

| The Temptation of St Anthony from the National Museum in Warsaw and the Landscape with the Legend of St Christopher from the State Hermitage Museum in St Petersburg – an Attempt at Interpretation and Attribution

A war loss from the Collection of European Old Masters of the National Museum in Warsaw, recuperated a few years ago, gave inspiration for an in-depth case study and a challenge for reattribution of a related painting in the Hermitage.¹

The Warsaw painting – a pre-war donation from Andrzej and Hanna Grabiński presenting a scene of *The Temptation of St Anthony*, painted by a sixteenth-century Netherlandish artist – was discovered in 2007 at the Wawel Royal Castle. The painting was moved from the National Museum in Warsaw to Krakow in November 1939,² and by the decision of Nazi authorities it was handed over to the architect Franz Koettgen, responsible for the decoration of the residence of Hans Frank, the Governor-General of the occupied Poland.³ It is still not known whether the painting was taken to Germany in the years 1943–1944 (as was the case with the majority of looted art works), and then perhaps recovered from the collecting point in Salzburg or Munich after the war, or whether it just never left Krakow. The post-war publications directing attention to this wartime loss had yielded no results until January 2007.⁴ The

¹ An article on the recovered Warsaw painting, entitled *Rzecz o „Kuszeniu św. Antoniego” na Wawelu i problemach z Janem Wellesem de Cockiem* was published by the author of this article in the book of honour *Amicissima. Studia Magdalenae Piwocka oblata*, Cracoviae MMX, pp. 93–9.

² From the Archives of the National Museum in Warsaw (vol. 674: *Das ehemalige polnische Nationalmuseum. 1005. Sichergestellte Kunstgegenständen. Verzeichnis der im November und Dezember 1939 nach Krakau überführten Kisten mit Museumgegenständen*, p. 70) it is known that the team was headed by Joseph Mühlmann, the Special Commissioner for the Safekeeping of Works of Art in the Occupied Territories, Northern Section. Along with many other works of art qualified as “first class,” under the item no. 2429 on the list of objects then looted from the collections of the National Museum in Warsaw it was transported to Krakow (Dienststelle des Sonderbeauftragten Süd) in a crate bearing the symbol 15.M.O. (foreign painting).

³ The Institute of National Remembrance, national archives, signed GG I/5990: *Regierung des Generalgouvernement. Staatssekretariat. Amt für die Pflege alter Kunst Krakau. Gruppe Süd*, p. 5, no. 6.

⁴ The National Museum in Warsaw was then informed by the Wawel Royal Castle that it had in its collection – thanks to a bequest – a work identical to one that had once belonged to the Museum’s Gallery of Foreign Painting. During identification in the conservation workshop at the Wawel Castle a painting was presented which had been covered by the thick, yellowed layer of varnish, with some paint losses along the upper edge, revealing traces of preliminary conservation treatment. On the back of the wooden support appeared an inventory number of the State Art Collections, Wawel Royal Castle, painted in red. It turned out that the painting had been there for

property matters having been explained and settled, the painting returned to the National Museum in Warsaw in March 2007. After comprehensive conservation – nearly 70 years after its confiscation – the picture found its place again in the Gallery of Netherlandish Painting. Interesting iconography and attribution problems encourage a more profound analysis.

The subject of the Temptation of St Anthony was very popular in Netherlandish art at the beginning of the sixteenth century, during the era of religious unrest. It dealt with the struggles against satanic powers as experienced by one of the first Christian hermits, St Anthony the Abbot who lived in Egypt in AD 251–356. Along with St Paul of Thebes, he is considered the founder of the anchoritic mode of life, a type of monastic asceticism. The saint spent almost his entire life living in the desert, offering prayers, fasting and holding vigils. Similar to his master, Jesus Christ, St Anthony also experienced numerous attacks by Satan and his temptations in the desert. The dramatic experiences of the saintly man were described by his friend and follower, St Athanasius the Great of Alexandria, a Doctor of the Church. A fragment of his original Greek text, translated into Latin, can be found in the early Christian compendium *Vitae Patrum*. In the Middle Ages, the theme of the Temptation was popularized mainly in the *Golden Legend* by Jacobus de Voragine (1230–1298), whereas in 1490, Pieter van Os published the first Dutch edition of *Vitae Patrum* (*Vaderboeck*) in Zwolle, leading to an even wider popularization of the life of St Anthony, especially in the Netherlands.

In the painting we are interested in, the artist shows the narrative zest, depicting the saint being besieged by demons against the background of a beautiful landscape with a remote cove and a fantastical rock in the style of Joachim Patinir (**fig. 1**). The dark forces have taken on various forms of hybrid monsters, very similar to those created by Hieronymus Bosch. The demons creep out from under the ground, they swarm like gruesome vermin around the saintly hermit, they crawl out of the water, sail on a boat, fly in the air, and one of them, with a zoomorphic shape with a knife driven into its buttocks, has settled in the branches of a half-dead tree, almost directly above the head of the saint, and is playing on a long pipe, possibly sending signals to his fellow creatures. There are two clay jugs on the dry bough with a bell suspended above – according to hermit tradition, the sound of a bell ringing was supposed to chase away demons.

The saint is also being tempted by a beautiful woman in a fashionable dress, holding a golden vessel in her hands, who approaches him from the right side of the composition riding on the back of a monster, as if on horseback. This is a personification of one of the cardinal sins – *Luxuria* or Lust, with the symbolic cup of desire (here similar to the liturgical vessel), in a depiction similar to the images of the Great Whore of Babylon in the Book of Revelation. The fire in the town, visible behind the church building in the background, intensifies the expression of the scene represented. The beautiful seductress and the depiction of the fire make a direct reference

a longer time – an earlier donation by the same person who in 2006–2007 (?) bequeathed the remainder of her estate to that collection. The examination allowed the painting to be identified without any doubt as being the property of the National Museum in Warsaw. Its former inventory number 126215, chemically removed from the painting's wooden support at an unknown time, was revealed thanks to infrared reflectography.

Before 2007 the painting was published in Władysław Tomkiewicz, *Catalogue of Paintings Removed from Poland by the German Occupation Authorities during the Years 1939–1945*, vol. 1: *Foreign Paintings* (Warsaw: Ministerstwo Kultury i Sztuki, 1950), p. 38, no. 75, fig. 75. Prace i materiały Biura Rewindykacji i Odszkodowań, no. 9; Jan Białostocki, Michał Walicki, *Europäische Malerei in Polnischen Sammlungen 1300–1800* (Warsaw: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1957), p. 499, no. 135, fig. 135 [Polish eds 1955, 1958]; Gerd Unverfehrt, "Zwei Gemälde der Bosch-Nachfolge aus dem Muzeum Narodowe zu Warschau," *Bulletin du Musée National de Varsovie*, XIX, n° 3 (1978), pp. 51–73, p. 64, fig. 11; Gerd Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch. Die Rezeption seiner Kunst im frühen 16. Jahrhundert* (Berlin: Gebr. Mann Verlag, 1980), p. 181, note 661a, p. 270, under cat. no. 75; Maria Romanowska-Zadrożna, Tadeusz Zadrożny, *Straty wojenne. Malarstwo Obce / Wartime Losses. Foreign Painting*, vol. 1 (Poznań: Ministerstwo Kultury i Dziedzictwa Narodowego, Biuro Pełnomocnika Rządu do Spraw Polskiego Dziedzictwa Kulturalnego za Granicą, 2000), p. 130.

to the story related in *Vaderboeck*.⁵ Namely, one day, St Anthony, while wandering through the desert, came across a stream, in which a queen and her ladies-in-waiting were bathing. When they saw that the hermit was making a hasty retreat, the queen beseeched him not to run away, because she wanted to show him the path to heavenly bliss. Having dressed herself, she took Anthony to the town, where she showed him her treasures, while also telling him about her gift for healing the sick, which she had allegedly received from God. But when she came nearer to the saintly man and tried to tear off his habit, he recognized Satan in her, and implored Christ to help him. At that moment, the queen turned into a swine, a great fire broke out in the town and its inhabitants, changed into demons, chased the saint through the desert. The Warsaw painting shows, near the church before the town walls, the scene of the saint's fight with a pack of diabolical creatures, which in accordance with the same sources, raised him high up in the air where, surprisingly, he received supernatural assistance from the heavens and returned to earth unharmed.

The fire depicted in the background and the image of the swine at the hermit's feet in the Warsaw painting, still have further connotations. The flames are associated with a serious but common illness in the Middle Ages, called "St Anthony's fire" (contemporary name: ergototoxicosis). That illness was caused by the ergot – a kind of fungus that attacked wheat grain – and resulted in painful, red inflammations of the skin. On the other hand, the swine – an ever-present and popular attribute in the iconography of the saint, not only makes reference to the story of the lecherous queen, but also to later accounts professing that the hermit had the power to heal domestic animals, in particular piglets, but above all, that he cured ergototoxicosis with compresses made from lard. The swine with a bell in its ear also brings to mind the future activities of the Hospital Brothers of St Anthony (founded in 1095). The Antonians (or Antonites), who used their master's healing methods, gained the privilege of allowing the pigs belonging to the monastery to roam freely and seek food around human settlements (which was forbidden for the livestock of laypeople). The bells hanging from the pigs' ears were used to make them recognizable.⁶

The castle in the background, on the right side of the composition, could be an allusion to wealth, which the hermit abandoned for Christ in his youth, but it is also a biblical symbol of reliance on God from the Book of Psalms (31:3–4, 91:2). Amidst the attacks from the satanic powers, the saintly hermit finds solace and relief mainly in the image of the crucified Christ, as well as in the Bible which he holds in his hand (the Bible is closed because when open, it could be a symbol of the spiritual temptation to read and interpret the Holy Scripture independently, a practice the Catholic Church considered dangerous). The central location of the bizarre old tree in the background emphasizes the significance of the crucifix.

The Warsaw picture was originally ascribed to Lucas Cornelisz de Kock, one of the sons of the Leiden artist Cornelis Engelbrechtsz.⁷ Michał Walicki supported this attribution with

⁵ *Vaderboeck (Dit boeck is ghenomet dat vader boeck dat in der latijne is ghebieten Vitas Patrum)* (Zwolle: Pieter van Os, 1490). Here quoted after *Patinir. Essays and Critical Catalogue*, Alejandro Vergara, ed. (Madrid: Museo Nacional del Prado, 2007), pp. 242–55, cat. no. 14, esp. pp. 245–8, note 14, p. 254 and notes 25 and 27, p. 255 (Pilar Silva Maroto).

⁶ Louis Réau, *Iconographie de l'art chrétien*, vol. 3: *Iconographie des saints*, part 1 (A–F) (Paris: Presses universitaires de France, 1958), pp. 104–5; Maria Peisert, "Sus domesticus – zwierzę, którego nazwy używać nie wypada," in *Język a Kultura*, vol. 15: *Opozycja homo–animal w języku i kulturze*, Anna Dąbrowska, ed. (Wrocław: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2003), pp. 153–4. *Acta Universitatis Wratislaviensis*, no. 2530.

⁷ Juliusz Starzyński, Michał Walicki, *Katalog Galerii Malarstwa Obcego* (Warsaw: Muzeum Narodowe w Warszawie, 1938), pp. 69–70, cat. no. 111, *Tablice*, p. 68, fig. 111; oil, oak panel, 45 × 57 cm, inv. no. 126215 MNW (new inv. no. M.Ob.2704 MNW).

pictorial affinities with a painting of the analogical subject in the former collection of Nicolaes Beets.⁸ In 1955 Jan Białostocki published the Warsaw *Temptation* as a work of Jan Wellens de Cock, a painter from Antwerp.⁹ The painting was linked with the same artist also by Gerd Unverfehrt in 1980.¹⁰

Yet, Jan Wellens de Cock is an enigmatic and controversial figure, whose identity probably refers to more than one person. We can only glean a few basic facts about him from the Antwerp municipal and guild archives. Jan Wellens de Cock registered his students twice: a certain Loduwijck in 1506, and Wouter Key, in 1516. In the years 1507–1508, he received payment for a wall painting in Antwerp Cathedral. In 1520, he was appointed dean of the Guild of St Luke, together with Joos van Cleve. Jan Wellens's wife – Clara van Beeringen, whom he married on 6 August 1502, and with whom he had four children including two sons, Matthijs (b. 1510), later a landscape painter, and Hieronymus (b. 1518), a famous engraver and owner of the publishing house *Aux Quatre Vents* – is mentioned as the wife of landscape painter Frans Vermeer in documents dated 19 January 1527. Therefore, she must have become a widow between 1520 and 1527. According to the ledgers of the *Onze-Lieve-Vrouwe-Lof* Guild, Jan Wellens de Cock died in 1521, but in the opinion of the contemporary researcher Walter S. Gibson, he died just before 1527.¹¹ It is also believed that Jan Wellens de Cock might have been the same person as a certain Jan van Leyen (Leyden?), who became a master of the Antwerp Guild of St Luke in 1503 (therefore, the registration of his first student in 1506 is plausible). His possible Leiden origins would explain the influence of Cornelis Engelbrechtsz, to which Walicki drew attention in the catalogue from 1938.¹²

Max J. Friedländer was the first to attempt to reconstruct Jan Wellens de Cock's *œuvre* on the basis of a painting from Friedrich von Bissing's collection (presently in a private collection in London), the *Landscape with St Christopher*. A print executed after this painting bears an inscription: *Pictum / J. Kock* which gave this scholar an assumption to identify the author of the Bissing painting with Jan Wellens de Cock, an artist noted in Antwerp archives.¹³ In the group of works attributed by Friedländer to de Cock one can also find the *Landscape with St Anthony and St Paul of Thebes* from the collection of the Princes von und zu Liechtenstein in Vienna (inv. no. 710; a replica in the National Museum in Warsaw, inv. no. M.Ob.820 MNW), a small triptych of the *Crucifixion* in the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (inv. no. A1598), which on its reverse side shows a scene of St Christopher being attacked by demons, as well as the only dated work – the famous woodcut dating from 1522 depicting *The Temptation of St Anthony*. Friedländer's work gave rise to a long debate between the supporters and opponents of such

⁸ Nicolaes Beets, "Zestiende-eeuwsche Kunstenaars. IV. Lucas Corneliszoon de Kock. Exeat Jan Wellens de Cock," *Oud Holland*, 53 (1936), pp. 61–2, fig. 52.

⁹ Białostocki, Walicki, op. cit., pp. 487–8, cat. no. 135.

¹⁰ Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch...*, op. cit., p. 270, mentioned in cat. no. 75, as "Wirkung des Jan Wellens de Cock."

¹¹ Jan van der Stock, *Printing Images in Antwerp. The Introduction of Printmaking in a City. Fifteenth Century to 1585* (Rotterdam: Sound & Vision Interactive Rotterdam, 1998), pp. 115ff, Appendix I, p. 259; however, the author acknowledged that in the archives the surname Cock has many homonyms; Walter S. Gibson, *The Paintings of Cornelis Engelbrechtsz*. (New York: Garland, 1977), pp. 165–207.

¹² Starzyński, Walicki, op. cit.

¹³ Max J. Friedländer, "Jan Wellens de Cock," *Zeitschrift für bildende Kunst* 1918, pp. 67–74. Neue Folge, 29; Max J. Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, vol. 2: *The Antwerp Mannerists. Adriaen Ysenbrant*, comments and notes by Henri Pauwels, cooperation Anne-Marie Hess, trans. by Heinz Norden (Leyden: A. W. Sijthoff; Brussels: La Connaissance, 1974), pp. 37–43.

attributions. Friedländer's adversaries pointed to the Leiden artists, Lucas Cornelisz Kock or another Engelbrechtsz's son – Cornelis Cornelisz Kunst.¹⁴ Works from the Engelbrechtsz's workshop generally share similar features with Antwerp paintings of the epoch, the so-called Mannerists. Jan de Cock's connection with Engelbrechtsz, either by family bonds or professional relationship (i.e., a practice in his Leiden workshop), was often suggested.¹⁵ Therefore, more important than the identification of the artist's name is the fact that he constituted a link between the Antwerp and Leiden pictorial traditions. Following similar premises and basing on a sole real indication of the name in the form as it appears on the print of the *Landscape with St Christopher* (*Pictum / J. Kock*), Jan Piet Filedt Kok has recently adopted for this artist the name of "Master J. Kock."¹⁶ This enables a solution of the "premature" death problem of Jan de Cock, whose date 1521 has always created difficulties in a reliable attribution of the woodcut dated 1522. As the *œuvre* of Master J. Kock Filedt Kok accepts more or less the same group of works that had been pointed out by Friedländer, but he also makes an attempt to include there the works of the Master of Vienna the Lamentation and the Master of Carrying the Cross in Douai. This author believes that the Leiden influence from Engelbrechtsz's circle is visible in later works of Master J. Kock; therefore, he concludes that the artist must have moved to the North after a period of living in Antwerp (where most likely both the painted version of the *Landscape with St Christopher* and the woodcut from 1522 were executed) around 1525. Thus, the sequence of places of residence and work has been reversed in relation to earlier suggestions connected with the person of Jan van Leyen.

In any case, the *œuvre* of this disputable artist amassed solely on the basis of attributions, combines elements of both North and South Netherlandish art. In addition to the stylistic affinities with the Leiden masters (e.g., in Warsaw's *Temptation*, the temptress' similarity to the woman rendered in profile in the print by Lucas van Leyden dating from 1509, B. 117), the artist often used fantastical motifs borrowed from the works of Hieronymus Bosch, which makes him one of the first followers of this master. The influence of Antwerp Mannerists is visible in the expressive gestures of de Cock's / Master J. Kock's figures, while his landscape backgrounds owe a lot to Joachim Patinir, considered to be the creator of modern landscape. It is de Cock's / Master J. Kock's landscapes, above all – more intimate than those by Patinir, compositionally sophisticated and with an intriguing atmosphere – that will make the main subject of this essay.

Until now the majority of scholars remained faithful to Friedländer's original concept and attributions, defining the artist by the name of Jan Wellens de Cock. Regardless of how we

¹⁴ Opposing against Friedländer's concept were mainly Nicolaes Beets (1936) and Godefridus J. Hoogewerff (1939). This debate is not important here, except for showing enormous difficulties with identification of an artist whose works combine features typical of both Antwerp and Leiden mannerism. For a summary and further details of this debate, see *Saur Allgemeines Künstler-Lexikon*, vol. 20 (München-Leipzig: K.G. Saur Verlag, 1998), pp. 70–1 and exh. cat. *ExtravagAnt! A forgotten chapter of Antwerp painting 1500–1530 / Catalogue*, Pieter van der Brink and Maximiliaan P. J. Martens, eds, exh. cat., Koninklijk Museum voor Schone Kunsten Antwerpen, 15 October – 31 December 2005, Bonnefantenmuseum, Maastricht, 21 January – 9 March 2006, BAI, Schoten, Antwerpen–Maastricht 2005, pp. 219–20, cat. no. 93 (Yao-Fen You). For the best and most comprehensive set of archive materials pertaining to biographical scraps of information on Jan Wellens de Cock, see also the same author in the exh. cat. cited above, p. 224. The most in-depth analysis of the mutual Antwerp–Leiden influences in the work of Jan Wellens de Cock, according to Friedländer's concept, can be found in Unverfehrt (Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch*..., op. cit., pp. 173–7).

¹⁵ Yao-Fen You in *ExtravagAnt!...*, op. cit., p. 220.

¹⁶ Jan Piet Filedt Kok, "Leiden en Antwerpen omstreeks 1520. De ontmoeting met Albrecht Dürer en de introductie van het landschap," in *Lucas van Leyden en de Renaissance*, Christiaan Vogelaar et al., eds., exh. cat., Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, 20 March – 26 June 2011 (Antwerp: Ludion, 2011), pp. 103–19, esp. 108–9 and p. 225, cat. no. 20.

call him, the works originally amassed by Friedländer display a number of common stylistic features and motifs, the most characteristic being the depiction of a bizarre, gnarled tree with bare or foliage-covered boughs, always cut off by the top edge of the painting. Other common motifs include “Patiniresque” rocks, fortresses, trails of smoke and figures of bat-like demons shown against a background of conflagrations in the skies, long skeins of black birds against the clouds, or “Bosch-like” monsters. The manner of depicting the dome-like canopies of the trees and the impasto rendering of the foliage, the thickness and volume of which is enhanced in white, are also specific to all of the works.

All of the aforesaid elements can also be found in the Warsaw composition, which shows a close, formal affinity with the famous woodcut from 1522, attributed to Jan Wellens de Cock, even though – as already mentioned – the date of his death was recorded a year earlier, and which presently is defined as the work of Master J. Kock (**fig. 2**). Both in the print and the Warsaw painting, the crowded scenes of *The Temptation* are arranged horizontally and similarly placed against a well-constructed, harmonious landscape with a high horizon. In the Warsaw painting the landscape background is rendered in rich, blue tones. Common motifs in the works being compared, such as the gnarled tree trunks, the roof of the hermit’s hut, castles with Romanesque biforia, the figure of a beautiful seductress and demon-like creatures are all of the same character. Decorative details and soft drawing in the woodcut reveal the hand of a painter. Scholars do not doubt that the woodcut is a work of the artist called Jan Wellens de Cock or Master J. Kock. This also seems to be confirmed by the scene of the meeting of St Anthony and St Paul of Thebes, visible on the left-hand side of the print, which is repeated in the painting from the Liechtenstein collection. It seems that the author of the woodcut and the Warsaw painting might be one and the same person and that both works were created within a short span of time.

A variant of *The Temptation* from Warsaw, differing only in its more compact composition and by a closer viewing point, a more mountainous landscape and somewhat different selection of Bosch-like monsters in the foreground, is held in the collections of the Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco, Palace of the Legion of Honor (**fig. 3**). The composition of the Warsaw painting is enlarged on either side, which allowed the artist to include extra demonic creatures. These are a small, legless monster wearing a helmet with a battle flag on the left-hand side and a dwarf-like figure close on the heels of the beautiful seductress on the right-hand side. A boat with two demonic passengers, one of whom is depicted in an unambiguously vulgar pose, defecating overboard, is visible directly above the midget. The San Francisco painting is also attributed to Jan Wellens de Cock and dated to ca. 1526.¹⁷ Unverfehrt has certain reservations about such an attribution. He believes that while Jan de Cock’s authorship is possible because of the high artistic quality and particular manner of rendering the folds of the fabric without sharp creases, it is not completely convincing due to the very light and “amused” forms of the demons.¹⁸ In the catalogue, he placed the Californian (and the Warsaw) painting in the chapter “Wirkung des Jan de Cock” [The Influence of Jan de Cock]. Unverfehrt

¹⁷ The painting was first published in *Le siècle de Bruegel. La peinture en Belgique au XVI^e siècle*, exh. cat., Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 27 September – 24 November 1963 (Brussels: Patrimoine des Musées royaux des Beaux-Arts de Belgique, 1963), p. 82, cat. no. 72 (I. de Ramaix), *Illustrations*, fig. 40; oak panel, 48.6 × 61.6 cm, inv. no. 1960.22.

¹⁸ Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch*..., op. cit., p. 181: “Als Werk des Jan de Cock möglich, was die hohe Qualität der Malerei und die weich fließenden, kaum gebrochenen Gewandfalten anbelangt [...]” And further note 661a: “Die Umrisse sind bei Jan de Cock durchgehend geschlossener, die Dämonen, hier von luftiger, verspielter Form, kompakter und schwerer.”

described the Warsaw version as “cruder” (derbere Fassung).¹⁹ Nevertheless, he only knew it from a pre-war photograph, because the painting had not been discovered by the time of that publication. It is by no means a poorer version. The artist’s individual approach is evidenced by a free preparatory drawing, in places visible with the naked eye, which, however, he did not adhere to particularly strictly when rendering his final composition; departures from his original ideas are visible in places.²⁰ The definition of crudeness probably concerns the more impish forms and vulgar behaviour of the demonic monsters.

The greatest merit of de Cock / Master J. Kock, this enigmatic but extremely interesting artist, was his contribution to a remarkable development of landscape painting. Friedländer considered his artistic output as anticipating the landscapes of Pieter Bruegel.²¹ Jan Wellens de Cock was the first to use the horizontal format more apt for depicting panoramas of nature and for mastering the illusion of depth. The figures were always welded with the landscape; the artist was exceptionally consistent in his presentation of all animate and inanimate forms of nature as one.²² The main landmark of such a vision of landscape was the artist’s groundbreaking woodcut from 1522. Filedt Kok attributes the invention of yet another woodcut composition to Master J. Kock, placing it in his Antwerp period, ca. 1525. The *Landscape with St John on Patmos*, although executed with a harder line of another printmaker, presents an even richer panorama of the landscape than the woodcut of 1522.²³ The depth of the created space with a high horizon, the type of edifices and monumental trees with characteristic foliage, a monster figure of the devil who tries to steal the inkstand from St John, all belong indisputably to the repertoire of this master. When speaking of the landscape development in Antwerp art, especially in the context of the de Cock / Master J. Kock group, one cannot omit a drawing from the Berlin sketchbook once published by Julius Held.²⁴ It shows the *Road to Calvary* with a procession of numerous small figures represented against the background of a panorama of Jerusalem. Characteristic shapes of the castles and gate towers in this drawing, dated ca. 1535, are found in paintings connected with de Cock / Master J. Kock: in the background of the *Crucifixion* in the small Amsterdam triptych and in both versions of *The Temptation*.²⁵ A drawing repeating only the architecture part from the *Road to Calvary*, also present in the same sketchbook, made some scholars believe that these and similar sketches were to serve as models in the early sixteenth-century Antwerp workshops.²⁶ However – as was already stressed by Held – the original model for the *Road to Calvary* certainly must have been close to the pictorial means used by Jan de Cock. Not only the elements of the architecture, but also the general atmosphere of the scene, the throng of figures moving from right to left, a motif of

¹⁹ Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch*..., op. cit., p. 270, cat. no. 75, fig. 128.

²⁰ Technological information was given by Dr Elżbieta Pilecka-Pietrusińska (Conservation Workshop of Sculpture and Painting on Wooden Supports) who conducted the conservation of the painting.

²¹ Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, op. cit., p. 39: “As an observer of the living powers of nature, picturesquely rooted and tangled, this master stands head and shoulders above his generation. Like Patenier, he chose Bosch as his point of departure, but then followed the road that led to Pieter Bruegel.”

²² Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch*..., op. cit., pp. 178, 182.

²³ Lucas van Leyden en de Renaissance, op. cit., pp. 224–5, cat. no. 19.b.

²⁴ Julius Held, “Notizen zu einem niederländischen Skizzenbuch in Berlin,” *Oud Holland*, 50 (1933), p. 280 and fig. 1, pp. 274–5. The discussed sketchbook is 79C 2 from the Kupferstichkabinett in Berlin.

²⁵ Filedt Kok mentions also such a tower in the *Carrying of the Cross* by Herri met de Bles from ca. 1535 in Princeton (*Lucas van Leyden en de Renaissance*, op. cit., p. 228, note 4).

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 229, cat. no. 24.

a monkey-shaped figure sitting on the tree, as well as the soft way of rendering the foliage are known from the woodcut of 1522. The horse on the left side of the drawing repeats instead the pose of St Christopher's steed from reverses of the Amsterdam triptych. This drawing gives testimony to the great popularity of pictorial devices elaborated by the painter of our interest in Antwerp in 1530s or even in the 1540s.

Following the track of the above considerations, one is tempted to include into the artistic production of the Antwerp de Cock / Master J. Kock group yet another, extremely interesting work, the *Landscape with the Legend of St Christopher* from the collections of the Hermitage²⁷ (fig. 4). The Bosch-like monsters and attacks by evil forces play as important a role there as in the Warsaw *Temptation*. When viewing the Hermitage painting one feels a strong sense of familiarity in the manner of thinking and painting, in the construction of the composition, above all its landscape part, in particular motifs and finally in the colour palette, especially close to the Warsaw version of *The Temptation of St Anthony*.

In the foreground to the left, the painting shows St Christopher carrying a globe in his hand with the Child Jesus atop it. The saint, depicted in half-figure, has just reached the bank, having ventured an incredibly difficult passage through a wide river teeming with a multitude of fantastical, mainly anthropoid, creatures, and sailing contraptions: a boat and a hellish war machine with a helmeted top and spitting fire. An old, hollow tree, serving as a shelter for three figures gathered around a table in faint candlelight, grows in the spot where St Christopher has reached the riverbank. Above, amongst the branches, sits a hooded monk who, holding a branch with one hand, is leaning forward in order to light the way for St Christopher with a lantern he is carrying in his other hand. The boughs are characteristically cut off by the top edge of the painting. Amongst them, we can see a characteristic clay jug and – visible against the sky in the very centre – a man's severed head with a knife driven deep into the skull, suspended from a dry branch by his long, knotted hair. More gruesome elements are visible in the background: a human figure and a severed leg hanging from a long post, with a bald head stuck on the top. Demons with insect and humanoid forms rise upwards from the thick, dark smoke of the fire on the right-hand side. The water level reaches to the high horizon, and in the distance to the right, the smooth contours of the hills blend into vertically stepped rock formations. The landscape itself, together with the tree in the foreground and the multitude of small figures on the other bank, is analogous to the landscape with St Christopher from the former Bissing collection – the fundamental work around which Friedländer grouped Jan Wellens de Cock's *œuvre* – the only difference being that in the Hermitage painting the extensive space is crowded with disturbing creatures and macabre motifs.

What is the source of such a depiction of St Christopher, whose repertoire of diabolical creatures is so similar to the scenes from *The Temptation of St Anthony*? Unlike the case of the saintly Anchorite, there is no precise information about the life of St Christopher. According to an old tradition, he came from Asia Minor (modern Turkey), from the Roman province of Lycia where he died a martyr during the reign of Emperor Decius in ca. AD 250 (i.e., around the time of the birth of St Anthony the Abbott). The colourful mediaeval legend, later popularized by Jacobus da Voragine in his *Golden Legend*, was based on the Greek form of his name, Christophoros, or “the bearer of Christ.” Originally, the name of St Christopher was Reprobis, or Repulsive, because he was a giant with a dog-like head. Distinguished for

²⁷ Nikolai N. Nikulin, *Netherlandish painting, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries* (The Hermitage catalogue of Western European painting, vol. 5; translation of: *Sobranie zapadnoevropeiskoi zhivopisi*) (Moscow: Iskusstvo Publishers; Florence: Giunti Barbera Editore, 1989), cat. no. 69; panel, 71 × 98.5 cm, inv. no. GE 4780.

his extraordinary strength, he decided to offer his services to the most powerful master on earth. First, he served the king of his own land. When he found out that the king was afraid of Satan, he offered his services to the latter. One day he realized, however, that Satan was afraid of the name of Christ. Finally, he decided to serve the Saviour. As a result of accepting Christ's teachings and after his baptism, human appearance was bestowed on him. As penitence and atonement for the fact that he had served Satan, he decided to settle on the River Jordan, where the water was the shallowest, in order to carry on his huge shoulders the pilgrims travelling to the Holy Land from the East. One night he heard the voice of a child asking him to carry him to the other side of the river. When he put him on his shoulders, he felt an overbearing weight threatening to pull him down under the waves. "I am Jesus your Saviour. By carrying me, you carry the whole world," the child told St Christopher. In the St Petersburg painting, these words are illustrated by the crystal globe topped with a crucifix on which the Child Jesus is seated. The Child Jesus also foretold the saint's imminent death as a martyr, which is symbolized in the painting by the severed head that crowns the representation. The motif of the monk lighting up the path with a lantern comes from a mediaeval German text written after the *Golden Legend*. That very monk allegedly christened St Christopher, and kept watch over his charge's penitential deeds.

However, the story described in the *Golden Legend* does not include elements of diabolical iconography. Over time, they appeared around the saintly man who was considered the most powerful advocate against all kinds of tragedy, illness and sudden death, and a mere glance at his image was believed to guarantee protection during attacks by evil forces. Unverfehrt quotes a number of examples of paintings depicting the theme of St Christopher carrying the Child Jesus amongst diabolical creatures and points to their mostly apotropaic-allegorical character. The apotropaic function, or antidote against any evil forces, is directly indicated by the inscription on the woodcut by Allart du Hameel (before 1509), which depicts the Saint carrying the Child Jesus through a crowd of bizarre creatures trying to block his path. The popularity of such representations, just like the cult of the saint itself, reached its culmination in the first half of the sixteenth century.²⁸ However, such an approach, and the great popularity of the saint, even surpassing the cult of the apostles, was criticized by religious reformers. Instead, the Lutherans emphasized that the legend of St Christopher should be interpreted as an allegory of the life of a Christian, who should carry Christ in his heart.

According to Unverfehrt, the narrative paintings of the legend of St Christopher and demonical motifs were also created out of a particular fashion for such "diableries," which Bosch and his followers popularized in scenes depicting *The Temptation of St Anthony*.²⁹ Therefore, we are looking here at a certain syncretism and contamination of iconographical motifs. Unverfehrt duly emphasized that while the demonic element in the theme of *The Temptation* focuses on the actual site of the hermit's lonely contemplation, in the representations of St Christopher it concerns the entire world and every faithful individual, thus illustrating the ubiquity of spiritual dangers on the path of every Christian.³⁰

The St Petersburg painting (originally described as a scene depicting *The Temptation of St Anthony*!), was attributed to Jan Mandijn, along with the correct iconographic identifica-

²⁸ Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch...*, op. cit., pp. 187–201.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 195.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 198.

tion, by Elena Fechner in 1940.³¹ Although the author mentions the similarity between the landscape panorama and the Netherlandish prints, including the one signed *Pictum* / *J. Kock*, she mainly focuses on the iconographical novelty of the composition, which she considers “one of its kind.”³² She attempts to make the attribution to Jan Mandijn by referring to the iconographical and (allegedly) stylistic affinities between the St Petersburg painting and the only signed work by that artist held in the collection of the Frans Hals Museum in Haarlem (inv. no. OS I-543) and the painting attributed to him in the Alte Pinakothek, Munich (inv. no. 960). Unverfehrt, who cites another two similar compositions with the half-figure of St Christopher associated with Mandijn: one from the former collection of Birtschansky in Paris (currently in the Los Angeles County Museum, inv. no. 59.48) and the other in the collection of the University of Liège (inv. no. 12006), justly rejects this attribution. Apart from the repertoire of devilish motives, stylistically these paintings differ – each of them in another way – from the signed work of Mandijn. In comparison to the St Petersburg painting, the compositions in Los Angeles and Liège are less complex. What is, however, interesting for the purposes of our consideration is that Unverfehrt points to some similarities between the Liège version and *The Temptation of St Anthony* in San Francisco.³³ However, the similarities are limited to the forms of some of the demonic creatures and landscape elements, such as the rocks à la Patinir and the dome-shaped trees. The composition from Liège is not only highly simplified but also primitive compared to the harmonious arrangement of the painting in San Francisco and particularly of the one in St Petersburg; therefore, it must be regarded as a work of a much later follower from what Unverfehrt calls a Mandyn / Huys group.³⁴

As we can see, in the context of the St Petersburg St Christopher, both Fechner and Unverfehrt tentatively mention the paintings associated with Jan Wellens de Cock, though they do not attempt any formal attribution. However, it is impossible to find equally outstanding features of modern, mature landscape in the first decades of the sixteenth century except in the *œuvre* of our artist or his workshop. The landscape in the St Petersburg painting – just like in the other works from de Cock’s / Master J. Kock’s group – does not solely constitute the backdrop for the scene depicted, but instead the two elements create a harmonious whole, blending nature with human and fantastical figures. The old tree flanking the composition with its characteristic foliage and its boughs cut off by the top edge of the painting is virtually a hallmark of all of the paintings of de Cock’s group. Also, the strings of small black birds

³¹ Elena Ulevna Fechner, “Dva novykh opredeleniya niderlanskikh kartin v sobranii Ermitazha,” *Travaux du Département de l’Art Européen. Musée de l’Hermitage*, vol. 1 (Leningrad: The State Hermitage, 1940), pp. 87–97.

³² *Ibid.*, pp. 90–1.

³³ Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch...*, op. cit., p. 199: “Die Bilder in Leningrad und Lüttich sind in den Sammlungen Jan Mandyn zugeschrieben, doch weder mit dessen Haarlemem Antonius noch mit der Münchener Christophorusdiablerie deckt die Ausführung sich ganz. Man wird mit einer Zuschreibung an die Mandyn-Huys-Gruppe und einer Datierung um 1550 der Wahrheit nahekommen, wobei anzumerken ist, daß die sorgsame Ausführung vor allem der Lütticher Tafel, deren Ausführung an die Antoniusversuchung in San Francisco erinnert und die das früheste Beispiel dieser Komposition sein dürfte, den oft groben Antoniusimitationen überlegen ist.”

³⁴ It also differs from the St Petersburg painting in many motifs. It is above all a monstrous head which here, together with the knife thrust into the skull, constitutes a kind of volcanic hill with a wide open-mouth, swarming with demonic creatures, whilst a column of smoke rises from out of the top of the head. See the text on the Liège version: Dominique Allart, *La peinture du XV^e et du début du XVI^e siècle dans les collections publiques de Liège*, vol. 6 (Brussels: Université de Liège, 2008), pp. 243–4, cat. no. 44. Collection Répertoires. The author also mentions another version, unknown to Unverfehrt, in the Museo Civico, Treviso. The Liège painting can be viewed in the documentation of KIK / IRPA [online], [access: 1 June 2011], available at World Wide Web: <http://www.kikirpa.be/www2/cgi-bin/wwwopac.exe?DATABASE=obj2&LANGUAGE=2&OPAC_URL=&%250=10064977&LIMIT=50>.

stretched across the sky like necklaces are equally typical (fig. 5). The cloud of smoke with evil spirits flying up like moths is repeated in both versions of *The Temptation* (fig. 6), as well as on the reverse of the small triptych in the Rijksmuseum, which presents yet another, atypical depiction of St Christopher as a knight on a horse, riding through a hostile landscape and protecting the Child Jesus in his arms. The fragment of the landscape with the winding road and the mountain with an old castle in the top right hand corner of the St Petersburg painting is reflected in an analogical fragment of the painting from San Francisco on the left of the tree (fig. 7). And finally, the monsters and nightmares clearly derive from “one family.” The creature with the basket on its head swimming in the water, and the one sitting astride the blade of a saw, constituting the axle of a devilish machine (and many others around the brown egg on the bank) in the painting from St Petersburg, have limbs like forked willow branches, as with the demon in the Warsaw painting depicted with a funnel on its head, seated between St Anthony and the crucifix (fig. 8). The figures in the boats, caught in the act of defecating (fig. 9), are very similar in both the St Petersburg and Warsaw paintings (in the woodcut of 1522 a crouching devilish creature is doing the same directly on St Anthony’s head). The female monsters with fanciful white caps on their heads (fig. 10) and with only one pair of limbs – legs (splayed for the purpose of the caresses of the accompanying boy) in the St Petersburg painting and the hands (playing the mandolin) in the Warsaw painting, are also related. A similarly severed leg (additionally skewered with an arrow in the San Francisco painting) swings from the branch, both in the St Petersburg and San Francisco paintings.

A very important feature in the compositions of de Cock / Master J. Kock is the depiction of the clear movement from the right to the left, already very prominent in the woodcut dating from 1522, emphasized in both versions of *The Temptation* by the arrival of the temptress and additionally in the Warsaw painting – by the direction of the sailing boat. This moment is not present in any of the contemporary or later “diabolical” versions by the Mandijn / Huys’ group. It is just this depiction of movement, together with the unusually harmonious vision of landscape, which may be considered (in spite of the opinions of earlier authorities – Fechner and Unverfehrt) as the deciding argument for including the St Petersburg *St Christopher* in the *œuvre* of de Cock’s / Master J. Kock’s Antwerp circle. Unverfehrt, who deals mainly with “boschian” iconography, seems to ignore the role of landscape in works of our interest, but in some cases he *nolens volens* appears to support our concept. Namely, even though he concurs that the woodcut from 1522 served as the model for the future compositional type of Mandijn / Huys’ group, he claims that with the exception of the painting from San Francisco (therefore the one in Warsaw too), none of these paintings, which are similar to each other in terms of composition and iconography, shows any deeper stylistic influence of Jan de Cock.³⁵ While fully agreeing with this opinion, it should be stressed however, that it does not concern the painting in the Hermitage. The analysis presented above has aimed both at showing the pictorial affinities between this painting and the two versions of *The Temptation of St Anthony* in San Francisco and Warsaw, and proving the relationship in analogical constructing of the space in the *Landscape with St Christopher* from the former Bissing collection. The St Petersburg *Landscape with the Legend of St Christopher* was painted in Antwerp in the close circle of de Cock / Master J. Kock without any doubt. However, considering its much bigger measurements, differing from the small landscapes with hermits, which Filedt Kok acknowledged as the fundamental works of Master J. Kock in the Antwerp period, it is not unlikely – just as in the

³⁵ Unverfehrt, *Hieronymus Bosch*..., op. cit., pp. 180–1.

case of the drawing from the Berlin sketchbook – that the St Petersburg painting was executed in 1530s. It is therefore more justifiable to define it as a work of the Antwerp de Cock / Master J. Kock group than of the master himself.

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