
Hieronymus Bosch's Garden of Delights Triptych

The Eroticism of its central Panel and Middle Dutch

Eric De Bruyn



Dr. Eric De Bruyn
Groenendaalcollege, Antwerp, Belgium

Eric De Bruyn (1955) was awarded his doctorate in the year 2000 at the Katholieke Universiteit Brussel for a dissertation on the figure of the pedlar in the work of Jheronimus Bosch. The dissertation was published in 2001 as 'De vergeten beeldentaal van Jheronimus Bosch. De symboliek van het Hooiwagen-drieluik en de Rotterdamse Marskramer-tondo verklaard vanuit Middelnederlandse teksten'. In 1999, Eric De Bruyn contributed to the exhibition 'Uilenspiegel – de wereld op zijn kop' (Damme) and in 2003 he co-organised the exhibition 'De Zotte Schilders – Moraalridders van het penseel rond Bosch, Bruegel en Brouwer' (Mechelen). Eric De Bruyn teaches Dutch and English at the Groenendaalcollege in Antwerp.

During the past fifty years the works of Hieronymus Bosch (and those of his spiritual heir Peter Bruegel the Elder) have proven to be a fruitful field of study for researchers of Middle Dutch.¹ Already in 1936 the Belgian art historian Domien Roggen signalled that the paintings of Bosch and Bruegel are very suitable for a cultural-historical approach based on Middle Dutch language and literature. In a little-known magazine article he wrote that many enigmatic details in the works of Bosch and Bruegel can only be explained in a satisfactory way by means of the fifteenth- and sixteenth-century literature and culture from the Low Countries. Roggen ended his short essay with an auspicious and somewhat bombastic exhortation directed at the scholars of Middle Dutch:

May this brief discussion suffice to encourage in the first place our scholars of Middle Dutch to shed their light also on this rich field of study which seems to be reserved for them. They will produce highly deserving work that will be followed with the utmost attention abroad, especially in these times when the issue of Bosch and Bruegel is raised over and over again from different sides.²

Only a few years later Roggen's call was already answered for. In the volumes 1938 and 1939-40 of the art periodical *Gentsche Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis* the Belgian scholars of Middle Dutch Jan Grauls and Paul De Keyser and the art historian Louis Lebeer published a series of articles in which they elucidated the cultural-historical context of Bosch's *Haywain* triptych in a revealing way. They did so by referring to a fifteenth-century Middle Dutch poem, to a text written by a sixteenth-century rhetorician (*rederijker*), to a haywain that was seen in the streets of Antwerp as part of a procession in 1563 and to a number of sixteenth-century prints (accompanied by explanatory Middle Dutch verses) with a haywain as central motif. This enabled them to conclude that the haywain on Bosch's triptych is a symbol of the transitory earthly vanities that are being pursued by sinful humanity.³ In 1957 Grauls also published a monograph on Bruegel (still considered to be a standard work of reference today) in which he tried to interpret Bruegel's paintings with the help of Middle Dutch language and literature.⁴

From 1948 on the directive example of these Belgian scholars was followed by the Dutch philologist Dirk Bax who systematically analysed the almost complete oeuvre of Bosch, resulting in four important monographs that together supply an impressive amount of cultural-historical material connected with Bosch.⁵ Bax's conclusions were contested by a number of foreign scholars (especially by the German art historian Wilhelm Fraenger) but were well received by others, in the first place in Belgium and the Netherlands. In 1967 Bax lent his assistance to the important Bosch exhibition at 's-Hertogenbosch and in the volume of scientific contributions that was published on this occasion the Belgian art historian J.K. Steppe made a renewed plea in favour of the cultural-historical approach as practised by Bax.⁶ In a series of essays that were published during the sixties and seventies of the twentieth century the Dutch friar minor P. Gerlach also defended the idea that the works of Bosch should be studied in their original Brabantine context.⁷ The same was done time and again by the American art historian Walter S. Gibson and by the Belgian art historians Roger-Henri Marijnissen and Paul Vandenbroeck in their monographs and essays on Bosch.⁸

Furthermore in 1979 the Dutchman H.W. Steemers published an analysis of Bosch's *Last Judgment* triptych (Vienna) based on Middle Dutch texts and in 2001 I myself tried to present an exhaustive interpretation of Bosch's *Haywain* triptych and Rotterdam *Pedlar* tondo by relying primarily on the (Middle Dutch) language, literature and culture of the Low Countries in the fifteenth and sixteenth century.⁹

As a Fleming or a Dutchman one is filled with a certain pride when being told that a number of American art historians have learned Middle Dutch in order to gain a better understanding of the works of art they study. A striking example of this phenomenon is James H. Marrow who published a book about Northern European *Passion* depictions and in doing so drew heavily upon Middle Dutch devotional texts.¹⁰ Irving L. Zupnick taught himself Dutch so that he could read Bax's 1949 Bosch monograph, which was only published in English in 1979.¹¹ Walter Gibson learned Dutch and Middle Dutch in the sixties when he was working on his dissertation on Cornelis Engelbrechtsz., from which his later Bosch research greatly benefited, and also Larry Silver learned Dutch partially in view of his Bosch interest.¹²

In spite of all the fruitful results that have been yielded so far by Middle Dutch philology, functioning as an auxiliary science that is indispensable for the study of Bosch, one has to reckon with sporadic negative reactions. In a recent American Bosch monograph for instance the following repudiating passage could be read: The fact that Bosch based his *Haywain* triptych upon popular proverbs does not indicate that his audience was limited to those who knew these sayings in the vernacular Dutch. This is to assume that Bosch and his patrons would not have had access to books written in other languages or, if they had, would not have been likely to buy them or capable of understanding them. Limiting Bosch's literary influences to vernacular Dutch sources underestimates the literacy of his audience and is based on an incomplete understanding of the linguistic history of northern Europe.¹³

As a matter of fact, statements like these seem to be based on an incomplete understanding of the cultural-historical Bosch approach. I firmly believe that none of the scholars using Middle Dutch material would be pleased to hear their treatment of Bosch being called a *monolithic interpretation* that limits Bosch's paintings to *Dutch visual puns*, as Larry Silver in the *Preface* to his 2006 Bosch monograph seems to suggest.¹⁴ Rather these scholars will be the first to admit that Middle Dutch vocabulary and literature can only provide one way among many others leading to a correct interpretation of the often complex Bosch imagery. Therefore an interdisciplinary Bosch approach seems inevitable and this means that not only Middle Dutch linguistic and literary sources, but also Latin, biblical, folkloristic and even alchemical and astrological sources can provide us with useful material to explain Bosch's iconography. As Bax wrote in 1948:

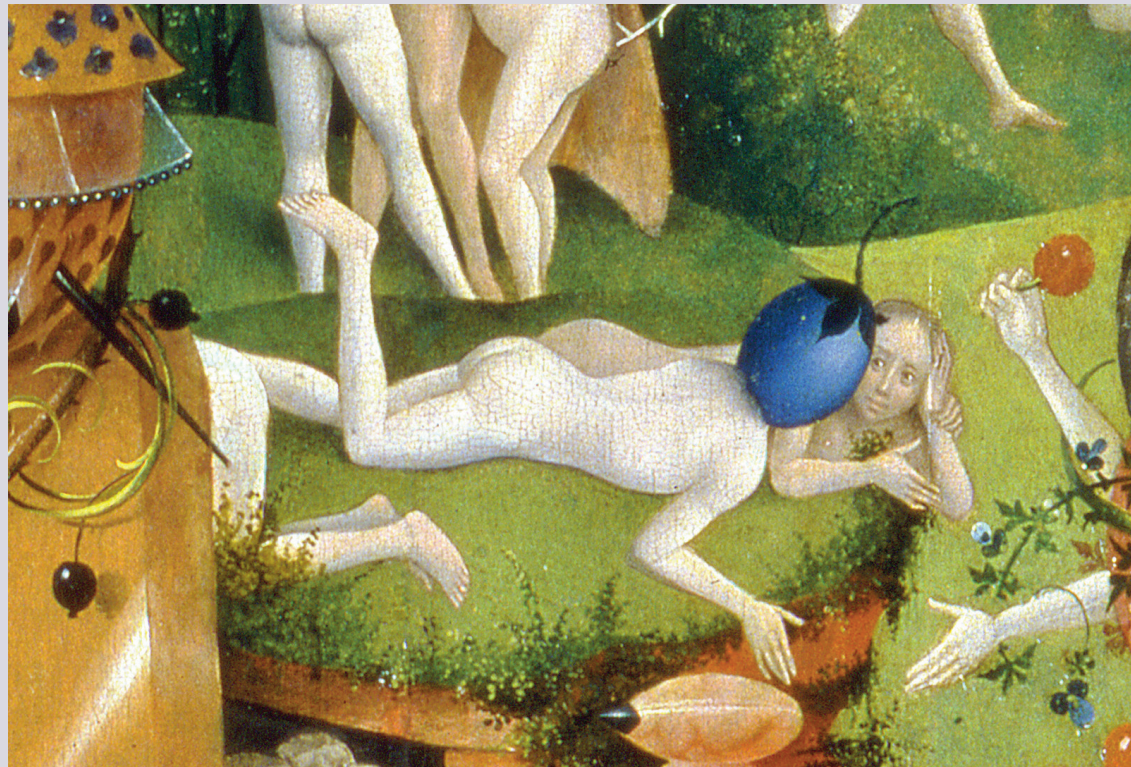
Already at an early stage it became evident that a reasonable explanation can be reached only by taking pains to orient oneself in the whole field of the language, literature, folklore and

cultural history of the Low Countries, as well as in the extensive area of Western European fine art, and all this over the period of, approximately, 1300-1600. In addition one has to consider some related parts of German and French literature and folklore.¹⁵ Instead of being blinkered and picking on each other's research results, twentyfirst-century Bosch scholars from different disciplines should rather join hands, look for the valuable elements in each other's findings and thus gain the best of both (or even more) worlds.

This being said I would like to dedicate the rest of this contribution to an ill-understood little detail on the central panel of Bosch's *Garden of Delights* triptych (Madrid, Prado). By doing so the *non believers* that may still exist, can perhaps be convinced that Middle Dutch was indeed one of the sources to be used by us to explain the iconography of Bosch, who himself thought in Middle Dutch.. The detail I am referring to can be found in the lower region of the central panel, towards the right, next to the big owl sitting on a fruit skin in which two dancers are hidden. On the grass-covered roof of a little rock house a naked man and woman are lying next to each other. He embraces her with his left arm while his hand is holding her left wrist. With an intense expression that seems to convey amazement or keen expectation, she is looking at his head. This head has the shape of a giant blue grape. On top of the grape Bosch painted some leaves and a stem, suggesting a fantasized head gear. The man's right lower leg is turned upwards (page 98).

Up to now very few authors have written about this weird couple. According to Bax the blue shape is a fantasized fruit.¹⁶ He supposes that the man's head is hidden inside a fruit skin and then produces a rather cumbersome explanation for this. The Middle Dutch word *scille* could mean both 'quarrel, fight' and 'fruit skin'. So Bosch literally painted the saying *in scille zijn* (to be in a fruit skin), which actually meant 'to be in a fight' and the idea of fighting could also have an erotic connotation (i.e. to have sexual intercourse). But if this would be the case, why then did Bosch only paint the man's head inside a fruit skin, and not the complete couple? Chailley, who doesn't want to identify the fruit either, talks about a large blue fruit (*un gros fruit bleu*) and adds without further explanation that this fruit confirms the meaning of all these fruits without any ambiguity (*confirme sans ambiguïté la signification de tous ces fruits*).¹⁷ Without any ambiguity? On the contrary, details like these show the correctness of Marijnissen's lapidary description of the central panel, hidden away in a newspaper article from 1984: *a gem of a picture puzzle for punks and adults*.¹⁸ Although the *Garden of Delights* has generated numerous and widely divergent interpretations, all Bosch scholars seem to agree about at least this point: the central panel of this triptych is brimming over with erotic symbolism.

The fact that neither Bax nor Chailley identified the giant blue fruit as a grape, is probably due to the fact that Bosch painted leaves on top of the fruit. Indeed, grapes don't have leaves growing on them, but as we will see below, Bosch had a good reason to paint the grape like this. Before we tackle this issue, though, we have to answer another important iconographic question: why did Bosch paint a grape instead of a head? Realizing that the solution must



Detail from: Jheronimus Bosch, *Garden of Earthly Delights* (central panel), Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado

have something to do with eroticism and having some knowledge of Middle Dutch, the answer can be very simple: because in Middle Dutch the words *grape* and *head* had the same meaning, namely: *glans penis*. Or, dispensing with Latin euphemisms: the head of the penis.

The paraphrase *t'hooft van de roede* (the head of the penis) for the glans can already be found in a rhymed medical treatise dating from 1351 and it can still be read in an anatomical treatise by Andreas Vesalius dating from 1568.¹⁹ The Dutch-Latin dictionary of Kiliaan, dating from 1599, explains the lemma *hoofdeken der mannelickheydt* (little head of manlihood) as follows: *glans, the upper part of the penis, covered with the foreskin*.²⁰ But also outside medical treatises and dictionaries, in texts with a more literary character, the word is frequently used around 1500. In *Dat Bedroch der Vrouwen* (The Deceit of Women) for example, a printed book dating from around 1532 and dealing with the connings of women past and present, we read the story of a French prince who is in love with one of the queen's maids. Because she has to sleep with her mistress every night, she has to come up with a trick in order to be able to meet her lover. One evening she locks out the queen's little dog. The prince has to make the animal whine by pulling its ears and when the queen asks her maid to fetch the dog, she and the prince will be able to make love in the next room. Thus happens, but the prince, who is too excited, is not able to *forge on Venus's anvil* and the lovers separate again. That same evening the prince returns twice, each time the dog's ears are being pulled, but the prince performs as poorly as the first time. After the third trial the maid starts to scold at the prince and when the queen hears this and asks for an explanation, the maid says that she was talking to the little dog:

He hid himself under a bench and when I had found him, he would not stand up, whatever I did to him. I would have liked to have him inside, but he did not want to raise his head, so I let him outside and closed the door in front of him regretfully.²¹

It is obvious that in this ambiguous fragment the words *head* and *door* refer to the glans penis and vagina respectively. Furthermore the casualness of these erotic euphemisms is striking: they occur in a vernacular printed book that doesn't have any high literary aspirations and doesn't contain any complex metaphors or disguised imagery, so it must have been easily understood by contemporary readers. Which goes to show that a similar erotic metaphor will also have been easy to interpret for Bosch's intended viewers.²²

Although the linguistic and literary material for the metaphoric equation *grape* = *glans penis* is more scarce than that for *head* = *glans penis*, it is anything but absent. A crucial argument is being delivered here by the so-called *Refereinenbundel van Jan van Stijvoort*, a collection of *rederijker* poems dating from 1524, but containing texts that are in some cases many years older. In one of these poems (which were not written but only collected and copied by Jan van Stijvoort) a cheated lover is complaining about the unreliability of his loved one. In the third stanza he commemorates the time when their love affair was still going strong, saying literally: *where I sacrificed the prettiest little berry of the bunch of grapes on your altar*.²³ That in these lines the word *altar* is used as a metaphor for the vagina becomes clear from a number

of other passages in sixteenth-century Middle Dutch literature where we meet the expression *Venus' altaar* (Venus's altar) in a manifestly erotic context. In *Vanden .X. Esels* (About the Ten Donkeys) for instance, a printed book edited in Antwerp in 1558, ten characters showing sinful and immoral behaviour are compared with donkeys. One of these characters is a pimp and the sluttish conduct of his wife is described as follows: *And then his wife receives the sacrifices in Venus's altar with heavy deadly sins which leads to the damnation of both of them.*²⁴ Apparently the lines quoted from the Jan van Stijevoort collection describe sexual intercourse in a metaphorical way and in this context a grape is used as a metaphor for the glans penis.²⁵

That this is a plausible interpretation can unambiguously be derived from a seventeenth-century edition. In 1651, after a stay in Italy, Mathys vande Merwede, who called himself 'Lord of Clootwijck (Testicleville)', published a collection of saucy love poetry in which he described his erotic adventures: *Ulytheimsen Oorlog ofte Roomse Min-triompfen* (Foreign War or Roman Love-Victories).²⁶ In one of these poems he described a coitus as follows: *En koom haer gansch verstaelt gedoken in den schoot, / Daer ik mijn rijpe druylf soo woelend overgoot.* Literally: *And completely turned to steel (i.e. hardened) I plunged in her lap / where I imbued my ripe grape so restlessly.*²⁷ It stands to reason that also in these lines the word *grape* is being used as a metaphor for the glans penis.

After all this we have a much better understanding of the young woman's facial expression in Bosch's *Garden of Delights*. But we have not yet uncovered Bosch's amazing imagery completely. On top of a grape don't grow leaves. If the grape that Bosch painted, represents the man's head (in the literal sense), then the leaves have to be interpreted as his hair or as some kind of head gear. The latter interpretation is preferable because Bosch not only painted leaves, but also a stem on top of the grape. Seven years ago the stem was still invisible, but already in 1967 Isabel Mateo Gómez signalled that on the sixteenth-century tapestry made after Bosch's triptych and on the sixteenth-century copy after the central panel (which was kept in Paris at that time and today is in a private collection in Brussels) the leaves do have a stem.²⁸ It is noteworthy that on the copies in Budapest, Nuremberg and London the stem is missing. Since 2000 - as a result of the recent restoration of the triptych - the stem has been made visible again on the original in Madrid.²⁹

Now why would Bosch have wanted to suggest a kind of head gear on top of the grape-head? When we know that the grape is referring to the glans penis and if we interpret the leaves and the stem as a kind of little cap (*kappeken* in Middle Dutch), we soon arrive at the meaning of 'foreskin' which the word *kappeken* could have. The Dutch-Latin dictionary of Kiliaan (1599) explains the word *kappeken* as: *cucullulus, parvum capitium* (cap, little cap) and *kappeken der manlickheyd* (little cap of manhood) as: *praeputium, pellicula glandem tegens* (foreskin, little skin protecting the glans).³⁰

In Middle Dutch literature the word *kappeken* (little cap) could have an ambiguous meaning by referring to a real cap on the one hand, and to the foreskin on the other. This is proven by

the following examples. In an erotic poem from the 1524 Jan van Stijevoort collection a lecherous young monk and a girl meet each other at the gate of the monastery, where she encourages him to climb out of a window and to come down to her. In the following lines the act of climbing out and coming down is linked with sexual intercourse in an ambiguous way: *Throw me your cap because it is too large. Hang out your long scapular without hesitation and let yourself glide into my lap. That's okay, said the nice little monk. Yes, she said, please jump, I won't fail, I will not die because of a push. (...) The little monk was so encouraged by her that he felt sorry about his cap and felt tired. He threw off his cap and the girl was very happy about this. He did so much that he came down and started to chat with her.*³¹ In these verses the act of throwing off a cap refers to the uncovering of the glans penis and the (long) scapular refers to the penis (with monastics cap and scapular form one unit). Furthermore 'talking' and 'chatting' are common euphemisms for sexual intercourse in Middle Dutch texts.³²

Also very relevant is an erotic song from the so-called *Zutphens Liedboek* (Zutphen Songbook), a collection of profane songs dating from 1537 and written in a Middle Dutch dialect that is close to Middle German. In one of the songs a monk and a nun have sexual intercourse. He says: *Auch nonn, wolstv mienn bolken sienn, / ich wol dyr geben mein keppeken* (hey sister, do you want to be my baby, I will give you my little cap). The next lines are: *Die non die dachtt inn oren moet / die munchnes kepe die wer wal gut* (the nun thought to herself: / I could use the monk's little cap very well).³³

My interpretation of the 'grape-head' as a reference to the glans penis and of the 'leaves-cap' as a reference to the foreskin is confirmed by an analogous detail elsewhere in Bosch's works. On the right wing of the Vienna *Last Judgment* triptych, representing a *Hell*, we see a detail that was described by Bax as follows:

At the foot of the tree an imp crouches in a kneeling posture. His fish's head with whiskers protrudes from a green garment that covers his human backside and legs. The edge of a little black cap is visible on the head (page 102).³⁴

The immediate context of this little figure is clearly filled with references at *luxuria* and obscene allusions: a horned procuress is sitting in a vagina-like hollow tree and a female sinner (a prostitute?) is forced to sing along with diabolic musicians. We see a flute or a trumpet sticking in a devil's anus through which excrements are blown in the woman's face and a creature that only consists of bagpipes with an eye on them and hands that play on the erected and fire-spitting pipe.³⁵

Although Bax correctly interpreted the erotic surroundings of the little kneeling imp, the phallic symbolism of the monster itself escaped him. According to him the monster alludes to the word *lijffloos* (literally: *without body or without life*), because it only has a head and legs and the word *lijffloos* in its meaning of 'lifeless' could also have the connotation of 'meaningless, trivial'. Isn't it possible, though, that Bosch wanted to focus the viewer's attention on the



Detail from: Jheronimus Bosch, *Last Judgment*, Vienna, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste

head and the cap of the devil by leaving away its body? In that case the little monster can be interpreted as an indecent allusion to an uncovered glans penis, the head of the imp being the glans and its cap the foreskin. This would fit in with the infernal and luxurious surroundings of the little figure and the fact that its head is a fish's head would then come as no surprise: in the Late Middle Ages the fish was a well-known phallic symbol.³⁶

The above interpretation of the man with the grape-head leads to the conclusion that on the central panel of the *Garden of Delights* Bosch used the Middle Dutch language to paint some visual puns that don't have a direct relation with the overall religious theme of the triptych. Apparently these visual puns were meant as profane, frivolous entertainment for the intended viewers. If this is correct, it follows that the person who commissioned the triptych must have been able to understand Middle Dutch in order to grasp the pun. In the literature about Bosch two persons are put forward as possible patron of the *Garden of Delights* triptych: Engelbert II of Nassau (1451-1504) and his nephew and heir Hendrik III of Nassau (1483-1538). Although Engelbert's official language more than probably was French (his personal heraldic device was *Ce Sera Moy Nassou* and he signed as *E. de Nassou*), he was born in Breda and spent his life in the Netherlands, so he will at least have had a smattering of the language.³⁷ Hendrik III certainly did understand Middle Dutch: in 1515 he wrote a letter in Middle Dutch to his father, Jan IV of Nassau, while he was staying in Bruges.³⁸

- 1 I would like to thank Suzanne Laemers, Roger Marijnissen, Jan Op de Beeck, Bernard Vermet and Thomas Vriens for their comments on earlier versions of this contribution.
- 2 *Deze vluchtige uiteenzetting moge volstaan om in de eerste plaats onze Germanisten aan te sporen ook dit rijke terrein, dat voor hen schijnt voorbehouden te zijn, met hun schijnwerpers te bestrijken. Hoogst verdienstelijk werk zullen zij leveren, dat met de meeste belangstelling in het buitenland zal gevolgd worden, vooral in deze tijd, waar het Bosch- en Bruegelprobleem steeds opnieuw gesteld wordt van allerlei zijden.* D. Roggen, "Het verklaren van het werk van Bosch en Bruegel", in: *Nieuw Vlaanderen*, 7 March 1936, pp. 6-7.
- 3 *Gentsche Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, V (1938), pp. 141-177 / VI (1939-40), pp. 127-160.
- 4 Jan Grauls, *Volkstaal en volksleven in het werk van Pieter Bruegel*. Antwerp, 1957.
- 5 Dirk Bax, *Ontcijfering van Jeroen Bosch*. The Hague, 1948 [English translation: Dirk Bax, *Hieronymus Bosch. His picture-writing deciphered*. Rotterdam, 1979]; Dirk Bax, *Beschrijving en poging tot verklaring van het Tuin der Onkuisheiddrieluik van Jeroen Bosch, gevolgd door Kritiek op Fraenger*. Amsterdam, 1956; Dirk Bax, *Jeroen Bosch' Drieluik met de Gekruisigde Martelares*. Amsterdam, 1961; Dirk Bax, *Hieronymus Bosch and Lucas Cranach: Two Last Judgment triptychs. Description and exposition*. Amsterdam, 1983.
- 6 J.K. Steppe, "Jheronimus Bosch. Bijdrage tot de historische en de ikonografische studie van zijn werk", in: *Jheronimus Bosch. Bijdragen bij gelegenheid van de herdenkingstentoonstelling te 's-Hertogenbosch 1967*. 's-Hertogenbosch, 1967, pp. 5-41.
- 7 A collection of these essays: P.M. le Blanc (ed.), *Jheronimus Bosch. Opstellen over leven en werk door Drs. P. Gerlach, O.F.M. Cap.* 's-Hertogenbosch-The Hague, 1988.

- 8 Walter S. Gibson, *Hieronymus Bosch*. London, 1973; R.H. Marijnissen and Peter Ruyffelaere, *Hieronymus Bosch. The Complete Works*. Antwerp, 1987; Paul Vandenbroeck, *Jheronimus Bosch. De verlossing van de wereld*. Ghent-Amsterdam, 2002.
- 9 H.W. Steemers, *Hieronymus Bosch. Een interpretatie van zijn Laatste Oordeelstriptiek te Wenen aan de hand van Middelnederlandse literaire bronnen*. Nijmegen, 1979; Eric De Bruyn, *De vergeten beeldentaal van Jheronimus Bosch. De symboliek van de Hooiwagen-triptyek en de Rotterdamse Marskramer-tondo verklaard vanuit Middelnederlandse teksten*. Proefschrifteditie. 's-Hertogenbosch, 2001.
- 10 James H. Marrow, *Passion Iconography in Northern European Art of the Late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance*. Kortrijk, 1979.
- 11 Dirk Bax, o.c. (note 5), 1979, p. ix.
- 12 Personal e-mail messages dating from December 11, 2006.
- 13 Laurinda Dixon, *Bosch*. New York-London, 2003, p. 114.
- 14 Larry Silver, *Hieronymus Bosch*. New York-London, 2006, p. 17.
- 15 Dirk Bax, o.c. (note 5), 1979, p. xv.
- 16 Dirk Bax, o.c. (note 5), 1956, pp. 43 / 45.
- 17 Jacques Chailley, *Jérôme Bosch et ses symboles. Essai de décryptage*. Brussels, 1978, p. 169.
- 18 R.H. Marijnissen, "Bosch' oeuvre uit Prado in reproducties (2). 'Tuin der Lusten', cultusvoorwerp", in: *De Standaard*, 10 December 1984: een pracht van een zoekprentje voor pubers en volwassenen.
- 19 Anonymous, "Die Heimlichede van mannen ende van vrouwen", in: Napoleon de Pauw (ed.), *Middelnederlandsche Gedichten en Fragmenten*. Part I, Ghent, 1893, p. 143 (vs. 757-761): *Want die pesen, die daer bringen / Die gevoelnisse in allen dingen / Ende oec die genoechte mede, / Die nemen inde tesser stede / Recht in thoef van der roeden*. Anonymous (ed.), *Vesalius. Anatomie oft levende beelden vande deelen des menschelicken lichaems: met de verclaringhe van dien, inde Neder-duytsche spraecke*. [Facsimile of Antwerp, Christoffel Plantijn, 1568], Kruishoutem, 1980, p. 55: *T'hooft van de roede, d'welcke ander het praeputium heeten, niet willende dien name gheuen t'vellenen daer de roede mede becleet is*.
- 20 Anonymous (ed.), C. Kiliaan: *Etymologicum Teutonicae Linguae*. Facsimile van de druk van 1599. Handzame, 1974, p. 196: *glans, penis suprema pars praeputio tecta*.
- 21 W.L. Braekman (ed.), *Dat Bedroch der Vrouwen. Naar het unieke, volledige exemplaar van de Utrechtse druk van Jan Bernts van circa 1532, bezorgd en ingeleid*. Bruges, 1983, F1r: *Hi hadde hem ghestelt onder een bancke ende als ic hem hadde vonden / so en wilde hi niet op staen / al wat ic hem dede / ick hadde hem gheerne in gehadt / maer hi en heeft zijn hooft niet op willen heffen / dus heb ic hem buyten ghelaten ende sloot hem die duere voor zijn hooft in een spijte*.
- 22 More fifteenth- and sixteenth-century literary examples of the metaphor *head = glans penis* can be found in Eric De Bruyn, o.c. (note 9), 2001, pp. 459-460.
- 23 Frederik Lyna and Willem Van Eeghem (eds.), *Jan van Stijvoorts Refereinenbundel. Anno MDXXIV. Naar het Berlijnsch handschrift integraal en diplomatisch uitgegeven*. Part II, Antwerp, 1930, p. 194 (nr. 231, vs. 39-40): *Daer ic tsoonste besken vander crappen / tot uwen outaer int offerhande gaf*. For *crappe* = bunch of grapes, compare Anonymous (ed.), *Matthijs de Castelein: De Const van Rhetoriken. Facsimile van de Gentse druk van 1555*. Oudenaarde, 1986, p. 146: *Als God ghelijc een crappe an tcruce hync* [source dating from 1555], and Anonymous (ed.), o.c. (note 20), 1974, p. 260: *krappe / krap-druyue: Uva, racemus, botrus* [source dating from 1599].
- 24 A. Van Elslander (ed.), *Het Volksboek Vanden .X. Esels, uitgegeven, ingeleid en toegelicht*. Antwerp, 1946,

- p. 24 (lines 72-73): *Ende dan soo ontfanct daer zijn wijff dye offerhanden in Venus outaer met sware dootlijcke sonden tot haerder beyder verdoemenisse*. Other examples can be found in: G. van Es (ed.), *Piramus en Thisbe. Twee rederijkersspelen uit de zestiende eeuw, bronnenstudie en tekstuitgave*. Zwolle, 1965, p. 126 (vs. 81-83) [*Alsmen voor Venus outaer gaet buijgen / en theijlichdom inde casse beloocken / wadt boutmer dan al?*] [source: a rederijker play dating from around 1500]; Robrecht Lievens (ed.), *Tghevecht van Minnen. Naar de Antwerpse postincunabel van 1516 uitgegeven*. Louvain, 1964, p. 65 (vs. 592-593) [*Dus liggick mat voor Venus outaer / Van anxte zweetende ghelijc den dassen*] and p. 69 (v. 733) [*Dan wert daer oec Venus outaer ontdeckt*] [source: an Antwerp edition dating from 1516]; W.L. Braekman (ed.), o.c. (note 21), 1983, K3r [*daer si tsame(n) speelde(n) dat lieflijc spel der natuere(n) / daer wart gedobbelt op venus outaer / daer liepe(n) die canssen al dues aen*] [source: a printed edition dating from around 1532].
- 25 The erotic content of the Stijvoort poem is also discussed in Dirk Coigneau, *Refreinen in het zotte bij de rederijkers*. Part II, Ghent, 1982, p. 360. Coigneau doesn't say anything about the quoted lines, though.
- 26 About Vande Merwede, see G.P.M. Knuvelde, *Handboek tot de Geschiedenis der Nederlandse Letterkunde*. Part II, 's-Hertogenbosch, 1971 (5), pp. 428-429 and Hans van Straten, *Razernij der liefde. Ontuchtige poëzie in de Nederlanden van Middeleeuwen tot Franse tijd*. Amsterdam, 1992, pp. 93-94.
- 27 These lines are quoted in Hans Heestermans (ed.), *Erotisch Woordenboek*. Baarn, 1977, p. 46. The question mark in the explanation *penis (of eikel van de penis?)* after the main entry *druif* can duly be dropped here.
- 28 Isabel Mateo Gómez, "El jard'n de las delicias. A propósito de una copia temprana y un tapiz", in: *Archivo Español de Arte*, XL (1967), p. 51.
- 29 See [Exhibition catalogue], *El jard'n de las delicias de el Bosco: copias, estudio técnico y restauración*. Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, June 23 -September 10 2000, pp. 122-123 (ill. 83-84), and Carmen Garrido and Roger Van Schoute, *Bosch at the Museo del Prado*. Madrid, 2001, p. 190 (ill. 73).
- 30 Anoniem (ed.), o.c. (note 20), 1974, p. 224. Compare also Hans Heesterman (ed.), o.c. (note 27), 1977, p. 84, where a passage dating from 1543 is quoted: *Dat capken vander manlycker roede als dat (...) eenich letsel heeft (...)*.
- 31 *Werpt my v cappe want sy is te groot / Hangt wt v langhe scapularis sonder verlaet / en laet v soe rysen in mynen scoot / Dats waer sey dmunicksken mingnoot / jaghy seydsy, springt vrij niet en flou ic / Ic en sal niet steruen voer enen stoet / (...) Dmunicksken van huer soe ghebeden was / dat hem verdroot en moede in syn leden was / van synder cappen / Hy werpse wt dmeysken wel te vreden was / hy de zoe veel dat hyder beneden was / ende gincker by clappen*. Frederik Lyna en Willem Van Eeghem (eds.), o.c. (note 23), Part I, 1929, pp. 140-141 (nr. 73, vs. 50-55/58-63). Dirk Coigneau, o.c. (note 25), 1982, p. 261 (note 40), also signals the ambiguity of these lines.
- 32 Many examples of this in Eric De Bruyn, o.c. (note 9), 2001, pp. 496-497.
- 33 H.J. Leloux (ed.), *Het Zutphens Liedboek*. Ms. Weimar oct. 146. *Van een historische achtergrond voorzien door F.W.J. Scholten*. Zutphen, 1985, p. 150 (nr. 33, vs. 3-6).
- 34 Dirk Bax, o.c. (note 5), 1983, p. 238, with a clear black and white illustration on page 236 (ill. 43).
- 35 Dirk Bax, o.c. (note 5), 1983, pp. 233-235.
- 36 Paul Vandenbroeck, "Jheronimus Bosch' zogenaamde Tuin der Lusten. I", in: *Jaarboek Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen*, 1989, pp. 170-173.
- 37 On Engelbert II of Nassau, see: Paul de Win, "Engelbert (Engelbrecht) II. Graaf van Nassau-

Dillenburg en Vianden, Heer van Breda", in: *Handelingen van de Koninklijke Kring voor Oudheidkunde, Letteren en Kunst van Mechelen*, vol. 95 (1991), part 2, pp. 85-115, and Ethan M. Kavalier, "Being the Count of Nassau. Refiguring identity in space, time and stone", in: *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, vol. 46 (1995), pp. 12-51.

38 Dirk Bax, o.c. (note 5), 1983, p. 330.

Detail from: Jheronimus Bosch, *Last Judgment*, Vienna, Gemäldegalerie der Akademie der bildenden Künste