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Bosch and the Jews

Bosch's art combines a double dimension: the visible world and the moral behind it; all things are supplemented by a dark other-worldly presence of evil. Bosch's pictures reflect the religious conflicts of the Middle Ages, full of eschatologic and apocalyptic expectations. Essential to this fight is the prophetic thinking that the Old Testament will be supplemented by the New Testament, overcoming Jewish thinking. In art historical literature, one question is seldom asked: did Hieronymus Bosch fight against heresy, especially of Jewish origin?

That there exists a connection between Bosch and the Jews has been advanced by some scholars, foremost among them Wilhelm Fraenger.¹ However, Fraenger's method of associative exegesis cannot be tested in any meaningful scholarly sense, even if some of his findings are worthy of reconsideration, e.g. the connection to Jewish thinking. Lotte Brand Philip convincingly pressed Fraenger's idea forward and connected the strange fourth king in the "Adoration" (Madrid) with the Jewish messiah (i.e. the Antichrist).² Later, Edward Cohen also dealt with some Jewish themes in Bosch's work.³

1. Many of Fraenger's articles published since 1943 are collected in the book Wilhelm Fraenger, *Hieronymus Bosch*. Dresden: Verlag der Kunst 1999, cited in the first edition 1975 (English editions since 1983).

2. Lotte Brand Philip, "The Prado 'Epiphany' by Jerome Bosch", *The Art Bulletin* 35, 1953, pp. 267-293.

3. Edward Cohen, "Jheronimus Bosch and Victor van Carben...", *Studia Rosenthaliana* 18, 1984, pp. 1-11; same: *Jeroen Bosch*. Amsterdam: Amsterdam Boek, 1975.

Bosch's social background is reasonably well known: he belonged to the wealthy class of Hertogenbosch citizens, not least through his propitious marriage to Aleid van de Meervenne.⁴ His social rank can also be surmised through his commissions, at least through the patrons he portrayed. It is possible that he had contacts to local Jews. Unfortunately, the history of the Jews of Hertogenbosch during the Middle Ages is sketchy. We do, however, know of a Jewish settlement in "Achter het Wilt Vercken".⁵ The way Bosch thought about Jewish issues can only be guessed at on the basis of his paintings.⁶

I will here have to restrict myself to one example, the *New Triptych*,⁷ but I believe that this contains the key to the entire oeuvre; through the *New Triptych* one finds exactly those themes that are vital for Bosch's view: the fighting against sensuality and greed.

The *New Triptych*, which is made up of the fragments *Ship of Fools* (fig. 1), *Gula* (fig. 2), *Death of the Miser* (fig. 3) and the *Pedlar* (fig. 4),⁸ is an

4. Paul Vandenbroeck, "Jheronimus van Aken en de stad 's-Hertogenbosch", *In Buscoducis: 1450-1629; kunst uit de Bourgondische tijd te 's-Hertogenbosch; de cultuur van late middeleeuwen en renaissance*, Deel 2, Wetenschappelijke bijdragen, Adrianus M. Koldewey (ed.), Maarsse 1990, pp. 395-402; Godfried C. M. van Dijck, *Op zoek naar Jheronimus van Aken alias Bosch. De feiten: familie, vrienden en opdrachtgevers, ca. 1400-ca. 1635*. Zaltbommel: Europese Bibliotheek, 2001.

5. Christoph Cluse, *Studien zur Geschichte der Juden in den mittelalterlichen Niederlanden*. Hannover: Hahnsche Buchhandlung, 2000; J. Bader, "Uit stof en as". *Joden in Noord-Brabant in vroeger eeuwen: de Nederlands Israëlitische Hoofdsynagoge 's-Hertogenbosch, 1799-1843*. Breda: Vereniging 'Vrienden Synagoge Breda' 1998, p. 3; *Germania Judaica, III, 1330-1519*, Teil 1, Ortschaftsartikel Aach-Lychen, Arye Maimon (ed.). Tübingen: Mohr, 1987, p. 553; J. Becker, "'s-Hertogenbosch de oudste joodse gemeente in de noordelijke Nederlanden", *Studia Rosenthaliana* 18, 1984, pp. 74-78.

6. Good reproductions in Roger H. Marijnissen and Peter Ruyffelaere, *Hieronymus Bosch. The Complete Works*. Tabard Press, 1987. From the recent publications: Roger Schoute and Monique Verboomen, *Jérôme Bosch*. Tournai: La Renaissance du Livre, 2003; Carmen Garrido: Roger van Schoute, *Bosch at the Museo del Prado*. Madrid: Museo del Prado, 2001.

7. See author: "A newly-established triptych by Hieronymus Bosch", *Jérôme Bosch et son entourage et autres études*. Colloque XIV, 13-15 septembre 2001, Bruges-Rotterdam, Hélène Verougstraete et Roger Van Schoute (ed.) (Le Dessin sous-jacent et la technologie dans la peinture, XIV), Leuven: Uitgeverij Peeters 2003, pp. 33-38.

8. *The Pedlar*, oil/wood, octagon, 71 × 70.6 cm, diameter of circle 64.6 cm; Catalogue *Van Eyck to Bruegel: 1400-1550; Dutch and Flemish Painting in the Collection of the Museum Boymans-van Beuningen*, Friso Lammertse (ed.), Rotterdam: Museum Boymans-van Beuningen 1995, No. 16, pp. 91-95 (cited as: *Catalogue Rotterdam*, 1995); Friso Lammertse and



1. Bosch, *Ship of Fools*, Louvre.

early variant of the *Haywain* triptych — excluding the middle panel, which remains unaccounted for (fig. 5). The left-hand wing (containing *Ship of Fools* and *Gula*) depicts sloth, careless selfishness, as displayed by the passengers in the boat, profligate drinking, as manifested by the barrel-rider, and unchaste love, as represented by the couple in the tent. This couple could be regarded as the core from which all sins derive, hence this wing could aptly

Annetje Roorda Boersma, "Jheronimus Bosch, 'The Pedlar': a Reconstruction, Restoration and Painting Technique", in *Verougstraete*, 2003 (see note 7), pp. 102-118.



2. Bosch, *Gula*, New Haven.

be titled *Luxuria*, offering a counterpart to *Avarice* on the opposite wing. In the picture we see representatives of a religious order, burghers and aristocrats, even a fool — but no Jew. And yet the vices exemplified here are precisely those conventionally associated with the Jews. A number of symbols do, however, allude to the Jewish world. First, the pennant: normally, the half-moon stands for the Turkish world. Bosch's use of the crescent moon in



3. Bosch, *Death and the Miser*; Washington, National Gallery of Art.

other paintings, such as *Crowning with Thorns* and *Ecce Homo*,⁹ demonstrates his reference to the Jewish world, possibly meaning the threatening “otherness” of the heretic world as such. Second, a detail in the boat, the pancake (“mop” in Dutch) hanging on a thread, alludes to the carnival tradition and to the depictions of fools, as we encounter them in manuscripts depicting Psalm 52 (“Dixit insipiens in cordo suo non est Deus”). It is possible

9. “Crowning with Thorns”, London (*L’opera completa di Bosch*, apparati critici e filologici di Mia Cinotti, Milano: Rizzoli Editore, 1968, *Classici dell’arte*, 2, No. 57 ; referred to as: “Cin.” plus No.); Marijnissen, 1987 (see note 6), p. 353; *Ecce Homo*, detail, background, Frankfurt/M, Städel (Cin. 10; Marijnissen, 1987, pp. 369, 373).



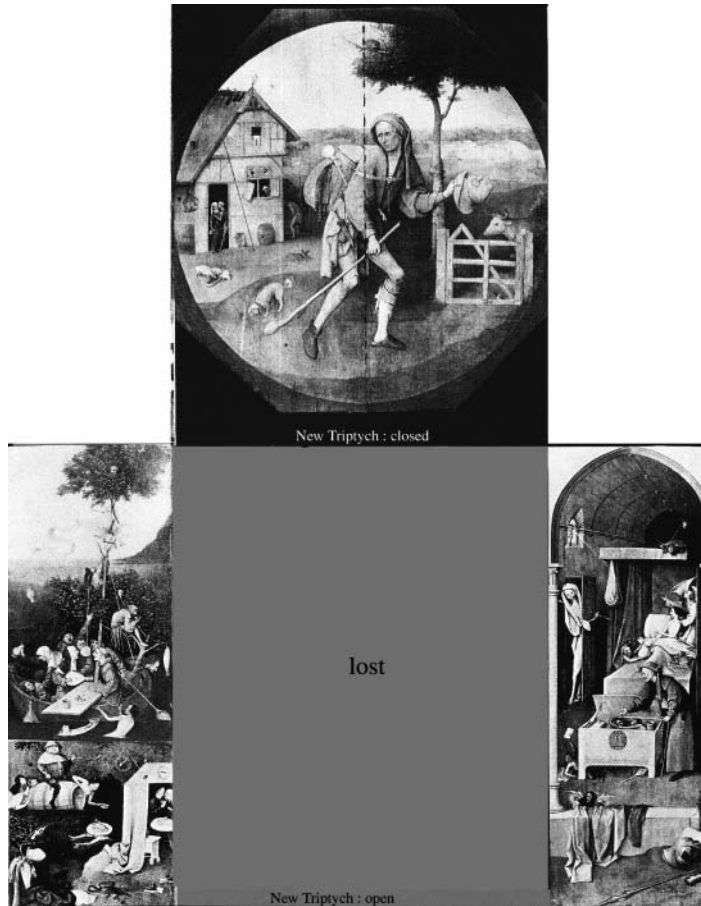
4. Bosch, the *Pedlar*, Rotterdam, Boymans-Van Beuningen Museum.

that Bosch has also the Jewish tradition in mind: the Jewish “mazzah” found attached to the wall in the synagogue “symbolises the main meal and domestic community of all Jewish inhabitants of the district”.¹⁰ Third, the paw in the heraldic standard of the tent: it is a pig’s trotter, which can be explained by the image of the pig as a symbol of gluttony. Jews are often depicted in a disreputable way by being linked to the pig.¹¹ Pigs’ trotters always crop up in Bosch’s work wherever gluttony or impending poverty are concerned,¹² since

10. Cluse, 2000 (see note 5), p. 354, fn. 289; Bax shows examples of fools “snapping at a suspended edible object” in manuscripts of the 14th and 15th centuries (Dirk Bax, *Hieronymus Bosch. His Picture-writing Deciphered*. Rotterdam: Balkema, 1979, p. 189, figuras 77, 78; Dutch edition: *Ontcijfering van Jeroen Bosch*, 1949). For the “mazzah”: *Encyclopaedia Judaica*. Jerusalem, 1971, vol. 11, pp. 1155-1158.

11. Isaiah Shachar, *The Judensau: A Medieval Anti-Jewish Motif and its History*. London: Warburg Institute, 1974 (Warburg Institute Surveys and Texts, 5); Claudine Fabre-Vassas, *The Singular Beast: Jews, Christians, and the Pig*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1997 (French, 1994).

12. *Gula* in *The Seven Deadly Sins*, Madrid (Cin. 2) and *The Temptation of Saint Anthony*, right wing, Lisbon (Cin. 43; Marijnissen, 1987 [see note 6], p. 202); *Merrymakers and Helmets*,



5. Bosch, reconstruction of the the *New Triptych* (fragments from Paris, New Haven, Rotterdam and Washington).

it is this small residue of the pig that could be given away to the poor.¹³ The

drawing, Paris (Inventaire général des dessins des écoles du Nord, maîtres des anciens Pays-Bas nés avant 1550, Frits Lugt (ed.), Paris, 1968, No. 69, p. 25; color pl., *Catalogue Jheronymus Bosch*, ed. A. Koldewey. Rotterdam, 2001, p. 160.

13. Other proposals: Bax 1979 (see note 10): "trotter... of billy — or nanny-goat", p. 301; Tóth-Ubbens: "herte-poot" (*Magdi Tóth-Ubbens, verloren beelden van miserabele bedelaars: leprozen, armen, geuzen*. Lochem: De Tijdstroom, 1987, p. 48).



6. Anonym, *De Judeo...*, woodcut (Brant, *Esopi appologi*, 1501).

barrel-rider also belongs to this context of gluttony as a parody of Bacchus. But since he wears a funnel, a Jewish allusion is possible: Jews are depicted with a pointed hat. There could be an allusion to the “avarus” too, who, according to the ancients, was seen as a dropsy sufferer: the more he drank, the thirstier he became. In other words, the more money he has, the more he wants.¹⁴ The Jews were considered lazy, and, as the reproach went, rather than earning their bread “by the sweat of their brows” like the Christians, they preferred to let their money work for them.¹⁵ Jews quite simply epitomized

14. Richard N. Newhauser, “The love of money as deadly sin and deadly disease”, in *Zusammenhänge, Einflüsse. Wirkungen: Kongreßakten zum 1. Symposium des Mediävistenverbandes*, 1984, Joerg O. Fichte (ed.). Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986, pp. 315-326; here 320 ff.

15. Jeremy Cohen (ed.), *Essential Papers on Judaism and Christianity in Conflict: From Late Antiquity to the Reformation*. New York: New York University Press, 1991; Stefan Rohrbacher and Michael Schmidt, *Judenbilder: Kulturgeschichte antijüdischer Mythen und antisemitischer Vorurteile*. Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1991; Wolfgang Bunte, *Religionsgespräche zwischen Christen und*



7. Bosch, *Garden of Earthly Delights*, right wing, detail, *Satan Gobbling up the Damned*, Madrid, Prado.

mised “avarus”. Later on, in the 17th century, Jews were often depicted as “Weinjuden” riding on a barrel.¹⁶ In Aesop’s fables, in the newly revised ver-

Juden in den Niederlanden, 1100-1500. Frankfurt/M, 1990; same: “Juden und Judentum in der mittelniederländischen Literatur, 1100-1600”. Frankfurt/M a.o. 1989 (*Judentum und Umwelt*, 24); Johan Tollebeek, “De Joden in de Zuidelijke Nederlanden tijdens de late middeleeuwen. Kritisch-bibliografisch overzicht, 1949-1983”, in *Bijdragen tot de Geschiedenis* 66, 1983, 13-34.

16. Gabriele Hooffacker, *“Avaritia radix omnium malorum”: barocke Bildlichkeit um Geld und Eigennutz in Flugschriften...* Frankfurt/M: Lang, 1988 (Mikrokosmos, 19), pp. 43, f. 54, 152.

sion by Sebastian Brant, one comes across the illustrated tale, “De Judeo qui cacando invenit pecuniam” (fig. 6).¹⁷ In passing one should note that the Dutch word for a money-lender is “geldschieder”. The connection of eating and money occurs also in Bosch’s right-hand wing of *Garden of Earthly Delight*. There he depicts a bird-headed Prince of Darkness (= Satan)¹⁸ who is wearing a cooking pan for a crown and whose feet are placed in pitchers, possibly wine flagons. He is gobbling up the damned while simultaneously excreting them into the underworld, shown as a pit where one man already empties his stomach, while another excretes money from his bowels (fig. 7).¹⁹ Alongside this throne of Satan are depicted the allegories of pride and avarice: on the left, Superbia with a toad on her breast and an ass for a partner, on the right, a sleeping miser being attacked by a toad lying in a tent, which is opened by a high priest accompanied by his female assistants. Thus in this scene power, avarice and lust are neatly assembled in one place — possibly alluding to “Jewish” features (bird head, toad, money, and high priest).

In the right-hand panel of the *New Triptych* is an old man dying, perhaps he is a pawnbroker and usurer (see fig. 3). He is dressed in the same manner as the Jew in the *Schedelchronik* of 1493, wearing old-fashioned headgear (fig. 8).²⁰ The usurer has propped up the lid of his treasure chest with a knife. Depictions of knives are to be found as leading motifs in all the panels of the *New Triptych*: in the *Luxuria* wing, it lies in the foreground under a hat, and with the man cutting a piece from the duck fastened on the mast; the *Pedlar*, too, wears a dagger on his belt.²¹ Jews were often depicted in con-

17. *Esopi appologi...*, Sebastian Brant (ed.), Basel: Jakob Wolff, 1501, Part 2, fol. 154 b (Sebastian Brant, *Fabeln*, ed. Bernd Schneider. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1999, pp. 186 f.).

18. Figures with birdlike heads were depicted in Hebrew manuscripts (Bezalel Narkiss, “On the Zoocephalic Phenomenon in Medieval Ashkenazi Manuscripts”, in *Norms and Variations in Art: Essays in Honor of Moshe Barasch*, Lawrence L. Besserman (ed.), Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1983, pp. 49-62).

19. *Garden of Earthly Delights*, Madrid (Cin. 30).

20. Thus a picture of the Christian boy “Simon” being martyred and tormented by Jewish people — a mere invention as we now know; see *Symon das selig kindlein zu Trient*, Woodcut, Hartmann Schedel, *Register des Buchs der Croniken und Geschichten...* [= *Liber chronicarum*, germ.]. Nürnberg: Anton Koberger, 1493, fol. CCLIIIv (repr. Leipzig, 1933); this woodcut seems to have inspired Bosch for his *Crowning with Thorns* (London); for the historical facts see Wolfgang Treue, *Der Trienter Judenprozess: Voraussetzungen — Abläufe — Auswirkungen, 1475-1588*. Hannover: Hahn, 1996.

21. Knives occur as well in the rest of Bosch’s oeuvre; in the Bruges *Last Judgement* (Cin. 51)



8. Anonym, woodcut (Schedel, *Liber cronicarium*, 1493).

junction with a knife, stemming from their traditional practise of kosher slaughter.²² The usurer lies on his bed in a vacillating attitude, caught between Christian thoughts of redemption and a tenacious attraction to worldly pleasures. With one hand he reaches for a moneybag held by a toad-like monster,²³ with the other he is pointing in the direction of death (originally

oddly enough, a knife is shown as an attribute for Christ rather than a sword. For the painting see Aquilin Janssens de Bisthoven, Musée Communal des Beaux-Arts (Musée Groeninge), Bruges, Bruxelles, 1983 (*Les primitifs flamands* I, 1), S. 68-84.

22. Bernhard Blumenkranz, *Juden und Judentum in der mittelalterlichen Kunst*. Stuttgart, 1965, p. 39.

23. *Death of the Miser*; Detail; Anne M. Morganstern, "The Pawns in Bosch's 'Death of the Miser'", in *Studies in the History of Art* (National Gallery of Art, Washington) 12, 1984, pp. 33-41.

this hand held a goblet; perhaps he wants to bargain with death). This indecisive vacillation was the general lot of Christians, as addressed, for instance, by St. Augustine.²⁴

If we now consider the *Pedlar* (see fig. 4), the mere fact of representing a wandering pedlar²⁵ in such large scale raises the suspicion of “Jewishness” — Jews typically being seen as pedlars and traders. We can ask ourselves how Jews tended to be depicted during this period and how they were represented by Bosch himself.²⁶ In “Crowning with Thorns”, for example, in the bottom left-hand corner is a Jew depicted with a long nose and ostentatious beard. The half-moon on the sleeves of his cap may be analogous to the badge that Jews were forced to wear.²⁷ In *Christ Among the Doctors* (a copy after Bosch),²⁸ on the other side, the Hebrews depicted there exhibit no conspicuously Jewish traits, though they are unsympathetically drawn, and the individual who commissioned the work is scarcely distinguishable from the other figures. The *Pedlar* does not have a Jewish physiognomy, but a number of features may allude to Judaism, such as the ostentatiously displayed money pouch (the attribute of Judas), the shoemaker’s awl in the hat (Ahasuerus was originally a cobbler),²⁹ and perhaps also the trotter, incongruously pro-

24. See the commentary of Augustine on Heb. 11.13-16 (see *Revue des Études Augustiniennes* 3, 1957, 137ff. and 8, 1962, pp. 129ff.); see also the illustration *The Free Will* for Augustinus *Cité de Dieu*, Abbeville: J. Dupré, P. Gérard, 1486/1487, book 1, fol. G2 (GW, 2891) (see Bax, 1979 [note 10], pp. 320-324).

25. These sorts of merchants and players were often depicted in scenes of the “Prodigal Son”, see Konrad Renger, “Versuch einer neuen Deutung von Hieronymus Boschs Rotterdamer Tondo”, *Oud Holland* 84, 1969, pp. 67-77; A. J. Bernet Kempers, “De oblieman: metamorfosen van een koekjesverkoper”, in: *Volkskunde* 74, 1973, pp. 1-43; *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (see note 10), 13, 1971, col. 203-210 (“peddling”).

26. Eric Zafran, *The Iconography of Antisemitism: A Study of the Representation of the Jews in the Visual Arts of Europe, 1400-1600* (Diss. New York 1973). Ann Arbor, 1981; same: “Saturn and the Jews”, in: *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institutes* 42, 1979, pp. 16-27.

27. *Crowning with Thorns*. London, National Gallery (Cin. 57); see also *Ecce homo* Frankfurt/M, Städel (Cin. 10, Marijnissen, 1987 [see note 10], p. 369). For Jewish badges, see *Encyclopaedia Judaica* (see note 10) 4, 1971, pp. 62-73.

28. *Christ among the Doctors*, oil/wood, 77.5 × 60.4 cm, c. 1550, Opoèno, Castle Gallery; Olga Kotková (ed.), *Hieronymus Bosch-follower: Christ among the Doctors. The Painting after Restoration*. Prague: Národní Galerie, 1996, pp. 9, 43.

29. Catalogue *Le Juif errant: un témoin du temps*. Paris: Musée d’Art et d’Histoire du Judaïsme, 2001.



9. Anonym, drawing in: *Comestor, Historia scholastica*, London, British Library, Ms Add 38122, fol. 85v.

truding from his waistcoat. It recalls miniatures showing Jews gnawing on a paw, here it is a lamb's hoof, slaughtered in the kosher manner for Passah (fig. 9).³⁰ The leg wound is significant since it represents moral reprobation.³¹ In the right-hand corner one can see gallows on a hill on the horizon; as in many other paintings by Bosch, it symbolises this rogue's horizon, his ultimate fate.

The meaning of these depictions becomes clearer when one considers Bruegel's famous engraving, "Elck".³² Here we see an overseas merchant and former cobbler — note the shoemaker's last — marching across the globe rummaging through boxes and bales of goods with a lantern in his hand in search of treasure. And yet, for all his rummaging he never actually discovers the real treasure, self-knowledge. This, then, accounts for the saying in the picture of the fool seen in the background: "no one knows himself". The unsuccessful attempt to amass riches only serves the purpose of war, as suggest-

30. Bible History, with a commentary derived from the *Historia Scholastica* of Petrus Comestor, Flemish (Utrecht?), mid-xv century; British Library, MS Add. 38122, fol. 85v ("Passahmeal"); see Robert G. Calkins, "Parallels between incunabula and manuscripts from the circle of the Master of Catherine of Cleves", in: *Oud Holland* 92, 1978, pp. 137-160, here 140.

31. When Bosch used the wound as a sign of excellence to designate the Antichrist in the *Adoration of the Kings* (Madrid; Cin. 62), for example, it is meant ironically, since the Jewish Messiah only feigns humility; see Brand Philip, 1953 (note 2).

32. Catalogue *Pieter Breugel the Elder: Drawings and Prints*, Nadine M. Orenstein (ed.), New York, Metropolitan Museum of Art, Rotterdam, Boymans-van Beuningen Museum (New Haven, London, 2001), p. 167, and drawing p. 166.

ed by the scene in the background. In the *Pedlar*, too, Bosch again wanted to show something Jewish. What is meant by “something Jewish” is the haggling, usurious soul, which humanists and early reformers never tired of criticising. They even complained that the Christians would soon be even worse than the Jews. Nowadays, remarks Sebastian Brant, some Christians are strolling around even more Jewish than the Jews themselves; since Everyman wants to profit from the begetting of money.³³ Engaging in shameful usury was referred to in German as *mit dem Judenspieß rennen* (“playing the Jew’s game”).³⁴ With the *Pedlar*, the Christian could look in a mirror — and see some ugly “Jewish” traits reflected in himself.

In the *Haywain* triptych (fig. 10), which constitutes the parallel to the *New Triptych*, we find all the world chasing after useless riches in the shape of a hay-wagon — which is being driven to hell by animal desire. The hay-wagon is not simply an inversion of the triumphal march, not only a variation of “the worship of the golden calf”, but it also corresponds to the astronomical growth of usury (“hay” and “yield” have the same connotation in Latin, Bargoens and Yiddish).³⁵ German broadsheets of the period, for exam-

33. See Brant, *Narrenschiff*, chap. 93, l. 25: “Mit juden spieß die [krysten juden] selber rennen”; *Piers Plowman*. “Jews, who are truly our teachers —shame on us all!” (p. 107; Passus IX, Z. 90— see William Langland, *Piers the Ploughman*, hrg. v. J. F. Goodridge, Harmondsworth, 1978, where it relates to the “miser cordia”), s. a. Lipton: “The regularity with which Jews are associated with money and greed in the images of the manuscripts [*Bibles moralisées*] serves to essentialize the Jewish (for which read: un-Christian) nature of such activities.” Sara Lipton, *Images of Intolerance: the Representation of Jews and Judaism in the ‘Bible moralisée’*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999, 45; Jacques Le Goff, *Your Money or Your Life: Economy and Religion in the Middle Ages*. New York, 1988 (French, 1986).

34. The perforated men in Bosch’s pictures (as in the right-hand wing of the the *Haywain*) may have the association of the “Judenspieß”; see also Brant, “Narrenschiff”, chap. 76, 11 and chap. 93, 25; editio princeps: *Das Narrenschiff*, Basel: Johann Bergmann 1. Feb. 1494 lat. translation by Jacob Locher: *Stultifera navis*, Basel: Johann Bergmann 1. März 1497; nederl.: *Der Zotten ende der Narrenscip*, Paris, 1500; s. Klaus Manger, *Das ‘Narrenschiff’: Entstehung, Wirkung und Deutung*. Darmstadt, 1983; *Das Narrenschiff*, transl. H. J. Junghans, hrg. v. Hans Joachim Mähl. Stuttgart: Reclam, 1980; engl. edition “The Ship of Fools”. New York: Dover, 1962 (first 1944), translated by Edwin H. Zeydel.

35. Latin: “fenum” (hay)/ “fenus” (interest); Bargoens: “lood” (lead, but also hay and money), see Enno Endt, *Bargoens Woordenboek*. Amsterdam, 1972, p. 91; Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal. Den Haag, 1924, vol. 8,2, col. 2712; Yiddish: “matbea” (coin, money) / “matben” (chaff, hay), see Siegmund Andreas Wolf, *Deutsche Gaunersprache: Wörterbuch des Rotwelschen*. Hamburg, Buske, 1985, p. 136.



10. Bosch, *Haywain*, open wings, Madrid, Prado.

ple, presented a polemically-charged bill, showing how “Jewish” interest grows infinitely and ultimately assumes threatening proportions.³⁶ Once again we come into contact here with the Jewish syndrome, with which the strangulating grip of usury and money-spinning ventures were associated. According to Thomas Aquinas (and Aristotle), money is incapable of multiplying money: “Nummus non parit nummos”, which, according to Saint Augustine, would also be contrary to “nature”.³⁷

This explains why in the foreground of the *Haywain* triptych we see social groups notorious for their supposed dishonesty in handling money:

36. Winfried Frey, “‘Zehn tunne Goldes’: zum Bild des ‘Wucherjuden’”, in *Amsterdamer Beiträge zur älteren Germanistik*, 1995, pp. 43-44, 177-194; Petra Schöner, *Judenbilder im deutschen Einblattdruck der Renaissance. Ein Beitrag zur Imagologie*. Baden-Baden: Koerner, 2002 (Saecula spiritalia, 42), pp. 209-226 (see also the review of F. Eisermann, in *Aschkenas* 13, 2003, pp. 270-275).

37. M. Honecker article “Geld”, in: *Theologische Realenzyklopädie*, ed. G. Krause et al., vol. 12, 1984, pp. 276-298; Walter Friedberger, *Der Reichtumserwerb im Urteil des Hl. Thomas von Aquin und der Theologen im Zeitalter des Frühkapitalismus*. Passau: Verl. Passavia, 1967.

gypsies, charlatans, nuns and the clergy.³⁸ Following from this, we are given a depiction of the whole of society: everyone, from the beggar up to the king and the pope, is chasing the hay; in other words, they have fallen victim to cupidity. In the blind beggar in the foreground one can see an encrypted Jew. His hat and his blindness (often referred to in a figurative sense) are typical attributes of the Jew.³⁹ One of the sources of the *Haywain* was the Bible moralisée's illustration of Isaiah 5.18, with the wagon of sin, and the prophet Isaiah warning. In the picture he is standing on the left side, with a turban on his head, the shoulder half naked, pointing to the wagon, as if saying "all flesh is grass" (Is. 40,6), and "honored men and the multitude" will vanish "as dry grass sinks down in the flame" (Is. 5.24).⁴⁰

The pedlar of the *Haywain* triptych (fig. 11)⁴¹ manifests fewer reprobate attributes than his counterpart in Rotterdam. There is something neutral about him, but not about his surroundings. The scenes of robbing, dancing (a negative activity for the moralists of the time), the skull to his left and the gallows above his head show his lot. This merchant, an "elckerlijk" (an Everyman), introduces the "enrich yourself" scenario. The centre shows a whole society in which: everyone has been corrupted by money. Compared with the display of debauchery in the *Luxuria* panel, the left wing of the *Haywain* has also been generalised; Eve's fall from grace is seen as the catalyst of sin on Earth. At the same time, in *Death of the Miser*, the individual's death is extended to the depiction of a hell scene that engulfs the whole town.

What was shown in the central panel of the *New Triptych*? A second *Haywain* or something different? The *Marriage at Cana* (fig. 12)⁴² is a possi-

38. Peter A. Dykema and H. A. Obermann (eds.), *Anticlericalism in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe*. Leiden: Brill, 1993 (Studies in Medieval and Reformation Thought, 51).

39. For the hat: Diane Wolfthal, "The Wandering Jew: Some Medieval and Renaissance Depictions", in *Tribute to Lotte Brand Philip: Art Historian and Detective*, ed. William W. Clark. New York: Abaris Books, 1985, p. 224, fn. 29; for the general topic: Kahren J. Hellerstedt, "The Blind Man and his Guide in Netherlandish Painting", *Simiolus* 13, 1983, pp. 163-181.

40. See my article "Das neue Triptychon von Hieronymus Bosch als Allegorie über den 'un-nützen Reichtum'" in *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* (forthcoming).

41. The *Pedlar*. Madrid, Prado, oil/wood, 147×112 cm; Garrido, 2001 (see note 6), pp. 123ff.; color pl. on p. 122.

42. Rotterdam, Boijmans-van Beuningen Museum (Cin. 3); variants: 1) 's-Heerenberg, Huis Bergh, 93×74 cm (Catalogue *Buscoducis* 1990 [see note 4], vol. 2, No. 149, p. 247 with color pl.); the picture was purchased for Heerenberg in London in 1929; 2) Antwerpen, Terninck



11. Bosch, *Haywain*, closed wing, the *Pedlar*, Madrid, Prado.

ble candidate since it is the only existing panel with appropriate measurements, and it has the same topic: the “transubstantiation”, here changing water into wine (John 2.1-11) and there hay into “money” (at least for the egaged, “blind” people). The painting has been passed down to us only in copies, but there exists an interesting drawing by the master himself with two

Stichting, 3) Paris, formerly collection Koehler (Catalogue Rotterdam, 1995 [see note 8], No. 20, pp. 109-112); Gerd Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch: die Rezeption seiner Kunst im frühen 16. Jahrhundert*. Berlin: Gebr. Mann, 1980, No. 19a.; see author “A newly established triptych of Hieronymus Bosch”, *Verougstraete*, 2003 (see note 7), p. 33-38.



12. Bosch follower, *Marriage at Cana*, Rotterdam, Boymans-van Beuningen Museum.

more figures. Striking are also the characteristics of “Jewishness” in Bosch’s painting. We see foreign guests, amongst whom are a man who reminds us of Judas with his hand on his back, and an oriental-looking, possibly Jewish beauty. One guest stands out: to the left of Christ, a man with an odd appearance sits at the corner of the table, with an owl hiding above his head. There is a certain similarity between this figure here, the figure in *Crowning with Thorns* (Madrid) and the patron in *Christ among the Doctors* (fig. 13), compare the long nose and the squeezed lips. Could these be portraits?



13. Heads from Bosch's pictures: *Crowning with Thorns*, Escorial; *Marriage at Cana*, Rotterdam, *Christ among the Doctors*, Opoëno.

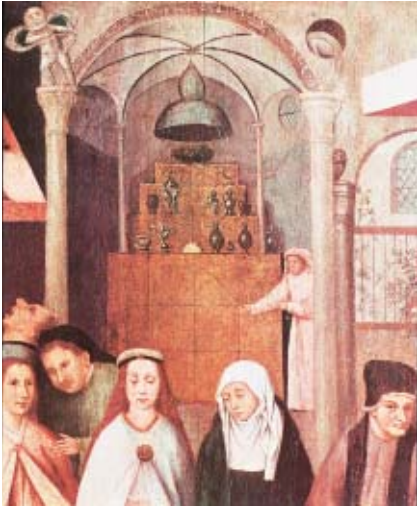
A boar's head and a swan⁴³ are being carried into the room; on them is attached a half-moon crescent sign. This half-moon sign appears also on the sleeves of the musicians. It may be interpreted — as in the *Luxuria* wing — as an emblem of the heretical world and of Judaism.⁴⁴

The chalice in the centre is a focal point of attention. Of course it is more than the Kiddush from the Jewish rite. Oddly enough a child dressed as a prince, seated on a royal throne, addresses the couple, and Christ's blessings may be directed as much to this chalice as to the water vessels. Maximilian I presented a cup adorned with a serpent tongue to Tielman van den Broeck in thanks for caring for his illegitimate daughter, Barbara Disquis.⁴⁵ As it stands, the scene already harbors Eucharistic significance.

43. Figure in Marijnissen, 1987 (see note 6), p. 430; a swan is in the sign outside the inn in the *Pedlar* (Rotterdam); the location of the *Confraternity of Our Lady* is the "Zwanenbroederhuis" still in Hertogenbosch, Hinthamerstraat (Catalogue *Buscoducis* 1990 — see note 4 —, vol. 1, No. 127, pp. 210f.); the emblem of the brotherhood is a swan over lilies. Bosch joined the brotherhood in 1486 (Dijck, 2001 — see note 4 —, p. 173).

44. See above note 27; see also Reuterswård: "das Gemälde ['Hochzeit zu Kana'] (spiegelt) die Denkweise eines Kreises, in dem ein jüngst zum Christentum bekehrter Jude dominierte" (Patrik Reuterswård, *Hieronymus Bosch*. Stockholm, 1970, S. 116).

45. Maximilian's the illegitimate daughter, Barbara Disquis/Disschot (ca. 1482-ca. 1566), half-sister of Philip the Handsome, entered the St. Gertruiden cloister in Hertogenbosch in 1497 at the age of fifteen (Godfried Ch. M. van Dijck, *De Bossche optimaten: geschiedenis van de Illustere Lieve Vrouwebroederschap te 's-Hertogenbosch, 1318-1973*. Tilburg: Stichting Zuiderlijk Historisch Contact, 1973, p. 219f.). Tielman van den Broeck was a member of "Onse Lieve Frouwe Brouderschap" (*Confraternity of Our Lady*). The cup is still on place with



14. Bosch follower, *Marriage at Cana*, detail, display cabinet, Rotterdam.

The incense-enveloped ceremony is continued into the display cabinet (fig. 14) with a miniature crucifix overhead. This scene evokes almost a Jewish tabernacle with its objects on display.⁴⁶ In the centre one can make out a tree.⁴⁷ One can also identify a receptacle with small feet, which the Louvre drawing suggests is a toad bearing a half-moon (fig. 15).⁴⁸ Toads belong to Bosch's repertoire of symbols, as do owls: they are, without excep-

the Broederschap in Hertogenbosch (C. J. H. M. Tax and A. C. M. Koolen, "Opt Decksel een Aderstonghe geset", *Antiek*, April, 1996, pp. 410-416).

46. Joseph Gutmann, *No Graven Images: Studies in Art and the Hebrew Bible*. New York: Ktav Publ. House, 1971; same, *The Jewish Sanctuary*. Leiden: Brill, 1983 (Iconography of religions, 23; 1); Thérèse Metzger and Mendel Metzger, *Jüdisches Leben im Mittelalter: nach illuminierten hebräischen Handschriften vom 13.-16. Jahrhundert*. Würzburg: Edition Popp, 1983, pp. 65ff. (also English edition).

47. Decorations with little trees at banquets were not uncommon; see "Catalogue Maria van Hongarije: konigin tussen keizers en kunstenaars, 1505-1558" (Utrecht: Museum Catharijneconvent), ed. B. van den Boogert a.o. Zwolle, 1993, p. 312f. (= "Interieur van het kastel te Binche", 1549). Fraenger saw a sponge ("Schwamm") (Fraenger 1975 —see note 1—, p. 193), Combe a sea urchin (J. Combe, *Jheronimus Bosch*. Paris: Tisné, 1946, p. 57, fn. 26).

48. *Marriage at Cana*. Drawing, Paris (*Catalogue Rotterdam 2001*, [see note 12], p. 161); Fraenger did not know this drawing, published only in 1960 (see K. G. Boon, "Hieronymus Bosch", *Burlington Magazine* 102, 1960, p. 458); but he saw already the vase as frog in the painting of Rotterdam (Fraenger, 1975 [see note 1], p. 189).



15. Bosch, ascribed to, *Marriage at Cana*, drawing, Paris, Louvre.

tion, embodiments of everything negative that people associated with heresy and especially Judaism. From antiquity onwards, satirists have left us with the specific image of frogs (or toads) standing for plague and punishment. Bosch alludes to their uncanny power whenever he depicts toads,⁴⁹ as in the sheath of the *Jewish Messiah* of the Madrid *Adoration of the Kings*, and the toads which are being squashed, pricked or gobbled up in this picture.⁵⁰ In the underdrawing of this picture, the *Jewish Messiah* even has a frog holding an egg on his head.⁵¹

The figure adorning the left-hand column in the *Marriage at Cana* could represent Cupid.⁵² It is shown wearing a pot as a helmet — a satirical touch

49. Toads are found in several of Bosch's pictures, see Renilde Vervoort, "The Pestilent Toad: the significance of the toad in the works of Bosch", in: *Hieronymus Bosch: New Insights into his Life and Work*, Jos Koldeweij *et al.* (eds.), Rotterdam: Museum Boymans-van Beuningen, 2001, pp. 145-151.

50. The *Adoration of the Kings*, Madrid (Cin. 62), Garrido, 2001 (see note 6), p. 96f.

51. Garrido, 2001 (see note 6), p. 110, fig. 28.

52. Boczkowska sees in the figure on the column in the Rotterdam picture a hunter influenced by the moon (Anna Boczkowska, "Lunar and Christian Symbolism of the Painting *The Marriage at Cana* by Hieronymus Bosch", *Studia muzealne* 11, 1975, pp. 7-23).

reminiscent of depictions of Purim festivals. The same motif appears in the right wing of *Garden of Earthly Delight* (see fig. 7). The two tiny figures depicted on the unusually lavish chair might be a prophet and an apostle, perhaps Saint Peter and Moses, who represent the two testaments,⁵³ and could thus show typological thinking.

Bosch could have painted *Marriage at Cana* when the wedding of Philip the Handsome and Joanna of Spain took place at Lier on 20th October 1496.⁵⁴ The guests seated around the table in *Marriage at Cana* refer not simply to that distant event, but also to Bosch's own era. The theme was used several times to show Christ as a guest at the table of the ruling classes, as the one dated 1495/1497, now in Washington (fig. 16).⁵⁵ Here we see a sacrament-filled depiction of the wedding of the 17-year-old Margaret of Austria — the future ruler of the Netherlands — and Juan of Spain. The man to the right of Jesus, who casts a sidelong glance at the unfolding miracle, holds a bowl in his left hand. The figures to his rear appear to be commenting on the proceedings. We can observe the statue of Moses in the background. This painting may convey the idea of the mistrust with which the Jews viewed Christ's miracles. At almost the same time that Spain expelled or forcibly converted all its Jews (1492), a Jew, called Jacob van Almaengien, was baptised in Hertogenbosch in the church of St. John on 15th December 1496 with Prince Philip as witness and name-giver.⁵⁶ Prince Philip purchased

53. Peter Bloch, "Nachwirkungen des Alten Bundes in der christlichen Kunst", in *Monumenta Judaica*, Handbuch, ed. K. Schilling. Cologne: Melzer, 1964, pp. 735-781, here 750f. with fig. 58.

54. Henri d'Hulst, *Le mariage de Philippe le Beau avec Jeanne de Castille à Lierre, le 20 Octobre 1496*. Antwerp: Impr. Generales Lloyd anversois, 1958.

55. Master of the Catholic Kings, the *Marriage at Cana*, c. 1495/1497, Washington (Jonathan Brown and Richard G. Mann, *Spanish Paintings of the Fifteenth through Nineteenth Centuries*. National Gallery of Art, Washington. Cambridge a.p. 1990, pp. 92-101, color pl. on p. 95) —compare: Master of Portraits of Princes (ascribed to), "The Marriage at Cana", c. 1493, Melbourne, National Gallery of Victoria— with portraits of the Burgundian-Habsburgian kings, in the foreground Adolph and Philip of Cleves and probably Engelbert II of Nassau, see Ursula Hoff, *European Paintings before 1800 in the National Gallery of Victoria*. Melbourne: The National Gallery of Victoria, 1995, pp. 111-112, color pl. on p. 111.

56. "nus Judeus ex Almania" (Rechterlijke Archieven van 's-Hertogenbosch, No. 1265, fol. 403; see *Anciens pays et assemblées d'états / Standen en landen*, 19, 1960, p. 53), the name "Jacob van Almaengien" is used in a chronicle of 16th century, see Peter-Jan van der Heijden and Henny Molhuysen, *Kroniek van 's-Hertogenbosch acht eeuwen stadsgeschiedenis*. 's-Hertogenbosch,



16. Master of the Catholic Kings, *Marriage at Cana*, Washington, National Gallery of Art.

some pictures by Bosch⁵⁷ and he is also depicted in the *Haywain*. Almaengien was also a member of the *Confraternity of Our Lady*.⁵⁸ Had this any effect on Bosch's work? At this time, some converted Jews in the Habsburg realm wielded considerable influence in public life (Mithridates, Victor von Carben, who was also a member of the *Confraternity of Our Lady*, Pfefferkorn, Ricius, Meir de Balmes and others).⁵⁹

1981, p. 38; see also Wilhelm Fraenger, *Die Hochzeit zu Kana: ein Dokument semitischer Gnosis bei Hieronymus Bosch*. Berlin, 1950 (also in: Fraenger, 1975 [see note 1], pp. 145-195).

57. In 1504 a "Last Judgment" (Dijck, 2001 [see note 4], p. 91) and very likely in 1505 a "L'histoire de Sainte-Antoine", see Chretien Dehaisnes, ed., *Inventaire sommaire des Archives Départementales antérieures à 1780*. Nord, Archives Civiles, série B (Chambre des comptes de Lille), vol. 4, No. 1842-2338, Lille, 1881, p. 311, no artist name given, but the exorbitant price of "312 livres" and the predilection of the Habsburg family for Bosch makes this artist very likely.

58. "Meester Philips van St. Jan, wylen een jude" ("Rekeningen Onze Lieve Vrouwen Broderschap", 1496/97, fol. 63; 's-Hertogenbosch, Stadarchief).

59. Mithridates became bishop (E. Meuthen, *Die alte Universität*. Cologne, 1988, p. 206).

The wedding scene is given a legendary appearance in the famous “St. Anthony” in Lisbon. In the centre the mysterious royal couple is served by a black servant, who proffers a toad-like creature holding an egg. This well-known symbol could refer to money procuring and thus to Jews (fig. 17).⁶⁰ Jews were thought of varlets de chambre (Kammerknechte) of the ruling princes,⁶¹ and were often asked to lend money to the rulers. The link to the toad may be surmised from the saying “qui fuit rana, nunc est rex”.⁶² In the Bible moralisée Jews are shown offering a toad instead of a soul to God.⁶³ The picture also shows a man seated in the foreground beside a wall, perhaps a Jew as suggested by his hat. As the embodiment of observation and reflection, this type of figure is a leading motif throughout Bosch’s oeuvre; the one who expects, as witness for Christ coming into this world of evil.

As later echoed by the *Haywain*, the *New Triptych* — with or without *Marriage at Cana* — relates the story of Everyman in search of gain in a world brought to the brink of ruin as a result of the two prevailing forces of Luxuria and Avaritia. This Everyman is to be seen in the pedlar, signal to the Christians not to become as selfish and wordly — minded like this despised outcast. He is no Jew since he repents, as conveyed by his looking backward. Repenting sinners will receive the mercy of God, as long they are baptized.

The unusual iconography can be explained by the wishes of the person who commissioned the work. Bosch’s drawing in the Louvre includes a pa-

Pfefferkorn proposed that Maximilian I confiscate the Talmud (Ellen Martin, *Die deutschen Schriften des Johannes Pfefferkorn: zum Problem des Judenhasses und der Intoleranz in der Zeit der Vorreformation*. Göttingen: Kümmerle, 1994). Victor von Carben gave influential — and for Jews devastating — sermons, cf. Cohen, 1984, see note 3, pp. 1-11; Paulus Ricius was physician to Maximilian I from 1514 on (*Encyclopaedia Judaica* [see note 10] 14, 1971, pp. 163f.). Abraham ben Meir de Balmes, the physician to Cardinal Grimani, had Dutch connections, see Bernard Aikema, “Hieronymus Bosch and Italy?”, *New Insights*, 2001 (see note 49), pp. 25-31, here 28f.

60. “St. Antonius”, central panel, detail, Lisbon (Cin. 43).

61. Cf. J. Friedrich Battenberg, “Des Kaisers Kammerknechte”, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 1987, vol. 245, pp. 545-599.

62. “[He] who was once a worm [frog] is now a king”, *Satyricon*, chap. 77 (Petronius, Michael Heseltine (ed.). London: Heinemann, 1951, The Loeb Classical Library, 15, p. 154f.); Petronius’s work was published in Milan, 1482 and Leiden, 1499.

63. See also “Bible moralisée”, Wien, önb, Cod. 2554, fol. 2 vb; see Lipton, 1999 (see note 33), fig. 28, S. 44. Bibles moralisées were copied by the Vrelant work shop in Bruges around 1470.



17. Bosch, *The Temptation of Saint Antonius*, detail, Lisbon.

tron together with a patron saint.⁶⁴ The identification of this patron may yield a clue for the painting. That this individual might be given to high moral reflection should be evident. That it might be a converted Jew must remain hypothetical, since we possess too little knowledge of Jews — and far less of converted Jews who commissioned Christian art. But that Jacob van Almaengien's conversion in 1496 and his membership in the *Confraternity of Our Lady* might have alerted the thinking about usury and the blessings of heaven is possible. In any case, Bosch's depiction of evil reflects the religious conflicts of his own era: demarcating Christian culture in relation to that of Jews was a central preoccupation of the time as well as a central feature in Bosch's art. Bosch seems to have had only one theme, the threat to humanity posed by the senses. More often than not, that threat was embodied by commerce, and commerce, especially usury, was associated with Judaism. This sense of fascination and seduction is a part of the Christian world view. For Bosch, evil prevailed and his imaginative inventions may have been fueled by his taking issue with Jewish thinking as it was understood in his time. ❀

64. St. Willibrord or St. Martin (Boon, 1960 [see note 48], pp. 457-458).