

Page 107, cat.59
 Details from
The Garden of Earthly Delights, c. 1510
 Central panel
Humankind before the Flood
 (see ill. pp. 104-111)

Stedek Breuël
Panacea (Allegory of Spring), c. 1485
 Unseen on page
 103 x 104 cm / 76 7/8 x 107 1/8 in.
 Florence, Galéria degli Uffizi

Fall and before the Flood, the two-man – a giant descendant of the daughters of Cain – with beans for feet represents a kind of translator or *Idem Ad*. Instead of providing streams with shells, it induces them to sit separately. It thus also assumes the role of the man to which drowning men and women cling for safety, another aspect of Delight representation.

The secular musical instruments are also directly connected with the theme of humankind before the Flood. During that first age, according to Hartmann Schedel in his 1493 *Chronicle of the World*, the “desires of the eyes” were assuaged by the mixing and working of precious metals, the “desires of the ears” by the art of song and the invention of musical instruments such as the organ and the harp, and the desire of the flesh by clothing. The first forms of civilization and culture, that is to say, developed before the Flood.

In formal terms, all four segments of the *organi* are linked by the motif of the circle: the spherical body of the Earth on the exterior diameter, the convex disc with the ood in the center and the birds around it in the left inner wing; the round pond with female bathers and men riding around it in the central panel; and the circular basin of the one-man-but-in-the-right inner wing, upon which three couples are walking around the begonia in the middle. Depending on context, the clock can symbolize the perfection of the cosmos, or it may brook the sinners whose physical desires drive them to wander endlessly and meaninglessly in a circle, without ever reaching a destination.

The invention that Bosch brought to every last inch of his paintings is directly related to the process by which he and his workshop elaborated the details of the composition. While the main motifs and the basic structure of each panel were laid down at an early stage, many of the detail motifs in the central and *Hell* panels were only developed after the *Paradise* wing had taken shape, namely as contradictions, commentaries and parallels of the motifs invented for this last. Besides that it is not yet clear how far a pre-ordained, harmoniously planned overall design. Rather, he used the process of application to elaborate upon a theme in detail in a way that was so alluring and at times as labyrinthine as possible (Fischer 2009, pp. 175-176).

Several documentary sources (see entry on Cat. 11), starting with the journal entry by de Bouts of 1517, make it likely that the *Garden of Earthly Delights* was commissioned by a member of the important Netherlandish branch of the noble house of Nassau-Brabant. The two lords of Brabant in the years immediately around 1500 were Engelbert II (1490-1504) and his successor Henry III of Nassau. Since Engelbert's marriage to Catherine of Brabant in 1498 had produced no children, in 1495 he named his 16-year-old nephew Henry to the Low Countries from the Nassau ancestral estates. Henry continued his education in the Nassau palaces in Brussels and Mechelen and at the court of Philip the Handsome in Ghent. Between 1501 and 1504 Henry's links with the Ghent court were so close that he was invited to accompany Philip on his visit of 1501 to Spain, France and Germany and that of 1503, again 16 weeks. During the first of these extended trips Engelbert arranged for his eldest successor to marry Louise-Françoise de Savoie (before 1486-1511). The couple were betrothed in November 1502 and married in August 1503. At the beginning of December, a month after the company had returned to the Low Countries, Engelbert II organized ten days of festivities at the Nassau palace in Brussels, thereby evidently also celebrating



the marriage. These were attended, and greatly enjoyed, by the bride and her father-in-law (Gachard 1876, pp. 158-161). On 6 January 1504 the master and chancellor of Brabant organized a ceremony to mark the arrival of Philip the Handsome. Whether Bosch had already completed the *Garden of Earthly Delights* by August 1503 and whether the wedding guests were therefore able to see the work, commented only the previous year to mark Henry's engagement, we do not know.

Engelbert II died on 10 May 1504. He had served the Habsburg Maximilian and Philip in a military capacity and had held other important political offices in the Low Countries. From his Brussels palace, of which only the chapel survives today, he had acted as governor of the Netherlands during Philip's absence. Henry inherited the Nassau properties in the Low Countries from his uncle and also followed, both militarily and politically, in his footsteps. On 30 July 1504 the 20-year-old took up residence in the Nassau palace in Brabant, traditionally the lord's main seat, at the same time commissioning renovations to the palace in Brussels. Bosch only truly became Henry's main residence from 1515, when he celebrated his second marriage there and proceeded to organize a major programme of new building.

Whether the children Engelbert II – who suffered from the very painful and protracted venereal disease of syphilis and very probably died of it in 1514 – inherited that the *Garden of Earthly Delights* were on a wedding of Henry is a question that must remain unanswered. As was the custom among the aristocracy in the late Middle Ages, the education of the young Henry lay in the hands of one teacher and one clerical tutor. Given as to the nature of this education can be found in the literature of Burgundian and Netherlandish princes and nobles and in the books that have come down to us from the Nassau collection (see Fischer 2009, p. 75). These last include, in particular, historiographical works, compilations of excerpts, theological and didactic texts on morality, encyclopaedias and other religious literature, but also works treating the same ground as the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, such as the *Revue de Brabant* chronicles of the world, works of biblical exegesis and *City of God* by St Augustine (154-190). The teachers of princes considered a cultivated mind and virtuous character more important than military valour. Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, *Law Judge* (Cat. 10) and *Impatient of St Andrew* (Cat. 10) were thus very suitable for the need instruction of Henry III and Philip the Handsome: they had a spiritual dimension, but they sought to satisfy the artistic expectations of a courtly audience.

Bosch and Henry were evidently lovers of art who preferred, where possible, to employ artists from the region. They maintained very close links with the circle of Rudolf, including a Habsburgophile. It is possible that they made contact with Hansmann Bosch through the Brotherhood of Our Blessed Lady, as it suggested by a member of considerations. In 1505/6, for example, through his second brother von Luttenbach, Henry III made a present of a house to the Brotherhood, perhaps to mark his own visit to 3 Habsburgophile on 22 December 1504. As the half of Brabant from 1504 onwards, Henry was Philip's representative at Duke of Habsburg. The actual function of half was performed by Hendrik Maschard, whose coat of arms was made for the chapel of the Brotherhood by Bosch's workshop; the patronym was paid for the job in 1510/4. Henry, like his first wife, was an external member of the Brotherhood. In the period before the external members included fifteen Habsburg courts holding office such as councillor, steward, doctor and





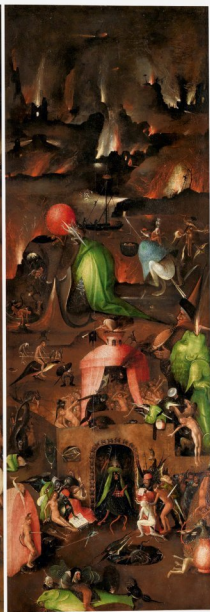
The Dove Man, c. 1510-1515
Pen and brown ink on paper, 277 x 100 mm
approx., 10 7/8 x 4 1/8 in.
Vienna, Austria
At the end of the 16th century, the name
BIRUCCEL was added to pen and ink
by an unknown hand.

Dread Storm
The Garden of Earthly Delights, c. 1510
Eight loose wings
Oil
(see ill. pp. 147-148)



Detail from
The Garden of Earthly Delights, c. 1490
Right inner wing
Hull
(see ill. pp. 114/115)





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Detail from

Paradise and Hell, c. 1500-1510

Insects of the insect left wing

Earthly Paradise

(see ill. pp. 167/168)

Detail from

Paradise and Hell, c. 1500-1510

Insects of the insect left wing

Heavenly Paradise

(see ill. pp. 167/168)

Detail from

Earthly Paradise, c. 1470

Oil on panel, 61 x 63 cm (24 1/8 x 24 7/8 in.)

Lille, Palais des Beaux-Arts

The quality of Bosch's art — at also of his patrons — reached a new height with his three large triptychs the *Temptation of St Anthony* (Cat. 10), the *Garden of Earthly Delights* (Cat. 11) and the *Last Judgment* (Cat. 12). Yet it is these very paintings that were subsequently to contribute to the denotation of his work to the much narrower category of the grotesque. This could had already begun in the 16th century, as modeled, for example, by the previously cited comments of de Beatis, and it was displaced by both Guicciardini and Sigismondi. Even if diolletino provided Bosch with a chance to make his art more varied, more lively and more freely inventive, he chose this medium not on a more personal whim, but in direct response to the subject-matter of the commission in hand and to his knowledge of the tastes of his patron, in particular those from the clerical sphere, who were familiar with diolletino from books of hours. Not until the middle decades of the 16th century would there be a market for the smaller-format diolletino produced in such numbers by Bosch's followers.

The reason for Bosch's success lay, instead, in a whole range of innovations that he introduced into painting. His *Adoration of the Magi* (Cat. 4), which does not fall within the sphere of diolletino, provided an influential model for many workshops and early followers. Among the paintings that issued from Bosch's own workshop during the final decade of his career, sotto (Cat. 13, Cat. 14, Cat. 21, Cat. 22) continue in the vein established in particular by the *Temptation of St Anthony* (Cat. 10), while in others Bosch explored new directions (Cat. 19-20). One factor was of great significance for Bosch during these last years of his life: in a paradigm shift to which many of his fellow artists likewise had to adjust, the interests of potential customers were turning increasingly towards the Renaissance and the Humanist flourishing in Italy. Yet this also presented Bosch with an opportunity, as it opened up a new market for his paintings.

An illuminating insight into the reception of Bosch's art in Italy during the last decade of his life is offered by the three works in Venice (Cat. 2, Cat. 14 and Cat. 16). We shall discuss them here as a group, since they have all come down to us from the same collection and though the two triptychs were conceived for a religious context and not for ostentatious display in a private art collection. This nevertheless became their destiny, as is shown by a note made by the physician Marcantonio Michiel (1474-1552) in 1530, and by a 1528 inventory of the paintings belonging to Marino Grimani (1488/89-1546). The latter was the nephew and heir of Cardinal Domenico Grimani (1450-1510), from whose collection the three Bosch paintings can confidently be said to derive. The Grimani were one of the most important noble families in Venice. Domenico supported the idea of reform within the Catholic Church, maintained associates with Jewish intellectuals, was open to developments in the North, and supported Pope Hadrian VI (1499-1523), who came from the Low Countries (Lazzarini-Vidali 2003).

The person who imported or looked after the sale of Bosch's paintings may have been David van Bomberghen (also called David Bomberg, c. 1470-1515), originally from Antwerp and active in Venice from 1505 onwards as a publisher of Hebrews and a dealer in luxury goods, who also had links with Cardinal Grimani (Alkana 2002, Lazzarini Vidali 2003). Another possible candidate, unconsidered until 2006, is the 3-Herzogshof's merchant Ludovico Bey, who was related to the Bohemian king through his nephew, Jan Grossens, and who owned a house on the market square very close to that

owned by Bosch. Bey's home was so grand and well appointed that Maria Bianca Siera (1473-1505), wife of Empire Maximilian I, lodged there during an imperial visit in 1502. In 1505, 1510 and 1515 Bey made lucrative pilgrimages to Jerusalem and Mount Sinai, whence he brought back relics of St Catherine (Van Diek 2002, p. 141). Such pilgrimages to the Holy Land, which were undertaken by nobles and patricians and proved very costly, departed from Venice in spring and autumn. Bey, who is known to have combined his pilgrimages with business transactions, might have negotiated or organized a delivery of Bosch's works while waiting to set sail.

In 1510, when Michiel made his entry on the art works he saw at the (now publicly accessible) Palazzo Grimani near the church of Santa Maria Formosa, the building housed a collection of manuscripts and paintings from the Low Countries. The manuscripts included the *Bravotium Grimani*, acquired in 1510 and among the paintings were works by Hans Memling, Jacobus Perini (c. 1480-1512) and Henri van de Bie (c. 1500-1510/61). After Domenico Grimani's death most of the works in the collection were put into storage in crates. These were responded only in 1616, after which the *Triptych of the Crucified Female Martyr* (Cat. 14) hung elsewhere in Venice in a room at the Doge's Palace.

The *Heavenly Saint Triptych* (with St Jerome, Anthony and Giles pp. 167/168, Cat. 12) was produced around 1510, and is probably even before the *Last Judgment*. Who commissioned it, and for what purpose, are unknown. The originally added top of the triptych was cut down at some point and the backs placed off and misfolded with stains, with the consequence loss of any information that might have been gleaned from painted scenes of saints or even portraits of donors. The pictorial concept governing the interior, with each panel devoted to one saint, suggests that we may be looking at three patron saints, here venerated in a triptych perhaps intended to stand on an altar. The central panel — and the main one by date of both its central position and its surface area (which is twice that of the wings) — shows the crucifixion of St Jerome (Cat. 12.2) in a sweeping hillside landscape, kneeling in front of a crucifix in a stela serving as a chapel. His long red cloak covers all but his bare feet, hands and chest. In his right hand, which is raised in front of his chest, St Jerome holds a rock with which to chastise himself. His left hand reaches out towards a parchment scroll prepared in a small altar in a miniature space. His low wall supports three monochrome enamel (p. 168). This main scene is based on a passage in one of St Jerome's letters to Eustochium (*Ad Eustochium de castitate virginum*) 32.7: "Now, although in my fear of hell I had consigned myself to this prison, where I had no companions but scorpions and wild beasts, I often found myself amid hermits and girls. My face was pale and my frame filled with fasting; yet my mind was battling with death, and the first of sin let kept bubbling up before me when my flesh was as good as dead." An early edition of the letter was printed in Haast in 1495. In the three small fields, which serve as pictures-within-a-picture, Bosch illustrates Jerome's inner conflict, in which the saint must choose between duty (constructive) and lust (destructive), between humility (asceticism) and pride (superb). These virtues and vices are exemplified by the two infants reared on either side of the choir ape. The relief on the right, aware of the viewer, shows the positive exemplum of the Old Testament figure of Jabbal, who cut off the head of his children, commander of the Babylonian army besieging the Jewish city of Bethulia, after first using his chains to make him drunk (Dionysius, Book of

