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The Strawberries of Hieronymus Bosch

WALTER S. GIBSON

When you go looking for strawberries, you know what a strawberry looks like—but when you go looking for interrelationships, you do not know what they will look like.

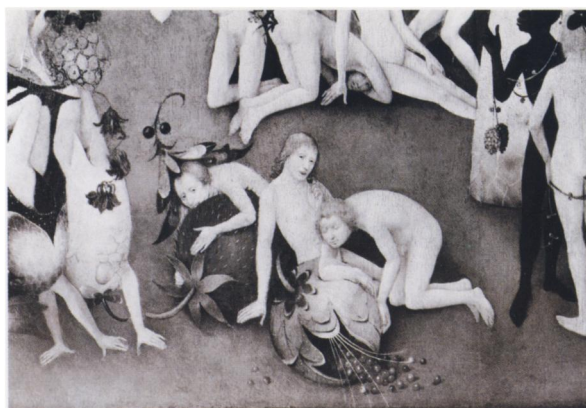
Max J. Friedländer'



Fig. 1. Hieronymus Bosch. *Garden of Earthly Delights*, c. 1500, oil on panel, 190 x 175 cm (central panel), 187.5 x 76.5 cm (each wing). Museo de Prado, Madrid.

With its distinctive leaves, flowers, and fruit, the strawberry plant was a popular decorative motif in the later Middle Ages and the Renaissance. Its long trailing vines could be easily adapted to the margins of illuminated manuscripts, often in combination with other plants. It also occurs on items of personal and household use. But the most spectacular strawberries of the period appear among the frolicking nude figures in the central panel of the notorious *Garden of Earthly Delights* by Hieronymus Bosch (1450–1516) (fig. 1), a triptych painted in the years around 1500, perhaps for Engelbert II of Nassau, more probably for his nephew and heir, Hendrik III of Nassau.² At the bottom right of Bosch's garden, a greedy little man bites into a strawberry bigger than himself (fig. 2); in the upper left quarter of the garden, near the water's edge, an even more imposing specimen of the same fruit reposes on a circle of semi-reclining male nudes (fig. 3). Herbalists of the period noted that cultivated strawberry plants produced larger fruit than those growing in the wild,³ but no amount of cultivation, surely, would have produced fruit as prodigiously huge as these two strawberries. Smaller strawberries, whose spherical shapes, vivid red hues, and pulpy seeded surfaces betray their ultimate descent from the common strawberry, occur elsewhere in the garden,⁴ along with other exotic fruits and, at the lower left, a winged creature.

Fig. 2. Bosch. *Garden of Earthly Delights*, detail, central panel, man biting into strawberry. Museo del Prado.



Finally, strawberry-like markings distinguish the red cylindrical form housing several figures at the lower right. Other fruits, of course, flourish in the garden, including blackberries, grapes, cherries, and possibly apples (or perhaps oversized cherries), as well as fruit less susceptible to precise botanical identification, but it is the strawberry in its various metamorphoses that proliferates in Bosch's garden, much like the time-pieces in Salvador Dali's *Persistence of Memory* (The Museum of Modern Art, New York).

Bosch's strawberries attracted the attention of viewers very early on. When the *Garden of Earthly Delights* came into the possession of Philip II of Spain, an inventory of 1593 listing the pictures that Philip sent to his monastery-palace, El Escorial, describes it as "a picture of the variety of the world with diverse disparities of Hieronymus Bosch that is called the *Madroño*," or "the Strawberry."⁵ This brief notation was elaborated some twelve years later by the librarian at El Escorial, Fray José de Sigüenza, who asserted that the picture is "of the vanity and glory and the passing taste of strawberries or the strawberry plant and its pleasant odor that is hardly remembered once it has passed." Thus, Sigüenza continues, the garden's inhabitants are devoted to "the pleasure of vengeance and sensuality, of appearance and esteem, and other such things that do

Fig. 3. Bosch. *Garden of Earthly Delights*, detail, central panel, strawberry held aloft. Museo del Prado.



not ever reach the palate nor wet the mouth, but are like the taste" and "delicate flavor of the strawberry or strawberry plant and the fragrance of their flowers, on which many people still try to sustain themselves."⁶

Sigüenza saw the strawberry as the most salient feature of Bosch's garden, and its passing fragrance and taste as a powerful symbol of the ephemeral nature of earthly pleasures and ambitions. Oddly, this fruit

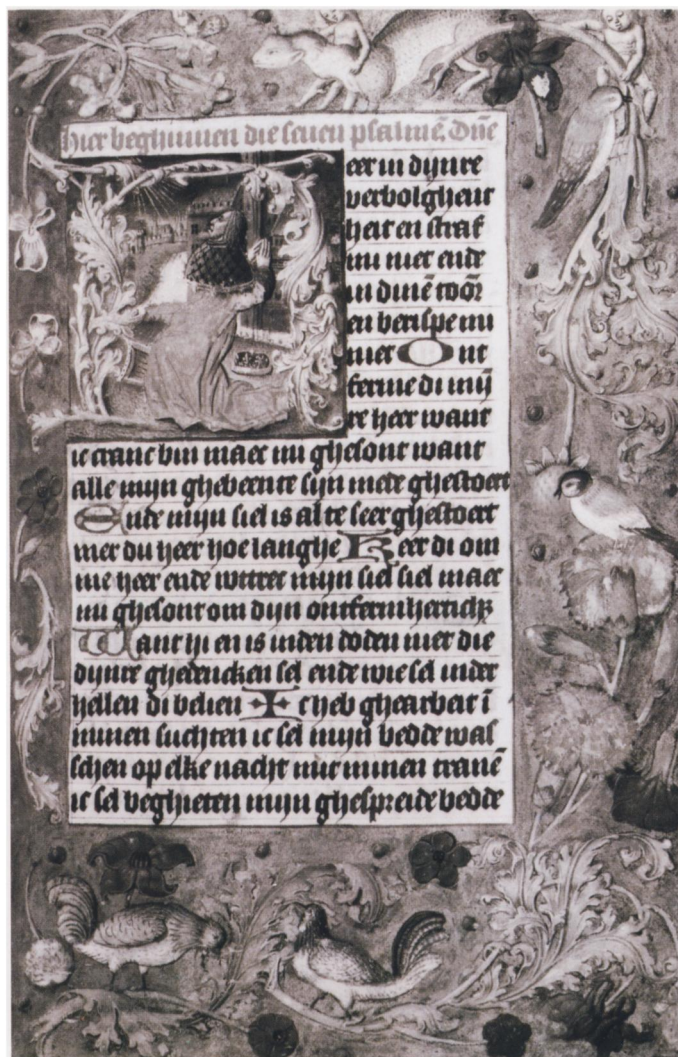
has received little specific attention from modern scholars, except for a few who explicate the *Garden of Earthly Delights* as an apotheosis not of mortal sin but of transcendent bliss. For Clément Wertheim-Aymès, who interprets Bosch's triptych as a Rosicrucian allegory, strawberries symbolize the fruits of religion for the blessed souls.⁷ Pater Gerlach, for whom the central panel shows humanity in Paradise before the Fall, Bosch's strawberries symbolize spiritual love.⁸ Observing the use of strawberries in medieval medicine, Laurinda Dixon assigns the fruit a significant role as an alchemic allegory of death and resurrection.⁹

Although such interpretations of the strawberry are quite at odds with Sigüenza's view of it as a symbol of human transience, this fruit had, in fact, long enjoyed a positive reputation.¹⁰ Ovid tells us that during the Golden Age people lived on mountain strawberries (*montanaque fraga*) and other fruits that Nature brought forth without human cultivation.¹¹ The medieval *Ovide moralisé* equates Ovid's Golden Age with the biblical paradise, and includes the strawberry among the fruits enjoyed by the blessed souls in paradise.¹² According to an old folk tradition, on the feast of St. John the Baptist (24 June), the Virgin leads the souls of dead children to pick strawberries.¹³ Similarly, in his autobiography, Henry Suso tells how one Lenten season he had a vision in which a young boy brought him a basket of strawberries as a gift from God.¹⁴ While the strawberry is missing from medieval lists of plants—such as the lily, the rose, the violet—that served as metaphors celebrating the virtues of the Virgin Mary,¹⁵ it frequently shares the Virgin's *hortus conclusus* with the violet and other flowers, and in the so-called *Madonna of the Strawberries*, often attributed to Martin Schongauer (1445/50–1510) (fig. 4), the Virgin sits on an elevated bed of strawberry plants and wears a crown ornamented with a garland of strawberry leaves.¹⁶

Fig. 4. Attributed to Martin Schongauer. *Madonna of the Strawberries*, late 15th century, oil on panel, 192 x 116 cm. Musées de Strasbourg.



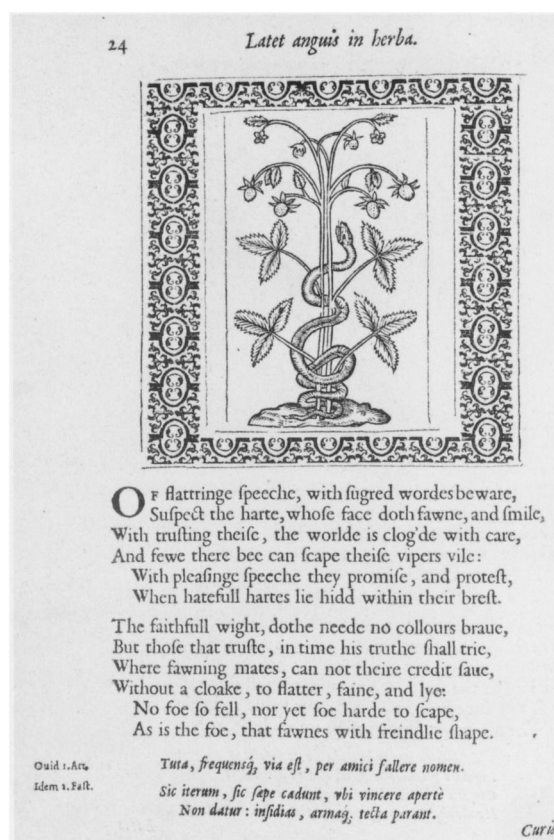
Fig. 5. *David in Penitence*. Book of Hours, Delft, 1490–1510. University Library, Leeds Brotherton Collection, Ms. 7, fol. 149r.



This exalted status enjoyed by the strawberry in medieval thought lends credence to the many “positive” readings that have been offered of Bosch’s triptych. But for those of us who believe, like Sigüenza, that Bosch’s garden, situated as it is between Eden and Hell, is not a place of human felicity but of human depravity, the strawberry also figures in quite unfavorable contexts of considerable relevance.¹⁷ If the strawberry was the fruit of the Virgin, it was also the fruit of Venus. Strawberries appear, for example, in an Alsatian tapestry made about 1500 depicting a wild woman caressing a unicorn (Historisches Museum, Basel), as well as in a tapestry depicting David and Bathsheba.¹⁸ And in the German *Allegory on the Three Ages of Human Life*, painted about 1480 (Germanisches Nationalmuseum, Nuremberg), strawberries flourish near a pair of young lovers. Nude figures frolic among oversized animals and plants, including strawberries, in a book of hours of produced in Delft between 1490 and 1510 (fig. 5); significantly, this design fills a margin surrounding an image of David in Penitence, perhaps an allusion to his adultery with Bathsheba.¹⁹ Indeed, the erotic symbolism of the strawberry is made explicit by Clément Marot, who describes the female sexual organ as [*u*]ne fraise ou un cerise (a strawberry or a cherry).²⁰

Another aspect of the strawberry *in malo* concerns not so much the plant itself, but what lies concealed beneath it. The source is Virgil’s *Third Eclogue*:

Fig. 6. *Latet anguis in herba*. Emblem from Geoffrey Whitney, *Choice of Emblemes*, 1586.



Ye who cull flowers and low-growing strawberries,
Away from here lads; a chill snake lurks in the grass.²¹

Later centuries did not forget Virgil's imagery. In a thirteenth-century German poem some children seek strawberries, only to be warned that nearby lies the serpent "that bit our forefather [whose wounds] will never heal," an allusion to Adam and the Serpent.²² Even earlier, John of Salisbury had employed the image of a snake concealed among strawberries to warn against the moral and intellectual dangers of reading pagan literature.²³ This metaphor was expanded to encompass all beautifully written but morally corrupting literature in Claude Paradin's *Devizes heroiques*, first published in 1557.²⁴ Serpents lurking under strawberry plants also characterize fair but unfaithful women, reinforcing the strawberry's venereal symbolism already noted, and, more generally, any deceitful appearance or pleasure, as we find, for example, in Joachim Camerarius's *Symbolor ũ & emblematum* of 1590.²⁵

The phrase "latet anguis in herba" in the second line of Virgil's famous verse seems to have given rise to the proverbial "a snake in the grass," designating someone who conceals his enmity for another under a façade of friendliness, a phrase occurring in many languages.²⁶ This aspect is emphasized in Geoffrey Whitney's *Choice of Emblemes* of 1586 (fig. 6). Showing a snake entwining a strawberry plant with the motto "Latet anguis in herba," Whitney counsels us: "Of flatteringe speeche, with sugred wordes, beware, / Suspect the harte, whose face doth fawne, and smile" of those who "With pleasing speeche they promise, and protest, / When hateful hartes lie hidd within their brest."²⁷ Shakespeare employed the strawberry to the same end in several of his plays. In *Richard III* (3.4), for example, Richard requests a plate of strawberries while disarming his enemy with seeming amity.²⁸ The most famous in-

Fig. 7. *Garden of Love Attacked by Death*. Book of Hours, possibly Champagne or Franche Comté, c. 1420. Walters Art Museum, Baltimore, W. 219, fol. 86v.



stance occurs in *Othello* (3.3), where Iago convinces the Moor of Desdemona's unfaithfulness by showing him her handkerchief "spotted with strawberries in your wife's hand," its design pointing up Iago's own perfidious intentions.²⁹

Thus by Shakespeare's day, the strawberry had long been a symbol for hypocrisy, deceit in general, and death concealed beneath a smiling appearance. In the visual arts, the strawberry *in malo* is perhaps to be found in Master Bertram's *Grabow Altarpiece*, painted 1379–83 (Kunsthalle, Hamburg): strawberries figure among the plants in the scene in which God instructs Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of the tree of knowledge. While the strawberries may simply be merely part of the earthly paradise, their presence at this particular point could also allude to the serpent whose deceit will deprive the first pair of both Eden and eternal life.³⁰ A late sixteenth-century English embroidered linen panel depicts an elegantly dressed "shepherd" who laments that he has been wounded to death by false Cupid; he is accompanied by suitable emblems derived from Paradin, including that of the strawberry and snake.³¹ Strawberries decorate an English wooden trencher of the same period, accompanied by biblical quotations warning of the dangers incurred by those who are seduced by beautiful harlots (Victoria and Albert Museum, London).³² Closer to Bosch in spirit, however, is an illumination in a French book of hours of the early fifteenth century (fig. 7).³³ The miniature depicts a fairly conventional garden of love: youths and maidens promenade, play music, and engage in amorous dalliance. A table set with wine in the middle distance awaits their further pleasure, but we may doubt that they will enjoy it, for Death, riding an ox and concealed in the trees at the left, takes aim with bow and arrow at the unsuspecting company. In the margin below the garden scene is an urn from which sprouts a strawberry plant, its left tendril splendidly curling up the left margin against

the more stylized plant ornament. In this context, the strawberry vine would seem to reinforce the meaning of the central image, that of death concealed beneath the pleasures of this world.

While it is unlikely that Bosch was familiar with this manuscript, the crucial lines from Virgil's *Third Eclogue* would have been familiar to the circle of Engelbert II and Hendrik III, if not in their original form, then almost certainly in a long and eloquent passage in the *Roman de la Rose*. This poem was especially popular at the Burgundian court, and Engelbrecht owned a luxurious manuscript of the *Rose* illuminated between 1490 and 1500 (British Library, London), which he probably commissioned and presumably passed to his nephew Hendrik III.³⁴ In the second part of the *Rose* added by Jean de Meun, Genius warns the barons against the dangers of confiding secrets to women, employing the extended metaphor of the fair strawberries hiding the serpent:

Take note of these lines of Virgil, and make your hearts so familiar with them that they cannot be erased: O children who gather flowers and fresh, clean strawberries, the cold serpent lies in the grass. . . . O children who search for flowers and young strawberries on the ground, the cold, evil serpent is hiding there, the malignant snake who hides and conceals his poison, secreting it beneath the tender grass until such time as he can pour it out to deceive and injure you; children, be careful to shun him. Do not let yourselves be caught if you want to escape death, for he is such a venomous beast in his body, tail, and head that you will be poisoned if you come near him; he treacherously stings and bites whomsoever he touches, without hope of a cure, and no remedy can heal the burning of that poison. No herb or root is of any use against it; the only medicine is flight.³⁵

We do not know, of course, if Bosch's lushly decorative strawberries were inspired specifically by Virgil's image of snake and strawberry, or if he drew on the unsavory symbolism of this fruit in general. Nevertheless, the dominating presence of strawberries in his central panel should alert us, as it must have contemporary viewers, that his garden, however fair-seeming, is no earthly or celestial paradise but a deceitful garden, an illusion whose alluring forms conceal death and damnation. The false garden has many parallels in literature, among them the medieval Venusberg, "the lecherous meadow called Lust" that Piers Plowman is warned against, and Acrasia's bower in Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.³⁶ Even in the *Rose*, again in Jean de Meun's addition, we are warned about the garden of the rose, where the lovers have gathered, and whose fountain intoxicates and brings death, in contrast to the fountain in the heavenly garden whose waters confer eternal life.³⁷ A still closer analogy to Bosch's garden, previously unnoticed, is *De Ure van ons dood* (The Hour of Our Death), a moralizing poem composed by the Brussels *rederijker* (rhetorician) Jan van den Dale and published sometime around 1516, the year of Bosch's death.³⁸ Like the *Rose*, the *Ure van ons dood* is cast in the traditional form of a dream allegory, although it is hardly as playful. Neither asleep nor awake, the poet tells us, but dozing between dream and "clear understanding," he finds himself in "a garden wonderfully beautiful and pleasant" (*een preeel wonderlijck schoon en playsant*), more joyous than a "double earthly paradise" (*vrolijcker dan een dobbel eerts paradise*), replete with sweet-smelling flowers, trees, rivers and fountains of sparkling

water, an orchard laden with fruit, a fine castle made of rubies (*een casteel / ghemaect al van fijnen robinen*), and birds that sing like angels. He also encounters a succession of fair maidens who ply the poet with wine and delicacies and dally with him.³⁹

These idyllic pastimes, however, are rudely interrupted by a dark stinking cloud that invades the garden; the ladies vanish and the terrified poet is left alone to face a monster armed with a huge bow and arrow. It is Death himself, who was “born in Paradise,” he tells the poet, “under the tree where Adam broke the commandment.”⁴⁰ The garden, we learn, represents the world; the maidens are the senses that deceive us and lead us astray through sensual pleasure, a point emphasized in a refrain: “the world’s promise is all deceit.”⁴¹ Bosch most likely painted his triptych some years before the first edition of Van den Dale’s poem; the similarities between poem and the painting indicate that their respective creators were drawing from a common stock of moralizing themes. Bosch, like Van den Dale, shows us a “prieel wonderlijck schoon en playsant,” replete with birds, flowers, and fruits, and Van den Dale’s “casteel ghemaect al van fijnen robinen” may recall the structures of coral and crystal whose fantastically decorative forms rise in the background of Bosch’s garden. But there are also significant differences. Van den Dale elaborates on the tradition of the courtly garden of love; Bosch transforms his painted garden into a kind of erotic Land of Cockaigne, where the descendants of Adam and Eve succumb directly to concupiscence, it seems, without the trappings of courtly love. More important, while the poet awakes from his dream to relate it to his readers, Bosch’s sinful humanity awakes from its dream of carnal bliss only to face the everlasting nightmare of Hell.

1. Max J. Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 14 vols. (Leiden/Brussels, 1967–76), 4: 9.
2. For the early history of this work, see Jan Karel Stepe, “Jheronimus Bosch: bijdrage tot de historische en de ikonografische studie van zijn werk,” in *Jheronimus Bosch: Bijdragen bij gelegenheid van de herdenkingstoonstelling te 's-Hertogenbosch 1967* ('s-Hertogenbosch, c. 1967), 7–12.
3. See, for example, *The Great Herbal of Leonhart Fuchs: De historia stirpium commentarii insignes 1542*, eds. Frederick G. Meger, Emily Emmart Trueblood, and John E. Heller, 2 vols. (Stanford, Calif., 1999), 1: 576.
4. At lower left, a strawberry shares a translucent globe with a young couple; in the carousel of animals above them and a little to the right, the man riding a unicorn holds a pole that supports two strawberries attached to a single stem.
5. Translated from Jacqueline Folie, “Les oeuvres authentifiées des Primitifs flamands,” *Bulletin de l'Institut royal du Patrimoine artistique* 6 (1963), 238.
6. Fray José de Sigüenza, *Historia de la Orden de San Jerónimo* (Madrid, 1605) 3: 837–42; reprinted in Francesco Javier Sánchez-Cantón, *Fuentes literarias por la historia del arte español*, 5 vols. (Madrid, 1923–41), 1: 430–31. The English translation is quoted from James Snyder, *Bosch in Perspective* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1973), 40.
7. Clément Wertheim-Aymès, *Hieronymus Bosch: Eine Einführung in seine geheime Symbolik, dargestellt am “Garten der himmelischen Freuden,” am “Hewagen-Triptychon,” am Lissabonner Altar und am Motiven aus andere Werken* (Berlin, 1957), 47.
8. Pater Gerlach, “Der Garten der Lüste: Versuch einer Deutung,” in *Jheronimus Bosch*, ed. R.-H. Marijnissen, photographs by M. Seidel (Geneva, 1972), 149–50.
9. Laurinda S. Dixon, *Alchemical Imagery in Bosch's Garden of Delights*, *Studies in the Fine Arts: Iconography* 2 (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1981), 33.
10. For the symbolism of the strawberry both *in bono* and *in malo*, see Karl Ulrich Wirth, “Erdbeere,” in *Realexikon zum deutsche Kunstgeschichte* (Stuttgart, 1967), 5: 984–93; Lawrence J. Ross, “The Meaning of Strawberries in Shakespeare,” *Studies in the Renaissance* 7 (1960), 225–40; U. Braun, “Erdbeere,” in *Lexikon der christlichen Ikonographie*, ed. Engelbert Kirschbaum, 8 vols. (Rome/Freiburg/Basel/Vienna, 1968–76), 1: 656–57; Mirella Levi d'Ancona, *The Garden of the Renaissance: Botanical Symbolism in Italian Painting*, *Arte e Archeologia*, *Studi e Documenti* 10 (Florence, 1978), 365–68.
11. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (1984), 1: 8–9, lines 101–4. At least one writer suggests that the central panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights* depicts a Golden Age such as the one described by Ovid. See Gerd Bauer, “Hieronymus Bosch,” in *Die grosse Zeit der niederländischen Malerei*, ed. Herwig Guratsch (Freiburg/Basel/Vienna, 1979), 77.
12. ‘Ovide moralisé’: *Poème du commencement du quatorzième siècle*, ed. C. de Boer (Amsterdam, 1915), book 2, lines 492, 928–33. Cited by Ross, “Meaning of Strawberries,” 233–34 n. 21.
13. Lotte Lisa Behring, *Die Pflanze in der mittelalterlichen Tafelmalerei* (Weimar, 1957), 19. Behring notes that, for this reason, it was believed that women whose children had died could not eat strawberries before St. John's day.
14. This episode occurs in chapter 11. See *The Exemplar: Life and Writings of Blessed Henry Suso, O. P.*, ed. Nicholas Heller, trans. M. Ann Edward (Dubuque, Iowa, 1962), 2: 29.
15. Wirth, “Erdbeere,” 990, notes that the strawberry is never named in medieval lists of metaphors for the Virgin, citing as his authority Ad. Salzer, *Die Sinnbilder und Beisworte mariens in der deutsche Literatur und lateinischen Hymnenpoesie des Mittelalters* (Linz, 1893). However, it is mentioned along with the violet as a symbol of the Virgin's humility in the *Partheneia Sacra*, an English Catholic emblem book published in Rouen in 1633; see Ross, “Meaning of Strawberries,” 233, 235, and n. 25.
16. This picture was destroyed in a fire in 1947. The only available photograph does not show the details of the strawberries with any clarity. For other images of the Virgin with strawberries, see Elizabeth Haig, *The Floral Symbolism of the Great Masters* (London, 1913), 268–71; Ross, “Meaning of Strawberries,” 235.
17. See, for example, Walter S. Gibson, “The Garden of Earthly Delights by Hieronymus Bosch: The Iconography of the Central Panel,” *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek* 24 (1972–73), 1–26. For other interpretations of this work, see Walter S. Gibson, *Hieronymus Bosch: An Annotated Bibliography* (Boston, 1983), xxiv–xxvii.
18. Cited in Wirth, “Erdbeere.”
19. Compare Yona Pinson, “Hieronymus Bosch: Marginal Imagery Shifted into the Center and the Notion of Upside Down,” in *The Metamorphosis of Marginal Images: From Antiquity to Present Time*, ed. Nurith Kenaan-kedar and Asher Ovadiah (Tel Aviv, 2001), 206–7, fig. 5. Pinson also stresses the erotic connotations of the marginal decoration, especially the animals. This folio is attributed to the Master of the Adair Hours, c. 1490. See *The Golden Age of Dutch Manuscript Painting*, exh. cat., Rijksmuseum Het Catharijneconvent, Utrecht, and tour (New York, 1990), no. 97.
20. Quoted in Michel de Certeau, *The Mystic Fable*, vol. 1, *The Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries* (Chicago/London, 1992), 68. For the use of fruit in general to symbolize various sexual acts and organs, including the *venter mulieris* (woman's womb), see Dirk Bax, *Beschrijving en poging to verklaring van het Tuin der Onkuisheid drieluik van Jeroen Bosch, gevolgd door kritiek op Fraenger*, *Verhandelingen der Koninklijke Nederlandse Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afd. Letterkunde, Nieuwe Reeks, deel LXIII, no. 2* (Amsterdam, 1956), 44.

21. Quoted from *Virgil*, 2 vols., Loeb Classical Library (1974), 1: 26–27, lines 92–93.
22. *Der Wilde Alexander*, in Carl von Kraus, *Deutsche Liederdichter des 13. Jahrhunderts*, commentary by Hugo Kuhn, 2 vols. (Tübingen, 1952–58), 1: 12. *Ibid.*, 2: 11–12, also interprets this passage as an allegory of the Fall of Adam, although he wrongly doubts the influence of Virgil's *Third Eclogue*.
23. John of Salisbury, *Polycraticus* 7.10; cited in Ross, "Meaning of Strawberries," 229.
24. *The Heroicall Devises of M. Claudius Paradin*, trans. P. S. (London, 1591), quoted in Ross, "Meaning of Strawberries," 229. See Wirth, "Erdbeere," 991, who says that Paradin probably took this idea from Isidore of Seville, *Etymologica*, 10, 54.
25. Joachim Camerarius, *Symbolor ü & emblematum ex re herbaria desuntor centuria vna collecta* (Nuremberg, 1590), fol. 92r, no. 90: *Vigilate Timentes*; reprinted as *Symbola et emblemata (Nürnberg 1590 bis 1604)*, eds. Wolfgang Harms and Ulla-Britta Kuechen (Graz, 1986), 1: 100. See also Ross, "Meaning of Strawberries," 231–32 and fig. 2.
26. Compare Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 11.775: "Behold a serpent hiding in the grass" (*Ecce latens herba coluber*). See Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 2.174–75. For examples of this expression in Renaissance England, see R. W. Dent, *Proverbial Language in English Drama Exclusive of Shakespeare, 1496–1616: An Index* (Berkeley/Los Angeles/London, 1984), 635–36, no. S585*; Charles G. Smith, *Spenser's Proverb Lore* (Cambridge, Mass., 1970), 244, no. 704, with references to other English writers.
27. Geoffrey Whitney, *A Choice of Emblemes*, ed. Henry Green (New York, 1967), no. 24. Discussed by Ross, "Meaning of Strawberries," 229.
28. For this and other strawberry imagery in Shakespeare, see Ross, "Meaning of Strawberries," 225–29.
29. *Ibid.*, 225–26, 238–39.
30. Compare Braun, "Erdbeere," who makes the same suggestion. This observation may answer Behling's question (*Pflanze*, 19) as to what prompted the artist to introduce the strawberry among the plants in this particular scene.
31. See A. F. Kendrick, *English Needlework* (London, 1933), pl. XII. See also Ross, "Meaning of Strawberries," 231.
32. No. 333A-1898. The verses are Proverbs 5:3: "for the lips of a harlot are like a honeycomb dropping, and her throat is smoother than oil"; Ecclesiasticus 9:8: "Turn away thy face from a woman dressed up, and gaze not upon another's beauty"; Proverbs 29:3: "A man that loveth wisdom, rejoiceth his father; but he that maintaineth harlots, shall squander away his substance." See also Ross, "Meaning of Strawberries," 321.
33. See Lilian C. Randall, *Medieval and Renaissance Manuscripts in the Walters Art Gallery*, vol. 1, *France, 875–1420* (Baltimore/London, 1989), no. 100. The illumination occurs in the hours of the Virgin for sext; the initial shows a prophet with a scroll inscribed: "forte uiuos deglutiscent nos" (Psalm 123.3: "perhaps they have swallowed us up alive").
34. Harley MSS 4425. See Thomas Kren, ed., *Renaissance Painting in Manuscripts. Treasures from the British Library*, exh. cat., J. Paul Getty Museum, Los Angeles, and tour (New York, 1983), no. 6; possibly illuminated in Bruges and most likely commissioned by Engelbert II of Nassau, whose coat-of-arms it bears. See also Anne S. Korteweg, *Boeken van Oranje-Nassau: De Bibliotheek van de graven van Nassau en prinsen van Oranje in de vijftiende en zestiende eeuw* (The Hague, 1998), no. 12. For the popularity of the *Rose* at the court of Burgundy, see Kren, *Renaissance Painting in Manuscripts*, 49. For the influence of the *Rose* on Burgundian and English pageantry well into the sixteenth century, see Gordon Kipling, *The Triumph of Honour: Burgundian Origins of the Elizabethan Renaissance* (The Hague, 1977), 102–3, 122, 140, 143–44.
35. Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. and ed. Frances Horgan (Oxford/New York, 1994), 256, lines 16547ff.
36. William Langland, *Piers the Plowman*, trans. J. F. Goodridge (Baltimore, 1959), book 9, 117. For the Venusberg and Acrasia's bower, and their relationship to Bosch's garden, see Gibson, "Garden of Earthly Delights," 9, 15.
37. De Lorris and De Meun, *Romance of the Rose*, 315–18.
38. First edition, Brussels: Thomas van der Noot, c. 1516. See Jan van den Dale, *Gekende werken met inleiding, bronnenstudie, aantekeningen en glossarium*, ed. Gilbert Degroote, Uitgave van de Vereeniging der Antwerpsche Bibliophielen, 2nd series, no. 2. (Antwerp/The Hague, 1944), 75–143. The poem is summarized on p. 17. For the various editions and translations of this work in the sixteenth century and later, see *ibid.*, 54–58.
39. Van den Dale/Degroote, "Gekende werken," 76–81. For the quotation, see 76, lines 32 and 34 respectively. The fine *robinen* of which the castle is constructed (78, line 85) may be either rubies or carbuncles.
40. *Ibid.*, 88, lines 341–42.
41. *Ibid.*, 100–101, lines 699, 713, 727.

PHOTOGRAPHY CREDITS

Figs. 1–3: Museo del Prado, Madrid; fig. 4: Musées de Strasbourg; fig. 5: Brotherton Collection, Leeds University Library; fig. 6: courtesy Chapin Library of Rare Books, Williams College; fig. 7: Walters Art Museum, Baltimore.