

Goat in a Landscape

Gerrit Dou
(Leiden 1613 – 1675 Leiden)

ca. 1660–65
oil on panel
19.6 x 24.9 cm
signed in brown paint on a rock, lower center: “GDOU” (GD in ligature)
GD-114

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Few goats have ever been featured as the primary subject of a painting, and certainly none has the whimsical personality of this one. Part of the goat's charm as it looks out at the viewer with a combination of curiosity and patience, is its lackadaisical pose, with one front leg stretched out and one bent back. This unusual animal, which has black wool covering its head and neck and white on the rest of its body, is not a figment of Gerrit Dou's imagination but an actual breed known as the Bagot Goat. How Dou came across such an exotic beast, which roamed the English countryside near Staffordshire, is not known, but its fascinating appearance clearly intrigued him and must have induced him to create this intriguing small panel painting.[1]

Dou undoubtedly based this image of a goat on a live model, but he also thought carefully about how he wanted the goat to appear in his painting. X-radiographs and infrared reflectograms indicate that he initially depicted the head in profile and then changed it to a frontal view during the paint process [**(fig 1)** and **(fig 2)**].[2] In devising the goat's pose, Dou seems also to have consulted an engraving of a recumbent goat (although of a different breed) by Marcus de Bije (1639–ca. 1690) **(fig 3)**. The goat in De Bije's print, based on a drawing by Paulus Potter (1625–54), also has one leg extended and one bent back.[3]

Dou situated the goat in a clearing between a gnarly tree and a large burdock plant,[4] an evocative landscape setting that indicates he was not only interested in portraying this specific animal, but also in alluding to broader thematic concerns related to the traditional associations of a goat with lust and promiscuity. This interest is evident in the amorous scene of a shepherd and shepherdess that Dou introduced on the distant hillside. Dou based this figural grouping on *Pastoral Couple with Goats*, an engraving by Boetius Bolswert (ca. 1580–1633) after a design by Abraham Bloemaert (1566–1651), in which a half-nude shepherd is also shown resting his head on his left hand as he embraces his female companion near a herd of goats **(fig 4)**. The burdock plant serves as a thematic counterpart to this ancillary scene, for its large vigorous leaves symbolize fecundity and reinforce the scene's underlying theme of carnal desire.[5]

The associations of the goat with lust and promiscuity, which go back to classical antiquity, were also evident in the writings of Karel van Mander (1548–1606). In his *Het Schilder-Boeck* of 1604, Van Mander described the goat as unchaste and ruinous, likening this animal, which bites off and destroys young green buds of plants, to a whore who ruins young men.[6] Hendrick Goltzius (1558–1617) alluded to the symbolism of lust associated with goats in his 1616 *Fall of Man* in the National Gallery of Art, Washington **(fig 5)**.[7] The goat also appears as a sign of carnal desire in pastoral landscapes such as *Paris and Oenone*, 1619, by Pieter Lastman

Comparative Figures

Fig 1. Detail of infrared photograph of GD-114, showing the changes made around the position of the goat's head

Fig 2. X-radiograph of GD-114

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(1583–1633), in which a shepherd gropes his bare-breasted companion **(fig 6)**.[8] Pieter Quast (1605/6–47) makes this allusion even more explicit in his *Peasant Interior* by depicting a reclining goat next to lovers rolling in the hay.[9]

Dou probably painted *Goat in a Landscape* during the first half of the 1660s, when he executed a number of single-figure nude scenes with similar landscape features.[10] One closely related example is *Nude Woman Bather* from ca. 1660–65 in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg, in which a barren tree trunk likewise frames the scene to one side.[11] He certainly executed it by 1665, when it was included in an exhibition of twenty-seven of Dou's paintings owned by the distinguished Leiden collector Johan de Bye.[12] The painting is listed as one of twenty-two works each displayed in a case (*kas*). Some of these cases must have opened with wings like a triptych, while others probably had a sliding lid; some of the covers of these containers were painted with still life images.[13] Such a case would have compelled the viewer to come close to the painting to open its doors. The small-scale format and meticulous finish of Dou's paintings continue to invite this type of visual intimacy today.[14]

Among the works in De Bye's collection—which included market scenes, candlelit interiors, nude figures and self-portraits—are two paintings in the Leiden Collection dating from the early 1660s: not only *Goat in a Landscape* but also *Young Woman in a Niche with a Parrot and Cage* (GD-105). Interestingly, both of these paintings contain commentaries on human sexuality that are conjoined in an engraving that Jacob Matham (1571–1631), made in the 1580s after a design by Goltzius. Matham's print, *Libido* **(fig 7)**, depicts a small bird perched on the finger of a half-nude young woman as she walks next to a goat.[15] It is quite possible that Dou and De Bye enjoyed this iconographic link between these two paintings, and brought them together as a delightful reference to the pervasive force of sexual desire in nature.

- Dominique Surh, 2017

Fig 3. Marcus de Bije after Paulus Potter, *Recumbent Goat*, 1654–88, engraving, 117 x 147 mm, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam, inv. BdH 1138 (PK), photo: Studio Tromp, Rotterdam

Fig 4. Boetius Bolswert after Abraham Bloemaert, *Pastoral Couple with Goats*, 1611, engraving, 113 x 135 mm, The British Museum, London, inv. D,7.151AN457100001, © Trustees of the British Museum

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Fig 5. Hendrick Goltzius, *Fall of Man*, 1616, oil on canvas, 104.5 x 138.4 cm, National Gallery of Art, Washington D.C., Patrons' Permanent Fund, 1996.34.1

Fig 6. Pieter Lastman, *Paris and Oenone*, 1619, oil on panel, 48.9 x 71.4 cm, Worcester Art Museum, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. John Adam, inv. no. 1984.39. Image © Worcester Art Museum, all rights reserved

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Fig 7. Jacob Matham after Hendrick Goltzius, *Libido (Luxuria)*, 1585–89, engraving, 216 x 144 mm, Rijksprentenkabinet, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam, inv. RP-P-OB-27.227

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Endnotes

1. Dou painted two other works that focus on a single animal: *Cat Crouching on the Ledge of an Artist's Atelier* (GD-108), and *A Sleeping Dog* in the Van Otterloo Collection. For a full reference list on the Cat, see GD-108; on the Dog, see Frederik J. Duparc, "Sleeping Dog," in *Golden Dutch and Flemish Masterworks from the Rose-Marie and Eijk van Otterloo Collection* (Exh. cat. Salem, Peabody Essex Museum; San Francisco, Fine Arts Museum of San Francisco; Houston, Museum of Fine Arts) (New Haven), 131–33, no. 19. Another four animal subjects are known only through eighteenth- and nineteenth-century sources. See Ronni Baer, "The Paintings of Gerrit Dou (1613–1675)," 3 vols. (PhD diss. New York University, 1990), Appendix A-12: *A Billy Goat and Four She-Goats*, *The Watchdog*, and *A* Butterfly; not mentioned by Baer is a work given to Dou, *A Dead Rabbit*, exhibited in Manchester in 1857, from the collection of R. Napier; see Willliam Thoré Bürger, *Trésors d'art exposés à Manchester en 1857 et provenant des collections royales, des collections publiques et des collections particulis la Grande-Bretagne* (Paris, 1857), 64, no. 908; Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century Based on the Work of John Smith*, ed. and trans. Edward G. Hawke, 8 vols. (London, 1907–28), originally published as *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten höllandischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts,* 10 vols. (Esslingen and Paris, 1907–28), 1: 462, no. 383.
2. See Technical Summary and John Twilley, "Analysis and Materials Science for the Preservation of Cultural Property: Scientific Examination of *Landscape with a Goat* by Gerrit Dou (GD-114)," unpublished report, 26 February 2013, on file, The Leiden Collection, New York.
3. Maarten Jager, *Voorkeuren: Een particuliere collectie* (Utrecht, 1985), 28–29.
4. In his analysis of the pigments found in GD-114, conservation scientist John Twilley found that no green pigments were used in painting this plant, which is currently blue in appearance. Twilley found a very high-quality ultramarine pigment in the uppermost layer of the paint, and concluded that Dou must have applied a yellow-pigmented glaze in the final layers in order to create the appearance of green leaves. See John Twilley, "Analysis and Materials Science for the Preservation of Cultural Property: Scientific Examination of *Landscape with a Goat* by Gerrit Dou (GD-114)," unpublished report, February 26, 2013, on file, The Leiden Collection, New York.
5. On the symbolism of *Arctium lappa*, see Guido Jansen, "Bok in een landscap," in C. Boschma et al., *Meesterilijk vee Nederlandse veeschilders, 1600–1900* (Exh. cat. Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum; Leeuwarden, Fries Museum) (Zwolle, 1988), 189–91, no. 37. On the identification of the pigments used for the plant and the possible loss of yellow glazing resulting in the bluish coloring, see John Twilley, "Analysis and Materials Science for the Preservation of Cultural Property: Scientific Examination of *Landscape with a Goat by Gerrit Dou* (GD-114)," unpublished report, 26 February 2013, on file, The Leiden Collection, New York.
6. "Met de Geyt, de Satyren oock daer onder begrepen, wort d'onkuysheyt; beteyckent. De Geyte

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beteyckent de Hoere, die de jonghe knechten verderft, ghelijck; de Geyt de jonghe groen spruyten afknaeght en scheyndet." Karel van Mander, *Het Schilder-Boeck, Uitlegghingh op den Metamorphosis Pub. Ovidy Nasionis…* (Haarlem, 1604), fol. 129r. For an English translation, see *Karel van Mander,The Lives of the Illustrious Netherlandish and German Painters, from the First Edition of the Schilder-Boeck (1603–1604),* ed. Hessel Miedema (Doornspijk, 1994–99). See also Alison McNeil Kettering, *The Dutch Arcadia: Pastoral Art and Its Audience in the Golden Age* (Montclair, 1983), 57.

7. See Arthur K. Wheelock Jr.'s essay on Hendrick Goltzius's *Fall of Man*, in *Dutch Paintings of the Seventeenth Century*, National Gallery of Art Online Editions, Washington D.C.
8. Alison McNeil Kettering, *The Dutch Arcadia: Pastoral Art and Its Audience in the Golden Age* (Montclair, 1983), esp. 44–58.
9. Peter C. Sutton, ed., *Masters of 17th-Century Dutch Landscape Painting* (Exh. cat. Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum; Boston, Museum of Fine Arts; Philadelphia Museum of Art) (Boston, 1987), 372–73, no. 55; Guido Jansen, "Bok in een landscap," in C. Boschma et al., *Meesterlijk vee: Nederlandse veeschilders, 1600–1900* (Exh. cat. Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum; Leeuwarden, Fries Museum) (Zwolle, 1988), 189–91, no. 37; Astrid Tümpel, Peter Schatborn, and Christian Tümpel, et al., *Pieter Lastman: The Man Who Taught Rembrandt* (Exh. cat. Amsterdam, Museum Het Rembrandthuis) (Zwolle, 1991), §9; Eric Jan Sluijter, "The Introduction of the Amorous Shepherd's Idyll in Dutch Prints and Paintings," in *Seductress of Sight: Studies in Dutch Art of the Golden Age* (Zwolle, 2000), 161–97.
10. Dendrochronological analysis was carried out on the present panel in 2010 by Ian Tyers, who concluded that the oak panel, originating from western Germany and the Low Countries, derived from a tree that was felled in 1594; see Ian Tyers's unpublished report on GD-114, on file, The Leiden Collection, New York.
11. Ronni Baer, "The Paintings of Gerrit Dou (1613–1675)," 3 vols. (PhD diss. New York University, 1990), nos. 103–06; Ronni Baer, "Dou's Nudes," in *Aemulatio: Imitation, Emulation, and Invention in Netherlandish Art from 1500 to 1800, Essays in Honor of Eric Jan Sluijter*, ed. Anton W. A. Boschloo, Jacquelyn N. Coutré, Stephanie S. Dickey, and Nicolette C. Luijter-Seijffert (Zwolle, 2011), 371–81.
12. For the 1665 document, see Theodoor Hermann Lunsingh Sheurleer, Cornelia Willemijn Fock, and A.J. van Dissel, eds., *Het Rapenburg: Geschiedenis van een Leidse gracht*, 6 vols. and index (Leiden 1986–92), 3b:486, no. 7. Hofstede de Groot was the first to associate GD-114 with the painting described in the 1665 document as "1 bok en landschap." See Cornelis Hofstede de Groot, *A Catalogue Raisonné of the Works of the Most Eminent Dutch Painters of the Seventeenth Century Based on the Work of John Smith*, ed. and trans. Edward G. Hawke, 8 vols. (London, 1907–28), originally published as *Beschreibendes und kritisches Verzeichnis der Werke der hervorragendsten höllandischen Maler des XVII. Jahrhunderts,* 10 vols. (Esslingen and Paris, 1907–28), 1: 462, no. 385.
13. On the original cases, see Ivan Gaskell, "Gerrit Dou, His Patrons and the Art of Painting," *Oxford Art Journal* 5, no. 1 (1982): 19–21; Ronni Baer, "The Wine Cellar," in *Gerrit Dou, 1613–1675: Master Painter in the Age of Rembrandt,* ed. Arthur K. Wheelock Jr. (Exh. cat. Washington D.C., National Gallery of Art; London, Dulwich Picture Gallery; The Hague, Mauritshuis) (Zwolle, 2000), 110, no. 23;

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Annegret Laabs, “Still Life with a Candlestick and a Watch,” in *The Leiden Fijnschilders from Dresden*, ed. Christiaan Vogelaar (exh. cat. Leiden, Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal; Dresden, Gemäldegalerie Alte Meister, Staatliche Kunstsammlungen) (Zwolle, 2001), 30–32; Ronni Baer, “Dou’s Nudes,” in *Aemulatio: Imitation, Emulation, and Invention in Netherlandish Art from 1500 to 1800, Essays in Honor of Eric Jan Sluijter,* ed. Anton W. A. Boschloo, Jacquelyn N. Coutré, Stephanie S. Dickey, and Nicolette C. Luijter-Seijffert (Zwolle, 2011), 371.

14. See Arthur K. Wheelock Jr., “The Framing of a Vermeer,” in *Collected Opinions: Essays on Netherlandish Art in Honour of Alfred Bader*, ed. Volker Manuth and Axel Rüger (London, 2004), 232–39.
15. The underlying inscription announces the destructive force of human sexuality: “Omnia pervertit veneris vaesana libido iura, fidem, patriam” (The raging fury of love’s desire overturns everything: law, faith, country). The author would like to thank Dr. David Ratzan for his translation. On the meaning of the bird, another well-established erotic symbol referencing sexuality, shown in Libido’s proper right hand, see Eddy de Jongh, “A Bird’s-Eye View of Erotica: Double Entendre in a Series of Seventeenth-Century Genre Scenes,” in *Questions of meaning: theme and motif in Dutch seventeenth-century painting*, trans. and ed. Michael Hoyle (Leiden, 2000), 22–58, esp. 25ff, fig. 3 (first published as “Erotica in vogelsperspectif: De dubbelzinnigheid van een reeks zeventiende-eeuwse genrevoorstellingen,” *Simiolus* 3 [1968–69]).

Provenance

- Johan de Bye, Leiden, by 1665.[1]
- (Sale, 2 April 1803, no. 14 [for 504 frs.]).
- De Preuil (sale, Paris, Lebrun, 26 November 1811, no. 65 [to Este for 220 frs.]; sale, Paris, Lebrun, 2 February 1813, no. 176 [unsold at 150 f.]).
- Edward Loyd, by 1857; by descent to M. Lewis Loyd, Monks Orchard, Beckenham, Kent; by descent to Captain E. N. F. Loyd, Shaw Hill, Melksham, Wiltshire (his sale, London, Christie’s, 30 April 1937, no. 101 [to Heather for £168]).
- Dr. Hans Wetzlar, Amsterdam, by 1950 (sale, Sotheby’s, London, 9 July 2008, no. 46 [Johnny van Haeften, Ltd., 2008]).
- From whom acquired by the present owner in 2008.

Provenance Notes

1. Gerrit Dou’s *Young Woman in a Niche with a Parrot and Cage* and Gerrit Dou’s *A Young Woman Playing a Clavichord*, both now in The Leiden Collection, were also formerly in the collection of Johan

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de Bye.

Exhibition History

- Leiden, front room in the house of Johannes Hannot on the Breestraat, September 1665 [lent by Johan de Bye].
- Manchester, “The Art Treasures of Great Britain,” 5 May–17 October 1857, no. 1039 [lent by Edward Loyd].
- London, Matthiesen Gallery, “Rembrandt’s Influence in the 17th Century,” 20 February–2 April 1953, no. 17 [lent by Dr. Hans Wetzlar].
- Paris, Institut Néerlandais, “Bestiaire hollandais,” 1–27 March 1960, no. 64 [lent by Dr. Hans Wetzlar].
- Dordrecht, Dordrechts Museum, “Meesterlijk vee: Nederlandse veeschilders, 1600–1900,” 25 September–20 November 1988; Leeuwarden, Fries Museum, 3 December 1988–29 January 1989, no. 37 [lent by Dr. Hans Wetzlar].
- Philadelphia Museum of Art, “Dutch Treat,” 11 October 2011–6 January 2012 [lent by the present owner].
- Leiden, Museum de Lakenhal, “Gerrit Dou: The Leiden Collection From New York,” 9 March–31 August 2014 [lent by the present owner].
- Beijing, National Museum of China, “Rembrandt and His Time: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection,” 17 June–3 September 2017 [lent by the present owner].
- Shanghai, Long Museum, West Bund, “Rembrandt, Vermeer and Hals in the Dutch Golden Age: Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection,” 23 September 2017–25 February 2018 [lent by the present owner].
- Moscow, The Pushkin State Museum of Fine Arts, “The Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer: Masterpieces of The Leiden Collection,” 28 March 2018–22 July 2018 [lent by the present owner].
- St. Petersburg, The State Hermitage Museum, “The Age of Rembrandt and Vermeer: Masterpieces of The Leiden Collection,” 5 September 2018–13 January 2019 [lent by the present owner].
- Abu Dhabi, Louvre Abu Dhabi, “Rembrandt, Vermeer and the Dutch Golden Age. Masterpieces from The Leiden Collection and the Musée du Louvre,” 14 February–18 May 2019 [lent by the present owner].

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Bretagne. Paris, 1857, 258.

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Leiden Collection. Edited by Lara, Yeager-Crasselt, 90; 167, no. 31. Translated by Wang YouYou. Beijing, 2017.

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Technical Summary

The painting is executed on of a single plank of tangentially cut, vertically grained oak from a tree felled after 1594. The panel remains in plane, retains its original thickness and there are original bevels along all four edges. 0.5-cm-wide by 0.7-cm-thick wooden shims have been secured to all four panel edges. The shims' wood grains are oriented lengthwise—they run cross-grain along the upper and lower panel edges—have mitered corners and each has been secured to the panel with three metal brads.[1]

Under magnification, a white ground is visible along the upper and left edges, however the added wooden shims make it impossible to determine whether the ground spills over onto any of the panel edges. In the X-radiograph, the ground is radio-opaque, has been thinly and evenly applied, and accentuates the panel's vertical wood grain. Four parallel, upward sloping diagonal lines can be seen in the ground, the most prominent of which is visible through the thin glazes of paint across the goat's proper left leg and tail.

The paint, which also extends to the panel edges, has been built up in successive thin layers, light over dark.[2] In raking light, the branches of the tree stand slightly raised, as does the large leaf to the left of the goat and the outlines of the goat's two horns and legs.

The painting is signed in brown paint on a rock at lower center: "GDOU" (GD in ligature)

No underdrawing is evident with infrared photography at 780, 850, or 1000 nanometers, however pentimenti, x-radiography, and infrared reflectography all suggest that the head of the goat was originally depicted in profile, facing to the left, and the point of the proper right horn was originally oriented parallel to the proper left horn. In addition, there has been a compositional change through the dark fur between the goat's proper

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left leg and tail.

The painting has been brush varnished with damar.[3] The varnish has a reticulated surface and there are numerous matte areas where the varnish has sunk. The most noticeable three areas of sinking are to the left and right of the goat and through the proper right side of the goat's face. In addition, vertical hairline cracks run through the varnish parallel to the wood grain. These hairline cracks appear as pale gray vertical lines through the blue sky along the upper half of the composition that continue down through the goat.

Technical Summary Endnotes

1. See X-radiograph.
2. The upper layers, particularly through the blue sky along the upper left quadrant, blue landscape, and dark fur of the goat, have been damaged during a past cleaning.
3. According to Nancy Krieg's 2009 private conservation treatment notes and discussions with her assistant Kirsten Younger.

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