begemann and Van Gelder too. A sheet on which Bosch drew
has once again been used by apprentices, as in the case of *The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes* (cat. 37), where, as we have seen, pupils were actually encouraged to make a creative contribution rather than simply referring to existing inventions. Similar efforts seem to have been made in this *Temptation*. A not entirely successful attempt to create an attractive composition has been made using ‘inventions’ derived from Bosch, such as the tree-man-like figure to Saint Anthony’s right. We find the same mechanism at work in the *Job Triptych* in Bruges (see cat. 23). The wing featuring Saint Anthony even includes an element that closely resembles the hollow, inhabited fruit in the lower right of the drawing. The *Infernal Scene with Tree-Man* in Dresden (cat. 58) is comparable in terms of drawing style and the way the composition has been put together.

The drawing with a concert in an egg on the verso is partially executed on top of the bird-monster and so was done later than Bosch’s little sketch. The cropped monster’s head in the lower right of the sheet and the little lines in the upper right corner (apparently applied in the same ink and by the same hand) indicate that the sheet was originally larger. The composition with the concert in an egg is probably a free variation on a Bosch invention, done in the workshop like the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* on the recto, which was drawn by the same hand.

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1 Koreny (2012, 267) has an early picture with a piece of paper stuck on that covers a little monster. The latter can already be seen, however, in Buck 2001, 395.

2 Unverfehrt 1980, 151–86.

3 Cf. cat. 4.

4 Haverkamp-Begemann and Van Gelder 1963, no. 517, 522. Koreny (2012, 269) also takes this sketch seriously and compares it with a detail from the *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, Lisbon (cat. 4), a painting he attributes to one of Bosch’s workshop assistants.

5 Similar pictorial elements are found in Bosch in *Saint Jerome, the Temptation of Saint Anthony* and the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (cat. 1, 4 and 21).

6 The painting, now in Lille, with a version of the same subject was most likely produced in the third quarter of the sixteenth century. See Unverfehrt 1980, 285.
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink on paper; red ink in the eye of the helmeted monster
253 x 197 mm
Private collection

Inscriptions and collectors' marks
Verso: several old inscriptions, one of which – antrement or autrement done in pen – might be original; in pencil: H: Mandyn, J: Callot / original Drawing; lower right: 41. A fragment of a price list is attached to the back, together with a small piece of paper with a fragment of text: ... got ghy dyt of ...

Watermark
Gothic letter P with cloverleaf; height 60 mm. Chain line distance: approx. 22–23 mm.

Condition/Restoration
Image cropped all the way around; tears up to 5 cm long on all sides. Dark brown ink border added later. Smudged, yellowed, a few small moisture spots. Various filled lacunae, particularly at the bottom.

BRCP documentation
The drawing was documented on 13 October 2014 with macrophotography in visible light and infrared, and in ultraviolet and raking light. An IR image was made using an OISIRIS camera.

Provenance
New York, Sotheby's, 21 January 2003, no. 20.

Literature

Infernal Landscape

This sheet was auctioned on 21 January 2003 as a drawing from the circle of Bosch, based in part on an analysis by Fritz Koreny. The drawing was not previously known in the art-historical literature and was only given a place in the Bosch group in 2012, following the publication of Koreny's catalogue raisonné of Bosch's drawings, as a work by an 'assistant of the master of the Bruges Last Judgement', which Koreny attributes to an assistant of Bosch (see cat. 16). In Koreny’s view, therefore, we are dealing here with an assistant of an assistant of Bosch.

Although the drawing is now in a private collection, it was possible to examine it at first hand on several occasions in the course of the research performed by the Bosch Research and Conservation Project. This included the extensive documentation of the drawing on 13 October 2014 using macrophotography, and in visible, infrared, ultraviolet and raking light, and infrared reflectography. This documentation is accessible online in full. Examination of the drawing itself and of its photographic documentation, combined with the similarities detected between this sheet and other works by Bosch (in the first instance the Garden of Earthly Delights) lead us to conclude that it ought to be viewed as an autograph work by Hieronymus Bosch.

A demonic edifice is placed in the middleground of a sprawling infernal landscape. A leviathan-like figure stands with gaping mouth and its legs in two jugs on the bank of a stretch of water. The beast’s maw is crammed with a wheel, seemingly intended to swallow up the human figures who are drawn into the monster’s jaws by two groups of figures with a large net. A disc with spikes running around the edge lies on top of the beast’s head. Two groups of figures have been drawn on top of it – one pair is wrestling, while another group rings a bell, the clapper of which consists of human bodies. The bell is hung from a canopy, from which a cloak hangs down. Above this is a bowl containing figures and with guy ropes hanging down on either side, attached to masts sticking through the handles of the jugs. The cables are tensioned by counterweights in the shape of a lantern on the left and a cauldron topped with a tent on the right. This fantastic structure stands in the middle of a landscape, the most striking features of which are a monstrous creature in a basket with a knife in its teeth, a barrel on legs containing a human figure and ridden by a curious creature in a helmet, and a dragon vomiting out another figure into a cooking pot.

The draughtsman has taken great pains to develop an infernal scene with a large number of fantastic elements. We find many of the motifs in the drawing in more or less varied form in Bosch’s paintings, most notably the Garden of Earthly Delights and the Bruges and Vienna Last Judgements (cat. 21, 17 and 16). This makes the sheet a fascinating addition to the drawing group while also giving us the sense of being able to follow the artist’s creative process. That process was a constant search for new forms, which frequently arose by playing with unexpected combinations of people, animals and things, and with relative scales. Human feet combined with a barrel for a body, two immense jugs used as shoes, and a knife so huge that five men can cling to, sit and lie on its blade. This was how Bosch went about finding forms and scenes that can exist only in his art.

What is particularly interesting about this sheet is that it can be linked in several ways to surviving paintings. The precise context and their juxtaposition with other visual elements often differ, yet it is plain that Bosch had a number of favourite motifs, which he constantly varied and combined to create new images. Exploring the relationship between elements of this drawing and those from several of his paintings can give us a certain insight into Bosch’s thinking, which must have been ‘modular’, enabling him to combine and rework motifs as required. It is important for the drawing discussed here that we consider the
44.1–2 Birds: Infernal Landscape [CAT 44] and Saint Anthony Triptych [CAT 48]

44.3 Garden of Earthly Delights [CAT 21C]

44.4 Garden of Earthly Delights [CAT 21C]
Barrel on legs,
The Flood [CAT 228]: 1RR and V15
relevant paintings not only as we see them today, but also in terms of their underdrawing and underpainting.

The analysis can be made most clearly by summarizing several of these elements. As noted above (cat. 22), for instance, the barrel on legs containing a human figure that we see in the right foreground of the drawing can also be found in the Flood panel After the Last Judgement. The way the face in the barrel has been rendered is also very similar to a detail from the Garden of Earthly Delights, in which a demonic mirror is held up to a woman. We find the same combination of a gaping mouth and a giant wheel in the Bruges Last Judgement, which also contains details like the lantern, the spiked disc, the bell with human bodies as a clapper, and the person/soul on the edge of a gigantic blade. The Vienna Last Judgement likewise contains the spiked wheel, as well as the combination of skewered bodies and a demonic bell (the Bruges Last Judgement has the demonic bell and a single impaled body). And the composition in Vienna also includes a large net used to catch human figures.

If we consider the affinities between this sheet and the other drawings from the Bosch group, we are struck by the similarity between the rendering of the birds, here and in the
Tree-Man, the Owl’s Nest and The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes (cat. 35–37). There is also a remarkable correspondence between the birds in the drawing and the bird on the exterior of the right wing of the Temptation of Saint Anthony in Lisbon, in which Bosch once again shows himself to be a draughtsman in paint. The smallest figures are similar to those in the Tree-Man, but also to those in the two drawings with birds and mammals in Berlin (cat. 41–42).

It is as good as certain that the drawing is not a copy (note the continuous lines between the figures sitting on the knife blade and below the figure riding the barrel), and its quality is excellent. The penwork is so deft that the more we look at the drawing, the more admiration we feel. The procession of figures with trumpet, banners and pennants that enters the scene from round the hill lower left is drawn with confidence and skill. We find similar groups time and again in Bosch, in the Adoration of the Magi in the Prado, for instance, the Garden of Earthly Delights, the Vienna Last Judgement and the Temptation of Saint Anthony in Lisbon (cat. 9, 21, 17 and 4). They also appear in his drawn oeuvre, including the Owl’s Nest (cat. 36) and the Gathering of the Birds (cat. 41). This drawing has to be by the same hand that...
44.12 Last Judgement (Bruges) [CAT 168]

44.13–14 Garden of Earthly Delights [CAT 21C]

44.15 Jan Brueghel the Elder (1568–1625), Aeneas and the Sibyl in the Underworld (detail).
Oil on copper, 25.5 x 34.3 cm. Private collection
drew the Owl’s Nest and the Tree-Man. Although the scale of the figures in the Burning Ship (cat. 45) is slightly larger, the way the figures are drawn there is very similar too. The relatively long arms are particularly noticeable in that case – a characteristic we also find in the right wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights, the image that this drawing most resembles in terms of its ambition and execution. The dramatically outstretched arms of the figure in the little boat, for instance, at the foot of the jug on the right, or the arms of the figure carrying a ladder next to the jug on the left are also found in various places in the Hell wing.

Other comparisons too are possible with the Garden of Earthly Delights. The monstrosity that occupies a central place in the drawing is comparable in ambition to the invention of the tree-man (in both his painted and drawn incarnations). The motif of the helmeted bird’s-head with legs is found in altered form, yet in the same spirit, in the right wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights. The way the bell is rung and the dynamism of its drawing is much closer to the Garden of Earthly Delights than the Bruges Last Judgement, in which we find the same motif. The two jugs in which the creature’s legs are placed form a striking detail that is also found in the demonic figure enthroned on the commode in the Hell wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights. The lantern on the left of the drawing also returns in the Prado triptych, to the right of the tree-man. The idea of a monster with its head, shoulders and arms sticking out of a basket is likewise found in a passage – subsequently overpainted – in the right wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights. This is an important argument in favour of viewing the drawing as autograph, since it is an example of information known only to the person who painted the panel, for it was rapidly painted out and removed from anyone else’s view, preventing a copyist from seeing it. The same goes for the barrel-monster in the Flood Panels.

Taking everything into account, the sheet discussed here seems relatively close to the Garden of Earthly Delights. It is an ambitious drawing with a series of motifs that were used in modified form in that and other paintings. Comparison between this and other inventions enables us to ‘see’ Bosch in the process of thinking and developing forms. Oddly enough, Jan Brueghel the Elder used this drawing roughly a century after it was made in the design of one of the versions of his Aeneas and the Sibyl in the Underworld. Brueghel borrowed the central monster and placed it in slightly modified form in the background of his painting. In other words, while Bosch seems ultimately to have used the drawing to develop new forms rather than as a preliminary study for a painting, Jan Brueghel later adopted the sketch as a model sheet.
**Burning Ship**

Hieronymus Bosch

Brush and grey-brown ink on paper
175 × 154 mm
Akademie der bildenden Künste, Kupferstichkabinett, Vienna, 2554

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Upper left: Akademie stamp (L.1628); verso, in pencil: Peter Brueghel del.

Watermark
Crowned star (virtually identical to the watermark in cat. 58), similar to Briquet 6116. Chain line distance: 25 mm.

Condition/Restoration
Smudged and discoloured in the corners and lower left; dark mark upper right; two stains on the right above the middle, partially retouched in white, which has subsequently cracked; numerous small, dark paint spatters; long, forked tear lower left, repaired.

Provenance
F. Jäger; donated to the Akademie in 1837.

Literature

The little sketch of a burning hell-ship, manned by unfortunates and beset by demonic monsters, features something rare in Bosch’s drawn work – a motif linked to both his drawn and his painted oeuvre. The figure dangling over the forecastle, with little birds flying out of his behind, is also found in the drawing of a figure in a large basket (cat. 46) and in the Hell wing of the Garden of Earthly Delights (cat. 21). The distinctive way the birds have been drawn is identical to that on the verso of the figure in a basket. We find the tapered feet in the Temptation of Eve (cat. 50) and in the Infernal Scene with anvil and monsters (cat. 53). As in the Infernal Landscape (cat. 44) we recognize here the characteristic manner of drawing arms, while the way the shod feet with spurs and pattens are drawn also links the drawing discussed here with that sheet. Although the Burning Ship is significantly less ambitious than the Infernal Landscape, the invention is once again done with brio, and so we see no reason to attribute the sheet to an assistant of Bosch.1

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1 Contrary to Koreny 2012, 214–16.
Man in a basket, old woman with tongs and children / Sketch of a man in a basket and a head-and-feet figure

The spontaneity and pleasure with which the artist has drawn the children chasing birds in the margin recalls Leonardo da Vinci’s drawing of a child playing with a cat from the same period. The poses of the tiny figures, the way they relate to one another and the little scenes they play out seem to have come to Bosch spontaneously. The young bird-catchers are drawn with the greatest of ease and wholly convincingly, in a manner also reminiscent of Bosch’s contemporary Raphael. The birds loosely connect the children with the two larger figures at the centre of the drawing, where birds fly out of the bare backside of a figure who is mostly hidden inside a large basket. A man squats on top of the basket, brandishing a lute with which he is apparently about to strike the buttocks below. A woman with a large pair of tongs gazes in shock at this bizarre scene.

The scene with the man in the basket is drawn again on the verso, this time with minimal means. In this case, a woman seems to sit on the basket holding two undefined attributes, one of which she is about to use to spank the figure in the basket. A flock of birds flies out of the man’s backside, similar to the way this detail was depicted in the Burning Ship (cat. 45). A strange creature consisting of a human head
on legs can be seen on the right of the drawing, with a kind of ‘see-through’ hump, containing little figures (the drawing on the other side of the sheet immediately makes us think of children).

The execution of these sketches is of the very highest level and shows numerous points of comparison with other drawings by Bosch. We also find the woman with the fire-tongs in the Model sheet with ‘Witches’ (cat. 39), while the figure whose backside serves as a ‘dovecote’ appears in the drawing of the Burning Ship. Bosch incorporated the motif of the figure with bare buttocks sticking out of a large basket in the central panel of the Hermit Saints Triptych (cat. 2), which shows various birds, including an owl perching on a stick inserted between the figure’s legs.

As in several other Bosch drawings, the artist has worked here in two phases, which can be clearly distinguished due to the discoloration of the respective inks.²

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² The same phenomenon can be seen in cat. 35, 40, 49 and 54.
Man in a basket, old woman with tongs and children, Vienna
Hieronymus Bosch

The Conjurer occupies a special place in Bosch’s drawn oeuvre, as it is a rare example of a composition sketch in which an attempt has been made to visualize a group of figures and the interaction between them. The composition drawings with Ten Spectators (cat. 49) and the Entombment of Christ (cat. 54) are more detailed and hence a little stiffer in character. This drawing is closest in functional terms to the Gathering of the Birds (cat. 41). Like that sheet, the Conjurer is accurately and confidently executed, resulting in a dynamic composition. The two spectators in the left foreground are as important in that respect as they are effective. Bosch used minimal means to draw two figures, with the one on the right placing an arm around the shoulder of the one on the left, who points towards the conjurer. They lean backwards and watch the show.

Bosch is playing a game here: we follow the gaze of these spectators as they observe an audience that watches but does not see, and whose attentive inattention allows them to be robbed of their possessions. The addition of the two spectators means that he does so in a more layered and hence more dynamic manner than in the painting in Saint-Germain-en-Laye, in which a follower of Bosch depicted a similar, but more caricatured scene (cat. 32). It is not clear to what extent that painting is a literal representation of an invention by Bosch. This drawing suggests otherwise.

Several motifs in the drawing and the way it is executed recall the Haywain (cat. 20). In the margin of that work, we see several oriental-looking women with conspicuous head-dresses, a very similar little dog, and two spectators who guide the viewer into the picture. This drawing is very close to the rapid, free style of painting and underdrawing in the Haywain, but other comparisons with Bosch’s painted oeuvre also thrust themselves upon us. Bosch used the device of spectators within the image also in the scene with Christ Carrying the Cross on the closed right wing of the Lisbon Temptation of Saint Anthony (cat. 4) and the Flagellation on the exterior of the Adoration of the Magi in the Prado, complete in that case with a monkey.
The back of the sheet has an interior scene with a comical concert, combined with drawings in the margin of helmets, three heads and a plough. All of these little drawings give an impression of having been copied and are of considerably inferior quality to the scene with the conjurer on the recto. They were probably done around the middle of the sixteenth century and evoke the world of the Verbeeck family of artists from Mechelen more than that of Bosch.

Provenance
Belonged in the seventeenth or eighteenth century to a French collector (identified by Lugt by the letter A); collection Charles-Paul-Jean-Baptiste de Bourgevin Vialart de Saint-Morys; in the Louvre during the French Revolution, 1803–14 Musée Napoléon (inv. MA 7775).

Literature
A rapid, now barely visible sketch of a conjurer and his assistant can be found on the verso of a drawing dating from the mid-sixteenth century with Christ Carrying the Cross and beggars. Fritz Koreny recognized its relationship with the drawing in Paris (cat. 47) and published the little sheet in his catalogue raisonné of Bosch’s drawings. Like the sketch of the Conjurer in Paris, he attributed this sheet to a follower of Bosch from around 1530–40. The drawing is undoubtedly by the same hand as the one in Paris, and so we ascribe it to Bosch. The speed with which it was done and its minimal characterization of the figures puts us in mind of the sketch of the man in a basket (cat. 46).
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink on paper
124 × 126 mm
The Pierpont Morgan Library, New York, 1, 112

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Recto, lower right in brown ink: bosch; above in pen and brown ink: Rymdyk’s Museum. Verso top: 81 ff; below in pencil: lived about 1600; below: 9; bottom: illegible inscription.

Watermark
Bottom left: part of a Gothic letter P.

Condition/Restoration
The image has been cropped at the top and the corners rounded off. Vertical fold in the middle; edged in black ink.

Provenance
Jan van Rijmsdijk (L.2167); Tighe; Charles Fairfax Murray; J. Pierpont Morgan, acquired in 1910.

Literature

Virtually all authors up to and including Charles de Tolnay (1965) considered this drawing to be autograph. However, since Lemmens and Taverne (1967–68) included this drawing in an article written to accompany the exhibition in ‘s-Hertogenbosch, the sheet has been invariably attributed to a follower of Bosch.1 Fritz Koreny (2012) dates it to between 1530 and 1540 and is highly critical of its quality, referring to an inexperienced draughtsman and unprofessional execution.2 Erwin Pokorny (quoted by Koreny 2012) gives the drawing an earlier date (c. 1510–20) and places it closer to Bosch’s workshop.3 Koreny’s comment that several figures in the drawing recur in a print that Hieronymus Cock published in Antwerp around 1560 is interesting. The drawing for it was done by Lambert Lombard in 1556. The print states that Hieronymus Bosch conceived the image (Hieron. Bos invenit) and that Lombard ‘brought it back’ (L. Lomb restituit).4 The engraving thus appears to show a lost Bosch composition.5 The relationship between the print and the drawing in the Morgan Library remains somewhat enigmatic; Koreny identified four heads in the drawing that reappear in the print in a modified configuration. On closer inspection we find that four more heads may be added to this, so that eight of the ten heads in the drawing have been used in the print. Surprisingly, not one of them appears in Lombard’s drawing. Could Lombard have had the drawing discussed here in his possession in 1556? Or do the Morgan Library’s drawing and Lombard’s print both refer to an unidentified painting by Bosch? We are unlikely to find answers to these questions, although the detail with which some of the figures from the drawing recur in the print suggests that the former did indeed play a part during the production of the latter.6 All this raises the question once more of the drawing’s status. Was it really made after a painted example? We are less sure about this than Koreny is. The second figure from the left, for example, initially had a very different head, probably without or with different headgear. One would not expect a pentimento of this kind in a drawing after an existing work. What is more, the quality seems much less poor to us than Koreny suggests.

The way the fourth figure from the left in particular has been drawn reminds us, despite the difference in scale, of the figures in the Tree-Man (cat. 35). Comparison of this figure with Saint John – drawn in the paint – in the background of the Escorial Christ Carrying the Cross is likewise enlightening. We also find some of the headgear and figure types in the Frankfurt Ecce Homo (cat. 11). To our mind, the similarities with Bosch’s work are much more numerous than the differences, and we therefore see no reason not to attribute this drawing to Bosch. As in several other Bosch drawings (cat. 35, 40 recto, 46 recto), two types of ink have been used here: an iron gall ink, which infrared light renders transparent, and a carbon-containing ink, used in a second phase of drawing, which remains visible in infrared.7

It is not clear what scene is being witnessed by the group of spectators in this sheet. An episode from the Passion of Christ is most likely, but we cannot say whether it will have been an Ecce Homo, Carrying of the Cross, or a Crucifixion. The dimensions of the sheet suggest that the figure group has been cut from a larger work. The purpose of a drawing like this is to compose a visually arresting group of people. The principal focus is not the interaction between the depicted individuals (as it is in cat. 50), but rather their positions.
49.1 Cornelis Cort after Lambert Lombard after Hieronymus Bosch, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, c. 1560. Engraving

49.2 Lambert Lombard after Hieronymus Bosch, *Christ Carrying the Cross*, 1556. Composition study for the engraving [fig 49.1]. Fondation Custodia, Paris, 3949
relative to one another. Where the figures in a model sheet (like cat. 39) are strictly separated, the ones here have actually been pushed together. The figure group in the central panel of the Wilgefortis Triptych (cat. 8) is similar in this respect.

1 Lemmens and Taverne 1967–68, 84.
3 Koreny 2012, 274 n. 19.
5 This is not likely to have been a literal copy after a lost work by Bosch: the draughtsman and engraver will have allowed themselves the necessary artistic freedom when producing the engraving. Ilsink 2009, 222–31.
6 The print made after the Tree-Man drawing (cat. 35) would be a similar case.
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and grey-brown ink on paper
137 x 103 mm
Private collection

Condition/Restoration
Recto, image cropped on all sides. The border on the recto was added later.

Provenance
L. Rosenthal; Le Roy Bakus (San Francisco/Seattle); L.V. Randall (Montreal); Sotheby's London, 10 May 1965; private collection.

Literature

Two men / The Temptation of Eve

The paper on which the little drawings of the temptation of Eve and two men talking were made must originally have been larger than the current thirteen by ten centimetres. The sheet has been cropped on all sides, as a result of which the immediate context in which the figures were initially drawn has been lost. This does not diminish the fact (the cropping actually enhances it), however, that these drawings have a much stronger narrative character than we find in many other drawings by Bosch. The rapid yet convincing way in which the pair of figures on both the recto and verso has been laid down gives these sketches a sense of dynamism and brio.

The free drawing style is comparable not only with other drawings by Bosch, but also with his underdrawings and painting technique. The way the male figure is drawn on the left of the recto, with numerous nervous strokes around the eyes, has a parallel in the painting of Peeter Scheyfve’s father on the exterior of the left wing of the Adoration of the Magi in the Prado (cat. 9). In terms of form, a similarity between the figure on the right with the hook-nose and protruding chin and one of the head studies in the Ghent Carrying of the Cross has been noted by Koreny, and with the beggar in the Saint Hippolytus wing of the Vienna Last Judgement (cat. 29 and 17). In our view, the comparison with the painting in Ghent is inadequate, since the similarity in that case is purely morphological. The painterly technique in the Ghent panel shows few affinities with Bosch’s way of ‘drawing in paint’, and the same goes for the underdrawing. The exterior wings of the Vienna Last Judgement seem much more closely related to this drawing. Apart from the similarity with the figure of the beggar, the manner in which Hippolytus’s left hand is rendered has a lot in common with the right hand of the figure on the left of the drawing. The underdrawing of paintings like Saint Christopher, Saint John the Baptist, Saint Jerome and Saint John on Patmos (cat. 7, 5, 1 and 6) is free, sketchy and readily comparable with the way the two heads on the recto were drawn. The head of the Virgin Mary in the Brussels Calvary (cat. 15), by contrast, is
less exploratory, but is also drawn in short strokes. This sheet can be linked to the master’s painted oeuvre to a greater extent than other drawings by Bosch.

The greatest similarity in the drawing group in terms of the scratchy lines is found in the sketch of an *Infernal Scene with anvil and monsters* (cat. 53), the sketch with studies of Saint Anthony (cat. 52) and the (horizontal) sheet with monsters (cat. 51).

1 Koreny (2012, 44, 59, 66) considers this figure to be a later addition by a hand other than Bosch. Closer examination shows, however, that the figure was planned from the outset and that it formed part of the painting as we see it now. See brcp, Technical Studies, cat. 9, RK 134–39.

50.4–6  Calvary (Brussels): VIS, IRP and IRR [CAT 15]

50.7 [CAT 50R]

50.8–9  Temptation of Eve: Last Judgement (Vienna) [CAT 17A] and Haywain (Prado) [CAT 20A]
Underdrawings (188):  
S0.11 Saint Christopher [CAT 7]  
S0.12 Saint Jerome [CAT 1]  
S0.13 Saint John the Baptist [CAT 5]  
S0.14 Saint John on Patmos [CAT 6A]  

Two men / The Temptation of Eve, private collection
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink on orange prepared paper
85 x 182 mm
SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, KdZ 550 recto

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Recto, lower left in a later hand in light brown ink: Jero: bosch.
Verso right: Kupferstichkabinett stamp (l. 1606); bottom left in pencil: KdZ 550.

Condition/Restoration
Recto: broad, grey brushstroke in the middle. Small tear in the middle of the left edge. Verso: the image has been cropped at the bottom.

BCCP documentation
The drawing was documented on 27 May 2014 with macrophotography in visible light and in infrared, and in ultraviolet and raking light. An IR was made using an OSIRIS camera.

Provenance
Old holding (acquired before 1879).

Literature

Two monsters / A head-and-feet figure and a monster

A comparison between the front and back of this sheet shows what effect light can have on a drawing. The paper was prepared with an orange tone on both sides; the front side, however, which has been exposed to light much more frequently, has faded to a pale pink colour. This fact reveals the excellent quality of the ink Bosch used to produce his drawings. It has no doubt faded to some extent over half a millennium (iron gall ink is virtually black when fresh), but the legibility of the drawings remains excellent, and they have not suffered from ink corrosion.

The format of the paper will originally have been larger, and the manner in which the figures were laid out on the sheet – alongside one another with no overlapping – suggests that it was used as an example in a similar way to the Model sheet with ‘Witches’ in the Louvre (cat. 39). As previously noted by Stephanie Buck and Fritz Koreny, Bosch does not seem to have used his drawings as models for his own paintings, since we do not know of any cases in which motifs from drawings are repeated verbatim in paintings securely attributed to him.1 The crawling creature on the recto of this drawing does recur literally in the uppermost roundel on the exterior of the panel showing the world after the Flood (cat. 22).2 That painting has to be considered, however, as a product of Bosch’s workshop. It is possible that his workshop assistants followed his drawings more faithfully than Bosch did himself.

In any event, the monstrous head-and-feet figure on the verso is an artistically delightful creation. The face was set down with short penstrokes to achieve a creased and grimy effect. The legs are a little stiff, yet relatively long, giving the impression that this gruff-looking creature could move pretty quickly, were it not for the rope tying its two limbs together. The figure is completely credible, despite the fact that this hybrid has sprung entirely from the draughtsman’s imagination. The attribution of the drawing is not contested.

2 See the website Boschproject.org, link 1.29.
Two monsters, Berlin
Although this drawing is sketched much more freely than the model sheet with monsters in Berlin (cat. 51), several of the profile heads here are similar to the head-and-feet figure in the Berlin drawing. The occasionally scratchy drawing style corresponds too. The sheet with a drawing of two male figures and the Temptation of Eve (cat. 50) can also be cited in this connection; we find the same pointed feet there as in the figure reading with a monk’s cap on his head. The swan on the other side of the sheet, where it serves as a helmet crest, is readily comparable with the way the same fowl is drawn in the Gathering of the Birds (cat. 41). Together, these connections firmly anchor the sheet within Bosch’s drawn oeuvre.

The drawing seems to have been made with a view to developing forms for use in a Temptation of Saint Anthony. The quest for forms and figures is very similar to the Saint Anthony in Lisbon, without any of the figures appearing there directly (see cat. 4). At a more detailed level, the way the creature on the lower right of the verso has been drawn – simple and primarily in outlines – is very similar to a beast in the underdrawing, but not the final painting, of the central panel of the Lisbon triptych.

As far as we can conclude at this point, Bosch’s drawings form a universe that exists in parallel to that of the paintings; certain links can be identified between the two, yet it is almost never possible to indicate a causal link. There are virtually no instances where a drawing can be identified as a preliminary study for a form that was subsequently painted. The drawing process, like that of underdrawing and then painting, is invariably a creative one. This is not to say that Bosch always created something out of nothing, simply that he rarely repeated forms verbatim, with the result that looking at his work is never boring.²

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1 Koreny 2012, 160.

2 Words to similar effect in José de Sigüenza. See pp. 578–82.
Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brown ink on paper
SMPK, Kupferstichkabinett, Berlin, KdZ 548

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Recto, upper middle in pen and grey-brown ink: m; lower right: 157.
Verso, upper middle in pen and brown ink: m; lower middle: Kupferstichkabinett stamp (i.1606); lower right in pencil: H. Bosch; lower left: KdZ 548.

Watermark
Fragment of a hand (corresponding with Piccard xvii, dept. i, 269, 307; Piccard online no. 154541).
Chain line distance: 37 mm.

Condition/Restoration
Recto: the image has been cropped on the left. Clear horizontal and vertical folds in the middle. Upper right corner torn off and subsequently repaired. Tear upper centre (repaired on the back).
Verso: image cropped on the right; clear horizontal and vertical folds in the middle; upper middle restored; pen strokes upper right.

bcp documentation
The drawing was documented on 27 May 2014 with macrophotography in visible light and in infrared, and in ultraviolet and raking light. An IR was made using an OSIRIS camera.

Provenance
Old holdings (acquired before 1879).

Literature

In her catalogue of early Netherlandish drawings in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, Stephanie Buck hesitates between attributing this drawing to Bosch himself or his workshop. Fritz Koreny, by contrast, doubts Bosch’s hand in the sheet to such an extent that he firmly identifies it as a workshop product. The quality, spontaneity and skill of the drawing are supposedly inferior to those of other, autograph sheets. The conclusion is an understandable one, given that this drawing does not contain any truly arresting or compelling inventions of the kind we find in, say, cat. 38, 51 or 52.

Nevertheless, there is no reason in our view to identify two different hands in the execution of the human head with four legs in the drawing in Berlin and the head of the figure with a sword on the sheet of sketches of Saint Anthony in Paris. The characteristically pointed feet of the figures around the anvil likewise correspond with those of the standing and reading figure in the Saint Anthony sheet (cat. 51). The figures on the Burning Ship in the Vienna Akademie are also comparable in this regard (cat. 45). We find the same pointed feet there, but also a similar way of representing hands, suggesting that this drawing ought to be viewed as autograph. In our view, the differences compared to the other drawings in the core group (cat. 35–54) are too minor for there to be any question of different hands.
The Entombment of Christ

Arthur Ewart Popham was the first to present this Entombment of Christ at an art historians’ conference held in Amsterdam in the summer of 1952. The British Museum had recently acquired the sheet as a drawing by Hieronymus Bosch. During his presentation, Popham compared the sheet with the drawings of the Ship of Fools and Death and the Miser in Paris (cat. 56 and 57), both of which he was inclined to attribute to Bosch, and with the angel in Saint John on Patmos in Berlin (cat. 6). He also wondered whether there might be some connection with the sculpture of the time, such as Adriaen van Wesel’s carvings for the altarpiece of the Brotherhood of Our Lady in ’s-Hertogenbosch (see cat. 5–6).  

Popham’s attribution to Bosch was adopted by Tolnay (1965) and Ironside (1973), but was contested by Lemmens and Taverne (1967), who viewed the sheet as the work of a follower. Koreny (2012) believes it to be by the same hand as the Haywain (which he considers to be the work of an assistant of Bosch). Fischer (2013) is unsure whether to ascribe it to a workshop assistant or a follower.

Koreny chiefly detects similarities with details from the Haywain, the Temptation of Saint Anthony and the Wayfarer (cat. 20, 4 and 19). He attributes the London Entombment,
along with those paintings, to a left-handed artist he has named the ‘Master of the Haywain Triptych’.

In our view, the comparison with both the Haywain and Saint John on Patmos is a valid one, although there are also other possibilities. Bosch’s only other surviving Entombment can be found in the (miniature) grisaille on the reverse of Saint John on Patmos.² Popham’s comparison with the way the angel is painted on the front of that panel is understandable in so far as the style of the painting is concerned, in which Bosch shows himself as so often to be a draughtsman in paint, modelling his figure very swiftly with visible brushstrokes.³ However, the underdrawing in that case is much less comparable with the drawing discussed here, as it was done much more sketchily.

The analogy with the angel in Berlin can be extended, as that drawing too was built up in several layers (black chalk and at least two phases with carbon-containing ink); it can be seen in several places that the artist has drawn with a pen and darker ink over a much vaguer and broader ‘underdrawing’ and a wash.⁴ The extent of the drawing’s finish and painterly quality led Popham to conclude that the sheet is a modello – a study from an
advanced stage of the design process. We are not aware of any Bosch drawings with a similar form or content to the one in London, making it hard to place the sheet in his drawn oeuvre. The Ship of Fools (cat. 56) and Death and the Miser (cat. 57) appear similar at first sight, but considerably less so on closer examination. The drawing method, in which the artist returns to the sheet several times and builds up the drawing in layers with different types of ink, is also found in other drawings by Bosch: the Tree-Man (cat. 35), Two Old Women (cat. 40 recto) and Ten Spectators (cat. 49). Although the format and the colour of the ink are different, the drawing style of the London and New York drawings is very similar.

The function of this drawing at some advanced stage of the design process (it is reasonable, in our view, to call it a modello) results in a work that resembles the underdrawing of paintings to a greater extent than many other sheets. Koreny has pointed out the similarity between Saint John’s cloak in the drawing and that of a beggar in the central panel of the Haywain. Further weight is lent to the comparison when we take account of the infrared documentation. We see there, for instance, how the underdrawing was used in the painting process and in some cases blends with it seamlessly. Painted and underdrawn lines cannot always be readily distinguished. This manner of drawing/painting is, as Koreny has noted, very similar to the way the Entombment was laid out. The Haywain does not, however, differ materially in this respect from Saint John on Patmos, with the qualification that it was executed faster and more economically. In our view, therefore, the London Entombment of Christ has to be attributed to Hieronymus Bosch.

1. Popham 1955, 250.
2. See the website Boschproject.org, link 112.
3. See the website Boschproject.org, link 113.
4. Unlike cat. 36, 37r, 38r and 41, the Entombment does not disappear in infrared light. The drawing appears to have been done using the same kind of ink as the one employed to emphasize the contours in cat. 35, 49, 46 and 40.
5. The use of prepared paper and white highlights enhances the painterly effect in the case of the Paris drawings and can be explained as a desire to ‘reproduce’ a painting. The search for forms — however limited — that we find in the Entombment, for instance, is missing from the Ship of Fools and Death and the Miser.
7. See the website Boschproject.org, link 114.
Entombment [CAT 54] and Haywain: VIS and RR [CAT 208]
This drawing was listed in the catalogue of the 1958 exhibition of medieval art from the Northern Netherlands at the Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, as having been produced in the 'Northern Netherlands, after the middle of the fifteenth century'. The brief description of the sheet there by Van Regteren Altena mentions the relationship with the drawing of two men in an American private collection (cat. 50). This was the first time the drawing was linked with Hieronymus Bosch. Stephanie Buck developed this insight in her catalogue of fifteenth-century Netherlandish drawings in the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin, where she compares the men in the sheet with figures in the Saint Wilgefortis Triptych (cat. 8) and the Ecce Homo paintings in Frankfurt and Boston (cat. 11 and 24). She linked the view of a distant landscape in the background with the Owl's Nest in Rotterdam (cat. 36). Above all, however, it was the similarity to the underdrawing of the Frankfurt Ecce Homo that prompted her to place this drawing in Bosch’s circle. Fritz Koreny in turn rates the quality of the drawing so highly that he does not think it can possibly be a workshop product. With slight reservation, he attributes it to Bosch himself, citing similarities with the Prado Adoration, the Garden of Earthly Delights and the Vienna Last Judgement.

Although the comparisons with the aforementioned works by Bosch are interesting, they are not entirely convincing. Koreny himself refers to ‘remaining doubt’ (‘Restzweifel’) in this regard, and we would agree with that. The drawing occupies an isolated position within the drawn oeuvre. The technique with which the men are executed (pen and brush, wash and white highlights) is similar to that of the Ship of Fools (cat. 56) and Death and the Miser (cat. 57), but the way they are worked out is not. The two men are drawn with a refinement we do not actually find in Bosch. Nor is there any solid parallel in Bosch's work for the men's headgear. We therefore wonder whether this drawing can actually be attributed to Bosch or his workshop.
Two oriental men, Berlin

1 Van Luttervelt: 1958, 135.

2 The drawing was previously placed in the Van Eyck group, Koreny 2012, 204, 206 nn. 4, 5.


4 Koreny 2012, 208.
Workshop of Hieronymus Bosch

Pen and brush and grey-brown ink, white highlights, on grey-green-brown prepared paper
256 x 168 mm
Musée du Louvre, Département des Arts graphiques, Paris, RF 3774

Inscriptions and collectors’ marks
Verso, in pencil: Pl. II. 13; black inventory stamp: R.F.70/3714; lower left, blue stamp of Marquis Charles de Valori (l. 2500); to the right of this the black Musée du Louvre stamp (l. 1886a).

Condition/Restoration
The image has been cropped all the way around; damaged on the right and repaired with thin paper on the back; several small tears around the edges; brown and black paint spots spread over the entire sheet; border added later.

BRCP documentation
The drawing was documented on 29 and 30 June 2015 with macrophotography in visible light and raking light. An IRR was made using an OSTRIS camera.

Provenance
Charles de Valori; acquired by the Louvre at the second Valori auction (13 and 14 February 1908, no. 164).

Literature

The Ship of Fools and Death and the Miser occupy a special place in the group of drawings associated with Hieronymus Bosch, due in the first instance to their appearance. Rather than pen and brown ink, the sheets were drawn in pen, brush and ink on prepared paper. Both sheets – drawn by one and the same artist – are heightened with white bodycolour to enhance the suggestion of plasticity. There is an obvious association, therefore, with grisaille paintings, although it is not clear to what extent the prepared paper was always so grey. Whatever the case, these sheets are more painterly in appearance than the other drawings in the group. This is even clearer when we compare them with the paintings with which they are related, namely the Ship of Fools in the Louvre, the fragment of that painting in New Haven and Death and the Miser in Washington (cat. 198–c). Both drawings must have been made after the paintings by, in our view, a workshop assistant rather than Bosch himself.

The most important information yielded by the drawing after the Ship of Fools is found in the upper part of the sheet, which shows a state of the painting different from the one we see today. A single branch is lashed to the mast above the roast bird that the figure immediately below is about to cut down. The equivalent branch in the painting was later expanded, giving it more of the appearance of the crown of a tree.

The horizon in the drawing runs directly below the roast fowl, indicated by a fairly thick line laid down in brush and ink. The outline of a city can be seen on the right of the drawing, partially intersecting the horizon. The painting has the beginning of a hill there, which was also added at a later date. We can only speculate as to the reasons for the overpainting; it might have been done to make the painting, which is only a fragment of a triptych, an autonomous work by closing off the composition on the right. These overpaintings were removed during the treatment of the painting in 2015.

The peculiar way the image is cut off at the lower right corner could be taken to mean that the drawing was made after the painting in the Louvre had been cropped. This would not be correct, however, as also the foot belonging to the cropped leg can be seen in the drawing, whereas it now belongs to the fragment in New Haven. This proves that the two parts of the painted Ship of Fools were still connected at the moment the drawing was done. The artist had to choose which part of the painting to record – probably because of the format of the paper – and decided to concentrate on the ship and the revelers. As a consequence, the upper part of the drawing is more compressed compared to the painting. He omitted the bottom part of the composition (now in New Haven).
The assumption is that this drawing was made after the painting of *Death and the Miser* (cat. 19c). The principal reason for this is a comparison between the painting, the underdrawing and the drawing of the man on his deathbed. The drawing corresponds with the painting: the man has not (yet) taken hold of the money-bag and does not have a goblet in his hand. In the underdrawing of the painting, by contrast, he holds the money-bag (his hand is placed around it) and there is a large goblet in his right hand. It is logical to assume that if the drawing had been made before the painting, it would also have been done before the underdrawing and would have served as a modello. If that had been the case, the artist responsible for the underdrawing would need to have made several significant adjustments to the preliminary design, which were then reversed during the painting process, which would be a highly unlikely sequence of events. It is far more plausible that the drawing was done after the painting had already been completed. An intermediate option, in which the drawing was done after the underdrawing and before the painting, is unlikely. It would not explain, for instance, why the shield, helmet and lance are placed on the left of the drawing, while the same elements are shown at the bottom of both the underdrawing and the painting. It seems probable that the draughtsman wanted to include as many visual elements as possible from the painted composition in what has to be defined as a copy drawing or *ricordo* – a record of a completed painting.

The drawing has little to tell us, therefore, about the earlier state of the painting. There are very few details that feature in the drawing but not in the painting, and it is reasonable to assume that these elements were originally included, but have disappeared over the centuries: the little letters, for instance, slipped behind a cord tied across the inside of the chest lid. Of the three in the drawing, only one can still be made out vaguely in the painting. During the most recent restoration of the painting, the drawing actually served as a guide for the reconstruction of the lock on the lid of the chest. In other words, it was eventually used as a preliminary study after all, more than 500 years after it was first made.
The hatching in this drawing runs consistently from lower left to upper right (or vice versa), which differs from the more varied direction of the hatching in the underdrawing of the painting. This was done almost uniformly from lower right to upper left (or vice versa); the hatching was only laid down from upper right to lower left (or vice versa) in the zone behind the dying man’s pillow (behind the angel’s extended arm). The direction of hatching chiefly reflects the function of the underdrawing, which is intended to show what has to go where, and also partly to model it. Modelling is less important in the copy drawing, the main purpose of which is to provide a record of the painting’s composition. The implications of this difference in the direction of hatching has been the subject of debate ever since Frits Lugt described it in 1968. It looks like the drawing was done by a right-handed draughtsman, while the underdrawing in the painting might have been done by a left-handed artist.

It is not clear when or where the drawing was made. Koreny placed its maker in the workshop of the Master of the Haywain Triptych, who had been employed in Bosch’s workshop and who, according to Koreny, took the business over when Bosch died. His suggestion is entirely plausible, with the significant proviso that we believe the ‘Master of the Haywain Triptych’ to have been Hieronymus Bosch himself. In our view, the drawing was produced in Bosch’s workshop as a visual record. Washed drawings done in pen and brush with white highlights on prepared paper became increasingly common towards the end of the fifteenth and the beginning of the sixteenth century. The choice of medium seems to have been determined in this case by the desire to achieve a painterly effect.

The question arises, lastly, as to who made the drawings of the Ship of Fools and Death and the Miser. We have to choose between an anonymous workshop assistant and the master’s own hand. Although the drawing was produced by a skilled draughtsman, we believe there are too few points of comparison to attribute it to the same artist as cat. 35–54. There are similarities in the rendering of the hands between these drawings and, say, the Model sheet with ‘Witches’ (cat. 39) and the Burning Ship (cat. 45). The execution of the sheets does not differ significantly either from the closed wings of the Temptation of Saint Anthony (cat. 4). Even...
so, these similarities seem too limited in this case for us to attribute the drawings to Bosch himself. We therefore consider *Death and the Miser* and the drawing of the *Ship of Fools* to be the work of a workshop assistant.

The draughtsman repeated the helmet and the shield from the painting on the verso of the sheet. In the drawing on the recto, he moved these elements from the bottom of the composition to the left, probably because of the format of the paper.\(^1\) They are less worked out there and less skilfully copied too, which might be why the helmet and shield were redrawn on the verso.

\(^1\) This takes account of the aforementioned money-bag and the goblet, but also elements like the arrow Death holds in his hand. This is short in the drawing and the painting, but much longer in the underdrawing. We should also note the group of attributes shown at the bottom of the composition in the underdrawing: a rosary, a stack of cups and a jug, none of which were painted. There is also the spur, lastly, which was included in the underdrawing between the lance and the helmet, but which does not appear in either the drawing or the painting. Apparently the painter thought that the owner of the tournament equipment had failed to earn his spurs.

\(^2\) Lugt 1968, 25, under no. 70; Koreny 2012, 63–71. See Blunk 2013, 394–95 for a discussion of this. See also cat. 19.

\(^3\) The lower part of the composition was also omitted in the drawing of the *Ship of Fools*. See cat. 56.
**Infernal scene with tree-man / Standing oriental man (a prophet?)**

The central motif on the recto of the Dresden *Infernal Scene* is a tree-man inspired by Bosch’s creation in the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (cat. 21) and the drawing in Vienna (cat. 35). Where the tree-man in the autograph Viennese drawing is surprisingly placed in a persuasively naturalistic setting, the artist who drew this sheet positions the monster in a hellish landscape with a cannibal, a severed leg and a large, monstrous fish. It is an imaginative scene of the kind found on countless occasions in the course of the sixteenth century in drawing, painting and printmaking. An example is the drawing with a tree-man in the University of Erlangen’s collection. The drawing harks back in part to inventions by Bosch, but it also elaborates on them and is not made up simply of quotations. The sheet is comparable in that respect with the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* and the *Concert in an Egg* (cat. 43). Both are drawings, probably made by two different hands, in which assistants employed in Bosch’s workshop attempted to obey their master’s exhortation above *The Wood Has Ears, The Field Has Eyes* (cat. 37): ‘Poor is the mind that always uses the inventions of others and invents nothing itself’. The result lacks the finesse, skill and coherence of the autograph sheets, but the manner in which the drawing was done suggests that it was produced in Bosch’s immediate circle. The watermark in the sheet is identical to the one in the *Burning Ship* (cat. 45).

The figure on the verso of the sheet – an elderly oriental man, standing and with a sword and a banderole in his hands (a prophet?) – is even more strongly related to Bosch’s drawing style. Charles de Tolnay viewed the figure as autograph for that reason.


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1 Koreny 2012; Unverfehrt 1980; Bass and Wyckhoff 2015. The Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin has an unpublished sketchbook which includes Boschian drawings from the second half of the sixteenth century. Inv. 79.b.2. 1921/1.


3 Tolnay 1965, i 18c.
Infernal scene with tree-man / Standing oriental man, Dresden
58.2 Infernal scene with tree-man (detail), University of Erlangen
Infernal scene with tree-man / Standing oriental man, Dresden

SB.3–4 Standing oriental man [cat 58v], and second king, Adoration (New York) [cat 10]
There was once a manner of painting called Grillo. It owed its name to Antipholus, who painted a man he jokingly called Grillo (cricket). Antipholus was born in Egypt and he learned this manner from Cresideno. It was similar in my view to the painting of Hieronymus Bosch, or Bosco, as we call him, who is so celebrated in our age; Bosch, who always distinguished himself by searching for amusing human figures and strange compositions to paint.

And now we are discussing Hieronymus Bosch, this is a reason to disabuse the common people – and others more than common – of an erroneous view they have of his paintings, such that they attribute any monstrosity or anything unnatural to Hieronymus Bosch, making of him an inventor of monsters and chimeras. I do not deny that he painted strange images of things, but for just one reason: to represent hell; and to this end, wishing to depict devils, he devised admirable compositions.

What Hieronymus Bosch did with prudence and decorum, others have done and do without the slightest discernment or judgment; having seen in the Netherlands how highly this type of painting is esteemed, they set out to imitate it by painting monsters and absurd fantasies, revealing their belief that Bosch’s imagination consisted in this alone.

So are there countless paintings in this style that are falsely inscribed with the name of Hieronymus Bosch; they are paintings on which he would never have thought of laying a hand, but are made with limited talent and with smoke, that is to say by making them appear old by smoking them in a chimney.

One thing I dare to state concerning Bosch is that he never painted anything unnatural in his life, except in the context, as I have said, of hell or purgatory. His inventions flowed from the quest for the strangest yet natural things: it may be stated in general that any painting—even when signed ‘Bosch’—in which anything monstrous appears or anything that goes beyond the limits of the natural is a fake and an imitation, unless, as I have said, the painting contains hell or elements of it.

It is certain—and will be clear to anyone who has observed Bosch’s work diligently—that he also showed the greatest respect for decorum, and that he took more careful account of the limits of the natural than any other in his art; but it is right to warn that among these imitators of Hieronymus Bosch, there is one who was his pupil and who, out of respect for his master, or to give his works a good name, inscribed the name Bosch on his paintings instead of his own. And they are nevertheless paintings very much to be esteemed, and those who own such works ought to be aware of their value, as this painter emulated his master in terms of invention and morals, as he was more diligent and patient in his work than Bosch, and because his work did not deviate in style, elegance or colour from that of his master. An example of this type of painting is a table
d owned by His Majesty, in which the Seven Deadly Sins are painted in a circle, depicted in figures and examples: and although the painting is marvellous in itself, the depiction of Envy is, in my opinion, so rare and so ingenious, and expresses her emotion so well, that it can vie with Aristides, the inventor of the paintings the Greeks call Ethica, which in our Castilian language can be translated as ‘paintings that show the customs and feelings of human beings’.

Felipe de Guevara: Commentaries on Painting  c. 1560

Edited and annotated by Don Antonio Ponz,
Madrid (Gerónimo Ortega; Hijos de Ibarra y Compañía) 1788.

Ovo antiguamente outro género de pintura que llamaban Grillo. Dióles este nombre Antífilo, pintando un hombre, al qual por donayre llamó Grillo.

De aquí quedó que este género de pintura se llamase Grillo. Nacío Antífilo en Egipto, y aprendió de Cresideno este género de pintura, que á mi parecer fué semejante á la que nuestra edad tanto celebra de Híeronimo Bosco, ó Bosco, como decimos, el qual siempre se extrachió en buscar talles de hombres donosos, y de raras composturas que pintar.

Y pues Híeronimo Bosco se nos ha puesto delante, razón será desengañar al vulgo, y á otros mas que vulgo de un error que de sus pinturas tienen concebido, y es, que qualquiera monstruosidad, y fuera de orden de naturaleza que ven, luego la atribuyen á Híeronimo Bosco, haciéndole inventor de monstruos y quimeras. No niego que no pintase extrañas efijes de cosas, pero esto tan solamente á un propósito que fué tratando del infierno, en la qual materia, queriendo figurar diablos, imaginó composiciones de cosas admirables.

 Esto que Híeronimo Bosco hizo con prudencia y decoro, han hecho y hacen otros sin discrecion y juicio ninguno: porque habiendo visto en Flandes quan acepto fuese aquel género de pintura de Híeronimo Bosco, acordaron de imitarle, pintando monstruos y desvariadas imaginaciones, dándose á entender que en esto solo consistia la imitacion de Bosco.

Ansi vienen á ser infinitas las pinturas de este género, selladas con el nombre de Híeronimo Bosco, falsamente inscripto; en las quales á él nunca le pasó por el pensamiento poner las manos, sino el humo y cortos ingenios, ahumandolas á las chimeneas para dalles autoridad y antigüedades.

Uma coisa oso afirmar de Bosco, que nunca pintou coisa fora do natural em sua vida, sino fuese em materia de infierno, ó purgatorio, como dicho tengo. Sus invenciones estrivaram em buscar coisas rarissimas, pero naturals: de manera, que pode ser regla universal, que qualquiera pintura, aunque firmada de Bosco, em que hubiere monstruosidad alguna, o coisa que pase os limites da naturaliza, que es adulterada y fingida, sino es, como digo, que a Pintura contenga em si infierno, ó materia de él.

Es cierto, y á qualquiera que con diligencia observarbe las cosas de Bosco, le serà manifesté haber sido observantissimo del decoro, y haber guardado los limites de naturalzaz cuidadosissimamente, tanto y mas que otro ninguno de su arte; pero es justo dar aviso que entre estos imitadores de Híeronimo Bosco, hay uno que fué seu discípulo, el qual por devocion de seu maestro, é por acreditar suas obras, inscribiu em suas pinturas o nombre de Bosch, y nao é suyo. Esto, aunque de todos maniera, son pinturas muy de estimar, y el que las tiene deve temerelas em mucho, porque en las invenciones y moralidades, fué rastreado tras seu maestro, y en el labor fué mas diligente y paciente que Bosco, no se apartando do aure e galanía, y do colorir de seu maestro. Exemplo de este género de pintura è uma mesa que V. M. tiene, em la qual em circulo estão pintados os siete pecados mortaes, mostrados em figuras e exemplos: e porque toda a pintura em sí seja maravilhosa, o quadro de la inviádu a mi juicio è tan raro e ingenioso, e tan exprimidio el afecto de ella, que pode competir com Aristides, inventor de estas; pinturas, que los Gregios llamaron Ethica, lo qual em nuestro castellano suena, Pinturas que muestran las costumbres y afectos de los ánimos de los hombres.
A method used by some to mislead those with little understanding of the true merit of the works; in the manner of the forgers of antique lead and metal monuments or casts of those that are truly antique. Such as these bury the monuments for a while in manure and use other means besides to corrode them and make them seem old, in order to deceive collectors of these objects, in which few are well versed.

The way our author describes Bosch's works tells us that he admired him and that he had studied the paintings and their meaning closely. We do not know with complete certainty where this table, on which the Seven Deadly Sins were depicted, is located; I am in no doubt, however, that it is a table measuring over four feet in diameter and four and three-quarter feet in height, which is in El Escorial. There is a circle in the middle with a diameter of just over two feet, and within it another, smaller one with the Saviour shown half-length, and with this inscription: cave, cave, Dominus videt (‘Beware, beware, the Lord is watching’). These two circles are surrounded by another, larger one, in which the Seven Deadly Sins are ingeniously represented and recorded. The Four Last Things are depicted in the four corners of this square table or panel in the same manner as the Deadly Sins. I will omit other details of this work which, in my opinion, is the one of which Don Felipe de Guevara speaks, and which is kept in the Royal Chambers, which is entered via a door on the sacristy stairs. Bosch was born in 's-Hertogenbosch and Spain has secured his best works. Various works by Bosch are mentioned, the best of them in Viage de España (Journey through Spain), II, pp. 131 and 139 and VI, pp. 149 and 152 of the second edition.

Arbitrio de algunos, usado para engañar á los que poco entienden el mérito verdadero de las obras; al modo de los falsificadores de monumentos antiguos, ejecutados en plomo y metal, ó vaciados de los que son verdaderamente antiguos. Estas tales los entierran por algún tiempo en el estiercol, y usan de otras medios, para que, adquiriendo cierta corrompimiento y señales de vejez, caigan en la trampa los que recogen estas cosas, en las cuales son poco versados.

Por esta narracion que nuestro Autor hace de las obras de Bosco, se conoce que le era aficionado, y que había mirado atentamente sus obras y la significacion de ellas. No sabemos con total certidumbre el paradero de esta mesa, donde se figuraban los pecados mortales; pero yo no tengo duda que es una tabla de mas de quatro pies de ancho, y de alto quatro pies y tres quartos, que está en el Escorial. En el medio hay un circulo cuya diámetro es de algo mas de dos pies, y dentro de él otro mas pequeño con el Salvador de medio cuerpo, y este letrero: cave, cave Dominus videt. Estos dos circulos estan comprendiendos en otro mas grande, donde se ven representados é historiados ingeniosamente los siete pecados mortales. Acia los quatro ángulos de esta mesa ó tabla que es quadrada, se representan en otros quatro circulos, los quatro novísimos, historiados al modo de los pecados mortales. Omito otras menudencias de esta obra, que, según mi opinion, es la de la que habla Don Felipe de Guevara, y se conserva en una alcoba, donde murió el Señor Felipe Segundo, y corresponde á la primer pieza de la Real habitación, entrando en ella por la puerta que hay en la escalera de la Sacristía.

Nació el Bosco en Bais le Duch, y España logró sus mejores obras. Se ha hecho mencion de varias obras del Bosco, y de las mas excelentes en el Viage de España, tomo II. pag. 131 y 139 y en el tomo VI. pag. 149 y 152 de la segunda edición.

* De Guevara uses the word mesa here, which means ‘table’. Ponz refers to the painting in his edition as mesa ó tabla — table or panel. De Guevara uses the word mesa or its plural, mesas, fifteen times in his Comentarios, always in reference to tables (painted or otherwise).
Among the paintings of these German and Netherlandish masters, which as I say are numerous, there are many throughout the house by a certain Geronimo Bosco, of whom I would like to say a little more for a number of reasons: because his great ingenuity merits it; because people who think little about what they see commonly refer to Geronimo Bosco’s absurdities; and because I think he has been maligned as a heretic for no reason. I have a high enough opinion of the piety and zeal of the King, our founder (to begin with this latter argument), to think that, had he known that this would be raised, he would never have allowed these paintings in his house, in his monasteries, in his bedchamber, in the chapterhouses and in the sacristy. All these places are adorned with these paintings. Besides this argument, which to me is an important one, there is another that may be deduced from his paintings: these show almost all the sacraments and estates and ranks of the Church, from the pope down to the very lowest, two stumbling blocks for all heretics, and he painted them very truthfully and with great consideration, which he would not have done, had he been a heretic; and he did the same with the mysteries of our salvation.

I would now like to show that his paintings are not absurdities, but books of great prudence and ingenuity; and if they are absurdities, then they are ours and not his. And, to come finally to the point, it is a painted satire on the sins and follies of men. The subject matter of many of his paintings might be expressed in the verses of that great critic of the vices of the Romans, who sang in the beginning the following words:

Quidquid agunt homines, votum, timor, iura, voluptas:
Gaudia, discursus nostri est narrato libelli.
Et quando uterius victiorum copia, &c.

Bosch might have put this [in our language] as follows: ‘All that men do – their desires, their fears, their rages, their vain appetites, their pleasures, their satisfactions, their occupations – is the subject of all my painting. But when was there such an abundance of vice?’

The difference, it seems to me, between this man’s paintings and those of others, is that where the rest sought to paint man as he appears on the outside, only he dared to paint him as he is on the inside. He did so with a singular motivation, which I have explained with the following example: all agree that poets and painters are very similar. So akin are their skills, that they differ no more than by paintbrush and pen, which are almost one and the same. The subjects, the ends, the colours, the liberties and other parts are thus so much one, that they are barely distinguishable, other than with the formalities of our metaphysicians.

Among the Latin poets, there is one (and no other worth naming) who, realizing that he could not equal the heroic verse of Virgil, the comedy or tragedy of Terence or Seneca, or the lyric poetry of Horace, and since these poets, no matter how excellent and promising he himself was, had to take precedence, he decided to beat another path: he invented an amusing form of poetry, which he called Macarronica – a poetry that had to have so much refinement, and be so inventive and witty, that he himself would always be the first and best exponent of the style, and that the good poets would read him, and that those who were not would not reject him and that, as he said Me legat quisquis legit omnia. ‘And because this occupation was not in keeping with his status and his profession (he was a clergyman), I will not give his name, as he withheld it), he invented an amusing name and called himself Merlin Cocayo [Merlino Cocacao], which seemingly fits the work well, as with that other, who called himself Ysopo [Aesop]. In his poems, he displays with exceptional ingenuity, all the good that can be desired and can be assimilated from the most lauded poets, both of moral things and the things of nature; and if I were
required here to act as critic, I would demonstrate this by comparing and contrasting many examples.

I am absolutely certain that the painter Geronimo Bosco wanted to be like this poet. Not because he had seen him, as I believe he was painting before the other made his name, but because he shared the same thinking and the same motivation: he discovered that he had great talent as a painter and that for all he would achieve, he would fall short of Albrecht Dürero [Albrecht Dürer], Michel Angel [Michelangelo], Urbino [Raphael] and others. He beat a new path, along which the rest would follow him, while he followed no other, and this so that all eyes would be trained on him; a kind of mocking and ‘macaronic’ painting, in which he concealed many refined and strange things in the midst of all that burlesque, in terms of ingenuity as well as execution and painting, and in which he sometimes showed what he was worth in this art, as Cocayo did too, when he spoke seriously.

The panels and paintings here are of three different types. He paints devout things, such as episodes from the Life of Christ and his Passion, the Adoration of the Magi, and when Christ carries the Cross. In the first, he expresses the pious and sincere impression of the wise and virtuous, and there is no trace here of anything monstrous or absurd; in the other, he shows the jealousy and rage of the false wisdom that will not rest until it has taken the life of the innocence that is Christ. We see pharisees and scribes with furious, fierce and grim faces, and we can read from their habits and actions the fury of these emotions.

Sometimes he painted Temptations of Saint Anthony (this is the second type of painting), as this was a subject in which he could show strange effects. On the one hand, one sees the holy prince of the hermits with a serene, devout, contemplative and calm face, and a soul filled with peace; on the other, the countless fantasies and monsters created by the enemy to confuse, worry and disturb this mild soul and steadfast love. To this end, he conceived animals, wild beasts, chimeras, monsters, fires, corpses, cries, threats, serpents, lions, dragons and terrifying birds of so many varieties, that it is admirable how he was able to give shape to so many ideas. And all this to show that for a soul aided by God’s grace and which pursues a similar path at his hand – even though in his imagination and with his inward and outward eyes he represents the enemy (which can lead to laughter or vain delight, or to other excessive emotions) – who shall not be able to cast him down or deflect him from his intention. He made so many variations on this subject and on this idea, and with so many new inventions, that I find it admirable how he was able to conceive so much; it makes me pause to consider my own wretchedness and weakness, and shows me how far removed I am from this perfection. For I am disturbed and agitated by such simple troubles and trifles, and I then miss my cell, the silence, the solitude, and I even lose my patience. In the case of this saint, all the ingenuity of the devil and hell was not enough to cast him down. And the Lord is so equipped to succour me, just like him, if only I throw myself valiantly into the fray.

This painting is found in very many places: there is a panel in the chapterhouse, another in the prior’s cell; two in the Infanta’s gallery; two in the prior’s cell; another in the cell of the Prior; two in the Infanta’s gallery; and there is no trace here of anything monstrous or absurd; in the other, there is an excellent panel and painting in which I am totally absorbed; there is an excellent panel and painting in which I am totally absorbed; there is an excellent one in the Prior’s cell; two in the Infanta’s gallery; two in the prior’s cell; another in the Prior’s cell; a kind of mocking and ‘macaronic’ painting, in which he concealed many refined and strange things in the midst of all that burlesque, in terms of ingenuity as well as execution and painting, and in which he sometimes showed what he was worth in this art, as Cocayo did too, when he spoke seriously.

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This painting is found in very many places: there is a panel in the chapterhouse, another in the prior’s cell; two in the Infanta’s gallery; one more in my cell, a very good example which I sometimes read and in which I am totally absorbed; there is an excellent panel and painting in His Majesty’s apartment, where he has a bookcase like clergymen have: our Saviour is represented there in a circle of light and glory, as if at its centre; in the ring around him are seven other circles containing the Seven Deadly Sins through which all the creatures He has saved offend Him, without them realizing that He is watching and sees everything. In seven other circles he painted the Seven Sacraments with which He enriched His Church, and in which He poured the medicine to cure all the many faults and infirmities, as if in precious flasks. And this painting is certainly important to a pious man, and it is good for us all to seek our reflection in it, because he painted it as mirrors in which the Christian might compose himself. He who painted this had nothing
against our faith. We see the pope here, bishops and priests; some are performing ordinations, others baptisms, others still take confession, and administer other sacraments.

In addition to these paintings, there are others that bear witness to immense ingenuity and which are no less useful, even though they seem more ‘macaronic’. This is the third type of his inventions. The idea and the ingenuity of these paintings are based on the passage in Isaiah, where God has him cry out: ‘All flesh is grass and all its glory is like the flower of the field.’ To which David says: ‘Man is like grass, and his glory like the flower of the field.’ One of these two paintings has the first as its foundation or main theme: it is a full haycart, and on top of it sit the pleasures of the flesh, fame and the outward display of its glory: the first represented as a couple of naked women playing music and singing, and the second as a demon standing next to them with its wings and trumpet, and which proclaims its greatness and its gifts. The subject and basis of the other painting is a little flower and fruit we call ‘strawberry’, which resembles the fruits of the strawberry tree (called in some places ‘maiotas’), something that you have barely tasted before it is gone.

To understand the story behind it, I will explain it in the order in which it is constructed. Both works consist of a large painting and two wings with which they can be closed. On the first of these shutters, he painted the creation of man and how God placed him in paradise, in a charming, wonderful place full of greenery, as lord of all the animals of the land and birds of the air, and how he commands him as a test of his obedience and faith not to eat of one tree. And how the devil in the form of a serpent then misleads him, how he eats and transgresses God’s commandment, and how He banishes him from that wonderful place and out of that high dignity in which he was created and placed. This is painted more simply in the painting called the haywain; in the painting of the strawberry tree, it appears with a thousand fantasies and considerations, which contain many warnings; this is in the first part on the first wing.

The large painting that follows shows how man, banished from paradise and placed in this world, occupies himself. It depicts him pursuing a glory of hay and of straw, or of grass without fruit, which exists today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, as God Himself said. In this way, it depicts the lives, occupations and conduct with which these children of sin and wrath give themselves up – with no thought for what God has commanded them, that is, to do penance for their sins and to lift their eyes to a Saviour who must protect them – to seeking and pursuing the glory of the flesh that is just as transient, finite and useless as hay, because such are the gifts of sensuality, status, ambition and fame.

This haycart, on which glory rides, is drawn by seven wild beasts and terrifying monsters, including human beings who are half lion, others half dog, others still half bear, half fish and half wolf – all symbols and representations of pride, lust, greed, ambition, bestiality, tyranny, cunning and cruelty.

Around this cart walk all ranks and estates of man, from the pope and emperor and other princes, to those who stand in the lowest esteem and have the world’s worst occupations; because all flesh is hay, and the children of the flesh arrange everything and use everything to achieve this vain and transient glory; and everything revolves around thinking of how they might ascend to the glory of the cart: some use ladders, others put hooks, others clamber, others jump and seek as many means and instruments as possible just to get on top of it; some, who were already on it, fall off; others are run over by the wheels, others enjoy this vain name and imagination; so that there is not a single estate, occupation or profession – from low to high, from clergyman to layman – which the children of this age do not use or misuse to be able to reach the glory of the hay and to enjoy it. I know well that they are all in haste, that the beasts that draw the cart struggle because the haywain is so heavily laden, and that they pull so that the working day will be done quickly, to unload for the journey and to turn around for a fresh load, expressing
And that we should also see in the last wing what the wretched final and defects of character that turn us into a beast, or rather many beasts, in us and we are so blind that we have no understanding of the passions ourselves, portrayed from the life inside, unless we do not realize what is and considered execution to one side (astonishing that a single mind absurdities, for if we set the beauty, the ingenuity, and the admirable as of the truth and the original on which Geronimo Bosque based his scent alone. I wish everyone were as full of the images in this painting flowers, even though there are those who sustain themselves with that a strawberry or the fruit of the strawberry tree and the scent of its personal honour, for appearances and prestige, and other like matters these monsters and absurdities come into being. And all this for such simplicity sheep, through vices goats, and so too other traits and forms, through craftiness and demonic cunning foxes, through gluttony apes mules, horses and pigs, through tyranny fish, through vanity peacocks, through pride become lions, through vengefulness tigers, through lust conception by Pythagoras, Plato and other poets, who wrote erudite simplicity sheep, through vices goats, and so too other traits and forms, which they pile and build upon this human existence. And this is how these monsters and absurdities come into being. And all this for such an insignificant and base goal as the taste of revenge, sensual pleasure, personal honour, for appearances and prestige, and other like matters that barely have taste or cause the mouth to water, as when savouring a strawberry or the fruit of the strawberry tree and the scent of its flowers, even though there are those who sustain themselves with that scent alone. I wish everyone were as full of the images in this painting as of the truth and the original on which Geronimo Bosque based his absurdities, for if we set the beauty, the ingenuity, and the admirable and considered execution to one side (astonishing that a single mind can think up so many things), we could benefit greatly from looking at ourselves, portrayed from the life inside, unless we do not realize what is in us and we are so blind that we have no understanding of the passions and defects of character that turn us into a beast, or rather many beasts. And that we should also see in the last wing what the wretched final destination is of all his studies, practices and occupations, and where they metamorphose into these infernal abodes. He who sought all his pleasure animals that tiran el carro, forcejan porque va muy cargado, y tiran para acabar preso la jornada, descargar aquel camino, y bolster por otro, con que se sinifica harto bien la brevedad de este miserable siglo, y lo poco que tarda en pasar, y quan semejantes son todos los tiempos en la malicia.

El fin y paradero de todo esto, está pintado en la puerta postrera, donde se ve un inferno espantosissimo, con tormentos estrafios, monstruos espantosos, embustes todos en obscuredad y fuego eterno. Y para dar a entender la muchedumbre de los que allí entran y que ya no caben, finge que se edifican aposentos y guarros nuevos: y las piedras que suben para asentarse en el edificio, son las almas de los miserables condenados, concertados tambié allí en instrumentos de su pena, los mismos medios que pusieron para alcanzar aquella gloria. Y porque se entendiese tambié que nunca en esta vida desampa de todo punto el auxilio y piedad divina, aun a los muy pecadores: y aun cuando estan en medio de sus pecados: se ve el Angel Custodio, junto al que está encima del carro de heno, en medio de sus vivos torpes, rogando a Dios por el: y el Señor Jesu Cristo los braços abiertos, y con las llagas manifiestas, aguardando a los que se convierten. Yo confesso que leo mas cosas en esta tabla, en un breue mirar de ojos, que en otros libros en muchos días.

La otra tabla de la gloria vana, y breue gusto de la fresa o madroño, y su olorillo, que apenas se siente, quando ya es passado: es la cosa mas ingenua y de mayor arteficio que se puede imaginar. Y digo verdad, que si se tomara de proposito, y algun grande ingenio quisiera declararla, hiziera vn muy prouechoso libro, porque en ella se veen, como vivos y claros, infinitos lugares de Escritura de los que tocan a la malicia del hombre, porque quantas alegorias o metaforas ay en ella para sinificar esto, en los Profeetas y Psalamos, debaxo de animales mansos, bravos, fieros, perezosos, sagazes, crueles, carnízores, para carga y trabajo, para gusto y recreaciones, y ostentaciones, buscados de los hombres, y concertados en ellos por sus inclinaciones y costumbres, y la mezcla que se hace de vnos y de otros, todos estan puestos aqui con admirable propiedad. Lo mismo de las aues, y pezes, y animales reptiles, que de todo esto estan llenas las diuinas leñas. Aquí tambien se entiende aquella transmigracion de las almas que fingieran Pitagoras, Platon, y otros Poetas que hizieron fabulas doctas de estos Metamorfosis, y transformaciones, que no pretendian otra cosa sino mostrarnos las malas costumbres, habitos, o sinistros arios, de que se visten las almas de los miserables hombres, que por soberbia son leones, por venganza, tigres, por luxuria, mulos, cauallos, puerco: por tirania pezes: por vanagloria, pauones: por sragazidad y mañas diabolicas raposas: por gula, gimios y lobos: por insensibilidad y malicia, asnos: por simplicidad bruta, ouejas: por trauesura, cabritos, y otros tales accidentes y formas, que sobreponen y edifican sobre este ser humano: y ansi se hacen estos monstruos y disparates, y todo para vn fin tan apocado y tan vil, como es el gusto de vna vengança, de una sensualidad, de vna honrilla, de vna apariciencia y estima: y otras tales que no llegan apenas al paladar, ni a mojar la boca, qual es el gusto y saborillo de una fresa o madroño, y el olor de sus flores, que aun muchos con el olor se sustentan. Quisiera que todo el mundo estuviere tan lleno de los traslados de esta pintura como lo esta de la verdad y del original, de donde retrato sus disparates Geronimo Bosque: porque dexado a parte el gran primer, el ingenio y las estratexias y consideraciones que ay en cada cosa (causa admiracion, como pudo dar en tantas vna sola cabeça) se sacara grande fruto, viéndose allí cada vno tan retirado al viuo en lo de dentro, sino es que no aduierte lo que está dentro de sí, y está tan ciego que no conoce las passiones y vicios que le tienen tan desfigurado en

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in music and in vain and lascivious song, in dancing, at play, hunting, at galas, in wealth, in authority, in revenge, in the reverence of holiness and hypocrisy, will see a contrast in the same manner, and that brief, insignificant pleasure will be transformed into eternal, incurable and implacable wrath.

I do not wish to say more about the absurdities of Geronimo Bosque, but it ought to be noted that in almost all his paintings – that is to say in those paintings that have this ingenuity (we saw, after all, that there are also simple and holy ones) – there is always fire and an owl. With the first, he would have us understand that it is important to remember that eternal fire at all times, because this makes every task easy to perform, as is seen in all the paintings he made of Saint Anthony. And with the second he is saying that his paintings were done with care and study, and that they ought to be studied in their turn. The owl is a nocturnal bird, dedicated to Minerva and to study, symbol of the Athenians, among whom philosophy flourished so, which was achieved through the stillness and silence of the night, consuming more oil than wine.

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‘Those who would read me are those who read everything’, quotation from the Italian macaronic poet Teofilo Folengo (1491–1544), who wrote under the pseudonyms Merlino Coccaio and Merlinus Coccaius.
The characters, deeds and works of painters are various and strange – and each of them has become the better master in that to which Nature has drawn him through inclination and for which she has given him talent. Who will relate all the wonderful or peculiar fancies which Jeronimus Bos had in his head and expressed with his brush, of phantoms and monsters of hell which are usually not so much kindly as ghastly to look upon. He was born in 's-Hertogenbosch, but I have not been able to discover at which time he lived or died – only that it was very early on. And yet he was quite different in his draperies or fabrics from the old, modern manner with its multiple creases or folds. He had a steady hand and a very adroit and subtle working manner, usually finishing his works in one layer which nevertheless remains beautiful without discoloration. Also, just like some other old masters, he used to draw his subjects onto the white of the panel, laying over that a transparent, flesh-coloured ground layer; he often allowed the ground to contribute to the effect of the picture. Some of his works are in Amsterdam. In one place I have seen a Flight into Egypt by him in which Joseph in the foreground asks the way of a peasant and Mary sits upon the donkey. In the distance is a strange rock, like a kind of inn, where all sorts of wonderful things are to be found. There are some strange little figures too, who are making a large bear dance for money, it is all wonderfully curious and lively to look at. Then there is a Hell by him at the Waal in which the patriarchs are released, and Judas, who is planning to slip off with them, is hauled up and hanged with a noose. The bizarre prowlings to be seen there are amazing – and also his subtle and natural way with flames, fires, smoke and vapours. Furthermore, there is in Amsterdam a Bearing of the Cross in which he employed more solemnity than was his wont. In Haarlem, at the house of the art-loving Joan Dietring I have seen various things by his hand: shutters with saints; for instance, how one or other saint who is a monk, while arguing with several heretics, has all their books as well as his own put into the fire and whomsoever’s book does not burn is in the right: and the saint’s book flies out of the fire. It was very subtly painted, the flames of the fire as well as the smouldering logs, burned and covered with ash; the saint with his companion looked very dignified and the others had odd, outlandish faces. Elsewhere is some miracle or other in which a king and others are fallen down and look wholly terrified. The faces, hair and beards appear effortless, to great and pleasing effect. In the churches in ‘s-Hertogenbosch there are also some of his works – and indeed in other places too; among others in the Escorial in Spain, works which are held in great esteem there. Lampsonius speaks to him thus in his verses:

Jeroon Bos, what means your frightened face
And pale appearance? It seems as though you just
Saw all infernal spectres fly close around your ears.
I think that all the deepest rings of miserly Pluto
Were revealed, and the wide habitations of Hell
Opened to you – because you are so art-full
In painting with your right hand depictions
Of all that the deepest bowels of Hell contain.

Veedervley and vreemt zijn de geneeglythepydren, handelingen en wercken der Schilders: en jeeder is beter Meester gheworden int ‘t ghene, daer de Natuere hem door lust toe heeft gehetrokken, en aengeheelyt. Wie sal verhalen al de wonderlyke oft seldsaem versieringen, die Ieronimus Bos in’t hoof heeft ghehad, en met den Pinceel uytghedrukt, van ghespook en ghedrochten der Hellen, dickwels niet alsoo vriendlijck als grouwlijck aen te sien. Hy is ghedgeeren gheweest tot s’Hertogen Bosch: maar hebbe geenen rijdt van zijn leven oft sterven connen vernemen, dan dat hy al heel vroogh is geweest. Hy was nochtans in zijn draperingen oft lakenen aghescheyden van de oude moderne wijsie, van dat menighvuldig hroken en voozuwen. Hy hadde een vaste en seer voorlygh en aerdighe handelinghe, doende veel zijn dinghen ten eersten op, dat het welck nochtans sonder veranderen seer schoon blijft. Hy hadde ook als meer ander oude Meesters de maniere, zijn dinghen te teekenen en trekken op het wit der Penneelen, en daer over een doorschijnigh carnatactigh primuereel te leggen, en liet ook dickwels de gronden mede wercken. Daer zijn t’Amsterdam eenige van zijn stucken. In een plaets heb ick van hem ghesien een vluchtighe en Prophetie van Egypten, daer Joseph voor aen eenen Boer den wegh vraeght, en Maria op den Esel sit: int verscheinten is een vreemde roos, waer wonder te beschicken is, wesende als een Herberghe: daer comen oock eenighe vreemde bootsen, die om gelt eenen grooten Beer doen dansen, en is alles wonder seldsaem en cluchtigh om sien. Noch is van hem op de Waal een Helle, daer de oude Vaders verlost worden, en ludas die oock mede meent uyt trekken, wort met een strick opghetrocken en ghehanghen: tis wonder wat daer al te sien is van oudbolligh ghespook: oock hoe aerdighe en natuurlijck hy was, van vlammen, branden, roocken en smoocken. Noch is van hem t’Amsterdam eenen Cruys-drager, daer hy meer statichheyt, als wel het ghespook was, in heeft ghebruukt. Te Haerlem ten huyse van Const-lijftighen Iohan Dietring, heb ick ghesien van hem verscheyden dinghen, deuren met eenighe heylighen: onder ander, daer eenighen Sanct Monick wesen, met verscheyden Ketters disputeringhe, doet alle hun Boecken met oock den zijnen legghen op het vyer, en wiens Boec niet verbrande, die soude recht hebben, en des Sancts Boec vlughtigt uyt het vyer, dat seer aerdighe gheschildert was, alsoo wel het branden des vyer, als de roockende houten verbrande en met de asschen becleedt wesende: den Sanct met zijnen gheselle steer statigh siende, en d’ander boostigh vreemde tronien hebbende. Elder is eenighe mirakel, daer eenen Coningh en ander ghevallen seer schricklich sien: en de tronien, hayren en baerdern, hebben met cleen moeyte eenen grooten welstandingen aerd. Tot s’Hertogen Bosch in de Kercken, zijn noch van zijn wercken, als in meer ander plaetsen: oock in Spangien int Escorial, dingen die daer in grooter weerden worden gehouden. Tot hem spreckt in zijn veeren Lampsonius, op dese meaninge:

Jeroon Bos, wat beduydt u soo verschrickt ghesicht,
En anschijnen alzo oock bleek, het schijnt oft even dicht
Ghy al het helsch ghespook saeght vliegen om u ooren.
Ick acht dat al ontdaen u zijn de diepste chooren
Gheweest van Pluto ghier, en d’helische wonsten wijt
V oopen zijn ghedaen, dat ghy soo constigh zijt,
Om met u rechter handt gheschildert uyt te stellen,
Al wat in hem begrijpt den diepsten schoot der Hellen.

The Life of Jeronimus Bos 1604
Translation from Van Mander (Miedema) 1994–99, fol. 216v–217r

Karel van Mander: The Life of Jeronimus Bos 1604
Het Schilder-boeck, Haarlem (Passchier van Wesbusch) 1604, fol. 216v–217r

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