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► **To cite this version:**

Xavier d'Hérouville, Aurore Caulier. The Tricks of Leonardo da Vinci & Hieronymus Bosch. 2023.  
hal-04332728v1

**HAL Id: hal-04332728**

**<https://hal.science/hal-04332728v1>**

Preprint submitted on 9 Dec 2023 (v1), last revised 10 Mar 2024 (v2)

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# The Tricks of Leonardo da Vinci & Hieronymus Bosch

Xavier d'Hérouville <sup>1\*</sup> & Aurore Caulier <sup>2\*</sup>

During the Renaissance, calling an Italian “furbo” was a compliment. At that time, in fact, trickery, like pranks and mischievousness, were the characteristic of great minds, gifted minds we would say more specifically today. If Leonardo da Vinci is known for the excellence of his pictorial achievements, the intelligence of his works seen from the angle of deception is much less so... That of Hieronymus Bosch, his contemporary and northern alter ego, again less... The crossed and uncrossed visuals which illustrate this article are very free extrapolations which are the sole responsibility of their author. They are proposed here and not imposed. The informed reader will form an opinion at first glance, his imagination will do the rest... In the light of these different elements of convergence currently deciphered, we can bet that the spirit of curiosity of the specialists of Leonardo da Vinci and of Hieronymus Bosch was sharpened, to the point of encouraging them to return to look in the drawing books (and more particularly those attributed by default to their "followers") and the painted works of the two masters for other elements of iconographic detail concordant.

## Portrait of *Joconde, reine d'Égypte (Mona Lisa, Queen of Egypt)*, by Leonardo da Vinci?



Figure 1 | Copy of *la Joconde (The Mona Lisa)* by Leonardo da Vinci <sup>3</sup>

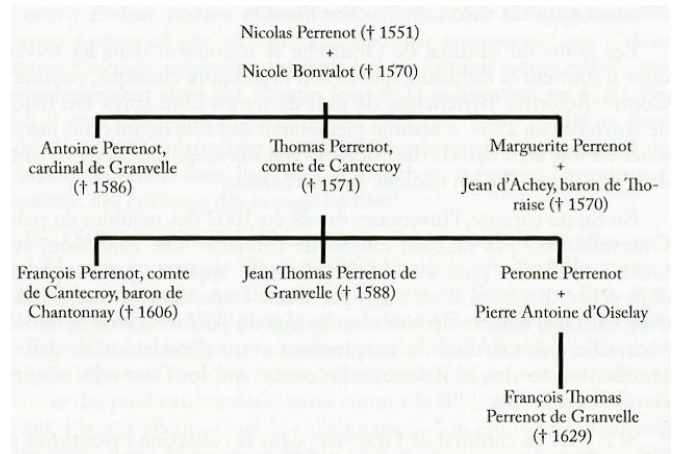


Figure 2 | *Succession du cardinal Antoine de Granvelle* par Simon-Pierre Dinard <sup>4</sup>

Designated as heir (Fig.2), François Thomas reserved, however, the right to accept the succession of Cardinal Antoine de Granvelle under the benefit of inventory. The cautious approach of François Thomas therefore gave rise to the drafting of an inventory of the furniture contained in the Granvelle Palace at the death of François Perrenot. Led by Canon Claude Boitouset, official of Besançon, the inventory began in Besançon on November 3, 1607. The

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<sup>3</sup> Oil on oak panel, 74 x 52 cm, Artcurial sale on 09/11/2021

<sup>4</sup> *Les Cardinaux de la renaissance et la modernité artistique*, under the direction of Frédérique Lemerle, Yves Pauwels and Gennaro Toscano, p. 157-168, IRHIS, 2009

description of the furniture was completed in February 1609. The document here studied and preserved at the Besançon Study and Conservation Library under the mark ms 1627, is a copy collated in Besançon on November 12, 1664 on a copy itself collated in Brussels on July 1, 1664 from the original. The Brussels copy must be the one kept in the General Archives of the Kingdom under the reference miscellaneous manuscripts no. 1039/c. Despite the work of Auguste Castan or Jules Gauthier, carried out from a less complete document, since the library and the “treasure” (the archives) are missing, but which seems contemporary with the writing of the original inventory and had the advantage for these two authors of giving attributions to the paintings, the complete edition and study of the entire collection was not done. No. 50 of the Granvelle collection of the Besançon Library is, however, an important step in the drafting of the inventory, a preparatory document, abandoning legal formulas to devote itself essentially to furniture and works.

Enlightened protector of the scholars and artists of his time. Patron and informed collector. He was also the builder of the Granvelle Palace in Besançon. Charles V sent him as a negotiator to Francis I – between 1526 and 1528 – notably to monitor the execution of the Treaty of Madrid.

**(?) Il s'agit du portrait de Mona Lisa, connue sous le nom de Joconde, par Léonard de Vinci : l'original de ce chef-d'œuvre est au Louvre, et on en connaît plusieurs copies très belles à Madrid, en Angleterre et en Russie.**

This footnote dates relating to the portrait of *Joconde, reine d'Égypte (The Mona Lisa, Queen of Egypt)* is the work of Auguste Castan, author of this monograph and was therefore written in 1867. However, the portrait of *Joconde, reine d'Égypte (The Mona Lisa, Queen of Egypt)* does not was no longer part of the Granvelle house collection since its dispersion at the end of the 17th century. So, could this painting by Leonardo da Vinci be in fact not the copy but the original of this masterpiece which has only been in the Louvre since 1798? Could Nicolas Perrenot have obtained it from François I himself, as a guarantee of compliance in his mission of monitoring the execution of the Treaty of Madrid? *Joconde, reine d'Égypte (The Mona Lisa, Queen of Egypt)*, could this painting by Leonardo da Vinci actually be not the copy but the original of the masterpiece which has only been in the Louvre since 1798? Its oak wood support makes it doubtful. An error in assessing the nature of the support can be a priori ruled out given the stubborn rigor with which the author of this inventory was able to describe each of the pieces in this collection, both by the nature of their different supports (canvas, copper plate, wood) as well as that of their respective frames (walnut, fir, etc.), as well as their condition and precise dimensions. We can therefore bet that this oak wood support was sufficiently remarkable at that time to be duly reported. Which ultimately leaves us as hypotheses for this painting only that of a version by the hand of Leonardo da Vinci copied from *the Joconde (The Mona Lisa)* which is currently in the Louvre, or even that of an original painted on oak wood whose *Joconde (The Mona Lisa)* from the Louvre would then be nothing more than a “cheap copy” painted on poplar wood... So, could the copy of *the Joconde (The Mona Lisa)* sold at auction in November 2021 by Artcurial (Fig.1) be this portrait of the hand of *Leonardo da Vinci* mentioned as such in the 1607 inventory of the Granvelle palace in Besançon?

Nothing proves it, but everything could lead us to believe it:

- Its oak wood support identical to that described in the 1607 inventory of the Granvelle Palace in Besançon. This feature is all the more remarkable since a priori none of the numerous copies of *the Joconde (The Mona Lisa)* listed throughout the world seems to have been made on a support of this nature,

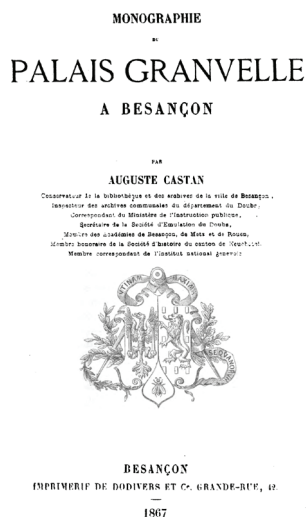


Figure 3 | *Monographie du Palais Granvelle à Besançon* by Auguste Castan <sup>5,6</sup>

Portrait of *Joconde, reine d'Égypte, (The Mona Lisa, Queen of Egypt), made on oak wood, by Leonardo da Vinci*, this is the exact title given in 1607 to the portrait mentioned on page 66, lines 3 and 4, in the inventory of furniture from the Granvelle Palace:

**Pourtrait de Joconde, royne d'Égypte, fait sur bois de chasne, de la main de Leonardo da Vinci (1), sa molure noircie, haute d'environ trois piedz et large de deux, n° 238.**

As stipulated in the preamble, this inventory was carried out in 1607, immediately after the death of François Perrenot (Fig.3), the last male descendant of the family of Chancellor Nicolas de Granvelle. Nicolas Perrenot (1486-1550), Lord of Granvelle, was first State Councilor and Keeper of the Seals of the Kingdoms of Naples and Sicily in the service of Emperor Charles V.

— 66 —  
avec double molure de nohier et un flet de jaspe au milieu d'icelle, hault d'environ deux piedz et un peu plus large, n° 237.  
Pourtrait de Joconde, royne d'Égypte, fait sur bois de chasne, de la main de Leonardo da Vinci (1), sa molure noircie, haute d'environ trois piedz et large de deux, n° 238.  
Le Triumphe d'Amour, fait sur toile de la main de Jean de Brix (2), peintre du roy de France, hault d'environ quatre piedz, large d'antant, sans molure, n° 239.  
Pourtrait de Scipion, fait sur toile de la main de Perdonone (3), large d'environ quatre piedz et demy et trois piedz et demy d'hauteur, sans molure, n° 260.  
Le pourtrait de Rafael d'Urbain et dudit Perdonone (4), faict sur toile, hault d'environ quatre piedz et large d'environ trois et demy, sans molure, n° 261.  
Pourtrait d'une teste collée de la main du Titian, fait sur toile, hault d'un pied et demy et antant de largeur, son chassis de sapin, ledit pourtrait à caduque, n° 262.  
Pourtrait d'une Venus et d'un Satyre, fait sur lame de cuivre, d'hauteur d'environ un pied, avec sa molure d'ébène, n° 263.  
Et un autre d'une Venus et d'un Satyre, faict sur lame de cuivre, avec un petit enfant, de semblable hauteur, largeur et molure, n° 264.  
En la grande garde-robe y a quatre pièces peintes de blanc et noir, sur toile, avec leurs chassis et molure de sapin, toutes caduques et pourries, non cothées.

(1) Il s'agit du portrait de Mona Lisa, connue sous le nom de Joconde, par Léonard de Vinci : l'original de ce chef-d'œuvre est au Louvre, et on en connaît plusieurs copies très belles à Madrid, en Angleterre et en Russie.  
(2) Connu en France sous le nom de maître Brix, ce peintre, né à Florence en 1496, fut le surintendant des travaux d'art de François 1<sup>er</sup>, il mourut à Fontainebleau en 1531.  
(3) Lizio (Jean-Antoine), dit le Perdonone, du nom d'un village de Frioul où il acquit en 1484, acquit une grande célébrité dans la peinture murale; il mourut en 1560.  
(4) Serait-ce le double portrait qui est au Louvre et que l'on a longtemps intitulé : Raphaël et son maître d'ornes?

<sup>5</sup> *Mémoires de la Société d'émulation du Doubs*, 4e série, 2e vol., 1866

<sup>6</sup> *La Monographie du palais Granvelle à Besançon*, by M. Auguste Castan, curator of the Library and archives of the city of Besançon, soberly and clearly written, with interesting details on the family and the biography of the two characters who played such an important role in the 16th century. The supporting documents contain a letter from Eléonore of Austria, dowager queen of France, to the chancellor of Granvelle, on the death of François I, and a particularly curious document: the inventory of furniture in the house of Granvelle. We see there that the palace of Besançon contained more than two hundred and fifty paintings, including several of the first order, Vinci, Titian, Dürer, Holbein, Correggio, and above all a large quantity of Flemish ones, and particularly many landscapes from the first half of the fifteenth century (*Compte-rendu de la Monographie du palais Granvelle à Besançon*, by Auguste Castan, Library of l'École des chartes, tome 31, p. 116-117, 1870)

- Its frame dimensions included are compatible with those of the blackened molding described in the 1607 inventory of the Granvelle Palace in Besançon.

Nothing proves it, but we can bet that future investigations in notarial archives and others will make it possible to establish the traceability of this hypothesis, and that all the scientific expertise techniques available to us today will make it possible to confirm - or to dismiss - very quickly the hand of Leonardo da Vinci, as described in the 1607 inventory of the Granvelle palace in Besançon.

### ***The Joconde (The Mona Lisa) of Hieronymus Bosch ?***



Figure 4 | Face extracted from the side panel of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka *The Feast of Metamorphoses* by Hieronymus Bosch and Face of the *Mona Lisa Hekking* attributed to an anonymous Flemish master

So, could this copy of *the Mona Lisa*, aka *the Hekking Mona Lisa*, sold at auction in June 2021 by Christie's (Fig. 4) be a copy of *the hand of Hieronymus Bosch* with regard to this face, presenting some remarkable features of similarity, sketched in one of the two parts of *the Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka *the Feast of Metamorphoses*?

This time again, nothing proves it, but we can bet that future investigations in notarial archives and others will make it possible to establish the traceability of this hypothesis, and that all the scientific expertise techniques available to us today will make it possible to strengthen - or remove - *the hand of Hieronymus Bosch* very quickly?

### **The “Great Master” of Hieronymus Bosch <sup>7</sup>**

“As far as Bosch is concerned, the appearance of this unknown means the destruction of all the prejudices, of all the errors which have disfigured his work, and the establishment of new criteria. We have seen that his smallest pictorial motifs are, in fact, not uncontrollable fantasies, but didactic symbols testifying to a rigorous educational, ethical and sexual system. But another conclusion emerges, even more important and revolutionary: behind these paintings lies, obviously, a hitherto unknown “author”. Because clearly the plan of the triptych of *the Garden of Earthly Delights* (Fig.1) does not come from a “pictorial” initiative, but from an intellectual system with a triple theological, philosophical and pedagogical base. These three disciplines flourish in the altarpiece in countless examples and didactic signs.

The *Great Master's* editorial instructions go beyond the simple “preparation” of the subject; the supervision is so narrow that it even touches on the specifically pictorial areas of color and composition. The altarpiece forms a symbolic totality, so that the directives extend to purely formal details.



Figure 5 | Inverted triptych of *the Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka *the Feast of Metamorphoses* by Hieronymus Bosch

The influence of the initiator thus covers even the domain always considered as the undisputed kingdom of *Bosch the “devil-maker”*. Alchemical amalgams also come from the *Great Master's* pharmacy. The harp-lute illustrates *the duality in a single chair of Genesis (Et erunt duo in carne una*, aka the “two in one”), and the botanical hybrid, half pineapple, half dandelion, is another illustration. A painter could not, we think, have created two such different images based on this single passage from the Bible: one appealing to the secret language of alchemy, the other to the mysticism of numbers contained in the theory Neoplatonic music.

The role of the painter thus seems to be reduced to that of a simple performer, to the secondary role of the craftsman. And as this highly spiritual altarpiece is entirely based on the idea,

<sup>7</sup> Wilhelm Fraenger, extracted from *le Royaume millénaire de Jerome Bosch* published in 1966 by Denoël editions

wouldn't it have been more logical to devote all our energy to bringing out the personality of the inspiration? Such a way of proceeding is itself reduced to absurdity because it contradicts the visual evidence. The painting, in fact, despite spiritual tutelage, flourishes in the greatest plastic freedom. Nothing in the composition gives the feeling of constraint or artificiality. On the contrary, everything seems to spring forth in a voluptuous creative delight, with a plenitude, an organic abundance which is more reminiscent of the spontaneity of the virgin forest than of the rigid rigidity of a garden. But how can this intellectual tutelage, which we are forced to admit, go hand in hand with such perfect freedom?

Guardianship and freedom are only reconcilable if we assume between the master and his disciple an absolute understanding, a harmony such that mutual understanding and a common sense of responsibility cancel out the differences between order and obedience, demand and accomplishment. In an agreement of this nature, differences are no longer felt as barriers but as an encouragement to create an authentically common work. *The Great Master* never demanded abstract fantasies from the painter, his disciple; he has always directed it towards nature and its living, ever-increasing organic plenitude. This rigorous submission to nature is based on one of the principles of *the magical science of Nature* professed by the Renaissance: on the *scientia signata*, the doctrine of "Signatures", which believed to possess the key to the occult powers of all natural substances and of all spiritual essences. According to this doctrine, every stone, every plant, every living being contains a certain energy, radiates mana; and for this energy, in the painting, to be captured and radiated again, the signature, that is to say the formative, essential force of the smallest object, animate or inanimate, had to be understood or grasped. This necessity obliged the painter to the strictest observation of Nature; she transformed this loyalty into perfectionism, which is, as we have seen, a magical conception of the function.

In the magical world of "Signatures," everything was of equal importance. Every detail, no matter how small, had to express the organic and functional force of life in all its varied forms and repercussions. Bosch, from this incessant, particular and necessary observation of reality, derived an encyclopedic knowledge of the realia of life; also he surpasses all the other painters of his time. This constant observation developed his sense of organic growth, movement and the play of physiognomies to the point that his art rose to the sovereign height of a universal physiognomism. Initiated by this priest-doctor into *the science of Nature*, Bosch not only learned to see and recognize; he gained that deeper insight into things that comes from true, penetrating vision: an infallible gaze for perceiving the characteristics of the object, combined with intuition of its internal mood. To achieve this vision, which mystics call "vision of the essence of things",

Bosch had to purify his mind through systematic exercises of concentration; we have already explained the method, it now remains for us to identify its goal.

The specific reasons for concentration placed the painter before a new task: he had to create a pictorial writing of a hieroglyphic character whose meaning had to be much deeper than that of the rebus, with sophisticated subtlety. The rebus is built on a duality: on the one hand it obscures an idea to the point of making it indecipherable; on the other hand he charges it with such expressive finesse that the intended joke hits the mark. Bosch's hieroglyphs are based, according to the words of Genesis, *on the duality in a single chair (Et erunt duo in carne una*, aka the "two in one"), on a syncretic vision; their complexity comes from their extreme simplicity, from their unexpected univocity. The key to Bosch's hieroglyphs is in the literal approach; their message is so fundamentally simple that at first glance we do not even think that all the meaning could be contained in the thing represented: we suspect a metaphor where the salt is hidden, and we look for the spiritual and refined point until until we discover with astonishment that the thing represented before our eyes contains the idea in all its simplicity.

With this *Great Master* (...), until now totally ignored, we discover one of the most powerful intellectual and artistic personalities of the Middle Ages (...) Announcer of the humanist ideal of the Reformation, we can compare him to Erasmus, the greatest of humanists. The esoteric science thus revealed by *the Garden of Earthly Delights* is of such depth that one may wonder where and how a man, at the end of the Middle Ages, was able to acquire it; which universities or academies taught such anthropogony? It was only in Italy, in the neo-Platonic Florence of Marsilio Ficino, Pico della Mirandola and Christoforo Landino, that a similar syncretism flourished where the *Christian doctrine of Salvation, Greek philosophy of Nature, profound symbolism* were mixed. *Hellenistic and Gnostic Mysteries, practices of magic and theurgical therapy*. Above all, Florence professed a theosophy stemming from the *scala mystica*, "the mystical ladder" of Plotinus, where all forms of Creation were included in a progressive realization of perfection, with man constituting the summit of this ascension. According to this doctrine, the rigid world of inorganic forms precedes, as an indispensable stage, the organic world; the plant kingdom is the primary form of the animal world and this, in turn, is the condition of existence of man. Man, a perfect creature, is the crowning achievement of all the stages which precede him and he leads them, mediator of Creation, into the higher system of an astral world entirely turned towards God. It is only within the framework of this *scala mystica* that the specific metamorphoses of Bosch, his stones which protrude like plants, his quasi-animal plants and his ethereal and winged men like genies, acquire all their functional and magical value".

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## Leonardo da Vinci vs Hieronymus Bosch or Leonardo da Vinci & Hieronymus Bosch?

“Men, what do you want from each other? Isn't the object of your wishes to bring you as close as possible to each other, to the point of never leaving you night or day? If this is what you desire, I will melt and weld you together, so that the two of you become one, and until the end of your days you lead a common life, as if you were only one”<sup>8</sup>



Figure 6 | *Elephantiasis* sketched by Leonardo da Vinci<sup>8</sup> and *elephantiasis* extracted from *the Haywain*, aka *the Wain of Vanities* by Hieronymus Bosch

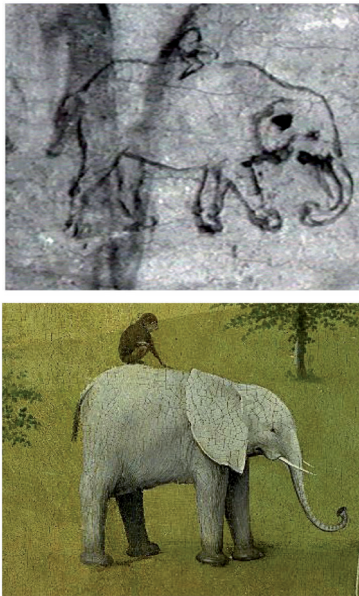


Figure 7 | *Elephant surmounted by an anthropomorphic form* extracted by infrared reflectography<sup>10</sup> from *the Adoration of the Magi* by Leonardo da Vinci and *Elephant surmounted by an ape-like form* extracted from the side panel of *the Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka *the Feast of Metamorphoses*, by Hieronymus Bosch



Figure 8 | *Character seated next to a tree with an anthropomorphic base* sketched by Leonardo da Vinci<sup>11</sup> and *Character seated next to a tree with an anthropomorphic base* extracted from *the Greed district of the 7 Deadly Sins* by Hieronymus Bosch

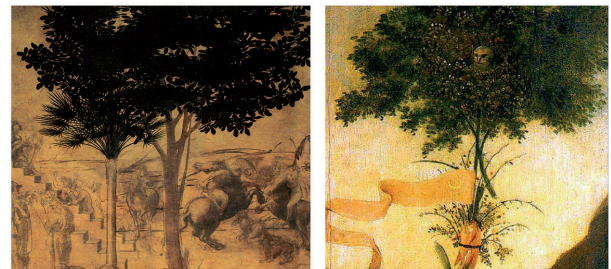


Figure 9 | *Accacia* extracted from *the Adoration of the Magi* by Leonardo da Vinci and *Accacia* (in its version before recent restoration) extracted from *the Ship of Fools* by Hieronymus Bosch

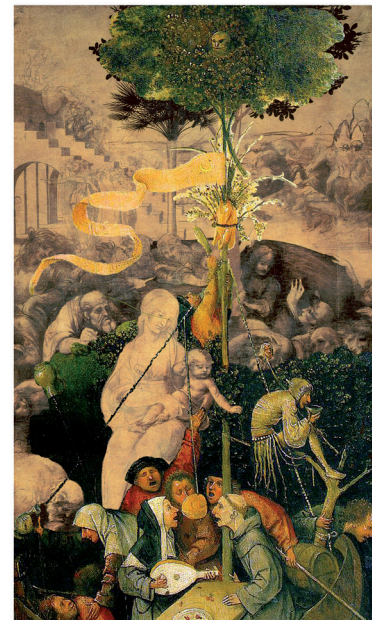


Figure 10 | Transposition: *The Adoration of Fools*

<sup>8</sup> Aristophanes's tirade extracted from the *Banquet* by Platon

<sup>9</sup> Windsor's Codex

<sup>10</sup> Maurizio Searacini, © Editech, Firenze (It.)

<sup>11</sup> The MET Museum of Art, NY (USA)



Figure 11 | Anthropomorphic landscape element extracted from the side panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka the *Feast of Metamorphoses* by Hieronymus Bosch and Anthropomorphic landscape element extracted from the *Adoration of the Magi* by Leonardo da Vinci after levorotatory rotation of 90°

“Hands games = gangs games”... “Words games = boards games”

## 1- Rebus



Figure 14 | Leonardian rebus to be read from left to right: A fishhook or "amo" in Italian, well then, the notes "re-sol-la-mi-fa-re-mi," the word "rare", the notes la-sol-mi-fa-sol, and finally the word "lectita"

Put end to end, the whole forms the sentence: “Amo-re sol-la mi fa re-mi-rare, la sol mi fa sol-lectita” of which a free translation could be: “Love alone revives my desire, He alone gives me wings.”



Figure 12 | Grotesque faces sketched by Leonardo da Vinci<sup>12</sup> and Grotesque faces extracted from the *Christ carrying his Cross* by Hieronymus Bosch

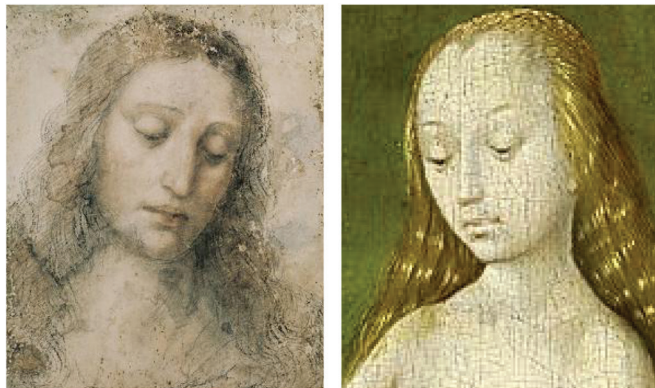


Figure 13 | Face with feminine features sketched by Leonardo da Vinci<sup>13</sup> and Female face of the *Anadyomene Venus* extracted from the side panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka the *Feast of Metamorphoses* by Hieronymus Bosch



Figure 15 | Boschian Rebus: It refers to the saying of Flemish folk wisdom, *De bosschen heben ooren, en de velden ogen* (*The woods have ears and the fields have eyes*).

<sup>12</sup> Windsor's Codex

<sup>13</sup> Pinacoteca di Brera, Milano (It.)

The association of this expression with the toponym from which Bosch (Bos) made his name “is eye-popping” and “whispers in our ears”: Oor + ogen + bos = Hertogenbosch (s-Hertogenbosch, birthplace of Jheronimus Bosch). Another remarkable element if there is one, the handwritten text in Latin which can be read at the top of the page where this drawing is located: *Miserrimi quippe est ingenii semper uti inventis et nunquam inveniendis* (*It is the property of the poor of spirit of always relying on things already known rather than on their own discoveries*) tells us that Jheronimus Bosch was familiar with this concept, often cited in the circles of emerging humanism and which we find almost word for word in the famous “Treatise on Painting” by Leonardo da Vinci <sup>14</sup>.

## 2- Mirror effects

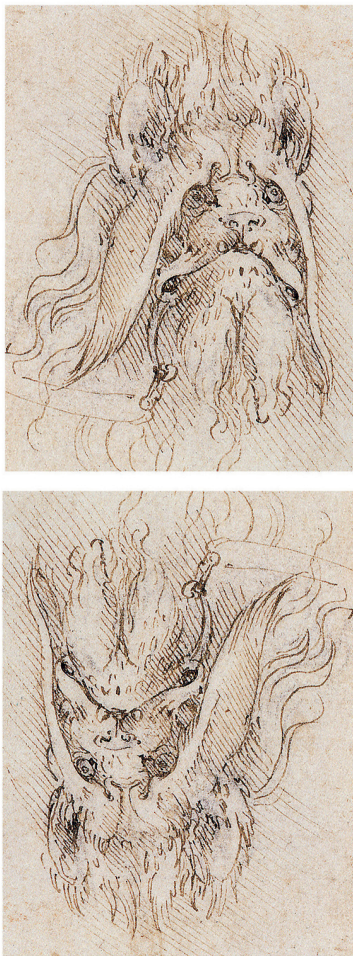
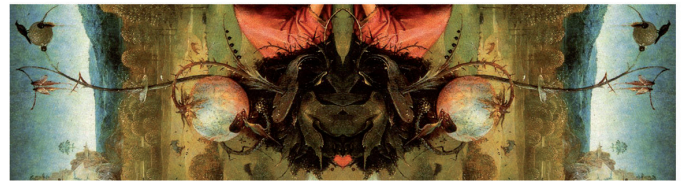


Figure 16 | “Mirror effect” applied to Leonardo da Vinci’s *Pekingese Cynocephalus*

A diabolical *Cerberus Cynocephalus* figure then appears, resembling those of “Baphomet” <sup>15</sup>.



Figure 17 | “Mirror effect” applied to *Saint John the Baptist in the desert* by Hieronymus Bosch



“The Devil hiding in the details”, a new diabolical *Cerberus Cynocephalus* figure appears resembling those of “Baphomet” too <sup>15</sup>.



Figure 18 | “Mirror effect” applied to *the Haywain, aka the Wain of Vanities* by Hieronymus Bosch

The figure of the skull is one of the known symbols of “Vanity”. This attribute is commonly associated with Saint Jerome in art.

<sup>14</sup> K. Vereycken, Avec Jérôme Bosch, sur la trace du sublime, Solidarité & progrès, 2007

<sup>15</sup> Pierre Klossowski y voit le *Basileus philosophorum metallicorum* : le souverain des philosophes métallurgistes, c'est-à-dire des alchimistes



### 3- Zoomorphies



Figure 19 | "Mirror effect" applied to *the Haywain*, aka *the Wain of Vanities* by Hieronymus Bosch



Figure 20 | *Grottesque simian profile* by Leonardo da Vinci<sup>17</sup> and levorotatory rotation of 90°

The figure of the monkey is - as mentioned previously with regard to *the Haywain*, aka *the Wain of Vanities* by Hieronymus Bosch - one of the known symbols of "Vanity". That of the "lion-headed hamadryas baboon" as well as that of the Nile ibis being commonly associated with the mythical character of Thoth<sup>16</sup>.



The figure of the monkey is also one of the known symbols of "Vanity". That of the "lion-headed hamadryas baboon" is commonly associated with the mythical character of Thoth<sup>16</sup>.

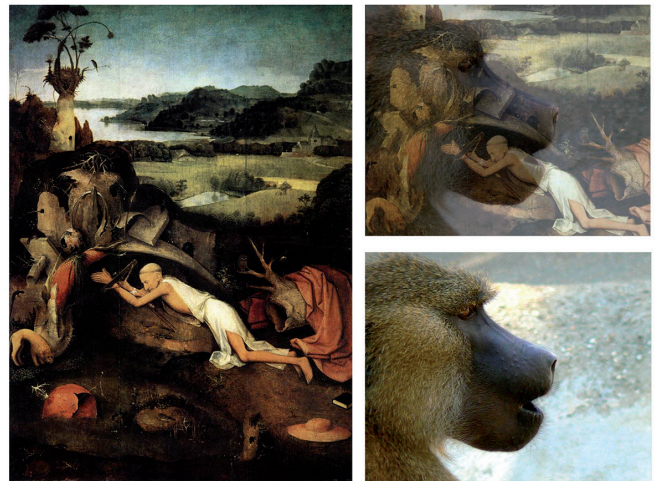


Figure 21 | *Saint Jerome* by Hieronymus Bosch

The figure of the monkey is - as mentioned previously with regard to *the Haywain*, aka *the Wain of Vanities* by Hieronymus Bosch - one of the known symbols of "Vanity". The anchorite depicted engaged body and soul in the jaws of the "lion-headed hamadryas baboon" can also be interpreted here as an implicit reference to the mythical character of Thoth<sup>16</sup>, but also as an allegory of "the opening of the heart". The heart being the organ - seat of the soul in ancient times - of which the lion is one of the known symbols.

<sup>16</sup> Thoth is assimilated to Hermes/Mercury, more particularly under the name of *Hermes Trismegistus* which the alchemists claim. According to legend, the teachings of *Hermes Trismegistus*, mythical founder of alchemy, were found in his tomb, engraved on an emerald tablet (*Tabula Smaragdina*)

<sup>17</sup> The MET Museum of Art, NY (USA)

### 3- Translations



Figure 22 | Arcana No. XI of the Tarot: *Strength*

The lion is the symbol of *Strength*, both in its physical and moral sense. We thus find it symbolically associated with the organ of the heart and philosophically speaking with “the opening of the heart”. Such is perhaps the reading of Arcana No. XI of the Tarot representing *Strength* (Fig.22): A gentle lady opening with a confident hand the mouth of a lion sitting at her feet which she controls between her legs.



Figure 23 | *Saint Jerome* by Leonardo da Vinci: *Diagonal translation*<sup>18</sup>

Until now, no one seems to have questioned the improbable real posture of the “Saint Jerome” outlined by Leonardo da Vinci. It is clear that if he has one knee, in this case the left, on the ground... Then his ipsilateral arm and forearm raised forward are as if in suspension above the void east and his left hand seems to contain, not to say “control”, a totally invisible element... A simple virtual *diagonal translation*<sup>18</sup> of the lion lying in front of him, could however change the situation and would thus shed new, more coherent light, to this sketch by Leonardo da Vinci (Fig.23). The anchorite represented a lion lying at his feet, mouth open, which he controls between his

<sup>18</sup> The diagonal symbolizes dynamism, movement, progression or ascension

left hand (that of the heart) and his legs can also be interpreted here as an allegory of “the opening of the heart”. At the risk of repeating ourselves: The lion is the symbol of *Strength*, both in its physical and moral sense. We thus find it symbolically associated with the organ of the heart (seat of the soul in ancient times) and philosophically speaking with “the opening of the heart”. Such is perhaps the reading of Arcana No. XI of the Tarot representing *Strength* (Fig.22): This gentle lady opening with a confident hand the mouth of a lion sitting at her feet which she controls between her legs.



Figure 26 | "Io Lionardo "

“Io Lionardo”: I am Leonardo da Vinci, the “precursor” of *causa mentale*, the one who raised painting to the summit of the paragon and raised it to the level of the other liberal arts... Such could be, according to the sign language <sup>20</sup>, the dactylological reading of the gestures of this “androgynous” character <sup>19</sup> that the Milanese master wanted to leave as a message to posterity. “Androgyny” - in its physical and metaphysical sense of “being awake” or “Rebis” <sup>19</sup> - which his colorful character seems to have perfectly embodied in the novel of his life as it has come down to us...

### 3- Transpositions

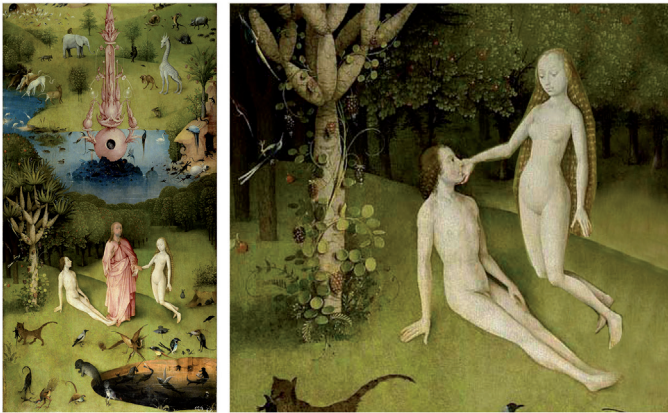


Figure 24 | Side panel of the *Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka the *Feast of Metamorphoses* by Hieronymus Bosch: *Horizontal translation*

If we follow the hypothesis put forward by certain specialists of the Flemish Renaissance master of a late repainting of this heavenly scene and the “politically (religiously) correct” addition of the Christ character, then the simple virtual *horizontal translation* of the two characters represented in their simplest form can be interpreted as an allegory of “twin souls”, and, even further, as that of the “androgynous” <sup>19</sup> so dear to Leonardo da Vinci.

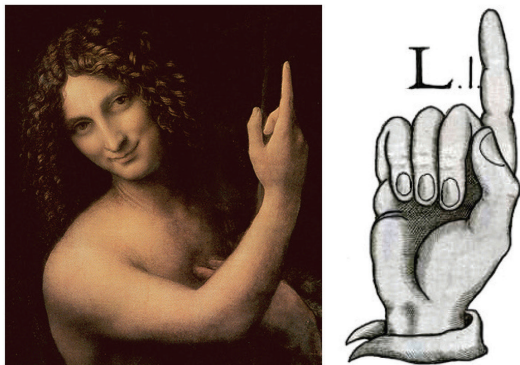


Figure 25 | *Saint John the Baptist*, alias *the Precursor* by Leonardo da Vinci and dactylological representation of the letter "L" in sign language <sup>20</sup>



Figure 27 | *The Adoration of the Magi* by Leonardo da Vinci + *The Ship of Fools* by Hieronymus Bosch = *The Adoration of the Fools*

<sup>19</sup> "Androgyny" symbolizes in alchemy "the awakened being" or "Rebis"

<sup>20</sup> Juan Pablo Bonet, 1620



Figure 28 | Face extracted from the side panel of *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka *The Feast of Metamorphoses* by Hieronymus Bosch and Face of the *Mona Lisa Hekking* attributed to an anonymous Flemish master

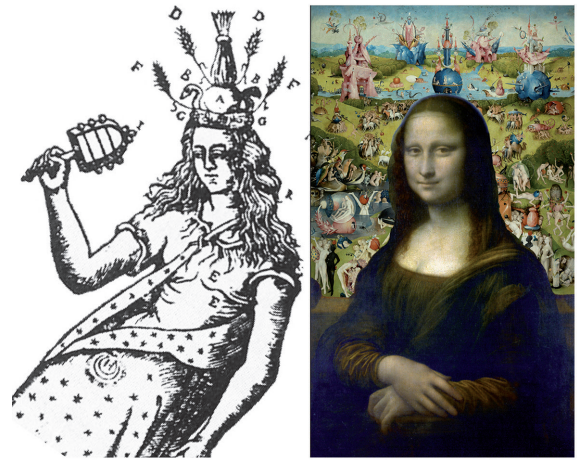


Figure 30 | *Mona Lisa, Queen of Egypt* by Leonardo da Vinci is *the Goddess Isis of Apuleius' metamorphoses* <sup>21</sup>

We can bet that a little-known work by four hands, certified by the two masters of the Florentine and Flemish Renaissance, will one day resurface from the depths of the centuries and will come as a high point (“organistrum”, in the form of a wink to the harp-lute of the side panel of *the Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka *the Feast of Metamorphoses* by Hieronymus Bosch which, according to Wilhelm Fraenger, illustrates *the duality in a single chair* of Genesis: *Et erunt duo in carne una*, alias the “two in one” <sup>22</sup>), to burst into the big day this pictorial collaboration totally new to date

PS: This article served as a working basis for the publication on the web by Xavier d'Hérouville of a blog entitled “LEONARDO DA VINCI vs JEROME BOSCH, *a little playful and funny comparative iconography of the two masters of the Italian and Flemish Renaissance*” <sup>23</sup>, as well as the creation of the model of an eponymous work still in search of a daring publisher...



Figure 29 | *Mona Lisa, Queen of Egypt* by Leonardo da Vinci + *The Garden of Earthly Delights*, aka *The Feast of Metamorphoses* by Hieronymus Bosch = *The Goddess Isis*

<sup>21</sup> According to Kircher, 1652

<sup>22</sup> Wilhelm Fraenger, extracted from *le Royaume millénaire de Jerome Bosch* published in 1966 by Denoël editions

<sup>23</sup> <http://vincivsbosch.hautetfort.com/>