

Lust and music in The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things at the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid

Lujuria y música en la Mesa de los Pecados Capitales del Museo Nacional del Prado en Madrid

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RESUMEN: Hay tres objetivos de investigación establecidos en este artículo. El primero es mostrar la conexión de la lujuria con la música en la *Mesa* del Prado, en el contexto de las representaciones de la personificación del amor impuro en las obras indiscutibles del Bosco (*Tríptico del camino de la vida*, *Tríptico del carro de heno*). El segundo objetivo de la investigación es un intento de indicar las principales fuentes de inspiración para el pintor. El artículo termina con la interpretación de los elementos musicales en la escena de la Lujuria. La presencia de elementos comunes (entre otros: pretendientes/amantes, un bufón, instrumentos musicales, vino y frutas) en las obras analizadas demuestra la existencia de un sistema artístico coherente en el taller del Bosco, basado en un fundamento mental-ideológico. De las fuentes iconográficas de inspiración para el pintor que hemos considerado las más importantes son las representaciones de *Jardín del Amor* y *Niños de Venus*. En la escena de la Lujuria, la figura que juega un papel principal es el bufón. No solo es interpretado como un músico sino también como la encarnación de un comportamiento socialmente indeseable.

Palabras Clave: Jheronimus Bosch; Pintura flamenca (siglos XV y XVI); Iconografía musical; Siete pecados capitales; Lujuria (*luxuria*).

ABSTRACT: There are three research goals set forth in this article. The first is to show the connection of lust with music in the Prado panel, within the context of representations of the personification of impure love in Bosch's undisputed works (the *Wayfarer Triptych*, the *Haywain Triptych*). The second research objective is an attempt to indicate the basic sources of inspiration for the painter. The article closes with the interpretation of musical elements in the scene of lust. The presence of common elements (among others: suitors/lovers, a jester, musical instruments, wine and fruit) in the analysed works proves the existence of a coherent artistic system in the Bosch workshop based on a mental-ideological foundation. Of the iconographic sources of inspiration for the painter that we have considered the most important are representations of *Garden of Love* and *Children of Venus*. In the scene of lust the figure that plays a leading role is the jester. He is not only interpreted as a musician but also as the embodiment of socially undesirable behavior.

Keywords: Jheronimus Bosch; Early Netherlandish painting; Musical iconography; Seven deadly sins; Lust (*luxuria*).

INTRODUCTION: ATTRIBUTION, DATING, AND RESEARCH GOALS

The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things (Fig. 1) that has been kept in the Museo Nacional del Prado (P002822) in Madrid since 1936 comes from the Real Monasterio de San Lorenzo de El Escorial, where it was stored between the years 1574-1936. King Felipe II (1527-1598) came into its possession under uncertain circumstances before the



▪ Fig. 1. Jheronimus Bosch (and workshop?). *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. Ca. 1510-1520. Oil on poplar panel. Museo Nacional del Prado (Madrid), P002822. © Museo del Prado.

year 1560¹. The inventory list from the year when the work was transferred to El Escorial states that the author of the painting representing the seven deadly sins is Jheronimus Bosch (ca. 1450-1516)². In the *Comentario de la pintura y pintores antiguos* by Felipe de Guevara (ca. 1500-1563), there is information that the painting was in the ruler's bedchamber and a suggestion that its author could have

1 See "Table of the Seven Deadly Sins", Museo Nacional del Prado, October 13, 2020, <https://www.museodelprado.es/en/the-collection/art-work/table-of-the-seven-deadly-sins/3fc0a84e-d77d-4217-b960-8a34b8873b70>

2 Archivo General de Palacio (Madrid), Entrega primera, c. 82, f. 211. 1574. In Fernando Checa Cremades, ed., *Los Libros de entregas de Felipe II a El Escorial* (Madrid: Patrimonio Nacional, 2013), 216.

been a pupil of Bosch³. It should be mentioned here that we do not know who the commissioner of the painting was, or what destination it was meant for. The function of the image is also elusive (visual aid to penitential meditation?).

Currently, the Prado panel is regarded by the members of the Bosch Research and Conservation Project (BRCP)⁴ as a work from Bosch's workshop or of his follower, and its date of origin is estimated to be around the years 1510-1520⁵. The BRCP scholars have their doubts raised from both the underdrawing and the painterly execution. However, despite the negative attribution, they do admit that the subject of the work appears Boschian⁶. Stefan Fischer⁷ and Pilar Silva Maroto do not question the authenticity of the Prado work and believe that the painting was created around 1505-1510. The scholar from the Museo Nacional del Prado claims that both the underdrawing and the paint layer of *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* are typical of works from the artist's final period⁸. Frédéric Elsig gives

3 Biblioteca del Museo Nacional del Prado, *Comentario de la pintura y pintores antiguos*, ms/8, f. 14v. Both the original and the English translation are available on the website *BoschDoc*, October 13, 2020, <http://boschdoc.huygens.knaw.nl>. On Bosch in 16th century Spanish sources see Elena Vázquez Dueñas, *El Bosco en las fuentes españolas* (Madrid: Doce Calles, 2016), 23-42, 131-159.

4 See Bosch Research and Conservation Project, October 13, 2020, http://boschproject.org/old_index.html#.

5 Matthijs IJssink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman. Catalogue Raisonné*, trans. by Ted Alkins (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2016), 468-475. Because the BRCP scholars did not obtain permission to have the painting undergo technical research, their arguments were largely based on the publication of Carmen Garrido and Roger Van Schoute, *Bosch at the Museo del Prado. Technical Study* (Madrid: Museo del Prado, 2001), 77-95.

6 IJssink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch...*, 472.

7 Stefan Fischer, *Hieronymus Bosch. The Complete Works*, trans. by Karen Williams (Cologne: Taschen, 2013), 188-191, 252-254.

8 Pilar Silva Maroto, ed., *El Bosco. La exposición del V*

it the same dating, highlighting the inventiveness and at the same time suggesting that the unevenness of the style must be due to the workshop assistants⁹. Larry Silver believes that the small amount of input from the painter's workshop should allow the painting to be considered an authentic Bosch production. In his opinion, the panel is a *summa* of almost all the major subjects of Bosch¹⁰.

The comments above, regarding the attribution and dating of *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*, are the basis of the first research goal in this article. It is meant to show the connection of lust with music in the Prado panel, within the context of representations of the personification of impure love in Bosch's undisputed works: the *Wayfarer Triptych* and the *Haywain Triptych* (here musicological profile analysis is proposed). The second research objective is an attempt to indicate the basic sources of artistic inspiration, among which the iconosphere of two themes - *Garden of Love* and *Children of Venus* is of fundamental importance. The article closes with the interpretation of musical elements in the scene of lust in the Madrid painting. The main considerations are preceded by short theological and musicological remarks conditioned by the content of the paintings and the issues discussed. Theological observations include inconspicuous references to wine, often combined in literature and art with various forms of immoral behavior. The lack of references to food is due to the fact that it is synonymous with another sin, namely gluttony. The presence of cherries and an orange in the Prado painting is very symbolic.

It is worth paying attention to one important point here. Although musical instruments appear frequently in Bosch's

⁹ Centenario (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2016), 302-312.

⁹ Frédéric Elsig, *Jheronimus Bosch. La question de la chronologie* (Genève: Librairie Droz, 2004), 92-100.

¹⁰ Larry Silver, *Hieronymus Bosch* (New York: Abbeville Press, 2006), 306.

paintings, and are often combined with love in art¹¹, not excluding erotic and sexual references, within art-historical literature, musical aspects are often marginalized or even overlooked¹².

LUST, WINE, AND MUSIC

The tradition of teaching about deadly sins, based on the Bible (1 John 5, 16), dates back to the patristic period. The foundations for its development were laid down by Evagrius Ponticus (ca. 345-399), author of the term "eight evil thoughts"¹³. In reducing the catalog to seven items, Gregory the Great (ca. 540-604) considered pride (*superbia*) as the source of all evil and he presented *septem principalia vitia* in the following order: *inanis gloriae* (vainglory), *invidia* (envy), *ira* (wrath), *tristitia* (sadness), *avaritia* (greed), *ventris ingluvies* (gluttony), *luxuria* (lust)¹⁴. A significant role in the dissemination of the list of deadly sins, in a different order than the one proposed by Gregory the Great, was played by the mnemonic acronym SALIGIA¹⁵. The

¹¹ See Yona Pinson, "Music", in *Encyclopedia of Comparative Iconography. Themes Depicted in Works of Art*, ed. by Helene E. Roberts (Chicago and London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 1998), vol. 2, 634-636.

¹² See two classic bibliographical references: Albert P. de Mirimonde, "Le symbolisme musical chez Jérôme Bosch", *Gazette des Beaux-Arts*, n° 77 (1971), 19-50; Reinhold Hammerstein, *Diabolus in musica. Studien zur Ikonographie der Musik im Mittelalter* (Bern and Munich: Francke, 1974), 94-119 and two newer ones: Ismael Fernández de la Cuesta, "La música, elemento natural de lo fantástico en la pintura de El Bosco", in *El Bosco y la tradición pictórica de lo fantástico*, ed. by Victoria Malet (Barcelona and Madrid: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2006), 127-166; Magda Polo Pujadas, "La música instrumental y la música vocal en Hieronymus Bosch", *Matèria. Revista internacional d'Art*, n° 10-11 (2016), 149-168.

¹³ *Praktikos* 6. See Leszek Misiarczyk, *Eight Logismoi in the Writings of Evagrius Ponticus* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2021), 185-378.

¹⁴ *Moralia in Job* 31,45.87. See Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, trans. by James Bliss (Oxford: J.H. Parker, 1844-1850), vol. 3, 87-91.

¹⁵ The acronym SALIGIA is made by: *superbia* (pride), *avaritia* (greed), *luxuria* (lust), *ira* (wrath), *gula* (gluttony), *invidia* (envy), *acedia* (sloth).

division made in *Moralia in Job* was, after some modifications, accepted in medieval theology and survived in the teaching of the Catholic Church to our modern times¹⁶. In line with the teaching in the Gospel according to Matthew: “For from the heart come evil thoughts, murder, adultery, unchastity, theft, false witness, blasphemy. These are what defile a person”¹⁷. The message of the whole pericope is easy to grasp, yet when it comes to impurity, it is the kind connected to the sexual domain¹⁸. Contrary to what we learn from the Gospel according to Matthew¹⁹, Saint Paul recognized the body as a source of impurity²⁰. In the moral teaching of the Church, certain sexual behaviors like adultery, concubinage, debauchery, prostitution, and relations *contra naturam*, are considered unclean, therefore, sinful and deserving condemnation²¹. In the scope of

medieval Christian ethics, various forms of behavior conducive to accidental sexual activity were also considered unclean. In the context of the issues addressed in this article, songs of physical love and dance should be broached first of all.

In the Old Testament we read: “You bring bread from the earth, and wine to gladden our hearts”²². Wine has the power to not only gladden people²³, but gods as well²⁴. In the same part of the Bible there is an important warning: “Consort not with winebibbers, nor with those who eat meat to excess”²⁵. The drink obtained from grapes appears in the context of sinful bodily activity in the story of Lot and his daughters²⁶. Saint Paul even spied a source of impurity in it: “And do not get drunk on wine, in which lies debauchery”²⁷. Criticisms on drunkenness are found in numerous literary works, including two quoted later in the article, whose authors are Sebastian Brant (1457-1521) and Erasmus of Rotterdam (1467-1536).

Although music in its instrumental form (as well as dance and certain modes of singing) has been criticized since patristic times²⁸, note that it is an important part of the Church’s liturgy. Generally, in the late Middle Ages, monophonic and polyphonic compositions *a cappella* dominated as part of the rituals, only important liturgical ceremonies (more numerous and credible sources come from the beginning of the 16th century) received a more sumptuous setting. In addition to the singers, there were musi-

16 See *The Catechism of the Catholic Church* (Life in Christ, Chapter 1, Article 8, nr 1866), October 15, 2020, <https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/P6D.HTM>. On the Church hamartiology, or the study of sins, and various issues related to it, see Carla Casagrande and Silvana Vecchio, *I sette vizi capitali. Storia dei peccati nel Medioevo* (Torino: Einaudi, 2000); Richard G. Newhauser and Susan J. Ridyard, eds., *Sin in Medieval and Early Modern Culture. The Tradition of the Seven Deadly Sins* (Woodbridge and Rochester NY: York Medieval Press, 2012).

17 (Matthew 15, 19-20). Biblical quotes in this article are from the *New American Bible*, October 20, 2020, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0839/_INDEX.HTM.

18 See also Exodus 20, 14.17; Matthew 5, 27-28; 15, 10-20; Mark 7, 14-23; 1 Corinthians 6, 9-10.12-20; Galatians 5, 19-21; Ephesians 5, 3-7; Colossians 3, 5-6; 1 Thessalonians 4, 3-7; Hebrews 13, 4.

19 See also Isaiah 29, 13; Jeremiah 5, 23; 17, 9; Ezekiel 36, 26.

20 Galatians 5, 19.

21 See James A. Brundage, *Law, Sex, and Christian Society in Medieval Europe* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 487-550; author’s discussion on the above pages covers the period 1348-1517. See also Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, eds., *Sexual Practices and the Medieval Church* (Buffalo NY: Prometheus Books, 1982); Vern L. Bullough and James A. Brundage, eds., *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality* (New York and Abingdon OX: Routledge, 1996).

22 Psalm 104, 14-15.

23 Ecclesiastes 9, 7; 10, 19.

24 Judges 9, 13.

25 Proverbs 23, 20; see also Sirach 31, 25-31.

26 Genesis 19, 30-38.

27 Ephesians 5, 18.

28 Among the staunchest critics from the patristic era, two writers should be mentioned: Saint John Chrysostom (ca. 350-407) and Saint Jerome (ca. 347-420). See James McKinnon, ed., *Music in Early Christian Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 78-90, 138-145.

cians playing trumpets, trombones, cornetts, and shawms²⁹.

LUST AND MUSIC IN BOSCH'S PAINTINGS

In *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things* the personifications of sins which constitute the all-encompassing reality are scenes depicting contemporary people from various social classes³⁰. Latin inscriptions allow for a clear identification of individual sins. The seven deadly sins are shown in a circle, in the center of which, in the pupil of the solar eye, appears the figure of Christ standing in a sarcophagus (*Vir dolorum*), and under him a suggestive inscription: *cave cave do[minus] videt* ("beware, beware, the Lord is watching"). Four last things: Death, Judgment, Heaven and Hell in the form of medallions, are found in the corners of the composition. The ideological layer of the picture is complemented by quotations from the Old Testament³¹. The central location of wrath (*ira*) occupying the largest space seems to indicate that it was this sin that the author of the iconographic program considered the most serious. Lust (*luxuria*) was portrayed between pride (*superbia*) and sloth (*acedia*)³².

29 See Leslie Korrnick, "Instrumental Music in the Early 16th-Century Mass. New Evidence", *Early Music*, n° 18 (1990), 359-370; Timothy J. McGee, "Vocal performance in the Renaissance", in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, ed. by Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 329-333.

30 This aspect of the Prado panel was studied by Laura D. Gelfand, "Class, Gender, and the Influence of penitential Literature in Bosch's Depictions of Sin", in *Jheronimus Bosch. His Sources. 2nd International Jheronimus Bosch Conference, May 22-25, 2007, 's-Hertogenbosch*, ed. by Jill Bradley et al. ('s-Hertogenbosch: Jheronimus Bosch Art Center, 2010), 159-173.

31 Deuteronomy 32, 28-29; 32, 20.

32 It can be assumed that in the Prado panel Bosch proposed his own order of deadly sins. The only commonality with Gregory the Great's catalog is *invidia*, located second (counting sins in a clockwise order). In turn, *luxuria* and *gula* coincide with the SALIGIA list in the third and fifth positions respectively (when counting sins counterclockwise).



▪ Fig. 2. Jheronimus Bosch (and workshop?). Lust, fragment of *The Seven Deadly Sins and the Four Last Things*. Ca. 1510-1520. Oil on poplar panel. Museo Nacional del Prado (Madrid), P002822. © Museo del Prado.

The sin of lust (Fig. 2) is embodied in two pairs originating from the higher social classes. The scenery in which they are presented brings to mind a courtly *rendezvous* in a garden³³. Two people sitting at the entrance to a tent drink wine from a common vessel, while a standing man and woman deep in the tent indulge in flirtatious conversation³⁴. A jester heads towards one of the couples or a table on all fours. The man behind him lifts up a large wooden spoon held with both hands with the intention of hitting the jester's buttocks. This motif probably deriving from the Dutch saying – *door de billen slaan* (to strike the buttocks) alludes to profligate, dissolute behavior³⁵. In the context of sinful

33 See Silver, *Hieronymus Bosch*, 317; Henry Luttikhuisen, "Through Boschian Eyes. An Interpretation of the Prado Tabletop of the Seven Deadly Sins", in *Sin in Medieval and Early Modern Culture. The Tradition of the Seven Deadly Sins*, ed. by Richard G. Newhauser and Susan J. Ridyard (Woodbridge and Rochester NY: York Medieval Press, Boydell Press, 2012), 269; Fischer, *Hieronymus Bosch...*, 188; Norbert Schneider, *Von Bosch zu Bruegel. Niederländische Malerei im Zeitalter von Humanismus und Reformation* (Berlin and Münster: LIT, 2015), 192-193.

34 One more promending pair is painted farther away on the right side of the tent.

35 See Hans van Gangelen and Sebastiaan Ostkamp, "Parallels Between Hieronymus Bosch's Imagery and Decorated Material Culture from the Period Between circa 1450 and 1525", in *Hieronymus Bosch. New Insights*



- Fig. 3. Jheronimus Bosch. *The Ship of Fools*. Ca. 1500-1510. Oil on oak panel. Musée du Louvre (Paris), R.F. 2218. *Gluttony and Lust*. Ca. 1500-1510. Oil on oak panel. Yale University Art Gallery (New Haven), 1959.15.22.

love, food and drink appear in this scene. Cherries with strong erotic connotations visible on the table and a phallic shaped pitcher for wine standing next to it can indicate the loss of innocence (fruit and wine also bring to mind gluttony)³⁶. Orange, as a fruit unattainable for ordinary people, emphasizes the social status of the couples shown. Musical instruments contribute to the atmosphere of impure behavior. The harp, flute and drum lie unused on the grass, in the immediate vicinity of the jester.

Into His Life and Work, ed. by Jos Koldewij, Bernard Vermet and Barbera von Kooij (Rotterdam: NAI Publishers, Ludion, 2001), 162.

³⁶ See Reindert L. Falkenburg, *The Fruit of Devotion. Mysticism and the imagery of love in Flemish paintings of the Virgin and Child, 1450-1550* (Amsterdam and Philadelphia PA: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 1994), 13-15; Luttikhuisen, "Through Boschian Eyes", 267-269.

Besides the Prado panel, two triptychs of Bosch present the personification of lust together with musical elements. Assuming the dating of the painter's works proposed by BRCP members, they are or could be chronologically placed earlier than the Prado painting. *Luxuria* appears in the left wing of the *Wayfarer Triptych: the Ship of Fools/ Gluttony and Lust* (Paris, Musée du Louvre/ New Haven, Yale University Art Gallery, ca. 1500-1510)³⁷ and in the middle panel of the *Haywain Triptych* (Madrid, Museo Nacional del Prado, 1510-1516)³⁸. In the Paris painting (Fig. 3), lust is embodied by members of two religious orders traveling in a boat: a Poor Clare or a beguine, who plays the lute, and a Franciscan; they both sing³⁹. A plate with

³⁷ See Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch...*, 316-335.

³⁸ See Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch...*, 336-355.

³⁹ See Walter S. Gibson, *Hieronymus Bosch* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1973), 41-44; Erik Larsen, *Bosch*.

cherries rests next to them. One of the passengers, on the boat filled with food and drink, is a jester. In the New Haven painting (Fig. 3), a twosome drinking wine in a tent evokes the sin of unclean love. The other people, along with a man sitting on a barrel and playing a lituus, are associated with the sin of overindulgence in food and drink. In the Madrid triptych (Fig. 4), the musical scene at the top of a cart laden with hay is interpreted as a representation of bodily impurity⁴⁰. A couple indulging themselves in sensual pleasure in the thickets is accompanied by a lute player and a vocal duet. On the left, a kneeling angel turns in prayer to Christ, who looks down from heaven onto humanity - using the Augustinian term - a *massa damnata*. A kind of counterweight to the good spirit, is the demon shown on the right, playing an aerophone that forms part of his nose (the instrument resembles a trumpet).

Bosch, in combining certain expressions of impure behavior with music (as well as food and drink)⁴¹, portrayed a *sui generis* symbiosis of the rudimentary elements of his contemporary social life. The first of these, though not fitting into the system of ethical norms (*burgermoraal*)⁴² in the Nether-



▪ Fig. 4. Jheronimus Bosch. Lust, fragment of the central panel of *The Haywain Triptych*. 1510-1516. Oil on oak panel. Museo Nacional del Prado (Madrid), P002052. © Museo del Prado.

lands, was condemned by the Church. It called upon moral teaching formulated on biblical terms⁴³. The second element - music, evokes aspects of real performance practice in the context of private music making at the turn of the 15th and 16th centuries⁴⁴. Nevertheless, a scene in the New Haven painting takes place in a different audiosphere. Two people, alone in a tent, enjoy the wine, and their intimate meeting is accompanied by the sounds of a lituus, a loud signaling instrument combined with municipal administration and judicial authority.

(Amsterdam: Prometheus, 1991); Paul Vandenbroeck, *Jheronimus Bosch. De verlossing van de wereld* (Ghent and Amsterdam: Ludion, 2002).

⁴³ Regarding lust in the teaching of the Church see notes 18 and 21.

⁴⁴ See Jon Banks, "Performance in the Renaissance: an overview", in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, ed. by Colin Lawson and Robin Stowell (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 297-317; Timothy J. McGee, "Vocal performance in the Renaissance", in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, 318-334; Keith Polk, "Instrumental performance in the Renaissance", in *The Cambridge History of Musical Performance*, 335-352; Victor Coelho and Keith Polk, *Instrumentalists and Renaissance Culture, 1420-1600. Players of Function and Fantasy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016).

The Complete Paintings by the Visionary Master (New York: Smithmark, 1998), 139; Fischer, *Hieronymus Bosch...*, 191-192. The BRCP scholars perceive an allusion to indecency in the members of two religious orders; IIsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch...*, 328.

⁴⁰ See Ludwig von Baldass, *Hieronymus Bosch* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1960), 25; Roger Van Schoute and Monique Verboomen, *Jérôme Bosch* (Tournai: Renaissance du Livre, 2001), 140; Silver, *Hieronymus Bosch*, 270; Silva Maroto, *El Bosco...*, 287 (the author of the catalogue entry is Pilar Silva Maroto).

⁴¹ On food and drink in the works of Bosch see Gerd Unverfehrt, *Wein statt Wasser. Essen und Trinken bei Jheronimus Bosch* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2003).

⁴² On secular ethics in the late Middle Ages in the Netherlands see Herman Pleij, *Het gilde van de Blauwe Schuit. Literatuur, volksfeest en burgermoraal in de late middeleeuwen* (Amsterdam: Meulenhoff, 1983); Herman Pleij, *Op belofte van profijt. Stadsliteratuur en burgermoraal in de Nederlandse letterkunde van de middeleeuwen*

The analogy between the scenes of lust in both triptychs and the corresponding scene in the Prado panel includes several elements: suitors or lovers (both, lay people and consecrated persons), a jester, musical instruments, wine, fruit, and a tent. However, there are three important differences. Firstly, Bosch did not associate the jester in the *Ship of Fools* with music. In the Paris painting, he is shown with a vessel for drinking wine. As one of the passengers on the boat, he symbolizes the folly of these people. The flute and drum are not found in the *Wayfarer Triptych* or the *Haywain Triptych*, so there is no reference to dance in either work. In turn, the melodic instrument shown in the Prado panel is not a lute but a harp, a chordophone played solo as well as in small ensembles of various configurations⁴⁵. In late medieval iconography, the harp was considered an instrument with rich symbolic connotations⁴⁶. Besides accompanying King David, it was shown played by people, angels, and also fantastic creatures and demons. In the context of lust, the harp appears in the central panel of the Bruges *Last Judgment* (Bruges, Groeningemuseum, ca. 1495-1505)⁴⁷, considered today to be the work of Bosch's hand. The strings of the chordophone, which itself is connected to the pleasure tent, suspend a damned man, whose hands allude to the kind of Christ's death. In this work the harp motif interpreted as the *figura crucis* is combined with the punishment for the sin of transgressive love⁴⁸. In iconography, the harp and the



▪ Fig. 5. Jheronimus Bosch (and workshop). Pleasure tent, fragment of the right wing of *The Last Judgment*. Ca. 1500-1505. Oil on oak panels. Akademie der bildenden Künste (Vienna), GG-579-581.

flute and drum are characterized by an ambivalent assessment. Nevertheless, the flute and drum (or pipe and tabor) appear much more frequently within a negative context⁴⁹. As instruments used for dance accompaniment, they largely belong to the sphere of *profanum*, which is confirmed by literary and iconographic sources, primarily illuminated manuscripts. The drum as well as the trumpet, horn and bagpipes is one of the typical instruments with which the inhabitants of hell are portrayed. In the right wing of the Vienna *Last Judgment* (Vienna, Akademie der Bildenden Künste, ca. 1500-1505)⁵⁰, (Fig. 5) created in Bosch's workshop, a demon sitting on the roof of Lucifer's Palace is armed with a pipe and tabor. Here the pleasure tent is located, the place of retribution for impure works of the soul and body committed in the earthly life.

Last Judgment triptych in the Groeningemuseum in Bruges", in *Jheronimus Bosch. His Life and his Works. 4th International Bosch Conference, April 14-16, 2016*, ,s-Hertogenbosch, ed. by Dawn Carelli and Hannah Gooiker (,s-Hertogenbosch: Jheronimus Bosch Art Center, 2016), 178-198.

⁴⁹ See Montagu, *The World...*, 45; Munrow, *Instruments...*, 13-14.

⁵⁰ See Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch...*, 290-307.

⁴⁵ On harp in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance see Jeremy Montagu, *The World of Medieval and Renaissance Musical Instruments* (Woodstock NY: Overlook Press, 1976), 33-4, 69, 120-122; David Munrow, *Instruments of the Middle Ages and Renaissance* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), 22, 74-75.

⁴⁶ See Tilman Seebass, "Idee und Status der Harfe im europäischen Mittelalter", *Basler Jahrbuch für Musikpraxis*, n° 11 (1987), 139-152; Martin van Schaik, *The Harp in the Middle Ages. The Symbolism of a Musical Instrument* (Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2005).

⁴⁷ See Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch...*, 278-289.

⁴⁸ See Grzegorz Kubies, "Angel trumpeters and poena sensus. A reflection on Jheronimus Bosch's

In summation of this section of the article, it should be stated that the presence of common elements in the aforementioned works, including musical motifs and the topos of the pleasure tent in both *Last Judgment* triptychs, proves the existence of a coherent artistic system in the Bosch workshop, based on a mental-ideological foundation (in the *Last Judgment* triptychs the punishment of eternal damnation bears the stigma of earthly pleasures). These similarities are also explained by the impact of iconographic sources, as will be discussed below. In turn, the noted differences indicate the painter's creative approach to the subject of lust, which gained new content in the Prado panel, in comparison to the *Wayfarer Triptych* and the *Haywain Triptych*.

SOURCES OF ARTISTIC INSPIRATION: EVERYDAY LIFE IN PAINTER'S TIME, LITERATURE AND ICONOGRAPHY

Although we are unable to reproduce or verify Bosch's auditory experiences⁵¹, let alone the painter's other spheres of life, our cognitive situation is by no means hopeless. Paul Vandebroek examined the issue of the system of ethical / moral values of the city patriciate in Brabant in connection with the paintings of Bosch; the scholar writes, among others: "A deep-seated non-religious rejection of fun, celebration and pleasure formed part of the morality of the 15th and 16th century burgher, as reflected institutionally in the thousands of municipal by-laws that were imposed in order to ban popular celebrations and similar activities, such as plays, games and dances. The civic and political authorities in the late Middle Ages and early Modern Era were seeming-

51 The multitude and variety of musical motifs in Bosch's paintings gives grounds to claim that the artist was an extremely attentive observer of life in its sonic dimension. For lists of musical instruments illustrated by Bosch and his workshop see Kees Vellekoop, "Music and Dance in the Paintings of Hieronymus Bosch", in *Hieronymus Bosch. New Insights*, 201-205.

ly obsessed with fear and condemnation of enjoyment"⁵².

A literary work from the beginning of the 16th century, which sheds valuable light on the studied issues is *The Praise of Folly* by Erasmus of Rotterdam. In his essay completed in 1509 and printed two years later, in depicting *upper class people*, he writes: "They sleep till noon and have their mercenary Levite come to their bedside, where he chops over his matins before they are half up. Then to breakfast, which is scarce done but dinner stays for them. From thence they go to dice, tables, cards, or entertain themselves with jesters, fools, gambols, and horse tricks. In the meantime, they have one or two beverages, and then supper, and after that a banquet, and 'twere well, by Jupiter, there were no more than one"⁵³. Dance, which practically can not be done without the accompaniment of musical instruments, is an integral part of the entertainment of people from all social strata. According to Erasmus, some women were particularly fond of dancing: "as old as they are, still caterwauling, daily plastering their face, scarce ever from the glass, gossiping, dancing, and writing love letters"⁵⁴.

Dance has its connections to various manifestations of social life and, as Erasmus shows, was a dubious ethical and intellectual pursuit. In his contemporary Sebastian Brant's eyes, it held the status of a serious threat to the morality of the people. In *The Ship of Fools*, a satirical poem published in 1494, he writes: "The dance by Satan was invented/ When he devised the golden calf/ And taught some men at God to laugh,/ And Satan dancing still doth use/ To hatch out evil, to abuse./ It stirs up pride, immodesty,/ And prompts men ever lewd to be/

52 Jos Koldeweij, Paul Vandebroek and Bernard Vermet, *Hieronymus Bosch. The Complete Paintings and Drawings*, trans. by Ted Alkins (Rotterdam, Ghent: NAI Publishers: Ludion, 2001), 121.

53 Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*, trans. by John Wilson (Mineola NY: Dover, 2003), 55. Chapter 56.

54 Erasmus, *The Praise...*, 25. Chapter 31.

The pagan Venus gives her hand/ And purity is rudely banned"⁵⁵. The fact that dance is closely related to drunkenness and gluttony, Brant points out in another passage of his work: "Through wine a wise man comes to prate/ And set a fool's cap on his pate;/ When Israelites were drunk with wine/ And glutted full like silly swine,/ They gamboled then in highest glee/ And had to dance in revelry"⁵⁶. The author of the *The Ship of Fools* also adds playing music beneath the window of a loved one to his list of irrational human behaviors: "The man who'd play the amorous wight/ And sing a serenade at night/ Invites the frost to sting and bite [...]/ Who walk the streets and would entrance/ The girls, to whom they're very sweet,/ And wend their way from street to street,/ While playing lutes for all to hear/ At doors from which a girl may peer,/ And do not from the street go dashing/ Until a night-pot's dregs come splashing/ Or till a rock has struck their pate"⁵⁷. Despite the fact that the lute is noted in the context of ridiculed night music, together with a harp it forms a pair of instruments that are the opposite of the bagpipes, the aerophone despised by the author of the poem⁵⁸.

It is impossible to list all the literary (as well as iconographic) works that could have been a source of inspiration for Bosch. Nevertheless, because of the unquestionable impact of these works on European culture, we must mention the Bible, the widely read *Romance of the Rose* by Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun (part. I 1225-1240, part. II 1275-1280), as well as *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville* (ca. 1357)⁵⁹. In the Book of Proverbs

55 "Of dancing", 61. Sebastian Brant, *The Ship of Fools. Translated into rhyming couplets with introduction and commentary by Edwin H. Zeydel, with the original one hundred and fourteen woodcuts* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1944), 205. See also "Of amours" (13) and "Of adultery" (33).

56 "Of gluttony and feasting", 16. Brant, *The Ship...*, 97.

57 "Of serenading at night", 62. Brant, *The Ship...*, 207.

58 "Of impatience of punishment", 54.

59 The Bible and the two abovementioned works

we read, "Lust not in your heart after her beauty, let her not captivate you with her glance! [...]. But he who commits adultery is a fool"⁶⁰. Instrumental music, singing, and dance repeatedly appear in the context of the sinful activity of people in the Bible. The following passage from the Old Testament, among others, is particularly suggestive: "Why do the wicked survive, grow old, become mighty in power? [...]. These folk have infants numerous as lambs, and their children dance. They sing to the timbrel and harp, and make merry to the sound of the flute"⁶¹. The direct connection between lust and music is described in the Book of Isaiah: "Take a harp, go about the city, O forgotten harlot; Pluck the strings skillfully, sing many songs, that they may remember you"⁶².

The first part of *The Romance of the Rose* is an allegorical tale, which likely contains the most famous description of a garden in medieval literature. One of the most often illustrated themes in illuminated manuscripts is the arrival of the Lover in the garden, where sophisticated young people indulge in fun and dances. The owner of the wonderful garden is handsome Diversion, who symbolizes entertainment and pleasure. His chosen one is pretty Joy, who loves to sing. In one fragment of the poem we read: "These people of whom I tell you were formed into a carol, and a lady called Joy was singing to them. She knew how to sing well and pleasingly; no one presented her refrains more beautifully or agreeably. Singing suited her wonderfully, for she had a clear, pure voice [...]. Then you would have seen the carol move and the company dance daintily, executing many a fine farandole and many a lovely turn on the fresh grass. There you would have seen fluters, minstrels, and jongleurs.

are among the fundamental sources of inspiration for Bosch; see Eric De Bruyn, "Textos e imágenes. Las fuentes del arte del Bosco", in *El Bosco...*, 77.

60 Proverbs 6, 25.32.

61 Job 21, 7.11-12; see also Isaiah 5, 11-12; 24, 7-9; Amos 6, 4-6.

62 Isaiah 23, 16.

One was singing *rotrouenges*, another an air from Lorraine"⁶³.

The Travels of Sir John Mandeville, one of the bestselling works in the late Middle Ages, holds a description of an extraordinary garden located on the island of Milstorak. Its owner is the conniving and deceitful Gatholonabes, who created his garden within the walls of a castle, which was later destroyed by the people he deceives anyway. "And when that any good knight, that was hardy and noble, came to see this royalty, he would lead him into his paradise, and show him these wonderful things to his disport, and the marvellous and delicious song of diverse birds, and the fair damsels, and the fair wells of milk, of wine and of honey, plenteously running. And he would let make divers instruments of music to sound in an high tower, so merrily, that it was joy for to hear"⁶⁴. In getting his guests drunk with a magical drink he sends them off on dangerous missions, promising that "if they would die for him and for his love, that after their death they should come to his paradise; and they should be of the age of those damosels, and they should play with them, and yet be maidens"⁶⁵.

Various aspects of love, in connection with music and dance, as well as food and drink, are represented in late medieval iconography, including representations such as *May Boat*, *Garden of Love* and *Children of Venus*. In miniatures showing a boat ride in May, a month associated with Cupid, two or three people usually make music and their instruments are a lute and flute. Generally, the atmosphere within a boat decorated



▪ Fig. 6. May Boat. *Hours of Joanna I of Castile*, f. 5v. 1486-1506. Parchment. The British Library (London), Add MS 18852.



▪ Fig. 7. May Boat. *Book of Hours and Prayer Book*, f. 9r. Ca. 1500-1525. Parchment. Koninklijke Bibliotheek (The Hague), RMMW, 10 F 14.

with green branches, which show a close connection with the advent of spring, is not contaminated by behavior that goes beyond good manners. However, when lovers are accompanied by a jester with bagpipes, the beauty of pure love symbolized by the harmonious playing of musical instruments, is disturbed. One can turn to the miniatures (f. 5v and 5v respectively) in the *Hours of Joanna I of Castile*⁶⁶ (Fig. 6) and the *Book of Hours*⁶⁷ made for an unknown patron for reference. In both cases, vocal and instrumental music is performed. In turn, the miniature on f. 9r in the *Book of Hours and Prayer Book*⁶⁸ made for an unknown client (Fig. 7) shows four people in a boat where a couple plays the lute and the flute and the man responsible for rowing drinks wine from the pitcher. A wine vessel introducing a dissonant ele-

⁶³ Guillaume de Lorris and Jean de Meun, *The Romance of the Rose*, trans. by Charles Dahlberg (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995), 40-41. Lines 727-735, 743-750.

⁶⁴ *The Travels of Sir John Mandeville. The version of the Cotton Manuscript in modern spelling. With three narratives, in illustration of it, from Hakluyt's 'Navigations, Voyages and Discoveries'* (London: Macmillan, 1900), 184. Chapter 30.

⁶⁵ *The Travels...*, 184. Chapter 30.

⁶⁶ The British Library, Add ms 18852. 1486-1506.

⁶⁷ CT Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library (Yale University), Beinecke ms 287. Late 15th century.

⁶⁸ Koninklijke Bibliotheek (The Hague), RMMW, 10 F 14. Ca. 1500-1525.



▪ Fig. 8. Master E. S. *Garden of Love*. Ca. 1465. Engraving. The Cleveland Museum of Art (Cleveland), 1993.161.

ment to the idyllic scene is also visible in a miniature on f. 6v in the *Da Costa Hours*⁶⁹.

The iconography of *Garden of Love* derives from several sources, including the biblical description of Eden, classical Latin literature, and medieval works praising courtly love. The garden of love theme was taken up several times by Master E. S. (active ca. 1450-1467) and Israhel van Meckenem imitating his work (ca. 1445-1503). The latter is the author of an engraving⁷⁰ based on the pattern of Master E. S., in which he presented a pair of people sitting opposite each other, on both sides of a fountain. The man plays a lute and the woman plays a harp. The scene, due to the presence of the fountain and a bird drinking water, evokes paradisiacal reality. In the so-called *Small Garden*

69 The Morgan Library & Museum (New York), ms M.399. Ca. 1515.

70 The British Museum, n° 1868,0822.163. Ca. 1480.

of *Love*⁷¹, Master E. S. depicted two pairs of lovers, among whom one definitely crosses the limit of innocent flirtation. They are accompanied by a jester playing bagpipes. A



▪ Fig. 9. Dance in Garden of Diversion. *Roman de la Rose*, f. 14v. Ca. 1490-1500. Parchment. The British Library (London), Harley MS 4425.

completely different vision of *paradis d'amour* was shown by Master E. S. in his engraving known as *Large Garden of Love*⁷² (Fig. 8). The atmosphere of highly immoral behavior is created by two couples sitting at a set table and the third in the foreground shown in dance. The woman, opening the man's robe and revealing his genitals, seems to embody temptation and sin, and the man - the jester with a drumstick, personifies lust. A pipe and tabor lie on the ground in front of him. The hawks present in the scene are a clear allusion to the love conquest. Musical elements are also present in two representations of the garden in the Bruges manuscript of *Roman de*

71 Staatliche Grafische Sammlung (München), n° 68068/68069. Ca. 1460-1465.

72 The Cleveland Museum of Art, n° 1993.161. Ca. 1465.



▪ Fig. 10. Children of Venus. *De Sphaera*, ff. 9v and 10r. Ca. 1450-1460. Parchment. Biblioteca Estense Universitaria (Modena), MS 1 X.2.14, lat. 209.

*la Rose*⁷³. On f. 12v the illuminator painted a group of ten young people gathered around a fountain, among whom several sing with accompaniment of a lutenist. In turn, on f. 14v (Fig. 9) he depicted a circle dance (carolle) performed by five pairs, accompanied by an instrumental trio consisting of a pipe and tabor player, a flutist and a harpist.

The writings of Abraham Ibn Ezra (ca. 1089/92-ca. 1164/67) are of great importance for medieval astrology. In addition to the well-known treatise *Beginning of Wisdom*, he left *Judgments of the Zodiacal Signs* in which he gave a very detailed description of Venus⁷⁴.

⁷³ The British Library, Harley ms. 4425. Ca. 1490-1500.

⁷⁴ "A very bright planet; it signifies any joy, pleasure, feasting, and every kind of sexual intercourse; [...] it is the planet of music, desire, and love" (*Judgments of the Zodiacal Signs* 43, 1-2); *Abraham Ibn Ezra's Introductions to Astrology. A Parallel Hebrew-English Critical Edition of the Book of the Beginning of Wisdom and the Book of the Judgments of the Zodiacal*

An excellent representation of Venus as the goddess of love, desire, and entertainment is contained in the short astronomical and astrological treatise *De Sphaera*⁷⁵. In the upper part of the miniature on f. 9v (Fig. 10) the illuminator presented a naked woman with a wreath on her head and two attributes - a bunch of flowers and a mirror held in her hands. In the lower part of the miniature, on a meadow framed by trees, three couples devote themselves to romantic conversations, accompanied by a lute player and a harpist. According to the astrological interpretation, Venus reigns in the zodiac signs Libra and Taurus. The influence of the latter is evident in the miniature on f. 10r (Fig. 10), being a complement to f. 9v. Among twenty-one children of Venus indulging in

Signs, trans and ed. by Shlomo Sela (Leiden: Brill, 2017), 529.

⁷⁵ Biblioteca Estense Universitaria (Modena), ms a.X.2.14 = lat. 209. Ca. 1450-1460.



▪ Fig. 11. Children of Venus. *Mittelalterliche Hausbuch*, f. 15r. Ca. 1482. Parchment. Private collection.

sensual pleasures (caresses, bathing in the fountain of youth, drinking wine) there are musicians: a lute player, an instrumentalist with a pipe and tabor, *alta cappella* (shawms and slide trumpets) and a vocal trio. Similar activities are performed by the children of Venus in the illustration n^o 20 in *Die sieben Planeten*⁷⁶. The reduced ensemble includes the lute player, harpist, *alta cappella* and vocal duo. An almost identical group of musicians (no harp) accompanies a couple bathing in a tub covered with a tent in the illustration (f. 12v) in the *Diversarius multarum materialium*⁷⁷ by Gallus Kemli (1417-1480/81). In one of the most elaborate representations of the *Children of Venus*, drawing (f. 15) in the *Mit-*

*telalterliche Hausbuch*⁷⁸ (Fig. 11), the music and dance elements deserve special attention. In the *multi-figure scene* with suggestive erotic motifs, exposed food and drink, in addition to the *alta cappella*, there is a hurdy-gurdy, platerspiel as well as a pipe and tabor. The musician playing the pipe and tabor accompanies two young men jumping merrily from a rural environment, while the *alta cappella* accompanies the dance of four noble couples.

The literary and iconographic sources reviewed above (due to the volume of the article the selection is necessarily limited), allow for the following observations. The concept of pairing lust with musical elements is described in literature, but art has displayed it much more prominently, mostly within two themes: *Garden of Love* and *Children of Venus*. The same should be said about dance, which, in the opinion of the author of *The Ship of Fools*, is a catalyst for certain sins; however, within the Bible, wine possesses this function. The flute (pipe), lute and harp are the instruments that most frequently appear in literature and iconography. Both chordophones according to Sebastian Brant, are the positive equivalents of bagpipes - tools for producing sounds for fools. The latter is present in representations of *May Boat* and *Garden of Love*. In addition to bagpipes, musical attributes of the jester are the pipe and tabor. The characteristic elements of depictions of *Children of Venus* are *alta cappella* and singing also found in the literature as well as in representations of *May Boat* and *Garden of Love*.

Erasmus of Rotterdam and Sebastian Brant testify that *per analogiam* with modern times, life at the beginning of the Modern Age provided many examples to portray the manifestations of impure behavior combined with musical elements. However, considering the strong influence of certain motifs, compositional schemes or even whole

⁷⁶ Bibliothek Otto Schäffer (Schweinfurt), OS 1033. Ca. 1465-1470.

⁷⁷ Zentralbibliothek (Zürich), ms. C 101. 15th century.

⁷⁸ Private collection, Wolfegg castle until 2008. Kunstsammlungen der Fürsten zu Waldburg Wolfegg. Ca. 1482.

themes in art, the most important sources for Bosch's inspiration should be considered the depictions of *Garden of Love* and *Children of Venus*. This statement is all the more credible because the iconography of both themes contain all the key motifs present in Bosch's works discussed earlier. An element indicating the strong influence of these visual sources is the scenery (outdoor setting) in which the musicalized scenes of lust take place in Bosch's paintings. Fruit and tent motifs can be derived from the same sources. The instruments and wine have multi-source origin: everyday life, literature, and iconography. Very important is the presence of a jester with musical instruments in the renderings of *May Boat* and *Garden of Love*, a figure playing a leading role in the scene of lust in the Prado panel.

It should be noted that the allusions to lust in the Prado panel and in both Bosch's triptychs are more subtle and the musical elements are much less intensified than in the indicated iconographic sources. In terms of the size and configuration of the music ensemble, the scene in the Madrid painting is similar to the descriptions of music-making in the Bible and a miniature in *Roman de la Rose*⁷⁹. Literary works, even if they were not a direct source of artistic inspiration, could undoubtedly fuel Bosch's creative imagination.

THE JESTER AND MUSIC

In the Middle Ages and the Renaissance jesters entertained people from all social layers with a wide variety of skills (acrobatics, juggling, magic tricks, storytelling, singing, playing music, etc.). They were often employed by noblemen or monarchs, some of them were itinerant entertainers who performed at fairs and town/city markets. Jesters, particularly court jesters, were inextricably linked with the tradition of folly. In the Middle Ages, not only carnival participants were

called fools but also people acting unwisely and sinners⁸⁰. The semantic scope of the word fool (or jester) with regard to the last two meanings, stems from the Bible. In the Book of Isaiah, we read: "For the fool speaks foolishly, planning evil in his heart: How to do wickedness, to speak perversely against the LORD"⁸¹. In-depth theological interpretation contains the Book of Psalms: "Fools say in their hearts, 'There is no God.' Their deeds are loathsome and corrupt; not one does what is right. The LORD looks down from heaven upon the human race. To see if even one is wise, if even one seeks God. All have gone astray; all alike are perverse. Not one does what is right, not even one"⁸². Erasmus of Rotterdam in *The Praise of Folly*, referring to the thought of one of the Greek philosophical schools, writes: "For since according to the definition of the Stoics, wisdom is nothing else than to be governed by reason, and on the contrary Folly, to be given up to the will of our passions"⁸³. In the light of the last statement, the presence of a jester in the scene of lust in the Prado panel evokes connotations of seeking and experiencing sensual pleasures. The jester is the embodiment of socially undesirable behavior and, for Christian morality, he is synonymous with sin and the rejection of God.

The iconographic material mentioned above and the closeness of the jester to the musical instruments lying on the ground give enough argument to combine this figure with the musical activity suggested in the Madrid painting. An exemplification of

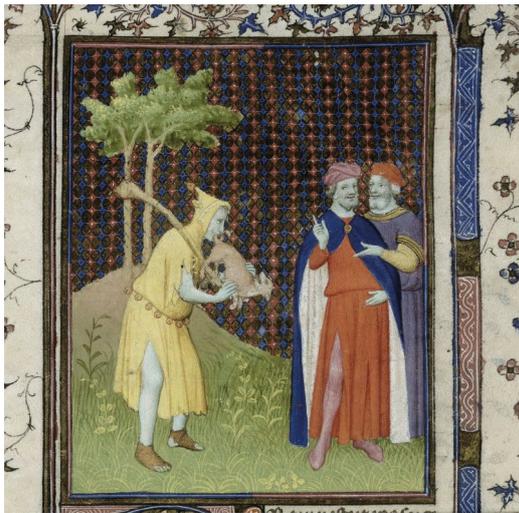
80 More on the jester in European culture in the late Middle Ages and early Modern Age see Werner Mezger, *Narrenidee und Fastnachtsbrauch. Studien zum Fortleben des Mittelalters in der europäischen Festkultur* (Konstanz: Universitätsverlag, 1991); Beatrice K. Otto, *Fools Are Everywhere. The Court Jester Around the World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2001); Yona Pinson, *The Fools' Journey. A Myth of Obsession in Northern Renaissance Art* (Turnhout: Brepols, 2008); Jean Schillinger, ed., *Der Narr in der deutschen Literatur im Mittelalter und in der frühen Neuzeit. Kolloquium in Nancy (13.-14. März 2008)* (Bern: Peter Lang, 2009).

81 Isaiah 32, 6.

82 Psalm 14, 1-3; see also Psalm 53, 2-4.

83 Erasmus, *The Praise...*, 14. Chapter 16.

79 The biblical text in Job 21, 11-12; Isaiah 5, 12. The miniature in The British Library, Harley ms. 4425, f. 14v.



▪ Fig. 12. Fool. *Bible historiale*, f. 262r. 1st quarter of the XV century. Parchment. The British Library (London), Royal 15 D III.

the character of the music performed by the fool is a miniature on f. 262r in the *Bible historiale*⁸⁴ (Fig. 12). It shows a jester who tries to play a small animal as if it were the bagpipes⁸⁵.

Musical instruments left abandoned on the ground are interpreted by some scholars as an expression of neglecting duties to God, who according to the Old Testament⁸⁶, should also be worshipped through music⁸⁷. Considering the musical practices in the Church's liturgy, this reasoning should be considered as incorrect. According to Kees Vellekoop, unused instruments may lead to a different interpretation, in which the painter rejects these tools for producing

⁸⁴ The British Library, Royal 15 D III. First quarter of the fifteenth century.

⁸⁵ Examples of the motif of a jester-musician can be found in miniatures (f. 81r and f. 209v respectively) in *Psalter* (Koninklijke Bibliotheek (The Hague), KB, 76 F 28. Ca. 1430) and the *Book of Hours* (The Morgan Library & Museum (New York), M.358. Ca. 1440-1450).

⁸⁶ See Psalms 147, 1.7; 149, 1.3; 150, 3-5.

⁸⁷ See Jacques Combe, *Hieronymus Bosch*, trans. by Ethel Duncan (London: B.T. Batsford Ltd., 1946), 75; Dino Buzzati and Mia Cinotti, *L'opera completa di Bosch* (Milano: Rizzoli, 1966), 88; Hammerstein, *Diabolus...*, 97; Luttkhuizen, "Through Boschian Eyes", 269.

sound, as symbols of lust⁸⁸. However, regarding the context that we find them, we must reject this attempt to explain the sense of the scene in question.

Musical instruments, we should emphasize, are both integral components of the musical culture of the early 16th century, as well as elements that can be derived, among others, from depictions of *Garden of Love* and *Children of Venus*. We must regard both types of sources equally. One could say that musical instruments are naturally found in the scene of lust because they belong to Bosch's historical realities. At the same time, they are necessary elements because his contemporary iconographic convention required it. The harp is ideal for creating an "acoustic background" for flirtatious conversation, the consumption of luxury specialties, and also songs can be performed to its accompaniment. The flute and drum evoke dance, a sinful physical activity that, following one of Sebastian Brant's suggestions, is stimulated by wine. Paradoxically, the fact that musical instruments lie unused on the grass better exposes the subject of lust. Of course, our attention is attracted to the jester in full costume, who does not play the role of an instrumentalist while we observe the frozen moment of the painting. Due to the caricatured expression on his face, he may be considered a singer. The jester and his spoon armed "tormentor" ready to hit the body part directly associated with impurity clearly illustrate the moral condition of the two upper class couples indulging in earthly and delusive pleasures as a prelude to love-making. Undoubtedly, they behave imprudently, and according to the Book of Proverbs, as we have already quoted, "he who commits adultery is a fool"⁸⁹.

Those born under the influence of Venus - without considering whether their behavior is due to impure hearts⁹⁰ or a dis-

⁸⁸ Vellekoop, "Music and Dance", 203.

⁸⁹ Proverbs 6, 32.

⁹⁰ Matthew 15, 19.

torted bodily condition⁹¹ - follow the path leading to perdition. That path reaches its end in hell, which, in the visions of Bosch, possesses its own sonosphere generated by instruments known from the earthly realm.

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⁹¹ Galatians 5, 19.

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