

FOUR TAPESTRIES AFTER HIERONYMUS BOSCH

By Otto Kurz

The first modern biographers of Hieronymus Bosch, Carl Justi and Hermann Dollmayr, knew from Félibien (1685) about the existence of a tapestry after a design by the artist, which was once in the Royal *Gardemeuble* at Paris, and they had heard rumours about other tapestries after Bosch in the Spanish Royal Collection.¹ It was natural to assume that Bosch, like so many other Netherlandish painters, had designed tapestries. When in 1903 the Conde V. de Valencia de Don Juan published, in good reproductions, the magnificent collection of tapestries belonging to the Spanish Crown,² it became obvious that the tapestries connected with Bosch, although still dating from the sixteenth century, must have been woven a considerable time after the death of the artist (Pls. 15a, b; 16a, b).

These four tapestries were traditionally called 'The Temptations of Saint Anthony', although in fact only one represents this subject. Juan F. Riaño said of them: 'They are copied from paintings on panel which existed in Spain by the Flemish artist Jeronimo Van Aeken-Bosch.'³ The first to contradict the traditional name was Alphonse Wauters in his book *Les tapisseries bruxelloises* (1878, p. 90), who came to the conclusion that they dated from about a hundred years after Bosch's time and were woven after designs 'par un émule de Bosch, Breughel, dit l'Enfer'. The Conde de Valencia was the first to recognize that two of the tapestries, the *Garden of Delights* and the *Hay Wain* were compositions of Hieronymus Bosch. He attributed the cartoons of the remaining two to Pieter Bruegel, presumably meaning the father. Jules Guiffrey hesitated, for three of the four tapestries, between Bosch and Bruegel.⁴ Göbel in his great *History of Tapestry* thought that these 'almost sadistic' tapestries might have been designed by Frans Verbeeck, an imitator of Bosch, of whom practically nothing is known and who made therefore an ideal target for attributions. The fact that one of the tapestries is a literal copy after a world-famous work by Bosch, the *Garden of Delights*, seems to have escaped the learned specialist.⁵

¹ C. Justi, 'Die Werke des Hieronymus Bosch in Spanien', *Jahrbuch der K. Preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, x, 1889, p. 122; reprinted with a few additions in Justi, *Miscellaneen aus drei Jahrhunderten spanischen Kunstlebens*, ii, 1908, p. 65. H. Dollmayr, *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, xix, 1898, p. 285. H. Hymans (in his translation of Van Mander, i, 1884, p. 175) says, obviously without any direct knowledge: 'Il existe au palais de Madrid un certain nombre de tapisseries d'après les cartons de Bosch: le Jugement dernier, et plusieurs épisodes de la Vie de Saint Antoine'.

² *Tapices de la Corona de España*, ii, 1903, pls. 113-16. The tapestries passed from the former Royal Collection to the Patrimonio Nacional. They used to hang for some time in the Palace of La Granja, but are no

longer there. All my attempts to see them at Madrid or to find out about their present location were a failure. I owe the photographs here reproduced and very valuable information to Mrs. Enriqueta Frankfort.

³ *Report on a collection of photographs from tapestries at the Royal Palace of Madrid*, 1875, p. 5.

⁴ J. Guiffrey, *Les tapisseries (Hist. gén. des arts appliqués)*, 1911, p. 142. P. Lafond, *Hieronymus Bosch*, 1914, pp. 89-92, left the question of authorship undecided.

⁵ H. Göbel, *Wandteppiche*, i, 1923, p. 420, fig. 384. What is known of Frans Verbeeck has been put together by Hulin de Loo (Bastelaer and H. de Loo, *Peter Bruegel*, 1907, p. 384). Nothing essential has been added since then.

The tapestries have often been referred to in iconographical studies, but the only author who has discussed their authorship in recent years is L. Brand Philip.⁶ According to her they 'represent various subjects in the manner of Bosch. The compositions constituting the series are designed in a *pasticcio*-like way. They either show the master's ideas carried out with the aid of newly invented details or they represent details created by Bosch more or less literally but arranged into a different, newly invented context.'

* * *

Of tapestries after Bosch we hear for the first time in the year 1566. Antoine Perrenot, Cardinal of Granvella, conceived the original idea of having a set of tapestries woven after compositions by Hieronymus Bosch. In a letter dated 16 June 1566 the Cardinal's agent in Brussels was able to report that they were ready, and that he was going to send 'les tapisseries nouvelles et de Bosche' to Malines, where Granvella resided as archbishop.⁷

Every collector takes pride in the possession of unique pieces, but the joy of the unfortunate cardinal did not last for very long. Just then his collections must have been his only consolation, since his political career had come to a sudden end. He had been dismissed as a concession to the rising storm of discontent against Spanish rule in the Netherlands. And Margaret of Parma, the regent of the Netherlands, whose adviser he had been, abdicated in favour of the Duke of Alba in whose hands all power was now concentrated.

The Duke of Alba, in spite of all his preoccupations, decided to have an identical set of tapestries after Bosch, whose works were just then very much in fashion, and asked for the loan of Granvella's tapestries in order to have them copied. The Cardinal being away, his *maître des comptes* had to inform him by letter of the Duke of Alba's inopportune request. As he had not the power to refuse the wish of such a mighty person, he wrote to Granvella on 5 October 1567:⁸

J'ay avertir V.I.S. comme le duc d'Alva veult faire contrefaire voz tapisseries de Jeronimo Bosch. Je luy dis que ne les pouvoie bailler sans vostre ordonnance et me dit qu'il en escriproit a V.I.S. et suis actendant responce combien qu'il faict encoires grande instance. Mais il ne fera rien sans ladicte ordonnance. Et pour m'en deffaire luy diray que le principal est sur le prince d'Orange sur lequel le patron se peult mieulx faire comme il est vray et cependant viendra vostre ordonnance.

The remark about one of the original paintings—from which a much better tapestry cartoon (*patron*) could be made—being in the collection of the 'prince d'Orange' was, apart from being a delaying action, an extremely shrewd diplomatic move. William of Orange, the Duke of Alba's great Protestant adversary, was at the moment living in exile in Germany. Three days after this letter was written, Alba's 'Council of Blood' confiscated the possessions of William the Silent.⁹

⁶ *Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek*, ix, 1958, p. 59, with a detailed discussion (and reproduction) of the tapestry with Saint Martin.

⁷ M. Piquard, 'Le Cardinal de Granvelle,

amateur de tapisseries', *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art*, xix, 1950, p. 119.

⁸ Piquard, *loc. cit.*, p. 120.

⁹ F. Rachfahl, *Wilhelm von Oranien und der niederländische Aufstand*, iii, 1924, p. 246.

In a list which was drawn up on 20 January 1568 of the art treasures confiscated in William's palace at Brussels our painting appears as 'ung grand tableau de Jeronimus Bosch'.¹⁰ Unfortunately, the compiler of the list did not indicate the subject, but the fact that he stressed its size suggests that it was the *Garden of Delights*, which is by far the largest of all existing paintings by Bosch (220 × 195 cm.). The other paintings copied on the tapestries show fewer figures and were presumably of smaller size. E. H. Gombrich has shown (see below pp. 403–6) that the first owner of the *Garden of Delights* was Henry III, Count of Nassau, who was an uncle of William the Silent. Henry's son René, who died in 1544, made William his universal heir, leaving him his possessions together with the title of Orange. It seems therefore that the *Garden of Delights* remained in the possession of the house of Orange-Nassau from the moment it was painted to the time of William the Silent.

If Odet Viron, Granvella's *maître des comptes*, thought it easy to deflect the Duke of Alba from his intentions, he was mistaken. On 14 December of the same year the 'grande pièce de tapisserie de Bosch' was already in the hands of Alba. Viron reported on this day to Granvella:¹¹

Le duc d'Alva m'a demande la grande pièce de tapisserie de Bosch que luy ai delivre. Il a fait pendre [prendre?] a son logis pour y veoir besongne pour son plesir et fait fere les personaiges plus grant pour estre la tapisserie des mesmes.

Any fears that the Duke of Alba might keep the tapestries were unjustified. After they had been copied they were returned to Granvella. After his death they were still in the possession of his descendants. In 1600 his nephew François, comte de Cantecroix, tried in vain to sell to the emperor Rudolph II 'cinque pezzi di tapezzaria di Fiandra di Hieronymo Bos'.¹²

The set in Madrid appears for the first time in the Spanish royal collection under Philip IV.¹³ Its previous history is unknown. Theoretically, it could be either Granvella's or Alba's set, but the second alternative seems more likely. Not so much because Granvella's set consisted of five tapestries as one might easily have disappeared, but because it seems that Granvella was always careful to have his coat-of-arms on all tapestries woven for him,¹⁴ and nothing of that kind is visible on the Madrid tapestries. There is an additional argument which seems to speak in favour of the identity of the Alba set with the tapestries now in Spain. If I understand the passage in the letter just quoted correctly, the Duke of Alba wanted the tapestry with the *Garden of Delights* of larger size and with correspondingly larger figures. And, indeed, this tapestry is, although of the same height as the others, more than one metre wider.¹⁵ Félibien mentions in his short biography of Hieronymus

¹⁰ A. Pinchart, *Archives des arts, sciences, et lettres. Documents inédits*, 1860, p. 185.

¹¹ Piquard, *loc. cit.*, p. 120; a last reference occurs in the correspondence on 22 August 1568 (*loc. cit.*, p. 121).

¹² *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, vii, 1888, p. li.

¹³ Valencia de Don Juan, *loc. cit.*, p. 77.

¹⁴ Piquard, *loc. cit.*, pp. 112, 122.

¹⁵ The dimensions of the four tapestries are: the 'Hay Wain' 291 × 372 cm.; the 'Feast of Saint Martin' 293 × 365 cm.; the 'Temptation of Saint Anthony' 290 × 352 cm.; and the 'Garden of Delights' 288 × 490 cm.

Bosch 'une tenture de tapisserie de son dessin dans le Gardemeuble du Roy'.¹⁶ This tapestry, which is now lost, could have come from either of the two sets.

Tapestries belonging to a set have traditionally a common subject. Ours is unique in showing four heterogenous themes; here it is the person of the artist, and not the subject matter, which forms their unity. That they were from the beginning intended to form a series becomes evident from their identical architectural frames.¹⁷ All show the mark which since 1528 the tapestry-weavers of Brussels had to put on their products: the shield between two B's, and in addition the monogram of the weaver, in our case consisting of an A and a C.

The first tapestry: The Garden of Delights (Pl. 15a)

Little need be said about the tapestry with the 'Garden of Delights', which is a copy after the famous triptych now in the Prado. The painting was acquired for the Escorial in 1593 at the sale of the possession of the Prior D. Fernando of the Order of San Juan (d. 1591).¹⁸ It is not without interest in our context to learn that Prior Fernando was a natural son of the Duke of Alba. As we have seen, the 'Garden of Delights' once belonged in all likelihood to William the Silent, whose properties were confiscated by order of the Duke of Alba. That the painting should later turn up in the possession of his son seems to be more than a mere coincidence.

Except for the fact that in the tapestry the composition appears in reverse, it is a very exact copy of the original. It is important to stress this exactitude which extends down to the smallest details, as we might expect the same faithful copying in the other three tapestries.

The second tapestry: The Hay Wain (Pl. 15b)

Our confidence in the reliability of the copyist is put to the test as soon as we look at the second tapestry.¹⁹ The first impression is that it is a free copy after the 'Hay Wain' in the Escorial. It seems that the designer of the tapestry cartoon copied the centre-piece of the triptych and adapted it at the same time as a circular composition. This, however, is only a first impression. As soon as we look closer we discover with surprise that although the two compositions are practically identical, not a single one of the roughly one hundred figures on the painting recurs on the tapestry. There are two possible explanations: either the copyist took endless trouble to change every single figure, or Hieronymus Bosch painted a second, and now lost, version of the 'Hay Wain', which is preserved in the tapestry at Madrid. The fact that all the alterations are conceived in the spirit of Bosch speaks in favour of the second alternative. Only Bosch with his inexhaustible fantasy could have done this without repeating himself.

There exists a second copy of this composition, this time a painted one

¹⁶ A. Félibien, *Entretiens sur les vies des plus excellens peintres*, I, 1685, p. 547.

¹⁷ Unfortunately these have been partly cut off in the photographs here reproduced. They can be studied in the reproductions of the Conde de Valencia de Don Juan.

¹⁸ The document is quoted in the *Catalogo* of the Prado by F. J. Sánchez-Cantón, 1949, p. 64.

¹⁹ Called 'St. Anthony tempted by the devil' by A. F. Calvert, *The Spanish Royal Tapestries*, 1921, pl. 167.

which has been attributed to Gillis Mostaert (Pl. 14e).²⁰ It corresponds in all details to the tapestry except for the fact that the painter has modernized the dress of most of the figures. The tapestry shows the original composition in reverse, but has preserved its archaic character.

Recent studies have led to a new and convincing interpretation of the 'Hay Wain'. The earlier interpreters had been misled by an all too easy association with the Biblical *Omnis caro foenum* (Isa. xl, 6; Eccles. xiv, 18) in overstressing the transitoriness of human life as its subject. As so often in the case of Bosch, the explanation has to be sought in Flemish folklore, where hay is a proverbial symbol of the struggle for futile earthly goods, for avarice and deception.²¹ The picture represents the egoism and the cupidity of the world and its ensuing punishment. The wings show Paradise and Hell, while our Earth forms the centre. The new interpretation was confirmed when attention was drawn to the beautiful description of the triptych written by Ambrosio de Morales in 1586. Morales was still aware of its meaning, and even knew of the Flemish proverbial saying.²²

Baldass has already pointed out that the tapestry in Madrid confirms this new interpretation.²³ Here the Earth is shown as a gigantic sphere surrounded by a cross, like an emperor's orb. Three men, one of them a friar, think they are able to escape from the confines of this world, but Death and devils keep a careful watch. The earth swims in the primordial ocean which is infested by the monsters of the sea. To the right we see large fishes devouring smaller ones, the picture of earthly strife which is familiar to us from Bruegel's composition, but was from the early fifteenth century a common motif of European literature.²⁴

In the English morality *The Pride of Life* the Bishop says:²⁵

The world is now, so wo lo wo
In such bale ibound
That dread of God is all ago,
And truth is gone to ground.

²⁰ Recuperation Service Collecting Point, Munich. Photograph Netherlands Institute of Art History, The Hague, no. 17812.

²¹ An excellent summary of recent studies can be found in L. Baldass, *Iheronimus Bosch*, 2. Aufl., 1959, pp. 229f. The papers here referred to were published in *Gentsche Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, v, 1939, pp. 152ff. (L. Lebeer), 156ff. (J. Grauls); vi, 1941, pp. 108ff. (D. Roggen), 127ff. (J. Grauls, *ibid.*), pp. 142ff., a discussion of the tapestry at Madrid).

²² Published by A. M. Salazar, *Archivo español de arte*, xxvii, 1955, pp. 117-38, esp. p. 125: 'Y hace entender cómo carro de heno, en flamenco, tanto quiere decir como carro de nonada, en Castilla'.

²³ Baldass, *loc. cit.*, p. 230. Ch. de Tolnay, *Hieronymus Bosch, Kritischer Katalog der Werke*, 1965, p. 355.

²⁴ Bosch painted a fish eating smaller ones in his 'Last Judgment' (Academy, Vienna; Baldass, *loc. cit.*, pl. 55). 'Big fish devour the little ones' is a proverbial saying of classical origin (A. Otto, *Die Sprichwörter und sprichwörtlichen Redensarten der Römer*, 1890, p. 281). A pictorial representation occurs on a miniature showing Alexander the Great's submarine journey in the 14th-century manuscript of the Romance of Alexander in Oxford, Bodl. 264, fol. 50v (facsimile edition by M. R. James, 1933; D. J. A. Ross, *Alexander historiatus*, 1963, p. 12). The text speaks of the perpetual warfare in the sea as on earth.

²⁵ A. Brandl, *Quellen des weltlichen Dramas vor Shakespeare*, 1898, p. 26. E. K. Chambers, *English literature at the close of the Middle Ages*, 1945, p. 54.

Peradventure men hold me a fool,
 To sing that fool tale;
 They fare as fishes in a pool:
 The great eateth the small.

Of Bruegel's composition 'Big fishes eat the small ones' we are fortunate to possess the original drawing as well as the engraving. The drawing, now in the Albertina, is signed with Bruegel's name and dated 1556. A rather poor engraving after it was published in the following year. On it we read with surprise the inscription 'Hieronymus Bos inventor'.²⁶ It is not difficult to guess how this surprising change came about. Bruegel has taken up a pictorial idea of Bosch, as he did in so many instances, but there can be no doubt that the composition is entirely his own.²⁷ In 1556 Bruegel was a young and little known artist who had not yet painted a single one of his famous pictures, while Hieronymus Bosch was at the height of fashion. In the Netherlands and in Spain an insatiable demand for his paintings had to be satisfied. A posthumous school of followers of Bosch sprang into existence and produced variations on his favourite subjects. Guevara already refers to apocryphal works with the signature of Bosch.

Hieronymus Cock, a publisher of prints at Antwerp, tried to cash in at this vogue and published a number of engravings under the name of Bosch. Nothing easier than to sell the works of Bruegel, 'novus Hieronymus Boschius', as he was later called on his portrait engraving, under the name of Bosch. Such impostures were far from uncommon at the time. The publishers of prints were fond of bringing out engravings by lesser known artists under more alluring names.²⁸

Was this the only drawing by Bruegel which Hieronymus Cock had engraved as a work of Bosch? It is not easy to answer this question. The medium of the engraving blurs somewhat the difference in style. Winkler once remarked that 'in the case of certain compositions which survive only in engravings, it is impossible to decide whether they are by Bosch or Bruegel'.²⁹ An obvious candidate is the 'Temptation of Saint Anthony' which Cock published, first in 1556 anonymously, and then again in 1561 as a work of Bosch.³⁰ It is so thoroughly in the spirit of Bruegel that one is glad to see that it has recently been claimed for him.³¹

On the other hand, the 'Parable of the blind men' has been accepted as a

²⁶ For the drawing see Ch. de Tolnay, *The drawings of Pieter Bruegel*, 1952, no. 44, pl. 24; O. Benesch, *Meisterzeichnungen der Albertina*, 1964, no. 137; and for the engraving Hollstein, *Dutch and Flemish etchings, engravings and woodcuts*, iii, p. 280. Vasari (ed. Ragghianti II, 550) lists 'Un pesce grande che si mangia alcuni pesci minuti' among engravings after Bruegel published by H. Cock, but without mentioning the name of the artist.

²⁷ This has to be stressed as some scholars thought that Bruegel had simply copied a now lost work by Bosch; e.g. Gustav Glück, *Monatshefte für Kunstwissenschaft*, iii, 1910, p. 355. M. J. Friedländer (*Bruegel*, 1921, p. 48;

Altniederl. Malerei, v, p. 127) thought that Bruegel had redrawn a rapid sketch by Bosch. For further bibliographical references see E. Feinblatt, *Prints and drawings of P. Bruegel, Exhibition Los Angeles County Museum*, 1961, p. 41.

²⁸ O. Kurz, *Falsi e falsari*, 1961, pp. 120-22.

²⁹ F. Winkler, *Die altniederländische Malerei*, 1924, p. 377.

³⁰ Hollstein, *loc. cit.*, iii, 133.

³¹ William H. Schab Gallery, New York, *Catalogue*, xxix, 1961, no. 14. Feinblatt, *loc. cit.*, pp. 13, 56 (among works in the 'Bosch-Bruegel orbit').

work of Bosch since Hieronymus Cock published the engraving under his name,³² especially since we know that a picture by Bosch of 'Two blind men' was among the paintings which Philip II acquired from the collection of Guevara.³³ The monumental figures of the blind men and the 'idyllic' character of the landscape are so completely in the spirit of Bruegel that the engraving appears to be a kind of first version of the grandiose painting at Naples.³⁴

Other works of Bruegel masquerading under the name of Bosch are the drawing with figures of cripples in the Albertina at Vienna, which we shall have occasion to mention, and in the same collection the drawing with the 'Tree-man', a variation on a detail in the 'Garden of Delights' put into a landscape in the style of the later sixteenth century.³⁵

The third tapestry: The Feast of Saint Martin (Pl. 16b)

In Tours zu Martin Bischofs Zeit,
Gabs Krüppel viel und Bettelleut.

Wilhelm Busch, *Unbeliebtes Wunder*.

It has long been known that Hieronymus Bosch painted a picture of 'Blind men chasing a boar' (*Unos ciegos andan á caza de un puerco javali*). It was one of the pictures which Philip II acquired after the death of Felipe de Guevara (1570).³⁶ We recognize this subject on the third tapestry, but here it is only a background scene in a larger context.

A small crowd is watching a grotesque spectacle. A wild boar is being attacked with thick clubs, apparently not very successfully, by a number of armed men with closed visors. One of them, with a blow obviously intended for the boar, brings down a fellow fighter, while another stumbles over a rope which is tied to the neck of the beast.

The inhuman entertainment here depicted was widely enjoyed in the Middle Ages. Of one such public entertainment which took place in Lübeck in 1386 we have a detailed description. On Shrove Tuesday twelve strong blind men were selected and put into old suits of armour. After each had been

³² Hollstein, *loc. cit.*, iii, 138; Feinblatt, *loc. cit.*, p. 58; E. Sudeck, *Bettlerdarstellungen vom Ende des XV. Jahrhunderts bis zu Rembrandt*, 1931, p. 19. Romdahl accepted the engraving as a copy after Bosch, but qualified this by saying 'vielleicht nach der Zeichnung Brueghels' (*Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, xxv, 1905, p. 129). The engraving has been copied by J. Horenbault (1608) in his composition 'Al Hooi' (reprod. *Gentsche Bijdragen tot de Kunstgeschiedenis*, v, 1938, p. 153; Hollstein, *loc. cit.*, ix, 146).

³³ Justi, *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, x, 1889, p. 141.

³⁴ The painting at Naples has been shortened at the top; old copies like the one in the Liechtenstein collection show its original size. Bruegel's painting of the same

subject in the collection of Granvella was a different composition (Lafond, *loc. cit.*, p. 83, no. 4, with the wrong date 1667).

³⁵ Benesch, *loc. cit.*, no. 25 (with bibliography). The drawing was traditionally called Bruegel, and discussed as his work by Romdahl, *loc. cit.*, p. 126. It was Benesch who first gave it to Bosch (in the Albertina catalogue no. 26), an attribution which was unanimously accepted. For an anonymous and altered etching after the drawing see Hollstein, *loc. cit.*, iii, 145.

³⁶ The list has been published by C. Justi, *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, x, 1889, p. 141, and reprinted by M. G. Gossart, *La peinture de diableries, Jérôme Bosch*, 1907, p. 310.

given a club they were led to the market square where an arena had been fenced off. A vigorous hog was let in, and the task of the blind men was to kill it with their clubs. Later it was to serve them for a festive meal. 'For this extraordinary entertainment not only children and young people assembled, but also men of advanced age, women and virgins, priests and laymen.' The hog tried to evade the stroke as much as possible and in full career often overthrew three or four men at a time. The blind men, mistaking their fallen companions for the hog, started clubbing them. To take part in this amusement was evidently not considered a punishment. On the contrary, people pretended to be blind so that they could join in the fun. In order to thwart those with unfair advantages, the participants had to wear their helmets with the visor to the back of the head.³⁷

In an erudite paper D. Bax has shown how widespread this unedifying spectacle must have been in olden times.³⁸ It appears among the *drôleries* of a Flemish fourteenth-century manuscript of the Romance of Alexander.³⁹ In the fifteenth century performances took place at Stralsund, Arnhem, Dordrecht, Bruges, Cologne, and no doubt in other places of Northern Germany and the Southern and Northern Netherlands. Nor were the Parisians willing to miss such good fun. In 1425 an *esbatement* was held at Paris where four blind men in armour fought for a pig. On the preceding day they had been led through the streets of Paris in full armour preceded by a man who carried a banner with the figure of a pig.⁴⁰ One should not forget that even Shakespeare was not above poking fun at the misdirected blows of an enraged blind man: 'now you strike like the blind man: 'twas the boy that stole your meat, and you'll beat the post'.⁴¹

Bax has not overlooked our tapestry and its connexion with the painting by Bosch mentioned in the inventory. A drawing attributed to Jan (not Frans!) Verbeeck and dating from the middle of the sixteenth century depicts the same subject.⁴² The revolting entertainment of the Middle Ages could no longer appeal to a new and more refined age. In 1559 at Antwerp the participants were no longer blind people, but men who had been blindfolded for the spectacle, and in this modified guise the entertainment survived in Belgium right into our century.⁴³ The sufferings of the animal did not count.

The main subject of the tapestry is Saint Martin who is leaving his castle on horseback.⁴⁴ Instead of the one beggar of the traditional iconography

³⁷ A. Schultz, *Deutsches Leben im XIV. und XV. Jahrhundert*, 1892, p. 409.

³⁸ D. Bax, 'Als de blende twijn sloughen', *Tijdschrift voor Nederlandsche Taal- en Letterkunde*, lxxiii, 1944, pp. 82-88.

³⁹ M. R. James, *The Romance of Alexander. A collotype facsimile of Ms. Bodley 264*, 1933, fol. 74v.

⁴⁰ Huizinga, *The Waning of the Middle Ages*, chapter i (*Verzamelde werken*, iii, 27) after *Journal d'un bourgeois de Paris*, ed. A. Tuetey, 1881, p. 204.

⁴¹ *Much Ado About Nothing*, ii, 1. The passage is explained by the commentators as an

allusion to an incident in the *Lazarillo de Tormes*.

⁴² Bax, *loc. cit.*, p. 84. Romdahl, *loc. cit.*, p. 129. L. Brand Philip, *Nederlands Kunst-historisch Jaarboek*, ix, 1958, p. 58, fig. 40.

⁴³ Bax, *loc. cit.*, pp. 85-86.

⁴⁴ The correct interpretation has already been given by Bax, *loc. cit.*, pp. 85-86. In the previous literature the subject of the tapestry is said to be the 'Departure of Saint Anthony for the retreat' (e.g. in A. F. Calvert, *The Spanish Royal Tapestries*, 1921, pl. 166).

there are now more than twenty cripples begging for alms. This shameless exhibition of human deformity did not, but might have, inspired Victor Hugo in the famous scene in *Notre Dame de Paris* where a similar crowd closes in on the unfortunate poet Gringoire:

Et puis, à mesure qu'il s'enfonçait dans la rue, culs-de-jatte, aveugles, boiteux, pullulaient autour de lui, et des manchots, et des borgnes, et des lépreux avec leurs plaies, qui sortant des maisons, qui des petites rues adjacentes, qui des soupiraux des caves, hurlant, beuglant, glapissant, tous clopin-clopant, cahin-caha, se ruant vers la lumière, et vautrés dans fange comme des limaces après la pluie.

In the left bottom corner of the tapestry appears a blind hurdy-gurdy player, a figure often drawn by artists in the later sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the Spanish picaresque novel had made the life of the beggars a popular subject.⁴⁵ This group of the hurdy-gurdy player accompanied by his emaciated wife in rags was freely copied by Pieter Bruegel who incorporated it into a kind of patternbook-leaf with beggars and cripples in the style of Bosch, now in the Albertina at Vienna. Already in the sixteenth century an anonymous engraver reproduced Bruegel's drawing as a work of his great predecessor ('Jer. Bosche Invent.'; detail Pl. 14d).⁴⁶ We get a glimpse of the torchlight procession inside the castle; it is the *fakkelen* which in Holland still forms an integral part of the festivities on Saint Martin's Day.⁴⁷

November 11, the day of Saint Martin, has always been celebrated by orgies of eating and drinking.⁴⁸ In the background we see a hall and in it a table with a boar's head on a platter. On one end of the table a bishop sits (is he Saint Martin himself?), at the other end the blind men who have taken part in the tournament.

The Saint's Day, the beginning of winter, is traditionally the day when the pigs are slaughtered:

Op Sint Martijn
Slacht de arme het zwijn
(On Saint Martin's day the poor man kills his pig)⁴⁹

In some parts of Germany it was customary on St. Martin's Day to let the boars fight each other to death instead of slaughtering them.⁵⁰ From here it

⁴⁵ The hurdy-gurdy was traditionally the instrument of beggars; E. Winternitz, 'Bagpipes and hurdy-gurdies in their social setting', *Bulletin of the Metropolitan Museum*, n.s. ii, 1943, p. 68.

⁴⁶ Drawing and engraving have often been reproduced, e.g. by Lafond, *loc. cit.*, pl. facing p. 66 (drawing) and 96 (engraving); E. Sudeck, *Bettlerdarstellungen*, 1931, pp. 12-16, pls. 1-2. On the engraving see also Hollstein, *loc. cit.*, iii, p. 144. The drawing has traditionally been called Bosch (Schönbrunner-Meder, *Handzeichnungen*, iv, no. 345; H. Leporini, *Die Stilentwicklung der Handzeichnung*, 1925, pl. 47; Benesch, in the catalogue of the Albertina, no. 24; etc.), but Baldass (*loc. cit.*,

p. 67) regarded it as a copy after Bosch. Friedländer (*Altniederl. Malerei*, v, 127) thought it was 'eher von Bruegel als von Bosch'. On a similar drawing at Brussels see F. Grossmann, *Burlington Magazine*, ci, 1959, p. 345.

⁴⁷ J. Schrijnen, *Nederlandsche Volkskunde*, i, 1914, p. 105.

⁴⁸ W. Jürgensen, *Martinslieder, Untersuchungen und Texte*, 1910, pp. 53ff. ('Der bacchische Martinskult und seine Wurzeln').

⁴⁹ Schrijnen, *loc. cit.*, p. 114.

⁵⁰ P. Sartori, *Sitte und Brauch*, 1914, p. 266, n. 10. The custom is mentioned already in 1520: 'Spectacula publica eduntur, duo aut plures frendentes apri circo includuntur, ut

was only a short step to celebrating the traditional 'Killing of the pig by the blind men' on the day of the Saint, as we see it on the tapestry.

'Saint Martin changes the must into wine' says a German proverb.⁵¹ On his day one taps the barrels with the new wine:

Sint Martijn, Sint Martijn
T'avond most en morgen wijn.
(In the evening must, and the next morning wine)⁵²

A barrel with this new wine to the left of the table with the boar's head causes a scene of riot.⁵³ A group of cripples try to force their way into the hall, but those already there are not willing to share their pleasures, and bar the entrance with their crutches. A regular siege takes place in which the equally handicapped attackers and defenders display a remarkable agility. In the courtyard outside, one of those who were not permitted to enter the hall shows with a rude gesture what he thinks of his luckier fellows. Inside the place of one who has had too much of a good thing is taken up by a cripple on his knees who drinks straight from the bung-hole.

The original from which the tapestry was copied was evidently a painting by Bosch of the 'Feast of Saint Martin' which included the scene of the blind men and the boar which Bosch had also treated as a separate subject. The lost painting may have landed, like so many of his works, in the collection of Philip II. At least, we find in the inventory drawn up after his death no less than three paintings of this subject by Hieronymus Bosch. The descriptions are rather summary. One is described as 'Sanct Martin y muchos pobres', the other two, one of which was a grisaille, as 'Sanct Martín con muchos pobres y desparates'.⁵⁴ One of these may have been an altogether different composition, which later appears in an inventory of Philip IV (dated 1636) as 'St. Martín quando va pasando una barca y el cavallo en otra'.⁵⁵

This description recalls a similar composition, the 'Saint Martin in a boat' surrounded by numerous beggars and cripples who try to draw attention to their misery, fight each other, or celebrate the feast by drinking, a composition known from an engraving published by Hieronymus Cock.⁵⁶ This engraving

mutuo se exertis dentibus visceratim dissecant, quorum carnes, ubi vulnerati coniderint, partim plebi partim potestatibus dividuntur' (quoted from J. Boemus by H. Pfannenschmid, *Germanische Erntebräuche*, 1878, p. 501).

⁵¹ O. von Reinsberg-Düringsfeld, *Das festliche Jahr*, 1898, p. 403; M. P. Nilsson, *Die volkstümlichen Feste des Jahres*, 1914, p. 40.

⁵² Schrijnen, *loc. cit.*, p. 116.

⁵³ Pieter Bruegel as well as his follower Pieter Balten painted pictures of the celebration of Saint Martin's Day where the barrel and the drunkards form the centre of the composition. Bruegel's painting is only known from a fragment in the Museum at Vienna and an engraving of the complete composition (Romdahl, *loc. cit.*, p. 124; R. van Bastelaer, *Les estampes de Peter Bruegel*, 1908, pl. 214; G. Glück, *Bruegels Gemälde*,

1932, p. 90). Of the composition by Balten there exist two signed versions which show some differences (in the museums at Antwerp and Amsterdam; they are reproduced together in *Jahrbücher des Museums der bildenden Künste in Budapest*, ix, 1937-39, pp. 207-8).

⁵⁴ F. J. Sánchez Cantón, *Inventarios reales. Bienes muebles que pertenecieron a Felipe II*, ii, 1946-49, pp. 248f.

⁵⁵ C. Justi, *Jahrbuch der preussischen Kunstsammlungen*, x, 1889, p. 142.

⁵⁶ Lafond, *loc. cit.*, pl. facing p. 92; Sudeck, *loc. cit.*, pp. 93f., pl. 3; Hollstein, *loc. cit.*, iii, p. 135; Feinblatt, *loc. cit.*, p. 57. Vasari described the engraving, not quite correctly, as 'una carta di S. Martino con una barca piena di diavoli in bizzarrissime forme' (ed. Ragghianti, ii, p. 550).

is apparently a copy after a painting which belonged once to the emperor Rudolph II. It is described in one of his inventories as 'Sanct Martin im Schüff mit den Petlern' without the name of the artist, but evidently identical with the 'Sanct Martin unter den Petlern vom Hieronymo Boss. (Original)' of the inventory of 1621.⁵⁷ The caption under the engraving says that Saint Martin gave his cloak to the poor, but

Nu vechte om de proeye (= French *proie*) dit quaet gedruys
(Now the vicious rabble is fighting for the spoils)

The poor with whom Saint Martin shared his cloak, has become one of the 'vicious crowd'. Although these verses were written a considerable time after the death of Bosch, they reflect without doubt his own sentiments. Sudeck, Bax and Baldass have already stressed the fact that for Bosch beggars and cripples were always bad men, never objects of compassion.⁵⁸ He, and the sixteenth century in general, saw them with unsentimental eyes as a 'vicious rabble' living in a world of deceit. It was their cunning and their picturesque appearance which fascinated painters as well as the creator of the picaresque novel.

In the late Middle Ages the belief in alms-giving as a safe and easy way to salvation reached incredible proportions and soon became an easy target for attack by the early reformers. Its immediate effect was, however, an enormous swelling of the ranks of the professional and often organized beggars and alms-demanding cripples by those who wanted to receive their share in the largesse. A whole literature sprang into existence, the authors of which tried to open the eyes of a public which was as generous as gullible. Many of the begging cripples were criminals who had been mutilated as a punishment for their offences by a barbaric system of justice. Even more were able-bodied men and women who simulated eye-catching sores and diseases. The withered limbs they displayed had been stolen from the gallows. The *Liber Vagatorum* or *Von der falschen Bettler Büberei* written in the early sixteenth century went through many editions, and was later reprinted at the suggestion of and with a preface by Martin Luther. It is a list of the prevailing swindles and impostures in the world of the beggars and at the same time a key to the secret language of the underworld.⁵⁹

Das vierte Capitel ist von den Klencknern, das sind Bettler, die vor den Kirchen auch oft sitzen auf allen Messtagen oder Kirchweihen mit den bösen zerbrochen Schenkeln, einer hat kein Fuss, der ander hat kein Schenkel, der dritter keine Hand oder keinen Arm . . . und wird der Mensch dadurch besefelt,⁶⁰ denn dem sein Schenkel, diesem sein Fuss in der Gefängnis oder in den Plöchern⁶¹ ist abgefault worden um böser

⁵⁷ *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, xxv, 1902, part 2, p. xli, no. 986.

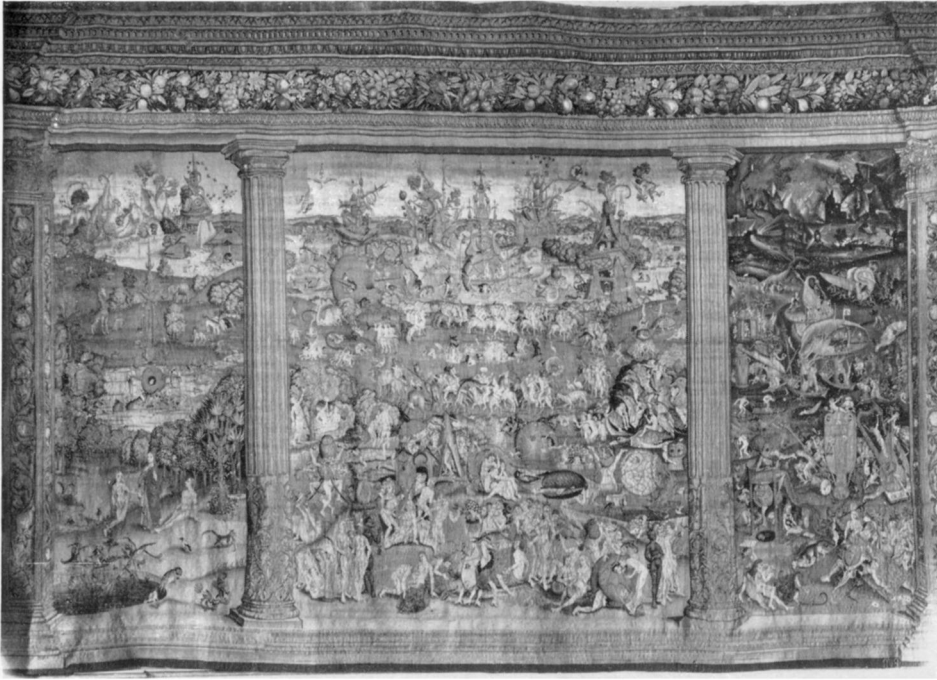
⁵⁸ Sudeck, *loc. cit.*, p. 14; D. Bax, *Ontcijfering van J. Bosch*, 1949, pp. 51f.; Baldass, *loc. cit.*, pp. 42, 68.

⁵⁹ The *Liber Vagatorum* has been reprinted in volume xxvi of M. Luther's *Werke* (*Kritische Gesamtausgabe*), Weimar 1909. Bax

(*loc. cit.*, p. 51) has already quoted the *Liber Vagatorum* in this context. I have modernized the spelling in the passage quoted here (from *Werke*, etc., p. 641).

⁶⁰ 'Besefelt' is thieves' cant (*Rotwelsch*) for 'cheated'.

⁶¹ 'Plöcher' means stocks.



a—*The Garden of Delights*. Tapestry after Hieronymus Bosch. Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional (pp. 150, 153)



b—*The Hay Wain*. Tapestry after Hieronymus Bosch. Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional (pp. 150, 153)

a—*The Temptation of St. Anthony*. Tapestry after Hieronymus Bosch. Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional (pp. 150, 161)



b—*The Feast of St. Martin*. Tapestry after Hieronymus Bosch. Madrid, Patrimonio Nacional (pp. 150, 156)



Sachen willen . . . Zu Schletstad sass einer vor der Kirchen, der selbig hatte einem Dieb an dem Galgen einen Schenkel abgehauen und hatte ihn vor sich gelegt und hatte seinen guten Schenkel aufgebunden . . . Alsbald dieser den Stadtboten ersehen hatte, wüschte er auf und lies den bösen Schenkel liegen und lief zu der Stadt hinaus, ein Pferd nicht ihn kaum erlaufen haben.

Even the genuine cripples were often children who had been maimed by their inhuman parents in order to arouse pity:

y ha femmes tellement expertes & sçavantes, que soudain que un enfant est nay, ils le contrefont au tout, comme luy tourner la teste à costé, ou un pied, le faire bossu, luy apprendre à tourner les yeux pour faire l'aveugle, & ce principalement au soleil.⁶²

Bosch did not stand alone in introducing such satirical and grotesque scenes into the legend of Saint Martin. The contemporary *Mystère de la vie et hystoire de monseigneur saint Martin, lequel fut archevesque de Tours* contains a burlesque episode of two cripples who tried desperately, but in the end unsuccessfully, to escape from the healing power of the Saint as they were only too well aware that, being once cured, they would have to earn their living by hard work.⁶³

The fourth tapestry: The Temptation of Saint Anthony (Pl. 16a)

Only the last one of the tapestries called 'The Temptations of Saint Anthony' does really represent this subject. We do not know how often Bosch painted 'The Temptation of Saint Anthony' which had a particular fascination for him, one might say which he changed from a religious scene into a secular phantasmagoria. There exist various versions of it, even if we discard those which have been wrongly fostered on him.⁶⁴ In 1605 Fray José de Sigüenza divided the works of Bosch into three categories, the second of which was 'The Temptation of Saint Anthony', while the other two were the religious and the 'maccaronic' (grotesque) subjects.⁶⁵

They abound in inventories from the sixteenth century. Margaret of Austria possessed one, certainly an original as it appears in her inventory already in 1516, the year the artist died.⁶⁶ Another belonged to the humanist Damiano de Goes,⁶⁷ while Cardinal Marino Grimani in Venice possessed

⁶² Noël du Fail; quoted by R. Schenda, *Die französische Prodigienliteratur in der zweiten Hälfte des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 1961, p. 53.

⁶³ L. Petit de Julleville, *Les mystères*, ii, 1880, pp. 537f. The story of the two cripples is old, but was originally told to glorify the healing power of the Saint; it is only later that the satirical element predominated. G. Cohen, 'Le thème de l'aveugle et du paralytique dans la littérature française', *Mélanges offerts à Emile Picot*, ii, 1913, pp. 393-404. It was this episode which inspired Wilhelm Busch to his poem 'Unbeliebtes Wunder' (in the volume *Schein und Sein*).

⁶⁴ Reproductions of these paintings, rightly

or wrongly attributed to Bosch, can be found in E. Larsen, 'Les Tentations de Saint Antoine de Jérôme Bosch', *Revue Belge d'Archéologie et d'Histoire de l'Art*, xix, 1950, pp. 3ff.

⁶⁵ J. de Sigüenza, *Fundación del Monasterio de El Escorial por Felipe II*, 1927, p. 522.

⁶⁶ *Jahrbuch der kunsthistorischen Sammlungen*, iii, 1885, p. xcix, no. 49.

⁶⁷ F. V. Engelenburg, *Oud-Holland*, xix, 1901, p. 196. This 'Temptation' has often been identified with the triptych in the Museum at Lisbon; cf. J. Dupont, *Le Retable de Saint-Antoine*, 1937, p. 3.

two.⁶⁸ In 1582 in the Casa Real del Pardo there were eight paintings by Bosch, seven of which showed the 'Temptation of Saint Anthony'.⁶⁹ Of none of these paintings have we a detailed description. Where did Granvella find the painting which served as a model for the tapestry weavers? Perhaps in his own collection. When in 1607, after the death of his last descendant, an inventory was drawn up of the art treasures in the Palais Granvella at Besançon, we find there a tempera painting 'une tentation de saint Anthoine' by Hieronymus Bosch. As the Cardinal's nephews were only anxious to sell their heritage and did not add to it, we can be certain that this painting by Bosch formed part of the Cardinal's own collection.

⁶⁸ P. Paschini, 'Le collezioni archeologiche dei prelati Grimani', *Rendiconti della Pontif. Accademia Romana di Archeologia*, v, 1926-27, p. 182. The inventory dates from 1528, but was 'riveduto e corretto negli anni susseguenti'. The paintings are described as 'Un quadro tentation de sto. Antonio in tella del Bosch mezano' and 'Un quadro grande tentation de santo Antonio del Bosch in tella'.

⁶⁹ F. J. Sánchez Cantón, *Fuentes literarias para la historia del arte español*, v, 1941, p. 358. In 1564 there was only one 'Temptation of Saint Anthony' in the collection; see the earlier inventory printed in *Archivo español de arte y arqueología*, x, 1934, p. 71.

⁷⁰ A. Castau, 'Monographie du Palais Granvelle à Besançon', *Mémoires de la Société d'Émulation*, 4e sér., ii, 1867, p. 139.



Photo: Alinari

a—Duccio, *Christ Among the Doctors*. Siena, Opera del Duomo (p. 140)



b

b—*Christ as Exemplum of Obedience*. London, British Museum, Harley MS. 1527, fol. 14v (p. 141)

d—The blind hurdy-gurdy player and his wife. Detail from an engraving after Pieter Bruegel (p. 158)



d

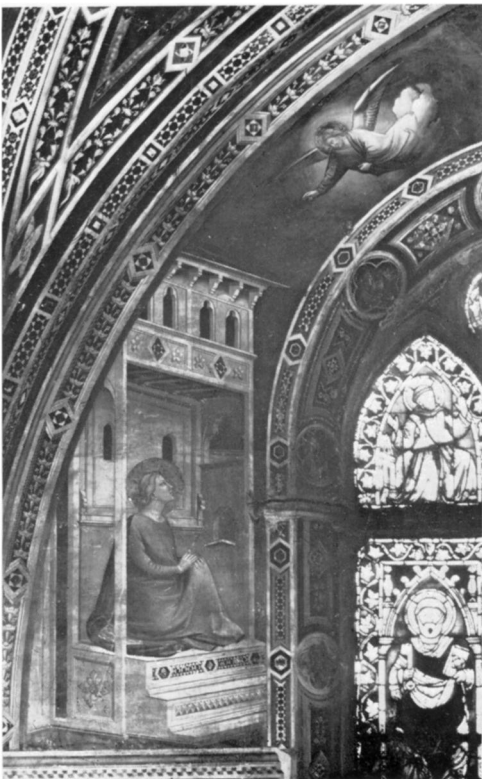


Photo: Alinari

c—Taddeo Gaddi, *The Annunciation*. Florence, Santa Croce (p. 146)



e—*The Hay Wain*. Copy after a lost painting by Hieronymus Bosch. Munich, Collecting Point, introduced from