

Marie-Eve Lafontaine

**WHAT'S IN A NAME? QUESTIONS OF CONNOISSEURSHIP AND  
ATTRIBUTION IN THE WORKS OF JHERONIMUS BOSCH**

MA Thesis in Comparative History, with a specialization  
in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies.

Central European University Private University

Vienna

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by

Marie-Eve Lafontaine

(Canada/USA)

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Accepted in conformance with the standards of the CEU.

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Chair, Examination Committee

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Thesis Supervisor

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Examiner

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External Reader

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External Supervisor

Vienna

# Author's declaration

I, the undersigned, **Marie-Eve Lafontaine**, candidate for the MA degree in Comparative History, with a specialization in Late Antique, Medieval, and Renaissance Studies, with a specialization in Interdisciplinary Medieval Studies declare herewith that the present thesis is exclusively my own work, based on my research and only such external information as properly credited in notes and bibliography. I declare that no unidentified and illegitimate use was made of the work of others, and no part of the thesis infringes on any person's or institution's copyright. I also declare that no part of the thesis has been submitted in this form to any other institution of higher education for an academic degree.

Vienna, 25th July 2022

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Signature

# Abstract

A Viennese art historian named Dr. Fritz Koreny is currently disputing the authorship of several works by the late medieval artist Jheronimus Bosch. While the academic world has for the most part dismissed his hypothesis, he raises valid points which are difficult to ignore. This thesis is a comparative study which seeks to combine selected aspects of the findings of the Bosch Research and Conservation Project (an ongoing panel of specialists in late medieval panel painting, currently the pre-eminent experts on Bosch) with Fritz Koreny's application of comparative connoisseurship in order investigate a potential methodology for determining attribution in the case of Jheronimus Bosch's *The Haywain* (c. 1510-1516).

# Acknowledgements

I am much indebted to the art historian Sandra Hindriks for her commentary and recommendations for papers on the topic of the historical practice of connoisseurship. Laura Ritter, for her helpful remarks regarding an early draft of this paper. My supervisors, Gerhard Jaritz for his generous patience and in particular, Bela Zsolt Szakacz, for his illuminating seminars and advice. My parents, Alisa and Pierre Lafontaine, for encouraging my love for art history. My daughter, Mimi, for tolerating innumerable museum visits on several different continents. And my husband, Zoltan Aczel, for being patient with me through it all.

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# List of abbreviations and notes to the text

This thesis references a number of technical terms, which are abbreviated here as follows. For a full explanation of technical terms, please refer to the glossary.

**BRCP:** Bosch Research and Conservation Program

**IR:** Infrared

**IRP:** Infrared photography

**IRR:** Infrared reflectography

**VIS:** Visible light photography

**XR:** X-radiograph

## Notes to the Text

While the general consensus in English speaking academic circles as to the spelling of the full name of Bosch is *Jheronimus Bosch*, sources consulted for this thesis frequently refer to him by name as *Hieronimus Bosch*. For the sake of clarity, I have retained this form when the secondary spelling of the name is directly quoted in the text or can be found in the title of those sources. For all other purposes, I have retained the spelling *Jheronimus Bosch*.

# Introduction

The potential of interdisciplinary research in the field of connoisseurship, especially in relation to the late medieval painter Jheronimus Bosch (c.1450-1516), has been until now a relatively underdeveloped area in generalized Medieval Studies. The departure point for this thesis is a 2012 catalogue by Dr. Fritz Koreny, an art historian and expert in early Netherlandish drawings formerly based out of the Albertina Museum Wien. Dr. Koreny is the author of a highly contentious critical catalogue of the drawings of Bosch entitled *Hieronymus Bosch - die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt und Nachfolge bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts*<sup>1</sup> (Jheronimus Bosch – Drawings: Workshop and Followers until the End of the Sixteenth Century). His analysis and hypothesis, that in fact, a member of Jheronimus Bosch's studio is responsible for about half of Bosch's currently attributed works, is in direct confrontation with the findings of an international panel of experts on medieval Netherlandish panel painting known as the Bosch Research and Conservation Project (abbr. BRCP), who are considered the foremost authorities on the currently accepted number of Bosch attributions, misattributions, and re-attributions.

Koreny's main theory is as follows: a left-handed assistant whom he names the Master of the Haywain Triptych worked in Bosch's studio and continued it after his death. This assistant is not only responsible for the *Haywain* triptych (c. 1510 - 1516), which currently hangs in the Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid, but also nearly half of Bosch paintings currently considered autographical. Fritz Koreny's thesis, if true, holds earth-shattering ramifications for other experts of Bosch research and all the knowledge accumulated about him until now.

The BRCP disputes Koreny's findings on the basis of their own scientific analysis of Bosch's works done *in situ* with the cooperation of various museums holding the artist's work

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<sup>1</sup> Fritz Koreny et al. *Hieronymus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Brepols Publishers, 2012.

around Europe and North America since 2010. Using a standardized procedure of documentation, dozens of paintings have been analyzed using infrared reflectography and ultra-high resolution macrophotography in both infrared and visible light, making possible a uniform scientific analysis between works and elements of those works such as the underdrawings, which are not visible to the naked eye. As a direct result of these findings, the BRCP has been able to significantly expand the number of Bosch attributions as well as deattribute several works which had previously been considered to be by the hand of the artist himself.

Despite the thorough scientific data of the BRCP, Koreny's contentious arguments on the basis of connoisseurship raises valid points and makes a strong case for the inseparable interconnectedness of the three elements of late medieval panel paintings: drawing, underdrawing and oil painting. An analysis on the basis of style vs. scientific data is especially applicable in the case of an artist such as Bosch, who worked with a highly particular and much copied style while leaving very few historical documents after his death. This thesis is an investigation into Koreny's methodology of attribution in comparison with the wealth of scientific data gathered by the BRCP in an attempt to illuminate a potential methodology for attribution in the case of Bosch works.

## **Thesis**

While both Koreny and the BRCP make excellent respective points regarding the works of Bosch, a uniform analysis making use of both the practice of connoisseurship and scientific data has, until now, not been extensively done. The aim of this research, therefore, is to make a comparative study combining aspects of the scientific findings of the BRCP with the practice of comparative connoisseurship in relation to works of Jheronimus Bosch currently under dispute by Fritz Koreny. This analysis will be undertaken within the larger context of a study of the practice of late medieval Netherlandish panel paintings with an emphasis on the economic

and social contexts which may have affected the ways in which Bosch's artworks were produced and sold around Europe. I hope to make a balanced analysis using two primary sources of information – comparative connoisseurship, as laid out by Fritz Koreny in his book, and the scientific data of the BRCP – to find a middle ground between the proposals of Koreny and the BRCP concerning the question of attribution, in particular with regards a painting which is currently under dispute in Koreny's publication, the *Haywain* triptych in the Museo Nacional del Prado.

# Chapter 1: The left-handed problem

## 1. 1 Connoisseurship in art historical practice

Connoisseurship has traditionally been considered the basis of the art historical science. Derived from the Latin *cognoscere* (“to get to know”), and first used around the year 1750, its origins can be found in the professionalization of the humanistic and moral sciences that occurred in France<sup>2</sup>, Germany, the Netherlands and England during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Connoisseurship as a practice and methodology is most often tied to questions of value or authorship with regards to particular works of art, decorative objects and other collectible valuables such as curiosities, coins and rare minerals.<sup>3</sup>

Broadly defined, connoisseurship is a “specifically visual knowledge gained from looking at works of art”.<sup>4</sup> Within art history, connoisseurship is generally referred to within two expansive frameworks of understanding: that which has historically pertained to connoisseurship as a particular community, and that which pertains to it as a practice.<sup>5</sup> As a community, connoisseurship was originally a common enthusiasm devised by groups of like-minded individuals with shared appreciations for “antiquarianism, discourse, and collection and classification”.<sup>6</sup> While somewhat frowned upon and regarded with a dismissive attitude outside

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<sup>2</sup> H. Brigstocke, *The Oxford Companion to Western Art* (Oxford University Press, 2001), 149.

<sup>3</sup> For a fascinating introduction on the intersection of the humanities, natural sciences, and early museum practices, see Jakob Vogel, “Stony Realms: Mineral Collections as Markers of Social, Cultural and Political Spheres in the 18th and Early 19th Century,” *Historical Social Research/Historische Sozialforschung* 40, no. 1 (151) (2015): 301–20. As mineral collecting became popular in the eighteenth Europe, the importance of classification and, more notably, the consideration of this pursuit as a gentlemanly form of scientific pastime became a prominent aspect of cultural life.

<sup>4</sup> “Connoisseurship,” Oxford Reference, accessed July 14, 2022, <https://doi.org/10.1093/oi/authority.20110803095632669>.

<sup>5</sup> Joris Corin Heyder, “Doing Connoisseurship. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. Introductory Remarks,” *Journal of Art Historiography*, no. 25 (June 2021): 9.

<sup>6</sup> Heyder, 9.

of the art market and museum world today<sup>7</sup>, in the seventeenth century it was a necessary (if somewhat ambiguously defined) practice for describing ‘original’ antiques and artworks and connecting people with mutual interests in such objects during the early age of the public sphere. Hence, the former understanding is intrinsically tied to the latter due to its purpose of answering crucial questions regarding authorship and authenticity.

While connoisseurship has been considered the “natural forerunner of art history”<sup>8</sup>, its practice as an “early form of art historical methodology”<sup>9</sup> is both murky and vague. Founded on principles of comparison, the rules and regulations for assessment of objects have historically relied on (and indeed, continue to rely on) constantly shifting parameters of the highly specific and subjective value functions of the person or organization doing the appraisal. Factors such as nationality, cultural background, methods of categorization and modes of communication of the executing person/s are persistently doomed to seep into any analysis aimed at an objective evaluation.<sup>10</sup>

Furthermore, the ability to pronounce any final analysis of a work is inherently connected to a viewer’s degree of education in any particular era, genre, material, or style. While the ability to distinguish the hand of an artist by a single painted, drawn, or sculpted element – for example, a hand, bird, or tree – can tell an experienced art historian the date, location, and creator of an artwork, it also requires her to make rapid judgements between minor details and the overall composition of a selected oeuvre of work, meaning that the methodology is almost entirely reliant on the medium of comparison and sample size.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> “Today, “connoisseurship” conjures up images of fusty old men in tweeds arguing over ancient etchings or perhaps the patter of opera buffs as they pass bejeweled into the night”. In Samuel Hope, “Connoisseurship in an Age of Distractions,” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 36, no. 2 (2002): 69.

<sup>8</sup> Heyder, “Doing Connoisseurship. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. Introductory Remarks,” 10.

<sup>9</sup> Heyder, 10.

<sup>10</sup> Heyder, 10.

<sup>11</sup> For an extended discussion on the use and purpose of connoisseurship, see Hal Opperman: “The Thinking Eye, the Mind That Sees: The Art Historian as Connoisseur.” *Artibus et Historiae* 11, no. 21 (1990): 9–13.

Although ultimately, “the complex interaction of somatic perception and practical knowledge withstands the capability to objectify connoisseurial processes”<sup>12</sup>, the majority of empirically-oriented art history remains heavily reliant on the practice of connoisseurship as a method of appraisal based on the desire to satisfy questions related to the following issues: an artworks value (what is it worth in a particular economic market?), attribution (who can be confidently named as its author?) and authenticity (is it a real or a fake?)<sup>13</sup>. Connoisseurship remains a useful and frequently practiced skill within academic circles not only because it assists an observer to assess the quality and status of an artwork, but also due to the fact that until now, no other system of categorization has presented itself as a viable replacement.

## 1. 2 Dr. Fritz Koreny and the left-handed problem

A peruse through Dr. Fritz Koreny’s more than three kilogram publication *Hieronimus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts* and its related academic articles is an interesting introduction in the social intricacies of inter-academia warfare, particularly in blue-blooded profession like art history. Nevertheless, the ensuing back and forth banter between Koreny, the Bosch Research and Conservation Project and further academics on attribution, misattribution, and re-attribution, is at the end an entertaining read on the finer points of connoisseurship and the ways in which high level institutions function. Koreny, an expert in early Netherlandish drawings and self-identified connoisseur, has published a highly contentious critical examination of sixty-one drawings of Jheronimus Bosch (c. 1450-1516), an ambitious, comprehensive project. Regardless of whether his thesis will be accepted, he does make several excellent points with regards to the importance of scientific analysis of paintings and the process of casting a wide net when gathering points

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<sup>12</sup> Max J. Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting from Van Eyck to Breugel* (London: Phaidon, 1956), 5. in Heyder, “Doing Connoisseurship. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. Introductory Remarks,” 18.

<sup>13</sup> Heyder, “Doing Connoisseurship. Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow. Introductory Remarks,” 10.



of research, as well as demonstrating the pressing need more interdisciplinary research in the field of art history.

Koreny is a senior researcher at the Institute for Art History in Vienna. He was previously curator of prints and drawings at the Graphische Sammlung Albertina. As an expert on early Netherlandish drawings, he has published widely on the topic. He was also the curator of several related exhibitions. A number of his previously published articles, the most notable of which being in *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien* which he subtitled *Prolegomena*<sup>14</sup>, already touched on the themes which are discussed in his final book, although they certainly do not reach the extent which are laid out in the roughly 450 pages of analysis we will look at in this chapter.

Assisted by Erwin Porkorny and Gabriele Bartz, Koreny's book is heavy (over three kilograms), printed in dense colour, with excellently detailed images. In contrast to the last critical catalogue of Bosch which was published in 1987<sup>15</sup>, the author makes an analysis of almost exclusively the artist's drawings. As an excellently written expansion of Koreny's earlier article in the *Jahrbuch* it defines Koreny's main topic of research – the relationship between Bosch's drawings, underdrawings and paintings – while expounding on his thesis, which claims a major reassessment of Bosch's entire oeuvre. He has based his formulation on a "painstaking and well-illustrated stylistic analysis of the paintings attributed to Bosch", making him the first scholar to attempt to make distinctions between the hands of different members of Bosch's studio who might have been working for the artist either during his life or after his death.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Fritz Koreny, "Hieronymus Bosch: Überlegungen Zu Stil Und Chronologie," *Jahrbuch Des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien* 4–5, 2002–03 (2004): 47–75.

<sup>15</sup> Matthijs IJssink, "Hieronymus Bosch: Die Zeichnungen," ed. Fritz Koreny, Gabriele Bartz, and Erwin Pokorny, *Master Drawings* 51, no. 3 (2013): 393.

<sup>16</sup> Jan Piet Filedt Kok, "Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years: Exhibitions and Publications in 2016," ed. M. IJssink et al., *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 39, no. 1/2 (2017): 114.

First, the content: the catalogue consists of an introduction of one hundred and fifty pages followed by an analysis of sixty-one drawings in total. Eleven of these works on paper are accepted by Koreny as autograph. Eight are designated as being from Bosch's workshop, while twenty-four further sheets are attributed to followers. These are followed by nine drawings which had been attributed to Bosch in the past, then sheets by those in the *Nachfolge* – that is, later imitators of Bosch – and then those which the author connects to Breughel. Most interestingly, it is the first critical catalogue of Bosch drawings<sup>17</sup>, and certainly one of the most comprehensive pieces of Bosch literature to have been published in recent years.

Koreny's main theory is somewhat strewn throughout the course of the introduction and the book as a whole. Nevertheless, as previously mentioned in the introduction to this thesis, he theorizes that a left-handed studio assistant, among other contributors, was responsible for a nearly half of Bosch's currently attributed works. This particular assistant, whom he names the Master of Haywain Triptych, also apparently continued Bosch's studio after his death. The most interesting selection of works which Koreny has lumped into this group is the *Temptation of St. Anthony* in the Museu Nacional de Arte Antiga, Lisbon (which had not previously been under disputation), the *Wayfarer Triptych* (Fig. 13) in Rotterdam – to which also belong *Death and Miser* in Washington D.C., the *Ship of Fools* in the Louvre and a further fragment in New Haven. Koreny also attributes further portions of *John the Baptist* (Museo Lazaro Galdiano) and *Adoration of the Magi* (Prado) to the left-handed master. All these attributions are based on Koreny's left-handed thesis which the author backs up with the practice of connoisseurship as laid out in the previous section of this chapter.

This is not the first time the Bosch attribution has been called into question and will most certainly not be the last. Even works that have been generally considered to be confidently

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<sup>17</sup> Ilsink, "Hieronymus Bosch," 393.

dated, such as Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*, are constantly being challenged with the development of new technologies, an increase of interdisciplinary methods and new information coming to light.<sup>18</sup>

### 1. 3 Connoisseurship as applied by Fritz Koreny in the works of Bosch

Unsurprisingly, Dr. Koreny is only one of several art historians who have tried to apply his or her own method of connoisseurship to Bosch over the past century. However, in contrast to other Bosch specialists, Koreny, has taken the practice of connoisseurship one step further. Based on a relatively minor detail found in one piece, the under-drawing of an angel on the left wing of the *Haywain* triptych (fig. 1a and 1b) which has been made visible using infrared reflectography<sup>19</sup>, Koreny concludes that the underdrawing and painting in question have been done by different hands, because the underdrawing of the angel exhibits the characteristics of a left-handed artist, whereas Bosch himself was right handed.<sup>20</sup> At that time, a complete reflectogram of the painting had not yet been made (although since then the BRCP has released this data<sup>21</sup>) and so to base an entire oeuvre off a small detail seems to reflect a methodology problematic for several reasons which will be covered later in this paper.

As a guiding example, Koreny refers repeatedly in his research to the example of another famously left-handed artist, Leonardo da Vinci, whose characteristic hatchings have always been a major factor in attribution. He helpfully includes several examples of the

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<sup>18</sup> For a fascinating digression on why material culture of the sixteenth century speaks against an late dating of *Garden of Earthly Delights*, see Bernard Vermet, "Baldass Was Right. The Chronology of the Paintings of Jheronimus Bosch (Lecture 2nd International Jheronimus Bosch Conference, May 22-25, 2007, 's-Hertogenbosch).

<sup>19</sup> Fritz Koreny, *Hieronymus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts* (Brepols Publishers, 2012), 95.

<sup>20</sup> Fritz Koreny, 95.

<sup>21</sup> M. Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné* (Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2016), 348–53.

hatchings made by left-handed artists vs. right-handed ones so as to point out the visual differences in technique and drawing style between the two (fig. 2, 3, and 4).

In order to make a comparison for Bosch on which to base any further examinations, the author goes on to establish a control group of drawings which he believes to be absolutely by the hand of the master: *The Field has Eyes*, *The Forest has Ears* in Berlin (fig. 5), the *Tree Man* in Vienna (fig. 6), and *The Owls Nest* (fig. 7) in Rotterdam. Koreny surmises that these drawings, carried out in simple pen and ink, are “spontaneous, creative works of art”<sup>22</sup> and therefore reflect the true stylistic expressions of the artist’s personality. According to Dr. Koreny, the *Haywain* angel does not match in style or technique to any of these drawings. In fact, the entire *Haywain*, he believes, exhibits left-handed tendencies. With the messy and crowded right to left hatchings exhibited in the underdrawing of the angel, it corresponds more closely in style to the underdrawings of other works such as *Wayfarer* triptych in Rotterdam.<sup>23</sup>

Complicating this debate is dendrochronological research that has determined that the *Haywain* would be a late work, if it was indeed painted by Bosch at all. The tree from which the panel was produced cannot have been ready for panel making before 1508.<sup>24</sup> However, again, Koreny has his own take on the matter. Although with estimated drying time and calculating the average number of years before use the painting could have been completed as early as 1510, Koreny believes the date to be more likely around 1516 – that is, after or in the same year as the death of Bosch.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Fritz Koreny, “Introduction,” *Master Drawings* 41, no. 3 (2003): 202.

<sup>23</sup> Fritz Koreny, *Hieronymus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 89.

<sup>24</sup> Peter Klein, “Dendrochronological Analysis of Works of Hieronymus Bosch and His Followers,” in *Hieronymus Bosch: New Insights into His Life and Work* (Rotterdam : Ghent: Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen-NAi Publishers-Ludion, 2001), 127.

<sup>25</sup> Fritz Koreny, *Hieronymus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 95.

In short, Dr. Koreny believes the Master of the Haywain Triptych was both a workshop assistant as well as a draughtsman/painter with his own discernable artistic hand. However, as scholars we face several problems with this thesis. First of all, none of the currently existing works by Bosch can securely be traced back to his workshop.<sup>26</sup> Problematically, the world of historical documents and that of the artist's paintings are not usually analyzed by the same specialists and indeed, require different skills to decipher each respectively.<sup>27</sup> Connoisseurship in Bosch studies is therefore both vitally important and a highly disputed topic in which arguments tend to ebb and flow over the years. Koreny himself credits work to workshop assistants and others working in the Bosch-*Nachfolge*. Likewise, he believes that the Master of the Haywain was capable of developing his own style and technique within the framework of Bosch's atelier.<sup>28</sup> So why isn't he capable to believe that a panel painting could have also been a collaborative effort between the master and pupil?

On the other hand, there are motivations to take Koreny's groupings of the two sets of paintings seriously, the most pressing of which being the deficit of historical information on both Bosch's life and works. Ambiguous archival documents and lack of a paper trail in relation to patrons and commissions leaves much room for analysis and lends water to Koreny's thesis.

Indeed, if anything else, Koreny's argumentation shows that we are dealing with a highly layered, complex situation which is impossible to judge based on any single factor. It seems that in order to fully understand the artworks of Jheronimus Bosch and the context in

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<sup>26</sup> "Although several of the artist's commissions are cursorily documented, it has so far been impossible to link a single one of the extant works securely to this documentation." Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 23–27. In Kok, "Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years," 115.

<sup>27</sup> The website *BoschDoc* is an excellent online database of archival documents related to Jheronimus Bosch, his town, his family and his patrons. As a further project of the BRCP, it is funded by the Radboud University Nijmegen, the City Archives of 's-Hertogenbosch and the Huygens ING. Bosch Research and Conservation Project. Prof. Dr. Jos Koldeweij et al., "BoschDoc," BoschDoc, <https://boschdoc.huygens.knaw.nl/>.

<sup>28</sup> Fritz Koreny, *Hieronymus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 89.

which they were painted, an interdisciplinary approach which is capable of scrutinizing every factor that contributes to a Bosch attribution is crucial.

## 1. 4 Contemporary literature on the left-handed problem

The so-called ‘left-handed issue’ has in fact been known to academics since decades. In 1968, the scholar Fritz Lugt had already remarked while writing on the drawing of *Death and the Miser* in the Louvre (now believed to be a later copy of the original painting) on the curious relationship between the drawing and the painting. He pointed out the strangeness of the fact that the drawing seemed to have been completed by a right-handed artist, whereas the painting (which is now in the collection of the National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C.) was painted by a left-handed one.<sup>29</sup> Likewise, writing on the *Ship of Fools* drawing, he surmised a similar left-vs right situation.<sup>30</sup> According to Matthijs IIsink<sup>31</sup>, it was Lugt who introduced this question into the art historical discourse from which point it was taken up by several academics in the years following. These further arguments, while interesting, will not be discussed here at length, with the exception of Patrick Reuterswärd, who noted that while Bosch’s drawings have right-handed hatchings, the paintings of the *Haywain* and *Wayfarer* triptychs do indeed seem to have left-handed underdrawings.<sup>32</sup> Crucially, Reuterswärd approached the problem by surmising that the underdrawings for the paintings in question had been applied with a maulstick<sup>33</sup>, thus

<sup>29</sup> “Il est curieux que dans le dessin les hachures sont faites de la main droite, tandis que dans le tableau c’est le contraire”. Fritz Lugt, *Inventaire Général Des Dessins Des Écoles Du Nord, Publié Sous Les Auspices Du Cabinet Des Dessins. Maîtres Des Anciens Pays-Bas Nés Avant 1550* (Paris: Musées nationaux: Musée du Louvre, 1968), 25.

<sup>30</sup> Fritz Lugt, 26.

<sup>31</sup> IIsink, “Hieronymus Bosch,” 395.

<sup>32</sup> Patrick Reuterswärd, “Hieronymus Bosch” n.s., 7, in *Figura: Uppsala Studies in the History of Art* (Stockholm, 1970), 163–64.

<sup>33</sup> For an explanation of what a maulstick is and how it might be used, please refer to the glossary.

causing the direction of the hatchings to change – certainly a plausible solution<sup>34</sup>, but one which is also mentioned by Koreny in subsequent articles and doubted for several reasons.<sup>35</sup>

It is also important to point out here that *The Haywain* has also been previously disputed by the scholar Gerd Unverfehrt, who removed it from Bosch's oeuvre in 1980 and attributed it instead to the author of *The Last Judgement* in Bruges.<sup>36</sup>

One major objection made by Matthijs Ilsink is that is Koreny does not take fully into account the complicated structure of a late medieval painter's workshop which lends itself easily to collaboration, especially one evidently as successful as Bosch's.<sup>37</sup> This is a crucial point. Molly Faries and Ron Spronk, technical art historians who specialize in early Netherlandish paintings, have pointed out the extensive complexity associated with scientific analysis of construction of these kinds of works, which were usually made in several layers and stages.<sup>38</sup> Bosch's drawings, which are done almost entirely in ink and without preparatory sketches, reveal more about authorship than paintings because they are small and are the work of a single hand. Panel paintings, especially of the size and complexity of Bosch's, do not correspond to this framework.

In addition to the above arguments, Maryan Wynn Ainsworth points out the importance of taking into account the sociological and economic factors influencing the creation of

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<sup>34</sup> Ilsink, "Hieronymus Bosch," 395.

<sup>35</sup> "But why, one has to ask, would Bosch, who was clearly right-handed (as is confirmed by the *Tree Man*, among others... go to the trouble of producing a left-handed underdrawing using a maulstick – faking it, to an extent – when he was going to cover it with paint shortly thereafter? And why, and for what purpose...when he had already masterfully and successfully used his right hand to complete other drawings and paintings?" In Fritz Koreny, "Review: Ilsink, Matthijs et. al.: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman. Catalogue Raisonné," *Master Drawings* 55, no. 3 (2017): 357–58.

<sup>36</sup> Gerd Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch: Die Rezeption Seiner Kunst Im Frühen 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Mann, 1980), 209. In Ilsink, "Hieronymus Bosch," 394.

<sup>37</sup> "In my opinion, the attribution of a painting (for instance the *Wayfarer* Typtich) to a specific hand (in this case the left-handed Master of the *Haywain* Triptych) on the basis of the underdrawing of (details of) pictures would appear methodically unsound. It would exclude the possibility of collaboration, as one would indeed expect to find in a late medieval workshop such as Bosch's". Ilsink, "Hieronymus Bosch," 396.

<sup>38</sup> Molly Faries and Ron Spronk, eds., *Recent Developments in the Technical Examination of Early Netherlandish Paintings* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003), 150.

paintings in late medieval Northern Europe, especially ones destined for the open market or for export.<sup>39</sup> Likewise, other art historians have pointed out that although all of Bosch's paintings originated in one workshop, different works may have served a variety of economic regions and communities in terms of content and function.<sup>40</sup>

As will be discussed later in this paper, the complex nature of the artist-pupil relationship in the fifteenth century often meant that it was normal for several different hands to be involved in the production of large panel pieces. Ainsworth illustrates several examples in which artists intentionally painted in styles which were not their own for the purpose of the artist-patron relationship<sup>41</sup>, while Erwin Pokorny (interestingly, also a co-writer on Koreny's *Zeichnungen*) has written on the prevalence of Bosch character patterns, which have not only been subsequently copied by imitators into several different works but are also evident in the drawings of followers who were evidently practicing "variations on Bosch inventions"<sup>42</sup>. Koreny himself has pointed out a similar issue by identifying nearly identical drapery patterns in the cloak of a beggar in *The Haywain* (fig 14). and the cloak of St. John in the drawing *The Entombment*, in the British Museum.<sup>43</sup> For this reason, the presence of the master's signature is no indication of an autograph work, another topic that will be discussed in further chapters.

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<sup>39</sup> "An open-minded view about this matter leads us to interesting and probably more correct conclusions about the role of the patron in commissions and the powerful influence exerted on artists and their production from time to time by economic factors, which fostered mass-produced art for the open market or for import". Maryan Wynn Ainsworth, "What's in a Name? The Question of Attribution in Early Netherlandish Painting," in *Recent Developments in the Technical Examination of Early Netherlandish Painting: Methodology, Limitations and Perspectives*, ed. Molly Faries and Ron Spronk (Brepols Publishers, 2003), 143.

<sup>40</sup> Reindert Falkenburg, review of *Review of Hieronymus Bosch: Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt und Nachfolge bis zum Ende des 16. Jahrhunderts, Catalogue raisonné*, by Fritz Koreny, Gabriele Bartz, and Erwin Pokorny, *Renaissance Quarterly* 66, no. 2 (2013): 606.

<sup>41</sup> Ainsworth points to the excellent example of Petrus Christus' *Portrait of a Man*, in which the artist deviated from his usual style in order to imitate Italian portraiture. Maryan Wynn Ainsworth, "What's in a Name? The Question of Attribution in Early Netherlandish Painting," 141.

<sup>42</sup> Erwin Pokorny, "Bosch's Cripples and Drawings by His Imitators," *Master Drawings* 41, no. 3 (2003): 293.

<sup>43</sup> Fritz Koreny, *Hieronymus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 63.



## 1. 5 Historical literature on the left-handed problem and further issues of attribution

Historical documents concerning early Netherlandish art, especially regarding archival material related to the collecting of Bosch works or their analysis in the years after their purchase, remain valuable sources of information both for questions of attribution and the complications that arise naturally between the information provided by technical studies of artworks and any authorships which might have previously been assigned exclusively on the basis of connoisseurship. However, what documentary evidence is available to us concerning early Netherlandish art is vague at best and requires training in obscure wording and fifteenth-century terminologies.<sup>44</sup> As already mentioned, none of the known surviving works by Bosch can be connected to the artist's own workshop directly by means of city historical documents and indeed, the ten archival documents which reference the artist's work directly only mention minor commissions.<sup>45</sup> In addition to this scanty information, despite our best guesses, we also do not know if Bosch's workshop continued after his death, and if so, or who might have been responsible for running it. Documents available to us from the town of 's-Hertogenbosch during the artist's lifetime and after his death do give concrete evidence of assistant painters in the artist's workshop as early as 1503. However, they do not mention the contents of his studio after his death in 1516, which were claimed by his widow.<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> "The study of almost any aspect of early Netherlandish art should begin with a lament that the documentary evidence available is sufficient to support only the vaguest of general statements... Such documents are often unbelievably prolix, sometimes irritatingly laconic and almost always obscure in their wording, and may be fully interpreted only by someone who is both a skilled economic historian and a practised linguist well versed in the terminology and workings of fifteenth-century legal systems". Lorne Campbell, "The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century," *The Burlington Magazine* 118, no. 877 (1976): 88.

<sup>45</sup> Paul Huys Janssen, "Hieronymus Bosch · Facts and Records Concerning His Life and Work," *Wallraf-Richartz-Jahrbuch* 68 (2007): 239.

<sup>46</sup> "On 1 December 1516 Bosch's sister and nephews declared that they had received all household chattels and good to which they were entitled from his widow, Aleid van de Meervenne. There is no indication that these included the contents of a painter's workshop". In Ilsink, "Hieronymus Bosch," 396.

Lastly, writing in 1560, Felipe de Guervera noted a Bosch pupil who signed with his master's name, "out of respect for the master's work".<sup>47</sup> In the passage he gives the example of the *Seven Deadly Sins* table (currently in possession of the Prado) which he describes in unmistakable detail. In an example of a work which has been de-attributed from the master, the BRCP has subsequently put down this work to a follower of Bosch.<sup>48</sup> The Prado, naturally, disputes that the table is not an autograph work<sup>49</sup>, even though a glaring number of stylistic details and technical data speak to the contrary. Episodes such as these attest to the difficulty of attributions in the case of Bosch works due to the deep-running tensions and traditions behind large institutions who stake much on Bosch's name.

To conclude this chapter, there's no question that determining authorship of an artwork is ultimately not entirely a science. While Koreny's book focuses almost exclusively on connoisseurship, it must be admitted that no painting exists in a vacuum - in combination with scientific analysis, a study of working procedures rather than the finished painting seems to be the best method of determining attributions in relation to the works of Bosch. Hence, any methodological approach must make use of a two-fold method of analysis to establish a secure context of understanding. On one side, the historical and current literature must be examined, and on the other, the scientific analyses already made by BRCP should be applied, as will be discussed in the coming chapters. The scientific analysis allows the researcher to access aspects of the artwork such as underdrawing and the chemical composition of panel, which are not normally available to a passive viewer. When applied properly, the scientific data can both

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<sup>47</sup> Felipe de Guevara, "Comentarios de La Pintura Que Escribio Don Felipe de Guevara, Gentil-Hombre de Boca Del Señor Emperado Carlos Quinto, Rey España: Se Publican Por La Primera Vez Con Un Discurso Preliminar y Algunas Notas de Don Antonio Ponz Quien Ofrece Su Trabajo al Excelentísimo Señor Conde de Florida-Blanca, Protector de Las Nobles Artes" (Madrid, 1788), 43–44. For the full text and translation, see Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman: Catalogue Raisonné*, 567–77.

<sup>48</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman: Catalogue Raisonné*, 470–74.

<sup>49</sup> Pilar Silva Maroto et al., *Bosch: The 5th Centenary Exhibition*, ed. Pilar Silva Maroto, 1st U.S. edition (New York, Madrid: Thames & Hudson Inc., Museo Nacional del Prado, 2017), 283–91.

compliment and expand the art historical practice of connoisseurship as traditionally practiced by art historians and, in this instance, by Fritz Koreny.

# Chapter 2: The Bosch Research and Conservation Project

## 2. 1 Background of the Bosch Research and Conservation Project and the purpose of establishment

The entire sum of Jheronimus Bosch's known oeuvre is generally considered to consist of about 45 paintings and drawings. Due to the robust trade of Bosch's works both during his lifetime and after his death, these pieces are currently located in ten countries between two continents, in twenty separate private and institutional collections. Due to the extremely limited number of existing artworks by Bosch, in the approximately one hundred and fifty years since the professionalization of art history as a science, determining the authorship of his pieces remains a difficult and highly discussed topic.

Considering the consistent popularity of Bosch as an artist since the sixteenth century, problems associated with contested attributions and further issues arising from the urgent need to clean, conserve and repair some of these artworks, the Bosch Research and Conservation Program was established in 2007 as a joint collaboration between Radboud University, the Noordbrabants Museum and the Jheronimus Bosch 500 Foundation<sup>50</sup> in preparation for the exhibition *Jheronimus Bosch: Visions of Genius*. The exhibition, which was to take place at the Noordbrabants Museum in 's-Hertogenbosch from February 13th to May 8th, 2016, was prompted by the coming five-hundredth anniversary of Bosch's death in 2016.<sup>51</sup>

As an "object-oriented"<sup>52</sup> research project focused on materiality rather than the meaning behind Bosch's works, the BRCP was established as a collaborative mission between

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<sup>50</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 8.

<sup>51</sup> Fritz Koreny, "Review: Ilsink, Matthijs et. al.: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman. Catalogue Raisonné," 347.

<sup>52</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 11.

a number of scholars, institutions, and museums associated with works of the artist. The entire project was made up of a board of governors, a scientific committee and finally, the Bosch Research and Conservation team itself consisting of a number of experts, professors, restorers and museum curators whose work was directly related to technical art history of early Netherlandish paintings or specialized Bosch studies.

The aim, other than a conducting a generalized review of a number of Bosch's attributed works, was to determine which might be confidently categorized as autograph and which might be put down to imitators or followers, what relationships might exist within the artist's oeuvre and to what extent did his workshop play a role in the execution of larger works such as panel paintings and related drawings.<sup>53</sup> The total output of the project was published in two generously illustrated books in February 2016 (the *Catalogue Raisonné: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman*<sup>54</sup> and its supplementary volume *Technical studies: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman*<sup>55</sup>) as well as an interactive website, Boschproject.org, with a massive number of freely accessible, high resolution images of IR, IRR, VIS and XR photographs taken in situ of Bosch works. The ability to compare different layers and details of the paintings side-by-side with the advanced image processor contained in the curtain viewer technology provided many previously unknown options for comparison for the researchers and laypeople alike to make comparisons between artworks and view the different layers of a panel paintings simultaneously.<sup>56</sup>

These three aspects – two books and a website – were designed to “summarize historical information about Bosch's life and work” while also presenting the results of the BRCP's

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<sup>53</sup> Ilsink et al., 8.

<sup>54</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*.

<sup>55</sup> Luuk Hoogstede et al., *Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman: Technical Studies* (Brussels and New Haven: Mercatorfonds, 2016).

<sup>56</sup> Kok, “Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years,” 116.

extensive research on a total of thirty-four works.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, each entry in the catalogue was accompanied by a written commentary that combined the collected data with a discussion on the work's iconography, condition, style and reasons for attribution/de-attribution.

## 2. 2 Data gathered by the BRCP and scientific analysis

With the exception of the field of recent conservation studies, the majority of Bosch research tends to focus on the meaning and interpretation of the artist's works. Therefore, analysis tends to land in one of two camps: the conservational or the art historical. Aspects such as the historical context of Bosch's production, his patrons, his stylistic technique and methods or the physical aspects of his work such as materials and effects of previously implemented conservation techniques have received relatively little attention in comparison to a flourishing amount of literature on the monsters, music, torture instruments, and metaphysical symbolism present in the artist's paintings.

While the historical context for the production of Bosch's works will be discussed in the next chapter, I will now discuss the scientific methods of the BRCP and briefly sum up their findings, including the decision to de-attribute several disputed works, and the 'discovery' of others previously determined to have been done by followers of Bosch.

Over the course of six years (between 2009-2015), the BRCP followed a systematic method of analysis for Bosch's known panel paintings and a selection of his drawings. The artist's entire corpus of work "was examined in situ and documented to as great an extent as possible in a standard, scientific manner".<sup>58</sup>

Paintings were methodically documented with the following technologies: infrared reflectography (IRR), ultrahigh-resolution digital macrophotography in infrared (IRP) and

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<sup>57</sup> Kok, 114.

<sup>58</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 11.

visible light (VIS), and X-radiographs (XR).<sup>59</sup> Images were digitized and then stitched together virtually. An innovative solution for comparison across images called ‘curtain-viewing’ was developed especially for this project and implemented on the website. Such techniques, in combination with the study of the artworks under microscopic and macroscopic conditions in visible light, enabled researchers to draw conclusions about conditions and attributions of the artworks under consideration<sup>60</sup> by closely examining every level of the panel paintings which had been made visible using the advanced imagery (fig. 8).

By means of methodical investigation, the BRCP aimed to investigate all paintings attributed to Bosch, “as thoroughly and consistently as possible, using modern optical and imaging techniques”.<sup>61</sup> An approach carried out “in the same way and with the same methods”<sup>62</sup> between various works was absolutely necessary in order to establish a standard databank of information from which researchers could make a measured analysis of the panel paintings and drawings themselves. This is because, as Larry Silver has pointed out, “there are considerable advantages to be gained by studying a number of paintings as a group. If each has been examined by the same range of methods of examination under similar conditions, the results from one can be interpreted in the light of those obtained from the others: some of the elements of uncertainty involved in comparing results of different campaigns of analysis are thus absent”.<sup>63</sup> Such a general survey allows scholars to look for parallels and/or differences across a spectrum of similar works, making it easier for them to pick up on any discrepancies which might also appear.

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<sup>59</sup> For a full description of each technical term, please refer to the glossary.

<sup>60</sup> Technical art history and conservation is an entirely separate science, which I will only touch on here. The BRCP investigation made use of advanced technologies in imaging software and equipment to carry out their investigation, the complete details of which are listed on their website [Boschproject.org](http://Boschproject.org).

<sup>61</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 8.

<sup>62</sup> Kok, “Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years,” 116.

<sup>63</sup> Larry Silver, “Methods and Materials of Northern European Painting in the National Gallery, 1400-1550,” *National Gallery Technical Bulletin* 18 (1997): 6.

In addition to the above, the BRCP supported the conservation of several works in the process of their research in the five years leading up to the exhibition in 's-Hertogenbosch<sup>64</sup>: “the *Saint Wilgefortis Triptych*, the *Hermit Saint Triptych* and the reverses of the *Visions of the Hereafter* panels in Venice, *Saint Jerome in Ghent*, the *Last Judgement in Bruges* and *Saint Christopher* in Rotterdam. *Christ Carrying the Cross* in Vienna, the *Ship of Fools* in Paris and the *Adoration of the Magi* in Philadelphia”.<sup>65</sup>

## 2. 3 Expansion of the Bosch oeuvre by the BRCP and subsequent deattributions

Due to being “documented photographically with the same equipment, under comparable conditions, resulting in consistent and previously unattainable high-quality digital images”<sup>66</sup>, conditions were ideal for examining the authenticity of paintings whose attribution was under debate. In the cases of de-attribution, the BRCP gave reasons in the corresponding entries in the *Catalogue Raisonné* as why they believed that there were “insufficient ground for retaining the work within the oeuvre”.<sup>67</sup> Several such paintings were then ascribed to either a follower of Bosch or his workshop.

While most owners were prepared to collaborate, problems arose with three in particular: the Museo Nacional del Prado in Madrid (to which belongs *Extracting the Stone of Madness*, *The Table of the Seven Deadly Sins*, and *The Temptation of St. Anthony*)<sup>68</sup> the

<sup>64</sup> Kok, “Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years,” 111.

<sup>65</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 11.

<sup>66</sup> Fritz Koreny, “Review: Ilsink, Matthijs et. al.: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman. *Catalogue Raisonné*,” 348.

<sup>67</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 11.

<sup>68</sup> The Prado has published the results of its own research in the catalogue for their own Bosch exhibition, which took place from May 31st to September 25<sup>th</sup> in Madrid the same year at the exhibition in the Noordbrabants Museum. See P. Silva Maroto (ed.), exhib. cat. *Bosch: the 5<sup>th</sup> centenary exhibition*, Madrid (Museo Nacional del Prado, 31 May-25 September) 2016”. See note 20, Kok, “Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years,” 116.



National Gallery in London (to which belongs *Ecce Homo*<sup>69</sup>), and the Akademie der bildenden Künste in Vienna (owner of *The Last Judgement*).<sup>70</sup> The authorship of the three works in the Prado, (especially the *Table of the Seven Deadly Sins*, which has already been briefly discussed in the previous chapter) had long been doubted by scholars as authentic Bosch works. The Prado disagreed and has since then has vehemently fought to retain the attributions. This disagreement eventually led to a breakdown in collaboration between the BRCP and the Prado, which resulted in the cancellation of the inclusion of *The Stone of Madness* and *St. Anthony* in the Noordbrabant's exhibition (despite having been previously promised) because they had been deattributed by the BRCP.<sup>71</sup> Nevertheless, *The Haywain*, (deattributed by Koreny but retained as an original by the BRCP) was allowed to travel to the Netherlands.<sup>72</sup>

Likewise, the BRCP concluded that two new works could be confidently added to the oeuvre of Bosch's autograph works: the fragment of a *Temptation of St. Anthony* in the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City<sup>73</sup> and a sheet, *Infernal Landscape*<sup>74</sup> (also referred to as *Hell Landscape*), which was attributed to Bosch for the first time.<sup>75</sup> In addition to these, the BRCP confirmed several other drawings whose authenticity had previously been under dispute but had at one point or another been attributed to Bosch in the past.

## 2. 3 Connoisseurship as practiced by the BRCP

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<sup>69</sup> However, "the researchers were able to examine the *Ecce Homo* with the microscope and other instruments in the National Gallery's studio and were also supplied with previous research" in Kok, 116.

<sup>70</sup> Kok, 116.

<sup>71</sup> See note 5, Kok, 112.

<sup>72</sup> Kok, 121.

<sup>73</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 132–39.

<sup>74</sup> Ilsink et al., 526–35.

<sup>75</sup> Ilsink et al., 11.

As will be discussed further in the following chapter, if there was an anonymous artist, he would for certain have painted under his master's name as was common in that era.<sup>76</sup> The job of the connoisseur, therefore, is to differentiate the possibility of different hands and, therefore, styles, present in the various layers and elements of the painting. One might expect that for a research project based on the desire to set apart authentic works from those that might be otherwise attributed, a wide range of commentary on style, painterly technique and detail might be forthcoming.

In the *Catalogue Raisonné* and *Technical Studies*, the BRCP does make some cursory attempts at connoisseurship with details taken from VIS and IRR imagery of a selection of works. However, the publication only contains one relatively short discussion on the history of connoisseurship in the second chapter of *Catalogue Raisonné*, without arguments regarding the history of past attributions or misattribution regarding early Netherlandish panel painting or Bosch himself.

In several cases, a selection of details is presented for comparison (fig. 9), but a lack of commentary or attempt at a breakdown of style renders the comparisons useless, although they remain interesting. Kok, among other scholars, echoes this attitude: “the opportunity to compare numerous similar details in Bosch’s paintings sometimes gives rise to Morelliesque attributions on the basis of ears, eyes, hands, owls and other elements, but they are not always convincing”.<sup>77</sup> When it comes to the drawings in the second half of the catalogue, the BRCP’s arguments are especially weak, stating “the primary reason for our attribution of twenty drawings to Bosch

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<sup>76</sup> Kok, “Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years,” 121.

<sup>77</sup> Kok, 116.

rather than the eleven Koreny gave him is that the differences are considerably smaller than the similarities”.<sup>78</sup>

Finally, as Koreny correctly points out, one glaring issue within the *Catalogue Raisonné* is that of chronology: when the works (which are arranged in the catalogue thematically) are placed in chronological order, a great difference in style and technique appears between paintings which have been assigned to the same eras.<sup>79</sup> This issue is more or less completely overlooked by the authors of the catalogue, perhaps because giving it attention would raise more questions than they would be capable of answering.

In all, the catalogue is more focused on the idea of Bosch as a painter than as a draughtsman, and that, perhaps, is its greatest weakness. Discussion of style and form are surprisingly little given the length of some of the entries, although perhaps, this is to be expected in a volume encompassing such a massive amount of technical and historical information. As already mentioned, the majority of attributive arguments are based on the visual comparison of stylistic details, so that the reader is left to draw her own conclusions.

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<sup>78</sup> Fritz Koreny, “Review: Ilsink, Matthijs et. al.: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman. *Catalogue Raisonné*,” 350.

<sup>79</sup> “Anyone who lines up the paintings and drawings that were declared as original works according to the suggested dates will be faced by astonishing juxtapositions: for example, the authors think that St. Jerome at Prayer in the Museum voor Schone Kunsten, Ghent (BRCP No. 1), was made c. 1490, around the same time as St. John the Baptist (BRCP No. 5). This is perplexing, given the serious differences in painting technique and figure style” in Fritz Koreny, 365.

## Chapter 3: Establishing a historical context

### 3. 1 Working practices of late medieval artist workshops in the Low Countries

In general, we have a multitude of evidence for pupils of master artists producing work on commission for the elite aristocracy and growing bourgeoisie of the Low Countries during the late medieval era.<sup>80</sup> Historical documents such as the regulations of painter's guilds, legal records, accounts of civic and ecclesiastical bodies and references to painters in contemporaneous poetry and memoirs<sup>81</sup> yield a plenitude of sources from which we can infer the level of collaboration at hand in the production of large-scale works such as panel paintings, tapestries and stained-glass pieces.

Workshop assistants were crucial parts of the complicated machine that was the late-medieval artist's workshop during the Northern Renaissance. Operating very much like a fine dining kitchen today, it was strictly hierarchical organization under the leadership of a master that delegated tasks according to technical expertise and skill level. As a collaborative enterprise, it was common that multiple hands would have touched a work of art before completion<sup>82</sup>. However, only the master artist remained the instigator from idea to execution, and he alone would have had the right to affix his name (if he chose to do so at all – during that

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<sup>80</sup> For a more in-depth examination than this paper will allow, see Jean C. Wilson. "Workshop Patterns and the Production of Paintings in Sixteenth-Century Bruges." *The Burlington Magazine* 132, no. 1049 (1990): 523–27.

<sup>81</sup> Lorne Campbell, "The Early Netherlandish Painters and Their Workshops," in *Le Dessin Sous-Jacent Dans La Peinture, Le Problème Maître De Flémalle-van Der Weyden*, ed. D. Hollanders-Favart and R. Van Schoute (Louvain-la-Neuve, 1981), 43.

<sup>82</sup> "From the documentary evidence, it quickly becomes clear that collaboration on many different levels was commonplace". In Lorne Campbell, 43.

time it was still an uncommon practice<sup>83</sup>) on the finished work. He was also the only one allowed to sell the work for profit.<sup>84</sup>

While the length of an apprenticeship varied, in the nearby cities of Antwerp, Brussels, Tournai, Louvain and Bruges between the years of 1400-1530, it lasted on average three to four years.<sup>85</sup> We can surmise that a similar system would have been in place at 's-Hertogenbosch. While our knowledge of the system of training remains highly obscure<sup>86</sup>, it was clear that learning consisted in large parts of emulation of the master's techniques and would have depended in particular on which craft the apprentice wished to pursue. Those who only wished to draw were taught for only one to two years<sup>87</sup>. For book illumination, a whole two years was necessary.<sup>88</sup> A painting apprenticeship in which a student would have learned the complicated art of oil painting required four years.<sup>89</sup> Apprentices would have been given room and board by the master before eventually becoming eligible to receive wages after they had completed their training. They would have paid dues to their guild as well as (relatively small) fees to their masters<sup>90</sup> until the third year of apprenticeship.<sup>91</sup> Interestingly, journeymen painters (in French documents, referred to as *compagnons* or *varlets* and in Flemish documents, *cnapen*) were also common, frequently employed in the region, and were almost certainly the most competent of all the assistants.<sup>92</sup> The guilds, however, were highly controlling of such practices, although

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<sup>83</sup> Laura Ritter, "The Making of Bosch: Observations on His Artistic Reception," in *Jheronimus Bosch - His Life and His Work : 4th International Jheronimus Bosch Conference, April 14-16, 2016, Jheronimus Bosch Art Center, 's-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands*, ed. Jo Timmermans (s-Hertogenbosch, The Netherlands: Jheronimus Bosch Art Center, 2016), 279.

<sup>84</sup> Lorne Campbell, "The Early Netherlandish Painters and Their Workshops," 46.

<sup>85</sup> Lorne Campbell, "The Early Netherlandish Painters and Their Workshops," 46.

<sup>86</sup> See footnote 43, chapter 1.

<sup>87</sup> Alphonse Goovaerts, "Les Ordonnances Données en 1480, à Tournai, aux Métiers des Peintres et des Verriers," in *Compte Rendu Des Séances de La Commission Royale d'histoire, ou Recueil de ses Bulletins*, vol. 5, 6 (Brussels: La Commission royale d'Histoire, de l'Académie royale des sciences, des lettres et des beaux-arts de Belgique, 1896), 155. In Lorne Campbell, "The Early Netherlandish Painters and Their Workshops," 47.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Campbell, "The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century," 90.

<sup>91</sup> Lorne Campbell, "The Early Netherlandish Painters and Their Workshops," 46.

<sup>92</sup> Lorne Campbell, 48.

they recognized a master painter's "right to subcontract work to, or to commission work from, other masters" with relative freedom within their own respective towns.<sup>93</sup>

The highly flexible nature of a master artist's methods of collaboration renders a modern scholar's attempt to distinguish the number and attribution of hands in a work of art nothing less than an extreme sport.<sup>94</sup> During his training, an apprentice would have been obliged to emulate his master's style as closely as possible, while a journeyman would have needed to do so out of necessity.<sup>95</sup> On top of that, workshop techniques such as tracing, pouncing, which are used to multiply patterns, obscure the peculiarities of individual styles. In pouncing, as "one of the principal techniques" of replication, the outlines of a design are pricked before the entire illustration is moved onto another surface and dusted with charcoal.<sup>96</sup> When the drawing is removed, tiny dots are left behind, thus outlining the contours of the drawing which has just been transferred. While some dots are easily visible to the naked eye in various Netherlandish panel paintings where the surface has been worn down, developments in infrared reflectography have revealed a steadily increasing number of examples to technical researchers.<sup>97</sup>

Pouncing was directly related to the use of a common pattern book. Although very few have survived until today<sup>98</sup>, a "valued and important part of any painter's equipment was his collection of *patrons* or drawn patterns"<sup>99</sup> from which illustrative samples would have been

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<sup>93</sup> Lorne Campbell, 50-51.

<sup>94</sup> "When collaboration was taken to such extremes, it is hardly surprising that connoisseurs have failed to disentangle in any major painting the contributions of master and assistants or to define very clearly the peripheries of any artist's production". In Lorne Campbell, 51.

<sup>95</sup> Lorne Campbell, 52.

<sup>96</sup> Jean C. Wilson, "Workshop Patterns and the Production of Paintings in Sixteenth-Century Bruges," *The Burlington Magazine* 132, no. 1049 (1990): 523.

<sup>97</sup> Wilson, 523.

<sup>98</sup> "Only one "pattern book" of much aesthetic merit has been reconstructed. Nine drawings in the Louvre and elsewhere are fragments from a small sketchbook by an artist from Gerard David's paintings are portrait studies, apparently from life, studies of hands and a drawing which is probably a copy after a portrait of an English sitter". Fritz Lugt, *Inventaire Général Des Dessins Des Écoles Du Nord, Publié Sous Les Auspices Du Cabinet Des Dessins. Maîtres Des Anciens Pays-Bas Nés Avant 1550*, 19-21. In Lorne Campbell, "The Early Netherlandish Painters and Their Workshops," 53.

<sup>99</sup> Lorne Campbell, "The Early Netherlandish Painters and Their Workshops," 53.

shown to potential clients. In many cases, they were passed down from father to son or master to pupil and could be rented to other artists or even bought and sold.<sup>100</sup> Such drawings were likely valuable education resources for a master's apprentices<sup>101</sup> and were used on a regular basis for instructive purposes. Pouncing would have increased the ability to reproduce pattern book motifs and/or "re-create popular compositions" for clients.<sup>102</sup> Archival documents points to the importance of such pattern books in the personal belongings of master painters, in whose wills and marriage contracts such items were frequently mentioned.<sup>103</sup> This is likely because "only a small proportion of pictures were commissioned"<sup>104</sup> whereas the great majority of purchased works were simply chosen from a particular dealer's stock.

Several researchers have pointed to the use of similar figures across multiple works by Bosch or attributed to the Bosch school.<sup>105</sup> Pokorny discusses a sheet of hastily sketched cripples currently housed at the Bibliothèque Royale in Brussels in which one of the beggars – madly swinging a crutch on his left-hand side – strongly resembles a carousing man in the central panel of the *Haywain Triptych*<sup>106</sup> (fig. 10 and fig. 11). A further similar sheet of sketches in Vienna confirms the educational purpose of this resemblance: what we are most likely looking at is the work of an early imitator practicing variants on Bosch inventions.<sup>107</sup> The easiest solution to this conundrum is that the figures were different views of a prototype from which pupils would have been expected to practice and copy, possibly before assisting in the

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<sup>100</sup> Lorne Campbell, 53.

<sup>101</sup> In a further illustration, "The Berlin Kupferstichkabinett drawing *Two Monsters* on recto and verso respectively can serve as an example of such an instructive work. The cowering creature on the right of the verso was copied and reused in the Rotterdam *Fragments of a Triptych* which is generally attributed to Bosch's workshop". Laura Ritter, "The Making of Bosch: Observations on His Artistic Reception," 280. See also Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman: Catalogue Raisonné*, 380–91.

<sup>102</sup> Wilson, "Workshop Patterns and the Production of Paintings in Sixteenth-Century Bruges," 525.

<sup>103</sup> Wilson, 525.

<sup>104</sup> Campbell, "The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century," 94.

<sup>105</sup> For example, "Jacques Combe already pointed out the similarities between the cripples in the drawings and those surrounding *The Haywain*. In J. Combe, *Jheronimus Bosch* (Paris, 1946): 46.". Note 26, Pokorny, "Bosch's Cripples and Drawings by His Imitators," 303.

<sup>106</sup> Pokorny, 296.

<sup>107</sup> Pokorny, 296.

application of the preparatory sketch (or underdrawing) to a larger work of art either during or after Bosch's lifetime. As the Brussels sketch has been dated to around 1515/1516, this is certainly a possibility. While Pokorny mentions numerous further resemblances beyond those related to the *Haywain*, they remain unfortunately beyond the scope of this thesis, although they do prove that contemporaneous Boschian figures are not difficult to find.

In drawings, even those as hastily drafted as mentioned above, it is relatively easy for a connoisseur to discern the hand of a master artist in comparison to that of an apprentice. This is because sketches – and therefore, also selected portions of underdrawings of panel paintings, executed in chalk – are often the work of a single hand, rather than a cooperative work as is usually the practice in the creation of a larger panel painting. In the drawings and underdrawings securely attributed to Bosch, slashes and feathery strokes confidently outline the forms of careening monsters, birds poised on the brink of flight, and a variety of hideous characters in an effortless fashion, a talent that can only come after many years of practice. The handling of ink or charcoal by an apprentice or follower is usually clumsy by comparison, with thicker, less confident lines and a tendency towards repetition of simpler forms. The recognition of such differences alongside the hallmarks of a master artist's style remains a major part of the practice of connoisseurship and makes up a large part of Fritz Koreny's argument for the existence of a talented left-handed studio assistant, which will be discussed in the next chapter.

### **3. 2 Economic frameworks of late medieval Netherlandish markets and export patterns for panel paintings and other luxury goods**

The fifteenth and sixteenth centuries was a period of unrivaled splendor in the area of the Low Countries. With a total of about 2.4 million inhabitants by the fifteenth century, the



region was already a densely populated and highly urbanized zone of habitation. By 1470, thirty percent of Flanders's population were city dwellers, compared to thirty-one percent of Brabant's (the region in which 's-Hertogenbosch was located) and a further forty-five percent in Holland by 1514. As one of the most developed regions in Northern Europe, Flanders, and later Antwerp in particular, became nodal points for merchants from England, the Baltic, Italy and France. Hence, a large portion of this period was characterized by economic prosperity, the growth of cities and a rise in artistic innovation.

With a growing population, a strong aristocracy and a rapidly expanding middle class came an increasing demand for luxury goods. The second half of the fifteenth century in particular witnessed an increase in the demand for Flemish paintings, which gave rise to a number of specialized markets for luxury commodities.<sup>108</sup> These included fine metalwork, stained glass, illuminated manuscripts and tapestries. Artists such as Robert Campin (1378/79–1444), Jan van Eyck (1390/1400–1441), and Rogier van der Weyden (ca. 1399–1464), rose in prominence with the emergence of large-scale panel painting, characterized by highly illustrative, jewel-like surfaces, realism, and keen observation of details. Bosch's work in particular was beloved by the Burgundian-Habsburg court of Philip the Fair during and after his lifetime<sup>109</sup> (indeed, the Burgundian nobility were the primary source of income for most artists during this period<sup>110</sup>), and orders for his most important works – including his masterpiece, *The Garden of Earthly Delights* – were shipped as far as Spain. It also seems that

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<sup>108</sup> Jean C. Wilson, "The Participation of Painters in the Bruges 'Pandt' Market, 1512-1550," *The Burlington Magazine* 125, no. 965 (1983): 476–79. in Wilson, "Workshop Patterns and the Production of Paintings in Sixteenth-Century Bruges," 527.

<sup>109</sup> IIsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 27. See also Bruno Blondé and Hans Vlieghe, "The Social Status of Hieronymus Bosch," *The Burlington Magazine* 131, no. 1039 (1989): 700.

<sup>110</sup> "In all probability the principal Netherlandish employer of painter was the Burgundian court, which retained a varying number of artists as court painters and which also intermittently provided temporary work". See the extracts from the Burgundian archives concerning works of art and artists collected and published by L. De Laborde: *Les ducs de Bourgogne, Seconde Partie*, 3 vols., Paris [1849-52], I and II". Note 2 in Campbell, "The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century," 88.

Netherlandish pictures were already being shipped in extremely great quantities to Italy.<sup>111</sup> Furthermore, the amount of religious Netherlandish paintings to be found in Spain, England, Scotland and Italy<sup>112</sup>, as well as painted altarpieces in Scandinavia and Central Europe indicate “a thriving export trade to the south and east”.<sup>113</sup> This meant that the repetition of motives, figures and themes by both a master and his workshop assistants was likely employed on a regular basis – as we have already seen demonstrated in the sketches of the previous section – and indeed, might have been required to meet a high demand for product. However, in general, “the workings of the export trade, like the activities of the dealers, are clouded in almost total obscurity”.<sup>114</sup>

Therefore, we should keep in mind that although all of Bosch’s paintings originated in one workshop, different works likely served different markets and audiences in terms of their content and function, a subject which unfortunately can only be briefly touched on within the scope of this paper.<sup>115</sup>

### 3. 3 Possible working practices of Bosch’s studio

Bosch’s name appears in only fifty-three official city documents over the course of his lifetime.<sup>116</sup> Hence, little is known about the structure or organisation of Bosch’s workshop.<sup>117</sup> Luckily, the scant archival evidence which we do have in relation to the artist describes at one

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<sup>111</sup> Campbell notes that Van Eyck was collected in Italy and also mentions the Medici collection of Netherlandish pictures. See note 18, Campbell, 90.

<sup>112</sup> “By the sixteenth century, Netherlandish pictures were available for sale in Italy in alarming quantities”. In Campbell, 197.

<sup>113</sup> Campbell, 190.

<sup>114</sup> Campbell, 197.

<sup>115</sup> Falkenburg, “Review of Hieronymus Bosch,” 606.

<sup>116</sup> “Most of these records are entries of account, meaning that they concern payments. In the remaining 31 documents Bosch is only mentioned by name as a tax payer or sometimes as the husband representing his wife, or as a member of his own family. Generally, these documents have to do with payments and provide only limited information on Bosch himself”. In Janssen, “Hieronymus Bosch · Facts and Records Concerning His Life and Work,” 239.

<sup>117</sup> Laura Ritter, “The Making of Bosch: Observations on His Artistic Reception,” 280.

point three assistants (or perhaps servants) receiving payments for the completion of a commission on Bosch's behalf.<sup>118</sup> However, this account from the years 1503-04 is the only surviving contemporary document referring any the artist's apprentices.<sup>119</sup> Unfortunately, "only in quite recent times have the personality and work of Jheronimus Bosch been interpreted against the cultural and socio-economic background of the Netherlands of the period"<sup>120</sup>, and although there have been strides made in past decades, a paucity of documentary evidence in relation to his studio and its working practices persists.

While a painter's collaboration with assistants and family members might be considered unusual today, throughout the Low Countries during that era it was in fact "standard practice".<sup>121</sup> This was likely due to the time and labour-intensive procedures necessary for the production of panel paintings, which required many hands for the numerous stages of assembling, painting and finishing. Likewise, it is not known with any absolute certainty whether Bosch had pupils, journeymen, or apprentices in his studio who would have either helped produce his work or produced in his style, although considering the archival documents stated above, this is likely.<sup>122</sup> Furthermore, tax records indicate that Bosch belonged to the top one percent of wealthiest citizens of 's-Hertogenbosch.<sup>123</sup> His house, placed prominently on the market square (fig. 12), "was one of the most distinguished in town", from which we might confidently assume that, as a man of significant means, he would have employed multiple

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<sup>118</sup> "The interpretation of the entry of an account from 1503/1504 has led to some discussion. In it is stated that the servants of Bosch (*Jheronimus knechten schilder van den drie schilden te makenen*) had received 6 stuivers for the three coats of arms of Jan Baex, Hendrik Massereel and Lucas van Erp... It has been thought that the servants were also painters and that they actually painted the coats of arms. If this was the case, it would mean that Bosch had a workshop in which he was assisted by other painters". In Janssen, "Hieronymus Bosch · Facts and Records Concerning His Life and Work," 243. See also Matthijs IJssink. "Review: Fritz Koreny Et Al., Hieronymus Bosch: Die Zeichnungen. Master Drawings." *Master Drawings*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2013: 396.

<sup>119</sup> Janssen, 249.

<sup>120</sup> Blondé and Vlieghe, "The Social Status of Hieronymus Bosch," 699.

<sup>121</sup> Laura Ritter, "The Making of Bosch: Observations on His Artistic Reception," 280.

<sup>122</sup> J. P. Filedt Kok, "Underdrawing and Drawing in the Work of Hieronymus Bosch: A Provisional Survey in Connection with the Paintings by Him in Rotterdam," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 6, no. 3/4 (1972): 133.

<sup>123</sup> Blondé and Vlieghe, "The Social Status of Hieronymus Bosch," 700.

apprentices in his studio.<sup>124</sup> While it is also certainly likely that Bosch had family members working in his studio (he came from the prominent van Aken family of painters<sup>125</sup>), there is unfortunately also a lack of archival evidence in relation to that.

As Jean Wilson has pointed out, “both visual and documentary evidence suggest that patterns of production and technique” in late medieval Bruges were “often directly related to those of demand”.<sup>126</sup> It is not a far leap to assume that, as Laura Ritter states, in ’s-Hertogenbosch, “without the multiplying capacity of its artistic production, Bosch’s output would have been seriously limited”.<sup>127</sup> The manifestation of similar patterns in various Bosch works (and those attributed to his workshop and followers) is proof not only of the necessity of repetition to keep up with the high demand for his imagery (a fact further attested to by the significant amount of wealth in the later years of Bosch’s life<sup>128</sup>) but also that his workshop operated according to a common model for that era. Indeed, “the appearance of identical or very similar motifs and forms in paintings produced within his [Bosch’s] inner circle” suggest a high degree of collaboration.<sup>129</sup>

In addition to the examples previously pointed out by Ainsworth, Pokorny and Koreny in chapter one, Flemish works were often produced in multiple examples<sup>130</sup>. Panofsky has written on the “copies of and variations on” works of Jan van Eyck and the Master of Flémalle

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<sup>124</sup> “In the common assessments of 1502/3 and 1511/2 each citizen was obliged to contribute ‘according to his state, power, honour and wealth’ – the last being, in fact, the prime criterion. Thus the assessments furnish a guide to the town’s socio-economic structure...In 1502/3 Hieronymus Bosch was obliged to pay a tax of 99 styvers, nine times the median figure for the town’s population at that time”. In Blondé and Vlieghe, 699–700. See also Janssen, “Hieronymus Bosch · Facts and Records Concerning His Life and Work,” 242–43.

<sup>125</sup> For a reconstructed family tree of the van Aken family, see Ilsink, “Hieronymus Bosch,” 397. See also Janssen, “Hieronymus Bosch · Facts and Records Concerning His Life and Work.”

<sup>126</sup> Wilson, “Workshop Patterns and the Production of Paintings in Sixteenth-Century Bruges,” 523.

<sup>127</sup> Laura Ritter, “The Making of Bosch: Observations on His Artistic Reception,” 280.

<sup>128</sup> Bruno Blondé and Hans Vlieghe, 700.

<sup>129</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 20.

<sup>130</sup> Wilson, “Workshop Patterns and the Production of Paintings in Sixteenth-Century Bruges,” 527.

at the beginning of the sixteenth century<sup>131</sup>, indicating that, in fact, it was likely the increase in demand for early Netherlandish art which caused a “refinement in methods of reproduction”.<sup>132</sup> While in modern terms, such practices of copying, replication, and reusing similar figures within the fine arts are normally denigrated, we must keep in mind the historical context surrounded the creation of Bosch’s works, which were treated as valuable luxury objects and less as singular expressions of an artistic brilliance (a mentality which would only come into its own with the advent of the “Romantic cult of genius”<sup>133</sup> in the late eighteenth century).

On the topic of reproduction, Wilson notes:

...to consider their evolution solely in an aesthetic context without reference to the socioeconomic circumstances has led to a view of production practice as a purely personal issue related to an artist’s particular creative approach or (where replication is concerned) diminishing creative powers and abilities. In the case of demand for Flemish painting, it would appear that the growing numbers of individuals desiring examples of this art shaped practice in quite explicit ways. Indeed, it might be argued that the demand for Flemish painting ultimately altered the very methods by which it was produced.<sup>134</sup>

Such issues beg the questions of if contemporary scholars have been too quick to put modern frameworks of analysis onto a historical society’s “demand for replication”, in fact ignoring “the power that certain images had within their specific communal context”<sup>135</sup> and the desire of a master artist to ‘trademark’ a particular style of his work.

Finally, the BRCP notes “whatever the case, the different hands detected in the underdrawing and painting of the surviving panels that can be linked to Jheronimus Bosch tell

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<sup>131</sup> See footnote 37. Wilson, 527.

<sup>132</sup> Wilson, 527.

<sup>133</sup> Larry Silver, “The State of Research in Northern European Art of the Renaissance Era,” *The Art Bulletin* 68, no. 4 (1986): 520, <https://doi.org/10.2307/3051038>.

<sup>134</sup> Wilson, “Workshop Patterns and the Production of Paintings in Sixteenth-Century Bruges,” 527.

<sup>135</sup> “Terms such as ‘copy’ or ‘imitation’ with their pejorative associations in modern art-historical usage should evidently be reviewed in the light of this society’s demand for replications”. In Wilson, 527.

us that close collaboration occurred at the workshop with a variety of draughtsmen and painters”.<sup>136</sup>

### 3. 4 Bosch’s studio after his death

It cannot be confidently known if Bosch’s workshop continued to operate after his death<sup>137</sup>, but we can look to other historical examples for clues. As already mentioned in chapter one, the historical records available to us do not mention the artist’s studio after 1516, at which point the contents of the house were claimed by his widow.<sup>138</sup> This was apparently a common practice as wives were occasionally cited in contracts, were known to negotiate on behalf of their husband, or are listed as taking over the business of running the studio after his death.<sup>139</sup> However, since no inventory was made at this time, we do not know which paintings were still in progress at Bosch’s death, or what might have happened to them thereafter.<sup>140</sup> One solution is to look to the example of the artist’s brother Goessen Van Aken, who was also a painter and whose widow Kathelijn is documented as continuing his workshop after he passed away. The studio was eventually taken over by his eldest surviving son Jan in 1504.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 20.

<sup>137</sup> According to Matthijs Ilsink, the despite the information available to us, the issue “remains unresolved”. In Silver, “The State of Research in Northern European Art of the Renaissance Era,” 520. Silver, “The State of Research in Northern European Art of the Renaissance Era,” 520. Silver, “The State of Research in Northern European Art of the Renaissance Era,” 520.

<sup>138</sup> “Bosch’s estate went to his wife, Aleid van der Meervenne. As they had no children, upon her death all of these possessions would be divided between her own family... and the Van Aken family in ‘s-Hertogenbosch”. In Janssen, “Hieronymus Bosch · Facts and Records Concerning His Life and Work,” 245. See also Ilsink, “Hieronymus Bosch,” 396.

<sup>139</sup> Campbell, “The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century,” 195.

<sup>140</sup> Janssen, “Hieronymus Bosch · Facts and Records Concerning His Life and Work,” 245.

<sup>141</sup> “The document was found and published by Jan Mosmans, *Jheronimus Anthonis-zoon van Aken, alias Hieronymus Bosch*, ‘s-Hertogenbosch 1947, pp. 28 and 69, note 17. For the original, see the City Archives in ‘s-Hertogenbosch, Old Municipal Archives, 1354-1520 (City Accounts), no. 1355 (1497/1498), fol. 8 verso.” In Janssen, 245, and note 27, 252.

### 3. 5 The problem of later imitations

Following his death, Bosch's work was "imitated and copied by followers until well into the sixteenth century".<sup>142</sup> As we have already seen in Pokorny<sup>143</sup>, variations of Bosch's depictions of beggars, fools, and devils were often incorporated into the drawings of the great artist's imitators. Meanwhile, Bosch replications and forgeries "flooded the art market"<sup>144</sup> in the nearby *pand* of Antwerp in particular.<sup>145</sup> Indeed, the sheer number of similar pictures currently visible in museums and collections across the world make it nearly impossible to ascertain exactly where the autograph works of Bosch end and the works of his assistants and followers begin. For this reason, the practice of connoisseurship along with the application of rigorous scientific data is a necessary aspect of any comprehensive attempt at attributions.

Uncommon for that period<sup>146</sup>, Bosch regularly painted his signature on his works "in clearly legible, calligraphed letters, which he henceforth placed systematically along the lower edge of his paintings".<sup>147</sup> Problematically, the same signature can found on autograph works well as later imitations completed after his death<sup>148</sup>, and is therefore "no argument in favor of assigning a painting to the master".<sup>149</sup> According to Ritter, "the fact that Bosch did not add a date to any of his works indicates that the integration of his signature served much more than a documentary purpose: it was an important device for consolidating different parts of paintings

<sup>142</sup> Kok, "Underdrawing and Drawing in the Work of Hieronymus Bosch," 133.

<sup>143</sup> Pokorny, "Bosch's Cripples and Drawings by His Imitators."

<sup>144</sup> Larry Silver, "Second Bosch Family Resemblance and the Marketing of Art," *Netherlands Yearbook for History of Art / Nederlands Kunsthistorisch Jaarboek Online* 50, no. 1 (January 1, 1999): 31.

<sup>145</sup> "Together with the countless copies and imitations on panel and canvas that also poured out of the city, they testify to the artist's growing popularity and to the steadily increasing interest in the demonic and caricatural aspects of his work". In Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 28.

<sup>146</sup> Laura Ritter, "The Making of Bosch: Observations on His Artistic Reception," 279.

<sup>147</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 113.

<sup>148</sup> Ilsink et al., 49–50.

<sup>149</sup> Ilsink, "Hieronymus Bosch," 397.

that were executed by members of his workshop under the warranting name of one *spiritus rector*’.”<sup>150</sup>

Despite the amount of technical data (especially dendrochronological research) available today, the number of Bosch imitations already circulating during the artist’s own lifetime renders any chronology we might try to construct useless.<sup>151</sup> Indeed, “the very phenomenon of copying and varying the original inventions of Bosch points to a small industry of painted supply meeting consumer demand”.<sup>152</sup> Ultimately, a practiced eye is necessary to separate the master’s hand from an imitator – whether pupil or artist in his own right. The existing scant archival records or otherwise contemporaneous documents do not comment on Bosch attribution directly. Even worse, although some are signed with the name Bosch, this is no guarantee of reliability<sup>153</sup>, because the standardized signature was easy to imitate and can be found forged on paintings attributed to followers such as the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* in the Rijksmuseum and *The Last Judgement* in a private collection in the US.<sup>154</sup>

The previously mentioned Felipe de Guervera wrote about a Bosch student who, as Bosch’s “highest achieving pupil”<sup>155</sup> would imitate the master’s signature – not with fraudulent intentions, but rather, out of reverence.<sup>156</sup> De Guervera also noted that in other cases, imitations were a problem: apparently some artists would go so far as to fraudulently sign their paintings with Bosch’s name before “smok[ing] them in fireplaces in order to lend them credibility and an aged look”.<sup>157</sup>

<sup>150</sup> Laura Ritter, “The Making of Bosch: Observations on His Artistic Reception,” 279.

<sup>151</sup> Laura Ritter, 280.

<sup>152</sup> Silver, “Second Bosch Family Resemblance and the Marketing of Art,” 31.

<sup>153</sup> Kok, “Underdrawing and Drawing in the Work of Hieronymus Bosch,” 133.

<sup>154</sup> Laura Ritter, “The Making of Bosch: Observations on His Artistic Reception,” 282–83.

<sup>155</sup> Laura Ritter, 280.

<sup>156</sup> See chapter 1, note 46.

<sup>157</sup> Felipe de Guevera, 42. In Laura Ritter, “The Making of Bosch: Observations on His Artistic Reception,” 289.



Unfortunately, while the number of variability of imitators is too large to be discussed by the range of this thesis, (and indeed, constitutes an entirely separate field of studies) I merely wish to point out that imitation of Boschian imagery, especially hell scenes and what were referred to as *diabolerian* eventually came to constitute a profitable genre with enough “consistent thematic material”<sup>158</sup> to provide countless pictorial variations on a theme and apparently, a tidy profit.

### 3.6 Establishment of historical context for the production of Bosch works

In conclusion, presented with the information above, several holes begin to appear in Korerny’s thesis. As previously discussed, workshop practices point to a multilayered, complex arrangement of collaboration and learning in which tasks were shared according to technical ability. While archival documents only attest to the existence of few pupils, we might hypothesize that Bosch’s studio, considering his considerable wealth, would have certainly reflected the size and hierarchical organization of similar studios in the Low Countries at that time. According to Lorne Campbell, in historical documents “it is not exceptional to find two painters collaborating on one commission, and collaboration between workshops on pictures which were not commissioned may have been common practice”.<sup>159</sup> This is not to suggest that Bosch would have engaged in such practices, or that his works are the strictly products thereof. It is merely to suggest that in the face of the above detailed levels of collaboration, international trade in luxury goods and working practices, a greater in-depth study of the historical context surrounding the production of his panel paintings would certainly merit more research, as it raises applicable points to our breakdown of Koreny’s thesis regarding *The Haywain*.

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<sup>158</sup> Silver, “Second Bosch Family Resemblance and the Marketing of Art,” 31–32.

<sup>159</sup> Campbell, “The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century,” 198.

# Chapter 4

## 4.1 The Prado *Haywain*

As previously stated, the *Haywain* has been determined by both the BRCP and the Prado to be a relatively late work from Bosch whose exact date remains under debate. Its history as a painting, however, seems to have been extremely popular. Two versions are listed in the inventory of the Spanish royal family from the sixteenth century, as well as a further copy and a tapestry based on the same theme in 1539.<sup>160</sup>

The composition of the entire panel painting draws its iconography from several different sources and, like many of Bosch's pictures, points to contemporaneous sayings or quasi-religious motifs. When closed, the image on the outer panels is that of a 'wayfarer' or travelling pilgrim. The metaphor of the human being as a pilgrim endeavoring to stay on the brave and true path while roaming through a wicked world would have been a familiar one to Bosch and his contemporaries since it appeared in several popular religious tracts and sermons at the time.<sup>161</sup>

For comparison, the BRCP points out in their own commentary on the painting to the sermons of St. Bernard of Clairvaux, which would have been available in Middle Dutch editions in both 1484 and 1495.<sup>162</sup> It describes the trials of the wayfarer as follows:

"Blessed are those who live as pilgrims in this wicked world and remain untainted by it... for the pilgrim travels the king's highway neither on the right or the left. If he should come upon a place where there is fighting and quarreling, he will not become involved. And if he should come to a place where there is dancing and leaping or where there is a

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<sup>160</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 336.

<sup>161</sup> For a discussion on the symbolism and iconography of the wayfarer in Bosch, see Yona Pinson, "Hieronymus Bosch: Homo Viator at a Crossroads: A New Reading of the Rotterdam Tondo," *Artibus et Historiae* 26, no. 52 (2005): 57–84.

<sup>162</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 336.

celebration... these will not entice him, for he knows he is a stranger, and as such has no interest in these things”.<sup>163</sup>

Apparently, Bosch used this character as a stock figure in his works, most notably in the central panel of the Rotterdam triptych<sup>164</sup> whose left and right interior iconographic program, as already discussed previously, are split between New Haven, Washington DC, and Paris (fig. 13).

When the outer panels of the *Haywain* are opened (fig. 14), the main composition of the panel paintings is revealed. The entire visual scene is split into three parts: on the left panel, we witness the fall of the angels and degradation of man, created by God and then cast out from Eden by the angel Raphael. The right panel will strike those even slightly acquainted with Bosch's works as a familiar scene: in the foreground, hellish devils prance while a raging fire silhouettes a blackened townscape. In contrast, the main and central panel (the *Haywain* scene itself) defies easy description. Whereas the figure of the wayfarer was a relatively recognized motif in religious writings by the sixteenth century, the central iconography of the *Haywain* challenges visual tradition. Most experts concede that Bosch visually depicts a quote from scripture, which compares the transience of human pleasure to grass – “referred to as ‘hay’ (hoey/hoy) in the 1477 Delft Bible”.<sup>165</sup>

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<sup>163</sup> This passage has been freely translated from Latin into English. See note 2, in Ilsink et al., 355.

<sup>164</sup> Ilsink et al., 316.

<sup>165</sup> Ilsink et al., 342.

## 4.2 Provenance

The *Haywain*'s provenance is for the most part unclear. This is to be expected, since the “almost total lack of documented pictures”<sup>166</sup> in early Netherlandish art hinders attempts not only at Bosch attributions but also attributions of panel paintings from this period in general.

What we do know is that there are several copies in existence. One seems to have been purchased by Philip II from Filipe de Guevara in 1570, at which point it was transferred to the Escorial, but we do not know if this was the one which is now in the possession of the Prado or was a further copy.<sup>167</sup> Between 1636 and 1900, there are several (likely different) *Haywains* recorded in separate inventories. The current one in the Museo Nacional del Prado was acquired in 1845 by the Marquis of Salamanca before being purchased by Isabelle II of Spain in 1848. In the early twentieth century, after being reunited with its left and right wings in 1914, it was housed thereafter in the Museo Nacional del Prado.<sup>168</sup> It was examined by the BRCP in 2013, who found it to be in a relatively well-preserved condition.<sup>169</sup>

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<sup>166</sup> Campbell, “The Art Market in the Southern Netherlands in the Fifteenth Century,” 197.

<sup>167</sup> Ilsink et al., Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné, 336.

<sup>168</sup> Ilsink et al., 336.

<sup>169</sup> “The engaged frames of the wings are original. In the centre of the closed wings, the composition continues over the planed-down vertical framing elements. The rabbeted frame of the central panel is of later date, it originally also had a engaged frame. The reverse of this panel was thinned considerably and cradled. Some old panel cracks and joins are apparent. Locally, there are some youth cracks in the paint, but the adhesion of both paint and ground appears good. Copper-green paint in the landscape has discoloured into brown, and lighter areas have become more transparent. There are paint losses and damages throughout, as well as abrasion primarily in the lower areas. Most damages were restored between 2006 and 2009, and overall the painting is in relatively good condition. However, discoloured varnish residues in paint interstices interrupt the luent modelling of skin tones. Locally, matte spots and glossy retouchings slightly distract from the otherwise good visibility of the paint surface”. In Ilsink et al., 336.

### 4.3 Koreny's view of the *Haywain*

As has already been noted, the seeds of Koreny's most important arguments, that of "distinguishing different hands and attributions"<sup>170</sup> can be found already in several of his earlier articles, most notable, the *Prologema*, published in the *Jahrbuch des Kunsthistorischen Museums Wien* in 2004.<sup>171</sup> *Zeichnungen*, however, is not only a discussion of Bosch as a draughtsman but also the relationship between all aspects of the artist's oeuvre: painting, drawing, and underdrawing. Due to the relationship which Koreny believes inherently exists between the underdrawing of a panel painting and drawing, he uses his conclusions about the drawings of Bosch to draw further conclusions about authorship of painted works<sup>172</sup> – in this case, the *Haywain*. Of the three 'masters' he lists as active apprentices in the studio of Jheronimus Bosch, the most significant attribution he makes is that of the Master of the Prado Haywain, whose left-handedness he stresses and to whom he attributes several further pictures: the Lisbon triptych of the *Temptation of Saint Anthony*, the triptychs and panels in Venice, the fragments of *The Wayfarer* triptych (fig. 13), *St. John the Baptist* in Madrid and *St. John on Patmos* in Berlin. Finally, Koreny also rightly points out that comparing drawing to painting is an approach which carries "inherent risks"<sup>173</sup> for scholars who are not trained in such a specialization.

As stated in chapter one, Koreny believes that Bosch exhibits the same hand, line and dynamic form across the three 'core' drawings *The Field has Eyes*, *The Forest has Ears* in Berlin (fig. 5), the *Tree Man* in Vienna (fig. 6), and *The Owls Nest* (fig. 7), which he then uses as a concrete basis for making judgements concerning the rest of Bosch's attributed oeuvre. Throughout his book, Koreny makes a series of important and effective evaluations with a full

<sup>170</sup> Ilsink, "Hieronymus Bosch," 394.

<sup>171</sup> Fritz Koreny, "Hieronymus Bosch: Überlegungen Zu Stil Und Chronologie."

<sup>172</sup> For a full table of Koreny's attributions, see Ilsink, "Hieronymus Bosch," 406–7.

<sup>173</sup> Fritz Koreny, "Review: Ilsink, Matthijs et. al.: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman. Catalogue Raisonne," 349.

analysis of stylistic details in comparisons between several drawings and a selection of underdrawings – most notably, the angel on the left wing on the *Haywain* triptych. As his comparative analyses are primarily focused on small details such as noses, paint handling, expression of emotion and the treatment of line, they describe in painstaking detail his thought process in a coherent and comprehensive manner. As an especially effective comparison he also leans heavily on Bosch's depictions of birds, which are generally acknowledged among Bosch specialists to be especially expressive examples of the artist's true drafting technique.

The hatching displayed in underdrawings and drawings, according to Koreny, is particularly useful in displaying right or left-handed tendencies because of the manner in which certain lines are formed with either a light or heavy hand. The angel on the left panel of the *Haywain* (fig. 1), according to Koreny, exhibits demonstrably left-handed hatching due to its dense lines and clumsy figure formation. In this aspect, he certainly raises a valid point. The angel, even to an untrained eye, demonstrates a considerably awkward handling of line and shadow, which one would not expect from the master of the exuberant lightness depicted in in the *The Field has Eyes*, *The Forest has Ears* or *The Garden of Earthly Delights*.

However (and most problematically), at the time of publication, a full IRR image of the *Haywain* had not yet been made. Koreny based his thesis off of smaller infrared reflectograms made of the painting during examinations by Carmen Garrido and Roger van Schoute in 2001.<sup>174</sup> Furthermore, as also previously stated, the dendrochronological examinations of Fritz Klein points to an approximate date of creation of 1510-1516. However, due to the lack of precise accuracy inherent of dendrochronological dating, Koreny takes the statistically most likely drying time as the standard in this case of this particular work and pinpoints the year of creation at 1516 – that is, in the year of Bosch's death (one of the few dates in relation to

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<sup>174</sup> Carmen Garrido and Roger van Schoute, *Bosch at the Museo Del Prado: Technical Study* (Madrid: Museo del Prado., 2001), 120–59.

Bosch's life that scholars can confidently identify).<sup>175</sup> Koreny has made an assumption here to fit a data set to his own conclusions, an approach which is methodologically tricky at best. In addition to this aspect, as has been previously pointed out by other scholars, he does not take into account the complex working practices of a late medieval artist's workshop (as extensively discussed in chapter three of this paper), and draws a direct correlation between the author of an underdrawing of a painting and its painter. It is more likely than not that Bosch did not work alone – many possibilities for collaboration would have surfaced according to his wealth and family history, and as we have also seen, especially since archival evidence mentions three servants or assistants painting on Bosch's behalf.

That being said, Koreny's *Zeichnungen* is undoubtedly the most important publications on Bosch to have been written in recent years<sup>176</sup> and the only one to focus with so much energy on the practice of connoisseurship in relation to the works of the master. Indeed, even members of the BRCP admit that Koreny has "based his assessment of the authorship of the drawings on a painstaking and well-illustrated stylistic analysis of the paintings attributed to Bosch."<sup>177</sup>

## 4.4 BRCP view of the *Haywain*

The BRCP is quite clear in their view on the entire matter: "There is nothing in the painting's execution, in either the underdrawing or the paint layer, to suggest that the Prado

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<sup>175</sup> "Bei der Datierung des Heuwagens wird die Dendrochronologie hilfreich: Nach den vorhandenen jahresringen der verwendeten Eiche ermittelte Klein als frühestes Falldatum das Jahr 1508. Rechnet man mindestens zwei Jahre für die Trocknung des Holzes, bevor die Tafeln bemalbar sind, so konnte das Heuwagen Triptychon frühestens 1510, den empfohlenen Durchschnittswerten entsprechend aber erst 1516, also um oder sogar erst nach Boschs Tod, entstanden sein". In Fritz Koreny, *Hieronymus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts*, 95.

<sup>176</sup> Kok, "Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years," 114.

<sup>177</sup> Kok, 114.

*Haywain* is not an autograph work”.<sup>178</sup> The Museo Nacional del Prado are in agreement.<sup>179</sup> The BRCP, unlike Koreny, do not believe that the style of an underdrawing is the only criterion for a Bosch attribution, and place a much greater emphasis on the handling of composition in the surface treatments and depiction of form.

A look at the BRCP data in relation to the *Haywain*, in particular, the IRR imagery of the entire panel which was made in 2013, reveals that the IRR scan of the left wing angel is, if anything at all, an anomaly. Indeed, the remainder of the entire composition is dynamic, flexible, and light-handed, exhibiting significant liveliness and energy, as well as a freedom of form which sketches both confidently and self-assertively. In explicitly refuting Koreny, the BRCP states that “the information from the study of the underdrawings fits well with the image of an artist with an exceptionally creative mind, for whom drawing and underdrawing were an integral element of the creative process”.<sup>180</sup>

However, the BRCP does not go further than that. In contrast to Koreny, “the BRCP has also been unable to indicate where, how, and to what extent assistants and other members of the shop worked on the various paintings attributed to the master”.<sup>181</sup> As their commentary lacks a clear analysis of different types of underdrawings, it is difficult to reach any unaided conclusion about the possibility of different hands. Therefore, their attributions – even in regard to the disputed *Haywain* – remain less effective than they might be.

<sup>178</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 336.

<sup>179</sup> “The technical documentation now available on the *Haywain* Triptych in the Museo del Prado, referred to below, confirms without any doubt that it is an original by Bosch,”. Pilar Silva Maroto et al., *Bosch : The 5th Centenary Exhibition*, 35.

<sup>180</sup> Ilsink et al., *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*, 67–68.

<sup>181</sup> Kok, “Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years,” 119.



## 4.1 Likelihood of a Bosch attribution or deattribution in the case of the *Haywain*

As Koreny has correctly observed: “hardly any other artist at the turn of the sixteenth century has faced such controversy in terms of attribution, workshop followers, imitation or copies”.<sup>182</sup> As an independent observer in search of authorship, the first thing we might do is check for common patterns across works – for example, we might search for evidence of a pupil copying a particular figure. As we have already seen, there exist have several comparative examples within the Bosch oeuvre of similar figures between paintings and drawings which are directly related to the *Haywain* triptych in form and function.

If we apply this approach to the *Haywain*, which, as we have seen, also has a wayfarer figure in the outer wings of the panel<sup>183</sup>, the most obvious parallel can be found in central panel of the *Wayfarer* triptych.<sup>184</sup> While easy comparison could be made between the two at the 2016 ‘s-Hertogenbosch exhibition<sup>185</sup>, within a paper it is significantly more difficult. However, as brush underdrawings are a crucial element of attribution for both Koreny and the BRCP, we might begin by examining the IRR images of each painting with special regards to the detail of the angel in comparison to the whole of the composition. An active comparison in combination with an active reading of current technical literature raises several elements which speak both for and against Koreny’s view of the matter.

The first is that “it is becoming increasingly evident, especially through efforts of the Bosch Research and Conservation Project in recent years, that pictures attributed to Bosch were

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<sup>182</sup> Fritz Koreny, “Review: Ilsink, Matthijs et. al.: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman. Catalogue Raisonne,” 348.

<sup>183</sup> Kok, “Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years,” 113.

<sup>184</sup> Kok, 113.

<sup>185</sup> Space does not allow for a review of this exhibition, but for further reference of the BRCP’s activities in connection with the exhibition, please refer to the exhibition catalogue by M. Ilsink and J. Koldeweij, *Hieronymus Bosch, visions of genius*, Brussels (Mercatorfonds) and s’Hertogenbosch (Het Noordbrabants Museum, 13 February to 8 May) 2016.

produced by various hands. This is certainly also the case for the underdrawings”.<sup>186</sup> Bosch’s technique has been studied since a publication in 1967 by Roger van Schoute of the first infrared photographs of the artist’s paintings, which revealed their underdrawings. Since then, general consensus confirms of presence of at least two hands present in the underdrawings of a number of panel paintings by Bosch: a light, sketchy one, which deftly shapes figures with a graceful energy, and a second heavier one, which hatches figures and in some places, “appears to prepare the structure of the paint layers”.<sup>187</sup> In the Vienna *Last Judgement*, for example, Kok points out that IRR has revealed a completely different hand in the painting’s underdrawings than the one which we have come to expect from the master<sup>188</sup>, while “the underdrawings of the Ghent *Christ Carrying the Cross* and the Vienna *Last Judgement* are unmistakably by different hands” despite the fact that “both paintings are considered wholly autograph by Koreny”.<sup>189</sup>

IRR images of the *Haywain* conform to this formation, as evidenced by the extremely lively underdrawing majority of the painting with the exception of various details done in an obviously different hand – this is, as done in that same style as described by Koreny. Thick and determined, the underdrawing of the angel outlines the shading in the figure’s drapery, perhaps to give a painter more confidence when filling out such a prominent figure in the entire composition, whereas the rest of the composition is energetic and only lightly sketched out in the manner of a mature artist with confidence in his own compositional abilities.

Secondly, both the BRCP and the Prado lean heavily on Klein’s dendrochronological dating of the *Haywain*, as do the writings of those who have criticized Koreny’s thesis in the years after the publication of his book. However, dendrochronology can also be inconclusive, since it based on an extremely small sample set which can also be affected by climatological

<sup>186</sup> Ilsink, “Hieronymus Bosch,” 397.

<sup>187</sup> Kok, “Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years,” 118.

<sup>188</sup> Kok, 118.

<sup>189</sup> Ilsink, “Hieronymus Bosch,” 297.

factors such as hot summer and dry winters. With a lag of between two and eight years to allow for travel time and storage, we should remember that precise dating to a particular year without a secondary source of analysis such as archival documents renders this type of technical analysis only approximate at best. While the *Haywain* could have been completed as early as 1510, it does not rule out a later date of completion, which, indeed, could theoretically have been done in any number of decades after Bosch's death.

Lastly, to remove the *Haywain* from Bosch's oeuvre creates an artificial distinction between different hands which does not seem to take into account contemporaneous workshop practices.<sup>190</sup> As we have already seen, "collaboration on many different levels was commonplace".<sup>191</sup> In Kok's view, the example of assistants playing a larger role in the preparation of a work is certainly possible in the case of the *Haywain*.<sup>192</sup> While "unfortunately we can never compare two pictures and say with absolute certainty that one is by the master, the other by his apprentice"<sup>193</sup>, a deft understanding of historical production can lead to illuminations and aid in the attribution of disputed works such as these.

Ultimately, does attribution depend on technical analysis or connoisseurship? I argue for a balanced, interdisciplinary approach which makes use of both sides of the argument to draw conclusions. Given the information above, the historical context and scientific data available for *The Haywain*, I would tentatively state that the work was most likely a collaboration between Bosch – evidenced primarily by the free handed underdrawing evident in the majority of the panel painting – and one or more pupils.

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<sup>190</sup> "To remove a group of paintings from Bosch's oeuvre, which would need to have been painted by a different hand and at a later date, is a simplification that does not take into account the practices of a late medieval workshop and the family of painters into which Bosch was born and raised. It excludes the possibility of diachronic or synchronic collaboration in the workshop". In Ilsink, 400.

<sup>191</sup> Lorne Campbell, "The Early Netherlandish Painters and Their Workshops," 43.

<sup>192</sup> "There are weaker passages in the interior, while the exterior appears to be decidedly less typical of Bosch when compared to the *Wayfarer* panel in Rotterdam" Kok, "Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years," 119.

<sup>193</sup> Lorne Campbell, "The Early Netherlandish Painters and Their Workshops," 52.

## Conclusion

As we have seen, “any attempt to come to terms with the importance of imagery in this society or the means by which it was achieved must take into account questions of demand”.<sup>194</sup> Without any sort of concrete agreement by specialists on any particular set of data, it is difficult to come to any consensus of any sort, even in regard to a single picture such as the *Haywain*.

While I do not entirely share the view of the BRCP about the unity of the works attributed directly to Bosch’s hand, I do not also agree entirely with Koreny. However, in the case of the *Haywain*, an analysis according to his points of view is certainly due.

Unfortunately, the scope of the thesis has only been able to make an attempt on attribution based on the qualities of the underdrawing of the *Haywain* in comparison to Koreny’s ‘core’ Bosch oeuvre. Koreny also writes a great detail about attribution based on painting, which assuredly deserves a much longer paper. However, I am inclined to believe that his thesis regarding the different (and possible left-hand) origins of the angel on the left panel of the *Haywain* holds water. However, this style is only evident in the one isolated figure, and indeed, does not fit to the overall composition of the underdrawing at all<sup>195</sup>, therefore, it cannot be as equally applicable to rest of the panel picture.

Given the historical context, methods of production and scientific evidence provided by the BRCP, a middle ground of attribution seems most likely. Different hands more than likely worked in collaboration on the production of the *Haywain*. The question remains: who

<sup>194</sup> Wilson, “Workshop Patterns and the Production of Paintings in Sixteenth-Century Bruges,” 527.

<sup>195</sup> ““There are strong indications that paintings in Bosch’s style continued to be produced after his death and there has been speculation as to the existence of a family business once run by Bosch.... This would explain the variety of styles within Bosch’s oeuvre”. In Janssen, “Hieronymus Bosch · Facts and Records Concerning His Life and Work,” 246.

much of it can we confidently say was painted by Bosch himself, and does the appearance of workshop hand (however minor) warrant a complete deattribution from an artist's oeuvre?

Like Kok <sup>196</sup>, I believe that the number works executed with active workshop participation is significantly higher than is listed than the BRCP, due to their failure to distinguish between different types of underdrawings across Bosch's works. While the BRCP is extremely strong in technical analysis, it lacks the expertise in connoisseurship of Koreny, which is revealed in their treatment of the drawings that lack a certain depth of analysis in the BRCP publications.

In the end, we might ask if it really matters if there was a left-handed assistant or not, given the methods of production in which the possibility of collaboration – considering Bosch's status, family traditions, and social prestige – was almost certainly likely in most, if not all, of his works.

Based on the information and discussions which I have presented in this paper, and the difficulties encountered, I tentatively suggest some ways to move forward:

Firstly, the discrepancies between the BRCP and Koreny have revealed the critical need for a method of collaboration across disciplines, especially in regard to the practice of traditional art history in the form of connoisseurship and the discipline of technical studies. In that way, the deficiencies of one might be accommodated by the strengths of the other, and vice versa, leading to greater insight not only in the works of Bosch but early Netherlandish panel paintings in general.

Secondly, considering the wealth of data now available due to the multi-year long effort of the BRCP, scholars should consider establishing a standard methodology for the

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<sup>196</sup> "I suspect that the participation of the workshop in the execution of many of the works attributed to Bosch is greater than is acknowledged by the BRCP" in Kok, "Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years," 121.

analysis of disputed Bosch works going forward. The steps of such a methodology might include the creation of a publicly available catalogue of comparisons for details of Bosch paintings, a greater effort to distinguish reasons for material and stylistic details in the underdrawings of paintings, and a comprehensive analysis of the paint handling of the surface of Bosch's panel paintings, which not only differ in form (impasto vs. thinly painted) but also figuration and composition. Potential comparisons should also be sought by researching studios of similar early Netherlandish painters in order to identify the possible working practices and structure of Bosch's studio, and particular attention should be given to the possibility of family members assisting Bosch, due to his own family background.

Lastly, given the limited sponsorship period of BRCP and the tendency of certain museums to jealously guard their own technical data, an official panel of institutions in possession of significant works by Bosch should be formed whose purpose is to fund further research on Bosch in the future. Information hoarding, inter-institutional quarrels, and polemic academic articles are divisive and counter-productive to a common cause. Steps have already been made with regards to recent conferences and exhibitions. However, as of now, there is no official body (as in the case of an artist like Picasso) to manage an official registry of authorships, which makes any comprehensive and collaborative attempt at attribution difficult.

Considering the amount of material now at researchers' disposal, one can only guess as to the amount of time it will take before all viewpoints and technical data uncovered in the past few years in relation to Bosch might be able to be combined into any single comprehensive analysis. Despite differences in opinion, we are closer now than fifty, thirty, or even ten years ago to a more accurate method of Bosch attribution. With further refinements in the reading of data and the building of a comprehensive methodology, it is easy to imagine that within the decade we might have a greater toolbox for analyzing the works of a master who left so little – and yet so much – information behind.

However, in regard to the research of the BRCP, “one can speak of it without exaggeration as a milestone for Bosch research and a pioneering achievement that sets a precedent for the entire field of art history. No future, large-scale research project in the visual arts will be able to overlook what has been achieved here”.<sup>197</sup> Despite differences in opinion, what both Koreny and the BRCP have managed to achieve is truly astounding. Both publications, as products of highly trained specialists doing what they love, are a pleasure to read and we can only hope that the potential of future collaboration will eventually bring disagreements to a happy conclusion.

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<sup>197</sup> Fritz Koreny, “Review: Ilsink, Matthijs et. al.: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman. Catalogue Raisonne,” 348.

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# Glossary

## Dendrochronology

Of all the investigations possible in technical art history, dendrochronology provides one of the most accurate methods of dating due to its ability to pinpoint the exact date of the last year of growth in the cradle or other support of a panel painting. The growth rings are measured on a cross-section of wood and then compared to a master chronology which has already been compiled for a particular species of tree which has grown in a particular area. In the case of early Netherlandish panel paintings, nearly all of the wood originates among the once expansive oak forests of the Northern Baltic states.<sup>198</sup>

With time given for transport and drying (without which the wood would warp), the painting cannot have been started less than ten years after the date of felling for that tree. However, as this is only the earliest date of making, it is always possible that the painting could have been completed significantly later, as is likely in the case of Bosch's *Garden of Earthly Delights*.<sup>199</sup>

While dendrochronology is helpful in giving an accurate framework of analysis, it cannot, however, give a precise dating, meaning that it remains only a tool for attribution at best. The majority of dendrochronological data and analysis associated with Bosch was published by the technical art historian Peter Klein in 2001.<sup>200</sup> For a generalized overview see

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<sup>198</sup> Peter Klein, "Dendrochronological Analysis of Netherlandish Paintings," in *Recent Developments in the Technical Examination of Early Netherlandish Painting: Methodology, Limitations and Perspectives* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003), 62–82.

<sup>199</sup> In this case, while dendrochronological analysis produces a felling date of 1455, the painting has been given a much later date of completion due to its mature compositional nature and refined handling of details. Kok, "Hieronymus Bosch after 500 Years," 117.

<sup>200</sup> Peter Klein, "Dendrochronological Analysis of Works of Hieronymus Bosch and His Followers."

Molly Faries *Technical Studies of Early Netherlandish Painting: A Critical Overview of Recent Developments*.<sup>201</sup>

### **Infrared photography**

Infrared is defined as electromagnetic radiation which is shorter than radio waves but longer than the red sections of visible light (700 nanometers). In technical art history, it is used to examine the conditions and underdrawings of paintings because it allows a researcher to partially photograph underneath paint layers. While it is possible to look beneath pink, white, brown and red colors, blue and green remain, unfortunately, for the most part impenetrable.

Infrared photography (IRP) requires a specialized lens to filter out visible light but can be carried out with a normal camera and light source. In general, IRP can record patterns of absorption and reflection between the wavelength of 700-1,00 nanometers.<sup>202</sup>

### **Infrared reflectography**

Unlike IRP, infrared reflectography (IRR) is capable of revealing an entire underdrawing because it utilizes higher wavelengths of the electromagnetic spectrum, from 1,500 to 2,000 nm, which penetrates below greens and blue while black remains visible.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>201</sup> Molly Faries, "Technical Studies of Early Netherlandish Painting: A Critical Overview of Recent Developments," in *Recent Developments in the Technical Examination of Early Netherlandish Painting: Methodology, Limitations and Perspectives* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003), 13.

<sup>202</sup> Molly Faries et al., "Glossary," in *Recent Developments in the Technical Examination of Early Netherlandish Painting: Methodology, Limitations and Perspectives* (Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003), 159.

<sup>203</sup> Molly Faries et al., "Glossary."

It is used primarily to examine the underdrawings of paintings<sup>204</sup>, which can reveal any changes that might have been made in the stages between planning the composition and its execution by the artist.<sup>205</sup>

### **Maulstick**

A maulstick is an instrument used by an artist to steady the hand while he or she paints or draws. It consists of a lightly padded ball (usually made of leather) at one end on a stick, upon which the artist rests his or her brush hand.

### **Photomacrograph**

A photomacrograph is a type of image which can be reproduced at the actual size of the object or larger<sup>206</sup>. Essentially an extremely detailed view of a very small section of an object (in the case of Bosch, a painting or drawing), it is used in various types of imagery (IRP, IRR, VIS) and can be stitched together in composite form into much larger images.

### **Underdrawing**

Underdrawing is the first step of compositional preparation for a panel painting. It is essentially the rough sketch (or in some cases, the traced patterns) which an artist lays down on the prepared surface of a panel painting in order to lay out the composition that will follow. Different materials can be used in the underdrawing of a painting and will appear differently according to the type of imagery used. Black chalk and charcoal are dry materials, whereas pigments such as ink are liquid and are applied with a brush.

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<sup>204</sup> For an excellent discussion on the use and purpose of IRR in underdrawing examination, see Molly Faries, "Technical Studies of Early Netherlandish Painting: A Critical Overview of Recent Developments," 17–21.

<sup>205</sup> Fritz Koreny, "Review: Ilsink, Matthijs et. al.: Hieronymus Bosch, Painter and Draughtsman. Catalogue Raisonné," 348.

<sup>206</sup> Molly Faries et al., "Glossary," 163.

An underdrawing might only lay out the outlines of a composition, or detail shading and colors, for example, with the use of cross-hatching. Stylistic analysis of underdrawings can help with questions of attribution and give insight into the original composition and changes that may have been made over the course of the painting's execution.

For further information on the underdrawings of Jheronimus Bosch, see J. P. Filedt Kok, *Underdrawing and Drawing in the Work of Hieronymus Bosch*.<sup>207</sup> For a generalized overview, see Faries<sup>208</sup>.

## Visible Light

Visible light (VIS) is the spectrum of electromagnetic radiation which is visible to the naked eye. Colors range from violet (400 nanometers) to red (700 nanometers).

## X-radiography

X-radiography (XR) images are made using x-rays, which are composed of radiation with significantly shorter wavelengths than visible light. When an object is placed between an x-ray source and a recording film, an image will be made of the different materials absorb x-rays in different volumes. For example, lead white or vermilion paints (with relatively high atomic weights) absorb x-ray in larger amounts and therefore appear as lightened areas on an x-radiograph.<sup>209</sup>

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<sup>207</sup> J. P. Filedt Kok, "Underdrawing and Drawing in the Work of Hieronymus Bosch: A Provisional Survey in Connection with the Paintings by Him in Rotterdam," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 6, no. 3/4 (1972): 133–62.

<sup>208</sup> Molly Faries, "Technical Studies of Early Netherlandish Painting: A Critical Overview of Recent Developments," 21–24.

<sup>209</sup> Molly Faries et al., "Glossary," 168–69.

## Appendix: Figures



Figure 1a (left) and 1b (right). VIS (fig. 1a) and IRR (fig. 1b) imagery of a detail of the angel on the left interior panel of the Haywain triptych. Jheronimus Bosch, *The Haywain*. Musco del Prado, Madrid, c. 1510-1516.

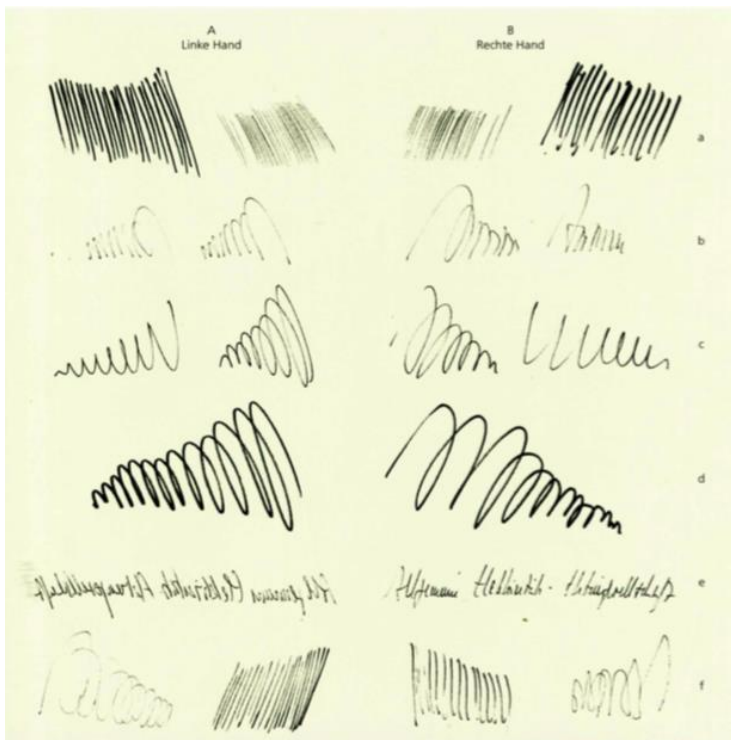


Figure 2. Right-handed vs. left hand hatching. "Beispiele und Erläuterung nach Richard Jung, 1977". Fritz Koreny. *Hieronymus Bosch – Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Brepols Publishers, 2012, 69.





Figure 3. Evidence of left-handed hatching, as can be found in this work of the left-handed artist Leonardo da Vinci. “Leonardo da Vinci, Fünf groteske Köpfe, um 1495. Windsor Castle, Royal Collection, Inv. 124959. Feder mit brauner Tinte auf Papier, 260x205 mm”. Fritz Koreny. *Hieronymus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Brepols Publishers, 2012, 70



Figure 4. Example of right-handed hatching, as seen in the example of the right-handed artist Albrecht Dürer. “Albrecht Dürer, Erasmus von Rotterdam, 1520. Paris, Musée du Louvre, Department des Arts Graphiques, Inv. R. F. 4113. Schwarze Kreide auf Papier, 373 x 271 mm”. Fritz Koreny. *Hieronymus Bosch - Die Zeichnungen: Werkstatt Und Nachfolge Bis Zum Ende Des 16. Jahrhunderts*. Brepols Publishers, 2012, 70.



Figure 5. Jheronimus Bosch, *The Trees have Eyes, the Forest has Ears*, ca. 1500, Kupferstichkabinett Berlin, pen and brown ink, 20.2 cm x 12.7 cm.





Figure 6: Jheronimus Bosch, *Tree Man*, c. 1505, Albertina Museum, Vienna, pen and brown ink, 27.7 x 21.1 cm



Figure 7. Jheronimus Bosch, *The Owl's Nest*, c. 1505-1516, Boijmans Van Beuningen Museum, Rotterdam, 19.7 x 14.1 cm.

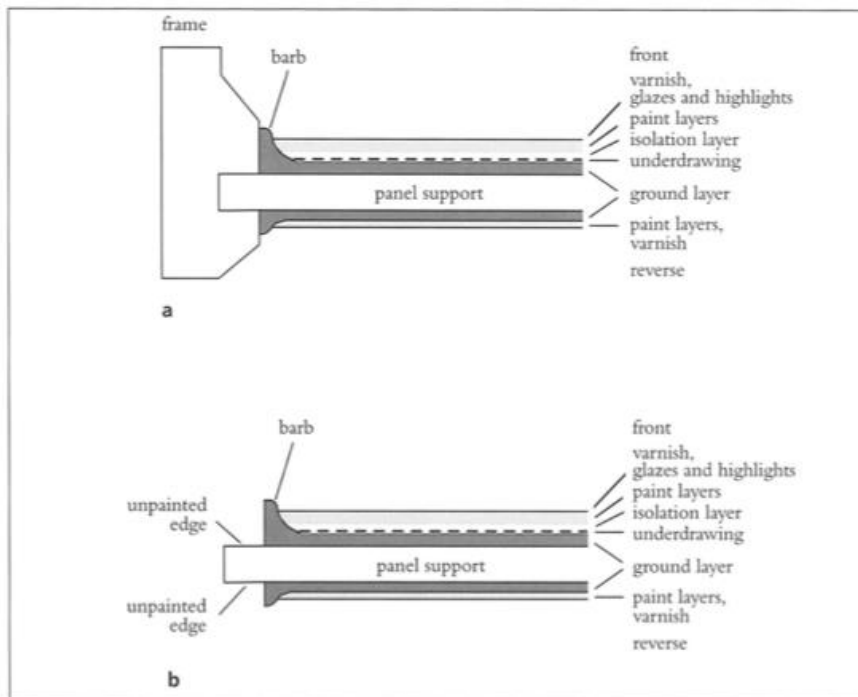


Figure 8. “Schematic cross section of the layered structure of an early Netherlandish panel painting with engaged frame present (a), and with engaged frame removed (b). In this diagram, the isolation, or priming, layer is on top of the underdrawing, but in some cases, it can be underneath”. Molly Faries, Narayan Khandekar, Kate Olivier, and Ron Spronk. “Glossary.” In *Recent Developments in the Technical Examination of Early Netherlandish Painting: Methodology, Limitations and Perspectives*, 149–70. Turnhout: Brepols Publishers, 2003, 150.



Figure 9. A comparison of ears taken from various Bosch paintings. Ilsink, M., J. Koldeweij, T. Alkins, Bosch Research and Conservation Project, R. Spronk, L. Hoogstede, R. G. Erdmann, Fonds Mercator, and R. K. Gotink. *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman: Catalogue Raisonné*. Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2016, 39.





Figure 10. Detail, *The Haywain*, c. 1510 - 1516, Oil paint on panel, Museo del Prado, Madrid.



Figure 11. Follower of Jheronimus Bosch, *Cripples and Beggars*, Bibliothèque Royale, Brussels



Figure 12. “Anonymous, View of the Markt at ’s-Hertogenbosch, c. 1530. Het Noordbrabants Museum, ’s-Hertogenbosch. Bosch lived in ‘Inden Salvatoer’, the fifth house from the right in the detail”. IIsink, M., J. Koldeweij, T. Alkins, Bosch Research and Conservation Project, R. Spronk, L. Hoogstede, R. G. Erdmann, Fonds Mercator, and R. K. Gotink. *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman : Catalogue Raisonné*. Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2016, 17.

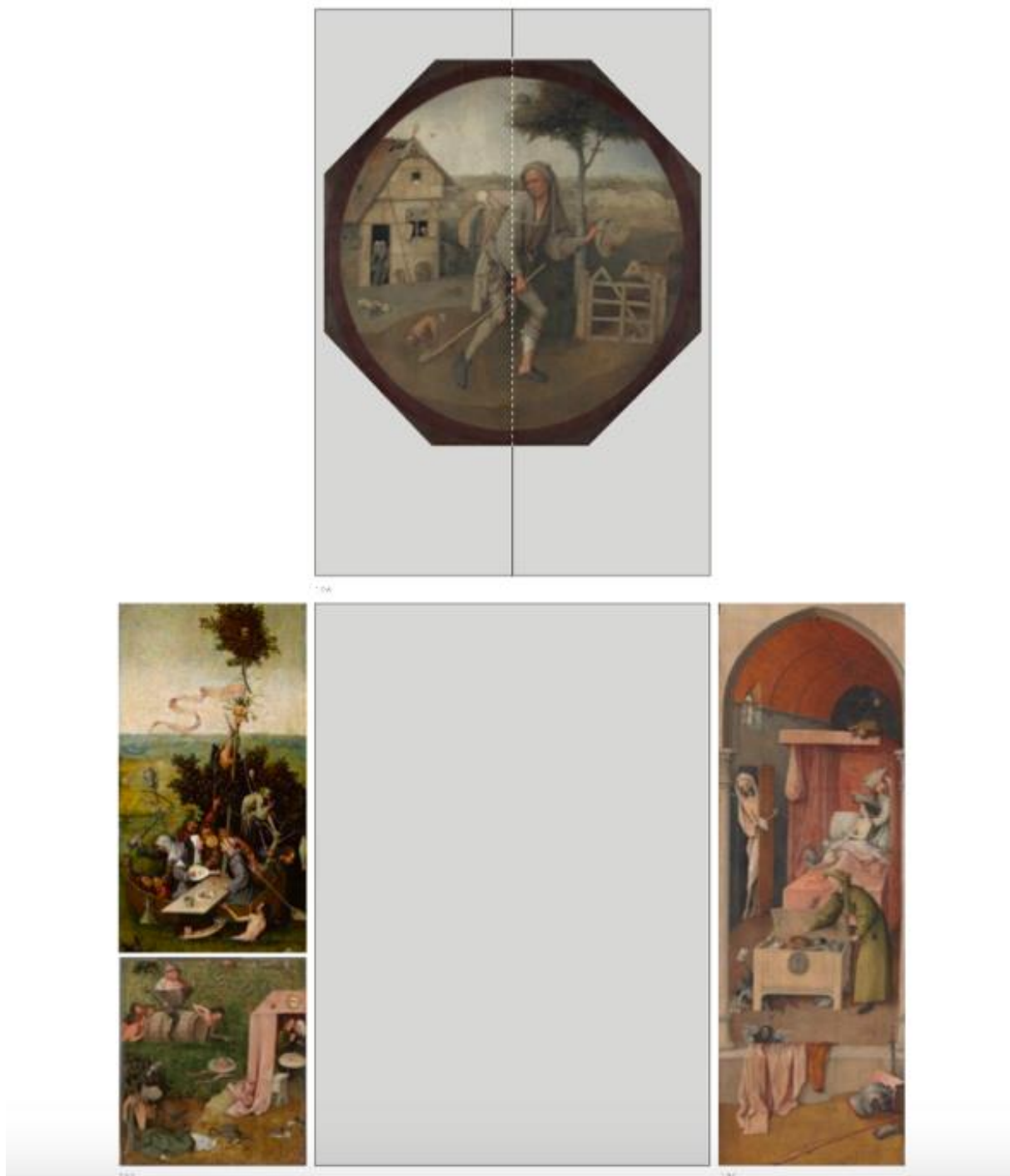


Figure 13. The four pieces of the *Wayfarer* triptych reassembled digitally. Currently the different sections are spread between four institutional locations: New Haven (Yale University of Art), Washington DC (National Gallery of Art), Paris (Louvre) and Rotterdam (Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen). Jheronimus Bosch, *The Wayfarer*, c. 1500-1510. Ilsink, M., J. Koldeweij, T. Alkins, Bosch Research and Conservation Project, R. Spronk, L. Hoogstede, R. G. Erdmann, Fonds Mercator, and R. K. Gotink. *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman: Catalogue Raisonné*. Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2016, 317.





20D

20E



20A



20B



20C

Figure 14. View of the Haywain closed (upper image) and open (lower image). Jheronimus Bosch, *The Haywain*, c. 1510-1517, Museo Nacional del Prado, Madrid. Oil on oak panel. Ilsink, M., J. Koldewey, T. Alkins, Bosch Research and Conservation Project, R. Spronk, L. Hoogstede, R. G. Erdmann, Fonds Mercator, and R. K. Gotink. *Hieronymus Bosch: Painter and Draughtsman: Catalogue Raisonné*. Brussels: Mercatorfonds, 2016, 337.