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The Noahic Pattern in Nicolas Rolin's Patronage: Jan van Eyck's Rolin Madonna and Rogier van der Weyden's Beaune Altarpiece

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THE NOAHIC PATTERN IN NICOLAS ROLIN'S PATRONAGE: JAN VAN EYCK'S *ROLIN VIRGIN* AND ROGIER VAN DER WEYDEN'S BEAUNE ALTARPIECE

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ART HISTORY

ABSTRACT

In Rogier van der Weyden's (1399/1400-1464) Beaune Altarpiece (fig. 1, c.1445-1451), Christ presides over the Day of Judgment while seated atop a rainbow. Previous analyses of the polyptych briefly mention the rainbow's presence. However, in this thesis, I will show how the rainbow motif symbolizes a significant and, until now, undiscovered allusion instigated by the patron Nicolas Rolin (1376-1462), the chancellor of Burgundy, to Noah, the Old Testament patriarch. In the chancellor's previous commission to Jan van Eyck (1390-1441), the *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* (fig. 3, c.1435), Rolin first exhibited the Noahic allusion through the Drunkenness of Noah capital relief directly above his portrait's head. Rolin continued this association in his later large-scale commission of the Beaune Altarpiece, appropriating the Noahic Covenant rainbow for the eschatological context of the polyptych.

Examining exegetical texts and artistic representations of Noah, my research will demonstrate how Noah's essence as an exemplar of righteousness and loyalty appealed to the chancellor. Rolin's character, observed through contemporaneous anecdotes, describes an ambitious and megalomaniac political figure capable of instrumentalizing Noah for social display. Furthermore, I argue the grandiose standards of Burgundian court life prompted Rolin's patronage, manifesting in his ostentatious displays of power, wealth, and association with Noah. This thesis offers a fresh evaluation of the Beaune Altarpiece in

light of Rolin's Noahic affiliation in the larger context of late Middle Ages and Early Renaissance art. As a result, I propose an alternative analysis of the Beaune Altarpiece contrary to the accepted interpretation that the polyptych is medieval, via the rainbow motif's symbolism of Noah.

Keywords: The Last Judgment, rainbow iconography, Nicolas Rolin, Noah

DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my cat, Pippa, the best research assistant and companion a graduate student could ask for, and to James, for your endless support and confidence in me; thank you both.

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INTRODUCTION

Rogier van der Weyden's (1399/1400-1464) polyptych of the Last Judgment for the Chancellor of Burgundy, Nicolas Rolin (1376-1462), better known as the Beaune Altarpiece, exhibits a profound and, until now, unstudied allusion to the patron to the Old Testament patriarch, Noah, in the form of the rainbow upon which Christ is seated (Figure 1, c.1445-1451).[1] This eschatological painting is otherwise mostly in keeping with the conventional late-medieval Christian iconography of the subject; however, the prominent rainbow motif is less common, promoting this inquiry into its source, rationale, and afterlife.

In the Beaune Altarpiece, the rainbow appears as the throne of Christ (Figure 2). Rogier's presentation of the natural phenomenon is idealized, depicting three hues—red, yellow, and green—to balance the similarly pigmented fire cloud enveloping the heavenly group. A closer inspection shows that Rogier carefully outlined the inner and outer edges of the arc while the interior colors were bridged using a gradient. The arc extends downwards from the central panel, continuing through to the altarpiece's doors (or wings) and end at a point behind the Intercessors, the Virgin Mary and St. John the Baptist. The rainbow-throne is stable and solid under Christ, but its materiality is formulated as more ethereal than physical. It is thus miraculous and therefore symbolic, carrying the divine weight of Christ rather than his tangible body. This connectedness between Christ and the rainbow draws the viewer's attention to the pronounced and brightly colored arc.

[1] Unfortunately, we do not have any surviving records documenting the commission of the Beaune Altarpiece.

Before endowing Rogier with this commission, Nicolas Rolin patronized a large-scale epitaph portrait from Jan van Eyck around 1435 known today as *The Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*, which likewise features a Noahic motif (Figure 3, c.1435). This Noahic allusion, I propose, reflects the chancellor's specific interest in the Old Testament figure. Identifying, for the first time, the highly prominent rainbow motif in the Beaune Altarpiece as a key Noahic allusion and part of a broader pattern in the chancellor's patronage, I draw on theological texts, documentation of Rolin's life and patronage, and iconographic precedents to show how the powerful Burgundian statesman instrumentalized his self-identification as a Noahic figure. In an ironic twist, the painting once deemed "medieval" in 1953 by Erwin Panofsky has now been shown to epitomize a profound Renaissance characteristic, self-fashioning, by way of Rolin's Noahic allusion.

In the Old Testament book of Genesis, the rainbow is chosen by God to symbolize his Covenant with Noah after the Flood, a promise to never again destroy the world (9: 13-15).[2] In homage to that divine promise, though it is not explicitly stated in the Bible, in the Book of Revelation (4: 2-3) Christ in Judgment is described as enthroned on a rainbow.[3] Theologians drew the connection early on; in the late third century, for example, St. Victorinus of Pettau, in the fourth chapter of his *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, recognized the eschatological rainbow-throne in Revelation 4 as a direct

[2] King James Version. "I have set my [rain]bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the [rain]bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh."

[3] KJV. "There in heaven stood a throne, with one seated on the throne! And the one seated there looks like jasper and carnelian, and around the throne is a rainbow that looks like an emerald."

reference to the Noahic Covenant.[4] Though Rogier's eschatological composition references St. John's description in Revelation 4, under Rolin's direction the rainbow motif represents both biblical narratives. In this thesis, I will explain how these converging themes of representation allowed Rolin to visually associate himself with Noah.

Scholars have examined the *Rolin Virgin* and Beaune Altarpiece for their style, iconography, liturgical and memorial functions, and the artists' biographical contexts, among other topics.[5] Although unrelated to the Beaune Altarpiece, several scholars argued Jan van Eyck's depiction of the Drunkenness of Noah in the *Rolin Virgin* was to be symbolic of Rolin's affiliation with the Old Testament figure. In his *Early Netherlandish Painting* (1953), Erwin Panofsky observed the capital relief segments visible above Rolin's portrait, including the Drunkenness of Noah, as examples of biblical sin whose iconography and presentation recalls medieval architectural decoration.[6] The scholar's assessment of Van Eyck's medieval elements ends there; however, by contrast, Panofsky described the entirety of Rogier's Beaune Altarpiece as "frankly medieval."[7] Later, in 1967, James Snyder argued for a more specific interpretation of the Noah relief considering the numerous parallels between Rolin and

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[4] Victorinus of Pettau, Commentary on the Apocalypse, trans. by Robert Ernest Wallis from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight.
[5] For key literature on the Rolin Virgin, see Anne Van Buren, "The Canonical Office in Renaissance Painting, Part II: More about the Rolin Madonna," *The Art Bulletin* 60, no. 4 (December 1978) and Laura Gelfand and Walter Gibson, "Surrogate Selves: The 'Rolin Madonna' and the Late-Medieval Devotional Portrait," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 29, no. 3/4 (2002). For key *literature on the Beaune Altarpiece see Alfred Acres, "Rogier van Der Weyden's Painted Texts," Artibus et Historiae* 21, no. 41 (2000) and Lorne Campbell, Van Der Weyden, edited by Christopher Wright (London: Chaucer, 2004).
[6] Panofsky, Early Netherlandish Painting, 139.
[7] Ibid., 269.

Noah. Snyder claims Jan van Eyck consulted St. Augustine's *City of God*, alluding to the Eucharist in his exploration of the similarities between the vine tenders, Rolin, and Noah in the Madonna image.[8] Although Snyder acknowledges this parallel, he does not investigate the message of Rolin's association further. Since Snyder, the Noahic connection in the Rolin Madonna has received little attention, though the painting itself has maintained a prominent status in Early Renaissance scholarly discourse.

The scope of literature for this research is vast and niche, primarily focused on foundational iconographic studies of the paintings, Rolin's socio-religious conditions in the fifteenth century, and secular scholarship and exegesis on Noah. In this thesis, I contextualize these sources with artistic representations of eschatological and Noahic imagery. The rainbow iconography in Western Christian art can be traced to the twelfth century. Illuminated manuscripts were one of the preferred media of the nobility in the late Middle Ages. Prominent patrons commissioned Psalters, Books of Hours, *Ars Moriendi* and Apocalypse manuscripts. A survey of twelfth through fifteenth century manuscripts containing the rainbow motif from the Netherlandish and Burgundian regions, however, reveals few examples. So, while the rainbow seat motif was an established one, it was not prevalent in any medium prior to the Beaune *Last Judgment*. This research will therefore supply an alternative interpretation that the rainbow motif is evidence of Rolin's self-identification as a Noahic figure.

The research presented in this thesis enhances our contextual grasp of fifteenth century devotional art through the interaction of socio-economic pressures and spiritual motivation by applying the converging analyses of iconography and patronage to both the

[8] James Snyder, "Jan van Eyck and the Madonna of Chancellor Rolin," 164.

Rolin Madonna and the Beaune Altarpiece. Alongside the preexisting studies on the paintings and artists, the Noahic pattern demonstrates how patronage motivation and environment shape artistic representation, bettering our understanding of two significant Early Renaissance artists' oeuvres. Drawing on the record of extant images, I will show how, outside the narrow context of Revelation manuscripts, the rainbow in the Beaune Altarpiece is a varied and uncharacteristic element of eschatological iconography, establishing the need to explore the rationale for its presence within Rogier's composition. Hence, investigations of patron-artist exchanges are vital methods of research to uncover the symbolism and nuanced communications of power and status in Early Renaissance art. Furthermore, this research joins scholarship's current approach regarding the arbitrary distinctions of Renaissance versus medieval art championed by early-to-mid twentieth century art historians like Panofsky. In his cultivation and expression of a specific identity via the rainbow motif in the Beaune Altarpiece, Nicolas Rolin exhibits Renaissance behavior governed by the concept of self-fashioning.

In Chapter 1, I demonstrate how the Noahic and other visual elements in Jan van Eyck's *Rolin Virgin* allude to Rolin's identity as the Burgundian chancellor. I will investigate Noah's biblical origins from Genesis 6-9 using literal and moral exegetical texts, such as those by Saints Augustine and Thomas Aquinas. These sources portray Noah as an exemplary servant of God, worthy of salvation for his righteousness and obedience, thereby providing a particular essence of Noah that appealed to the chancellor for appropriation within his patronage. Contrasting Noah's pious reputation, I analyze contemporaneous anecdotes by chroniclers Jacques du Clerq and Georges Chastellain to show, among other themes, how Rolin was known for his inappropriate display of wealth

and aversion to religion. These sources support the perspective that Rolin was capable of instrumentalizing Noah for his personal usage and display. Furthermore, the moral of Noah's drunkenness has been repeatedly examined as an accident and blameless episode of overindulgence, overshadowed by the subsequent cursing of his son, Ham, in Genesis (9: 25-27).[9] Consequently, the lack of repercussions for Noah's actions, rationalized by Thomas Aquinas in *Summa Theologica*, implied that the patron would receive a similar treatment in the form of absolution.[10] I will also analyze artistic representations of Noah, looking at the stained-glass window at Chartres (Figure 6) and an allusion between Louis IX and Noah observed by Elina Gertsman in *The Hours of Jeanne D'Évreux* miniature, *The Miraculous Recovery of the Breviary* (c. 1325). Gertsman's analysis highlights the medieval interest in Noah's political and moral utility.[11]

In Chapter 2, I examine Rolin's patronage of the Beaune Altarpiece and the Hôtel-Dieu, the joint hospital and monastic complex donated by the chancellor to Beaune. Still in situ at the Hôtel-Dieu, the Beaune Altarpiece is one part of Rolin's grand and pious endowment that exceeded the standard practices for noble patronage. In this chapter, I elaborate on Rolin's ambitious commission in the context of his station compared to earlier examples, such as Philip the Bold's Chartreuse de Champmol in Dijon. The usage of the eschatological rainbow motif before the Beaune Altarpiece was infrequent but not without precedent, looking at the few representations I found

[9] KJV. "And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant."
[10] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1911-1925), IIa-IIae, q. 150, arts 1-2.
[11] Elina Gertsman, "'Vir Iustus Atque Perfectus': Saint Louis as Noah in the 'Miraculous Recovery of the Breviary' Miniature from 'the Hours of Jeanne D'évreux,'" Source: Notes in the History of Art 23, no. 1 (2003): 1–8.

throughout my research, such as *Initial A* miniature (Figure 5, late 13th century) and, in a particular connection to Rogier, Stefan Lochner's *The Last Judgment* c. 1435 in the Cologne City Hall (Figure 10). The limited appearance of this motif in eschatological subject matter indicates that its sourcing lies elsewhere. Alternatively, I propose the rainbow motif originates from Noah's narrative in Genesis (9: 13-15) as a manifestation of God's promise to Noah and humanity after the Flood: The Noahic Covenant. This particular passage, made possible only by Noah's faithfulness and devotion, secured the future of salvation for humanity after the Flood. Therefore, in his self-identification with this Covenant between God and Noah, Rolin assumes a similar treatment of absolution and salvation upon his death. Accordingly, I analyze the circumstances that propelled Rolin to conceive this allusion by assessing the larger context of the polyptych in its environment at the Hôtel-Dieu. Comparable to earlier royal and noble structures like the nearby Chartreuse de Champmol in Dijon by Philip the Bold, Rolin clearly understood the advantages of bold statements of power. In this thesis, I will further explore this complex interplay of Rolin's social status and motivation for patronage through his Noahic association.

In Chapter 3, I demonstrate how Rolin's Noahic allusion altered Renaissance imagery through his manipulation of the rainbow as a convenient iconographic motif of both eschatological and Noahic Covenant imagery. Rolin's reputation as chancellor and patron, alongside Rogier's fame as an artist, popularized the eschatological rainbow motif for later iterations. Examples considered are *The Last Judgment* paintings by Hans Memling (1467-1471), Jehan Bellegambe (1520-1525), Jan Provost (c.1525), and Crispijn van den Broeck (c.1571), as well as a Book of Hours by illustrator Guillaume

Vrelant (c.1470-1490) (Figures 11-16) to demonstrate how the motif's revival confined itself to the Netherlandish and Burgundian regions. The afterlife of the Noahic pattern is contextualized with recent research on Noah in Renaissance spirituality and art, offering a new perspective for the biblical figure's interpretation in the fifteenth century. Following the research of Edgar Wind and Don Allen, Michelangelo's frescoes depicting Noah's narrative in the Sistine Chapel (Figures 17-18, 1508-1512) represent the first example of Noah's humanization as a flawed biblical figure in the Renaissance. However, this thesis augments their research, showing how decades before Michelangelo, Rolin also adapted Noah, precisely as a flawed but venerated figure, to his spiritual and social needs.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXTUALIZING THE NOAHIC MOTIFS IN THE *ROLIN VIRGIN*

In this first Chapter, I examine the Drunkenness of Noah motif within the *Rolin Virgin* (Figure 3) as the first instance of the Noahic pattern in Rolin's patronage, demonstrating how Noah was a desirable model for the chancellor. In 1435, Rolin commissioned Philip the Good's court painter, Jan van Eyck, to paint what would become his epitaph portrait.[12] In the painting, Van Eyck presents the viewer with a pious and contemplative Rolin who, as a true suppliant, kneels at a prie-dieu with his gaze aimed directly at the seated Virgin. She does not acknowledge Rolin's presence and instead lowers her sight on the Christ child in her lap.[13] An angel hovers above the Virgin, lowering a crown onto her head which most art historians interpreted as a Coronation of the Virgin scene; Christine H. McCorkel rejected this assumption, arguing that he instead alluded to the Crown of Life (*corona vitae*).[14] The palatial interior is Italianate, featuring a tripartite Corinthian arcade in the center of the composition to create an overlook of the expansive landscape. In the background, a river winds through two sides of a bustling and prosperous city.[15] In this view from above, the city is dense,

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[12] See Anne Van Buren, "The Canonical Office in Renaissance Painting, Part II: More about the Rolin Madonna," *The Art Bulletin* 60, no. 4 (December 1978) and Laura Gelfand and Walter Gibson, "Surrogate Selves: The 'Rolin Madonna' and the Late-Medieval Devotional Portrait," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 29, no. 3/4 (2002).

[13] Craig Harbison observed how their disconnected gazes indicate this scene to be a vision, rather than reality, for Rolin. Another painting by Van Eyck, *Virgin and Child with Canon Joris van der Paele*, demonstrates this type of devotional meditation, see "Visions and Meditations in Early Flemish Painting," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 15, no. 2 (1985): 87–118, 100-101.

[14] Christine Hasenmueller McCorkel, "The Role of the Suspended Crown in Jan van Eyck's *Madonna and Chancellor Rolin*," *The Art Bulletin* 58, no. 4 (December 1976): 517–20, 519.

[15] See Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 413 for a description of the potential identification of the city.

exhibiting multiple church steeples and a cathedral on the right, closest to the Virgin. Just outside the sacred interior space, two figures stand on a terrace in the center of the painting dressed in contemporary 1430s *houppelandes*.[16] Scholars have long debated their identities, however, Anne van Buren most convincingly observed them as "watchmen," alluding to Honorius' commentary on the Canonical Office, *Gemma Animae*.[17] This painting is also notorious for an element absent from the final composition: a purse attached to the chancellor's belt. Bret Rothstein hypothesized that Van Eyck endeavored to balance the "earthliness and spirituality [...] speak[ing] to the careful coordination of seemingly extraneous details with central narrative concerns."[18]

Of the minute details presented in this painting have garnered much scholarly attention over the years, the present thesis is primarily concerned with the column capitals above the chancellor's head.[19] Illustrating episodes of sin from the Old Testament (Figure 4), the rightmost relief depicting the Drunkenness of Noah likely speaks to Rolin's identification with the patriarch. As a group, McCorkel observed that the capitals "crown" Rolin, mirroring the Virgin and angel on the right to "show how man has merited his position in the scheme of things" (Figure 4).[20] From left to right, the capitals feature Adam and Eve's expulsion from the Garden of Eden, Cain killing Abel,

[16] Anne Hagopian van Buren, "The Canonical Office in Renaissance Painting, Part II: More about the Rolin Madonna," *The Art Bulletin* 60, no. 4 (December 1978), 629.
[17] Ibid., 618.
[18] Bret Rothstein, "On Devotion as Social Ornament Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*," *Dutch Crossing* 24, no. 1 (June 2000): 96–132, 103.
[19] For key literature on the Rolin Madonna, see Max J Friedländer, *Early Netherlandish Painting* (Leiden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1967); Laura D. Gelfand and Walter S. Gibson, "Surrogate Selves: The 'Rolin Madonna' and the Late-Medieval Devotional Portrait," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 29, no. 3/4 (2002): 119; Craig Harbison, *Jan van Eyck: The Play of Realism* (Updated and Expanded ed., London: Reaktion Books, 2012).
[20] Christine Hasenmueller McCorkel, "The Role of the Suspended Crown in Jan van Eyck's *Madonna and Chancellor Rolin*," 519.

and lastly, the Drunkenness of Noah.[21] In the upper left (Figure 4), Van Eyck depicted Noah within the Ark, arms outstretched towards a dove, referencing the scripture in Genesis (8: 8-11).[22] A goat or similar animal appears directly below the Ark and under the animal is the drunken Noah. Van Eyck chose the climax of Noah's sin from Genesis (9: 20-24) when, after overindulging on wine and passing out naked, Noah was discovered by his son Ham.[23] Rather than aid his father, Ham retrieved his brothers, Shem and Japeth, who immediately covered the drunken Noah to protect his modesty and dignity. In the painting, Noah is unknowingly covered by a son, while the one in the middle looks on, shocked and open-mouthed at the drunken state of his father. Contrasting the middle son, the third figure turns away, using a hand to block his vision from gazing at Noah's nakedness. Van Eyck respected the biblical account thus far; however, he altered the number of figures in the scripture to include another beside the third, a fourth son turning away from the shameful event. Although this fourth figure does not appear in Genesis, Rolin had four sons from two marriages.[24] This possible adjustment of the scripture may indicate Rolin's aspirational identification with Noah.

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[21] Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 139.

[22] King James Version. "Also he sent forth a dove from him, to see if the waters were abated from off the face of the ground; But the dove found no rest for the sole of her foot, and she returned unto him into the ark, for the waters were on the face of the whole earth: then he put forth his hand, and took her, and pulled her in unto him into the ark. And he stayed yet other seven days; and again he sent forth the dove out of the ark; And the dove came in to him in the evening; and, lo, in her mouth was an olive leaf pluckt off: so Noah knew that the waters were abated from off the earth. And he stayed yet other seven days; and sent forth the dove; which returned not again unto him any more."

[23] KJV. "And Noah began to be a husbandman, and he planted a vineyard: and he drank of the wine, and was drunken; and he was uncovered within his tent. And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japeth took a garment, and laid it upon both their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces were backwards, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him."

[24] Herta-Florence Pridat, *Nicolas Rolin: Chancelier de Bourgogne* (Publications de l'Université de Bourgogne 82, Dijon: Editions universitaires de Dijon, 1996), 109-117.

In the bible, Noah's drunkenness is not defined explicitly as a sin; however, Van Eyck designates it as such, depicting it alongside the Expulsion from the Garden and Cain murdering Abel, events clearly understood as principal examples of sin (Figure 4). Noah's active participation in getting drunk is overshadowed by his dramatic cursing of Ham's child, Canaan, in Genesis (9: 24-27); alternatively, Van Eyck portrayed Noah as drunk and exposed in the process of being covered.[25] Therefore, this representation places the emphasis on Noah's inebriation as the original source of sin in the relief, corresponding to both Adam and Cain in the neighboring capitals. Before examining the exegetical interpretations of Noah's narrative that led to this representation, the following section contextualizes this portrayal with the circumstances of the patron's background.

According to his biographer, Herta-Florence Pridat, sources on Nicolas Rolin's heritage lacked substantial and authentic documentation for several centuries, predominantly in the aftermath of Burgundy's dissolution in 1477 into the rival Hapsburg empire.[26] These later writers created contradictory accounts of Rolin's background, particularly regarding his place of birth. It is agreed by scholarship today that Rolin was born in 1376 to a bourgeois family in Autun, located to the south-west of Dijon.[27] In 1422, Rolin was promoted to Chancellor of Burgundy, an administrative and civil servant

[25] KJV. "And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed be Canaan; a servant of servants shall he be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed be the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japheth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." See David Goldenburg, "The Curse of Ham: A Case of Rabbinic Racism?" in *Struggles in the Promised Land: Towards a History of Black-Jewish Relations in the United States*, by Jack Salzman and Cornel West, 21–51, Oxford University Press (1997) and Benjamin Braude, "The Sons of Noah and the Construction of Ethnic and Geographical Identities in the Medieval and Early Modern Periods," *The William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 1 (January 1997) for more on the implications of Noah's curse on Canaan. Goldenburg and Braude observe how the narrative promotes racist and anti-semitic ideologies and, from the fifteenth through the nineteenth centuries, was sourced in defense of the Trans-Atlantic slave trade.
[26] *Nicolas Rolin: Chancelier de Bourgogne*, 17-18.
[27] Ibid., 22.

position of power under Duke Philip the Good.[28] Two years prior, in his earlier profession as a lawyer, Rolin acted as the ducal defense during the trial against the Dauphin of France for the murder of John the Fearless in 1419.[29] Though the trial failed to punish the true perpetrators, Rolin was instrumental in the subsequent alliance, the Treaty of Troyes (1420), between Burgundy and England; a move which united the two against France, directly prolonging the Hundred Years' War (1337-1453).[30] During these years of internal and external strife for the Duchy of Burgundy, Rolin, who was previously non-noble, benefited handsomely from the power shift to Philip the Good. In this particular context of his background, the following contemporaneous anecdotes present a specific characterization that shows a man capable of perceiving himself as a Noahic figure.

Overwhelmingly, contemporaneous authors describe Rolin's character as greedy, megalomaniac, and highly unlikable. One of Rolin's chief critics, Jacques du Clerq (1420-1501) writes that the chancellor was "unwilling to let anyone rule in his place, intent upon rising and expanding his power to the very end and dying sword in fist."[31] In agreement with du Clerq, Georges Chastellain (1405/15-1475) writes in his *Oeuvres* that Rolin:

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[28] Ibid., 39.
[29] Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy* (New ed. Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K. ; Rochester, N.Y: Boydell Press, 2002), 5.
[30] Ibid., Vaughan writes that Rolin argued for a brutal sentence, calling for the Dauphin and his collaborators "to be carried bare-headed on tumbrils through the streets of Paris… holding lighted wax tapers in their hands, they were to make loud and public confession of their crime in every square they pass through." However, only one person potentially involved in the assassination was executed for the crime; the victim was "dragged alive on a hurdle through the streets of Dijon; his severed head was exhibited for eight days at a street corner…"
[31] Trans. by Panofsky in *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 1: 268. "Nul si eust voulu souffrir régner en son lieu pour luy retraire en la paix, mais contendoit à monter tousjours et multiplier jusqu'à son darrenier et de mourir l'espée au poing, triumphant sur fortune."

> Sought to govern everything single-handedly, whether it be waging war, making peace, or administering finances. In every matter, the duke looked to him and relied upon him principally; and in all [the duke's] lands there was no office or benefice, nor were any gifts made, either in town or in the country, which were not in his disposition and about which he was not answerable in all things. [32]

Du Clerq and Chastellain are explicit and straightforward in their disdain for the chancellor, expressing their particular indignation towards Rolin's fierce possession of political power. Historian Richard Vaughan, however, qualifies Chastellain's statement specifically, observing the reality of Rolin's "subsidiary" role in government affairs.[33] Though Rolin amassed a generous amount of power and wealth as chancellor (especially considering his non-noble heritage), Vaughan supplies only one instance from 1431 in which Rolin received ducal approval to lead diplomatic negotiations on Philip's behalf. Looking at the correspondence between Rolin and Philip from this period, Vaughan stresses Rolin's obedience as a civil servant and adherence to the duke's instructions for the diplomatic situation. As a result, Vaughan surmises that Chastellain's description of the power dynamic between the two was likely exaggerated and fallacious, but Rolin's respect for the duke was in fact genuine. Nonetheless, these unfavorable judgments of Rolin were shared by many at court and beyond. The French King Louis XI (r. 1461-1483), commented on Rolin's patronage of the Hôtel-Dieu complex saying that, "it is only right that Rolin, after having made so many poor during his life, should leave an

[32] Author, Richard Vaughan, trans, Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good: the Apogee of Burgundy* (New ed. Woodbridge, Suffolk, U.K.; Rochester, N.Y: Boydell Press, 1970), 169. "II voloit tout gouverner tout seul, fust de guerre, fust de paix, fust en fait de finances. De tout en toutle due s'en attendoit à luy, et sur luy comme principal reposoit, et n'y avait ne office, ne bénéfice, ne par ville, ne par champs, en tous ses pays, ne don ne emprunt fait qui tout par luy ne se fesist et conduisist et à luy ne respondist comme le regardeur sur le tout."
[33] Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good: The Apogee of Burgundy*, 168-169.

asylum for them after his death."[34] Corresponding to du Clerq and Chastellain, Louis IX insinuates that Rolin profited heavily from his decades as chancellor at the expense of his subjects, recognizing the irony in Rolin's decision to create a hospital complex for them.

The character traits described by du Clerq and Chastellain portray Rolin as manipulative, shrewd, and ambitious, desiring to assert his power and status at every turn; their condemnation of the chancellor extends to rumors and doubts about his spirituality, furthering his reliance on the Noahic exemplum in his patronage. During Rolin's lifetime, Pridat commented that all aspects of society, including social class, religion, politics, and culture, experienced "discordance and imbalance."[35] Specifically, the effects of internal Church strife, famine, and the Hundred Years' War contributed to the complex omnipresence of death and religion in society.[36] According to Pridat, this led an individual, regardless of their social status, to blur the lines between strict, pious behavior and superficial devotion.[37] Regarding Philip the Good, the author examines the paradoxical nature of religious practice, noting that while the duke attended Mass daily and fasted more than the Church advised, Philip the Good also had thirty-five mistresses and seventeen illegitimate children.[38] Unable to escape criticism, Rolin's contemporaries doubted the authenticity of his religiosity; according to du Clerq, Rolin was "reputed to be one of the wisest men in the kingdom [in France], to speak temporally; with respect to

[34] Quoted in Laura Gelfand, "Piety, Nobility and Posterity: Wealth and the Ruin of Nicolas Rolin's Reputation." *Journal of Historians of Netherlandish Art* 1, no. 1 (June 2009) and Gaston Abord, trans., *Nicolas Rolin*, 1898.
"Il est bien juste que Rolin, après avoir fait tant de pauvres pendant sa vie, leur laisse un asile après sa mort."
[35] Pridat, *Nicolas Rolin: Chancelier de Bourgogne*, 5.
[36] Ibid.
[37] Ibid.
[38] Ibid., 6.

the spiritual, I shall remain silent."[39] This particular quote is often sourced by scholarship to describe the chancellor, contributing heavily to his impious characterization.[40] Despite this assumption, Pridat writes a positive description of Rolin's "personal convictions," citing the chancellor's donation of sixty livres in 1430 for the erection of the St. Sebastian chapel within Autun Cathedral as evidence of his pious nature.[41] In conjunction with the previously examined quotations by his contemporaries, however, it is clear that Rolin was not considered a model devotee by fifteenth century standards. As a result, the chancellor's motivations for patronizing religious objects, like the *Rolin Virgin* and Beaune Altarpiece, should be understood within this modality.

Although examinations of the Rolin-Noah allusion have not considered the chancellor's patronage of the Beaune Altarpiece, the Drunkenness of Noah motif in the *Rolin Virgin* has received increased attention by scholars since the 1960s. For example, in 1967 James Snyder observed the Drunkenness of Noah motif to be one of many analogies between Noah and Rolin within the painting.[42] In his article, Snyder refers to Genesis (9: 20), where Noah is named the first winemaker, but because he became drunk off his product, Snyder notes that the patriarch, "a sort of Old Testament Bacchus" is "reduced to the shameful figure of a drunkard."[43] Surprisingly, Snyder does not parallel this impious behavior with Rolin directly but relates the two figures based on Rolin's position

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[39] Quoted by Bret Rothstein "On Devotion as Social Ornament Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*." *Dutch Crossing* 24, no. 1 (June 2000): 96–132, and translated by Henri Pirenne in *Nicolas Rolin*, 1907, 19. "Il fut réputé,' [...] 'un des plus sages hommes du royaume [de France], à parler temporallement; car au regard de l'espirituel, je m'en tais."

[40] See Laura Gelfand "Piety, Nobility and Posterity," full citation in footnote 22. An assessment of her article will be presented in chapter two of the thesis.

[41] Pridat, *Nicolas Rolin: Chancelier de Bourgogne,* 138.

[42] "Jan van Eyck and the Madonna of Chancellor Nicolas Rolin." *Oud Holland - Quarterly for Dutch Art History* 82, no. 1 (1967): 163–71.

[43] See footnote 2 for Gen 9: 20-24; Snyder, "Jan van Eyck and the Madonna of Chancellor Nicolas Rolin," 170.

as chancellor in a region renowned for its wine production and export. Furthering this viticultural relationship, Snyder indicates the presence of vineyards in the background, a rare occurrence in Van Eyck's landscapes, to be an overt expression of Rolin's association with Burgundy.[44] Snyder's main argument focused on Jan van Eyck's consultation of St. Augustine's *City of God*, and his exploration of the parallels between Noah and Rolin did not result in further discourse on this particular pairing.[45] However, in 1981 Molly Teasedale Smith was prompted by Snyder's analysis of the Drunkenness of Noah relief to question the identity of the patron in her article, "On the Donor of Jan Van Eyck's Rolin Madonna."[46] According to Genesis (6: 10) Noah had three sons, however Smith observes the existence of an extraneous figure, another son, within the relief.[47] Other scholars, like Brett Rothstein, assumed the fourth figure to be Canaan, the son of Ham.[48] However, Smith uses this irregularity in Van Eyck's composition to claim that Jean, Rolin's third son out of four, commissioned the painting on his father's behalf. Smith argues that Jean, in his role as Bishop of Autun, believed it was essential to secure his father's spiritual legacy and, thus, was motivated to patronize such an object.[49] Smith's assessment of Jean's spiritual concern for his father seems credible in conjunction with du Clerq's remarks about Rolin's impious nature; however, the author's

[44] Snyder, "Jan van Eyck and the Madonna of Chancellor Nicolas Rolin," 170.
[45] Snyder concludes that Jan van Eyck's wine-related iconography was symbolic of the Eucharist and, subsequently, demonstrates his knowledge of the prophetic nature of Noah's story in St. Augustine's *City of God*.
[46] Molly Teasedale Smith, "On the Donor of Jan van Eyck's *Rolin Madonna,*" *Gesta* 20, no. 1 (January 1981): 273–79.
[47] KJV. Gen. 6:10. "And Noah begat three sons, Shem, Ham, and Japeth."
[48] "On Devotion as Social Ornament Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin*." *Dutch Crossing* 24, no. 1 (June 2000): 96–132. See footnote 13 on page 520.
[49] Molly Teasedale Smith, "On the Donor of Jan van Eyck's Rolin Madonna," 274-275.

conclusions remain speculative and challenge foundational scholars like Erwin Panofsky, who held the prevailing belief that Rolin patronized the work for his chapel at Autun.[50]

Interpretation of the life of Noah since Antiquity, including discussion of his sin, has perpetuated the patriarch's reputation as a venerated biblical figure. Exegetical texts demonstrate how Noah's legacy was utilized as a convenient and archetypal model amongst those in power like the chancellor Rolin. In the fifth century, for example, St. Augustine of Hippo promoted Noah's identification as a typological figure in *The City of God*, paralleling the patriarch's various life events to those of Christ:

> [...] the planting of the vine by Noah, and his intoxication by its fruit, and his nakedness while he slept, and the other things done at that time, and recorded, are all of them pregnant with prophetic meanings, and veiled in mysteries.[51]

In this first chapter, Augustine endorses the Noah narrative's typological interpretation, thereby increasing his importance as a biblical figure. The theologian speaks highly of Noah's sanctity:

> Because from Noah [...] down to Abraham, we do not find in the canonical books that the piety of any one is celebrated by express divine testimony, unless it be in the case of Noah, who comments with a prophetic benediction his two sons Shem and Hapeth, while he beheld and foresaw what was long afterwards to happen.[52]

Although Augustine's work was applied by Snyder in his assessment of the Rolin Virgin, the author solely considered the text as evidence of Van Eyck's inclusion of specific Eucharist-related motifs. In this chapter, I consider Augustine's text, alongside others, in the light of Rolin's agency as patron. Amidst the rampant "godlessness" before the Flood, Augustine regards Noah's "prophetic spirit" as the only vessel through which humanity

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[50] Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 139.
[51] Book XVI Chapter 1 trans. by Marcus Dods. From *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers*, First Series, Vol. 2. Edited by Philip Schaff. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1887.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight.
[52] Ibid.

and, consequently, Christianity could survive God's wrath.[53] Appreciative of Noah's sacrifice, Augustine emphasizes Noah's virtues, his loyalty and piety, which contributed to his reverent essence.

Hugh of St. Victor (1096-1141) wrote his key mystical work, *De arca Noah morali et mystica* around the mid-twelfth century.[54] Using the instructions given to Noah by God in Genesis (6: 14-16), Hugh created an incredibly complex, two-dimensional representation of the Ark as an educational metaphor to accompany his lectures at the Parisian abbey of St. Victor.[55] Conrad Rudolph (2014) argued that this text is fundamentally political.[56] According to Rudolph, numerous manuscript copies of *De Arca Noah* survive, but the text itself has been ignored by art historians primarily due to its complexity.[57] In his text, Hugh proclaims Noah's Ark to be a symbolic representation of the monastic vessel and uses this concept to promote the integrity of monastic institutions: "Noah's ark is the figure of a spiritual building that corresponds to Christ's whole person."[58] In this quote, Hugh links monastic society with Christ through Noah's function as the continuation of Christianity through the Flood. As Hugh instrumentalized Noah to strengthen the authority of monastic institutions, I argue, so did Rolin use the biblical figure to enhance his righteous and obedient chancellorship and provide himself with the solace that, like Noah, he would also receive absolution for his sins. In the

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[53] Ibid.
[54] *Hugh of Saint Victor Selected Spiritual Writings*, translated by a Religious of C.S.M.V (City: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc. 1962).
[55] KJV. Gen. 6:14-16 "Make thee an ark of gopher wood; rooms shalt thou make in the ark, and shalt pitch it within and without with pitch. And this *is the fashion* which thou shalt make it *of*: The length of the ark *shall be* three hundred cubits, the breadth of it fifty cubits, and the height of it thirty cubits. A window shalt thou make to the ark, and in a cubit shalt thou finish it above; and the door of the ark shalt thou set in the side thereof; *with* lower, second, and third *stories* shalt thou make it."
[56] Conrad Rudolph, *The Mystic Ark* (City: Cambridge University Press, 2014).
[57] Conrad Rudolph, *The Mystic Ark*.
[58] *Hugh of Saint Victor Selected Spiritual Writings*, translated by a Religious of C.S.M.V.. chapter 7

thirteenth century, Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, wrote an account of Noah in his collection of hagiographies, the *Golden Legend*.[59] Corresponding with the opinion of Augustine, Jacobus reiterates Noah's character as "righteous and perfect," emphasizing, again, the specific qualities which persuaded God to select Noah to survive the Flood. This repeated association of righteousness with Noah was expressed in the New Testament; according to 2 Peter, Noah was a "preacher of righteousness."[60] As Jacobus details the Flood narrative, he further emphasizes Noah's sense of duty regarding the construction of the Ark; writing, "this ark was on making, from the beginning that God commanded first to make it, one hundred and twenty years." Here, Jacobus implies that to obtain Noah's degree of righteousness, one must be obedient to God's instructions.

Later in the thirteenth century, St. Thomas Aquinas (1225-1274) debated whether or not drunkenness is a sin in *Summa Theologica*. In his deliberation, Aquinas proposed that drunkenness should be understood loosely, specifying that Noah's inebriation was an excusable offense because it was "not through his negligence" that he "was made drunk."[61] It is significant for this analysis that, compared to Noah *becoming* drunk as a result of drinking, Aquinas described Noah as "made" to be drunk. Therefore, despite committing sin, Noah's status as a typological and righteous figure prohibited any punishment for his wrongdoing. As a result, Aquinas advertises the idea that one could similarly absolve themselves of sin under the assumption that, like Noah, they were

[59] *The Golden Legend or Lives of the Saints. Compiled by Jacobus de Voragine, Archbishop of Genoa, 1275*. First Edition Published 1470. Englished by William Caxton, First Edition 1483, Edited by F.S. Ellis, Temple Classics, 1900 (Reprinted 1922, 1931.)
[60] KVJ. 2 Pet. 2:5.
[61] *Summa Theologica*, trans. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (New York: Benziger Brothers, 1911-1925), IIa-IIae, q. 150, arts 1-2.

obedient and righteous in their actions. For Rolin, then, Aquinas's dismissal of Noah's sin exposes the ambiguity of concepts like repentance and confession; just as Noah was "made" drunk, others may apply such a rationale to their respective sins. Like Noah under the direction of a higher power, Rolin, for instance, could assume that his sins would be absolved because, under Philip the Good, he was a dutiful and obedient servant.

This recurrent justification for Noah's sin cannot be understated. A century after Aquinas' wrote the *Summa*, Jean Gerson (1363-1429) also discussed the sin of drunkenness in his *Oeuvres Complètes* in the fourteenth century.[62] Gerson concludes that "Noah has been forgiven," because he was drunk "unintentionally."[63] Even though in Genesis (9: 20), Noah actively drank his own wine, these exegetical sources have conveniently removed the patriarch's agency from the narrative.

In art, Noahic representation is similarly selective in its interpretation of the patriarch's biblical account. At Chartres, for example, the Noah stained glass window (Figure 6, c.1205-1215) condenses the narrative into forty-two didactic vignettes. According to Jane Welch Williams, the Noah window at Chartres is the largest known Medieval representation of the Genesis story.[64] Despite this significance, however, the vignettes pertaining to the Drunkenness of Noah omit any illustration of Noah lying naked to be discovered by Ham. In the upper register of the window, a band of three horizontal vignettes depict the episode (Figures 7-9). In the left scene, two figures are making wine (Figure 7); on the right, Noah appears to drink wine (Figure 8). In the

[62] Jean Gerson, *Oeuvres Complètes*, Translated by Kathleen Garay and Madeleine Jeay with an introduction by Palémon Glorieux (City: McMaster University, 2000).
[63] Ibid.
[64] Jane Welch Williams, *Bread, Wine & Money: The Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993, 100).

central vignette, however, the artist skipped directly to the cursing of Ham from Genesis (9: 22-27), when Noah damned Ham's son, Canaan, and his descendants, to be servants for eternity (Figure 9).[65] In her text, Williams argues that the absence of a vignette depicting Noah's intoxication was justified by a moral and legal restriction of wine in the early thirteenth century.[66] Williams speculates about the rationale for the missing portion of Noah's story: "according to the window [at] Chartres, Noah [...] did not get drunk."[67] Consistent with the attitudes of Augustine and Aquinas, the designer of the Chartres window consciously omitted the immediate aftermath of Noah's decision to drink wine. Whether or not it was a result of restrictions as proposed by Williams, this particular section of Noah's narrative was rendered unnecessary for the cathedrals' windows. In the *Rolin Virgin*, Van Eyck presented the opposite approach implying his sin, showing the inebriated Noah alongside Adam and Cain (Figure 4).

In her 2003 article assessing Noah's influence on Medieval art, Elina Gertsman analogizes Louis IX to Noah using Jean Pucelle's *Miraculous Recovery of the Breviary* miniature from the c. 1325 *Hours of Jeanne D'Évreux*.[68] Using an iconographic and biographical approach, Gertsman compares the *Miraculous Recovery* miniature to a depiction of Noah in the Ark (Figure 19) from *The Psalter of Saint Louis* (c. 1253-1270).

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[65] KJV. "And Ham, the father of Canaan, saw the nakedness of his father, and told his two brethren without. And Shem and Japeth took a garment, and laid *it* upon both of their shoulders, and went backward, and covered the nakedness of their father; and their faces *were* backward, and they saw not their father's nakedness. And Noah awoke from his wine, and knew what his younger son had done unto him. And he said, Cursed *be* Canaan; a servant of servants shall be unto his brethren. And he said, Blessed *be* the LORD God of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant. God shall enlarge Japeth, and he shall dwell in the tents of Shem; and Canaan shall be his servant." See footnote 13 for recent literature on this episode.
[66] Jane Welch Williams, *Bread, Wine & Money: The Windows of the Trades at Chartres Cathedral*, 100.
[67] Ibid.
[68] Elina Gertsman, "'Vir Iustus Atque Perfectus': Saint Louis as Noah in the 'Miraculous Recovery of the Breviary' Miniature from 'the Hours of Jeanne D'évreux,'" *Source: Notes in the History of Art* 23, no. 1 (2003): 1–8.

Although the style of both illuminations differ, Gertsman suggests the depiction of Saint Louis within the confines of the castle in the *Miraculous Breviary* miniature to be based on Noah within his ark in *The Psalter of Saint Louis*. The author assesses Noah's righteous exegetical interpretation as the "[second] progenitor of the human race, a man blessed by God."[69] According to Gertsman, Noah's pious and moral utility made him the perfect archetype to demonstrate "the devoutness of the sainted king—the only sainted king—of the Capetian dynasty."[70] In addition, Gertsman considers these implications for the recipient of the Book of Hours, Jeanne D'Évreux. As the Queen of France, Jeanne's primary role was to provide (male) heirs and secure the line of succession. Although the Capetian line ended after Jeanne, Gertsman argues that Noah, who had three sons and received God's commandment to "be fruitful and multiply," was a specific message for the Queen to fulfill her duty.[71] Despite their creation a century before Rolin, the miniatures in Gertsman's article demonstrate a precedent for Noahic allusions within Medieval art. The author's examination of Saint Louis and the patriarch demonstrates a more positive association between the two when compared to Rolin's appropriation of Noah in the fifteenth century, which seems more complex and, I propose, also nuanced.

In service as chancellor of Burgundy from 1422 until his death in 1462, Rolin's livelihood depended on the strength and success of the Duchy.[72] In his forty-year tenure as a civil servant, Rolin's strategic manipulation of symbolism, particularly through his Burgundian identity, is evident in his Noahic self-fashioning. As chancellor, Rolin was

[69] Ibid., 2.
[70] Ibid., 5.
[71] KJV. Gen 9:6. Full verse: "And you, be ye fruitful, and multiply; bring forth abundantly in the earth, and multiply therein."
[72] Pridat, *Nicolas Rolin: Chancelier de Bourgogne,* 157.

aware that Burgundy's most important product and export was wine.[73] According to a document by Philip the Good from 1460:

> Wines of unsurpassed excellence are produced in the territory of Beaune, because of which merchants have long been accustomed to buy their wines at Beaune and transport them to various different countries. Because of the excellence of these wines we are reputed to be lord of the finest wines in Christendom.[74]

Richard Vaughan writes that wine was as equally accessible as water in Burgundy, "in fact, [wine] was a bulk, not a luxury product."[75] The abundance of vine imagery within the *Rolin Virgin*, then, can be explained as a dual reference to the Eucharist and Rolin's viticultural identity as the Burgundian chancellor. Although Snyder's analysis of the painting considered this imagery and its association with Burgundy, he argued that Jan van Eyck prompted these allusions, rather than the chancellor himself.[76] Snyder does mention, however, that Rolin "bestow[ed] upon [Beaune] some of his richest vineyards that produce and still produce famous wines that carry his name," indicating Rolin's direct involvement with vinous affairs.[77] La Confrérie des Chevaliers du Tastevin, a Bacchanalian fraternity of wine connoisseurs, was established in the early eighteenth century in Burgundy. Today, minimal records exist pertaining to the foundation of the group, unfortunately, as it collapsed alongside the Ancien Régime in 1789.[78] However, in 1934, the fraternity was reformed to boost the economic sales of Burgundian wine, which had plummeted following the Great Depression.[79] Idolizing their predecessors, the 1934

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[73] Blockmans, Wim, and Walter Prevenier, *The Promised Lands: The Low Countries under Burgundian Rule, 1369-1530*. The Middle Ages Series (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1999), 2.
[74] Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Good: the Apogee of Burgundy*, 241.
[75] Ibid.
[76] James Snyder, "Jan van Eyck and the Madonna of Chancellor Nicolas Rolin."
[77] James Snyder, "Jan van Eyck and the Madonna of Chancellor Nicolas Rolin," 164.
[78] Gilles Laferté, "La production d'identités territoriales à usage commercial dans l'entre-deux-guerres en Bourgogne," *Cahiers d'Economie et sociologie rurales* 62, no. 1 (2002): 65–95.
[79] "Histoire," n.d. https://www.tastevin-bourgogne.com/fr/histoire.

group revived many traditions, including dressing in period clothing from the era the original Confrérie. One of these traditions was the recitation of a motto upon initiation: "through Noah, father of vines, Bacchus, god of wine, Saint Vincent, patron of winemakers, We make you Knight of Tastevin."[80] The homage to Noah as the "father of vines" suggests a patrilineal genealogy, in spirit, to Noah. Although the Confrérie was established several centuries after Rolin, the motto used in their induction ceremony alludes to a localized Burgundian association between Noah and the region that, judging by the chancellor's choices as a patron, may well have been established already by the fifteenth century.

In this first chapter, Jan van Eyck's *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* evinced the first display of the patron's instrumentalization of Noah. Branded by his contemporaries as ambitious and manipulative, their claims imply a prevalent perception of the chancellor in the fifteenth century. Exhibiting the qualities of someone capable of such self-identification, Noah provided a convenient exemplum for the chancellor. Representing the specific event of Noah's drunkenness, Van Eyck equated the narrative with the Expulsion of the Garden and Cain killing Abel. Noahic exegesis informs that regardless of the "sin" portrayed in the *Rolin Virgin*, his ongoing veneration and obedience to God before the illustrated episode conveniently implies Noah's guaranteed salvation. Located directly above the chancellor's head, Rolin parallels himself with the Old Testament patriarch, superficially admitting sin but content to disregard any guilt because, like Noah, his duty and obedience to the duke as chancellor

[80] Gilles Laferté, "La production d'identités territoriales à usage commercial dans l'entre-deux-guerres en Bourgogne," 86. "Par Noé, Père de la Vigne, Par Bacchus, Dieu du Vin, Par Saint-Vincent, Patron des Vignerons, Nous vous armons Chevalier du Tastevin."

of Burgundy guarantees similar absolution. Furthermore, Noahic reception from Antiquity to the fourteenth century demonstrates how Rolin's instrumentalization was one of many selective interpretations appropriating the figure. Hugh of St. Victor, for example, analogized Noah's ark to monastic institutions, advocating the scripture from Genesis to be a metaphor for the sanctified importance of monasteries.[81] As Hugh politicized Noah to his advantage, other theologians, like Jacobus de Voragine promoted the patriarch's righteousness and strict adherence to God's word. Similarly, Thomas Aquinas and Jean Gerson pronounced Noah's drunken sin as excusable because of his righteous nature. Because of his obedience to God throughout Genesis 6-9, these sources convey that Noah's sin was inconsequential. As a result, Noah is a convenient personification a patron seeking similar automatic absolution, like the chancellor.

[81] *Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. By a Religious of CS. H. V. with an introduction by Adred Squire (City: O. P. Harper and Row Publishers, Inc. 1962).

CHAPTER 2

THE NOAHIC COVENANT AND THE BEAUNE COMMISSION

In his commission to Rogier van der Weyden, Nicolas Rolin established another Noahic visualization on the main altar of the Hôtel-Dieu via the Beaune Altarpiece's rainbow motif. Exhibited rarely in the eschatological context before its commission in 1443, the rainbow is displayed prominently in the composition, I argue here, as evidence of the patron's self-identification with the Old Testament patriarch. In the last chapter, I assessed Noah's exegesis by theologians like that of Thomas Aquinas to demonstrate how the biblical figure became identified with advantageous values such as righteousness, loyalty, and devotion. To further understand why Rolin adopted Noah for the Beaune Altarpiece specifically, this chapter will examine how, in the context of Last Judgment imagery, Noah guarantees salvation for the patron.

Although the rainbow motif has not been studied hitherto, investigations into Rogier's style, the environment of the Hôtel-Dieu, and Rolin's patronage are in abundance.[82] In the polyptych, Rogier represents Christ as Judge from St. John the Evangelist's vision in the New Testament book of Revelation (4: 1-4).[83] Assembled using nine oak panels that feature six additional paintings on the exterior (Figure 20), the

[82] For additional resources on the Beaune Altarpiece and Rogier van der Weyden see Lorne Campbell, *Van Der Weyden*, edited by Christopher Wright, London: Chaucer, 2004 and Nicole Veronee-Verhaegen, *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Beaune*, Centre national de recherches Primitifs flamands, 1973.

[83] KJV. "After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."

overall dimensions of the opened polyptych measure 220 x 547.6 cm.[84] This large altarpiece was commissioned by 1443 and completed in time for the consecration of the Hôtel-Dieu in December of 1451.[85] In comparison to the other paintings within Rogier's oeuvre, De Vos and Panofsky respectively observed how the Beaune Altarpiece reflected Rogier's "paradoxical" and "frankly Medieval" stylistic tendencies.[86] Panofsky, in particular, emphasized the composition's singularity by way of Rogier's "anti-Eyckian" expression of medieval elements. Later, in Chapter 3, I will revisit Panofsky's pejorative assertion to argue that the Beaune Altarpiece is, in fact, innovative in many respects, including in its reference to Noah, which is far more nuanced than the purely celebratory iteration in such earlier images as the Chartres windows. In this chapter, however, I will first address the iconographic history of Last Judgment imagery to establish the rainbow as a rare motif. Then, I will clarify how the Beaune Altarpiece supplies the chancellor with an auspicious guarantee of salvation in anticipation of the Day of Judgment. In this analysis, I return to Noah's narrative in Genesis (9: 13-15) just after the Flood to show that the rainbow is deeply tied to an ideology of granting salvation through its implementation.

Whenever opened, the Beaune Altarpiece exhibited a compelling representation of Christ in Judgment. Seated atop a radiant rainbow, Christ appears reflective and authoritative, positioned above the archangel Michael who weighs souls conventionally represented as miniature nude figures. Emerging from the ground, they are subsequently weighed by St. Michael and directed towards their eternal destination. Engulfed in a

[84] Dirk de Vos, *Rogier van Der Weyden: The Complete Works*, 252.
[85] See Nicole Veronee-Verhaegen (see footnote 1) and Dirk de Vos for more on the dating of the polyptych.
[86] Dirk de Vos, *Rogier van Der Weyden: The Complete Works*, 252; Erwin Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting, Its Origins and Character*, Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1953, 269.

divine flame, Christ is accompanied by a representation of the celestial court in the lower-middle register of the altarpiece. Janey L. Laney observed how Rogier placed Christ at the highest peak of the polyptych, emphasizing his preeminence through the spatial divisions of the panels.[87] In the lowest register of the altarpiece, Rogier visualizes the progression of souls for the Final Judgment. Emerging from the ground, they are subsequently weighed by St. Michael and directed towards their eternal destination. St. Michael's scale has garnered much interest in scholarship for Rogier's depiction of evil outweighing good.[88] However, Barbara Lane rejected this perspective to propose that Rogier paralleled the scale with Christ's hand gestures in demonstration of his control over the act of judgment.[89] The outermost panels, which feature scenes of both heaven and hell, are consistent with earlier representations in ecclesiastical architecture; their orientations dependent on the right and left of Christ. Supported by the scholarship of Lane, the cathedrals at Autun and Bourges are believed by many scholars to be sources of inspiration for the polyptych, based on their visual similarities and proximity to Beaune (Figures 21-22). At St. Lazare in Autun (Figure 21), the twelfth century west portal presents a hierarchically structured Christ in Judgment above a register of souls. However, the artist, Gislebertus, visually conjures scenes of a violent hell, complete with demons to torment the damned. This aggressive visual depiction of hell contrasts with that of Rogier's more restrained and refined depiction. At Bourges (Figure 22), the archangel Michael similarly appears directly below Christ as he holds the scales for

[87] "The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: Ecclesiastical Authority and Hierarchy in the Beaune Altarpiece," *Art History* 14 (March 1991): 18–50, 22.
[88] See Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 271-272.
[89] Barbara G. Lane, "'Requiem Aeternam Dona Eis': The Beaune 'Last Judgment' and the Mass of the Dead," *Simiolus: Netherlands Quarterly for the History of Art* 19, no. 3 (1989): 167–80, 179.

judgment. Rogier's particular formatting of the Beaune Altarpiece found influence from these regional eschatological representations; however, noticeably absent from either of the tympana is Christ's rainbow-throne. As opposed to a literal reading of the scripture in Revelation, the Bourges tympanum depicted Christ in a royal throne and, at St. Lazare, Christ hovers within a mandorla, an almond-shaped frame accentuating the figure's significance. Considering the erosion of original polychromy at Bourges and the analogous arc shapes, the mandorla could be considered an earlier version of the rainbow motif. However, according to Byzantine art historian Liz James, the rainbow and mandorla were conceptualized independently, the latter representing "the immaterial light of divine visions and the presence of the divinity."[90] Indeed, an Apocalypse Manuscript miniature (Figure 23) from the 1330s demonstrates the coexistence of the rainbow-throne and mandorla. Therefore, in this chapter I consider the rainbow and the mandorla as distinct, rather than interchangeable, elements.

In the Beaune Altarpiece, Rolin's identification as Noah manifested in the (then) arcane motif of Christ's rainbow-throne. Although analyses of the motif are mere mentions, Veronee-Verhaegen observed that its representation is visibly intriguing; De Vos concurred, noting that the rainbow has a "hard, metallic appearance."[91] In the polyptych, Rogier depicted a naturalistic rainbow, its color scheme flowing from a bright red on the outermost rim to a dark green on the innermost rim. The crisp outlines of the arc help delineate its form against the brilliant yellow-gold background enveloping Christ

[90] Liz James "Colour and the Byzantine Rainbow," *Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies* 15, no. 1 (January 1991): 66–95, 82.
[91] Veronee-Verhaegen, *L'Hôtel-Dieu de Beaune*, 94; Dirk de Vos, *Rogier van Der Weyden: The Complete Works*, 254.

and his celestial court of saints and Apostles. The motif grabs the viewer's attention immediately due to its centrality and vibrancy, amplifying Christ's mighty power.

In the eschatological context, the rainbow's biblical sourcing originates from Saint John's description of the Throne of Heaven in Revelation (4: 1-4):

> "After this I looked, and, behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter. And immediately I was in the spirit: and, behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne. And he that sat was to look upon like a jasper and a sardine stone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in sight like unto an emerald. And round about the throne *were* four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold."[92]

This idealized display of Christ has fascinated artists and patrons attempting to imagine one of the central events of Christianity: one's judgment by Christ upon their death. In his extensive research text, *The Hour of Our Death*, Philippe Ariès surveyed the Western-Christian history and practices relating to death from late Antiquity through the modern twentieth century, concluding that the Middle Ages conceptualized a "tame" attitude.[93] A consequence of war and famine on an incredible scale in the fifteenth century, death was familiar and inevitable.[94] Moreover, in light of its visible influence on Rogier's compositional arrangement, Ariès noted Last Judgment iconography dominated ecclesiastical architecture from the twelfth through the sixteenth centuries, implying viewers of the Beaune Altarpiece were acquainted with the subject matter and its general meaning.[95]

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[92] KJV.
[93] Philippe Ariès, *The Hour of Our Death*, 1st American ed. New York: Knopf: distributed by Random House, 1981, 28.
[94] Ibid.
[95] Ibid., 99.

On the standardization of Last Judgment iconography, Ariès observed that earlier representations were directed by a highly prophetic interpretation of the scripture in Revelation.[96] Tracing its origins to the early eleventh century, Ariès indicated the west portal at Conques as the final stage of the standard iconographic image (Figure 24).[97] The thirteenth century progression towards urbanized society, however, shifted the artistic approach away from this prophetically influenced composition to a representational court of justice.[98] Therefore, as Western-Christian society continued to develop hierarchically, so too did the iconography of Last Judgment imagery; less influenced by the great cosmic drama of the event, an individual's relationship with Christ (and their destiny and resurrection) gradually became the primary concern.[99] However, despite society's general acceptance of death, Ariès indicated how the lack of knowledge about the afterlife created anxiety regarding what happened to an individual upon their death.

Conceptually, Ariès recognized how this fear of the unknown manifested in the depiction of the torments of Hell in Last Judgment imagery. [100] In its various forms, therefore, artistic representation of the Last Judgment embodied society's apprehension of the afterlife's mysteries and hope for the salvation of one's soul. Having established the rarity of the rainbow motif, Rolin's instrumentalization of this particular biblical figure is evident. In this context, I believe Rolin conceived his Noahic allusion in the Beaune Altarpiece to express his auspicious hope for a positive outcome in Final Judgment. Representative of his own anxiety about death, Rolin employed the subject

[96] Ibid.
[97] Ibid.
[98] Ibid., 101
[99] Ibid., 106.
[100] Ibid., 110.

matter of a righteous and venerated biblical figure whose narrative in Genesis directly following the Flood ensured the possibility of salvation for all humankind.

In the preliminary research on this topic, a survey of contemporaneous Last Judgments in various media revealed few objects containing the eschatological rainbow-throne. Though uncommon, the motif was not unprecedented. Exploring regional influences, it is possible that Rogier viewed Stephan Lochner's *The Last Judgment* (Figure 10) when passing through Cologne on his way to Rome for Pope Nicholas V's Jubilee in 1450. Rogier's journey to the Holy See was minimally documented, however, Bartolomeo Facio's *De Viris Illustribus* (1453-1457) recorded the artist's attendance:

> It is said of Gentile [da Fabriano] that when the famous painter Rogier of Gaul, of whom we shall speak afterwards, had visited in the Jubilee year this same church of John the Baptist and had looked at this picture, he was taken with admiration and inquired after its author, and heaping praise on him preferred him to the other Italian painters.[101]

At first glance, the resemblance between Lochner's painting from c.1435 and the Beaune Altarpiece is visually apparent. Wearing a bright red robe, Christ judges the souls below him while Mary and St. John the Baptist kneel in his direction, ready to intercede on the viewer's behalf. More important for this analysis, however, is Lochner's depiction of Christ atop a rainbow. Compared to Rogier's interpretation of the eschatological motif, Lochner presents two arcs, one for Christ's seat and the other supporting his feet. The arcs project an orange-gold sheen and are outlined in black to accentuate their forms against the equally bright background. Stylistically, Rogier's rainbow is larger and more

[101] Quoted and translated by Michael Baxandall in "Bartholomaeus Facius on Painting: A Fifteenth-Century Manuscript of the De Viris Illustribus," *Journal of the Warburg And Courtauld Institutes,* 27(1964): 90–107, 101. "De hoc uiro ferunt cum rogerius gallicus insignis pictor de quo post dicemus iobelei anno in ipsum iohannis baptistae templum accessisset eamque picturam contemplatus esset. admiratione operis captum auctore requisito eum multa laude cumulatum caeteris italicis pictoribus anteposuisse."

realistic in its legible and defined color scheme (Figure 2). As a result, it is much more prominent and imposing than the Cologne *Last Judgment*. Their corresponding subject matter and particular inclusion of the rare rainbow motif indicate Rogier might have been aware of Lochner's painting. Unfortunately, there is little evidence to prove the association, and, in observance of the timeline, Rogier's polyptych was approaching completion in 1450 since it was in situ by 31 December 1451, the date of the Hôtel-Dieu's consecration.[102] Therefore, it is unrealistic to assume that Lochner's composition evoked substantial change in Rogier's composition. Accordingly, derivations of the rainbow motif from alternative perspectives, such as manuscript illumination, will be explored. My research shows that the rainbow in the Beaune Altarpiece differs stylistically and conceptually, resulting from its nuanced symbolism relating to Rolin's Noahic allusion.

In the late thirteenth century, an anonymous French illuminator depicted the eschatological rainbow-throne in a manuscript of Jacobus de Voragine's *Golden Legend*, titled *Bottom, Initial A: The Last Judgment* (Figure 5).[103] In the vignette, Christ bears His wounds as he gazes downward. Instead of directing their gaze to Christ's face, the surrounding figures, the Virgin, St. John the Baptist, and four unidentified saints, look at one of the various injuries. Accompanied by objects of the Passion distinguishing him from the group, Christ is seated on a rainbow stylistically reminiscent of Lochner's representation in Cologne. As a result of the rainbow's monochromatic appearance, the artists stressed its function as a structural component of the eschatological throne.

[102] Dirk de Vos, *Rogier van der Weyden: The Complete Works*, 259-260.
[103] According to its current repository, the Victoria and Albert Museum, the text was likely completed during the author's lifetime.

Comparatively, Rogier's attention to the rainbow's naturalism does not convey a similar iconographic interpretation. Closer in style to the rainbow in the Beaune Altarpiece is a depiction of *The Last Judgment* (Figure 25) by an anonymous Belgian artist from 1400-1415. The artist has replicated the realistic color scheme of a rainbow like the Beaune Altarpiece; however, its idealization amplifies Rogier's distinctly organic presentation. From a Book of Hours by the Workshop Master of Guillebert de Mets, a *Last Judgment* miniature (Figure 26, c. 1430) reaches a naturalism in the weight and modeling of the figures closest to Rogier's composition, however, much like *Initial A* (Figure 5), the artist uses the rainbow as a prop for Christ's seat. Almost completely covered by Christ's garment, the monochrome rainbow is only partially revealed by the positioning of the Virgin and St. John. Considering these differences in style, alternative influences for Rogier's rainbow will be explored in the context of Rolin's Noahic instrumentalization.

The previous paragraphs showed how the potential precedents for the rainbow motif exhibit distinct differences when compared to its representation in the Beaune Altarpiece. Stylistically, the rainbow in Rolin's polyptych is more pronounced, naturalistically rendered, and emphasized in its relationship to Christ, whose weight appears realistically supported by the arc. In the composition, the rainbow is an essential component of the Last Judgment. For this reason, I argue that Rolin conceptually interposed the eschatological rainbow throne with the Noahic Covenant to assert his self-identification with the biblical figure. In Genesis (9: 13-15), God appears to Noah after the Flood and proclaims, directly to Noah, a promise to never again destroy the world, ensuring a future of salvation for all righteous and worthy humankind.[104] As a symbol of

[104] KJV. "I have set my [rain]bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth. When I bring clouds over the earth and the [rain]bow is seen in the clouds, I will remember my

the Covenant with the patriarch, God adopted a rainbow to embody this everlasting promise to Noah and humanity; correspondingly, artistic representations of the Noahic Covenant used a rainbow when depicting this crucial event in Christian history. For example, in the register above the discrete Drunkenness of Noah scene at Chartres is a vignette depicting the Noahic Covenant (Figure 27). Here, a haloed figure representing God leans on a rainbow above Noah and his wife. Contemporaneously, a rainbow symbolizing God's promise appears in the upper margin of Psalter MS M.338 (c. 1210) by Simon of Tournai (Figure 28).[105] The folio's description by the Morgan Library and Museum reveals the rainbow miniature was accompanied by an image of God holding a scroll, depicting his Latinized pronouncement from Genesis (9:13), "I will place my [rain]bow in the clouds," to Noah.[106]

As early as the third century, the rainbow symbolizing the Noahic Covenant was associated with Christ's eschatological rainbow-throne from Revelation. In his *Commentary on the Apocalypse*, for instance, Saint Victorinus of Pettau (d. 303/4) noted this iconographic allusion to the Noahic Covenant in Revelation:

> *"And there was a rainbow about the throne."* Moreover, the rainbow round about the throne has the same colors. The rainbow is called a bow from what the Lord spoke to Noah and to his sons, that they should not fear any further deluge in the generation of God, but fire. For thus He says: I will place my bow in the clouds, that you may now no longer fear water, but fire.[107]

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covenant that is between me and you and every living creature of all flesh; and the waters shall never again become a flood to destroy all flesh."

[105] M.P. Harrsen, "Psalter MS M.338," curatorial description from 1945. Access provided by the Morgan Library and Museum.

[106] Morgan Library and Museum. "Arcum meum ponam in nubibus"

[107] Trans. by Robert Ernest Wallis from Ante-Nicene Fathers, Vol. 7. Edited by Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe. (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Publishing Co., 1886.) Revised and edited for New Advent by Kevin Knight.

Despite its minimal discussion in modern theological interpretation, Aaron Chalmers (2009) claimed that the Noahic Covenant was fundamental in establishing the metanarrative for the story of redemption.[108] Without the Noahic Covenant to detail God's divine commands, Chalmers argued that there would be no salvation history, thereby arguing in favor of the significance of the Covenant in the broader context of Christian history and theology.[109] As evidenced by the Genesis rainbow's artistic and exegetical interpretation, Noah's association as the designated recipient of God's miraculous promise was crucial to the narrative. Highlighting this Noahic association, I believe St. Victorinus verbalizes how the chancellor conceptualized the Noahic rainbow motif in the Beaune Altarpiece; Rolin singled himself as a loyal and dutiful servant deserving of salvation.

Akin to his Noahic allusion in the *Rolin Virgin*, I propose that Rolin evoked the Noahic Covenant in his commission of a Last Judgment altarpiece to align himself with the biblical figure for assurance that on his day of Judgment, his obedience and servitude of Burgundy was equivalent to Noah building the Ark. As explored in Chapter one, we again see how Noah was a convenient and advantageous association in the context of the Last Judgment. Having considered what Noah offered Rolin via the rainbow motif in the Beaune Altarpiece, it is now important to understand Rolin's motivations relating to the larger context of the Hôtel-Dieu's endowment.

In accordance with the historians Pridat, Vaughan, and Blockmans, Medieval and Renaissance art historical scholarship has investigated the sumptuous essence of Philip

[108] "The Importance of the Noahic Covenant to Biblical Theology," *Tyndale Bulletin* 60, no. 2 (2009): 207–16, 216. Compared to the other biblical covenants (Abrahamic, Mosaic, Davidic, and New), Chalmers indicates that the Noahic Covenant is often neglected by scholarship for its "folkloric" themes.
[109] Ibid., 212.

the Good's court as an impetus for artistic change. His pervasive ideology, *vivre*, encouraged members of the nobility to patronize the arts and "live nobly." Art historian Jean Wilson (1998) observed how this principle infiltrated the lower classes, inadvertently making the concept accessible to (some) members of the Third Estate. Wilson highlighted this idea as a possible explanation for the increased artistic patronage by the "haute bourgeois" as a direct consequence of the presence of Philip the Good's dazzling court in their prosperous towns.[110] Wilson noted the variance between noble-born and bourgeois patronage, indicating panel painting as the decorous and relatively least expensive option by those of non-noble heritage. Conversely, royal and noble patrons preferred luxury items viewed as appropriate for their rank: jewelry, tapestries, and precious metalwork.[111] Wilson rationalizes that because of the unattainability of these media for the emerging bourgeoisie, panel painting in the form of devotional portraits and altarpieces designated for churches, for example, were regarded as the best and closest alternative within non-noble means. The Beaune Altarpiece, then, should be examined within this contextual framework considering Rolin's non-noble heritage and role in Philip the Good's court. Rolin's actions as patron reflect the noble desire to display wealth and effectively communicate messages of power and prestige. Therefore, I argue that Rolin's Noahic instrumentalization in the Beaune Altarpiece is an example of this behavior.

Halfway through his tenure as Chancellor of Burgundy, Rolin received approval from Pope Eugene IV in 1441 to establish a hospital and monastic complex in a city of

[110] Jean C. Wilson, *Painting in Bruges at the Close of the Middle Ages: Studies in Society and Visual Culture*, University Park, Pa: Pennsylvania State Univ. Press, 1998, 41.
[111] Ibid., 42. For the nobility, Wilson writes that early panel painting served a particular purpose for genealogical representations, primarily depicting a family's coat of arms.

the chancellor's choosing.[112] Initially Rolin considered Chalon-sur-Saône, but a disagreement between the chancellor and the local clergy led Rolin to establish the Hôtel-Dieu in Beaune.[113] Beaune itself was in dire need of a hospital, with its inhabitants suffering the effects of famine in 1438-1439 as well as a plague through the 1440s.[114] In addition, Beaune was close in proximity (around forty-five kilometers) to the ducal capital in Dijon, a fact certainly not overlooked by the chancellor for political reasons. To further understand the circumstances that contributed to Rolin's patronage of the Beaune Altarpiece, in the next section I demonstrate how Rolin, through his endowment of the Hôtel-Dieu complex, transcended the conventional social practices of the nobility, cementing his legacy and acquired noble status.

As examined in Chapter one, the chroniclers Jacques du Clerq and Georges Chastellain were profoundly negative in their interpretations of Rolin's character. As two of many unflattering anecdotal records about the chancellor, art historical scholarship consequently endorsed this specific view. Panofsky, for instance, labeled the chancellor "mighty and unscrupulous" following Du Clerq's assessment of Rolin's ambitiousness.[115] In 2009, however, Laura Gelfand appealed to recontextualize this perspective, claiming the chroniclers were prejudiced against Rolin because of his non-noble heritage and therefore accentuated his poor image in the historical record.[116] In addition to his powerful and crucial role as chancellor, Rolin also achieved knighthood in either 1422 or

[112] Pridat, *Nicolas Rolin: Chancelier de Bourgogne*, 150.
[113] Ibid., 147.
[114] Theodore Feder, "Roger van Der Weyden, And the Altarpiece of the 'Last Judgment at Beaune,'" Dissertation, Columbia University, 1975.
[115] Panofsky, *Early Netherlandish Painting*, 264.
[116] Laura Gelfand, "Piety, Nobility and Posterity: Wealth and the Ruin of Nicolas Rolin's Reputation," 2009.

1423.[117] Through his position and rank, Rolin received all the advantages of the nobility; however, because of his heritage, Gelfand observed how these "battles for status in the hothouse of the Burgundian court system caused the 'vulgar destructive envy' that marks Rolin's relationships with his noble contemporaries."[118] Like Pridat, Gelfand is also of the belief that Rolin's piety is clearly communicated through his charitable donations and devotional paintings. Gelfand sought to vindicate Rolin in the face of what she perceived as scholarship's prejudiced perspective.

It is possible the chroniclers were biased towards Rolin's non-noble heritage, but whether or not his rank or behavior contributed to his unflattering legacy, Rolin was considered by many to be ambitious and self-absorbed, lending some merit to this generalized attitude. Although this thesis does not corroborate her reevaluation of Rolin, Gelfand's article addresses the complex interplay of Rolin's social status and his motivations for patronage. Compared to the standard options for patronage observed by Jean Wilson, such as tapestries and metalwork, Rolin's establishment of the Hotel-Dieu institution exceeded the norm. Moreover, it is my opinion that the ambitious chancellor conceived the Beaune complex in this perspective based on his background, thereby neutralizing his court rivalries, and securing his ennobled legacy. Furthermore, in the context of his Noahic pattern, this is further evidence that Rolin was socially and politically emboldened to devise the allusion for his patronage of the Hôtel-Dieu institution.

Rolin's grand pious endowment somewhat mirrors that of Philip the Good's grandfather, Duke Philip the Bold (r. 1363-1404), who founded the Chartreuse de

[117] Ibid., see footnote 28 for further reading on knighthood and rank in Philip the Good's court.
[118] Ibid., paragraph 9.

Champmol, a Carthusian monastery in the capital of Dijon around 1377.[119] The complex includes the famous *Well of Moses* (1403), a hexagonal structure in the central cloister and ducal effigy tomb, both partly executed by the Dutch sculptor Claus Sluter.[120] Vaughan commented that Philip the Bold supplied over 75,000 francs towards the completion of the complex; as a result, it housed twenty-four monks, double the capacity of a standard Carthusian monastery.[121] Corresponding with the previous assessment of Rolin's incentives for patronage, Philip the Bold's more than generous donation in the 1370s is recognized by scholars as similarly governed by the principles of legacy and protection of his royal dynasty.[122] Rolin, having grown up during Philip the Bold's reign, and having served as chancellor to his grandson, was intimately aware of the Chartreuse de Champmol when conceiving his plans for the Hôtel-Dieu. The Dijon monument exemplified the utilitarian advantage of monumental patronage in cementing one's legacy, a device likewise manipulated by Rolin at the Hôtel-Dieu. Despite these similarities, Rolin's status as a non-hereditary noble amplifies the scope of his patronage, especially compared to that of a duke. Indeed, the expectations of the highest-ranked and most wealthy figure in court differed significantly from what was accessible for lower nobility.[123] Therefore, as someone who came from non-noble birth, Rolin's establishment

[119] Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Bold: The Formation of the Burgundian State*, Harvard University Press, 1962, 202.
[120] For more on the Well of Moses and its artistic significance, see Susie Nash "Claus Sluter's 'Well of Moses' for the Chartreuse de Champmol Reconsidered" parts I-III. See Winter in footnote 23 for more on the ducal tomb.
[121] Richard Vaughan, *Philip the Bold: The Formation of the Burgundian State*, 202.
[122] In "Art from the Duchy of Burgundy," Patrick de Winter emphasized that the "duke sought to enhance the glory of his rule and create a fitting setting for his dynastic ambitions" (407). Richard Vaughan agreed that the complex was conceived as a "gigantic sepulchral monument for himself and his heirs" in *Philip the Bold: The Formation of the Burgundian State* (202).
[123] See Laura Gelfand, "Piety, Nobility and Posterity: Wealth and the Ruin of Nicolas Rolin's Reputation," for more on court standards.

of the Hôtel-Dieu was uncommon in the scope of fifteenth century patronage, increasing its contemporaneous significance—and his status as an exceptional patron.

To further understand Rolin's capacity to construct this elaborate association with Noah in the Beaune Altarpiece, in the following paragraphs I explore his meticulous conduct operating the Hôtel-Dieu. I propose that the care and attention devoted to the institution by the chancellor demonstrates a similar instrumentalization of social display akin to the Noahic allusion. The late nineteenth century Abbot J.B. Boudrot (1819-1880) published the original charter from 1451 articulating Rolin's self-professed intentions for the Hôtel-Dieu in 1880.[124] Pridat commented that Rolin was very precise in this text and that he maintained a prominent role in its conservation and administration throughout the remainder of his life. On one occasion in 1459, Rolin dismissed the chief nurse, Alardine Gasquière, for her extreme treatment of the sisters and, subsequently, with permission from Pope Pius II, redrafted the rules of conduct appropriately.[125] Rolin's leadership over the complex was not a solitary one; recently, scholars have credited Guigone de Salins (1403-1470), Rolin's third wife, as equally pivotal in the Hôtel-Dieu's foundation.[126] In stark contrast to her husband, Guigone was reputed to be incredibly religious and devout; attributes mirrored in her pious appearance on the exterior panel of the Beaune Altarpiece (Figure 20).[127] After her husband's death in 1462, Guigone renounced her inheritance and retired to the convent at the Hôtel-Dieu, joining the sisters of Valencienne in caring for

[124] See Pridat p. 187 for the full charter.
[125] Pridat, 150-151.
[126] Marie-Thérèse Berthier and John-Thomas Sweeney, *Guigone de Salins: une femme de la Bourgogne médiévale 1403-1470*, Nouvelle éd. Paris: Guy Trédaniel éditeur, 2022, 69. Guigone was nineteen when became Rolin's third wife in 1423 when he was forty-two; together they had three children.
[127] Shirley Neilsen Blum, *Early Netherlandish Triptychs: A Study in Patronage*, California Studies in the History of Art 13, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969, 39-40.

the sick and attending daily matins.[128] Up to her death in 1470, while Guigone lived on a nun's stipend of one hundred *soles* per year, she remained steadfastly charitable.[129] Berthier and Sweeney recorded that on two separate occasions, Guigone personally contributed large sums of her own money for hospital equipment.[130] Therefore, it is evident that the patrons Rolin and Guigone were remarkably dutiful in their maintenance of the hospital complex. They were therefore likely as fastidious and intentional in its foundation and planning.

As previously discussed, Rolin established the Hôtel-Dieu to memorialize his legacy as a pious and ennobled benefactor. Asserting his superiority over those residing at the Hôtel-Dieu, the patron adorned almost every element of the interior surfaces with their monogram and coat of arms, ensuring visitors never forgot who provided their accommodations and care.[131] For example, in the Salle de Pauvres, the main wing used to house the sick where the Beaune Altarpiece resided, the floor tiling features emblems of the patrons' monogram, a very blunt, almost shameless representation of their 'pious' endowment. This persistent reminder was also an overt expression of Rolin's power as chancellor. Janey Levy observed the political utility of the Hôtel-Dieu in the context of viewers beyond the nuns and sick residing at the complex, noting its "audience [also] composed of members of the bourgeoisie, the aristocracy and perhaps the royalty."[132] Considering this additional viewership, the usage of such symbolic decoration becomes increasingly politically charged and territorial. The patron's brazen self-advertising as the

[128] Marie-Thérèse Berthier and John-Thomas Sweeney, *Guigone de Salins: une femme de la Bourgogne médiévale 1403-1470,* 164-165.
[129] Ibid.
[130] Ibid.
[131] Janey L. Levy, "The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: Ecclesiastical Authority and Hierarchy in the Beaune Altarpiece."
[132] Ibid., 20.

benefactor of the Hôtel-Dieu supports the notion of his expectation of salvation. In the Beaune Altarpiece, the Covenant rainbow assumes the patron's role as the recipient of God's divine promise, just as the monogram details in the Hôtel-Dieu memorialize his name.

As was customary for these objects, the altarpiece typically remained closed for the duration of the year, only opening feast days or other important religious occasions. Located at the altar of the main ward, De Vos commented that it is no coincidence that "as one entered [...], the closed wings were framed by the central opening of the choir enclosure."[133] Therefore, visitors and residents generally viewed its closed position, which prominently displays the donor portraits of Rolin and Guigone (Figure 20). On these exterior panels, the couple kneel at their respective prie-dieu, reverently facing toward the interior composition of the altarpiece, the Last Judgment. In 2002, the scholar and art historian J.R.J van Asperen de Boer proposed a third, intermediate stage between the polyptych's closed and open forms, noting the exterior donor portraits' convenient alignment with Mary and John the Baptist on the interior.[134] The scholar's research implies that Rolin and Guigone are attendants of the Last Judgment scene; however, regardless of the author's conclusions, the mere overlap of the donors and the Intercessors is certainly intentional. Because of their generous patronage, Rolin and Guigone are symbolically positioned at the two ends of Christ's rainbow-throne, acting as Intercessors for the residents of the hospital. His analysis, therefore, supports the concept of Rolin's instrumentalization of Noah as additional evidence of the chancellor's

[133] Dirk de Vos, *Rogier van Der Weyden: The Complete Works*, 259, see his footnote 17.
[134] J.R.J. Van Asperen De Boer, "A Note on the Original Disposition of the Ghent Altarpiece and the Beaune Polyptych," *Oud Holland - Quarterly for Dutch Art History* 117, no. 3–4 (2004): 107–18. See p. 115 for the author's proposed model of the intermediate stage.

privileged assumption about his guaranteed salvation; to Rolin the Hôtel-Dieu ensured this belief.

Nicolas Rolin's donation of the Hôtel-Dieu to the city of Beaune prompted an ostentatious display of status, wealth, and piety. On account of Guigone's admirable religiosity, however, it is unlikely Rolin expressed similar devotional behavior, implying that patronage was the chancellor's alternative approach to salvation. Lane agreed that "it is probable [...] Rolin hoped his donation of Rogier's polyptych would help him achieve salvation just as much as his foundation of the hospital."[135] Rolin accomplished this penitential endeavor, by requesting an eschatological composition to feature his self-conceived association with Noah. Moreover, in following the customs of the nobility gained through his status as chancellor, Rolin's awareness and utilization of social display permitted him this opportunity. Evinced by the complex's function and proximity to Dijon, the following chapter will assess the impact of Rolin's Noahic visualization.

It was advantageous for Rolin that the rainbow associated with Noah also appeared within Last Judgment imagery, allowing the patron to resume the symbolic pattern initiated in his earlier commission to Jan van Eyck (Figure 3). Representations of the eschatological rainbow before 1443 are infrequent; however, its sourcing in the Beaune Altarpiece can be attributed to the Noahic Covenant from Genesis and, potentially, to Stefan Lochner's painting in Cologne (Figure 10). This visual allusion to the Old Testament patriarch in the Beaune Altarpiece evokes the same qualities of obedience and righteousness seen in the Drunkenness of Noah relief in the *Rolin Virgin*.

[135] Barbara G. Lane, "'Requiem Aeternam Dona Eis': The Beaune 'Last Judgment' and the Mass of the Dead," 169.

However, within the eschatological context of the Beaune Altarpiece, Rolin's Noahic allusion further insinuates his self-assured salvation.

CHAPTER 3

THE AFTERLIFE OF ROLIN'S NOAHIC ALLUSION

Examining the Noahic motifs presented in the Beaune Altarpiece (Figure 1) and the *Rolin Madonna* (Figure 3), Chapters one and two focused on how and why the Burgundian chancellor, Nicolas Rolin, evoked Noah's exegetical symbolism in his patronage. I have argued that the Old Testament figure's association with obedience and righteousness appealed to Rolin, who saw himself as equivalently loyal and duteous during his tenure as Chancellor of Burgundy. In this final Chapter, I will first assess the iconographic afterlife of Rolin's Noahic allusion via the rainbow motif in the Beaune Altarpiece (Figure 2). Then, I will discuss the impact of Rolin's Noahic connection in the broader context of Renaissance art as it relates to contemporary scholarship's understanding of the Beaune Altarpiece. As discussed in Chapter two, my research into the possible precedents for the rainbow motif before 1445 revealed few extant examples, mostly in manuscripts. However, after Rogier completed the Beaune Altarpiece in 1451, the use of the rainbow motif increased substantially in panel paintings of the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, connected by geography and their corresponding subject matter. In this chapter I trace how the rainbow motif became a standard iconographic attribute in Last Judgment imagery following its portrayal in the Beaune Altarpiece.

This trend developed in the Netherlandish and other Burgundian territories as a consequence of Rolin's illustrious status as chancellor and, I argue, Rogier's fame as a distinguished artist of the period. Agnolo (or Agostino) di Jacopo Tani, a native Florentine stationed as the head of the Medici bank in Bruges, commissioned *The Last*

Judgment altarpiece (Figure 11) between 1467-1471. Notably, Tani was reputed to be an excellent manager, highly respected by the family business's patriarch, Cosimo de' Medici.[136] Although Tani's painting never made it to Italy, Cosimo's influence as a preeminent patron certainly played a role in Tani's motivation for commission.[137] However, I suggest that Tani's *Last Judgment* polyptych found its primary iconographic model in Beaune. Barbara Lane hypothesizes a few encounters resulting in Tani's exposure to the Beaune Altarpiece; first, Tani traveled through Beaune on his routine journeys home from Bruges to Florence, potentially visiting the Hôtel-Dieu during his stay.[138] Alternatively, she suggests that the two men knew each other by way of their occupations.[139] Following Lane's observations, Tani was likely aware of the Beaune Altarpiece; to atone for his sins, Tani took inspiration from Rolin, the patron of such an impressive and pious establishment to God.[140] For this reason, Christ's entire image and, subsequently, his rainbow-throne in the Beaune Altarpiece were replicated within Tani's commission.

Beyond considerations of its patronage, however, *The Last Judgment* shares another inherent connection with the Beaune Altarpiece, because of the likely relationship between the two artists. According to Dirk de Vos, *The Last Judgment* artist

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[136] Raymond de Roover, "The Medici Bank Organization and Management," *The Journal of Economic History* 6, no. 1 (1946): 24–52, 33. Roover noted one instance when, after a poorly organized settlement between the Bruges bank and an Italian pawn brokerage firm failed, Cosimo wanted to fire Tani; however, his advisors made him reconsider based on Tani's exceptional dedication to the business.
[137] Barbara G. Lane, "The Patron and the Pirate: The Mystery of Memling's Gdansk Last Judgment," *The Art Bulletin* 73, no. 4 (December 1991), 631. The altarpiece was famously stolen by Polish pirates in 1473 (ironically from Tani's successors' ship) and is now kept in the Muzeum Narodowe in Gdańsk, Poland. Unfortunately, Tani's intended location for the altarpiece is undocumented, however, Lane noted that most scholars agree it was conceived to decorate the patron's funerary chapel in Florence.
[138] Ibid., 629.
[139] Ibid.
[140] Ibid.

Hans Memling (1430-1494) is "inseparably linked" with Rogier, acknowledging how the later artist's "style and technique, morphology and compositions [...] were assimilated so thoroughly [...] that virtually every authority on the subject has been obliged to conclude that Memling studied for a time under Van der Weyden."[141] The first to pinpoint their association in writing was Giorgio Vasari (1511-1574), who, observing the pair's usage of oil paint after Jan van Eyck, alluded to Memling as Rogier's "disciple" in Volume III of his *Lives of the Most Excellent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*.[142] Although many shared De Vos's sentiments regarding a link between the two, in 2005, Till-Holger Borchert made the first confident claim that Memling served as an apprentice to Rogier in Brussels until Rogier died in 1464.[143]

Memling's apprenticeship postdates Rogier's working on the Beaune Altarpiece by a decade; however, because of their resemblance, Paula Nuttall suggested that Memling viewed sketches of the composition while apprenticing in Rogier's workshop.[144] In his *Last Judgment* (Figure 11), Memling has mimicked Rogier's arrangement of Christ seated on a rainbow-throne above St. Michael, with the surrounding celestial court on either side of his figure. In this central panel (Figure 12), Memling's Christ is nearly identical to Rogier's depiction in the Beaune Altarpiece (Figure 2). Both Christ figures bear the stigmata and raise their right arm in a gesture of blessing to the viewer, adorned with a red robe secured by a circular broach. Aside from Christ's physical appearance, Memling mirrored the iconographic attributes around his

[141] Dirk de Vos and Hans Memling, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works*, 20.
[142] Giorgio Vasari, *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*, translated by Gaston du C. De Vere. 10 vols. London: Macmillan and Co. Ld. & The Medici Society Limited, 2008.
[143] Till Borchert, Hans Memling, Maryan Wynn Ainsworth, Lorne Campbell, and Paula Nuttall, *Memling's Portraits*, English ed. Ghent; Amsterdam; [New York, NY]: Ludion: Thames & Hudson, 2005, 11-12.
[144] Paula Nuttall, *From Flanders to Florence: The Impact of Netherlandish Painting, 1400-1500*, 1st ed. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004, 55.

figure from the Beaune Altarpiece, the sword and lily, and the objects used for torture during the Passion.

Most important, however, is the artist's implementation of the rainbow motif instrumentalized by Rolin to display his Noahic allusion through a combination of the Noahic Covenant with the eschatological rainbow-throne. Against the dark tones of the celestial court and ominous cloud, Memling's color scheme amplifies the rainbow's presence as Christ's throne (Figure 12). Like Rogier, the artist has carefully delineated the rainbow's colors; however, Memling has extended his rainbow below the celestial group and into the horizon of the earthly realm. As the rainbow descends, it loses its dimensionality, and the colors blur; for the souls on the earth, the rainbow appears inverted. Although Dirk de Vos observed that Memling's rainbow "separates the two worlds and their different orders" in his catalogue raisonné on Memling, this intriguing visual comparison of heaven and earth has received minimal attention, like in his discussion of the Beaune Altarpiece in Rogier's catalogue.[145] The similarities in the near-identical depiction of Christ demonstrate how Memling incorporated his mentor's composition within this later painting. In addition to Tani's patronage and reverence for Rolin, Memling expresses a similar desire to emulate one of Rogier's largest and most famous paintings. Among other allusions, the rainbow motif appeared within *The Last Judgment* in homage to the artist's mentor, Rogier.

Surveying eschatological representations through the late 1500s, I found iterations of the Last Judgment in panel painting and manuscript illumination in the Netherlandish and Burgundian regions to include the rainbow-throne, a stark contrast to its limited

[145] Dirk de Vos and Hans Memling, *Hans Memling: The Complete Works*, 84.

usage before its appearance in the Beaune Altarpiece. After tracing the development of the motif, I examine scholarship on Noahic interpretation in the Renaissance to better analyze the efficacy of Rolin's appropriation of Noah in his patronage. The workshop of manuscript illuminator Willem Vrelant, for example, produced a Book of Hours (Rome use) featuring a *Last Judgment* vignette (Figure 16) in the 1470s.[146] In this image, Christ appears in a white garment rather than red; however, his gesture and sitting position mirror the figure's representation in the Beaune Altarpiece (Figure 2) and the Memling *Last Judgment* (Figure 12). Christ's right arm raises to bless the viewer, and his garment opens to display his side wound. The figure's feet rest on an orb inscribed with a decorative "T" shape, a symbol also present in the Beaune Altarpiece (Figure 2). Compared to Rogier's version, the illuminator's treatment of the rainbow lacks definition and is closer in its appearance to *Initial A* from the late thirteenth century (Figure 5). Despite their aesthetic differences, the rainbow's current state may be the unintentional result of centuries of usage considering how the rainbow's left section exhibits a slightly lighter tone on its outer side compared to the inner side. The lack of original coloring contends the possibility the rainbow depicted a gradient similar to the Beaune Altarpiece.

Rogier's range of influence is not wholly inconceivable considering Max Lehrs and Jakob Rosenberg's evaluation of Martin Schongauer's *Christ in Judgment* (Figure 29). This drawing, from 1469, is a direct copy of Christ in the Beaune Altarpiece.[147] In his drawing, Schongauer reduced the composition to focus solely on Christ, portraying a

[146] K. C., Book of Hours "MS H.7" curatorial description from 1979. Access provided by the Morgan Library and Museum.
[147] See Jakob Rosenberg, *Die Handzeichnungen von Martin Schongauer,* Dissertation, 1923; and Max Lehrs, "The Drawings of Martin Schongauer," *The Burlington Magazine for Connoisseurs* 44, no. 252 (1924): 133–36. The circumstances of Schongauer's existence at Hôtel-Dieu assume the artist traveled, a belief promoted by the authors and accepted by most scholars.

nearly identical version of Rogier's that depicts Christ atop the rainbow. Besides omitting the "T" shape decoration of the orb, Schongauer replicated many details from Christ's undergarment, a white cloth exposed around his left hip, to the exact arrangement of drapery over Christ's arm, lower body, and the rainbow as seen in the Beaune Altarpiece (Figure 2). The rainbow's appearance shares more in common with the Bruges Book of Hours (Figure 16) than it does with the Beaune Altarpiece, but that is perhaps the limitation of Schongauer's monochromatic medium that determined the static quality of his reproduction. For the most part, the two Christ figures are indistinguishable; however, in 1996, Fritz Koreny argued that minute differences such as the distance of Christ's hand to his head and its slight tilt to the left demonstrate the likelihood Schongauer referred to a drawing of Rogier's Christ rather than the one in situ.[148] No records indicate Schongauer referenced the Beaune Altarpiece*;* however, the precise folds of Christ's robe, gesture, and even the slight portion of cloth undergarment exposed on Christ's left hip imply a connection between the two images.

These examples suggest that Rolin's identification with Noah via the rainbow in the Beaune Altarpiece circulated in the iconography of paintings in the Netherlandish and Burgundian regions alongside the motif's depiction in print. These paintings demonstrate how, over the next century, the rainbow evolved from its prominent placement in the Beaune Altarpiece to a background element detached from its original sourcing: Nicolas Rolin's display of self-importance and fabricated piety through the Noahic symbolism of the Covenant rainbow. Following the visual analysis, I contextualize the afterlife of the Noahic pattern using scholarship on the figure's interpretation in the

[148] "Martin Schongauer as a Draftsman: A Reassessment," *Master Drawings* 34, no. 2 (1996): 123–47, 125.

sixteenth century to assess why the rainbow motif experiences a regression into the background of Renaissance Last Judgment imagery.

Looking first at *The Last Judgment* triptych (Figure 13) by Jehan Bellegambe, the rainbow, Christ's red robe, and the sword and lily attributes appear from the central panel in the Beaune Altarpiece (Figure 2). In addition, the French-Flemish artist similarly depicted Christ sitting atop his rainbow-throne, draped in a red garment exposing his chest and side wound. Furthermore, Bellegambe included Latin text around Christ, a motif also featured in Rogier's composition (Figure 2). Although the rainbow-throne projects a beam of red, yellow, and green closely resembling the rainbow in the Beaune Altarpiece, Bellegambe's rainbow is thinner in form. Here, the motif's thin form emphasizes the ethereal aspect of the rainbow as a natural phenomenon; rather than alluding to the scripture in Revelation, the airy structure amplifies Christ's power and ability to sit atop the trim arc. Contemporaneously, the Netherlandish painter Jan Provost created a *Last Judgment* (Figure 14) around 1525 keeping with this alteration of the rainbow motif. In the oil on oak panel, Christ sits atop a light blue and yellow rainbow-throne generating a similar enhancement to Christ's power through its unnaturalistic coloring; correspondingly, its effect parallels Bellegambe's thin arc. Bellegambe and Provost demonstrate the early decline of the rainbow's stylistic representation from its origins in Beaune Altarpiece to a standardized and relatively unimportant aspect of Last Judgment imagery.

Furthermore, Lucas van Leyden's *The Last Judgment* (Figure 30) triptych from 1526 demonstrates how the bright, legible, and solid rainbow seen in the Beaune Altarpiece became a secondary feature of Last Judgment representations. In the central

panel, Van Leyden thinned the rainbow to its most slender form. The rainbow's brownish appearance was initially a bright yellow; however, the varnish's deterioration contributed to the loss of its true pigmentation, meaning although it had color, the rainbow was not intended to replicate the type presented in the Beaune Altarpiece.[149]

Correspondingly, *The Last Judgment*, an oil on panel painting from 1571 by Crispijn van den Broeck (Figure 15), exhibits the final form of the Beaune Altarpiece rainbow trend before the infusion of the Baroque style of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that diluted Rolin's century-long Noahic iconography. In the painting, Van den Broeck's faint rainbow blends in with the heavenly scene, minimized in scale and color, contrasting its candid display in the Beaune Altarpiece. Resembling earlier sixteenth century examples of the motif, such as the triptychs by Jehan Bellegambe and Lucas van Leyden (Figures 13 and 30), Van den Broeck's representation of the rainbow likewise reinforces the celestial and otherworldly elements of the scene. These later iterations of the symbolically rich rainbow motif in the Beaune Altarpiece prioritize the aesthetic value over its function as Christ's throne. As a result, the rainbow is separated from Christ and rendered a minor role; by the later sixteenth century, the motif's revival peaked, and though it was unintentional, the rainbow was a standardized iconographic attribute within Last Judgment imagery.

Having established the scope and stylistic approach to the rainbow motif throughout the sixteenth century, in this final section of this thesis, I contextualize this exploration with scholarship on Noahic interpretation in the Renaissance. These sources

[149] P. F. J. M. Hermesdorf, M.L. Wurfbain, K. Groen, J.R.J. Van Asperen De Boer, J.P. Fieldt Kok, and Patricia Wardle, "The Examination and Restoration of 'The Last Judgment' by Lucas van Leyden," *Brill*, Netherlands Yearbook for the History of Art, 29 (1978).

clarify why the rainbow motif and attitudes concerning Noah's narrative changed through the 1500s. This idea had been extended by Don Cameron Allen in his text, *The Legend of Noah,* examining the implications of rationalism on the Old Testament patriarch's narrative in Renaissance art and literature.[150] As an invention of the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, rationalism superseded a literal understanding of the biblical scripture as truth. However, this inherently pagan perspective was gradually replaced, leading theologians and artists of the Renaissance to comprehend a more realistic version of Noah's story, a myth instead of fact. Furthermore, regarding the Flood in Genesis (7: 10-12), the unlikelihood of its existence and Noah's survival rendered his story one of the more doubtful accounts in the Old Testament and, therefore, highly susceptible to the rationalization of the scripture during this period.[151]

In agreement with the investigation of the rainbow motif in Chapter two, Allen noted that the standard representation of the various Noahic events in Genesis solidified in the Middle Ages. Surveying depictions of the Ark, Flood, Covenant, and Drunkenness, Allen indicated a conscious shift away from the symbolic and typological depiction in the Middle Ages to an empathetic and humanized version in the Renaissance. From the tenth through the early fifteenth century, Allen observed that images of Noah were popular in the graphic biblical text, *Speculum humanae salvationis*, which emphasized the Old Testament figure's typology, the parallels of his story that prefigure Christ's own.[152] For instance, a Drunkenness of Noah miniature (Figure 31) from a *Speculum* text in 1380-

[150] Don Cameron Allen, *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters*, University of Illinois Press, 1949.
[151] KJV. "And it came to pass after seven days, that the waters of the flood were upon the earth. In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, the same day were all the fountains of the great deep broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened. And the rain was upon the earth forty days and forty nights."
[152] Don Cameron Allen, *The Legend of Noah: Renaissance Rationalism in Art, Science, and Letters*, 163.

1399 demonstrates the structured and conventional presentation of the scene. For the reader's convenience, Noah and his sons are labeled and there are no extraneous figures to distract from the message. Another miniature of Noah entering the Ark (Figure 32) from a c.1460 Book of Hours similarly confirms the direct and didactic presentation of the narrative. These literal representations, assisted by explicit texts underneath the figures, were part of the instructive tradition in medieval art to simplify complex biblical narratives for the viewer's comprehension.

Allen produced evidence identifying Michelangelo's scenes of Noah on the Sistine Chapel ceiling as a distinctive break from this conventional type, however, Rolin's instrumentalization of Noah via the rainbow motif in the Beaune Altarpiece demonstrates this began to occur earlier.[153] In the Flood fresco from 1508-1512 (Figure 17), Allen argues, Michelangelo subverted the power of the Ark by placing it in the background, contrasting Hugh of St. Victor, who promoted the Ark as a metaphor for the sanctity of the Church and, specifically, the monastic institution in the eleventh century. Michelangelo, however, focused on the human suffering as a result of the Flood; Allen noted that it is the "doomed antediluvians who trap our attention" instead of the Ark.[154] In another scene from Noah's narrative, Michelangelo's depiction of his Drunkenness (Figure 18) was "not comic nor religious, for it contains subject matter for the brooding sympathies of mankind."[155] Therefore, Michelangelo humanized Noah's sin to be relatable for the viewer rather than establish a prophetic message. Edgar Wind and Elizabeth Sears similarly assessed Michelangelo's Drunkenness of Noah fresco "by the

[153] Ibid., 169.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid., 173.

humane economy of its pathos" (Figure 18). [156] For Allen, Wind, and Sears, Michelangelo's treatment of Noah as a flawed hero indicated the changing attitudes toward the Genesis narrative in the Renaissance. The scholars' proposed chronology leaves the Beaune Altarpiece on the cusp of this humanized transition of Noahic iconography. As we have seen, Rolin's emphasis on the Noahic Covenant in the Last Judgment context is deeply ingrained in the standard dogma of salvation and absolution. However, in light of Allen I suggest that the patron's actions, his instrumentalization of the Noahic Covenant rainbow motif, should be considered an early development of the changing Noahic iconography of the Renaissance.

The previous paragraph assessed how society gradually debunked the mystical elements of Noah's Genesis narrative as a result of the emerging rationalist attitude of the period. Earlier, I demonstrated how the rainbow motif, Rolin's evocation of the Noahic Covenant in the Beaune Altarpiece, receded into the background of sixteenth century Last Judgment imagery. Therefore, I suggest that alterations to Noah's interpretation in art and society began to develop earlier in the context of literature historian Stephen Greenblatt's "self-fashioning" concept. Rolin's act of Noahic instrumentalization in the Beaune Altarpiece exhibits the qualities Greenblatt associates with the Renaissance phenomena of constructing identity. In Greenblatt's book, "Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare," the author explores the development of individual and cultural identity in sixteenth century Tudor England through the literature of that period's great authors and playwrights.[157] To Greenblatt, self-fashioning was a set of principles or

[156] Edgar Wind and Elizabeth Sears, *The Religious Symbolism of Michelangelo: The Sistine Ceiling*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, 51.
[157] Stephen Greenblatt, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980.

characteristics assembled by an individual primarily in the context of social exhibition.[158] This expression of identity and display manifested in the writings of Thomas More.[159] Greenblatt contextualizes More's fictional political commentary *Utopia* (1516) with Hans Holbein's highly materialistic painting, *The Ambassadors* (Figure 33), from 1533. For the author, both *Utopia* and *The Ambassadors* reflect the construction of a self; for the men in Holbein's painting, they convey power and wealth through their clothing, environment, and surrounding objects creating this specific display of identity. Greenblatt observes *Utopia* as concurrent with the "world of [*The Ambassadors*]" and reactive to their particular identity display. Within this context, *Utopia's* alternative socio-political narrative led Greenblatt to conclude the author self-fashioned an "act of self-cancellation" to oppose the expression of identity seen in the painting.[160] Greenblatt's self-fashioning construct limited this particular mode of representation to England in the sixteenth century. However, like More and *The Ambassadors*, the research conducted in this thesis has shown that Rolin's Noahic instrumentalization is, in fact, an example of this Renaissance phenomenon.

Rolin's patronage of the Hôtel-Dieu and Beaune Altarpiece developed alongside *vivre* to identify himself with the nobility in a manner similar to Greenblatt's description of self-fashioning in the Renaissance. The ideology promoted by the upper class empowered even the haute bourgeoisie, Rolin's inherited class, to patronize art objects in panel painting; as an outsider, the construction of a newfound identity as chancellor

[158] Ibid., 2. "... [an] achievement of a less tangible shape: a distinctive personality, a characteristic address to the world, a consistent mode of perceiving and behaving."
[159] Ibid., 16.
[160] Ibid., 57.

necessitated these choices.[161] Moreover, his implementation of the Noahic Covenant rainbow in the Beaune Altarpiece endorsed this perspective as an example of the chancellor's manipulation of religious iconography for private devotion and public display. On account of Greenblatt's self-fashioning construct, then, Rolin's Noahic exemplum is a Renaissance invention, countering Panofsky's conclusion that the Beaune Altarpiece is medieval. Acutely aware of how to best aggrandize through patronage, Rolin tailored the Salle de Pauvres to exhibit his monogram in decorative roundels on the floor and ceiling tiles, capitalizing on the altruism of such an establishment to remind visitors of his name. Hence, the likelihood that Rolin understood the potential of both the Hôtel-Dieu and Beaune Altarpiece to garner envy from other wealthy patrons.

Channeling the essence of Noah, I have argued, Rolin's iconographic pattern communicates a belief that his service and duty to Burgundy absolved him of any sins committed during his career. Although Pridat advocated for Rolin's devotional activities (donations to the Autun chapel and the Hôtel-Dieu, for instance), the chancellor's dubious relationship with spirituality remains questionable, especially considering Jacques du Clerq's notable silence on the matter. Previously examined in Chapters 1 and 2, for viewers of the *Rolin Madonna* and Beaune Altarpiece, Rolin's insinuations of righteousness and obedience express his false sense of piety. However, in return, this association granted Rolin the security that his soul would be safe upon Final Judgment. Evoking God's unconditional promise to Noah within the eschatological context, Rolin manipulated the standardized representation to fit within his desired Noahic perspective.

[161] For further research of contemporaneous patronage similar to Rolin, see Nicole Reynaud, *Jean Fouquet: Les Heures d'Étienne Chevalier*, Dijon: Éditions Faton, 2006 and Judith Förstel, *Étienne Chevalier, Jean Fouquet et Melun*, Conseil régional d'Île-de-France, 2007. Chevalier demonstrates how, outside of the eschatological context of the Beaune Altarpiece, Rolin's brand of patronage was not unprecedented.

As a result, the rainbow in the Beaune Altarpiece recalls both scriptures, Genesis, and Revelation. This investigation into the afterlife of Rolin's Noahic association has shown how the motif resonated with artists and patrons over the following century. Although the rainbow's distinct symbolism originated from Rolin, this research does not claim all were aware of the particularities of the motif's sourcing; nevertheless, Rolin's (faux) display of penitence at the Hôtel-Dieu inspired many.

The substantial number of later eschatological images which include the rainbow motif presents a new perspective into the exchanges of patrons and artists in the fifteenth century. In these representations, in this thesis I contend that the rainbow's affiliation with the Noahic Covenant appealed to patrons seeking absolution for their sins. Corresponding to Rolin's motivations, these patrons appropriated his false expression of penance for themselves. However, in observation of the different visual interpretations of the rainbow motif, its artistic development shows how the rainbow was gradually subsumed into the heavenly background of Last Judgment imagery in the sixteenth century. Rogier's rainbow functions to be a solid and independent component of the Altarpiece's iconography, contrasting its later portrayal in Bellegambe's and Van Leyden's images; for these artists, it stylistically contributed to the ethereal and otherworldly nature of the eschatological scene.

Rolin's Noahic allusion via the rainbow in the Beaune Altarpiece influenced the subsequent standardized representation of mid-fifteenth century eschatological iconography. This thesis has shown how Rogier's treatment of the rainbow's scale, coloring, and placement accentuated its prominence within the composition as a significant symbol deserving of deeper examination. In light of these conclusions, this

analysis demonstrates the need for further evaluation by modern scholarship to fully understand the complex iconographic symbolism utilized for patron-related social displays. Although Panofsky categorized the Beaune Altarpiece as “frankly medieval” in 1953, the rainbow’s connotation as a Noahic motif demonstrates how Rolin, governed by the same Renaissance principles of identity described by Greenblatt, engineered the allusions in the *Rolin Virgin* and Beaune Altarpiece.

CONCLUSION

This thesis has focused the previously unresearched pattern of Noahic allusions within Nicolas Rolin's patronage in the Beaune Altarpiece and *Rolin Virgin* to display his self-important belief in himself as a Noahic figure in the mid-fifteenth century. Both paintings were shown to illustrate specific parallels connecting the Old Testament patriarch with the Burgundian chancellor. This is, moreover, the first study to identify the Noahic allusion in the rainbow motif in the Beaune Altarpiece as a combination, instrumentalized by the patron himself, of the Noahic Covenant from Genesis 9 and St. John's description of the Last Judgment in Revelation 4.

Nicolas Rolin's position as one ennobled later in life, in comparison to someone born into the nobility, undoubtedly affected the chancellor's motivations for patronage. In particular, through his relationship with duke Philip the Good, a strong proponent of the arts, I analyzed how Rolin was motivated to emulate the standards of his new social order. Accordingly, the chancellor large-scale commissions, the *Rolin Madonna*, Beaune Altarpiece, and the Hôtel-Dieu complex were assessed within this framework.

Several conclusions emerge from this analysis of Rolin's patronage. Firstly, that Noah in particular appealed to Rolin as a representative of righteousness, loyalty, obedience, and wine. Recognizing these attributes within himself, Rolin exhibited this essence of Noah within his patronage. In addition, the biblical narrative conveniently overlooked Noah's drunken sin, and exegetical commentaries followed suit, neglecting this aspect in favor of Noah's faithfulness and salvation. Secondly, as a consequence of Rolin's Noahic allusion, the rainbow motif was incorporated into Last Judgment

iconography over the next century. Although it was unintentional, the motif was popularized by its inclusion in the Beaune Altarpiece via the Noahic Covenant rainbow. Considered alongside Noahic scholarship, the biblical narrative's lack of rational thought contributed to a more temporal interpretation of Noah in the sixteenth century.

Finally, and most importantly, the Beaune Altarpiece was recontextualized as a Renaissance object. Related to Panofsky's interpretation that the Altarpiece represents the peak of Rogier van der Weyden's medieval phase in the 1440s, Rolin's identification with Noah actually involved the idea of "self-fashioning" proposed by Stephen Greenblatt. Therefore, this analysis demonstrates the advantages of iconographic and patron-based analyses to uncover the nuanced expressions in art objects as a mode of inquiry for further research. In light of Rolin's instrumentalization of Noah, this research contends that evaluations of medieval and Renaissance objects, including objects seemingly well-researched by Jan van Eyck and Rogier van der Weyden, for example, contain more information than previously thought.

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FIGURES

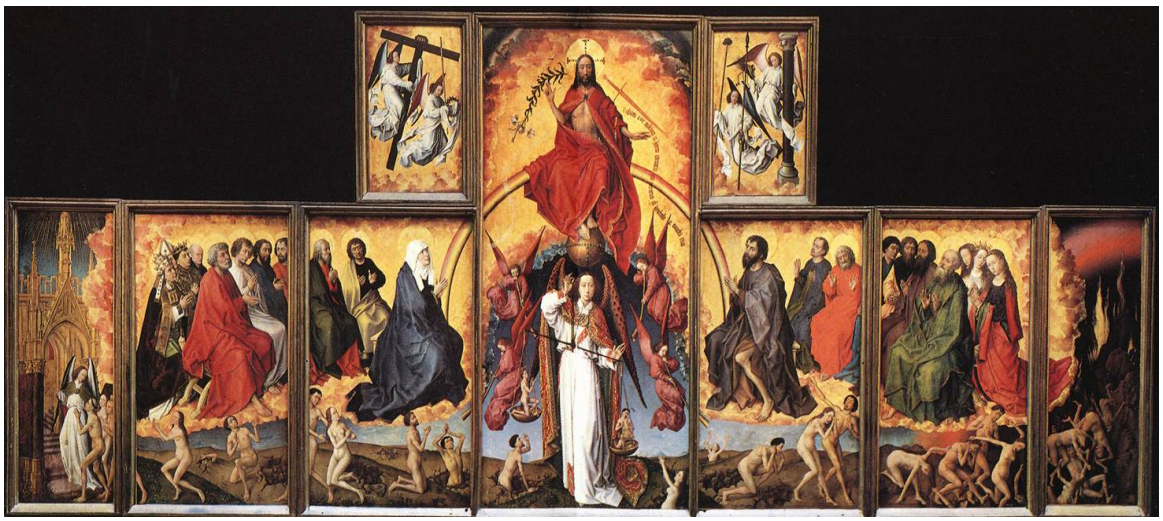

Figure 1. Rogier van der Weyden, Beaune Altarpiece, (open view), c. 1445-51, oil on oak polyptych, 220 cm × 548 cm (87 in × 216 in), Hospice de Beaune, France.

Figure 2. Detail of the Beaune Altarpiece central panel.

Figure 3. Jan van Eyck, *Virgin and Child with Chancellor Nicolas Rolin* (*Rolin Virgin*), c. 1435. Oil on panel, 66 x 62 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Figure 4. Detail of the *Rolin Virgin*.

Figure 5. Anonymous French artist, *Bottom, Initial A: the Last Judgment*, late 13th century, bottom, 2 x 2 1/4 in (50 x 55 mm). Victoria and Albert Museum, London, United Kingdom.

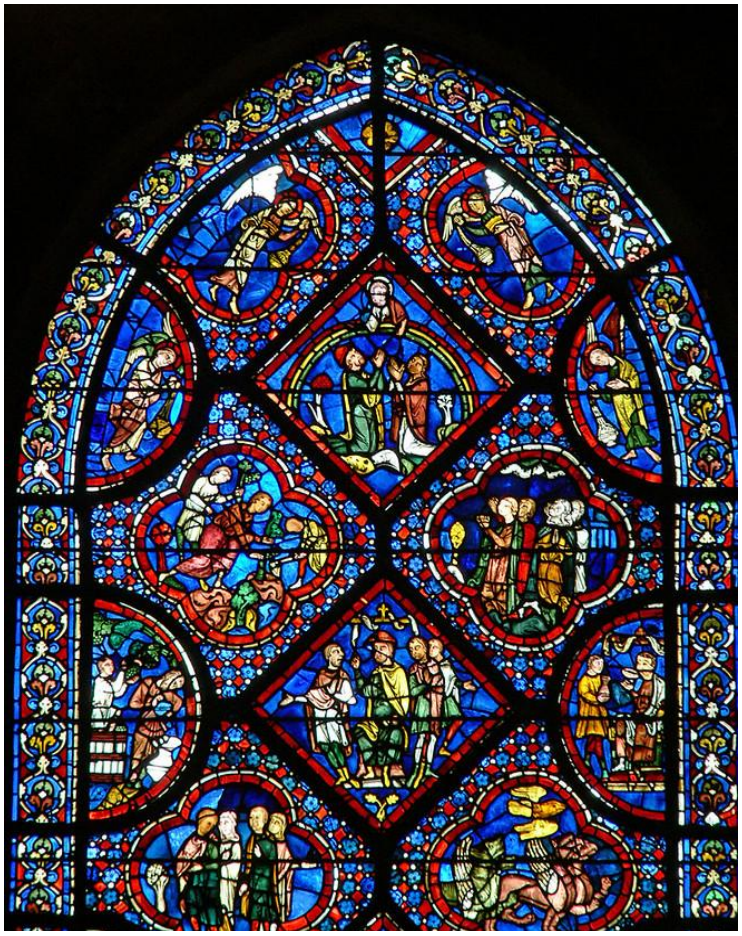

Figure 6. Chartres Cathedral*, Noah Window, detail: upper narrative scenes including the Noahic Covenant,* c.1205-1215. Stained glass window.

Figure 7. Detail of Chartres window.

Figure 8. Detail of Chartres window.

Figure 9. Detail of Chartres window.

Figure 10. Stefan Lochner, *The Last Judgment*, c. 1435. Tempera on oak polyptych, 124.5 x 173 cm, Collection of Ferdinand Franz Wallraf, Cologne, Germany.

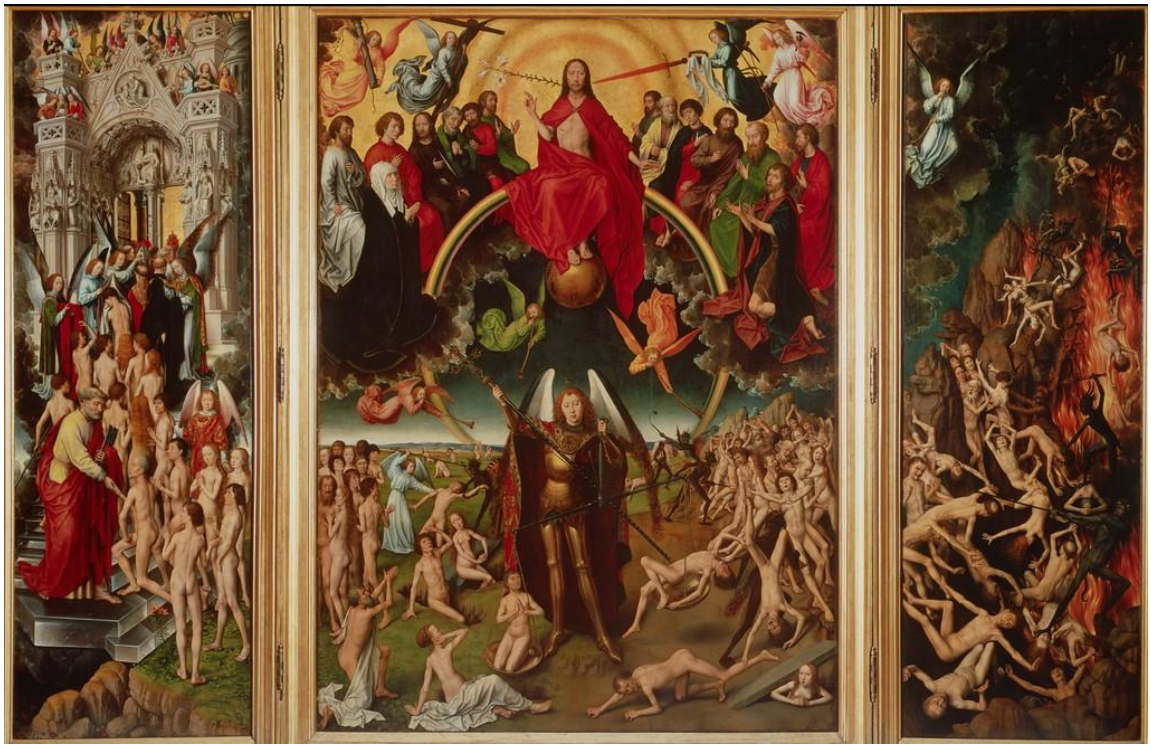

Figure 11. Hans Memling, *Last Judgment Triptych*, 1467-1471. Oil on oak, Center: 221 x 161 cm; wings: 223.5 x 72.5 cm (each), Muzeum Pomorskie w Gdańsku, Poland.

Figure 12. Detail of the *Last Judgment* central panel.

Figure 13. Jehan (or Jean) Bellegambe, *The Last Judgment Triptych*, 1520-1525. Oil on oak wood, Central panel: 222x178 cm, Gemäldegalerie, Berlin, Germany.

Figure 14. Jan Provost, *The Last Judgment*, c. 1525, oil on oak panel, 75.3cm x 77.6cm, Detroit Institute of Arts, Michigan, USA.

Figure 15. Crispijn van den Broeck, *The Last Judgment*, oil on oak panel, 81.2cm x 59.8cm.

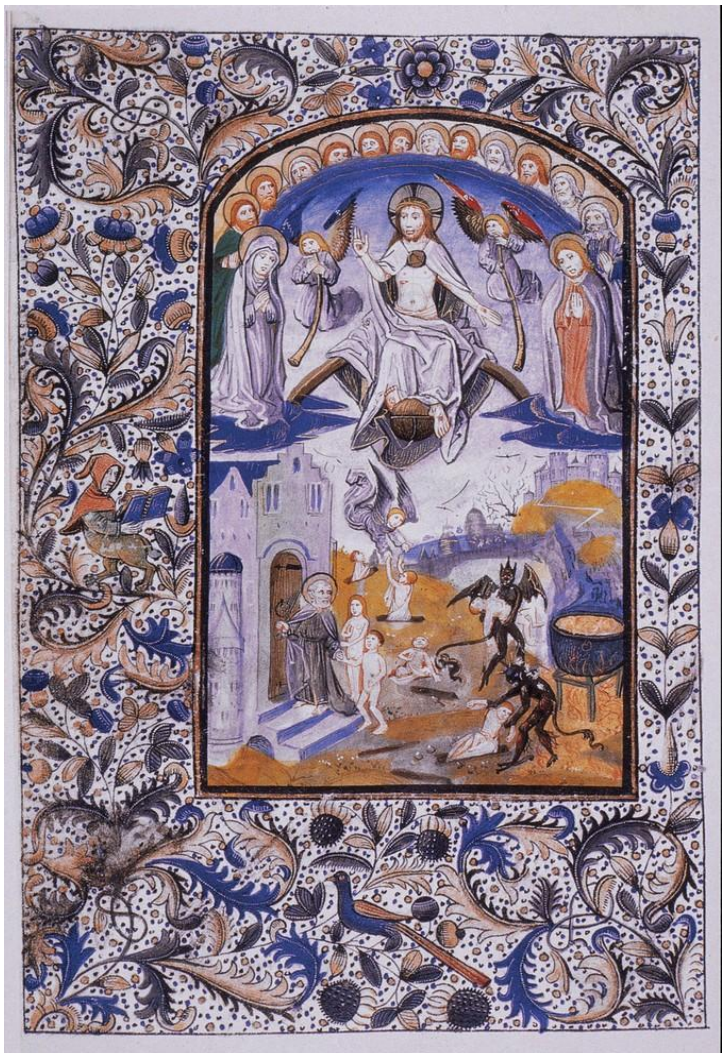

Figure 16. Workshop of Guillaume Vrelant, *Last Judgment Book of Hours Ms. H. 7 Fol. 91v*, c. 1470-90, Bruges. Morgan Library and Museum, USA.

Figure 17. Michelangelo, *The Flood*, 1508-12, fresco, Sistine Chapel, the Vatican, Rome, Italy.

Figure 18. Michelangelo, *Drunkenness of Noah*, 1508-12, fresco, Sistine Chapel, the Vatican, Rome, Italy.

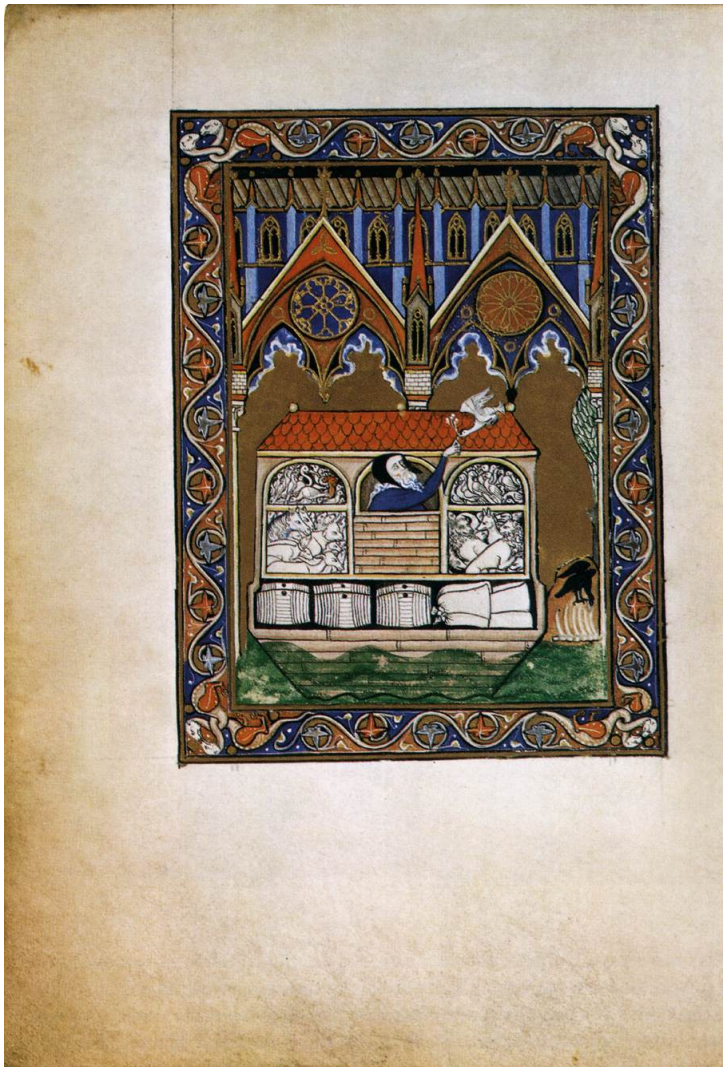

Figure 19. “Noah’s Ark” (f. 3v), *Psalter of Saint Louis*, c. 1260s. Bibliotèque Nationale, Paris, Manuscript (Ms. Lat. 10525), 210 x 145mm.

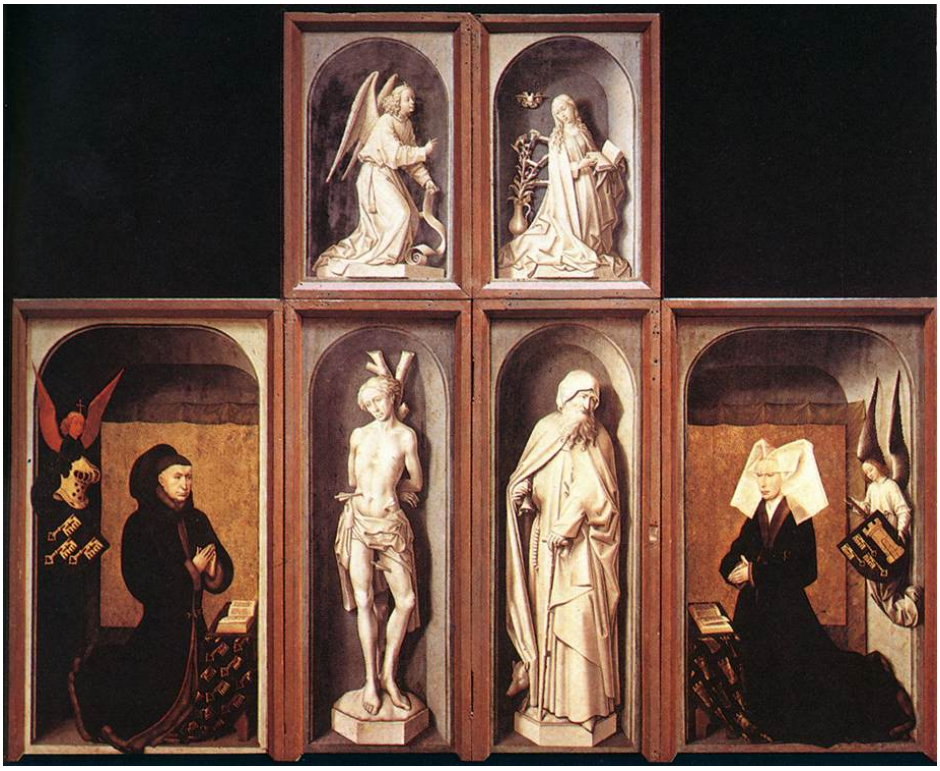

Figure 20. *Beaune Altarpiece* exterior view.

Figure 21. Gislebertus (sculptor), West Façade, Central Portal detail of the *Last Judgment* tympanum, c. 1120-1135, limestone, Cathédrale Saint-Lazare d'Autun, France.

Figure 22. West Façade, Central Portal detail of the *Last Judgment* tympanum, c. 1192-1275, limestone, Cathédrale Saint-Etienne de Bourges, France.

Figure 23. “The Court of Heaven” (f. 5. v.), *The Cloister’s Apocalypse,* c. 1330. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, 30.8 × 23 cm.

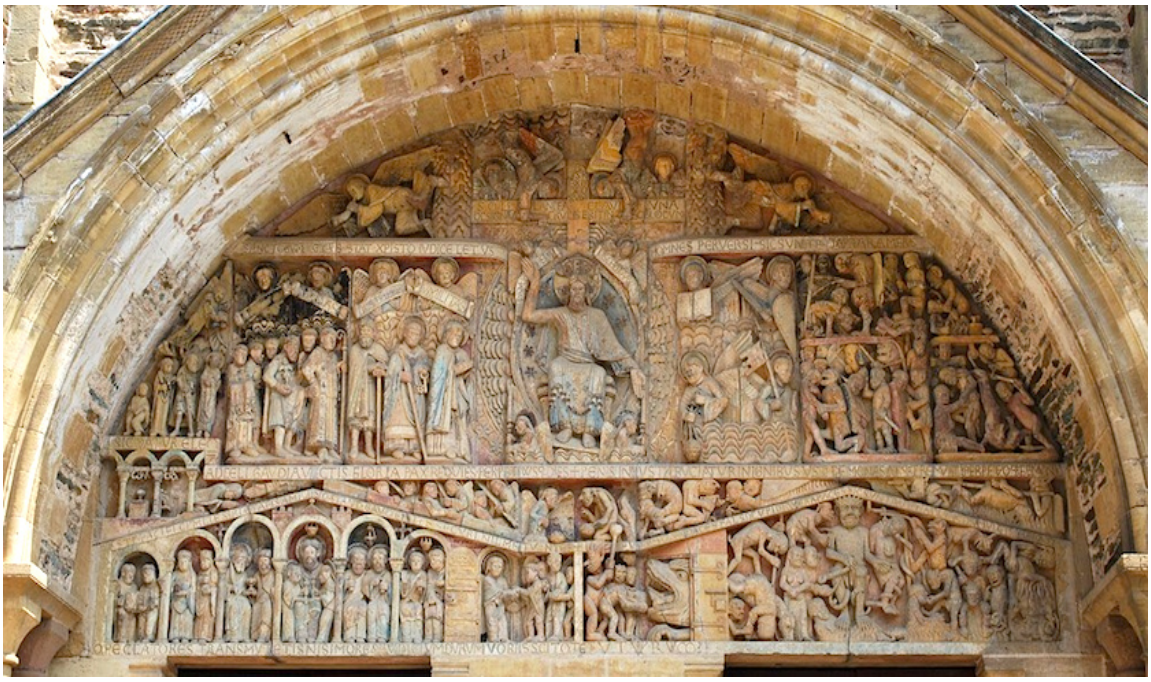

Figure 24. West Façade, Central Portal detail of the *Last Judgment* tympanum, c. 1050-1130, limestone, Abbey Church of Sainte-Foy, Conques, France.

Figure 25. Anonymous artist, “The Last Judgement” (fol. 62v) Book of Hours (MS M.259), Belgium, 1400-1415. Morgan Library and Museum, USA.

Figure 26. Workshop of Master of Guillebert de Mets, *The Last Judgment*, c. 1430, ink, tempera and gold on vellum, 12.6 x 8.5cm. Cleveland Museum of Art, USA.

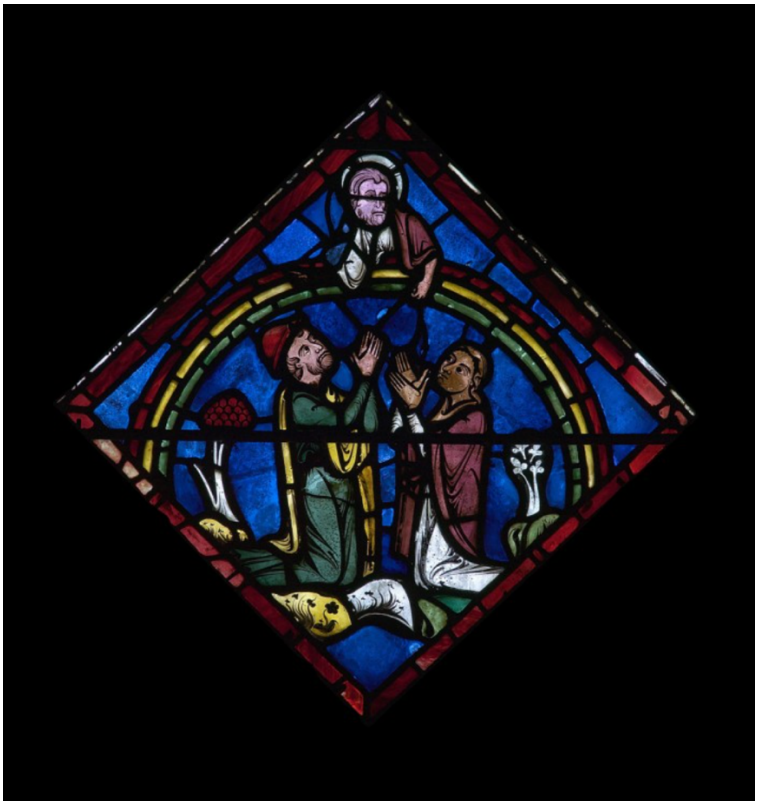

Figure 27. Detail of Chartres window.

Figure 28. Simon of Tournai, "Noahic Covenant" (fol. 145r) in upper left of page margin, *Commentary on Psalms 1-50* (MS. M.338), c. 1200, Belgium. Morgan Library and Museum, USA.

Figure 29. Martin Schongauer, *Christ in Judgment*, 1470, drawing on paper, 26 x 18.5 cm. Musée du Louvre, Paris, France.

Figure 30. Lucas van Leyden, *The Last Judgment triptych*, c.1526-27, oil on oak panel, 301 x 435 cm. Stedelijk Museum De Lakenhal, Leiden, Netherlands.

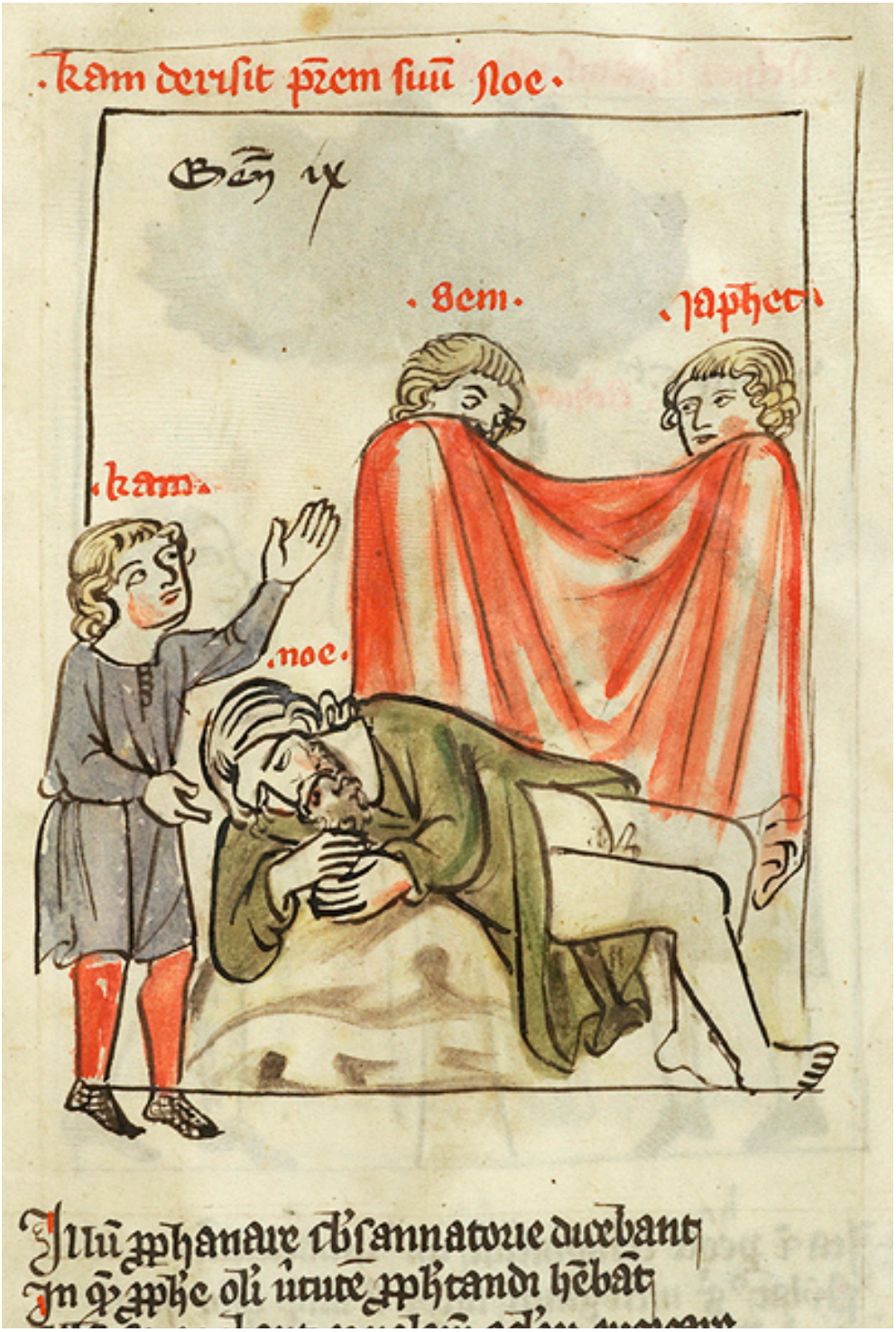

Figure 31. "Drunkenness of Noah" (fol. 22r), *Speculum humane salvationis* (MS M.1400), c. 1350-1400, German. Morgan Library and Museum, USA.

Figure 32. Attributed to the Master of Amiens 200, “Noah Entering the Ark” (fol. 4v), Book of Hours Manuscript miniature (M.212), c. 1460. Morgan Library and Museum, USA.

Figure 33. Hans Holbein the Younger, *The Ambassadors*, oil on oak panel, 1533, 207 x 209.5cm. National Gallery, London.